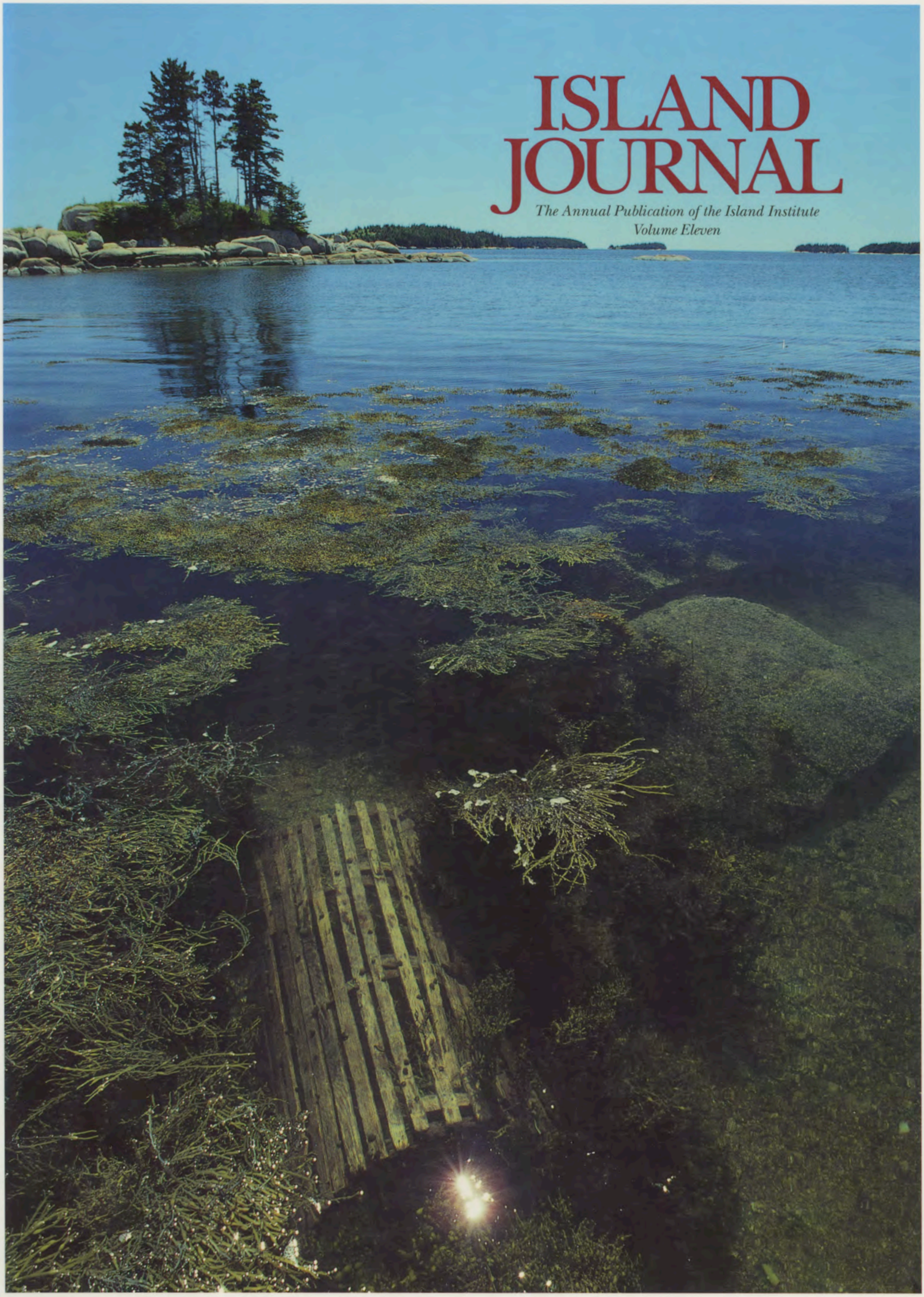

ISLAND JOURNAL

The Annual Publication of the Island Institute
Volume Eleven

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Peter Ralston

A Question of Scale

An Eye for Maine," title of this year's folio section, is also in some ways the key phrase for the entire issue. One of the marvelous aspects of the human eye is its ability to shift scale, from the broadest panorama to the smallest detail. As we selected the materials for this, our eleventh *Island Journal*, we realized that what we are really dealing with, thematically, is the question of scale. The large forces constantly shaping and reshaping our island earth—both natural forces, such as tide and current, and the sweeping changes created by our human capacity to tamper with these forces—play out in the real and the particular: whether there are fish in the sea, whether real estate is affordable, how and in what ways our concept of traditional community survives. And as ever, islands are excruciatingly pinioned between the global and the particular; as such they become critically important platforms for viewing the whole of our island earth.

Broadening the scope of last year's *Journal*, we continue to situate ourselves within the body of water that nourishes us: the Gulf of Maine—this year spanning both ends of the Gulf, from the Bay of Fundy to the Cape islands of southern New England. From the global viewpoint, aided by satellite imagery, we look at water currents, fish habitats, the rare combination of geological and hydrological features that make our Gulf such a productive body of water. Meanwhile, sociologically, we look at a different sort of rising tide: the rising tide of tourism slowly engulfing the Gulf from west to east. We peek in on Grand Manan, at the eastern edge, in the blush of a budding tourism sustained by a new, larger ferry, and full of confidence that this Pandora's Box can be managed. We look upwind, see Martha's Vineyard, Block Island, and Nantucket struggling under the deluge which Maine islands have only started to experience.

The question of scale inescapably raises the question of choice. Spencer Apollonio's comments about understanding fish habitat in the Gulf of Maine play out against Cabot Martin's agonizing tale of the loss of an entire livelihood and cultural identity on Newfoundland when overfishing led to the collapse of its cod fishery—in part because the fishermen and politicians failed to heed the clear pattern and refused to sacrifice short-term gain for long-term economic and environmental stability.

There are no pat answers to these questions; it is perhaps enough of a starting point to hold the contradictions themselves, knowing that island life is in its own way intensely vulnerable to both ends of the scale. Against the backdrop of these global pressures, island life plays out with the intimate, rich detail created by the inescapable fact of boundaries. On these rocks we live, fall in love, struggle through the winters, found new towns, blow off steam at boat races. Love, passion, poetry, art, go on. The global patterns are lived out in the particularities of our own life moments. And as has been the *Journal* tradition for more than a decade, we celebrate this particularity; it is what makes island life as it is.

— the Editors
Island Journal, 1994

Peter Ralston

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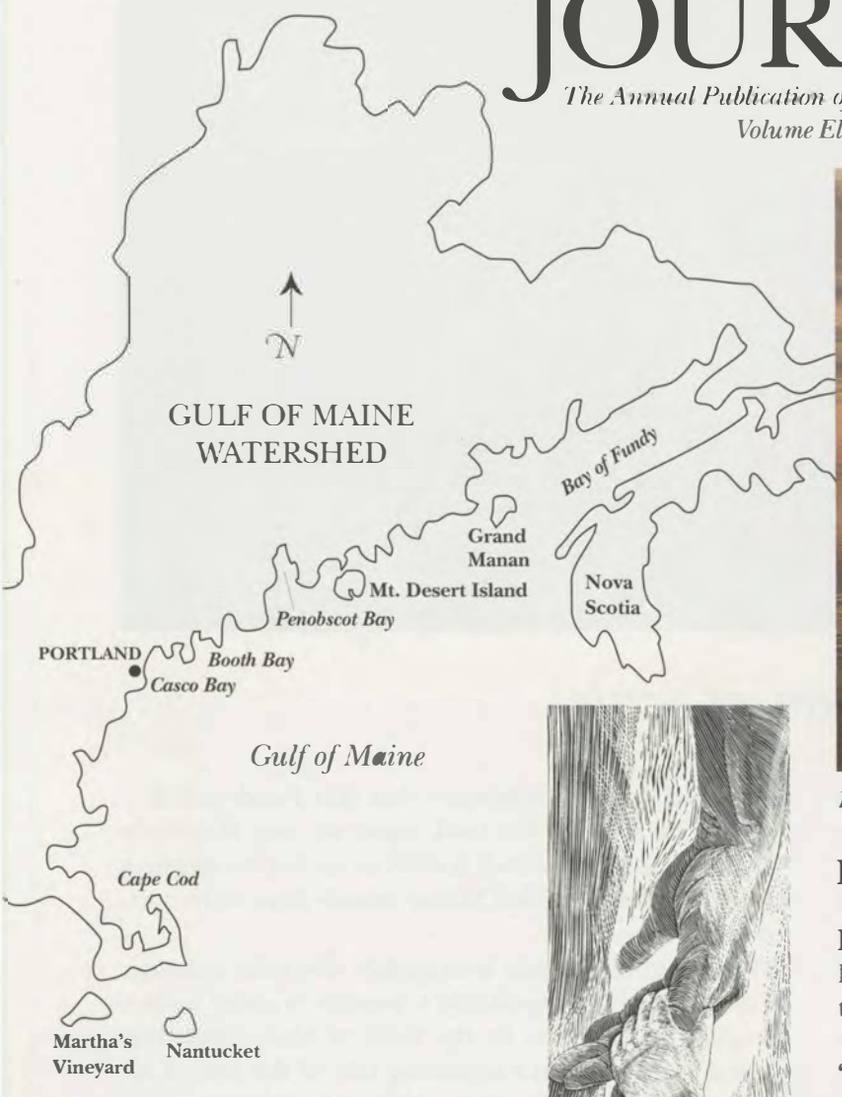

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Sustaining Islands And Their Communities

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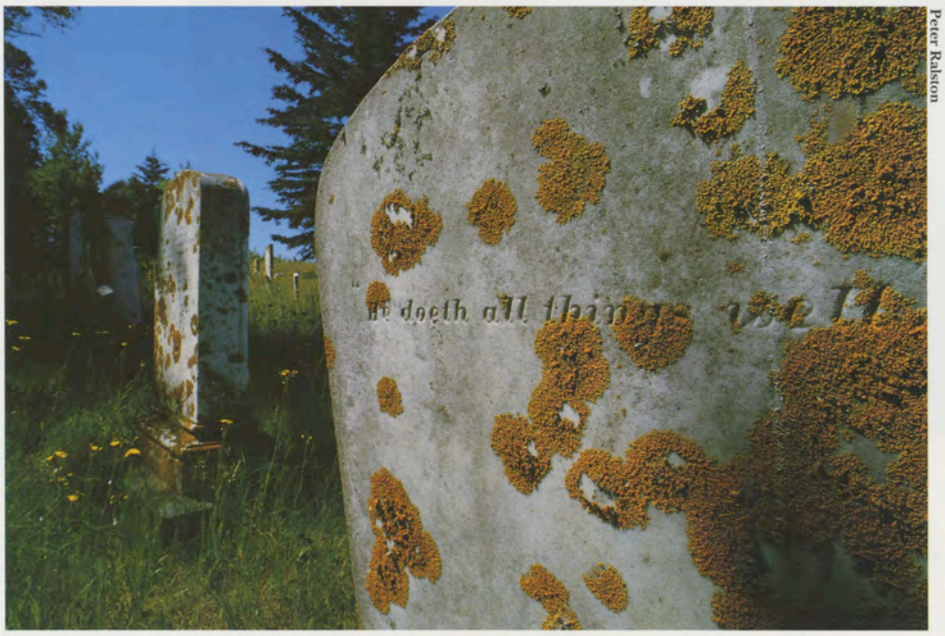


Peter Ralston

Thomas J. Watson, Jr.
1914 - 1993

When Founding Member Thomas J. Watson, Jr. died in Greenwich, Connecticut, last December, the world lost a remarkably talented and gifted man. Tom was a generous contributor to the Institute, but far more, all of us who knew him will miss him as a true friend. He asked tough, challenging questions ... and encouraged us at the Institute to consider all different options as we charted our institutional course.

Photo Courtesy of Michael McGuire

Tom Watson was truly a remarkable man—one of this country's greatest business leaders, ambassador to the Soviet Union, early advocate for nuclear disarmament, loving husband, father, and grandfather, superb sailor and aviator, and so much more. There are few people who could be better company on a quiet beach walk or in a boat. Every time the phone rang and Tom's voice sprang forth, I knew that an adventure of some sort was in the offing.

The photograph above was taken on a walk on North Haven with Tom five years ago, at the old cemetery down near the shore of Kent Cove. As I made the exposure, I found myself thinking, "This really says it all about Tom." It does.

Peter Ralston
Art Director, *Island Journal*
Associate Director, Island Institute

Peter Ralston (4)

FROM THE PILOTHOUSE

Aboard FISH HAWK *and* RAVEN

PHILIP W. CONKLING

SAILORS USED TO SAY there are two ways to navigate in the fog: either facing forward with a Bible in hand or facing aft with a bottle of rum. There is wisdom in this image, as anyone who has spent time in the eerie opaqueness of an island fog cannot fail to appreciate. In the absence of either of these onboard aids to navigation, we are left simply gripping the wheel and trusting the essential accuracy of our instruments and course. And there is still plenty of room for error, as one of the captains on the Vinalhaven ferry run learned—not once but twice this past summer— during groundings of the GOVERNOR CURTIS in Lairy's Narrows, the tight, rock-strewn passage between West Penobscot Bay and Hurricane Sound. After the second grounding, an anonymous navigator with a sense of humor nailed a large piece of plywood to a tree on the north end of Lairy's Island, complete with an arrow, reading "Keep Left."

FISH HAWK is mostly a dream to operate in summer fogs; shoal draft and highly maneuverable, there is a greater margin for error in the ledgy waters around islands than aboard RAVEN, say, or most other boats of lobstermen or cruising yachtsmen. But anyone can get fooled in the fog. The Penobscot Bay lobsterboat races, scheduled last July in Stonington, were held during a prolonged weekend of pea soup fog. Not only was the fleet of spectators considerably thinned, so was the number of entrants. The fog rose and fell throughout the afternoon, and a handful of races went off as planned, but the last race, "the fastest boat afloat," was unforgettable. It was about to be canceled, to everyone's great disappointment, when the race committee thought it sensed a thinning of the vapor. From a mile away down at the finish line, you could hear the muffled sound of these huge engines in their sleek hulls wide open, but could see nothing. Then a scant quarter mile away, three roaring, ghostly silhouettes part the shrouded course and burst spectacularly into view, hurtling toward the finish line. Quite something! Afterwards the lobsterboats rafted up in all their mar-

velousness at Billings Marine for beer, barbecue, and reliving the short glories of the day.

Approaching Monhegan, November, 1993

A couple of weeks later, FISH HAWK is underway in early evening under lowering conditions in Casco Bay. We head for Boothbay Harbor, a halfway point, and arrange to have dinner with our friend, the skipper of the stately SHERMAN ZWICKER, a wood schooner now plying the coast in the cruise trade. During our evening together our friend tells us how he discovered this love of his life down on the Nova Scotia coast in Lunenberg, and later met her Newfie crew, the last dorymen on the last wooden dory schooner to handline on the Grand Banks before the trawlers came and dragged up all the cod.

After a quiet night aboard, we ran across the harbor to Mouse Island to observe the shoreline erosion control plan that Annette Naegel, the Institute's Science and Stewardship Director, has prescribed to reduce the ocean's appetite for a precious piece of island beach. Not long after we've kicked over the traces at the beach, a massive gray hull materializes out of the murk off Squirrel Island and steams directly up in front of the island while we stand on the shore slack-jawed at the specter of one of Bath's guided missile frigates assembling itself directly ahead of us. Our host, a former Navy man himself, will not let this marvelous entrance go unobserved, as he wrestles a small cannon out of its hiding place and puts a round into her while his wife and visitors look on dubiously. In the exact instant the report goes off, the U.S.S. ANZIO cuts her anchor loose, the sound of the rattling chain through the steel chock ringing across the harbor. Our host beams: timing is everything. Then out of nowhere a Cobra attack helicopter swoops in, and for the next 30 minutes performs unbelievably aggressive maneuvers 100 feet off the water before landing on the impossibly small flight deck of the frigate, its rotor blades spinning 15 feet from the pilothouse bulkhead and utter disaster. I don't know if the emotion that grips the chest is exactly patriotic, but one thing is abundantly clear: you would not want to be chased down by that machine.

We have miles to go, and so we cast off, to run underneath the knife-like bow of the ANZIO, and swing a westerly course out past Seguin for Ragged Island, once the home and refuge of Maine's most beloved poetess, Edna St. Vincent Millay. We meet with the owners of the island, who acquired it from Millay's estate, and walk part of the rugged interior pasture with its elegant stone walls that are rapidly being overtaken by the ubiquitous cat spruce. We discuss the various options that islanders have resorted to over the centuries to combat the march of spruce across the island landscape and reluctantly conclude that it would take a crew the size of the ANZIO's to reverse the grip of nature here.

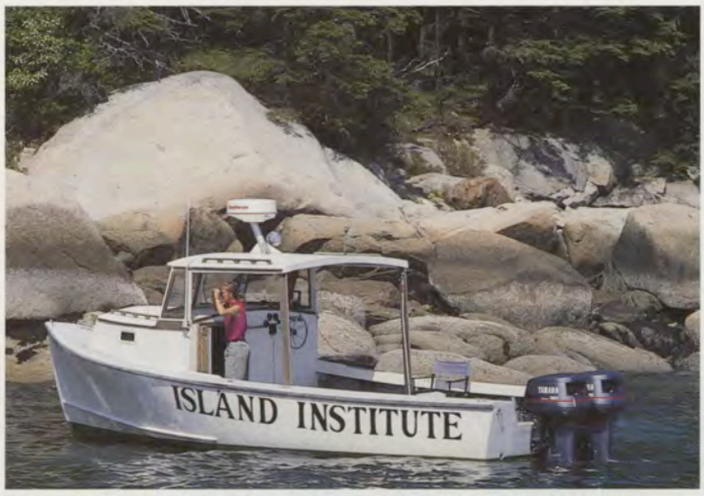
From Ragged's anchorage we cross the outer reaches of Broad Sound and head for the back side of Cliff Island for an meeting with a cross section of the island population. At the meeting, the head of the Cliff Island Lobstermen's Association tells me of the terrible snarl that has developed between island lobstermen and their Portland counterparts. With groundfish catches so reduced, more and more fishermen from Portland have re-geared their boats to go lobster fishing. Large offshore boats with long trawls bent on end to end—30 traps to a trawl—have set their gear over Cliff, Long, and Chebeague Island grounds and a showdown seems imminent. In fact a few weeks later, Marine Resources commissioner William Brennan places a 3 p.m. curfew on lobsterboats in Portland Harbor to avoid an escalation of the confrontation which threatens to turn nastier. It seems apparent that in an age of declining wild stocks of cod and haddock and heavily exploited shellfish stocks of lobsters and urchins, the old rules of the road are breaking down. "If the Island Institute cares about helping year-round island communities," the lobsterman tells me, "you'll help us do something to protect island fishing grounds."

CLIFF ISLAND
FISHERMEN'S MEETING,
JULY 1993

"If the Island Institute cares about helping year-round island communities," the lobsterman tells me, "you'll help us do something to protect island fishing grounds."

The feeling of being pinned down by Portland boats is the talk of the waterfront not only on Cliff, but also on Long and Chebeague where we spend the next few days. On Long Island some of this business is overshadowed by the glow of independence which shines on the faces of the supporters of the independence movement who successfully managed a campaign, sanctioned by the Legislature, to part the island's historic ties with the City of Portland. There are plenty of new problems besetting the new polity on Long Island, including a demand from the DEP that the Town tear down its recently constructed transfer station and move it 100 feet farther away from a wetland. But in the new Town Office, which has risen like the mythical bird from an abandoned Phoenix Oil Company building, the feeling of being in control of the island's fate is as fresh as the blush on a seaside rose.

A month later in mid-September FISH HAWK and RAVEN carry staff, Trustees, and assorted guests across Penobscot Bay to Hurricane Island for the Annual Meeting of the Institute whose focus this year is on marine resource issues. With us to give the keynote address is Cabot Martin, the head of the Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Association. His remarks about what has happened to the fishing communities now that the cod have disappeared are so stirring that we have published his talk elsewhere in this volume. Late that night in a little room covered by nautical charts, Cabot has an epiphany—he realizes he is looking at water depths in *feet*, not in fathoms as he originally thought. He just keeps shaking his head and saying, "Look at all that beautiful water, all that beautiful water!" Maine has an embarrassment of marine riches, he tells us in the tones of a northern prophet which is altogether fitting from the son of a Newfoundland minister. "You must not let this be squandered; you mustn't."



Science and Stewardship Director Annette Naegel aboard FISH HAWK

Not long afterwards, RAVEN and FISH HAWK with most of the staff of the Institute raft up in the lee of Heron Neck to celebrate the transfer of the lighthouse keeper's residence and 10 acres of Green's Island to the Institute. A project we have been working on for nearly four years has finally come to fruition, although it has taken literally an Act of Congress to make it happen. The lighthouse keeper's building had burned in 1989 and been left open to the elements. Three years ago we had intervened with the Coast Guard to forestall the demolition of the deteriorating structure—one of a handful of Maine lighthouses on the National Register of Historic Places—and said we would help identify qualified individuals interested in renovating the structure. In time bought with the help of sympathetic media, we had found a pair of qualified individuals including one who successfully renovated the similarly deteriorated Damariscove Island Lifesaving Station off Boothbay Harbor. But in the intervening years there had been changes in policy and changes in personnel, and the Coast Guard, unable to produce a lease, again scheduled the building's demolition. Finally the effective intervention of Senator George Mitchell accomplished during a brief Congressional session what the Coast Guard could not accomplish in three long years. This is of course what people mean when it appears the government is coming at you rather than coming to you.

ISLAND CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER, 1993

"Look at all that beautiful water, all that beautiful water!" Maine has an embarrasment of marine riches, Cabot Martin tells us in the tones of a northern prophet which is altogether fitting from the son of a Newfoundland minister. "You must not let this be squandered; you mustn't."

RAVEN, meanwhile, has been carving a niche for herself as, among other things, an inter-island school bus. In May, she logged her most memorable trip of the season, providing round trip transportation of grade schoolers and assorted teachers and parents from Monhegan, Matinicus, and Frenchboro to Isle au Haut for the Sixth Annual Small Schools Conference. With Islesford and Great Cranberry contingents arriving on the Maine Sea Coast Mission's SUNBEAM, 50 island kids and 20 adults join forces for two days of fun, food, and a chance to be together. For some kids from the most remote of the island schools, it is the first time there are enough teammates for a real game of softball, or a chance to sit and talk with a couple of kids in your own grade.

Now, in October, RAVEN is still in gear, headed out across Penobscot Bay under nearly perfect skies, to pick up 10 Vinalhaven students at the Thorofare and take them across to join 11 North Haven kids for a day of field and classroom activities focusing on island environments with their teachers and Institute staff. The kids break up into three groups and rotate between a field session collecting soil and tree cones with Science and Stewardship Director Annette Naegel, a town government session aboard RAVEN with Community Services Director Victoria Dyer, and a computer science session with Suzy Meyer. Suzy introduces the kids to the Institute's satellite image software, called GAIA (currently featured in the curriculum of 94 classrooms) which allows students to see their backyard from space and create "theme maps" of different environments around their towns.

Come late fall, the weather begins to overtake FISH HAWK, and all her seasonal virtues become edgy liabilities. FISH HAWK's last trip of 1993 starts early on November 11. We are headed east for a morning meeting on Frenchboro and an afternoon meeting in Burnt Coat Harbor on Swan's before returning to Rockland at the end of the day.

Isle au Haut, May, 1993, Inter-Island Small Schools Conference

It's a pristine morning: cold and still on the water, but with no sea running in the Bay outside the Rockland Breakwater. You don't get many days that start out this well in November. The sky is rosy, more orange than red and thus not yet worrisome; but there's a big cold front that's supposed to punch through sometime soon, so we are eager to get underway.

Victoria has brought some muffins which have disappeared by the Breakwater Light, and we throttle up across West Penobscot Bay, through the Fox Islands Thorofare, across East Penobscot Bay, into Merchant Row, up Jericho Bay, around Halibut Rocks, down Toothaker Bay to Southwest Approach, and into Lunt Harbor. Crossing the last open stretch, we hail the barge laying the new power cable between Swan's and Frenchboro—the cable is being buried, a tortuously slow operation, but one which will hopefully put an end to the frequent cable partings that pitch Frenchboro into 19th century darkness and powerlessness.

ISLE AU HAUT,
INTER-ISLAND SMALL
SCHOOLS CONFERENCE
MAY 1993

For some kids, it is the first time there are enough teammates for a real game of softball....

We tie up at the town landing in the inner part of Lunt Harbor and head up the hill to the Fire House where a meeting has been called of the Frenchboro Future Development Corporation, which owns and manages six of the seven houses built five years ago to augment the year-round population of this small island community. (The seventh is owned by the town and reserved for the school teacher.) David Lunt appears as if out of nowhere in his jeep and we are whisked up to the meeting where another dozen people are gathered to consider a letter the Corporation has received from the Maine State Housing Authority demanding payment on the $250,000 note the Corporation owes, but has had trouble meeting since two years ago when more than half the newcomers left.

Today it's reassuring to know that all seven of the new Frenchboro affordable houses are full, but everyone on the island knows it's been a struggle. A year and a half ago, four of the original six homesteaders had abandoned their effort to resettle on remote Frenchboro, victims of weather, isolation and a downward-spiraling economy. The youngest couple were the first to leave; they had just had enough of island living and "removed" to Massachusetts where there was a lot more going on. Another family left after their lobsterboat nearly sank in heavy freezing spray one late December day. "He kinda lost his courage after that," other fishermen said, knowing how that can happen. Then the salmon farm closed down and two other families left. However, the two remaining families are survivors and are ready to buy their homes if the final details of the financing can be worked out.

The new families that have taken the others' places hardly have stars in their eyes. Twenty-year-old April Davis, who grew up on Frenchboro and has returned with her fiance, certainly knows she's getting into. Another family originally hails from Swan's Island and has moved to Frenchboro from Rockland where he worked for the O'Hara processing plant until the groundfish gave out. Maybe not all of the current crop will stay, but there will be more survivors and slowly, slowly the resettling of this small, proud community will succeed. Out here, you must take the long view.

The meeting adjourns after voting to make a good faith payment of a significant amount of interest owed. As we wander back down the hill to the harbor, we can't help but feel the bite of the wind eddying around the waterfront, and we know the bell off Harbor Island will be clanging in the building sea. We poke our way through the narrow dredged channel of Frenchboro's inner harbor, surrounded by the harbor houses which are mostly neat as pins, arrayed around on all sides. This is only Victoria's second visit to Frenchboro. Although she spent virtually her entire life on Vinalhaven, just under 20 nautical miles away, it still comes as a shock for those who have never tried it to learn how difficult inter-island travel is, perhaps the ultimate example of the Maine truism that you can't get there from here. I recall for Victoria how a decade ago, when I first visited Frenchboro, except for the Lunt and Lunt Lobster wharf at the harbor entrance,

the rest of the waterfront had deteriorated into a picturesque but sorry state of disrepair. Most of the houses lacked insulation, foundations, and furnaces; a few had only outhouses. But between the dredging of the inner harbor which opened up a more secure winter anchorage, and the town's first Community Development Block Grant award for housing rehab back in 1985, tens of thousands of dollars have been invested in and around the harbor, and the small fleet looks, if not exactly prosperous, at least to be holding its own. This is no dying island town.

We cross Southwest Approach in a building westerly sea on our way across to Swan's. The spray from one sea breaks over the pilothouse, but we duck into the lee of Baker and Scrag Islands, the back entrance to Burnt Coat Harbor, and approach Swan's new fish plant over on the Minturn or easterly shore. Tying up at the new float, we head into the plant to find Sonny Sprague, General Manager of Island Aquaculture Company. After 28 years as a selectman, Sonny has resigned his post to head up the effort to maintain the salmon and trout farm here on Swan's, which has become a mainstay of the island economy, providing employment for roughly one out of every five year-round islanders. Although some members of the summer community had opposed the farm when it began four years ago, the local effort to rescue the operation (after Key Bank foreclosed on the original owners in March 1992) has received broad support from natives and summer people alike. Summer resident Tom Cabot, "Old Tom," as Sonny calls him, has made the lead contribution to get the farm in local hands and others have joined in.

FRENCHBORO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CORP. MEETING, NOVEMBER, 1993

Today's it's reassuring to know that all seven of the new houses are full. This is no dying town....

The first fish of the season are just about to be harvested and there is some very encouraging news; the average size of the salmon in the pens already exceeds 8 pounds eviscerated, larger than the average achieved during the past four years when the farm was not under local management. This is significant because of the important price differential between 8-10 pound salmon versus 6-8 pounds. Sonny is modest about this achievement, but the fact is, this results from the day-in-day-out commitment Sonny and his crew have made to get out on the cages and feed the fish on the exposed Toothaker site during good weather and poor. Under the previous management, rough weather during the fall often saw the crew staying ashore attending to other useful but less essential tasks.

Sonny walks us through the new plant including an inspection of the new ice machine he has finished jury-rigging, but he is eager to show us the feeding out in Toothaker Cove. We climb back aboard FISH HAWK and stick our bow out around Hockamock Head into a freshening 20 knot westerly breeze as the cold front begins to cascade across the coast in earnest. Sonny's crew are finishing the feeding in the last pens, as the shadows lengthen across the cove and the day grows grayer and colder. It's all we can do to come up alongside the pens, but we manage to get lines secured and climb up onto the catwalk that surrounds these 70-foot diameter steel cages. As Mike Camber and Jake Cease hurl feed in a neat arc across the undulating pens, the water inside breaks into a white froth when the salmon boil up from below to feed. The sight cannot fail to stir the blood. With upwards of 10,000 fish in this pen, each weighing 8 or 9 pounds and worth (we hope) $2.50 per pound, there is a quarter of a million dollars breaking the surface to feed every minute or two. And when the silver-sided beauties circle down and away into the depths, the crew can take real pride in how healthy these fish look and are. Unlike the densely packed salmon farms in Cobscook Bay, there have been no disease problems out here.

We take our leave of Sonny and his crew, anxious to recross three bays before darkness takes hold. Victoria has a firm two-handed grip on the bulkhead rail as we begin to plow up and over the cresting westerly seas that have steadily built over the past six hours. Down Jericho Bay, the seas break off the starboard bow, but in Merchant Row we have a partial lee until fetching Scraggy Island when the hull shudders while taking the full fetch of the seas romping down East Penobscot Bay. When we enter the lee of Fox Islands Thorofare and come abeam Brown's Boat Yard, not a soul can be seen stirring on the waterfront. The dark is drawing nigh, (as we used to sing in Sunday School), but we still have the west Bay to cross. Coming by the Sugar Loaves, I fire up the radar to try and locate the nun off Crabtree Point which is tough to see in the chop. Rounding the Point, local knowledge says you line up Brown's Head Light (where Victoria used to live, when she was Vinalhaven Town Manger) with the Drunkard Ledge spindle to give you your course crossing the bar. Of course it's dead low tide, but there's no real worry about the five foot spot since FISH HAWK only draws three, but in a heaving sea, it still sets you to wondering.... I turn on the spotlight to get a fix on the approach of the waves which are notoriously higher around Stand In Point than at any other place between us and Swan's Island. There's about a half mile of really nasty water for a 26-foot boat, but FISH HAWK just keeps climbing steadily up their sides and sliding down their backs. It's a sight to see. When the Rockland Breakwater heaves into view, I take a slow deep breath and Victoria loosens her ten knuckle grip on the rail.

(continued on page 91)

EXPORTING EXPERIENCE

How much "islandness" can Grand Manan's new tourists carry away before there's none left?

DAVID D. PLATT

Photography by Peter Ralston

Whale Cove, Grand Manan. Dories await service at herring weirs, all of which have names such as the Gully, The Star, Iron Lady, and Jubilee.

Facing page: "Sticking" herring for smoking at Grand Harbour. Smouldering birch logs provide the smoke.

THE LONG LINE of cars and trucks leading downhill to the ferry dock at Black's Harbour, New Brunswick, can be unnerving if you're not prepared for it. The scale seems wrong: too many vehicles on a narrow road not built for a traffic jam. "With a line this long," you're likely to wonder, "how will I ever get on the boat?"

Don't be concerned; you will get aboard. Six times a day in summer (three times in winter) this same line forms as travelers arrive for the scheduled arrivals and departures of the GRAND MANAN V, the larger of the two ferries that link the New Brunswick mainland with the province's biggest and most populous island, Grand Manan.

The length of the line of vehicles is explained when the ferry steams into Black's Harbour. The red-and-white GRAND MANAN V isn't like the coastal ferries in Maine, which carry at most two dozen cars. Like the SCOTIA PRINCE that makes the crossing from Maine to Nova Scotia or the ferries that serve Nantucket or Martha's Vineyard off the Massachusetts coast, she is a true ship: nearly 250 feet long, multi-decked, capable of sticking to her schedule even in the Bay of Fundy's foul winter weather. She can carry 300 passengers and more than 60 cars (or a smaller number of trucks and bulk tankers) and even the sections of a full-sized prefabricated building. The year before last, the makings of Grand Manan's new funeral home arrived aboard the ferry.

Dark Harbour and its unusual natural bar punctuate the western shore of Grand Manan.

The question for island residents, faced with what must seem like a tidal wave of visitors, is how to avoid being swamped; how to keep their collective venture into tourism from destroying the "experience" the visitors have come to buy.

Since entering into service four years ago, the GRAND MANAN V has changed—some would say transformed—life in the island community that she serves. Between 1989 (the last year before the new ferry went into service) and the end of the 1993 season, summer visitors to the Grand Manan Museum rose from 5,520 to 10,250. The number of bed-and-breakfast establishments and housekeeping cabins increased dramatically during the same years, as did the population of restaurants, small stores, guided whale watches, and other businesses catering to visitors during the summer/fall tourist season. Adventure High Sea Kayaking, based in North Head, the island's ferry port, served 400 customers last year and saw its business grow 80 percent in the previous two years.

Grand Manan's tourist entrepreneurs took time to awake to the possibilities. It took three years for the museum numbers to rise from 5,500 to 7,400, for example; last year it was still possible for business at one restaurant set up on a former fish wharf to double. Still, the numbers suggest that an era of growth and change is at hand on Grand Manan, and the pace of change could accelerate as residents realize that their traditional ways of earning a living aren't as reliable as they once were.

"Tourism is an export commodity," declares island resident Eric Allaby, turning around the usual notion that tourists, having come from someplace else, are a kind of import. A writer, diver, historian, and artist who serves in the New Brunswick legislature, Allaby exemplifies the versatility that has been a way of life on Grand Manan since it was settled by American Loyalists two centuries ago. Making a living on Grand Manan has often meant combining fishing, farming, and a variety of other skills such as net-mending, fish-smoking, boatbuilding, and building construction. Tourism is simply a new variation on an old pattern.

"What you're exporting is the experience," Allaby says, expounding on tourism in general. In Grand Manan's case that means the sights and sounds of a community where relative isolation and economic conditions have preserved some traditional ways. The question for island residents, faced with what must seem like a tidal wave of visitors, is how to avoid being swamped; how to keep their collective venture into tourism from destroying the "experience" the visitors have come to buy.

DORIES, DULSE, WEIRS WITH NAMES

The experience that visitors look for is waiting on the beach at Whale Cove, where Sheldon Bass and a small crew are delivering a truckload of "twine" (fishing net) back to its owners after a session of repairs. The big net's destination is The Star weir, a distant collection of stakes that Bass, when asked, points out along with several others along the shores of the cove. His willingness to stop and talk with "strangers from away" (as photographers, notebook-toters and other visitors are commonly known on Grand Manan) speaks of a native-to-visitor relationship here that's noteworthy: people on this island are unfailingly polite. At the ferry ticket window, in a restaurant, in a fish smoking establishment, among dulse-gatherers, on a dock, along a road or on a beach among weirmen—good manners are the rule.

All of Grand Manan's weirs have names: The Gully, The Star, Winter, Jubilee, Eel Brook, Iron Lady, The Spike. Sheldon Bass's business is slower than it once was, even with a strong run of herring this past season, because the number of weirs along the island's western shore has declined. The twine repair job for The Star was made necessary by dogfish, a species whose numbers in the Gulf of Maine have grown as groundfish have declined, and which can tear holes in a net to get at the fish trapped inside.

Another tradition-based experience presents itself on a different beach: Dark Harbour, a few miles southwest of Whale Cove on Grand Manan's western shore. Backed up by steep cliffs and protected from the rough channel outside by an unusual gravel bar, Dark Harbour is the heart of an edible seaweed harvesting business. Seaweed is gathered at low tide and sun-dried on flat gravel beds.

Geologically, Dark Harbour might be called a perched lagoon, with one entrance at its north end. At low tide the water's surface inside the bar is higher

than the ocean outside. The lagoon doesn't drain dry, and there's a 66-foot-deep hole in one spot. Its beach is lined with battered wood dories, each with a chopped-off stern to accommodate an outboard motor. A gasoline-powered winch and cable lifts dories over the bar to shorten the trip to the outside for the seaweed gatherers and others who keep their boats here.

The scene is congenial if a little raffish: plenty of beer cans and more than a few shacks that don't look as if they're equipped with indoor plumbing. Pesky inquiries about the boats, the tide, and the gas-powered winch produce polite responses and smiles.

Across the island in Grand Harbour, a lobster fisherman sits in the sun next to his dock. The scene is classic fare for visitors. His boat, grounded out in the mud at low tide, sits as idly as its owner, waiting for the season to begin on November 1. Traps remain stacked ashore or on the decks until then. The season lasts until June, and there's a limit of 375 traps per fisherman. The current regulations, the lobster fisherman tells his visitors, have been in effect for the past 12 years. The rules seem to be working (catches have held up, at any rate, and fishermen can afford better boats than their counterparts in Maine), although there's talk of less government involvement in lobster fishing in the future because of budget problems.

A weirful of herring, at the right price, can represent a fortune.

Smoking herring is an art, requiring patience and precise timing.

Farther down the island in the village of Seal Cove, a team of men and women at Helshiron Fisheries Ltd. salts herring for smoking, a traditional Grand Manan industry. The fish come to the plant already split, having had their roe removed for export. Workers soak the fish in brine for three days, then arrange them on tarred sticks. Using ladders, men (there seems to be a division of labor here) hang the sticks in a smokehouse. A low fire fueled with spruce or hemlock logs provides the smoke. The fire burns only in daytime, the manager says, to save the cost of having a man there all night. In four weeks the fish attain a golden color and are ready for market. Helshiron operates several smokehouses but seems to be bucking the Grand Manan trend: dozens of these traditionally designed buildings, all wood planked and painted an identical red, are disused and falling into disrepair. Changing tastes among the fish-buying public have left to smoked fish only a remnant of the market it once enjoyed.

The drying fish, like the named weirs, the dories with their identical chopped-off sterns, the dulse crew, the grounded boats, the piled lobster pots and the identical red fish houses, represent the sort of traditional "experience" Grand Manan now "exports" to its legion of visitors. Up to now, at least, the Grand Manan community has found the exercise a profitable one.

Swallowtail Light, North Head, Grand Manan

CHANGE: FISH FARMS, FOREIGN-OWNED LAND

Despite the rising number of visitors, much of the change that has come to Grand Manan has been gradual. A lot of it would have come without tourists—the market for smoked fish isn't what it used to be, for example, while the opportunity to earn money from fish farming has mushroomed. Fishing for herring is as much a boom-and-bust business as ever. Sheldon Bass and his crew confirmed that herring were plentiful this past season, but the demand didn't keep up with the supply and the price fell. "The Russians were the only ones buying this summer," Bass remarked as he surveyed the weirs at Whale Cove. "Then they stopped too."

Salmon aquaculture is the most visible change in the fish business on Grand Manan. Strings of cages are evident at several sites around North Head, where the ferry lands after the trip across from Black's Harbour, and have made inroads at Dark Harbour, once the exclusive domain of the dulse gatherers. A fish food plant enjoys steady business, and the same auxiliary services that benefit from salmon farming in other parts of Canada and the United States—diving, net repair, pen tending, processing, transporting—are doing well, for the time being. Low fish prices are as much a problem for Grand Manan salmon farmers as they are in other parts of the world, and they have direct experience with over-production and disease. Still, aquaculture has become as much a part of the local scene as lobsters and the inshore herring fishery.

Half the land on Grand Manan is owned by people who don't live there. Deborah Daggett, a 10th grade teacher at Grand Manan High School who lives in Seal Cove, suspected this was becoming the case in 1987, when an Arkansas developer purchased vast acreage on Campobello, the New Brunswick island that's visible from Grand Manan on clear days. She assigned her students to study land ownership patterns on their own island. "I wondered how much of Grand Manan was owned by outsiders," she recalled at her kitchen table in Seal Cove. "I knew of a fellow from Switzerland who had bought a large chunk of land." Besides a general impression that an increasing amount of land was being sold to outsiders, that was about all she knew. Armed with a copy of the Grand Manan tax list from the assessor's office, she asked her class to sort out ownership by categories. The results surprised Daggett, whose family has lived on Grand Manan since the time of its earliest settlement by Loyalists.

In 1987 (the year the students did the project) non-residents owned 47 percent of the island. Eleven percent of the total was owned by U.S. citizens, while 4 percent was owned by Canadian non-residents. A small percentage of the non-resident land was owned by people related to Grand Manan residents. The widow of the Swiss man owned 8,000 acres, or 24 percent of the land. A German owned Nantucket Island, which lies just off Grand Manan's eastern shore.

