

SOUTH DAKOTA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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Name of informant Judd, Steven and Sharon (brother and sister)

Address 2510 Janet, Rapid City, South Dakota

Date of Interview June 28, 1972

Name of Researcher O. A. Rothlisberger

Others Present _____

Location of Interview _____

Added Notes The informants and their parents were in their house when it was destroyed by flood.

Subject Headings under which you feel this interview should be filed:

Rapid City flood victims.

Demographic Information on Informant

Age Steven, 20 Sex Male , Female County Pennington
Sharon, 19

Socio-economic status Middle

Occupation _____

Education _____

Religion _____

Date of Arrival of Family in South Dakota _____

Where? _____

From where? _____

Number of Moves in South Dakota _____ Reasons for moves: _____

- Q. I'm talking this afternoon to Mr. Steven Judd and Miss Sharon Judd, that's brother-sister, right? Now, Stever or Sharon, right, Sharon? You were both home at the time of the flood, and that was the evening of June 9th, right, that Friday evening? And your residence, then, you were living with your parents, I suppose?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Okay, was 2510 Janet Street, Rapid City, South Dakota, right? Well, what can you tell us about that? Steven, what time of, what time of the evening did, or either one of you, what time of the evening did you first become aware that a, a crisis situation was perhaps developing, that serious flooding was, was probable. It had been raining for sometime, had it not?
- A. It's rained like that before, so. . .really, there wasn't that big of a, an emergency situation, but they were commenting on it that it was pretty bad in the Hills and that you should beware if you're near the creek to keep an eye out. So we were doing, it was lightning and stuff and we turned our TV off so _____ if the lightning happened to strike near or something.
- Q. Now, Janet Street, that is on, is that on Rapid Creek?
- A. It's about. . . .
- A₂ No, it's about a block and a half from Rapid Creek.
- Q. A block and a half, but it's down in that valley. . . .
- A₂ It's in a low area.
- Q. I see. Well then, when did the, when did the creek start to rise, what caused you to notice this, Sharon?
- A₂ Well, my mother was downstairs ironing in the basement and the water started coming in under the walls, and then she was going to try to get the drains

opened up 'cause she thought they _____ with those covers on, so she was gonna open those and then a big wall of water took off the basement door.

Q. I see. I see. Where were you at that time, Steve?

A. I was upstairs.

Q. You were upstairs. And you were immediately made aware of this, I suppose, your mother alerted you, or something, was your father home?

A₂ Yes.

Q. I see, the whole family was there then, right? How many of you are there in the family?

A. Four.

Q. _____ I see, brother, sister, mother, father, right, no other children. I see. Well, then the basement filled with water, and then I suppose the first story.

A. Yes, it just all happened so fast. Once the basement got it, that was where it all started.

Q. Well, then, I suppose you become alarmed, become frightened. . . ?

A₂ Well, right after the wall of water broke the basement door, I was in my room getting my jeans, and another house came down the street and hit ours and took off the side. So it took off both the hinges off the, off his bedroom and my bedroom.

Q. And you were in your room at the time.

A₂ Well, just, I just got out of there.

Q. I see, I see. But it carried your room away, right? Well, then what did you do, the four of your?

A₂ Well _____ house came across the street and knocked a corner of the bedroom

out, we all went in Mom and Dad's room. And Kenny, Dad, put that rocking chair up against the door in their room. I sat against it, which kept the water from coming in that room. And then what it did, we found out later.

Q. And did the four of you stay there in that room throughout the night. . . ?

A₂ Yes.

A. Yes.

Q. Now, you had no electricity, you lost your power, about. . . .

A₂ It was about 11:20.

Q. Eleven-twenty this was, and the wall of water, that occurred about when? A little before that?

A. They said the dam broke around 11.

A₂ Yeah.

A. _____ or so.

Q. _____, then. So you, you had to, you were there in that room all night, in pitch dark, I suppose, and you could hear this noise.

A₂ Yeah, and you could feel, we have a deep freeze and stuff in the basement and you could feel that bobbing up against. . . .

