

Vinalhaven Historical Society

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2017 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Over the Sea and Faraway: Uncle Sam and Vinalhaven Enter the Great War in 1917



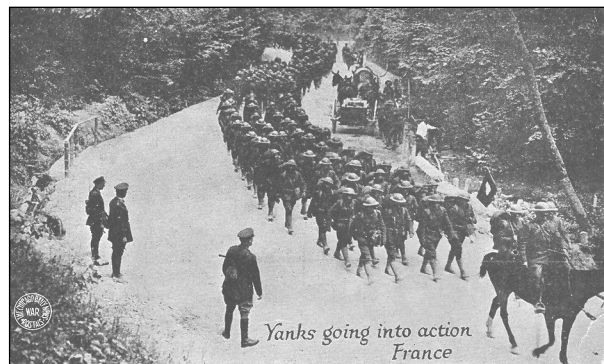
The Vinalhaven Historical Society and local American Legion Post 18 combine for a joint exhibit examining some aspects of the United States long postponed entry into the 20th century's first world wide bloodletting.

This cursory effort is divided, roughly, into co-dependent sections that entwine with each other: the human element (soldiers, sailors, airmen, and civilians), and technologies, where both the old and rapidly increasing new war related inventions were used by—and on—the hapless combatants.

Seventy-plus men and women had Vinalhaven connections to WWI. Two have been selected for scrutiny here. Lyford Otis Warren returned to the island after his Army service. He married, raised his family, and lived a long life. Arthur Leonard Woodcock volunteered for the Army, but caught a bad case of measles on the way to France. He was hospitalized and sent to England on a hospital ship. In transport the ship was torpedoed and sunk. Arthur went down with the ship and left a wife and two small sons to carry on without him.

Much American sympathy lay with the French people, nation, and culture. The perceived threat posed by German autocratic barbarity was skillfully manipulated by allied propagandists to play upon America's naïve sense of fair play. Should not the rising *young* country repay its *old* debt to the nation that sent money, soldiers, and—most of all—General Lafayette, to assist in the very founding of the country.

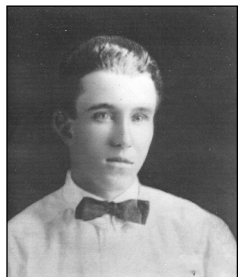
Photos, letters, postcards, and actual “war gear” from that time will be on display at the Museum's show room for the summer of 2017.



*Lafayette! We are here to save France and
make the world safe for Democracy!
(top) French hand embroidered post card*

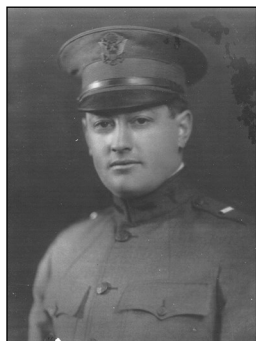
WOODCOCK-CASSIE-COOMBS

On May 25, 1919, the Lafayette Carver Post G.A.R. invited Vinalhaven WWI veterans to attend Memorial Sunday church services and were also encouraged to participate in Memorial Day exercises. There was discussion of forming a Post of the American Legion and a subsequent meeting was organized at the Memorial Hall. The Post was named after Arthur Woodcock, Robert Cassie, and Wyvern Coombs, the first three Vinalhaven men to be killed in the war.



Arthur Woodcock was born October 29, 1895 on Vinalhaven to Leander and Carrie Woodcock. He enlisted in Rockland on October 2, 1917, leaving his wife Susan at home with two small sons, Donald and Edwin. On August 3, 1918 Woodcock was aboard the hospital ship *Warilda* which was transporting wounded soldiers from Le Havre, France, to Southampton when, despite being clearly marked with a red cross, it was torpedoed by a German submarine. Of 801 soldiers and crew on board 123 lives were lost.

Robert Cassie was born May 30, 1892 on Vinalhaven to Andrew and Mary Cassie. Serving with the 102nd Field Artillery, Battery B, Pvt. Cassie died from effects of being gassed in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. His body was brought to Vinalhaven and buried with services conducted by the Legion joined by the Ladies Auxiliary, GAR veterans, Sons of Veterans, Ladies of the GAR, Spanish War veterans, and members of the Grange. Pvt. Cassie was awarded the French Croix-de-Guerre for conspicuous bravery in the Battle of Seicheprey and a citation from General Pershing.



Wyvern Coombs was born on Deer Isle on October 12, 1890 to Tyler and Cora Coombs. A graduate of Vinalhaven High School and Bowdoin Medical College, Coombs worked in hospitals in Maine and Boston before gaining military experience in the National Guard. When the war began Dr. Coombs enlisted in the Army and served as examining surgeon in Western Maine before being assigned to Field Hospital Unit 14. At Fort Oglethorpe, GA, Lt. Coombs was thrown from his horse when it encountered a wet and slippery stretch of asphalt highway. Despite receiving the best surgical skills available, Lt. Coombs died as a result of his injuries on April 23, 1918. He is buried in Roberts Cemetery, Vinalhaven.

