

[Mary E. Armour]

Personal narrative South Sioux S-241-DAK DUP

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Edna B Pearson ADDRESS 108 E 18 South Sioux

DATE November 9, 1938 SUBJECT Interview No. 18

1. Name and address of informant [Mrs. Mary E. Armour?] Armour [306?] W. 17, South Sioux
2. Date and time of interview November 9, 1938 3:30 P M
3. Place of interview At above address
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant no one
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you no one
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Mrs. Armour lives in a very nice bungalow, facing the north, on 17th Street; it is a very nice house, and well kept up; in a very nice neighborhood. C15 - 2/27/41 - Nebraska

FORM B. Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Edna B Pearson ADDRESS 108 E 18 So Sioux

DATE November 9, 1938 SUBJECT Interview No. 18

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NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. Mary E. Armour, 306 W 17 So Sioux

1. Ancestry Father David T. Hileman Mother Elcinda Marjorie Montgomery Hileman
2. Place and date of birth Indiana County, Pennsylvania, 1857
3. Family Four girls and three boys
4. Place lived in, with dates Indiana County, Pa. from birth until 1867; dakota County, Nebraska from 1867 to 1916; Sturgis, South Dakota from 1916 until spring of 1938 when moved to South Sioux City
5. Education, with dates As far as Sixth Reader
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Housewife
7. Special skills and interests Interested in making good home
8. Community and religious activities Originally belonged to the Salem Lutheran Church, but later Presbyterian.
9. Description of informant Mrs. Armour is a short, rather plump woman, gray hair, blue eyes, rather nervous, but pleasant and very ready and glad to give information.
10. Other points gained in interview ——

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Edna B Pearson ADDRESS 108 E 18 So Sioux

DATE November 9, 1938 Subject Interview No. 18

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. Mary E Armour, 306 W. 17 So Sioux

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In March, 1867, when I was about ten years old, my parents, one brother, one sister, and myself, came to Dakota County. Rev. Samuel Aughey had come out to Dakota County the year before, from Indiana County, Pennsylvania, and had returned to Pennsylvania and persuaded several families to come back with him the next year. After we came to Dakota City we went out on our farm that father had spoken for. We crossed the Missouri River on the ice; Augustus Haase (father of Mrs Neiswanger of Dakota City) and C. F. Eckert, from Dakota City, were at Sioux City with wagons; the one wagon brought back goods, hardware, etc., and the other wagon took us to Dakota City. Phil, Mary A., Samuel and Ella Bridgenbaugh came out with us; we came by train to Sioux City. We moved right into a house with four rooms; the living room had been a saloon in Omadi when the river took the town of Omadi this saloon was moved to the farm we took, and joined on to a three-room house; this made a four-room house for us to live in.

The first year we were in Dakota County the grasshoppers came and cleaned our corn crop for us; they ate all the leaves. We had a yoke of oxen, besides our horses.

That same fall, our barn burned just after the grain was threshed; the granary was built in the barn. The corn didn't burn as the corn crib was away from the barn, and the horses didn't get burned. We saw a little spot of fire on the bluffs; father was away helping a neighbor with his threshing and as soon as he saw the fire he rushed home; the wind was so strong it brought the fire right over the swamp and set the barn on fire, but we saved the house. Mother took us children in to the cave right near the house; we had vegetables in the cave, all covered with hay. We had a big canoe right near the house, at the kitchen door, that some Indians had evidently left on the bank of the river, and this canoe was full of water. Mother took a large piece of rag or a sack and would dip it in the water in the canoe and beat out the coals of fire that fell into the cave, and in that way kept the fire out of the hay in the cave, and kept it away from the house. I don't see how she ever saved the house, but she did. The men had a hard time saving the horses. They saved most of the corn in the crib as the men chopped the side out of the corn crib and threw

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the corn out of the crib. The fire burned all over the bottoms, as it was all tall grass. About the only reason the house was saved was because what grass there was back of and around the house, was so short that it didn't catch fire. The wheat that was in the granary in the barn burned all over the top; this wasn't good for anything so they threw the burned wheat away, but the wheat on the inside was all right so father had it ground for feed for the animals; the very bottom of the wheat, where it hadn't been burned at all he took to Oakes Mill and had it ground and Mother made biscuits of it; it was sort of whole wheat.

