

ISLAND JOURNAL

*The Annual Publication of the Island Institute
Volume Eight*

Jamie Wyeth Folio

■
Community Design

■
Bandit Island

■
So You Want to
Buy an Island?

■
Memoirs of a
Yankee Yachtsman

■
Fishing as a
Foreign Language

■
...and much more



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"All islands are different; all have their particular meaning. This one is a sanctuary for the wild places of the soul." — Philip W. Conkling

SINCE 1984 the *Island Journal* has been a celebration of the best of Maine's island life, both the rich legacy of the past and the issues shaping the future. You'll find here distinctive island voices, poetry, commentary, historical vignettes, plus the sumptuous photography that has become our trademark. Each year our goal is to capture a slice of what makes the Maine islands special, and to rekindle a commitment for their protection and renewal.

Maine's islands, inhabited and uninhabited, are both sturdy and vulnerable. Human and natural communities have endured the test of time, but they exist under pressure—from development, environmental degradation, and changing social patterns that make older lifestyles increasingly more difficult to sustain. Through the *Island Journal's* annual celebration of a distinct island culture, we believe that our readers — who are scattered along the entire Atlantic coast from Canada

to the Caribbean and from Manhattan to Monhegan — also recognize that the earth has become more and more an island home. Island communities have much to teach us about shaping the future.

Island Journal is the annual publication of Island Institute—a group of people some 5,000 strong who are committed to preserving and protecting island life. Our readers include year-round islanders, summer residents, yachtsmen, kayakers, conservationists, scientists, and visitors. Our programs include stewardship, advocacy, education, publications, and working with communities and their schools on inter-island projects. If you like what you see here, we hope you'll join us (we have enclosed a membership form on the back page). But at the very least we hope you will carry this Eighth Volume to some other part of Island Earth and ask others to think about how life is lived when the earth is a very small place.

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Log of the Fish Hawk

The Annual Chronicles of the Island Institute

PHILIP W. CONKLING

Each year Island Institute staff members visit more than a hundred islands aboard the Institute's 26-foot boat, the FISH HAWK. This year's voyages "down the bay" begin and end on a distinctly druidic note...

APRIL IS NOT ALWAYS the cruelest month; most votes on the Maine coast would go to either March or May—March because snow and mud are such an appalling mixture, or May because everyone has run out of patience waiting for some color to appear on skeleton trees and featureless fields.

It is a blessing to get FISH HAWK overboard in mid-April and be headed a few days later for Russ Island for an Earth Day celebration. From the northeast hill on Russ we look out over a world of blue waters and white-fringed islands of green spruce. For a few fleeting moments it feels as if we're at the center of the universe—inside the pounding heart of Island Earth as it sends its slow tidal pulse of life along the salty arteries of the coast. All earthly celebrations should be as powerfully symbolic as standing on an island hill in the midst of an archipelago of near perfect islands thinking about the relationship of the beast that walks upright to the world on which it sits.

A week later, still in a kinder, gentler April, FISH HAWK heads out of Rockland Harbor for a working weekend on Butter Island. Tom Cabot's Butter Island has inad-

vertently become a kind of test case for whether the stewardship of a privately-owned wild island can be shared by a responsible island public. Mr. Cabot's children, now Butter's legal owners, face a vastly different situation from when their father first bought the island nearly a half century earlier and allowed almost anyone unfettered access to this remarkable kingdom. In recent years, the number of boats and people who wander Butter's shores, beaches, headlands, and interiors has increased exponentially.

At the same time, as unchecked numbers have landed on Butter's shores, unchecked nature in the form of gnarly field spruce has choked off its interior fields and obscured a once magnificent view from Penobscot Bay's most inspiring headland. A crew of volunteers recruited from Island Institute staff and Maine Island Trail Association members, supported by Outward Bound's motor vessel HURRICANE, begin two days of clearing and burning piles of spruce from the five-acre headland clearing where Tom Cabot says he intends to have his ashes spread. When we quit the island after two days of progress and a temperature swing of 50 degrees, we sensed that the 250-acre spruce-covered island has enough volume for a generation of such clearing projects. The question is whether there is enough space on Butter's finite shores to accommodate the two-legged creatures which congregate there in growing numbers in the summer.

By the middle of May another drama begins unfolding at the outer edge of Penobscot Bay. We have been informed that the Coast Guard intends to demolish the fire-damaged lighthouse keeper's building on Heron Neck near the entrance of Vinalhaven's Carver's Harbor. Pressured by the Lighthouse Preservation Society to intervene in the Coast Guard's decision, we contact George Mitchell's office and a stay of execution is granted to try to find a private individual willing to undertake the repairs in exchange for a long-term lease. Not everyone on Greens Island (where Heron Neck is located) believes that preserving the lighthouse keeper's building is worthwhile. This spring the building remains open to the elements even though several individuals have expressed serious interest in its restoration.

During a June spent mostly on local errands, the wet, sloppy spring finally gives way to summer. Shortly after the Fourth of July, FISH HAWK picks a good day to head down Penobscot Bay across the edge of Pigeon Ground (probably named for the black guillemots, or "sea pigeons" as fishermen call them, that feed on the rock eels found among these shoals), bound for Criehaven's small harbor.

Criehaven is more properly designated on the charts as Ragged Island, which is a good description of the condition of the wind-ravaged spruce that cling to the rocky fastness of this outermost inhabited island of the archipelago. Sheep were once an important part of the island's landscape, but their gradual disappearance has led to a tangle of spruce blowdown that underscores the island's original name.

The 12 lobstermen who maintain the fishing privilege in this outermost harbor interact easily with each other and with the few summer families that have been coming to Criehaven since Robert "King" Crie died and his heirs divided up his fishing empire.

The south end of the island, which looks out to Matinicus Rock and the restless Atlantic, offers spectacular views, but it, too, is being overtaken by ragged spruce, and our conversation naturally (or unnaturally, depending on your point of view) turns to the methods, means, and the ecology of costs for reclaiming historic pastures.

Criehaven is cursed by a plague of rabbits—a little piece of Australia-like foolishness that someone apparently thought would add a pastoral dimension to the island's complement of wildlife. In the absence of predators, the rabbits have overrun and under-run every niche on the island. During the previous winter, a pair unhappily crawled into one of the island's important dug wells. The rabbits' carcasses were recently salvaged from the well by the still trim wife of the owner,

because he couldn't fit down the well walls. This feat still provokes a good deal of commentary among the fishermen. "He got her young and trained her well," says the skipper of PROVIDER.

Late that evening when we are back aboard FISH HAWK before the early morning run ashore, the harbor is mirrored in the glassy dark. Flat calm, the seas make little perseverating noises on the shore. But just outside the harbor, the sound of big black back gulls defending night territory cuts the air: the quintessential outer island sound...

Toward the end of July we bang west southwest toward Casco Bay for an informational meeting on Cushings Island, which is besieged not by rabbits but by deer; and because it is within the city limits of Portland, the discharge of firearms is prohibited. The obvious signs of overbrowsing evident in the woods and yards of Cushings and the illegality of thinning the herd are another instructive example of how mainland laws fail in the island context.

On the way across Casco Bay, we come up through Broad Sound and are hailed by one of Chebeague's fisherman-philosophers who fills us in on the latest news of Stockman Island. This low, brushy 30-acre island had been important seabird habitat in Casco Bay for decades, until recent years when raccoons mysteriously appeared there and cleaned out the gull and eider nests. To make matters worse, Stockman's designation as a Resource Protection Area was inadvertently left off Cumberland's recent zoning map, so there is no legal way to prevent the construction of the residence that is now proposed for the island. Gunwale to gunwale in the mid-morning swells, we ponder a strategy to keep Stockman what it ought to be: a seabird nesting habitat in an increasingly busy and built-up Casco Bay.

In the early evening after a day of meetings (planned and serendipitous), we decide to cut some of the distance off the trip back to Penobscot Bay. A half an hour past sunset, the western sky still faintly glowing, we round up into the narrow unmarked channel of Small Point Harbor. The tide is at peak flood and carries us through the fleet of fishing boats in the anchorage, around a small headland, and up to the entrance of a larger uncharted basin. We have passed two other men in a small outboard in the anchorage offloading a crate of lobsters who now roar by at full throttle, and we tentatively follow their sinuous wake into the basin, estimating the difference in their draft and our own. A half mile in, they come up alongside a rickety wharf, which we anchor off in five feet of water and watch them wrestle the full crate ashore and up to what our noses tell us is a finest kind of clam shack.

When the lobster catchers return, they nod and tell

"From 125 feet above sea level, we look out to Bermuda. At our feet are tiny workboats circling over invisible lobster grounds, in an elaborate dance of competition and cooperation."

us FISH HAWK will be okay where she is for an hour or two—and to favor the starboard side of the basin on our way out after dark. As reluctant as local knowledge can be, they ask about FISH HAWK's manufacturer (a Seaway) and one observes with finality, "I called her everything but."

Before dawn the next morning, the big boats begin thundering to life in Small Point Harbor and cutting wakes that roll us to our feet. We sit in the first faint light watching a small parade of lobsterboats and boats rigged over for tuna heading out of the harbor: RISE AND SHINE (indeed!) followed by RESTLESS followed evidently by a proud highliner, FIVE GRAND. The masts, gulluses, and towers of the remaining boats are lined up in the narrow harbor one behind the other, breaking through the dawn's wispy fog. The sun burns little holes over the warmer edges of the shore, drying the fog molecule by molecule before our eyes.

Firing up FISH HAWK's motors, we decide to make for Seguin for breakfast, and an hour later we are on the big Coast Guard mooring. After juice and donuts, we climb to the top of the citadel that since automation belongs mostly to the gulls; to them and a few hearty volunteers from Georgetown Island who maintain a trail up to the lofty lighthouse and mow a half-acre patch of the dense thatch growing in seabird-enriched soils around the keeper's house. From 125 feet above sea level, we look out to Bermuda. At our feet are tiny workboats circling over invisible lobster grounds, in an elaborate dance of competition and cooperation.

The first weekend of August is the annual lobster festival on Frenchboro, the smallest year-round community among the Maine islands. The lobster festival coincides with the annual meeting of the Frenchboro Future Development Corporation, which has overseen the construction of seven new homes for the island's schoolteacher and new "homesteaders." On the day of the meeting the weather in Rockland is not promising. The fog hangs like a pall just beyond the breakwater, and a cool, wet, easterly flow of air promises not only to bring more of the same, but to kick up a head sea on the way to Frenchboro. Because the trip will be without a crew, an outside course around the southern shores of Vinalhaven, Isle au Haut, and Swan's seems more prudent than dodging targets in the Fox Island and Deer Isle Thorofares.

South of Hurricane Island the first visible waypoints—James and Willy Ledges—break up the offshore sea just where they're supposed to. But 20 minutes later there are two radar targets near where the Yellow Ledge buoy should be. With visibility less than 100 feet, it is useful to be able to read the number on the buoy to confirm your location because no one likes surprises in the fog. Coming as close as I dare, for a moment or two I catch a glimpse of a 30-foot sloop heaving in the swell with two yellow figures clutching a

halyard in the foredeck worrying over a fouled jib while another watches anxiously from the cockpit. In the 6- to 8-foot seas that are lumping up, it is clear that I am in no position to offer any assistance, and I am glad that I don't read more about them later in the local newspaper.

After the lobster and homemade pie meal which benefits the church, business at the Development Corporation meeting revolves around the salmon aquaculture operation that the island desperately needs to stabilize employment, the schoolhouse population, and the next piece of the island's one-of-a-kind homesteading project. Frenchboro's salmon venture has been caught at least temporarily in an eddy of controversy and misinformation that has spilled out of the nearby Swan's Island Toothacher Cove operation, concerning the environmental effects of raising salmon in ocean net pens. But from watching the Swan's operation, the prospects seem promising, and Frenchboro has no choice but to wait out the long fall and winter while the regulators grind through their process.

August offers up more than easterly depression, we remind ourselves a few evenings later after a meeting on North Haven. Leaving the float under starry, starry skies, we cross the thorofare, grope our way into Perry Creek, and drop the hook in this legendary anchorage. It is past midnight and not a soul save us is stirring. Not a light can be seen for a full circle around us, when suddenly overhead we are aware of a streak of light and then another and another. Ionic beams of luminous green energy pulse overhead, almost hurting the eyes. The aurora is no earthly light; it comes from beyond the heavens with this message only: All who see it thus without the competing loom of man's light are unspeakably privileged.

September always brings new weather; shifting streams of air from the high Arctic lace into lingering traces of the Bermuda high. The annual Island Institute conference on Hurricane Island is followed at mid-month by the Maine Island Trail Association meeting on Warren Island off Islesboro. For the second year in a row the Island Trail meeting tests the mettle of this ardent band of volunteer island stewards, as a southeasterly half gale claims the bay. Last year it was Hurricane Hugo. Even so, when FISH HAWK arrives in late afternoon, approximately 100 members in half as many boats have gathered to discuss their role in the future of the archipelago. The Institute is concerned with the integrity of the ecosystems that sustain life in year-round communities and on the outermost skerries shared only by seals and seabirds. Island Trail members are the eyes and ears of the thousand uninhabited islands offshore and we agree that our joint efforts under the umbrella of the Institute are the best hedge against unwanted futures.

(continued on page 89)



Peter Rablston

Log of the Eider

Along the Maine Island Trail

DAVID R. GETCHELL, SR.

EIDER is an 18-foot motorboat used for monitoring and stewardship along the Maine Island Trail, the innovative small boat waterway created by the Island Institute in 1988. From April to November she stays busy, as Maine Island Trail Association Founding Director Dave Getchell recounts:

THE DAY HAD BEEN near-perfect—clear, bright, warm, with a light breeze to temper the July sun—and eight islands had been visited during our 50-mile circuit of Penobscot Bay and around Deer Isle. Although it was the height of the summer season, we had seen few cruising pleasure boats and nobody on the islands where we had stopped during one of our regular “informational patrols.” In short, we were not prepared for what was about to happen.

A 20-minute run north from Calderwood Island up the west side of Eagle Island brought us to the southwest point of Butter Island and the Maine Island Trail Association campsite just behind the point. It was clean and empty, and I debated whether or not to simply call it a good day and head *EIDER* across the bay to our starting point at Lincolnville Beach. I chose instead to take another 15 minutes and run around the island to show the beautiful southeast beach to my crew member, Island Trail Membership Coordinator Krisanne Rixon, who was taking a day out of the office.

The rocky shore was deserted as we motored east along the south side of the island. A high tombolo beach connects a rocky outcrop to the main island, serving as a breakwater for the sweeping curve of the southeast beach. As we approached this, I saw a sailboat mast showing above the tombolo, then another, and another. Heads began popping up as we started around the point, and several groups of youngsters could be seen fishing off the rocks. Moored boat after boat began to appear until a completely unbelievable scene was spread out before us. At least a dozen craft, most of them sailboats with a few motorboats among them, lay at anchor, some of them empty, others with crews relaxing or surveying the action. Ashore, the big beach was a carnival midway swarming with grown-ups and kids. Dogs bounded here and there. Blue smoke rose from a couple of beach fires. Camping gear was stacked along the beach and in the woods, and tents revealed their many colors among the spruces. Our wilderness island wasn't.

“Oh my goodness!” Krisanne gasped, speaking for both of us. “What are you going to do?”

“Not much from the look of things,” I replied, trying to sort out the options in my mind. This was my first major confrontation under a new responsibility we had accepted in 1990 of managing camping access on three frequently used islands in the Penobscot Bay area.

Each of the islands has different kinds of ownership and different histories of use. In the case of Butter, the owners also have a full-time caretaker, Captain Bob Quinn of nearby Eagle Island, who checks the island daily, and I looked with thin hope among the boats pulled up on the beach to see if his big Whaler might be there. No such luck.

"When in doubt, talk," I muttered to Krisanne. Picking my way slowly through the gathered fleet, well aware of the many eyes staring at the "Maine Island Trail" in big white letters of the side of our burgundy-colored boat, I eased EIDER onto the gravel beach. A man walked down from one of the fires and we exchanged introductions. I asked him if he knew what was going on.

He said he was director of a sailing school and that many of the boats and most of the youngsters were in his charge. They had arrived and set up camp the day before. Did he have permission to camp there, I asked. No, but he had talked with the caretaker the previous evening and the latter had told him that all camping was supposed to be cleared through the Maine Island Trail Association, but since they were all set up they could stay the night. Just this morning, the director added, he had made a special trip to Rockland to buy a membership in Island Trail so that it would be OK to camp another night.

Are you aware that your membership covers you and your immediate family only? No. How many in your party? About 50. Did you know this is a no-camping area? No, although I do now—but I figured since we were planning to leave tomorrow, we might as well stay here. Have you read the Island Trail Guidebook with its emphasis on low impact? Well, I haven't had a chance to, but we teach our kids low impact anyway. Do you call settling in 50 people in a day-use-only site on a wild island low impact? They aren't hurting anything. Do you feel it is right for a commercial operation to use an island without the owner's permission? We always have.

We didn't seem to be making much progress.

I was acutely aware of the fact that I was getting only one side of the story and that what Bob Quinn or the staff at our Rockland office might have told this man could be other than what I was hearing. Also (thankfully!) I wasn't a ranger; our informational patrols were just that, designed to inform people about the rules owners set for the use of their islands and to answer questions about the Maine Island Trail Association. Lacking both information and authority, I decided that the island had withstood human assault before and could survive another night, at least. I told him I was unhappy with this apparent misuse of the Island Trail

membership but that I would give him the benefit of the doubt in that regard and, as far as I was concerned, since it was late in the day, he could stay the night but should leave first thing the next morning. (As I expected, subsequent talks with Bob Quinn and the Rockland office revealed versions somewhat different from the one I got on the beach. I wrote the camp director, canceling his membership and returning his money and advising him, among other things, to get advance permission directly from an owner before descending with his horde on any privately owned island in the future.)

The above was one of the very few challenging "people" incidents we faced in more than 2,500



miles of travel logged on or near Penobscot Bay during a season that began in early April and ended in mid-November. The emphasis on the Midcoast area was brought about by the fact that whereas in 1989 we had almost no private-island permissions in Penobscot Bay, the 1990 season saw access opened to the Island Trail on some of the bay's most striking wild islands. Since we

wanted to know the extent of use on these islands and wanted to be certain that if they were "trashed" or damaged the problem would be corrected quickly, we set up a schedule that let us visit these islands two or more times a week during the busy months of July and August, and at least once a week for the remainder of the season. In addition, a number of trips were made to other parts of the coast from Portland east to Schoodic.

April saw an early and busy start to the season, with successive weekends taken up with trail clearing on the Schoodic Carry, a trip by water from Rockland to Portland, an Earth Day dedication on Russ Island, and a two-day brush burning work session on Butter Island.

The Portland trip gave us a good taste of early-season boating. With three of us and our supplies and camping gear in EIDER, and two more aboard Bureau of Public Lands Island Coordinator Steve Spencer's 15-foot aluminum boat, we left Rockland on a cold and breezy Thursday, visiting several Island Trail islands as we worked our way south. Off Martinsville, snow and sleet stung our faces as a squall rode the northwest wind sweeping out from the dark mainland to starboard. We had a late lunch on a Trail island in Muscongus Bay, and by the time we were coming up on Pemaquid after stopping at several nearby islands, the lowering sun was a gold ball peeking between more squalls to the west.

South of Louds Island, the long swells of a distant ocean storm grew higher, ringing the Dry Ledges off New Harbor in a wide collar of heaving foam. My eyes

swung back and forth between the rising seas and the western horizon, weighing the wisdom of making the passage around Pemaquid or turning back and waiting for quieter waters. EIDER was riding the waves like her namesake, however, while Steve followed along easily a hundred yards behind us. Knowing we could always turn back, I continued on. The squall seemed to hang several miles away without moving as we came even with famous Pemaquid Light. Great swells humped even higher on the long fingers of ledges reaching out from the low mainland cliffs before exploding in surf and spray, as white and cold as mountain snow. The seas were now moving green hills, and the feeling of limitless power beneath us added a different chill to the day as we rounded the point a quarter of a mile or more outside the breaking combers. The seas flattened quickly as we motored up Johns Bay, through The Gut at South Bristol, and up the quiet Damariscotta River to Fort Island, where we spent the night.

The next day we headed up the Sasanoa River on a rising tide, squeezed our boats through Little Hell Gate on the west side of Beal Island, and entered lovely Back River on the very top of the flood. With a bit of time to spare, we explored the creeks that wind deep into the salt marsh a short distance above the Route 127 bridge. What a contrast with the day before as we idled up the twisting waterways with brown marsh grass brushing the sides of our boats! The night was spent at the long-established and pleasant campsite on Perkins Island in the Kennebec, and on Saturday morning we shouldered through a bumpy rip at the mouth of the river, passed Small Point inside Fuller Rock, and then made a straight 13-mile run across the mouth of Casco Bay to Jewell Island. On schedule at noon, we headed up the Fore River and slipped under the low bridge at Stroudwater Crossing where we joined the pre-Earth Day celebration dedicating Maine Audubon's new nature preserve. Later that afternoon, EIDER was back in Rockland, thanks to the fact she is easily trailered anywhere on the coast.

In the weeks that followed, through good weather and bad, under hot sun and through chilling fog, EIDER plied the waters of Penobscot Bay. Serving as relief skipper at times was Island Trail member Ron Franklin, whose help using my old boat freed me to visit other parts of the Island Trail and the growing list of private islands open to members. This included a couple of trips to busy Casco Bay, an exploration run up the beautiful Sheepscot River to Alna and then back to Cross River and down the backside of Barters Island, and an overnight east from Lincolnville Beach to Schoodic.

The latter trip was of a type we try to make once or twice each summer in a hunt for new islands to add to the Trail. Leaving from Lincolnville Beach, we made the usual run across to Islesboro, down Gilkey Harbor, then northeast to Pond Island off Cape Rosier. Leaving Pond, we made the always enjoyable run down Eggemoggin Reach for quick checks of the private islands open to members of the Maine Island Trail Association.

Lunch on a small Trail island in Deer Isle Thorofare was followed by a run across Jericho Bay to the south side of Swan's and an outer island, a new addition to the Trail, although only open for day use. Much to my pleasure and to the surprise of us both, I met *Island Journal* Executive Editor Cynthia Bourgeault heading toward Burntcoat Harbor in her rugged little vessel, the OLDSQUAW, as I started east again. Our boats lay bobbing in the swell as we gammed for 15 minutes before parting company.

One of my favorite bodies of water on the Maine coast is Blue Hill Bay. The course this day was north past bleak Ship and Trumpet islands, close in and up the bony west shore of Bar, and then north by east through Bartlett Narrows to the Western Bay section of Blue Hill Bay where a narrow, thickly wooded Trail island is protected on all sides by granite cliffs, except for a tiny cleft at the north end that makes an ideal small boat landing. A flat grassy area just above the beach provides a tent site in the open, and I wasted little time pitching the tent, firing up my wood burning camp stove, and steaming a pot of mussels gathered earlier in the day.

The bay was like glass in the morning without so much as a tiny swell denting its surface. I heated water for coffee, at the same time boiling a couple of eggs in it to save time and water, toasted an English muffin on the dying coals, ate, and broke camp. EIDER fanned a perfect wake behind her as we shattered the glass of the bay in the run to the Mt. Desert Narrows Bridge and into Frenchman Bay.

We stopped at busy Bar Harbor for a tank of gas. A bevy of kayakers waved as we left the harbor, pointing EIDER on a course south of Ironbound Island and along the west shore of Turtle Island en route to West Pond near Schoodic Point. Park Ranger Jeff Carlisle wasn't at his house, but his wife radioed him, and he said he'd meet me at West Pond in half an hour. I took the time to hike down the Carry Trail, opened a year earlier by Island Trail members, with the permission of Acadia National Park, so that kayakers or others could avoid the rough waters of Schoodic Point if they so wished. Not surprisingly, the portage showed no signs of use.

(continued on page 89)

**“The
Adopt-an-Island
program is a big
step forward in
our voluntary
stewardship program
and assures that all
the islands in the
Trail will get the
attention they
deserve.”**



Peter Ralston

ROOFTOPS

*An Island Legacy:
community design as if people mattered*

GEORGE PUTZ

I WAS A WESTERNER born to the rationale of democratic plots of land, all in squared country sections and municipal blocks. The haphazard metes, bounds, and lays of properties in northern New England seemed like magic to me. It was a world created under Christmas trees for medieval imaginations, not reasonable land tenure. And so, on a smoky southwest day during the summer of 1963, when I first came to a Maine island and walked up a dooryard path to pick up a key, all my attitudes and perceptions about people in communities began to change forever. It would still be a few years before I thought of Maine island community layouts as much more than a wonderfully inspired accident, a kind of caprice allowed by rural isolation and cultural deprivation. Retrospective shudderings at that naive impression are only slightly relieved by the constant observation that all visitors to an island indulge the same romantic violence from the moment they step off whatever conveyance discharges them.

Domestic Maine islands grab our hearts for the sufficient reason that they are beautiful. Setting and proportion, architectural styles, and period design figure in our ordinary reasons, but these are really irrelevant. The wonderful aspects of traditional island community design are easily celebrated, without intellectualization, by plain unencumbered admiration. Much of it is period architecture without architects, design and siting from times without designers and planning boards, created by people who met their own requirements with heart, saw, and hammer.

Traditional Maine island neighborhoods are vibrant living places because they are wonderful spaces in which to play and work—indeed, to not make that distinction. Even when emulating middle class 19th century Victorian renderings (deluded) of 18th century Aristocratic design concepts (depraved), island community builders had the individuality and good sense to regard each and every building plot without regard for rational planning schemes. Rather, structures were built to the characteristics of the site and to their own builders' eccentric preferences. The result is an eclectic layout of structures and humane networks of inter-dwelling and



Stonington waterfront

outbuilding connections that ignore the block grids and sidewalks that organize and direct the ebb and flow of community intercourse elsewhere. This semi-public, semi-secret sharing of paths through, around, and over the property of others is a continuing rite of intensification. Kids and adults alike celebrate their citizenship by knowing all the ins and outs, the appropriate routes from here to there, and by using them. When these paths are abandoned and later forgotten, it is diagnostic of community exasperation. Island community death begins when too few remember where the paths went, or why.

Automobiles and a strictly cash economy have had much to do with the demise of the traditional, natural community traffic, but still there are contemporary children, and when they, too, fail to observe the ancient routes and byways, symptom becomes disease. In any case, it is the ungridded island community framework from which our notions here derive—matters of the sun, marine winds, harbors, horticulture, and husbandry, 19th century maritime work, and the cantankerous wants of free people who had vital cultural memories of feudalism.

Island community design reflects the affective needs of people, not the imposed rational planning of experts or public administrators, whose milieu and work are essentially alien to community life. (The irony here is that rational community planning was a child of the French Revolution, which took the old Roman and late Renaissance infatuation with geometric planning and declared it a means to perfect, nonelitist democratic community design; in the process creating inappropriate community layouts everywhere the system was applied, as well as the worst kind of elitism hidden under the guise of what's good for everybody.) In the corners of New England society, however, people individually negotiated their lives and living spaces and dealt with greed and stupidity in their own way, often in accommodating ways. On the Maine islands, these people created a unique tradition of American community design based on maritime requirements, an abundance of good construction timber, and, in retrospect, a competent Yankee contempt for pseudoscientific mandates and proprietary experts.

First is the sun:

Whoever thinks that the sun is a rational and straightforward consideration has never looked at how sunlight actually falls on real estate. Astrophysics, geometry, the songs and dances of land planners and architects notwithstanding, the nuances and effects of the sun differ from place to place within very short dis-

tances, everywhere. Regardless of the architectural style—Federalist, saltbox, cape, mansard, Victorian, etc.—the particular way that sunlight falls on and into a domicile or out-structure must reflect the special aspects of the sunlight on the building site. It was not just a matter of energy use. Even though our forbears always had heat energy in mind, many other considerations were more important—morning light in the kitchen, dryness in the anterooms, good midday reading and sewing light in the family and birthing rooms, western light in the parlor, decent winter light for the milch cow and buggy horse, and so on. The summer kitchen wanted shade, and the open chamber wanted ventilation to cool the boy's sleeping. Treasured and desired yard trees figured in home siting decisions. Never was a specified setback from the road, or shore-

line, or alignment with other structures a consideration. Except in special circumstances, the sun's relationship to the intended building came first.

Then comes wind:

It does not always blow on the coast of Maine, but it does blow often. Winds have been an energy resource always, usually a nautical blessing, sometimes a curse or even a killer. In siting and orienting a new home or attendant structures, few men and no women ignored how the prevailing winds would serve or impinge on their ordinary lives. While acquiescing to the silvic wisdom that nearby trees and forest stands were not, could not, be permanent companions, our island forbears often planned on the care and replacement of tree growth in such a way that nearby land contours would influence the wind.

Though the general purpose was to avoid the worst and utilize the best the atmosphere presented in its seasonal and occasional rounds, many Maine island homes seem placed without the slightest regard to wind. Prominently exposed houses seem especially cherished. Now deep into their second century, these dwellings are wind-chiseled survivors, with tales to tell. All the gales and tempests have been a write-off—items of legend, further embellished or fragmented, one generation to another.

And always, the waterfront:

The placement and orientation of homes and structures to the water cannot be understood without a forthright vision of Maine coastal society—and in this respect mainland and island communities differ considerably. In mainland towns, the class order was rigid, dominated by the families who owned or commanded ships and those who negotiated or controlled the trade. A young man from a prominent family would enter

“Island community design reflects the affective needs of people, not the imposed rational planning of experts.”

cabin or counting house service as an adolescent and expect his own command of a vessel or administrations at his majority, age 21, or even sooner. He would complete a few voyages and marry in his mid-to-late twenties, establish a household through the auspices of his partnerships in ships and companies, and retire to community leadership in his late thirties—piece of cake.

Not coincidentally, mainland coastal community design reflected an adversarial relationship to the sea. The great houses were turned inward toward the streets, all aligned in rows, and we can only imagine the psychological atmosphere created in many of these homes, filled with well-to-do young women, their children created at odd moments when husbands came home for a few weeks, and otherwise their lives overseen by elder retired captains and tradesmen, the ubiquitous (often young male) ministers of the gospel, and of course the older women who were fully in possession of effective social authority through the towering presence of their homebound husbands. Anyone who looks longingly at the architectural and community design heritage of Wiscasset, Thomaston, Camden, Searsport, and many other Maine coastal towns would do well to ponder on the implications of this legacy.

On the islands the sociology of community design was very different. While the tradesmen and nonmarine tycoons (for example, quarry owners) had their occasional place on some of the islands (and there created neighborhoods nearly identical to the mainland coastal pattern), the predominant spirit was much more free and independent. The islands were the domain of private maritime entrepreneurship—owners and shareholding crewmen on relatively small vessels, whether in fishing or trade. Indigence was not a permanent social status. A few seasons of work would get anyone a few hundred dollars saved by, and that was enough to establish a home and household. Furthermore, a view of the sea was a proud affirmation, an expressed relationship to the sources of one's life and livelihood. Island wives did not spend their best years beholden to absentee values and did not fear or loathe the sea on which their men worked, as did most of their mainland counterparts. They preferred practical, used and valued windows on the sea; not useless, hypocritical widow's walks and glazed cupolas.

These earnestly cherished views to the water did much to create aspects of island community design. Any island planning board that disallows this ancient consideration does itself badly. Maritime island life is sustained by small boats, nautical craft that do not

require complex institutional paper or highly capitalized infrastructures (at least not until recently), and direct views of the harbor go well beyond the aesthetic. Who's in? Who's out? Why all? Why not!? An island harbor was and remains not only its community's means to existence, but the symbol of each family's absolute citizenship. Harbors and approaches wanted watching, and watching windows were placed where they must, oftentimes orienting buildings out of linear or rational street alignment, even back from the water as much as several "blocks" or their equivalent for a larger view of the waterfront.

HUSBANDRY AND HORTICULTURE

Contemporary notions of the American Dream feature lawns in the domestic yard. But this pleasant prejudice is only about a century old. At the turn of the 20th century Thorstein Veblen, in *Theory of the Leisure Class*, decried lawns as a form of conspicuous consumption, a way of declaring economic superiority to people who had to harvest their grass rather than mow it before it matured into something useful. (We can only wonder what old Thor would have to say about modern golf courses and the initiation fees paid out to suburban clubs.) In any case, we know that the modern American lawn is in fact an agricultural artifact whose origins go back to yards enclosed by fencing to grow gardens and defend against livestock. Only in recent times has the picket fence become an amenity.

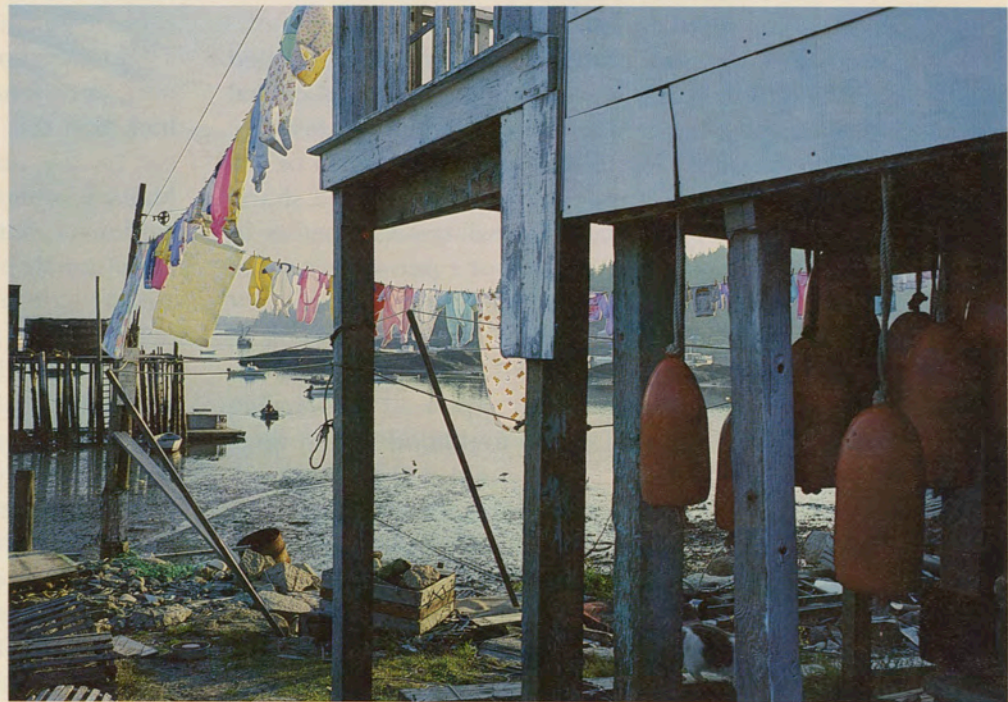
The appropriate portions of today's unfenced lawns were once fenced gardens, and it is strictly a matter of luck that this ancient New England pattern survived out on the islands long enough to be photographed. Maine islanders have always been enthusiastic and able gardeners, but the small-plot horticulturalists of today (traditional, habitual, Victory, idealistic, and hobbist alike), pale in the light of our island forbears who depended on nearly the entire space of their domestic yards for the major portion of their vegetable diet. A century ago almost all the Maine islands were largely cleared and used for agriculture and animal husbandry. Ninety-nine percent of this clearing—today in woods or quasi-heath—was overgrazed, over-harvested, overused pasturage and haylands. People's vegetable diets came from their dooryards, and this is why so many island homes are oddly placed, near to or atop ledges, with tiny, inadequate cellars. On the islands, good deep rich soil near to the house was precious, saved for a yard that had to be productive.

More than just nostalgia drives the memories of many living islanders when they recall their parents putting by fish from the sea, vegetables from the

“Traditional island neighborhoods are wonderful spaces in which to play and work—indeed, to not make that distinction.”

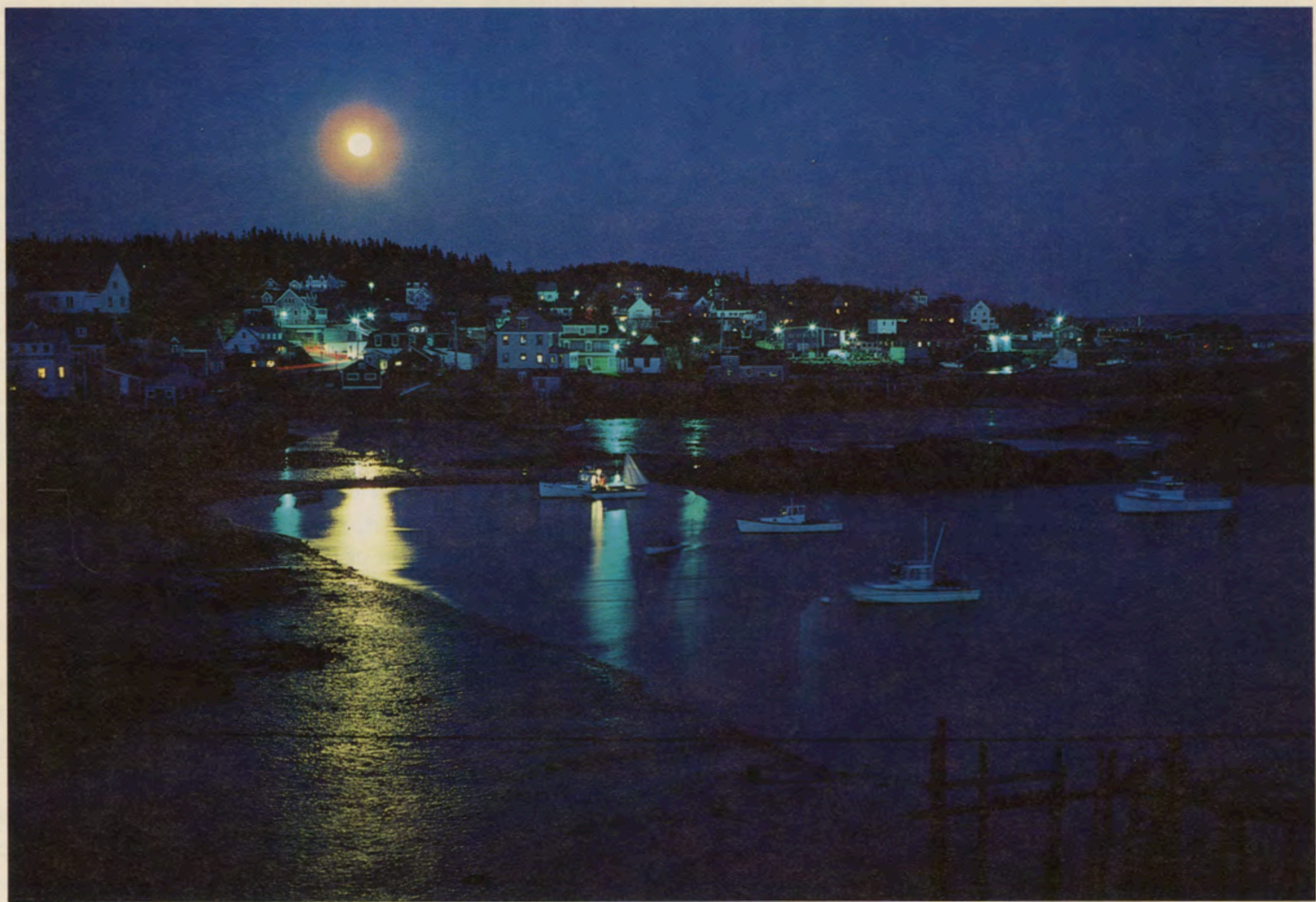


“May a new generation of islanders create rooftops that fit no mainland pattern and express the human spirit, not imposed philosophies.”





