

EXUBERANCE IN CONTROL: THE DIALOGUE OF IDEAS
IN THE TALES AND FAN TOWERS OF WOODSMAN
WILLIAM RICHARD OF PHILLIPS, MAINE

by Margaret R. "Peggy" Yocom

The fieldwork for this study might never have begun had it not been for Sandy and Bobby Ives.¹ In the fall of 1975, I was an all-but-dissertation graduate student in folklore at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, traveling around New England looking for traditional storytellers, craftspeople, and musicians for the twelve-week-long Festival of American Folklife that the Smithsonian Institution was to stage for the Bicentennial. Since I had never worked in Maine before, I headed to the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History at the University of Maine. I pawed through the fieldwork collections on file, the archives' library of books, and the gathering of spruce gum boxes and other wood carvings.

As I was finishing, Sandy Ives, who founded and directed the archives, suggested that I look through the photographs sent in by artists to a juried art show that his wife Bobby produced at the university. I thumbed through the photographs of the work that had been accepted, and then I turned to those that had been rejected. There, toward the bottom of the reject pile, my eyes focused on the image of a barrel-chested man in his middle years, his one hand resting on the handle of a chain saw with its bar tip-down on the ground. His other hand disappeared behind the back of a six-foot or so wooden figure of a Native American in a headdress. The carving itself didn't catch my attention so much: pictures of dime-store Indian sculptures, one after another, flashed through my mind. But there was something about the man and the chain saw



Figure 1. William Richard carves a white cedar fan tower at the Maine Festival in Brunswick, August 1985. Photo by Margaret R. Yocom.

resting so comfortably in his hand, something about his making art from Maine's forests with his working tool. I wondered aloud what else he had done, and I wondered what lay behind his slight smile. "Yes," Bobby agreed. "Well, he's Rodney Richard. A logger. And I'm pretty sure he told us that his father William and his son carve, too. In fact, his son's right here on campus." So began my years of work and friendship with the Richard family of the western Maine mountains, and their oldest living member, William.

WILLIAM RICHARD: CROSSING THE LINE

It was in 1921, when he was 21 years old, that William Richard—Guillaume Jean Richard—left his Acadian home of Village-Saint-Pierre, near Rogersville, New Brunswick, for the logging camps of northwestern Maine with one small black cardboard suitcase, no English, and just enough money to get him to "the line" at Vanceboro, Maine.² However, William carried with him an array of skills. Previously, he had worked on his father's farm until he hired out to Joe Bunvey and his portable sawmill in McGivney, New Brunswick, during the winter of 1917-1918. After that, William kept at woods work, cutting long logs, peeling the bark off of hemlock near Blackville, and building a driving dam on a branch of the Miramichi. As he traveled by train toward his brother's place in Phillips, Maine, during that January of 1921 with his cousin Steve, William also brought with him the local woodworking and storytelling traditions that would help him establish a three-generation family of Maine loggers and woodcarvers. [Figure 1]

William Richard, born on the second of June in 1900, grew up sixth in a family of eleven children. "I was the *middle one*," William laughed once. "*Five older and five younger, and I'm still kicking.*"³ His father, Emmanuel, born on November 25, 1856, was raised in Richibucto, New Brunswick. And his grandfather—Hypolite Richard—from the Shediac area, was a member of the seventh generation of Richards in North America, all of whom were descended from Michel Richard, born in France in 1630—most likely a peasant from the Loudun area of Poitou, just south of Angers. William's resourceful relatives managed to stay in Acadia despite "*la grande derangement*" of 1755 when the British

tried to rid Nova Scotia of all the French. William inherited that resourcefulness.⁴

"When I was little," William told me, "I had a jackknife in my hand *all* the time."⁵ "I *didn't* have *enough money* to buy me a *knife*, but I used my *father's*," he laughed, remembering. "Make little *guns*, you know. . . . Little wooden guns. *Whittle*. Everything I needed, I *make* it."⁶ William Richard also made arrows for bows and wooden shoes for the tops of homemade ice skates. All around him men worked in wood: he watched his brother Martin fashion shingles, windmills, and violins. Even the houses he and his friends grew up in were built by the Village-Saint-Pierre men during communal work parties.⁷ But it wasn't until William had been in Maine for twelve years that he began to make the carvings that would become his trademark. [Figure 2]

William's fan towers are mind-tricking sculptures with two fans perched on a vertical shaft that supports balls in cages. A traditional form associated with logger artists and their families in the United States, the fan towers have European roots.⁸ [Figure 3] Carved with jackknives and razor-sharp kitchen knives from the pliable yet strong layer right under the bark of the Maine white cedar, most of William's fan towers stand ten inches high and spread out for four inches on either side. All of the fan towers have two balls of different sizes carved within the tower, all have two fans, and all rest on a pyramid-shaped base. The design on the tower's summit, though, varies: anything from a cross or a heart to a miniature Washington Monument might perch on its top. People compare the fan towers to birds in flight, dancers' skirts, and doves trying to fly away with a church steeple. All of these images contain the idea of movement, freedom, flights of the imagination, and attempts at the impossible—all the more fitting when I think about where William was when he first made the fans.

It was 1933. William spits out this part of his story with a vengeance:⁹ "The *hardest time I ever had*, by gee whiz, since I was *married* was when *Hoover* was in, Herbert Hoover that old son-of-a-bitch, somebody ought to have *shot* him.

"We was *cutting pulp*. We had to *peel* the bark off from the trees, saw four feet and *pile* it up for a *dollar a cord*. I'll never forget it. *Dollar a cord*. And we used to *cut* about two *cords* a day.

