



*From top: Mayflower descendants Gladys W. Butler, David Stanley,
Chris Lawler and Gladys Whitmore*

Local Color

THE *MAYFLOWER* AND MOUNT DESERT ISLAND

Ralph W. Stanley

Few are aware that Mount Desert Island is home to so many families of *Mayflower* descent. When I was a boy growing up in Southwest Harbor in my grandmother's house, there were a total of twenty-six *Mayflower* descendants just among our household, the houses to either side of us, and the four houses across the street. Of the twenty-nine students in my graduating class at Pemetic High School in 1948, ten had ancestors who came to America on the *Mayflower*.

Many of the early settlers here whose forebears were *Mayflower* passengers came from Eastham, Massachusetts. One such settler was Israel Higgins. In about 1768, he traveled from Eastham to Mount Desert Island with a few other men to gather wood for staves to be used in the manufacture of barrels, according to Virginia M. Fowler in her book *Down Wind to Eden: The Higgins Family from Plymouth to Maine*. I suspect, however, that Higgins and his friends from Eastham had been coming to Mount Desert regularly since the early 1760s and were quite familiar with the island. Here, they had found safe harbors with sheltering islands and plenty of fish in the sea. The land was rich and fertile, the fresh water plentiful and pure; forests were thick with trees that could be sawed into lumber and there were brooks where the flow of water could be harnessed to power mills. With land in Eastham and in other Colony towns quickly becoming settled to the point of being over-used, and the encouragement of Massachusetts Colony Governor Sir Francis Bernard for people to take possession of and improve the

land, it seems natural that Israel Higgins and his contemporaries would have looked to Mount Desert Island as a good place to settle.¹

Surely those early settlers of Mount Desert Island brought to their new home some deep-rooted values of their Pilgrim and Puritan forebears, who traveled to such lengths to gain religious freedom. The beliefs of those first families must have guided the establishment of educational and religious institutions as well as influenced civic and social morality. Mount Desert is fortunate to have founders of such character, whose attributes have passed down through the generations.

When I was a boy, signs of our forebears' values were still quite apparent – perhaps more so than today. Back then, people worked six days a week and Sunday was a day of rest and quiet. Just about the only sound you heard on a Sunday morning was the ringing of church bells. Even if you did not attend church, the sound of those bells in the quiet of the morning caused you to reflect on what the church meant to your life and to the community. Nowadays, it's rare that I hear the church bells over the routine hustle and bustle, and I wonder about our forebears – who they were and what they would think if they came back to see the life their many descendants lead on Mount Desert Island today.



Bertha Stanley, descendant of Israel Higgins, with husband Chester

In *Traditions and Records*, Mrs. Seth Thornton states that “Eastham contributed a goodly number of the settlers who first came to Hull’s Cove and later spread out to other settlements,” and indeed Eben Hamor, in his *History of Bar Harbor*, lists thirteen families from Eastham who were settled in Eden by 1779. These families – six branches of Higgins, headed by Israel, Nathan, Levi, Jesse, David and Solomon – as well as the families of Seth Doane, Joseph Hopkins, Joshua Mayo, Joseph Mayo, Robert Young, Elkanah Young and Ezra Young, were all fifth, sixth and seventh generation *May-*

flower descendants. Those from Eastham not of *Mayflower* descent were descended from other Pilgrims from Leyden, Holland and from the Puritans who followed shortly after the *Mayflower*.

The Pilgrims who came to America were from a radical group of separatists. While both the Pilgrims and the Puritans were dissatisfied with the Anglican Church, it was the goal of the Pilgrims to break entirely from the Church and start their own, while the Puritans wanted to remain with the Church of England but reform its structure. These separatist Pilgrims referred to themselves as “saints,” while those outside of their congregations were labeled “strangers.”

In 1608, the congregation of “saints” at Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, England, led by Reverend John Robinson, settled in Leyden, Holland in order to escape persecution in England. However, after several years there, fearing that their children were becoming more Dutch than English, some of the congregation decided to find a more isolated place to settle and practice their religion. William Brewster led these Pilgrims to seek permission from the Virginia Company to move to America. After much tribulation, 102 passengers embarked on the *Mayflower* and, failing to reach their intended destination of Virginia or somewhere near the Hudson River, they took refuge in Provincetown Harbor, finally settling at Plymouth. They spent their first winter in America aboard the ship, where nearly half of them died from malnutrition, scurvy and other disease. Following are some details about those early colonists whose descendants live among us today.

