

Bayside Historical Preservation Society Oral History Project
Francis Samway by Christy Weisenbach August 13, 1997

CW: This is Christy Weisenbach, and I'm interviewing Francis Samway. Francis, I was reading the Bayside Journal, and find your family has great memories of Bayside. What is your first memory of Bayside?

FS: It must have been about 70 years ago when I friends of John Short and his wife, and we used the summer, and they would take us sailing, and to spend the summer. came down to visit the Shorts. We were to ride down here a couple of times in that was long before we ever came down

CW: Great.
How developed was the area? Were there a lot of cottages here then?

FS: As I remember it, it seemed to be the same...

CW: The same as it looks now..

FS: Because we just visited in the park and at their cottage up there.

CW: And how long after did you find this cottage?

FS: We've only owned this cottage since '59, but we rented for twelve years before we bought.

CW: Did you have a favorite cottage that you stayed in?

FS: I think the Metcalfs we rented, and we had several around this area, so that when we were ready to buy, we knew the location we wanted, and we were lucky to get this cottage.

CW: Very lucky! I love this whole row here. that were important to you?
What are some of the places around Bayside

FS: I guess the dock, and the community hall, and the golf club...

CW: Do you golf?

FS: I did.

CW: It's fun.

FS: Yes.

CW: Who were some of the leaders of the community when you were young, and what do you remember about them?

FS: I remember playing Canasta craze was going, and we had Canasta parties every week, and there were twelve of us, and we had to have a luncheon for the twelve every week, and that was nice.

CW: Are you still playing Canasta?

FS: No, I don't even know how to play now, but then everyone was playing.

CW: Were you involved in groups- church or social?

FS: The Golf Club, and I guess the Community Hall. When it opened(?) the whole area was involved in it.

CW: What community-wide events do you remember; for example, celebrations, parades, beach bon fires, dances?

FS: I remember the boat parade that we had on holidays, and the Shrine Band came down every year and played on the basketball court.

CW: Now, the Fourth of July event that they do, has it changed a lot since you've been here?

FS: NOr we still had the games for the children and the boat parade. They carryon about the same (?)

CW: Do they still do the boat parade on the 4th of July?

FS: They try to. It wasn't too successful this year, but there were a few boats that paraded.

CW: That's great. We're never here on the 4th of July, so I only get to look at the pictures of what happened. Who were your best friends, your closest friends?

FS: Probably the twelve that I played Canasta with.

CW: Do you remember them?

FS: Yes.

CW: What are some of your favorite stories that you pullout in conversation about Bayside?

FS: I remember one time we'd gone out to eat and came back, and went down to the wharf and we were dancing on the wharf, and Mr. Scribner, who was the mayor, and he came down anyway to stop the noise.

CW: Noisy, uh?

FS: Yes, and we think that's bad when the children do it now, but it was fun then.

CW: That's cute.
How did you discover Bayside?

FS: I guess it was through the Shorts. We knew the family and they were down here then.

CW: Are any of those family members still here?

FS: Yes, Joanne Coughlin, LeeAnn, and Stevie..that whole Short family.

CW: Oh, that's great.
Do you have any old photographs of Bayside?

FS: Yes, I think I have one or two.

CW: Do you think we could borrow them and copy them, and we'd return them?

FS: Yes.

CW: That'd be great. What was a typical summer's day like for you here at Bayside? What did you do; what were your favorite pasttimes?

FS: Well, when the children were growing up, it was knowing when the tide was in, because that was the only time they could go swimming on the beach, and so I think my time revolved around them.

CW: Did they do a lot of picnicking?

FS: Yes, and they had the Junior Yacht Club...the children..., and I can remember being one of the chaperones one time when they were climbing Mt. Battie. There weren't too many cars around, so the children were always around at night playing baseball games and everything. It was fun in the park.

CW: Sounds like it was very similar to today.

FS: Yes. Someone would have a car and once or twice a week they'd all go into the movies, but otherwise they made their own fun.

CW: Were you into boating?

FS: No, although two of my children had sailboats...

CW: So they were involved in the Junior Yacht Club.

FS: Yes, all the children were involved in the Junior Yacht Club when they were growing up.

CW: Have you ever had anything to do with town management?

FS: No.

CW: How was the dress different in your childhood: for example, the bathing suits, the play clothes...

FS: I don't remember too much, except that they're much more comfortable, this generation, than they were when the children were growing up. I remember bringing down rubbers for them to wear when the grass was dewy. A lot of unnecessary things like that.

CW: The bathing suits weren't comfortable years ago?

FS: I'm talking about the clothes generally.

CW: Oh, the clothes in general. Bathing suits aren't too comfortable now, if you want my opinion on that. Anything else that you can remember that we should know about? Any fond memories, anything exciting ever happening

FS: No. I remember elderly people who came back year after year. One, I don't remember her name, but she'd go in the water every day and she was very old. It was fantastic.