IN MEMORIAM

This year we were upset by the loss of several dear friends. In October, we said goodbye to Wyman Philbrook, a past president and long time board member. Both Wyman and his wife Astrid, who passed away in 2015, were active members of the Historical Society and Museum from its very early days.

Former secretary and long time board member Jean McDonald passed away in January. She was an active committee member of the Gwendolyn Green Fund, which we were very lucky to receive support from.

This spring we were shocked and saddened to learn Francis “Fraffy” Welsh had passed on. She was a generous supporter of our Chandler Blackington Acquisition Fund and always encouraged us to enhance our collection and bring Vinalhaven items into the Museum.

After a courageous battle with cancer, Charlotte Goodhue passed away at the Sussman House in Rockport. This summer you’ll notice a section of the old Post Office counter window has been installed in our office. The window had been stored in Charlotte’s barn and we are excited to greet visitors from behind this beautiful, one-of-a-kind piece of history.

RICHARD HOWARD PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

Last fall we were approached by photographer Richard Howard about a project he's calling a *Community Portrait of Vinalhaven*. He would like to make a series of visits to the island and take photographs of individuals, families, and groups, as well as places that represent Vinalhaven as a working community.

The project is scheduled to begin with a first round of portraits in October 2017. Howard would then return to Vinalhaven every (or every other) month to take more photos and bring prints from the previous session. He estimates the entire collection could take up to two years.

Howard's mission is to assemble a group of images that provide a snapshot of our island community as it exists today. Once completed he would like to have an exhibition of all the photos, which will become part of the Museum's collection, and publish a book.

More information will be available soon and will be announced in the Wind and on our website.

EINAR'S JOURNEY

For the past several years we have been corresponding with Jan-Åke Karlsson who was piecing together the adventures of his uncle, Einar Carlson, who emigrated from Malmon, Sweden, in 1914. Jan-Åke did a lot of research in Sweden, talking to relatives and researching online, but needed our help to track down Einar on Vinalhaven. He knew from the 1920 census that Einar was working as a stone cutter and boarded with Frank Haskell on Cottage Street. Working with all the information that Jan-Åke had already collected we were able to find a funeral register that indicated Einar was buried in Cummings Cemetery. It also told us he had died in Fairfield, Maine, at a sanatorium for patients with tuberculosis.



Jan-Åke has many photographs of his uncle, both in Sweden and on Vinalhaven, and has published them in a small pamphlet, *The Athlete from the Past*, which he shared with us over the winter. Tullio Lasansky, our summer volunteer, translated it to English for us so we were able to read about Einar's history. (Thank you, Tullio!)

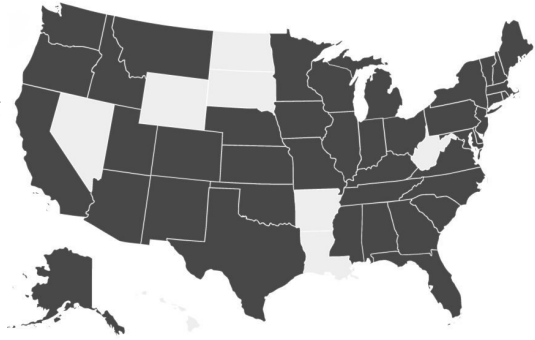
In June 2016, Jan-Åke and Kjell Andersson visited Vinalhaven. Kjell and his wife

Anita are working on a documentary on Swedish emigration to America and heard about the research Jan-Åke had done on his uncle. Together, they traveled to Vinalhaven to record video and take photos, and to learn what life would have been like for the Swedish stone masons living here. According to Jan-Åke and Kjell, Vinalhaven is very similar to Malmon in climate and geography (topography?), which may have added to the appeal of the island.

Einar's story is just one of many Swedes, and other nationalities, who came to Vinalhaven looking for work and a better life. This is another example of how important our work is. Genealogy files and other documents all piece together to form an important paper trail for families who come to Vinalhaven looking for relatives. And chances are they end up loving the island as much as their ancestors did before them!

YEAR IN REVIEW

Over the 2016 Summer season we welcomed 1,066 visitors from 42 US states and 45 from 12 countries including Italy, Germany, Sweden, Turkey, Japan, Dubai, and Venezuela.



Year after year we are amazed by the generosity of people who think of us with their donations. And again, this year was no exception.

Henrietta Winslow, Nancy Carlsen Tesseo, Candy Barton, and Valerie Morton's estate all kept Laurretta busy going through pictures, books, and old scrapbooks full of interesting articles and announcements. Heather Woodman also sent in a packet of clippings, brochures, flyers, ferry schedules, and menus collected by Margaret Schwartz who summered on the island for 18 years.

