

**STUDENT MILL WORKERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT:  
LEWISTON-AUBURN, MAINE**

**Anita Turgeon**  
(Interviewer: Bridget Harr)

**SMWOH #37**  
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*(Personal conversation)*

**Q:** So I've been in the area, but I actually had no idea the mills were even up here.

**A:** Oh, yes, it was a mill town.

**Q:** Yeah, that's so interesting to me.

**A:** Yes, it was a mill town.

**Q:** I think it's funny how little of Lewiston history I know, and that's why I think it's so good that Bates students are doing this, because I really feel like -

**A:** That's true, because, you know, a lot of them are here for four years, and they don't know nothing about where they've been living all these years, so.

**Q:** Exactly. Okay, first of all, if I could just get you to sign this. It's just for the release of the tape to the museum. Excellent, all right, and then initially they just want you to state your full name and spell your last name, for the tape.

**A:** Okay, I can start now? My name is Anita Turgeon, and I live at 263

Lincoln, Lewiston, Maine.

**Q:** Do you want to spell your last name

**A:** Oh, yes, T-U-R-G-E-O-N.

**Q:** And then this is Bridget Harr, interviewing. All right, to just start off, where, the place and date of your birth?

**A:** My, I was born here in Lewiston, and my date of birth is January 24, 1920.

**Q:** So you grew up in this town?

**A:** I grew up in this area, yes.

**Q:** What was the community like then, especially compared to now?

**A:** Well, it was much, you know, there wasn't nothing going like we have nowadays with drugs and all, we didn't have anything of that, you know. It was very quiet, people were, you know, people weren't afraid of the neighbors, there was nothing going on, everybody knew each other and that's the way people lived then. So, but now it's a completely different ways of living. You never know who's your neighbor, you never know what's going to happen, and it's very changed area. Everywhere in the city.

**Q:** Your family and ethnic background, what were your parents' names?

**A:** My parents came from Canada, both my father and my mother, and I was born here so I'm an American with French descent.

**Q:** Okay, do you speak French?

**A:** Oui. Oh yeah, that's my language, French. You know, my parents, my father spoke English, I don't know where he learned that, but my mother didn't speak English. But of course I went to the, I went to a parochial school right here, not too far from here on Oxford Street, and we had half an hour of French, half an hour of English, so we learned how to speak, because at home we never spoke English.

**Q:** It was all French.

**A:** Yes, so all of our neighbors were all French people around here, so, but we learned English.

**Q:** Did you have siblings?

**A:** I was an only child.

**Q:** Okay, I was just wondering if maybe your parents, like were your parents here for a long time before they had you?

**A:** Yeah, they had been married for twelve years. Big surprise.

**Q:** Well, what were your occupations?

**A:** When I, I work in a department store for four years, and then I got married and I was out of work for a while, and then I went to work at the Pepperell Manufacturing Company. They were a company that would, they were finishing the material. The material was made in Biddeford, that's where the, there was weave, they would bring it back to Lewiston here. It was what they called the Bleachery, that's where the material was bleached, and then it was cut to make pillowcases and,

pillowcases, and they'd make, or sheets. And then, that was in the early part, and then when the fitted sheet started to come on the market, they went into the fitted sheet also. So they made, and then there was no queen or king size bed, it was all double or twin, so that's what they made, twin size or double size sheets.

But, and then the Bates Mill, which is not too far from here, would, they were a company that would manufacture bedspreads and things like that, and then they would weave that material, which was called pencale [sic]. It was very, very fine material, and that would be brought over to where I worked at the Pepperell, and it was cut there and it was finished there. At the time, way back, scalloping was the trend, and hemstitch. This is little holes and it was all finished with thread, so that was beautifully done.

Q: Very time consuming?

A: Yes.

Q: So did you work at Pepperell, is that what?

A: Pepperell, I worked there for twenty seven years at that place, right here, not too far from I would say Lisbon Street. You know Lisbon Street? That mill as you go up was on the left hand side. Now it's gone, it's a completely different things that are being operating in there, you know, (*unintelligible word*) stuff.

Q: Right, so now, did you actually do the finishing of the hemming?