*Photos of Stonington, Maine,
by Jeff Dworsky*



garden, hay and wood from the farmers (often relatives), eggs in waterglass and sawdust, and apples, pears, cider, and cheeses as well. So-called "summer kitchens," today's odd mudrooms and catchalls beyond the kitchen, were serious places, to be slighted or encroached at a husband's or child's peril when they were not in service to it. All of these means of living were subsumed under a brag that they were poor.

As on the mainland, Maine island society had one of its significant divisions between farmers and villagers—not to be confused with our current urban versus rural designation. Local farmers found their bread and butter in the village, just as villagers received it from the farms. The farms would provide hay, fodder, and grains, often eggs and dairy products to the villagers; and the villagers would receipt in cash or credits for civil services, including marine transport. It was a marvelous Jeffersonian yeoman system that lasted more than two centuries. Some aspects of it hung on until World War II. Even in the village, however, the common expectation that a good wife and family enjoyed at least a milch cow and proper carriage horse made the village barn a commodious necessity. It would be set by the house, where it would do the least harm and the most good (often so the good wife could serve the favored cow and driving horse without going outside).

Today these village barn structures have become garages and workshops, studios, and otherwise patronized places. The ells are much admired for their aesthetic integrity, while lamented for their inadequate ability to justify the additions to taxations applied to them. They are purchased and maintained for sentimental value, a criteria that would appall the men and women who required and created them. Like the domiciles that attend these out-structures, their orientation on islands has everything to do with ancient practicalities and preferences, and nothing to do with modern rational living, planning, or evaluation. The rooftops of an island community speak loudly of animal and vegetable, along with the environmental and mineral.

MARITIME WORK

It is not by accident that men's work comes so far along in this list. Island women have always controlled island society, beginning and ending with the layout and conduct of their community, including the character and disposition of its structures and design. To whatever degree this effect is true elsewhere, it is absolutely true on islands everywhere. It has to do with the mandatory requirements of traditional maritime occupations, occasional and often spectacularly competent nautical women notwithstanding. The truths of gender in conti-

mental life are more stark on islands. And the men respond by doing what they're told in domestic duty—hammer and nails, toting and carrying—and then whatever else they want in secret societies and the exigencies of work. Wharves and fish houses, the volunteer fire company, Masons and Oddfellows, church men's groups, and other private experience organizations are all the residual legacy of this traditional and necessary division by gender—kith and kin and friends, as it were, in bilateral parity with kitchen culture. The ultimate men's society is, of course, at sea aboard small craft.

All islanders in some way exploited marine resources for their livelihood, if in no other way than to collect seaweed for their gardens. Most everyone dug clams, now and again exchanging produce for seafood; and most families had a small boat and used it often to hunt as well as fish. For three quarters of a century the islands have been an economic world of small wooden boats, wooden lobster traps, and other set gear derived from locally acquired materials. Organic twine and rope required lengthy and assiduous preparation and maintenance; automotively-derived power drive systems were operated and maintained with ordinary

tools used by sensible mechanics; and other fishing systems likewise made use of natural materials that required regular fish house attentions. All this was supported by a shoreside culture; busy, complex, intense, and vital. Every fishing household had at least a trap shop, whether near to the shore or not. Many fishermen were also reasonably good wood craftsmen and so expanded their shop areas to permit boatbuilding and repair, otherwise woodcrafting with room to swing a cat. The point is not the activity, but rather the society. Men would conduct their own regimen and then adjourn and gather at a key shop to kibitz and share and decide by sense of the meetings their position on matters. There were usually many such shops, several on even the smaller domestic islands. They did not determine community design. Rather, they confirmed, built, and defended it, especially by determining the rooftop conformation of the working shoreside.

ITINERANT ARTISANS AND RESIDENT ARCHITECTS

A large number of Maine island domestic structures were produced from kits, literally out of the Sears and Roebuck catalog, either in whole or for their detailed appointments.

When the often itinerant journeyman carpenters were not instructed by a kit, then their own experience and habit would do very well with the briefest consultation from the clients. Space order and room placement were simply matters of revolving adjustment; then

**“Whether from away
or local, the builders
listened to what was
wanted and then built
it without imposition
of art. They were
artisan craftsmen,
not narcissists.”**

experienced style guided the framework and finish. When from time to time we look up onto an island shore and swear a house could have come from anywhere along Route Two, or from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, or Canaan, Connecticut, we do not hallucinate. The craftsmen were the same, plying their carpenter Gothic or cottage shingle, as the case may be, escaping the summer heat and indulging better berths. Home, after all, was just an overnight train or steamboat trip away...

Whether from away or local, the builders listened to what was wanted and then built it without imposition of art. They were artisan craftsmen, not narcissists. With plenty of good clear dimension-sawn timber available, they reached, measured, sawed, and passed each piece to a fellow who knew where it went without headscratching or going up the road for a tool. Every day saw enormous progress without screw-ups or cavil, and all cheaply. Here and there on the islands some old-school journeymen craftsmen still ply their work, and it is a scandal that we do not emulate the Japanese and declare them National Treasures.

If this seems like an apology for island vernacular architecture, it is, just a little. The old capes worked, and keep on working. And their special island twists—more loft to the sections and peaks, a bit narrower breadth, more pitch to the rooflines, shorter gables and odd dormers, window placement, and ells—ply their magic today with the same pizzazz they always did. Those who apply the term “vernacular” chauvinistically do so at their artistic peril. Architects design space, and space has much to do with human relationships. Islanders have trouble enough getting others to understand their relationships, and do not require the directives of disconnected imaginations, no matter how skilled in design or draftsmanship. The old fellows listened and got on with it. Designers mostly speak, and insist on practical havoc. The splendidly wonderful structures we see appearing along island shores in recent times are nearly impossible to build, always (irreparably) leak, and never participate in any way in community design, despite or perhaps because of the enormous sums of money spent on them. Much contemporary design is imposed from cultural presumptions that are alien to their host communities and apologize for this in the name of science and necessary convenience. Who can cavil against the facts?! Yet, no matter how successful a house design, or even its status as a breakthrough in efficient taste, when science or artistic altruism are enjoined in the name of appropriate design on the islands, they are almost always represented fraudulently. Here and there along the coast of Maine there are examples of this so spectacular that they boggle the mind.

GHOULIES AND GHOSTIES

Some people who built homes and working spaces on Maine islands hated the place, the structure in which they lived and the community alike. These places sometimes radiate the old contempts and hatreds, and islanders often feel terrible resonances from them. Islanders understand vibes. These feelings are not disputable. Christians have their ghostly prejudices, but even the most atheistic concur. Places where terrible things happened, unregenerately unhappy people lived, or unexplained violence occurred are anathema by fiat. Though these sentiments can save several tens of thousands of dollars to a seasonal buyer (who unsuspecting will never know, care, or notice), their places among the rooftops remain the same.

“Those who apply the term ‘vernacular’ chauvinistically do so at their artistic peril. Architects design space, and space has much to do with human relationships.”

RECLAIMING THE OLD PATHS

The time when households of primary island citizens made-do, put-by food, made most of the household clothing and goods, and derived their livings from locally built boats and domestically produced gear fished in nearby waters, is over. It is dead and gone. But there are thousands of living people who remember these recently deceased times, and their moral power is emotionally disruptive to the ascendant generations, who must deal with household expectations, marine debt services, and nautical requirements that by necessity turn cherished legends of traditional Maine island maritime activity into myths. Successful early-middle-aged Maine island fishermen, with a quarter of a million dollar debt service on their boat, gear, truck, household, and attendant effects, do not need to be lectured on their status as the carriers of a quaint and curious legacy. Except as persistent, inconvenient expectations, much common sense of island specialness is gone. But the specialness of island community design remains, even if involuntarily cast into the uncalloused hands of seasonal owners, the frustrated aegis of island selectmen, planning boards and, more recently, “futures groups.”

Almost everywhere on islands, just below the soil, you can find marbles—emmies left behind by eight-year-old children decades ago when the landscape was clear and in agriculture or grazing. Bless the eight-year-olds! May they return to create and remember pathways and byways that fix and define enfranchised and happy lives in Maine island communities. If their houses are not the old ones, may they be fine ones anyway, and create rooftops that fit no mainland pattern and express the human spirit, not imposed philosophies. Balance between loss and hope is impossible. Only love and spirit can steal loss’s portended winnings. Resident islanders must recollect their spirit and cut through this madness between past and future.

ARE ISLANDS IN MAINE'S FUTURE?

*The all-too-short story of
land preservation in Maine*

J. MASON MORFIT



ANYONE ASKED TO discuss land conservation in Maine will have little trouble being brief because at least in the formal sense, there hasn't been much.

Public conservation land in Maine (including both state and federal ownerships) constitutes less than five percent of the state's total area. By this measure, Maine ranks 47th among the 50 states in the percentage of its land area in the public domain. On an absolute scale, Maine has less public land than the state of New Jersey, from which many people flee for the "wilderness experience of Vacationland."

The situation has improved somewhat recently, primarily through the work of the Land for Maine's Future Board, established to disburse the proceeds of a \$35 million state public lands acquisition bond issue passed three years ago. Last summer, for example, The Nature Conservancy announced that it had optioned almost 40,000 acres of prime forestland around the state, of which the largest single parcel—called the Nahmakanta/Rainbow tract, southwest of Baxter State Park—is some 30,000 acres, or about the size of

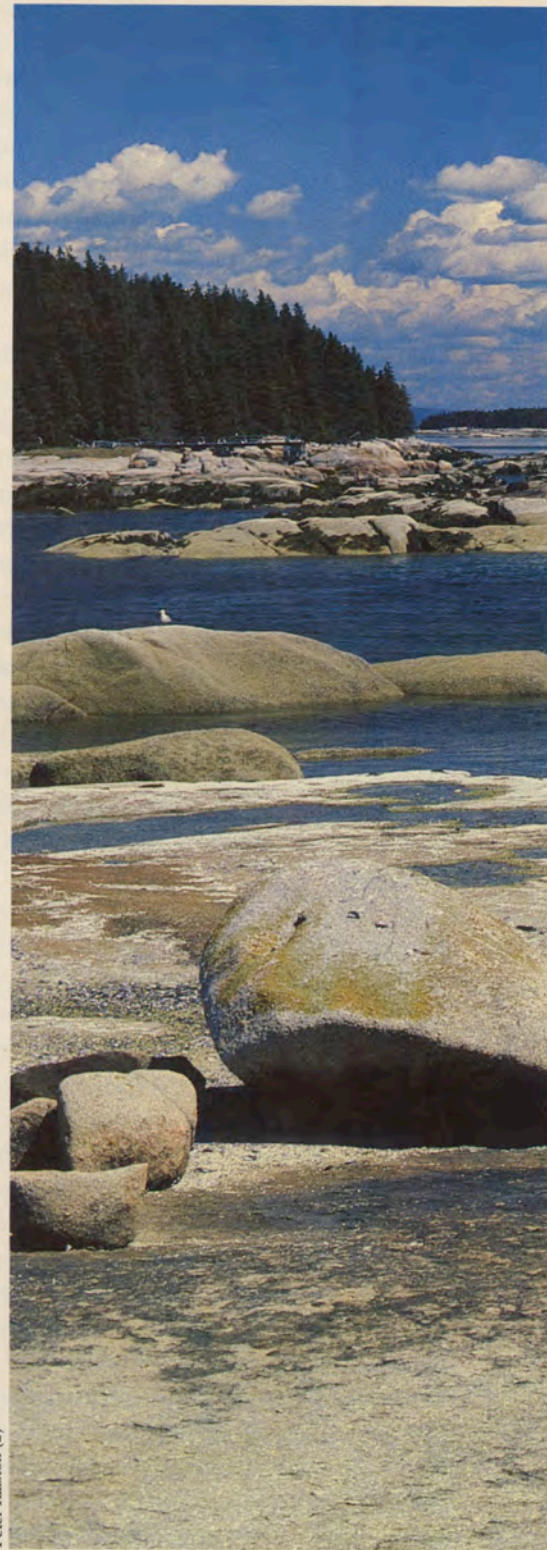
Acadia National Park. However, total purchases and commitments by the Land for Maine's Future Board to date have probably increased Maine's public lands by only a fraction of one percent.

These figures do not include private institutional conservation land, which protects a lot of critical real estate, but which is modest in either absolute terms or as a percentage of Maine's total landscape.

For example, The Nature Conservancy owns and operates 82 nature preserves—the largest private sanctuary system in the state—that, in the aggregate, total some 18,000 acres. The Conservancy has also protected an additional 72,000 acres on behalf of various private and public conservation agencies, for a total of some 90,000 acres.

The Maine Coast Heritage Trust owns a little over 1,000 acres and holds another 17,000 acres under easement. Local land trusts are estimated to have collectively protected some 60,000 acres, primarily through conservation easements. The Maine and National Audubon societies, the Philadelphia Conservationists, Friends of Nature, the Laudholm Trust, the Island Institute, and scores of other small organizations have, collectively, protected a few thousand more acres. But again, all private conservation groups together have probably protected well under one percent of Maine's total landscape.

This institutional total is a significant understatement of protected lands because important lands are also protected by private individuals and families—for example, the almost 5,000 acres of virgin forest around Big Reed Pond (recently sold to The Conservancy), protected by the Pingree family for over 100 years; the Cross Island Archipelago of seven islands off Cutler, donated to The Conservancy by Tom Cabot of Boston for subsequent



Peter Rakston (2)

transfer to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and at least one magnificent island adjacent to Mount Desert Island that is being planned for permanent protection by a concerned private citizen.

Of necessity, conservation organizations take as much credit as possible for saving land. And they do perform that function when they assume the expensive and difficult task of caring for land "in perpetuity" once it is entrusted to their care. But if it's worth protecting now, someone has been protecting it—for the some 400 years since Europeans first set foot on these shores in significant numbers.



In the Deer Isle Thorofare



Peter Ralston (2)

There are many such unsung heroes of deliberate individual, family, (and, in some cases, corporate) land conservation, and some day I would like to write a book about them. But they are becoming fewer as land becomes more precious, as property taxes increase, as public use (and abuse) increase, as family fortunes deteriorate, and as successive generations proliferate, frequently making family ownership a nightmare. Increasingly, land conservation will become the exclusive province of institutions: government agencies and private conservation organizations.

Is this a good thing or a bad thing? The answer is complex and ambiguous, but one obvious question is: do these institutions have the capacity—scientific, managerial, financial, and political—to get the job done?

And that raises the more fundamental question: What's the scope of the job?

As I pointed out earlier, perhaps five percent to 10 percent of Maine's landscape is currently under some form of deliberate conservation ownership. Some people think that's enough, and a few even think it's too much. But we know with a very high degree of confidence—from public opinion polls conducted by The Nature Conservancy and others—that most Mainers today believe it's way too little.

Why, then, does Maine have so little public land? Probably the major reason is that for many years development pressure was minimal; and, importantly, because most of the private land in Maine has been, in large degree, de facto public land. (This was illustrated for me a few years back when a realtor friend of mine sent me a prospectus on a large lakeside property in Washington county. When I

“Increasingly, land conservation will become the province of government agencies and private conservation organizations.”

asked, “Why should I buy it even if I could afford it? I’ve camped and fished there for years,” my realtor friend said, “Damn, you’ve gone native on us!”) Virtually throughout the Maine woods, and to a surprising degree on the coast and islands, landowners generally have turned a blind eye to largely benign trespass.

Under the circumstances, Mainers apparently took an appropriately thrifty, Yankee attitude that might be characterized as “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it—particularly if it requires our tax dollars.”

Beyond that attitude, however, Mainers apparently also felt a strong antipathy toward public land ownership, particularly federal but also by the state. In fact, two of my personal heroes, George B. Dorr and Percival P. Baxter, created Acadia National Park and Baxter State Park, respectively, not only through private purchase, but in direct opposition to the sentiment of the Maine legislatures of their time. (Interestingly, Baxter bought the 200,000 acres around Mt. Katahdin with his own money partly in adamant opposition to possible federal purchase of the area.)

Attitudes had eased up somewhat by the middle of this century, but Maine still spent minimal amounts on public land acquisition, and often only when pushed into it by threat of federal ownership or other unusual circumstances. The state's acquisition of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, originally proposed as a federal Wild and Scenic River, is a case in point.

Ironically, it was during this period that Maine acquired a large percentage of its present public land—not at the outset as the result of new public policy initiatives, or through purchases, but through land swaps with large timber companies who were discovered (not by the state, but by an investigative reporter) to have misappropriated what were legally public lots. Many of the state's current best and biggest public lands represent the recapture of scattered public lots and their consolidation, through exchanges with large landowners, into contiguous areas of exceptional natural resource value.

The largest single unit of the state's public lands (not including the 200,000-acre Baxter State Park which is owned by a quasi-public trust) is the 34,000-acre Bigelow Preserve. Once again, this land was acquired not as the result of a bold vision on the part of the state's political leadership, but reluctantly, when the state was essentially required to do so as a result of a citizen-initiated public referendum in 1976.

Meanwhile, several units of the Maine state park system were created not through purchase but as the result of gifts by farsighted and exceptionally generous individuals—notably, Wolf's Neck State Park in Freeport and Popham Beach State Park in Phippsburg, both given to the state by Mr. and Mrs. L.M.C. Smith.

Also during this period, Maine declined to realize at least one great opportunity to expand on limited federal holdings within the state when it acceded to the reduction of the borders of Acadia National Park from its original inspired extent—from the Washington County line to mid-Penobscot Bay—to the roughly 35,000 acres now confined within a rapidly-tightening noose of motels, souvenir shops, and miniature golf courses.

Clearly, by the time this deed was gone, it was neither possible nor desirable to incorporate the Maine coast from Dyer Neck to Dark Harbor into Acadia National Park. But in reducing the park's borders to their present minimal confines, we lost (perhaps irrevocably) a chance to acquire several coastal islands that are probably beyond the means of all but the federal government, and which are hard to characterize as finding their highest and best use as the site of speculative second home developments. To name just a few: Tinker Island in Blue Hill Bay, the subdivided half of which is now languishing in the real estate advertising section of *Down East* magazine; Marshall Island, recently on the auction block with an alleged reserve price



of \$4.5 million (fortunately, at least for a while, there were no successful bids); and virtually undeveloped Long Island, also in Blue Hill Bay, which could probably have been had for not too much more than the \$300,000 that was all I was able to offer for it in the late 1970s.

Fortunately, The Nature Conservancy has been able to acquire several important islands around the periphery of Mount Desert Island, including Dram, Preble, Long Porcupine, Turtle, Great Duck, Placentia, the Ship Island Group, Trumpet, and others. But with a few notable (and expensive) exceptions, our acquisition of these islands was possible only because of the generosity of the owners, who either gave them to us outright, or sold them to us at a price significantly below fair market value. I'm pleased to report that more are in the pipeline, but many of the "best and the brightest"—and particularly the biggest—will probably fall prey to subdivision within the next few years.

The outlook is pretty grim, not only on the coast, but also inland, in the Great North Woods; particularly along the shores of its lakes and rivers, probably the largest, finest, and least-developed expanse of waterfront real estate east of the Mississippi. This vast expanse of private lands, assembled into major corporate and family ownerships primarily during the past 100 years, is under increasing threat from both national and international forces.

A couple of years ago, 800,000 acres of Maine woods were put on the block when Sir James Goldsmith completed a hostile takeover of the old Diamond Match Company. Fortunately, most of that land was acquired by the James River Company and other forest products companies for continuing management as forestland, and some of the best of the rest—approximately 40,000 acres in seven different parts of the state—was recently optioned by The Nature Conservancy after 18 months of negotiations by my partner, Kent Wommack, on behalf of the people of Maine. But we didn't get it all; in a recent issue of *Down East* magazine, there was a full-page ad from the upscale real estate brokerage firm, Land Vest, offering four hitherto undeveloped lakes and ponds for prices that total \$2.4 million.

When the Diamond takeover occurred, I was assured by several spokesmen for the forest products industry, and by Land Vest's chief agent in the Northeast, that this was a one-time fluke, with minimal chances of repetition. Very soon thereafter, however, the Hearst Corporation put its Maine lands on the block, including several spectacular parcels along Washington County's "Bold Coast," that have since been acquired, for millions of dollars, by the Conservation Foundation of Washington, D.C., and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

In 1989 we witnessed yet another hostile takeover, this time of Great Northern Nekoosa, the largest single landowner in Maine, by Georgia-Pacific. To allay political concerns in Maine, G-P pledged (sort of) not to sell any of its newly acquired

Stewardship as a Preservation Strategy

DAVID R. GETCHELL, SR.

Money is not — and never will be — the only answer to land preservation in Maine. Neither private individuals, non-profit organizations, local and state governments, nor even Uncle Sam can afford to buy and set aside for public use alone the great tracts of valuable property that would be needed to meet existing and future requirements. More importantly, much of this land, both on the mainland and on islands, has enduring economic value that should not be locked away solely for preservation's sake.

Fortunately, there is a way that thousands of acres of outstanding coastal property can be preserved, cared for, used in many ways, and still be enjoyed by large numbers of people. And all of this at little or no monetary cost.

What is required is an act of faith on the one hand and an acceptance of an ethic on the other. Faith that people can be trusted must be instilled in the minds of private property owners, public land managers, and other guardians of desirable landscape, while users must adopt an ethic that includes a heavy dollop of stewardship for all land and a willingness to abide by rules when not being watched.

Cynics may scoff at such idealism in this day when egotism seems the dominant feature of our society. Pointing to the pervasive filth of our urban culture,

the trash along our highways, and the vandalism in our parks and to private property, they will ask how anyone can harbor such naiveté as to believe people will willingly do the "right" thing without constant policing.

After three years of trying to convince owners, managers, and users that such an implausibility is worth trying, at least on the Maine islands, I feel confident in stating that it does work. There are well over 60 islands, both private and public, along the coast whose superb condition puts a lie to the claim that use and preservation are mutually contradictory. Part of the Maine Island Trail, a small-boat waterway that takes in two thirds of the Maine coast, these islands are visited, hiked on, picnicked on, and camped on every year by people who are convinced that holding to the "impossible" ethic described above is in their own best interests.

Many of these visitors are members of the Maine Island Trail Association, the organization developed by the Island Institute that now maintains the Island Trail. In joining the Maine Island Trail Association members not only accept a low-impact use ethic, but also provide a strong stewardship presence on all the islands they use, lending a hand in shore clean-up and regularly scheduled work projects. Their quiet example is being adopted by non-members as well.

lands for two years. But in other states, G-P is divesting itself of a lot of former Great Northern Nekoosa real estate, and most analysts believe it's just a matter of time before additional large blocks of Maine woods are offered for sale to the highest bidder.

Most of this land will presumably continue to be used for timber production, and continue to be available for public use. But some of it will almost certainly be sold to reduce the staggering corporate debt required to finance such acquisitions, to consolidate redundant holdings, or to eliminate products that don't fit the strategic objectives of newly structured companies. And what's most likely to be sold are the so-called HBU, or "highest and best use" lands, which is real estate jargon for waterfront with top development value.

Some industry and real estate spokesmen say, "Not to worry: The land offered to developers will be only a small fraction of the total." But this is like being assured by a surgeon that a scheduled procedure will remove only eight percent of one's body weight—the proportion of Diamond lands characterized as HBU—only to find out that it's all above the neck!

An additional concern is that some of the larger parcels may go to foreign owners, whose sensitivity to traditional Maine land uses—and susceptibility to pleas for inspired corporate citizenship—may be less than we hoped for.

In fall 1989 Daishowa International, a Tokyo-based forest products company that has been embroiled in environmental controversies in several countries around the world, made the first purchase by a Japanese company in the Maine woods: a one-third interest in 180,000 acres straddling the magnificent St. John River that it planned to buy from International Paper.

Daishowa reportedly now wants out of this \$18 million deal and is looking for another buyer. And it's likely that the next buyer will be a Canadian firm, several of which have acquired significant Maine timber holdings in recent years. Largely as a result of these Canadian ownerships, Maine has a greater percentage of its land in foreign ownership—approximately 11 percent—than any other state in the union. In fact, Maine lands owned by foreigners account for 16 percent of all reported foreign-owned land in the United States.

If forest land must be sold to realize a competitive return on investment, it generally makes more sense to sell HBU, or development-potential land—which brings top dollar per acre and often makes only a relatively modest contribution to a company's total wood supply—than to sell non-waterfront parcels that fetch a relatively low price per acre, produce large volumes of wood, and involve fewer problems with respect to zoning, restrictions on clearcutting and herbicide application, public recreational use, etc. In short, Adam Smith's invisible hand points toward the

continuing sale of prime forest real estate, especially waterfront, for development purposes.

Against this rather grim background, I'm pleased to report that all is not lost. In recent years, there appears to have been a fundamental change in the attitudes of Maine citizens about the state's role in protecting the best of our natural heritage.

Three years ago, the Maine Chapter of The Nature Conservancy broke a 30-year tradition of political non-involvement by assuming the leadership of a broad-based coalition sponsoring a \$35 million public

“Being assured that the land offered to developers is only a small fraction of the total is like being assured by a surgeon that a scheduled procedure will remove only eight percent of one's body weight – only to find that it's all above the neck!”

lands acquisition bond issue. This was one of the largest single bond issues in the state's history (perhaps the largest), was in competition with a dozen other measures on the same ballot, and was offered to the voters only a few days after a stock market crash that some people feared was the opening event in a global depression. To our delight, it passed by a margin of better than two-to-one.

Since then, approximately \$25 million of the \$35 million—all of the money that was realized through the first two years of bond sales scheduled over a three-year period—has been spent or committed, and the balance will probably be spent almost as soon as it becomes available.

Thanks to the quality of the land so far protected—and to the exemplary performance of the Land for Maine's Future Board—this program has proved to be one of the most popular state initiatives of the past four years. The fact that Maine has taken a great leap forward in public land acquisition doesn't mean that private land conservation groups (or their supporters) can sit on their hands. For one thing, there simply isn't enough state money to do what needs to be done. And of political necessity, public funding must be spread relatively evenly around the state, primarily on lands that can bear a fairly heavy dose of public use.

There are a lot of special landscapes in Maine that may not “make the cut” for

public funding. Among these I would place offshore islands (more costly on a dollar-per-acre basis than the public wants to pay, and difficult to reach safely without a fairly expensive boat); lands primarily harboring rare species of plants and animals (in some instances, too fragile to accommodate intensive outdoor recreation); and lands being sold by a wealthy individual (or corporation) without a significant discount off the price (very few Mainers are inclined to pay retail at Tiffany's).

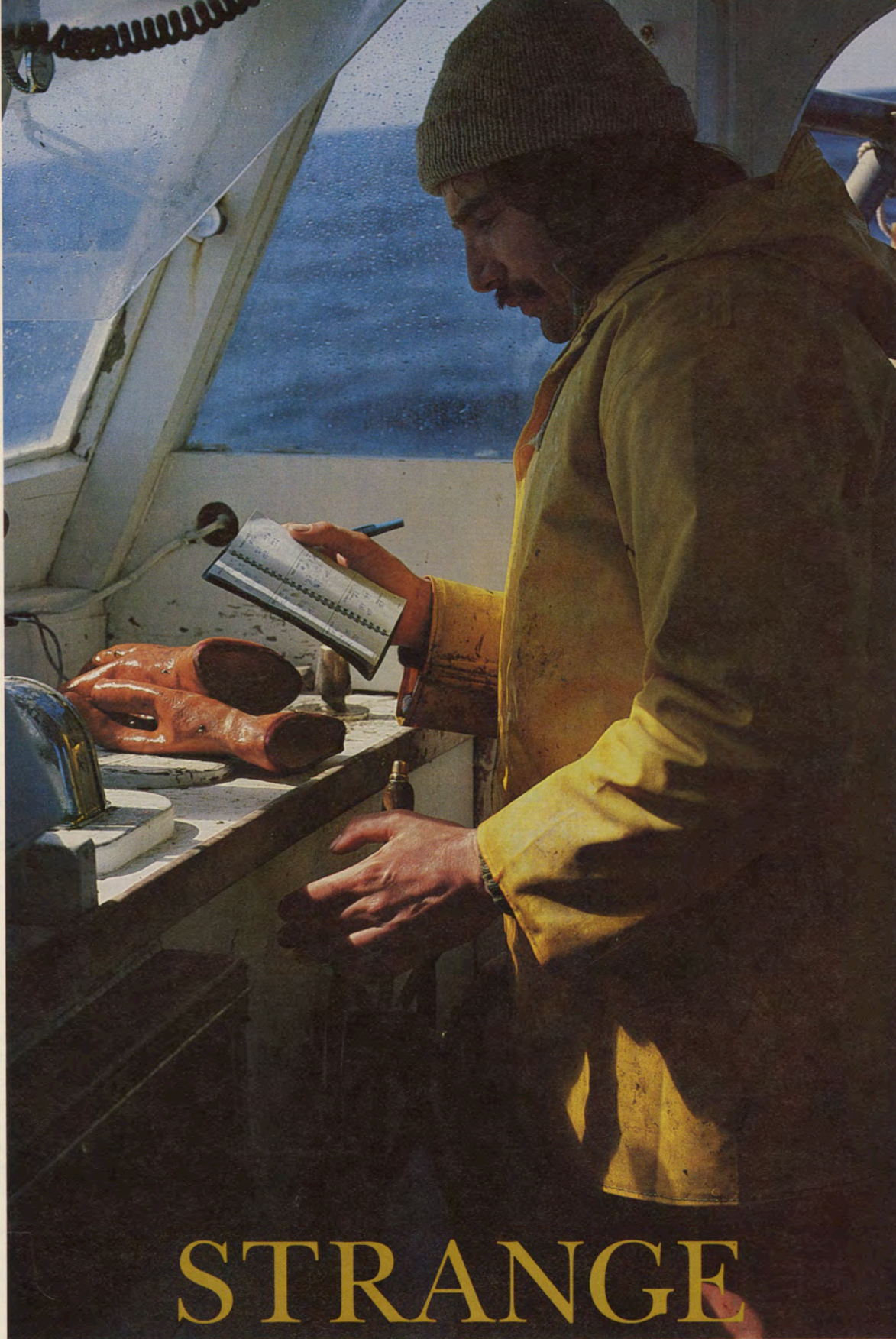
Fortunately, Maine's private land conservation organizations are growing and developing the capacity to undertake more ambitious projects, some in the millions of dollars. The Maine Coast Heritage Trust is currently in the difficult final stages of a multi-million dollar campaign for its first land acquisition project on Washington County's “Bold Coast.” The Nature Conservancy hasn't announced anything publicly, but it is rumored to have committed to a multi-project undertaking that will provide yet another opportunity for philanthropic distinction. The number of local land trusts in Maine has almost exploded in recent years, and at least a few are developing the capacity to purchase properties rather than simply accept or reject what is offered as gifts. And on Mt. Desert Island, Friends of Acadia has gone into high gear with an ambitious goal to make sure that the federal government, and we who are the most immediate beneficiaries of the tremendous legacy of Acadia National Park, aren't derelict in discharging the fiduciary obligation with which we've been entrusted.

In closing, I'd like to cite the “Iron Law” of former state economist Lloyd Irland, which is: “People will invest in attractive places until they're no longer attractive.”

Attractive is hardly an adequate word to describe Acadia National Park—or other outstanding examples of the Maine landscape—but, apart from investments in land conservation, it's difficult to think of exceptions to Irland's Iron Law.

Acadia National Park may be one potential exception, but not without further investment. I think it's worth a try—if only to be able to say to the ghosts of George Dorr, Percival Baxter, and others who initially invested in the protection of Maine's tremendous natural resources, “We got you your bait back.”

John Mason Morfit (usually simply known as Mason Morfit) likes to refer back to his ancestor Captain John Mason, who with Sir Ferdinando Gorges was granted title to the so-called “Province of Maine” in 1622 by King James the First. In an unexplained property division in 1629, Gorges ended up with our Maine and Mason got New Hampshire. Morfit, who is Executive Director of The Nature Conservancy of Maine, says he now spends his days “trying to buy back the better half of the real estate.”



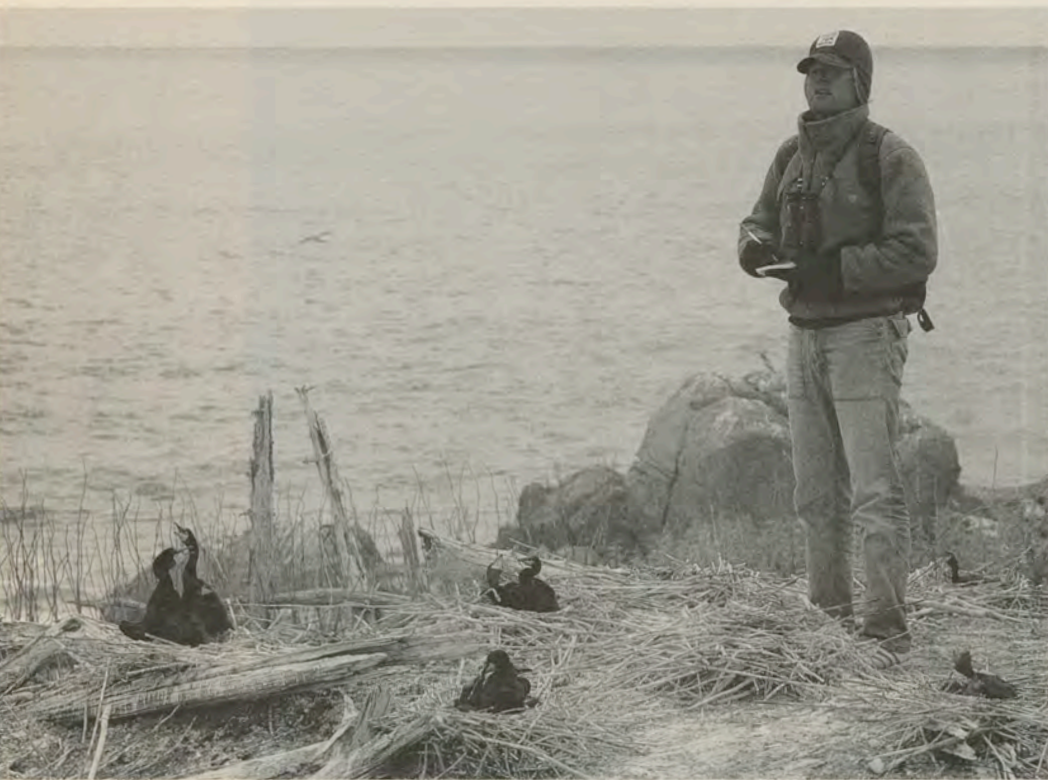
Peter Ralston

Anson Norton, off Criehaven

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

*Can fishermen and environmentalists
find a common ground?*

ROBIN ALDEN



Peter Baskin (2)

Counting cormorants, Old Man Island

FISHING IS OF critical importance to the economies of Maine island towns. Thus, it is important to know why these island communities are threatened by problems in the environment and, in some cases, by well-meaning environmentalists.

From the fisherman's point of view, the environmental community can be either a threat or an ally. All too often it is a threat. Fishermen live a life unknown by urban dwellers, and this cultural difference can be the source of misunderstanding and conflict. Understanding the fisherman's perspective on environmental issues is a start toward bridging that gap.

The issues break down into three broad categories. First, there is habitat degradation, about which fishermen and environmentalists pretty much share the same goals. Second, there are issues upon which fishermen and environmentalists differ or just plain disagree—marine mammals and endangered species being notable examples. Finally, there is the endless controversy over fisheries management.

In the end, there is real common ground as well. As a youngster raised as an environmentalist, I deduced early on—and still believe—that fishing was the answer for the coast of Maine. Fishing provided work and money and at the same time yielded an enviable quality of life: both in terms of economic and personal independence. Thus, it has always seemed to me that supporting commercial fishing in Maine would help provide an economic incentive to keep the environment healthy.

Some 20 years later, I still believe in that common ground. But to reach it requires a good deal of mutual understanding and

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a far more sympathetic hearing than the commercial fisherman has by and large received in the popular (let alone environmental) press. Let's look at some of the significant communication gaps.

HABITAT DEGRADATION

Habitat degradation—mainly water pollution—threatens both fishing and fish. The early life stages of many species depend on healthy estuaries and near-shore waters, the very areas most vulnerable to pollution. The threats are numerous: agricultural fertilizers and pesticides, industrial waste discharged into rivers or improperly disposed of ashore, sewage contamination—both bacterial and hazardous metals—and salt run-off from roads and developed areas. Fishermen face effects of thermal pollution, plankton blooms, and oxygen depletion. Beyond this are disasters such as oil spills, chemical spills, and massive PCB discharges. Offshore are the threats that come from ocean dumping, oil exploration, and ocean mining.

No one knows for certain how much of the change in both abundance and distribution of fish can be attributed to habitat degradation. But there are telling clues.

