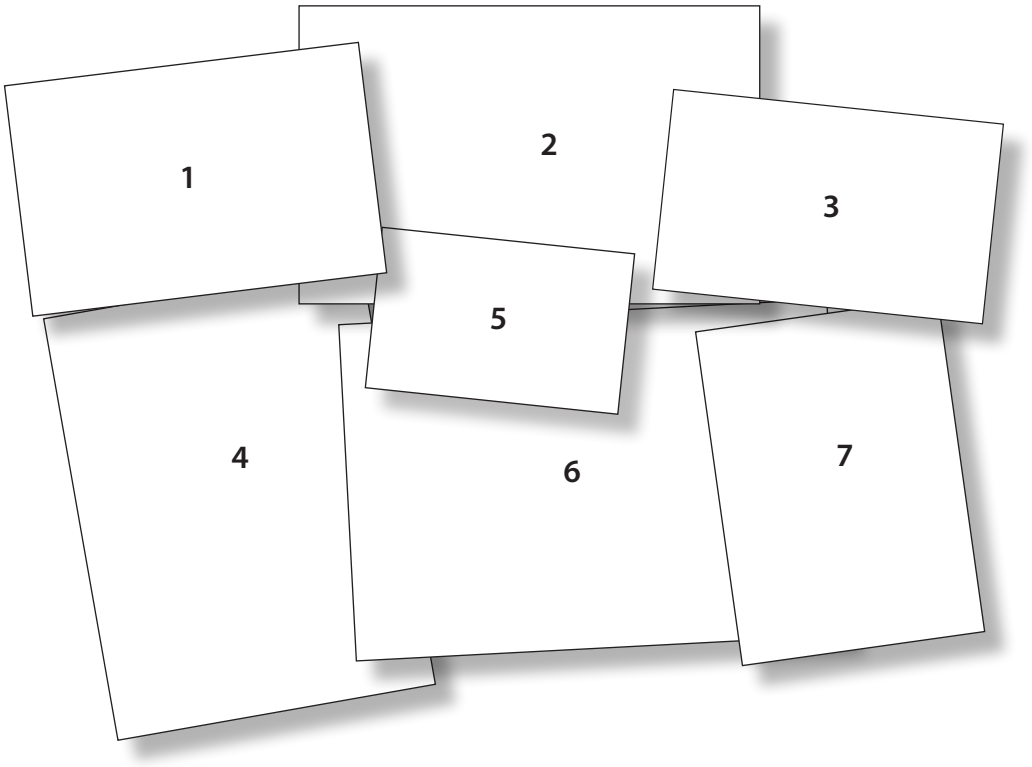
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Ethnography Program
Northeast Region

# The Waterfront of Otter Creek:
## A Community History




Special Ethnographic Report

Acadia National Park




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2. 1940s Postcard, showing the Causeway (Figure 15)

3. Breakers Entering Otter Creek Cove (D. Deur photo) (Figure 21)

Bottom, left to right:

4. Map of Otter Creek Cove, 1776 (From Des Barres 1776) (Map 1)

5. Fish House, Eastern Shore, 1960s (Photo courtesy Robert Walls) (Figure 20)

6. Otter Creek Fishermen on Western Cove, late 19th Century (Photo courtesy of Robert Walls) (Figure 6)

7. Interviewee, Denis Smith (Photo courtesy of Karen Zimmerman) (Figure 2)

# The Waterfront of Otter Creek: A Community History

by

**Douglas Deur, Ph.D.**

*Prepared under cooperative agreement with*
**University of Washington**

**Acadia National Park**
**Special Ethnographic Report**

**Northeast Region Ethnography Program**
**National Park Service**
**Boston, MA**

**2012**

# Executive Summary

This report addresses the history of the community of Otter Creek, Maine, and its historical connections with the Otter Cove waterfront in Acadia National Park. Sitting on the southeastern end of Mount Desert Island, and now largely within the boundaries of Acadia National Park, certain families gathered here in the early 19th century and eked a living from the Cove and its adjacent waters as fishermen and lobstermen. Other industries would come and go along the Cove – from granite quarrying to firewood cutting – but fishing and lobstering remained the cornerstones of community life even as the community began to provide service and support to the Rusticators in the latter decades of the 19th century. In spite of many geographical and economic challenges, this small fishing community persisted and even thrived in the years that followed.

Throughout its history, various forces brought changes to the community and its relationship with the waterfront in Otter Cove. Interviewee accounts and a variety of other sources attest to these challenges. The village grew up on either side of a municipal boundary between the towns of Bar Harbor and Mt. Desert, which sliced through Otter Cove and split the community in two. Later, as the affluent "rusticators" of Mount Desert Island began to transform island life in the late 19th century, many Otter Creek residents became caretakers or landscapers for the sprawling and opulent "cottages" of Bar Harbor, or raised crops and flowers for Bar Harbor homes - sometimes complementing and sometimes undermining families' participation in the fishing economy. However, it was the events of the Great Depression and after that most transformed the relationship of the community with the waterfront, in ways that were complex and enduring. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., arriving at the height of the Depression, was able to acquire much of the Otter Creek waterfront at little expense, in support of his larger vision for Acadia National Park. Wishing to create a showpiece swimming pond for the new national park, Rockefeller enclosed Otter Creek's inner Cove in a scenic causeway, and worked to extinguish the waterfront access of the community while making informal agreements to allow Otter Creekers continued access to their fish houses on the outer cove beyond the newly constructed shoreline drive. By 1940, much of Rockefeller's vision for Otter Creek's waterfront – except the swimming pond – had been achieved, and over time Rockefeller transferred his lands to the National Park Service for incorporation into Acadia National Park.

As interviewees attest, the relationship between Otter Creek and the National Park Service became somewhat complex in the years that followed. Otter Creek was the only town on Mount Desert Island to be fully encircled by the new park, and to

effectively lose access to a working waterfront concurrently with the park's creation. These developments compounded the many other challenges facing fisherman on this Cove in the mid-20th century. Some of these were of longstanding duration, such as the Cove's exposure to waves and the ill effects of bad weather, but others arose from newer economic conditions such as changing fish stocks and markets, and the industry's transition to larger boats and power-assisted technology. The few people who held on to the traditional fishing lifestyle did so with great effort, and often out of great affection for their heritage and for the traditions of small scale Maine fishermen. By mid-century, only a very small community of fishermen remained, launching their boats from small waterfront fish houses on remnant inholdings. At certain times, park staff demolished fish houses, abandoned and sometimes not, as park management prioritized natural resources and landscapes rather than cultural resources and landscapes in this portion of the park.

The waterfront is still of profound importance to many Otter Creek families and, though commercial fishing has largely passed from the scene, the attachments and structures of these fishing families often endure – giving the place unique meaning to the modern descendents of the historical fishermen of Otter Creek. Even when families cease to fish, they make efforts to maintain symbolic connections to the waterfront. Some memorialize their traditions, and attempt to preserve them on NPS lands. Impromptu constructions - such as the Harold Walls memorial piling – sometimes appear on the landscape where working structures once stood. Other families and individuals litigate to seek an enduring footprint on the landscape. A longstanding community organization, the Otter Creek Aid Society, was revived and now organizes community events, maintains its own fish house, and has supported the restoration of a town landing developed out of an agreement with Acadia National Park. No matter the method employed, it is clear that this little cove means something significant to many Otter Creek residents, and that this meaning is rooted in the distinctive history of this place.

The current study seeks to do justice to this long and complex story. This is a historical survey, covering roughly 180 years of human history as it relates to a particular landscape – Otter Creek's waterfront. This document does so using the methods of ethnography and oral history – allowing the words of Otter Creek families to often "speak for themselves" in the pages that follow. Some 18 individuals with specialized knowledge of Otter Creek history served as formal interviewees for the report, while a number of other area residents provided informal input and guidance on the project. Archival and published sources are used to provide a context for interviewees' observations, recollections, and opinions.

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The staff of local museums and libraries also provided critical support. Bob Pyle and Tina Hawes, both of the Northeast Harbor Library, provided indefatigable assistance in the early phases of this research, as well as permission to reproduce photos attributed to their collection within this report. The staff and board of the Bar Harbor Historical Society, especially Deborah Dyer and Sherwood Carr, provided useful support and access to their materials as well. Additional support was provided by the staff and administrators of a number of local collections, including the Town of Mount Desert, the Town of Bar Harbor, the Jessup Memorial Library, and the Mount Desert Historical Society.

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and Patrick Hammons (Pennsylvania State University) also provided valuable assistance in obtaining maps for the document. My indefatigable research assistant, Debbie Confer (University of Washington) provided assistance on many portions of this project, while Joel Siderius (NPS-WASO) helped put complex historical census data in order. This work would not have been possible without the keen interest, participation and support of National Park Service Northeast Region Anthropologist, Dr. Chuck Smythe; his collaboration and preliminary groundwork on study's themes were critical to the success of the current report.

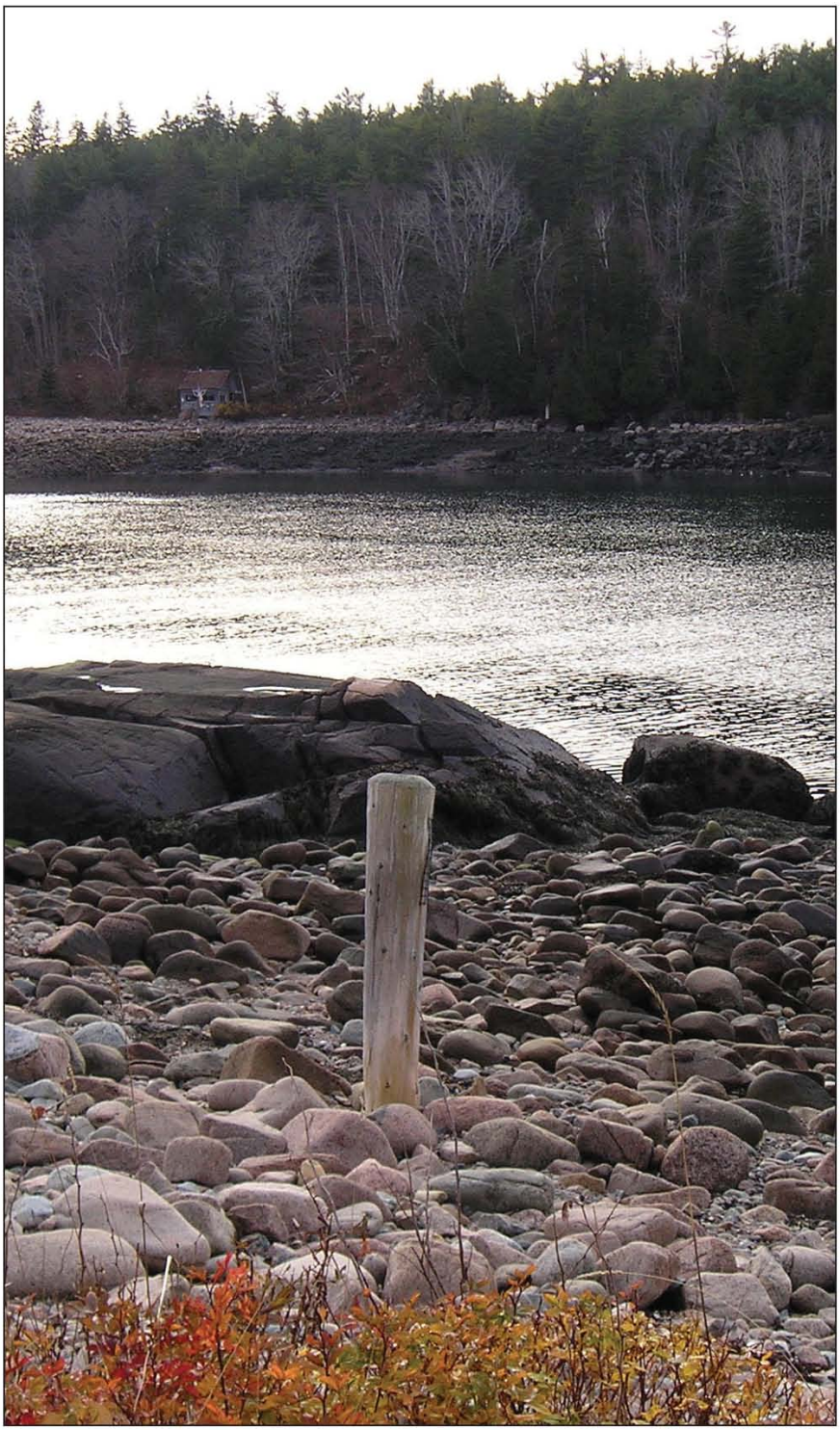


Figure 1: Otter Creek cove, with the Harold Walls memorial piling in the foreground and the Otter Creek Aid Society fish house in the background. While the fish house is functional and somewhat controversial while the piling is not, both structures are in some manner "commemorative" of historical fishing on the waterfront and are of great symbolic importance to certain Otter Creek families today. D. Deur photo.

# Chapter One
# Introduction

Occupying a rugged notch in the seacoast, where Otter Creek opens into the open Atlantic, the small community of Otter Creek has struggled and endured for many generations. First settled in the early 19th century, the little town was oriented to the waterfront and made up of peoples who knew how to make a living from the water - families from other small New England fishing towns, with roots in the coastal communities of the British Isles. These were hardy families, who carved homesteads from this island when it was still a relative wilderness, accessible only by the sea.

First and foremost, Otter Creek was a fishing town in these early years, with a population that knew how to wrest a living from the sea when the sea was their single greatest resource. Cod and other fish, caught far out to sea, were brought back to Otter Creek's cove, unloaded, and dried on flakes that once lined the shore. By most accounts, there were times of genuine prosperity on this small cove. The village's tiny but bustling waterfront was a lifeline to the fishing grounds, to shipping lanes, and to the markets of Boston and the cities beyond. Small fish houses and other fishing infrastructure ubiquitous along the New England coast were tested and adapted in response to local conditions. Yet, this rugged rockbound inlet was not a forgiving harbor. Long swells rolled into the cove during storms, as they still do, hammering piers, boat slips and fish houses with waves, carrying away gear and upturning boats. Never an easy life, families supported themselves with mixed economies, shifting with the years and seasons: lobstering and fishing some times, working in granite quarry operations on others, cutting firewood and farming in-between other tasks.

Various forces long conspired to pull apart the little community of Otter Creek. The municipal boundary between Bar Harbor and Mt. Desert Island literally spliced the town in two. As the affluent "rusticators" of Mount Desert Island began to transform island life in the late 19th century, Otter Creek residents adapted by splitting their own economic patterns "in two" as well: while fishing continued and even expanded, many residents became caretakers or landscapers for the sprawling and opulent "cottages" of Bar Harbor, or raised crops and flowers for Bar Harbor homes. Though Otter Creek and the privileged mansion districts of Bar Harbor were both predominantly comprised of New Englanders of British stock, the social and economic contrasts between the two communities could not have been starker. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries,

many Otter Creek residents found themselves pulled into the service sector – some enthusiastically and some less so. Yet, this was a time of relative stability and prosperity in many respects, a time of school- and church-building, and of social gatherings that brought together extended families that were still, by and large, descended from Otter Creek's first settlers.

The Great Depression transformed the community and their relationship with the waterfront in ways that were complex and enduring. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., arriving at the height of the Depression, was able to acquire the Otter Creek waterfront at little expense, in support of his larger vision of a national park that would preserve the natural assets of this spectacular coastline. Guided by his plans to remake Otter Creek's inner cove as a showpiece swimming pond for the new national park, enclosed in a scenic causeway, Rockefeller worked to extinguish the waterfront access of the community while making informal agreements to allow fish houses to persist elsewhere along the cove. By 1940, much of Rockefeller's vision for Otter Creek's waterfront – except perhaps the swimming pond – had been achieved, advanced considerably by crews working in the park as part of two New Deal programs - the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Bureau of Public Roads. Over time, Rockefeller transferred his lands to the National Park Service, for incorporation into Acadia National Park.

The relationship between Otter Creek and the National Park Service had never been an easy one. Otter Creek was the only town to be fully encircled by the new park, and to effectively lose access to a working waterfront in the process of the park's creation. The gulf between the experiences and worldview of the park's affluent boosters and the residents of this modest town were vast indeed - that Rockefeller and his fellow park supporters may not have recognized the Otter Creek waterfront as a legitimate asset is perhaps not completely surprising, in light of the paucity of buildings, the ambiguity of certain fishermen's titles to the land, and a variety of other idiosyncrasies. Nonetheless, as residents attest, the community experienced impacts from park creation that are arguably unique, and have contributed to changes within the community of Otter Creek that are still playing out today. By mid-century, only a small community of fishermen remained, launching their boats from small waterfront fish houses on remnant inholdings. At certain times, park staff demolished fish houses, abandoned and sometimes not, as the cultural landscape gave way to a largely natural one. The challenges to fisherman on this cove were many – waterfront access, exposure to waves, changing fish stocks and markets, the industry's transition to larger boats. The people who held on to this fishing lifestyle

did so with great effort, and often out of great affection for their heritage and for the traditions of small-scale Maine fishermen.

Today, the residents of Otter Creek – many of them descended from the original settlers – continue to exhibit a resiliency and a sense of community that carries on in spite of the challenges. A longstanding community organization, the Otter Creek Aid Society organizes community events, while also petitioning for continued access to the waterfront; Aid Society maintains its own fish house, and has supported the restoration of a town landing developed out of an agreement with Acadia National Park. Even when they cease to fish, families make efforts to maintain even symbolic connections to the waterfront. Some memorialize their traditions, and attempt to preserve them on NPS lands. Impromptu constructions - such as the Harold Walls memorial piling, constructed by Harold's son in the slip below the Walls fish house site - appear now and then on the landscape where working structures once stood. Other families and individuals litigate to seek an enduring footprint on the landscape. No matter the method employed, it is hard to deny that this little cove means something significant to many Otter Creek residents, and that this meaning is rooted in the unique history of this place. The waterfront is still of profound importance to many Otter Creek families and, though commercial fishing has largely passed from the scene, the attachments and structures of these fishing families often endure – giving the place unique meaning to the modern descendents of the historical fishermen of Otter Creek.

The current study seeks to do justice to this long and complex story. This is a historical survey, covering roughly 180 years of human history as it relates to a particular landscape – Otter Creek's waterfront. This document does so using the methods of ethnography and oral history – allowing the words of Otter Creek families to often "speak for themselves." With such an ambitious scope, it should be understood that some themes and periods are given only brief attention, though no doubt they could be the focus of independent studies in their own right. The document is careful to take no particular position on some of the thornier political and legal issues that have emerged on the cove in the last 75 years, but does not necessarily shy away from the discussion of these issues either – they are essential to a larger historical understanding of Otter Creek history, and it is almost impossible to conduct an oral history interview without interviewees venturing into the cove's 'rougher waters.' In undertaking this work, I am following the lead of the project ATR, Chuck Smythe, who completed prior research on the fish houses at Otter Cove and has produced a report and transcript collection relating

to that theme, in addition to collaborating on the current research (Smythe 2008). As the acknowledgement section of this document will attest, I am very much indebted to the people of Otter Creek, the staff of the National Park Service, and representatives of various local museums and archives for everything that they have provided to this study. While certain omissions are inevitable in such a broad survey, I take responsibility for any glaring omissions, errors, and boneheaded mistakes.

## Methods

First and foremost, this study is an ethnographic investigation of a particular community, Otter Creek, and its historical relationship to its physical landscape – especially the waterfront of Otter Creek cove. Relying especially on ethnographic interviews, augmented with published and unpublished writings, the study has sought to illuminate such themes as historical settlement, community formation and development, occupational history, traditional life ways, and resource uses as they relate to lands and resources now located within Acadia National Park. Such information has been needed by NPS staff for both interpretive and management functions at the park, but is also of interest to Otter Creek residents as part of their effort to document local history. Information regarding the history of this small community might also guide the park in preserving any places of particular historical importance and in accurately presenting its history to park visitors.

While this research has involved the review and incorporation of available archival materials, it has especially emphasized the accounts of knowledgeable individuals with historical ties to Otter Creek – its residents, and descendents of fishermen who once used the Otter Creek shoreline. Oral history interviews were qualitative in nature, focusing upon oral history pertaining to uses of the lands and resources along this shoreline. As much of the human experience along this shoreline remains unwritten, but is well remembered by some members of the Otter Creek community, oral history was seen as the most effective and illuminating way of gathering new information on this community's history.

Initial phases of this research involved archival research at pertinent state and local historical archives, to identify manuscripts, maps, and other materials that addressed key study themes. These collections included, but were not limited to:

1. William Otis Sawtelle Collections and Research Center, Acadia National Park
2. Bar Harbor Historical Society, Bar Harbor ME
3. Jessup Memorial Library, Bar Harbor ME
4. Town of Bar Harbor municipal records, Bar Harbor ME
5. Northeast Harbor Library, Northeast Harbor ME
6. Mount Desert Historical Society, Northeast Harbor ME

A variety of on-line archival sources were also compiled and analyzed in the course of the study. In addition, the research team acquired copies of all available census compilation sheets for the study area from archived federal census records (U.S. Census Bureau n.d.). The outcomes of this analysis have informed the content of this document in various ways. Simultaneously, lists of names, ages, household size and occupation for Otter Creek residents from 1850 through 1930 are included as an appendix to this report – both as a tool for future researchers, and as a genealogical resource for Otter Creek families.

Based on a review and analysis of historical documents recovered during this initial research, the PI was able to identify data gaps that required attention during oral history interviews. Oral history interviews were conducted with individuals who were reported to be knowledgeable of, and have personal ties to, the Otter Creek waterfront (Figure 2). A "snowballing" sample method was employed in this case, with each successive interviewee being asked to identify other knowledgeable potential interviewees until the pool of potential interviewees was well established and these individuals could be contacted regarding their interest in participating in the study (Patton 1990).

Oral history research on the history of the two communities expanded on past ethnographic research already undertaken by the project's Agreements Technical Representative, NPS Anthropologist, Dr. Charles Smythe. Smythe's collaboration in this research was essential, providing access to initial interviewees, as well as interview transcripts and select archival materials associated with the production of his authoritative statement on fish house use in the study area, *Traditional Uses of Fish Houses in Otter Cove* (Smythe 2008).

Some 18 individuals were formally interviewed in the course of this study – some of these individuals being interviewed more than once. The majority were interviewed solely by the project Principal Investigator, Dr. Douglas Deur, but some portion of the cited interviews in this document were conducted by the project ATR, Dr. Chuck Smythe.

Their initials are used within in-line citations in the text of this report, while a key to these initials is included in the "Sources" section at the end of this document. A number of other individuals provided valuable information and perspectives, but did not chose to be formally interviewed; these "informal interviewees" are not quoted directly in the text, but some of the most informative are identified at the end of this document, also in the Sources section.



Figure 2: Interviewee Dennis Smith participating in the alewife harvest during the late 1970s. Though modern interviewees are not full-time fishermen, many come from multigenerational fishing families and have considerable personal experience as fishermen. Photo courtesy of Karen Zimmerman.

Interviews were conducted at mutually convenient times and locations. After being informed about the project goals and the potential uses of the results, interviewees were asked if they wish to participate; those who were willing were given a copy of the University of Washington informed consent form, as approved by the UW Human Subjects division, to review and sign during the interview.

Interviews focused on key themes, including interviewees' knowledge of:

7. Places of known historical importance within the Otter Creek study area;
8. Places of enduring personal importance to interviewees within the study area;
9. Historical resource procurement, such as fishing or lobstering, within the study area;
10. The identities of individuals or families who historically occupied lands now within portions of Otter Creek that are now managed by the Acadia National Park;
11. The social and economic circumstances of daily life within the study areas during the period when the cove was being used regularly by Otter Creek fishermen;
12. The factors that contributed historically to the discontinuation of use of lands within along Otter Creek's waterfront;
13. The meaning of Otter Creek's waterfront to contemporary Otter Creek families, and their expectations for its future.

Interviewees were asked about their personal and family associations with the study area in order to contextualize their comments – including basic discussions of their family and the family's occupational history. Interviews were loosely structured, so as to facilitate a conversational tone between the interviewer and project interviewees; while focusing on the themes identified above, questions were not rigidly predetermined. Interviewees were posed questions regarding each of the seven themes outlined above, and allowed to discuss each theme to the full extent that they wished. Repeat interviews were carried out with certain interviewees, when it seemed that additional interviewing might elicit new and relevant material. Field interviews were especially valuable, using landmarks to elicit site-specific information regarding the Otter Creek waterfront. Interviews were audio-recorded whenever interviewees provided their consent.

In practice, interviewees' comments tended to progress in certain predictable directions. Interviewees spoke of diverse historic uses of the Otter Creek waterfront, from fishing to quarrying, from military uses of the landscape, to commemorative efforts

of the modern era. Invariably, interviewees wished to discuss the historical loss of access to the waterfront associated with its purchase by John D. Rockefeller. Jr. and its subsequent management by the National Park Service. Many spoke of how this changing access to the waterfront, as well as changes in ownership and management of this area, had affected community life in Otter Creek. Fishing stories were shared in abundance. Many also spoke of efforts to maintain ties to the waterfront, either practical or symbolic, into the present day. All of these topics are pertinent for NPS management and were recorded in an effort to reflect the unique knowledge, interests, and priorities of the community.

On the basis of materials gathered through interviews and archival research, I compiled this report, providing a thematic and roughly chronological overview of Otter Creek's history. The themes of the report were largely suggested by the content of interviews – if interviewees conveyed significant information on a topic, and numerous individuals addressed the topic, it is almost certain that this topic is represented in a distinct section or subsection of the report that follows. By the time this report is final, interviewees will have been given the opportunity to review and recommend changes to a draft version. When interviewees have granted consent, recordings and transcripts from their interviews have become a part of the project archive, available to future researchers and future generations of Otter Creek residents alike. While there are no doubt many omissions in any summary report that professes to outline the history of an entire community over nearly two centuries of human history, it is hoped that this report identifies many of the high points, and will help illuminate a path to future cooperation between the National Park Service and the community of Otter Creek on various issues of mutual concern.

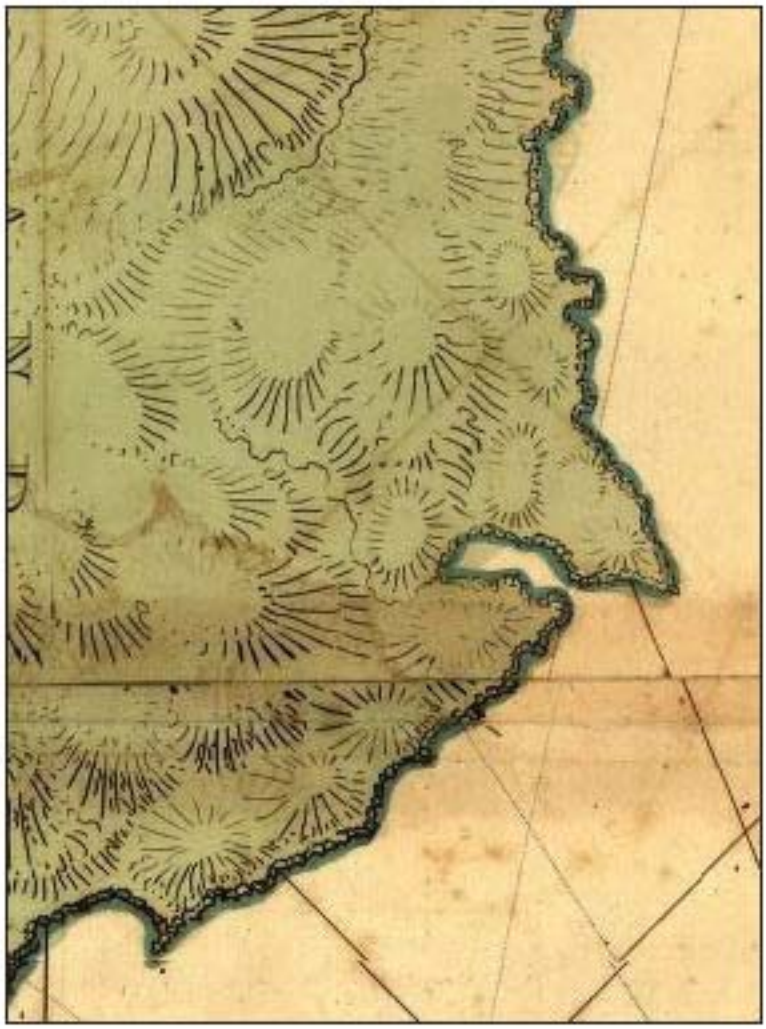
# Chapter Two
# The Foundations of Otter Creek

When French explorer Samuel Champlain first sailed along the shore near Otter Creek in September 5, 1604, the cove had long been considered a home. For no less than 6,000 years, Mount Desert Island – including Otter Creek cove – had served as a center of seasonal resource procurement and settlement to the ancestors of the modern Wabanaki. Here, the Wabanaki hunted, fished, gathered berries, and harvested clams on the many protected coves of the island (Prins and McBride 2007).[1] While these island communities were gradually displaced to the mainland in the wake of American settlement, and most physical evidence of their presence was quickly swept aside, American Indians continued to be a presence at the cove for a considerable time after Champlain's visit. Passing references to Indian residents and resource uses on Otter Creek's waterfront, persisting alongside growing American settlement, appear in non-Native oral traditions dating to at least the early 20th century. Certainly, there is an American Indian history of Otter Creek - a story spanning many, many generations – that might prove enlightening, but would be regrettably difficult to recover at this late date.

The available written historical record regarding Otter Creek begins in the 17th century, a time when French and British empires competed for control of this portion of the North American coastline. Among the outcomes of this competition were complicated patterns of land ownership that would affect the early settlement of Mount Desert Island for no less than a century and a half. (Plagued by complex land title issues that slowed early 19th century development, this history arguably anticipates the complex land title questions around Otter Creek cove in the 20th and 2st centuries.) While the story of competing land claims is complex, it bears a brief retelling here.

In 1688, Otter Creek was included within the seigneury estate of Les Douacques, granted by the French crown to explorer Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac as part of an effort to advance settlement in New France. Cadillac's new lands included Mount Desert Island and other lands along Frenchman's Bay, and represented the first European titular claim to what is now Otter Creek. Cadillac reputedly settled a modest homestead at Otter Creek some time after receiving his claim, but the restless Cadillac did not stay there long and left no enduring presence. For the time being, the non-Native presence of the cove was brief and fleeting. Despite this fact, Cadillac's many heirs continued to claim

the island as their own. However, in 1759, King George III - as part of a larger effort to undermine French claims in this part of the New World - issued a competing land claim to Mount Desert Island to Francis Bernard, Royal Governor of Massachusetts. Bernard did not occupy these lands, but he did open a portion of his claim to settlement a year later, in 1760, resulting in the first permanent non-Native occupation of the island. Situated at the present site of Somesville, these lands were occupied by settlers, Abraham Somes and James Richardson (Prins and McBride 2007; Richardson 1989).



Map 1: One of the first clear cartographic representations of Otter Creek's waterfront, dating from 1776. On the larger map from which this inset is taken, there are numerous structures shown on other portions of Mount Desert Island. Otter Creek, as shown here, has no structures. This agrees with documentary evidence that settlement was delayed on this cove due in part to title issues, and that permanent settlement did not occur until a few decades later. This being said, some descendents of the original families that settled in Otter Creek report that their ancestors were present on Mount Desert Island from roughly the time of the Revolutionary War. From Des Barres 1776.

Despite contested land ownerships, as well as the tumult of the Revolutionary War, there was a remarkable amount of small-scale settlement around the island soon after the arrival of Somes and Richardson. A number of settlers built homesteads on the shoreline despite the absence of clear title. Accordingly, Joseph De Barre's 1776 map of the island shows settlements in a number of locations, though Otter Creek is shown as having no permanent structures (De Barres 1776). This is not to suggest that the cove was unused; indeed, as a protected but largely unoccupied harbor, Otter Creek was reputedly one of many stopover points used by early international smugglers during the Revolutionary War era (a role that was later reprised during prohibition) (Smith 2003).

Only two years after the conclusion of the War, in 1785, Massachusetts Governor Bernard's son John inherited his father's lands, including Otter Creek. Nearly bankrupt after the Revolutionary War, John Bernard sought to quickly raise capital by mortgaging his Mount Desert Island claim to Thomas Russell, a Boston merchant. However, by 1786, Cadillac's granddaughter, Maria Theresa de Gregoire and her husband Bartolemy de Gregoire, asserted their own historic claims to the island's lands, based on Cadillac's French title. With the de Gregoire family and John Bernard jointly claiming the island, the issue went before the American courts. In 1794, the court divided the claim, so that the de Gregoire family obtained uncontested title to the eastern half of the island, including Otter Creek, while Bernard was able to maintain a claim to the island's western side; the de Gregoire family then settled at Hull's Cove (Savage 1989; Morison 1960; Street and Eliot 1905).

Almost immediately, Mount Desert Island's residents convened, seeking to bring some administrative order to the island. Together, they appointed selectmen and agreed to divide the island into the Town of Mount Desert and the Town of Eden (later Bar Harbor), with its boundary splitting what is today the village of Otter Creek in two. As recalled by Savage, this boundary delineation occurred in 1795 in the home of James Richardson:

> In 1795 the voters directed the selectmen to draw up a dividing line to separate the island into two towns. The final vote was held at James Richardson's house on May 6, 1795. The eastern side of Mt. Desert would be governed as the Town of Eden, officially incorporated in 1796. The boundary generally runs from the east side of Otter Creek Cove to the head of the tidal water in Somes Sound, then due west to a point just north of Deep Cove (Savage 1989: 19).

As a well-known natural landmark, the Otter Creek cove was a logical place to anchor this boundary and - with no permanent population living there at the time - potential inconveniences resulting from the splicing the land in two at this point were not yet anticipated. Still, as shall be seen in the pages that follow, this division would create challenges to the administration of the community of Otter Creek that have lasted into the present day.

Though the courts had granted the de Gregoire family much of the eastern island, the family continued to encounter challenges in settling their land claims. In particular, they found that many portions of the eastern island were occupied by vexing numbers of American settlers, almost none of them possessing clear title. The family doggedly sought to obtain payment for these occupied lands, but did so without much success. Running low on funds at the close of the 18th century, they began "attempts to dispose of vast tracts through private auctions" (Savage 1989: 12). (In time, the family sold large tracts to a General Henry Jackson, who soon sold those lands to William Bingham; by the beginning of the 19th century, they had sold off almost all of their lands and by 1811, they held no more lands in their name, other than their home [Savage 1989]).

The timing of these land sales was fortuitous. While the platting and distribution of lands on Mount Desert Island had commenced at around the time of the Revolutionary War, settlement of the Acadia region had lagged somewhat after that date. All matters of competing French, British, and American land claims aside, the population of the Acadia region arguably had been depressed relative to other portions of New England, due to the tumult of the Revolutionary War and uncertain national claims to the Maine coast generally. A more secure border and more sharply defined territorial claims resulting from the passage of the 1783 Treaty of Paris abruptly resolved these matters. A wave of New Englanders flooded into coastal Maine in the very late 18th and early 19th centuries. This process was hastened not only by land grants to Revolutionary War veterans, but also by increased demographic pressures in southern New England, where continued European immigration ran up against growing urbanization, limited soil productivity, and localized pressure on fish resources. People from relatively well-established New England communities moved into the relative "wilderness" of Mount Desert Island, adopting subsistence-level fishing and farming for a time, and assuming life ways reminiscent of earlier generations of southern New Englanders (Eves 1995).

While these regional and national pressures rapidly transformed other portions of Mount Desert Island, their effects were additionally delayed at Otter Creek. On the

southeast side of Mount Desert Island, the contested land claims of the de Gregoire family lingered longer than elsewhere, complicating the initial acquisition of title and arguably delaying initial American settlement. Cadillac's brief settlement of Otter Creek appears to have been among the complicating factors, adding weight to the claims of his descendents to this coastline. As Savage noted,

> It is interesting to note that the last Mt. Desert shoreline to be developed was from Otter Creek to what is today called Gilpatrick's Cove [at Northeast Harbor]…Though this shoreline certainly appears attractive from today's point of view, it has been suggested that…the settlers who wanted property on this side of the island had difficulty getting title to their claims (Savage 1989: 19).

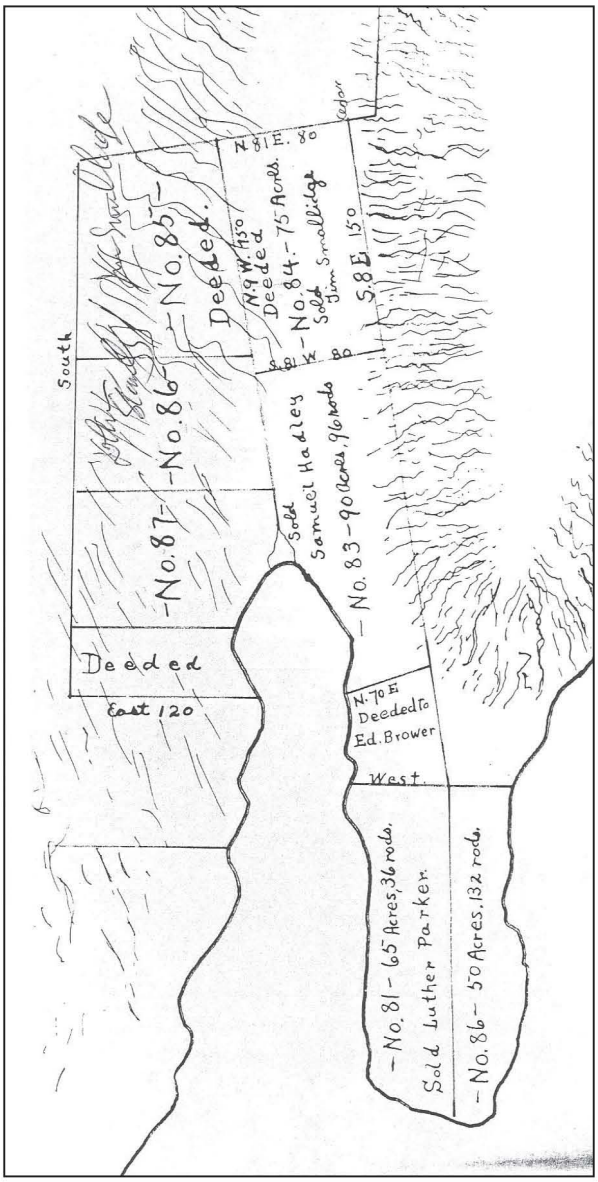
> Both written and oral history evidence suggests that some of the ancestors of today's Otter Creek residents were aware of the Otter Creek area and were seeking land there, even as they lived nearby, on or near Mount Desert Island.

Finally, in the early 19th century, the de Gregoire family was prepared to dispose of that part of Cadillac's original seigneury estate that centered on Otter Creek. Their agents released a tract of more than 400 acres, centered on the cove, from the family estate. As oral tradition on this point is recalled by Richard Walls, "There were land grants made of 300 acres each…back when France decided to recognize Britain's claim to the island" (RI). In 1807, a man named James Peters surveyed and subdivided this large tract into eight or nine numbered, large plots of land, ranging between roughly 30 and 90 acres, for sale to American settlers (Peters 1807). The resulting land division set the boundaries of Otter Creek in an enduring way. This original survey still defines the overall geometry of land ownership into the present day – with more recent Otter Creek lots being carved from these original tracts (see Map 2). Boundary markers are said to still be visible in some locations, marking the corners from these old land claims. Some interviewees report that there are U.S. Geodetic Survey markers on the island that make reference to these original land claim boundaries from the Peters survey.

The original holders of these grants included three or four extended families, who cleared the forest and constructed modest farmsteads around Otter Creek cove. The families were the ancestors of many contemporary residents, including a number of interviewees for the current project: "there are primarily three or four [families]: Walls, Smith, Davis and so forth …It started out [with] large tract holders of land" (KD). Of these families, it is widely agreed that the Walls family were the first to become

permanently established, homesteading in Otter Creek sometime in the 1830s.[2] As noted in the writings of Tom Richardson,

> It is believed that Samuel, Benjamin and James Walls were brothers and were the first to move to Otter Creek, arriving perhaps as early as the 1830's. Of the three, Samuel is thought to be the village's first permanent inhabitant (Richardson 1989: 111).




Map 2: A hand-drawn replica of the original 1807 land grant map of Otter Creek (Peters 1807). These lot boundaries established the general pattern of land ownership in the community, from which modern properties in the community were subdivided. In this light, the original 1807 survey still defines the general morphology of modern property boundaries in Otter Creek. Lots were subdivided so as to provide access to the cove or Main Brook. *Map courtesy Bar Harbor Historical Society*

Clarifying this point in the course of interviews conducted for this study, Tom Richardson suggests that the community of Otter Creek was principally a Walls family settlement prior to the mid-19th century, though other families were present in smaller numbers:

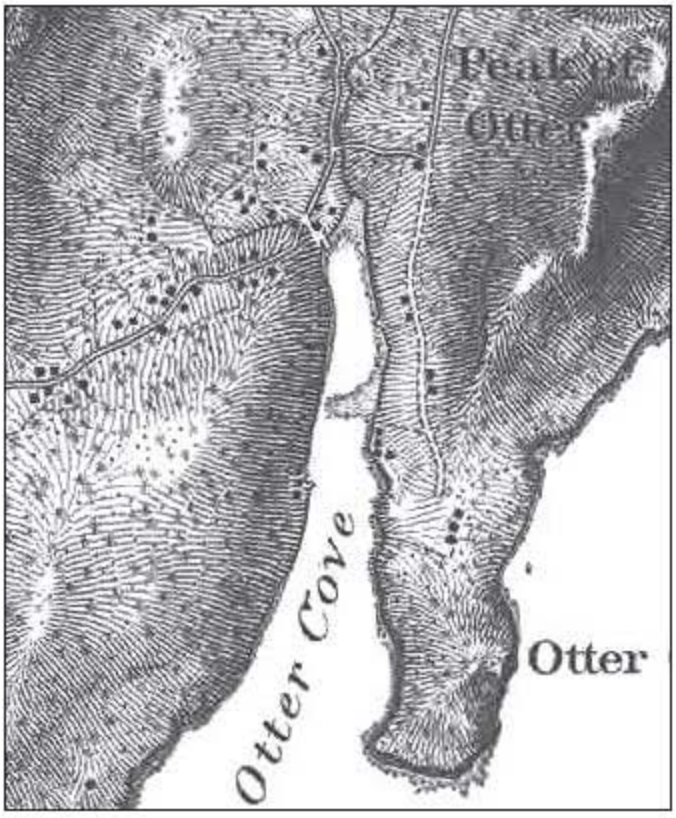
> There was basically three brothers that came here originally, the Walls brothers, and settled here first in about the 1830s. Then the Richardsons, Smiths got here in the 1850s. Smith is my grandparents, my grandmother's side of the family. And [then] it was Walls…Davises, Richardsons, Smiths, and many others (TR).

In addition to the Walls brothers, the Richardson family (kin to Somesville founder, James Richardson), the Davis family, and others, records from the early- to mid-19th century allude to such names as Smalledge and Hadley – names that did not persist in the community and were seldom mentioned by modern interviewees. (The Smalledge family appears as late as 1860 census, while the Hadleys appear in census records as late as 1900 [U.S. Census Bureau n.d.]). On August 31, 1855, a party including Charles Tracy visited the community of Otter Creek, staying with this Smalledge family:

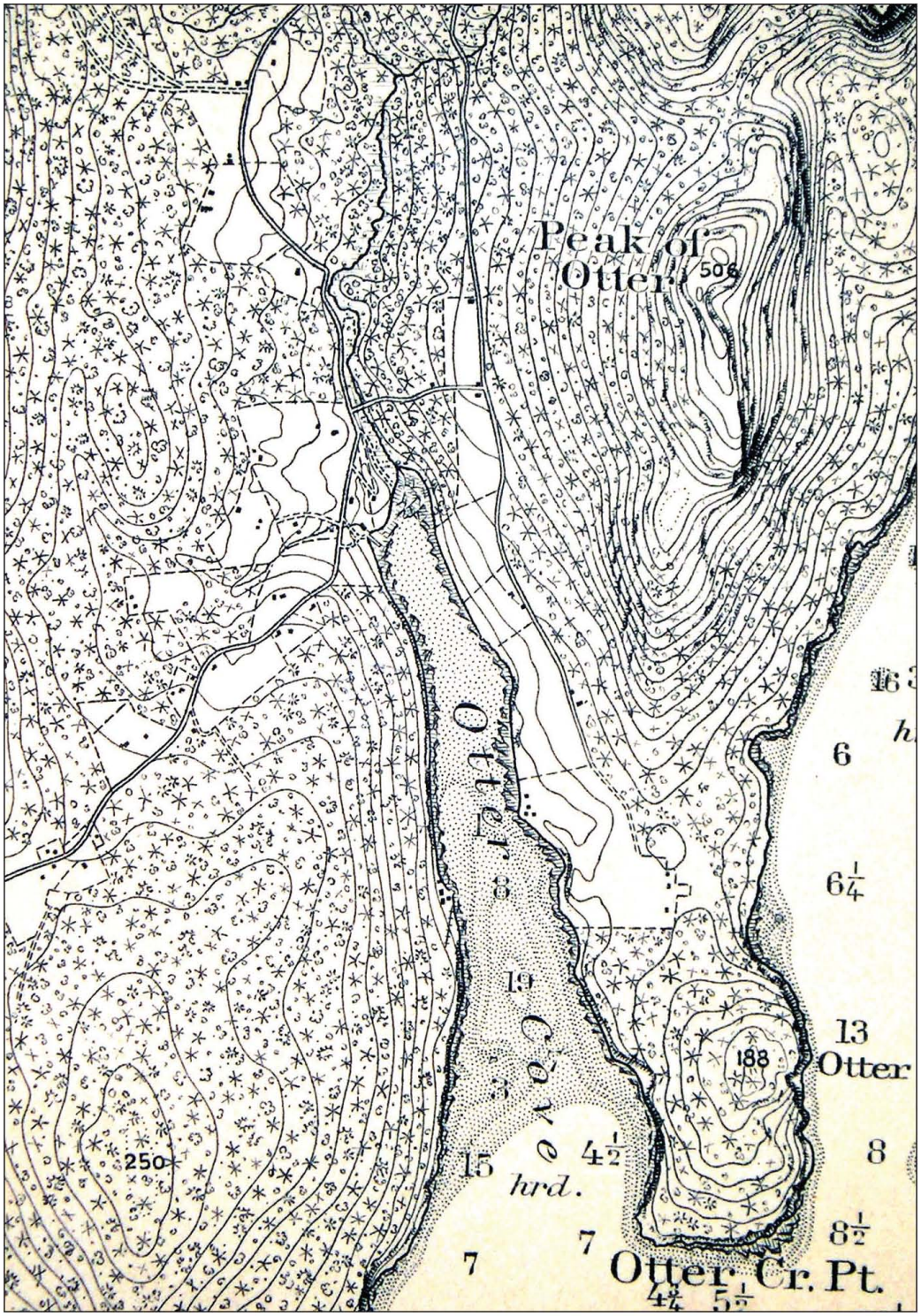
> After completing 15 miles of jaunting, in 5 hours time [from Seal Cove], we stopped at a small farm house on Otter Creek, and made our repast, partly from our own basket & partly from provisions found by the family.
>
> The house was upon a hill looking over the land into the ocean. The farmer, Mr. Smallage, was an old man, native of the island, who came to this spot 20 years ago [ca. 1835] and cleared this farm from its native forest. His crop consists chiefly of fire wood which is sent to Boston. Mrs. Smallage was a stout old woman, a snuff taker. The married daughter and a very pretty daughter of 15 made up the party. The girl was one of the prettiest we have met on the island…We crowded around a little table, and had a feast of the most ravenous and cheery sort. The family seemed to wonder at and enjoy our pleasure in an extraordinary manner (Tracy 1997: 133).

Based on available genealogical information, it appears certain that the Smalledges and the Hadleys are among some modern interviewees' ancestors. Indeed, it is safe to say that most longtime residents are related somehow, after multiple generations of marriage between different family lines. Dig deeply enough into the community's genealogy and one finds that most of the Davis family are Walls descendents, many of the Walls family are Davis descendents, most Richardsons are Smith descendents, many Smiths are Richardson descendents, and so forth (RW, TR, PR).

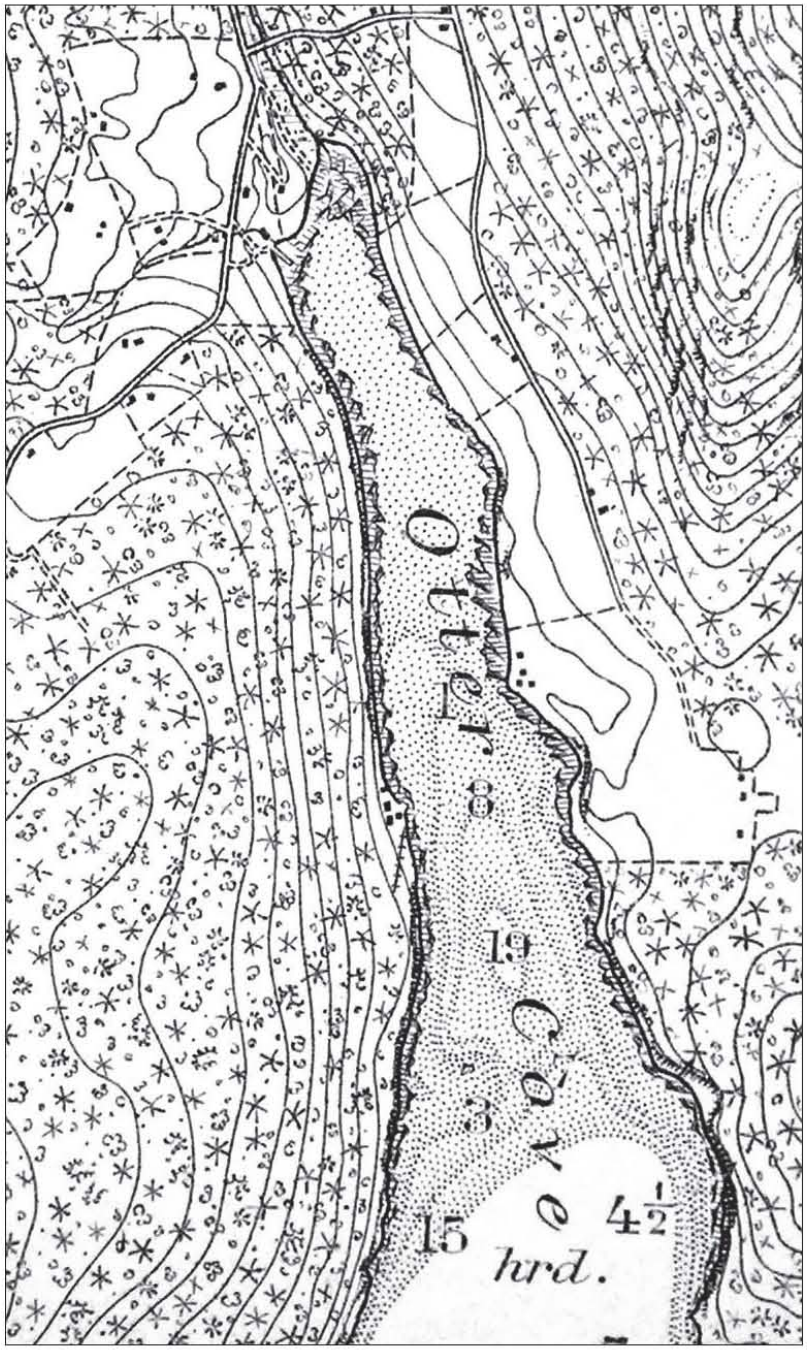
Very little in-migration occurred in the two decades after Otter Creek's first settlement. According to Richardson (1989), only six permanent households existed in Otter Creek by 1850, including those of Samuel and Lorana (Young) Walls, James and Clarissa Walls, Benjamin and Sabrina Walls, George Jr. and Elsa (Bracy) Grover, Samuel and Comfort Davis, and David Sr. and Hannah (Young) Bracy (Richardson 1989: 111). Together, these families represented a total town population of forty. (This figure apparently excludes the Smalledge and Hadley families.) By 1860, these original families had grown, their children marrying and starting homes of their own; only two new extended families, the Youngs and Turnbulls, had moved to the area. Census records, included in the appendix of this document, provide available names for Otter Creek residents from the earliest detailed census for this area, in 1850, and the most recent census available for public inspection, from 1930.[3]




Map 3: One of the earliest maps showing structures on Otter Creek's waterfront, this 1875 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey map shows no fewer than four fish houses on the eastern cove and no fewer than three on the western cove. A wharf or pier extends into the tidal zone at the approximate location of the modern town landing. An apparently natural spit of land extends into the water at the approximate location of the modern causeway. Homes are largely concentrated on the roads through the village, on the bluffs above. From USCGS 1875.




Map 4: Otter Creek as it looked in the mid-1870s. Town boundaries are not shown. Yet, even at this date, a geographical distinction between two settlement cores – one centered on the eastern Bar Harbor side of the community and one centered on the western Mount Desert side of the community – is apparent. See inset for a discussion of shoreline features. From USCGS 1885.




Map 5: A detail of the Otter Creek waterfront as it looked in the mid-1870s. Four fish houses are shown on both the east and west shores of the cove, in the same locations they were found a century later (conventional map symbology used in this date sometimes used one structure symbol to imply several buildings, so actual numbers may not be exact). A wharf or pier is seen extending into the tidal zone at the location of the present town landing. Farm lands on the eastern side of the cove have been cleared of forest, as had the head of the cove. Though property boundaries are indicated, they do not conform to the distribution of fish houses, possibly confirming local accounts of placing fish houses without title on larger landowners' holdings, in places that were advantageous in terms of access by land and by sea. From USCGS 1885.

Most of these early Otter Creek families were of British stock originally, though most are said to have spent a few generations on the New England or Canadian Maritime[4] coasts before moving to the Otter Creek area: "I'm pretty sure they all came originally from…what is Great Britain now" (GN). The Smith family, however, traces some portion of their ancestry to Portugal and an ancestor, Julius Delarose, who took the more typically Anglo-American name "John Smith."[5]

The lands occupied by these first families provided ample opportunities for sustenance and the formation of frontier homesteads. As described by Richard Savage, the landscape of Mount Desert Island was a place of natural abundance:

> Clams, mussels, lobster and fish were readily available. Fresh water was abundant. Waterfowl and game animals were easily taken. Untouched forests provided a limitless resource for building and commerce (Savage 1989: 12).

However, the profound remoteness of the community at this time is apparent in almost any written record mentioning Otter Creek.[6] The community was sufficiently remote that only limited markets existed for local products; most communities on the island had access to fish and produce, while shipping to urban New England was intermittent.

At the onset of settlement, families in rural Maine experienced a downward trend in their degree of economic specialization as Yankee townsfolk moved to the fringes of New England and became generalists – hunting, gathering, chopping wood for Boston markets, and participating in commercial fishing and small-scale quarrying as part of a larger mixed economy, subject to seasonal cycles. In this respect, Otter Creek was very much like other remote Maine communities of the period – an era of personal and economic versatility that has been commented upon by New England historians (e.g., Deitz 1978). These trends arguably underlie some of the independence and self-determination that can be found among tightly-knit communities of descendents in rural coastal Maine today.

Accordingly, as was true elsewhere on the Maine coast, residents of Otter Creek maintained a mixed economy in these early years. Residents combined subsistence fishing and small-scale farming with a fledgling commercial fishery focusing on cod and other locally available fish: "in the early days…because there were no summer cottages then… you were a fisherman or a farmer, or typically you were both" (PR). Families alternated between economic and subsistence tasks in seasonal but sometimes highly variable sequences, based on the vagaries of weather and markets. When fishing was slow, men

often took temporary work as ships' hands or in other maritime occupations that would temporarily take them away from the community. Items harvested for commercial sale were chosen from those few natural products that would keep – cured fish, fire wood, and other items being especially popular at the time. Wood cutting for personal use was widespread, while residents sometimes arranged to send a load of wood along with fish or other goods to Boston for sale – allowing families to generate income even as they cleared the virgin forest in preparation for farming. These fledgling farms struggled to establish gardens and orchards on the freshly exposed forest soil in the early years, but had relative success with the grazing of livestock. As elsewhere in coastal Maine, their social and economic activities exhibited clear seasonal rhythms, centered on fishing and agriculture – rhythms that had already started to evaporate by this date in more urban portions of New England (McMahon 1989).

