Nola Johnson

Cp 133

FOLKLORE COLLECTION

January 23, 1967

Integer: Make a special note of the Joe Ware stories p. 19-20-21

THE AREA

Most of the collecting was done on the University of Maine Campus in Orono. There are somewhat less than six thousand students at the University. The area concentrated on is the Stodder Quadrangle which includes Balentine Hall, Penobscot Hall, Stodder Hall, and Chadbourne Hall.

Some of the collecting took place in Yarmouth, Maine, a small town fifteen miles north of Portland of about four thousand people. It is right on the coast, so there is a large tourist industry in the summer. Most of the shops and restuarants and motels are only open during the summer. Many people work in Portland, but there is a fish factory working in the summer, a chicken factory and a textile factory. There is also a small boat building industry, which was the main economy (quite famous, too) in the eighteen hundreds. During the summer there are four or five large farms that sell fresh vegetables. The Central Maine Power plant on Cousin's Island off Yarmouth keeps the taxes fairly low.

Two stories were collected in Cumberland Center, a small town next to Yarmouth of about 3500 people. Cumberland is mostly inland, but it does have a fairly large area of coast.

Orono
Yarmouth
Portland
Cousin's I.
Cumberland Cent

THE INFORMANTS

(The numbers in parentheses after the informants' names correspond to the pages on which their stories are found.)

Nola Johnson

I am a senior at the University of Maine, living in Balentine Hall. I learned the ghost stories about Penobscot when I lived there last year. I was brought up in Beachmont, Massachusetts and now live in Yarmouth, Maine. I am one of the "few" people in Cp 133 class who admitted to believing in ghosts.

Ellen Willey

Miss Willey is a senior at the University and has lived in Penobscot for three years. She was born in Canada and has lived in Falmouth, Maine since she was two years old. She also believes in ghosts.

Peggy Shaw Titherington

Mrs. Titherington was born and raised in Sanford, Maine. She is a senior at the University, lived in Penobscot Hall for one semester, and now resides in Orono. She believes in ghosts.

Sharon Murphy

Miss Murphy is a senior at the University and has lived in Penobscot Hall for three years. She does not believe in ghosts.

Orono
Beachmont Ma
Yarmouth
~~Penobscot~~
Falmouth
Sanford

(THE INFORMANTS)

Cherie English

Miss English is a senior at the University and has lived in Penobscot Hall for two years. Her home is in Philadelphia. She believes in ghosts.

Fanchon Carey

Miss Carey is a junior at the University of Maine. She transferred from Westbrook Junior College last year. She lives in Brunswick, Maine and does not believe in ghosts or the Ouija board, for that matter.

Wendy Martin

Miss Martin is a sophomore at the University. She lives in Augusta, Maine and went to Kent's Hill School in Reedfield, Maine for four years. She does not believe in ghosts.

Anne Witham

Miss Witham is a senior at the University. She was brought up in Newport, Maine and both of her parents are from Newport, originally. She does not believe in ghosts, but admits the possibility of their existence.

Orono
Pennsylvania
Brunswick
Westbrook
Augusta
Readfield
Newport

(THE INFORMANTS)

Nancy Townsend

Miss Townsend was brought up in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, lived for two years in Littleton, New Hampshire, and now lives in Hartford, Connecticut. She went to Sweetbriar College in Virginia for one year and then transferred to Maine, where she is now a senior.

Judy Bowie

Miss Bowie was brought up in North Yarmouth, Maine, where she now lives. She is a sophomore at the University. She claims that she does not believe in ghosts.

William Sweetser

Mr. Sweetser has always lived in Yarmouth, Maine. He is a junior at the University of Maine. He does not believe in ghosts.

Mrs. Richard McCann

Mrs. McCann has lived in Yarmouth since her marriage twenty years ago. She was brought up in Cape Elizabeth. She heard the Joe Ware story when she first moved to Yarmouth.

Mrs. William Hake

Mrs. Hake first heard Joe Ware stories when she moved to Cumberland Center, Maine, thirty years ago. She was brought up in Scarsdale, N.Y. She is in the antique business now and has heard many stories about Joe Ware and other historical legends.