"But my family—there was *four of them* [*kids, then*—I brought

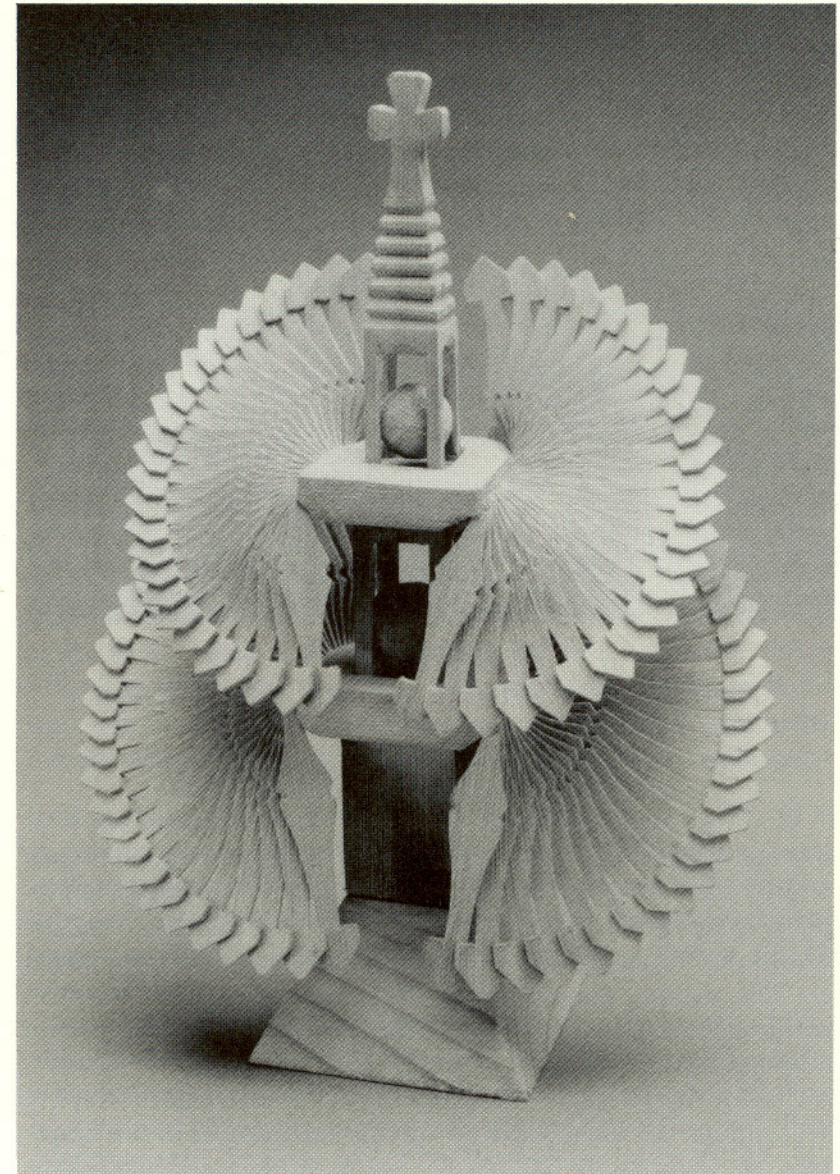


Figure 2. White cedar fan tower of William Richard from Village-Saint-Pierre, New Brunswick, and Phillips, Maine, c. 1986. 10 in x 6 in (smaller fan) x 7 in (larger fan) by 2½ in. Photo © 1995 by Melville D. McLean.

them up on *fish* and *deer meat*. I shot all the deer meat we *wanted*. I shot seven *deer* one summer. My wife *canned* them, and in the *wintertime* if I didn't have any *work*, we *ate* just the same. 'Twas good, she knew how to can. . . . We didn't starve when Hoover was in.

"But I worked *enough*, by gee whiz. I worked like hell."¹⁰

What William did to work "enough" was to make and sell beer and choke cherry wine that reputedly had a kick like whiskey until Sheriff Bill Leavitt, Deputies Butterfield and Sedgeley, and State Officers Greene and Corey—an unusually large contingent of lawmen—found William Richard's secret cellar, reachable only through a trap door hidden under a rug, and slapped him in the Franklin County Jail.¹¹

William's time in jail forms a major section of his life story as he told it to me, and he returns to it in interview after interview. With an anger that was very much alive into his eighties, William Richard recalls the sheriff drinking so much of the eighteen cases of beer he confiscated from William's cellar that he repeatedly threw up out the window at night. William and his fellows would yell from below, "*Die, you old bastard. Die.*"¹² It was in jail, from a fellow French woodsman, that William learned to make the fans.

SCULPTURE AND STORY: CONNECTIONS

When people first see a fan tower of William Richard's, they usually back away and peer at it from a different perspective, trying to grasp its meaning. I am no different: I wonder about the fan tower, too. What first drew William to this sculptural form? What got him making them again in 1975, after years away from fan carving? How did his life experiences, especially his confinement in jail, influence his art?

I have always been intrigued and startled by the connections I've seen among the many creations of this extended family in northwestern Maine—how one object or story evokes so many others, setting off a chain of associated meanings. It has gotten so that I can't think about the slanted spokes of William's fans without seeing, in my mind's eye, the garage doors that open to his carving room with their slanted boards painted in alternating colors of

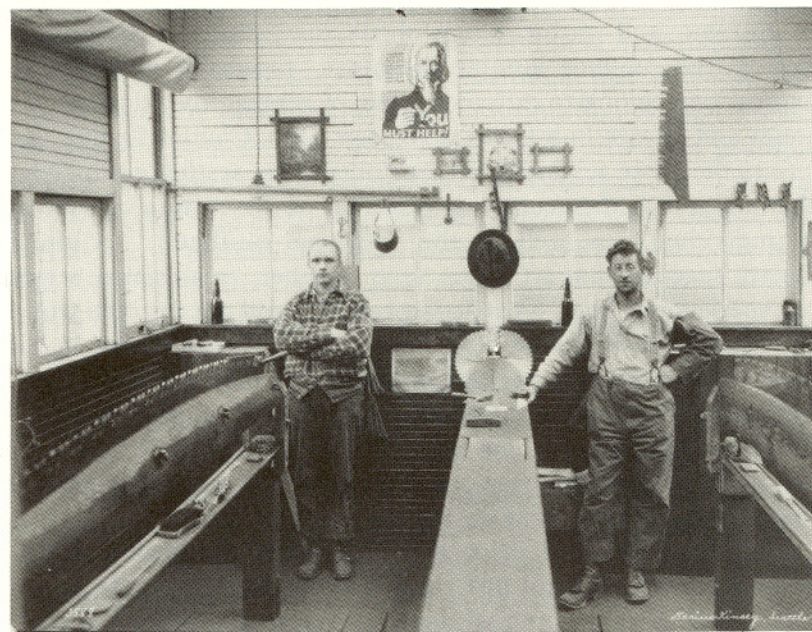


Figure 3. Fan tower displayed by loggers in filing shed, circa 1930s. Washington State, somewhere north of Seattle or on the Olympic Peninsula, possibly the Hama Hama River Camp. #13588, Darius Kinsey Collection, Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, Washington.

gold and brown. I can't think about his son Rodney's carvings of the Maine black bear without recalling his and William's hunting stories or the knitted teddy bear clothes of Rodney's wife, Lucille. And as I grew to know William Richard's life stories better, the images of flight and freedom in his fans took on greater significance for me.

But I began to understand his fan towers more fully when I connected them with the other treasure in William's repertoire: his legends about Henry Mayeux, an unnaturally strong Acadian logger. William told the tales over and over after he first heard them in 1921.¹³ He told them to his son Rodney as they rested in the evening from woods work; he told them to Rodney's sons; and he told them to me, interwoven with the stories of his own life. What I began to see when I looked at sculpture and story together was a shimmering dialogue of ideas.

My proposals in this essay contribute to the on-going discussion in folklore and anthropology about how multiple traditional expressions produce similar meanings, especially when those expressions belong to different types of genres. Investigating the songs and stories in a Georgia woman's life, Charles Perdue discusses the "core aesthetic," those "organizing aesthetic principles that are part of the generative grammar of the culture of a group or individual," as well as the "personal aesthetic."¹⁴ Clifford Geertz suggests that art forms, seen together, "materialize a way of experiencing, bring a particular cast of mind out into the world of objects, where [people] can look at it."¹⁵ Gerald Davis, in his work with African American preacher and carver Elijah Pierce, highlights "expressive equivalences," explaining that "while a folk artist may excel in one expressive structure—quilt tops, split oak baskets, taletelling, etc.—certain selected structural elements of one form or mode may be applied to other forms."¹⁶

And Henry Glassie's discussion of an expanded notion of context—context being not just the situation that surrounds performance but also the mental associations woven around texts—helps him suggest that brick and sod, tale and song link up to "express a collective mentality," one that in Ireland's Ballymenone consists of "opposing forces" such as roughness and smoothness that are "conceived by the inhabitants as an unresolvable structuring of a subordinate within a dominant."¹⁷ "What matters," Glassie urges, "is not what chances to surround performance in the world, but what effectively surrounds performance in the mind and influences the creation of texts . . . the multitudes of invisible associations that echo oddly through the mind, conditioning the emergent product, surrounding and saturating it with meaning, making of it a living thing." We must treat stories and other ethnographic materials, Glassie recommends, "not as isolated but as interlocked, effectively making stories into contexts for each other."¹⁸