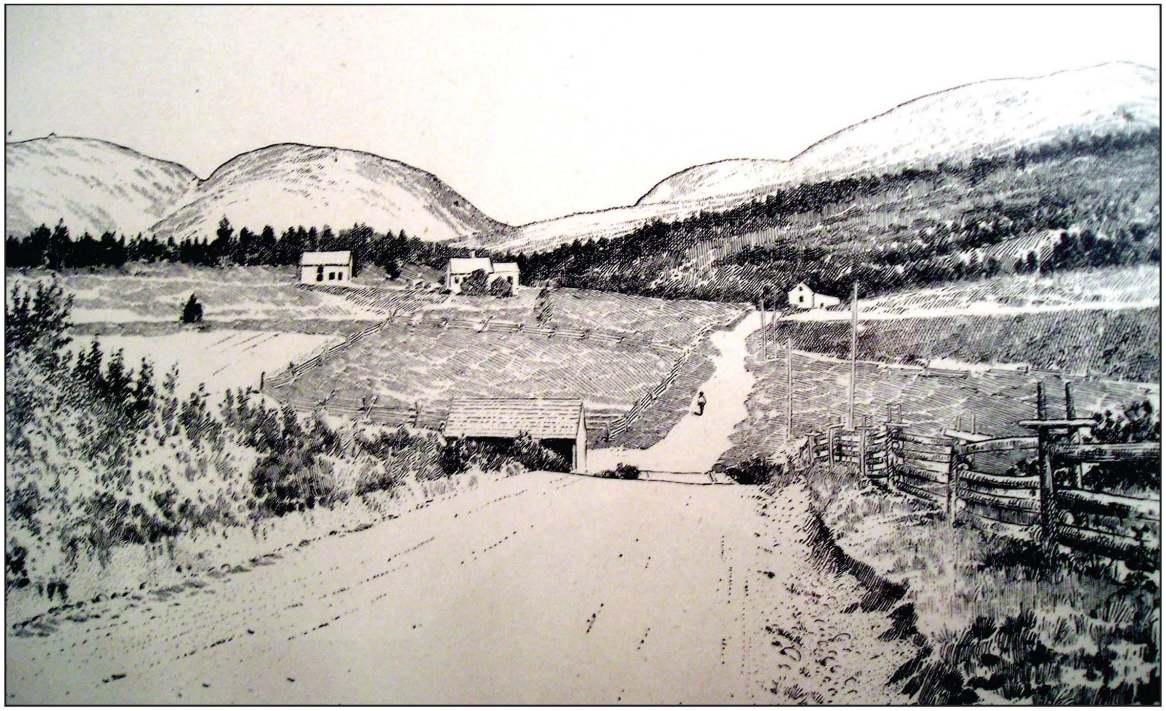


Figure 3: A lithograph image of the main road through Otter Creek in the 1880s, showing small farmsteads amidst cleared fields. From Shaler 1889.

In 1855, island visitor Charles Tracy commented on this mixed farming and fishing lifestyle, which he found unique but common to many places around Mount Desert Island. In each small community, Tracy found a limited cash economy, supported largely by woodcutting, as well as commercial sailing and fishing:

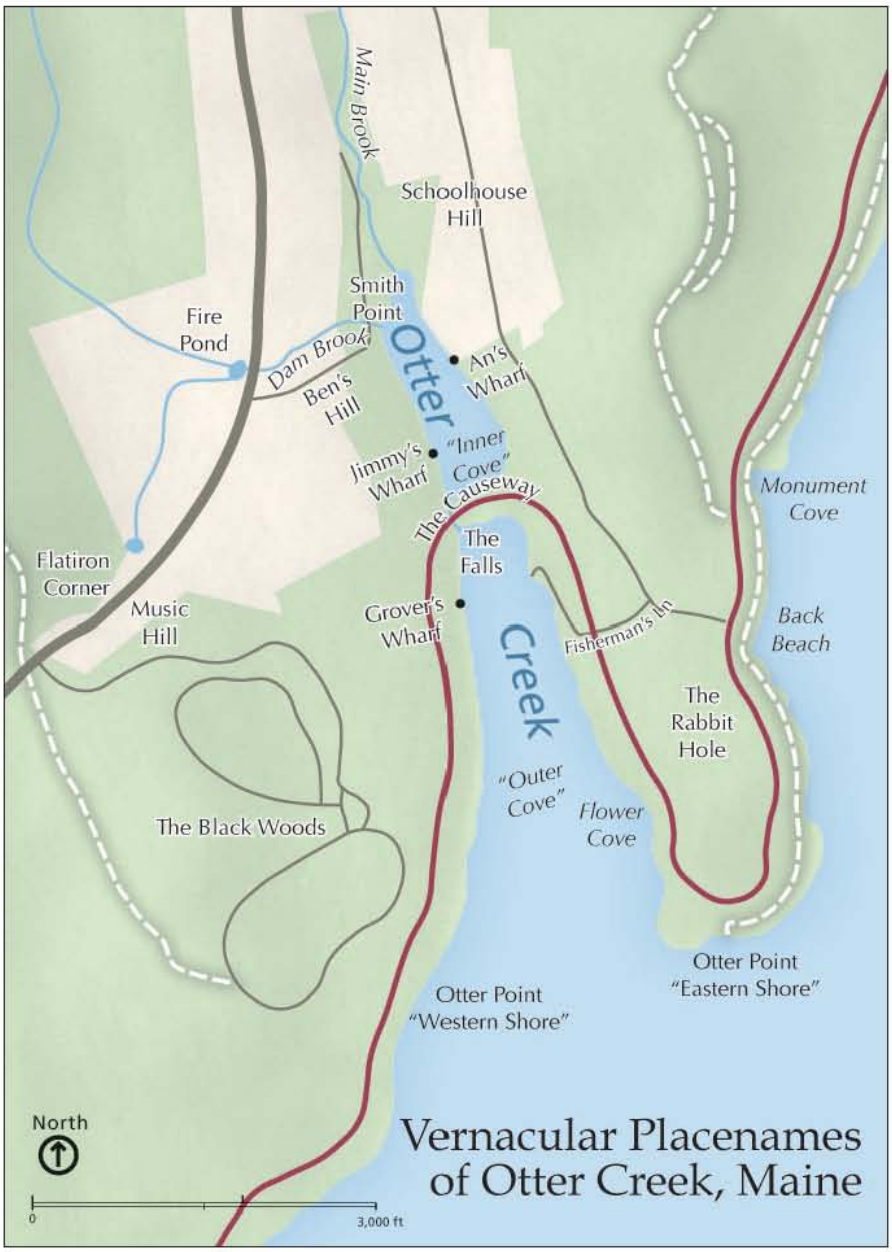
> The farming is peculiar…most of the island is used for cutting wood for the Boston market, or for grazing a few cattle and sheep. The men are much drawn away on the sea as sailors and fishermen, and hence the cultivation about a farmhouse is generally limited to the production of hay for use on the premises, and a small patch of oats, buckwheat, con, barley, and potatoes & sometimes of wheat, for the supply of the establishment. At almost every house there are racks standing in the yard for curing fish, and the curing, or "making" of codfish is always going on.
>
> The inhabitants seem to be in a comfortable state between riches and poverty, none hitting either extreme. On Sundays the fisheries cease and a well dressed population turns out to church…We were hospitably and considerately treated and received we went, and never encountered any offensive or prying inquisitiveness (Tracy 1997: 140).

Though it is perhaps difficult to envision today, various lines of evidence suggest that Otter Creek essentially became a "waterfront" town – diffuse, certainly, but with its economic, and social hub centered at the head of Otter Creek cove. By the mid-19th century, according to many interviewees, today's Grover Avenue was a bustling waterfront roadway, linking Mount Desert and Eden sides of the communities over a wooden bridge that crossed Main Brook just above the head of the cove. The head of the Otter Creek cove – at the base of what is now commonly called "Ben's Hill" near the modern town landing – was the principal water access point for the community, allowing for the coming and going of small boats, while fish houses were placed further out in the cove, where they fronted deeper water and could be accessed from town either by foot paths or by small boats rowed from the town landing. The remains of an old bulkhead can be seen close to the modern town landing, attesting to these historical functions. Soon, a few commercial buildings appeared at near the town landing, as did a Baptist church. Over time, the village expanded gradually westward and southeastward along the main road through town, linking a number of scattered farmsteads on the ridges above. By this time, essential elements of the modern community of Otter Creek were all in place (Richardson 1989).

## Vernacular Placenames of Otter Creek

People who live in an area for a long time, especially within small and stable communities, have a tendency to apply a locally unique set of names to the land. While these placenames may not be recorded on conventional maps or appear in national or state gazetteers, they are deeply embedded in communities' histories and fundamental to

communities' everyday navigation of their home landscapes. Such placenames embody stories, events, and personal names from generations of shared history that is anchored to particular local landmarks. These names are sometimes termed "vernacular placenames," to differentiate them from the widely-recognized placenames that might be found, for example, on the maps of the U.S. Geological Survey and included in that agency's national Geographical Names Information Database. Certainly, as a small and remarkably stable community, Otter Creek has vernacular placenames in abundance.




Map 6: Vernacular Placenames of Otter Creek, as used in this document

There may be some value in postponing the discussion of these names until later sections of this document, addressing later events in Otter Creek's history with which they are connected. However, we choose to include a description of certain key placenames at this point in the document, if only because they are used freely in the everyday speech of Otter Creek families and, consequently, these names will appear throughout the report. A list of certain key names is presented below, complete with a few representative quotation from interviewees who discussed the names of these places. The accompanying map (Map 6) shows the locations of these places in and around Otter Creek.

- *An's Wharf* – The old Hall quarry wharf on the east side of Otter Creek cove. This wharf is commonly named for Ansel Davis, a prominent figure in 20th century Otter Creek life, who fished the cove; Ansel's house was up the hill from this site and he sometimes used the wharf site for water access.[7] "Over here is another wharf, and a bigger wharf called Ans' Wharf. "Ans's" for Ansel Davis" (SS).
- *Back Beach* – A small cove beach, named because it is positioned on the back side of Otter Point from the vantage point of Otter Creek. "As you go out by Otter Cliffs, they call it the Back Beach" (RD).
- *Ben's Hill* (or *Ben Walls' Hill*) – Sloped road grade along Grover Avenue; named for Ben Walls. Ben Walls apparently lived along this road, but so did many other residents; the exact origins or significance of the name was not recalled by interviewees. "Ben's Hill went down to the trailer park. We always called it Ben's Hill. . .My father always called it Ben's Hill, and we'd have to go down and follow that some time. And that's where you get to the upper end of the cove, going down the hill" (SC). "When I was four years old my brother was born on that Grover Avenue they used to call Ben's Hill Road. . .And then they changed it to Grover Avenue" (RD).
- *Black Woods* – A forested plateau on west side of Otter Creek cove, originally named in reference to its dense conifer forest. An 1896 map shows this area as having the name "The Black Woods," following local usage (Bates, Rand and Jaques 1896). The NPS adopted this local name in designating the Blackwoods Campground, which was developed on the site ca. 1940.
- *Cod Ledge* – An underwater bank, popular as a cod fishing location for Otter Creek fishermen. It is said to be "Just a shallow spot out there. . .I don't know how many fathoms of water there might have been there. . .I can only guess there might

be 15 or 20 fathoms out there, and there's probably 25 or 30 around it" (RW).

- *Dam Brook* – A small stream running from fire pond to head of Otter Creek cove, named in reference to small dams constructed on it, apparently for retention of the fire pond. This waterway has sometimes called "Richardson's Brook" in reference to the Richardson family, which has owned land along its banks.
- *The Falls* – The narrow point where the Otter Creek cove empties under the Causeway from its protected interior waters to the open cove. At low water especially, flow at this point creates a small rapids that must be navigated carefully, hence the common name.
- *Fishermen's Lane* – The road descending from Otter Cliff Road to the fish houses on the east side of Otter Creek cove, named in reference to the fishermen who have used this area for water access, storage of gear and other activities relating to the fish houses located there.
- *Fire Pond* – A small pond, used to draw water for firefighting purposes. Water from this pond was used to fight the catastrophic 1947 fire.
- *Flatiron Corner* – A corner on Highway 3, apparently named in commemoration of a murder: "over in here some woman killed her husband with a flat iron, or killed somebody. When you come up into Otter Creek by the Blackwoods… That's what my father always called Flat Iron Corner" (SC). This event reportedly took place around the time of World War I (NW).
- *Flower Cove* – A small cove on eastern bank of Otter Creek cove, where protected waters transition into open waters. Some speculate that there were flowers growing there that made it visually distinctive along the shoreline for people traveling by boat. This is an important navigational landmark, used by fishermen seeking to safely pass the Otter Creek bar.
- *Grover's Wharf* – A stone wharf formerly used for transshipment of granite from quarries on the western shore. Named in reference to a member of the Grover family (the same family for whom Grover Avenue is also named), who used the site in the course of fishing.
- *Jimmy's Wharf* – A stone wharf formerly used for transshipment of granite from the Hall quarry on the west side of Otter Creek cove. The identity of Jimmy remains unclear, except that this was a resident who used this point for water access at this point following the peak of quarrying in the late 19th century. "There

was a wharf over on the opposite side of that fish house. It was Jimmy's Wharf, I believe they called it, and it was for quarrying operation…the quarrying operation would bring down and unload into the boats and take them out" (KD). Jimmy's Wharf can be seen in some maps and images in this report, most notably Figure 8.

- *Main Brook* – The brook shown on most maps as Otter Creek – named Main Brook because it is the main brook in the community, larger than the rest, and emptying into the head of Otter Creek cove (or "Otter Cove"). "This is what we call the Main Brook. They have it on maps now as the Otter Creek" (SS).
- *Monument Cove* – A small cove on the east side of Otter Point, used as a landmark for fishermen from Otter Creek. A large chunk of rock fell from the cliff in this location, "looks like a stone monument" from the sea (NW).
- *Music Hill* – A small hill, in southwestern Otter Creek village. Reported to be named in reference to members of the Davis family, who lived in that part of town for many years and played music – sometimes for the entire community's entertainment. "They called it Music Hill. By that cemetery is that old hill. It was all Davises…I think my father's brother had four girls and four boys. And they were always playing the piano and all that stuff. So I think that's how they probably got [the name]. There was always something going on" (RD).
- *Otter Creek* – Many residents still use the term Otter Creek in reference to the cove that is commonly called "Otter Cove" by non-residents. "It was all called Otter Creek because there was no causeway and it was all open through…one body of water" (RI). In this document, the cove is frequently referenced as "Otter Creek cove" to differentiate it from the community of Otter Creek. This use has historical precedents; for example, Clara Martin's 1885 guidebook to Mount Desert Island consistently identified the cove as "Otter Creek Cove" to distinguish it from the village of Otter Creek (Martin 1885: 76, 111).
- *Otter Creek Bar* – A rock structure nearly crossing the mouth of Otter Creek, which both served to protect the harbor from surf but also represented a significant navigational hazard to visitors. "There's a bar that runs across that about halfway out and at low tide the rocks are protruding right out of the water… there's a white boulder there on the shore. That's where the bar goes across" (PR). This features is said by some residents to be natural but was intentionally augmented to improve protections to the harbor.

- *Otter Creek Ledge* – An underwater ledge, or shallows, running generally parallel with the shoreline offshore from the mouth of Otter Creek cove. This ledge was a landmark for fishermen between different nearshore fishing grounds, and was said to be a fair fishing area itself.
- *Otter Point – Eastern and Western Shore* – While some referred to the point east of Otter Creek as "Otter Point" Otter Creek fishermen distinguished from each side of the cove by using the terms "eastern shore" and "western shore." This helped avoid ambiguity caused by the historical use of the term "Otter Point" in reference to both the point on the western mouth of the cove as well as the eastern mouth.
- *Rabbit Hole* – A former access point to the "Russian Tea house" on Otter Point, named in reference to the fact that the narrow road disappeared through a "hole" in the dense vegetation where it exited Otter Cliff Road.
- *Schoolhouse Hill* – A slope along old road and upslope at old Otter Creek Schoolhouse site on east side of Otter Creek cove; technically on lower slopes of Gorham Mountain.
- *Smith Point* (or *Smith's Point*) – A point between the Main Brook and Dam Brook confluence, at the head of Otter Creek cove. The point was named for the Smith family, who had a home on the low bluff at this point; a foundation, apple trees, and other evidence of occupation can still be seen at this site. John Smith (ca. 1843-1913) and the Gott family, including Berilla Gott (ca. 1838-1904), were said to have lived here at different times. The house was said to have been an important "landmark" fronting the cove. It was sometimes also called "Smack Point" as this was where the early "lobster smack" boats landed when calling at Otter Creek.

There were a number of places mentioned that were far enough from Otter Creek that they do not appear on the attached map. Many spoke of the places in the upper Otter Creek or "Main Brook" watershed, such as "the Canyon" between Cadillac Mountain and Dorr Mountain– a popular place for hunting, woodcutting, and other resource procurement activities prior to the advent of park management. On the ascent to the Canyon, one passed along a portion of the stream commonly known as "Deep Hole," which was a very popular swimming spot on Main Brook:

> if you're going down the hill in Otter Creek, where the brook goes under the road right there, [Deep Hole would] be off the right up there a quarter mile. It's just a hole in the ledges there. It's not as big as this house, but three-

> quarters as large…Today it's six feet deep. And as kids we'd spend that time down there swimming and sunning on the ledges and we'd always be taking shovels with us to throw the rocks out there that washed down during the winter, throwing it in and damming it up. We just spent our childhood down there (RW).

Also, there appears to be an entire constellation of offshore sites known by name to Otter Creek fishermen, in addition to "Cod Ledge" and "Otter Creek Ledge" as shown on the accompanying map. They are often named for their location or for the species of fish caught there. One example is "Hake Bottom," a fishing area differentiated by the sediments on the ocean floor:

> [T]here is a bottom out there, pieces of bottom that they call different things. Hake Bottom and different areas like that for different fish… soon as you get off into the mud, more or less. When you come from the gravel and rocks and start to get off into the mud. That seems to be where they used to catch the hake (SS).

The exact locations of these fishing sites were often difficult to discern in the course of indoor interviews, or even during field interviews conducted on land. The documentation of this detailed geographical knowledge and nomenclature would be a worthy topic for further investigation.

## Early Fishing and Fish Houses in Otter Creek

Numerous fishing boats plied the waters of Otter Creek and adjacent waters in these early years, and residents and commercial interests alike rapidly added piers, slips, and fish houses to the shore. (Interestingly, artistic representations of Otter Creek from the period, such as Sanford Gifford's 1865 painting from the crest of Green Mountain clearly show considerable maritime traffic in the cove.)[8] Otter Creek was a launching point for small, "in shore" vessels, specializing in small-scale fishing in areas comparatively close to shore. As explained by the 1881 census bulletin, *Statistics of the Fisheries of Maine*,

> In-shore vessels are those that from their size or mode of fitting are prepared for fishing only within a radius of thirty or forty miles of their source of supplies, being obliged to return to the harbor frequently to dispose of the catch, to secure additional outfit, or to escape the more violent storms (Earll 1881: 3).

Interviewees recalled that cod was originally the primary commercial fishery along the Otter Creek cove, as was true in many small fishing towns of Mount Desert Island (PR, NW; Smythe 2008). "Cod fishing was before the Depression days. . .they used to catch the cod and salt them, then ship them down to Boston" (NW). Especially by the late 19th century, the fishing industry was experiencing a boom. "Flakes" – drying racks for cod – were said to have lined the low banks of Otter Creek cove, in cleared lands adjacent to piers, slips, and fish houses:

> The cod fish, of course, is depleted a lot now [but] absolutely - they brought in cod. They dried the fish. Cod fish was one of the best dried fish. And practically everybody would dry them on flakes either on the shore down there or at home (GN).

Interviewees report that Otter Creek fishermen caught many other species of fish and shellfish from the cove, for both personal use and for intermittent, specialized commercial sales. While detailed records for 19th century Otter Creek are elusive, the official 1880 catch records for nearby Frenchman's Bay (in Bar Harbor) is perhaps instructive of the diversity of species caught by early fishermen of Otter Creek. In that year, cod was far and away the predominant catch – its quantities representing almost 90% of the total 73 million pound catch reported for Frenchman's Bay. Making up the remaining 10% of the catch, there was - in declining order – lobsters, hake, haddock, herring, mackerel, pollock, clams, and cusk (Earll 1881: 23).

While the American lobster (*Homarus amenicanus*) was caught and consumed in this period, the market was still small. Ironically, interviewees note that, as the market for lobster grew, Otter Creek's competitiveness in this industry declined. In particular, a series of regulatory changes from 1860 into recent times, designed to foster the long-term stability of the Maine lobstering industry, required significant investments in the retooling of gear that have operated in favor of larger operators and often resulted in the displacement of small and poorly serviced fishing communities in favor of large ports (Acheson 1997; Judd 1988a). Still, interviewees spoke of considerable lobstering in and around Otter Creek by resident fishermen, who sometimes worked together to develop local markets and to coax lobster "smacks" to Otter Creek.[9] Some recall that these efforts were initially successful, so that lobster "smacks" – boats that gathered lobsters from a number of fishing communities for transport to market – regularly sailed into Otter Creek to gather their catch, from this period into the mid-20th century.[10]

Otter Creek's fishermen participated in barter economies that were reportedly

widespread, but are poorly documented. In particular, fishing families often bartered for farm products that they could not, or did not, raise themselves: "I know that some of them would barter. Maybe a few potatoes for some fish or whatever, you know what I mean? They bartered back and forth" (GN). Fishermen also have had a tradition of bringing some portion of their catch to the elderly and infirm in the community – a tradition that is said to date back to the origins of the community. While reducing risks associated with unpredictable economies and harvests, these exchanges also helped to bind together a diffusely settled and relatively new community, building a sense of community identity in the process.

As has been widely acknowledged, Otter Creek cove was the site of a number of fish houses historically, which were fundamental to much of the fishing and lobstering described here. Otter Creek residents had fishing houses on both sides of the cove during much of the recoverable history of the community. Fish houses are visible on both sides of the cove in maps dating from 1875 and, as will be discussed below, land title to fish house sites were being transferred no later than the 1860s, though informal title to fish house sites probably predates those documents by a few decades (U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey 1875, 1885; Smythe 2008).[11]

These fish houses served a number of functions to Otter Creek fishermen. As summarized by Chuck Smythe (2008: 13-14), they were multi-functional spaces, serving as:

1. a base of operations and a staging area for fishing activities;
2. a place to prepare bait, bait tub trawls, and salt and store bait;[12]
3. a place to store gear (inside and outside) including tub-trawling lines, lobster traps and buoys, bait barrels, tools and miscellany;
4. a place to repair and construct equipment, including build lobster traps, paint buoys, and maintain gear; and
5. a gathering place, serving as a social space for fishermen.

As will be discussed elsewhere in this document, the interviews conducted for this study have continued to confirm all of these functions of the fish houses along the Otter Creek waterfront. In most accounts, these structures provide familiar and relatively comfortable spaces to carry out all of these tasks; they are, in one interviewee's words, "a good place to get out of the rain and stay warm and fix your traps on a day when you can't get out to fish" (SS).

If we look back far enough into the preindustrial past, fishing shacks are perhaps a worldwide phenomenon. A tradition of fishing shacks in the British Isles likely served as the precursor and precedent for those of Maine, as well as the larger New England and Maritimes coast. As Smythe has noted, "Their use can be traced back to the fish drying stations that were erected along the coast of Maine since the earliest days of European exploration" (Smythe 2008: 4). Numerous lines of evidence attest to their historical importance to maritime economies and communities. During the American Revolution, privateers attacked coastal settlements in what is today Maritime Canada; among their targets were fish houses, which were burned and razed apparently due to their economic and psychological importance (Greene and Pole 2004: 507). Interviewees for the current project recalled that, for a time in the early 20th century, the economic importance of these small structures was so universally appreciated that the Town of Bar Harbor actually dispatched staff periodically to maintain the shoreline in front of the fish houses, removing rocks tossed there by waves and performing other minor maintenance.

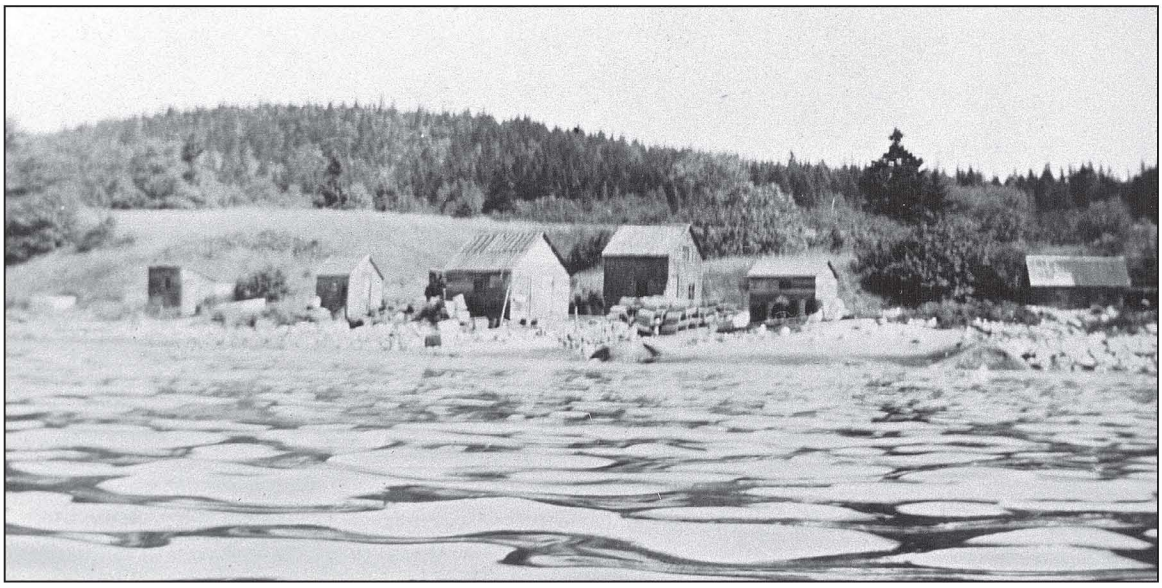


Figure 4: The fish houses on the east shore of Otter Creek cove in the early 20th century. Norm Walls recalls the owners of his youth as being, from left to right, Ansel Davis (two structures), unknown (probably a member of the Richardson family), Chester Walls, Mike and Shirley Bracy, and Harold Walls. Virgil Dorr photo, courtesy Northeast Harbor Library.

In addition to those fish house functions mentioned by Smythe (2008), a number of interviewees also discussed how some fish houses on Otter Creek were used as homes in some instances - sometimes with an upper residential level and a lower level that was devoted more to storage and fishing-related tasks. Fish houses fitting this description

appear in some historical photographs from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Especially later in this history, the people who lived in these places were often poorer than the norm, and included at least on American Indian family, who lived in a fish house on the eastern shore:

> There was an old shack where I guess an Indian family lived…after that, it used to be full of gear, but it all got pilfered over the years…it had a chimney and a tarpaper roof (RW).



Figure 5: Stripes of black tar visible on the rocks near the Otter Creek Aid Society fish house. In an effort to waterproof their ropes, fishermen formerly coated them in heated black tar – a difficult and messy job by most accounts. When the freshly tarred ropes were pulled across the rocks, they left stripes of tar that hardened and, in some cases, have endured with time. Tar-striped rocks of this kind can be found in various places along the cove, especially at the sites of former fish houses. D. Deur photo

Another fish house on the eastern cove – the large two-story fish house adjacent to Harold Walls' fish house, which sat on the waterfront until the early 1970s - was said to have been owned and occupied as a home by Chester Walls:

> That was the best one there, that big building there. At one time the guy lived in it, raised his family there. That was Chester Walls (RD).

> [T]hat was actually a house this one. And then they turned it into a fish house. Somebody… had it for a fish house. But that's what that was. It was an actual dwelling (GN).

Interviewees were quick to mention that the structure was not the only place of importance. The spaces around fish houses also were organized work spaces, of importance to the operations of fishing and lobstering. Ordinarily, most of the fish houses along the Otter Creek waterfront were accompanied by a mooring post and a maintained slip:

> they would take those rocks over by the big rock over there, take those rocks and throw them out on the side and make a slip, as we called it. And out on the end of that in the mud that would be out there they put anchors in with a bow that you had a running line that they tied their punts on… when they came to shore, they'd tie their punt onto this line and then pull it and it would go out…and that's basically the only thing they had other than the houses which kept their bait, their stuff that they used (NW).

Men stockpiled lobster traps on the grounds adjacent to the fish houses, while also storing lath and other materials used in their construction and repair. Families dried and fixed their nets and other gear in open spaces alongside the fish house. Fishermen treated their ropes with a black, sticky tar to waterproof them. One still finds black stripes of tar on the rocks, weathered and hardened with age, where fishermen treated their ropes in this manner. In some places along the Otter Creek waterfront, physical evidence of these activities persists even today.

According to a number of interviewees, 19th century fish houses were often constructed without ownership of the land, but with the informal consent of the property owner. They had, as a few interviewees such as Robert Davis called it, "squatter's rights." People traditionally built fish houses, they suggest, on the shoreline of larger parcels that had not been subdivided for the purpose. Even if the fishermen did not own the title to the land below their fish house, "it was just always theirs, I suppose. They figured it was anyway" (NW). A few interviewees suggested that this tradition had roots in fishing communities of the British Isles, where large landholders allowed long-term access to the land, presumably in exchange for such favors as a token portion of the seafood catch (cf. Rodgers et al. 2010). Some interviewees allude to a time when similar arrangements, such as providing fish to a land-rich farmer, created long-term connections between fish house owner and landowner at Otter Creek cove. This reflected a generally informal, "common law" approach to land ownership maintained in this small community in its early years. As reported by Gerry Norwood,

> They'd just build [a fish house] on somebody else's land with permission… [There] may have been an unwritten agreement, 'I'll bring you in some fish or

> I'll bring you in lobsters, or whatever.'… Agreement, unwritten. Of course, now it's changed to the point where, if it's not in writing and somebody buys it, you're not going to be able to be there anymore…
>
> And years ago here in the creek, say if you wanted to buy a house or whatever, a guy'd say 'Yeah [you can have the land] from here to there to there…and that was it. And nobody ever said a word. And then when they finally got [records for] the lots out, they'd actually have two people building on the same lot, 'cause it was family. Nobody cared. And that's what that town was practically. It was family, one big family (GN).

Similarly, Steve Smith suggested that access to fish houses was part of the "riparian rights" of community members historically; by his understanding, early fishermen would have had little incentive to seek legal title to the larger upland lot of which their fish house land was a part:



Figure 6: A group of Otter Creek fishermen gathered beside a fish house on the western shore of the cove. A stack of wooden lath, used in the manufacture and repair of lobster traps, makes an impromptu seat. A portion of the community on the eastern, Bar Harbor side of the cove can be seen in the background. Photo courtesy of Robert Walls.

> I don't think any of them owned the property up above where…the properties where the fish houses were on …Everybody just used that whole common

> area…they all had rights just to the shore. It was riparian rights…Nobody has any more or less rights than anybody else there (SS).

Still, at some point, certain lots seem to have been recorded to formalize what was commonly an informal exchange. The partition of lots, beginning no later than the 1860s, perhaps reflected a collision between British common law traditions and Yankee legal standards relating to land ownership. References to fish houses on Otter Creek cove appear in deed records as early as 1861, involving a deed relating to the land of Samuel Davis that appears to have included a fish house in addition to other buildings nearby – an apparent case of a fish house sitting on the shoreline of a much larger parcel of land with multiple functions including agriculture (Smythe 2008). Numerous references to fish houses then appear in deeds from 1868 through the end of the century for individual fish house lots, suggesting that the exchange of legal title became




Figure 7: A lobster pot weight on the Otter Creek shoreline, formerly belonging to the late Virgil Dorr. Small concrete slabs such as this are traditionally used as ballast to keep lobster traps upright and immobile when they are underwater. They are traditionally marked with the owner's name and license number – 1116 in Virgil Dorr's case. Weights of this sort can still be found among debris at the sites of former fish houses along Otter Creek. D. Deur photo.

commonplace at that time, and fish house lots were being partitioned accordingly (Acadia National Park n.d., Smythe 2008). It is unclear, but this timing and sequence of events might suggest that the first generation of fish house builders on Otter Creek cove were, after some 30 years of settlement on the cove, finally being forced to contemplate

questions of succession for these informally 'deeded' fish house sites. With time and detailed archival investigation, it is possible that more detail could be uncovered on this point. Perhaps significantly, some individuals were reportedly reluctant to engage in the process of securing deeds for their properties if there was no compelling need to do so, due to the expense, difficulty, and continued ambiguity over the veracity of individual claims.[13]

There is some suggestion among interviewees that families originally had developed fish houses that were in locations conveniently close to their homes – those living on the Eden side of the cove building their fish houses on the east side, and those living on the Mount Desert side of the cove building their fish houses on the west side, all else being equal. However, over time, as people moved, families intermarried and fish houses were passed between generations, people living on one side of Otter Creek often would continue using houses on the opposite bank. (As will be discussed later, even when access to one side was disrupted, due to such phenomena as World War II or the great fire of 1947, these ties facilitated some level of fish houses use on the opposite shore from a fisherman's original fish house, thus minimizing disruption to their livelihood.) We might speculate that, by maintaining loose rules of ownership, fishermen traditionally were able to maintain a level of geographical flexibility that helped them to offset the considerable risks of their profession. Such arrangements might hypothetically allow for the movement of fishermen to alternative fish house locations without significant real property losses if they sustained damage to their fish houses, or local conditions – changing fish availability, shoreline conditions, or competing upland land uses, for example – might have made these economically critical facilities inaccessible or untenable for some reason. This point might invite further investigation on other portions of the New England or Maritime coast, where fish houses are still being actively maintained and used for small-scale commercial fishing today.

## Granite Quarrying at Otter Creek

Granite quarrying was an essential part of Otter Creek history. Most interviewees recalled that Otter Creek was a major center of granite quarrying in the 19th century: "they quarried rock out of both sides there…that pink granite" (NW). Though large-scale granite quarrying took place in Otter Creek for scarcely more than two decades, it nonetheless reshaped the community's waterfront and altered village life in ways that have had enduring effects.

The first quarry on Mount Desert Island dates from the 1760s – it was located in the Somesville area, and was associated with that settlement. J.G. Richardson was reported to have quarried granite from this site to produce property corner monuments for the land grants being issued by the colonial government shortly after French renunciation of claims on the island. Granary grinders and other specialized stone items were also fashioned from the granite of Somes Sound to support the fledgling rural economy of Mount Desert Island. From this time, the potentials of Mount Desert Island for granite quarrying were recognized to be considerable, with the island containing several distinct and attractive varieties of the stone, all sitting within a short distance of tidewater and potential shipping points along its rugged coastline.

At Otter Creek, much of the quarrying was initiated by local mining magnate, Cyrus James Hall. Born in Belfast, Maine in 1834, Hall was a venture capitalist of considerable practical skill. The Hall quarries of Otter Creek were Hall's first, transforming both the Otter Creek economy and Hall's fortunes – a point that has been documented in various sources (e.g., Wedin 1989).[14] Among contemporary Mount Desert Island residents, this history is especially known to interviewee Steve Haynes – the enthusiastic and knowledgeable director of the Maine Granite Industry Museum in Mount Desert, who is cited extensively in the pages that follow.

Hall established his initial granite quarry on Otter Creek at a location known today as "Hall's Quarry," an experience that set the stage for his more famous and large-scale quarrying operation on Somes Sound (Wedin 1989: 139). Well before he arrived on Otter Creek cove, Hall recognized that a productive quarry, containing distinctive and visually appealing granite, had the potential to make him quite wealthy. Certainly, the quarry business was booming in the post-Civil War era, as communities around the nation built new schoolhouses, courthouses, and other grand structures.[15] Hoping to enter this lucrative business, Hall had explored a number of options on the coast of Maine, but was not satisfied with the color or quality of granite to be found:

> He worked with Colonel Bangs and opened the granite quarry in Norridgewock. Then he was not satisfied with gray. Before he could go to Washington, D.C. or Philadelphia to bid on contracts, he had to have one of the best pinks that Maine would offer. And so I know he knew his stones. He knew the geology of Maine, and so it was quite easy for him to come into the cove [at Otter Creek], look at that bright red hornblende granite and say, 'This is it, boys' (SH).

The granite was very hard but it was beautiful, with deep pink and reddish tones that stood alone from any granite on the coast. Its proximity to tidewater was also a great asset, allowing shipping directly from the quarry to the ports of the Eastern seaboard without extensive transshipment.

By the 1860s, Hall was circulating samples of the distinctive, dark pink Otter Creek granite among the builders of Philadelphia, Boston, and other Northeastern cities. Concurrently, Hall was getting his affairs in order in Otter Creek, acquiring mining rights, wharf sites, and tools to support his planned quarries. During this period, Hall adapted traditional stone drilling methods to the hard Otter Creek granite, resulting in a laborious process that nonetheless produced intact and perfectly geometric cut stone:

> [Wherever a block was to be removed] Cyrus Hall brought in four men and a handful of tools and two oxen. And one man holding the drill like this, two men striking it or three men striking it, turning it, striking it, turning it, and they would just dig a hole down through the ledge, bringing it out every, I would say probably, 20 minutes or so, to dig out the dust with all those spoons. And so they would take this drill down, then put the other drill, which is longer, and keep going down, and drilling the holes six to eight inches apart all in a straight line, putting the half rounds or foot wedges in, a vacant hole possibly for the black powder. And then they would huff [blast] these pieces of granite off (SH).

With this technique perfected, Hall was ready for large-scale production for regional and national markets, founding the Standard Granite Company in 1870. His marketing efforts were successful too, and Hall was able to launch commercial-scale production from the Otter Creek quarries in 1871. The shipment of granite that first year was considerable: "the first season, the summer months, the spring and summer, they took 11 cargoes of granite out on the schooners" (SH).

By the mid-1870s, Otter Creek's distinctive granite began to appear in public buildings in Philadelphia and Washington D.C., on a prominent New York church, an Omaha bank building, and on Boston's Back Bay Bridge at "The Fens." The visibility of Otter Creek granite only lent momentum to Hall's marketing efforts. Yet, not all of this granite went to distant cities; with Hall's Belfast connections, a great deal of the downtown in Belfast was also bedecked with Otter Creek granite. By the end of the decade, Hall had distinguished himself as one of the most prominent granite businessmen of the region, with Otter Creek as his principal quarry:

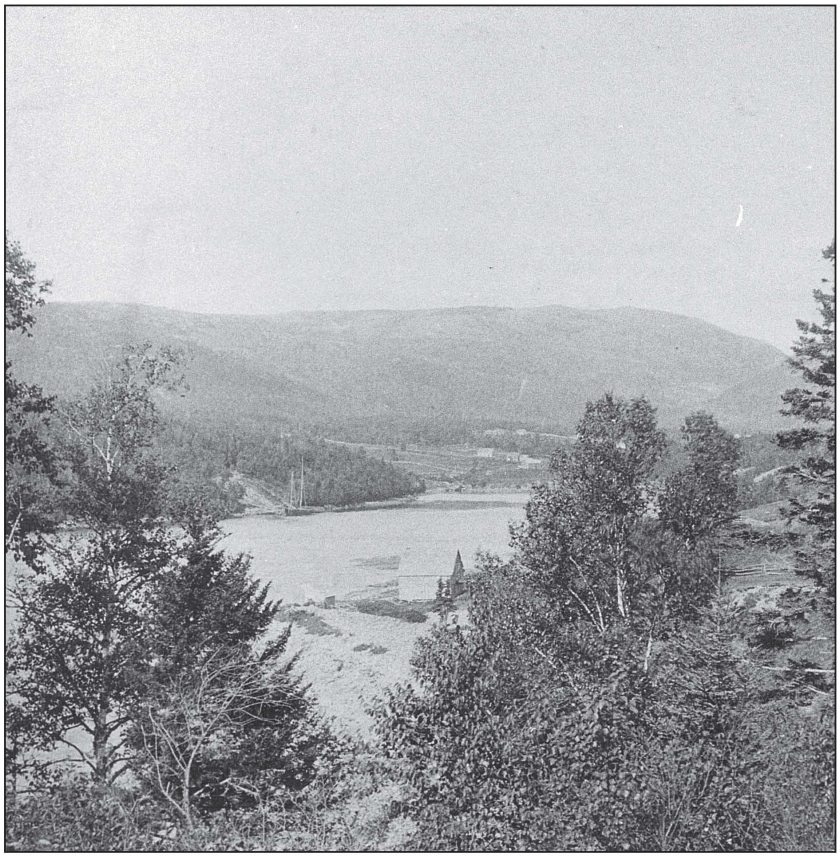


Figure 8: A view of Otter Creek cove from the approximate site of the modern Fabbri monument. A schooner can be seen receiving a load of granite at the site of "Jimmy's Wharf" while fish houses, in good repair, sit in the foreground. The core of the village of Otter Creek, with fences dividing individual fields, is clearly visible in the background. Photo courtesy Northeast Harbor Library.

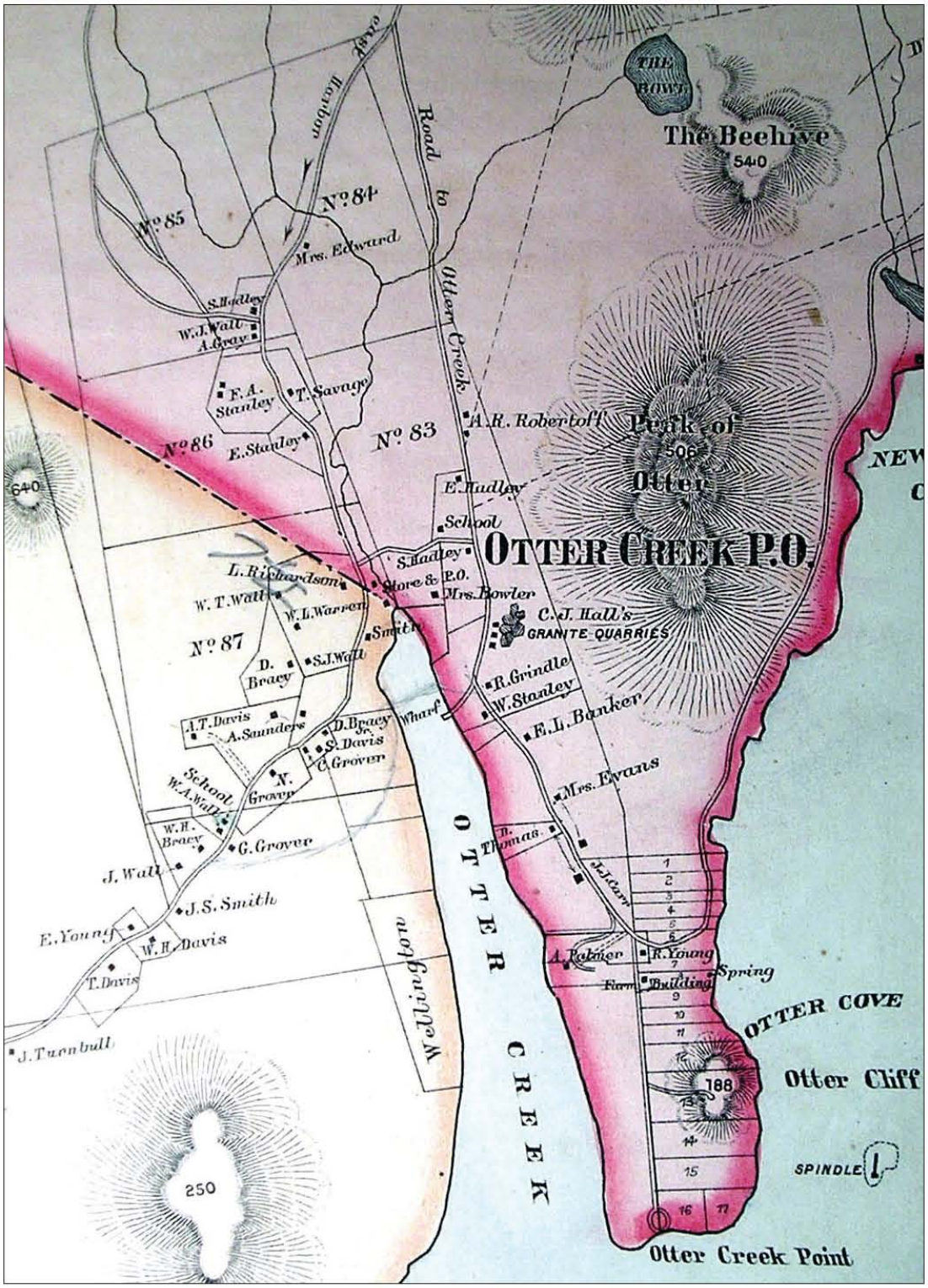
> It was the little jobs that made him famous out of the Otter Creek granite, being the best granite in the United States. This is a huge claim here from little Mount Desert Island. . .So those made him famous pretty much. The architects, the people he associated with, knew he was a granite person (SH).

Local men were hired for diverse tasks – not only quarrying, but also the construction and support of the entire quarrying operation. Men from outside the region also arrived for employment, most hailing from other parts of New England; with time, Hall began to recruit men from further afield, including the quarrying regions of Italy, Scotland, Finland, and Sweden. Some of these men were said to have been boarded by local families, though today it is widely speculated that housing was constructed near the quarries as well. Demand for services, food, and supplies brought about an unprecedented commercial boom in the small village, affecting almost every resident of Otter Creek (SH; Richardson 1989).

Likewise, the quarrying operation abruptly transformed the Otter Creek shoreline, especially that portion that is today called the "inner cove." Hall had two major quarry operations on each side of what is today Otter Creek's inner cove – the eastern quarry being both the first and the largest of the two. A number of other, much smaller quarries were said to have operated occasionally in the Otter Creek area where Hall could secure access and mineral rights. Yet, interviewees asserted, these quarry pits were by no means the sum total of Hall's "footprint" on Otter Creek. The Otter Creek shoreline was quickly occupied by extensive quarrying infrastructure, including small rail tracks to transport the stone to wharves, small roads for galamanders (a durable ox-driven wheeled cart for carrying extremely heavy loads), and derricks used to lift stone both at the quarries' and the wharves' edges.[16] Pens for oxen were found there too. Interviewees recalled that, adjacent to the road to the wharf from the quarry on the east side of the cove there was also a small "weigh shack," used to check the weight of quarry loads before they were placed on ships. These quarries, as well as rock processing facilities, simple wharves, and other quarrying infrastructure were linked by a network of roads and trails, crisscrossing the Otter Creek waterfront.

Hall's men constructed wharves from natural rock ledges for each of the major quarries on either side of Otter Creek cove. Modern residents refer to the initial wharf constructed on the eastern side as "An's Wharf," while the wharf for the quarry on the western side was called "Jimmy's Wharf."[17] A third wharf, Grover's Wharf, operated near the west-side fish houses for a time, apparently to enhance shipping options for the productive west-side quarries. Shipping of granite was, at best, difficult from this small and shallow cove, a point recalled by many interviewees for this study. Ships loading granite from the quarries commonly were allowed to become grounded at low tide, were loaded in this condition, and then floated free with their loads on the rising tides: "typically ships along the coast of Maine in those days grounded out and they loaded them" (PR). During the quarrying, ships filled Otter Creek. At times, there were ships at both An's Wharf and Jimmy's Wharf simultaneously. At other times, ships were aligned to fill the bay from one wharf to another – perhaps in an effort to minimize listing of ships while they were loaded at low tide. As explained by Norm Walls,

> all the way across Otter Cove on the inside of [what is now] the Causeway. My grandmother…told me that she could [practically] walk from this side to the other side across boats. They would be tied up in there waiting to get loaded with stone (NW).




Map 7: Otter Creek in the 1880s, showing distribution of homes and lots, reflecting the original 1807 survey. Hall Quarry and associated buildings are visible on the eastern side of the cove. From Colby and Stuart 1887.

Likewise, Steve Hayes recalls that this was commonplace with small schooners, while larger draught ships required a barge shuttle the stone out to them for loading:

> the creek would drain out, so they would have to pull up against the wharves, tie up. Then the schooner would lay in the mud. And then they would load her, wait until the tide came back in and to lift her. Either that or putting it on barges and towing the barges out, and loading the schooners out. . .in the deep water. I would say that most of the time they would have brought the schooners in and tied them. I don't think there's any more than probably a nine-foot draught there. So it probably would have been a small schooner (SH).

Cyrus Hall also constructed a foundry on Otter Creek cove to sharpen and repair tools, while also constructing many of his own specialized tools in support of the fledgling quarrying operation. He established a method of grinding and polishing the hard pink granite using jasper and silica-rich sand - some sand eventually being sailed to Otter Creek for this purpose from North Carolina, resulting in lenses of sand in and around quarrying sites that can still be uncovered today. Hall also designed a type of stone polishing equipment commonly called a "Hall Polisher" that was prominent in the industry for a time, though it is unclear whether this was used at Otter Creek. The quarry brought other forms of change and modernization, such as the introduction of early telephone lines: "I know Cyrus Hall had the first telephone in Otter Creek to carry on business from Belfast" (SH). By most measures, Hall was an innovator.

Yet, despite the initial success of Otter Creek's quarries, they could not live up to the commercial ambitions of Cyrus Hall. While Otter Creek granite was "some of the best granite on the coast of Maine" it was also "the hardest" (SH). Production was slow-going. Drills and other tools had to be sharpened and repaired almost constantly. Demand was rapidly outstripping the supply on small Otter Creek cove, and the difficult harbor made shipping difficult at best. Even when operating at breakneck speed, an entire tidal cycle was required to load a ship with granite, and typically only two ship loads of stone could leave the cove per day. Frustrated by the limits on his production Hall began looking elsewhere for an alternative supply:

> he needed a quarry from which he could not just take two loads of stone a day, because Otter Creek was drained out, so he could get those two schooner loads out a day (SH).

Hall soon found an alternative source of fine granite, located in a less formidable tidal channel nearby. By 1881, Hall had moved his principal operations to Somes Sound,

where high-quality white and pink granite was available.[18] The Hall quarries on Otter Creek were increasingly marginal to his operations, becoming the source of granite for specialized applications only – harder to work than the Somesville granite, but still so distinctive in color and grain as to warrant these applications.

In time, however, Hall began to abandon his Otter Creek holdings, selling the rights and infrastructure to smaller independent operators. Comparatively small-scale quarrying operations persisted, some under the direction of J.S. Salisbury. Salisbury resumed some of Hall's aggressive marketing of the distinctive Otter Creek granite, successfully selling numerous loads to builders in Boston and other Northeast cities through the late 19th century, though production at the quarries tapered off considerably by the late 1880s. Over the course of Salisbury's operations, quarrying shifted to the western side of Otter Creek cove, so that the two sides of the cove both possessed large quarry operations. As will be discussed in the pages that follow, Salisbury maintained quarrying operations until the beginning of the 20th century. After that time, the quarries were largely disbanded, with small-scale quarry operations emerging occasionally for local stone projects.

In the wake of the large-scale quarrying operations, derelict infrastructure slowly decayed into the landscape. Still, here and there, one might still encounter remnants of quarrying on the cultural landscape of Otter Creek cove. Roadways between quarrying facilities became overgrown in the years following the quarries' abandonment, but some persisted as social trails: "There are miles of roads leading down from the quarries to the creek…they're hard to find. You kind of need to look around or know where to look" (DS). Partially quarried stone can still be found at the two main Hall quarries. On the west side of the inner cove, for example,

> that whole hillside has been quarried. And you walk right up in there and there's blocks…Probably 12 feet long that have all been junked out and moved. And all they did was just move them out, and keep quarrying it. And those blocks are all still there. Oh, it's incredible. It is. The stone blocked out absolutely perfect in square…It's a coarse grain, but it's got the grain and the rift. It's perfect. Cyrus Hall knew it (SH).

Formerly, there were wooden pilings at the quarry wharves; most of these decomposed long ago, but there are anecdotal accounts of the persistence of their bases underwater. So too, derricks have long ago disappeared, but holes associated with derricks are sometimes said to be found beside quarries and wharves. In places such as Jimmy's Wharf, neat lines of drill holes still can be seen in the granite, where some

long-ago quarryman attempted to remove a slab of stone, only to find that the grain or some other attribute was not up to standards. And, of course, the dark pink granite still can be found just below the ground: "that place was attacked pretty good. . .But there's enough stone there to supply the world for a thousand years. Just in Otter Creek. It's incredible"(SH).

## The Rusticator Wave

By the mid-19th century, Mount Desert Island had found itself at a turning point. The herring runs were decreasing, most of the tall timber had been harvested from the island, and the New England "coasting trade" was in decline. Simultaneously, news of the rugged beauty and isolation of the island was being broadcast across the United States through the art work of Hudson School painters such as Frederic Church, William Hart, and Thomas Cole, and through the writings of enthusiastic newspapermen such as Robert Carter of the *New York Tribune*. Gradually at first, America's growing leisure class made Mount Desert Island their summer resort of choice. Bar Harbor became the epicenter of what has been called an elite "pleasure periphery," of recreational sites catering to the elites of the Northeast, where upper classes reoccupied the landscape, often displacing working-class residents and affecting the resource industries they depended upon in complex ways (Hornsby 1993). Newspapers and a flourishing guidebook trade extolled the rustic virtues of the early summer community, drawing an expanding range of visitors to the island – Eden (later renamed Bar Harbor) in particular (Dodge 1871). By the 1870s and 1880s, these "rusticators" were radically transforming Mount Desert Island. Astors, Morgans, Rockefellers, and many other prominent leaders of finance, industry and government summered there, maintaining "cottages" that were, in fact, sprawling mansions staffed by legions of servants. Even a young Theodore Roosevelt vacationed at Mt. Desert Island in the late 1870s and early 1880s, exploring the Otter Point area while staying at Schooner Cove, less than two miles away from Otter Creek (Brinkley 2009: 125-26). These affluent rusticators incited a boom in visitation and second home development that had few equals on the New England coast, permanently transforming the social and economic life of the island (Prins and McBride 2007; Morison 1960; Hale 1949; Street and Eliot 1905).

With this notoriety came a nationally-recognized flurry in real estate activity (New York Times 1887). By the 1880s, land prices were soaring. The New York Times proclaimed,

> There is a great land craze at this popular resort, and building lots are selling at fabulous prices. Among the men interested in this "boom" are the Hon. James G. Blaine, United States Senator Eugene Hall, Judge Emery of the Supreme Court of Maine and others (New York Times 1887).

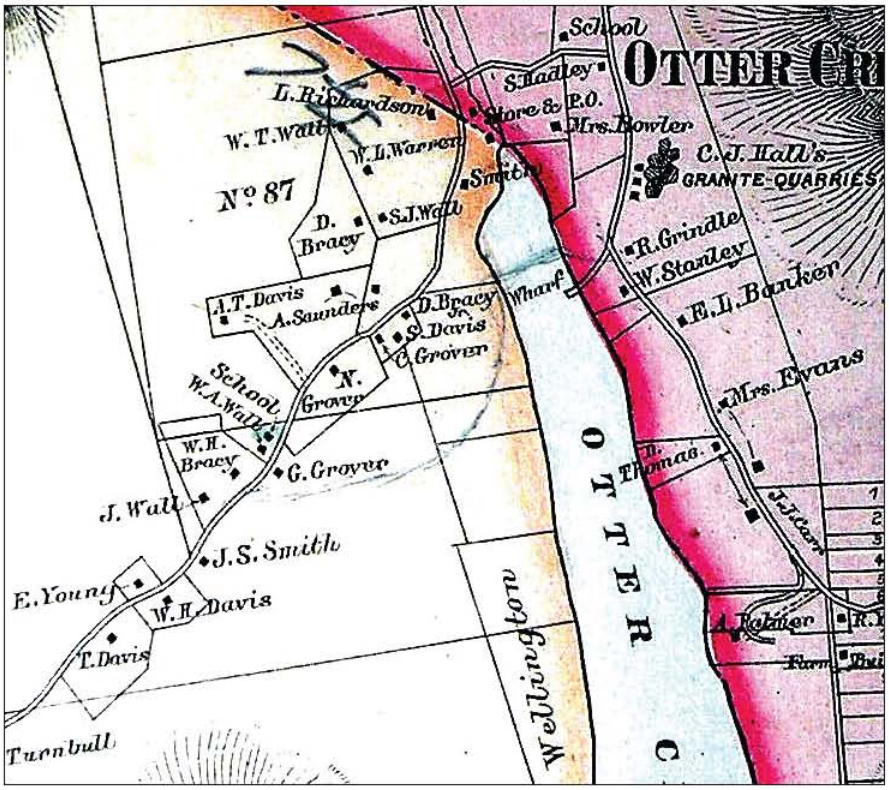
Quoting one land broker, the article noted that,

> A few hundred dollars wisely invested 10 years ago would have made the happy possessor a millionaire to-day. Why, think of it! (New York Times 1887). Luxury hotels and, indeed, entire mansion districts appeared on the margins of certain island towns, particularly Eden/Bar Harbor, but also Northeast Harbor, Seal Cove, and other small towns.

Meanwhile, with its rural provenience, Otter Creek remained comparatively unaffected by the development pressures that overwhelmed some other parts of the island. Despite the many changes on Mount Desert Island, the 1880 census shows that almost the entire village population consisted of the original settlers and their descendents at this time – the Walls, Bracy, Young, and Davis families being well represented. A small number of additional families had appeared by this time, including the family of John and Martha Smith and John and Abbie Richardson – ancestors of a number of Richardsons and Smiths interviewed for the current report. Some individuals had arrived to support the Hall quarries, no doubt, while others arrived to settle and to fish much as the settlers of a generation or two before.[19]

Likewise, there was very little new commercial or recreational development in Otter Creek. Instead, at the beginning of the rusticator boom, the community experienced a subtle revitalization of existing occupations and industries. A number of fishermen sold their catch directly to the cooks and staff of the various "cottages" of Eden. So too, the remaining Otter Creek quarries maintained small-scale production for local markets, helping to build the grand houses and public buildings of the age. The Northeast Harbor Episcopal Church, the Pulitzer house in Eden, and other impressive buildings of the island featured highlights, and sometimes significant structural elements, all made, of deep pink Otter Creek granite (SH). A growing number of Otter Creek residents sold farm products such as eggs, dairy products, or vegetables to the summer community of Bar Harbor. Meanwhile, woodcutting in the forests around Otter Creek became an economic activity of growing importance, supplying the needs of the summer people and sometimes even supplying wood to the Boston market; this was an important enterprise in this era, when most household cooking and heating relied on the use of firewood.

Despite the relative continuity of Otter Creek life, a number of residents from rural Mount Desert Island began taking part-time employment in unprecedented occupations in nearby towns. Some found seasonal work in the construction and maintenance of the "cottages" as well as landscape installation and maintenance. For many fishermen, these new jobs allowed for increased off-season income and economic stability despite the uncertainties of commercial fishing. Meanwhile a few Otter Creek women were able to find work as maids and in other domestic service positions. A small but growing number of Otter Creek residents took work as florists, while a very few took seasonal work in other professions – working as chauffeurs, janitors, or as assistants to bakers and confectioners. (These occupations are reflected in census data included in the appendix of this document.) The skills that Otter Creek residents honed in the course of these seasonal jobs would help foster their transition away from natural resource professions in the decades that followed (PR, TR, RW).




