



Business History

Seawall Hotel Sea-Wall House

Address: Seawall Road

City: Tremont, Seawall

State: Maine

Map: CS 1887 - SEAWALL HTL

Date Founded: 1882

Original Owner: Dolliver – Sophia C. (Dolliver) Mooney Thompson (1822-1907)

Date Built: 1882

“In 1882 Dr. Sophia Thompson of Boston built a large hotel and stable at Seawall for summer business to be conducted by her son, Smith Mooney. The hotel was well finished and furnished with fine furniture, but it was too far away from the village; when the fog was in it was cold and dreary and the installation of a bell buoy on a reef off the shore kept the guests awake with its gloomy tolling, so it was not successful and after a few years the furnishings were sold and the buildings taken down. When the hotel was built the old Whitmore house was still standing and part of it was used as a shed.” - “Traditions and Records of Southwest Harbor and Somesville, Mount Desert Island, Maine” by Mrs. Seth S. Thornton, 1938, p. 206.

“To those who are looking up an agreeable and pleasant place to spend a few weeks of the summer, we can cheerfully recommend South West Harbor, Mount Desert, on the coast of Maine, as possessing most superior and attractive surroundings to enchant the tourist. The Sea Wall House, with its pleasant adjoining cottage, will be managed by mine host D.S. Mooney, which is a sufficient guarantee that every comfort and want of the guests will be looked after. Large and airy rooms, nicely furnished, with plenty of fishing, gunning, boating and bathing in the immediate vicinity, together with an unsurpassed mountain scenery, all at reasonable prices, await the patrons of the Sea Wall House.” – “The Sea Wall House, South West Harbor, Mount Desert, Me.” – Boston Daily Globe, p. 10 - June 8, 1884. While this may sound like a review of the hotel, it is probably an advertisement by the hotel.

“Near the Sea Wall is the spacious and commodious Sea-Wall House, in one of the most interesting localities on Mount Desert, with the wild surf dashing all along the front of its domain, and a fragrant forest of spruce close at hand on the back. Off-shore are the Cranberry Isles, with their promontories and coves and white houses, and the lonely Dead Man’s Beach; and still farther out loom the desolate Duck Islands, in the open sea. Owing to its seclusion and social quiet, this hotel has not achieved a prominent success as a summer-resort, and its seasons are short and uncertain; but there is no other place on the island where the lover of the grandest shore-scenery has it brought so close to his domicile. And the fields are royally adorned with roses, and sweet peas, and wild morning-glories, and cranberry blossoms, and other delicate beauties of the Northern flora.” – “Chisholm’s Mount-Desert Guide-Book” by M.F. Sweetser, p. 77 – 1888

“Sea Wall is a pretty little place. Nearly all the houses are painted white with green blinds. The only industry is fishing. There is but one hotel in the place.

One can not write up Southwest Harbor without making some mention of Seawall. The following description by “Spray” gives one a good idea. A vast stretch of solid wall, more than six feet above high water mark, composed of rocks and pebbles of all shapes and sizes thrown up by ocean surges, and all smoothly polished by the wash of countless ages of old ocean’s thunderous roll. The wall is nearly half a mile in length and quite broad, the road passing along its sloping opposite sides. A little pond borders the road on the right and ‘tis said that in a heavy storm the seas break over the wall and dash the spray into it. At the end of the wall is a beautiful clump of low growing spruces their lower branches sweeping the ground, forming a delightful reclining seat for picnickers. Who can paint in words sufficiently expressive the majestic beauty of the scene. Amid the deafening roar, those huge, steady, incoming billows rolling in so grandly to at last dash themselves madly against the jagged rocks, throwing up clouds of white spray flashing like gems in the rays of sunlight.

We stand with bated breath and throbbing pulses, finding all words powerless to express the grandeur and sublimity of the scene. Occasionally comes to us on the wind, like faint, far off music, the ringing of the bell-buoy on Long Ledge.

When we can take our eyes from the grand charge of water at our feet we find that the entire coast line presents a picture of surpassing beauty. On the smooth beach the moon-crested waves lap the shore so peacefully, while here and there, as far as the eye can reach, around our Island Long Branch, and on the distant sea-girt isles breakers toss their sparkling spray.” - “Southwest Harbor - the Location of the First Settlement on Mount Desert Island - A Brief Sketch of the History, Homes and Industries of that Enterprising Village” - The Bar Harbor Record, p. 1, 5, 6 – Saturday, June 15, 1895

The Harvard Land Company “own here about two hundred acres of land, situated a short distance from South West Harbor proper, known as the “Sea Wall” property, beautifully located, with an unobstructed view of the ocean and surrounding mountains, and extending for two miles along the shore. They are the proprietors of the new Sea Wall Hotel, located about six hundred feet from the shore and facing the sea; with wide verandas, from which there is a most beautiful and varied view of all the loftiest peaks celebrated for their beauty, and the broad, rolling ocean, dotted here and there with picturesque islands...” - “Illustrated Boston: The Metropolis of New England Containing Also Reviews of its Principal Environs” published by American Publishing and Engraving Co., New York, p. 173 - 1899