

[Policy players have various ways...]

[?]

Accession no.

W 3641

Date received

10/10/40

Consignment no.

1

Shipped from

Wash. Office

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4p

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WPA L. C. PROJECT Writers' UNIT

Folklore Collection (or Type)

Title Policy. [Begin]: Policy players have various ways of determining...

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Place of origin Chicago, Illinois Date 4/11/39

Project worker Grace Outlaw

Project editor

Remarks

W3641

Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FORM A

Circumstances of Interview Numbers [Line?]

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

460 Words

May 18 1939

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER G. Outlaw

ADDRESS 507 Oakwood Boulevard

DATE April 11, 1939

Library of Congress

SUBJECT Policy

1. Date and time of interview - April 11, 1939 - Noon-day
2. Place of interview - 3229 Prairie Avenue
3. Name and address of informant Zelma Brown, 3229 Prairie Avenue
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.

8-room house in a Negro neighborhood where property for the most part is badly in need of repairs. The house was used as a rooming house and there were about four separate family units in it. The informant had a room on the second floor, back. She was seen in the kitchen of the building.

FORM B

Personal History of Informant

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

Library of Congress

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER G. Outlaw

ADDRESS 507 Oakwood Boulevard

DATE April 11, 1939

SUBJECT Policy

NAME OF INFORMANT Zelma Brown

1. Ancestry Negro
2. Place and date of birth - Canton, Mississippi, May 3, 1912
3. Family - One of a family of three girls and four boys; mother dead, father still living in Canton, Mississippi.
4. Places lived in, with dates- Canton, Miss., 18 years from birth; Chicago, since November 1930.
5. Education, with dates - 6th grade in public schools of Canton, Mississippi
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates - Housework, odd jobs taking care of children . . . dates uncertain.
7. Special skills and interests - no skills . . . interests, church and polity.
8. Community and religious activities - Nothing special in community activities . . . attends church especially on Sundays.

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9. Description of informant - Unmarried mother with three illegitimate children; small in stature, neat in personal appearance.

10. Other Points gained in interview - Annoyed as to whether relief will be continued; if so, whether it will still be in cash.

FORM C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Grace Outlaw

ADDRESS 507 Oakwood Boulevard

DATE April 11, 1939

SUBJECT Policy

NAME OF INFORMANT Zelma Brown

Policy players have various ways of determining what their gig shall be. The numbers, seven, eleven, thirteen, and forty-four have special significance for many players.

Zelma Brown is a relief client and like seventy five per cent of them plays policy as often as she can find it possible to hold out a nickel or dime from her budget.

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The caseworker called on day while Zelma was working out a gig which she termed the "Holy Sevens". She had looked up as many biblical references as she knew about in which the number seven had been mentioned. She was seated at the kitchen table with the open bible before her, scratch paper and pencil, some policy slips which she attempted to conceal under the bible.

Zelma: "Howdy, Miss Jones . . . hot today aint it? . . . set down here by the window (which was as far distant as she could have her sit from the table) . . . reckon they gonna stop the relief soon?" And she muttered, "seven animals, seven people, seven days."

Worker: "Why do you ask about the discontinuance of relief?"

Zelma: "Oh, nothing. Just heard some talk of it since the lection . . .

FORM D

Extra Comment

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Grace Outlaw

ADDRESS 507 Oakwood Boulevard

DATE April 11, 1939

SUBJECT Policy

Library of Congress

NAME OF INFORMANT Zelma Brown

seven months, seven weeks between the passover and the pentecost," Zelma continued.

Worker: "May I help you in your figures, Miss Brown?"

Zelma: "No'm, reckon you wouldn't understand . . . seven days in a week . . . seven days for the . . ."

Worker: "It has been exactly seven days since I was here and you promised to have the children's birth certificates ready for me. Where are they?"

Zelma: "Seven days . . . yes'm it is seven days . . . wonder if that means anything?"

Worker: "What are you talking about, Miss Brown? You're terribly preoccupied today."

Zelma: "Yes'm . . . uh, Miss Jones do you know anything from the bible that happened in seven days or something with seven in it?"

Worker:(obligingly) "Well, let's see . . . the children of Israel were ordered to eat leavened bread for seven days . . . and in Revelations you find something about seven churches, seven spirits, seven seals . . . I can't remember all of them . . . why so interested in things connected with seven?"

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FORM C

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

Zelma: "You caint remember the rest of the seven things? And you say it's in Revelations," she mused, turning the pages of the bible. In her anxiety she exposed the policy slips under the bible.

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Worker:(chagrined) “This has gone far enough . . . are you still gambling with relief money?”

Zelma: “Whata you think I'm gonna do? Aintcha cut my budget till I aint got hardly enough to eat . . . [Mme?] Dell gimme a gig called the Holy Sevens and she say it aint never fail . . . and I'm gonna 'deed try it'.”

Worker: “You know you're not to use your relief money that way . . . you'll always be short if you continue to gamble . . . and you can't win, Miss Brown.”

Zelma: “How come? . . . if I didn't catch myself a gig every now and then I dont know what I'd do, cause yo'all show dont gimme enough,” and she continued to work out the 'Holy Sevens', scarcely conscious of the worker's departure.