

INTERVIEW WITH HELEN CUSHMAN • VIENNA UNION HALL • BLUEBERRIES •

MT. VERNON ~ VIENNA

NEWS & COMMENT

VOL. I # 3



Is there hope for the Union Hall?

Ninety-six years ago the people of Vienna, having decided on the need for a building in town to be used as a Hall, asked the ladies to form an association. On Saturday evening, February 25, 1888, a meeting was held and the Union Hall Association was formed, with the object of "raising funds for the purpose of erecting and finishing a Hall in the village." A constitution was drawn up and ratified at that meeting. The document specified that all offices of the Association be held by ladies and that the members of the Building Committee be all gentlemen.

The Association went to work in earnest and by the first of May the Hall was up, boarded and shingled. At this point the Association consisted of 23 ladies and 20 gentlemen. By the 25th of December, 1888 the Hall was clapboarded, the chimney built, underpinning done, outside finish put on, doors and windows in, floor laid and the stage built. The first function--a Christmas Festival and Oyster Supper--was held, and was considered a great success, both socially and financially, having made a profit of \$16.77.

From its very beginning the Hall was utilized as a Community Center. A wide variety of activities, including plays, exhibitions, suppers, sociables, auctions, dances, wedding receptions and other festivities have taken place there. It has been used by different organizations such as the Vienna Lodge of the Good Templars, and, until the early 1960's, by the Vienna Grange for a meeting place. It has even been used as the scene of a dancing school. In the late 1800's Fred Stinchfield's Dancing School held classes there one day a week. Its most recent use has been by the youth of Vienna as a recreation center, for basketball and other sports.

Today, all of this activity has ceased and the Hall stands empty, boarded up and in great need of revitalization and renovation. Within this last year, interest is again being taken in the Hall and meetings are being held to reorganize the Association. Hopefully, the Hall soon will again be the center of as many community activities as it was in the past. In 1888 the people of Vienna built the Hall in less than one year, which included the felling of the trees used for lumber. Surely, in 1984, we can restore

and put to its optimum use that which the men and women of Vienna worked so hard to build almost one hundred years ago.

The members of the Union Hall hope that all of the people who are interested in this commitment to our community lives will attend the next meeting of the Association, and give much needed support, be it time, money or building materials to this endeavor. The following pledge, made at a meeting in 1950 is still appropriate today. "We, as new members of the Union Hall Association, pledge our support to the above Association, so that the Hall can never be sold, but shall be handed down from one generation to the next, as was the original plan."

Marty Gross

Interview with Norman Waite concerning Union Hall

Q.: Thinking back, what was the most active time you remember?

A.: The time the Grange used the Hall they paid I think \$60 for the use of the Hall. Then we had traveling shows. They stayed often for a whole week. They would have contests, who was the most popular girl in town. They sold patent medicine and other items and with each purchase you had one vote! I remember the time we brought the building up which we made into toilets in the back of the Hall. We got it from Goucher and set it up and the women all helped.

Q.: What happened then?

A.: Well the Grange got their own building and then there was not much moeny and the people--they weren't so young anymore. There was Fritz Eaton & Hazel and Dorothy & Clyde Waugh and Olan Trask and Arlene Waite and Dowst and us. People kept dying and then Olan sort of controlled it and he managed the money and put the stove in. He never joined the Grange. There wasn't much going on then. There was nobody to go ahead and do anything.

Q.: Was that the biggest problem?

A.: Yes, then Olan died and Marie Kohtala took over and paid the taxes and Arlene, I think, paid the insurance. Then they let the kids in and there was no supervision and they wrecked the place.

Q.: How old were you when you became active in the Union Hall.

A.: Twenty-one or twenty-three, but then the older folks looked after everything. Later on when there were no more Grange meetings there, Olan just ran the thing; he put in the gas furnace.

Q.: Do you think this new group will be successful?

A.: I don't know. They have ambition right now. I know the other meeting was called off. I'd be willing to do some work. Before, when there was only little money coming in I thought it would be nice if the town took it over. At least it would stay in repair.

Q.: What would you like to see the Hall be used for--concerts, dances plays?

A.: We don't have a big choice. Plays would be nice. The Grange always had card parties. That earned a little money. We had dances--dances would be nice if we could earn any money with them.

Q.: Do you think the Fire Department could hold their dances in the Hall?

A.: I don't know. It wouldn't hold more than maybe 100 people. They couldn't put tables all around or there wouldn't be enough room to dance. But people could go up in the balcony or they would have to stand.

