

## LLOYD V. STOVER INTERVIEW

Interviewed Ted Reynolds August 27, 1998

Transcribed by George Scholhamer November 2002

Edited by Zelma Huntoon May 2003

### **Mr. Stover, a few moments ago you mentioned when you came to Bayside.**

My great uncle, a merchant in Belfast, he was one of the five people who provided some funds for the original groups of ministers that built a Methodist Campground here at Bayside. This was in the latter part of the 19th century; shortly thereafter, he and my aunt built two cottages at Bayside. The large cottage to the left is known as Breezy Point. The one we are presently residing in was the guest cottage. My great aunt ran into financial difficulties arrived in the late 1930's and she sold that cottage and moved this one over here.

She was a very interesting person, she was originally of Belfast and spent some time in New York, Boston, did many things, came back to Belfast married a local merchant. She spent most of her summers here. During my mother's lifetime she spent time when she was a child and spent time here when I was young. So I am a third generation in the cottage. When my aunt died at the age of about 96, my mother passed away about 16 years ago and the cottage became mine at that time.

### **So you came here at a fairly young age then.**

Yes, I came here and spent summers with my aunt during the 1920's, 1930's. About the only person, I guess, still around Bayside that I was acquainted with at that time was Alfred Keith. His family had a cottage up in here and Al and I used to make rafts and hang around the shore.

During the early days of the cottage, there were woods south of here. My great aunt, Mary Smith used to tell me the Indian... family used to come and spend each summer at Kelly Cove. There was an Indian family. The head of it was lady known as Molly Molasses. and they apparently came here for many years. And there were only a number of cottages, below here, there was a large farm at Kelly Cove, and there were several large farms up on the back road and what is now all woods up there used to be a very large blueberry field-- I remembering going blueberrying there.

Bayside, in my recollection, as told to me by great aunt and my mother, was a combination of four communities: the original Community was Brown's corner, with a group of farms, and there was a campground then what is now known as the center of the village, was more of an entertainment community, originally. It was created by a number of investors from Maine and Boston, at the time of when the time that the Boston Boat Excursion used to come to Bayside, they had several large hotels, movie theatre, rolling skating rink, a poolroom, a bowling alley, and people used to come here on weekends, the way people now go to Disneyworld.

Most of that disappeared after World War 1. The two hotels went, everything sort of closed up. Bayside then became for many generations of a series of gingerbread cottages that you see today, which passed on from one generation to the other. Most of the people were from the Boston area or the Maine coast and when you came here you saw the same people year in and year out. And you saw many generations from the same family. That continued I would say from the end of the WW1 period until the last twenty years. So Bayside has gone through many transitions.

**You were how old when you first here?**

I guess I was here every summer from my first year until 1940 when I went into the Navy.

**Since you were a baby, then?**

That's right. You might be interested in, when I was young here as I said everybody of many generations, people spent a lot of time at the beach, the bathing parties, like that, and one of the attraction was the fact that everyone dug clams. And everybody went clamming four or five times a week and would take picnics at Kelly's Cove. You would build a fire on the rocks and put seaweed on and the clams and corn, and lobsters and beach parties were a very large thing. Of course, over time, with the development of the chicken industry in Belfast, everything became polluted. And the clams have all disappeared. Also, we could go fishing anywhere and bring in a load of fish. At high tide you could catch flounder at Kelly Cove and to my knowledge, flounder hasn't been found in Kelly Cove for many generations, now. But the Bay is cleaning up, and I would imagine the clams will return. I don't know if the fish will or not.

**Hopefully, they will, lots of fish. I can remember when I was very young as a boy, we used to go with my grand father and catch flounder, lots of flounder many times.**

Yep. Another event that was important for all the people here when I was young was the Boston boat used to come here three times a week, and it used to come here and then go to Belfast, and then Bangor, and come back. Many people from Massachusetts would, especially during the summer, come up on Friday and go back on Monday. From here you could catch the Boston boat to Bangor and go shopping for the afternoon and come back home to Bayside in the evening.. There were also excursion boats that went regular to Castine, or Rockland or Camden, and there was lot of boating activity around the Bay. And it was a very communal kind of thing with everybody participating.

