

## [James Hughes]

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TITLE Irish Shoe Laster of Lynn - #[8?]

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COMMENTS

1

Section 8

Page 1

Name: Jane K. Leary

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Subject: The Shoe Laster of Lynn Mass. 1938-9

"In Ireland ya owned a firm an yet ya din't, 'cause ya always heda pay rint ta the gentleman that wuz over thet piarta the land ya wuz alivin' on. Still it wuz better ta live in o'Marge

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then it wuz ta live in some other piarts a Ireland, cause thier, if ya hed intintions ta come ta America, ya could see sell it an' come. Some piarts a Ireland, ya jest heda lava (leave) the land behind ya if ya come.

“So whin ma (my) uncle diaed, (died) the land wuz sold an' I got roun' \$200 outa it.

“Laike I told ya before, there wuz a tame, about thirty years ago whin I coulda gone back ta it, but my wife din't want ta go, an' basiades (besides), I remimbered how ya heda pay taxes on it, the poor rates, fir the asylums, an' the school taxes, an' basiades (besides) ta help build the roads, an' I figured I wuz better off here bein' a shoe laster. Basiades thet too, if the gentleman thet wuz over ya could disposses ya at iny tame ya din't kap (keep) the rint up ta him.

“Still ya could miake (make) a good livin' on a thirty acre firm. Thirty acres wuz considered a good 2 sized firm thiere.

“Thiey raised wheat an' flax, an horses too. Miny's the fiane horse they sold ta Angland (England). Ya wouldn't get a horse fir nothin' in thim diays. A good horse would breng \$250 er \$300, spacially a race horse. Thiey had quite a course thiere in o'Marge. An' a fiane pair a ciart horse would breng pratty near \$500, ya know. Thiere wuz good money in raisin' good horses.

“Fir tin years after I come back from Ireland after ma visit thiere fieve years after I come here the first tame, I followed up the horses. I din't stop until I got married. I wish I hed the half a what I dropped thin now though, an' I wun't hafta worry none about money.

“Thiere's no money ralely in pliyain' the horses. I lost all thet money I coulda saved thim tin years.

“The first tame I played thim, I won an' thet got me started raight. So I kep on an' sometimes I'd win, and thin sometames I'd lose[.?] Towards the last a it, I dropped aroun'

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thirty dollars one mornin' and that wuz the ind fir me. I got married soon afterwards and thin I niver pliyed agin.

"I've often thought what a pety puty (pity) it wuz that some a us young fellas a thet diay din't taike (take) some a the good money we wuz earnin' alastins shoes ta 3 buy telephone stock. Jest thenk, it could be got thin fir tin cints a share. Jest thenk a thet. If ya had put \$100 in thin, ya'd be rich tadiay.

"But liake most young fellas, I wuzn't thenkin' much a savin' money before I got married. Thet first fieve years, I did siave (save) up \$500, but thin I got a thenkin' a goin' home on a visit so I took \$400 outa the benk (bank) an' wint, an' ldft left jest the \$100 thiery. An' I spint the whole \$400 on the trip.

"Whin I come over the first tame, I come from Belfast fir thet wuz jest fifty males (miles) from Monohan. Whin I wint back fir a visit, I landed at Cork an' wint from thiery ta Dublin on the train. One hundred and sixty males it wuz.

But the train trips wuzn't inytheng laike they woulda bin in America. They wuz box ciars (cars) an' ya wuz boxed in laike ya can't get from one ciar ta the next while the ciar wuz moving, laike ya coulda hare."

"Whin I come back from thet visit, I brought one sister with me an' she lived in Lynn fir a whale (while). The other two sisters come over a little later but at ma mother niver come. She wuz too old an' I thought he she wun't be happy hiery. (here). [?]

4

### Tack Feeding From the Mouth

I asked Mr. Hughes to tell me something about the requisite custom of the old band laster, of feeding himself tacks from his mouth with his tongue.

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“Oh! thet ,,” he said, “It gets ta ba second nature laike. Ya jest sorta throw a ciartain (certain) number inta your mouth from the tack box and hold 'em thiere betwan (between) the jaw an' the lip on one siade a the mouth. Thin line tongue kinda turns em' around so as ta ta feed 'em ta you head first. Ya don't know you're adoin adoin' it after a tame.

“No I don't thenk I iver swallowed one. But I knowed a fella once that did. Thim wuz three fourth inch tacks and whin he throwed 'em in his mouth one wint back an' got stuck in his throat. Thet made him throw his head back an' the first theng ya know he had the whole business in his throat. Well, they had to taikie him ta the hospital an' they give him cotton battin' ta eat and took xrays a him an' iverytheng. “ Whin it happened, he fainted raight off laike a man achokin'. He din't know what wuz happinin' ta' him atall. But he come outa it all raight fir I seen him afterwards an' he wuzn't the worse fir it atall. An' thets the only tame in all my years a bein' a hand 5 laster thet I iver heard a the laike a that.

