



Friends of the Ogunquit Heritage Museum

Fall 2020 Newsletter

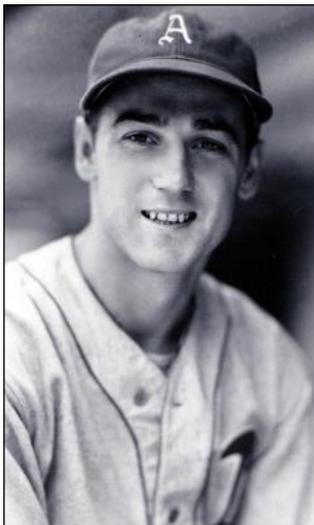
Mission of the Friends:

**To Support the Educational Goals and Programs
of the Ogunquit Heritage Museum**

Raymond Franklin "Bobby" Coombs

In a list of prominent historical persons associated with the State of Maine, appears the name John "Colby Jack" Coombs. John Wesley Coombs was born in Iowa in 1882. His family moved to a farm near Kennebunk when he was 4 years old. He graduated from Freeport High School and then attended a prep school in Waterville, Maine. Following that, he entered Colby College which accounts for the nickname "Colby Jack." After college he pitched in the major leagues for the Philadelphia Athletics, the Brooklyn Dodgers, and the Detroit Tigers. He set records in 1910 with Philadelphia when he won 31 games, while losing only 9. In 1929 he became the baseball coach at Duke University until he retired in 1952. At Duke he led the Blue Devils to 7 North Carolina championships and 5 Southern Conference championships. "Mr. College Baseball" became a new nickname. Twenty-one of his students made the major leagues including his nephew Raymond "Bobby" Coombs. The baseball fields at both Colby College and Duke University were named after "Colby Jack."

His nephew Raymond Franklin "Bobby" Coombs was born in Goodwin Mills, Maine on



Bobby Coombs

February 2, 1908 and grew up in Kennebunk. Following in his uncle's footsteps, he attended two high schools and graduated from Kennebunk High School in 1925. He was well known in York County and held the schoolboy strikeout record. In 1929, he graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy where he was president of his class and captain of

(Continued...Page 4)

Christmas By The Sea in Ogunquit Friday, Dec 11 - Sunday Dec 13, 2020



An Excellent gift for any Season . . .

The FOHM

NOTE CARDS

featuring

**Our Favorite Photos
Of Ogunquit From the Past**

***A Packaged Set of Twelve Historic Views
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FOHM President's Letter . . .

Thank you to the friends and benefactors of the Ogunquit Heritage Museum. This has been a most difficult year with the Covid 19 Pandemic. We have had to adjust to many changes like wearing masks, quarantining, and participating in social distancing.

Our Opening Day Party in June was cancelled as was the Fundraising "Dinner and a Chance," Ghostly Tours, and Christmas by the Sea. In times of uncertainty, we could have given up in our endeavors for the museum.

BUT.... HOORAY for US!!!

The Museum opened to the public. We implemented rules to address the Covid challenge like limiting the museum to five persons at a time with mandatory masks. Thank you to Administrator Charlotte Tragard who kept all operations running smoothly.

This year's exhibit by our Curator Carole Lee Carroll focused on the 40th birthday of Ogunquit and the 200th birthday of Maine. Thank you for persevering.

The Ogunquit Dory was refurbished along with a new cover and it is presently back at the museum.

Wendy Broms Levine and I traded places. Wendy is now Vice President and I am President of the Friends. I will do my best to follow in the footsteps of one so articulate and organized, and I look forward to building on this legacy.

My foremost love of the Heritage Museum is the gardens. A few of the persons originally connected to the Gardens are Barbara Woodbury, Marcia Brazer, and Eva Nudelman. I have tried to keep the historical correctness as they would wish.