William Brewster was born in Scrooby sometime between 1560 and 1566. He attended Cambridge University but did not graduate. He was one of the original members (“saints”) of the separatist congregation of Reverend John Robinson and was jailed along with several others during their first attempt to leave England and settle in Holland. At Plymouth, William Brewster served as the Elder of the Pilgrims’ separatist congregation in the absence of their pastor, John Robinson, who had stayed behind in Holland, intending to come to America later. William Brewster was much loved and respected as the religious leader of Plymouth Colony.

Thomas Rogers (also a “saint”) was born in England and became a citizen of Leyden, Holland in 1618. Two years later he sold his house in Leyden and took passage to America on the *Mayflower* along with his son, Joseph. He was one of the many who died that first winter, but his

son survived. His wife, Alice (Cosford) Rogers, two daughters and son John came to America later.

Francis Cooke (a "saint") was probably born in England about 1583. He was in Leyden, Holland as early as 1603, before the Pilgrim separatists had emigrated there. He came to America on the *Mayflower* with his eldest son, John. His wife, Hester, followed in 1623.

John Tilley (a "saint") was born in Bedford, England in 1571. He had married a widow, Joan (Hurst) Rogers, and they had a daughter, Elizabeth. John and his family, along with his brother Edward, came over on the *Mayflower*. John Tilley and his wife were among those who died that first winter, leaving their 13-year-old daughter an orphan. She would later become the wife of John Howland.

John Howland (a servant to John Carver) was born in Fenstanton, Huntingtongshire, England about 1593 and accompanied Carver to Plymouth on the *Mayflower*. During the voyage to America Howland was swept overboard in a violent storm and his dramatic rescue was described by William Bradford in his account of the voyage. At Plymouth, John Howland quickly rose to a position of responsibility and respectability. He assisted the governor and was one of the so-called "Undertakers," who collected monies to pay off the colony's debt to the businessmen who had financed their voyage. He was also placed in charge of the Plymouth Fur Trading Post at Kennebec, Maine.

Stephen Hopkins (a "stranger") had made a voyage to America in 1609 on a vessel named *Sea Venture*. He was clerk to the captain, possessed much knowledge of the Scriptures, and was assigned to read the Psalms and Chapters on Sundays. *Sea Venture* was part of a fleet of nine vessels that encountered a hurricane during the voyage. Though some of the fleet made their way to Jamestown, *Sea Venture* was wrecked off Bermuda, where the crew was stranded for nine months. While there, Hopkins used his position to challenge the governor's authority and organize a rebellion, for which he was tried at court martial and convicted of mutiny. Though sentenced to death, he received a pardon. The ship's company then managed to build a vessel and sail to Jamestown, eventually returning to England. (The story of Stephen Hopkins' shipwreck was passed to Shakespeare by a friend of the playwright, the Earl of Southampton, and used as the basis for *The Tempest*.) With his second wife, Elizabeth Fisher, and their daughter, Damaris, together with two children, Giles and Constance, by his first wife, Stephen Hopkins took

passage on the *Mayflower*. Elizabeth gave birth to a son during the voyage who was named Oceanus. Unhappy with some of the decisions of the Pilgrim leaders, Hopkins started to instigate an uprising on board the *Mayflower* at Provincetown, but it was suppressed by the “saints.” At Plymouth, Hopkins was given positions of responsibility, but was also in trouble with the law several times for assault, for letting people get drunk, and for overpricing of goods.

William White is somewhat of a mystery. He possibly boarded the *Mayflower* at London with his wife, Susanna, and a son, Resolved. His wife gave birth to a son named Peregrine while on board the *Mayflower* in Provincetown Harbor in December of 1621. William White died during the first winter, and Susanna married Edward Winslow, a *Mayflower* passenger whose wife had also died.

These “saints” and “strangers” who sailed on the *Mayflower* are the ancestors of the thirteen families of settlers from Eastham cited by Eben Hamor and whose descendants live on Mount Desert today.



