

William Smith

Arkansas HRS Form J

Early Settlers' Personal History Questionnaire, WPA
Interviewed by Arthur R. Hill Hempstead County, Ark. April 7, 1941.

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

1. Early settler's name
William Smith, Colored.
2. Address
R F D #1. Hope, Arkansas.
3. Present occupation (most of the old timers are now retired).
Retired Farmer.
4. Previous occupation or occupations.
Farmer.
5. Date of birth.
June 10, 1857.
6. Place of birth.
Ozan, Arkansas.
7. Married? To whom? When? Where?
Nancy Jane Hawkins.
8. If an immigrant give particulars. City and country of derivation, name of ship on which arrived, etc.
Born in Arkansas, Hempstead County
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.
Native Citizen.
11. Why did the individual come to Arkansas?
Born here.
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 Houses, Brush Houses, Split Board Roof and Dirt 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.
Pine knots and Tallow Candles.
14. When were electric lights first used in your community?
Hope, Arkansas, 1895.
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 Kindling.
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, Deer, Turkey, Squirrel[sic] and Fish.
 17. What kinds of clothes were worn and how manufactured?
Jeans clothes and Home made Woolen clothes.
 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?
Came to Girls House and mt[met?] at Churches and Camp Meetings.
 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, \$6.00 per Barrell[sic], 1869.
 20. What were some of the incidents pertaining to the sharing of food and other supplies in times of common need?
Shared food after War, in common, 1966.
 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?)
Corn, Cotton, Oats, Wheat, Rye, Sarham[sic] and collards.
 22. What were early farm implements? Any homemade? If purchased, where? Prices?
Bull Tongue, Solid Sweep, Wooden tooth Harrow, Twister turning Plows.
 23. What were early industries in the community?
Grist Mill, Gins, and Black Smith Shops—Horse Power.
 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.)
Muscadines, Poke Salad, Possum Grapes and 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, Board splitting, Threshing Wheat and making Sargham[sic].
 26. Tell of early methods of combating forest fires, town or building fires.
Fought with Pine Knots, Hoes and Spades, cut ditches and plowed furrow
 27. Get origin of place and thing names such as hills, valleys, rivers, soughs, bayous, plants, animals, etc.
Little Missouri, Red River, Crews Creek and Bois D'Arc Creek.
 28. Tell of early taverns, hotels, boarding houses, stagecoach stations, boat landings, etc.
Washington Tavern, Travelers Inn, Stage Coach Station from Little Rock to Fulton, Arkansas.
 29. Tell of early schools.

- Rural, Log Houses, "Square", Split Log seats, no backs.
30. Location of school? Late?
Public Schools in Town, use Bus line for Pupils.
 31. Name of teacher?
Do not remember.
 32. How were funds provided? Tuition? How much? Was payment made in kind?
Tuition, no Public Schools then.
 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.)
Blue-Back Speller (Etter?), McGuffeys Reader.
 34. What constituted the reading matter of the early settlers? Books? Magazines? Newspapers? Get titles and authors.
Washington Telegraph, Camden Beacon, Arkansas Gazette, Woodruff.
 35. Where was the first telegraph station in the community? When established?
Hope, Arkansas, 1873.
 36. Tell of the early "Horse cars." When were trolley cars substituted? When buses?
Hope, Arkansas, 1873.
 37. When and where was the first automobile seen?
Hope, Arkansas, 1910.
 38. When and where was the first train seen?
Hope, Arkansas, 1873.
 39. When and where was the first airplane seen?
Hope, Arkansas, 1918.
 40. When did automotive busses begin interurban operation? (Give descriptions on the five foregoing.)
Do not remember.
 41. Early theatrical performances? Local people? Traveling stock companies?
Circus and Local School Shows.
 42. Tell of any important local celebration in memory of any individual or event.
Grover Cleveland, 1885.
 43. Does the individual recall any early historical character such as Sam Houston, Co. James Bowie, former President Zachery Taylor, the James boys, etc.?
James Boys, 1882.
 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.
None.
 48. Tell of Civil War days, giving the fullest detail possible.
Stormy times for everybody.
 49. Tell of any battles, skirmishes, forays, etc., witnessed.
None.
 50. Tell of Reconstruction, the Carpetbaggers, scalawags, etc.
Carpet Baggers burned Houses and Crops.

51. Get all information possible regarding the original Ku Klux Klan or similar organizations.
Organized to keep out Carpet Baggers.
52. Tell of any participation in the establishment of any religious or fraternal organizations.
None.
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.
Nevada County near Emmett, Arkansas
55. Tell of any other historic sites.
Old State Capitol, Washington, Arkansas and Court House.
56. What is total number of descendants?
3.
57. What are names and addresses of sons and daughters?
Landon Smith, Wade Smith, Bill Smith, Ozan, Arkansas
58. Name some of the grandchildren and greatgrandchildren, if any.
Albert Early and Palmer Williams, Hope, Arkansas
59. Tell of any books, diaries, journals, sketches, or newspaper articles the individual has written. Give details.
None.