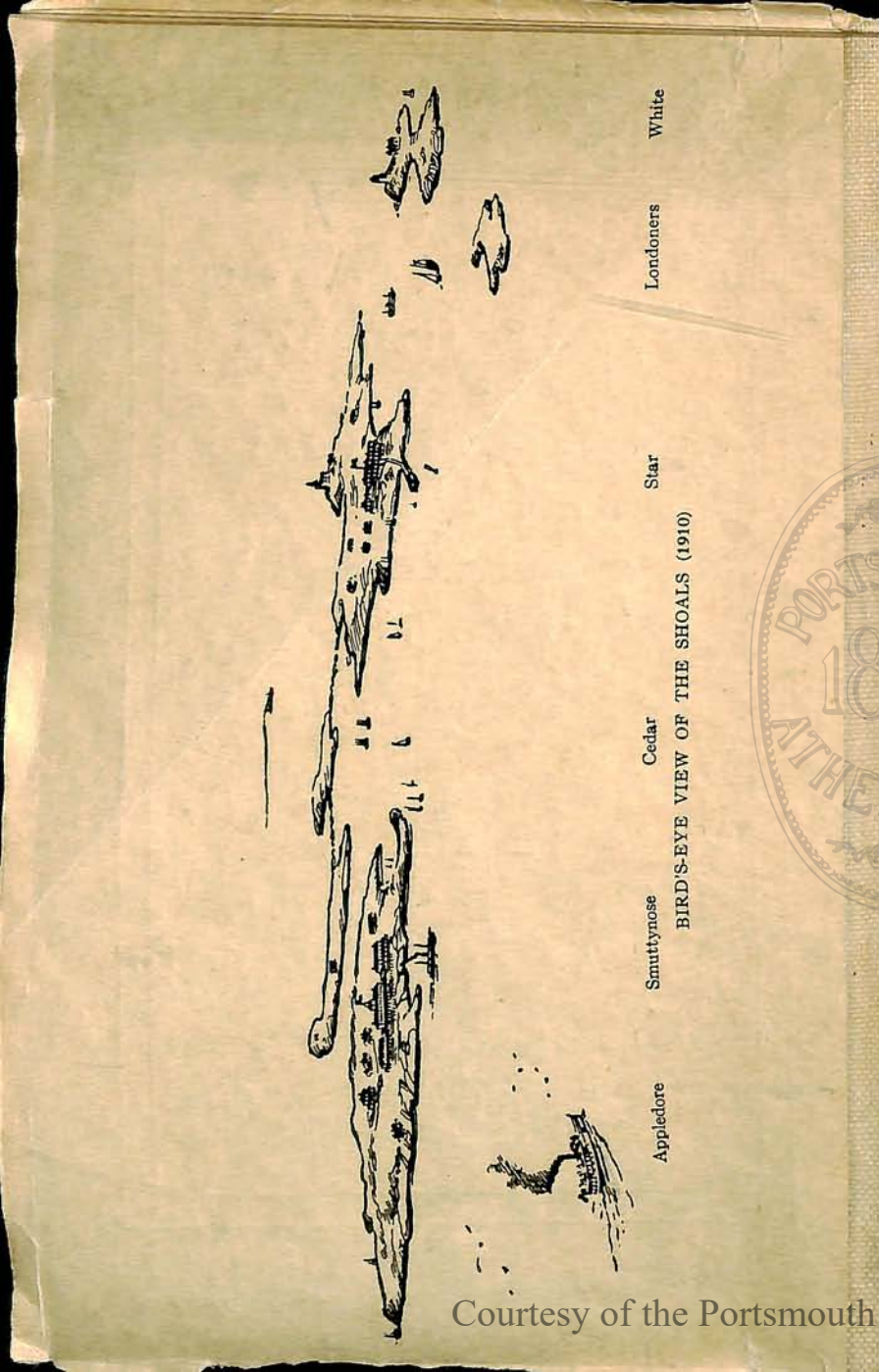

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE SHOALS (1910)

BRIEF HISTORY

OF THE

ISLES OF SHOALS

OFF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

WRITTEN BY

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ANDOVER, MASS.

PUBLISHED BY

THE CONGREGATIONAL SUMMER CONFERENCE

STAR ISLAND

1923

OTHER HISTORIES OF THE ISLANDS

A Description of the Isles of Shoals 1800

In Massachusetts Historical Collections
Series I, vol. 7, pp. 242–261

REV. JEDEDIAH MORSE

The Isles of Shoals—

JOHN SCRIBNER JENNESS 1873

Revised Edition—MARY H. JENNESS 1901

Among the Isles of Shoals—CELIA THAXTER 1873

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EPOCHS OF THE ISLANDS

For about three hundred years these islands have mingled in the affairs of civilized men. For three or four thousand years before that, they touched the savage life of this neighborhood. For some millions of years before that they were in process of making, accumulating the features which make them interesting today.

The rugged and jagged granite rocks jutting up through the water like teeth of destruction to gnash the ribs of luckless vessels, or by a kindlier interpretation, jutting up through the water like walls of protection making a harbor for the storm-driven ships, bear the marks of extreme antiquity and the scars of creative violence.

Enclosed within the masses of granite there are still to be seen great slabs of older mica-shist tipped up on edge and lying in streaks across the islands sometimes twenty feet wide stretching northeast and southwest as the folds of earth-crust lie in this region. These layers of mica-shist wearing out more readily than the granite have provided the main valley of Appledore Island where the hotel used to stand, also the little depression across the middle of Star Island in which the graves of the Beebee children were made, and presumably the low places in White Island and Londoners where they are almost cut in two.

The amount of wearing which has resulted in the present exposure of granite knobs is worth estimating. Those who have observed

how the air and the rain and the frost have been gnawing away at the tough rocks may wonder how much has been eroded from the top of our islands. That the process has been going on for ninety millions of years is fairly well ascertained by measuring the salt of the ocean which has been carried there from the land since the oceans as fresh water first were able to rest upon the hot surface of the earth.

If now the total erosion of the Isles of Shoals and of all the surrounding land has been at the rate of the thickness of a fine hair in one year, say one-thousandth of an inch, in ninety millions of years we could have lost a covering

Gap at Appledore, where brittle rock has been battered out by the angry waves.

90,000 inches thick or 7333 feet or approximately a mile and a half of solid rock, worn off the top of our islands exposing now the granite masses which had been churning in a molten mass underneath.

But long after the granite had hardened with its inclusions of mica-shist there were made some other streaks of rock in our islands. Volcanic eruptions split the granite in a north and south direction, while lava oozed up through the cracks and hardened, making the trap dikes of diabase, one of which cuts along the eastern side of Star Island providing when it was cracked out, the canyon known as Betsy Moody's Cave. Another wider strip of this trap rock some ten feet wide runs under the Oceanic Hotel at the western side of Star Island and it is possible that this dike, having been broken out before the soil was deposited, provided the deep hole into which the little well has been sunk under the canopy on the front lawn near which the village well of Gosport used to stand.

Passing a few millions of years after the dikes split their way through the granite, we may note the important event of depositing soil upon these rocks. Much of the soil which might have been here before the glacier, was doubtless scraped off by that ruthless sheet of ice along with a great quantity of the ledges. The great continental glacier which planed off so much of the northern portion of the United States, depositing heaps of gravel everywhere, has left some interesting

marks on Star Island. At the southern tip of rock within two hundred feet of the tide there are still to be seen some grooves upon a rounded head of fine granite that point straight across the water to Portsmouth, from which direction came pushing down from Mt. Washington the field of ice a thousand or more feet in thickness sliding off into the sea far to the southeast of us, just as it is doing on the coast of Greenland today.

A beautiful souvenir of this movement of ice is left on our island, called Neptune's Punch Bowl on the north side near the stone wall in the tide-washed rock. It is a hole worn smooth by whirling stones, three and a half feet deep and two feet wide. The only accepted cause of this hole is the falling of a stream of water through a crevass in the glacier from its top surface and whirling the grinders in the pot-hole.

The melting of the glacier, some four or five thousand years ago left a deposit of sand and gravel very much more in quantity than we find here now. The gradual sinking of the whole Atlantic seaboard even since the arrival of our ancestors has caused the washing away of much soil. Straight across to the mainland at Straw's Point there are the remains of a forest under the water of low tide—stumps of trees which when growing there in ages gone by were above the reach of the sea.

With these inadequate comments upon the happenings in the vast creative period of the Isles of Shoals we may now pass to the period when they became a loitering place for the fishermen of Europe.

During the whole century that followed Columbus's discovery of this continent, there were doubtless many adventurous seamen who found this coast and fished upon it without leaving any official or literary record of it. There is no reason why we may not accept the statement of Mr. Jenness — "During the entire sixteenth century fishing vessels came hither from our eastern waters. Doggers and Pinckies of the English, clumsy Busses of Holland, light Fly-boats of Flanders, the Biskiner and Portingal and many other odd high-peaked vessels were attracted thither summer after summer."

The first unmistakable mention of these islands is dated with the year 1605, when De Monts and Champlain sailing along the coast of Maine passed the mouth of the Piscataqua river and saw "on the east two leagues distant three or four rather prominent islands."

If Champlain had been one of the common adventurous fishermen of that day he would have known that these "rather prominent islands" were the Isles of Shoals; for the white breakers upon the outlying ledges had doubtless already given the name to these islands in the lingo of the sailor lads.

There is nothing more sensational to a sailor than a line of shoals in an open sea, and these islands in the midst of the shoals must have

been named by the sailors from their earliest visits before the year 1600. That name stuck with them even though Captain John Smith in the year 1614, tried to have them called Smith's Isles and so named them on his map. Some attempt has been made to twist the natural meaning of the phrase into the sense that these were isles of shoals of fishes; but shoals of fishes are of slight notice to a sailor compared with shoals of rocks which he must respect or perish.

Another perversion of the name was attempted by a Boston historian who suggested that the phrase might have been "shoals of islands" instead of "isles of shoals"; but I have never seen an atom of evidence that the Isles of Shoals have ever been called Shoals of Isles. The Indian deed given to John Wheelwright and others, 1629, includes this clause "Isles of Shoals so-called by the English."