Also crucial to my understanding of William Richard's traditional art are Barbara Myerhoff's perspectives on storytelling as the work of life-integration and Mikhail Bakhtin's assertions about dialogic discourse.¹⁹ When I look at William's words and wood I see what the struggle for that life-integration looks like, how William—through his stories and carvings—has held differ-

ent parts of his life up to the light, turning them over as one might a crystal for contemplation. How are traditional materials part of the process of life-review? How do traditional performances help people negotiate their experiences of multiple beliefs and complex identities? I propose that, as symbolic structures with multiple internal dialogues, these legends and carvings put into material form William's exploration of several paired issues—freedom and confinement, masculinity and femininity, clarity and mystification, and, especially, exuberance and control—not as opposites, but as complements that "mean," as Glassie suggests, "in association."²⁰

"AND THAT'S THE WAY I HEARD IT ABOUT HENRY MAYEUX"

I first heard William Richard tell me about Henry Mayeux during my initial visit with the Richards in 1975; these stories always appeared as William told about his own work in the woods. William's stories of Henry always fascinated me, and I willingly listened to them over and over again during our time together at the 1976 and 1983 Festivals of American Folklife. When I came with my tape recorder in the winter of 1984-1985 to begin work on a book about the Richards, I wanted to hear William telling the stories to his family, as he had before. So, on several afternoons at Rodney's home in Rangeley, we—Rodney, his wife Lucille, and two of their three sons, Steve and John, as well as myself—listened to and talked with William.

Sometimes William would just slip into a story about Henry Mayeux. Often, though, if I'd ask about Henry, William would protest at first, sometimes in earnest and sometimes in jest: "Oh, that son-of-a-bitch has been *dead* a long time ago," he said once, laughing. "Let's leave him alone."²¹ Then, with a concern for clarity, William would make sure I understood that *he* had not seen Henry's feats with his own eyes: "I didn't work with him . . . that was before my time. . . . I'm telling you *just* the way I heard it."²² After those provisos, William would begin talking unrelentingly about him, telling one story after another.

At first, I didn't understand why William was hesitant to tell about Henry Mayeux. Later, I would.

"I'm not going to talk today," William told me one Sunday in March as we were all sitting in the living-dining room area of Rodney and Lucille's home. We had just returned from dinner in Kingfield. William was drinking Narragansett beer, which he called "pitch remover," and stacking the cans one on top of another. Rodney was whittling his 3/8 inch bunnies that he gives away to people he meets. Steve gave me a conspiratorial smile; we knew William would be off and talking any minute.²³

"I had wanted to ask you today especially about the stories you've heard about Henry Mayeux," I mentioned, trying to sound casual.

"Oh, *Jesus!*" William exclaimed.

"He's quite a character," I said, looking straight at William, hoping to warm him to the idea of talking about Henry.

"I told you *all* I know about him," William told me, firmly.

"Well," I began, "I don't have—"

"I didn't work with him," William interrupted, "and that was before my time."

"That's right, that's right," I assured him.

"Yeah," William said, probably thinking I'd understood and would stop asking.

"What I'm interested in is getting the stories with this *good* tape recorder and this *good* tape—" I persisted. I did have a new machine, but mostly I—like everyone else in the room—wanted to hear the stories again. And we all knew that after he started, he'd enjoy himself, get excited by the stories, and tell more and more. It was like taking him out for pizza: he'd say he wasn't hungry and then proceed to eat more than anyone else.

"Yeah, but—" William interrupted.

"—because I think they're important ones." William began to talk as soon as that last word left my lips:²⁴

He worked 'round *Rangeley* here for years, down to *Kennebago*, over to *Oquossoc*—

years *ago*,

as far as I *know*.

[Peggy: Yeah.]

The night that he had the big fight like to kill 'em all,

that was, uh, over to *Bemis*.

[Rodney: *Oh!* Is that *right?*]

Yeah, it was a lumber *camp* there.

I'm telling you *just* the way I *heard* it.

There was an *old man*²⁵

work up the farm, uh, *Gray Farm*, with us.

And,

somebody mentioned Henry Mayeux.

He said, "*Yes*," he said, "*I know that man*."

He said, "*I was taking charge*

of a certain place there in, uh—

Bemis.

And," he said, "*I had half Irishmen*

and *half French*.

They don't *EAT TOGETHER*.

[Peggy: *Oh!*]

They *fight*."

So,

the Irish—

the *cook* was Irish.

And, uh, they had *half* the table,

one end the table

for the *Irish* and half for

the *French*.

So Henry come *in*,

for to work.

He sat on the *end* of the *table*,

and <there weren't hardly anything to *eat* on their end of the

table and on the *other end* they had *EVERYTHING*.>

And he done let that go for one meal, you know?

And he asked the fellows *why*

they was acting *THAT* way.

"Well, the *Irishmen*," they said,

"don't want us,

don't want 'ssociate with us at *all*. That's *all*."

And they want everything their own way."

"Oh, oh, oh," he said. "Now I *know*," he said, "what the trouble is."

He said, "TONIGHT we're going to have something to EAT or NONE at all."

So,
when he set on the table on the *end*, 'twas just the same.

He hollered to one them other fellows there,

"Irish, pass me certain *thing* there."

"If you want it, come and GET IT!"

"OK!" <He gets right up and walks on the table, went over there. Of course by the time he got there, everybody's off the table,>

[Peggy: ^^]

fighting.

And he *told* the French, he said,

"Hide all the things that they could reach,
so they won't get it.

They won't hit us then."

There was a *bench* back the *camp* there, the *long* window.

Just as <soon's he got over there, by jeez, he begin to throw 'em right through that window,>

<just as fast as he could grab 'em.>

Well,

some of them got away.

When they see what he was *doin'*,
they got away.

And,

they called up the—

Rumford,

for the *police*,

to come up.

He *like* to kill *some* of them, you know.

<Well, they *deserved* it anyway.>

[Peggy: Ummm.]

But, uh,

the *police* come up and got 'em.

Took 'em to *Rumford*.

Went before the *judge*.

The judge asked him WHY he had that *fight*.

Well, he *told* them the *whole* work.

"Well," he said, "I don't *blame* you, but," he said, "you should n't have *done* what you *did*! You, you almost *killed* some of 'em."

<"Too BAD,"> he said, "I didn't <KILL 'EM ALL!">

[Peggy: ^^]

[^^] So,

the judge *told* him, he said,

"Don't do that *again*," he said. "I'm gonna let you go *free*

because—you didn't kill anybody. But,"

he said, "the story you told me,"

he said, "is hard take it."

So that's the way—the old man who was tellin' us that, he was shakin' all over, he was so scared.

He wasn't an Irishman, he was an American.

He was the *boss*!

[Peggy: Oh?]

Oh, yeah!

And I know it come—*straight* from *that* because he was the boss.

He *worked* with us, oh,

pretty near a *month*.

He was loadin' *cars*—

and he was *shovelin'* a little *snow*. He was an *old* man, anyway.

And *that's* the way I *heard* it about Henry Mayeux.

[Peggy: Yeah.]