Funding was voted for and provided by the Friends of the Ogunquit Heritage Museum. With the assistance of Elizabeth Green and Marjee Levine, who sent me a multitude of research pages, a plan was formulated for a 1790s garden of medicinal and useful plants. Thank you to Matt K of Strawberry Bank for design ideas of that era.

Wendy Levine and I went to Joann Gardens to select appropriate plantings. During the second week of June, Peter from Joann Gardens sent Mike and company to transplant and plant for us. At the end of June, Margot Maxwell planted twenty-two native-to-Maine seedlings from the Wild Seed Project of Maine. Tom Torno, Ogunquit Public Works Director had the pruning and mulching done along with repair of the irrigation system. Robert Dateo constructed wooden signs to identify individual plantings and native Maine plantings. Charlotte Tragard did the research and documentation of each plant. This information coordinates with a map of the gardens by Pat Dateo.

So here we are in November. Gardens are not quite put to bed yet. The deer have had a feast on new leaves particularly anything native to Maine. But nevertheless, with the help of a team of committed

friends, we accomplished the multifaceted task of planting the gardens and creating a natural outdoor exhibit. For the future, we look forward to a new garden design near the entrance to the park and the sign on Obeds Lane. We need more funding for this venture, but I am confident that we will find it and persevere to further improve our lovely Heritage Museum.

Here's to a healthy and productive 2021.

Pat Dateo



Pat Dateo & Hollyhock

Our existence depends on all of our "Friends." Please don't forget to pay your dues!

-- P.D.

Ogunquit Heritage Museum Committee

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Friends of the

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Some plants in our 2020 Herb Garden . . .

Artemisia - A form of wormwood; used for intestinal upset; anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic and antirheumatic.

Beard-tongue (native) - Has traditionally been used as a poultice for swellings, gun and arrow wounds, eyewash; a tea drunk for constipation, stomach ache, internal injuries, bronchitis, kidney problems and whooping cough.

Delphinium - A very poisonous plant used to repel scorpions, lice and other parasites. It was believed to protect against lightning and witches.

Evening Primrose (native) - Was used for arthritis, skin disorders, allergies, asthma and depression.

Foxglove - Used for irregular heartbeat "flutter," spasm, headache, constipation, asthma, and tuberculosis.

Harebell (native) - The gluey substance produced by the plant was used as a substitute for starch in ironing, used for fixing feathers in the shaft of arrows and bookbinder's gum for covers of books.

Hollyhock - Used as an astringent, diuretic, anti-inflammatory, fever suppressant, soothing poultice for ulcers and bleeding gums

Sneezewort (native) - The dried, powdered leaves are used as a sneezing powder. The leaf chewed could relieve a toothache.

Yarrow (native) - When the leaves are chewed, they become like a bandage and stop any bleeding. The leaves would be rolled and stuffed in the nose to stop nosebleed. Chewing the leaves could also relieve a toothache.

Gardener: Pat Dateo; Signs: Bob Dateo; Text and Photos: Charlotte Tragard



Evening Primrose



Foxglove



Harebell



Hollyhock



Sneezewort



Yarrow

A Real-Life Story . . .

A friend of mine who is an herbalist and holistic healer, happened by my house on her bike, but had a fall. She came to my door and showed me her scrapes on her hand and knee. I offered peroxide, Neosporin and band aids. She said all she really needed was some **yarrow**. I knew we had some growing at the Heritage Museum in Pat Dateo's herb garden, so off we went.

My friend quickly chewed a small bunch, formed two wads and applied them to her wounds. Not only did they stick, but naturally cleaned the wounds. She thanked me with a thick voice, because, as she explained, the leaves release a numbing agent which also relieves pain.

It was great to see first hand the Museum's garden in action!

-- Charlotte Tragard



Artemisia



Beard-tongue



Delphinium

Coombs... (from p. 1)

the football, baseball, and track teams. He then entered Duke University where he was coached by his uncle. Although he participated in four sports, his main interest remained baseball. He was voted All-Southern and All-American player three years in a row.

