

History

The Inn at Southwest



The Inn at Southwest was built on the site of the village smithy in 1884. It is believed to have been built by Dudley L. Mayo for James A. Freeman, a local businessman, as an annex to The Freeman Hotel located on the ridge behind the present day Inn. Named “Freeman Cottage”, it is believed to have been built primarily to provide dining room space for both locations, and to house overflow guests during the busy season. The Freeman Hotel burned to the ground in 1891 and Freeman Cottage became a boarding house. In the 1920’s the name was changed to “The Ashmont” and it continued as a hotel and boarding house. Sometime during the 1950’s it was renamed “The Harbor Light”. Finally in 1986 it became “The Inn at Southwest” and was marketed as a seaside Bed and Breakfast.

One of the most photographed buildings on Mount Desert Island, The Inn at Southwest is a 2nd Empire Victorian structure with a classic side ell, a Mansard roof, 13 dormers, 2 box bay windows, intricate dental work, and a wrap-around porch that originally encircled the entire house. Some of the more striking interior architectural details include molded entrance doors with clear glass panels, an elaborate paneled, veneered newel post carrying a hollow wooden cup, heavily molded Italianate wooden trim and molding, curved walls and interior arches, beautifully detailed fireplace and mantel, unique box bay window seats in two of the 3rd floor guestrooms, and high ceilings throughout the 3- floor structure.