Take Penobscot Bay, for example: There are fishermen alive who will tell you of landing 20,000 pounds of cod a day from Penobscot Bay as far up as Stockton Springs. Today, despite an abundance of codfish in other Maine bays, there are virtually none in Penobscot Bay. Fishermen say the cod started disappearing in the mid-1930s when the first kraft process paper mill went on line. A study released in 1990 shows the Penobscot to have the highest levels of dioxin of any Maine river.

We do not know with scientific certainty that these two events are linked. Fishermen, however, know with certainty the manifest effects brought about by changes in water chemistry. All along the East Coast the pressures of development have made coastal waters vulnerable to pollution, and none of this is good for the fish, the fishermen, or their communities.

Pollution also endangers a fisherman's access to species that are abundant and available. Insidious contamination such as toxic bacteria or PCB's can actually put productive fishing grounds off limits. It can also put entire species on the banned list—as happened recently with striped bass.

But this does not mean that fishermen are ready to jump on the environmental bandwagon. Pollution catches them in a painful and more immediate “double-whammy” when publicity about environmental problems spooks the seafood consuming market.

Ironic as it may be, this boomerang effect is a hard reality to fishermen. My own first experience with it came when paralytic shellfish poisoning, more commonly known as red tide, first became an annual problem in Maine in the 1970s. The state was not geared up to provide accurate information, and the vacuum was filled by scare stories in the media. Not only did the market dry up for species that were affected such as clams and mussels, but the market for lobsters and fish also plummeted.

If you haven't sold fish to support your family, pause for a minute and think about how vulnerable you would be to changes in the price of fish. Imagine if your paycheck were dependent on the fears of your customers. The fisherman's reaction is not greed; it is a basic, human response to economic insecurity.

The primary role of environmentalists is to identify and publicize problems, and their tools are often scare tactics. So it should be no surprise that fishermen are leery of allying themselves with the groups that raise the issues and trigger the fears that hurt their market.

Two years ago, when the offshore dumpsite off New York City was moved from a stagnant area to one where there is lots of water mixing, the East Coast had a

summer of marine pollution, with hospital wastes washing up on beaches and diseased lobsters showing up in traps. One offshore lobsterman from Rhode Island, a flamboyant character, appeared on television brandishing lobsters with shell disease and railing against the dumping.

What happened? Consumers decided they preferred beef, and the seafood market simply dried up. It has not yet fully recovered.

This does not mean that fishermen and environmentalists cannot work together on habitat issues. But it does point up how necessary it is that the environmental community be sensitive to the fishing industry's vulnerability to bad press, and that any joint action needs to use strategies that do not inflame consumers, but rather build on the strengths of each group.

Sometimes small steps offer the best start. A recommendation has come out of the EXXON VALDEZ disaster to have fishermen trained to become strike teams in the earliest stages of an oil spill. The thinking is that fishermen have the most intimate and detailed understanding of the currents and conditions in an area. Moreover, they are skilled at working on the water; deploying oil booms is not very different from setting fishing gear. The idea is not

just to use fishermen as laborers, a task they are ill-suited for, but rather to use their knowledge and skill to make clean-up more effective. This is constructive thinking, and a defense initiative that might well be emulated on every coast.

THE WILD COMPETITION

Marine mammals are a more difficult point of contention between fishermen and environmentalists. Since the passage of the Marine Mammal Protection Act in 1972, we have seen a steady rebuilding of our East Coast seal and whale populations. What many are not aware of, however, is that this law—and the rebuilding of the populations—causes serious problems for fishermen. In a few cases, whole commercial fisheries are threatened with extinction.

There is a misfit between the marine mammal movement and the fishermen's way of life. Fishermen make their living using marine resources. The marine mammal movement's objective is to reduce sea animal kills to as near zero as possible. Preservation versus use: clearly at odds.

But even beyond this, fishermen and marine mammal people live in different realities. Fishermen are in direct contact with the natural world. They experience the weather, the seasons, the tides, and all of the changes in the ecosystem that surrounds them. They see the whole gamut, from birth to death, throughout the year in birds, mammals, and fish. They see dead and dying fish daily, realizing that for one animal to eat and live, another must die. They deal with constant uncertainty, making their way through it by the courage of their convictions. They work when they are cold, wet, and tired, and are all too familiar with the real dangers of injury and loss that come when one works close to the elements. And because of a raw form of competition that few urban dwellers know, they realize the value of standing their ground.

Fishermen also compete with marine mammals: for the fish they eat and space in the ocean they both use, much as a farmer competes with a raccoon for his corn. Some fishermen, lobstermen, her-ring seiners, and fish farmers, see seals as

Better Dead Than Fed??

A fisherman's perspective on the harbor seal

Most people who love Maine also love seals, so it comes as a real surprise to discover that fishermen by and large do not share this enthusiasm. Fisherman Mike Brown explains why:

Seals have never been held in very high regard among Maine fishermen. That is probably why there was a long-time bounty on the critters back when fishermen used more stationary fishing gear like weirs, floating fish traps, and gillnets. These were seal food pantries, and their use was discouraged only by gunfire.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 changed all that. No more plinking away at seals to keep them off fishing gear. In fact, even seal harassment was illegal.

Nobody knew how many seals were on the Maine coast in 1972. The fishermen said too damned many and the environmentalists said not enough. That set the stage for a Maine coast seal assessment study that lasted from 1973–1975.



The principal investigator was David T. Richardson, a researcher at the DMR's Boothbay Harbor Station, who utilized grant money first from the National Geographic Society and then from the Marine Mammal Commission. In his final 1975 report, Richardson said that through boat surveys and aerial coverage, his data revealed a population of about 5,800 harbor and gray seals counted on 203 haulouts, those rocks and half-tide ledges that comprise prime seal habitat. The investigator estimated that these counts were a conservative estimate of 75 percent of the total Maine seal population.

This represents a density of one haulout in every 2.58 square nautical miles of water within the 60-foot depth contour, with each haulout supporting an average of 28.1 seals.

However, one part of the Richardson study caused considerable controversy and alarm in the state fishery bureau-

cracy: the figures on just how much fish these cutesy, cuddly marine animals were putting away every day. Beef cows eat about three percent of their body weight. Seals eat six percent.

When Richardson's data revealed that seals were gulping down

about 11 million pounds of local fish annually, the fishcrats shuddered. This was 11 percent of the total Maine finfish landings! The seals were outfishing the fishermen on a per seal/man basis. And if that wasn't enough of a humiliating petard, the fishermen had to stand by and watch helplessly while the seals nibbled away on what the fishermen did catch.

The fishcrats didn't exactly squash Richardson's report because it had a lot of taxpayers' bucks stuffed into it. But it was tough to scare a copy of the report up. It still is.

Today, the public looks at the seal as more cuddly than ever. The fishermen have pretty much traded in their stationary gear for mobile stuff. And the big, fat seals, probably double their 1975 number, are lying around on nearly every Maine half-tide ledge wondering what the hell to do for excitement in their food-filled, non-predatory world.



Peter Ralston

of our stocks. The ocean environment is complex and its many physical, chemical, and biological aspects are not thoroughly understood. There is tremendous diversity in the ecology of many New England species. At times, the size of an adult population may be the most important determinant of stock size; at another, it may be habitat for each life stage or the current flow that occurs during larval stage; or the timing of, or the chemical stimuli necessary for spawning; or the health and location of predator stock for each life stage. This frustrates managers seeking to stabilize the stock levels of the commercial species.

We simply do not fully understand the population dynamics of a number of important species. For example, biologists have been predicting the collapse of the lobster fishery for 20 years. After year upon year of record harvests, they finally admit—in private—that they don't know what's going on.

We do know simple things, such as the importance of letting a fish grow big enough to spawn. These lead to simple, qualitative measures, such as not catching groundfish at pre-spawning age. But we certainly do not understand how species relate to one another or the functions of the ocean system that would let us fine-tune management, as critics often advocate. We tend to treat all fisheries with the same prescription rather than customizing the approach. As a result, we are not in a position to isolate and evaluate the effects of a given management action.

It is time to question whether stability may not be a false quest. Instead of using fine-tuned, expensive-to-enforce, complex plans, we should realize the appropriateness of a simple, qualitative approach.

A team at the University of Maine has developed an impressive multi-species model of the fishery using the new chaos theory. This appears to describe reality more accurately than the old, theoretical stock recruitment curves. The model clearly shows the importance of a good mix of species and ages. It also shows response to management measures such as age at capture. What it does not show is predictable results to specific controls.

This would come as little surprise to fishermen, who have lived first hand with the complexity of the system. They make their living by understanding the ecosystem in which they operate. A good flounder fisherman, for example, "thinks like a flounder." He may know many square miles of ocean bottom the way a summer person knows the rocks in front of his house. The fisherman knows the effects of the currents, tides, wind, and weather on that bottom through the seasons; he knows the feed and plankton blooms; and he knows how fish behave in those myriad conditions. He knows the dynamics of that marine world with a certainty that comes from having used the information to feed his family. He may not have the whole

pests like the raccoon—except they must not shoot them.

For other fishermen, mammals are an unwanted and unfortunate by-catch, the inevitable result of the fact that both fishermen and marine mammals are targeting the same concentrations of fish. Fishermen know that it is only possible to minimize this contact, that it is impossible to eliminate it and still keep fishing. The ocean does not lend itself to the absolutes that seem so righteous on land.

In contrast, the emotional groundswell of support for saving whales and seals comes from urban people, who view it as a motherhood issue. These are people who don't ever have to face the fact that eating beef means a cow must die; they live in an environment that is virtually free of natural risk. It is difficult for them to understand that nothing on the ocean is stable or consistent. Since there are more urban people than fishermen, and since this type of emotional argument carries more power in Congress and the press than a rational one, fishermen are ill-prepared to argue their case.

No one will quarrel with preventing needless slaughter of animals, nor with protecting an endangered species. And most people recognize the importance of predatory marine mammals in maintaining the stability of a system.

But the situation has become ludicrous. Whereas the Marine Mammals Protection Act is touted as an ecosystem management approach, in fact, it has great potential for unbalancing the environment. We now have one part of the ecosystem—fisheries—managed for wise use; at the same time, the apex predators are managed for absolute protection. It has reached the point where the latest recommendations from the Marine Mammal Commission ask fishery managers to consider the food

“Non-fishermen hold simultaneous conflicting views of a fisherman: first, he is a rapacious, greedy, technologically advanced hog; second, he is a quaint throwback to simpler times.”

requirements of marine mammals in allocating fish under management plans.

Consider the situation as described to us at *Commercial Fisheries News* by someone involved in administering the Protection Act: There will be more and more seals and whales; more interactions with fishing gear so that more fisheries are closed in order to keep the competition near zero; finally more fish will be kept from fishermen so that the growing marine mammal population may eat. One might ask if food production has any role here? Is it any wonder the fishermen are threatened?

THE MUDDLE

Fishermen and environmentalists both agree that they would like to see healthy fish stocks. But they often define the problems differently, and usually propose different management solutions. There is much to be learned by listening to the fishermen's perspective.

Fishermen, trained by years on the water, take the practical approach to management. Viewed that way, existing fisheries management is short of two critical elements: information and means.

Surprisingly little is known about many

picture, but he has learned what he needs to know and that practical knowledge could be a valuable resource for fishery managers.

Managers, however, could not use sophisticated fishery science even if they had it, because the tools for controlling fishing effort are so inadequate. Worldwide, there are few good examples of effective methods to control effort or stabilize commercial species—except possibly our lobster mystery.

Here again, the fisherman's practical reality consistently thwarts theory. A rule, it is said, must be fair to be abided by. And the first element of a fair rule is one that can be uniformly enforced. Few fisheries rules meet this test.

Say you set a quota: How do you enforce landings along the 3,000 miles of Maine coast? How do you keep one species from being called another—haddock called pollock, for example—to beat the limits? How do you control days at the dock, or number of trips, when you are dealing with a fleet as varied and dispersed as we have in New England?

To do this effectively, we would need a tremendous increase in enforcement—up from the existing few dozen federal agents from Maine to Virginia. The other alternative is draconian measures such as are being proposed for scallops, with check-in and check-out, electronic position-fixing transponders on every boat, and credit card and UPC-coded landing procedures fed into a central computer. And even then, there is no guarantee that this would stabilize the fish populations.

Another highly-touted answer to these problems is limited entry. Managers like limited entry, because it limits the number of fishermen they are trying to control. Limited entry means allowing only a set number of people to fish. Usually, this is accompanied by a saleable license. Other schemes involve individual quotas which can be bought and sold.

Limited entry would fundamentally change the business of fishing. Imagine if a young island man had to pay \$100,000 to get a lobster license to start a fishing career. Imagine if he also had to buy a comparably-priced scallop license to go scalloping in the winter. Then imagine if he had to buy quota on top of that. The days of the owner-operator would be limited indeed.

Furthermore, although limiting entry does create a privileged class who "own" the fishery, it does not control fishing effort. Effort would continue to escalate: bigger boats, more horsepower, more or larger gear. So all the gear-limiting and other effort rules would be needed too.

Fishermen react to limited entry proposals in two ways. First, almost anyone in business wants to limit the competition. Thus, there are fishermen who welcome



Nance S. Trueworthy

**“The ocean
does not lend itself
to the absolutes that
seem so righteous
on land.”**

the idea of closing the door on all new entrants. Nevertheless, the inshore fisherman in particular has always firmly opposed limited entry. The key to inshore fishing the world over is flexibility and versatility: the ability to shift from one species to another as markets or environmental or seasonal changes occur. The small boat fleet is also full of people who go in and out of the fishery throughout their life. A recent pronouncement, for example, for a 50 percent cut in groundfish effort, would, I fear, destroy once and for all the independent, small fisherman who is the backbone of island communities.

Underlying the limited entry idea are two assumptions of managers not shared by many fishermen. First, managers assume that large, single-species boats are the most efficient. Second, managers feel that fishermen would be easier to control if they became businessmen.

Maine fishermen think differently. Their business strategy is based on the environment in which they operate. They live with uncertainty, switching fisheries and gear as needed. An efficient boat for coastal Maine is an adaptable one.

Ironically, it is the fishermen businessmen, not the traditional Maine fishermen, who cause the worst stock problems. They are the ones who maximize short-term profit, amortizing their boats in three years—as opposed, for example, to matching a small-scale rig to the demands of the area, riding out the bad times with low overhead, and having the freedom to combine such quality-of-life goals as being home every night.

It is a common maxim that big business and big government go hand in hand. Unfortunately, we are seeing this evolve in fishing. The fishermen who can change the open and democratic system of management that we have are the large-scale operators. So they will prevail and the fishermen who have previously survived through their skill and knowledge on the grounds will fall behind. This bodes ill for the fishing economies of Maine.

One example close to home is the ocean quahog fishery in eastern Maine. Recently the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management council completed a plan that gave about two dozen surf clam and ocean quahog fishermen exclusive transferrable property rights to all the clams and quahogs on the East Coast. Unfortunately, because the 50 or 60 small boats that fish ocean quahogs in eastern Maine were not represented, they were permanently excluded from the fishery. They were limited out of the limited entry scheme.

The Mid-Atlantic council denied Maine's request for an exemption, fundamentally because Maine quahogs compete with the mid-Atlantic industry in the market, even though the catch is a tiny fraction of the total. Furthermore, the Maine quahogs are not even in the area considered in the biological analysis for developing the plan. And those Maine quahogs could have continued to feed 50 or 60 families for about half the year on a sustainable basis.

Are fishermen rapacious hogs, or the last of the environmentally balanced humans in western society? We have both kinds in the industry. The goal of fishery management should be to preserve the aspects that make fishing a sane and wise use of marine resources. For me, this means preserving the ability for someone to get in or out of the fishery. It means preserving fishermen's independence as owner-operators. And it means rules that favor the guy who is a skilled fisherman, rather than the guy who knows how to work the government system.

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Illustrations by Jon Luoma

FISHING

as a Foreign Language

MIKE BROWN

THE NAMES IN this lobster saga have been changed to protect the guilty. But the events and times, the trials and tribulations, all happened as surely as the live-time seagull can't sink.

The time was the early 1970s and as Joe Friday used to say, I was working the day watch out of bunko. Actually, I was a field agent in the Fisheries Technology Service of Maine's Department of Marine Resources. My job, as I saw it, was a human sacrifice between *bona fide* fishermen and the state's fishery bureaucracy.

Our small field agent group operated on the premise that one had to first get the confidence of fishermen before one could talk salt cod. We spent plenty of

personal money on six-packs of beer and countless non-paid overtime hours in foc'sles agreeing with fishermen that state fishery policy in many cases, well, sucked. We also lied like hell on our daily activity report sheets.

In one of our Narragansett Ale roundtables, two lobstermen told us that they were being audited by the IRS. That was the first I ever heard of what was to become the largest IRS SWAT team to ever hit Maine. What we were to find out later was that the lobstermen brought this tax monster upon themselves.

As most should know, the lobster business in those days was mostly cash and carry. The fishermen were paid cash daily at the dock. They, in turn, operated their

personal finances from their fat wallets. Their financial records were on matchbook covers, backs of leaflets and junkmail envelopes, and occasionally under the visors of their oily caps. The most common place to find these files of financial transactions was atop the dashboards of their pickup trucks. Veteran lobstermen could be easily identified by how high the paper tide would rise on their pickup windshields.

Greed began to creep into the lobster business in the 1960s. Lobsterboats were getting bigger and more expensive. Gear was more sophisticated and abundant. And a prolificacy of wire traps began to cover most of the lobster-producing areas of the Maine coast. With greed came its companion, jealousy. Snitches began to contact the IRS—anonously of course—to complain that some of their colleagues were not playing fair.

Heretofore, the IRS sort of looked askance at this canon of Downeast independent enterprise. The lobstermen generally figured up what they thought was their gross annual revenue, subtracted their ballpark expenses by riffling through their pickup debit dashes, and gave the IRS what they thought was fair. This was an individual decision and had nothing to do with tax tables, the law of IRS-land, or any of that tomfoolery stuff observed by other lesser informed social segments of the Republic.

Of course, this meant obvious and public disparities. Where one lobsterman paid what he thought was fair and rode about town in a cut-off 1956 Ford pickup, another might have built a new home, bought a new Chevy four-wheeler, and spent four winter weeks in sunny Florida.

Well, said the cut-off Ford guy, the reason that that sonofabitch has it made is that obviously he ain't paying a goddamn cent to Uncle Sam. The IRS in the early 1970s got a big batch of these sonofabitch letters and decided to investigate. They sent a token pre-strike force to reinforce a rather skimpy stable of resident IRS examiners with their hands full of irate fishermen.

What the IRS agents found was, to them, tax ground for declaring World War III on Maine lobstermen. The token force was reinforced. All this was unknown to me and my merry band of field agent colleagues. We also did not know that the IRS commissioner in Maine had contacted our boss, the commissioner of Marine Resources, saying that an investigation would be in progress and it would be "a sensitive public issue." The IRS commissioner lived on the Maine coast and he knew the prestige and mys-

tique associated with lobstermen. He didn't want a publicity blood bath for his department.

With that in mind, the DMR commissioner, also a very public, political person, called in his field agent day watch out of bunko and assigned me to the IRS office. My instructions were to "assist in any way the investigations," a sort of ombudsman among IRS desk jockeys, the DMR, and lobsterman rebels with a cause—the cause being 200 years of independent social structure.

I asked for half a day of my vacation time and went right home, sat down and cried. I knew this would be the end of me.



My first day in the IRS office was agony. The first audit was with Clyde.

Agent Stanley: "Well Clyde, you're a lobsterman, huh?"

I looked at Clyde sitting there in his faded Three Brothers flannel shirt out at the elbows, his green all-wool, incredibly itchy Johnson pants plastered down with bait gurry, and rubber boots with red patch stickers all over. His wallet pocket fairly bulged. I cringed.

"You're goddamn right, bub," said Clyde. It was a toboggan ride all downhill into the fishery canyons from then on.

The agent had a photostat of Clyde's state license, a lobster dealer's list of sales with Clyde's name in it, and a copy of his IRS statement in which Clyde claimed abject poverty annotated with a penciled margin note that he couldn't contribute to the IRS coffers that year. Catch him on the flip-flop.

Agent Stanley asked Clyde where his "paperwork" was that he was ordered to bring to the audit. He replied—what else?—"In the goddamn pickup, wheared ja think, bub?"

I beckoned for Stanley to follow me to the men's room. "Stan my man," I said, "I think we have a major problem here. Clyde is but a clever scout for the army to come. We'd better set some guidelines and procedures. You're not dealing with pantyhose clerks here."

The IRS staff had a conference. (Of course.) I said that they didn't even know

the lobster lingo. How in hell were they going to communicate if they didn't even speak the same language? Staff IRS asked for suggestions. I said I would try to write a lobster lingo dictionary. They thought that was a helluva good idea.

Over the next few days while trying to conjure up every provincial lobstering word connotation that I could think of from my family's history of fishermen, I also attended IRS audits.

The Bubba interview comes clearly to mind. Bubba had expense receipts although they were in an old rubber boot. No kidding. An old cut-off rubber boot stuffed with dashboard receipts.

Agent Stanley: "Bubba, I see you have taken mileage expenses several times to the 'Orland Dame.' Bubba, you can't, well, deduct for ... you know, sex."

"Gimme that matchbook cover," says Bubba. "F' Christ's sake, that ain't DAME, it's DAM! I went t'the goddamn Orland DAM f'alewives."

"What are alewives?" asked Stanley. I wanted to crawl right under the government green issue carpet.

"They's fish, f'Christ's sake, little fish with little beady eyes that I use f'bait."

"But I don't see in your, er, records where you paid for any fish at the Orland dame, er dam," persisted Stanley.

"Well, shit, the fish wa'nt running, I didn't know that. I had t'go didn't I? Go t'find out, f'Christ's sake." I signalled Stanley that we better retreat to the men's room where I suggested that Stanley wait for the Lobster Lingo Dictionary & Saltwater Thesaurus which would hopefully shed some light on Bubba's position.

Several audits began with pent-up hostility that only a lobsterman can harbor against the government. They were livid that the state had provided information to the IRS that the lobstermen considered confidential—mainly, private information on their lobster license and application forms. I made a lot of visits to the men's room during these discussions.

I rapidly finished writing the lobster lingo dictionary because we were right on the edge of World War III. The IRS had a staff meeting at their long conference table where the publication was distributed and I was asked to explain the contents. Due to circumstances later to be explained that document is no longer in my possession, but a few selected verbatim entries still vivid in my memory follow herewith:

Clorox: Sure, it's a housewives' common bleach, but it also removes the crud from the bottom of boats. If a lobsterman takes a deduction for a barrel of Clorox, he's not putting you on.

Alewives: They are bony fish that swim up rivers in spring to lay eggs. Lobstermen love them for bait. Only God knows when these fish will arrive at river dams where they are caught. Lobstermen have a legitimate claim for pickup truck expenses even if the fish don't show up. If they claim expense for the beer they drink while waiting for the fish, that probably is negotiable.

Cuttings: In the same boat with alewives. Cuttings are what's left of herring (sardines) after women cut their heads off and stuff the tails in cans. Sardine plants (factories) buy whole herring for \$2 a bushel, cut the heads off and sell them to lobstermen for \$3 a bushel as lobster bait. Fishermen have latent anger about this rip-off waste marketing so it's best not to bring it out during an audit.

Racks: These are not towel, dish, or hunting trophies. Racks are what's left of the fish after the machines get done stripping the fish of everything eatable. What's left is sold for five times the price of the whole fish in the first place. Like cuttings, don't push lobstermen on rack expenses. They don't appreciate double jeopardy.

Stuffing box: This has nothing to do with turkeys or Thanksgiving as many of you agents have believed and denied this expense on these grounds. Stuffing boxes are clever marine inventions surrounding a propeller shaft (that long pipe sticking out of the engine) where the pipe runs through a hole in the boat and is what prevents the boat from sinking. You are justified, however, in rejecting 12 stuffing boxes for one boat. Very few lobsterboats have more than one stuffing box. The other 11 would be turkeys.

Plugs: These are wood, rubber, and plastic pieces that immobilize lobster claws which on certain belligerent lobsters can be dangerous. Plugs are not household items in this instance. It is understandable that you agents are unfamiliar with plugs because restaurants immobilize lobsters with hot water after removing the plugs and before serving them as rather expensive menu entrees.

Gauges: Some of you have denied expenses for gauges thinking they were chicken roasting thermometers. Not so. They are the legal devices that measure how many lobsters a fisherman can have at the end of the day. The state changes the size of the measure so frequently that measures are becoming a major expense.

Monkeyshit: This refers to anything soft that a lobsterman uses around his boat. It could be grease for his engine, putty for his cabin windows, duct tape for his boots, snuff to tuck, and an occasional roll of toilet paper. You have to watch this one. Anything over, say, \$100 a week for monkeyshit is a bit much.

Cars: An expense claimed for 10 or 15 cars is not unreasonable. Cars in lobster lingo are sunken boxes that hold lobsters while the lobsterman tries to wait out a dealer for a better price. Dealers, in turn,

do the same thing with their "pounds" waiting for the ripe time to rip off the public, usually around the Christmas-time holidays.

Irons: These include anything forged into a device helpful to lobstermen. Baiting irons are pointy, hollow-nosed shafts used to spear baitbags and redfish racks for threading on bait strings. This is a time-saving method as tying lobster bait inside lobster traps would be a real mess. There are also personalized branding irons like the cowboys have, useful to lobstermen for two reasons. First, the state requires all lobster pots and buoys to be personally identified. And second, the brand, if it ends up in a rustler's hands, allows the lobsterman, like the cowboy, to shoot the thief without a trial.

**Agent Stanley asked
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He replied—what
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bub?"**

Meetings: Watch this one. It is a catchall phrase for most anything a lobsterman does off the water. An expense claimed, for example, of driving to the state capital to attend a meeting with lobster biologists is probably bogus. Shopping at Sears would be more likely.

Entertainment: This is a tough one because lobstermen are themselves entertainment and their very existence is probably deductible. Posing for from-away tourists at the town wharf is probably not a legitimate expense unless instructions are also given on how the tourist couldn't get there from here. This happens a lot.

Well-armed and versed in lobster lingo, the IRS agents marched forth into audit-land on much thicker soled boots. The interviews were still adversarial but at least guys like Stanley knew that monkeyshit thrown at them was nothing personal.

I was feeling quite smug with myself for being a part of the lobster peacekeeping mission until one day in the mail I received this official IRS letter requesting I report for an audit and bring all my "seafood receipts" for the past three years. There must be some mistake, I told my wife. Although I did have a few lobster traps to keep my hand on the pulse of the

industry, surely, the IRS couldn't be serious in auditing ME!

I hastily called the IRS and explained that, hell, I was working with them, a brother, and that I had only a few traps for weekend bakes and please pass this embarrassment up right away. In a voice that could have come from a cave recording, I was instructed to do as the letter (summons?) said.

My wife, my bookkeeper, had to take a day off from work, as I did, and travel to the distant IRS office. I recognized the auditor, who wanted to know what I was doing there. I asked him the same thing. After he had put a new roll of ammunition tape in his adding machine gun, he unfolded a manila file folder.

"Is this a copy of your lobster license" he asked. It surely was, said I, feeling betrayed of confidentiality by my very employers. I knew how Clyde and Bubba must have felt.

"And is this Brown name, you Brown, on this lengthy list of lobster purchases by this dealer?" asked the auditor in a spider-to-a-fly tone.

"My God, that's the same Brown name but that sure as hell ain't me!" I sputtered.

"Well, Mr. Brown, how many traps do you have and how many lobsters do you catch?"

My wife at this point had had it. "He has about five—four with rotten laths—and catches about two lobsters a week which we fight over," she said.

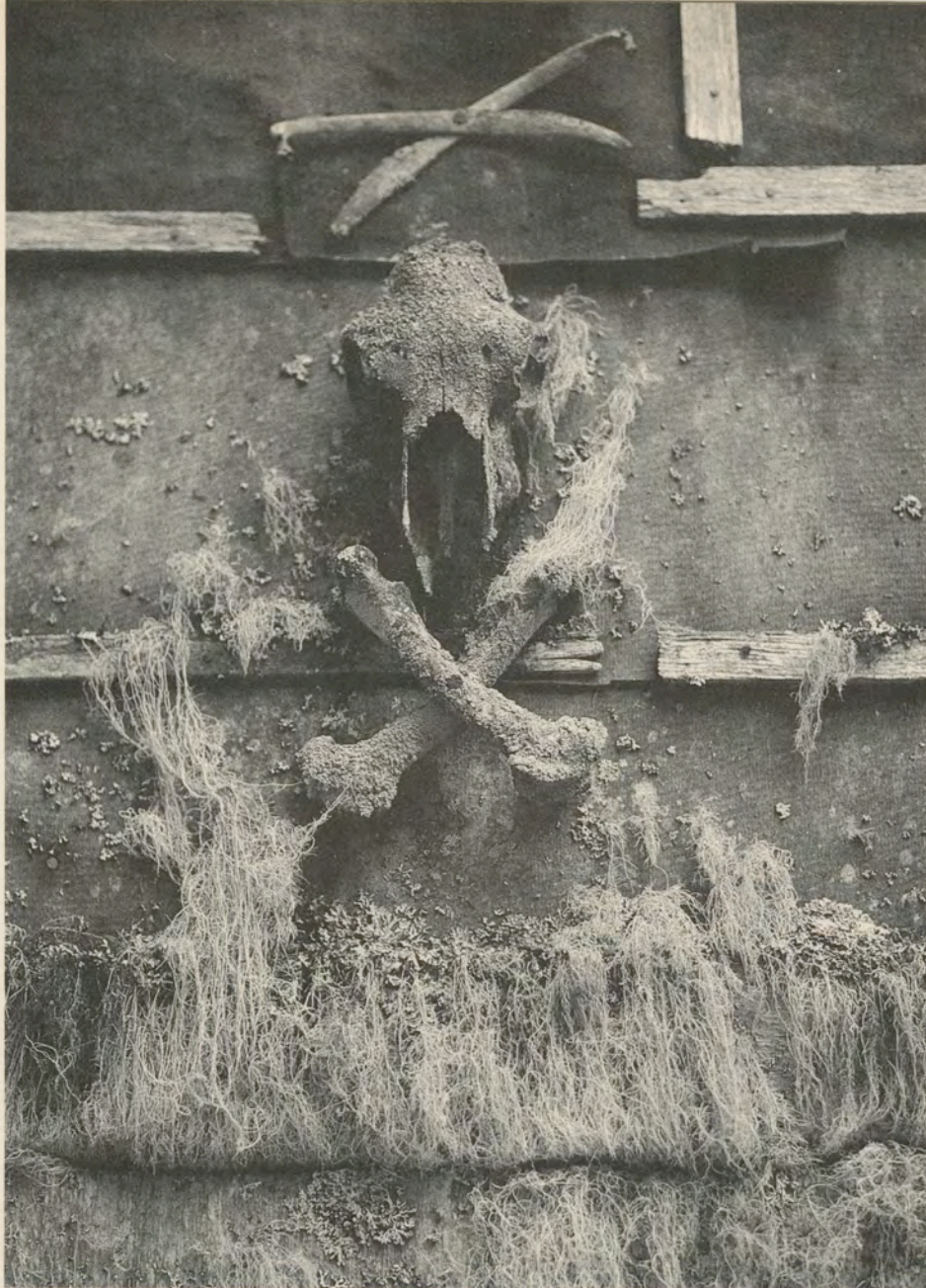
I suggested to the agent that he release me from harm's way until he could further investigate this Brown/lobster snafu. He did and later discovered that half of the lobstermen selling to this particular dealer used my very same Brown name. The other half used Elmer Fudd.

The IRS Waterloo finally ended. The government had their fill of belligerent lobstermen with receipts in rubber boots and trying to decipher waterlogged matchbook covers. Of the hundreds of audits, there were only a few civil fines and probably two or three criminal tax indictments which were later plea bargained to near death for fear of the public backlash against Maine's most sacred persons.

I was called to IRS bunker headquarters for one last time. The commissioner said his agents had shredded all their copies of the secret lobster lingo dictionaries and that I was to burn any copies that I possessed under penalty of penitentiary. He didn't have to spell out that order twice.

Bubba probably had it right when it all started. "This is just a bunch of crap," he said spitting Redman tobacco juice into a government Dixie cup.

Native-born Mainer Mike Brown is a syndicated columnist and writer ("Kittle Cargoes," The Great Lobster Chase) and longtime observer of the Maine waterfront. Recently he opened an office in Augusta to keep closer tabs on "gummint" doings.



Peter Ralston

BANDIT ISLAND

In a few places, squatters' rights are still a way of life

CLINTON TROWBRIDGE

(In deference to the overwhelming desire of islanders not to be exposed to public view, fictional names for people and places have been used in the following account. The substance remains factual, however, although certain descriptions have been modified where not to do so would have set up a sign post.) —Eds.

WHEN I HEARD the shot, I looked up just in time to see the jolt run across my wife's face. "I told you there was someone over there," I said to her, getting to my feet.

"Did you hear that?" It was our 15-year-old daughter, Michele, who had run over to where we were sitting in the field picking berries.

"Yeah," I said. "Sounded like a gunshot, didn't it? Think I'll go over and see who it is. Why don't you stay here and pick with Mummy while I'm gone?" Neither of them looked too pleased, so I added, "Don't worry. He's probably just shooting at cans or something. I'll be back before you're ready to leave."

It was the summer of 1972, and we were anchored off a lovely wild island well to the east of North Haven. Ever since we'd discovered, three summers ago, that this island was thick with cranberries, we'd made a point of coming over sometime in late August with as large a group as we could muster, to get ourselves enough berries for the winter. There were eight of us today and we hadn't been here long. I had two hours, at least, to investigate who it was potting away with what sounded to me like a pistol over on Calf Island a half a mile away. I'd seen the shack up on the shore, and for several summers I'd been meaning to go look at it. Maybe whoever it was that had fired the gun could tell me where to find the remains of the old schoolhouse. The smallest schoolhouse in the world, I'd been told. Room enough for four students and a teacher, if she was on the thin side. The island, several hundred acres large, had supported a small fishing and clamming community at one time and up until recently had boasted a pay phone, put there for the benefit of passing fishermen. The booth had been wrecked by vandals, but you could still see where the cable came up onto the shore, if you knew where to look. I didn't put much stock in that story, but I'd heard about the schoolhouse from several different sources.

The somewhat smaller island just north of Calf was actually connected to it at low tide by a sand bar, over which we had sailed that morning. According to the people I'd talked to, Calf Island had supplied all the beef for the fishing fleets that went out to the Grand Banks from here in the 19th century. Perhaps that's how it got its name, I thought, slowing down the outboard a little so as to seem more casual about my approach; the bar would have provided a convenient way of separating the calves from their mothers in the spring. I'd been up on top of the other island and seen the enormous house foundations: 40 feet by 90 feet at least, and 6 feet deep where the cellar had been. The man who'd owned both these islands back then, I'd been told, had made and lost three fortunes: cattle, fish, and then clams. At one point he'd gone to France and tried to buy the Eiffel Tower. Sure, I'd thought at the time—and if the clams hadn't run out, he'd have tried for London Bridge on his next trip. It was hard to separate truth from fiction in these parts, I had discovered, one tending to be no stranger than the other.

There was a man sitting on a rock near the shore, and two children were nearby, playing with a skiff that was tied to a hauloff. I asked if I could talk to him for a minute, and he moved his head up and down in what seemed a friendly way and yelled out something that I didn't hear. He was bare to the waist, and strapped around his jeans was a holster. "Care for some?" he said, holding out a box of thin

mints. I thanked him and took one. At first I thought he was a Negro, his skin was so dark, but now that I was closer I saw it was the combination of his almost leathery skin and close-cropped black hair that had given me that impression. "Thomas McBride," he said, getting slowly to his feet and holding his hand out. "Home's Belfast, but me and my little 'ons like it better out here."

At that moment there was a splash and then a boy's head shot out of the water next to the skiff. For the next 30 seconds there was an exchange of swear words that about used up the available supply, between the boy (who happened to be fully clothed at the time), his sister, who had jiggled the boat on him so successfully, and their father. For a moment I thought Thomas McBride was going to use his pistol on his kids, but then it was all over and we were sitting down again on the rock, eating thin mints. "Jesus! Them kids!" he sighed. "Can't never leave each other alone." The boy was about 15, I judged; the girl, still smirking, in her one-piece, faded-yellow tank suit, looked three or four years younger.

Thomas McBride was one of those lean, hungry-looking men whose whole bone structure, including the skull, was clearly visible beneath his skin. The boy and the girl, too, looked like pretty desperate characters. I thought of beating a fast retreat, but he seemed to want to talk. He held me there with his glittering eye and his thin mints and expounded on life in general and his own in particular. Belfast, many miles to the west, was too citified, he told me—"You leave three things out overnight, the next morning two of them'll be gone." He'd been living out here on Calf Island more or less year round for the past several years. The man who owned the island let him camp in the shack, so long as he didn't litter up the place too much. The clamming was good. He could make \$60, \$70 a day if he worked at it. At the end of the week, he'd load down the skiff with a ton of clams and take it over to the mainland. "Of course you have to go a bit easy," he said, noticing, I suppose, the look of alarm that crossed my face as I eyed the flimsy 12-foot boat that looked to me as if three people would make a good load for it providing there was no wind. It was five miles across the open bay to the mainland.

The people were so friendly around here. That's what he liked about it. "You see that wind break? Well, a man just gave that to me. He saw me and my girl riding in one day last February, and he said I could have it: 'cause the girl might get cold and I have no use for it.' Them's exactly his words. I went and made that little cabin out of it. Only wished I'd met him sooner. Burnt my face black going across six weeks before. It was 30 degrees below, chill factor -60. I was a damn fool to be out that day, that's for certain."



Peter Ralston

He had a whole philosophy worked out about people and seemed eager to expound it to me. "If you're nice to them, they'll be nice to you. That's how it is up here. I wish everyone was rich, even if I was poor. Now you take them rich people over on Harbor Island." (The island, I happened to know, was one of the summer retreats of one of the Rockefellers.) "My motor broke down right near their house. Well, pretty soon a woman came down to the shore and called out, 'Can I help you?'

'No ma'am,' I said.

