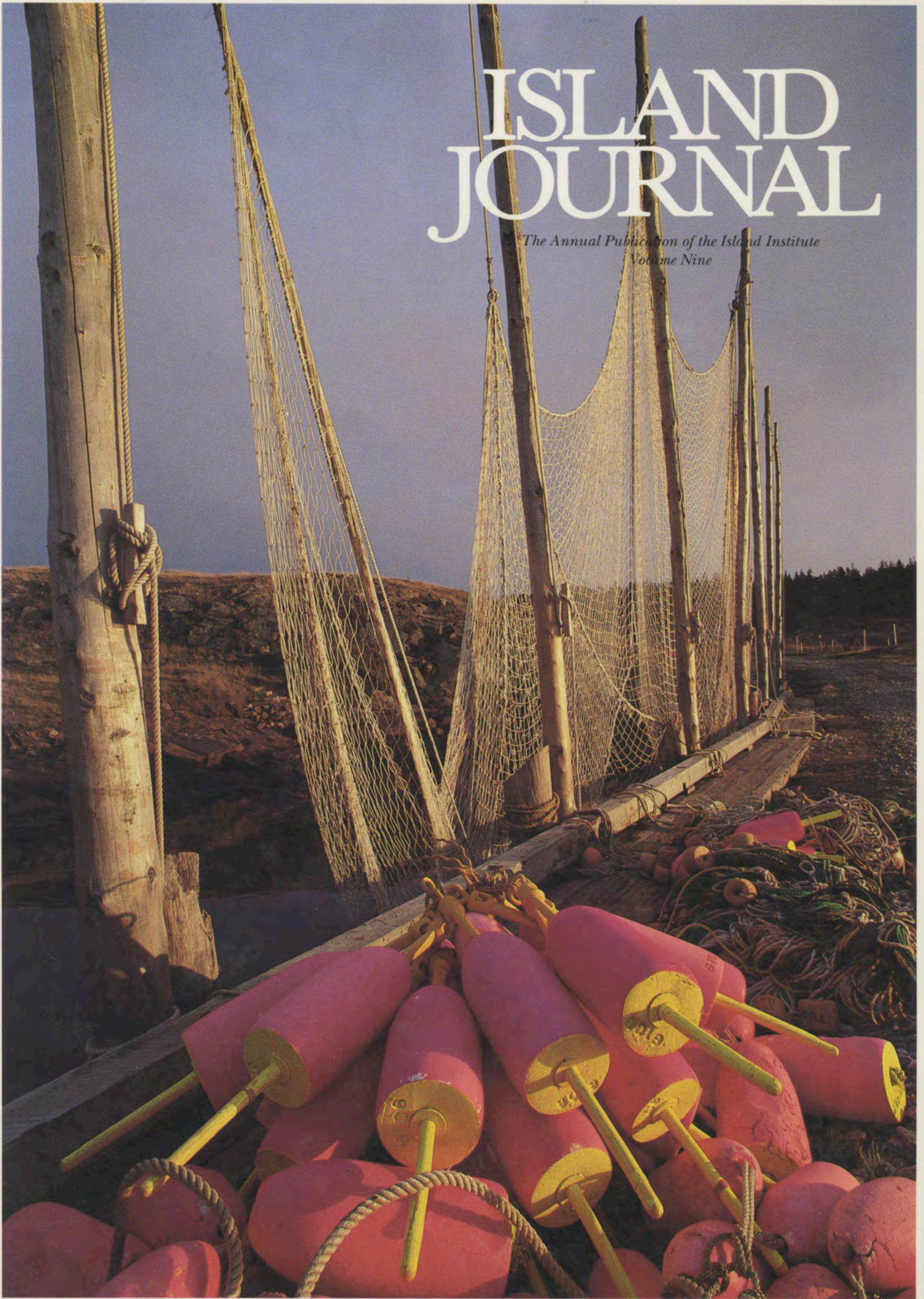
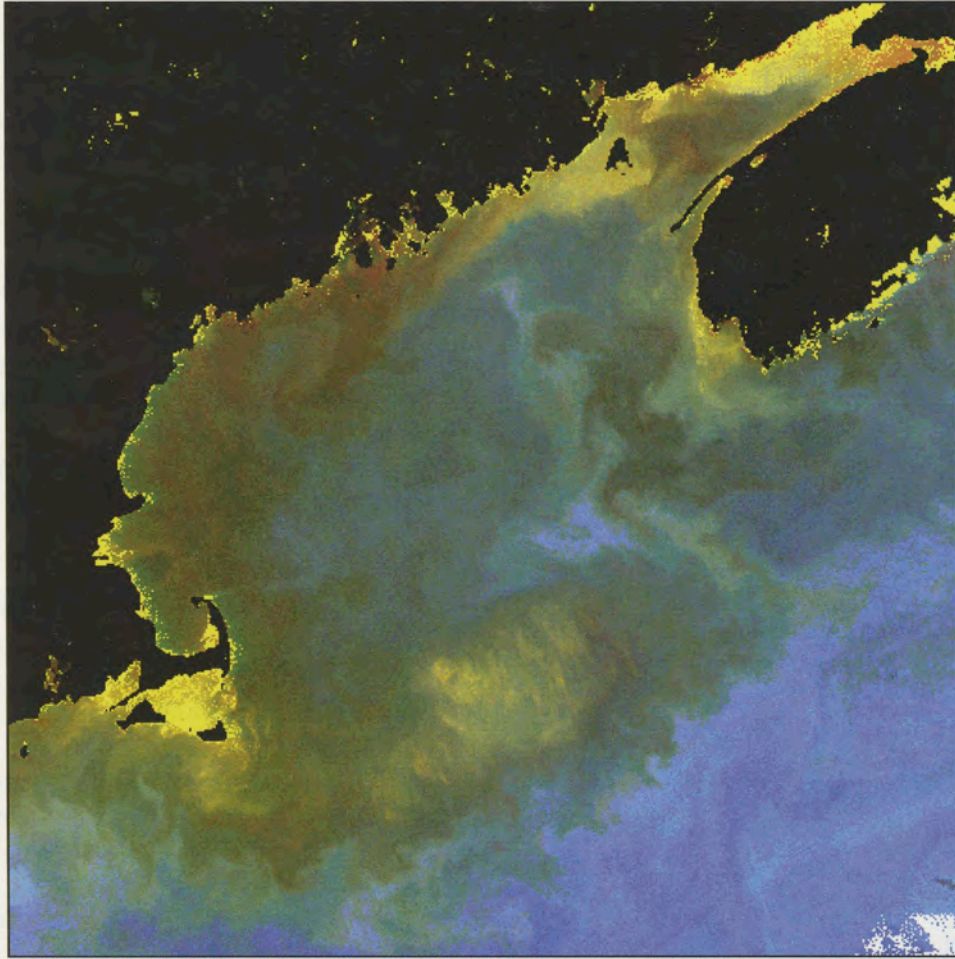


ISLAND JOURNAL

*The Annual Publication of the Island Institute
Volume Nine*



To our members...



Courtesy Janet Campbell, Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences

Image of the Gulf of Maine, from the Coastal Zone Color Scanner, June 14, 1979

WHEN *ISLAND JOURNAL* began publication back in 1984, nearly everyone thought about islands in terms of *preservation*. Nowadays we are beginning to see that even more important than what islands preserve may be what they *pioneer*. As Edgar Allen Beem remarks in this issue, "Islands are the most concentrated form of the habitable world." Gradually over the past few years a new definition of "islandness" has begun to take shape before our eyes, one no longer based on physical isolation and remoteness but on a conscious care and celebration of finite spaces. Islandness is about knowing who your neighbors are, taking care of them; it is about living close enough to the seams to see how one thing impacts another—how the dump runoff and the clam flats are on a collision course; how the building spurt that provides jobs also takes away that open space where people need to go by themselves to

stay human. Each island, inhabited or not, in some way has something to teach us about how life is lived when our island earth is itself a very small place.

Our 1992 *Island Journal* reflects this increasing awareness of Maine islands as small models for "island earth." In a major section on Cobscook Bay, and another on Casco Bay, we look at how intelligent balance between different and sometimes competing needs seems to be the model in which "preservation" and "pioneering" come together. An expanded "Island Earth" section reports globally on island issues and problems—which are not so much different from those in our own backyard. Meanwhile, in a haunting folio section entitled "Belonging," Jeff Dworsky and Chellie Pingree capture an intimate portrait of the values of membership, commitment, and loyalty fiercely held on islands—perhaps a model for a larger belonging on island earth... where, in the words of one commentator in this year's *Journal*, "No island is an island."



The Island Institute dedicates
Volume IX of *Island Journal*

IN MEMORY OF
H. JEREMY WINTERSTEEN

MAY 27, 1935 – JUNE 18, 1991

Island Institute Trustee
and Founding Member

ISLAND JOURNAL

The Annual Publication of the Island Institute
Volume Nine



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Sustaining islands and their communities

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Philip W. Conkling

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Cynthia Bourgeault, Ph.D.

ART DIRECTOR
Peter Ralston

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
David D. Platt

SCIENCE EDITOR
Richard H. Podolsky, Ph.D.

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Spencer Apollonio
Mike Brown
Jane Day

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
Caitlin Owen Hunter
Robin McIntosh
Sharon Smalley

DESIGN & PRODUCTION
Michael Mahan Graphics
Bath, Maine

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Caitlin Owen Hunter

PRINTING
PENMOR Lithographers
Lewiston, Maine

PAPER
Champion International Corporation

ISLAND INSTITUTE STAFF

Executive Director, *Philip W. Conkling*;
Executive Associate, *Peter Ralston*; Executive
Editor, *Cynthia Bourgeault*; GAIA Research
Associate, *Richard Podolsky*; Marine Research
Associate, *Spencer Apollonio*; Production Director,
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LOG OF THE FISH HAWK

PHILIP W. CONKLING

From splashdown in April till haul-out in December, Island Institute staff members logged more than 1800 nautical miles circuit riding the Maine islands aboard FISH HAWK, the Institute's 26-foot boat. The season offered up its usual blend of natural and human dramas—for which the best advice may be “expect the unexpected...”

SPRING COMES MORE reticently to Rockland Harbor now that virtually all of the fish factories along the waterfront have closed their doors for good, victims of the collapse of commercially viable schools of cod and haddock due to overfishing. The harbor is strangely quiet and empty when FISH HAWK goes overboard in the freezing rain on an early April tide.

On our first trip, we steam out past the Rockland breakwater and head down the Muscle Ridge Channel for Muscongus Bay. We take on passengers at Greenland Cove and pass by the silent wooded shores of Hockamock Channel along Muscongus' quiet western front. At the southern tip of Louds Island, we tuck

up inside Bar Island to survey a hundred-acre wooded parcel for possible inclusion in the Maine Island Trail system. It's still early enough in the season that Muscongus Bay's legendary concentrations of lobster gear have yet to be moved inshore to intercept the world's most favored crustacean on its annual migration into warmer water to shed its hard shell. Louds Island, too, is quiet and empty, its shores awaiting the annual migration of summer folk. As we watch a pair of osprey bank overhead clutching their nesting material, it seems that nowhere in this world are spring's timeless dramas more artfully choreographed.

A month and several trips later, FISH HAWK's faithful twin 130 Yamahas are fired back up for a trip to survey a pair of Penobscot Bay's important offshore seabird nesting islands. The owners of one of Maine's dozen Crow islands have asked for an opinion of its value — ecological and economic — as they plan for their island's future. It is blowing a steady 20 knots ENE, and lowering from the circulation of chill maritime air around a large low to our south. Landing on the island

is out of the question as the surge heaves up onto the bold white granite shores, but we slowly circle. Then it happens. For an instant, silhouetted against a gray sky in a wind-torn spruce is a female eagle, atop a massive nest, staring as intently at us as we at her. Whatever crows once haunted this ragged forest, they have departed, as we soon do, in deference to this intent raptor. But we mark the place as yet another new island aerie to be added to the state's total of 100 nests.

We round out into Two Bush Channel in a quartering sea and head for the north end of Metinic Island, which has been recently subdivided into 11 lots. We are working with members of the lobstering family who own this magnificent property to find a balance between the island's historic use as a fishing station and its half century history as Penobscot Bay's largest seabird nesting colony.

It's still blowing hard, but we get an anchor down and go ashore to survey the northern 85 acres. Immediately, we put up a dread flight of Arctic terns that are defending nesting territory on a nearby beach. As we make our way around the shores, rafts of eiders and black guillemots are flushed from their nests and gather offshore while gulls careen overhead. The uncertainty that has clouded the efforts of the lobstering family to reclaim their ancestral property is mirrored by the uncertainty over the fate of a half thousand pairs of nesting seabirds if Metinic is fully developed. Already a year into this project, the delicate balance between private property rights and prime wildlife habitat—between people and seabirds—is easier to describe in the abstract than to sort out on the ground.

After another month of ranging the midcoast from our Rockland base, we are underway to Allen Island for the annual sheep shearing effort. Mollie Nelson, a young shepherdess from the western Maine foothills, is at Allen with her infant daughter and indefatigable border collie. With the help of the Miller family who lobster around Allen's shores and shoals, a crew has managed to corral 40 of the island's 50 sheep after scouring the shores, interior fields, and fastnesses of Allen's wild outback. Although an annual ritual which dates to the 17th century on Maine islands, chasing sheep over hill and gully on a 400-acre island, even with the help of a well-trained border collie, sounds like more fun than it is. And when you have finally gotten them penned, Mollie's real work of arm wrestling each one into a three-point position while they are sheared is a physical challenge few people these days begin to appreciate.

Mollie gladly takes a break and steps back from the redolent lanolin-rich heap of fleeces at her feet, hangs up her shears, and picks up her beautiful newborn daughter, Ruby, to discuss the island sheep business. The proprietress of Offshore Sheep Services, Mollie probably knows more about the practices and pitfalls of raising sheep on Maine islands than anyone else alive—except perhaps for Jenny Cirone of Nash Island off Cape Split. We recount FISH HAWK's recent visit to York Island, off Isle au Haut, which has had a flock of sheep for at least 100 years. One morning shortly after this spring's lambing season, the owners were alerted to the

possibility of problems in the northern pasture by the presence of an eagle, which generally signals that a lamb is down. When they arrived, they found that 28 lambs had been slaughtered overnight. Immediately suspecting coyotes, they called in a U.S. Fish and Wildlife animal control officer and drove the island with dogs to try to flush out the beast that had wreaked such havoc.

Mollie nodded throughout the retelling of the horrid details; she had seen it all before more times than she wanted to remember. But she also knew some things that no one else had mentioned. "Could be coyotes,"

she said. She had seen times when coyotes had gone "kill crazy" in a flock of sheep; but you could not rule out dogs. Either dogs or coyotes could have picked up the scent of newborn lambs and crossed the quarter mile from Isle au Haut to York. The only way to tell, Mollie says, is in the tracks. The middle two toes of a dog are longer than the outer two; in a coyote, it's the other way around — the middle toes are shorter. It's not real easy to tell, she says, but you take piece of grass and lay it so it just fits in the print of one of the outer two toes; then set it in one of the center toes. If it fits inside the toe print without touching the end, it's a dog; if it doesn't, it's a coyote. Although no one will ever know just what happened that terrible night on York, few people understand what apparently docile pet dogs are capable of doing when they get loose on an island.

Later that evening, we head for a favorite one-boat anchorage in the Muscle Ridge Channel at a tiny five-foot spot surrounded by ledges. It's syzygy, an astronomical alignment of the sun and moon and a day after the solar eclipse, and tonight's tides will be higher than yesterday's, which are already a foot above (and below) normal. The anchorage is as beautiful as any one-boat spot among Maine's undeveloped islands, and we watch evening steal slowly across the sky. May, June, and now July have been as warm and sunny as we can remember. It almost doesn't seem right to feel this good. For one

"Twenty minutes of mild terror are followed by the lee of Marshall and the sobering reminder of how quickly small vessels can come to grief on this gray sea'd coast."

thing, there is the lurking suspicion that all this greenhouse warmth is being purchased at a terrible price. But still, it's tempting to wonder...if this is global warming, maybe Maine has nothing to complain about.

At the end of the month, FISH HAWK is underway for the east side of Deer Isle, where 80-acre Campbell Island is tucked up inside a beautiful, sparsely developed cove. The owners of Campbell have asked whether the Island Institute is interested in receiving the island as a donation. As often happens in the conservation world, the future has a way of knocking on your door and asking you questions before you're prepared to answer. Campbell Island's shores are thickly wooded and intersected by little pockets of sandy beach, salt marsh, shelving slabs of granite, and extensive clam and mussel flats. The interior spruce are tall and mature although some have begun toppling over. Fern glades and birch groves give a light and airy feeling to the interior, unlike the black growth of Stonington's Merchant Row islands. Permanent protection of this island is too important to let slip away while we try to determine what our acquisition policy might be. The future is here.

After an overnight in Merchant Row and an early breakfast in Stonington, we head out across East Penobscot Bay on a glassy blue day for a morning on Brimstone Island. We drop a hook in the southern harbor, put in at the small beach, and scale Brimstone's magnificent cliffs, which present a view as endless as the entire Atlantic Ocean. Brimstone, one thinks, was created especially for times like these — for quiet thoughts, for solitary walks, and for a perch on the edge of the infinite, so we split up and happily go our separate ways. Several hours later, it is somewhat dismaying to see another boat anchoring off, although we've had Brimstone to ourselves on this most perfect morning in Maine.

As we climb carefully down the cliffs to gracefully depart and to turn this kingdom over to another set of visitors, a young girl and boy split off from their parents on the beach and scramble up the hill near us. We talk about Brimstone's sea ducks, and they ask us about our boat with its boldly lettered sides. Then the little girl, as if she is not to be outdone by anyone's claim to a time of wonder on this island, announces in a matter-of-fact voice, "Well, my Mom down there is Sal." And we know that indeed this particular morning in Maine will be remembered in all of our minds.

Frenchboro's annual Lobster Festival, which FISH HAWK regularly visits on the second weekend in August is held despite a generally poor weather forecast from an approaching easterly gale. The six families of homesteaders inhabiting the houses constructed by the town and its development corporation have hung on through another long winter. A bright spot amid the otherwise bleak economic realities on Frenchboro is the recent appearance of 12 floating net pens near the entrance to Lunt Harbor, filled with approximately 300,000 hatchery-raised trout—a satellite to the neighboring Swan's Island aquaculture operation. (For hard-pressed Frenchboro even this glow of hope will fade all too quickly as the exposed pens, buffeted by Hurricane Bob and a series of fall gales, spill much of their precious cargo, and the site is forced to close in late January.)

Notwithstanding this brief diversification of the island's economy, it is clear that the "affordable" housing home-steading project needs to be refinanced, and this is the business to which we turn after the lobster dinners have been dispatched and the day visitors have left. The Maine State Housing Authority, which holds the notes on the project, has indicated some flexibility and a new plan is approved by the Frenchboro Future Development Corporation, prior to FISH HAWK's departure.

Throughout the afternoon meeting the weather continues to deteriorate. We head out of Lunt Harbor and turn west and lay a course south of Swan's and across outer Jericho Bay to Marshall Island. Although it's not blowing more than 25 knots, the wind is due east into an opposing tide. By the time we are past Baker and Scrag islands, it is clear that we have underestimated the sea conditions. For a stretch of two nautical miles FISH HAWK is caught in a huge following sea, surfing down the gray walls of 10- and 12-foot combers and plowing deep into the back of the next wave. There is no way to come around and head for Burnt Coat Harbor, so while the mate watches aft for boarding seas, the helmsman alternately throttles up to avoid being pooped and throttles back on the downside of the waves which race by underneath us. Twenty minutes of mild terror are followed by the lee of Marshall and the sobering reminder of how quickly small vessels can come to grief on this gray sea'd coast.

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Karen Stimpson

LOG OF THE EIDER

CATE CRONIN AND KAREN STIMPSON

This past year marked a major turning point in the Maine Island Trail Association. Following the departure of Dave Getchell, Sr., the Association's first Trail Director, the staff was expanded, a second boat was added, the Guidebook was revised and reformatted, and a Portland base for MITA/Island Institute was opened. Two women with impressive marine backgrounds came out on top in a search that saw more than 225 applicants for the Trail Director's position. Cate Cronin took over as Director and Karen Stimpson filled the new position of Trail Keeper, working out of the Portland base. The following report gives a sampling of the many and varied activities Cate and Karen pursued:

The first day on a job is both exciting and unsettling, but the first day out on the water in a new kind of boat is even more so. Cate got an early start:

IN MOST OF OUR conversations during my first two months, Dave Getchell, my predecessor, has been encouraging me to leave the tasks on shore and to get into the field. From experience he knows that the Trail Director can be devoured by shoreside details and needs to break out to see first hand the focus of all our planning—namely, people and islands.

By 7 a.m. on this crisp April morning, Dave and I are celebrating the first-of-the-season EIDER launching with a mug of hot cocoa as we scoot across a calm Rockland Harbor and Penobscot Bay toward the Fox Islands Thorofare. Familiar with boats, yet less seasoned in working within inches of ledge, shore, or sea-bottom, I hand the helm to Dave so that I might learn from observation this time rather than experience it all during my first landfall. In the larger craft I've been used to, landfall means stopping the boat a calculated distance from the land (both off the bow and below the keel), but in EIDER it means beaching her between snarly ledges and on as smooth a seaweed or sand bottom as the skipper can find.

We secure EIDER to a steep rocky outcrop near the popular crescent beach on the north side of Calderwood Island. I note that this deepwater "mooring" will serve us better for the hour we'll spend ashore on Calderwood than if we land on the smooth sand of the beach and have only a fraction of an hour on this falling tide before 800 pounds of boat and gear ground solidly for the whole day.

On our approach to Calderwood, Dave has enjoyed chiding me about my conservative approach to naviga-

tion—a caution well learned while working aboard the Camden windjammer ADVENTURE, which drew 13 feet. But that was then; this is now—and clearly, most of this new job is going to be carried out inside the 10-foot curve. So I put down the chart, watch the water, and find a short route around Calderwood Island for EIDER, which draws all of 18 inches with the motor down!

In between her busy days revising the Guidebook, Karen made a few trips with Cate and Dave, but her first trip alone was memorable nevertheless:

Early June. We round the end of Union Wharf and head east into the unblinking mid-morning sun. Portland Harbor is already humming with recreational boat activity—motorboats and sailboats alike, large and small. This surprises me. It's so early in the season to be part of such a large Saturday morning exodus. But the weather promises a banner weekend, and I suppose if Casco Bay boaters want to secure themselves a quiet spot in that increasingly difficult-to-find secluded cove, they had best get out there before the high season begins.

This is my first official work cruise as Trail Keeper, and I am determined to cover more than 150 miles and 13 islands in two days, a feat which Getch assures me is do-able. I have with me two volunteer island stewards, their first “official” Trail trip, too.

SCOTER, our brand new 18-foot Lund Alaskan, handles beautifully, but at first I feel a little self-conscious standing up to steer in such a small open boat. David has rigged an extension to the tiller of the outboard, a nifty handle he crafted from a sapling. He has also added a midship grab rail where an athwartship seat would ordinarily be. This bar is the subject of much wry comment (tent frame? swingset for kids?), but it makes good practical sense when hauling an anchor, leaning over to scoop debris from the water, or coming and going from islands not easy to land on.

Out of the harbor, we choose a route NE to Little Chebeague and Chandler Cove, because that's what we recommend in the Maine Island Trail Guidebook. Passing Fort Gorges and Cow Island close to starboard, we make note of the many small boats already gathering at these islands; by the time we reach Little Chebeague, a popular public island on the Trail, we are not surprised to count four powerboats, two large cruisers, and three sailboats at anchor off the beach, with several picnicking parties ashore.

Overuse of islands, however you care to define it, is becoming a reality in Casco Bay. More and more people in more and more boats are visiting a fixed number of islands within a day's reach of Portland, with or without permission of owners, or with or without an understanding of fragile island ecology. Our hopes are pinned on our ability to gently educate island users, to enlist them to become part of the solution, not part of the problem.

This visit is an encouraging one: we have barely landed SCOTER when a family of four approaches us with big grins and plump trash bags full of sea wash-ups they have plucked from the thick brush behind them. No,

they are not MITA members, but yes, they have heard about us and are pleased to meet us...especially pleased that we will take their bags, as they are already chin to jowl in a very small boat.

As my crew and I head down the beach with our own trash bags to fill, we are greeted by picnickers, friendly and talkative. The bold “Maine Island Trail” logotype along the side



David Getchell

of SCOTER inspires many to tell of beaches they have cleaned, or to rein in the erstwhile bottle cap as we pass by. Pickin's are poor today, as this appears to be a particularly conscientious crowd, so we pile back into SCOTER and turn our sights to the eastward, to Jewell, possibly the most camped-on island in all of Maine.

At Jewell we receive more good news—the phantom “friends of Jewell Island” (rumored to be a band of lobstermen from the Harpswell area) have been at it again: new, skillfully crafted birch ladders grace the watch-towers, the trail is clean as whiskers, and campsites are immaculate. Who are these unsung heroes, we wonder, and will the rest of the season be as promising as our first two stops have been?

Recreational use of the islands becomes less east of Casco Bay, and by the time one gets to Blue Hill Bay, the nature of the coast has changed a great deal. Cate describes a brief visit to a small, wild island:

Several weeks later, halfway through our reconnaissance of the Maine Island Trail, Karen and I are mastering the art of poling as it is done aboard the versatile EIDER. With our 12-foot hardwood pole, useful in a hundred different ways, we take turns keeping EIDER off the mud and moving forward in the channel between Johns and Pond islands—all of six inches deep!

We land on a surprisingly long sand beach on Johns and set out to confirm that eagles that nested here a year ago have departed. We find no eagles or nest. Has the pair relocated? Are they likely to return? Shall we open the island for low-impact use? These are some of the questions we must ask Charlie Todd, the state eagle specialist, as well as the island's owner and ourselves. Wildlife islands, and wild islands for people: Hopefully, there is appropriate space always for all species.

Part of the job is answering emergency calls, but as often as not Trail "emergencies" have a way of being different, as Karen reports:

July 9, 1991. Acting on a report from one of our stewards that Crow Island in Muscongus Bay got "trashed" over the Fourth of July, volunteer Susie Lindsay and I take off from Portland to make the run to Muscongus by water, instead of trailering, so we can visit all the MITA islands from Port Clyde to Portland on the return trip. The weather report is favorable—clear skies and calm seas; three hours later we round Pemaquid Point—our time is not too shabby for a boat loaded with camping and work gear.

On our way in, we make the customary stewardship sweep of Bar, Louds, Little Marsh, then Thief and Black, all of which look pristine and untouched.

At 6 p.m. we wind-moor off the east shore of Crow-Muscongus, and drop a stern anchor for the night. We trot ashore to survey the reported damage, and I'm miffed by the curious lack of debris of any sort. The site areas look frequented, but hardly "trashed." Our adopt-an-island steward must have beat us to it...I'm almost disappointed. Then I get this hunch: our problem may lie behind the bushes.

Meanwhile, Susie, an anthropologist by profession, has taken a keen interest in all of this, darting behind rocks and plunging into thickets to make scientific (scatological?) discoveries of her own. We don rubber gloves and within two hours we have made the best of an unsavory situation.

Though an indelicate topic, it needs to be stated here that people seem to be getting better about "carry-in, carry-out" when it comes to trash, but they need more education when it comes to human waste. The MITA boat, incidentally, always travels with a portable toilet.

In spite of daily demands, there is the need to look down the road, so the search for new additions to the Maine Island Trail continues, especially as boating traffic increases. Cate describes a two-day trip downeast:

We have been waiting for a break in the weather, and it comes on a Tuesday in October. Two pickup trucks with boats in tow make a morning rendezvous in Machias where we will launch and head down that historic estuary to spend the rest of the day checking islands between Cross Island and Narraguagus Bay. In one boat travel Karen and Dave with Trail island owner Bob Stewart, who comes from the Narraguagus Bay area and knows the waters well; with me in EIDER is Sharon McHold, a dedicated advisor of Island Institute and MITA. We stop to lunch on a private island owned by a friend of Bob's—Bob seems to know as much about islands he doesn't own as those dozen islands he does. We muse about how little the islands this far east are used today and talk about what to expect 10 years from now, or 20—more boaters, inevitable coastal real estate booms and busts, and the increasing value of open space for wildlife and for people. Timely to our conversation, the quiet of the island is disrupted by the roar of a fighter jet flying low from over the barrens; the jet's practice flight gives emphasis to our talk of humanity, wild lands, and progress.

The next morning we aim for the wild environs of Petit Manan Point and the islands off the mouth of Gouldsboro Bay, but rising seas force us to reconsider before crossing the Inner Bar of Petit Manan. Just before I turn EIDER's stern into the seas, I see the other boat in this convoy momentarily disappear in the trough between two oversize swells. It is only midday and already an unseasonal southwest wind is building big seas out here. It's time to be elsewhere.

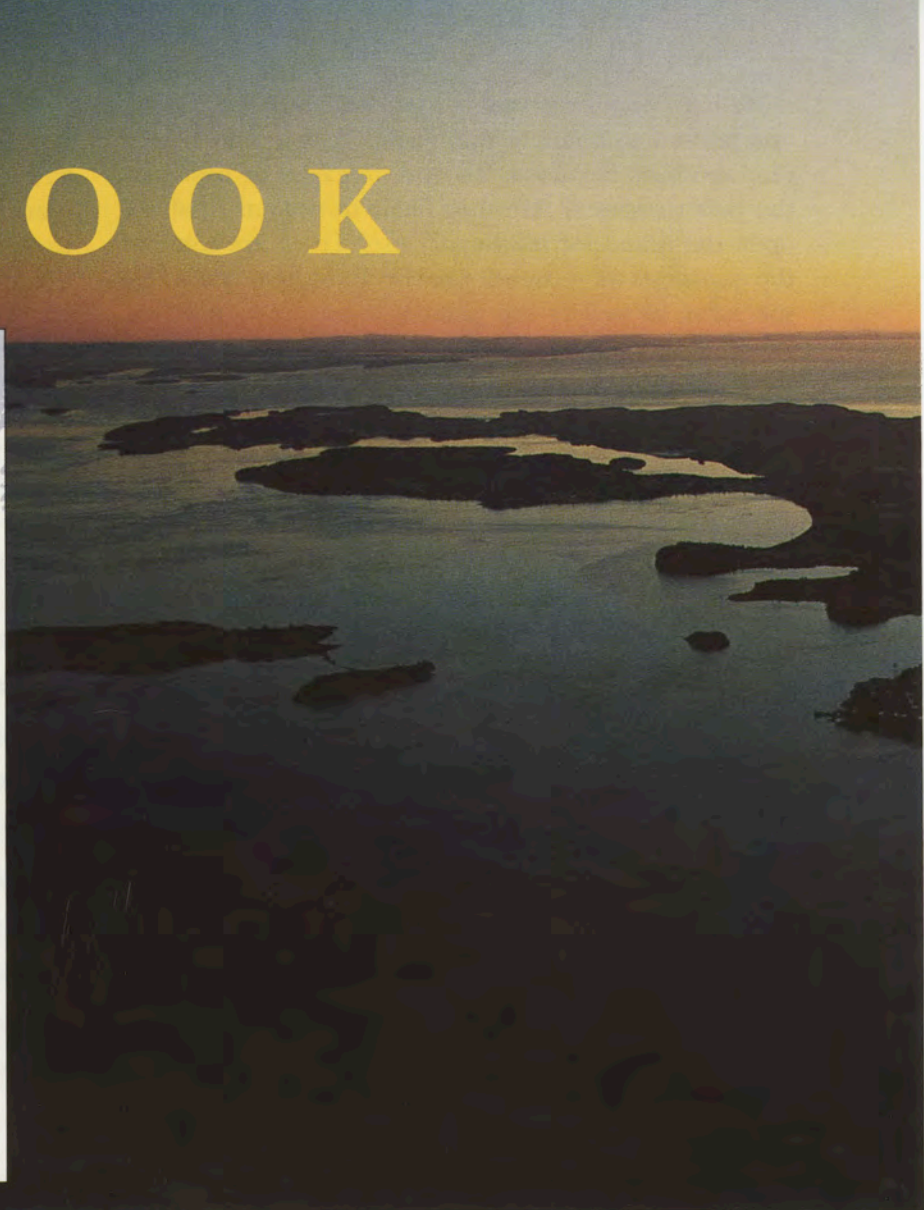
People pressures on some Casco Bay islands continued to grow in 1991, culminating in an unusual police action, described by Karen:

Saturday, July 27. Passing to the north and then east of Cow Island, a privately owned, non-MITA island in Casco Bay, we pause to marvel at the spectacle of Cow's eastern point, normally teeming with weekend revelers but now uninhabited at the height of the season. The Portland police have barricaded Cow, at the request of the owners and residents on nearby islands. From SCOTER we can see heaps of half-buried beer cans and other debris piled against the walls of the historic gun bunkers on the south side. The pretty little island looks tired with her vegetation trampled brown and her banks eroding into the sea. It physically hurts to see such thoughtlessness.

(continued on page 88)

"The visit is an encouraging one: we have barely landed when a family of four approaches us with big grins and plump trash bags full of sea wash-ups they have picked from the brush behind them."

COBSCOOK



*Biologically unique
in our part of the world,
Cobscook Bay is a model
for international
cooperation.*

*Introduction by Senator
Edmund S. Muskie*

IFIRST LEARNED OF Cobscook Bay in the 1930s through news accounts of the Quoddy Tidal Power Project and President Roosevelt's visits to Campobello Island. The images were intriguing but distant for a young man growing up in western Maine's Oxford Hills. Today Cobscook is a frequent personal experience. During my years as Governor, Senator, and member of the Roosevelt Campobello International Park Commission I have come to prize the bay and its attractions.

The governments of Canada and the United States created the Park to conserve the Roosevelt Cottage and the natural area around it as a symbol of international friendship. The Commission has devoted special attention to the island's cobble beaches, headlands, fog forests, bogs, ponds, and meadows, protecting them while making them accessible to visitors. In our work we have gained a sense of the complex relationships of seas, land, climate, flora, and fauna that make this area such a challenging and surprisingly rich environment. But the scope of our efforts is limited to part of the island and its shores.

From the shore below the Roosevelt Cottage on Campobello Island, when fog does not obscure your view, Cobscook Bay stretches north past Eastport where it joins the currents of the St. Croix River and Passamaquoddy Bay. The southern entrance to the bay, Lubec Narrows, is obscured by the high bluff of Friar's Head. To the northwest, between Eastport and Lubec, Cobscook divides in small fjords between islands and peninsulas. That panorama is a powerful magnet for repeated visits to Roosevelt's "beloved island," but it is a small part of the value of this complex marine environment.



Stephen O. Muskie

Campobello Island shields Cobscook Bay from the full force of the Bay of Fundy's storms. Within Campobello's sheltering arms Eastport and Lubec have offered protected anchorages for generations of sailors. Their harbors have been bases for fishermen, shippers, smugglers, and recreational sailors. Native Americans and European settlers have feasted and traded on the bounty of Cobscook's waters. Vacationers have prized the dramatic tidal ranges and the stark beauty of the rocky, wooded islands and peninsulas in the bay. Engineers have dreamed of converting the energy of the tides into electricity. But until recently, we have little appreciated the diversity of the resources in Cobscook's shallows and depths and the bay's role in sustaining life far beyond its tidal rips and pools.

This section of *Island Journal* will broaden our understanding of Cobscook Bay as an ecological gem with global significance, deepening our appreciation of the importance of the bay, the waters that feed it, and the flora and fauna that are sustained by it. I am sure the *Journal* and the work of the Island Institute will stimulate expanded studies, involving scientists from the United States and Canada. More than that, I hope the *Journal* and the studies will lead to public and private commitments in both our countries to join in wise conservation and use of Cobscook, Passamaquoddy, and St. Croix, our unique combined resources.

Edward S. Muskie

BOILING TIDES

Cobscook Bay's islands and tide-scoured channels are a haven for wildlife—as well as a center for Maine's expanding aquaculture industry

DAVID D. PLATT

PULLED BY THE MOON, billions of gallons of water flow twice each day through the big natural harbor between Eastport and Lubec, Maine. From the north the water comes out of Passamaquoddy Bay and the St. Croix River, down through Western and Head Harbor Passages, past Deer Island and Campobello. From the south it comes up from the Bay of Fundy, over mudflats and through Lubec Narrows, a shallow stretch a few hundred yards wide where the current can vary from eight knots to nothing at all.

