

[Lilly Lindo]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Vivian Morris

ADDRESS 225 West 130th Street

DATE July 14th, 1939

SUBJECT

1. Date and time of interview
2. Place of interview
3. Name and address of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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NEW YORK

FORM C

TEXT OF INTERVIEW (UNEDITED)

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NAME OF WORKER Vivian Morris

ADDRESS 225 West 130th Street

DATE July 14, 1939

SUBJECT

Lilly Lindo, one of the Apollo Theatre dancing girls, isn't as happy as she looks when she trips out on the stage four times each day, seven days a week. In between shows and after the last show at night she rehearses for the next week's bill. —

"I been doin' this for goin' on two years now, hopin' an' wishin' that some day I'll get a break an' be sumbody. I want t'see mah name in 'lectric lights an' in alla newspapers. — I knows I'm black, an' I knows black folks has gotta go a long ways befo' they arrive. But I got one thing in th' back a this head a mine, an' that is 'Color Can't Conquer Courage'. I'm gonna be a Florence Mills. ——— Does you remember her, Miss?

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Y'knows when she started dancin' she was oney 5 years old? At an entertainment her Sunday School was puttin' on it was, an' she kep' on from there to the nickelodeons on 135th Street an' on, an' on, til she became the sensation of two continents. She danced an' sung for kings, princes an' all the rest a royalty. Lawd, am I wishin' an' hopin' that one a these nights some a them white folks who come to Harlem lookin' for talent will see

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sumthin' in me an' give me a chance where I whouldn't have t'do four shows a day for 7 days a week.

“Florence Mills knocked 'em dead ev'vy time she came on the stage. The Duke a Win'sor, (then he was the Prince a Wales) saw her 'strut her stuff' thirteen times. They even call her the Negro Ambassador to the World, but things like that never went to her head. Her spirit was typical of the Negro, and did she have pride in her own people! Whenever she was playin' in a show on Broadway she always seed to it that it came to Harlem even for a week so that her own people who didn't have money enough to go down on Broadway would not be denied the privilege of seein' her. Lawd, I can see an' hear her now, singin': 'I'm a little Blackbird lookin' for a Bluebird', in her small warblin' voice, her figgitin' feet dancin' as though she was walkin' on fine wires an' had 'lectric sparks goin' through her body. Jesus! she shore did her stuff with enjoyment. I'm gonna be that sumday, shore enough. I'm 23 now. Keep watchin' the newspapers — you gonna read about me. Florence Mills was one a God's chosen 3 chillren. She make as much as three thousan' five hun'ed dollars a week an' she didn't leave 133rd Street either, until God saw fit t'take her offa this wicked earth, an' she was moved outa there. Sometime I think God ain' fair as He should be. Florence Mills die when she reached the top. She didn' enjoy the money she made. She was in demand. They had big plans for her an' all of a sudden God came on the scene. She was one of His chill'ren; He step right in an' clip her wings. Her shufflin' feet danced her way t'Glory. She was a God-given Genius. People like Florence Mills make this world a better place t'live in. She did a helluva lot t'wipe out race prejudice. — If all they say about the Hereafter is true, then the Heavenly Gates must a swung ajar for Florence Mills t'enter an' Shine in Heaven, 'cause she sure did shine down here. That was some year an' month a dissappointments in Harlem, November 1927. The Republicans swep' Harlem, Marcus Garvey was bein' deported an' our Queen a Happiness died.

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