

# **“A Law Which Was Meant to be Broken”**

## **Rum-Running in Islesboro During Prohibition**

**Based on  
Oral Histories and Stories**



**by Nancy P. Alexander**

**For: Dr. Edward Ives  
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# **“A Law Which was Meant to be Broken”<sup>1</sup>** **Rum-Running in Islesboro During Prohibition**

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## **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

Prohibition in the State of Maine has a particularly long and rich history, owing in great part to the presence of Neal Dow of Portland who led the national campaign for the prohibition of the consumption of alcoholic beverages. As early as 1851, Maine had prohibition laws on the books, known nationally as the Maine Law<sup>2</sup>, but enforcement was sporadic, localized, and generally rare. My concern here is limited to the time federal laws of Prohibition were in place in Maine, 1920 to 1933. The federal laws outlawed the distilling, sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages.

Canada was a major source of alcohol in the northeast United States. While the country of Canada had passed strongly enforced Prohibition laws, they had not outlawed the making or distilling of alcoholic beverages—it was just illegal to drink them. It was also illegal to *import* liquor, but *exporting* one's product made in Canada was just fine. Maine's long unprotected border and jagged coast created enormous rum-running opportunity. There was historical precedent for communications between the people of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the people of Maine. At the time of the American Revolution, families were separated by both politics and the arbitrary line drawn between the two countries. Families remained close, with continuous communication, (“networking” is the latest term), through the trials of the War of 1812, when the border lines were still not so clear as to prevent some illicit trading and cross-border employment, fishing and smuggling. Those ties remained active right through the 1800s and into the 1900s, when the old blockade-running and work routes from long ago were reactivated along the land borders and sea lanes for smuggling alcohol<sup>3</sup>. Islesboro's location, along with its Canadian shipping and fishing ties, offered opportunity.

Another benefit of Maine's geography was propinquity to Miquelon and St. Pierre, two French islands off Canada with all the rights, privileges and enthusiasm to legally import and export liquor from anywhere in the world. So they enjoyed a lively international trade with both Canada and the United States, offering access to scotch whiskey from Scotland, irish whiskey from Ireland and French champagne<sup>4</sup>. Prohibition was the greatest period of economic well-being those islands have known in their entire history<sup>2</sup>.

Few, if any individuals currently living on Islesboro actually participated in rum running, but there are several who were young boys or girls and remember pieces of stories or heard them

from their parents. Looking for people to interview was fun, especially since I learned of others who might be willing to share their stories. I propose to put a call out this summer for willing participants and will use the stories I collect to make a much more complete record of Prohibition for the Islesboro Historical Society. I will try to get proper authentication for the benefit of the Maine Folklife Center as well.

I have spoken with six individuals, two of whom were willing to sign the permission sheets of the Maine Folklife Center. Two others were taped for a different project and agreed to be published for that project, but I have not asked their permission for this one. Therefore, I will relate their stories but not identify the source. The fifth and sixth informants spoke to me in informal conversation which I will report, but I have no verification or written permission to do so. Therefore I will not identify them. I understand that this does not stand up as acceptable Oral History, but the stories are too good to waste.

My search of the Maine Folklife Center's archives showed me that in 1980 a University of Maine student from Islesboro, Sharon Weiss, did some work collecting stories which included rum-running histories for Dr. Ives' class. I called her to say I would be using parts of her paper. She was amused. I found two Fogler Library references to Prohibition and Islesboro, one in a small memoir of Islesboro by W. Henry Hatch<sup>5</sup>, and the second in The History of Islesboro 1893-1983<sup>6</sup>, published by the Islesboro Historical Society.

Islesboro is a town consisting of several islands, the largest of which is also called Islesboro. It is a long island, running north and south for thirteen miles, and varying between three miles and forty feet wide. In 1920 the town's population was 637 and grew to 697 by 1930. It is located in the middle of the Penobscot Bay channel between the Camden-Lincolnton-Belfast mainland and the islands of North Haven and Vinalhaven. It is close to the mouth of the Penobscot River and it is close to both the Eggemoggin Reach and the Deer Isle Thoroughfare, major marine routes going east-west along the rugged coast of Maine. There are hundreds of islands nearby and a great deal of boat traffic. At the time of Prohibition, from 1920-1933, the common kinds of vessels ranged from passenger and freight steamships, fishing vessels of all shapes and sizes, to both the sail and steam-powered yachts of the wealthy summer community members of Islesboro and their friends and visitors from other wealthy coastal enclaves on the eastern seaboard. The sizes of boats crossing between and among the island and the mainland ranged from 12-foot skiffs powered by oars to 150-foot motorsailing yachts and larger steam ships and freighters. They could all carry alcohol.

By 1920 Islesboro had developed two very distinct social groups, the native year-rounders

and the wealthy out-of-state summer folk. There was also a small group of people from the Bangor area who had summer cottages, including faculty of the Bangor Theological Seminary, but they don't figure in these stories as far as I know. The year-rounders were small-town hardworking people trying to make a living by being capable at many different things, like fishing and carpentry, or small farming and housepainting, not much different from rural Maine today. In the late 1800s, the southern end of the island had been purchased by a group of wealthy out-of-state families who built large summer "cottages" and required help in building, maintaining and managing their houses, laundries, kitchens, grounds and boats. This was steady seasonal but annual employment for the year-rounders, causing some local resentment, and creating a new and relatively reliable caretaking career for many people. The summer people needed the winter people and the winter people needed the summer people, and this symbiotic relationship was usually successful.

## Methodology

I have done a literature search in the University of Maine Fogler Library, including the Special Collections Department. I also looked over a number of books about Canadian Prohibition, and while the background was interesting there were no relevant stories about Islesboro. Efforts to look at information which may exist in the Islesboro Historical Society were thwarted by the time of year, as the building is shut down from October to May each year.

I have made tape recordings of two interviews specifically for this project and I am using sections of one other tape I made for another project. My equipment is very basic, a Radio Shack tape recorder and standard 90 minute tapes from the grocery store. I have had three years of experience with this equipment interviewing artisans and performers, etc. for newspaper stories. Because these interviews are made in relatively controlled situations, the limitations of the equipment are few.

I am going to present this project as a story, how it unfolded, with the relevant stories in order, and then more formally present my findings and the full transcript. In making the transcripts, I discovered that I asked leading questions which was a successful technique some of the time and not so useful at other times. I talked too much. One informant had a good sense of story-telling and another did not. I suspect a third embroidered very well, but the basics were true, or at least corroborated. I discovered that I didn't listen so well as I might have and therefore missed opportunities to ask good follow-up questions which might have opened up more material. Another disappointment for me was the lack of solid dates for any of these stories. Only the wedding champagne story can be verified, as far as I know. My informants had no idea when the events took place.

Occasionally I have enclosed information in editor's brackets [ ] when that information helps clarify something. I have used the work BREAK when the conversation wandered from the subject. I have tried to capture speech qualities as faithfully as possible. Several stories or events are mentioned and I have numbered them in the order I have first heard them. Later reference to them will be reflected in a table following the stories.

## The Project

My first stop was the Maine Folklife Center to see if there was any material on rum-running stories from Islesboro. Indeed, I found a paper by Sharon Weiss of Islesboro, accession # na1321, written in 1980, a product of Dr. Ives' course. In her generalized search for island stories, Ms. Weiss, now Mrs. McCorison, had come across several individuals who told her rum-running stories which I will copy here:

### Page 5, from commentary by Sharon Weiss

From what I've heard there was a lot of that type of thing going on around Islesboro during Prohibition, and there were a lot of island residents involved. There is an island, not far from Islesboro, called Ascention [sic] Island that used to be the pick-up point for the island men. Big boats would bring the liquor there, then the island men would go out in their small boats and pick it up. The rich summer people bought quite a lot of the liquor from what I understand. This also brought about competition as to who had the fastest boat.

This story is from Kaspar Murphy, who was 82 in 1980 when Sharon collected it.

### Story #1 - Page 15

Another time I went over to Camden and they had a boat over there called the Boy Scout, see. And she was a lot higher than she was supposed to be. Well that was so that when she was loaded down with liquor she'd be just about the normal heights out the water, see. And I wanted to know, I said what are you fellows--they asked me about being [from] Dark Harbor and I told them all I knew about it, see. And I said what you fellows take out, Boy Scouts to train them? Sea Scouts? They said yes, we take out Boy Scouts and they all laughed amongst themselves you know. And I didn't, I was so dumb I didn't come to at all. I didn't know what they were talking about see. But that boat was loaded with the power to you know, they could outrun just about anything that the coastguard had.

This story was collected from Robin Quimby of Islesboro, 76 in 1980, and a life-long resident of Islesboro. Sharon did not tape this but recalled it.

### Page 21 - Story #2

This story took place near Charlotte's Cove which is on the east side of

the island. This cove is located way down in back of his house quite a ways through the woods. There is a fresh water spring down there near the cove. Robin was walking along down there one day and was thirsty so he stopped to get a drink of water. When he stood up he saw a large odd shaped pile of brush and he thought he would go over and investigate. But as he was walking towards it he heard two clicks like the hammers on a double-barrel shot gun being pulled back. He figured someone must be hiding liquor in that pile, so he changed his course and just walked nonchalantly away in another direction without looking at that pile of brush again.

### Story #3 - Page 22

This story also took place during the rum-running period. Robin and a couple of other men were coming back from Belfast or Castine or somewhere, I can't exactly remember where. Well they had some bales of hay down in the cockpit of the boat, and when they got back in the boat to come back to Islesboro, Robin noticed that some of the bales had been moved. He didn't think much about it just put them back in place and started off. As they were going along one of the men spotted a coast guard boat and this man told Robin that they would have to dump the liquor overboard. Well, Robin didn't know anything about any liquor, he didn't know what was going on. The liquor had been hidden down behind the bales of hay. They didn't get caught, but Robin told the man to tell him next time so he would know what was going on.

With the above information as a start, I knew the project was a good one. I just needed to check with my belwether on the island, a friend whose family summered there in one of the large cottages, every summer from the late 1800s. Her response to my project idea, collecting island stories about rum-running during Prohibition in the form of oral histories, was enthusiastic.

"I have one for you right now," she announced, and proceeded to tell me the following story over the phone:

### Story #4

In the late 1920s or early 30s her grandmother, Mary Christie Tiffany, was getting married, and a very fancy wedding with lots of New York society and many parties was planned. The only question her grandfather had to deal with was the

champagne for the festivities. Of course during Prohibition, getting champagne was no easy feat so he turned to Islesboro's most trustworthy and cagey local talent, Ralph Leach. We will learn more details about Ralph later. Ralph tried to get champagne, he tried very hard, but it would have to come from Canada and that part was particularly difficult for him. At close to the last minute he announced he just couldn't help with the champagne. The proud father was in despair. He informed his gentlemanly group of cronies of his dilemma and one of them, a man handy with a corkscrew himself, offered to do his best. This gentleman sent his very large and fast power yacht to eastern Canada with an apparently knowledgeable and talented crew, and returned with the champagne that saved the party. The gentleman in question turned out to be the Reverend Dr. Maitland Alexander, my husband's grandfather! I had not set out to reveal or record a family history, but that was my introduction to rum-running stories on Islesboro.

I next made some preliminary phone calls, first to Mr. Ralph Gray who is an informal island historian and made an interview appointment with him. I then called Mr. Jack Leach, whose father, Mr. Gray had told me, was the ringleader of the local rum-running ring and whose role was substantiated by my friend's story. When I called the Leachs, Mrs. Jackie Leach answered, thought the project sounded great, and told me the following story over the phone:

#### Story #5

Ralph Leach, Jack Leach's father, was on the mainland one day, doing business in Bucksport, and federal agents cornered him on the Bucksport bridge. They blocked off both ends of the bridge and he was trapped. His only solution was to jump off the bridge into the water, which he did, escaping in good shape. [Mrs. Leach led me to believe that he had jumped off the high bridge.]

**"It Was a Bad Law..." —Ralph Gray**

My first interview was made with Mr. Ralph Gray of Islesboro who is one of the multi-talented year-rounders, part fisherman, part caretaker. He is now in his 70s and lives in his own home which was at one time the caretaker's cottage for one of the large summer houses, still standing across the road. Ralph has taken a great deal of interest in the histories and stories of the summer people. I went to his home, we talked and recorded, and then sat down to a lunch which I

had brought for us. I am including in this section only the pertinent stories Ralph told me, with a complete transcript of the rum-running section of the interview included at the end of this report. Unfortunately we had begun talking before I had set up the recorder, on the subject of the wedding story.

February 6, 1998 at the home of Ralph Gray, Dark Harbor, Islesboro, Maine

Repeat of Story #4

R: The Pratt wedding, she [Mary Christie Tiffany] married a Pratt, John Pratt, and of course it was a real arrangement, affair, I think 1924.

N: So what they did, was, they needed to get that liquor, and so did Maitland Alexander, he ran the *Viator* down?

R: Yea, it was a bigger *Viator*, the original one. Of course there were several *Viators*. This was Maitie's father...

Repeat of Story #3

N: So there must have been a huge amount of secrecy surrounding this, and you knew on the island who might be involved, but it never was..