When the tide is rising, the waters from south and north meet and mix off Eastport. The water flows on to the northwest, past Estes and Shackford Heads, past Seward Neck, and into Cobscook Bay. On the ebbing tide the process is reversed.

"Boiling Tides," the Indians called this region—"Cobscook."

A drive down to the end of Leighton Neck in Pembroke, one of the half-dozen towns that touch on Cobscook Bay, suggests what the Indians were talking about: four times each day, the water literally "boils" over the rocks off Leighton Neck in one direction or the other as Cobscook Bay's inner portion fills and empties through this bottleneck. "Make the passage in someone else's boat," suggests the author of one cruising guide to the area, clearly hoping that adventurers will avoid the place altogether.

Ask a scientist about this region's "boiling" water and you'll get another picture: currents and the shape of the sea bottom interact to force cold water up to the surface, exposing nutrients from the bottom to sunlight and preventing the stratification one finds in quieter places. Deep water thus "boils" to the surface.

The fast-moving water that gives Cobscook Bay its name and makes it so treacherous for unwary navigators is the critical ingredient of one of the world's richest biological systems. The tidal range



Christopher Ayres

here is 18 to 20 feet, making the difference between high and low water greater than it is at any other location in the United States, except Alaska. And while oceanographers are fond of comparing the tidal regime in Cobscook and the adjacent water to a bathtub, the images fail to capture everything that's happening here. Cobscook's combination of islands, coves, peninsulas, necks, bays, and mudflats makes it much more than that.

"The tide distributes the nutrients," explains Susan Woodward, a biologist who completed an inventory of Cobscook's wildlife resources last year. The nutrients may be microscopic, like the phytoplankton and zooplankton brought to the surface as the tides stir the water, or they may be somewhat larger, like the rotten "wrack" or detached seaweed that's floated off the shore every few weeks on a full-moon tide. Still more food comes down nearby rivers, and the combination of deep and shallow water and a complex shoreline keeps everything well mixed.

Interestingly, the freshwater wetlands that play such a large role in other productive ecosystems aren't a major factor here. "It's mostly a marine ecosystem," explains Mark McCullough, another biologist familiar with the area, noting that freshwater wetlands are relatively rare in

the areas adjacent to Cobscook Bay. Wetlands in the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge lie some distance from the Bay, McCullough notes, and aren't as important to its ecosystem as the upwelling nutrients that come in on the tide.

Cobscook is a system with two distinct parts: "outer" Cobscook Bay from Eastport to Cobscook Falls and the "inner" bay, extending north and south, respectively, to Dennysville and Whiting.

The inner bay is best known for its bald eagles. "It has the highest concentration of them in the state," says McCullough, who works for the State

Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Nests (there are 15 to 17) are more closely spaced here than they are elsewhere, and the eagles are Maine's most productive, meaning they produce the greatest number of young per nest.



Marble Island, Friar Roads, between Eastport and Campobello

Mergansers and Canada geese are drawn to the inner bay as well, as are migrating shorebirds when its mudflats are exposed at low tide. Black ducks are probably more productive in the inner bay than elsewhere in the region because they can find a richer food supply. Alewives and Atlantic salmon migrate through the inner bay and up the Dennys River, and the alewives attract large numbers of cormorants. White sided dolphins have stranded in Whiting, perhaps after becoming disoriented while chasing schools of fish.

The outer bay is rich in wildlife too. Several hundred pairs of eiders nest on its islands. Various species of gulls—herring, Bonaparte's, and even little and black-headed gulls from Europe—appear in the outer bay at different times of the year. Old squaw, bufflehead, and three species of scoters winter there, probably venturing into the inner bay when its mudflats are open. Large whales frequent the Eastport area and come into Cobscook Bay as far as the falls. In July, the flats at Lubec can draw thousands of migrating shorebirds, which nest in the arctic and use the flats to rest and feed in preparation for their migration to South America.

Turbulence keeps Cobscook's water ice-free much of the year, making the bay attractive to wintering waterfowl and shorebirds.

"It all functions as one system," says McCullough, who inventoried the region's resources several years ago and still monitors them for the state.

Cobscook Bay teems with animals and birds, but the trends are disturbing. When



Tom Ramsay

Susan Woodward began counting birds last year, she noticed right away that her numbers were smaller than those that had been compiled a decade earlier by Mark McCullough.

"I tried to cover areas Mark had covered," she says, "and we just weren't finding the same numbers of birds, and there was evidence of less use of roosts." Peak shorebird migration through the Lubec flats had dropped from 10,000 to 5,000 in recent years. Sandpipers which had once roosted on the beaches at Johnson, Half Moon, and Carrying Place coves were no longer to be found there. In the case of the sandpipers, the reason was probably human disturbance: in recent year the beaches have become important staging areas for offshore aquaculture projects, and the sandpipers have moved away.

Explaining the population drop on the Lubec flats gets more speculative. "It could be disturbance, a poor year in the Arctic, or a change in the ecosystems in Cobscook Bay," says Woodward. Or there may have

been less fog in recent years, meaning more sunlight that could, in turn, have prompted a "bloom" in algae, smothered the invertebrates in the water and on the flats, starved the birds and left them physically unprepared for their flight over the ocean.

The algae bloom theory isn't as far-fetched as it sounds. In 1984, Brian Beal, a scientist working at the University of Maine at Machias, found "thick algal mats and extremely long and massive networks of green, rope-like structures" on tidal flats at Weir Cove in Whiting Bay (the south arm of inner Cobscook Bay). The mats and ropes formed in August, he found, and stayed relatively intact until November. On flights over other coves and mudflats, Beal observed other algae concentrations—"Our surveys... reveal that between 10 and 30 percent of most mudflats in Washington County are now periodically covered by these algal blooms," he later wrote.

Since 1984 the algal blooms have recurred, but their extent has varied from year to year. "We're still up in the air as to the mechanism that causes them," Beal says. "But the effects on soft-shelled clams (the lifeblood of the commercial clam industry in the area) are devastating."

Algae blooms may or may not be a threat to Cobscook's wildlife, but humans clearly are. Development and loss of habitat are big problems for bald eagles, black ducks, and shorebirds. Before the current recession, developers crisscrossed parts of Cobscook's once-pristine shoreline with roads to unbuilt subdivisions, and the pressure to build houses will return if the economy rebounds. Changes in water



Christopher Ayres

quality are another potential problem; runoff, inadequate wastewater treatment, and the introduction of toxics such as oil can destroy entire habitats even if they don't directly poison the wildlife. To what extent new treatment plants at Eastport and Lubec will improve Cobscook's water quality remains to be seen.

A more sustainable type of development from which Cobscook benefited in the 1980s was the amazing growth of salmon farming. Salmon aquaculture, as it is called, is an industry new to Maine but well established in places like Norway, Scotland, Canada, and Chile. By transferring fingerling salmon raised in hatcheries to ocean net pens and using locally caught herring as feed, a \$30 million salmon industry has grown up off the shores of Lubec and Eastport.

Although excess feed and salmon waste can build up under poorly sited operations, Cobscook's boiling tides help flush areas even at the huge salmon farms in Eastport's Broad Cove and Deep Cove. While the rest of the coast is weathering a deep recession, the Eastport area, long an economic backwater, has lately seen better times than at any other time during this century.

Cobscook's natural system is far from static. There have been many changes over the years: the decline of the herring and the virtual disappearance of the canning industry it had created; the recent departure of one bird species—phalaropes—that once could be counted on to congregate annually off Eastport (the phalaropes have reappeared offshore, fishermen report). Ospreys have made an impressive comeback, particularly in the St. Croix River, and the bald eagle's situation continues to improve. Seals, which bounced back in the 1970s after the enactment of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, are holding their own.

Cobscook without its twice-daily bath in seawater is unimaginable, of course; the ocean is what brings in the nutrients and makes the bay even more productive than other systems that depend solely on nearby freshwater wetlands. Still, the uplands can't be ignored. They are a source of human waste, agricultural runoff, and toxics. Human disturbance along the shore will destroy habitat and drive off wildlife. Inevitably, the development of Cobscook's shores would make the region less wild and less capable of supporting wildlife. As a careful scientist, Susan Woodward isn't saying yet that the bird population declines she observed were caused by human disturbance, but from the evidence it's clear that something is amiss.

The constant here, of course, is the tide, which will go on stirring the nutrients in Cobscook Bay as long as there's a moon to make it all happen.

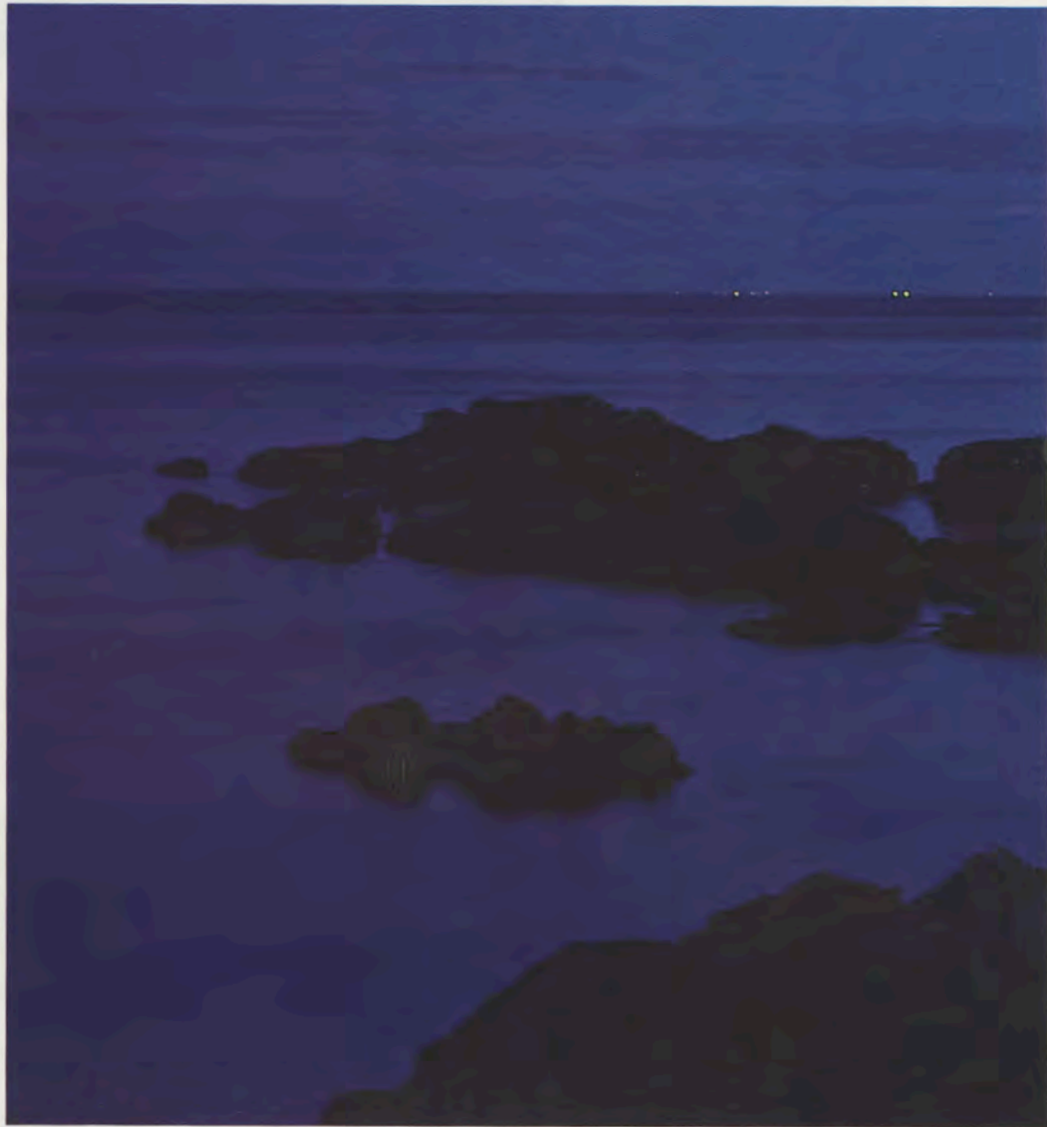
A Maine-based freelance writer, David D. Platt was formerly editor of the Maine Times.

COBSCOOK

ONE BIG NEIGHBORHOOD

Across Cobscook's waters, international connections run old and deep

DAVID D. PLATT



WHEN FRANKLIN D. Roosevelt Jr. was elected to Congress in the 1950s, it was pointed out that if he followed in his father's footsteps and ran for President one day, there might be a problem. FDR Jr. was born on Campobello, the Canadian island where his family spent vacations, and might not be the "native born citizen" required by the Constitution.

"I think my mother miscalculated, because she intended for me to be born in New York," he told an interviewer after his foray into politics was over and the

White House was no longer a possibility. "But it turned out all right."

The suggestion that the younger Roosevelt wasn't eligible to be President is a little more than an historical footnote, of course, but it illustrates the international character of the region where he was born.

The ties between eastern Maine and southwestern New Brunswick are old and close, and whether one was born on one side of the border or the other often seems almost inconsequential. From the 1880s to the 1930s dozens of wealthy American families spent their summers on Campobello, where they stayed in shingle-style hotels

East Quoddy Head, Campobello Island



Stephen O. Muskie

and cottages that looked west to Eastport and Lubec. The fishermen who plied the waters off Campobello, like their counterparts across Friar Roads in Eastport, sold their catches in Canada or the United States, depending on the market. The salmon produced today in aquaculture operations at Eastport or Deer Island or Campobello move into an international market where prices are determined as much by conditions in Norway and Chile as they are by supply and demand on the local docks. Again, whether the fish are American- or Canadian-reared seems unimportant.

The region's international connections extend to Cobscook Bay, whose entrance just above Eastport is less than three miles from the U.S.-Canadian border. Cobscook's natural resources are important well beyond the bay itself—many of the migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and marine mammals that spend part of each year in Cobscook Bay also spend time in the Canadian arctic, the Caribbean, and even South America. Many of the birds that rebuilt the breeding population of bald eagles in eastern Maine, including Cobscook Bay, moved across the border from Passamaquoddy Bay. Biologists speak

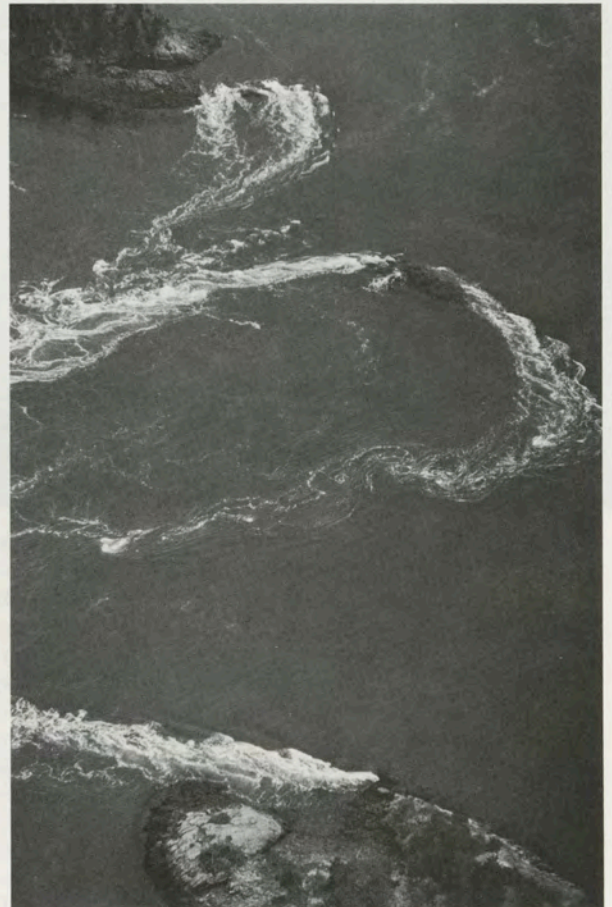
of a "plume" of nutrients from Cobscook Bay extending out into the Canadian waters of the Bay of Fundy.

Giving tangible form to these international connections is the Roosevelt Campobello International Park. Founded in 1963 to honor the memory of the area's most famous American rusticator, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the park is "Canadian soil which has become part of America's heritage and which is being preserved for the future through the commitment of the citizens and governments of both countries," according to former Maine Senator Edmund S. Muskie.



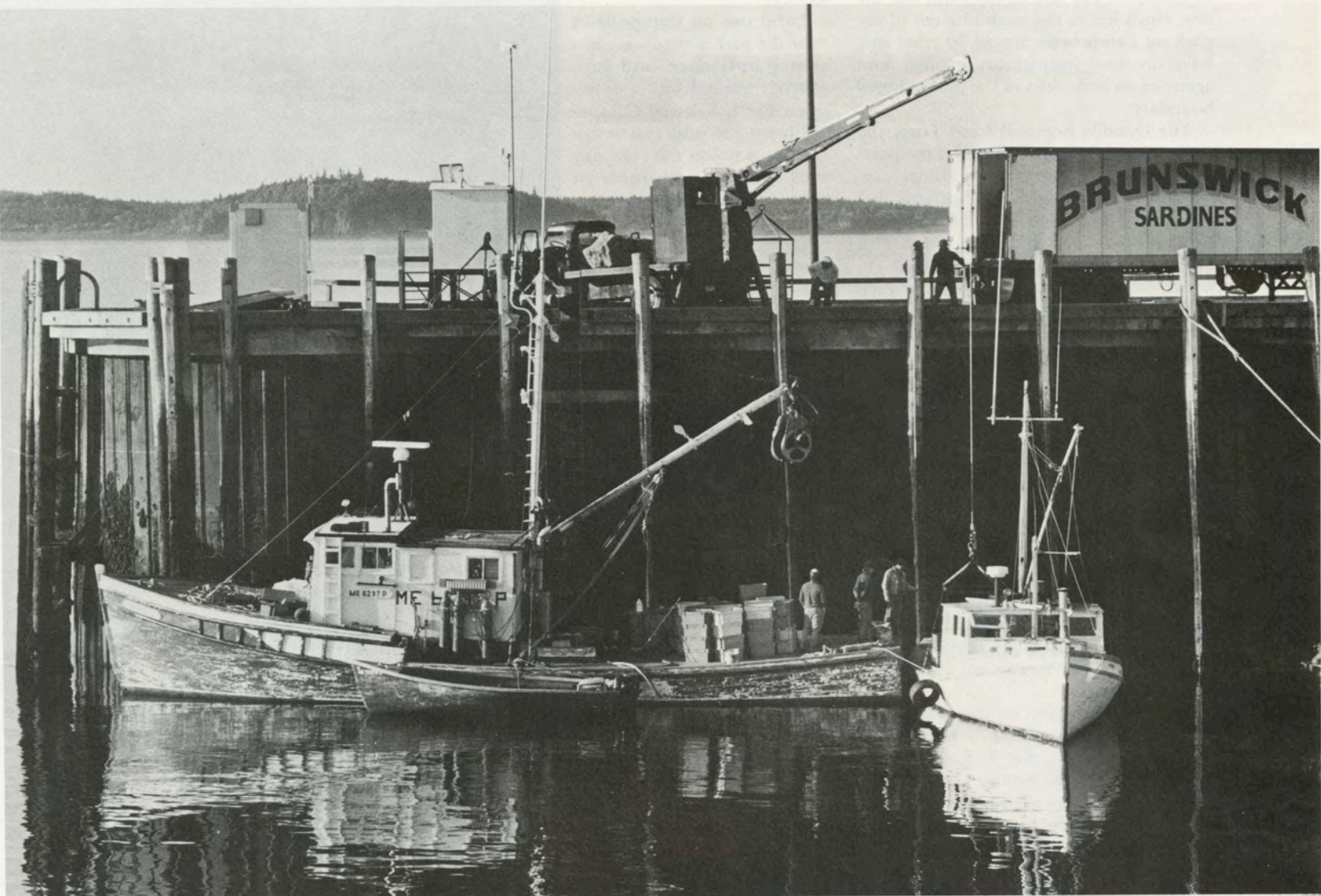
Lubec flats, South Lubec

**...from the south the tide
comes up from the Bay of
Fundy over mudflats and
through narrows where
the current can vary
from eight knots
to nothing at all.**



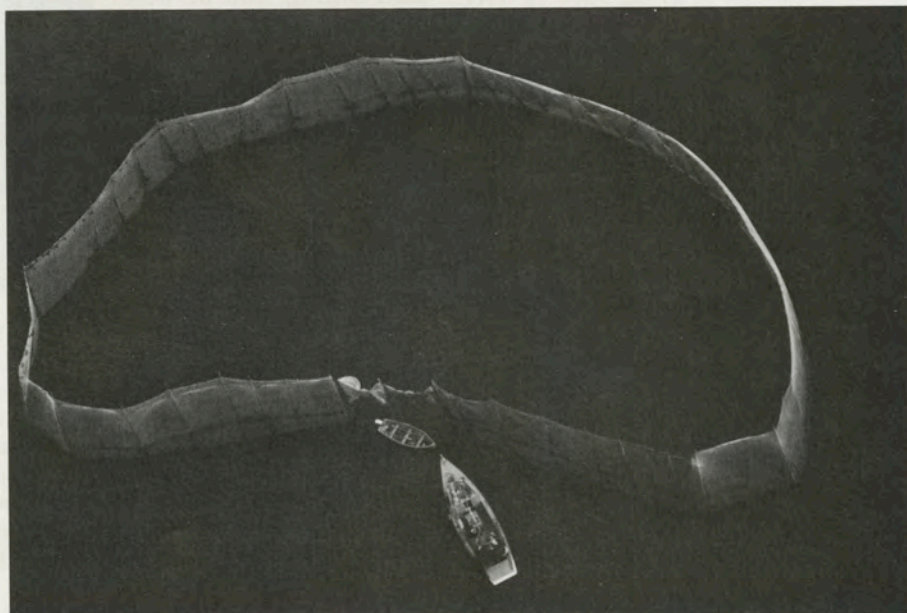
Reversing Falls, Cobscook Bay

Views around Cobscook Bay by Christopher Ayres



Loading aquaculture feed, Eastport Harbor

...using locally caught herring as feed, a \$30 million salmon industry has grown up off the shores of Lubec and Eastport.



Herring weir, Cobscook Bay

Muskie was the park commission's first chairman.

Efforts to preserve the natural character of Cobscook Bay and its environs, like the one which led to the establishment of the park on Campobello almost 30 years ago, have involved individuals, groups, and agencies on both sides of the international boundary.

The Quoddy Regional Land Trust, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and the state-sponsored Land for Maine's Future program all participated in transactions that protected Tide Mill Farm and Commissary Point, both in Cobscook Bay. The Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, which has owned land in the area since the 1930s, recently embarked on an expansion, providing it could find willing sellers. Several years ago the Eastport Land Trust acquired Shackford Head, a promontory that guards Cobscook Bay's entrance just above Eastport. Individual landowners have donated conservation easements on Straight and Whiting bays, and other easements are in the works. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has acquired shore frontage in Lubec and other areas.

"These are things that are happening independently," says Caroline Pryor of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. "People get nervous about master planning, and it's important to know there's not a whole lot of coordination."

Still, there is *some* cooperation: the Maine Wetlands Coalition, consisting of Ducks Unlimited, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and the land trusts, has made Cobscook Bay a top priority for preservation efforts because of its importance for wintering waterfowl and birds of prey. The wetland coalition describes itself as "very informal," but it has access to acquisition funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Currently, the coalition is directing this money toward easements and outright purchases in Straight Bay.

Across the international border on Campobello, the administrators of the Roosevelt Campobello park take an active interest in developments that might affect the natural qualities of the park's 2,800 acres. "We mostly stay informed," says staff naturalist Harold Bailey. Air quality is one concern: increased pollution isn't allowed under U.S. federal law because Roosevelt-Campobello, while not precisely a national park, is considered a "Class 1 Area" under the Clean Air Act. At the request of park officials, the National Park Service's air quality experts in Denver, Colorado, have examined emissions-license applications from upwind sources such as the paper mill at Lincoln, Maine, and the AES energy plant proposed for Bucksport, Maine.

Prevailing winds make it likely that such emissions will pass over Cobscook Bay before reaching Campobello. (Canadian

sources don't get the same scrutiny by the park service because the law there isn't as strict.)

Land use on Campobello near the park is regulated by a zoning ordinance, and park officials worked with a developer, the U.S.-based Campobello Co., to add restrictive covenants to lots the company sold. "We met with them all the time they were active," says park superintendent Henry W. Stevens. In addition, the Roosevelt-Campobello park has an agreement with the New Brunswick Department of Tourism concerning land use around Glensevern Lake, and park officials regularly attend meetings of local land trusts.

Another public agency active on both sides of the border is the St. Croix International Waterway Commission, based in St. Stephen, New Brunswick. Created jointly by the Maine and New Brunswick legislatures, the commission's jurisdiction extends south to St. Andrews at the mouth of the St. Croix, less than a dozen miles from Campobello, Eastport, and the entrance to Cobscook Bay. "We're really one neighborhood," says executive director Lee Sochasky, noting that any land-use development on one side of the river is likely to affect things across the water. Unlike Maine, New Brunswick had no land use standards, no shoreland zoning, and no water classification system, and the commission has focused on resource planning on the Canadian side of the river. "The politics and policies are very different on the two sides of the river," Sochasky says. Recently the commission completed a public access study, finding that less than one percent of the waterfront in Maine is publicly owned, compared with about 20 percent on the New Brunswick side. Other projects include a look at use of the river by governments, corporations, and individuals, as well as salmon restoration, maintaining campsites, and encouraging small business development. "We're like the telephone operator," says Sochasky. "We get people talking with each other."

No compilation of protection efforts in the region would be complete without mentioning Robert Stewart, a Maine resident who has taken a personal interest in the preservation of islands on both side of



the border. Last year Stewart donated the title to one island and easements on three others in the Deer Island area to the Nature Trust of New Brunswick, based in Frederickton. Stewart owns 18 islands in the area, including several others on which he has placed conservation restrictions. Incidentally, donors of property in Canada are subject to heavy taxes, in contrast to donors in the United States, where a charitable deduction is the rule. "It's very hard to give away property in Canada," Stewart says. The islands he protected last year—Birch, Barnes, Mowatt, and The Nubble—are homes to a rich



Stephen O. Muskie

assortment of wildlife, including bald eagles and possibly nesting herons.

The Roosevelt International Bridge connecting Campobello to Lubec was opened in 1962 by James Roosevelt, another of FDR's sons who served in Congress. (Unlike his brother, James was born in the United States.) The bridge, like the Roosevelt family, further emphasized the close connections between eastern Maine and southwestern New Brunswick, ties that affect the whole Cobscook region to this day.

History and geography alone would make Cobscook Bay and the surrounding

area an international sort of place. From Deer Island or Campobello, from Federal Harbor or Dennys Bay or Lubec, the international border is never very far away. The region's long tradition of cross-boundary commerce and vacation travel add to the international flavor, as do its associations with a world leader, Franklin D. Roosevelt. But it is natural character—wildness, extreme tides, importance for wildlife that knows no boundaries—that sets the area apart from other places. The Cobscook Bay region is different and very special; failing to understand that would be a mistake of global proportions.

View over Seward Neck toward the International Bridge connecting the Town of Lubec and Campobello Island

TIMESCAPE

Cobscook's cultural landscape provides clues to the past—if you know how to use them



Looking south from the end of the Clark sardine factory wharf, Sea Street, Eastport, circa 1890-1900

Maine State Archives

EDWARD HAWES

IRVING MAHAR, a neighbor close to where I was staying Downeast nearly 30 years ago, told me about a place his uncle, Harold Mahar, owned and might be willing to sell for the right price. An overgrown road led down to “the town landing” across from the western end of Falls Island and Reversing Falls, then turned east ending at the “old Kelly Place.” It seemed a long way down there from the turn-around on Crows Neck. Irving said, “Follow the ruts,” and so I did, pushing aside stickly branches of spruce and fir, alders insistently jutting out, and raspberry brambles that slowed me down. When the road was “swamped out” and gravelled a few years later, it turned out to be only 7/10ths of a mile long. But that first time, it seemed a lot longer.

I passed the fence line marking the old farm boundary, and just as Irving had

said, there was a meadow filled with wildflowers. In front were immense lilac bushes in their last bloom and apple trees in their first. Hidden behind them was a cellar hole and an outline of foundation stones.

This was the farmstead of the Joe Kelly family. For two years I dickered with Irving's uncle and finally paid his price in 1967. Over the next several years I built a camp, woodshed, workshop, and chicken shed in the clearing (the latter occupied for one season only by its intended residents), and nearer the shore, a sauna and the Sunshine Cabin. As I walked the land and talked with my neighbors, in time I learned much about the Kellys, their predecessors and successors, their ways of life, and those of others on Cobscook Bay. These conversations gave me clues to look for at the

Kelly place and elsewhere: features on the land and at its tidal borders, hints left by former occupants about their lives and the way they used the environment.

The place has become a kind of time machine for me. I now see its history as a microcosm of life through time that reflects the macrocosm of the bay.

Joe Kelly was a saltwater farmer, a term confusing to those not familiar with coastal New England ("Is it a kind of aquaculture?" I've been asked). He was one of those many who with his family farmed and fished, using the various resources of both land and tide to put food on the table and in the family storage cellar. One leafless March day I realized that the house where Joe had lived was sited on the one high spot in the farmstead area with a commanding view up and down "the river," as people call this portion of the bay. It was the perfect location for British or Acadian settlers in the 18th century.

The Kelly family probably raised corn and good crops of potatoes; they definitely had sheep. (Joe's daughter Alice remembered them.) The son recounted how his father bought the "outer farm"—the high ground above the bay—for additional pasture. They certainly needed it. Now there are only about 10 acres of open land, including the Kelly farmstead area and what we call Sunshine Meadow to the east toward Race Point, named because the first and last rays of the sun hit this hill in most beautiful ways.

Back in the scrubby woods of ash, service berry, and birch, down in the alder-thick wetlands, and along the spruce-lined shore are stone piles testifying to the efforts of generations to make the land friendly and fruitful. These clues indicate that at least double the amount of land now open in the inner farm was used by the Kellys and their predecessors in farming. A stone fence and the remains of a zigzag rail fence angling off it reveal that another 10 acres were available in the outer farm.

In the woods at the end of Crows Neck near the Kelly Place are at least two other cellar holes besides the Kellys', with lilacs and apple trees as sentinels to the past. Other farmhouses still stand. This area was densely populated one hundred years ago. What the cultural landscape tells us is verified in the Washington County Atlas for 1881. Next to little squares locating their houses are the names of all the families living there. The rest of the Neck was thickly settled as well.

In 1851 the federal population and agricultural censustakers recorded in the schedules they filled in information that helps understand more about these Necks. In contrast to Cutler and Bailey's Mistake on the Bold Coast, these were farming areas. The occupation of male heads of household and the older teenage sons was exclusively listed as "farmer." There was no entry category for "farmer-fishermen," but many must have been such. Down in



Sardine cannery, Eastport, circa 1895

Maine Historical Society

Cutler, there were some who described themselves as farmers, but many more were listed as fishermen, millmen, laborers, or seamen.

The tallies for potatoes, corn, and other crops listed farm by farm in the agricultural census forms indicate that agriculture on Crows and Leighton necks was the primary activity. A few summers spent at the end of Crows Neck demonstrate why this was so: the weather is dependably warm and humid—in contrast to Lubec or Bailey's Mistake, where you are often hit by chill breezes and fog. I have wondered if the Necks were not part of Washington County's corn/potato belt! Store records in Lubec show that families bartered potatoes for other needed staples, and state agricultural market statistics for the turn of the century indicate that many barrels of spuds were sent out by ship to Boston and elsewhere.

Joe Kelly, Irving Mahar told me years ago, was a smelt fisherman. He went out in his boat in the spring, when the fish were running, with a light to attract and a net to catch. I don't know whether he ate, processed, or sold his harvest, or did all three. But he did leave some clues about his connection with the tide in the coastal landscape. Irving said I should look for "Joe Kelly's steps" on the shore down in front of the old foundation. Sure enough, at low tide, there was a series of saplings set parallel to the shore stepwise, backfilled with stones, muck, and seaweed. Removing the seaweed every few years uncovers again this convenience for himself and family, probably used when they went to market in Lubec or Eastport, or to visit friends on Leighton Neck.

Another time Irving said, "Do you know where the 'hollup' is?" I said "No," not wanting to admit to ignorance of the term.

But since earlier he had shown me where the Kelly spring was hidden 300 yards back in the woods from the farmstead, my curiosity and sense of practicality got the best of me. "What is a hollup and where was Kelly's?" Irving said there was an old way across Sunshine Meadow down to the shore opposite Race Point. This was where Joe hauled his boat out of the water and up on land when he needed to (mystery solved: a *haul-up*). The next day I found the faint ruts down over the Sunshine hill down to the shore, which was marshy here, not cobbly as it is in front of the old foundation. There was a rusted clutch housing, and I wondered, as I have wondered since when I pass it, did Joe Kelly put a motor in his boat before he died?

In Joe Kelly's time and before, the "river" was the major highway for people and commodities. In the 1890s the Corps of Engineers blasted and moved rocks off the western end of Falls Island to enable deeper draft vessels to go securely up and downstream without being pulled toward Reversing Falls. All during the 19th century ships built in the small yards in the Dennysville area and the Pembrokes came down on their maiden voyages. In the 1890s and afterwards ships laden with sardines for the canneries at Pembroke and West Pembroke went by. Certainly some of the saltwater farmers of Crows Neck, Leighton Neck, and elsewhere on Cobscook went out beyond the bay for this harvest of the sea. Some of their wives worked in the canneries.

There was a virtual explosion of sardine canning on the bay in the 1890s fueled by new technologies and expanding markets. Not only at the head of the bay in the Pembrokes, but at its mouth in Eastport and Lubec were many canning



The 1881 Washington County Atlas shows the patterns of settlement in Cobscook's five major towns. Also note the three unorganized territories at its wild western edge.

operations. The 1894 State Atlas shows 12 on wharves in Eastport. During the next two decades, control came more and more into the hands of outside interests and was more and more concentrated.

There was a downswing in the Depression, then during World War II the industry prospered. This was Lubec's last great period. The homes on the hill remained well kept afterward, but the waterfront declined. Now salmon aquaculture just beyond the mouth of Cobscook is changing things again.

It is not clear whether or not Joe Kelly was involved in woodland harvest or processing. Irving Mahar's uncle certainly was. As owner of the old place in the 1940s and 1950s, he cut over 20 acres of Race Point for pulpwood. When I bought the onetime farm, you could see several hundred yards beyond the end of the woods road Harold used to haul out the harvest. Over the years natural succession has resulted in a mix of impenetrable 10- to 15-foot-high

spruces, firs, and birches. A few summers ago with surprise we realized it was necessary to cut a new path.

Joe or his ancestors may have been involved in woodland harvest for older purposes with older technologies. On the outer farm, down under the old elm off to the southwest, lies Big Birch Point. Here are moss and hummock-covered stumps measuring 12 inches and more across. The birch and fir are more mature here than elsewhere on the place. Long ago someone cut the timber here, perhaps for the tidal mill that was located only a mile away by water on Straight Bay. I first suspected a mill might have been there upon examining Rufus Putnam's 1785 map that indicated a "mill seat" on the east side of Crows Neck. A hike across fields and around an extensive salt marsh cove revealed a site that gave a clue at dead low tide. The rocks on either side of the narrow outlet had been cut vertically down for six or more feet.

Woodland harvest and processing are still extremely important activities in the bay region today, although there are few saw mills remaining—none at historic locations—because gasoline and electricity have freed owners from the need for water power.

Cobscook has long known human habitation. Early British settlers left evidence of their presence in the place names at the end of the necks of the bay. Putnam's 1785 maps of Crows Neck-Falls Island area designate "Denbow Neck," "Latins" (Leighton's), and "Mahar Point." Scattered here and there in town histories and the memories of local families are clues of Acadian settlement. One of Joe Kelly's children remembered "the Woman" who opened doors and left little breezes indicating her presence as she passed. When British soldiers came to remove all the Acadians in the 1760s, she had hidden her baby in a drawer, not realizing that she was going to be permanently deported. Her spirit returned according to legend and remains still at the old foundation.

Here is yet another mystery: While digging out a space to set a six-by-six foundation sill for Sunshine Cabin, about six inches beneath the surface, I came across some charcoal and gray pottery shards. During the summer this is where the first rays of the sun hit the shore at 5 a. m. Was this a seasonal fishing camp site, or, I have wondered, a sacred site?