"I thought more would be in U.S. ownership," Daggett said. "But their property did turn out to be mostly shore frontage." Had her students analyzed dollar value, in other words, the U.S. percentage of the total would have been considerably larger. Unlike Prince Edward Island, which is itself a Canadian province, Grand Manan and Campobello don't restrict foreign ownership of land.

Daggett's classes have done the study twice since 1987, with approximately the same results. The market in real estate, incidentally, has slowed on Grand Manan as it has everywhere else in the region. "But prices are still too high," she said. "It makes it difficult for the residents, doesn't it?"

WHERE WILL IT LEAD?

Another Grand Manan observer of long standing is Marcia Cheney at the Grand Manan Museum. From deep island roots (her husband's family settled nearby Cheney's Island in the 1780s), she has in the 80 years of her life seen a lot of changes and brings the long view to this new Pandora's box of tourism.

"A lot of people welcome the tourists," she says when asked about visitors and the changes they have brought. "But a lot of people are not sure—there's fear about land being bought up."

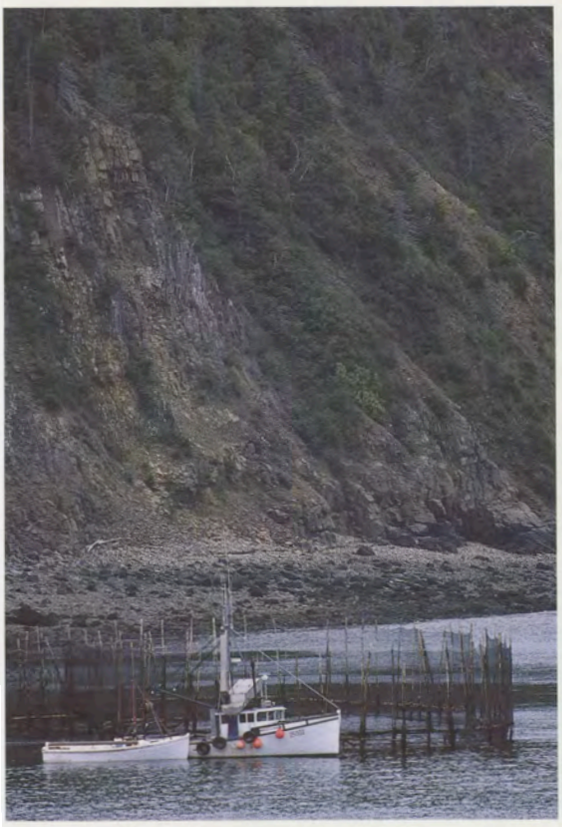
"There are good people who come here," she says softly, speaking now of people who buy homes on Grand Manan as well as those who come for a few days. "They've got to be the type of person who

enjoys this type of life. There's no night life, no [movie] theatre—TV took care of that."

One thing visitors do on Grand Manan is take hikes. A network of trails links the cliffs along the western side of the island to scenic lighthouses, pocket beaches, and other attractions at the north and south ends. Most of these trails run over private land, and Eric Allaby says it has often been easier to get access from absentee owners than from locals. Very little real estate on Grand Manan (about 9 percent, Deborah Daggett's students found) is public or "crown land," suggesting that except for restrictions on its use there is little standing in the way of future subdividers and developers.

There is a sense on Grand Manan that life has changed since the big ferry came, but that most of the change has been for the better. Builders, fish processers, and other shippers appreciate the added capacity; residents mention the convenience of a reliable winter schedule. Manufactured housing can travel aboard the GRAND MANAN V, opening new possibilities for middle- and lower-income island residents in need of homes. Longtime residents such as Sheldon Bass (the twine repairer) enjoy traveling during their off-island vacations; to them the ferry represents mobility.

Like many islanders accustomed to being protected by isolation, it is probably difficult for Grand Manan's residents to envision their community overrun by visitors, the "experience" of the island damaged or destroyed by too many people. Most who live in the island's three hamlets earn their livings in ways not directly connected with tourism, even if they benefit from the growth that the ferry and its daily cargo have brought them. The big ferry brings trucks as well as tourists, after all, and there is a tendency to view tourism as a force that can be managed for the benefit of the community as a whole.



Money Cove, Grand Manan

Marcia Cheney's husband's ancestors settled Cheney's Island off Grand Manan's eastern shore in the 18th century.

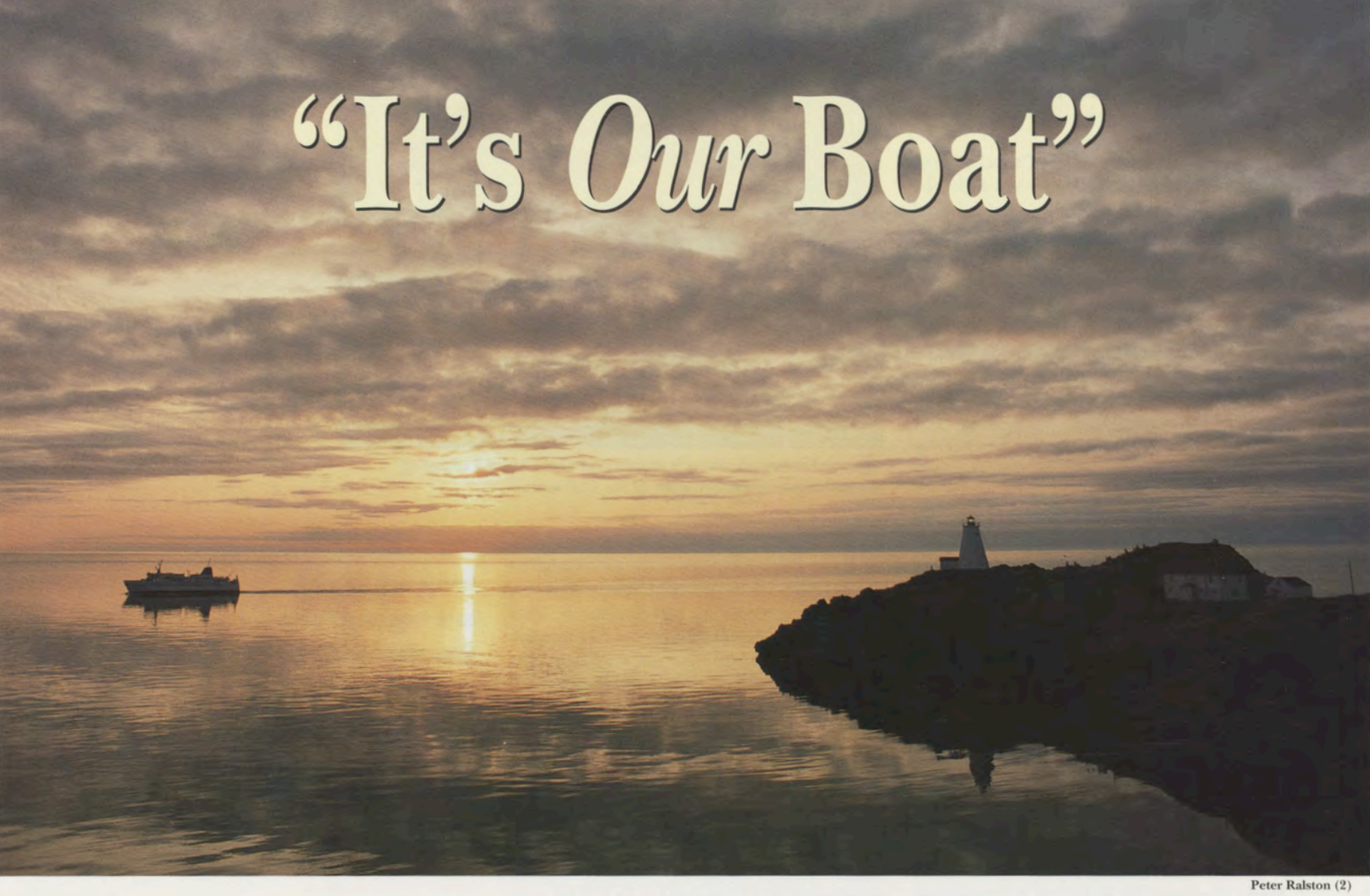
Nor may Grand Manan's people be particularly interested in living in a museum. The jobs and other benefits that tourism has brought are clearly a source of pride in a place where the traditional lifestyle has been hard at best. Living on an island in the late 20th century needn't mean no supermarkets, shopping malls, or regular trips to other places, and it would be condescending for an outsider to suggest otherwise. The belief is strong, at this stage in Grand Manan's development, that the island "experience" can be "exported" for everyone's benefit without significant harm.

An exhibit at the Grand Manan Museum includes pictures and descriptions of the various vessels that have provided scheduled transportation to the island. Regular steamer service began in 1884, when the route ran from Eastport, Maine to Campobello, Grand Manan, and Saint John. The ferry GRAND MANAN III (nine cars), served the island from St. Andrews, the old Loyalist settlement at the mouth of the St. Croix River. As the exhibit makes clear, the character of these passenger and freight vessels has evolved over the years, from steamships with overnight cabins and large passenger saloons, to small car ferries, to larger car ferries (GRAND MANAN IV, which still runs in summer), and finally to the ship that makes the run from Black's Harbour today.

Each vessel, in turn, responded in some way to Grand Manan's economic needs, to the desire of its residents for a reliable connection with the mainland. Yet none of them was designed to protect a tradition-rooted culture from the often-destructive energies of the outside world. The challenges and contradictions of the 20th century have finally reached Grand Manan; facing up to them will test everyone there to their limits.

There is a tendency to view tourism as a force that can be managed for the benefit of the community as a whole.

"It's *Our* Boat"



Peter Ralston (2)

ERIC ALLABY

The GRAND MANAN V spends the night at the island end of her run between Grand Manan and Black's Harbour, N.B., giving islanders the sense that they control her comings and goings.

DEEP WATER AROUND the prow-shaped northern end of Grand Manan suggests an enormous tugboat jutting upward into the Bay of Fundy, strewing out a wake of islets, shoals, and fishing grounds, spilling off into the Gulf of Maine.

At the head of the Bay of Fundy, the highest tides in the world rise and fall as much as 50 feet—an enormous displacement of water that, twice daily, gives rise to powerful currents. Such is the strategic placement of Grand Manan in a dynamic oceanic system, rich in sea life. It is natural to expect that such superior water circulation would stimulate undersea food chains and provide opportunity for a plentiful sea harvest.

Before written history, Passamaquoddy Indians, visiting Grand Manan during the summer months for gulls eggs and seals, called it "Mun-a-nook," which literally means "island place." Earliest known written reference to "Menan" appeared in an account of a trading voyage in 1583 by Stephen Bellinger who used "Bay of Menan" to describe the Bay of Fundy. The Island changed hands several times over the next two centuries, but was never permanently settled until the American Revolutionary War resulted in an exodus of people who wished to remain loyal to Britain. On May 6, 1784, a small party of Loyalists stepped ashore at Harbour Island, midway down the east coast of Grand Manan. With firm resolve they carved from this chilly seacoast a community that would grow and prosper beyond their most optimistic expectations. Though this was a lonely, isolated shore, the first settlers had brought with them the skills, capital, and determination necessary to build a self-sufficient community which housed and fed itself and built boats to fish and brigs for trade.

The GRAND MANAN V carries more than 60 cars and 300 passengers, as well as large trucks, bulk tankers, and oversize loads such as modular buildings. In four years of service she has transformed life on Grand Manan.

"An Excursion out of St. Stephen" — AURORA, Grand Manan I, 1911-1930

Certainly all islands are inviting to visitors, and on Grand Manan the sense of being an island is pervasive, powerful, and unmistakable. As a common principle, island wellbeing depends on a delicate balance in accessibility to the outside world: too little and the island turns inward and narrows its vision and aspirations; too much and it loses its distinctiveness. The question of how much accessibility is too much has been a topic of heated debate on Grand Manan, especially in the years leading up to the arrival in 1990 of a very much larger new ferry. While it was generally agreed that the ferry service that had been in place for the two-hour trip to the mainland was definitely inadequate to meet the needs of the island, there were genuine misgivings that a major increase in this service might have detrimental results, that the island might lose its character, that the values to which islanders cling so fiercely might be eroded. People wanted the improved services but some were nervous about the possible consequences.

If the improvements in accessibility are island-driven, and are aimed at year-round island benefit, to help islanders realize their own economic aspirations, then the island community can boast better tools to determine its destiny.

Certainly, the ferry service which existed prior to 1990 was an economic bottleneck; the flow of goods and people was seriously thwarted. It was a far greater problem than just repressing the flow of tourists; residents themselves had difficulty meeting appointments, shipping goods, carrying on business—not just in the summer, but year round. Consequently, the Provincial Legislature, responding to the urgings of the islanders, determined that the service to be upgraded was the year-round service, to address primarily the needs of the residents. Special attention in design was given to truck capacity; indeed, the first design was scrapped and the ferry redesigned to address it. This was a community-driven emphasis, as opposed to the bureaucratic vision of expanding the service to bring more tourists.

I served as a member of the Provincial Legislature at this time, and I recall how we very consciously directed the plans toward the goal of improving the potential for permanent residents to develop business, meet appointments, ship produce, trade in sea fare, and open as many doors of opportunity as possible. There was upgrading of the added summer traffic capacity, but it was not nearly as significant as the improvement in the year-round operations.

Herein lies one of the answers to the islander's accessibility dilemma: If the improvements in accessibility are island-driven, and are aimed at year-round island benefit, to help islanders realize their own economic aspirations, then the island community can boast better tools to determine its destiny. Perhaps islands concerned with the effects of an increase in accessibility should test planned improvements against the goals, to determine wherein lies the benefit. If an island seeks improved accessibility to increase tourism as its primary goal, then the island's identity itself cannot help but take a bias in that direction.

"Slinging the Cars Aboard" — Grand Manan III, 1946-1965

The experience of Grand Manan in seeking to direct improvements in its link with the mainland primarily toward the benefit of islanders, and secondarily toward tourists, appears to have been a fundamentally sound move. Visitors generally relish the quiet confidence of the island. There is a feeling here that a visitor is an equal, a guest, not just a commodity to be flattered and

Archival photographs courtesy of Grand Manan Museum.

The fishing fleet at Grand Manan, like its counterparts at other Canadian ports, gives the impression of a prosperous industry. In fact, it's as subject to price fluctuations, resource problems and changing government policies as fishing fleets are anywhere in the world.

fleeced. This island self-assurance derives strength from a closeness to the order of nature, under which the workday marches to the clock of the tide and responds to the blowing of the wind. Visitors sensing the importance of the resources of the sea can appreciate these values too.

At heart, the island remains a fishing community. Grand Manan has developed not only on the strength of the herring fishery, but primarily on the reliance on a multi-license approach to fishing. In Canada, fisheries resources are managed by a federal agency with powerful regulatory capacity. Access to most fisheries is controlled by limited issue of licenses. In many coastal areas, fishermen choose to direct their efforts toward a single species, but on Grand Manan, the rich environs have provided the opportunity for fishermen to move from fishery to fishery as seasons and supply dictate. Of course this requires the fisherman's boat to be versatile and necessitates a greater investment in equipment and effort, but the multi-license fisherman does have an opportunity to ride out the natural cycles of supply in particular fishery stocks.

Emiline Royco Ott

In an ongoing tradition, Grand Manan's "personalized" weirs all have their own names.

"Night Catch" — Emptying the nets into a dory on the beach.

Currently, the fisheries are moderately healthy, as compared to other places where dependence on a single collapsed stock has resulted in community devastation. Groundfish are a matter of concern: cod, pollock, and haddock are currently not as abundant as they once were. But the lobster catches have been consistently good, scallop fishing provides a good return, and the herring stocks seem to be doing well as the schools return year after year, and sardine canning provides important shore jobs. A newly developed sea urchin fishery offers a supplement to fishermen and adds processing jobs ashore, a welcome diversification to offset the declining smoked herring industry. And Grand Manan is back in the aquaculture industry. A venture in the mid 1980s in the salt water lagoon at Dark Harbour on the western side of Grand Manan was plagued with difficulties, as inexperienced farmers learned of the problems and limitations associated with the business. Infected smolts (juvenile salmon) spread disease throughout sea cages; good practices in management of stocks in their cages had yet to be developed; there was not sufficient understanding of the importance of good site conditions. Today aquaculture is based on far better understanding and control of site conditions and operating procedure. As a result of this more careful approach, the new salmon farms in Grand Manan waters are sound ventures, growing out healthy fish to market size with the best efficiency to be found anywhere in the Gulf of Maine.

As we face the future on Grand Manan, we are keenly aware that whatever our destiny, we are an island, and we must shape our future in keeping with all those wonderful values and characteristics that islands treasure. The special qualities that shape an island will always be ours to mold and develop, for we know that whatever lies ahead, our future is closely tied to the resources of the sea.

As an island, we are very much aware that we are a special place, set apart from the rest of the world. Of necessity we must maintain ties with our neighboring mainland, but we must be vigilant always to strengthen the links in ways that guard and enhance the character and values that define this special place called Grand Manan Island.

Eric Allaby *was born on Grand Manan Island and has lived and worked there following graduation from Acadia University. Besides being a commercial diver, he taught school, was an underwater archeologist, and developed fishing, processing, and consulting interests. He is currently serving as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick.*

Rob Benchley

Brave New Worlds

PHILIP W. CONKLING

Southern New England islanders have had to withstand and adapt to the gale force winds of change brought about by exploding summer populations and their attendent changes in lifeways and land uses. How well have they survived and what do they have to teach us here in Maine?

IT'S ALL A QUESTION of scale. On Maine islands the summer and year round communities are still delicately balanced places where timeless rituals of island life play out as they have for generations. As long as seasonal residents build on the shore outback, stay out of fishermen's way in the harbor and don't overtly intrude into an island's internal affairs, everyone stays reasonably happy.

In our part of the Gulf of Maine, islands have mostly been able to contend with "summer complaints," meaning newcomers who don't know their place, who don't observe carefully calibrated rituals, by turning the Field of Dreams dictum on its ear: "If you don't build it, they won't come." This works its own special downeast magic to keep things they way they are, sort of, and has become an effective homegrown approach to island planning where practiced.

Swan's Island, for instance, has posted a sign at its mainland ferry terminal. "Swan's Island is not for everyone," it states and then goes on to explain that there are no movies, hotels, or entertainments, only the peace and quiet of its rugged shorelines. Isle au Haut, an island community that shares its space uneasily with outsiders (including visitors to Acadia National Park land which occupies half the island), successfully lobbied the Federal government to build a separate wharf six miles from town to keep visitors at bay—or at least at Duck Cove.

Most of my year-round island neighbors on Vinalhaven in Penobscot Bay feel oppressed by the 6,000 visitors the island now hosts during the summer, and lobstermen have gotten so practiced at scowling at the few cruising boats who dare to enter the harbor looking for non-existent services, that the old fashioned civility of the sea is beginning to be compro-

Five roads converge on the Vineyard Haven ferry terminal. Mark Lovewell

mised. What, one wonders, would they do with an additional 60,000 to 80,000 daytrippers, summer people, and bermuda-shorted boatsmen that are hosted on several southern New England islands?

Last summer I had the occasion to visit two southern New England islands—Martha's Vineyard and Block Island—and was overwhelmed by the changes that had occurred since my last visits a decade or so earlier. At a Martha's Vineyard family reunion in early May, I was astounded to learn that my cousin, a guidance counselor for Martha's Vineyard schools, packs up her family each June and leaves for the mainland because the summer has become unendurable. Her island house is eagerly rented by people who are ironically looking for the peace and quiet that she and her family can no longer find.

During this visit to Martha's Vineyard, the challenges simply to moving around were intense. Edgartown, one of six towns which shares the Vineyard's boundaries, supports 31 T-shirt shops downtown, and there is simply not room enough on the sidewalks for the mixture of daytrippers, harbor gawkers, and weekenders like myself who repair to the island even before Memorial Day has been observed. And once you are pushed off the sidewalk, you are more likely to be run over by an overly enthusiastic bicyclist than to be hit by a car, which remains gridlocked somewhere between the ferry terminal and the entrance to Edgartown's shopping area. Even before the Clintons made their plans known last summer, August weekends on the Vineyard had reached surreal proportions. Visitors now exceed the lemming-like level of 100,000 on an island of less than 100 square miles.

A few weeks later, I was invited to Block Island off Rhode Island to attend a roundtable discussion on issues common to New England's islands. I had hoped to learn something from these islanders about balancing conservation and development, but we spent the weekend talking about traffic, and then I missed my connection back to the mainland because the driver couldn't get through the throngs of tourists in the streets downtown. The privately owned ferry runs boats not only between Point Judith and Block Island, but also from Providence and New London and can land 1,200 holiday makers in the Block Island village before noon. A recent meeting with Rhode Island State officials to study transportation problems on the island had to be postponed because the officials couldn't get on the boat—they were left standing somewhere back in the line.

That's nothing, though. On Martha's Vineyard when the island's second ferry landing at Oak Bluffs is too rough, all boats must land at Vineyard Haven every half hour, which results in absolute chaos because the traffic on the five roads that converge on the one way street to the ferry landing don't have time to unsnarl before the next boat arrives. And here's one for the all-time Book of Follies: the Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce arm-twisted the Steam Ship Authority, a public utility, to adopt the policy that if your car is in line by 2, they guarantee to get it to the island! Up there people work overtime to create Traffic Hell. During the Fourth of July weekend, 600 cars were lined up on stand-by so the Steam Ship Authority ran boats round the clock; at daybreak there were still 100 cars in line.

Meanwhile, over on Nantucket, roundtrip ferry fares were recently increased to $180 to discourage bringing ever more cars to this island's choked roads. Of course, the fare increase has not reduced the number

Alison Shaw

of cars brought to Nantucket during the summer; it has simply made it financially and logistically impossible for year-round islanders to get off. In August, Nantucket is the second busiest airport in New England after Boston's Logan Airport. During the past four years Nantucket has witnessed $2.5 billion—that's *billion*—worth of property transactions, which among other things increased the number of lawyers on the island from 20 to 75.

As I drove back to Maine at the end of this August weekend assault, I had the deepest sense of appreciation that the proposed widening of the Maine Turnpike had been resoundingly defeated by voters who show a far deeper wisdom than any state transportation official anywhere in the region over such matters. However besieged Mainers feel about summer tourism, it is evident we experience nothing like the kinds of oppressions routinely endured by our southern New England neighbors. Because none of this summer snarl is news, I resolved to return after the summer season, to discover if our island neighbors to the south harbor other lessons of a less cautionary nature. After all, these islands started out much like our own: isolated places inhabited by independent souls scratching out a reasonable living—sometimes bountiful, sometimes not—from the gifts of the land and sea. But I know in my bones that it is just a matter of time before the changes these islanders have witnessed will arrive on our gangplanks. From their experience I hoped to learn—What helps? What hinders?

I was astounded to learn that my cousin, a guidance counselor for the Martha's Vineyard schools, packs up her family each June and leaves for the mainland because the summer has become unendurable.

NANTUCKET
Blue Chip Planning

With the tail of the season's first northeaster spinning up the New England coast in early November, I head to Nantucket aboard the little commuter airplane that butterflies its way through 30-knot gusts of wind before settling down uncertainly onto the impressive tarred runway stretching out toward the sea.

Although I don't expect to find big city problems on Nantucket, I do expect to encounter the pervasive sense of unease that is endemic to many Maine islanders, an unease that is perhaps an inevitable by-product of all successful resort communities; a sense that you are not in control of your fate; a sense that the quality of life is compromised by the ever more affluent life styles of those from away who acquire and privatize an ever increasing amount of a town's special places. To lose control of your fate is, perhaps, more painful to islanders than to any other citizen in New England since independence is such a profoundly cherished community ideal, no matter how tarnished it might be in reality.

In fact, this question of how to control the island's fate has drawn the Nantucket community together to research the question of how to encourage a more sustainable, year-round economy. Consultants have been hired and are making a preliminary report the night I arrive at a meeting of the Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission, a unique institution that combines the Town's Planning Board members, four Town agencies, (including a representative of the island's Conservation Commission), and three other citizens appointed by Commission members. The Commission has a staff of seven, headed by an Executive Director, Alan Gordon. "Everyone knows that the tourist economy on Nantucket is flourishing," Gordon explains to me, "but the Commission members want to collect baseline economic data to get a better picture of other parts of the economy important to year-round islanders."

Two consultants from Land Use Incorporated present a preliminary draft of their findings. They compare Nantucket with other communities experiencing similar problems and are trying to figure out: "how to avoid (or undo) elitism that prices out the traditional population," and "how to assuage local resentment of outsiders who are 'taking over' the community." The consultants compare Nantucket's situation not just to Aspen and Hilton Head, as one might expect, but also to communities in Hancock and Knox Counties in Maine. I am brought up short to hear comparisons to the communities of Mount Desert Island and Islesboro being described and discussed. Are we in the same situation as Nantucket?


Rob Benchley

Jack Gardner, Vice Chairman of the Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission, is a descendant of one of the island's original settlers.

The consultants have also researched the economics of the construction industry, as well as fishing, aquaculture, and marine technology sectors, and have tentatively concluded that encouraging upscale renovations to Nantucket's historic homes (the whole island is an historic district) represents the best option for increasing year-round employment because of its high wages. Because I am a visitor who truly knows nothing, I keep my mouth shut, but it hardly sounds like a solution to me.

After the meeting, I am introduced to Jack Gardner, Vice Chairman of the Nantucket Commission, a descendant of one of the 20 Proprietors and Associates who originally purchased the island in 1659. Because Gardner's forbears were farmers, fishermen, whaling captains, merchants, judges, landed gentry, and just about everything else you can imagine during the past

Rob Benchley

On the Cape islands, traditional scalloping hangs on—barely.

250 years, one senses in him the moral certainty of intensely local, intensely insular blood. This short, big-shouldered, square-jawed man with a neatly trimmed beard, seems to have stepped right out of one of Melville's novels. Gardner filed the original legislation to create the Nantuket Planning Commission in 1973, and is something of an institution himself. A selectman for 15 years, a member of the Planning Board for 26 years, he is also Nantucket's Road Commissioner and the Hearing Officer for Traffic Court. "We take in between $175,000 and $200,000 a year in fines," he tells me later with some satisfaction. Somehow all this history has been good to Jack; he and his wife spend a portion of the winter on another island in a condo they have bought on Bermuda.

Unlike the situation in so many communities where conservation and economic development interests are pitted against one another, on Nantucket the inter-relationship between tourism and conservation is evident to all.

I want to get Jack's views of the different parts of Nantucket's economy, and he agrees to show me around the next day. We drive through a bewildering knot of one-way streets which wind through the downtown village to the waterfront where a few fishing vessels are tied up waiting for the lashing northeast seas to settle. "We lost our fishing industry in the 1940s and '50s," he says. "It was easier for the boats to steam into New Bedford to unload, and we just couldn't compete." Gesturing out at the well-maintained private wharf at the bottom of Main Street where the ships that were at the Boston Tea Party and scores of famous whaling vessels used to berth, Jack says, "Back then we could have bought Straight Wharf for $1, but it was pretty far gone, pretty well washed away. Then Beinecke came along and started redoing the waterfront. Private ownership can do a real good job," Jack concludes matter-of-factly.

You cannot talk about Nantucket today without talking about Walter Beinecke, the marketing genius and heir to the S&H green stamps fortune, who reshaped Nantucket as one of the country's preeminent international destination resorts. "Back then in the 1960s, you could buy a house for $12,000 or $15,000," remembers Jack. "But Beinecke would come in and offer $30,000 or $35,000, fix it up as a historical house and then turn it over for $100,000 to the right people... whoever the right people are...." Jack's voice trails off, and then he adds, "He sold to a different kind of people. He never told me this himself, but he was often quoted as saying, 'I'd rather sell one steak than a hundred hot dogs'." And sell steak he did. In fact, you could say that Beinecke sold filet mignon in his restaurants, upscale shops and stores that he systematically acquired and artfully restored in the brick and cobblestone village to recreate a seamless and compelling historic ambience. Beinecke was among the first New Englanders to appreciate the enormous market appeal of historic seaside architecture.

But Beinecke also had a deft sense of how to avoid some of the unfortunate downsides of tourism in resort communities. "It used to be that businesses would come in, make their money and take it 'round Brant Point by Labor Day," says Jack gesturing at the outer harbor. "Beinecke put in all his leases that they couldn't close down before Columbus Day; then he extended it to November 1st," says Jack. "Now our season goes through Christmas.

Tourism is our business, no doubt," concludes Jack, but you get the sense that he also has an islander's appreciation of how resources like money need to be cycled and recycled through an island community year round.

Leaving the harbor to check on a road paving job up island, Jack pulls off at a small roadside parking area to point out another of the distinctive features of Nantucket's allure. We are looking out over a rolling landscape of ponds, heath, moor and pine trees through which Jack tells me a trail winds for five or six miles before ending at a beach. "One of the best things we did was the Land Bank," Jack says, referring to the special legislation that first Nantucket and later Martha's Vineyard got passed in the Massachusetts Legislature. The Land Bank Bill allows these two islands to levy a two-percent tax on real estate transactions (with an exemption for first time home buyers) that is put into a fund to acquire conservation lands. "In the '80s," Jack recalls, "the average house lot would sell four to five times before anyone ever built on it. And everytime it'd sell, they'd pay more to the Land Bank. We were putting away $40,000 a week." With the help of the Nantucket Conservation Commission and Nantucket Conservation Foundation that Beinecke was instrumental in funding, more than a third of Nantucket's total acreage (38 percent) is in permanently deeded conservation open space. "Our goal is

50 percent," says Jack. "It'd be great if we could get that much." According to the Commission's Director, Alan Gordon, "Nantucket has one of the major Land Banks of any community in the United States."

Nevertheless, Gordon and the Commissioners worry about some of the island's intractable problems, such as housing and the need for more reliable year-round employment, especially during the January to April months, the most difficult season in any New England island community. On Nantucket a "starter" house costs in the range of $275,000 (down from over $300,000 during the boom years of the 1980s), which is still prohibitively expensive for the vast number of island families. Even rental costs are a hardship, approximating the rates common in Boston. So islanders are reduced to the "Nantucket Shuffle," which Gordon defines as "holding down a couple of jobs, moving around a lot because you can't afford housing, and living a kind of hand-to-mouth existence."

Alison Shaw

Raking shellfish in Sengekontacket Pond, a traditional Martha's Vineyard fishery.

"Emotionally, we all have a love/hate relationship with tourism. Shellfishing is our chance to be independent."

Peter Wilson, a transplant to Nantucket, and a member of the Planning Commission for several years, is practiced at the Nantucket Shuffle. Like many people on the island, he wears different hats. I first met him as the Conservation Commission's delegate to Nantucket's Planning Commission, but his day job is working for a real estate developer. His wife runs a landscaping business with a clientele familiar to Wilson from his days growing up a summer kid. And though he has been on the island for 20 years, he is still a newcomer on the Commission, where so many of the important decisions governing Nantucket's future are aired. Unlike the situation in so many communities where conservation and economic development interests are pitted against one another, the inter-relationship between tourism and conservation is evident to all. "On Nantucket environmental protection is economic development and economic development depends on conservation links that are stronger here than anywhere else," says Alan Gordon.

But I want to pry into other less obvious connections, and I ask Gordon about connections between wetland protection and shellfish aquaculture on Nantucket, which has been mentioned by the consultants as a "good direction to pursue." Gordon arranges for me to visit Nantucket's Shellfish Hatchery and Wilson decides to accompany me. Out at the end of Brant Point is a lovely old lighthouse station which the Coast Guard leases to the Town and where the Town has installed an experimental shellfish hatchery. Wilson introduces me to Rob Garrison and Martin Ceely who run the hatchery as a joint project between the Town and the private, non-profit Nantucket Research and Education Foundation.

Garrison and Ceely have the only aquaculture lease on Nantucket, a small shallow water site near Polpis Harbor where they are struggling to increase their production of oysters from their current level of 500,000 to 4,000,000 annually to make the farm a profitable operation. Two years ago, frustrated by their inability to locate disease free oyster seed stock, they approached the Town for help in building a commercial shellfish hatchery of their own. The Town provided the initial $20,000 from license fees it collects from Nantucket's 400 licensed scallopers to get the hatchery underway. Private donations, primarily from the summer community, have followed and a state-of-the-art hatchery has been completed at Brant Point.

The Town's interest in the the hatchery stems from the wildly fluctuating annual harvest of bay scallops: on a good year scallopers pull in $3 million worth of this valuable shellfish resource from the beds scattered around Nantucket's shores; but the difference between a good year and a poor one can vary by a factor of ten. By raising seed scallops, along with oysters and hard shelled clams in the hatchery and distributing them in productive areas, everyone hopes the harvest will be more predictable and provide a more reliable winter income.

Rob Garrison walks us through several rooms of plastic tanks through which they pump seawater to raise the marine algaes that nourish large bins filled with small scallops, oysters, and quahogs. Garrison, one senses, is a veteran of the kinds of aquaculture battles that pit various interests against one another, no matter what coastline we are talking about. Nantucket's fishermen, like fishermen everywhere, are deeply skeptical of the aquaculturalist's requirements for exclusive lease

sites. And shorefront property owners, like property owners everywhere, have employed lawyers to intervene in the complicated regulatory proceedings through which lease sites are awarded or denied. All the while, government authorities, like authorities everywhere, try to figure which way the wind is blowing, and in Massachusetts, this is not hard to figure out: State law prohibits the granting of shellfish aquaculture leases in any naturally productive area. Aquaculture leases are, therefore, relegated by law to marginally productive areas which seems to guarantee marginal operations. In fact, the value of all farm-raised species in Massachusetts amounts to approximately $8 million, far behind Connecticut's $62 million and Maine's $43 million. (I thought Maine aquaculture regulations were stifling, but Massachusetts has gone us one better.)

Garrison's primary focus is now on a pilot aquaculture training program, recently funded by a State grant, which he and Ceely hope will be the turning point for the acceptance of aquaculture on Nantucket. The concept is to entice 20 island fishermen and other residents to participate in a four-month training program. Each participant will raise a batch of scallops, oysters or quahogs, half of which will be released to wild beds as a public stock enhancement effort, and the other half placed in a Town-controlled lease site for the individual's benefit. This ingenious approach to public-private aquaculture appears to avoid most of the political shoals on which many aquaculture dreams in the region have foundered: the Town has applied for the lease site, thereby vastly simplifying the regulatory process; fishermen have not opposed the effort, because even non-participating fishermen presumably stand to benefit from the release of shellfish seed in the wild, and the Town gets, among other benefits, free water quality monitoring information on which it has previously spent significant public funds. Finally, the hatchery receives a new source of funding for capital improvements that its private entrepreneurs need for a stable seed source for their farm. Although Garrison, Ceely and others involved in this innovative project are yet to deliver on their promises, this unique effort has many elements with obvious parallels to Maine island communities wrestling with Nantucket's dilemmas of escalating housing costs and high winter underemployment.

"Feeling like you can take care of yourself—get a deer, catch a fish, dig some clams, that's the part of being on an island that makes it worthwhile."

As the little commuter airplane lifts off the runway for the ten minute flight across Nantucket Sound to Martha's Vineyard, I am struck with a flood of impressions. Many of my preconceptions about tourism have been turned on their ear: if tourism is your business, there are evidently ways to do it well, and it is impressive, not only how carefully Nantucket now plans and manages this part of its economy to the maximum benefit of its residents, but how a single individual's vision is still being played out on Nantucket well after the leading player has left center stage.

I wonder what the November visit to Martha's Vineyard will bring. My Nantucket hosts have already alerted me to one of the key differences between the two island communities: "We get all the CEO's," said Alan Gordon, "they get all the stars." Or put another way by Peter Wilson, "We get the brown weejuns, they get the brown boat shoes."

MARTHA'S VINEYARD
A Struggle All the Way

To appreciate the natural bounty of Martha's Vineyard, you must see it from the air: all those fringing salt ponds along the southern coast and up the eastern shore past Chappaquiddick to Vineyard Haven; tens of thousands of acres of marine nurseries around the island shores with exotic and evocative names like Menemsha, Squibnocket, Tisbury Great Pond, Oyster Pond, Katama Bay, Cape Pogue, Sengekontacket, Lagoon and Tashmoo Ponds, among dozens of others. I knew these were here, but to see them all at once is to appreciate at a glance Martha's Vineyard huge potential for producing locally grown seafood. No island I have visited is better endowed in this respect.

Chuck Clifford, the Executive Director of the Martha's Vineyard Commission, meets me at the airport and drives me into the Commission office in Oak Bluffs, located in a curious stone building up the hill from the harbor. Upstairs his staff is at work meeting various deadlines for the grants they administer for the six towns that cohabitate on the island—one senses, like a group of divorcees in an attached housing project.

The day before on Nantucket, Jack Gardner had been unusually candid about his views of Martha's Vineyard. "Their government doesn't work," he had said firmly. "They have six fire departments, six town offices, six of everything, each of them with all those high paid positions. About the only thing they do county-wide is a police dispatcher. It works. I'd think it'd tell them something." Then he added, "They'd work much better as a county government."

Of course, everyone who has described Martha's Vineyard in recent decades mentions the difficulty of getting the island's six towns to work together. I have searched through historical references for how Martha's Vineyard happens to have so many different towns and the reasons are interesting and complex. The Wampanoags, Martha's Vineyard's original settlers, were bought out bit by bit and the survivors clustered on Gay Head, near the westernmost harbor Menemsha. Edgartown, with its large and protected harbor, was settled by Nantucket whaling families who

Alison Shaw

Fences used to be for controlling sand. Increasingly they're used for controlling people.

moved across the Sound as Nantucket Harbor slowly filled with shifting sands. Vineyard Haven, the village part of Tisbury, slowly but surely became the island's commercial center because it is the closest harbor to the mainland. West Tisbury split off from Tisbury because Vineyard Haven was too far away and different. Oak Bluffs, with its smaller harbor, began to take on its distinctive character when it was ordained as summer tent camp by the Methodists in the 1850s. And Chilmark, always an agricultural area, wanted to be left alone by all the other towns.

One is confronted by so many contradictions on Martha's Vineyard that it is difficult to sort out the impressions. Martha's Vineyard, according to Clifford, has the lowest per capita income among year-round residents of any town in Massachusetts; Nantucket has the highest. During the 70s and 80s, when large numbers of newcomers moved to Martha's Vineyard doubling the island population, the construction boom was able to absorb the influx. But not now. "Back in 1987 and 1988," says Clifford's assistant John Schilling, "a new house was completed each day on the island; today 60 to 80 are built each year." Unemployment now averages 16–18 percent across the island and hits 35 percent in some towns. "This is a poor place in the winter," says Clifford.

That night I repair to my cousin's house. She and her husband, Albert, have invited over two other friends, who are, it turns out, distant cousins and we spend the evening after dinner trading island stories, north and south. Steve Ewing and his brother Doug grew up on Martha's Vineyard and have, over the years made a living, like so many other islanders everywhere, doing a little bit of this and a little of that, almost always around the water. Steve is on Edgartown's Harbor Committee and is intimately familiar with what goes in the town's marine resource sector. "It's a whole different ballgame now," says Steve. "You always had to scratch; it was hard, but you used to be able to go out and make a living. Feeling like you can take care of yourself—get a deer, catch a fish, dig some clams, that's the part of being on an island that makes it worthwhile. Now it's all changed. The land parcels are smaller; it's harder to get to the water, a lot of the big farms you used to cross have been divided up, more areas are closed and there's tourists everywhere."

That night before falling asleep, I leaf through a book by Henry Beetle Hough, who became one of Martha's Vineyard's most beloved citizens as the irascible editor of the local newspaper, *The Vineyard Gazette.* He devotes several chapters to the story of Ted Kennedy's plan to include the island in the National Seashore program, a piece of federal legislation that successfully saved much of Cape Cod's outermost beaches in the 1970s from the intensive development that characterizes virtually all the rest of the blessed region of sand and surf. The story, in its twists and turns of political intrigue, is too long to recount here, except to mention what is perhaps, in retrospect, obvious. The divided island towns that could never agree on much of anything, could and did rise up in righteous indignation against someone from the outside suggesting what the island towns ought to do to save themselves, and the plan went down to an ignominious defeat. During the intense local debate, Hough clearly saw what others chose to ignore: that in the absence of some collective action, local business interests would inevitably overtake Martha's Vineyard's divided municipal interests and carve out new identities for these towns serving their own interests. To read his prophetic words 20 years later against the backdrop of the recent summer oppressions is to wonder whether the islanders who united against outside control also missed their last chance to control their destiny.

