



Extracts from “Memories of Grindstone Neck”

Copyright 2004, Grindstone Association, Inc.

Pages ? - ?

Grindstone Neck 1764-1990

By Henrietta (Aunt Henny) Weaver

Henrietta Weaver worked closely with Allan Smallidge for a project they planned to prepare for the Grindstone centennial in 1990. According to Smallidge, she spent several afternoons in the summer of 1988 at the Hancock County Registry of Deeds “digging through musty records on the second floor of the Winter Harbor Town Office and sweeping the dust from some Grindstone memories.” Unfortunately, Henrietta never returned to Grindstone after that summer and died in 1990. Her unfinished essay is an important achievement that provides historical context for this more recent project on Grindstone remembrances.

Henrietta and John Weaver THE EARLIEST OWNERSHIP OF GRINDSTONE NECK was a grant given in 1764 to Francis Shaw. In 1796 Shaw sold his grant to William Bingham of Philadelphia, a United States senator who owned two million acres of land in Maine. Bingham had a plan drawn and developed lots which were numbered and put up for sale. The earliest known settler was Stephan Rand in 1820, buying 120 acres of land and building his home on the eastern side of Sand Cove. Then the Joys built a settlement nearby. George Grover built on the hill above Sand Cove about 1837. Nathaniel Stover originally built the Moore farmhouse about 1820, which was bought by Mark L. Bunker in 1841. For many years these were the only homes on Grindstone Neck. In 1889 a group of wealthy men formed the Gouldsboro Land Improvement Co. These men came from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, New York, New York, and Providence, Rhode Island. They purchased Grindstone Neck or Point, the smaller peninsula extending from the western side of Winter Harbor, Maine, into Frenchman Bay, which forms Winter Harbor Sound with Schoodic Peninsula. It is reputed that it got its name from a ship loaded with grindstones that wrecked off the point. The peninsula is one mile and a half long and one-half mile wide. These men felt they could build a summer resort to compare with Bar Harbor, Maine, which had become so popular.

They spared no expense and expert talent was employed. Mr. Nathan F. Barrett, a famous landscape engineer who laid out the Ponce de Leon [hotel in St. Augustine, Florida], was hired. He designed what is known as Barrett’s Survey. In the plan a main avenue ran the length of the peninsula. Ovals were laid out with the central portion primarily for cottage lots. Lots were to be bought with the agreement that the owner erect a cottage within the year costing no less than two thousand dollars. If you purchased a lot in 1890, you had to complete a house by July 1, 1891. You could not sell or

subdivide prior to 1892. The Gouldsboro Land Improvement Co. reserved the right to erect a clubhouse, a casino, and an inn. Stabling and carriage houses were built in designated areas and a wharf on the west side. They also agreed to lay down two main sewers, secure adequate water supply, and adopt and carry out completion of roads no later than July 1, 1891.

Mr. William Paul Gerhard, the eminent sanitary expert, was consulted for drainage and water supply. Water was piped from Birch Harbor Lake, which was fed by springs some two miles away. It was piped partly by gravity and partly by pumping to a standpipe on the summit of Grindstone Neck. It was run by the Grindstone Neck Water Co., in which the Gouldsboro Company had an interest. Sewerage was carried to the sea in rain pipes. The miles of roads constructed were wide avenues under laid with broken stone.

The Gouldsboro Company was also interested in the Winter Harbor Steamboat Co. of which Mr. Charles S. Whelan of Philadelphia was president and which owned the steamers *Silver Star*, *Schoodic*, *Marjorie*, and, in 1905, *Ruth*.

