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Transcript of DARE Interview (1968): Medicine Lodge, Kansas; Primary Informant KS013 (Tape 0531-S1)

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INTRODUCTION: The following was recorded from Dictionary of American Regional English, tape zero five three one, side one.

FIELDWORKER: This is a recording of Alice [beep] made at Medicine Lodge, Kansas, on August seventeenth, nineteen sixty-eight, by [beep].

- 5 INFORMANT: My mother and father were pioneers in Barber County. They came here in May of eighteen eighty-four. My father had come in j-, February and had brought his, his horses, and livestock, and had taken a claim ten miles north of Medicine, ten to fifteen miles north of Medicine Lodge, up on the ridge. My mother did not come until May, as I said before, and she came on the train from northern Missouri to Harper, Kansas, which was the end of the railroad.
- 10 The Santa Fe was building at that time, on south into, through Oklahoma, and into Texas and New Mexico, so that it was quite a rough element along the railroad towns at that time and Harper was no exception to this. My mother, who brought my oldest sister, a baby six months old, I, and, uh, they stayed that night in the hotel at Harper over a saloon. And it was very wild and frightening to her. But the next morning, bright and early, my father arrived, in Harper, with
- 15 his two big teams of horses and the wagon. But he had elongated the running gears of the wagon, and there at Harper, bought the lumber for their shanty, which he put, fastened onto the running gears. About the center of the, this expended lumber, expanded lumber, he fastened a rocking chair, and to the back of the rocking chair, he had attached an umbrella. So my mother rode in the rocking chair and held the baby, and they drove all day long across country, across pastures,
- 20 very few roads, mostly cattle trails, until they reached the place where they were to build their shanty. And nearby was a shanty belonging to a friend where they lived until they built their shanty, which did not take very long to build. And, uh, my father wanted to farm, but in off season, he freighted. He would take his two teams, and his dog and his shotgun, and the wagon, and drive back to Harper, which was east of, east and a little south of the claim, and would pick
- 25 up a load of freight and take it across country, up to about seventy-five miles west of Medicine Lodge, Mescatunga. It does not exist anymore. But his trip would be about a hundred miles, which would necessitate his being gone for, uh, three or four days out of the week, which left my mother alone on the claim with the baby. However, there were neighbors, the [beep] family lived

30 nearby, and there were two teenage boys, who would often come over to see if she were all right, and often would stay the night with her. And, of course, it was a custom in that day when the cowboys came through, that they were fed. No matter whether you knew them or not. You gave them a meal if they needed it when, when a cowboy rode through. And there were lots of cowboys riding through at that time. She had several frightening experiences, but, uh, they all turned out well. One evening she, my father had left early in the morning, and, uh, the baby had
35 grabbed a pair of scissors and thrown her hand up and hit my mother in the eye. And she had been miserable all day long with this eye. And just at dusk, she saw a man coming over the horizon, which really frightened her. He was walking, but as she watched him, she thought he looked familiar and became more familiar as he came along, and it proved to be my father's brother, who came and spent some time with them out here. My grandfather also preempt, uh,
40 uh, preempted a claim, up there and brought his family, my father's father, grandfather [beep]. He built a three room house, and in the center room of the house was the windmill. So, back in the day, eighteen eighty-four, they had a pla-, they had water in the house, and a place, a big tank in that middle room where they could keep the things cool, where the food was kept cool. And my grandfather stayed for about two years, but the country was too dry for him, so he sold
45 out and went back to Missouri. But my mother and father stayed on, my mother hoping every year that next year would be the year that they would go back to Missouri. But my father loved it here, and he had no intention of ever going back to— he loved the hills, the gypsum hills. He loved the country, he loved the prairie. Everything about it, he loved. And so, they did nev-, did not ever go back to Missouri to live. Uh, my father worked in a hardware store when he came to
50 town. And, uh, then later, he, uh, through the work in the hardware store, he was employed by the John Deere Implement Company to come to their, come to Chicago, and learn about putting together and setting up their harvesting machines. And now they were not combines at that times, they were harvesting machines. And they were pulled by teams of horses or mules. And the machines would be sent out, knocked down. They'd be sent on the train, and to, by freight.
55 And my father would pick them up and take them to the, the farms or ranches where they bought them, and would set them up and get them started to going. Then, uh, that kept him away from home more than he wanted, after our family had grown, so he came back to Medic-, er, he stayed in Medicine Lodge and bought a meat market, and conducted a meat market up until the time of his death. Uh, there were seven children in our family, and I was the one in the middle. I have
60 had, uh, an older sister and an older brother and a younger sister and three younger brothers. We have, uh, I was born here in Medicine Lodge and went through grade school here and through high school. And then I taught school. I taught one year in Belvidere, which was a, the railroad terminal north and west of here. And it was rather wild for that time, that was in nineteen twelve and thirteen. And I lived in a room over a pool hall. And, uh, one weekend, when I had, when I
65 got back to my room, there was a bullet hole up through the floor of my room, just in front of my dresser where they'd been having a wild time on Saturday night. Uh, then I taught school in the country north of town. And, uh, then I went out to Protection, Kansas, in Comanche County. And that was a little more western and more pioneer. And, uh, I loved it very much. I liked the people. It was in the days of big long overland touring cars, and, uh, I had a friend, a boyfriend with a big