Mark Lovewell

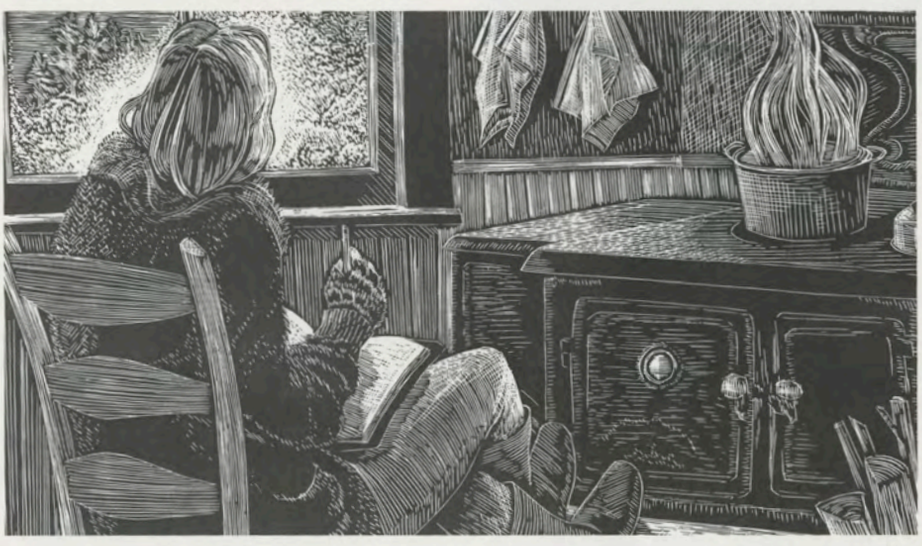
Rick Carney, Martha's Vineyard shellfish wizard

The theme of the island reeling from the onslaught of poorly planned tourism is one that nearly everyone I spoke with on Martha's Vineyard mentions, and stands in stark contrast to Nantucket. A general seige mentality has settled over Martha's Vineyard's residents and landowners. According to Clifford at the Commission, "There's no comparison with Nantucket in the miles of shore for public use; there's just six miles here." On Nantucket, Jack Gardner had proudly pointed out that virtually all of their 100 miles of beaches (all but two of which are privately owned) are nevertheless open to the public on a controlled basis. Cooperation between tourist promoters and private beach owners on Martha's Vineyard has been severely strained, and year-round residents have seen many formerly open beaches slam shut.

(continued on page 92)

Crazy ON THE Rock

KAREN ROBERTS JACKSON



FOR A BRIEF PERIOD in my life I lived on the Hawaiian island of Oahu — six weeks at the most, just past my twenty-first birthday. Still, I refer to that time as having "lived" there because I had transferred across the ocean all my meager worldly treasures and my wildest dreams.

Within a week of my arrival, the boxes bearing my possessions were delivered by my Polynesian postmistress with a meek smile. Each box tinkled like tree branches after an ice storm; the contents looked like the multi-colored shards inside a kaleidoscope. As I peeled off the duct tape from each crumpled carton, I could sense the fracturing of my lofty dreams as well.

I had followed love to this paradise, but even love could not sustain me. While there were passion fruits and strawberry guavas offering themselves up in this Eden, there were no jobs to be had to pay the rent. I was not native, nor could I speak Japanese: just another poor, white-faced parasite, a "haoli," as the locals say. In my backyard were lush, green mountains; in my front yard was an endless expanse of the most exquisite blue ocean. But somehow all I was conscious of was the singular King Kamehameha Highway that encircled the island. I had spent every dime of my waitressing career flying into Oahu airport. I felt a strangulating kind of claustrophobia knowing I could not get off the island.

The locals had a name for the haoli sickness: they called it "Rock Crazy," and in my naive youth, I probably caught the malady quicker than most. I missed friends and community and was not prepared for outward hostility. I was too young to know that a sense of belonging takes time and nourishment.

So it is ironic, I suppose, that I write this piece now from another Rock, in the middle of Penobscot Bay, an hour and a quarter ferry ride from the mainland. It is three days after Christmas; the temperature has hung at zero

Illustrations by Siri Beckman

all day. My feet are propped on the chrome bar of the woodstove, and I write wearing wool fingerless gloves. My breathing creates puffs of smoke that steam my glasses.

This will be our fourth winter here, and the season is just beginning to show her stuff. Fool that I am, the dread of winter consumed half my summer and stole nearly all of the splendor of autumn. In a sense, it is a relief for the frigidness and the inherent "bucking up" to be here at last. I will admit with all candor that I have been battling the Rock Craziness for many months now. I have tried short trips away, rearranging the furniture, and working myself so hard I collapse at the end of the day. These methods all help in short spurts, but I know that once again the core of the matter is isolation, the lack of friends who can relate to my daily life, and a hunger to have a sense of belonging to a community.

When we moved here I was again following that love thing, this time in an expanded equation that included a family. My partner and I counted our wealth in increments: four children, four acres, lots of lumber, and endless dreams. Older and supposedly wiser, I choked back my misgivings as friends transported boxes of soggy books (my precious cookbooks . . .) up from the shore and promised to visit the following summer. It would not be the last time that I felt like a pioneer family breaking loose from the wagon train. We rolled up our sleeves, dug in our heels, and got to work creating a home. Perhaps it was the seemingly endless labor and lists of things to do that kept our minds plenty occupied for a while. But now that we have a roof over our heads and a fleet of boats to serve every purpose, I seem to have more time for introspection. The question I find myself chewing on the most is: how do my fellow islanders keep from going nutskie? And tell me again why we chose this incredibly complex "simple" life.

A quote hanging on my kitchen wall, from the Findhorn community in Scotland, reads: "Become more aware of the things in life that really matter; those that gladden the heart, refresh the spirit, and lift the consciousness . . ." Depending on the day, I am not sure whether this is my creed or my curse. What refreshes my spirit is laughter and kinship, commodities found only in the presence of other beings. Despite the stark beauty that surrounds me — the white woods, ice water, gray granite — it is all I can do to fight the chill in my heart and the bone-loneliness.

I was too young to know that a sense of belonging takes time and nourishment.

Against this backdrop, my definition of friendship and community has changed a lot over the last four years. I feel sometimes as if my place is at the back of the line, behind a long list of people who have come before us. I am not a native Mainer, although two of my children were born in Maine. I am not a native islander even though I all but sleep in my mud boots. Even on our small island made up of a handful of families, we are neither the first to come nor the longest to endure. Sometimes there seems to be no end to the dues that must be paid before the initiation into simply belonging.

I've also been here long enough to feel much sympathy for why it is that this ritual exists. Friends—and more and more, strangers, out of the blue—come to visit us here, in the summer of course. I wince when their first words of greeting are, "Got any land for sale?" They bring guests of their own to show off this paradise; they pontificate like tour guides on our "alternative lifestyle," our "intentional community." Increasingly my response is, "Come check out our alternative lifestyle in February . . . ."

Yet in my heart, I do not mean to be rude or withdrawn. The first visitors of summer are often my lifeblood. They bring news and tidbits from an outside world that I sometimes forget exists. I find, however, the longer I am here, that I must overcome a shyness around visitors that surprises even me. Either I don't know what to say, or I can't shut up. The mental agility and social graces that would normally enhance such an exchange seem to trip all over one another.

Last summer a couple came to visit bearing wondrous gifts. Wade has been coming to his family's little cabin on the island since he was a child. He is now a prestigious artist in Philadelphia, and his sweetheart Kate is a poet and museum curator. On the way here, they had stopped in a Chinese market and brought my children such delights as Chinese yo-yo's, rice candies with edible wrappers, soaps, teas, and incense in exotic paper. For me, Wade had brought a book, one of his paintings comprising the jacket cover. It was a collection of contemporary literature, new works from some of today's brightest and most promising writers. The gift nearly brought me to tears. I stood in a corner of my kitchen awash with emotion. It was as if Marco Polo himself had landed on our shore, reminding us that indeed the world is round and chock full of exotic smells, colors, thoughts, words. What's more, I was reminded that I exist as a particle of that planet.

When my manners returned, I thanked them for their gifts and asked what had prompted such a generosity. Wade's sincere response was, "Hey, we live in Philadelphia, you guys are the closest neighbors we have . . . ."

In no way do I mean to diminish the soul sustenance provided by my island neighbors; both on my own island and on neighboring islands. I heard somewhere once about a contraption, a bosun's chair sort of thing, by which a pair of schooners could draw near to one another and the captain's wives could swing between the two ships for much needed chitchat. Or maybe I just dreamed it, as I often daydream about some convenient way to stop in for a lengthy cup of tea in a woman's warm kitchen. Instead, I seem to engage in stoic exchanges about the weather, brief comments in the post office, and try to build on these acquaintances over time. Always, I feel, there is the persona of toughness to uphold, the rusticator. A few months ago I wrote a piece for a literary magazine called *Feast*, produced each summer by a summer resident. I happened to visit some of my island neighbors one day as they were perusing the magazine. With all good intent they were joking that a winter counterpart should be produced, entitled *Famine*, on ratty newsprint, that told the true story of island living. I laughed along at the idea, but inwardly I cringed. Is it really necessary to constantly remind ourselves of the harshness of our life? Is adversity our strongest common thread?

This past summer I stumbled into the Farnsworth Art Gallery, sharing time with a visiting friend until the next ferry run. In addition to the regular Wyeth family exhibit on display, there was a special exhibit of Jamie Wyeth's spectacular work. One painting in particular, "Breakfast at Sea," struck me as if the wind had been knocked out of me. The painting is of an idyllic breakfast for two, on a long white porch overlooking the sea and the other islands. The tension between the couple is obvious. The caption read: "Everybody started looking at their relationships, and saying, 'Do I really want to live on this rock for the rest of my life?' and a lot of divorces happened . . . The older islanders were quite anxious because you need young people to support an island, to give it stability." The statement that other island couples had questioned their own ability to persevere, their own stubbornness, was a revelation to me. I had believed that confessing one's need for something more than nature's beauty and backbreaking work was equal to an admission of defeat.

"Come check out our alternative lifestyle in February..."

The statement, too, that the older folks kept a watch on such things made me smile. I recalled the anxiety I felt when first I came to the islands of keeping names straight, who was related to whom, and how that might affect my life. I remember thinking that the scientific discoveries of body language and subliminal messages were nothing new to island folks. They had generations ago learned the art of observation, of reading facial expressions, tone of voice, the handwriting on the wall. It made me nervous — as if the community knew you were bound to screw up and that it was just a matter of time before you cracked.

But there is a comfort as well, in this sense of people keeping watch over each other. While my hunger for long soul-sharing conversations may go unfulfilled, I seem to have found it easier to have intimate relationships with people I hardly know, and often, have never seen. Our main source of communication with the outside world is via the VHF radio. Whatever you say is heard by all who have their set on. I adore the fisherman who consistently calls his wife "dear" and always lets her know when he is about to pass by the house. The mates who check in throughout the day, who describe in detail the warm vittles that await on the table at home. Like an audio soap opera you learn to tell by an unspoken code who is feeling under the weather, whose wife just went into labor, who has frozen pipes needing attention at home.

When we first moved to the island it was a daily game show figuring out who was taking the kids across to the larger island to school and picking them up in the afternoon. One day I was in a coffee shop in town and a silver-haired, sparkly-eyed woman said to me, "I know you; you're Rosebud." I laughed, a bit startled, and replied "How did you know?" She said, "Oh, I hear you each morning on the radio." I said, "Well, if you ever have any suggestions for us, just jump right in." She replied, "Oh, I don't talk, I just listen . . . ."

I realize that this familiarity is still a bit alien to me, not a part of my gypsy upbringing. I come from a background of seekers and dreamers, "lost souls" as some would call us. As nomads often do, my parents sought warmer climates and settled for a time (my childhood) in places such as "Orange Blossom Estates," in Florida, subdivisions with street names like "Ponce de Leon," "Hibiscus," and "Zephyr." I have been to my hometown once in the last ten years, and only once in the ten years before that. There was no old neighborhood to cruise, not a familiar face on a sidewalk; the town is virtually unrecognizable from my youth.

My maiden name is Roberts and once I stood in a cemetery on Lane's Island, startled to find myself in the company of several Roberts there. I fantasized that perhaps I did have roots here, that one of my ancestors might have been a sea captain (I was told as a little girl that my South Carolina relations had been sailing men). I imagined an earlier time when the islands were first inhabited by explorers, immigrants, dreamers such as I. A time when island folks' homes faced the ocean, the watery highway that had brought them there, when their homes contained carpets, tapestries, and souvenirs from distant lands.

My husband, on the other hand, grew up in a medium-sized midwestern farming town. To this very day he can go home and be greeted on the street by passers by. He is remembered for his athletic victories, his club-related awards, and his boyhood mischief. More important perhaps, he is reminded of his family lineage; his father's and grandfather's boyhood mischief and adult achievements.

It has taken this extreme introspection of late for me to question what it is that we hope to give our children here. The long winters alone have required us all to become friends as well as family, something unheard of in my childhood. My immediate island neighbors treat the children respectfully and lovingly, giving them an extended family of aunts and uncles, and mentors when the need arises. I realize I hope to give them a blend of both, a healthy strand of gypsy blood and yet a strong sense of homeland.

For myself, I am still defining the balance.

Karen Roberts Jackson *and her family are year-round rusticators on Green's Island in Penobscot Bay. By day she tries to live up to her husband's term of endearment, "Tough Old Root," and enjoys the privilege of being home-schooled by her four children. By night she sharpens her pencils, makes a pot of coffee, and dreams of being a great writer.*

Jamie Lewis

Even if the fishery comes back, a whole generation of young people will have missed growing up learning the skills of fishing, safety, water condition and weather forecasting, and many other bits of knowledge needed to make a living from the sea in small boats.

"A BLACK HOLE ON THE MAP OF HOPE"

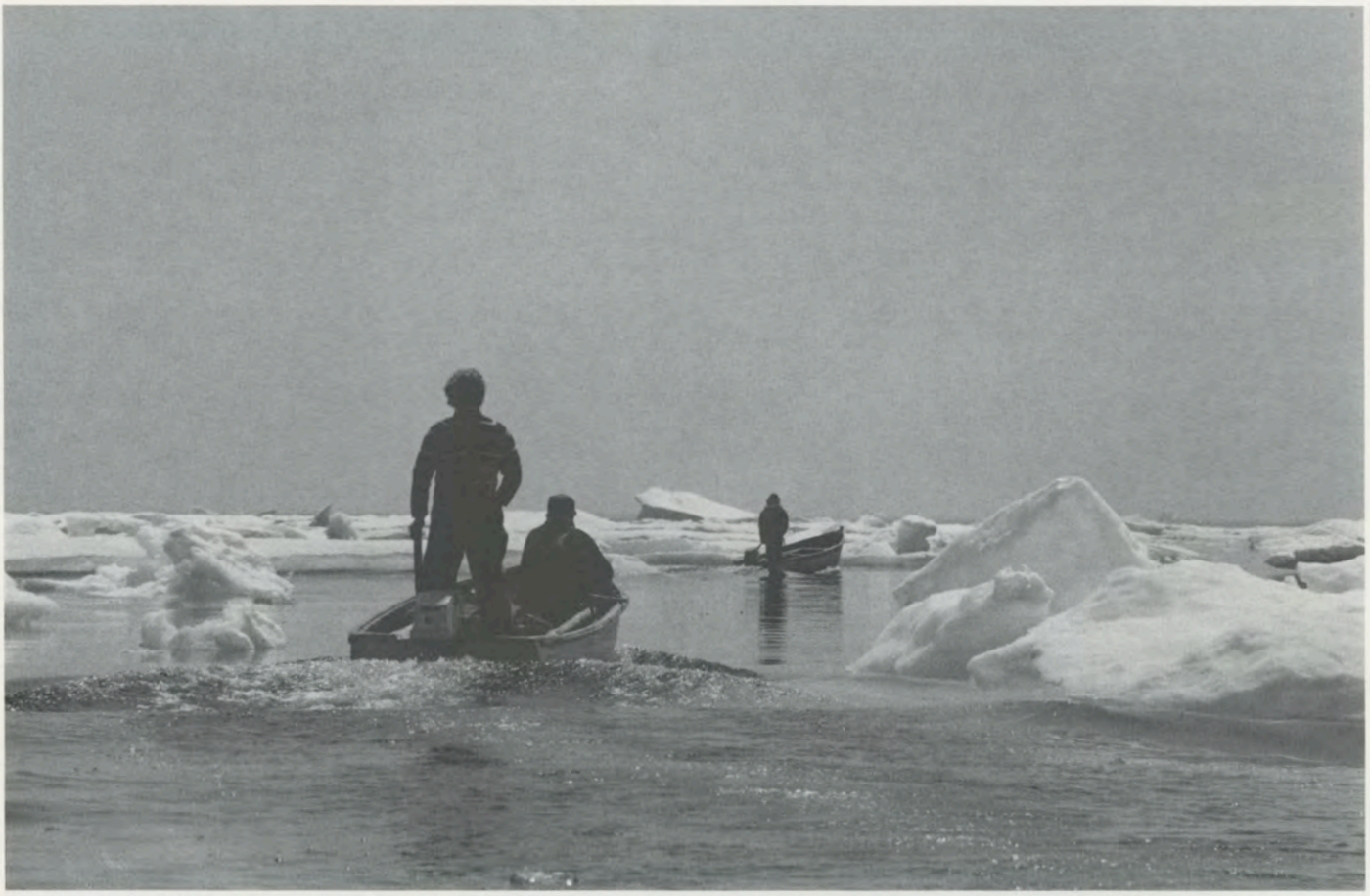
What Happens to an Island When the Fish Are Gone?

CABOT MARTIN

NEWFOUNDLAND IS a very large island, but there is no farming. The people are scattered in many small communities that have depended on the sea, principally cod fishing. As you move from the tropics toward the Arctic, the number of species tends to decline and the number of dominant species tends to increase. So in our ecosystem, the cornerstone is the capelin, a smelt-like fish. All forms of life depend on the capelin—the whales, the birds, the seals, and of course the cod, which is the main finfish species.

The way our ecosystem works has had a very profound effect on Newfoundland's social and economic organization and history. Capelin spawn on the beaches. They literally roll in on the beaches each summer between the middle of June and the middle of July. Faithfully following the capelin to land, the codfish come from their winter breeding ground about 100 miles offshore under the ice. That means the cod are not only abundant, but very easy to catch with very simple and economical technology that is within the means of individuals. A man and his sons have always been able to make a good living with the simplest of gear and with very little investment. This has been our great advantage and the reason why we hung on to this bleak land.

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHS . . . *These images of Newfoundland come to us from two sources. Candace Cochrane worked for the Quebec Labrador Foundation in the small outports of the Northern Peninsula from 1970 to 1980. Her intimate, long-term relationship with the people is brilliantly reflected in her book* **Outport** *(Addison Wesley, 1981) from which her images are taken. Newfoundlander Jamie Lewis has been documenting the decline of his island's fishery for two years and was present with his camera as the crushing fishing moratorium went into effect.*



Candace Cochrane

Checking the ice in June.

Sharing the Hard Lessons

Last year's Island Journal *brought the sobering tale of the collapse of the Newfoundland cod fishery and the government-imposed fishing ban that has put thousands of Newfoundlanders out of work, destroying not only a livelihood but a way of life.*

Throughout the crisis, one of the most eloquent voices has belonged to Cabot Martin, President of the Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Association. Son of a Protestant minister, born and raised in a Newfoundland outport, lawyer and journalist, (his book No Fish & Our Lives *was excerpted in last year's* Journal*), his has been a call to reason, trying to bring together the fishing community, the scientific institutions, and the government regulators to stop the headlong plunge into disaster.*

Could the Newfoundland crisis be repeated here? Recognizing the parallels in our own Gulf of Maine, we invited Cabot Martin to visit with us at the Island Institute during late September 1993. After meeting with fisheries groups in Portland, Stonington, and Rockland, Cabot delivered the keynote address at the Institute's 11th Annual Conference, held September 18–19 on Hurricane Island. His talk is reprinted here, along with a portion of the very lively question and answer period.

In the technological explosion after World War II, we saw the buildup of foreign trawler fleets (dragger fleets, as we call them) on our offshore banks. In the mid 1960s, the foreign fleets developed the capability of fishing in the ice on the spawning grounds of the northern cod. The northern cod are a group of stocks on which about 80 percent of the fishing communities in Newfoundland depend. In 1968 the foreign fleets took 800,000 metric tons of cod. By the early 1970s, inshore landings were greatly depressed, and there was community mobilization to fight for a 200-mile limit. Of course, we saw the same trend in the United States. As I understand it, there was an alliance at that time between the environmental groups and fishing groups in the United States that resulted in the Magnuson Act of 1977. We tend to forget that because today we see fishing interests and environmental interests as being somehow opposed.

In its appeal to the world community, Canada pointed out over and over again that the fishing communities of Newfoundland had no alternative other than the inshore cod fishery. The parallel here would be if there were no more lobsters among the islands of Maine. Take away the lobster fishery and what becomes of the lobsterman? He becomes a displaced person. When the Plains Indians lost buffalo, it was not just the loss of a source of meat for them, but a source of identity and self-worth.

So Canada, quite wisely, said this should not be. The 200-mile limit was needed in order to protect the inter-

ests of coastal fishermen. The years 1977–1982 were years of rebuilding, renewal, great hope. Smiles were on the faces of a lot of people in Newfoundland because, with no draggers, the stocks started to come back. But being the kind of creatures we humans are, we weren't satisfied with the old ways. We wanted the shiny, the new, the bigger, the better. So Canada started to build its own deep-sea trawler fleet, to go back into the spawning grounds of the cod and wreak the havoc that the foreigns had formerly wreaked—as if the Maple Leaf on the ship could sanctify the rape.

By 1983 inshore fishermen were saying, "It's happening again. We know it's happening again." At that time I was senior policy advisor to the Premier of Newfoundland, and I, along with everybody else, quite frankly, turned a deaf ear. We said, "No, no, it can't be happening again. We talked to the scientists. They, in their great wisdom, with their computers, are telling us there's lots of fish. You are overreacting. It must be some temporary interval." By 1986, when I had left my eighth-floor office and started to work on a fishing boat, it was very obvious that the fishery was in serious difficulty. So a group of us got together—the fishermen and the processors—who never talked to each other, as if they were not members of the same community. We bridged the class divide, started an organization, the Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Association, and began lobbying.

Mending the trap Candace Cochrane

Our first step was to hire our own scientists, which was a very radical move at the time. Although I have a science background of sorts, we were not prepared for the kind of intellectual dishonesty and compromising that we encountered within the scientific establishment and the bureaucracy. (Unfortunately, back in 1972, the Canadian government had dismantled the Fisheries Research Board of Canada, an independently structured body with great scientific integrity and some outside board members. They dismantled that independent board and incorporated it into the bureaucracy.) Now even the bureaucracy was waking up to the crisis: DFO Scientists had published a paper acknowledging that they had overestimated the size of the stock by 100 percent. But the scientific truth was being filtered through a membrane of middle-rank bureaucrats who were rewriting the reports to tell the politicians what they wanted to hear.

By this time, there were two very large, vertically integrated Canadian companies catching half the quota—over 180,000 metric tons—using ice-reinforced draggers on the spawning grounds. These companies had already gone bankrupt in 1982, but the government had bailed them out in a drive to privatize and had sold $177 million worth of stock in one company alone to

One lesson, surely, is the need to build effective bridges between the scientific community and the fishermen, so that the two kinds of knowledge work together and expand their reach.

Candace Cochrane

The path to Northeast Crouse

an unsuspecting public. So now they had to pull every policy lever imaginable to keep the monster fed.

As a small group without the resources of the Island Institute, our Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Association fought a rearguard action from 1986 to 1992. We had some small success, but always the quota cuts were too little and too late. Unbelievably, the trawlers were allowed to sail again at the beginning of 1992, only six months before the ax fell for good. In January and February of that year, it took up to 75 head-on gutted cod to make up 100 pounds; that's how small the cod were. The trawler companies came to the government of Canada and said, "We can't make money doing this. We can't put them through our lines, can't get a yield, can't pay for the diesel. The game is over."

Of course, that's not the way it's portrayed in the press. We had the brave government of Canada taking the very wise decision to close down the fishery. I keep forgetting that it happened only a little over a year ago. It seems like a lifetime for the people who have built their whole culture on fishing, who work with the seasons, getting ready each spring and watching for the capelin run to come in June. To say you can't go on the water is like telling farmers in Idaho that in the spring they can't plant. Your whole society is geared to the cycle.

I've tried at different meetings to express what it's like, but I guess the best way to describe what it's like is the fact that in Newfoundland today, even after a year, many people cannot talk about it. They find it hard to articulate their feelings. People who have spent their whole life talking about nothing else but fish don't want to talk about it. They'll talk about hockey scores, crises in Bosnia—about anything but the loss they are going through.

So what is the loss? First, it is the recognition that, given the power structure, we fishermen were—and are—helpless. As a group, we are political eunuchs. We have no power.

More fundamentally, we know that we have allowed great damage to be done to the one thing that kept our society together—the ecosystem that we were living off. If you ask older fishermen in Newfoundland, they will tell you that they don't expect to see a commercial fishery in Newfoundland ever again, that it is gone forever. There are others—and I am included among them—who take a more optimistic view of the tremendous healing powers of the ocean. But whether we will be given a second chance is a question over which we have no control. It's a process that must surely teach us something; if not, then we are incapable of learning.

One lesson, surely is the need to build effective bridges between the scientific community and the fishermen, so that the two kinds of knowledge work together and expand their reach. It is critical that this be done in such a way that both groups respect one another in their different knowledge. We also need effective organizations that bring fishermen and processors together. I framed it that way because in Newfoundland there has recently been such a terrible class struggle between fishermen and processors that

it's very hard sometimes to get the two groups even to sit in the same room.

This sense of working together has to expand to include the larger community as well. We have to recognize that people working on the water— fishermen—are a minority within this society. They will never be effective in exercising a wise stewardship of the ocean if the larger community doesn't value the ecosystem and work with them and respect them. So whether you like it or not, the general community and the fishing community are going to have to work together.

The other thing we realize, in retrospect, is how naive and ineffective we were at lobbying government. The decisions were being made not in St. John's but in Ottawa, where the two trawler companies had full-time vice presidents of public affairs who were buying lunches for every influential bureaucrat they could get their hands on while were holding press conferences locally.

But the fundamental lesson we've learned is that you can never take just the short-term view. In light of our modern human ability to destroy ecosystems, you always have to accept short-term pain for long-term gain. In Newfoundland we never were ready to bite the bullet. We always put it off. We learned the hard way. I suspect, if we look at environmental degradation in any other category, that's a given. It's not some faraway problem in the Amazon jungle; we are living through it in a so-called modern society like Canada's. Yet we still are not prepared to take the short-term pain.

You hear so much in the media—and it's something of an assumption in our North American society—that environmental protection and economic growth are somehow opposites that clash; that given the level of unemployment, you have to come down on one side or the other. But that is a false dichotomy. There is no such conflict. We in Newfoundland are living proof that, because we did not put the environment first, our economy suffered terribly. We may have fatally injured our whole society because we didn't respect the environment.

The lesson of the cod in Newfoundland is just one example of the general lesson of our failures of stewardship all over this whole planet. We just happen to be an obvious example, where cause-and-effect is so clearly visible. But I suspect I could go to any country in the world and find the same short-term trade-offs, the same lack of stewardship. So if you can draw some parallel or some lesson from our experience, then perhaps some good can come out of it.

As for ourselves, I think we will survive as a society and even be a better society because of it. Right now, a lot of work lies ahead of us. I personally look forward to strengthening links between New England and Newfoundland, drawing on your experiences, as you perhaps can draw on ours.

(continued on page 93)

Jamie Lewis

The day after the moratorium, they went back out and hauled up the 100- to 200-year-old anchors.

In light of our modern human ability to destroy ecosystems, you always have to accept short-term pain for long-term gain. In Newfoundland we never were ready to bite the bullet. We always put it off.

SWIMMERS

DAVID CONOVER

My mother shared the shallow waters off her island with a rare creature from the deep on that hot August day. At the time, she did not know she had company beyond that of the gulls and a diving cormorant. I wonder if the other swimmer knew.

MY MOTHER IS a swimmer and has been all her life. Long before our family became the seasonal caretakers of an island and its lighthouse, she swam in pools, lakes, rivers, and the ocean—anywhere the water was deep enough. Something about floating and the rhythm of the stroke seems to appeal to her spirit. She also takes great satisfaction in swimming with others. For years she has taught classes, and the first thing she said to my wife and me when we told her we were going to have a child was, "I can teach the baby to swim!"

In the summer, every once in a while when the weather is hot, the sea still, and the water warmed from the low tide rocks, she'll walk to the shore and step off the island into Penobscot Bay. Usually she goes right in, without the sensible hesitation most of the rest of us feel about the chilly Gulf of Maine water.

"Saltwater's good for you," she says—a prescription that also applies to healing cuts, relaxing sore muscles, and shampooing hair.

With a steady kick and a lingering crawl stroke, she sets off from the boat haulout beach. Her course carves an arc in the water until parallel to the shore. She continues past the points and coves, underneath the light tower, the house, and the place where two chairs look out and down the bay. Underwater, the rockweed sways with the surf and pot warps trail off into the dark. Occasional minnows come up to swim beside the land. Continuing her leisurelly circle of the island, she passed the cliffs at the southwestern end, where the rocks are sharp, and back to the boat haulout. The distance is about a mile and a half.

On that particular August day, as my mother was setting off for her swim, there was an underwater creature nearby. The animal looked like a large dolphin or a pilot whale, but it was neither. Specialists later identified it as a True's beaked whale, one of the least known of the world's large animals, named after an obscure turn-of-the-century scientist named Frederick True. It had traveled far, perhaps thousands of miles, from the depths of the mid-Atlantic to the shallow water of this tiny Maine island. No one knew it was coming, and aside from a Wells Beach stranding in 1906, not a single True has ever been seen in Maine. (My later research also revealed that there has never been a confirmed sighting out at sea, in any of the world's oceans.)

My mother swam with her eyes open that day, as she always does, without goggles.

"My eyes don't sting," she responded, when I asked her as a child. Later in life, I realized that my eyes didn't sting in the ocean either. The fear of stinging which had kept them shut tight was actually discomfort with the blurriness, the vague forms, the moving shadows of deep water.

She saw nothing unusual during her swim, she reported later on, only the island, the water. Her head rolled back and forth between the two worlds, looking up to the trees and sun, then down into the silence passing underneath. If anyone was in a position to see the visiting deep-water enigma, it was she. But like so many other happenings in the water between Maine islands, the creature was missed.

Only after she had stepped out of the water, dried off, and walked back up toward the house did she notice the commotion near the southwestern shore. She walked along the cliff path to investigate. As she approached, she saw two outboards, with people aboard pointing to the rocks on shore. Unable to see where they pointed, she hurried along until she spotted an enormous pool of red in the water and on the rocks. The pool did not look like blood. Spilled red paint perhaps. She didn't really know and wasn't alarmed, but she did wonder how the red pool had appeared so suddenly in water she had just passed through.

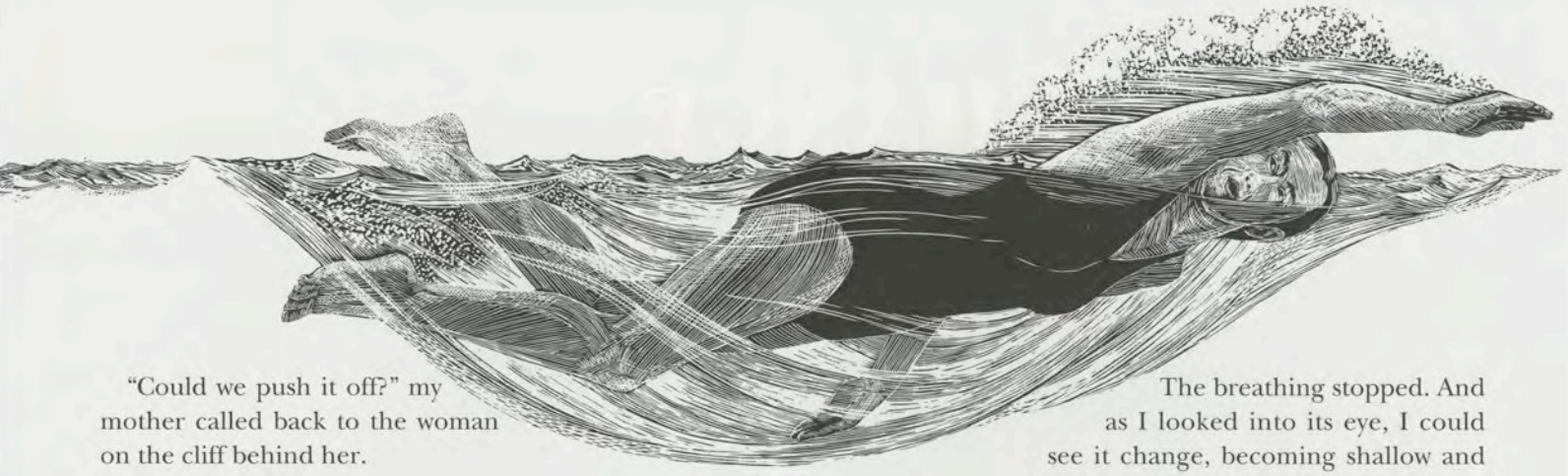
Then she saw the black form itself, about 13 feet long, thrashing violently back and forth on the rocks. A large dolphin, she guessed, in need of help. She had reached the cliff directly over the scene. A woman and a five year old boy, island picnickers, had also heard the fuss and were looking over the edge, fixed with wonder.

"I'm going down there." said my mother, and began to pick her descent. The little boy watched.

The True whale was still as my mother approached, half its body firmly on ledge, half in the water. It appeared determined to leave the sea. One side of its face and long, gently curved nose gushed blood, apparently cut on the rocks. She noticed scratches and parallel scars on its back. The animal breathed heavily. There must be some way to save this magnificent animal, she thought.

"It tried to swim onto the beach across the way, too," shouted a man from one of the boats.

Illustrations by Siri Beckman



"Could we push it off?" my mother called back to the woman on the cliff behind her.

"Maybe we should...," came the response, but the cliffwatchers remained frozen in place, uncertain as to how that could be done.

Suddenly, the True lurched again, moving further onto the rocks. My mother stood back, waiting. She called out, "Hey fella, hey fella." Maybe it was sick. She hoped her words would soothe the animal, but feeling the heat and distress of the animal she realized now that this was not a rescue situation. The True was dying.

The True was dying on the island beach and my mother understood that of all the people in the world, of all the living things swimming in the water, she was the one to be with this particular animal in its last living moments.

Then she saw the eye, focused directly at her. A beautiful, liquid, strangely intimate eye. An eye that seemed to look at only her, as if she were surrounded by the vast open distances of the deep Atlantic. The eye called her. "Without saying anything, it spoke," she later told me.

"It's okay, fella, it's okay," she said, and sat alongside, as she has so often over the years when someone in the family was ill.

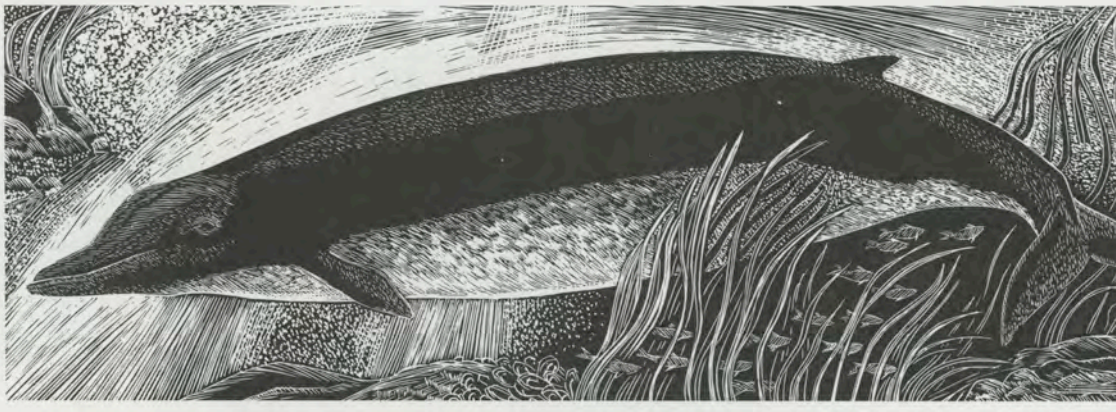
The two of them were together on the ledge like distant relatives from neighboring countries meeting at the border for the first and last time. So little said, so much to know. My mother did not know that True whales have only been seen 24 times in recorded history, and then only when stranded. She did not know that almost nothing is understood about where they swim or how they mate or breathe, that the best guesses are based on their cousin, the Baird's beaked whale, which swims in mid-ocean, diving down as far as three thousand feet and staying underwater for over an hour.

She knew little about how it lived, except that it was a swimmer. But she did understand that it would die here, and that the animal's last swim was in her waters, off this Maine island.

"I heard a deep moan," she said. "I wasn't even sure it was from the animal, the moan was so strange and so deep. I've never heard anything like it. The tail stopped. The breathing stopped. And as I looked into its eye, I could see it change, becoming shallow and then... that was it."

The body spent the night on the rocks. After sitting with it for a while, my mother walked back along the island path to the house. When it was dark and the solid green glow of the lighthouse was casting reddish shadows on her bedroom wall, she drifted to sleep.

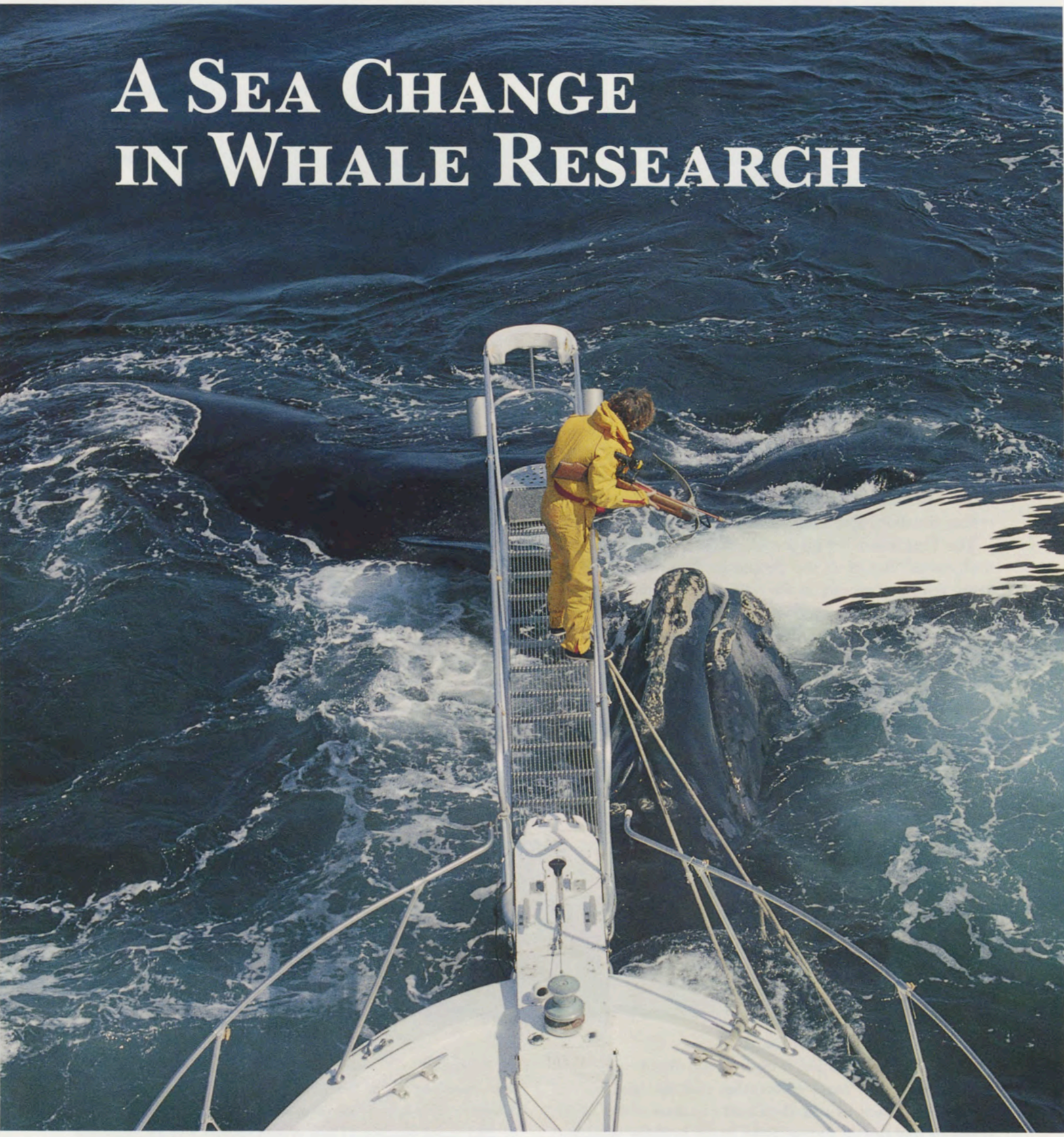
My mother still marvels at the encounter and will continue to do so for the rest of her life. As for the whale, we may never know why the True swam to this island and, with its last breaths, pushed itself out of the water and looked one of us in the eye. Maybe it misread the oceanic currents and was lost. Maybe it was under the attack of internal marine parasites. When all the theorizing is done, most whale biologists agree, we simply do not have enough experience to conclusively know. All we are left with is a carcass, the memory of a swimmer's eye, and an understanding of the fragile mystery that lives in the water between and beyond our islands.



On August 26, 1993, the body was towed to the mainland town boat launching ramp. Whale researchers from the College of the Atlantic took it to their lab on a boat trailer, performed a necropsy, and found that the 13 foot, 8 inch animal was an immature female. They found no apparent cause of death. The internal organs were sent to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. for further study and the skeleton prepared for eventual display.