The Grindstone Inn, accommodating over two hundred guests, was built in 1891 by the Gouldsboro Company in the center of the Oval. It was thoroughly modern, well built, and completely furnished. Facing east were the hills of Schoodic Peninsula and to the west beautiful Frenchman Bay across which lies Mt. Desert Island. The view is not surpassed by that from any hotel in the state of Maine. A brochure states: "Malaria, hay fever, flies, and mosquitoes are unknown." Activities were many. A splendid nine-hole golf course, two tennis courts, excellent sea fishing, and small boats could be rented. A safe harbor for yachts and good sailing. A swimming pool for the use of the guests, the Winter Harbor Club and Casino nearby for entertainment. Large rooms and piazzas, an excellent cuisine, a telegraph, and long distance telephone office in the house as well as a post office with two mails daily and a laundry, all to make guests welcome and comfortable. It was a meeting place when the mail arrived and to plan the activities for the day, as there were no telephones in the cottages. Mr. George Dallas Dixon was always on hand to greet everyone. The tea was served every afternoon. The Inn was so successful that in 1902 and 1903 it was necessary to have additional buildings for laundry and help. By 1912, every room was taken. The harbor was filled with yachts and sailing craft. About 20 automobiles on the neck with three transient ones kept busy.

Early managers were Gustav A. Dnowlauch, Enneor G. Grob, Henry W. Dutton, Otto E. Hansen, Frank M. Love, Evans Bargman, Stewart Hackenburg, Bill Christian, EWD John McShain, Milton Baker, and Edward Flather. Mr. Samuel Henderson ran the Inn at one time and it was bought by Isabel Henderson then to John C. Groome then Goodhue, then fire. The Inn burned down in 1956 one fall morning.

The community flourished through the First World War until the Depression and the grand manner of living passed. Wealthy guests no longer came to the Inn or the cottages, and business waned. There were some, though, who remained loyal and loved Grindstone Neck and the life it had to offer and continued to return. Some old cottages were torn down, many changed hands. The Gouldsboro Land Improvement Company disbanded, and on August 22, 1947, the Grindstone Association was formed.

The lean years continued and if it were not for a few members who picked up the deficit, the community would have died.

Travel in 1890 was anything but simple. The Maine Central Railroad ran several trains between Boston and Bar Harbor. The steamer *Olevette* made tri-weekly trips between Boston and Bar Harbor. The steamer *Winthrop* ran weekly between New York and Bar Harbor. If you objected to travel by water there was a stage coach route between Mt. Desert ferry, Sullivan, and Winter Harbor in connection with the Maine Central Railroad, affording through communication by land.

So, if you traveled for the summer you took the train, and it wasn't a diesel or Amtrak, but a good, old-fashioned slow steam engine with probably a hot box or two on the way to delay the trip, and of course no air conditioning. You changed trains in New York and Boston. Nice old Pullman cars with lovely big swivel chairs. Upper and lower berths and of course the wonderful dining cars. When you got to Mt. Desert you took the ferry S.S. *Norumbega* or the *Moosehead* to Bar Harbor where you changed to the ferry *Schoodic* with Captain Harper to Dixon Point wharf on Grindstone Neck. You were met by horses and wagons to take you and your luggage to your cottage or the Inn. How many days it took to get from there to here I do not know, but several I would think. You did not commute in those days. You went for the summer and stayed put. No airports, no automobiles — the only wheels were horse and buggy or a bicycle.

Traveling was difficult enough but think of the packing. Steamer trunks were filled, suitcases, large and heavy in those days, shoe boxes and hat boxes. Ladies wore a great deal more clothing — undershirts, bras, camisoles, bloomers, whole slips and half slips made of satin or silk, stockings, and always a corset with stays. Lovely dresses made of lawn with pleats and tucks. Everything had to be dry cleaned or hand washed and ironed. White buckskin shoes had to be scrubbed with soap and water then whitened with Blanco and a sponge. Hats for every 2 outfit and of course gloves. Long tennis dresses and golf clothes. No shorts or mini-skirts and bathing suits were not bikinis.

Gentlemen wore undershirts, boxer shorts, flannel trousers, shirts, ties, vests, a coat or blazer, and a straw hat. A gentleman never went without socks and of course white buckskin shoes. Bathing suits had tops and knee-length shorts. All this too had to be dry cleaned or hand washed and ironed. If you went away for two months you had to take quite a large wardrobe with you. You and your husband, children, and servants, so imagine there were easily 20 or 30 pieces of luggage to keep track of.

