

Malinda Sutton

Early Settlers' Personal History Questionnaire, WPA
Interviewed by Arthur R. Hill Hempstead County, Ark. April 12, 1941.

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

1. Early settler's name
Malinda Sutton. "Colored" Aunt Malinda.
2. Address
R.F.D. 3 Box 26
3. Present occupation (most of the old timers are now retired).
Retired housewife
4. Previous occupation or occupations.
Nurse and cook.
5. Date of birth.
December 12. 1845. 96 years of age.
6. Place of birth.
Foreman, Arkansas.
7. Married? To whom? When? Where?
Eligah Sutton Washington, Arkansas December 19, 1877.
8. If an immigrant give particulars. City and country of derivation, name of ship on which arrived, etc.
Born in 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.
Native citizen.
11. Why did the individual come to Arkansas?
Born in Little River County, Arkansas.
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.)
Prewar homes for colored stockades and log cabins.
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 torch.
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 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?
Wild game and fish, Farm products and hog meat.
17. What kinds of clothes were worn and how manufactured?
Cotton stripes, spinning wheel woven garments.
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?
Boys and girls[sic] met at house of parents.
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. # 10.00 had biscuits twice a week.
20. What were some of the incidents pertaining to the sharing of food and other supplies in times of common need?
I as a slave knew nothing of how food was shared.
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?)
Wheat, corn, cotton, oats.
22. What were early farm implements? Any homemade? If purchased, where? Prices?
Bull tongue, old twister turning plow, and solid sweeps.
23. What were early industries in the community?
Grist and flour mill water power, and black smith shop.
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, Lambs quarters, 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, sheep shearing.
26. Tell of early methods of combating forest fires, town or building fires.
Had to fight all fires by hand with brush tops.
27. Get origin of place and thing names such as hills, valleys, rivers, soughs, bayous, plants, animals, etc.
Red River, Little River, Beards. Lake.
28. Tell of early taverns, hotels, boarding houses, stagecoach stations, boat landings, etc.
Washington Tarven[sic], stage coach station.
29. Tell of early schools.
Negroes[sic] had no school during slavery.
30. Location of school? Late?
In town modern style.

31. Name of teacher?
I had no school I was a slave.
32. How were funds provided? Tuition? How much? Was payment made in kind?
Had no funds for negro[sic] slaves
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.)
I had no school books at all.
34. What constituted the reading matter of the early settlers? Books? Magazines? Newspapers? Get titles and authors.
Had no newspapers then that I knew of.
35. Where was the first telegraph station in the community? When established?
Hope, Arkansas 1875.
36. Tell of the early "Horse cars." When were trolley cars substituted? When buses?
Never saw street or horse car.
37. When and where was the first automobile seen?
Hope, Arkansas 1906.
38. When and where was the first train seen?
Hope, Arkansas 1878.
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.)
Don't know.
41. Early theatrical performances? Local people? Traveling stock companies?
Had no shows during slavery and war days.
42. Tell of any important local celebration in memory of any individual or event.
None.
43. Does the individual recall any early historical character such as Sam Houston, Co. James Bowie, former President Zachery Taylor, the James boys, etc.?
Don't remember.
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?
Had no tombstones during slavery days.
47. Tell of any bank robberies, stage holdups, executions of horse thieves or other impromptu executions, including lynchings. Give details.
Never saw any.
48. Tell of Civil War days, giving the fullest detail possible.
Saw Yankees carrying[carrying?] Hats on a stick of Confederate Soldiers they had killed and saw one confederate soldier shot as he went to tell his family good bye.
49. Tell of any battles, skirmishes, forays, etc., witnessed.
Poison Springs, heard of it but never saw it.
50. Tell of Reconstruction, the Carpetbaggers, scalawags, etc.
Carpet beggers[sic] robbed and burned houses and stole food and crops.
51. Get all information possible regarding the original Ku Klux Klan or similar

organizations.

Ku Klus[Klux?] faught carpet beggers and negros[sic] stayed at home at nights.

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.
None.
55. Tell of any other historic sites.
Old Washington, Arkansas State Capitol.
56. What is total number of descendants?
3.
57. What are names and addresses of sons and daughters?
Ealo, Charley, Andrew, all at Hope, Arkansas.
58. Name some of the grandchildren and greatgrandchildren, if any.
5 Mary Frances, Lem Sutton Ruston, La. Eola, Charley, Jesse, Pauline, Lidd
59. Tell of any books, diaries, journals, sketches, or newspaper articles the individual has written. Give details.
None.