On September 10, 1930 he married Agatha E. Hawkes from South Windham, Maine. She was “a Wheelock girl,” also well known in Ogunquit since she often spent time with her elder sister Grace, who was married to Charles Littlefield Maxwell, the owner of Maxwell’s Store. In 1933 Bobby signed with the Philadelphia Athletics and played his first year of professional baseball. During a game with the New York Yankees he faced their “Murderers Row” and managed to strike out Lou Gehrig, Bill Dickey and Tony Lazari. Then, Babe Ruth hit his 716th home run. This was controversial to Bobby since he believed his strike out had not been called by the umpire, which then allowed the home run to happen. He played 21 games that year and then spent the next 9 years playing for several minor league teams including Syracuse, Birmingham, and Shreveport. In Jersey City he was 17-8 in 1942 and named outstanding pitcher in Class A baseball. He returned to the majors in 1943 and appeared in 9 games before he was inducted into the United States Navy.

World War II had already decimated baseball’s major and minor leagues. Many players were drafted, and after Pearl Harbor many more enlisted. In order to boost morale, baseball teams were formed among the various branches of the military in both the Atlantic and Pacific theatres. More than 500 major league ball players served in the armed forces and many were well-known players such as Stan Musial, Joe Di Maggio and Ted Williams. Most of the minor league players also served and they all played ball on various teams. Bobby Coombs played for the Navy’s Bill Dickey All Stars.

After the war, he decided not to return to professional baseball and became head baseball coach at Williams College as well as freshman basketball and football coach. He had 167 victories at Williams where he spent twenty-eight years. In 1947, he moored his boat “The Gath” (named for his wife Agatha) in Ogunquit where he spent his summer months operating a private charter fishing boat out of Perkins Cove. He and Agatha maintained a home on Scotch Hill called Oak Farm. Many neighbors and friends enjoyed visiting them and listening to his tales of

baseball and fishing.

In 1970, his name was added to the Maine State Baseball Hall of Fame and to the American Association of College Coaches. He was revered by his colleagues and students at Williams, where his enthusiasm and positive attitude were more important to them than the number of games they won. Baseball coach Jim Briggs as a student played for Coombs at Williams College, coached with him and then succeeded him as head coach. He commented, “He was the happiest guy in the world. It’d be snowing out there, we’d be getting ready to play, and he’d look out on the field and say, ‘What a great day. It’s great to be alive, let’s play two!’”

When he retired in 1973, he and Agatha became winter as well as summer residents of Ogunquit. In 1987 he was honored by Williams College when the new baseball field was named after him as had the baseball field at Duke University been named after his uncle. He died in 1991 leaving his wife after sixty-one years of marriage and his son Raymond “Bobby” Coombs Jr. A natural raconteur he had engaged many people with his baseball stories including the late Bruce Martin who had been a friend of Bobby Jr. Bruce donated his collection of Bobby Coombs memorabilia to the Ogunquit Heritage Museum and we are pleased to share.

-- Carole Lee Carroll

THE NATION LEAGUE ALL-STARS 1945



Back Row (l to r): Bob Sheffing, Stan Musial, Bob Usher, John McCarthy, Dick West, Ray Yochim, Roy Hamrick, Wimpy Quinn, Dee Moore, Hugh Casey, Wes Livengood

Middle Row (l to r): Larry Varnell, Billy Herman, Max Wilson, Bill Barnacle, Jim Carlin, Whitey Platt, Ray Lamanno, Eddie Shokes, Lou Yost

Front Row (l to r): Jerry Lonigro, Hank Schenz, Herman Franks, Charlie Gilbert, **Bobby Coombs**, Gil Brak, Ray Soukup, Clyde Shoun

Carole Lee Carroll . . . A Profile

When Barbara Woodbury, the founding director of the Ogunquit Heritage Museum, retired in 2006, she left a significant vacancy in the organization.