R: Right, and a lot of times it might be the the most prominent people involved, you know, and they would have a.. now that story of Robin, I don't know what one it was, because he had several, anyway, he went somewhere to get a scow-load of something, and somehow along the line, they got some liquor put onto the scow and he didn't even know it was on there and that was the people who were having the work done or who owned the scow, you know, he was just working.

Story #6

R: Yes, it was, and they were, and there was one time that the neighbor was having, well, it was Ralph [Leach] it was Ralph and he was having some liquor delivered, and the neighbors, next door, I won't say where he was living at the time...

N: Why not?

R: You'd know who they were.

N: OK

R: But anyhow, they'd set this liquor off and there was a corn patch near by and they'd go out a grab a couple of cans, get it in the corn patch you know, and when they got through he had only about half of what he had started out with. And I don't know if he found out and got it back or not....but there was a lot of money be made. It was fair game, and even though you'd lose some you would still make out on it.

Story #7

N: Well there's a story [unnamed informant] told of, again, older Dr. Alexander, having a shipment coming in on the *Viator*, and having the boat chased so that the crew threw everything overboard. And it washed up on the beach there, but his neighbor got it and never returned it. I've heard that. *Unnamed* has a wonderful way with stories so I didn't know if you knew anything about that....

R: Well, I do know if they were chased they would, there was some way they had of throwing this over board and it would sink and after a day or two it would float. It was be a, something would come unhooked or something and then they could go out and pick it up, they knew right where it was. Oh there were all kinds of angles to it. but I don't know that particular story. I think I have heard it but...

Repeat of Story #5

R: Yea, well, he wasn't into it that much, Al. He was really on the tail end of it, too. He isn't that much older than I...but it would be, and they'd have a, in one instance it was Ralph, and the story that they cornered him up in Bucksport and they got on each end of the bridge, and, or course they always say he jumped off the bridge, but it wasn't the big bridge, it was the little bridge and he got away.

N: What a great story.

R: I don't know if Jack will tell you that story.

N: Well, Jackie sort of hinted that she knew that story.

R: And through the years, they started, the story that he jumped off the bridge. Of course he was even more non-committal than even Jack is. Ralph is a...I knew him real well I used to work alot with him. He cut wood. He always called us all. He always had a horse to haul it out with, and we used to cut it with bucksaw and axe, you know, and we'd cut a cord a day and burn your brush and haul your wood. and nowadays...

#### Story #8

R: You know one story about it, these two fellows heard a boat in the middle of the night, they went down to the, they call it the Baptismal beach, just back of the island cemetery, in the little cove there, on the east side?

N: Right, Baptism beach, that's not the Hewes Point cove?

R: No that's this side of that, and if you go along there it's just an indentation in the island, and they were delivering it there, and as I said, they'd lug it up and then run down on the beach and get some more and these two fellas, they'd grab a couple and go back into the woods a little farther and they got quite a bit, and one of the fellers, he didn't even drink and I don't know what the other fellow, he gave him some money or not, The other one sold it all summer, and he was selling it to the butlers and things. And you know the butlers, they would buy from whoever had it.

#### Story #9

R: Ralph worked at the Dark Harbor wharf for McLeod. He'd had the freight and handle the wharf and so Ralph worked for him. One time Ralph was having someone bring something, off of Player's Island or Resolution, and so they went over in the middle of the day, and they got this in a little small power boat, and they got into it, so when they come back by, it was supposed to be very discrete, and this fellow come back by, he was tooting, waving, just as happy, and by the time he got back inside here, he just went right into the float, tied up the boat and went home.

N: Oh that's wonderful.

R: And then of course, anyone who saw this knew what he was doing, you know and 'acourse Ralph couldn't leave the wharf, so he had to just put up with it. I know that happened because one of my best friends who was a little older, Newton, saw the whole thing and in fact went down and saw the boat, just a little power boat, like you know a 25-footer with six or eight cans Ralph

needed.

[Note: At another time I talked with Ralph who filled in some of the details of this story, as follows:]

R: Foster Ober drove his boat be the dock tooting his whistle and making a todo. Everyone knew he must be loaded. Then he tied up his boat at the dock and just left it. Ralph [Leach] had to stay at the dock because it was his job, but everyone else could come and go as they pleased. They went aboard Ober's boat and helped themselves, leaving Ralph empty-handed and Foster almost empty-handed.

#### Story #10

R: Now this is a little confusing because they repealed this in '33 or '34?, because they didn't get cars on here until '33 and I know that there were cars on here that were loaded with the liquor and they were hiding it. I was old enough...by then I was in my early teens and I remember being in on some of that just as an observer.

N: The law may have been repealed in Washington and not have kicked in here...

R: There's something about it, because I know the cars were on here, fast cars, one of them was a Jordan...

N: Never heard of a Jordan.

R: ...a Jordan and it was built up and I drove it, in fact. I started driving when I was twelve. But anyway, thirteen, actually, but the accelerator was, you know, very long to go down, but you think of it having more speed, which it doesn't actually, but you think of it that way. If it goes farther [the accelerator] why you think it goes faster. But it did and it was a peppy car, and it did, compared with a Pontiac six-cylinder Pontiac and it was one of their cars they use to haul booze in it.

**"I would think at times it would be terrible scary. A fellow would want a good heart..."**

**-Jack Leach**

My second interview took place four weeks later. I had no idea what to expect. Jack Leach

runs several businesses which are key mostly to the comfort and well-being of the summer people. He has a trucking service and heavy equipment for earth-moving and plowing. I was pleasantly surprised when he agreed to talk on the record with me. His father, Ralph Leach, was reported to me by my friend and by Ralph Gray, to be the finest of the rum-runners. Ralph Leach grew up on Islesboro and during Prohibition he worked at the Dark Harbor steamship wharf on the southern part and eastern side of the island of Islesboro. Jack himself was born the year Prohibition was voted out but he had heard stories. Jack's wife, Jackie, was present during this taping and helped out when she could. She is not originally from Islesboro.

March 1, 1998 at Jack Leach's home in Islesboro, Maine.

Repeat of Story #9

J: That could be too, but they'd bring a lot of it in wherever they dared to bring it but I'm sure a lot of it come in over Dark Harbor wharf, down in there, you know.

N: Right. That was another thing I heard about your dad from somebody else, I don't know if it was Ralph, that a load came in and everyone knew what was on it and your dad was down at the wharf and he was stuck dealing, and everyone else just evaporated.

J: I guess—I don't know all that much about it. I might have been born, but I wasn't born in '33.

Repeat of Story #7

N: Yup, that makes sense. Well we heard a story about Maitland Alexander again, when he lived at Greylegde, you know, where the Rothchilds live now. Well, he had a load coming in on the *Viator* and the coast guard was standing off so his crew threw it overboard so they couldn't get caught with it. It washed up on the beach a couple of days later and his neighbor took it all, and he came down to claim it, Maitland Alexander, to claim it, and the neighbor said, sorry, salvage rights and took all of it.

J: I guess that happened a lot, too. And of course all that was done at night, or a good part of it, or a foggy day or some darn thing.

Repeat of Story #5

Jackie: What was the time you father supposedly jumped off some bridge?

J: Well that was...

Jackie: When they were after him.

J: the Verona Island Bridge. As far as I know, certainly no one ever jumped off the Bucksport bridge, but I guess he climbed down and climbed in underneath it, you know, and some darn thing, the coast guard was after him or something, police or whatever.

N: Do you know if that was at night or during the day?

Repeat of Story #10

J: No, I don't, but then they used to transport a lot of that in some of these cars, you know they had the rumble seat, these coups, and one thing or another, they'd go all over hell.

N: Yup, I guess fast cars probably improved rum-running considerably.

J: Yea, well they had all kinds Those old big Buicks you know, remember those, with those two, oh shoot, spare tires, one on each side. Christ they'd haul five tons, seems so.

Story #11

J: But then they had those scows, you know, that used to haul automobiles before we had the ferry boats, and I suppose those scows could have quite a lot of that alcohol in the bottom of them. They would make do, those old fellows.

The following material was collected during the fall of 1996 for use in a centennial publication for the Tarratine Club of Islesboro. I cannot locate the original tapes but I do have my edited version. I have permission from the informants for that publication but not for this so I will not use their names.

Repeat of Story #7(actualy the origin of this story)

*(Informant speaking to my husband)* Didn't your grandfather, the Right Reverend Maitland Alexander, own Grayledge during Prohibition...the Rothchilds' house? Well, next door in Mrs. Field's house lived George Clark. Your grandfather was in short supply of some liquid refreshment. He owned the old huge *Viator* at the time. So he had sent his crew off for a little exercising cruise to Canada. Well,

the boat returned as the revenuers arrived, the crew threw the cases of hooch over the side and it floated up on George Clark's beach. So your grandfather said to Clark, "The survival of these cases is a miracle and was meant to be, and I know you will return them to me." George Clark, a truly classy guy says, "I'm terribly sorry but I believe it's mine by right of salvage. If you'd like a drink I would be happy to oblige, but it's mine." They never spoke after that.

My collection of stories ends here but I suspect it is only temporary.

### Charting the Stories for Comparisons

<u>Story #</u>	<u>Times told</u>	<u>Variation</u>	<u>Innocence of teller</u>	<u>Substantiation</u>
1	1	—	yes	no
2	1	—	yes	no
3	2	no	yes	yes
4	2	no	—	yes
5	3	very slight	no	yes
6	1	—	—	no
7	1	—	—	no
8	1	—	—	no
9	1	—	—	no
10	2	—	—	yes
11	1	—	—	didn't ask

### Notes on the Rum-running Stories

Page 5 This is Sharon Weiss' introduction to her interviews. It is not a story but corroborates Ralph Gray's and Jack Leach's mention of the other islands in the East Bay as depots and drops for alcohol. Ascension Island is located near Resolution Island and the others mentioned.

Story #1 Kaspar Murphy's memorate story collected by Sharon Weiss is one in which he is the dupe, the naive innocent, a common theme close to denial. This theme of innocence continues.

Story #2 Robin Quimby's memorate story discusses the presence of guns and his innocence and avoidance of trouble. The subject of violence and the presence of guns is discussed particularly well by Ralph Gray on page 20 in his interview.

Story #3 Robin again is the innocent on a boat which was carrying liquor. Again, a memorate story in which the teller is almost a victim. Ralph Gray is faithful to Robin's innocence when he tells the story even though he doesn't have the detail.

Story #4 The Tiffany-Pratt wedding in need of liquid refreshment. This story was known to people closely acquainted with the summer colony, but Jack Leach never mentioned it. Is this perhaps a way of proclaiming innocence, especially when interviewed by a member of the family which succeeded in getting the champagne? I'm probably pushing it there. This story is always second-hand but the basic detail remain the same.

Story #5 Ralph Leach jumps off the bridge at Bucksport. I love the variations in this story. The first teller expressed a bit of pride in the story and knew how to present it in its most dramatic light. The second, Ralph Gray, wants to be sure I understand from which bridge Ralph jumped. And the third version, Jack's, is understated but agrees that it was the Verona Island bridge. None of the stories are cluttered up with any detail such as the time of day or night, the season, whether Ralph had a boat or was able to get back to his car. I could have asked those questions but they didn't seem to be part of the story.

Story #6 Ralph's second-hand story of stealing alcohol from Ralph Leach via the corn patch was great fun, perhaps because Ralph Leach was the butt of that particular story. There is no corroboration of this story, but the philosophy, that all alcohol is fair game, even stealing from

each other, is a theme which runs through Ralph Gray's interview and is corroborated by Jack Leach.

Story #7 This story was told to me by a master yarner. There is no solid confirmation from either Ralph or Jack. Ralph thought he might have heard something like that and Jack had no recollection of it. While the story is one which people inside the summer community might remember, I have no access to that information at this time. I will try to discover the validity of the story this summer.

Story #8 Ralph's memorate about people stealing liquor from other people and successfully marketing it was a great story. It substantiates the sense that Ralph had of a free-for-all for anyone lucky enough to have the chance to make some money mentioned in Story #6. It also substantiates the sense of a community windfall which was greater than personal rivalry. No violence, no retribution, no seriousness of purpose. This last item, however, I have begun to wonder about in that this was truly a very dangerous profession which could have very serious consequences if caught by the authorities or dissatisfaction within the distribution system. From these stories I am just realizing that there was a very strong and intricate network which worked along the Maine coast, and Islesboro was fully integrated into that network. Further investigation into rum-running on Islesboro could be entering more dangerous and wider territory than just hearing old stories of derry-doo.

Story #9 The vision of Ralph Leach at the Dark Harbor wharf with a drunk delivery person calling attention to himself and his alcohol is quite amusing. That was a busy wharf, serving regularly scheduled passenger steamboats from Boston and New York and other points within Maine. It also handled freight carriers and other smaller commercial boats. If Ralph Leach was in charge of the dock, and it sounds as though he was, this unseemly arrival was quite unfortunate. Ralph Gray's story has lots of detail and color and is in sharp contrast to Jack's reaction. Jack Leach's claim of ignorance on the basis of his birth date is classic. I look forward to hearing other versions of this story when I put the call out for more information.

