

[Mr. Cooke

Beliefs & Customs-Life Sketches Songs & Rhymes - Popular Songs One or two good jokes [?] [?] 3

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER A. Fitzpatrick

ADDRESS 327 East 145th St. Bronx, N.Y.

DATE October 5, 1938

SUBJECT MR. COOKE: REMINESENCES REMINISCENCES

1. Date and time of interview 1.30 P.M.
2. Place of interview AT HOME
3. Name and address of informant T. A. Cooke, 4300 Oneida Ave., Bronx.
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
H. Leonard Manager A & P Store 143rd St. and Third Ave.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None.

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

The residence, one family type, consists of a typically modern residence. Built of red brick, and set back about eight feet from the sidewalk, it is surrounded by a beautifully kept garden which extends alongside the side of the house. The entrance is to the side. The lawn is carefully groomed and there is an abundance of flowers of all varieties, visible to the eye.

The home itself, the interior, is immaculate and most beautiful. As one enters the hallway., he is confronted by a wide carpeted stairway, which leads to the upper rooms. The room in which the interview was held was a picture of neatness, cleanliness and was indicative of a man of ample means.

The furnishings, while not too elaborate, were undoubtedly expensive, and consisted of a Piano piano , a beautiful three-piece suite, and tables [rugg?] scatter rugs, ferns and draperies, a home beautiful to behold. The window view disclosed other beautiful one family residences of a like type, all set in their own beautiful and well-cared-for grounds.

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NEW YORK

FORM B Personal History of Informant

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER A. Fitzpatrick,

ADDRESS 327 East 145th St. Bronx.

DATE October 5, 1938

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SUBJECT MR. COOKE: REMINESENCES REMINISCENCES

1. Ancestry None of importance. Family. Wife deceased. Six children living.
2. Place and date of birth Tubercurry, Co Sligo, Ireland Jan. 6, 1856
3. Family
4. Places lived in, with dates 35 years resident at 879 10th Ave. N.Y.C. three years at present address. Other places not recalled.
5. Education, with dates Ordinary grammar school
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Stonecutter by trade. at present retired.
7. Special skills and interests Mechanics and Books
8. Community and religious activities Active in all social activities in his immediate parish. Is a member of the Holy Name Society and The Nocturnal Division Society. He is also President of the Eucharistic Society at 76th St. and Lexington Avenue. (The Eucharistic Society is the only one of its kind in America and is the highest order, Socially socially in the Catholic Faith.
9. Description of informant

Mr. Cooke impresses one at first sight as a person of high breeding and education. Soft spoken and gentle in his manner he conveys an impression of one who demands respect and in a position to secure it.

10. Other Points gained in interview

He stands perhaps five feet five inches high is grey and is the owner of two bristling moustaches and a Van Dyke beard. It is quite evident from his rosy complexion that he

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has always been a lover of the great outdoors He neither drinks or smokes and has never indulged in either vices. The visitor is mostly impressed by his neat appearance and the cordial welcome extended. Comment may also be made by the painstaking efforts on Mr. Cookes part to make the visitor feel at ease.

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NEW YORK [.]

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER A. Fitzpatrick

ADDRESS 327 East 147th St. Bronx

DATE October 4, 1938

SUBJECT MR. T. A. COOKE: INFORMANT

"Well, ye're askin me a lot, on account of me mind not being what it used to be, but if I can help you any I'll be glad to.

Anyhow, I'm 82 year ould. I was born in a small town outside a place called Tubercurry, [Co.?] Co Sligo. Maybe ye've heard of /[#- Tubercurry, Its not much av a place but I was born there anyhow, and I first saw the light of day on January 6th 1856.

All me folks were simple folk like meself. Me Father was a wheelwright but I had a likin' for stonecuttin' and if I do say so meself, I was'nt a bad hand at it. I had a sister out here in New York and she was always askin' us to come out here and live. I also had an uncle in Staten Island, but we niver bothered with him. Anyhow, we made our minds up to come out, and we did-the whole sivin of us. We sailed from Queenstown, (they call it 'Cobh' now,

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but it does'nt change it a bit), and we landed in New York,-(he pronounced it 'Knew Yark'), on a Sunday morn on June the 12th, 1881, after a tin day trip.

We stayed in a Hotel for a few days and thin we located in a house at 879 Tinth Avenue, That was 57 years ago. It was real Irish section that we lived in, in thim days, and mind ye, we lived there for thirty five years. Well, what with wan thing and another, 2 some of the younger wans gettin' married and such, we moved to other places and now I'm livin at me present address for the past three years.

I forgot to tell ye that I lost me Wife some years ago and a better woman niver lived, God Rist her Soul.

“Well, to get back to the beginnin'. Whin I landed here I had no trouble gettin' a job, anyone could get a job in thim days. The first job I got was with the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad where I worked for many years at me trade. I alwo worked for a long time with the New York Cintral. They did'nt pay ye much wages in thim days but what ye got ye could buy a lot with, if ye e/ understand. Why, you could buy a lot with, if ye understand. Why, you could go into a butcher's shop and get a couple of pounds of corned beef and they'd throw in the cabbage to go with it, try and get it now, and they'd give ye all you'd want, too.