A: No, I folded them. After they were stitched, they had to be folded. And then they would be put on racks and brought down to be put in boxes or, you know, they would be wrapped around in cellophane and stuff like that. So that's what I did then. Then they had, they had the, pillowcases were done but then they had that machine

that would turn them the wrong side out, I mean the right side out, you know, because they were then, and then they had to be, that machine would, they'd put a pillowcase in there and the arms would project and turn the pillowcase around.

**Q:** Oh, that's funny. How did you get your job there?

**A:** There's a lady that I knew that got me a job there. Yeah, she was working at the, in the office and I knew her very well, and she asked me, and at the time that was big money, fifteen dollars a week, that's when I started. But it was more than some of these places around here, you know.

**Q:** So did you consider yourself lucky to have that (*unintelligible word*)?

**A:** Yes, I did, I did.

**Q:** Did your husband work in the mill?

**A:** No, he work in the shoe shops.

**Q:** Did you guys have children?

**A:** Two daughters.

**Q:** How did that work with like child care and that sort of thing?

**A:** Well, my mother was, my mother took care of my children, yeah, while I worked.

**Q:** That's good. The last woman that I interviewed, her family had to do it so she was on first shift and her husband was on third shift, and they saw each other

weekends only.

**A:** Oh, oh, yes, oh, that was hard. I was very lucky to have my mother to take care of them, you know.

**Q:** Did either of them end up working in mills?

**A:** Who?

**Q:** Did your daughters?

**A:** No, no, see, that's another area that, you know, with time, they didn't want to go work in these places. And so I got a daughter that went to nursing school and graduated from here, St. Mary's. They used to have a school, nursing school. Now it's dead, it's been gone for quite a few. And she was still, she's still working, well she's, she worked there for twenty seven years taking care of the O.R., central sterile, they call it. And what else now? Oh, it's another place that she had, she had three places to take care of. Oh, post operating, you know, recovery room, so that was a big, big job to take care of. So she did that for quite a few years, and then she was burning out so she just left and she stayed home. And they used to live in Winthrop then, you know, and then the town of Winthrop, where they were, where they had their home, the town of Winthrop wanted the land because at the time they were building a high school. And where they were, the town of Winthrop wanted that area, so they sold it and they came back to Lewiston. Now they're living in Lewiston, now.

**Q:** It's interesting to hear about how families still really stay in the area.

**A:** Yeah, that's right, they wanted to come back, because that, you know, they were, she and her husband were, went to grade school together, and then they went to high school, and he went on his own and then she went to nursing school, and

finally they met again and married.

**Q:** Within your family, who really took care of money and organizing the family, between you and your husband?

**A:** Well, we did that together, you know, we did that together, take care of the bills and the insurance and everything.

**Q:** In working in the mills, did you ever think workers were overworked? Like how long was your day, and that sort of thing?

**A:** Well, we started at seven to three thirty, so we had an hour, a half an hour for lunch. So that wasn't bad. But we work hard, we work hard, oh yes, yeah, we work hard. That was, you know, it was all piece work, so you had to make more and more to make money, because you weren't paid by the hour so you had to produce a lot.

**Q:** Actually, a question was who was more inventive, piece workers, bosses or salaried people?

**A:** Well, let's see now. They had a lot of people, well, coming up with these different things, but you know, they never, we never had any pension plans, and then all of a sudden they say they were leaving, with nothing. You know, there we were. And at the time, well, you know, if we didn't have somebody to fight for us, they wouldn't do nothing.

**Q:** Who fought for you?

**A:** We had a union, we had a union, yes, yes, you know, there was a

spokesperson for us people, because otherwise we wouldn't get much of anything. Because, like I say, we never had anything out of them, you know. We got the jobs, but when they left, it's too bad, we didn't have any pension plan like people have today, you know. But they decided to leave. They went down south.

**Q:** Were women involved in the union?

**A:** Men and women.

**Q:** Men and women were both?

**A:** Yes, yeah, we had spokes-, women had women that took care of the women, you know, and then they had, we were all together at meetings and, you know, whatever things would come up, we'd have meetings to discuss whatever was going on.

**Q:** The class that I'm doing this for is a gender relations anthropology course, so that'll be why I'm asking questions about relations between men and women. But then that said, did you find, were most of your co workers men or women? Or was it pretty even?