And there's a *good* many other *places*
that he *work*

that I *heard* about *him*.

[Peggy: Huh! (Surprised, as William hurries to the next story)]

He was workin' at a place where—
and the goddamn *camp* got a fire.

[Peggy: Oh my!]

And, 'twas in the summer, you know.

[Peggy: Yeah.]

And they had a four hundred pound pig
next to hovel, you know, in a little *pen* there,
and the fire was *headin'* for *there*.

The old man

hollered, he said,

"SOMEBODY GET THAT PIG!"

He (Henry) said, "I WILL!" [^^^]

He jump over the fence, grabbed the pig by the feet, put him
over his [^^^^^]—

weighed four hundred pounds [^^^^^^^^]—

[Peggy: [^^^]]

put him over his neck, there he,
he walked off with it [^^^]

out of,

out of the fire.

[Peggy: Four hundred pounds!]

Oh, he was *something*! Weren't *nothing* that he couldn't do.

[Lucille: They say he was a bit strong.]

[^^^^^^] But take a pig by the feet, you know, weigh four hun-
dred pounds, put back of his neck.

[Rodney, Peggy: [^^^^^^]]

Jeez!

[Peggy: Oh, that's something!] ²⁶

In another story, William told how Henry Mayeux lifted a boulder-sized rock for a road crew in Rumford. As William himself said of Henry at different times, "Oh, he was *something*! Weren't *nothing* that he couldn't do. He was a *man* all right."²⁷ But, "William added, "nobody knew how he done it."²⁸

In most of the stories I've heard through the years, William's attitude toward Henry slid about like ice that's been melting and

freezing, and melting and freezing again. William would hesitate to talk about him, but when Henry stands up and fights for the men, William was right there, ready to stand with him. In his concluding metanarrations, however, William often undercut his own words of admiration: "Henry wouldn't do *anything* to hurt anybody if they didn't do anything to him. He'd go through *fire* to *save* you, you know, he was one of them *kind*. But he was a *drunk*. After a while you get—" and William quickly went on to another story as if he couldn't wait to get to it and didn't want to dwell on the issues raised by the Henry stories.²⁹

After telling several other stories about Henry Mayeux and people who were afraid of his strength—like the time Henry single-handedly loaded a logger and his team of horses atop a railroad car of logs, or the time he got back at a boss he despised by hoisting the boss's wagon sled and all his gear up a tree—William's voice trailed off. "But that's as *far* as I can tell you about *that*," he assured me, and then he abruptly continued with a revealing fact that almost made my heart stop the first time I heard it:

[Henry] worked for old George *Goolong*, years ago when *George* was *young* there.

[George] says he weren't a big *man*, round 175, 180 [pounds].

But, uh,

the *moon* was runnin' *him*, see?

When the moon was small, grow[ing] *smaller*,

he'd grow *weaker*. . . .

When the *moon* got big, the stronger *he* got.

Well, I don't know if I'd ever *believe* it or not but that's what they *claim*.³⁰

Other men, William said once, swore that Henry's unnatural strength came from the Devil.

That March afternoon as he came to the end of Henry's story, William spoke in fits and starts, as if he were stepping through a mine field:

But I never [met him],

of course,

I just heard the *talk*, you know.

This was a good many years ago.

A-n-d,

a bunch of drunk—

well, a bunch of fellows, you know, they didn't like him.

And, uh,

Henry went on a *drunk*.

'Course when he was on a *drunk* he,

he couldn't *fight* much

and they went over and *grabbed* him and when they *found* him—

Well, they went on a *drive*

And they had *caulk* shoes on.³¹

<By Jesus Christ, they *grabbed* him, the whole bunch of them *grabbed* him and *killed* him.>

They said that he was ALL chewed up by them

boots. *Killed* him,

with that.

He couldn't do anything he was *drunk*.

Caulk shoes there. Well, they—they couldn't *tell* for *what* he was.

And *that's* the way he *went*.³²

A DIALOGUE IN WORDS AND WOOD

William Richard's stories of Henry Mayeux are not just entertaining tales about a local character with greater than average strength. They are, instead, legends that lead their listeners to places of worry and wonder deep within themselves—an effect quite similar to that of his fan towers. Much of this worry and wonder come from the multiple internal dialogues that pulse through these stories and sculptures, drawing in audiences and keeping the teller and creator enthralled.³³

Literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, in speaking about the dialogic nature of the novel, presents a way to understand the correspondences between William Richard's fan towers and his stories, both

of Henry Mayeux and himself. In his discussion of double-voiced discourse, Bakhtin demonstrates how the novel serves two speakers who express two different intentions simultaneously: "the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author. . . . And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated," Bakhtin continues,

they—as it were—know about each other . . . ; it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other. . . . A potential dialogue is embedded in them, one as yet unfolded, a concentrated dialogue of two voices, two world views, two languages. . . . A dialogue of languages is a dialogue of social forces perceived not only in their static co-existence, but also as a dialogue of different times, epochs and days, a dialogue that is forever dying, living, being born: co-existence and becoming are here fused into an indissoluble concrete unity that is contradictory, multi-speeched and heterogeneous.³⁴

Like the novel, William Richard's stories and fans are also "contradictory, multi-speeched" texts that result from a "dialogue of two voices, two world views." As he carves and tells, William holds up for scrutiny several paired issues that run like a dialogue between himself and Henry throughout his multi-genre repertoire. Freedom and confinement, masculinity and femininity, clarity and mystification, exuberance and control all debate one another. Like voices in a musical performance, they are each at times dominant, subordinate, equal, harmonious, and strident. This dialogue of juxtaposed elements provides the source of interest in both traditional art forms; it electrifies the fans and the stories, filling them with compelling paradoxes and tensions.

Visual representations of freedom and confinement create provocative contrapuntal rhythms in the fans and the tower of William's sculpture. The upward sweep of the spiraling fans, their step-like spokes sweeping ever higher and higher, direct the eye upward and point, with their arrow-like tips, toward the heavens. Though they rest securely on a ledge that runs completely around the tower, the fans are also free because they are not nailed to or pasted on the tower itself. A curious observer who dares can lift both fans off the vertical tower and fly them about, thus dismantling the sculpture. Though locked into place one behind the

other, the spokes form an airy pattern; the arrow-like shape of each individual spoke lets light shine through, creating a refracted halo just inside the edges of the fans.

The tower's ball in the cage may seem like bells in steeples to some, but to William it resonates with parts of his life story. "It's free!" William would cry out to his watching audience when he was first able to carve the ball apart from the block of wood forming the cage. He'd roll the ball around as far as it could go, pointing at it with his razor-sharp knife. The ball, though, can make its joyful rattle and look so bouncy and free only because it is confined within the tower's posts.

The Henry Mayeux stories also play with freedom and confinement. Though Henry's strength gave him a marvelous freedom to live life beyond the restrictions of the human body, it also separated him from his fellows, confined him to an unnatural space inhabited by beings who are distinctly "other."³⁵ In William's stories, Henry often tries to enter into human companionship: he tries to get into a logging camp for work and food, into a job with fellow laborers, and into a tourist camp for coffee in the middle of a long walk to a job in the woods. In the end, Henry Mayeux remains alone.