70 automobile, and we drove all over the country to basketball games, and, uh, church meetings,
whatever we wanted to do. The roads were very poor, but we managed to go. Then, uh, I, uh,
after I taught there four years, I went to business college one summer, and then I went down to
Shattuck, Oklahoma, and, uh, worked in the railroad for the Santa Fe. I was utility clerk. That
means, the superintendent of the road said, it w-, a lady utility clerk did all the jobs around the
75 office that the men hated to do. It was a very busy office there because they were building a r-,
branch line, and there were twelve or fifteen men working with me, or may I say, I worked with
them. And, uh, that was a sort of a pioneer's job, too. Then, uh, my husband, [beep], whom I had
met in the fifth grade in school, and we'd been off and on sweethearts, all through high school,
graduated in the same class, uh, we were married when he got home from France, in nineteen
80 nineteen. And, we raised, uh, we raised three children. And, uh, when, a boy, a girl, [beep], who
graduated from the same law school Mr. [beep], was a graduate of Kansas University Law School,
and he came home to the county attorney's job and went right to work. They had held it open
for him till he got out of the army. And he went to work, and we were married in September of
nineteen nineteen. And then in two years our oldest daughter was born. And, uh, she graduated
85 from the law school at KU. And then in five years, our son was born, he went on through school
here, and he graduated from the, uh, law school at KU. And then in five years, after the, uh, son
was born, our daughter was born, and, uh, she graduated from KU, but as an art major. When
our son was ten years old, Mr. [beep]'s younger sister died, and left twin boys, just one month
older than our son. So we raised three boys, all the same age. And they were our children just
90 the same. We have lived in this house, which we built six months after we were married, and
have lived here ever since, and it will soon be forty-nine years. Uh, Mr. [beep] was state senator
for twelve years. He was, has been very active in all kinds of civic affairs. I am greatly interested
in history and genealogy, and I have traced one of my family li—, I have traced five family lines
back to my immigrant ancestor, and I have one family line traced back to sixty-two AD. Great
95 Britain, Queen Boadicea. And I work at, uh, genealogy, I work at historical society, I work in the
Eastern Star, I'm a member of DAR, I'm a member of the Methodist Church, I'm a, a... It's turned
off. The Quakers say they are birthright members of their church, and I'm a birthright member of
the Methodist Church, because my people, way back, from the beginning of Methodism in
America, were Methodists. So I consider myself a birthright member of the Methodist Church. I
100 have taught Sunday school class, and, uh, been secretary, and worked in the Women's Society all
through the years. And my children have worked in the church. And, they are very active, they
were active in their university lives. And, uh, about two years ago, when I was seventy-four, I was
in, sort of tricked into taking an art class. I had never done any painting at all, only maybe get up
in the night and add some touches to my youngest daughter's painting, who was the art major,
105 and, but she didn't know it, when I thought something should be done. It, uh, really was one of
the things that frightened me the most of anything I've ever done, because I didn't want people
to see how horribly I would be doing. And the first, uh, night of the class, I sort of hunkered down
over my desk, and covered up my work. The next night, not quite so low, the third night, I sat
upright. And I got to the place where I thoroughly enjoyed it, and didn't mind who looked at my
110 work. And, uh, they were all very complimentary about the work that I was able to do. Sometimes

they called me Grandma Moses, but my work is not like Grandma Moses' work at all. Uh, Mr. [beep]'s hobby has been a farm, and ranching. And he has built up a lovely, a beautiful herd of pure-bred Herefords. Uh, just last year, when his health failed, we sold our interest in a very large ranch thirty-five miles southwest of here, and reduced our commercial herd, so that now we just
115 have the pure-bred cows and calves and bulls. And every year, we have a sale, selling our pure-bred bulls, and some of the heifers, part of them, we keep for replacement heifers in our herd. We raise wheat, we had a big wheat crop this year, Mr. [beep] has been a lawyer, of course, some years, some bad years it took a good law practice to keep the farm going. But most years, it has been, it has paid its way. The government is trying to, their very best to keep us from making any
120 money on wheat because the prices are so low. But we're doing all right. We are, uh, also have been interested in horses. And, uh, there was a period, back twenty-five, thirty years ago that we had harness horses, race horses, which we enjoyed thoroughly. And, uh, then, now our son, who is a lawyer, and is in the office, took over the office from his father. He was in the office with his father through the years, and since Mr. [beep] has retired, he runs the law office himself. But he
125 has some harness horses, and is doing very well with them. The, they are not gambling devices. We love to see them run, we love to see what they can do, and we particularly love the ones that we have raised down on the farm, and have made good. Our t-, the twin boys that we raised have done fine. Our oldest daughter does not practice law now, she married a pharmacist whom she met in college at KU. They have a fine pharmacy and have made good. She does all the bookwork.
130 And, uh, what law practice that thriving business needs. She did practice law in California for two years while her husband was in law, in the army, in the South Pacific. But, she, uh, she worked for the California Oil Company and had her own desk, and her own stenographer, her own secretary. She's very capable girl, she works a great deal with Delta Gamma, and she works in politics, Republican, and she, uh, works in the church. Our son has, uh, always been, worked in
135 the city. He has four children, and is the city attorney, he was county attorney. He hasn't, uh, really gone into politics yet, but I think it's bugging him. And he works, takes charge, and knows the cattle. And, uh, really has charge of the business of the law office, and the Hereford cattle. Our youngest daughter married a boy she met in college. Our son also married a girl he met in college. And, uh, our daughter married, as I say, the, uh, boy she met in school. He was a track
140 star. His, he was a hurdler, and his record was only broken last year. And they've been married for fifteen years, so he was quite good. But he came out here, and they were both going to teach school. And, uh, our daughter was put to work in her father's office and not allowed to teach school, and the son-in-law was given a very fine job in the building and loan. Not that he expected to do anything but coach. But he's been at that job for the past fifteen years, and they've done
145 quite well. They have two children, and, uh, we are very, very proud of our family, they have done well, and probably much better than we deserve. I want to tell you about Carrie Nation. When I was a little girl, we lived just across the fence from Mrs. Nation. She was a grandmother to me. I loved her dearly. Whenever my mother would let me out of the house to play, I always ran off, up to Mrs. Nation's house, would knock on the back door, and she would say, "Why, honey, come
150 on in, I think you need some hoecakes." Because I was very small and very tiny, she was always feeding me. And, uh, I spent many, many happy hours with her. And it always hurts my feelings