*Lida Ellen Clark Cousins,
Librarian, 1917-1938,
Southwest Harbor Public Library, and
Mayflower descendant*

From *William Brewster* was descended Zacheus Higgins, who was born at Eastham in 1719 and died about 1785 at Mount Desert Island. His wife, Rebecca (Young) Higgins, was born at Eastham in 1717 and was descended from *Stephen Hopkins, John Howland* and *John Tilley*. Their son Israel Higgins, whose search for wood for barrel staves allegedly brought him to Mount Desert Island, was born in Eastham in about 1742. Israel's wife, Mary Snow, born at Truro, Massachusetts in 1744, was also a descendant of *Stephen Hopkins*. Israel Higgins took up land at Bar Harbor in about 1771 and established a home there with his wife and their



*Rod Clark, descendant of five
Mayflower passengers*

son, Henry, then two years old. He and his wife, Mary, both died there in 1818.

I have known several descendants of Israel and Mary Higgins: Lida Ellen (Clark) Cousins, the first librarian with whom I became acquainted at the Southwest Harbor Library; Rod Clark, an agent for the Eastern Steamship Company who also operated the Railway Express Agency until he retired; Marion Clark, manager of the South-

west Harbor branch of the Bar Harbor Banking and Trust Company, until she retired; Lawrence B. Getchell, who owned the Southwest Harbor Motor Company; Julie (Rice) Speakman, grand-daughter of Anson Holmes; Raymond (Pete) Somes, who ran a men's clothing store and was treasurer of the Town of Southwest Harbor for many years; my mother, Bertha (Robinson) Stanley; and Aquaie (Richardson) White, whose husband, Leslie F. White, Sr., was probably a descendant of *William White* of the *Mayflower*. Leslie F. White, Jr. is still living at Southwest Harbor.

Also descended from *William Brewster* was Solomon Higgins, who was born in 1722, probably at Eastham, and came to Mount Desert Island in about 1771. Solomon's wife, Bethia Chase, was born in 1734, probably at Yarmouth, Massachusetts. She was a descendant of *Stephen Hopkins*. Ernest D. Wilcomb, who lived at Hull's Cove, was a descendant of Solomon and Bethia; his wife, Alliene (Thompson) Wilcomb, was a teacher at Pemetie High School when I was at school there.

My next-door neighbor when I was growing up was Kathy (Freeman) Walls, wife of Fred Walls. She operated Freeman's Store, which dealt in dry goods and was started by her father, John T. R. Freeman, in about 1896. Fred Walls ran the Walls Coal Co., which also had been

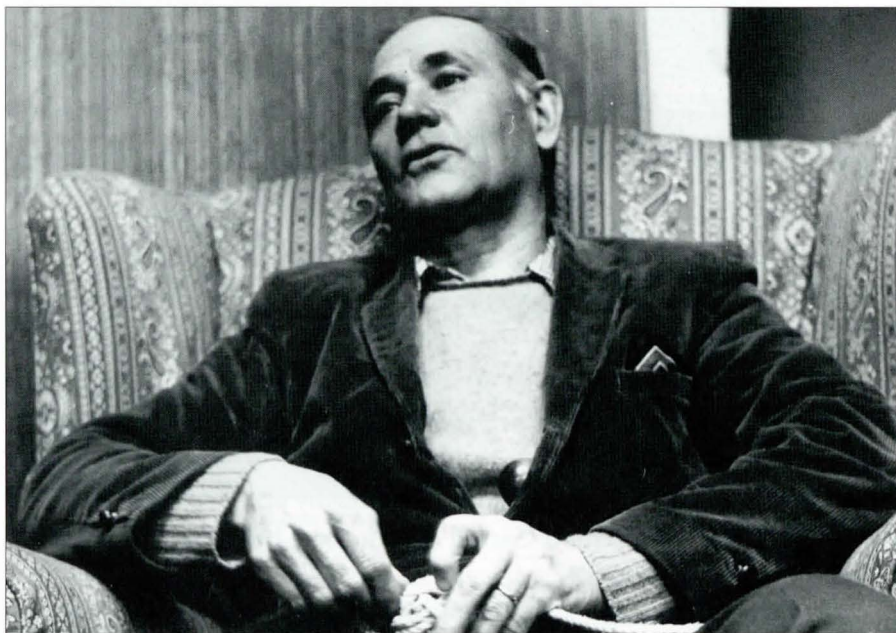


Freeman's Store, a Southwest Harbor business owned by Wm. Brewster's descendants

established by John T. R. Freeman. When Kathy and Fred retired, the store was sold to Richard Carroll and the coal business was sold to Charles Carroll. Kathy was a descendant of *William Brewster* through her great-great-grandfather, Reuben Freeman, and his wife, Catherine Thorne, who settled at Pretty Marsh sometime before 1784.

