

St George Historical Society Newsletter

P O Box 14, Tenants Harbor, ME 04860

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An IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

November 2020



(Close up from a real photo postcard from ca. 1900)

The History of the Andrew Robinson House

In 1982 Ruth Hazelton, the great-great-granddaughter of Andrew Robinson, wrote a brief history of the house she lived in and left to the St George Historical Society in her will. The article that follows draws from her recollections:

Andrew Robinson, born in 1779, probably lived his entire life in what is now the Wiley's Corner section of St. George. Andrew was the great-grandson of Dr Moses Robinson, who came to this area in the Scotch-Irish settlement of the early 18th century and settled in Cushing.

Town assessing records indicate that Andrew Robinson built this house in 1805. Helping to confirm the age of the house are the bark-covered beams in the cellar and a chimney that started at the first floor level and was supported by rocks. When a furnace was installed in 1970, the chimney was extended down to the cellar. The door frames in the kitchen have been identified as being made in a style used before 1810. It is reasonable to suppose that Andrew Robinson built the house around the time of his marriage to his first wife, Nancy Burton.

The only major structural change seems to have been the removal of the central chimney and the three fireplaces. (continued on page 2)



A Postal Stamp Honoring Lucy Flucker Knox a Possibility?

We've heard recently from Nancy Clark requesting letters of support to the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Commission for a stamp honoring Lucy Knox, wife of General Henry Knox. A replica of their residence - **Montpelier** - sits atop the hill at the intersection of Routes 1 and 131 in Thomaston.

Over 40,000 suggestions are received each year by the Citizens Stamp Advisory Commission, and only a few make it through for further consideration. This year, Nancy's suggestion of Lucy Knox made it through!

Women played a key role in the Revolutionary War from managing farms while their husbands were fighting to providing services while they followed the troops. Women from all kinds of backgrounds were patriots who helped win the war. Women have been under-represented on the Revolutionary War stamps of the past.

Please send letters of support to:

Stamp Services

**Citizen Stamp Advisory Commission
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3300
Washington, DC, 20260-3501**

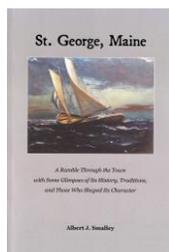
Cemetery Preservation Fund

In 2019 a special fund was created to help preserve some of the old stones in our local cemeteries. We are grateful for the \$800 in donations received.

So far in 2020 we have received \$250 to be added to this fund. We look forward to begin the restoration of some gravestones in 2021. If you would like to donate to this fund, please send donations earmarked for this fund to:

**St George Historical Society
P O Box 14
Tenants Harbor, ME 04860**

Reprint of History of St George NOW AVAILABLE



The Historical Society has reprinted Albert Smalley's "**History of St George, Maine**". It has many new old photos added to Smalley's "ramble through the town" and a more readable font. Copies are \$32 each. If you would like a copy, please contact us via email, or call and leave a message at 372-2231.

Membership Dues

Membership dues cover the calendar year and are \$10 / individual and \$15 / household.

To renew your membership for 2021, please send the appropriate amount to the address below.

An application form for a new membership can be found at the end of this newsletter. Please send dues and/or application form to:

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Andrew Robinson House *(from page 1)*

This was probably done in the mid-19th century when stoves came into common use and fireplaces were no longer needed for cooking and heating the house. Ardelle Robinson Hazelton (Ruth's mother) was told that originally the stairway to the second floor went up from the kitchen, at one end of the large kitchen fireplace. When the chimney was removed the stairway was changed and now goes up from a small hallway in the center of the house. There is a large, square closet on the first floor where the chimney once stood. In the living room the location of the fireplace was plainly visible when eleven layers of wallpaper were removed in 1973. *(Samples of the wallpapers were saved from the 1973 renovation and will be displayed at the House.)*

A minor structural change was made in the 1940s when part of a room adjoining the kitchen, used as a pantry, was made into a bathroom. The rest of the room was added to the kitchen. Also in the mid-1940s an ell was constructed on the east end of the house, replacing an old shed. At the same time a garage was built, serving to connect the house and the barn.

During the early 1970s considerable work was done on the house, with certain changes made in an effort to make the house look its age. Linoleum and coats of paint were removed from original floorboards and a traditional style of wallpaper, curtains and rugs have been used. The original Christian doors add to the traditional appearance. On the exterior, asbestos shingles and the old clapboards were replaced with cedar shingles stained a silver gray and nine over six windows were installed. Old nine over six frames were found in the attic and barn, so this is most likely what was used originally.

We look forward to holding an Open House in 2021 so we can show off this fabulous 200 year-old home.