Q.: What about the young people and children. Should they be allowed to play ball, etc.?

A.: You would have to put bars on all the windows and something solid on the walls and there has to be supervision, when something is going on.

Q.: Would you join in if the Hall becomes active again?

A.: Yes. I'd be interested.

Q.: With all these groups in town--Grange, Historical Society, Extension, Fire Department, now Union Hall--you think people will have time to go to all these things?

A.: There are so many newer people and you have to see how they feel about it. The older folks just don't get around that much anymore.

Q.: Do you think \$1.00 membership is enough?

A.: No. I think it ought to be \$5.00.

Q.: They would have to change the constitution.

A.: Yes.

Q.: Do you think the town government should get involved?

A.: If there are enough people to look after it, that's all right. But it always falls down then it starts up again. The town could be involved and look after repairs.

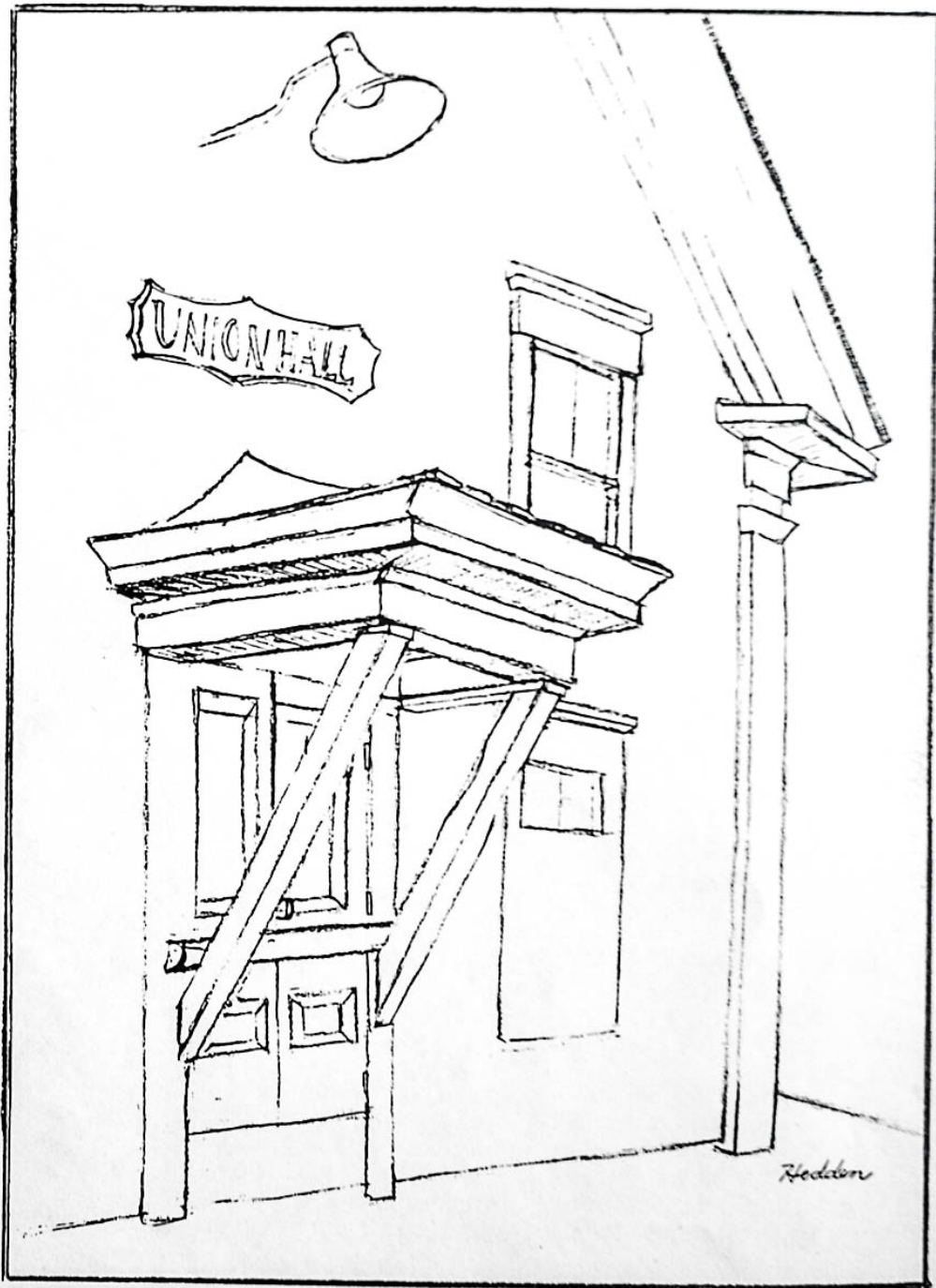
Q.: What do you think should be done to get the oldtimers involved?