But its not the same New York today, no sir, I've seen some great changes in me day. Ye would'nt believe, to look at it now, that at seventy second St. and Eight Avenue,-it's Cintral Park West now,-that right opposite the Majestic Hotel, where the [Dakota?] apartment house now stands, and bye the [way?], that's the [ouldest?] apartment house in the city today, did ye know that?, well, as I was sayin', right there, where the ould Dakota stands, it used to be a goat farm and many's the time I saw the people buyin' the goat's milk to feed to their children.

Ah Yes, times have changed. Where are your Horse cars?. Ye may laugh bedad, but let met tell [you?], ye were more comfortable in thim cars in the Winter than ye' are today

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in ye're subways and elevator railroads. They were different Winters then. Plenty of 3 cold and snow. You look like a man of fifty years of age or thereabouts and maybe you rimember the ould belly stoves that they carried in the horse cars, and the box av coal and the shovel that the conductor used to put the coal on the fire?. Even the passengers thimselves used to shovel the coal whin the fire wint low.

Ye know, ridin' on the horse cars on a Sunday was great treat in thim days. The young fellas and the girls would have lots av fun. Why there used to be dancin' in the cars on Sunday evenin's. And I mind the time whin girls that had'nt any escort would stand on a corner by the tracks playin' the accordeon and the mouth organ in the hopes that the car would stop and someone pay their fare so that they would get on and join in the fun. There would be dancin' and singin' and a wild time all round. Ah, they certainly had good times.

They had gas lamps thim days and I can see him now, the lamplighter, comin' along the street with the long pole in his hand and the flame on the top, inside a brass contraption to prevent it from blowin' out, and how he used to stick it up inside the lamp to light the light. Ye'd think it was only yesterday.

There are lots av things I can tell ye but ye'll have to give me time to think thim up. Could ye give me a couple av days and I'll see what I can do?. I also have some ould' Commalyes; (Irish songs), that I'll let ye have, if I can find thim. and also some poetry.

Here's a couple of verses that I can recall; Ireland's Son so good and bold Not to be tempted by women or gold. And there are women and gold galore. They love Virtue and Honor more.

————— 4 Here's another wan; And she went on with her maiden smile.
Safety lighted her 'round the Green Isle. For blessed forever are they who will ride On
Erin's Virtue and Erin's Pride.

Wait 'til I tell this wan;

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When I first came over to America, as I told ye, I stayed in a Hotel. It was on a Sunday morn and after Mass I was standin' in the doorway by meself, when another fellow come over to me, he was Irish too, and axed me for a match.

Well, I had a couple of matches in me pocket and I gave him wan. When he lit his pipe he asked me if I'd have a cigar. I told him I did'nt smoke.

Afetr a while he asked me if I'd have a drink. and I told him that I did'nt drink. He seemed to get mad for he suddenly turned to me and said 'Do ye eat grass? because ye're neither fit company for man or beast, and thin he walked away.

That wan reminds me of a story that I heard in the ould country. You, as an Irishmen, as ye say ye are, surely must have heard of Lord Leitrim after which the County is named?.

Well, he was a regular tyrant of a landlord as we all know. There was no standin' him. He made the lives of the people so miserable. Wan day a couple of Irishmen vowed to kill him and so wan night they hid in the bushes alonside the road, where he always used to pass in his carriage at nine o'clock at night.

They waited until nine fifteen and until nine thirty and they started to get uneasy because he had'nt come along and he was never known to be late. Nine forty-five passed by and tin o'clock wan of thim turned to the other and said 'Something must have gone 5 wrong, Cassidy, he was niver as late as this before'. 'I dont know phat can be keepin him', said Cassidy, 'BUT I HOPE NOTHIN' HAPPENED TO THE POOR FELLAH',"

"And another wan that I can recall, is the wan about Cromwell, the Tyrant. Father Tom Burke could vouch for this:"

There was a statue of Cromwell in Dublin. I dont know if it's there now or not, but anyhow, so the story goes, two Irishmen were standing under it, tearing Cromwell apart.

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'He's in Hell, where he ought to be' said one.

Just then Father Burke passed by and hearing the remark said, 'Ye ought to be ashamed of yerself for sayin' that'.

'Well, ye're Riverince, Phat's the use of havin' Hell, if he's not in it,'.

“And before I finish, I have to go now, but I'll see ye to-morrow, As I say, before I finish, I'll tell ye the wan about the Irishman that came into a saloon and asked for a bottle of whiskey in a hurry. The bartender said 'Sure, but why the hurry?' 'Well!, said the Irishman, 'Me friend is sick in bed and the doctor is with him, He's just asked him has he seen any pink elephants floatin' around the room, and mind ye, he said that he did'nt; and bedad, THE ROOM IS FULL OF THIM ”

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Three old poems from Mr. T. A. Cooke's collection:

(1) “God Save All Here”—This little poem was published in a “Knights of Columbus” dance program 50 years ago. Where it came from, Mr. Cooke could not explain. GOD SAVE ALL HERE There's a prayer that's breathed alone In dear old Ireland's land. 'Tis uttered on the threshold's stone With smile and clasping hand. And oft, perchance, 'tis muttered low With sigh and falling tear. The grandest greeting man may know— The prayer, “God save all here”. In other lands they know not well How priceless is the lore That hedges with a sacred spell Old Ireland's cabin door. To those it is no empty sound Who think with many a tear Of long-loved memories wreathing 'round The prayer, “God save all here”. Live on, O prayer, in Ireland still To bless each threshold free The echoes of her homes to fill With sacred fervency. And guarding with its holy spell The soul and conscience clear, Be graven on each heart as well The prayer, “God save all here”.