Story #10 The use of fast cars for the transportation of liquor is corroborated by memorates of both Ralph Gray and Jack Leach. Confusion over the time period is possible because Islesboro didn't allow cars until 1933 and Prohibition on the national level was abolished in 1933. Both of them distinctly remember fast cars as important in rum-running on the island, not just the

mainland. Ralph even drove one of the special cars. Maine repealed Prohibition on December 16, 1933, following the national repeal. Perhaps that year in the mind of a thirteen-year-old like Ralph and in the stories passed to Jack was enough of an experience to make it seem much longer. I will have to pose that question to them.

Story #11 Jack Leach tied in the use of scows as liquor transport with the use of fast cars. He felt confident that the scows which carried heavy equipment to Islesboro brought more than cranes or cement or lumber. I have no doubt that Ralph Gray would support this idea. The structure of a scow is such that it is a floating box in most cases, with plenty of room for storing cargo. Scows could also be easily set adrift in an emergency as they were usually towed by another vessel.

### Conclusion

I may have stumbled on an intricate network of people and relationships constructed carefully and with great secrecy more than seventy years ago which is still protected today. However, some of the people on Islesboro are willing to have the stories told for the first time, in fact I feel that some individuals would welcome it. I do not pretend to know the motivations people might have to reveal these stories, but I am beginning to suspect that there may some individual and family reputations at stake. The validity of recreating (or creating) those reputations should not be the function of this project, so I will proceed with caution. I have also learned a great deal about oral history collection techniques, which I need to refine. I better understand how long it would take to do the proper follow-up questions, research them, and proceed on to the next.

The stories collected here are good ones, probably basically true, and non-committal or non-accusatory, a necessity of island community living. The names which Jack Leach gave me could lead to interesting stories and a proper newspaper search for records of raids and arrests. I did not pursue Ralph Leach's arrests because the University of Maine Library did not have back issues of the major county newspaper and I didn't make it to Belfast where the newspaper is located. This avenue of research, however, could be very helpful.

I look forward to asking the good ladies of the Islesboro Historical Society if they are interested in really knowing what went on during Prohibition and who was involved. They may be gun-shy.

### Additional Avenues for Investigation

Possibilities for expanding this project are enormous. However, the standard town research tools might not be particularly useful here because of the illicit nature of the subject. I suspect that personal interviews would be the best means of getting at the scope and intricacy of this network of smugglers and salesmen. Newspaper records would be revealing, checking known Islesboro rum-runners with stories, arrests and jail terms as reported in the local papers. I tried to look up stories about Islesboro in the *Republican Journal* of Belfast for the years 1929-33 but the Fogler Library does not have copies. Only the newspaper itself in Belfast has copies and I had no specific event or dates to look for.

Records from the Islesboro Historical Society might reveal interesting things but I don't know which ones except perhaps those who admitted to owning cars on the mainland before they were allowed on Islesboro. Not that automobile ownership in itself would make someone guilty, but it would pare down the list of possibilities. The usual municipal records like personal property records or income taxes would reveal nothing about the success of a rum-runner because no one was about to pay taxes on it and changing one's lifestyle too fast in a small community is suspect in itself. It would be necessary to discover the leadership of the larger network beyond Penobscot Bay to get a real picture of this period in Islesboro's history.

How the summer people got their hard liquor is also not clear. I'm certain that it was possible to order it, but I don't think it was from Ralph Leach, from the stories collected here. It appears that the local people specialized in grain alcohol, not hard liquor. Perhaps I will need to interview older summer people who might remember the details. Those I have talked with knew that their parents always had cocktails in the evening but how the liquor got there was not part of their experience. If the butlers were the intermediaries as Ralph Gray has suggested, then they are another line to pursue, for journals or household records.

There is still a question of openness about this subject with the islanders. The proclamation of innocence by so many people who had had experiences with rum-runners surprised me. Even Jack Leach made an effort to exonerate himself from something he couldn't have done if he wanted to. It brings to mind the power of the knowledge of evil.

There is still a hesitancy to name names and point fingers, something which deserves respect in a small community locked together by water. There was a man named Lee McCorison who figured heavily in the era who seemed to be generally disliked, and I understand that Robin Quimby is still alive and alert at 94, living in Augusta, with many wellwishers among the islanders. Kaspar Murphy was totally unfamiliar to me.

A58

## The Rum-Running Parts of Original Transcripts of Interviews

February 6, 1998 at the home of Ralph Gray, Dark Harbor, Islesboro, Maine

### Repeat of Story #4

R: The Pratt wedding, she married a Pratt, John Pratt, and of course it was a real arrangement, affair, I think 1924.

N: So what they did, was, they needed to get that liquor, and so did Maitland Alexander, he ran the *Viator* down?

R: Yea, it was a bigger *Viator*, the original one. Of course there were several *Viators*. This was Maitie's father...

N: The BIG doctor.

R: yea.

N: Did you know him or ever see him?

R: I've seen him but you know I was just a kid and he was quite a fella. He'd preach in church and do everything. He'd tell 'em to "do as I say, not as I do." Well, anyway, it was a big wedding that lasted well into the next day. The people that were driving horses, I knew some of those, and they'd tell about it later, it would be daylight in the morning before they got everyone delivered. 'Course at that time there was a big Pratt house where the Barron house is now, that cottage, and it was one of the bigger cottages, three stories, and it belonged to Harold Pratt. His initials were HIP and they called him big hips. And then his brother was the father of John Pratt that Mary Christie married.

N: On this rum-running, I sort of gathered that the year-rounders had their own.. was a little separate from the rum-running the summer people did. That they had their own industry going and that they may have serviced a larger area than just the island.

R: Well, the.. it was really like a gang and they did, and they had the whole area, and the coast guard was always chasing them and they'd get fast boats and faster than the coast guard, so they could get going, and of course as they went along they were trying to stop them, and really you see it in Gang Busters or something. This was a....

N: So there must have been a huge amount of secrecy surrounding this, and you knew on the island who might be involved, but it never was..

### Repeat of Story #3

R: Right, and a lot of times it might be the the most prominent people involved, you know, and they would have a.. now that story of Robin, I don't know what one it was, because he had several, anyway, he went somewhere to get a scow-load of something, and somehow along the line, they got some liquor put onto the scow and he didn't even know it was on there and that was the people

who were having the work done or who owned the scow, you know, he was just working.

N: Do you ever remember hearing about coast guard raids?

R: They would...I don't know too much on that, although there were times when they would come and go over the place, and search it, but usually it had just been moved. I think most times they had been tipped off. It worked right down the line to everyone's benefit. The thing about em, was the whole thing. It wasn't like the big mobs or anything, because there wasn't anybody shooting or ...

N: There wasn't any violence associated with it?

R: No, there wasn't much violence to it. They might, if there was a spotlight, they might shoot that out or something, but there was nobody shooting at anybody. There was an awful lot of people, even your friends, if you were mixed up in it and you were moving it or something, supposedly your friends, if they could get in on it, somehow to get some of it, they would.

N: You mean pinch from each other?

R: Yea, steal from each others, and they'd hear about it or they'd hear a boat, and it would be dark, certainly, and they wouldn't do it in broad daylight so much, and they'd go down and come up with these cans, three gallon cans usually, it was clear alcohol, that was what they... 190 proof, and that's what they were doing, but as they'd set it down to go get another [load?], they'd take a can or two, put it off to the side and you know, and a lot of it was a kind of pilfering I guess you'd call it, and a lot of times it would be stolen back..

N: Sounds like a kind of honor among thieves...

#### Story #6

R: Yes, it was, and they were, and there was one time that the neighbor was having, well, it was Ralph [Leach] it was Ralph and he was having some liquor delivered, and the neighbors, next door, I won't say where he was living at the time...

N: Why not?

R: You'd know who they were.

N: OK

R: But anywho [sic], they'd set this liquor off and there was a corn patch near by and they'd go out a grab a couple of cans, get it in the corn patch you know, and when they got through he had only about half of what he had started out with. And I don't know if he found out and got it back or not....but there was a lot of money to be made. It was fair game, and even though you'd lose some you would still make out on it.

N: Do you think that some of that was related to the end of the whole sailing era, all those people who had made their money by the sea. Then it all stopped, the sailing part of it, and they were

having to make a transition and this was one way to keep the cash flowing at home?

R: Well, maybe a little bit, but what it was was a... it was not a good law to begin with, and then the people who were going to have it, they'd been all through the years, they'd had rum and everything, you know, given to them, the British had it on their ships and each man each day got a portion, but, and then when they made this, why they just, It's a... one of these laws that's made to be broken. And then...usually the people that did handle it, they knew people, and of course these people that bought it, a lot of time, they knew how to handle it, and in the sense that they'd buy this alcohol and they'd make bathtub gin as the doctor called it and have it in big five gallon jugs and it was mixed with this 190 proof, with one gallon of that to four of the others, cut it back to where it should be...

N: So what was in the other, the bathtub part?

R: Well, it was the alcohol and of course they'd put water with it and then they'd put the juniper berry to make the gin taste, and they just, I don't believe they ever heated it, I never really, I was pretty young to know really what they did but a lot of them of course, when they'd go, they could buy like a small bottle, like a vanilla bottle full of this, you know and they...two bucks or whatever it was and then they'd take it home and they'd mix it. This was the alcohol and then they'd just mix it maybe. I know in the Navy, when I was in the Navy, this was nothing to do with Prohibition, but on VJ Day when the war was going to be over, they had a little party and they had some 190 proof on the ship and the captain ordered a gallon of it broken out and put it with four gallons of grapefruit juice and gave everybody a cup..

N: That's great.

R: And the two ships, we kind of anchored together, tied up along side each other.

N: Where were you?

R: In the Philipines, and the ships on either side, that captain hadn't done it so they came over and visited. Ah it was quite a mess the next morning.

N; Would they smuggle barrels of scotch or bourbon..

R: Not really. What I would know more about would be the alcohol, and I'm sure that they did have the whiskey and the scotch and rum...

N: I'm just thinking of Joe Kennedy's fortune made in scotch,

R: Yea, I know it and you know Betsy Shirley has a great story about her father, I believe it was her, and they went down to Cape Cod every summer or down that way, and she tells about her father, and they had a cottage and he'd hide whatever liquor he had in the house, and during the winter it would be stolen and he'd call up, he'd get there and there wouldn't be any, and he'd call up the local bootlegger, and some of the bottles that would come back would be the ones he'd stole. You know Betsy, don't you?

N: Yes, I do.

R: She's told that story two or three times, and the father knew but he didn't do nothin'.

N: What could you do?

R: Buying his own liquor.

Story #7

N: Well there's a story *unnamed* told of, again, older Dr. Alexander, having a shipment coming in on the *Viator*, and having the boat chased so that the crew threw everything overboard. And it washed up on the beach there, but his neighbor got it and never returned it. I've heard that. *Unnamed* has a wonderful way with stories so I didn't know if you knew anything about that....

R; Well, I do know if they were chased they would, there was some way they had of throwing this over board and it would sink and after a day or two it would float. It would be a, something would come unhooked or something and then they could go out and pick it up, they knew right where it was. Oh there were all kinds of angles to it. But I don't know that particular story. I think I have heard it but...And then there'd be times that, Of course a great place for them to leave it was on Player's Island, that's off... the first island out in the East Bay.

N: What's it called?

R: Player, that was the owner. That's Resolution, but we called it Player's Island at that time. There was a big barn over there, it had been vacated and so they stored all this liquor. They'd slip over and get what they'd need.

N: Well now, where, do you have any clue where they were getting it, was it Canadians that were bringing it down?

R: Pretty much Canada. yes.

N: And they would just come in their bigger boats, and...

R: Right, off shore, you would go offshore and pick it up. In fact I think Maitie, Charlie's father, see they had a fast speed boat, I think about 45, and he and my cousin who worked for Dillon, I hope that no one from Dillon's is going to hear this...

N: I'm sure that it's fifty, no it's eighty, seventy years later...

R: I know it but anyway, they would go out at night

N: So this was Clarence's person, and what was his name?

R: I'd rather not, and he had several captains.

N: OK I'll be quiet.

R: But he had several captain, but anyway, I shouldn't even be saying Maitie,

N: Well, Al Norton would be the first to admit.

Repeat of Story #5

R: Yea, well, he wasn't into it that much, Al. He was really on the tail end of it, too. He isn't that much older than I...but it would be , and they'd have a, in one instance it was Ralph, and the story that they cornered him up in Bucksport and they got on each end of the bridge, and, or course they always say he jumped off the bridge, but it wasn't the big bridge, it was the little bridge and he got away.

N: What a great story.

R: I don't know if Jack will tell you that story.

N: Well, Jackie sort of hinted that she knew that story.

R: And through the years, they started the story that he jumped off the bridge. Of course he was even more non-committal than even Jack is. Ralph is a...I knew him real well I used to work alot with him. He cut wood. He always called us all. He always had a horse to haul it out with, and we used to cut it with bucksaw and axe, you know, and we'd cut a cord a day and burn your brush and haul your wood. and nowadays...

N: You know it's so good for the forest to do it that way..

