

HANCOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER

With this issue we welcome our new President, Myrna Coffin. Myrna was elected at our Annual Meeting in October succeeding long time President, Sandy Phippen.
We thank Sandy for his years of service.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings from Myrna

Sandy Phippen ended his long presidency on a very high note. Sandy interviewed and presented our final program speaker, Richard Malaby, in great form. Rich was funny and informative in his historical summary of his years at the Crocker House. Great finish Sandy and Rich!

I am excited to be part of this Hancock Historical Society team. Working together to build, clean and arrange the museum has strengthened our board. We are showing the new building to many visitors to learn more and share more information. Both out of town visitors and former residents are amazed at our building. Many of these people have shared stories of Hancock years ago.

Members will see that there are an abundance of new programs and plans for our new museum. Also, please note the new members to the board whose histories go back many generations unlike the new president. However, after living here for 55 years; Steve and I are "almost" locals and no longer "from away".

Myrna Coffin, President

CURATOR'S REPORT

It has been an amazing first season in our new building. 450 people signed our guestbook this season. That is a record! Our programs were well attended and enjoyed by all. Our grand opening, in a hurricane, with Liam Riordon was attended by 60 plus people.

Next year, we hope to be open more hours depending on volunteers who are able to make the commitment of time. We also hope to expand programs to include special winter programs.

The term "thank you" seems inadequate for all the work that went into our new home. The board members rallied to raise funding, volunteered their time to shovel snow, help with construction, pack, move, unpack and set up the new building and caring for the plants beautifying our front entrance. Dozens of people made contributions of money, time, land, materials and expertise to make our dream a reality.

To you all, whatever your contribution,

THANK YOU.

Charlene Clemons, Curator

HANCOCK MEMORIES

Mary Beth DiMarco



A Lifetime of Summers at the Creek.

When Rich, Peg, Sarah, and I were babies, we were each set on the pebbles at the swimming hole in our diapers, and the tide came up around us until we floated. I'm not sure I take those family stories so literally now, but they show how long I have loved my time at the creek.



For the month of July, we left the heat and humidity of New Jersey for Grandma (Pauline) Lewis's house in Hancock, where Dad's (Charles Lewis) ancestors, the Woosters and the Bunkers, had sailed, fished, and farmed. There was a big house with an attic full of family treasures, an old barn to play in, and the creek. At the house, Grandma had high expectations for our behavior. Meals were formal affairs; gum was not allowed.

You can see the creek from the house, so it's easy to keep track of the water. In the summer, unhindered by school and work schedules, the movement of the tide ruled our days. Dad was always painting some part of the big yellow house up the hill from the creek. He had a good view from up there and would call out, "Time to get your suits on!" According to Grandma Lewis's diaries, she and Mom often took us down at mid-tide to splash and play for hours as the water came in and went back out. Dad put away his brushes in time to come down for a swim.

The water in our little corner of the Atlantic never warms up much, and sometimes we were sure we felt the ice crystals going by. I remember coming out to wrap up and shiver uncontrollably, then going back for more. Aunt Carolyn got in an inch at a time, waiting for each part to get completely numb before taking another step.

Dad plunged in with a great "Wahooo!", swam a bit, then floated as if he were sitting in a comfortable lounge chair with his feet crossed above the surface. Grandma swam in long gliding breast strokes and declared that it was, "Like a bathtub!" In fact, a day that we swam was a day we didn't have to take a bath. There were some Julys where we rarely used soap! We learned to swim and row and got strong in the water. Dad moored a WWII Navy

life raft out in the middle for us to climb on, sit on, use as a diving board. We not only sat on it, but stood on the four corners and rocked it – sometimes hard enough to flip it over. We all learned to water ski and were skilled at weaving in and out of the boat's wake. You didn't want to get dumped out in the bay!



When we weren't swimming, we took the rowboat out to explore every rock, creature, and variety of seaweed at every stage of the tide. We made bowls with the clay from the bottom, dug clams, and pulled mussels. We learned about the power of the tide and the ways the wind played off the trees.

Lest you think our childhoods were perfect, Peg (Carlson) vividly remembers the day I thought playing catch with a half-full Coke can sounded like fun, until Peg, innocently standing on the raft, was knocked in the teeth and thrown, bleeding, into the water. She still bears the scars of that incident. And then there was the summer that the one movie we saw was "Jaws" and we had a hard time enjoying the water.

Through the years since childhood, I have grabbed every chance I had to swim in the creek. One summer, after I finished chemo treatments, the cold salt water was the perfect balm for my body and my soul. Stretching my arms through the coolness restored muscles wounded by surgery and made me feel very much alive.

Now the way I swim up and down the creek reminds me of Grandma. I can imagine how she was aware of the water running along her body, how she watched her hand sliding out in front through the clear green-tinted water, how she looked up to appreciate the trees, the narrow view of the sky, and the heron, eagle or gull that flew there.