Carole Lee Carroll

Fortunately for Ogunquit, Carole Lee Carroll was there, first acting as director and curator for some years, and later becoming the Curator. With a masters in theatre design from Boston University, Carole Lee designed theatre sets at the Ogunquit Playhouse under the leadership of John Lane, and later designed sets in theatres in Boston, New York, and in summer stock.

Her theatre work brought her into collaboration with major performers like Margaret Hamilton and John Lithgow among others. In the 1970s Carole Lee joined NBC, working on *Saturday Night Live*, *The Tomorrow Show* and others. In 1984 she became the art director at NBC's *Today Show*. When she retired in 2004 and moved to Maine, she had been with NBC for more than thirty years.

Not only did Carole Lee bring a massive design talent to the Ogunquit Heritage Museum, she had also spent much of her life in Ogunquit, first as a summer resident, and later as a year-round resident in Ogunquit and York. Her father, Francis Dixon, served as Technical Director for Walter Hartwig's (and later John Lane's) Manhattan Theatre Colony, so Carole Lee was involved in many aspects of the theatre from an early age. Her recollections of those days are quite amazing, and because of them, she brings to each of her summer season exhibits, a rich historical frame of reference to complement her designs. She is also a co-author of a book on the history of the Ogunquit Playhouse published in 2007.

Carole Lee has twin daughters, Alice Carroll Bair, a jewelry designer and teacher, living in Cape Neddick, and Sarah Carroll, the commissioner for the Landmarks Preservation Commission for the city of New York. Both young women have inherited Carole Lee's artistic talent. As

of this winter, Carole Lee had four grandsons and two granddaughters, living here and in New York. The museum committee and the Friends of the OHM have had the fun of seeing three Bair boys and one Danielle Carroll grow up, helping as they grew with Ghostly Tours and other museum happenings.

It's hard to imagine what the Ogunquit Heritage Museum would be like without Carole Lee's vision and exhibition skills. Some of the exhibits that have excited Ogunquit residents and tourists alike include the replica of an old fisherman's shack in the cove, an Ogunquit Playhouse exhibit on its 75th anniversary, a wonderful exhibit about life guards over the years, and last year, a remarkable tribute to tuna fishing complete with a dried tuna tail as big as half of the top of the glass case displaying it.

For future historians, interested in understanding the development of the Ogunquit Beach as a public beach, or the creation of the Marginal Way, or the evolution of Perkins Cove from a sleepy fisherman's inlet to the thriving boatyard and harbor it has become, the Ogunquit Heritage Museum has in its archives, all of these rich stories, thanks to the talent and dedication of its Curator, Carole Lee Carroll.

--Susan Day Meffert



Fisherman's shack replica at the Ogunquit Heritage Museum



The Gold Rush at Perkins Cove, OR, Ogunquit's 'Flash in the Pan' . . .

The story really begins on March 24, 1959 when the Perkins Cove Committee comprised of William "Billy" Tower, Roby Littlefield and Gordon Brewster along with O.V.C. Manager Percival Wardwell, appeared before the State of Maine Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. These four men appealed to the Committee to pass Legislative Document #LD1013 titled "An Act Relating to Completion of Josias River Project in Ogunquit."

The project was based on "removal of 4000 cubic yards of ledge rock and 28,000 cubic yards of ordinary materials" that normally constitute marshland. The project got underway in mid-October 1959.



Blasting ledge at the back of Perkins Cove caused this fountain of water and rock during the Project. Marsh and ledge were removed so that a new depth of five feet and expanded area was created for anchorage of boats and docks. Parking lots in the cove and nearby received the material that was removed. Loosened gravel provided the gold which caused the gold rush.