David Conover *is a documentary filmmaker in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His previous contributions to* Island Journal *include "In Cod We Trusted," published in 1993.*

A Sea Change in Whale Research



Gulf of Maine researchers look outward—and inward—for answers to new questions

A medieval invention, the crossbow, makes it possible to sample a whale's skin so its genetic makeup can be studied.

Scott Kraus (2)

To see a whale at close range is to glimpse a world humans are only beginning to understand.

DAVID D. PLATT

UNLESS THINGS in the Gulf of Maine get even livelier this summer, we will all remember the warm months of 1993 as the Time of the Whales.

A boatload of camera-toting tourists off Portsmouth, New Hampshire, got a good look at a blue whale, an animal so large and rare—it was the second sighting of the season, only the sixth in 13 years—that the event was front-page news. Two hundred miles to the northeast, frisky finback whales feeding near inshore fish weirs kept residents of Grand Manan, New Brunswick, awake at night. A dead sperm whale turned up in the vicinity of Mount Desert Rock, Maine. Researchers at Allied Whale, an arm of the College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, reported sightings of 41 individual humpback whales in their study area—a doubling of the population in the area since 1991. In Penobscot Bay a True's beaked whale stranded and died at Curtis Island off Camden. The presence of this species anywhere is highly unusual.

Bob Bowman photo, courtesy of Allied Whale

Finback, Mount Desert Rock. For some kinds of studies, an offshore station makes an ideal study platform. But increasingly, scientists are using satellites and other tracking systems to learn about whales' oceanic migrations.

Whale numbers all over the northern Gulf of Maine were up in 1993, probably because of the food supply. Stocks of herring, a species favored by whales, have been building for many years. They got high enough in the Gulf last summer to depress the price humans were willing to pay for them, and whales—heedless of the market price—showed up in larger numbers than usual to fill their bellies.

Scott Kraus of the New England Aquarium agrees that whale sightings in the northern Gulf were more common last summer than they had been in previous years. But he downplays the significance of the increase, pointing out that sightings on Stellwagen Bank at the Gulf's southern end were lower, and that scientists increasingly view the Gulf of Maine as one destination in whales' far-ranging migrations. In other words, more whales may have been attracted to the Gulf of Maine this year because of the food available, but we shouldn't assume we're doing something right or that the whales will be sticking around.

THE LARGER WORLD

Kraus's thoughts about the summer of '93 reflect a new way of looking at whales. After 20 years of photo-identifying individual animals that visit their study areas, learning about the behavior of individuals and cataloguing their reproduction and yearly returns, he and other researchers have begun to look at the much larger world these animals inhabit. They have found, for example, that the present population of right whales in the North Atlantic may trace its lineage back to as few as three individual females that survived the depredations of 19th century commercial whaling. They have learned that there are two distinct populations of right whales in the Atlantic—north and south—and that they have been separate for almost a million years. Not surprisingly, the scientists have found evidence of inbreeding in the North Atlantic population—a discovery with serious implications for the species' long-term health and survival.

The shift from whale identification and local census-taking to topics such as genetics, migrations, and physiology is related to developments in technology over the past 20 years, such as satellites and DNA discoveries. The end of the Cold War made the U.S. Navy's once-secret underwater-listening methods available to researchers, making possible a "passive tracking" project to track blue, finback, and minke whales as they move about the Atlantic. The same technologies have made it possible to study whales from great distances by listening to them. It's even possible to observe the changes a whale's body undergoes when it dives hundreds of feet.

The new research focus is a natural outgrowth of two decades' worth of work on the Gulf of Maine's whale populations, during which researchers have learned that these animals are far more cosmopolitan than was once thought.

Finally, the change has a political dimension: the killing of whales for commercial purposes, while still a potent issue in some quarters, has largely stopped since 1970. Man may still be the whale's worst enemy, but not man the hunter.

"There has been a shift in the way we understand conservation issues," Scott Kraus says. What's important to whales' survival is "the way we manage the oceanic environment"—reducing threats from ship collisions, pollution, underwater noise. The key to this sort of management: understanding whales' ties to the ocean as a whole.

Kraus's most visible weapon in this brave new research world is actually quite old: the crossbow. Perched on the tuna pulpit of a pitching boat, he takes aim at a surfaced right whale and lets fly with a dart that's designed, when reeled in, to pull away (painlessly) a tiny piece of the whale's skin. From this sample Kraus can

extract enough DNA to learn something of this particular whale's ancestry. Examining samples from enough individuals, a researcher can learn a lot about the size and diversity of the right whale gene pool, and how closely the members of the North Atlantic's small population of right whales are related to one another.

This sort of genetic research isn't limited to the North Atlantic or to right whales, and similar studies in other parts of the world have provided useful comparisons. In the Pacific, for example, where commercial whalers greatly reduced the gray whale population, scientists have learned that the gene pool had stayed larger than that of the North Atlantic right whale. Gray whales have rebuilt their population more successfully than right whales, and greater genetic diversity may have played a part.

Peter Stevick photo, courtesy of Allied Whale

In the Gulf of Maine, the population of humpback whales doubled between 1991 and 1993.

Nor is genetic research limited to one or two species. The College of the Atlantic has a federal permit to collect skin samples for biopsies from finback and minke whales in U.S. waters, and has had Canadian permits for these species as well as for humpbacks. A finback genetic study is in its early stages, and researchers have learned how to determine a finback's sex, giving them new insights into the lives of a number of known individuals.

Genetic research on humpbacks — a playful species that's a favorite with the public and therefore capable of generating lots of research donations — is much further along. A project called YONAH (the letters stand for "Years of the North Atlantic humpback") is currently underway, involving researchers from half a dozen countries. Bob Bowman of Allied Whale describes YONAH as "the biggest whale project ever attempted."

In essence, YONAH is a population study, but it also has a genetic component supervised by a university in Denmark; three photo-identification projects; and a statistical analysis component in collaboration with the National Marine Fisheries Service. The College of the Atlantic also maintains a separate catalog of humpbacks in the Antarctic.

"The point," says Bowman, "is to get every whale an equal opportunity of being sampled." In the past, sampling of humpbacks has been "inconsistent."

At least three research organizations — the New England Aquarium, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Bioacoustics Research Program at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology — are investigating the effects of sound on whales and other marine mammals. Some of the work focuses on entanglement and the possibility that sound can be used to keep whales and porpoises out of fishing nets, while other projects have explored the implications of the noisy underwater world man has created (largely through ship traffic) and how it affects whales' ability to communicate with another.

Christopher Clark of the Bioacoustics Research Program says his work "all boils down to a love of music and natural sounds, particularly the sounds from the ocean." Since 1992 he has been working with the U.S. Navy, using its passive acoustic submarine tracking systems to listen to whales in the Atlantic. "The experience of listening to these animals for weeks and weeks is unbelievably exciting," Clark says. "We have tracked blue whales from over 900 nautical miles, and listened to humpbacks singing from over 50 nautical miles. I am sure that these whales are not only communicating over these incredible distances, but that they are using a form of low frequency sonar in order to navigate, orient, and find areas that might have food — in essence they have evolved over 35 million years the very capacities that we have been developing over the past 35 years."

A blue whale was tracked with sonar for almost 1,500 miles. Such "passive listening," says senior scientist Peter Stevick at Allied Whale, is "already changing the way we think about whale distribution."

Satellite tagging, a technology used by terrestrial wildlife biologists for many years, has made it easier to track individual animals — a researcher working off Grand Manan recently tracked two right whales from the Bay of Fundy to New Jersey and back, a journey that took 43 days.

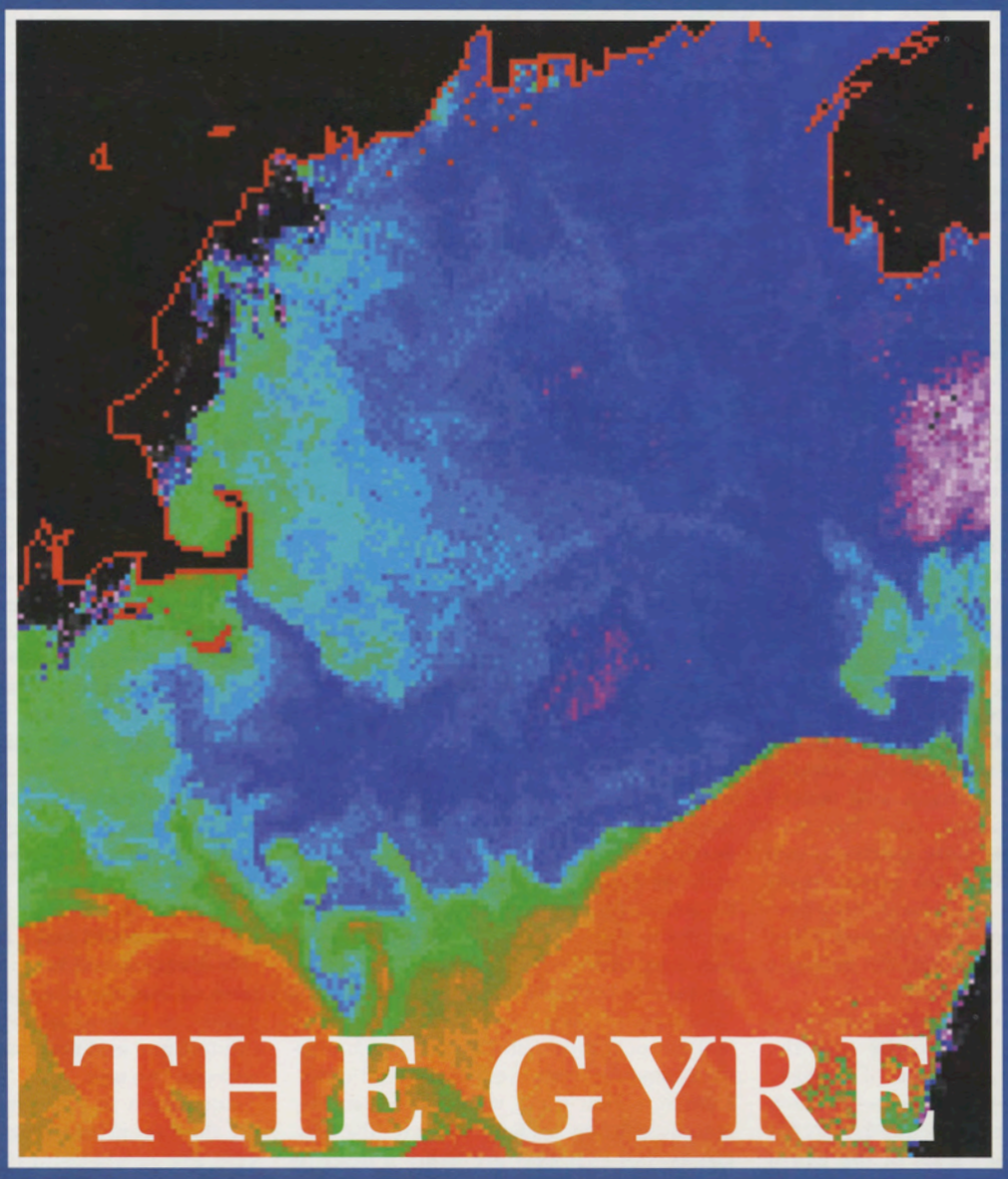
The newest technology can't solve all the mysteries, however. The True's beaked whale that stranded and died on Curtis Island (see story, page 34) in late August was in the area for reasons even scientists can only speculate about. The only previous stranding in Maine occurred in 1906, according to Allied Whale; only 16 strandings of True's beaked whales are known for the entire North Atlantic Ocean. Postmortem examination of the Curtis Island animal did little to clear up either mystery — why the whale was in the area, and why it came ashore.

Investigations in the decade to come can be expected to answer questions about the larger marine environment and the ways whales relate to it. "The marine mammal community is more affected by everyday activity than we think," says Kraus, pointing out that the term "pollution" can really be applied to lots more than oil spills. Pollution can be acoustic, when noise from ships interferes with whales' communication. It can describe what takes place when the activities of whale-watching boats (or even, perish the thought, researchers with crossbows) disturb the animals being observed. And even as we clean up old sources of pollution like sewage discharges, we must be careful not to create new ones: Boston's new sewage outfall 12 miles offshore, it has been suggested, may degrade water quality in an area that until now has been relatively pristine.

Being able to listen from shore, Clark points out, could make man less obtrusive. "My dream would be to have listening stations all over the coasts at places where the public, as well as students and scientists, can to listen and acoustically observe these animals," he says.

Important as these matters are, however, they seem mundane in comparison with the newly-launched investigations into genetics, migrations, breeding, and other things that will determine whether whales can survive at all. A whole population of right whales descended from three females, for example, might lack the genetic diversity it needs to weather an environmental catastrophe or an outbreak of illness. Humpbacks that migrate to and from the Antarctic (a College of the Atlantic team is studying them) may prove to be extremely vulnerable to disruptions in their food while they're in that polar region.

Time, technology, and experience have brought about a "sea change" in whale science, if the term is appropriate. Identifying, observing, and counting individuals that return annually to the Gulf of Maine, while important, will no longer be enough. A generation of scientists, all specializing in the whales of the Gulf of Maine, has completed its work, more or less. The next generation, it seems, will be looking in two directions: outward to the rest of the whales' environment; inward into the very makeup of the whales themselves.



THE GYRE

If You Understand the Water, You Can Find the Fish

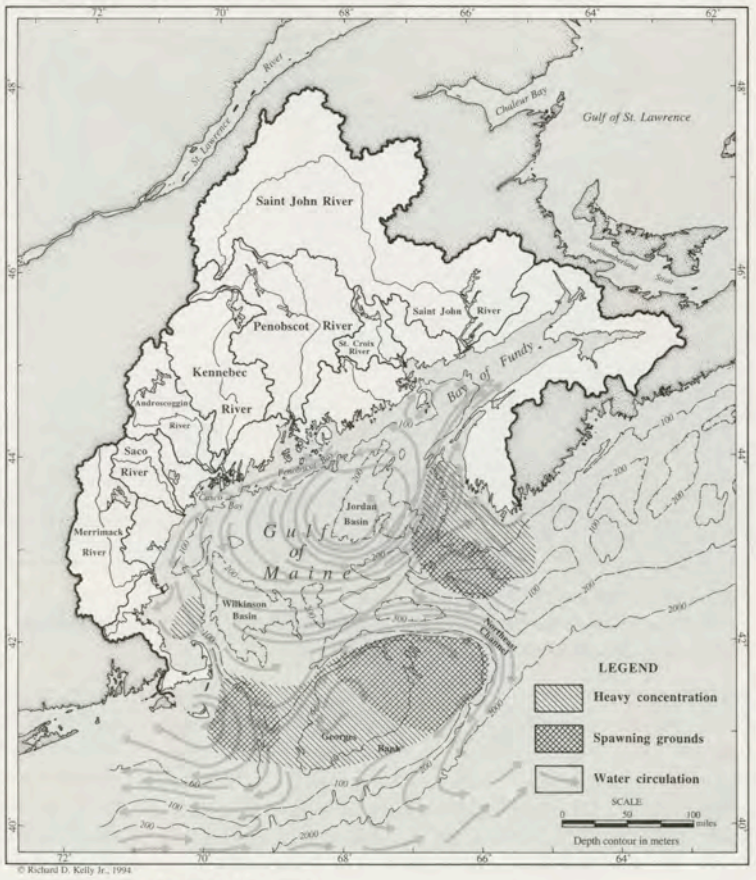
SPENCER APOLLONIO

Understanding the ways in which the unique physical features of the Gulf of Maine interact is essential to understanding the interactions of its rich variety of fish, shellfish, and other marine life. This, in turn, has direct implications for the economic well-being of our island and coastal communities.

This essay is excerpted from a forthcoming book, *An Environmental Atlas of the Gulf of Maine*, to be published jointly by M.I.T. Press and the Island Institute in the spring of 1995.

PERHAPS THE first thing to understand about the Gulf of Maine is that it is not the Atlantic Ocean. For the observer on the shore, the Atlantic Ocean lies far beyond the horizon, perhaps 200 or more miles offshore. The Gulf of Maine is quite distinct from the Atlantic, differing by such significant measures as geological history, water characteristics, age, and productivity. A 19th century historian called the Gulf of Maine "a very marked and peculiar piece of water," and indeed it is. Its marked and peculiar nature could be a great help, if we were wise enough to read the signs, in understanding the relationships of the dynamics of the sea with those of the plants and animals that live there.

The question is important. The fisheries of the Gulf of Maine support about 20,000 fishermen and each year produce about 530,000 metric tons of shellfish and finfish worth about $650 million. The wellbeing of these fisheries increasingly depends upon management based on an understanding of the physical and biological interactions within the entire system that supports them. The collapse of the Newfoundland cod fishery and the consequent disruptions of migratory patterns of whales, described elsewhere in this issue of *Island Journal*, are examples of our failures to think systematically.



HADDOCK DISTRIBUTION
Major haddock spawning grounds on Browns Bank, Georges Bank and off Massachusetts Bay (map by Richard D. Kelly Jr.)

Part of the reason it has been difficult to understand ecological relationships in places like the Gulf of Maine is that different water bodies are almost impossible to see. Instead, oceanographers have collected literally millions of bottles of seawater, analyzed their temperature and salinity, and set countless more bottles and bouys adrift to chart currents. But this is slow going. Now, with the aid of new imagery, much of it collected from orbiting satellites, seeing the fundamental building blocks in the watery realm of the Gulf of Maine is becoming easier. Such imagery from space can help us visualize how oceanography, geology, and biology are intertwined and how they interact to create the underpinnings of marine food chains on which all life in the Gulf—including ultimately our own—depends. The sections that follow focus on how physical features of the Gulf of Maine interact and affect marine life, including the lives of fish and fishermen.

OUR YOUNG GULF: PRODUCTIVITY AND STRUCTURE

The productivity of the Gulf of Maine—meaning its ability to capture sunlight and transform it into floating plant life (called phytoplankton) that all other species depend upon—is near legendary. But our waters have two other properties that are as important and interesting, though seldom considered. One is that the Gulf is very young; the other is that it is highly structured, meaning that there are lots of physical structures and compartments which give the Gulf of Maine its basic shape and which, in turn, control the way that life circulates through it.

The age of the Gulf of Maine is frequently put at about 16,000 years, approximately the time since the most recent glaciation retreated from our area. That is very, very young when compared to the age of most geographic features on the surface of the earth. The Atlantic Ocean, for example, is about 150 million years old. But the functional age of the Gulf of Maine is much less than 16,000 years; in fact, it is probably about 4,000 years, less than the duration of recorded human history and more recent than the arrival of early man in the area we now call Maine.

The reason for this functional youth lies in sea level changes and changes in absolute height of land that have occurred since and because of the great glaciation. The Gulf of Maine is a nearly landlocked body of water, and it was even more so 10,000 years ago (that stage of its development is known as the DeGeer Sea) when Georges Bank, rising above sea level, shut off most water exchange with the North Atlantic Ocean, the origin and source of our tides. It was only about 4,000 years ago that melting glaciers raised sea level to the point that Georges was submerged, thus establishing a broad connection between the ocean and our gulf and thus establishing the tidal regime with which we are familiar today. Without that tidal action and its many consequences the gulf was a much different water body from what we know today. Try to imagine the coast of Maine or the Bay of Fundy with tides of two to three feet instead of 10 to 50 feet.

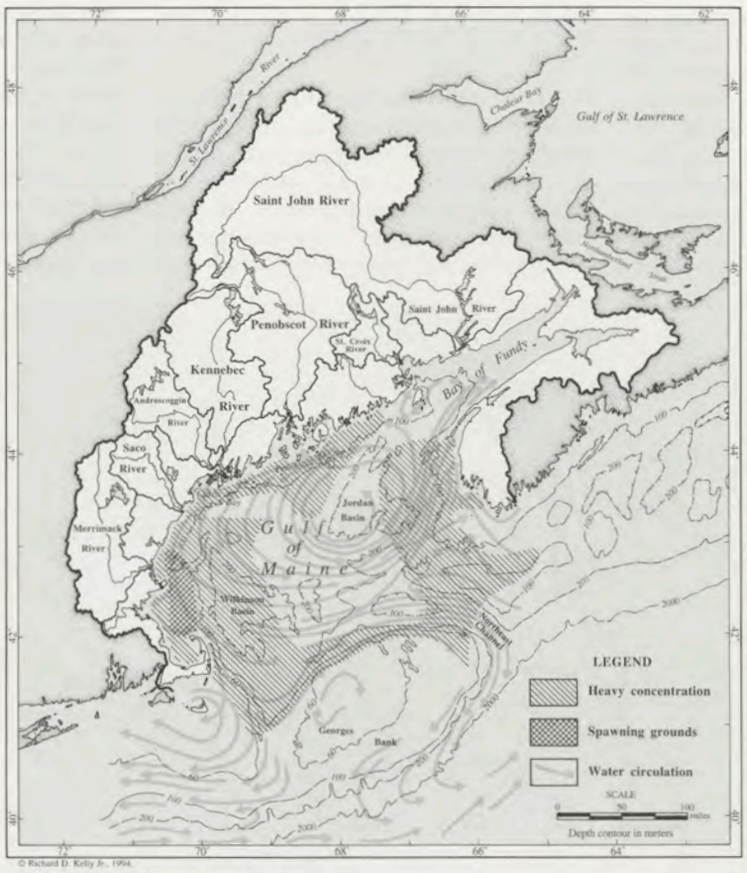
Archaeological evidence about the nature of the gulf in its youth exists—perhaps surprisingly—but is equivocal. About 4,500 years ago, at or just prior to the time that tides were becoming well established in the gulf, native peoples caught swordfish in impressive numbers. Swordfish are a warm water fish. Their considerable presence in archaeological sites suggests warm water in the relatively tideless gulf. But offsetting that hint is evidence to the contrary, suggested by the presence of walrus remains in those archaeological sites.

THE STRUCTURE OF LAND AND SEA

The structure of the gulf appears in its many topographical and hydrological features. Topographical structures include the great diversity of coastline and submarine basins and ridges, and the many types of bottom materials. The coastal geomorphology and bottom topography of the gulf reflect its youth: both show the varied and rich configurations of new, recently formed terrain, unweathered by the erosional forces of geologic time. As a result of all this there is great variety of habitats along the coasts and on the bottom of the gulf. This variety is in sharp contrast to the quite uniform shores and bottoms west and south of Cape Cod, a very much older habitat.

Facing page: Warm Core Ring Satellite Image of Gulf of Maine sea surface temperature. Blue colors (from dark to light) show transition between cold and cool waters. The shades of red in the lower part of the image show a pair of warm core rings, each 40 to 60 miles in diameter, and the associated fronts which are set up along the south facing edge of Georges Bank which is outlined in blue. (Image by Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences)

The Gulf's hydrological structures are just as real as its geographical units. The surface waters of the Gulf of Maine flow counterclockwise in a great gyre. The engine behind this flow comes in part from a cold coastal current off Nova Scotia that rises up over Brown's Bank and enters the Gulf of Maine near Cape Sable. Long term measurements indicate an additional flow of deeper waters from the the Atlantic Ocean which enter the Gulf of Maine through the deep but narrow cut, called Northeast Channel, between Georges and Brown's Banks offshore. Once these currents enter the Gulf of Maine, the earth's rotation deflects them toward the shores of Nova Scotia and the land surrounding the Bay of Fundy where they curve back around to the southwest. Off Casco Bay, the current trends more to the southeast and then to the east to set up a gentle counterclockwise gyre north of Georges Bank.



POLLOCK DISTRIBUTION

Pollock spawning areas along the inner edge of the Gulf of Maine and on Georges and Browns Banks (map by Richard D. Kelly Jr.)

Additional "thrust" to the circulation is supplied by spring runoff of fresh water from rivers as well as from one of the world's most powerful tidal surges. It has been estimated that the outer edge of this anticyclonic gyre of water rotates at a rate of seven nautical miles a day. Thus it takes approximately three months for the Gulf to complete a single revolution.

Within this generalized circulation pattern there are important seasonal and localized variations. Some of the water which enters Northeast Channel fills the deep basins of the Gulf of Maine, and important temperature features develop there. In the spring and summer increasing air temperature over the top of the basins heats the surface waters in the top hundred feet or so of the water column, while the water at the bottom of the basins remains cold. In between the surface and bottom waters, a horizontal layer of water characterized by a sharp temperature differential forms. Called a"thermocline" by oceanographers, this narrow band of water effectively isolates surface and bottom waters from each other. Within these separate environments, fishermen and scientists find different species and abundances of fish, each of which has its preferred range of temperature for feeding and spawning. In the fall and winter, the thermocline breaks down and surface and intermediate waters of the Gulf of Maine mix, but heavier, saltier bottom waters remain isolated.

Another highly important structure to Gulf of Maine waters occurs where currents intersect, such as off Georges Banks where colder waters meet the warmer waters of the Gulf Stream. Oceanographers refer to the boundaries of water bodies of different temperatures, densities, and salinities as "fronts." Similar to weather fronts in air masses, oceanographic fronts are places of exceptional biological activity. From the scientific and management points of view, it is significant that these fronts are all regular and predictable features of the gulf. They figure prominently in the distributions, abundances, and life characteristics of the many species of fish, marine mammals, and seabirds that inhabit the Gulf of Maine.

TIDES

Tides are a notable characteristic of the Gulf of Maine, perhaps the most striking feature even to the casual visitor. But as noted, they are a very recent feature in the context of geological time, about 4,000 years old. Prior to their onset the gulf was quite different. The intertidal zone was much smaller than it is now, and the abundance of life dependent upon that zone must have been notably different, probably a much smaller abundance of intertidal and subtidal seaweeds, and certainly smaller mussel and softshell clam populations.

"The tides within the Gulf of Maine have a very great rise and fall compared with other waters in this region" wrote Walter H. Rich nearly 65 years ago. "At the south of Cape Cod tides are seldom over 4 feet in their range, but beginning at once at the north of Cape Cod with a rise of from 7 to 10 feet these increase constantly as they go eastward, reaching about 28 feet in the neighborhood of Passamaquoddy Bay, to touch their highest point in the Bay of Fundy, where in many places is a rise and fall of 50 feet..." These are the highest recorded tides in the world.

The main reason for this is that the whole Bay of Fundy and Gulf of Maine system, out to the edge of the continental shelf, has a natural period of oscillation of a little over 13 hours, and so is nearly in resonance with the 12.4-hour period of the tide forging in from the North Atlantic. They are semi-diurnal tides, highs and lows occurring approximately twice a day. Because of their familiarity we tend to think of our semi-diurnal tides as typical of all tides. But in many parts of the world, such as in the Pacific region, tides may occur only once a day. Canadian Sailing Directions for Nova Scotia and the Bay of Fundy note that when the tides are propagated from the Atlantic Ocean, where they originate, into the Gulf of Maine, they undergo considerable changes.

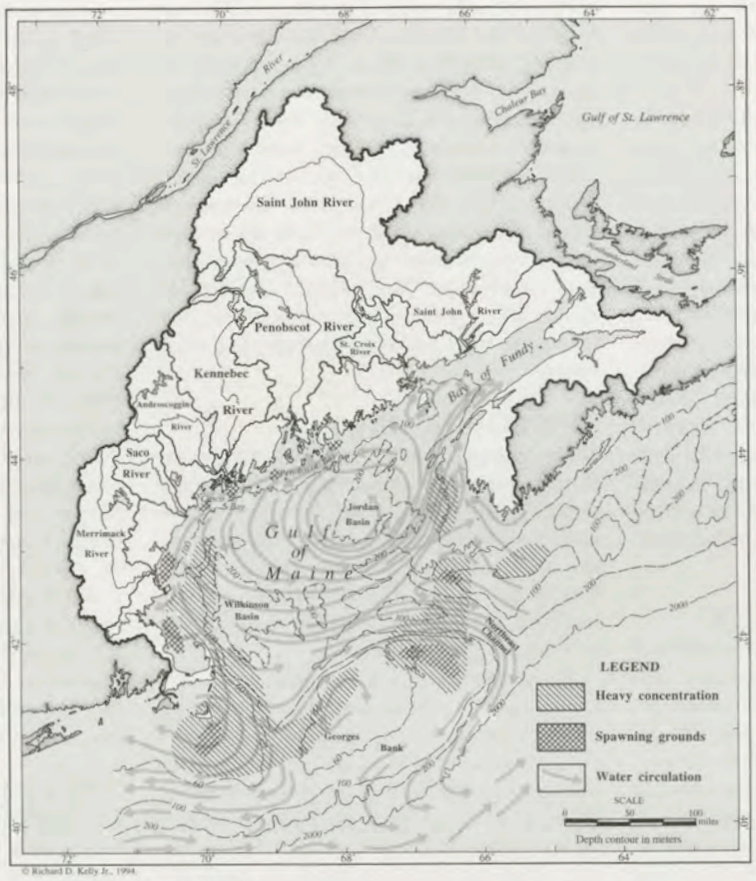
Along the coast from Boston to Bar Harbor, high water occurs nearly four hours later than on the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia, and the range of tide is nearly double. The rapid changes in the high water times and in the ranges of the tide are very apparent around the south end of Nova Scotia. The range of tide in the Gulf of Maine is a function of a number of geographical features of the gulf. The shorelines converging toward the head of the gulf is one; the oscillations created by the Bay of Fundy and reflected back into the gulf is another. The length and depth of the Bay of Fundy are the most important factors determining its great tidal range. The width of the continental shelf underlying the Gulf of Maine is an important factor affecting the ranges of our tides, even though it is seldom mentioned in the scientific literature.

TEMPERATURES

The distributions of many species within the gulf appears to be directly related to the variations of surface temperatures across the Gulf of Maine. For example, ocean surface temperatures off southwest Nova Scotia even in summer are cold, indicating upwellings in that area—i.e.,

because currents move surface waters away from that coast, deep, cold bottom waters rise to the surface to replace them. And there we find a rich population of seabirds, attracted by the tiny floating "planktonic" animals brought to the surface by that upwelling.

In marked contrast, the surface temperatures off Cape Ann and lying over Jeffreys Ledge on the western side of the gulf are warm in the summer; this is the warmest part of the Gulf of Maine, reflecting the strong temperature stratification or layering that prevails here during the summer and early fall. These warm surface waters imply a lack of vertical mixing in one water column. They form a blanket that insulates the cold bottom waters from the warming effects of summer air temperatures. Thus here we find the greatest contrast in summer between warm surface waters and cold bottom waters. In fact, these deep waters have the coldest temperatures of the gulf at any season. Here we find northern shrimp in greatest abundance, precisely because the waters are thermally stratified: shrimp, a sub-arctic animal, prefers those coldest waters of the gulf.



COD DISTRIBUTION
Major cod spawning areas on Georges Bank and in the Gulf of Maine (map by Richard D. Kelly Jr.)

Along the Washington County coast in eastern Maine, in contrast, are found cool summer surface waters lying in a well-defined tongue of water that parallels the shore. These cool temperatures indicate considerable vertical mixing largely due to tides ebbing and flowing in the Bay of Fundy. Sun warmed surface waters are stirred deep. As a result, the bottom waters are relatively warm in summer compared to bottom waters to the west.

This pattern of surface and bottom temperatures in the eastern and western sections of the Maine coast is reversed in the winter: the bottom waters to the west tend to be warmer in the winter than the bottom waters off Eastport, but the eastern surface waters tend to be warmer in winter than those to the west, again because of mixing with depth that occurs on the eastern Maine coast.

These characteristic temperature patterns account both for the fact that shrimp are found in abundance only in the southwest part of the gulf and also for the fact that eastern Maine and southwest New Brunswick are great salmon growing areas. The relatively warm surface water off Eastport in winter allows the survival and growth of salmon in the cold months.

The dynamics of the Gulf's various currents and counter currents as they circulate through basins and over ledges, combined with different temperature regimes of water bodies which determines the presence or absence of mixing are keys to understanding fish distribution.

PATTERNS OF FISH DISTRIBUTION

Fishermen know that fish are not scattered randomly about the gulf; fishermen know that they must look for certain species in certain places at certain seasons.

These patterns of distribution may be more than geographical curiosities; they seem to reflect important relations between the structure of the Gulf and the biology of the species.

There is a working hypothesis that the distributions of pelagic (near surface) fishes, like herrings, and of benthic or demersal (bottom living) fishes, like cods and flounders, in the Gulf of Maine are a direct reflection of the differing regimes of tidally controlled mixing along the coast of Maine. The demersal fishes seem to be more abundant along the western parts of the coast, while herrings predominate along the eastern parts of the coast and off southwestern New Brunswick. These differences appear to coincide, respectively, with the more stable water in the west and with the mixed waters in the east.

In the west, according to one hypothesis, the basic phytoplankton food supply is produced in a strong pulse each spring and then sinks to the bottom to form the basis for a rich food supply for the benthic animals upon which demersal fish feed.

In the east, in contrast, the phytoplankton productivity occurs more evenly throughout the year and tends to remain in the water column, rather than sinking to the bottom, because of the strong tidal mixing. These two factors favor the development of the pelagic, surface-feeding herring population.

The hypothesis remains to be proven, but it does suggest the important connection, not sufficiently taken into account in fisheries management, of the interaction of fish with their environment.

SHRIMP

Perhaps the best documented example of the relationships of the ecology of species and structures in the gulf is found in our shrimp population. Shrimp distribution coincides, we noted, with the greatest temperature stratification of the Gulf, as well as with the coldest bottom temperatures at any season. Because of this stratification, shrimp are found in greatest abundance in the southwestern part of the Gulf.

But shrimp also swim upward and downward each night, passing through different parts of that temperature stratification in the water column, and researchers have learned that their egg production is affected by those temperature changes. The greater the temperatures differences, the greater the egg production. Presumabaly these differences in egg production from year to year have some bearing on the subsequent abundances of shrimp catches by fishermen.

It appears possible to predict future relative abundances of shrimp simply by measuring the vertical temperature distributions in early summer when eggs are being formed. Shrimp decline drastically in warm temperatures, but they also increase dramatically in cooler waters. Although they are highly vulnerable to adverse conditions such as warm water, they can also rapidly exploit favorable conditions. That is their nature, and shrimp distribution in the Gulf of Maine reflects this fact.

REDFISH

Redfish, or ocean perch, generally are found in greatest abundance in deep basins, such as Truxton, Jordan, or Crowell Basin, of the central gulf. It is in those deeps that relatively warm waters and the waters with least temperature

changes are found throughout the year, and that relationship of warm and stable water with redfish distribution is not accidental.

Redfish are attuned to the rather stable environment they live in. They are slow growing and reproduce late in life. They produce a remarkably small number of young. You might say that their lifestyle is compatible with their stable and favorable habitat. But a consequence is that they are also highly vulnerable to heavy fishing pressure; their biology does not permit them to recover quickly from stock reductions resulting from either heavy fishing effort or natural catastrophes. Redfish used to be an important commercial fishery in the Gulf of Maine; it is no longer. We failed to understand that its vulnerability to fishing, even though that vulnerability is clear in redfish biology.

HERRING AND MACKEREL

Other fishes of the Gulf of Maine also have clear and characteristic geographical distributions. The abundances of mackerel and herring in western and eastern Maine respectively are familiar to fishermen. These distributions reflect fundamental differences in these seemingly similar surface schooling fish. Look more closely at the relationship of herring to its spawning sites. Herring are dependent for their spawning upon areas defined by oceanographic "fronts," the meetings of warmer and cooler waters (more technically correct, the meetings of waters of greater and lesser stability) these are clearly visible in satellite imagery as we can see in the image on page 40. Fronts are stable, predictable, quite permanent features of the Gulf of Maine because they are functions of water depths and tidal currents (and thus of the moon). Herring, like other animals with their kind of life history, have come to rely on these physical features of the ocean for their basic reproductive patterns. Mackerel, reflecting a different kind of life history, have no such dependence, shedding their eggs, apparently unpredictably, wherever may be convenient during the course of their extensive migrations along the coast from the deep waters off the Virginia Capes to the Gulf of Maine or to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. These differences suggest basic differences in the vulnerability of these species to natural variabilities. They should also suggest basic differences in the management tactics that may be appropriate for each species.

THE COD FAMILY

Intriguing patterns of fish distributions are found among the great family of cod and cod-related fishes. The family includes cod, haddock, pollock, cusk, whiting or silver hake, and red and white hakes. Each has its pattern of distribution throughout the Gulf of Maine just as do shrimp, redfish, mackerel, and herring.

Looking closely, for example, at the distributions of cod and haddock (see accompanying chart), it is clear that each species shows considerable patchiness within its overall distribution,as well as a kind of alternation or reciprocity of relative abundance within particular areas. For example, whereas haddock tends to be more abundant on the eastern end of Georges Bank, cod tends to be more abundant in the near shore waters of the gulf.

The distributions of the cod family have a number of potentially important implications. It is as if nature has deliberately spaced the many members of the cod family throughout the Gulf of Maine, with each able to function best in a certain part of the gulf, to hedge its bet, so to speak; to ensure that no matter what may be happening to the Gulf by way of environmental disturbances there is always a member of the cod family or its close relatives that might thrive within the system.

There also seems to be a species of one kind or another of the cod family spawning throughout the year. Because the distributions and spawnings of this big and important family of fish are spaced throughout different compartments and seasons of the gulf, the ecosystem is buffered to some degree against adverse conditions during one part of the season or in a particular location. The fluctuating patterns of abundance within the cod family appears to be important for the functioning of the system in ways that we do not really understand; but the system, perhaps, doesn't care whether a cod or a haddock or a cusk performs the function. The important thing these distributions seem to imply, is that there be some member of the cod family present in abundance to perform its function. In summary, the Gulf of Maine ecosystem has coevolved with a highly diverse group of cod and cod family relatives by spreading them out in space and time, resulting in a built-in stability that renders them less vulnerable to localized impacts that might jeopardize their abundance and functions.

THE GULF OF MAINE AS AN ECOSYSTEM

Our gulf is clearly not a casual, accidental catchall of living things randomly scattered about in an homogenous body of water. We find instead much structure and much pattern in the gulf and its inhabitants. We have hardly begun to describe these structures and patterns, even less to consider their significance. In fact, with one or two exceptions, little note has been taken of these facts. But we cannot doubt that there must be causal relations here and significance for the wellbeing and management of the abundance of life that we find here. If the frequently invoked concept of "ecosystem" is to be useful in thinking about the Gulf of Maine, then we must have some agreement presently lacking on what that term means. It is in fact an elusive idea; the definition is not self-evident. Ecosystems are not functionally described by geographical limits or by somewhat arbitrary species lists, even less by monitoring every physical and chemical variable that comes to mind—an impossible task even if it were useful. The concept of ecosystem probably turns fundamentally upon the rates at which such things as energy flow, nutrient recycling, and so on happen. And that fact may require quite a revolution in our way of thinking about such things. However we may define an ecosystem, we suspect that structure and pattern such as we find so clearly in both the oceanography and biology in this "... very marked and peculiar piece of water" the Gulf of Maine, will be part of that concept.

Whales, too, have striking patterns of distribution in the Gulf of Maine. The few right whales in the Gulf of Maine are found mostly off eastern Maine in contrast to the fin, sei, and humpback whales, each of which has its own characteristic distribution elsewhere in the gulf. These distributions reflect, undoubtedly, needs of each species and so reflect the vulnerability of those animals to perturbations to those habitats. A tanker spill at the once proposed refinery at Eastport, for example, could have devastated the few remaining right whales dependent upon the unique properties that area.

There is a curious tendency when thinking, or at least talking, about the ecosystem of the Gulf of Maine to overlook the presence of mammals such as whales, seals, porpoises, dolphins. Perhaps this is because the whale population now is not large. But this is to ignore the role of mammals in the evolution and functioning of this system when their numbers were much larger than now. It is just as well, therefore, to make some estimate of what that abundance once was. We can reasonably guess that whereas the present population of large whales (right, humpback, fin, sei, minke) in the gulf is about 3200, the original populations were about 20,000. This difference in numbers ought to attract our attentions to the question of the ecological role these mammals play or played in the functioning of the gulf.

With a seven-fold reduction in their abundance we should expect that the functioning of the gulf is now different from what it was at the time of whale abundance. It is entirely possible that changes of this magnitude may be critically important for our management policies of the gulf. Unfortunately, there has been little effort to understand the significance of those changes.

Spencer Apollonio *is senior research associate at the Island Institute. He was the first director of the New England Fisheries Management Council.*

N.C. Wyeth, *Dark Harbor Fishermen*, 1943, tempera on panel, 35 x 38 inches

"AN EYE FOR MAINE"

One Collector's Embracing Passion for the Art of Maine

CHRIS CROSMAN AND PETER RALSTON

THE FOLLOWING pages contain a sampling of a unique collaboration between the Island Institute and the Farnsworth Museum, neighboring Rockland institutions dedicated to preserving the best of Maine. "An Eye for Maine: Selections From a Private Collection," an exhibition of these and approximately 25 other paintings, will open at the Farnsworth Museum on July 15, 1994 and run through September 11, with the show later appearing at the Portland Museum of Art.

"An Eye For Maine" is a selection of paintings from a remarkable private collection, assembled over the past several years by an anonymous individual who has chosen to concentrate exclusively on the art of Maine, past and present. Unlike many private and even museum collections, these works are defined by an extraordinarily sharp and refined focus.