R: Well, you know it cut, of course they're talking about just taking one now and then. It don't work, not around here, it will, it blows down. And some of them, you just can;t tell them. And it comes back. If you cut soft wood usually it comes back hardwood. Well, I don't know too many other stories. I do know that it was fair game, and anyone who knew where there was some, why they were ...and they

N: I'm not going to ask you to give away anything, you know, but if the reticence of giving names is out of respect for the families and I appreciate that completely, but it's curious to me, that to me it is such an honorable profession,... but I understand.

R: No, it just that, I just don't, even when I talked with you about the summer people I never mention any names,

N: You're a gentleman.

R: Well, yea, but that's a, well, I wouldn't want anybody to tell about me, but they're all friends and these people, and I'm sure as you said that whatever it is, seventy years, or more, because I remember when it first came that you could buy it. They had it at the inn and my father, I would go up with him and he could, he'd go just to the outside of the main entrance and the bar was right there and they were selling it. ?? gin, but before that and he would have it, as I said, it would be in a Mason jar or in a kind of a small jug and they'd just pour it into these little containers, you know. You never knew, I'm sure they cleaned out pretty good, but anyway, it wasn't healthy, it

wasn't as good, I'm sure that that alcohol would kill any germs anyway. But that was the way they would have it.

N: Someplace I've read a discription of a steel dock on the east side up island with a vacated summer house. And all I can think of was the old Drexel House. Was there ever a steel dock that you know of there? And this is supposed to be opposite from Resolution, but I don't know where Resolution fits on the east side.

R: Well it's the first one out here.

N: I know that but where would be a summer house, that would be...

R: Well, it would be the old Marshall Field's or the Clark cottage at that time and they did have the legs of steel...

N: And that would be where the Fentresses are now?

R: Yes, and they did, and I've heard stories about that they would stash it right there and it was right across from Resolution.

BREAK

R: You know one story about it, these two fellows heard a boat in the middle of the night, they went down to the, they call it the Baptismal beach, just back of the island cemetary, in the little cove there, on the east side?

N: Right, Baptism beach, that's not the Hewes Point cove?

R: No that's this side of that, and if you go along there it's just an indentation in the island, and they were delivering it there, and as I said, they'd lug it up and then run down on the beach and get some more and these two fellas, they'd grab a couple and go back into the woods a little farther and they got quite a bit, and one of the fellers, he didn't even drink and I don't know what the other fellow, he gave him some money or not, They other one sold it all summer, and he was selling it to the butlers and things. And you know the butlers, they would buy from whoever had it.

N: So they were the middle men for the summer people.

R: Yea and some of them...

N: That put them in a tight situation.

R: But this fella, and would sell, and of course if they were buying from him they weren't buying it from the regular bootlegger, but he made out well, of course it was stolen.

N: But nobody...It sounds as though people didn't hold it against you very much.

R: No they didn't, no they didn't. Tthere was a few psalm singers, but there weren't anybody,

most of them liked to drink themselves. It was funny. At that time you didn't drink in public. It was funny, you tried to be, you know, you did it privately. Even buying beer when it first come out. A lot of people would go to the store and they'd have the storekeeper put it in a big bag. You didn't see the bottle or see the carton.

N: It was a little dirty?

R: Yup and they didn't want some of the other people to know that they even drank. And people, you'd never see them intoxicated though, you'd never see them, and then there were few that didn't give a damn. They would have some, you know, and they are more the way it is now.

N: Were people still coming to the island to work for Mr. McLeod at that time, from Cape Rosier and that peninsula?

R: Oh sure. One time he had forty men.

N: I remember you said that. I just wonder what traffic that created on the

#### Story #8

R: Well that wasn't much to do with the liquor because they were just workmen pretty much, but not that some of them might not get into it a little bit. Of course Ralph came from over there and his father. Ralph worked at the Dark Harbor wharf for McLeod. He'd had the freight and handle the wharf and so Ralph worked for him. One time Ralph was having someone bring something, off of Player's Island or Resolution, and so they went over in the middle of the day, and they got this in a little small power boat, and they got into it, so when they come back by, it was supposed to be very discrete and this fellow come back by, he was tooting, waving, just as happy, and by the time he got back inside here, he just went right into the float, tied up the boat and went home. Oh gosh.

N: Oh that's wonderful.

R: And then of course, anyone who saw this knew what he was doing, you know and 'acourse Ralph couldn't leave the wharf, so he had to just put up with it. I know that happened because one of my best friends who was a little older, Newton, saw the whole thing and in fact went down and saw the boat, just a little power boat, like you know a 25-footer with six or eight cans Ralph needed.

N: So they were tin cans?

R: Yea, tin cans, three gallons usually with a handle ,they'd be like turpentine, you know the gallons with the handle, only they were three gallon I guess they did have some five gallon but basically they were three gallons is was I remember.

N: Interesting.

R: And then another thing they had at that time, I guess, maybe I mentioned it before was real fast cars. And they had them built up, the springers would be built up so they wouldn't be sagging

down with the weight and they'd be loaded with the stuff.

N: So they used those on the mainland because there...

R: Yea but the scows had started to running over here by then. That was right in between, you see, there was still scows. The cars first came in '33 and they were still right on the edge of it.

N: Now there must have been quite a community of psalm singers, as you say. I mean Maine historically has been, with Neal Dow, who was eader of the national temperance thing, I wonder, I haven't read anything at all in the historical research that I've done, about what the island psalm singers might have thought. Do you think they just lived with their heads in the clouds?

R: Well, you know they were just Baptists, hard-shell Baptists and a lot of times they'd really look the other way, but they'd look down on them, you know and they didn't want them...

[interrupted by a phone call]

R: Now this is a little confusing because they repealed this in '33 or '34?, because they didn't get cars on here until '33 and I know that there were cars on here that were loaded with the liquor and they were hiding it. I was old enough...by then I was in my early teens and I remember being in on some of them just as an observer.

N: The law may have been repealed in Washington and not have kicked in here..

R: There's something about it, because I know the cars were on here, fast cars, one of them was a Jordan...

N: Never heard of a Jordan.

R: ...a Jordan and it was built up and I drove it, in fact. I started driving when I was twelve. But anyway, thirteen, actually, but the accelerator was, you know, very long to go down, but you think of it having more speed, which it doesn't actually, but you think of it that way. If it goes farther [the accelerator] why you think it goes faster. But it did and it was a peppy car, and it did, compared with a Pontiac six-cylinder Pontiac and it was one of their cars they used to haul booze in.

BREAK - The discussion went on the how to build a fish weir and other aspects of island life.

[C 1859

March 1, 1998 at Jack Leach's home in Islesboro, Maine

Nancy: You're on, Jack. I understand that your dad was a superior rum runner, that he had a great reputation and really could produce results.

Jack: Well, that's what I've heard and I guess he traveled through some of the islands, you know, he and several others, he had..., I don't know who the boss was or anything, but there were four or five of 'em, they were in it together, so over around the end of Cape Rosier, Hog Island, you know, there used to be a cave or something, they used to hide stuff in, so I've heard.

N: That's so great...

J: There was four or five of those places that they would hide it, you know.

N: I understand that Resolution Island was a big drop.

J: I think so. Down to the south, I think Laselle's Island, wasn't it? Laselle's or one of those islands off to the east of there?

N: Makes sense.

J: But there was quite a few uh... mixed up in it. Uh, there was old Lee McCorison, do you ever remember him?

N: I never knew him but his granddaughter, no, Sharon Weiss, took the same course I'm taking and her dad said, "You should talk with Lee McCorison", because she wanted to ask about just general stories about Islesboro and she talked to Mary Grinnell about Ryder's Light and that kind of thing, and then she thought she'd talk to Lee McCorison about rum-running and this was in about 1980 and he wouldn't talk. Isn't that funny?

J: For heaven's sakes.

N: I don't know if somebody had something on him or whatever, but he wouldn't talk, but Robin Quimby was happy to talk [to her].

J: Yes, Robin would know something about it, you know, but Lee did too, and I've heard tell that Lee would steal some if he could.

N: Well, that was what Ralph said, there was a lot of that going on.

J: And then Foster Ober, he knew where you'd...you don't know Foster, do you, anyway, I've heard the same about him. Emery Gray, you remember Emery Gray?

N: No I'm a youngun here, only 25 years...

J: Well he was captain for Clarence Dillon, I believe. Ralph knows him, he came from Cape Rosier.

N: He's one of Ralph's relatives, Ralph's from Cape Rosier.

J: Ralph's house, you could look from Emery's house over to Ralph's house over that Cape, and I know Emery used to come back and forth all the time from the Cape, and he was captain for Clarence Dillon.

N: I think maybe Clarence was happy to have access...

J: That could be too, but they'd bring a lot of it in wherever they dared to bring it but I'm sure a

lot of it come in over Dark Harbor wharf, down in there, you know.

N: Right. That was another thing I heard about your dad from somebody else, I don't know if it was Ralph, that a load came in and everyone knew what was on it and your dad was down at the wharf and he was stuck dealing, and everyone else just evaporated.

J: I guess—I don't know all that much about it. I might have been born, but I wasn't born in '33.

N: Well that was the last year of Prohibition so you...

J: Well, here I am telling stories...and a lot of the old fellows you know, Pretty Pendleton and a lot of them, they always knew where they, on a Sunday if they wanted a bottle they always knew where they could go.

N: Would they get grain alcohol or would they get hard Canadian whiskey or..

J: I don't know, I think it was alcohol and you had to water it down so you could drink it.

N: Yea, I understand it could blind you.

J: Yea.

N: But it was like bathtub gin kind of stuff...

J: I believe so.

N: I wonder where that was made, whether it was Canadian or whether it was good old stills going everywhere. Do you have any idea?

J: I wouldn't have an idea but I would think it was Canadian made, wouldn't you?

N: Yea.

J: Just guessing.

Jackie: That stuff they used to bring in in caskets, didn't they, Jack, I've heard tell?

J: Well, they'd bring it in any way they can, any way they could smuggle it by those agents, you know.

N: Were there any good stories about raids, that you know about, where there...

J: Not really. There were....I'm sure there was some.

N: Apparently it would come in in sort of like those cans of gas that you get.. 3 gallon tins. And some probably came in bottles...

J: I've seen the cans, they were about that square and five gallon high, you know what I mean?

N: Oh really, ok, sort of like the kind you'd get gas in now, not quite the same?

J: Not quite the same, these were square, you know.

N: Square, interesting.

J: With that thing on the top? I've seen one or two, years ago. I don't know where I've seen them but I know I have.

N: Now I understand people would go along the shore and they'd see lights on the beach at night and they would know something was up?

J: Yup. Yup, but a lot of it went on, you know, especially on the east side...

N: Yup, that makes sense. Well we heard a story about Maitland Alexander again, when he lived at Greylodge, you know, where the Rothchilds live now. Well, he had a load coming in on the *Viator* and the coast guard was standing off so his crew threw it overboard so they couldn't get caught with it. It washed up on the beach a couple of days later and his neighbor took it all, and he came down to claim it, Maitland Alexander, to claim it, and the neighbor said, sorry, salvage rights and took all of it.

J: I guess that happened a lot, too. And of course all that was done at night, or a good part of it, or a foggy day or some darn thing.

N: Now did your dad have a boat?

J: Yes, I guess one or two, years ago, you know a speed boat type of thing. I don't imagine it was too elaborate, but I guess he did.

N: Do you know anything about the hull, did it had wonderful hidden places or anything?

J: I would imagine, but I don't know.

N: I wondered if as a kid you found yourself playing in places that boats don't usually have.

J: Oh no, we never had a boat in my time, you know, but they used to...what ..I've heard these stories, you know...

Jackie: What was the time you father supposedly jumped off some bridge?

J: Well that was...

Jackie: When they were after him.

J: the Verona Island Bridge. As far as I know, certainly no one ever jumped off the Bucksport

bridge, but I guess he climbed down and climbed in underneath it, you know, and some darn thing, the coast guard was after him or something, police or whatever.

N: Do you know if that was at night or during the day?

J: No, I don't, but then they used to transport a lot of that in some of these cars, you know they had the rumble seat, these coups, and one thing or another, they'd go all over hell.

N: Yup, I guess fast cars probably improved rum-running considerably.

J: Oh I'm sure it did.

N: I understand that your dad was a guest of the county for a while.

J: Yes, I guess two or three times.

N: Well...you...it's an honorable profession, I consider it a very honorable profession.

J: Gosh, I don't know...

N: It just goes against nature that they would make a law, you know.

J: I would think at times it must be terrible scary, a fellow would want a good heart.

Jackie: Well it couldn't have been very good for your mother. I...

J: Well, let's see, I was born in '33, '32, I don't know, you know, so this was previous to that I think.

N: Are you the oldest child?

J: Yup

N: Um, I understand that you would see a light on the shore and somebody would be unloading a boat and they would come up and carry as many of these little cans as they could and put them in the woods and go back. But you would have seen the light, so you would scurry down, and while they were getting another load, you'd just take half of them. And make your own little stash in the woods.

J: I've heard of that a number of times. But ah, I'm just trying to think, there were one or two of these little islands that have these little caves in 'em you know and I guess they worked out pretty well until a few people found out where they were, you know. sd But my grandfather I guess was in on it to some extent. He helped the old man, you know.

N: Well it was lucrative and those were tough times. Depression.

J: Yes depression times. Ralph must have helped you quite a lot.