A.: There wouldn't be enough left. Have the new group take over--a lot of them don't mix--and then money too....

Q.: What advice if any would you give the new members?

A.: If they do fix it up there should always be someone there to supervise if something is going on, especially with the young!

Thank you Norman
Coleman



The Big Wooden Diamond

I went to the theatre once a year when I was young. The play was performed on the local high school stage by a traveling group of actors who disappeared for another year as soon as it was over. I remember their voices bouncing off the back wall and the colors: of glitter, the mist of scrims and luminous gels. So completely different was this block of time in light and sound and movement on its raised platform, that it existed in total isolation from the rest of my life, a levitated, floating isolation. It never occurred to me that theatre could be part of a community--spring out of it--and dive back into it like a porpoise. When I was young theatre was more like a floating bubble.

Maine is a muscular place: the work of sea, earth, wood, digging cars out of mud and snow and a hundred years ago building a performing hall in the middle of winter in Vienna. There just wasn't instant performance back then. It was all live and life needs room. So they built a big square room with a curved stage and ample wings, a big balcony on the far wall with steps leading up on either side and a beautiful hardwood floor. Now, almost a hundred years later, we need it and want it again. I heard a story that the Hall has gone through cycles of use and disuse. This new wave must be spurred on by the difficulty in getting the Odd Fellows Hall in Mt. Vernon for performances and by the recent breaking of the Union Hall's windows reminding us that a vacant building is an easy target and that "vacant" is thought to mean "valueless."

With its square shape (the best for acoustics), wooden floors (giving bounce to a dancer's steps instead of the dead, hard absorption of concrete found under most modern floors), and the balcony (a possible second stage or musicians' platform), this hall is a jewel. Features and materials perhaps taken for granted a hundred years ago make the Vienna Union Hall more valuable than ever today.

In 1978 we were singing "Cabin Fever Blues" in Mt. Vernon and there was a swell of energy from the audience so thick, so palpable I thought the audience had become the performers. This community has a tradition of local performance. And the place to do it in already exists, right under our noses.

Carol Hedden

VIENNA FIRE DEPARTMENT

October 6th - The Fire Department will send out its chimney cleaning brigade. If you want your chimney cleaned call Jon Ljunggren 293-2570.

A bright colored good-sized sticker is available from any of the firemen. The sticker is to be placed on your children's bedroom window to identify that room in case of fire.

The Fire Department received two portable radios. The Dept. of Conservation pay half of the cost of \$1,000. The helmets the town appropriated money for finally arrived - boy are they needed.

Jon

What are the Vienna Selectmen doing?

The Selectmen finished the 1984 assessing and the results went in the computer and out came your tax bills. WOW! That is why the tax bills look the way they do. Since the new format of the tax bills included more detailed information such as the number of acres you own, we go a lot of inquiries.

We are not the only one sending tax bills. Ours were hardly out and the State sent us their tax assessment. The State does this for all municipalities in an effort to equalize the assessed value throughout the State. Last year we contested the figure of 9,500,000 and finally the court upheld the figure of 7,500,000. This year the State assessed us for 9,350,000 and our calculations were 8,100,000. After spending literally days with the State Tax Assessor assessing, they decided not to allow our figure. We again will go before the Board of Appeals. Hopefully this time the Board will direct the State with some ruling to accept the basis for our calculations so this is settled once and for all.

Other Items of Interest:

Work has progressed on the dump. The State's requirement of a 10' mineral strip and 100' of clearing of brush and debree is the issue. In an effort to keep costs

down, the wood was part of an exchange for the work of clearing acres.

The snowplow contracts were signed September 4 with Gerald Goucher.

Upcoming Events:

Town meeting to close some roads to winter plowing.
National elections November 6th.

Work Ahead:

Make plans with the Road Committee on next years approach for road maintenance and repair.

Correcting and completing assessments for all properties.