**A:** Pretty, well, more women, more women than men, because there were a lot of stitchers which were women, and all of these, the, everybody that would work on pillowcases, they were half and half on that. But otherwise, otherwise there would be more women.

**Q:** Okay, now did you find that as far as interactions with a supervisor, did women have any more problems than men?

**A:** I don't know, I don't think so.



**Q:** Do you think it was pretty even?

**A:** It was pretty even, I think, yes.

**Q:** Within working, your working environment, were there ever, or I guess even in Lewiston, were there ever any conflicts between different ethnic groups, or would, did everyone socialize together?

**A:** Way back, way back. It was all Irish that settled first, and then French people started to come from Canada, they come to work in the mills. And that was a big conflict between the French and the, the French and the Irish, that was something else. I don't remember that, but I know that had been going on a lot. But then after a while, you know that the French and Irish got married, you know. Yeah, see? They got together and they married, French married an Irish and Irish married a French, so.

**Q:** Did the Irish people also work in the mills?

**A:** Yes, oh yes.

**Q:** Was everyone -?

**A:** Oh yes, yeah.

**Q:** The town that my mom is from is half Irish, half Lithuanian and it's very similar like that.

**A:** See? That's right. We had Lithuanians here in the city, too.

**Q:** Yeah, I've seen (*unintelligible phrase*).

**A:** Yeah, we had Lithuanians, very nice people, yeah. I had, yeah, we had Lithuanian people that lived, that worked with us, yeah. Quite a few. They were nice, I just love them.

**Q:** Now, as far as accommodations toward women within the mill, like maternity leave or accommodations for pregnant women, what was that like?

**A:** Well, you were allowed I think it's thirteen weeks then, with pay, and then you have to come back to work.

**Q:** Now, do you think, were there problems within that, or were people very accommodating? Like sometimes women will face issues with like being fired if they get pregnant or something like that, did that ever occur?

**A:** No, no, no, no, you had a leave, you know, you had a leave of absence and then you'd come back. No, there was never any problem with that.

**Q:** How did people get jobs? Like who got what jobs?

**A:** Well, they applied. Yeah, they applied, you know, I guess they went to apply, they left their names, and whenever there was an opening they'd call these people back.

**Q:** Was there any difference, I mean you mentioned that women were stitchers, but was there any gender division within who got what jobs, or did everyone apply for everything?

**A:** No, they applied, and I guess whether they were satisfied, whatever job was offered, they'd take it.

**Q:** And then who was admired or looked down upon within those jobs? Like what jobs were considered high level or admirable, versus like who were like the lower workers?

**A:** Well, you know, there was the, like if they, we'd call the manager of the place, and then there were, they would call them floor ladies. They are the ones that would look after, if somebody was missing they had to replace them, and what kind of work had to be out first, you know, they would go around the room, and that's with the ladies. But then there were men, too, there were, you know, at the echelon there, there was that top manager. Of course, he wasn't on the floor, he was in his own office. But the other ones would report to him whatever was going on and what had to be done. And if they had to work overtime, if there's so much work that had to be out, you'd have to work an hour overtime to get that work out as soon as possible.

**Q:** Was there pay for overtime work?

**A:** Yes, time and a half, yeah.

**Q:** So it was more important to actually get the work done than worry about like having the mill have to pay overtime?

**A:** Yeah, well they had to be, when the work had to be done they were willing to pay to have that work out as soon as possible, for their customers.

**Q:** Were there ways of getting favorite jobs? If you wanted a specific job, was there a way?

**A:** No, no, it went by seniority, see. If you been there three years, well the

one that just came in couldn't get your job because you had seniority.

**Q:** Okay, do you have favorite memories from working at the mill?

**A:** Yeah, we had, you know, met a lot of nice people that I still remember, and we'd meet, because right now I don't know how many is left there, I think I'm one of the older ones. I was one of the younger ones that worked there, and throughout the years, you know, there's a lot that died. I don't know how many's living right now. But there were a lot of nice people that I really enjoyed being with.

**Q:** Did your family life at all center around the mills? Like, I know that there were very social, a lot of social functions that went through the mills and just, was, did, like were a lot of your friends mill workers? How did that work?

**A:** Yeah, we had, at Christmas time we'd all, all the women would get together and we'd have a big party at Christmas time.

