

Library of Congress

[Jean Solter]

[?]

Accession no.

W 3622

Date received

10/10/40

Consignment no.

1

Shipped from

Wash. Office

Label

Amount

5p

WPA L. C. PROJECT Writers' Unit

Folklore Collection (or Type)

Title American lives. Packinghouse worker's job

Place of origin Chicago, Illinois Date 6/20/39

Library of Congress

Project worker Betty Burke

Project editor

Remarks

W3622 8/8/1939

Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A

Circumstances of Interview

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

STATE

NAME OF WORKER Betty Burke

ADDRESS 1339 S. Troy

DATE June 20, 1939

SUBJECT American Lives Packinghouse worker's job

1. Date and time of interview June 20, 6:30 p.m.
2. Place of interview 4758 S. Marshfield
3. Name and address of informant Jean Solter

Library of Congress

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. None

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

None

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Union Headquarters

FORM B

Personal History of Informant

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

STATE

NAME OF WORKER Betty Burke

ADDRESS 1339 S. Troy

DATE June 20, 1939

SUBJECT Packinghouse workers job

NAME OF INFORMANT Jean Solter

1. Ancestry Irish parents American born

2. Place and date of birth Chicago, 23 years old

Library of Congress

3. Family Married, no children
4. Places lived in, with dates Chicago only
5. Education, with dates Grammar school, 1 year high
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates
7. Special skills and interests Active in her union, and the auxiliary
8. Community and religious activities Attends church, Irish Catholic one, admires the priest because he calls on the members to stick to the union and not to be afraid to be called 'red'. This priest was once against the CIO, now he preaches that the only menace to America is the spreading of fascistic ideas. So she goes to church without fail, to hear the priest stand up for 'them', meaning yards workers, and it makes her feel good the rest of the week.
9. Description of informant
10. Other Points gained in interview

FORM C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

STATE

NAME OF WORKER Betty Burke

Library of Congress

ADDRESS 1339 S. Troy St.

DATE June 20, 1939

SUBJECT Packinghouse worker's job

NAME OF INFORMANT Jean Solter

I carry away finished pork hocks. That is, when my table finishes the trimming of them, they box the hocks and I take it away to another table farther up. These boxes are heavy, they weigh a good thirty pounds apiece. The floor is greasy and that makes it easy to slip and fall all over the place. I almost broke my neck from one of the flops I took there. My arm was sore for three weeks after that. I remember I went over to the 'butcher shop' a couple hours after I fell that time, and I wanted the doctor to take a look at my arm. It was swelled up like a ham, and hurt so I could hardly work. Well, the way he fixed me up! Like they always do in the 'butcher shop'. Painted mercurochrome on my arm, gave me a pill and said I could go back to work.

The doctors are lousy in that place. They don't give a hang about you. The girls always joke about the 'treatments' they give you. Got a headache? Here you are. White pill. Dizzy spell? Take a pink pill. Cold? Take an aspirin. Sore throat? Take an aspirin. Infection? Paint it with merch. or iodine, and let it go at that. Cut deep? Tape it. Katie Sullivan cut herself across the first joints of her three middle

FORM D

Extra Comment

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

Library of Congress

STATE

NAME OF WORKER Betty Burke

ADDRESS [1339?] S. Troy St.

DATE June 20, 1939

SUBJECT Packinghouse worker's job

NAME OF INFORMANT Jean Solter

fingers. Doctor said it wasn't bad, just needed taping. Her fingers are deformed now. All crooked up. She can't unbend them. Those dirty company doctors!

A lot of women keep at work until their fifth or sixth month of pregnancy. Couple of months after they come right back. Pregnant woman gets sick at work she won't go see the doctor. He'll just tell her to go home or shut up, she isn't supposed to be working there according to company rules and if she does, why, let her take the consequences. If she gets sore, he sends in a report and she gets laid off right away.

Once there was a committee got up of people who were willing to pay a doctor to set up a clinic just for yards workers. You know, to find out just how many had t.b. and heart diseases and all that. Armour's wouldn't let him do it. All he asked for was a little space for the clinic in the yards. He was going to furnish it with hospital equipment through the committee that was backing him. But they wouldn't give him a chance. They said that 'unfortunately' there was no available space in the yards for a clinic. We were all for it, got signatures from the girls and all, but they wouldn't budge. That was before the union's time. If we had this contract signed and off our minds, we could start the ball really rolling for a yards clinic, sure.

Library of Congress

##