Today you roll up enough wash and wear in a duffle bag hung over your shoulder to last two months. Bras, briefs, slips, a couple of pair of shorts and tops, a few skirts, enough dresses for Yacht Club dinners, a bikini or two, slacks and sweaters if it's cold, loafers, foul-weather gear and you have it made. If you forgot anything you just dashed into Ellsworth and bought it.

As for conveniences, your lighting was oil lamps or candles, cooking on coal stoves and open wood fires for heating. No washing machines or dryers, you used laundry tubs and wash boards and everything was hung out to dry. Naturally no electric appliances such as toasters, coffee pots, no dishwasher. Provisions of all kinds, including fresh meat and vegetables, butter, milk, eggs, and ice were daily served to the Inn and the cottagers. Whitehouse, the grocery store, sent a boy, Ralph

Gerrish or Philip Whitehouse, for the order then delivered before lunch. Two farmers, Linwood Sargent and Wilkinson, provided milk, eggs, and vegetables. Mail was brought to the Inn twice a day. In the morning everyone gathered to make their plans for the day as there were no telephones. George Dallas Dixon was always there to greet everyone.

In the afternoons everyone gathered for tea. Activities are very similar today as they were then with a few changes and modernization. The gentlemen played golf in the morning. The course has been slightly altered, such as moving the seventh green further away from the church so you would not hear the mild profanity when a putt was missed while you were communing with the Lord on a Sunday morning. Then there was swimming in the old pool below the clubhouse. Good cold ocean water, not heated like today. Lunch was had at home, boating, sailing, or canoeing in the afternoon. Tennis was played and tea was served every afternoon at the Inn. In 1907, when the knockabouts came to Winter Harbor, there was racing twice a week and the rivalry was intense. The Saturday races were followed by a tea for which sandwiches and cakes were brought over from Bar Harbor by the *Schoodic*. All the ladies wore their very best clothes and hats and according to Emily Fisher there was no liquor in evidence. Dinner was served every evening for those at the Inn and also for any cottagers who wished to eat there. In the evenings you took walks or games or cards were played.

Arthur L. Williston of Dedham, Massachusetts, tells the story of the first time he ever saw Grindstone Neck in the summer of 1895. He was spending the summer in Sorrento and was invited to the Inn by Mr. Joseph Outhwaite, a member of Congress from Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Williston said: "I drove over in a small runabout with a horse that I had hired at a livery stable. As I approached the rise in the road leading to the Inn, I was met by a cavalcade of horsemen and horsewomen mounted on beautiful steeds and in regalia with top hats and all the elegant costuming of the period. It was a fascinating sight. May Dexter's older sister, Helen, led the parade."

He also told about a group of young girls who had come out in society and felt grown-up enough to undertake a dramatic performance at the Casino. The girls made elaborate preparations and hoped to create a stir. However, there was an active group of younger girls, too young to be included in the performance, and being left out, called themselves the Lemons. They decided to have some fun and secretly prepared a burlesque. When the date of their performance arrived, there was so much more fun, with a dash of devilry, that they put the older girls in the shade.

*



Pages 8? – 8

Alan Goldstein, 75, says, "This is a good place for sailors," as his own Grindstone Neck story illustrates. Fascinated by the Neck's historic knockabout sailboats, he went on an odyssey to find the nine custom-made boats and bring them home for the centennial of the Yacht Club. Goldstein, who

learned to sail on Lake Ontario, graduated from Syracuse University and the University of Rochester and achieved early success in business through his furniture manufacturing company and real estate investments. Today he spends a great deal of time in both Winter Harbor and Key Largo, Florida, where he has been an instrumental member of the Ocean Reef Club.

