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Interview with Ann Raymond by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Raymond, Ann

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

March 26, 2002

Place

Monmouth, Maine

ID Number

MOH 331

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Biographical Note

Ann Raymond grew up in Roxbury and South Freeport, Maine, and at the time of this interview resided in Monmouth, Maine. Ann's mother knew Edmund S. Muskie from her high school years. Raymond has extensive photos and documents on her family history and the history of the Rumford, Maine area.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: community history of Rumford and Roxbury, Maine; paper mills; Civil War; Abbott family genealogy; and Ann's mother's story about Ed Muskie.

Indexed Names

Abbott, Bertha

Abbott, Dexter

Abbott, George

Abbott, Lucille Hicks

Binford, Horace

Binford, Marcia
Binford, Marcia (Reed)
Binford, Victor
Bisbee, George
Chandler, Hannah
Chisholm, Hugh J.
McMaster, Donald
McMaster, Mira
Pettengill, Waldo
Reed, John H. (John Hathaway), 1921-
Rich, Louise Dickinson

Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Ann Raymond on March the 26th, the year 2002, at her home in Monmouth, Maine on the Norris Hill Road, and this is Andrea L'Hommedieu. And you were just starting to show me some pictures.

(AR making references to photos and other memorabilia.)

Ann Raymond: Okay, well this, just to connect up Lewiston and Rumford, this is a picture of Sewall Goff driving logs on the Androscoggin River, or either the Androscoggin or the Swift River, I think it may be the Swift River. And his grandfather, his father was James Goff, Jr., and his father was James Goff, as in Goff Corner, Goff Hill, Charles Street, James Street, and all of Auburn. Another connection between Lewiston and Rumford, or Roxbury, in that area, is the Lewiston Steam Mill Company that was very active in logging in the, this was 1870 and 1871, and they were very active in logging, and these are the logging, one of the logging account books. And so they had a major operation in Byron and Roxbury and all up and down the Swift River valley. These are things that are just background bits, pamphlet on paper making in Oxford, at the mill.

AL: The Oxford Mill?

AR: The Oxford Paper Company. So this . . . Which is earlier than your period, but the mill was still the big factor of life up there. And that's, it's getting a little closer, this is the Mechanics Institute, and that's the building and it's still there.

AL: Tell me a little bit about it again.

AR: Okay, the Institute was started by Hugh Chisholm who founded the paper company, and it was his goal to provide a clean, safe, educational and recreational facility for the mill, for the workers in the mill. Keep them out of the bars and the taverns. And what he, and it's got pictures of all the people involved, let me see, a lot of the names are still, like Gagne, you'll still find, and Waldo, Pettengill, those are, George Bisbee, those are our big Rumford names. And it was set up as a corporation with a board of governors, and it had house rules, and it was really

nice for its day. It's all in arts, it was done in arts and crafts style, but it had a lounge, it had a ladies' parlor so that they could have ladies, entertain ladies there. A lot of the mill workers didn't live in the kind of place where it was popular to bring a lady to visit, and so that they could entertain ladies in the ladies parlor. They had a card room, he was not a total prude, a writing room so that could write letters, a lecture hall, class-rooms. It also had a gymnasium because he believed that that was good for their health, to have active exercise, and also had a bowling alley, and a billiard room, a library and a reading room, and it, you could live there also, it had some boarding rooms and sitting rooms. And, in addition to all the older men who were on the board of governors, there were a lot of the younger men who actually belonged, who were involved in governing. It was a lesson also in self-government. There's my grandfather.

AL: And his name?

AR: Victor Binford. His father was the local doctor in Mexico, as his mother's fa-, let me see, his mother's father had been, Dr. Abbott, and the Abbotts came to Rumford in 1790, give or take.

AL: Okay. And the Abbotts, was that related to, the Abbott Farm? Is this the Abbott family -?

