



# MAINE FOLKLIFE CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

Volume 11 Issue 2

WINTER 2006

## Maine Humanities Council Supports Oral History Project with Former Eastern Fine Paper Mill Workers

In early September, the Maine Folklife Center, in collaboration with the city of Brewer, hosted a dinner and roundtable discussion where former Eastern Fine employees met with MFC staff. Following Associate Director Pauleena MacDougall's explanation of oral history and the project's goals, workers discussed which aspects of mill culture they felt were most important, as well as the potential difficulties surrounding what is to many a controversial topic. Attendees also viewed photos of the mill, taken after it closed, by Bill Kuykendall of the University of Maine's New Media Department. These photographs, together with the mill workers' stories, will comprise the basis of an exhibit entitled "The Writing on the Wall: The Twentieth Century Culture of a Maine Paper Mill." The exhibit will address cultural aspects of mill work and consequences of mill closings.

Interviews have already brought to light one intriguing aspect of papermill culture—the frequency with which family members worked together in the mill. Parents and children, husbands and wives, and siblings often secured jobs for one another, and many workers have stories which date back several generations. David Morrison described how his grandfather came to America in the late 1800s as a twelve-year-



---

*"The Writing on the Wall" title for the oral history project occurred to us after touring the mill, where much writing could be found on the walls. We realized the double meaning of this phrase was appropriate since the mill closing foreshadows the end of the paper mill era in Maine. This photo of the "Wall of Shame" marks the area where workers piled up paper with mistakes. --Bill Kuykendall photo.*

---

old boy and constructed wooden boxes at the

---

Eastern Fine site when it was a sawmill. When he was finally forced to retire from Eastern Fine Paper in the 1960s, he had worked on the site for more than 60 years, and had secured jobs for both his son and grandson! Morrison's anecdote, which touches upon the histories of the Maine lumber industry, the Penobscot River, the city of Brewer, the Eastern Fine site, the paper industry, and the Morrison family, is just one of many fascinating stories brought to light by what promises to be a rich and revealing



### ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION Conference Features Tribute to Sandy Ives

One of the great pleasures I had serving as program co-chair for the November 2005 Oral History Association (OHA) annual meeting in Providence, RI, was organizing a well-deserved tribute to Sandy Ives and his work. The plenary session brought together oral historians and folklorists to discuss Sandy's influence on the two fields.

As chair of the panel, I led off with a brief comment on how Sandy's field work class changed my life and set me on the course I'm still following more than twenty years later. Alicia Rouveral, another alumna of the Folklife Center, closed the session with a discussion of how Sandy's bridging of the disciplines of folklore and oral history has been a model for her own work. Rouveral, who many may remember from her appearance in "The Oral Historian's Work" video demonstrating our transcription techniques on an incredibly antiquated Kaypro computer, was instrumental in the transformation of the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History and the Northeast Folklore Society into the Maine Folklife Center. She now lives in Oregon with her husband and baby and works as a writer and contract folklorist.

Dale Trelevan, emeritus director of the UCLA Oral History Program and past president of the

OHA, recalled Sandy's pioneering insistence on the tape as the primary document in an era when oral history programs were reusing tapes after they had been transcribed and historians were only interested in the transcript.

Charlie Morrissey, of Baylor University Medical Center, discussed his and Sandy's long practice of "joshing," including Sandy's use of Morrissey's name on sample forms in his *Manual for Fieldworkers*, and the many practical lessons he has learned from Sandy and passed on in his own workshops.

Neil Rosenberg, Memorial University of Newfoundland, talked of Sandy's influence on Canadian folklore and oral history practice and of his generosity to younger scholars.

Jeff Todd Titon, Brown University professor of folklore and ethnomusicology and member of the MFC board, discussed the influence of Sandy's book *Joe Scott* on his own work with Hap Collins, lobsterman, storyteller and poet, enabling him to appreciate what he calls the community poetry of Scott and Collins that his training in literary criticism had failed to provide.

It was a very well-attended session that concluded with what has become an OHA conference tradition, a heartfelt appreciation by Brother Blue, folklorist, street performer, and radio personality.

We recorded the session and hope to



make it available on our web site in the near

## The Maine Folklife Center Moves into Digital Archiving

Digital is the wave of the future in audio preservation as well as recording. While concerns remain about this format, MFC will continue our leadership in audio preservation with the development of a northern New England digital audio archive.