Map 8: Detail of 1887 Colby and Stuart map, showing the locations of the homes of permanent families. The C.J. Hall Quarries are visible on the hill above the eastern inner cove, with associated buildings and wharf. A store and post office are located on Main Brook close to the head of the cove, while two separate schools – one on the Mount Desert side and the other on the Bar Harbor side of town. Pink areas are within the Eden/Bar Harbor municipal boundary, while yellow areas are within the Mount Desert Island municipal boundary. From Colby and Stuart 1887.

While most of these new opportunities were to be found outside of town (if not far away on the Island) there were those who saw in Otter Creek all of the amenities and opportunities needed to foster a thriving tourist economy. Certainly, painters were fond of the rugged scenery of Otter Point, Otter Creek cove, and vicinity. The Mount Desert Herald proclaimed on July 24 1881, that "Artists are fond of resorting to Otter Creek for sketching purposes; as splendid opportunities are afforded" (Mount Desert Herald 1881). Others surely would follow in their wake, some reasoned, resulting in a transformation of Otter Creek on a scale comparable to any other town on the island. As one guidebook noted,

> the day cannot be far distant when the little hamlet at Otter Creek will be a successful rival of Bar Harbor…the view from it, whether of the sea of the long slopes of the mountains, far surpasses anything at Bar Harbor (Martin 1885: 76, 111).



Figure 9: A view of the west shore approach to one of Otter Creek's early wooden bridges, later destroyed by wind and waves. Horse and carriage tracks are visible on the unpaved road surface. Photo courtesy Northeast Harbor Library.

Changes in transportation were conspicuous, too, with increased traffic by land and by sea. The steamers from the cities of the Northeast to Bar Harbor and points north commonly passed the entrance of Otter Creek cove, creating modest new challenges to fishermen seeking to navigate the difficult cove (Bell 1989). Indeed, with people and goods moving back and forth regularly, the Boston market was important to the local economy through much of the late 19th and early 20th centuries: "When the steamships were running, it was constant, every day," and there were frequent opportunities for the sale of Mount Desert Island fish and firewood to Bostonians (NW).

The amount of new vehicular traffic associated with the rusticator boom also was causing congestion in town – especially near the waterfront town pier, where residents congregated and sometimes on- and off-loaded fishing gear and their catch. Both town residents and those who passed through it were increasingly frustrated by this traffic, leading to proposals for a scenic bypass that would involve a bridge spanning Otter Creek cove. There were numerous attempts to build a bridge over Otter Creek cove during this period, each of them undertaken with provisions for ship passage and economic uses of today's "inner cove" in mind. Regrettably, the rugged, exposed cove vetoed each attempt in succession. The first bridge, constructed on wood pilings in the early 1880s, was retractable so that boat traffic could still pass – a concession apparently made principally to accommodate quarry ships. It "was destroyed by a gale" on January 25, 1889, but its footings have been occasionally seen by clam-diggers (RW; Richardson 1989: 112). By March of 1889, a privately owned Otter Creek Bridge Company was formed to construct a new bridge that would "contain a draw, which shall be thirty-five feet in width, in the clear, and located to meet the needs of navigation at that point" (State of Maine 1889).[20] Soon, this bridge was destroyed as well. At least one more bridge would be constructed prior to the modern causeway.[21]

Undeterred, the community continued to develop its waterfront while facilitating alternative proposals for a bypass. By March of 1892, the village had approved the development of a new town landing near the head of Otter Creek cove – apparently bringing formal status to what was already a commonly used access point (Town of Mount Desert 1892). And, by 1897, the residents of the community of Otter Creek approved a resolution allowing for the realignment of the roadway through town, moving it away from Grover Avenue and the comparatively congested Otter Creek waterfront (TR, PR). Traffic had been successfully deflected away from the town pier and other waterfront infrastructure. And, as will be discussed in later sections, the Town of Mount

Desert recorded the town's right-of-way in that year, allowing unimpeded access to the waterfront along the town pier between private waterfront properties. For the moment, Otter Creek had weathered the rusticator boom with only modest changes to its social life and physical structure.

# Chapter Three
# 20th Century Changes in Otter Creek

At the beginning of the 20th century, the community of Otter Creek had reached something of an apex, with a relatively stable population, a healthy waterfront economy, and schools, churches and other social institutions apparently thriving. Yet, this comparative stability did not mean that the community was unchanging. In fact, the first decades of the 20th century appear to be a time of transition, when residents began to confront the changes that tourism and the "rusticators" had brought to their island, and adapted in many ways to a changing social and economic landscape.

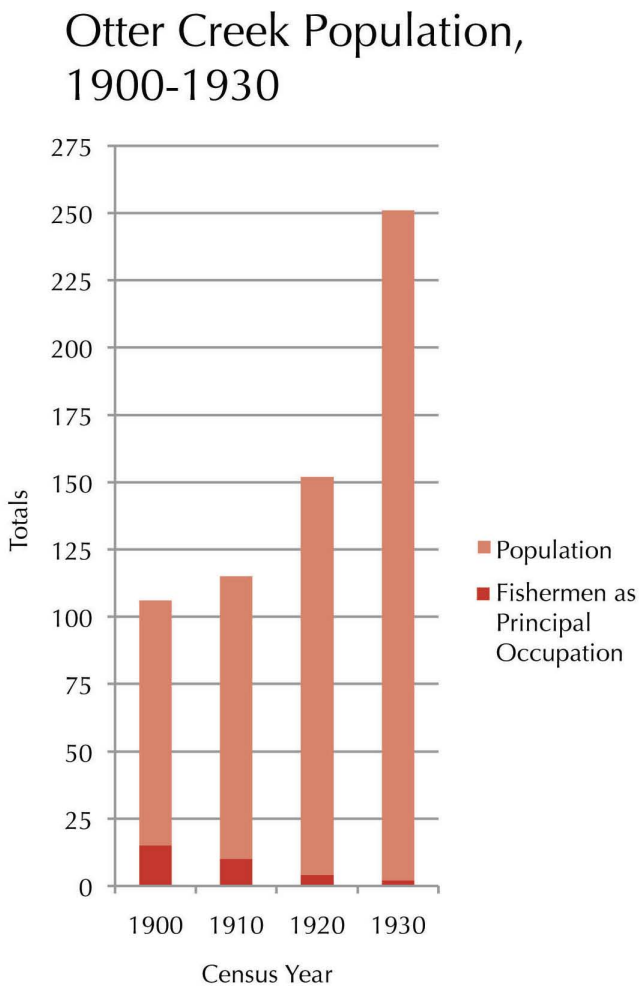
At the beginning of the century, boosters from nearby towns such as Bar Harbor wrote tracts calling for the wholesale redevelopment of the island to meet the expectations and match the preferences of affluent visitors. Charles Eliot's "*The Right Development of Mount Desert,*" for example, depicted this aggressive transformation as a matter of economic necessity (Eliot 1904). Considering the question of the island's future economic success, Eliot proclaimed,

> With the exception of the granite industry, which fluctuates much but is unchanged in character, the former industries of the island have for the most part been replaced by industries which relate to the wants of the summer population. A clear comprehension of the wants and wishes of the summer residents will lead to a satisfactory answer to the question before us (Eliot 1904: 2).

These boosters, Eliot among them, promoted roadbuilding on the island, the development of small-scale farms to provide fresh food to visitors, and the entry of women into the domestic service industry. Such a transformation would, by their estimation, overcome the unpredictability and seasonality of both the tourist and resource industries. Otter Creek residents increasingly confronted the prospect of a future where providing services to the tourists might eclipse traditional resource economies and activities. As Eliot summarized the problem,

> Whether Mount Desert is, or is not, to be developed as a prosperous pleasure and health resort for years to come depends on the amount of foresight, good judgment, and good feeling which the voters in the three towns can bring to bear on the problem. They can either secure or endanger the future of the island. It is for them to consider carefully what the sources of the island's prosperity are and will be. It is for them to take counsel with the summer residents who live the island and hold property on it (Eliot 1904: 13-14).

Witnessing the astonishing wealth of the summer people, the city fathers in the towns of the Island increasingly sympathized with this perspective. In time, they became complicit in fostering the transformation of Mount Desert Island from a resource-based rural community to a pleasuring ground of national significance.

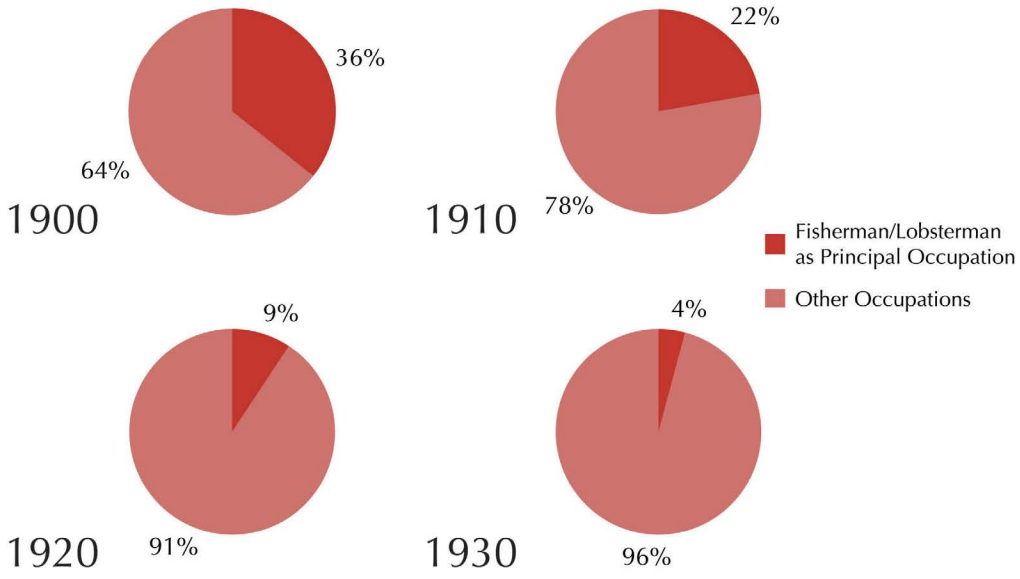



Graph 1: Otter Creek Population, 1900-1930. *Source: U.S. Census n.d.*[22]

Certainly, the pattern of mixed economies that had characterized Otter Creek persisted at the beginning of the 20th century: "in the different seasons, see, they would do different things" (PR). Eliot and those of his ilk probably did not need to lobby hard to spur on the economic transformation of the island, which was already well underway under its own momentum, centered in places such as Bar Harbor and Northeast Harbor. With each passing year, the mixed economy expanded, as tourism brought new opportunities for both service and natural resource work. Seasonal cycles of life on

the island changed of their own accord, with residents' summer schedules increasingly devoted to labor in the tourist economy and the off-season devoted to other tasks, including fishing and the off-season maintenance of tourist facilities – a pattern that arguably persists today.

At this time, fishing began a slow and steady decline in its proportional importance, gradually pulling the village of Otter Creek away from the waterfront. Certainly, fishing was still a major occupation at this time, even as it entered a gradual but continuous decline that lasted from its 1890 peak into the late 20th century. Interviewees suggest that the men of Otter Creek continued fishing from the cove, using small boats




Otter Creek Occupations, 1910-1930

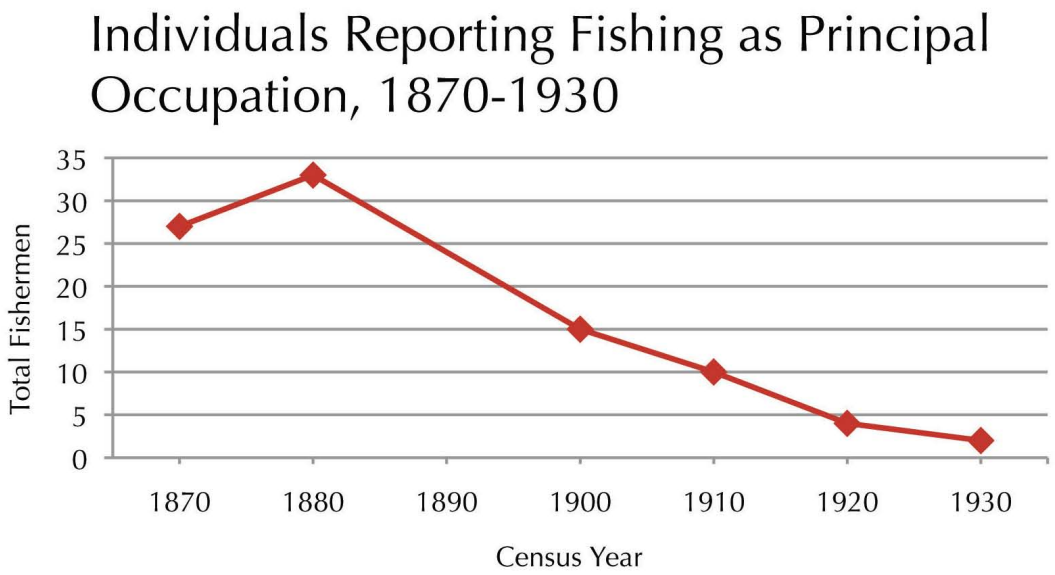
Graph 2: Otter Creek Occupations, 1910-1930, by percentage of total community population in both Mount Desert Island and Eden sides of the community. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau n.d.*

launched from fish houses, slips, and piers around its interior shore. From the cove, these men brought their catch to a number of canneries and processing plants around Mount Desert Island and the adjacent coast. By most accounts, this was a period of hard work and low wages for the fishermen of Otter Creek. To cite one line of evidence, Robert Walls, who keeps an impressively thorough collection of receipts from his father and grandfather's fishing operations, has receipts from this era. Reviewing the period

from 1908 through 1910, one can review each of his transactions with these canneries, delivering 885 pounds of hake at one cent a pound for a grand total of $8.85, delivering 700 pounds of Pollock for $1.10; delivering 850 pounds of large cod for $6.70.[23] These were not large sums, even in that era, when considering that this was his principal source of income. Meanwhile, the rusticators provided expanding local markets. Fishermen continued to sell their catch directly to fish markets and wealthy households in Bar Harbor and elsewhere; Harold Walls, for example, sold directly to the staff at the cottage of U.S. Senator, Eugene Hale. Though these transactions involved smaller numbers of fish, they were also relatively lucrative per pound of fish, providing incentives for some families to transition into these small-scale niche markets. For most of the community, at least some portion of their livelihood came from the sea, with family food, income, and even building materials being wrested from the sea.[24]

Census data suggests that the period from 1900 through 1930 was a time of population growth at Otter Creek, while the total number of people identifying themselves primarily as fishermen was in decline. In 1900, the earliest date for which a complete data set is available, some 36% reported themselves as Fisherman or Lobsterman. By 1930, residents identifying themselves as Fishermen or Lobstermen in the census represented only 4% of the population, while the most common occupations were in construction and gardening, indicating that tourism had dramatically transformed the economy by this time. Also noticeable in the 1930s data is a considerable decline in the occupational diversity of the community, with construction and gardening eclipsing most other occupations and together representing almost three-quarters of the community's employment (U.S. Census Bureau 1880-1930).[25] It was also during this period – roughly a century after the original Euro-American settlement of Otter Creek - that the original setters' families finally "lost the majority," with a combination of outmigration and immigration changing the composition of the community (Richardson 1989: 112).

Clearly, statistics derived from census data tend to underestimate the total number of fishermen in the community, as a growing number of men became only intermittent or part-time fishermen, devoting their off-season to a range of other jobs. In the course of interviews, it became apparent that individuals who did not principally derive their income from fishing often did not identify themselves as "fishermen" despite supplemental fishing income, and would not have reported themselves as such on the census.




Graph 3: Individuals reporting fishing as principal occupation in census records for Otter Creek, 187001930. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau n.d.*

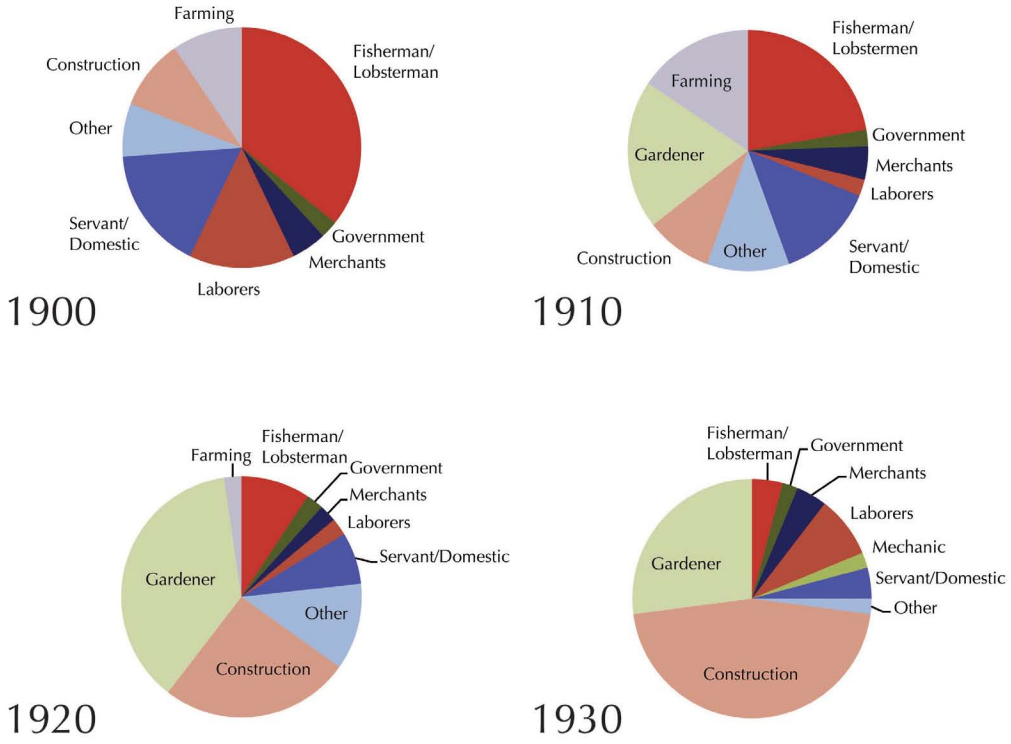
As noted earlier, quarrying was also in decline during this period – declining far more precipitously than fishing. After the initial rusticator building boom had run its course, and most large-scale quarrying had been consolidated at Somesville, Otter Creek's quarries ceased large-scale operations. Steve Haynes pinpoints the end of Otter Creek quarrying to this period:

> I would say that it was after the building boom. These Rockefeller houses now built, the Pulitzer job, the turrets over the College of the Atlantic—that was 1893, I believe. I believe that after all of this, it kind of slowed down. The quarries were looking for other buildings to be built, possibly the one on Commonwealth Avenue [Boston] was one of the last contracts to be executed out of the Otter Creek. I'm going to say it was like 1905 or something like that when it peated up [i.e., became dormant and covered in new lichen] (SH).

Large-scale commercial quarrying for off-island markets largely ceased, even as residents sometimes quarried stone for small building projects. Small-scale quarrying for these local projects persisted in the two main Hall quarries, especially the quarry on the east side of today's inner cove: "There was quarrying on the east side by Otter Cliff Road into the 20th century"(NW). Even when local demand faltered, quarry owner, J.D. Salisbury found new local markets, using crushed granite for driveway installation and maintenance for Mount Desert Island's affluent homeowners:

> There was a rock crusher in Otter Cove in the 1920s. . .it was easy for people to go in there to make crushed rock, by drilling in and using dynamite, then crushing the rock to make gravel, mostly for peoples' driveways [for "cottages" and other tourist developments]. . .that red granite was real popular. . .I know at the very end Salsbury was doing this driveway work, cause I've seen some of those families like the Rockefellers with those red Otter Creek granite driveways (SH).

A number of smaller non-commercial quarries also were maintained on some properties for the owners' private use – interviewees alluded to one such quarry still visible "behind the old Otter Creek church." Several of the homes in Otter Creek from this period employ local granite from these small quarries as foundation stones and outdoor stairs, some of which are still visible today.




Otter Creek Detailed Occupations, 1910-1930

Graph 4: A detailed breakdown of Otter Creek occupations by proportion of total, from 1910-1930. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau n.d.*

Much as these classic natural resource occupations – fishing and quarrying – adapted to the circumstances of a "rusticated" Mount Desert Island, many residents now entered new occupations, providing locally unprecedented products and services to affluent summer visitors. Many families began work as professional landscapers during this time: "Everyone was transitioning to landscaping here…that was big business here at one time" (NW). Norm Walls reports that his father became a landscaper and much of the family joined him in the business for a time. Nurseries and cut flower operations also blossomed on the farmlands of Otter Creek, providing flowers and gardening materials to the summer people. Similarly, some residents became professional florists, selling their families' flowers in the larger towns of Mount Desert Island. Marjorie Walls Cough recalls,

> My grandfather was a florist. My dad was a florist. My brother. They all were doing it… My father had a flower shop in Northeast Harbor, 'cause it was the same town, town of Mount Desert…[My family] had flower gardens in Northeast and Otter Creek, too...[They were selling to] the rich people, people with money, 'cause they did landscape working around. There was gardens down back of my grandparents' house. They had a big place rented over at Northeast that grew a lot of flowers (MC).

While nurseries were found in many parts of Otter Creek, interviewees alluded to an especially large concentration of them on the eastern, Bar Harbor side of town. In the 1910s through the 1940s, there were a number of small nurseries and landscaping operations operating along Otter Cliff Road. The area was so widely appreciated as a center of nursery and landscaping operations that some families from communities outside of Otter Creek developed commercial nurseries in the village. Interviewees spoke especially often of "Miller Gardens," a large nursery operation on the east side of Otter Creek above An's Wharf, which was started by Jane Miller in 1928 and provided cut gladiolus and other flowers to the island's visitors. (Charles Miller, meanwhile, served as a "woods boss" to Rockefeller during the 1930s: "Charlie Miller his name was. He was the boss then. My dad was one of the workers" [RW]).

The eastern, Bar Harbor side of Otter Creek was said to be a bustling part of the community at this time, complete with a group of homes, a school and small commercial enterprises near the intersection of Fishermen's Lane and Otter Cliff Road. This was widely reported to have been the core of eastern Otter Creek at the time:

> you can find foundations all through [there] where buildings used to be. And on that corner that turns down and goes underneath the bridge, there was

> two – at least two houses there, and the place is full of old apples trees down in there… pretty much that was the center (NW).

Just above the Park Loop Road bridge on the south side of Fishermen's Lane, "red astrachan" apple trees can be seen at a former home site along the old road grade.[26] Robert Walls recalls,

> [T]hey had these apple trees there, and they still exist today, and there was one tree in particular, there's a choice apple. Red astrachan it was called, and we always in the fall would try to watch the apples when they got ripe and try to get a few for pies or whatnot. And, growing up, we'd always gravitate toward that one tree before someone else did, because it would seem like we were always late (RW).

Other apple trees, domesticated lilies, foundation stones, and other evidence of past occupation can be found to the east of the intersection between Fishermen's Lane and Otter Cliff Road. A number of interviewees mentioned that there was a gas station at this intersection historically, in addition to houses and a variety of small-scale commercial activities. The Buzzell family was said to have run this gas station for a time.

Commercial operations were said to have changed owners frequently during this period, and moved from location to location over time, making them difficult to track in available town records. This observation has been made by other researchers, such as Tom Richardson, who noted,

> Commercial development in Otter Creek has been, at best, sketchy. A number of merchants have hung out their shingle throughout the years, but it has been difficult to determine exactly when some of those businesses existed (Richardson 1989: 132).

A review of local business directories in the early 20th century show two or three main stores operating in town, most of them in the Mount Desert side of town along Route 3. In the early decades of the 20th century, these directories report a general store operated by Fred Stanley, a grocery store operated by Edgar Walls, and a "dry and fancy goods" shop operated by Mrs. L.A. Richardson. Over the years, these shopkeepers would be joined or replaced by a number of women, including Stella, Florentine and Cora Davis, who assumed operations of grocery and general stores in the town. Otter Creek at this time had its own post office and postmaster. Meanwhile, Greely Walls served as the "telephone agent," in addition to operating a floral shop in town. Modest quarrying is reported in these directories, as is a congregational minister preaching on a circuit

between Otter Creek and other nearby communities (Donham 1909: 514-16). With the exception of the stores in town stocking up on ice cream and confections, there is little evidence that the tourist economy had reached the commercial "district" of Otter Creek.

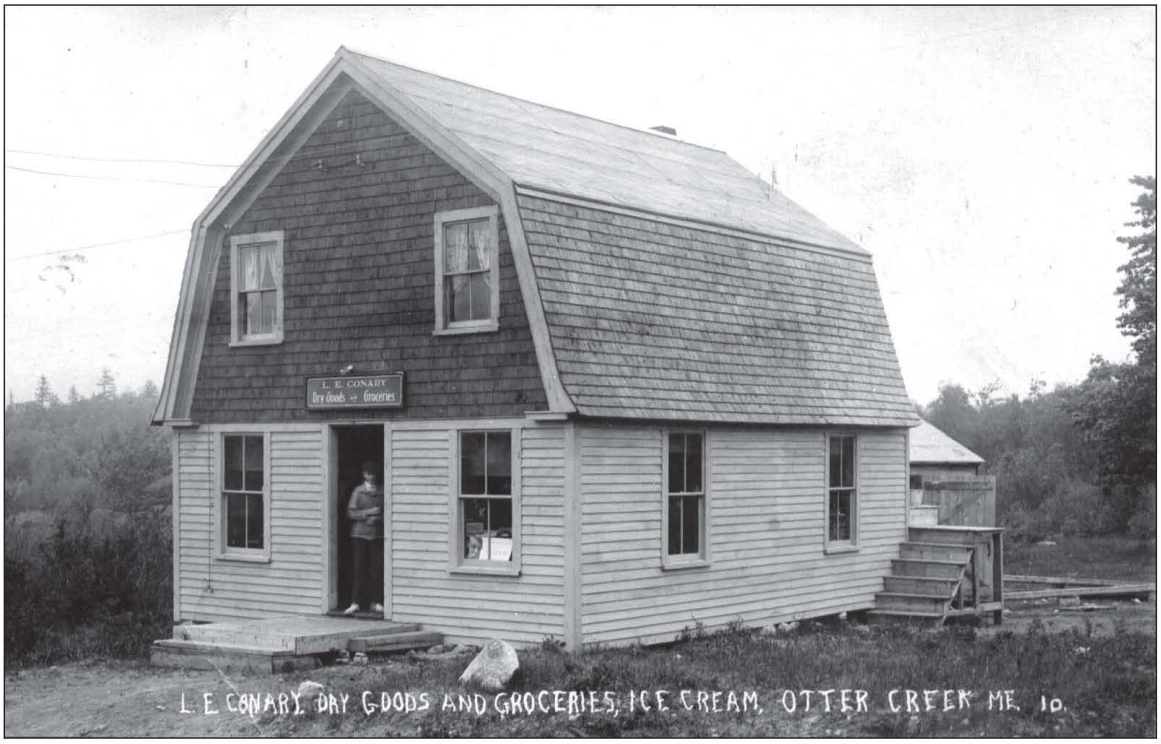



Figure 10: Commercial structures of the late 19th and early 20th century changed hands often, and were managed by local families. Here, L.E. Conary Dry Goods and Groceries, which catered to local customers on the Mount Desert Island side of Otter Creek, but also is said to have sold ice cream and other items to early tourists passing through town. Photo courtesy Northeast Harbor Library.

Still, on the hills around town, certain establishments appeared for the tourist trade that had little direct connection to the Otter Creek community. These places were positioned to take advantage of the scenery, and also the remoteness, of this rugged shoreline. Some sources allude to a "gentlemen's club" operating in the Otter Point area, which sold shares during this period to affluent Bar Harbor men. This operated on the later site of Fabbri's Otter Cliffs Radio Station:

> There was a gentlemen's club there…There was a club there in Otter Cove. I don't know if it was a "gentlemen's club" or what… but when that got shut down a radio station moved in and they operated out of there for a while and then something took them out (SC).

Also on Otter Point, but toward its south end, was the original "Tea house" or "Russian Tea House," reported by many interviewees. Both the Tea house and the

"gentlemen's club" are rumored to have been "speakeasies" during prohibition, though no detailed accounts were forthcoming on this point. Serving food and drink to Acadia visitors, the Tea house's history appears to be complex; it is discussed in more detail in later sections of this document.

Meanwhile, Otter Creek residents actively expanded and consolidated various social institutions including churches and schools during this period. There had been abortive attempts to start a permanent church in the 1860s and 1870s; by the late 19th century, church services were held in homes or the schoolhouse, often without clergy present. However, in 1901, Reverend A.P. MacDonald developed a schoolhouse in town and began holding regular church services from that building. The idea of a permanent church building in Otter Creek took hold in the community, with a preexisting women's charitable organization from the village – the precursor to the modern Otter Creek Aid Society – taking the lead in this effort. The Otter Creek Aid Society was incorporated that year, with one of its goals being the development of a permanent church building for the community. With quick fundraising and considerable community support, church construction was soon underway. The church building, today's community hall, was a "shingle-style" church, common to many Mount Desert Island towns (Cole 1989). The first service was held there in 1903, and the building was dedicated in 1904. In the two decades that followed, other churches became active in the Otter Creek community, but the Otter Creek Aid Society church maintained a unique centrality in community affairs (Pyle 1989: 90). The larger history of the Otter Creek Aid Society will be discussed later in this document.

As with the church, the schools of Otter Creek were taking shape as well. As early as 1845, Otter Creek had been part of the larger "Gott's Island" school district, which included Greening Island, North Bass Harbor, Bear Isle, and Moor Island; the school supervisor was J. Leach, and the entire district had only 16 students, who often traveled considerable distances from their home for formal education (Smith and Hughes 1989: 170-71). By 1857, Otter Creek had established its own school, serving 30 schoolchildren (Richardson 1989: 130). By 1875 two small schools were operating on the Mount Desert and Bar Harbor sides of the village respectively. In 1910, the Otter Creek school on the Mount Desert side of town underwent a dramatic expansion; the original, small building was demolished and a new two-story building was constructed in its place (Richardson 1989: 130) (see Figure 11).[27]




Figure 11: A scene from Otter Creek in the early 20th century. The new two-story Otter Creek School, built 1910, sits on the left side of the photo, while a horse and wagon travel down main street. Photo courtesy Northeast Harbor Library.

Rapidly, over the course of the first two decades of the century, the new Route 3 bypass began to foster a movement of traffic, and the focus of the local community, away from the waterfront to the ridges above.[28] The removal of through traffic from the town's waterfront was apparently seen as a priority both by local residents – frustrated with a growing number of recreational visitors passing through this small working waterfront – and Bar Harbor interests – frustrated that the maritime bustle of Otter Creek's waterfront slowed their progress to scenic vantage points and towns on either side. By the end of World War I, the town's waterfront was effectively being bypassed by through traffic, a welcome change, but one that no doubt contributed to the decline of Otter Creek's waterfront ties in the years to come (see Map 9).

As part of this effort to bypass the town and provide scenic roadways, residents and city fathers at MDI and Eden determined that a new bridge would need to be constructed over Otter Creek to replace the 1890s bridge, which – like its predecessor – had been destroyed in a storm. In 1913, a new bridge was constructed on roughly the same place as the modern Causeway (Figures 9, 13).

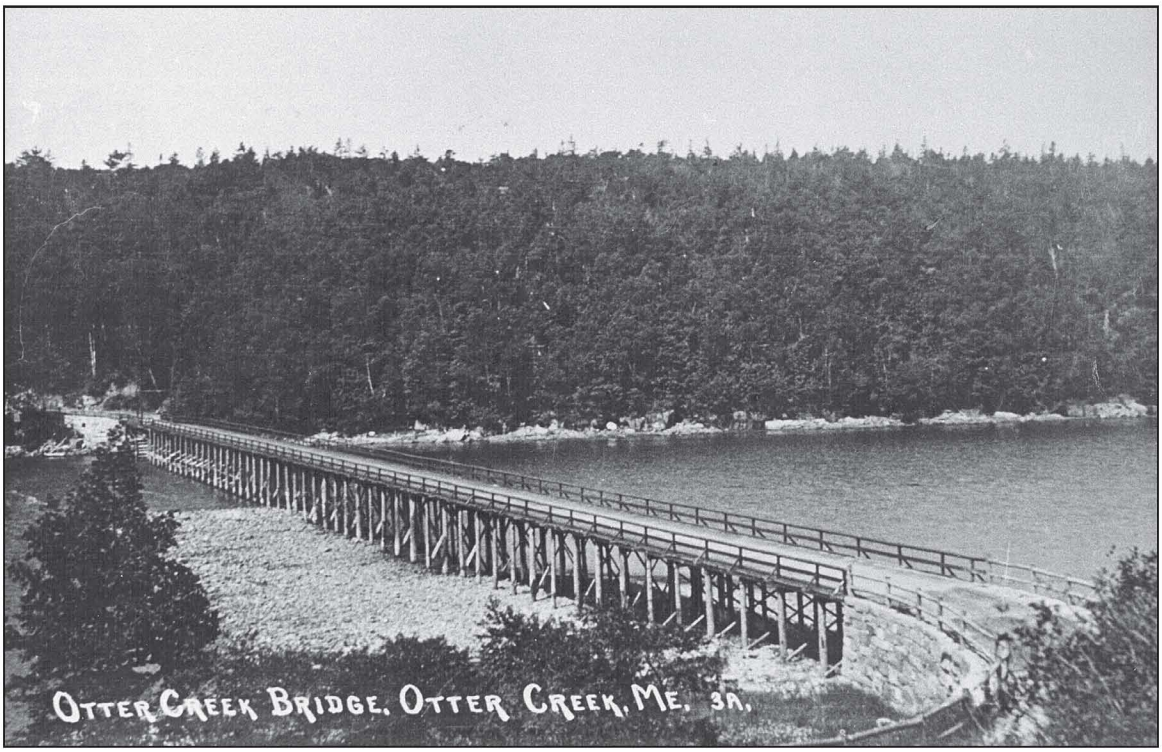



Figure 12: A view of one of Otter Creek's early wooden bridges, spanning the cove close to the location of the modern Causeway. Like the other early bridges of Otter Creek, this one was damaged by wind and waves. Photo courtesy Northeast Harbor Library.

An indicator of how much the social landscape of Mount Desert Island had changed in recent years, the completion of this bridge in the tiny town of Otter Creek was celebrated by a who's-who list of the nation's elites and was reported in the New York Times. As reported in the September 7th 1913 issue of that newspaper,

> Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., entertained on Wednesday and Friday during the week at their Summer place at Seal Harbor, where they have been throughout the season. Wednesday they gave a large dinner at their cottage, and Friday Mrs. Rockefeller entertained at luncheon.
>
> A notable affair during the week was the reception and dance Tuesday afternoon at the country club to celebrate the opening of the new bridge across Otter Creek. Ideal weather and a big gathering from all parts of the island made the occasion an enjoyable one in every way. Fifty remained for dinner and dancing that night. The hostesses were a notable list of the Summer set, and included the following:
>
> Mrs. Nicholas L. Anderson, Mrs. Benjamin W. Arnold, Mrs. William T. Blodgett, Mrs. D.C. Blair, Miss Blodgett, Mrs. Edward C. Bodman, Mrs.

> Robert B. Bowler, Mrs. William Adams Brown, Mrs. Flamen B. Candler, Mrs. Charles D. Dickey, Mrs. Tracy Dows, Mrs Edward K. Dunham, Mrs. W. W. Frazier, Mrs. Mark Hanna, Mrs. Richard M. Hoe, Mrs. Warner M. Leeds, Mrs. John C. Livingston, Mrs. Charles H. Ludington, Mrs. Louis B. McCagg, Mrs. Howard Mansfield, Mrs. Edward B. Mears, Mrs. J.F. Mitchell, Mrs. J. Archibald Murray, Mrs. D.G. Ogden, Mrs. Henry Parkman, Mrs. De Witt Parshall, Mrs. George Wharton Pepper, Mrs. Joseph Pulitzer, Mrs. John D Rockefeller, Jr., Mrs. Edgar Scott, Mrs. George L. Stebbins, Mrs. J. Madison Taylor, Mrs. Augustus Thorndike, Mrs. Huntington Williams, and Mrs. Arnold Wood (New York Times 1913).

The celebrated bridge was widely popular, retracting to allow large boats into the inner harbor; unfortunately, within 10 years, this bridge was also damaged by a storm and was condemned by roughly 1923: "the earlier bridge that collapsed before 1925, that's how they got in and out of there because that [span] would swing" (PR). Frustrations with the bridge question persisted and from that time, until shortly before Rockefeller arrived with his plans to develop the Causeway in the 1930s, there was agitation for a new bridge from interests both inside and outside of Otter Creek.

Despite all this national attention, Otter Creek remained a somewhat isolated place, with a strong sense of identity and social cohesion. Local oral tradition suggests that people used to travel between houses in the evenings, telling stories, reading poems, and playing music for entertainment – especially during the winter, when fishermen might take a hiatus from their work on the stormy sea. Norm Walls recalls stories of these early decades of the 20th century:

> there was a dance hall. A log cabin. Had a player piano in it. I do remember that. And some of the old timers here – a father built this and he had two daughters. And of course, here in Otter Creek there wasn't a whole lot the two daughters could do, so he got the piano, I suppose, and the boys would come over and go to dance. My father [Greely Walls, Jr.] was one of them (NW).

This tradition was said to have continued until the mid-20th century, when radio, television, and improved access to the outside world largely eclipsed these local events.

## Otter Cliffs Radio Station

When discussing Otter Creek as it existed in the early 20th century, most interviewees recalled that "there was a radio station once there…on Otter Creek Point" (RW). Alessandro Fabbri, an amateur radio operator with a family mansion in

Bar Harbor, established a wireless station at this site in 1912. The site was uniquely suited to the early radio technology, providing a view toward the open Atlantic, with sufficient space for all of the facilities, antennae, and other accoutrements associated with early radio station technologies. In an expression of both technological and national pride, Fabbri donated his station to the U.S. Navy in support of the war effort at the onset of World War I (Wentworth 1984).[29] Fabbri went to great lengths to advertise to military leadership of the time that he had "achieved what no one else in America had, a guaranteed twenty-four hour contact with European radio stations" including those of American enemies in Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Hale 1949: 210). Stressing his unique knowledge of the station and its technologies, Fabbri also successfully negotiated for a Navy commission so that he could be involved in military operations at the site. Under U.S. Navy command, the station facility was expanded considerably, allowing this amateur station to take on full military functions:

> The navy took over his station, enlarged it, made use of his radio compass, built a transmitter at Seawall which was handled by remote control, set up direct wires to Washington, and conducted most of its European traffic with the benefit of the radio reflection of the Mount Desert hills (Hale 1949: 210-11).

In an effort to improve the range and clarity of the signal at the station during this initial expansion of the station, the Navy extended wire antennae northeast and southwest, with the southwest wire being aligned across the Otter Creek bridge, built only four years earlier. The reception proved unsatisfactory, so the Navy attempted to string an antenna wire directly across Otter Creek cove; this too proved unsatisfactory, resulting in the relocation of these antennae to Hunter's Beach, where the signal was relatively clear.[30]

The much modified Otter Cliffs Radio Station became operational in August of 1917 under the command of Fabbri. For a brief time, the station served as the U.S. Navy's most important transatlantic radio receiver, with state-of-the-art technologies and an unobstructed ear on European radio signals. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to suggest that the radio station was of national significance during World War I:

> The Naval Radio Station at Otter Cliffs was perhaps the most vital radio installation in the world, the most reliable transatlantic receiver, and at one time the sole facility intercepting enemy field communications (Pyle 1989: 85).[31]

As a hub of military activity on Mount Desert Island, the station took on other functions, including the provisioning of patrols for a "submarine chaser" boat that plied the waters along this stretch of the Maine coastline, guarding the radio station as well as nearby towns on the island.[32] A pier extended into the cove for a time to allow the provisioning of this boat, as well as the transport of supplies to the radio station. Cumulatively, with all of its various functions, the Otter Cliffs Radio Station stationed up to 125 enlisted soldiers from the Navy and Marines by the end of the war in November of 1918 (Wentworth 1984).

As with granite quarrying a generation or two before, the men who arrived at the Otter Cliff Radio Station were only in the area briefly, but their presence surely transformed the community of Otter Creek. Interviewees recalled that the radio station had a movie hall and that residents were allowed to attend movies there on occasion – a tremendous novelty for a town of this size, especially during the late 1910s and early 1920s. Meanwhile, the servicemen came to Otter Cove's community hall to participate in dances and basketball games. At the time, the community of Otter Creek had a

> community building which had a basketball court, a stage, they had plays… they had a basketball court there that the navy base used to utilize. They come over and play games. They used to put teams together (TR).[33]




Figure 13: An image showing Otter Creek cove in the World War I era. Towers from the Otter Cliffs Radio Station loom large above the hills on the eastern shore of the cove. Fish houses on the west shore appear to include at least one sizable two-story structure, possibly suggesting residential use during this period. Photo courtesy Karen Zimmerman.

Some suggest that the men from the station had standing sports teams that played against local men: "There used to be quite a rivalry between them" (NW). A restaurant on the east side of Otter Creek was said to be a hangout for the military men, who went there in the hope of meeting young women from the local community (NW). The military men from the station sometimes created quite a stir in the little village, and there were occasional brawls between them and young men from Otter Creek. After their service at the station, a few of the men stationed at Otter Cliff chose to stay: "I knew a lot of people who worked there and settled into the community afterwards" (NW). For example, Norm Walls' uncle, Elmer McGarr – an Oklahoma native – was one of these men who came to work in the station and then married into the local community. Some interviewees speculate that fishermen sold their catch to the station commissary, but little detail was recovered on that point.

Closely associated with this station in local oral traditions, a "Tea house" was said to be located on the end of Otter Point, accessed by a side road from Otter Cliff Road. This establishment is often called the "Russian Tea House," as it had Russian owners and ambience for at least part of its existence. There were persistent rumors that it served as a transfer point for smuggling "White Russians" seeking refuge into the United States during the Russian Revolution, which took place concurrently with the operation of the Otter Cliffs Radio Station facility. The road to the Otter Point Tea house was said to pass through dense forest, and the entry to this road was called the "Rabbit Hole" in reference to its appearance. (There are persistent rumors that this Tea house may have sold alcohol during prohibition, perhaps contributing to a desire to remain unseen from the main road.) A number of interviewees and written sources imply that the tea house moved a few times during its operations – ultimately being relocated to Schooner Head by the time the NPS assumed management of Otter Point. Some Otter Creek fishermen, such as Harold Walls, sold their fish directly to the Tea house (NW, RW).

In 1921, the Otter Cliffs Radio Station was no longer needed for strategic purposes, as the threat of war in Europe temporarily disappeared, and other Atlantic radio stations were developed. The Otter Cliffs Radio Station was decommissioned in that year, but was awarded the Navy Cross for its services in World War I. Fabbri died of pneumonia a year later, at the age of 44. The station persisted as a "radio-compass" station, providing navigational support to the growing network of military and civilian radio navigation systems.

By the early 1930s, the buildings at the Otter Cliffs station were in need of repair

and the technological capacities of the station were sorely out of date. Soon, the station was targeted for relocation by Rockefeller and other park boosters so that its scenic Otter Point land could be incorporated into the park (Hale 1949: 211). "When Rockefeller bought up the land to build his road for the park, they made an agreement to move all of that stuff out of there, the radio station and all that" (GN). This point that will receive more attention in later sections of this document

By the end of the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps, working with the Town of Bar Harbor, established a memorial on a point overlooking Otter Creek cove, commemorating the history of Fabbri and the Otter Cliffs Radio Station. This site is of enduring importance to some Otter Creek families – some of whom have personal and families ties to that station. In recent years, at least one young man from the community chose to take his oath of service to the military at that site, out of respect for the military history of his family and his community.

## The Great Depression on Otter Creek Cove

Among all of the periods addressed in this document, the Great Depression was among the most transformative. As was true in many parts of the United States, Otter Creek families resumed certain economic practices and subsistence economies that had been eclipsed by the economic developments of the preceding decades. In some respects, the rural residents of Otter Creek were, in fact, better equipped to deal with the riveting effects of the depression than many other American communities. As Moriera et al. (2009) noted,

> Only marginally attached to the capitalist economy prior to the crash, [the people of rural Maine] were accustomed to hardscrabble lives of semi-subsistence farming supplemented by hunting, fishing, and woods work (Moriera et al. 2009: 39).

Most accounts suggest that use of Otter Creek cove for fishing did not decline and – if anything – increased during the Great Depression. Interviewees describe it as a bustling waterfront: "as a kid. . .I spent most of my time down there, around the shore there" (NW). Families resumed subsistence fishing practices that had waned for years, taking fish and lobster, gathering shellfish, and picking berries along the cove's margins.

Otter Creek fishermen also sought to adjust to the decline in seafood sales nationally by focusing on underutilized products and focusing on certain local markets, which showed remarkable resilience. For the wealthiest families in the United States, the

Depression had comparatively little effect on daily life. Bar Harbor cottages continued to be occupied each summer by wealthy families eager to get away from the difficulties of urban America during this period. Local families scrambled to find ways to offset the decline in national sales of seafood by intensifying their efforts to sell to these wealthy seasonal residents, while also following larger statewide trends in harvesting especially low-cost seafood products for national markets. Some suggest that this was when the Otter Creek fishermen most successfully expanded their lobster sales within local markets:

> I hear my grandfather talk. Grandpa was born in 1907. And, you know, I did a lot of hunting and fishing with him, but he would talk about that's when the lobster business [really started] 'cause back then, lobsters were a poor man's food. But then there was a market developing more because of the people coming here, you know the summer estates, the summer tourist business. And, so fishing, you know, a lot of restaurants, a lot of hotels, that type of thing…There was quite a viable fishing area, you know, down in that area. I remember him talking about it as a kid being involved with other older people [lobstering during the Depression] (TR).

In addition to lobstering, clamming expanded significantly during the Depression, as residents relied on unconventional sources of income to make ends meet. Norm Walls remembers that

> during the Depression…they went clamming. They cooked the clams and shucked them out. There was a market. They loaded them in barrels. Most of the able-bodied people dug clams (NW).

Similarly, Gerry Norwood recalls stories of this period, when families could earn up to three cents a pound for shucked clams at Bar Harbor and other communities where there was still a thriving summer population:

> my father-in-law and some of those [men of his generation said] there was quite a few fishermen there before the war… I remember during the Depression my father-in-law telling me he used to lobster and dug clams. And they got three cents a pound for short clams—dig 'em, shuck 'em out, and sell 'em that way...Because I think he said there were five or six guys down there digging clams and shucking them out right there and selling them. And that was one way to make a little money back then (GN).

Otter Creek fishermen typically cooked these clams before they were trucked out of Otter Creek, building fires along the waterfront. The current site of the Otter Creek Aid Society fish house was said to be the approximate site of one of the main clam cooking

operations during that period: "When I was a kid there were piles of clam shells all over there" (NW).

Families also kept chickens, goats, cows, and oxen during this period – both for personal use and for sale of eggs, milk, and meat to Bar Harbor and other Mount Desert Island communities. Oxen were said to be especially popular during the Depression, because they could alternatively serve as beasts of burden or as a source of meat, depending on one's needs during this uncertain period: "in the first year you used them to haul firewood, then in the second they would butcher them for food" (NW)

Otter Creek families also turned their attention to the forests around Mount Desert Island to help support their families. Norm Walls recalls that his grandfather, a homebuilder, was able to supplement the family's income by selling firewood:

> during the Depression days, he would recruit people, he had a lot in Ellsworth, and they would go and cut wood…to sell on the island (NW).

Other families cut firewood closer to home, often in areas that were later incorporated into Acadia National Park. At Christmas time, these families trekked into the forests to find greenery or Christmas trees for sale to local or regional markers. As Norm Walls recalls, "my aunt had a place where she made wreathes. Some people cut trees and sold them to Boston" (NW).

As Bar Harbor and other "cottage" communities on the island continued to thrive, service occupations were still available to some Otter Creek residents. A growing number of women were compelled to join the work force to help families pay expenses, many becoming maids in the grand homes of Bar Harbor. Marjorie Walls Cough remembers working in Bar Harbor during this period:

> That's where I worked, where the college [College of the Atlantic] is used to be the home of a very rich woman, and I worked for her for three different summers. That was when I was 17, 18 and 19. [It]'s right where the college is…the Burns house… it burned [in 1947] and they made a new one. It's utterly different now. But it was very nice then…That was all before the college. [The family's name was] Burns, James Burns…I was a kitchen maid. I helped the cook and, you know, washed dishes and cleaned up, everything. We had seven help. Just one woman, all alone. Seven people waiting on her (MC).

Flower sales also continued, catering to the same affluent families. Norm Walls remembers that his father had a greenhouse at Otter Creek where he grew flowers "for the summer people," a job that continued to pay during the Depression. "Chauffeurs

would stop with their big Pierce-Arrow and. . .my grandma sold sweet peas to them by the bunch" (NW).

Still, while there was still life on the streets of Bar Harbor, Otter Creek was suddenly quieter, as a declining number of cars passed through town. Interviewees recall that, in winter, kids sledded on Route 3 where it passed through town, as the snows were deep and traffic was light. A number of stores and businesses were said to have fronted Grover Avenue and Route 3 until the Depression, but foundered during the 1930s. By the late 1930s, there were three grocery stores in Otter Creek, owned by George Buzzell, Percy Cameron, and a large one owned by Edward McFarlane (NW). A few of these businesses were resuscitated during World War II, but the town never fully regained its commercial "core" after this period.

## Rockefeller and NPS Acquisition of Otter Cove

The Great Depression, of course, would have other, major consequences for the waterfront of Otter Creek. In time, the devaluation of land in coastal Maine opened the waterfront of Otter Creek for easy acquisition by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Philanthropist, industrialist, and heir to the great Rockefeller fortune, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. had been a promoter and benefactor for the national park concept on Mount Desert Island since its inception. A regular visitor to Mount Desert Island with a family "cottage" of his own, Rockefeller had been instrumental in helping establish the initial Sieur de Monts National Monument on the island in 1916, had played a catalytic role in the redesignation of the NPS unit as Lafayette National Park in 1919, and had been involved in the rededication of the park as Acadia National Park in January of 1929. As early as 1915, J.D. Rockefeller Jr. had been planning, designing, and personally financing the development of the park's unique carriage road network - continuing work on this system of roads, bridges, and associated features until his death in 1959. Certainly, these roads established new socio-spatial boundaries between affluent park visitors and their blue-collar counterparts living on the island. Yet, with formal road planning beginning a mere seven years after the arrival of Ford's Model T, Rockefeller's development of this road network was also a prescient response to the growing pressures on the island – creating uniquely scenic passageways through the park that would not be congested by the growing motorized traffic of fisherman and Bar Harbor tourists alike (Roberts 1990; Dorr 1948, 1942).

Otter Creek was one of those portions of Mount Desert Island that was of particular interest to Rockefeller. On its waterfront, Rockefeller sought to make an

enduring imprint, by making elaborate plans for a park road and other recreational infrastructure while simultaneously attempting to place most of its shore in National Park Service management. A number of interviewees discussed plans that Rockefeller had developed to turn inner Otter Creek cove into an impounded swimming facility, to be developed by the NPS with the assistance of the Army Corps of Engineers. Original proposals to develop a swimming beach for park visitors at Seal Harbor were met with organized opposition by residents of that community; some suggest that this development is what led to proposals for a protected swimming beach on the inner cove of Otter Creek: "they wanted to build a salt water swimming pool over in Otter Creek to attract the people to a warmer area and get them off the Seal Harbor beach. That was the whole point of it" (SS). As explained by Paul Richardson,

> Rockefeller had envisioned that that inner harbor would have been a recreational facility. The whole complex would have been recreational, because he knew that the sand beach was not – you know, when interviewed once someone said to him, 'well, what do you think about the beaches?' He said, 'well, obviously everybody goes to the Ocean Drive sand beach. It is a beautiful beach but extremely cold water.' And he said, 'they come to Seal Harbor where the water may be a little warmer,' but he didn't really want them over to Seal Harbor, okay?...the village, that's not what they wanted. So he would have put in a beach in there and it would have had canoes and this type of thing. And when that bridge was built, those three arches have stopgaps so that they could slide in huge planks to hold the water back inside that cove (PR).

Rockefeller's correspondence from the period appears to confirm the general descriptions of Otter Creek interviewees. Here and there, Rockefeller alludes to this swimming beach project in meeting notes related to park expansion; even into the late 1940s, he makes such references in correspondence with NPS leadership: "We discussed the Otter Creek swimming pool project and made some progress toward its further study and development" (Rockefeller et al. 1991: 249).

For the Causeway and swimming pool design, Rockefeller sought the assistance of the Olmstead Brothers company – perhaps the preeminent landscape architecture firm of that era. The two structural elements of this plan – the Causeway and the impounded swimming area – were fundamentally linked. The original Causeway design, for example, called for barriers that could be placed under the arches to impede the flow of water, as well as structural elements that reinforced the Causeway so that it could withstand impounded water on its northern face – a point recalled by some local historians today

(PR, TR, AN). The acquisition of the larger Otter Creek waterfront, to keep it in a natural condition so that it could be appreciated by Causeway travelers and swimmers alike, was also arguably integral to Rockefeller's vision. Yet there were a number of obstacles. Clearly, fishermen maintained fish houses and access points along the cove, as had other historical users of the Otter Creek waterfront. For a time, Rockefeller was successful in closing certain public roads accessing these sites, where they crossed his land, or that of the former Navy station, yet this was not a tenable long-term strategy (Rockefeller et al. 1991). And, at the head of the cove, the village had secured formal right-of-way access to the waterfront for fishing purposes. This right-of-way, in particular, conflicted with Rockefeller's plans for an impounded recreational development on that cove, and became a target of his acquisition strategy: "They had a right-of-way and he wanted to get that"(PR).

As will become clear in the pages that follow, Otter Creek residents seem to largely be in agreement that Rockefeller's efforts to extinguish residents' claims to the waterfront were "heavy handed" and had enduring adverse effects on important social and economic activities on their waterfront. Certainly, a case can be made that Rockefeller – one of the richest men on Earth at the time, who visited the area seasonally with an entourage of servants at his 107 room "cottage" – was not in a position to understand the needs and concerns of the hardscrabble, working-class families of the Otter Creek waterfront. And, as a steadfast supporter of national parks, born to great wealth, there is evidence that would support the suggestion that Rockefeller could exert considerable force to achieve his aims of park expansion.

In order to understand the context of Rockefeller's Otter Creek efforts, it is perhaps important to note that accusations of "strong-armed" tactics were directed at John D. Rockefeller Jr. not only at Acadia, but in a number of other national parks throughout the United States, where he worked to remove the scattered, working-class occupants from the land to support what he perceived as a national calling for unoccupied and scenic natural spaces. In the Appalachians, for example, Rockefeller had been instrumental in promoting and financing the creation of Great Smoky Mountain National Park. Rockefeller's plans for that park's development called for the removal of residents from roughly 1,100 farmsteads in the proposed 300,000 acre park footprint. From the signing of the park's enabling legislation by President Coolidge in 1926 and Franklin Roosevelt's dedication of the park in 1940, Rockefeller collaborated with brokers working for the state governments of North Carolina and Tennessee to purchase homes

and farms, and relocate their residents to places outside of the park boundary. Accounts of strong-arm tactics and low valuation of homes purchased under these agreements were widespread, leading to lawsuits against Rockefeller's coalition that advanced all the way to the Tennessee Supreme Court. While acquitted of wrongdoing, Rockefeller's actions raised tensions between the NPS and former Great Smoky Mountain residents for generations to come (Cotham 2006; Pierce 2000; Campbell 1960). Meanwhile, in the Rocky Mountains, Rockefeller sought to circumvent the concerns of area ranchers in the development of a proposed national park in the Teton Range. In 1927, Rockefeller founded the "Snake River Cattle Company" a "front" organization that sought to acquire ranches while concealing Rockefeller's involvement or intentions for the property. Once discovered, Rockefeller's secret efforts led to howls of protest from the Wyoming state government and congressional delegation, as well as its ranching communities. Still, the Great Depression, market changes in Western cattle ranching, and proposed private developments of reservoirs in the Tetons turned the tide of opposition, allowing Rockefeller to purchase most of the lands required for the development of Grand Teton National Park. Nonetheless, the controversy did not pass. The Idaho and Wyoming congressional delegations led the charge to develop a U.S. Senate subcommittee, which was formed in 1933 to review claims of illegal activities by Rockefeller's Snake River Cattle Company and the NPS in land purchases. This committee ultimately cleared Rockefeller and the NPS of all formal charges but, here too, suspicions of the local community have persisted for generations after the land transfers took place (Jackson 1999; Daugherty 1999; Albright and Schenck 1999; Albright 1985).

The situation of Acadia certainly had some similarities to these other cases. Some residents, unaware of this larger national history, recall local stories of another "front" company, the "Otter Creek Realty Company" which was said to have operated for a time in the 1910s and 1920s with the goal of buying up property in Otter Creek, Otter Point, and vicinity in support of efforts to expand Sieur de Monts National Monument and establish Lafayette National Park. While initially unsuccessful in securing title to the Otter Creek waterfront, this effort is said to have set the foundation for Rockefeller's land acquisition efforts that would soon follow.

