



MAINE FOLKLIFE CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

ACCESSION SHEET

Accession Number: NA 2607

Depositor: Nancy P. Alexander

Permanent Address: RFD 1, Box 357
Ellsworth, ME 04605

Field Work Locations (State or Province): Maine

(Town or Locale) Camden

Description of Accession: Interview with Al ^{verd}diverd Norton and Dorothy Norton about 700 Acre Island, history, Prohibition, light horses

Tapes (numbers): 98-3

Photographs (numbers): _____

Other Materials: 1910 Map 700 Acre Island, notes from telephone conversation, journal transcript

Interviewer Agreement signed:

Release obtained:

Special restrictions:

Remarks: quality of tape not very good. Subject had difficulty speaking.

Archival Work

Shelf list card prepared: _____

Donor card prepared: _____

Tape copied: _____

Transcript prepared: _____

Pagination completed: _____

**NORTHEAST ARCHIVES OF FOLKLORE AND ORAL HISTORY
TRANSCRIPTION COVER SHEET**

Interviewer's tape no.: 98.3

NAFOH Accession no.:

Interviewer: Nancy P. Alexander

Address: RFD 1, Box 357, Ellsworth, ME

Interviewee: ^{vera} Aldivert Norton

Address: 21 Mountain St. Camden, ME

Place of interview: 21 Mountain St
Camden, ME

Date of interview: Oct. 23, 1998

Equipment used (include both recorder and mike):

recorder Optimus CTR-108 Cassette recorder with Radio Shack Uni-directional dynamic
Cassette brand: Radio Shack C30 C60 C90 Type: I II IV microphone

Dolby: In Out B C

Amount of cassette used: Side A: entire Side B: one-third

Interview context: (Where? Others present? Problems? Etc):

Made in Norton's living room with his wife Dorothy helping out. Mr. Norton is on oxygen and speaks unclearly. When he is really interested, however, he becomes clearer.

Brief description of contents:

200 Acre Island, Islesboro, Prohibition, bonbard., history of
200 Acre Island, Charles Dana Gibson, lighthouses.

Transcriber: Nancy Alexander

Date of transcription: 10-28-98

Level of accuracy represented by transcript:

The editing has tried to reduce false starts, repeats and interruptions like coughing and laughter.

Nancy Alexander

Journal for ANT 425
Oral History Interview

September 23 - We submitted an interview plan to Sandy Ives for his review and OK. I wrote that I would like to interview Robin Quimby and I have included my letter to Mr. Quimby to explain why I wanted to talk with him.

September 29 - I called Mr. Quimby today and his daughter answered the phone. She knew what I was calling about and handed the phone to Robin who couldn't hear me. He gave it back to her and she relayed his comments to me, that he didn't know anything about rum-running and didn't want to talk with me. He said he couldn't remember anything, anyway.

September 30 - Have to write to Sandy with alternative plans for an interview. I should have started this earlier. Plan B is Aldiverd Norton of Camden, Plan C is Verna Dyer. We'll see what happens...

October 2 - Called Al Norton and told him what I was up to. He said he didn't think he had much to offer but I'd have to check with his wife who is in charge of his medical schedule and see when he could see me. He is willing to chat but may not have much to say. I told him I'd call Dorothy and set something up. But if he feels he has little to say, perhaps I'll move on to Verna.

Called the Dark Harbor Boatyard looking for Verna Dyer and Carol said she was at home but that her sister was very ill and Verna was unlikely to have much free time. No answer at Verna's home and no message machine.

October 3 - Called Verna. No answer.

October 4 - Called Verna. No answer.

October 5 - Called boatyard, Verna visiting elsewhere. Left a message.

October 9 - Called boatyard. Melissa told me that this was the anniversary of Verna's son being lost at sea. Said Verna was very quiet today when she came to the office. What great timing! Left message.

