

[Chas. W. Huyck]

Interview 5

Week 3 S241 - LA DUP

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE January 25, 1939 SUBJECT American Folklore Stuff

1. Name and address of informant Chas. W. Huyck, Route 1, Lincoln

2. Date and time of interview Jan. 17-'39——8:30 to 10 p.m. Jan. 23-'39——9:30 to 10:30 p.m.

3. Place of interview

Home of informant

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.

Long living room, cheerful, homey, with potted plants in south exposure bay window, furnished with bath modern and antique furniture. Includes a high walnut secretary probably [58?] years old and a bent back wooden chair over 100 years old. The musical

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atmosphere predominates, however, piano, five radios, 3 in sight, ukelele, mandolin, 2 guitars, 2 trumpets, 2 violins, one a 105 years old, Marimba phone, large harp, five feet high, phonograph. They play them all. A green parrot occupying a large cage in one corner watched the proceedings but refused to leave the cage or talk through the cage although he could have done both. A toy electric train track with a maze of switches and spurs wound in and out between the legs of a library table with a miniature modern streamline train scooting around. C. 15 Neb

The room is a friendly, warm, congenial, somewhat artistic, but in no way severe. It makes one, of course, music conscious and the atmosphere certainly reflects the personalities and harmonious relations of its long time occupants.

The house itself is of brick built on a low terrace, with the walk entrance rising by stone steps from the street level and guarded by two stone columns and an iron gate. Yard is enclosed by fence.

House faces the west and looks directly across toward the Nebraska State Hospital whose spacious grounds border the paved street on the west. This small suburb was at one time called "Asylum" which name has long since been discarded.

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE January 25, 1939 SUBJECT American Folklore Stuff

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Charles W. Huyck, Rt. 1, Lincoln, Nebr.

1. Ancestry Hollander-English
2. Place and date of birth Lancaster, Wis., November 27, 1874

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3. Family No children of own. Wife, brother and sister living and one adopted boy.

4. Places lived in with dates

Lancaster, Wis. 1874 to 1876 Lincoln, Nebr. 1899 to date Ashland, Nebr. 1876 to 1899

5. Education, with dates Country school, Ashland, Nebr. 1883 to 1886 Grade and Hi-school 1886 to 1895

6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Some farm work, 1886 to 1895. Musician, worked at instrument repairing, 1895 to 1898. Learned piano tuning 1896 to 1898, rebuilding pianos. Traveled with a "Tom" show, (Uncle Tom's Cabin) 1898 to 1899, played violin—— * 1900 to 1902 worked at State * Hospital. [Orch?]. work and piano * tuning 1902 to date. *****

7. Special skills and interests

(words in "box" to left are of the above heading.)

8. Community and religious activities

Christian church, member of board, society work. Free musical entertainments.

9. Description of informant Broad features, clear complexion, medium height, heavy build, hair gray, inclined to curl some. Inclined to curl some. Have very pleasing voice, rich full and melodious.

10. Other points gained in interview He is of a kindly, [calm?] disposition, easy going, but [?] a hard worker. Has considerable music talent and reflects the harmonious atmosphere in which he has lived and loved. Not a dreamer type but yet one feels restful and relaxed when in his presence. Personality pleasing. Live and let live attitude. [Belives?]

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Believes in forgiving the mistakes of others and not being hasty to sit like a tribunal in judgement of others. Has religious faith but is broad in these views and does not encourage the practice of condemning or talking ill of fellow human beings. Gives impression of great sincerity.

1

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

There is always the story about a piano tuner, being mistaken for a doctor and I know of one instance where the neighbors rushed over after I left a job to look into the matter and see who was sick, or hurt or maybe dead.

People, at least, used to have a custom of making sick calls and are keenly interested in sickness.

It stands next to if not ahead of the weather as a topic of conversation among housewives.

I traveled with a "Tom" show (Uncle Tom's Cabin) for two years in 1898-99. They played good sized towns once in a while but were commonly referred to as 'trouping' the kerosene circuit.'