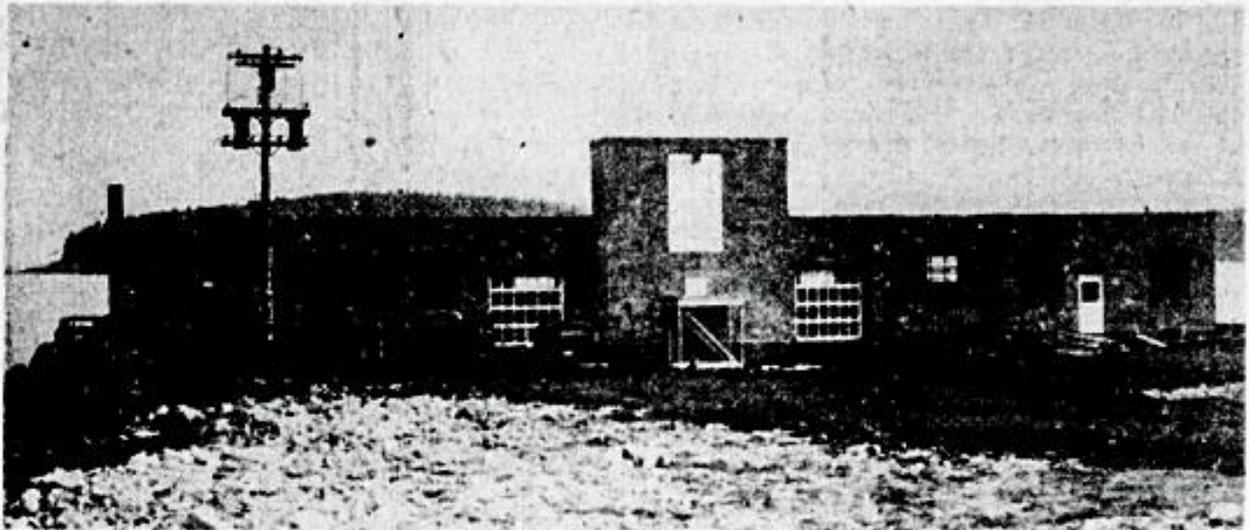
ER - GAZETTE

Monday, November 21, 1950

EIGHT PAGES—5c COPY

\$5.00 per year
\$2.50 six months

HOME OF "NEPTUNE'S PUREST"



The new plant of Atwood Brothers at Wildcat which will be put into operation this week. The cement block structure measures 114 feet in length and 50 feet in width and houses storage tanks sufficient to hold 100,000 pounds of lobsters. It is located on the wharf of the former St. George Granite Co. and is the most modern of the lobster plants along the coast of Maine.

Wholesale Lobster Plant Located At "Wildcat" Through a Chance Remark

(By Sid Cullen)

A huge lobster wholesale plant, modern in every respect, with a 100,000 pound capacity, opens this week in the Wildcat section of St. George. The plant, strange as it may seem, is there because of the kindness of a retired Tenant's Harbor physician and his wife one morning last Spring.

The whole thing started with the burning of the big wholesale lobster plant of Atwood Brothers on Boston's Foster's Wharf last May 14. The firm, hard pressed to care for its nationwide trade, sought new quarters the same day. Other Boston sites were checked and one in Gloucester. Then their thoughts turned to Maine where

the lobsters they handled came from, anyway.

Several days in a Rockland hotel with daily searches for sites brought no appreciable results for Mr. and Mrs. Peter W. Larsen. The St. George area was investigated while the couple stayed at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Charles H. Leach in Tenant's Harbor during the time they were trying to find a location.

Maine Coast Hospitality

One morning, after they had been there three days and were ready to give up the search and take the Gloucester location, Mrs.

Continued on Page Three

This news item was found while looking through some of the local newspapers on-line at <https://digitalmaine.com/rockland/>. It tells a great story of the founding of the Atwood Brothers plant in the Wildcat / Willardham section of town. What is now known as Atwood's Quarry was once known as Wildcat Quarry.

Home of "Neptune's Purest"



George Atwood and his sister, Mrs. Virginia Larsen, prepare waybills for shipments of lobsters to New England and Western Markets. They are two of the four member team of brothers and sisters who operate Atwood Brothers. Others are Marsden Atwood, presently in Nova Scotia, and Mrs. Kathleen Saunders who handles sales in Boston.

(Continued from Page One)

Leach invited the couple in for breakfast. During breakfast with the kindly doctor and his good wife, the story of the then discouraged couple came out.

No sooner were the facts of the situation in front of Dr. Leach than he had not one answer, but two. A phone call to Alfred C. Hocking led to visits to the former Booth Brothers Quarry pier in Long Cove and to that of the former St. George Granite Co., in Wildcat. From then on, things happened fast.

Both sites were checked for depth of water at the pier, the availability of utilities and the opportunity afforded by the locations to erect a modern lobster plant.

Wildcat Chosen

Members of the firm, all brothers and sisters had more than one session before the Wildcat site was chosen over any Boston or Gloucester location and the property purchased from Alfred Hocking.

Meantime, the buildings once occupied by Palo Sales Inc., at Tenant's Harbor were leased to house the firm's business until the Wildcat plant could be developed, and Atwood Brothers were in business in Maine.

In New Plant

Operations will be moved during this week from the Palo Sales old plant to the new concrete block structure on the Wildcat pier.