**Mr. Stover you came here, were you born in Maine?**

I was born in Maine. I grew up here on a farm near Belfast. The only family homestead was Patterson Hill, which was the highest point in the county. And the whole farm I grew up on, burned when I was about 3 1/2 years old. I remember the place burning and my grandmother and I came in a horse and buggy down here to Aunt Mary's and we spent the summer with her.

**You mentioned you were in the Navy.**

I joined the navy in 1940. Went to flight school in 41. Was a pilot in the Navy in WW2.

**What occupation were you in?**

After six years in the Navy, I went college; I picked up a degree in law and engineering after the war. Practiced law for a while and entered industry, at the age of 50 went back and got a PhD in oceanography. And for the last 25 years I've been doing consulting work for the UN and the World Bank on environmental matters and global climate change.

**Can we back up a little bit? You mentioned some of your early Memories on recreation we have all things that are very interesting in terms of the whole project. Some of your memories, anecdotes, or stories you can remember, or things as a boy you did?**

About four or five years ago, one of my closest friends around here died. I have a story about him that I told at the funeral, which a lot of people appreciated. His name was George Jennings. The Jennings family had been here for many, many generations, and the old Jennings farm was sold. John and I grew up together, along with Al Keith.

George was one of most enthusiastic boating person I have ever known. We used to go up and spend time at the wharf and when the boats came in, go down and stand with the people and go on and go sailing with them or motoring, and we spent a lot of time on the sea that way. One day, an excursion came in and we thought it was just going out on the bay, so we got on, it turned out it was going to Castine. George immediately went up on the bridge, and I went out to explore the boat. When we got to Capstone, half way out and I figured where is everybody...So we got to Castine and we went wandering around, and we went into one of the stores and they had some curios. One of the things they had was a little canoe with an Indian which had a sail and George had never seen a canoe with a sail and he was fascinated. He is looking at it and the merchant is trying to get it away from George, and he got a hold on it. At that time, Castine was a teachers college. That was before it became a maritime academy, and one of the teachers there said that if I had a boy that wanted something like that I would certainly buy it for him, so she bought it for him. We came back on the boat and George held on to this, we got back to the pier at Bayside and George's grandmother and my great aunt were there waiting for us, and that was the last time we on a cruise to Castine for some time.

**Nice story. Do you any other stories like that that you can think of?**

When I was young, and the children all spent time on the beach. One of our favorite pastimes was that at high tide getting logs and floating them back and building rafts out of them. I don't know, and I guess that's how a lot of us learned how to swim. Because we had no supervision. We would get out on the beach and people would say get out of our

hair and go down to the beach. And I think we all learned how to swim by having a log too far away, and then having to dog paddle it back to the beach. Every summer we would build rafts and fool around and have a good time. I see very few people on the beach anymore and I think it is really too bad, because we were probably a combination of people being in touch. And the families but everybody knew a lot about the beach. And knew what kind of shells they were and they knew what was going and you could explore tidal pools and find things. And most of us kept logbooks of the things we learned, and everybody was sort of an amateur scientist. In those days, there were starfish and sea urchins and things like that. We used to trade these things back and forth and we also collected different kinds of rocks. There were a few people had some knowledge, and we find something we didn't know, we got a committee and went to the local library. They're few young people that have that kind of curiosity. I think it's too bad.

**I think you are right, I don't see many kids on the beach. I would be if I were still young, though.**

One pleasant experience that I had. As I said when George Jennings and I were young we did everything else we could to ride on people's boats. Eventually George got a boat. We learned how to sail and did a lot of things. And particularly in the 1930's it was very interesting here on the bay because in the latter part of the 19th century and early twentieth, wealthy people came here from New York and other places and on the islands built many, very large homes and resorts. After 1929, they were abandoned. So that young children, you could sail over and camp out. There were homes on Sears island, Islesboro, on the islands the other side of Turtle Head and it was lot of fun to go explore them.

