

Fieldwork Recordings—Dictionary of American Regional English
UW–Madison Digital Collections Center

**Transcript of DARE Interview (1967): Moscow, Idaho; Primary Informant ID005
(Tape 0383-S1)**

The DARE fieldwork recordings and transcripts have been released to support research, scholarly work, and other non-commercial usage. This transcript was created for and approved by the Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE) under a grant by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation to DARE and the Wisconsin Englishes Project. To contribute to the DARE project, please consider transcribing additional recordings in the collection and submitting them to DARE@english.wisc.edu.

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

5 FIELDWORKER: This is a recording of Lola [beep] made at Moscow, Idaho, on January sixteenth nineteen sixty-seven by [beep]. There we go. Well, where, where exactly was your father's homestead then?

INFORMANT: Well it was about six miles, it was at the foot of Paradise Mountain.

FIELDWORKER: Which is Paradise Mountain?

INFORMANT: This mountain right up here beside us, only he lived on the other side of Paradise Mountain from us.

10 FIELDWORKER: So you lived right on the other side of the mountain from your future husband?

INFORMANT: That's right! They say, uh, we, they say most girls find their husbands within six miles of where they live, and that's just the way it was with me. [laugh]

FIELDWORKER: Uh, well, could you describe some of the routines on the farm in the earlier days?

15 INFORMANT: Well, in the early days it was pretty rugged. We had no electricity, we had to bring water from a spring, and we did lots of canning of our own fruit, and milking cows, and hunted eggs, and, uh, raised most of our own food. And it was lots harder than it is nowadays. I always say the coming of the electricity brought a great change in the way of life to farmers. They used to say the farmers uh, the city people got their ice in the summer, and the farmers got all their ice in the winter time. But after we got electricity, you couldn't tell the children in the Moscow
20 schools, you couldn't tell the country children from the city children, they were all so clean and washed and scrubbed.

FIELDWORKER: [laugh] Well, uh, they were raising wheat right from the start in this {{xx}}, is that right?

25 INFORMANT: Yes,} yes. Wheat and in the real early days they used to raise flax. But it was kind of hard to do, so they quit raising flax. And in the old days they had to, they had to, the first crop raised here, they cut it with a scythe and a cradle and flailed it out. But it wasn't long until they had the old horse-power threshing machines, and that gave way to larger threshing machines and finally followed by the horse-drawn combines, then by the tractor-drawn combines and now by the self-propelled combines.

30 FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm. Well these, uh, this country all around here, when they first came into homestead it, what was it like? Was it {grassy?

INFORMANT: It was bunchgrass}, bunchgrass. And Governor Isaac Ingalls Stevens was the first white man to visit this country, and he came here on the longest day in June of eighteen fifty-five, and he wrote in his diary, "There I was astonished at the luxuriousness of the grass and the richness of the soil." And he wrote that so all men for all time could read about this very favored spot that he'd found.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm. So then your father had to come in and, and break up all that ground.

INFORMANT: That's right. My father, uh, came from a s-s-, from the eighteen eighty graduate class of the San Francisco Theological Seminary, and he established the first Presbyterian church here in Moscow. That was the third church in the little village of Moscow, and it was the second Presbyterian church to be founded in the state of Idaho. So it was very much the beginning of things.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm. And how did they market the wheat here in, in those days?

INFORMANT: Well, in the very early days, they sacked it, of course, and then they'd take it by the wagon team clear to Walla Walla to sell it. But as time went on, they, the mills, came to Moscow and they could have it ground here, and they could have it, then the railroad came in eighteen eighty-four and after that of course it was shipped to Portland to the big milling sections.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm. So the railroad was here that early {that (xx).

INFORMANT: Mm-hmm}. Yes, eighteen eighty-four.

