

# Winter Harbor Historical Society

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

August 2019

## NEWSLETTER

### Casa Marina (Blance Home)



Edward J. Hammond was born in Winter Harbor in 1851. His family was among the earliest residents of Winter Harbor and his father was postmaster and Customs Inspector, a large job for this busy village of ocean going merchant vessels. Edward prospered in a Boston lumber business and was a partner in the early development of Winter Harbor, as a summer resort destination. Mr. Hammond acquired many properties and initially built this seven bedroom home on the shore of Winter Harbor. Mr. Hammond built an even larger home, Fairlawn across Main Street and the Casa Marina was described in his West Shore Land Company proposal as 'The Club House.' His Beacon Hotel, also off Main Street boasted fresh spring water and 150 rooms.

Casa Marina sold to George Blance, Sr. in 1925 for \$2,000. He was born in 1867 and married Beulah Bunker, a teacher when he was already 55 years old. George had been a long term caretaker and engineer for the Grindstone Neck Water Company, which was incorporated in 1889. Water was piped initially over the ground from the Birch Harbor Pond to Grindstone Neck. Pumps were added that required constant maintenance and eventually Mr. Blance supervised the placement of underground piping along Main Street. Grindstone Point residents supported the water company financially and town residents gradually joined, as pipes were placed under some side streets. After 58 years, Mr. Blance passed the Water Company responsibilities to Albert Hallowell in 1955. Mr. Blance supervised crews, who performed maintenance on the summer homes, Grindstone Inn and the chapel. He attended to the gardens, delivered coal, cut and delivered ice, insuring the homes were ready for their owners. His granddaughter remembers that he always wore a three piece suit, even for breakfast, adding a hat, when he left his house. He provided loans for those, who suffered through the depression and worked 11 hour days and 7 days a week. In 1957 he retired in his

90<sup>th</sup> year and from his bed, shortly before his death; he watched the Grindstone Inn burn.

In 1969, Lois MacGregor interviewed Beulah Bunker Blance Rollins for the Acadian; the newsletter distributed on the Winter Harbor Navy Base. Mrs. Blance was Winter Harbor's librarian, when it moved to the Winter Harbor High School and she was Winter Harbor's first bank manager in 1960. The Blance's raised their three children, Elinor, Charlene and George, Jr in Winter Harbor. Mrs. Blance attended the one room schoolhouse in South Gouldsboro, where she would begin her teaching career. She was organist for the Episcopal Church and the Winter Harbor Baptist Church. She gave piano lessons and served as bookkeeper for the Grindstone Association and the Grindstone Inn. After Mr. Blance's death, she moved to Ellsworth to teach at the Moore School; retiring after 35 years in education. She married Howard Rollins in 1963 and they retired to her Winter Harbor home. Beulah stayed active in many organizations, completed needlepoint, crewel embroidery, bargello and hooked rugs. She had a kiln installed at Casa Marina and was described by her husband, as someone who showed him something new each day that she could do well.

The value of education and reading left an impression on their visiting grandson, who recalls the entire family as being "wicked smart." Charlene graduated from Colby College and taught science at Sumner Memorial High School, before moving to Waterville. Charlene married Dr. Wendell Ray, a Harvard graduate and professor of chemistry at Colby. Dr. Ray was known in the family, as a quirky genius. Their Waterville home held a full laboratory and machine shop in the basement. Dr. Ray was believed to perform contracted experiments for the US Office of Secret Service, the precursor of the Central Intelligence Agency. Any class night at Sumner Memorial High School is a testament to the Ray's legacy, as dozens of scholarships are awarded each year in Mrs. Ray's memory.

Although stacks of magazines and classic comic books filled the attic for rainy day entertainment, the grandchildren enjoyed the freedom of Winter Harbor's outdoors and local recreation. Blance grandchildren ran errands for their grandmother, charging treats to her account at Whitehouse's and Gerrish's Store. Local neighbor kids included these visitors in sneaking cigarettes, learning to shoot, skating, sledding and borrowing a row boat for a harbor tour. Although the Blance descendants have traveled and worked throughout the country, their roots remain in Gouldsboro and Winter Harbor, where they share summer reunions. The Blance family look forward to Casa Marina's future and the next 100 years. We extend a special thank you to grandchildren, Fran and Bud for sharing their memories.

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### **Programs**

At 7pm at the Winter Harbor Historical Society  
Museum

August 21 **Winter Harbor Yacht Club and  
Grindstone History** presented by Vicki Goldstein  
September 18 **Winter Harbor Business History**  
presented by Larry Smith

### **Museum**

Visit our museum on Saturday from 1-4pm. A  
Summering Place by Alan Smallidge is for sale at the  
museum, Town Office and the Winter Harbor Public  
Library.

### **Town Reports**

Winter Harbor Town Reports for 1897-1950 are  
available to read through the new Maine Digital  
Library:

[https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/towndocs-  
winterharbor/](https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/towndocs-winterharbor/)

### **Bake Sale/Fundraiser**

August 13 at Winter Harbor Farmer Market from  
9-noon

Donations of baked goods (uncut pies, bars and breads  
preferred) can be made on those dates and/or support  
the society with your purchases

### **Thank You To:**

Donors, who participated in Historical Walking Tour,  
Bill Pitt for copies of the Pythia, Dr. Pendleton  
diaries, and library book.

Cathy Carruthers for having our building sign  
repainted.

### **Building Fund Donations Needed**

Our 150 year old schoolhouse continues to require  
major effort to maintain the structural integrity of the  
building and protect the artifacts stored there. We are  
particularly in need of:

Blinds

Weather tight windows

Foundation Stabilization

50+ inch Flat Screen

**Enjoy the Peninsula Gazette, a local newspaper  
written from 1954-1960 on the Winter Harbor  
Historical Society web site.**

**Receive news and updates on Winter Harbor  
Historical Society Facebook.  
[winterharborhistory@gmail.com](mailto:winterharborhistory@gmail.com)**

**Winter Harbor Historical Society**

**President: Diana Young**

**Vice-President: Johanna Mackay Smith**

**Secretary: Pearl Follett Barto**

**Treasurer: Cathy Lilly Carruthers**

**Building & Grounds: Brent Hurd  
Board Members**

**Deborah Martin Anne Harper**

**Barbara Campbell**

**Joanne Brown Charles Arnett**