The cultural landscape gives clues about the past if you know how to hear and see them. The Kelly Place has told a lot about itself and given hints on how to uncover the past elsewhere on Cobscook Bay. Recently it has helped me understand not only what is historically and culturally significant, but also environmentally and ecologically. Straight Bay, out beyond the old elm, is a key stopover on the Atlantic Flyway for migratory waterfowl. Seals haul out on tidal islands. Race Point is within the range of nesting eagles.

As a conservation-minded landowner, I believe our preservation efforts must include a wide spectrum of purposes—not just open space and scenic views, but future farmland and a variety of woodlands for diverse purposes. We need space for eagles and seals to live in, and for migrating ducks to feed in. How many camps and how many year-round houses are appropriate? Economic factors come to mind. So do spiritual ones. The Kelly Place is very special. Standing by Sunshine Cabin as the June sun comes up or sitting on the whale rocks at Race Point makes me think again of that fire pit with shards. Was this sacred space?

Edward Hawes is an environmental historian consulting with municipalities, preservation organizations, and museums. He lives in Brunswick and in Washington County with his wife and two stepchildren.



Casco Bay, view southwest toward Portland

Peter Ralston

PRIDE OF OWNERSHIP

The Casco Bay Estuary Project gives all hands a stake in the future of their bay

ROBERT MOORE

ASK ANYONE TODAY and they'll tell you they're an environmentalist. Not because it's an election year, but because most of us like to think we are doing as much as we can in our own way to make our world a more livable place. And therein lies a characteristic weakness of the environmental movement — it's a sandbox full of individual causes, each representing the grassroots zeal and devotion of its advocates, but in all lacking the coherence and heft to shape a unified course of action.

That could change in Casco Bay. In April 1990, the bay was recognized by state and federal governments as an estuary of national significance, making it the focus of a five-year project to study the problems and potential solutions in the bay and its watershed.

The focus of the Casco Bay Estuary Project geographically and culturally is holistic, as it must be, for Casco Bay is far greater than the sum of its parts. Spanning 20 miles from Cape Elizabeth to Cape Small, it includes an area of 150 square miles. Within that area are some 400 islands and ledges, nicknamed the Calendar Islands because there is (at least) one for every day of the year. In this defined area there are 575 miles of coastline, along which live 150,000 year-round residents. Its waters are both nourished and polluted by runoff from the urban confines of Portland and as far away as Bethel, 60 miles inland. The activities of the 240,000 residents in this watershed define the quality of life and waters in and around the bay. The goal of the project is to get all of these residents interested, educated, and involved in the health and future of Casco Bay.

Why? From outward appearances Casco Bay looks to be fine. But the bay is threatened by intensifying pressure from pollution, development, and overuse. Bacteria, nutrients, and toxic pollution have caused



Chebeague Island, looking southeast toward Cliff Island

“The Casco Bay Estuary Project has particular meaning for islanders because it’s the first time islanders have had a say from the outset.”

—*Jean Dyer*
Casco Bay Island Development Association

deterioration of water quality and marine habitat in certain places. In the urban zone around the Fore River area of Portland, bacteria and toxic pollutants are posing the greatest threat. Along the more rural eastern coastline of the bay between Freeport and Small Point, where depths are shallow and circulation is slower, bacteria and nutrient loading from runoff are the pollutants of primary concern. Because Casco Bay comprises several different habitat types, each with its own set of problems, the lessons learned during the five-year Casco Bay Estuary Project will be applicable to the protection and preservation of similar coastal areas where development and increased use pose a threat.

Management of the Casco Bay Estuary Project is accomplished by a committee of representatives from business, government, the scientific and academic communities, and citizenry. Achieving consensus among the varied—sometimes competing—interests may at first appear a long shot, but to Jean Dyer of Chebeague Island, president of Casco Bay Island Development Association, a bay-wide civic organization with some 400 members, it’s the only logical way to get from talk to action. “The Casco Bay Estuary Project has particular meaning for islanders,” says Dyer, “because it’s the first time islanders have had a say from the outset. We’ve been represented at every management committee meeting there’s been.”

If any one group is particularly sensitive to the health of the bay, it’s islanders. In the closely defined world of island life,

things like septic systems, fishing, solid waste, water supply, and scenic beauty determine not just where but how people live.

In the not-so-distant past, for example, the residents of Peaks Island used to dump their trash and debris into the bay. What floated drifted away, and the remainder sank to the bottom, where it remains today—an altered underwater habitat for marine worms, formed of tires, boots, and debris. Today international and federal laws address the problem of marine dumping through federal bans and penalties, but they are only as effective as the monitoring and enforcement that back them up. A pile of evidence exists to demonstrate there is still much to be done to reduce marine debris; 29,850 pounds of debris were collected during Coastweek 1990 from 190 miles of coastline in Maine, most of it in the form of nondegradable plastic and styrofoam.

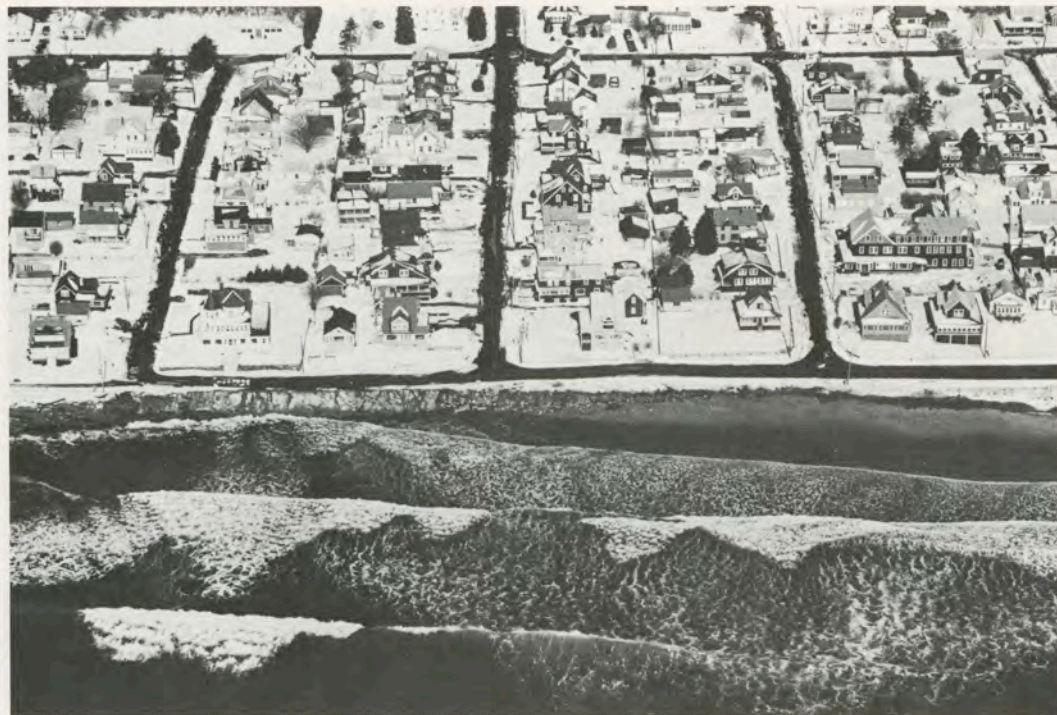
Cynthia Martin, who teaches science at Portland High School, has discovered a tool she thinks will fix the problem for good. During the 1989–1990 school year she led 100 students out to Great and Little Chebeague islands to perform an ecological analysis. Martin’s students mapped cover types, looked at the geology and ecology of the islands, and made stewardship recommendations in a 120-page report. They scoured the shoreline from top to bottom and collected, sorted, and categorized the debris they found, drawing parallels with the rest of Maine’s debris. While the obvious benefit from all the

work is clean beaches, "the greatest motivation is the fact that they're contributing something," says Martin. Most of Martin's students, city kids from Portland, had never been to the islands, nor were they aware of the issues islanders contend with on a daily basis. "Some of the students go back out to Chebeague," she says, noting that having a sense of ownership of their region inspires students to become more involved. Martin's 1991-1992 students worked on Cliff Island, and she plans to do another island ecological characterization in 1992-1993. This time, the Casco Bay Estuary Project will provide much of the funding.

The success of the Casco Bay Estuary Project will depend on making the program useful and relevant to those who participate in it.

Especially for islanders, decisions affecting water quality in Casco Bay will be far-reaching. Islanders derive their livelihood from clean water. If the waters are contaminated by fecal coliform bacteria or overboard discharges, there can be no shellfishing in the clam flats around them. The National Shellfish Sanitation Program, administered by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, requires that an area easily recognized geographically—for example an entire cove from point to point—be closed to shellfish harvesting if an overboard system is in proximity, even if the system is legal and functioning properly. In many parts of Casco Bay, not strictly islands, this means a significant percentage of shellfish areas are off limits. In Harpswell, for example, shellfish biologists attribute the closure of approximately 75 percent of the clam flats in town largely to the presence of about 128 residential overboard discharge systems. Harpswell's long-fingered peninsulas reaching into the bay have the same ledge-and-clay geology as most islands in the bay.

Hal Winters of the Maine Department of Marine Resources says of residential overboard discharge systems, "About 50 percent of them work 50 percent of the time"—an abysmal performance he attributes more to poor owner maintenance than to design flaw. Originally required by the government to replace the straight pipes which were the rule along the coast until the 1960s, these overboard systems are now the bane of homeowners and clam diggers alike. "On islands where the soil—if there is any—is close to the ledge," says Winters, "it's very restrictive. People have to either use chamber systems, and bring in the soils to mound it up, or use holding tanks," an option as expensive as it is inconvenient. "There's a lot of property that can't be built on



Developed shore south of Portland, around Old Orchard Beach

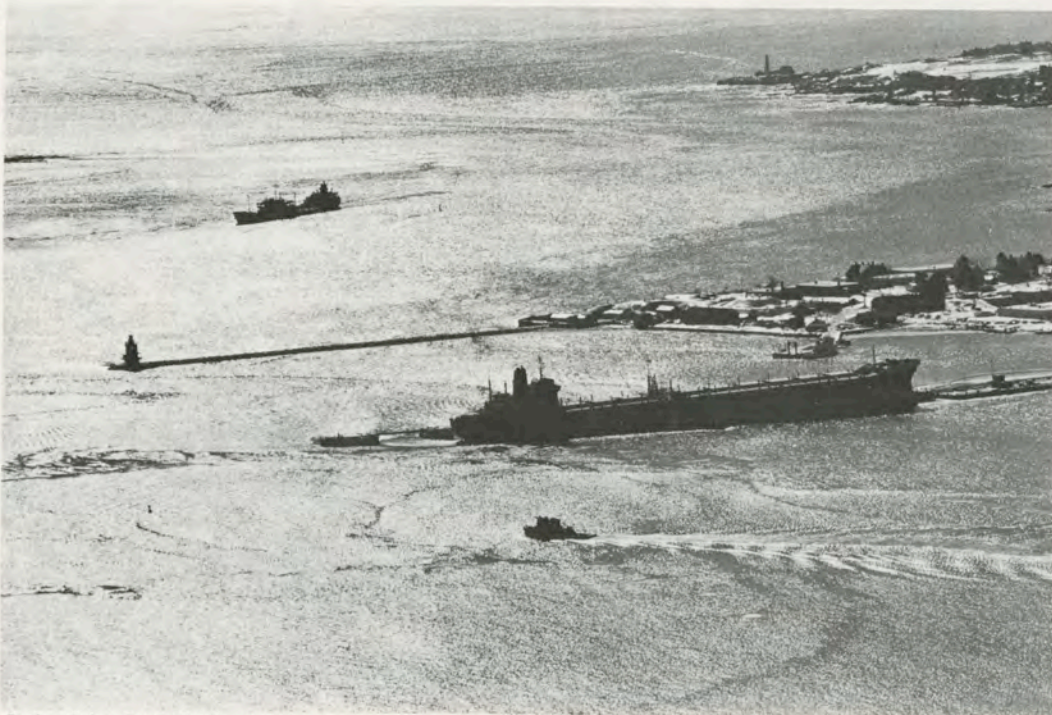
because there's nowhere to dispose of the sewage." Mike Hogan, shellfish warden for the Town of Freeport, agrees. "A lot of seasonal camps turned into year-round dwellings" over the past few years, says Hogan, "but the wastewater systems didn't. All it takes is one or two failing systems to close an entire embayment to shellfish harvesting."

Clam digging is only one example of the cost of restoring a resource, but it is a good one. Clamming is Maine in essence—a cultural tradition as old as human habitation on the coast. But to continue on the present path would mean further decline in harvestable areas. The number of commercial shellfish harvesting licenses in Maine went from 3500 in 1989 to 1400 in 1991: a decline Winters attributes to more areas being closed, forcing more intense pressure on the flats remaining open. At risk, then, is a defined piece of Maine's cultural heritage, and the economic livelihood of shellfish harvesters.

The price of progress will reach far beyond lost profits to clam diggers. Peaks Island, the most populated of Casco Bay's islands, has a wastewater collection system that drains raw sewage directly into the bay. Common sense and the federal government both say that wastewater has to be treated before it goes into Casco Bay, and plans are underway to take care of that. The City of Portland and Peaks Islanders have engaged in lively discussion about where the treatment of Peaks Island's sewage should take place, with the resolution to construct a treatment plant on the island rather than pumping the waste over to the Portland treatment plant. Figuring in the costs of planning and design engineering, the price of the project is estimated to be \$6 million.

The Maine State Planning Office's efforts to put a price tag on Casco Bay

If any one group is particularly sensitive to the health of the bay, it's islanders. In the closely defined world of island life, things like septic systems, fishing, solid waste, water supply, and scenic beauty determine not just where but how people live.



Spring Point, South Portland

“All it takes is one or two failing wastewater systems to close an entire embayment to shellfish harvesting.”

—Mike Hogan
Shellfish Warden
Town of Freeport

resulted in the 1990 report “The Economic Value of Casco Bay” by University of Southern Maine economist Charles Colgan. By averaging the value per acre of production derived from the open clam flats in Casco Bay, Colgan estimated the value of lost production from clam flats closed because of pollution to be \$4,007,160 per year. As the example on Peaks Island suggests, the cost of building treatment plants all around Casco Bay could quickly exceed the dollar value of the resource.

But maintaining the status quo has other costs: shoreline waters enriched with nutrients from residential, agricultural, and commercial runoff may result in more frequent algae blooms, already a problem in some of Casco Bay’s shallow covers and bays. In Brunswick’s Maquoit Bay, the algae bloom in late August of 1988 resulted in a total die-off of marine life: once the alga had consumed the nutrients in the water, it died, and the resulting decomposition by bacteria depleted oxygen in the water to drastically low levels. Sandworms, shellfish animals, and plants died. Scientists are focusing their studies on whether there is a direct link between nutrient enrichment as a cause of algae blooms. Aside from the obvious ecological impacts, human residents and visitors will recall with wrinkled noses the Bloom of ’88.

Just as difficult as the task of appraising economic losses from these events, such as from tourists who stayed away, is that of defining solutions. While it is known that aquatic oxygen levels are affected by water temperature, circulation, and nitrogen loading, controlling nitrogen loading requires time, money, and cooperation on the part of coastal residents. Planning shoreline development wisely will reduce the risks of total die offs such as Maquoit Bay experienced. What is needed, of

course, is a heightening of general awareness that what individuals do will have an impact beyond their back yards. Green, weed-free lawns and unblemished fruit and vegetables may be desirable, but spreading fertilizers and pesticides on the ground has consequences to the animals, plants, and humans nearby.

If qualities such as the beauty of the coast at Wolf Neck State Park, a sail on the bay, or a mess of steamers on the table are balanced with the costs to those activities, then our choices accurately reflect the value we place on Casco Bay. Affinity with an attractive resource of blue water and green shores must be worth something if 34 businesses in the area, from tap dancing studios to dentists’ offices, use Casco Bay in their

names. If Mainers are willing to plug their state as “Vacationland” on every license plate (with a lobster logo that to the chagrin of many implies that vacations here are uniquely coastal), there is more value to this bay than the dollar amount of its marine-related commerce. The value of the image of a sparkling, windswept bay is what brings tourists back to Maine for their next visit. It is what drives people’s incentives to dedicate their free time to beach cleanup walks during Coastweek, or to donate their financial support to membership organizations like Maine Audubon, the Island Institute, and Friends of Casco Bay.

Over the next four years, those volunteers and all Casco Bay residents will be making myriad choices that reflect their ideal vision of Casco Bay, tempered by the reality of the Casco Bay they can afford. The primary goal of the Casco Bay Estuary Project is to slowly forge a comprehensive conservation and management plan, or CCMP. The CCMP will delineate the goals—both lofty and mundane—derived from five years of consensus building among citizens, business, scientific, government, environmental, and non-profit groups, then provide a blueprint of action plans for how to reach these goals: who is responsible for the action, and where the funds will be derived to pay for it. The next four years will provide an unusual opportunity for people to participate in and benefit from an opportunity which does not come very often: the chance to have a direct voice that will be listened to in deciding the future of their resource.

Robert Moore is public outreach coordinator for the Casco Bay Estuary Project and welcomes inquiries from readers interested in learning more about the project. Contact him at Casco Bay Estuary Project, 312 Canco Road, Portland, Maine 04103.

Twilight of the Island Dump

At \$2 a bag to ship the trash out, recycling and composting look better and better

DONALD MAURICE
KREIS

WIND IS FICKLE, tide implacable, but as to one other inevitability that haunts and daunts the lives of Maine islanders, there is a temporary reprieve.

That other inevitability is, of course, garbage. Physics has saddled all of us, island-dwellers or not, with the law of entropy—and the consequences of that law are everywhere. The relentless ocean is eternally wearing away at Maine's rocky coast, youth is perpetually yielding to the decay of age, and notwithstanding its pretensions to noble purposes, the human family is wholly occupied with the process of turning useful matter into useless matter—variously referred to as solid waste, refuse, or good old garbage.

Happily for many of those who need a boat to start their journey to the State House in Augusta, the Legislature there has intervened—not to amend or revoke the law of entropy, but rather to extend the deadline by which all Maine communities must close their unlicensed dumps. This was welcome news for the island communities of Chebeague, Frenchboro, Islesboro, North Haven, Swan's Island, and Vinalhaven—all of which would have had to shut the gates to the local landfill on January 1 and find somewhere else to send the local garbage.

"It was a welcome reprieve. We were by no means prepared to close on the first of this year," admitted Vinalhaven Town Manager John Spear. But the reprieve only lasts until January 1 of *next* year—so Spear and his counterparts on those other five islands are spending this year scrambling for answers to the most nagging of questions: how to turn back the



Christopher Ayres

implacable tide of entropy and make less trash, and where to send that lessened garbage supply once it is produced.

Islanders are not the only Mainers who have found themselves neck-deep in garbage policy recently. Incinerators in Biddeford and Orrington have turned out to be a lot more expensive and a lot less environmentally friendly than the private developers of those facilities promised. The state's biggest commercial landfill, in Norridgewock, suffered a whopping landslide in a rainstorm three summers ago—creating a firestorm of protest not just from the landfill's neighbors but from the would-be neighbors of any location that has ever been suspected of being a good dump site. The Legislature created the Maine Waste Management Agency, in part to find new landfill sites—but a million dollars and three years later the agency came up empty-handed early this year.

Folks who have not spent the last five or six years worrying about all of that might find it odd that five island communities,

plus plenty more on the mainland, could have been so irresponsible as to have an unlicensed dump. The answer, of course, is not irresponsibility but history: unlicensed dumps date from an era before there was a Maine Department of Environmental Protection to issue such licenses. Ignorance was bliss back then; the town dump tended to end up in whatever hole in the ground was available. Usually, such holes in the ground turned out to be among the worst places for toxins from the garbage pile leaking into the groundwater and thence into the local drinking supply—which is why the state decided to start licensing landfills and closing the ones without licenses.

Nowhere are the potential dangers from leaky dumps more acute than on Maine's islands. Geologist Robert Gerber of Freeport, who has investigated the Vinalhaven landfill and numerous other garbage sites around the state, says that most Maine islands are sole-source aquifers. An aquifer is simply an under-



Shipping out white goods, Cliff Island

ground water supply—the goal of every well dug by humanity. An aquifer is considered sole-source when it is the only available supply of at least 50 percent of the drinking water for its community.

“Most of the landfills on islands that I’ve seen are on terrain where there’s very little soil,” Gerber reports. At the Vinalhaven dump, he discovered “bedrock popping out all over the place.”

At a properly sited landfill, there is soil or clay beneath the garbage pile to absorb any nasty stuff that might leach out of the trash and into the ground via rainwater. Without such a protective layer, this noxious liquid—known in the trade as leachate—can flow straight into aquifers that supply drinking water. That’s why “bedrock popping out all over the place” is bad news for Vinalhaven.

More bad news: engineers have dug some test wells around the Vinalhaven dump—and early this year they reported that there has indeed been some leachate seeping into the local groundwater. But things could be worse, according to Town Manager Spear. There was no sign of PCBs or heavy metal, the stuff of which major health hazards are made. And tests on nearby drinking water wells revealed that the leachate has yet to reach anyone’s water supply.

But Vinalhaven’s “leachate plume” will be kind to local wells for only so long, as it creeps inexorably toward paydirt. And the

possibilities for toxins at other dump sites are very real. Anyone who has ever worked at an island boatyard knows that the resins and solvents which make for seaworthiness in watercraft are not good for swimming or breathing. It does not take a suspicious mind to surmise that some of this stuff, to say nothing of the noxious residue of other commercial enterprises, has ended up in an island landfill or two over the years.

There is, of course, a time-honored, sensible, and scientifically acceptable solution to the problem of island garbage: ship it to the mainland. Monhegan, the Cranberry Islands, and Peaks Island have all opted for this solution—and for islands with unlicensed landfills, the export idea can start to look very inevitable. The trouble with the ship-it-out solution is that it is expensive—as in budget-busting. The Camden-Rockport transfer station, which accepts solid waste from Penobscot Bay islands and dispatches it to the PERC incinerator in Orrington, is charging in the neighborhood of \$90 a ton for the privilege. These so-called “tipping fees” have more than doubled in recent years in communities throughout Maine.

For islands, tipping fees are only part of the financial monolith. Offshore communities must bear the cost of transporting the trash via boat to the mainland. Monhegan pays \$250 a trip, plus another

\$150 to truck the stuff from the dock to the transfer station. But all of that can seem terribly abstract to those not schooled in municipal finance. So consider this: barging Vinalhaven’s wretched refuse to the mainland would chomp through fully 25 percent of that island’s \$800,000 annual budget, according to Town Manager Spear.

Numbers like that start to account for why it is an island—Peaks, to be precise—that can boast of what is arguably Maine’s most successful curbside recycling program. Curbside recycling is another expensive garbage solution—greater Portland tried it experimentally and gave it up when the trash authorities figured it was costing in excess of \$100 a ton. But on Peaks, where the sight of the Portland skyline across Casco Bay is sometimes the only reminder that the island is part of Maine’s biggest city, blue recycling bins line every street and the curbside program is well into its third year. The program was a real headline-grabber upon its debut, but lately it has faded from media view—a development that provides a certain smug delight to the program’s founder, Carol Eisenberg.

“What’s nice about it is that it’s quit being news,” Eisenberg says. “We’ve really modified our behavior—we’ve not seen participation drop off.”

Newspaper, tin cans, plastic, and glass—altogether, three quarters of a ton

per week—is travelling via city barge from Peaks to Portland each week. Eisenberg estimates that 12 percent of the island's garbage is now being recycled—undeniably impressive, but still short of the state's official goal of 25 percent recycling by this year. The goal jumps to 50 percent by 1994.

Nevertheless, the fact that Peaks was able to start and maintain such a program is an example of grassroots genius. There was no money in the budget for the blue recycling bins, so Eisenberg convinced beverage companies and recycling firms to pay for the containers in exchange for getting their corporate logos printed on the plastic boxes. There was no municipal person-power available for staffing the program, but islanders voted to close the Peaks transfer station on Monday so the laborer who works there can spend Mondays collecting recyclables instead of trash. And as to consciousness raising, there is no secret to motivating Peaks Islanders to separate their recyclables. "I just kind of post signs down at the store and remind people how well we've been doing," says Eisenberg, whose devotion to island recycling earned her a mainland job as recycling coordinator for the Portland area's quasi-municipal trash agency, Regional Waste Systems.

Skeptics, nay-sayers, and those who don't think Portland is truly part of Maine will grumble that successful recycling on a Portland island does not mean that recycling will help any other island on the Maine coast solve its trash troubles. Those folks are advised to visit Monhegan.

Monhegan residents were in the news back in 1988 for getting in trouble with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA paused from its customary obsessions with hazardous waste sites, destruction of wetlands, noxious factory fumes, and other mega-crimes to declare that the small island 10 miles off Port Clyde could no longer meet its waste disposal needs by simply having everyone on the island throw their garbage into the ocean. "You will not discharge," said EPA's letter to the island's assessors, "or you will be subject to a \$25,000 a day fine." Crisis descended on this tightknit community of 60 year-round residents.

But this did not prove to be the last of the Monhegans. They rang up Will Brinton, president of Woods End Laboratories up in Mount Vernon, Maine. Brinton is the Julia Child of compost, not just in Maine but throughout the world. If there is a recipe to be found that can turn rotting mounds of residue from tourists' clambakes into loamy brown organic fertilizer, Brinton can find it in his lab.

Composting discarded food is no back-to-the-land fantasy for solving Monhegan's garbage problem, since restaurant waste alone accounted for



Crushing glass, Monhegan

nearly 32 percent of the island's waste at the time the crisis hit. We know that because the first thing Brinton did was have everyone on Monhegan sort and weigh their garbage for the entire month of August 1988. Alas, Brinton soon discovered that the bigtime composting facilities for which Woods End Laboratories is famous would not work for Monhegan—owing to an endemic and downright ironic reality about islanders and their trash. Islanders just don't make enough garbage in the winter months—or, to be more technical, the seasonal fluctuation in population inherent in any community that attracts lots of summer visitors makes it impossible for islands to supply the steady stream of waste needed for any major innovative disposal facility to work.

It takes an uncommon kind of consultant to admit that the big-ticket, technologically sophisticated, engineer-driven solution is not the right answer to a problem—and that the solution lies in a small-scale, home-based program. But that's what Brinton told the folks on Monhegan.

Mary Beth Dolan, a member of what she calls Monhegan's "prestigious garbage committee," says her panel and Brinton agreed on a system of backyard composting devices—supplemented by eight dumpsters and a used compacter. The latter piece of hardware lives in Monhegan's "new" garbage facility—a weathered-looking former boat shed on the island wharf. From there Monhegan is compacting and then shipping recycled aluminum, tin, paper, catalogs, plastic, and glass—at half the cost of disposing plain old garbage, which is also squished and then removed to the mainland.

"I have so little waste now, it's wonderful," Dolan reported earlier this year. "I've probably been down once this month with a bag of garbage."

Monhegan got a \$10,000 grant from the Maine Waste Management Agency to

finance the equipment purchases. But another financial aspect of the program—and the one that may go a long way toward motivating those who would rather not tinker with their trash—is the \$2 sticker you have to put on every bag of garbage you throw out in Monhegan. The same sticker system applies to bundles of newspaper, magazines, and cardboard—a reflection of the depressed market nationwide for recycled paper.

Refuseniks do turn up. "Some of the people who come out in the summertime ask why they should have to spend their summer vacation separating things," says Dolan.

"There are always people who, if you came into their kitchen and cleaned out their cat food cans for them, they'd still refuse," agrees Peaks Island recycler Eisenberg. But on Casco Bay, many summer visitors come from communities elsewhere in New England that are already recycling of necessity. And farther Down East, the word from Monhegan is that compliance is excellent, with few people responding to that island's proclamation of mandatory recycling by simply throwing the trash in the woods. "The compliance end of it has been a happy surprise," says First Assessor Bill Boynton.

All along the Maine coast, environmental consciousness—with a little help from economic reality—is forcing islanders to confront the law of entropy and its by-products. Three years ago, Vinalhaven spent \$30,000 to run the island landfill; last year the bill was \$83,000. Island communities don't have to worry about developers, public or private, showing up with plans to build a mountain of toxic incinerator ash—as people in Washington County, Norridgewock, Lebanon, Porter, and a couple dozen other mainland towns have in recent years. But the islands face pressure from the mainland to be more responsible and creative than the rest of Maine in dealing with their solid waste.

"The islanders should be more aggressive than anyone else," says Terry McGovern of the state Department of Environmental Protection. "Their alternatives to that are so much more costly.... If you have backyard composting, and you have metals and glass and plastic separated out, and you have burning of highly flammables, you don't have much left to send to the mainland. What you end up with is everybody having a new part-time job. They might have to work an hour a week." It hardly sounds like entropical paradise—but, though islanders do grumble, they also persevere.

Or, as Peaks Island recycler Carol Eisenberg says, "It's forcing people to become engaged in their trash."

Donald Maurice Kreis is a contributing writer at Casco Bay Weekly, a former staff writer with Maine Times, and a student at the University of Maine School of Law—where he is majoring in garbage.

Fished Out

*Without better science
we will continue to empty
the Gulf of Maine*

SPENCER APOLLONIO

THE GULF OF MAINE and Georges Bank are a great inland sea of near legendary productivity. The ability of this complex marine ecosystem to provide us with an outstanding variety and abundance of seafood is equalled by only a handful of other places on our planet.

But this bounty is being wasted along with hundreds of millions of dollars of New England's wealth and thousands of jobs to our citizens. The problem is complex, but the roots lie in our failure to envision the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank as a marine ecosystem rather than as a collection of individual fisheries to divide up among those who vie over them with each other. This failure is profound and systemic. If we are to rebuild our fisheries into the powerful, sustaining source of wealth they once provided to the region, what is needed is nothing short of a new scientific paradigm to guide management decisions.

Fortunately, principles of ecosystem management are now being applied in a variety of terrestrial settings so that we have some good sources of knowledge which can provide a conceptual framework for the oceans. To begin with, we know that communities of organisms have evolved over time to exert ever greater control over the physical forces operating on the planet's surface. We frequently speak of the fragility of life and the hostility of nature (meaning storms, floods, extremes of temperature, and so on), and yet life itself is a powerful force that tends to shape the physical processes of the earth to its own needs.

There are many familiar examples: oxygen, produced as a by-product of life processes in the sea, altered the earth's original atmosphere to make life possible on previously inhospitable land. Forests modify humidity, light, temperature, and wind velocities within and beneath the tree canopy to create new and diverse ecological niches; kelp beds reduce wave and tidal impacts on rocky shores—certainly one of the most difficult habitats for life—and thereby increase the opportunities for a rich variety of marine organisms. If there were any questions of the significance of this ecological principle, the recent disastrous Philippine floods, which were a direct result of unrestrained deforestation, ought to reinforce this concept. No organism, other than man perhaps, manipulates its environment consciously. But when a community of

**This bounty is
being wasted by our
failure to envision
the Gulf of Maine as
a marine ecosystem
rather than a
collection of
individual fisheries.**



Sorting cod (lower left) and flounder (lower right) from dogfish and skates (center) aboard FV ENDEAVOR, circa 1984

Neal Parent

species coexist in a given environment, the stability of the whole is vastly greater than the sum of its parts. Complex communities of organisms tend to dampen natural fluctuations which often plague simple or monocultural communities and thus tend toward greater predictability. Community structure within most ecosystems, therefore, is a powerful stabilizing force.

This concept—the presence of organizing forces in natural communities—ought to be an integral part of any human effort to manage living resources. Once we understand this phenomenon, in fact, it's difficult to imagine any effective management scheme that does not take it into account.

But this does not always happen. The idea is absent, practically speaking, from all fisheries management anywhere on the globe. While we accept the general notion that Darwinian natu-

ral selection pressures lead toward self-organization of communities and thus toward greater community stability, the reverse is rarely considered: *that mismanagement of resources can lead to the dismemberment of communities, to reduced organization, and to destabilization.* The various worldwide fisheries crises may be a consequence of our conceptual failure to recognize the destabilizing effects of our current management practices.

By fairly general agreement, the commercial fisheries of the Gulf of Maine are in a seriously degraded condition as a result of overfishing of food fish such as cod, haddock, redfish, and flounders. The current decline is reminiscent of the decline of

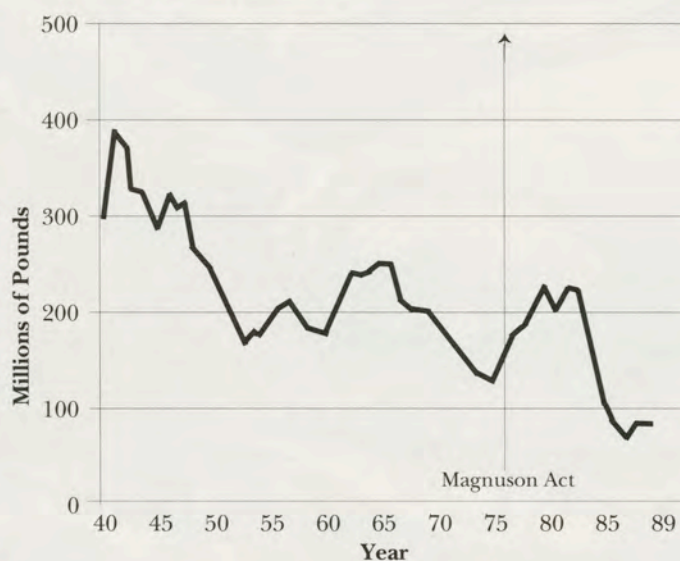
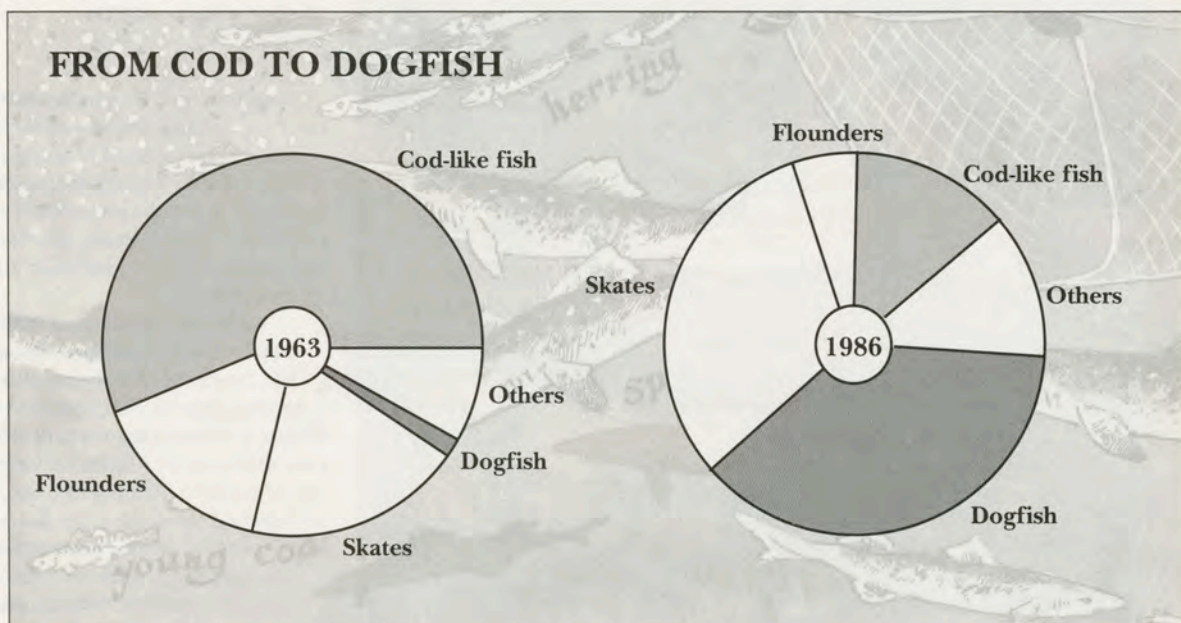
the fisheries in New England between 1965 and 1975 when large foreign fishing fleets decimated fish stocks in the Gulf of Maine and on Georges Bank within a short period of time. Widespread public anger at the over-harvesting of New England's fisheries led in 1976 to the passage of the "200 Mile Limit Law," or the Magnuson Fisheries Conservation and Management Act. The Magnuson Act delegated responsibility for the management of the nation's fisheries within 200 miles of the American coastline to six regional fisheries management councils which are advised by the scientific staff of the National Marine Fisheries Service.