Fifty years later, my wife and I lived on a sailboat for a couple of years--a 41 ft Columbia. We sailed up here from Florida one year and got together George Jennings and his wife and George and I went back and explored places we had been 50 years before. One of the islands, two of the islands, at the mouth of Penobscot Bay. There was the Pond Island. Barred islands and Butter Island. When we were young, Indians used to come down from Old Town and spend the summer there. And George and I used sail over and visit with them and camp on the beach with them. Today when you go back, if you didn't know any of the places the Indians had been, you would never be able to determine other than a few shell piles around. On other islands where there had been very large homes, and tourist facilities, you could find a few stonewalls. People have dismantled the walls and taken them away and Mother Nature has reclaimed them. The other thing when I was young, I may have mentioned earlier, there were a lot of large farms around here. Up on top of the hill on the back road was a lot of blueberry fields. There was also a small, a platform like this where you could observe the Bay. And there was a story people used to tell that during WW2 they caught a German spy up there because Penobscot Bay was a training place for American submarines. They were out of Rockland, and, I guess new submarines used to come up here and go through exercises and some of little old ladies saw this fellow up there with a telescope watching them and they reported him to the authorities and they captured what was locally known as "the

German Spies". And when you look at the Bluff road today, it's grown up quite a bit. The most colorful character we had down here on the South shore, was Captain Kelly. The old Captain Kelly place which was down here on the South shore, he was a retired sea captain and he used to have a parrot which sat out on the porch which used to swear at everybody. Captain Kelly also had a farm building there and a large garden every year. I remember my aunt Mary and most of people around here bought some eggs and fresh fruits and vegetables from Captain Kelly.

There was a handy man, a Scottish fellow, Jack, was his first name and he had one of the oldest Model T Fords anybody had, and which didn't run very well and he would swear at it and kick at it but he was the one that came along and did maintenance jobs and helped people when they had a problem.

**You mentioned an Indian family. Can you tell me more about that?**

I don't know where they spent most of their time, but apparently they came here every summer for many, many years, in the latter part of the 19th and early 20th century. They put up wigwams which they would live in and they had some children. And they would stay down there in Kelly Cove, and they would fish and things like that. And then they would disappear back to where they came from.

**Were they still coming down here when you were a boy?**

I

don't remember them but my aunt and my mother used to talk about them and other people used to talk about them. Mrs. Lightner, a neighbor did some research on them and I don't know what she did find out. But she is still alive in a nursing home in Belfast. So it might be something somebody might follow up with that.

**Let me make a note of that.**

Dorothy Lightner.

**What do you suppose you would say as to the biggest changes since you were a boy, in Bayside?**

The biggest changes have taken place, I think, in the last 15 years. When I was young, it was still a place that everyone closed up at the end of the season. It was like Brigadoon, and then in the Spring, everyone came and opened up the cottages and told what they had been doing during the winter and what not. After WW2 more people began winterizing their cottages, mostly professional people, primarily. The major change began to occur in the last 20 years, and it occurred I think, when Einstein came in and began with his real estate business of selling cottages and then providing the opportunity to buy them or lease them in the summer time, and that resulted in that we had more and more people from away to come, many very interesting people, but more cottages are now purchased as tax shelters by people that never come here and rent them out. So it's led to, when you go up to the village, its all strangers. And more and more the people that used to come and

spend summers continually, don't want do that anymore. The cost of all the services has gone up. I think now, probably 40 or 50 percent of the cottages are rental cottages. The traffic on the road has gone up tremendously. When I decided to put our place on the market,..a number of people from the village came down and told me that they and many people they know want to get out of the center of the village because they don't know anybody anymore. The traffic has increased; the noise level has gone up. There's now a lot of speculation that probably within five years, the cottages on Park Row will be boutiques and people selling things to tourists... And most of the kind of people I know around here will be long gone. A number of people in recent years that I have known have sold, and more and more people I think will be. A new transition, another transition, it's gone through many and its going to bring in a new group of people that will have a chance to enjoy it with a different set of variables that people have done in the past.

