A Lighthouse "Huck Finn"

By Frank Milan
Date: Unknown

As I have stated before in columns of down East, I have the unique distinction of having been conceived on one lighthouse and born on another.

On Nov. 21, 1892 my father was appointed Acting Second Assistant Keeper on Mount Desert Rock Lighthouse at the huge salary of $440 per annum. (His father was keeper there at the time). On Oct. 23, 1897 he was promoted to Keeper at Burnt Cote Harbor Station at Swan's Island at a salary of $540, $100 more than he started at five years before. A notice dated 6/28/1912 fixed his salary at $552 and another dated 11/4/1918 increased the salary to $780, a raise of $340 over what he started as 26 years earlier. That is almost what one would call rapid progress in reverse, taking into account inflation. It is interesting to note that in 1892 the Lighthouse Service was under the Treasury Dept., in 1912 the Dept. of Commerce and Labor, and in 1918 under the Dept. of Labor. Of course now it is under the Coast guard which is run by the Treasury Dept., during peace time. Thus it has made a complete circuit in the almost 80 years since 1892.

He got to Swan's Island late in November and I was born at the Lighthouse there the following June 23rd. Count it up.

I am going to (????) the events that will be described here up to the time I left Swan's Island in 1914 to attend high school on the mainland into four rather roughly defined categories; Pre-school at the Lighthouse, school happenings, shipwrecks (All of which I am glad to say I was not the cause of), and a miscellaneous section that includes far too many acts of deviltry to be fully described here.

Pre-School

My Cousin Emma's mother died about the time I was born and my mother took her under her wing. Since she was 12 or 15 years old then, and since my mother was in rather poor health, she assumed most of the burden of raising me. She took delight to the end of her life telling about the horrible deeds I had committed on my up-the-ladder of time. She told about them so many times and so convincingly that I almost have come to believe they actually happened.

This first thing I can really remember (Many readers will doubt this) was the birth of my sister Urla when I was a little less than 3 ½. I can see Dr. Hawkes coming into the large room we used as a kitchen and dining room, laid his doctor's bag on shelf, and went upstairs. In a short time he came back got his bag and went back upstairs. Shortly after I heard yells that heralded the coming of a sister, who unbeknown to me at the time was to cause me no end of woe later. I always believed that the doctor produced Urla from that little black bag. At about this time or perhaps a short time later my father told me that the calf our cow had every spring was dug out of a rotten stump by the cow. I spent hours trying to find such a stump and although I found many rotten stumps, I never did find one that looked as though it had given birth to a calf. This belief, however, did strengthen my belief that Urla did come from that black bag. Somehow the two incidents seemed to complement each other, and it was many years later before I began to doubt their plausibility.

Although those woes I spoke of above really came mostly during the school years, now is as good a time as any to tell about them. When Urla was old enough to help me wash the dishes, her job was to wipe. After great effort and considerable argument I would finally get her into the pantry. Before we could get a quarter way through the job, a fight would erupt. My mother's stock order was always the same, "Urla, you go upstairs. Frank you finish the dishes". Getting her off to school was still worse. The schoolhouse was some two miles form the Lighthouse and I was always anxious to get going as early as possible not because of any thirst for knowledge on my part but to have as much time as possible to play. Urla couldn't care less about an early start. After fretting and fuming and one or two battle royals I would finally get her on the road. Needless to say, once I got her up on the 'Head' out of sight of the house, she would suddenly become distilled with a great desire to get to the school as soon as possible.

Once when I was five or six years old (this is one of Emma's stories backed up by my mother) Urla and I disappeared. A frantic search of all the buildings and the shoreline, which surrounds three sides of the Lighthouse property, failed to produce any sign of us. Everyone was at her wit's end and frantic when someone happened to look out the harbor's entrance and lo and behold there was the Lighthouse dory wending its way slowly towards home. It seemed I had taken Urla to the shore and somehow had gotten her into the dory which was hauled up onto the boat slip. Then I had slipped the hook from the bow and had rowed to Harbor Island which was about a half mile away, paid a call on "Aunt" Sue Hardy, and was on my way home when they discovered me. I'll agree it is a fantastic story, but I have heard Emma tell it so many times backed up by the rest of the family that I have really come to believe it myself.