Masculinity and femininity also claim their dialogic spaces in William's fan towers with their circular, sweeping fans and their slender, rising towers that enclose two balls. The fans call to mind hand-held fans that from the earliest of times have been associated with the reproductive powers and sexual exploits of women. Peacock feather fans on early Greek vases were used to suggest fecundity; and in eighteenth century England and Spain, a language of the fans developed that allowed lovers to send visual messages, in code, to one another.³⁶

The language that William Richard and others use when referring to the fan towers has often taken on gendered, sexualized overtones, too. When the fan tower's ball rolled free of its wood block for the first time, William would sometimes call out, "The baby is born! The baby is born!" In saying this phrase, William was mimicking a woman customer of Rodney's who was so pleased with the bear that Rodney was bringing out of a pine block with his chain saw that she screeched, "Oh, the baby is born! The baby is born!"³⁷ William continued to use the phrase, however,

long after the original event occurred, and amused all around him as he pronounced it with smiles and laughter.

People gazing at the fan towers often, consciously or not, ask questions with gendered overtones. "How did the ball get in there?" some want to know, their question reminiscent of a child asking a pregnant woman, "How did the baby get into your stomach?" Whatever the impulse behind such metaphoric language, its use at turning points in the process of creation may very well call attention to creation itself as a "*gendering* activity," one of those intense, ritual-like moments that marks the gender and procreative potential of its participants.³⁸

Stories about Henry Mayeux and his strength are also gendered, for they have much to do with how life is lived and lost in masculine bodies. They ask us to picture the dimensions, the possibilities, the excesses, and the abnormalities of one man's body; and, in doing so, they serve as meditations on masculinity and the masculine body. As William Richard exclaims, Henry "was a *man*!" Men in the woods during Henry and William's times paid attention to each others' bodies. In one way, they had to. Working in tall timber with danger as an ever-present partner, body size and strength was noted and commented on. Men described each other as "small," "little," "not a big man," or "wiry," "big," and "massive," citing height and approximate weight. William, talking about Henry, for example, reported how woodsman George Goolong described Henry as not a "big man," since he only weighed 175 or 180 pounds.³⁹ Henry Mayeux's body, however, was an ambiguous one. Although he had this great, manly strength, his full strength came only at the floodtide of the moon, fluctuating in cycles much as a woman's body would.

Along with these other internal dialogues of freedom and confinement, and masculinity and femininity comes that of clarity and mystification. For example, William Richard enjoyed both confusing his onlookers and setting them straight as he displayed his fan towers. When people saw him with his fan towers, they often backed away; and, before they would venture a question, they'd whisper to each other, "Do you think he *made* it? What do you suppose it *is*?" The fan towers puzzle people and push them to solve the very riddle that, left unsolved, intrigues and delights them: "Is that fan *really* one piece of wood, or are those popsicle

sticks glued together?" William would smile, as he listened. "That's a cross on the top, right? So, this is a religious piece?" they'd ask him. "What is it for, anyway?"

William Richard would only let people's confusion go so far, though, before he, or other family members, would firmly assert that the fans were definitely made of one piece of wood each. William was especially eager to demonstrate the exactness and precision that his towers represent. When he learned to make the fans in jail, he watched his neighbor Raymond Bolduc⁴⁰ steam the columns of the white cedar towers and then squeeze in some balls of white birch from Carroll Brackley's Wood Turning Mill in Strong, Maine. William refused to make his towers that way; he carved his balls out of the fan tower's wood block, itself. "When I made *them*," he stressed, "I made them *balls* right in there. It's the ONLY WAY, goddamn it! You can't make people *believe* that them balls was made in *there* with a different kind of wood."⁴¹ . . . If I couldn't make them *right*, I wouldn't *make* them," he pointed out to his family and me. " . . . There's *quite* a lot to it. You've got to *think* what you're *doing* when you're *making* it, that's *all*. Least little *mistake*, you might as well *throw* it away and make a new one. I don't spoil *many*."⁴²

Through his many personal narratives about the right way to work, William also stressed his dedication to clarity and exactness:⁴³

"I learned them [*my four sons*] how to do *work* and do it DECENT. Not to tire themselves all out for *nothing*. . . and every one of them is a *damn* good woodsman. They all know everything there is. They learned it by ME. I showed them ALL. . .

"I used to cut three cords a *day* with a *bucksaw* and *pile* it in the winter, and *snow*, deep snow—

"There was two *next* to me, work *together*, and they work like *hell*, two able men. I cut *more* wood everyday and *piled* it, than they *did*, the TWO of them.

"So the *oldest* one—they was in *relation*, you know, they worked *together*—he come to me one night, and he said, 'How is it that we *work* like *hell*, two of us, and you cut *more* wood than we do and *pile* it?'

"I said, 'Goddamn it. As long as you do the work that *you* do,

you might as well keep on going. You'll never learn any *different*,' and I told 'em.

"I said, 'When I cut a tree across the *road*, I saw it up, and *throw* it to the road, and *move* my brush. But,' I said, 'you don't. You leave [*the brush*] right there. You're [*working*] in the brush *all* the time.'

"That was true. *Three* o'clock, half past *three* in the afternoon I'd go to *camp*. I had my *three* cords all piled. They *worked* 'till dark and they *wouldn't* have as much as I did.

"And I told him. 'Well,' he said, 'we can't do that. We ain't never *learned* that way.'

"But I said, 'Work the way you *are*, then.' Worked themselves for *nothing*.

" . . . When you saw a tree, you throw it to the road. [*You move*] the brush, too. [*Then*] when you get to your woodpile [*at the end of the day*], your road is all swamped [*built, cleaned*].

"There's a lot to it. If you don't know *how*, you'll be working your head off and [*won't*] get *nothing*."⁴⁴

Like the fans, the Henry Mayeux stories also mix the voices of clarity and mystification. William swears to his audience that he's telling the stories just as he heard them; his assurance of clarity calls out for us to respond, "We believe you, William." But each tale he tells leads us deeper and deeper into wonder: what was the nature of this creature, this Henry Mayeux? How could he have done the things William says he did? The story of Henry's death, the capstone of the cycle, ends with a final ambiguity: as William says, "They couldn't *tell* for *what* he was. And *that's* the way he *went*."

Being able to tell "what [*a person*] was" is of great importance to men in the woods, as William often pointed out when he talked about choosing a dependable woods partner. He also stressed this desire to be known and recognizable in his talks about his repeated visits to Dead Man's Camp:

"[*There was*] a *fellow* that *died* in *camp*. He was all alone. He watched some camps in the summer, he had quite a few camps, you know. And they found him *dead* in one *camp*, he took *sick*. And he *died*—no *help*!

"And, he had a lot of *tobacco* there, and he *knew* he was gonna

die. He cut *all* the tobacco and *covered* himself with tobacco so that the *animals* wouldn't get *at* him.

"Somebody *found* him, and they—it was *thirteen* miles from the *railroad* there—they cut a hollow tree and made a *box* out of it, *buried* him. So they always called it the DEAD MAN'S CAMP.

"I stopped *there*—many a time when we were in the *woods*."⁴⁵

EXUBERANCE IN CONTROL

Telling legends and carving fan towers are like dancing in a tiger's cage: something is always about to happen, spin loose, or come unhinged. All is not in place.⁴⁶ In both the fan towers and the stories, the dialogues between freedom and confinement, masculinity and femininity, and clarity and mystification usually proceed like a give-and-take of paired ideas. In the final dialogue of exuberance and control, however, the conversation switches to a debate with a clear victor.