**Q:** What about difficult experiences, or any challenges you faced working there?

**A:** Not really, not really, we didn't have no, nothing going on. Everybody got along well, and whatever job was available. If there was a job posted, and you'd think, well, I think I'd like to change. So you'd put your name on the board, and if you had seniority you would get it, see? That's the way it worked. Well, I think that was fair, you know.

**Q:** Yes, I think that's still pretty much how it works as well. What about just anything else you'd like to talk about?

**A:** Well, let's see now, I want to tell you how many mills we had.

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** Yeah, there was the Libby Mill, that was woollen mill, Libby, it burned, you'll probably see it when you cross the, across from the, let's see, there's Lincoln Street and Main Street, the Longley Bridge, right on the left there, and that's the Libby Mill. That burned a few years back. And then it came down to the Bates Mill on Canal Street, and then there was the Hill Mill, that's on Canal Street. And then, on Canal Street again, that was the Androscoggin Mill. So, and the rivers, when they first dug the rivers, that was all made by Irishmen. Can you imagine digging a canal? That was unreal, unreal, yeah, they dug the canals.

**Q:** How long ago were those dug?

**A:** Oh, my goodness, that was in the 1800s. So that's when the canals have all that water, which was run by, a lot of things were run by water then, you know, there wasn't that much electricity.

**Q:** Yeah, actually, one of the questions was, did you know about any illegal discharges into the river back then?

**A:** Yes, I guess there was because, you know, they didn't have the things that, possibilities they have now with the, the sewage and everything now is being taken care of. But then, everything was thrown out in the river, you know, that's why it was so polluted. It was just unreal. And the paper mills, of course, they dump a lot of their acids, and summer time you wouldn't believe, it was just awful. You couldn't open the windows. The wind, if you'd open the windows and you'd have a white sink, in the morning it would be rusty, like rust. And the house, houses, there would be rust on,

colored on the houses. Yeah, that was bad. But there was a Mr. Lawrence from the Bates Mill, he's the, from the Bates College I think, and he's the one that started to clean up the Androscoggin River. Mr. Lawrence, I remember that.

**Q:** How long did it take? Was there noticeable improvement?

**A:** Oh yes, oh yes, and right now that what it, they want to stay, they want to keep it that way. Because, you know, right now there's that hotel that's built along that esplanade where your older people live and, you know, it's such a nice, it's a nice river, it's a beautiful river. And the falls are so nice, too. So, you know, they're trying to keep the pollution. And we don't smell it any more, there's no smell.

**Q:** There used to be (*unintelligible word*) smell?

**A:** Oh, in the summer time, like I say, it was, you know, on humid days there it was just unbearable.

**Q:** How about working conditions within the mill? Like in the summer, did it get extremely hot, or were there ways to, how did people survive?

**A:** Oh, when I went downstairs, I work on the, that was downstairs, on the pillowcases, that was hot in that place. We had fans, but this place was so warm, oh, it was un-, it was just awful. They didn't have any air condition or anything, you know, but.

**Q:** Were you given breaks at all to drink water or whatever to -?

**A:** Yes, yeah, we did. And then, did I tell you about the Pepperell, they didn't weave here, they just finished the material. All that materials, all the cotton came from

Biddeford, that was woven there, and they'd bring it here and they'd fit, you know, they'd bleach it and like I say, they'd cut it in whatever wanted, fitted sheets or whatever else they wanted. And that was done over here, so that was a transportation back and forth.

**Q:** And then when did the place that were working in the mill shut down?

**A:** That was in, let's see now, I think it was '69, yeah, '69.

**Q:** Okay, so pretty early. Because there were some that were still open for a while, right?

**A:** Yes, yeah, see, the Bates was still going, and the Hill, and then they all folded up, you know, I mean they're gone. But the Bates Mill used to make a lot of bedspreads, and there was one that was called George Washington, and that was a beautiful bedspread. At the time they sold a lot of them. Then there was Martha Washington, that was another design. So that was their most valuable bedspreads that they made. Real nice. Then they made tablecloths, they had the most wonderful tablecloths. They were just great. They were made out of rayon, and the pattern was just one patter, Chrysanthemum, and that, they made an all white, and then they had one with a mint green border. I still can see all that stuff, you know, it's still in my mind.