Thomas Rogers was the ancestor of Joshua Mayo, who was born in Eastham in 1735, came to Mount Desert Island sometime before 1778, and is believed to have died in Southwest Harbor. His wife, Lydia Pepper, was born in Eastham in 1731. Of the many descendants of Joshua and Lydia, I have known: Everett G. Stanley and his brother, Isaac F. Stanley, who owned and operated Stanley Fisheries for many years; George Noyes; Richard W. Noyes; Roland Stanley; Jaylene Roths; Eleanor Mayo; Wendell Gilley; James E. Richardson; Nancy (Dunbar) Bulger; Alice (Carpenter) Berry; Levi Hamblen and his brother, Charles; Lawrence Enoch Lurvey; Robert Weston Higgins; Jay Whitmore and his brother, Raymond; Gladys Whitmore, who taught grammar school for many years at Southwest Harbor, and her niece Gladys (Whitmore) Butler of Mount Desert; John Carroll, who operated a mason business at Southwest Harbor for years; Rod Clark; Christopher Lawler, who kept work horses and conducted the ice business at Southwest Harbor; Derby Stanley, who was a notorious rum-runner during prohibition; Eleanor (Hadlock) Gilley, who taught school at Southwest Harbor; Marie (Rumill) (Allen) Malanson; Clark Lawton; Ella (Tinker) Davis;

Elaine (Rumill) Smith; Harold Soukup; Victor A. Higgins of Somesville; Captain Ted Spurling of Islesford; Douglas Gott; and Constance (Robbins) Stanley.



Captain Ted Spurling of Islesford, descendant of Thomas Rogers

Stephen Hopkins is another of the *Mayflower* passengers who has many descendants here on Mount Desert, among them members of one of Eden's most prominent families, the Higginses. Jerusha Mayo, born in 1739 at Eastham, was a descendant of Stephen Hopkins and the wife of Nathan Higgins, who was also born at Eastham, in 1736, and died at Mount Desert Island in 1780. George (Bud) Higgins, who now lives in Southwest Harbor with his wife, Katherine, is a descendant of Nathan and Jerusha Higgins. Another early Higgins was Levi, who was born at Eastham in 1743 and died at Eden in 1825. On February 19, 1767, at Eastham, he married Bathsheba Young, a descendant both of *Stephen Hopkins* and of *Thomas Rogers*. Bathsheba was born at Eastham in 1747 and died at Mount Desert Island in 1799. C. Proctor and David L. Stanley, sons of Clarence George Stanley, who lived in Northeast Harbor and owned the fish market on Main Street, were descendants of Levi and Bathsheba Higgins. David Stanley, who died in 2006, took over the fish market after his father died.

Priscilla Snow, born at Eastham in 1747, was a descendant of *Stephen*



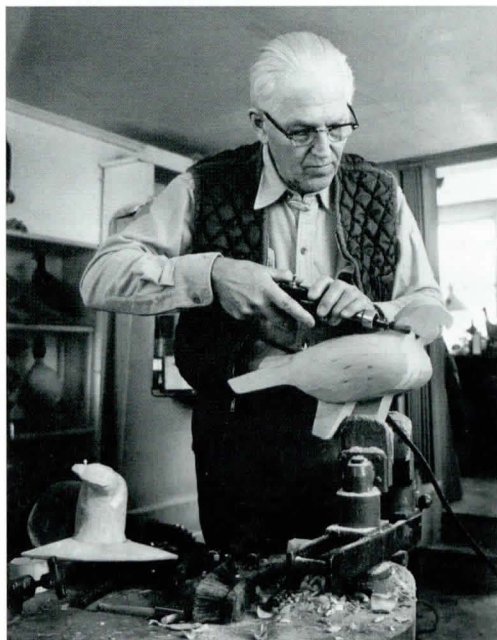
Mayflower descendant Victor Higgins operated Somesville's popular market

Hopkins and wife of Jesse Higgins, who was born at Eastham in 1743 and died at Eden in 1814. Mount Desert descendants of Jesse and Priscilla include Dana Fernald, who died in 1977; Norman Farrah, who died in 1978; Stanwood Leslie King, who died in 2004; and Jarvis Newman and Peter H. Dolliver, all of Southwest Harbor; Lyle A. Reed of Bass Harbor; Robert E. Fernald of Somesville; and Alice (Murphy) (Moore) Carter and her son, Lewis Moore, both of Northeast Harbor. *Stephen Hopkins* was also the ancestor of Lydia Hopkins, who was born at Eastham in 1749 and married David Higgins (also born at Eastham, in 1746). Both Lydia and David died at Mount Desert Island in 1812. Some of the descendants of David and Lydia that I knew were Levi Hamblen and his brother, Charles Hamblen; Lawrence Enoch Lurvey; Robert Weston Higgins; Charles Wallace Birlen; Harvey Greeley Walls; and Emma Beatrice Bunker, wife of Enoch A. Stanley and mother of Malcolm, Nina, Hazel, Mae, Rebecca, Helen, Willie and Wilder.