For William Richard, Henry embodied exuberance; and there's no doubt that William, at times, admired him. Henry Mayeux lifted boulders, tossed troublesome Irish loggers out of camp windows, and saved four-hundred-pound hogs meant for the dinner table. It was exciting to tell about him. And William often mixed in stories about his own adventures that mirrored Henry's, such as the time William had to go before a judge, as well as the day he grabbed a stick of dynamite about to explode and saved a room full of men by tossing it outside. In the final assessment, though, William judged Henry's exuberance as an exuberance out of control.

William Richard's personal stories and his metanarrative comments about Henry Mayeux reveal his opinions of the strong logger. William would tell contrasting stories of his own high-jinks, which, according to him, were fun and hurt no one. And when I told William that I didn't understand why the loggers would kill a strong man like Henry Mayeux, William nearly shouted his response. "They didn't *LIKE* him," William told me with an impatience that implied I was one of the dumbest things on earth, "because he was a *strong man*!" To drive his point home, William told about the time Henry refused to let the men leave the logging camp "barroom," their sleeping quarters, on a stormy day. Henry

Mayeux stole away the men's choice. And if they didn't work, they didn't get paid.⁴⁷ In William Richard's eyes, Henry's exuberant but uncontrollable strength, as well as his inability to understand his own nature, also brought endless problems to Henry Mayeux and the men around him. "They wouldn't keep [Henry] too long in the camp," William explained to me at several different times. "They got scared of him, they fired him. So it don't pay to be too strong." "It's *nice* to be *strong*, but, uh, not *that* strong—for me. I'm telling you, I wouldn't work side of a fella like *that*." "That man was so *strong* he didn't know the end of his *strength*."⁴⁸

These metanarrations on Henry, along with William's personal narratives about his own exacting ways and his non-threatening high-jinks, provide a context for understanding William's final evaluation of the strong man. When these texts are read along with the Henry Mayeux legends, when their relationship—what literary critics call intertextuality—is interrogated, they force readings of Henry as a man of excess.⁴⁹

The fan towers, though, offer a way to succeed if one is attracted by such excess, a way that William chose but Henry Mayeux did not. Although the carvings celebrate exuberance, they also contain it. The two double-sided fans with their perfectly symmetrical wings resting lightly on the edge of the vertical post, poised in eternal, exuberant flight, are carved with a precision, an exacting sameness and control, so that the exuberance cannot explode into disorder and chaos.

Once William Richard was asked if he'd repair a fan tower made by Eli "Lee" T. Violette (1894-1975), a French-American woodsman and wood carver from Fort Kent who lived in the Rangeley area.⁵⁰ Violette's fan contrasts sharply with William's in design and spirit. [Figure 4] Made between 1926 and 1928 as a gift for the seven, nine, and eleven-year-old sons of the Reed Ellis family who employed Lee's wife, Kate, as a cook, this fan tower sports eight double-sided fans protruding from four upright posts. In addition, five single-sided fans adorn this fourteen and a half inch tall sculpture: four perch on the base and a last one graces the top. Nails fasten most of the fans in place.⁵¹

William Richard took one look at Lee's fan and turned the repair job down. "I said, 'No,'" William told me emphatically, "because—

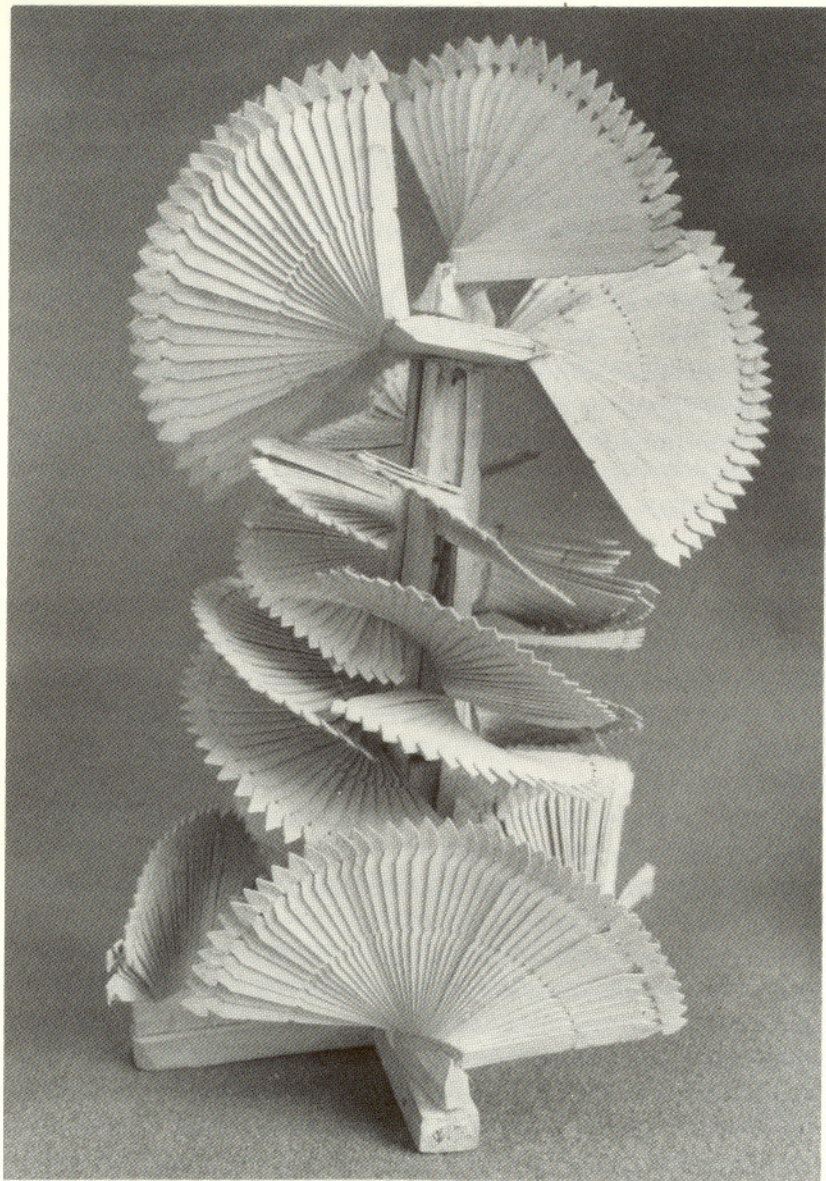


Figure 4. White cedar fan tower made by Eli "Lee" T. Violette of Fort Kent and Rangeley, Maine, for the boys of the Reed Ellis family, between 1926 and 1928. 14½ in x 8 in x 8 in. Photo by Margaret R. Yocom.

these [fans] got *one* way to be made and no different. No other thing else."⁵² William's own aesthetic sense of exuberance in control would not allow him to either praise or fix Lee's fan tower.⁵³ Precision and symmetry contain the exuberance of the fans, just as William's personal stories and his metanarrations frame Henry Mayeux and his excesses.

William's sculptures and stories with their multiple internal dialogues enabled him to explore issues of freedom and confinement, masculinity and femininity, and clarity and mystification throughout his lifetime. The traditional art forms in his multi-genre repertoire show how he wrestled with these ideas, drawn sometimes to one and sometimes to another. But in the final dialogic pairing, William the carver and storyteller clearly surrounds exuberance with control. For in William Richard's way of thinking, exuberance, no matter how enticing, must be in control to be a man, to survive in the woods, to complete the work, and to meet death so that people can tell who and what you are.