N: Yes he did.

J: He would remember more than me.

N: He was ten and eleven and twelve, and so he wasn't part of it but he heard the stories and he saw some funny boats that sure did ride high when they were empty. They had extra...He said some cars rode pretty high when they were empty too, that they were supersprung cars.

J: Yea, well they had all kinds. Those old big Buicks you know, remember those, with those two, oh shoot, spare tires, one on each side. Christ they'd haul five tons, seems so.

BREAK

N: Do you know did they off-load out to sea or did they stash on the island before they....

J: Oh I think they had a place to hide it, you know, and leave it for a while. Right here in Charlotte's Cove, I've heard them say they used to come in down there.

N: Uhuh, that makes sense.

J: No, they all knew where they could get some most of the time, the way I have it figured out, the little bit I knew of it.

N: And did the islanders here take it to the mainland and sell it or did they just take care of them here?

J: Oh no, I think they took it to the mainland and sold it, a good part of it. I don't think at that point in time there was people here that really could afford it, do you, the ordinary people?

N: Right. That would have been the grain alcohol, you know. I'll bet it wasn't dry here.

J: Oh God, no, gee whiz.

BREAK

N: The thing that Ralph said was that people had guns but they were never used in anger against people. If you saw a light, a spotlight that was being trained on your beach or something, and you were working around there, you might try to blow out the light, but you'd never...there was never shoot-outs, you know. Nobody on the island, I don't want to put words in his mouth, but he was saying essentially, but nobody on the island, they might really get angry with each other with this stealing and stuff, but they never...it never turned vicious.

J: I never heard of any guns used.

N: I mean...I'm...maybe they may have never spoken to people again, but it was considered just generally fair game. Does that make sense?

J: I guess so, yes, I believe it does.

Jackie: I've never heard of any violence in any of the stories I've heard either.

J: No, I haven't either.

N: I wondered if you have ever been aware of any animosities that have carried on long term or whether it was just a wonderful game that everyone was playing to the best of their ability.

J: I think that would about cover it. I know I've heard a lot of people say different ones about Lee McCorison. He never would gamble much, he always knew where he could steal it, you know.

Jackie: Well that was true of Lee in most anything.

J: Oh yes. He just had that reputation.

N: Well, I called Sharon, and she ended up marrying his son and I thought that was very funny, you know, or his grandson, so I called her to tell that I was using what she had done as an undergraduate and I was building on it. She thought that was hysterical. And then I say, so um...I've never met her, so I said, "so has over the years, did Lee ever loosen up about the stories. Once you became part of the family, for instance, did any of those stories come down at all?", and she said "not a word."

J: Well...

N: He probably knew better if he was one of the ones at the other end of the system.

J: Well, when did Lee die, Lee sort of disassociated himself from Jenny and all those people, you know, after Buddy died, and Charlotte (Robinson) and all of them, so if he had been alive I don't believe he would have told them a damn thing. And he would have laughed all the way if he thought he could help 'em and wouldn't, you know. Well that's just that type of person... he was odd, same as we're all funny.

N: That's right, we've all got our little quirks.

**BREAK**

J: If I thought of something here, I'd write it down, but as I say, Ralph's going to help you more than me.

N: So your dad sort of never sat around and chuckled and told stories about his exploits. 'Cause he must have had some real adventures if he got....

J: You know, lots of times they'd play poker, he and Charlie Field and Amasa Williams and all those old fellas, you know, like the boys do today, and they always had drinks, you know, and I'm sure that was all thrashed over, but you see I was never around, but 'acourse a good many of them passed away.

N: I understand Mrs. Field's house, you know where the Fentresses are, you know, that used to have steel pilings.

J: Well, it still does, you know.

N: But this was used for rum-running too, their dock.

J: I'm sure it was. Far as I could determine from a lot of the stories, all the stuff came this way, you know, from the easterly direction. So, you know, Deer Island [sic], you know, and Brooksville, Cape Rosier, all of Castine up along there, I'm sure there was a lot of it going on.

N: I wonder if they ever ran up up to Bangor...well, if they were doing the Bucksport bridge, ha ha.

J: I'm sure they probably did, and you take all the automobiles involved...

N: Now since autos weren't allowed on this island for so long [up until 1933], for remarkable reasons, they'd have to get it to the mainland [to the cars] for a long time.

J: But then they had those scows, you know, that used to haul automobiles before we had the ferry boats, and I suppose those scows could have quite a lot of that alcohol in the bottom of them. They would make do, those old fellows.

BREAK

N: Ralph was explaining that they had a way of tying these things [the cans of grain alcohol] together so that when they threw them overboard, they'd sink when the coast guard would come and they could throw five or six of these cans overboard, tied together some way, and they'd sink and two or three days later whatever was holding them together would rot or break and they would come up.

J: I've heard that.

N: How could that be?

J: I don't know.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Ralph Gray, in his interview with the author, February, 1998

<sup>2</sup>Edited by Richard W. Judd, Edwin A. Churchill, Joel W. Eastman *Maine The Pine Tree State from Prehisotry to the Present*. University of Maine Press, 1995. Maine Law, page 203.

<sup>3</sup>B. J. Grant, *When Rum Was King, The Story of the Prohibition Era in New Brunswick*. Printed by Fredericton Poetry Books, Fredericton, New Brunswick, 1984. Page 9.

<sup>4</sup>Geoff and Dorothy Robinson, *It Came by the Boat Load*. Privately published by the authors, 1984, in Canada.

<sup>5</sup>W. Henry Hatch, "On the Island: Islesboro Recollections". copyrighted 1991 by the Hatch Family. Page 58.

<sup>6</sup>Islesboro Historical Society, *History of Islesboro, Maine 1893-1983*. Published by The Islesboro Historical Society, 1984.

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**Notes on Lecture by David A. Walker**  
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Lecture given at the Penobscot Marine Museum in Searsport, Maine, April 28, 1998

Mr. Walker solved the problem of how to counter-weight the boxes of liquor when they were thrown overboard, by tying a 50 lb. bag of salt to it which would dissolve in a day or two, allowing the crates to rise to the surface. this was a question I cam across doing my oral histories.

Canada would ship liquor to the French island of St. Pierre legally, where it could then be shipped anywhere legally. Canadian bills of lading usually showed the Caribbean islands as the destination, the vessels simply would never get there because they'd be empty. If the vessels stood off outside the 12-mile limit, the transaction was legal for them. While Canada also had Prohibition laws, distillers could still make liquor for sale to people other than Canadians. Mr. Walker credited this sort of moral compromise as a totally Canadian phenomenon, where compromise suits people very well. Those vessels which received it and ran it into Maine waters were not legal. Crews on the Canadian vessel worked two weeks on and two weeks off. The money was good, \$500 a month for the Captain, \$400 for the mate and radio operator, down to \$250 for deck hands - all for two weeks work. At Christmas time however, the demand was so great that they worked the entire month.

Several small shipyards in Nova Scotia started building the vessels in 1926 and one little place, Metegan? could have six ships under construction at any given time. It took 18 span of oxen to pull the engine for one of these ships from the railroad yard the eight miles to the ship yard. Lunenberg was another building center. The liquor was decanted into containers which fit into canvas bags and then was packed in cardboard and straw to fit the contours of the ships.

Reo I and Reo II, Casassa, Irene, and other vessels were named by him. The Casassa stopped at Stockton Springs and was captured. All transactions were cash and carry. It cost about \$6000 to build a boat and another \$6000 to pay for the engine. The company Fairbanks Morse, an engine building business, I think, was named as owner of the boats, or at least held the mortgages.

There are still feelings of animosity and rivalries in Nova Scotia from that time. The violence of the system in the United States didn't sit well with the Canadians either. Mr. William Caesar Cavalini(sp?) of Massachusetts (Harwichport?) said that even though he loved Nova Scotia, he felt better living in the United States away from his former employers. Mr. Walker could get no names of upper echelon leaders for these smuggling rings.

Boat structure was interesting, with metal walls for the wheel house, and space between the wooden inside walls. The space was filled with sand to slow down bullets. There were also shutters to cover the ports of the wheel house and the ports were very small. The most important feature needed for these vessels was a low profile, very low, so the mast for the radio antenna was minimal, the wheelhouse was low and the lookout station was constructed lightly to reduce its visibility. The wheel house was located in the center of the vessels with the engine positioned

beneath. The hold was divided into four sections, with the engine centrally located. Crew quarters were next, and the holds for the liquor were fore and aft. The crew quarters were very simple, but as Mr. Walker said, the men were coming off fishing smacks and it was all the same to them. There were no secret spaces or false floors as there were in Maine vessels, because the Canadian vessels were not breaking the law. The boats were seaworthy but very wet and they pounded and rolled. Since speed was up to 12 knots, the spray and pounding were very unpleasant. Mr. Walker had 30 slides, mostly of the boats, one showing winter conditions with ice built up on the foredeck. Another slide showed the 18 span of oxen pulling an engine along a dirt road to the boatyard.

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## Excerpt from Interview with Aldiverd Norton

Oct. 23, 2998

Interviewer: Nancy Alexander

**Characters:** Ralph (Gray), Ralph Leach, Jack Leach, Emery Gray, Uncle Dudley Howe, and Dr. Alexander. Others are explained in the conversation.

N: Absolutely, Well, I didn't know if you had, if you remembered anything about Prohibition.

A: Sure I remember upon it. Ralph..

N: Ralph has got some good stories and so does Jack Leach.

A: Ralph Leach was, I think it was Ralph Leach was the station agent over there on the island.

N: Yes he was.

A: That's where they stored all the liquor.

N: He really had some adventures.

A: Yea. Emery Gray was mixed up in it. I guess Emery made a few trips out and brought the booze in the boat, and he stored it in the railway express agency.

N: Were they off-loading from Canadian boats that were standing out?

A: They were outside here.

N: And so that was all legal because that was outside the limits, but once those boats came in, right, they were

D: We weren't on the island then. (-?-) I was over there but Al was in school.

N: Did you ever see how some of those boats were constructed to disguise the fact that they were heavily loaded?

A: Well, they were, they were fast, when they got around and they knew where to go, they could, they could find all the places where they could get through and the coast guard boats couldn't. I know one time during Prohibition there was a, Bill Bickford was one of those Prohibition officers and his brother Henry Bickford was bookkeeper for Father at the boat yard )-?-) and he (-?-) that night, they were all at the boatyard there at Henry Bickford's camp, playing cards, when across the cove they were unloading liquor right into the woods and they never knew about it either. They hid it and and they got it out of there and Bill Bickford at cards, he didn't know what was going on. Those were funny actions.

N: It seems that Ralph told me was that nobody ever really got angry at anybody else because they knew they were all doing something that was illegal, so that there was some stealing from each other.

A: But there was no shooting at anybody.

N: No. Yeh, exactly, there was no violence.

A: No, just a gang. That's all it was.

N: Were they mostly bringing in white lightning or were they bringing in good Canadian scotch?

A: Oh they had good Canadian booze. There was people at Camden handling it. They'd bring it into shore somewhere and when they landed it they set a nice carpet. They'd roll right down to the beach over the rocks. Of course the beach was all slippery. Well, they laid that carpet down and have a place to walk.

Uncle Dudley Howe, who I worked for when I was going to college, he used to come up on the Boston boat and he'd bring it in his hands in a five-gallon can right on the Boston boat.

N: Uncle Dudley sounds like an amazing person. I see pictures of him and hear stories about him.

A: He was a nice man.

N: Well, I'm glad to know that Dr. Alexander wasn't the only one running it. He was in good company.

A: We had that for alcohol in the five gallon can and Sunday morning we used to make gin at our house.

N: What was your recipe?

A: I don't know, he knew how to do it. I was up there helping him, but I don't know how he did it.

N: And then, you wouldn't drink it all, I mean it wouldn't all be drunk by the person who was making it so it got passed on again, is that right?

A: I don't remember that. Probably get all kinds of (-?-). One day Father broke the jug and it all went down the sink. He groaned about that.

D: Bathtub gin.

N: Well, Ralph said that one day, he remembers the recipe to be, one of these containers of white lightning, I guess, I mean that's, what, pure grain alcohol?, and then cut it with four parts water, and then add the juniper berries for flavor. I guess that gave it the gin taste. And then just let it simmer for a while.

A: It was all a game, anyhow.

N: Well it's nice that nobody got hurt.

A: Some of those, I guess some (-?-?) shooting (-?-) once in a while. I know some of those boats. They had a steel bulkhead right back of the wheelhouse.

N: Oh really?

A: Boilerplate, down in the stern so if they fired at them, the bullets just bounced off. I can't remember the names of any of those boats.

N: Were those the Canadian boats or the Maine boats?

A: They were American boats.