That Maine has nurtured and long provided inspiration for many of the most important artists in the nation is immediately apparent to anyone who sees this collection. Artists better known for their work outside Maine are represented in this col-

lection by some of their best paintings, arguing for a reassessment of their careers—George Bellows, Robert Henri, Leon Kroll. Artists such as John Marin and William Thon who have long been associated with Maine, confirm their stature with outstanding examples. And several works by such artists as Rockwell Kent, N.C. Wyeth, Fitz Hugh Lane, Winslow Homer, and Fairfield Porter are as fine as anything these artists ever produced.

While not (yet) a comprehensive survey of painting in Maine, this collection does provide a range of work suggesting the tremendous impact of Maine on the history of representational painting in America. Its breadth and qualitative consistency places it among the most important Maine art collections, public or private, anywhere in the nation. "Museum quality," it should be stated, has always been defined by private, "amateur" collectors who nearly always see things first and more clearly than most so-called "professionals" who work in museums; nearly every great museum collection in America was originally formed by private collectors.

What characterizes "An Eye for Maine"—as a collection and as a show—is not only its regional point of view, but the collector's individual sensibility. Looking closely at the collection as a whole suggests an aesthetic consistency that goes well beyond specific locale. The hallmark is an eye for particular qualities of color, form and especially light—the slant of light raking Andrew Wyeth's *Maine Room*, the shimmering light on Hassam's *Isles of Shoals*, the isolating, still light of Fitz Hugh Lane's luminescent *Camden Mountains from the South End of the Harbor*. In many of the works there is a strength and confidence of structure and bold handling of paint—Henri, Kent, Bellows, Hartley, among others. And there is even a wry "Maine" sense of humor. While it is not often true (as is sometimes suggested) that artists are like their paintings; it can be said with confidence, that collections mirror their owners, at least in terms of a sensibility. "An Eye for Maine" depicts a sensibility of warmth and vitality, intelligence and discernment, and, most of all, an embracing passion for the art and state of Maine.

Chris Crosman *is Director of the Farnsworth Museum.* ***Peter Ralston*** *is Art Director of* Island Journal *and Associate Director of Island Institute.*

Victor de Grailly, *Eastport and Passamaquoddy Bay*, c. 1840, oil on canvas, 17 x 23 1/2 inches

Two Centuries of Maine Art

DONELSON HOOPES

"As one crosses the Piscataqua from New Hampshire into Maine, the air changes and becomes fresh—alive. There is a . . . unique glitter to the fields and forests, marshes and water."

KENNETH ROBERTS, *TRENDING INTO MAINE*

KENNETH ROBERTS celebrated Maine, not as a painter of pictures, but in words inspired by much the same response to the incomparable beauty of the state that has long motivated artists to produce some of their best creations. Many of his books, like *Trending Into Maine*, were embellished by illustrations created by one of the supreme masters of the genre, N.C. Wyeth, who established a summer residence at Port Clyde and later at Cushing. Andrew Wyeth, his son, and perhaps the best known artist working in Maine today, maintains a summer studio in the same St. George River locality. Significant connections abound here, and something of a full circle is completed, historically speaking. For it was in the riverine estuary of the St. George that the English explorer Waymouth dropped anchor in 1605, exciting dreams for a colony that little more than two centuries later would become the State of Maine.

Before Maine attained statehood in 1820, it was a dependency of Massachusetts. As a frontier district, life was harsh and amenities few. In the 18th century, the great "proprietors" commanded the destinies of their vast domains in Maine from afar and patronized artists like Copley, Feke, and Blackburn who rendered their sitters according to the fashions of British portraiture prevailing in colonial Boston and New York. Landscape painting was unknown, for, typical of 18th century attitudes toward nature, the wilderness was regarded as unworthy of the artist's attention.

Not until 1825, when Thomas Cole almost single-handedly opened the sensibilities of artists and the public to the sublimity of nature, did that attitude change. The so-called "Hudson River School," for which Cole was the founding genius, endowed the United States with its first truly original art expression. In the summer of 1844, Cole made his one trip to Maine, visiting Mount Desert Island, where he sketched views of Frenchman's Bay. This marked the first time a major American artist had visited Maine. It would inspire others to follow.

ROMANTIC REALISM

In the second quarter of the 19th century a number of European artists also began to exploit the potential of the American landscape. The Englishman William Henry Bartlett made watercolor drawings of the principal attractions of the East Coast which were published in 1839–42 as engravings in the two-volume book, *American Scenery*. This frequently became a

source for the work of others, such as Victor de Grailly, whose *Eastport and Passamaquoddy Bay* reveals a charming innocence about the realities of life in Down East Maine, as his depiction of the improbably elegant figures in the foreground amply attests.

About the same time Cole was coming into prominence, Alvan Fisher established a studio in Boston, and made occasional painting trips to Maine. Although he had studied in Europe, his pictures often retain the sort of ingenuous picturesque appeal usually associated with the work of self-taught painters. This quality is present in his *Camden Harbor*, in which the view is securely bracketed in the embrace of mysterious monoliths.

Fisher adhered to a romantic and picturesque interpretation of nature which, by the 1850s, gradually was being replaced by an emerging style of painting now termed "luminism." Characterized by attention to meticulous realism and precise rendering of atmospheric effects, it seeks to unify the total image in an envelope of light.

For more than any other artist of the time, luminism was central to the paintings of Fitz Hugh Lane. Permanently established at Gloucester, Massachusetts, Lane was at the height of his career in the 1850s when he began making annual cruises to the Penobscot Bay region. As in *Castine Harbor*, his paintings almost always describe coastal scenes at twilight, with sailing vessels becalmed in the limpid glow of late summer afternoons.

Some of that generation of Hudson River School painters who came after Cole allied themselves stylistically with the luminist aesthetic, demonstrating their devotion more to Lane's pioneering example than to Cole's. Born a decade or more later than this group, Alfred T. Bricher represents the final development of the School's cult of nature. His mature work is almost entirely concentrated on coastal seascape subjects of New England, from Grand Manan Island and Mount Desert to Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Probably done in the 1880s, his *Ships Along the Shore* is essentially a luminist painting. But it also intimates European influences which were than beginning to alter the course of American art—particularly toward impressionism.

Winslow Homer also briefly studied in Europe, but maintained a strong connection to the American realist painting tradition. He settled permanently in 1883 on the Maine coast at Prout's Neck, where he created his supremely masterful seascapes.

Working for a time as both a painter and illustrator, Homer would go on to become one of the greatest watercolor painters in the history of Western art. *Pulling the Dory* is a perfectly realized example of the transparent wash method, notable for the extreme economy with which the artist achieved his results, both in terms of assured drawing and subtle, judicious color. In an 1875 review of Homer's watercolors, the critic and novelist Henry James pronounced the work as daring, and averred ". . . to reward his audacity [Homer] has incontestably succeeded."

Maurice Prendergast, *Group of Boats (Watching the Regatta)*, 1907, watercolor and pencil on paper, 11 1/2 x 15 1/4 inches

Impressionism in Maine

In growing numbers, American artists became attracted to impressionism in the 1880s, rejecting as outmoded the realist-luminist traditions associated with the Hudson River School. In 1886, only ten years after a group of dissident French painters mounted the first Impressionist exhibition in Paris, a gallery in New York City was host to a much acclaimed showing by many of the same artists. That year, Childe Hassam was working abroad, and was rapidly assimilating the new style. Shortly after his return to the United States in 1889, Hassam first visited the Isles of Shoals, some 10 miles off the Maine-New Hampshire coast. For nearly every summer thereafter until 1916, Appledore became an open-air studio where he created some of the most radiant paintings of his career. Rudimentary rock forms set against the shimmering expanse of ocean is the dynamic operating in *Isles of Shoals* that, like all of Hassam's Appledore views, invests this canvas with a timeless monumentality.

Farther down the Maine coast, the tiny fishing village of Ogunquit was slowly on its way to becoming an artist colony. Charles Herbert Woodbury, an impressionist painter and teacher from Boston, arrived there in 1888 and soon opened a summer art school that attracted students from all over New England. As a teacher, he extolled the virtues of robust color and expressive brushwork, qualities particularly clear in his own later work such as *Ogunquit Beach House*, painted in the early 1900s. The accomplishments of Woodbury's school inevitably attracted other artist-teachers, whose more progressive tendencies eventually would change Ogunquit into a thriving modernist camp by 1920.

Impressionism is a flexible term, capable of encompassing a wide range of applications. It is also an international phenomenon and, as such, tends to blur stylistic mannerisms that may be associated with any particular national school. Max Kuehne's *Rockport Harbor, Maine*, with its formal references to French Impressionism and even to post-impressionism, exemplifies this tendency especially well, and may be ascribed to the artist's ethnic heritage as a transplanted European as much as to his subsequent study abroad.

The middle ground of American impressionism was held by advocates of a more academic approach. Edward Willis Redfield's four-year student sojourn in Paris cemented his early allegiance to impressionism. In 1898 he returned to Pennsylvania's Delaware River valley, where he became the presiding genius of the New Hope art colony, rarely straying from home. His visits to Maine were infrequent, and *The Toymaker's Home* must be accounted as an agreeable change of pace for an artist who had secured his reputation by making winter landscapes his forte.

The west coast counterpart of Redfield's New Hope coterie, though on a larger scale, was a loosely associated group familiarly known as the "Eucalyptus School." Jan Marinus Domela studied both in

Frederick Judd Waugh, *White Surf*, c. 1920s, oil on board, 30 x 40 inches

Europe and California, finally settling in the Los Angeles area where he assumed his place among this set. Remarkably consistent in their methods, these artists practiced a pleasant, broadly-brushed plein-air impressionism. When Domela visited the East Coast in 1938, he brought this style to bear upon his *Monhegan Island*, conferring a semblance of California light upon this diminutive jewel of the Gulf of Maine.

The Magnetism of Monhegan

Robert Henri was the first artist of national stature to recognize Monhegan's potential to stir a painter's imagination. His belief that nature was a living force which impinged on the lives of men was nowhere more substantiated for him than on this small, uprearing granite sentinel of an island. Some 12 miles from the mainland, Monhegan offers the most elemental themes of rock and water and does it with compelling power. On his first visit in 1903, Henri focused his attention exclusively on these ideas. In the few extant examples, such as *Monhegan (Rocks and Sea)*, his field of concentration was narrowed to fragments of nature which are rendered with an explosive energy. These paintings are Henri's most intensely personal works, and it is likely he understood that even the most adventurous collector of his day would find them too radical. But, as Henri wrote in 1909, "A man should not care whether the thing he wishes to express is a work of art or not . . . he should only care that it is . . . worthy to put into permanent expression." That statement accurately reflects the ethical underpinnings of Henri's career. Both as a teacher and as a reformer, he fought against the reactionary attitudes of the entrenched art establishment of his day. This was a major concern for Henri and led to his organizing a dissident group known as "The Eight," whose 1908 exhibition of sometimes daring realism earned them its unofficial name, "The Ashcan School."

Rockwell Kent was one of Henri's pupils who was encouraged to experience the bracing challenge of Monhegan's scenery. Kent arrived on Monhegan in 1905 and remained for several years. He built his own house there, and when not painting, he worked as a sternman on a lobsterboat, and generally joined in the life of the community. The paintings from this phase in his career, like *Maine Coast*, reveal Kent's attachment to Henri's assured and fluid manner while also suggesting a strong personal vision of his own. *Wreck of the D.T. Sheridan* is indicative of Kent's mature style, with the forms of nature simplified and sharpened in the modern manner.

George Bellows, Henri's most gifted student, made several visits to Monhegan between 1911 and 1914. The first time was in the company of his teacher, and Bellows was ecstatic: "This is the most beautiful country ever modeled by the hand of the master architect . . ." he wrote in a letter home. The experience evoked in him a strong attachment for Maine, and by the summer of 1916 Bellows and his family were installed in a house in Camden. They invited yet another of Henri's students, Leon Kroll, to join them, and for a time Camden became Henri country. Bellows had made a brief visit to Matinicus two years before and vowed to return some day. He did so in the fall of 1916, setting up his temporary studio in a fish house on the harbor. Matinicus lacked the dramatic cliffs and the solemn firs of Cathedral Woods on Monhegan, but its waterfront offered sufficiently appealing material in the shapes and patterns of battered buildings. With its distortions and adventurous color juxtapositions, *Matinicus* represents a departure from Bellows' former, more conventional style.

Raphael Soyer, *Vinalhaven*, c. 1950, oil on canvas, 15 1/2 x 19 1/4 inches

While Bellows was busy on Matinicus, his house guest, Leon Kroll, was painting on the mainland. *Lowering Day, Camden*, employs the same high-pitched color statements found in the Bellows work. Together, these pictures suggest that Bellows and Kroll were being guided by certain theoretical experiments in adventurous color harmonies Henri was making at precisely this time.

The Modernists

Foremost among the American modernists of his generation, John Marin is another whose work is indelibly associated with Maine through his vast output of images inspired by places such as Deer Isle and Cape Split. Marin's first visit was in the summer of 1914, beginning what would be a lifelong communion with the spirit of rock and wave. His artistic orientation was in cubism, which he freely adapted to his personal vision. He saw the elements of the physical world ". . . at work, pushing, pulling, sideways, downwards, upwards. I can hear the sound of their strife, and there is great music being played." The crystalline geometry of *Boat Fantasy, Deer Isle, Maine, No. 30* is conceived in terms of symbols that Marin invented to express the idea—not the illusion—of space. Yet however removed from representational art his work may be, Marin always regarded himself as a realist responding to nature: "The sea that I paint may not be the sea, but it is a sea, not an abstraction."

Newell Convers Wyeth was among the very few artists in history to elevate book illustration to the level of fine art. Together with his teacher, Howard Pyle,

he bought the form into its golden age. The novels of Robert Louis Stevenson and James Fenimore Cooper will be forever intimately connected with Wyeth's powerful and eloquent depictions of their stories. Some 60 years ago, Wyeth established a summer studio at Port Clyde and began painting Maine subjects. (As an illustrator, he customarily painted pictures in oils which would be reproduced mechanically by the book publisher.) Always the master of disarmingly elegant design, Wyeth could convert an everyday subject as *Dark Harbor Fishermen* into an arresting and visually exciting composition, gaining its effectiveness through heightened dramatic contrasts.

Andrew Wyeth, his son, spent his summers in Maine from the time he was a child, and grew to know intimately the moods of the country around the family's place at Port Clyde, and then, later at Cushing. His earliest training in art came from his father, but essentially Andrew Wyeth is self-taught. He has been quoted as explaining that he "worked everything out by trial and error." His earliest watercolors are remarkably proficient, and suggest that he had also a fine grasp of his predecessors' achievements in the medium—with a particular nod to Winslow Homer. Gradually he began to shift his interest to the egg tempera medium, an ancient and arcane technique that Wyeth now employs better than any artist in modern times.

Another whose summer roots in Maine go deep is Fairfield Porter. He was the scion of privilege — Porter's family maintained their own island, and several generations of Porters have migrated seasonally to Great Spruce Head in Penobscot Bay from Long Island, New York. Lurking behind Porter's outgoing personality whose self-assurance seems mirrored in his sunlit world of paintings, a keen intelligence is at work. True to form, *Beach Flowers No. 2* is endowed with a visual charm that masks a through familiarity with the historic sources of his art. A nostalgic element often lies at the core of his paintings, and by treating his subjects in a detached and somewhat formalized manner, Porter parallels the French Impressionist masters.

The islands of the Maine coast have individuality, and it is to be supposed that an artist will choose one over others in keeping with his notion of the ideal place to live and work. John Heliker's summer studio is on Great Cranberry Island, off Mount Desert, where it lies exposed to the ocean's moods. Painting in a modified impressionist style, Heliker creates images through a fusion of light and form. A sensation of muted radiance prevails in *Early Morning Landscape*, conveying the notion of lifting fog over an ocean island, and lending his work a very place-specific quality.

William Thon, *The Old Sloop*, 1993, watercolor, 17 x 22 1/4 inches

"An Eye for Maine"

Romantic realism has been central to the art of Maine since Winslow Homer established the gauge by which all who came after him inevitably must be measured. The intervening years have witnessed the rise and eclipse of other orientations on the national art scene. Abstract expressionism, America's only truly original contribution to the history of art, has had its champions in Maine as well as New York—as, for example, in William Kienbusch—yet the idea of place has remained central in Maine art. For Kienbusch, Maine was always an inescapable poetic fact and determinator in even his most overtly conceptual works. His contemporary, William Thon, has always been quite close in spirit to that position, without slipping his anchor from the holding ground of objectivity. *The Old Sloop* strikes a balance between these seemingly conflicting ideas, creating a variant that might be described as "romantic abstraction."

Andrew Wyeth is the dominant figure in contemporary romantic realism. His paintings are perhaps misjudged by those who can only look at them without seeing the subtler level at which his art operates. His associative ties to well-loved places often establish undercurrents of tension that take his pictures beyond the confines of simple illusion. Ambiguity permeates *Maine Room*, arousing a sense of profound disquietude. Wyeth withholds information on a subjective plane, while fulsomely offering it in another way as delectation for the eye. The viewer must match his discernment with that of the artist in order to apprehend essential meanings.

With Jamie Wyeth, a family tradition is being carried on in a way that is more stylistically connected than was the case with N.C. Wyeth and his son. Elusive distinctions can be made between the way Andrew Wyeth perceives his subject and the way Jamie Wyeth does it. The latter has remarked that his work is ". . . mainly about portraits. but portraits of objects and animals and people. I spend as much time with an animal or an object as I do with a person when I'm doing their portrait." *Coast Guard Anchor*, then, is not some sort of large outdoor still life, but a portrait, a presence. Conversely, Andrew Wyeth's *Maine Room*, like many of the subjects he chooses, is not about presences, but about things absent.

Looking back over the 150-year procession of artists who have been moved to create this remarkable panoply, even to the casual observer it must be obvious that a causality exists in the unique environment, cultural and topographical, that Maine has always possessed. Mary Ellen Chase, one of Maine's notable writers of this century, remembering an incident from her days as a teacher, wrote, "A perceptive little girl once said to me, 'Maine is different from all other states, isn't it? I suppose that's because God never quite finished it.'" Perhaps it is for such a quality, with its intimations of being present at the Creation, that Maine has ever excited the senses of all who have passed that way. Artists of many dissimilar temperaments have made common cause in attempting to illuminate that mystery.

A distinguished art critic, ***Donelson Hoopes*** *is a co-author of* Maine and Its Role in American Art, *published in 1963. This article was adapted from Hoopes' catalog essay for* "An Eye for Maine."

Fitz Hugh Lane, *Castine Harbor*, 1852, oil on canvas, 20 1/2 x 30 inches

Alvan Fisher, *Camden Harbor*, 1846, oil on canvas, 29 x 36 inches

Fitz Hugh Lane, ***Camden Mountains from the South Entrance to the Harbor*****, 1859, oil on canvas, 22 x 36 inches**

Characterized by attention to meticulous realism
and precise rendering of atmospheric effects,
luminism seeks to unify the total image in an envelope of light.

Alfred Thompson Bricher, *Ships Along the Shore*, after 1885, oil on canvas, 15 x 32 inches

Winslow Homer, *Pulling the Dory*, c. 1873-1875, watercolor 12 3/4 x 17 1/2 inches

Pulling the Dory *is a perfectly realized example of the transparent wash method, notable for the extreme economy with which the artist achieved his results, both in terms of assured drawing and subtle, judicious color.*

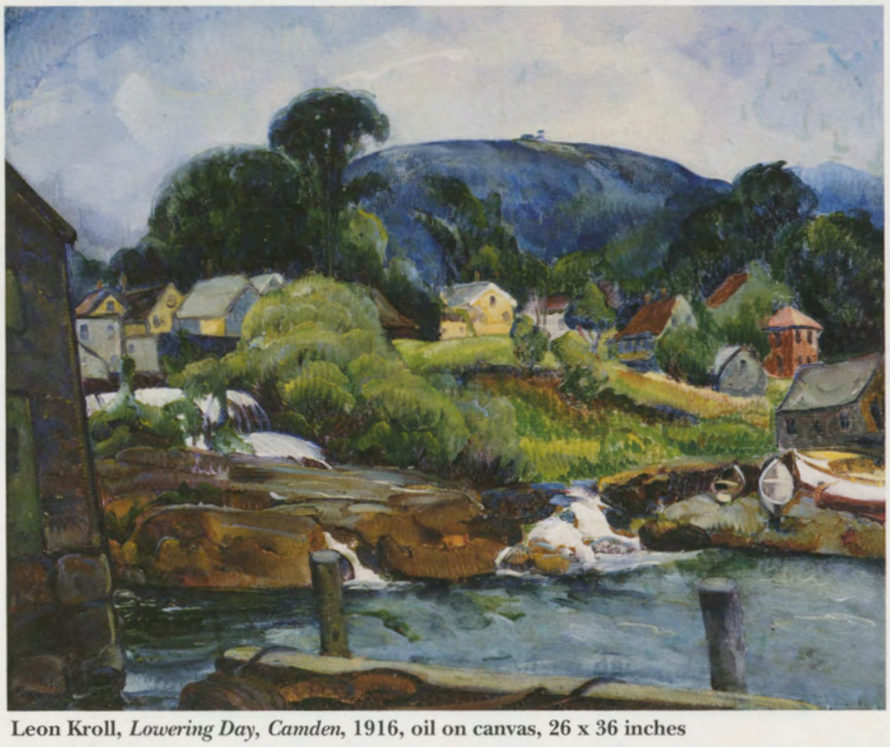
Charles Woodbury, *Ogunquit Beach House with Lady and Dog*, 1912, oil on board, 12 x 17 inches

Edward Willis Redfield, *The Toymaker's Home*, 1928, oil on canvas, 26 1/4 x 32 1/4 inches

Childe Hassam, *Isles of Shoals*, 1915, oil on canvas, 25 x 30 inches

Rudimentary rock forms set against the shimmering expanse of ocean is the dynamic operating in Isles of Shoals *that, like all of Hassam's Appledore views, invests this canvas with a timeless monumentality.*

Robert Henri, *Monhegan (Rocks and Sea)*, c. 1905, 11 x 14 inches



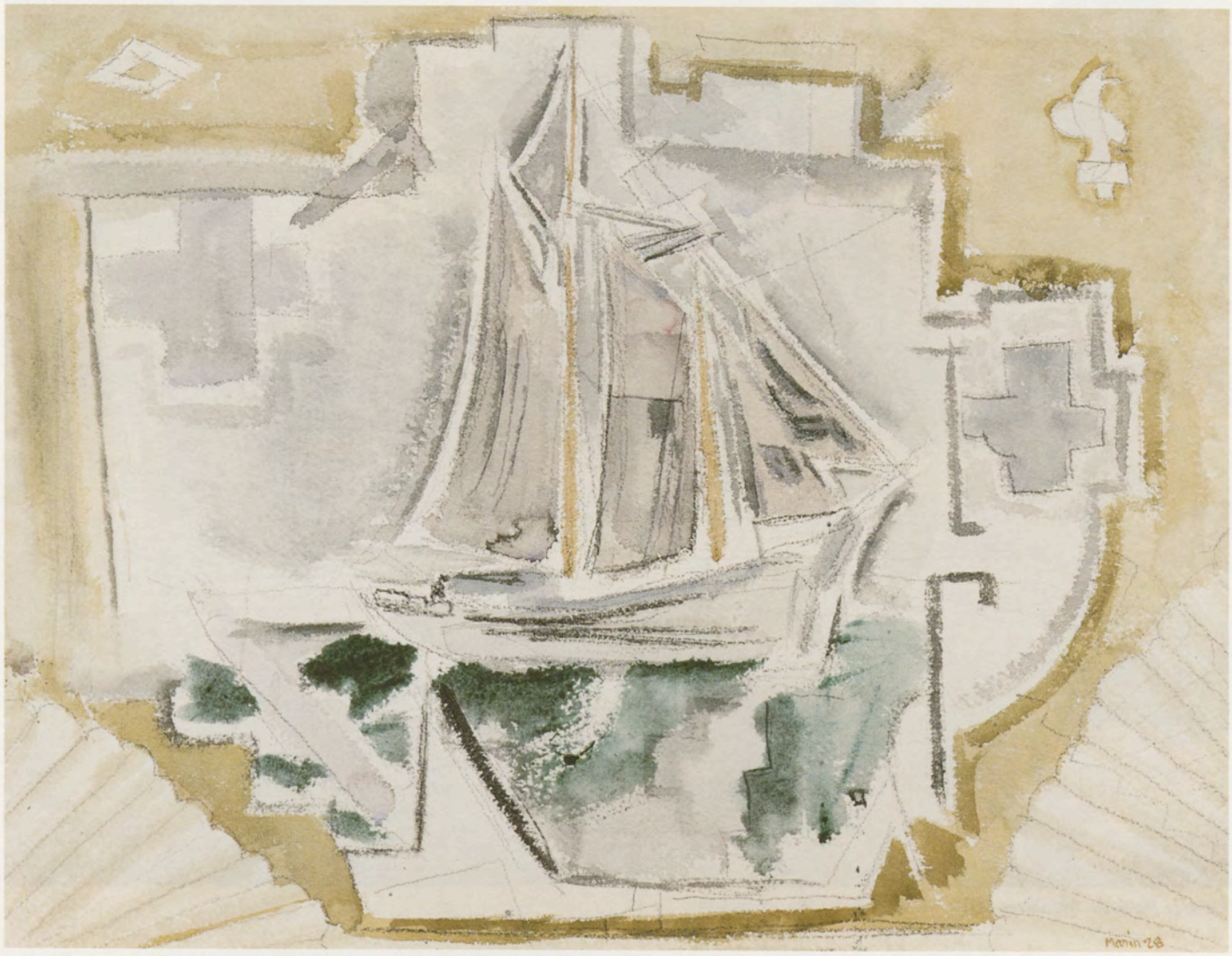
Leon Kroll, *Lowering Day, Camden*, 1916, oil on canvas, 26 x 36 inches

"A man should not care whether the thing he wishes to express is a work of art or not . . . he should only care that it is . . . worthy to put into permanent expression."

– Robert Henri

George Bellows, *Matinicus*, 1916, oil on canvas, 32 x 40 inches

Together, these pictures suggest that Bellows and Kroll were being guided by certain theoretical experiments in adventurous color harmonies Henri was making at precisely this time.



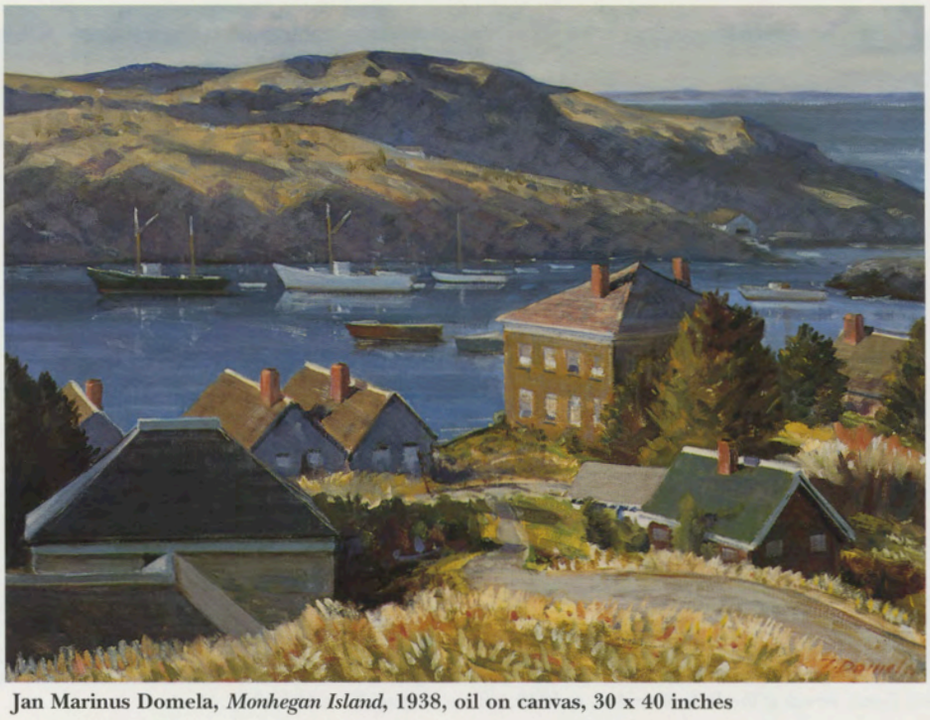
John Marin, *Boat Fantasy*, Deer Island, Maine No. 30, 1928, 18 x 23 inches

However removed from representational art his work may be,
Marin always regarded himself as a realist responding to nature:
"The sea that I paint may not be the *sea, but it is* a *sea, not an abstraction."*

Rockwell Kent, *Maine Coast*, c. 1907, oil on canvas, 28 x 38 inches

Rockwell Kent, *Wreck of the D.T. Sheridan*, c. 1940, oil on canvas, 28 x 44 inches

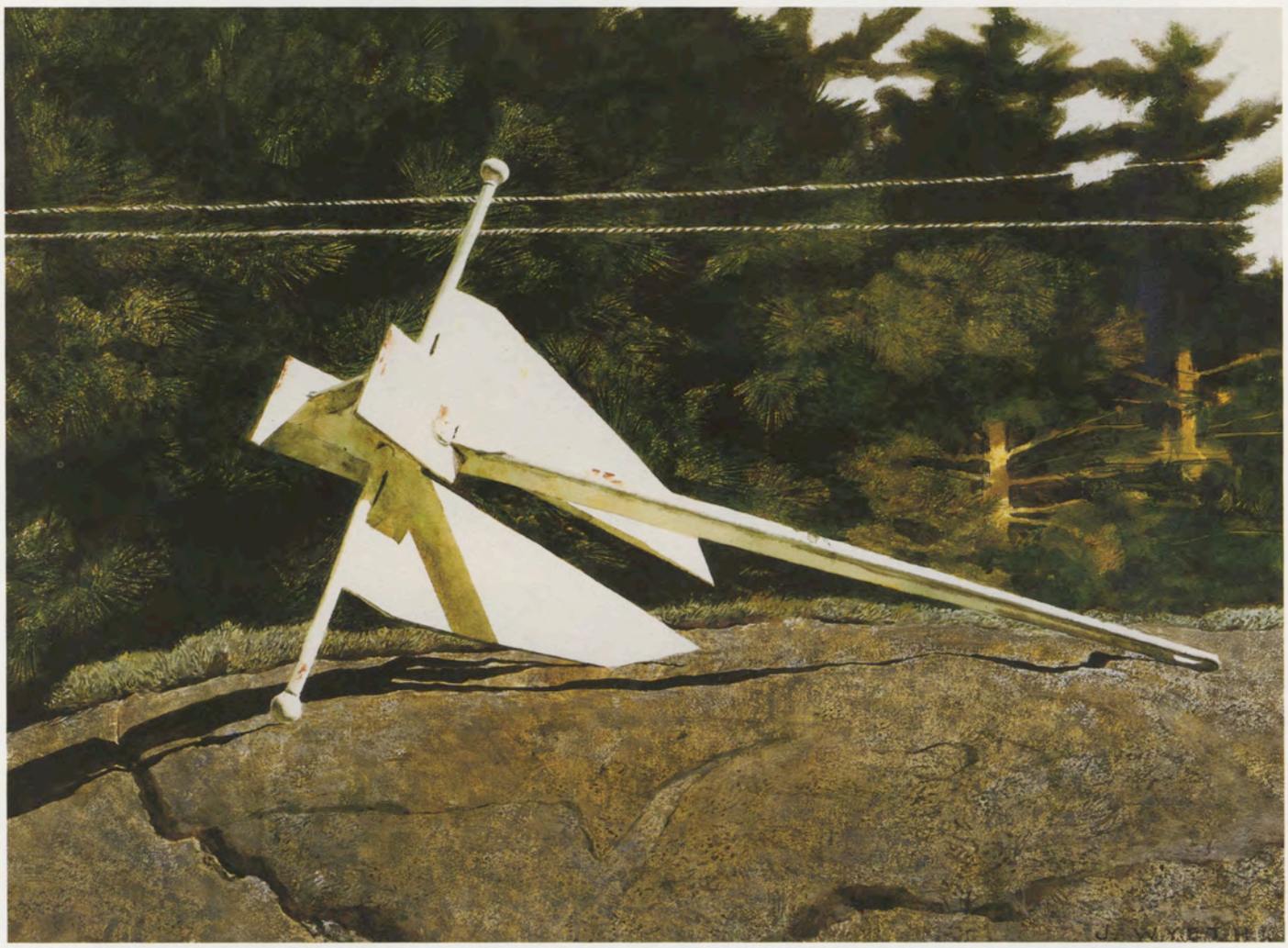
John Heliker, *Early Morning Landscape*, 1978-1993, oil on canvas, 31 x 41 inches



Jan Marinus Domela, *Monhegan Island*, 1938, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inches

Fairfield Porter, *Beach Flowers No. 2*, 1972, oil on canvas, 24 1/4 x 20 1/4 inches

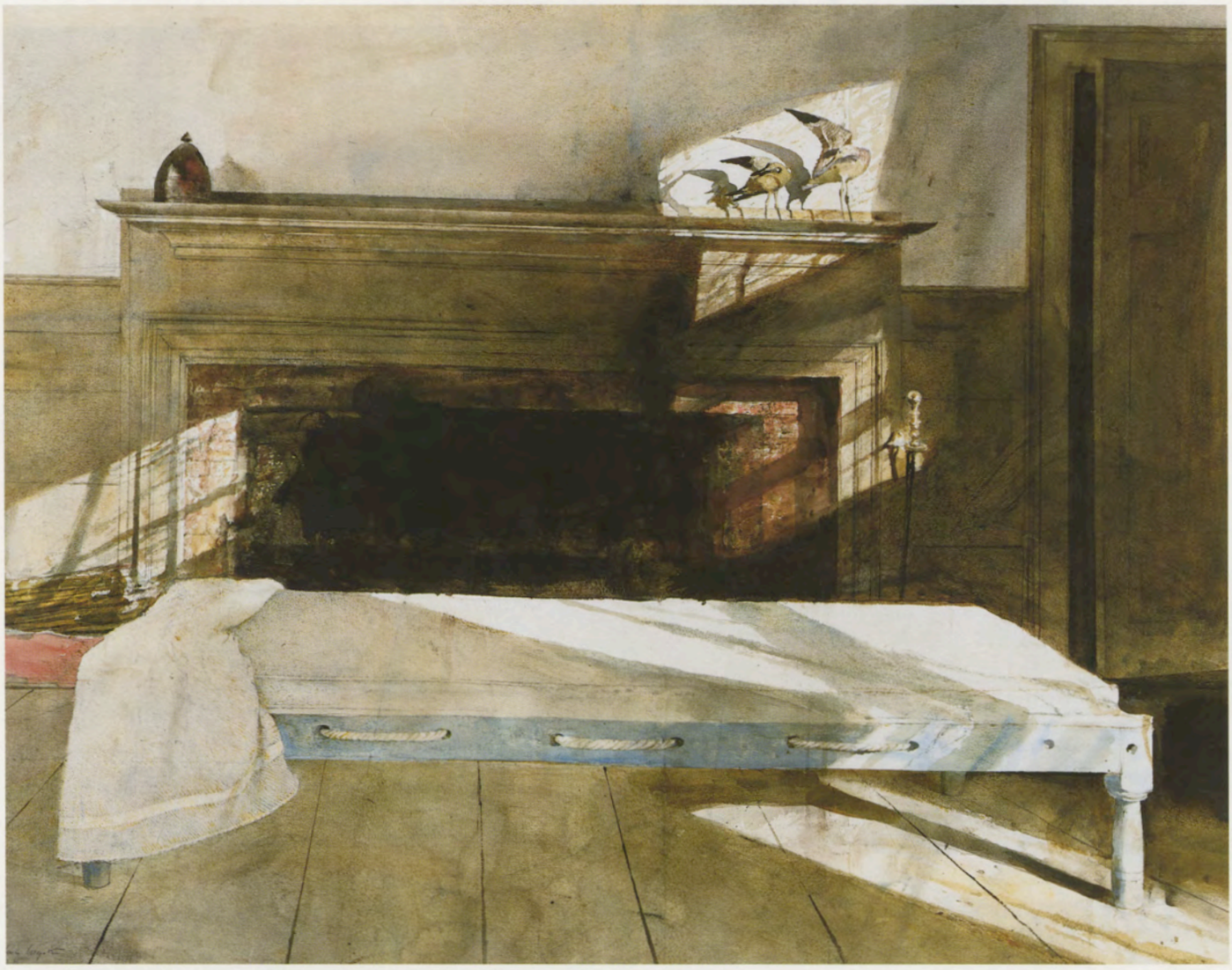
By treating his subjects in a detached and somewhat formalized manner, Porter parallels the French Impressionist masters.



Jamie Wyeth, *Coast Guard Anchor*, 1982, watercolor, 22 x 30 1/4 inches

"My work is . . . mainly about portraits.
I spend as much time with an animal or an object
as I do with a person when I'm doing their portrait."

– Jamie Wyeth



Andrew Wyeth, *Maine Room*, 1991, watercolor, 28 1/4 x 36 1/4 inches

Andrew Wyeth's associative ties to well-loved places often establish undercurrents of tension that take his pictures beyond the confines of simple illusion.

"A Writer of Songs & Nonsense"

Photographs courtesy of James Rockefeller

Margaret Wise Brown & The Little Island

JAMES ROCKEFELLER

Margaret Wise Brown summered on Vinalhaven during the 1940s where she composed dozens of her immortal children's books including The Little Island. *Her biography has been charted by literary historians, but here a more intimate portrait of her Vinalhaven life emerges from a man who loved her deeply.*

ISLANDS CAN BE personal castles or prisons depending on how one views their moat of water. To Margaret Wise Brown, her place on Vinalhaven was a castle of fairy story proportions. Margaret brought me there to the head of Hurricane Sound in the summer of '52. She called it The Only House because looking out at night, more often than not, no other light was visible.

No road existed. The surrounding forest was yet another barrier against the outside world. Our entry was the little house of Mildred Brewster and Maynard Swett in that small drain behind Strauson's Point. Mildred had done the cooking in the Boarding House at Wharf's Quarry for the men back when, and Maynard, over 70 years old, lobstered out of his white peapod with the green gunwale. Here Margaret kept a gray flat-bottomed punt built by Skoog of Carver's Harbor. It comfortably held the two of us, her Kerry Blue terrier called Krispin's Krispian, groceries, a case of wine, and other household necessities. The 20-minute pull up the Sound was a pleasant interval on that warm and sparkling day of my arrival, gently pushed along by the southwest breeze.

Dog and Margaret occupied the sternsheets. Krispin glared at me while I eyed his mistress. Krispin was disagreeable by nature, but then, in all fairness, it was not easy for him being in the proximity of another male who also loved his mistress. Margaret wore her usual working costume of white slacks, espadrilles, and a blue blouse open at the neck. Her straw-colored hair, tumbled by the breeze, was a perfect frame for those crinkly blue eyes that looked at you, with you, through you, while absorbing everything within 360 degrees. She trailed one hand in the water, lifting it eventually to extend a dripping finger to a passing dragon fly. To my amazement the insect landed as if it had no choice.

"Warlock," she said to me, "What must it be thinking, flying over all this bright blue water? Must be the lobster buoys are a flower garden?"

With Margaret you lived an ongoing series of mini adventures. Involved with the smallest event, she pulled her companion along into a magical world she composed on the spot. She called me her Warlock because I wore a beard back then and could look very fierce when being protective.

Too soon we arrived at a tiny beach hidden behind a long chunk of rounded granite. Entrusted with the case of wine, I walked up through the long grass of the tiny meadow dappled with hawkweed toward the tiny house. The high-pitched roof, black attic window, black-framed windows of the lower two floors, the gray weathered clapboards, made it both intensely appealing yet mysterious. It was as diminutive as a child's playhouse, but one sensed immediately the inhabitant was neither a child nor a casual rusticator.

Access was gained by saluting an ancient pear tree and mounting steep steps, almost a ladder, that teetered upwards to a circular porch 15 feet above the ground. This platform, in turn, was guarded by a granite ledge to the west that resembled a smiling whale, and an apple tree that intruded over the railing to the north. Ice cream parlor chairs and table formed an eyrie for eating, talking, or just surveying the warblers, woodpeckers, ospreys, gulls, and terns who considered the place their own, which delighted Margaret. The long, narrow, steep steps were yet another psychological barrier against those things and beings beyond the forest and the bay. As Margaret put it, "Here I am far away from the fidget wheels of time," talking about her frenetic winters spent in New York with agents, publisher, and her host of social commitments.

From this roofless treehouse you entered a tiny kitchen, off of which opened an eight-by-ten room that held a love seat, a reclining couch, potbellied stove, and a long table in front of the window where Margaret did her writing. To the left of her writing station was a door that swung out onto nothing but a ten-foot drop to the ground below. It bore a brass plate saying Belle McCann. Belle was a previous owner before the house had been raised and a floor added underneath. Off the sitting room was an even smaller bedroom with a brass bed and dresser. The whole place was the size of a ship's cabin.

The window was an inspirational place commanding Hurricane Sound with its myriad little spruce-tipped islands. This view inspired *The Little Island*, perhaps her best known book.

Kerosene lamps were the sole illumination. A rose-colored globe hung over the tiny kitchen table on an adjustable chain. Another glass lamp, this one ruby-tinted, lit the writing table, while two companion pieces moved about as needed. A pair of exquisite small Italian rococo candelabra created a flower display on the vertical paneling between the sitting and bedroom, adding more soft ambiance when darkness fell.