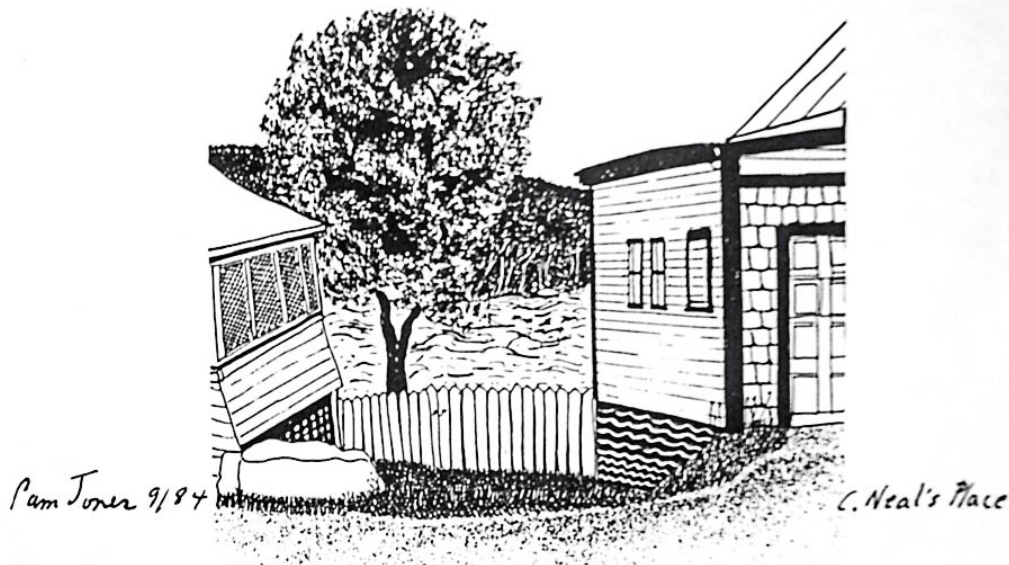
Remember Selectmen's meetings are first and third Tuesday of the month at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall. You are welcome!

Irene

Arts Group Announcement:

This December 22nd will be the 10th Annual Mt. Vernon Christmas Revels. At this moment, nothing whatsoever has been planned. If you'd be interested in being in on the planning stage, on the performing stage, or can think of someone or some group you'd like to see, or have any opinion about what might take place, please get in touch with Eunice Reneyske at 293-2145, or at the Dr. Shaw Library, as soon as possible so a planning meeting can be called.

The Arts Group and The Vienna Historical Society are once again doing an evening of Beverly Smith plays, early in November. Anyone interested n working in any capacity (sets, acting, costumes, etc.) should get in touch with Ellen Miller (293-2350) or Alice Bloom (293-2383).



Politics Now, And Politics When It Was Damned Fun
an interview with Helen Cushman, by Alice Bloom

Has Helen Caldwell Cushman ever needed an introduction? Probably not. Writer, journalist, teacher, raconteur; a resident of Mt. Vernon for 70 years; known as "The Green Witch" to hundreds of children who have heard her ghost tales; and a worker in the Democratic party, when, according to Helen in this interview, working in a party made a difference:

News: According to town records, there are currently 743 registered voters; in the last general election, around 380 voted. What do you think of that?

Helen: I'm not surprised. Actually, that's not a bad percentage, though I have no idea what it is across the country. But I'm not surprised because I don't think there's much interest in elections at either the local, state, or national level. In town, unless there's a hot issue in which people feel terribly involved, and one group thinks another group is trying to pull something, there's not much interest year to year, and the reason for that is this: one, there are so many people who use Mt. Vernon as a bedroom. And two, people don't think anymore that their

individual vote matters. Whether that's just their feeling or actual reality, I'm not sure.

News: Has it always been that way?

Helen: Heavens no, there used to be much more active interest, on all levels. And here, I have to include myself. I used to be passionately involved, but I don't even know who the Selectmen are anymore. Of course, I'm only here half the year now, less than half the year, so it isn't as though I were here year round. I would be involved if I were, I'm sure. I was, for many years. Was it more fun? Oh, yes. For one thing, until the advent of Ed Muskie, Mt. Vernon was solidly Republican. But after Muskie, there were some Democrats, out of the closet so to speak. Of whom I was one, though I had been a Democrat for a long time. With Ed Muskie, we were able to vote our conscience and our thoughts. Of course, you were allowed to vote Democrat, but not many people did, or claimed they did. I remember my husband's cousin, Lincoln Walton, who lived to be 103; he could recall the only time he ever voted Democratic, and that was because he got mad at the person who carried him to vote. So he decided to protest that way.