“The number a tacks ya hold in your mouth is accordin' ta the size of thim. Ordinary, you ya tiake about fifteen er sixteen in your mouth of a tame. Ya cut a hole in the pack and thin jest sorta throw or drenk 'em in. Some goes ta the siade a your mouth an' some undernath the tongue. An' thin the tongue tirns 'em fir ya an' feeds 'em ta ya as ya need 'em.

An' the tongue had ta wirk protty pratty (pretty) fast laike a machine too, in order ta tirn 'em headfirst fast enough fir ta give 'em ta you as fast as ya could use 'em.

“Most lasters 'ould chew tobacco on the other siade a the mouth the same tame the raight siade an' the tongue 'ould ba feedin' ya the tacks ta nail in the shoe. An' a good laster could spit the tobacco outa one siade a the south while the tacks wuz a coming outa the other. Fact is thot thet lasters an' most all the other kands a shoe wirkers chewed tobacco in the old diays.

“Thiere usta be sawdust all over the place so's it could ba swept up after the shop wuz closed of a naight. In other shops thiery'd theire'd be spitoons in the renk. (rink).

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"B. L. usta ba (be) a great tobacco fir chewin'

"After chewing kinda lost out, a lotta the min took ta pipes, an in late years a lotta T Ds wuz smoked (clay Pipes). Quite a few a thim come across the water from 6 Scotland an' Ireland. The city a Derry, Scotland, wuz a good place ta get a clay pipe from.

"The soft clay pipe wuz always the best, but ya heda ba (be) very careful a thet fir it would break asy (easy). I usta laike a clay pipe maself. It wuz a good smokin pipe.

"I niver like a corn cob pipe. Din't laike the feel an' the shank a thim. Wooden pipes aire faire enough though. Of thim, I laiked the Calabash from Scotland. Thet had a long windin' stem laike the root of a squash.

"I've hed a Mirsham pipe too. Thet's supposed ta ba (be) miade from sea foam. That wuz a elegant pipe all raight, but ya heda ba (be) careful a it or it 'ould break. It wuz colored nice.

"Ya could piay pratty protty high fir thim. Some rich fellas piad as high as twinty er thirty dollars fir 'em.

"But it ' ould always tiake a while ta sason (season) thim up. An' I knowed rich fellas thet 'ould hire some one else ta do thet fir 'em. But I would niver a done thet. I'd not laike ta smoke a pipe that some one else hed sesoned sasoned (seasoned) up. I think I'da done thet maself aven if I wuz rich.

"Most a the good pipes cost aroun' fieve or siven sivin er tin dollars.

7

"After pipes come cigars an' cigarettes. Hardly nobody tadiay smokes pipes nomore. Todiay Tadiay ya kin get as good a cigar fir fieve cints as ya usta git fir tin cints.

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“An' tadiay almost iverybody smokes cigarettes, aven the womin. In the old diays, womin that ‘ould smoke a cigarettes would almost cartain ba biad womin. But thet ain't true tadiay. A lotta womin smoke, the s same as the min.

“Years ago a man could smoke in most iny a the shops but tadiay he cain't baccuse if he goes ta the washroom ta do it, he loses a lotta tame, and the insurance a the bag shops won't let him smoke in the renk (rink). In some a the small shops ya kin still smoke, but aven a lotta thim ya cain't. on accounta the insurance laws.” 8 [Drinking](#)

“In the old diays thier wuz a lotta drenking in the shops. Not at wirk rally, but on a piay diay thiers thiery ‘ould be certain min ‘ould get enough so as he maight be out sick from it. I knowed some out fir a wake (week) er two on account a thet.

“But drenking beer wuz another theng. Most iverbody drank some a thet. Ya could get a pial a it fir tin cints an' good beer too. Paople ‘ould buy it ta drenk bafore a male (meal) fir it din't make ya drunk an' why drenk water whin ya could ‘ould get six, sivin or eight glasses fir tin cints. Womin, children, why they'd give it to 'em sure.

“ Thiet They hed both ale an' beer in Lynn. Four er fieve glasses a thet ‘ould jest about maike ya fale (feel) fiane all raight. 9 [More About the Lynn of Yesterday.](#)

“Iverytheng in Lynn wuz diffрут thin (then) it is now, laike I said bafore. Thiery wuzn't the big mairkets laike thiery is tadiay. Thiery wuz a bag grocery store raight across from whiere Blood's bag mairket is on Summer strate (street) tadiay. [?]

“It ‘ould same (seem) small and quare (queer) tadiay. They sold flour by the barrel thin, and molasses wuz bought in a jug an' sugar suger by the barrel too.

“Iverybody hed a bag garden and they raised a lotta onions an' corn an' thengs. Thiery wuzn't miny fruit stands in town but thiery wuz one big one down at Central Square run by

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Mr. Maloney, a bag fat man. An' an Italian did an awful business a sellin' fruit on Munroe Strate (Street).

“But mosta the paople din't same (seem) ta care fir fruit the wiay people do tadiay. But the Italians laiked raw vegetables, The wiay thiey usta cat raw cucumbers.

“But iverybody laiked a lotta mate. (meat). But mate wuz chaper (cheaper) in thim diays an' paople could afford ta buy it.