[Unfinished Business]

Beliefs and Customs - Folk Stuff

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK 7 Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Herman Spector

ADDRESS 701 Crotona Park North, Bronx

DATE December 12, 1938

SUBJECT UNFINISHED BUSINESS (MRS. MAGUIRE.)

1. Date and time of interview

2. Place of interview On steps of porch at 838 Freeman Street

3. Name and address of informant Mrs. Maguire Address above

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

Mr. Gabe Gabrelian Address above

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

None

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

Could not get interview in home. Circumstances related in body of report.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Herman Spector

ADDRESS 701 Crotona Park North Bronx

DATE

SUBJECT UNFINISHED BUSINESS (MRS. MAGURE)

I was introduced to Mrs. Maguire, a lady of some 70 years or more, by a friend who rooms in her 3 story frame dwelling on Freeman Street in the Bronx. This is an ancient structure, typical of many others in various sections of the city which exhale a sort of musty defiance against the encroachment of neighbor tenements. At our first meeting, Mrs. Maguire was apparently busy preparing supper for her burly truckdriver son, so that I arranged for another visit. Mrs. Maguire I had been told by my friend, had lived in this house for over 40 years, and I hoped to gain some interesting insights from her reminiscing. However, she failed to reminisce when I called back, and I merely record the unsatisfactory interview to show how the winds of mood affect the fortunes of folklorists. The old lady had just returned from a shopping trip when I called, and for some obscure reason she was very testy; wouldn't even permit me to assist her with the heavy bag she was carrying, and I couldn't get through the threshold.

“Yes yes, I know all about it; that'll be enough of that nonsense about stories. All I can say is, this was all a wilderness when I came here. There was nothing at all there (pointing eastward,) or there (west,) and over there (pointing northward, across the street,) they had a wall that they used for shottin'. Target shootin'. Down that hill was Baden's Park, we used to pick mushrooms and dandelions.

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Yes, people came there on picnics; I was the first one to use gas in this neighborhood, German and Irish was here first; then the Jews came. They bought up all the property and resold it. Boston Road over there was called Huckleberry Road; you can read all about that in the Bronx Home News, I don't know what ye want to be botherin' me about. It was after the War the Jews came. People were just livin' on their last cent; they were glad to sell. I didn't and sure, I'm doin' all right, not the way I was used to, five dollars I used to get and no conveniences. My husband was a boat builder over at [?] [17th?] Street and the North River. Now that'll be all young man; no, I'll need no help at all getting up these stairs, been climbin' them long enough I guess . . . “And that was all.