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(2) “’Tis Always So”—From the same source. 'TIS ALWAYS SO Across the meadows with clover sweet, I wandered one evening with weary feet, For my heart was heavy with untold woe, For everything seemed to go wrong, you know. 'Twas one of those days whose cares and strife Quite overshadow the good in life. So, lone and sad, 'neath the twilight stars I wandered down to the pasture bars, To the pasture bars, 'neath the hillside steep Where patiently waited a flock of sheep 7 For the happy boy, with whistle and shout, Who was even now coming to turn them out. “Good morning”, said he, with boyish grace, And a smile lit up his handsome face. He let down the bars, and we both stepped back, And I said, “You have more white sheep than black”. “Why yes”, he replied, “and didn't you know? More white than black, why, 'tis always so”. He soon passed on with his flock round the hill, But down by the pasture I lingered still, Pondering well on the words of the lad— “More white than black”, more good than bad. More joy than sorrow, more bliss than woe. “More white than black—and 'tis always so”. And since that hour, when troubles rife Gather and threaten to shroud my life, Or I see some soul on the downward track, I cry, “There are more white sheep than black”. And I thank my God that I learned to know The blessed fact, “,Tis always so”.

(3) “Will My Soul Pass Through Ireland?”—Composed by Dennis O'Sullivan, of New York City, over 50 years ago. Mr. Cooke says the poem was published only in a dance program, also that there were two composers —the second name he does not remember; WILL MY SOUL PASS THROUGH IRELAND? O, Soggarth Aroon, sure I know life is fleeting; Soon, soon, in the strange earth, my poor bones will lie. I have said my last prayer and received my last blessing, And if the Lord's willing, I'm ready to die. But, Soggarth Aroon, can I never again see The valleys and hills of my dear native land, When my soul takes its flight from this dark world of sorrow Will it pass through old Ireland to join the blest band? O, Soggarth Aroon, I know that in Heaven The loved ones are waiting and watching for me, And the Lord knows how anxious I am to be with them In those realms of joy, 'mid souls

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pure and free. Yes, Soggarth, I pray ere you leave me forever, Relieve the last doubt of a poor dying soul Whose hope, next to God, is to know that when leaving 'Twill pass through old Ireland on the way to its goal. O, Soggarth Aroon, I have kept through all changes The thrice blessed shamrock to lay o'ver o'er my clay, And, oh, it has minded me often and often Of that bright smiling valley, so far, far away. 8 Then tell me, I pray you, will I never again see The place where it grew on my own native sod? When my body lies cold in the land of the stranger, Will my soul pass through Erin on its way to our God?

* Arrah, bless you my child, sure I thought it was Heaven You wanted to go to, the moment you died; And such is the place on the ticket I'm giving, But a coupon for Ireland I'll stick on its side. Your soul shall be free as the wind on the prairies, And I'll land you in Cork, on the banks of the Lee, And two little angels I'll give you, like fairies, To guide you alright, over mountains and sea.

* Arrah, Soggarth Aroon, can't you do any better? I know that my feelings may peril your grace, But if you allowed me a voice in the matter I won't make a landing in any such place. The spot that I longed for was sweet County Derry, Among its fair people I was born and was bred; The Corkies I never much fancied when living, And I don't want to visit them after I'm dead. Let me fly to the hills where my soul can be merry, In the North, where the shamrock more plentiful grows; In Counties of Caven, Fermanagh and Derry, I'll linger till called to a better repose. And the angels you give me will find it inviting To visit the shrines in the Island of Saints, If they bring from Saint Patrick a small bit of writing They'll never have reason for any complaints.

* A soul, my dear child, that has pinions upon it, Need not be confined to a Province so small; Through Ulster, and Munster, and Leinster, and Connaught, In less than a jiffy you're over it all. Then visit sweet Cork, where your Soggarth was born, No doubt many new things have come into vogue, But one thing you'll find—thatboth night, noon and morn, As for centuries back, there's no change in the brogue.

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* Good Mother, assist me in this, my last hour, And, Soggarth Aroon, lay your hand on my head; Sure you're Soggarth for all, and for all you have power, And I take it for penance for what I have said. And now, since you tell me through Ireland I'm passing, And finding the place so remarkably small, I'll never let on to the angels, while crossing, That we know a distinction in Counties at all.

Note: "Soggarth" is "Priest" in Irish, "Aroon" is word for "dear", "Arrah" is word for "Well".