Grandma's diaries detail who swam each summer day from 1944 to 1974. We still rarely swim alone, but go down the path with the Walkers, Crabtrees, and guests when the tide and time are right. The raft is gone and there is no motor boat moored at the other end. It's the tide, the time, and the company that matter.

Adventures of a Hancock Sea Captain

By Harold Foss (1881-1965)



The publication which follows was written by Harold Foss detailing one of his experiences as captain in the year 1910. I've shortened it up a little and added a couple of notes at the end. They were loading cargo on a 3 masted- schooner in Boston. The second Hancock person mentioned in this document is Ivory Foss—Harold's brother and my grandfather. Ivory was "engineer" on the schooner which was the title given to the operator of the "Donkey Engine" which was often used to load /unload cargo.

Bob Foss

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After discharging our timber in Boston, we finally got a charter that will stand out in my memory if I live to be 100 years old. Crowell and Thurlow, our agents, chartered us to take a cargo of old second-hand railroad rails from Boston to Texas City. It seems that a doctor Simmons of Dallas Texas had marketed a pill called Dr. Simmons Liver Regulator and made a fortune out of it. It must have been good or else he fooled a great many people. Having made so much money he bought a whole county down in Southwest Texas, and then divided it into small pieces and sold farms and ranches to a great many customers. One of the clauses in his sales contract was that he would build a railroad in this area. He waited until he was

forced to build it. Somehow, he bought the second-hand rails as I said before from the Boston and Maine railroad and they were well used up before the Boston and Maine railroad decided to scrap them. I don't think that Simmons paid much for the rails because if he did then he got damnably stuck.

Well, we started to load the rails and we hoisted them in with our own gear. My brother Ivory, who had just gotten married [to June Crabtree], was engineer of the schooner. Handling icy rails in January is no joke. The rails were terribly crooked and badly warped. Of course, they should have gone to a scrap pile. Dr. Simmons came to Boston and arranged the financing with the Shawmut National Bank and left a Col. Adkins in Boston to represent him and do all of the business in regards to the shipment. Col. Adkins was a big 6-footer with a badly whiskey-stained walrus mustache who wore a 10-gallon cowboy hat and looked more Texan than Sam Houston ever did. It was very cold in Boston and he bitterly complained about the Northeast climate. Well, the old boy came to the ship the first thing every morning, and I could tell when he was coming, because I would get a strong bourbon odor before he hove into sight coming around the corner at Mystic Wharf. In order to combat the cold weather, he would take aboard several double bourbons before going out, and as a matter of fact, he would be quite well plastered by the time that he arrived on board.

Another thing about him that was very impressive was his fluent vocabulary. That man had the most striking profanity and could throw more rank and savage curse words around then any man whom I ever heard before. I am paying him some compliment when I say that, because after being master of many ships and many kinds of ships then one must have heard some men who were really good cussers. But I can truthfully say that that man Adkins was the real champion. Once I complained to him about the rails being crooked and he let out a string of oaths about 10 blocks long and never repeated one word either.

Well as I said it was icy and Ivory was handling the throttle on the Donkey engine on a cold morning and two rails came out of the slings in midair and came down "Kerplunko" with the ends going through the deck and the rails bending into a perfect hairpin. We pulled them out and laid the things on deck and I put a tarpaulin over the hole in the deck to cover it up. It was not long before I smelt brother Adkins coming. After saying good morning and the usual griping about the weather he asked how things were going, and of course I answered "the very best". I did

manage to get him to go forward and managed to steer him by the two rails on deck. However, he spied them and wanted to know how those blankety-blank things got that way. Well, I told him that they were a bit crooked but I thought that we could put them on top of the others all right and to think nothing of it. He says "Capt. will you come with me?" Of course, I agreed and together we started from the ship to the Boston and Maine office at the head of the dock. The superintendent or man in charge was a very high-class man named Smith. He was a most refined gentleman used to having a flower in his buttonhole every day, was a deacon in his church, and was a man so decent that he would not say "XXXX" if he had a mouth full of it. He was sitting behind his desk dictating to his very charming secretary when Col. Adkins "who had a snoot full" and myself walked into his office. The Col. never even said good morning but immediately went away at full blast on Smith shipping those crooked rails and comparing the crooked rails with the crooked Damn Yankees. I sat in amazement and admiration at the words that Atkins threw at poor Mr. Smith. His secretary started to take down the conversation but the meaning of the swear words and the spelling were over her head and she gave up. The doors at both ends of the office were soon crowded with the curious and all that Mr. Smith could say was "My - My" as old man Adkins rolled on. Probably nobody who was there that will ever forget that scene. When Atkins finally stopped, they agreed to take back a few of the most crooked rails. When we cleared out of his office old man Adkins said that "perhaps the ship would sink on the way down to Texas City as the rails were all well insured and it would save them all many headaches".

Notes by Bob –The ship was the "Sallie C Marvil" and she sailed from Boston Jan 20, 1910, encountered a gale and snow as she headed south, and experienced what the sailors called a Gulf Northerner as she crossed the Gulf of Mexico. She arrived in Texas City without incident with the rails well washed by seawater. If they were every used is unknown. I now know why my grandfather had such an impressive vocabulary.

