

## [Mrs. Larson's Story]

Beliefs and Customs - Life History (Sketch) NY 38 [?]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK 720

STATE: New York

WORKER: EARL BOWMAN

86 West 12th St

New York City

DATE: AUG. 31, 1938

SUBJECT: MRS. MILLIE LARSON

988 Boston Road

The Bronx

New York City MRS. LARSON's STORY

"My birthplace was in the old Harlem and then we moved when I was a young girl to The Bronx where I've lived ever since.

"In those days the cars were all horse-drawn and so were all the fire companies apparatus. One of the most thrilling sites it seems to me was when the big fire engines drawn by the fine handsome horses came dashing along the street.

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"I remember too when bicycles were the popular means of going on outings. Every Sunday during the summer groups of young people would stream out to the "country" [?] with the picnic lunches tied to the handle bars of their bicycles.

"Of course there no paved roads like we have now and it was real work sometimes to peddle the machine over some of the rough dirt roads.

"When the bicycles first began to be common they would often scare the horses like the automobile did later until 2 they got used to them.

"I guess the most exciting experience I ever had was because a horse got scared at a bicycle one time when I was a young girl living in Harlem.

"Some children were playing in a vacant lot and one of the very small ones was allowed to wonder unnoticed by the others out into the street.

"Just as I cam out onto the street a horse farther up became frightened at a bicycle and threw its rider off, then it dashed wildly straight toward the little girl. [??]

"I was near the baby but didn't have time to get out of the horses' way as I reached it, so the only thing I could think of was to fall on top of the baby and try to protect it with my body when the horses hoofs should strike which I was sure they would do... But the horse jumped right over [?] us, just as if he was taking a hurdle! Neither the baby or myself had even a bruise.

"I don't [?] remember who the horse belonged to, even if I knew at the time, but I've often wondered if the horse hadn't been trained as a hurdler-jumper. But whether he was or not, I was glad he jumped when he came to the child and myself piled up there in the middle of the road....

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"It has been interesting to watch the changes that have taken place in New York during my life-time and we have many more conveniences than we used to have but I don't know whether we are any happier than we were in the early days.

"I've always taken an interest in politics and government and still do.

"During the last Presidential campaign I wrote a poem about President Roosevelt, which I sent to him and he sent me his personally autographed picture, which I prize very highly. I have written some other poems but the one about the President I think is perhaps the most interesting, for after all, I don't consider myself a real "poet!"

"I will give you the verse about the President. It is short. "The President: "By the fireside sits a man, "Studying and figuring the best he can. "Through the radio he reaches our heart, "Memories of his will never depart. "On Nov. Third don't forget this Friend, "Who worked and slaved for us without end. "Roosevelt is the man of my inspiration, "Long may he be head of the Nation.

—Mrs. Millie Larson

988 Boston Road

The Bronx.

"We will always keep President Roosevelt's picture as one of our cherished possessions."

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### WORKER' S COMMENT:

Mrs. Larson did not seem to be very specific in her places and dates, and did not wish to reveal her age. The incident of the run-away horse and her bravery in saving the child in the horse's path seemed the most outstanding incident in her life. I tried to get other

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samples of her...poetry....in addition to like one given but she claimed she had no copies of them and could not remember. So, I am afraid that with this one sample of the work of a “local poet” we will have to be content. But there is a distinct bit of “humanism” revealed in her pride that because of her effort at writing, so distinguished a person as The President honored her with his photograph.

—Bowman