In 1996 the Maine Folklife Center received a major grant from NEH to set up a preservation program for our audio collection. At that time 1/4" open reel tape was widely considered the preservation format of choice. To date we have copied to open reel preservation masters and CD user copies approximately 1,000 of the nearly 5,000 hours of audio material in our archives. We have also created preservation masters for other archives including the Maine State Archives, the Sabbathday Lake Shakers, the Rumsford Historical Society, and the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, among others.

The recent bankruptcy of Quantegy, the only manufacturer of open reel tape, has forced us to consider digital formats. To this end we have begun exploring the establishment of a regional digital audio archives. The Maine State Archives, Vermont Folklife Center, the Acadian Archives at UM Fort Kent, the University of Maine Library, and the Muskie Archives at Bates College are among the institutions interested in this effort.

As a first step we hired consultant Michael Casey, Coordinator of Recording Services for the Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University, to advise us. Indiana and Harvard Universities recently received a major NEH grant to design and test best practices in digital audio preservation.

A digital archive will be based on a system of two separate servers—the second a remote backup—maintained with the help of the UMaine Library's digital media experts, especially Marilyn Lutz.

At the Folklife Center we will plan to renovate

our current analog preservation studio and update our equipment to handle the analog-to-digital conversion process. The cost of the equipment and the technical expertise needed for both conversion and server maintenance means that few institutions can afford to go it alone. Although participating institutions will retain control of their own holdings, sharing costs and servers will make this large project more manageable. We plan to continue providing preservation services to small repositories on a fee basis.

-PD

---

## Archival Notes

Recently Maine Public Radio called on the Folklife Center for program material when Charlotte Albright produced an excellent Memorial Day piece featuring excerpts from an interview with Donna Loring about her experience in the Army in Vietnam. Loring has served as the Penobscot Nation's representative to the state legislature. Mazie Hough, of the Women's Studies Program, and Carol Toner, director of Maine Studies conducted the interview as part of a class they taught on women in the military. They and their students have deposited fifty-four interviews with us on this subject. The Women in the Military series is part of the American Folklife Center's initiative to collect Veteran's Oral Histories throughout the country.

Elizabeth Clark's nursing course students have also been collecting valuable interviews with nurses which have also been added to Maine Folklife Center's women's oral histories collections.

---

### **Welcome to our New Members!**

Scott Cormier, Havelock, NC  
Barbara Slavin, Framingham, MA  
Ellen Sullivan, Stanford, CT

## Mementos at Wilbur Day's Grave: Tribute or Trophy?

Through its involvement with the MOFGA Common Ground Fair, the American Folk Festival on the Bangor Waterfront, and similar events, the Maine Folklife Center presents its work to a tremendously broad audience. As a fringe benefit, we also get to hear directly from members of that same audience about things happening around the state that relate to the Center's work, past and present. At the 2003 Folk Festival in Bangor, I struck up a conversation with a visitor regarding Wilbur Day (1864-1924), whose autobiography was published as volume XXVI of *Northeast Folklore* (1985) and who was a secondary figure in Sandy Ives's landmark study, *George Magoon and the Downeast Game War* (1988). The visitor, who was from the Wesley-Crawford area, regarded Day as a hero, "just like Robin Hood." He went on to talk about the economic necessity of subsistence hunting in an earlier time and the on-going prevalence of poaching today. For him, Day was emblematic of the hardscrabble conditions in the region, and a way of life, indeed an outlook on life, that had grown up around them.

The following year at the festival, another gentleman from the Wesley-Crawford area stopped by our booth and struck up a conversation about Wilbur Day and his significance to local culture and history. This fellow, however, mentioned that someone had been leaving small mementos on Day's gravestone. These were not your customary memorial objects. They were live rounds of ammunition, an apparent acknowledgment of Day's historical notoriety as one of the area's foremost poachers. Needless to say, within the week



up Route 9 to check it out for myself. The only thing I found on that trip, unfortunately, was a white feather—possibly from an eagle or an owl—no gun shells.

On a trip back to Canada a month later, I stopped again; no gun shells. Finally, while driving to the Canadian folklore meetings this spring, I stopped and there was a single round lying on the upper left hand corner of the stone. As so often—too often—happens in fieldwork, I had left home without a camera and had to drive ten miles up the road to find a store that was both open and sold disposable cameras. (You can only imagine the look on the storekeeper's face when I asked with some urgency at 8:30 in the morning if he "might by any chance have disposable cameras for sale.") On my last trip to Calais two months ago, this time with camera in hand, there were two shells on the grave: a .270 caliber rifle cartridge and a shorter, .44 caliber bullet.