1 An earlier version of this essay was read in 1992 at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society, 15-18 October, Jacksonville, Florida; thanks to Joan N. Radner and Ellen Todd for their comments on that paper. Thanks also to Robert Walls for telling me about the Kinsey photograph. I am particularly grateful to the family of Rodney and Lucille Richard for sharing their many gifts of knowledge and friendship with me. My special thanks to William Richard (1900-1993) for keeping the stories and the carvings alive. We miss you.

2 William Richard and his family always talk about his "crossing the line" when he emigrated from Canada. By this they mean he crossed the U. S.-Canada border at Vanceboro, Maine.

3 William, Rodney, Lucille, John, and Stephen Richard, interview by author, tape recording WM2, Rangeley, Maine, 20 December 1984. In editing William's stories, I've used several ethnopoetic practices. For example, *italicized* text denotes stressed words. I will describe my other ethnopoetic punctuation further on, when I quote a story at length. I have used bracketed italics to indicate words which were unclear on the tape, or added by me for clarification of William's meaning.

4 My thanks to Anne Marie Chiasson (New Brunswick), David Gallant (Prince Edward Island), and Marie Therese Clement-Vedrunes (Belle-Isle-en-Mer, France) for help with the Richard Family genealogy. Some information comes from D. O. Robichaud, *La Famille Richard: au nord du comté du Kent* (Moncton, New Brunswick: D. O. Robichaud, 1981), xeroxed pages of which were provided to me by Mrs. Chiasson.

5 William Richard, interview by author, tape recording WM16, Phillips, Maine, 20 July 1986.

6 William Richard, interview by author, tape recording WM15, Rangeley, Maine, 11 July 1985.

7 William Richard, interview, WM16.

8 Space does not allow for a full treatment of the history of the fan and fan tower form and its link to other split-wood carvings. Split-wood carvings in the form of birds with fanned wings and tails have been found in the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Norway, the Philippines, Romania, Russia, Sweden, the United States, and the former Yugoslavia. For a discussion of fan carving in Michigan and its links to Scandinavia, see C. Kurt Dewhurst and Marsha MacDowell, "A Fantastic Tradition: Cedar Fan Carving in Michigan," in *Michigan Folklife Reader*, ed. C. Kurt Dewhurst and Yvonne R. Lockwood (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1987), 47-56. For sources on split-wood carving, see Jane Beck, ed., *Always in Season: Folk Art and Traditional Culture in Vermont* (Montpelier: Vermont Council on the Arts, 1987), 38-9; Roy Berendsohn, "White Cedar Birds: Pocketknife Yields Fanciful Fantails," *Fine Woodworking* (July/August, 1987): 50-1; John Berger and Jean Mohr, *Another Way of Telling* (New York: Pantheon, 1982); and Bengt Jacobsson, "The Arts of the Swedish Peasant World," in *Swedish Folk Art: All Tradition is Change*, ed. Barbro Klein and Mats Widbom (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 55-81. For additional fans and fan towers made in the United States, see Simon J. Bronner, *Chain Carvers: Old Men Carving Meaning* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1985), 120, 122; Douglas A. DeNatale, *Between the Branches: Folk Art of Delaware County, New York* (Delaware County Historical Association, 1985), 26; Suzi Jones, *Oregon Folklore* (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1977), 28-30; Gary Stanton, "Whimsey and Recreation," in "We Came to Where

We Were Supposed to Be": Folk Art of Idaho, ed. Stephen Siporin (Boise: Idaho Commission on the Arts, 1984), 69, 72-73, 85; and E. J. Tangerman, *Whittling and Woodcarving* (1936; reprint, New York: Dover, 1962), 92-99. For fan towers made of slate, see Beck, 12; and Nancy Boardman, "The Welsh Revival," *Vermont Life* (Winter, 1992): 53.

9 Contributing to the writing experiments of some anthropologists and folklorists—especially feminists among them—I have interwoven the words of the Richards, my informant-consultants, with my own instead of placing their thoughts in indented, block quotations. Through such writing practices, borne of an awareness of the politics of authorship and textual representation, we seek to enact a greater equality among all those who help construct a text. We strive for a more dialogic presentation of detail, since it is in dialogue that ethnographic practice itself proceeds. And we call to mind the linkages between fiction, creative non-fiction, and ethnography. See Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993); Ruth Behar, "Introduction: Out of Exile," in *Women Writing Culture*, ed. Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 1-29; Kevin Dwyer, *Moroccan Dialogues* (1982; reprint, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1987); Roger Lancaster, *Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua* (Berkeley: University of California, 1992); Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); and Margery Wolf, *A Thrice Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism & Ethnographic Responsibility* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

10 This story is drawn from several interviews with William Richard and his family, in order: Richard family, interview, jail segment, WM2; William, Rodney, Lucille, John, and Stephen Richard, interview by author, tape recording, jail segment, WM7, Rangeley, Maine, 20 December 1984; William, Rodney, Lucille, John, and Stephen Richard, interview by author, tape recording, jail segment, WM3, Rangeley, Maine, 20 December 1984; Richard family, interview, jail segment, WM7; Richard, interview, jail segment, WM2; Richard family, interview with author, jail segment, WM3.

11 "Farmington and Near-by," *Franklin Journal and Farmington Chronicle*, 28 July, 1933.

12 William Richard, interview by author, tape recording, jail segment, WM14, Phillips, Maine, 31 July 1985.

13 Although I placed articles about William and his Henry Mayeux stories in newspapers throughout Maine and eastern New Hampshire from 1991 to 1994, I've found only one other person yet alive who may have heard the legends. Abenaki storyteller and writer Joe Bruchac of Greenfield Center, New York, says his Abenaki grandfather, Jesse Bowman, told stories about "Old Henry" who was a logger "over in Maine" whose unusual strength was said to come from "Old Nick." Jesse logged in the southern Adirondacks, and his grandfather reportedly died on a log drive on the Penobscot. Conversation with author, April 1991; letter, 16 October 1997. For reports of a 19th century man, Henry Moon, from New Brunswick whose unusual strength was said to come from the Devil, see Barbara Grantmyre, *Lunar Rogue* (Fredericton: Brunswick Press, 1963).

14 Charles L. Perdue, Jr., "'What Made Little Sister Die?' The Core Aesthetic and Personal Culture of a Traditional Singer," *Western Folklore* 54 (1995): 152.

15 Clifford Geertz, "Art as a Cultural System," in *Local Knowledge*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 99.

16 Gerald Davis, "Elijah Pierce, Woodcarver: Doves and Pain in Life Fulfilled," in *Elijah Pierce, Woodcarver*, ed. Norma Roberts (Columbus, Ohio and Seattle: Columbus Museum of Art in association with University of Washington Press, 1992), 13.

17 Henry Glassie, *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 33, 480.

18 Glassie, 520-21. Also see Roger D. Abrahams, "The Complex Relations of Simple Forms," in *Folklore Genres*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); Linda Dégh, "The Approach to Worldview in Folk Narrative Study," *Western Folklore* 53 (1994): 243-52; Barre Toelken, *The Dynamics of Folklore* (1979; reprint, Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996); and William A. Wilson, "Personal Narratives: The Family Novel," *Western Folklore* 50 (1991): 127-49.

19 Barbara Myerhoff, *Number Our Days* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978), 222; Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 324-25, 365.