when people say derogatory things about her. I realize, well, that she smashed saloons, and she did things, but to me, she was just one grand person. Uh, I have written many stories about her. I have a large file of things about Carrie Nation, gifts that she has sent to me, and to the family. I have original copies of her autobiography that she has given to us. And, uh, perhaps no one in the town now living, knew her better than I do and remembers the things about her. I have written in full detail the description of her house as it was when she lived there. And when I was a little girl. The yard and the flowers and each room as you came to it in her house, and the furniture as it was at that time. The house is, uh, open now to the public. It is not furnished as it was when Mrs. Nation had it. There are some things in it that belonged to her. Mostly things that she had given to our family when she moved away. There've been many books written about her. Two years ago, at the University of Kansas, there was an opera written about her, and given. It was a very, very fine opera. And it was my privilege to go. Douglas Moore, one of our fine composers, composed the opera, and was the composer in residence there at KU at the time. He came and conferred with me before he wrote it and afterward, and it was my great pleasure to get to go and see the opera, and be his guest.

The story of Arthur the Rat. Once upon a time there was a young rat who couldn't make up his mind. Whenever the other rats ask him if he would like to come out hunting with them, he would answer in a hoarse voice, "I don't know." And when they said, "Would you rather stay inside?" he wouldn't say yes or no either. He'd always shirk making a choice. One fine day, his Aunt Josephine said to him, "Now look here. No one will ever care for you if you carry on like this. You have no more mind of your own than a greasy old blade of grass." The young rat coughed and looked wise as usual, but said nothing. "Don't you think so?" said his aunt stamping her foot, for she couldn't bear to see the young rat so cold-blooded. "I don't know," was all he ever answered, and then he'd walk off to think for an hour or more, whether he should stay in his hole, in the ground, or go out into the loft. One night, the, uh, rats heard a loud noise in the loft. It was a very dreary old place. The roof let the rain come washing in, the beams and the rafters had all rotted through, so that the whole thing was quite unsafe. At last, one of the joists gave way, and the beams fell with one edge on the floor. The walls shook, the cupola fell off, and all the rats' hair stood on end with fear and horror. "This won't do," said their leader. "We can't stay cooped up here any longer." So, they sent out scouts to search for a new home. A little later on that evening, the scouts came back and said they had found an old-fashioned horse barn where there would be room and board for all of them. The leader gave the order once, "Company, fall in!" and the rats crawled out of their holes right away and stood on the floor in a long line. Just then the old rat caught sight of young Arthur— that was the name of the shirker. He wasn't in the line, and he wasn't exactly outside it. He stood just by it. "Come on, get in line," growled the old rat coarsely. "Of course, you're coming too." "I don't know," said Arthur calmly. "Why the idea of it. You don't think it's safe here anymore, do you?" "I'm not certain," said Arthur, undaunted. "The roof may not fall down yet." "Well," said the old rat, "we can't wait for you to join us." Then he turned to the others and shouted, "Right about face. March!" and then the long line marched out of the barn while the young rat watched them. "I think I'll go tomorrow," he said to himself. "But, then

again, perhaps I won't. It's so nice and snug here. I guess I'll go back to my hole under the log for a while just to make up my mind." But during the night, there was a big crash. Down came the beams, rafter, joists, the whole, joists, the whole business. Next morning—it was a foggy day—
195 some men came to look over the damage. It seemed odd to them that the old building was not haunted by rats. But, at last, one of them happened to move a board and he caught sight of a young rat, quite dead, half in, and half out of his hole. Thus the shirker got his due, and there was no mourning for him.