'There's some hot coffee on the stove, if you'd like some.'

'Don't need a thing, thank you ma'am.' That's what I told her. Now I know fellers who'd make cracks about rich people: 'Look at that old son of a bitch up there.' Things like that. She doesn't like to hear that. And you wouldn't like someone doing that to you. Nor would I. Treat everybody polite. That's how I look at it. They'll be nice to you, go out of their way to help you, even. Course not everybody's like that. That's why I carry this." He patted his pistol as another man might have stroked the head of his dog. "Most everyone carries one up here. You need it for the nasty characters."

He told me he kept the pistol on him all the time in case he happened to see a squirrel. "Destructive creatures," he remarked with some fury. That was the gunshot we had heard a while ago, but he'd missed him. Also he was half expecting the crazy from Belfast to show up again. He'd been off the island for a couple of weeks last winter after he'd gotten his face frozen, and while he was gone a neighbor of his came out here and busted all his windows, threw his stove out into the snow and hacked up the kitchen table with the axe. "No reason for it. Just plain meanness. If I catch that son of a bitch around here again, I'll know what to do with him."

He offered to show me his house, and I followed behind him along a clamshell

walk he had made to it. "It's in pretty bad shape," he said over his shoulder. "Back part's all rotted away. Get a chance I'll scrounge me some boards before the cold weather sets in. Cardboard keeps her pretty tight on the inside, though. Too damn hot in there, most of the time."

It was a one-room shack about 8 feet by 10 feet, a double-decker bunk made out of driftwood along most of one wall, a single bunk in the space next to it along the other wall. There was a wood stove, a small table, two chairs and a trunk that acted as a third, a box of canned food on the floor, and two plastic milk containers next to it full of water. There was a window about two feet square to the right of the door and another one between the stove and the bunk, the glass in both of them having been replaced with plastic. About 15 feet to the left of the house as you faced it was good-sized pit about half full of tin cans and other debris. "Makes a good place, don't it?" he said, looking over at what was clearly an old cellar hole. "Just keep the mess in one spot. That's all he ever asked me to do. Nice feller. In the winter time you wouldn't even know it was there."

The children had followed us up the path, and the girl was sitting on the trunk struggling to open a can of peaches. "We don't have a garden or anything," he said, sitting down in one of the chairs. "People just come in and wreck it. We go home once a week and bring a load back with us. Two gallons of water'll last us easy. Now don't you go spilling that again, d'ye'hear?" he shouted suddenly at his son who was mixing up some Kool-aid in a paper cup. "Maybe the man would like some. Why don't you ask him, huh? Never did like the taste of water myself," he added, motioning for the boy to make him a glass.

"What do you do when you're not clamming?" I said.

"Nothing."

He said the word as if it were an occupation and didn't offer to go into more detail.

The girl, into the peaches finally, looked over at me and said, "My license is #1 and I've got \$437.50 in the bank. He doesn't have half that much," she added, looking over at her brother.

"Yep," Thomas said, letting his eyes rest on her proudly. "We got her a license and everything. I've got #2 and he's got #3. First in line for everything. That the way we do things. See these jockey shorts?" He unwrapped a package containing three of the items. "When I get done with 'em I throw 'em out and buy new. Too damn much trouble to do washing out here. Paper cups, paper plates. Just open up the cans and put 'em on the stove. That way we don't have to bother with pots either."

"Give me some of them peaches," the boy said, and his father told him to be more polite and ask his sister for them nicely. At an order from him she finally handed them over, and Thomas and his son spooned out the rest of the can with their fingers. "Now don't that taste good," he said, lighting up a cigarette and leaning back in his chair with a sigh. "All the comforts of home and none of the vexations."

I asked McBride if he knew where the foundations of the old schoolhouse were, but he said he didn't. A friend of his came out here in the fall to trap mink and he'd heard him tell of it, but he didn't spend time walking around much. If it were cold out, he'd come in here when he'd done clamming and just sit and enjoy himself. Oh, he had wood to cut and once in a while he'd go out for a squirrel, but that was about it. He hadn't come out here to kill himself.

"Don't you ever get lonely?" I asked him. He looked startled.

"I've got my little ones. They come with me most times. They like it out here. They say they do, anyway. So I bring 'em. They don't get nothing out of school. My wife thinks they're getting to be too old now to be out here alone with me like this, but I tell her that the girl's nothing for her to worry about for a few years yet, and I'll do my best to keep her brother off her as well. It's kind of a joke between us, don't you know. She such a pretty little thing."

The boy, who was playing with a box of cartridges up on the bed, guffawed, but the girl got up and walked stiffly out of the room, apparently in a snit. "There ain't too much of that out here, that's for sure," the man said leeringly. "We got to wait for that 'til we get to town, don't we, son?" The boy laughed again in a rusty sort of way, and I decided not to ask Mr. McBride any questions about his wife, which I was surprised to hear he had, or anything else along those lines.

"My daddy died last winter," he suddenly offered, just as I was beginning to make motions about leaving. "Shot himself in the head, 'cause they were going to put him in a home. Didn't quite kill him though. Not right away. We weren't very close, but it bothered me. I took a couple of months off, came out here part of the time. Didn't work and was criticized for it. Sons of bitches. What do they know about what goes through a man's head?"

I said it was about time for me to go, and he got up and followed me out of the house and back down to where my boat was tied. By way of conversation I asked him if many other people dropped in on him like this.

"Oh God, yes," he said. "Hardly a day goes by one of these big sailboats don't come in here. Now they can see by the chart there isn't enough water at low tide to float a banana skin, but maybe they can't read, I don't know. Feller came in

here the other day. Thick fog. Wanted to know if he could get out around the other side of the island. I told him he could if his boat had wings, but otherwise he's better not try. They're rocks straight across in there and there's just mud in between them when the tide's out. I told him he only had about another hour where he was and he'd better try to find his way back out the way he'd come in, whatever way that was, but he didn't listen to me. Just anchored his boat and went off in a little shell of a thing and pattered up along the beach. Well, when he got back, sure enough, his boat was leaning over on its side. Nothing to do now but hope a rock didn't punch a hole through it when she settled down. You should have heard him, though. Acted as if I'd done it to him myself, when all I'd tried to do was help him, too. Damn fools, most of them. Nice people, but..."

I thanked him for his stories and his time and pushed off. As I left I saw the girl come running over to him apparently crying about something. Over the sound of the outboard, I could hear their voices as Thomas McBride chased after his son with a stick he probably kept there for just such a purpose. Before he was out of sight, though, I saw him wave, and I waved back. I'd spent more than two hours there, and I was anxious to get back to my family.

"What happened?" said Paul, our 21-year-old, when I motored up to where they were all gathered on the beach, their pots full of berries. "We thought you were being killed. We heard all these voices and then your boat left and Mummy was sure he was going to shoot you."

"Nothing," I said. "He was perfectly friendly. A bit peculiar, maybe, but nice enough."

EPILOGUE

Thomas McBride is dead. When he lived on Calf Island during the 1970s and 1980s there were a good many other clammers camped there, as well as on the four other nearby islands. These islands, three of them large ones, were all owned by a wealthy family from out of state who seldom visited and may not have known how many squatters there were. Perhaps for that reason, the clammers increasingly became a law unto themselves; finally, they became outlaws. They broke into the cabins and helped themselves to the contents. They jacked deer and other game in and out of season. The local law enforcement was unable to control them, so some of the fishermen from a nearby island community attempted a vigilante effort themselves. But the clammers would not retreat with grace. The result were the "clamming wars," with sporadic gunfire that continued for many years.

In 1985 a former trustee of a nature conservancy group bought two of the islands to keep them from being sold to a developer. Trying a different tack, the new owner decided to reason with the clam-

mers. He suggested a meeting, and much to his surprise they accepted. He said he wanted to hear their point of view, so they told him. In essence what they said was that these were their islands. Many of them were members of families who had owned these islands in the 18th and 19th centuries, but even if they hadn't been, they would have considered these islands theirs. Using the same basic argument that the Passamaquoddy Indian Tribe had been employing so effectively, they claimed that the islands were theirs from use. They had always earned their livelihood from them. No owner from away, no matter what absurd price he had paid for them, had prior rights.

Much to their surprise, the owner of the islands accepted their reasoning. His concern was that the island be cared for. As long as the clammers proved good custodians, they could have it, he said. They could even have the cabins. He would meet with them once a year to review the situation. The men were tough characters, every one of them cut from the same pattern as Thomas McBride. But at the moment they were jovial. They would do right by him. He would have no regrets.

When they met again the following year, the owner was delighted to find that the main cabin, on the larger island, had not only been cleaned out and repaired, but that there were curtains on the windows. The owner complimented the clammers on their stewardship and renewed their "lease" for another year. Only one thing bothered him: a large radio antenna set up in one of the trees, hooked to a powerful radio. "Purely for communication between themselves and the mainland," the clammers assured him...

A few years after this truce went into effect, Calf Island was sold to a young man "from away" who bought it on the strength of an aerial tour with the real estate man, hopeful of returning it to a working sheep farm. Four months later, making his first on-site inspection, he was greeted by a group of tough-looking men. He explained that the island was his and asked the men what they were doing there. "Nothin'" one of them said. He wore a patch over one eye. The owner asked the group to leave. "Sure," said the one-eyed man, "how long you going to be here?" "A couple of hours," the owner said. "Fine," the man said. "Couple of hours is when we'll be back."

Whether the clammers will accept the sheep or enrich their diets remains to be seen. As yet the sheep have not arrived. And the clammers have not left.

Clinton Trowbridge is the author of three books and numerous articles, many of which appeared in The Christian Science Monitor. An early-retired English professor, he and his artist wife Lucy have lived in Sedgwick, Maine, since 1985. He teaches part time at the College of the Atlantic.

Cruising the **GULF OF MAINE**

Part II: Six Decades of Change Along the Coast: 1935–1990

THOMAS D. CABOT



Tom Cabot on Cross Island, April 1943

In Part I (Island Journal 1990), Boston industrialist/yachtsman Tom Cabot recounted his early sailing adventures in Massachusetts, his first cruise to Maine, at age 20, in the 17-foot TULIP, and his first family cruises along the Maine coast during the 1920s and early 1930s in chartered yachts. On one of these trips, in the emotion-charged aftermath of his young son's near drowning, he made a vow which would become lifelong agenda — to buy and care for Maine islands.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1935, after a five-week cruise in a chartered yawl from Cohasset to the St. John River in New Brunswick and back, we decided we ought to have a cruising vessel of our own. We now had four children and several nephews and friends who wanted to cruise with us, so we thought we needed a vessel which would accommodate 10 people without too much crowding. We looked at several vessels to buy second-hand, but could find none we really liked. Finally we decided to build one new. I had very firm views as to just what we wanted and made them plain to John

Alden, the famous yacht designer. He assigned responsibility to a young MIT graduate in his office.

I had been through a period of insolvency in the bottom of the Great Depression and needed to economize. Luckily, the low bid for building the vessel, not including engine and sails, came out at less than \$8,000 and the contract for construction was awarded to Harvey Gamage of South Bristol, Maine. The six-ton lead keel was poured at South Bristol in early December 1936. We sent a large British penny to be tossed in the mold for good luck.

In those days, Maine had the best men and the best woods in the world for building ships. On the shores of the Damariscotta River one could find white pine, tall and straight for masts, white oak for frames, pine or spruce for planking. Harvey Gamage, then in his early forties, was the master craftsman who prepared in his loft a pattern to the exact curvature of the designer's lines. He arranged for each heavy oaken timber to be steamed and bent, mortised and notched, for an



Launching AVELINDA, May 21, 1937, at South Bristol

exact fit in the complex framing of the finished vessel. Men skilled with the adze, the saw, the plane, and the chisel would cut the tough wood, fit the heavy parts together, and hold them in place with trenails and bronze fastenings.

The design and workmanship were both huge successes. Our vessel was built with white oak frames much heavier than Alden had recommended. The main timber was a single white oak piece more than 20 feet long and 18 inches by 24 inches in cross-section. The planking was 2-inch Philippine mahogany. She was 50 feet on deck with 5-foot draft and the center board extended the draft to 9 feet. The keel ballast was 12,500 pounds of lead within the hull. She was yawl rigged, with the hollow main mast and boom of Douglas fir and mizzen of spruce. Most unusual was the huge propeller and large engine with a geared-down transmission. The 28-inch diameter feathering propeller would push her ahead even against heavy seas. She would cruise at 8 knots, and she had lots of tank capacity for extended voyages. She also had a very large and heavy rudder and, with her long keel, she was easy to handle even in breaking seas and would hold her course remarkably well with the helm lashed.

In the fall and winter of 1936–37, we made frequent trips to Maine to oversee the building and rigging of our dream boat, which we named AVELINDA. She was launched in the spring of 1937 and made her maiden voyage along the Maine coast in May. With the exception of a 2-1/2-year stint during World War II when she was requisitioned by the U.S. Navy for service as an icebreaker in Casco Bay, she was our summer home for 40 years. The large blue yawl with tall wooden masts got

to be known and welcomed in many little harbors down east.

All the while I had not forgotten my interest in buying islands, first stirred that night in the summer of 1931 after my young son's near drowning at our anchorage in the Barred Islands, in East Penobscot Bay. In the beautiful dawn, after a chilly all-night vigil on deck, I was near weeping with emotion. It seemed the most beautiful dawn I had ever witnessed, and I resolved then and there to try to buy the surrounding islets.

On my return to the office I learned that the islets were owned by a man named Smith in Chelsea. I wrote him and received a polite reply that he had bought the islands for \$100 with the assistance of his cousins, the Porters (of nearby Great Spruce Head Island), and he felt obligated to offer the islands first to them. They wanted to have them sold to another set of cousins, the Schaffler family, who are still the present owners after nearly 60 years.

Being frustrated in my attempt to buy the Barred Islands, I learned that Butter Island and the two northernmost of the Barred, which are connected to Butter by a half-tide bar, were perhaps for sale. The Harriman brothers, who had bought these islands in 1895, were still alive, but they asked a price that was beyond my means. However, they both died soon thereafter and 10 years later I was able to buy Butter Island and the two connecting islets from the estate.

The first island I actually acquired was not in Penobscot Bay at all but well downeast — Cross Island in Machias Bay. That purchase came about in 1942 because of a conversation with a lobster fisherman who was a squatter on the island. He told us that a hunting guide from Machias was negotiating to buy not only Cross Island but also six nearby islets for only \$2,700 from Pejeboscot Paper Company. The guide's intention was to bring hunters there throughout the year, claiming that the deer were a private herd. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, this idea looked less promising to the guide and I was able to take his place in the purchase.

When we bought Cross, it was occupied by about 40 Navy men living in the modern lifesaving station that was built in 1917 to replace an earlier surfboat station. In April of that year, my son Tom, Jr., who was designing radars at MIT as a naval officer, had a three-day holiday. He and I went by night train to Machias to visit the island and brought with us a folding boat which we had bought in Germany before the war. It was a seaworthy kayak bearing a swastika emblem. As we unfolded the boat beside the river it took some time to convince the gathering crowd that we weren't spies. We had notified the Navy men on the island that we were coming, but the security people

in town had no notice and were ready to arrest us.

It started snowing as we paddled down the river and there were steep seas in the bay with the outgoing tide. A picket boat from the island came to greet us. We had difficulty persuading the crew to let us go on rather than risk our overturning in an attempt to tow us or take us aboard. When safely landed on an island beach, we spent the night in a deserted shack and all the next day explored the shores by walking all the way around the island. We were stopped innumerable times by raw recruits of the Navy patrols. They greeted us with orders to hold up our hands while they kept us covered with side arms. Then each of us, separately, had to place our credentials on a rock to be examined before we were allowed to go on.

In the course of this long walk, we visited the two Dobbins brothers who lived on opposite sides of Cross and had been feuding for years over the water rights in which they could place their lobster traps. We insisted that they could continue to occupy their cabins only if they stopped feuding and would agree to act as caretakers. This would mean paying \$1 a year rent for their respective cabins, thus voiding the question of squatters' rights. For some years thereafter the two brothers continued to live peacefully on the island and we soon became good friends. They taught me a lot about the people of the sea and about the early glories of that part of the coast.

Before leaving, we had a chance to visit the sea cave in the cliffs of the outer shore and the water-filled hole of an abandoned copper mine. We saw many evidences of former inhabitants who had fished and farmed there or worked in the copper mine on Outer Doubleshot Island nearby. Sheep belonging to a retired sea captain were pastured on the grassy shores and the interior woods were accessible by passable roads needed for recent logging. We learned that in the 19th century several families had lived on the island and done well by fishing, farming, mining copper, and selling supplies to the coasting schooners that sought shelter in the coves.

My interest in collecting islands continued to grow and I soon got the reputation for being willing to pay \$100 for any good-sized island with woods on it. I had many offers, and before 1950 I was able to accumulate 41 nominal islands at a total cost of less than \$5,000. To be sure, less than half of them were wooded and the majority were only skerries or ledges. The total area of these islands was about four square miles and they must have had more than a score of miles of shorefront.

Although I had not originally set out to buy islands with the goal of preserving the primeval character of the Maine coast—in the 1940s that was hardly an issue—as



Kilwood schooner, Penobscot Bay

the years progressed, preservation became an increasingly important concern. My involvement in this activity began as the chance result of an effort to buy real estate farther west along the coast. One foggy morning, my wife and I landed the AVELINDA on the north shore of Swan's Island and walked a mile along the shore through woods that showed no sign of recent human use. We came to a fisherman's cottage, where an elderly man was repairing lobster traps. We asked him about the ownership of the land, and he told us that it had been sold a few weeks before by a local ne'er-do-well for a few hundred dollars, and that a real estate man from Bar Harbor had resold it for several thousand dollars. When we expressed regret that we hadn't had a chance to put in a bid, he said that his own house was for sale and he wanted to show us through it. We weren't looking for a house, but when he mentioned that there were 80 acres on Swan's Island plus several islets and a part ownership of Buckle Island that went with the property, we were more interested. He quoted a price he got from a real estate man, and it seemed reasonable to us. Having no use for the house and not wanting to deprive the lobsterman of its use, we thanked him and went our way.

A day or two later at a cocktail party, Mrs. David Rockefeller asked me if I would sell her one of my islands. I declined, but offered to buy her one, with Buckle Island in mind. I told her of my conversation with the lobsterman and of my intention to return to make a deal with him, but I didn't expect her to get there ahead of me. When I found she had been to see him, I feared the worst, but the lobsterman stuck to his offer, and I was able to get the property, giving him a lease-back to the house free of charge. Thus, Mrs. Rockefeller got her island, and soon began to buy a good deal of



Launching the infamous "Nazi" folding boat, Cross Island, 1942



Son Louis at the helm, circa 1931



Pet raven on Ernest Joy at Kent Island

other undeveloped shorefront nearby. As prices rose, she asked my advice about how we could save the coast, and I recommended voluntary scenic easements as one alternative, suggesting that this was probably the cheapest and most permanent way of preserving the primeval quality of undeveloped land.

It is an old idea and the advantage, as compared with deeding to a conservation agency in fee, is that the owner retains the title and sole right of access if he wishes. He pays taxes only on the remainder value and not on the development value, which may be worth about 80 percent of the total. For an owner who wants to hold land for sentiment rather than a profitable sale, this is an advantage to him personally and to his family and friends.

Mrs. Rockefeller took my recommendation seriously and looked into it with her lawyer. Our conversation led eventually to the formation, in 1970, of the

Maine Coast Heritage Trust, which has been so effective in preserving the Maine Coast. It was my pleasure to serve as its first vice president.

Collecting the islands was fun and we took much joy in the ownership and pride in giving them away. Nearly all of them now belong to the federal and state governments, and the best of them are held forever by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior.

We still own Butter Island and the two connecting islets in the family, but they have been restricted as to development and are held in a non-profit corporation. We are expecting that a commemorative stone bench or some other suitable memorial will be erected on the high point on the east side of the island after my wife Virginia and I are deceased.

Owning islands and cruising in AVELINDA went hand in hand. Although AVELINDA's many years of cruising included several offshore passages, visiting the navigable rivers and all the little gunkholes into which we could float was a more varied fun and a more varied challenge—particularly those way down east, where our island collecting had begun. Our ship came to be expected year after year in the long reaches and tributary lakes of the St. John River above the reversing falls; in the many rivers and harbors of the Passamaquoddy and Cobscook bays, where we met great challenges; in Haycock Harbor above its perilously narrow entrance; in Cutler, where we were most at home at our own Cross Island and its many coves; in the anchorages of Machias Bay and its two great rivers; or in Little Kennebec Bay. Almost on her own AVELINDA knew the way into the Cow's Yard off Head Harbor and, if the tide was right, through the back channel to Jonesport where we also felt at home and usually bought supplies. We

had many favorite anchorages among the wild islands between Moose Peak and Petit Manan light. Before the bridge was built, we used to pass through Moosabec Reach, but our opposing its construction was of no avail and the clearance was far too low for AVELINDA's mast. Of course we nearly always passed through Roque Island Harbor and often visited friends there and passed through one of the two narrow western entrances to the lovely curved beach of fine white sand where we could swim or dig a mess of huge sea clams for a delicious chowder.

Of course we are not proud of the misadventures we and our vessels survived. We were sometimes a bit foolhardy and we had a lot to learn. In 1937, AVELINDA's first summer, we were returning from a cruise to the Magdalen Islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence when a friendly yachtsman in Quoddy Bay dared us to take our yacht through the reversing falls of Cobscook Bay with the flood, as he himself had done. We were told to hug the point to port lest we be carried on to the ledge below. Too late I realized there was another ledge off the point with the rapid water falling over it at least six feet into the swirl beyond. No longer was it possible to pass to the right around it, but to the left was a vee of heavy water flowing between the ledge and the point. With a yell for full left rudder and full throttle we passed through the vee without touching and into the backwave that covered our deck and filled our cockpit.

Perhaps the most dramatic incident in the life of the old AVELINDA was when she got "hung by the tail" in Haycock Harbor. Haycock is our favorite gunkhole and there was hardly a year in our five decades of cruising that we didn't spend a night there at least once. I think our 50-foot yawl was the largest vessel that ever entered there and in all those years we never found another yacht inside. The outer harbor has needle-sharp ledges on either side of the channel that are invisible at high tide, and the passage through the shingle beach to shelter being only a tiny shallow stream at low tide, one must approach when the tide is nearly high. There is a wooden pile near the beach used by a local lobsterman to tie to while waiting for high tide, but it is hardly suitable for a vessel like AVELINDA. Any vessel must maintain steerageway in the narrow passage through the beach and, if the tide is flooding, this means a scary forward speed. Once inside, there are cliffs to starboard and shoals to port with just room enough for a 50-foot vessel to swing at anchor. There is plenty of depth near the cliff—about nine feet at low tide.

One summer day 30-odd years ago, AVELINDA entered the inner harbor at noon, about an hour before high tide, turned around to face the entrance and anchored near the cliff. The youngsters aboard had challenged the adults to a



Shipmates Waldo Holcombe and Sam Binnian at Port Clyde waiting out the tide

game of scouting on our favorite point west of the entrance. While the game was in progress there was suddenly a cry from a sharp-eyed youngster that AVELINDA's mast was awry. We rushed for the dinghy but arrived aboard too late. The vessel had swung around at high tide when the current reversed from flood to ebb and her skeg had caught in a cleft of the cliff. We couldn't get it out. The stern was already several inches above the waterline and the tide had about 18 inches more to fall.

We became alarmed that the outgoing current against the bow would twist off the skeg and destroy the rudder so we set bower anchors to hold the bow firm and prevent it from turning in either direction. Then, as the bow sank and the skeg came above the water, we worried that the vessel might roll over sideways. There were very tall spruce trees above the cliff so, hoisting lines to the masthead and climbing high into several of the tallest trees, we pulled the lines taut so the vessel couldn't roll in either direction. Unfortunately we didn't mark at the base to which trees we had tied the lines.

By six o'clock everything loose in the vessel, including the bilge-water, had fallen into the forecabin and filled the chain locker. Our oldest passenger was propped up in her bunk head up at 45 degrees and unable to move. We couldn't get a proper supper and had been too busy to take lunch. At nine o'clock it started to rain and by ten it was pouring. The keel was in the rising water and there was no longer a danger of rolling over. But how could we untie those lines made fast high in trees!! It was pitch black and we didn't know which trees to climb. All hands spent the next two hours climbing like monkeys among the branches and groping for knots in the heavy rain. By midnight the vessel was level enough to start the stove and serve hot drinks. By one o'clock, as the tide turned, the skeg came



Picking flowers on Montserrat Hill, Butter Island, looking west toward Camden, 1943

free. It took until noon the next day to clean up the vessel and leave harbor on the next high tide.

There are other skippers of many years experience who have no such tales to tell. If one's enjoyment of cruising comes from showing a fine yacht to other yachtsmen, or from sailing only between yacht clubs by well travelled and buoyed passages, or from riding in the cockpit while a professional operates the yacht in waters where he has often been, it is easy to avoid such misadventures. Our interest was in exploring the inlets and islets and meeting those who live and work by the sea.

Any avid sailor who has been to Maine can tell why that coast is so attractive to those who like to cruise. It is not just the challenge of the weather and the rocky shores, nor the beauty of the unspoiled islands and the variety provided by the ebb and flow of the tide; nor is it just the independence and self-reliance of Maine people, nor their wit and good humor and peculiar idiom and accent, nor sense of timelessness. All these help, but the evidence of hardships conquered and dangers averted makes the people seem heroic. Many able professional authors have attempted to capture the spirit of Maine. The people are unique. Even after a lifetime in the state, those not born there are identifiable and not entirely accepted by those who are. It is not just the separation of summerfolk from year-round residents, nor is it any form of snobbery; it is more that the native fisherman or farmer wants to preserve his independence and not become a cook, caretaker, or choreman for someone who was not his schoolmate. Any visitor who fails to understand this will not get a full measure of enjoyment from his visit.

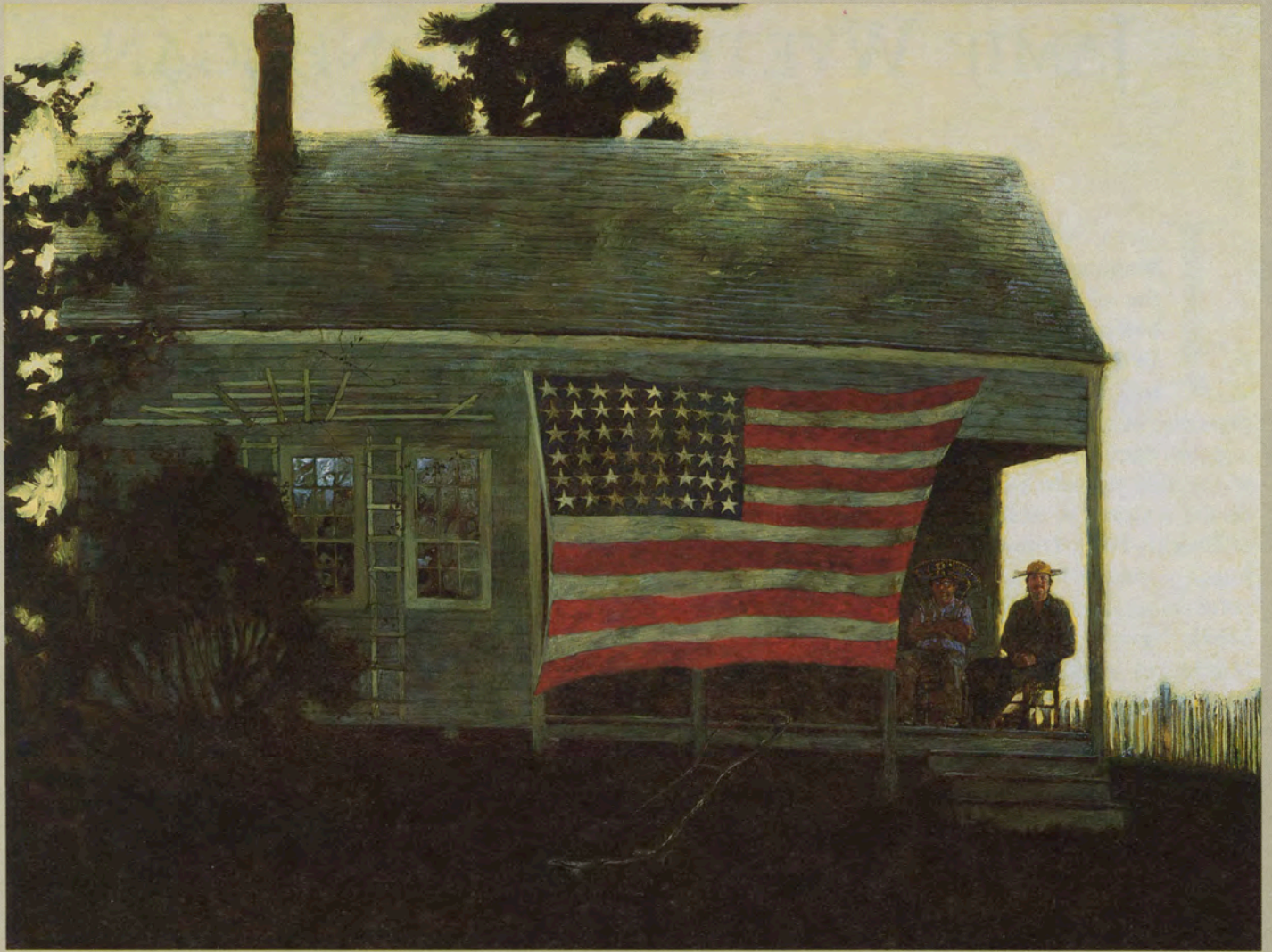
Even in such proximity to the islands, cruising on the coast or living on a yacht

gives one a rather one-sided view of island life, and it was not until we retired to live on Swan's Island that we felt we really knew the islands well. As we approached the age of 90, we realized that we were getting too old to handle a sailing vessel without help. We had a college boy as a helper for two or three years, but in 1983 decided the time had come to "swallow the anchor." We bought a lot on the end of Garden Point between Buckle Harbor and Garden Cove of Swan's Island, across Orono Narrows from Orono Island, not far from where the old lobsterman had first sold us his house and acreage.

It is a beautiful spot with a view through the trees at the water in all directions. We are in a grove of red oak, huge trees more than two centuries old, with young spruce, birch, and poplar growing among them. The sailing yachts and fishing boats pass us through the channels that for millennia were used by the Indians in their canoes of white birch bark. The beach of clam shells shows that they camped on our point to feast on shellfish from the coves on either side.

The puritan work ethic is still strong on Swan's Island and there is a tradition of cooperation and mutual respect among the islanders. The selectmen are all fishermen and the island is by and for the year-round islanders. There is more honesty and less violence than we have found elsewhere. It is a good place to come ashore, to live out our final years of a century of change and changelessness along the Maine coast.

The full accounting of Tom Cabot's seven decades of cruising the Maine coast is told in his new book AVELINDA: The Legacy of a Yankee Yachtsman, jointly published by Island Institute and Tilbury House in the Fall of 1991.



Islanders, 1990

JAMIE WYETH ON MONHEGAN

"When I moved to Monhegan I decided I was not going to paint big surf and such. Not that it can't be done. Homer certainly did it wonderfully. But it's easy to fall into a trap because Maine is so beautiful. Yet, that emotion can be so corrupted.

"I think Maine has produced the worst art of any state in the union. There are so many standard motifs that people grab onto. I think Maine is much more interesting and has much more depth than what's on the surface. It's not the fault of Maine that the clichés have been done so much. The tough thing in Maine is to get through that stuff."

J.B.W.

JAMIE WYETH ON MONHEGAN

RICHARD McLANATHAN

JAMES BROWNING WYETH first came to Monhegan Island alone at 15, and there found the wildness and a pattern of life reduced to its basics that have fascinated him ever since. Despite summer visitors, in island life essentials still prevail over superficials. The constant presence of the open sea, the necessary and demanding awareness of the direction of the wind and the set of the tide provide a far different rhythm to life than do the seasonal successions and the gentler pastoralism of Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, Jamie's winter home. Jamie reflects and expresses that bleak grandeur in his Monhegan works. "It is still a working island," he told me, "not just a resort or tourist attraction. . . Islanders are edgy people, not sweet. They are hardworking and live a hard life." Though most of the small, weatherbeaten houses and other buildings are old, they look vulnerably impermanent compared to the rocky, windswept landscape that provides their setting.

It was traditional for the Wyeth family to go to Maine each summer, first to Port Clyde where N. C. Wyeth, Jamie's grandfather, loved to paint; then later to a farm in Cushing after his father Andrew married Betsy James. The thinner, cooler light, and the landscape, anchored in its undergirding of ledge, became a part of Jamie's experience as it had of the previous two generations of his family. Island life is mainland coastal life in a more intense degree. Jamie was prepared to understand it and make the most of it.

Every artist starts out by making choices—of subject, medium, models, habits of work, and style. But for Jamie, what might have, in other circumstances, been a primary choice was already a given. He was born into an extraordinary family of imaginative, gifted, and lively people; dedicated to the arts, including music and literature. All shared an intense interest in history, were energized by the exchange of ideas, and lived active and vivid lives. Chadds Ford and coastal Maine were Jamie's heritage, as was the three-generation artistic tradition, starting when Howard Pyle first trained his grandfather, N. C., and continuing through his father, Andrew, and his aunt, Carolyn.

"I focus on my birthright," Jamie told me. "I find it impossible to work in a place I've never been before, or have only visited. There all I see is externals. What does

interest me is a tree or a rock that I've known since childhood. I don't go looking for 'interesting' faces. I'm interested in the faces of people I've grown up with. I just want to dig deeper and deeper into what I was born into. I want to squeeze it dry."

The result is an intensity of realization and expression that gives an almost archetypal quality to his images. For example, the looming form of the towing bit from the wreck of the D.T. SHERIDAN on Monhegan's outer shores that appears in several paintings, takes on an almost

totemic significance. So does the whale's jaw-bone in the nude of Orca, in which the detail of the wristwatch almost jarringly reminds us that this is the portrait of a contemporary boy, Orca Bates of Manana Island, facing present problems of growing up in a technological world at far remove from the gritty but remote realities of island life.

In the Orca pictures there is a harking back to the romantic idea of man in a state of nature, of primal innocence. After having attended the island school along with five other pupils, Orca had to go to the mainland to continue his education, like all Monhegan students above the eighth grade. There his understanding of the ways of seagulls and fishermen doesn't count for much. He is, for the first time in his life, a part of a larger community, with its own inevitable demands on top of those of the never easy transition into young manhood. One thinks of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, and remembers the problems faced by Kipling's Kim in St. Xavier in Partibus. All this lies behind the Orca paintings, with overtones of the loss of island freedoms and necessary but painful compromise with the seemingly unfeeling demands of modern society.

Jamie explores the world on Monhegan as Thoreau explored the world on the shores of Walden Pond: intimately and intensively. In Jamie's work, as in his father's, there is a subtle and feeling use of a vernacular idiom and a powerfully focused energy that leads beyond what might be merely a picturesque regionalism to a revelation of universals—Blake's "world in a grain of sand," Emily Dickinson's "shaft of light." Though differing in their personalities and approaches, both artists achieve a timelessness that lends a grave dignity to their statements and places them outside the trends of shift-



Julia Dean (2)

ing fashion and the pursuit of novelty that have prevailed in the arts in recent years.

If some of the art world has found it difficult to come to terms with the Wyeth tradition, the problem lies in the fact that both Jamie and his father are representational artists. Some see comfortingly identifiable objects and stop there. In that case, nostalgia and sentimentality supplied by the viewer discharge a warm cloud of wishfulness that obscures the experience the painting offers and that interferes with the dialogue between viewer and artist that constitutes the vital experience of the arts, the life-enhancement that Berenson considered the difference between an art of superficial appeal and an art of fullness, which can communicate across broad disparities of experience, culture, and time.

"It's walking a tightrope to be a representational artist painting in Maine," Jamie said. He might well have added Chadds Ford also. One can easily veer toward picturesqueness or cliché. But the intensity of vision of both Andrew and Jamie eliminates this danger. The elder and younger Wyeth are distinctly different artists. They look at things from different points of view as well as from different viewpoints. They choose subjects differently and for different reasons. Although both have great technical virtuosity, they handle paint differently: Jamie with much of the gusto for impasto that his grandfather showed (though in an entirely dissimilar manner), Andrew with haiku-like delicacy and reserve. Both are masters of their chosen media.

Their use of color is also distinct. Andrew's palette is severely limited, with the result that an occasional accent sings out with extraordinary effect, even though, on examination, the accent color itself is muted and tells by calculated and controlled contrast rather than by obvious brilliance. Jamie, on the other hand, often allows himself a greater range of color, although he carefully adjusts that range to the subject at hand and to the mood that illumines or undershadows it. Both father and son tend to be allusive, as shown by the titles of their paintings, implying that there is more to the picture than at first meets the eye and inviting the further looking that always proves rewarding, and sometimes surprising.

Jamie likes to juxtapose unlikely objects, or view familiar things in a way to make them appear objects of wonder. He uses more contrast, often modelling down almost to black, as in the view of Manana against which Orca stands silhouetted like the youthful hero of a Russian folktale. Here the artist's palette is limited to an almost black-to-white scale, suggesting the raw cold of the island winter and the isolation of the boy's figure.

Jamie seems to be an instinctive portraitist, an heir of both Gilbert Stuart at some remove, and, at closer range, of Thomas Eakins, a proud and admirable tradi-

tion. But Jamie also treats animal subjects as portraits, (indeed, these are some of his best known paintings) and seeks to express their essence emphatically. The result is a sense of presence, of vitality and individuation resulting from his capacity both for analytical observation and empathic projection. No one has ever better expressed the orneriness, the reptilian rapacity, and the superb adaptation to their environment of his seagulls, with their cold, baleful eyes.

Jamie has also inherited from Howard Pyle's inspired Brandywine tradition a distinctive sense of composition, based on a feeling both for the abstract principles of order and for the emotional nuance that can be

expressed by its subtle management. Notice the cool geometry of *Breakfast at Sea*, for example, with its feeling of isolation, loneliness, and alienation. Jamie is able to infuse even inanimate objects with a suggestion of personality, as in *Wolfbane*, with its beautifully painted still life of a hat, which, as he said, "is really a portrait of my wife, Phyllis."