Of an evening, with perhaps a red spaghetti sauce laced with garlic bubbling on the kerosene stove, the red wine in goblets, Margaret would seat herself at the table that had witnessed many things, her eyes shining in the fairy story light, and was definitely the queen of this special kingdom. I say "queen," for everything in the tiny house appeared her personal subject, chosen for shape, for color, for adding catalytic quality to the overall sense of a cozy den, yet in such an unstudied way as if to be a natural extension of herself. Eggs were stored in a bowl to enjoy their shape and facilitate their use. Wildflowers winked from glasses, cups, vases, or copper pots. The sublime imbued the whimsical with a dignity that I likened to their originator.

Margaret loved fur. "Remember, we are animals," she was wont to say. Rabbits were a special totem. She had long eyelashes and would often accent her eyes to give herself an almond bunny look when feeling mischievous. Many friends called her "The Bunny," and she often referred to herself as "The Bunny No Good" when up to some lark or saying things like "I'm going to give all the bird brains egg cosies for Christmas."

There was a lot of fur around: a fur rug on the floor, fur on one of the couches, a fake leopard skin covering on the bed. She was very proud of the fact that the

"The Only House," Vinalhaven, 1952

English Queen Mother reputedly kept *The Little Fur Book* (it was covered in rabbit fur) on her bedside table.

After a few days with "The Bunny," you weren't sure whether people acted like animals or animals like people. As one's eyes are drawn to those of a wild animal to gauge their intent, so mine would often gravitate to hers. There was always more going on in there than the viewer could ever grasp. The look would vary from youth to venerable age to childlike wonder, mischievousness, gaiety, somberness, or the wisdom of a seer.

"No one will ever know my age," she laughingly said one day. "How could they? It keeps changing."

"No one will ever know my age," she laughingly said one day. "How could they? It keeps changing."

In earlier years—before her time—goats, chickens and a cow lived downstairs. Now there was a workshop and guestroom. The latter also served as a gallery for her paintings. She explained that from early on she knew she could either be a credible painter or a writer and had decided on the latter, so painting became a hobby. One oil was of a white dog (with rabbit-long ears) lying on the loveseat upstairs. Through the window in the painting peeped The Little Island. Another featured the horse weathervane she had whimsically mounted on the end of the stone wharf; yet another showed a white china water pitcher filled with flowers. The last conveyed a different mood. The Only House stood somber in its black trim under a lowering sky. A small drab figure huddled against the stoop. This she had done after the death of her dear friend, the poetess Michael Strange, wife of Barrymore the actor.

"When I can no longer write, paint, or read, that is the end," she once told me.

Going to the outhouse was more rewarding than just an outing for personal relief. First encountered was an apple tree that shaded a wash stand with white ewer, pitcher, and soap dish. The classic mirror was nailed above it to the trunk. Next you passed the icebox—a covered well with floating containers housing butter, milk, cheese, and other perishables. The white wine floated alone. Only then did you enter a short section of woods, rush up an incline, throw open the Dutch doors, and choose one of two holes. As Billy Brown, her caretaker, put it, "Darn thing is so far away, you're pressin' your luck."

But enthroned, it was worth the journey. The view took in the back cove with the large grout pile of Wharf's Quarry rising behind. Across to the left was a rock with a fissure that from half-tide down cast the silhouette of an Indian maiden demurely bending forward at the edge of the limpid tidal pool.

I asked Billy what he thought of The Maiden. "Haven't told my wife," he said. "Might get jealous."

The rest of her dominion held other landmarks. Along the path heading to the east was the well where you hauled drinking water up in a pail. Then at the edge of the spruce forest dwelled the magic mouse in his magic mousehole. From there a trail wove between the spruces around several corners until bursting forth upon a small cabin Margaret had built for Michael Strange. On entering it, the eye met a large, ornate, gilt frame set with glass that revealed the striking picture outside, which was the backyard. The front of the cabin was at the edge of a large smooth ledge that sloped down to the sea. The roof, as if to emulate the ledge, swooped downward forming two points, pagoda like, which in turn were supported by wood columns from her favorite antique shop in Rockland. Convention to Margaret was like red to a bull.

Walking up the granite escarpment behind the cabin, one came to a flat circular expanse of stone some 60 feet in diameter. As we approached, she would press fingers to lips for silence, for here was the Fairy Ballroom where the "little people" danced at midnight overlooking Hurricane Sound. It was always just possible, even in broad daylight, there might be one peeping from behind a bayberry bush.

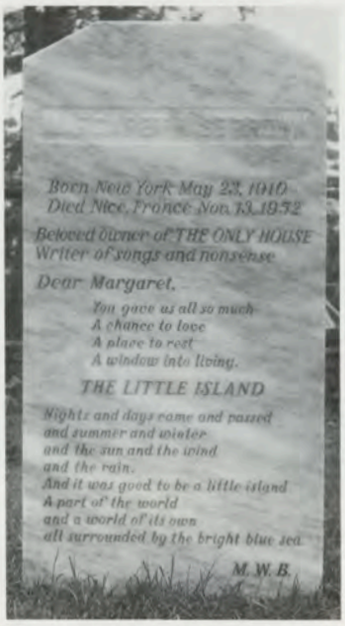
I loved to go up there of an evening, for we would stand on a rock outcropping and watch dusk enfold the Sound. Dawn and dusk were important times for The Bunny, as was the languor of noon, the rising of the moon, storms, and calms. Standing on the promontory, outlined against the darkening bay, she radiated the elemental dignity of a wild animal free in its native habitat. Often those eyes of hers would go far away where no one could ever reach, and one evening she turned suddenly and said, "We are born alone. We go through life alone. And we go out alone." I never have forgotten that moment, painful as were the words, for what she said was true. She saw herself in a frame where human beings were but one component of a larger tapestry.

In the woods and fields Margaret moved like a deer. She told of going beagling and running with the hounds for hours on end. During berrying excursions

she could wriggle through the most impossible of tangles at incredible speed and eat berries off the bush like a bear I once had. A herring fisherman who set his nets out front once said to me, "That Margaret! If you saw her in the woods come November and she was wearing horns it would take a steady mind not to shoot." Then he added with a wistful grin, "I'd rather take her home alive, myself."

For venturing on The Bay, Margaret had a treacherous North Haven Dinghy. One day we had a wonderful sail down to Hurricane, trailing the bottle of white wine behind on a string with Margaret puffing on her pipe, reciting one of her many lyrics, "The Fish with the Deep Sea Smile." The ballad begins:

They fished and they fished
Way down in the sea
down in the sea a mile.
They fished among all the fish in the sea
For the fish with the deep sea smile.



On the way home the southwest breeze turned into a small gale. We rushed along faster and faster until at the end of Leadbetter Island the dinghy sailed her bow right under. There we were with the sail up, going nowhere, paddling around in the cockpit. I was mortified, considering myself something of a sailor. But Margaret puffed away on her still lit pipe, asked if there was any wine left in the bottle, and giggled with glee. Just then Goldie McDonald, the guardian of Dogfish Island, happened by and pulled us, dripping, into his boat. Goldie was one of Margaret's favorites. She even used him as a pen name.

Goldie took one look at The Bunny with her wet clothes clinging to her athletic frame and said with feeling, "Gawd Margaret, you look better wet than dry!"

She laughed all the way home. In her eyes it couldn't have been a more perfect day.

Aside from sitting in the evening bathed in that ruby light, going up to Wharf's Quarry was my fondest memory. Carrying a hamper, towels, and soap we would take the path around the back cove, plough through an overgrown meadow and tangle of brambles, then walk under a canopy of huge spruces until coming to a granite ledge lying in the gloom like a forgotten Stonehenge. Over this we pushed and pulled ourselves, emerging on a gently sloping expanse of stone which we followed upward until standing atop the quarry. There we would gaze down 50 feet of sheer rock wall to the pool of water with the pyramid of grout on the far side. To the left stretched Hurricane Sound and straight ahead to the west was Leadbetter's Narrows with a backdrop of the Camden Hills. The entry to our destination was at the far end where the granite sloped down to cattails, with stone and vegetation arranged as if by an artist's brush to form a hidden water garden. Here on a flat rock by the water's edge we would spread our things and have our biweekly ablutions. Afterwards, drying on the sun-warmed granite, we would eat lunch in almost mystical serenity.

Margaret would talk about her writing, and I, our future life together. She had published 72 books to date, "with nothing serious to say," as she put it. Little did I comprehend at the time what a pioneer she had become, and how revered in the writing of children's books.

"Warlock," she would muse, "Someday I would like to write something serious when I have something to say. But I am stuck in my childhood. That raises the devil when one wishes to move on."

"What do you want to put on your tombstone then, if not recognition for childrens' works?" I said facetiously—little knowing that only a few months hence she would lie dead in France of a blood clot.

She thought a bit, watching the white clouds pass overhead before turning and saying in all seriousness, "You will put 'A writer of songs and nonsense.'"

I quickly turned the conversation to a more cheerful bent and asked how she had arrived at the title for her forthcoming book, *The Noon Balloon.*

"I was looking out my New York window at noon when this blimp came sailing by. It had to be the noon balloon to LaGuardia."

"And the writing," I asked. "How do you go about it?"

She took my hand and gave it a squeeze. "Sometimes it is easy, sometimes hard, to bring your feelings, your heart, and your interest together."

More than 40 years have passed since that day in the quarry. Her tombstone, a few steps from The Only House, does read "A writer of songs & nonsense." And my grandchildren still stop by the 'magic mousehole' to whisper "Hi." They know by heart *The Little Island, The Runaway Bunny, Goodnight Moon,* and a dozen others. As to The Fairy Ballroom, I am convinced it is Margaret peeping from behind the bayberry bush, while the Indian Maiden holds Billy's hand across the eternal deep divide. And forever, ever, there will be the fish with the deep sea smile, down in the sea a mile, just a swish of his tail from The Little Island in a world of its own, all a part of the enchanted kingdom that is Margaret's.

After sailing the South Pacific aboard a Friendship sloop, ***Jim Rockefeller*** *settled in Camden, raised a family, built boats and airplanes, and founded the Owls Head Transportation Museum, of which he is still Chairman. Jim considers The Only House on Vinalhaven his spiritual home.*

Peter Ralston

Hortense Flexner (1885-1973) is a relatively little known poet whose body of verse about Maine consists entirely of a group of 14 lyrics inspired by Sutton Island, third largest of the Cranberry Isles and Flexner's summer retreat for more than 30 years. **Island Journal** *readers were introduced to Flexner's work two year ago in an article by Carl Little; "Sea Fog" is excerpted from* **Poems for Sutton Island,** *edited by Little and reproduced with permission by Port in a Storm Editions, 1993. Copyright Editions Gallimard, 1969.*

Sea Fog

HORTENSE FLEXNER

By moisture held as in pre-natal bath
I live at peace.
Senses are dulled, unneeded now;
Porch rail and pebbled path
Are furled in fleece
Bird-song is gone with the bough;
Muted the harbor bell as it would cease.
The dripping stair,
The rock, have lost all form,
My hand its will.
Blank—blank and white the air;
The self, compressed and still,
Asks but to be
Of unseen earth and sky the smallest part.
Far off I hear the beating of the sea,
Or of my mother's heart.

TURNING BACK...

CYNTHIA BOURGEAULT

ALL THAT SUMMER, the summer of 1988, I'd been communting by sailboat from Swan's Island to Northeast Harbor to rehearse the Mozart *Requiem* with the Mt. Desert Summer Chorale.

Normally, living year-round on an island, you eventually grow out of this sort of romantic nonsense. But this was summer—sailboat in the water—high, starry nights—and the Mozart *Requiem*!!!! And romantic it was...With perfect conditions I'd sail all the way to Northeast, then motor home—occasionally even sail home. The more usual scenario was leave a car stashed in Bass Harbor, the closest mainland landfall, which reduced the crossing from high adventure to a straightforward commute. From the Bass Harbor town landing, it's an easy shot to the green-flashing bell off Mackerel Cove, Swan's Island, about four miles away.

The week before the concert my daughter Gwen, going-on-nineteen, arrived for her annual two-week fun-in-the-sun-with-Mom-in Maine ritual. When I'd moved to Swan's Island a decade earlier, Gwen had elected to stay with her father and stepmom in suburban Pennsylvania, where her high school years had passed by in a flurry of cheerleading, Broadway musicals, and a steady beau with his own BMW. She'd now completed her first year at a small private college in Virginia, putting in her hours in a more-or-less economics major, while reserving most of her enthusiasm for sorority life. She arrived, as usual, with matched luggage and a perfectly tailored Patagonia outfit.

She was none too pleased when I broke the news that we'd be heading across the last leg on the boat. "One-more-tack Mom," she used to call me, recalling those days when she and her little sister spent hours damp and miserable, playing cards or staring up at the rough spots in the fiberglass in the cuddy cabin while I chased the last breezes of a long, long sailing day around Jericho Bay. Secretly, I think she'd been hoping we'd put in at Ellsworth, catch some good fajitas at The Mex, and a last crack at cable TV. But proud of my night piloting skills, I stuffed her aboard, and we cast off to west'ard.

"Want to take the tiller?" I asked, but she shook her head—emphatically—rummaged in the her monogrammed duffelbag, and pulled out her Walkman, which she clamped determinedly in place. With Eric Clapton dividing her world from mine, we endured the passage.

In a way, we both braced for these visits. The bond between us was deep and real, but we struggled with each other; always had. Around her I felt like a kind of overgrown Peter Pan hiding out from the real world by playing homesteader on Swan's Island. And she, in turn, would feel my eyes on her, implicitly marking those "useless" outfits...velour..turquoise?.. What the hell good would they do you if you had to *bail* something? She'd walk off when irritation arose—as it always did between us—with the rejoinder,"Well...sorry to be so *bourgeois* . . ."

Illusrations by Siri Beckman

"You know....I'm sailing over on Monday nights to sing the Mozart *Requiem*," I ventured, during what looked to be a brief intermission while she flipped the tape.

"That's nice," she yawned, with that My-Mom-the-Fruitcake look. I decided to play my trump card. "Bryce is singing in the choir too...."

Headset came off. This actually interested her. An island summer kid, a year or so younger than Gwen, Bryce was one of those magical teenagers who seemed to bring out an expansive side in everyone, Gwen included. Even the Mozart *Requiem* was, temporarily, a possible stretch.

"Isn't that the music from *Amadeus*?" she said—quite correctly—after a long, thoughtful pause. Then the headset went back on.

The night of the dress rehearsal found the three of us tying up to the wharf at Bass Harbor. Gwen and Bryce had been pretty much hanging out on the backshore all week, lots of conversations, lots of energy. I wasn't that surprised she'd opted to come along tonight. Only wished...couldn't she just once have passed up something matching for something *warm*? Perched on the bulkhead, in pink running shorts and a matching sweatshirt, her long blond hair spilling down, she looked appropriately put together for her own evening's agenda. But I wondered how all that would hold up when we struck back across later that night, in conditions which I knew were going to be damp.

It had been one of those deteriorating southwest weather patterns all week—every day a little hazier, a little more humid, a little thicker and dirtier. Coming over from Swan's had been moderately unsettling. The sun sinking lazily to west'ard, you could barely make out the shoreline of Bass Harbor. By the time the rehearsal was over, somewhere approaching midnight, the haze had come to fullblown fog—thick, drippy; very intent upon itself. Looking out from the Bass Harbor town landing, you couldn't see the green-flashing bell at all— couldn't even see the nearest yachts on the Bass Harbor Marina moorings, not 20 yards away.

"I have a bad feeling about this," Bryce intoned solemnly, mimicking Han Solo's famous *Star Wars* one-liner. Then he and Gwen broke into convulsive giggles. The whole drive back from Northeast Harbor, they'd whipped themselves into a high state of hilarity over, of all things, African place names. "Mogadishu!" Bryce would venture. "Djibouti!!." Gwen would parry, and they'd crack up. Lost in a merry world of each other, they were not about to have their spirits dampened by a little fog. In a happy trance they just looked at me."Go for it, Mom..."

It didn't take five minutes out of the harbor to realize this was a serious mistake. This wasn't just fog—it was "dungeon fog," the kind that obliterates not only your sense of here-and-there, but of up-and-down. Bryce held the red flashlight on the compass and I'd try to hold the helm, but without a sense of where the horizon was, it was hard to keep a steady course. We

tried reversing roles, but it went no better, and we zigged and zagged across the face of the deep. Then from out of that deep emerged a more ominous complication—the not-so-distant rumbling of a thunderstorm.

With the sailbag wrapped around her thoroughly cold legs, Gwen watched in growing, horrified disbelief. She was used to me landing her in scrapes, making her life damp, uncomfortable, insecure. But through it all she'd always had this sort of "Well, Mom will get us through it" faith. Her role, she knew from long childhood history, was a sort of exasperated patience. Now she checked it out a bit more quizzically.

"Are we lost?"

"MOM?"

For once, speechless. I was frantically trying to cast through our options....

Reciprocal course, reciprocal course, I found myself muttering under my breath like a mantra. Yes, but how do you steer the reciprocal of a zig zag? About the best I could figure, finally, was to take the broadest possible picture. If our initial heading had been even vaguely in the right ballpark, west-southwest, then Bass Harbor would have to be somewhere generally northish and eastish of where we now probably were. What to do? Pulling out of the hat, I put the compass on 50.

We turned, headed back, thunder rumbling around. Bryce, mystical soul, crawled out on the bow; lost himself watching the phosphorescence. Gwen stayed ruggedly put, huddled against the bulkhead, now fully cocooned in the sailbag, looking at me with increasingly ferocious vibes of impending doom.

After what seemed an endless unbroken expanse of

black on black, suddenly, a ways off the port bow I spotted a little red bauble floating on the water... Like a little Christmas light out of place, or a lit-up mooring buoy—what a good idea! I thought, in that strange altered consciousness that one degree from sheer terror can bring you to. Mesmerized by its actuality, I veered north, headed toward it ...

As we drew near, suddenly it leaped out of the water and up onto a cliff. There we were, directly under Bass Harbor light!

What incredible, pure luck! If I hadn't changed course, we'd have been headed straight out to sea. The other uncommon piece of luck—which to this day I still can't figure out—is how we managed to get from where we must have been to where we now were without sailing right over the Bass Harbor Ledge. As that prospect slowly washed over me, something all of a sudden felt permission to collapse inwardly. Numb all the way to the heart, I hadn't a clue what to do next. The chart lay soggily in my lap, but it might as well have been the Bagdhad Daily News. I couldn't even figure which was right side up.

Gwen watched me flopping it around this way and that, then suddenly lunged out of her sailbag-coccoon and grabbed flashlight and chart from my hand. "Look...it's obvious," she said. "We're right here, and the town landing is about a half mile due north going right up the shore. We can go in close—it's bold all the way."

Bold? Where'd she ever learned that? But as I sat there meekly, she moved astern, kicked the motor into gear, put the tiller hard over until the compass came around to 0. Then, holding the helm lightly, like she'd done it all her life, she piloted us up to the town float, brought us smartly alongside, stepped ashore, and tossed a docking line to Bryce on the bow, as astonished by this performance as I. Then all of us, wanting only to be off the water, clumped up the hill and spent the night stretched out in the back of my Subaru.

By the next morning the rain had cleared the fog out, and we ran home damply but uneventfully. We went back across the next evening, sang a lovely Mozart *Requiem*, and returned under full stars and calm seas. A few days later Gwen packed her matched luggage and headed back to Pennsylvania, a little quieter but none the worse for wear.

That fall, back at college, she broke up with her DuPont beau, took a career assessment test revealing a strong aptitude in geography, transferred to Bucknell University as an International Relations major, and nailed a summer internship with the State Department in the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. She graduated in 1991 and a few weeks later, just turned 22, set off to Africa on her first job assignment—to coordinate medical relief to Somalia for International Medical Corps.

These past three years she's seen death, a lot of death. She's held children in her arms as they were dying of starvation, and she herself has been shot at. Two guys she's dated have been killed. And yes, as her Mom, I struggle with this. There have been many, many times since that night in Maine when she's had to put the tiller hard over. But she is also supremely her own woman: spirited, tough, resourceful—and yes, still fond of matching outfits.

Part way through her first tour of duty, she took a vacation to Djibouti—found a bush pilot to fly her there. She sent me a post card—with a P.S. "I'm also sending this to Bryce. " I have it pinned on my wall—a hedge against all those times when I forget, give up. The picture of the bright African bazaar with its vibrant colors and shapes spills out, fills the blackness-upon-blackness of that night from which we all emerged slightly changed.

"Thanks, Mom," it says... "Starting out and having to turn back is different than if you never started out at all...."

Winning isn't everything,

ROGER F. DUNCAN

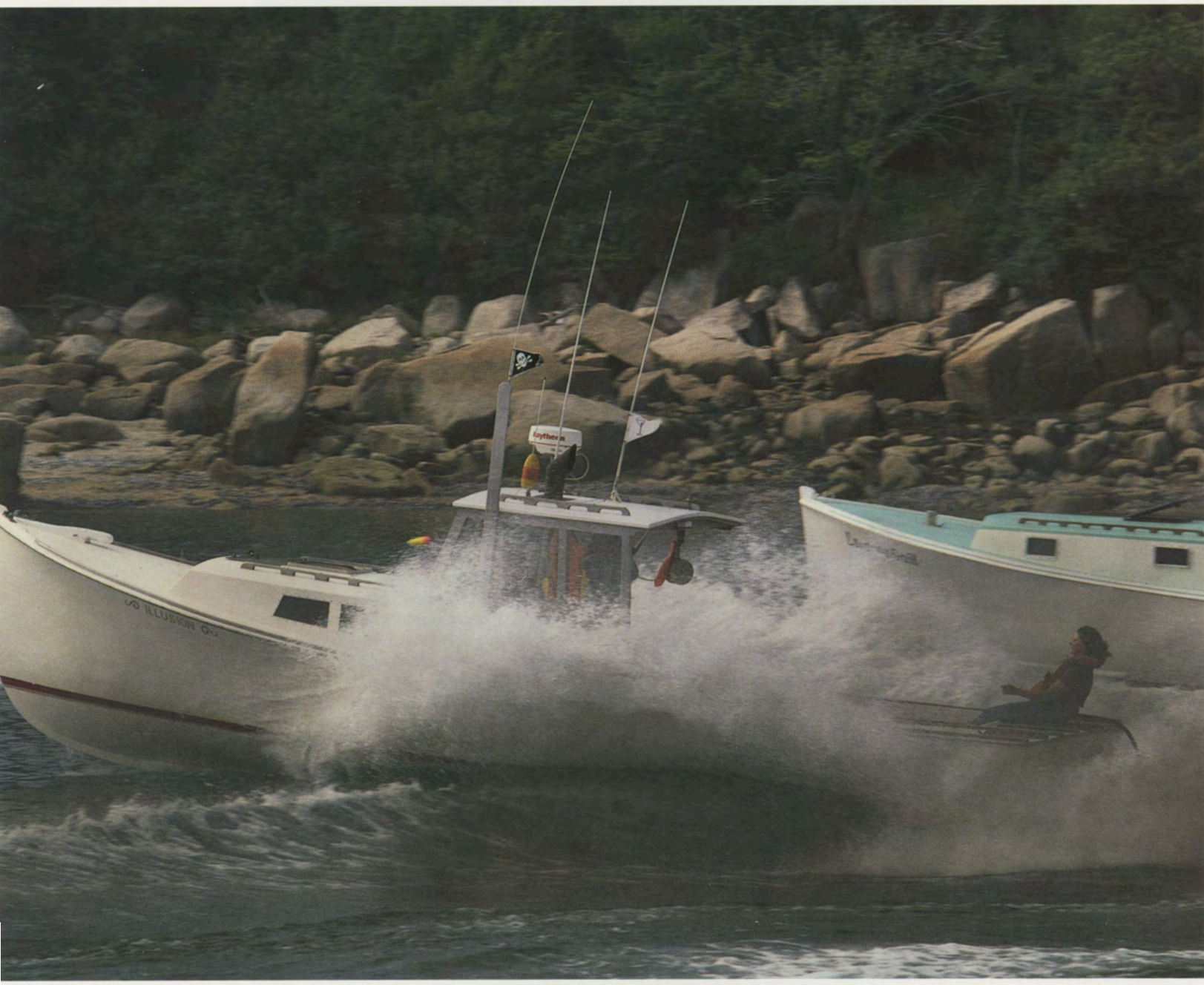
WHENEVER TWO people are going in the same direction on the water, in each there wells up an inclination to be a little ahead. An inclination? A determination; an obsession! Which of us, sailing alongside another, does not give a little pull on the sheet, watch the luff of the mainsail a little more carefully, then look across at the other's bow? Which of us, just rowing across the harbor with a load of groceries, does not pull a little harder on the oar, stretch out his stroke to keep ahead?

When fishermen fished under sail, they raced, formally and informally. Perhaps it was a desire to be first in the market to get the best price, but perhaps it was also a quest for the warm satisfaction of having another tucked comfortably under the lee quarter.

All along the coast people raced their dories and sloops. Each year from 1903 through 1916 John H. Quinn, owner of a guest house on Eagle Island in Penobscot Bay, organized a race for local sloops. One faded photograph shows nine sloops hard on the wind on the starboard tack headed down the bay for Babbidge Island, thence to Brown Cow Ledge and back to Eagle Island. After the race, cups were awarded to first, second, and third finishers with appropriate ceremony, festivities, and feasting. One cup is now in the library at Bernard, apparently retired by Lewis Freeman Gott of Bass Harbor, who won it in MERRY WINGS in 1911, 1914, and 1916.

Photographs by Peter Ralston

but second place stinks



"When fishermen fished under sail, they raced, formally and informally. Perhaps it was a desire to be first in the market to get the best price, but perhaps it was also a quest for the warm satisfaction of having another tucked comfortably under the lee quarter."

Colby Young of Corea observed some years ago, "If I had an engine aboard that amounted to anything, I'd go to the races." His brother Arvid jumped into his truck, drove to Ellsworth, and came back with a new engine.

When marine engines became practical, fishing sloops were abandoned and "sloop boat" races languished until circumstances revived the tradition in 1961.

Bernard MacKenzie of Scituate owned a staunch old Friendship sloop, VOYAGER. Her huge mainsail had been cut down and she was not regarded as a fast boat in any company. However, MacKenzie entered her in a "bang and go back" race in Boston in 1960. This was a highly informal affair which any sailing craft could enter. When the first boat reached the first mark, a gun was fired and all headed for the second mark wherever they were. The final leg was a run before a building easterly for which VOYAGER, with her reduced sail area, was properly dressed. She won. MacKenzie was delighted, and with the help of others, organized the Friendship Sloop Society to preserve the tradition of the Friendship sloop. The new officers of the Society rejected the idea of a regatta at Friendship because the town had no restaurants, motels, parking space, or public toilets to accommodate the crowd that might come; but seven sloops had entered even before the officers met, so the regatta was on. MacKenzie won the Governor's Cup as the first sloop built before 1914 to finish. Since then, the Society has held annual regattas, first at Friendship and later at Boothbay, and now holds races also at Marblehead, Southwest Harbor, New London, and Gloucester.

Because Friendship sloops are not class boats, all identical, but just a fisherman's solution to the boat problem, coming in all sizes with subtle variations, a handicap system was necessary. At first this was arranged by having the faster boats sail a longer distance down "handicap alley." Each boat had to pick up her assigned buoy at a calculated distance from the mark at the alley's entrance. Now, with as many as 30 sloops starting, the Society has had to adopt the conventional time allowance system; however, the informal festive attitude prevails. Tense, competitive as the atmosphere is at the windward end of the starting line, afterwards at the float, at the bar, or gamming in the cockpit, friendship prevails. Overall winner at Boothbay in 1993 was John Rand in WILLIAM M. RAND, a 22-foot wooden sloop he built himself. John Cronin's TANNIS and Tad Beck's PHOENIX are also boats to beat.

There are many other informal sailing races up and down the coast wherever stick-and-string sailors congregate. North Haven and Deer Isle have in some years "round the island" races. There is a race for retired skippers at Castine, and the cruise schooners gather for a race from North Haven to Rockland on occasion — or from wherever the wind serves to wherever they are bound.

Oarsmen and kayakers are subject to the same competitive instincts as sailors. In 1975 a few oarsmen rowing for fun in small shoal-draft traditional boats raced from Pepperel Cove in Kittery up Chauncey Creek, through the marsh behind Cutts Island, to Brave Boat Harbor and back to Pepperell Cove outside, a course of about six miles. The course must be rowed at high water to get through the marsh. If the high tide is not very high, one must pick his way through the channels, but on a good high water, the word is "press on." This leads to an informal approach.

Entries, led by Lance Gunderson, picked up dramatically as general interest in recreational rowing gained momentum. Now between 50 and 60 boats race in various classes: dories, peapods, and other fixed-seat, oarlocks-on-gunwales traditional types; sliding seat boats like Alden Ocean Shells; various kinds of kayaks; a Scilley gig; even windsurfers. Although the race can certainly be described as "informal," that does not imply that it is not hotly contested. Astonishing speeds are attained. The all-time record is 52:04 held by Bill Reagan of Exeter in a kayak, and the record in traditional craft, a plywood peapod rowed by John and Dan O'Reilly, is 62

minutes. Debbie Arenburger and Priscilla Healy White rowed an Alden double in 55:38, fastest time in 1993.

After the race, when everyone has caught his or her breath, prizes are distributed not only for winners but for such distinctions as smallest boat, biggest boat, fastest rowed by one who built his boat, oldest, youngest, and even for last to finish. Then comes a massive clambake and mutual admiration.

A similar race started in Southwest Harbor in 1983 sponsored by Mount Desert Island rowers and Harbor House. Reginald Hudson, a former crew coach, was one of the early promoters and eager competitors. The races are usually held on the July 4 weekend, but even this early in the season, competitors are in strong physical condition and sharp set. The course runs from the Claremont Hotel to a mark on the Mount Desert shore to the can on Middle Rock and back to the Claremont. There are classes for kayaks, Alden-type shells both double and single, for traditional fixed-seat boats, and an "elite" class for any shell however rigged. A handicap system is based on age. Competition is keen indeed. The winner in the double Alden class in 1992 was only three seconds ahead on corrected time of the two who tied for second. Keen as the competition is, the merriment afterward is in no way shadowed.

Fishermen no longer race in sloops, but their competitive spirit is in no way diminished. Competition is keen for the fastest lobsterboat in Maine. The first races were held at Jonesport in the fast, narrow, high-bowed Jonesport lobsterboats, and now there are also races at Winter Harbor, Stonington, Boothbay Harbor, and Potts Harbor. Since the advent of fiberglass boats, many with identical hulls, speed is largely a function of horsepower, weight, propeller size and pitch, water line length, and fine tuning. Competition has become so keen that few lobstermen race in their working boats without taking time to prepare.

Neither time, ingenuity, nor money are spared. A set of aluminum heads? No problem. Tear out the the exhaust system and run hot stacks out over the washboard. Haul out the heavy engine box, bait barrel, spare battery, radar antenna, anything to save weight and windage.

Some go to greater and more expensive lengths. Colby Young of Corea observed some years ago, "If I had an engine aboard that amounted to anything, I'd go to the races." His brother Arvid jumped into his truck, drove to Ellsworth, and came back with a new engine. They grounded the boat out, painted the bottom, changed the propeller, installed the new engine, and got to Jonesport in time to start the race and finish a respectable third.

Some travel a considerable distance to an airport to buy airplane gasoline. The smell of ether and of nitrous oxide has been detected. Special carburetors are bolted on. Some ground out, strip the paint, and wax the bottoms of fiberglass boats. Some with wooden boats haul out for two weeks before a race to dry out and save weight. Still, the boats must be working boats, although that corner is sometimes crowded pretty close.

Why should one spend so much time and money to win a mere trophy? As one fisherman explained, "Second place stinks."

The heaviest pressure on time, money, and ingenuity is found in the boatbuilders' class. These boats must look like lobster boats, but here the resemblance stops. The hulls may be specially laid up to save weight. Engine boxes and platforms may be made of Kevlar.

Engines may be specially tuned up by a mechanic from the factory. The rule requires that only one window may be opened to reduce wind resistance. The open "window" in one boat is a big automobile windshield; the other is — well, much smaller. Some have the fever so badly that they go to all four races, even putting their boats on trailers if time is short. To be competitive in the boatbuilders' class, a boat must exceed 40 mph; in the gasoline or workboat divisions it has to be capable of 35 or better.

Outboards with working hulls race in two or three classes from 30 to 100 horsepower. Working inboard lobsterboats race in classes according to length, number of cylinders, and cubic inches of cylinder displacement with different rules at different regattas. Winners in each class may enter a gasoline or a diesel free-for-all and then in the "fastest lobsterboat in Maine" race including both gasoline and diesel boats. Brian Robbins of *Commercial Fisheries News* tried to work out a point system for those who raced in all four regattas, but it turned into such a "hog wrastle" — his words — that it was dropped in 1993 but may be tried again in 1994. It would not be hard today to get into an argument about whose is the fastest lobsterboat in Maine.

Benny Beal of Jonesport would certainly have to be considered. He rebuilt an old wooden Jonesport boat, STELLA ANN, left on the shore to die, put a powerful engine in her, and left younger boats far astern. Also for several years his BENNY'S BITCH led the Jonesport races and traveled to many others. Doug Carter of Boothbay won the gasoline class in 1990, '91, and '92 in BABE, but retired her in '93. Leland Peabody of Cutler has done very well, and Donny Page of Boothbay in PAGE ONE has been a hot contender. Ask him why he has had three new boats in six years.

Spectator fleet

Donny Page of Boothbay in PAGE ONE has been a hot contender. Ask him why he has had three new boats in six years.

On a good day, 50 to 60 boats will be in a regatta, five to 10 in a class. They come down on the starting line carefully abreast. As they cross the line, the starter drops his flag and they all HIT IT. If one crowds the line to start ahead, they are all called back to start again. Any boat causing two false starts is disqualified. Finishes are sometimes so close that judges disagree and TV cameras must decide.

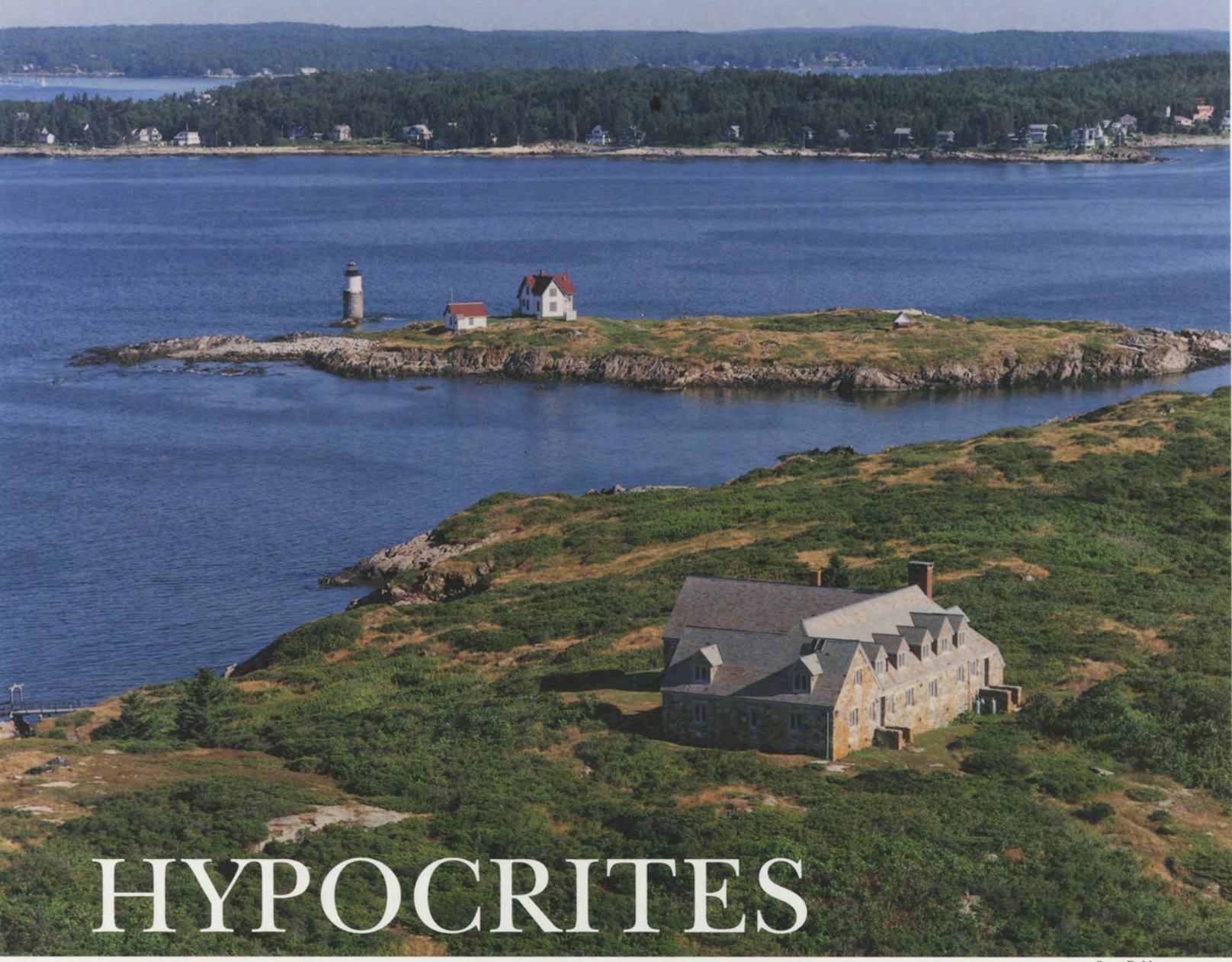
The apotheosis of informal racing on the Maine coast occurs at Boothbay Harbor's Fishermen's Festival in April before the summer people arrive and local people still have time to enjoy the day. The Festival is ruled by a Shrimp Princess chosen from the junior high School and crowned with due ceremony. Each class in the high school enters a team of four in a codfish race. Dressed in boots and oil clothes, each contestant must carry two large, heavy, wet codfish over the course. It is a relay race, and if one class cannot assemble a team of four, one or two may have to run two laps.

Another event is crate running. Twenty-seven lobster crates are tied together end to end from one float to another. A lobster crate is a wooden box built of slats about 3 feet long by 18 inches wide and maybe 16 inches deep. A quick lad or lass on light feet can run from one to another to another so fast as to be off a crate before it sinks. If it does sink, he or she swims. Current two-year champion is Mike Peters. Also there are several rugs of war contested with great enthusiasm and competitions in fish cutting, clam shucking, and one year, in lobster eating—a gross display.

However, the best race of all is trap hauling. A line of six lobster traps is set in the harbor with a buoy on each end. The contestant's boat is tied to the outer end of the long, narrow town float projecting from the wharf. The lobsterman and his stern man, dressed in oil clothes and boots, stand by the judge on the wharf. At the word "go" they sprint — try it in boots — down the long float, cast off, start up, rush out, pick up the buoy, and haul each trap. The stern man must take out a lobster and hold it up for all to see and bait each trap. They then reset the traps and return at top speed, something like 30 knots, throwing a huge bow wave across the float. At the inner end they throw the engine into full reverse. With a scream of tortured machinery and a turmoil of suds, the boat stands on her nose and more or less stops. The crew tie up, run up the wharf to the judge, who has been holding a stop watch. Anything under three minutes is good time, but, say the wise ones, "you can't beat Doug Carter."

In 14 years of contests, he has participated five times, each time setting a new record and waiting until it is broken. In 1991 his nephew beat his record. In 1992 Doug re-established his position with his son Andy as stern man. In 1993 Andy beat the record again in 2:27.7, this time by knitting his bait bags in the shape of doughnuts so he did not have to spear them with a needle in the usual way, thread the string through the needle, and pull it back through but merely reach through the hole in the "doughnut" for the string. This saved 10 seconds per bag, times six bags is a full minute. In 1994 Doug will be back with who knows what innovation. One year he set a new record towing a water skier who, claims Doug, never got wet above the knees. Don't miss the Fishermen's Festival.

A resident of Boothbay Harbor, ***Roger F. Duncan*** *is author of* Coastal Maine: A Maritime History *and* Sailing in the Fog. *With John P. Ware, he is co-author of* A Cruising Guide to the New England Coast.



Steve Rubicam

HYPOCRITES TO HOLY PEOPLE

Fisherman Island reveals many layers of history

Excerpted from *Islands of the Mid-Maine Coast, Vol. IV*

CHARLES MCLANE

THIS ISLAND may be counted as one of the early offshore fishing stations on the coast of Maine, although of less significance (because of its size) than neighboring Damariscove and Cape Newagen, and of course Monhegan and Matinicus. There was year-round residence here in the 17th century: when early settlers in eastern Maine petitioned in 1672 for inclusion within Massachusetts, fishermen from Hippocras were among them. Hippocras, or Hippocrist, was then the name of the island, later transferred as the The Hypocrites, to the ledges lying to the east, a name they still bear. Fisherman meanwhile became in due course the accepted name of the island, surely an appropriate one, given the occupation of its residents.

The stone mansion on Fisherman Island off Boothbay Harbor was built by the Rev. John H. Wilson in the 1920s. Ram Island is in the background.

