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Summary of Oral History Interview with Anna K. Schofield

Anna K. Schofield was interviewed on August 2, 1967, in Westcliffe, Colorado, where she shared her family's immigration story, early life, marriage, and experiences living in Custer County.

Early Life and Immigration

Born in London, England, on August 3, 1879, Anna immigrated to the United States at the age of five with her parents and six siblings. Her father, an architect, had been in correspondence with a newspaper editor in New York, which influenced his decision to move to Colorado. He built several notable buildings in Denver, including Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church and structures at the University of Denver.

As a child, Anna struggled with nerve trouble and was often taken outdoors for sunshine therapy. She completed the eighth grade and later attended night school to further her education. She was actively involved in church activities at St. Mark's Church in Denver and later worked at the Denver Gas and Electric Company as a credit clerk, where she met her future husband, Mr. Schofield.

Marriage and Life in Custer County

Anna married in 1906 and moved to her husband's family ranch in Custer County, owned by Grandfather Schofield, who had come from Maryland. He had been raised by a formerly enslaved woman and returned to visit her after settling in Colorado. The Schofield family homesteaded 320 acres, and the road leading to their ranch eventually became known as Schofield Lane.

Adjusting to ranch life was challenging for Anna, who had worked in an office and had no experience with farm work. Determined to prove herself, she quickly learned to cook, bake, and manage household chores, including feeding threshing crews, raising chickens, and preserving food. She also recalled raising turkeys, which were particularly difficult to care for in rainy weather.

Community and Social Life

Anna described early interactions with Native Americans, who would come to the ranch asking for food. One unsettling encounter involved a group arriving with blood-covered hands, which frightened her grandmother. However, they had simply butchered a deer and wanted to wash up.

She also recalled attending a local dance soon after arriving in Westcliffe, where cowboys' spurs ruined her silk stockings and patent leather shoes. She found it difficult to adjust to the rugged lifestyle but eventually embraced it.

Later Life and Legacy

Anna's husband managed cattle operations and later became county clerk and county treasurer, roles in which she served as his deputy. They eventually moved into town, where she remained active in the community.

Reflecting on the changes she had witnessed, Anna spoke about early transportation, from horse-drawn buggies to automobiles, and recalled how her mother in England had once heard a gypsy predict that people would ride in horseless carriages and fight bloody wars. She also shared stories of early wildlife encounters, including a domesticated deer that later attacked her husband, prompting Grandfather Schofield to put it down.

Anna's recollections provide valuable insight into the immigrant experience, pioneer resilience, and the evolution of ranching and community life in Custer County.

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