In the year 1605, besides Champlain's visit, Captain George Waymouth was in these parts and one of his companions, John Stoneham, had become so familiar with this coast that he was chosen pilot the next year, 1606, for Henry Challons who set out from Plymouth, England, in a small ship of fifty-five tons named "Richard" bearing with them two American Indians who had previously been kidnapped by other sailors.

What a fascinating suggestion this is of the obscure and unnamed sailors who must have known these islands before Captain John Smith visited them in the year 1614.

When the promoters of Smith's discoveries proposed dividing by lot the shares of New England, he said, "no lot for me but Smith's Isles which are a many of barren rocks, the most overgrown with such shrubs and sharp whins you can hardly pass them, without either grass or wood, but three or four short, shrubby old cedars."

These cedars may have given the name to Cedar Island.

Smith's desire for these islands was whetted by his knowledge of their vast importance as fishing grounds. His own experience in the year 1614, supplemented his knowledge gained from others, for in that year thirty-seven of his men spent two and a half months getting "40,000 drie fish" which he sent to the Spanish market and an abundance of "salt fish" and "train oil" for England. The same year another ship went out from the Isle of Wight on the same errand. The next year, 1615, four good ships were sent out by "the Londoners" taking Smith's men while Smith himself took charge of four ships for a group of "Westerners" as those ship owners were called who lived in the region of Plymouth and of Appledore, England.

Who knows but that the island which we now call Londoners was so called in the year 1615, because the ships of the Londoners used that island as their camping place and dried their fish upon its rocks.

The Londoners' four ships were loaded by June 15th, and they sailed away. one for Spain,

which was captured by the Turks, one for the young settlement of starving colonists in Virginia, while two brought green fish and train or whale oil to England.

Again the next year, 1616, the Londoners, enthusiastic over their success sent out two ships, one of which marketed their fish which they had dried on our rocks for a big price far south-east in the Canary islands. It is reported that the crew had their heads so turned by their success that they became pirates in that Southern sea.

Captain Smith said that sailors could earn in seven months of fishing at the Shoals including the voyages forth and back as much as in twenty months in any other voyage. Some thirty-five ships from the West of England and nearly as many from London were making their owners wealthy in the days before our Pilgrim Fathers settled at Plymouth. Not all of them confined their fishing to our island waters but many of them did as Smith says "within a square of two or three leagues"—ten miles square.

[Chronicles of The Pilgrim Fathers, Everymans Ed. p. 262.]

No wonder that he was enamored of these islands; and being a bachelor he could well call them "my children, my wife, my hawks, my hounds, my cards, my dice and in total my best content."

Catching and Curing Fish in Colonial Days
[*Courtesy of the Old Colony Trust Company, Boston, Mass.*]

Smith slips into his account a vivid piece of information about their life at the Shoals when he says "having wrought all day" at fishing around the islands they brought in their catch at night and "layed abroad" in the open air—sleeping probably on Star Island. Their food was chiefly fish and bread and berries with a refreshing drink which they called Vinegar. [Smith's Description of New England, Old South leaflets, vol. 5, p. 435.]

Awaking in the early morning, thirty of his men and boys would resume their fishing, while fifteen of them left upon the shore, would cut open and clean the fish, and lay them upon the rocks to dry, turning them to get the hot sunshine, preparing them for the market in Spain. France, England and other parts of Europe.

As soon as they could import the boards from England or could split some pine trees of the New England shore, they made rude tables called "fish flakes" instead of using the rocks. They made also "stages" where their fish could be dumped, also roofs to shed the rain from their fish which required several weeks to dry.

One substantial advantage of the islands was their safe distance from the savages of the mainland, making it possible for sailors to camp out unguarded at night and affording a safe rendezvous for themselves and their possessions.

Fishermen and adventurers sailing along the new coast of America doubtless paid visits here and exchanged news with the men and boys who caught and cured their codfish on these

rocks. Before the Pilgrim Fathers came to Plymouth (1620), the fishing industry of these islands had grown so that dozens of vessels yearly were sailing slowly along these shoals, pulling in huge codfish and pollock, some of the vessels anchoring in the lee of the islands to dry the fish and others packing them wet in salt for the home market.

Smith gives the number of ships in the year 1622, as "30 sail of the better sort of ships belonging to the Western part of England."

In that year the ship "Nightingale" of Portsmouth, England, 100 tons burden and the ship "Abraham" of 220 tons, are mentioned as taking fish which sold for 3150 pounds sterling, nearly $16,000. One third of the receipts went to the sailors for their toil, one third to the owners of the vessels and the other third to pay for food and supplies.

Sir Christopher Leavitt in writing of his voyage of the year 1623, says "The first place I set my foot upon in New England was the Isles of Shoulds. We could not see one good timber tree or so much ground as to make a garden. Good fishing place for six ships, not more, for want of good stage room. Harbor indifferent good. No savages at all."

It was this year, 1623, that another visitor of still more fame, Miles Standish, is reported by Gov. Winslow to have come to these islands upon his anxious errand of buying provisions for the needy Pilgrims at Plymouth.

After the attention of business men in England had been centered upon this coast by the successful settlement of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, they conceived the notion of capitalizing and cornering the fish industry of the region.

"The fishing ships," says John Smith, "made such good returns, at last it was ingrossed by twenty patentees that divided my map into twenty parts and cast lots for their shares. They required of fishermen licenses to fish"—5 pounds stirling for every 30 tons of shipping which would mean about $175, for a ship of 200 tons. "They also fixed penalties against trading with the natives and against cutting down trees to get wood for their fish platforms." "Hereupon, the men grew so disconted that a few or none would go."

This was written by Captain Smith in the year 1629, and it marks the close of what we may call the epoch of the Sailors' Fishing Camp.

It is in recognition of the worthy service of Captain John Smith for the settlement of New England that a monument to his name has been erected upon a high point near the center of the island. It is made in the form of a three-sided prism copying the original one which bore on the top at the corners three globes that represented the heads of the Turks which were slain by Smith in his famous duels with the Moslem warriors.

When the sailors were discouraged by the licenses and other restrictions from coming here, there was still open the opportunity for a genuine settlement of people who would establish their homes in this new land.

In the year 1628, there were two permanent settlers named Mr. Jeffrey and Mr. Burslem, supposedly with their families, who commenced the next historic period.

The fact of this settlement is assured by an assessment of two pounds stirling upon them for their share in the cost of sending home to England the obstreperous Morton of Merrymount, who with his drunken crowd had endangered all the little settlements from Plymouth to Maine by selling guns to the Indians and by being generally too fresh in the sober business of settling their new coast. He was captured at Wollaston by Miles Standish and put aboard a ship at the Isles of Shoals, a harbor which had been for years the favorite port of departure for England.

With the little settlement started at the Isles of Shoals it was perfectly natural that sailors who had fished formerly in these waters, should bring their families here to grow up with the country, and to make a living here both by fishing and by keeping a sort of trading post for the sailors who might continue to resort here.

Thus it happened that when Governor Winthrop and his large company sailed by these islands on their famous journey to settle at Salem and Boston, the first signs of life they saw in the new country were in this little settlement at Star Island harbor.

The Winthrop Journal says: "Friday, June 11, 1630. The wind southwest. We stood to and again all this day within sight of Cape Ann. The Isles of Shoals were now within two leagues of us and we saw a ship lie there at anchor and five or six shallops under sail up and down. We took many mackerels and met a shallop which stood from Cape Ann towards the Isles of Shoals which belonged to some English fishermen."

Winthrop at a later writing in his History of New England, vol. 1, p. 124, says that in 1634, the Shoals settlement was of so great strength that its assessed property was equal to that of New Plymouth and as many as seventeen fishing vessels arrived here from Europe in the single month of March.

Another famous Colonial leader, Richard Mather, came into our harbor the next year, 1635, and was struck here by the most famous gale of New England history. He writes—Young's chronicles, p. 473—

"This evening (August 14, 1635) by moonlight, about ten-of-the-clock we came to anchor at the Isles of Shoals, which are seven or eight islands and other great rocks, and there slept sweetly that night, until the break of day."

In the morning a northeast storm came with a sudden burst "whereby we were in as much danger as I think ever people were. For we lost in that morning three great anchors and cables, of which cables one having cost £50, never had been in any water before; two were broken by the violence of the waves and the third cut by the seamen in extremity and distress, to save the ship and their and our lives. And when our cables and anchors were lost we had no outward means of deliverance, but by loosing sail, if so be we might get to the sea from amongst the islands and rocks where we anchored. But the Lord let us see that our sails could not save us neither; no more than our cables and anchors; for by the force of the wind and rain the sails were rent in sunder and split in pieces as if they had been rotten rags, so that of the foresail and spritsail there was scarce left so much as a handbreadth that was not rent in pieces and blown away into the sea. So that at this time, all hope that we should be saved in regard of any outward appearance, was utterly taken away; and rather because we seemed to drive with full force of wind and rain directly upon a mighty rock, standing out in sight above the water; so that we did but continually wait, when we should hear and fee the doleful rushing and crashing of the ship upon the rock.

"In this extremity and appearance of death as distress and destruction would suffer us, we cried unto the Lord, and he was pleased to have compassion and pity upon us; for by his

overruling Providence and his own immediate good hand he guided the ship past the rock, assuaged the violence of the sea and of the wind and rain, and gave us a little respite to fit the ship with other sails and sent us a fresh gale of wind by which we went on that day toward Cape Ann."

[Young's Chronicles p. 473.]

In this famous storm "Millett's shallop" loaded with household goods from Castine, Maine, being towed by the "James" was swamped near these islands and went to bottom. Also in this storm occurred the famous Thatcher tragedy on Cape Ann which gave that name to the rocks and the lighthouses on the tip of the Cape.

[For the fascinating and quaint account of this Thatcher wreck see Young's chronicles, p. 485.]

