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Squam Lake is "Golden Pond" until Octobe

By TINK TAYLOR

Dramatist Ernest Thompson's **On Golden Pond** could be the story of any elderly couple arriving at Squam Lake for their 48th summer vacation. And many seasonal residents have already identified with this play being made into a motion picture at Great Island Narrows and elsewhere since mid-June. In fact, the movie company, called Golden Arch, plans to occupy the shores of Squam until mid-October.

Last Wednesday the action shifted to a marina at the bridge in Holderness. For one day the boat livery became Sam Murdough's dockside market advertising meats, fish, fruit, vegetables, bear and ale. It was all a backdrop for what would become a very long day of filming for both cast and onlookers estimated at 400.

Katharine Hepburn, grand lady of the cinema, arrived on the set shortly before 9 a.m. to the applause of those already lining the bridge and opposite shore. A few members of the ever curious public hovered off-shore in boats.

Miss Hepburn bowed to her audience, then took a high seat at the far end of Sam Murdough's long dock. Henry Fonda had also arrived at about the same time.

Miss Hepburn's first task was to master the portside docking of the 1940s vintage Mahogany Chris Craft. With each improving try the crowd would cheer. Director Mark Rydell, with both arms raised, pleaded with the onlookers to withhold their enthusiasium once the filming had begun. They did.

In fact, once the large 35mm cameras did begin to roll, the crowd was just about motionless.

Present for the filming beside Katharine Hepburn who, at 70, plays Ethel Thayer, were Henry Fonda, a crusty old Norman Thayer, Jr. stage age 79 (he is actually 75), daughter Jane, her 8 year old son, Troy, who is also in the film, plus local extras.

Those not experienced in the art of film-making were amazed at the attention to detail and how many times a scene was repeated. Rehearse, rehearse, film, re-shoot, backup, shoot again sometimes for 30 seconds of finished product!

Experienced Hollywood hands, to the contrary, felt the filming moved along quite rapidly.

Actual filming began in Sam's boathouse at the end of the wharf, then moved outside and onto the water. A large double-hulled barge with sunshades, reflectors, lights and camera dolly track hovered nearby throughout the day.

Briefly, Ernest Thompson's (he is from Walpole, N.H.) play is a character study of two old marrieds facing their twilight years and mortality. On Norman Thayer's 80th birthday his daughter, Chelsea (Jane Fonda) and her fiance visit Golden Pond leaving behind her son, Billy, who is every bit a modern California kid. Time and again he tests the patience of the elder Thayers but, in the end, becomes the catalyst for bringing a new dimension and new meaning to their lives.

"The chief virture of **On Golden Pond**," says Edwin Wilson of the **Wall Street Journal**, "is the way it captures the lives of people we care about." And it is obvious that the people of and around Squam Lake care about the Fondas and Miss Hepburn. In fact there emerges a sort of "we're all in this together" feeling as the movie project enters its 13th week. All but the most reclusive lake resident is interested.

Henry Fonda, wearing his now familiar fishing hat with turned down brim, was quoted by the **Washington Post** as saying; "Think how lucky I've been ... at a time of life when there aren't many leading parts for an old duffer like me, I've had 4 beauts." Recently he's played lawyer Clarence Darrow, Col. Kincaid in **The Oldest Living Graduate**, Justice Daniel Snow in **First Monday in October**, and now Norman Thayer.

Katharine Hepburn, a native New Englander herself, feels one price a star must pay is the dependency on so many others.

"You can't be sick. If you break an arm or a leg you wear a cast and go on anyway as I've done." she told the **Post** on August 24.

"You've always got to be up because if you go down, everyone else does too!" she concludes.

In typical style, Miss Hepburn was so concerned over the nuisance she felt her troupe was causing for those neighbors who had waited all year for a vacation at Squam, and because a family of vacationers had to be relocated, that she decided to play diplomat. Rather than send a movie company employee to extend her apologies, she went directly to the neighbors, introduced herself and invited them to visit the set at anytime.

