

STATE AND COUNTY

Jan. 4, 1968

Land Promotion Brochure Of 1893 Hails South Gouldsboro Properties

By JONAS CRANE

WINTER HARBOR — Mrs. Carrie Colwell of Winter Harbor has an interesting old land promotion brochure that she treasures as a memento of the past.

It was published by the West Shore Land Company in 1893 during the period when selling waterfront property to wealthy summer visitors was good business. The brochure was aimed at advertising land sales in the section of South Gouldsboro known as "Summer Harbor". Mrs. Colwell's father was Captain Raymond Bickford and his home was in the area described in the brochure.

Summer Harbor is located on the east side of Frenchman's Bay and, according to the booklet, it was twenty minutes sailing time from Bar Harbor. "Bar Harbor is on an island possessing many beauties to be sure, but having its drawbacks. On the opposite side of the bay, twenty minutes' sail from Bar Harbor, a large tract of land has been secured, which will be improved and laid out as one of the most delightful summer places in this locality. This land lies entirely on the water front, and commands a view that cannot be excelled."

The brochure lists Horace Jordan as president and A. H. Watkins as treasurer of the Company. According to the booklet "The West Shore Land Company has been organized under the laws of the State of Maine, having a capital of one million dollars. The officers are well-known businessmen and capitalists, who ask those who wish to secure a beautiful summer home to come forward one and secure one or

more lots. Plans of the land can be seen in the company's Boston office and all information will be freely given. The well known law firm of Wiswell & King has been engaged as attorneys and they will guarantee all titles."

The president of the company lived on Jordan's Island near the proposed development and the booklet describes it. "It comprises four hundred and fifty acres in extent. Game of all kinds abounds there. It is close proximity to Ironbound Island, Stave Island, and Long Porcupine. Mr. Jordan has been offered fabulous sums for this property, but this gentleman has always declined to sell."

In the old days vessels were built on Stave Island and according to legend Richard Henry Dana who wrote "Two Years Before the Mast" shipped on one of them. According to another legend this island was the scene of a midnight battle between the wives of four bounty fishermen and a pack of hungry wolves that were trying to get to the three cows that supplied the island families with milk. The wolves finally fled when the women hurled flaming pitch torches used in night herring fishing into the wolf pack.

Steamboats played an important part in the growth of Bar Harbor and the Frenchman's Bay region.

81,704 Passengers

According to figures in the brochure steam boats brought 81,704 passengers to Bar Harbor and the Mount Desert region during the year of 1893.

At that time steamers from Boston, New York, Portland,

Rockland, and Winter Harbor brought passengers to Bar Harbor. The steamboat service to Bar Harbor was established in 1857 when the 400-ton paddle-wheel steamer, Rockland, ran from Rockland to Bar Harbor and other points along the coast as far east as Machiasport. Her schedule was arranged to enable passengers to connect with the steamer Daniel Webster that sailed from Portland to Boston. The Rockland's career as a Down-East passenger carrier ended in 1862 when it went into service for the Union Army in the Civil War.

By 1886 the summer business in the Frenchman's Bay area—and especially Bar Harbor—had grown to a point where the Maine Central Railroad had a new steamer built especially for transporting passengers from their terminal at Mount Desert Ferry to Bar Harbor. The new steamer, the Sappho, was designed for luxury travel and her saloon and main decks were inclosed in glass.

The wealthy summer visitors could reach Bar Harbor without any inconvenience or trouble. They traveled from their homes in New York and Philadelphia by private car to Mount Desert Ferry. Arriving there they could spend a few days in a luxurious hotel called "The Bluffs" that had a wonderful view of sea and mountains or step aboard the Sappho for a very comfortable voyage to Bar Harbor.

Today the old steamers and most of the luxurious hotels are gone but summer visitors continue to come to the Frenchman's Bay area, in large numbers. Although the Frenchman's Bay promotion was not a howling success there are many summer homes in the area they tried to develop.

The old brochure describes the bay "This important Bay extends from the Atlantic Ocean to land about 20 miles inland. It contains many fine harbors and beautiful islands. It is one of the best retreats in a storm on the American coast being easy of access and never obstructed by ice."

Probably some of the fishermen who live in South Gouldsboro would dispute the "no Ice" claim but none of them will dispute the claims of the natural beauty of the area.

1260

Goldsboro Historical Society