Cindy Lloyd gave two books by poet Harold Vinal and one book by Elliot Hall. She also donated a large and very heavy halibut hook that once belonged to her grandfather Tom Lloyd (brother of Wilfred "Mouse" Lloyd).

We received two beautiful water color paintings of the Museum, summer and winter, from Ann Guidoboni. They were done by her grandfather, Sidney Winslow, and given in memory of her mother, Virginia Winslow Webster. (Winter pictured on Page 6)

Marg Conway gave us a netted bag full of glass marbles that once belonged to her brother, Edward, who enlisted in the Naval Air Corps when WWII started. He was killed in a plane crash in 1943.

The Baker/Lynch heirs donated an amazing Redwork Quilt. We are in contact with the Maine Quilt Heritage to see if they have any information on its age or maker.

Annette Philbrook shared some of her father's netting tools, eyeglasses that belonged to J. F. Burgess, and a very interesting "stocking repair kit" that would remind you of a match book!

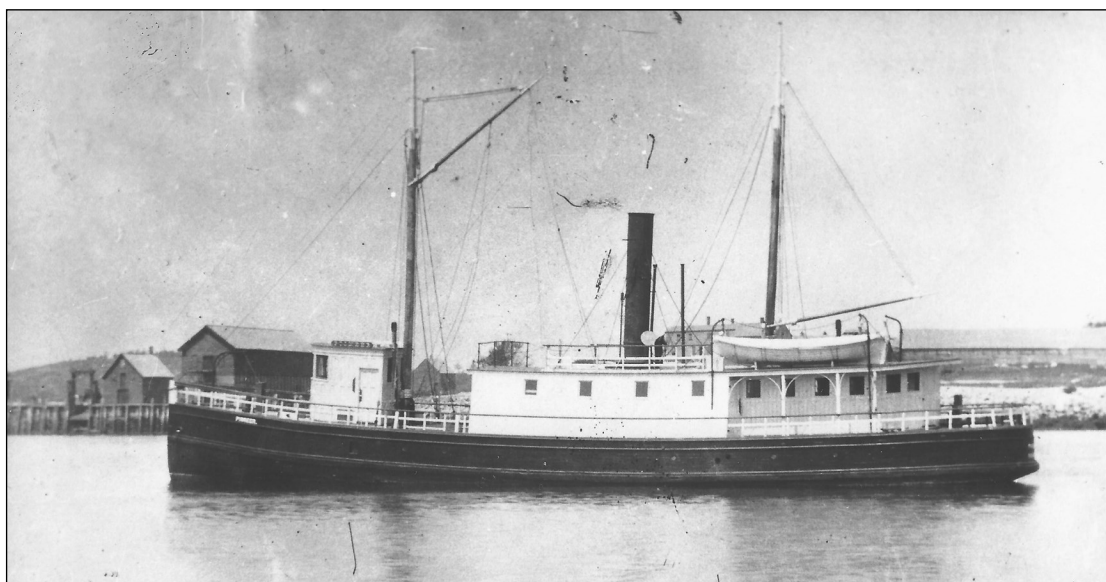
Our collection of signage grew this year with the acquisition of two Paper Store signs. One is the iconic man in his yellow sou'wester from Carlene Michael, the other is classic block black with white lettering from Ellison Griffin. Clarence Conway brought in the sign from R. A. Jones grocery store.

Margaret Sparrow gave us a 55 piece set of china dishes given to her by the Kulka family. The Kulkas had purchased the set at an estate sale and in the box was a note that said it was "from the oldest house in Vinalhaven," the John Carver home, now part of the John Carver apartments on High Street.

We used the Chandler Blackington Acquisition Fund for several additions to our collection this year including Margaret Wise Brown books (written under the pseudonym Golden MacDonald), a decoy carved by Lyford Coombs, a 1913 calendar from the Cascade Bowling Alley, and a few postcards.

In the office: Sue Radley and Lorraine Bunker have been working on another edition of Reminiscence. Lorraine has transcribed all of the new interviews conducted and Sue is now editing them down. We hope to have the new book out by Christmas. Lorraine has also been transcribing Jessie Lowe's diaries from 1895 to 1905. Jessie kept a very detailed journal that paints a vivid picture of what life in Vinalhaven was like during those years. Lizzie is picking away at the cemetery database, adding information from funeral registers and obituaries. There is also a group effort on enhancing our military records.