Available evidence makes it clear that, by the early 1930s, Rockefeller clearly had redoubled his efforts on Otter Creek's waterfront, and was quietly buying up the entire Otter Creek waterfront from families cash-strapped by the Great Depression. During this period, Rockefeller was also exerting his considerable political influence in order

to transfer to NPS ownership those few parcels on the cove that were already in public ownership. Beginning in the early 1930s, Rockefeller lobbied for the removal of the Otter Cliffs Radio Station: "When Rockefeller built his road, they made an agreement to move all of that stuff out of there, the radio station and that" (GN). "When Rockefeller wanted to do the Ocean Drive Road, this four million dollar project, one of his requirements was that the radio station would move" (PR). He clearly considered the station an eyesore, and wanted it removed as far from his roads as possible. Writing to Horace Albright on October 28, 1932, he noted of "the radio station removal problem":

> The removal of the radio station to either Schoodic Point or Little Cranberry Island will be satisfactory to me. I would not be prepared to consider any other location that has thus far been suggested, until and unless I had been fully convinced that for reasons which I might regard as adequate neither of these locations was practicable (in Rockefeller et al. 1991: 129-30).

He was successful in his demands, and by 1935 the remnant station was dismantled, its radio direction finder compass being relocated to Moose Island at the tip of the Schoodic Peninsula (Wentworth 1984). (In 1939, the Town of Bar Harbor arranged for the construction of a memorial to Fabbri, honoring this local facility, which had very briefly played so prominent a national role.)

With the Otter Cliffs Radio Station out of his way, Rockefeller could turn his attention more directly to the private lands and public access issues of Otter Creek. Some suggest that, as Rockefeller's plans became clear to the community and some families resisted his initial requests to relinquish claims on the waterfront, the land acquisition effort stalled. Much of his vision could be achieved without extinguishing all claims to the inner cove, but unresolved claims left his project in jeopardy:

> what they did after they went all through the work that Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., did the park finally said to Rockefeller, look, we will resolve this someday the way you want it. Rockefeller was never one to give in and hope for the best. . . But Rockefeller. . .knowing that he wanted to put the bridge in and that four million dollar project, okay, what he did was with his attorneys and real estate people was to buy all the land around the inner cove of Otter Creek (PR).

He also began to work to extinguish other types of community access to the inner cove through formal means. Early in 1936, Rockefeller introduced an article in the Town of Mount Desert to extinguish community title to the town landing, which the village had formally secured in their March 1892 agreement with the town government (Town

of Mount Desert 1892). A number of interviewees recall that there were multiple public meetings regarding the elimination of Otter Creek fishermen's access to the waterfront. Considerable oral tradition centers on the events associated with these meetings, as the outcomes "really ticked off people down here" (PR). Meetings occurred on a number of dates in late winter and spring of 1936, including two critical meetings on March 2nd and 3rd (Town of Mount Desert 1936a: 249). While general summaries of these meetings were located in the course of this research (Town of Mount Desert 1936a), detailed records of these meetings were elusive. (Such records might still be found in the collections of the Town of Mount Desert archives at Northeast Harbor with further efforts. Interviewees recalled that an Otter Creek woman by the name of Thelma Wass was the town recorder at the time and helped to record some of the meeting minutes).[34]

Otter Creek oral tradition seems consistent on the point that Rockefeller used strong-armed tactics in these meetings to secure the vote to cede title to the landing. Some suggest that he packed these meetings with men who were on his payroll, providing transportation to and from the meeting from around the island. To provide a few examples,

> There was a town meeting…in 1936. It was apparently about Rockefeller giving property to the park. He owned property around the cove. There was an implication that he had cajoled people into voting for it, because he employed a lot of people and that kind of thing (TR).

> they were trying to send a bus around, and if you worked for Rockefeller he kind of took you to vote, kind of told you how to vote (SC).

> He even got the town meeting in Mount Desert to shut off the right-of-way or the way for the people in Otter Creek at the foot of this hill to get to the inner harbor…I don't know how they got away with it because why didn't the people know with the warrants that have to be presented before the town meeting knew that Rockefeller wanted that shut off (PR).[35]

While there was vociferous opposition from some quarters, the proposal to cede public claims to the right-of-way to the Otter Creek cove waterfront passed a March 3rd vote, effectively rescinding the Town of Mount Desert's public right-of-way to the cove. In retrospect, some suggest that the community was truly divided as "about half the community was gratified to Mr. Rockefeller for the employment" and were not inclined to vote against him even without direct coercion.[36] Others suggest that the vote reflected the presence of large numbers of non-residents or disinterested parties who were cajoled

into voting in opposition to prevailing resident opinion.

Still, almost immediately, Rockefeller was forced to confront the fact that his victory in that vote had not completely settled the matter of resident access to the Otter Creek waterfront. With threats of legal challenges to this taking of a public right-of-way, Rockefeller consulted his attorneys on the matter of the legality of landlocking the fishing community at Otter Creek through both the extinguishment of the town landing access and the construction of the Causeway. His attorneys indicated that Rockefeller's rights in this case were not sound. As J.D. Rockefeller Jr. wrote to former NPS Director Horace Albright on May 14, 1936:

> You will recall that when you and Mr. Cammerer [Arno Cammerer, NPS Director from 1933 to 1940] met in my office some months ago to discuss Acadia Park matters, we felt it was necessary to have a legal opinion as to the rights of fishermen on the Otter Creek Inlet waters, their rights to reach the water over private land and the right of the Government to build the causeway over navigable state waters. I have only recently gotten from Mr. Rodock his opinion on these two matters and am sending you herewith his letters of May 5th and 6th with the opinion which accompanied the latter. His judgment as to the Government's right to build the causeway is rather upsetting (in Rockefeller, et al. 1991: 161).

At this point, Rockefeller conceived of a new arrangement. This new vision involved a compromise of sorts, which would allow fishermen to retain the east cove fish houses and access along a new road that he would personally fund – today's "Fishermen's Lane" (Figure 14). As Rockefeller continued in his letter to Horace Albright,

> As I have been studying this whole situation, it has seemed to me that the simplest thing to do with reference to boats and fishing on the Inlet would be to have a permanent underpass road to the shore of the Inlet, which would permit the public to get to the shore without crossing the Park motor road. I remembered that there now exists what was formerly a public road to the shore just north of the Radio Station property. This road was abandoned at our ins[is]tance several years ago. I have had the matter studied on the ground and believe that such an underpass road is entirely possible. For your information I am sending herewith a letter from Mr. Ralston, also a letter from Mr. Hill on this subject, together with a blue print that illustrates the situation. Perhaps we could also discuss this matter when we meet next week. Will you be good enough to bring back all this material at this time?
>
> Very sincerely,
> John D. Rockefeller, Jr.
> (in Rockefeller, et al. 1991: 161-62).

According to Otter Creek oral tradition, Rockefeller began petitioning the fishermen of Otter Creek to abide by his plans for their cove at around this time. He is reported to have traveled along the shoreline, providing "handshake deals" that he would not extinguish their access to the eastern cove and the fish houses in that location, provided that they would raise no further claims against the loss of rights to access on the inner cove and perhaps on the western shore as well:

> Rockefeller was a great one for going around and talking with everyone. . .he assured them, 'hey, it will never be any problem. You'll always be able to go in there,' and it was the same with the fish houses. . . John D. Rockefeller granted the fishermen that they never would have a problem down here when he turned everything over to the park. And it was only a handshake, you know? (NW).

Again, the thin available record – from both Otter Creek oral tradition and Rockefeller's correspondence reviewed in the course of this study - suggests that this "handshake" deal largely involved the fishermen of the eastern cove fish houses, while Rockefeller sought to formally and permanently displace community use of the inner cove and possibly the western fish houses as well. Available federal documentation reviewed in the course of this research seems to provide additional confirmation of this interpretation – especially documentation relating to the funding and construction of Fishermen's Lane (Rockefeller et al. 1991; NPS n.d., Acadia National Park n.d.). On this road and its significance, Bob Walls recalls,

> the approaches to the fish houses or that fish area was by a different road back before my time, I believe. Not very far away, but there was apparently a little different route to get down there. I don't know why it was changed, but Rockefeller had this road leading down to the fish houses built for the fishermen, and that was what my dad told me all the years that I was growing up. And he always claimed that a town meeting at Northeast Harbor discussed it. And the secretary at the time. . .recorded that Rockefeller's stipulation was that this road be kept open for the fishermen and kept up for the fishermen, this access road, and whatnot. And that's the present road that goes on down there (RW).

In Rockefeller's view, this entire arrangement seemed to have represented a compromise position, with the east cove fish houses – relatively invisible from Rockefeller's new park road – being protected so that the rest of his vision for the cove could be achieved. This is interesting, in light of the fact that, at the time these deals reportedly were being made, Rockefeller appears to have possessed the very land that the

east cove fish houses sat upon (NPS n.d.).

This balance being accomplished, the access issue apparently resolved along the lines put forth in his letter to Albright, Rockefeller was ready to begin transferring his land titles to the NPS as a prelude to construction efforts. Yet, fish house inholdings and issues of tideland rights and 'common law' access apparently continued to dog him. These matters complicated the title question so much that, according to local historians, the park was initially reluctant to accept title to these lands – at least until these title questions were resolved. Some lands – those on the western side of the cove - were transferred to the National Park Service as early as fall of 1937, but others were apparently delayed. As recalled by Paul Richardson,

> when he offered it to the park I believe they didn't take it because they didn't have clear title. I mean with all the heir-ships and all this that went through, he may have missed one or two and he couldn't run them down, okay? But eventually the park did take it (PR).

While the status of the land on the inner cove and eastern shore was in limbo, prior to transfer to the National Park Service, a few residents reportedly attempted to buy parcels of land back from Rockefeller. Again, Paul Richardson recalls,

> When I got out of the service, the first thing I did was I contacted John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s office and asked him about buying a piece of land down over – now it's called Grover Avenue, it was then Ben's Hill – because I wanted to build a house in there. There are beautiful views of the mountain. He came down and looked at it and then his attorney came down and I got a letter from his attorney saying that even though he had offered it to the park and they had not accepted it, he'd be an Indian giver if he sold me a piece of it (PR).

Ownership of certain lands along the cove were retained by Rockefeller, but the remainder were transferred to the park by his estate at the time of his death in 1960 (NW, PR).

A few interviewees suggest that, to Rockefeller's credit, the waterfront dependence of Otter Creek may not have been clearly apparent at the time to Rockefeller, the NPS and other outsiders as would have been the case in other towns of coastal Maine. The houses and businesses, they note, were situated on the ridges above the cove by necessity, as the shoreline was steep and waves threaten most of the waterfront in storms. The practice of building fish houses below and 'commuting' the short distance between them had been seen as the most practical solution to these challenges, yet it left

the waterfront looking sparsely settled and still quite "natural" by the standards of urban America. So too, many note that Rockefeller was a benefactor of great importance to the great charitable contributions to the communities of Mount Desert Island (Muether 2008). While these contributions focused on matters of patrician concern – libraries and other urban amenities – they certainly enhanced life on Mount Desert Island. Rockefeller was even reported to work with other community boosters to promote the consolidation of churches in the 1930s and 1940s, in an effort to foster the development of larger, grander churches. There were few arenas of Mount Desert Island life in which he did not exert some influence, reshaping the island to fit his expectations. Some appreciated his efforts, while others objected on complex grounds – that his actions had concrete and adverse impacts, or that they found the disproportionate influence of a single man on their lives to be profoundly distasteful. Despite even the conflicts between Rockefeller and some of the Otter Creek fishing families, some interviewees – descendents of these families – express enthusiasm for his acquisition efforts in preserving the cove shoreline. His legacy is complex; modern responses to it are even more so.

While the NPS was not directly involved with Rockefeller's transactions on the Otter Creek waterfront, the modern agency was the inheritor of the lands and the frustrations that came with them like some sort of 'political encumbrance.' The agency was at an additional disadvantage, because so little was recorded of what are reported to be Rockefeller's "handshake deals," which may have helped him to achieve at least some of his vision for Otter Creek. In later years, when fishermen asserted that they had been promised uninterrupted access on the eastern shore, "the park said, 'oh no, we have no record of that.' Well, of course they wouldn't have a record of that" (NW). Some kind of collision between park and resident interests was probably inevitable as Rockefeller passed from the scene and the NPS was left to manage these lands – acquired with considerable friction, no matter the legal ramifications. Even today, some Otter Creek residents wish to hold modern park leadership accountable for the challenges emanating from Rockefeller's unique approach to land acquisition on Mount Desert Island.

## Federal Implementation of Rockefeller's Vision for Otter Creek

The circumstances of the Great Depression continued to have dramatic transformative effects in Otter Creek. During the late 1930s, the National Park Service was able to develop infrastructure in a way that had never been seen in the agency before, drawing upon the labor and the skills of the men mobilized under Roosevelt's New

Deal programs. Most of the work in Otter Creek took place in what is sometimes called the "Second New Deal," spanning from 1935 through the mobilization of the military forces for World War II in early 1942. Active programs during this period included the WPA (1935-1942), the CCC (1937-1942), as well as the Bureau of Public Roads, the Resettlement Administration (1935-37), the Recreation Demonstration Projects, and the "Federal One" arts programs (1935-1943) (Moriera et al. 2009; Paige 1985; McGuire 1966). Through the late 1930s, and into the very early 1940s, a force of up to 600 men from these programs – especially the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) – developed facilities throughout Acadia National Park, with specialized assistance on road projects by the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) in particular. Trail construction at Otter Cliffs was largely carried out in 1936 and 1937, but development of the Otter Creek area was largely delayed until the later stages of New Deal programs, in part because the NPS was still negotiating for acquisition of the Blackwoods campground and the Otter Cliffs transmitting station while early CCC contracts were being established. Together, these programs transformed Acadia's landscape, developing much of the park infrastructure visible in and around the Otter Creek area (Moriera et al. 2009).

The Causeway and associated sections of the Park Loop Road were undertaken principally as a BPR project.[37] The natural spit of land that had once provided a footing for the 1913 Otter Creek Bridge served as a foundation for the Causeway, while some speculate that a portion of the stone footings used on either end of that bridge were incorporated into the Causeway rockwork. The Hall quarries were resuscitated for this work, as well as other federal work around Mount Desert Island. One oral history interviewee for the Acadia CCC research project noted that stone was gathered and quarried

> anyplace we could find it. We might go out through the woods and if we found a stone that looked like a good step, we used it…Some of the stones was cut. Some of them we got over at the Hall Quarry (Lester Harford in Moriera et al. 2009: 235).[38]

As the BPR quarried stone for the Causeway they also prepared the grades on the Causeway's approaches from the eastern and western shore. According to some interviewees, this involved simultaneously quarrying rock from areas they were grading. Extensive blasting was required for this effort within the old quarries, as well as along the road grades. As Norm Walls recalls,

> I remember as a little kid them building the road that came in through, you know, down by the campground and across the Causeway and up through. . .I remember that blasting. . .and every once in a while a person would say 'a piece of rock went through my roof!' (NW).

Some community residents apparently took part in quarrying at this time, apparently in support of the federal efforts.[39] And, while BPR crews were drawn from all over the nation, most of the CCC crews were from Maine and there is some suggestion that the stoneworkers working on these crews included Maine quarrymen and stone masons.[40]

As part of this construction of the Park Loop Road, the BPR and CCC worked together to follow through on Rockefeller's plan for the east cove fish house access. Again, the Park Loop Road effectively cut off the east side fish houses from Otter Cliff Road. Rockefeller –apparently seeking to concentrate Otter Creek fishing activity in this one location - determined that a new bridge would be constructed to allow continued (and even improved) access to the site. As noted in HABS-HAER documentation for the site,

> One of the smaller structures on the Park Loop Road, the Fish House Bridge is a stone-faced semicircular arched reinforced concrete bridge. It is the smallest stone-faced true bridge on the Loop Road. . .The "Fish House Road" was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps to provide access to several fishermen's houses which were isolated from the Otter Cliff Road by the construction of the Park Loop Road. Its construction necessitated an underpass under the Loop Road, the structure now known as "Fish House Bridge." . . .John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who funded the construction of the Otter Cliffs segment of the Pak Loop Road, managed to have the Town of Otter Creek discontinue the town road and the landing as part of his plan to extend the park motor road (HAER 1995: 2).

Other sources confirm that the CCC constructed Fishermen's Lane, even as the BPR constructed the arched overpass where that road passed under the Park Loop Road – a partnership that was employed for many of the side roads in the park.[41] The CCC also took the lead role in the development of the Fabbri Memorial, commemorating the station that was perhaps ironically swept away by this development.[42] Only after completing these efforts, as well as most of the park trail projects did the CCC turn their full attention to the Blackwoods Campground.[43]



Figure 14: The bridge and archway over Fishermen's Lane, called "Fish House Bridge" in HABS-HARE documents. This access point passing below the Park Loop Road was proposed by Rockefeller as part of his larger compromise on Otter Creek waterfront access – eliminating access on the inner cove in exchange for implied access to the eastern shore fish houses. This bridge and archway was constructed in 1938 by J.M. Francesca of Fayetteville, West Virginia under the direction of the federal Bureau of Public Roads, with funds provided by J.D. Rockefeller, Jr., and was adorned with local granite. D. Deur photo.

The Causeway, complete with the Park Loop Road around Otter Creek cove, was completed in September of 1939. Norm Walls recalls that when the park road was close to completion, he had older cousins in town who took him for a drive on these roads before they were opened to the public: "We were one of the first ones. . .That was impressive!" (NW).

The Blackwoods Campground was constructed in part by CCC crews from the NP-1 an NP-2 CCC camps, and most of this construction occurred after the first half of 1940 (Moriera et al. 2009: 269-70). All major construction at this Campground was completed by the end of CCC operations in the park in 1942.

While this work was taking place, old side roads, including the former east side fish house road and former approaches to now-defunct Otter Creek cove bridges were

largely retired and replanted as part of a larger roadside beautification effort.[44] There is some suggestion among interviewees that farmsteads and quarries were also being planted in natural vegetation, as part of a well-documented aspect of CCC efforts in the park, seeking to removing aspects of the human imprint from the landscape. As Moriera et al. summarize this effort,

> For an area like Mount Desert Island, where human history is deep but not so intensive that its mark is indelible, development in part meant restoring a sense [of] nature by removing traces of human activity – slash heaps, derelict, traces of agriculture, defunct military installations (Moriera et al. 2009: 318).




Figure 15: The Causeway, shortly after its construction, as shown in a 1940s postcard. The inner cove sits in the background, and formerly cleared farmland on the eastern "Bar Harbor" side of the cove is giving way to forest along the cove shoreline. The arches, seen here at high tide, were the only passageway for boats into the inner cove from the late 1930s onward. Image courtesy Karen Zimmerman.

Clearly, Rockefeller's plans for Otter Creek brought a wave of laborers associated with the CCC, the BRA, and other federal work programs. As work needs moved from place to place within the park, temporary camps were established to house workers, as well as to store equipment and materials for the development of park infrastructure.[45] For a time, these men were said to be stationed close to the east cove fish houses. As oral tradition on this point is recalled by Gerry Norwood,

> They were stationed down here [on the cove]…Housing, a base, they kept equipment there and all of that. I don't remember whether they did or not, but they probably did quarry a lot of that stone [for] the causeway, 'cause there was a quarry over here…and there's an old landing right in here …I'm assuming that they quarried rock because they were building the roads (GN).

Socializing between the men of the federal work program camps and the larger MDI community was commonplace (Moriera et al. 2009: 126-36). A few of these men stayed in the area after their work was complete, marrying into the local community. When asked about the WPA presence in the area, interviewee Tom Richardson reports,

> Some of it had to do with Rockefeller and the building of the carriage roads… This gentleman, this little house right next to here, Bernard Holmes, was one of the people who came with that group and then stayed. He passed away just a few years ago, just a couple of years ago. But there were several people that, you know, families that came here, I believe, with or connected to that program or something of that nature…I believe it's, that's how his family made it. They came here for job openings. They would have been with a government program (TR).

Similarly, the Acadia CCC research project noted that a number of men had dated women from Mount Desert Island; some had met their spouses on the island and, of those men, many had continued to reside there after the end of their CCC duties (Moriera et al. 2009: 137-38).

Otter Creek residents were dazzled in many ways by the abrupt transformation of their landscape - with new roads, new stonework overpasses and causeways, new trails, new campgrounds, new monuments, and even new relatives all appearing in the course of roughly five years. Yet, this was also a time of considerable apprehension as well. Fishermen reportedly expressed concern about the Causeway's development as it took place, as the scale of its impacts on traditional patters of fishing began to become clear. Norm Walls recalls,

> They were pretty concerned…they used to beach at the head of the cove. Some could still go through [the causeway] with old 20 foot boats, but it became a problem when everybody started getting bigger boats (NW).

In many ways, the enclosure of the inner harbor was said to exacerbate other pressures on the fishing community. Certainly, fishing had already been in retreat for some time before all this new development: "It was on decline by the time Rockefeller was here – it was a hard harbor" (NW). However, accounts from the period suggest, the fishermen of Otter Creek sensed that this new development marked a pivotal moment in the history

of their community and the fishery – one that would make their hard job harder and would change their community's relationship to the water forever.

## World War II on Otter Creek Cove

Interviewees report that World War II was a challenging period for residents of Otter Creek. Even as the Great Depression lifted in other parts of the country, it held on tenaciously in many communities of Mount Desert Island. If the people of rural Maine, with their diverse skills and expertise at natural resource procurement, were better-prepared for the Great Depression than many other American communities, they also did not participate in many aspects of the industrially-driven economic recovery that followed America's entry into the war. The Depression lingered in Maine "long after it was over elsewhere…a lot of families were 'on the town'…relied on food boxes and that kind of thing" (NW). The Otter Creek Aid Society was said to have helped in some of these food distribution efforts for the poor and needy of the community.

A significant proportion of the young men in Otter Creek entered into military service at the onset of American involvement in World War II. Simultaneously, the rapidly expanding military presence on the island created new obstacles to traditional economic activities. As the coastlines of the United States were militarized, Mount Desert Island was no exception. There was a well-documented military lookout on Cadillac Mountain: "From Mount Cadillac, in World War II, radar beams searched the coast, as a defense against submarines" (Hale 1949: 18). Interviewees recall of that station that "they had army in there. They fenced the whole thing in and it was off limits. You couldn't go up there certain times of the year" (NW). Meanwhile, at the Porcupine Islands, near Bar Harbor's shore the islands and offshore rocks were used for bombing practice by American flight crews - especially Bald Porcupine Island. Blimps slowly traveled over the island, serving as lookouts for enemy craft and also dropping occasional depth charges offshore. In Otter Creek, Norm Walls remembers seeing these balloons passing low overhead: "We were tapping maple trees behind the house…we saw a big blimp rise over the trees…you could almost count the rivets!"(NW). In each of the communities of Mount Desert Island, there were also enforced blackouts: "You had covers on your street lights…they had people driving around patrolling. You had to tape up the lights on your car so that there was just a little square open" (NW).

Otter Creek's waterfront was no exception. A few interviewees spoke of a submarine refueling station that operated out of the cove. Because the cove was so shallow, this facility reportedly sent supply boats into the water a short distance beyond

the Otter Creek bar where they rendezvoused with submarines.[46] These submarines set off depth charges from time to time off the mouth of Otter Creek – possibly as a defensive maneuver when preparing to receive shipments of supplies: "We had submarines out here. Every once in a while you would have depth charges go off…you could feel the ground shake" (NW).

The station was reported to be constructed near the old Navy pier, and essentially occupied much of the east side fish house area at the time. As one interviewee explained,

> it was under heavy guard. Even the locals couldn't come down here…It was on the fish house side. On the refueling station…On the eastern side… that's where the sub came in at high water and fueled up…[T]here were tanks back in here [by the fish houses]…They didn't change anything here [on the shoreline]. Only put that refueling station there (GN).

While evidence on this point is complex and perhaps contradictory, it appears that the military may have also been involved with the augmentation of the Otter Creek bar at this time. While most interviewees agreed that the original bar was "natural" – perhaps associated with an underwater moraine, there was a history of augmenting the bar for many years prior to military occupation of the cove, to provide additional protection to the exposed cove.[47] As recalled by Norm Walls, fishermen said they would take rocks out and dump them on that bar…At low tide some of those rocks are sticking out" (NW). During World War II, however, the submarine station is said to have augmented the bar considerably:

> They *made* that bar. The Army Corps of Engineers put that bar in there. And there's only an opening on this side… But they wanted that for protection for that refueling station (GN).

During this period, Otter Creek fishermen's activities were severely restricted in the cove, and the men from the east cove fish houses, by some accounts, had to temporarily relocate. Asked about fishing near the sub station during World War II, Gerry Norwood relayed stories passed on to him by his father-in-law and other Otter Creek fishermen:

> they really locked down that area tight…you couldn't fish out of there without a permit. They gave out permits…[on the east side] they couldn't even fish out of there during the war. When that sub station was there you couldn't even get a permit to fish out of here. You could fish from th[e west] side of the harbor, but you couldn't come over to this side… [Men with fish houses on the east side] had to give up the fish houses there for the duration of the war…they used this shore. They put barrels and stuff over there [and

launched from the west side] (GN).

Simultaneously, there is oral history suggesting that the fishing was unusually good during the war, for reasons that are poorly understood but the focus of much speculation:

> The Second World War—my father-in-law fished out of there…[he] said that he never saw better fishing than there was here in the Second World War. And I said, 'Well, we didn't have as many fishermen, for one thing.' And he said, 'I don't think that's what it was.' He said, 'We were catching bigger lobsters than I ever saw in my life, and more of 'em.' He said sometimes you almost couldn't really lift a trap over the side of the boat, so many lobsters in it…'The battles out to sea,' that's what his theory was: Sinking ships offshore in that deep water was forcing the lobsters to come in. That was *his* theory… Vibrations and concussions and on and on. Yeah. And he said, after the war that it dropped back to normal fishing (GN).

The refueling station was said to have occupied some of the structures that had been left behind by CCC crews on the eastern cove at the end of work on the Causeway and Park Loop Road. Very little physical evidence was said to remain of this submarine fueling station, with the exception of some old concrete footings, because the site was completely "cleaned up" at the end of the war (GN, AN).[48]

Some interviewees discussed a Coast Guard Station that operated during this period at the southern end of Otter Point, apparently expanded at that location as part of the war effort:

> they had a Coast Guard station in my time. I guess I was about 15 when that was going on, 15 years old. [That Coast Guard station was located right] where the toilet rooms are on Otter Point… It's right there… I knew the guy who was stationed there (RD).

In addition to these stations, and changes in fishing access, the war had complex economic effects upon the community. A small number of Otter Creek families became involved in local light manufacturing to support the war effort. Most notably, a few families banded together, founding a company that manufactured wooden boxes for automotive parts and ammunition for the war effort, using local timber:

> Some of the caretakers, the Richardsons and some of the others…thought they should do more for the war effort. And Rockefeller, or whoever [they worked for as caretakers] didn't want them to leave. So they set something up where they could build boxes. They had the box factories in Northeast [Harbor]…I'm not sure exactly how the story goes on the contract, but I heard something that Ford, when he was getting parts from some other supplier, specified that they had to be shipped in certain oak boxes [for] packing the

> stuff, and then the packing went from Ford's, from Detroit or whatever, by train and came up and they used it up here to make ammunition boxes. My father worked there. He didn't have nothing. He didn't go in the war. He worked for the town plowing snow and worked in the box factory. There was a lot of women who worked there. But some of the older guys who had maybe already been in World War I still thought they should do something during the Second War. That's how that started (SC).

Led in large part by the Richardson family of Otter Creek, this box manufacturing company, the "Crobb Box Company," became one of the larger private employers on the island during the war years. As recalled by Tom Richardson,

> Originally the Crobb Box Company was started by my grandfather. And Crobb is an acronym for Clemmons, Richardson, O'Brien, and Buckland. O'Brien was the owner of the property my grandpa was the caretaker for. And Clemmons was, I believe, the bookkeeper for the Fords, either Fords or Rockefellers, I get them confused. And Buckland was the contractor in Northeast Harbor. They started, the Rockefellers, Fords and all these summer people were losing so many people to the war effort that they basically allowed my grandfather and whatever to start Crobb Box Company to build ammunition boxes, big boxes for cab casings, things of that nature, that Ford Motor Company had contracts with the US government, and Ford Motor Company gave contracts to Crobb. And they employed as many as 100 people at one point. They started in Northeast Harbor but moved up to Hancock, out of Hancock, and been there some time, '42, I think it was (TR).

After the war, the family adapted their lumbering and wood manufacturing operation to the post-war economy, moving into wholesale lumber production in response to the building boom of following decades. Even today, this wartime effort continues to define the occupations and opportunities available to island residents, including the Richardsons and other families associated with the original Crobb Box Company: "Our family today is still in lumber manufacturing. . ..[since] then we've been involved, we own saw mills and planing mills, all kind of converted over from that box scenario to the wholesale lumber type of stuff" (TR).

## The Fire of 1947

A number of small forest fires were reported to have affected the Otter Creek area in the 19th century, including a 1883 blaze – often attributed to a Green Mountain cog railway car - that consumed the forest as far south as Otter Creek Road before burning out (Bachelder 2005: 70-74).[49] However, it was the great fire of October 1947 that would

permanently transform Otter Creek – especially its eastern "Bar Harbor" side. After a summer marked by a prolonged drought, a small fire was detected on a cranberry bog off Crooked Road on October 17th of that year. The fire quickly spread southward and eastward, becoming a conflagration that consumed the forests of eastern Mount Desert Island, as well as many of the wealthiest neighborhoods of Bar Harbor.

Interviewees for the current research had a number of vivid memories of these events. Marjorie Walls Cough recalled being forced to evacuate as the fire rapidly spread across the island:

> I was just out of the hospital with my fifth child. That was awful. We got off the truck and you could look up and see the fire, you know, the flames in the air. And we'd only been in that, we bought the house [on Ash Street] in March, the fire was in October. We bought a house in March before that, and I never expected to see it [after the fire], but we did. And the fire burned on the street next, not very far from us.
>
> [We had to evacuate the island.] They came to the door and said, 'Be out in 15 minutes'…We went to Ellsworth and stayed overnight. But my two brother-in-laws came, one of them took my two, my two girls is the oldest. And I took the three babies, and went to another brother's in Gardiner, Maine. Stayed a whole week (MC).

Robert Davis also remembered the evacuation, which occurred while he was in Hancock. Despite the evacuation, he was able to return to the island and helped to evacuate residents in a 1924 Buick:

> At first I was up in… Hancock getting some wood and stuff… and they wouldn't let us on the island. So I hitched a ride into town I stayed awhile, and then I went off the island, took some people off in an old car, in fact, in an old '24 Buick. I didn't even have a driver's license. Someone said, 'Can you drive?' I drove these people off the island. So I stayed off the island for a few days before I came back. And I came back and helped put out the ground fires then over there (RD).

By October 24th the outskirts of Bar Harbor had been burned, the southern end of the island was engulfed and the communities of Town Hill, Seal Harbor and Northeast Harbor were being evacuated (Snow 1947). Reporters covering the blaze attempted to pass through Otter Creek, but were turned back by military troops that had been mobilized to fight the fire: "We got to Otter Creek, only to be turned back in line by a group of Army trucks who had tried to get through with food only to be stopped by smoke" (Pottle 1947: 1). Most of Otter Creek was evacuated, but a number of individuals

– volunteer firefighters prominent among them – chose to stay.

During the fire, the community of Otter Creek was saved in part by the local fire department's aggressive firefighting strategy, which involved pumping water from the local fire pond through hoses to a number of outposts in the forests north of town. (The Otter Creek Fire Company was fortuitously founded only five years earlier, in March of 1942, with Shirley Bracy as its first fire chief.) This strategy stalled the fire's progress as it moved toward the western side of town, though the fire continued progressing southeast into the Bar Harbor side of the community. As they worked to extinguish the fire, both local and out-of-town firefighting crews pumped water from Fire Pond and the inner cove of Otter Creek. So much water was used from the cove to fight the fire that people reported "the brooks ran brackish for two or three days afterwards" according to one local account. A frequently mentioned subplot of this story mentions an out-of-town firefighter from Maine's interior expressing astonishment that he had "emptied the pond," apparently unaware that the tide was going out at the inner cove where he was pumping. Someone reportedly retorted that the "pond" extended all the way to Portugal. This fireman had continued backing the pump truck toward the water as it had receded, so that it became quite stuck at the bottom of the tide and other vehicles had to be pulled away from firefighting to rescue it before the tide rebounded.

The fire was under control by October 27th, some 10 days after it had started, but continued to smolder until mid-November. By October 28, some families were beginning to return to their homes. Volunteers in Ellsworth maintained lists of names of Otter Creek residents, in addition to residents of Bar Harbor, Seal Harbor, and other communities, helping to reconcile families that had been separated in the blaze (McClay 1947). Marjorie Walls Cough remembers returning to Bar Harbor as soon as the evacuation orders were rescinded: "Oh, what a sight to come back and see everything. [some parts of town were] just bare. Everything was gone. It was very sad" (MC).

In the end, over 17,000 acres had burned, including the northern half of the eastern shore of Otter Creek cove. Returning to that area, Robert Davis recalls seeing most of the homes destroyed on "Miller Garden Road," along Otter Cliff Road east of the inner cove:

> the fire had burnt about everything while I was gone…the Miller Garden Road, most of them places had burned. [The Miller family] had a little flower shop that didn't burn. Might have been one or two buildings that didn't burn, but most of all of them burnt during the fire. It came awfully close to Otter Creek. It came down Green Mountain… right on one end of Otter Creek it

> went right across to Miller Drive and all. So luckily it didn't burn Otter Creek itself. It went right by it (RD).

Similarly, Gerry Norwood recalled the extensive damage to the east side of Otter Creek:

> "The opposite [east] side of the harbor was the most populated... everything was lost during the fire...There were a lot of houses along there and only later some of the younger people moved over to this [west] side...just about everything [on the east side] was lost during the fire, the fire of 1947" (GN).

This portion of Otter Creek, they suggest, never rebounded after the fire and is today only a pale reflection of the former neighborhood that occupied the eastern slopes of Otter Creek cove. Ironically, while the loss of many vacation homes of Mt. Desert Island's elite were mentioned in press coverage of the time, the impacts on homes in such humble places as Otter Creek scarcely received mention (Brechlin 1981; Hale 1949: 216-42).

In addition to destroying this neighborhood, the fire of 1947 had a variety of other impacts on Otter Creek life. The burning of the forests resulted in a temporary surge in woodcutting through the remainder of the 1940s – both for personal use but also for commercial lumbering and firewood operations. Some portions of the burned lands within the park were opened for salvage logging, and the park issued permits allowing certain Otter Creek residents to harvest wood from the burned portion of the park around town. A few of these permits and associated correspondence are still in the private collections of Otter Creek families.[50] A small lumber camp briefly operated in Otter Creek, where horse logging teams mobilized to locations in and around the park, with logs being cut for various uses (RW).

The destruction of the affluent "cottage" district of Bar Harbor had ripple effects throughout the entire island's economy. Construction employment temporarily boomed as Bar Harbor was rebuilt, employing a number of Otter Creek men seasonally.[51] Simultaneously, many of the jobs for maids, chauffeurs, florists, and other hired help disappeared – some never fully rebounding. The entire character of the eastern island was said to have changed irreversibly, as the old mansion district was swept away at the very moment that post-war automotive tourism began to expand. Regarding the changes that occurred to the nearby Bar Harbor area after the fire, Marjorie Cough remarked,

> This was a rich man's town. And overnight, it became a T-shirt town. Everything is utterly different. We used to have many garages... and clothing stores and everything. Now we don't have anything (MC).

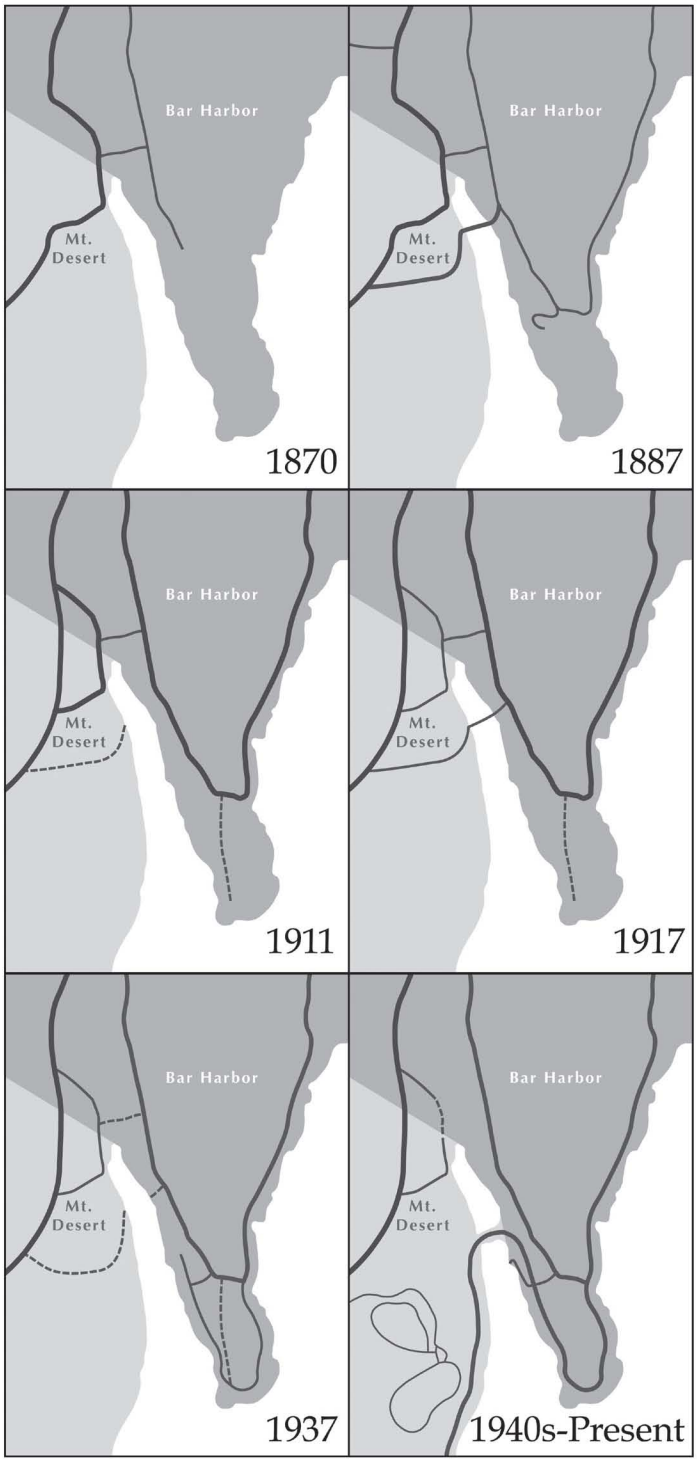
This was, she notes, also a critical blow to the floral industry, which persisted in reduced form but never fully recovered from the fire. Her family's involvement in that business steadily declined after the fire: "[T]here's nothing [of the florist trade] left in my family now…My brother's son, I guess he wasn't interested, and he moved away" (MC). Even as the natural landscape has slowly recovered, the fire arguably changed many aspects of the social landscape forever.

## Changes in the Post-War Community of Otter Creek

Over the course of the mid-20th century, the community of Otter Creek gradually migrated away from the waterfront – morphologically, but also economically and socially. Fishing entered into a period of rapid decline; for example, Norm Walls recalled that there had been roughly 20 regular fishermen working on the cove in the 1940s, but only five regular fishermen by the mid-1950s. The domestic work associated with the rusticators' "cottages" had also evaporated somewhat, as middle-class automotive tourism reshaped the island. Women ran laundry operations and assisted in landscaping and other service occupations in this new tourist economy. Paid work was seasonal and not always stable: "you worked three, four months a year and they you got laid off!" (NW). Despite these challenges, Otter Creek continued to adapt and thrive in the 1940s and 1950s:

> the community during the forties and fifties grew…They held dances at the community hall. They held rummage sales [there too]… And they were in that era where it was a good time and they were all like all a community, big things, baked bean suppers, the whole thing (KD).

Certainly, some things had changed in the wake of park expansion. First-hand witnesses report that "the park brought big changes to the community," bringing "outsiders" and "limiting access" to certain places including the waterfront of Otter Creek. Most suggest that park management was one of several factors contributing to the rapid decline of fishing on the cove. Several interviewees reported that the immediate post-War years marked the time when residents began to fully grasp the scope of NPS management, with its restrictions on historical uses of lands and resources. This was not only true on Otter Creek cove, but on many places around the island. Indeed, oral history accounts hint that the change in land management initially had a more jarring effect when applied to terrestrial rather than marine resources. The Smith family shared stories of this awkward transition. Denis Smith recalled that,




# Principal Otter Creek Road Networks, Selected Years

Sources: U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey 1882, Colby & Stuart 1887, Bates et al. 1911, Bates et al. 1937, ACAD GIS files & interview accounts

Map 9: Principal Otter Creek Road Networks, Selected Years, derived from maps from each date. These maps show a gradual movement of the principal roads away from the waterfront, as well as the repeated loss and reconstruction of bridges over the cove.

> My grandfather would go fox hunting over at Newport Mountain…and wherever he wanted to go.…they came and said, 'You can't do that anymore.' He used to go from here all the way up to the gorge, cutting firewood [and had to stop doing that] (DS).

Similarly, Steve Smith spoke about his grandfather's difficult adjustment to the new park management:

> My grandfather used to swear about [how] he couldn't any longer go hunting, he couldn't go trapping, he couldn't cut wood up in the gorge, he couldn't do this since the park came in. And he just despised them (SS).

Yet, other families had stories of this kind. Robert Walls described his father's surprise at having a dead moose confiscated by park staff:

> The park was there, and they didn't bother my father or the fishing, at least anything that I ever heard…They might have tried to tell him what to do a few times, but, I know he came across a moose that was floating. It was still warm. He dragged it ashore and called on the radio to talk to the fellow boaters—the family or what—telling them he had come across this moose and he was towing it into Dark Cove. And somehow the park found out about it, heard about it. And they were there waiting for him when he came in, and they sort of confiscated the whole animal. And that was always …a sore, sore spot. I guess he tried some of it to eat, but it was no good. And he complained a little bit about the park (RW).

Some suggest that a considerable proportion of their communication with the park was carried out through park law enforcement, and that this was often the venue through which local people first learned of new land use restrictions. Some interviewees suggest that the initial shock and frustration at the loss of access during this period, often conveyed through enforcement action, is at the root of many of the conflicts over resource access that persist in the community into the present day.

## The Decline of Eastern Otter Creek

Otter Creek had always been a somewhat divided community – with the town boundary between Bar Harbor/Eden and the Town of Mount Desert bisecting the village into an eastern and western half. This had undermined the community's status as an independent "town" in many respects. (Perhaps reflecting this fact, residents still use the term "village" generally to refer to Otter Creek, but do not use the term "town" – employing the latter term to the formal and incorporated entities of Bar Harbor and the Town of Mount Desert.) The Main Brook was often impassable during heavy rains prior

to the development of the modern Route 3 highway, adding to the division between east and west Otter Creek (NW). Perhaps most significantly, though, this division had been exacerbated by the division of the community into two school districts, on either side of the town line, each with its own Otter Creek school.

However, things became more complex in the post-War period. By 1949, the Otter Creek School on the Bar Harbor side of town had been closed. The devastating 1947 fire apparently was the final blow to this steadily declining student population, contributing significantly to the decision to close the school. At this time, the students from the eastern half of part of Otter Creek were sent to Emerson School at Bar Harbor. Residents demolished the abandoned schoolhouse, salvaging it for building materials; Austin and Chester Walls were said to have built homes in part from materials salvaged from the schoolhouse. The former Otter Creek School site can still be found along the abandoned road grade ascending Schoolhouse Hill, close to the boundary between NPS and private lands. Pink granite steps and foundation stones can still be seen there too. A number of the individuals discussed in this document attended the school on the Bar Harbor side of town (such as Harold Walls, who attended first grade there circa 1919).

Then, by roughly 1960, the two-story Otter Creek School on the Mount Desert side of town was also demolished, sending all students to schools in Seal Harbor or Northeast Harbor (Richardson 1989: 130). An "invisible line" increasingly divided the community, with those from the Bar Harbor side attending Bar Harbor schools and being pulled into the social orbit of that community, and those from the Town of Mount Desert side being pulled in the opposite direction. The children from the community were sent to different schools depending on which side of the town line they came from; families from one side could arrange for their children to attend the school from the other side of the line "but they paid for it."

Interviewees varied in their perception of the consequences of this divide – those from the Bar Harbor side more commonly depicting it as a source of deeper social divisions in the village, and those from the more populated Mount Desert side often dismissing it as being less consequential. Especially since the 1949 closure of the Otter Creek School on the Bar Harbor side of town, the two halves of the community have been divided – increasingly attending different churches, shopping in different stores, and the like as their travels and social networks take them in two different directions. Accordingly, Rosamund Walls, a former student from the Bar Harbor side of town, described a degree of isolation from those living in the larger Otter Creek community: "I had to go to Bar

Harbor schools, and everything I did was in Bar Harbor and the rest was all out here"(RO). Likewise, her husband, Norm Walls, recalls:

> My wife came from the other side of the town line. Of course we met as teenagers in the church and the grange and Sunday school. . .She went to Bar Harbor and I went over the Gillman [High School in Northeast Harbor]. . . Some didn't even call the Bar Harbor side "Otter Creek" but called it "Bar Harbor" instead (NW).

As the Mount Desert side of Otter Creek became the undisputed social core in the post-War era, residents also sometimes alluded to the Bar Harbor side by the phrase "'cross the creek" (RD). The term "Crikkers" in reference to Otter Creek residents gained some currency in this period, but interviewees had varying perspectives on the extent and conditions under which this term was used. With the vast majority of its remaining population on the west side of the village divide, Otter Creek became more socially and economically linked to the Town of Mount Desert at this time: "The villages still have their own identities in many respects but the town, it's become more of a town orientation. It has to be, to function properly" (TR).

Interviewees noted that the Bar Harbor side of Otter Creek was never able to rebound from the great fire of 1947. They note that the boundary between Mount Desert and Bar Harbor, coupled with the patterns of park land ownership, insured that most of the infrastructure improvements of the late 20th century were necessarily limited to the Mount Desert side of the village. Sewer service, for example, was restricted to the Mount Desert side:

> we, Mount Desert did a public sewer here about in the late '60s. We set up a sewer plant and so forth, but we didn't include the Bar Harbor side. . .it was unfortunate but that side of the village, Bar Harbor side, was not able to get into that sewer, which would have been nice, I'm sure. But that tells some of the issues here with this village (TR).

In the absence of such infrastructure, redevelopment of the Bar Harbor side of the village was simply not possible in the way that would allow it to regain parity with the Mount Desert side of the boundary. As a result of these kinds of institutional forces, they suggest, eastern Otter Creek has continued to languish into the present day.

Still, the residents of Otter Creek were adaptable. Among other things, they adapted to all of the structural changes in their community emanating from the reorganization of roads and land ownership along the waterfront. Though Grover Avenue ("Ben Wall's Hill") would no longer serve as a main street, it continued to play

an important role in the community, linking eastern and western districts of Otter Creek: that road's derelict northern end was still used as a path for fishermen traveling between their homes and the east cove fish houses through the mid-20th century (RW). And, though the road up Schoolhouse Hill gradually fell into disrepair, the community maintained a wooden bridge over Main Brook to allow traffic to pass between the eastern and western sides of the community. People still used the old road grade as a footpath, sometimes to access fish houses and other fishing activities on the east side of the cove, but also to access nurseries and other sources of employment along Otter Cliff Road: "I used to walk the path past the old school every day when I was working at the farm up there" (SS). The path to the east side of the cove was also commonly used by recreational fishermen from the community, traveling between fishing sites around the cove and up Main Brook. A small maze of historical trails fanned off of these main routes, linking fish houses, historical quarries, and other places that continued to be used by residents for social and economic activities:

> [at the head of the cove] there was a trail that lit off the woods there. The right led you down to the Causeway and I remember fishermen even in my time walking down there to go haul a few traps and maybe walk. They walked through the woods. They didn't have an automobile. So I'm sure that's what they did before my time when they were fishing for a living, some of the fishermen. In fact, my dad walked to the shore…he talked about walking through the woods back to the house (RW).[52]

Up on the ridges above, where a growing number of cars passed through town along Route 3, through tourist traffic surged: "new people came because better cars and roads made it more accessible" (Richardson 1989: 129). These visitors traveled through town, largely unaware of the enduring patterns of foot and boat traffic, the social networks, and the enduring fishing economies that persisted a short distance downslope.

## Otter Creek Fishing in the Mid-20th Century

Fishing on the cove continued to be an important part of community life, tied to some of the earliest and happiest memories of people raised in Otter Creek in the mid-20th century. Denis Smith recalled from his own childhood,

> On the Causeway there, on the bridge, that's absolutely my first recollection of being down there. My babysitter took me down there at age five and I caught pollock. There were tons of them going in and out of there (DS).

Yet, fishing on the cove was very different than it had been only a decade or two earlier. Importantly, markets, technology and the natural availability of fish were changing rapidly, reshaping the commercial fishery on the cove. Cod had been in steep decline for many years, and there was little evidence of the large-scale cod fishery as it had existed on the cove in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While the cod fishery had moved far offshore to the remote banks and bars of the Atlantic, interviewees recall that this large-scale, long-distance fishery was beyond the range of most Otter Creek fishermen; still, cod sometimes could still be fished right at the mouth of the cove:

> I remember as a kid going out here just out by the point and catching codfish till your boat run up full. . .Hand line. . . out of a skiff. I mean, I'd just go down there and take the skiff and row out, you know, out beyond the bar out there (NW).

Despite the occasional availability of cod at the cove, the fishermen were forced to confront a steadily declining fishery, as stocks of cod became increasingly rare. As Bob Walls remembers from his youth,

> I was fortunate enough to go with my dad a few times to set all of the trawl, and I don't recall we caught many at that time. This would have been back in the early '60s or late '50s. So I wasn't very old when we went, but we set a few trawls and caught a few halibut. I've even gone hand lining off on a couple of spots where my dad used to fish [for cod]. He took us children hand lining cod. We filled a boat like that one day pretty much to the washboards with codfish, really nice, nice codfish, 20-pound codfish. A place called Cod Ledge just two or three miles. So I've seen just a little bit in my lifetime, but most of it's gone (RW).

Instead, a great deal of the Otter Creek fishery was turning to lobster in the mid-20th century, as the market for lobsters expanded and the availability of other marketable species – cod especially – continued to decline. Lobstering was productive along the Mount Desert Island shoreline, while a considerable amount of lobstering was also done inside the cove. In the winter, waves, weather and currents pushed lobstering into deeper waters, and lobster traps were often set well offshore. During the summer, the lobstermen placed their traps closer in, against the Mount Desert Island shoreline on the inside of the cove. Lobstering so close to shore, interviewees note required special skills and knowledge of the terrain, due to waves, currents, rocks and shoals on the exposed outer coast:

> [A]ll along them shores it's treacherous. That Otter Cliffs is a treacherous area there. And if you're in a boat looking at it, there's just narrow strips of

> stone, and I often wondered if they're going to crumble or not. Some of it did break down once a while back (RD).

A few deep holes in the inner cove are said to have been good places to find lobster, and men placed traps there into the late 20th century. "Even today [at the head of the cove is] really one of the better areas [for lobstering]" (GN). The Blackwoods Campground formerly had a sewage outfall dropping directly into Otter Creek cove and "That used to be the best fishing there! My dad said the lobster used to gather right in there" (RW). Over the decades, the distribution of lobster has changed in response to a variety of human and environmental pressures, requiring that Otter Creek fishermen were flexible and somewhat experimental in their choice of lobstering sites.[53] As Robert Davis summarizes it,

> We went all over the place, just to *survive* really, getting up and making a living at it. It was harder work than working for someone else, I can tell you that…Anyway, I kind of miss that lobstering, but [it's] a lot of work, more than people think (RD).

Only a small number of fishermen remained in the business full-time – men such as Harold Walls and Robert Davis, who became full-time lobstermen - while a growing number of Otter Creek residents – such as Norm Walls and Gerrald Norwood – were compelled to seek work in other domains, only lobstering in-between other obligations. Still, as markets expanded, there were a variety of options for Otter Creek fishermen wishing to sell their lobsters. Lobster smacks still visited the cove into the mid-20th century, gathering the men's catch in their recessed wells that were used to transport the lobsters to market:

> the "smacks" they called them—bigger boats used to come in and buy all their lobsters. They buy 'em right there… I can remember seeing a boat 30, 40 feet long, because the old lobster boat back in those days was 20 to 25 feet long (DS).

However, men increasingly sold their catch door-to-door, as well as to local lobster pounds catering to tourist and market sales. Most families had trucks and Bar Harbor was a short drive away by this point in time. Gerry Norwood recalls,

> when things were getting a little tight and I was fishing with my brother-in-law, I said, 'Why don't we sell 'em. Go uptown to Bar Harbor and sell 'em.' I had a regular route that I used to go to Bar Harbor and sell 'em. We would sell them five for a dollar (GN).[54]

Similarly, Bob Walls reported, "at that time I sold [lobster] house to house like when I first fished. Then at the end of it I was selling to Trenton Bridge Lobster Pound" (RW). Others sold to lobster pounds on Little Cranberry Island and elsewhere.

Despite the decline of cod, the waters in and around the cove were still very good for a number of other commercially viable fish species, and Otter Creek fishermen turned attention to these – haddock, halibut, flounder, and others. Though these fish all occurred in the Otter Creek cove area, they were present in very different habitats and required different fishing methods. Halibut was fished off the mouth of Otter Creek cove:

> just off of the mouth of the harbor here, I caught some halibut…I was trying to think of who I used to sell those halibut to. If I could, I would sell them to a restaurant. Get a better price. But, if not, then I'd sell them to one of the fish dealers, Rich, over in Bass Harbor (GN).

This area was also good for other fish and lobster under the right conditions. Meanwhile, the cove, itself, was said to be a popular and productive fishing area when conditions were right, for haddock and lobster:

> And always with the good fishing, you'd catch haddock right there in the rowboat. You know what I mean?...Yeah, codfish and all that stuff. And halibut came right up inside. And I always caught flounders there and some of the best lobster fishing…Right up in here [indicating all the way up in the cove]. Right in here. We caught, I think, five crabs. I had 16 keepers there one day...Good fishing (SS).

The cove was also fished for other species, such as alewives and menhaden, which were often fished at night using torches to attract them to the men's boats:

> I remember some of the fishermen telling about [how] they used to go out, and I think my grandfather did too, instead of just codfish they also was catching menhaden, you know, for the oil … Mike [Bracy] used to tell me about that his father and them would go out and they'd have a big soak rag that they'd have fired and do it at night because this would attract them in… this is the way they caught them. Dipped them, you know… I think they'd come up here in the summer more – the fish, those fish do, you know. They come with the season. They're never here in the wintertime (NW).

Some men used a "hand line" to catch flounders at high tide in the ocean just beyond the mouth of the cove, usually in August. These were said to be good, large flounders – sometimes 18 inches across. The shallow, interior waters of the cove were fished for flounder, which men sometimes speared by hand: "They would go up inside

and spear flounder" (DS). The cove's productivity as a flounder fishing site has declined in recent times:

> you could go up there with a spear and spear flounder. You could spear a bushel of them in an hour…And now you can't find a flounder there…I think that [flounder fishing] was just mostly for the village [not commercial] (GN).

A few Otter Creek residents still have old spears that were used for flounder fishing in the cove during this period – Denis Smith among them.

A small number of individuals ran modest charter fishing operations from the cove, though this was described as being relatively uncommon: "They used to go out and catch, you know, take someone – like Kenneth Tripp used to take a party out now and then, wanted to go out on a Sunday or something and they'd fish there" (NW).

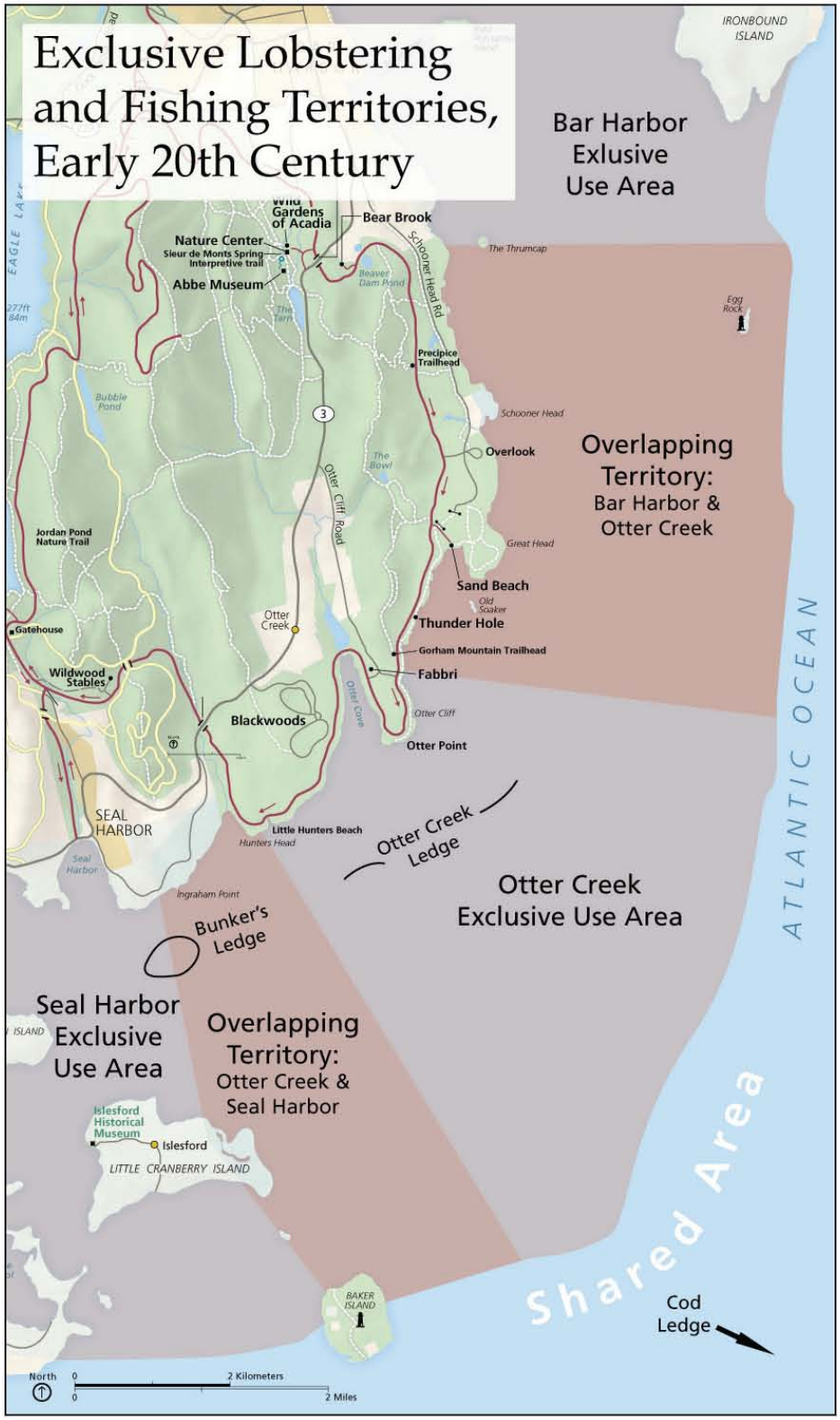
## Fishing Territories

A number of interviewees mentioned that the shoreline of Mount Desert Island has been subject to territorial claims by the different fishing communities: "There's lines… we could fish down so far without being in someone else's territory" (SC). Such territories served to provide predictable and productive locations for fishing harvests; they also appear to have fostered a more sustainable fishery in the aggregate, as different areas were overseen more-or-less exclusively by communities with a direct interest in long-term viability of localized fisheries (Acheson 2003, 1975a, 1975b).