But, years ago, people felt that the conduct of the town, of the schools, of the state, and of the country for that matter, had very much to do with the individual vote. Now I don't think people give a damn. Nothing is as personal as it used to be, and people feel that they have no control over anything, even the local schools. So then they have no interest, either. There was a lot more interest when people thought they had control.

News: During the 40's, you worked in voter registration, didn't you? What was that like?

Helen: Well, trouble, if you want to know. I stuck strictly to the rules, and I can remember asking people questions they'd never been asked before, such as "Can you read? Can you write? Where do you live?" and sometimes, they didn't live in Mt. Vernon but were going to try to vote, and of course this was illegal, but it was also because they were interested in it personally. You'd make darn sure your candidate got voted in; you'd call up everybody you knew, and so forth. I got in trouble with my

questions, but you always got in trouble if you tried to break the status quo, even in Mt. Vernon. And that was sort of fun, you know, shaking up people.

News: What's your opinion of the coming election?

Helen: I'm not enthusiastic about Cohen. I don't think Libby Mitchell has much personality. I liked Ed Muskie, but I don't find anyone in Maine politics right now very inspiring. And this is the tragic thing--I'm not really interested in who wins, myself. Well, I'm afraid Reagan will win, and that doesn't inspire much interest. I think he's deplorable; I can't stand him; or Nancy. Though I do like Bush, he's an intelligent person, I think. I like Geraldine Ferraro all right. But it doesn't seem to me there's anybody outstanding enough to make you want to get out and work, to go up and down to all the voters, saying - why aren't you behind so-and-so? It's all dull these days.

Have I ever told you about the April Hill Gang? We used to have, in the 30's and 40's, very strong, politically minded people in town. For one thing, Maine Supreme Court Chief Justice Pattangall's daughter lived here, on the North Road, just beyond the Town House. Next door to her was a writer, a very good writer, Mac McSorley, and on the other side, Ann O'Flaherty Cohen. Maybe one of those houses is still standing, but I'm not sure which one. Anyway, Justice Pattangall's daughter was quite a person, and she used to have a luncheon, or dinner, or cocktail party before any election, and we would decide what we were going to do, who we were going to vote for, and then we'd do it. It seems to me people don't get together in that way these days, they're not that much interested anymore. But we had a good reason. We wanted to be sure that the town didn't slide back to a solid Republican thing, God forbid. April Hill was considered a radical place--of course, anything Democratic was considered Communist by many those days. Free thinking, anyhow, if not actually Communist. But those people had ideas, and that was fun--April Hill.

News: Have you ever held an office?

Helen: On the local level? No. I think a woman could have run for Selectman twenty-five years ago, or longer, but I never did. I only ran for school board one year (I was a

school bus driver, did you know that?), but I was defeated.

News: You were defeated?

Helen: Of course. I was too radical.

News: Did people think you were a wild radical?

Helen: Oh yes, certainly.

News: Were you a wild radical?

Helen: Of course I wasn't. I've never been a wild radical. I was arrested once, when we had a bookshop in Portland, for selling a copy of my ex-husband's book. And the reason was this: the title condemned it: The Bastard. It was not an obscene book, but the title got it in trouble. But a wild radical? No. I may be radical, though. I hope.

SOMETHING IS CHANGING

Something has been happening in Mt. Vernon. (Isn't it always?) I mean something underlying and more subtle than the Christmas Revels, Haying, Politics and trying to figure out whose ice shack went down this spring. The character, population and land use has been changing significantly, and the changes whether they be good or bad depends on your perspective of each one. These changes demand other changes to support them. For example, the town has needed to constantly revise our dump procedures/contracts for increased use, and it will continue to be a problem until some good planning is done. Figures from the state (compliments of the Kennebec Valley Regional Planning Commission) show that from 1970 to 1980 this town had a 70% increase in housing (no more recent figures were available) and over an eight year period, the amount of developed land (in acres) has increased over 80%. Because of these changes the Mt. Vernon Planning Board began this summer to revise the town ordinances. The intent was not to stop the growth, but only to re-evaluate the ordinances to better meet the needs of our town.

The first tasks were to re-organize the ordinances to

be more readable and easier to find. Several members of the Planning Board went through boxes of maps at the town hall, labeling and discovering again a wealth of maps showing soil characteristics, elevation, etc. Then we decided to suggest some changes. Fee structures for permits should be brought in line with neighboring towns (ours were extremely low, although the suggested new fee structures are still not up to many local towns). We drew up a proposal stating a fifty foot set-back from the road in the building codes, included a clause that clearly gives the Appeals Board the authority to hear complaints on Planning Board decisions (there had been some questions since this was not specifically stated in the town ordinances) and generally tried to clear up some potential contradictions that have existed in the ordinances. Lastly, we are proposing a minimum of 2 acres for lots from this point on, and are clearing up some points in the subdivision ordinances. When we have completed the review process, we will be holding public information meetings to discuss the revision, and eventually the new ordinances will be taken to a town meeting to be voted on.