The Hancock Historical Society is the repository for the nautical history of the town of Hancock and has a unique collection of seafaring artifacts. We are digitizing/archiving a great many historical documents dealing with our Maritime History. Come check it out.

Hancock In the News:

Since the 1950 US Federal Census will be released in April 2022, this month we will focus on articles from the early 1950's. All from Bangor Daily News.

10 October 1952

Sullivan Reception Honors Hancock Physician

SULLIVAN Oct 9 — Dr Eva Reich of Hancock was honored recently by a reception given by the North Sullivan WSCS at the vestry. Thirty-eight guests attended. A welcome was given by Mrs. Marguerite Gordon. A duet of violin and piano was played by Fred Grant of Hancock and Mrs. Zelda Havey of West Sullivan. Solos were sung by Mrs. Evelyn Sutherland and by Miss Patricia Gordon. The refreshment table was decorated with candles and fall flowers. Mrs. Dorothy Robertson and Miss Gussie Robertson poured. Other members of the WSCS who assisted in the affair were: Mae Hodgkins, Beulah Wooster, Edna Robertson, Lena Hooper, Gertrude Sinclair, and Devina Murray.

Hancock Briefs HANCOCK Oct 9— Hollis Davis is on vacation from his duties with the Consolidated Lobster Co. Elias DeRaps has returned home after receiving surgical treatment at the Eastern Maine General hospital Bangor. Mrs. Effie Cook left recently to visit her daughter Mrs. Albert Colwell and family in Stonington. Mrs. Francesca Kimball has returned to Winterport following a visit here es guest of Miss Louise Hamlin. Mrs. Effie Dinsmore of Eastbrook is a guest of her brother Alonzo Wilbur. Mr. Charles Hutchins of Brewer is a guest of Mr. and Mrs. John Springer. Dr. and Mrs. Albert Durand left Thursday to spend two weeks in New York City.

24 November 1951

HANCOCK Nov 23— Miss Joyce Hancock a student at Pembroke College, Brown University Providence R I is spending the Thanksgiving recess with her parents Mr. and Mrs. James Hancock. Mr. and Mrs. George Marsters, Jr and daughter Priscilla and Mr. and Mrs. Traverse Wooster and son Eric were Thanksgiving dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Wooster. Mr. and Mrs. Harry W Johnston were Thanksgiving dinner guests of their daughter Mrs. James Hancock and family. Mrs. Clara Johnson was a holiday guest of her son Reginald Johnson and family in Ellsworth. Miss Hester Carter, a teacher in the Old Town schools, spent the holiday week end with her parents Mr. and Mrs. Harvard Carter. Holiday guests of Mrs.

C S Colwell were Mr. and Mrs. David Parkhurst and daughter of Belfast and Clair Clarice and Thomas Colwell of Stonington. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Tufts, Jr and family of Lincoln were holiday week-end guests of his parents. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Tufts Sr. Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Partridge were hosts at a Thanksgiving eve dinner. Guests were Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lounder, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Lounder and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Tufts Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Garland of Belfast were holiday and weekend guests of Mrs. Garland's son Joseph Carter and family. Mrs. Arthur Colwell and family were holiday guests of her mother Mrs. Mildred Dyer in Gouldsboro. Mrs. Nellie Leach left recently to spend several weeks in Ellsworth. Miss Florence Hancock of Winter Harbor was a holiday guest of Mrs. Mabel Graham and Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Baker and family. Mr. and Mrs. Harvard Graham were Thanksgiving dinner guests of her parents Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Springer in Sullivan. Miss Ruth Maynard and Miss Ethel Green of Newton Mass are spending the Thanksgiving recess at Miss Maynard's home at Mt Desert Ferry.

Officers:

President, Myrna Coffin
Vice President, David Johnston
Secretary, Charlotte Stetson
Treasurer, Don Parker

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Bob Foss
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Check out our Facebook Group:
[Hancock.me_historical.society](https://www.facebook.com/Hancock.me_historical.society)

Email us at: hancock.me.history@gmail.com

Hancock Historical Society Financial Report

Don Parker, Treasurer

Our society had another financially successful year.

- We budgeted for \$8,770.00 for income but actually received \$13,377.00.
- Our budget for operating expenses was \$5,715.00 and we actually spent \$5,390.00.
- Additionally we spent \$36,350.00 finishing outfitting the new building.
- Our bank balances stood at \$26,015.00 plus \$25,897.00 in our endowment fund as of the end of September.
- One big unknown was what it would cost to heat our new building and I am pleased to report that we averaged less than \$100 per month for electrictricity to light, heat and cool the building. This was less than half of our estimate.

If you would like more information of details please contact me at plc465@aol.com or 207-479-5251.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUING SUPPORT
OF THE HANCOCK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.**

**PLEASE TURN THE PAGE
FOR THE ENTRY FORM
FOR THE 2022 RAFFLE!**