New York North Yarmouth Cape Eliz
Yarmouth Littleton
Cumberland Center Hartford, C
Virginia
Orono

The White Lady of Penobscot Hall

When Penobscot Hall was being built, a workman fell and met his death because of the carelessness of another workman. When the dead man's wife died she swore she would always haunt the place of his death. The first year that the dorm was ready for occupancy, two girls in a room on first floor-east woke up during the night and saw a whitish translucent figure in the center of the room. They were very frightened, but the figure disappeared, and they eventually went back to sleep. The next morning, everything on both of their bureaus was turned upside-down..

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
October 27, 1966

Inf.: Nola Johnson, 114 Balentine Hall

A :

Note: I heard this story about a year ago, when I was living in Penobscot Hall. I don't remember exactly who told me, but it was someone living in the dorm. I believed it at the time. In fact, whenever I was studying in the lounge late at night, I always went back to my room by the center staircase in order to avoid first floor-east, even though my room was at the top of the east staircase. Later, I heard other stories that stated that the haunted room was on the west side of first floor. But I still believed the story and avoided first floor--both sides.

Orono

Nola Johnson- 6

(The Penobscot Ghost)

About five years ago, the janitor was fixing the light fixture in Penobscot Hall. He had a heart attack, fell off the ladder, and died. His dead wife's ghost keeps coming back to look for him. One night the two girls in that room woke up because they heard funny noises at the door. They thought it was probably some friends playing a trick, so they both went to the door and jerked it open. In the hallway there was a white figure that disappeared in a few seconds.

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
October 27, 1966

Inf.: Ellen Willey, 211 Penobscot Hall

C :

Note: Miss Willey heard the story first about two years ago when she moved into Penobscot Hall. She never saw anything "strange," but she believes the story.

Orono

Nola Johnson - 7

(The Penobscot Ghost)

A man was killed a few years ago when he was working on the construction of Penobscot Hall. His wife's ghost comes back to look for him. I don't know if anyone has ever seen her, but one year when two girls were studying in their room at night, the curtains and their towels started to wave back and forth for no explainable reason. The door and the windows were closed.

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
January 11, 1967

Inf.: Peggy Shaw Titherington
Forest Ave., Orono

B :

Note: Mrs. Titherington heard this story a year ago when she was living in Penobscot Hall. She doesn't remember who told her, but she believes it.

Orono

Nola Johnson - 8

(The Penobscot Ghost)

This is my third year in Penobscot. Last year I lived in Room 119. I've heard that 119 is supposed to be haunted, but nothing ever happened when I was there.. Maybe because I don't believe in ghosts. But the girl who lived there two years ago said something happened. One night this girl woke up and saw a white figure standing at the foot of her bed. The figure was blurry, but when it leaned toward the bed, the girl could see a gold locket on a long chain around the figure's neck. Gradually, the figure just faded away.

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
January 7, 1967

Inf.: Sharon Murphy, 315 Penobscot Hall

B :

Note: Miss Murphy didn't believe the ghost stories. She first heard them two years ago. The girl who was in 119 at that time is Midge Thurlough, who graduated from the University last year.

Orono

Nola Johnson - 9

(The Penobscot Ghost)

We lived in 102 Penobscot last year and we thought that we had the haunted room. The walls made funny tapping noises, and the plaster was full of wavy cracks that kept getting longer. The janitor and some carpenters came a couple of times, and they couldn't see any reason for the cracks in the plaster or for the tapping noises. So they didn't do anything about it. The tapping really bothered us sometimes. It was spooky, especially at night.

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
December 15, 1966

Inf.: Cherie English, 220 Penobscot Hall

C :

Note: Miss English had heard about the haunted room, but not anything about which room it was supposed to be. She heard the stories in the fall of last year and believed them.

Orono

Nola Johnson - 10

(Westbrook Spirits)

There was a dorm at Westbrook Junior College that no one would sign up for--voluntarily. It started about three years ago when one girl in the dorm had fantastic powers over the Ouija board. She'd get so excited that she'd even roll on the floor. All the kids thought that there were spirits in the attic that caused her powers, and no one wanted to live in the dorm.

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
December 12, 1966

Inf.: Fanchon Carey, Penobscot Hall

B :

Note: Miss Carey heard the story two years ago when she was a student at Wesrbrook Junior College. She did not believe it. This fall she visited Westbrook and said that many of the girls still believe the story, although the girl who had "powers" over the Ouija board is not there anymore.