The fee structure changes are fairly straight forward, and I doubt that there will be much question that they are needed. The 50 foot set-back may cause some discussion, but let me just interject that living currently in a house that is setting almost right on top of the Belgrade Road, I wish that our house were 50 feet back. It is as much a safety request, in my mind, as it is an aesthetic one. Certainly the most controversial ordinance proposed will be the 2 acre lot size. We are one of the few towns around that have not gone to this yet. The questionnaires that the Selectmen distributed this past spring indicated that the majority of those who responded to the "what would you like to see done" question, were in favor of this proposal. Although that may not be the sentiments of the entire town, it was the expressed opinion of those who took the time to respond, and thus the Planning Board was more or less obligated to suggest something along these lines.

With the past year's changes in this town, the town people have a right to say how they want the town to grow. We choose to live here, and within certain limits we have a right to say how we want the town to be, limiting the development to specific guidelines. As a resident who now owns some acreage, this does scare me a little. I don't intend to sell my land for development, but if it ever

became necessary, I hope to get the best price possible and limiting the minimum size of the lot sounds dangerous. However, many times when a buyer comes in to look at the land, if they are shrewd they check to see if their investment is protected. A minimum lot size will often increase the "saleability" of land, because the buyer knows that they have a certain amount of insurance as to what the surrounding area will become. It also has been brought to my attention that while FHA does not ordinarily finance more than one acre (even for a full fledged farm); in a town with a minimum lot size they will finance a parcel of the minimum size (i.e., 2 acres) with a waiver form. Evidently one of the reasons they won't finance more than one acre in our town now, is because the buyer could take advantage of the lower FHA interest rates and then potentially turn around and sell off part of the land at a profit. When you think about this, it actually has some advantages if we institute a 2 acre minimum, because FHA would then in most cases allow financing of two acres instead of only one.

Now one last message, whether you agree or disagree with the proposed changes, I strongly encourage you to attend the special informational meetings when they are announced. This is your town, and nobody is going to be able to read your mind--the advantage of a small town like ours is that everybody has a chance to speak their mind but only if they take the opportunity.

Kerry Casey

Interview with Jackie Bragg and Fred Legasse
by Peter Devine

N & C: How long have you raked blueberries?

Fred: I've been raking quite a few years now, about four seasons in a row. I've done a lot of fruit work all over Canada and Maine, mostly raking blueberries. Apples probably is the second thing I'm experienced in, blueberries first. Blueberries's better pay, so I try to stick with that.

N & C: Jackie, how long have you raked?

Jackie: Four years in Cherryfield, Maine for Jaspar Wyman & Son.

N & C: Has it changed over the four years?

Fred: Where we're working it's changed drastically over the four years. It used to be a family-like atmosphere, where people brought their kids, taught them how to work out in the fields and make a few bucks and buy their own clothes. But now there's laws that kids can't be out in the fields. The companies are kind of trying to discourage the kids coming altogether. Now it's a lot more business oriented whereby it's less personable.

N & C: What's it like having your kids with you raking?

Jackie: Well, they all rake. They have to be twelve. The law has been in effect, I think, something like five or six years. But when I was a kid, I went down with my parents and it was anybody could go out in the field. Mothers used to take their babies and bring them out in the field. And it was basically just set up [so] you could work when you want to. It is to a certain extent now, but they're more or less trying to turn it into a nine to five job, I think, I think it's going to end up that way.

Fred: Right now the whole field's getting bogged down in technicalities and legal wranglings. It's confusing to the blueberry raker. We have to go out in the field and punch out on a time clock.

Jackie: You have to make minimum wage, too. And that really hurts kids.

Fred: We're paid by the box but if they don't rake enough boxes the company, by law, has to make up the difference.

Jackie: Kids twelve years old cannot make minimum wage so you either have to put boxes on their pile or have them punch out early or else they get fired. So it's really hurt younger kids. And that's the reason I go. I live on AFDC and I have four kids. It's a good chance for them to make enough money for school clothes 'cause I can't afford it. I think they're really making it hard for people like me. That's the reason a lot of people go. That's the reason we

went when I was a kid with my parents. So they could make some extra money and us kids could make some money for our school clothes. That's the way its always been. It's a family oriented type deal.