AR: Well, all of the Abbotts in Rumford are related. Some nearer, some not so near. And this Dexter Abbott who had, what was it, the Mountain Spring Hill, one of the hotels with a spring, Mt. Zircon, I think it was. That was Dexter Abbott. All of the Abbotts in Andover, Rumford, Hanover and that general area, all came that way in a three-step migration from Andover, Massachusetts to Concord, New Hampshire, to Rumford, Maine. And they all descend pretty much from George Abbott and Hannah Chandler in Andover.

AL: The Abbott that brings to mind is Lucille Abbott who was a teacher at Stephen's High School who taught Senator Muskie when he was there, and I wondered if you -

AR: Oh, Lucille was not, I don't think she was directly in our family, but I can probably find out who she is, because if you haven't got it in your library for reference, you should have that.

AL: *The New Pennacook Quotes: Early Rumford with Geneology of First Families.*

AR: And it's indexed.

AL: Oh, that's nice. Oh, wonderful.

AR: So that is, it's probably out of print, but you ought to be able -

AL: Yeah, I was going to ask.

AR: Yeah, it probably is. It should be available on this, you know, as a used book at some point. And it really is a good one to have because it explains a lot about the early settlement of Rumford.

AL: And it's by Stewart F. Martin, copyright is 1980. I'll look into that.

AR: Yeah, it's a, it's really good. And this is just little stuff. These are all earlier than your period, than what you're looking at. Are grammar school exercises, and prize speaking, and graduations and entertainments. But what I thought might be, intrigue you a bit, were the menus from the Rumford Falls, let me see, it was Hotel Rumford.

AL: The Hotel Rumford.

AR: And people gave dinners for their friends, and look at how elaborate the menus were.

AL: Broiled Penobscot salmon with anchovy sauce.

AR: Roast duck, mallard ducks with applesauce, mashed potatoes, string beans. Roast haunch of venison, currant jelly.

AL: And for dessert, Rumford Falls spring water.

AR: So, I had several menus from particular dinners, a complimentary banquet to Frank Stanley, Rumford Falls, at the new Duet in Lewiston. So they did go back and forth. One of the back and forth, one of the avenues by which there was a lot of back and forth was the Masons, because the Shrine was in Lewiston and there were masons, a lot of Masons in Rumford that came down to events in Lewiston all the time. Sometimes even a special train, special, you know, they'd rent a car on the train and that kind of thing.

And I've got some newspapers, on a Rumford fire in 1939, the Falls View Hotel. So that would have been well within Muskie's memory.

AL: Yes, he would have, oh yes, he would have been in law school at Cornell.

AR: When was he born?

AL: Nineteen fourteen.

AR: Okay.

AL: So he graduated Bates in '36, and then he would have been at Cornell from '36 to '39.

AR: Okay, so he was considerably older than my mother.

AL: What year was she born?

AR: I've been trying to think, but in the thirties, she was through school in the thirties and was in England. In I think '36, so she was enough younger. And, you know, it's ridiculous, I can remember dates for people I'm doing genealogy on that lived a lot longer, but I can't remember when my mother was born. But I just haven't, it's just a mental block, I don't put it in any of my genealogy stuff because I try not to do that generation in case I forget and send it to somebody, I

just don't want to be doing that.

That's a pretty typical picture of a bunch of mill workers.

AL: Oh, isn't that neat. No listing of, oh, it's a postcard.

AR: It's a photo postcard, though, and it was local. Just like these pictures of my mother's are on a postcard. People did that all the time. They took a picture of their house and had it printed on a postcard. And this is just surrounding area for the atmosphere of it, Upper Dam and Middle Dam, there's still Lake, Lakewood Camps are up there now, just as they were, where Louise Dickinson Rich went. But when I was young, you could take a launch and go over for lunch, which people did in great numbers. But it just, you know, here's a lady casting, with her, holding her salmon, in full kit with hat and dress, getting helped out of a canoe. That's downtown Mexico. Musty.

AL: It needs help, pretty quick, if you want to keep the image. This one.