I FIRST CAME TO WINTER HARBOR IN 1974 AND I'll tell you how I happened to get here. I sailed my boat in 1974 from Rochester, New York, where I lived, out the St. Lawrence Seaway, out around the Gaspé Peninsula, down the coast of Nova Scotia, to southern Nova Scotia. I had never been in the state of Maine before. I then sailed from southern Nova Scotia to Northeast Harbor, Maine. The entire time that I was in Nova Scotia, there was fog, rain, thunder, lightning, but the morning that I sailed into Northeast Harbor, the sun came over Cadillac Mountain, and for the next three weeks, I cruised down the coast of Maine. I said to myself, "This is the most beautiful part of America and I'm going to buy a house here." So I contacted a real estate broker in Bangor and asked him to send me the listings on every house on the coast of Maine. This happened to be sort of a recession year, and I received a carton that was filled with probably 700 or 800 listings. So when I got to Florida — I sailed ultimately to Florida — I spent the winter going through those listings and eliminating the ones that didn't interest me, and I narrowed it down to about 20 properties that looked interesting. I sailed back up to Portland, Maine, and I started in there, going up the coast looking at the properties that looked interesting to me.

Now, of real interest was the fact that there was one property located in Winter Harbor that consisted of a peninsula that went into the ocean almost a mile. It was called Harbor Point and it was just opposite Grindstone Neck, just across the bay, and it was a beautiful peninsula. On one side was the harbor of Winter Harbor, and the other side, across Sand Cove, was the Winter Harbor Yacht Club and a golf course. It just looked very interesting. But I did my homework and I started up the coast and as I went up the coast I looked at property after property and nothing really lit my fire.

When I got to Camden, Maine, I decided to rent a car and drive to Winter Harbor and take a good look at this property. When I got there, it was a day like today. It was foggy; you couldn't see a thing, but there was a small house there, built by a family that had just been transferred out west. They'd never lived in this little house on the Point. And it really did attract me. I went to Northeast Harbor, Seal Harbor, I looked at all these places, and then I got back to Winter Harbor, and decided to buy that property. I knew nothing about Grindstone Neck, nothing about the Winter Harbor Yacht Club. I had never heard of Fitz Dixon in my life. I just was in love with the house and the property, and I bought it [in 1974]. The next year I returned to Winter Harbor and, to make a long story short, it wasn't until 1980 that I became a member of the Winter Harbor Yacht Club. [It took] five years. I was not known to anybody there, and it was a very closed corporation in those days. But eventually I did get in the club and one of the things that excited me about this area to begin with was the fact that it was such beautiful water, deep water, wonderful sailing water. When I did join the Yacht Club, I was very interested in teaching youngsters how to sail. I'll never forget, one day I went out with Doug Moxham and Bill Holden in a Bullseye and worked on teaching their children how to sail. And that was the beginning of getting involved in junior sailing at the Yacht Club. I think in about 1980 we had a tennis instructor named Bill Nelesky who worked mornings teaching tennis. I said to Bill,

“Look, I think it’s time you taught the children how to sail.” He said, “I don’t know anything about sailing.” So I gave him a book on sailing and I said, “Stay one chapter ahead of the kids,” which is what he did and so Bill Nilesky started teaching children how to sail in the Bullseyes.

* * *

About 1980, or 1981, I became interested in the Winter Harbor knockabouts. There were two knockabouts left in Winter Harbor and they were both owned by Mr. Dixon. The rest of the fleet of seven other boats, a total of nine, were dispersed throughout the Northeast. So the fleet was basically gone and there were no official races at all at that time with just the two boats.