Another of Emma's stories that I don't remember is the plaster episode. It seems some government workers were either plastering or replastering in the living room. I was being a general nuisance poking my fingers into the fresh plaster. Finally they got a stout rope and tied me so I couldn't reach the plaster. Shortly after they went out into the kitchen for dinner. Imagine their consternation upon returning and finding that I had somehow reached a nice long pole and had made the entire wall into something resembling the present day acoustic tiling on ceilings.

I also had some other rather interesting experiences with the dory mentioned above, or at least they were interesting to me at the time. The boat slip was very steep and quite long. I soon learned that if I greased the ways and slipped the boat hook I could get a fast ride and a beautiful splash when the dory hit the water so whenever my father was away from the station I would practice this pastime. It was fun for which I had to work hard for after each ride. I would have to pull the dory up the slip by means of the winch up in the boathouse. Electricity was an unknown thing on Swan's Island in those days so the work had to be done by brute strength. When the tide was extra low the bow of the dory would hit the rocks as it slid into the water. This, of course, didn't do the dory any great amount of good. In fact after a few times of this the bottom of the bow wasn't pretty at all. For several years the Lighthouse tender (I believe it was the Lilac in those days) would have to bring a new dory. The men who brought the new dory always wondered out loud ho my father could wear out so many dories. Of course I never volunteered any information on the subject.

Another episode happened in that same location that wasn't so pleasant. This happened in 1906 as my father was building his first motor boat in the boathouse. I was hanging around seeing how much trouble I could get into as was my cousin, Harry Greenlaw, who had just come back from a three year cruise to Hudson Bay. I had the hook from the boat winch hooked under a rock down between the ways and I guess I was either trying to move the rock or break the rope. It didn't matter much which happened as long as I caused a commotion. Sure enough a commotion did happen and not at all to my liking. I had the iron winch handle up over my head and putting all the power I possessed on it. Harry came along and grabbed the rope along about in the middle and pulled on it. Since the rope was strung along parallel to the floor for some 25 feet anyone pulling on the middle of it could exert a tremendous pressure on the winch. Sure enough the winch handle flew out of my hand and caught me on the forehead, felling me low and completely out for some time. I still carry the scar to this day.

I have another scar in proximity to that one that happened under somewhat different circumstances. I had one of those old "Black Beauty" solid side sleds with a turned up nose. The steel runners came up over the front and formed a loop through which the tow line was tied. One day I was sliding down the steep hill towards the Lighthouse and struck a bare spot in the ledge. The sled stopped right there but I kept on going until my forehead brought up on one of those steel loops. Then I stopped but not until I had received another ugly gash on the forehead. I didn't pass out this time but I was a gory mess when I reached the house.

In those days it seemed the supply boat always brought just double the material that was needed. There was always plenty of galvanized cut nails and shingles. The nails could be driven just about anywhere and the shingles made excellent darts and blowgun missiles. One year they built a new picket fence and as usual they brought more pine boards than was needed. By sawing off the points I had a beautiful knot free pine board. There were so many left over that it took me several years to use them all up. I built many things that were a complete waste of lumber but I had a lot of fun building them.

The kerosene used for the house lights and the lamp in the tower was stored in a little brick building just under the high bank. Some one had the bright idea of putting slate shingles on the building. That was fine for me. I soon discovered that a rock thrown with the proper velocity would cause the slate to fly in all directions. The next year they had to reshingle it but by that time my family watched me a little closer. I did get in a few licks however and now I like to visit the station and wonder out loud to the present keeper what nitwit broke all those slate shingles. He usually gets quite a bang out of it when I tell him that I broke them 65 years ago.

