

[T. L. Phillips]

[??]

Week No. 15

Item No. 22

Words [????]

[Moss:LL?]

Percent

Received

Accredited [5241-LA?] DUP.

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER HAROLD J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St. Lincoln

DATE April 19, 1939 SUBJECT American Folk Stuff

1. Name and address of informant. T. L. Phillips, 23rd and Q
2. Date and time of interview. April 18, 2 to 4 p.m.
3. Place of interview. Home of informant.
4. Name and address of person, if any who put you in touch with informant. [N?]
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you. None

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6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Front living room, style of the nineties, spacious, cheerful, excellently kept and with a friendly atmosphere. One or two old style framed picture prints and a few family group and still life pictures adorn the walls. This room and house seem to have absorbed something of the calm, harmonious and congenial qualities of the occupants. House, a frame building, with a rambling somewhat disjointed look, has the uneven lines of a structure which is settling and sagging. Surrounding are mostly old plain dwellings, of no particular distinction. A rickety, barn like structure built right on the street, borders house on west and serves as a sort of battery service station. [C????]

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6954 Francis St. Lincoln

DATE April 19, 1939 SUBJECT American Folk Stuff

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT. T. L. Phillips, 23rd and Q St. Lincoln

1. Ancestry. French German.
2. Place and date of birth. North Carolina, 1869
3. Family. Wife, four sons living.
4. Place lived in, with dates. North Carolina 1869-1888
Douglas, Nebr. 1888-1897
Lincoln, Nebr. 1897-1903
Raymond, Nebr. 1903-1930

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Lincoln, Nebr. 1930-date.

5. Education, with dates. Log school house, country school, N. C. 1877-1887 part time.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates. Blacksmith 1886-1888-1903. [Farming?] and stock 1888-1897—1903-1930. Successful and owns 3 farms and city property.
7. Special skills and interests. Blacksmith and horses. Land development.
8. Community and religious activities. No particular activities in later years protestant faith.
9. Description of informant. Slight, somewhat stooped, medium height, features thin, and elongated, rather prominent; complexion pale.
10. Other points gained in interview. Has a rather modest, retiring way, with that old style sincere friendliness, which seems genuine and not affected. Like people and known how to get along with them. Family relations and domestic harmony are apparently ideal. Mr. Phillips is liberal minded toward people and things, socially inclined, and is anxious to see some plan put into effect which will correct the present situation and attain greater individual [soale?] of operation and ownership.

[??]

Form C Text of Interview (Unedited)

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

DATE April 19, 1939 SUBJECT American Folk Stuff

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT L. T. Phillips, 23rd and Q St.

We had heard a good bit about the rough, unvarnished life of the prairie settlers in Nebraska, and I came out expecting to find a stern strict class of people, who had no time

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or desire to quit being serious. But they proved entirely different and liked their fun, and entertainment such as I had never even known myself. Jokes and monkey shins were played on anyone, who happened to be handy or was easy enough to go for them.

There was a young feller down there by the name of Gus White, who was new to the neighborhood and he got hold of a buggy and horse, a thing which every young buck was hankerin' to do. He was pretty proud of it and was probably his first rig. Hell he got to goin' with an Irishman's daughter and was pretty high falutin' sippin around the country with his girl.

The girl's father was full of the old Nick and was just waiting his chance to play some whizzer on Gus. He finally got his chance for Gus came over one evening to their house to take his girl to a dance.

While he was in the house waitin' for her to get fixed up, the old man slipped out and changed the buggy wheels around putting one rear wheel on the front and the front wheel back an the rear. As you know the back wheels of a buggy were lots bigger than the front ones, so with one 2 big wheel in front on the left side and one small wheel in back on the right side, the bed of the buggy set sort of lop sided and twisted. It tended to wobble too and the wheels wouldn't roll in a straight line.

Well Gus set off for the dance and of course he couldn't see for the dark what had happened. His girl noticed the funny way the buggy behaved and felt a little awkward rolling back and forth, feelin' like she was fallin' [all?] the time. Gus was too interested in her to pay much attention to anything else so they got to the dance.

There were a lot of rigs around and they unloaded, hitched, the horse and went in without Gus seein' what was wrong. Goin' home the buggy acted worse than ever as the horse hit it off at a good [clip?] once he was started for home. The next day Gus found out what was wrong and everyone else did too. 'By God I never noticed any difference in the danged

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thing' Gus told the, and I guess he didn't as every one heard he 'popped the question' that night to his girl as the wobbled along.