Now, a little history of the knockabouts. They were all built in 1907, except for Mr. Dixon’s. His boats were built in 1921 and 1922. A gentleman came up here in 1921 in February and took the lines off what was the fastest boat at that time to build the other two boats. When they brought these boats in 1907, they raced them every Wednesday and every Saturday, and the races were preceded by a lobster dinner, with a lot of martinis and a lot of drinking. So here we are, it’s 1982. I’ve been in the Yacht Club for two years and I decided that I would try to put the fleet back together. So I found a boat in Sorrento, Cloverly. I don’t know whether I saw an ad or what, but at any rate, I heard about the boats. So I went down to Sorrento and I met with the fellow who owned the boat, and his name was Sturgis Haskins. I think he bought the boat from Howard Flierl. So at any rate, I bought the boat and had it restored, and I brought it to Winter Harbor and now we had three. Then I heard of a boat for sale on Cape Cod and the boat was Sphinx, which happened to be owned by John Banes’ grandfather. And I said to John, “You know, there’s a boat up in Cape Cod and it’s Sphinx, and we ought to go see it. It’s for sale.” Well, he was very excited, so I chartered a friend’s plane and John Banes and I flew to Cape Cod, and we looked at this boat, and he fell in love with it. It needed restoration; it was a mess, but he bought it and brought it back to Winter Harbor, where he had it restored. There are some pictures of it here at the Winter Harbor marina. So now there were four. Shortly thereafter we found Riddle, which is another boat. We had that boat restored at the marina as well. In fact, there’s a picture here of the two boats, a newspaper article of them being restored. So now we’re five.

Over the next few years we found every single boat but hull number one, which was named Mystery. It was a total mystery. We could not find that boat. I was commodore now of the Winter Harbor Yacht Club and our centennial was coming up in 1990, 100 years. We had eight of the nine boats and we had them restored and brought them all back to first-class condition. We couldn’t find Mystery. One day, I was sailing in Winter Harbor, and a fellow that I know, a yacht historian, came up to me and he said he had a present. And he handed me a sheet of paper. On that sheet of paper was a lady’s name and a telephone number in Rhode Island. And he said, this lady owns Mystery, but it doesn’t look anymore like a Winter Harbor knockabout. Had a different rig, had a big motor in it. She used it for cruising. I immediately called her and I said, “I want to buy your boat.” She said, “It’s not for sale.” She said, “I have a gentleman”— she was an elderly lady, you could tell — “who takes me for a twoweek cruise every year and I just won’t sell the boat.” So I said, “Look, in two years we have our centennial. I would just like to pay to bring that boat to Winter Harbor for the Fourth of July so we’ll have all nine boats.” Well, she said, “I’ll think about it.” So I wrote her a letter and confirmed

the fact that we wanted to have her come. She didn't answer the letter, but in the spring of 1989 she called me. She said, "The fellow who's been taking me on my cruises has died. I'll sell you the boat." Well, at that time, Dexter and Mary Coffin had bought one of the boats. Dexter was a rear commodore of the Yacht Club at the time, and he was anxious to get Mystery here too. He had a jet plane at the time. We all got in his jet and we flew to Rhode Island. He bought the boat. I have a picture here, too, of the boat coming to Winter Harbor.

So now, we had the ninth boat, but it had to be totally restored. Well, I was on the board at that time of the Maine Maritime Museum, and they had a shipbuilding school there, and I was able to get the school to take the project of restoring that boat, and they totally restored the boat. It was a mess. And, as I said, the rig was changed, they had this big motor in it and everything. So they took the boat, they molded all the bronze fittings for the boat, they did the whole thing and they delivered it to us on the third of July of 1990. So on the Fourth of July, we had a parade of all the boats, a major event. We had a big race, and since then, there have been nine boats. Now all the boats are owned by individuals on the Neck. They've all come home. And it's a pretty interesting story. We believe that it is the oldest complete racing fleet in the country.

* * *

When I became active in the Yacht Club, I became active in the community. So, the strangeness that occurred before I joined the club was forgotten. I was commodore for six years in the club, including during the centennial. When I retired, I was very honored to be made a lifetime commodore of the club. Now there have been two honorary commodores because the next one that was made right after me was Fitz Dixon, so the two of us are honorary commodores and we attend all the meetings.

