

SOUTH DAKOTA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Library Cataloguing Service Data

Name of Informant Mrs. ^{Watterson} Virgil Schoenhard

Address Unadell Drive, Rapid City, South Dakota

Date of Interview June 28, 1972

Name of Researcher J. Watterson

Others Present Mr. Virgil Schoenhard

Location of Interview Unadell Drive

Added Notes _____

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

Demographic Information on Informant

Age 58 Sex Female County Pennington

Socio-economic status _____

Occupation _____

Education _____

Religion _____

Date of Arrival of Family in South Dakota _____

Where? _____

From where? _____

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

- Q. This is John Watterson and I'm talking with Mr. and Mrs.--it's Virgil isn't it?--Schoenhard. Schoenhard, is that how you pronounce it? We're at, on Unadell Drive and the Schoenhard's lived formerly in the Braeburn Addition which is in the southeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section 8, township 1 north, range 7 east. Now let me just. . .and why don't well, we can just put the. . .there, and you can talk, just informally, just as if we were, just as we were conversing before. Maybe you should start by describing where you were as you did to me a moment ago the evening of the flood and then go into what happened to your house and your neighbors and so on.
- A. Well, I was at _____ doings at (Pretty Pane) party house and my wife was at the, this address right here to a birthday party, so we were both gone that evening, and it was too late to get to ur home before they, the storm hit, the floods started coming. So, luckily we weren't home.
- Q. Right. Would you describe a little bit of what happened to the Braeburn Addition, to your home and so on?
- A. Well, our home was taken off the foundation and moved about 70 feet, and most everything in the home was, was gone. . .washed away, we saved very little of it. And some, one of my neighbors homes was completely off the foundation, a pile of kindling down someplace, I mean they, luckily, some of them weren't home. Our close neighbors, although they had two boys home, the other neighbors were gone for the weekend and he come out and got his two boys out and just barely made it out with his life to get these two boys out of there.
- Q. What were their names? The family's name.
- A₂ Stan Bise.
- A. Stan Bise _____, has Bise drilling company.

Q. Mm-hm. And you say that something like 30 out of roughly 50 people that lived in the Braeburn Addition. . . .

A. Well, there probably more than fifty, but there wasn't too many homes and that many drownings, out of that many homes, I mean, it was terrific, they. . . and one of our neighbors, Meade Corwin, he lost his wife, his mother-in-law, and his daughter, he chopped a hole in the roof of his house and put them up there and he rode the creek all the way down over Canyon Lake and _____ got into debris several times, thought he was gonna be gone, but he's, he's quite an old man, but he'd lived on a river, and he knew how to take care of himself. And he got down in Canyon Lake Park and hung onto a tree with water up to there till the water went down. And finally from tree to tree he got up on Jackson Boulevard and got out.

Q. That's remarkable. What was his name?

A. Meade Corwin.

Q. Meade Corwin.

A. Yeah. Very good friend's of ours too.

Q. And, let's see, what was the extent of the damage to your house in terms, are you going back to your house?

A. No. . . .

A₂ (Unintelligible.)

A. Our house was condemned and to be demolished. It's all demolished and hauled away now. There's nothing left there at all but the foundation. Yeah.

Q. You were commenting before I cut you off on something about the channel of the river, the creek. . . .

A₂ Yes, I think that, as it came around the corner _____ on the highway that the

channel changed, instead of going down on the creekbed, it came right down through the middle. Which may be an old creekbed there, for all I know.

Q. Where the homes were located?

A₂ Where the homes were, where the new homes were built. And I thing there is seven home to east of us that are completely off the foundation and there is nothing left except you could see where they are. And most of these people, I believe it's five families, are gone. To the east of us.

Q. Did you ever anticipate anything, I know you probably built you house out there, or did you buy out there?

A. I, I built that in 1960. And they never, never had a flood that, you know, that, everytime _____ that area out there. Further downtown where the creek levels out, they have had flood _____ down there, but never out there.

Q. Yeah. So there really wasn't much reason for you to anticipate any flooding such as this.

A₂ Oh, no.

A. No, no.

A₂ No, we didn't anticipate this. Well, it is so unusual to have 14 inches of rain, this is. . .there was one unusual occurence, our neighbors to the left, I told you, were swept off, their houses were. Well one of the neighbors to the right of us came back, I understand to get his family, I know he has some little girls. Our granddaughter played with them. And he couldn't evidently get the car out to get them out. And he took and tied stripped up sheets and tied his little girls to a mattress. And they floated. The mattress was floating in the flood. And this was quite, quite something.

Q. Yes, it was very. . . .

A₂ Their house has been bulldozed down since it was so bad.

A. Uh-huh. That's, that's really amazing. Let's see, is there, can't think of anything off hand. Do you have any other impressions of the flood or any kind of evaluation of what happened that particular night over all _____ residents of Rapid City in this area?

A₂ It was one of the beautifullest spots in Rapid at one time. Everyone said that is was. . . .

Q. You don't think they'll ever build along that area again?

A₂ I hope they don't.

Q. Yeah. Yeah.

A₂ I don't think it's, it's almost impossible. They say that up the canyon further from where we lived, up Dark Canyon, that, from the top of where the water was clear down to the bottom is sixty feet, some place. It's just gouged out so and there's never been any roads, it doesn't look like. It's such a force.

A. I could probably tell you a lot of other experiences of people I know, it's so many of them, I couldn't name them all.

A₂ It's different things that people did and how they hung in trees that night and hung on to their kids, and then some of them had to let go, and. . . .

Q. Well. . . .

(End of Interview.)

JW This is John Watterson and I'm talking with Mr. and Mrs. ~~it's~~ Virgil isn't it?—Schoenhard, Schoenhard, is that how you pronounce it? We're at , on Unadell Drive and the Schoenhard's lived formerly in the Braeburn Addition which is in the southeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section 8, township 1 north, range 7 east. Now let me just...and why don't well, we can just put the..there,and you can just ~~talk~~ talk, just informally, just as if we were, just as we were conversing before. Maybe you should start by describing where you were as you did to me a moment ago the evening of the flood and then go into what happened to your house and your neighbors and so on.

VS Well, I was at _____ doings at (Pretty Pane) party house and my wife was at the, this address right here to a birthday party, so we were both gone that evening, and it was too late to get to our home before they, the storm hit, the floods started coming. So, luckily we weren't home.

JW Right. Would you describe a little bit of what happned to the Braeburn Addition, to your home and so on?

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JW What were their names? The family's name.

AZ XEMS Stan Bise.

VS Stan Bise , has Bise drilling company.

JW Mm-hm. And you say that something like 20 ~~of~~ out of roughly fifty people that lived in the Braeburn Addition _____.

VS Well, there probably more than fifty, but there wasn't too many homes and that many drownings, out of that many homes, I mean, it was terrific, they.. and one of our neighbors, Meade Corwin, he lost his wife , his mother-in-law and his daughter, he chopped a hole in the roof of his house and put them up there and he rode the creek

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JW Meade Corwin.

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VS No..

RZ MS (INAUDIBLE)

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JW You were commenting before I cut you off on something about the channel of the river, the creek..

MS Yes, I think that, as it came around the corner on the highway that the channel changed, instead of going down on the ~~creek~~ creekbed, it came right down through the middle. Which may be an old creek bed there, for all I know.

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JW Yeah. So there really wasn't much reason #for you to anticipate any flooding such as this.

MS Oh, no.

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JW WELL... (end of interview)