Westbrook
Orono

Nola Johnson - 11

(The Kent's Hill Ghost)

About thirty years ago, I think, one of the students at Kent's Hill was in love with a teacher. They planned on getting married--she did, anyway--and he left her. She climbed the spiral staircase in the main building in her wedding dress and jumped four flights and died. Now on nights when there's a full moon, you can see her ghost falling from the top of the bell tower through the center of the spiral and landing on the floor. She is wearing her wedding dress.

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
December 10, 1966

Inf.: Wendy Martin, 113 Balentine Hall

B :

Note: Miss Martin didn't believe the story herself, but she said that a lot of the students did. She never saw the ghost, but many students claimed that they did. She first heard the story about five years ago when she was a student at Kent's Hill School in Reedfield, Maine.

Readfield
Orono

Nola Johnson - 12

(Dr. Stanton)

Several years ago Dr. Stanton was a professor at Bates College in Lewiston (Maine). I think he was probably an English professor, but I'm not sure about that. Anyway, he was a great nature-lover. For part of Freshman Orientation every year, he used to take all the freshmen on a nature-walk through the woods, where he had a cabin. When he had to retire he still did this for a few years and then donated his cabin to the Outing Club at Bates. He said that he always wanted the tradition to be carried on and said, "I'll always be there to meet you." Shortly after that Dr. Stanton died. Every year the freshman are still taken up to the cabin. On the way they are told the story of Dr. Stanton. When they reach the cabin, there is always an enormous feast laid out for them and no one around, so they believe that Dr. Stanton's ghost is there.

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
November 5, 1966

Inf.: Anne Witham, 217 Balentine Hall

B:

Note: Miss Witham heard this story several years ago from her mother, who went to Bates. Miss Witham did not believe the story, but her mother did.

Lewiston
Orono

(Daisy's Ghost)

Just after the Civil War, an old Vermonter came down to Sweetbriar, Virginia and married a wealthy widow who owned a tobacco plantation. The had one daughter named Daisy. One night there was a fire in the main house. Daisy, then sixteen years old, was caught in her room on third floor and died. Her parents were so upset that they went away and left the plantation to start a girls' college in Daisy's memory. The house was rebuilt and is now where the President of Sweetbriar College lives. Daisy's ghost comes back often, and no one will stay in her room on the third floor. At night you can see a burning candle moving in her room or across the look-out walk on the top of the house.

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
October 27, 1966

Inf.: Nancy Townsend, 114 Balentine Hall

B :

Note: Miss Townsend heard this story three years ago when she was a student at Sweetbriar College. She believed the story at the time and still believes it.

Vermont
Virginia
Orono

Nola Johnson - 14

During the Civil War, there was an underground railroad in Littleton, New Hampshire. A big river goes through the town, large houses on one side and woods on the other. The railroad went through a tunnel underneath the river. From there, the slaves could escape to Canada. The owners of the large houses used to chain slaves in their cellars while they were awaiting their turn to escape. Some of the slaves died in the cellars and never made it. The people who live in the old houses now say that sometimes they can hear the chains rattling..People have looked, but no one can find the tunnel that goes under the river.

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
January 19, 1967

Inf.: Nancy Townsend, 114 Balentine Hall

B :

Note: Miss Townsend heard this story about ten years ago when she lived in Littleton. She said that she thought it was terrible to chain the slaves they were helping to escape and that if the ghosts of the slaves did come back it must be for revenge. She claims that she didn't believe the story.

Littleton NH
Orono

Oh, my house is haunted. We live in a farm house that's a hundred and fifty years old. Something might have happened years ago, but I don't know. Of course, old houses always seem to creak, but this is different. Sometimes a door will open for no reason at all. And lots of times, especially at night, we can hear footsteps in the attic. One day a couple of years ago, my brother and I were home alone and we heard the footsteps. He went up the front stairs and I went up the back stairs. I was scared stiff, but when we met in the attic there was absolutely nothing there.

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
December 3, 1966

Inf.: Judy Bowie, 116 Balentine Hall

B :

Note: Miss Bowie says that she and her father don't really believe that their house is haunted, but the rest of the family (five members) does believe it. But she admits that she always gets scared when she hears the footsteps. (Her home is in North Yarmouth, Maine.)

Orono
North Yarmouth

Nola Johnson - 16

(Pownal Ghosts)

In Pownal, almost near Durham (Maine), there was a family of Negroes. I don't remember how long ago it was. Well one night their house was burned down and they all died in the fire. It wasn't any accident, either. Another house was built in the same place a few years later, and everyone says that the Negroes' ghosts haunt it for revenge. The older people, especially, believe it. I guess a lot of funny things have happened.