For Jamie, as for the rest of his family, a painting is also the record of the process that produced it. As we look at one of his pictures, we can see the strokes of the brush that constructed it. The touches are vigorous and direct. Just as in *Giant Clam* he has recorded the layers of growth of the shell of the enormous

bivalve, the strokes of his brush are the record of the growth of the painting. As we look at it, we can, in a small but still significant way, vicariously participate in the act of creation of which the finished picture is a vital demonstration. The energy of the process remains inherent, and, as with Andrew, the tactile values are always there.

There is a unity of vision and an intensity of experience in Jamie's mature work to which the Monhegan environment, with its powerful essentiality, has substantially contributed. It can be sensed in all of the paintings illustrated here, but *Sea Star* is a particularly interesting example. It is more than a confirmation of the effectiveness of the yearling's protective coloration, though it is that also. The gull, the starfish, the shells, the sand, and the pebbles—even the frame—merge into a totality. The parts are clearly distinguishable, but the sense of a multifarious whole is still more compelling. As Jamie observed, "Islands are unique. There man's relation to the world changes..." As we look at his paintings, we also share an awareness of that change.

Richard McLanathan characterizes himself as "a writer, tree farmer, and former museum curator and director who lives on the Maine coast." This unassuming description belies a distinguished 50-year career as a scholar, art editor, museum director, and consultant. A former trustee of the Brandywine Museum in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, he is author of *The Brandywine Heritage* (1971), and is a recognized authority on the Wyeth tradition.





Breakfast at Sea, 1984

“Everyone thinks of these as lovely bucolic islands. Sleepy people and all that. But there are terrible anxieties in these places, too. There’s isolation in island life, isolation from each other, a kind of alienation which comes from the environment. In retrospect, I realize what motivated me to paint *Breakfast at Sea* was that there was a period of a lot of divorces on Monhegan that can happen in any small town. The wives were looking at their lives and asking, ‘Do I want to continue living out here?’ But on an island it was critical, because all the young people were leaving. And there was a real sense of alarm among the older islanders. ‘Are we going to survive?’”



Wolfbane, 1984

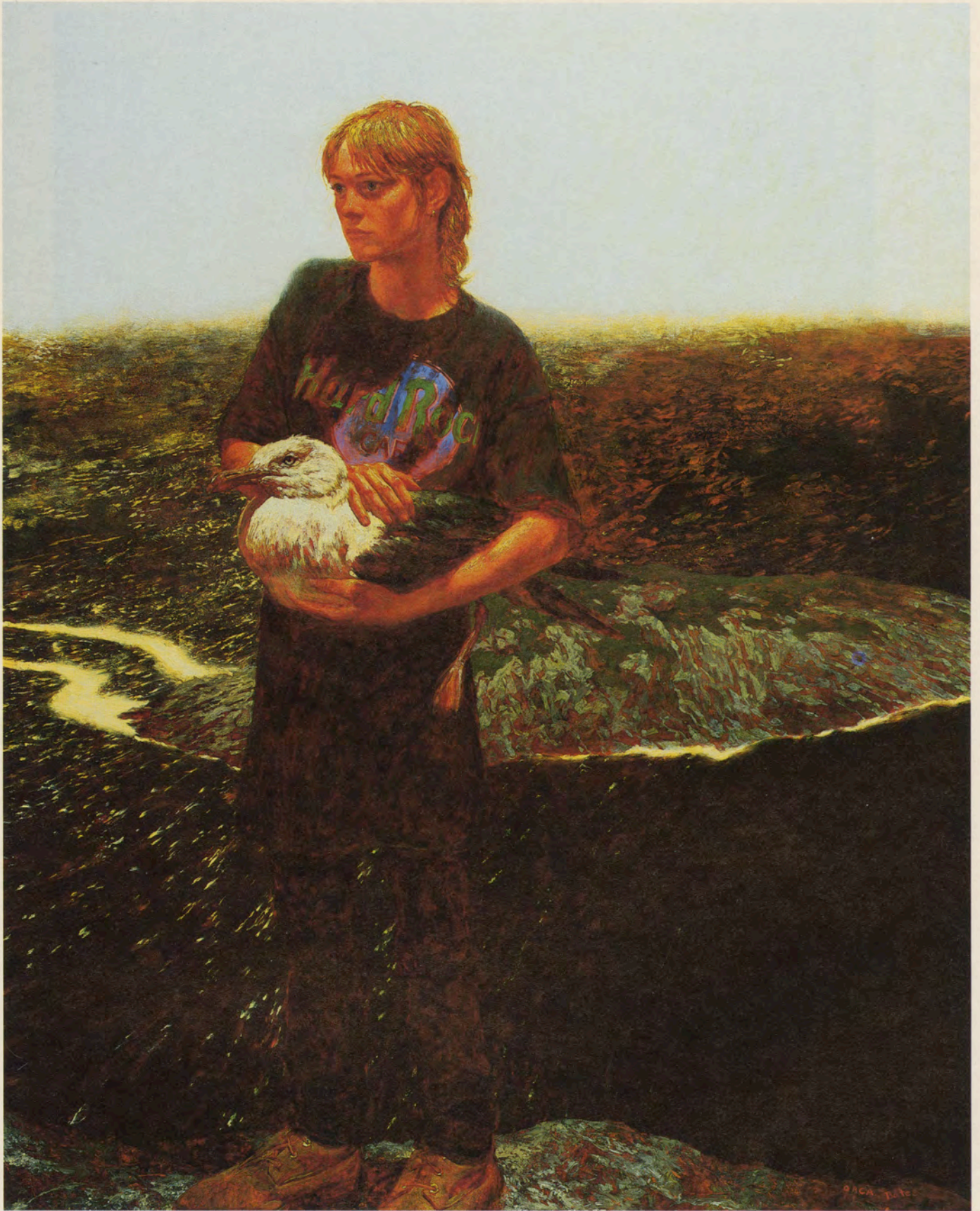


Sea Star, 1986

“You look at most paintings of gulls and they look like doves. If you really look at a gull, it is a beautiful bird, but it is a scavenger. It’s a mean, tough bird. To me they’re the sea more than anything else. The eye of a gull, you could paint a million seascapes and you don’t get the same sense of those eyes looking at you. They’re reptilian really.”



Giant Clam, 1977

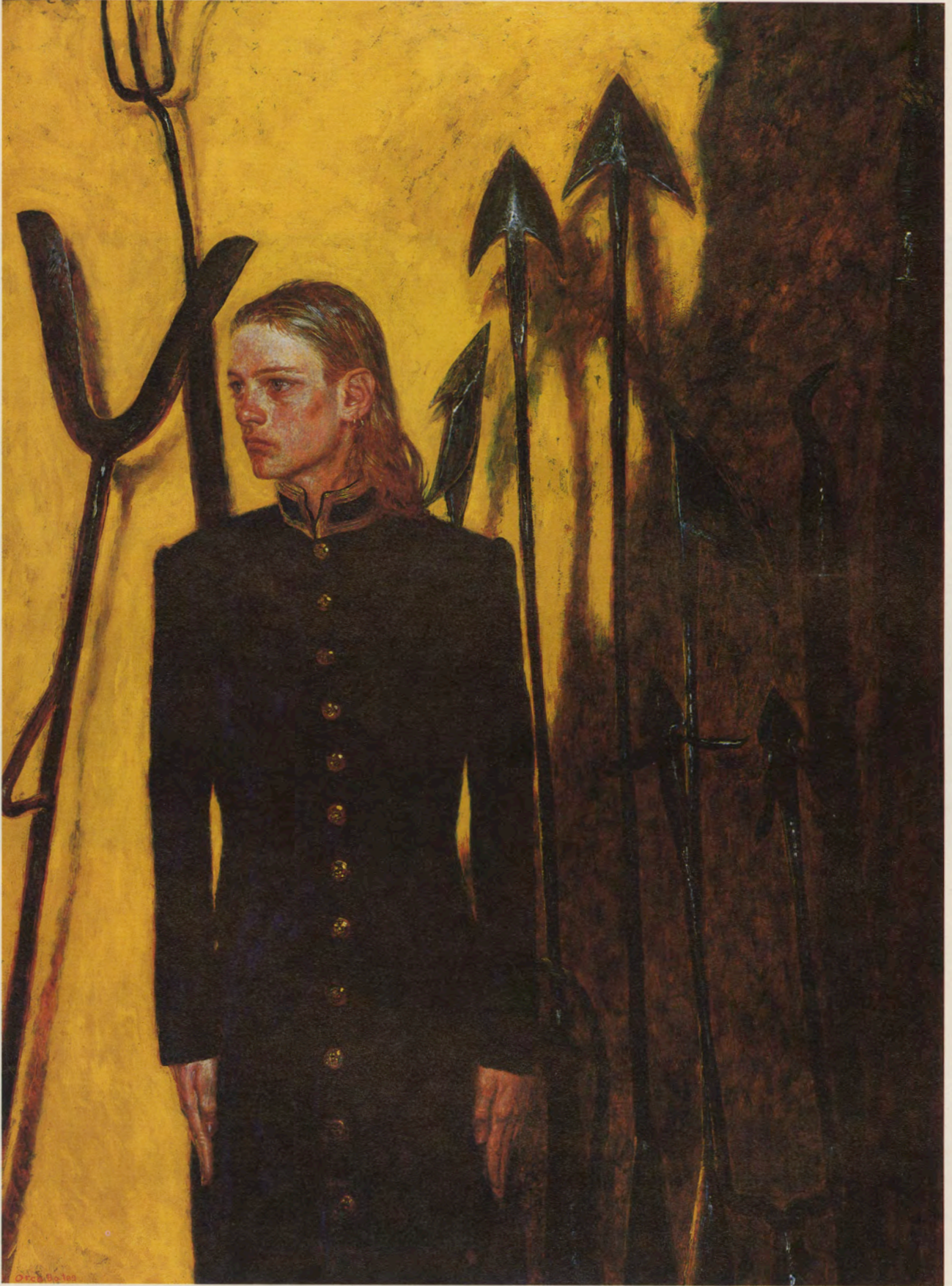


Portrait of Orca Bates, 1989

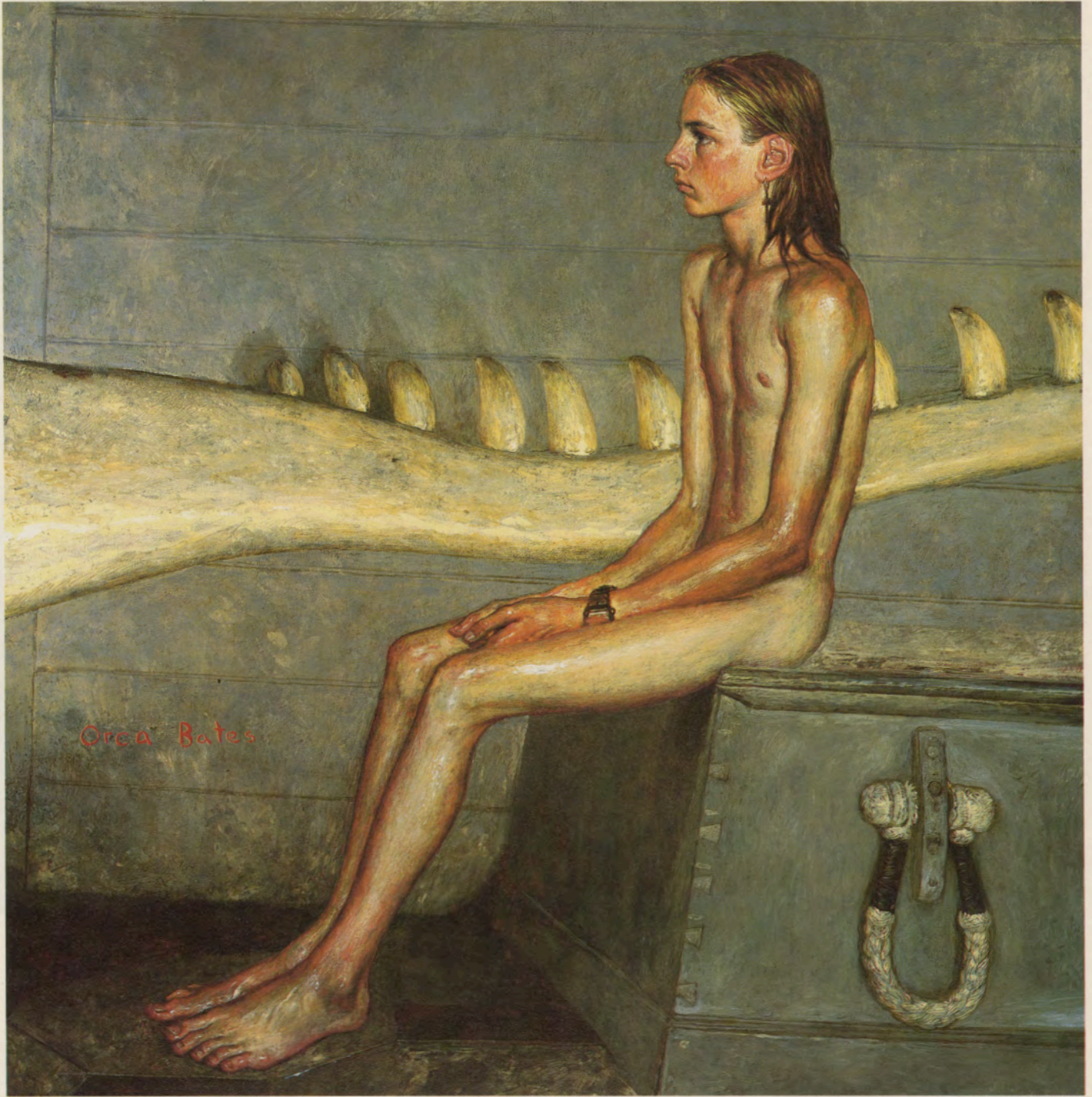


Orca in Winter, 1990

“Orca is a true island child – at home with gulls, rocks, and seaweed. He was born on Manana, the treeless rock behind him. He belongs to it; he is part of that place.”

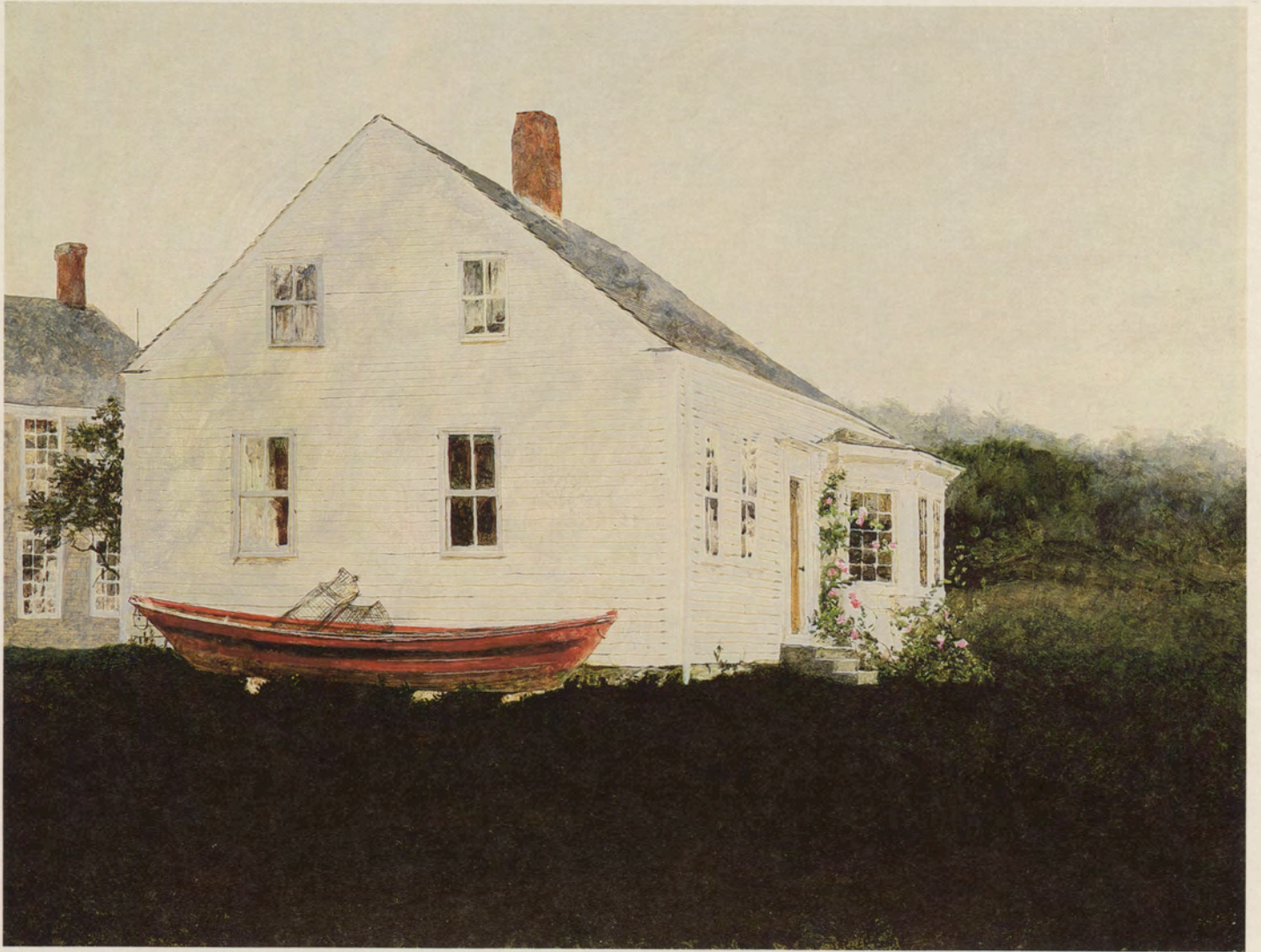


Orca, 1990



Orca Bates, 1990

“Orca is solitary and unruly. It’s hard for him to work with people. He went to school on Monhegan up to the eighth grade where there were only five pupils.”



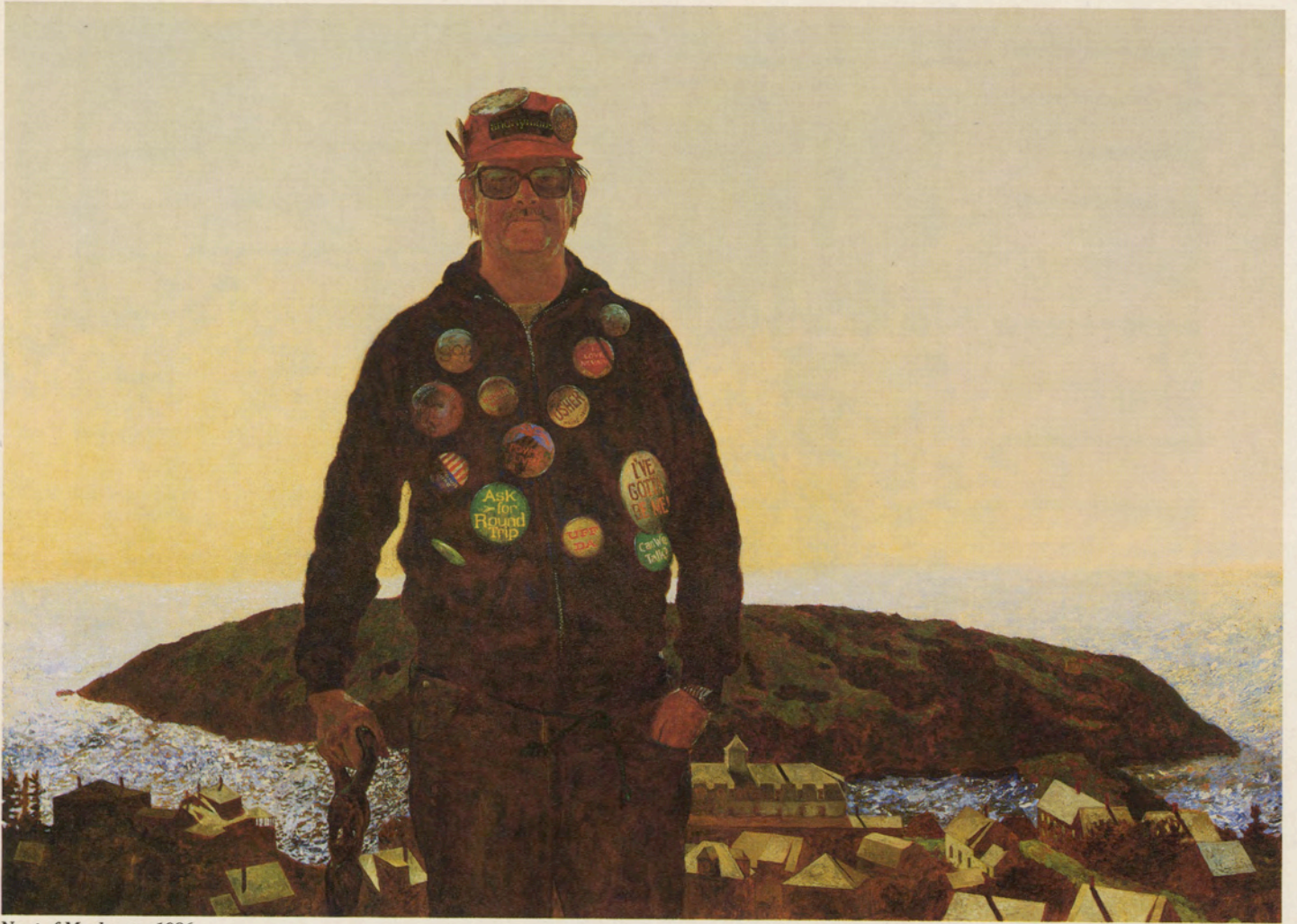
Fog Bound Island, 1988

“Houses on the island are of as much interest as the people. To me, they’re portraits. They’re hanging on as tenuously as the people are. Unlike buildings in Pennsylvania which almost grow out of the earth, I always feel that if a big wind comes, everything would be just swept away.”



Milk of Magnesia, 1990

“That blue Milk of Magnesia glass is all over the beaches I’ve walked; it’s everywhere, it seems. Maine people must have drunk an inordinate amount of Milk of Magnesia.”



Neat of Monhegan, 1986



Scotia Prince, 1987

“Every fall a group of islanders go on a trip. It’s the first time off after the summer people leave, and what do they do but go out on the SCOTIA PRINCE and come by Monhegan and all go up on deck and look at the island. Then there’s the whole thing with the gulls. The way we must look to them. Looking at the ship going by from their world on the ledge.”

“When it goes by at night, all lit up with the gambling going on out to sea, it’s weird; it’s unreal, like a piece of cardboard in a movie set all lit up.”

“Last fall I’d walk down into town early in the morning. There were gulls all over the roads walking around, in, and out of the church and up the steps. It was wonderful, like Hitchcock’s *The Birds*.”

KEEPING THE PAST PRESENT

*From Casco Bay to
Mt. Desert, island historical
societies are hard at work
on local lore and legend*

JANE DAY

THE RICH LORE of island history is continuously refreshed in the retellings of all manner of ancestral exploits by successive generations. Great-grandfathers skimmed to the mainland in horse and sleigh when the bay froze solid. Etched in early childhood memories are tales of vessels breaking up on island ledges and daring night rescues. Some can claim an island ancestor who raced with death in a gale-driven Friendship to save an injured child. The tales become part of the fabric of island life, a shared bond of pride in islandness.

No one is doing more to keep this past alive than members of island historical societies. From Casco Bay to Mt. Desert, historical societies find fertile ground in island communities. Buoyed by enthusiastic summer residents, their ranks keep growing—and so does their sophistication. A number of island societies currently conduct oral history projects to learn from older natives the realities of their early island years. Others catalog thousands of photographs loaned from island families and convert them to poster-sized prints and slides for public lectures and display. They reprint, update, and publish books by island authors, thereby restoring lost volumes to circulation and providing an educational service for students of island history. A few societies even make video documentaries, in which island people become players themselves in the ongoing record of community life.



Garden Cove picnic, Swan's Island



Courtesy Swan's Island Educational Society



Sardine factory Cooper's shop, Swan's Island

Yet the native flavor remains. Most island societies maintain modest museums during the warmer months, often in drafty frame buildings long since abandoned as village school, grange hall, or store. Here they house the effects of early island home life—quilts and cradles and wooden implements worn and polished by generations of use. Here, too, are fishnets, granite cutters, and joiner planes, the tools of industries that once were the lifeblood of island communities. In sharp contrast to the mummified aura of glass-caged exhibits, the simplicity of the island museums lends an immediacy to objects of some ancestor's everyday life. Yellowed with age and wear, they are displayed within reach, as if left momentarily by someone who didn't return.

MIDCOAST MUSEUMS

For simplicity itself, one might look to Isle au Haut, where Virginia MacDonald cheerfully acknowledges being a "one person historical society." Town librarian for 31 years, she became interested in preserving island memorabilia in the early 1970s, when a summer estate was being settled and the heirs invited her to go through an old trunk full of papers to see "if any was of use to the library." Recognizing the value of some of the old letters contained in the trove, she arranged them in an album, and has been adding to those albums ever since. The present collection includes letters dating back to 1812, and among its highlights are a strong representation of letters from missionary/crusader Lucretia H.P. Turner and from Arctic adventurer Jack Crowell of neighboring Kimball Island (*Island Journal*, 1989). Two albums

of old town records were added recently when Isle au Haut selectmen asked MacDonald to peruse the contents of an old desk in the town office before dispatching it to the dump.

At present there is no museum building—not even a display case (one island artifact, a set of photographic glass plates once belonging to John Turner, is in the safekeeping of the Deer Isle Historical Society). And the tempo is definitely slow during the winter, when the library itself is only open one day a week—"and some cold at that." But Virginia MacDonald keeps at the work of updating, cataloging, and arranging her albums, adding to the collection new Isle au Haut milestones such as the housing and wharf rehabilitation projects carried out under the island's recent Community Development Block Grant.

While MacDonald remains the driving force behind the Isle au Haut society, she is delighted that islanders take real pleasure in the collection, and that the albums are well thumbed. "I only hope someone takes it up when I'm long gone," she says.

Several miles to the west across Isle au Haut Bay, the North Haven Historical Society is gearing up for a major exhibit during the summer of 1991 to inaugurate the new addition to its North Island Museum. Lewis Haskell, native

islander and writer, says the gallery display will focus on steamboat transportation to the islands and will include artifacts and poster-sized photos of well-known steamboats from 1885 until the last steamer ran in July 1942. As a youngster, Haskell himself rode the steamboats from Bar Harbor to Boston and points in between, and he still looks back with longing to that bygone era. "It was wonderful. When the steamboats stopped, it was like cutting out throats."

Little did Haskell realize when he salvaged a batch of early town records at the North Haven dump in 1976, that it would spawn the growth of an island historical society—or even less, that he would wind up giving his home for its museum! The dump papers contained town records and early deeds dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. "I found hundreds of old documents blowing all over the place," he says.

Fortunately, their historical value was not lost on Haskell. For years he had collected artifacts, housing them in the replica of an old country store he had built onto his house, complete with old post office letter boxes. The dump find, he figured, merited official action to preserve such materials from North Haven's past. He asked the selectmen to call a community meeting to organize a historical society. In November 1976, about 15 residents turned out for the initial planning session. By the following June, the society was full-fledged, and members were hard at work refurbishing two vacant rooms in the town hall for their meetings.



The old cable-drawn ferry, North Haven Courtesy North Haven Historical Society

Courtesy Swan's Island Educational Society



Courtesy Chebeague Island Library

Smelt season, back shore, east end, Chebeague Island, circa 1909

The need for a museum building to exhibit the society's growing collection of artifacts came to a head about the time Haskell's country store relics spilled over into his carriage shed. A museum it certainly was, but as a home museum, it lacked certain essential prerequisites for an "official" repository of island family heirlooms.

"People won't give to an individual," says Haskell, "the thinking being that if he himself doesn't sell out, his family will when he dies." So Haskell and his wife Ida (who is descended from the Woosters, the first family to settle successfully on North Haven in 1762) wound up giving their house and five acres to the Historical Society. They lease back their home and a couple of acres. The North Island Museum opened in June 1988, and construction on a 20-foot by 40-foot addition was completed last summer.

The North Haven Historical Society also has a number of publications to its credit. In the past 10 years it has published three books by Seward E. Beacom: *Silent Fingers of Faith, a History of Island Churches*; *White Schoolhouses on an Island*, and *Pulpit Harbor, Two Hundred Years*. A new edition of the late Norwood Beveridge's *The North Island, Early Times to Yesterday*, is now available.

Neighboring Vinalhaven, formerly the South Island in the Fox Islands group, also has turned to publishing as a source of fundraising. In the fall of 1990, it reprinted Sidney L. Winslow's excellent *Fish Scales and Stone Chips*, a history of Vinalhaven originally published in 1952.

In lively colloquial style, Winslow depicts the people, recounts the legends, and traces the granite, fishing, and boat-building industries of the island from its settlement in 1765. In the 1800s, Vinalhaven's netting industry employed 400 knitters of a variety of nets and made weekly shipments of 1,800 horsenets alone. A few of these handsome "horseflies" are on exhibit in the Historical Society Museum, once the old town hall.

Documenting those fabled days when winter laid siege at 20 below, Winslow vividly recounts the "ice blockade" that closed the bay from Vinalhaven to Belfast during the winter of 1875-76. He quotes

newspaper reports of islanders who drove horse and sleigh from Vinalhaven to North Haven's Pulpit Harbor, then on to Islesboro and across the channel to Northport and back the same day—an exercise Winslow labels "Foolhardy Adventure."

Ice crossings from Islesboro to the mainland, however, became almost commonplace in the first three decades of this century. The Islesboro Historical Society's *History of Islesboro 1893-1983* includes photographs of islanders in horse sleighs speeding across the ice to the mainland, while steamboats stood frozen solid off Belfast. The only tragedy recorded in four solid freezes was a horse that fell through a seam in the ice during the winter of 1922-23. But in 1905, 1917, and 1933 sleighs and iceboats and horse sleds found the bay an ice-paved thoroughfare even to Castine.

The Islesboro history represents the most extensive publishing venture yet undertaken by an island historical society. In 1965, only a year after its inception, the Society reprinted John Pendleton Farrow's *History of Islesborough 1764-1893* to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the island's settlement and the 175th year of incorporation. When, in about 1980, islander Pyam Williams suggested that the Society reprint more copies of Farrow's

history, fellow islander Margaret Hatch countered, "What we ought to do is bring it up to date." All agreed and tapped Hatch, a former newspaper correspondent, to undertake the massive job of organizing and editing. Her husband Henry Hatch provided major editorial assistance and wrote a good deal of the text.

During the next four years, Society members and other willing islanders researched and wrote assigned chapters spanning 100 years of Islesboro's history, beginning where Farrow left off. The 430-page volume contains two sections: one on genealogy and the other on everyday island life—people, industries, boats, summer cottages, and the natural environment. The variety of subjects and writers' styles makes for a highly readable and informative piece of work. In 1989 the Society also published a pictorial history, *The Summer Cottages of Islesboro 1890-1930*, by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., director of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

MUSEUMS DOWN EAST

The first settlers on Frenchboro arrived in 1813, seven years before Maine became a state. By the time the Frenchboro Historical Society was organized in 1979, there was a sizeable collection of antiquities on hand. "Everything in



Ice cutting, Islesboro

-- This picture shows the Cutter creating our first showing the road we came over the old road today but not in the same way. We are going to take The Golden Rod this P.M. for Fort St. It's possible may not get back until Saturday. Belfast is the same old place. just as lively as ever.
H.P.

Courtesy Islesboro Historical Society



Courtesy Chebeague Island Library

Field day at the ball field (now the golf course), Chebeague Island, circa 1906

the museum we got right here in Frenchboro," says Vivian Lunt, the Society's founding president. Of particular interest is an unusual, 150-year-old Victorian "fainting couch" with carved back. "The springs need fixing, but that's sometime down the road."

For a community with a year-round population of only about 70, the Society generates considerable interest and support. Within six or seven years of its founding, members had raised enough money from craft sales at holidays and lobster festivals to build a one-room museum on the hill overlooking the town and harbor. During the winter of 1991, the Society was able to add a 20-foot by 40-foot addition to the museum, providing more space for display and a library. "We had a lot of volunteer help and donations," says Vivian, including construction materials and hours of labor from island people.

One volume that is certain to be on the library shelves is Vivian's *History of Frenchboro*, published in 1976. She also writes a semi-annual newsletter to keep Society members abreast of Society happenings. Her grandson, Dean Lunt, a news reporter in Massachusetts, prints it and occasionally contributes essays of his own on island life.

Vivian and her sister, Lillian Lunt, with help from other members, take turns staffing the museum from noon to 6 p.m., every day from May to October. Many visitors last year said it was their first trip to Frenchboro; others come year after year, and a number of them have joined the Society. It's an indication, Vivian says, that "outsiders like what they see."

On nearby Swan's Island, Seaside Hall, built in 1905 by the Atlantic Improvement Association, contains the historical collection of the Swan's Island Educational Society. The museum collection was put together in 1986 as "The Second Century Exhibition" to commemorate the island's bicentennial. But it was so popular—more than 2,000 people came to see it—that the Society asked to continue use of the building. Photographic enlargements of island scenes by former resident Tom Hindman set the tone for the entire exhibit. Hindman also reproduced some remarkable early photographs for the Swan's Island calendar to mark the bicentennial.

Mali Bailey, island librarian and director of the Society, says, "We're always collecting and we have a humble way of cataloging." Among the exhibits are the original sign and counter from Newman's store at Steamboat Landing, a school setting with desks and blackboard, and an early island kitchen. Household furnishings, tools, and native American artifacts from the island are among the collection. The major island industry is reflected in the collection of tub trawls, lobster traps, and a skiff.

Both Swan's Island and Frenchboro are among nine members of the Islands Association of Museums and Historical Societies based in Bar Harbor. The Association was organized in 1988 to promote the programs and

exhibits of small and less accessible island societies. It opened headquarters during the summer of 1990 in the former comfort station on the village green in Bar Harbor to display island crafts and exhibits. Fourteen thousand visitors trooped into the one-room brick building to look, and buy, from June through September. Nina Gormley, Association president and director of the Wendell Gilley Museum in Southwest Harbor, says visitors were particularly interested in historical photographs such as one of the Frenchboro school, the huge tuna caught off Swan's Island, and the old cog railroad up Cadillac Mountain.

The Association meets once a month and plans to produce a 10-minute video tour of each island museum. "We're much more in touch than we ever were," says Gormley. "The Association promotes a sense of appreciation and understanding of island life and of its lasting contribution."

One of the biggest disappointments for visitors, Gormley says, was seeing the exhibit from Frenchboro and discovering they couldn't get there and back in a day. Ferries from Bass Harbor service Swan's and Frenchboro, but the latter involves an overnight stay. With Islesford, it is a different story. A mailboat/passenger ferry plus several tour boats ply back and forth between Northeast Harbor and the Cranberry Isles, which may account for the whopping 36,000 people who visited the Islesford museum in 1989.



Courtesy Islesboro Historical Society

A.P. Gilkey livery stable, Islesboro



Courtesy North Haven Historical Society

Charlie Brown's boat shop, at Pulpit Harbor, located close to the Rockefeller house which was Brown's home. Many fine yachts were built there.

The museum was built in 1927 by Dr. William Otis Sawtelle, a longtime summer resident and founder of the Islesford Historical Society. It is a solid structure with granite foundation, flagstone floor, brick walls, and slate roof. The museum and a former ship chandlery known as the Blue Duck are on the National Historic Register and have been part of Acadia National Park since 1948.

MONHEGAN AND CASCO BAY

On Monhegan, an outer bastion in the Gulf of Maine, the Monhegan Historical Society and Cultural Museum Association occupies the keeper's house and three separate buildings on Lighthouse Hill that were abandoned when the Coast Guard automated the light in the mid-1950s. The Monhegan Association, primarily a conservation group, acquired the buildings in 1962. It turned them over to the Museum Association, an outgrowth of its own membership, in 1985.

Museum exhibits relate solely to Monhegan and represent a reservoir of the island's cultural and natural history spanning more than four centuries. Cutting tools from early Indian settlements, followed by the household furnishings of the European settlers in 1607, take up two buildings in the complex. The more recent past is represented by prominent exhibits of the gear and implements for its two major occupations—fishing and ice-cutting.

The artistic history of Monhegan surpasses that of any other island. From the 1890s, Monhegan has been home to an active summer art community. One entire room in the museum is a gallery of works by these artists, and the Association continues its effort to build this collection.

Despite its large and active membership, the Historical Society on

Chebeague Island in Casco Bay has no meeting place of its own—only a first option on an 1871 schoolhouse. The Society meets in the church parish house in summer, the school in winter, and the community center when programs promise to draw a crowd.

Meanwhile, it stashes a growing collection of artifacts in members' homes, and a host of promised donations remain with their owners until the museum becomes a reality. Among these are tools and other relics dating from the stone sloop fleet that operated out of Chebeague, running granite from quarry islands to the railheads.

Chebeague Island was settled in 1740. For years island history buffs asked themselves why they hadn't formed a historical society. They finally organized in 1984 and six years later had 100 members. Well over that number turn out for the Society's periodic slide lectures. Donna Damon, an island native and Society trustee, carries a lifelong accumulation of island history in her head, and is constantly researching for unexplored chapters. She admits she is prepared to give an hour slide talk on almost any subject related to Chebeague.

Bill and Carolyn Swann, summer residents and active library and Society volunteers, made the slides from early prints loaned by island residents, a project that involved about 3,000 photographs. The Society keeps a catalog on file at the library where, for a small charge, residents can get a photocopy of an ancestor or other subject of research.

Every summer, the Society conducts a tour of island houses, and in September at its "Summer Native" program, it gives people who have summered on the island from before 1942 a chance to talk about their recollections. Last summer the Society conducted its own island census of 450 families. Thirty members and friends

helped in a door-to-door poll to learn more about the island's peak population, how long residents had been on the island, and whether they were descended from former islanders. The project was a great success, and, says Donna, "We had a good time with census."

