

[Occupational Customs and Early Horse Racing]

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Beliefs & Customs - Folkstuff

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Place of origin Oswego, Oreg Date 1/1/39

Project worker Wrenn, Sara B.

Project editor

Remarks

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Form A

Circumstances of Interview Customs

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Wrenn, Sara B. Date Jan. 1, 1939

Address Home, Upper Drive, Oswego, Lake Grove, Oswego, Oregon

Subject Occupational Customs and Early Horse Racing

Name and address of informant J. J. Kadderly First Street near Alder, Portland, Oregon

Date and time of interview Dec. 28, 1938, 1:30-3:00 p.m.

Place of interview Hardware store, First near Alder Street, Portland, Ore.

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

Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you none

Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

A little old-fashioned hardware store in an old part of Portland, the interview taking place in the small glassed-off office. The informant, owner of the store, sorted out change as he talked, placing it in a noisy little change container that came in with a rattle and bang over the wire from the sales clerks. Ever so often he would be too interested in what he was saying to notice the change and the clerk would yell, "What's the matter up there? Hurry

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up with the change." Whereupon the informant would chuckle, "heh! heh!" and dive into his desk drawer for change. There seemed to be quite a lot of money dribbling in. The change cup shot in with such a racket the worker jumped half out of her seat at every operation.

Form B

Personal History of Informant

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Wrenn, Sara B. Date Jan. 2, 1939

Address Upper Drive, Oswego, Lake Grove, Oswego, Oregon

Subject Occupational Customs and Early Horse Racing

Name and address of informant J. J. Kadderly, Hardware Dealer First Streets near Alder, Portland, Oregon

Information obtained should supply the following facts:

1. Ancestry
2. Place and date of birth
3. Family
4. Place lived in, with dates
5. Education, with dates

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6. Occupations and accomplishments with dates

7. Special skills and interests

8. Community and religious activities

9. Description of informant

10. Other points gained in interview

1. Swiss.

2. Monroe, Wisconsin; June 22, 1854.

3. Jacob Kadderly, father; Barbara Becker Kadderly, mother.

4. Wisconsin, 1854-1878; Oregon 1876, 1939.

5. Public school — log school house - Four years.

6. Tinner, or Tin-smith.

7. Horses special interest, and driving trotters special skill.

8. "Always tried to follow the Golden Rule." No church. Mason for many years — Scottish Rite.

9. Little wiry man, with a long nose and a continuous "heh! heh!" chuckle. His father died when he was fourteen, leaving him the sole support of his mother and four brothers and sisters. He appears to have got a lot out of life and to have enjoyed every minute of it. Meticulous in his dress and appearance.

Form C

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Text of Interview (Unedited)

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OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Wrenn, Sara B. Date Jan. 2, 1939

Address Upper Drive, Lake Grove, Oswego, Oregon

Subject Occupational Customs and Early Horse Racing

Name and address of informant J. J. Kadderly First Street, near Alder, Portland, Oregon

Text:

School? I only went to school four years, in a little old log school house in Wisconsin. Then my father died and I had to get out and earn some money. Gosh ding it, I can smell that school house yet. There was about forty kids and I don't think they ever took a bath. I can smell it just as plain as if it was yesterday.

I came to Oregon in 1878. It was September 1, when we, my wife and me first set foot in Portland. We came by way of San Francisco and we came up from there on the old steamship George W. Elder. God dang it, but that old ship could roll! I was doing pretty well in Wisconsin too. I had learned the tinnern trade. I had enough to get married, heh! heh! But we had gosh danged thunder storms back there. One day I was settin' with some of the boys and there was a bigger storm than usual — thunder and lightnin' like blazes, and I sez, "Gosh dang it, if I knew a place where they didn't have any such storms as this I'd go there right off," and just then somebody spoke up and sez, "Young man, I kin tell you

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where to go. Go to Portland, O-re- gan . They don't have no sich storms there." O-re- gan , he sez, just like that.

I looked 'round and there was an old circus clown of Forepaugh's Circus. I knew him right away. "Heh," I said, "I know you. I carried twenty-two buckets 2 of water to one of your little old elephants once." He laughed. Sure 'nough, it was that same old clown. He told me some more about Oregon, and finally I jumped up and said "I'm goin' out there, gosh ding! I'm goin' right away." And I did, too. Heh! heh!