AR: Yeah. I think I'll probably scan it. And that's downtown Roxbury. This is the end of my grandfather's barn, and you can see the railroad tracks went right through, where she picked up the train to go into school. And that I just thought was different.

AL: Ice cave at Rumford Falls. Is there really such a thing?

AR: They were temporary with water conditions; they would form in the winter and be gone in the spring.

AL: That is wild.

AR: Isn't that neat?

AL: That's really neat.

AR: And these are fronts and backs of houses in Mexico that she, that the family, that my grandfather's family built up above their house, sort of for investment, they're up towards the hill where the school was. They lived right on Main Street in this house, which is right next, it's next door to the Greene church in Mexico.

AL: Okay, I'm not familiar with that, but I -

AR: They gave the land to the church, and it's been a B&B, it was painted blue last I saw. It's almost across the street from the library.

AL: Okay, that's neat. As we're looking at these, tell me a little bit again about your family. You had mentioned that they were maybe not the typical residents in Roxbury, some of their educational background?

AR: Right. My grandfather's father was the doctor in Mexico, Dr. Horace Binford. His wife's father was Dr. Abbott, who was also the local doctor. On my grandmother's side, the family came up from Freeport around 1814, part of it, the Reeds did, and they married a family that came over from Fayette about the same period. And they lived in the same house in Roxbury, which was added to and turned around and altered repeatedly, from about 1825 to when we sold when I was an adult. So everything accumulated in the house. And my grandmother's father was big on education, as was his grandfather. Several of my grandmother's uncles were sent to Kent's Hill, as was a daughter, became, one of them became a Methodist minister. And then my grandmother, which was unusual for her day and her place, in her geographical place, was sent to Smith, spent four years at Smith, majoring in botany.

AL: And what was her name?

AR: Marcia Binford, Marcia Reed before she was married. And then my mother, who was an only child, was indulged, got dancing lessons, ballet lessons, tennis lessons, went to Colby. And, so it was, and my grandmother's brother also went through college and became a professor of botany and chairman of the department at University of New Hampshire.

AL: Now, did your mother work outside the home after her education at Colby?

AR: Then she went to England, which was unusual, she went to stay with my, her aunts, my grandmother's sisters and her husband who were in England. And I told you before but I'll put it on the tape, his name was Donald McMaster, he was a Rumford boy, he started as a chemist at the mill, and then went to Eastman Kodak as a chemist and would up chairman of the board in his old age. And he was Kodak's representative in England during the war, and my mother went to stay with him and then had to come home a bit sooner than she'd planned because the war was getting hot and they didn't, it meant a sea voyage then, which was beginning to become risky so she went home when he didn't think it was safe for her to travel later on, so - Let me see what else we've got here.

AL: I should just mention while you're looking that we do have some, you have some of the experimental prints that he had worked with at Kodak.

AR: Right, different papers, different film, pictures of Roxbury Pond and of the mill. These are all Lewiston people; these are all Goffs from Lewiston.

AL: And they're all related to you?

AR: Yes. This is James Goff, who was the postmaster at Goff Corner in Auburn, and these are various, I just was checking to see if. Okay, that's Elizabeth Ann Abbott who was my grandfather's grandmother. Her husband was Dr. Abbott. But these, this is the Reed farmhouse, a photograph taken just about 1867, with the whole family all lined up.

AL: Were any of them in the Civil War?

AR: The Civil War is, I've got a picture somewhere of Virgil Richards. My, John Reed was

not particular, he was a Democrat and he was not really big on the war. Some of the Richards were, and their sons, several of them, went. His boys were mostly too young, a lot of his boys were too young. But, and he did not encourage them to volunteer. One of them was at Kent's Hill and was always writing home on patriotic letterheads, but he didn't encourage them.