Ezra Young, who was born in 1735 at Eastham and who died at Eden in 1812, and his wife, Constant Mayo, born at Eastham in 1737, were descendants of *Stephen Hopkins*. Constant (Mayo) Young was also a descendant of *William Brewster*. Their son, Ezra Young, Jr., born at Mount Desert Island in 1774, married Sarah Hodges, who was probably a descendant of *Francis Cooke*. Descendants of Ezra and Constant include Eleanor Mayo; Wendell Gilley; Nancy (Dunbar) Bulger; Alice (Carpenter) Berry; James E. Richardson, who now lives at Bar Harbor;

Constance (Robbins) Stanley of Southwest Harbor; and Jaylene Roths, former director of the Mount Desert Island Historical Society.

Another member of the Young family, Robert, was also a *Stephen Hopkins* descendant. Robert was born about 1737 at Eastham, came to Mount Desert Island in 1777 and died in 1812 at Eden. His second wife was Bathsheba (Cousins) Thompson, who was the widow of Cornelius Thompson, Jr. She was born at Harpswell, Maine and after



Wendell Gilley in his studio

Robert's death moved to Ohio, where she died in 1840. Named among the descendants of Robert and Bathsheba (Cousins) Young are Warren A. Workman, Lionel Stanley, Wesley Peterson Bracy, Jack Rosebrook, Francis Spurling, Emerson F. Spurling, Jr., Neil S. Peterson, Sheldon Spurling, Clifford Stanley, Elva (Spurling) Beal, Raymond A. Bunker, Charles Wallace Birlen and Dorothy (Spurling) Whitney.

Elkanah Young, a participant in the "Boston Tea Party" on December 16, 1773, was born at Eastham in 1745. He settled at Mount Desert Island in 1770 and later moved to Lamoine, where he died in 1832. He was a descendant of *Stephen Hopkins* and *Thomas Rogers*. Elkanah married Rebecca Higgins, who was born in 1745. After she died in 1774, he married Mary Lewis, who was born in 1750 and died at Lamoine in 1824. Both wives appear to also have been *Mayflower* descendants. My high school teacher, Alliene (Thompson) Wilcomb, was a descendant of Elkanah and Rebecca Young.

Joseph Hopkins was born at Eastham in 1750. Some time after settling at Mount Desert Island he was drowned in Frenchman's Bay. He was a descendant of *Stephen Hopkins*, and Joseph's wife, Mary Higgins, born at Eastham in 1750, was a descendant both of *Stephen Hopkins*

and *William Brewster*. Some of their descendants whom I knew were Pauline (King) Higgins, Postmaster at Manset for many years; Davis B. Robinson and his wife Marjorie (Bunker) Robinson; Lyle A. Reed of Bass Harbor; Leslie Phippen of Cranberry Island; and Stanwood Leslie King. Jarvis Newman and Peter H. Dolliver, both descended from *Hopkins* and *Brewster*, still live in Southwest Harbor.

My children and I are related to four of the *Mayflower* passengers. My ancestor Joseph Mayo, born at Eastham in 1747 and believed to have died at Southwest Harbor in 1829, was a descendant of *William Brewster*, *Stephen Hopkins*, *John Howland* and *John Tilley*. His wife, Ruth Snow, born at Eastham in 1749, was also a descendant of *William Brewster* and *Stephen Hopkins*. Among the descendants of Joseph and Ruth (Snow) Mayo are my mother, Bertha (Robinson) Stanley; her cousin, Carrie Ralph, who married Andrew Bennett; the late James Christopher Bartlett of Brooklin; and Marie (Richardson) Seavey of Tremont, wife of Austin (Buddy) Seavey. Of *William White* descent, I believe, was Edith White, wife of Derby Stanley, and her sister, Elsa White, wife of Neil S. Peterson.