On neighboring Peaks Island, even the lack of a formal organization has not hindered historical activities. Peggy Harmon grew up on the island and is treasurer of the Fifth Maine Regiment Community Center. She says Center directors have discussed organizing a historical society and could provide two rooms for its use. The Fifth Maine Regiment was built as a museum and retreat for Civil War descendants. They turned it over to the town's Community Center about 30 years ago with the stipulation that the Civil War collection remain intact.

Steven and Kimberly MacIsaac have put together a historic collection of 500 to 600 slides from which they select slide presentations for the Trefethen Evergreen Improvement Association. The slides are largely from photographs made by Paul Whitney, a former island resident whose widow contributed them to the Association. The MacIsaacs have added photos of their own along with early prints they track down and copy.

"We took it over because we're both interested in history," says Mrs. MacIsaac, an island native. "We like it. It's a hobby."

Mounting interest in things past comes as no surprise to native islanders like Mary Ella Grinnell of Islesboro, where local history was "your entertainment, just second nature." On every island, the work of keeping alive the record of the past is nothing short of a labor of love. Since such small museums are traditionally at the bottom of givers' lists, historical society members dig deep into their own pockets to repair their buildings, send out mailings, and pay the light bill. But the current nostalgia for once-better days has pumped new life into these historical organizations and enlivened the past they work to preserve.

Jane Day is a freelance writer from Camden, Maine, and a frequent contributor to Island Institute publications.

ISLAND TO ISLAND

Exploring a common history

Panelists (in order of appearance)

- JC Julie Canniff, Island Institute
- BC Bill Chilles, Vinalhaven
- LH Lewis Haskell, North Haven
- CY Clayton Young, Matinicus
- TS Ted Spurling, Cranberry Isles
- DD Donna Damon, Chebeague
- DR Donna Rogers, Matinicus
- CB Cynthia Bourgeault, Swan's Island

As a highlight of the 1990 Summer Institute for Island Teachers, Project Director Julie Canniff (with considerable help from Penobscot Air Service) pulled off the logistical tour de force of a first-time-ever gathering of island historians. Meeting at the North Haven School on June 28 were Lewis Haskell from North Haven, Bill Chilles from Vinalhaven, Donna Damon from Chebeague Island, Donna Rogers and Clayton Young from Matinicus Island, and Ted Spurling from Cranberry Isles, along with Island Institute Executive Editor Cynthia Bourgeault from Swan's Island. For nearly three hours the historians regaled the audience—and each other—with vignettes of island life, myths, yarns, and mutual discoveries. After a more formal first half of the session, in which each panelist spoke in turn to a series of questions (“Describe your island at the turn of the century with regard to population size, schools, occupations, gender roles, etc.; describe it now...”), moderator Julie Canniff opened the floor to the audience, and a lively give-and-take ensued, a portion of which follows below:

Jeff Dworkin



Clayton Young, Matinicus

“If people didn’t like the island way of living, they wouldn’t have stayed in the first place...”

AUDIENCE: What are your favorite legends about island life?

BC: A while earlier we were talking about tinkers coming around to the houses to sell tinware and bloomers. There was a little legend on Vinalhaven about a tinker that went to the Hacienda, a house on the other end of the island. He went in and there was a young girl doing her ironing. Her parents had gone into town, and the tinker saw a gun behind the door. He picked up the gun and aimed it at the girl and said, just jokingly, “Your money or your life.” The gun went off and shot the girl. As it shot her, the hot iron in her hand flew back and hit the door. There is a big print of an iron on the door that supposedly still is there. The tinker disappeared. Nobody ever

saw him after that—nobody knows what happened.

LH: This isn’t a story, but I would like to add something about these travelling peddlers. In Rockland there are several businesses that got started by men travelling among the islands with packs on their backs selling. Stonington Furniture Company started that way; a place called Benny Siegal on Main Street started that way. There were several others who came out to these islands. One of the most popular salesmen I have heard about was the man who came out selling shrubbery and plants. A lot of the old shrubs we see around these cellar holes were probably sold by him. People really looked forward to him coming every year.

CY: You said Stonington Furniture—that was Sadie Marcus’s father. Sadie Marcus’s mother used to sell hats; she was a milliner, and she used to come out to Matinicus selling her hats. We also had a man by the name of Cohen, Whitman Cohen, did you know him? I know he was out to home once and he was selling cucumbers—six cents apiece, four for a quarter.

LH: They used to buy rags and all kinds of things.

TS: Thinking about these peddlers, Mother was born over to Seal Cove Center on Mt. Desert Island. She said there was two peddlers she could remember over there: one they used to call “Cling-Clang.” He had a lot of pots, pans, and frying pans and tied them around his neck like a necklace and they would bang back and forth as he walked along. Then there was another one on our island named Dan Rosenthal. He used to come on when I was a boy and bring all kinds of goods. He’d rent a little cottage on the island and people would have him in to

eat. As a boy growing up, I remember he had quite a little trade. In later years, he had a model T, the last on Mt. Desert Island, and used to take things around. Then there was another lady that I read a little bit about in a magazine not too long ago. Mother used to remember her—her name was Mary Christmas. I think she operated out of Brewer, and she had a little business built up the same way. She was a peddler around the turn of the century or even a little earlier than that. There were quite a lot of those on the island.

JC: A woman peddler?

TS: A lady peddler, surely was.

LH: There used to be a guy that came out here who sold strictly vanilla. He was a vanilla salesman.

DD: That must have been during Prohibition.

I can think of another way that people got goods, too, at least on Chebeague: They had the Larkin Soap club. It was a catalogue company and people could either go around and take orders for premiums, or get together and have a party. I know my grandmother and all her neighbors would go to a different person's house once a month. Whoever hosted the party would get a premium or whatever they chose. After the party they'd all put their order in together. For a ten dollar soap order you could get one of those Larkin Desks. I have one.

TS: I have one at home, and my grandmother had one, too.

DD: It was a premium for the order. My desk still has my grandmother's shipping labels on the back. We just happened to find it, thought it was an old piece of newspaper and started to peel it off; it was from the Larkin Company.

TS: They were a good piece of furniture. I think they are fairly valuable now, aren't they? An antique fellow came out and wanted to buy one. My wife painted it and now it's not worth much. It wasn't a real antique; I guess you could call it a near-antique. She fixed it, all right.

AUDIENCE: I would like to ask each of you what you think the best times and the worst times have been for the people who live on your island?

DD: You never know what the best times are. It's easy to look back and say, "It must have been wonderful then!" But it's hard to say for sure. I guess on Chebeague maybe the most exciting time for people would be in about the 1860s. They were still self-sufficient. They had a lot of action going on—that is when the island had three churches. We found a journal that someone had kept in 1860, and there was a social event every day or every night during the winter. It seemed to be a really good time.

Of course, it was a time of really hard physical work, but I think there was a cohesiveness on these islands before the tourist industry came that never, ever returned. Maybe now it is a lot easier and exciting, too, but the psychological complexity takes the place of the physical complexity of having to do everything for yourself.

CY: As far as Matinicus is concerned, I think as far back as I can remember, which is over 70 years, there have always been the best of times and the worst of times. If people didn't like the island way of living, they wouldn't have stayed in the first place. **THEY DO!** There is something about it; they don't want anything else.

DR: Our hard times are when there is strife on the island. Because the population is so small, if you have even two families who are not getting along it will affect the whole island. Our island has been divided terribly this last year. There are times when everything seems to go to hell in a hand-bucket, if you want to say that. There has always been a pretty good living out there. People have always survived. People are there because they really want to be. It isn't just the money; it's because this is where they want to live and this is the way they want to make their living. So our hard times come from within ourselves, not from the outside. Even now with a lot of newcomers, we're still our own worst enemy.

JC: How does it work itself out?

DR: Eventually the people that you are fighting with are also the ones that will tow you in. You will find yourself out there, and it will be *that* person that comes and tows you. You can't be enemies with your worst enemy because you depend on each other so much.



Jeff Dworsky

Ted Spurling, Cranberry Isles



Peter Ralston

Donna Damon, Chebeague

"Islands are like one big family. Somebody loses their boat, somebody gets sick, people go door to door and take up a collection and thousands of dollars come from nowhere..."



Bill Chilles, Vinalhaven

CY: They had a real lobster war out on Matinicus a few years back. Two very strong factions, relatives against relatives. There was a bad storm and one of the fishermen was overdue to get home in his boat. One of his adversaries, on the other side, said, "Look," (he had a big boat) he says, "You can take my boat and go out and hunt, and I will go with the boat. But I will go down forward where he can't see me, because I know the damn fool," he said. "He wouldn't even take hold of a line from me if he was going ashore." And they did, they went out, but the Coast Guard found them first. When it comes right down to hard fact, nitty gritty, we're all neighbors.

DD: I guess that's what makes islands unique. It is like one big family. Somebody loses their boat, somebody gets sick, people go door to door and take up a collection and thousands of dollars come from nowhere.

LH: Politically, here we get divided on something. I think this past year we had it on public housing, the island split both ways. For those of us who have lived through these things, we try to cool it, because it really is hard for us when we find our next door neighbor has a very different opinion of how something should be than you do. It gets pretty bitter sometimes.

DD: And it can escalate, too.

LH: It's a thing we really try to cool. And I think sometimes people who come in from the outside don't realize that some of us may be in sympathy with the way they are thinking, but we have to cool the whole thing.

CB: On Swan's Island we actually have several different, overlapping eras, and people have very different points of view depending on which era they came from. Up through the 1920s, Swan's Island was a very prosperous and cosmopolitan place. It had steamer service; the population peaked at 1,200 people; we were quite connected with the world. That all collapsed with the Depression and the closing of the granite quarry. All through the 1930s, the population steadily decreased. The capstone was World War II, when the steamer got commandeered, and all of a sudden Swan's Island really was isolated.

That was from 1930 through 1960, let's say. And from those years, people remember poverty, but they also remember the incredible plenty of the land, and people

pulling together. Bonnie Hopkins, who delivers the mail from Bass Harbor, grew up on Swan's Island in that era. She says she never knew there was a depression out there in the world because they had plenty of food, they had friends, they had social life. The social life of the island was glued together by doing the things you had to do to survive, like chopping ice together—they had ice parties that people still remember. So it was good times, but it was inward times, and sort of private times.

Then after World War II there was a sudden push to get modern, to get aboard. I think a real line of demarcation in the history of Swan's Island was in 1953 when rural electrification came. All of a sudden, within the year, there were 20 drilled wells, and there were TVs. The next year there was the consolidated school. The Brown Appliance Company in Ellsworth said that in this particular year there were more TV sets, washing machines, and electrical equipment sold on Swan's than anywhere else in Hancock County. There was this whole image of "let's catch up with the mainland."

I first set foot on Swan's 20 years ago and what I have seen in these two decades is an incredible schizophrenia. There is the tension between, on the one hand, wanting to be modern, wanting to be connected to the world. Everybody keeps up—we have computers, we have satellite dishes, and there is this real urgency to be up to date and modern. On the other hand, there is the memory of the times that were really better before.

BC: Best and worst times can be seasonal, too. As far as seasons go, summer on Vinalhaven should be the best time of the year, but it is pretty much the worst time, because we don't like the tourists. They bring money to the island, but they crowd us, they are in the middle of the roads, and we love the winter. The population goes down immensely in the winter; it's quiet, peaceful, but there isn't any money.

LH: North Haven doesn't really have tourists as such; it has families. As the years have passed, the native families have become very close to the summer families. The relationship today between families is closer than when I was a boy and they are on more of a mutual footing. There is not so much social distance between us. You can call people by their first names, and they expect us to.

DR: On Matinicus we tried to limit our tourist industry in quiet ways—I don't



Donna Rogers, Matinicus

*"Our hard times
come from within ourselves,
not from the outside..."*

think we are even aware of it. One of the things that almost all of us have agreed on is that we don't want the state ferry service more than twice a month. We don't want it every day, we don't want it even once a week. We just want it to come and bring the essentials, the cars and the things we need, but we don't want it to come every day because that would bring people every day. Even those of us who see the money that we make off the tourists don't want it bad enough to bring them in. We don't want to get to that point. We want to sell a few things at farmers' market twice a week, and that is as far as we want to go with it. I hope it always stays that way. Like the Marines, we want a few good men; we want a few good tourists.

CY: On the other hand, 75 percent, I'm going to say 75, percent of the taxes on Matinicus are paid for by off-islanders.

DR: Yes they are, and we are grateful for that.

DD: I guess that's one way to look at it; another is: If they hadn't come, we would be paying 100 percent of the taxes, and they would be a lot less...

AUDIENCE: Speaking of Matinicus, could you tell the story about how the new school came about?

CY: It was in the 60s. I was on the school board and the teacher went on strike. I kid you not, he went on strike, and it was known as the world's smallest strike. I have a clipping from the *Hong Kong News*. A friend of mine who was taking a trip around the world bought a Hong Kong paper and saw Matinicus in the headline; then she read the rest of it and saved the clipping.

DR: We made the papers all over the world because of that. Now what was he striking about?

CY: We didn't have bathrooms at that time: we had outdoor toilets. He wanted a new schoolhouse. We had been putting \$5,000 a year away each year for a period of time toward a new schoolhouse that we were going to build. I don't think he knew that.

DR: He wanted it yesterday. He wanted hot lunches, hot and cold running water. He wanted it all and he wanted it now.

DD: How long did the strike last?

DR: Three weeks and then he got fired.

DD: Did he picket?

DR: Oh yes, he picketed.

CY: I had a boy in school at the time, and he came home one night and said, "Dad, the teacher gave us paint today and told us to paint the inside of the schoolhouse." I wish you could have seen the inside of the schoolhouse. They were allowed to put paint wherever they wanted, and they had blue, yellow, green all over the walls. It was a mess. We had to have the whole schoolhouse redone after he left.

DR: The shame about it was that he was a very good teacher. He was very creative.

CY: He used to smoke. He used to put his feet up on his desk and smoke cigarettes in class. The kids used to talk about the funny smelling tobacco...

DR: He was your typical "hippie."

CY: Yes, he was, and this was back in the 60s.

DR: He had a van and he had a mate.

CY: He was told he had to get married before he came to Matinicus or it wouldn't work, so he shaved his beard off and came back and said, "I'm married."

DR: But he lied...

This historic gathering was undertaken as part of a two-year research and curriculum development project of the Summer Institute for Island Teachers, co-sponsored by the Island Institute and College of the Atlantic, with foundation support from the Maine Humanities Council, the Davis Family Fund, and the Clarence and Anne Dunwalke Dillon Trust. During the summer 1990 session, island teachers learned oral history and research skills and, working with North Haven as a model, developed strategies for launching students on historical research in their own island communities. At the 1991 Summer Institute on Swan's Island, the plan is to build on these individual histories to develop an overview of islands as models of sustainable communities.

The complete transcript of the "Island to Island" gathering, plus a 50-minute video, are available from the Island Institute. Contact the office for a price list (207-594-9209).—Eds.



Lewis Haskell, North Haven

"Sometimes people who come in from the outside don't realize that some of us may be in sympathy with the way they are thinking, but we have to cool the whole thing..."



Illustrations by Jon Luoma

**ISLAND
FOR
SALE
\$15,600**

So... You Want to Buy an Island?

*Reflections from the
dean of island real estate*



Few real estate brokers on the coast of Maine enjoy the reputation of C.R. "Cap" De Rochemont of Rockland. A behind-the-scenes man, he is known around Penobscot Bay as the broker's broker, the type who maintains an old-fashioned ethic that was thought to have disappeared with the nickel cigar but hasn't, who keeps an ear perpetually to the ground of buying and selling, who, on the one hand can talk your ear off and on the other can be as tight-lipped about business as Calvin Coolidge was about everything.

Cap De Rochemont conducts business out of the same house he was brought up in, an old homestead in the South End of Rockland that has been in his family for nearly 120 years. He has been a real estate broker for the last 30 years, starting out shortly after he quit an earlier career in documentary movies in New York as a production manager. (His cousin was Louis De Rochemont, an Academy-award-winning director/producer, famous for his "March of Times" series.)

Noted for a sales patter that is a cross between an academic lecture and a stand-up comedy routine, he has always maintained a reputation for fair dealing and confidentiality. ("One definition of ethics," he says, "is to do less than you're allowed to do, but more than you're required to do. I think that's a good way to do business.")

Shorefront property is De Rochemont's speciality, particularly individual islands in the Midcoast region and parcels on the larger islands, such as Vinalhaven, Islesboro, North Haven, Matinicus, and others. He is a walking, talking encyclopedia on who owns what, and what has value to whom and why. We sat in his office on a cool afternoon in early November and talked about island real estate—most-recent past and present.

I'VE SOLD QUITE a few islands in my career. They vary from as small as one acre up to several hundred acres. I've also sold many, many individual pieces of property on larger islands. It's a romantic type of real estate that people are always looking for.

The island dream is still the same as it was 30 years ago when I started in this business—the dream of living on a little saltwater farm on an island off the coast of Maine with blueberries for Sal or something, the meadow that goes down to the sea, where you lie there while the gulls soar overhead. But there isn't much of a chance of finding that now—not just because the cost might be prohibitive, but because it has become so difficult to find a piece of property that is large enough to fit the dream.

I haven't seen a great change in the type of buyer who is looking for island properties. The dreams of the buyers have remained the same. Some people are trying to get away from something; some are trying to get away to something. I think I encounter a lot more people who are getting away to something than getting away from it.

There was an era 20 years or so ago when people came here to get back to the land, back to the coast. One good reason for people coming then was the prices were more reasonable than they are now.

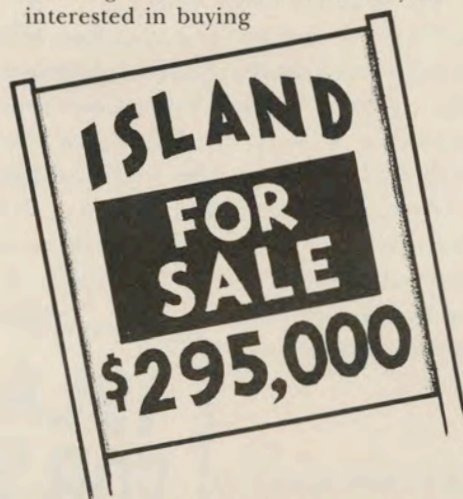


Though that era seems to be gone, we are still seeing the same types of people; they're just older and the prices are higher.

Along with the back-to-the-landers, I recall there were a great number of people who were buying either shorefront parcels or large pieces of land for future use. They were young people who would buy property with the thought that they would use it later. I think we get less of that now. In recent years I have seen fewer young couples thinking about the future. The buyers now are older, closer to the period when they would actually start using the property.

There is, indeed, a common thread in the backgrounds of the people who want an island. It is that they are basically sensitive people who really love the coast of Maine. I've never sold an island to someone who said, "I've just bought a chainsaw. Can you find me an island with lots of woods I can cut down?" The island buy-

“Until somebody comes up with a formula for taking it with you, we are only stewards of property, not owners.”



ers seem to be, by nature, the preservationist type, people who like the Maine coast as it is. They are the romantics who recognize what I have also come to recognize as I get older—that it is a matter of stewardship as opposed to ownership. Until somebody comes up with a formula for taking it with you, we are only stewards of property, not owners.

Being a broker who specializes in island properties can be an expensive proposition. You show islands by plane—for an overview—and by boat. Sometimes, but not very often, the seller has a boat of his own and can help us out. Most of the time I have to arrange the transportation myself. There are some brokers who charge a transportation fee to show an island, or suggest that they go halves with the prospective buyer, but I've never done that. I just try to be sure I am working with someone who truly is interested in buying

an island, not simply spending the summer traveling around looking at beautiful scenery.

We do get a certain percentage of fantasizers who don't have an understanding of how difficult it can be to live on an island. I don't know as it's my place to put a pin in their balloon, but I do think that, at some point during the marketing effort, we brokers must point out that it takes a certain type to live on an island. Sitting out there in the glorious summer is not the same as sitting there in the middle of the winter. We try to hold up the mirror so the buyer can get a true image of what life is like. Though it's true the broker represents the seller, rather than the buyer, we still have to paint a realistic picture, because we want to stay in business after the sale. There's nothing to be gained by taking advantage of somebody if you have any interest in repeat sales.

How can I tell the difference between the realists and the fantasizers? I think it goes back to the question: Are the buyers going to something, or are they getting away from something? It's an intuitive feeling that you acquire. Going out to the island will tell you how the prospective buyer responds to the difficulties—the late ferry boat, or not being able to get the car on the ferry and you have to stay

overnight or hire a boat to get you over there. Don't shield them from the truth. The worst thing a broker can do is throw people off inquiries. If they say, "Is there ever a problem with getting back and forth on the ferry boat." and you respond with, "Look at that double-breasted gro-beak over there" you haven't helped them understand the truth about island living.

I am handling fewer island sales now than I was 30 years ago. One of the big changes since my first years in this business is the reduction in the number of large parcels for sale. When I first started, if someone came in and said he would like to buy a mile of shore frontage somewhere, I could give him several choices. Right now I have one parcel with a mile of shore frontage, but it's unique. It's also on the mainland, not an island.

One of the reasons for this reduction in large parcels for sale is that there has been a rise in the number of conservation easements. A large amount of land has been protected from development. I also have a hunch there may be a tendency for islands to stay in family ownership longer than mainland frontage. I am called on often to appraise islands as the result of inheritance. It is not unusual for me to be looking into a third generation's interest in a property that is not being sold, merely appraised to determine its value for inheritance reasons.

It's rare to see an island property, even parcels on the larger islands, leave a family chain. For that reason, the choices a prospective buyer might have are usually limited, especially on the big islands like North Haven, Vinalhaven, and Islesboro. Once a property gets into family ownership, it tends to stay there.

Which is not to say there aren't beautiful islands out there for sale. The high point of last summer was an entire day I spent appraising an island that comes as close to perfect as I have ever come across. It was partly wooded, it had some beautiful fields, it had some beautiful beaches, it had some beautiful ledges, it had a good anchorage on the northeasterly or leeward side, it was far enough from the mainland and other islands so you didn't have the problem of other people confusing your island with the state park, it had a freshwater supply, which is a strong attribute on an island. It was about 100 acres and was about an hour from the mainland by small boat. If I had to define the perfect island, that would be it. The appraisal on it came in at over a million dollars.

Here's how I evaluate islands, speaking in generalities: Wooded islands have greater value than barren islands. Some islands are close enough to the mainland to have access to public services; that can be desirable. Accessibility to the mainland matters a lot. The farthest island out, just before you fall off the edge of the world, is not desirable. The existence

of potable water is very important. A good anchorage is desirable. The tax assessment on the property is also an important consideration. Interestingly, it does appear that islands that come under state administration, LURC [Land Use Regulation Commission], seem to fare better on their tax assessments than those that come under the jurisdiction of individual towns.

A proper title to an island is, of course, very important. The state checked the titles of all the islands a few years ago to see how many had legitimate ownership chains and how many did not. A significant number didn't. In many cases, this title problem created genuine hardship. It was a rude awakening for a lot of people.

Islands that are not barred to another island or to the mainland have a greater value than those that are. Most people who come to Maine are looking for at least some privacy, or they wouldn't be here. People who want islands value their own company and that of other people of their own choosing, but not of people who come ashore unexpectedly and say, "Look what I found!" Unfortunately, there are types of private property, like many Maine islands, that are so attractive that public use takes place without an easement of any kind. The value of that property is therefore diminished.

There are two ways to determine the appraised value of an island property. One method applies to pieces of property with shore frontage on larger islands—or the mainland, for that matter—and the other method applies to small islands sold as a whole.

The value of property with shore frontage on large islands such as Vinalhaven, North Haven, and Islesboro, or on islands that are occupied by several families, is determined on a per-front-foot basis. The appraiser assigns a price per foot to the frontage. To reflect the economy of scale, as the number of front feet increases, the price per front foot drops. It continues to drop until you get to a thousand feet of frontage, after which the price-per-foot remains the same.

If you have the good fortune to be able to buy a thousand feet of frontage, the appraiser who put the value on it would have started with a price based on what the price per front foot would have been if it were a one-acre parcel with 200 feet of frontage. That would be the benchmark. At 1,000 feet, the price per front foot would be half what it would be if it were 200 feet. If an acre with 200 feet of frontage were priced at \$200 per front foot, at 1,000 feet of frontage it would be valued at \$100 a front foot. Beyond a thousand feet the price remains at \$100 a front foot.

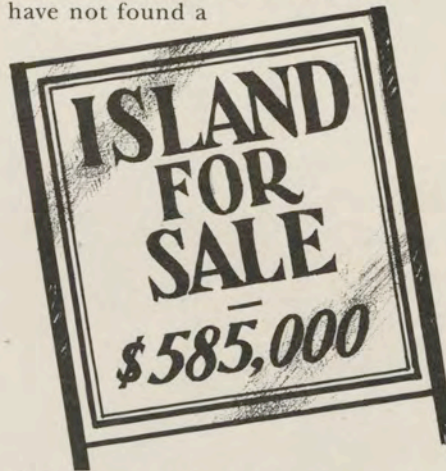
The back land, the acreage behind the shore frontage, is valued at a price per acre. The price is determined by such fac-

tors as: Is it barren? Is it marshy? Is it high land? What are its productive uses?

Individual islands are valued strictly by a price per acre. The value has nothing to do with the amount of shore frontage. I don't know why this is so. I guess it's just a matter of tradition—how it has always been done. There is an economy of scale here, too. The smaller islands command a much higher price per acre than the larger islands.

There has been a great growth factor in island real estate. The value of islands followed right along with the rise in value of mainland Maine property during the 1980s. One island I was involved with, for example, went from \$13,000 to \$300,000. Another one went from \$10,000 to about \$400,000.

Recently mainland prices have been in decline. Yet, as the result of appraisals and sales we did last summer, we have not found a



diminution in value of island properties that would parallel that of mainland frontage or other mainland real estate, for that matter. In the mainland sales handled by our office, in July of 1990 the actual price that sellers got for their property was 93 percent of the asking price. By September, the actual price had dropped down to 83 or 84 percent. By the end of October it had dropped to 70 percent. That's quite a downhill slide.

But we have not seen the same thing happen in the sale of individual islands. They continue to hold their value. The reason for this may be that many of the properties are in families that have perhaps more adequate buying power and staying power than the owners of some mainland properties. It also could be that owners of islands have such a strong love affair with coastal Maine that they might sell the family jewels before they sold their island.

The feeling for island property is as strong as it was when I began in this business. There isn't a vast difference between now and a few decades ago. I think the dream goes on, I really do.

Peter H. Spectre is a contributing editor to WoodenBoat and Down East magazines. A prolific freelance writer, he will see four of his books published this year.

"The worst thing a broker can do is throw people off inquiries. If they say, 'Is there ever a problem with getting back and forth on the ferry boat?' and you respond with, 'Look at that double-breasted grosbeak over there,' you haven't helped them understand the truth about island living."



Solitude

PHILIP W. CONKLING

IFIRST SET FOOT on the Maine islands 16 years ago. A graduate student at the time, I was working toward a degree in forestry and I wanted more than anything to go to work somewhere within the vast reaches of the North Maine Woods: the place, I thought, where timber cruising foresters and other real Maine men went. The job market was not encouraging of my fantasy, but on a bulletin board at the forestry school I happened to see a mimeographed notice listing Earth Day-type environmental internships in the Northeast that included one in Maine collecting natural resource data on 12 islands owned by a nature group.

Like all truly ignorant people, I had some preconceived ideas about Maine islands because after all, (I thought to myself) I had seen some of them from the peninsulas of Steuben, the small Washington County fishing and blueberry village where I had been living for the two previous years.

Steuben's narrow peninsula roads wandered far down and away from the well-traveled Route 1—that lifeline that took us either east or west to the big shopping towns of Machias or Ellsworth. My favorite byway, the north-south trending Pigeon Hill Road, ran down over small glacial outwash tablelands (now and again managed for blueberry production) through spruce flats, birch copses, and occasional larch stands, to the tip of Petit Manan Point, which splits Narraguagus and Dyer bays. Off to the east from Petit Manan, the view encompassed a dozen or so mostly small, spiney, porcupine-like islands crawling down the bay on their way out to sea.

I thought I knew two things about Maine islands when I started to work on them that May of 1975. I knew they were rocky and I knew they were covered with spruce. I also had a third suspicion that I didn't voice while I was preparing for the field season; namely, if you had seen one of these islands, you had seen them all—or certainly most of what needed to be seen.

I suspect I had gotten the job of surveying the natural resources of the 12 islands I was to visit mostly on the strength of having known a few Washington County fishermen who were willing, in a loose sort of way, to help out with transportation. Eager to get underway with my assignment, I packed my kit for a three-day trip to Flint Island, a 100-acre island at the outer edge of Narraguagus and Pleasant bays.

I left aboard the lobsterboat JESSE from Pigeon Hill lobster pound, tucked up inside Petit Manan Point, in a dungeon thickness of fog. In those days radar was still a very expensive item for inshore fishing boats, and so we steamed out on a compass course past Dan Leighton Point, north of Pond Island, then four miles across outer Narraguagus Bay headed for Flint—or more precisely, as I was shortly to learn, for the bell buoy near the entrance to the Flint Island Narrows. Not until many years later would it have occurred to me that we were beam-to in a big tide and seaway where two large bays meet the waters of the North Atlantic and where eastern Maine's normal 12 to 14 foot tidal range pushes its relentless way around the islands. Nor did it occur to me that our course, which skirted the shoals north of Pond Island and Western Reef off Shipstern Island, might have presented more difficulties than the skipper was letting on.



My lobsterman friend said almost nothing for the first 20 or 25 minutes after leaving the lobster pound. Then he throttled back, cut the engine, and stepped to the stern of the boat—"Listenin' for the bell," he said. But there was only the muzzy, muffled sound of the sea's rote, and so after a minute or so he fired the engine back up, steamed another few minutes, shut down, and listened again. He listened hard, as swells slapped at the sides of the JESSE. Slowly I began trying to separate out sounds, all strange, dampened down in the fog, coming from all directions at once, with no horizon to fix on, with no direction known. As the seconds ticked by, I heard nothing faintly resembling a bell. Nothing like that whatever, maybe a gull call careening off somewhere.

"There," my friend said finally. Taking a quick course, before he lost whatever it was he heard, he throttled the JESSE ahead again until we stopped for the third time. By now I, too, could hear the chaotic clap of the bell buoy, as I tried to figure out where the sound was coming from out of the dense fog. Then the lobsterman pointed into the thick white blankness, "There it is." Though I stared straight and hard directly to where he was pointing, I saw nothing. I'm not sure I really believed he saw something, but I kept staring to the place he pointed as he throttled back up. In another 10 seconds we motored by the clanging bell and three minutes later we steamed into the little anchorage of Flint Island.

I distinctly recall these few thoughts: At first, I was disconcerted that this lobsterman could hear things I couldn't hear and see things I couldn't see. And then slowly it began to occur to me that perhaps there was more out here than met the eye.

Soon I was ashore by myself. After pitching a tent, arranging my kit, laying out field guides, botanical keys, binoculars, hand lens, and such, I fell to the task of taking stock of everything around, writing down long lists of names of things I found—*Lathyrus japonica*; *Picea rubra*; *Mertensia maritima*; *Iris hookeri*; *Empetrum nigrum*, *Rubus vitus-idea*, and so on. The names rang out over the next few days as I wandered the shores and swales and beaches of this uninhabited island, absorbed in my cataloging.

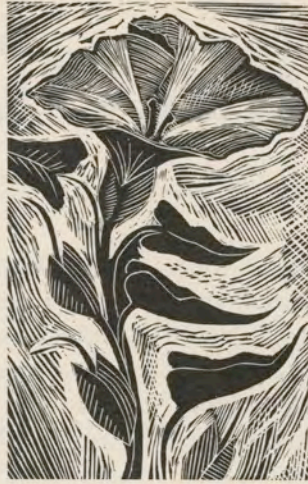
I was struck by the intricately beautiful pattern of white cherty cliffs for which Flint was named, and although it took several more months for me to fully realize it, I had landed on an island like no other on the Maine coast.

The interior of Flint, like that of many islands I was to visit that summer, was a dense thicket of tangled young spruce and alder hells, best negotiated on one's hands and knees and completely discouraging to anyone not being paid specifically to transect them.

I found in Flint's interior only one entirely arresting feature that was to concern me on and off for most of the rest of the summer. Within the densest interior of this lonely place were stone walls and piles of fieldstone. It wasn't until much later that I was directed to the home of one of the Sawyers in Milbridge, an old man who had tended a flock of sheep on Flint as a boy and told me who had lived there and what had become of the people of the island. But on this particular foggy day, I began to realize that this island, like the people around it, held secrets that were not likely to be deciphered by the small library I had brought along.

Amid these few disconcerting thoughts, I spent my allotted three days alone and had acquired a long list of names of what grew on the shores, flew through the trees, and lived in the rocky intertidal zone. On the morning I was to be picked up by my lobsterman friend, I was feeling pleased with myself and was all packed and ready to go, down by the shore. I recall I waited a couple of hours, until the first wisps of doubt crossed my mind that maybe the JESSE wasn't coming back.

Although the middle day of my visit had been bright, blue, and sunny, the fog had now returned and had probably delayed my lobsterman friend, who I was



certain couldn't have confused the days and wouldn't have forgotten me. By this time I had pretty much eaten everything I had packed out. Along about mid-afternoon, I had concluded I wouldn't be seeing the JESSE come out of the bleak whiteness off Flint's northwest point, so I repitched the tent, went over my notes, added to my lists, and tried not to think about eating.

The next morning I woke up early, but decided against packing up my gear—I suppose as some kind of propitiation to the events of the past day. I began walking down the flinty, shingly shore over which

spikey spruce boughs were combing tiny droplets of water from the wet breath of fog. At such times everything is very close, the view is narrowed to 40 or 50 feet, with little to be seen, and because not much is moving on the water, the air is still, heavy, and silent.

At that moment, directly in front of me, not 20 feet above the beach and just off the island edge, navigating by the shore spruce, I was staring at two magnificent adult bald eagles: one a female, slightly larger than the male. They flew by, wingtip to wingtip, out of the fog—as startled to see me as I them, and then careened sharply away and were gone. I heard, and in the damp air imagined I felt, the rush of heavy air from their wings on my face. Although I'm not sure I knew it then, in that moment my life changed forever. In that

experience that lasted an instant, I felt a sensation telescoping itself outward, beyond Flint's outermost realm, into a foggy white light far beyond boat times and lists of names of things I had left at the campsite.

Over the past 16 years, I can think of another small handful of such experiences, which almost always occur alone and accidental-

ly; which strike me dumb at the time, but then work like the tide and fog in strange ways of muffled sound and obscured sight to bring me back and back again to things that cannot be named.

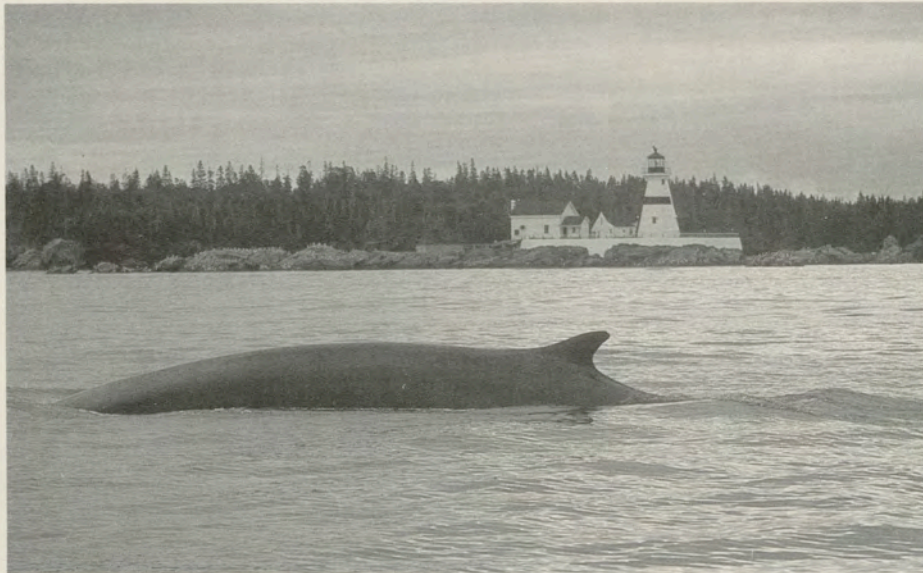
Here in Maine, still within our arms' reach in the late 20th century, we find a multitude of these once lightly inhabited islands, places that are rich in the ways of maritime history and culture. Places that, the smaller and more enclosed they are, the larger the window on the infinite, the farther they telescope to the heavens.

These are spirited and peopled places, and we must consider carefully how to keep these worlds balanced between accessibility and inaccessibility, because in one single moment of solitude, they provide our callous, name-collecting natures something as precious as vision itself.

THE THIN EDGE

Maine's island waters sustain kingdoms of remarkable diversity—and vulnerability

RICHARD PODOLSKY



Dr. Robert Leahy

Fin Whale (Balaenoptera physalus)

"The Gulf of Maine is in many ways a pivotal area in today's worldwide chess game of international politics and maritime law. Its prolific fisheries, its potential wealth of oil and ores, its complicated issues of international rights and boundaries comprise a smaller picture of a world in the throes of massive change, and how the problems of our Gulf are solved may well show the way toward the solution of far greater issues."

David R. Getchell, Sr.,
from the foreword to *The Gulf of Maine*
by Spencer Apollonio.

OF ALL THE PLACES on earth, the shorelines of the world's oceans are among the most dynamic. Here at the thin edge,* wave, wind, and land commingle with a dizzying array of plant and animal species and a surprising productivity. Islands figure prominently in whether near-shore waters are productive or not, and they must be viewed as a distinct and essential part of the ecology of shallow

*This phrase was first used by author Anne W. Simon in her 1978 book, *The Thin Edge: Coast and Man in Crisis*, published by Harper and Row.

seas. In fact, virtually anywhere in the sea where there are islands, the local marine productivity is enhanced by their presence.

It is also at the earth's shoreline where ten-legged invertebrates with eyes at the ends of stalks go head-to-head with human insults to the planet. Plastic debris bobs in this briny medium, polluted with chemicals that wash into rivers and streams from abused watersheds and fall from a sullied atmosphere. The sad irony is that humans are having the greatest impact on that portion of the ocean that supplies us with the greatest share of our food from the sea.

