

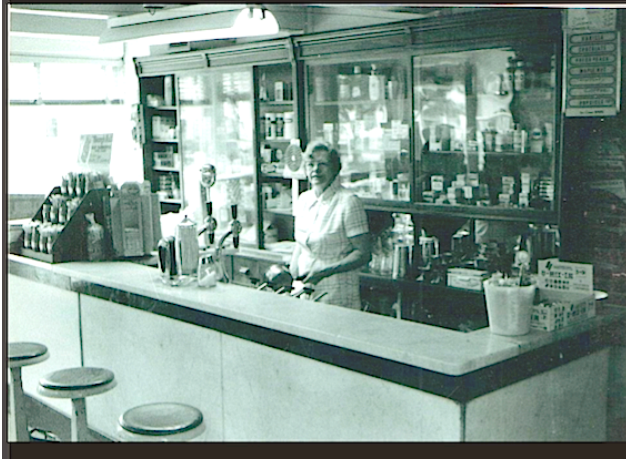
Winter Harbor Historical Society

P.O. Box 93, Winter Harbor, ME 04693

July 2017

NEWSLETTER

Gerrish's Store



(Marie Clark interview completed by Nanette Daley Hadlock in 1988)

In a small fishing village on the coast of Maine, sits a business named JM Gerrish Store. To the locals, this store is just "Marie's" or the "drugstore." I don't exactly know why people call it a drugstore; the strongest medicines retailed there are aspirin and pepto bismol.

The owner of Gerrish's Store is an elderly woman, Marie Clark. Marie has worked in the store constantly since 1942. Since 1961, she has run the business by herself. Sandwiches, coffee, soda and ice cream are the main dishes served at the lunch counter. When you order a ham sandwich, it's a real home cooked ham. Marie recalls the days when her father owned the business. Hot dishes and homemade ice cream were served. "People didn't leave town much back then," she says, "we needed to be more of a variety store. Merchandise included shoes, boots, sneakers, men's suits and Emerson radios. Cigarettes were eighteen cents a pack or a penny each. Today the inventory is much less. You can't buy footwear at the drugstore or a radio. You can still get a real fountain soda and catch up on the latest town gossip. Marie also worked as a New England Telephone agent for nearly forty years. Until 1971 telegrams could be sent directly from the store. In 1986, Marie stopped accepting payments for telephone bills. New regulations, such as computer installation and a mandatory ten thousand dollar insurance policy forced her to quit the service. "Besides that," she adds, "it only paid me fifteen cents on each bill, which really didn't make it worth the bother."

Marie wasn't always a store operator. After high school, she attended teaching school at Eastern State Normal School, the former site of Maine Maritime Academy. As a teacher in Levant, Maine, she earned eighteen dollars a week, five of which was spent on room and board. Her teaching career was short; five weeks total. Her sister, Cora was very sick and Marie was needed at home to help care for her. "I was, also very homesick for Winter Harbor, my family and my friends," she says.

The town post office was in the store also. Marie worked there for some time, after she returned from teaching.

JM Gerrish has a reputation of being the social center of town. In the morning, the regulars meet there for coffee and to pick up their 'saved-out' copy of the Bangor Daily News. During the winter months, she reserves approximately 30 papers per day. In the summer, this number more than doubles for the summer residents of Grindstone Neck. Following a day of sailing, these "summer people" drop by for some hand-dipped ice cream cones and an afternoon chat.

The store's and therefore, Marie's busiest day of the year falls on the second Saturday in August. People travel from many miles for the annual Winter Harbor Lobster Festival. The small town is wall to wall people, who come to eat lobster dinners, attend a huge craft fair and watch boat races. One of the summer residents, Mr. Goldstein sells grilled hot dogs in front of the store for \$1.50 each. All profits go to Marie. Her daughter, Anne, sells home-grown popcorn from Iowa. It takes four people to run the store that day, instead of the usual one: Marie.

Marie is a member of the local chapter of Eastern Star. She also holds the custodial office for the Winter Harbor Women's Club. Women's Club bazaars are held in her establishment twice a year. In December, a Christmas party is held in Marie's upstairs apartment. She serves hot fudge sundaes to club members.

Marie is a very important and well-known citizen of Winter Harbor. I have known her since 1970, when I was six years old. I used to go to the store after school, where I could buy a coke and a bag of chips for sixteen cents. The same snack, which still constitutes a bargain, costs seventy-four cents in 1988.

I consider Marie a real inspiration. A woman in her early seventies, still runs her own business, is active in her community and is willing to participate in interviews for curious writers like myself.

The Winter Harbor Historical Society has contracted with Seaside Landscape to stabilize the rock wall and add 30 new plants to the Marie Clark Memorial Garden in front of the museum.

Receive news and updates on Winter Harbor Historical Society Facebook.

Events

July 15 at 8am

Yard sale at the museum building on Hammond Lane. Donations for the sale can be left at the museum or contact Debbie Martin at 963-5555.

July 19 at 7pm at Museum

Annual Meeting of the Winter Harbor Historical Society. Annual memberships can be renewed and new members for the board of directors are being recruited. Please consider joining to help with our many museum projects and preservation of artifacts.

Program will be Sanford Phippen, author, educator, TV host and historian. As a colorful Downeast storyteller, Mr. Phippen will share his memories of the Hayes family of Grindstone Point. Mr. Hayes' screenplays for 'Rear Window' and 'Peyton Place' were both academy award nominees and his screenplay for 'Butterfield 8' supported

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Elizabeth Taylor's first academy award in 1960. John Michael Hayes' last movie was 'Iron Will' written in 1994.

August 2 at 7pm at Hammond Hall

Historic film: **Around Cape Horn**. documents daily living and a wild storm aboard the sailing ship, Peking in 1929.

August 16 at 7pm at Museum

Program: Area Projected Summer Colony Resorts (winners-losers) speaker Willie Granston

September 20 at 7pm at Museum

Sargent Street Then and Now speaker Pearl Barto

Winter Harbor Historical Society

President: Diana Young

Vice-President: Deborah Joy Martin

Secretary: Pearl Follett Barto

Treasurer: Cathy Lilly Carruthers

Building & Grounds: Brent Hurd

Board Members

Johanna Smith Dan Keegan

Email: winterharborhistory@gmail.com

Thank You

Sincere appreciation is expressed to Shirley Chase, John Kuhl, Kit Johnson and Billy Bickford for their presentation on the history of the Winter Harbor Water Company at our June meeting. Winter Harbor citizens are forever grateful to Shirley Chase for her diligence and her long-term commitment to the oversight of a project that will assure our citizens of a quality water supply for many more years.

Thank you to Katherine Heidinger, Kenny Atha, Janet Buffett, Charlotte Boyd and Sharon Coombs for their donations to our museum. We welcome any donations for safe keeping at our museum.

We appreciate input from community members to the Schoodic Institute Marine Center at their June meeting to gather ideas for the Sargent Street marina exhibits and activities.

Thanks to our continued advocacy, the University of Maine and Natalie Springuel of the College of the Atlantic have provided the society with a DVD of the oral interviews completed with Dale Torrey in 1973. We hope that Natalie will soon be able to restore the interview to the Downeast Fisheries Trail web site.