



September 15, 1952

Att of

State Commissioner of Education
Augusta
Maine

Dear Sir:

The town of Surry erected a fine new public school this summer. As an adornment to the school the friends of Clifford Coggins requested the Surry School Board that they be given an opportunity to erect a flagpole for the school in his memory. Mr. Coggins was a highly respected and beloved resident of Newbury Neck who died last winter.

A very fine flagpole was placed at the school and a handsome flag was purchased. In memory of Mr. Coggins a simple decoration was placed on the top of the pole consisting of a weather vane showing the points of the compass and surmounted by a two masted schooner. Mr. Coggins' name is directly beneath the schooner. The pole was presented to the school with appropriate ceremonies and everyone seemed to be happy about the whole thing.

One of the citizens, however, has now protested that it is naval tradition that no decoration may be placed above the American flag except a simple gold ball and has demanded that the weather vane be removed. As chairman of the Clifford Coggins Memorial Committee, I wish to request that you make an official ruling in this matter. If you deem it inappropriate for the weather vane to remain on top of the flagpole, then we shall have it removed. I am enclosing a copy of a letter to Mr. Frank Whitney, who is one of the committee instrumental in having the school built, and my letter is self-explanatory.

I would greatly appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Yours truly,

Wilson G. Smillie, M. D.

WGS:wgj

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Contributed to Maine Memory Network by Surry Historical Society

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Description: Wilson G. Smillie letter

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