

[Random Conversations]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Wayne Walden

ADDRESS 51 Bank St NYC

DATE December 1, 1938

SUBJECT [STREET-LORE-Random conversation?]

1. Date and time of interview
2. Place of interview Picked up here and there along the city streets (New York)
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. Note: The New York City Streets are a rushing [???] folklore. I have picked [??] random [???] heard by me along the city, streets the following - as was similar [?] [???] (FOLKTALK - FOLKSTUFF," may not be [?] [?] lore [??] [?] these stray bits of interest and humor to have some [?]

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(Wayne Walden [1211?]

November 30, 1938) Street Lore. [730?]

(In pursuance of some "new contact", a gushing geyser of indubitable folklore, I have picked up more random remarks as heard by me along the city's streets. The following, as was similar material previously turned in as "street lore Street Lore", may not be strictly lore, but I'm presuming these to have some relation to it. Lore or not, I hope the interest and humour is something more than a mere delusion of mine.)

[md]

With Olive Oil And Garlic

On Bleeker Street, down among the vegetable market, a woman lady about thirty was on a shopping tour. Hesitating before a stand attended by a young Italian / woman girl, the lady inquired of a certain vegetable.

"Them's broccoli," replied the salesgirl, "they's very nice and fresh." "But", confessed the lady, "I'm afraid I dont know how to cook them."

"Oh, it's nothin' much to it," said the attendant, "you just berl it, and then put erl an' gollick in it. That is, if you like erl and gollick, but you dont have to use the erl an' gollick if you dont like 'em."

Tough Luck For Anthony.

Not so long ago, while calling on some friends, I found Anthony, a boy of twelve, ill in bed with a severe cold. From the kitchen, adjoining the room where Anthony lay, came the [?] appetizing aroma of a meal being prepared. [?]

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Anthony:- “Wot you gotta eat, Maw?” Can I get up?”

Ma:- “No, Anthony—you're to stay in bed. And it's best that you dont eat just yet, as you still have a fever.”

Anthony:- “But wotcha gotta eat?”

His Ma:- (Somewhat [?] hesitant) “Chicken.”

Anthony:- (A wail of woe) “Yeah! When I'm sick and [can't?] eat, you have chicken. And, gosh darn it, when I'm well and [can?] eat you have cabbage.”

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(I'm reminded, while telling the tale of Anthony's hard luck, of something similar, but [??] happening much longer ago.) Dave wouldn't eat.

Dave, my cousin, when a boy of about nine, was sent from the table to wash his dirty hands.

“And don't come to the table until you've washed them thoroughly clean,” said his mother.

Ten or more minutes had passed when the mother observed Dave sitting in the wood-box , back of the kitchen stove.

“Dave, “she said,” didn't I tell you that you couldn't come to the table, until you washed your hands ? “

“Well,” said Dave, “I aint a eatin' am I ?”

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Two Eggs. This was told to me by [???] Stony Point, N.Y. [????????]

A young Italian woman entered an American grocery store. She spoke no English and the grocer spoke no Italian.

He: "Can I help you, madam?"

She: - Si, dua ova." (Yes, two eggs.)

He: - "Pardon, did'nt catch what you said."

She: "Dua ova—dua ova."

He: "Sorry, lady. I dont understand—I guess me no savvy."

She: "Dua ova" then giving a fair imitation of a cackling hen, she repeated "dua ova."

He: (catching on at last) "Oh, I know what you went, you want some aigs!"

"Si" said the signorina, holding up two fingers, "dua ova."

***** Such Language!

A flippant young/ man seeing a young lady across the street, with whom he was apparently aquainted acquainted , yells: "Hi Toots, how's yer state of hycopperosity sagashiatin' this morning?"

Young lady: "Huh? What did you say?" Continued on page 3.

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Young man: "I say it aint so hot as it is now is it? What do you say?"

Young Lady: "I say, I think you're nuts."

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***** Not Much Of A Topic.

Two men, casual acquaintances, met on the street, exchanged “hello's” and proceeded together.

“Well, how's everything” ? said one.

“Oh, so so”, replied the other,” How's it by you?”

“Bout the same. Rotten weather, aint it?”

“Yeah, makes a guy feel kinda bum.”

“Workin'?”

“Naw, Can't find a damned thing. You workin'?”

“Naw. Kinda tired lookin'; dont seem much use lookin' anyhow.”