While removing thick layers of marshland mud, the drag dredge hit gravel in the old Josias riverbed. The town parking lot was in need of resurfacing, so representatives of the Ogunquit Village Corporation instructed Supervisor Irving Pickering to have the gravel dumped in piles on the cove parking lot (as well as in a nearby field owned by Leon Perkins). In the process Mr. Pickering became intrigued by the texture of the material. The fine alluvial sediment and small stones had been flowing down the Josias River from Mount Agamenticus for eons. Mr. Pickering stated that it reminded him of the gravel in which he had once found tiny flecks of gold at another site. Following a hunch, Mr. Pickering borrowed a gold-pan from local rockhound Fred Kemp, Jr. and extracted a gold nugget the size of a coffee bean. After panning the rest of the day, he collected a half a thim-

bleful of gold dust. His total take for the day was around \$8. Back at his office he jokingly put a sign over the door that read "Klondike Town Hall."

Fred Kemp got word of the "mother lode" and quickly retrieved his gold-pan from Pickering. He and several others were at the Cove parking lot first thing the next day. The glitter in the pan, caused by a tiny nugget and some gold flakes, electrified the town. The local papers picked up on the story. Within days 2,500 "prospectors" appeared in the parking lot and along the banks of the Josias river. They came from all around with prospecting tools in hand. Panning operations began and continued for many days.

But not to be outdone by folks from "away," local teenagers Jay Smith and Kenney Bassett, got in the spirit and contributed to the cause.

Jay Smith had the advantage of living on the



April 1960: two gold-seekers, Jay Smith, (l) and Kenny Bassett, both 14 at the time, were eagerly panning for their share of gold at Perkins Cove. (Newspaper clipping from The Boston Sunday Herald, 3 April 1960.)

Cove and could gauge his panning expeditions to not interfere with the changing tides and dangerous dredging activity. Scouring a couple of inches of gravel into their pans, Smith and Bassett dipped up some water and began to swirl the pan with growing dexterity. Little by little the swirling water slopped the sand and light pebbles over the side of the pan. In the sand that remained, yellow flakes shone and glinted in the sunshine.

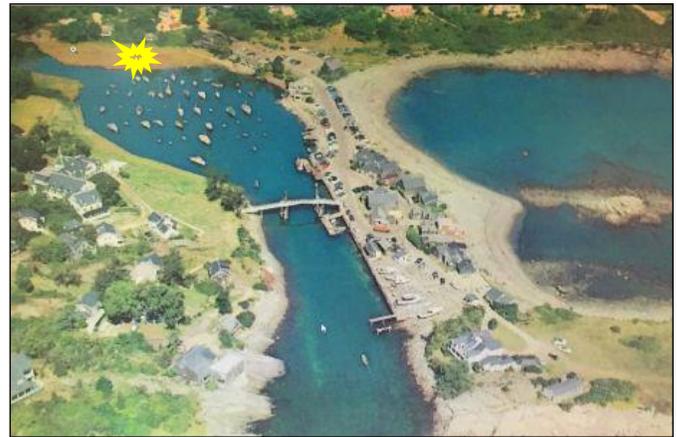
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Gold...(from p. 6)

The April 17, 1960 issue of the *New York Times* ran the following headline: “MAINE’S GOLD RUSH; An \$8 strike Brings the Rock Hounds Flocking to the Pine Tree State.” And the beat goes on.

As most treasure seekers know, it is helpful to have a map that marks the spot where the gold was buried. (See the aerial view at right)

All told, nobody, including this narrator, became a millionaire. In fact, within weeks everyone had gone home. It was reported in the *Lewiston Daily Sun* that “...the claims in the cove parking lot gravel were scarcer than parking spaces on a hot August day.” Disgruntled prospectors complained that the only similarity between Ogunquit and the Klondike was the weather. Most of the money made during the 1960 Ogunquit Gold Rush ended up in the pockets of local merchants so not all was lost.