Special dispensation from the Screen Actors Guild, the actors' union, has allowed **On Golden Pond** to continue filming. Because of the crucial factor of weather and the changing seasons, the Golden Arch Company is one of very few films now being made. A postponement of this summer's effort might spell doom for the entire production. In exchange, Marble Arch has agreed to abide by whatever demands the Strike accomplishes.

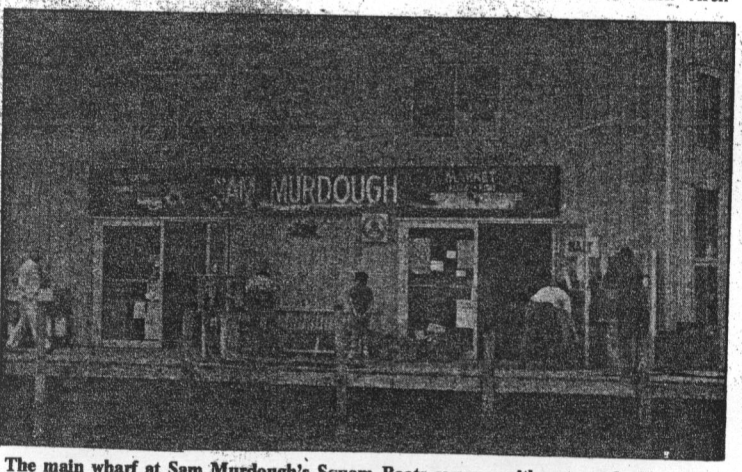
To some local independent trades and craftspeople, the clout exercised by the unions has meant loss of employment with the film company. Members of The Teamsters Union must do all staff driving of cars.

A great deal of film footage remains to be exposed including a staged boat crash off The Duck Islands, a church scene in Melvin Village, and back to Centre Harbor Neck to the Thayer Camp.

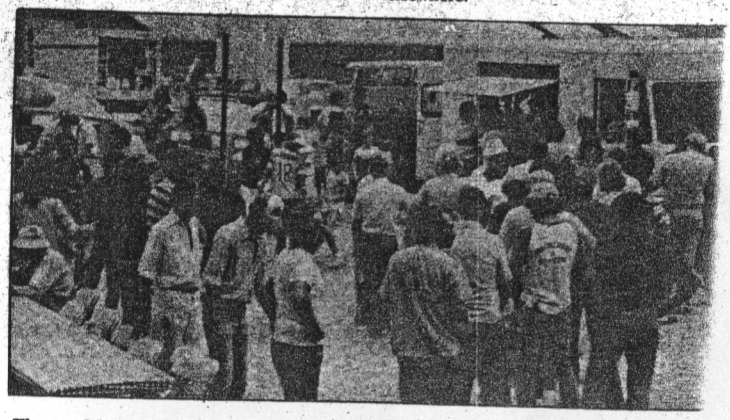
Details of the filming are hard to come as are photographs for another agreeme Marble Arch has made with the Acto Guild, in exchange for being allowed continue filming, is that they will publicize **On Golden Pond**. Last We nesday's episode at Sam Murdough's w the first real public exposure the producti has had.

How do things really turn out with t Thayers in the end? Well...you'll just ha to see the movie in another 12 months or In the meantime, copies of the play circulating about the town libraries a elsewhere.

Katharine Hepburn takes a turn at the helm of Thayer IV, the old family power being used in the movie. After several "dry" landings, Miss Hepburn got the knac landing.



The main wharf at Sam Murdough's Squam Boats swarms with extras, doubles, the actors themselves, sound and cameramen, and Director Mark Rydell. For one day, at least, Holderness and Sam's boatyard became Hollywood.



The combined parking lot of Louis Francisco's bowling alley and the Holderness Fr Library is instantly transformed into a chowline for more than 100 film makers.