

McKinley, A. R.

Early Settlers' Personal History Questionnaire, WPA
Interviewed by Arthur R. Hill Hempstead County, Ark. [1941]

Transcribed by Andrea E. Cantrell, University of Arkansas Libraries, 2003. [See transcriber's notes](#)

1. Early settler's name
A. R. McKinley "Colored"
2. Address
229 W 8th St Hope Ark
3. Present occupation (most of the old timers are now retired).
Grocery man
4. Previous occupation or occupations.
General Merchandise
5. Date of birth.
March 8, 1873
6. Place of birth.
Lewisville Ark
7. Married? To whom? When? Where?
Laura Lawdermilk
8. If an immigrant give particulars. City and country of derivation, name of ship on which arrived, etc.
Native of Arkansas
9. How long has the individual resided in Arkansas?
All my life
10. If not a native tell of the voyage to Arkansas. Boat? Wagon train? etc.
Born in Ark
11. Why did the individual come to Arkansas?
Reared in Ark
12. Get details of construction of early homes. (In the southern and southeastern parts of the state chimneys were frequently built of clay and split wood or trimmed branches due to the scarcity of stone and the lack of brick kilns. Some of the more pretentious houses were built with brick imported up the rivers. In the northwestern part of the state stone houses occurred much more frequently. Pay particular attention to these and similar regional differences.)
Log cabins, dirt floors, square clay and stick chimney
13. What form of lighting was used in the early days? Pine knots? Tallow dips? Candles poured at home? Oil or fat lamps? etc.
Tallow candles and pine knots. Some oil lamps.
14. When were electric lights first used in your community?
1895 Hope Ark
15. What kind of fuel was used? (This was wood in most parts of the state, of course, because it was plentiful and convenient, but in some of the western counties coal may have appeared early.)
Wood and pine knots
16. What kinds of food did the early settlers have? Were fish and game depended upon for

- the meat supply? Was game plentiful? What kinds?
Hog meat, farm products, [?] eggs, fish, and wild game.
17. What kinds of clothes were worn and how manufactured?
Jeans clothes, hickory shirts, and home spun dresses, knit socks.
18. Were there any interesting customs or incidents connected with early courtships? Was bundling ever practiced? (It is highly improbable but possible.) Were charivaries (usually pronounced 'shivaree' in Arkansas and the lower Mississippi Valley territory) frequent?
Met at Camp Meeting place, churches and schools.
19. Compare some early food, clothing, etc. prices with those of today. (Since staples were usually bought in barrels, hogsheads, bushels, and similar large units, present prices will have to be quoted on the same basis.)
Flour barrel[sic] \$4.50 other products cheap.
20. What were some of the incidents pertaining to the sharing of food and other supplies in times of common need?
No famine in my younger days recalled.
21. What were some early cultivated crops? Domesticated animals? (For instance, when did tomatoes cease to be known as 'Love Apples,' regarded as poisonous? When moved from the flower garden to the vegetable garden?)
Cotton, corn, wheat, oats, sarghum[sic], small tomatoes grew wild and used extensively.
22. What were early farm implements? Any homemade? If purchased, where? Prices?
Wooden Ga stocks[?], bull tongues and sweeps, also twister shovels[?]
23. What were early industries in the community?
Saw mills, gins, grist mills, planers[?] and iron foundry.
24. What were some native wild plants used as food or for flower gardens? (For example: mullein, sassafras roots, sweet gum resin, sun-flower seed, paw-paws, sumac berries, poke salad-- or salet, or salud. There are stories told of various food substitutes used during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. These might supply interesting sidelight.)
Poke salad, wild greens called cabbage, wild onions.
25. Relate interesting incidents of the early days. Tell of childhood impressions and memories. Tell of group activities such as house raisings and warmings, quilting bees, corn huskings, brush arbor meetings, dances, games, socials, hunts and game drives, hog killing, sorghum making, play parties, and the like. Compare early farm and town life with that of today. Tell any experiences relating to the Indians, their customs and habits.
Log rolling, quilting bees, corn huskings, and help one another farm.
26. Tell of early methods of combating forest fires, town or building fires.
No method of handling forest fires.
27. Get origin of place and thing names such as hills, valleys, rivers, soughs, bayous, plants, animals, etc.
Red River, Clear Lake, Beards Lake, Steamboat "Belle Cook"[?] on Red River.
28. Tell of early taverns, hotels, boarding houses, stagecoach stations, boat landings, etc.
No Taverns known of in my young days.
29. Tell of early schools
Frame buildings near Hope Ark. My first teacher was a white man Mr. Lane 1881 while Ja. Garfield was president.
30. Tell of early schools.