What energy sustains these critical shores, and what is their fate in light of man's increasing impact? Most important, what can we do to protect and enhance the thin edge?

THE STRUCTURE OF OCEAN BASINS

Ocean basins, like an organism, have an anatomy, and it is important to distinguish between different kinds of marine environments. Offshore waters lying above the deep sea floor and ocean trenches are called pelagic. Nearshore waters lying above the shallow shelves surrounding continents are referred to as neritic. The very shallowest waters (less than 15 feet deep) are limnetic. Finally, estuaries are semi-enclosed bodies where fresh water from rivers or streams inter-



Background image: Atlantic Wolffish (*Anarhichas lupus*). Insets, from top right: Northern Basket Starfish (*Gorgonocephalus arcticus*), Red Gilled Nudibranch (*Coryphella rufibranchialis*), Atlantic Wolffish (*Anarhichas lupus*), Red Soft Coral (*Gersemia rubiformis*), Blood Starfish (*Henricia sanguinolenta*) on Green Sea Urchins (*Strongylocentrotus droebachiensis*). All photos by Dr. Robert Leahy, taken in the near-shore waters of Passamaquoddy Bay.



mingles with salt water from the open sea. Oceanographers refer to the Gulf of Maine as a partially enclosed shallow sea, given its average depth.

Pelagic waters are far too deep to support rooted plants simply because light does not penetrate much beyond 200 feet. Consequently, the base of the pelagic food chain comes from phytoplankton, single- or multi-celled plants that float freely in the water column. At

the top of the pelagic food chain are whales, tuna, and seabirds that feed on plankton-eating fish and invertebrates. Human impact on pelagic waters is primarily from ocean dumping, oil spills, and the fallout of atmospheric pollutants.

Neritic and limnetic waters support a diversity of rooted seaweeds as well as phytoplankton. Shallow-water food chains are longer and far more complex than pelagic food chains. Shallow waters and estuaries are also under the direct influence of adjacent land masses, especially from the outflow of rivers and streams.

LIMITS TO BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTIVITY

Simply put, biological productivity refers to the total amount of plants and animals



produced in a given location over a period of time. The oceans, like the land, vary in their relative productivity. The productivity of tropical rain forests far exceeds that of deserts or alpine communities. In the ocean, near-shore or coastal waters (neritic, limnetic, and estuarine) are much more productive than offshore pelagic water.

The three key factors that contribute to the productivity of a given water body are its location, temperature, and nutrient load. For instance, proximity to a major river such as the Amazon or Mississippi will, by way of nutrient input, enhance local productivity. Upwelling of deep, cold water at the edge of a continent will also do the same thing. The Chilean coast is one of the most productive ocean regions due to the upwelling of cold antarctic water. Cold water holds a greater amount of dissolved oxygen and carbon, which together enhance productivity. Sunlight is also critical to productivity, and all things being equal, regions with higher year-round intensity of sunlight will have higher productivity. Finally, nutrients, especially phosphorous and nitrogen, are critical to high productivity.

The interesting twist is that a given part of the ocean or land may appear to be optimal for productivity but have very low productivity simply because a single factor

is missing. Imagine an automobile with everything working fine but with a single switch in the ignition system nonfunctioning, or a football team with everything going for it except that its quarterback is sidelined. The Law of the Limiting Factor (or Liebig's Law of the Minimum) tells us that the ultimate productivity experienced by any place on earth will be governed by whatever factor is in least supply. Human nutrition operates on the same principle. Good health results from a diet that includes everything we need at the levels we need them. Hence, a person getting everything she needs from her food except, for example, iodine, will experience poor health. The Law of the Minimum is why billions of dollars are spent each year on vitamins.

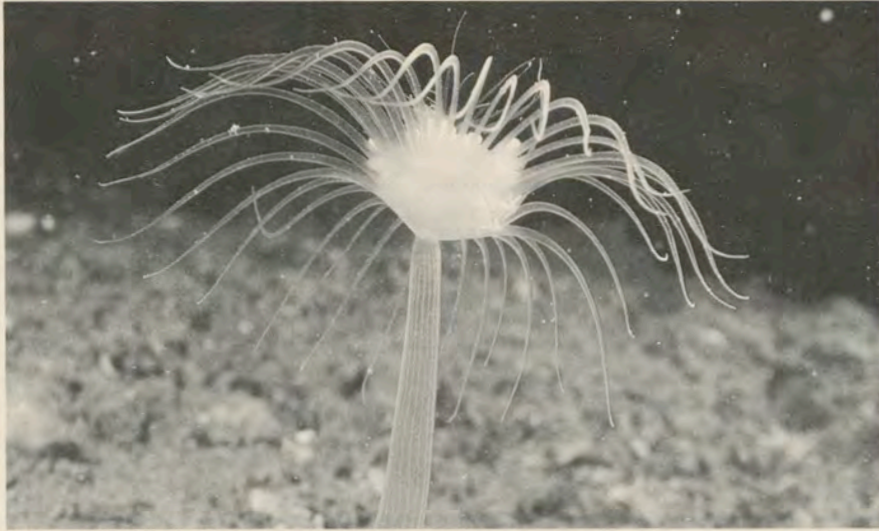
THE GULF OF MAINE

With the Law of the Minimum in mind, the productivity of cold water in areas under the influence of rivers and with relatively high levels of sunlight will far exceed the productivity of warm waters low in dissolved nutrients with less sunlight. The Gulf of Maine meets all the major criteria for high marine productivity. Bounded on the south by Cape Cod and on the north and east by Nova Scotia, the Gulf of Maine is a textbook example of marine productivity. Roughly rectangular in shape with an average depth of 75 fathoms, the Gulf of Maine covers 36,000 square miles (about equal in area to Indiana). Perhaps most significant is the input from the many rivers that flow into the Gulf. On average, 60 cubic miles of fresh water empty into the Gulf each year from more than 60 rivers. This massive volume of fresh water is enough to influence the large-scale circulation pattern of the Gulf. The numerous estuaries located around the mouths of these rivers also function as breeding and feeding grounds for the fish and shellfish of the Gulf.

The surface waters of the Gulf of Maine flow counterclockwise in a great gyre. The engine behind this flow comes in part from the Labrador Current, which has its origin between Greenland and Baffin Island and moves southward past Labrador, around Newfoundland, and down the east shore of Nova Scotia. At the southern end of Nova Scotia, a portion of it turns west and enters the Gulf of Maine, where it is called the Nova Scotia Current.

The Nova Scotia Current supplies the cold, nutrient-rich water that distinguishes the Gulf of Maine as one of the most productive marine environments on earth. Additional "thrust" to the circulation is supplied by spring runoff of fresh water from rivers as well as from one of the world's most powerful tidal surges. It has been estimated that the outer edge of this anticyclonic gyre of water rotates at a rate of seven nautical miles a day. Thus, it takes approximately three months for the Gulf to complete a single revolution. Local legend has it that it was knowledge





Solitary Hydroid (*Hybocdon pendula*)

**“Without islands
Maine would be
both biologically
and culturally
less productive
than it is.”**

of this circulation pattern that allowed a fisherman to predict the precise location and time a shipmate's body would be found off Vinalhaven after being lost from a dory on Brown's Banks off Nova Scotia.

ISLANDS HELP TO ENRICH PRODUCTIVITY

Stop for a moment and imagine a Maine coast without islands. Replace it with either a bold granite coast or a continuous sandy beach coast or some combination of the two. This simplification of the coastal geology would utterly change the character of Maine and greatly decrease the carrying capacity of the coast for fish, birds, and humans alike. Islands distinguish the Maine coast; without them Maine would be both biologically and culturally less productive than it is.

Luckily for us, the Maine coast is rich in islands; in fact, for every linear mile of the Maine coast between New Hampshire and Canada there are, on average, 13 islands or ledges in the adjacent coastal waters. This represents a high density of islands and sets up conditions for enhanced near-shore productivity.

Perhaps nowhere is the connection between islands and marine productivity more apparent than in the lobster fishery. Nowhere else in the Gulf of Maine or in Atlantic Canada are more lobsters caught per square mile than in Penobscot Bay. This is largely a reflection of the fact that nowhere else is there such a large concentration of islands.

As the Gulf of Maine circulates among the 3,000 islands, each island helps to mix, oxygenate, and enrich the water. The islands also cause local upwelling of deeper, colder, nutrient-rich water. On very foggy days, the islands break up the fog by causing the formation of plumes of clear air downwind from the island and thus help to increase the intensity of sunlight. Individually, islands support many wetlands and estuaries, the runoff from which enriches the surrounding waters. These factors help explain the inshore movement of lobsters, crabs, and fish during the spring and summer and the result-

ing high density of lobster traps around the margins of islands.

Marine ecologists measure productivity by estimating the yearly production of carbon “fixed” by plants through photosynthesis. Because plants comprise the very base of the food chain, these estimates are measuring what is called “primary” production. The animals that feed on this primary production, the grazers, are called “secondary” consumers and comprise themselves the secondary production for the animals, the “tertiary” consumers or predators, that feed upon them further up the chain.

For any place in the biosphere, on land or in the sea, the amount of plant production is what ultimately controls the abundance of grazers and predators. This is because of what ecologists refer to as the Ten Percent Rule. This rule is based on the observation that only 10 percent of the production from one feeding level is passed up the chain and thus available for consumption by the next level—right up to the topmost predators. This relative inefficiency of ecological systems (that is, 90 percent loss with each transfer from one feeding level to the next) explains in part the relative rarity of animals like mountain lions, eagles, or bluefin tuna. In fact, ecological systems are often likened to a “pyramid of life,” with predators at the top point, grazers in the middle, and plants residing at the broad base.

The amount of carbon fixed is reported by ecologists in grams of carbon (gC) per meter square (M^2) per year (yr), and it can be measured for both land and sea. Deserts, for example, produce only 70 gC/ M^2 /yr, lakes and streams 500 gC/ M^2 /yr, tropical rainforests 1,800 gC/ M^2 /yr, and swamps and marshes the highest in nature, 2,500 gC/ M^2 /yr. Even lands under cultivation produce only 650 gC/ M^2 /yr.

Closer to home, Dr. Kenneth Mann of the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Nova Scotia has, for more than two decades, been measuring the primary production of rooted seaweeds in the shallows of the Gulf of Maine. His data on near-shore productivity is crucial to understanding how islands scattered along the shore lead to enriched coastal food chains. Mann makes his estimates by studying the growth of seaweeds and by harvesting them. His long-term studies in St. Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia, estimate 1,000 gC/ M^2 /yr for the rooted seaweeds along the shores of the Gulf of Maine. This compares with estimates of only 125 gC/ M^2 /yr for the open ocean adjacent to the Gulf. Dr. Mann's estimate of 1,000 gC/ M^2 /yr translates into 370 kilograms (815 pounds) of carbon for every meter (3.28 ft) of shoreline.

The coast of Maine is approximately 5,600 km in length (about 3,500 miles); thus approximately 4.5 billion pounds of carbon are produced merely by seaweeds along the Maine coast alone. These values

are among the highest coastal productivity recorded anywhere. One of the reasons for these high values is due to the complex micro-topography of the shallows around the many islands in the Gulf. Again, without the islands, the near-shore zone would be a much simpler place, without the biological richness we currently observe.

The rooted seaweeds of the Gulf of Maine function on many levels. The intertidal seaweeds or rockweed, including *Ascophyllum* and *Fucus*, supply cover and food for crabs, periwinkles, and mussels. Subtidally, kelp and *Alaria* form the forests that protect shedding lobsters and larval fish and supply food to sea urchins. The rooted seaweeds also oxygenate the water because oxygen is a byproduct of their photosynthesis. But their most vital function occurs when these algae perish. When they die, they enter the decomposing or detrital food chain that is the life support system for lobsters, crabs, and a host of scavenging invertebrates. The Ten Percent Rule holds true for detrital food chains as well. Thus 4.5 million pounds of carbon produced by rooted seaweeds are passed up the detrital food chain each year to crabs, lobsters, and other scavengers residing along the coast of Maine.

ESTUARIES ARE THE BOTTOM LINE

Estuaries are the most productive part of the marine environment (1,800 gC/M²/yr), but they are very rare, making up less than one percent of the world's oceans. Their rarity, in concert with the intensity of their biological activity, renders estuaries enormously important for us to preserve and even to revere. The Maine coast has an abundance of estuaries compared to most coastal regions, which in large part accounts for the richness of the entire Gulf of Maine. Numerous small estuaries are found along the Maine coast and on many islands. Among the major estuaries from west to east are Saco Bay, Casco Bay, Merrymeeting Bay, Sheepscot Bay, Muscongus Bay, Penobscot Bay, Blue Hill Bay, Frenchman Bay, Narraguagus Bay, Englishman Bay, Machias Bay, and Cobscook Bay.

Unfortunately, estuaries are where human activity is having its greatest impact. The health of an estuary is directly related to the land use practices and industrial activity in its drainage area. For example, a watershed in which there is an abundance of agriculture or industry typically has unnaturally high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus. In small doses, nitrogen and phosphorus are critical to productivity; but in unnaturally high levels, they can cause eutrophication or over-enrichment and lead to ecological imbalance. Casco Bay estuary, for instance, is believed by NOAA (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration) and the EPA (Environ-

mental Protection Agency) to be concentrating a variety of toxic dissolved substances.

Similarly, Narraguagus Bay, located at the mouth of the Narraguagus River at Milbridge, is believed to be concentrating other dissolved substances. The reason for this lies in the land use practices in the estuarine drainage area. The drainage area for this estuary is 416 square miles, of which 83 square miles, or about 20 percent, are in agriculture and range land. One hundred and six tons of nitrogen and 12 tons of phosphorus enter Narraguagus Bay annually.

KNOW YOUR WATERSHED

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of towns and their citizens to plan for growth in such a way that they take into account the impact of land use in all estuarine watersheds. The first step in this process is knowing whether or not your land is in an estuarine watershed. Even if you live hundreds of miles from the ocean, your land eventually connects to the sea. For places like Damariscotta and Jonesport there is no question, but if you do have questions, ask your town planner or manager. The next step is to analyze the land use practices in your watershed to see if there are any point sources or non-point sources of pollution or other problems. Point sources of pollution are typically large scale, like an outfall pipe or leaking tank at an industrial facility. Non-point sources are typically smaller and thus more insidious. They include all the backyards where household toxins such as cleaning fluid or motor oil are dumped. Inexorably, these materials make their way down our rivers and ultimately to the thin edge.

More and more people are adopting a watershed consciousness. In Maine, we are quickly coming to a time when every lobsterman and fisherman realizes that the quality and quantity of his catch is directly related to whether or not a dairy farmer from "up-country" uses pesticides on his land or how and when he fertilizes. Conversely, whether or not there is a local market for dairy products is a function of the viability of coastal communities dependent upon economies such as fishing. Chesapeake Bay watermen have understood this positive feedback loop for several decades, but had to learn it the hard way. Excluding perhaps Casco Bay and parts of a few other highly polluted embayments, Maine has the luxury to act on the lessons learned elsewhere before having to enroll in the school of hard knocks.

Like it or not, we have inherited the long-term responsibility for an enormously productive archipelago. More of us than ever before are living and vacationing on the shore, among the islands, and within estuarine drainages, and the numbers are only going to increase. We are therefore the *de facto* stewards of this thin edge, and we must conduct ourselves accordingly. The lobsters are counting on us.

**“Like it or not,
we have inherited
the long-term
responsibility for
an enormously
productive
archipelago.”**



Wayne Barrett

Focus on
**PRINCE
EDWARD
ISLAND**



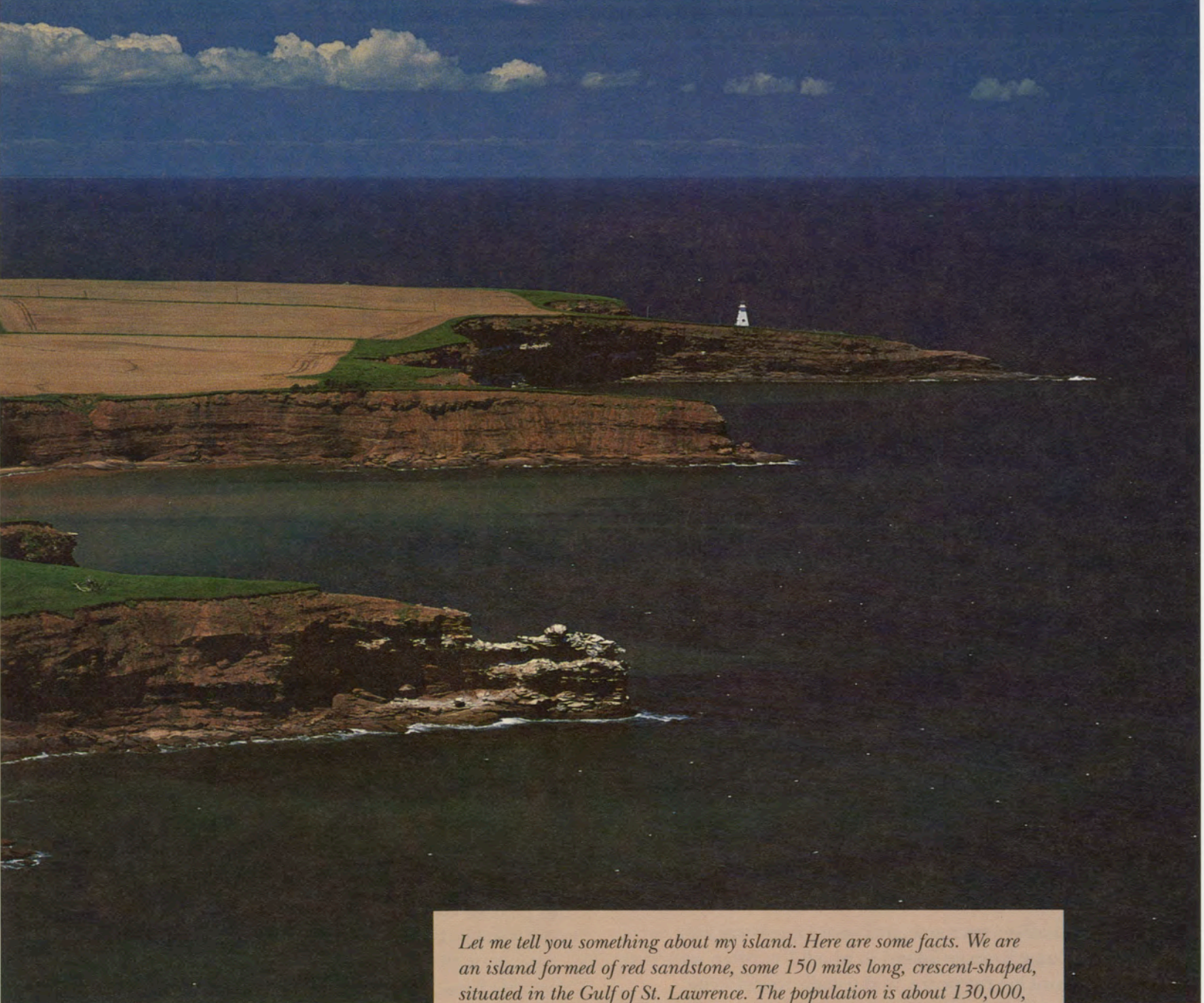
BEGINNING THIS YEAR with the following essays, poetry, and photographs, we are delighted to introduce a new section of *Island Journal* to our readers that we have called "This Island Earth." In this section we will extend our coverage to those islands beyond the borders of Maine that we believe have a story to tell that will resonate with our concerns and interests back home offshore.

We are particularly delighted to introduce this new section with an elegant selection of writing from Prince Edward Island received from our Canadian friends at the Institute of Island Studies, located at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown. Institute of Island Studies Director Harry Baglole, along with his colleague, Professor of History David Weale, addressed our Eighth Annual Conference at Hurricane Island in September 1990.

In his remarks at that conference, Baglole described the Institute of Island Studies as "a research, education, and public policy organization with a particu-

lar interest in the culture and environment of Prince Edward Island." With ongoing programs in sustainable development, land use, research, and publications, the Institute of Island Studies reflects concerns similar to ours in Maine, but with a distinctly more international bent. Explaining his Institute's mandated emphasis on comparative studies of island cultures, Baglole commented: "In order to understand our own island, to share common problems as well as to comprehend more clearly our particular sacred nuance of difference, we must become familiar with other small island societies all over the world." In March 1990 Baglole attended an international conference in Malta on Small Island Development. In June 1992 the Institute is planning a conference on Small Islands of the North Atlantic Rim, and in 1993 the Institute of Island Studies will host an international conference on the Demography of Small Island Populations.

While avoiding political stands, the Institute of Island Studies has been inescapably drawn into the storm of con-



Wayne Barrett

troverly surrounding the most divisive issue to hit Prince Edward Island in recent years: the proposal for a “Fixed Link,” or bridge to the mainland. Although most agree that it would result in a more efficient mode of transportation, never far in the background—and in some ways more pressing than those immediate concerns about environmental degradation and “quality of life”—have been the fundamental questions of the island psyche, the island spirit. At a Fixed Link hearing devoted entirely to a discussion of the island way of life, David Weale shared his observations on “Islandness.” When he shared his thoughts again at Hurricane Island, we recognized a quintessential island truth expressed with insight and eloquence. It is a pleasure to reprint his words here, along with a sampling from the work of Prince Edward Island’s poet laureate Milton Acorn (page 80 and back cover). Meanwhile, we look forward to continued rich association with our “Canadian cousins.”—Eds.

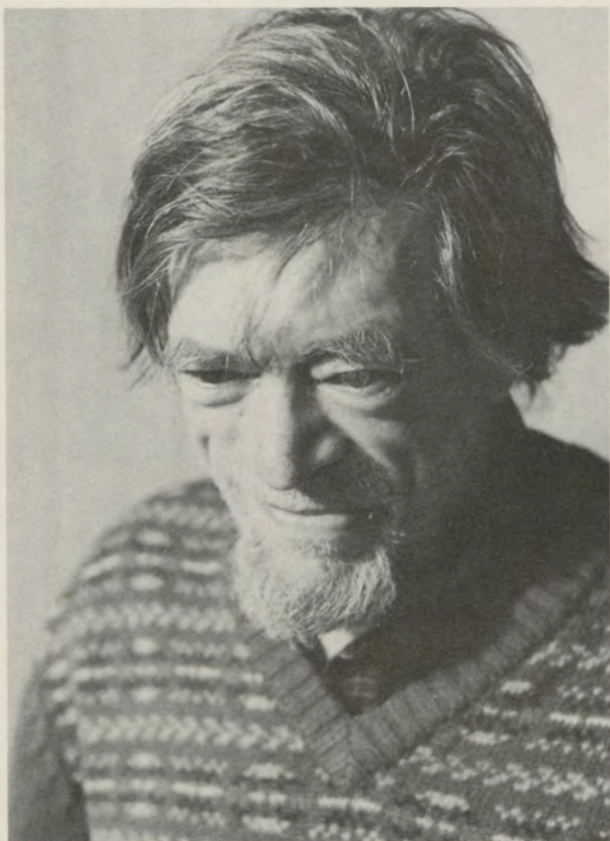
Let me tell you something about my island. Here are some facts. We are an island formed of red sandstone, some 150 miles long, crescent-shaped, situated in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The population is about 130,000, mainly of British and French origin. At its closest point, the mainland is some nine miles away. The principal industries are farming, tourism, and fishing. We are famous for our potatoes; for our lovely pastoral landscape; and for Anne of Green Gables, a character created by Island author Lucy Maud Montgomery. It may not be coincidental that “Anne,” as we have come to refer to her, is particularly popular in Japan, another island society.

We have problems on our island—many of them familiar to other islanders. Our young people continue to leave, as they have for more than 100 years. Our family farms are in decline. Our land is being sold to non-residents and large corporations; and our precious landscape is under attack by strip development, coastal subdivision, and a whole host of related atrocities.

There is, however, a bright side to this picture. In a very real sense, our greatest asset is our island identity. This special character has been shaped by generations of co-habitation in an isolated place, an island, a place where, as our foremost poet Milton Acorn has written, there is no “spot not measured by hands;/no direction I couldn’t walk/ to the wave-lined edge of home.”

Harry Baglole

I, MILTON ACORN



Courtesy Institute of Island Studies

I, Milton Acorn, not at first aware
That was my name and what I knew was life,
Come from an Island to which I've often returned
Looking for peace, and usually found strife.

Till I came to see it was no pocket
In a saint's pants while outside trouble reigned;
And after all my favorite mode
Of weather's been a hurricane.

The spattered color of the time has marked me
So I'm a man of many appearances;
Have come many times to poetry
And come back to define what was meant.

Often I've been coupled, and often alone
No matter how I try I can't choose
Which it shall be. I've been
Ill-treated, but often marvelously well-used.

What's a man if not put to good use?
Nothing's happened I want to forget.
What's a day without a notable
Event between sunrise and sunset?

My present lover finds me gentle
So gentle I'll be in my boisterous way.
Another one was heard to call me noble.
That didn't stop her from going away.

To be born on an island's to be sure
You are native with a habitat.
Growing up on one's good training
For living in a country, on a planet.

Shall I tell you the soil's red
As a flag? Sand a pink flesh gleam
You could use to tone a precious stone?
All its colors are the colors of dreams.

Perhaps only the colors I dream
For I grew under that prismatic sky
Like a banner of many colors
Alternately splashed and washed clean.

The Island's small ... Every opinion counts.
I'm accustomed to fighting for them.
Lord I thank Thee for the enemies
Who even in childhood tempered me.

I beg pardon, God, for the insult
Saying You lived and were responsible
... a tortuous all-odds-counting manner
Of thinking marks me an Islander.

Evil's been primary, good secondary
In the days I've been boy, youth and man.
I don't look to any rule of pure virtue
But certainly not continuance of this damned ...

Damned! Damned did I say? This glorious age
When the ancient rule of classes is hit
And hit again. History's greatest change
Is happening ... And I'm part of it.

Milton Acorn was born in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in 1923 and died there in 1986. Arguably the most accomplished and important literary artist in Island history, Acorn was known in Canada as "The People's Poet" for his identification with what he called the "working classes," "the people." He gave up his carpentry tools for poetry when he was in his mid-thirties, pursuing his art while living in Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto before returning to the Island to stay in 1981. His poems about the Island—the landscape, its history of political and economic struggle, and its people—are imbued with his sense of himself as "Island born."

"I, Milton Acorn" and "The Island" (back cover) are reprinted here with permission of the estate of Milton Acorn.



Paul N. Baglole

ISLANDNESS

DAVID WEALE

I WAS DRIVING WITH my ten-year-old son along the shore on the way to a late afternoon hockey game in a town an hour or so away. He sat quietly in the seat just looking out the window at the passing landscape and seascape. I turned to look at him several times, but he didn't even notice. He was absorbed in his looking.

Then it occurred to me what he was doing. He was taking in the landscape. He was, if you will, ingesting the Island. And that is exactly what happens when you live here for long—you take the Island inside—deep inside. You become an Islander, which is to say, a creature of the Island. Islandness becomes a part of your being—a part as deep as marrow, and as natural and unselfconscious as breathing.

The idea of a fixed link joining Prince Edward Island to the mainland is a

prospect that is disturbing to many Islanders. The source of this disquiet is often so primal that it is not easily expressed, and it is sometimes articulated in terms of a threat to the "Island way of life."

This phrase, "Island way of life," does not, however, adequately identify the source of the disquietude, referring as it does to such things as tradition, socio-economic and political arrangements, or even the pace of living. I would contend that the most radical and deeply rooted concern of many Islanders has to do with what we might describe as the "islandness" of their identity, both as individuals and as a community; and that you would expect to find it best expressed, not by politicians or academics or journalists, but by artists and poets.

Wherever we look in the world we discover peoples whose lives and cultures have been shaped by their natural environment. There are mountain people, valley people, and people of the open plains. There are polar people, coastal people, and people of the forests. In each case the nature of the community—its mythology, imagination, its very soul—has been sculpted and colored by its geographical circumstances. Furthermore, it would certainly be foolish to think of anyone of these as being superior to the others. Each is good and bad in its own way, and its strength and genius is derived from its adaptation and response to its own geographic peculiarities.

The people who live on Prince Edward Island are Island people. This is more than a statement about our location. It is a statement about our very nature and essence. It is deeply and profoundly who we are. If we deny it, we betray ourselves; and for a society, no less than for an individual, it is a matter of great and grave seriousness to deny or compromise your essential being.

Again, this is not to suggest for a moment that being Islanders makes us better than anyone else. Such a notion, when it appears, is not an expression of confidence and integrity, but of insecurity. To say, "We are Islanders," is not, therefore, to claim any superior virtue. It is simply an acknowledgement of our own true nature as a people, an acknowledgement that we are an Island psyche—an Island soul.

The uniqueness of an Island is its geographic precision. "An Island," as I was taught in Grade Four, "is a body of land completely surrounded by water,"—or, as a friend from Cape Breton recently expressed it, "An Island is geographically perfect."

Another Islander penned this statement about twenty years ago:

The Northumberland Strait has always been nature's emphatic and unambiguous way of informing Islanders that they are a separate and unique people. Living on an Island inculcates a vivid and precise recognition of exactly who you are—and who you are not. Year in and year out, generation after generation, this singular geographic circumstance dictates both a sense of unity and separateness.

Notice, if you will, some of the words in this description. They are important: *Emphatic. Unambiguous. Vivid. Precise.* These are not just descriptions of the geography of an island; they are, more to the point, descriptions of the consciousness of Islanders. And that is just why the prospect of a permanent fixed link is unsettling. It may seem a small thing to

someone who is not an Islander, but for many of us who have grown up here it represents an affront to who we are. Proponents of the link have said that it will only enhance the Island way of life. That is quite absurd. You might reasonably argue that it will enhance the economy of the province, or that it will make travelling on and off the Island more convenient, but you cannot reasonably argue that it will enhance the Islandness of our way of life. You can no more enhance the Island way of life by building a fixed link than you can enhance the forest by cutting down the trees.

Economically, socially, psychologically, the construction of a fixed link will reduce our insularity. It moves us in the direction of peninsularity, which as the word itself expresses, is a state of being almost an island. There is nothing wrong with that, but we should not pretend that it makes no difference. It is fine for Nova Scotians or Gaspesians; it is who they are. But it is not who we are.

Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor-General of Canada in the 1930s, commented in a speech delivered in Charlottetown in 1939 that what gives an island "its special charm for the heart of man" is that "...an island has clear physical limits, and the mind is able to grasp it and make a picture of it as a whole."

Once again it is important to be aware that Tweedsmuir was speaking not just of a topographical shoreline. Rather, in the words of an Island song-writer, he is speaking of the "psychological shoreline" that has been internalized in the consciousness of Islanders, and informs every aspect of life in this province.

This deep truth about ourselves is also expressed simply and eloquently in "The Island," a poem by native Prince Edward Islander Milton Acorn (see back cover).

*Since I'm island-born home's as precise
as if a mumbly old carpenter,
shoulder-straps crossed wrong,
laid it out,
refigured to the last three-eighths of
shingle.*

The topography and landscape of this province, that is to say, its Islandness, is the source and reference point for the imagination of Islanders. It is the primal source of our communal insight and wisdom. As I have already said, this is not to speak exclusively. There is imagination and wisdom that grows up in other dissimilar places, and we recognize that we have much to learn from others in this regard. But when we fail to reverence the unique identity of our own place, we despise our own birthright, and cut ourselves off from the ground of our own insight and imagination. If we do that, we will still be able to receive from others, but we will have compromised the source of our own cre-

ativity, and the world will be the poorer for it.

For the island community, no less than for an individual, the failure to respect the truth about ourselves is a serious and soul-destroying failure. Any repudiation of our Islandness is, therefore, a deep and fundamental repudiation of who we are—and of our uniquely precious existence.

This term Islandness or "insularity" frightens some people. They think it is a sign of narrowness or narcissism. There is, however, no inherent contradiction between "Island-identity" and "global citizenship," anymore than there is a conflict between the healthy self-esteem of an individual and her ability to participate in community life. Indeed, the two are not conflictual, but complementary. In other words, my identity as a citizen of this Island we call Prince Edward is a complement to my identity as a citizen of this Island we call the Earth.

There are three islands in the experience of every human being living in the 20th century: the island of the self; the island of the particular spot where you live; and the island of the world. What I am saying to you today is that these three are interdependent, and that a lack of integrity in any of these spheres diminishes the wholeness of the others.

I would once again draw attention to the work of Milton Acorn who, in a poem about himself, wrote:

*To be born on an Island's to be sure
You are native with a habitat.
Growing up on one's good training
For living in a country, on a planet.*

One of my students was recently doing an interview for one of my classes with an elderly Island woman. In the course of the interview the girl referred to the Island as P.E.I. The woman stopped her and chided gently. "A place as beautiful as this," she said, "shouldn't be abbreviated. Say it right out, dear, Prince Edward Island."

For all these reasons, my contention is that the construction of a fixed link represents an abbreviation or diminishment of our Island: or, to put it more even pointedly, it represents for Islanders a deep psychic or spiritual violation. It puts a kind of chill right down to the marrow of who we are. If it were essential to our survival, we might be prepared to endure it, but since it is not—since, indeed, it may even harm our capacity to provide a livelihood for our people—the losses far outweigh the gains.

David Weale teaches history at the University of Prince Edward Island. An authority on Island folk and social history, he has published widely; his weekly award-winning radio commentary "Them Times" is a big hit in his home province.



Peter Ralston

What the Light was Like

AMY CLAMPITT

Every year in June—up here, that's the month for lilacs—
almost his whole front yard,
with lobster traps stacked out back, atop the rise
that overlooks the inlet
would be a Himalayan range of peaks of bloom,
white or mauve-violet,

gusting a turbulence of perfume, and every year the same
iridescent hummingbird,
or its descendant, would be at work among the mourning cloaks
and swallowtails, its motor loud,
its burning gorget darkening at moments as though charred.
He kept an eye out

for it, we learned one evening, as for everything that flapped
or hopped or hovered
crepuscular under the firs: he's heard the legendary
trilling of the woodcock,
and watched the eiders, once rare among these coasts,
making their comeback

so that now they're everywhere, in tribes, in families
of aunts and cousins,
a knit-and-purl of irresistibly downy young behind them, riding
every cove and inlet;
and yes, in answer to the questions summer people always ask,
he'd seen the puffins

that breed out on 'Tit Manan, in summer improbably clown-faced
behind the striped scarlet
of Commedia dell' Arte masks we'll never see except in
Roger Tory Peterson's
field guide, or childish wishful thinking. There was much
else I meant to ask about

another summer. But in June, when we came limping up here
again, looking forward
to easing up from a mean, hard, unaccommodating winter,
we heard how he'd gone out
at dawn, one morning in October, unmoored the dinghy
and rowed to his boat

as usual, the harbor already chugging with half a dozen
neighbor's revved-up craft,
wet decks stacked abaft with traps, the bait and kegs stowed
forward, a lifting weft
of fog spooled off in pearl-pink fleeces overhead with the first
daylight, and steered,

as usual, past first the inner and then the outer bar, where in
whatever kind of weather,
the red reef-bell yells, in that interminable treble, Trouble,
out past where the Groaner
lolls, its tempo and forte changing with the chop, played
on by every wind shift,

straight into the sunrise, a surge of burning turning the
whole ocean iridescent
fool's-gold over molten emerald, into the core of that
day-after-day amazement—
a clue, one must suppose, to why lobstermen are often
naturally gracious:

maybe, out there beside the wheel, the Baptist spire
shrunk to a compass-
point, the town an interrupted cirlet, feeble as an apron-
string, for all the labor
it took to put it there, it's finding, out in that ungirdled
wallowing and glitter,

finally, that what you love most is the same as what you're
most afraid of—God,
in a word; whereas it seems they think they've got it licked
(or used to), back there
in the Restricted Area for instance, where that huge hush-
hush thing they say is radar

sits sprawling on the heath like Stonehenge, belittling every
other man-made thing
in view, even the gargantuan pods of the new boat hulls you
now and then see lying,
stark naked, crimson on the inside as a just-skinned carcass,
in Young's boatyard,

even the gray Grange Hall, wood-heated by a yardarm of stovepipe
across the ceiling.
Out there, from that wallowing perspective, all comparisons
amount to nothing,
though once you've hauled your last trap, things tend to wander
into shorter focus

In its original publication, "What the Light was Like" was dedicated to Louise Dickinson Rich and the family of Ernest Woodward. With the author's permission, the Island Institute dedicates this republication to the memory of seven Mount Desert and Deer Isle fishermen lost at sea during the past two years: Buddy Closson, Herb Damon, Ben Day, Clyde Haskell, Raymond Hodgkins, Larry Robbins, Sr., and Alan Thompson.

as, around noon, you head back in: first 'Tit Manan lighthouse,
a ghostly gimlet
on its ledge by day, but on clear nights expanding to a
shout, to starboard,
the sunstruck rock pilot of Cranberry Point to port; then
you see the hamlet

rainbowed, above the blurring of the spray shield, by the
hurrying herring gulls'
insatiable fandango of excitement—the spire first, then
the crimson boat hulls,
the struts of the ill-natured gadget on the heath behind them
as the face of things expands,

the hide-and-seek behind the velvet-shouldered, sparse
tree-spined profiles,
as first the outer, then the inner bar appears, then the scree-
beach under Crowley Island's
crowding firs and spruces, and you detect among the chimneys
and the TV aerials,

yours. But by midafternoon of that October day,
when all his neighbors'
boats had chugged back through the inlet, his
was still out; at evening,
with half the town out looking, and a hard frost
settling in among the alders,

there'd been no sign of him. The next day, and the next,
the search went on,
and widened, joined by planes and helicopters from as
far away as Boston.
When on the third day, his craft was sighted
finally, it had drifted,

with its engine running, till the last gulp of fuel
spluttered and ran out,
beyond the town's own speckled noose of buoys, past
the furred crest of Schoodic,
vivid in a skirt of aspens, the boglands cranberry-
crimson at its foot,

past the bald brow the sunrise always strikes first, of
the hulk of Cadillac,
riding the current effortlessly as eiders tied to water
by the summer molt,
for fifty miles southwestward to where, off Matinicus,
out past the rock

that, like 'Tit Manan, is a restricted area, off limits for
all purposes but puffins',
they spotted him, slumped against the kegs. I find it
tempting to imagine what,
when the blood roared, overflowing its cerebral sluiceway,
and the iridescence

of his last perception, charring, gave way to unreversed,
irrevocable dark,
the light out there was like, that's always shifting—from
a nimbus gone berserk
to a single gorget, a cathedral train of blinking, or
the fogbound shroud

that can turn anywhere into nowhere. But it's useless.
Among the mourning-cloak-
hovered-over lilac peaks, their whites and purples,
when we pass his yard,
poignant to excess with fragrance, this year we haven't
seen the hummingbird.

