

Interview of Margaret Sauer about the Dirty Thirties

By Alexandra Brown

Interview Date: 1/26/05

Question=(Q)

Answer=(A)

- 1) Q-What is your full name?
A-Margaret S Smith Sauer
- 2) Q-How old are you today?
A-85
- 3) Q-Where do you live today?
A- Ceter View Nursing Home-Hays, KS
- 4) Q-What jobs did you do during your working years?
A-Farming, Nanny, Dishwasher job, Restaurant owner
- 5) Q-Where were you born and raised?
A-8 miles southwest of Hanston, KS, where she lived in a dugout.
- 6) Q-During the time of the Dirty Thirties, were you in a relationship or marriage.
A-No
- 7) Q-During the Dirty Thirties, how old were you?
A-1928 age 12 or 13
- 8) Q-During the Dirty Thirties, what was your main activity or what did you do?
A-Just tried to say alive
- 9) Q-Where were you living?
A-Hanston, after last home we lived in a hut.
- 10) Q-What financial hardships did you notice about this time?
A-Lost house just before Dirty Thirties
- 11) Q-Do you remember the dust storms and please describe them.
A-Yes, they looked like little dust devils or twisters. If you got caught in one, it could whip you around pretty good.
- 12) Q-Describe changes in lives when the Dirty Thirties started.
A-It pulled our family closer. We worked together more and we wouldn't have made it without each other.
- 13) Q-What new responsibilities did you have to do during the Dirty Thirties?
A-Not really any responsibilities except farming.
- 14) Q-What social activities were you involved in during the Dirty Thirties?

A-Basketball, Music, went to go see movies every once in a while at Jetmore- movie=\$1 & popcorn=\$0.05

15) Q-What were parties like during this time?

A-Sometimes we went to Burette and partied with the 6 Smith Brothers. They were pretty well off.

16) Q-What effect did the Dirty Thirties have on your health?

A-It affected some more than others and I was one of the lucky ones. My brother had a bad lung disease and my sister had appendicitis later in life.

17) Q-What was our most memorial experience during this time?

A-One Sunday afternoon our family made ice cream in the basement. After we went upstairs and came back down I thought it was Armageddon! The light went out because of the dust and it was pitch black down there.

18) Q-Describe the Jackrabbit Drives.

A-Rabbits were eating the roots of our vegetables right out of the ground so farmers built a circular fence and left one open to let the jackrabbits in. There were tons of them. Once they got as many as they wanted they would beat them to death with bats. I can still hear the scream of those poor little rabbits. We lived ½ a mile from the jackrabbit drives.

19) Q-Describe a person you most remember during this time.

A-My mother and Father mostly. They took me through the Dirty Thirties.

20) Q-Did you have any worthwhile experiences during this time?

A-Mostly the Christmas Parties but you can't take the fun away from kids.

21) Q-What news did you have during this time?

A- Radio, Newspapers-Capitol Weekly-in Topeka

22) Q-Have you watched or read anything about this time? Did you think it was correct?

A-Yes I have watched some things of Television and most of the time it was correct but there is always someone who will say something extra.

23) Q-What kind of food did you have to eat?

A-I remember my mother's biscuits the most but I also loved my mother's fried potatoes. We never had a lot of meat.

24) Q-What were your experiences eating a meal?

A-You knew the dirt was there so you just went right a head and cooked. You had to deal with it.

25) Q-Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences during this time.

A-I always thought of security when growing up because they didn't have it back then.

+ 100/100