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Western History Collections

Mary Griffith Hoops Collection

Hoops, Mary Griffith (1842–1898). Manuscript, 1864–1866. 1 item.

Pioneer. A photocopy of a typewritten memoir (1887) by Mary Griffith Hoops, published in the *Marion Record* in 1925, and describing the 1864–1866 settlement of her family in Marion, Kansas. It includes information on the early history of the area, life on the frontier, a meeting with Kit Carson, and a trading post on the Santa Fe Trail.

Description:

This memoir about the settling of Marion, Kansas, was written circa 1887 by Mary Griffith Hoops (Mrs. Evin Hoops). Mrs. Hoops, her husband and two daughters were one of the first families to build homes in the central Kansas community. She was 22 years old when they left their home in northern Indiana in 1864 and joined her brothers and their families on the Western frontier. Her account describes the building of frontier homes; the clothing, food and household goods they brought with them; the ever-present danger of Indian raids; the emotional and material support women settling the West gave each other; work at a trading post serving the Santa Fe trail riders, and finally, a meeting with Kit Carson. It is also a unique look into thoughts and emotions of a woman whose determination, courage and perseverance mirrored that of many others.

Mrs. Hoops had some educational advantages as a girl and had dreamed of becoming a doctor. She was an avid reader of medical texts and had brought a large volume with her to Marion. Her family, the Griffiths, was related to other Marion settlers by marriage -- her sister Keziah (Mrs. William Billings), her sister Margaret (Mrs. Roberts), her brothers George, Jack and others were also in Marion at its beginning. Mrs. Hoops' eldest daughter, Carrie, married Levi Billings in 1876 after his wife and two of four children died in an epidemic.

Mary and Evin Hoops eventually left Marion and moved to the Long Beach area of California where they lived near their three youngest children for many years. Mary Hoops died in Escondido in 1898.

This narrative is submitted to the Western History Collection by Mrs. Hoops' great-great-granddaughter, Katherine Billings.