

"Hamilton Hill"

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Yesterday

THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED ON THE HILL

by Gladys O'Neil

The small hill behind the National Park Motel on Kebo Street has had many names: Malvern, Malden, (by mistake made in spelling on a map) Scott, School House and Hamilton. Most Bar Harbor people call it Hamilton Hill.

The house that once stood there was burned in the great fire of 1947 and the remaining ruins can be plainly seen from the street below.

Mrs. Rebecca Scott from Washington, D.C. had the house built in 1881. William Ralph Emerson, well-known Boston architect, designed it for her. She called it Thirlstane and the name was kept by the next two owners. Mrs. Scott and her son, Owen, spent

many summers in their lovely house with its magnificent view of the town, mountains, harbor and bay.

After Mrs. Scott's death, Col. Edward Morrell of Philadelphia, bought the house in the fall of 1897. He spent around \$25,000 remodeling it and later built a gate house. He was an enthusiastic horseman and needed a place to keep his horses, so he also purchased Robin Hood Park at the foot of Newport Mountain (Champlain) where he had room for them to race. He later made the park available to the Horse Show and Fair Association, when it was founded in 1900. Col. Morrell's horses Gray Fox, Glory, Belmont, Coquette, My Lady, Bango and Sheriff won many of the prizes.

Col. Morrell, who later was given the rank of General, was a commander of a brigade of Pennsylvania militia in peace time. He was also a representative to Congress. In 1906, he

inaugurated a coach line between Philadelphia and Devon, Penn.

After Col. Morrell's death, his wife gave the park to the people of Bar Harbor in August of 1919. It is now the site of the newest additions to Jackson Laboratory.

In 1926, William Pierson Hamilton, a partner of J.P. Morgan, bought Thirlstane and made many changes in the house, including the building of a swimming pool.

Hamilton had owned and operated farms in New York State and at that time had several working ranches in Nevada and California. He began to develop model farms in this area and purchased several in Salisbury Cove, along the Shore Road, and in Trenton and Lamoine. When his project was completed, he employed 100 people and owned 1500 acres, and nine farms. All of his farm buildings were painted yellow and blue, and he called the group Thirlstane Ranch, Inc.

Each farm had its own specialty: sheep were bred at Bay View Farm in Trenton, hogs were raised at Riverview Farm in Lamoine, Rosemary Farm in Trenton produced poultry, and Aberdeen Angus cattle were featured at the Ashmore Farm near River-

view. The finest Guernsey cattle and Belgian mares were purchased for the farms, along with the very best equipment. His milk and dairy products were sold throughout the area.

In August of 1938, Hamilton went into the newspaper business and revived the Mount Desert Herald, Bar Harbor's first newspaper. This was published for only a short time.

In 1939, he decided to go out of the ranch business and sold all of the livestock and most of the farms. He gave his Salisbury Cove farm to the Jackson Laboratory in 1941 and Hamilton Station was the name given to this research laboratory when it was estab-

lished there.

After the fire destroyed Thirlstane, the property was sold in 1948. Later several ideas were presented to develop it. A real estate company's most recent plan to build condominium apartments did not materialize and the hill is now owned by two Maine banks.