So far we have no idea who is leaving the shells, or (precisely) why. Are they a tribute to Day just because of who he was? Are they a nod from a fellow poacher acknowledging kills? Or perhaps they have been left by a legitimate hunter (though on both occasions when I saw shells on the stone, it was "out of season")? And why has Day been singled out? As far as I know, similar tributes have not been left at Magoon's grave, which is just up the road. There is also the question of whether Day's notoriety has remained steady in regional tradition, or whether the formal histories published by Sandy have elevated Day to the status of "local hero." If anyone can shed light on any or all of these questions, we would love to hear from you.



**Northeast  
Folklore  
Volume XXXIX:  
“No Flies  
on Bill”: A  
Granddaughter’s  
Tribute**

“When my grandmother opened the dish cupboard, the family and neighbors fell

out. I know because I was there when it happened,” begins Darcy Gammon Wakefield in her book *No Flies on Bill: The Story of an Uncontrollable Old Woman, My Grandmother, Ethel “Billie” Gammon*. In *Northeast Folklore Vol. XXXIX*, which will be available in January 2006, Wakefield expertly weaves her grandmother’s poignant reflections and her own thoughtful narrative, creating a story as heartfelt as it is historical. Chapters such as “The Flush Didn’t Flush: Ending a War and Putting in a Bathroom” are typical of this incredible book, wherein Wakefield continually sets “Mamie’s” life against the backdrop of twentieth-century America. The Great Depression, World War II, and other landmark historical events become more tangible when viewed through Billie’s eyes. After all, she reminded her granddaughter, “It’s history for *you*, but it was life for me.”

Wakefield interviewed her grandmother over the course of several years. Beginning with Billie’s youth on an apple farm in Nova Scotia, readers will experience education in a one-room schoolhouse; Christmases on the farm; women’s education in the 1920s and ‘30s; courtship, marriage, and childrearing during the ‘30s and ‘40s; and Mamie’s part in the development of the Norlands Living History Center in Livermore, Maine in the 1970s. “Everyone’s life is a story, or better expressed—a collection of stories strung together by time,” Billie says. This is one story that folklorists, historians, and students of all ages will want to read again and again.

We deeply regret to report that author Darcy

**“If Walls Could Talk” Films  
Golding House**

This last summer the HGTV show, “If Walls Could Talk” visited the Perry home of Patrick Mealey and Joyce Jackson, formerly the Robert N. Golding house (until his death in 1969). The house is one of five Maine homes to be featured on the nationally televised show. The program will air some time in the next few months.

As readers of this newsletter will recall, Golding was well-known in the area as a guide, farmer, stone mason, woodsman and celebrated storyteller. The house was built by his parents, Nathaniel and Mary Golding, about 1893. Professional restorers, Mealey and Jackson immediately set out to remove the “improvements” previous owners had made. In the process, they gathered volumes of material: photos, letters, tapes, old home movies, poems and stories, and personal objects from the family that lived there.

One item of great interest was Robert Golding’s Spanish-American War uniform, circa 1898, that the crew found in the garage. The couple also has photographs of Rob and his sister Amy wearing this uniform.

The highlight of the day was the arrival of Emma Golding of Calais who is 102 years old. Golding was married to Rob’s brother, Jim, who died in 1970. They filmed her arrival and talking with the couple in their restored dining room while looking through the family album, circa 1910, that she had given them.

Jackson was filmed reading a passage from a poem, “First Settlers” written by Rob Golding. The couple recently discovered a tape of Golding reciting the poem in the Maine Folklife Center. In preparation for the show the couple also viewed home movies dating back as early as 1927 that are archived at Northeast Historic Films in Bucksport. They found many reels of their

## Eastern Fine Oral History Project continued...

The Maine Humanities Council initially provided a \$500 grant in the summer of 2005 to plan the project. We began by contacting the City of Brewer and asking for a tour of the mill. Bill Kuykendall, Cooperating Professor of communication and journalism and senior lecturer in the New Media department at the University of Maine, took photographs inside and outside of the mill. During this tour Pauleena MacDougall, Associate Director of the Maine Folklife Center, conducted a tape-recorded interview with Richard Smith, former engineer at Eastern Fine Paper. The objective of taking these photos was to document the state of the facility one year after operations ceased, with particular emphasis on the distinctive machinery and structural details as well as artifacts, graffiti, signage and other evidence of the men and women who worked there.

