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MF064 Veazie History and Architecture Project

NAFOH Oral History Recordings

July 2023

Ruby J. (Hollis) Meehan, interviewed by Bruce B. Brown, Jr.

Ruby J. Meehan

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Department of Anthropology
Northeast Archives of
Folklore and Oral History

Stevens Hall, South
Orono, Maine 04473
207/581-7466

December 6, 1977

Dear Mrs. Meckow,

When I interviewed you yesterday
I forgot to ask you to sign a
release form. Would you please sign
the form because it makes it easier
for the Northeast Archives to store the
tape.

Thank you for the interview you
gave me yesterday.

Sincerely,
Bruce Brown Jr.

Interviewer's tape no.: 12.5.77
 Interviewer: Bruce Brown Jr.
 Interviewee: Mrs. Ruby Meehan
 Place of interview: Mrs. Meehan's home
 Other people present:

NAFOH Accession no.:
 Address: RFD#2 Box 778, Carmel, Maine 04419
 Address: Veazie, Maine
 Date: December 5, 1977

Equipment used: TR 14 Uher
 Tape: Brand: Scotch AV 176 Size reel: 5, 1 mil/1.5 mil Speed: 7/8
 Cassette: Brand: C-30/C-60/C-120
 Amount of tape used: (Side 1): 3/4 (Side 2):

Brief description of contents: Part of Veazie Architecture & History Project.
 Mrs Meehan talks bout her life in Veazie and about the history of the town in general.

Index	NAFOH	Int.	Catalog
	003	3	Opening announcement.
		6	Born in Troy, Maine. Moved to Veazie when she married. The house orginally had two rooms but over the years they have added on. Put a cellar under the house. First came about fifty years ago.
		34	Daughter was born in the town in a house at the top of the hill [Toward Orono]. She had a midwife instead of a doctor--like the girls are doing today. The midwife was Maude Hollis, Mrs. Meehan's aunt. Did not know that Grace Jordan had been a midwife. The doctor came after everything was over.
		60	She had heard of Dingbat Prouty. Said Dingbat was Warren Prouty; father to Gene Prouty. He lived the house now owned by Ann Dinsmore. Did not know why people called him Dingbat. Her husband was called Skinny though his name was Gene.
	100	87	Tells a story about how Gene and Gene Prouty and a friend stole some of Ruby's chickens. They had decided to have a feed but had no money. She made them pay two dollars a chicken even though they weren't worth it.
		115	One of the Prouty's on the Chase Road took one of her pigs and kept it. He found the pig on the electric trolley trolley track and put it in his pen. When she confronted Prouty he denied having the pig. Cliff Prouty said she could go down to the pig pen. She took a pail that she fed the pig from and he came to her, so she

Veazie Troy

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			claimed her pig.
		156	She could not remember when the trolley was first put in. [A book about Veazie's history just came out so she continually refers to it] Used to be a train station on School Street where the crossing is. If people wanted to use the train they would flag it down. The train was mainly for freight like milk. First thought the trolley was taken out forty years ago. The book said the trolley dismantled in the 1940's. When she first came there was a spur track that went up the river to pick up freight.
		185	there was a ferry that crossed over to Eddington. There was one to Indian Island also. In Veazie the ferry was at Thompson Point. The people would cross the river to take the electric trolley to Bangor. She never used the ferry.
	200	201	Tells how she used to pick up river wood. When they used to drive logs down the river, and when it rained the booms would burst. The logs would be strewn on the banks of the river from Old Town to Bangor. The rivermen would push what they could back in the river but there still would be some. One time she and an old fella were picking up the wood. She had a pick pole to get the wood. In a battle to see who would get the most. she got about a cord. The stove would burn coal or wood.
		222	Never heard of Corporation Hill.. Read there Had been a Pumpkin Tavern.
		228	Never heard of Nell Donahue. When she first moved there she worked all the time. She left early in the morning and came back late at night so it was a long time before people knew she lived in town. She worked in Bangor in the Mel Long restaurant. Catered to high school students. [Read in the book Veazie known as the Plains]. Traveled back and forth on the trolley
		245	Never heard of Harknessville. Knows the harkness family. Mrl. Harkness a big lumber man The present Mrs. Harkness was his second.
		25]	Veazie Park across from the cemetery. Old Aunt Hat had a big house in the area. Aunt Hat a famous madame. Husband had a song but she wouldn't recited it all. First came she had the big place. The town was a booming lumber town. Like Hancock St. in Bangor. When she first came to town Aunt Hat was an old lady. One day she came to visit Ruby. Aunt Hat lived with her brother Joe Dudley. Smoked on a clay pipe. Showed Ruby a big wad of paper tied to her calf, and promised to show Ruby how to get that kind of a roll. Husband told her not to let her in again

