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Myrick Photo

HOBBYIST AND HERO—Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Bickford have each carved out their niche in the hall of fame of South Gouldsboro. While Mrs. Bickford has contented herself with collecting a large array of rare pitchers, her brave husband, along with three friends, saved the lives of five persons marooned on a sinking ship April 30, 1923, for which Bickford received a gold medal from Congress and a letter of commendation from Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce.

Gouldsboro Couple Have Gained Fame As Hobbyist And Hero

By Jonas Crane

South Gouldsboro, Dec. 25.—Mrs. Raymond Bickford of South Gouldsboro, who is still "going strong" at 78, believes that a woman needs three things for a long and happy life. They are, a good husband, a lot of friends and a hobby. The friends to bring color and a sense of security to life; the hobby to make it interesting and to occupy the mind so that a lot of the minor ills that go with living will be forgotten; the husband—well, they're handy things to have around the house.

With Mrs. Bickford, the friends and hobby are almost inseparable, for pitchers are her hobby and all of the '84 in her collection are gifts from friends.

It started many years ago when Mrs. Bickford and a friend, Mrs. Jesse Stevens of Steuben, were having tea together. They were discussing their mutual interest in pitchers and Mrs. Stevens suggested that they start a collection. Each presented the other with a pitcher to start the collection, and over the years they both have been rewarded with the fulfillment of their plan. Mrs. Stevens has accumulated about 500 of the vessels that she admires.

ecdoté in connection with her acquisition of the smallest pitcher.

It came in the mail, and after admiring it, she took it to the bedroom to show to her husband who was ill. Mr. Bickford had been conditioned to a regular diet of pills, and a little groggy after being aroused from a nap, he thought the object his wife was handing to him was just another pill. He reached for a glass of water and started to plop the tiny trinket into his mouth. Mrs. Bickford acted promptly and snatched her precious pitcher just in time.

Cont'd. over - Col. #2

Cont'd. over - Col. #1

Column #1

Mrs. Bickford has received pitchers from friends in all of the 48 states and the Catalina Islands.

One of the oldest is a ewer that originally came from Austria. It was presented to her by the small daughter of one of her nephews. The child found it while playing near an old house, and very generously decided to donate it to "Aunt Lou's" collection.

One of the odd pieces is a pitcher made from a walnut shell that came from the Ozark Mountains. Another is one that was crocheted by a neighbor.

The collection contains nearly every kind of glass and china vessels. There are majolicas, blue and brown willow ware, Wedgewood and old English chinaware, and vaseline, and Nippon basketweave glass.

They are in various shapes and sizes and the smallest is so tiny that the contents of a medicine dropper would fill it several times. Many of the comic strip characters are depicted, and also the Gingham Dog and Calico Cat of storybook fame. There are also replicas of violins, lobsters, roosters, Ferdinand the Bull and Isabella the Cow, owls, dominoes, and many historical characters.

One of the interesting pieces is a replica of the pitcher that Rebecca carried to the well. The most treasured piece is a small pitcher made by Mr. Bickford on his 80th birthday. Another is a tiny vessel that Mrs. Bickford's father, Martin Myrick, carried as a good luck charm during the Civil War. There is also a gold pitcher presented by friends 10 years ago, on the Bickford's golden wedding anniversary.

Dusting and cleaning the collection takes several hours, and one of the problems is to keep the tiny pieces from being lost. Some are strung on wires and the smallest are glued to pieces of glass. Mrs. Bickford relates a humorous an-

Column #2

There is no doubt that Mr. Bickford is entitled to be called a gold medal husband. He has a letter signed by Herbert Hoover when he was Secretary of Commerce, commending "Captain Bickford" for conspicuous bravery in rescuing five persons from the schooner Frank Brainard, which was in trouble on Jordan's Island bar on April 30, 1923.

Captain Bickford richly deserved that letter and the gold medal that Congress awarded to him six years later. What he, and the three men with him, did on that April day called for the highest degree of courage. A courage strong enough to lay down their lives, if necessary, to save the five on the doomed ship.

Captain Bickford, Captain Eugene Sargent, William Hammond and Eugene Myrick set out in a 51-foot dory and landed on Jordan's Island to decide on a course of action. It was blowing a terrific gale and heavy seas were breaking over the vessel.

They had to cross Jordan's Island bar to get to the schooner and the heavy sea was throwing combers 12 feet high across the bar.

They knew that only two persons could go out in the dory, so Captain Bickford and Captain Sargent calmly decided that since they were the oldest they would gamble their lives and leave the younger men on the island.

"I have never seen it blow so hard on the Maine coast as it did that morning," Captain Bickford relates. "We watched our chance and got across the bar between seas. We rowed to the vessel and saw that there were four men and a woman lashed to the forward house. The woman was sure a cool one. She untied the ropes that held her to the house, and ran the length of the deck which was covered with floating laths. She jumped into the dory and one of the seamen followed her. We landed them on the island

and went back for the other three. We finally got them aboard and then three gigantic seas hit the Brainard, one after another, and she started to roll over. Just as we were pulling away the dory caught in one of the stays. We had to move fast to get her free and 10 minutes later the Brainard rolled over on her side until the masts were in the water."

On April 16, 1929, Congress awarded Captain Bickford and Captain Sargent gold medals, and Hammond and Myrick silver medals for their work in the rescue.