Another episode happened along about this time that sort of destroyed my faith that the cow dug her calf out of a rotten stump. Our cow, which was getting ready to calf, fell over the bank. There was no way of getting her back up over the bank so my father hitched a rope to her and towed her around to the Burying Point where there was a beach. It soon became evident that she was trying to have her calf but because of some injury could not do so. Since there was no vet in town my father called Dr. Fuller. When he got there he proceeded to help the birth of the calf. Right then and there I lost my faith in the rotten stump idea. I believe the cow either died or had to be destroyed but I don't remember what happened to the calf.

It was also along about this time that an event happened that could have very well have terminated my stay on earth right then and there and I wouldn't be here to be writing this opus. The cow barn had an upstairs room that my father used as a workshop. As is the case with most barn lofts, it had a double door in one end. One day I was near the door sawing a board, probably one of those pine pickets, when I lost my balance and out I went. I landed in a heap on the ground some 8 or 10 feet below. Apparently I was none the worse for the experience because I went back up and finished what I was doing and I don't remember that I was even lame form the experience. I guess that was a case of the "Luck of the Irish". My grandfather came from Northern Ireland.

Writing about the barn episode recalls my battle of wits with my mother. In those days raisins came as a soggy mass in a paper carton. I dearly loved the raisins and every chance I got I would swipe a package from the house. Since I couldn't eat them all at one time, I would stash them away in the workshop until I could eat them all, then I would go looking for some more. Always I found them in a different place. My mother never said a word about them disappearing but she must have suspected what was going on. It certainly was fun until I outgrew my passion for raisins.

Another episode that Emma liked to relate but which I don't remember had to do with "Gram Norwood". My mother had married young age to a sea captain named Norwood who had visited Calais where my mother grew up after being born in Eastport. He came from Tremont and died not many years after their marriage leaving her with my half sister Rita. The fact that her husband came from Tremont explains how my mother happened to be in this part of the country and met my father who was born and brought up in Southwest Harbor at the head of Norwood's Cove. The Milan House still stands and is occupied although it is no longer in the Milan family. My mother always kept up a close relationship with her first husband's family. It seems "Gram" Norwood, my mother's first mother-in-law was visiting us one time when I was small. In some way I got hold of a man sized butcher knife and when Emma became attracted by the series of screams she found that I had "Gram" cornered in a small closet and was threatening to cut out her insides. In the nick of time Emma disarmed me and "Gram" was permitted to live. To her credit I will say that she never did hold it against me.

I well remember another event that had a profound effect on me. Dorsey Stanley, who lived in the Valley finally died from T. B. after a long illness. At the same time my grandfather died in Southwest Harbor. To get to Southwest Harbor, my father had to walk to Atlantic, about four miles, borrow a boat and row to McKinley, another four or five miles, and then to Southwest Harbor, another four miles. He got back home on the day of Dorsey's funeral after the services as they were getting ready to lower the casket into the ground. They stopped and opened the casket so my father could view the remains and I being with him could see also. It was my first experience with a corpse and I remember it vividly to this day including the dress she had on.

On the light side, shortly after my father moved to Swan's Island, my sister Rita, was in the Valley and Edna Stanley said to her, "My, I would recognize you alright you look so much like your father". Of course she

was way out in left field because my father was no relation whatever to her.

To get from the Lighthouse to the Valley one had to traverse quite aq high hill which was about a half mile long. The road traveled along the top between the trees taking the path of least resistance. One day when I didn't come home on time, which wasn't the least bit unusual, my mother sent my father to find me and bring me home. He had no great trouble finding me in the Valley since he saw me first. We then started home with him in the lead. I watched my chance and when he disappeared around a bend I turned tail and ran in the opposite direction. My father kept right on going and when he approached the Lighthouse my mother said, "What's the trouble? Couldn't you find Frank?" "Why yes", my father replied, "He's right here". But when he turned around Frank wasn't there; he was long gone. So, my father had to go back after me and needless to say this time Frank led the procession back home.