Coll.: Yarmouth, Maine
November 25, 1966

Inf.: William Sweetser, East Main Street, Yarmouth, Maine

B :

Note: Mr. Sweetser didn't believe the story himself, but some of his friends from Pownal do. He first heard the story about five years ago.

Pownal
Durham
Yarmouth

There used to be a haunted house on East Main Street (Yarmouth). It was a huge old farmhouse, and the barn was falling apart. An old woman lived there alone with her animals. Nobody ever saw much of her, but she looked like a witch or something. Everyone thought she was crazy. The barn was falling apart, so she kept a horse and a couple of goats in the house. These were always about ten dogs running around outside, and they wouldn't let anyone get near the place. Kids used to stand out in the street and yell things at her--they called her crazy and a witch. The old woman died about fifteen years ago, and the house was just left to rot. Everyone said the house was haunted--that the old woman's ghost came back to keep people away from her house. As far as I know, no one ever saw a ghost, but some people claim they could hear her dogs barking at night. No one ever went near the house, except a few kids would go in once in a while on a dare. But no one ever went alone.

Coll.: Yarmouth, Maine.
December 20, 1966

Inf.: William Sweetser, East Main Street, Yarmouth, Maine

B :

Note: Mr. Sweetser didn't believe the story and can't remember when he first heard it. I heard that the house was haunted when I moved to Yarmouth, and I believed it. The town finally had the house burned about four years ago.

Yarmouth

Nola Johnson - 18

(The Dwellers)

Right behind my house, maybe a couple of houses down, there's the house where the Dwellers live--well, she still lives there. They met strictly through a Lonely Hearts Club. They corresponded for a long time, and finally she came up to Maine and they got married. The marriage never really worked out, but they stayed together anyway. When he started getting older he got very senile and was a burden on her. He used to drive downtown and forget the way home, or drive downtown and walk back forgetting the car. Sometimes when they were together, she'd have to give him directions because he'd forget how to get downtown, and in Newport, that's not easy. One day about twenty years ago, she reported him missing. She said he went out and never came back. They searched the whole town and the woods and dragged the river, and never found a body or anything. Well, everyone believes that she did away with him. It's a spooky old house and everyone goes out of their way to avoid it. She never goes anywhere any more. The funny thing is, she still washes all of his old clothes and hangs them out on the line. I'm dying to go over and investigate, but I'm afraid she'll do away with me, too.

Coll.: University of Maine, Orono
November 5, 1966

Inf.: Anne Witham, 217 Balentine Hall

B :

Note: Miss Witham first heard this story when she was a little girl, from her parents. She still believes it.

Orono

Nola Johnson - 19

(Joe Ware)

A long time ago there was a man in Yarmouth named Joe Ware, who was an Indian hunter. One day he happened to be out in the woods--it was all woods then anyway--splitting a log. A Britisher came along and said, "I'm looking for Joe Ware. Do you know where I can find him?" So Joe said, "I guess I can help you if you help me with this log." Then Joe showed the Britisher where to hold the log and pulled his ax out of the log. The Britisher's fingers got caught in the crack, Joe was free to go about his business, and he never got caught.

Coll.: Yarmouth, Maine
December 18, 1966

Inf.: Mrs. Richard McCann, East Main Street, Yarmouth

B :

Note: Mrs. McCann heard this story several years ago from an old Yarmouth native. When I asked, "What did the Britisher want with Joe Ware?" she replied, "Well now, maybe it wasn't a Britisher after all. Maybe it was an Indian."

Motif K1111

Yarmouth

Nola Johnson - 20

(Joe Ware and the Indians)

In the early seventeen hundreds, Captain Joseph Ware's family was massacred by the Indians. After that he took every opportunity to be revenged on the Indians. Once when he lived at Lewiston Falls on the Androscoggin River, he learned that a war party of Indians planned to come down the river and attack a settlement. In order to prevent getting too near the falls, the Indians sent a scout to build a fire several yards above the falls, so they could use it for a land marker at night. Ware killed the scout, put out his fire and built another one right at the top of the falls. When the war party came down the river, they got caught in the current before they realized they had been tricked. They were all carried over the falls and killed.

Coll.: Cumberland Center, Maine
January 21, 1967

Inf.: Mrs. William Hake, Methodist Road, Cumberland Center

C :

Note: Mrs. Hake heard this story about thirty years ago when she first came to Cumberland. She and her husband are antique dealers and both have heard many stories since.