- Late schools in Hope Ark.
31. Name of teacher?
Prof. Lane, teacher
32. How were funds provided? Tuition? How much? Was payment made in kind?
Public subscriptions for funds
33. School books used? Title? Author? (Many of the old plantations maintained tutors either for individual families or groups of families. Sometimes 'school' was conducted on the premises for darkies'[sic] youngsters. Check on such information.)
Blueback Speller, McGuffey Reader
34. What constituted the reading matter of the early settlers? Books? Magazines?
Newspapers? Get titles and authors.
Newspaper – Hope Gazette, Hope, Ark.
35. Where was the first telegraph station in the community? When established?
M. & P. Railway – 1874
36. Tell of the early "Horse cars." When were trolley cars substituted? When buses?
No horse cars here
37. When and where was the first automobile seen?
Texarkana – 1905
38. When and where was the first train seen?
1876
39. When and where was the first airplane seen?
1918
40. When did automotive busses begin interurban operation? (Give descriptions on the five foregoing.)
Don't know
41. Early theatrical performances? Local people? Traveling stock companies?
Minstrels & stock company's[sic] 1895-1896
42. Tell of any important local celebration in memory of any individual or event.
Cleveland's Election 1885, when he defeated James G. Blaine
43. Does the individual recall any early historical character such as Sam Houston, Co. James Bowie, former President Zachery Taylor, the James boys, etc.?
Remember & [worked?] for Frank James, Ft. Worth Texas Cattleman
44. Tell of any duels. Where were they fought? By whom? Why?
none
45. Tell of any feuds. Who was involved? Where? Why?
none
46. Tell of any early tombstone inscriptions. Where?
none
47. Tell of any bank robberies, stage holdups, executions of horse thieves or other impromptu executions, including lynchings. Give details.
Remember when Cotton Belt train robbed, Texarka, Ark – 1893
48. Tell of Civil War days, giving the fullest detail possible.
nothing
49. Tell of any battles, skirmishes, forays, etc., witnessed.
none
50. Tell of Reconstruction, the Carpetbaggers, scalawags, etc.
none
51. Get all information possible regarding the original Ku Klux Klan or similar organizations.

- none
52. Tell of any participation in the establishment of any religious or fraternal organizations.
Helped organize African Methodist Church – 1884, Hope, Ark.
53. Tell of any military affiliations.
none
54. Tell of any Indian mounds, cliff dwellings, caves, etc., that may be recalled. Get as accurate information as possible regarding artifacts, particularly such things as calendar stones, mortars, pottery, baskets, etc.
none
55. Tell of any other historic sites.
Old State Capitol, Washington, Ark.
56. What is total number of descendants?
3 children
57. What are names and addresses of sons and daughters?
John Bell & Jack McKinley
58. Name some of the grandchildren and greatgrandchildren, if any.
Hazel Adams – Indianapolis, Ind.
59. Tell of any books, diaries, journals, sketches, or newspaper articles the individual has written. Give details.
none

The above questionnaire is intended solely as a skeleton outline to assist the interviewer in giving his subject leads. It is improbable that any one individual can answer all the questions fully but it is advisable to ask them all anyway. Record the answers on plain paper numbering the answers to correspond with the above questions, if possible.

AT THE TOP OF THE PAPER ON WHICH YOU RECORD THE ANSWERS BE CERTAIN TO PUT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, DATE AND REFER TO ARKANSAS HRS FORM J.

Do not limit yourself to the above questions. If the subject goes off on any tangent follow it to see if it is of historical interest. Remember to get Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why on every possible question. As regards matters of location, such as Indian sites, early buildings, tombstones, etc., be as definite and detailed as possible. Give pertinent data i.e., whether or not buildings are now occupied and if so by what or whom, and in either case, in what state of preservation and repair.