How many lived on the original Hippocras and who were they? We can only guess as to the number: possibly as many as a dozen fishermen by the 1670s, most of them with families. We know from the records of the short-lived county of Devon (1674-76) that Hippocras shared a sergeant (John Bessell) with Damariscove Island and that the residents of the two islands together paid a higher tax than any other community in Devon except Monhegan. This suggests a not insignificant community on Hippocras, but we cannot identify its members. This community surely broke up during King Philip's War (1675-76) when settlements all along the eastern coast were abandoned.

At the North Cove on Fisherman Island, there were once several buildings.

A dozen years later, in 1687, William Sturt of Pemaquid, "in possession of a Small Island commonly called hyocrist," petitioned Governor Andros of the Bay Colony for a "pattent of Squirrel Island," a useless property (he said) which had never been taken up and was "in no wayes commodious for the fishery"; Sturt wished to use the wood on Squirrel for the dwelling he was building on Hypocrist ". . . in order to a Settlement" (I find no record that a patent was granted). William Sturt was the clerk at Pemaquid at this time and presumably too preoccupied to reside himself on Hypocrist, but he apparently sought to launch a settlement there. The general guidelines for settlements in the Cornwall area were a minimum of 20 dwellings. Whatever Sturt's ambitions, they were dashed in the second Indian war when nearly all settlement on the Kennebec ended.

After the evacuation of eastern Maine in the 1690s Hippocras Island passes from view for nearly a century, apart from an occasional claim or conveyance that cannot be verified. In 1693, for instance, George Jeffrey of Portsmouth claimed ownership from the administrators of the estate of William Phillips, who had acquired the island from Henry Joslin (or Jocelyn), a justice of the peace in Cornwall in the 1680s. Seventy years later, in 1765, Shem Drowne, agent for the Pemaquid Patent, the latest claimant of the island (now called Fisherman), sold it for £10 to Alexander Nickells (Nichles, Nichols) ". . . which island the said Nickells have improved for some years by lease." The "improvement" may be reflected in a building which appears in a 1772 coastal chart. During the Revolutionary War a tenant named Roberson was living on the island. In 1777 he was raided by sailors from a British man-of-war lying off Fisherman; they took hay and sheep from him with only partial payment.

The Wilson mansion dominates the skyline on Fisherman Island.

Alden P. Stickney (2)

In 1799 Alexander Nickells died, leaving Fisherman Island, along with Ragged Arse in Penobscot Bay, to his son John. The island passed by some device I have not discovered to John Andrews, who appears as owner in an 1815 Boothbay Town Plan. Andrews owned the island until mid-century when it passed in undivided halves to several families of fishermen from Edgecomb, Southport, and Bristol: Bennetts, Burnhams, Ayers, and Doloffs. The island appears to have been in regular use as a fishing island from the 1850s to the 1890s, but I believe seasonally, not normally year-round (like Damariscove): had residence been year-round, there would have been a listing of residents in the federal census and more discussion of an island school in Boothbay town records. The only mention I find of a school on Fisherman was in 1895 when three scholars are reported in the fall and winter terms. Meanwhile, Boothbay tax records show Burnhams, Doloffs, etc. assessed for the island and its facilities. In the 1870s the assessment was normally just under $1,000—high for a working island in that era (Damariscove was normally around $2000, but Indiantown was rarely above $500, Fort about $250, and Tibbets $200). The high assessment suggests that while we have identified no regular seasonal residents (unless the owners themselves), there was a considerable community of Fisherman Island. Coastal charts and maps of the 1870s show five or six buildings on the island: one near the top of the island, another east of it, and the rest around the cove.

In 1893 Edward S. Burnham sold the island to the Samoset Island Association of Boothbay, one of the ambitious corporations that sprang up in this era seeking to gentrify the islands for summer vacationers. The island's assessment in 1885 was $1300. I am not aware what plans the Association had, but they appear never to have materialized. In 1925 the Association sold the island and its facilities to the Reverend John H. Wilson of Duxbury, who built a stone mansion with leaded glass windows on the crest of the hill commanding the bay. This was the summer home of the Reverend Wilson and his descendants, as well as a retreat for fellow-brethren of the cloth.

Is this an expected denouement for Hippocras Island? Not expected, perhaps, but appropriate. Island histories are composed of many layers of history. Some of the layers in this cross-road region of Hippocras and Damariscove islands were brutal: the brawling of early 17th century fishermen, the iron glove of Sir Edmund Andros at Pemaquid, the marauding Dutch pirates, the rampaging of Royal Navy sailors in the Revolutionary War and War of 1812—not to mention the venial squabbles of 19th-century settlers. Three quarters of a century of quiet meditation may be what this sector needed all along.

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

ISLANDS OF THE MID-MAINE COAST, VOL. IV IS IN THE WORKS . . .

For more than a decade Charles McLane has been documenting the history and genealogy of all the inhabited (and formerly inhabited) islands of the Maine coast 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 conversations 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 1985, 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.

In 1992 the Island Institute and Tilbury House, Publishers began a joint venture to publish the remaining two volumes and returned Volumes I and II to print. Volume III, (Muscongus Bay) appeared in 1992. The preceding excerpt announces the publication of Volume IV, (Boothbay) in Spring 1995.

THE LITTLE ISLAND THAT GOT AWAY

How Long Island Became Maine's 455th Town

AL DIAMON

The good old boys used to sit on the grass overlooking the public pier on Long Island and watch the activity on Casco Bay while sipping a few cold beers. Now they can sit and watch, but public sipping is in serious decline.

The beat up station wagon that met ferry passengers on the pier used to be free of any signs of government regulation. Now it has license plates and registration stickers.

The old building on the waterfront used to be a decaying eyesore. Now it's covered with fresh paint and filled with donated furniture, and serves as the town hall.

Long Island used to be a tiny rebellious outpost of the city of Portland. Now it's an independent town, being closely watched by neighboring islands as they consider their own attempts to break away.

Photo courtesy of Independence Day Committee

If Portland's other islands—Peaks, Great Diamond, Little Diamond, Cushing, and Cliff—decide to secede, they'll owe a debt to Long for its pioneering trek around the political pitfalls. They'll know towns have to live with a host of laws, dealing with everything from alcohol consumption and automobile registration to environmental protection and governmental organization, that islanders have traditionally ignored. They'll find out that Portland, often regarded as dictatorial but remote, can turn into a devious manipulator. They'll discover everything costs more than expected.

Long Island learned these lessons the hard way, without benefit of a mentor. It was all worth it, according to Nancy Jordan, a leader of the secession movement and now Long Island's school committee chairwoman. "We weren't part of Portland's community," said Jordan. "We were black sheep, poor cousins. Now we are the community."

Long Islanders talk a lot about community, but a more important factor in their decision to leave Portland was money, specifically the $755,000 per year they paid to Portland in property taxes and the $365,000 in service they got back. That imbalance would likely have produced little more than grumbling if it hadn't been for a seies of political miscalculations and a sharp reversal in the economy.

Gathering Storm

The first political mistakes were made in Augusta during 1988 and 1989. Legislators were taking a lot of heat from constituents over increasing property taxes. They responded by doing very little to alleviate the immediate pain and virtually nothing to deal with the chronic disease. While the state created programs such as the "circuit breaker," which provides rebates to those whose property values outstrip their income, that failed to help the middle class. A homestead exemption that would have eased the burden on all taxpayers was enacted, but before it could be funded, the state budget crisis hit. The tax relief law was first delayed and eventually repealed when it became obvious the state couldn't pay for it. The fiscal crunch also led to tighter restrictions on circuit breakers, further limiting the number of people receiving property tax relief.

Meanwhile, the city of Portland was starting its first property revaluation in over six years. The city had little choice. State law requires municipalities to assess property at at least 70 percent of its market value. The economic boom of the 1980s had dropped Portland's assessed values to 45 percent. But as the revaluation got underway in July 1989, the boom was heading south and a recession was moving in.

Nobody at Portland City Hall noticed. In May 1990 the city council passed a budget that boosted property taxes 7.8

percent. When taxpayers didn't riot, then-Mayor Esther Clenott mistook apathy for approval when she told the *Portland Press Herald*, "They don't seem to be angry."

Maybe they were just unmotivated. In September 1990 a statewide petition drive to exempt the first $35,000 of assessed value on a person's primary residence from property taxes fizzled out. Three property tax reform measures launched the following month all failed to get enough signatures to get on the ballot.

Maine was in the midst of a gubernatorial campaign at the time, and the state of the state's economy was a central issue. Democratic challenger Joseph Brennan claimed the current budget would run $100 million in the red. Republican Governor John McKernan argued the financial plan he'd put together was in good shape. Brennan turned out to be right, but McKernan won the election, at least in part because nobody wanted to hear bad economic news.

So it's not surprising the public paid little attention to another fiscal warning issued at the height of the campaign. Portland's assessor said preliminary figures from the revaluation showed a big shift in the tax burden from commercial property to residential property. Businesses were already feeling the effects of recession, while housing prices were still riding the last of the boom.

The economic downturn finally reached Portland City Hall in February 1991. City Manager Robert Ganley told the *Press Herald* the next budget was "going to be brutal" because of the recession and state reductions in money for municipalities. As Ganley began cutting spending and services, the revaluation results arrived, showing housing prices on the islands outpacing everything else in the city. Wil Corcoran, the project manager for the company conducting the appraisals, told the newspaper, "The islands are going to be in for a serious shift."

He was right. Angry islanders discovered their tax bills had doubled or tripled. They protested their new assessments by unsuccessfullly appealing to the state. They also launched a recall of most of the city council, but failed to get enough signatures. These actions were the work of a poorly organized group on Peaks Island, led by a firebrand named Patrick Gardner. "I think we're getting rooked by the city of Portland," Gardner told his followers. Shortly afterwards, he announced he didn't believe the group would ever get its act together enough to accomplish anything, and that he was selling his house and moving away.

Gardner's histrionics distracted the news media and city hall from less exciting developments just up the bay. Almost unnoticed, the Long Island Research Committee was formed in July 1991 to investigate whether secession from Portland made sense. The chairman of the committee was Mark Greene, a part-time island resident who taught school in Massachusetts. At the same time, the Long Island Civic Association, headed by summer resident Christine McDuffie, a substitute teacher from Portland, began negotiating with the city for more services.

Point of No Return

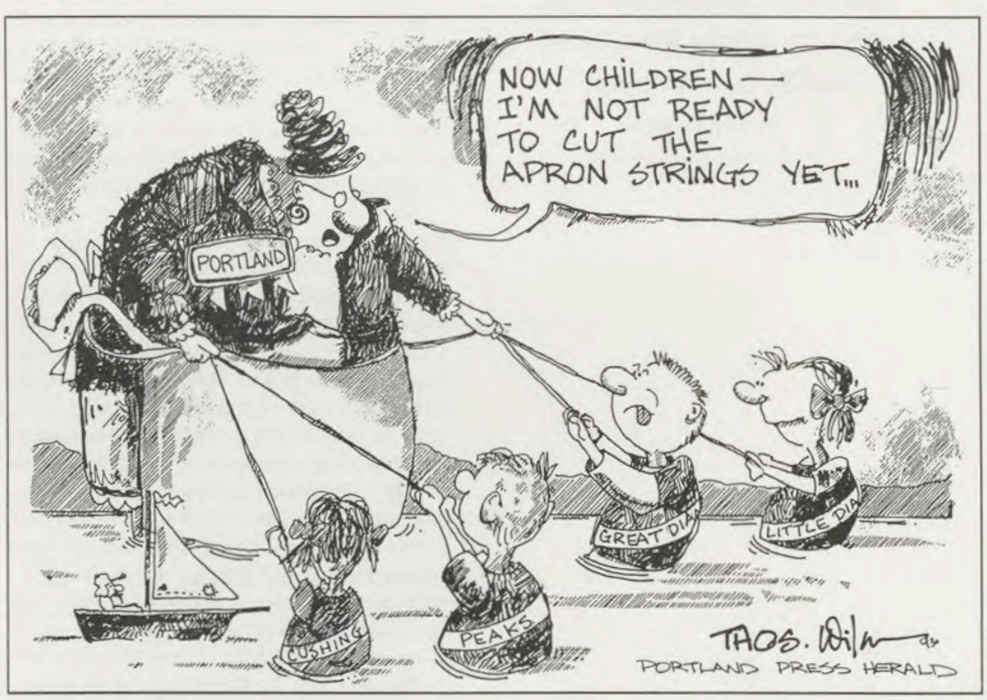
Portland was making a clumsy effort to counteract the rebellious mood on the islands. It released a study showing many island homes were selling for far more than their newly appraised values. The state tax assessor reviewed the revaluation and concluded it was fair. The assessor even emphasized that most island properties were still undervalued by 10 percent or more. Since most islanders didn't want to sell, these statistics provided cold comfort.

August 29, 1991, turned out to be a turning point for the secession movement. City officials took their annual tour of the islands that day, and they came equipped with some ideas to ease the rebellious mood. At each stop, councilors talked about setting up a special tax district on the islands where lower property tax rates would apply. They also discussed making the islands into village corporations within the city, which would allow them to keep more of the tax revenue they generated. Since Portland collected about twice as much from the islands as it spent on them, the idea had definite appeal.

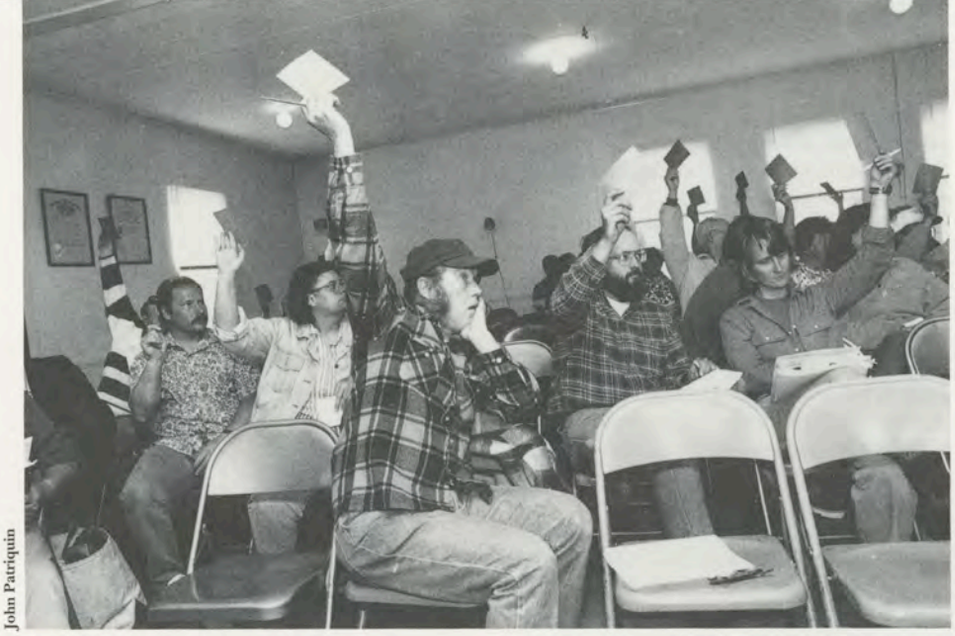
The islanders on Peaks, the Diamonds, and Cliff were interested. Secession movements on the islands were going nowhere, and most of the leaders were willing to settle for tax relief instead. "Secession is a

Most Maine legislators look on Portland as an alien place, full of people from away and flatlander values. . . . They weren't going to require much persuading that letting Long Island secede was the political equivalent of freeing a virgin from Sodom and Gomorrah.

After Long Island seceded, Portland out-maneuvered four other independence-minded islands.



Thomas Wilson



John Patriquin

First town meeting, May, 1993

long-term, separate thing," said Peaks Island's Charlotte Scot. "The majority of islanders are worried about their tax bills now."

When the officials got to Long Island, McDuffie had a different message. She handed councilors a memo thanking them for their help in removing junked cars, improving recreational facilities, and maintaining staffing on the city's fire boat. But the memo also listed nearly two dozen unresolved problems, and warned that the revaluation had been "wrenching" and "too much for many in our community to absorb."

"We feel we have no choice but to begin to investigate our other options," she wrote. "The local control of wrestling with our own problems and setting our own priorities could perhaps make us more resillient to the threats that face us as one of the few remaining year-round island communities."

McDuffie's quiet message didn't penetrate. Councilors sipped beers and played penny ante poker as they sailed back to the mainland. They were convinced the secession movement was dead and the tax revolt was waning. Even if McDuffie's little group wasn't satisfied, city officials figured Long Island was too small to go it alone.

Nobody on board seemed to realize they had just blown their last chance to derail the secession movement.

Long Island had been part of Portland since the city split from Falmouth in 1786. This island is 4.5 miles from the mainland. Its area is just 900 acres, its length only 2.6 miles, and its width less than a mile at the widest point. Its year-round population is estimated at 175, swelling to nearly a thousand in the summer. It has one store, one seasonal restaurant, no hotels or bed and breakfasts, and no businesses except fishing and lobstering. Its only tangible asset is property, which the revaluation showed had increased in value more than threefold, from $11,228,660 to $37,455,300. In the minds of Portland city councilors, Long Island had none of the elements needed to operate independently.

"My sense is there ought to be some discount due to the remoteness," he said. "You could argue they're paying for a lot of stuff they don't use."

Robert Ganley
Portland City Manager

The idea of a special tax district for the islands gathered dust. It was June 1992, before the Portland City Council even got around to formally rejecting the idea. Opponents of the tax district argued it wouldn't be fair to mainland taxpayers. City councilor and Little Diamond Island resident Ted Rand warned, "If you turn this down, it's bye-bye."

Snowballing Toward Secession

But by then, the momentum toward secession was probably unstoppable. On October 20, 1991, a community meeting on Long Island voted 98-2 in favor of holding a referendum on forming a separate town. The next day state Representative Ann Rand of Portland introduced legislation to allow a secession vote in November 1992.

The islanders studied hard. They met with other island municipalities to learn how they handled the nuts and bolts of governing. They talked with the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department about the costs of police protection. They drafted a budget that called for an annual tax rate of $15 per thousand, about a third less than Portland's rate. "Paying smaller taxes is the prime impetus," said McDuffie.

That "prime impetus" was severely threatened in January 1992, when Portland announced that if Long Island left the city, islanders would have to pay their share of long-term debt accumulated while they were part of the city. The secessionists' draft budget estimated that cost at $130,000. City Manager Ganley's estimate was $750,000. The city also wanted Long Island to bear the cost of closing its dump, and warned it would not give up any assets, other than property, if the island became a separate town. If Portland had its way, most of the tax savings would be eaten up for years to come.

Supporters of a separate town were quick to react to the threat. If there were no savings, the central point of their campaign was gone. They needed a new theme, and by the time the Legislature's State and Local Government Committee held a public hearing on the secession bill in February, 1992, they had one. "This is not about a tax revolt," Greene told the committee, "this is about preserving an endangered way of life."

The pro-secession group also cast the battle in David versus Goliath terms. Long Island and Portland were "a total mismatch," according to islander Robert Jordan. "we have no political impact on the city; they don't even know we exist."

Portland's counter-attack was unfocused and ineffective. City Councilor Clenott asked, "Why are we being pushed into making a decision in a matter of months on a relationship that has endured for 200 years?" Councilor Tom Allen argued that Long Island, with fewer than 200 residents, was too small to be a separate town. That got laughs from legis-

lators who represented towns half that size.

Most Maine legislators look on Portland as an alien place, full of people from away and flatlander values. Consequentlly, rural representatives relish any opportunity to stick it to the state's largest city. They weren't going to require much persuading that letting Long Island secede was the political equivalent of freeing a virgin from Sodom and Gomorrah. On March 4, 1992, the committee voted 13-0 in favor of the bill. During House debate a week later, Portland State Representative Fred Richardson warned, "This is the beginning of a tragedy in the form of the emasculation of the City of Portland." The House approved the operation 128-7. The Senate gave its unanimous approval without debate or a recorded vote.

Richardson kept fighting. "It makes no sense to take the islands out of the total city because they don't get some services," he told a Portland delegation caucus. "It's like saying I should only pay for the services I get on my street. Besides, folks with second homes have more ability to pay."

Even Portland City Manager Ganley didn't buy that argument. He told the *Press Herald* he still favored a special tax district for the islands. "My sense is there ought to be some discount due to the remoteness," he said. "You could argue they're paying for a lot of stuff they don't use."

Technical problems held up final passage of the secession referendum bill, but on March 23 the measure flew through both chambers with only three dissenting vites. The governor signed it, setting the vote for November 3.

That campaign began with both sides making their worst possible arguments. Robert Jones, who owns the island store, told the *Maine Sunday Telegram* he was tired of teenagers joy-riding around the island in beat up cars, and he thought local control would take care of that. "Personally, I'd like to see some of these freedoms curtailed," he said. "Even I appreciate some of the island's lawlessness, but sometimes it reaches a certain point that goes too far."

Island resident Richard Ladd offered the opposite view. "I never liked government," he said. "At least they're up there in Portland. We give them money and they look the other way. But now they're going to be down here."

Hard Negotiations, Hard Knocks

While islanders debated, negotiators for both sides tried to settle the questions of debt payments, asset transfers, dump closing costs, and other issues. Though they met from April until late June, almost no progress was made. The disputes were then turned over to a three-member arbitration panel. A month later, the panel ruled in Portland's favor on the major issues. If Long Island seceded, its residents would be responsible for $1.6 million of the city's long term debt. That amount was more than five times the secessionists' original estimate.

The arbitrators' decision forced the pro-secession forces to redraft their proposed town budget. The new estimated tax rate was $23 per thousand, just shy of Portland's rate of $24.66. The original reason for splitting—saving money—was gone, just as the campaign was about to move into high gear.

City officials had promised Portland would stay out of that campaign, but just couldn't seem to keep from getting involved. In July, the city council ordered its committees to study various ideas for helping the islands, including subsidizing the ferry service run by the Casco Bay Island Transit District. The proposal got some attention in the news media, and was never heard from again.

In August, Portland opened bids for a new, faster, emergency medical evacuation boat. City officials were quick to point out that if Long Island seceded, it would not have use of the vessel.

Meanwhile, the campaign was focusing on preserving the island's lifestyle and the benefits of self-government. Pro-secession leader Nancy Jordan told *Casco Bay Weekly*, "To me, it just makes no sense that a rural fishing village 4.5 miles from Portland is being run by an urban government."

Anti-secessionists, like Sarah Ladd, saw forming a separate town as the road to intramural squabbling and feuds. "We don't live on Long Island to play government, we live here to escape it," Ladd said. "We can feel independent because we're not busy trying to fugure out if our neighbor's septic system is up to code."

Those seeking a "yes" vote on forming a new town ran an organized campaign. They distributed copies of their proposed budget to every islander. They held informational meetings. Whenever opponents raised an issue, they mass mailed a response within 24 hours.

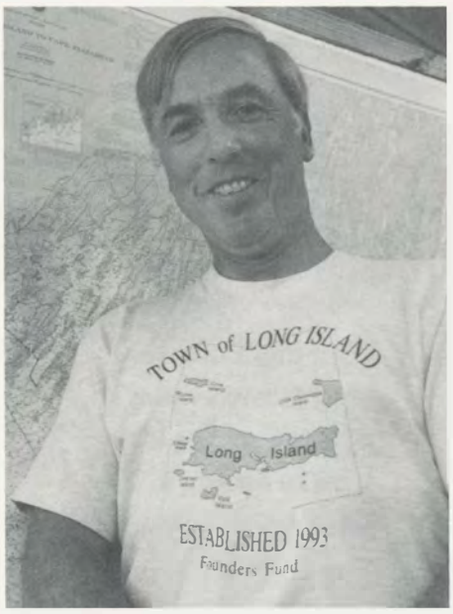
The "no" campaign was a mishmash of individual effforts. One person printed

"We don't live on Long Island to play government, we live here to escape it."

Sarah Ladd, Long Island

Gary Guisinger

Baiting the opposition: Long Islander Donald MacVane showed his support for secession on his lobster buoys.



Long Island T-party: Before voting a budget, the new town supported itself through the sale of T-shirts. The model is Mark Greene.

The Secession Sandwich: "Let us alone."

Daily special at The Spar Restaurant, Long Island

signs, another sent out letters. There was lots of intensity, but no coordination.

The hard campaigning led to hard feelings. A fistfight broke out on a Casco Bay Lines ferry to the island. Friends and even familly members stopped speaking to each other. Secession opponent Betty Felton told the *Press Herald*, "There's a lot of hostility, and I'm afraid the island will never be the same."

As election day approached, there were threats of lawsuits over who was a legal resident. By late October, the number of registered voters had risen from about 160 to over 200.

On November 3, 1992, Long Islanders went to the polls in record numbers to support secession in a 129-44 landslide.

Making a New Town

The winners didn't spend much time celebrating. They had a lot of work to do to prepare for independence on July 1, 1993. And they had no illusions about how difficult it would be. "We're looking at three to five years of hell," islander Cynthia Steeves told the Associated Press. "We're willing to stay the course."

The first step was to elect some leaders. At a December 12 town meeting, secession leader Greene was chosen as moderator, but most of the other elected positions went to full-time residents with deep roots. Volunteers fixed up the town hall, helped draft a budget and sold T-shirts, which constituted the government-in-waiting's only form of income until tax revenue started flowing.

An official town meeting in May approved a budget of $683,000. Not a single attempt to cut an item won. Several efforts to increase spending succeeded, adding about $10,000 to the total. So much for the tax revolt. More than 100 people took part in the meeting, and the most contentious issue was deciding how many street lights the town could afford to operate. It was settled by compromise. So much for feuds.

Not everything went smoothly. Islanders were cited for illegally pouring a concrete slab for the new town's transfer station without proper permits. Portland Public Works employees stripped a truck of required safety equipement before turning it over to Long Islanders. When the truck was sent to Portland on a barge to pick up supplies, city officials were waiting to ticket it. Portland and Long Island workers got into a shouting match on the public pier over which municipality owned a lawnmower. A summer resident was elected to the board of appeals, an apparent violation of Long Island's newly adopted municipal ordinances.

On July 1, 1993, the chalkboard outside the island's only restaurant, The Spar, listed only one daily special, "The Secession Sandwich," it read: "Let us alone." But there were few other signs of bitterness as assembled dignitaries officially incorporated the Town of Long Island. The crowd even managed to give Portland Mayor Anne Pringle, a secession opponent, a warm greeting.

When Pringle became mayor, she formed an advisory committee to discuss issues of concern to islanders, but little else has changed at Portland City Hall since the split with Long Island. "What happens when Pringle is gone?" asks Nancy Jordan. "I think it's going to come to nothing, and that's not entirely the city's fault. So much separation of the mainland and the islands, both because of water and lifestyle is going to lead to more calls for secession. It's bound to happen."

As for the future of Long Island, Jordan is optimistic. "The unanimity is astonishing, she said. "Of course, a lot of the people who were vociferously opposed have left. A few other opponents are still complaining, but most of them have joined in, or at least said, 'Yeah, the roads are getting plowed. I guess it's working okay.'"

Factionalism has not yet set in on the island. That's partly a result of the relative lack of problems the town has had to confront. It hasn't faced lawsuits, layoffs, scandals, or budget problems. Yet.

As Long Island headed toward its second annual town meeting this spring, the remaining opponents of secession were taking a realistic approach to town politics. George Callan, a commercial fisherman and anti-secessionist, said cooperation is necessary as a matter of self-preservation. "Nobody is trying to undermine (the new town)," said Callan. "Nobody wants their own boat to sink."

Down at the municipal pier, the cars are registered and the public drinkers are few. There's also a new rope handrail to help ferry passengers climb the icy, windbuffeted hill. It was installed by volunteers using donated materials.

"It's a practical solution that just appeared," said Chris McDuffie. "We're finallly taking ownership of our problems."

A longtime observer of the Maine political scene, ***Al Diamon*** *writes for* Casco Bay Weekly *and the* Bangor Daily News *and appears regularly on Maine Public Television's "Media Watch." He lives and works in Portland.*

EDITOR'S NOTE:
As *Island Journal* went to press, the Maine Legislature was defeating bills that would have given four other Portland islands—Peaks, Great Diamond, Little Diamond, and Cushings—the right to vote on seceding from the city. Portland officials were fearful of an eroding tax base and the possibility that other neighborhoods would secede for a variety of reasons, and lobbied vigorously against the secession bills. Long Island escaped from the city, it seems, because it acted more promptly than Portland's other islands.

Christopher Ayres

TRESPASSING IN PARADISE

In which the author confesses an illicit love affair with private summer islands

EDGAR ALLEN BEEM

SPOTTING AN unfamiliar face and an unfamiliar apparatus, the first mate of the Cushings Island boat confronted *Maine Times* photographer Christopher Ayres last summer and demanded to know, "What are you doing?"

"I'm going out to the island," Ayres replied, stating the obvious.

"And what are going to do out there?" inquired the mate, a woman of great personal authority.

"I'm going to take some pictures. I'm a photographer," replied Ayres curtly.

"Oh," said the first mate, still eyeing Ayres' tripod suspiciously, "I thought you were a surveyor."

The contempt with which the good lady of the POLLY LIN spit out the word "surveyor" left no doubt in my mind what she thought of surveyors, and for that matter, any of the legion of low-lifes that tend to follow in their wake—real estate speculators, developers, investors, sightseers, and promoters—in short, anyone who might intrude on paradise and upset its established order.

Ross Edwards Collection

Christopher Ayres

Squirrel Island, then and now

The gates of Maine's private island summer colonies, I have found in my journalistic travels, are jealously guarded against unwanted outside interference. I often feel like a trespasser in my own native state when visiting an island, but never more so than when setting foot ashore on an association-controlled island such as Cushings, Little Diamond, MacMahan, or Squirrel. Naturally, I respect the rights of private property, yet there is an illicit pleasure about scouting charmed islands where there are no public accommodations of any kind and even the roads are private.

The errand that took Chris Ayres and me to Cushings this day was an interview with an artist, a son of the summer colony, but even with legitimate business I felt like a party-crasher as we motored out through a summer fog to that deer-infested island enclave of abandoned, bittersweet-choked harbor fortifications and stately shingled cottages.

Cushings Island is the most exclusive of the summer islands I have visited. Between 1858 and 1917, the great Ottawa House hotel flourished there, giving the public a base from which to explore its wild North Atlantic beauties, but for most of the 20th century Cushings has been an arrondisement of summer aristocrats rusticating in some 35 cottages hunkered down on its leeward side.

In 1883, noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted was commissioned to create a plan for the development of a summer community on Cushings, a community he foresaw as "a club of families of congenial tastes united only for the purpose of preserving and developing its characteristic advantages and of providing convenience of habitation in a manner harmonious each with all."

And that's pretty much what Cushings became. Idyllic to a fault, the island is a vestige of 19th century gentrification. We have learned to be more discreet about such things in the pluralistic democracy of the late 20th century, but Olmsted in his time could be more frank about the advantages Cushings could offer the privileged few and about the threats to its elite splendors.

"Notions of improving the island based on what has generally been attempted at many public favored places of summer resort should therefore be wholly abandoned," Olmsted wrote in his 1883 report to the trustees of the Cushings Island Company. "But to persons who wish to take as complete a vacation from urban conditions of life as is practicable without being obliged to dispense with good markets, shops, and the occasional ready use of city conveniences; who have a taste for wildness of nature and who value favorable conditions for sea bathing, boating, and fishing, the island offers attractions such as can be found, I believe, nowhere else on the Atlantic seaboard...The only dan-

But to persons who wish to take as complete a vacation from urban conditions of life as is practicable without being obliged to dispense with good markets, shops, and the occasional ready use of city conveniences, the island offers attractions such as can be found, I believe, nowhere else on the Atlantic seaboard..."

Frederick Law Olmstead,
Cushings Island, 1883

ger of reasonable disappointment to such persons lies in the chance that others of incompatible tastes and ambitions will aim to make improvements of various sorts, an attempt at a style of life incongruous with the natural circumstances and repugnant to tastes that the island is otherwise adapted to gratify."

The only threat of "improvements of various sorts" that Cushings faced in modern times was the sale of 70-acre Fort Christopher Levett, a coastal artillery installation, to a group of Portland lawyers and businessmen in 1970. The sale did bring 15 new families to the island, but "the fort people," as they were called, turned out to be "families of congenial tastes"—in other words, People Like Us.

Christopher Ayres

After the fort people were assimilated into the summer society of the island, the undeveloped backside of the island, including the spectacular precipice of White Head cliff, was placed in a conservation trust to prevent any further improvements.

Conservation easements and land trusts, of course, became a popular way to protect open land during the 1970s and 1980s, but I can't help thinking that somewhere down the line, when developable land really does become scarce, the courts may have to be called in to sort out which trusts were created to protect environmentally-sensitive areas and which were created just to keep people out.

Standing high atop White Head watching an angelic white fog float in from sea, I found it difficult to believe that here on Cushings Island, where nature and culture coexist so amicably, I was still within the municipal boundaries of Maine's largest city. But then that may not be so much longer. Long Island has already seceded from Portland, and there is talk of secession on all the Portland Harbor islands.

Summmerfolk on Cushings, many of whom are Portland residents, seem to feel that the city regards their island as a cash cow, a source of tax revenue (Just look at all that prime shorefront!) that requires very few city services. My own bias, admittedly, is that the price of exclusivity should be high, that people should expect to pay disproportionately high taxes for the privilege of maintaining second homes as long as there are people who don't have homes, but then I might feeling differently if I owned a cottage on Cushings—or, for that matter, nearby Little Diamond.

Now Little Diamond is an island I have only trespassed visually. I ogle it every time I cruise down the bay on the Casco Bay Lines ferry, but my knowledge of its inner workings is vicarious.

I spied on Little Diamond one evening last summer while my wife and I were being ferried to and from dinner on Great Diamond. It was the end of a brilliant high summer day and the ferry that departed Casco Bay Lines' festive new terminal had the aura of a party boat. Piratical working men heading home to Long Island leaned against the deckhouse, chain smoking and swigging beers, while young professionals bound for Little Diamond produced potables of their own from their briefcases and turned their faces to the sun.

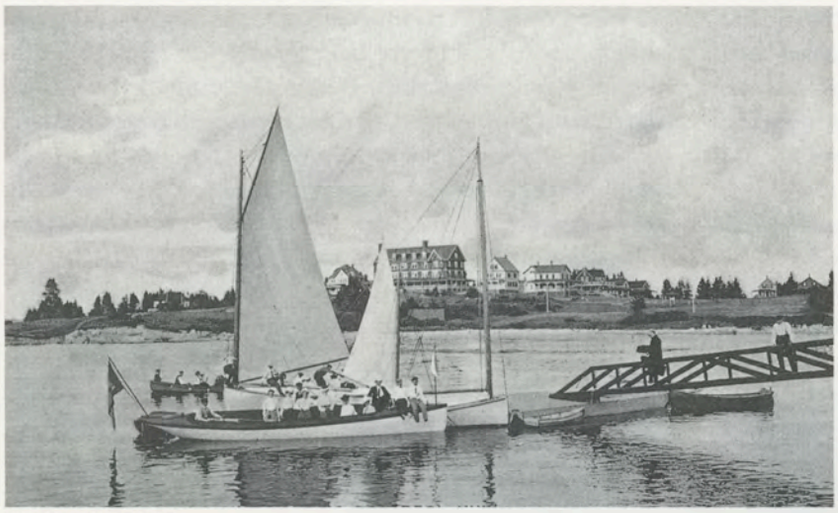
Once the demesne of out-of-state summer residents, Little Diamond was transformed during the go-go years of the 1980s into a summer retreat for lucky and successful locals. This disruption to the settled order occurred when the Sisters of Mercy, who had inherited the former summer estate of an archbishop, put their 33 acres on Little Diamond up for sale as a 15-lot subdivision.

The horror with which the old guard tend to view any changes in the status quo is understandable, of course, but having reported on the slam-the-door-on-paradise syndrome as it was acted out all over Maine during the development boom of the 1980s, I have also come to see that growth management has a selfish, even hypocritical side. The folks on the front side of Little Diamond, for instance, wouldn't have gotten a foothold on the island were it not for the development scheme of the Maine Coast Realty Company a century before in the 1880s. Maine Coast Realty built 15 cottages—as rental property, of all things—before it went out of business in 1912 and the Little Diamond Island Association took over, transforming the company's commercial enterprise into a social venture.

Today, there are some 46 cottages on Little Diamond's 73 acres. In this domestic democracy, each cottage (not each person) is accorded one vote. An attempt was made to make the arrivistes on the Sisters of Mercy land pay an entrance fee to join the Little Diamond Island Association, and, indeed, a few, including a former mayor of Portland, did ante up before resistance to the fee overturned the practice.

Meanwhile, Little Diamond has absorbed the Sisters of Mercy brigade just as Cushings accepted the fort people in the 1970s, and life goes on at own leisurely pace. As the merry little ferry bumped off from the Little Diamond dock headed for Great Diamond Cove, I watched as the summer islanders trooped up the open hillside and dispersed along the shore and into the woods.

The social life of Little Diamond focuses on the island's Casino and is overseen by the matriarchs of the



Ross Edwards Collection

Islands of dreams for more than a century, Maine's summer islands have offered a repast of elegant simplicity.

Back in the days when the Seal & Porpoise Club inn operated on MacMahan island, its motto was "The simple life for elegant people." Folks on MacMahan today say it's "an elegant life for simple people."

Cogowesco Club. Far more organized than Cushings, the folks on Little Diamond maintain a regular schedule of lectures and dances, mount The Horribles Parade on the Fourth of July (in which children are encouraged to fashion outlandish costumes from materials scavenged on the island), and every Saturday evening hold a community dinner.

There is only one irritant to this estival bliss, I am told, and that is the uncongenial presence on Little Diamond of the browntail moth. So infested are the oak groves of the island with browntails that, come spring, it rains caterpillar fur in the defoliated forest. The caterpillar fur causes an itchy rash that one Little Diamond cottager described as "a pox on heaven." Ascribing moral intention to natural phenomenon is a dubious and dangerous business, but there's the rub on Little Diamond.

Not being much of joiner by nature, I suppose if I were to make my fortune, my summer isle of choice would not be Cushings or Little Diamond, but secluded MacMahan.

SUMMER AMONG THE SQUIRRELS

LIBBY LOVATT

The summer season on Squirrel Island begins its long build-up mid-April or early May, as soon as water to the island is turned on and the Squirrel Island tanks are filled. A few summer residents settle in immediately for a time of enjoying the island in solitude. Numbers on the island gradually increase. Retired people settle in for the summer. When schools close in June, a great influx occurs. Mothers arrive with children for the summer, to be visited on weekends and for brief vacations by husbands who work through the summer at home.

Boats start arriving in Spring Cove, where moorings, boat dock, and boat house are run by the Squirrel Island Boating Association. Preparation of the tennis courts is under the supervision of the Athletic Association, which hires a pro and "runs tennis." Later in the season the pro will give lessons and clinics, and organize junior and senior tournaments on the island and junior tournaments with neighboring Boothbay Harbor Yacht Club, Juniper Point, and Ocean Point. The Recreation Director oversees all other children's activities including swimming lessons and sailing lessons at the Boothbay Harbor Yacht Club.

The season really begins July first with the opening of the Tea Shop, a membership-only lunch and ice cream spot and gathering place for all ages. The calendar for the next two months is filled with special events. All ages flock to Hotel Beach on the fourth of July for a picnic and games, followed by a recent innovation, a children's parade with decorated wagons, wheeled Squirrel Island shopping baskets, and garden carts. The parade

MacMahan Island is a wild and woodsy place located at the confluence of the Sheepscot and Sasanoa Rivers. As there is no public transportation to the 200-acre island and as there was a blinding rain falling the day several years ago that I set out in an open boat from Robinhood to visit MacMahan, I'm not even sure I could find it again if I came up with the cash to buy in.

There are just 37 cottages on MacMahan and most of the summer residents are the descendants of preachers and teachers from Andover, Massachusetts. Back in the 1880s, when MacMahan was along the busy steamship route, however, the Sheepscot Island Company had plans to develop 600 lots, giving rise to the spectre of primitive little MacMahan as another Coney Island.

What I liked about MacMahan was its remoteness and its modesty. Back in the days when the Seal & Porpoise Club inn operated on the island, its motto was "The simple life for elegant people." Folks on MacMahan today say it's "an elegant life for simple people."

Christopher Ayres

MacMahan is a do-it-yourself, independent sort of place loosely governed by the 1979 MacMahan Agreement, an 11-page legal document that is only binding on the signatories. The MacMahan Agreement severely limits development on the island and restricts renovations and additions to less than 20 percent of a building's existing floor space — unless the majority of the property holders on the island grant a variance.

Any construction on MacMahan raises eyebrows, so this year when a longtime islander, who already owned two houses on the island, subdivided his property and put up a third, it was big news. Some folks on the island felt the new cottage violated the spirit of the MacMahan Agreement, but others reportedly started thinking, "Hey, if he can do it, why can't I?"

MacMahan is a long way from becoming another Old Orchard or Moody Beach with ticky-tacky cottages every 50 feet, but change is slowly creeping onto the island and into its ethos.

Roads on MacMahan are rutted lanes barely passable with four-wheel drive vehicles (and in the rain and mud, barely walkable as I recall), but leads to the Tea Shop, where all participants (including members of the canine crew) receive an ice cream cone, a gift from "the ice cream fairy." In the evening, many board one of the ferries owned by the Campbells who run Squirrel's ferry, for a few hours on a lobster cruise, ending at the fireworks display in Boothbay Harbor, spectacular when viewed from the sea.