Old Town
Bangor
Indian Is.
Eddington
Veazie

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	300	300	<u>Aunt Hat</u> reminded her of another madame in Bangor, <u>Dolly Jack</u> . both woman would help people that needed help. But when <u>Dolly Jack</u> died nobody went to the funereal. She knew <u>Dolly because</u> through her husban when he bought liquor from her.
		322	Tells how the first president of the University of Maine was hard off the boys. The boys decided to get even. <u>John Davis</u> was one of the boys. Told the president that they wanted to buy anew wagon, but hey wanted his advice first. took him to see <u>Aunt Hat's</u> wagon, got him to sit in it and tyhey took an pictuæ that they plastered the campus with the picture.
		343	Could not remember any stories about <u>Dingbat</u> and <u>Aunt Hat</u> . Suggested talking to <u>Bill Jordan</u> and <u>Addie Weed</u> .
		350	The street she lives on was known as <u>Dugy- Dun-g</u> Dugy Lane, instead of Lemon St. Tells how she had a lemon tree that grew big lemons. A reporter wrote an article about <u>Mrs. Meehan</u> of Lemon St. and her lemon tree. She made lemon pies from the lemons--more sour that the normal ones.
		369	Did not know much about <u>General Veazie</u> . [Agaïne she refered to the book]
		378	Could not remember any sawmills in the town. Did remember the canoe factor-y owned by <u>Bertie Morris</u> . Was where Stucco Lodge is now.
		390	Three stores in town: the Gillman store just above Red's market (the old Russel store). [From thebook] E K Stewart store, the Gillman store,
	400	402	only one boarding house on the corner of Oak and Olive. Owned by a <u>Pratt</u> . Later madè it into apartments. Three houses up was the NEOP hall--where <u>Norman Bacon</u> lives now. NEOP stood for New England Order of Patrons.
		419	They used to ahve a big Grange <u>whisch</u> which was held in the old town hall. Had a Pomona meeting that drew a lot of people. the town's centennial drew the biggest crowd--fed over a thousand. <u>Gillman</u> made bean hole beans. Needed a lot of hañd wood coals to cook the beans. The people fed cafeteria style.
		434	Never heard of Fort Hill. Never were any Indians in the town. Never heard of <u>Hervert H. Sellers</u> , a landscape photographer.
		441	The oldest house was the Veazie house, now owned by <u>Bob Turner</u> . <u>Bill Jordan's</u> house id old. <u>Ralph Park's</u> house is old-- the old Towl house. <u>Addie Weed's</u> house and <u>Frank Todd's</u> . Houses fixed up. <u>Ethel Bell's</u> was is old. the ol <u>Davixs-</u> Davis farm.
		454	Big fire at the Davis farm. When she came

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Bangor

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Index	NAFOH	Int.	Catalog
			town the <u>Davis's</u> had a dairy farm. They delivered the milk everyday in a bottle. their barn burned down.
		463	The firehouse used to be the fire house. Did not remember any other firehouses
		468	The old Doan house used to be the first town hall--on the corner of Olive and Judson. Thought they had dances there. <u>General Veazie</u> gave it to the town.
		478	For entertainment they had hay rides and skated on the river. Now the river so polluted they can't skate on it. Toward Bangor they had horse races on the river. Even grown people would skate. She could always see bonfires from the river. Fifteen years since they last used the river. <u>Jones</u> also cut his ice into the river, but no one can now. The ice was packed in saw dust. No sewers ran into the river. Most people had outhouses.
	500	501	When she first moved into the town had not electric lights. Many people had gas lights. When they dug the streets up they found old gas lines. Her house never had any gas lights. Her kitchen used to be smaller, she had a wood stove. At first there were only two rooms.
		511	First got electricity about forty years ago. The owner was <u>Arthur Day</u> . At first they were renting. They fixed it up. <u>Day</u> came to borrow money. He didn't pay it back before asking for more. They made a deal to buy the house if they loaned him the money. His wife was a Pentecostal and she stripped him of his money to give to the church. Owned the land all the way down the road. Bought the place for seven hundred dollars. Daughter had part of the land now.
		542	The town had a lot of poor people. One poor girl married a poor man from Bangor. One year the American Legion decided to give a family a Christmas basket. Drew a name at the Salvation Army. They were given an address. When they got the basket together the <u>Meehans</u> were asked to deliver it. Got here and found they knew the couple. While they were there the man was cooking hog jowls. The kids were eating it up as fast as he cooked it. He offered some to <u>Ruby</u> and she ate it--her husband could not believe she ate it. Believed it made him feel better.
		573	Went to another house where the family was poor and dirty. The woman was baking cookies for her big family--a table was loaded with cookies. Offered <u>Ruby</u> a cookie which she ate. Those kind of things don't hurt people. Now she works for Meals For ME in Bangor. It makes the old people feel better. Most of the people are lonely.
	604	598	Closing statement/

Bangor