Another strange catastrophe of that storm on these islands was the blowing into the sea of a little cabin of Mr. Tucker, a tailor, on Smuttynose island. Apparently before the cabin had drifted to the mainland the wind shifted to the northwest; for the cabin was found later on Cape Cod seventy-five miles away, identified by some of its contents. [7 Mass. Hist. Coll. p. 252.]

The period during which these islands were being settled by English colonists may be roughly set between the years 1625 and 1650, a time during which the huge exodus of many

thousands of Puritans and others poured out of English towns and farms into New England.

To the Isles of Shoals came chiefly families from English seaports where people had long been familiar with the reputation of these beautiful islands as a fishing camp.

The towns of Portsmouth and Gosport on the South shore of England looking across the harbor at each other, sent over enough families to establish the towns of Portsmouth on the mainland and of Gosport on Star Island looking across the harbor at each other in a new continent. Likewise, from the region of Appledore in Western England came some families who gave the name of their England home to the largest island of our group, Appledore, more attractive than the name Hog Island by which it has been called.

Homes were established with growing children on Appledore, Smuttynose, Cedar and Star Islands. For a few years they were all under the jurisdiction of Mason & Gorges who had the patent for settling Maine and New Hampshire in 1631; but when that enterprise fell apart in 1635, the islands were divided, leaving Star Island, Londoners and White in New Hampshire; while Cedar, Smuttynose, Appledore and Duck islands were attached to Maine.

The Mason & Gorges influence was naturally Episcopalian in contrast with the Puritanism that prevailed in the Massachusetts colony and the first church functions upon the islands of the Maine jurisdiction were performed by

Episcopal clergy. Rev. Joseph Hull, who was settled in Agamenticus visited the Settlement at Appledore occasionally to preach and administer sacrament prior to the year 1640, and likewise upon Smuttynose he performed the same services so that in his estate at death there was the inventory of a claim of £20 for pastoral services unpaid by the Islanders. [Jenness p. 145.]

During the year 1640, Rev. Robert Jordan of Richman's Island, officiated in a similar way and in 1641 and 1642, Rev. Richard Gibson, the first minister of Strawberry Bank, was settled at the Shoals.

When the Puritan colony of Massachusetts came into control of the Maine province the magistrates at Boston arraigned Richard Gibson in 1624, in Boston—"he being wholly addicted to the hierarchy and discipline of England, did exercise a ministerial function in the same way and did marry and baptize at the Isle of Shoals which was now found to be within our jurisdiction." [2 Winthrop p. 66.]

The moral quality of this clergyman was judged in part by the reputation of his wife, Mary Lewis, of Saco, whom he had married in 1637, "who", the people said, "had so behaved herself in the shipp which brought her from England some two years agoe, that the block was reaved at the mayne yard to have duckt her, and that she was kept close in the ship's cabin forty-eight hours for shelter and rescue."

[1 Mass. Hist. Coll. 5th series, p. 267.]

Women of this bold sort must have made trouble at the Isles of Shoals among the reckless sailors who resorted there, because the Court of Maine prohibited women from dwelling on the islands, as the following interesting petition discloses.

"Oct. 20, 1647—The humble petition of William Cutt and others sheweth:—That John Reynolds contrary to an act in Court that no wimmin shall live upon the Isles of Shols hath brought his wife thither with an intention there to live and abide. And hath also brought upon Hogg Island a great stock of goats and hoggs which doth not only spoil and destroy much fish to the great damage of several others, and likewise many of your petitioners; but also doth spoil the spring of water that is on that island by making it unfit or unserviceable for any manner of use, which is the only relief and sustenance of all the rest of the Island.

"Your petitioners therefore pray that the said Reynolds may be ordered to remove his said goats and swine from the island forthwith; also that the act of the Court beforementioned may be put in execution for the removal of all wimmin inhabiting there."

To this the Court responded:

"Whereas by the aforesaid request the general complaint of the chief of the fishermen and owners of the Isle of Shoals, that it is a great annoyance and prejudice for Mr. John Reynolds to keep his swine and goats at the Isle of Shols—it is by mutual consent of this Court ordered

that Mr. Reynolds within twenty days remove all his swine and goats that he hath at Hogg Island from thence or any other island of these Islands that are inhabited with fishermen. And as for the removal of his wife (if no further complaint against her) she may yet enjoy the company of her husband."

[Mass. Hist. Coll. Ser. I, Vol. I, p. 192.]

Whatever of personal spite was pushing this attack upon Mr. Reynolds it was evident that the suicidal effort to exclude women could not succeed. The settlement went on apace and brave women settled with their husbands here even though they were in the midst of many young men who fished or roved the seas unattached. Yielding to the inevitable the General Court at Gorgeana (York) 1650 ordered "upon the petition of William Wormwood, that as the fishermen of the Isles of Shoals will entertain womanhood, they have liberty to sit down there, provided they shall not sell neither wine, beare nor liquor."

The district of Maine officials yielded to William Wormwood's petition notwithstanding the fact that the Puritan magistrates at Boston had disapproved the bitterness of his wife and had ordered John Seeley and Antipas Maverick of the Isles of Shoals "to attach the wife of Wm. Wormwood and bring her before the magistrates of Boston." [Oct. 27, 1647. Records of Mass. Bay Col. vol. 2, p. 99.]

A Conference Morning Lecture where the manuscript of this pamphlet was read. Hotel Oceanic.

Gosport of American Commerce
1650–1770

The settlement of these islands differed from all other New England settlements in that no farming land was at hand to maintain its growth and development; the plowing was in furrows of the sea and their harvest was fish; but they did have a seaport and that was of prime importance. It became a distributing depot for merchandise for all the colonies and for commerce across the wide oceans. Josselyn's Voyages to New England tells of the cargoes of fish from different parts of New England re-shipped here for France, Spain and the world at large, bringing rich return cargoes of wine, sugar, tobacco, clothing and other merchandise.

As early as 1636, Thomas Mayhew is reported to have purchased at the Shoals eighty hogsheads of provisions at one time, paying for imported "rugges and coates" one hundred pounds English money.

As a natural accompaniment of the exchange of merchandise, the Shoals became an exchange for the news of the old world and of the new. Gorges wrote to Governor Winthrop in 1640, "I cannot send you news from England, because contrary winds hath hindered it coming from the Isles of Shoals."

[Mass. Hist. Coll. Ser. 4, p. 334.]

The news of the beheading of King Charles in 1649, did not reach New England until it was brought by a Shoals vessel. [Winthrop pp. 60, 413.]

The newspapers of England at this period printed news from America as communications from their reporter in Gosport, Isles of Shoals.

[Cornish's Story of the Isles of Shoals p. 10.]

By these and other tokens we may be pardoned for saying that our Gosport was a gossip port to tell the world.

Those were busy days for the little harbor in the midst of these islands and one can easily imagine the three Seeley brothers, William, Richard and John who settled on Smuttynose in 1640, accumulating wealth by importing and exporting for this whole region from Nova Scotia to New Amsterdam. There were so many people living upon Smuttynose at 1650, that a meeting house was necessary to accommodate them and the island was known for some years as Meetinghouse Island.

Samuel Maverick in writing in 1660 said: [Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc. Vol. I, 2nd Series p. 234.]

"Two leagues off lies the Isle of Shoals, one of the best places for fishing in the land. They have built a church here and maintain a minister."

The minister from 1650 to 1662, was Rev. John Brock, a puritan of marked spirituality. Rev. Cotton Mather said of him—"he dwelt as near heaven as any man upon earth. I scarce

ever knew any man so familiar with the Great God as his dear servant Brock." [2 Mather's Magnalia, p. 32.]

A memorable incident in his pastorate is recorded (in Vol. 7 Massachusetts Historical Collection, p. 251), as follows: "While Mr. Brock resided at the Shoals the fishermen came to him, on a day devoted to the worship of God and requested that they might put by their meeting on that day, and go a-fishing, because they had lost many days by the foulness of the weather. He pointed out to them the impropriety of this request, and endeavored to convince them that it would be far better for them to stay at home and worship God than to go a-fishing. Notwithstanding his remonstrance, however, five only consented to stay at home, and thirty determined to go.

"Upon this Mr. Brock said—'as for you who are determined to neglect your duty to God and go a-fishing, I say unto you, catch fish if you can. But as for you who will tarry and worship the Lord, Jesus Christ, I will pray unto him for you, that you may catch fish till you are weary.' Accordingly, the thirty who went from the meeting, with all their skill, caught through the day but four fishes; while the five who tarried and attended divine service, afterwards went out and caught five hundred."

At this time of the maximum population on Smuttynose Island, while the Islands were under jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Colony, there was a court house as well as a church and a

tavern on the island and a commission of six magistrates was appointed by the general Court Oct. 23, 1652, "to settle all causes." [Records of Mass. Bay Colony Vol. IV, p. 110.] But the court ceased to be held there after 1684, and the meeting house fell into decay in 1685.

In the meantime Star Island was gaining the ascendancy and had many men of force coming into prominence. Richard Cutt, Rice Cadogin, Alexander Jones, Christopher Jose, Hercules Hunkins, and his son John, Peter Twisden (the magistrate), James Waymouth, William Pitt, Peter Glanfield (the tailor), John Davis, John Moore, Philip Tucker, John Fabius, John Hodgkins, Henry Tucker and many others made up the Star Island list of freemen.

In the year 1653, being alarmed by the menace of Indians and their French instigators, these people secured from the government at Boston the grant of "two great guns" which were mounted upon the northwest peak of Star Island around which a fort was built establishing a military protection which figured in successive generations of the community's life.

[Mass. Archives, Vol. III, p. 212.]

It was this same year 1653, that some twenty of the principal inhabitants petitioned the Massachusetts General Court to be erected into a township—at a time when many other communities throughout the colony were seeking similar municipal autonomy. But not for eight years was the petition granted, when in 1661, the Court permitted that all the islands

should be erected into one township called "Appledore" having power to regulate their own town affairs. [Records of Mass. Bay, Vol. IV, part 2, page 8.]