Most interviewees reported some geographical pattern to the Otter Creek fishery that fit this overall pattern. For example, referring to his father, Bob Walls recalled,

> It seems like they might have had set areas that they fished… He'd fish off Otter Creek as far as I know to Seal Harbor. And he'd fish up to Schooner Head. In my growing up years he'd fish up as far as Schooner Head and offshore some (RW).

As is true in many parts of coastal Maine, these fishing territories had both exclusive use areas and places where communities' fishing territories overlapped on the margins (Acheson 1988, 1975b). While there were no formal, legal foundations for these territorial claims, they were enforced by fishermen through a variety of mechanisms, including the scuttling of gear placed within a territory by fishermen without rightful claims to that location:




Map 10: Fishing territories as they existed in the mid-20th century, based on the accounts of interviewees.

> It always has been that way, but now it's not as bad as it used to be. There's still certain areas that if you try [to fish they will cut your gear] you know, you can complain to the authorities and it doesn't do you any good. They've always done that. 'I don't care if they have or not, my license says that I can fish there.' Just keep trying. You don't keep trying because you can't afford to lose the trap (GN).

In the course of interviews for this study, Gerry Norwood provided the most detailed account of the extent of Otter Creek's fishing territories, as they existed in the mid-20th century. He outlined these territorial boundaries, based on both his personal observations as well as Otter Creek oral tradition:

> When I first started, we could go to [The] Thrumcap Island…It's up towards Bar Harbor. We fished from there to Bunker's Ledge. And that was our fishing area. That's when I started. And we could go offshore to a certain point. And much beyond that point the Bar Harbor guys took over…
>
> And then Otter Creek sort of controlled up to Bunker's Ledge on the other side. *Half* of Bunker's Ledge you could fish—the [eastern] side of Bunker's Ledge, but you couldn't fish the [western] side…Hunters Head down to Back Beach would be just Otter Creek (GN).

The accompanying map of approximate Otter Creek fishing territories reflects information provided by Gerry Norwood and other interviewed Otter Creek fishermen regarding the geographical scope of these territories in the mid-19th century, before they began to erode (Map 10).

Certainly, while the tradition of maintaining exclusive lobstering and fishing territories persists in other Maine fishing communities nearby, the exclusive territorial claims of Otter Creek have largely broken down. As Denis Smith reports,

> That's still going on today...People from a certain area having a certain territory, and you don't set traps there. [But not in Otter Creek anymore] because there's nobody fishing out of Otter Creek (DS).

The Otter Creek fishing and lobstering territory has been consumed within the larger territories of the Bar Harbor and Southwest Harbor fishermen. Gerry Norwood notes that "now, these Bar Harbor guys, these Southwest Harbor guys, they come in and fish this cove because that is a good spot in the summer" (GN). Similarly, Robert Davis reported of these outside fishermen,

> I don't think [they would have] come down into the Otter Creek area too much…years ago. Now they do, come from Southwest and Bar Harbor the

> whole way now… Chances are the older fishermen wouldn't put up with it. They'd probably, like they do today, cut people's traps and stuff. They did, if they got into their territory (RD).[55]

Asked when this tradition of specific fishing areas started to break down, Gerry Norwood said,

> I think it started in the '50s, late '50s. That's when it really started breaking down, and people were pushed a little further this way and little further that way. And as long as you didn't lose traps, they kept pushing a little further and a little further. They still are (GN).

Most cited the demise of the commercial fishing community operating out of Otter Creek as the primary cause of this change in territorial claims. Contributing to this trend, some mentioned the effects of general resource pressure on territorial redistribution: "[m]ore fishermen. Just more fishermen. They didn't have a place to set a trap" (GN). Clearly, the growing consolidation of the fishery, with larger boats and larger dockside facilities, also struck a formidable blow to the fortunes of the fishing community on this small and difficult cove. In light of the limited catch available to Mount Desert Island, and the strong economic incentives to spread beyond one's original home territory, some suggest that it would have been unthinkable for these Bar Harbor and Southwest Harbor fishermen to move into the largely "abandoned" exclusive fishing area of Otter Creek.

## Other Resources Obtained in Otter Creek Cove

In addition to the fish and lobster harvested from the cove, families gathered many other natural products there for both personal and commercial use. Shellfish were of particular interest. Marjorie Walls Cough recalled, "I've known a lot of clam diggers…a lot of people [in Otter Creek] dig them…I think it was pretty constant [over the years]" (MC). Clams are said to be elusive except at exceptionally low tides. In addition to these clam digging traditions, which are largely discussed earlier in this report, families gathered quantities of mussels in the Otter Creek cove (Smythe 2008). They gathered mussels were for food but also for fish bait – mussels being appropriate bait for haddock and other fish. As Bob Walls recalls,

> My dad writes about the fishermen going out collecting mussels to go trawling. They'd get those wherever they could, and I'm sure most of them came from the cove. So they'd take them out of the cove…[and in the fish house, they'd] shell the mussels out, bait the trawl (RW).

Some report that the use of mussels for food was relatively uncommon, and usually undertaken only on occasion. Denis Smith recalls that "mussel raking" was "fairly common" but only for bait:

> A number of people would go down in there clamming, not so much musseling, raking. My father took me down there one time [to dig] clams. And I said, 'Well look at all the mussels!' 'Aye,' he said, 'You don't want those mussels. They're not good for anything' (DS).

Mussel shells can still be found in association with former fish house sites on the cove. Some families report gathering mussels in Otter Creek cove in recent years for personal use. The eastern side of the cove was said to have been historically popular for the gathering of both clams and mussels. Still, this was not an entirely simple or safe process: Harold Walls reported that a number of "sinkholes" were to be found on the tidal flats on the east side of the cove, where the mud was soft and would give way underfoot as people dug for clams (RW).

Other shellfish were gathered in the cove, or from the cove, but this practice was reportedly not as common as clam and mussel gathering. Caroline Smith recalls gathering a diverse range of shellfish on the cove with her family during her childhood:

> I remember going down there when I was little, like getting crabs off the shore, see if you can get them out of the shore at low tide and pick 'em out of the seaweed. And I've been clamming, picked mussels, shucked scallops (CS).

A number of men recalled freshwater fishing in the brooks entering the cove, principally Main Brook. Trout was especially popular. As Bob Walls recalls,

> I remember catching trout out of there. I never had much luck, but my dad would always take us as kids and go over on to that west side…over on the boulders there in the deepest part of the water, and he'd say, 'Just cast your worm out and let it sit on the bottom. When you see your line straighten out, you know you got one.' And that's how he fished with his mother, and just throw what he called a glob of worms out on the mud…. Always trout there. But I remember catching some eight and ten inchers out of there. That's the biggest that I've ever caught. But I've gone into the brook there in the fall with my dad about this time of the year [fall], maybe a little later, and they'd be spawning in there…That's where I grew up, in that brook [Main Brook]. That's all I did. I didn't play baseball or football when I was a kid. I went fishing…I spent an awful lot of hours fishing in the Main Brook from what we always called the 'Deep Hole' down to the Otter Cove, right where it went into the ocean…Sometimes I fished further up on the mouth onto the side

> of what we used to call Dry Mountain Cadillac, but I never found the fishing that great up there (RW).

Some residents also fished for smelt in Main Brook when these fish were running. Walking along and over this brook frequently en route to the fish houses on the eastern shore, a number of the men in the community would know precisely when the fish were there.

Hunting was also popular along the shore of Otter Creek cove – a practice that was in steady decline in the mid-20th century as the park consolidated management of this area. Men often traveled the shoreline by foot, or in a punt, hunting for waterfowl: "We'd always walk around the shore bird hunting" (RD). Men also hunted eider ducks directly from their fish houses, and old shotgun shell fragments can still be found at some of the former fish house sites where this was practiced. Men participating in other types of hunting along the waterfront historically, including deer and occasionally moose hunting; this large game hunting largely disappeared concurrent with the arrival of park management along the shoreline.




Figure 16: A postcard image of lobstermen at Otter Creek from the immediate post-War era. In this image, wooden traps are being transported by punt to fishing sites in the cove – a type of small-scale fishing that was rapidly disappearing along the Maine coast during this period but persisted at Otter Creek. Image courtesy of Karen Zimmerman.

Plant gathering was once an important activity along the Otter Creek shoreline, providing both food and recreation. In particular, berry picking used to be an important recreational activity along the Otter Creek waterfront: "I used to know where every berry bush was!" (SS). Especially during lean times, these berries augmented families' diets in important ways. Changes in shoreline vegetation in recent times have eclipsed a lot of this activity. Other plant foods were also reportedly gathered at the cove: "I remember picking goose grass and eating it down there" (DS). More information on plant gathering might be obtainable in the course of spring- and summertime field visits with longtime Otter Creek residents.

By the mid-20th century, a few other resources were gathered on or near the waterfront, but in minute quantities. Firewood cutting had long been part of the local economy, as well as a principal source of home heating. By the mid-20th century, people still cut firewood in Otter Creek, almost always outside of the park, largely for personal use or for very small-scale commercial sale to island residents and visitors. Some individuals reported the gathering of seashells as well. Sand dollars are said to wash in at Otter Creek under certain conditions; local kids have gone to the cove to gather them – most for personal use, though some have sold these shells to tourist shops in times past. These were especially easy to find on the beach along the Causeway, which also became a social gathering spot for young people in the late-20th century.[56]

## The Practicalities of Mid-Century Fishing in Otter Creek

Most of the fishermen who operated out of Otter Creek during the mid-20th century were, by definition, small-scale fishermen, using small boats and often working on other trades in the off-season. "The tradition here [was] for a lot of the small time fishermen [to be] farmer-fishermen—they were farmers plus fishermen." Men from the big port towns were transitioning to large, technologically sophisticated boats "and would go up around Labrador and stuff" while Otter Creek fishermen, lacking docks or other facilities, continued to operate small boats used primarily for local waters (SC). Many of the men who worked here were "punt fishermen," operating very small boats, pulling their traps by hand, and commonly operating without motors. Bob Walls recalls that his father was one of the few men who used a boat motor in the final years of commercial fishing on the cove: "in 1961, which was when my dad got out of lobstering, he had been the only person fishing with a motorboat out of Otter Cove for a few years" (RW). These were small-scale operations, utilizing technologies and scales of operation that were

ostensibly from an earlier era: "the old fishermen didn't have to have five or six hundred traps. Basically if they had a hundred traps, they made their living off of that" (NW). It was a challenging but rewarding life, by most accounts, even if the fishermen took considerable risks and operated on narrow economic margins.[57]

In the early 1950s, "that little cove down there was full of boats. There must have been, I would say, 20 boats in there… they had their moorings and everything right there in the cove" (NW). During the mid-20th century, a number of men still fished regularly from the cove and owned or shared fish houses. They included (but were not limited to) Virgil Dorr, Ansel Davis, Kenneth Tripp, Chester Walls, Harold Walls, Austin Walls, Roland Tripp, Hillard Walls, and Gerry Norwood (GN). Only a small portion of these men fished clear through the year – most notably Harold Walls. A few others carried on as "part timers," carrying on a family tradition of fishing in-between a variety of other work obligations.[58] The fish houses and other technologies used by these men have already been given considerable attention in other documents, particularly the work of Chuck Smythe (2008) and are only summarized briefly here. Readers interested in more detail on fish house structures are encouraged to consult this earlier report.

Many interviewees recalled seeing fish houses and other structures related to fishing on the west shore of Otter Creek cove in the mid-20th century. Through the 1960s, "there were the fish houses on both sides" (PR). As Bob Walls recalls,

> when I was young there were a couple more fish houses over there… Apparently, there were several bait houses over on that west side…[and] docks that were there…when I was a kid, there were three or four buildings over there, so I'm assuming that there were probably more before my time (RW).

Similarly, Paul Richardson recalls that a number of boat slips were maintained on the west side of Otter Creek cove during the same period: "there were quite a few landslips there…there wasn't just one or two" (PR). It was commonly said of the west cove fish houses that, "There weren't as many or they weren't as good" (PR).

The west shore was still being used for fishing in the late 1940s and early 1950s, it use perhaps buoyed a little by displacement from east cove fish houses in World War II. The old fishermen "hung out a lot here, earning their living and getting their food" during this period (SS). Men who had fish houses on the west side of the cove were said to have included (but were not limited to) John Walls, Austin Walls, Charlie Turnbull, Rodney and/or Johnny Smith, and Virgil Dorr. A few fishermen were said to have operated on both sides of the cove, such as Virgil Dorr, who for a time had a fish house on the west

side of the cove but moored his boat on the east side (RW). Family appear to have had ties over multiple generations to fish houses on either side of the cove, but the a number of disruptions – from Rockefeller, the WPA, military use of the eastern cove, and others – had caused repeated moves between fish houses through the preceding decades.

While there were still signs of activity on the west shore, however, the east shore fish houses were the final center of significant commercial fishing activity during this period. As Norm Walls recalls,

> the little round turn [on Fishermen's Lane], the parking area came down, you know, and went right around that. And there was – the Richardsons up here had a fish house there, Chet Walls and Harold Walls, Shirley Bracy, Mike Bracy, Lance Davis, Kenneth Tripp…Those were all lined up around that little parking area there (NW).

Many Otter Creek families have ties to this last enclave of fishermen. As Paul Richardson notes, "You know, Chet Walls, he had an upstairs in one… Shirley Bracey had one there. Harold had one there. My dad when he bought lobsters had a little shack to store all his bait in there" (PR).

A number of men maintained slips in front of their fish houses, picking stones out of the way so that boats could be smoothly landed there. Some fishermen, such as Harold Walls, placed cedar poles on the ground on these slips - placed at certain intervals, perpendicular to the slope – so that underlying rocks would not damage the punts. These crossbeams can still be found occasionally, buried below the rocks that have accumulated in the former slips. Until recently, Robert Davis continued to maintain some of these Otter Creek slips when he fished from the cove. A few, such as the Harold Walls slip, have been occasionally looked after by family and friends since Harold's passing, as a gesture of respect and commemoration.

In addition to fish houses and boat slips, fishermen maintained pilings with running lines, to which they tied their punts. While some of these running lines were said to be on the west side of the cove, most were said to be on the east side.[59] Each fisherman had their own running line: "God knows, you…didn't use somebody else's line" (PR). Fishermen also placed moorings underwater in the cove, to keep boats safely anchored there:

> [they] used to have about a two-ton rock with a big staple in it and got a bottom chain, which was the big heavy chain like that, and then you had a top chain that come out and you tied your boat with a chain instead of ropes. Nobody trusted ropes back in those days (NW).

To overcome the difficulties of hauling fish, lobsters and gear, a number of fishermen had developed innovative technological solutions. Beside his fish house, Harold Walls and his brother-in-law Kenneth Tripp designed and built a lobster car that rolled on wheels so that lobsters could be unloaded in the water and then pulled in the car to dry land beside his fish house (Figure 18). The car was pulled with a cable that was attached to a pulley, following tracks that rose from their submerged base downslope to a landing on the shore. Bob Walls remembers the family using that lobster car as part of their fishing operation on the cove:

> That lobster car, I remember we built it when I was very small, and it held 600 pounds of lobster. One night we had a huge, torrential flood and my dad had the lobster car full of lobsters and they all drowned. It was a devastating day or two for my folks because they were relying on that for a winter's money (RW).[60]



Figure 17: A view of the outer cove in the late 1960s or early 1970s, showing punts tied to pilings on running lines at the east cove fish house slips. Photo courtesy Northeast Harbor Library.

Meanwhile, as noted elsewhere, the beaches around the fish houses were used as work spaces, storage areas, and social gathering sites. When the rocky areas around the fish houses did not provide sufficient space or access, men often used adjacent beaches for work purposes. The Causeway had caused the accumulation of sediments to considerably expand an existing beach in the northeastern corner of the cove. This new beach along the Causeway was a popular haul-out point for some fishermen:

> When boats needed repairs or a part. . .they would bring the boats in at high tide and brace them on the beach [outside the Causeway]. . .they would work on it at low tide and then the boat would be ready to launch when the tide came back in (RW).[61]



Figure 18: The fish houses on the eastern shore in the early 1960s. Harold Walls' lobster car and its track can be clearly seen extending into the subtidal portion of the cove. Photo courtesy Acadia National Park.

Meanwhile, families began to largely abandon the inner cove for their commercial fishing operations, in light of the difficulties and dangers of navigating under the Causeway. One could only pass under the Causeway at certain stages of the low tide, and only with small boats. As Robert Walls recalls,

> There was a few boats way up at the edge of the creek [on the inner cove], but that was almost a thing of the past. After they built the causeway, that was it, you know...[I]n 1939 they built the causeway. . .You can go under the bridge, but you got to catch the tide just right. You could [go] in there pretty good, even with it coming out, but coming back out it's dangerous, because you have the curve a little. . .But there was just a few fishing part-time in and out of there, different ones (RD).

Instead, the fish houses became the center of almost all remaining commercial fishing activities on the cove.

As the scale and technological complexity of commercial fishing boats grew in the post-War period, the small fish houses on the cove were being used for relatively small tasks associated with an earlier, even "pre-industrial" era of commercial fishing: "At Otter Creek…[the fish houses would] be more of a trap shop, and you'd go there and build your traps"(SC). Unused fish houses were eagerly converted to these types of uses in support of the remaining commercial fishery:

> My dad always talked about a carpenter's shop there. I think that that was a carpenter's shop. They built traps and all pieces of boat, anything they needed in relation to the fishing industry. Pieces of boat and anything (RW).

Some families kept gear at their fish houses, or unused fish houses nearby, but during this period many "kept all that stuff at home" (NW). This transition to storing gear at home reflected a response to several factors, including automotive access to the eastern shore, the limited work space along the waterfront, the growing potential for vandalism and theft, and a variety of other concerns (NW).

The Town of Bar Harbor continued to manage and care for the waterfront in a manner that, for many fishermen, illustrated the enduring importance of the traditional fishery on the cove:

> after the storm, you saw the boats tossed up there [around the east cove fish houses]. I remember going down there as a young person seeing …the waves tossed up and filled that parking area so full that you couldn't begin to drive down there. And who came to clean it out? The Town of Bar Harbor. The park didn't have anything to do with it. Back years ago, you see, there was a time there then where the town of Bar Harbor, you might say, policed it and took care of the area. And then the park somehow, it'd be interesting to know what took place there at that time, who decided, 'Am I to go down there and clean it out or is the park to do it or—?'… It would have been late fifties… So sometimes when my father had lobsters stolen he'd call the police (RW).

Even as Otter Creek's fishery shrank, and other communities' wharves became the center of commercial fishing, the town government of Bar Harbor appears to have devoted resources to the protection of this little cove and its inhabitants – probably not due to its economic importance, but perhaps due to local legal conventions and the broader social importance of this traditional fishery for the residents of Mount Desert Island.

## Families' Use of Otter Creek Cove

From their homes in Otter Creek, women and children would see men's boats returning and know that it was time to mobilize – preparing food or going to the fish house to assist with the catch. Bob Walls recalls times when he and his mother waited for his father, Harold Walls, to pull his boat into the cove, which they could see from their home off of Route 3:

> Back when I was a kid you could see the cove, and my mother would watch. And because I had the shore radio, as I called it, she could actually see my dad come up from around the Eastern Point and head into the mooring. And so she would get dinner ready at 3:30 or 4:00 in the afternoon. And she'd have it on the table waiting for him when he came home (RW).




Figure 19: The view from the town of Otter Creek in the late 19th century. The cleared farmlands allowed for unimpeded views from the settlement along modern-day Route 3 across the cove to the open Atlantic – a view that is elusive today, to the dismay of some Otter Creek residents. The pilings from one of the wooden bridges that spanned Otter Creek cove can be seen in the background, along with no fewer than seven fish houses on the eastern shore. Houses from the Bar Harbor side of town are visible on the hill, while a small schooner, suspended by a low tide, lists to one side at "An's Wharf" below. Other boats can be seen beyond the Otter Creek bar. Photo courtesy Northeast Harbor Library.

Similarly, informal interviewee, Wilda Higgins, who lived in the town from roughly 1920 through 1937, remembered that her family could "see the water pretty well from

the town and could see the boats coming and going." This view of the waterfront has been largely lost in the years since park creation with the regrowth of forest on formerly cleared lands, some suggest, adding to the community's sense of growing disconnection from the waterfront. Poplar and other deciduous trees can still be seen as conspicuous discontinuities in the conifer forest around Otter Creek cove, where farms were once located.

Men were not the only ones to work on the Otter Creek waterfront. Women also had roles there – being minor but persistent characters in Otter Creek cove economic life, whose roles changed with the times. During the Great Depression, women's roles had expanded slightly - some assisting with clam digging and other activities. By mid-century, a few women helped with nets and bait, though their most important roles were said to be at home, where they prepared food, clothing, and other items - often rising very early to prepare these things in anticipation of the men's fishing trips:

> one thing I remember most about my mom helping out would be just helping him with his lunch box, getting ready to go in the morning, 3:30 in the morning. In the winter time, knitting these gloves or whatever, of wool. She'd do that and generally help out around the house. She'd help with things: bait bags and that kind of stuff around the house. But I don't recall that she *went* to the shore that much…. [She might help] baiting traps or whatnot, just that kind of a life. Everything revolved around trying to make a living (RW).

A number of individuals mentioned that women knitted mittens regularly to support the fishing effort. As Norm Walls recalls,

> the women used to knit mittens, the big white mittens [with] wool that they would have. And men would go out fishing with those and the first thing they would do was dip them in the salt water with their hands and then put them –you had your exhaust pipe. It usually came up through your cabin to help warm up things a little bit, and they'd put their hands around that, and that would shrink that wool so that [they would be almost waterproof] (NW).

In more recent times, Robert Davis has recruited young women to work on his fishing boat out of Otter Creek and other communities, noting that "they're good workers and good to look at" (RD).

Children were also actively involved with fishing in a variety of ways. Children often came along and participate in small ways within commercial and subsistence fishing. As Gerry Norwood recalls,

> My kids used to go down and fish off the boats once in a while. And nobody cared. Back then the kids would go down there and grab a skiff and row out and sat on one of the boats and fished. As long as they cleaned it up, everything was fine. They could even take bait out of the bait rail along the boat and fish with it. So, nobody cared. A different generation (GN).

For some children, the cove provided other kinds of opportunities, including education about maritime skills. The local Sea Scouts chapter – a Boy Scout group with an emphasis on maritime skills – used the cove for such purposes. For example, the Otter Creek Sea Scouts constructed and launched a rowboat on the cove:

> We sanded it, we painted it, and all that stuff. And launched it…Yeah, we launched a little rowboat there down in the landing, and we took the letters out of the names, put them in a hat, and picked out six of them or something like that, scrambled them all up, and came up with the name of the boat which was the *Ocamoa*. And we figured that means, "Otter Creek Aid and Monitor Ocean Activities (SS).



Figure 20: A fish house on the eastern shore, in the early 1960s. This is the house reported to have been formerly occupied by Chester Walls and his family. Lobster traps and a small 'punt' boat – essential gear for all the lobstermen operating on this cove – were commonly kept at these structures. Photo courtesy Robert Walls.

Other children went to the cove primarily to swim and fish recreationally, "wading in the water and playing."

A small number of families still lived in houses along the waterfront, including in the upper levels of fish houses, insuring that entire extended families were on the waterfront at most times, living upstairs while assisting with fishing tasks when downstairs in their homes. As Norm Walls remembers, Chester Walls was one of the last fishermen to live in this manner:

> some of those houses as I say were family houses that people had lived in them. One house was in particular, Chester Walls and his outfit, and it had the triangle windows, little small, and the door and everything in it, you know. And it was just a little – it was small, probably a two-room house but it had an upstairs to it (NW).

By the late 1950s, there were no longer families living on the Otter Creek waterfront in this manner.

## Difficulties and Displacement

By the 1960s and early 1970s, full-time fishermen were rapidly disappearing from Otter Creek's waterfront. The reasons for the almost complete disappearance of the commercial fishermen were complex. Indeed, no one issue is consistently said to have been the sole cause of their displacement. Rather, interviewees describe a situation where numerous factors – such as an unforgiving harbor, the logistical requirements of modern boats and fishing, changing economic trends, the construction of the Causeway, and park policies relating to waterfront access – together conspired to bring an end to roughly 130 years of commercial fishing history on Otter Creek's waterfront.

Most interviewees discussed the difficulty of fishing from Otter Creek, noting that – in general - "it was not a nice harbor" (PR). They often discussed the effects of Otter Creek cove's unique geography on the mid-century fishery, and cited these effects as a contributing factor to the demise of that fishery by the late 20th century. Most interviewees who spoke of navigational matters mentioned the shallow bar at the mouth of Otter Creek cove. The channel had never been easy to navigate, and it had become more difficult with time due to changes in sedimentation associated with the Causeway. A clear channel can be found by putting one's boat on a course that lines up between "the Falls" below the Causeway and the big white rock at the cove known locally as "Flower Cove." To get around this bar, fishermen have to pull close to shore on the east side of the cove near Flower Cove. As Norm Walls explains, "over on the far side what they used to call Flower

Cove, there's a place that you come in by at low tide without hitting your boats on, you know" (NW). Once at Flower Cove, a boat must pull close against the eastern shore of the cove until past the bar. As Bob Walls explains,

> I know going from the moorings out into opening of the head of the cove there's was what my father always called a natural channel. And if you were to row out there on a low tide, a calm, you could see these boulders east and west of this channel, and I can remember the exact route we would take to get out of there in a boat today. You get out there to a certain point where you could see this boulder in the mouth of Flower Cove. It's a cove and they call it Flower Cove. And you have to [line up with] Flower Cove with this boulder. And then you cut directly to the left, up to the east, to get out of this channel, striking boulders. And that's how my dad did it every day of his life…It'd be on the eastern side of the bar…It's no deeper from here to the end of the house. But just little rocks in it like this, a little cove area, a beach area...No idea why it was called Flower Cove. Flower Cove is directly on the eastern end of the bar (RW).

This bar was so dangerous and unpredictable that men often gathered to assess the condition during marginal weather: "They would stand out there by the fish houses… talking about it" (NW). The challenging bar was a significant obstacle to continued commercial operations, limiting access to outsiders who did not know how to navigate the cove: "a lot of people didn't want to come in there. The fish smacks that came in to buy lobsters, oh god, they hated to come in there" (PR).

The tremendous wave energy in the cove, often arising from swells in the open Atlantic, was among the reasons why there were no permanent docks or piers at Otter Creek.[62] As Tom Richardson lamented about the challenges for fishermen operating out of Otter Creek cove:

> It's a terrible harbor for a boat. It's got a big sand bar halfway all through it and there's only one small area to get out around it, so to speak. It's not protected. It's directly open to the Atlantic Ocean, unlike all the other harbors in the town. And even Bar Harbor, you know, they've got protection. But we're right facing east, where the storms come from, right out of the east. Which, again, there's very little about that cove that today is manageable for any kind of an industry, for fishing or anything else. It's just not a good place (TR).

Waves have ripped out moorings and fish houses, torn sails and rigging on boats moored in the cove, or even tossed boats high on the shoreline. Even the Walls family lobster car sustained considerable damage.[63] After hurricanes, the landing around the fish houses on the east cove was said to look "like one big rock beach" strewn with stones

(RW). At these times, boats were usually in need of repair, and fishermen and their families traditionally walked the shoreline, looking for lost gear and traps. The time and cost of repairing gear and facilities was a significant drag on fishermen's limited resources – a single storm could simply "wipe them out."[64] While fishermen employed a number of innovations to try to minimize the effects of these storms, little could be done to resist the force of the surf in this cove – a point made by many interviewees.[65] When asked if there might ever be a wharf on the waterfront in the future, most concurred that "I don't think so, just because it's just so wild down there" (DS).



Figure 21: Breakers entering Otter Creek cove on a typical autumn stormy day. Breakers often roll into this cove from the open Atlantic, which has caused considerable damage to boats, fish houses, and fishing gear over the decades, in addition to damaging or destroying wooden bridges that once spanned the cove. D. Deur photo.

Interviewees suggested that the construction of the Causeway changed these circumstances. The outer cove arguably became even more dangerous during storms due to complex wave shoaling, reflection and refraction as well as rip currents, while the inner cove became much better protected but less accessible. During hurricanes, fishermen often hauled smaller boats into the inner cove for protection. A number of boats were saved this way.

The inability to develop a dock or other infrastructure due to both environmental and access challenges meant that the waterfront was uniquely inconvenient for access. Meanwhile, the commercial fishing industry was changing, and increasingly required such

facilities to accommodate larger boats, needed to access more remote fishing sites, carry large hauls, and house all of the modern navigation, safety and electronics gear required of modern vessels:

> But then things changed a lot. You fished more gear. You couldn't make a living with a small amount of gear. . .You could get further offshore and chase the lobsters further. . .they wanted to fish longer in the season and fish in the winter some. And you had to have a decent boat (SC).

Otter Creek, with its exposed rugged coastline and its limited access, was poorly suited to this new era in commercial fishing. Norm Walls observed,

> it was such a hard harbor to work out of because you had to row everything out to your boat, lug it down, and you know most of the fishermen moved out of there and went to a place where they could come tie up to a pier. All your lobster traps, you had to lug two or three down and put them in a punt and row them out to your boat (NW).

Similarly, Donald Walls notes,

> It took hours and hours to get bait and fuel and supplies down across the beach and to the boat and whatnot, whereas the people that fish from wharfs and any place like Southwest Harbor had a lot of that done for them. Particularly today it's done for – a lot of it is done for them. The fishermen today don't have a clue what it was like (DW).[66]

Only a few Otter Creek fishermen, such as Bill Carter, attempted to adapt to the demand for larger boats in the mid-20th century with mixed success. Simultaneously, the presence of a growing number of pleasure craft around Mount Desert Island made navigation even more difficult than it had been historically.[67]

Most of those men who wished to continue fishing at a commercial scale chose to move to nearby harbors, such as Seal Harbor or Southwest Harbor, in order to have access to such facilities. They did so in the final decades of the 20th century. Robert Davis was one of them:

> I moved to Seal Harbor. . .it made it a lot easier. You had the bathrooms, so. And lugging the stuff, you didn't have to drag it up and down like you did down in [Otter Creek cove]. You could keep your tender right there without having it on a running line. You had it on a running line, sometimes they'd get snarled up on you, quite a job to get that free (RD).[68]

As the industry moved toward the use of larger boats, the commercial fishermen of Otter Creek resisted the change. As some of them got older and retired, they "would keep their hand in by going out in a punt from their fish house" (NW). However, this final generation of full-time (or nearly-full time) fishermen was not replaced by the succeeding generation: "the old timers may have continued but the younger people didn't pick it up" (PR).

This was, by all accounts, grueling, difficult, and low-paying work. The fact that it was increasingly becoming "capital intensive" was not encouraging. For some time, families had been making a transition away from fishing based on these sorts of considerations:

> my grandfather and Lance Davis fished out of a sloop down out of this cove…I was down there and [Lance] was telling me, he said, "you know, your grandfather, Greely Walls, came to me one day and he says, you know, we can fish all of our lives right here and we'd never be any different when we die. We won't gain anything or nothing," so he says "I'm going to get out of it." So Lance Davis fished right up to the day, basically the day he died. But he told me he says, "you know, Greely was right." So he – my grandfather started a florist business up here in town (NW).

It was within this challenging context that park policy restricting the use of fish houses, and calling for their removal, first appeared. While fishing had long been in decline, some attribute the final disappearance of commercial fishing to park policy, especially the regulation and permitting of fish house uses. It is viewed, in many respects, as "the last straw," a decisive final blow that made even small-scale commercial and subsistence fishing untenable.

The effects of park policy regarding fish houses were perhaps felt first on the western shore, where complex variables conspired to dislodge the fishermen operating there.

Certainly, the eastern shore of the cove was sometimes described as being more desirable, owing to the larger amount of flat land available there for shacks and other uses, better sunlight, and slightly greater protection from swells from the open Atlantic. Access had always been difficult on the western shore too, with its steep slopes and poor road access:

> for someone to go to the shore over here, hell, the only way they could do it was walk down through the ledges or go down to the shore if the tide were right and row out… it was such a hard job to get down and get up over that bank (PR).

Residents mention that a number of steep trails accessed these fish houses, sometimes cut across the grade of the bank or zigzagging down the slope with switchbacks.

The park was also reportedly discouraging the use of west shore fish houses in favor of those on the east shore. As Robert Davis recalls of that time, "I had a fish house on the west side, Otter Creek side, first. And then the park wanted me to go over so they keep them all in one cluster" (RD). The one-way traffic and the lack of parking on the western shore was also described as an inconvenience, making access to and from these fish houses difficult even at the best of times. Again, quoting Robert Davis,

> what messed up over there mainly, they made it one-way traffic. So you had to go all the way around the route from [Otter Creek]. . .In my time I lived in Otter Creek, the old fishermen had no road they went down to. You could walk it because it was only a short ways to the shore. I suppose they had horse and buggies back before my time...Only thing [the park has done] that's bothered [the fishing out of Otter Cove] is on the west side there's one-way traffic, of course. . .the Otter Creek side, they made it one-way traffic, messed up everything about having fish houses there. And most of them were like mine, squatter's rights on them anyway (RD).

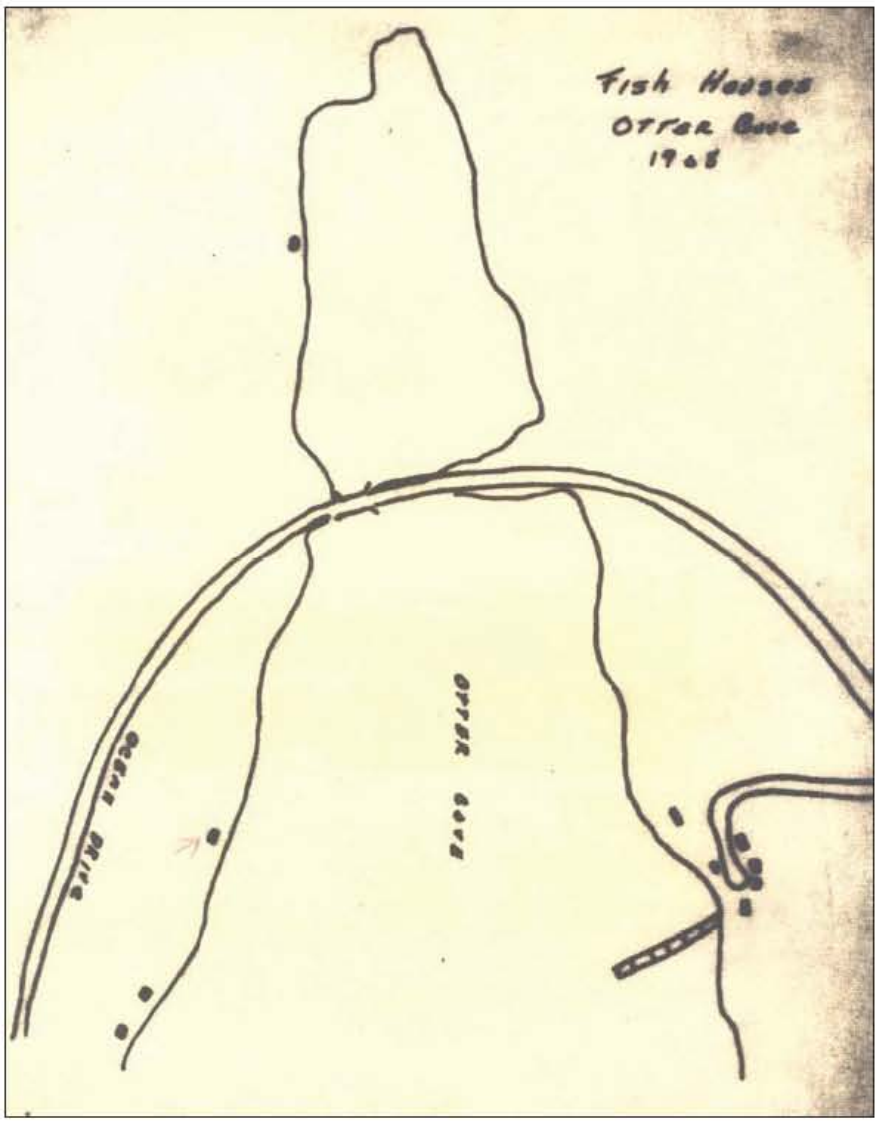
Together, these factors provided strong incentives to relocate away from the west shore during the 1950, 1960s, and 1970s, even when they were closer to some of the fishermen's homes. "A lot of guys transferred over to the east side, because it was easier over there" (SS). "You know, they kept fishing there out of that [east] side, see?...there were very few fishing on that other side at the end of it" (PR).

By the late 20th century, "there was only one place that there was ever any fish shacks, and that was on the Bar Harbor side" (RI). Still, there were a number of running lines for small boats that were maintained on the west shore into the 1970s:

> that side was used for running lines. . .we had one on that side when I was a boy. . . we had a running line out there, so we had a mooring block and we had a line that ran out to it. That's where we kept our tender (KD).

Through the late 20th century, these west side fish houses increasingly were in a state of disrepair due to the general decline of fishing, access challenges, and the move to east side fish houses: "they began to deteriorate there was nobody using them" (PR). Otter Creek residents allude to some of these structures being demolished and removed by NPS staff during by the 1960s – a trend generally confirmed by park files (Acadia National Park n.d.).

Some interviewees noted what they felt was a dramatic increase in the park's efforts to remove abandoned fish houses and associated materials along the shoreline generally in the very early 1960s, as the remaining fishermen became concentrated exclusively on the eastern shore. The last fishermen holding on along the eastern shore of Otter Creek, such as Harold Walls, Chester Walls, and Mike Bracy, were said to frequently disagree with the park over access issues, even if they were not men inclined to vocalize or seek out conflict. In time, interviewees felt that park policy transformed and, without




Map 11: A map of the Otter Creek fish houses as they existed in 1968 from Acadia National Park files. A total of ten fish houses were shown along the cove at this date, including Austin Walls' fish house on the inner cove, three fish houses on the west shore, and six on the east shore accessible via Fishermen's Lane. Harold Walls' lobster car track is indicated extending into the water on the eastern shore. Map courtesy Acadia National Park (n.d.)

much warning, even occupied east shore fish houses were increasingly being targeted for removal in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There are various accounts, few of them offered "on the record" in this study, of park staff demolishing fish houses at odd hours, when the fishermen were away. During this period, park staff tore down one of the last fish houses, an occupied structure belonging to Mike Bracy. According to oral history accounts from Otter Creek residents, the park's right to destroy the fish house was challenged. The park then offered to rebuild it. Mike Bracy refused, perhaps as a matter of principle, and perhaps to distance himself from an uncertain future on Otter Creek cove:

> the park went in and tore it down. . .unbeknownst to [Mike Bracy], and then they went back and rebuilt it for him. And he said – afterwards he said, nope, he guessed he wouldn't have anything to do with that and he moved out and he took the fish house with him. . . at the same time down in Schoodic that way, they did the same – the park did the same thing. . .I said, "you guys made a mistake when you tore down Mike Bracey's fish house down there." I said, "you had to build a new one" and I said, "I'm not sure a hundred percent sure that the Park is right on this (NW).

There are accounts of additional fish houses that had to be rebuilt at this time, but interviewees agree that most demolished fish houses were never replaced, being abandoned before, or during, the time of this park action. As Denis Smith suggests

> [The park] worked real hard in trying to keep people from using it at all. There's no question about it. . . They tore down all the fish houses. . .They didn't have to build them all back, because some of them nobody was using (DS).

In light of the community's view that they had a "handshake deal" with Rockefeller regarding east shore access, and that they had abandoned the inner cove and west shore in response to perceived pressure from Rockefeller and the early park management, these fishermen felt betrayed. As Norm Walls remembers, "they said, "I stood right here, John D. Rockefeller told us that this is [okay]," you know" (NW).[69]

Concurrent with the policy of fish house removal, the park also instituted a policy that allowed the remaining fishermen with working from the Otter Creek shoreline to continue using their fish houses, provided that they acquired a park special permit and pay a fee to do so. In addition to being seen as objectionably intrusive into what had been an independent fishery, some suggest that the cost of the park permit was seen as a challenge by some fishermen, who were already living close to their financial margin. As Norm Walls recalls,

> they had to pay…Like a permit, a land-use thing. And most of these guys said it wasn't worth it, you know… anybody that stayed fishing moved away or gave it up. They was mostly old timers by then. There was very few – in fact there was no young people in it at that time (NW).

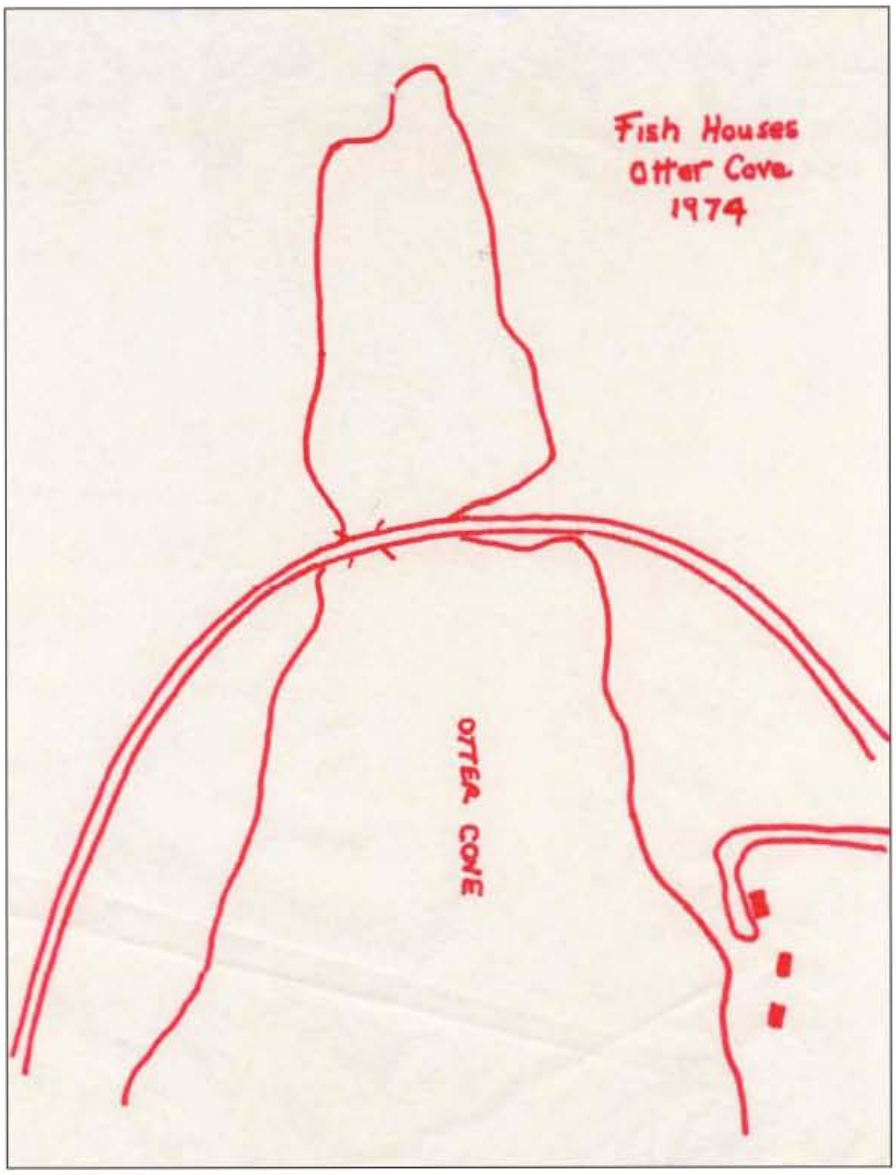
This new policy also was said to have compounded existing tensions with the park. "The understanding [was] that it was ours. Why do we have to pay for something that's ours?"(RO). Only a few men – Harold and Robert Walls, Ellwood Bracy, Robert Davis, and a few others – continued to obtain "special use permits" through the late 1970s and into the early 1980s, allowing them to continue using the Otter Creek waterfront to fish.

When Harold Walls – apparently the last full-time commercial fisherman to work the Otter Creek shoreline – announced that he was going to retire from fishing, park staff informed him that they would remove his fish house. After some consideration, Walls agreed to remove his fish house on his own, but would not allow the park staff to do so:

> We actually tore [my dad's fish house] down. The park wanted to clean this area up, and they were going to tear it down. My father said, 'No, you're not going to tear it down. We'll tear it down.' [He didn't want the park to tear it down because of] his pride (RW).

As Bob Walls recalls, Harold's decision to discontinue commercial fishing was not made lightly:

> I mean my dad fished because he loved fishing. There got to be a point in 1961 and '62 that he just decided that he could no longer make a living doing it…he had always done some gardening work and woodwork for the Rockefellers. He just had this opportunity in the early '60s to get into caretaking full time, and he just up and decided that this was the time to sell his boat and get out of it for the sake of the family, I guess. He was getting older…but he loved it, and it was a very difficult thing for him. Fishing was difficult, especially in Otter Cove…Everything had to be lugged down the beach—the traps and boat and parts—and everything had to be lugged back…He just spent every living, waking hour down working, salting. He'd come back, and back he'd go with a truckload of bait and salting it, and just getting ready for the next day. He loved it. There was work and I think as he got older he just found he wasn't able to do it. He had to provide for the family (RW).




Map 12: A map of the Otter Creek fish houses as they existed in 1974 files from Acadia National Park files. A total of three fish houses are shown on the cove, all on the eastern shore. Oral history suggests that the park had been actively removing fish houses during the late 1960s and early 1970s, which may explain the apparent loss of seven fish houses (or 70% of the cove's total) in the intervening six years. While some structures were removed, others (such as the Austin Walls fish house) were reported to have still been on the cove but in derelict condition. As such, this map might only represent those fish houses that were still being actively used. Map courtesy Acadia National Park (n.d.)

A small fish house, formerly used by Harold's brother, still sat near the former site of Harold's fish house. The family continued to use that structure for a time, as Harold and his family returned for occasional fishing trips from Otter Creek's cove despite his "retirement" from commercial fishing:

[My dad] tried to discourage us from fishing, I think. Absolutely. But he kept going for the love of it. He fished a hundred traps after he retired…he bought a 38-foot fiberglass boat. He and my younger brother, they bought it together. He tried fishing even after he retired, but the [catch was poor]. It wasn't profitable like it has been in the past few years. But, like I said, he bought a couple of boats this size here and he would set out with a hundred traps and just catch what he could. Weekends and nights (RW).

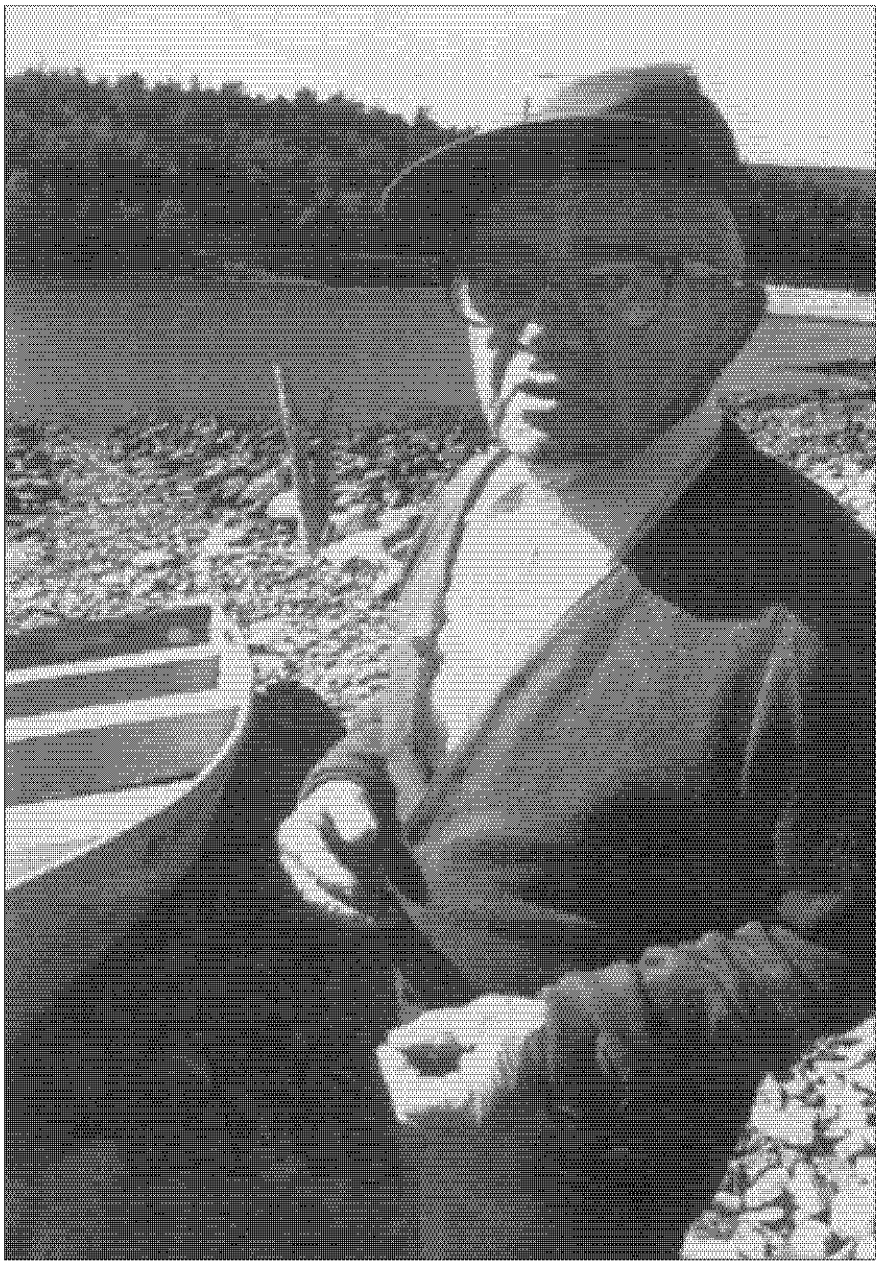


Figure 22: The late Harold Walls, one of the last Otter Creek cove commercial fishermen. Photo courtesy Robert Walls.

A number of these final fishermen, including Harold Walls, struggled to maintain the tradition of fishing in Otter Creek out of a genuine love of the work – even when it was not entirely economical to do so. As with most fishing families from Otter Creek, Harold's sons did not carry on with maritime occupations, but have an abiding interest in (and knowledge of) fishing, a strong connection to Otter Creek's waterfront, and a wish to see the long history of this fishing community preserved, so that the considerable skills, knowledge, and sacrifice of their father's generation will not be forgotten.[70]

# Chapter Four
# Late 20th Century to the Present Day

To fully understand the enduring interests of modern Otter Creek families in Otter Creek cove, and to appreciate the urgency of the concerns they sometimes express regarding the cove's management, one must appreciate the village's larger struggle to remain a vital and distinct community into the present day. After some 180 years of settlement, residents increasingly express a concern that "it's a dying town, with its independent identity eroding steadily" (RO). Certainly, at the close of the 20th century, and the beginning of the 21st, Otter Creek can seem like a community lacking a core – geographically, socially, or economically. The fishermen of Otter Creek are largely gone from the waterfront, and the town's fishing economy – though symbolically significant – is mostly of historical interest today. The town's residents are pulled into different social orbits, drawn in multiple directions to schools, jobs, churches, and other institutions, almost all of them located somewhere else on the Island. Village identity is being displaced by a relatively diffuse community identity that is defined by the larger island and by its larger towns. As Tom Richardson notes, this has been the result of a gradual process over the last few decades:

> Back in the '40s, '50s, and '60s, every village had their own identity. It wasn't a town identity as much as it was a village identity. They had their own fire departments, schools to some degree, community functions, and all that stuff. And the one thing that I've been involved with for the last 40 years is going through that change—the change from an isolated community, a village, to being involved with the town and the island as a whole (TR).

Even the Otter Creek Fire Department – one of the last major community institutions in the village - was disbanded in 2001, a victim of consolidation, limited budgets, and the upscaling of firefighting technologies.[71] It is perhaps not surprising that many residents fear for the future of their village.

The 20th century transformation of the Mount Desert Island economy has played an important role in this transition. As has been the case since the beginnings of Otter Creek history, families can make ends meet by combining a number of seasonal jobs, usually involving work in both the natural resource and tourist sectors.[72] "Around this island, a lot of the natives have two or three different trades that they can do" (SC). Yet, interviewees suggest that Otter Creek proper seems relegated to the island's economic

backwaters. Residents express dismay that their lack of control over the waterfront – even the ability to see the waterfront, as was once commonplace from much of the village – has severely restricted the community's ability to make the transition to a modern tourist-based economy. Simultaneously, the inflation of property values island-wide as a result of this tourist economy is widely said to displace residents and further undermines the community structure of Otter Creek – elevating tax rates and maintenance costs, barring the purchase of homes by young members of longstanding communities, and the like. As Rosamund Walls suggests,

> we used to have the best little town…you knew everybody and as we said, you left the door open, never distrusted anybody. Everybody was so friendly, you know, and now we know very few people left in Otter Creek… they sold their houses and, you know…you sell a house and nobody here can afford to buy it. It has to be somebody from out of state that comes in and buys it (RO).

Local residents often do not have the capital to acquire lands within their own village, resulting in a gradual transition of land ownership to outside and absentee interests. Often these interests treat the community as a source of potential investment wealth rather than as a home – a stark contrast to local norms and values. Norm Walls provided one recent example from Otter Creek:

> this guy up here moved in, he bought the thing above the store, the store, and most of Wall Street, and this property up here. He owns completely around me. And he's just buying, building it. I don't know why. He bought my old grandfather's place (NW).

If the residents of Otter Creek shared a sense that they were losing control over their community's fate due to the combined effects of rusticators, Rockefeller, NPS management, and various other regional trends, this transformation of private land ownership to outside interests has done little to allay their concerns.

If there is still a clear "core" to Otter Creek, it has been the extended families of Otter Creek. These families still maintain strong ties to the land and to each other. (Indeed, ironically, the relative economic stagnation of Otter Creek has perhaps contributed in some way to this unique identity, restricting immigration of new families and economic forces into the community.) Many still take great pride in their Otter Creek ancestry - for being what some might call 'Crikkers' - even if the people who feel that Otter Creek pride often might live in communities some distance away, elsewhere on MDI or on the mainland.

## The Resurgence of the Otter Creek Aid Society

Increasingly, as formal social and economic institutions have eroded, the Otter Creek Aid Society has stepped forward, providing a single organized venue for social activities in the community. In many respects, the OCAS has filled the vacuum left by having a town split in two by municipal boundaries without its own independent government. As such, the Otter Creek Aid Society has become an informal village 'government,' providing a venue for stating and redressing grievances, and the organization actively seeks antidotes to the modern problems of Otter Creek. Though the organization was largely defunct for a period in the latter decades of the 20th century, it was revived and today serves as the principal community organization with the capacity to organize multi-family social and economic events in Otter Creek.

The Otter Creek Aid Society has been in existence since the beginning of the 20th century. The modern OCAS has been depicted as evolving from a

> Ladies' Circle, which for many years had been working for benefit of the community…Although the Aid Society of Otter Creek was originally formed to build a church, its functions were not limited to that. Over the years its membership included any resident who wanted to contribute to the community (Richardson 1989: 131).

Paul Richardson provided additional detail on the origins of the organization, suggesting that there had been a women's community support organization that predated the OCAS, but that the organization was formed when the group began to manage funds for the development of a community church:

> the Aid Society is like a village improvement association or a society…in 1901 or 1902, apparently the attorney whom they worked with, the women primarily, realized that they needed something more than just that to make – to hold up or to support them in a legal way…So he recommended that they form an Aid Society to help build the church. You could call it like a trustee (PR).[73]

The OCAS successfully constructed their church, of course, by 1903. As part of its larger mission, the OCAS then founded a community hall on donated land across the street in 1915 providing "space for basketball games, dances, stage productions and public meetings" (Richardson 1989: 131). The organization also assumed management of the Otter Creek Cemetery at some point in this history: "it took care of the cemetery. It had the town hall and the church, and you know, those are basically what they took care of" (NW).