“That's way I' feel. Well, see you agin—gotta turn off here, s'long.”

“S'long.”

***** A Lesson in Language.

Following directly behind a couple of fellows walking up the street, I overheard this fragmentary conversation.

“She said somethin' bout havin' an aversion toward the guy.”

“What she mean, 'aversion'?”

“Aversion means when you dont like somethin'.”

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Then why'nhell dont you say, 'I don't like the damned thing' ? “

***** The Number of your Chicken

In a live poultry market on Thompson Street, near Bleeker, the dealer has struck a kind of compromise between the English and Italian language. Your ticket, when buying a fowl, [?] instead of stating “This in the number of your chicken”, reads, “This is the 237 (or whatever number) of your chicken.”

(I pondered quite a while on this last one. Throw it out if you dont like It.)

Wayne Walden [1215]

December 5, 1933. [6?]

This socalled “ [?] Siamese out-of-work song, tune American, is one that would likely be more popular were it more obvious. Among at least a dozen members of the I.W.W., I found no one who could fully translate the words. The song is printed in the twenty-sixth edition of the I.W.W. songs, of May, 1936. No explanation is given of its peculiar arrangement. But I feel sure that my solution will appear to be correct.

“SIAMISE OUT-OFF WORK SONG (As I figger it oud out)

(Air: America) Ova tannas Siam, O, what an ass I am, Geeva tannas Siam, Gee, what an ass I am, Ova tannas! Oh, what an ass! Holezin mupan zencote, Holes in my pants and coat, Bossad meby deth rote Boss had me by the throat— Allah tadid wazvote All that I did was vote— Ova tannas! Oh, what an ass! Ova tannas Siam Oh, what an ass I am, Geeva tannas Siam, Gee, what an ass I am, Ova tannas! Oh, what an ass! Nome ore por kchopsin pize, No more pork-chops and pies, Ivui knotor gan nize I would not organize, Disoop pline aintzon ize; Dicipline aint so nice; Vatta tammass!” What a damn ass!

Friday night, December 2, 1936, two housewives sitting on the front steps of an apartment house on Perry Street, were interrupted in their gossip by the sudden clamour of newsboys announcing an "extra".

"Uxtra, Uxtra," bellowed the brass-lunged paper sellers, "re awl aboudid, wah boo raw blub, re awl aboudid, Uxtra, Uxtra, Frans wah blub blah woo, re awl aboudid, Italy, re awl aboudid Uxtra xtra". When, in a few moments, the

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(Street Lore

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Wayne Walden

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noise and excitement had diminished, the bellowing newsboys having hurried into other streets, the old ladies resumed their talk. :

"Did you get what they said?" asked one of the other.

"Kinda sounded like France and Italy going to war" she answered.

"Oh, I just bet you that's what it was", chortled the first, "Maybe now we'll have a little peace for a change."

(I don't know [?] whether these remarks of the old ladies represent lore, or possess any point. It struck me at the time there was a bit of humour in them but, now that I've tried to present it, I'm not so sure. I fear that a better man than I am would need record the shouts

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of the “Extra” peddlers. Perhaps the author of the “Siamese Song” would be just the guy.) But my poor blubs boos re awl aboudids, etc., were jotted down before seeing Siam song.

***** The Manners of Modern Youth.

Two girls, one slightly plump, were walking arm and arm up the street. Opposite, on the other side, three pubescent young fellows took notice. “Hey Fat” called one of the daring young men Gallants, “Hey Fat—You gonna be an old maid all yer life?”

“Aw close your face”, said “Fats”, or I’ll come over and smack you down.”

The following two, of remarks heard from colored persons in Harlem, were related to me by John Turner who states they are recent and true, and possibly of value.

A checker game was in progress, the players and spectators all being negroes. Good natured banter was indulged, and frequent laughter. Evidently clever maneuvering enabled one of the players to do some “tall jumping”. “Dats all right, he aint goin to do it no mo’”, boasted the losing player. “Oh, Yeah?” said the winning man, as he again made two jumps, “Who sa say he aint?” 3 [urner?]/ as a book salesman calling at a house in Harlem, failed to find the prospective buyers at home. “So I got to talking to the colored maid. She seemed to have the blues, and about all she cared to talk about was her tough luck.” “I told her maybe she ought to try to get a good job, or, better yet, to get herself a man with money.”

“Dey aint no mo’”, the man replied, “when you see a man now whats got money, he already occupied.”