And then his oldest son was drafted, and I've got the letter he wrote to one of the other boys saying he would give up everything right down to his last piece of land to pay for a substitute for his son so that his son wouldn't go, and I thought, boy, that's a really unpatriotic attitude. But as I went through family letters later, what I found out was that his, either his brother or his brother-in-law's boy, who he would have known really well, someone he would have been really close to, they had, just before his son was drafted they had had word that he had starved at Andersonville, or Libby Prison, one of the, Andersonville I think. That they had received notification that he had starved to death, and it was partly that, that he loved his, he just couldn't bear the thought of having his boy die, he just couldn't. He was a very involved, loving and protective father, even though he was out in the woods all the time with the logging operation.

Isn't that a wonderful picture? I've got others that show, there's actually a woman sitting in the doorway here, and I've got another picture that shows all the way to her. That lady was born in 1795 in Fayette, and the little lady in the doorway here was called Arriettie, I think it was, I don't know, I'm not sure. But she was a pauper that they bid off and took care of, in large part because she was a fr-, I don't think they even paid, you know, I think in the bidding they paid for her, as opposed to being paid to take her, because she was a friend of the family from before.

And this is the Locke homestead with Richards, the Richards family out in front. John Reed was married to, here they are, okay, this is of four, well, four generations. This is Edwin Durgin, Cordelia Reed Durgin, Hannah Dutton Richards, and Rebecca Walton Richards. And Rebecca Walton was born in Fayette in 1795.

This, I go back to these two, and her brother. Her husband died not too long after this picture was taken, and she wound up going out to join relatives, other part of the family in Colorado. But this little tiny boy at one point actually owned the family farm; there was a temporary reverse in finances and this little boy actually held the mortgage. I think he was like twelve years old, I mean he was little, but I thought that was just kind of fun. So that's the Locke place, the house is still there but it's so much altered you'd never recognize it. Yeah and that's the family house. That, believe it or not, is the same house. They changed the roof line, rotated the roof line. And there was a little building here which was a store. And right in the middle of Roxbury was Swaine and Reed Dowel Mill.

AL: So that's the dowel mill.

AR: That's the dowel mill.

AL: And your family owned that.

AR: Yeah, well, yes, and Roscoe Swaine was a partner in that. Later on, Roscoe, the Swaines left the dowel mill and he wound up with a box factory over here in Leeds.

And that's just another Abbott. I don't think there are any more that I - That's my grandfather's stepmother, Lulu Abbott. His, my grandfather's father married Bertha Abbott who died, and then he married her sister who was older, actually, and they were totally different. Bertha was round and jolly, smiling, laughing, happy, just delightful person. And Aunt Lu was spare, relatively severe, and an altogether different person. She never, she didn't cut her hair until she was in her late sixties, and she did it at her doctor's recommendation because she was having headaches. And it took care of them.

Now that one's Dixfield, that's Rebecca Walton Richards. That's John Reed, that's my grandmother's father. And his father was a member of the legislature.

AL: And what was his father's name?

AR: John Reed.

AL: They were both named John.

AR: Both John Reed, right. And he was a member of the legislature when Chamberlain was governor, his father was, and also town clerk, justice of the peace, county commissioner, all that kind of stuff. So they were real active. And that just gives a flavor of what a, the kind of gathering they had, they'd erect a temporary thing outdoors and hold picnics. And that's my grandmother. Now wait a minute, or was that her mother? At a certain age they, no, that's my grandmother's mother, John's wife.

AL: Oh, so your great-grandmother.

AR: Yeah, that's my great grandmother. They look so much alike it's often hard to tell. And those are my grandfather. We've got just so many, so many.

AL: And, but there was no relation with those Reeds and the governor John Reed?

AR: No, no. Nope.

AL: Just checking.

AR: And then this is just a lot of other stuff that, you know, on the, now there's John Reed as an older man, he was on the, see he was real active in Rumford.

AL: Sure. The hospital program.