When I retired as commodore, we still didn't really have a first-class junior sailing program. When Tony Harwood became commodore, I persuaded Tony and the board that we should have a real junior sailing program and hire a certified instructor. We needed a fleet of boats that were designed to teach children, and that's what we did. I think it was in about 1998 that we — each of five different people bought Opti sailboats, which are little boats for teaching children, and we hired a wonderful girl named Cindy Houghtailing, who is still our instructor. We have taught scores of children to sail. It's a very active program, five days a week, and it's been a very successful program. So I still oversee that for the club and we now have six Optis and probably will have another one next year or the year after. We have a bunch of children participating, we have an instructor and an assistant instructor, and we've got a big fun children's program going. I had a vision.

The Yacht Club really wasn't a yacht club when I got there. It was a social club, the meeting place of our community, for the Grindstone Association as well. So, that's my real involvement here. I am involved in the community. I'm on the board of the hospital in Ellsworth, and I'm quite involved philanthropically in this part of the world as well.

Grindstone Neck and the Winter Harbor Yacht Club are really two and yet they're one. The members are the same. I'm sort of the new kid on the block, compared to many of these second- and third-generation people that are here. But it's a great place. It is growing because children are buying

homes that are off the Neck, and we're not exactly on the Neck, we just happen to be between the town and the Neck. I think that it's a very special place. You'll find everybody says that. It's more the place than the people, really. I think the fact that we're in a fishing village here, so to speak, and yet, we have a pretty sophisticated group of people over at Grindstone Neck and in the Winter Harbor Yacht Club. It's, I think, quite unusual.

* * *

What I like most about the place, I think, is the geography. It's a very beautiful place. What I like least about it is the fog, this year. It's been really a bad year, but there's a wonderful bunch of people. Very different values, very different backgrounds, and this place means different things to different people. My wife is a gardener and she loves to garden. This is a wonderful place to have a garden; the climate here lends itself to beautiful gardens. And a lot of people have wonderful gardens. The reason I'm here this morning is I'm about to leave on my yacht to go to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

I was very disappointed it took five years to be invited to join the Yacht Club. In fact, I had the property back on the market, because I didn't want to be some place that I wasn't going to be wanted. But it all turned around. . . . I'll tell you how it turned around. One day, I was walking down the street in Winter Harbor and I came upon a friend of mine from Florida, and I said, "What are you doing in Winter Harbor?" And he said, "Well, what are you doing here?" I said, "I've got a house here. What are you doing here?" He said, "We're guests of the Dixons this weekend." So I said, "Come on over, I want to talk with you." And he talked to Fitz and Edie and that's how the ice got broken. He knew I'd been very active down in Florida in the community and he said to the Dixons, "I think you should get Alan Goldstein in your club. He'll do something there."

I love the knockabouts. They sail beautifully, and they were designed to sail in these waters. They're very, very well-designed boats and they're very beautiful boats. Once I had sailed on one, I knew they were really special boats. Then I bought one, and then a few things happened. In this world, you've got to be lucky. I think I've been a very lucky guy in a lot of different ways. We found John Banes' boat, and he was enthusiastic. Two boats were owned by people who came here and saw our other boats and said, "Hey, I've got one of those," and came into the town office and said, "Tell me about the boats. I've got one." They immediately called me. It worked out well for the club that I had just happened to be at the right place.

[The Centennial] was a fabulous event. And we should talk about that event because we had two major parties. There's a group that comes in July and a group that comes in August at Grindstone Neck. We had a big event at the Yacht Club on the Fourth of July, with fireworks and the boat race and the parade and all that. Then in August, we had a big dance with a band from Philadelphia. We covered the parking lot of the swimming pool with a tent. We had a great party. In 2006 it will be the one hundredth birthday of these boats, and we will be doing something to recognize that in a big way as well. Of course it's very important that we maintain the boats, and they are maintained well, and also that we keep them here. As we all pass on, we've got to make sure to keep the boats in Winter Harbor.

*



Pages ??- ??
?Sydney Fisher?...

*



Pages ??=??
?member3?...

*



Pages ??=??
?member 4...?

*



*

Copies of the complete work “Memories of Grindstone Neck” may be purchased by contacting Frederick Hauck via email: rickhauck@maine.rr.com

* Clipart courtesy FCIT