One time our neighbor, Mr. Busch had one of those butcherin' beef and the folks had gathered in as they always did. Busch had a neighbor north of us by the name of Dick Childs and these two were always figurin' out some deviltriment. They wanted real bad to pull something on Thad Williams a neighboring boy, who always acted kind of smart alecky but who didn't really know much and was considered a big boob around there. [??]

Thad showed up at Busch's and was pretty busy tellin' them all how to do it. Busch and Dick Childs got their heads together and rigged up a joke on Thad. So that noon Childs went back to his own farm and after dinner Busch and one or two others who were let in on the joke, got to 3 arguin' with Williams about the best way to cure the ham and shoulders. They got him real interested and he fell right in with their scheme. He had a right good idea at that of cutting out an opening along the bone so the meat would cure inside in good shape. Then they mentioned a ['meat?'] auger' as just the ticket, for doin the business and Thad just swallowed hook line and sinker and wanted to know who had one. Busch said he thought Dick Childs had one and offered to loan Thad his Molly Mule so's he could go over there and get it. Thad rode the old mule over to Childs and asked for the ['meat?'] auger." He knew all about it of course and says "Yep I got er all right' except the 'twister', you'll have to go by Ed. [Scheibert's?] for that.

So Dick took a grain sack and stuck in a piece of log chain, an old brace and wood bit and a cultivator shovel. Thad then heaved it all up across the mule's back and went on over to [Scheiberts?] who also had been tipped off. He took the sack and stuck an old stove lid and a piece of heavy casting. Thad had a good load by now and started back to fix up those hams. But he had trouble. One of those pieces of iron prodded old Molly the mule and she leaped and bucked and threw Thad off along with his sack. [Molly?] then went on without waitin' for Thad so he had to carry that mess of heavy junk back to the Butcher [Bee?].

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By that time they all knew about it and were waitin' for him. He was pretty chesty when he finally got there and goes right up to Mr. Busch sayin,' "Wal I got 'er allright and I don't think anything got broke when your ol' mule got skittish.' He actually thought he had a meat auger allright and the boys and some of the women had to turn away 4 as they couldn't keep their faces straight. Some one suggested that maybe Thad could get them an oven stretcher' some place so they could bake up a whole half hog at once. But he was beginnin' to catch on now and pretty soon they missed him. Thad kept pretty much to his father's farm after that and was so mad he wouldn't speak to anyone.

I have often wondered why people in those earlier days were so much more interested in religion, even though they had no fine churches or meetin' houses. We even had meetings in barns and sheds, or in the / open and the folks walked miles to go and worship.

Right here I want to say that my people were so strict, and as a youngster I got so sick of being forced to go to church meetings and stay all day that when I got to be my own boss, I almost quit going to church entirely. The earlier church and meetings provided a place to go and satisfy the social longings of people, who for the most part didn't see many outside their families. Today they have too many other things to interest and distract them.

On Sunday, I have seen as many as five spring wagons filled with neighbors and friends drive in the yard, unexpected but Mother always was prepared to fix up a big dinner and they would stay through the afternoon and drive away in the evening.

It was a common practice to hold dances around at the different homes in the neighborhood and sometimes a crowd would just drive up and say they were going to hold a dance there. Carpets would be taken up and the dancers or musicians sometimes had a small organ along and usually a fiddle. This just goes to show the [?] and easy custom of the people of the time.

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Four of us used to sit up with the corpse when anyone died. This was in the days when the body was always kept at home. Well it was customary to fix coffee and a lunch for around about midnight, but one night we found no preparations made and the folks had gone to bed and we hated to disturb them or bring up such a matter. The peaches were getting ripe along about that time and a man living right across the trail had a dandy orchard. So two of us decided to slip over there and snatch some peaches. So we took a pan along and had no trouble getting some nice ones without any disturbance and we took them back with us. The other two thought it wasn't just right to steal peaches during the death watch but they helped eat them just the same.

It's funny about those horse hair snakes we used to see in the horse troughs. Most everybody on the farm and around where there was horses has seen them and lots of people believe that they are real snakes which started from horse hairs. Well hair lives an after it is separated from the body that grew it, and those little wriggling black snake like hairs which we saw in the water are just hairs revived and showing life. Hair is a vegetable growth anyway. Any number of people can tell you down where we lived in [Otoe?] county about the grave of a man long dead being opened in a country grave yard there and the coffin was filled with a snarled mass of hair and the corpse had turned into hair except the bones.

There are lots of strange things happen in this world, which are not understood and as children people used to hear lots at boogey stories and frightening tales so it is no wonder, they grow up with superstitions and funny beliefs, which grow into customs.

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Fear and ignorance seem to go together and theres nothing worse. I have enjoyed talking to you and it in interesting to know that in this [dissy?] so called modern time, somebody still regards the older horse and buggy day customs as something worth while.