During the first half of the century, the OCAS maintained community support functions from this community hall: "they'd hold dances, they'd have suppers" (PR). During certain lean periods, the OCAS distributed food boxes for the needy and the elderly of the community, as well as hosting events for children:

> when my mother had her problems, they brought her… they used to bring [a box around] at Christmas time… they would have a big thing for the kids at the church and we'd all get a – candy and different things, you know, some little thing (NW).

The Otter Creek Aid Society's old minutes books from that era are now housed in the Northeast Harbor library.

By the late 1960s and 1970s, the OCAS was in rapid transition, reflecting general changes in the community of Otter Creek. The organization was intermittently inactive in these decades, as residents encountered new challenges in applying the historical OCAS mission with the modern realities of the village. During this period, the organization made a gradual shift from religious to secular functions and, during certain times, went through periods of relative inactivity. As was characteristic of this challenging period in Otter Creek history, the community hall was in bad repair and was demolished in the 1980s, amid some controversy. As recalled by Tom Richardson, who was the OCAS President at the time,

> I was involved in dealing with getting rid of the community building. Nobody wanted to see it go, but nobody wanted to fix it. Nobody wanted to work on it. It became a trap, you know what I mean? All these issues and…the fact that I was the chief and I was the president of the Aid Society, it left me in that position (TR).[74]

By the 1990s, the OCAS began to seriously reevaluate their mission. Recognizing that many other community institutions were in rapid retreat, some argued that the OCAS should be revitalized, becoming an organizing force that might reverse some of these negative changes in the community and help organize events that would bring together Otter Creek residents.[75] The organization developed a new mission statement, new bylaws, and made other administrative changes to reflect its broader mission. "We actually did a charter change…it probably was 20+ plus years ago. Its [original] function was to build and maintain a church. So that whole thing changed then" (TR). Funds accumulated over many years of fundraisers and donations were used to restore the now unused church building for use as a new community hall.[76]

Much as before, the OCAS maintains properties associated with the organization's mission:

> The Aid Society owns the properties—the church property, what was the community hall property, and the two fish house lots. Our charge is to maintain these…the church is no longer a viable church, and that changed probably 15 years ago. Membership is just going, so we turned it into a community hall. And it is now being used for community functions, meetings. We have the annual meetings there for the Cemetery Association, which I'm the president of now. And the Aid Society, which Karen Zimmerman is president of. She took over from me, which is great. She's doing a wonderful job (TR).

The organization has added to its list of properties, not only acquiring the OCAS fish house (which will be discussed in more detail below) but helping to arrange for the development of a playground on the site of the former Otter Creek School on the Mount Desert side of town:

> You know Steve [Smith] brought these, all these, what used to be the schoolhouse property up here, it's now a playground, right in the middle of the village up here, that originally was a schoolhouse. And it stopped functioning as a schoolhouse in the late '50s, early '60s. And that was town-owned property, Mount Desert, not village-owned. And it was then rented by Jackson Laboratory for many years who did some type of stuff there. Eventually the town tore it down, and… we turned it into a community park. The town paid for it, and we kind of planned it and had done some initial maintenance with it, and the town maintains it (TR).

The OCAS holds annual meetings for the election of officers, in addition to having residence requirements for its officers and has attendance requirements for voting members. Each new group of officers helps to set the agenda for the OCAS, though there is considerable continuity between administrations. Current OCAS President Karen Zimmerman[77] described some of the social and administrative functions of the Aid Society from this time forward:

> [The Aid Society] owns two pieces of property, one is the fish house…and the other is the hall, which is more visible and at this time is the one that can do more for the community, I think. So we're working on keeping it from falling into the ground. That's, for one. But six years ago it was empty. There was nothing happening there. And now we have a chowder supper which is a fund raiser, but it's also a time that everybody in the community gets together. And, until we started doing these things, we really didn't have a time that we gathered. The post office was gone. We used to hang around in front of that. But, even that, it was smaller groups. But these few events that we do

> I think tap in and pull the people together. Sometimes that's the only time you [see people is] at these events. But I think it does help us feel like we are Otter Creek. And working together always makes you feel a bond with each other. So there is the chowder supper and the Victorian Christmas. Now we have a rummage sale, and it's growing slowly. People are beginning to use it again. We've had two memorial services, which I think is wonderful for that set of people who [have left for health reasons and] had to go to Bar Harbor or someplace else. They have a place right here to do that, to honor their descendants. And birthday parties for the younger generations. It's great seeing the kids at the Victorian Christmas. Some of them were really tiny when we first started doing that, and now that's become a tradition in their life. It's great, because people talk about a Christmas they used to have before I moved here, which I didn't know anything about, but there apparently *was* a Christmas party that happened every year and, as the older people say, "It's not the same." But it's nice to see a similar tradition starting again (KZ).

As an organization, the Otter Creek Aid Society has rallied around the issue maintaining access to the waterfront, in securing the right to continue maintenance of historical trails between the community and the waterfront, and having some opportunity to maintain viewsheds in a way that would facilitate views of the waterfront from residential Otter Creek. Yet many residents – especially the older residents - are reluctant to generate conflict with the park over these issues, so a number of these proposals have been tabled at the time of this writing (KZ, CS).

With the extended families of Otter Creek arguably being the principal units of traditional social organization, the agendas and interests of the Otter Creek Aid Society tends to evolve with the family interests of its leadership over time. The OCAS has maintained an active interest in waterfront access issues for decades, but this interest has intensified noticeably since members of the Smith family have taken leadership roles in the organization. As will be discussed in more detail below, the OCAS has played a role in developing a new fish house on the outer cove, as well as in codifying community access to the waterfront via the town landing.

Today, the OCAS considers a number of potential initiatives for the community's future. There have been various proposals entertained by the OCAS for the vacant land where the old community hall once stood, including the development of a playground and a farmer's market. There have also been proposals for new economic activities along the waterfront: "I want an oyster farm…I think there's room for the Otter Creek Oyster Farm" (KZ). No doubt, with its dynamic leadership and no other comparable institutions

in town, the OCAS will continue to play an important role in shaping the social and economic future of Otter Creek for some time to come.

## Recent Conflicts over Waterfront Access

If Maine coastal communities share a focus on the waterfront, Otter Creek is exceptional. While parties may disagree as to the causes for the decline of fishing (and the causes are clearly numerous) the absence of a socially and economically viable waterfront district clearly has contributed to the community's demise (Candee 1988).

Fishing out of the Otter Creek waterfront clearly is not easy. Waves roll into the narrow, rocky cove, damaging gear and threatening to overturn boats; road access is challenging; slopes are steep and shore facilities are limited. These and other factors have prevented the historical development of docks and piers, as in other Mount Desert Island towns, and large modern boats are ill-equipped to operate without such infrastructure. Still, when considering the factors that may have brought an end to the use of the waterfront and contributed to the decline of local fishing, most residents consulted in this study attribute at least a portion of this trend to Rockefeller's acquisition of the waterfront and subsequent NPS management of the landscape. Residents commonly refer to their community as being "landlocked" by the development of the park and suggest that Otter Creek was the only town subjected to this – something that would not have been attempted in other communities such as Northeast Harbor, Southwest Harbor, Bar Harbor, some suggest, reflecting differences in class and political clout.

Some are matter-of-fact about these claims, and speak of them in relatively unconcerned tones as matters of primarily historical interest. Others state it as a sharp critique of the agency and its policies. Of those in the latter category, this critique is most vocally expressed by Steve Smith. As he summarizes the situation,

> [The fishing industry] down there had phased out because it never grew with the rest of the towns. It just never grew. One reason: they didn't have any land to grow down there. [The park had] already absorbed it…Definitely the biggest factor was with the park. It had to be, because it could have changed something too if it had evolved like other villages had… there would have been condominiums there and stuff. And that would have changed it somewhat then. But somehow, in all those villages, the fishing somehow managed to stay alive…This here [at Otter Creek] really has just hung on by its toenails. But I think that was the biggest factor. This is a hard place, a hard area. But, at the same time, it's the closest area to the fishing… (SS)

It is perhaps uncommon in a report of this type to discuss a single individual's perspectives with such sharp focus. Yet, it is impossible to ignore the fact that Steve Smith has played a unique and prominent role in the relationship between the Otter Creek community and the NPS. An untiring proponent of community access to the waterfront, and a perennial detractor of NPS policy on the issue, Smith has been at the center of numerous initiatives and controversies centering on the Otter Creek waterfront since the mid-1970s and perhaps sooner.

Smith described one of the defining moments that led him to take up the cause of Otter Creek waterfront access in an organized fashion. This occurred when he built a new fish house on the outer cove in 1976 – only a few years after the apparent peak in park demolition of old fish houses. In part, Smith's construction of a new fish house at the time was a practical matter – adding a new structure to aid local fishermen - but also was carried out in a way that allowed him to test the NPS agency position on fish houses along the cove generally. As Smith recalls,

> I didn't know the [property] boundaries myself. And I first built [the fish house] right there…and finally one Sunday morning I got a whole crew together…[a ranger] said 'You're going to have to stop construction here right now.' I'm up on the roof and…I said, 'Well, we got a crew going there right now. We got to finish this up. But just give us a little while and we'll be done.' And he goes, 'No, you're going to have to stop.' 'Well,' I said, 'if you just go up in your deeds there you'll see an exception in there for this area.' And he did. He went up and checked the deed, and he came back and he brought me the paperwork. And I said, 'No, it's not in this here. No, you'll see it.' And I knew it then by heart…And he says, 'No, I'm going to have to arrest you.' I said, 'Well, go ahead if you want, but it won't help anything.' I says, 'We're almost finished up here.' And I said, 'Well, we got the roof on now.' He gave us enough time. So, all right, I'll go meet Monday morning with the superintendent… This was about '76…And he wouldn't let me as I wasn't a direct descendant of the Walls over there [who formerly owned the site]. And I wouldn't leave. I couldn't believe it. [A park employee] says, 'Eventually we plan to phase you people out there completely.' I'm going, 'Well, now he's coming out.' That's all I needed to know right there (SS).

From this time forward, Smith has undertaken a number of actions to advance waterfront access for Otter Creek residents, ranging from federally unpermitted construction of fish houses to challenges in the courts. Past efforts by Steve Smith also have included petitioning members of the United States congress for involvement on the issue. For a time, in the 1980s, Smith achieved some level of support from U.S. Senator George Mitchell of Maine in the effort to institutionalize community waterfront access

and rights for continued fish house use and development along those portions of the park lining the Otter Creek shoreline. These lobbying efforts on the waterfront access issue became especially intense while Mitchell was working on the development and passage of Senate Bill 720, establishing permanent boundaries for Acadia National Park. As a result of these efforts, testimony was brought forward in a hearing before the Congressional Committee on Energy and Natural Resources (99th Congress, 1st Session) in 1985. Despite Mitchell's apparent support for the Otter Creek effort, the boundary legislation for the park, Public Law 99-420, passed in September 25, 1986, but brought little clarity to the Otter Creek situation. Without clear legislative resolution on the issue, Smith advanced small efforts to challenge NPS policy on the issue.

Discussions with Otter Creek interviewees and their families make it clear that there are those in the community who support Smith's efforts openly. There are others who, in staid New England style, agree with Smith's efforts silently, or express support for his message even if they disagree with his tactics. And, of course, there are many in the community who disagree strongly with Smith's efforts generally on principle, no matter what he might be advocating at the time. However, it would be incorrect to view Smith as a lone agitator on the waterfront issue. He sometimes casts himself as the representative of Otter Creek's interests; some residents agree and some do not. While the NPS may not agree with or support many of his initiatives, it is perhaps important to carefully consider the general sentiments underlying them, as information gathered in the course of research suggests that they resonate more broadly in the community than might be generally assumed. "Stevie [Smith] may be a radical, but he's not saying anything that hasn't been thought by a lot of people from Otter Creek" one interviewee noted under condition of anonymity. As frustrated as some people appear to be with Steve Smith's tactics, even his detractors suggest that he has played a catalytic function in the community - initiating debates and efforts that often are adopted by other parties and then subsequently negotiated with the park to good effect, such as in the establishment of the town landing and the Otter Creek Aid Society fish house.

As suggested throughout this document, the general issues of waterfront access, fish house claims, and other related concerns have been ongoing for many years. No matter how many of these issues have been resolved, the issue of waterfront access is still seen widely in Otter Creek circles as an issue requiring resolution. Smith has helped advance this perception, but is not alone in doing so. As Paul Richardson summarizes this recent discussion:

> I have dealt a lot with and have said at several meetings that. . .this needs to be resolved. I mean, it's kind of just, 'we know that it's not right and why is the government not taking care of it.' You know what I mean? (PR).

So long as waterfront access issues are perceived as being unresolved by Otter Creek residents, these challenges are likely to persist – even if the park might view access issues as being largely resolved through past agreements.

Efforts to claim, or reclaim, community access to the waterfront has centered at four historically significant sites on the cove: the town landing, the west cove fish house area (specifically the OCAS fish house), the east cove fish house area, and the former Austin Walls fish house site on the inner cove. Each will be discussed in turn in the pages that follow.

While these waterfront access issues create a number of challenges for park staff, it is important to note that discussion of the park's role on the cove is by no means uniformly negative. Indeed, some interviewees expressed outright enthusiasm for the park and Rockefeller having acquired the waterfront, in spite of ongoing access challenges. While accepting that many of the residents' concerns about access are valid, interviewees such as Gerry Norwood still express relief that park acquisition of the cove precluded major industrial and recreational development along the cove:

> today I'm tickled to death that it never happened—this stretch of property right here [along the eastern side] was for sale. It was for sale during the Depression. The park didn't own it at that time. And that whole oceanfront was for sale. And so I'm glad—there were a few people who had money enough to buy it, but they wouldn't take it out of their pocket because they didn't know what was going to happen. And the park eventually got it, which I'm really pleased with because, it's like what I said, we'd look like Coney Island or something (GN).

The effects of NPS management have been diverse, of course, and community members' perspectives suggest that many of them possess a nuanced appreciation of these diverse effects – both positive and negative – upon the quality of life in Otter Creek.

## The Town Landing and the OCAS Fish House

The town landing at the head of Otter Creek cove appears to have been an access point to the water for Otter Creek residents from the earliest recorded history of the community - "since the village's beginnings" as Richardson (1989: 129) has written. The village of Otter Creek formally secured this access point with a right-of-way registered with the Town of Mount Desert – initiating the process as early as 1892

and formally recording the right-of-way with this town in 1897.[78] As noted earlier in this document, John D. Rockefeller Jr. sought to close this public access point in support of his larger recreational vision for the Otter Creek waterfront, and successfully petitioned the Town of Mount Desert to rescind the right-of-way in 1936. Though the Causeway was constructed in the late 1930s, Rockefeller's plans for a swimming pool or beach on the inner cove did not come to pass. Interviewees report that, in the decades after the Causeway's development, residents continued to use this point of access informally to reach the inner cove, though use of the inner cove had declined in the wake of Causeway construction and other factors. By 1976, the community – in an effort largely led by Steve Smith – began seeking the reestablishment of this right-of-way. The reader should be forewarned: what follows is a brief recounting of the effort to restore community access through the town landing, as well as the closely-related development of the Otter Creek Aid Society fish house; this narrative is based on oral history and limited archival evidence only, and should not be construed as a full or balanced review of legal facts.

Concurrent with Steve Smith's initial efforts to restore public access to the head of Otter Creek along the town landing, Smith began construction of a fish house on the west shore of Otter Creek cove. The precise sequence of events is unclear, but Steve Smith is reported to have found an unextingushed right to lands on the site of the former west shore fish house properties. (Some interviewees report that Ansel Davis used a fish house at approximately the same spot in the mid-20th century). In 1976, Smith constructed a small fish house on the site, meeting with almost instantaneous opposition from park staff, who had been operating with the understanding that the western shore was entirely within NPS ownership. Residents such as Norm Walls, who have subsequently investigated the situation, seem to concur that Rockefeller and his agents had somehow missed this inholding when acquiring the larger shoreline:

> that little parcel of land, everybody assumed that it went with Rockefeller but there was no deed, no nothing, that little inholding got missed. Stevie found it, you know, so he was well within his rights at that time (NW).

The exchange with park rangers described by Smith in the preceding section of this document was the immediate result. The issue of Smith's rights to the property became the focus of litigation soon thereafter.

More or less concurrently, Smith and others initiated a petition effort pertaining to the town landing issue. A number of residents of Otter Creek signed a petition, dated December 7, 1978, requesting legal intervention to formally reestablish community access

to the waterfront. Apparently written in part by Steve Smith, who has organized a number of petitions on the waterfront access issue over the years,[79] the petition outlined the history of the town landing in some detail, and then concluded as follows:

> we the undersigned village, citizens of Otter Creek, being registered voters of the Town of Mount Desert, State of Maine, County of Hancock, in the United State of America, do hereby pray that the Honorable Solicitor will come to the decision that no damages are claimed by Acadia National Park to the right of way in question so as the greater Town of Mount Desert may commence as soon as possible with its pursuit to reestablish this right of way and landing by the use and convenience of the people of Otter Creek and that they be good neighbors and work together with the National Park Service forevermore (Village of Otter Creek 1978).

> The petition also included a long preamble, outlining the history of Otter Creek use and access at the town landing, as understood and documented by Smith.[80]

The park appears to have opposed this proposal. Having received this land from Rockefeller without a right-of-way encumbrance, as a matter of policy Acadia National Park was unreceptive to the legal codification of this "social trail." As the park explored legal challenges to Smith's efforts the fish house issue, it also resisted the legal effort to reestablish the town landing right-of-way. By the early 1980s, the park had established a structure to serve as a blockade to access through the town landing area. As reported by Richardson,

> In 1976, through the efforts of Stephen Smith and others, the town began to try to regain the right of way. The park, opposing such an attempt, blocked access to the landing in 1983 (Richardson 1989: 129).

A number of interviewees spoke of this unexpected loss of access at the base of Ben's Hill at the time: "the park closed it off. There had always been a road down to there" (NW). Pedestrian access through the town landing persisted, but the new blockade placed significant restrictions on boat and automotive access, or the ability of residents to load and unload fishing gear at this site. Even among those Otter Creek residents who were cynical about Smith's motives or tactics, there appears to have been considerable resentment of the park's response.

In the early 1980s, park staff reached a point in their deliberations where they felt confident moving forward with the demolition of Steve Smith's fish house on the western shore. Local residents working for the park, including Norm Walls, worked to dissuade

the park from doing so, citing possible political ramifications. The park temporarily relented, but the house burned soon afterward, apparently due to arson. At that time, Steve Smith built another fish house nearby with the assistance of a few other Otter Creek residents: "Stevie's fish house down there burned. And there was a few of the people that donated things for Stevie to rebuild it" (RO). Smith apparently withstood court challenges by the park to his construction of a fish house on the west shore in 1983, and secured a formal deed to land at the west side fish house location.



Figure 23: The Otter Creek Aid Society fish house, as it appeared in November of 2009. D. Deur photo.

Holding title to these lands, Smith then began discussions with the Otter Creek Aid Society regarding the possible transfer of title to that organization, so that the fish house would be of benefit to the larger community as a single fish house outpost on the otherwise NPS-managed shoreline. The OCAS was receptive, and Smith transferred his title to the Otter Creek Aid Society for use by fishermen of the community in perpetuity (Richardson 1989: 129). When this land was transferred to the OCAS, some report that Smith undertook a considerable effort to close out any residual claims on the lands so that he might pass clear title to that organization:

> when Stephen was able to get the fish house, which he gave to the Aid Society, God knows the different people that signed off on that that were heirs of that family (PR).

As part of this transfer of title, Smith and the OCAS sought to reserve the riparian rights at the fish house land for the OCAS in perpetuity. Therefore, if the property is ever sold, the community will still retain access through this location:

> In Stephen Smith giving us the fish house property and stating in the deed that if this property is ever transferred or sold or whatever, the riparian rights will never be transferred with the sale of that land. So a person in Otter Creek always has access to that shore through that…The Aid Society could sell, but it can never give away or sell the riparian rights of the people to go down there and use that as a landing to access the shore (PR).

This innovative maneuver appears to have secured a waterfront access point for Otter Creek residents that can never be effectively extinguished by third parties, at least not without the consent of the Otter Creek Aid Society.

Simultaneously, the town landing issue remained unresolved. Tom Richardson explains that tensions had grown to the point between Steve Smith and the park that negotiations were going nowhere. He and Paul Richardson had a much better rapport with park officials than Smith, he suggests, but were generally sympathetic to Smith's general position on the importance of retaining a public right-of-way through the town landing. Tom and Paul Richardson agreed to take over negotiations with the park:

> Paul was well known with…the superintendent, and I, being president of the Aid Society… basically Paul and I took over the negotiations. You know, we went through quite a time of repairing, repairing the workability with the park. And we did. And we ended up making an agreement with them (TR).

> In this agreement, the park granted a right-of-way to Otter Creek along the town landing in exchange for a conservation easement on the private lands underlying Steve Smith's fish house (now the Otter Creek Aid Society Fish House), so that no further development could take place there.

> Paul Richardson summarized these agreements as a complex exchange in which the community of Otter Creek achieved its primary objective – access to the inner cove through the town landing – while also maintaining limited access to the OCAS fish house site. As he suggested,

> The landing down here at the end of this road…That goes down to the shore…There's no wharf or nothing there, just the flats…That now is a

right-of-way deeded by the park to the town of Mount Desert…that was the original landing for the people in Otter Creek. That was the only real access. And when we lost it, then we got it back with that conservation easement given to the park and you give us the right-of-way back to the shore…

In order for us to really throw the cards up in the air and negotiate with the park, we agreed to give them…a conservation easement on the fish house lot that was given to the Aid Society by Steve Smith…we gave the Park a conservation easement so that things would not be done around it… And in doing that we were going to get the right-of-way back to the town of Mount Desert to the shore inside…

by getting [the OCAS fish house property] we were able to give a conservation easement to the park and get back our right-of-way to the shore…you might say 'what did we give a shit about the fish house property?' But the fish house property was an aid in getting back the right-of-way to the shore…And some day it will be given to the park. At the present time, the park has a conservation easement... what really we got that meant something to some people was the right-of-way to the shore (PR).




Figure 24: The Private Property sign on the side of the Otter Creek Aid Society fish house. As specified in the sign, the property is made "available to the residents of Otter Creek for access to the water for the purpose of fishing." The house serves a number of other functions as well, functional and symbolic. D. Deur photo.

Other interviewees provided similar accounts; taken together, these accounts provide a rich picture of a negotiation process that involved numerous participants within the community and was of considerable local interest.[81]

All parties, including the Otter Creek Aid Society and the National Park Service, successfully negotiated this agreement in the late 1980s. However, the NPS did not sign the agreement until 1993, after considerable internal review (TR).

Following the negotiation of this agreement, residents of Otter Creek constructed a modest boat launch with a small amount of financial support from the OCAS. There is still some hope among community members that this boat launch might be improved in the future. Many view the current launch as inadequate, being hard to reach by water in most boats and conditions, as well as hard to access with a boat trailer by land: "You can't get a boat in and out, a row boat once in awhile if it's high tide" (NW).[82] The road access to the modern town landing is so steep that it is not graveled, as trucks and boat trailers would lose traction on the slope. Parking barriers have also been constructed at the town landing in recent years, apparently by the park, which prevent parked cars from blocking the access but also pose some challenges to automotive access to the landing: "It's like they still want to close us and choke us out," complains Steve Smith (SS). The site is so difficult to access that some residents describe the site as being more important in "principle" than in practice:

> this particular landing area, which is inside the cove, which is as much as it is a principle issue, that's about it, because of the functionality of the landing is pretty basic, pretty minimal. At low tide, there's no way to get in and out, and neither at high tide, you know, it's a stretch for a smaller boat (TR).

Some interviewees, such as Caroline Smith, Steve Haynes, Gerry Norwood, and Tom Richardson, also noted that the construction of the Causeway had accelerated siltation in the upper end of the cove, by restricting tidal flushing. Past wastewater discharges into the inner cove were said to have accelerated this effect:

> The thing that has hurt this cove is that they put a treatment plant in here… and treated waste out here. Well, as you dump the treated waste, you're also getting the silt that comes with it. And you can go down there now and look at low tide and you'll see that much silt where the brook is that far down into the [inner cove] and it never used to be. So there's lobsters and flounder that used to come up inside here and spawn…up into the head of the harbor. But after they put—I shouldn't be talking about engineers but, one of the mistakes they made is…they should have either put another bridge in here or a culvert to allow [some flushing]… and you wouldn't have that silt build up

> behind. . .You can look at the old picture, that one and this one, and see that that was never there. This is all man-made (GN).

This, in turn, has further reduced the navigability of this upper portion of the cove and restricted potential activities there, making inner cove access even less appealing.

Meanwhile, interviewees suggest that the Otter Creek Aid Society fish house continues to be used by a small but devoted number of Otter Creek residents. Use of the OCAS fish house is especially frequent by the Smith family, though others do sometimes use it for fishing and for recreational visits.

There have been occasional discussions among the OCAS leadership of giving the fish house to the park, in response to liability and other concerns, but this has been voted down consistently by their membership. Some have proposed developing the fish house in such a way that it could both serve as a functioning fishing structure while also providing interpretive and commemorative value to the Otter Creek Waterfront:

> I would love to see us develop that the same way we're doing the [community] hall. I think our resources are small, and I'm focusing the members and the Society on that because it's more manageable at this point. But it would be great to see the fish houses used again, and how to do that, but. . .if it can't be used in that way, use it for the community. And so a learning center or just like a mini-museum to the fishing industry (KZ).[83]

The OCAS has explored options for running a water line to the fish house, to accommodate both fishing activities and potential educational functions.

In the past, the visual clutter created by the stockpiling of fish gear has been a point of contention between the Smith family, the OCAS, other Otter Creek residents, and the park.[84] Some interviewees alluded to the park's efforts to reduce the aesthetic effects of the OCAS fish house through the removal of trash and piers. This, they suggest, has been interpreted by some residents as proof of park hostility to the OCAS and an overly broad interpretation of the NPS's conservation easement at the site. Some – primarily though not exclusively the Smith family – still question the authority of the NPS to carry out these actions in light of the terms of the park's conservation easement and the OCAS title to the land. These legal questions are beyond the scope of this research, but it is clear that there might be benefits to more sharply defining and articulating shoreline management principles in this area in a way that might involve both NPS managers and OCAS representatives. It is clear that the fish house, on a certain level, might be construed as a cultural and scenic resource to the park, in addition to its various functions

for the residents of Otter Creek. In its tidied condition, the OCAS fish house seems to have become the subject of visitors' photography and, at the time of the completion of this report, in summer of 2011, the on-line encyclopedia, Wikipedia, features a photo of this fish house among the eight images in its photo gallery of representative scenery of Acadia National Park.

## The Inner Cove Fish House

In the mid-20th century, a lone fish house sat on the inner cove. Built by Austin E. Walls, Sr., this fish house sat close to the former Hall Quarry wharf known as "Jimmy's Wharf." Austin Walls is reported to have constructed a fish house at this site roughly four decades prior to Steve Smith's 1987 occupation of the site, and continued to use it for many years - principally for fishing but also as a base camp for hunting and other activities on the cove. (Like Smith, Austin Walls also had legal challenges with the park, associated with duck hunting on park lands within the Otter Creek cove.) Austin was reported to have started using Jimmy's Wharf as a boat landing, but later built a small fish house to facilitate his fishing efforts from that site:

> Austin would keep a boat in there at Jimmy's Wharf. . . But later then he built a little bait house or a fish house, just a little – in the wood there, you know? I remember my brother and I going out with him. I don't know how the hell we happened to do that. . .he had one of those one-lung motors, you know, choo choo choo. And we had to go out through the bridge, you know, under the bridge (PR).[85]

While interviewees suggest that Austin Walls used this fish house as his principal base of operations for fishing, he also reportedly maintained running lines in the outer cove as well.[86]

Austin Walls was said to have been the only person to have maintained a fish house on the inner cove in living memory: "the only one that ever had anything down there that I knew of was Austin Walls. . .He built a little fish house there. . .he would go out with the tide" (PR). While there has been speculation as to earlier fish houses at this location, it is clear that the site was used as a wharf for ships transporting stone away from the west cove granite quarry instead of for fishing purposes in the late 19th (and perhaps very early 20th) century.

Walls had maintained a modest boat launching slip, consisting of a narrow intertidal path cleared of rocks, on the shore immediately below the house. This slip sits a short distance south of the former quarry wharf known locally as "Jimmy's Wharf,"

where stone wharf retaining structures persist and quarry bore holes can still be seen in the waterfront bedrock. Like this slip, Austin Walls' house was said to be quite small and unobtrusive:

> I recall was it was nothing more than probably 3 or 4 feet wide, 6 or 8 feet long, a shanty, just a shanty-style building. I want to say it had a little gable roof on it but it was tarpapered. . .as I remember, there was a rock there, and what he used to do was pull his boat [a skiff] up right into a little like a little slide there, a slip, and he'd pull his boat up onto the shore right there. It was right next to it almost. . .It was very non-obtrusive. It was just. . .utilizing what was already there (KD).

This small scale perhaps reflected Austin's modest needs, but also may have reflected a desire to stay at least somewhat hidden. While the fish house was located on a larger tract of NPS land that was part of Rockefeller's original acquisitions along the cove, its unobtrusive size and placement helped reduce unwanted attention from park authorities in the early years of NPS management, even with its small access road built from Otter Creek for access:

> At the time that Austin Walls had the one up inside, there was an old road that no one paid much attention to or anything like that… I'm pretty sure Rockefeller purchased some of that land and turned it over to the park (RD).

Park records and the interviewees' accounts imply that the Austin Walls fish house was in regular use by the Walls family until the late 1960s or early 1970s (Acadia National Park n.d.). The building continued to occupy the site after that time, slowly falling into disrepair.

Today, a single and relatively new fish house is located in the "inner cove," north of the Causeway. Steve Smith constructed the current structure on the site of Austin Walls' fish house, which was badly dilapidated by the late 1980s. In order to acquire Austin's claim to the fish house site, Steve Smith undertook an effort to track down all of the Austin Walls heirs to secure their permission. He was largely successful in tracking and down and securing permission from these individuals, though some report that "for some reason he wasn't able to get all of the heirs" (PR).[87] Steve Smith appears to have finally secured this claim from the Walls heirs in 1987 (though the exact nature of that claim and its legal foundations are beyond the scope of this investigation).

Steve Smith reports that the Walls structure was in such dilapidated condition that he opted to build a new structure on the footprint of Mr. Walls' building. The new

structure is made in no small part of materials salvaged from demolished or remodeled buildings at various locations around Mount Desert Island. Smith and his family also retained items dating from Mr. Walls' use of the site and incorporated these into the structure and its surrounding landscape. These include a few of Mr. Walls' lobster buoys (which hang from the roofline of the new building, with Walls' license number of 9006 clearly visible) and the bow of a wooden boat that was used by Walls (sitting on the ground a short distance to the south of the fish house). Smith and his family have continued to maintain Austin Walls' boat launching slip into the present day, so that a narrow pathway, cleared of rocks, can be seen extending from the fish house into the intertidal zone.




Figure 25: Steve and Caroline Smith at the inner cove fish house, November 2009. Especially in foul weather, the interior of this structure is used as a base of operations for fishing and lobstering activities by the Smith family, while during good weather the area just outside the door is used for these purposes. Most of the materials seen here are salvaged from buildings elsewhere on Mt. Desert Island. D. Deur photo.

The trail running from Grover Street to the Austin Walls fish house is said to be a social trail of considerable time depth, being a conventional access point for the Hall granite quarry and west cove fish houses. This original social trail was apparently improved by Austin Walls to serve as his modest "access road" to the site, though it is unclear whether it truly merited designation as a road, or was just a well-maintained footpath. Otter Creek residents (principally the Smith family) have continued to maintain sections of this trail into the present day. The trail still continues south of the old Austin Walls fish house to the Causeway, but has not been regularly maintained south of the fish house in many years. The Smith family also selectively pruned a few trees - one cedar in particular - to improve natural sunlight to the structure, but did so in a manner that intentionally retains a visual buffer between the fish house and the causeway and other park lands and infrastructure. For this reason, the fish house has remained largely invisible when seen from Otter Creek cove. This placement departs with the tradition of building fish houses with unimpeded views of the water, and so the visual concealment of the inner cove fish house appears to represent a novel adaptive response to the concerns of Acadia National Park.

Steve and Caroline Smith indicated that they have used the inner cove fish house as a base of operations for lobstering and occasional fishing in and around Otter Creek cove. This lobstering and fishing is undertaken on a small scale, intermittently between other work obligations - sometimes commercially as a minor source of personal income, but mostly to acquire seafood for personal use. When fishing or lobstering there, the Smiths have first launched their boat from the Otter Creek town landing, a short distance north of the fish house. This boat is then propelled to the fish house slip, where gear is loaded and unloaded as necessary. The fish house is used as a base of operations for general maintenance of all lobstering and fishing gear used by the family, as well as baiting and other tasks associated with particular lobstering and fishing trips. Steve Smith reports that he sets lobster traps from this house by rowboat at places in Otter Creek cove.

Perhaps more than serving as a base of operations for fishing and lobstering, however, the fish house also serves as a foothold for other, less utilitarian activities on the waterfront by some Otter Creek residents. Interviewees Denis Smith and Karen Zimmerman report visiting the fish house, and even staying the night there, to enjoy the waterfront, to read, and to write. Karen reports,

> "The park claims it's theirs. And I think we're talking about taking it down, but nothing's happened, which is good, because I love it. I go down there and

write and, it's a wonderful little retreat…Got my own private path right that way. There's a street down to it, don't even have to hit the road…I've slept there and woken up in the morning to the sound of half a dozen blue herons screeching at dawn. It's just amazing. It is really amazing" (KZ).



Figure 26: The bow of a boat reported to have been owned and used by Austin Walls, sitting a short distance south of the inner cove fish house. D. Deur photo.

Denis and Karen sometimes walk there for recreational purposes, and Karen reports that she and her family go there sometimes to do morning yoga there roughly once every three weeks. Unlike the seasonal use of the structure for fishing and lobstering, these other uses occur intermittently throughout the year, but with less intensity than fishing and lobstering when those activities are in season. A journal of sorts is kept in the fish house, to which visitors add entries when staying there. Karen Zimmerman made references to other uses of this fish house by "maybe a dozen to twenty" other Otter Creek residents, including members of families unrelated to the Smiths. These individuals are said to use the structure for similar purposes "to do stuff by the waterfront" such as family picnics (KZ).

As reported elsewhere in this document, as well as in past writings on fish houses in this area (i.e., Smythe 2008), the construction of fish houses on land not owned by the

fish house user appears to be a tradition of considerable time depth in this community and in other portions of the Maine coast – though a convention that typically involves the consent of the landowner, and possible agreements as to reciprocal actions such as the sharing of some portion of the catch (Deur 2012). By constructing this fish house in a place with potentially ambiguous land title but a local convention of fish house use, the Smiths seem to be identifying with, and perhaps reasserting the persistence of, this tradition.[88]



Figure 27: One of Austin Walls' lobster buoys, with his license number – 9006 – on one side, hanging from the roofline of the inner cove fish house. D. Deur photo.

As a potentially precedent-setting development in the ongoing relationship between the NPS and the Otter Creek waterfront users, this fish house is known to almost everyone in town. A majority of the interviewees consulted for this project expressed some level of interest in the outcomes of NPS decision-making regarding this inner cove fish house. While some interviewees expressed cynicism regarding Steve Smith's

construction of this building, which some see as politically motivated rather than of practical use to the Smith family, no interviewee expressed strong support for the outright removal of the inner cove structure. Some interviewees, unrelated to the Smith family, expressed strong support for the retention of the structure and a desire to maintain continued access to the inner cove fish house for some of the recreational purposes described here. For some, the desire to see the structure persist seems to reflect a desire to see certain practices associated with lobstering and fishing continue from time to time, or minimally be commemorated, within the community in light of the decline of these industries and their associated lifeways. For others, the retention of the fish house appears to have symbolic dimensions and seems to reflect a desire to resist some of the influence of J.D. Rockefeller and the National Park Service on the use of waterfront fish houses – an effort spearheaded in no small part by Steve Smith. Clearly, the structure appears to be symbolically important to some portion of the Otter Creek community for reasons that are rooted not only in contemporary political realities, but also within the larger history of the community.

## Other Challenges on the Otter Creek Waterfront

Some interviewees mentioned other minor sources of friction associated with NPS management of the Otter Creek cove that warrant brief mention here, in order to facilitate ongoing collaboration between the NPS and Otter Creek residents. While the discussion of such frictions might inherently be an invitation to debate and rancor, this theme is still included here in the hope that this discussion might point toward opportunities for improving NPS relationships with the Otter Creek community. Resolution of these issues is no simple task. The NPS is the inheritor of Rockefeller's legacy on the cove, for example, a fact that brings with it generations of political baggage; meanwhile, contemporary NPS staff are held accountable for agency conflicts that occurred with community residents years ago – sometimes prior to the birth of the NPS staff in question. These are not easy issues to navigate, but they are perhaps understandable within the larger historical context of NPS-Otter Creek relations, presented elsewhere in this document.

Yet, there are other dimensions of this relationship worth considering. For example, it is arguably true that, in Otter Creek, those residents with the greatest local knowledge and the deepest local roots are held in particular esteem by the community. Both visitors and park staff are often depicted, in sharp contrast, as transitory guests to

the area: "[visitors] are guests. . .the park is a guest here" (CS). The actions of park staff are commonly seen through this lens: many park staff are depicted as relative newcomers, who are sometimes unsympathetic to local concerns while nonetheless having considerable power to influence community life. NPS staff who work with Otter Creek may be well advised to bear this common perception in mind, because – spoken or not – it colors a great deal of the discourse between both parties. If it is a consolation to NPS staff, Otter Creek residents who have moved to the community from multi-generational households elsewhere on Mount Desert Island are also commonly seen as "outsiders," even when they have married into Otter Creek families, lived in the community for decades, or fished as part of multi-generational families from Otter Creek cove.[89] As Gerry Norwood - who has done all three of these things in Otter Creek but hails from one of the oldest families in Southwest Harbor - notes, "You're an outsider if you're not born here" (GN). This kind of insularity is common to small communities with multi-generational families and, arguably, has helped to preserve the integrity of the community for so many generations despite a number of profound challenges.

The relative newness of most NPS staff was certainly key to many of the concerns expressed by Otter Creek residents. Park staff were said to be commonly unaware of local history and conventions: "that's the fault I find with the people in the park because people coming in just don't know what something was from way back" (KD). Some locals have found that their own interpretations of local history have been challenged by NPS staff who have only arrived in recent years. When volunteering on interpretive efforts, for example, "they. . .tell me I am all wrong," one interviewee noted, giving residents "kind of a sour taste." Hopefully, the current document might give all parties a point of departure for shared historical understandings of Otter Creek's waterfront – a foundation for other historical discussions.

There does seem to be a sense among Otter Creek residents that there has been general discord between their community and the park over time, though residents vary in their assessment of its severity. As Paul Richardson summarizes it, this sense of discord is rooted in the practical realities of land and resource access, an arena where the community's interests are seen as being in direct opposition to those of the park:

> here we are surrounded by the park in Otter Creek. So I mean, that's not the first love of everybody is the park. I mean, what's going to be good for them is taking something away from you (PR).

As a result of these sentiments, some residents who have worked for the NPS in the past have been depicted as not entirely "trustworthy." Being a park employee was said to have been a liability for some Otter Creek residents in times past, creating social obstacles to their participation in the OCAS and other community organizations and events. Those residents who took positions with the NPS sometimes found themselves in the unexpected position of serving as a *de facto* intermediary when conflicts arose between village residents and the park.

If land and resource access are the fundamental topics of concern, much of that concern centers on the management of the Otter Creek waterfront. The park's management of the shoreline as a "natural" rather than a "cultural" landscape is perhaps key to this concern. As noted previously, the loss of views of the waterfront from Otter Creek was mentioned as a point of concern by a number of interviewees, as former farms and settlements are now being managed as natural areas by the park. A discussion with the community regarding viewshed management might be constructive. Similarly, some residents express frustration with park efforts to retire longstanding social trails to the cove, including but not limited to the inner cove fish house; residents have traditionally maintained these trails when trees fall, brush grows over them, and so forth, but are increasingly concerned about backlash from the park if they do so.

Interviewees mentioned more specific cases in which these differing expectations for the Otter Creek waterfront had resulted in friction in recent years. Certainly, interviewees alluded to the demolition of fish houses in the 1960s and 1970s, but more recent conflicts also were mentioned. For example, interviewees mentioned that - for a time in the late 1990s - the park considered developing a boat launch at the fish house landing on the east side of the cove. Plans apparently called for this boat launch to be built at the location of Harold Walls' slip – a proposal that many local fishing families found objectionable. Fishing families organized in Otter Creek in opposition to this proposal. As explained by one interviewee,

> the park wanted to build this ramping down there, which we petitioned not to…The park said they had the permission to build this one from the State…I created a little of a stir amongst the town of Bar Harbor…they had a special meeting. They lit right into the park and helped me essentially stop this. It was quite an uproar they created… whatever the park did down there to build the ramping, would not, due to a storm like this, stay. We convinced the town of Bar Harbor that this shouldn't take place. It was a pleasing day for us [when they abandoned their plan]…Our thinking at the time was, 'Why does the park service want to build and commercialize this area that was totally

> wild?' I mean not totally wild. We had fish houses down there. But they had been there for the fishermen and had been for 100 years…and other people in the area, some of the residents from Bar Harbor, came to this meeting and said, 'Why do you want to put people's lives in jeopardy? Put them into the guts of the ocean that way?' Kayakers and boats endangered. It's a totally dangerous situation (RW).

This opposition appears to have been a factor in the ultimate rejection of the boat ramp proposal by the park, though the park made modest improvements (such as road paving) to enhance public access to the waterfront at this location all the same.[90]

Road access issues were also mentioned frequently. Some noted that awkward road access and one-way traffic on the Park Loop Road have been perennial challenges to cove users attempting to expeditiously move between boat launches and their homes. Others expressed concern about having received parking tickets on their vehicles when parking in locations long used by local residents when accessing the waterfront.[91] These experiences are sometimes dismissed as further evidence of park staff as "newcomers," but disagreements over appropriate parking sites still complicates park-community relations.

There is also concern among some residents about the perceived potential for further expansion of park influence in Otter Creek. Even if the park has no plans for expansion, some note, there has been growing trend toward conservation pressures on private lands sitting adjacent to the park in recent times, which could, under certain circumstances, affect land and resource use in Otter Creek. As evidence, some note recent cases where logging adjacent to Acadia National Park has been opposed by a number of local and national conservation organizations (O'Connell 1996).

Simultaneously, interviewees report that vandalism and theft was a growing problem at fish houses during the late 20th century, as a growing number of park visitors accessed the eastern cove. The absence of fish houses on the eastern cove today has eliminated this problem, though there are still some minor concerns about potential public impacts at the Otter Creek Aid Society fish house – especially if this area were advertized more to the visiting public. Some suggest that theft and vandalism might create obstacles to potential future cooperative efforts with the park, such as the development of interpretive media along the waterfront. Other criminal activities were mentioned as a minor source of concern on the cove. As cross-border smugglers may have used the cove at different points in its early history, for example, some speculate that drug smuggling may have been carried out by boat from Otter Creek cove in recent times. Little specific

detail was mentioned on this point, however.

These areas of shared concern – especially regarding potential vandalism – might yet provide avenues for cooperation between the NPS and the residents of Otter Creek. Many of the management issues discussed here are addressed by the Acadia National Park Advisory Commission. There appears to be broad support among Otter Creek residents for the Advisory Commission's efforts to build a dialogue between local communities and the park. Certainly, there are members of the Otter Creek community who do not view the Commission as being fully representative of community concerns, but most parties are in agreement that a broader dialogue is in everyone's interest. Building a rapport when there is no immediate crisis, some note, will help insure that things go well and relationships are not irreparably damaged when minor crises do inevitable emerge.

## Efforts to Perpetuate and Commemorate Otter Creek History

In Otter Creek, recreational and residential functions overlie an older, resource-based landscape. With the passage of time, that resource-based history has the potential to disappear from the landscape altogether. Otter Creek residents make reference to the changes they see: the old farms on the east side of inner cove have become overgrown in forest, for example; a house now sits inside the former Hall quarry nearby. If these kinds of places, and their history, is not documented and commemorated in some way, some suggest, they may soon be lost to us forever.

Accordingly, interviewed residents generally agree that "people need to respect and commemorate the local history around the island." Park interpretation has helped to reverse this trend somewhat, but some interviewees, such as Richard Walls, noted that park interpretation regarding human history prior to park creation has been very thin, and that it was important to document and share this history with park visitors. An "Otter Creek Historical Museum" was briefly being planned by community residents to fill this vacuum, but the museum did not ultimately come to fruition.

The community still seems eager to document its history and to find mechanisms for historical commemoration, and perhaps nowhere is this sentiment more focused than Otter Creek's waterfront. As is clear in many parts of this document, residents continue to be very concerned about the loss of shared associations with the waterfront and fear that even the knowledge of the community's ties to the waterfront will fade in the next generation or two unless something is done to reconnect the town to the waterfront and

to commemorate this part of Otter Creek's history. Concern and knowledge about the fishing history of the cove clearly varies generationally. People in their mid-40s might still remember seeing active commercial fishing from the cove; those who are younger than that might not.[92]



Figure 28: Robert Walls standing by the memorial piling constructed in honor of his father - fisherman and poet, Harold Walls. The piling is situated alongside the slip once maintained by Harold Walls, in front of the former site of his fish house. A recessed space in the side of the pole – covered with a protective wire grate - contains a brass plaque engraved with a Harold Walls poem about maintaining this slip. D. Deur photo.

Visits to the Otter Creek waterfront for commemorative purposes are commonplace. People commonly visit the Otter Creek shoreline simply to reflect on, or to teach children about, their history:

> We were just out there. But it's just not any big production. It's just sort of, well, for me, the reason I do it is because of the history of it all. It's sort of a part of who I am, so I appreciate it (CS).

Spouses and others, lacking a personal knowledge of the Otter Creek waterfront, are also invited to walk the cove with family who point out historical landmarks and places of personal and community importance: "I took my wife down there and we walked along the shore…I showed her all those small holes where we used to put our traps" around the cove (RW).

In a few cases, these commemorative efforts have taken material form. Of particular interest is the piling erected by Robert Walls in honor of his father, Harold Walls. Raised on the bank, adjacent to Harold Walls' former fish house and slip, the piling features a poem by Harold Walls, inscribed in a brass plaque set within a recessed space on the side of the pole. Bob Walls recalls that when he installed this pole, he took his father to see it without explanation. Seeing that there was a new pole installed on the beach, Harold began complaining to Robert, wondering aloud who would build such a thing right on top of his slip. When he saw what his son had constructed, though, he was profoundly touched by the gesture. More recently, since Harold Walls' death, Bob Walls has wished to repair the memorial to his father by removing the corrosion from the plaque, which has made the poem partially illegible. He worries that the park might object, or that if he asks for permission to repair the landmark the park may decide to remove it. In fall of 2010, as an outcome of Walls comments to the author of this report on the issue, park staff conveyed written permission to Walls allowing such maintenance.

One might argue that the Otter Creek Aid Society fish house has had similar, if more politicized, commemorative functions in some respects, being a landmark placed on the cove in part to acknowledge an enduring and strong sense of attachment to this waterfront due to familial associations with its fishing history.

It is clear that there is much interest in further commemorative efforts on the waterfront of Otter Creek. Some residents are eager to provide a physical venue for this historical commemoration. When asked what she would like to see along the shoreline in the future, Caroline Smith said, "I want there to be a little fish house-looking building

down there that has placards around the walls," describing the local fishing history. While acknowledging that "it's hard to reestablish what's gone now," resuscitating an entire way of life, one might insure that the unique knowledge and perspectives emanating from that lifestyle might endure (CS). Such commemoration might be of interest to park visitors, but would be of particular value as Otter Creek residents seek to teach future generations of their heritage and to provide a foundation for an enduring community identity.

# Chapter Five
# Conclusions and Opportunities: Envisioning a Collaborative Future on Otter Creek's Waterfront

While Otter Creek might not seem remarkable to the casual visitor with no knowledge of its history, it is a unique place. The little village has exhibited remarkable stability despite shifting economic fortunes, changing ownership of its waterfront, and the social transformation of the larger island community of which it is a part. Families that arrived on this little cove some 180 years ago are still here; they continue to thrive, and it seems likely that they will be there for many more years to come. These longstanding Otter Creek families arguably see this place differently than do visitors, or even other longtime residents of Mount Desert Island. For these families, Otter Creek cove is a geographical locus of personal identities and family histories - a place that brought generations of ancestors a source of sustenance, income, and even entertainment. There is great pride in the shared and individual histories associated with this place. It is where many of them first learned to fish, to swim, to take pride in their family heritage. It is a place that still resonates with meaning.

The cove is also a locus of change and conflict. In historical terms, it is fair to say that the residents of Otter Creek have shared a generally declining sense of control over their own fate for more than a century, as Mount Desert Island gained the attention of the Northeastern aristocracy, the National Park Service, and modern tourists and developers in turn. There is a suggestion in some interviewees' comments that – here more than most places in Maine, or indeed, the United States – moneyed interests have reshaped the landscape while muting the influence of local and working-class people over land and resource use decisions. Residents have long witnessed an awkward juxtaposition between the urban gentility and privilege of summer folk with the pragmatism and austerity of their own, rural New England lifestyles. The contrast between "insiders" and "outsiders" softened with time, but persists to varying degrees between Otter Creek families and out-of-towners today.[93]

While the National Park Service is not the first, or perhaps the most imposing, of the external influences that have reshaped Otter Creek, it is perhaps the most enduring and institutionally tangible. As such it has become a symbolically charged focal point of

some residents' frustrations with a much larger sweep of historical, social, and economic change, of which the agency has been one part. In practical terms, an individual can rage about the tactics of John D. Rockefeller but, as he has been dead for three-quarters of a century, the outcomes of this exercise are somewhat dissatisfying; by placing the past missteps of the National Park Service in the foreground alongside those of Rockefeller and the rusticators, however, one had a tangible adversary – an adversary with a clear administrative hierarchy and a current address. Certainly, many events that continue to affect the NPS-Otter Creek relationship happened years before the arrival of contemporary staff, and sometimes long before their birth. Moreover, the policies under which the NPS acted in times past have sometimes changed, as a matter of evolving park and agency policy through the 20th and early 21st centuries. However, the agency is still being held accountable for this history on some level. Given the history of the cove, the park's relationship to Rockefeller and his legacy, 20th century park positions on fish houses and access issues, and the park's responsibilities as a public institution, it is likely that some Otter Creek residents will continue to hold the park accountable for some time to come.

Certainly, there is a palpable sense of anxiety among some interviewees that the community of Otter Creek continues to change, mostly for the worse and for reasons that are beyond their control. The sources of this concern through the late 20th and early 21st centuries have been numerous. They include increased village dissociation from the waterfront, both functionally and aesthetically; a declining sense of community associated with a gradual decline in shared economic and social activities, in spite of the best efforts of the Aid Society; the disappearance of historical landscapes of shared importance, both on the waterfront and elsewhere; a growing sense of economic vulnerability as traditional economic activities and "mixed economies" have become less tenable; and an enduring sense that the community's fate is being shaped by people without empathy for those of their station, class, occupation, history and values. There is a pervasive suspicion that the NPS views Otter Creek's historic waterfront as being principally a "natural resource" rather than a cultural and historical landscape of enduring importance to the community. Moreover, there is a concern that, over time - whether as an intentional product of park policy or not - this view of the cove as a principally "natural landscape" will ultimately contribute to the erasure of the human presence – or even the memory of the human presence – along the Otter Creek waterfront.

The park has tended to manage this part of the shoreline as a "natural landscape," when it was in many respects a "cultural landscape." This challenge is common to many national parks, but also to many other conservation efforts in rural Maine, where there is both a natural richness and a historical depth that calls upon land managers to make difficult choices about the resources and "periods of significance" within particular settings. There are a number of examples in Maine where conservation efforts have been challenged by a fundamental tension between a desire to conserve the natural environment and a desire to conserve the historically modified cultural landscapes (Judd 1988b). Clearly, Otter Creek is no exception.

Simultaneously, in the course of this research, I detected genuine hints of optimism. The Otter Creek Aid Society has brought considerable energy to the revitalization of village social life, and residents are enjoying community events that for a time seemed to be disappearing. Otter Creek families continue to persist in Otter Creek and are finding gainful employment in new fields – including work that can be done in whole or in part from home offices with internet access – that are allowing young people to stay home rather than move away for work. Certain individuals in the community have been successful in developing positive relationships with particular NPS staff, creating the potential to resolve remaining land use issues peacefully and informally rather than through lobbying and litigation. Access to the town landing and the Aid Society fish house has arguably reduced the intensity of community discontent about being wholly "landlocked" by the park.

Perspectives on the past, and the present need for water access, vary within the community. Despite these differences, almost all Otter Creek residents consulted in the course of the ongoing study do seem to share a sense of concern regarding what is perceived as declining community ties to the shoreline of Otter Creek cove. Residents generally agree that, in some manner, it is symbolically important that "we have the right to go there. We might not necessarily go there very often, but it's available to us if we wish to" (DS). A number of individuals noted that the forest succession on former Otter Cove farmlands, now managed by the NPS, has visually separated the community from the waterfront within living memory – an issue being considered through park management planning efforts at the time of this writing. Some suggested that the absence of water views has undermined options for development and participation in the tourist economy relative to other portions of Mt. Desert Island. Improvements to the town landing provide some level of boat access to certain Otter Creek residents, but a large proportion

of those individuals contacted from the community still express a desire for greater visual and functional connections between the community and the waterfront.

Many Otter Creek residents express hope for an expanded dialogue with the National Park Service that might go beyond the conflicts and the compliance-driven discussions of past times. Interviewees participating in this project often did so enthusiastically, expressing the hope that this research effort, and others like it, might help foster a greater dialogue with the National Park Service regarding the future of Otter Creek cove. Many envision a future in which the community's needs for waterfront access and historical commemoration might be integrated more effectively within NPS cultural and natural resource management goals – producing a waterfront that might meet the needs of both parties. These individuals seem to strive for some final resolution of the conflicts that are perceived to have been simmering since the 1930s, so that the waterfront might continue to serve the diverse needs of the community – now and for generations yet to come.

Similarly, the development of interpretive content and media is clearly of interest to many Otter Creek families. There is a strong interest among a number of community members in developing interpretation that might tell the story of their community to the outside world, while also keeping the memory of that history alive among its younger members today. In particular, interviewees mentioned that they would like to see broader interpretation of small-scale commercial fishing and lobstering traditions within the park, generally, and Otter Creek cove specifically. Karen Zimmerman, for example, said that she would hope to see an interpretive collection or facility:

> "something that would pass down the history of the community, be a repository for all of the stories you're collecting and these kinds of things—events, artifacts, and a place to bring kids and tell them what life used to be like here" (KZ).

A number of individuals made similar suggestions. Interpretive content that spoke of the cove and its significance – not only in the past tense, but also with reference to modern attachments and activities – was said to be appropriate. Some suggested an interpretive development process that involves not only consultation with the Otter Creek community, but the active involvement of the community in the development of content. On the basis of such recommendations, the park might consider undertaking an interpretive development process that incorporates the contents of this document and involves further collaboration with the Otter Creek community in defining some of the

content, media, and venues for public interpretation.

In more general terms, some interviewees advocated the development of educational opportunities regarding maritime ecology, industries, and history that might both provide options for young people in Otter Creek while drawing on the considerable local knowledge of its residents. Some individuals suggested interpretation that might discuss the forest succession around the cove, where farms gradually were overcome with shrubs and then young forest. Even interpretive "demonstrations" for the public or schoolchildren, involving living Otter Creek fishermen, might be considered. In light of efforts to develop an Otter Creek 'museum' or other local repositories of historical information, park staff might consider providing technical assistance (or workshops) in basic historical research and curatorial methods; opportunities might even exist for the collaborative development of curated collections of historical photos, documents, and other items. These all seem like worthy projects, likely to build rapport between the park and the community, while serving the interests of both.

Additional historical research might also be considered, both in support of these interpretive efforts, and to provide other sources of information to park resource managers and community members alike. One can only accomplish so much in a document of this scope, and so many interesting and promising topics of value for resource management and interpretation have been given only cursory treatment in the current report. A number of these sources and themes might call for further investigation, some of which have been noted in the preceding pages. Certainly, there is potential for a more detailed investigation of fishermen's geographical and ecological knowledge, which is only briefly touched upon here. There is still significant knowledge regarding the whereabouts and significance of different underwater features, changes in fish presence, and other environmental sites and processes. Interviewees for this study also made a variety of observations about broader environmental changes that were only addressed tangentially in this document.[94] Yet, with the demise of Otter Creek commercial fishing, coupled with almost universal reliance on electronic gadgetry in the modern fishing industry, means that this knowledge is in rapid decline. Interviewees also noted that many of the waterfront access and fish house maintenance issues that exist at Otter Creek have also played out similarly at Schoodic Point, and urged further historical investigations at that location as well. Natural resource research into the siltation and other, historically recent physical changes to the inner cove were also advocated by some interviewees.

