



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
FOLK ARTS & HERITAGE PROGRAM

AUDIO TAPE LOG

Accession No.: MH-11-04-DA Date(s): April 23, 2011

Fieldworker(s): Maggie Holtzberg, David Blackburn, Marsha Felch

Interviewee(s): Congregants of Holy Trinity Polish Church

Event: Blessing of Easter food

Place of Recording: parish hall

Recording Equipment: Tascam Microphone(s): internal

Recorded in: stereo Tape Brand and Format: DAT, 65 minutes

Amount Tape Used: Cassette: _____ DAT: ABS time: 27:34 minutes

Related Accession Numbers: _____

Brief summary of tape contents: Pauline Golec greets us, and we mingle with parishioners have brought their food baskets to be blessed by the priest; Dottie Naruszewicz Flanagan, Jane, and others. People describe the foods in their baskets -- ham, keilbasa, eggs, horse radish, butter lambs, and greens. Many people tell us that the priest used to come to each person's house to bless the food. Formal blessing of food by priest.

Counter/ABS	Contents
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Mary	Before, the priest used to come to every house to bless the food.
Pauline	And people would clean like crazy. And they'd come in for all of three minutes (makes the sound of the holy water being sprinkled)
Mary	They'd go from house to house, all by foot too.
Maggie	When did that stop?
Mary	People are scattered all over, it's so hard.
PG	I would say at least 30 years ago.
DB	Oh, there are the butter lambs.
PG	You see Dotties? She's got a flock.
MH	Nice to meet you. Are these yours? They're beautiful! Look at the way you've done the detail.
DNF	Well, my daughter swirls. I mold and my daughter swirls. And as she's swirling, my grandson and I are doing the eggs.
DB	Hi Dottie. I'm David Blackburn - Pauline has told us so much about your lambs.
DNF	Well, this is a wonderful tradition. It's an absolutely fabulous tradition.
PG	From the sublime (Pauline points to a man nearby with his grocery brown paper bag) to the ridiculous. [loud laughter] Straight from Market Basket.

DNF This is called the Mazurac and it's a Polish cake. I didn't make it. I got it from a Polish store. At one time, the priest used to come to the house. So my mother would always have everything prepared. But then when they weren't able to do that anymore, logistically there weren't able to get to all the families, they would then have people come here. And there are two blessings: nine and eleven.

MH What is the story behind the butter lambs?

DNF Well of course, Jesus is the lamb of God. And so that represents Jesus.

MH [maggie turns to the man to Dottie's right with the brown shopping bag.] And this is yours?

That is mine. Yeah, everything is in it. All the representation -- we have the salt and the horse radish, you have the meat, you have the dairy products. Each thing sort of represents the meaning of Easter. The lamb, and the eggs are the spring coming up, the lamb of God.

MH What does the horse radish represent?

That, I think, in the Jewish tradition, where they have something bitter in the Passover [seder]. That's an extension of

DB The bitter herbs, during the Passover Seder, the bitter herbs are dipped in salt water to remind you of the trials and the tears of the Hebrew slaves.

Yeah, actually the Christian tradition, in church we're taught it's not a denial of the Jewish tradition, it's a follow up. The lamb is the resurrection. So all the staples are here -- the meat, the dairy products, everything that gives life.

DNF I got the babka, the mazurac. . . Fill and Chill Gas Station o in Billerica. He's wonderful, he's from Poland.\

MH So we're going to see you on the 12th of May

DNF Right, at 11:00 o'clock.

MH Well Jane, this lady in the blue, does these, which are much bigger.

Jane Yah, these are from candy molds. [Jane Markowicz Dutley]

DNF Her father owned a candy store

Jane In Lowell and he made all his own candy - all the bunnies -

MH What was his name?

Jane Blue Dot Candy on Bridge Street. He's been dead 25 years already. But we kept the molds so I use them for Easter to make the lambs out of butter. It's a nice tradition. We've been doing this since we were little kids. The priest used to come to the house to bless the food.

MH That's what everyone has been saying.

Maggie notices some beautiful needle work on decorative cloths over the food in baskets.

RF We just celebrated our 50th anniversary, so that's why I have gold on all my baskets.

MH Can I have a picutre of you with your basket?

RF Sure. . . the egg is made with onion skins. You boil it with onion skins. For the color. Then when they dry, you take a little bit of butter or oil and you shine it up. That's why you get the shine. And I do wraps and I do the kids' names on them. This is my youngest granddaughter, Gabrielle.

MH Hi Gabrielle, nice to meet you. Oh, it looks so good. You even have cakes too.

RF These are ginger breads from Poland. And I always put a few Polish candies in.

MH And your name again?

RF My name is Regina Fuller. My mother's name, my maiden name was Krogosky. There's where the Polish is.

MH Well, this is a lot of people. So what happens? Does the priest -- oh here he comes now.

RF The priest will come and bless the food.

Priest Peace. [someone claps hands loudly to get everyone's attention.
? It's a nice time to meet friends we went to grammar school with, now that our school is closed.

Priest [speaking English with a Polish accent]. . . Of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. . . Pray for God. Raise Him on high and gave him a name above all other names. . Blessed be God from Heaven. [All] Blessed be God from Heaven.

Man Brothers and Sisters, listen to the words of the Book of Deuteronomy. Observe the month of Abebe by keeping the passover of the Lord, dear God since it was in the month of Abebe that He brought you by night out of Egypt. You shall offer the passover sacrifice from your flock or your herd to the Lord dear God. . . . you may not eat leavened bread, but only unleavened bread, the bread of affliction . . . then in the morning you may return to your tents. . .

Priest This time of God who invites us to the Pascal feast, stands ready to . . .let us call upon the [?]

Man Lord, prepare us for the feast of life. [parishioners repeat this phrase.] That Easter may find us cleansed of sins and ready to live anew our Christian faith. We pray to the Lord. That the bread we share may be a reminder of the bread of life we share on eucharist. Pray to the Lord [all pray] . . .

Priest Christ told us to pray for our daily bread and so we say, [all] Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Bless us Amen. [He then delivers his message in Polish, after which he sprinkles holy water while walking in amongst the people who have their food on display.]
Happy Easter. Halleluah.

Pauline brings me over to meet the priest.
Dr. Holtzberg? Monsignor Kempa.

MH Pleased to meet you. Thank you for letting me be here.

MC She is good history.

PG God knows how long this will last.

MH Well it's interesting because the priest used to go to the house and now it's here. . . . wow, and now people just leave with their food.

PG They stick around, they might talk. Might grab an egg.

MH Do you remember when the priest would come to the house? You were little.

PG Everybody would clean. Maybe Jane would know. Jane Markowicz Dutly. Maggie Holtzberg.

MH Yes, we met- the candy store. Her father had the candy store, right?

PG Former teacher. Good people.

JMD I have all the molds at home.

MH Did you ever learn how to make candy yourself?

JMD Uh, candy canes. I can make great canes, but I can shape them, not make them.
 That's my husband who helps me.
MH And what's your name?
MD Mike.

We all continue to mingle for awhile and then leave.