When me and my wife landed in Portland I had just eighteen dollars, and as I sez I was awful seasick. I felt just like a fellow does when he's been on a drunk. Somebody on the boat told us where to go so it wouldn't cost so much, and the very next day here came a man wanting to know if there wasn't a young fellow just arrived who was a tinner. He played a cornet or something, and he was going up to the State Fair at Salem, and he wanted me to take his bench. I said I would if I'd got over my drunk, heh! heh! and he said, "Oh jest drink a lot of coffee and you'll be alright." I wasn't all right. I felt pretty bad; but I had to get some money, so I went down to where he worked next morning, and right away the boss sent me out to put on a drain pipe on a new house. It was hard work, that first job, out on Union Avenue. But I did a good job. Why gosh ding it, the last time I went by there that old house was still standing, and I bet that same drain pipe was still there.

Well, pretty soon I had enough to start a little shop of my own. I went over to East Portland. Heh! heh! I had just enough to pay my first month's rent. It was eighteen dollars. There was only 350 people in East Portland then. Rents were a lot lower than on the West Side. God dang it, on First Street, in 1878, they asked as much as \$60 or \$70 a month. I had my tinner's tools and some tin and sheet iron. Right away I made a coffee pot and painted it red and hung it out for a sign, and pretty soon I was doing a fair trade. It was a good while later that I came over to the West Side.

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I bet I've sold more cook stoves to bride and grooms than anybody in this town. In 1888 I bought four carloads of cook stoves and wood ranges, and I think I sold 'em all to bride an' grooms. I don't make so much money these days, but I keep goin'.

And say, you asked some back there what I like best to do. Well, horses, that's what I like best. I've had some fine horses and I've got some now. There ain't anything any better than a horse.

Portland's first race track was out at Sellwood. It was a mile track. I mind me the world's first 2:10 trotter showed on that track. It was in 1880, and his name was Alteo, out of Altamont, the greatest sire the world ever knew. I used to drive my own horses in the matinees. One of the most successful drivers of those days was a race track man named George Meisner. He used to drive for Charlie Lohmire. Charlie was some driver himself. Once at a Fourth of July meet he challenged me to drive a big mare I owned, known as Bessie Lovelace, against a trotter of his called Redskin, I could out-drive Lohmire and I knew it. Otherwise I wouldn't have been such a gol darned fool as to have accepted his challenge, heh! heh! That was out an the old Rose City track. We drove in carts. They're something like a sulkey, only a little heavier. Matinee races used to be always driven in carts.

Well, Lohmire and I pulled out on the track. Redskin was a lot faster then my big filly. But Bessie was steady — an' I could drive, heh! heh! It was a half-mile track. Lohmire lead after the first quarter — an' I let him — heh! heh! I jest eased 'round after him on that first lap. After we got goin' good on the second lap I gave Old Bessie the word — I never teched a whip to any of my horses. We pulled up even with Redskin and I let Lohmire think I was makin' an awful effort. Then on the last quarter I begin to draw 4 away easy like. At the finish I was sixty feet in the lead. Lohmire never did get over that, heh! hah!

The first macadam road in this part of the country was the stretch along the river, of what is now called the Riverside Drive. It was always called the Macadam Road in early days,

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and everybody with any kind of a harness horse went out there to speed it. Pretty speedy folks some of them were too, and maybe they'd finish up at a tavern or roadhouse known as the White House, at the end of the speedway, where there was a little track — I think it was a quarter-mile. I wasn't much interested in that sort of drivin'.

Yep, I've had some good horses, and gosh ding it I've got some now. Wife sez we'll go broke on horses, but we haven't yet.

Form D

Extra Comment

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Wrenn, Sara B. Date Jan. 2, 1939

Address Upper Drive, Lake Grove, Oswego, Oregon.

Subject Occupational Customs and Horse Racing.

Name and address of informant J. J. Kadderly First Street, near Alder, Portland, Oregon.

Comment:

A colorful little old man, who lived over his life as he reminisced. Part of the time his English — or American — was quite grammatical, but soon he would lapse into the vernacular. I have tried to present his speech exactly as I heard it.