



Vinalhaven Island's Maritime Industries (Images of America)

Cynthia Burns Martin

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Vinalhaven Island has been the home port of a productive commercial fishing fleet for over 200 years. By 1819, Vinalhaven vessels were fishing for cod and herring from Seal Island all the way to Labrador waters. By 1878, Carver's Harbor was lined with docks, fishhouses, a sail loft, a net factory, and the Lane & Libby fish plant. Throughout the 19th century, boats brought bait, salt, and supplies to Vinalhaven and returned with fish and granite from the island's quarries. Lighthouses at Brown's Head, Heron Neck, Saddleback Ledge, Goose Rock, and Matinicus guided mariners through storms. In Vinalhaven shops, boatbuilders constructed small dories, peapods and double-enders, masted schooners, and lobster boats, as well as the 365-ton Margaret M. Ford. Passenger ferries played an important role as the primary link between Vinalhaven and the mainland. The island has long been a successful center of maritime economic activity, so it is no surprise that islanders call it "the center of the universe."



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