C 1860

[NA 2607]

**Interview**  
with  
**Aldiverd Norton**  
and  
**Dorothy Norton**

**October 23, 1998**  
**Camden, Maine**

ANT 425  
Dr. Edward Ives

Nancy Alexander,  
Interviewer

### Transcription of Aldiverd Norton Interview

The following interview occurred on October 23, 1998 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Aldiverd Norton, 21 Mountain St. in Camden, Maine. Mrs. Norton was present during the interview and fortunately joined it. The Nortons lived for many years on 700 Acre Island in the town of Islesboro. He took over a boatyard there from his father Sidney. They have two children, David who lives with his family in Boothbay, and Anson, recently married, who fishes and caretakes on the island of Criehaven in the summer and goes to Florida as a carpenter in the winter. Mr. Norton owned the boatyard through the Second World War and later, even after losing a lung and most of his stomach to disease. He sold it in the 60s, I believe. Mr. Norton is not well and is dependent on constant oxygen. The tape is not clear, and even with the microphone pointed directly at him and away from me, his voice is very liquid and difficult to understand. He is very cheery, however, and has a wonderful sparkle.

I had asked for this interview because of my interest in 700 Acre Island and my difficulty in finding a place there called Norton's Island, inhabited by a Mr. Vincent Norton in 1855 who appears in the 1860 Islesboro census. I hoped that Al Norton would be able to help me. Mrs. Norton was a little anxious during the interview, frequently checking her watch, which helped keep me somewhat on track. They were both very helpful.

I have made a transcription with some editing of words to avoid repetition and false starts. A = Al Norton, D = Dorothy, N = Nancy. I have made double spaces for short pauses and bigger spaces for longer pauses. Some gestures and sound effects are noted with italics. When a word or phrase was undistinguishable, I have noted (-?-), with more ?? if it is lengthy. Sadly, there are many of these symbols.

#### Transcription Begins

N: [The tape started late - or the interview started early.] On October 23rd, talking with Mr. and Mrs. Al Norton. It's Dorothy, is that right? (*a nod*) Let me play this back and see if we're working. We'll just put that down here and hope for the best. (*laughter*)

N: Well, so you have family based in Matinicus, is that right?

A: Right. That's where my grandfather came from, was Matinicus.

N: And what was your grandfather's name?

A: Same as mine, Aldiverd.

N: OK. And then your dad was Sidney?

A: Right. Yuh. And they had my father Sidney and they had three daughters, I guess. And there was Ruth and Rena, and Cora.

N: And did you know all of them, Mrs. Norton?

A: You knew all of them, didn't you

D: Yes.

A: And, uh, my aunt, Aunt Ruth, went to New York and she was a secretary for a an explorer, I can't think of his name. She used to go over to the American Museum of Natural History and he used to go over to China and all around and send these reports home and she took care of all that and typed it all up and she worked there in the office there.

N: Oh my goodness.

A: and she'd [blip in the tape] the next one. I can't think of the, getting old, I can't think of his name. He was a he was an explorer. He was over in China and all those places out there.

N: So he wasn't one of our explorers that was doing the Arctic or Antarctic, from Maine? This was another explorer?

A: *Nod and murmur of agreement.*

N: How exciting to have a secret life when you went to work to find out what adventures he'd had.

A: But there were no Nortons on Acre Island that I know of until my father went there. But there were were Edgar Knowles owned, owned a lot of the property on there and I guess he was one of the older residents.

N: I have a map here, of some of the, of the island at different times. And here is one from, what is this date 1910, and you see here's a Knowles.

A: Right.

N: And those, those places are houses.

A: Yup.

N: Is one of his houses still standing?

A: No, it fell down, or they tore it down.

N: Huh.

D: Did they tear the old house down on the hill?

N: You know, I think they did.

D: Because Al bought all that land and those places too, and the Knowles place too and the other side of the island.

N: Oh my word!

A: And then I sold it and of course the boat yard was [tape blip] right down in there and uh

D: I know my house is still standing.

N: Now what's your house? Where were you living on the island? (-?-)

D: I was right above the yard.

N: So that's where Carol lives now, maybe?

D: No, she lives in the cape cod.

A: She lives right up in this area, here.

N: OK because I know Verna Dyer has a house.

D: Yuh, but, There's nobody in mine. We built that when we were married.

N: Oh did you really? How old were you, Mr. Norton, when you moved to the island?

A: When we moved to the island? Well I was I was just a kid. I don't know when I...

D: You lived on Bayview Street. You didn't live on the Acre Island but the summer.

A: Yup, we were on Bayview Street. The rest of my I didn't get over to Acre Island, just in the summer (-?-).

N: (*laughter*) What a great place to be a child. That must have been wonderful. But did your dad work you pretty hard?

A: Did he what?

N: Did he work you pretty hard or were you hanging around in bare feet fishing and messing around?

A: Yuh, I was going to school and learning all I could about boat building, and engines and anything else I could think of.

N: This map is from 1890. And you can now those houses were on Knowles land but you know

D: Our house was around in here, right up there. (-?-)

N: Well, I'm wondering whether there any when you were there as a child or was there any still, coastwise schooner trade or was everybody engines? They must have been diesels by then.

A: No coastwise schooners that I remember. Well there was schooners coming into Camden carrying coal.

N: Is that what they carried?

A: Yuh,(-?-). Well, they were bringing those in when I was in high school.

N: Gee. When would they have..?

A: That's how the coal all came into Camden, those big vessels and stuff. They unloaded the coal and unloaded on both sides of the harbor.

N: Both sides?

A: Yes, along where Wayfarer is and also on the Bayview Street side.

N: Were they using schooners to move granite anymore? Where they still using schooners to move granite then, or was the granite...of course they wouldn't be in Camden anyway.

A: No, no granite, no the only schooners who came in here was loaded with coal.

N: Huh, amazing. There's no railroad track is there, in Camden.

A: No no railroad track. The railroad track ended in Rockland. Then they had the street cars coming up from Rockland and Camden. I guess those street cars went beyond Rockland to Thomaston, didn't they?

D: I think so.

N: So they really were just, were they electric streetcars?

A: Electric street cars.

N: Did anybody else live on Acre Island when you people were living on there in the summers? What were the other, I mean I guess...

A: Mrs. Chandler was there.

N: She's listed on there someplace.

D: And the Gibsons were there. They used to come call on us, Mrs. Gibson, always came to see us when she first came on the island. *(laughter)* And David, our oldest boy, always used to climb on Mr. Gibson's lap, and they used to say David was the only one who wasn't afraid of him because he was a big man and David never was afraid of him.

N: *(Laughter)* Oh that's wonderful. So were there any Philbrooks still alive or on the island that you remember at all?

D: I don't think so, I don't think there was anybody on that side of the island. There were some Nowells and Thomas (-?-).

A: I didn't know old George Nowell owned property way up on the north end of Acre Island. I thought all the Nowells was way down on the south end.

N: Well, he may have bought that piece from the Thomases at some time, which is an old family from the the 1800s on there, but I guess he sold it.

A: Well there was a different Nowell up that, G. M. Nowell and A. L. A. Nowell down on the south end of Acre Island.

N: Well they were all islanders, right, I mean they weren't summer folk. Is that right? Where they islanders or summer people, the Nowells?

A: The Nowells, they were summer people I think.

D: The Knowles?

A: Not Nowells, but Knowles.

N: No N-O-W

A: Not Knowles but N-o-w-e-l-l s.

D: Oh.

N: That's right.

N: Do you have any idea where there are cemeteries on that island?

A: Well there's one there's one over there but I can't tell you exactly where it is.

D: Probably all grown up now.

A: One of them got a good sized monument on it from some.

D: that's on the...

A: someone that was killed in the Civil War, I think.

D: That's on what we called the Lincolnville side. Of course Al owned all that right straight through when he owned the boatyard. He bought it.

N: Well it's beautiful.

D: and then he (-?-) sold it all the yard to Jack Emery.

N: So you had essentially the whole southern end of the island.

D: The whole thing.

N: Well, now there's a big field up at the top of the hill on the Lincolnville side. There's a big cellar hole and an area where someone has been taking gravel. I don't know if that's Ethan Emery now doing that, or but I just wondered if that's where the school would had been. Do you remember the school building or the..

D: There wasn't anything there when I was there. I used to visit over there when Al's mother was alive and I went to grade school with Ruth.

N: What years would that have been?

D: That was in the early thirties. I graduated in '33.

N: From high school.

D: In Camden.

N: So you, did you grow up here in Camden?

D: Um hum. I lived in that house over there [*indicating the house next door*] when I was two years old, 19 Mountain St. and during the world war, (-?) my grandmother owned this place too and so we moved over here, my mother and I. And Al graduated from the University of Maine in 1935.

N: Well, that was the same year my father graduated from college.

D: And we were married in 1936.

N: Oh my word.

D: 62 years.

A: I don't know if you want a hard job if you went to Belfast or the court house where they have all the records kind of thing but.

N: I think that's what I'm going to have to do.

A: They got things computerized anymore (-?-). I've been up there looking for things, minor things, a lot of work.

N: And they're not going to computerize that stuff. They're going to It will take years before they can.

A: They 've got all the transfers, of course from one person to another when the property was sold.

N: Right.

A: and the descriptions.

N: So I can't figure out where Norton's Island, or what they're calling Norton's Island, is because she could get there easily so the Mussel Ridge Channel Norton's Island is too far away. Her little brothers could row her over there in an afternoon, so that's the tough part for me. I don't

A: (-?--?) Some of those island, out by Brackett's Channel,

N: Oh Job and Minot's and stuff?

A: Job and Minot's

N: I'm wondering, maybe she was on Job.

A: Kelloggs.

N: Yup. Ohhh, have you seen what's been going on on Minot's Island, from, you know this young man, Dan Thorne, bought the island from Jack Dreyfus and he has done a number on that island. He didn't like the height of the ceiling in the big house so he raised the whole house a foot and a half. And uh, and it's beautiful, he's just done a beautiful job.

One map I have and I don't have that one with me, shows that Warren Island and Spruce Island are connected to 700 Acre..

A: Yuh, they are.

N; You can walk over ?

A: You can walk over either one of them at low tide. It was easy to get from Warren's Island to Spruce or Spruce Head Island, Spruce Island, if you get across there at high tide there used to be some water but not very much. And at one time, they had that gut blocked off because Rose Cleveland used to ride in her carriage right up to Spruce Island.

N: From Acre Island?

A: Yup.

N: Oh my word..

A: And they opened it up again, but there used to be a road across there.

N: You know, I wonder if maybe that's where it is, maybe she was on Spruce Island, because there's one part of these letters where she's walking with Mr. Norton and she feels shy and uh, so he goes across from one island to another, it says "I took the road and he stayed on the beach", or something like that, because he knew she was feeling very shy while he was taking, you know, walking her home and they, so they closed off that gut between Acre island and Warren Island. Did they do that for fishing purposes

so they could set weirs in there, do you think, or do you..?

A: Not while I was over there. *(Dorothy offers something -?-)*

N: Cause I know that Ralph Gray said that he used to have a weir up in there after the war. Well, I think maybe you've just solved my problem *(laughter)*. That would be wonderful.

D: See Rose Cleveland was President Cleveland's sister.

N: Is that, I knew there was a relationship but I didn't know what it was.

D: It wasn't his wife, was it, Al? It was his sister.

A: No.

N: And she never married?

D: They were all gone by the time we were there.

N: When you were there were there so many trees on the island, or was it open, grassier?

A: Well, Ralph Reed and Ira Reed was, cut all the pulp wood off.

N: Oh really?

A: Yup they cut ah, well Reed, Ira Reed from Bangor, bought a lot of it. He cut a lot of wood. He had some wood choppers down there, I don't know where they came from, Bangor, I guess or somewhere. And uh, they, I guess they were in this area up in here *(showing the map)*, he cut all the land.

N: Up in there, OK I'll write that down,

A: And they cut down down here on this end.

N: The Nowells lot and pretty much on the Ames-Maris area. How interesting.

A: Yup they cut that down in there.

N: Did they barge it off?

A: They just, they bought and then they sold some of it but he (-?-?) the wood too.

N: So, I thought maybe it was a lot more open further back, the way Islesboro was, you know, and then people just let the trees grow back up, but you're saying it was pretty treed. It was pretty..

A: They cut a lot of pulp wood over there all cut up for (-?-) and take it over to the paper mill up there at Bucksport

N: How did they get it up to the mill, do you know? did they?

*[Sadly I cannot make out the answer or recall the answer, except something about stuffing logs onto a schooner of some kind.]*

A: They had a dock up there in the gut between Acre Island and Warren's Island and they had a ramp built up there out of logs and those schooners would go in and they would haul that wood down and tuck it in to them and go with it.

N: This is the map which has all the (-?-) *(showing the property map to Dorothy)*

D: Here's the Nowells, the Nowells, their house burned while I was on the island, their big house.

N: I heard about that. And that was their summer house?

D: And um, I think, did that house burn, but the big cottage burned, because what was his name, Andy something, they were on the roof shingling...(-?-)

A: What, down at the Nowell House down at the south end?

D: Yes, but they were shingling and it got afire.

A: See he was up there smoking or something, and it got away.

D: Did they live in Rose Cleveland's great house there?

A: No they lived in the small house. There was nobody living in that house when it burned. That was some fire and there was no way to put it out.

N: Oh no. I bet not.

A: Just to have it burned, burned itself out.

D: That's right, the house that belongs to Bill Bohne. They called us this summer.

N: That's the little cape?

D: That's the house that faces Camden way down on the end there. It might have been the Emmets. There wasn't anybody over there when I got married. Except the Gibsons, and their caretakers, the Durkees.

