

FRANK GERRISH

RETIRED POSTMASTER & STOREKEEPER

Frank Gerrish had been thinking of taking things easier for some time, but didn't get around to retire from his Post Office until Feb 28, 1958, after 34 years of service.

Frank seemed wonderfully content last week when we called at his home in the evening. His wife, Lydia, sat across the room sewing, his Labrador Retriever, Queenie came into the room frequently for a reassuring stroke on her silky head. Behind him, Joe the parakeet chatted in his cage, while on the wall a real cuckoo clock sounded off several times during the visit, while we were enjoying Lydia's butterscotch cookies and tea.

Some time after John Hammond gave up the Post Office and store, Frank was appointed Postmaster by the Postmaster General Harry S. New. On March 1, 1924 Frank took over the same building, situated where now stands Hammond's Garage. The entrance was through a centered door, with South Gouldsboro Post Office sign over the door, which had a window on each side. A gas pump stood outside.

At this time Frank and Lydia and their two children, Frances and Robert moved from West Gouldsboro into the Cole Bunker place, now the Earl Driscoll's, about a tenth of a mile north of the Post Office.

The following year Frank built a 12 x 15 addition on the back to enlarge the store. It was a general store in every sense of the word, groceries, meat, clothing and fishing gear.

Six years after he became PostMaster, the building burned during the snowplowing season. He sold gas evenings to the men plowing and on Dec 29, 1930, when he stayed late, the building burned, caused either by an overheated stove or a defective chimney. All the Post Office equipment and mail was saved. The summer kitchen of his home became the Post Office.

All went well for the next ten years, and then a friendly impulse brought disaster. In January, 1940 he was on his way to Ellsworth to buy parts for his car, saw a friend stalled at the side of the road. He stopped to see if he could help and was struck by a passing truck, pinning him against a guard rail, and injuring both legs. Frank was taken to the Hurley Hospital in Ellsworth, where he was in a cast until May 16th. While at home for the summer no healing took place, and in September he went to the E.M.G. Hospital in Bangor, for major surgery, was put in a 'spiker' cast and remained there until Dec 22, home in time for Christmas. In January the cast was removed. It was a slow process, going from crutches to cane, but on June 1st he resumed his duties as Postmaster. His wife Lydia had been acting postmaster for a year and a half.

In 1942, he rented the house they now own and live in, then on the north side he built a 12 x 20 post office and also carried a small stock of bread and candy. He then built in back, a turkey farm, and piped in water. He bought the poults, all hatched, from

Jake's Turkey Farm in Augusta and some from Pennsylvania, 300 in all. Poulets bought in April were sold for broilers, those bought in May and June were sold for Thanksgiving and Christmas. He raised the turkeys on wire, 4 or 5 feet from the ground. Selling turkeys for broilers was rare at the time, but he did a tremendous business, selling them at \$1.25 a pound. The turkeys were very popular with the summer people, often leaving orders for their holiday dinners.

In 1949, Frank added a 12 x 24 piece on his store and enlarged his stock, making a general variety store. Meanwhile, mail was increasing, especially during the summer, while Snow's factory and The Winter Harbor Agency further increased his work so in 1949 he discontinued the turkey farm.

Frank was born in Winter Harbor, son of Ludella and Woodbury Gerrish, at the Jordan Joy place, at the head of the road leading to Grindstone Neck. He was the first of 11 children, three having died, the eight living were Frank, Ralph, Ellis, Donald, Herman, Norman, Beatrice and Ethel. When Frank was small, his father built a house in Gerrishville.

Frank got his first job when he was 12, as a caddy at the Golf Course, caddying for J. B. Thompson of Philadelphia. Winters, he attended school in Winter Harbor.

At 15, Frank worked as a clerk for Mel Torrey in his grocery store, where now Miss Healey runs the "East Coast Shop". He worked one winter for Thomas Hooper, then clerked in the A. B. Whitehouse store for five years. He was next employed on Linwood Sargents farm in West Gouldsboro. Winters, he drove a horse selling the farm produce, and in the summer drove a motor truck, carrying vegables, chickens, milk and cream to Grindstone.

In 1917, the Sargent's daughter, Lydia and Frank were married by the Rev Sparks, of Sullivan.

Frank and Lydia lived just north of the Sargent farm, where the Duke's presently live. Their two children, Frances and Robert were born there. They were about five and seven years old, when he became Postmaster in South Gouldsboro.

Things that Frank missed most, when he retires as Postmaster, was the personal contact with people, who often made personal confessions, related striking events, discuss their health, the weather, to mention news, good or bad and plans they might have, however he can and does keep contact with neighbors, through the store, which in itself, is a 'center' in South Gouldsboro.

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