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NAFOH Oral History Recordings

July 2023

Avon E. (Hodsdon) Lancaster, interviewed by Jill Hansen

Avon E. Lancaster

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Interviewer's tape no.: NAFOH Accession no.: 1126.1
 Interviewer: Jill Hansen Address: 82 Little River Rd.
 Interviewee: Address: Hampton, N.H. 03842
 Place of interview: Mrs. Avon Lancaster Date: 116 Main St. Veazie, Maine
 Her home November 8, 1977
 Other people present: None

Equipment used: Sony
 Tape: Brand: Scotch Size reel: 5" 1 mil/1.5 mil Speed: 1 7/8
 Cassette: Brand: C-30/C-60/C-120
 Amount of tape used: (Side 1): 1/2 (Side 2):

Brief description of contents:

Mrs. Lancaster, 65, moved to Veazie when she married her husband 37 years ago. She talked of her childhood and family in Bangor, and recollections of Veazie from about 1939 onwards. She also speaks of her house, built in about 1800.

Index	NAFOH	Int.	Catalog
		034	Opening announcement
		046	She has lived in Veazie for 37 years. She moved from Bangor because she got married. She thinks she was born at home, but her own two girls were born at the Eastern Maine Medical Center. It was fairly common for children to be born at home in the early 1900's. She is 65 years old, born in 1912.
		065	Her mother came from Limestone, Maine. When her mother was old enough to go to work, she came down to Bangor. She worked for Dr. Bunker in his office. Her father was a railroad man.
		078	Mrs. Lancaster worked as a child at Rhines, at that time owned by a Mr. Goul from Orono. It was an exclusive dress shop with one-of-a-kind merchandise. Now, a Rhine from Portland is running the store and it's completely different.
	0100	090	She earned about \$25 per week as a buyer for the jewelry department. She, as well as her brothers and sisters were expected to work. There were two girls and one boy in her family. One sister is currently in Jaffrey, N.H. and her brother has died.
		103	She's not sure, but she thinks Veazie is named after Gen. Veazie who had a residence here. [A horn outside somewhere is blaring]
		115	Lou Silver lives in a house that was previously Pickard's, an especially nice home. She has never heard of the term 'Main Roaders'. There was no special section of town where the poor people were located.

*Jaffrey, J. H.
 Bangor
 Limestone
 Veazie*

Index	NAFOH	Int.	Catalog
		131	Her husband was a musician. He worked all over the area as a saxophone player. He was in a band sometimes at the Dreamwood Ballroom in Bar Harbor which has since burnt down. It used to be a real nice place. He's also worked at the Anchorage, the Turn Inn, which has also burnt, the Bangor House and many other places.
		147	There are several local local businesses in Veazie now, such as the Tabenken beer sellers, but she can't recall in the olden days.
		157	Everybody seemed to know everybody else in Veazie. It wasn't especially difficult, however, when <u>Mrs. Lancaster</u> first moved to Veazie. She had never visited Veazie before she moved there. It's only about 4 miles from Bangor.
		163	Veazie didn't have any particular reputation in Bangor. [Tape is turned off for about 15 seconds while interviewer reviews some questions]
		169	<u>Mrs. Lancaster</u> was married in 1939. She met her husband at a band concert in Bangor. Their courtship lasted about two years. She and her husband eloped. She moved right into her present home with her husband.
	0200	186	Her brother-in-law thinks her home [<u>Lot 7-10</u>] is about 175 years old. It was moved from across the new highway [<u>State Street</u>]. At the time it was moved, there was just the main house without the kitchen ell. Her husband's father and mother built the ell at probably the same time the house was moved. She does not recall the date.
		200	So far as she knows, the house was built by <u>Mrs. Lancaster's</u> [<u>her husband's mother</u>] grandfather. The house was heated by stoves in the living room kitchen and two upstairs bedrooms.
		210	Her grandmother had a parlor that was used mainly for holidays and guests. People lived mainly in the kitchen. She does have a mudroom, referred to as a junk room. [Tape is turned off while interviewer is escorted to the mudroom] When she first moved to Veazie, her mother-in-law referred to it as her summer kitchen. She had a wood-eating iron stove on which she did all her cooking. Presently, there is an old-fashioned china closet. Her mother-in-law used to sell Larkin soap orders. She doesn't know where the term 'summer kitchen' comes from.
		230	<u>Mrs. Lancaster</u> spends most of her time in her family room. Her home has a half-cellar, a dirt one where they used to keep vegetables harvested in the Fall. There's a slab of cement just large enough for the furnace and the hot water heater. The rest is called a dirt cellar.
		246	When she first moved to Veazie, there wasn't any indoor plumbing. They used an out-house

Bangor
Bar Harbor
Veazie

Interviewer's tape #

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			which was a shed where her garage is presently. It had a big, wide barn door that opens outwards [she indicates this with hand motions] A crow-bar was used to keep it shut. She hated the out-house, especially in the middle of the night.
		260	Her mother-in-law's maiden name was Spencer.
		265	After she and Leonard were married, they redecorated inside. The family room used to be a dining room, and the kitchen was closed off by a narrow doorway. [Presently there is only a waist-high partition and a larger doorway]-- [Tape is turned off while the interviewer is escorted to the living room]
	0300	274	She has hear of Corporation Hill , and locates it at the end of Olive Street, leading up to the Bangor Hydro-Electric Plant. She doesn't think they use the hill anymore. Oak Hill is the first hill on the right. It changes to Grove half-way up.
		296	She thinks possibly the old Shore Rd. is the same as the present River Rd.. Correction, the current name for the River Rd. is Veazie Rd.
		315	She's heard some things about <u>Dingbat Prouty</u> , but would just as soon not repeat them. She doesn't have any idea where the working people boarded.
		325	There used to be Brownie's Market in the red brick house next to Red's Store. The store was down in the cellar, and sold groceries. [Tape is turned off while interviewer ponders]
		340	They had a garden and chickens. They bought beef at the store and it was fairly cheap. Both she and her husband liked to fish, partly for food and mostly for pleasure. She used to love to ride in the boat, a big deep-sea fishing boat with an outboard motor. They fished out at Pushaw Pond and they had a camp at Speck Pond. They caught toag, bass, perch. Her husband was a hunter, but deer were just as hard to catch as they are now.
		365	She doesn't think the younger people drank back then like they do now [i.e. beer, liquor] She used to like rum and coke. Beer was also popular.
	0400	380	In 1924, during the Depression, her father worked with the railroad as an engineer, He was laid off, and got a job over at Eastern manufacturing firing boilers. He worked there for two or three years until rehired by the railroad. There was alot of unemployment. Very few people in Bangor had gardens. Brewer Manufacturing had a large payroll, plus the stores, street sweeper, and people to shovel snow off the sidewalks.

Bangor
Pushaw Pond

Interviewer's tape #

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			There were quite a few jobs around but they didn't pay much money.
		410	There didn't seem to be any class distinctions between people in Bangor and the people in Veazie. People bought most of their clothes and did most of their shopping in Bangor. Everyone had to go to Bangor to buy clothes. There's no place in Veazie to go out to lunch or dinner.
		420	She first had a car in about 1942, and was not particularly excited about it. She used to take the street-cars back and forth to work because her husband had to have the car at night when he played the saxophone. She can't recall when the street-car stopped running. It used to run right by her house, as far up as Old Town.
		430	The new highway was built already when she was married, in 1939.
		440	End of interview.

*Veazie
Bangor*