

Dobbs - Jefferson Grant Dobbs



21st Century Photographer Biography

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Dobbs Productions of Bar Harbor has been making documentaries about Maine for almost three decades. Over twenty films, all seen on Maine Public Television and many of them have been broadcast on national PBS. Jack Perkins, formerly a NBC News commentator, hosted all of them, with three exceptions. "*Wild Maine*" a story about Maine's abundant wildlife, featured Jennifer Skiff, a former CNN reporter and Maine resident, and "*The Lighthouses of Maine: A Journey Through Time*" was hosted by Tim Harrison, president of the American Lighthouse Association. The third. Entitled "*Portrait of an Island: The Story of Mount Desert Island*," was hosted by Jeff Dobbs, himself, and was written by his friend Gunnar Hansen, star of the cult film "*The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*." The film was never aired on Maine Public Television, but it did receive some notoriety in the Bar Harbor Times. Over the years Dobbs Productions' Maine documentaries have become a staple on Maine Public Television and many people, mostly Mainers, have enjoyed these films and especially the aerial views of the state, but documentaries isn't the only thing that Dobbs Productions does, so what else do they do besides tell stories about Maine and it's people?

Jeff Dobbs graduated from Emerson College, in 1972, with a bachelor's degree in Mass Communications, majoring in film. He began his career in still photography: but scenic and marine photography and his interest in maritime history led him to collect hundreds of old photographs of steamships, and all types of sailing vessels, from coasting schooners, and full rigged ships to America's Cup contenders. Dobbs used a sepia technique to give the photos a nostalgic look. Hundreds of these photos still hang in local restaurants, hotels and homes.

In the mid to late 1970's, Jeff had two stores, both named *Down to the Sea In Ships*, in Bar Harbor and in Northeast Harbor, where he sold his sepia photographs and nautical brass. When cable television first came to Bar Harbor, Mr. Dobbs leased time on the local access channel and started Dobbs Productions. He rented some old video equipment from a production company in Bangor and with the help of an old college roommate, Doug Wornick, created "*Island Update*", Maine's first cable tourist information channel. The first two seasons of "*Island Update*" were broadcast from his dining room, with Jeff not only being the host, but the cameraman too. "*Island Update*" included advertising for local restaurants, shops and museums, and stories about local history and tourist activities, including golf, fishing, and hiking reports. All the reporters were local business people, including the editor from the local newspaper. Eventually "*Island Update*" became MDI TV and grew to include short productions about the history and people of Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park. In the mid 1980's Jeff enlisted the help of Penny Purcell, a local actress and friend, who co-hosted the show for many years. Eventually MDI TV became The Acadia Channel, which features information about the area and shorter versions of the documentaries Mr. Dobbs has produced over the past 17 years.

The story of Dobbs Productions includes Mr. Dobbs best friend, Bing Miller, who came to work with Mr. Dobbs in the early 1980's. The two have worked together so long that when people call Dobbs Productions, they can never tell their voices apart. Mr. Miller shares the same interest in Maine History

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