The maximum population of all the islands was reached probably during the forty years, 1660 to 1700, and may have been as high as 600 souls, the estimate of Mr. Jenness (p. 82) for the period when Smuttynose was the most prominent island, when Appledore was populated and when Star Island was prosecuting its successful rivalry. Star was much reinforced in the year 1670, by a wholesale exodus of forty families from Appledore or Hog Island, [Thaxter, Among the Isles of Shoals, p. 46.] Appledore island had been attractive from the beginning because of its larger size, some 300 acres, and its well of fresh water and its soil available for gardens and grazing. As many as seventy little

The home of Celia Thaxter on Appledore. Burned 1914.

cellars with tumbling walls among the bayberries and brambles may still be traced in evidence of the village that crowned the southern brow of Appledore in the days of its glory.

But Appledore was in serious lack of a harbor, and no other advantage could compensate, so the ascendancy passed to Smuttynose whose harbor at the west end was flanked by the protecting islands of Malaga and Cedar, and whose harbor also easily enlarged itself by extending across into the harbor of Star Island. There were several acres of arable land also on Smuttynose supplying hay for cattle and sheep as well as vegetables for its fisherfolk. But the roomiest and best harbor of all was on the north side of Star Island largely protected upon the north and east by the other four islands. There was also on the island some soil and a partial supply of fresh water with much more room than Smuttynose could afford, to accommodate fish houses and dwellings, as well as shipping.

The limit of capacity on Smuttynose having been reached about 1670, and the wholesale immigration having come from Appledore that year, Star Island gained the ascendancy which has been maintained ever since.

The art of curing fish had reached its highest development here at the Shoals, the fame of which was world-wide, and here were set the standard prices of the world for dried fish salted or unsalted. There is on file in the Salem courthouse the following statement:

Andrew Newckum, aged thirtey tow yeares or theare aboutt, swaren and saith, that in the yeare 1666 the prise of ffish was Sett and mad at the Illes of Showles Marchanabell fish—thirty tow Railles per quintel, ($1.60 for 100 lbs.), this deponen' then Receved severall poundes of Marcha fish att the prise corrantt above Rightin and this deponen' knew no other prise corrantt Butt that above Rightin and forder saith nott.

Taken upon 27. 1 mo 1672.

WM. HATHORNE, Assist.

The profits made in the fishing business were not kept upon these islands but went with their prosperous owners to the larger social privileges of the mainland where families could be reared with higher attainments. The probated estates of some of the Shoals men who died at this period—before 1674, ranged well up among the wealthy of that period. Philip Babb left £200, William Seeley £631, 7 s., Walter Matthews £400, James Waymouth £595, and John Lines £729, 13 s., 1 d.

[Quoted by Jenness, p. 84, from Records of York and Rockingham counties.]

This thriving seaport was much in the thought of all seafaring folk of that day and the happenings of the little harbor of Star Island sometimes jarred the solemn serenity of the Great and General Court of Massachusetts. One such event is perpetuated in the Records of Massachusetts Bay vol. 4, part 2, p. 449 as follows:

"The General Court being informed that there is a ship riding in a roade at the Isle of Shoales suspected to be a pirat — — .— she is warned to keep away from our ports upon

penalty of being seized — — — and the Courts declaration against the ship at Isle of Shoales is to be publisht in Boston by beat of drume &c."

Thus on the 27th of May, 1670, our little harbor was advertised by the town crier of Boston with the beating of the drum. That was the year of the Appledore exodus and the sudden growth of Star Island population, making it necessary to start the erection of a meeting-house on this island. Smuttynose which had been called "meetinghouse island" for a whole generation could not persuade the Star-Islanders much longer to come across in row boats to attend the Sunday services of worship in the old meeting house. Having a major portion of the inhabitants, the people of Star Island during the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Belcher "erected a substantial new meeting house" says Mr. Jenness (p. 146), "a building 28 by 48 feet with a belfry and a bell. The loftiest point of the island was chosen as a site of the building, in order that its elevated spire might serve as a landmark for mariners; in dark and tempestuous nights the warning light may have gleamed from its belfry; and in times of fog the groping fisherman was guided safely home by the note of its friendly bell." This was in the sixteen-hundred-and-seventies, long before the establishment of a government lighthouse on White Island; and the star on Star Island gleaming from the church steeple was a prophecy of the great light which would some day flood the seas for many miles.

The prestige of Star Island is witnessed in The Records of Massachusetts Bay, vol. 4, p.

520, where it states that the "inhabitants of Isle of Shoales requested that they may be adjoined unto the same county unto which Starr Island belongs." May 15, 1672. That is evidently the appeal of the remnant of the Appledore people and the diminishing Smuttynose people and Cedar Islanders asking for political connection with the adjoining mainland of New Hampshire. But the confused political connection and unreasonable division of the islands between Maine and New Hampshire has been necessitated from the beginning because of their lying off the mouth of the Piscataqua river which divides between Maine and New Hampshire. It was doubtless some corollary of this political division of the islands that caused the mysterious exodus from Appledore in 1670, as well as many confusing appeals first to one government and then to another.

"When the Massachusetts authorities in 1677, undertook to collect (from the Shoalers) something towards the expenses of the general government they flew into open rebellion. Walter Randall fell foul of the constable; Henry Joslyn climbed up into the belfry of the meeting-house and rang the tocsin of alarm; the people ran together into the church; a combination for open resistance was entered into, and it was solemnly declared, that they would never pay a penny of rates, unless they had it under the hand of the Governor and Council, that the money raised should be 'laid out upon ye Isles of Sholes, and this was the end of the meeting.'"

[Jenness, p. 125, Court papers of Exeter.]

It is supposed that Betty Moody figured in this period during King Philip's Indian war, secreting herself in a deep chasm on the eastern side of the island during an invasion of the Indians who are said to have carried off many female captives. "Betty Moody's Hole" has been a place of tragic memory and a theme of constructive fancy for two and a half centuries.

[See Mass. Hist. Coll. 1 series, vol. 7, p. 244.]

From the height of prosperity when settlement from England had ceased and the rearing of families came to a natural limit because of the narrow agricultural resources of the islands, there followed a period of nearly a century—to the time of the Revolutionary War, when life upon the islands was a constant seesaw between the forces of economic success and of economic failure; with the handwriting on the wall "Thy days are numbered."

Alienated from the mainland by ten miles of treacherous billows with only a comparatively few acres of soil, what chance had these islands for that flush growth and development which characterized the seaports of the mainland with the backing of an inexhaustible domain? Even the advantage of being a harbor on the track of vessels that skirted the American shore was marred by its inaccessibility to the mainland. The port authorities of Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts were annoyed by vessels that avoided customs regulations in landing at the Shoals. Accordingly, our Star Islanders petitioned "that the dues of such shipping as

first anchor in our own roade may be here received." This was granted May 15, 1672, and Peter Twisden and John Faber were appointed customs officers.

[Rec. Mass. Bay Vol. IV, p. 520.]

But a few years later the death knell was sounded. At a meeting of the Council in Boston on June 18, 1686, Joseph Dudley presiding, it was ordered—"That no ships do unliver any part of their loading in the Isles of Shoals before they have first entered with the collector of His Majesties Customs and also with the officer for receiving His Majesties Imposts and Revenues arising from wine, rum &c. imported either in Boston, Salem or Piscataqua and that all the ships and vessels trading to the eastward of Cape Porpus shall enter at some of the aforesaid ports or at the town of Falmouth in the Province of Maine."

Thus the commerce of the Shoals was doomed both to smuggling and to ultimate extinction. With its commerce gutted the Shoals settlement was reduced to a mere fishing hamlet with a gradual sinking into the squalor and shiftiness of that narrow livelihood.

The absentee ownership to which we have alluded yielded its inevitable neglect in a way impressively told by a military occurrence of the year 1692.

The Chasm near Betty Moody's Cavern on the East side of Star island.

During the bloody French and Indian war after the massacre of the town of York a few miles away, the people of the Shoals knew themselves listed for the next outrage, and so petitioned the government at Boston for a company of soldiers to defend them, January 26, 1692. [Mass. Archives, vol. 37, p. 252.] Their anxiety was expressed by writing on the outside of their letter, still to be seen, "With care and speed." Captain Willey with a company of soldiers was sent to repair Fort Star and to make ready to resist. The expected attack did not materialize and the poor soldiers found the

greatest difficulty to get their pay because the chief owners of the property at the islands who lived in Ipswich and Boston refused to contribute. Captain Willey said, "Several of the owners who have the most particular interest here in respect of boats and stages and have always carried away the greatest profit of this place whereby they have gotten the greatest part of their estates, are resolved that they will get what they can but will contribute nothing for the maintaining of our public charge in order to the preservation of these islands."

[Quoted by Jenness, pp. 196 fol.]

Captain Willey and his soldiers withdrew and three years later, 1695, the French captured and carried away several fishing boats. These interruptions of industry and impairments of social efficiency were of course registered in the religious and moral life of the islands. The people in the year 1705, either could not or would not maintain their own minister, leaving the Assembly of Massachusetts the burden of paying fourteen pounds annually of Mr. Greenleaf's salary, and the assembly of New Hampshire the burden of paying six pounds.

After the erection of New Hampshire into a Province, 1679, repeated efforts had been made to bring the Shoals into allegiance but with poor success until finally in the year 1715, an act of the New Hampshire Assembly re-christened the community of Star Island as the Town of Gosport [3 N. H. Prov. Papers, p. 620.] This name had been used doubtless for many years

in common parlance but now it had official prestige, though it was only to serve in the period of decadence. A petition of Richard Yeaton, selectman of Gosport, April 22, 1721, to the General Assembly of New Hampshire at Portsmouth, tells the story of that decay in simple eloquence.

The selectmen (of Gosport) have not expressed any contempt to the authority by their omitting to make an assessment.....for the Province tax. The people are very few in number and most of them are men of no substance, live only by their daily fishing, and near one third of them are single men and threaten to remove and leave us if the tax be laid, which will prove our utter ruin if our fishermen leave us.

The charge and expense which they are at in the support of the ministry is as great as the people can bear at present, it having cost them but lately the sum of Two Hundred pounds for that end in building a Meetinghouse—which is not all paid.. . . . . .