Among the most distinguished of contemporary American poets, Amy Clampitt lives in New York City and is a longtime summer resident of Corea, Maine. Her poems have been published in The New Yorker, The Kenyon Review, The New Republic, Prairie Schooner, Poetry, and The Yale Review. She has also authored several books of poetry including The Kingfisher (1983), What the Light was Like (1985), Archaic Figures (1987), and Westward (1990), all from Albert A. Knopf. A collection of essays, Predecessors, Et Cetera, is forthcoming sometime this year from the University of Michigan in its Poets on Poetry series.

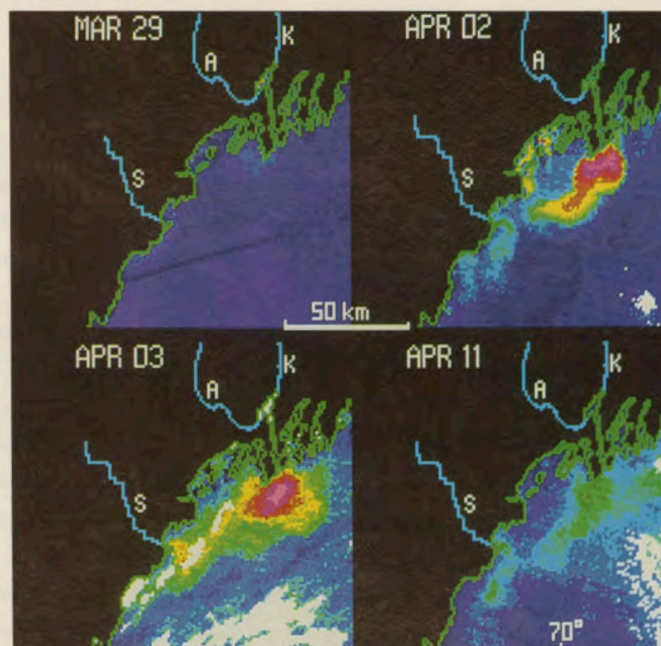
THE BIG PICTURE

*Bigelow Lab and Bath Iron Works
team up against Casco Bay pollution*

PHILIP W. CONKLING

MOST PEOPLE remember the 1987 April flood in New England for the damage it caused to bridges, roads, and buildings along the banks of dozens of rivers and streams. At the time it didn't occur to anyone that these muddy rivers, swollen with millions of cubic yards of sediments, might be carrying a huge load of toxics that would cause even more serious damage to the marine environment as they emptied into near-shore waters of the Gulf of Maine—no one, that is, except a few scientists at the Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences at Boothbay Harbor.

Peter Larsen is referred to by his colleagues at the Bigelow Lab as a benthic ecologist, which means that he studies the structure of communities of plants and animals that inhabit the bottom of the ocean's subtidal areas, or "benthos." Already in 1980 Larsen had begun sampling benthic communities in Casco Bay to try to piece together an understanding of the environmental health of Maine's most heavily populated estuary. By 1984 Larsen had assembled enough data to reach the disturbing conclusion that Casco Bay exhibits many of the same symptoms of degradation that have plagued other much more heavily



industrialized embayments of the East Coast, such as Boston Harbor and New York Bight.

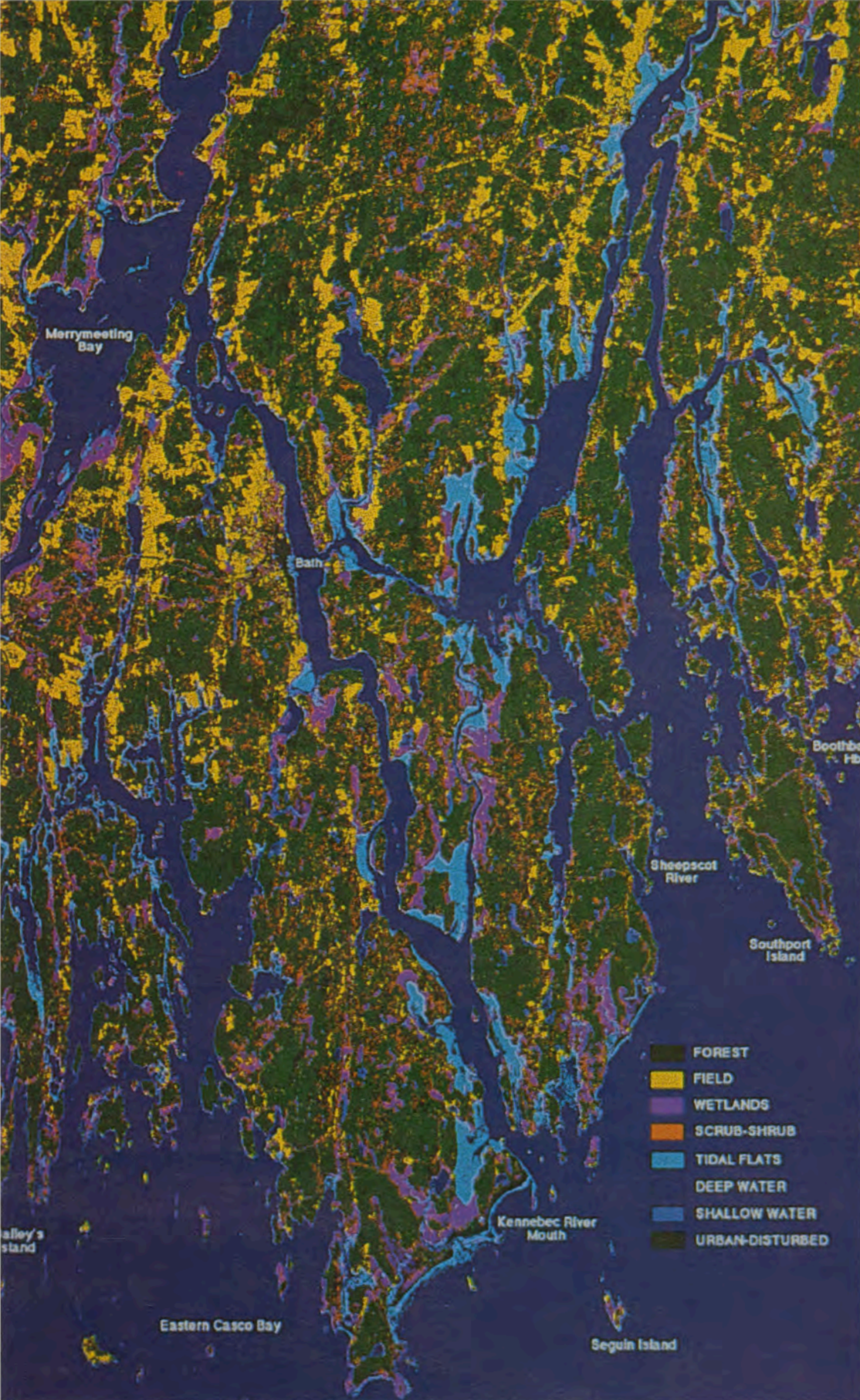
Janet Campbell, who heads Bigelow's Remote Sensing Image Analysis Facility, has been making measurements of the ocean from space since coming to the Boothbay lab from NASA in 1982. Even before Maine's 1987 flood, her collection of satellite images of the Gulf of Maine had begun to provide scientists, policy makers, and fishermen with revolutionary new insights into the location of important currents, productive fishing areas, and warm and cold eddies within the vast oceanic realm off Maine's shores. For some time prior to the flood, Campbell had been urging her colleagues at Bigelow to look at early spring satellite images of the Gulf of Maine, when river, runoff is typically highest. She reasoned

that since the river signal known as a sediment plume (see photo at left) would be visible from space, images of the Gulf of Maine during the so-called spring freshet, when turbidity is highest, could help Bigelow's scientists understand how far the effect of the river waters reaches.

Larsen was interested in the question of where Kennebec river waters go once they merge with salt water because he knew that fine-grained sediments are a primary mechanism of transport for a variety of toxic contaminants that are capable of adhering to these tiny particles suspended in the water column. Based on very fragmentary evidence, Larsen had suspected the Kennebec drainage basin as the ultimate source of the alarmingly high concentrations of contaminants that he had found in Casco Bay. But the proof—the telltale sediment plume—was missing.

So Larsen and Campbell began to track down a satellite image of the Gulf of Maine that was centered on the Kennebec River estuary during a flood condition. The best available remotely sensed data of any shoreline or oceanic body comes from NASA's Nimbus Satellite, which is equipped with a special sensor known to scientists as the Advanced Very High

The sediment plume (in red and yellow) of the Kennebec (K) and Androscoggin (A) watershed is shown above in the series of "before and after" satellite images of the Maine coast around the time of the flood. Note the "back eddy" of the plume into Casco Bay in the April 2 image.



If we could only see the surface of the earth the way soaring hawks can. Well, now in a way we can. The photograph on this page was taken by an orbiting French satellite, called SPOT, and interpreted at the Island Institute. Getting above it all and examining a critical landscape, such as the Kennebec River watershed shown here, provides ecological information on a regional scale that cannot be obtained in any other practical way. This particular image, for instance, covers a whopping 316,000 acres of habitat, of which approximately 216,000 acres are terrestrial and 100,000 acres marine.

To create this image and conduct an analysis of the significant natural features, we begin by purchasing raw satellite data from SPOT Image Corporation; then we analyze it on an Apple Macintosh computer using the Institute's GAIA software package (*Island Journal* 1990) to create a "theme map." Theme maps correlate what the satellite sees with habitats that ecologists can recognize on the ground. Using the power of computers to keep track of the computations, we then are able to determine with a high degree of accuracy the number of acres of wetlands (18,328), mudflats (12,008), residential areas (7,268), or other features.

The Island Institute developed GAIA with regional planners, researchers, and educators in mind. Call us if you would like more information on how to use similar information in your community.

— Richard Podolsky

Images copyright (1988) CNES, provided by SPOT Image Corporation, Reston, VA.

Resolution Radiometer (or AVHRR). AVHRR imagery can distinguish differences in water color over vast stretches of the ocean and is primarily used for "real time" weather forecasting. Locating a single image for a particular date for a small portion of the Gulf of Maine from an archive that stores enormous volumes of satellite image data from oceans world-

wide on a daily basis is easier said than done. When Larsen finally got a hold of the image he was looking for, the pictures were startling. The massive sediment plume that carried an estimated 500,000 cubic yards of material out of the Kennebec River during the 1987 flood provided Larsen with strong circumstantial evidence that a key source of pollu-

tants affecting Casco Bay was an adjacent watershed, where a major portion of Maine's population and economic base is located. The satellite pictures (reproduced here) that Larsen saw began to provide a framework for understanding other observations, made "on location," about the serious deterioration of marine environments in Casco Bay.

Since 1962, when he was 12 years old, Guy Johnson has been diving in the waters of eastern Casco Bay between Small Point and Bailey Island. Johnson began diving for his father, who owned a marine biological supply company, and in later years has continued as a commercial scallop and urchin diver. For years Johnson has been worried about the progressive disappearance of the delicate marine creatures such as anemones, brittle stars, and tunicates that the family business depended upon. Johnson is certain there is a connection between the Kennebec River plume and the decline of marine productivity in eastern Casco Bay. "After a heavy rain," says Johnson, "there's a fresh water current moving in a westerly direction close to shore that curls in around the tip of Small Point into Casco Bay. Anywhere from the top 2 to 10 feet of this river water are murky; when you dive down below it and look up, it's like looking at a ceiling. All the fishermen have known this for years."

According to Johnson, about 10 years ago he began to notice that he couldn't find certain once common marine species around the inshore islands and ledges where he and his father had been collecting for decades. He also noticed that increasing amounts of a brownish-black sludge was settling in shallow areas covering up and ultimately killing kelps, razor clams, and mussel beds. "It's like a brown life form in the water that settles in shallow areas; it's so fine that when you dive and try to stand on the bottom, you go right up to your waist," says Johnson.

Clarice Yentsch is another of Bigelow's senior scientists. She has spent more than a decade studying red tide blooms in the Gulf on Maine that result from the as yet unexplained population explosion of tiny, single-celled organisms called dinoflagellates in the water column. The results of Yentsch's research over the past decade also implicate the Kennebec estuary as a prime site for the genesis of these blooms, which can cause paralytic shellfish poisoning. Recently, red tide organisms have been found for the first time in water samples taken from Georges Bank. The disturbing hypothesis is that these red tide organisms are somehow stimulated to high reproduction levels by the Kennebec River's water plume and are then carried southwestward along the coast and ultimately out to Georges Bank.

These disturbing thoughts might have continued to worry only fishermen and scientists if it weren't for an unusual form of corporate activism in the person of Bill Haggett, Chairman and CEO of Bath Iron Works, located on the western

shore of the Kennebec. The son of a BIW employee, Haggett grew up alongside the powerful currents of Maine's largest river prior to taking the helm at BIW in 1983. When he heard that the Kennebec might be contributing to the environmental degradation of Casco Bay and the Gulf of Maine, he decided to get involved. Haggett called Dennis Taylor, Director of Bigelow Laboratory, to see if scientists such as Peter Larsen, Janet Campbell, Clarice Yentsch, and others would be able to work in a comprehensive way to deter-

"My grandfather used to say that we would never starve to death, because we could always eat what we harvested from the Bay. But that's no longer true. I'm the first generation that's starving to death down on the coast."

*Guy Johnson,
Casco Bay diver*

mine the cause and impacts of pollution from the Kennebec watershed on Casco Bay and the Gulf of Maine. After learning how little research has been conducted near the mouth of Maine's largest river system, Haggett decided that BIW should take the lead in establishing a foundation to fund essential scientific work.

Haggett and Taylor have established a goal of \$1,000,000 support for this research, and BIW pledged the first \$100,000. Haggett has also said BIW will take an active role in raising the balance of what has now been agreed will be called the Kennebec Area Research Endowment (KARE) from industries along the river and other interested individuals. "It has been obvious to scientists for some time," says Haggett, "that coastal waters are influenced by the quality of fresh water flowing from this river system, yet financial limitations have made it impossible to conduct timely, meaningful, and sustained research. We hope KARE, with the help of the business community, can help remedy this problem."

Dennis Taylor hopes that long-term research, coordinated by the foundation with Bigelow's help, will identify what levels of pollutants are suspended in the water column and leave the river system

on a chronic basis, and what levels of pollutants have been stored in the sediments of the river from past events and are released in pulses during major storm events such as the 1987 flood.

Peter Larsen is encouraged that people in coastal Maine like Bill Haggett are beginning to appreciate the importance of his research. Like many researchers in Maine and like all his colleagues at the Bigelow Lab, Larsen has been dependent on government support, which is harder and harder to come by. In Larsen's case, government financial support for his toxics research completely dried up in 1984. Ever since then, Larsen has been very nearly a voice crying in the wilderness. For Larsen, Bath Iron Work's interest came just in time.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Guy Johnson. After the marine supply business fell on hard times, Johnson supported his family by diving for scallops. In the past three years, like many divers, he turned to urchins. But the urchins are just not abundant enough in eastern Casco Bay. "Urchins are scrubbers; they eat algae," says Johnson. "Between Portland and Bailey Island there are literally hundreds of urchin divers; between Bailey's and Small Point there are just a handful. That should tell you something."

Now as Johnson prepares to ship out in the Merchant Marine for a four-month tour of duty, he thinks back over the generations of his family who have lived and fished around the inshore waters of eastern Casco Bay. "My grandfather used to say that we would never starve to death, because we could always eat what we harvested from the Bay. But that's no longer true. I'm the first generation that's starving to death down on the coast."

The satellite pictures that show the connection between the land and the river and the river and the ocean are worth a thousand words in terms of environmental understanding. And Bath Iron Work's leadership grant to endow a long-term research program is worth far more than just the substantial dollars and cents. Hopefully this unusual partnership between Maine's leading corporations and Maine's premier marine research facility will help us increase by another order of magnitude our understanding of the inescapable linkage between the watery environments of inland Maine and the outermost reaches of the Gulf of Maine. On a small planet, it increasingly comes as no surprise that what happens alongside a river in far northern Maine can be felt in a shallow embayment hundreds of miles away. Environmentally speaking, there is no such thing as two Maines.

Fish Hawk

(continued from page 6)

During much of October, FISH HAWK lies on her mooring waiting for a break in the gales that pound through the harbor and test the chafing gear. An afternoon break in the weather late in the month, when the telephone has temporarily stopped ringing, convinces us we should head down the Muscle Ridge Channel to visit an island we've never been on, where the owner is considering allowing access to Island Trail members.

When we round up into a small cove to drop the hook, we immediately spot a bald eagle careening along the island's rugged outer shores before it banks steeply and soars low and fast at treetop level farther south along the windward edge of the Muscle Ridges. Once ashore we pick up a trail that takes us into the quiet glens of the mossy green interior. Trails split off here and there to port and starboard; some are game trails that an evidently well-established deer herd follows through the still, lush understory of the spruce canopy; others are maintained by the two-leggeds.

We keep to a course of north-northwest, near as we can tell, headed for the large island's wild outer shores. We jump a pair of whitetails that bound off to denser cover; the October slanted sunlight just catches a piece of their tawny coats. This island is alive. If we put an ear to the ground, we think we can feel twigs snap as deer adjust to our presence. Around another bend, the huge silent form of an owl disappears before our eyes, silent as a shadow. A hooty great horned, we think, waiting for autumn's crepuscular light. Several hours later, when the circumnavigation is complete (and never on the same trail twice), it is clear what a privilege the occasional use of this island will mean. All islands are different; all have their particular meaning. This one is a sanctuary for the wild places of the soul.

A final fair weather window opens up after another series of November gales, and we have resolved to make a post-Thanksgiving passage before FISH HAWK is put on the bank. In a Boston board room, of all places, we have got wind of what sounds like a story too good to be true. On a lonely out-of-the-way island there is a small cabin built in a clearing in the interior that can't be seen from shore. It is occasionally used by the family for overnight outings and by friends as a honeymoon spot, or on other occasions where the idea is to be out of the way.

The story, collected in snatches around other business, is that unknown strangers have lugged ashore three large wooden columns that have

been placed architecturally around the cabin and have left a note signed "the Druids." This is a story that clearly can't wait until next year and we make a resolution to get there ourselves.

The day is windy with a 25-knot southerly breeze, but warm when we cast off before 2 p.m. An hour later, FISH HAWK is secured off the rocky island, which offers little if any lee, and we scramble ashore on a doormat-sized beach. We follow a trail up the steep side of the island through the woods and come out into a little rocky garden with a cabin. Before us, framing the sylvan scene, are three druidic columns. Dravidiacus couldn't have done better. What a comfort to know that mysterious initiates move through this archipelago to remind us that the relation of the sun and moon and man's work is timeless.

After signing the island log book (and fastening a cabin window that has blown open), we repair to the beach. It is only 4:40 p.m., but a near full and waxing moon is up. It has scattered its beams across the shiny, wet beach cobbles, turning them from rock to pearl and back again in the pre-solstice moment that is frozen in our minds. For this moment, Diana the Huntress is pleased; the Prometheans have not yet offended the gods and all is well along the archipelago.

Eider

(continued from page 9)

Jeff showed up in his green patrol car right on schedule (he'd been off chasing suspected poachers), and we spent some time talking about maintenance of the Carry Trail. I told him my main

purpose for coming east was to try to find some islands in the Frenchman Bay/Gouldsboro region that could be added to the Trail system. With only one or two islets available now, and neither of them big enough to hold more than one colony of sea fleas, this section has the longest gaps in the entire Maine Island Trail. He told me that none of the Acadia National Park islands were open to primitive camping, a fact I already knew, but since it was a lovely quiet August day, we took a half hour to cruise around Schoodic Point and have a look at two park islands on the east side of the peninsula.

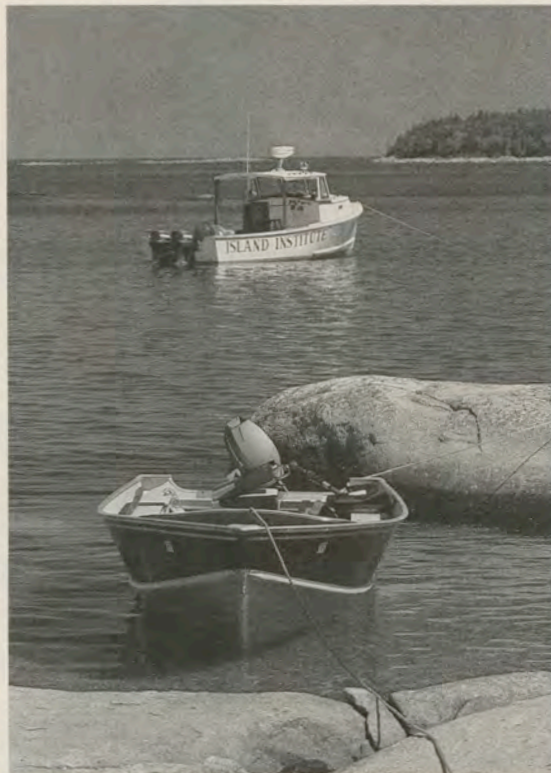
After leaving Jeff, I drifted behind a ledge off Western Island while downing a quick lunch and then spent the rest of the day looking over the archipelago of large and small islands scattered along the eastern side of Frenchman Bay. By the time I had worked my way up to Sorrento Harbor, it was time to call it a day. The afternoon southerly was huffing up the bay, so I battened down and put on rain gear before starting the run to Trenton Airport, where the World War II seaplane ramp makes a first-class launching site. My wife Dorrie was there with truck and trailer, waiting patiently and saving me many miles of water travel, as she has done so many times before.

The above account has been only a glimpse of a season that saw EIDER on the go every week from early April until late September, and then occasionally right into November. There isn't space enough to describe the exciting things happening in Muscongus Bay or to follow EIDER's wake into other parts of the coast. However, there are two important developments of 1990 that will figure strongly in 1991 and in the overall future of the Maine Island Trail.

The first was the start of our Adopt-an-Island program, in which Island Trail members select one or more state or private islands for their personal care. This is a big step forward in our voluntary stewardship program and assures that all the islands in the Trail will get the attention they deserve.

The second major move is a strengthening of the Maine Island Trail staff with the hiring of a new Trail Director, Cate Cronin, and Trail Keeper Karen Stimpson, the latter to oversee the busy western end of the Island Trail, with special emphasis on Casco Bay. Both of them come to their jobs with strong credentials and years of sea duty behind them. And EIDER is expected to have a twin sister by the start of the new season.

These important moves, along with strong support from the Island Institute and Island Trail members, means that the organization is now beginning to have the muscle it needs to realize its full potential.



Peter Ralston

REVIEWS

Wood and Canvas Kayak Building by George Putz. Camden, Maine: International Marine Publishing Company, 1990. 133 pages, softcover, \$17.95

Reviewed by David R. Getchell, Sr.

"Kayaks are splendid boats. Light, fast, easy to build, inexpensive, transportable, and good-looking, these craft have a history going back at least 2,000 years." —George Putz

Kayaks are also the biggest thing in small boats on the Maine coast right now, and for more reasons than the impressive fact they been around for two millennia. Like islands, sea kayaks get under your skin; they are intensely personal, exciting, bewitching, and addictive. And, as this book reveals with charm and humor, you can make one yourself.

Having read literally hundreds of how-to-build-a-boat books and articles, and not infrequently found myself baffled and confused by the jargon and arcane mathematics, this reviewer does not approach another how-to book with unbounded enthusiasm. But as usual, George wins me over in just a few pages with his clear descriptions-for-dummies, spiced with wit and understanding for those of us who are less than skilled woodworkers. In brief, there is room for some variation—whether from accident or choice—in the design and construction of these boats without doing irreparable damage to the final product.

This is not to say this book has a zero confusion factor—not when the writer has the likes of myself to contend with—but I suspect that most of this confusion would evaporate when it finally came to dealing with wood, not words. The excellent photos and drawings are additional aids to comprehension.

The Greenland model of the sea kayak described here is a particularly handsome one, and producing it with one's own hands should provide a great deal of longlasting satisfaction. In our travels among the islands, we have occasionally come upon a lone kayaker threading silently among the reefs and skerries, as much a part of the scene as the gulls and guillemots nearby. His oneness in mind and body with both boat and sea is evident in his every move.

The ultima Thule of this scene would be doing the same thing in a kayak born of personal craftsmanship. This book is highly recommended to accomplish that final step.

A White Heron by Sarah Orne Jewett, illustrated by Douglas Alvord. Gardiner, Maine: Tilbury House Publishers, 1990. 30 pages, \$13.95.

The Tinker of Salt Cove by Susan Hand Shetterly, illustrated by Siri Beckman. Gardiner, Maine: Tilbury House Publishers, 1991. 58 pages. \$13.95.

Reviewed by Jamien Morehouse

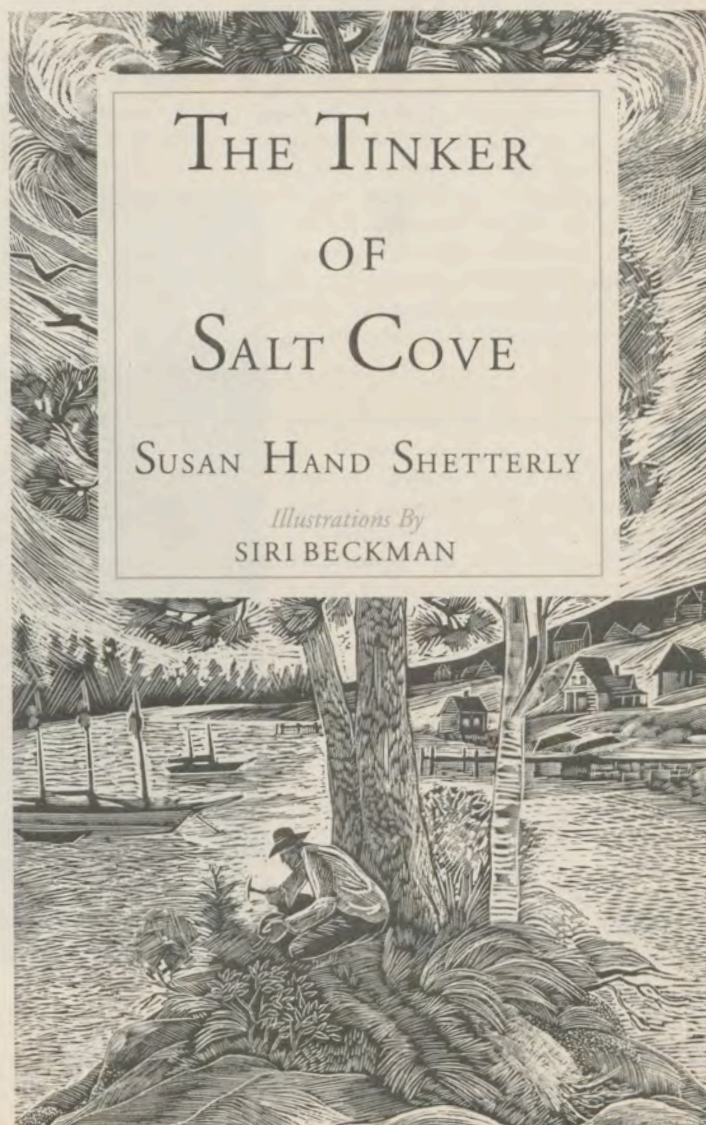
Every once in a while you come across a book that becomes a valued treasure. When the words tell a timeless story and the design is handsome, the whole package is a keepsake. Here are two such little treasures, both published by Tilbury House Publishers of Gardiner.

A White Heron by Sarah Orne Jewett is a classic for all who find themselves desiring the kind of story a stark Maine landscape can tell. Over 100 years old, it still holds a message that will ring clear for those of us who are coming to understand

that some secrets, those of the natural world, need not be disclosed. Sylvia, a gentle child living in "the best thrift of an old fashioned farmstead," juggles the excitement of a new friendship with her inborn sense that the secret of a wild bird is a sacred one. It is a lovely story, a sketch really, illustrated with Douglas Alvord's pencil drawings, which are as stark as the ancient pine where Sylvia meets the magic of the wild.

Susan Hand Shetterly's *The Tinker of Salt Cove* is another picture of a life defined by the Maine landscape. The story is as charmingly odd as its central character, a social outcast who lives in a beached dory and traverses the countryside on long-legged stilts, pots and pans clanging over his shoulder. It is through the eyes of two young girls that we share the wonder of this pathetic little man and that we ponder the secrets larger than our own small lives. Where did he come from and what queer, personal history is he carrying in his troubled soul? Siri Beckman's illustrations are as bold as Alvord's are soft, almost as if they were hewn from the wooden debris that litters the beach of Salt Cove. They provide an enduring look at the intimacies of a small 19th century fishing village. We can hope that Beckman brings us more such spirited portraits in future books.

Both of these lovely stories remind us that some of the best lessons of life come to those who wait and watch in silence. They'd make lovely gift books. If you finger them carefully, without mussing the pages, you should read them first before giving them away. On the other hand, you may find yourself unable to part with them after a single reading because you'll want to hang onto such delightful little treasures.



Solstice, A Mystery of the Seasons by Jan Adkins. New York: Walker and Company, 1990. 85 pages, line illustrations, hardcover. \$12.95.

Reviewed by Caitlin Owen Hunter

The healing power of Maine islands is strong medicine and strong mystery. So are love, Christmas, and family celebrations. Jan Adkins weaves all of these elements together in *Solstice*, a short Christmas tale of forgiveness.

A family is torn apart by misunderstandings. The father and his young son head for a distant Maine island to spend the Christmas holiday. The son's pain is our own pain when he asks, "Why was Christmas hard? Wasn't it supposed to be the happiest part of the year?"

Bound for the island aboard their boat, they lose their way. When hope is almost gone, they are taken in by old Vern Filson, head of a warm and giving island family, itself divided by pride.

Throughout the course of a solstice celebration the two families share their love and generosity and help each other to a better understanding of love and family; both the father's and son's pain is healed. A feast is prepared and before they eat, they sing and dance. Dancing together under the solstice moon they are dancing away the pain of the darkest night in the promise of longer days to come. The new friends promise to see each other again, but in the end, realize they cannot.

The drawings by Adkins illustrating this small book are fully as evocative as his prose. We see, taste, and smell the wonderous meal cooking on the Charm Crawford Royal stove. The rich tapestry of the old man's cabin is spun out for us to feel.

"He did not know why they (the islands) moved him; it was a mystery and he was young enough to be comfortable with mysteries." May we all be young enough to be comfortable with the mysteries of the Maine islands.

Herreshoff of Bristol, A Photographic History of America's Greatest Yacht and Boat Builder by Maynard Bray and Carlton Pinheiro. Brooklin, Maine: WoodenBoat Publications, 1989; 242 pages; large format, index, \$45.00:

Reviewed by George Putz

Yachts have been an important nautical component of island life for more than a century, and the nature of this relationship has evolved and changed right along with everything else along the Maine archipelago. This book is about a family boatyard, the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company of Bristol, Rhode Island, that began building extraordinary recreational marine craft when Maine island towns were still in the heyday of the schooner ground fisheries, when mackerel fleets of a hundred sail appeared and evaporated during the night, when the quarries were going full tilt, and the lime kilns of the main belched smoke night and day. These yachts were among the first to come to Maine, and no lover of the craft, the sport, or the region can read this book unmoved.

Divided into three parts (the early years to 1897, the heyday of big yachts before World War I, and the years of 1917 through 1945), this beautifully produced large format book allows a privileged look into eras that are hardly believable today. Surely there are very impressive craft being built, sailed, and steamed these days, but how do you rationally consider a yacht like, say, the 1903 Cup defender *RELIANCE*, with a mast over 189 feet above the deck, carrying over 17,000 square feet of canvas, and requiring a crew of 66 professional mariners (most of them from Stonington, Deer Isle) to sail? Pages upon pages of large, crisp, gorgeous photographs (250 of them) show us how much of American yachting had it right the first time, and yield constant surprises and delights. The Maine yachtsman will find here the classics that still grace our harbors—the 12-1/2s, the Fish

Class, the S Class, the 21s, and 25s. Lovers of power craft get their fill, too. Herreshoff was no chauvanist about how a boat went. He was a leader in powercraft development for over a half century, and it's all chronicled.

The authors are the best. Maynard Bray simmered up on the Maine coast and among the islands from birth and went on to make Mystic Seaport a genuine ship preservation institution, not just a keeper of relics. He has been technical editor of *WoodenBoat Magazine* for more than 10 years, and this volume fulfills a lifetime of dedicated ambition to give the elder Herreshoffs their literary due. Carlton Pinheiro is curator of the Herreshoff Marine Museum, a lifelong resident of Bristol, and student of the Herreshoff tradition for many years.

What a book! See it there, by the stove, on a foggy, drizzly day, worth every penny forever, and imagine the Old Days in great boats...

Images of Swan's Island, Past and Present by Edward L. Wheaton. Gardiner, Maine: Steel Publishing Co, Inc., 1989. 84 pages, softcover. \$12.95.

Tales of Matinicus Island, History, Lore, and Legend by Donna Rogers. 1990. 63 pages, softcover. \$5.00. Available from the author (Matinicus, Maine 04851).

Reviewed by Caitlin Owen Hunter

Everyone agrees that life on Maine islands is changing fast, and sometimes not for the better. Nowhere is this reflection more poignant than in these two small books by islanders. Both authors struggle with wanting to share what it is they love about the island they call home, yet at the same time they are reluctant to let the secret out.

Ed Wheaton shares with us his collection of old post cards of Swan's Island and his memories of growing up. He has returned to the site of each post card and made a new photograph of each view. Trees have grown up and obscured views, buildings are gone or changed, power boats replace sleek sloops, telephone poles and electric lines snake through the photo frames. Things have changed, Wheaton tells us, yet there is timelessness that remains.

Images of Swan's Island could be the history of any small village or island. New times—and new people—have replaced the old. Many buildings are gone, but just as often the houses in the later photographs are restored, a tribute to the latest generation of owners, whether summer people or islanders. There is still the feeling of peace and neighborhood and coming home.

In the author's words, life on Matinicus Island is a "labor of love." Donna Rogers has stuck by her island in good times and bad, throughout the many changes brought about by modern life: television, telephone, electricity, and air taxi service. Her sense of humor has remained intact and she provides the reader with a lively history of Matinicus Island, taking up where the 1929 classic by Charles A. E. Long leaves off.

This slim volume is as much a visitor's guide as a history, written to answer the new visitor's many questions. Maps and charts are included along with several vintage photographs. However, it is the tales of island legends that capture the imagination of the reader. Tales of local characters, past and present, have passed from yarns into enduring island legend. Particularly entertaining is the section on "island terminology," providing us with a salty lexicon of island terms.

The love and effort put into this book make it worth far more than the \$5.00 cover price, a portion of which the author is donating to the island church. Her success with this book is just a stepping stone to an expanded edition to chronicle the island's history through photographs, she says—"all we have left of our past."

Spend some time with us and discover why we love the islands of Maine.



Peter Ralston

ANGELIQUE

Yankee Packet Company
95' Ketch, built in 1980
31 passengers and 7 crew
Hailing Port, Camden, Maine
Captains Mike and Lynne McHenry
PO Box 736 Camden, ME 04843
207-236-8873 or 1-800-282-9989

MARYDAY

Coastal Cruises
90' Schooner, built in 1962
28 passengers and 6 crew
Hailing Port, Camden, Maine
Captain Steve Cobb
PO Box 798 Camden, ME 04843
207-236-2750 or 1-800-992-2218

ROSEWAY

Yankee Schooner Cruises
112' Schooner, built in 1925
36 passengers and 7 crew
Hailing Port, Camden, ME 04843
Captains George Sloane and Stephen Gold
PO Box 696U Camden, ME 04843
207-236-4449 or 1-800-255-4449

ISAAC H. EVANS

Schooner Isaac H. Evans
65' Schooner, built in 1886
22 passengers and 4 crew
Hailing Port, Rockland, Maine
Captain Edward B. Glaser
PO Box 482 Rockland, ME 04841
207-594-8007 or 1-800-648-4544

STEPHEN TABER

Schooner Stephen Taber
68' Schooner, built in 1871
22 passengers and 5 crew
Hailing Port, Rockland, Maine
Captains Ken and Ellen Barnes
70 Elm St., Camden, ME 04843
207-236-3520 or 1-800-999-7352

J. & E. RIGGIN

Schooner J. & E. Riggins
89' Schooner, built in 1927
26 passengers and 5 crew
Captain Dave Allen
Hailing Port, Rockland, Maine
Box 571, Rockland, ME 04841
207-594-2923 or 1-800-869-0604

NATHANIEL BOWDITCH

Schooner Nathaniel Bowditch of Cape Rosier, Inc.
82' Topsail Schooner, built in 1922
24 passengers and 5 crew
Captain Gib Philbrick
Hailing Port, Rockland, Maine
Nathaniel Bowditch, Harborside, ME 04642
207-326-4098 or 1-800-288-4098



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The Island

MILTON ACORN

Since I'm island-born home's as precise
as if a mumbly old carpenter,
shoulder-straps crossed wrong,
laid it out,
refigured to the last three-eighths of shingle.

Nowhere that plough-cut worms
heal themsleves in red loam;
spruces squat, skirts in sand;
or the stones of a river rattle its dark
tunnel under the elms,
is there a spot not measured by hands;
no direction I couldn't walk
to the wave-lined edge of home.

In the fanged jaws of the Gulf,
a red tongue.
Indians say a musical God
took up His brush and painted it;
named it, in His own language,
"The Island."