AR: He was on the hospital committee, and I've got all the stuff from the dedication, the dedication of the community hospital. And, yeah, this is Virgil P. Richards, this is the member of the family that was the enthusiastic Civil War person. He was, he enlisted like day one, served in the South, and when his three year enlistment was up he signed up again and went down and went on the Sabine, which, when it was docked in Portland. And we've got his letters

back, they couldn't load as soon as they wanted, the town was paying their expenses, their travel expenses down and their hotel expenses until they boarded, and there were extra days so he wrote home for more money for more meals and more hotel rooms.

And that's just a little local squabble. I wish I'd had time to really sort these out before, because a lot of it doesn't really apply. I don't know what that one is, could be anything. Oh, an *Oxford County Democrat* from 1886. I don't know why it's in here, but. Yeah, this is my, the aunt my mother stayed with in England. Wasn't she lovely? Just beautiful. But these are all, you know, my grandmother as a child. But it's really nice, you know, I've still got that (*unintelligible word*). We've got all the stuff.

AL: Wow. And your grandmother's name was Marcia?

AR: Marcia, and her sister was Mira.

AL: And Mira, who -?

AR: Mira married Donald MacMaster and lived in England, and she died there. And that's my grandmother's brother Marshall Reed, whose son stayed in the family. He's been with the library and the Botanical Gardens in New York for a long time. I don't know if he still is, I've lost touch, but that's what he did for a long, long time. Beautiful people, aren't they? Those are just, those are cousins.

Okay, so, that's about the stuff. And you wanted to know my mother's story about Ed Muskie. And it's very, very timely, and what it was, and I think I must have been in high school at the time myself when she told me, and I'm, my memory is so foggy and I can't remember whether it was the principal or a teacher so I wouldn't want to say. But it was someone in a position of authority in the high school, was molesting boys, and he picked boys who couldn't complain or wouldn't be believed. Boys whose grades were marginal, were a little bit this way, or a little bit that way, they could be thrown out. Boys who were always in a lot of trouble where it would be very easy to have them suspended or expelled, or just say, well, they're getting back at me because it's a, you know. Boys he could inti-, and with an eye for picking weak children who could be intimidated, and someone with the means to intimidate them. And in that day and age people didn't say much.

And somehow he found out about it, Muskie did, he was on the student council at the time. And I don't know how he did it, but he was one who couldn't be intimidated. I mean, he was not molested himself, he couldn't be intimidated, and his grades were good. And he was popular; this guy picked unpopular kids. And he mustered, I don't know whether he went, I think he went through the school board, but he got the teacher out of there.

And how it was presented to me by my mother, as illustrating her view of Muskie's character was that he didn't need to do that, he wasn't the only one who knew. Everybody else ignored it, and he took a risk and he took a risk for people who couldn't help him. He took a risk for people who were not the lovely people, the people who were weak, people who were in trouble, people who were not the best, and he took a real risk to do that. And she, that, she said ever after that,

after she found out about that, as far as she was concerned he could do no wrong. That he had demonstrated strength of character and compassion above and beyond, and she didn't need any more recommendation than that. So that's, that's what it was, and I bet you have people, had you heard about that before?

AL: No, no.

AR: I didn't think so, because for one thing, I mean people, when I was growing up people in my mother's generation wouldn't normally have even mentioned that. It was because my mother was different, you know, she was -

AL: She had a more worldly perspective.

AR: She had a more worldly perspective, and probably because she was an indulged only child, she's always said what she thought. And so she told me about that, and I was just really impressed.

AL: Has there been a sense in the Rumford and Roxbury, that area, of Ed Muskie, did he have -?

AR: It would be hard for me to say. I lived there only until, in Roxbury, until I was three because Dad, my father was off in the Pacific, in the war, so I lived there until I was three. And after that I went back most summers to Roxbury Pond, which was kind of out of it, and only went back occasionally other times of the year for holidays and things. So I didn't know a lot of Rumford, living Rumford and Roxbury. I knew all the dead ones, I knew all the dead ones, but I didn't know the living ones.

AL: Yeah, let me pause for just a minute.

