

## Learnings from York Harbor Cottage Project – February 2014

### Major Insights

- The history of an individual cottage is interesting, but the real story is understanding who lived there, the summer colony community and the different types of cottages that were being built.
  - The first generation cottage owners were self-made businessmen, lawyers, doctors, artist, college presidents and ministers
  - Although York Harbor cottage owners were very wealthy and prominent, they were definitely second to the Rockefellers, Pulitzers and Vanderbilts of Bar Harbor and Newport, RI
  - There are many, many connections between cottage owners in York Harbor and events in New York, Washington and other parts of the world.
- There was a well-defined support system (ecosystem) – clubs, architects, banks, insurance, food and supplies, local help and caretakers for summer colony. Some of this infrastructure exists today but serves a broader purpose.
- Many cottages change visual form – but they are still there. They look different (enclosing of porches, loss of shutters, growth of trees and bushes).
  - Original families may also be in York Harbor, but their (last) names are different
  - Dilution of wealth – still in York Harbor, but live in far more modest cottages than their grandparents
- There can be a 'long tail' in the decline of a summer colony – over 100 years. The decline of one lifestyle is replaced with another lifestyle.

### More Tactical Learnings

- For a small summer colony – there were some famous architects that did work in York Harbor. Cottage owners brought their own architects. Architectural details were copied from one cottage to another.
- Entire cottages can disappear without many records or photos.
- The larger the cottage, the greater the chance that it would last less than 50 years.
- Most people stay in the area for 10 to 20 years and then leave. People moved around from cottage to cottage, and then some built their own cottage. Neighbors often bought property from each other.
- Many widows in York Harbor – woman lived longer and outlasted their husbands often