Though the inhabitants have been very much richer and more numerous and their trade greater than at present, yet they were not then rated.—They live on a rock in the sea and have not any privilege of right in common lands as other inhabitants in the respective towns have.

The building of this second church on Star Island in 1720, seems to have been a tribute to the inspirations of Rev. Mr. Moody, who was called a "Man of piety, a pathetic and useful preacher," who labored for about twenty-five years upon this island.

His successor, Rev. John Tuck, was called by a vote of the town, Dec. 11th, 1731, at the age of thirty years and was ordained by a council of churchmen who came out to the island for

that purpose, and here he poured out his strong personality into the characters of the island until his death in 1773. He was a doctor of medicine and was doubly useful in the lives of his people.

The following votes at various town meetings are to be seen in the Records of Gosport which are in the possession of the New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, N. H.

At a general meeting of the Freeholders and other inhabitants of Star Island, alias Gosport * * * * * * Dec. 11, 1731, it was voted to give and call the Reverend Mr. John Tooke annually for his support and maintainance one hundred and ten pounds money or bills of credit so long as it shall please God to continue him among us in the work of the ministry.

It was also voted to give the Reverend Mr. John Tooke fifty pounds in money by the last of May next towards building him a house in case he chooseth to Build him a House himself but in case he should hereafter remove from us he shall be obliged to give us the refusal of buying the House and abate us fifty pounds in the price.

It was voted at a meeting April 8, 1732, that we will give the Rev. Mr. John Tooke a constant contribution during his ministry among us the money that shall be marked shall go toward his salary—and the money that shall not be marked shall be given him gratis.

It was voted also that we give the Rev. Mr. John Tooke privilege of keeping one cow.

At a church meeting 28th of Apr. 1733 This day the Brethren of the Church met at the house of their Pastor as they did at the foregoing Church Meeting 31 of March 1733 and Mr. Samuel Emory appeared before the Church and acknowledged his Fault in Drinking to excess. Whereupon the Church voted his Restoration to the Communion and that his Confession should be read publickly tomorrow just before the Sacrament of the Lords Supper is administered . . . . . to which the Pastor gave assent.

Mar. 11, 1762 The Jeneral free Vote past amongst the inhabents that every presson or pressons that have got a pue in the meating houfe shall pay three pounds ouls tener to the Counstabel to keep the meating houf in repar for the year insuing.

At Jeneral free voot past amongst the inhabents that every fall of the year when the Mr. Rev. John Tuck has his wood to carry hom eavary men will not com that is abel to com shall pay forty shillings ould tener.

A Jeneral free voot past amongst the inhabents to cus tow men to go to the Rev. Mr. John Tuck to seak whether he was willings to tak one Quentel of fish each man or to take the price of Quentel in ould tener which he answered this that he thought it was easier to pay the fish than the money he consented to taik the fish for the year.

The noble obelisk in the center of the island that now marks the grave was erected July 29, 1914, by Mr. Edward Tuck of Paris, France, a great-great-grandson of Rev. John Tuck's brother. This obelisk supplanted a monument erected more than a century earlier through the energy of Dudley A. Tyng. [Jenness p. 149.]

A document of some interest in showing who were the inhabitants of Gosport at that time is a petition dated June 25, 1766, asking for the privilege of running a public lottery to secure funds to build a wharf at Star Island, headed by the minister, Rev. John Tuck.

The Humble Petition of the Inhabitants of Gosport in the Province of New Hampshire and others whose Interest is concerned shews—

That the situation of the Road and Harbor at Gosport aforesaid, is well known to be exposed to the violence of Winds and Seas in many cases, and Events which frequently occur by

which they often sustain much Loss and Damage which they would gladly Prevent it by any means feasible.

That it has been Judged a Pier or Bason might be so contrived and built as to be in Great measure a security in this case and a means of great saving to your petitioners and Preservation of their Property.

That to make such a work effectual a Larger sum would be demanded than your Petitioners by any means could raise; but as it would be of great utility in its consequence they flatter themselves the scheme for carrying on such a building would meet with a suitable encouragement from many other persons besides your petitioners and those who have connections with them.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that they may have leave to set up and carry on a Public Lottery to raise money for the end aforesaid and for that purpose to bring in a bill containing such limitations and restrictions as shall be thought necessary but with such extent and authority as shall be sufficient to effect the design; and your petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray:

John Tucke	Samuel Downe	Thomas Wentworth
Henry Carter	Jeremiah Lord	John Sherburne
Richard Talfrey	Jos. Damrell	D. Sherburne
John Varrell	Peter Robinson	Sam'l Warner
William Mickamore	John Walfrey	Titus Salter
William Holbrook	Ambrose Perkins	Abraham Trefethen
Samuel Varrell, Jr.	John Barter	Hugh Hall Wentworth
John Down	Rich'd Langford	Wm. Knight
John Down, Jr.	Jonathan Warner	Elamuel Muchamore

William Sanderson
George Walfrey
Josiah Sanderson
Henry Shapley, Jr.
Joseph Muchamore
Henry Shapley
Richard Talfrey, Jr.
Henry Talfrey
Daniel Rindle
James Hickey
Samuel Varrell
Samuel Muchamore
Gregory Purcell
Samuel Cutts
Daniel Rindge
George Boyd
Nath'l Adams

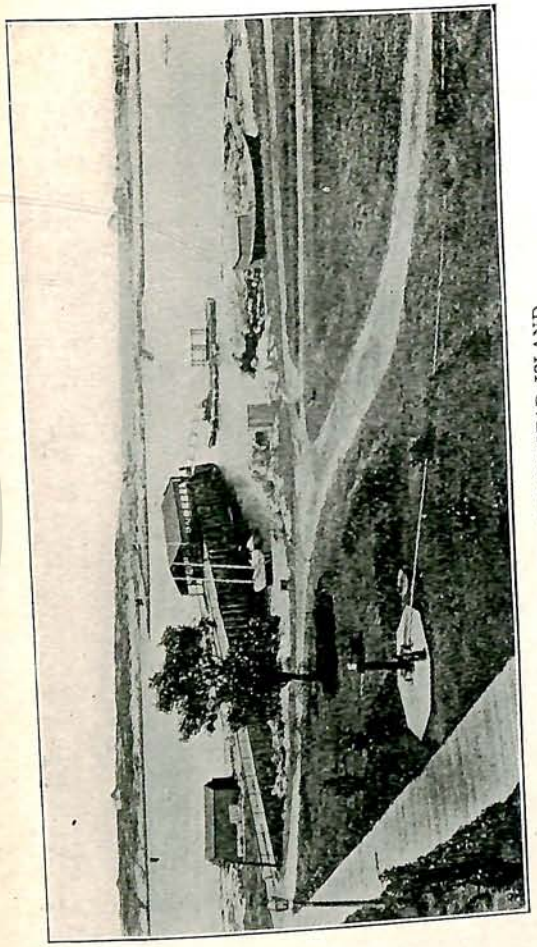
Wm. Bickham
Sam'l Healy
John Parrell
Sam'l Currier
Temple Knight
Samuel Sherburne
George Janvrin
Sam'l Dalling
John Flagg
Joseph Whipple
Benj'n Muchamore
Sam'l Muchamore
Arthur Rendle
Arthur Rendle, Jr.
George Rendle
John Rendle

Edward Bondey
Henry W. Andrews
S. Matthews
Jno. Newton
Stephen Pierce
Jas. Ward
James Stoodly
Rich'd Hart
Wm. Whipple
Jno. Parker
H. Wentworth
John Penhallow
Thos. Bell
Samuel Moffatt
D. Pierce
Paul March
John Moffatt

Although the petition was granted it was too formidable an undertaking for a decaying community and the wharf was not built. For more than a century later and for purposes of summer resort the big job had to wait.

During this period of decadence there was one man of fine constructive industry on Smuttynose Island named Samuel Haley, who persisted in good works.

It is reported [Thaxter, Among the Isles of Shoals p. 41] that Mr. Haley lifting a large stone on his island one day, found four great bars of silver, believed to be the hidden treasure of some sea rover, and with it, he defrayed part of the expense of building the high sea-wall that forbids the angry waves from the northeast to sweep through the cut between his island and Malaga, thus making a still harbor for ships. This private enterprise set the good example followed later by the U. S. government in build-



THE WHARF ON STAR ISLAND
Appledore, Malaga and Smuttynose in the Distance

ing the two other great barriers that shut out the sea between Smuttynose and Cedar, and between Cedar and Star Islands. Mr. Haley's epitaph reads in part, "he was a man of great ingenuity, industry, honor and honesty, who did a great public good in building a dock and receiving into his enclosure many a poor distressed seaman and fisherman in distress of weather."

Among Mr. Haley's works there were still standing in the year 1800, "a windmill, a rope walk 270 feet long, salt works erected before the war, a bake-house, a brewery, a distillery built 1783, a blacksmith and cooper shop."

[Mass. Hist. Col. 1 Ser. vol. 7, p. 247.]

Abandonment of the Revolutionary War Period

Before the death of Rev. John Tuck in 1773, the diminishing population and the increasing difficulties of sustaining civilized customs bore heavily upon the hearts of all who cared for the welfare of Gosport.

In the year 1767, the number of residents had become reduced to 284, of whom four were slaves. [Farmer & Moore, N. H. Hist. Col. 166.]

As an impressive sample of the hard fare of this community at this time we have record of a woman named Pulsey, who died about the year 1795, on Star Island at the age of 90 years. Before the Revolution she kept two cows. The hay on which they fed in winter, she used to cut in summer among the rocks with a knife by her own hands. She usually collected in this way about half a ton. The cows were taken from her and paid for by the British about the year 1775, and killed for beef, to the great grief of the good old woman. [Mass. Hist. Col. 1 Series, vol. 7, p. 245 note.]

