

Reminiscence of Mrs. O.C. Bell From 1938 Interview

Sept. 27, 1938 Interview	Original typed form	2
Transcript		6

Lincoln, NE. From American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940.

Sept. 27, 1938

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FORM A

Circumstances of InterviewNAME OF WORKER Cecile Larson ADDRESS 430 So. 17thDATE Sept 27, 1938 Subject Folklore

1. Name and address of informant. Mrs. O.C. Bell--931 D.
2. Date and time of interview. Sept. 27, 1938--9 til 12.
3. Place of interview. 931 D.
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
Miss Julia Young, 1719 L Street.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you. None
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Large house, filled with
lovely furniture the old, antiques, beautiful pictures, ancient pic-
tures, hand drawn pictures, what nots, electric lamps etc. Neat yard.

Courtesy Federal Writers' Project

Sept. 27, 1938

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FORM B

Personal History of InformantNAME OF WORKER Cecile Larson ADDRESS 430 So. 17DATE Sept. 27, 1938 SUBJECT FolkloreNAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. O. C. Bell, 931 D. St. Lincoln.

1. Ancestry
2. Place and date of birth. New York State, Oct. 25, 1854.
3. Family. Maiden name Polley
4. Place lived in, with dates. Chagrin Falls Ohio from 3 years until coming to Nebr. in 1774.
5. Education, with dates. High school in Ohio and a short time in Lincoln.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates. Married in 1774. Did drawing--crayon pictures.
7. Special skills and interests. Fancy work--crocheting--quilt making
8. Community and religious activities. Active in First Christian Church most of her life.
9. Description of informant. Very nice looking, energetic with full use of all faculties, sight, hearing, mind and has all of her own teeth yet at 84.

Courtesy Federal Writers' Project

Sept. 27, 1938

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FORM C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF DONOR Cecile Larson ADDRESS 430 So. 17
 DATE Sept. 27, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore
 NAME AND ADDRESS Mrs. C. J. Bell 931 D

My father was in the dry goods business for 20 years in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. He became ill and came to Lincoln to visit his sister and benefit his health. He became impressed with the country and came back to Ohio, sold out and came back here and bo't land where Raymond now is. He felt that he was moving us to a wilderness and began buying the things we tho't we couldn't get in Nebr. Father told us that we could buy anything we needed in Lincoln and it wasn't very bad for the size of it. That fall corn was so cheap that people decided to use it for fuel and it was bro't to Lincoln and placed in open bins on 6 st. After my marriage I lived at 12th & M. There were board side walks but the rats became so thick on account of the corn that I was afraid to leave the house at night--you had to kick them out of your way. My husband was a Grand Army man enlisted at 16--had to lie about his age--then when he got the pension had to prove his age. Still we plowed and sowed and planted, tried to do our level best, 'gainst hot winds cyclones and hailstorms and every other dog gone pest. Year by year we toiled and labored, til we'd almost broke our backs "Half a crop" or "total failure, scarce enough to pay the tax.

So we're going back to "Homeland and we're going back to stay,
 where they always have a plenty, wheat and corn and oats and hay,
 upon loads of fruit and "tators" all you wish on every hand
 So we thank you now most kindly, we want no more Nebraska land.

Courtesy Federal Writers' Project

Sept. 27, 1938

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The Homesteaders Lament

Sung to the tune of "Is not this the land of Beulah. By S.S. Warren

Song given to me by Mrs. O.J. Bell.

When we left our home back yonder we had all that mortal needs
Horses, cows and tools abundant, household goods and gardens seeds,
Covered Wagon full to bursting, Bob and Betty full of glee,
Going West to take a homestead, happy kiddies, Kate and me.

Soon we landed in Nebraska where they had much land to spare,
But most ever since we've been here, we've been mad enough to swear,
First we built for us a "sod house" and we tried to raise some trees,
But the land was full of "Coyotes and our sod house full of fleas.

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Courtesy Federal Writers' Project

FORM A
Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Cecile Larson ADDRESS 430 So. 17th
DATE Sept 27, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant. Mrs. O.C. Bell — 931 D. [Lincoln, NE]
2. Date and time of interview. Sept. 27, 1938 — 9 til 12.
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5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you. None
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Large house, filled with lovely furniture tho old, antiques, beautiful pictures, ancient pictures, hand drawn pictures, what nots, electric lamps etc. Neat yard.

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 NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. O. C. Bell, 931 D..

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"After my marriage I lived at 12th [M?]. There were board side walks but the rats became so thick on account of the corn that I was afraid to leave the house at night — you had to kick them out of your way. My husband was a Grand Army man enlisted at 16 — had to lie about his age — then when he got the pension had to prove his age.

[The following are songs related by Mrs. Bell to the interviewer:]

"Still we plowed and sowed and planted, tried to do our level best,
 'Gainst hot winds cyclones and hailstorms and every other dog gone pest.
 Year by year we toiled and labored, til we'd almost broke our backs
 'Half a crop' or 'total failure, scarce enough to pay the tax.'

"So we're going back to 'Homeland' and we're going back to stay,
 Where they always have a plenty, wheat and corn and oats and hay.
 Wagon loads of fruit and 'Tators' all you wish on every hand
 So we thank you now most kindly, we want no more Nebraska land."

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"The Homesteaders Lament"

*Sung to the tune of "Is not this the land of Beulah." By S. S. [Warren?]
 Song given to me by Mrs. O. C. Bell.*

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 Going West to take a homestead, happy kiddies, Kate and me.

"Soon we landed in Nebraska where they had much land to spare,
 But most ever since we've been here, we've been mad enough to swear,
 First we built for as a 'sod house' and we tried to raise some trees,
 But the land was full of Coyotes and our sod house full of fleas."