

Winter Harbor Historical Society

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

June 2023

NEWSLETTER

Merchant Home 1951



14 Sargent Street

Local anecdotes relate that this house was built by Christopher E. Myrick on Frazer's Point (formerly known as Lower Harbor). Christopher's parents were the first recorded year-round settlers of Schoodic Point and his home is shown in the 1880 census at the Lower Harbor. Christopher's widow married Lewis Bickford and they reportedly moved the house to the Sargent Street location about the same time that Mrs. Bickford's former mother-in-law; Eleanor Myrick Weare moved the neighboring house (now occupied by Darren Whitney) from the Lower Harbor.

An account from a 1954 Peninsula Gazette suggests that the Lewis and Eunice Bickford house at the Lower Harbor burned after they moved to Sargent Street. We do know that the Lower Harbor property was transferred to John Moore heirs in 1899 and no dwelling is described in the deed. The land on Sargent Street was deeded to Lewis Bickford in 1900, also with no description of a dwelling in the deed. Without recordings of family folklore, we may never know if these homes were built on site or actually moved from the Lower Harbor locations.

Llewellyn and Alice Merchant cared for Lewis, as he aged and inherited the house in 1943. Llewellyn was known as a laborer and carpenter in the area. He helped clear land for the Sargent's Point Road and helped with construction of cottages on that point and Grindstone. According to a local news item, Llewellyn placed dynamite in the chimneys that stood after the Grindstone Inn fire, while everyone else took shelter. Llewellyn (1894-1987) eventually moved back to the Merchant homestead (behind Prospect Harbor Soap) where he and seven siblings had been raised.

14 Sargent Street transferred to Llewellyn's brother, Percy Merchant (1903-1989) in 1945. Percy crewed large draggers; harvesting herring, sturgeon and other fish.

Percy and Elvira Merchant's three children: Percy, Rita and Lila remained in Winter Harbor throughout most of their adulthood and raised their children here. Granddaughter, Susie Bickford has made a lifelong commitment to our town, as a business and land owner.



Percy & Elvira Merchant and son, Percy
1969

Granddaughter, Julie Brenton shares memories of her grandmother's mince pies and molasses cookies. Elvira's black treadle Singer sewing machine was always in a front window, where she could watch the traffic on Sargent Street and make quilts for her grandchildren. Julie remembers her grandmother's pride in the garden of dahlias in the front yard with blooms larger than a dinner plate. Julie states that the Merchant brothers traded homes, so the three children would be closer to Winter Harbor schools.



Elvira Merchant 1973

This four cornered home passed to William and Mona McMichael in 1991 and finally to Ralph and Lyane Cobourn of Savannah, Georgia in 2020. The Cobourns have replaced windows, added a deck and transformed this simple home to a spot for welcoming neighbors and walkers with their genuine hospitality.

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Museum

The board of directors of the Winter Harbor Historical Society express sincere appreciation for the donations to our building fund. The museum has severe structural deficits that will make it unsafe for continued use soon. We are grateful to the Channing Chapel board and Schoodic Arts for All for their commitment to Winter Harbor's historic buildings. The museum will be open on Saturday from 1-4pm through the summer. Please help us plan future fundraisers to **SAVE OUR SCHOOLHOUSE.**

July 6, 13 & 27 Historic Walk with **Annabelle Myrick Weston** (1873-1943), granddaughter of Schoodic Point's first settler through Winter Harbor's past at 1:30pm for \$15 donation. Registration required at winterharborhistory@gmail.com

Winter Harbor Historical Society

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Programs at the Museum

June 27 at 6:30pm **Share your Schoolhouse Memories.** Explore the museum and share your memories of the artifacts in our collection and enjoy the stories of Winter Harbor's past.

July 19 at 6:30pm **Annual Meeting** **Philippa Libby** of Norris Island will share her memories and research of the Pendleton family. Her transcriptions of the original Dr. Pendleton diaries and thirty years of fisherman, Maurice Pendleton's diaries are available at the museum. Philippa will, also share her newly published novel: **Morgan Harbor**, which features her significant knowledge of place in this fictional account of a Downeast Maine family. We will all recognize this 'fictional' place and its geography.

TBA Maine's prolific author, **Cathie Pelletier** has written over a dozen books of fiction for adults and juvenile readers. She lives in Allagash, has a sincere love of local history and was key in building their local museum. Cathie devoted years of research to publish her first nonfiction book this winter: **Northeaster**, which describes a blizzard in 1952 and its impact on multiple Maine families. The book includes the detailed account of a sailor, stationed at the Winter Harbor Naval Base, who was buried in a car in a snowbank for over 60 hours. Cathie's research transports the reader to 1952, as she describes the daily events of her characters' lives. This blizzard was initially made famous with the movie: **Finest Hours**, which details the Coast Guard rescue, when two tankers sank off Cape Cod. Cathie has agreed to include Winter Harbor in her August book tour.