**Q:** Did you own any of those products that you made there?

**A:** Oh yes, I, yeah, everybody could buy some, yeah.

**Q:** What about just differences in Lewiston, because of the mill shutdown, what happened, how did the community survive?

**A:** Well, people had to find, try to find jobs somewhere else, you know,

they'd go in different areas. Some people would change from going in the mills to learning a new trade, going to construction, the men. And the women, well some of them went to school to learn other things to try to find, diversify, you know. So others went to work in a, they had a General Electric. I should have gone there, which I regret not going. I'd have a pension today. But I didn't go, so. They had other things, you know, some went into stores, some went into the, they had a lot of shoe shops going so they went there.

**Q:** Did you just stop working after the mill shut down?

**A:** No, no-no, I kept on working.

**Q:** What did you do?

**A:** Well I went, from there, the Pepperell, I went to the, right here. Oh, there's another one that, Continental Mill I forgot, I forgot to tell you about that one, on Oxford Street. That was a cotton mill. That's where my mother worked. Both my father and my mother work at the Hill Mill. My mother was a weaver, and my father was a loom fixer. So that's how they earned their living. And, you know, way back at the time my mother and my father came here, I think they earn about three or four dollars a week. So how they made it, I don't know, really.

**Q:** Was that considered -?

**A:** Yeah, that was a -

**Q:** Was that reasonable?

**A:** It was going, that's what was going then.



**Q:** Was that enough to survive on, to live on, early?

**A:** Yes, they did.

**Q:** And then you said you made fifteen a day? Or a week?

**A:** A week, well that was a week. Then, that was, see, that was still in the forties, '40, '41. So it kept going up a little, you know, the wages kept changing. But still, it took a long time. But people never earned a lot of money around here, never.

**Q:** Were, like now, compared to other mills, was fifteen a week good?

**A:** Yeah, yeah, it was.

**Q:** Because you said you were (*unintelligible word*).

**A:** Yes, yes, yeah, that was the goal, just about, just as best as you could get then, you know. So that's the way it was, way back.

**Q:** Now, was that a comfortable amount to live on, having two daughters, and with your husband's income as well?

**A:** Yeah.

**Q:** That was okay.

**A:** Yeah, see, the prices weren't like they are today, you know, you could manage much better than you could now. You couldn't make it now.

**Q:** As far as gender relations within the workplace, what is your opinion on how they were when you were working in the mills, versus how they are today, or how you hear about them today?

**A:** Well, way back then I think, you know, all the men and women really got along very well, you know. They were nice people, really, they weren't, I don't remember having anybody bad there, you know. There were Democrats and Republicans, and they would talk, and this guy would call me a Demo, because I was a Democrat. He says hi there, Demo, he called me that. I didn't mind. But, you know what I mean, nothing, there was nothing bad coming out of it, you know, people just, you're this and I'm that and that's okay, no problem. People interacted very well, really, you know.

**Q:** Was working in the mills a very uniting force, like to get past those differences such as being a Democrat or Republican?

**A:** No, I don't think so. I think this, especially this, Lewiston here was, way back, was a Democratic city, it kept on. But that's the way it was then. I think probably it's changed a little, but not too much. We still have a lot of Democratic people, you know, like in the city of Lewiston and Auburn. They have, in fact they're brothers, they're brothers, you know, one in Auburn and one in Lewiston, that's strange, that it happened.

**Q:** Right, so was the environment in the entire city very open to everyone and very, like everyone got along, or was it particularly within the mill life?

**A:** No, no, no, it was all over the city, yeah, yeah, it was all kinds of, like I say, there were Lithuanians, there were Polish people, there were French, Italian, you know, it was a mixture. And we had a, on Lisbon Street we had all kinds of stores. It was wonderful to be there, you know, there were all kinds of nice stores. And now of

course it's all gone, but like I say, they were owned by all kinds of people, you know. So people got along well, really, and you know, they didn't say well I'm not going there because he's Polish or French or what.