However, there is an important difference in the fisheries crisis created by the foreign fleets two decades ago and the crisis we face today. The foreign fleets fished the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank extremely hard, harvesting on the order of 80 percent of the biomass of this region. But these boats utilized all species they dragged up in their huge nets including spiny dogfish, skates, and other fish considered inedible. Although the biomass of the Gulf and Georges was significantly reduced, it rebounded relatively quickly after the fleets were banned, in part, perhaps because all stocks were similarly reduced, but the community structure remained relatively unaffected.

The effects of overfishing today, however, have much more troubling ecological implications. After 1978 when stocks rebounded, the total biomass of the New England fishery has remained nearly constant, but cod, haddock, hakes, and other food fish have dramatically declined, according to National Marine Fisheries Service data, from 55 percent to 11 percent of the marine system, while dogfish and skates, serious predators on cod and haddock, now comprise 74 percent of the biomass. Although we do not know how serious or irreversible these changes may be, we do know that since the foreigners left, there has certainly been a remarkable change in species composition. If this ecological shift reflects fundamental structural changes in the ecosystem, we do not know where the system is headed, nor where management controls ought to be placed.

It is clear that intensive management efforts over the last 14 years as required by Congress have not been successful. More intensive efforts in Canada have not achieved much greater success; nor so in Europe. We must ask ourselves if the failure of fisheries management across the globe is a consequence of our failure to view fisheries from an ecosystems perspective.

FROM COD TO DOGFISH

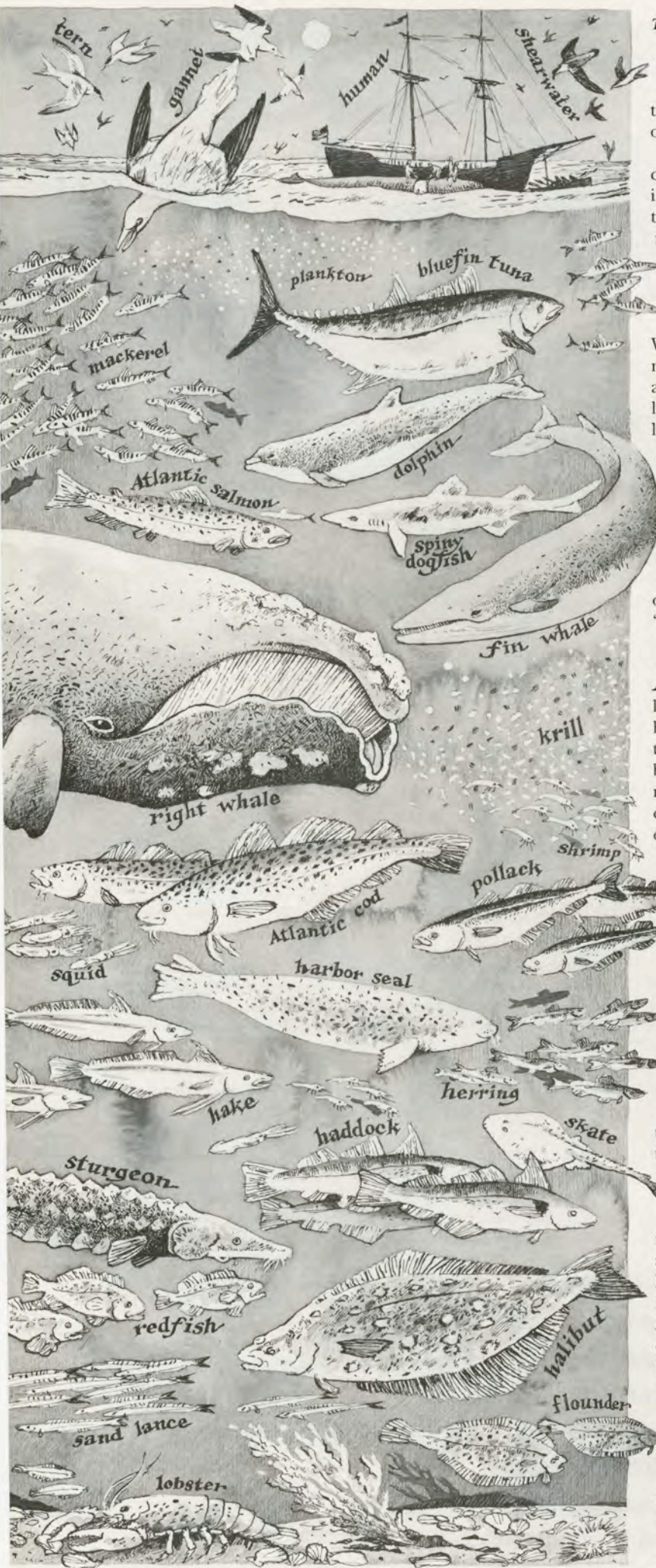


Domestic commercial landings of four major New England groundfish—cod, haddock, yellowtail flounder, and redfish—from 1940 to 1989. The large peak in foreign groundfish landings in the late 1960s and early 1970s is not shown here. The arrow indicates when the Magnuson Act was implemented.

In the debates over how many fish of which species can be safely harvested, there is of course frequent reference to marine ecosystems in a vague sort of way, but seldom has a "marine ecosystem" been defined. It is the absence of that definition that underlies the problem, because the term ecosystem, formally defined, embodies the principles of community organization.

All ecosystems have three major characteristics. First, all have a hierarchical organization. Second, among the lower or less well organized parts of the system there are relatively large variations. For example, plant and animal plankton, low in the hierarchy, exhibit large weekly and seasonal variations. Even so, the overall ecosystem function is sustained by the presence of stabilizing mechanisms. Thus, overall variance is much less than the sum of the variances of the parts. A third characteristic is that large fluctuations of one part of an

The worldwide fisheries crises may be a consequence of our conceptual failure to recognize the destabilizing effects of our current management practices.



ecosystem will be compensated for in other parts, preserving the functions of the whole such that the overall function is more or less independent of the nature of the individual parts.

These fundamental characteristics mean that the whole system contains information which cannot be deduced purely from inspection of the parts. Yet detailed inspection of the parts, not the whole, is the foundation of traditional fisheries science and management.

An understanding of how these principles apply to a particular marine ecosystem must take into account not only the life histories of the constituent species, but also the linkages among species that regulate the functioning of a community. Without elaborating on individual life histories, ecologists recognize different strategies among species on earth. At one extreme are organisms which grow fast, reproduce early (and profligately), but are short-lived. Such species put a great deal of their biological energy into reproductive cycles which may or may not be successful in any given year. Inherently unstable, the species have been called "opportunistic," since they are highly vulnerable to adversity but are, by virtue of their huge reproductive potential, able to exploit favorable opportunities which occur from time to time in their environment and thereby sustain themselves over time. Within the Gulf of Maine, red tide organisms, squid, menhaden, and shrimp are familiar examples of opportunistic species which experience significant yearly "boom and bust" population fluctuations.

At the other extreme are creatures with an "equilibrium" strategy. These species have evolved to be large-bodied, long-lived, and late-reproducing. There is a tendency among them to have fewer young, but to expend more energy in caring for them. They are less susceptible to environmental variations, but because they produce fewer young later in life, they do not recover quickly from serious population depletion. In some cases, they take advantage of the physical environment—unlike opportunistic species that are vulnerable to the environment and simply react to it. Equilibrium species lend predictability to their systems in part by storing nutrients and energy—information—in their large bodies and by transferring them into the future by their longevity. The transmission of information to the future is the essence of predictability. And because many of these species migrate long distances, they have been called time-and space-binders. In a sense, they are integrators of community dynamics over time and space. Examples in our water would be redfish or ocean perch, gannets, and marine mammals. Many of the fish we eat are equilibrium species, and they, rather than opportunistic species, contain the mechanisms that control ecosystems.

Fishing tends to remove these equilibrium species. A system that lacks equilibrium species also lacks stability and predictability, and physical forces may simply overwhelm what must be acknowledged as generally feeble human efforts to manage those systems.

In the Gulf of Maine and on Georges Bank there are 52 commercially harvested species of fish and shellfish, some of which are regulated by management plans approved by the New England Fisheries Management Council based on stock assessments compiled by National Marine Fisheries scientists. Although vast amounts of data are gathered at great effort and expense, fisheries management plans are prepared on a species by species basis. Until we develop ecological models which relate the harvest of individual species to the marine system as a whole, management results will continue to be disappointing at best or destabilizing at worst.

In ecosystem theory we have the framework for understanding interactions of individual components of a complex community—an understanding, incidentally, suggested by commonsense observations from those actually working on the water.

Illustration by Jon Luoma

The Gulf of Maine today illustrating the shift in species composition toward dogfish and skates.

Many lobsterman, for example, believe there is a relationship between the recent record lobster landings and the sharp decline of inshore groundfish stocks which prey on small lobsters. We don't know that answer, but the important point is that we cannot continue to treat marine populations as if they were unrelated and ignore the effects that the depletion of one species may have on the abundance of another and vice versa.

Some argue that to manage fisheries we do not need arcane theories; we just need to control fishing effort. And indeed we do, but ecosystems theory tells us that fish species vary in their responses to effort controls; some species need little control because they are inherently variable or unstable no matter what the managers may attempt to do and therefore effort controls would have little public benefit. Controls are essential for equilibrium species because they are inherently vulnerable to excessive fishing effort and because the stability of the entire community depends upon the abundance of those species.

In short, recognition of ecosystems dynamics is an integral part of effort control; it can tell us where effort controls would be most effectively applied. Management could more productively direct its efforts if it is guided by ecosystems principles.

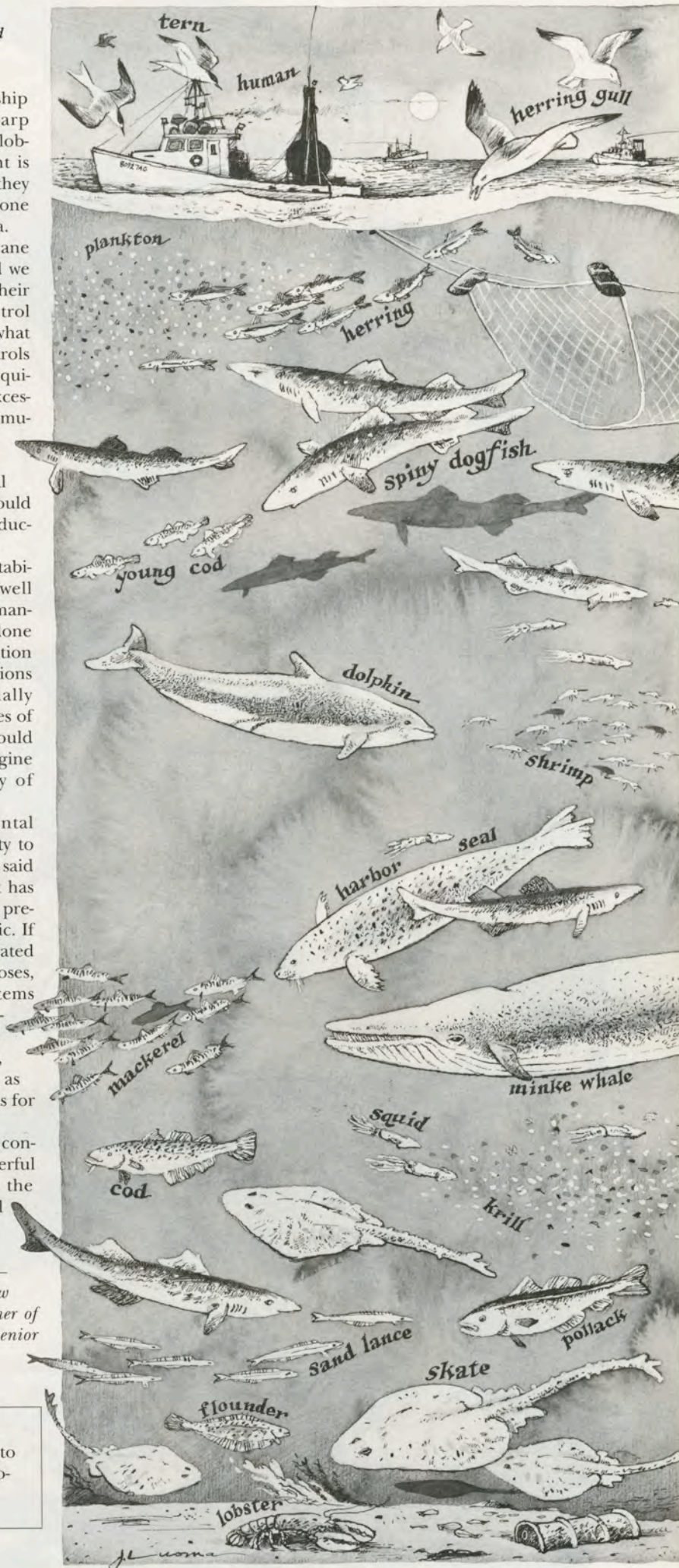
Ecosystems theory also tells us that if we do remove the stabilizing forces—the equilibrium species—the system may well become unmanageable, even with the most strenuous of management programs. To a very considerable extent, we have done just that. In the Gulf of Maine the marine mammal population is much less than it was prior to heavy fishing. The populations of equilibrium species of many seabirds are substantially reduced. And we have greatly reduced those ages and species of marine life—cods, halibuts, tunas, and billfishes—that would lend stability to the system. (By analogy, we might try to imagine the stability of a human community consisting only of teenagers.)

It is likely that only through application of fundamental ecosystems principles can we hope to restore manageability to the ecosystem of the Gulf of Maine. Fisheries science, it was said years ago, suffers from a failure to search for principles. It has frequently been accused of being neither experimental nor predictive, as good science must be, and therefore not scientific. If the concept of ecosystems, formally defined, were incorporated into the practice of fisheries science for management purposes, those criticisms would disappear. The concept of ecosystems presents a testable, refutable hypothesis such as is the foundation of all productive science. Such a hypothesis offers a simplifying and unifying direction to fisheries research, sorely needed now as fisheries crises increase worldwide, as the imperatives of management multiply, and as the budgets for research and management decrease.

The reality that living organisms gradually exert greater control over often hostile nonliving forces of nature is a powerful concept. We have started to incorporate this concept in the management of terrestrial ecosystems. Whether we shall incorporate these principles into the management of marine resources remains to be seen.

Spencer Apollonio was the first executive director of the New England Fisheries Management Council. A former commissioner of Maine's Department of Marine Resources, he is currently a senior research associate at the Island Institute.

The Island Institute has received foundation support to sponsor an international conference of marine ecologists to define the ecosystems principles which need to be incorporated into fisheries management.





LOBSTERMANIA!

Sex, lies, and red tape...

MIKE BROWN

FOR AN ANIMAL with a brain the size of a boiled split pea, the lobster is doing very well. Having existed a few million years and outwitted most humans who have pursued them through the eons, the lobster as a species probably is somewhere on the intelligence scale a notch or two above a college professor. If a lobster had a whole pea brain, humans would be the hunted instead of the hunter.

Consider that lobsters were finished creatures millions of years ago. And despite egregious attempts by man to add to, detract from, and alter it, the lobster is a perfect animal. There are lobster scientists world 'round who still haven't figured out the lobster perfection mold.

Smart lobster scientists know they are defeated by a millenary anatomy before they start. So to survive in their lowly profession, they switch tactics to legislation. By this covert maneuver, they collect great swarms of magnet allies — politicians, legislators, bureaucrats, media mites, grant groupies, foundation philanthropists, old-money dilettantes, and sushi chefs who try to out-hare the lobster turtle as he plugs along through life.

The politicians are the dominant terrorists. They are the ones who make the laws that write the rules that wind the clock that sets the week that Jack can work. Today there are more soldiers and generals in the lobster terrorist's army than there are licensed Maine lobstermen, who number about 8,000 nervous guys wondering where in hell the terrorists will strike next.

Maine lobstermen started losing the battle in 1874. That was the year that the first Maine lobster law went on the slim gum-mint books. It prevented the catching, preserving, selling, or exposing for sale of any lobster less than 10 1/2 inches from head to tail. If rule had stopped right there, the lobsterman might have had a chance. But no, it got progressively worse.

The head-to-tail law was replaced by the carapace statute because biologists couldn't tell one end of a lobster from the other. Switching to carapace shortened the mystery by a half and the biologists seemed able to handle the abridged version. But the legal length of the lobster has been a terrorist target for 118 years. When everything else fails, the lobstercrats generally revert to the carapace flanking maneuver.

Then early lobstercrats discovered sex. This was news to them because, well, hell, all lobsters sure look the same, right? This discovery really changed the lobster business and was the last bung pulled that began to sink the lobsterman's ark. As lobsters were previously just lobsters, they now became two intricate groups to regulate. Boys on one side of the rule table, girls on the other.

Biologists really got into girl lobsters. They began to massage their carapaces and found that girl lobsters have lots and lots of babies. The biologists named this fecundity for lack of a better word and whole regiments of girl lobster fecundities came into being, which led to more regulation. Girl lobsters toting their babies on their tummies were ruled a no-no to hoary-handed lobstermen. Girl lobsters weren't entirely sexually inviolate, though. The crats told lobstermen to cut rusty knife V's into their pieces of tail — sort of a Maine Scarlet V — to let other lobstermen know that this old girl was putting out and off limits to capture. This V-notch branding practice is unique to Maine. Maritime Canada, the world's largest catcher of lobsters, gets a big chuckle out of the Scarlet V. So do all lobstermen west of Maine borders who legally catch and sell the horny Maine V's that habitually migrate via the stars into their waters.

Lobster V-notch laws, however, changed over the years. The crats couldn't make up their mind which part of the tail to notch. First it was left, then middle, then right. Many lobsters are running around the Gulf of Maine looking like they got run over by a crosscut saw. Mighty embarrassing, even for a lobster.

When it came to boy lobsters, just slapping the carapace rule on them was not enough. Biologists looked high and low, east and west, ashore and afloat, for reasons to further regulate boy lobsters. They found an eager ally in the Rockland lobster dealers. These dealers were having a

hard time selling the large lobsters in the lobstermen's boat-run catches. Nobody wants a washtub lobster. Restaurateurs want chicken lobsters that would fit tourist's plates and rip-off menu prices.

And so what happened? The dealers invited a few coastal legislators to a sippin' whiskey buffet at the old Thorndike Hotel in beautiful fishy downtown Rockland where they conned them into introducing a Big Boy Lobster Bill. Then the dealers started a public relations campaign. It was a beaut. According to the lobster gospel as spoken by the dealers of "The Lobster Capital of the World," the big male lobsters were the ocean studs that roamed the briny benthos impregnating every girl lobster they could find. Why, they could knock off—and up—30, 40, maybe 100 girls a night. At 10,000 babies a shot, it didn't take long for the public to look at Big Semen Sam lobster in a different light than plain old washtub fare.

Of course, the Maine legislature, chock-a-block with farmers and slyster lawyers, didn't know what the hell they were voting for. Nor cared if potatoes and probate were spared. The Big Semen Sam lobster bill passed with flying colors. And lobstermen even today hail it as the greatest thing since pop-top beer cans and radar fog slicers.

Again, Maine is unique in the lobstering universe with both the Scarlet V and Big Sam Semen law. Canada decided many decades ago to eat their washtub lobsters. Massachusetts lobstermen can sell them legally to red-faced, pot-bellied Irish bartenders who hold Saturday night boiler-maker raffles. The Boston papers have a couple of stirring stories a year on how some yuppie in L.L. Bean boots and Land's End mock turtle tee saves a jumbo from the washtub by buying all the tickets and then releases the lobster back to the Big Sam sanctuary waters of Maine.

Lobster dealers are even less well understood than lobsters by those stout hearts who have to deal with them. The public doesn't have a clue of what glues together a lobster dealer. Most lobster dealers are born, not made. They either inherited the gift outright or burst forth from a latent gene after generations of bank lending officers, stock brokers, real estate agents, used car salesmen, or lawyers.

Maine lobster dealers have always been here. They pre-date the lobstermen. Before lobsters caught the public fancy, the dealers bought raw skunk furs and beaver pelts from Indians for glass beads and other trinkets. Lobster dealers were here long before the white man. They were the reason that early Maine Indians were called the Red Paint people. Lobster dealers sold tribal medicine men old copper bottom boat paint with no instructions. Not many people know that.

When Eric the Red sailed along the Maine Coast, lobster dealers sold his gullible crew fake Norway mooring balls made from seal bladders from a percentage of their catch. When the Cabots, with and without God, sailed along the Maine coast, lobster dealers sold them very inaccurate charts, pillaged their wrecks, and then had the balls to sell the wet dog survivors an Indian maiden or two to guide them home.

When Maine fishermen realized that people would actually buy and eat those fertilizer bugs found under the shore rocks and started the lobster industry, the lobster dealers were already a hundred years old. They owned all the shore property, wharves, lobster bait, had all the money or owned the banks that did, and had exclusive contracts with every Red Lobster restaurant in the country. They also had invented and perfected a lobster dealer vocabulary that is harder to comprehend than a Wabanaki bedtime story.

A Maine lobster dealer will, for instance, in answering a lobsterman on why the price of lobster fell 50 cents between morning and night mooring time will say, "Whatfuckthinkiam, fedreserve bank?" Or, if a lobsterman's wife wants a two-bit loan to buy some powdered milk for the kiddies and can't wait for dad to get back after being blown nearly to France in a gale, the lobster dealer will answer, "Whatfuckthinkiam, the A&P?"

The strange language and elitist lifestyles of lobster dealers over the years has fanned a suspicious spark among the lobster catching community that it has been had. The dealers, ever publicity shy, have nevertheless countered with a lobster promotion campaign that they fiddled through the Maine legislature last year in the hopes it will rub some crud off their brass bell.

Dealers and their ever-faithful legislators have created a half-million-dollar, state-run lobster promotion outfit (funded from increasing lobstermen's license fees, of course) to introduce lobsters to the public. Only the Hershey bar is lesser known than Maine lobsters. And so the council will buy a lot of slippery rotogravure space, a few shots on Good Morning America and presto, the half-mil sucker promotion accumulates to Canada where the Bluenose lobster industry laughingly fills any extra summer demand for "Maine Lobsters" which the Maine dealers buy at prices under what they pay Maine lobstermen for their catch. Nothing, say the dealers, is too good for their lobstermen friends. And likely what they'll get.

Lobster dealers learned this little marketing trick in the last century by conning the Hudson Bay Company into advertising Maine foxtails to European aristocrats

as New World bonnets. The dealers had first, of course, cornered the market on Maine tail.

Despite all the help from lobster dealers, how else is the lobsterman getting by these days? Well, not too much progress in the gear line. The lobster trap and telephone pole haven't changed design since God made little green apples and alders. One reason is that the rules say a lobsterman must fish a "conventional" trap. This brilliant conservation rule was adopted under the bureaucratic reasoning that a lobster would prefer a non-conventional trap. However, wooden traps have mostly been replaced by wire traps which are made from junk cars, and hemp potwarp has been replaced by nylon which is made from worn-out sweaters and old pantyhose.

In the meantime, lobstermen have gone bonkers over gimmicks, like hydraulic haulers, sounding machines, radar, loran, satellite wherewithal, foam mattress bunks, and plastic boats. Some lobsterboats even carry real food, not Twinkies. Lobstermen also shoulder big boat and pickup truck payments. Bankers get very nervous about their fragile equity, knowing lobstermen are temperamental and just a hand away from a seacock. One lobster catcher couldn't cut his sports pickup payment so he told the bank to come and get it. But he drove it off the wharf first.

Lobstermen keep their public image remarkably well. Every legislative session waits with baited breath for the lobster bills to surface. Lobstermen sort of declare a truce on lobsters and war on politicians. They once descended in convoy on the State House but half of them got busted for OUI on the way home. Nowadays they hire buses, load up on Bud suitcases, Big Macs, KFC Hot Wings and make it a day in the life of the Legislature.

Attempts to organize Maine lobstermen have never been very successful. They cling to their independence like urchins to kelp. Lobster coops and organizations self-destruct eventually but a few remain. Usually because the members can get group health and boat insurance cheaper than as solo sailors. From Lloyds of London, that is.

The public will not run out of lobsters, either. Last year was a 28-million-pound winner with lobstermen averaging about \$2.70 a pound boat run; more for selects, less for culls. They bitched, as always.

But the Maine lobsterman is alive and well, his prey abundant and healthy. Now, if only those lobster dealers would cut some slack.

Native-born Mike Brown is a syndicated columnist and writer ("Kittle Cargoes," The Great Lobster Chase) and longtime observer of the Maine waterfront.

A Family Tradition

*North Haven's J. O. Brown boatyard
is launched on its second century*

JANE DAY



FOR MORE THAN a hundred years now, the J. O. Brown & Son boatyard of North Haven has weathered the pressures of national whim and welfare with the steadiness of its wooden boats riding the rise and fall of the tide.

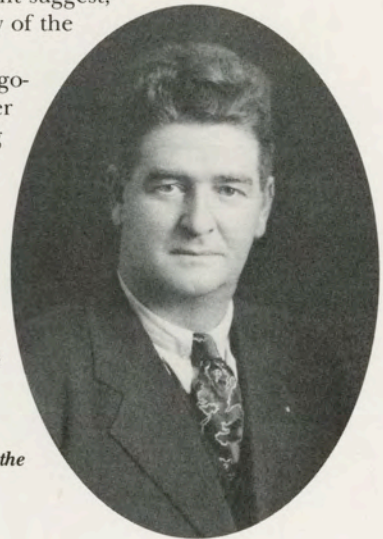
Five generations of Browns have put heart and sweat into the boatbuilding and repair yard since the first James O. (Osman) Brown opened shop on the island in 1888. The yard's random assembly of buildings occupies much of the original site alongside the ferry terminal, its wharf and red frame boatshop a landmark on the Fox Islands Thorofare that threads its way between North Haven and Vinalhaven, its larger "South Island" neighbor.

Although the yard crew may ferry people across the channel 100 times a day in summer—"it takes longer to walk down the dock than go across in the outboard," says Foy Brown—the Thorofare separates a less tangible economic and social character of the two islands. North Haven's year-round population of several hundred triples with the annual return of a well-rooted summer colony, many of whose families date from the earliest settlers. Vinalhaven's greater year-round population is home to an active fishing community that supplies J.O. Brown with a good bit of work in general repairs and new boat construction.

Members of three generations of Browns now account for most of the regular crew, their first names known to fishermen and yachtsmen alike from Beals Island to Boston and beyond. James E. (Jim) Brown, 75, grandson of the founder and now patriarch of the family, lives in the house his grandfather built close by the yard. He took over from his father Foy, W., in 1940 and ran the yard until recently with his sons Foy W., 45, who now heads the operation, and James O., 47, known to the family as "Oz"; together with Foy's son, Foy E., 27. As the alternating succession of names might suggest, tradition runs strong in the Brown family as well as in the quality of the boats they build.

A major asset in J.O. Brown's historic operation has been its ongoing ability to buck a tide that would have defeated many another boatyard. As a business, it has the dubious advantage of being located an hour's ferry run off the mainland. More remarkable still, the Browns build only in wood, traditional carvel-planked cedar over oak, one of few boatyards on the coast that has held out successfully against fiberglass or epoxy construction.

The very nature of an island operation requires stocking a good supply of basic materials. Getting the unexpected replacement part involves phoning in the order, then depending on the mainland supplier—and more often a taxi—to deliver to the next ferry.



Above: founding father James O. Brown. Right: son Foy W. Brown who headed the operation until 1940.



The crew, circa 1922

Photographs courtesy of Brown family and North Haven Historical Society

The yard's business traditionally comes by word of mouth. "It's nice out here," says Foy, "but if someone doesn't know about you, you're hard to find. On the mainland you can drive up the coast and find a boatyard down the road." In many cases, the J.O. Brown boats themselves are their best advertisement. Foy's own 34-foot lobster boat CENTERFOLD—"a wicked good boat" by his own admission—led to a succession of orders from a Massachusetts fisherman who saw it in one of the Stonington lobsterboat races.

The years have brought a lot of changes in the boatbuilding and repair business, some more questionable than others. Take boat lumber, says Foy: "The price is up and the quality is down." He has noticed a steady decline in the quality of boat lumber, particularly in the past 15 years, but it still hasn't dampened his preference for wood as a building material. As for island delivery: "It doesn't make any difference whether you're here or there; you've still got to get it ordered special. Nobody has that kind of stuff lying around." Foy has a supplier who cuts the timber, mills it, and delivers by truck to the island. But now he prefers to pick it out himself. "We don't skimp on

wood," he says, adding that the yard's outstanding feature is a "good heavy boat, built to last a long time."

Since its beginning in 1888, the J. O. Brown yard has shown a marked ability to roll with the changing demands of customers. At first the yard built boats for local fishermen, and in the years before the gasoline engine, sailboats in the 30- to 40-foot range to meet the demand of an affluent summer population. It was not unusual in those days to have 12 or 15 men working—up to 20 some winters. With the advent of power, the yard built a number of sportfishing boats as well as the sturdy vessels favored by area lobstermen and scallopers. And in deference to the proliferation of fiberglass boats, the yard not only stores and repairs them, but has finished off a number of fiberglass hulls.

The Browns design most of the boats they build. Jim starts with a half model—"My father built that way and my grandfather." He makes a distinction in the construction of what he terms the "Maine lobsterboat hull" between the "built-down" hull he builds and the "dead-wood" or skeg type favored by builders in

Jonesport and Beals Island. "In a built-down boat, you plank clear down. They hold up better, and they've got more buoyancy. But the deadwood boat will drive easy. And those fellas down Beals Island are after speed.

"We do the whole thing from start to finish—caulking, rigging. When I grew up it was power boats. I don't sail. I've rigged 'em and hauled 'em and fixed 'em, but I never sailed 'em."

Most of the boats built in Jim's time were powerboats for fishing and yachting. One of the largest was the 43-foot Pow-Wow, which came off the ways about 30 years ago for use as a fishing party boat. She's had a couple owners since, but was still in good shape when she came by a couple years ago. The yard has built boats for owners largely in New England and the mid-Atlantic states, and once shipped a 22-foot sailboat to a customer in Puerto Rico.

But perhaps J.O. Brown is best known for the 14-foot 4-inch gaff-rigged North Haven Dinghy, the racing class sailboat built in the yard's first years, primarily for the island's summer colony. Demand for this round-bottomed, centerboard boat grew out of the island yacht skippers' hankering for a small racing class boat to replace the yacht tenders they had been using. Every winter for decades, the Browns built several of these now classic dinghies that marked their 100th anniversary a few years ago. But they are no longer built of wood. Dinghy racing members had molds made and for the past 10 years or so, all the North Haven dinghies have been built of fiberglass at another yard.

The major part of the present J.O. Brown operation is boat repairs and storage. Early this year, several small boats were in various stages of repair, including a 17-foot fiberglass Crownshield knock-about. The main shop of the lofty 90-foot by 40-foot building—originally a canning factory—can handle a boat up to 45 feet. Rows of wooden and aluminum masts line the rafters overhead. A workbench along one wall, its deep drawers worn with decades of use, is laden with hand tools and the usual boatshop collection of parts and might-come-in-handies. "The day after I get rid of something, I'll need it," says Foy.

It's usually December before all the boats are hauled and the Browns settle down to building. It was mid-January before they could get materials for a lobsterboat for one Vinalhaven fisherman—red oak for the keel, white oak for stem and timbers, cedar for planking. When she was launched seven months later, she was fully equipped, ready to go lobstering the next day. Boats are launched at high tide from the forward end of the shop which is located right over the ways.

Although the yard hasn't had a new boat to build this past winter or the one



Fourth generation namesake Foy W. Brown presently heads the operation.

before, its island location may have isolated the J.O. Brown yard from the brunt of recession that has gripped the rest of the country. "North Haven has been fairly recession-proof," says Foy. "There'll be boats here. The Fox Islands Thorofare is Route One as far as boats are concerned. Anybody who leaves Boston headed east, 99 percent of 'em come through here. In the last few years, we see more boats, more boats, more boats. Go to Massachusetts in summertime—the harbors are full. There's no place else for 'em to go but this way. This past summer, they were fighting to get into our float, yelling at each other."

J.O. Brown is in the business of serving these people, pleasure boaters and working fishermen alike. But Foy acknowledges that many who come to the island to get away from it all aren't one bit happy about the "crazy madhouse" at the waterfront in the height of the summer. The yard supplies all the gas for boats and cars on the island. On Sunday mornings the dock swarms with boat owners buying ice and gassing up for a day's outing.

Jim Brown remembers that the first outboard he ever saw was in the late 1920s or early 30s. But the increase in the numbers of outboard engines in the last 10 to 15 years, he says, accounts for one of the most dramatic changes he has seen in the business. "We used to store a dozen motors; now we store 50 to 75 anywhere from 4 h.p. to 150 to 200 h.p."

Boat storage has grown by leaps and bounds as well. Nowadays the yard handles some 100 to 150 boats each winter, most of them fiberglass. The Browns have an upper yard a short distance from the wharf where they haul about 100 boats for winter storage on a 14-ton hydraulic trailer—a recent acquisition—pulled by an old army weapons carrier. Other boats are stored in and around buildings at the yard.

For years after the boatyard began, the crew hauled all the boats with a windlass. Jim remembers it well. "We called it a crab. It usually took two men to haul a boat, but I've seen five or six men on it, if it was a heavy boat. The first thing I did when I got out of the service was put in a railway. We got the Travelift in '72 or '74. That made a big difference in time."

One day this past winter as Foy surveyed the array of boats in the upper yard, their blue plastic covers bright against the snow-covered field, his mind was on spring. "I hope they all don't want 'em by Memorial Day. In summer, by the time we get these boats overboard, it's time to haul 'em back. Plus set all the floats and moorings. And a lot of these cottages have boathouses and caretakers. We help them move their boats around and help move their moorings and floats. The main thing is to have something done when somebody wants it. If they come down for two weeks' vacation and find their boat all ripped apart, they are not happy."

When he was little more than toddler, Foy would follow his father around the yard all day all summer long. He started working at the yard part time and during

Peter Ralston (3)



Yet another launching, 1989

summers while he was in school, and full-time after he graduated in 1964. Labor has never been a serious problem at the Brown yard. Besides Foy, father Jim, brother "Oz," young Foy—and two or three island boatbuilders—other family members round out the labor crew. Ivaloo Brown Patrick, Jim's sister, served as bookkeeper most of her life until 1988, when Foy's sister, Kim Alexander, took over the duty. In summer his daughter Karen helps

in the yard. "She and young Foy can put varnish on better than I can." His brother's daughter Rachel also helps out in summer. Foy's wife Viola works at Brown's Coal Wharf, the restaurant the family opened in a building they bought a few years ago next to their property on the waterfront. The only restaurant on the island, it is open for dinner in the summer and seats 50.

The CENTERFOLD, a 34-foot lobster boat—with a 6-71 Detroit Diesel—which he built for himself and launched in 1982, is his chief source of pleasure and relaxation. He's won lobster boat races with her, and two years running he and young Foy took first in the trap-hauling contest, an exercise that begins with a race from the dock to boat to traps, hauling, baiting, and back. His best time: two-and-a-half minutes. Foy regularly fishes about 100 traps as soon as he can get away from the shop in summer 'til dark. "You can be exhausted, but you get out there and just let all this stuff in your mind go. It's like starting fresh."

The first James O. Brown, known as Ozzie, was the son of a fisherman who died aboard a mackerel seiner off Prince Edward Island. When he was a young man, Ozzie went over to Camden and worked in the shipyard to learn the trade, then returned to the island and started the boatyard. At the urging of Dr. Charles G. Weld, forebear of the Pingree family, he rented a small fish house and began to build boats. It was in that fish house that the first North Haven Dinghies, reputedly the oldest continuously raced one-design sailboats in North America, were built, having been designed and commissioned by Dr. Weld. Ozzie took apparent pleasure in his craft and over a 15-year period built a planked-hull sailing model of a four-masted schooner, now housed in a glass case in the boatshop. When he died in 1927, the business fell to his son Foy W., Jim's father.

Jim started working at the yard summers during high school and went to work fulltime after he got through. He worked off-island just once. When the yard was slack one winter, he went to Massachusetts and worked for a house contractor. Soon after, his father died and Jim came home to take over. That was 1940. For the next 45 years or more, Jim ran the yard.

The only time work at J.O. Brown came to a halt in its century-long history was during World War II, when Jim was in the navy in the Pacific. All the men were away or at work in shipyards with defense contracts. But Carl Bunker, a longtime member of the yard crew, returned a year or so before the war ended and ran the shop, along with Ivaloo, until Jim got home. He still puts in the 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. day with the rest of the crew, plus Saturdays, which is customary for family members. As though driven by habit, he arrives even earlier on winter mornings to help get the fire going in the shop stove.