**When you were a boy, I get the impression that there was a closer community ties.**

Yes. When I was young there was a local post office, which the Blair Agency is today. And there was a general store there and a restaurant and everyone went there to get their mail and have a cup of coffee. And people had coffee and doughnuts and chatted, there were card parties, and something going on at the beach all the time. It was a very much a communal affair. The stores, I guess they lasted until after WW2 but not long after that. Bayside used to have a summer Post Office and I think when the Post Office and the general stores went, they lost much of the community spirit that had been a part of that. Then the trend of old people moving out and new people coming in and so people now are now private or they come here for shorter periods of time. The village used to have several times a season, a cocktail party. It's been 4 or 5 years since that happened. I am pleased to see that the community center is being used for more things now, for many years all they had was the annual meeting. But there's a new a mix of variables coming in and new people are going to have different desires than the people did before that. So as the community has gone through many transitions, it now going through another one.

**Let's take a break at this time.**

**Dr Stover, in part of your story, you mentioned sailing. Was the yacht club in existence then?**

The yacht club was really the result of a lady, Marion Eaton, Both her father and grandfather had operated excursion boats in Penobscot Bay from here in Bayside. Marion was a schoolteacher, she taught in high school in New Jersey, and she conceived of the idea of a sailing school in the early 1930's and she would bring young people from New Jersey up here. She had a number of small boats. George Jennings and I went home as instructors in the school. We were lucky with almost no experience with the boats and run around in the fog we never lost any children, never had any bad accidents, and the children all had a great time. She had a couple of the large cottages that were dedicated to a community. The boys were in one and the girls in another. We used to have some grand times. During my lifetime in various parts of the world I had met people in conversation had with them about Maine. They would say. "When I was young I went to a place you

never heard of, Bayside, to a sailing school". Amazing how many times that happened. It's also amazing how people up in the center of the village are there now because they originally came here for the sailing school. There are quite a number of them. Marion became the first Commodore of the yacht club and the yacht club was the natural growth out of the sailing school. Since Marion's time the sailing school has become extinct and then reorganized maybe a half a dozen times. I notice this year they are active again and I see young people sailing around and it's a great tradition. It's a great thing.

*[Editor's Note: Marion Eaton's sailing school was started in the 40s, not the 30s. She was Commodore of the Northport Yacht Club in 1945. The Yacht club was started in 1938 and John Short was its first commodore. The current sailing activity mentioned above is the NYC Sailing program which was started c.1966 by Walter Downs and is not connected to the Maine Sailing School in any way.]*

A couple of other things that we used to do when we were young, all the young kids went berry picking. We all knew where there were raspberries early in the Spring and the top of the hill above the Bluff road were the blueberries and blackberries were there and everybody would get after their parents to make pies, of course, so kids would spend time at the various cottages and all knew whose parents made the best pies, so summertime was a great thing and berrying was a major activity.

**All of these things seem to have made a more cohesive community. You mentioned people would walk.**

For the most of my lifetime this was a walking community. When I was young, the center of the village had a post office during the summer. It was an extension of the Belfast Post office; there was also a general store there and a restaurant. So, the normal thing for most people was to walk up in the morning, pick up the mail, stop and have coffee and donuts, chat with people. There were also organized card parties and continual series of activities. There was for many years, a Bayside Intellectual Forum at the Community center. And we would have speakers and discuss all sorts of things. There were movies on Saturday night, there were usually dances on Friday nights. There was a full summer of activities going on. The community used to have cocktail parties several times a year. I think too bad that these are no longer in existence. I do see some signs that things are reviving. Now I find more people going on at the community center. I think that is very good. The Yacht club I think has become a center for young people. And I think that gives them a chance to get out on the bay and become involved in our community activities, and I think the community center activities have been lost as more people use their automobile to go to Belfast and somewhere else for activity

So, today there was more congestion, more automobiles, more noise. I think it's a symptom of what is happening throughout all communities today. More people, more congestion, I think that is inevitable as it moves up the coast. Camden used to be like Bayside, not too many generations ago. It became filled with tourist activities. And I think it's likely that Bayside may become like that. People who want peace and tranquility will have to move further east. So far as I am concerned, I am very thankful

that I been able to spend much of lifetime summers here, and enjoyed when there was a lot of peace and tranquility. I hope that new people coming in will also have a generation to enjoy it. It certainly will be different from mine, but I hope they enjoy it as much as I do.

**Mr. Stover I think that your perspective having been here a long time is a good one, and I think it would be very nice for the new residents to hear this and get an idea what the community can be. Thank you very much.**

It's been my pleasure