N: There were some Durkees over there? Were they the caretakers, or?

D: Yes, he was from Canada, Bowman Durkee it was, and

A: Bowman was the caretaker.

D: And they had a cat and the Gibsons had three (-?-).

N: That must have been quite a lively household.

D: It was, it was great fun. Gee, I can't remember all their names, but... there were the youngest the (-?-), and there was Bowman and what was the other one? Decker.

A: There was Decker.

D: Decker, there were three of them that lived there, and uh,

N: and they took care of that house and grounds and

D: And the Durkees lived in the house where (? Lloyd and Verna ?) and, where Carol, I guess she lives there now.

N: Yup, I'm not sure where.

D: I haven't been over there but just once since I left. I've never been back in the house. I couldn't go. It was my house, the only house I ever had.

N: So...

D: And then we sold it and built that boat over there (*indicating a painting*).

N: What was the name of that boat?

D: The *Norn*,

A: The *Norn*.

N: My husband talks about this boat and he talks about you. He remembers that boat very well.

D: Well the one that Charlie probably remembers is that one done there (*indicating a photograph*).

N: Well, he remembers a boat called the *Norn*.

D: Well that's the *Norn*.

N: Were they both the *Norn*?

D: That was the old one that we sold and this is the fiberglass one.  
(*confused with two speaking, can't separate*)

A: The wooden one, I built that one right after the , right after the war.

N: Where is it now, do you know?

D: Down here in the harbor.

N: That's what I thought

A: Called the *Acturus*.

N: OK.

A: It was built right at the end of the war, when the war was over, we built it.

N: You build it over at the yard?

A: Yes, the yard.

D: I don't know whether we ever, we didn't have, we had that boat, the new one, after we sold the yard.

A: Its made of fiberglass.

N: This one, Is that a Banks, a Grand Banks?

D: No, it's a Bristol 42.

N: Really, cause we had a sailboat that was a Bristol 40.

D: can(-?-) And then we went to Florida on trips,

N: No

D: The two of us.

N: Did you really?

D: Yes.

N: Good for you!

A: I don't know how many trips we made it in.

D: About twelve, I guess. We kept her at Wayfarer the first year to see if we liked her.

N: Wow, she looks so comfy.

D: (-?-?) Wayfarer??

A: We would use the inland waterway, sometimes some was outside and some was inside.

N: How wonderful.

A: After you get to, after you get to uh, where we go outside to where we get to the Chesapeake Bay then you go inside, but it gets, it's all outside until you get down there.

N: Right. Oh that sounds like a wonderful trip to take.

A: It is.

D: We left here in October, the last of September, and we came back in May.

N: Perfect.

D: We closed the house up.

N: That boat looks so comfortable, too.

D: It was all teak inside the boat.

*(Two speakers, couldn't catch it. Something about teak.)*

D: ..an electric stove, an electric refrigerator and it had a big generator. We used to anchor a lot.

N: I wondered where, if you stayed in one place or if you were on the move.

D: No.

A: We stayed in one place after we got to Florida, ah, but we went down to New Smyrna Beach.

D: But we went up to Key West and (Mackerel's?) island and way up to (-?-) Light and then we tied up the boat and stayed in New Smyrna because we had a lot of friends there.

(-?) And then I would work in the library.

N: Look at you, you really are a librarian aren't you? *(laughter)*

D: I have to go to work, this afternoon. *(laughter)*

A: Yes she worked at the library down there in New Smyrna for a long time.

My friend down there in New Smyrna lives in Virginia. (-?-) He 's 94 years old. He sold his boat and he sold his house in New Smyrna Beach. He said he was, he said he couldn't go fishing down there so he was going to stay in the house in Virginia (-?) so he sold the house down there and he sold the boat, the whole works.

D: Last weekend he called up, he was in Bangor. He and his son, he was a doctor, he was going to Bar Harbor and they were going on the Cat.

N: Oh ho ho ho!

D: He wanted to see, and Al, he would have loved to go if he was able, to see what it's like.

N: It is unbelievable.

D: And so we haven't heard from him, but we were so surprised to hear from him when he called up and well they call each other at Christmas time.

A: He picked a bad week to come up. It was raining, it was

D: It wouldn't cooperate.

A: When they flew into Bangor they lost their baggage, their luggage.

N: Oh no.

A: It finally came and they delivered it to the hotel where they were staying and then they drove down to Bar Harbor and got on that Cat. He just wanted the trip.

N: Well, we took it, in June.

A: He and his son, he just wanted to see it. That's all he wanted to do.

N: That's wonderful.

Uh, I have a bit of news that might be sort of fun for you. You know that Earl MacKenzie built his, you know Earl MacKenzie? Louise's son, he's built that wonderful new sailboat and he wants to take people on cruises, but what was he going to do with his water taxi, the *Quicksilver*? Well, Charlie's brother Sandy, bought it and Sandy is a licensed captain and ah, he's having a ball. He's got a run at 6:30 in the morning and he has runs at 11 o'clock at night and he takes duck hunters out. He'll be doing that this fall, all over Penobscot Bay and he's going to move to Islesboro. He's going to live in the house, the farm house the family has up island and um, his heart is right there. He's having a good time, which is nice. I think Charlie's envious.

D: Where do you live?

N: We live in Ellsworth.

D: Oh you do?

N: Yup, and Charlie is a doctor there and , but we bought a house in Dark Harbor a couple of years ago, and um, it's the Cake House, or Ruthie James used to live there in Ames Cove, sort of next to the yacht club. It's a, a smaller, it's not one of these huge houses. I want a house I can take care of, I can afford, and we love it. And our kids have spent two summers out there, working at the Dark Harbor Shop and being waitresses and it's wonderful.

D: We knew all the Alexanders and uh, *(tape changes sides)* and how is Anne doing?

A: How old is she now? *(from memory when it turned over the tape)*

N: 82 and going strong. She had some big surgery this year but came out of it wonderfully, and so she'd here six months every year and then forces herself to go down to Florida. But she'd like to be here.

D: Is she in the big house?

N: She in the big house um, for some of June, all of July and August and some of September, and then they go to the farmhouse up island and she lives in that for May and October. And ah, she just loves it.

D: (-?-)

N: Well I was wondering if you had any good prohibition stories, because I know Grandpa Alexander, the minister, ran liquor down from Canada in his boat.

D: I used to play the organ in Christ's Church.

N: Oh , did you?

D: And of course I remember Dr. Alexander.

N: What was he like?

D: Well, he was big.

N: Yeah, I'm not sure I would have liked him very much if I had met him.

D: He was (-?-) sweating and he was getting vested but I said something about it was hot and he said, "Oh, I'm getting used to it" and he said, "I knowthat's what's going to happen to me" and he meant he was going to hell and he was just laughing and water was running off him. So I used to play there. I wasn't married then. Ruth got the job for me. (-?) So I remember him. (-?)

and then I played after I was married. And then I was playing over here and going back and forth to the island. I didn't after David was born, I retired back here. And then when Anson came, the younger one by eight and half years later, and he was about a year old I guess, and Al was on the vestry then (-?) and he volunteered that I would play.

N: Oops.

D: I was there seventeen years.

N: Oh my word.

D: And I had the choir.

N: So you ran the choir too.

D: And the children (-?-?). So I moved here, more than on the island (-?-?) I used to back and forth.

N: Really, that must have been very hard, you never knew how to pack and where the.

D: I had to travel on the ferry. But they probably (-?) Buddy McCorison

A: Buddy MCCorison

D: Buddy McCorison always helped me on and off the ferry. I had to climb on (-?-?-?) I used to do it every day, to carry him. (-?) I don't know how I did it, but I did.

N: Absolutely, Well, I didn't know if you had, if you remembered anything about Prohibition.

A: Sure I remember upon it. Ralph..

N: Ralph has got some good stories and so does Jack Leach.

A: Ralph Leach was, I think it was Ralph Leach was the station agent over there on the island.

N: Yes he was.

A: That's where they stored all the liquor.

N: He really had some adventures.

A: Yea. Emery Gray was mixed up in it. I guess Emery made a few trips out and brought the booze in the boat, and he stored it in the railway express agency.

N: Were they off-loading from Canadian boats that were standing out?

A: They were outside here.

N: And so that was all legal because that was outside the limits, but once those boats came in, right, they were

D: We weren't on the island then. (-?-) I was over there but Al was in school.

N: Did you ever see how some of those boats were constructed to disguise the fact that they were heavily loaded?

A: Well, they were, they were fast, when they got around and they knew where to go, they could, they could find all the places where they could get through and the coast guard boats couldn't. I know one time during Prohibition there was a, Bill Bickford was one of those Prohibition officers and his brother Henry Bickford was bookkeeper for Father at the boat yard )-?-) and he (-?-) that night, they were all at the boatyard there at Henry Bickford's camp, playing cards, when across the cove they were unloading liquor right into the woods and they never knew about it either. They hid it and and they got it out of there and Bill Bickford at cards, he didn't know what was going on. Those were funny actions.

N: It seems that Ralph told me was that nobody ever really got angry at anybody else because they knew they were all doing something that was illegal, so that there was some stealing from each other.

A: But there was no shooting at anybody.

N: No. Yeh, exactly, there was no violence.

A: No, just a gang. That's all it was.

N: Were they mostly bringing in white lightning or were they bringing in good Canadian scotch?

A: Oh they had good Canadian booze. There was people at Camden handling it. They'd bring it into shore somewhere and when they landed it they set a nice carpet. They'd roll right down to the beach over the rocks. Of course the beach was all slippery. Well, they laid that carpet down and have a place to walk.

Uncle Dudley Howe, who I worked for when I was going to college, he used to come up on the Boston boat and he'd bring it in his hands in a five-gallon can right on the Boston boat.

N: Uncle Dudley sounds like an amazing person. I see pictures of him and hear stories about him.

A: He was a nice man.

N: Well, I'm glad to know that Dr. Alexander wasn't the only one running it. He was in good company.

A: We had that for alcohol in the five gallon can and Sunday morning we used to make gin at our house.

N: What was your recipe?

A: I don't know, he knew how to do it. I was up there helping him, but I don't know how he did it.

N: And then, you wouldn't drink it all, I mean it wouldn't all be drunk by the person who was making it so it got passed on again, is that right?

A: I don't remember that. Probably get all kinds of (-?-). One day Father broke the jug and it all went down the sink. He groaned about that.

D: Bathtub gin.

N: Well, Ralph said that one day, he remembers the recipe to be, one of these containers of white lightning, I guess, I mean that's, what, pure grain alcohol?, and then cut it with four parts water, and then add the juniper berries for flavor. I guess that gave it the gin taste. And then just let it simmer for a while.

A: It was all a game, anyhow.

N: Well it's nice that nobody got hurt.

A: Some of those, I guess some (-?-?) shooting (-?-) once in a while. I know some of those boats. They had a steel bulkhead right back of the wheelhouse.

N: Oh really?

A: Boilerplate, down in the stern so if they fired at them, the bullets just bounced off. I can't remember the names of any of those boats.

N: Were those the Canadian boats or the Maine boats?

A: They were American boats.

N: They were, going out? Hum. Well I gather that some of the islands, like Hog Island, East Bay islands, had some good caves on them so that they'd stash it there and then Ralph Leach and his gang would go over and get it when they needed it and bring it back, but that was sort of like a warehouse for it too.

Now how did Mr. Gibson get his, do you know? I mean, was that? How did he get a little something to drink? Did he get from, I gather that the butlers were some of the go-betweens in some of the big houses, and uh. How do you negotiate I wonder. Do you have any idea?

A: I have no idea.

N: That's something I haven't been able to figure out yet. I don't know. Is that a painting of Mr. Gibson's for you? (*indicating a landscape oil*) (-?-)

D: That was our wedding present. That's the Knowles house.

A: That's up in the field looking down toward the Gibson place. I guess he was a good artist. When Spruce Island burned, he was right down on the shore painting a picture of it. (*ba, ba*)

D: It didn't take him very long. That was quite a fire. If the wind had changed it would have been a great disaster, but it didn't. It blew away from Acre.

N: When was that, do you remember? Do you remember when that fire was?

A: I don't remember.

D: It must have been in the 40s.

N: It seems to me the 40s.

D: David was (-?-) He was born in '42. (-?-)

N: Interesting.

A: I know Mr. Gibson painted a lot of stuff all over the State of Maine. Merrill. That's when Merrill Young was working for him, why Merrill was driving him around to different places. He painted covered bridges and all kinds of things all over the state. I don't know where all those pictures went to or what he did with them.

D: I think they were around. They had an exhibition and they wanted this picture and it had our name on it, Dot and Al Norton, (-?) I said no.

N: You know, I don't blame you. It's scary to transport something like that, but you never know.

D: And I don't think they wanted the responsibility of it. Our name was on it. And he had a "To Dot and Al Norton, when they were married."

N: Yeah, Anne has one, Anne Alexander Owsley has a painting by him too, and I think it's also of 700 Acre Island but it's not as beautiful as that. A horse and wagon on a hill.

D: I think David wanted that.

A: The way he painted that shadow (-?-). It's almost like a photograph.

N: Yeah really, it's beautiful.

A: He was a great artist, there was no question about it.

