

[Sandhog Stories]

[?]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

AUG 8 1939

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Marion Charles Hatch

ADDRESS 862 First Avenue

DATE June 12th, 1939

SUBJECT Sandhog Stories

1. Date and time of interview

During the week.

2. Place of interview

Long Island City Hoghouse, Queens Mid-town tunnel, Borden Ave and Front St., L.I.C.

3. Name and address of informant

Library of Congress

Sandhogs who contributed these stories are A.J.C., D.G., Jimmy McGee, J.M., J.J., A.L.L., D.W., J.R., F.O., Broadway, J.W., J.W.V., Walter Miles, John [?], F.J.O.

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

No one.

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

No one.

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

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C

TEXT OF INTERVIEW (UNEDITED)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Marion Charles Hatch

ADDRESS 362 First Avenue

DATE June 12th, 1939

SUBJECT Sandhog Stories WORTHLESS RULER

By A.J.C.

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This fellow they sent him out to get an eight foot board. So he went out. He came back, he needed a ruler. So the miner gave him a six foot ruler. He came back the second time and said the ruler wasn't long enough. It was only six foot.

***** THE FIRST AIR

By D.G.

Some fellow was working down the hole. They weren't air men. So they started pumping air in the first day. He was just down there long enough to feel it so he run up the ladder like a wildman. When he gets up to the lock he says, "Let me out! Let me out! I never took it before!" So Joe says, "Mrs. Murphy had to take it the first time!" So as soon as we got enough air so we could close the door we let him out. 2 COP FOOLED

By J. McGee

This was supposed to happen in New York, Sunday. Out of a hole the cop on the beat seen these three fellows laying down. So he thought they had the bends. So he took off his coat and laid it under their heads. He took them over to the medical lock and found out they were drunk.

***** TAKE IT EASY

By J.W.

This guy is so lazy he wouldn't even work in convulsions. Next to Step'n Fetchit he's the laziest.

They have a mule down there, so if the electricity goes off, to pull the cars. So the guy says to him, "Blow your nose, you bastard, blow your nose!"

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That guy couldn't fight his way out of a paper bag!

***** CRACK!

By F.O.

These guys were working down there. One guy gets hit on the shoulder with a rock. He has to go up on top to see the doctor. So when we're going down the second half, on the cage, one of the guys asked the fellow that got hit with the rock, "Did you get hit on the head?" Tommy, standing alongside of him, says, "If he got hit on the head he'd be all right!"

***** GETTING TOUGH

By J.J.

There's a hot bum on this job they call Jack McCabe. He has a habit of hanging up in all in different saloons. The first day he goes into a joint he pays up and makes a good impression. So then he runs up a bill.

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The next day you'll see him in another place. Until he gets around all the places. Then his credit is no good. Finally he comes in late and they ask him why he is late and he says, "Hell, they know me all around here now. Things are getting so tough. I had to go to Broadway to get a drink!.

***** HOW TO GET A BETTER JOB

By Jimmy McGee

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Working on the Cornell College job, I used to go in this place every day and drink. So I got very chummy with one of the guys in there. To wind up Morgan Bateman and I was drinking with this guy and I didn't know who he was. I got into a sort of an argument with him and insulted him. He knew me so then I went out some of the guys said, "Don't you know who he is? He's your super!" He was my big boss and I insulted him. So he winded up and he gave me a better job. This is one of those embarrassing moments.

***** GET A ROOM

By J. McGee

If you get a cold you generally get blocked. So when a guy gets blocked they generally tell him, "You better quit sleeping in the park! Get a room!"

***** THE HOD CARRIER

By A.L.L.

He asked the boss what to hell to do with this material. The boss told him to carry it up the ladder, 75 feet. When he got up to the top he asked the boss what to do with it and the boss says to carry it back. After that they always called that guy the hod-carrier.

***** JOKE ON THE WIFE

By A.L.L.

This same guy was in the hospital. He had been hit on the foot with a rock and his foot was broke. So his wife was all excited. She went up 4 to see him in the hospital. So she asked him, "What's the matter? Have you got a broken foot?" He said, "The foot ain't nothing! My back is broken too!" His wife almost fainted. His back was all right.

***** HOW'S THE WHEEL BARROW?

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By D.W.

A man was working on a building one time. He was wheeling up a load of brick on a wheelbarrow. So he was running it up on a plank, one story high. The plank broke. The man and the wheelbarrow fell to the bottom. The boss asked him if the barrow was broke. He didn't give a damn about the man.