October 10 - Verna called me and said she had no time and would not be able to talk with me. However, if I wanted to write down a list of questions for her she would try to answer them by letter. She also promised to walk me around 700 Acre Island in the spring when her life settles down.

Away at Skidmore College for the weekend.

October 20 - Called Al Norton again and chatted with his wife. I have an appointment with him for Friday at 10:30. Halleluia! Al's family is from Matinicus and his grandfather was the lighthouse keeper for three different houses along the midcoast: Two Bush, Negro (now called Curtis, I think) and Matinicus Rock. They have never heard

of Vincent Norton or any Nortons in Islesboro other than themselves. Dorothy says Al will know what houses are which, and some of the cellar holes, but I don't know how much help I'll really get. I will ask him about Prohibition too, although Dorothy didn't think he knew much about it. Dorothy will be at the library that day - she volunteers every Friday.

I will try this evening to reach Miriam Pendleton, the mother of Barbara and David, who knows about the Philbrooks as she is about the last of a direct line on the island. She is very shy and it is best to have her children introduce me to her and introduce the idea of talking to me through them.

No luck reaching Miriam Pendleton. I'll try again for this weekend. Meanwhile I'll meet with the Islesboro Historical Society people on Saturday for laying out further research plans this winter.

October 26 - I am recapping what happened with Al and Dorothy Norton last Friday. I had gone there as a sort of last resort and expected a chilly reception because Dorothy was very protective of Al. Well, she started out that way and finished up that way, but in the middle she enjoyed herself during the session. We met in the living room of their home in Camden, a comfortable and thoughtfully put-together room. They had been watching TV before I arrived, although Dorothy assured me (herself?) that Al liked it, she didn't.

Al had a boatyard on 700 Acre Island which his father had started in the 1920s. Al had been successful and was well respected by the islanders and summer people whose boats he wintered over and commissioned in the spring. Al apparently also did a lot of production for the Navy in the Second World War because he was a trained engineer. A good followup question. Al is very frail and connected to oxygen at all times. He has a liquid voice as if his lungs were constantly filling up, which they probably are. My husband says he was tough to understand thirty and forty years ago, without these difficulties. I could get his drift at all times, fortunately.

The Nortons wanted an explanation of my interest in Acre Island, and I worked the taping and the Archive Collection into that explanation. Al has been interviewed by the Island Journal about his light-keeping grandfather so they were familiar with the set-up. Therefore, there is no confirmation on the tape. The end of the tape is too abrupt, with no closure. Dorothy was shooing me along, as she had things to do.

I'm disappointed in that I didn't make a clean taping session, from the introduction and confirmation of taping, the quality of the tape, or the closure. I could have managed better and so with the follow-up session I will try to do that. This whole exercise has been one of frustration for me. I am not used to having difficulties talking with people, organizing my time and getting good results. This has been healthy for me, and while I have always tried to be respectful of my informants, perhaps I have a ways to go yet.

The quality of information I received from Al is limited; however, I am delighted with the boot-legging story about Henry and Bill Bickford. As far as the location of Norton's Island, I have new information from Al about the connecting link between Warren and Acre Island over the Gut, but it is not conclusive for me. Al didn't know the location of the school or anything about the cellar holes. I will have to rely on Verna Dyer for that.

The taping session was successful enough, however, to obviate the need to rush an interview with Miriam Pendleton. I arranged a meeting with the Historical Society people for next Friday morning so I'll catch an early ferry and then sort of sneak up on Miriam Pendleton through David or Barbara.

October 28 - Transcribing the tape of conversation with Al and Dorothy Norton. It's tricky in places because of Al's vocal problems. The microphone was pointed right at him but the reception of him was not good. Reception of me, behind and away from the mike, was excellent.