**Q:** How do you think that compares to today with the Somali population?

**A:** I don't know, I don't go too much to different stores. But, and then I don't interact too much with people. Well, the ones I do, I volunteer at the hospital, so I meet a lot of people, you know, but everything goes on well, you know. I don't get, I don't ask them, because we don't ask any question, I don't ask them whether they're French or Irish or whatever. But, you know, if they want to talk, if they want to speak, I do, they don't, well I just, you know, because we take them down to different areas for tests, you know, so that's what I.

But now, I'll tell you, right now, there's a lot of people here, they weren't born here. They come from I don't know where. They come here with drugs, you know, and all kinds of stuff. They're not, they're never born here, they were from God knows where. They, you know, they bust them every other week, they're busted in different areas. They come from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, whatever. But like I say, a lot of these people that don't belong here, they come here to be on the dole, or to sell drugs, that's all they're good for. I know that, because you know, I hear that every day, you know, these people they, different names there, and they said, well, they come from here, they come from there. They weren't born here.

People that were born here, I don't mean they were all a hundred percent good, but I mean, we didn't have these problems. Now there's more problems, I don't know, I feel safe living here. The doors lock, and I wouldn't let anybody in. And I don't drive at night. If I have to, my daughters will come and get me and take me back. But it's scary nowadays, you know. You don't want to be, I wouldn't want to be outside by myself on

the road, not knowing what's going to happen. So it's not a, it's not a good way of living right now, you know. I'm not the only, it's not the only place in Lewiston, Maine. It's generally, that's what's happening nowadays.

**Q:** Would you have felt more safe back then, at the time (*unintelligible phrase*)?

**A:** Oh yes, I used to belong to that church here, St. Mary's Church, I'm Catholic, and I used to belong to the choir. Well, we had two rehearsals a week, one on Wednesday night and one on Saturday night. I used to walk. I used to live at 78 Lincoln, so I used to walk. Nothing happened, and I wasn't scared. I'd walk from there at night. We had the, they rehearsal would be at six thirty, seven o'clock, and we'd get home by nine. No problem, you know. Now, I wouldn't do that. I don't even go from here to there on foot. It's sad, you know, anh?

**Q:** It is sad, it's very sad.

**A:** Yeah, it is. So, that's the way things are nowadays. But I don't think I'll move, I think I'm old enough to stay here until I die, I guess. But I'm afraid of the, afraid of what's going to happen with the rivers.

**Q:** Yeah, I had never heard of that, I didn't (*unintelligible phrase*).

**A:** See if I got that book, 1936, there was an awful, awful, (*moves away from recorder*). Well, I thought I had it here, I had it. Oh, my god, you wouldn't believe. It was March.

**Q:** Oh, wow, Maine's greatest flood.

A: It was just awful.

Q: So this was when all the (*unintelligible phrase*)?

A: See, that's the Longley Bridge now.

Q: Okay, wow.

A: Yeah, see, that's the Longley Bridge.

Q: It's so high.

A: I think that was the dam.

Q: How many times has it flooded?

A: Well, it was there, and then in, let's see now, which, the last time was in '89. There was, before that, there was another one before that. Oh, look at this, yeah, god, it's awful.

Q: At this time where did you live?

A: Thirty eight, so I was way down, but we didn't get it there. It didn't come there, can you imagine? But over here was, it was just awful.

Q: Were you affected in the eighties? You said -

A: Yeah.

**Q:** You had to leave?

**A:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, the water came up, in the eighties, and came up, way up to the first floor.

**Q:** Were the mills affected at all with the flooding?

**A:** No, they, well yes, the Libby Mill, they're right by the falls so the water came there.

**Q:** I don't know if the museum would be interested in this, because it doesn't necessarily specifically pertain to the mills, but there's some pictures of how the, how it used to be. Would you be willing to let them make copies of any of these? Because I won't, I just let Rachel know that you have it, because I -

**A:** I told Rachel I'd be seeing her, because I've got, I've got a picture of the, somebody gave me the picture, they didn't want it, last summer. I don't throw anything out, I'm a collector. See, that was from the Pepperell Mill.

**Q:** And this is the one that you worked at?

**A:** Yeah. See, these were all the foremens and -

**Q:** Oh, wow. If you like, I could take this with me, or also, because I have a release form for anything you want to give as well, anything you want to donate, and I can take it with me. Or we're having a reception on April 6th where everyone that we've interviewed can come to meet us at the Lewiston-Auburn Museum and, or you could bring them with you there if you'd like to come to that as well, I'd love to see you there.