***** MAN BITES

By J.R.

We've got a habit if anybody comes in the lock late we put him on the board. So this guy was coming in a couple of minutes late. So we got a wedge. We started to putting this mason on the board. So Dan Gallagher says, "I'll fix him. You fellows hold him. So while we were holding him, he takes a bite out of his back side. He had to go to the doctor. The doctor says, "I've heard of dog biting man but I never heard of man biting man."

***** MINER AND HELPER

By A.L.L.

The helper was helping the miner. He did something he didn't like. So he said, "As a miner you couldn't even mind your own business."

***** RETRIBUTION

By A.L.L.

This guy used to get his cocoa every day. He wouldn't give anybody any. Once the fellows got a cake of "Ex-Lax" put it in his cup. So for a 5 week he was moving his bowels. He had a bowel movement four times a day after that.

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By A.L.L.

A guy was in there working, shovelling the muck out. The boss said, "Get that muck out of there or by Jesus you're coming out."

***** LETS PUSH!

By A.L.L.

They were shoving so they had about two inches to go. (Moving the 150 ton shield by hydraulic pressure). The gang was coming down the line to relieve them. This Polack had the gang so he says, "Let's all get together and push it!" They tell this to greenhorns, whenever they get in the hole. Lets all get together and push it.

***** GREENHORN

By B'way

A Greenhorn went in to work at 8 in the morning. On about 37 pounds pressure you should only work in there about an hour and a half. So he worked till about noon. So then he went up to one of the guys and said, "What time does that 8 o'clock gang go out to lunch?" But he went through all right without the bends.

***** FANCY DRILL

By J.W.

We had a newcomer in the gang. They sent him for a five or six block walk from one end of the tunnel to the other. The shield-driver sent him to the lock to get a diamond studded drill!

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***** 6 BEND'S STORY

By J.W.

There was a fellow down here not so long ago. He worked the first half and he took a walk down the Queen's Plaza, where they're making that new drive and garden. He was taken with the bends in his stomach. He was layin' on the sidewalk, there. Nobody paid any attention. They all thought he was drunk. The wind was one of the safety men, one of our own insurance men, seen him there, recognized him as one of the sandhogs, rushed him over to the medical lock. He had the bends so bad they thought he was going to die from it. He was in the lock for about 36 hours. He was foreman at that time, in the heading. He was off for about three weeks before he could go back to work and then, when he did go back to work, he couldn't take it any more. He had to go in the light air. He couldn't go in the high air.

***** BAD LUCK

By Walter Miles

If you be in the coal mines you see a rat they say its hard luck. When you see the rats leaving, it is hard luck. They take the white mice down in the mines to test for gas. When they die then the miners know they must get to hell out.

We were cutting the 38th Street tunnel, the Lincoln tunnel. A fellow was running a drill for me and a big rat fell about thirty feet, down in the shaft, and fell on top of Hall's drill and killed the rat. He got scared because he thought it was hardluck and started to run out of the tunnel. We had to hold him from running out of the tunnel.

***** CONSTIPATED

By John Tiplady

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There's a guy down there working on cement. He had to move so he wiped himself. They come out of the hole. Three or four days later he was constipated. So he went to the doctor to get a physic. So the doctor gave him a 7 a couple of pills. No luck. So he gave him some more pills the next day. No action. So he pulled his pants and the doctor said, "What are you a cement man?" He said, "Yes." The doctor said, Well, the next time you move down in the hole don't wipe yourself with a cement bag!"

***** ACCIDENT

(A man comes up out of the hole with hand bloody). "What's the matter? You just went down! "Cut my finger!" (laughingly) "Cut it half off!" "He's probably feeling good. He'll have some money when he gets out. Compensation. He probably stuck his hand under there.

"Most all the sandhogs, the majority of them have one or two fingers missing, a joint missing!"

*****)* PRANKS

By F.J.O.

This guy he come down there, like a new man would he was looking around there. Didn't know what was going on. So there's always a couple of guys in the gang like to pull a good one on a new man like that. So they told him to get the oil can. He got the oil can and a half dozen rags and he greased the whole cutting edge.

Then they tell a new guy to hold the shield so it won't turn over. The shield actually weighs about 400 tons. The cutting edge is the edge of the shield facing the muck and the stone. It's all rough and rusty.

***** FEED THE DONKEYS

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By A.L.L.

A new man was watching all the hay going down there and he asked what it was for and they said it was for the donkeys. When sand is coming in between the boards they put the hay in the board to stop it. The Irishmen are the donkeys.