We were afraid of the Indians; there were so many Indians near us because the Agency was just below us; the Indians would come to our house to trade three yards of calico or flannel for chickens. The government sent them calico and flannel in three yard lengths and they would trade their yard goods for things to eat. One time when father was up the road a mile or so an indian came and ordered mother to cook him some ham. He was standing so he could look down the trap door that lead to the cellar and could see a ham hanging there. He took out his knife; we never knew whether he just wanted to cut off a piece of the ham or whether he meant it as a threat but we were scared. Mother didn't have to say anything to me; I ran and got father, and by the time we got back the Indian was gone; I was about eleven years old at that time. They never really bothered us, only wanted to trade with us; one time an Indian and his wife and baby came to our house after dark; they very seldom travel after dark, but said their baby was sick and wanted to stay all night so we kept them that night.

Rev. Aughey used to go to Ponca to preach; I think he went every other Sunday; he used to ride a mule. We would walk four and a half miles to Dakota City to church. When father and I went to church mother had to stay at home and watch the cattle, and when mother went to church father stayed at home.

When they put in the pontoon bridge we usually drove across the river to Sioux City; they had the pontoon bridge until they built the combination bridge. My husband (Dennis

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Armour) crossed the river on the ice with a load of wheat. The ice broke and he lost the wheat but saved his own life and the mules.

We didn't have very close neighbors; had one or two within a mile or [som?].

My husband was in the Indian War, in Dakota.

One of our most popular games when I was a little girl was checkers. Father made a checker board, marking off the squares, and we used red and yellow corn for the checkers. We sang war songs mostly.

The first school we went to was held in Will Berger's home; had school in the front room; while the teacher was in the kitchen cooking we studied and when the family ate at noon we played out doors. The year after we went to school at Will Berger's home they built a school that was afterward called the Hileman school, named after my folks. Adam Sides was the director, who was the head of the school board; Samuel Whitehorn was the treasurer, and father, David Y. Hileman, was the moderator.

It doesn't seem, now as though there was much to go to when I was little. After the first few years we used to go in to Dakota City to sociables in the church; I guess they called them sociables although we didn't have anything to eat, but they had programs, spoke pieces, sang and had dialogues, etc. We went to [lycoums?] after I was married, and I took part in some of the plays.

After the school house was built, and after Rev. Aughey, the minister, went away we had Lutheran church in the school house, which was about half a mile from our place. Rev. Zimmerman was one of the first ministers after Mr. Aughey. After some years they started to build the Salem Lutheran Church but before it was finished lightning struck it and it burned to the ground; they re-built it right away; that is the church on the east of old Highway #20; the Salem Lutheran Church was the first one of the "Twin Churches" built, and later the Germans wanted a church of their own so they could understand the

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sermons, and they built the German Lutheran Church, the one on the west side of the highway; but for a long time the people who went to the German Lutheran Church used our hitching posts; they could do that as we had church just every other Sunday and they had church the Sundays we didn't have church.

I remember the first pig we had; father and I went to Berger's and Mr. Berger told father to pick out a pig that he wanted, and he could leave it there a while, but father said he would take it with him. We had a load of hay and father made a hole in the top of the [loan?] of hay and put the pig in the hole and covered it up with hay.

My father got a recipe for tanning hides and used to buy 'coon and badger hides in Sioux City and tan them; then he would sell them after he had tanned them. Once we had a white cat that my folks wanted to get rid of; they killed it and father tanned its hide and I made a pair of mittens out of the hide and I wore them to school.

When I was eight or nine years old, I remember, I wore hoops; wore my dresses real long at that time, and wore high top shoes.

I went as far in school as Osgood's Sixth Reader.

We used to make butter, in pound prints, and sold it to Felt's store in Sioux City; I think we used to get from 15 cents a pound up.

I remember my first washing machine; the bottom of the tub was rounding and corrugated, and the top part had to be pushed back and forth by hand, which acted on the principle of a wash board. We couldn't put much water nor many clothes in / the tub at a time; the next washing machine I had operated by a big wheel which had to be turned by hand. Our first cook stove was called "Protector No. 8"; I remember when we bought it the man gave us a waffle iron. In order to bake waffles we had to have a fire with a good bed of red coals. When we first came out here we sometimes had grease lights, made by putting a piece of

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cloth in a dish, filling the dish with grease and lighting the cloth; of course we never used grease lights to read by.

When I was a little girl I used to hold the moulds to make candles; made six at a time, three on each side of the mould; there were two sticks across the top of the mould and the wicks would be hung over these two sticks, and put down through the hole in the center of the small end of the mould. We would have to pull the wicks tight across the sticks at the top. Then the tallow was poured into the moulds. We had to be careful to get the wicks right in the center.

My mother's first sewing machine was a Wheeler & Wilson; she paid \$90.00 for it; there was a little stand or standard some way where the sewing was held, which now seems so inconvenient. Of course our first irons were the old flat irons; then we had a gasoline iron but we were always afraid of it.