

PREFACE

My mother, Albertine (*Becquet*) Williams, passed away in 2001. Just before her death, she handed me a large box of papers. She had saved them since 1936, when she supervised a project titled 'The National Youth Administration Writers', which was a part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. My mother's area took place in the southwest section of Kansas.

The project was also called, "The Federal Writers Project", which was a group of volunteers who had an interest in writing about local history. They would research local communities and then report their findings in a written way requested by those in charge of the project. They also interviewed old settlers of southwest Kansas and told their stories on the written pages.

Mother traveled to a few small towns in southwest Kansas to find people interested in the project. About 18 people signed up. These writings were to be in a book titled "The American Guide." I have found only one book in this series, and it is about the whole state of Kansas. So it is clear that a few of these stories may have been lost forever if she had not saved them.

The following pages are from the actual papers & carbon copies written by the volunteers. The type of paper used then was so thin and frail that today, handling it is very hard to do without the pages crumbling apart easily. Many of the pages were hard to read because the volunteers had made corrections on the original page, and the carbon copies had the mistakes, plus corrections. Many of the pages were very difficult to understand, as the storyline was not in any order.

Starting in 2015, I slowly began going through each page, researching, re-typing everything, and making corrections as needed. My goal has been to honor the people in the stories, the writers, and the consultants. To many of the stories, I have added a section titled "Additional Information". There you will find details about some of the people mentioned in the stories. Each county has a section about the writers and a section about the consultants. I have also added obituaries, headstone pictures, plus photographs of the people mentioned in the stories, the writers section, and the consultants section, when provided.

I hope the information found here will be a benefit to others. I am so grateful that my mother saved these papers as they helped me learn more about the areas I remember as a child and the people who lived there. Many thanks to all of the people who have been such a tremendous help! This includes some of the descendants of people mentioned in the stories and the wonderful folks who work in the libraries and historical societies located in Southwest Kansas. I feel blessed to have had their support and help.

There is another reason this project is important to me. Not only did my mother work for the National Youth Administration, but my father, William D. Snyder, was also working for the group in 1936 as their Project Accountant in Dodge City, Kansas. Therefore, this is where they met and they married on 8 May 1937 in Sublette, Kansas.

Kathye Snyder-Knight
2024