

EDITORIAL
THE PROSPECT HARBOR
COMMUNITY HOUSE

The following is the story of how the village has preserved its most picturesque building.

On approaching Prospect Harbor either by land or sea the first sight to catch the eye is the white steeple of the old meeting house. This landmark has stood for nearly a hundred years, a focal point in the village as well as a monument to the sound workmanship and sense of fitness of Alfred Tracy, the builder.

The Coast and Geodetic Survey has thought the building sufficiently important to have located its exact position: Latitude, N. 44° 24' 22.765"; Longitude, West of Greenwich 68° 01' 40.329". Rising nearly 100 ft. above the surrounding level ground, the building is back from the road 100 ft. and covers 60 X 38 ft. of ground. So sturdy is the building that repair work has not altered the position of the building or its steeple.

The original purpose of the building was to serve as a Union Church, welcoming all protestant denominations to worship under its roof. At first the congregations were large and inclusive but as time wore on, many of the descendants of the first supporters, those upon whom the responsibility of carrying on would naturally fall, moved away. The new smaller Methodist Church, easier to heat and keep up, was found adequate for the religious needs of the community. For a while the Union Church was opened during the summer but at last that was found infeasible and the building closed.

To many it seemed unfortunate that this fine building was put to no use, therefore

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when in 1948 a group of interested citizens approached the two remaining trustees of the church, to request that the building be turned over to a responsible organization to serve as a Community building, the suggestion received enthusiastic support. (To be cont'd)

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In 1948 it was decided to turn the nearly one hundred year old meeting house over to the newly organized Community Club. That same year in August the deed was handed over from the old custodians to the new.

Repairs began immediately. Substantial contributions made it possible to install electricity, reshingle the roof, install a furnace, reinforce the foundation and paint inside and out. Young and old, parents and friends contributed generously both with money and labor to the adaptation of the building to its new requirements.

With draperies at the windows and handsome scenic wallpaper bringing out its original design, the building became an ideal center for meetings, social gatherings and private parties. A small rental is charged for heat, electricity and use of the well equipped kitchen. Many young couples have held their wedding receptions there. The Gouldsboro SOS Old Folks' Club annual dinner, the Flanders Bay Nursing Service tea and art exhibit, the 4th of July breakfast, baby showers, Boy Scout meetings, political rallies and many social occasions have taken place in the renovated old building. As every year the demand for its use increases most of the expense of upkeep is met by the modest rentals. However, the mainstay of the enterprise lies in the interest and generosity of the community. In

the past two years it has been possible to add extra cupboard and drawer space in the kitchen and paint the kitchen walls, repair the front steps, refurbish the powder room and install electric ranges in the kitchen. Money, time and selfless effort have been given

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In 1956 it was discovered that the fine old steeple was in dangerous shape, a bad storm could demolish it. The question arose whether to take it down, or to repair and repaint it at a considerable expense. Friends of the town were asked by word of mouth and by letter how they felt and the reply was practically unanimous. Prospect Harbor without the distinctive steeple was unthinkable. This was no idle opinion for it was backed up by generous contributions from summer residents, from villagers and from friends far away who love the village. Benefits, art exhibits, food sales, suppers which gave the restoration fund a substantial push and today the building stands with its high white steeple a lovely landmark serving the needs unstintingly to keep, improve and preserve the historic structure for the town of Prospect Harbor. (To be cont'd)