

[Samuel B. Farmer]

[S241 - LA?]

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE January 10, 1939 SUBJECT American Folklore Stuff

1. Name and address of informant Samuel B. Farmer, 1133 N. Cotner Blvd.
2. Date and time of interview January 6, 1939 Lincoln, Nebr. 9 to 11:30 a.m.
3. Place of interview Flower room, Farmer green house, 1133 N. Cotner Blvd.
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant Anna Nye Moss, 6934 Francis St., Lincoln, Nebraska.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Glass enclosed plant and flower rooms, Tanner Green house. This is filled with the raised beds of flowers and plants requiring the higher temperatures. Rather humid and tropical, the odor of fertilizer rather predominating. This room is one of the several units comprising this Botannical Garden. It is combined somewhat with the living quarters and a front sales room, and flanked by open outdoor gardens with their piped sprinkling devices. Flowers and plants in great profusion are in the glass enclosures. C.15 [?]

FORM B Personal History of Informant

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NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE January 10, 1939 SUBJECT American Folklore Stuff

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Samuel B. Farmer, 1133 N. Cotner Blvd.
Lincoln.

1. Ancestry English

2. Place and date of birth Near Pontiac, Ill., Jun. 6. 1859.

3. Family 2 boys living, 1 dead - Father born Oct. 6, 1837, Indiana. Died Jan. 18, 1863.
Mother born May 30, 1837, Pontiac, Illinois. Died Jan. 1, 1929.

4. Places lived with dates.

Near Pontiac, Ill., 1859 to 1882. Near Bennett, Nebr., 1882 to 1903. Bethany, Lincoln,
Nebraska, 1903 to date.

5. Education, with dates Country school, Pontiac, Ill., 1865 to 1875.

6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Farming and stock raising, 1875 to 1930.
Owned own farm in Nebraska.

7. Special skills and interests Farming and gardening.

8. Community and religious activities Avondale Comm. church between Palmyra and
Eagle, Nebr. Methodist church, Christian church, Sunday School. Deacon.

9. Description of informant Small of stature, alert and active despite age. An outdoor type.

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10. Other points gained in interview Rather precise and has acquired much business judgement. A devotee to the Gospel and rather retiring in disposition. Gives the impression of never having been very active socially outside of the church also somewhat colorless.

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE January 10, 1939 SUBJECT American Folklore Stuff.

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Samuel B. Farmer, 1133 N. Cotner Blvd.

I have lived most of my years on a farm and can't tell you much about town life or the [goings?] on of people. I stuck pretty close to the farm work and chorin' around. When I went to school, it was only held in winter and that wasn't much. Singing school was one of our best amusements and I learned quite a bit about it and how to sing the songs of that day.

[?] meetings were held in our neighborhood, and lots of people got interested and believed a good deal of the hocus pocus, which the mediums put on.

These people would also get worked up over the marsh or bog lights which used to float through the air ever the water. Sometimes they sank out of sight or fell to the ground and glowed like a ball of fire. We always thought it was marsh gas or phosphorus but some believed that the lights were spirits or fairies, good or bad.

The girls in those days "prided" in long hair just as they "pride" in short hair today. A girl with short hair then, would be thought of as crazy or evil.

The people were very saving and some of the men who worked out could save \$90.00 out of \$100.00. They earned about \$100 a year. When they had a few hundred dollars

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they would buy a farm and so more farmers owned their own places. Now they are renting more and the land is owned by big outfits or owners.

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Most of the old neighborly customs of helping one another, sitting up with sick and helping with the farm work has gone out of style.

One of our little boys was stung to death by bees and the neighbors came from all directions to help and comfort us.

In those days the people at a funeral always staid until the grave was filled in. I thought this was the saddest part of the burial and I am glad that they don't do that anymore.

We did lots of our farm work and chores by hand, as the fellow would say "By main strength and awkwardness." I've toted many a barrel of water my step-father used to say.

"We make [?] and save [?]"

(our heads) (our [heels?])

One time I was plowing over there by Dead Man's Creek and the man who owned the land came out. He watched me awhile and then asked me what I meant by "Gee" and "Haw" when I spoke to the horses. He had never heard it before. "Gee" means for the horses to go right, "Haw" to the left.

The right hand is the "off" horse. He probably never heard a farmer call the hogs in either. "Poway"- "Poway"- "Poway". But if you want to drive them away its "sooway."

A team driver is called "skinner" sometimes.

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I have always liked church and think the different denominations could mix more and be tolerant of each other's different beliefs. Liquor was always a poison to me and I never drank any and hope that people will learn to quit using the stuff.

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FORM D Supplementary

Many labor terms have found their way into American speech in Nebraska and elsewhere.

A ground worker on a telephone gang is called a "Grunt." Guy anchors were called "Dead men." Stretching the wire—"pulling blocks."

Railroad terms:

Section men are "gandy dancers" or "Jerries,"

Brakeman ——— "shack"

Fireman ——— "Tallow Pot"

Engineer ——— "hog head" or "Eagle eye."

Conductor ——— "captain"

Car repairer ——— "car tink"

quick stop signal ——— "wash out"

out of town ——— "high ball"

Take a hold & lift ——— "grab root and growl"

Shoveler ——— "shovel stiff"

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Telegrapher ——— “lightning slinger”

Demerits ——— “brownies”

Intinerant laborer is a “gay cat” or “bindle stiff.” There are literally hundreds of these terms.