Lewiston Falls
Androscoggin R
Cumberland Center

Nola Johnson - 21

(Joe Ware)

Captain Ware was splitting logs behind his house one day when six Indians came up to him and asked if he could tell them where Joe Ware lived. Ware said he would show them as soon as he finished splitting the log he was working on. When he had opened up a large crack with a wedge, he asked the Indians to help him by pulling the log apart. Three got on one side and three on the other and they put their fingers in the crack and began to pull. Ware hit the wedge as hard as he could with a sledge hammer and knocked it out. The Indians' fingers were caught in the crack. Ware killed the Indians one by one while he shouted, "I'm Joe Ware, damn you, I'm Joe Ware!"

Coll.: Cumberland Center, Maine
January 21, 1967

Inf.: Mrs. William Hake, Methodist Road, Cumberland

C :

K IIII

Cumberland Ce

Nola Johnson - 22

(A Children's Counting-Out Rhyme)

(The spelling is according to pronunciation.)

Intie, Mintie, Tibbity Fee,
Delia, Delia, Dominee,
Icha, Picha, Dominicha,--(ch pronounced as in church, preceded by long i sound)
Alka, Palka, Poo,
Out pops Y-O-U.

Coll.: Yarmouth, Maine
January 1, 1967

Inf.: Nola Johnson, Portland Street, Yarmouth

A :

Note: This rhyme was taught to me by my mother when I was a little girl. She used to say it when she was a little girl. She was brought up in Worcester, Massachusetts in a Swedish neighborhood. I had always thought that she had made it up, but she recently said that she learned it from the other children in the neighborhood.

Yarmouth
Worcester, Mass

Nola Johnson - 23

(A Children's Counting-Out Rhyme)

(The spelling is according to pronunciation.)

Intie, Mintie, Tootsa, Lala,

Falama Linkie, Dinkie, Dala,

Falama Lee, Falama Loo,

Out pops Y-O-U.

Coll.: Yarmouth, Maine
January 1, 1967

Inf.: Nola Johnson, Portland Street, Yarmouth

A :

Note: This rhyme was taught to me by my father when I was a little girl. He used to say it when he was a boy to choose who would be first up at bat, etc. by a process of elimination. He was brought up in Worcester, Massachusetts in a Swedish neighborhood. He learned it from other boys in the neighborhood, but it sounds like it has some Italian influence.

Yarmouth
Worcester, Mass

Nola Johnson - 24

(A Children's Counting-Out Rhyme)

(The spelling is according to pronunciation.)

Hi, Lo, Eenie Meenie Ki Ki,
Oom Chow Chow, Oom Pow Pow,
Ish-diddily Otin Botin,
Bobatin, Pootin, Patin,
Sssssst!

Coll.: Yarmouth, Maine
January 1, 1967

Inf.: Nola Johnson, Portland Street, Yarmouth

A :

Note: This ryhme was taught to me three years ago by my room-mate at the time--Cynthia Fuller, from Ellsworth, Maine. She moved to Ellsworth when she was five years old and learned the rhyme from her playmates. The child doing the counting-out would change from one child to another on certain beats, not every syllable. The beats are marked above. The child to whom the counter was pointing when he said "Sssssst!" was eliminated.

Yarmouth
Ellsworth

EVALUATION

The University of Maine campus does not seem to be rich in folklore, especially not in stories about ghosts on the college campus in specific or ghosts in general. As was mentioned in class, maybe believing in ghosts is going out of style. The lack of folklore on the campus may also be a reflection of the statement: "But legends vanish under the impact of education and urbanization." I think that students have too much else on their minds to think about folklore. The thing for college students to do today seems to be to get away from tradition. I found that the Penobscot ghost stories weren't known anywhere on campus except in Penobscot. I also found that very few male students believe in ghosts, or they won't admit it.

Yarmouth, a town which would seem to be quite rich in folklore, seems to be lacking. Several people said that they used to know stories about such-and-such, but they couldn't remember them. This is probably also a result of education and urbanization.

I collected my items two ways. The items marked B: were taken down almost word-for-word; the items marked C: I composed from catch words and phrases I wrote down during the meeting. In all cases there were never more than four other people present. The stories were told mainly to me, and the presence of others didn't seem to have any effect on the story.

Orono
Yarmouth