A. . . . floor.

Q. Did you hear people screaming outside in the street. . . ?

A₂ Yeah, could hear. . . .

A. We saw a flashlight go down the creek, I don't know whether somebody was holding on to it or whether, what happened.

Q. I see. Well, now what, what, this must have been quite an experience to sit there in that room all night without moving around, and was the house struck by any other houses or automobiles?

A. Just automobiles.

A₂ (Unintelligible.)

Q. Just the one, the one collision there, then. What did you do to keep your spirits up? You must have been pretty frightened.

A₂ Well, I was holding onto the window so if the house went I'd have something to hang on to. (Laughter.)

Q. Steve, what were you doing?

A. Dad was sitting up against the door in his rocking chair, he was picking up things and saying, "Well, it used to be my slippers, and. . . ." He took it all pretty good.

Q. I don't suppose there was much else to do. You couldn't. . . .

A. What could you do?

Q. Did you, did you think about or toy with the idea of trying to get away, as it was water all around then. . . ?

A. No, that was, we all. . . .

A₂ There wasn't anyway we could have gotten out.

A. Outside it must have been what; four feet deep, five feet deep?

A₂ _____ worse than that.

Q. Now, were you on a two story house?

A. Just a split level.

A₂ Just a split level.

Q. I see, and the bedroom was up. . . .

A. Upstairs.

Q. I see, I see. And the downstairs was. . . .

A₂ Yeah, (Dad took out a wall downstairs).

A. _____ room.

Q. Well, when, you stayed there all night then, and how did you leave the place in the morning?

A₂ Well, my dad and I were standing out on the step and some Air Force guys yelled across and asked if we wanted to get out and we said, "Yes." So they came and they took our garden hose and strung it across the street and they all spread out, and we walked across that.

Q. I see. You walked across hanging onto. . . .

A₂ Yeah, hanging on.

Q. I see. The waters had receded now.

A. Yeah.

A₂ Yeah, it was only about four feet deep now. But like the houses on the other side of the street, one didn't have anything wrong with it and the other just got water.

A. Yeah, it was really peculiar. One house came off the foundation, which is the one that hit our house. And that was about a half a block away on the other side of the street from us. It came down, down the street, hit our house and went all the way down a block and a half and lodged in the middle of two streets way down the block.

Q. What about your automobiles? Do you have an automobile, Steve?

A. It went about 11:30.

A₂ Well, when I got out of bed, they weren't there, so I don't know.

Q. I see, I see. They, they were destroyed?

A. They just took off.

Q. The Air force then, in the morning, rescue party _____ and, and where'd

you then?

A₂ Well, there's a little store, it's the Circle S Market, it's open from 7 to 11, we went up there, it's up on Jackson Boulevard.

Q. I see, I see. And you went there until you could relocate, and now you, you're staying here at. . . .

A. (Unintelligible.)

Q. These are both the family businesses, here, the station on the corner, Mobil Station?

A. It used to be.

Q. And it was, was it destroyed, I guess it's not. . . .

A₂ There's nothing left.

Q. And this also, the tire. . . .

A. There was a lot of water and mud about this deep in this building, and then a lot of tires went down, flowed down. And the electric motors, or whatever was sitting on the floor got all _____ up.

Q. Yeah, sure. Well, either one of you have anything else to, these are a couple of young people I'm talking to here tonight, they have a band concert to attend, I said I'd be finished in time for them to get there. Steve, do you have anything else you'd, anything else you remember you'd like to get on this now before we, before you have to make that band concert.

A. No, not right off hand, it was just something that happened and you just have to rebuild.

Q. Now, there were casualties out in that area, your friends, neighbors. . . .

A. There was, well, just a little farther up the creek was one of the hardest hit areas. Right below the dam.

Q. How far, how far was your place from the dam?

A. Well, it's what, a mile. . . .

A₂ Mile, mile and a half.

A. About a mile, I would say.

Q. (Unintelligible.)

A. And there was a lot of residents up there that we knew.

Q. Sharon, do you have anything else that, the, now you're speaking for posterity now, this oral history. Anything else? Well, if not, thank you folks, for this interesting and informative tape.