(Pause).

AL: So did your mother go to the Rumford schools?

AR: Yes, she went to high school in Rumford.

AL: At Stephen's, was it Stephen's? Yeah.

AR: Yeah.

AL: What were her experiences like at Stephen's, as far as the teachers and, you know, the education?

AR: She never talked about it; she never talked about it at all. It was, I've got a lot of her school papers, and the level of work I thought was rather high. There was a lot more exposition, a lot more writing than I seem to see kids doing now.

AL: Today.

AR: Yeah. A lot more essays, and they wrote poetry, there was a lot more literature, they memorized a lot more, they recited, poetry was big, a big part of English when she was in school. But she really didn't talk, she didn't talk a lot about high school, or even college all that much to me. Now, she may have to my sister, we were both very different and she talked about, you know, different things with both of us. I mean, we did different things with her, I mean it was like two different mothers.

AL: Did she - I'm trying to get a sense of what was it like for her, do you think, did she ever discuss to move away from Roxbury and that area? I mean, she'd had some experiences away from home, but was it easy for her part with?

AR: Oh yes. Oh yes, I think so, I think so. But it probably helped, what she parted with it for was South Freeport, which is one of the nicest, loveliest places. And when I was young and growing up there it was abso-, it was indescribably wonderful for the children and the young mothers. They, it was, the whole neighborhood that we lived in on Park Street and Middle Street, all the mothers were really close. And to this day, I mean I went, just went to the ninetieth birthday party of one of my mother's friends, and they were amazingly young. God, if I could do that well. They were amazingly young. But they were all looking back on that period as being so wonderful, and how much fun they had. And they did, they just had a wonderful time. And it was such freedom for children, freedom and safety like you, I don't know if places are like that any more where any of the mothers in the neighborhood, if they saw me doing something I shouldn't have done, wouldn't have hesitated a minute to, you know, to stop me and let my mother know. And, I mean, everybody, you were really pretty safe, everybody watched out for everybody else's children, the children were in and out of everybody else's house all the time, and for meals, for everything, we were just, it was, the whole street was like one big house.

AL: It's sort of the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child."

AR: Yes, very much so. And they had very much that attitude about it.

AL: Having grown up in that way, and then seeing how it is today, where do you think the change is, because that doesn't happen that way any more?

AR: Well, I'm not sure because I don't have children now. It's really hard to say. If I had children I might feel differently, but I notice that here in, that in Monmouth I've talked to a lot of younger families, families with young children, who have been through a rough transition. Had started out in cities for education and job opportunities, had caught the country fever and moved to the country, got sick and tired of hauling the kids around and were moving into the village to get that. Because in Monmouth Village you can, we don't, we have our own schools, not consolidated schools, if you live in the village your children can walk to school or bicycle to school, you can walk to the beach, you can walk to the ice cream shop, you can walk to the post office, and children can walk to each other's houses. And a lot of them have moved here for that. So there is an awareness that that's a good thing, and they're trying to do it, and fairly successfully I think. So. But without children it's really, you know, you just, you know, my

child is forty.

AL: Now is there anything I haven't asked you that you think is important to talk about today, in regards to Muskie or Rumford or Roxbury?

AR: Not very much, but one thing I'm going to take you in the other room and show you because it, when you, when, people tend when they picture early Rumford to picture it pretty primitive, and I have some furniture that was made in the 1820s, probably in Rumford, probably by Ebenezer Virgin or one of his sons in the 1820s, and it's country, any city cabinet maker, Portsmouth cabinet makers would look at that and see that it is not polished, fine work in the back and in some of the places where it doesn't show, but the front of it is typical, federal Portsmouth and Concord, New Hampshire furniture. And so it really, it was lovely. So people, actually they did, it was not, even though it was on the edge of the civilized world at the time in 1790, there were plenty of people that had more formal city stuff.

AL: Okay, well let's go, and I'll just end the interview here and say thank you very much.

End of Interview