The new plant is unquestionably the most modern on the coast of Maine and certainly one of the largest. The building is constructed of concrete block with concrete flooring and measures 50 feet in width by 114 feet in length and 15 feet in height.

Within the plant, there are 90 tanks which will have a capacity of 100,000 pounds of lobsters. The pumping plant, which supplies fresh sea water to all tanks, is operated by two Lister diesel engines turning heavy duty pumps. The diesel system pumps 2,000 gallons per minute and is backed up by an emergency system of the same capacity driven by electric motors.

New Design Tanks

The tanks are new in design to this section designed and used in Boston by George Atwood of the firm some years ago, they are built up of strips of two by three inch timbers which lap by one another on the corners to give added strength. The style has been widely copied by Massachusetts wholesalers due to the strength

and resulting longer life of this type of tank.

To Operate Daily Service

The firm will continue to serve customers in all sections of the country, having made arrangements with Railway Express to take shipments from their plant for each train leaving Rockland.

Brothers and Sisters

The firm name of Atwood Brothers is actually a misnomer, for in addition to the two brothers there are two sisters who are very much in the business. Pert little Virginia Larsen runs the office at the plant in St. George and contacts customers by phone while her sister, Mrs. Kathleen Saunders operates the Boston branch office and cares for sales in that section.

The brothers do the buying and run the plant. George and Marsden Atwood divide their time between the plant where they handle buying and shipping problems and trips along the coast to contact fishermen and buyers.

Came From "Novy"

The family are Nova Scotians who migrated to Boston in their childhood when their father, left Clark's Harbor to take a job with the wholesale lobster firm of Johnson & Young in Boston in 1916.

There was nothing more natural in the world for the boys than to go lobstering off the Massachusetts coast when they were out of school.

Started in '27

Their father being in the wholesale end of the business, it was again natural for the pair to move gradually toward that end of the game. In 1927, they opened a small plant on Commercial Wharf.

Boys Hauled, Girls Sold

The project immediately became

a family affair as the boys continued hauling their traps to supply the infant firm with its product. The girls hustled about the city to the eating places and stores to drum up trade; taking time out to pick lobster meat and boss a worker or two on the shipping floor.

Whether it was the novelty of having attractive young ladies call as sales persons for a lobster firm or the excellence of the product that swung a lot of trade to the Atwood clan may never be known. At any rate, the business grew by leaps and bounds.

Larger Plants needed

In 1938, the plant was moved to larger quarters on Commercial Wharf as the business enjoyed a steady growth. The war years held them in the same location until 1946 when a move was made to Foster's Wharf where a 100,000 pound plant was set up.

Heavy Loss By Fire

May 14 of this year, the plant was razed by fire and the outfit which was shipping thousands of pounds of lobsters daily found itself without a lobster or even a barrel to ship him in, let alone the ice and seaweed.

Kept In Business

The drive and business abilities of the brother and sister team, which had brought them from

hauling traps off shore to operating one of the biggest plants on the coast kept them going.

Arrangements were made elsewhere to buy and ship and not a single day was missed in caring for customers. The plant burned on a Sunday, and by Thursday they were shipping from the Palo Sales buildings in Tenant's Harbor as an emergency measure.

Searched For Site

Unable to find a suitable location after weeks of search, the family team was just about ready to settle on a location in Gloucester. The chance remark that they might leave set Dr. Leach off on his campaign to keep them in town. The result may be seen by everyone just by visiting the plant where a warm welcome will be extended visitors by the quartet operating it.

Construction of the new building was started in mid-July by Alton Prock of Waldoboro and was rushed to completion ahead of Winter weather.

All Hands Joined In

Construction of the 90 tanks and all the plumbing was done by and under the direction of George Atwood. Last Friday, he was busy cutting pipe and running pipelines to the completed tanks while workmen assembled still more tanks.

All four had a hand in designing the plant with the result being that lobsters will come from the tanks to the barrels and move swiftly along an assembly line setup to icing, seaweed and capping. When the last seaweed goes on and the barrel is capped, it is right at the shipping door. Lost motion has been eliminated as much as possible in the system with the result that a minimum of workers can handle the work.

An ice machine supplies volumes of chipped ice for the shipments. Operating from overhead, the machine drops the ice into storage bins on the floor level.

Neptune's Purest

Already loyal Maine boosters, the Atwoods have taken the trade name of "Neptune's Purest" for their barrel labels and sales material and gives prominent mention to the clear cold waters of the coast of Maine from which their lobsters come.

Notes to article:

- The Booth Brothers wharf in Long Cove is where Great Eastern Mussel Farm operated
- Palo Sales in Tenants Harbor operated where the Cod End wharf is located next to the public landing
- The section of town mentioned in the article is Wildcat and was called that because of the name of the adjacent quarry. That part of town has also been known as Willardham.



Santa Has Already Set the Stage Here

Yes, the big production is about to go on—Christmas.

St George Historical Society, Inc.

P O Box 14

Tenants Harbor, ME 04860

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email address _____ Phone (optional) _____

Type of Membership: Individual / \$10 _____ Household / \$15 _____

Areas of interest _____