We asked the city and engineer for names of former workers and began calling them and telling them about the project and asking for more names. We ran an article in the Joni Averill column of the Bangor Daily News asking workers to call us. As a result of these efforts we currently have about 70 names of former workers who are interested in the project and may be interviewed.

In October of 2005, Bill Kuykendall and his son Adam prepared a mock-up of a DVD consisting of interviews, historic and contemporary photos and other resources from our initial work. The DVD was used as part of a fundraising strategy. We sent copies of the DVD with a proposal to the Maine Humanities Council who responded by granting us \$5,000 to continue the project through October 2006. We plan to compile all of the materials, oral and written, to develop a more comprehensive DVD that can be used by teachers and others interested in the history of the Eastern Fine Paper company in Brewer.

We will be meeting with workers again on January 18, 2006 to update them on our

progress.

Our ultimate goal is to place a permanent exhibit in the soon-to-be renovated mill, and our work on the documentary will serve as a guide for developing the larger public

---

## WAgN, Windsor Chairs, and Hillbilly Music: The 2005 Common Ground Fair

This year at the Common Ground Fair, the Maine Folklife Center tent featured master craftsman Steven Thomas Bunn of Bowdoinham, Maine. Bunn, who hand crafts Windsor chairs using traditional tools and techniques several centuries old, is listed in *Early American Life* magazine's Directory of Traditional Craftsmen. A photo exhibit on Maine Windsor chairs from the historic collections of the Maine State Museum complimented Bunn's chairmaking demonstrations. On Saturday, Bunn discussed his craft and experience during an oral interview open to the public. Sunday, Bunn was joined by chief curator of the Maine State Museum Edwin Churchill, and furniture makers Marc Blanchette, Jon Brandon, Linda Coit, and Andy Abello in a discussion about the Maine Windsor chair tradition.

Fair-goers also enjoyed "Old Time" Southern Appalachian music performed by musicians Jeff Titon, Art Bryan, Nathan Rutenbeck, and Marta Daniels, members of the Bound to Have a Little Fun String Band. The Appalachian style, dubbed "hillbilly music" in the 1920s, became very popular in Maine following the invention of the radio. Southern Appalachian music has evolved into a lively and uniquely American form.

The Maine Folklife Center and the Women's Agricultural Network (WAgN) collaborated on an oral history project based upon the stories of Maine's women farmers. Interested

## Maine Folklife Center Folkways Demonstrations at the American Folk Festival August 26, 27, 28, 2005

The first annual American Folk Festival on the Bangor Riverfront was a huge success, as were the Folkways Demonstrations coordinated by the Maine Folklife Center. Based upon a series of interviews conducted by Associate Director Pauleena MacDougall and students Kate Durbin, Maria Sandweiss and Elizabeth Hardink, this year's theme reflected the increasing diversity of central Maine as more and more immigrants come to the area from around the world. International food, dance, and costume attracted large crowds of Festival-goers, as did several sessions where men and women from Peru, Pakistan, Hungary, China, Columbia, and Brazil talked about their experiences as recent immigrants to Maine.



**Maine Folklife Center**  
5773 S. Stevens Hall  
University of Maine  
Orono, ME 04469  
Email: [folklife@maine.edu](mailto:folklife@maine.edu)  
[www.umaine.edu/folklife/](http://www.umaine.edu/folklife/)

Non-Profit organiza-  
tion  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Orono, ME

5372984-60400  
5-4-20210



Pauleena MacDougall, Editor  
Bethany Haverlock, Editorial Assistant

## PLEASE JOIN US!

Membership dues and contributions enable the Maine Folklife Center to function as a self-supporting unit of the University of Maine. By pledging membership, individuals and institutions play a vital role in encouraging the study, documentation and presentation of Maine's traditional cultural heritage. Benefits of membership include:

- an annual copy of our monograph series, *Northeast Folklore*
- the Maine Folklife Center Newsletter
- a ten-percent discount on audios, videos, and publications

Please circle desired membership level:

- \$1,000 Benefactor
- \$ 500 Patron
- \$ 100 Sponsor
- \$ 50 Friend
- \$ 25 Basic Membership
- Other Donation (Please specify amount)

Any contributions greater than the \$25 basic membership is considered a gift. Please make checks or money orders payable to the University of Maine. Your contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Return to the Maine Folklife Center at the address above.