A: I got to look to see if I got something else. I thought I had something else for Rachel. But this is, oh, that's old so I don't know whether that's, that's what I wanted to give her, too.

Q: Oh, the Social Security (*unintelligible word*).

A: Nineteen thirty seven.

Q: Were those like hung up in the mills or anything?

A: I don't know where it comes from. Somebody gave it to me. I don't know where they got it either, but that I want to give to Rachel, too, I want to give to Rachel, this I want to give, I got a few names, you know, that I had. I don't remember all of them.

Q: It's interesting that there's just one woman in this picture. I wonder who she was and -

A: She must have been a -

Q: Because there's just the one.

A: Yeah, well she must have been a forelady, you know. I wouldn't know whether she would be, her name would be Martha Stowell, because there was a, Martha Stowell, no, that was the daughter. I don't know what was the mother's name, but the mother was a forelady there.

Q: Now how, so there was one forelady and then just one foreman for -?

**A:** Well, then probably there was one, but with the years they had more than one, see, because they had the stitching department, there had to be this lady, folding department, there was another forelady, and then fitted sheets had their own department, so there was another, that were ladies. So at the time, I don't remember his name, there. They had this house, the Pepperell owned a house on Pine Street. Now it's a funeral home, what's the name now, is it Albert and Burpee? They owned that house. That was a beautiful home, and any, the agent would live there for nothing, it's the company that would provide the home for him and his family.

**Q:** So then, all these other men?

**A:** Yeah, these were all foremans, you know, yeah, they were all working in there. In the office, there were men working in the office, too, and some of the men were, of course they had different areas, you know, like plumbing, and they had the woodworking stuff, they would take care of all these buildings. So these men had all, you know, different areas, they had different men working. And of course they have the CEO, and then they have an assistant. And I can, I remember that one, I think her name was Adams. Of course, I don't remember them all, but been there for so long. Oh, the agent there was Harrison, and then there was a Mr. Cronin, and Arthur Cloutier, took the place of Harrison, French guy. So that's the one I told Rachel I'd give her. Because I never wanted to part with it, I says, you know, some day, and then that museum came along so I says, well, you know, that would be a good place for it if she wanted it. So I saw her in the hospital last week, I went to the emergency and she was sitting there so I talked with her. I said, I've got something, I said, I don't know whether you'd be interested, she says, yes, she says, just call me or, she told me when she'd be there, so.

**Q:** That's excellent.



A: So I want to keep that, and I put a plastic on it, you know, some Saran wrap so it wouldn't.

Q: Well, I'm sure she'd make a copy and give you back the -

A: Oh, I don't want it back.

Q: Oh, really?

A: Oh no, no, what would I do with it? And when I die, nobody would, they don't know, they're going to throw stuff out that, they don't know. They'll see some pictures, they don't know anybody, that's going to be thrown out. And if somebody can use it, so much the better, anh? That's what I'm going to do with it.

Q: All right, well, it was excellent meeting you.

A: Yeah, me too. I'm glad you came over.

Q: Yeah, definitely. And then we'll have that reception on April 6th. If you could come, that would be great. And then you can always bring a guest if you want.

A: April 6th, where is that going to be now?

Q: April 6th, have you been to the Museum L-A?

A: Oh, that's where it is, what time?

Q: It's 1:45 to 3:15.

A: So, what day is that on?

Q: It's on a Wednesday, a week (*unintelligible phrase*).

A: I'll have to mark it down.

Q: I'll send you a little card about it, too.

A: Oh, you will? Oh, okay.

Q: Yup, so then it'll be great. And there'll be lots of previous mill workers there.

A: You know, I haven't been. Rachel asked me, she said, did you come over last year when they had that big meeting, you know, with all the different people in mills. Well, I says, I don't belong to Bates Mill so I didn't go. She said, you should have come over. So I says, no, I didn't go. She says, well you missed it because you could have come. Well, I said, I didn't know whether, I thought it was only for the Bates Mill. So, I could have gone. But I never been to the museum.

Q: Yeah, they have some looms and they have it all set up just like it would go through, like the production of (*unintelligible word*) things, and they have old equipment there. And then also samples of what was produced and all that sort of thing.