Fred: All these technicalities and legal hasslings, rather than giving us an advancement in the wage, they're just trying to make things smoother for the blueberry raker. But really, that's not what the raker wants, according to the ones I've talked to and myself. We'd rather have a raise and get more money, keep up with the times and inflation rather than have it easier camping, easier showers, and porta toilets and all that. We don't mind roughing it, 'cause we like camping out anyway.

Jackie: I just hope next year they don't get carried away with those rules. It's really ridiculous. They have to have one outhouse per twenty people, plus they have to have something you can wash your hands with afterward plus fresh water that has to be kept at a certain temperature for the rakers and so many gallons per person. I mean I think that's a little bit ridiculous. We go down there to rake blueberries, obviously we know it's not a picnic. You go down there expecting you're going to camp out and rough it. If you can't do that, then you can't rake blueberries because it's really hard work. It's not a place for sissies.

Fred: It's the hardest work I've ever done--way more than apples. Of any crop I've ever picked, blueberries is by far the hardest. The position you're in for 8 or 9 hours a day, working strenuously, plus the time of year. It's so hot and dry that the heat's really a big factor.

Jackie: Oh, yeah. Plus for a woman or kids it's pretty hard carrying out those five gallon buckets full of blueberries. They weigh quite a lot, about twenty-five pounds a piece. That's about fifty pounds you have to lug, sometimes quite a ways up hills to the winnowing machine. So it's hard work. It's hard work for anybody. But I'm not complaining. But I certainly don't need an outhouse either. You know, a big umbrella to shade me, that'd be nice. A wagon to pull my berries in. I mean, you could really get carried away.

Fred: We don't mind hitting the woods with some toilet paper. We'd just rather have more money than more benefits.

Jackie: It seems like it's coming out of our pocket. Somebody is saying "We're doing good. We're getting this and that and that for the rakers." Well, that's crap. We don't want that. Nobody's asked us rakers what we want.

The best part of it down there is the people you meet and the camping out with a bunch of people, getting to know people, being really close to them for a month. That's the reason most people go back is because of that--the friends you make and you see them every year. It's a lot different. You live in a town and you can live next door to somebody and never even know them. Down there it's like in a matter of two days, they're like your best friend. They know all about you, you know about them. You eat together.

They have one big compound where a lot of people stay. Then they have two or three camps here and two or three camps there. We were staying in the compound for awhile. Then we moved out of the compound because there's usually a lot of trouble, problems going on there. There's just so many people crammed into a small space.

Fred: It's a lawless type environment. It's pretty wild around there. It can be hostile or it can be really good. It's just a pretty lax environment. You get some rowdies in there, some hostile people, there can be trouble. The worst problem up there in the compound was probably about three hundred people camped out in a small area. And the security patrol that they'd hired to keep everybody quiet was more like a goon squad. You know, they were going out looking for trouble. You could tell they'd enjoy it. So we had to get out of that scene, go camp in the woods, have our own campfire and do what we wanted without black belts in Karate breathing down our necks or telling us what to do.

Jackie: It was great because the four years I've been down there, I'd never heard the coyotes before. So it was really neat. I'd never stay in the compound again. Being down there in all that wide open space 'cause it's fields and fields and fields, really wide, wide sky. So it was really nice listening to the coyotes. If you're going to camp out that's how I figure you ought to do it anyway. It's a good time. But it certainly isn't because of Wyman. Money is a

factor but it's the friends, too, you make. [And it's] the only time you get to go to a restaurant and eat sea food 'cause the rest of the year you can't afford it.

The Ups and Downs with Blueberries

Farming has its ups and downs, we are aware of that. Nevertheless, sometimes the downs are more than can reasonably be expected. And this year in the blueberry industry it was just such a case.