CW: Have you seen a lot of changes at the end?

FS: Yes. We think it's great now...the stores...

CW: And your children still come up on a regular basis, I read...

FS: Yes, they come here every year. Honora is here all summer with me, so she teaches and the Miami group come up and stay a couple of weeks, and always climb Katahdin, and go white-water rafting and climbing Mt. Battie and any place around that there is to climb. And the Virginia group, too.

CW: Do all the fun things they remember in growing up..

FS: And they do them every year.

CW: Over and over again! Well, your cottage is lovely. you say?
You've had it since 1959, did you say?

FS: Yes, this is our 51st year, I think.

CW: Have you seen a lot of neighbors come and go?

FS: There's a lot of rentals now. It used to be people who owned their cottage came here for the whole summer.

CW: Husbands would go back to work, and their wives would stay up..

FS: And that's why we didn't have any transportation. Usually there was only one car in the family, and so the only time we had a car was when my husband came down weekends. Sometimes he was able to come down during the week.

CW: So as you remember most of the people owning their cottages being from Maine then?

FS: Yes, I think a lot of them in the group were mostly from around here. There were a couple in the club that were from Oregon or somewhere. Well, at least half of them were from Maine, I would say.

CW: Okay. The Northport Golf Club. Has it changed over the years? Do you think that that is still a real part of the Bayside community? And can you tell me a little bit about what the golf club was like years ago?

FS: Well, years ago, those who played golf, we would play three or four times a week, and the men always played on the weekends, and we used to have dances up therer which were open to everyone, whether you were a golfer or not, and they'd always have a card party once a year, and probably it was the golfers who chaired it. The other thing about the golf course...oh, they used to have a bean supper, and both the Bayside and the Belfast girls put it on. That used to be every week, or every summer, at least, but it seemed to be the social part of those who were golfers.

CW: Was tennis popular?

FS: They had tennis courts, too, but it wasn't as popular as it was later, and then the court was overgrown, and we started parking up there.

CW: And the tennis courts are still there?

FS: No.

CW: I don't ever remember seeing them. What did you wear to golf in? clothes did you wear to golf in. What kind of

FS: Skirts...short skirts.

CW: Just like for tennis?

FS: Yes, but not as short as that, and any colors that you wanted, and tops. Our boys caddied some of the time.

CW: The boys you had caddy?

FS: Our boys, yes.

CW: Did they volunteer?

FS: No, they were earning money, but then they put inr had carts, so that they didn't need the caddies. And then the children used to put up the flag. One of the older members in the community, we used to call Papa Cobb....I think he lived where you live over in the Bayside, next to the Rice cottage. And he used to give them 25 cents a week, and they would have the flag up at 8 o'clock and take it down every night, and it was really a ceremony because they always had someone with them to help fold the flag so that it wouldn't touch the ground, and can remember one time Michael, my oldest one, for some reason he wasn't around, and my husband and I took down the flag, and folded it. We took his place. And then he outgrew it, and Tim and Terry, by the time they were doing it it had reached 35 cents a week. But it wasn't just putting it up and taking it down. There really was a lot of responsibility for them. And he used to pay for it himself.

CW: Do any of your children have cottages in the area?

FS: Yes, Tim has one down on the south shore. He used to own the one next to us, then he and his wife, Anne-Marie, bought the cottage down on the south shore.

CW: Which one is it on the south shore.

FS: It's next to Sezak's.

CW: And how often does he get up?

FS: well, he's up more often than his wife because she works at Phillips Exeter, so most of the time it's weekends when she has a vacation. Tim has his own business, so he can come more often.

CW: It's so nice to see them pass the cottages down from generation to generation, the families enjoying it.

FS: Yes, and so many of them are for five or six generation families. We're only four.

CW: Can you tell me how you got your cottage.

FS: Yes, one of my friends was a bridge player in my group, and one night she said her husband had a boat, and he liked to spend his weekends on the boat, and she didn't care for the boat, and she had two teenagers who weren't too happy to come down here and stay for the summer, and so she was here alone most of the time, and she said "I'm really tired of it, and I think if I got the right price I would sell my cottage," so I went home that night and told my husband, and he said, "Call her up!", and she said she'd sell it for \$5,000, and he said to call her up and we'd take it. So I did, and we got the cottage.

CW: \$5,000!

FS: I know, but the first thing we had to do was have a new foundation under it. They were all so old that they had a lot of work to be done on it, so you had to have more than the initial price of the cottage. I was always glad that the boys, Skipper and Connie, got tired of Bayside, and we had rented for twelve years, and we had chances to buy in the meantime, and we knew that we wanted to be nearer the water, and this seemed to be ideal one, and we bought it.

CW: It must be, and you're still here. It's a great cottage.