D: Where we have two boys, it's hard to know which one to (-?) Of course David he was gone, and Anson says, "Well, I was there more than he was." I guess he did.

N: Now Anson is teaching and fishing, is that right?

D: Well he lives over on Criehaven.

N: In the summers?

D: And he sold his house on Spruce Head this summer. So he has, Wednesday he left in a U-Haul and his new truck (-?-) for Venice, Florida for the winter. (-?) his wife is an RN and he'll be back in April but it seems a long time.

N: I bet.

D: And David lives over in Boothbay and we have two grandchildren and they are both in college.

N: Charlie and I sailed over to Criehaven a few years ago and, um, asked if Anson was around that day and he must have been fishing because he wasn't there. He would have loved to see him. They said, "Oh no, he's out today."

D: He has (-?) caretake (-?) and he does a lot of work for Mr. Kremitz. He has all those houses and Anson does a lot of work for him in the summer time and he looks after them when people come for the weekend.

N: Oh good. I really liked Criehaven. I don't like Matinicus so much.

D: (-?) flies, comes to the mainland. Her daughter lives (-?)

N: Now are there Nortons still living on Matinicus itself?

A: No, there are no Nortons on Matinicus now.

N: Another thing I learned from my letters, was that in the 1850s an enterprising young man from Acre Island, had a sloop and he'd sail it to Matinicus and the fishermen would sell him their fish. And he'd put them in his sloop and then he'd sail the fish to Bangor and sell them. And so he was sort of the middle man. I didn't realize that there would be fish brokers on the Maine Coast in 1850, but ah,

D: (-?Criehaven) And of course Al's grandfather was the lighthouse keeper here and they just had a lot of exhibitions of (-?) library, Have you seen our new???

N: I 've heard about it but I haven't seen it.

D: (-?) it's all underground.

N: And people love it, don't they?

D: Yes and (-?) they had a lot of stuff, from, about it. Negro, It was Negro Island, and All used to stay there to visit his grandfather.

N: Do you know why it was called ? Do you have any idea why it was called Negro Island?

A: Well the story was that a long ago a vessel come in here and there was a Negro cook and when they come by the island, this cook says "That's my island" and they called it Negro island. That's the truth as far as I know, and it's probably true.

D: And then they renamed it later, Curtis Island because they did so much for the town and of course Mrs. Bok.

A: When I was a kid growing up, it was Negro Island.

N: Well that's really..

D: His grandfather was light keeper there for 1907 to 1920.

N: Oh my word.

D: (-?-) six years old.

A: I liked it out there. You could go fishing, he had a nice cow, and he raised some pigs and he had a nice garden.

N: Sounds wonderful for a kid.

D: It wasn't far from his house, right across from

A; He had a little, nice little power boat

D: It was the Lighthouse Service then.

N: that's right.

A: It wasn't the Coast Guard, it was the Lighthouse Service. He started out on Matinicus Rock and he wanted to get nearer to shore.

N: I was going to say, that was pretty lonely.

A: He, my grandfather on Matinicus Rock, and he was a helper, they put a, so he wanted to get nearer to the mainland so they put a lighthouse on Saddleback and they made him the keeper (-?-) and they got a boat built just the way he wanted it. That was a little improvement over Matinicus Rock. So the next move was from there to Negro Island.

N: Oh that's great.

A: I guess he could have gone to Nash Island down east but he didn't want to go there, so they put him on Negro Island and he was there until he retired.

N: I think that I don't want to overstay my welcome. I think I don't want to push my luck with you people.

D: Well I have to go get his lunch pretty soon but I have (-?-)

N: But I hate to, ah, I don't want to wear you out. Are you pretty tough?

A: I think of these things but I'm getting to the age where my memory isn't all that it should be. I think of it and I know it but I can't say the name.

N: Well, can I ask you if, um, I go over this tape and have some further questions, could I make a visit again for some follow-up questions?

A: Yes.

N: I'd really appreciate it. And I will do some checking around and, maybe I'll go over to Acre Island this weekend and see if I can find any remnants of land that, between Acre Island and Warren Island and see if there are, you know, any clues there of there being a road. That would be very wonderful.

A: Well, I remember my father telling about Rose Cleveland riding across there.

N: The other person I might talk to is Miriam Pendleton who, um, who is the last

Philbrook, apparently, and I'm not sure that her Philbrooks were the ones on Acre Island or were the ones on Islesboro. She may give me some ideas and then I can come back and ask you about them.

D: Well, I think he told you about all he knows. We left the island, sold it, and the all the land.

N: Was that hard?

D: What?

N: Selling that or just walking away from all of that? Or were you tired?

D: Well, Anson wanted a piece up by the gut that Al sold (-?-) Anson didn't like it but he wanted a piece of it.

A: Well, I was tired, I

N: You were tired?

A: Just didn't want any more to, just too much business, just more paperwork and everything, and the government was making it more difficult all the time. You were working for the government half the time, and all, and during the war it was all right, I didn't mind it then, while we were building stuff for the Navy, but later on I just got to the point I just didn't want to keep at it. I figured if I was going to make a change and have a few years to do something I wanted to do, I better do it.

N: Yup. I'll bet. Well, I'd say that boat was a wonderful alternative.

A: It was. We had a lot of fun with that boat.

N: I think my husband has this little niggles in the back of his head that he'd like to do something like that some day but, he's not as good on the water as his brother Sandy, and you know, Sandy been spending time with boats and Charlie's a doctor and he'd have to do a lot of learning before he felt he could do that. You are fortunate, you are very fortunate.

D; He's fortunate that I like the water, too.

N: Yes, yes.

D: I always did. I miss the boat, but he wasn't well and so (-?-)

N: Is that boat around at all?

D: No, we sold it down in Florida.

N: Well, I'm not a sailing wife and we had that Bristol 40 sailboat and it was too much for the two of us. I hated holding that boat into the wind while Charlie was up, but last weekend we to Newport and we bought ourselves another sailboat. And it's smaller, very fast, and all the lines come into the cockpit and that way

A: No stuff on deck

N: I feel much better about that. When he was up there and I thought I've got three little

kids down below, I don't want him to fall overboard and, you know, what do I do now. And so, this is much better and he doesn't have to leave the cockpit. So.

A: Perry Coat Smith, down on the south end of Islesboro, he was an architect, a smart man. He had a sailboat.

N: Did you call him Petticoat Smith?

A: Perry Coat Smith

N: Perry Coat Smith.

A: And he, uh, kept that boat for a while and then he tried to trade it with me. He wanted the power boat and he'd give me the sail boat. And he told me he was worried at his age and sailing, he was afraid he might get overboard or something and not get back and so he thought he'd get out of the sail boat and get a power boat. But he sold the sailboat and he had a place down in Florida, he died down there, he had a heart attack the next year. He was a, I liked him very much. He was a darn good engineer and an architect and he and I got along real well.

N: Now, I was going to talk to Robin Quimby. Did you know Robin? Did he ever help out at your place?

A: Well he worked for me for quite a while.

N: That's what I figured.

A: He worked over there in the yard during the War, all during the War. And after the war.

N: Huh. I think it's amazing, he

A: He was the engineer over on the Governor Brann for a while.

N: Well he's just seen the whole evolution of marine engineering hasn't he, from the engines, especially the engines' standpoint. He lives in Augusta.

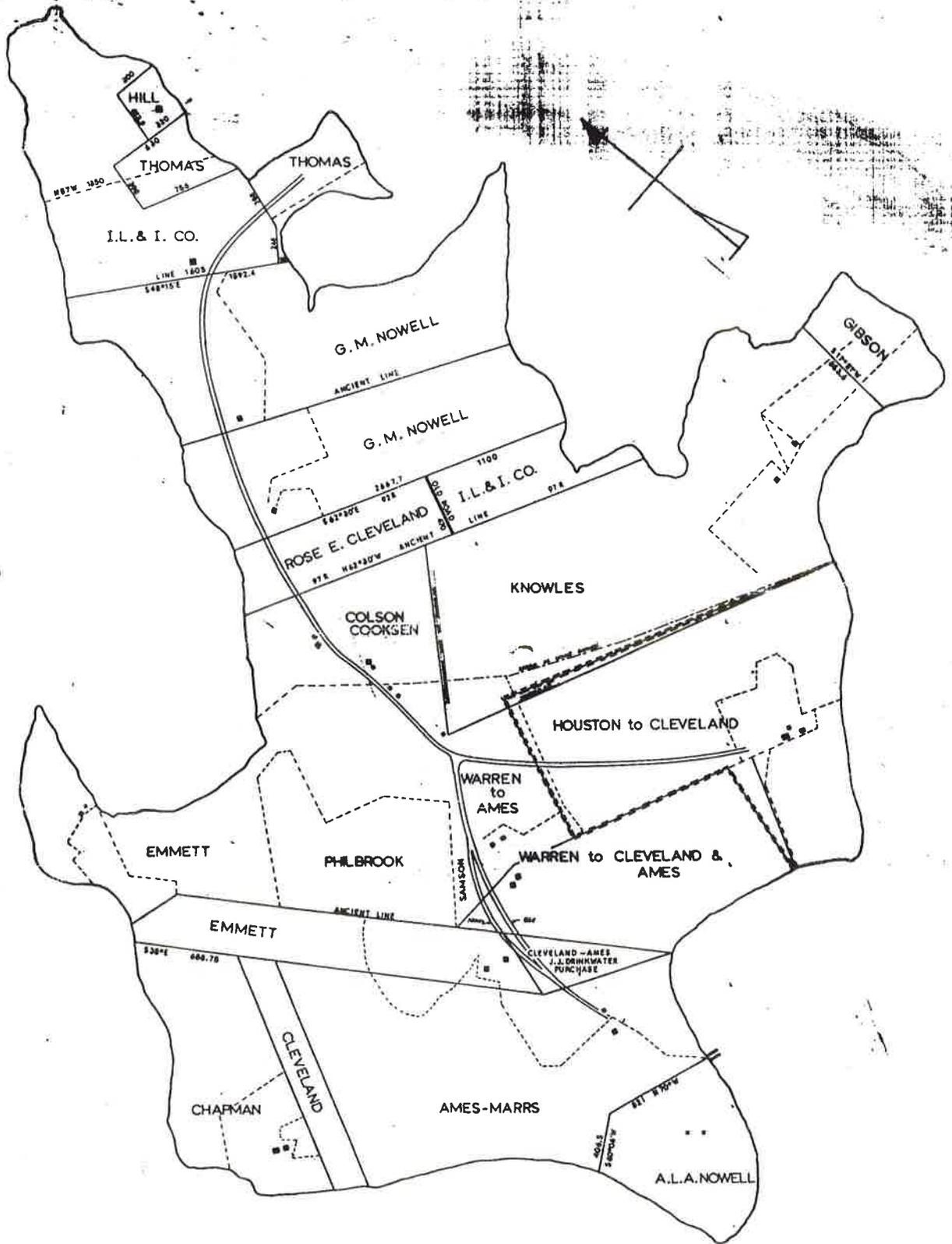
A: His son Charles (-?-) works over that the Cabot, the Lynam-Cabot place over to Thomaston. (-?-) I guess.

N: Oh that's amazing. Yeah, he had some funny prohibition stories too, He said "Oh, I didn't know anything about it. Wasn't, had nothing to do with me" and then he'd go into these stories and you knew that he had his hand a little bit involved, which is really fun.

Well I will leave you in peace and I want to thank you very much for chatting with me.

A: I don't know if we've been any help.

N: Well I think you have.



SEVEN HUNDRED ACRE ISLAND  
ISLESBORO, ME

ENLARGED FROM U.S. COAST SURVEY 12 TIMES

H. P. FARROW C.E. 1910  
SCALE: 2700 to an inch



## Notes on Follow-up to Al Norton Interview

Dorothy Norton

Ralph Gray

On November 11, 1998, I called Dorothy Norton in Camden to ask if I could stop by on the 12th or 13th and ask my follow-up questions of Al and herself. I said it would take only about a half-hour. She preferred helping me over the phone, thinking that Al had offered me all he knew.

I asked what Al had built at the boatyard during the Second World War for the Navy. She said he built buoy boats. I asked what Al's sister's name was, the one whom Dorothy befriended. She said that her name was Ruth. I asked Dorothy why she had had to climb over the side of the ferry *Governor Brann* and she said "That's how you got on. There was no apron." I wondered if the ferry had gone to Acre Island to get her and she said "No, that's just the way it was." I thanked her for her help and hung up.

On November 15, 1998, I spotted Ralph Gray working outside and decided to ask him about those questions I had from my conversation with Al and Dorothy Norton. He said that Al had built landing craft out of special 16-foot plywood at the boatyard during WWII. He said they were for limited use so they didn't have to be made out of steel. I asked him about buoy boats and he had no idea what I was talking about. Ralph never worked at the yard, but he was on the island and knew people who did work there in 1941 and 1942. When he was offered a job there, it was too late and the draft had gotten him. Apparently working at the yard made you draft-proof as it was a defense industry. I asked Ralph about the ferry and climbing over the side. He had no idea what Dorothy meant about it being difficult. The ferry carried cars so you could just walk on. Perhaps Dorothy is thinking of an earlier ferry than the *Governor Brann*. I thanked him for his help.