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1957

## Minerva Cutler Interviewed about David's Folly Guest House and Earthworm Business

WLBZ Radio

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**University of Maine Raymond H. Fogler Library Special Collections Department**

Transcript of a sound recording in MS 608, WLBZ Radio Station Records, Bangor, Maine, 1931-1973

Title: Minerva Cutler Interviewed about David's Folly Guest House and Earthworm Business

Date: 1957

Recording number: Tape 37, part 2

Length of recording: 4:13

[transcript begins]

MINCHER: Here's a story of a dovetailing operation that has nothing to do with doves. It concerns a guest house and an earth worm farm named David's Folly on Penobscot Bay in Maine. This is Bill Mincher of WLBZ in Bangor getting the story firsthand from Miss Minerva Cutler in West Brooksville, Maine. Well now, where did the name David's Folly, which is quite provocative, where did that come from?

CUTLER: Well, when David, when David Wasson retired to become a farmer from his shipbuilding and sea captaining activities, his house was on the hill, up beyond us, which was also part of his property. And at that time, almost all farmers built on hills. But he became weary of coming down for his cattle down over the hill and driving them back up, and and hanging down there and driving that back up. He decided you'd come down on the level and build his house and barn and make life easier. And he did. And his neighbors scoffed at him and said, what a foolish thing to do, you'll just get the drainage from your hills, you won't be able to plant so early, and they said you're really very foolish to do it. And they called the place David's Folly.

MINCHER: And was his farming operation successful?

CUTLER: Very successful.

MINCHER: It was. So a folly was not correct at all.

CUTLER: Not at all correct.

MINCHER: How long ago was that, by the way? How old is this place?

CUTLER: 1819.

MINCHER: Which is the primarily the business? Is that the worms that you raise, or the operation of the house?

CUTLER: The two help each other.

MINCHER: In the earthworm business, what is the purpose? Why do people buy them? It's not for fishing bait, is it, or?

CUTLER: They may be used for fishing bait. They make very good fishing bait because they're very wiggly, live longer than the ordinary earth worm. We've raised them primarily, however, for gardening because they make the very best kind of topsoil and humus that is possible. They're a crossbreed between the manure worm and the orchard worm, crossbred by a doctor in California who was disturbed by the fact we were having so much chemical fertilizer used in our soil and so many sprays. He thought that if we raised our food and good, healthy soil, there'd be no need of the chemical fertilizer or the spray.

MINCHER: Do you sell them just around here in Maine?

CUTLER: No, we ship them all over the country, into Canada. We ship some to England. We know that a half a pound of our earthworms of assorted sizes and ages will weigh, uh, will contain 500 earthworms. Take a pail from the earth propagation pits of the soil with the earthworms in it, dump it on a counting table, put a strong electric light above it, and the earthworms, who, which dislike sunshine, will go into the center, in a mass.

MINCHER: Oh.

CUTLER: And they remove the earth, and take out these earthworms, put them on the household scale, and half a pound is 500. One of the big reasons for these earthworms, using these earthworms instead of the ordinary earthworms is that they propagate very, very much more rapidly. One earthworm could be responsible for 500 to a thousand, at least, in a year's time.

MINCHER: I wonder what David would say to all this. [Both laugh] This is a far cry from the farming and growing techniques of his day.

CUTLER: He'd probably approve, heartily.

MINCHER: So that's another story of the earthworm and a not so vicious circle. Table scraps from the guesthouse feed the worms, which help produce good vegetables to feed the guests, etc. All this goes on at David's Folly, operated by Miss Minerva Cutler in West Brooksville, Maine. Now this is Bill Mincher of WLBZ in Bangor, returning you to Monitor at Radio Central.

[transcript ends]

For more information about this transcript, audio recording, or other materials in Special Collections at the University of Maine, contact:

Fogler Library Special Collections  
5729 Raymond H. Fogler Library  
Orono, ME 04469-5729  
207.581.1686  
um.library.spc @ maine.edu