Were you ever the first to enter a theater? Some people would ask 'who comes in first?.' Working with a road show, we got to see some of the public's peculiarities. Many a time one or two or three, sometimes even a family group would start to enter the hall or opera house as it was then called but when they saw no one there ahead of them would draw back and go away. I've even heard some folks were superstitious about being the first to enter a place of public entertainment. Nebraska people used to drive horses 15 miles to see a show and cry and sob when 'Little Eva' died and went to heaven.'

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I played the violin most of the time, and have one now, which is about 105 years old. It was made in [Leipzig?], Germany. [Molzer?] Music house of Lincoln imported it. A violin grows better with age.

2

Political rallies were spectacular in the nineties. Those were the days of the Flambeau clubs.

Flambeau Torches were lighted during these parades. These were tubes with a lighted flame. They would blow powder from a container up through the flame. It would catch fire as it struck the flame and flash high in the air. Women and children would take part in the parades, carrying kerosene torches and blowing tin horns. They sang and shouted when McKinley and Bryan ran for President. The 'Christian' sisters quartet from around Ashland had a slogan 'No matter who's elected it's bound to be a Bill.'

They sang to the tune of 'Just Before the Battle Mother.' They sang this verse. 'Farewell you will never have an office anymore. But you will know a heap more Bryan, After this campaign is o'er.

Another slogan in Cleveland's campaign was:

'Vote for Grover and live in clover.'

They also had campaign dances now and then, sometimes a half masquerade. In one of these some came made up like capitalists, some as farmers, doctors, laborers, etc., with plenty of signs and banners.

The bottom either dropped out of the full dinner pail or else food over flowed the top according to which candidate they were aiming at.

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E. J. Smith, 1755 North 30th St., Lincoln made the violin I play now. It was made in 1934. He made 53 violins, 2 cellos, 4 violas and a dulcerine, which is something like a dulcimer but having fewer strings. He played it with his fingers. I have known of one dulcimer, owned by Henry Johnson near Ashland, Nebraska. It was played with little mallets and looked something like a harp.

3

We played for wedding dances frequently. Some of those lasted all night. The Irish dances near Denton were always big dances. Mr. Seidell played for Mr. Meyer's wedding dance and 50 years later he called at Mr. Meyer's home in Lincoln on his way to a masquerade dance and learning it was his Golden Wedding anniversary day, he played for them again there.

I only play now at the state hospital dances. Customs are changing of course, and people are becoming more individual in their habits and beliefs.

4

FORM D

(Supplementary)

Singing as They Danced.

Nearly half a century ago and then for many years in Nebraska it was customary to sing the chorus of the favorite dance songs.

Here's one which was sung often at the dances. Mr. W. G. Seidell and Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Huyck played at these dances around Lincoln and recall the great popularity of singing as they danced: "Doris was a village maiden, Little did she know save the sentence I had taught her Oh I love you so."

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Chorus: "Doris, Doris, Oh how I love thee. See me at thy feet. Doris, Doris could you but love me Life would be complete. Doris, Doris stars shine above you Hear my pleading, do. Why then tarry, Come let us marry, Dearest Doris, do."

The following verses were sung to the tune of "Irish Washerwoman" in the gay nineties in Nebraska. The man referred to was probably William Jennings Bryan. "There is an ambitious man From over the hills Who pledges the people He'll cure their [ills?] In every county and every state He says that his scheme Will determine their fate. But come the day When they go to the polls They'll proceed to shoot His scheme full of holes And when he awakens, From this funny dream He'll know that they traded His skim milk for cream.

Till McGowan

37th and Van Dorn

Lincoln, Nebraska Waltz Quadrille First couple down center And there you divide. Ladies to the left Gents round the outside Bow to your partner Don't be afraid Swing on the corner And waltz [promenade?].

(Then the fiddler plays the waltz chorus and they waltz around the set.) Next second couple, etc.