Ask Jim if he favors a particular boat of all he's built and he names the one he built in 1952 for his own pleasure—the TWO SONS. "When I got out of the service we had the J.O. that we hauled passengers in, a 42-footer. If I wanted to go anywhere, the boat was busy. I decided if I wanted to go somewhere, I'd build one for myself. Took me three years to get her overboard—nights, Saturdays, Sundays." She's a regular lobsterboat type, 36 feet long. Jim goes scalloping in her on winter weekends, "if we don't don't have too much to do," and on summer Sundays he likes to take the family out to picnic on one of the islands.

"Building a new boat is more interesting," says Jim. "You can come out here and work on some old boat and fix it up for somebody, and they will pay you and all that. But with a new boat, you start right from scratch and when you get done, you can stand back and see what you've done."

Now into its second century, the family business spawned by Ozzie Brown has developed into a community-oriented service as well. "If someone on the island wants something," says Foy, "and they don't have a cent to their name, they can come down and get it anyway. If they want to come down and use the tools, they can. If they want to put their vehicle in here and work on it and we aren't using the space, they can. If somebody wants something in the middle of the night, we get it for them."

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



Centennial party, 1988



Duryea's office, Stonington

Belonging

Portraits of Island Community

BY JEFF DWORSKY AND CHELLIE PINGREE

This special Folio addition to *Island Journal* is made possible by a generous grant from the Charles Engelhard Foundation.

Jeff Dworsky:
Writing with Light

BY PHILIP BOOTH

PHOTOGRAPHY IS, literally, writing with light. Most of the photographs in this remarkable folio were written with winter light, in the bare season when island life is in no way trespassed on by tourists or pleasure boats. As any tourist knows, photography is in many ways the most literal of the arts: what the lens of your camera sees when you press its shutter to let light write on the film is what you get back from the photolab. What comes back to you from the lab is all too seldom what your mind's eye, looking through the viewfinder, imagined it saw. What you sensed just before you pressed camera to cheek may well have been a profound view of nature or human nature, but its profundity is lost if you never quite found it in the finder.

As his photographs clearly prove, Jeff Dworsky's eye is used to seeing through a viewfinder. Seeing, not merely looking. Whether he's carrying a camera or not, his eye observes, his mind fills with insight, his heart responds—here to the available light of humanity itself—with an acuity that no autofocus or exposuremeter can measure. With camera or without, he sees potential photographs; when he has camera in hand he has already readied himself to record what Henri Cartier-Bresson called “the decisive moment,” that fraction-of-a-second when what is vital in the viewfinder is fully self-illuminating.

No one who hasn't weathered a whole year on an offshore Maine island could possibly have made these photographs. No one who hasn't lived long on islands can come close to knowing the terms of island life, especially the isolation that December darkness brings home, and the weight and torque and blindness of midwinter storms. First as a clamdigger, later lobstering with an outboard, going sternman on a scalloper, and then fishing the first boat he built (under Arno Day's sharp eye), Jeff Dworsky has worked the tides in all seasons, and has earned his own local knowledge of ledges not marked on any chart, and weathers NOAA never predicted. For some 15 years he has brought his catch home to Deer Isle, York Island, and now Isle au Haut.

From just such various islands, all within seven miles of each other, Jeff Dworsky's camerawork demonstrably

brings home to mainlanders, no matter how far inland, the harsh immediacies of everyday island life. His lens shows what the instant of his shutter's opening tells: the intense aloneness that, paradoxically, makes for a community bound—not without twisting and tugging—by necessity. Only an island community grown to respect an-islander-by-choice would allow his camera to tell the hard and redeeming truths of island life; only an islander grown all-but-native could know to open his camera in non-invasive ways to the faces and lives of the people he lives and works with, and cares about deeply.

Even in summer, islanders are, by self-definition, a breed apart. And proud of it. Given what passes for civilization on the mainland, it's small wonder that the wife of a “well-spoken” lobsterman “met by chance on Swan's Island,” once softly told a California poet, “What I like more than anything is to visit other islands.” Islanders value their island values, their mostly unspoken codes, with a gentleness that is equalled only by the violence of island fishermen settling the constant small wars of their territorial rights to drag for scallops or set lobstertraps where their fathers fished before them. Whether islander by birth, or islander by being loner or in love, any islander instinctively knows that she or he is the equal of every other islander; and more-than-equal to mainlanders, especially those from away who flaunt dollars or try to talk as if they could speak the rhythms and words of island speech. Maine islanders are most of all equal not only to each other,



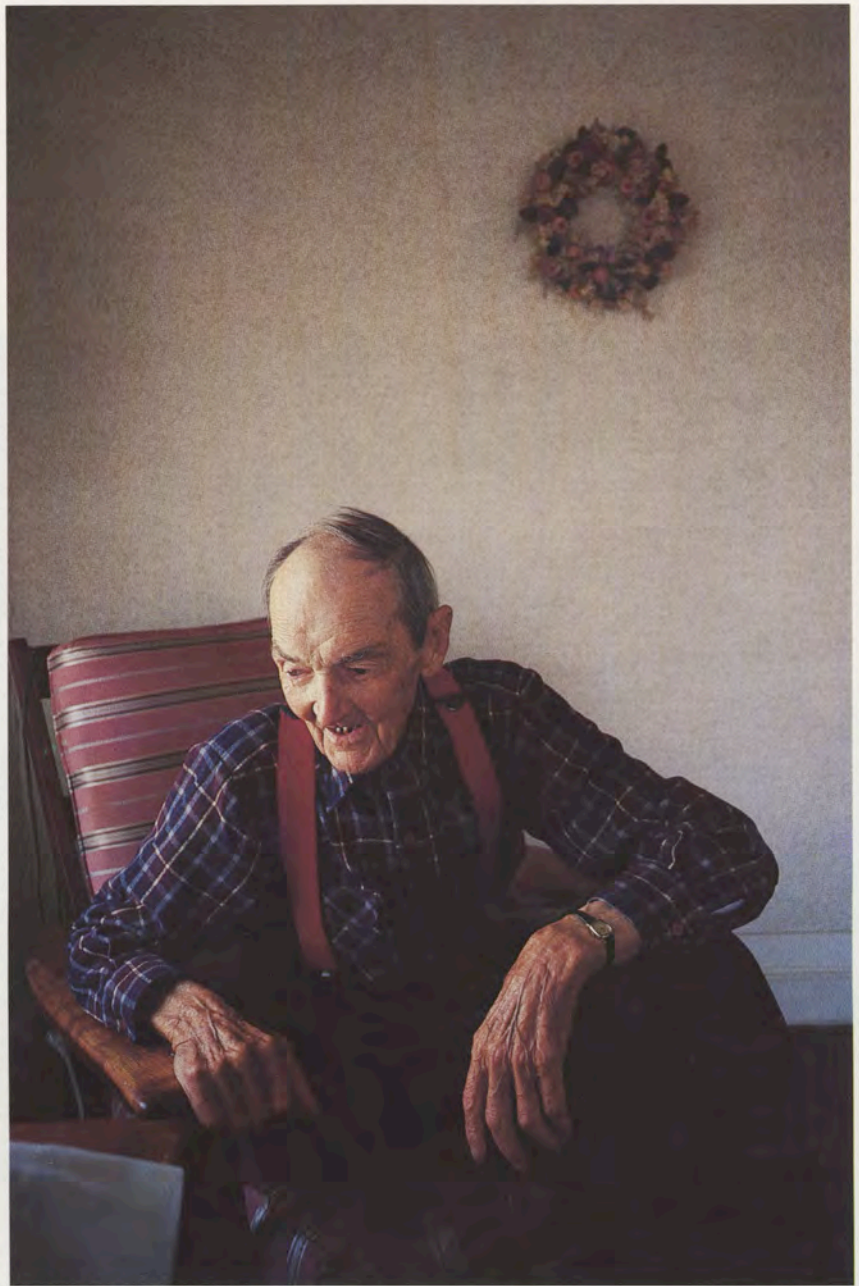
Bernadine Barter, Isle au Haut

but to the inescapable fact of being islanders. No matter what modern worldliness radios and TV dishes bring to an island, its year-round inhabitants incomparably realize what it means to root one's life on a low mountain-top shaped, constricted, and surrounded, by the sea. Lifelong islanders, if faced with such dying as still gives them marginal choice, more often than not refuse to be moved to hospitals on the mainland: they know without doubt in their inmost selves that they want to die where they were born to live.

Living surrounded by tides, and working those tides for a living, is the life Jeff Dworsky lives and photographs. His photographs are in many ways the color-equivalents of the black-and-whites John de Visser made of fishermen and fisher-families on the South Coast of Newfoundland 30 years ago, images that were altogether co-equal with the text of Farley Mowatt's *This Rock Within the Sea: A Heritage Lost*. Like de Visser's photographs, Dworsky's refuse to sentimentalize, or impose on, the lives that each photograph frames. Like de Visser, Dworsky photographs the human resilience of people who inhabit a rock within the sea; but Dworsky's viewpoint is more surely his own. Mowatt painfully writes of discovering "a heritage lost" in the process of his writing and of de Visser's camera work. Jeff Dworsky similarly documents a heritage, but precisely because he is part of that heritage, his photographs argue the more strongly for its survival. They particularly challenge the expensive assumptions many of us have about living a life that appears to insulate us from the existential realities that islanders daily confront.

Jeff Dworsky's eye cares little for mere appearance. It cares duly for handsaw, hammer, potwarp, engine oil, starting-fluid, and boat paint. It cares passionately for human beings who know they live on one of this island world's smaller islands, islands where life's daily terms are daily visible. Notably visible in all but a few of these photographs is the window through which islanders forever look out, in whatever weather, to check the weather and, if it is visible, to see the sea. In winter's hardest weathers they can barely leave the house, much less the island. With so much beyond all control beyond them, generation after generation of islanders know that if they're to winter out, to make it over the old March hill, they must snug down in their kitchens, their general store, stay close to woodshed, workbench and woodstove. And, without choice, live close to each other.

Inhabiting such necessity, Jeff Dworsky's camera eye focuses most acutely on the basics of island life: work,



"Sheet" MacDonald, *Isle au Haut*

love, joy, anguish, prayer, and play; on how such basics are equally shared, whether in ways lonely or communal, by women, men, children, of age after age after age. His photographs show, tellingly, how faces feel. And how, in every aspect of island experience, hands work and express. How, in extreme human weathers, hands cover face.

Jeff Dworsky has, in an island context, made interior photographs which tell, as quietly as a Chekhov story might, how we humans survive in our most interior selves. To refamiliarize ourselves with the islanders of these photographs is to review isolated aspects of our own lives, to find anew the essential community to which we inescapably belong.

Philip Booth is a poet from Castine, Maine. His most recent volume, Selves, was published by Penguin Books in 1991. A longtime friend of the Island Institute, Booth was interviewed in the 1988 Island Journal, and his poems have graced several issues.



"Punk" Mitchell's family, Stonington



Steve and Edna Gray, Stonington

“No one who hasn’t lived long on islands
can come close to knowing the terms of island life,
especially the isolation that December darkness brings home...”



Steve Gray



"Punk" Mitchell's house



Wallace's yard, Stonington



First trap, Stonington

“His lens shows the intense aloneness that, paradoxically, makes for a community bound—not without twisting and tugging—by necessity.”



Fishermen's Ball, Stonington



On the waterfront, Stonington

“He has made interior photographs which tell, quietly,
how we humans survive in our interior selves.”



Last boat in, Matinicus



Wedding day, Stonington

“...they live on one of this island world’s smaller islands,
islands where life’s daily terms are daily visible.
Notably visible is the window through which
islanders forever look out.”



Haley Steele at Duryea's

"A PLACE SLOWLY



Heath Steele, with his father at Duryea's

“A PLACE SLOWLY EARNED...”

CHELLIE PINGREE

IN 1971 I STEPPED OFF a ferry and was on an island. A Minnesota girl, all of 17 years old, I had a long blond braid, wire rim glasses, and a metal framed backpack containing all my earthly possessions. I had come to visit Charlie, a friend I'd met through a school program, who had taken up residence in an abandoned family cabin at the end of a mile-long dirt road. There was no running water, no electricity, and no TV. Armed with *Living the Good Life* by Helen and Scott Nearing, we wanted to go back to the land. During the summer we were surrounded by our friends from away who drifted through, shared our ritual diet of soybeans and brown rice, and talked about subsistence farming and forming an “alternative community.” By fall they were gone, but I never left.

Charlie was from a summer family with a 100-year history and when he didn't go home at the end of the season, people were confused. Although there were two or three families we visited sometimes, people rarely spoke to us in the store or asked us questions in the post office. We naively thought we were unnoticed, and it surprised us when we heard the rumor that we were spies for the summer people.

Charlie was able to find a job with the road contractor, but there were no jobs for me, so I stayed home making candles for a mainland craft store. During my second winter, a creeping need to be involved drove me to ask if I could volunteer at the school. The kindergarten teacher “from away” was pleased to have my offer of help, and the principal had only to propose it to the school board for approval.

I will never forget the principal's expression when he came in and sat next to the woodstove in our two-room cabin. Reluctantly he told me there was a problem: the board had unanimously voted not to allow me in the school. He quoted one of the board members: “The girl who drives that red pickup truck is not coming in our school.”



At the time I felt only bewilderment at these feelings of animosity from people I didn't even know. What I didn't understand was that upon stepping onto the island I had entered a community. There were standards and requirements, unconsciously crafted by a community to ensure its longevity and stability. I hadn't even known what a community was, but I spent the next 20 years learning—and probably will never stop.

We moved away for three years, and in the separation people seemed to warm to us a little. When we returned for summer visits, people would ask us when we were moving back. Although we fully intended to start a new life on the mainland—we even built ourselves a house there—the pull of the island was strong. We wanted to come back. We did—married, with our first child, armed with a college education and vocational training—determined to fit in.

We chose work that suited island life: I ran a farm (cows, chickens, sheep, and vegetables), and Charlie built boats. In the winter, I started an egg delivery route, dropping by my customers' houses once a week. I came in through their kitchen doors and was occasionally asked to sit at their well-scrubbed or cluttered tables and drink coffee. Talking about the small things that fill our lives, I gradually began to know my neighbors and find out who was in this community. I heard about their mother's health, how to cook salt fish, who was related to whom. Then I went home and scrubbed my table, did my chores, and retold the stories to Charlie.

Every day people dropped by to pick up their glass jugs full of rich yellow milk layered into skim and cream. I invited them into my kitchen and was honored if they accepted. I poured them coffee, proud of the clean glass milk jugs draining in the sink, and I'd ask them questions until they were tired. Gardening was a favorite topic of conversation: I learned to start my tomatoes on town meeting day, not to touch my beans after a rain, and how to fool the slugs. People loaned me their butter molds and told me how their mother got the last drop of buttermilk out of the rich yellow grease. I learned to quilt, I learned to knit. Before long I was the mother of two babies, then three. Sometimes a few other young mothers would come by, and we'd watch each other's children and exchange stories, wondering if we were good mothers. Older women would drop by too; they told me about rubbing vodka into a child's emerging tooth, staying away from vaseline for diaper rash, and rubbing Avon cremes into my own face to postpone the wrinkles that were sure to come.

In July and August I sold vegetables to the summer people on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from the shed attached to my house. Sometimes a customer showed up on a Saturday, pleading for tomatoes for a critical dinner party, or called long after I'd gone to



Illustrations by Jon Luoma

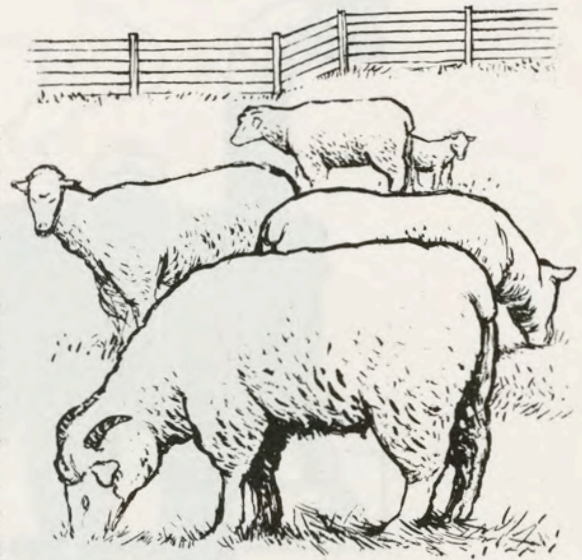
sleep, asking me to save the highly desired but rationed sweet corn for her the next morning. I began to understand the price my island neighbors paid to earn their living. Summer exhausted everyone; winter was when the community reconnected.

We raised pigs and they escaped from every pen and we chased them through our muddy pond and neighbors' fields. We bred a sow once, who rested on the back seat of my VW van as a friend and I took her on the ferry to meet her mainland mate. The sow returned a month later and got larger by the day. Shortly before the piglets were due, she became hopelessly lame. When no drugs or treatments would bring her back to her feet, we consulted the man in town who knew the most about animals—the chairman of the school board. He came over and shot her. Then he showed us how to rub her with tar and hoist her with the tractor bucket to dip her body in boiling water, so that we could scrape her hair off the hot skin. Finally we cut a slit down her middle and stood back while her hot insides and never-to-breathe piglets tumbled out.

We turned to him for advice on other occasions after that—how to hobble a cow who wouldn't keep her foot out of the milk bucket, how to treat a calf with diarrhea. I hadn't become an islander, but I was learning to ask questions.

People helped us with haying and we ate a big meal together when it was done. Friends came over when we plucked chickens or froze sweet corn and we shared the results. The more people learned about us, the more often they would speak to us on the long ferry rides, ask us along on Sunday picnics, invite us over for dinner. I learned a paradox of island life: to be accepted, or even given your privacy, you had to let people know a little about who you were. They had to know who they were allowing to join the community, whether you wanted to participate or not.

We began to go to meetings where the community plotted its course and made everyday decisions—town meetings where salaries were set for road crew workers and fire trucks were talked about and the recreation council defended the money for an outdoor basketball court; school board meetings where parents disagreed with teachers or principals and told them what they thought. At first I was silent, rehearsing the words in my head before I spoke, even though they were mild. Eventually I even learned to say things that others would disagree with, about taxes or schools or the ferry schedule. I learned that people could get angry at me in a meeting and the next day in the store would ask how my wood was holding up this winter or whether I would be plowing gardens in the spring. I learned that on an island people depend on each other too much to hold grudges over any but the most important disagreements.

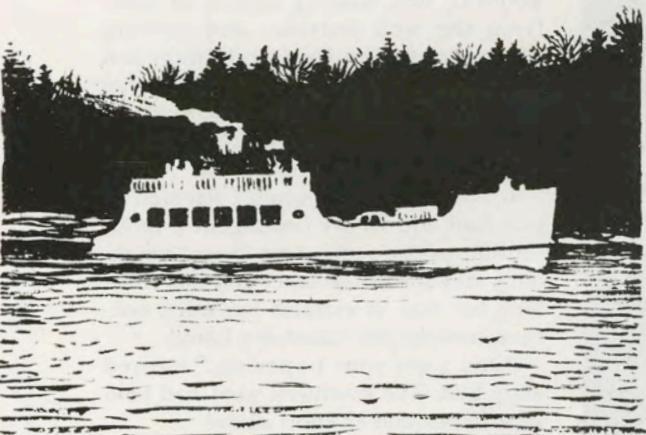


I rode the ferry, never knowing who I was going to sit next to. Often I found myself in conversations with people who had disagreed with an article I'd written for the local newspaper or who didn't like me because I was from away. We'd end up talking about which potholes in the road were hardest to avoid or how many trees were lost in the last storm or maybe how sad it was to have a relative die. As the boat docked, we'd both be thinking about our commonalities.

Sometimes the ride was rough. If there were children along, mothers would shuffle through their canvas bags looking for something for their children to get sick in. If the mother was sick, someone else would comfort the child while she went out on deck for fresh air. On one gray day, a north-east wind was building at boat time. The captain hesitated before starting the engines for home, but once the ferry was loaded, he set her out to test the waters and then he just kept going. The boat pitched and trembled in spite of the captain's best efforts to tackle each wave gently. An older woman sitting on a hard plastic seat was nervous, and everyone's attention gradually focused on her. The cabin, with seats for 30, became cozy and enclosed us all tightly as we huddled in the back. People told stories about other storm crossings and joked with her. A young man whom I had watched grow up leaped up to share her seat, teasing her not to tell his wife. She laughed and blushed and for a moment didn't think about the next shudder and crash that was soon to come. It was almost an embrace—a small, random group of community members helping her through the ride and giving us all comfort.

I was two seats ahead of the old woman. In the seat between us was her daughter, a middle-aged woman, once a member of the school board that kept me out. She was now my valued friend. I had shared many ferry conversations with her and listened to her wisdom about children, the community, and the school board, of which I was now the chairperson. It had taken 20 years, but in spite of how little I knew when I made that first step, I was now part of this random group. I had never created the alternative community of chosen peers that my friends and I had once discussed. But here on an island, I had come to belong.

Chellie Pingree is owner of North Island Designs, an island mail order company, and is active in local politics.



SOLSTICE ON BAKER'S ISLAND

*'Then' and 'now' are not so far apart
when you're weathered in*

ARN H. PEARSON AND MARY LOU WENDELL

December 21, 1989. Arn:

Our first Winter Solstice on Baker's Island started like every other day that December—bitter cold, windy, and starkly beautiful. Scraping the frost from our bedroom window, I took a quick look at the miles of whitecaps and seamoke separating us from the mountains of Acadia, then hurried downstairs to revive the night's embers in our two wood stoves and fix a cup of coffee for Mary Lou.

I was disappointed with the harsh weather. We had invited friends from Islesford to spend the solstice with us, but no one in their right mind would come on a day like today. We would miss the company. A week had gone by since we made our last supply run to the mainland, and several more would pass before we left our island again.

Still, Baker's looked glorious in her coat of fresh snow, and we settled easily back into our winter routine: stoking the stoves with spruce logs dragged out of the woods by sled, hauling buckets of water from the well outside, and making Christmas presents for far-off nieces and nephews. Mary Lou sat at the kitchen table most of the day hand sewing dolls, while I carved a block print of the northern lights over Cadillac mountain.

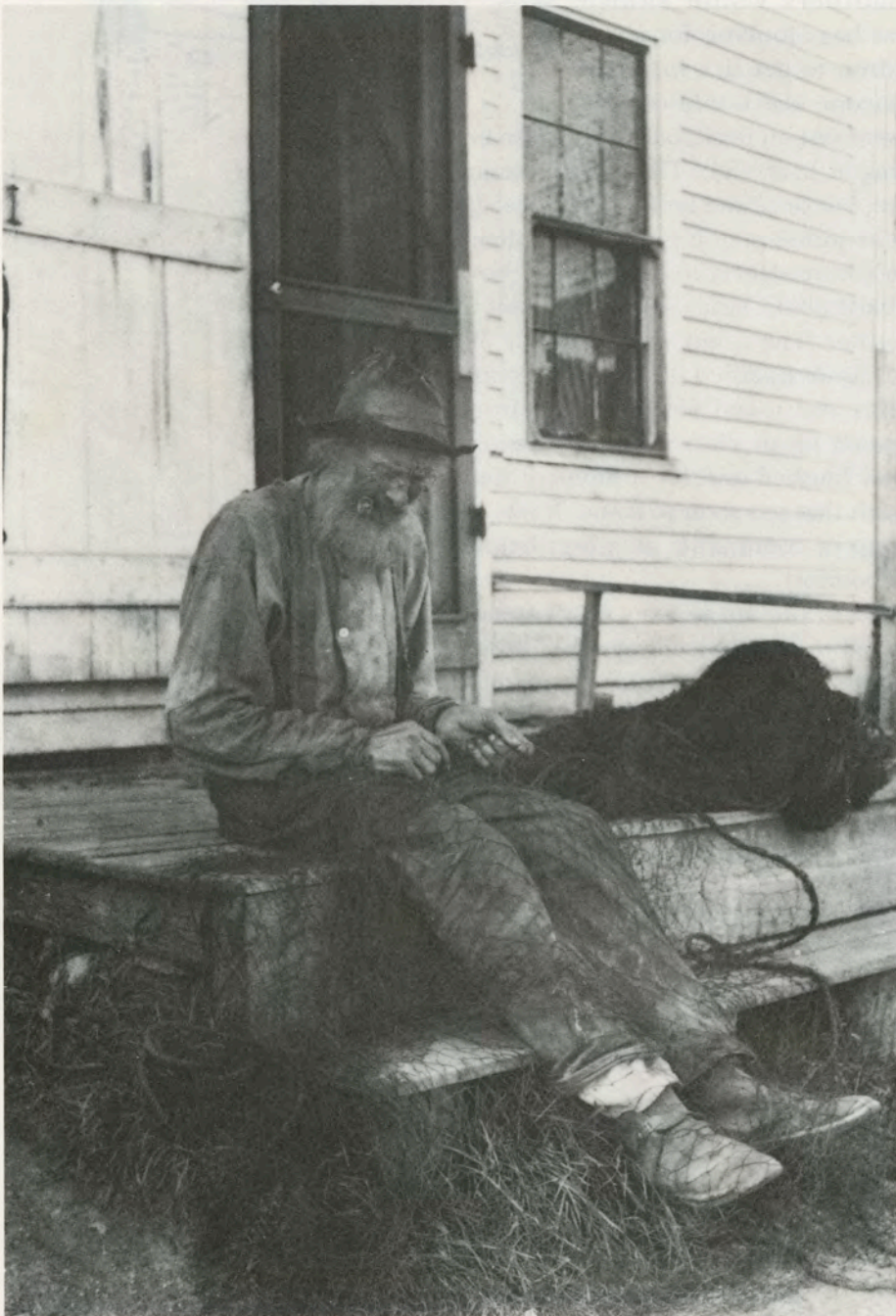
It was nearly dusk when I decided to give Gail and Henry Grandgent a shout on the marine radio. Our closest neighbors, they live at the other end of a mile-long bar that, at extreme low tides, connects us with Little Cranberry Island.

"Don't get your hopes up," warned Mary Lou. The northwest wind had held steady at around 25 knots all day.

Henry answered. "We'll be there in an hour," he said.

Their lobster boat was hauled up for repairs, and we thought he was stringing us along. But he was serious. They had picked up their rowboat from the harbor, brought it down to the bar, and were busy closing up the house.

Courtesy Irene Bartlett



Elisha Gilley, 19th century patriarch of Baker's Island

Excited, we spent the hour straightening up, making the guest bed, and bringing in enough wood for the night, while watching Gail and Henry's progress through the binoculars. We met them at the landing just after sunset, Henry at the oars, Gail all bundled up in the stern, and their sheepdog in the bow with a big red Christmas bow on her collar. In addition to their own gear, they had brought us a cooler full of much-needed groceries, cookies left over from the Islesford Christmas party, and a big box of mail and presents.

We hauled it all up to the house on the sled, broke out the rum and eggnog, and made a solstice feast of kielbasa roasted in the wood stove. Only our cat, who is terrified of dogs, failed to appreciate the good company.



Lighthousekeeper Vurney King

Courtesy Eleanor Walker

the westward passed just outside of Baker's, loaded with cargoes of cordwood, lumber, potatoes, and coal. In foul weather, many a ship had foundered on the dangerous ledges nearby.

William won the appointment as first keeper of the Baker's Island light in 1828. The job was quite a windfall for the Gilley family, for with it came a new house, \$350 per year, and all the sperm oil they could burn.

By the 1840s, Baker's Island had become a real community. Five of William and Hannah's children had married and moved away (five others still lived at home), but two of the sons, Elisha and Joseph, chose to bring their brides to the island, build new houses, and start their own farms. The brothers raised cows, oxen, cattle, sheep, and chickens, and planted hay and Irish potatoes.

Like their father, they also fished and hunted wild ducks, both for home consumption and to earn cash from the sale of smoked herring and feathers.

The Gilley sons and their wives brought up another 15 children on Baker's, and the island air must have been full of young voices. But as the Gilleys soon learned, new neighbors are not necessarily good news.

In 1848 Zachary Taylor's election ended the Democrats' hold on the presidency, and William, as a federal appointee, was called upon to join the Whig party. A lifelong Democrat, he refused and was promptly stripped of his post as light keeper.

The new keeper, John Rich, appeared at William's door in 1849 and, as instructed by the Superintendent of Lights, "reported the facts to him and gave him six or seven weeks to vacate." William complied, but insisted that all of the island except three acres belonged to him. Leaving the island in care of his sons, Elisha and Joseph, William moved out to Great Duck Island, which he had bought in 1837 for a sum of \$300. Hannah, her health failing, moved in with her son Samuel's family on Islesford, where she died three years later.

Elisha and Joseph showed no hesitation in taking charge of Baker's Island. Angry at the turn of events, they immediately began harassing the Rich family. The new keeper wrote the Superintendent in 1852 that he "can stand the base insults and insinuations no longer" and "cannot leave the island for one hour without [his] family being subjected to insults of the most indecent and vilest kind."

The Gilleys were repeatedly ordered to leave the island but each time they refused. By 1853 an exasperated Light

December 22, early morning. Mary Lou:

Last night was the coldest of the winter, and the wind hasn't let up a bit. I step out of our little red house and into the five-degree air. My cheeks burn with the cold, but it feels good to get outside. Arn is making coffee and pancakes for our guests, still asleep, and I like getting outside for a few minutes before breakfast.

Our island is small and round, and a 15-minute walk through the woods will bring me to the other side half a mile due south. It is all I can do to keep from slipping on the sheer ice just beneath the snow. So I walk carefully onward, past the snow-laden spruce and out through the jagged stillness of this winter morning.

Along the path, I pass the old Gilley house, the red one-room school house, and the crumbling stone walls and foundations of farms now crowded with wild rose and spruce. Up ahead, the Baker's Island light, long since automated, stands atop a granite ledge at the center of the island, with the white clapboard keeper's house close beside it.

I imagine these houses lit and warm, the school full of children. How different would it feel to have neighbors here? Gail and Henry are our first visitors since a surprise blizzard brought us winter just before Thanksgiving. But Baker's Island has not always been so deserted. William and Hannah Gilley moved their family here in the early 1800s and eventually turned the island into a thriving community. At its peak, Baker's was home to 24 people. We may be alone here, I am reminded, but we are not the first.

The Gilleys found Baker's Island much as we did, covered with forest and encircled by a jumbled granite shoreline swept bare by countless Atlantic storms. Several

miles out to sea from Mount Desert Island, Baker's offered a convenient refuge to William while fishing outer waters. Lore has it that he found an abandoned log cabin near the northern shore, gradually fixed the place up and cleared some land, and took to staying there during summers with his wife Hannah. In 1806 they left Southwest Harbor altogether and declared the island their home.

Our struggles here are slight compared to what the Gilleys must have endured. Arriving with two young children, they faced the challenge of making Baker's thin, rocky soil support a family with enough food for the winter. In addition to clearing virgin forest, William had to row provisions, tools, and livestock to the remote island and carry them ashore, weather permitting. Unprotected from the open sea, Baker's only landing place is a small rock beach, and even a modest northeaster can make it impossible to come or go.

In time, the Gilleys built up a successful farm. Hannah, in between cooking, cleaning, gardening, tending the animals, making butter, and spinning wool, somehow found time to give birth to 10 more children. An educated woman herself, Hannah schooled the children at home and had them take turns reading aloud during the long winter evenings. Like us, their closest neighbors lived on Islesford, and their trips off island were confined mostly to the summer months. For more than 20 years they raised their family on Baker's Island, alone.

The first winds of change came to the island in 1823, when the federal government commissioned the construction of the Baker's Island lighthouse. Virtually all the schooner traffic between eastern Maine and the Maritimes and the cities to



House Inspector urged Washington to eject the brothers by force. "Their houses also should be taken down, wrote W. B. Franklin, "and I believe that the presence of the revenue cutter will be required to have the business thoroughly done."

Opting for a less extreme approach, the government filed suit against the Gilleys. At the center of the dispute lay a question that would simmer for more than 50 years—who owned Baker's Island anyway?

The government had purchased the entire island from trustees of the William Bingham estate in 1827 and therefore declared that the Gilleys were mere squatters. However, the Gilleys had lived there some 21 years by then and claimed they had won title to the land through their undisputed possession.

The Bingham estate's right to sell the island was also challenged. Around the turn of the century Bingham, one of the nation's wealthiest bankers, had used his political connections to lay claim to over a million acres in Maine. A ruling in favor of the government would have created a frightening precedent for many other coastal settlers living on "Bingham" land.

In 1855 both sides reached an agreement and the suit was dropped. The Gilleys were allowed to remain in possession of the island in return for disclaiming their rights to a 40-rod square lot around the light house and allowing the government and its employees unrestricted pasturage and right-of-way from the landing to the lighthouse.

Life on Baker's returned to normal. William eventually returned to the island, where he lived with his son Joseph until his death at the age of 90. In the course of a generation, the community grew to embrace five households, including our little house, which was built for Joseph's daughter Phebe shortly after she married in 1862.

But the dispute surfaced again in 1896 due to the construction of a new school house and quarreling over pasturage

rights. The U.S. government decided to assert its claim to Baker's once and for all, and renewed its suit to declare the Gilleys squatters. This time, however, the government found few allies.

In an 1898 letter to Washington, the U. S. District Attorney for Maine wrote, "It would certainly be unfair and oppressive at this late date to assert the paramount title of the Government as against the few poor and hardy fishermen living there; and if the United States has and intends to allow them peaceable possession of these scanty and sterile lands, I can see no earthly objection to allowing the town of Cranberry Isles to build a school house for the proper education of their youth."

The courts agreed. In 1909 the U.S. Circuit Court upheld the 1855 agreement and formally stripped the government of any rights to the rest of the island. The Gilleys had finally won title to the land they had lived on and farmed for more than a century.

With matters resolved, the old tensions soon faded away. Now when old-timers tell us stories about life on Baker's Island after 1909, they speak of the school house, their neighbors, and long, cold winters. Few remember that there was ever a land dispute at all.

"I first went to school in the little school house there," recalled Eleanor Walker when we went to visit her in Southwest Harbor. Her father, Vurney King, took the job as light keeper in 1915, when she was in the first grade.

"When we moved on there, there were 13 pupils. And then it got down to seven. Then it got down to three. And when it got down to three, they closed the school, and my father used to bring us off here to get to school," she said. "I'd get so homesick when he'd bring me off here."

Eleanor also remembers her neighbors—Samuel Gilley, Elisha's son, and Bert Stanley, a taciturn lobsterman who rarely took off his boots and spent many a day down at the baitshed whittling trap

latches. Born and raised on Baker's, Bert lived with his mother, Phebe, in what is now our house.

"Bert used to come up to the light house, up to my father's house there, every single afternoon about three o'clock," Eleanor told us, smiling at the memory. "And it was funny. He'd come up there and...he wouldn't hardly ever say a word, just come up and make his little visit, you know. Maybe for 20 minutes or a half hour. All of a sudden he'd get up and out through the door and not say a word. He was kind of strange."

Bert was the last of the Gilley line to live here. When his mother died in 1929, he moved to Great Cranberry Island to live with his sister Mabelle, saying Baker's was too quiet for him. Just 20 years after winning title to their land, the Gilleys left Baker's Island to the light keepers and a few summer folk.

As I stand by the boarded-up keeper's house, the icy wind makes me think of the hot breakfast back at home. I bury my face in my scarf and head down "Main Street," now a narrow and overgrown path.

December 22, sunset. Arn:

Gail and Henry waited until mid-afternoon for the wind to die down, but it never did. It held at a gusty 25 knots and swung around north, which made for even rougher seas down at the landing. Mary Lou and I invited them to stay another night, but they needed to get home. After waiting for a lull in the chop, we helped them shove off and watched Henry row fiercely against the whitecaps. It was slow going.

Back at the house, I followed their progress through the binoculars and called them on the radio when they got home. "Did you get soaked?" I asked Gail. "No," she said. "The spray froze when it hit my jacket and just coated me with ice."

We thanked them again for coming and settled back again into our winter routine of fire-stoking and toy making. We are probably not much different from the Gilleys who lived here a hundred years ago except when winter rolled around for them they settled back into their little island, they had four or five families to keep each other company. Now it is just the two of us. Again.

Arn Pearson and Mary Lou Wendell lived in the Pearson family home on Baker's Island year-round from July 1989 to August 1991 and celebrated their marriage there in June 1991. They now reside on the island of Manhattan, where Mary Lou is studying journalism and Arn is writing a book about Baker's Island.