One early Mount Desert family descending from *Thomas Rogers* is no longer represented here. Seth Doane, a Rogers descendant, was born in Eastham in 1737 and died here sometime before 1796. His wife, Elizabeth Cole, who was also born in Eastham, in 1741, counted *Stephen Hopkins* among her ancestors. She, too, died on Mount Desert Island.

From my graduating class at Pemetec High School in 1948 there were descendants of most of those early colonists: Richard Allen descends from *Thomas Rogers*; Allison Bunker from both *Stephen Hopkins* and *William Brewster*. Marilyn Carroll was a descendant of *Thomas Rogers*, Charlotte Gilley descended from *William Brewster*, and Everett Hamblen descends from both *William Brewster* and *Stephen Hopkins*. Arthur Moore descends from *William Brewster* through Moses I. Staples, born in 1753, and his wife, Judith Eaton, born in 1756, who settled at Deer Isle. Louise Phippen was descended from *William Brewster* and *Stephen Hopkins*. Nancy Spurling descends from *Stephen Hopkins*. Ralph Stanley descends from *William Brewster*, *Stephen Hopkins*, *John Howland* and *John Tilley*, and Eleanor Walls' ancestor is *Thomas Rogers*.

I like knowing that the spirit of those intrepid colonists lives on in my old classmates, and I hope that spirit will live on in generations of islanders to come.

Southwest Harbor native Ralph W. Stanley is a boatbuilder and a passionate sailor, historian, genealogist and storyteller. His collected lore of sailing ships, island families, and adventures has been shared in numerous articles and books, including *Ralph Stanley – Tales of a Maine Boatbuilder* (2004), co-authored with Craig Milner.



FOOTNOTES

¹Governor Bernard had himself acquired property on the Maine coast. At the time of the American Revolution, his land in Maine, including Mount Desert Island, was seized by the United Colonies. Then in 1785 John Bernard, his son, petitioned the House of Representatives of Massachusetts for the return of his father's land, and the following year John was granted the western half of the island.

The 1763 Treaty of Paris had required France to give up any claims to the land known as "Acadia," which included Nova Scotia and Cape Breton and the Maine coast. However, long before that, in 1688, a Frenchman known as "Cadillac" and his wife were living at the place now known as Hull's Cove. He was there only a short time, perhaps feeling threatened by the British who were taking a census of the inhabitants along the coast. The son of a small-town French lawyer named Laumet, Cadillac decided to change his name to LaMothe (a name of some distinction at the time) when he came to Canada, or "New France" as it was then known. He then decided to give himself titles – "Sieur de Cadillac" and "Seigneur de Douaquet et des Monts Deserts" – along with a coat of arms which may still be seen on the Cadillac automobile. The French governor of Canada was impressed with Cadillac and awarded him a portion of eastern Maine that included Mount Desert Island.

In 1786, Cadillac's grand-daughter, Marie Therese de Gregoire, came to Boston to lay claim to Cadillac's land grant. France's help in the American Revolution was then viewed favorably, and she was awarded an undivided eastern half of Mount Desert Island. She and her husband settled in Hull's Cove, where they gradually sold off their land in lots of one hundred acres for five Spanish milled dollars.

Settlers who were already living on lands claimed by Bernard and de Gregoire were granted the property that they had settled and improved.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs courtesy of the following individuals, families and organizations:

Gladys Whitmore and her niece, *Gladys Whitmore Butler* – The Butler family

Christopher Lawler – William Lawlor (“Lawlor” was the original family name)

David Stanley – Jean Fernald

Bertha and Chester Stanley – Ralph W. Stanley

Lida Ellen Clark Cousins, Southwest Harbor Public Library Librarian, 1917 to 1938 – Undated photograph taken before her marriage. Photograph by G.F. McIntosh – Number 5647 – The Southwest Harbor Public Library Photographic Collection

Rod Clark – Frances Stehman

Freeman's Store, Southwest Harbor – Mount Desert Island Historical Society

Capt. Ted Spurling – LaRue Spiker Collection, Mount Desert Island Historical Society. Inscription: “Ted Spurling, licensed skipper and lobsterman, wiles away hours weaving Turk’s heads from warp. Used as decorative collars on sailing vessels in the past, the Turk’s heads are a popular gift shop item used as candle stick holders.”

