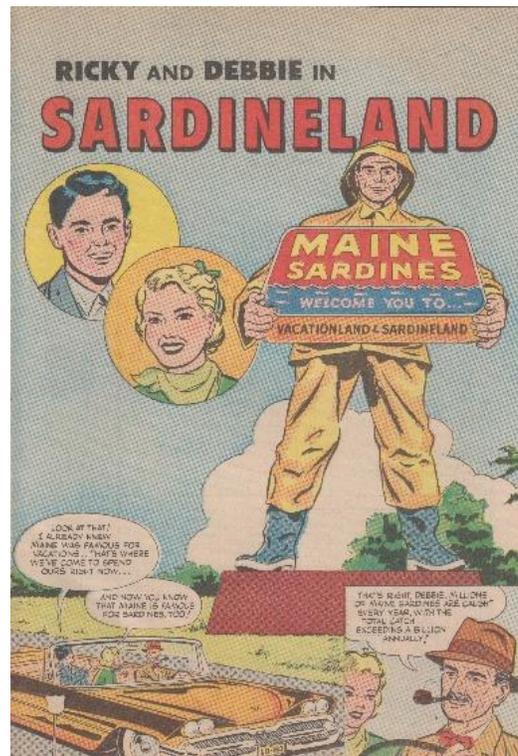




Sardines Through a Comic Book Lens

By Cipperly Good, the Richard Saltonstall Jr. Curator of Maritime History



Our SardineFest celebration is just around the corner on October 4th, and we are lining up a fascinating group of speakers to explore sardines from many different perspectives. We invite you to join us to hear from sardine factory workers, herring fishermen, sardine industry regulators, and other sardine enthusiasts. One of our speakers will be diving into the comic *Ricky and Debbie in Sardineland*. Originally put out by the Maine Sardine Council in 1967, the comic takes readers through the canning process from catching the herring to the different steps at the cannery to going to market. The Maine Sardine Council also issued a Spanish language version and an updated 1987 version that reflects the automatization of much of the canning process.

Ricky and Debbie in Sardineland is an example of a government and educational comic. Our comic expert at SardineFest, Dr. Mark McLaughlin, is an Associate Professor of History and Canadian Studies at the University of Maine. He is the leading historian of government and educational comics in Canada, and he is now starting to turn his attention to Maine and New England.

WHENEVER I TALK TO YOUNG PEOPLE I TRY TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD NUTRITION. THE STATE OF MAINE PRODUCES MANY OF THE FOODS ESSENTIAL TO A WELL-BALANCED DIET... CHICKENS... EGGS... VEGETABLES... LOBSTERS, AND OF COURSE, MEATY MAINE SARDINES!"

MARGARET CHACE SMITH
SENATOR FROM MAINE

"COMING FROM MAINE AS I DO, I GREW UP WITH A LOVE OF RIVERS AND THE SEA. TODAY, ONE OF MY PRINCIPAL INTERESTS IS IN SEEING THAT OUR NATURAL HERITAGE IS NOT RUINED. CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF THESE GREAT AMERICAN RESOURCES IS IMPORTANT TO US AND TO OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN."

EDMUND S. MUSKIE
SENATOR FROM MAINE

FREE! SARDINE RECIPE BOOK

MAINE SARDINE COUNCIL
15 GROVE STREET
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04330

PLEASE SEND ME YOUR FREE BOOKLET OF MAINE SARDINE RECIPES.

NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY OR TOWN _____

STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

NEW TASTE-TEMPING WAYS TO SERVE MAINE SARDINES!

ANSWERS TO SUBSTIONS ON PAGE 5. LIVES 3 IN WOODS. HOLDSY. 4 IN LIVES OR WOODS. 6 YEAR CAMP. A PLUG ASSEMBLY. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

HERE HUNDREDS OF TRAINED WOMEN WORKERS PREPARE THE FISH AND PACK THEM NEATLY IN TIN CANS

ALTHOUGH OTHER CATCHING AND CANNING OPERATIONS ARE MECHANICAL, NO MACHINE HAS YET BEEN INVENTED WHICH CAN PACK THE TENDER FISH AS CAREFULLY AS THESE SKILLED HANDS

THE CANS GO TO A SEALING MACHINE WHERE OILS OR SALCES ARE ADDED AND THE COVERS SEALED ON AUTOMATICALLY...

THE CANS NOW GO INTO A RETORT OR PRESSURE COOKER - WHERE THEY STAY FOR AS LONG AS AN HOUR TO STERILIZE THE CONTENTS AND COMPLETE THE COOKING

THE CANS ARE COOLED IN WATER, PUT IN BINS AND LATER PACKED IN CAGES...

EVERY STEP IN THE PRODUCTION OF MAINE SARDINES IS WATCHED BY SPECIAL STATE INSPECTORS

MOST MAINE SARDINES ARE PACKED IN SOY-BEAN OIL. BUT SOME ARE PUT UP IN OLIVE OIL, PEANUT OIL, MUSTARD OR TOMATO SAUCE

He sees the *Ricky and Debbie in Sardineland* comic book as a window into Maine's past. While published by the Maine Sardine Council, the Maine state government had heavy involvement in this comic's content and messaging. The comic book helps us get a sense of how fishery and state government officials responded to various large-scale challenges to the sardine industry in the years after the Second World War. Dr. McLaughlin will juxtapose *Ricky and Debbie in Sardineland* to another comic also published in 1967, *Massachusetts Men Against the Sea*. In comparing the two, it becomes obvious that there were similar challenges facing the New England fisheries as a whole, not just those in Maine.

Selections of the comic book are on display in the *Sardineland* exhibit section where visitors are taken through the process of cutting and packing 3-D printed sardines. Stay tuned for a story walk version of the comic.

We hope to see you at SardineFest as we delve into the delicious and historical process of turning herring into canned sardines!