20 Glassie, 178.

21 William, Rodney, Lucille, John, and Stephen Richard, interview with author, tape recording, WM5, Rangeley, Maine, 20 December 1984.

22 William, Rodney, Lucille, John, and Stephen Richard, interview with author, tape recording, WM1, Rangeley, Maine, 10 March 1985.

23 Margaret Yocom, field journal, 10 March, 1985.

24 Line breaks indicate that William paused in his telling, spaces between lines indicate longer pauses. *Italicized* text denotes stressed words; CAP-ITALS, more loudly stressed words. Carets [^^] indicate laughter, in varying lengths of time. Brackets frame interjections into the story by others. Finally, < > mark off words spoken quickly. I've edited out some false starts and some repetitions of single words. The reasoning behind the use of these punctuation choices is more fully explained by Dennis Tedlock in "Learning to Listen: Oral History as Poetry" in *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 107-23.

25 In an earlier version of this story, William names the "old man" working on the Bemis operation with Henry Mayeux as Old Steve Smith of Lewiston, Maine. William Richard, interview by Stephen Richard, at Phillips, Maine, 22 July 1980. This interview is held by the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History, Accession # NA 1387, T1525.

26 Richard family, interview, WM1.

27 Richard family, interviews, WM1 and WM5.

28 Richard family, interview, WM1.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 "Drive" refers to a river drive, in which pulpwood or logs were floated down a river that would take them to a mill, and "caulk shoes" are shoes with nails on the soles, worn by river drivers so they could stand on the logs.

32 Richard family, interview, WM1.

33 This dialogic movement I am proposing resembles Dégh and Vázsonyi's discussion of the debate between belief and non-belief that occurs in legend-telling sessions. See Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi, "Legend and Belief," in *Folklore Genres*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 93-123.

34 Bakhtin, 324-25, 365.

35 For a discussion of Henry Mayeux's otherness as it relates to gender ambiguity, homosocial violence, and the rising tide of Ku Klux Klan activity against Maine's French Catholics in the 1920s, see Margaret R. Yocom, "'He Was a Man': Gender Ambiguity and Homosocial Violence in the Maine Logging Legends of Henry Mayeux" (Paper read at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society, Eugene, Oregon, 27-30 October 1993).

36 Bertha DeVere Green, *Fans Over the Ages* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1975), 42, 83-86.

37 Yocom, field journal, 11 October 1997.

38 For a discussion of war as a "gendering activity," see Margaret Randolph Higonnet, et al., "Introduction," in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, ed. Margaret Randolph Higonnet, et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 4.

39 Richard family, interview, WM1.

40 Raymond Bolduc and William Richard lived several miles from one another on the Weld Road outside of Phillips. Although they and their

wives visited one another and their children played together, William never learned to make fans from Raymond before they were both locked away in jail. Born in Gorham, New Hampshire, on July 8, 1903 of parents from Quebec, Raymond Bolduc was a woodsman all his working life. Family members I spoke to don't know where Raymond learned to make his white cedar double fan towers, but his wife Lucina Poulin Bolduc first saw him make the carvings when Raymond was in jail with William. Raymond also made wooden "dancing men," his daughter Laurette remembers, as well as spruce gum boxes, fans, crosses, miniature axes mounted on blocks of wood, and necklaces of carved peach pits. Skilled with wood and metal, he also made his own woods tools. He built sleds to haul pulp, steamed and bent wood to make snowshoes, and he carved handles for axes, birch hooks, and hammers. In his forge, he fixed horse-shoes and fashioned birch hooks and cant dogs. "If he had to have a tool . . . for the woods," Laurette recalls, "he'd make it." Raymond Bolduc died on the Fourth of July, 1974. (Lucina Poulin Bolduc and Laurette Bolduc Childs, interviews with author, tape recordings BOL-91-7-31-1, Phillips, Maine, 31 July 1991 and BOL-98-9-11-1, Phillips, Maine, 11 September 1998).

41 William, Rodney Sr., Lucille, Rodney Richard Jr., interview by author, tape recording WM8, Rangeley, Maine, 16 February 1985.

42 Richard family, interview, WM3.

43 See Glassie, pages 567-9, for a discussion about self-control as a value among storytellers and brick-makers in Ulster.

44 Richard family, interview, WM5.

45 William Richard, interview by author, tape recording WM6, Rangeley, Maine, 20 December 1984.

46 Glassie speaks about gaps and ambivalences such as these in his discussion of Ballymenone's saints' tales, on page 181: "Their message is not clear, nor should it be. To be effective, stories connect, unifying meaningfully. . . . To be affective, connections remain intricate and imperfect, leaving space for people to discover new and personal meanings within and between."

47 Richard family, interview, WM1.

48 Richard family, interviews, WM1 and WM5.

49 Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (New York: Routledge, 1987), 27.

50 Thanks to Shirley W. Adams, author of *Rangeley's Allied Families* (manuscript in preparation) for genealogical information on Lee Violette.

51 Bill and Edward Ellis, interview, ELL-91-8-7, Rangeley, Maine, 7 August 1991. For other fan towers shaped like Lee Violette's, see Tangerman, as well as Thomas S. McLean, Sr.'s fan tower in the collection of the Lumberman's Museum in Patten, Maine.

52 William Richard, interview by author, tape recording WM10, Phillips, Maine, 6 March 1985.

53 Gaylon "Jeep" Wilcox, however, sees his stepfather's fan tower quite differently from William Richard. For Jeep, the fan shows Lee Violette's attention to detail and working wood to perfection, attitudes he carried into all parts of his life with wood. "I'm amazed that [*the fan*] stays together," Jeep remarked, "but, that's what I mean about [*its being*] so detailed it kind of jumped out at you."

In addition to the fan towers, Lee Violette carved toy animals and built whirligigs for children. He also made the tools he needed: wheelbarrows, ax handles, and bucksaw handles. "The thing that I remember most," Jeep pointed out, "was everything [*in all his carvings*] was in the right proportion."

Lee shaped the round knob on the top handle of a bucksaw "as perfectly round as a cue ball," Jeep remembered. "At first, you get the impression, it's so perfect that somebody had glued it on there or something. But it's not so. Evidently, he had the ability to shape it so perfect, it's hard to believe that [*he*] could do it so good. . . . Anything that I ever known him to make like that, regardless of what it was, always ended up the same—good! . . . Everything had to be just perfect."

Jeep continued: "Another thing that I remember that makes me believe this is—after he died, and we [*were*] cleaning some things out of his house, I went out in the woodshed. . . . And he had probably three or four cord of these real fine edgings [*thin strips of wood cut off of white birch*

slabs at a mill and used for kindling], sawed and stacked in his shed, and every one was the exact same length, and a nice smooth cut. . . . *Exact* twelve inches, you know. Where most people wouldn't care. A piece of kindling wood, it could vary six or eight inches, you know, but he, for some reason, he took the time to cut every piece of wood the exact same length. . . . He was very, very particular about it. Knowing that, you can see why he might have put the extra time into the ax handle [*and other carvings*]. To look at the things he done, he's definitely had to have a gift in him, you know. I don't think he considered himself as an artist, or [*the fan tower*] a great piece of art, or anything like that. I think it all had to do with his feeling that maybe a job worth doing was worth doing right." Gaylon "Jeep" Wilcox, interview by author, tape recording WIL-92-7-29-1, Rangeley, Maine, 29 July 1992. Carol Lee Violette Savage, interview by author, Rangeley, Maine, 13 August 1991.

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