50 FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm. And how about the university, now, it hasn't been, it isn't much older than that, or {(xx)

INFORMANT: No, that's right}, no, the university was, uh, was established at, about eighteen ninety. And that's when Idaho became a state.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

55 INFORMANT: Before that we'd been a territory, but it was chartered, uh, in eighteen, in eighteen ninety. Although it was about eighteen ninety-five before they really got, uh, s-, uh, a building erected and so on. The first president was real funny, he always said, "I had the best job in the,

in the world," he said, "I was president of a University, and I had no buildings, no teachers, no pupils, and best of all, no alumni."

60 FIELDWORKER: [laugh]

INFORMANT: [laugh] {So—

FIELDWORKER: When,} hat years did you attend school?

INFORMANT: I attended the university in, uh, in twenty-six, and, in twenty-four and twenty-five and twenty-six. I went to summer schools, and then I went the entire year of uh, of uh, twenty-
65 five and twenty-six and graduated. And then I did, I did some advanced work on my master's degree, but I got married, and, uh, took a good old MRS degree instead of a MA degree.

FIELDWORKER: Well, how, how large was the university back then?

INFORMANT: Well, we must have had about eighteen hundred, or eight-, yes, eighteen hundred students, but I can remember when we had four hundred students and that we thought, when I
70 was in high school, it, there were four hundred students, and we thought that was quite a big enrollment. Of course now it's nearer to six thousand. And we're real proud of our university, it's a thing that makes our town something more than just a little wheat-raising country town.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: It brings more, it brings new view point into the community for us.

75 FIELDWORKER: Would you like to read now?

INFORMANT: Yes, I'll be glad to read the story of, of Arthur the Rat. Once upon a time there was a young rat who couldn't make up his mind. Whenever the other rats asked 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
80 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!" And the young a-, rat coughed and looked wise, as usual, but said nothing. "Don't you think so?" said his aunt stamping with 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 run off to think for an hour or
85 more, whether he should stay in his hole in the ground or go out into the loft. One night the 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, and the cupola fell off, and all the rats' hair stood on end with fear and horror. "This won't do,"
90 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 at once, "Company fall in!" and the rats crawled out of their holes right away and stood

95 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 either—he just stood 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
100 rat, "we can't wait for you to join us." Then he turned to the others and shouted, "Right about
face! March!" and 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 beams, rafters, joists—the whole business. Next
105 morning—it was a foggy day—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. That's kinda cute! But the, they use some
unusual words there when they said that the, the old rat called out "coarsely," and, that Arthur
talked in a hoarse voice, that's kind of unusual.

110 FIELDWORKER: Well, they wanna get you to make those sounds, you see.

INFORMANT: Oh yes, uh-huh. [laugh]

FIELDWORKER: Uhm, can you think of anything you, you think you should tell me about this
region, or—

115 INFORMANT: Well, it's not a question of getting me to talk about this region, it's getting me to
stop talking about this region. [laugh] About how long do you want this?

FIELDWORKER: Oh, we need a few more minutes yet (xx), five, ten minutes.

120 INFORMANT: Uh-huh. Well, I, I tell the newcomers to this county that Latah county should be
the best educated place in the world, because not only do we have the University of Idaho, but
in this county we have Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Cornell, Purdue, Vassar, and Wellesley, these are
all little, uh, wayside stations along the Oregon, Washington, Montana line that runs up to our
town of, uh, Elk River. They were named by the young engineers, uh, the, who built the line, uh,
in honor of the schools where they had graduated, and of course Wellesley and Vassar were
named for their girlfriends that attended there. Then the, the, uh, town of Bovill, where this
telephone, where this uh, railroad line runs, was named for, uh, uh for Sir Hugh Bovill and his
125 wife, and he was the thirteenth son of Lord and Lady, uh, William Bolton Bovill of England. And
they were titled people, and they came here, and, uh, they loved the beautiful Warren Meadows,
and they bought this uh, this land, and ran cattle there, and the story is that Mrs. uh, Mrs. Bovill
had uh, traveled greatly on the continent, and she, so she put lovely little silver bells around the
necks of her cattle and she had them all tuned so they would ring in chimes like they do in
130 Switzerland. And you can be sure the cattlemen up in that vicinity took a pretty dim view of this
going on. The little town of Deary next to it was named for William Deary who was an early day,