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War when the British forces had control of the sea it was manifestly imprudent to permit either

property or people to remain where they could be so easily appropriated by the enemy. Accordingly, the death blow to this fading community was struck January 5, 1776, by the Provincial Congress of New Hampshire in the following vote [Provincial Papers, Vol. VII, p. 709]: "That Captain Titus Salter and Captain Eliphalet Daniel be appointed to go over to the Isles of Shoals and inform all the inhabitants there that it is the opinion of this Congress that the situation of said islands are such that the inhabitants are exposed to our enemies in the present unhappy controversy and may be obliged by their weak, defenseless circumstances and inability to defend themselves, to assist our enemies, and that for said reasons it is absolutely necessary that they should immediately remove with their effects to the main land to such places as they shall choose and to tarry during the present dispute—and provided they neglect to comply herewith for the term of ten days after this notice that they be informed that they must be brought off by authority."

"Pursuant to the above vote of Congress we repaired to the Island of Shoales the 16th inst., being the first favorable opportunity that offered and after communicating to the inhabitants the contents of the vote of Congress, we proceeded to number the inhabitants and underneath are the different numbers on each island."

Star Island	Men	31	
	Women	34	
	Children	94	
			159
Hog Island	Men	13	
	Women	13	
	Children	29	
			55
Smuttynose	Men	2	
	Women	2	
	Children	15	
			19
January 18, 1776		Total	233

To be thus torn away from their homes was like another Acadian tragedy worthy of a poet's pen. Who would wonder if some of them stole back again to occupy their familiar cabins during the next spring and summer? Whatever equipment and buildings were there became an inducement for some to form a nucleus of a rough and lawless community.

The son-in-law of the revered Rev. John Tuck in the summer of 1780, removed the parsonage which his father-in-law had built and set it up again in Old York on the mainland. But the meeting house fell victim to the vandals as reported by Rev. Jedediah Morse.

"About the year 1790, some of the people of the baser sort, not having the fear of God before their eyes, pulled down and burnt for fuel the meeting house which was a neat and convenient building and had been greatly use-

ful, not only as a place for religious worship but as a landmark for seamen approaching this part of the coast. The special judgments of Heaven seem to have followed this piece of wickedness to those immediately concerned in it, who seem since to have been given up to work all manner of wickedness with greediness."

About half as many people as had been banished by necessity of war straggled back after the war so that by the year 1800, there were 92 persons on Star Island in fifteen families occupying eleven dwellings while on Smuttynose there were three Haley families, and none on the other islands.

The restored stone Meeting House on the peak of Star Island.

The bitter cold winds of the winter blowing through the loosely built cabins of the fisherfolk, where no coal bins were known and scanty cordwood could be brought from the mainland, must have prompted the resort to anything that might be burned upon the island and we are not surprised to read in the journal of Rev. Jedediah Morse, "All the trees and the bushes have been consumed and they have cut up, dried and burned many acres of the sward leaving only naked rocks where formerly there was the finest pasturage for cows."

A Modern Sportsman with his "catch" at the end of the wharf

For the ten years after the meeting house was torn down, the few families of sturdy fisherfolk and the flotsam and jetsam of humans that lingered near them made a reputation for the island that was pitiful in the hearts of benevolent people on the shores of Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. "They had not tho ability, and by degrees lost the disposition, te support the ministry. The people neglected the annual choice of town officers. They had no regular schools. The Sabbath was neglected and profaned. The vices of cursing and swearing and drunkenness, quarreling, and disobedience to parents became prevalent in an awful degree; and they were degenerating fast to a state of heathenism." Homes were started without marriage and children grew up without record of birth and knew nothing more of their ages than "Topsy"—even their language was so dilapidated as to need an interpreter.

Mrs. Thaxter's account of the appearance and habits of some of the Islanders as she saw them forty years after this period while under missionary efforts gives a vivid idea of what they might have been before the missionary efforts were started.

Among the Isles of Shoals, pp. 50–63.]

In 1799, the ancient "Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North America" took on these Islanders as

the "Others" of their charter, and sent to them Rev. Jacob Emerson of Reading, Mass., as Pastor and schoolmaster for a period of three months.

The next year they sent Rev. Jedediah Morse of Charlestown to examine the social, moral and religious condition of the Shoalers and to report to the Society. He spent five days among them, preaching four times and learning from them as much as possible of their traditions and history and wrote the valuable report which is to be found in the Massachusetts Historical Collections, [Series 1, vol. 7, p. 242.]

By his recommendation the Society continued to send missionaries for seventy years.

Voluntary contributions to build a new meeting house were secured from many benevolent people. $300 were raised in Portsmouth; $100 in Exeter, $500 in Salem and $500 in Boston and Newburyport. The Rev. Dr. Morse with Dudley A. Tyng of Newburyport, accomplished the erection of a stone meeting house during the summer of 1800, on the site of the old one where it stands to this day, the good Doctor saying somewhat facetiously—"the inhabitants cannot burn it for fuel."

The interior woodwork, however, was partially destroyed by fire Jan. 2, 1826; but it was restored and dedicated anew in 1830.

In 1859, the steeple of the church was adorned with a weather vane by the islanders with considerable pride as their town record says, "At considerable expense, the inhabitants of these

Isles have put up a beautiful vane on our chapel. May their own hearts yield to the breathings of the Divine Spirit, as that vane does to the wind."

When the church was built the people made with Rev. Jedediah Morse the following interesting agreement:

Articles of agreement entered into by the inhabitants of the Isle of Shoals, Nov. 14. 1800.

Whereas the islands now commonly called the Isles of Shoals, but heretofore named Smith's Islands, in honor of the renowned Captain John Smith—have fallen into a lamentable state of decay, since the revolution war; and the inhabitants, from their extreme poverty, and other inhappy circumstances, have long been destitute of the means of religious and moral instruction; and whereas some pious and charitable persons have generously erected a commodious and durable building, to be solely appropriated to the public instruction of the inhabitants, and the Massachusetts Society for Propagating the Gospel have appointed a missionary to reside at the said islands, as a religious and moral teacher to the inhabitants and an instructor of the youth; and whereas there is ground to hope for further charities from the said society, and other humane and benevolent persons should the good effects of their present bounty be visible in the improvement of the morals, manners and conversation of the inhabitants; and whereas from the location of the said islands, it is very difficult to resort to the laws for the decision of disputes which unavoidably arise;

We, the inhabitants, do hereby solemnly and mutually covenant and agree with each other in the following articles, all which we promise to observe and keep, viz.

First. We engage to treat with kindliness and respect all such worthy and godly persons as shall come to instruct and reform us; to render them as comfortable as we can; and to attend with sobriety and diligence on all their

instructions, whether the same be public in the meeting-house, or private and personal in our houses.

Second. We engage that our children shall also attend the school at the stated hours, and that we will, by setting them sober and good examples, and by needful corrections labour to make them better, as well as more decent and mannerly in their behavior.

Third. We promise our best endeavors to abstain from all brawling, quarreling, profane swearing and cursing, drunkenness, idleness, dishonesty, and all other conduct which is offensive to God and all good beings.

Fourth. Should any disputes arise among any of us, we promise to submit the same to the decision of the missionary for the time being, and two assessors, who shall be annually chosen in the month of January; and we promise to abide by, and perform their award touching such disputes.

Fifth. The house lot and garden, heretofore occupied by the Rev. Mr. Tucke, shall be forever appropriated to the use of the public teacher for the time being.

In February, 1819, the population of the islands was as follows:

Star, 11 families and 2 Solitaries	52
Smuttynose, 5 families and 1 Solitary	26
Hog Island, 1 family	8
Total Souls	86

The successive missionaries had to preach on Sundays, to teach an ungraded school on week days and to be a bit of spiritual leaven at all times to all ages.

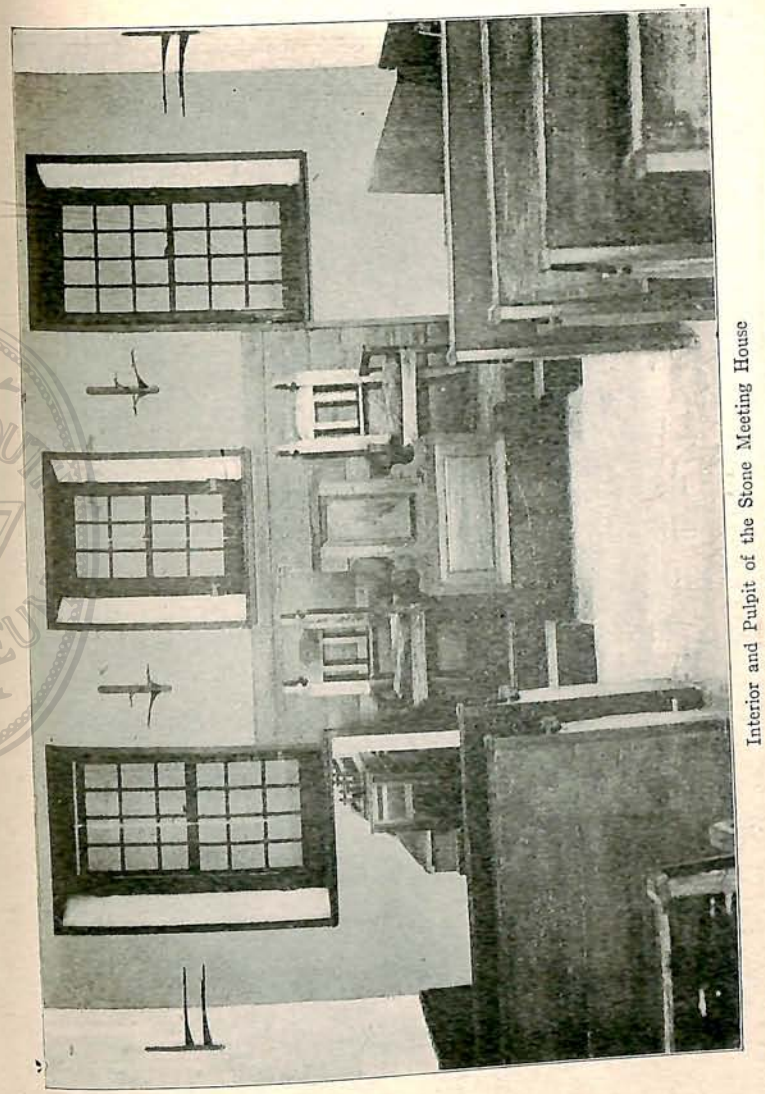
Mr. Reuben Moody, a theological student who remained a few months in the spring of 1822, kept a journal which reveals some homely experiences. "April 20. My school presents a

singular appearance in the morning. As soon as they see me with my brand of fire and key, they all leave their plays and run; and when I am building the fire they flock round me and squat down on the hearth like papooses. Some with their books, some with their Indian bread, and some with none."