Since there were no tarred roads in those days, there was s profusion of rocks laying around about everywhere. I became very proficient in throwing those rocks both with a slingshot and with what I was endowed with by nature, a good right arm. At this time I will confine myself with happenings at the Lighthouse and leave my other exploits with rocks for later in this discourse. One fine day with a very light breeze blowing Mill Rowe was coming in by the Lighthouse in his sloop. He was at peace with the world, down on his knees in the cockpit, leaning over the rail and contemplating the water as he slid by in it, perhaps I should say through it. All of a sudden a rock landed in the water not two feet from his face. A jumping jack in-the-box would have been slow compared to the time it took him to get to his feet and start looking to see where the rock came from. By that time the thrower was long gone and I doubt if he ever knew for sure what happened although it wouldn't be too hard to guess. On frequent occasions I took pot shots at the steamboat, Vinalhaven, as it went by. Several times I Thought I was going to make it and held my breath until the rock dropped into the water just short of the boat. My undoing came, however when I dropped a good sized rock on the stern of John Kent's boat as he was hauling lobster traps near the shore. He wasn't long telling my father and that sort of put a cramp in my rock throwing at boats.

The following has nothing whatever to do with me but I am sure the fishermen who read this will get a kick out of it. The land lubber probably won't see anything funny at all. It seems a certain lobsterman had lost a trap off Turnip Point. Finally someone spotted it and told the owner of the lost trap just how to find it. He said, "run out with the Lighthouse over your stern until you get abreast of Turnip Point, then look overboard and you will see your buoy about four feet under water.

School Days

As I have stated before, the schoolhouse was about two miles form the Lighthouse. Despite this distance I seldom missed more than one or two days of school each year. Since there were no automobiles in those days, boats were used instead, especially after motor boats became common. My father and mother attended Pocahontas Lodge each Thursday night. To get a baby sitter he would take his motor boat, go across the harbor, pick up the sitter, and bring her back to the Lighthouse. After the meeting he would usually take her back home since he went and came from the Lodge meeting in the boat. On stormy days he would take us up to the head of the harbor in the boat and we would walk the half mile to the schoolhouse. If it was still storming in the afternoon he would repeat the process in reverse. In the winter the head of the harbor was always frozen over so we would have to go by Shanks Mare regardless of the weather.

The school building was typical two-story with the primary school below and the grammar school above. Surrounding the lot on three sides was a fence with 2 x 4's laid on the top. We always got a great kick of racing each other along the top of those when 2 x 4's until they got so weak they started to break. Then it wasn't so much fun.

The schoolhouse was ideally situated for sun-loving kids. On the north side was Grindle Hill, fairly steep and long with the usual S curve at the bottom. We could get in three slides in the 15 minute recess. We also found that if the sliding was extra fast and we hurried back up the hill, we could just get started on the 4th slide before the bell rang. Of course, once we started, we had to finish the slide.

On the South side of the schoolhouse was what we called the frog pond. Actually it was man made and the ice was cut from it in the winter and stored in an ice house for summer use. The teacher took no chances here of us being late as he would ring the bell out the back window five minutes early. That would give us time enough to get our skates off and back to the schoolhouse on time. When I got old enough my mother would let me go up there for the night skating parties. Why we never got sick from drinking the water out of that pond, I will never know. On one end of the pond weeds grew profusely up through the ice. We would skate to that part, cut a hole through the ice, break off a reed and suck the up thru it to our hearts content. I especially remember watching Halley's Comet streaking across the sky during the winter of 1910. I don't know how long it was visible but it surely was quite a sight for us as long as it lasted. When I got older I joined skating parties over in Minturn at the Goose Pond, some four miles from the Lighthouse. I remember one night my feet were so sore that I took off my shoes and walked home in my stocking feet. The Lilly Pond was a much better pond to skate on but it was farther away and I only remember being there skating once. Of course skating was quite some different in those times than it is now; if anyone does any skating now. Then we wore our regular shoes at all times and the skates either clamped to the taps and heels of our shoes or screwed into the heel and was held in place in the front with straps. The clamps were always bending down and in our desire to hold them on we would set up the clamps so tightly that it would pull the heels and taps from our shoes. The screw skates were an improvement but still far from perfect. As I said before, they screwed into the heels which held firmly. On the front end, however, there were two little metal sharp points that were supposed to stick into the taps and hold firmly. Actually we could never get the straps tight enough to keep the skates from moving and in a short time we would have a beautiful cut right across the whole tap. The only remedy was a new pair of shoes.