who was an early day timber cruiser for Potlatch Forests. And Troy, the next town, was named for, first for J.P. Vollmer, who was the banker there. He named it most modestly for himself, but uh, was settled by the Scandinavians and Vollmer was hard for them to say, they called it "Walmer." So, uh, they said, let's just name this something we can pronounce, so they changed the name to Troy. Uh Kendrick was named modestly by uh, by Mr. William Kendrick, who was superintendent of the railroad that went through there, but the boys that had been a-working on that railroad, they had some other ideas, they said, "Well, we'll establish a town of our own, just a few miles down below it, and we'll name it for those two good-looking girls who, of the Schneiders, we boarded in their good boarding house and we'll just name the town Juliaetta," because the oldest was Julia and the best looking one was named Etta. So we had the town of Juliaetta. And Genesee to our south was named by Martin (Kenbich) and, uh, Tom (Turney), and the story is that when they rode their horses through the lovely bunchgrass and this was so tall it swept the saddle stirrups. They cried out, "Oh, isn't this beautiful, it's just like it was in the beginning. We'll call it 'Genesis.'" But a little later a man named Stone came to the valley and they raised such big potatoes, he said, "Oh these big potatoes just remind me of the potatoes we used to raise back in the beautiful Genesee Valley of New York State, so we'll change the name to 'Genesee.'" And our own town of Moscow, uh, has an interesting history, Taxt-hinma the Indians called it, meaning "place of the little spotted deer." And, it was a camas digging grounds of the Nez Perce tribe. And, they would dig enough, they could dig enough camas in a couple of days to last them all winter. And, the, when the settlers came to Moscow, they noticed that their pigs, like the Nez Perce's got real fat digging the camas. So they said, "Why this place is a regular hog heaven." So Hog Heaven it became, but when the settlers' wives came, they didn't think this was a very good address, it wasn't, you know, a place that you could write home about. So they said, "Oh, let's change the name and call it, uh, Paradise Valley." So Paradise Valley it was called in the early days. The first post office was called Paradise Valley, but, uh, we have searched the record and we could find no Russians ever came here, so how did it get the name of Moscow? Finally, we wrote to the man who was postmaster when it was changed, and he said, well, when they moved it to, when they moved it, uh, they, he had lived within twe-, he'd lived in a Paradise Valley in Pennsylvania in a little town called Moscow. Well he left Pennsylvania, he went to Iowa, and he lived there within fifteen miles of a little town called Moscow, so he had named it himself Moscow in honor of his little home towns.

FIELDWORKER: Hm.

INFORMANT: Uh, is that interesting?

165 FIELDWORKER: So it wasn't even named after the Moscow in Russia, it was—

INFORMANT: Well}—

FIELDWORKER: No} Russians here (or anything).

INFORMANT: There were no Russians here, but I think maybe the Moscow, Russia influenced the naming of the Moscow, Pennsylvania, and the Moscow, Iowa, because the eighteen, the

170 eighteen hundreds, uh, saw Napoleons great retreat from Moscow, and there was, Moscow was very much in the news. And I suppose those other towns were named after, M-Moscow, Russia. So, indirectly, uh, our town probably got its name that way.

FIELDWORKER: Hm.

INFORMANT: Uh-hum.

175 FIELDWORKER: (Now) I always thought it was because it was an old Russian store keeper down here or something (xx).

INFORMANT: Well, the, uh, chamber of commerce don't like me to tell this story, but it was said that when they called it Paradise Valley, some of the men said, "Well, it's as hot as hell in the summer and cold as hell in the winter time, so let's, uh, uh, this, this isn't paradise, this is more like Russia." And someone said, "Well, then the name should be Moscow." But, I think that's just a joke, don't you?

180

FIELDWORKER: [Laugh] I don't know. [laugh]

INFORMANT: [Laugh]