The little schoolhouse stood next to the parsonage a few feet east of and facing the end of the stone church where slight portions of the foundation can be seen at the present day.

Miss Peabody, of Newburyport, came to live with them in 1823, and performed the functions of a social settlement long before that modern device for human uplift had been named. She wrought wonders for them, teaching them manners and reading, besides the arts of carding, spinning, weaving, knitting, sewing, and braiding mats. She took seven of the poorer and neglected girls to live with her in the parsonage where they made one winter, "chips" for 20 hats, 33 skeins of twine, 118 yards of netting, 138 yards of cloth and 416 skeins of yarn. All of these articles which could not be sold on the island were bought by appreciative friends in Portsmouth and Newburyport.

One of the women employed to teach during this period has left her name in one of the tragedies of the island. The town record says—"Miss N. J. Underhill of Chester, N. H., a school teacher who had instructed the youth of this place for nearly 2 years last past, came to her death by drowning Monday evening.



Interior and Pulpit of the Stone Meeting House

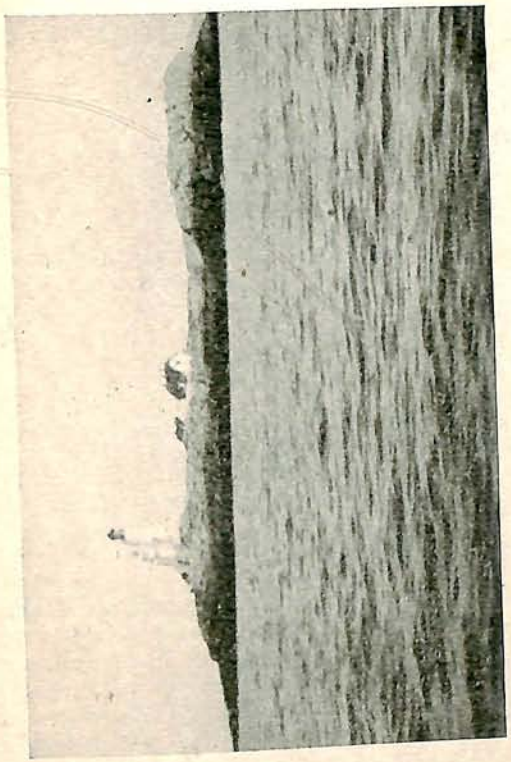
Sept. 11, 1848. Her body was found Sept. 18th on the shore at Cape Neddock. The body was taken to Chester and buried Thursday, Sept. 21. She was about 34 years of age."

Tradition points out a "seat in the rocky cliff upon the southeast side of the island where she was washed off by an exceeding high wave that rolled its mountain-mass against the shelving cliff."

In 1855, Rev. J. Mason in his report for the Society says the missionary "must have the whole care of the public buildings. This includes repairing, cleansing and preserving from injury.

"On the Sabbath day and in the day school I have made during two years past all the fires, swept the buildings, rang the bell or hoisted the Bethel Flag. Furthermore, unconscious of any impropriety, they have sought the missionary to mow their grass, file their saws, repair their clocks, pull their teeth and make coffins for the dead." [Jenness p. 162.]

One of the last of these missionaries was Rev. George Beebe, whose wife did the work of a schoolmistress for part of the time. The pathetic little marble monument for the three little Beebe children who were swept away all at one time by an epidemic in 1863, marks nearly the close of the missionary period of seventy years.



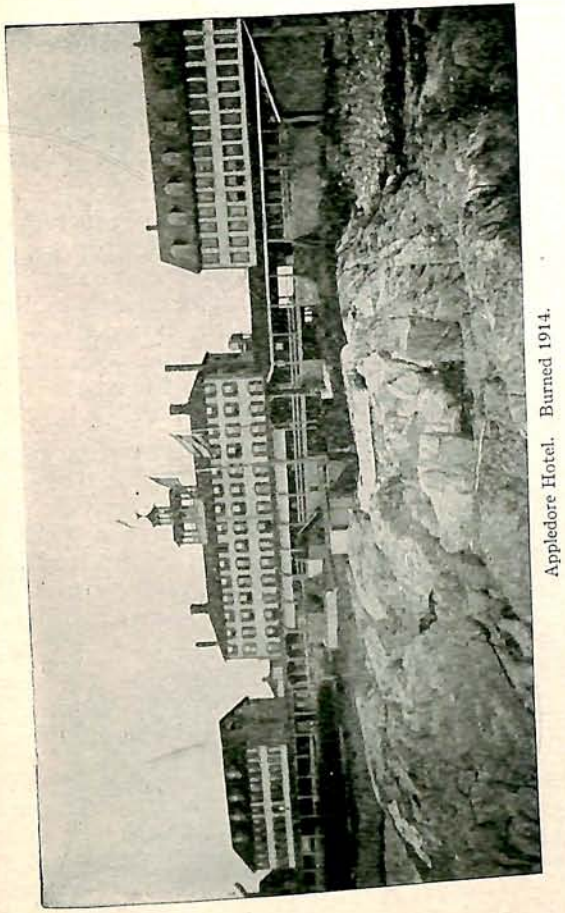
White Island Lighthouse and the Keeper's Home

A Gay Summer Resort

Before the termination of missionary labor in 1870, there had commenced on the islands an epoch of Summer Resort which brought the islands into considerable fame during the latter half of the 1800's.

A foregleam of this fancy was expressed far back in the days of discovery when Captain John Smith felt the sweetness of summer time at the Shoals in the year 1614. He wrote afterwards a poetic passage in his "Description" in memory of that experience, "What sport doth yield more pleasing content, and less hurt or charge than angling with a hooke and crossing the sweet ayre from Isle to Isle, over the silent streams of a calme sea? Wherein the most curious may find pleasure, profit and content."

Multitudes have felt that charm of "crossing the sweet ayre from isle to isle over the silent streams of a calme sea," and have been captivated by the sense of detachment from the jangling discords of humanity. Even the utilitarian fishing purpose of English sailor lads was doubtless mingled with indulgence in the solf languor of summer idleness, and all through the centuries that have intervened, the charm of the islands as a summer resort has been operating.



Appledore Hotel. Burned 1914.

It has been reserved for the last half of last century to specialize this phase of the life at the Shoals.

As early as 1826, we have a most interesting account in Mrs. Thaxter's book, p. 177, of a Summer health seeker who boarded "in the family of a worthy fisherman" of Star Island, and who had a thrilling experience of ghosts and buried treasure.

In 1840, one of the missionaries reported "water parties" at Gosport during the summer and in 1844, the Gosport town record says, "J. E. Smith came to this island for the pleasure of improving his health, boarded at Mr. Samuel Caswell's and found him a gentleman who spared no pains to make the visits of his boarders agreeable in every respect."

But the chief stimulus of this new era of the Shoals was the Laighton family. In the summer of 1839, the Hon. Henry B. Laighton completely exasperated by the drift of political affairs in which he was interested, and wishing to get away from it all, accepted the position of light keeper on the White Island lighthouse.

In order to be quit forever from the follies of democracy he went with his wife and three children, Celia, five years of age, Cedric and Oscar to live on the lonely islet one mile south west of Star Island.

For six years in the old lighthouse he trimmed the whale oil lamps, ten with colorless glass and five with red glass chimneys resting upon a horizontal triangle which revolved showing

alternately golden and red light. Afterwards, the new and higher lighthouse with its huge French prisms to concentrate the beams of the central lamp made the first seem more primitive; but the family in the old house was not primitive. The little girl, Celia, developed in this lonely island one of the rarest poetic natures among our New England writers and her book of reminiscences, "Among the Isles of Shoals" will be always cherished as a most charming account of impressions made by the moods of nature and of rude people upon a sensitive soul.

After serving six years in the lighthouse, Mr. Laighton moved to the large island of Appledore and built a cottage determined never to set foot upon the mainland which he regretted was not further away. He was hospitable to some summer visitors and behold, others began to swarm about him and his fascinating family. He soon had to build in 1848, a large house to accommodate them and then more enlargements for the increasing number of guests who came from a widening area of acquaintance.

In Harper's Magazine of 1874 (p. 663,) Mr. Chadwick said of him "the keen-scented found him on his mimic continent and almost before he knew it he was a host himself. The place never loses its attractions; with five hundred guests crowding its tables, overflowing its beds, swarming up and down its long piazzas, the Appledore is still homelike to a degree that has no parallel; the genius that directed its begin-

ning still presides over its comforts and conveniences; year after year the guests return."

Hon. Henry B. Laighton died in 1865, at the age of 61 years but his two sons, Cedric and Oscar with amiable hospitality of no less degree, continued and enlarged the business of their father

The magazines of the early seventies were generously sprinkled with accounts of this famous resort. A writer in the New England Register of 1871 says—"the Isles of Shoals have become a second time prominent in New England history. For nearly two centuries they were famous as a fishing station and swarmed with inhabitants. After the Revolutionary War the fishing interest declined and these isles seemed likely to return to their primitive nakedness and desolation. Within the last twenty-five years they have become widely known as a summer resort, more persons now visiting them annually for pleasure or health than in the days of their fishing glory." Many notable Americans including Lowell, Hawthorne, Whittier, Aldrich and others were among the summer visitors with the Laightons.

Among the visitors was John R. Poor of the famous mustard firm who conceived the idea of building upon Star Island a hostelry to match and to excel the famous Appledore. The Oceanic was built in the year 1873, at a cost of $300,000. The natives, about twenty, were persuaded to sell out their little cottages, most of which were torn down and the better ones repaired for outside guests.