In light of the broad scope of this report, the unpublished writings of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. were only dealt with superficially here, but would no doubt be revealing of his attitudes, strategies, and agreements surrounding the Otter Creek cove access issue. (As a significant proportion of his writings are held in the Rockefeller Archive Center, which tightly controls access, it is unclear how successful such a venture might be if there is a chance it might portray him in a mixed or negative way.) Still, a number of other public repositories contain portions of his correspondence and would warrant a more focused investigation. In the course of this research, promising federal record collections were identified that might contain more records of CCC and military activities on the Otter Creek waterfront and might also warrant a more careful review. Housed primarily (though not exclusively) in the regional and national collections of the National Park Service and the National Archives and Records Administration, these records would be readily available for review.

There are a surprising number of paintings that feature Otter Creek, by both amateur and professional artists, spanning over a century and a half of history. A number were encountered in the course of this research, but many others are known to exist (cf. Wilmerding 1994). These paintings are quite revealing of early life on Otter Creek and Mount Desert Island generally, though none were included in this report because of uncertainties regarding permissions. A systematic effort to identify and obtain copies of these paintings would be of interest to the community and to NPS interpreters alike. Formal and informal interviewees consulted for this project, such as Bob Walls and Leah Palmer, have paintings in their personal collections that might aid such an effort.

The impressive personal archival collections of certain Otter Creek families also deserves more attention. The collection of Robert Walls, alone, could support a dissertation or two, with his father and grandfather's hand-written notes on almost everywhere they placed lobster traps or fished for much of their career, with receipts of most of their work-related purchases, and of almost every major load of fish sold to fish processors in the islands. (Bob Walls also has a number of fishing artifacts in his possession such as a lobster measuring device manufactured by his grandfather, Louis J. Walls.) Mr. Walls is interested in providing access, the information that could be inferred from this unique collection is vast, providing insights into themes biological, historical, economic, and otherwise. An exhibit of such materials might be developed – either as a temporary exhibit or as a permanent portion of the park's interpretive program.

On a tangentially related note, the park might consider granting Bob Walls a more formal agreement than has been granted to him to date, allowing for his family's continued maintenance of the Harold Walls memorial piling on the east side of Otter Creek cove. As noted in this report, that piling continues to be of great commemorative importance – principally to the Walls family, but also to other descendents of Otter Creek fishermen.

Based on the findings of this study, an expanded assessment of the cultural landscape, even a Cultural Landscape Inventory, seems warranted. Such an investigation could expand on existing park documentation for Otter Creek and incorporate some of the lesser documented sites mentioned in this report. As is being accomplished more commonly within recent NPS Cultural Landscape Inventories, such a documentation effort might seek to address some of the "intangible" elements that could warrant inclusion under current NPS and National Register Program guidance – as "ethnographic landscapes" or "ethnographic resources."

Clearly, there are many options for developing collaborative efforts with the Otter Creek community around themes of shared interest. Conversely, it may be very difficult to develop a truly harmonious relationship with the Otter Creek community until the community views the waterfront access issue as being completely resolved, guided by a coherent plan for the cove's future in which residents share some sense of investment. A community visioning process for the future of the Otter Creek waterfront, guided by the NPS but involving a spectrum of community stakeholders, might be an option for developing such a plan. Certain interviewees shared their interest in such a process, which might help to air concerns, counter misperceptions, and identify areas of shared interest that could be developed into the future. The outcomes might be momentarily contentious but, carried out in a mindful way, such a process might yield considerable results and build a firmer foundation for park-community relationships to develop into the future. In addition to general management and access considerations, such a process might identify options for commemoration and interpretation along the Otter Creek waterfront that would be of shared benefit. Though the community has been in transition for many years, many families hold resolutely onto their home and their heritage; in all probability, there will be Walls, Davis, Smith, and Richardson families living in Otter Creek and vicinity another 180 years into the future. It would be best if the community and the park could find opportunities to develop a positive, enduring and collaborative relationship in the intervening years.

From the beginning of white settlement on Otter Creek, there have been great aspirations for the cove – homesteads, family fishing operations, quarrying empires, nationally significant radio stations, and those residents – the majority perhaps – just seeking a stable and happy home in a beautiful and historically rich corner of Mount Desert Island. Dreams and aspirations line the banks of Otter Creek cove. They do not go away with a fee simple purchase of property, with changes in NPS management, or with the economic transformation of Mount Desert Island. These hopes for the cove persist and expand – hopes for more public education, a museum, new oyster farms, or just the ability to keep fishing. The residents continue to aspire, to work for the community's stability, and to prepare for the future of Otter Creek and its cove.

# Sources

## Interviewees

*Interviewees Quoted in the Text*

Sherwood Carr
Marjorie (Walls) Cough
Kendall Davis*
Robert Davis, Sr.
Deborah Dyer
Steve Haynes
Gerald Norwood
Paul Richardson**
Tom Richardson
Caroline Smith
Dennis Smith
Steve Smith
Donald Walls**
Norman Walls**
Richard Walls
Robert Walls**
Rosamond Walls
Karen Zimmerman

*Interviewed by Dr. Charles W. Smythe (Smythe 2008).
**Interviewed separately by Dr. Charles W. Smythe (Smythe 2008), and Dr. Douglas Deur.

### *Informal Interviewees*

The following individuals provided information and perspectives that contributed significantly to the current report, but did not participate in structured or recorded interviews.

Robert Davis, Jr.
Tina Hawes
Robert Hetzer
Wilda Higgins
Leah Palmer
Robert Pyle
Rodney Smith
Charlotte Singleton

### *Interviewee Codes*

CS —Caroline Smith
Deb —Debbie Dyer
DS —Dennis Smith
DW —Donald Walls
GN —Gerald Norwood
KD —Kendall Davis
KZ —Karen Zimmerman
MC —Marjorie (Walls) Cough
NW —Norman Walls
PR —Paul Richardson
RD —Robert Davis, Sr.
RI —Richard Walls
RO —Rosamond Walls
RW —Robert Walls
SC —Sherwood Carr
SH —Steve Haynes
SS —Steve Smith
TR —Tom Richardson

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# Appendix A

# Census Data for Otter Creek: Mount Desert and Eden/Bar Harbor Enumeration Districts, 1850-1930

The tables that follow provide a transcription of hand-written census takers' notes available in federal records (U.S. Census n.d.). In the case of census enumeration within the Mount Desert Island portion of Otter Creek, Otter Creek residents' data were gathered as a single unit, allowing for easy reporting in the attached appendix. On the Eden/Bar Harbor side of the community, Otter Creek data were not enumerated as a single unit, but were recorded in an undifferentiated section of the Eden records. Still, census takers did collect data in geographically contiguous blocks; knowing this, the research team was able to use the names of known Otter Creek residents on the Eden side of the boundary to "bracket" the names of all individuals in census data sheets who appear to have resided in the Otter Creek area at the time. Very modest over- or-under counting of Eden's Otter Creek residents and fishermen is possible because of the inexactness of the historical record that might allow the researchers to identify all Otter Creek residents by name independent of these census records. For the purposes of graphs in the preceding report, Mount Desert Island and Eden figures are aggregated together, unless indicated otherwise. In the notes that follow, there are a few gaps: detailed census sheets from 1890 were lost in a fire long ago, so that this date is not represented in the appendix that follows. Also, the Eden district sheets for 1910 are largely illegible except occupational information, allowing for the inclusion of occupational figures for that date in the report, but not allowing for the listing of resident names in the appendix. Slight variations in recording standards between the censuses of different dates result in variations in data reported here.

## Fishing Families, Mt Desert Census District, Otter Creek, 1850

| HH No. | First Name | Last Name | Head of HH? | # in House | Occupation | Age | Sheet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Samuel | Walls | Y | 7 | Laborer | 40 | 1 |
| 2 | David Jr. | Bracy | Y | 4 | Laborer | 29 | 1 |
| 2 | David Jr. | Bracy | N | | | 3 | 1 |
| 3 | Benjamin | Walls | Y | 7 | Fisherman | 45 | 1 |
| 3 | Benjamin | Walls | N | 0 | Fisherman | 21 | 1 |
| 4 | George | Grover | Y | 6 | Fisherman | 38 | 1 |
| 5 | James | Walls | Y | 7 | Fisherman | 41 | 1 |
| 5 | Ephraim | Walls | N | 0 | Fisherman | 19 | 1 |
| 6 | ?? | David | Y | 10 | Seaman | 38 | 1 |
| 7 | John | Davis | Y | 1 | Seaman | 46 | 1 |
| 7 | Elizabeth | Davis | N | 0 | | 43 | 2 |
| 7 | Daniel R. | Davis | N | 0 | Fisherman | 15 | 2 |
| 7 | John | Temple | N | 0 | Laborer | 18 | 2 |
| 8 | Adam | Pendleton | Y | 5 | Laborer | 37 | 2 |
| 9 | John | V. | Y | 6 | Seaman | 34 | 2 |
| 10 | Jacob | Clement | Y | 6 | Fisherman | 43 | 2 |
| 11 | Abraham | | Y | 6 | unknown (not fisherman) | 67 | 2 |
| 11 | Gifford | | N | 0 | Seaman | 18 | 2 |
| 12 | John | Jordan | Y | 5 | unknown (not fisherman) | 36 | 2 |
| 12 | Isaiah | Jordan | N | 0 | Laborer | 16 | 2 |
| 13 | Michael | Green | Y | 4 | Laborer | 40 | 2 |
| 14 | George | Jordan | Y | 6 | Milkman | 45 | 3 |
| 14 | Alden | Jordan | N | 0 | Milkman | 20 | 3 |
| 15 | James | Clements | Y | 7 | Cooper (barrel maker) | 47 | 3 |
| 16 | James | Bracy | Y | 6 | Fisherman | 21 | 3 |
| 17 | Stephen | S | Y | 6 | Carpenter | 39 | 3 |
| 18 | John | Bracy | Y | 8 | Fisherman | 39 | 3 |
| 19 | John | Bracy | Y | 5 | Laborer | 87 | 3 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | Berilla | Bracy | N | 0 | | 77 | 3 |
| 19 | William | Bracy | N | 0 | Fisherman | 25 | 3 |
| 19 | George | Bracy | N | 0 | Fisherman | 24 | 3 |
| 20 | James | Clements | Y | 5 | Cooper (barrel maker) | 25 | 3 |
| 21 | Gideon | Dodge | Y | 8 | Fisherman | 44 | 4 |
| 22 | William | Calahan | Y | 4 | Blacksmith | 28 | 4 |
| 23 | Ezekiel | Pierce | Y | 5 | Fisherman | 32 | 4 |
| 23 | William | Pierce | N | 0 | | 2 | 4 |
| 24 | Benjamin | Baker | Y | 4 | Ropemaker | 50 | 4 |
| 25 | George | Roberts | Y | 7 | Fisherman | 50 | 4 |
| 26 | Samuel | Lindsey | Y | 10 | Seaman | 40 | 4 |
| 26 | Edward | Lindsey | N | 0 | Seaman | 19 | 4 |
| 26 | George | Lindsey | N | 0 | Fisherman | 16 | 4 |
| 27 | Harriet | Pung | Y | 3 | | 47 | 4 |
| 27 | Epps | Pung | N | 0 | Fisherman | 24 | 4 |
| 27 | Amos | Pung | N | 0 | Fisherman | 16 | 5 |
| 28 | John | Savage | Y | 8 | unknown (not fisherman) | 49 | 5 |
| 28 | Augustus | Savage | N | 0 | Seaman | 18 | 5 |
| 29 | William | Roberts | Y | 4 | Fisherman | 47 | 5 |
| 30 | William | Stanley | Y | 10 | Seaman | 53 | 5 |
| 30 | William | Stanley | N | 0 | Seaman | 30 | 5 |
| 31 | Daniel | Kimball | Y | 7 | Merchant | 47 | 5 |
| 32 | Peter | Stanley | Y | 2 | unknown (not fisherman) | 60 | 5 |
| 33 | Samuel | | Y | 4 | Farmer | 57 | 5 |
| 33 | ?? | | N | 0 | Seaman | 26 | 5 |
| 34 | Hannah | Smalledge | Y | 3 | None | 28 | 5 |
| 35 | Thomas | Manchester | Y | 3 | unknown (not fisherman) | 29 | 5 |

Population 199; 18 Households, 10 Households reporting Fishermen as “Head of Household”

## Fishing Families, Mt Desert Census District, Otter Creek, 1860

| HH. No. | First Name | Last Name | Head of HH? | # in HH? | Occupation | Fisherman? | Age | Sheet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 393 | David | Bracy | Y | 8 | | x | 29 | 13 |
| 393 | David Jr. | Bracy | N | | | | 13 | 13 |
| 394 | Benj | Walls | Y | 4 | | x | 57 | 13 |
| 395 | George | Grover | Y | 9 | | x | 48 | 13 |
| 396 | UnOccupied | | | 0 | | | | |
| 397 | James | Walls | Y | 7 | | x | 53 | 14 |
| 397 | Andrew T. | Davis | N | | | x | 22 | 14 |
| 398 | UnOccupied | | | 0 | | | | |
| 399 | Samuel | Davis | Y | 9 | | x | 52 | 14 |
| 399 | Thomas | Davis | N | | | | 16 | 14 |
| 400 | Harvey | Nickerson | Y | 2 | | x | 30 | 14 |
| 401 | M | Helley | Y | 3 | | | 28 | 14 |
| 402 | Elizabeth | Davis | Y | 8 | | | 54 | 14 |
| 403 | Joseph | Turnbull | Y | 4 | | | 65 | 14 |
| 404 | John | Jordan | Y | 5 | | | 46 | 14/15 |
| 405 | Geo. | Jordan | Y | 6 | | | 56 | 15 |
| 406 | Michael | Green | Y | 7 | Laborer | | 48 | 15 |
| 407 | Susan W.K. | Bracy | Y | 6 | | | 41 | 15 |
| 408 | James | Clement | Y | 8 | Seaman | | 57 | 15 |
| 409 | John | Smalledge | Y | 7 | | | 45 | 15 |
| 410 | John | Bracy | Y | 10 | Seaman | | 51 | 15 |
| 410 | John W. | Bracy | N | 0 | | x | 18 | 16 |
| 410 | Samuel | Davis | N | 0 | | x | 24 | 16 |
| 411 | Berilla | Bracy | Y | 3 | | | 76 | 16 |
| 411 | George | Bracy | N | 0 | | x | 33 | 16 |
| 412 | James | Bracy | Y | 10 | | x | 42 | 16 |
| 412 | Amos | Bracy | N | 0 | | | 14 | 16 |
| 413 | Gideon | Dodge | Y | 11 | | x | 56 | 16 |
| 414 | David | Ladd | Y | 4 | | | 35 | 16 |
| 415 | Stephenson | Hard | Y | 6 | | | 48 | 16 |
| 416 | William | Hellishan | Y | 7 | | x | 41 | 16 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 417 | Unoccupied | | | 0 | | | | |
| 418 | Ezekiel | Pierce | Y | 7 | | x | 42 | 17 |
| 418 | William | Pierce | N | 0 | | | 12 | 17 |
| 419 | Unoccupied | | | 0 | | | | |
| 420 | James | Clement | Y | 9 | | | 47 | 17 |
| 421 | Unoccupied | | | | | | | |
| 422 | Thomas | Savage | Y | 4 | | | 36 | 17 |
| 423 | Thomas | Hasgall | Y | 9 | | | 37 | 17 |
| 424 | Augustus | Savage | Y | 4 | | | 28 | 17/18 |

Population 177; 10 Households reporting Fishermen as "Head of Household"

## Fishing Families, Mt Desert Census District, Otter Creek, 1870

| HH No. | First | Last | Head of HH? | # in HH | Occupation | Fisherman? | Age | Sheet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 139 | Ezekiel | Pierce | Y | 8 | | x | 52 | 18 |
| 139 | William | Pierce | N | 0 | | x | 22 | 19 |
| 140 | Stephen | | Y | 3 | Grocer -Retail | | 58 | 19 |
| 141 | Charles | | Y | 3 | Shoemaker | | 31 | 19 |
| 142 | James | Calahan(M) | Y | 7 | | x | 50 | 19 |
| 143 | James | Bracy | Y | 8 | Sea Captain | | 50 | 19 |
| 143 | James | Bracy | N | 0 | | x | 18 | 18 |
| 144 | Amos | Bracy | Y | 2 | | x | 22 | 19 |
| 145 | John | Bracy | Y | 6 | | x | 60 | 19 |
| 145 | George W. | Bracy | N | 0 | | x | 21 | 19 |
| 146 | John | Jordan | Y | 1 | Farmer | | 63 | 19 |
| 147 | George | Bracy | Y | 3 | | x | 44 | 19 |
| 148 | Gideon | George | Y | 9 | | x | 64 | 20 |
| 148 | Eastman | George | N | 0 | | x | 23 | 20 |
| 149 | John | Smallidge | Y | 7 | Sea Captain | | 54 | 20 |
| 150 | James | Clement | Y | 8 | Sea Captain | | 69 | 20 |
| 150 | James | Clement | N | 0 | | x | 30 | 20 |
| 150 | Charles | Clement | N | 0 | | x | 27 | 20 |
| 151 | Susan | Bracy | Y | 6 | Keeping Home | | 51 | 20 |
| 152 | Eri T | Lyman | Y | 7 | Sailor | | 53 | 20 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 153 | Michael | Brown (Green) | Y | 2 | | x | 57 | 20 |
| 154 | Jamie | David (Davis) | Y | 3 | | x | 28 | 20 |
| 155 | Joseph | Turnbull | Y | 4 | | x | 65 | 21 |
| 155 | Charles | Turnbull | N | | | x | 18 | 21 |
| 156 | Samuel | Davis | Y | 2 | | x | 63 | 21 |
| 157 | Thomas | Davis | Y | 4 | | x | 25 | 21 |
| 158 | William | Davis | Y | 2 | | x | 26 | 21 |
| 159 | James | Walls | Y | 4 | | x | 62 | 21 |
| 160 | William K. | Walls | Y | 3 | | x | 31 | 21 |
| 161 | George | Grover | Y | 5 | | x | 58 | 21 |
| 162 | Samuel | Davis | Y | 6 | | x | 34 | 21 |
| 163 | Berilla | Smith | Y | 4 | Keeping Home | | 32 | 21 |
| 164 | David Jr. | Bracy | Y | 3 | | x | 23 | 21 |
| 165 | Davis (David) | Bracy | Y | 5 | | x | 60 | 21 |
| 166 | James J. | Walls | Y | 3 | | x | 28 | 22 |
| 167 | Andrew T. | Davis | Y | 5 | | x | 31 | 22 |
| 168 | Daniel | Walls | Y | 6 | | x | 31 | 22 |
| 169 | Samuel | Walls | Y | 3 | | x | 32 | 22 |
| 170 | Leander | Richardson | Y | 4 | Farmer Laborer | | 53 | 22 |
| 171 | William | Walls | Y | 4 | | x | 30 | 22 |
| 172 | Elisha | Hadley | Y | 9 | | | 30 | 22 |

Population 159; 23 Households reporting Fishermen as "Head of Household"

## Fishing Families, Mt Desert Census District, Otter Creek, 1880

| HH No. | First | Last | HH Head? | # in HH | Fisherman? | Age | Sheet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 73 | Augustus | Savage | Y | 8 | | 48 | 8 |
| 73 | Fred | Savage | N | 0 | x | 18 | 8 |
| 74 | | Savage | Y | 1 | | 75 | 8 |
| 75 | Melvin | Manchester | y | 2 | | 27 | 8 |
| 76 | Daniel | Kimball | Y | 2 | x | 37 | 8 |
| 77 | Horace | Roberts | Y | 7 | | 47 | 8 |
| 78 | Debora | Roberts | Y | 6 | | 50 | 8 |
| 79 | Charles | Frazier | Y | 6 | | 43 | 8 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 80 | Josiah | Smallidge | Y | 8 | x | 54 | 8 |
| 80 | Herbert | Smallidge | N | 0 | x | 19 | 8 |
| 81 | Daniel | Davis | y | 3 | x | 43 | 9 |
| 82 | Frank | Bracy | Y | 8 | x | 38 | 9 |
| 83 | Joseph | Turnbull | y | 3 | | 77 | 9 |
| 83 | Charles | Turnbull | N | 0 | x | 28 | 9 |
| 84 | Peter | P | Y | 3 | | 49 | 9 |
| 85 | Robert | Boyd | Y | 2 | | 45 | 9 |
| 86 | Samuel | Davis | Y | 1 | | 72 | 9 |
| 87 | Thomas | Davis | Y | 7 | x | 36 | 9 |
| 88 | Martin | Oak…. | Y | 3 | | 33 | 9 |
| 89 | William | Davis | Y | 4 | x | 37 | 9 |
| 90 | Jullian | Smith | Y | 4 | x | 35 | 9 |
| 91 | James | Walls | Y | 2 | | 73 | 9 |
| 92 | James Jr. | Walls | Y | 7 | | 35 | 9 |
| 93 | George | Grover | Y | 3 | x | 29 | 9 |
| 93 | William H. | Walls | Y | 4 | x | 41 | 10 |
| 94 | George W. | Grover | Y | 6 | x | 68 | 10 |
| 95 | Andrew | Davis | Y | 9 | x | 41 | 10 |
| 95 | Florington | Davis | N | 0 | x | 19 | 10 |
| 96 | Samuel | Davis | Y | 6 | | 44 | 10 |
| 97 | Daniel | Walls | Y | 7 | | 41 | 10 |
| 97 | Fred H. | Walls | N | 0 | | 17 | 10 |
| 98 | David Jr. | Bracy | Y | 3 | x | 33 | 10 |
| 99 | Samuel | Walls | Y | 3 | x | 42 | 10 |
| 99 | Samuel Jr. | Walls | N | 0 | x | 17 | 10 |
| 100 | David | Bracy | Y | 3 | | 69 | 10 |
| 101 | George | Saunders | Y | 4 | | 36 | 10 |
| 102 | William | Walls | Y | 7 | | 41 | 11 |
| 103 | Leander | Richardson | Y | 4 | | 61 | 11 |
| 103 | Willis J. | Walls | N | 0 | x | 18 | 11 |
| 104 | Joseph | Bracy | Y | 6 | | 30 | 11 |
| 105 | Berilla | Smith | Y | 3 | | 41 | 11 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 105 | Charles | Smith | N | 0 | | 16 | 11 |
| 106 | John | Jordan | Y | 4 | | 66 | 11 |
| 107 | Eliza | Bracy | Y | 6 | | 61 | 11 |
| 108 | Frank | Herriman | Y | 4 | | 53 | 11 |
| 109 | Eldridge | Seymour | Y | 6 | | 39 | 11 |
| 110 | Eri T. | Lyman | Y | 4 | x | 62 | 11 |
| 111 | | Clement | Y | 5 | x | 37 | 11 |
| 112 | James | Clement | Y | 3 | | 79 | 12 |
| 113 | | Smallider | Y | 3 | x | 25 | 12 |
| 114 | Stephen | Southarce | Y | 3 | | 69 | 12 |
| 115 | Gideon P. | Dodge | Y | 7 | x | 73 | 12 |
| 116 | Eastman | Dodge | Y | 6 | x | 33 | 12 |
| 117 | John | Bracy | y | 5 | x | 70 | 12 |
| 118 | George | Bracy | Y | 2 | x | 53 | 12 |
| 119 | William | Callahan | Y | 5 | x | 53 | 12 |
| 120 | Ezekiel | Pierce | Y | 7 | | 61 | 12 |
| 120 | William | Pierce | N | 0 | x | 32 | 12 |
| 120 | Waldon | Pierce | N | 0 | x | 29 | 12 |
| 120 | Berton | Pierce | N | 0 | x | 21 | 12 |
| 121 | James | Clement | Y | 3 | x | 63 | 12 |
| 122 | John | Talmadge | Y | 6 | x | 32 | 12 |

Population 234; 23 Households reporting Fishermen as "Head of Household"

## Eden Census District, Otter Creek, 1900

| HH No. | First Name | Last Name | Head of HH? | # in HH | Occupation | Age |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 623 | Charles | Frances | Y | 3 | | 73 |
| 623 | Robert | Dalton | N | 0 | | 36 |
| 624 | Isaac | Tripp | Y | 3 | "[?] Estates" | 48 |
| 625 | Charles | Young | Y | 8 | Fisherman | 42 |
| 625 | Arthur | Young | N | 0 | Teamster | 20 |
| 625 | Earnest | Young | N | 0 | Day Labor | 16 |
| 626 | Herbert | Neuman (Newman) | Y | 4 | Carpenter | 39 |
| 627 | John F. | Young | Y | 3 | Fisherman | 36 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 627 | ? | Lindsay | N | 0 | Housekeeper | 41 |
| 628 | David | Thomas | Y | 2 | Farm Laborer | 71 |
| 629 | William | Stanley | Y | 3 | None | 84 |
| 629 | Walter | Stanley | N | 0 | Stone Cutter | 36 |
| 629 | Emma | Sargent | N | 0 | Housekeeper | 56 |
| 630 | Tyler | Stanley | Y | 3 | Carpenter | 39 |
| 631 | Henry L. | Stanley | Y | 3 | Quarry-man | 37 |
| 631 | Arthur | Hooper (Hooker) | N | 0 | Teamster | 26 |
| 632 | Lincoln | Wright | Y | 7 | Carpenter | 36 |
| 632 | Arthur | Young | N | 0 | Day Labor | 20 |
| 633 | John | Harvey (Stanley) | Y | 4 | “Beach [?]” | 36 |
| 634 | Edward | Stanly | Y | 2 | Farmer | 74 |
| 635 | Joshua | Richardson | Y | 5 | Day Labor | 50 |
| 635 | Clarence | Richardson | N | 0 | Farm Laborer | 21 |
| 636 | Willis J. | Walls | Y | 3 | Fisherman | 36 |
| 637 | Mary | Hadly (Haddy) | Y | 6 | None | 51 |
| 637 | Granville | Hadly (Haddy) | N | 0 | Day Labor | 29 |
| 637 | William | Lally | N | 0 | Day Labor | 61 |
| 638 | Heny L. | Chambers | Y | 4 | Farm Laborer | 30 |
| 639 | Elisha | Hadley | Y | 2 | Farm Laborer | 60 |
| 639b | Irving | Frost | Y | 4 | House Painter | 25 |
| 639b | Alexander | Morrison | N | 0 | Farmer | 54 |
| 640 | Richard (Rechman) | Kittredge | Y | 5 | Merchant | 51 |
| 640 | Percy | Kelly | N | 0 | Salesman | 22 |
| 640 | Harrad | Copp | N | 0 | Salesman | 19 |
| 641 | Ambrose | Butler | Y | 8 | Quarry-man | 43 |
| 641 | Daniel (Damier) | Gray | N | 0 | Quarry-man | 22 |
| 641 | Earnest C. | Gordon | N | 0 | Quarry-man | 35 |
| 641 | Joseph | Baker | N | 0 | Teamster | 65 |
| 641 | Parke | Robinson | N | 0 | Quarry-man | 45 |
| 641 | Walter | Gray | N | 0 | Day Labor | 50 |
| 641 | Otis | Conary | N | 0 | Quarry-man | 45 |
| 642 | Fred H. | Leonard | Y | 4 | Hostler | 37 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 642 | Lewis | Duffy | N | 0 | Day Labor | 19 |
| 643 | Alexanda (Alexander) | Robertoff | Y | 3 | Nurseryman | 46 |
| 643 | George | Ward | N | 0 | Farm Laborer | 34 |

Population 89; 3 Households reporting Fishermen as "Head of Household"

## Mt Desert Census District, Otter Creek, 1900

| HH No. | First Name | Last Name | Head of HH? | # in HH | Occupation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fred | Stanley | Yes | 2 | Grocer |
| 1 | Edith | Stanley | No | 0 | Grocer |
| 2 | Charles | Richardson | Yes | 3 | |
| 2 | Linda | Richardson | No | | Dressmaker |
| 3 | William | Walle | Yes | 3 | Farmer |
| 3 | Ernes | Walle | No | 0 | Quarryman |
| 4 | William | Bronker | Yes | 3 | Fisherman |
| 5 | Samuel | Walls | Yes | 2 | Carpenter |
| 6 | Edgar | Walls | Yes | 2 | Blacksmith |
| 7 | George | Davis | Yes | 4 | Fisherman |
| 8 | Frank | Davis | Yes | 4 | Fisherman |
| 8 | Ada | Naggertty | No | 0 | Housekeeper |
| 8 | Elmer | Naggertty | No | 0 | Laborer |
| 9 | Andrew | Davis | Yes | 7 | Fisherman |
| 9 | James | Davis | No | 0 | Fisherman |
| 9 | Yesta | Davis | No | 0 | Housekeeper |
| 10 | Forentine | Davis | Yes | 8 | Fisherman |
| 11 | David | Bracy | Yes | 5 | Farmer |
| 11 | Lucy | Bracy | No | 0 | Housekeeper |
| 11 | Vernon | Bracy | No | 0 | Fisherman |
| 11 | Hattie | Gilley | No | 0 | Teacher |
| 12 | N | Liscomb | Yes | 7 | Quarryman |
| 13 | George | Mover | Yes | 6 | Fisherman |
| 13 | LeCharles | Dunbar | No | 0 | Day Laborer |
| 14 | Eldridge | Walls | Yes | 3 | Day Laborer |
| 14 | Lora | Grover | No | 0 | Housekeeper |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | Greely | Walls | Yes | 10 | Fisherman |
| 16 | William | Bracy | Yes | 6 | Carpenter |
| 16 | Nellies | Allen | No | 0 | Servant |
| 17 | Willie | Warren | Yes | 5 | Farmer |
| 17 | Eddie | Warren | No | 0 | Housekeeper |
| 18 | John | Smith | Yes | 3 | Day Laborer |
| 19 | Joseph | Duffer | Yes | 1 | Day Laborer |
| 20 | Albert | Stanley | Yes | 5 | Farm Laborer |
| 21 | William | Davis | Yes | 3 | Fisherman |
| 21 | Arthur | Saunders | No | 0 | Fisherman |
| 22 | Philemon | Young | Yes | 2 | Housekeeper |
| 22 | George | Young | No | 0 | Day Laborer |
| 23 | Thomas | Davis | Yes | 4 | Fisherman |
| 23 | Martin | Davis | No | 0 | Fisherman |
| 24 | Charles | Turnbull | Yes | 8 | Fisherman |

Population 106; 10 Households reporting Fisherman as "Head of Household"

## Mt Desert Census District, Otter Creek, 1910

| HH No. | First Name | Last Name | Head of HH? | # in HH | Occupation | Industry |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Augustus | Small | Yes | 4 | Gardener | Private Estates |
| 1 | Guy | Small | No | 0 | Farmer | 'working out' |
| 1 | Beatrice | Small | No | 0 | Laundress | At Home |
| 2 | Charles | Turnbull | Yes | 8 | Farmer | Produce Farmer |
| 2 | Emma | Turnbull | No | 0 | Laundress | At Home |
| 2 | Mary | Turnbull | No | 0 | Servant | Private Family |
| 3 | Thomas | Davis | Yes | 4 | Fisherman | Lobster |
| 3 | Martin | Davis | No | 0 | Fisherman | Lobster |
| 3 | Ruth | Davis | No | 0 | Teacher | Public School |
| 4 | George | Davis | Yes | 7 | Fisherman | Lobster |
| 5 | Phadelia | Young | Yes | 5 | None | |
| 5 | Jennie | Wright | No | 0 | Servant | Private Family |
| 5 | George | Young | No | 0 | Laborer | Roads |
| 6 | Arthur | Sanders | Yes | 4 | Fisherman | Lobster |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | John | Smith | Yes | 2 | Gardener | Private Estates |
| 8 | John Jr. | Smith | Yes | 6 | Gardener | Private Estates |
| 8 | Ella | Smith | No | 0 | Laundress | At Home |
| 9 | William | Warren | Yes | 3 | Farmer | Truck Farm |
| 9 | Mary | Grindle | No | 0 | Housekeeper | Private Family |
| 10 | Hillard | Walls | Yes | 3 | Gardener | Private Estates |
| 11 | Surley | Walls | Yes | 11 | Farmer | Truck Farm |
| 11 | William | Walls | No | 0 | Gardener | Private Estates |
| 11 | Harvard | Walls | No | 0 | Farmer | At Home |
| 12 | Andrew | Davis | Yes | 4 | Fisherman | Lobster |
| 12 | Florentine | Davis | No | 0 | Fisherman | Lobster |
| 13 | Samuel J. | Walls | Yes | 4 | Farmer | Truck Farm |
| 14 | Samuel M. | Walls | Yes | 2 | Farmer | Truck Farm |
| 15 | George W. | Grover | Yes | 6 | Fisherman | Lobster |
| 15 | George | Smith | No | 0 | Gardener | Private Estates |
| 16 | James | Smith | Yes | 2 | Gardener | Private Estates |
| 17 | David | Bracy | Yes | 2 | Carpenter | Job Work |
| 18 | F.D. | Stanley | Yes | 2 | Clerk | Store |
| 19 | Charles | Young | Yes | 5 | Fisherman | Lobster |
| 19 | Edith | Young | No | 0 | Cook | Private Family |
| 19 | Roy | Young | No | 0 | Laborer | working out |
| 20 | Charles | Richardson | Yes | 4 | Painter | Houses |
| 20 | Linda | Richardson | No | 0 | Dressmaker | At Home |
| 21 | William | Walls | Yes | 5 | None | |
| 21 | Earnest | Walls | No | 0 | Stonecutter | Granite Quarry |
| 22 | Edgar | Walls | Yes | 2 | Clerk | Grocery Store |
| 23 | Shirley | Bracy | Yes | 6 | Fisherman | Lobster |
| 23 | Forrest | Bracy | No | 0 | Driver | Livery |
| 24 | Mary | Bunker | Yes | 4 | None | |
| 24 | Alton | Grover | No | 0 | Gardener | Private Estates |
| 25 | William | Davis | Yes | 2 | Fisherman | Lobster |
| 26 | Florentine | Davis | Yes | 6 | Gardener | Private Estates |
| 27 | Veagie | Young | Yes | 2 | Teamster | Street Work |

Population 115; 8 Households reporting Fisherman as “Head of Household”

## Bar Harbor Census District, Otter Creek, 1920

| HH No. | First Name | Last Name | Head of HH? | # in HH | Occupation | Industry | Age |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 93 | John | Young | Y | 2 | Fisherman | | 53 |
| 93 | Louise | Starr | N | 0 | Housekeeper | | 41 |
| 94 | Helen | Early | Y | 4 | None | | 26 |
| 95 | Fannie E. | Harvey | Y | 3 | None | | 26 |
| 96 | Albert P. | Harney | Y | 5 | Fisherman | | 46 |
| 97 | Ansel R. | Davis | Y | 5 | Fisherman | | 35 |
| 98 | Isaac | Tripp | Y | 2 | Farmer | At Home | 66 |
| 99 | Hubert | Young | Y | 1 | Laborer | | 34 |
| 100 | Palmer | Seavey | Y | 2 | Fisherman | | 44 |
| 101 | William | Chatworthy | Y | 7 | Illegible | | 35 |
| 102 | Wallis J. | Walls | Y | 3 | Fisherman | | 56 |
| 103 | John E. | Stanley | Y | 3 | Tool Handyman | | 54 |
| 104 | Chester | Walls | Y | 4 | Fisherman | | 35 |
| 105 | Frank E. | Davis | Y | 4 | Teamster | | 55 |
| 105 | Maynard | Davis | N | 0 | Gardener | | 29 |
| 106 | Albert H. | Stanley | Y | 6 | Farmer | At Home | 56 |
| 106 | Dora | Stanley | N | 0 | Sales Shop | | 21 |
| 107 | Frank | Hamblin | Y | 1 | Laborer | | 46 |
| 108 | George | Jellism | Y | 2 | Farmer | At Home | 69 |
| 108 | Albert | Jellism | N | 0 | Teamster | | 44 |
| 109 | Frank H. | Dray | Y | 2 | Farmer | At Home | 41 |
| 110 | Albert F. | Manning | Y | 2 | None | | 62 |
| 111 | Earnest (Evert) | Graham | Y | 2 | Banking | | 46 |

Population 60; 6 Households reporting Fisherman as “Head of Household”

## Mt Desert Census District, Otter Creek, 1920

| HH No. | First Name | Last Name | Head of HH? | # in HH | Occupation | Industry |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Edgar | Walls | Yes | 3 | Road builder | Roads |
| 2 | | Harvey | Yes | 6 | Steamship-Oiler | |
| 3 | Alfonso | Harvey | Yes | 2 | Gardener | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Shirley | Bisbey | Yes | 8 | Fisherman | |
| 5 | | Grover | Yes | 8 | Gardener | |
| 6 | Gloria | Davis | Yes | 1 | None-Housewife | |
| 7 | Arthur | Saunders | Yes | 4 | Fisherman | |
| 8 | David | Bracy | Yes | 2 | Laborer | Roads |
| 8 | Lucy | Bracy | No | 0 | Wood Craftsman | |
| 9 | James | Smith | Yes | 4 | Gardener | |
| 9 | Bernard | Wright | No | 0 | Laborer | Roads |
| 10 | George W. | Smith | Yes | 9 | Gardener | Estate |
| 10 | Walter | Raymond | No | 0 | Teamster | |
| 11 | F. | Gundle | Yes | 6 | Laborer | Roads |
| 12 | James | Davis | Yes | 4 | Gardener | |
| 13 | Clarence | Richardson | Yes | 6 | Stonemason | |
| 13 | Eldridge | Walls | No | 0 | Laborer | Roads |
| 14 | Hollis | W | Yes | 4 | Gardener | |
| 15 | Thomas Edgar | Tubbs | Yes | 6 | Gardener | |
| 16 | Greely | Walls | Yes | 13 | Florist | |
| 16 | Ralph | Walls | No | 0 | | Public |
| 16 | Beatrice | Small | No | 0 | Housemaid | |
| 16 | Harvey | Walls | No | 0 | Gardener | |
| 16 | M. | Walls | No | 0 | Housemaid | |
| 16 | Percy | Walls | No | 0 | Gardener | |
| 16 | M. | Walls | No | 0 | Gardener | |
| 17 | Samuel | Walls | Yes | 7 | Gardener | |
| 18 | Hillard | Walls | Yes | 3 | Gardener | |
| 19 | Fl. | Davis | Yes | 3 | Manager | Store |
| 20 | George | Young | Yes | 1 | Laborer | Roads |
| 21 | Herman G. | Bracy | Yes | 3 | Gardener | Estate |
| 21 | Joseph S. | Bracy | No | 0 | Mason | Stone |
| 22 | George | | Yes | 2 | Gardener | Estate |
| 23 | John E. | Smith | Yes | 7 | Gardener | Estate |
| 24 | George | Davis | Yes | 10 | Fisherman | Lobsters |
| 24 | Earl | Davis | No | 0 | Laborer | Roads |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | Roger | Davis | No | 0 | Gardener | Estates |
| 25 | Frank | Tracy | Yes | 3 | Laborer | Roads |
| 26 | Martin | Davis | Yes | 3 | Laborer | Nurseries |
| 27 | Abby | Richardson | Yes | 2 | Housemaid | Houses |
| 28 | Harold | Bracy | Yes | 6 | Farm | Laborer |
| 29 | Augustus | Small | Yes | 6 | Carpenter | Houses |
| 30 | Milton | Walls | Yes | 6 | Forestry | Forests |
| 31 | Charles | Young | Yes | 4 | Fisherman | Motorboat |

Population 152; 4 Households reporting Fisherman as "Head of Household"

## Bar Harbor Census District, Otter Creek, 1930

| HH No. | First Name | Last Name | Head of HH? | # in HH | Occupation | Industry | Age |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 491 | Leslie | Seeley | Y | 8 | Laborer | National Park | 21 |
| 491 | Maurrice | Lingley | N | 0 | Laborer | National Park | 23 |
| | Harold | Cox | N | 0 | Laborer | National Park | 22 |
| | Hubert | Seeley | N | 0 | Laborer | National Park | 19 |
| 492 | Chester | Walls | N | 5 | Fisherman | Fish | 44 |
| 493 | John E. | Stanley | Y | 4 | Gardener | Private Estates | 64 |
| | George G. | Stanley | N | 0 | Gardener | Private Estates | 39 |
| | Hoyt | Stanley | N | 0 | Delivery Clerk | | |
| 494 | Willis | Walls | Y | 2 | Fisherman | Boats | 68 |
| 495 | William O. | Doucette | Y | 3 | Truckman | | 30 |
| 496 | Edgar | Tripp | Y | 2 | Gardener | Private Estates | 54 |
| 497 | William | Young | Y | 5 | Laborer | | 40 |
| 498 | Pearl | Bunker | Y | 3 | Gardener | Private Estates | 54 |
| 499 | Walter | Webber | Y | 6 | Laborer | National Park | 30 |
| 499 | Fred | Haslam | Y | 0 | Gardener | Private Estates | 53 |
| 500 | Fred | Jones | Y | 1 | Gardener | Private Estates | 29 |
| 501 | William | Allen | Y | 2 | Shoemaker | Shops | 56 |
| 502 | Albert | Stanley | Y | 3 | Farmer | | 65 |

Population 44; 1 Household reporting Fisherman as "Head of Household" (Chester Walls data ambiguous – maybe 2)

## Mt Desert Census District, Otter Creek, 1930

| HH No. | First Name | Last Name | Head of HH? | # in HH | Occupation | Industry |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Herbert | Newman | Yes | 2 | Carpenter | |
| 2 | Edgar | Walls | Yes | 2 | Contractor | |
| 2 | F | Carter | No | | Servant | |
| 3 | Shirley | Higgins | Yes | 2 | Mason | |
| 4 | Willis | Carter | Yes | 3 | Fisherman | |
| 5 | Harold | Carter | Yes | 2 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 6 | Chase | Young | Yes | 3 | Laborer | Odd Jobs |
| 7 | Alfonso | Harvey | Yes | 4 | Gardener | Private House |
| 8 | Samuel | Walls | Yes | 8 | None | |
| 8 | Austin | Walls | No | | Laborer | |
| 8 | Samuel | Walls | No | | Laborer | |
| 9 | Harvey | Richardson | Yes | 1 | Laborer | |
| 10 | Chase | Young | Yes | 1 | Quarryman | |
| 11 | Shirley | Bracy | Yes | 5 | Fisherman | |
| 12 | Mertie | Harvey | Yes | 5 | None | |
| 13 | Jeb | Brown | Yes | 3 | Gardener | |
| 14 | Albert | Grover | Yes | 8 | None | |
| 14 | H. | Grover | No | | Stenographer | |
| 15 | Frank | Reynolds | Yes | 5 | Gardener | |
| 15 | Lucy | Reynolds | No | | Servant | |
| 15 | S. | Carter | No | | Gardener | |
| 16 | George | Grover | Yes | 4 | Gardener | |
| 16 | M. | Smith | No | | Pr | Dry Goods Store |
| 17 | Fred | Driscoll | Yes | 6 | Trucker | Roadwork |
| 17 | Justin | Driscoll | No | | Contractor | Roadwork |
| 18 | Will | Grey | Yes | 1 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 19 | Theodore | Smith | Yes | 2 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 20 | Samuel | Belcher | Yes | 1 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 21 | Herbert | Young | yes | 1 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 22 | Edward | McGinn | Yes | 1 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 23 | Howard | Fr. | Yes | 1 | Mechanic | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | A. | Grouver | Yes | 4 | Gardener | |
| 25 | George | Smith | Yes | 7 | Gardener | |
| 26 | John | Trasey | Yes | 2 | Mason | |
| 27 | James | Dodge | Yes | 1 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 28 | Harold | Donkin | Yes | 3 | Navy Radar | |
| 29 | George | Buggell | Yes | 5 | Pr | Grocery Store |
| 30 | Raymond | Webber | Yes | 1 | Gardener | |
| 31 | Ephraim | Walls | Yes | 6 | Gardener | |
| 31 | Earl | Lawry | No | | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 31 | James | Lawry | No | | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 32 | John | Watson | Yes | 3 | Gardener | |
| 33 | Chester | Craney | Yes | 7 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 33 | Urban | Craney | No | | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 35 | Ray | Seeley | Yes | 3 | Gardener | |
| 37 | Herman | Grindle | Yes | 5 | Gardener | |
| 38 | Hugh | Gilley | Yes | 4 | Gardener | |
| 39 | Everett | Gilley | Yes | 6 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 39 | Walter | Gilley | No | | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 40 | Fountain | Davis | Yes | 4 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 41 | Adolf | Wyman | Yes | 4 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 42 | Greely | Walls | Yes | 4 | Gardener | Private House |
| 42 | Greely Jr. | Walls | No | | Gardener | Private House |
| 43 | Harvey | Walls | Yes | 5 | Gardener | Private House |
| 44 | Percy | Candays | Yes | 3 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 45 | Suzanne | Haskell | Yes | 3 | None | |
| 46 | Merle | Bracy | Yes | 3 | Gardener | Private House |
| 47 | Harry | Winlock | Yes | 3 | Pr | Grocery Store |
| 48 | Sherman | Davis | Yes | 4 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 49 | Elmer | McGarr | Yes | 8 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 49 | Lawrence | McGarr | No | | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 50 | Howard | Clark | Yes | 3 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 51 | Clarence | Richardson | Yes | 3 | Mason | Stone |
| 52 | Wallace | Richardson | Yes | 3 | Gardener | Private House |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 53 | Gerald | Richardson | Yes | 3 | Gardener | Private House |
| 54 | Clarence | Jordan | Yes | 3 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 54 | Multon | Davis | No | 0 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 55 | Leon | Emery | Yes | 3 | Gardener | Roadwork |
| 56 | Elmer | Reed | Yes | 4 | Pr | General Store |
| 57 | Daniel | Ryan | Yes | 2 | Mechanic | Garage |
| 58 | Hillard | Walls | Yes | 4 | Gardener | Private House |
| 58 | Reginald | Walls | No | 0 | Gardener | Private House |
| 58 | Grace | Walls | No | 0 | Teacher | Public School |
| 59 | Florentive | Davis | Yes | 5 | Pr | General Store |
| 59 | Merle | Cousins | No | 0 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 59 | Harry | Porter | No | 0 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 60 | Frank | Gallery | Yes | 2 | Mechanic | Garage |
| 60 | Mira | Gallery | Yes | 0 | Teacher | Public School |
| 61 | Herman | Bracy | Yes | 2 | None | |
| 62 | John | Smith | Yes | 2 | Gardener | Private House |
| 63 | Lawrence | Smith | Yes | 6 | Gardener | Private House |
| 64 | Maurice | Smith | Yes | 3 | Gardener | Private House |
| 65 | Millard | Carey | Yes | 3 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 66 | Sherman | McFarland | Yes | 5 | Mason | Brick |
| 66 | Sherman Jr. | McFarland | No | 0 | Laborer | Carpentry |
| 66 | Christopher | Brenton | No | 0 | Carpenter | Construction |
| 67 | George | Davis | Yes | 5 | Fisherman | Saltwater |
| 68 | M or N?? | Davis | Yes | 4 | Gardener | Private House |
| 69 | Clifton | Bracy | Yes | 3 | Gardener | Private House |
| 69 | Carl | Bracy | No | 0 | Laborer | Roadwork |
| 70 | Harold | Bracy | Yes | 11 | Contractor | |
| 70 | Leslie | Bracy | No | 0 | Salesman | |
| 71 | George | Young | Yes | 1 | Gardener | Private House |
| 72 | Frank | Bracy | Yes | 2 | Mason | Brick/Stone |

Population 251; 3 Households reporting Fisherman as “Head of Household”

# Appendix B

## Community Histories of Otter Cove and Isle au Haut, Acadia National Park

# Work Plan for Otter Cove

Douglas Deur, Ph.D.
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# I. Project Background

Acadia National Park encompasses more than 47,000 acres, including a significant portion of Mount Desert Island, as well as geographically separate park areas on Isle au Haut and the Schoodic Peninsula. The current project focuses on 1) a single cove within Mount Desert Island – Otter Cove, and 2) the entirety of Isle au Haut (approximately half of which is managed by the park).

This proposal specifically addresses the Otter Cove research. While the proposed research will rely significantly on published and archival documentation, knowledgeable individuals associated with this community will be invited to provide oral history interviews to fill data gaps and to share their unique knowledge and perspectives regarding the study area. The study as described below represents a proposal only, and this proposal may be revised in light of the community' recommendations and preferences.

Historically, Otter Cove was the staging area for a number of small-scale, family-run fishing and lobstering operations. The National Park Service acquired the lands surrounding Otter Cove in the 1910s. Some families, mostly from the nearby town of Otter Creek, maintained fish processing houses, fishing boat landings, and simple piers along the shoreline of Otter Cove before that date; a small number continued to use these shoreline areas as launching places for family fishing operations through the Great Depression, and a few families continued to occupy these sites as late as the 1950s. While the cove no longer serves as a base of operations for fishing and lobstering, the families that used this cove persist in the local area and some maintain a knowledge of, and sense of attachment to, the Otter Cove site. In recent years, the Otter Cove community has been of growing interest to National Park Service staff. Acadia National Park staff have been called upon to manage the site, and to interpret the site to the public, even as knowledge and physical traces of historical resource use at the site has rapidly faded. Information regarding the history of this largely defunct community will guide the park in preserving any places of particular historical importance and in accurately presenting its history to park visitors.

While there are various written accounts of Otter Cove, the National Park Service has relatively little documentation of the history of the lands and resources that it now manages on the island, and of the relationship of the community to them. Such information is required by National Park Service staff for management functions at the park, while also being of likely interest to residents as expanded documentation of local history, and as a means of expressing views to NPS staff. Information regarding the history of the Otter Cove community will guide the park in preserving any places of particular historical importance and in presenting its history to park visitors in a manner that is accurate and sensitive to the values and concerns of families with ties to Otter Cove.

# II. Project Objectives

The primary objective of this project is to document the local history of the Otter Cove portion of Acadia National Park (ACAD). The documents produced in the course of this study will provide a historical overview of this community, with particular attention to the traditional uses of lands and resources located within Acadia National Park. This report will be compiled in such a manner that it will be of value to National Park Service resource managers seeking to better manage lands and resources within the Otter Cove portion of Acadia National Park. They will also be written so to be of value to community members, and to scholars who wish to understand local history. There are no plans to produce a widely-distributed published document from this study, and no such effort would be considered without the direct involvement of families with ties to Otter Cove.

The Otter Cove research will incorporate the methods of oral history in order to illuminate historical community life and activities associated with Otter Cove, as well as to provide the perspectives of modern day families with ties to this area. Although the project reports will incorporate archival materials, they will emphasize a number of oral history interviews from individuals who have personal and/or historical ties to the study area. This emphasis on original oral history research will illuminate the history and ethnography of a poorly documented place within Acadia National Park, while also illuminating the perspectives and concerns of families that formerly used Otter Cove regarding NPS management of lands and resources.

The information collected will fill gaps in the documentation of community associations with the study area. These data will assist the park in consulting with the associated communities and groups about planning and management issues that may arise, and possibly in creating interpretation programs involving the stories of families that have fished or otherwise occupied Acadia lands for multiple generations. The information collected may also help Acadia National Park better manage specific park resources (such as remnants of fishing piers, orchards, and the like). For example, appreciation of the social and historical context of these features, will enhance the ability of park staff to determine their eligibility for designation to the National Register of Historic Places, or to identify modern-day descendents of historical residents who could be consulted, if proposed park actions were thought to potentially impact either historic character or traditional uses.

Through interview and archival research, the researchers will document a number of general, interrelated themes that are fundamental to understanding the human history of Otter Cove, including:

1) Community settlement history, including the history of proximate communities the town of Otter Creek;

2) Population and employment trends within the communities in and adjacent to modern-day NPS lands;

3) Historical uses of land and resources within the study area, especially those that may have a bearing on land management by the NPS;

4) Historical fishing and lobstering practices associated with the study area;

5) Changes in fishing, lobstering, and other resource use practices among former occupants of NPS lands that may have contributed to the decline of communities on these lands;

6) Connections between specific families and lands and resources within the two study area;

7) Enduring senses of attachment to places in the study area by certain families;

It is expected that a number of other themes may emerge in the course of interviews, reflecting the perspectives and expertise of interviewees. This research will also produce documentation and inventory of historically significant places, properties and resources on NPS lands at Otter Cove, as apparent from oral history interviews in particular.

## III. Procedures and Methodology

The planned research shall involve two primary and complementary methods: archival research and ethnographic interviewing.

The Principal Investigator (PI), Dr. Douglas Deur, will work directly with the NPS Northeast Regional Anthropologist, Dr. Chuck Smythe on a number of research tasks, including: identifying and incorporating existing NPS documentation, the dissemination of research findings, and insuring the compatibility of project methods with overarching NPS goals and policies. In addition, as Dr. Deur will be responsible for the majority of oral history interviews and archival research, Dr. Smythe may participate in these tasks as schedules permit. Dr. Deur will enlist the assistance of a Research Assistant for initial review of census data and the identification and acquisition of written materials in national collections pertaining to the study area.

The PI has completed the UW Human Subjects Office approval process, and will be reporting in to this office over the course of the study to insure that all research will be conducted in an manner that is ethical and consistent with university policy regarding research. The PI will also identify research needs, and revise, as needed, this work plan for the completion of project research; any revisions of this work plan, once reviewed and approved by the project PI and the NPS ATR, will supersede the current work plan and become integral to the project task agreement.

## Archival Research

The PI will acquire a diverse range of materials within archival collections that will illuminate the principal themes of this project. These sources shall include, but not be limited to, census data, gray literature reports, newspaper accounts, historical photographs, fisheries data, personal reminiscences, oral history transcripts, and other original documents regarding the study area. A review of available documentation will be conducted in the NPS resource managers' collections, as well as museum and archival collections in and around Acadia National Park that may have material pertinent to either the Otter Cove or Isle au Haut phases of this study, including:

1) William Otis Sawtelle Collections and Research Center, ACAD
2) Bar Harbor Historical Society, Bar Harbor ME
3) Jesup Memorial Library, Bar Harbor ME
4) Town of Bar Harbor municipal records, Bar Harbor ME
5) Northeast Harbor Library, Northeast Harbor ME
6) Mount Desert Historical Society, Northeast Harbor ME
7) Revere Memorial Library, Isle au Haut ME
8) Town of Isle au Haut municipal records, Isle au Haut ME
9) Deer Isle-Stonington Historical Society, Stonington, ME

The Principal Investigator will consult as necessary with NPS staff, university collection managers, and others in the identification of pertinent materials and potential project interviewees. In addition, the PI will research any relevant information within national archival collections, including available census forms and reports addressing the Otter Creek community; in this national archival effort, the PI shall enlist the assistance of a research assistant who, under the PI's supervision, will complete a review of available materials found in national collections.

# Interview Research

In addition to archival research, the PI will conduct oral history interviews with individuals who have knowledge of, and/or historical ties to, the study area. Interviewees will focus on the themes identified in the "Project Objectives" section of this work plan.

As currently planned, interviews shall be undertaken with one or more individuals at a time, and will be conducted at interviewees' homes, at field locations, or at other mutually convenient venues. Interviews will be audiorecorded whenever possible, provided that interviewees give their consent to be recorded. It is anticipated that each initial interview will last from over one to over two hours; follow-up interviews and/or field visits may be undertaken subsequently if the PI and the interviewee agree that further discussion would be beneficial.

We anticipate that interviews will consistently address these themes, but will be loosely structured and will not employ rigidly predetermined questions, so as to facilitate contextually appropriate questions and to foster candid and conversational exchanges with interviewees. Interviews will be conducted so as to solicit interviewees' first-hand knowledge, based on their own life histories, but will also invite interviewees to contribute information that they have learned regarding historical periods preceding their living memory. While the exact order of questions will be shaped by the interests and expertise of the interviewee, it is anticipated that all of the central themes identified in the "Project Objectives" section of this work plan will be addressed in the course of these interviews.

Typically, interviews will begin by soliciting biographical information regarding the interviewee and establishing their personal or family connections to the study area. Once interviewees have illuminated these themes, they will then be asked to discuss specific aspects of the history of the study area including historical fishing and lobstering practices, other kinds of social and economic uses of the study area that they might recall, settlement history and locations within the study area, historical family and community life in the study area, reasons for the decline of communities that formerly occupied lands now managed by the NPS, the historical development of tourism and community responses to these trends, and the like. Toward the end of these interviews, interviewees will be asked to identify any places or resources that continue to be of significance to themselves and/or their families today; detailed information will be sought regarding any lands or resources so identified, and these features may be mapped on topographic base maps. Interviewees' perspectives on the possible future interpretation of the park may also be solicited.

The number of potential interviewees in this community is recognized to be limited. At the onset of the project, NPS staff and, ideally, individuals with ties to Otter Cove will assist the PI in identifying appropriate interviewees. On the basis of initial research and "snowball sampling" methods, the PI will add to the list of potential interviewees; this method largely involves seeking interviewees' inputs on possible additional interviewees, based on their familiarity with the community, the research topics, and the geographical area.[1] Especially in small communities such as this, snowball sampling is often the best means of identifying knowledgeable individuals within a community, and typically will yield more informative interviews than alternative methods, such as randomly soliciting interviews from the community or seeking interviewees from a list predetermined without recourse to community knowledge. It is anticipated that no fewer than 10 interviews will be conducted for the Otter Cove portion of the project. After being informed about the projects goals and the potential uses of the results, interviewees will be asked to sign an informed consent form, confirming their willingness to provide information for the study at the commencement of the interview. Interviews will be audio-recorded when possible. Transcripts will be produced from audio-recorded interviews, and will become part of the final project deliverables.

## Report Development

Using field notes and transcripts from the interviews, as well as materials gathered in the course of literature review, the PI will write a stand-alone draft ethno-historical report regarding Otter Cove that synthesizes and analyzes available information from archival and oral history sources. NPS staff will have the opportunity to review both reports and to provide editorial comments; the PI will be available to NPS staff for comment and questions during the review period. Project interviewees can also be provided with copies of these drafts so that they might provide editorial comments. Responding to all reviewers' comments, the PI will produce final drafts of the report. Copies of the report will be printed under the guidance of the PI and will be delivered to NPS staff for use and local distribution.

