

Winter Harbor Historical Society

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

August 2023

NEWSLETTER

319 Main Street



This 1984 photo shows the home of Ira (1892-1960) and Hilda Smallidge (1894-1988) Coombs. Their children: Montelle, Irma, Erdine, Osmon, Richard and Althea were descendants of this couple with a genealogy that includes nearly all of Winter Harbor's original settlers. Somehow this compact two bedroom house sheltered a large busy family. Deeds can be traced back to an 1899 transfer from Helen Smallidge, so the house was owned by the Coombs/Smallidge family, except for a ten year period: 1904-1914. Richard and Rosa Farrar lived there and established a neighboring barber shop from and pool hall in the former Victorian building, before the business was sold to Albert Hallowell.

Ira and his five brothers, known as the Coombs boys held a unique agreement with Acadia National Park to maintain their fishing camp, built in 1908 on Little Moose Island. Tarred rocks remain as evidence of nets being prepared on the island, as they continued use of the camp for over 60 years.

Bernice Richmond shares a story in her 1959 Peninsula Gazette about Ira's treasure from the island. He found a seven inch figure of a Mongolian priest carved from cedar with the details of his robe and facial features still clear. The figure held an open umbrella and caused much speculation about its origin. Hilda Coombs is noted to be an active member of the Eastern Memorial Hospital Auxiliary. Their granddaughter, Roseanne Shafer recalls frequent visits with her grandparents. Roseanne would often be asked to summon her grandfather from the pool hall for supper and she remembers being at eye level in the dark room with the leather pockets on the pool table. Hilda was a great influence with her calm and kind wisdom and her rituals of changing from her house dress to her afternoon dress to entertain her friends; Eva Harrington and Velma Young at tea. Roseanne was invited to join her grandparents for the Lawrence Welk TV show every Saturday night.

Althea Coombs Ray and Richard Coombs transferred the house to Richard 'Treat' and Pamela Williams in March 1990. Sightings of Mr. Williams in Winter Harbor over the next four summers were often shared, but the family's privacy seemed respected by our local residents. Mr. Williams starred in six Hallmark movies, a Star Wars movie and the Broadway production of Grease. He appeared in several television series and was newly married, when they purchased the Winter Harbor house. Our community was saddened by his death in a Vermont motorcycle accident last month.

Jeffrey Miller of Arlington, Virginia has owned this Main Street house since 1994. Jeff remembers his initial commitment to saving the garage outbuilding and finding a contractor to keep it from falling over. He has added a roof deck and has become interested in the history of his summer home.

Program at the Museum

August 23 at 6:30pm Chris Byers will offer his observations of the history of the fishing industry and the challenges facing their future. Chris has been able to build an international business and use his understanding of the industry to provide employment for dozens of workers. Chris carries on a family legacy, as chairman of the Lobster Boat Races for Winter Harbor; a position his paternal grandfather, Ralph E. Byers, Sr. held beginning in 1969. Ralph Byers, Sr. drowned in 1973 off Turtle Island while pulling lobster traps with his son, Kenneth (Danny) Byers, who was also lost. At the time of their deaths, Mr. Byers was a town selectman, fire chief, past harbor master, officer in the Winter Harbor Lobster Co-op and president of the Coastal Seiners and Weirman's Association. He piloted the H. G. Bennett Fish Company plane for 17 years to search for schools of fish.

Chris's maternal grandmother, Beatrice Rand Bowling's great grandfather, Stephen Rand was one of the first families to purchase property in Winter Harbor in 1820. PLEASE COME AND LEARN ABOUT THE CURRENT CONSERVATION EFFORTS OF MAINE LOBSTERMEN AND THE PROPOSED NEW RESTRICTIONS. *HELP US SAVE OUR LOBSTER INDUSTRY.*



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Museum

Visit our museum Saturdays 1-4 PM and view the new diorama of the Whitehouse General Store. Find out what townsfolk did before the era of the local 5 & 10 store. Please come and enjoy other dioramas created by Joanne and Rick Brown to portray many local sites.

Winter Harbor Historical Society

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Thank You

We extend sincere thanks to all, who have contributed to our building fund. Each dollar gets us closer to preserving **Our Old Schoolhouse!** We, also thank the many donors of personal memorabilia; including Shirley Chase. Thank you for donations and for attending our programs with Joanne Brown, sharing the history of our schoolhouse; Philippa Libby, sharing the Pendleton family history and Pearl Barto's walking history tours.

Oral History

. Please enjoy our media projects with the Downeast Fisheries Trail and the College of the Atlantic on our website with audio recordings completed by the University of Maine Folklife Center in 1973 with Dale Torrey. Dale's memories of the fishing history of Winter Harbor are a first hand recounting of the stories passed on by multiple generations.