The proprietor built the substantial wharf to accommodate pleasure seekers, which could not be afforded for business and which was longed for during two centuries and for which in vain a lottery had been sanctioned in 1766.

Old stone walls that had divided house lots for centuries were torn down to supply the wall that lines the front of the island, paths were built and markers placed on all points of interest.

The new hotel was filled at once just as the Appledore. One of the attractions that brought the crowds at its opening season was the scene of the brutal murder on Smuttynose in March, 1873, where Louis Wagner killed Karen and Anetta Christiansen and barely missed killing Marie Hontvet all for the paltry pelf of $16.00.

Mrs. Thaxter's account of it in her "Letters" is piercingly vivid.

The Portsmouth Times of August 11, 1873, says that "a party of gents" who were stopping at the Oceanic played a practical joke upon the morbid tragedy hunters. They took a quantity of fish blood and spattered it upon the walls and daubed the woodwork and windows with their fingers. Then they waited the results. Presently the visitors came back with hot interest bringing bits of bloody wood and wall paper which they cherished as souvenirs of the ghastly crime.

The steamer "Stamford" brought 600 excursionists to the scene on Thursday, July 24, 1873, and on August 5th, another similar party. The Appledore and the Oceanic were crowded till

they could hold no more and brilliant "hops" were held in both houses on Saturday night.

The Oceanic had a full brass and quadrille band regularly engaged for the season; and the "elegant hall" was filled with gay parties every evening and especially so on Saturdays when numbers of yachts from Boston and other places anchored in the harbor.

Such large use of Star Island harbor justified the Government in building the sea wall of protection between Cedar Island and its two neighbors, Star and Smuttynose.

The Laighton Brothers succeeded in subduing the rivalry of the Oceanic by purchasing it in the year 1875, and carrying on the big business of both as a unit. It must have been feverish work during the short summer of three months and Mrs. Thaxter expressed her feelings in these words:

"Until the middle of June the quiet is undisturbed; then comes an eddy of humanity from the great world,—clatter of voices, patter of feet, much empty sound up and down the long piazzas, women with the carcasses of birds I love borne in simple vanity above their faces—much that is pleasant too, for I have my own corner, my little garden and my friends, and the piazza is no more to me than Washington street.

"In September away the crowd blows like leaves in the wind, and down comes the healing balm of quiet again upon the place." [Letters of Celia Thaxter, p. 176.]

After a few years the new Oceanic Hotel was burned to the ground; but another was built, a composite of several buildings which now stands with the old name Oceanic. For some twenty years the Appledore and Oceanic together maintained a waning popularity and as late as the year 1894, the Boston Transcript bore this advertisement.:

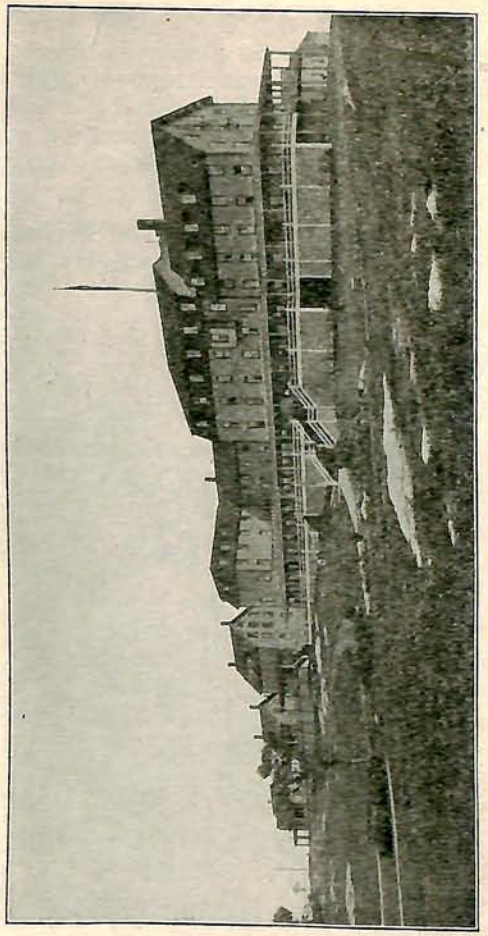
"The Beautiful Isles of Shoals off Portsmouth, N. H., are famous for their divine summer climate and health-giving air.

"Visitors have all the charm of a Sea voyage without its discomforts.

"Appledore and Oceanic Hotels.

"Steamers make close connections at Portsmouth with 9:30 A. M. and 3:15 P. M. trains from Boston.

"Circulars and Terms of Laighton Brothers."



The Restored Oceanic Hotel, Star Island

A Sanctum for Religious Conferences

1896–1922

The increased emphasis upon active sports such as golf and tennis which prevailed in the latter part of the eighteen-hundreds began to reduce the popularity of the Shoals where only a little tennis and no golf is possible. A commodious swimming pool at the water's edge in front of Appledore Hotel had been built so that the sea water could be sun-warmed for bathing; but athletic sports were not sufficiently afforded to suit the changing tastes of the pleasure seekers, and the Shoals faded from public view. But when this period of the Shoals as a Gay Summer Resort was nearing its end another epoch was being started.

In the summer of 1895, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Elliott of Lowell, while resting in the sweet and solemn detachment of Star Island, conceived the idea of saving this resort from its threatened desertion by dedicating it to the high uses of religious summer conferences. They enlisted the Unitarian denomination in that laudable enterprise and in the summer of 1897, a conference was held at the Oceanic Hotel which has been repeated annually for twenty-five years with increasing efficiency and fame.

The appropriateness of this shrine for Unitarian gatherings lies partly in the fact that the old stone meeting house and parsonage had been for so long a time fostered by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North America, as a part of its missionary work.

That society which was founded many years before the Unitarian division of the Congregational churches, had come into the management of the Unitarians by the operation of its self-perpetuating function; and thus the Star Island meeting house was appropriately passed along to the use of the Unitarian Conferences.

After some ten years of annual conferences extensive repairs in the meeting house were undertaken under the leadership of Rev. Louis C. Cornish and its tidy appearance has been maintained by the lovers of this quaint shrine. Over $1700 were spent upon roof and walls and floor, the latter being laid with bricks to take the place of decaying boards.

After about seventeen years of Unitarian Conferences and the progressive depletion of the secular uses of the Shoals, the Unitarian sponsors enlisted the interests of churchmen in the Congregational denomination with the hope of extending still further the religious uses of the islands.

In the summer of 1914, under the auspices of the New England Congregational Congress a Conference of Congregationalists supplemented the period of Unitarian occupancy, filling the

two weeks, July 30–August 11. The secretary, Rev. John L. Sewall, of Worcester, enlisted the loyalty of his fellow churchmen and his work has been continued by others for the past six years.

No sooner had these two church conferences commenced their united patronage of the Oceanic Hotel on Star Island, when the Hotel Appledore on the other island in the fall of 1914 was burned to the ground with the famous home of Celia Thaxter; and thus the entire patronage of this summer resort was thrown upon the promoters of the religious conferences of Star Island.

The attempt of some persons to purchase the Oceanic Hotel for a disorderly resort stimulated some of the patrons of the religious conferences to raise funds sufficient to purchase Star Island with the Oceanic Hotel and accessory buildings.

It is the fond hope of many who love these unique and picturesque islands that they may develop into a religious center of influence as significant for New England as St. Colomba's Iona was significant for Scotland and Ireland. The recent patronage of the Layman's League of the Unitarian churches in bringing hundreds of church school workers from all over the continent to imbibe at this font the best inspirations for religious uplift, fulfills in a measure those hopes for a wide influence emanating from these little reefs in the broad ocean.

Ready to ride among the islands with "Uncle" Oscar Laighton

The simple and beautiful liturgies that have been arranged by the Unitarian churchmen for the religious services in the old stone meeting house are unique and charmingly appropriate for this lonely island in the sea.

The Conferences that are held give the sweetest blend of an out-of-door vacation combined with a contemplative and devout consideration of the purposes of God, which inspires to a life of happy service.

The one beautiful custom which prevails in these island conferences is the Candle Light Service at the close of every day.

At about nine o'clock, after the evening lecture or entertainment, one or two score people take in their hands lighted candles protected by glass lamp chimneys in wire frames, and walk slowly with these improvised lanterns from the hotel piazza along the rocky pathway up to the little church while the bell tolls solemnly, and the flickering shadows sprinkle with light the footsteps of the procession whose silence is not broken even by a whisper.

As the door of the dark meeting house is entered, every candle adds its light and they are hung upon the tiny wooden crosses that jut out from the walls until there is brightness enough to light the pages of the little service books from which a beautiful liturgy is read, a hymn is sung and prayers are said.

The service ended, one by one the people file out bearing away their candles until the

last person shuts the door upon the dark room; and the recessional is made in the same absolute silence in which the still small voice of the spirit makes itself heard in the worshipping soul.

The time taken is only a few minutes but the impressions made are everlasting and sweet.

Where his beetling brow looks into the deep.

THE UNITARIAN FAREWELL SONG

(Tune: Auld Lang Syne)

Lest we forget these islands dear,
These isles we love so well,
We'll pledge again our loyalty
E'en though we say "Farewell."
For all the good times we have had
For all we hold so dear
May God protect us, every one,
Until we meet next year.

—Helen Greenwood

THE CONGREGATIONALISTS SONG

O ISLES OF SHOALS

(Tune: O Galilee!)

When summer days from toil release
My weary soul to rest and peace,
One longing o'er my spirit rolls—
To fly to thee, O Isles of Shoals!

Refrain

O Isles of Shoals! fair Isles of Shoals!
Where sky meets sea so lovingly;
O Isles of Shoals! dear Isles of Shoals!
Come, sing your song again to me!

Each cooling wind from Ocean's breast;
Each combing wave on wat'ry crest;
Each bird that trills, and bell that tolls,
Brings back thy face, sweet Isles of Shoals!

Refrain

—Henry Francis Smith.

Shaw Stocking Press, Lowell, Mass.