1. On snowball sampling, see, e.g., M. Patton (1990) Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, California.

# IV. Products

The research will result in the following products:

1) Draft Otter Cove Report - the PI shall provide the NPS PTR with an electronic copy of a draft Otter Cove report that addresses all themes outlined above and present the author's methods, data, and analysis in a thematic format.

2) Final Otter Cove Report – the PI shall provide the NPS PTR with 50 printed and one electronic copies of a final Otter Cove report that incorporates the draft report along with reviewer comments. In addition, this report shall include accompanying maps and other illustrative materials, as well as a bibliography of all published and archival sources cited.

3) Project Archive - the Project Manager shall provide the NPS with a project archive, consisting of field notes, audio recordings, photocopies, and other materials amassed in the course of this research effort.

The PI and the NPS ATR may share drafts of written materials prior to the formal submission of the draft reports. While the exact outline of the two reports has yet to be determined, pending the accumulation of relevant data, it is anticipated that the report shall present an Executive Summary, Introduction, and Methods sections, followed by a generally chronological thematic overview of the community's history (and ethnography, as appropriate) based on project findings; a final section will provide recommendations for additional research, if any, and address any management or interpretive implications of project findings. The outline in the task agreement will serve as a general template for the project report unless changes are mutually agreed upon by the NPS and the PI.

# V. Project Schedule and Milestones

While some archival research will precede the initiation of interview research, it is expected that research trips to the study area will involve concurrent archival and interview research. Research trips will vary in length, but it is anticipated that each research trip outlined below will be of no less than two weeks' duration.

It is anticipated that archival research, as well as initial meetings with potential project interviewees will commence for the Otter Cove portion of the project in fall/winter of 2009. A spring 2011 research trip will be undertaken to largely complete the Otter Cove research. Any required follow-up research will be undertaken during subsequent Isle au Haut research trips.

## Proposed Otter Cove Field Research Schedule

| Date | Task |
|---|---|
| Fall/Winter 2009 | Initial archival research and meetings |
| Spring 2011 | Interview research |
| Fall 2011 (projected) | Final interview/archival research, as needed |
| Spring/Summer 2012 (projected) | Follow-up meetings, as needed |

The following project milestones are proposed for the overall study:

**January 30, 2009** - Human Subjects application completed (complete)
**February 10, 2009** - Work Plan submitted to NPS ATR (complete)
**March 15, 2009** - Research assistant hired (complete)
**August, 2009** - Quarterly reports to ATR commence
**Fall/Winter 2009** - Initial Otter Cove archival research and meetings
**Spring, 2011** - Otter Cove fieldwork to be undertaken
**Fall, 2011** - Follow-up Otter Cove fieldwork, as needed
**Summer, 2012** - Follow-up Otter Cove meetings, as needed
**December 15, 2012** - Final date for draft reports to be submitted to NPS ATR
**February 11, 2013** - Final reports submitted to NPS ATR
**April 11, 2013** - Project archive submitted to NPS ATR

This schedule amends the timeline proposed in the original project Task Agreement (#J8W07080015). Changes to this timeline can only be made in consultation between Project GTR, Dr. Chuck Smythe and UW Principal Investigator, Dr. Douglas Deur. Any changes to the final project completion date would require a Task Agreement modification, authorized by the NPS and the University of Washington PNW-CESU.

# VI. Logistical Issues, Staffing and Needs for Assistance from NPS Staff

It is anticipated that this research will be collaborative, and that Dr. Chuck Smythe will be playing an active role in the research, in collaboration with Dr. Douglas Deur. The project PI will need existing documentation from the files of the Northeast regional Anthropologist, including but not limited to oral history transcripts and relevant past grey literatures regarding the study area. Information from other NPS staff files would be welcome, but not essential to the completion of the project. NPS staff assistance with mapping and/or GIS support - including providing base maps for the study area and assistance in the production of maps for the project report - would also add materially to the project. In addition, the PI will require the assistance of NPS staff in making initial contacts with members of families with ties to the Otter Cove area, before and during the interviewing phases of this project.

The PI welcomes any guidance that NPS staff might provide in obtaining low-cost lodging that would be suitable during field phases of the project on Mt. Dessert Island. The PI may seek occasional computer or internet access during the course of fieldwork.

# VII. Proposed Budget Reallocation

No specific budget reallocation is advised at this time. Certain unforeseen costs may emerge in the course of the study, depending upon such factors as the availability of housing and fluctuations in travel costs. Significant changes to the budget allocation can only be made in consultation between Project GTR, Dr. Chuck Smythe, ACAD staff, and UW Principal Investigator, Dr. Douglas Deur.

# VIII. Project Staff

Project PI, Dr. Douglas Deur, is a researcher with 20 years of experience work working with communities to document their histories and their cultural practices. He often works with Native American communities, as well as resource-based and tourist towns in the western United States and Canada. Holding graduate degrees in both geography and anthropology, he often provides research support to the National Park Service. He lives with his wife and two children in the small coastal second-home community of Arch Cape, Oregon.

The research is being conducted as part of a nationwide cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies (CESU) Network. The Pacific Northwest CESU program at the University of Washington is a national leader in the search for practical solutions to the enormous set of complex issues confronting contemporary natural resource managers within federal agencies.

# Appendix C

# Superintendent's Letter

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Acadia National Park
P.O. Box 177
Bar Harbor, Maine 04609

H4217

October 7, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to inform you that the National Park Service is undertaking a study of the history and ethnography of Otter Creek, a community long associated with Acadia National Park. The purpose of this research is to gather information that will help the park better understand the history of the community and, in particular, the enduring importance of the Otter Cove area to families with historical and ongoing ties to this important place. We are especially eager to record the knowledge and perspectives of people who have personal and family ties to the cove, which is a special portion of the park. It is our hope that the information gathered in this study will help the National Park Service to protect the landscape and history of Otter Creek, and will give our interpretive staff information to share the cultural heritage of the area with our visitors. We also anticipate that this research will foster continued dialogue between Acadia National Park and the community of families with historical ties to this locale regarding the future management of the Otter Creek portion of the park.

In order to achieve the goals of this study the National Park Service has recruited the project's principal researcher, Dr. Douglas Deur. This letter serves as an introduction to Dr. Deur and his research. With advanced degrees in both Anthropology and Geography, Dr. Deur is affiliated with the University of Washington's Pacific Northwest Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit. This university institute provides research assistance to National Park Service units around the nation. Beginning in November of 2009, Dr. Deur will be initiating both archival research in local libraries and historical societies, and interviews with individuals living on or near Isle au Haut. As currently projected, Dr. Deur will make a number of trips to Mt. Desert Island over the next year and a half as he gathers information for this study. The success of this study depends on collaboration with community members, historical societies, libraries and museums, and we wish to thank you in advance for any assistance that you might provide Dr. Deur in the course of this effort.

If you have any questions about this project, we invite you to contact the National Park Service's Northeast Region Ethnography Program Manager, Dr. Chuck Smythe, at (617)223-5014 or chuck_smythe@nps.gov. You may also feel free to contact Acadia National Park's Cultural Resources Program Manager, Rebecca Cole-Will, at (207)288-8728 or rebecca_cole-will@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

Sheridan Steele
Superintendent

# Appendix D

# Consent Form

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**
## Community History of Otter Cove

*Researcher*: Douglas Deur, Ph.D. - Research Coordinator
PNW Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit, University of Washington
Telephone: (503)805-1266 E-mail: deur@u.washington.edu

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

We are undertaking this study to learn more about the history of the community of Otter Creek, Maine - especially within Otter Cove, in what is today Acadia National Park. The National Park Service is working with communities that have historically used this part of the park, in order to document information on the area's history. The results of this study will help National Park Service staff better understand the history of Otter Cove, as well as the views of families with ties to this part of the park. This study might also help park staff to better protect areas of the park that are of historical importance, as well as helping Acadia National Park to share aspects of Otter Cove's history with park visitors.

### STUDY PROCEDURES

If you choose to be in this study, we would like to interview you about how people lived, and the things they did, at Otter Cove. We will ask questions like "Where did people have their fishing shacks?" or "Why did people stop using Otter Cove for fishing?" In addition, we will ask you to give suggestions about how the Acadia National Park might best protect important places at Otter Cove, or describe the history of Otter Cove to park visitors.

If you agree, we can audiotape your interview so that we can have an accurate record and so that the information and views you provide can be preserved. We will transcribe your interview tape following the interview. When we have interviewed a number of people, we will write a draft report. You will have an opportunity to review this report and recommend editorial changes. You can review, edit, or remove any direct quotes from you in the report at this time. You can choose to be identified in the report, or can remain anonymous if you wish.

With your permission, the audio recording and transcript from your interview can be kept in the archive at Acadia National Park. You can review the transcript and make any changes before it is archived in the Acadia National Park archive. If you request, you can also obtain and review copies of the audio recording or notes from your interview before they are placed in the Acadia National Park collection. You can withdraw them from the collection at any time. Other people can only access the archived audiotape with Acadia National Park's permission, unless you specify otherwise. Please indicate on the following page whether or not you give your permission for the researcher to audiotape your interview. Also, please indicate whether you give your permission for the transcript and audiotape to be archived at Acadia National Park, and indicate if you would prefer to remain anonymous.

If you have any questions about the project, please don't hesitate to contact Doug Deur at the phone number or e-mail address listed above. If you wish, you can also contact the Acadia National Park Cultural Resources Program Manager, Rebecca Cole-Will, at (207)288-8728 or the Northeast Region National Park Service Northeast Region Anthropologist, Chuck Smythe, at (617)223-5014 regarding this study.

# Community History of Otter Cove

Consent Form

By signing this form, I agree to take part in an interview with Dr. Douglas Deur regarding the history of the Otter Cove area, near Otter Creek, Maine. I recognize that participation in the study is entirely voluntary and that the information gathered in the course of this study will be used in the writing of a National Park Service report addressing Otter Cove history.

Signature: _____

Interviewee Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____

_____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

**Also, please check the following:**

_____ I give my permission for the project report to use my name.
_____ I wish to remain anonymous in the project report.

_____ I give my permission to be audio recorded.
_____ I do not give my permission to be audio recorded.

_____ I give my permission for the audiotape, transcript, and notes from my interview to be placed in the Acadia National Park archive.
_____ I do not give my permission for the audiotape, transcript, and notes from my interview to be placed in the Acadia National Park archive.

Other requests from the interviewee: _____

_____

# Notes

1. The presence of aboriginal occupation of the Otter Creek waterfront is suggested by a number of historical documents. See Prins and McBride (2007) for a summary of this material. A longstanding diorama at the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor has depicted a summer encampment of American Indians at Otter Creek cove.

2. Some suggest that the various Walls lines are not all related:

"Not all of the Walls family is related…some arrived separately….at one time there were three separate Walls families here in Otter Creek that were not really related" (NW).

Some genealogical work has suggested that at least one of these families used the spelling "Wall" for many years and only later added the "s."

Others counter that these Walls families are all descendents of the original three Walls brothers, but that their lineages diverged so long ago that they are seen as separate by some descendents.

3. The Otter Creek Cemetery Association, under the guidance of Paul Richardson and Tom Richardson, has conducted detailed investigations of the identities and genealogies of people buried in the Otter Creek cemetery – a potential resource for future researchers of town history.

4. For example, one of the Walls families - that of interviewees Robert and Donald Walls - trace a portion of their ancestry back to Nova Scotia fishing families who lived in communities and economies very similar to those of Mount Desert Island.

5. In discussing his family and how long ago his ancestors arrived at Otter Creek, Steve Smith said one branch of the family goes back to Portugal, through his great-great-grandfather, Julius Delarose:

"I believe he went and served in the Civil War. That's how he got his name changed to Smith… He took two names too: Julius Delarose and John Smith…his son…was John, and… John had Lawrence, because that was my grandfather. And then Lawrence Jr. was my father" (SS).

John Smith was perhaps ahead of his time, being a 19th century Otter Creek fisherman who also worked as a gardener when not fishing. In family records, he is "listed as both gardener and fisherman" (CS).

6. The difficulty in reaching Otter Cove overland was made clear in the August 31, 1855 account of Charles Tracy, who was attempting to access Bar Harbor from Seal Cove via Otter Creek:

"We set out at noon, a party of eleven, with two wagons, and pursued the North East Harbor road. Passing the Notch Lake, we rolled down the winding wood road to the harbor, thence along the shore and around the rough road that skirts the ocean along the south shore of the island. The aspect of the island from this route is exceedingly wild & frowning. The mountains are sharp, bare & ragged, and the calm, wide blue ocean on the other side stretches a long, long horizon, only marked with scattering sails. The road is hilly, rocky, & almost impassable. We walked most of the distance. Now it was up & down a rocky back of ground, with a sweeping view on all sides, and now down through a ravine or cove where we struck tidewater and forded, or crossed on bridges,

the water way through a sand or gravel bar against which the sea was rolling in. Once we mistook our route, and went wrong a long mile up hill…" (Tracy 1997: 132).

Finally, Tracy and his party joined the residents of Otter Creek. Their journey from Seal Cove to Otter Creek had taken them an arduous five hours.

7. Ansel Davis was an accomplished fisherman and hunter, whose house can still be seen along Otter Cliff Road, a short distance north of its intersection with Fishermen's Lane on the east side of the road. Ansel Davis had glaucoma; by the mid-20th century he had largely gone blind, and had to stop fishing. His deep dissatisfaction and eventual suicide after this development is still an emotional topic for many Otter Creek families, who seem to have held him in high esteem. "An was a man of action!" (SS).

8. Gifford's painting was made during the final year of the Civil War, during a visit taken after the artist's service for the Union Army; he had already lost two brothers to the war by the time he painted this scene. Gifford made the visit to the site, as well as making the original sketches, on July 22, 1864, but finished the painting in 1865 (Wilmerding 1994: 131).

9. Despite a ruggedly independent streak, and a strong tendency to work within family and community networks, lobstermen often have banded together around issues of common interest, including the development of markets, the development of processing facilities, and the presentation of a unified front on certain regulatory and labor issues (Scontras 1989; Acheson 1988). That being said, most of the organization described in Otter Creek seems to have been organized at the family and community level.

10. Smythe (2008) includes a photo of a lobster car from this period.

11. It does seem very likely that the concepts that guided fish house use and ownership were brought here from elsewhere. Indeed, some interviewees alluded to the founding Walls brothers of the community, including Samuel Walls, having a fish house along the waterfront (SS).

12. On the seasonal storage of bait and gear in fish houses, Norm Walls notes,

"you could get your bait in the summertime but they had no bait to keep it in the wintertime so they used to get it and store it in the big barrels and the big things in there, salt it down, and that's…just something that they stored their gear in and their bait in to go lobster fishing. And they used to have to keep it, you know, buy it in the fall of the year to keep it all winter because most of these guys did fish in winters" (NW).

13. Some portion of this disagreement on land title centered on traditional claims to lands to the low tide line, which were not subsequently supported by Maine state law. As Steve Smith notes,

"I think at one time they started deed work. They started writing out that their property went out to the low salt water mark. Well, what's the difference, writing it out or not? If they didn't own it in the first place, they couldn't sign it over anyway. And, if they did own it, there wasn't any need to" (SS).

14. While this history is widely mentioned, accounts of the Otter Creek period of Hall's quarrying legacy tend to be brief and superficial. A typically brief account is provided by Truax:

"His first quest on Mt. Desert Island for a superior grade of granite took him to Otter Creek two

years after he had married Sylvina (Gilmore) Davis, an attractive young Belfast widow. Although his first quarry operation was a small one – called a "motion" in the jargon of the trade – it produced a pink granite of exceptionally high quality, which may still be seen in the Episcopal Church at Northeast Harbor and in the Public Library at Belfast" (Truax 1972: 35).

15. As Steve Haynes notes that Otter Creek had these attributes, but Somes Sound was even more suited to the task:

"[B]ecause [Hall] knew the potential right after the Civil War, the governments of the different cities were now building their state houses, their libraries, their post offices. If a building grossed over $800,000 in income it would be built of granite. If it was less than that, it would be of brick or limestone or sandstone. So he knew if he opened a quarry as in Somes Sound that even at low tide he would have a hundred feet of water in places. He could get 15 schooners in a day, go to Philadelphia, bid on these contracts, bid low, and win the contract" (SH).

16. On the extent and types of infrastructure along the cove, Steve Haynes reports,

"I believe that Cyrus Hall was right on the shore, and Salisbury was up further, up off the shore. They carted down to the shore… A lot of times they would put up a rail, a simple railroad track, and the carts would be towed right down to the wharf, back and forth. I've seen both [rails and carts drawn by horses or oxen]. I've seen just the old roads that the oxen would tow it back and forth…[T]here was a small galamander down in Hall Quarry. Cyrus Hall did have derricks, because he did have the foundry, which is the holes, which would turn inside your guidelines, and lift the block up. Then they could put it on the wagon, tow it down to the shore. They would have a similar derrick, but it would be a three-legged derrick, because they couldn't have guidelines going into the water, OK? So they had to have this apparatus built in a triangular form with a boom that they could swing, pick up stones, and then put it on the schooner. That would be a three-legged derrick" (SH).

17. Of these, considerably more oral tradition seems to focus on Jimmy's Wharf. Norm Walls, for example, recalls,

"what we called Jimmy's Wharf down there – was where they tied up the schooners and stuff in the summertime and loaded rock in, and that all went to Pennsylvania I think somewhere down that way, the pink rock…[they] used to tie up their boats all the way across the cove – they were schooners…at low tide the schooners would all settle down in the mud" (NW).

18. By 1880, labor was already moving to the new quarry; the entire quarrying boom occurring between 1870 and 1880, comparatively little of the population of laborers in the Hall quarries were reflected in the census records of those two dates. A number of quarrymen are reported in the 1900 census, however (U.S. Census n.d.).

19. Regrettably, the 1890 census pages for these districts were lost in a fire long ago, preventing a comparison of these data against those of 1890 – a comparison that would have reflected changes during the 1880s, the decade that marked the peak of the rusticator boom.

20. As Paul Richardson notes,

"There had been at least two wooden bridges. They no more than got the first one done and a hurricane knocked it flat… So the county then built another one, and it had a trestle in it so that the boats could come in and out of the Outer Harbor and the Inner Harbor" (PR).

The full text of the "Act to Incorporate the Otter Creek Bridge Company" (March 5, 1889: Chapter 504): is as follows:

"Darius Wellington, Cornelius Wellington, and Eri L. Bunker, their associates and successors, are hereby incorporated into a corporation by the name of the Otter Creek Bridge Company, for the purpose of building, erecting and maintaining through and over the tide waters between Mount Desert and Eden, in the county of Hancock, across Otter creek, at or near Otter creek bar, a free road and bridge for public, with a draw, as hereinafter specified.
Sect. 2. Said road and bridge shall be located at or near said Otter creek bar, and general continuation thereof, from Eden to Mount Desert, in a suitable and convenient place, and said road shall be built of earth, stone, wood or other good material, and of not more than four rods in width. Said bridge shall contain a draw, which shall be thirty-five feet in width, in the clear, and located to meet the needs of navigation at that point, and said company may build, erect and maintain such piers, abutments and other structures, as it may deem necessary in the premises, within and without said four rod limit. Said company is to so construct said bridge that there shall always be one hundred feet in the clear, including said thirty-five feet of draw, for the unobstructed influx and efflux of tide.

Sect. 3. The capital stock of said company shall be three thousand dollars, which may be increased to nine thousand dollars by a vote of said company, and said stock shall be divided into shares of ten dollars each.

Sect. 4. Said company, for all its said purposes, may hold real and personal estate sufficient, necessary and convenient therefor.

Sect. 5. Said company may issue its bonds for the construction of its works, maintenance or operation of the same, of any or all kinds, upon such rates and terms as it may deem expedient, not exceeding the sum of nine thousand dollars, and secure the same by mortgage of any property and franchise of the company.

Sect. 6. Said towns of Eden and Mount Desert in the county of Hancock, or either of them are hereby empowered to purchase stock in said company at any time with all rights of such stockholders therein, provided, the inhabitants of said town or towns shall by a majority vote of those present at a legal meeting, authorize the same.

Sect. 7. Said towns of Eden and Mount Desert in the county of Hancock, or either of them are herby empowered to purchase so much of the property of said company as may be situated within the respective limits of each, with all rights and franchises of the company connected therewith, provided, the inhabitants of said town or towns shall by a majority vote of those present at a legal meeting, authorize the same.

Sect. 8. Any person who shall willfully injure any of the property of said company, shall be liable to said company for three times the amount of the actual damage to be recovered in any proper action.

Sect. 9. The first meeting of said company may be called by a written notice thereof signed by any one corporator, served upon each corporator by giving him the same in hand, or by leaving the same at his last usual place of abode, at least seven days before the time of meeting.

Sect. 10. This act shall take effect when approved.
Approved March 5, 1889" (State of Maine 1889: 829-31).

21. Some have suggested that the first construction of a bridge on Otter Creek cove may have marked the origins of the conceptual division between an "inner cove" and an "outer cove." Still, a natural spit of land appears to have extended into the water on the east side of the cove near the present Causeway even before that time (USCGS 1875). This apparently natural feature is even visible in early paintings, such as Sanford Robinson Gifford's "The Artist Sketching, Mount Desert, Maine" from 1864-65, which also shows ships in Otter Creek cove.

22. Fishermen are generally identified by occupation in the census data for these periods. In the case of Mount Desert Island, Otter Creek data were gathered within a single unit, allowing for easy calculation of the proportion of the population claiming fishing as an occupation. On the Eden/ Bar Harbor side of the community, Otter Creek data were not enumerated as a single unit, though census takers did collect data in geographically contiguous blocks; in this case, known names of Otter Creek residents were used to identify those sections of the Eden census data sheets relating to the community of Otter Creek. Very modest over- or-under counting of Eden's Otter Creek residents and fishermen is possible because of the inexactness of the historical record allowing the researchers to identify all Otter Creek residents by name independent of these census records. Community population and fishermen numbers are produced for this graph and others in this report by adding Mount Desert Island and Eden data gathered in this manner.

23. This receipt collection could be an outstanding source for future research - used to establish the range of buyers who operated during this period, the types of fish caught, changes in prices, and any number of other variables related to the early 20th century fishing industry of Mount Desert Island.

24. There is a time-honored tradition of building from wood and other materials salvaged from the shoreline, as is true in many small coastal communities. Houses made from such materials can still be seen in the community today:

"I remember after a couple storms back many, many years ago, of course, back in the early 1900s, my father's half-brother there Chester collected a [load of ship] lumber off in the Sand Beach over there…to do his house. That's how he built his house down in Otter Cove. It still stands today there across from where I grew up. Cedar shingles and the lumber from it" (RW).

25. As noted elsewhere in this document, these figures represent reported occupations for the Mount Desert Island side of Otter Creek, as well as the inferred number of reported occupations for the Eden side of Otter Creek, as a proportion of the total population – this population being reported in census figures for MDI and approximated for the Eden portion of the community.

26. At least a portion of these may be part of a small orchard that had belonged to David Thomas. Paul Richardson recounts, "primarily the fish houses on the other side really were the Walls. Now my great-grandfather, [David] Thomas, he lived right in that field in back north of the fish houses… that's what that orchard is" (PR).

27. These were elementary schools principally. At around the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, Northeast Harbor was the site of the school for many high-school aged students on the Mount Desert side of Otter Creek: "Students from Seal and Otter Creek generally boarded in Northeast Harbor homes during weeknights of the thirty-six week school year and returned home on weekends" (Pyle 1989: 81).

Available records suggest that, during the 1890-91 school year, the school supervisor was William Bracy and the school had some 39 students. Otter Creek was perennially challenged by its small schools, "trying to effectively teach nine grade levels with only three teachers" (Smith and Hughes 1989: 174).

28. With respect to road changes and waterfront access during this time, Bob Walls noted

"The only change—and it wasn't a change in my lifetime [was] the old Bar Harbor Road going down through Otter Creek used to go down to what used to be the sewer plant. We always used to call it Ben Walls' Hill. That's the old…Bar Harbor Road, route 3. It went down back of that bunch of houses there" (RW).

29. Wentworth (1984) provides a detailed biography of Fabbri, as well as a technically rich description of the station's operations.

30. As reported by one of the operators at the time, H.H. Beverage, who helped establish these antennae,

"the European signals were quite good on the northeast wire, while there was practically nothing but static on the southwest wire over the bridge across Otter Creek. Accordingly, I arranged to run a wire directly across the creek to a large tree on the far side. I had some difficulty in finding an able seaman who dared to climb the tree to hook on the wire, but it was finally accomplished" (Beverage in Wentworth 1984: 18).

31. Interviewees used similar superlatives in their assessment of the station's significance. Gerry Norwood, for example, proclaimed,

"The radio station, that was down here. That was down here on the point. And it was the best radio reception. You could contact Europe, and the best reception in the United States was right here…And it monitored them [the Germans]. It monitored their broadcasts" (GN).

32. Pyle provides the following details regarding this "submarine chaser":

"The navy assigned a submarine chaser to the area and crewed her with reserve personnel from Islesford, her informal homeport. This craft and her courageous crew, manning the .30 caliber Browning machine guns and bow gun on patrols from Otter Creek, visited Northeast [Harbor] every few days, much comforting the populace" (Pyle 1989: 85).

33. Tom Richardson adds, "I used to have a poster of a particular production that was held over there in the '20s and '30s, somewhere in that range. You know, it was pictures of my great grandmother and great grandfather, and a couple of people, they were involved in that …as a kid, we used to play basketball there [too]"" (TR).

34. An Otter Creek resident, Thelma was also a skilled amateur painter, and painted images of Otter Creek that sometimes appear in local collections (RW).

35. It is this oral tradition that Richardson summarized when writing:

"It seems that at its 1936 annual meeting, the town passed an article presented by John D. Rockefeller to discontinue the town way and landing. Some argue that Rockefeller engineered the vote through his influence as a major employer in the area and by bringing unqualified voters to

the meeting" (Richardson 1989: 129).

In interviews undertaken in the course of the current research, Paul Richardson provided additional clarification on these points:

"the town didn't own the land along the shore…But there was a right-of-way access or the town owned the right-of-way to the shore… And at a town meeting they gave it to Mr. Rockefeller or gave him the land… Which, as I say, really ticked off people down here. Although in hindsight the use of that in the harbor was very, very little" (PR).

36. Speaking under condition of anonymity on this point, this formal interviewee specifically reports that, "About half the community was gratified to Mr. Rockefeller for the employment and about half resented his high-handedness and his view that the national interest and the greater good demanded that he cut off the fishermen's access to their boats."

37. The role of the Bureau of Public Roads is often overlooked in discussions of the Causeway generally, or Acadia's roads specifically. As Moriera et al. note,

"It's crucial to stress that the CCC was only one of several federal agencies that contributed to this development. The Bureau of Public Roads and the Resettlement Administration deserve special mention for such projects as the Otter Creek Causeway, Kebo Mountain Road, Pretty Marsh picnic area, Oak Hill picnic area, and others" (Moriera et al. 2009: 317).

Certainly, in the Otter Creek area, the BPR was central to most major construction activities:

"The Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) provided funds for both the initial surveys and subsequent construction of…the Otter Creek causeway, and the roads in the Blackwoods Campground" (Moriera et al. 2009: 272).

38. Some portion of the rock used in CCC construction in the park came from off-island, even for Otter Creek road development:

"An enduring feature of CCC roadside work is the coping that lines many of the park roads. Earlier agencies performed similar work, often using natural boulders, but the CCC consistently used cut granite blocks. Claude Beaupre, who served at both the Ellsworth and McFarland Camps, helped to install coping along the Otter Creek Road. He stated that the stone was hauled from as far away as Islesborough and St. George near Rockland. It is also clear from the Landscape Architect's reports that a good deal of this material was quarried by RDP crews on MDI" (Moriera et al. 2009: 257-58).

39. Apparently alluding to the CCC work, Gerry Norwood noted that his father had worked in the Hall Quarry:

"My father quarried out of the Otter Creek, the quarry over there. He was one of the last quarrymen to work over there…I used to go over with him. And they went from drilling by hand to power machines, steam-driven at one time, but drills…steam-driven would move so fast that it would heat the rock right up… You could take some tender and stick it in that hole and it would burn. It would be that hot…I was there towards the end (GN).

40. Some have suggested "that the more elaborate stone-work in the park [completed under the New Deal programs] may have been the work of "old timers" from Maine's granite industry, and

here we have good evidence of that connection" (Moriera et al. 2009: 273-74).

Most of the men in the five major CCC camps on MDI were from other portions of Maine; two camps briefly included men from Massachusetts too. As Moriera et al. suggest,

"Men in the Acadia camps came from many walks of life. If most were the sons of farmers, lumbermen, and mill workers, that largely reflects the demographics of a predominantly rural state. Urban middle-class families were represented too. The majority were Maine residents, but two companies – the 1104th CO. at Ellsworth between 1933 and 1935 and the 2140th Co. at Southwest Harbor from 1940 to 1941 – were made up of men from urban areas in Massachusetts" (Moriera et al. 2009: 38).

41. On this point, Moriera et al. suggest,

"The bulk of the primary construction work on major roads was done by professional road crews. Of the small number of travel roads built by the CCC, most were side access roads, such as the loop roads at. . .the Seawall and Blackwood campgrounds, which were built in part by the CCC, or the Fish House Road at Otter Creek" (Moriera et al. 2009: 253).

42. Rockefeller was apparently pivotal in organizing the commemoration of the Fabbri radio station. For reasons that may have been political, press coverage emphasized the involvement of the Town of Bar Harbor in developing the memorial, but made little of the CCC connection: "Stories about the CCC rarely appear in the Bar Harbor Times after about 1938, and even the Corps' work on the Fabbri monument was not acknowledged in the Times' lengthy coverage of the unveiling" (Moriera et al. 2009: 11). This was one of the few memorials in this part of the park that involved CCC workmen: "No historical or archaeological projects were assigned to the CCC at Acadia. . .The CCC did, however, construct the memorial to radio pioneer Alessandro Fabbri" (Moriera et al. 2009: 276).

43. As Moriera et al. report,

"Trail development became less important at Acadia during the latter years of the CCC, as attention turned to the construction of the Seawall and Blackwoods campgrounds" (Moriera et al. 2009: 241).

44. On the topic of roadside beautification by the CCC, Moriera et al. note,

"crews transformed jagged, rocky cuttings into smoothed, planted banks. Stones taken out of the banks, if sufficient size, were recycled on other projects, either as fill or coping material. Eradicaing gravel pits was an equally important part of the roadside improvement work. Abandoned structures, including derelict homes, were razed, and sections of old road were torn up and planted" (Moriera et al. 2009: 256-57).

Meanwhile, during construction, "Most truck trails [including] Otter Cliffs Truck Trails, for example, followed old logging roads" (Moriera et al. 2009: 254).

45. "Side camps" were sometimes established close to work sites, away from the principal CCC and other WPA camps on Mount Desert Island. The side camps also appear to have served as overflow housing during the infrequent periods of over-enrollment in the CCC camps. Regrettably, the documentation of these side camps is thin (Moriera et al. 2009; Paige 1985; McGuire 1966).

46. Northeast Harbor Library Director and historian, Robert Pyle notes that the site was a "submarine refueling operation" but the submarines did not come into the cove. Instead, they used "rendezvous boats" to ship fuel and other supplies to submarines, disguised as civilian boats.

47. This bar contributes to the general shallowness of the cove and the difficulty of navigation for recreational users today. As Kendall Davis points out,

"that's why I never took my sailboat up in there, the keel was 5 foot on it and you seen that bar out there. You have to get it awfully good and at high tide. And I don't know how it would be with the flat-bottom boats. I take it you have to have a flat-bottom boat to go up in there but it'd be pretty close… there is a boulder bar that's underneath the water too" (KD).

48. As explained by Gerry Norwood,

"There was a bunch of buildings down there and they are there because during the Depression they had the crew working on that road [a park road in the causeway], the park did…And those buildings were used for the [fueling] station…When they left, they took everything. Cleaned it up. Well, the only way you would have known they were there is you can go down and, if you know somewhere near where to look, you'll see square concrete posts. You can see the tops of them sticking out of the ground in places" (GN).

49. Fire danger continued to be of great concern to the larger MDI community through the late 19th century. A Bar Harbor Fire Department was established as early as 1877, but peripheral areas were not readily serviced by the new department, resulting in a number small fire districts appearing around the island in the years following the Green Mountain fire (Brechlin 1981(Bachelder 2005: 126-27).

50. Robert Walls reports,

"I have a couple of permission letters from the man at the Park Service giving my dad and a couple of his friends permission to cut [burned wood] on the park, up there after the fire… He had permission to cut up to so many cord of wood, maybe eight cord" (RW).

51. With the combined effects of the fire and the post-war economic boom, men report that they found ample work in construction. Robert Davis recalls finding abundant work in brickwork during the reconstruction of Bar Harbor:

"I worked for Old Norwood [L.E. Norwood and Sons Masonry, Bar Harbor years ago…They both were doing mason work back at that time. That was in the '40s, so before I got married…[T]hey were working just with brick…brickwork. And then you had to mix your own lime. You mixed in a barrel, to mix with the cement" (RD).

52. Today, such trails are still to be found, especially on the west side of the cove, linking the residential areas of Otter Creek with the old Hall quarry site and the inner cove fish house. Maintenance of these trails has been a point of contention between some residents and NPS staff:

"there are trail markers, the little piles of stones there, on most of the trails around here. But occasionally there are trees that fall over that path and it's just not well-groomed. I know I'm not allowed to take a chainsaw in there and cut down a big tree that's lying across. I'm not going to go down there with an axe. [So I asked the park,] "Well, there's a path that I use. If there is an obstruction, how do I go about getting someone to remove that?" And the answer that I basically

got was that there's a lot of small trails that the park does not encourage people to use. And so you probably wouldn't get somebody in there to cut that tree and they're probably going to ask you to stop using the trail. Well, that's not what I wanted to hear. I've used that since I was a little kid and it's always been there" (CS).

53. On the changes in lobster distribution, Bob Walls notes,

"I think back then [in the mid-20th century] they just fished where the lobsters seemed to be moving on the rock piles. It's different today…until a couple years ago, lobsters were everywhere. You could catch the lobsters on the sand, and many fish on the sand. The only thing you could fish on the sand and on a cove back when my dad was fishing was maybe for halibut. You wouldn't set a lobster trap in the sand. There you go. You couldn't find room for a halibut trawl because people were fishing on the sand" (RW).

Similarly, nearshore lobstering used to be more feasible in the past than it is today:

"One thing that's interesting to me is the fact that [my dad] used to fish 12 months out of a year, out of Otter Cove. And he wouldn't [go off]shore fishing like they do today. You just couldn't do that back then. He'd fish right around the shore. In fact, I have these pamphlets, notes of [where he put his] traps this particular December day out around Schooner Head and Otter Creek Ridge, and he'd be catching lobsters. Today you wouldn't catch lobsters around the shore like that. So it just shows you that things happen and change for some reason. I mean he wouldn't catch many lobsters…but he made, if you want to call it a living, a living even in the winter time fishing around the shore" (RW).

54. The longer quotation from Gerry Norwood on this point is important context for his statement:

"We used to sell [lobster] out to…Little Cranberry Island. There was a Liam's Lobster Pond up there, and we sold to him. As a matter of fact, he had one of the boats that used to come around to different fishermen that sold to him. We'd carry our lobsters out, and he'd come and pick them up once a week. And that was in the early '50s, and when I started we were getting 20-30 cents a pound. And it dropped.

"When I started, we had two measures. Maine had just gone up on the size. And then they had what they called the Boston measure, which used to be the same size as Maine's. The Boston, shorts is what we used to call them, were legal to keep but weren't legal for the buyers to buy. The dealers couldn't buy them and resell them. But we could keep them and sell them if we wanted to. So, when things were getting a little tight and I was fishing with my brother-in-law, I said, 'Why don't we sell 'em. Go uptown to Bar Harbor and sell 'em.' I had a regular route that I used to go to Bar Harbor and sell 'em. We would sell them five for a dollar" (GN).

55. This pattern is confirmed by fishermen who have conventionally operated out of other communities, such as Sherwood Carr, who fished out of Bar Harbor and fished "right down to" the cove, but rarely inside it:

"[we] went right down to the creek. I know we did…I think even we might have fished a little beyond, but by that time, when I was fishing…nobody hardly fished in that Otter Creek." (SC).

56. The Causeway beach was also known as a place where local girls went to sun themselves on hot summer days.

People also have surfed in the cove when the waves are high, socializing on this beach and elsewhere: "people several years ago would go down there to meet new people surfing" (DS).

57. Bob Walls remembered, "It was hard sometimes. The [pay] wasn't that great. We'd scrounge for lunch money to go to school as a kid. We really did. We had to dig the pennies some mornings to buy a milk with" (RW).

58. Norm Walls, for example, reports "I didn't fish a full-time fisherman. I was working weekends, nights, and things like that. I was a part-timer as they called them" (NW).

59. Paul Richardson noted, "the moorings were more on the east side of the cove as opposed to being… closer to the shore on the west side where these fish houses were, see? Why, I don't know, whether it was rougher coming in there" (PR).

60. On this lobster car, Norm Walls recalls,

"Kenneth Tripp and Harold Walls were brother-in-laws, you know. And so they built a thing down there where the fish shacks were. And they made a run out there and they planked it over and they made it so that they could – at high tide could bring their boat up onto this platform, tie it to a rock… they made a breakwater down through there, cribbed it, and filled it full of rocks and then had a platform underneath of that so that they could bring their boat in or they could even let their big pens that they kept the lobsters in moored on the other side of the cove. But they would bring it and tow it up there. They had a winch that they could tow it up there…And that was about the last of the fishermen being down there too…more and more of them had left" (NW).

61. A number of other interviewees mentioned this beach being used as a work space. For example, Paul Richardson noted, "on the east side looking back at the Causeway, there's a beach in there and they'd haul some boats up in there…they'd go inside and there was a beach up on the other side of that" (PR).

62. There have been attempts to construct piers and docks in the past, but not in recent times: "I never saw a pier down there in my lifetime, what I saw was running lines that used to go up into the cove" (KD).

63. Norm Walls mentioned damage to the lobster car:

"Kenneth Tripp and Harold Walls made that rig so they could pile it on a platform and then haul it up to their – with their – on a winch. That worked pretty good. And then we had a couple of hurricanes, kind of wiped that right out…all of those rocks down there, you wouldn't believe it. You make those slips down and just little gravel rocks underneath that and you get it down to that, and then next spring there's not a sign of that. [They] all rolled right back in….Every year" (NW).

64. Robert Davis provided examples of the impacts of storms on particular fishermen:

"[T]hat Ansel Davis, I bought his traps when he got done fishing for two bucks apiece all in the water. A storm came and I only had eight or ten left, out of 50 traps I had. I had eight or ten left. So that's how quick a storm would wipe [fishermen] out. Of course, sometimes you have them in quite shallow water, and that makes it worse, too. You get some pretty big seas down there off Otter Creek area. From there to Sand Beach area [you're fronting] deep ocean. You get all the sea when it comes in…That's how bad that sea gets coming right in, real bad sometimes." (RD).

65. A selection of quotations on the issue is provided here. Norm Walls noted,

"There's nothing all the way from your operation straight across [to the open Atlantic], you know. [During] some of those hurricane things, you know, a boat would break loose though. Even after the Causeway was there, a boat would break loose and go right on top of that Causeway…In fact they'd go beyond the road a little bit…The ocean just roars back because you can sit right here and hear the rock rolling. It pounds…Oh it's just like a funnel. The sound comes in against the mountain I suppose behind us or something" (NW).

Similarly, Denis Smith reported:

"See, they used to keep runways—I'll call them runways—dug right down on the rocks right there, but probably [ripped out] every time there was a big storm. Right back to ground zero again. No other harbor was [less] kind to us users. That's all there is to it…It's always been the bugaboo of the place, how open it is to the sea. And you could put a lot of stuff there, but if you have the right kind of storm, it's going to put you right back where you started. People can do that only so many times, and they stop fishing out of there…[T]hese people used to fish out of there because they didn't have transportation to go to anyplace else. And now they can drive to Seal Harbor or Northeast Harbor" (DS).

Meanwhile, Robert Davis added the following:

"it's so hard to fish out of. That's why, like, Gerry and all of them went to Seal Harbor…'cause it's a hard harbor at Otter Creek. You had to come and go when the tides are right there, too. It was rough. I've seen when you shouldn't have even gone out over the bar. I've gone over it, picking up traps and stuff…You could see right under my boat coming in. A small boat, it was an outboard. It was dangerous because, every so often, it would break right across that bar. You go with it, of course. It's dangerous, too. I was out trying to salvage some of my gear after a storm once when that guy said, 'You ain't going out again, are you?'…That Otter Creek cove area—I've seen the beach rock right up by where the parking lot is. It gets so damn rough washes that rock right up…I don't know if it did much [damage to the fish houses]. Now, mostly the surf would throw the rocks. There wasn't much water itself, just the waves would pick them up and throw them" (RD).

Other quotations could certainly be added to this list from the interviews conducted for this study.

66. Likewise, Denis Smith notes,

"It's always been a big issue, accessibility…[Y]ou can go to Seal Harbor and drive right out on the pier and walk down the ramp and load your boat. At Otter Creek you've got to drive down, lug your gear down to your tender with a rowboat, row out your boat" (DS).

67. The presence of so many prominent and affluent summer visitors resulted in some peculiar logistical complications:

"[W]hen Nelson Rockefeller was Vice President [December 1974 through January 1977] anybody fishing in Seal Harbor—his house is right on that point—and anybody fishing in this area had to have a permit. The Coast Guard was there, the Secret Service was there" (GN).

68. Echoing these sentiments, when asked to explain why fishing at Otter Creek had declined, Gerry Norwood said,

"Inconvenience. Inconvenience, the main thing. You can go to Seal Harbor and tie your skiff up on the float, walk down to the float, and get your skiff, and go off to the boat. Down here you got to set yourself a running line again in the water, have a long line running back to tie your skiffs on. You come in, get out of your skiff, tie it on to that running line, and then haul the boat back out. And then pull it back in again. Everything has to be transferred from the road to the parking lot to the skiff to the boat. Everything" (GN).

69. This is, of course, an oral history account, describing the experiences recalled by a community as they relate to park actions and policy. Park records on this policy and associated demolition activities would no doubt shed welcome light on park activities and motivations; little written record of this period was encountered in reviewed park documents, but the park's side of this story would no doubt be illuminating.

70. As with other Otter Creek fishing families, the Walls brothers – Bob and Don – work in the maintenance of summer homes.

71. On this development, Tom Richardson reports,

"the fire department, which Paul [Richardson] was a chief, my father was a chief… and I'm the one that ended up closing it because I was the fire chief. And I was in favor because a lot of the functions, the training and all this stuff, into the '90s and beyond and to this day, you had to be trained, fully trained as a firefighter one, state codes, and had to do the training, and if you weren't, and as an organization, and somebody got hurt or something happened, you're totally liable.

"So this whole conversion, from the '80s where I got involved in the fire department locally until I became chief, I think around '89 or whatever, and then got more involved with the other departments because things started consolidating, the monies for equipment coming from the town, and the more centralization going, and we maintained the fire department until 2001, I believe it was, although we officially disbanded. And then the building was shut down, the building, the fire department and the property was owned by my grandfather [Gerald Dean Richardson]. He had a deed, as long as it was being used for the public safety, so forth, so on, it would remain. But once it wasn't then the building and/or property reverted back to him" (TR).

72. In recent times, a few families have been involved in the ownership and maintenance of rental homes elsewhere on the island – a variation on the longstanding tradition of "cottage maintenance" around Mount Desert Island.

73. Similarly, Kendall Davis indicated that the OCAS started as a

"women's aid society…that was to …establish a church in the village of Otter Creek. And they borrowed money from a company – I believe it was out of New York, it was a bible society or whatever – to build this church. So in the very beginning it was a community-conscious group" (KD).

74. Tom Richardson discussed the structures of the OCAS and their history in more detail than what can be accommodated here. An excerpt from his interview, addressing this topic, is as follows:

"[T]his church over here, this church building, that was the function of the Aid Society originally. And it was built in 1901, started, and that's what this Aid Society Incorporation was for, to build that church. That was the purpose behind to build and sustain that church. It later, because of,

you know, trying to progress more, we changed the charter of it to be community organizing type stuff. It was just, we took it away from just being a church organization, which it was for many, many years, to become more of the village improvement society, OK? So the Aid society owns the property of the church which is just a small property around the building. And right directly across the street there was a community hall built, it was built in, I could go back and check records but I believe it was built in 1917, 1918…[T]hey owned it. Had it built, built the property there, and so forth. Still owns the property that exists…
"It wasn't until probably late 1990s, I was the fire chief at the time, the village had a fire department and it was before the town of Mount Desert consolidated and made it a municipal department. The town's fire protection came from four fire associations, corporations: Otter Creek, Seal Harbor, Northeast Harbor, and Somesville. We all had our own trucks, we all had our own equipment, and all this stuff. Over the years, the town obviously to maintain fire protection, funded a lot of the equipment and actually bought trucks and did all this stuff. And they started with an old oil truck and it was converted to pump water in 1942.
"But anyway, that community building was there until, I'm trying to think, it was probably in the mid '90s. Being the president of the Aid Society, you try to maintain the building and it became very difficult. It was down to just a few people who were doing anything. The building was basically open, you know, even when I was a kid, we'd go in there, they had a big wood furnace in the basement to get heat, hot air, and we'd bring wood in. And eventually the kids started tearing out the stalls and the rooms, you know, the walls and the partitions downstairs to burn, make heat. And it got to be quite a concern. And again, I don't have the exact date in front of me but, being the president of the Aid Society at the time and also being the fire chief, we decided that, it was voted, it wasn't just my decision, but it was voted to allow the fire department to utilize it for training and burn it down, which we did. We had state fire people come in. It was great training for all the departments, well ours included. We'd set fires to the basement and then go in with pit crews and put 'em out. And did that several times. And then, but the finale of it was that we let 'er go. We contained it with foam on the outside and let it burn from the inside out, so to speak. You know it was very controlled…
"But, that building was very old then, and I'm sure it's quite a bit of involvement just from my recollection of my grandpa talking about the meetings that took place, the games that were held in that hall" (TR).

75. On this point, Kendall Davis notes,

"people had genuinely wanted something done in that community. I think they still exist, a few of them do. I think with the church now being a community hall, you know that that transition has taken place in the last year, I think there still is a genuine interest… saying, "listen, we'd like to have some sort of community center here, community activities here"" (KD).

76. Some individuals object to the church having been converted to a community hall on religious grounds, or simply express regret that the town was not able to sustain a viable church congregation there. Some also suggest that at least a portion of the funds used to convert the church to a community center were originally given by individuals who assumed their donations would support religious rather than secularizing developments – a minor point of contention among Otter Creek residents today.

77. At the time fieldwork was undertaken for this project, in 2009-10, Karen Zimmerman, was the OCAS President, and her niece, Caroline Smith was OCAS Vice-President.
78. It is unclear on the basis of documents consulted for this study as to the ownership of the right-of-way prior to this action. The right-of-way appears to be established on what was private land, but was dedicated for public use by a municipally sanctioned lot-line adjustment to create

a heretofore undedicated passageway between private lands. Park and municipal land records are available for those wishing a more precise understanding of the legal steps associated with the creation of this right-of-way.

79. Kendall Davis was one of the interviewees who talked about the role of Steve Smith in galvanizing community support for waterfront access issues through the use of petitions:

"When I was growing up in Otter Creek [in the 1970s]…it was a fishing community. Yes, that cove was of interest. Yes, there were fish houses down there… They were sooner or later abandoned. People moved on their way. Life moved on. Around in the 1980s, and I want to say the early eighties, Steve Smith stepped onto the scene and he had an interest in those lots in that outer cove. He approached my father, approached other people throughout the community, Virgil Dorr, all of them [regarding continued use of the fish houses]… But he would have them sign petition after petition, you know, vowing the support for it" (KD).

80. A longer excerpt from the petition is of interest due to its detailed content on the history of the issue, as compiled by Steve Smith and other Otter Creek residents:

"the passageway to the shore at the foot of Ben Walls' Hill is and has been for many years a right of way to the ocean by the people of the village… The Village of Otter Creek was built around it and is, was, centered by the body of water also known as Otter Creek...When the ocean drive was constructed with the assistance of Rockefeller and others, the ocean drive was built on the inner bar and the site of the old road and bridge that crossed Otter Creek…Beside this area and to the north, but on the south side of the brook, there was once a sawmill. The road that went to the sawmill was the same one that that was used by the villagers as an access road to the shore. The distance was a couple hundred feet from the old county road to the shore. This access was and is in such a location that nature protects it extremely well from all sides. Severe weather and rough seas did not stir this particular area, so the villagers naturally continued to use it long after the sawmill was gone and eventually, in 1896, a group of Otter Creek people got together and asked the selectmen of the town to lay out the area on paper. They asked the town to lay out, plan, and maintain the town way and landing in Otter Creek at this particular point.
[The town landing] was laid out and filed with the town clerk on February 2, 1897. Four weeks later, on March 6, 1897, at the regular town meeting, it was officially accepted, and for 39 years it was supposedly maintained faithfully by the Town of Mount Desert. Then, in 1936, the town voted to discontinue it. And so it was against the will of the people of Otter Creek…but this didn't mean the way was closed. No indeed, for this was Otter Creek's access to the shore long before it was ever laid out on paper and would always be so because of its natural location.
As the years passed and the town no longer maintained it… the villagers continued to use it as they always had less and less. The wide road squeezed off to a mere passageway, but always kept open for use by the locals to launch small boats, carry traps and other gear, or just for walking for scenic or recreational purposes. When Rockefeller left large parts of the land to the national park, one of which took in this area under discussion, his lawyers inadvertently left out the fact that there was a right of way and landing area located there that had not been transferred back to any previous land owner. In all probability, this was merely an oversight. Surely, if it had surfaced, they would have realized that the right of way was that of the people of Otter Creek by nothing more than if used by prescription alone.
With this information, we the undersigned village, citizens of Otter Creek, being registered voters of the Town of Mount Desert, State of Maine, County of Hancock, in the United State of America, do hereby pray that the Honorable Solicitor will come to the decision that no damages are claimed

by Acadia National Park to the right of way in question so as the greater Town of Mount Desert may commence as soon as possible with its pursuit to reestablish this right of way and landing by the use and convenience of the people of Otter Creek and that they be good neighbors and work together with the National Park Service forevermore" (Village of Otter Creek 1978).

81. A longer quotation from Tom Richardson is instructive on the context and details of these negotiations:

"My understanding was that Rockefeller owned much of the land down all around the shore. And there have been, you know, the community has used that shoreline for years, with these various fishing areas and so forth. There was actually deeded parcels of land which I believe the Aid Society of Otter Creek has… deeded parcels on this western side of the cove. … I believe that, at some point, the park, they were putting all this together to make the park with Rockefeller, John D. Jr., and I believe he was, I've heard stories that somehow, the meeting, you know, they got a bunch of their employees there to vote to allow this land to be transferred, or some effect of that nature. So it became the park.
"And then this particular landing area, which is inside the cove, which is as much as it is a principle issue, that's about it, because of the functionality of the landing is pretty basic, pretty minimal. At low tide, there's no way to get in and out, and neither at high tide, you know, it's a stretch for a smaller boat. But it became a principle scenario. Steve Smith started years ago, trying to retain, somehow he actually got the owners of those fish house lots to give it to the Aid Society. The Aid Society is the village improvement society, started in 1901. So he was able to get those deeds transferred to the Aid Society which is now kept in the public domain as opposed to, or a quasi-public domain. And the landing area was something he was arguing and fighting for a number of years. And basically was getting nowhere…That's when Paul and I—I was the president of the Aid Society at the time—and Paul has been a member of the, the town representative for the National Park Commission, however it is, most of the island towns, they had representatives to deal with the park. So Paul was well known with… the superintendent, and I, being president of the Aid Society. So Steve approached the Aid Society to try get this resolved, to try to get this landing back. Which, basically Paul and I took over the negotiations. You know, we went through quite a time of repairing, repairing the workability with the park. And we did. And we ended up making an agreement with them…
"The agreement basically was we had these two fish house lots, the Aid Society. One, which at the time had a fish house on it…the building that Steve made covered the entire lot. Next to it was a strip of land, I don't have the exact dimensions, but it's like 50 feet by 180 feet that went up the bank, you know, towards the road and came down onto the shore area, which had nothing built on it at that time. So we ended up being able to negotiate with the park that we would give them a no-building easement on that little strip of land for the right to have the park, and turn over this, a right-of-way basically to the town of Mount Desert. And that's how we were able to get that right-of-way in, and there was a lot of restrictions as typical of the park. You know, as far as construction type and approvals and all that kind of stuff. We were able to get a road back in there. There was a base for the road from the original roads. But the town then went back and did the road so you could travel down it and then built a bulkhead of such, of sorts.
"And again, Steve to this day, would still like to have more things done. But, it's about as easy as it gets and in reality the functionality of it, the functionability of it, is minimal. So, we now have that, or the town has that. But how it got in the park's hands and as such is just over" (TR).

82. Similarly, Paul Richardson asks rhetorically,
"I mean, who the hell goes down there and launches a boat, you know what I mean? If you're going to launch a boat, you're going to go to Northeast Harbor where they've got a ramp to do it… And you know, and there's very little water in there at low tide. So I mean if you're going to be

using a boat, you've got to go with the tide" (PR).

83. Otter Creek residents not currently involved with OCAS administration also expressed an interest in a broader community role for the OCAS fish house. As Kendall Davis questioned rhetorically,

"Why aren't we using those for kids to go down there ecologically and study tidal pools and stuff like that?... why aren't they able to take and go down there and have picnics down there, families?" (KD).

84. Kendall Davis, speaking in 2006 before more recent cleanup efforts, complained of this clutter:

"We went down there. It was a mess. It was a disaster. It's just – it's not ecologically sound. I mean a fish house – and this is where it would be a draw. [Public access would be appropriate if] it were clean, a governed building, you know, minimal rope, debris, wire, and garbage all over the place" (KD).

85. People of a later generation also remember seeing this fish house, such as Kendall Davis: "Austin Walls had a fish house on that inner cove, and that fish house was there all through my life. And that's where Austin used to take his boat out and used to do his thing down there. That is where Stephen has the inner cove building right now. It's in those woods" (KD).

86. On this point, Kendall Davis notes,

"Austin, I believe, had a running line on the outer cove also, but I'm not sure. He may have had a running line on the inner cove at one time, but I can't recall that. Most of the boats were kept on the outer cove during my lifetime…where they had their running lines that went out to the center" (KD).

87. Others suggest that Smith had secured the permission of Walls descendents who no longer lived in the area, but that there were some local Walls descendents who had been reluctant to grant their claim to Smith – some on principal and some who wished to retain these rights for the family alone.

88. Whether this meets the technical threshold of a "common law" convention of access remains unclear.

89. Gerry Norwood notes that he continues to be seen as something of an "outsider" though he married into one of the oldest families of Otter Creek, has lived in the community for decades, had fished from the cove, and has impeccable Mount Desert Island genealogical credentials. His family hails from Southwest Harbor:

"For the [Norwood] family, it was originally four brothers that came from England. Well, they departed from England...They sort of landed in Southwest Harbor originally, I guess, or Somesville. My closest family came through the Somesville area. But then they branched off to Southwest Harbor. Somesville's the oldest village on the island, so that's where they originated" (GN).

He goes on to observe,

"you're an outsider if you're not born here…And they still say, 'Well, you're not from here though.'

But, yeah, we were born in the same hospital, but…my parents lived in Seal Harbor when I was born, but I grew up in Bar Harbor" (GN).

90. A number of individuals provided testimony on this issue in hearings held in Bar Harbor, including members of the Walls family. Copies of this testimony are available in park records relating to the proposed ramp.

91. A lot of this concern centered on parking for the OCAS fish house, but other locations were mentioned, such as along the Causeway. Denis Smith, for example, recalled,

"for a long time…we'd come down on the Causeway and go up on the [beach there] and there were picnics there and everything. And the park just did not want that happening. They did everything they could to discourage it. No parking on the road. I don't remember all of the details, but it was always a thorn…it wasn't a designated park. People used to actually drive our cars off the causeway and down on to that [little beach there] on the north side" (DS).

92. Kendall Davis is an example of a community member, currently in their mid-40s, who recalls fish houses on east side of the cove:

"over on that side…I've been told by old timers, that there were fish houses over there. One was occupied by Virgil Dorr and then one was owned by – it was a Davis, but I don't know which Davis it was. So there was along that side. On the other side there was Chester Walls, people like that, that had all their fish houses over there" (KD).

93. With most extended families tracing their ancestry in this place so far back in time, local oral history arguably functions differently here than it does in the larger, more urbanized parts of the country. Events from the relatively distant past are still part of the shared narrative within the community, discussed between residents as part of their shared history. The history of park creation and the changes in uses of the waterfront arrived comparatively late in Otter Creek's historical narrative; conflicts between the park and the community over access in the 1960s and 1970s, are often spoken of as if these were recent events.

94. It is perhaps worth noting that more than one interviewee alluded to environmental changes at Otter Creek that appeared to be the result of regional or global environmental change, rather than local causes. For example, according to Bob Walls, Harold Walls observed in the last 20 years of his life that the water levels at Otter Creek cove seemed to be rising. As evidence, Harold Walls commented that he had to set the poles for his boat lines higher on the bank than he had as a young man (RW).

Sea ice used to be a much commoner occurrence than it is today, as well. In the early 20th century, the shoreline was locked in ice for a portion of the winter. When Norm Walls was a kid, "they had a person who hauled grain up toward Trenton…They'd go out on the frozen ocean all the way to Bartlett's Island [from Mount Desert Island]…inside of Otter Cove it used to freeze solid, but not in the open water outside" (NW).

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