SACRED PLACES

*What is it about these outcroppings in the sea
that awakens the soul?*

TONY BURKART

IT WAS JUST before Christmas and we were laying in at Matinicus, having had quite a time getting there—including a night's unintended sanctuary at Isle au Haut while the wind raked us southwest at 45 knots and the seas out in the bay were still building to over 10 feet. When Matinicus finally came into view, it seemed like the yearned for conclusion of a pilgrimage. In reality, it was simply the monthly rounds of the *SUNBEAM*, the Maine Sea Coast Mission's 65-foot boat.

The afternoon of our second day on Matinicus, an island friend invited me along for a walk on the trail around the southern end. With the wind still blowing 40, southerly, we headed on through woods that were like something out of *Green Mansions*. Soft wood rose above a thick covering of emerald moss—and this was December! After about 10 minutes we broke out onto the shore high above the surf on the jagged rocks beyond Southern Beach. In short order I found myself moving into a different time and space. Sounds, foam, surf, memories, yearning, dreams, and those broken, sacred, and private places in the heart—all had a place together and made sense in some order the world couldn't provide. And the



Peter Ralston

waves continued to slam into the island's scraggy edge in some ordered way that needed no explanation or purpose. We walked on from that cold coast of Matinicus and back to whatever. And yet, something had shifted slightly within, altered time and the cosmos; something had opened up that made the world a more hospitable place, crying for care and nurture. On the surface, nothing had changed. We walked back speaking of town meeting, island politics; I still needed a shave. But all the while I wondered: what are these places, anyway, that seem to carry in their soul the power and energy to open up the hardest of hearts

and turn them from stone to flesh?

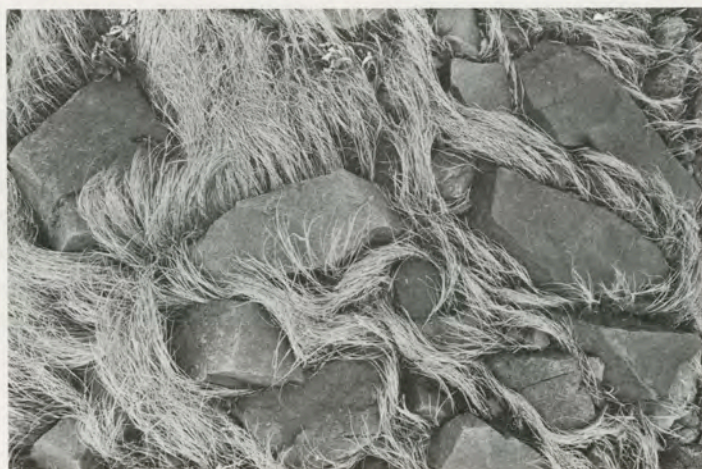
On the way back from Matinicus, we stopped to see some folks who live most the winter alone in their outpost offshore. Island living—much of the year in solitude—has been their way of life for nine years now. They are people who know well that the mystic is not a special person but a quality waiting to be awakened in all of us. I am constantly learning from them, so what might appear to be a pastoral call on isolated islanders is actually a sojourn with my teachers.

I was still resonating from the southern cliffs of Matinicus when they suggested we listen to a CBC tape they had just acquired. The story was told of four people who decided the time had



come to venture out to an austere outcropping about 15 miles out to sea off the western coast of Ireland. Skellig Michael was its name, and they knew it to be the ancient home of numerous Celtic monastic communities dating back to the third and fourth centuries. Skellig Michael has had a rich history as the energizer of some of the most beautiful poetry and prose in all of Celtic literature. Apparently it was a singular and solitary place where many seekers found gold. The story goes that a monk in search of a suitable location to establish a monastic community paddled his skin craft for three weeks and found himself hopelessly lost in dungeon-thick fog. He literally ran into Skellig Michael. But the moment his foot touched shore, he intentionally let the painter go, and his boat drifted off to sea. He knew that he had found home...

It is not only monks of legend and yesteryear who have found their way to islands. June 1991—and we are briefly far from Maine, at a mountaintop monastery in Big Sur, California, on a visit with Brother David Steindl-Rast. As we stroll the steep monastery driveway that winds and switchbacks its way 2000 feet down to the Pacific, Brother David is talking about his years on the Maine coast—years filled with a hope and beauty and energy he remembers as being unique. In the early 1970s he spent two years in the Mt. Desert area attempting to start a small Benedictine community on Bear Island, off Northeast Harbor. That effort eventually came to naught, but the memory of his presence is still vivid among many of us here in Maine who have in some sense become inheritors of his dream. Island Institute editor Cynthia Bourgeault



Christopher Ayres (3)

and I have come out here to seek his advice on a project of our own, the Maine Monastic Foundation. For the past two years we have been developing a network among Maine contemplatives centered around

annual “wilderness retreats” on the outer islands, in the spirit of Skellig Michael.

As we paused at the third switchback, he suddenly turned to us: “Do you know Dancing Rocks on Baker’s Island?” We both acknowledged we did, and for myself I immediately felt something deep inside resonate. I recall a committal one frigid winter morning for a friend who had lived on Little Cranberry island. We took a lobsterboat from Islesford out to Baker’s and off the Dancing Rocks offered Paul’s ashes to the sea. In a laser-like second I felt the power of those scattered, flat, perfectly fashioned rocks jutting out of the seasmoke into the Atlantic on that frozen morning. It’s the stuff of poetry, but more than poetry, even—some ancient, primordial soul knowledge mostly buried in us, silent until those rare moments when despite ourselves it erupts. “There is a definite reason why the Maine Indians came from far distances to dance, celebrate, and live out their sacred ceremonies on those rocks.” Brother David continued—“They are the ones who know where to go.” He went on to speak about other places in the world like the Dancing Rocks, but my mind remained on Baker’s Island. Just then I couldn’t move on.

What is it so distinct to these outcroppings in the sea? What quality awakens the soul and reminds us that along with our purposeful lives there is that in us which hungers for being—for a meaning deeper than accomplishment, power, and position?

The populated islands of the Maine coast are, first and foremost, alive communities of individuals and families making a living and walking out their lives. As in any other inhabited

domain, these lives are filled with all the visceral stuff of hopes and dreams, aspirations and failures, birth and death. But island communities, by virtue of their location, have long dealt with issues indigenous to monastic life. There is isolation, boredom, nothingness—few escape routes from the task of enduring one's own presence. There is the inevitable emergence of rhythm: in time and tide, the seasons of the year, in that delicate interplay between human communities and the awareness of living on the edge of an untameable vastness as wide and wild as the ocean itself. Or it may be that islands, with their clear boundaries of sea to shore, offer the psyche an uncomplicated landscape within which the parameters of one's world are clearly understood. When our boundaries are clear, we are conscious of where we can move and where we cannot. The world is comprehensible, allowing our defenses to drop and receptivity to the unknown—to surprise, to wonder—to arise in us.

A fourth century monk on the Skellig caught this well, experiencing through the microcosm of his island an intensified connection to all time and space — “Heaven in a grain of sand,” as William Blake would later put it. From an ancient Celtic scroll comes the following beautiful hymn:

*On some island I long to be. A light promontory looking
on the coiling surface of the sea*

*To see the waves crest on crest of the great shining ocean,
composing a hymn to the creator without rest.*

*To see without sadness the strand lined with bright shadows
and the birds lamenting overhead. A lonely sound.*

*To hear the whisper of small waves against the rocks.
The endless seasounds like caning over graves.*

*To watch the sea bird sailing in the froth
and that most marvelous of monsters, the turning whale....*



It was bitter cold that morning when we spread out Paul's ashes off the Dancing Rocks. Baker's Island is monolithic in the winter. To the eastward, it is the last island until the Washington County cluster

looms through the seasmoke. Although close to Mt. Desert Island, it still keeps its distance and remains its own place. We were all silent as the island dropped astern in the wake of the lobsterboat. Anything other than quiet at that moment would have bordered on sacrilege.

So much of our contemplation is private; so much of our organized religion is formal, cold, lifeless—a blunting rather than intensification of the things of the spirit. Perhaps it will always be that way, should always be that way, hinted at only in “glimpses and visions,” as T.S. Eliot says. But it seems that what is really at heart's center here—what really feeds us—is the reconnection with a vision beyond our own, beyond expediency, real estate, vacation homes, nature preserves, picturesque fishing villages, gorgeous panoramas—all the uses, private, public, philanthropic in which we cloak our love for these wild, bare places of the soul. It is the spirit speaking to us in its own language of our bondedness to each other and to something still deeper beyond words and form.

Along with reasons of natural beauty and irreplaceable scenery, should not conservation protection also include the sacredness of a place? Cultures far more spiritually advanced than our own knew this and made the preservation of such places a top priority. Perhaps the magic needs to be reawakened, as those places that allow us to listen may very well be part of the key to finding that which the human heart longs for most.

Tony Burkart is missionary pastor with the Maine Sea Coast Missionary Society and co-founder, with Island Institute executive editor Cynthia Bourgeault, of the Maine Monastic Foundation.

Grand Manan

KATHLEEN LIGNELL



Stephen O. Muskie

I was born on an island in the Pacific.
My father looked like a Paul Strand portrait
of a native from the Outer Hebrides,
ruddy as winter, pelagic, northern:
white horse wading near the rocky shore.
It all survives in imagination.

Here, the day rises like rare birds
I watch among shacks of dulse gatherers
above Dark Harbor on Grand Manan.
Wild lady's slippers lean to the morning sun,
the father toward a daughter, the island
to the last stray bird looking for home.

If landscape captures the human memory,
frail, hovering like spray in mid-air,
my father and I become a single swimmer
circling an island like a lifetime's careful
work: reading Melville, entering the water
at Neptune Beach, learning to speak Spanish.

Passage of the sun still beckons
his seal-like body, sleek, breast-
stroking in the estuary as a boy.
He would swim out toward the Golden Gate,
my arms weightless around his neck, and turn
to look back at the shrinking beach.

Like a lifeboat that does not reach
the safety of the cove, our hopes
circle east toward land and disappear.
The men who collect dulse at sunset
know that everything turns blood-red
except loss that is appeased with labor.

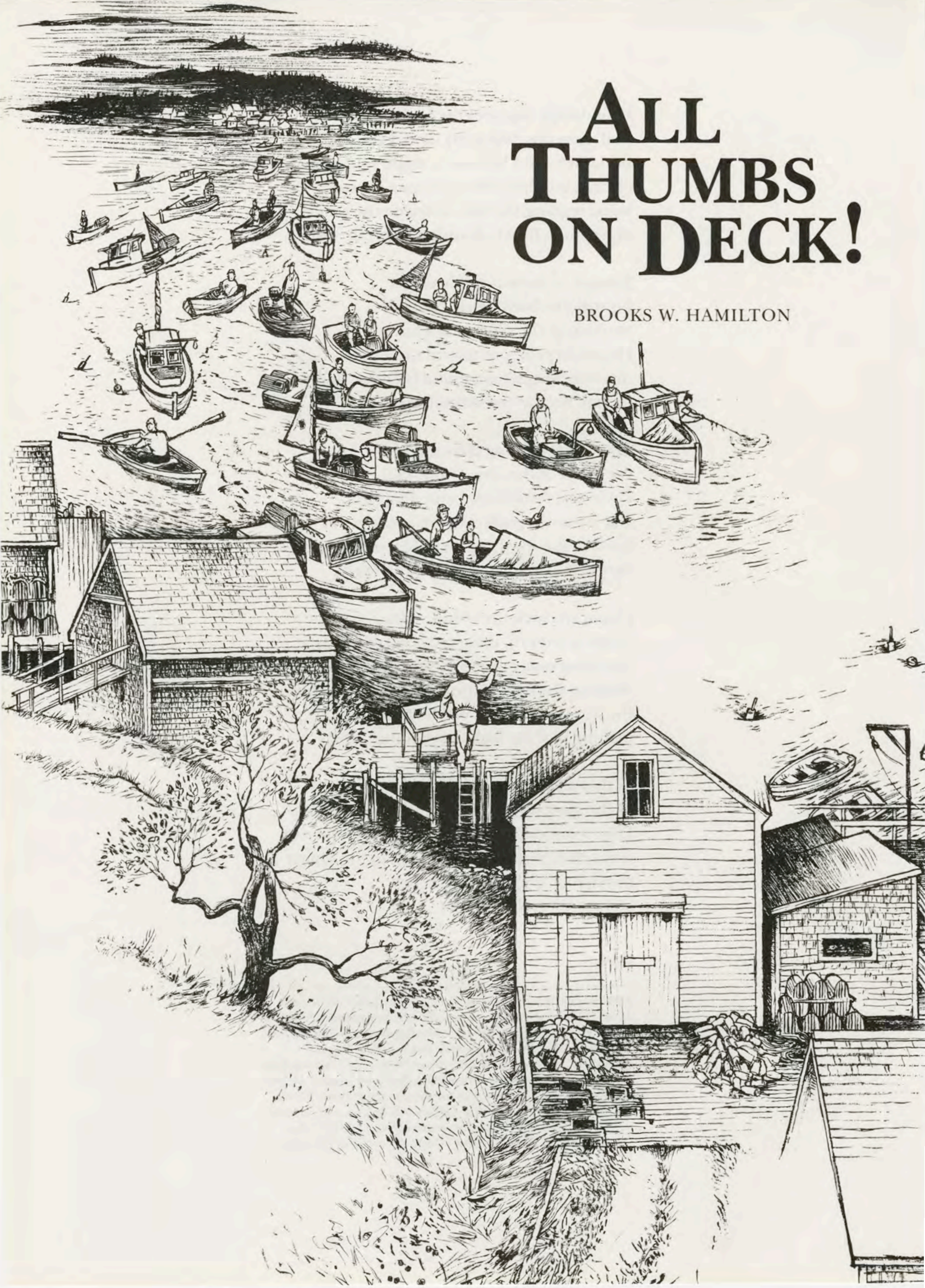
I labor to reach the island's other shore,
which is fatherly, darker, the abrupt cliffs
brooding on a graveyard of forty shipwrecks.
Walking the lighthouse trail, I try to imagine
the white-tailed deer on the mainland,
panting in their flight from hungry dogs

as they leap and swim through the heart
of the spawning herring in the Bay of Fundy.
Like everyone else, they thrash, try to survive,
eyes full of wonder. Like them, we no longer
remember where we were born
or how far we have come.

Kathleen Lignell is the author of The Calamity Jane Poems and a novel, The White Buffalo, and co-editor of The Eloquent Edge: 15 Maine Women Writers. She has received grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Yaddo, and the Payson Foundation, and she won the 1983 Stover Poetry Award from Southwest Review and the 1986 Pablo Neruda Poetry Prize from Nimrod. She grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area (she was born on Alameda Island), was educated at the University of California at Berkeley, and currently lives in Bucksport. Her most recent volume of poetry is Red Horses (Northern Lights, 1991), in which "Grand Manan" first appeared.

ALL THUMBS ON DECK!

BROOKS W. HAMILTON



YOUR MISSION," said the crusty Chief Warrant Boatswain, sounding distinctly like the disembodied voice of a much later MISSION IMPOSSIBLE actor (but without the option, "should you choose to accept the assignment..."), "is to fingerprint every lobster fishermen and shoreside worker from Stonington to Lubec"—covering a good hunk of the State of Maine's roughly 3000-mile coastline.

I was a simple Coxswain then in May of 1943, just arrived at the Southwest Harbor Coast Guard Base and not too long in the military. I was unable to say anything but "Yessir," without risking, I was sure, a certain court martial. In such a lowly rank one does not question orders, period.

But I was not without some knowledge of the Maine coast. I was born and bred in the streets of the South End of Boston, but my family for several past generations has been reared in Maine, and I had been there on family trips enough to know that one doesn't issue orders to Maine fishermen, even in wartime (that is, if one values his life): "Hey you guys, report to the Captain of the Port's Office at 0900 tomorrow to be fingerprinted." In fact, I soon learned from Base scuttlebutt that two previous incumbents in my billet had failed in the task and had been transferred to the Murmansk run.

We have here, in the Maine fisherman, perhaps one of the most independent, cussed, bull-headed, and wonderful people in the world. He simply does not think anyone, especially from the "gummint," has any right to tell him what to do. He lives his life going out daily in a very small boat on a very big ocean, winter and summer, and doing the back-breaking work of hauling in lobster pots—all this on a platform that is frequently rearing and bucking around on the open water like a bucking bronco. Traditionally, through a lifetime of this, he asks no quarter nor help from anyone, especially that "gummint," except to leave him the hell alone! Go out with a Maine lobsterman sometime for a day; you'll develop an appreciation of the independence of spirit.

Yet the look I got from the old Boats told me I'd probably better think of something, or the nice summer's duty on the Maine coast would disappear in smoke and I'd be off in a trice to somewhere far, far away.

It was not until considerably later that I found out through various communications with First District Headquarters in Boston (otherwise known as Heaven where God resided and handed down his commands based on complete lack of knowledge of everything on all ships and stations in its area) what brought about

this fingerprinting idea; those idiots were afraid Maine fishermen were going to contact and supply German subs! Can you believe it?

Well, there I was, in that halcyon year of 1943, wanting in the worst way to stay on the Maine coast in the summer. The place was replete with the two things I most coveted in my young and foolish days, sailboats and girls—hard to know which came first at times. Something had to be done.

Next day with all this on my mind I wandered down to the nearest lobster wharf to watch the passing scene. Several boats came in together to offload their day's catch, and in all the chattering (whoever claimed that Maine people are taciturn hasn't run into a gaggle of lobstermen in from a day of solitary labor out

"One doesn't issue orders to Maine fishermen— even in wartime."

on the rolling ocean) I chanced to overhear that two boats were from Swan's Island, about six miles from Southwest Harbor toward the wide Atlantic. Swan's is a lovely place, big enough for three villages and a population of some 40 lobstermen. And if lobstermen as a whole are a breed apart in their fierce independence and ability to take care of themselves, island ones are a cut above the rest!

As I listened, a sudden light bulb went on in my mind, and I sauntered over and managed to get into the conversation. (While those guys would ignore or look askance at most people from away, one in uniform in 1943 got a friendly reception.)

I didn't come near the thing most on my mind, fingerprinting; I just let the conversation roll along for awhile. Then I mentioned to one of them I'd heard him mention Swan's Island. Trying to sound casual, I added, "Gee that's interesting; my mother was born out there."

There was instant attention as they all, to a man, turned and stared at me. One said, "Your mother? What was her name?"

Now what I had said was perfectly true, and that was the idea I'd been struck with shortly before. I simply said casually, "Oh she was Vyra Witham, daughter of Doctor Witham, who doctored out there before 1900 for quite a few years."

There was moment of open-mouthed silence, then one burly character burst out, "Doc Witham's daughter was your

mother? Why, then, deah, you must be the Doc's grandson! Why, old Doc brought me and half the island into the world back then—wait'll I tell my mother I've seen Doc Witham's grandson in here. Why, she sure set some store by him, she did!" After a delightful gab-fest, with everyone from Swan's brought up to date on what had happened to "Ole Doc Witham" and his family, one asked me the question I'd been hoping for.

"Now you're stationed here in the Coast Guard? What've they gotcha doing, son?"

Now came the answer which might save my ass for a summer of girls and sailing in Maine: "Well, you know that crazy bunch up there told me I had to fingerprint every fisherman on this coast, for some stupid reason they only could figure out in Washington. Yessir, stuck me in an office up on the Coast Guard wharf there, and ordered me to go ahead. I'm thinking of going AWOL." Much laughter followed, both at my plight and the stupidity of Washington and the "gummint" in general.

Nothing was said directly about my plight. But the next day all afternoon into the night and for many days after that, lobster fishermen from every port from Stonington to Lubec came streaming into the little office on the wharf and submitted to fingerprinting. And every Swan's Island man had to stop and hear all about my grandfather and mother. The word had gone up and down the coast with lightning speed that there was a grandson of Swan's there who was being subjected to some stupid orders from the "gummint" and needed help!

Funny thing, though—which I knew before we started the stupid operation but no one else in the military would believe. Lobstermen do not have fingerprints. Years and years of handling pot lines and other gear soaked in the cold salt Atlantic create a crust of extra-leathery skin outside the epidermis of those hands, covering up any trace of fingerprints. For the duration of my assignment I would send my results off to Washington, then get them back later with notes telling me to take 'em over, since they were unusable! By then, though, at the Base in Maine at least, a little sense had permeated thick, non-Maine skulls. And before too long, after a lovely summer of 1943 amongst the sail boats and fleshpots of Mount Desert Island, I was soon off for heavier duty ending years later, 1945, in Tokyo.

Brooks W. Hamilton is Professor Emeritus of Journalism at the University of Maine in Orono where he still teaches classes despite his "retirement." A newsman with the Kennebec Journal in Augusta, for many years he spent much of his spare time cruising the coast in a variety of small sailboats and an old wooden Hinckley Sou'wester.

LOST ISLAND BIRDS

Island extinctions teach us how to look at island earth

RICHARD PODOLSKY

ALTHOUGH ISLANDS cover only one percent of the earth's surface, an estimated 75 percent of the recent animal extinctions have occurred on them. In the last five centuries the earth has lost forever 80 species of birds, 65 mammals, and 30 reptiles and amphibians. Except for one amphibian, a dozen birds, and fewer than 30 mammals, all of these species lived on islands.

Only 20 percent of the existing 8600 species of birds are island dwellers, yet a whopping 90 percent of the birds driven to extinction in historic times have been island birds. Of the 60 island birds recently extirpated, about 30 succumbed to introduced predators including dogs, cats, rats, foxes, mongoose, and mustelids. Human hunting is responsible for the extinction of an additional 12 island birds. The Hawaiian Islands and New Zealand alone account for over half of the known avian extinctions in the world: 24 for Hawaii and 18 for New Zealand.

Notable among the island birds lost forever is the Laysan Island finch of the Hawaiian Islands, the last of which literally disappeared from its treeless island during a hurricane. The last dusky seaside sparrow, a denizen of the coastal islands of Florida and Georgia, disappeared five years ago, a victim of rampant coastal development. The Kauai o'o', which lived in the wettest forest on earth, is also believed to have



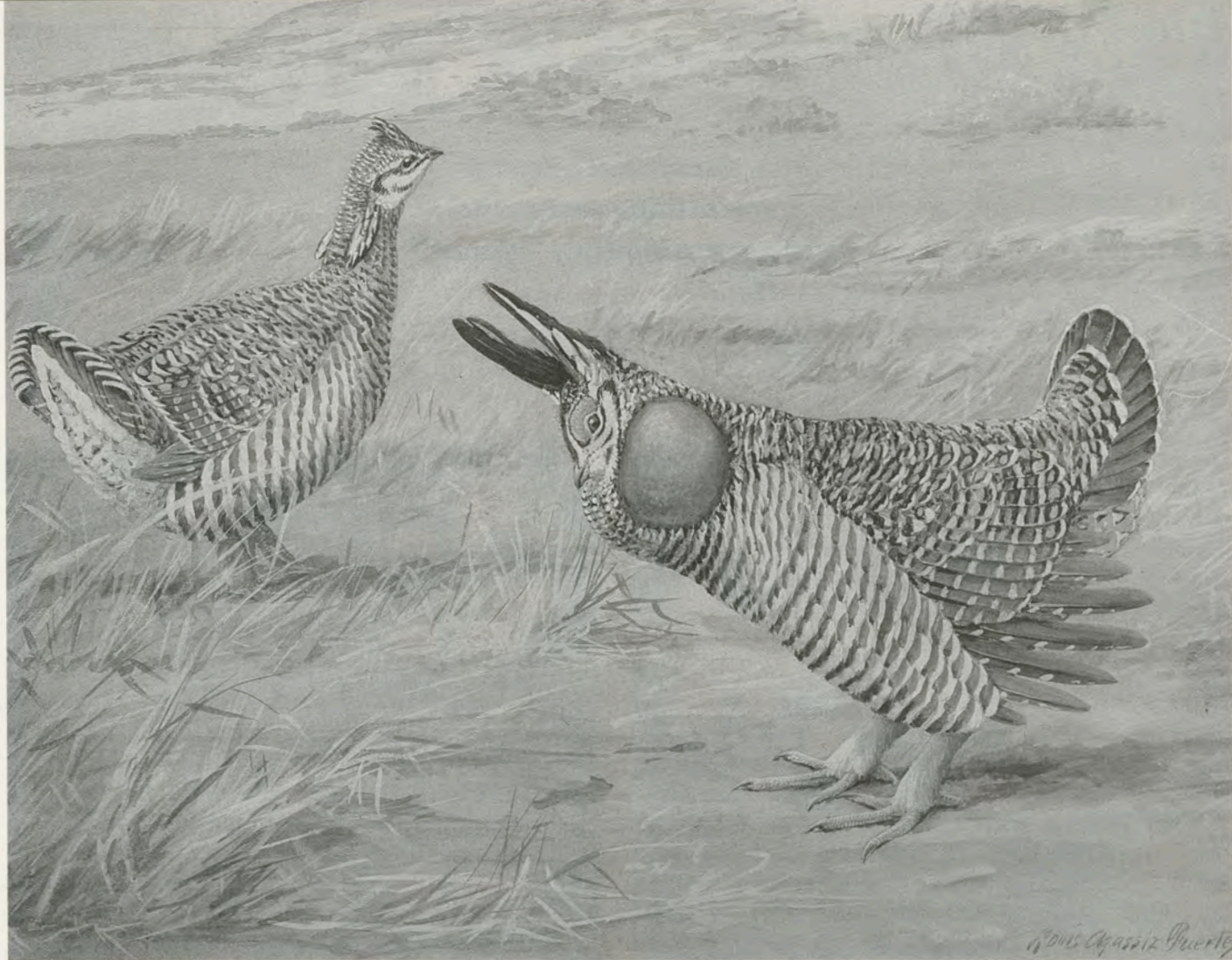
gone extinct due to habitat fragmentation and possibly disease.

Among the 400 birds currently threatened with extinction, 55 percent are island inhabitants. According to the Red Data Book (published by International Union for the Conservation of Nature), approximately twice as many island organisms are threatened with extinction as are continental forms. Poised for extinction are the Bermuda petrel—numbering fewer than 100 which cling precariously to Nonesuch Island off Bermuda—and the Galápagos dark-rumped petrel, a few thousand of which are thinly scattered over several volcanic plains in the Galápagos Islands, with populations declining at an estimated rate of 30 percent per year.

Why are island species so vulnerable? One reason, certainly, is their genetic diversity. It is a well-known fact that islands are often populated with species found nowhere else on earth. Due to their isolation, islands have repeatedly given rise not just to new species but often to bizarre and fantastic creatures through a process evolutionary biologists of the 19th century called "adaptive radiation."

According to this theory, first described by Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace, populations of plants and animals trapped on isolated lands gradually adapt to local conditions and thereby embark on different evolutionary trajectories from continental species. Given enough time, say several million years,

Great Auk engraving courtesy Jamien Morehouse



The last heath hen disappeared from Martha's Vineyard in 1930.

Unpublished watercolor by Louis Agassiz-Fuertes courtesy Bill Gross

isolated island populations become physically and genetically distinct from their ancestors, and in this way, new endemic species are born.

These small populations are extremely vulnerable, however, since the probability of a population extinction increases dramatically as population size decreases. When faced with even slight environmental perturbations, small populations are simply more likely to “wink out” than are large populations. A single species or population on an island is literally a genetic “island” whose persistence is a function of the size of resident populations. To a large degree, the disproportionate number of extinctions that have occurred on islands is simply a function of the small size of their populations compared to those on continents.

The second factor contributing to the fragility of island populations is the fact that island habitats are often too small to support predators or competitors. This explains why island animals so often seem tame and island birds, like the kiwi or great auk, are often sedentary or flightless. The evolutionary down side to this tameness is that island species are literally “sitting ducks” when a new predator, competitor, or disease is introduced to their habitat.

The cumulative effect of these vulnerabilities, especially when coupled with the increasing impact of humans on islands, is the reason why island species are among the most endangered populations currently on earth.

For all the concern about global extinctions, North America has been spared the high rates of extinction that currently plague pantropical forests. Aside from the dusky seaside sparrow mentioned earlier, only five other North American birds have gone extinct in the last 300 years: the ivory-billed woodpecker, the great auk (*Island Journal* 1989), the Carolina parakeet, the Labrador duck, and the heath hen. If we take “islands” in the very broadest sense to include all isolated patches of habitat, then islands figure in the extinction of each of these species, but none more so than the heath hen, whose demise has an important lesson to each of us about the conservation of habitat on this increasingly fragile “island earth.”

The heath hen, an eastern race of the prairie chicken, was abundant in the Northeast at the time of European colonization and ranged along the Atlantic seaboard from Maine to Virginia. The hens were highly localized on heath-covered plains such as those common in eastern Massachusetts, Long Island, New York,

**Steadily we are
transforming continental
ecosystems into tiny “islands”
of habitat in a “sea” of
human-altered environments.**

and numerous barrier islands. Thomas Nuttall wrote in 1832: “According to information I have received from Governor Winthrop, they were so common on the ancient brushy site of Boston, that laboring people or servants stipulated with their employers not to have heath hen brought to the table oftener than a few times a week.”

The loss of heathlands, which were dominated by scrub plants such as wild rose, bayberry, scrub oak, blueberry, partridgeberry, scrub pine, sheep sorrel, and barberry, is the single most important factor in the disappearance of the the heath hen. In addition to habitat loss, the bird also was exceedingly tame and slow and thus easy game for both market and pot hunters. Finally, the advent of poultry farming in the Northeast introduced disease into the wild that further contributed to the bird’s decline. By 1890, only 200 heath hens were thought to be in existence; by 1908 that number was estimated to have dwindled to a mere 50 birds.

At this low ebb in the early 1900s, an impressive conservation action was spearheaded by the distinguished ornithologist from Bowdoin College, Alfred Otto Gross, who raised money and led an effort to save the heath hen from extinction. Through his efforts a 1600-acre preserve was established in the middle of the heath hen’s breeding range on Martha’s Vineyard, and within a few years the heath hen population had rebuilt to 2000 birds.

But on May 12, 1916, disaster struck: a gale-driven wildfire raced across the scrubby plains of Martha’s Vineyard at the height of the nesting season and ravaged some 20 square miles of the interior of the Vineyard, killing brooding females and decimating the scrub oak and brushy plains where the hen nested. The fire undid in a few short hours what had taken A.O. Gross and others many years to accomplish. Mortality was especially high among brooding females. A hard winter followed the fire along with an unusual flight of goshawks which drove the population even lower. By the spring of 1917 only 150 heath hens remained, most of them males. There was a slight rally in numbers but inbreeding, disease, and a heavily skewed sex ratio finally did the heath hen in.

The last heath hen was seen in November 1930 on the road to Tisbury on Martha’s Vineyard. There is the intriguing possibility that a remnant population persisted a while longer in the abundantly brushy and heathy lands on the southern Maine coast. Heath-covered islands such as Richmond Island, Damariscove Island—and many others—certainly could have supported populations of heath hens. The idea is an alluring one, as Maine was (and still is, in many ways) terra incognita from an ornithological point of view. But the theory has never been confirmed.

One lesson is clear, however: the preservation of islands and their fragile cargo ultimately comes down to preservation of places and a respect for rare habitats. At the turn of the century only an enlightened few—like A.O. Gross—saw that species needed enough habitat to guarantee the persistence of a population big enough to weather a hurricane, a flood, or wildfire. Now that we know what is necessary for populations to persist, we simply need the wisdom and the courage to put this knowledge into action.

Unfortunately, the opposite course of action seems to be prevailing. The threat to islands is not limited to those found at sea. Deforestation, agriculture, and urbanization are dramatically increasing the fragmentation of continental landscapes. Therefore, all of the reasons discussed above concerning the vulnerability of island life forms now sadly apply to continental life forms. Steadily we are transforming continental ecosystems into tiny “islands” of habitat in a “sea” of human-altered environments. Numerous populations of continental organisms that once enjoyed a vast geographic range are increasingly imprisoned in tiny fragments of habitat. These species are the lucky ones; the unlucky ones are those whose habitats are being eliminated entirely as the level of the sea of human-altered environments ineluctably rises.

Richard Podolsky, co-inventor of GAIA, which identifies island habitats from satellite images, is science editor of the Island Journal.

TOM MARTIN

Bird Man of Monhegan



When I met Tom Martin on my first birding excursion to Monhegan Island, he completely won me over. Here was a guy who had literally joined the migrating birds and for nearly 40 years had returned to the same clump of roses, the same small marsh, the same pond. I can easily imagine the birds on their perch watching Tom and his wife arriving at Monhegan and remarking, "Look at that! Here they come again...and on the same day as last year! How do they find their way?"

Tom Martin is known in Maine for his years of dedication to the birds of Monhegan, but away from Maine he is recognized as a pioneer nature photographer who has lectured widely and contributed photographs to numerous books. During the 1950s Tom was one of the first to experiment with macro-photography, custom-building much of his equipment. Over the years he has turned his camera on an enormous number of subjects ranging from plants and insects to the intricate patterns trapped in ice or in the iridescence on a feather. Tom supplied us with hundreds of stunning images as potential illustrations for this article, but we decided to focus on his birds.

The following interview was conducted in the heart of Manhattan in the apartment of Tom and his wife Josephine in Greenwich Village. Tom and I spent several hours together ranging widely over many subjects. What we present here is a small portfolio of Tom's work, followed by a narrative in Tom's own words. During the interview I asked Tom how he tears himself away from Monhegan each fall to return to a housing project in the canyons of New York. "There's a lot I can say," says Tom. "We came back from Monhegan one year and we saw a flock of 15 or 20 white-throated sparrows in our little oval lawn. We saw only three white-throats on Monhegan that year. Two years in a row, we've had winter wrens right here on the chain-link fence—walking right by them. I get thrushes, I get woodpeckers, I get assorted warblers. I get kestrels here constantly. I see peregrines flying once in while. We went to visit a friend in St. Vincent's Hospital and I'm looking out the window and a bald eagle just drifted right past the window on the 17th floor. Damn it, that bald eagle just drifted right out over the Statue of Liberty. You just have to be looking."

—Richard Podolsky



1

TOM MARTIN
A Monhegan Portfolio

1. Blackburnian Warbler

2. Black-Throated Green Warbler

3. Canada Warbler

4. Myrtle Warbler

5. Indigo Bunting

6. Bobolink

7. Red-Headed Woodpecker

8. Yellow-Shafted Flicker

9. Swallow-Tailed Kite



2



6



4



3



5

I WAS BORN IN Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, but spent my life in the country. I had a tent as a boy and when school was let out, my parents would let me camp by myself out at Harvey's Lake. Although they would see me on the weekends, the tent was my real home. Boy Scouts meant nothing; I wanted to be on my own. I was inspired by my Lithuanian grandmother, who was a real forager. She picked wild greens, seeds, nuts, even mushrooms. She knew what was good to eat and what wasn't. She would say, "If it's not good to eat, it will make you sick and you won't eat it again"—which is Russian roulette, really.

From my grandmother I learned you have to have a guru—a good teacher. I have a very good guru, a man by the name of Sam Ristich. Sam Ristich is one of the foremost mycological minds in the world (mycology is the study of molds). He does all the mycological-toxicological studies when people get sick. Sam is a real likable, down-to-earth man; a field man at heart.

Sam was head of the biological laboratory department at Boyce Thompson Institute of Plant Research in New York, and he wanted to get into natural history photography. I'm uneducated but I take a lot of photographs because there's something in them that is beautiful. This intrigues Sam because I'm doing technical photography and he sees a technical aspect where I only see beauty. He appreciates beauty, but he also values technical photographs that he can use for teaching. Early on I began to illustrate things for him like vernalization of plants. I had never heard of vernalization, but I was struck by the beautiful patterns, while Sam wanted to know why these things happen. He's the kind of guy who slips information to you sideways. He had me looking at things and identifying things with a microscope, that I'd never heard of. Then I wound up starting to take these photographs without even thinking about it. That's a good teacher; someone who slips things to you without you knowing it.

I was a die maker all my adult life. When I got out of the service after World War II, I already had a family started. I went back to die making. I look back now and I think, "Well, maybe I should have taken the GI Bill and gone to college." But when all is said and done, for somebody that took themselves by the bootstraps like I did, I don't look back with much regret. I read a lot and have a very curious, inquisitive mind. I also have very good hands. Who knows what the right road is?

I ran a die department for 28 years on 28th Street in New York City. I was able to

make machinery for myself for photography which I got interested in as a hobby. I made micro-focusing beds and my own microtomes (cross-sections). I made what I needed. For some reason I got interested in photographing sections of plants. When you do something for fun, you can take any track you want because you don't get hamstrung by any rules. I am a free spirit. For five or six years, I photographed nothing but textures on seeds of wild plants. Another time I started to work with beetles—the Coleoptera. I photographed beetles for a long time.