Now we come to baseball. We had an excellent diamond consisting of all 12 or 15 feet of the town road plus what little we could borrow from the school yard on the first base side and from the trees on the third base side. North of the school was an excellent field that we would invade every chance we got. This field, however, belonged to "Uncle" Horace Stanley and he passed by it at least twice every day on his way to and from his fish weir in Toothacher's Cove. If we were there when he came by he promptly drove us off and to make the situation more sticky, Evie Bridges, Uncle Horace's niece, and who lived with him was the primary teacher. It would be a little bit of misnomer to call the ball we played a baseball. It was strictly home made with no cover. In those days many of the clothes we wore especially stockings were knitted wool so it was no problem getting yarn as practically all these clothes could easily be raveled out. If we wanted a real good ball, we went to the shore and got a small round rock for a center. A rock that had sharp edges or points wasn't good because as soon as it had been hit a few times the sharp edges would cut right through the yarn. We would wind the yarn around this rock and if we wanted an especially good ball, we would stop every once in a while and sew it. When we finally finished winding, we gave it a good sewing and would have a ball that would last quite a long time if we didn't lose it. We didn't pay too much attention to basemen as they weren't too important in getting men out. To get a man out all we had to do was throw the ball at him and hit him when he was off base. Needless to say, we always had a good supply of black and blue places where the ball had hit but we enjoyed the game fully as much as the present day ball players. During the summer Dr. Fuller was always promoting baseball games between Atlantic and the Swan's Island side of the Island. One summer Atlantic had a player by the name of Boone, a summer visitor or rusticator as we called them then. He was obviously a good ball player because, I presume, he had played in schools away form the island. When he got up to bat he faced the plate with his feet quite close together instead of facing the pitcher with his left foot in the "bucket". That fall when we were playing one day at the school I made the smart remark that the batter should stand at the plate the way the Boone boy did and I did. The raspberries flew thick and fast for awhile and I never did live the remark down as long as I stayed in Swan's Island.

You know it is sometimes said that everyone remembers two teachers; his best and his worst. I don't know that I can remember anyone as my worst but I definitely can remember THREE as my best and two of them were at Swan's Island. The third was my algebra teacher at MCI, a Miss Moberg. The two at Swan's Island were Evie Bridges and Sidney O. Young, Jr. from East Machias. Evie was my teacher all but one year I was in primary school. She certainly did have the knack of communicating with the younger generation although that phrase had not been invented then. She picked the whole last year of my primary schooling in which to die. Just before she died she called me in and presented me with a two-volume set of the history of

Mexico and a 15-volumn set of Stoddard's lectures about his travels about the World. Although I still have the books more than sixty years later, I am sorry to admit that I never have read them.

In grammar school I had a succession of mediocre teachers until Sidney O. Young came two years before I graduated. I well remember one who was a big husky fellow over six feet tall. One day in the winter when he was out on the playground Della Withee arched a snow ball around the corner and hit him smack on the bright red tie he was wearing. Apparently the dye wasn't as good then as it is now as before it dried out his whole shirtfront was dyed red. What we didn't do for deviltry while that man was there just wouldn't be worth mentioning. The next year Sidney O. Young, Jr. came and when he walked through the door it was perfectly evident that things were going to be different. He stayed there for two years and never once did he have to take any disciplinary action and I don't remember that he ever raised his voice. In addition to that he was an excellent teacher and we learned a great deal during the time he was with us; may his soul rest in peace. This piece is getting so long and so out of hand that I am going to cut off right here. Later I taught a year in that same school and many interesting things happened but that is another story.