I have some serious things to think about here. Perhaps my good fortune last year interviewing islanders came from reasons I didn't fully appreciate at the time. I wonder if Ralph Gray and Jack Leach would have been so willing to talk with me if I hadn't been a summer person, and from a well-respected family of long-time summer people. Actually one which has hired both of these men in the past and esteems their work and them as individuals. I may have taken advantage of that relationship which is not necessarily a totally nice one - more a desire to please than a trust thing. If that is the case, I hope I haven't put a strain on it. Al Norton was in a slightly different situation in relation to the summer people because of his education and training, but not much. And that is an outgrowth of summer-person behavior, not islander behavior. It's just that some of the islanders have believed it too.

November 9 - Called Al and Dorothy Norton to arrange a follow-up interview to answer a few questions from the first interview. Dorothy answered the phone and was reluctant to set up another visit. She repeated that "Al told you all he knows, isn't that right, Al?" I could hardly press. She did answer some questions over the phone and those notes will be attached to the interview.

November 15 - Talked to Ralph Gray when we helped him stuff his inflatable into Mrs. Bering's garage. I asked him some of the questions I had asked Dorothy Norton and he helped me as much as he could, but I hesitated to press there, as well. This is a small community, one which I intend to join almost full-time in a few years. I want to be relatively welcome when I come. Notes about Ralph's answers will be attached to the Norton interview.

November 17 - Here I am, reviewing this journal and my progress in the course. A sorry state of things, but perhaps not, since I have had to mull over this major issue of respecting my informants. Kinda puts me in my place. Not a bad thing at all. I suppose I could have had a pretty, but relatively useless interview from someone safe, but that seemed pointless. I have a project going and these oral histories or oral stories are relevant to that project. They are tools for me to use and I used them. The fact that I didn't learn what I had hoped is more enlightening to me than information about something which is of no particular interest to me. I'll do the notes from Dorothy Norton and Ralph Gray and add them to the interview and consider this assignment complete - not pretty, but realistically complete. How's that for justification!!!!



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Department of Anthropology
Northeast Archives of
Folklore and Oral History
Northeast Folklore

5773 Stevens Hall, South
Orono, Maine 04469-5773
207/581-1891

DEPOSITOR / INTERVIEWER AGREEMENT

I, Nancy P. Alexander, in view
(Depositor / Interviewer)

of the historical and scholarly value of the material I am depositing in the
Archives and described briefly as follows:

Taped interview with Halvard Barton about 700 Acre Island,
Isleboro. Subjects: Past residents, boatyard, history, & Camden Lighthouse.

knowingly and voluntarily permit the Northeast Archives of Folklore and
Oral History the full use of this material, and hereby grant and assign to
the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History all rights of every kind
pertaining to this material, whether or not such rights are now known,
recognized or contemplated, except for such restrictions as are specified
below:

no restrictions

Understood and agreed to:

[Signature]
(Director)

Nancy P. Alexander
(Depositor / Interviewer)

11/4/98
(Date)



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INTERVIEWEE RELEASE AGREEMENT

Form A: 06-01-98

In consideration of the research the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History is conducting to collect and preserve materials of value for the study of oral history and folklife in the New England-Maritimes area, I would like to deposit with them for their use the accompanying interview items (tapes, transcriptions, photographs, artifacts, responses to questionnaires, etc.) represented by the accession number given below:

Accession Number: _____

If tape recordings and their accompanying transcripts are included, they are the result of one or more recorded, voluntary interviews with me. Any reader of the transcripts should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of my spoken (not written) word and that the tape, not the transcript, is the primary document.

It is understood that the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History will, at the discretion of the Director, allow interested individuals to use these materials in connection with their research or for other educational purposes of a university, school, or organization. It is further understood that no copies of the deposited materials will be made and nothing may be used from them in any published form without the written permission of the Director.

Understood and Agreed to:

Interviewee: Edwina J. Norton Date: Oct. 23, 1998

Interviewee: Dorothy J. Norton Date: Oct. 23, 1998

Director: Chris D. In Date: 11/4/98

Interviewer: Nancy P. Cleaveland Date: 11-15-98