July sees the children's masquerade. Last year's theme was "My Favorite State," which led to portrayals, often hilarious, of various states of the Union and states of mind. The spelling bee, organized by class from preschool to high school, ends with a large contingent of adults battling for the title. There is a teen dance, a square dance for all ages, and the summer's highlight—The Fair, which always falls on a Saturday in August.

The Hennesy, a much written about, much talked about dance with live jazz musicians is scheduled once again, though few of the oldtimers who made it famous are still around. Fête Ball, however, an even older institution, was canceled without a murmur two years back.

On a rainy evening during the summer of 1992, a group of island women gathered and traded outrageous ideas. These ideas developed into a scavenger hunt, held the following July. Forty islanders participated, in ten teams, bringing shouts of amusement all over the island. Teenagers at the boat dock watched in astonishment as straight-faced, purposeful individuals, one after another, launched a dinghy, sculled out to a moor-ing, took a few notes, sculled back, docked the dinghy, and strode off, without ever uttering a word. The captain of the Maranbo, the island ferry boat from whom a kiss was required, had been forewarned and had a bag of Hershey's kisses on hand. A number of our elegant older men, already asleep for the night, rose and joined the throng when informed that they were to be put forward as the handsomest man over 50 on the island. The event will not be repeated for a few years, but it will be remembered with laughter.

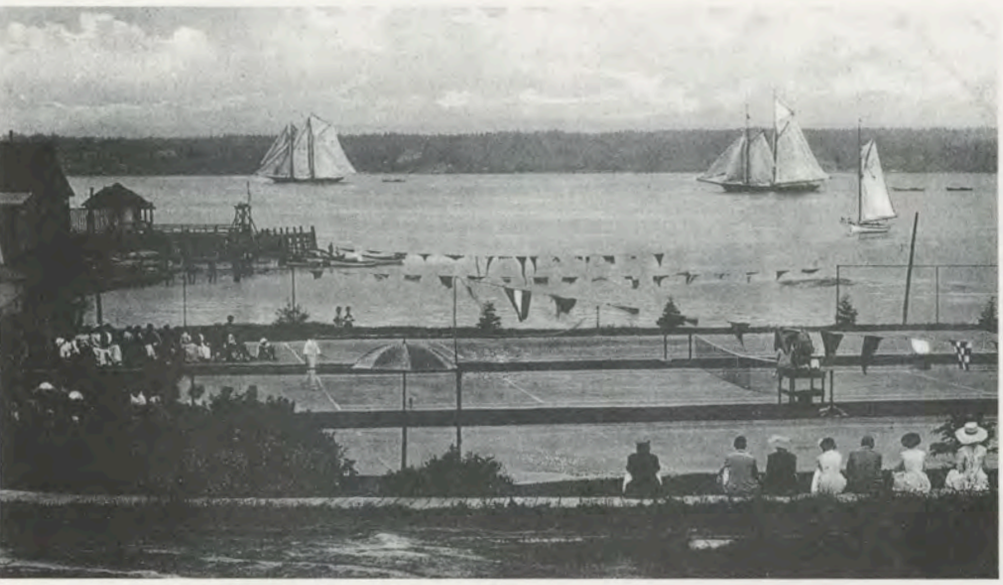
Play readings are held regularly in the Davenport Library. Last year a book review evening inspired some of the younger readers, who sought permission, then organized and ran their own "My Favorite Book" program. The audience of children sat entranced, hearing about books they would soon be delving into.

Every Sunday morning during July and August, islanders gather for a service in the Squirrel Island Chapel, always with a visiting minister and with excellent music on the chapel organ.
Every Sunday evening, a number of islanders finish the weekend with a lobster cruise on the MARANBO II.

Dogs and their owners meet regularly on Indian Beach for a romp and a swim. In blueberry or raspberry time, berries are plentiful here, and from early summer till late fall, beachcombers seek sea glass, shells, or other flotsam. Since the closing of the dump several years ago, a favorite prowling spot is gone, but some persevere and find the occasional escapee from the plowed under dump.

As the season ends and the majority of people leave, those remaining take time once again to enjoy the quiet of the island, its woods and its beaches. They settle down with a book from the excellent library or catch up on maintenance of their cottages before winter. By the first of November all cottage owners depart, leaving the island in the care of the island manager and his work crew and the island caretakers.

***Libby Lovatt** is a longtime resident of Squirrel Island and a frequent contributor to Island Institute publications.*



Ross Edwards Collection

the informal prohibition against motor vehicles has begun to soften. In recent years, golf carts have become all the rage on MacMahan. And as a younger generation of islander takes possession, spouses and children unused to being inconvenienced have been known to mutter those fateful words, "You mean we have to walk to the cottage?"

Watch out, MacMahan! It's a slippery slope you've embarked upon.

An absolute prohibition against the automobile, after all, is the single most important factor responsible for shaping and preserving Maine's oldest summer colony, Squirrel Island in Boothbay Harbor.

Founded in 1871 by a group of 22 Lewiston businessmen, Squirrel Island is known as "the Plymouth of summer colonies." Its summer residents now list swell addresses all over New York and Philadelphia, but Squirrel does have the virtue of being a summer colony established by and for Maine residents. And since it is serviced seven times day by the MARANBO II out of teeming Boothbay Harbor, it is one of the few private islands that regularly has to put up with daytrippers.

A Victorian period piece, Squirrel Island is a toy village of 106 cottages tightly packed onto 150 acres. The magic of Squirrel is not its natural beauty, but its human scale and pedestrian ambience. The expansive cottages are all individually owned, but the postage stamp lots they sit upon are subject to 99-year leases from the Squirrel Island Association. Cars are expressly forbidden and the cottages are connected by an elaborate system of concrete walks liberally illuminated by old-fashioned globe street lamps. Status on Squirrel, then, is not represented by shiny new BMWs, but by venerable wicker baskets on wheels and antique wagons that Squirrels (as islanders call themselves) push or pull along their quaint public ways.

"Island living carries with it a certain mindset in the way you approach your living," says one Squirrel. "In terms of Squirrel, that is further emphasized by the fact that if you want to invite someone to your home for a libation, you either have to write them a note and leave it at the post office or go knock on their door. It makes you live in a fashion that is very different from the normal way of life."

There is also a prohibition on Squirrel against private telephones, the peculiar accommodation to this prohibition being that there are public phones improbably located all over the island. The advent of cellular phones has subverted the ban of telephones in recent years, but the personal communication ethic still obtains on Squirrel. Even those with contraband cellular phones don't use them to call each other.

In order to maintain this museum of living history, Squirrel Islanders generations ago struck a deal with the state legislature that established the island as a village corporation within the town of Southport. Under the terms of the arrangement, 75 percent of the island's property taxes are returned to the island for local use. In addition, islanders assess themselves a separate property tax that keeps the Squirrel coffers full.

If Cushings and Little Diamond had such sweetheart deals with Portland, they probably wouldn't be talking about secession, but then they wouldn't be of much value to Portland either.

I first visited Squirrel in 1986 to write about its unique properties for *Maine Times*, but I have returned twice in the off-season to nose around on my own. What I find preserved there is not just architecture, but a way of life—genteel, intimate, and familial—that is rapidly disappearing from mainland America.

When I walk the walks of Squirrel, I have a strange sense that I am looking at something I have lost — a pedestrian society, continuity with the past, and a sense of community. No matter that the established order on Squirrel is rigidly enforced, seasonal, artificial, and exclusive, it results in a sense of belonging that fewer and fewer Americans ever experience.

My fascination with Maine's summer islands, then, may be tinged by the green of envy and discolored by the acid wash of resentment, but, even as I trespass, I am genuinely grateful for the glimpses these charmed colonies afford of earthly paradise.

Edgar Allen Beem *writes regularly for* Maine Times *and* Yankee.

From the Pilothouse

(continued from page 9)

FISH HAWK is hauled out in early December, leaving RAVEN and a dozen other boats in the anchorage we watch uneasily from the office windows. The first real hard northeasterly sinks three of the most unseaworthy boats, from among the ghastly collection of ungainly summer craft that are pushing their luck in the Gold Rush fever of the urchin fishery. Twenty million dollars will be paid to the quick, not the dead. The second storm takes out two more, including one that turns turtle literally before our eyes after taking one sea broadside that does not drain before the second rolls her over and takes her under.

There's nothing like winter on the water to remind you how narrow the margins really are. We have vowed to replace RAVEN's aging gasoline engine with a more reliable diesel as soon as we have raised the capital. The Executive Director of one of the foundations to whom we've applied calls at year end to report that his Trustees have voted to give us the shaft...and the propeller...and as much engine as we can beg or borrow for $17,000. This is a great leg up, but we're not yet home free.

In early January, we have several meetings lined up on North Haven and Vinalhaven. So Peter Ralston, Annette Naegel, and I head back out across the Bay. With us is a candidate to fill the Island Schools Coordinator position, recently vacated by Jim Schwellenbach, and we figure this is as good a time as any to measure his jib. He and Peter are headed out for a meeting with Barney Hallowell, principal of the North Haven Community School, while Annette and I are headed out to Calderwood Neck to survey a 300-acre parcel of Vinalhaven that is currently in the Tree Growth program, but may better qualify under the newly revised Open Space Law that we worked hard during the last session of the Legislature to get amended and clarified.

For days the sea smoke has been towering up over the water. One recent morning as I came into town early, the sun was just rising behind the Breakwater Light. The Breakwater itself was completely obscured in the ghostly vapors that licked their icy tongues in the wind, and the Lighthouse seemed to be floating in this eerie ether. Dreams of absolute cold. We've weathered two more northeasterlies that brought several feet of snow to the coast and an endless progression of Alberta Clippers that added to the load. We creep down the icy ramp to the float where Peter has brought RAVEN alongside and crowd into her pilothouse. The anchorage is completely thinned out except for a half dozen mostly seaworthy looking boats still urchining, and we cast off the frozen lines under absolutely clear skies. It's blowing 25 northwest, but we don't expect too much problem crossing the Bay because we'll be going with the seas; it's the return trip that you start to think about. When we come abeam the giant PB Bell out in the middle of the bay, we're confronted with just how cold it's been. The bell, completely shrouded in a frozen greenish design of ice, is completely silent.

Arriving at the Thorofare, Peter puts Annette and me on the Vinalhaven float, partly submerged under its weight of frozen snow and ice. There is something odd but strangely humorous to be unloading two pair of snowshoes from a boat that mostly stows seaboots and Helly Hansons during bouts of marginal weather. We arrange a rendezvous for 4 p.m. and head our separate ways. Peter steams across the Thorofare for North Haven while Annette and I carefully scale the ramp toward the truck that will take us to the back shore of Calderwood Neck during the day. Our conversation runs to cords per acre and deer and rabbit tracks while we imagine Peter and Barney's runs to cost per pupil and inter-island education possibilities.

Sure enough, at the end of the day everyone appears just as planned for the thrash back to Rockland. The wind has not moderated as forecast; as far as Annette and I can tell from a half hour earlier when we stood on an exposed shore, it's now howling about 30 knots steady. RAVEN's Force Ten stove is going and there is a glow to the cabin, but she needs a Force Twenty or somesuch to hold her own against the record lows temperatures and wind chill. We know we can go round the corner and spend the night in Perry Creek if need be, but as we watch the A.C. McLOON steam by we decide to poke the bow out around the Monument to see what the return trip to Rockland might be like.

The sun is just a half hour down, and there is a beckoning rosy hue off to the west where the sun has disappeared much farther south than it does during high summer. RAVEN lumbers heavily in the head sea as we make haste slowly. When we fetch the Monument, the edges of the pyramidal tower of stone are sharply etched in the backlit sky. Off across the Bay, the light on the water plays its usual winter tricks. Something about the cold air over the water makes the islands rise up and shimmer before the wind. A ribbon of liquid rose sky ripples underneath the turtle-like islands while the dark waves of the bay gallop by like seething black stallions. This is worth the whole day, worth it all after 20 years to be continuously surprised by a coast you think you know well.

Off Drunkard Ledge the seas swell up in the foul tide, and hard water breaks continually across the pilothouse. Soon darkness descends and RAVEN's windward windows are sheeted in frozen spray. In the loom of the radar and the red navigation light, we watch the blip of the McLOON on the screen, the only living thing between us and the Breakwater. Part way across RAVEN seems to shudder a little less when taking a sea and slowly, slowly the wind begins to let go. We turn on "All Things Considered," reconnecting with America, and think of sending a report of crossing the Bay in January. We pass below the McLOON and soon fetch Owl's Head. When Peter turns the spotlight on to view the end of the Breakwater, the ice on the forward rail gives a ghostly reflection.

Back in the Harbor, we drop off the crew and put RAVEN to bed on her mooring. All systems have performed well, but in the dark in the dinghy rowing back ashore, I vow the next time I write the journal of RAVEN in winter, it will be with the sound of a diesel beating as her heart.

Peter Ralston (2)

An informal inter-island school bus, RAVEN transported Islesboro students to North Haven for a classroom visit.

A phone call from a North Haven science teacher resulted in a field trip to Swan's Island to view the aquaculture operation in May 1993.

Brave New Worlds

(continued from page 25)

Although Chuck Clifford at the Commission, as a seasoned island diplomat, has chosen his words carefully during our earlier discussion, it is clear that he believes many of the Vineyard's Chamber of Commerce views on the subject of tourism are, to use Clifford's own words, "not helpful." "The Chamber," says Clifford, "seems bound to the notion that you have 90 days to make your money. They make a big deal about getting people here, but don't support activities that keep them here longer. Their answer to year-round employment is to keep building summer houses." Clifford shakes his head wistfully and says, "But there's got to be something better than that. There's a potential here for marine research, an adjunct to Woods Hole...," his voice trails off..."We've got to keep our fisheries."

Martha's Vineyard's shellfish industry annually contributes approximately $3 million to the island economy, down from $6 million a decade earlier. Although this harvest currently represents a mere three percent of the total island economy, on years of high production the contribution is close to 10 percent, and most of this is earned during the critical winter months.

The shellfish harvest is down, at least in part because "Martha's Vineyard has seen an unprecedented increase in shellfish bed closures," according to a 1989 report published by the Commission. Failing septic tanks, upland runoff, the flushing of recreational boats, and peeling bottom paint are all variously suspected as contributing to this decline which has attracted the attention of an important cross section of the island population. A recent Commission survey points out that recreational shellfishing is ranked as the third most important activity by residents and visitors to the island and between 2,000 and 3,000 licenses for recreational shellfishing are issued each year on Martha's Vineyard.

When I ask Clifford about the effects of pollution in Martha's Vineyard's legendary ponds, he suggests I meet the resident island shellfish wizard, Rick Karney. Since 1976 Karney, a marine biologist, has headed up the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group headquartered in a small solar heated hatchery at the head of Lagoon Pond in Vineyard Haven. Each year Karney carefully raises up to six to seven million seed scallops, six million quahogs, and two million seed oysters. He has learned what kind of algaes each of these species prefers and how to raise this food in sufficient quantities to be available to satisfy the voracious appetites of the tiny shellfish which in their early stages of life double in size every few days. Working closely with fishermen and shellfish wardens, he has developed a comprehensive understanding of which ponds present the best ecological conditions for seeding which combination of shellfish. But perhaps his most significant public relations achievement was the development of a strain of orange scallops which are easily identified by fishermen who have slowly come to understand the importance of Karney's operation to their annual income. Seeing is believing.

I am all the more more struck with Karney's achievements because he has succeeded in doing something significant for the island in the face of almost impossible odds. Karney's Board of Directors is composed of the Shellfish Constable and a selectman from each town, each of whom must be satisfied that they're getting their share, and each of whom I imagine is easily roused to jealousy. Budget caps at each town have frozen the hatchery's budget even as the production has soared. As in Nantucket, there is only one private aquaculture lease on the island, in Gay Head. "The bottom line, Karney says, "is we're doing aquaculture in the public sector. We need more private operators, but you can't get a lease on the island because of the tradition of the ponds as a public resource. The fishermen fight bottom grants tooth and nail."

All the while Karney must be part scientist, part jury-rigger, part politician, part philosopher. "Emotionally, we all have a love/hate relationship with tourism," says Karney. "Shellfishing is our chance to be independent." Karney runs his entire operation on the shoestring budget of $90,000, less than half the operating budget of Nantucket's more sophisticated hatchery, and of this total about $30,000 is raised through raffles and other modest fundraisers. "It's a real grassroots set-up," says Karney, an island hero in my book.

As my plane climbs up over the island and banks away to the mainland, the impressions begin to seep out of storage to be sorted out, perhaps arbitrarily, in the frontal lobes. Two days on each island and a short visit during a family reunion hardly qualifies one to offer any useful thoughts; several decades in most island communities is rarely enough time to develop helpful insights. But a couple of things are obvious and worth repeating. Nantucket, like the island communities of Maine, from Monhegan to Islesford, is its own town; while Martha's Vineyard is a county shared by six towns. Back home we get an occasional view of two towns trying to share a single island, as in Deer Isle and Stonington, one an old farming community, the other a fishing community. Lots of things are made more than twice as difficult as a result of this historical happenstance. But imagine putting North Haven and Vinalhaven together on the same island and then adding Matinicus, Monhegan, Isle au Haut, and Swan's to the island enclosure. It doesn't take but a second to recognize this as a picture of an island from hell.

It hardly seems fair that Nantucket has had so many historical advantages that makes its future bright as a place to live and bring up families, while next door Martha's Vineyard, though beautiful, must struggle against enormous historical obstacles. But Nantucket is not only its own town, it is also its own county and therefore more nearly able to control its fate. To mention but one example, Nantucket is cleverly able to double dip at the state coffers as both a town and a county, while Martha's Vineyard divides what state and federal largesse it receives across six towns, each of which marches to the beat of its different drummers.

This trip also serves to reconfirm a lesson that is perhaps even more apparent on Maine islands: for better or worse a few individuals can exert an inordinate influence over the future of an island. In the 1960s when Walter Beinecke decided to take Nantucket on as a project, its prospects, to any who cared to look, would have seemed no better or worse than those of Martha's Vineyard, a few miles away. But 30 years later, by any objective yardstick you choose to measure—per capita income, per pupil education expenditures, unemployment rates—you would think these two communities were from different ends of the country, rather than separated by a few miles of water.

More than anything else, however, I am swept up by a feeling of admiration for the islanders I have met from upwind and the institutions they have developed to adapt to or cope with changes to their communities, as rapid as any experienced across the entire country. Islands are defined by their edges and seem to bring out the best and worst in people who occupy their shifting margins. I've been lucky to meet some of the best in each place. I've been impressed by the prospects for these islands to capture a greater portion of the natural productivity of their waters through innovative shellfish programs designed locally, and tailored to their vastly different circumstances, especially against the backdrop of state policies which appears to discourage this kind of enterprise.

But I also feel lucky to be headed back to the harder, colder, rockier, altogether less favored islands of Maine where the tacit agreement still exists among natives, transplants, and summer folk alike, "If you don't build it, they won't come." And I realize that if this fragile social contract lasts long enough, Maine islands still have time to plan for the kind of durable year-round community life that is the only worthwhile counterpoint to the kind of a future that is inexorably headed our way. If we don't, the consequences, as I have seen with my own eyes, are too terrifying to contemplate.

"A Black Hole on the Map of Hope"

(continued from page 33)

Cabot Martin

QUESTION-AND-ANSWER

Q: I assume the meetings you attended earlier this week were with the lobster fishermen?

MARTIN: There were some lobster fishermen and one gillnet fisherman. Last night I had one of the most interesting exchanges with an older dragger skipper. He was a very thoughtful person and pointed out that he understood and even agreed with what I was saying, but, he said, "My dilemma is that I have my boat. What do I do with my boat? This is what I do for a living." For his problem, what we need are creative transition strategies.

Q: Did you find acceptance on the part of the lobstermen that you spoke with that it is time to do something different here? Do you see that coming about?

MARTIN: I've been impressed. I would love to have the willingness to talk, the thoughtfulness I've heard this week, in our own discussions back home. We in Newfoundland are at the anger stage and we have to get through that.

Q: One of the key points you made is that somehow you have to get the fishermen to believe the scientists. But on the other hand, you said that the scientists were giving erroneous information that misled people. So how do the fishermen know what to believe? The lobstermen on the coast here have been hearing for two decades about the decline of the lobstering industry. And it hasn't happened. How do you reconcile that?

MARTIN: I can just tell you the process we went through. It was patently obvious—and in retrospect everybody agrees—that the inshore fishermen's perception of what was going on with the stock was far more precise than what the scientists were portraying. There were two reasons for that. First, as I said, the scientific integrity had been compromised by the bureaucratic structure and by the political commitment of the whole system to this integrated company idea based on big draggers. That's a very powerful idea, by the way, which goes back to concepts of what is modern and what constitutes progress. One senior politician paid me a great compliment, I suppose, when he called me a romantic. He said, "Cabot means well, but he's trying to stand against history"—the assumption being that history is defined and that the world somehow gets bigger and more degraded as we go.

The other problem is that there have been some unfortunate developments within fisheries science in that the natural history/ecological approach—which many scientists still train in and like to do—has been demoted in the hierarchy of scientific disciplines. Those who are credited with really knowing what is going on out there are the people with the computer models and the mathematical formulas. So there has to be some reality testing injected into the scientific discipline. But as far as the fishermen themselves are concerned, there has to be some degree of organization of their information. It can't be a bunch of disconnected stories.

One of the things we did in Newfoundland was to send trained anthropologists into the field to interview older fishermen for real data. It just can't be, "Skipper Joe, I have an hour's tape here. Now talk away and give us your favorite stories." You have to have a structured set of questions because what you are trying to do is format all the information that is in the community. Their computer is in their heads.

Q: You mentioned a good living for fishermen in Newfoundland before World War II. What drove the change after World War II?

MARTIN: When I say "a good living," Newfoundland historically has been a pretty hard spot to earn a living. What I really meant to say was that a person could, by skill and hard work, provide for his family and keep the family together. What changed was the amount of fish that were being taken out of the ocean. Dragging also has other impacts which need to be considered. It is really symptomatic that they've never been discussed. First, the otter boards are tearing up the benthic community. I maintain that if an oil company were to propose to go down the Grand Banks and drag two D-9 tractor blades, linked together by two hundred feet of heavy chain over the ocean floor, we'd boil them in oil, symbolically, for attempting to do such a dastardly and unconscionable thing to the environment. Right? Then we'd put them through an unending environmental assessment process. But you call it "fishing" and no one will ever question your right to do it. Why? Because we don't approach it from that same ecological point of view.

The other overlooked element is that the reproductive process of cod is very complicated. It involves mating calls, territorial defenses, mating dances. That basic aspect of their life cycle is never considered as being relevant to fisheries management. So the problem was not just the amount of fish that were taken out of the ocean but how we were taking them out. Those two things together made the ecosystem collapse. That's why you can't make a living fishing in Newfoundland today.

Q: You talked about the old fishermen who say it will never come back. Are they just sitting there drawing checks? Canada can't do this forever, either. Are they trying to convert to other jobs?

MARTIN: You are right that we cannot expect the government of Canada to continue to pay compensation indefinitely. The challenge is, how can we generate hope? If you had a "hope map" of the world, we'd be a black hole in Newfoundland today. Please God, there will be some good sign of fish in one, two, or three years—I don't think we could last much longer than that in the present psychological condition. This spring, everybody was very excited to see that the capelin started coming back. That's the start of hope.

Q: What is your view of aquaculture? Do you think it has any role to play in this crisis for Newfoundland?

MARTIN: You are not going to get a very objective answer since I am involved in cod farming. Our style of cod farming is to take the live trapped fish, 6–8 inches, and grow them for three or four months, to make a fish 2–4 pounds. Our company is working with individual fishermen so that they will have their own cod farm. A good many fishermen think that when the fishery comes back there will be restrictions on what you can and can't do and on the amount of fish you can take (which will not necessarily be a bad thing) and that you are going to have to make as much money as you can out of the amount of fish you can catch. Many people see cod farming as part of the way of supplementing their income from trawling.

That brings me to another point, which is what I call the curse of superabundance. We are, generally speaking, a wasteful people when it comes to the fishery. Historically, as early as the 1870s, one Norwegian observer remarked that he thought the superabundance of the Newfoundland ecosystem ironically made people quite casual about the way they were using it. Now we are experiencing a radical shift in our thought process on that issue. We have to become good stewards. We have been taught an awful lesson. We all go through terrible experiences in life where we say, "If I ever get another chance, I'll never do that again!" That's where we are as a whole society. We'll never do it again, right? There is a lot of hard work ahead. Aquaculture, I think, is part of the future.

REVIEWS

Gotts Island Maine: Its People, 1880-1992, by Rita Johnson Kenway
Penobscot Bay Press, 1993. 342 pages, Hardbound

Reviewed by Charles McLane

Serious studies of individual Maine islands are a rarity and the appearance of a new one is a welcome event. The present volume, by a seasonal resident of Great Gott Island for over 40 years, is a fine addition to the still slender shelf of island monographs. The book has a special focus, as suggested in its subtitle: the island's residents during the last century, from 1880 to the present. Why 1880, when there was recorded residence on the island for at least a century before that? Because, as the author explains in her preface, the initial stimulus to writing the book was a request from the Tremont Historical Society for information about the island's "summer people:" the pioneer vacationers on Great Gott Island arrived in the 1880s. (Rita Kenway uses the name Gotts Island, as natives have for some two hundred years, but the official name on U.S. coast and geodetic surveys is Great Gott Island).

The year 1880 in the subtitle may be misleading. It is true that the lion's share of the author's attention in the substantial volume is given to the summer residents. This is hardly surprising. Early rusticators kept copious diaries, wrote detailed letters, and recorded events in Kodak photo albums; descendants have shared these rich sources with Rita Kenway. If these prolific memorabilia seem at times to intrude on a balanced presentation, they also cast a searching light on some of the principal characters of the time (Russell and Mont Gott in this century, for instance) as well as on the great dramas and tragedies of the island (the fire of January 1925 which consumed Miss Peterson's cottage "Petit Plaisance," with the formidable Miss Peterson herself in it; or the similarly fatal burning of the Strauss' cottage 35 years later). But Rita Kenway's study is not a celebration of Great Gott's summer community. The quarter of the book devoted to the indigenous residents — the quarter that lay readers not closely identified with the island will enjoy most — is handled with a similar competence. The early Gotts, Millers, and Moores, as well as the later Welches, Hardings, Driscolls, and Babbidges, are set forth with the best tools Rita Kenway has been able to discover. Once again, for instance, she uses the memoirs of descendants (including a rare journal by Susannah Gott covering the years 1852 to 1910). She also probes school records (1893-1928) extracted from the Tremont Town Reports. The history of the island's original Methodist Church, as well as of Miss Peterson's Episcopal Church (which attracted some indigenous converts), has been reconstructed from church records. The author's survey of such municipal institutions as the postal service fleshes out her account of the indigenous community. Meanwhile, she spent many hours at the Registry of Deeds in Hancock County searching land titles (admittedly with an eye to the vacation properties, but reaching back into the 19th century dealings of Welches, Moores, and Gotts).

The indigenous community lasted to the late 1920s, when another fire precipitated its demise. The suspicious burning of Clarence Harding's barn and homestead in August 1927 led to the departure of his family and soon thereafter to the closing of the school, then the store, and finally to the removal of the remaining Hardings, Moores, and Babbidges.

The indigenous community thus co-existed with the summer colony for 40 or more years. This indeed is one of the wonders of Great Gott Island that engaged Rita Kenway's imagination: the interaction of the two communities. Even after the indigenous settlers removed to Bernard and Bass Harbor, the ties between surviving Trasks, Moores, and Hardings on one side and the cottagers who occupied their homes on the island remained close. Leaving aside some of the newer cottages, which are on the rim of the island, the aspect of the "village" as it curves northwesterly from the "Pool" to the Bass Harbor Bar is remarkably unchanged from the way it was a century ago.

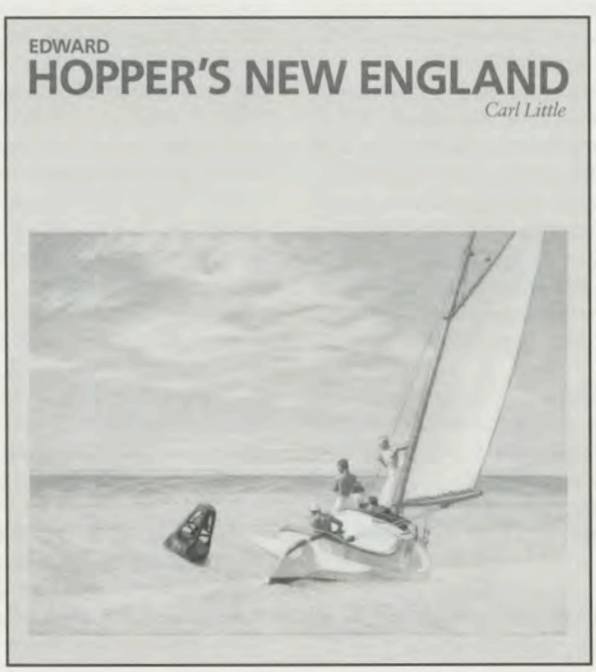
If there are ways in which this volume could be improved — say, in a second printing or revised edition — this reviewer would suggest the following: first, a simple chronology to orient readers as they move from one genealogical spread to the next (the book is organized around family ownership); second, a few abbreviated genealogical trees, both of the early settlers and the more prolific of the summer residents (the original Gott — Daniel — had 97 grandchildren, and his successors not many less); third, more detail on the island's husbandry: livestock count, revenue from the fisheries, the rise and fall of new ventures like pogy factories, purse seining, etc. (It is not a certainty such statistics would be available, but it is probable that town, county, and state archives would yield some relevant data).

The foregoing comments and suggestions will not — and indeed should not — deter readers from enjoying many hours with Rita Kenway's study.

Edward Hopper's New England, By Carl Little. San Francisco: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1993. Hardbound, 81 pages.

Reviewed by Richard S. Morehouse, AIA

Edward Hopper, one of the most important American painters of the 20th century, spent nearly every summer of his long artistic career in new England. It was this region of the country, with its translucent sunlight, dramatic coastal vistas, and distinctive architecture, that inspired some of the artist's most powerful images.



In *Hopper's New England*, a new book by Mt. Desert Island's versatile art critic Carl Little, viewers are treated to over 35 of Hopper's finest paintings of the region reproduced in full color—from scenes of the secluded coves and bold headlands of the Maine coastline to the hills of Vermont to the sail-filled harbors and sunlit streets of Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Hopper's inner visions reveal to us his real and translated world. Its what we demand and are grateful for in an artist. Rockwell Kent's sharp-edged universe, William Blake's clouds of fancy, Louise Nevelson and Joseph Cornell's contained objects, Dong Kingman's joy-

ous streetscapes—wondrously subjective reality where we sample images, recollections, and secret longings.

Hopper is surely a subject matter painter. Carl Little recalls a quote from Hopper's painting teacher Robert Henri: "I want to see these houses solid; I want them to feel like houses." There was little suggestion that personal painting technique should outshine subject matter identification. At the same time we see watercolors like *Captain Kelly's House 1931* with brush work as from an oil palette, and an oil painting *Five A.M. 1937* which we might mistake for a watercolor from across the gallery.

Light is Hopper's forte. Is that two people who stand protected in the shade of the glowing day in *Italian Quarter, Gloucester 1912*, or simply shadows? It's noon and the light streams down from the top of the canvas. In *Freight Cars, Gloucester 1928*, the cars are defined mainly by the thin strip of light along their tops but the foreground trackside weeds have turned to backlighted yellow fire.

Am I put off by any aspect of Hopper's paintings? One only — Hopper's life figures. Their heads sometimes don't sit properly on their shoulders. The man and the woman in *Sunlight in a Cafeteria 1958* (not in Little's book) are awkward enough to call attention to them rather than the strong diagonal sunlight slanting through a window. The nude in *A Woman in the Sun 1961* seems to need a final anatomical touch-up before revealing herself. But these are insignificant cavils when I look at a triumph like *Rooms for Tourists 1945* and see sheer mastery of night-time reflected light.

Hopper's New England is bound in 10-inch by 11-inch format with excellent color reproductions. Some of the originals are as large as 3 feet by 4 feet and are reduced in satisfactory and compelling fashion. The oil *Blockhead, Monhegan 1916* is a bare 9 inches by 13 inches in the original and is included almost at full size. Hopper is good company and so is Carl Little's book.

The Rockbound Coast, Travels in Maine, by Christopher Little. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994

Reviewed by David D. Platt

The ROCKBOUND COAST
Travels in Maine

CHRISTOPHER LITTLE

Twenty years' prowling the Maine coast in search of stories has taught me something about photographers. There's a personality type that sets the good ones apart from the thousands who come each season, and by the looks of this book, Chris Little has it—a certain charm, a hint of the confidence man, the ability to talk old ladies (and most other people) into revealing themselves while the camera snaps away.

Print journalists ought to have these qualities as well, of course, but because they can go out and get most of their stories without making asses of themselves (or merely work the phones and not go out at all), they tend not to cultivate their victims (their subjects, please!) as carefully as the lens-and-shutter crowd. If they did, their stories would be better.

By applying his photographer's charm as he gathers words as well as pictures, Chris Little has produced a lively and readable account of a cruise along the entire length of the Maine coast. The technique is simple: every time he steps ashore, he does all in his power to work his way into the community. He chats up lobster fishermen on docks; he looks up the local historian; he grills the drivers of pickup trucks who give him rides; he calls up friends of friends. Encountering someone at a salmon pen, a boat yard, a hardware store—Little draws all of them out, plies them with questions, makes friends. Reading Little's accounts of visits to Eastport, Lubec, Cutler, Matinicus, Biddeford Pool and a half-dozen other places, I found myself imagining a follow-up story in the manner of the Lone Ranger: "Who Was That Masked Man?...Why, That Was Chris Little, Charming The Natives."

In the manner of Duncan and Ware (*Cruising Guide to the New England Coast*) the book is full of quotable anecdotes. "Outside the Stonington Library, which had a perfect scale model of itself in its front window, I met Tim Brown," Little writes. "A swarthy Newfoundlander who has lived in Maine for fifteen years, Brown and his son were waiting next to the library for a ride home. While he was waiting, he told me a harrowing sea story—actually two sea stories. The previous March, Brown had been employed as a crewman aboard the WALTER LEHMAN, a 70-foot wooden dragger, when her engine room caught fire. He managed to fight his way into the smoke-filled wheel house and reached the VHF radio. 'Mayday! Mayday!' he shouted into the mike. His distress call was picked up by hundreds of fishermen, but he did not have enough time to broadcast his position. Choking, his eyes, burning, he and his crewmates climbed into an emergency life raft and watched the WALTER LEHMAN sink...."

A lobsterman had spotted the smoke and picked them up an hour and a half later.

"A month later," Little continues, "Tim was out on a 38-foot gillnetter, the T.L.C. 'You know what they say about getting right back on the horse.'" Shortening the story a bit, the T.L.C. went down too. Tim and his companions swam out a porthole and eventually were rescued—by an old crewmate from the LEHMAN.

Little asks Brown if he's been to sea since. "'As a matter of fact, no, I haven't,' he said. 'For the time being I'm working construction.'"

Unstoppable as a raconteur, Little then launches into the tale of a man who kept getting zapped by lightning and makes the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

"Are you nervous about going back out?" he asks Tim Brown. "'Yeah," Brown replied promptly. After a moment, he added, ...'yeah, about as nervous as a clam at low tide.'"

The next time you're waiting for a ride in front of your local library, introduce yourself to the guy next to you, ask him what's new, and start taking notes. Take his picture while you're at it, and you'll see firsthand how Chris Little goes about his work.

Aside from a title I'll charitably describe as unimaginative (sounds like a geology text, doesn't it?) *The Rockbound Coast* is a real addition to Maine's rich travel literature.

New and noteworthy...

Friendship: Photographs by Jed Devine, Letters by Jim Dinsmore: Tilbury House, Publishers, 1994

Photographer and wordsmith converse through their respective arts as they and their families build lives (and a house) on Friendship Long Island. A haunting story of mid-20th century homesteaders whose lives lead inexorably to a tragic end.

Candance Cochrane

It Depends on the Fish

When I was growing up, the most thing I ever did was study. We used to spend so much time at the books. All we were concerned about was getting out of here and getting something. I was anxious to get out of here cause it was drilled into me. "Get outa here. There's nothing here for you." All the kids were told that. There was a different emphasis put on fishing. Fishing wasn't respected like it is now. Nobody encouraged you to fish. You had to get out of here and most people did too. Very few didn't. I wouldn't say they ever really wanted to leave—a lot of them—but they did because it was drilled into them. "You get outa here, my son, there's nothing here for you."

My brothers knew from when they were young they wanted to fish. They didn't have much interest in anything else—not because they didn't know the difference. Dad spent a lifetime trying to tell 'em. He never discouraged them I must say. But he worked them like dogs in the summertime so they would see what it was like. "If this is what you want, that's fine. But you're not going to go into this not knowing what's in store for you." So they knew. They had all gone out, been away at school and they still wanted to come back.

People wonder what's going to happen to this place. People even think this place will just die out. I used to think it would, but in the past few years, I've come to think it won't. A lot of it depends on the fish. How well that keeps going.

—*from* Outport, Reflections from the Newfoundland Coast *by Candace Cochrane and Roger Page, Addison-Wesley Publishers, 1981.*

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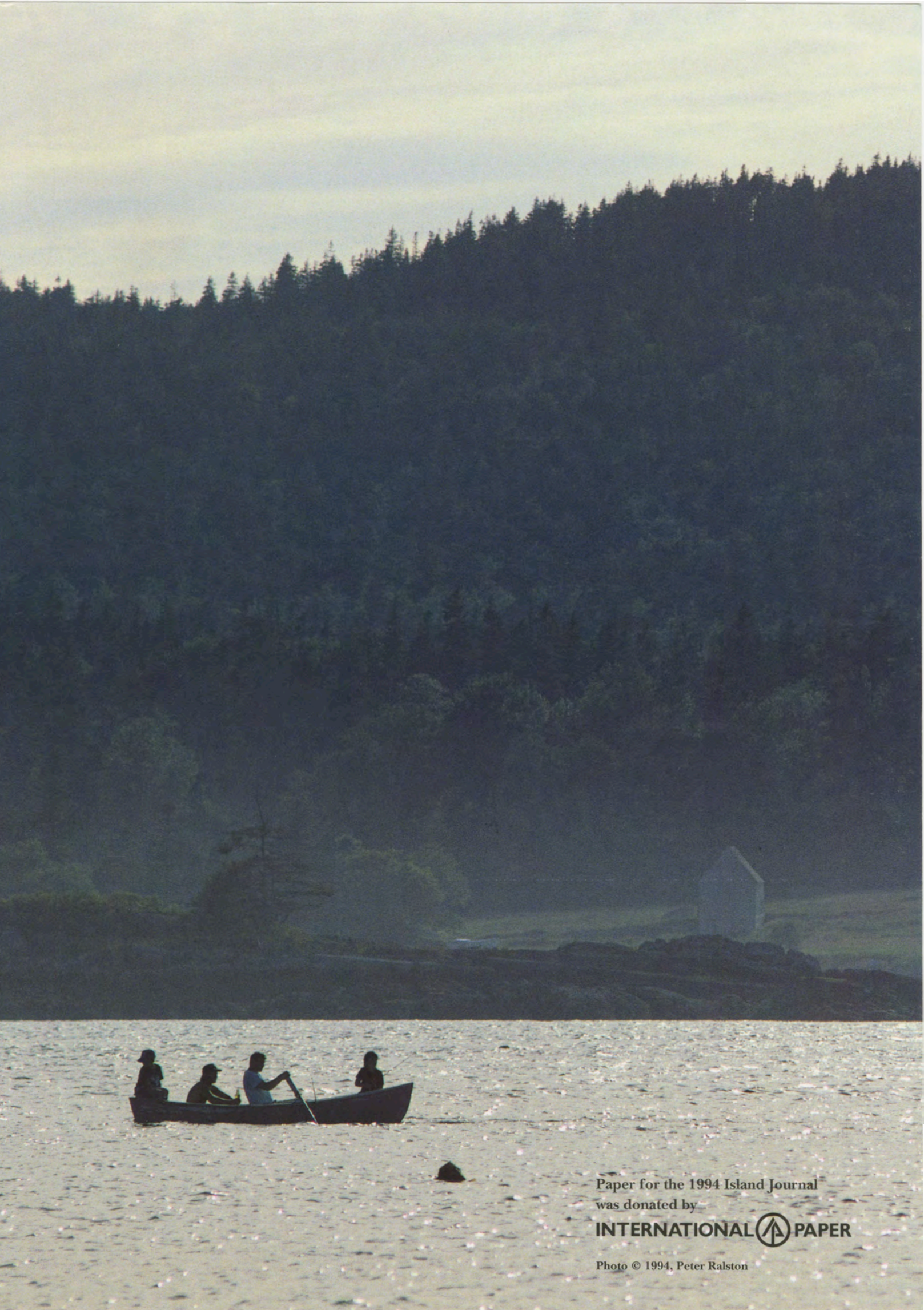

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Jeff Dworsky

Nights and days came and passed
And summer and winter
and the sun and the wind
and the rain.
And it was good to be a little Island.
A part of the world and a world of its own
all surrounded by the bright blue sea.

— *The Little Island* by Margaret Wise Brown (Golden MacDonald), 1946

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