Miscellaneous Deviltry

I have a list of items a mile long under this heading, but since as I said above, this piece is getting out of hand, I will condense the list as much as possible. You will remember that I spoke of rock throwing at the Lighthouse. That wasn't the only place by any means that I practiced that art. My special target was the glass insulators on the telephone line. I found that a decent sized rock thrown with the proper velocity would make the glass fly in all directions much the same as the slate on the oil house at the Lighthouse. I kept the glasses pretty well cleaned off between the schoolhouse and home and although I was threatened with dire consequences if I persisted, I still kept at it. It must have been a relief to the telephone linemen when I left Swan's Island. Another great place for rock throwing was Uncle Abe's Hill just before getting to the Valley. It was a short hill but quite steep so that the surface was always washing away. When it got about so bad the roadman would go to the beach and haul some beach rocks just right for throwing. Will Stanley had bought an old Canadian America Cup Challenger, I believe its name was the Atlanta, and moored it off Uncle Abe's Hill as a gasoline station for lobster boats. It was so far off that it was difficult to throw one that far but it was a challenge and every now and then we would bounce one off the deck. We never did get caught because we always threw them when whoever was aboard was below deck and by the time they could get on deck we would be no where to be seen. A much more inviting target was Uncle Joe Willey, who fished there during the summer and lived aboard his little sloop. One time he made the mistake of anchoring too near the shore and we really had a ball for a while. Just about two out of every three rocks we threw would hit the target. Pretty soon he appeared in the cud with the idea of warning us off but about that time a garage of rocks landed aboard and he decided right off that discretion was the better than valor. Like all boys we frequently had our spats and usually they would end up with rock throwing. One time we fought all one afternoon with air guns but as far as I know no one got killed and I believe very few hits were made.

One event caused me to get the only real licking that my father ever gave me. He would quite often make a swipe at me with his hand when I aggravated him enough but I always saw it coming and managed to duck under. This event happened on May Day. In those days we used to hang May baskets much the same as the kids go around at Halloween. This particular May Day came on a Thursday. By this time I was old enough to baby sit for my sister. When it came time for my father and mother to leave for the Pocahontas Lodge, I wasn't home so he started looking for me. It was almost dark when I saw him coming. Freeman Gross and I happened to be standing near a hole that was made when a large rock was taken out of Ferd Morse's lawn. I immediately got down into the hole and Freeman sat on me. When my father came along he saw Freeman and asked him if he had seen me but Freeman's memory was very short and he allowed that he hadn't seen me. My father went along farther up town and not finding me started back home. By the time he went by us on the way back, I was beginning to get a little Leary of what was going to happen so I got up followed him at a discreet distance. I got home at about the time he did and by that time he was pretty well stewed up. He took me upstairs on the bed, took down my pants, and proceeded to give me a royal shellacking with an onion crate slat. He didn't spare any horses and I can almost feel the ache now.

Another episode occurred of which I am not too proud and was very unhappy about at the time. I was engrossed in rigging up a telephone line. I seemed to have the idea that all one needed for a telephone line was a couple of tin cans with a strip of wire between them. I had the cans but no wire so I proceeded to get into Fred Tainter's boat which was tied up at the steamboat wharf and swiped his spark coil. That gave me a beautiful supply of copper wire. It wasn't long however before Fred found out who the culprit was and he came right down to the Lighthouse. I was in bed but my father called me right down stairs. I tried to deny it but it was no use. I presume my father paid for the coil but that was not the end of it for me. The next night was the dedication of the new Odd Fellows Hall and everyone in town was there; that is everyone but Frank. I put up an awful fuss but it was no use; my parents were adamant and they went to the big time and left me at home. It was just what I deserved but I couldn't see it that way at the time. I am not going to burden you with any more of my memories all of which are much the same as I have recounted, lest some of my present students get to read it and start pointing back at me when I point my finger at them.