Aerial view of Perkins Cove before dredging and discovery of gold. Material, containing gold-bearing sand, was removed from the area marked here by a sun-burst shape. (Photo by Ed Hipple)



Jay Smith's mining operation yielded some "colors" sixty years ago, which he preserved in this plastic vial. He has promised to deposit the treasure at the Ogunquit Heritage Museum which has arranged to keep it in a safe place.

In true prospecting tradition, nobody ever says just how much gold they found but I will break that tradition. The gold dust I managed to save for the last sixty years in a plastic vial will be donated, along with numerous photos of the dredging and all newspaper articles I own on this topic, to the Ogunquit Heritage Museum on Obed's Lane. I have been assured that the Museum will deposit my gold in a maximum security vault.

Postscript...

In the summer of 1960, the enlargement of the mooring basin was completed. The official dedication of the “new” Perkins Cove was held on August 23. Among other fitting ceremonies, a parade of boats was held. One of the entrants in the parade was an outboard captained by 15-year old Jay Smith dressed up as a prospector with a pick axe and pan. Most notable was a huge three-foot round gold “nugget” situated prominently amidships. Although hard to distinguish in the photo below, the nugget was obvious to the crowd and drew applause as the attendees recollected Ogunquit's gold rush, national press coverage, and moment in the sun.

-- Jay Smith



Jay Smith thrills the crowd with his 3-foot diameter “nugget” in a parade of boats which opened the expanded Cove on 23 August 1960. Jay asks anyone who has other photos of this boat parade to kindly contact him or the Ogunquit Heritage Museum.

(A live video presentation of this story was given by Jay at the Ogunquit Memorial Library's Gabby Gathering Forum, November 19, 2020.)

Accessions . . .

Susan Alexandre

Her cousin David Hutchins' OGT Cub Scout uniform from the 1970s

Robert & Marena Bragg

Her grandfather Warren Hutchins' original lobster pot buoy, clam basket, two scales, ice tongs and wooden plane (Given in memory of Blanche Hutchins Staples)



Original red & white lobster pot buoy owned by Perkins Cove Fisherman Warren Hutchins given by Robert & Marena Bragg

Bob & Pat Dateo

Old sign from the footbridge, "No Diving No Jumping"

Jim & Julie Habas

Advertisement for the OGT Chamber's Christmas by the Sea ornament, 1998

Kurt & Heidi Knight

CHARTER of the Ogunquit Village Corp., together with Amendments, Accepted Legislative Enactments and Ordinances, Passed 1958

Deborah LaPerche

Photo of John Neill painting; Two first day of issue Maine Statehood Commemorative covers with Ed Hopper OGT stamp, 2020

Lew-Ann Leen

DVDs "Painting by George" [George Carpenter], "OAA 75th," and "Perkins Cove"

Sonny Perkins

The History of Newbury, Massachusetts by John J. Currier 1902

Jay Smith

Ogunquit Methodist Church Women's Society Recipe book, 1960s; Original letter by Capt. Bruce Robertson Dick, re: "...a French-built

LeCar bought out-of-state as a police cruiser..."; Two Cookbooks by Marjorie Standish; Leavitt Theatre flyer; Newspaper article, "Roby Littlefield is a Candidate for State Senator," 1952; *A Guide to Perkins Cove* a brochure promoting the cove in 1973 with a map of businesses; A rudder from an original OGT dory; A binder with dory photos and postcards; Souvenir program of the 125th anniversary of the Ogunquit Baptist church (1830-1955); Biography and other articles about John Kendrick Bangs; Summer issue of *Turn o' the Tides*, 1919

Maryann Stacy

Framed artwork picturing the Old Swenson Inn (now the Old Village Inn) from *The Saturday Evening Post* cover by John Falter, 1947

Joseph & Jean Wassick

A panoramic postcard from Stair's Overnight Lodges, Ogunquit, Maine, pre-1926



Rudder from an original Ogunquit dory, given by Jay Smith, shown with the toolbox which belonged to Ogunquit dory builder William Henry Perkins.