

## [The Rooster's Ghost—McGuinness]

Tales - Anecdotes

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK 8 Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER A. Fitzpatrick

ADDRESS 327 E. 145th St. New York

DATE December 13, 1938

SUBJECT THE ROOSTER'S GHOST - MC GUINNESS

1. Date and time of interview December 12, 1938
2. Place of interview
3. Name and address of informant James Mc Guinness 218 E 188th St. New York City
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. (See previous interviews)
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

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SUBJECT THE ROOSTER'S GHOST - MC GUINNESS

This is a story that is absolutely true, and one too, that happened right here in New York. It is about a rooster that had his head cut off and continued to crow for days afterwards. The end of the story will satisfy the curiosity.

“A brother-in law of mine, living in East 225th St. in the upper Bronx, occupied a little five room, one family house. In the rear he had a garden where he grew, each year, a plentiful supply of vegetables. He was a great lover of flowers, too, and at one time had as much as thirty-one different varieties in bloom at the same time.

“At the rear of the garden he had erected a six-by-four chicken coop and a forty foot long runway for the chickens to exercise in. He had forty chickens, including a magnificent specimen of a rooster, standing nearly two feet in height. And how that boy could crow.

This brother-in-law of mine, that I'm speaking about, was a taxicab driver. He arose every morning at four A. M. and left the house at five to be at his work at six. He retired to bed

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every night at nine P. M. The only trouble was that he could not secure a night's unbroken sleep due to the crowing of the rooster.

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He confided in his wife, adding "That rooster's got to go". A few days afterwards upon his return from a hard day's work, he took the axe, grabbed the rooster, took him to the chopping block and severed his head from his body! The rooster ran around, headless, for a while and then collapsed. 'Chicken Fricassee' didn't taste bad that evening for supper.

"The next night, the one following the demise of the rooster, my brother-in-law was awakened in the early hours. He was not sure, so he listened again. There it was the rooster was still crowing. There was no mistake about it. He knew that he was not dreaming, because the crowing was repeated while he lay in his bed.

Not wishing to alarm his wife, he told her nothing about his experience of the night. He went to sleep again the next night and, sure enough, the rooster woke him up again. He wanted to tell his wife, but, knowing how Irish and superstitious she was, he kept his knowledge to himself. [?]e/

"However, the third night was too much for him. He was beginning to get nervous. All he knew, and was sure of was THAT HE HAD KILLED THAT DARNED ROOSTER - and being over twenty-one he had sense enough to know that dead roosters CANT CAN'T crow. He had only one rooster at the time; he had none now; so where was the crowing coming from? '/

"He hit upon a plan. He got up and dressed and, taking a flashlight and an axe with him, went out into the light and down to the chicken coop. He placed his hand on the wire mesh enclosing the runway and waited. He wasn't disappointed. Sure enough, there it was, and right inside the coop; - 'Cock-a-doodle-do'. He almost dropped the axe when his hair stood on end, but gathering his courage, (or what was left of it), he rushed to the coop, tore open the door and looked in. There were the chickens all asleep, huddled up close to each other

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and -no ROOSTER. He closed the door quickly and bolted for the house. When he was safely inside he woke his wife up and told her the story.

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“His wife looked at him to see if he had been drinking and said, 'Are ye losin' ye're senses? Ye know that ye killed that rooster three days ago and that we ate him. Now hold ye're whisht and get back into bed. Waking a body up with such a fool tale as that, G'wan, go back to sleep.'

He tried to convince her, but it was no use. Suddenly the rooster crowed again and she sat up in bed. 'There ye are, There ye are, See, am I lyin'? Ye hear it ye're-self, dont ye?' said the brother-in-law.

He wife crossed herself and said, 'Glory be to God'. He's come back to haunt us. Oh, what'll we do, what'll we do'?

I'm goin' to go right down agin and if I have to kill ivery wan of thim damned fowl I'll get to the bottom av this', and away he went.

He went straight to the coop once more, opened the door and going inside, closed the door after him. He put his flashlight out and waited.

“Suddenly the 'Cock-a-doodle-do' came again and he put the light on, and what did he see?, He couldn't believe his eyes, ONE OF THE CHICKENS were was crowing. Oh' said he, 'That's it, is it?' He took his handkerchief of his back pocket and, tying it around the legs of the culprit, slammed the door. When he reached his wife he told her that he had solved the situation and explained what he had discovered.

He killed the chicken the next evening when he came home from work. And a peculiar thing about it was, that when be cleaned it, he discovered (whether it had anything to do with the crowing or not, or maybe the chicken was a morphodite) right through the gizzard

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was a nail about three inches long. Figure it out for yourself. However, he got his sleep after that-and that ends the story.

With the exception that, upon several inquiries afterwards, it was found to be a common occurrence that chickens DO sometimes crow.

“The wife's mother, when told of the occurrence, confirmed this and remarked that there was a four-line poem that was heard frequently in Ireland,

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appropos of this phenomenon, that went something like this:- “A whistling woman. Or crowing hen Is very unlucky To single men”.