A: Yeah, so they must have samples of whatever bedspreads they had, because I'm sure that was a seller, I'll tell you. It was so heavy, you couldn't wash it in the washing machine, because it's too heavy. I don't know what they did, people way

back then, what they did to wash it. Because there's no ordinary washing machine that would do that, break right down.

**Q:** Wow, that's interesting. I wonder how they washed them? Yeah well, and then they have just samples of, well I guess just anything anyone has donated, they just have all sorts of things. And like they have patterns of everything and how it was all produced, so it's really interesting. Especially like previous to doing, conducting any interviews to go through because you really get to understand the process so that when the people you're interviewing are describing, you can understand what they're talking about.

**A:** Oh, there was a lot to it, to make patterns, you know. So many, all these bobbins there, and the looms and everything that people used to work on. Wonderful, but it's gone. Too bad all these things have gone by, you know.

**Q:** It's so good that the museum's documenting it now.

**A:** Yes, I'm so happy that anybody that had things like that. It's just like the old times. You know, people had wonderful furniture. Brass beds, they had maple, what'd they call it, anyway, it was maple something, and they'd make furniture. Beautiful. Threw it out in the dump. The new modern furniture came along, everything went. Well, my father and mother, they had the most beautiful brass bed. I kept it. I don't have it here, but I kept it and -

*End of Side A*

*Side B*

**A:** So what's your last name Bridget?

Q: Harr, H-A-R-R.

A: H-A-R-R, that's a, I never heard that name before. Bridget I did, but not Harr, H-A-R-R.

Q: I don't know, I think Harr might be Polish? Slovak?

A: Polish, yeah, is that so?

Q: Yeah, I'm mostly Irish, but it's funny, my dad's dad just is the one like Slovak area.

A: It's a mixture, yeah, it's a mixture. Just like, we had, we called them (name) Adams, but their names wasn't Adams, they change it from, I don't know what it was first, but they change it to Adams so it would be shorter. Yeah, they were both nice people.

Q: Well thank you very much.

A: Oh, you're very welcome.

Q: It was excellent meeting you.

A: Oh, I'm glad you came. I hope I help you.

Q: Oh, definitely.

A: Well then, you know, oh yes, I'll bring that over, too. Or you want to bring that over, or what?

**Q:** Well, if you, if that's, if you'd like that's fine. Let me just get out the other form for you to sign then.

**A:** Fifty cents then. Can you, *Lewiston Daily Sun*, and in the evening we had the *Journal*.

**Q:** Oh, okay. Okay, if you want to fill out this.

**A:** You'll send it back, or you'll bring it back?

**Q:** I think you should probably just circle that you're lending it, and then Rachel would bring it back, I'm assuming, or like another volunteer would.

**A:** Where should I -?

**Q:** Just circle under here, and then write your name? Yeah. Okay, and then just, I guess just list the title of the book, just like a little, flood -

**A:** Maine's Greatest Flood?

**Q:** Yeah, just say book about Maine's greatest flood, or picture.

**A:** Oh, that one I was telling you about, I'll show you that, the last page is, that's the mill I was telling you about, on the river there. Longley Bridge, see, the river was overflowing. So that's, they had a big fire. See, now you don't see that as much because there was a big fire. If you ever come up from Auburn, you can see the, can see those. They're trying to renovate them to have like a, I don't know what they say, oh, condos, and restaurants and gift shops and stuff like that, see. That'd be nice.

**Q:** Well also what we could do is if you are just going to bring the picture and the little (*unintelligible word*) about Social Security, you can just bring this at the same time, if you'd like.

**A:** Oh, okay, I'll put that in a bag there and put it all together. Now I'll have to, you'll have to give me the date again because, April?

**Q:** April 6th, it's Wednesday, April 6th, and that is from 1:45 to 3:15.

**A:** Okay.

**Q:** And it's in the Museum L-A, which is in the Bates Mill complex.

**A:** Yeah, she told me, you go by Da Vinci's, anh, upstairs.

**Q:** Yes, right by Da Vinci's and then just go in and upstairs, yeah.

**A:** Yeah, okay, there. I got to write it down because, I won't forget. And even if I make little notes, I forget them. That's the way it is when you get older. You forget.

*End of Interview*

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