A.V. Higgins Market, Somesville – LaRue Spiker Collection, Mount Desert Island Historical Society

Wendell Gilley in his studio – LaRue Spiker Collection, Mount Desert Island Historical Society

Stanley Fisheries, Southwest Harbor (following page) – LaRue Spiker Collection, Mount Desert Island Historical Society

SOURCES

Mayflower Families – General Society of Mayflower Descendants

Traditions and Records – Mrs. Seth S. Thornton

History of Mount Desert – George E. Street

Down Wind to Eden: The Higgins Family From Plymouth to Maine – Virginia M. Fowler

Mount Desert Register 1909 - Lawton, Jordan & Maddox

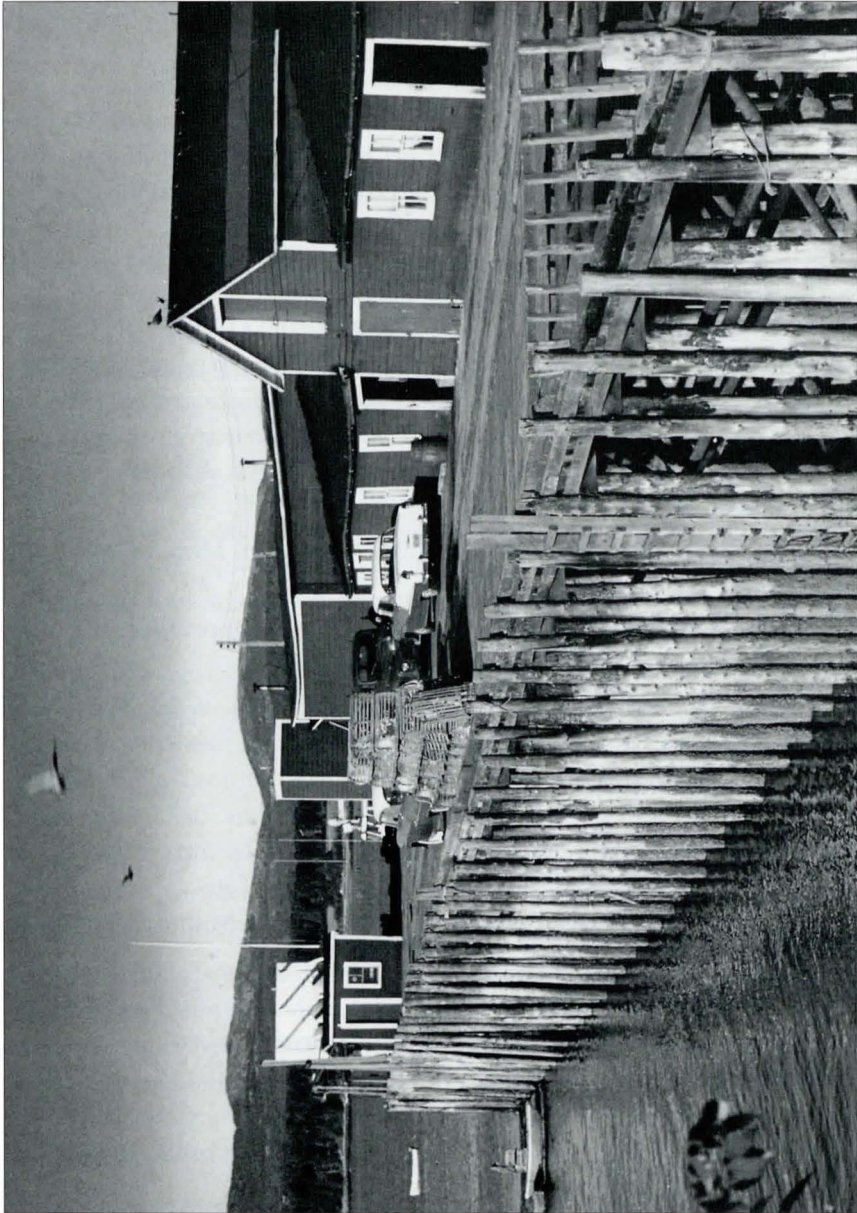
Historical Sketch of Deer Isle – Hosmer

Head of the Bay (Bluehill, Me) – Annie L. Clough

Eben Hamor Papers - Eben Hamor - Microfilm at Jesup Library, Bar Harbor

Pemetic Yearbook 1948 - Class of '48

Pilgrims and Puritans - Pilgrim Hall Museum, Plymouth, Mass.



Stanley Fisheries, Southwest Harbor – LaRue Spiker, Spiker Collection, MDI Historical Society