

[The Life of Alphonse Martin]

ORIGINAL MSS. OR FIELD NOTES (Check one)

PUB. Living Lore in New England

(Maine)

TITLE Alphonse Martin, French Canadian

WRITER Robert Grady

DATE WDS. PP. 3

CHECKER DATE

SOURCES GIVEN (?) Interview

COMMENTS

1

Maine

Living Lore

Old Town - 1

THE LIFE OF ALPHONSE MARTIN, FRENCH CANADIAN, WOODSMAN

(As told by Himself to Robert F. Grady)

“Yes sair, I work on de boom mebbe tree or five summer. Gene Mann was de boss dere. When I go up dere for job Gene say to me, ‘Can you stan’ on de log, [my?] frien’?’ ‘Yes

Library of Congress

sair,' I tole him, 'if she's tie on bot' hends.' Gene laf at dat an' he say, 'Hokay, my frien', I guess we can use you. Go down on de stream where de watair ain't so deep, an' tell Tobey - dat's his boy - I sent you dere.' I go down dere an' Tobey he puts me on de las' joint of de firs' beat, an' he say, 'You go on dere. Dose hemlock doan run so fas' today. Doan you raf' anything but de diamond rabbit track.' Tobey he show me how to raf' de log, an' bimeby I can do him jus' as well as hanybody helse. You grab delog wit' de pickpole an' pull him over, an' den you wind de rope aroun' de toe an' pull him tight. Den you put on de wedge an' drive him in wit' de mallet. If dat rope ain't tight enough you wind him aroun' de mallet an' pull on dat an' dat make de rope tighter. Dose log, you honderstan', haf to be raf' tight. If dey ain't de log she's turn over an you can't see de mark. One day I was set on de bank for smoke de pipe when de hemlock doan run so fas' an Jo Cote - he was de checker on dat [boat?] - he holler, 'Hey Alphonse, sleep on de night time. Come out here an' catch dese log. What you expec' for me to go over an raf' dose hemlock for you.' He was make joke, you honderstan[;?] I tell [you?] dough, mister man, when Jo Cote get mad you better look out. Dat man he's fight on de ring sometime an' he's know what she's all about.

"One Sunday night dere was a fellow came up from Holetown an' he's fell pretty good. 'I can lick any son of a b--- in Pea Cove,' he say, 'Yowee!' Jo Cote was light a cigarette an' he's look over at dat fellow an' he say, 'You doan take in much territory dere, my frien'. Why doan you make dat Penobscot Countee?' Dat fellow he doan like dat because heverybody laf, an' he go over to Jo Cote an' he say?' 'Hokay, smart guy, I can lick anybody in dese part. How you like date apple, hey?' He make a big swipe at Jo Cote, but Jo he see dat punch come a 2 long ways away an' he jus' tap dat fellow wit, a hoppercut an' dey haf to wake him for breakfas' de next morning.

"Jo Cote was great man for joke. One time when it was his turn for soak, he holler to me he say, 'Come on, Alphonse. Can you walk de shore log? Leave dat pickpole dere an' dose hemlock will raf' demselves. Come wit' me an' we'll get dose [strays?].' 'Why doan you keep your heyeyes hopen?' I say, 'an' doan let doese log float pas'. Sleep wit' your hans

Library of Congress

outside de blanket.' 'doan worry about Jo Cote, my frien', he says 'dat's not de troub'. De rafters are dead [from?] de hears up. Dey doan catch de log when I shove him over.'

"We start back wit' dat stray raf' and Jo holler he say, 'Come on dere, Alphonse. Bend dat back. We ain't get all day for get dose stray back.' I was make same more pull on de towline an' Jo he kick de wedge out dat hole dat on de stray rail an' Alphonse Martin he go into de wataire up to his ankle - wit de head down. Jo laf at dat, but nobody get mad on de boom because his clothes get wet, for dey dry in de sun in one half hower. I try to put Jo in de wataire after dat, but no sair, I can't do it. He gets mos' of de log pushed out of dat stray raf' an' de log is pretty loose, an' when Jo is stan' on de log which has de towline wit' his back turn, I give dat line a sharp pull, but dat doan bother Jo. He jus' jomp to some oder log. 'Alphonse,' he say, 'when you can put Jo Cote in de wataire you will be much older dan you are at present.' I tole you, mister man, it's pretty hard to put Jo Cote in de wataire. Gene Mann can't do dat.

"Someting I nevaire could learn was ride de log. One time I see de big one come by de joint. Dat log she's a foot an' a half on de butt. I jump on top of dat log but she's curved ones you [honderstan?], but I can't see dat because she's ride low in de wataire. Dat log she's turn over very fas', an' when dose big log roll she's hard to stop. Jo Cote he pull me out of de wataire an' he say, 'Alphonse, you better stay on your raf'. Den if you fall over you doan get wet.'

3

"Dere was a fellow dere dat didn't have much hair on his head, an' one night when we was play poker, some one say, 'Onzime, de barbair shave you pretty close in de wrong place, ain't it?' Onzime he say, 'My frien', did you know dat was a sign of hintelligence?' 'If dat's de case,' de fellow say, 'dey ought to put you on de supreme court.'

Library of Congress

“We doan wear much clothes on de boom in de sommertime. Jes' de shirt, de pants, an' de calk shoe. We doan stop for de rain dere onless she's pretty heavy shower. Dey wear de [gresser?] an' de slicker an' dat keep de rain off.

“Lots of de rafters can ride de log, but dey doan haf to. De checkers, dough, has got to be able for ride dose log. He's stan' on de jigger when he work, but if de log come pretty fas' he' got to get out dere and work wit' bot' feet and de pickpole besides. I nevaire want dat job, Dose checkers get twice as much as de rafters, but dey earn him.

“Dat boom she's not run now for twenty year. De long stuff she's gone from dis states for some time.”