

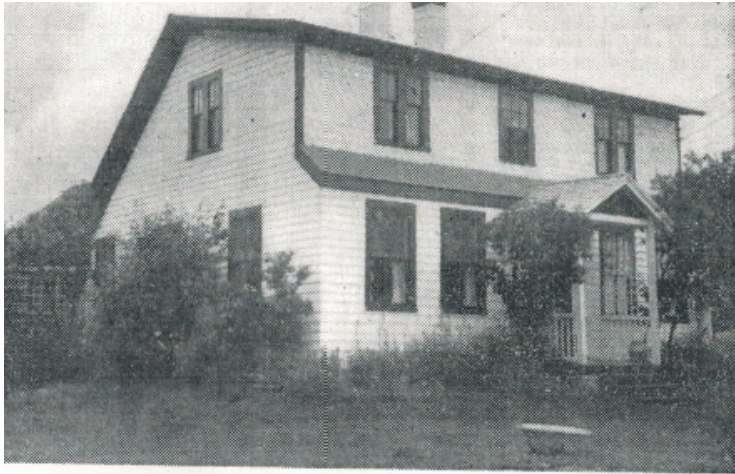
Winter Harbor Historical Society

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

July 2019

NEWSLETTER

Myra Earl (Guptill) Home 69 Harbor Road



THE OLD GUPTILL HOUSE—Believed to be about 200 years old, this old Colonial home, belonging to Mrs. Myra Earl at Winter Harbor, contains many mementoes of the past. (Crane photo)

Nathalie Hahn recognizes this home in her *A History of Winter Harbor*, as another of the three oldest structures in Winter Harbor. Before 1840 Stillman Guptill (1797-1889) purchased half of an original Bingham tract surveyed by John Black on the eastern side of Harbor Point. Stillman and wife, Susan raised five sons and five daughters, worked as a blacksmith, made shingles and operated a store further up the hill. Three sons became sea captains and the busy family watched over the commercial activity of the inner harbor. The house was carefully constructed as a small Cape with a double walled foundation around an eight-foot square center chimney with three fireplaces and oven. Produce and fruit were protected from the cold and birch bark insulated the house under the hand hewn shingles. Sea charts papered one room.

Ledgers from the Guptill store indicate that the store provided shingles, rum, coffee, molasses and butter, but offered store credit for wool, labor and wood. Cod, dried in the sun like venison jerky was sold in 50 pound bundles for a dollar. This 'strip fish' was served with potatoes and cranberry sauce, another frequent sale.

Stillman's great granddaughter, Myra Earl's memoir: *Fond Memory* describes high style renovations made by her great aunt, Dr. Almena Flint in 1882. "The old place had certainly been torn limb from limb." The front was raised for a second floor saltbox style, chimney removed and a steep, straight flight of stairs were built between "ugly twin chimneys." "The final touch of elegance was a narrow piazza with a roof crowded over every window where a ray of sunlight might penetrate, and this held up by posts made of trees with their branches lopped off." Her great uncle, Edward tore down Stillman's shops and sheds to build a "huge Victorian stable for his stallion, Mount Desert."

The Guptill children built around the family home in Winter Harbor, bringing their travel and education to this small working village. Dr. Flint died in 1914 and Myra Earl bought the homestead to keep it in the family. In 1922 piazzas were removed, the present porches added at the side and the 'ugly' brown exterior was painted white. She had an antique shop in her home and Bernice Richmond describes Mrs. Earl's prized figurehead in the *Peninsula Gazette*. Loring Kimball of Northeast Harbor had found the figurehead adrift attached to a piece of ship and sold it to Capt. Smallidge of Winter Harbor. Edward Guptill had acquired the figure and mounted it to the wall of the box stall to keep his horse company. When the stable was sold for its lumber, Capt. Tracy saved the figurehead for the Guptill family. She was a portrait bust of a lady of obvious wealth and determination, perhaps personifying the six generations, who have remained stewards of this house of *fond memories*.

Jonas Crane writes: 'Standing straight and true for nearly 200 years, the old Guptill house is a monument to a time and a people who had a pride in sturdy workmanship that would endure.'

Thank You for Donations:

- *Contributions continue in memory of our former president, Neil Buffett
- *Jane Gardener for Freeland Bunker documents
- *Louise Baker for Herman Gerrish articles

Programs

At 7pm at the Winter Harbor Historical Society Museum

July 17 **Lobsters and Boatbuilding** presented by Alan Johnson

August 21 **Winter Harbor Yacht Club and Grindstone History**

September 18 **Winter Harbor Business History** presented by Larry Smith

July 6, 13, 20 & 27 **Historical Walking Tour**

Annabelle Myrick Weston (1873-1943), granddaughter of Schoodic Point's first settler (aka: Pearl Barto) will lead a walk through Winter Harbor's past at 1pm for \$15 Register at winterharborhistory@gmail.com

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.

Membership Reception

July 17 at 5:30pm **Annual Meeting and Social** Please join us for a social hour before our program to explore the museum, enjoy a beverage and appetizer and visit with other members. Please rsvp to 963-4167 by July 10. Annual dues can be renewed at this time.

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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/>

Bake Sale/Fundraiser

July 16 and 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

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

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*

Winter Harbor Historical Society

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