Shipwrecks and Other Items about The Sea

I wouldn't want to close this piece without some mention of the shipwrecks that occurred while I was growing up. Telling about these will be especially pleasant because they will be the things in this article that I didn't have a hand in.

The first one I can remember occurred at Scrage a little wooded island off the southwestern tip of Harbor Island. This schooner tried to get into Swan's Island Harbor in a heavy northwester but couldn't point up into the wind enough to make the harbor so she dropped her anchor. The anchor or anchors wouldn't hold so she dragged and piled up on Scrage. The next Sunday two steamboats tried to pull her off but it was no soap and she died right there. The last time I was out by the island some 45 years ago some of her bones were still there.

Two vessels came to grief on john's Island Ledge; one loaded with molasses and the other with coal. I don't seem to remember much about the molasses ship but everyone knew about the coal vessel. It was so rough that she broke up shortly and spewed the coal (hard) all over the ledge. Everybody that had a boat hypered themselves out there and there was no shortage of coal the next winter.

About this time a three-masted vessel loaded with laths ran ashore on Frenchboro, Long Island. Apparently she tore a good big hole in her bottom because the sea surged back and forth in her Justas it did outside. Most of the scavengers were divided into teams of three. One would get down in the hole where the laths were and toss the bundles up on deck, another would take it to the rail and toss it into the boat. Here again, I guess just about everybody had all the lathes they could use for some time. Not long after, an insurance man showed up and tried to reclaim the lathes but not one was to be found anywhere. What he didn't know was that the woods all over the island was full of lathes.

Another time a ship came directly from Italy and in some way in thick fog sailed up the bay and then turned around and came back all the time not seeing a thing. She finally came to grief on Mason and it wasn't too long before nothing was left of her. I can't remember whether or not the ship was loaded but the fishermen weren't long stripping everything else off.

Another thing that caused considerable excitement happened right in the Eastern Way. A man was coming in through there at high tide and struck the ledge which is right ion the middle of the passage. When someone went aboard to see if he could help, the skipper was deader than a door nail. It was presumed that he had a heart attack of some kind when the boat hit.

Another time we very well cold have had quite a smashup but it was narrowly avoided. The old revenue cutter Woodbury had stayed in the harbor all night. The next morning it was thick as pudding. About noon she decided to go out anyway. She went out by the Lighthouse and disappeared in the fog. In a short time we heard her whistle blowing on her way back. She apparently went out and turned North around the bell buoy and started back. Her compass must have been accurate in both directions because when she got back to the light she was just about as much North of her outgoing path as it would take to turn her around. I was right down on the point watching for her when she showed up right in close. Apparently just about the time I spotted the ship the

men on her spotted the shore. Bells rang all over the place and confusion was rampant on the boat. When she stopped I swear I could have tossed a biscuit aboard. A rock wouldn't have been any feat at all.

The next is the Waronock (I don't think that is spelled correctly). She was a brand new three-masted schooner commanded by a Capt. Anderson of Camden whose wife was a cousin to my father. She had just loaded with stone at the quarry dock. To save tug fees it was the practice to hook a rope to aq deadeye on a little ledge just outside the dock. As the ship neared the ledge and had gained some momentum they would stop pulling from the dock and the ship would glide by into the main harbor. This time someone goofed and didn't stop pulling on the rope until the ship was hard and fast on the ledge. That evening the Captain came over to visit my father and I was all ears to hear what happened. I think they had the tug Betsy Ross come down from Stonington and pulled her off on the next high tide none the worse for the experience.