I came to Monhegan by accident, really. I was on my honeymoon with my wife at that time, Irene, who is now deceased. We were staying in Boothbay Harbor and decided on the spur of the moment to

**“Something about
Monhegan
makes this island
a standout
for oddball
bird rarities.”**

take a trip out to Monhegan on the BALMY DAYS. We walked all the way out to White Head and had to come running back down the hill because we almost missed the boat. They were waiting for us. I said to Irene, "Gee, we have to come back here; this is some place!" That was in 1954. Since 1954, we have gone back every vacation in every year.

At that time, everybody was taking only two weeks' vacation and it was always in July. So my first couple of summers on Monhegan were in the midst of the tourist season. Of course, the island wasn't well known then. Our first vacation to Monhegan, we stayed with Josephine Day. She had the Trailing Yew going full-force. It was a memorable day when I paid the bill for two weeks. I said to her, "There's got to be a mistake!" She asked why. I said, "We stayed here two weeks and the bill is less than 50 dollars for the two of us for room and board." But that's the way it was then.

I was already taking natural history photographs of the wild plants and animals when we first went to Monhegan. Basically it was just camera club stuff. I was not aware that you could make any money from photography. I was very much

intrigued by Monhegan's beauty; not only scenery, but also the diversity of plant life. The rocks and minerals you can see on the island are wonderful, the tide pools are fantastic. There's just an abundance of everything.

Since my wife, Irene, was interested in birds, the first thing we did on our next trip to Monhegan was to buy binoculars. We had bird books, of course, like every aspiring amateur. And like all newcomers, we started to see birds that didn't belong—that weren't supposed to be there.

It was embarrassing to us. We would come back and tell our friends who were interested in birds that we'd seen some real unusual species. They'd say, "Oh, yeah, yeah, all you amateur birdwatchers are the same." So I said to Irene, "I've had enough of this nonsense. I can take fairly good pictures. I'm a good mechanic, a good technician. I'm going to build myself a gunstock and I'm going to borrow a friend's 400mm lens and I'm going to take some pictures of these darn birds and I'm going to show them that we're not just seeing things."

At that time we were starting to go to Monhegan in the fall and spring. I was getting three weeks' vacation and taking one on the cuff, so I could take two vacations. Monhegan had started to get popular in the summertime and I couldn't work. I was an attractive nuisance. The kind of photography that I do, macro- and micro-photography, everybody wants to look over your shoulder through the lenses and I could never get anything done. So I stopped going in the summertime.

I went up there with the 400mm lens and the gunstock. The first pictures I came back with, on the same roll I had clay-colored sparrows and Gable's white crown sparrows. That caught some attention. Among ornithologists they say you are only supposed to see one rare, unusual bird every five years. If you're seeing more than that, they call into question your observation. But there is something about Monhegan that makes this island a standout for oddball bird rarities.

You have to realize that Monhegan is a very small target. It's something like 668 acres. Although it's not a big piece of land, it's the highest point of land for many hundreds of miles along the offshore flyway. Then Monhegan's lighthouse attracts migrants at night to the island. Also there is an abundance of food when a bird arrives. There is fresh water and all kinds of trees and shrubs that have fruit. You have viburnums and the hawthorns and shadbush, all of which birds like to eat.

On Monhegan you never get two years back to back with the same kind of migrations. One year, you'll have a lot of myrtle warblers and next year you won't get any, but you will see a lot of Wilson's warblers. Last year was the poorest sparrow year in all the years I've been going to Monhegan. We had two or three white-crowns, two or three white-throats, one Lincoln, one swamp, and hardly any chipping sparrows. Chipping sparrows should be coming out your ears. But then I photographed the Harris's sparrows, which are unheard of on the Eastern seaboard.

Lark buntings, Lazuli buntings, painted buntings, swallow-tailed kites, white-winged doves are Mexican and South American birds. What was a swallow-tailed kite doing on Monhegan? It stayed six days. You don't have to be astute to identify it. You look up and you see this damn bird flying with the gulls and he's got this big tail like a swallow on him. As long as you're not blind, it jumps out at you.

As soon as I see something oddball like the kites, I start putting up notices around the island where tourists come to eat—the Trailing Yew, Shining Sails, the Island Inn. The sign will say something like this: there's a swallow-tailed kite around; look for it. So everybody gets aware. Then, when a strange bird shows up that I don't see, people come and tell me.

Every two or three years, we see something new on Monhegan that I've never seen before. Of all the experts I talk to, no one can tell me why every springtime, mixed with the northern orioles, I'll get 15 to 20 orchard orioles in the same group. But I never get adult male orchard orioles. Maybe every two or three years I'll see an adult male, but almost always it's young males. They're in breeding plumage, but they're young Turks, the rust is just starting to come out on them. Orchard orioles don't breed in Maine, but they're here every springtime, without fail. Every year we also get blue grosbeaks. Maybe the grosbeaks are vagabonds, but you can even get them in the wintertime around Christmas. We get Western kingbirds on Monhegan every year. Why should we get Western kingbirds there? It's crazy! I also can't say why I saw a hooded warbler or the Harris's sparrow out there hundreds of miles from their usual territories. But these are definitive sightings; they're not species that you could mistake, because there's nothing else that looks like a hooded warbler or a Harris's sparrow or a yellow-throated warbler. I can't imagine what brought the white-wing doves up here to Monhegan from Texas or Mexico, but we had them three years in a row. This is not just an accidental occurrence. This bird is a very easy call when you see one because of the distinct white patch on him. You might not know

what he is when you first look at him, but you sure know what he isn't. You know he's not a mourning dove. That's for sure.

Although I did bird photography for years as a hobby, I got an exposure break when Time-Life began publishing their Library of Photography. An agency got hold of me and said, "Why don't you go over and talk to them? They're looking for somebody who does nature photography." So I made an appointment to go see them. I was delighted. I thought, boy, here is a chance for me to really brain-pick the pros, the top of the line, Time-Life photographers! But, goodness, was I taken aback! The people that were in charge of this project didn't know the front from the back of a camera. They didn't know the difference between a symmetrical and an asymmetrical lens. I thought to myself how can these people write about close-up photography-macro-photography? When they had the pictures in front of them, they knew what were good pictures or not. But they didn't know how photographs were made. So they asked me if I would be a consultant and I agreed. This gave me a lot of exposure. Nikon Photography got hold of me after that. Then Chanticleer Press got hold of me and produced those new bird books. I have 125 pictures in them from Monhegan.

From when I started on Monhegan 37 years ago, there has been a decided downward trend in the number of birds migrating through Monhegan. I don't know whether they've disappeared, or they're some place else, or they're missing the mark and just not hitting this small target. I am seeing basically the same numbers of species on Monhegan, but not seeing the volume in each that I was seeing before. When I first started to go up there, I'd go out in October and I'd look out over the ocean and there'd be so many eiders, scoters, and mergansers that I couldn't even estimate their numbers. But it would run in the hundreds of thousands. The ocean would get black. Now you go out there and you see maybe 10 to 15 eiders in a raft. And that's it. Maybe I am not in the right time frame. Maybe their time frame has changed. I can't say. I can only say what I'm seeing.

Also I have noticed a diminution of the size of the lichen, especially *Cladonia cristadella*. That's the one with the red caps; they're also called British soldiers. On Monhegan they used to be an inch to an inch-and-a-half tall, but now you don't see them much more than three-quarters of an inch. These lichens are very sensitive barometers to air pollution. All lichens lead a very tenuous existence; they are composed of delicate symbiotic relationships between the fungus and algae and

they have to have a certain compatibility with the environment. I don't know what the real ramifications are, but by God it's saying something!

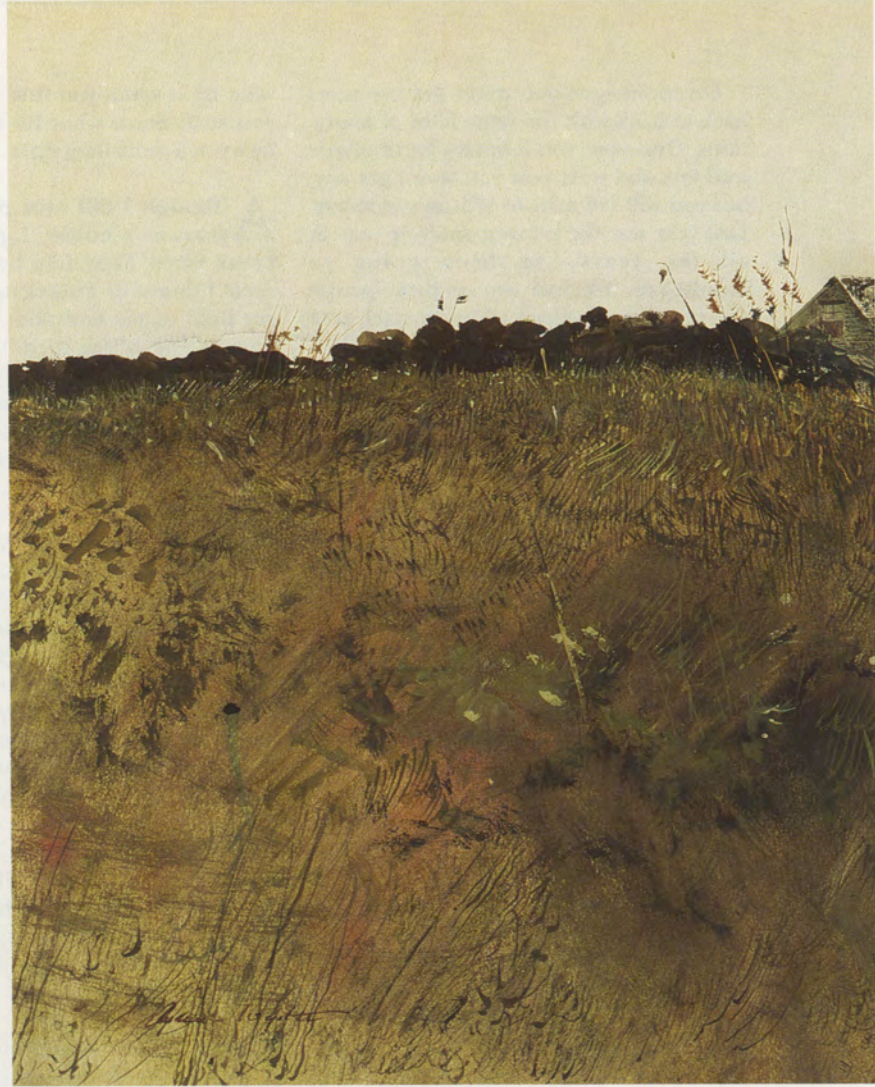
The strange thing is, if you go to Monhegan in the same time frame year after year you can almost tell to the day when things are going to happen. I can tell almost to the day when indigo buntings are going to be there. I can tell when the grasshopper sparrows are going to be there. I can tell what day to look for certain warblers.

When I first started to go to Monhegan, there weren't many people interested in looking at birds, or feeding them. So when I got interested, I made bird feeders from my own pocket money and sent them up to Monhegan so people could establish feeding stations. I gave one to Mort Bernstein, one to Pru Cundy, one to Rita White, one to Doug and Harry Odom. Every one of these people started feeding birds. They all had nice big sanctuary-sized bird feeders that could take five pounds of birdseed with suet pockets on them. I got a lot of information this way because I brain-pick everybody. A friend told me, "Cut oranges in half and put them out." I wouldn't have known there are a lot of birds will come and eat oranges. Now everybody goes to the store and buys oranges and the storekeeper can't keep up with them. The orioles eat them, grosbeaks eat them, scarlet tanagers eat them, cedar waxwings eat them, mocking birds eat them. There's a whole bunch of birds that will eat oranges. Our yard is just chock-a-block full of these birds.

It's a pleasure to look out the windows of my little fish house on Monhegan and see hundreds of birds in the yard—50 or 60 rose-breasted grosbeaks; 30, 40, 50 Baltimore orioles; every sparrow in the book; flocks of bobolink, 40, 50 in a flock sometimes; meadowlarks. I can stand by the window and watch the sharp-shinned hawk come down the road trying to pick out birds right in front of the house. It's quite a sight.

Some people drop by and say there's nothing there. But, as soon as they leave, up will pop the yellow-headed blackbirds along with the rare sparrow—the clay-colored. It's something to see a clay-colored sparrow. Last year I had five clays at one time on the feeders. A clay-colored looks very much like an immature chipping sparrow. They always travel with the chipping sparrows. Chipping sparrows happen to be very beautiful birds. But they are considered to be trash birds by the people that are list-keepers. They don't even look when they see chipping sparrows, but that's where you see the clays. There is no such thing as a "trash" bird; every bird is beautiful."

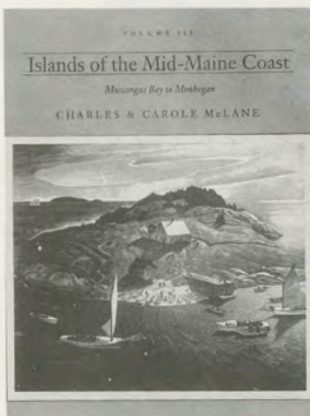
Teels Island,
Andrew Wyeth, 1954



A SINGLE-FAMILY ISLAND

For more than 140 years, the Teels of Teel Island held their own through grit, luck, and longevity

CHARLES B. McLANE



For more than a decade Charles McLane has been documenting the history and genealogy of all the inhabited (and formerly inhabited) Maine islands from Machias to Boothbay. His work, with wife and collaborator Carol Evarts McLane, has involved prodigious research in town records and historical societies, field

work in island cellar holes and cemeteries, and thousands of hours of conversation with local historians, descendants, and present island owners. Volume I (Penobscot Bay) was published in 1982, with Volume II (Mt. Desert to Machias) following in 1989, both by Kennebec River Press. They became instant "must have" volumes for island owners, cruising sailors, and local historical societies, and were quickly out of print. With great pride, Tilbury and Island Institute are collaborating to publish Volume III (Muscongus Bay)—available this August—and to republish Volumes I and II.

SOME SINGLE-FAMILY island communities have died out because of too short life spans of the male patriarchs, or insufficient progeny to carry on, or too great a concentration of the wrong gender (for farming or fishing, that is), or too long a hiatus between generations. None of these afflictions troubled the Teels of Teel Island, off Port Clyde. They were long-lived for the most part (the first Adam and his wife Mary Murray lived into their late nineties). The families were large, with abundant replenishment of any Teels who fell (Adam and Mary could count many hundreds of descendants if they were alive today, as a glance at any local telephone directory will tell). The genders were on the whole evenly balanced, and since there was never the slightest possibility of all Teel descendants living on the island, a rule of primogeniture appears to have prevailed—loosely.

Adam Teel, arriving from Marblehead in his 30s, settled on the island just before the Revolutionary War. What right he had to settle there is unclear—presumably the right of any determined squatter—but within a few years he was buying up other islands in the area from

those whose claims were as uncertain as his: in 1778, for instance, Adam Teel, described as "living on Georges Island" (that is, one of the St. George Islands—Teel) bought from James Thompson of Meduncook, for £ 15, the three islands known today as Stone, Seavey, and Ram. In 1779, in a list of island settlers in the Waldo Patent, he is explicitly noted as living on the island "next south of Colvill's"—that is, Caldwell.

Adam Teel was evidently not held in universally high repute by his compatriots. In 1775 the local Committee of Safety and Correspondence was obliged to order that "one Teal of George's Islands" receive 10 stripes, well laid on, for stealing a tow cloth. In recounting the episode, local historian Cyrus Eaton recollected an earlier incident when the same Teel was taken by a posse of citizens for stealing someone's salt-kettle: the sentence, after guilt was pronounced, was that Teel be tied bareback to a tree, each man present to give him one stroke with a "rod" cut from nearby bushes. Eaton continues: "As the process began ... a son of one of the first settlers of the Upper town, perceiving that the castigation was likely to be bloodless and mild compared to what he had been



Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Wyeth

Forrest Wall (left) and Henry Teel
by Kosti Ruohoma

accustomed to on board of a man-of-war, cut a branch from a thorn-bush, and, when his turn came, gave such a bloody stroke as excited compassion in the crowd and turned their indignation from the prisoner and against the unfeeling executioner" (*History of Thomaston*, I; p. 115). Such was local justice to the first Teel.

Adam Teel (the name is spelled in various ways—Tiel, Teal, Teel—but I will keep to prevailing current usage) appears in the 1790 federal census with a household of nine (three sons, six daughters) and in 1800 with eight (two sons, six daughters); his oldest son James appears in the latter census with a family of five, including three sons. The torch had already been passed to James—not yet 30 in 1800—and it is unlikely Adam was still on the island. In 1795 he had deeded Teel Island to his son for a nominal \$20 and James is shown as paying taxes on the island in the first St. George assessments after the town's incorporation in 1803: 25 acres, three improved, a house valued at \$20, no barn, and two cows—barely sufficient husbandry for a farmer, but the Teels were mainly fishermen. Adam appears elsewhere in 1803 tax records (that is, apart from the recognized St. George Islanders) and is paying taxes on a sizeable lot. I believe this is the lot in the Herring Gut area formally deeded to him by Henry Knox in 1810, "the lot on which said Teal now lives" (Lincoln County Registry of Deeds, 85/171). In 1810 Adam and his Mary were living alone (both were about 70); James had a household of eight. None of Adam's other children—there were at least nine who grew to adulthood—settled on the island. In 1818, after some 43 years of Teel residency, Joseph Pierce, on behalf of the proprietors of the Waldo Patent, formally quitclaimed Island No. 31 in the

patent to James Teel; the fee was \$30.

James Teel's valuations in St. George tax records show modest but steady improvement during the years he was patriarch of the island; by 1820 his valuations were comparable to Samuel Gardner's on Caldwell Island, Peletiah Barter's (and his son John's) on McGee Island, and Samuel Bickmore's on Barter; only Gideon Allen on Allen Island and Josephus Bradford on Bradford (Hupper) Island had higher valuations. In 1820 he is again shown in the federal census with 11 in his ever-expanding household: four are minor (that is, under 16), four are young men—James' sons, presumably—of whom three are in "commerce"

(fishing) and one in agriculture. John Teel, James' oldest son, is living separately, with a young wife and an adult male boarder (perhaps another brother). James was 50 when he died in 1822—the only Teel patriarch to die prematurely. He is buried in the island cemetery, alongside a daughter Ann who died in infancy.

Three of James' sons took over from their father. John, who had already appeared in tax records as a poll (that is, a voter) without real estate in 1817, is shown with the largest share of his father's estate in the 1820s, and he retains this share in tax records through 1832. (He was married to Sarah Gardner, presumably a daughter of Samuel Gardner of Caldwell Island). Joseph Teel, James' second son, also appears in tax records from about 1823 with a significant share of the estate—and he remains in tax records for the next 65 years, eventually owning the entire island. Both John and Joseph are signatories of the 1827 petitions of the St. George islanders for relief from the road tax and for independence from the township. James' next son, Adam II, picked up John's share when John removed from the island, or surrendered his interest, early in the 1830s; Adam paid taxes on this portion through the 1850s. Joseph and Adam each had a home on the island, with barns, several cows, and 30 sheep apiece; Joseph also had a yoke of oxen. By the 1850s they were very nearly the most prosperous settlers in the St. George Islands. In the 1850 federal census Joseph and Adam are shown as fishermen, aged respectively 52 and 38, with real estate valuations between them in excess of \$1000.

School records for St. George show a school in session on Teel Island every year from 1841 to 1858, then after a hiatus of

about two decades—while the generations rearranged themselves—from 1879 to 1903; during the final decade, this was the only school operating in the St. George islands. The school population never fell below three during these years and never rose above 10. Teachers customarily boarded with Joseph or Adam Teel (later with Rufus) and taught the six-to-ten-week term as directed by the Superintendent of Schools.

Two sons of Joseph Teel appear as polls on Teel Island in 1850, about the time that Adam II disappears as a taxpayer: William J. and Rufus. They lived with their father and are shown in the 1860 census as fishermen, aged respectively 26 and 23. William remained only seven or eight years, but Rufus stayed at least until 1914 and in due course replaced Joseph as patriarch of the island. Joseph removed (or died) about 1890, when he disappears from the tax rolls at the age of 92, and the estate passes to Rufus.

The valuations on the Teel Island farm did not change significantly over the years: there was the homestead (apparently one, for the 1880 census shows Joseph and Rufus living together, with households respectively of nine and eight, and an 1873 chart shows a single large building in the saddle, surrounded by patterns of stone walls). There was a barn; there were a few cows, a yoke of oxen, and up to 20 sheep; valuation on the farm and on the island rarely exceeded \$400–\$500, which was comparable to the farms on Thompson and Allen islands. The larger real estate valuations shown in tax lists near the end of Joseph's life and during Rufus' tenure reflected the Teels' gradual acquisition of neighboring islands. Joseph Teel, for instance, acquired a quarter interest in Medumcook (that is, Thompson) Island in 1843, and retained that interest through much of the century. In 1848 the Teels acquired Bar Island,



south of Teel, and retained their interest in it into the 20th century: the island appears in Rufus Teel's tax bill in 1914. Teels also had interests at various times in both Stone and Seavey islands, and the latter's barred satellites, as well as the Little Caldwell islands. When therefore Joseph Teel is shown in 1886 with a real estate valuation of \$2300, it is not on Teel Island alone but on all his island properties. Appraisals on the island farm per se actually declined somewhat under Rufus Teel, as he and his sons turned more and more to fishing and let the farming go.

Rufus Teel and his wife, Thankful, had a large family and most of them continued to live on the island when they became adults. Their sons, Henry T., Sumner S., Walter, Iradell, Oral, and Fred, are shown variously as polls on the island in tax records between 1900 and 1915; Sumner had a gasoline boat, but none owned property. The 1910 census shows Rufus' household on Teel Island as follows—15 or 16 altogether:

Rufus W., 72, general fisherman

Frank P., 60, wife (Her maiden name was Thankful Arey, but she appears to have been called "Frank.")

Henry, Sumner, Walter, Oral, sons, lobstermen

Florence A., daughter, 18

Byron C. Tency, 42, son-in-law (probably Fred Tracy, married to Eveline), lobsterman, with 4 grandsons and 1 granddaughter (that is, of Rufus)

Fannie E. Wilson, 23, with daughter

Also living on the island in a rented home was Frank D. Davis, 34, sailor on a coasting vessel.

This, then, is the saga of Teel Island over some 140 years: a single family island—indeed, the only one I know along the Maine coast for so long a span. Nor did it end with World War I (as my account does). Thankful died in 1915—she is buried in the island cemetery—but Teels continued to use the island until mid-century. The original farm still stands, as well as a fish house (converted to a dwelling), near the landing on the northwest shore. Stone walls are still evident through the center of the island and crisscrossing the wooded south end, separating pasture from once-farmed land. The northern end of the island, by contrast, has undergone significant transformation in recent years: with several summer cottages and well-tended grounds.

Charles B. McLane is Professor of Government at Dartmouth College and a longtime summer resident of Brooklin.



*Henry Teel with "Ted," and (below) Rose Teel.
Courtesy Langdon Wilson (2)*

THIS ISLAND EARTH

The term "Island Earth" speaks of isolation and independence, self-sufficiency, and even deep spirituality. Common experience endows islanders everywhere with these qualities, making it appropriate that we devote a portion of Island Journal to islands and island regions that lie beyond the limits of the Maine coast.

Islands dot the world's oceans. There are islands in Scandinavia, in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, in the Far East, the Caribbean, the eastern Mediterranean, the Canadian Arctic. They are whole nations, like Great Britain or New Zealand, and they are tiny colonial outposts like the Falklands. Islands are provinces and states and even cities, often part of larger entities nearby but seldom enjoying the same status.

Cut off from the easy connections of life ashore, humans who find themselves in any of these places have at least the opportunity to forge new links with their immediate surroundings. Unavoidably, they will learn islands' universal lessons about limits.

Recognizing "islandness" as a shared experience, we include brief notes and vignettes from Alaska, Prince Edward Island, Finland, and Washington State in this year's "This Island Earth." Their authors, we believe, have explored common ground.

Institute of Island Studies, Prince Edward Island

"No island is an island"

Barry Bartmann is the envy of his colleagues these days. Professor of political studies at the University of Prince Edward Island, Bartmann has become known as an "island-hopper," with jaunts in the past two years to such diverse islands as Malta, the Azores, and Iceland. With his Ph.D. dissertation in the study of micro-states, and a passion for things small, Bartmann is part of a global rising tide of comparative small island studies.

"The recent interest in small islands reflects in part the extraordinary proliferation of island micro-states over the past 25 years," says Bartmann. "Scores of very small islands now sit on councils of international organizations. Many of them, like the recently independent Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, for instance, are much smaller than Prince Edward Island. In university and intergovernmental organizations

around the world, the emergence of so many autonomous small islands has encouraged comparative studies in most disciplines."

As we near the end of this century, with mass communications serving to shorten the distances between islands, researchers, organizers, and policy-makers the world over are coming together to address the particular problems and concerns unique to island life. Issues associated with transportation, energy, land, and the environment are faced by everyone to some degree, yet in the context of a small island, such matters have a special immediacy, even urgency. If global warming, for instance, should cause the sea level to rise the meter that has been predicted, an island such as Tuvalu in the South Pacific could be virtually wiped out. In an increasingly integrated global economy, prospects for sustainability and growth depend on shared information and shared technologies. It is becoming more and more true that "no island is an island."

This year alone, close to a half-dozen conferences are being held on islands such as Sicily, the Azores, the Bahamas, and Prince Edward Island. In 1991 Bartmann attended conferences in both



São Mateus, Terceira Island, the Azores.

Malta and the Azores, and he has been invited back to the Azores in October. His trip to Iceland in February was to strengthen the links with university and government officials there in anticipation of a conference entitled "The Small Islands of the North Atlantic: Patterns of Autonomy and Dependence," to be hosted this September by the Institute of Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island.

"The small islands of the North Atlantic, including the adjacent Baltic and Mediterranean regions, are particularly interesting," says Bartmann, "because they represent so many different models of political autonomy, from active local councils in the Scottish Isles to regional government in the Azores, home rule in the Isle of Man and the Faerøes, and full sovereignty in Iceland and Malta. Our proposed conference will focus on the powers and policy options available in these various models of self-government



Jeff Dworsky

with a view to assessing the prospects for small islands in pursuing self-reliant economic strategies.”

International organizations such as UNESCO have also become involved in the field. Their office, the International Scientific Council for Islands Development (INSULA), this spring hosted a conference in Sicily focusing on how new developments in technology, scientific research, and international legislation have contributed to the sustainable development of islands and an improved quality of life.

Organized by the University of Calgary, the third “Islands of the World” Conference was held in the Bahamas in May. It provided a forum for the discussion of issues of importance, including social and economic development, tourism and islands, development and the environment. Previous “Islands of the World” conferences have been held in Victoria on Vancouver Island, Canada,

and in Hobart, Tasmania. In conjunction with this Islands ’92 Conference was the first general meeting of the International Small Island Studies Association.

In order to better facilitate small islands research on an ongoing basis, the Institute of Island Studies has established an electronic small islands information network, which uses computer communications to link researchers, organizations, and policy makers interested in the study of islands. A bibliography of books, articles, and papers on islands has been started, as have directories of persons and organizations with an interest in small islands research.

Researchers, academics, and governments are not the only people involved in small islands networking. In

1985, a number of European islands got together to form the international Island Games Association, bringing together island athletes in an Olympics-style sporting competition. Based in the Isle of Man, the association now has 22 member islands, from the large island of Greenland to the tiny island of Sark; from the Estonian island of Saaremaa to the almost inaccessible St. Helena. In 1991 the games were held in Finland’s Åland Islands in the Baltic Sea. Known as “The Friendly Games,” the Island Games embody the spirit of this coming together of a large community of islands. Says Geoffrey Corlett, Secretary General to the Games, “In our rapidly changing world, it is vital for different cultures to be able to meet. We are all different, but have one thing in common: we are proud to be Islanders. That is the bond between us.” In 1993, in the Isle of Wight, cultural activities representative of the islands will also be part of the games.

There are even some for whom islands are a passion—or an affliction—depending on one’s point of view. For Wayne Wright, a Prince Edward Island writer, the love of islands, or “islomania,” is a way of life, and he is collecting essays and poems from islanders around the world who feel the same way. To be called *Islomania: Explorations of Islands and Islandness*, the book will focus on what it means to live on an island, what it does to our souls and our psyches. “From the beginning, when small island research was called seafaring, a voyage by sea was an invitation to peril, perhaps death,” he writes in his planned introduction to the book. “Fortuitously, a new consciousness is afoot: Planet Earth has become Island Earth, regarding itself for the first time as a single living being. Something of the excitement of the great era of island discovery, which ended with Captain Cook in 1780, can be felt around the kitchen tables on a thousand small islands today.”

Bartmann sees in the experience of small islands much value for the wider human community. “Perhaps in an age of accelerating global economic integration and cultural homogenization, small islands and very small states offer themselves as refreshing and comforting examples of resilient particularism. In my view civilization is far richer for survival of diversities. The determination of very small communities to maintain their independence and their distinctive experience and the evidence of their relative success in an increasingly integrated world is immensely encouraging.”

“Fortuitously, a new consciousness is afoot: Planet Earth has become Island Earth, regarding itself for the first time as a single living being.”

—WAYNE WRIGHT

PRINCE EDWARD ISLANDER

—Laurie Brinklow, *Institute of Island Studies.*

Archipelago Research Institute, Finland

From leper colony to research station

Finland's southwest coast, as it appears in any atlas, looks for all the world like the mid-Maine coast with innumerable small and mid-sized islands scattered like pebbles in a shallow sea. This corner of the Baltic is, in fact, called the Archipelago Sea and is the home of the Archipelago Research Institute, a biological field station which migrates seasonally between the University of Turku and the island of Seili, its summer headquarters.

Seili, four miles by ferry from the nearest mainland point, was first settled in 1619 by an act of Gustavus II Aldophus, King of Sweden, who established a leper colony there which operated until 1785. Thereafter, the island was used for 150 years as a mental hospital until 1962

"Because the general climate is so similar to the Maine archipelago, it appears that the two areas share a common environment."

when this use was discontinued and the buildings transferred to the University of Turku. Seili's history is reminiscent of the history of tiny Widow Island at the east end of the Fox Islands Thorofare, where a facility was established as a quarantine station for sailors who might have contracted yellow fever. Later the island's buildings were used as a summer retreat for the "convalescent insane."

The Archipelago Research Institute, according to its director, Dr. Illpo Vuorinen, studies both aquatic and terrestrial plant and animal life throughout the islands of southwestern Finland. In addition to the main research facility at Seili, the Institute has a smaller substation on the island of Lohm, 12 miles at the outer edge of the archipelago. Researchers have investigated the effects of fish farming on local fish populations, the food supplies of Baltic herring, the influence of acid rain on pine and birch forests, and the effect of oil pollution on the blue mussel—the same *Mytilus edulis* which is found throughout the coast of Maine.

Because the general climate is so similar to the Maine archipelago, with similar winter and summer sea temperatures and similar growing season, it appears that the two areas share a common environment. In fact, Illpo Vuorinen mentions that "in human geography, migration, and desettlement has been studied."

If the trading of scientific and cultural information seems like a good idea, a list of publications and programs can be obtained from the Archipelago Research Institute, University of Turku, SF 20500, Turku 50, Finland.

—Philip Conkling

Bainbridge Island, Washington

Home Rule

Like newcomers everywhere, I believe it falls to me to instruct my newfound neighbors on how to live. Consequently, I've embroiled myself in the local battle over whether or not we should stick with county government or incorporate Bainbridge Island, Washington, as a separate municipality.

For several months after I got here, I assumed we were already a municipality, and in fact when I went to Founders Day in Winslow, the island's only municipality, I thought its mayor, who appeared for the ceremony in a cheerleader's outfit, must have been my mayor as well. And in the town portrait taken there that day you may find me with my children, grinning proudly on the town's main drag.

It wasn't until a couple of weeks later that a neighbor told me that I lived beyond Winslow's city limits, and that the only local government I had to turn to was the county of Kitsap, whose seat was about a 40-mile drive away in a town called Port Orchard.

Seeing as how the island represents only about nine percent of the voters in Kitsap County, it seemed to me that if there was any sense in my regarding myself as a Bainbridge Islander, county government was neither local nor representative. And so with visions of New England town meetings dancing in my head I joined up with a group that's pushing for incorporation.

A couple of days ago, waiting for a home rule meeting to begin, I couldn't help but overhear a large mustachioed man in a ball cap loudly ask what would happen to the parks on the island if we incorporated.

"What about the parks if you incorporate? Have you thought about that? Have you?" was how he posed it.

Well, I'd just asked more or less the same question of the Home Rule Executive Committee, so I helpfully piped up that it was my understanding that our parks would remain in a special taxing district separate from the proposed municipality.

The man slowly turned and fixed his gaze upon me. "Uh, hold it," he said. "How long have you lived on this island?"

"A couple of years," I told him, stretching things a bit.

He nodded. "And can I ask where you're from?"

"Connecticut," I said.

He nodded again. "Connecticut," he said. "A lot of history back there. Two hundred years of history."

"At least," I said.

"Well," said the man, jutting his chin, "my family's lived here for four generations, and I don't need some newcomer from Connecticut telling me about my island."

Ordinarily I'm not too bad at defending myself. Once upon a time I used to spend my car rides home fantasizing what I should have said, but lately I've stood up for myself pretty well, or, when I didn't stand up for myself, I could at least convince myself that I was probably better off remaining seated.

But this time I found I could not say anything in my defense, and merely looked away like a chastened schoolboy. The exchange haunted me not only on the ride home but the whole next day, which I spent building bookshelves in my study. Every time I measured something wrong, or bent a nail, or let a piece of molding slip under the chop saw, the longtimer in the ball cap emerged for an instant to scorn this Connecticut newcomer who calls himself an islander, who calls himself a man.

The tug-of-war between newcomer and longtimer on Bainbridge Island is probable as close to class warfare as you get out here. It wouldn't amount to anything back in New Haven, where the art of class warfare had been raised to a level of almost Oriental exquisiteness. I suspect it's a new phenomenon here, born of an influx of prosperous young couples who come here for the schools, the views, and the "rural lifestyle" that the local realtors simultaneously pitch and doom.

The island was settled and cleared of Suquamish Indians and virgin forests by lumbermen, shipbuilders, and berry farmers. A lot of their descendants are working people who are now being squeezed out by the young professionals who will pay just about anything to land on the island's beaches. So on one side you've got newcomers who fail to see themselves as part of the inundation that threatened to turn the island into another interchangeable Seattle suburb, and yet at the same time, once settled, presume to instruct longtimers on the preservation of their rural heritage. And on the other side you've got longtimers who want to be free to develop their land but resent the influx of new-

"My family's lived here for four generations, and I don't need some newcomer from Connecticut telling me about my island."

comers who build their homes upon it. Thus riddled with contradictions, the two side hurl hypocrisies back and forth at each other over issues like home rule.

I guess I resented being conscripted for this warfare, to which I object as conscientiously as possible. But the man in the ball cap had gotten under my skin for another reason. I'd been working hard at making myself at home on Bainbridge Island. I'd made friends, I'd learned the names of the check-out clerks at the market and the hardware store, I'd joined adult education workshops, I'd even thrown a neighborhood Christmas party. But what the truculent man in the ball cap was telling me was that none of this mattered. This wasn't my home. This was his home. And he was right. There are no shortcuts home, and I'm not home yet.

—Andrew Ward

Reprinted with permission from Out Here by Andrew Ward. New York: Penguin Books USA, 1991. (For review see page 89.)

Prince William Sound, Alaska

Still paying the price

Four years after America's worst oil spill, Alaska is still adding up the cost of being unprepared.

Across island-studded Prince William Sound, where fishing, tourism, and oil are the backbone of the regional economy, residents continue to debate the financial and environmental impacts of what happened on Good Friday, 1989, when the EXXON VALDEZ struck Bligh Reef.

Some of the debate can still be heard in Cordova, a rough-hewn town of salmon canneries and weathered buildings surrounding a modern harbor that nearly 800 vessels call home.

When the cleanup began, Exxon hired hundreds of fishermen, paying them between \$1000 and \$2000 a day for the use of their boats. Some of Cordova's 2500 year-round residents didn't want to work for the industry they saw as a culprit, but others, uncertain of their future if their livelihood was ruined, found the offer a godsend.