MILESTONES



***Pioneer* - 150 years, 1st Steamship (1867)** The *Pioneer* was built in 1864 in Portsmouth, NH. It was placed on the Rockland/Vinalhaven line in June 1867, replacing the sailing packet *Greyhound* which had been in use since 1855. *Pioneer* had two masts and was equipped with a set of sails which were used to steady the vessel in rough weather. During the winter of 1867-69 the *Pioneer* was taken out of the water and the *Greyhound* was again used. In the early part of 1873 the steamboat *Clara Clarita* and the side wheel steamer *Ulysses* were both put into service by rival steamboat companies. A short, but lively contest ensued. The *Clara Clarita* was fast and powerful, but was also expensive to operate and was eventually sold. Once again the *Pioneer* was put on the route and continued service until 1892.

Through the *Pioneer's* entire career on the Rockland-Vinalhaven run she was mastered by Captain William R. Creed. Creed was born in Vinalhaven in 1836, and started his maritime career at an early age on his father's fishing boat. During the Civil War he enlisted in the Navy as a crew member of the *Colorado*. At the close of the war he returned to Vinalhaven and took over command of the *Greyhound* until it was replaced by the *Pioneer*, and remained there until succeeded by the *Gov. Bodwell*. He captained the *Gov. Bodwell* until his health forced him to retire in 1904.

ANNUAL APPEAL

Please consider donating so we can continue all the work highlighted in this newsletter, and much more! The Vinalhaven Historical Society is a non-profit organization. We do not receive annual operating funds from the Town of Vinalhaven. We exist solely because of your donations!

If you have ever visited the Museum you know we have a lot of stuff packed into a little space. So much so that we're *actually* busting at the seams! Our back wall (north side) has developed a visible bulge and will need attention very soon. We're not yet sure of the exact scope of work, but we know it will be a **huge** undertaking. We also hope to improve the look and layout of the museum to help us function better, and in turn, improve our ability to help visitors and researchers. Any donation is greatly appreciated!

William D. Chilles, Pres.

Amy Lear, Vice Pres.

Lorraine Bunker, Sec.

Lucy Bickford, Treas.

Elizabeth Bunker, Dir.

Dallas Anthony

Niall Conlan

Roy Heisler

Alan Lazaro

Torry Pratt

Sue Radley

Priscilla Rosen

Marion Tolman

Roger Young

VINALHAVEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS!

On August 23, 1963 the very first meeting of the Vinalhaven Historical Society, organized by Raymond Sennett, was held in the Union Church Vestry with about 30 people in attendance. A constitution, by-laws, election of officers, and yearly memberships were among the first agenda items. Also discussed very early was the need for a “headquarters,” where donated items could be displayed and volunteer work could be done. Decisions such as regular membership (set at \$2) and elected officers (Pres: Elliott Hall, Vice-President: Gwendolyn Green, Sec: Elizabeth Bunker, and Treas: Michael Bunker) were made within the first couple meetings. Finding a suitable building was delayed “to allow for a trial period.” In the meantime, meetings continued to be held at the Union Church Vestry, homes of members, the Latter Day Saints church, or the high school gymnasium.

By June 1964, there were enough donated artifacts to have an exhibition in the Washington School from June 20th through the 4th of July. Two people were on duty daily from 1pm to 3pm. Discussions to find a building that could suit the needs of the Society continued and included the Drug Store (64 Main St.), the old Engine House, and the Redmen/I.O.O.F. Hall. Finally, in March 1967, the Town agreed to let the Society use the Town Hall with the condition that they “were to put [the building] in useable condition and to pay insurance on the same.” A building committee was established and over the next couple years they reported regularly to the board on their progress.

Since that first meeting the Society has grown substantially. We have one part-time employee and many dedicated volunteers. We have permanent exhibits on fishing, the granite industry, schools, music, and war veterans, along with a rotating feature summer exhibit. We have an enormous collection stored in two buildings, one of which contains a humidity controlled vault. Our annual newsletter goes out to nearly 600 members and supporters.

This summer we’ll highlight the history of the building, influential members, and our on-going mission to collect and preserve Vinalhaven’s important history.



Watercolor by Sidney Winslow, 1932

SUMMER HOURS

June 19 - September 22
Monday - Friday 11-4pm
(Open Monday - Saturday in July and August)

SUMMER PROGRAMS

September 14th: *Fragments from a Time Gone By: About the Stonecutting Era on Sweden’s Maine Coast.* The Vinalhaven Public Library and the Vinalhaven Historical Society will present this 58-minute documentary. The film will have special meaning for Vinalhaven residents who are descendants of those who immigrated here from the west coast of Sweden and adjacent Norway communities. The film will be introduced by Jeannette Lasansky who has been researching these Vinalhaven Scandinavian families. A map of the area with towns and quarries highlighted will also include a list of family surnames that will be available to attendees. The film is narrated in English while interviews of former quarry workers on the Bohus-Malmön coast will be in Swedish so their language is featured as well. **7:00 pm at the Vinalhaven Public Library.**