Writing of the quarry reminds me of going over there with my father. "Old Man" Shepard ran the grocery store very close to the quarry and my father traded there quite often. I remember vividly two things about the store. First was seeing Mr. Shepard cut cheese in no time flat, far quicker than the present day grocery clerks can cut through one with a knife. The other episode wasn't quite as pleasant. In those days every store that sold cigars had a cigar cutter. The end of the cigar was inserted into the cutter and when it was pushed down it snipped off the end of the cigar so it would draw. Of course I didn't have any cigars in those days but my forefinger seemed about the right size so I inserted that in the cutter and pushed like the men did. In no time at all I was missing the tip of my finger. Quite often when my father went shopping he would go over to the quarry and talk to some of the men there. The main quarry was on top of the hill with a railroad track running to the dock. The car would run down the track on its own and then a winch in the power house at the top of the hill would pull it back. This was a paving block quarry and the men cut the paving in stalls along the track. When a man was out of stone the railroad would bring him a block of stone some four or five feet long and wide and then he would cut it up into paving blocks. When a ship came in for the paving, they would be load on the car from those stalls, transported to the dock, and then into the hold of the ship.

Since Swan's Island was a fishing village and everyone was familiar with the sea it was only natural that one went that way instead of by land. The people there were great for picnics when I was growing up. Although there was plenty of shore and beaches on the main Island, they wouldn't do for a picnic. At least once a week during the summer fifty or sixty people including the youngsters would pile onto the Verna G., a two-masted lobster smack, and take off for one of the islands. Arriving at the island, the smack would be anchored and everyone and everything transported to the shore in a small boat. The menu was always the same; coffee, a fish chowder, and plenty of pies and cake. Everyone seemed to have a bang-up time even though it was before the days of liquor.

Like just about everyone else in the town, just as soon as I was big enough to pull a lobster trap, I was out there with some traps of my own. I probably had my first traps when I was 12 or 13. That first year I used the Lighthouse dory. A dory is one of the most difficult boats to stand up in but it is also one of the most seaworthy boats ever made. It is practically impossible to swamp it or to turn it over. The only difficulty in using a dory is in steering it when rowing off before the wind. There is so much of it above the water and so little in the water that the wind blows it so that it is almost impossible to get where one wants to go. The next year I had a skiff and that was much better. The next year I graduated to a double ender about 18 feet long and equipped with a three horse Mianus engine which I called the Pumpkin Seed. That was heaven itself and I was able to run quite a few more traps.

The first I can remember about lobsters and perhaps when I first fished, the lobster was measured from the tip of its jiboom to the end of the tail. If it didn't quite go the measure it was no chore to grab it by the body and tail and with a slight twist and pull lengthen it out a quarter inch or more. Then they came out with a new measure that went from the end of the jiboom to the end of the body. If the jiboom was broken off the measure went from the little swelling at the base of the feelers. Sometimes we got a lobster that wouldn't go the measure from the jiboom but would go from the feeler. In that case just a little jolt on the end of the jiboom and we had a saleable lobster. Still later they came out with a measure that measured from the eye socket to the end of the body. That put an end to that foolishness but did cause considerable discussion as whether or not hair touchers

should be taken. That depended mostly on where the dealer was going to sell his lobsters; Portland or Boston. If the lobsters were going to Boston where the legal limit was smaller than ours then the dealer was quit apt to take the hair touchers. If Portland, no.

For several years a rusticator came to the Island summers. He would hire a local boat and since he had a son about my age, I often went places with him. One year he brought his own boat which was a beauty and obviously built for speed. I immediately asked him how fast it was and he informed me that it would do about 15 knots, which was real fast for those days. Shortly after that we were in Stonington one day when the Gov. Bodwell came in from Rockland. His boy was so insistent that we wait and race her that we went down by Bold Island and waited for her. Now, it was about ten miles between each landing from Rockland to Swan's Island and since the boat made it in just about an hour it was assumed that the Bodwell's speed was a little less than ten knots. Apparently the engineer saw us and suspected what we were up to because by the time she got to where we were she was really moving. Mr. Gratz opened our boat wide open but the Bodwell went by us as though we were towing a barge. By the time we got to Halibut Ledge the Bodwell was going in by the Light at Swan's Island. After that I didn't hear much more about the speed of Mr. Gratz's boat.