"Exxon was offering such big money to go to work that everybody was fighting," says Jerry McCune, president of Cordova district Fishermen United, a 500-member group that represents commercial fishermen.

Beyond work payments, Exxon spent \$2.5 billion to clean the spill and paid thousands of fishermen and processors a total of \$300 million in compensation. Many fishermen bought new boats or equipment.

Four years later, they're probably wondering if they did the right thing. A drop

in salmon prices in 1991 left many fishermen unable to make payments on their boats. The windfall prompted some people to move from town, and attracted others who now can't find jobs.

What fishermen really want to know is whether the oil spill hurt their fishery. But protracted legal battles have kept some environmental studies under lock and key, and the long-term impact may not be known for years.

Exxon has released several glossy studies by its own consultants that conclude the sound is recovering from the spill and that fisheries and wildlife are in good shape. But L. J. Evans, a spokesperson for Alaska's Department of Environmental Conservation, says until long-term studies on toxic effects are completed and released, Exxon's conclusions are premature.

"The key," Evans says, "is there are places in Prince William Sound where there will be oil for 20 or 30 years. Is it harmful? Well, animals won't walk on it and die. But with the research assessing its effects on the food chain locked up, we don't know yet."

One place that saw a major impact from the spill was Valdez, even though not a drop of oil drifted there.

Located at the end of an ice-choked fjord, Valdez is home to the Alyeska Marine Terminal. The terminal is owned by a consortium of oil companies and operated by the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, which supplies the 70 or more ships that fill up here each month with North Slope crude oil.

Valdez became cleanup headquarters for Exxon, which at one point had 11,000 people working on the spill. When fortune-seekers from around the world converged there in 1988, the town came to resemble an industrial Woodstock.

Prices rose. The crime rate soared. A shortage of housing and the lure of money prompted parents to send children into garages and tents, so spare bedrooms could be rented at \$60 a night.

The workers are long gone now. But the oil spill that made Prince William Sound a household word also made it a more popular tourist destination than it was before the accident.

Commercial fishermen who upgraded their fleet with oil money have diversified, and 25 charter boats now cater to sightseers and sports fishermen. The port continues to draw cruise ships plying the inland passage. Many homes have been converted to bed and breakfasts. (A New Englander's image of rustic accommodations may be shattered — some inns are converted trailers.) Curiosity about the spill has made the Alyeska Marine

Terminal a major tourist attraction, and the facility averages 250 visitors a day. For \$16.95 in local gift shops, customers can buy "On the Rocks: The Great Alaskan Oil Spill Game."

What tourists don't see is the continuing fight over the Exxon spill, and the preparations for the next accident.

Exxon still faces 19,000 lawsuits from fishermen, natives, and other people affected by the spill. Civil trials are set to begin in April 1993.

Meanwhile, on the Valdez waterfront, Alyeska has created the world's largest spill prevention and cleanup program. An elaborate vessel-guiding plan, it is called the Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, or SERVS. Under the state-approved plan, each tanker must be guided through the stormy port by a tugboat and escort vessel. If a tanker strays off course, as has already happened since the plan took effect, the guide vessels can tow it to safety. The strength of SERVS, according to Alyeska, is that three captains are in charge of each tanker, and any imprudent decision is immediately questioned.

Docked in the port and anchored offshore, skimmer vessels are on standby, prepared to vacuum any crude oil that might spill. The system is designed to handle a spill 40 percent the size of the EXXON VALDEZ, if the weather cooperates.

Alyeska admits it didn't foresee the human error that led to the Exxon spill. It was prepared for a minor spill around the terminal, not an 11 million gallon gusher on Bligh Reef. That's one reason the law creating the oil spill plan also established a Regional Citizens Advisory

Council to advise and oversee future spill response plans. It is made up of representatives from surrounding communities, business, fishing, and environmental groups, and funded with \$2 million a year from Alyeska.

Despite the appearance in Valdez that a prevention and response system is in place, many issues remain unresolved and are subject to public hearings sponsored by the council. Some of the questions include:

- Should response plans assume 100 percent of the cargo will be spilled?

- Can industry reduce response standards by upgrading prevention, and how?

- Should the government restrict operations at times when cleanup ability is questionable, like during stormy weather?

- Beyond spills, how prepared should the industry be for fire or explosions?

Alyeska is spending \$50 million a year on SERVS, a fraction of the billions Exxon will spend cleaning up the mess left by the EXXON VALDEZ.

— Tux Turkel

For \$16.95 in local gift shops, customers can buy "On the Rocks: The Great Alaskan Oil Spill Game."

A CRITIC'S CHOICE

"Casco Bay Morning"

EDGAR ALLEN BEEM



Casco Bay Morning by Thomas Connolly, 1988

IN ITS WATERY isolation, every island determines a state of mind, a consciousness of limits that is not as sensible in the middle of a continent or in the middle of an ocean. Experience is circumscribed on an island, contained. And art is the form of human knowledge which expresses islandness best.

Here in Maine we have a rich tradition of landscape painting, and—not surprisingly given the sublime nature of our islands—*island* landscapes form an important part of Maine art history.

Thomas Cole and Frederick Church, pillars of the romantic Hudson River School, pursued the divine in nature up the coast as far as Mount Desert Island. Childe Hassam, premier American Impressionist, did some of his best work on the summery Isles of Shoals. An army of 20th century painters—from Rockwell Kent, Robert Henri, and George Bellows to Jamie Wyeth—have battered their brushes against the monumentality of Monhegan. Marsden Hartley, Maine's one

true native genius, painted the rawness around Vinalhaven. John Marin made the islands downeast off Cape Split float on the canvas and shatter like glass. And Fairfield Porter gave the world some of its most lovely visions of Vacationland in the paintings he did on his family-owned island, Great Spruce Head in Penobscot Bay.

Having summoned up such greatness, I must now say that my favorite Maine island painting is a modest little (10 inch by 10 inch) gouache that hangs above the bookcase in my own living room. Entitled "Casco Bay Morning," it was painted during the summer of 1988 by a young and as yet relatively unknown artist named Thomas Connolly. I purchased it for something like \$50 from a show Connolly had at the Portland Public Library. Such quality at such a price! I quickly snapped up the picture intending to give it to my boss as a Christmas gift, but when my wife saw the sweet little gray painting she insisted that we keep it for ourselves.

The painting itself, as is plain to see, is a simple composition, an almost minimalist landscape easily distilled into eight or nine elements. There is the milky gray-white band of the sky, the clay blue ribbon of the land, and, most of all, the blue-gray stillness of the sea. Upon this opaque surface floats a forest green rowboat with a lick of beige suggesting transom and gunwales. Placing the boat upon the water is a cement gray shadow, a putty gray lap of a wave at the bow, and the white dot of a mooring. And that is all, save for, if one looks closely, the blue and brown undercoats that show through at the critical edge where land meets water.

Thomas Connolly, a 1987 graduate of the Portland School of Art, painted "Casco Bay Morning" over the Fourth of July weekend in 1988 while his family was renting a cottage on Bustins Island, a private little summer isle just off Freeport. Sitting on the shore near the island ferry dock, he painted what he saw as he looked back across at Wolf Neck on the mainland.

What interested Connolly at the time was the relationship of the colors, the way the scene plays itself out in such neutral shades. But what interests me most about the painting is its subtext, what it tells us indirectly about the condition of islandness.

"Casco Bay Morning" is a painting "from" an island, not a painting "of" an island. This is an important distinction because most paintings of islands tell the viewer about a physical reality. For me, this painting from an island begins to get at the psychic reality of the island experience.

No matter how close you are to the mainland, when you are on an island you are removed. You're not necessarily marooned, but you are committed. You cannot just walk away from an island. Contact with the rest of the world is somehow broken.

A few years ago I visited a world famous author who had summered for many years in a little beachhouse on a Casco Bay island. The island was serviced by ferry and the house was on a popular sand beach, yet in listening to this sophisticated New Yorker talk about how she foraged for food and lived without telephone or indoor plumbing, I realized that, to her, this Maine island was Ultima Thule, the end of the earth. The fact that she lived within sight of Maine's largest city didn't seem to modify her sense of isolation.

In practical terms, of course, riding the ferry from the Portland waterfront to populous Peaks Island may not be much different from taking the bus from downtown Portland to South Portland, yet the almost magical sense of removal you get on Casco Bay Lines as opposed to the Metro is quite real. Tourists and seasonal visitors to Maine islands tend to romanticize ferry crossings, experiencing ferry

rides as adventures, while ferry veterans doze in their cars, but even native islanders will confess to experiencing a feeling of decompression as they pass from the large world of the mainland to the small world of the island.

The heightened sense of place one has on an island is a function, then, both of physical geography and of psychology. Islands enforce their specificity. They insist on being special places. And small summer colony islands like Bustins, or Cushing, or MacMahan, or Squirrel, amplify their specialness by virtue of their intimacy and privacy. You always feel privileged to set foot on such islands, whether you belong there or not.

The fact of the matter is that anyone who lives on a Maine island inhabits a place which millions of people find as quaint and remote and charming as we might find, say, the Outer Hebrides. It's all a matter of one's perspective.

Which brings me back to Thomas Connolly's view from Bustins Island. As I said earlier, this is a small painting, yet it requires a certain distance before one can gain the proper perspective on it. Up close it loses its magic, revealing the effort of its making, its factuality and flaws. Stand back a few feet, however, and the five-sixths of the painting that is nothing but a flat plane of gray becomes a convincing evocation of the surface waters of Casco Bay. The imperfections, the sweep of the brush, the subtle shifts in tone create the illusion of depth, the mystery of deep water, the unknown that must be crossed to reach any island.

The little green rowboat is really the only specific object in the painting. And not only is it a manmade object, it is a kind of human surrogate, a vessel, a human container. Small and frail, swinging gently on its mooring, the boat supplies human scale and implies humanity in the absence of people. It waits to carry the returning mariner back to shore. You cannot just walk away from an island.

Ultimately, what I see in "Casco Bay Morning" is that the calm gray waters of Casco Bay, no matter how familiar to me, are both a moat and a mystery. They are the natural element which separates the island from the imagined security of the mainland. And that security is only imagined.

Floating, buoyant, hopeful, the small rowboat reminds us just how precarious our condition really is, how thin the margin of habitability. In all the universe, the only place we humans can live is on the skin of this earth. And islands are the most concentrated form of the habitable world.

Edgar Allen Beam is the art critic for the Maine Times. In 1990, a selection from his writings was published as Maine Art Now. Thomas Connolly is represented by Greenhut Gallery in Portland, Maine.

Fish Hawk

(continued from page 6)

At the end of August, FISH HAWK is headed east toward the shores of Mount Desert. The long shadows cast by Cadillac's barren cliffs pale in contrast to the looming proposal to construct an 84-slip marina and boatel in the island's last working waterfront at Bass Harbor. As fishing boats have been progressively displaced from Mount Desert's changing waterfronts at Bar Harbor, Seal Harbor, and Northeast Harbor, the viability of Bass Harbor's fleet of 60 working vessels and the commercial enterprises that support its fishermen are threatened. The delicate balance which is precariously maintained between Bass Harbor's recreational and fishing vessels would be decisively tilted against fishing interests if such a proposal were approved.

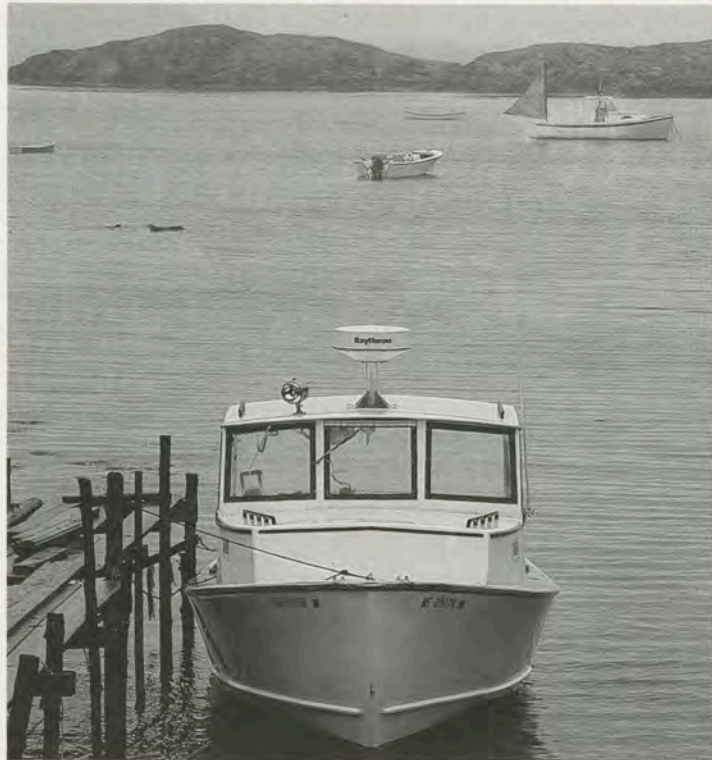
Because all marinas are located over subtidal areas, which are public lands held in trust for its citizens by the state, any private developer wanting exclusive use of this resource for private purposes must acquire a lease from the Bureau of Public Lands. Fishermen who buy their bait and sell their catches to the C.H. Rich Company, as well as Bass Harbor's two commercial boat repair yards, have asked the Island Institute to intervene on their behalf in the state proceedings after the town of Tremont narrowly approved the marina. The fishermen, in cooperation with a local citizens group, have organized a public meeting at the Town Hall where we have been invited to speak.

The discussion over the future of Bass Harbor's waterfront is lively; town officials who are present have an understandable interest in encouraging new uses for the abandoned canning factory where the boatel and marina have been proposed. But the fishermen, backed by the Harbor Committee, have presented a compelling case demonstrating the serious conflicts which such a proposal presents. Although the air is not cleared at the end of the August meeting, by fall the Bureau has ruled for the fishermen in a precedent-setting case, and by December the developer has withdrawn his court appeal and Bass Harbor's working waterfront is, for the moment, secure.

Fall comes with a mixture of relief and anticipation. By mid-October, FISH HAWK has ridden out two gales at her mooring and is scheduled to take a film

crew from WGBH's Nova Science Series to meet Richard Wheeler. Wheeler, a 60-year-old educator from Boston, has been retracing by kayak the migration route of the extinct Great Auk from its ancestral nesting grounds off Newfoundland, south along the Nova Scotia and Maine coasts, on his way to Buzzard's Bay.

Everywhere in maritime Canada, Wheeler and his small craft have attracted attention. With word of his quixotic voy-



age calling attention to the perils which the ocean's living creatures face today, Canadian fishermen have shared their deepest fears over their future. With the disappearance of the inshore capelin run in Newfoundland, the cod catch has also plummeted. The collapse of the groundfish populations in the Canadian Maritimes mirrors the situation in the Gulf of Maine, and we wonder when we will see here the bumper stickers which are now all too common in Canada: "In cod we trusted."

When the march of the equinox foretells the changing seasons and white horses begin regularly galloping down the bay on blustery northwest fronts, FISH HAWK seems a frail cork, bobbing in the water. Because each island winter is an important and neighborly season, we resolve to try to find a winter boat which we hope might make our visits steadier — and our reception warmer in the colder season. On the strength of a pledge from Institute Trustee Betty Noyce and several months of searching harbors from Perkins Cove to Bass Harbor, we locate a 36-foot Repco hull, finished off with a galley, head, and five berths. After minor refitting and repairs, RAVEN, a peaked-bow, black-hulled beauty, is commissioned.

Skipped by Jeff Dworsky, our lobsterman/shepherd friend from York Island (who will winter with his family on Isle au Haut), RAVEN will rotate her home harbors among moorings at Isle au Haut, Stonington, and Rockland, and she will make twice monthly winter passages from Monhegan to the Cranberries on Publications and Community Services missions. Although our fish hawks find winter islands farther south, a raven is a solitary wanderer among the islands in all seasons.

Eider

(continued from page 9)

We turn worried eyes in the direction of our own little Crow Island, a MITA stronghold, and to Jewell, which, to many of us, is still a jewel. As we head off down bay, we pray our stewardship efforts and island use ethic will protect other islands from a similar fate and keep the Cow Island debacle from spreading up the coast.

The Cow Island situation stands out even more because it is so unusual. Take Butter Island, for example, one of the most heavily used in Penobscot Bay. Cate tells of a late-season stop there:

Hanging off the nubble of Butter Island, EIDER is riding the gentle swell while I carry a

few fire-scarred stones to the water. Only infrequently have I found a fire ring above the tide line here, and rarely do I find any litter. I look up to see a man walking toward me wearing a broad-brimmed straw hat. I recognize him immediately as Bob Quinn, whom I met last month at his home on neighboring Eagle Island. Bob and I share a responsibility for monitoring use on Butter; he, as caretaker, makes a run around the island every summer evening aboard the Boston Whaler of the Butter Island Conservation Trust; I, with MITA members, check each week the sites we have permission to use.

We speak briefly of the total numbers of campers this season, down from last year at this time. We stop in a clearing in the woods just inshore from the beach. Bob says we wouldn't have been able to stand here two years ago because of the stench of human waste. This is good news, as it appears that the hundreds of picnickers who flock to this beach in every kind of craft now get the message the owners so eloquently write on their signs: in brief, carry-in, carry-out. Everything.

Walking toward his boat, Bob and I quiet our conversation, as if the visible evidence of this land relieves us of the burden of speaking about it. It's a serene and beautiful spot in the world.

REVIEWS

A Passage in Time, Along the Maine Coast by Schooner by Peter H. Spectre, photographs by Benjamin Mendlowitz. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1991. 212 pages, hardcover. \$45.00

Reviewed by David D. Platt

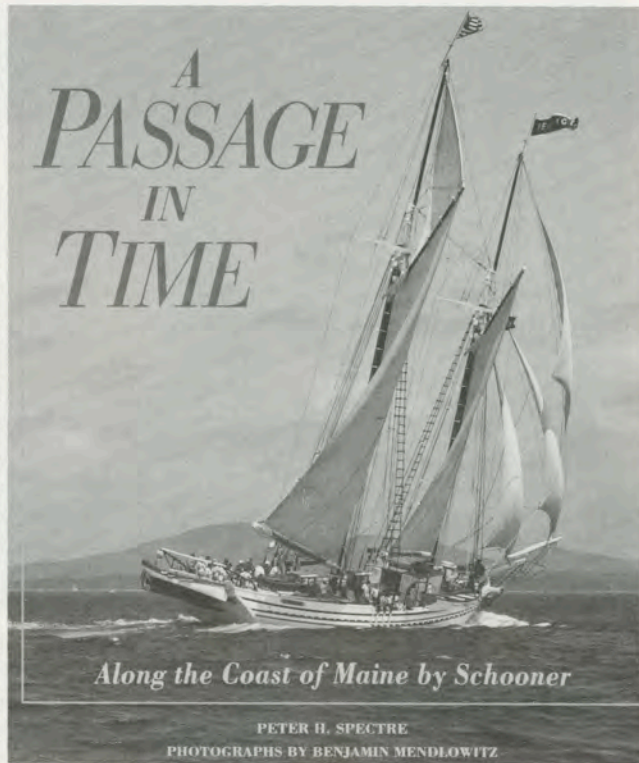
This book has one weakness: it's so handsome that many people will think of it as a coffee table production they needn't bother reading. Were *A Passage in Time* an ordinary picture book, this weakness wouldn't matter. And besides, few photographers take better pictures of boats than Benjamin Mendlowitz, so you'd get your money's worth even if you never read a word.

But if that's the way you approached *A Passage in Time*, you'd miss a lot. Peter Spectre's text is a thoughtful essay on what it means to sail the Maine coast aboard a schooner. It's about the business of "coasting" from the 19th century (when the schooners were Maine's trucks) to the present, when they're the wind-powered equivalent of those buses that haul leaf-peepers into and around Maine every fall.

A Passage in Time is at heart a history book, one in which the history, enlivened with anecdotes, is woven into a narrative. Spectre takes us on a week's voyage through Penobscot and Blue Hill bays with stops at Swan's Island, Northeast Harbor, Deer Isle, the Merchant's Row area, and North Haven. Along the way he entertains with tales of granite quarrying, fishing, and what it must have been like to travel the coast with a deckload of lumber so high that the sails had to be reefed to make room. (Lumber schooners, by the way, could be older and leakier than other vessels, because in a pinch their cargoes could float them.)

The heart of the history here, as is so often the case, is economics—a set of circumstances that allowed people to make a living fishing and sailing cargoes among Maine ports and between Maine and more distant places. There was profit in hauling cordwood and lime at a time when wood fueled kilns at Camden and Rockport and Thomaston; there was money in carrying granite to Boston and New York when those cities were being built of the stuff, before concrete became the material of choice. The first age of cargo-carrying sail in Maine lasted until shortly after World War I, when economic decline, steam-powered vessels, and the building of roads conspired to put the schooners out of business.

Well, not completely out of business...the laid-up schooners and lack of other opportunities up and down the coast inspired a silversmith and summer camp counsellor named Frank Swift to charter the MABEL in 1936 and take three lady passengers out for a cruise. The first season was what they call a "character builder" in sports—Swift lost money—but as Spectre observes, he had "gained experience and a sense of what would work and what would not." The following summer he was back with the LYDIA M. WEBSTER; finally in 1938, with the ANNIE F. KIMBALL, he began turning a profit. The second age of cargo-carrying sail in Maine—the windjammer business—was born.



Since then, it has come a long way.

Early in 1980 at the North End Shipyard in Rockland, John Foss and Linda and Douglas Lee laid the keel for the HERITAGE—a new addition to what was at the time a fleet consisting largely of old, converted vessels. Spectre's chapter on the building of the HERITAGE (the book's best, in my opinion) conveys what it means to build a large wooden vessel from scratch. Spectre lists the materials: 100,000 board feet of lumber, three tons of fastenings, two tons of ironwork, a mile of rope, 5000 square feet of canvas. "Just locating this stuff and getting it delivered was an exercise in logistics that would deter most people," he observes, "never mind building it into a ship." As Douglas Lee put it in his journal, it was "one year of thinking, one year of planning, three years of building." And about \$300,000, including a loan the partners arranged after they'd built the hull. Unlike a lot

of ships, HERITAGE slid down the ways a year ahead of schedule.

Now I'd better make it up to Mendlowitz, whose pictures of the Maine windjammer fleet at work make this book so beautiful that it might not get read. Mendlowitz has a way with water and with light, particularly the low-angle light we're familiar with in northern latitudes. In a Mendlowitz photograph, the relationship between boat, light, and water is always strong; reflections and bow waves and wakes are as important as the vessels that make them. A favorite of mine in *A Passage in Time* features the MARY DAY somewhere off Mount Desert, working her way from puff to puff in an obviously fluky wind. Light, sky, water, vessel, and reflection are all gray, brought together in an atmospheric composition like a painting by J.M.W. Turner. There are more striking examples of low-angle light in the book (an early morning yawlboat shot comes to mind) but the seascape quality of the MARY DAY sailing between the puffs is hard to beat.

Out Here, A Newcomer's Notes from the Great Northwest by Andrew Ward. New York: Viking, 1991. 189 pages, hardcover. \$18.95

Reviewed by Philip W. Conkling

In 1987 Andrew Ward left the ivy-shaded streets of New Haven, Connecticut, for the Great Northwest where his wife Debbie had been offered a new job at the University of Washington. Ward, a mid-life Connecticut Yankee, was initially devastated by the thought of uprooting his family and his writing life and moving to a remote corner of America. But move he did, fetching up on the shores of Bainbridge Island, where he now commands a view over Puget Sound and the Cascades, over the Seattle Skyline (that Boeing built), and over his Smith-Corona typewriter.

In the pages of *Out Here*, Ward chronicles his new life in a wonderfully humorous, humbled, and insightful series of essays collected in this volume. In fact you might, like me, have heard

snatches of one or two of these essays broadcast on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," which concerned the fate of a trophy buck that walked grandly past Ward and his son on Bainbridge Island. The emotions this creature inspired on a small island that is more home to dogs than wildlife was instantly reminiscent of a page from the life of a newcomer to Peaks or Cliff or Monhegan "back here."

Ward's deft style, sharp eye, and dry wit make each of these 52 essays like little polished stones you feel lucky to have found on the rocky beaches of night-time reading. He describes one western woman he meets, for example, as "hard candy:" "cute, sweet, immaculate, and tough enough to break your teeth." He captures in the portraits of his island neighbors all the same characters and characteristics you find on Maine islands—native, transplant, misfit, and rural genius. In "That Bainbridge Island Attitude," "Home Rule," and "Ferry Tales" our own island travails are mirrored.

But this collection is much more. Ward uses his island perch to survey not just his neighbors and the magnificent splendor of Puget Sound, but the nature of human nature itself. His advice on telling bedtime stories to your children is priceless, and his helpful hints to husbands and wives resonate for all time as he covers such topics as housework, children, and sex ("Have it first, then get married. But remember...that where you were once having a wholesome sexual relationship with somebody, all of a sudden you're sleeping with a relative.")

No matter from what perch you choose to view the world, sharing the view from *Out Here* is its own reward, even for those Back Here.

THE CALL OF THE RUNNING TIDE

Nancy Price Graff

Photographs
Richard Howard



traditional lobstering industry—and two of the three Joyce kids now commuting off-island to high school for full immersion in this brave new world—the family is positioned at the intersection of two cultures: late 20th century America and the island microcosm in which their craft is plied. Graff had before her a powerful opportunity not only to depict an occupation often considered "exotic" to those at distant remove, but to catch the tension—evident in small communities throughout America—between homegrown, local values deeply held and an insidious pressure to abandon these in favor of a fast-track, unisex American culture, urban-derived and media-driven.

Regrettably, *The Call of The Running Tide*, while performing the first half of the task admirably, lacks the gumption—or perhaps just the years in the field—to tackle the second.

Somewhere between high and low tide this one hangs: lacking the magic of bona fide children's literature (one thinks of *Bert Dow, Lobsterman*)—but falling short of the intimate, intuitive seeing that in its own way brings the stuff of the adult world vibrantly alive.

All told, it is a very credible portrait. I imagine farm kids in Nebraska reading this book and am relieved that no disservice would be done. With considerable intelligence and a clear skill for interviewing, the author has gotten the details straight. There are no obvious attempts at pandering; no "Gee whiz, these people are quaint!"; no attempt to paint museum-piece Americans of a bygone century. We look at lobstering and see how it is done—not some inscrutable ritual dance, but simply another of the many hard ways of earning a living, whose components are common sense, persistence, and skill. Graff has caught the trade very well, conveying with balance and dignity a sense of what life is like in this island corner of New England. Richard Howard's portraits, while not "tack-sharp," are well composed and poignant, not only supporting the text but on several occasions extending it. From the combined effect, we get a real sense of the profession—only just shy of a whiff of the bait barrel.

What is missing, however, is the magic—that vital spark which, thrown into the mix, might ignite this solid, yeomanlike portrait with the fire of life actually lived. So thoroughly written to a mold, the book fails to convey a sense of what makes this Joyce clan *break* the mold. Conspicuously absent are the well-springs from which this family itself draws identity and strength. We catch it in small glimpses, mostly in the photography—of the five of them striding side by side on a family walk, clearly animated by each other's company...of a lobsterboat named DAILY BREAD, and another named PRINCE OF PEACE...of 73-year-old Lewellyn Joyce, craggy as an old testament patriarch, passing on a lifetime of fishing skills to grandson Josh. We miss the story—implicit, but never stated—of a proud, traditional, fiercely religious family trying to negotiate the tension between life in the larger world of America—from which their Daily Bread is inescapably buttered—and the smaller world of Swan's Island where identity, belief, occupation, are handed down in fiercely personal rites of passage. And in the lack of this explicit context, the "clips" from the kids' lives: Jaime's yearning to go off island and become a teacher, Josh's and Emmie's to stay home

The Call of the Running Tide, A Portrait of an Island Family by Nancy Price Graff; photographs by Richard Howard. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1992. 77 pages, hardcover, \$16.95

Reviewed by Cynthia Bourgeault

The *Call of the Running Tide* is of particular interest to me because it tells the story of neighbors of mine on Swan's Island—Spencer and Wendy Joyce and their kids Joshua, Jaime, and Emmie, now 17, 15, and 13. Following this lobstering family through the course of a year, author Nancy Graff and photographer Richard Howard attempt to convey a realistic, personal portrait of an American family plying the trade of lobstering while going about the business of all families: growing up, coping, sharing good times, and weathering hard ones. Though never explicitly stated in the text itself, the book, in 7 1/2-inch x 10-inch trim size with copious black and white photography, is intended as part of a series introducing junior-high age readers to occupations around America.

Graff has certainly come to the right place—and the right people—to find her story; Swan's Island is a bastion of the Maine lobstering industry, and the Joyces are among the island's "first families," with a 10-generation tradition of competence and determination (great-great-grandfather Herman Joyce, for example, led the entire New England fleet in mackerel landings during the 1880s). Today, with innovations in technology, finance, and marketing rapidly changing the face of the

and fish, seem like merely casual conversation, not the life-and-death questions they really are. And Spencer's irrepressible prankstering—he is an acknowledged island master—and Wendy's pellucid calm and dignity, have virtually no place in this workmanlike account of baits and traps, getting and spending, spring-summer-fall-winter.

In one sense, that story is not conspicuous in its absence. At the level at which the book unpacks itself, there is a continuous, craftsmanlike job. But sensitive readers can hardly fail to catch an implicit melody deeper than the libretto—in Spencer's faraway, homing look in several photos; in momentary expressions of fear, yearning, regret on so many faces, gently hinting at a story not being delved into. Perhaps it was thought that junior high readers might be too young to appreciate the human drama, or that this dimension was irrelevant to the book's pedagogical purposes. Certainly that deeper music was not inaccessible—it was at least as there for the taking as the intricate details of lobstering the author caught so well. But in her keenness to speak *about* this family, Graff misses the real opportunity, which would have been to allow the family members to speak for themselves, in their own voices. Surely Josh, Jaime, and Emmie, teenagers in the same age group as the proposed readership of this book, might have had much to say to other young teenagers about choices—roots versus wings, family pride, identity—the universal questions played out against the concrete here-and-now of lobstering. What's sad is that the priorities were not attuned—and a golden opportunity was missed.

(A slightly different version of this review appeared in *Down East Magazine*, May 1992.)

Beachcruising by Douglas Alvord. Camden, Maine: International Marine Publishing, Co., 1992. 146 pages, paperback. \$15.95

Reviewed by David R. Getchell, Sr.

Doug Alvord is first an artist, an attribute revealed in the excellent illustrations and the lighthearted tone of this pleasant and informative book. This same artistic sense contributes to its major weaknesses that, while essentially harmless, leave questions unanswered and gaps unfilled.

When the boating world in general discovers beach cruising — more aptly defined as cruising in small boats — there is a good chance the sport will blossom as a major pastime, as sea kayaking has already. Doug Alvord's *Beachcruising*, to my knowledge the first modern book to deal with small boat cruising on a broad scale, will serve as a good introduction to the subject and start the move toward greater awareness of this exciting use of little boats.

Why small-boat cruising has been slow in catching on is somewhat of a mystery to this longtime beach cruising reviewer. Unbeknownst to most big-boat owners and yachtsmen, they cruise on about a third of the available water in their deep-draft vessels, leaving what many of us believe to be the most interesting two thirds of the inshore to others; namely, those of us cruising in smaller craft. Alvord knows this and presents the philosophy of going small in a brief and beautiful foreword by the late Hank Taft, author with his wife Jan of the highly popular *A Cruising Guide to the Maine Coast*. The Tafts' book was written for yachtsmen, but Hank, who rowed much of the coast in a 15-foot Matinicus peapod, had a big place in his big heart for small boats.

Like Taft, Doug Alvord is a traditionalist when it comes to the sea. His primary love is for sailboats, and he opens his introduction with the joy of sailing up to a "new" island off the Maine coast, going ashore, and making camp. Such a casual approach is also the traditional view of the islands — that they are wild and free for all to use — and while this attitude once was tolerated, if not heartily accepted by all owners, it is not a practice that should set the tone for a modern book on beach cruising. Times

are changing, island property values are soaring, use of islands both authorized and unauthorized is increasing, the island natives are restless, many private island owners are restlesser, and a chorus of critics sit on the mainland shore decrying all the bad things they imagine the newcomers in small boats are doing to the islands. Granted carefree beach cruising sounds like blissful fun; the truth is that its day has almost passed.

To his credit, Alvord is aware of the need for responsibility on the part of beach cruisers and others who use the islands, and later in the book he makes fairly strong amends for the faux pas in his introduction by devoting Chapter Four to "The Marine Environment: Use, Access, and Conservation." But still, the essence of what Alvord calls "freestyle cruising" pervades the book — and this is unfortunate. This reviewer was once a charter member of the "freestyle" school, but I am now certain that unless a concerted effort is made to use only those islands where one knows in advance that he or she is welcome, greater restriction and policing are sure to follow.

There is a lot of good and useful information in the book, particularly so if sailing is your favorite means of travel on the water. Alvord obviously is an experienced hand at the helm of sailboats both small and large, and his writing on rigging and cruising small sailing craft is some of the best in the book. His comments on rowing and powerboats, by contrast, are relatively brief and, in the case of motorboats, in my opinion, not very informative.

Chapter Two on gear and equipment is good: sound advice on the basics, fine suggestions for a few niceties, awareness that it is always wet out there and how to prepare accordingly. Since much saltwater beach cruising is on islands, however, greater emphasis should have been placed on carrying plenty of fresh water — in several containers so that all will not be lost if a leak develops. Also, the section on anchors and anchoring is weak, in light of my experience, anyway. Alvord considers the Danforth type the best all-round anchor for small boats; I like it least because in small-boat sizes it is just too light and has a tendency to skitter over many of the hard bottoms of the inshore. My big four-tined grapple grabs almost instantly on nearly any kind of bottom, and on a short scope too, an important advantage when working close to shore. Skill at anchoring or mooring to shore, by the way, is critical to beach cruising, and there are many good methods that eliminate the need for a tender. I wish the subject got the attention it needs. The author's advice on getting rid of human waste — to dig a deep hole and bury it — is passé, and on many islands impossible because of thin soils. Today's method is to dig a shallow hole, cover the waste, and burn or carry ashore the toilet paper. Still better alternatives are to relieve oneself well below the tideline or carry all solid waste home with you (yes, it's done regularly!).

On a more uplifting note, Chapter Five concerns itself with "Cruising Cuisine: The Good Life Afloat." Some of the basic products of foraging — clams, mussels, fish, blueberries, rose hips, and beach peas — are mentioned, but these only touch the surface of possibilities. Nearly all islands are lush gardens of exotic tasting greens, unusual seafoods, and delicious fruits (some of the best apples I have ever eaten came from the drops of an ancient island apple tree). One should starve on an island only because one's tastes are centered on hamburgers and fries alone. Otherwise, a feast is at hand.

Most guides of the *Beachcruising* sort end with suggested cruises. In a switch on this style, Alvord chooses to expand on an opening statement of the chapter that "Freedom is a hard thing to define," and shares two cruises with his readers. The first is an exciting island visit marked by a typical coastal windstorm. It is wild, memorable, and brief, as is the author's description of the event. The second is the fictional account from a Damariscove lifesaver's journal, an historical event based on Alvord's perusal of diaries and papers from the old Lifesaving Service and the Damariscove Station.

It is a rather strange way to end a beach cruising guide. But it is a nice artistic touch.

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
Captain 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 Stephen Cobb
PO Box 798 Camden, ME 04843
207-236-8489

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

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

NATALIE TODD
Down East Windjammer Cruises
129' Schooner
100 passengers and 4 crew
Hailing Port, Bar Harbor, Maine
Captain Steven F. Pagels
PO Box 8, Cherryfield, ME 04622
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Jeff Dworsky

A Farewell

MAY SARTON

For a while I shall still be leaving,
Looking back at you as you slip away
Into the magic islands of the mind.
But for a while now all alive, believing
That in a single poignant hour
We did say all that we could ever say
In a great flowing out of radiant power.
It was like seeing and then going blind.

After a while we shall be cut in two
Between real islands where you live
And a far shore where I'll no longer keep
The haunting image of your eyes, and you,
As pupils widen, widen to deep black
And I am able neither to love or grieve
Between fulfillment and heartbreak.
The time will come when I can go to sleep.

But for a while still, centered at last,
Contemplate a brief amazing union,
Then watch you leave and then let you go.
I must not go back to the murderous past
Nor force a passage through to some safe landing,
But float upon this moment of communion
Entranced, astonished by pure understanding—
Passionate love dissolved like summer snow.

excerpted from *Letters from Maine*
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