Not since 1969 have we experienced such a low point in the prices we received on the wholesale market for our crop. Fifteen cents per pound, a price approximately seven cents below the cost of harvesting (raking) the blueberries and twenty-two cents per pound below the cost of production. Even by not harvesting the blueberries to avoid additional losses, our loss should be figured at \$400 per ton or \$8,000 for 20 tons. There is of course a ripple effect and it is far reaching; it causes much controversy and includes many aspects of doing business. One of the discussions is about wages. This discussion pops up repeatedly among blueberry growers and workers. Since it is customary to pay by the pound or box or basket, a person raking blueberries can make good money one year and not even minimum wages the next. It depends on how good a crop that season is, how bad the weed problem, and many factors. The question was, should you vary the wages you pay in accordance with field conditions? If you pay more when raking is bad, you would pay more when you are not making any money anyway since bad raking is when the crop is poor. If you pay less when raking is extremely good it sometimes helps to balance the low price you receive (because of overproduction) for your berries. This whole approach of variable wages goes much deeper than a discussion of blueberries. Should every person from the manager and owner to the sweeper of the floor be part of the ups and downs of an industry, gain the benefits of good times and suffer the rigors of bad times? I believe that's the way to go. That's the way it is in Japan. And they out manufacture us and out sell us. I don't believe that workers from unrelated industries should try and help each other against the bosses. Workers and bosses must stick together in their industry and try to better themselves as a whole and share. In the blueberry industry some of the

workers are not a permanent fixture and therefore fall only partly in the aforementioned concept. Yet, if they are paid according to market conditions, they feel like a pawn in a chess game. So who is looking out for the worker? The government--bless the bureaucrats! And how do they look out for the workers? Well, the newest regulation is, get a moveable toilet, put it behind a tractor, and pull it along behind the crew of workers so they can step right in and don't have to walk 500 feet to the edge of the woods--good thinking! Another new rule--1 gallon of fresh cold water per worker per day. Did you ever drink a gallon of water? Perhaps someone missed the point. What the workers want is more money. The only way we can pay more is if we make a profit. If the market is depressed, then do something about that! There we need help if they are willing to give us help. The new regulations on pesticides, and herbicides are like a Rube Goldberg invention. Whether they help or not is not the point. They still seem misplaced when a whole industry is going down the drain. We the blueberry growers are not the only ones. In Maine, eggs, potatoes, shoes, textiles, are all on the brink of being wiped out! We don't need a government to hassle us with regulations. We want them to help in marketing, in development.

The fact that farms are dwindling is a real problem. Why are they being sold? Because they can't make any money. You don't sell your farm when you make money, you sell when you go broke! And the real estate developer pays the best price. It is just as simple as all that.

Coleman

WHO WE ARE

The Kennebec Valley Community Action Program is a private, non-profit social service agency providing a variety of services for residents of Kennebec and Somerset Counties.

The Agency began as the Northern Kennebec Valley Community Action Council in 1966 serving only the Northern Kennebec County area. In 1967, the NKVCAC extended its service area into Somerset County. In 1977, the Agency expanded into the Southern Kennebec area forming the Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP). KVCAP

presently serves the people of Kennebec and Somerset Counties with offices in Waterville, Skowhegan and Augusta. The Agency employs approximately 150 people, and has an annual budget of six to seven million dollars. KVCAP has a diverse funding base which includes support from a variety of federal, state and local agencies, as well as fees paid by clients for services.

A Board of Directors, comprised of equal representation from elected officials, private organizations and low-income people, governs the Agency. In addition to the Board of Directors and its committees, many of the Agency's programs have advisory or policy committees. These committees together with the Board must review and approve any major changes in programs and policy.

WHAT WE DO

In order to meet the goal of reducing poverty in our service area, the Agency:

- 1) operates programs that directly assist low-income people;
- 2) works with groups, towns and outside programs to improve service to low-income people;
- 3) provides opportunities for low-income people to participate in planning and decision making; and
- 4) continually works to develop new programs to reduce poverty.

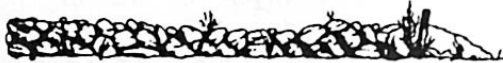
The major programs which KVCAP operates are:

- 1) CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
Day Care, Center-Based Head Start, Home-Based Head Start
- 2) FAMILY SERVICES
Energy Assistance, Information & Referral, Family Planning, Community Education, Somerset Project/Adolescent Counseling, Nutrition Education, WIC
- 3) HOUSING SERVICES
Weatherization, Energy Education, Minor Home Repair, Burner and/or Heating System Retrofit, Installation of Solid Fuel Heating Devices, Chimney Repair, Energy Library, Home Energy Audits, Energy-Related Technical Assistance
- 4) TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
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ADDRESS:

P.O. BOX 3
VIENNA, MAINE
04360

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EDITORS: PETER DEVINE, COLOMAN VONGRAFF
BOB WEINGARTEN
ART + LAYOUT: PAM JONES + CAROL HEDDEN
ADVERTISING REP. + TREASURER: EUNICE RENEYSKE
ROVING REPORTER: ALICE BLOOM