



**HOUSEFUL OF REMINDERS**—At West Gouldsboro sits the home of Oliver Jones. The house, built by a grandson of Colonel Nathan Jones, contains many mementos of the days when the place was a vigorous young town. (Crane Photo)

## W. Gouldsboro History Reveals Yankee Traders, Winning Wit

By JONAS CRANE

**WEST GOULDSBORO, Dec. 30**—Probably there isn't a town in Hancock County with a more historical background than that of West Gouldsboro. In the old days it was a favorite vacation spot of such well-known literary figures as Longfellow and Nathaniel Hawthorne and his son Julian.

After the close of the Revolutionary War, General David Cobb, who was a close personal friend of President Washington, often came to West Gouldsboro to visit his friend and compatriot, Colonel Nathan Jones.

Colonel Jones was one of the three original owners of Gouldsboro by a grant given by the General Court of Massachusetts February 16, 1789. Colonel Jones owned the northwestern quarter section which included the present location of West Gouldsboro. The rest of Gouldsboro was owned by Francis Shaw and Robert Gould.

Colonel Jones built a sawmill and tannery on his land, and he also owned mills and wharves in Sullivan and Morancy. Jones' Cove and Jones' Lake were named in his honor, and he settled down to the comfortable life of a country squire. But when the War of 1812 broke out his placid way of life came to an abrupt end.

### Raiders Come

English raiding parties came into Frenchman's Bay and one of them came to West Gouldsboro to make Colonel Jones a prisoner. They landed in his cove before he was aware of their presence, but his wife spied them before they reached the house.

The colonel escaped by jumping out of the bedroom window and fleeing to the thick forest around Jones' Pond. Before they left, the British captured two Gouldsboro men whose names are not known. They planned to take the prisoners to England to show the people that America was vulnerable to British raiders.

The plan was never carried out for they made one fatal mistake. The error came when the ship sailed to Milbridge waters in search of more prisoners. They sailed into Pigeon Hill Bay and attacked the schooner William and John, commanded by Capt. John Allen of North Brooklin. The commander of the English ship, "Bream" thought that he had an easy victim in the defenseless coasting vessel, but he soon found out that he had a tiger by the tail.

### Plan Fails

Capt. Allen sailed into shoal water where the British ship could not follow and the English captain sent a 12-oared barge armed with a swivel gun after the American schooner. When they got in range, the English officer ordered his gunner to touch a match to the swivel gun. But before the order could be carried out, a hail of bullets from Capt. Allen's men, who were concealed in the lumber on the schooner's deck, killed the gunner and the officer.

This left the barge in the command of a midshipman who immediately surrendered to Capt. Allen. Then the English captain sent a boat under a flag of truce and offered to trade two Gouldsboro men for his men and the barge. But Capt. Allen was a natural born Yankee trader, and he just laughed at the offer. Four truce boats later he settled for the two Gouldsboro men, \$90 in cash, the barge with all of her armament consisting of one swivel gun, six muskets, five cutlasses, a trumpet, six boxes of cartridges one spy glass, some blue light, a compass, and a quantity of canister and grape shot.

All of the loot added up to about \$100,000 which was a small fortune in those days. But the shrewed Yankee captain added one last demand before returning the British prisoners. He asked for and got a written agreement that his ship would be allowed to carry her load of lumber to Boston without being molested.

When he had secured that paper, he put the Gouldsboro men ashore and headed his ship for Boston. When the citizens of Boston learned of his exploit they gave him a reception and presented him a sword, in acknowledgement of his courage and resourcefulness.

### Daughter Captured

The British never came back to Frenchman's Bay but the Jones family had not seen the last of them. The colonel's daughter, Mary, commonly known as Polly, went to the Canadian provinces to visit friends. On her way home she was captured by a party of English sailors, and kept prisoner at St. Andrews, N. B. During the long winter months Polly played the part of a demure miss and dutifully washed and mended for the sailors. But she kept her eyes open for a chance to escape. It came one fine spring morning when a local farmer left his rig near the kitchen while he delivered eggs and butter to the cook. While he was busy haggling over the price of his products, Polly sprang into the wagon and laid the whip on the horses. The sailors had no animals, and before the farmer could get help from his neighbors Polly was on the American side of the river. When she arrived home her family, who thought that she had decided to spend the winter with her friends, were surprised to learn that she had been a prisoner of the enemy.

Although Colonel Jones built three fine homes, all of them passed to other families and the only house in West Gouldsboro today that bears the Jones name is the one built by the colonel's grandson Oliver.

It is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Johnson and it contains many pictures, books, and other mementos of the days when West Gouldsboro was a lusty young town.



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