

# Cranberry Chronicle

NEWS OF CRANBERRY HOUSE AND GREAT CRANBERRY ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY • OCTOBER 2025

## Beal & Bunker 75th Anniversary

PHIL WHITNEY



*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

**2025** marks the 75th anniversary of operations for Beal & Bunker (B&B) FerryService. The business was established in 1950 and remains the longest-running business in Cranberry Isles history under the same incorporated name. Over the years, they have served Southwest Harbor and later Northeast Harbor. Their various boats have included the *Bobcat*, *Maleska*, *Island Queen*, *Sea Queen*, *Double B*, *Cap'n B*, *Sea Princess*, *Driftwood*, and *Rogue*. They have carried passengers, freight, and mail. In addition to regularly scheduled ferries, they have had special boats for hire, tourist

excursion trips, and a separate barging service for vehicles and oversize freight. They operated a wharf offering multiple services: post office, cold storage (fish), bait shed, marine supplies, cafe, and business offices. They also sold lobsters, fuel oil at the dock, heating oil truck deliveries, and delivered groceries when there was no store. Over two decades they built numerous boats in their adjacent boat sheds, some for their own business use and some for other organizations.

They also regularly ran special boats for the movies in SWH, Rockbound Grange on Islesford, July Fourth fireworks in Bar Harbor, and town meetings on Islesford. Dozens of people,

both young and older, worked for the company over the years, as captains, deck hands, office, and dock staff. For a small island, B&B was truly an amazing community business.

What follows are excerpts and articles from two separate previous *Cranberry Chronicle* issues that discussed the history, operations and personnel of Beal & Bunker in greater detail. Also below are memories from islanders of the business while they were growing up. We hope these articles will resurrect fond memories for you, the reader, and enlighten newer arrivals to its rich and varied history. We would encourage you to forward any favorite anecdotes or stories you may remember to GCIHS

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*"Islanders Gather for Ruth Westphal's 4th of July Picnic" circa early 2000s Photo Courtesy of  
GCIHS Archives*

## Notes of Appreciation:

Thank you, this and every year, to all our hardworking, dedicated, and intrepid volunteers. Driving the Cranberry Explorer, manning the reception desk, helping with committees, projects and keeping things running - without you, Cranberry House would not be a fixture and tradition of Great Cranberry Island summers.

Thank you, Billy Bancroft, for help replacing the fluorescent lights in the Arts Center.

Thank you, Blair Colby, for his rapid responses and support with the Golf Carts.

Thank you, Jim Singerling, for all around support and other financial concerns.

## Great Cranberry Island Historical Society

*Great Cranberry Island Historical Society (GCIHS) collects, preserves and studies the history and genealogy of Great Cranberry Island and its neighboring islands, and presents diverse cultural and educational programs. GCIHS promotes a strong sense of community through its museum, archives, café, and lively arts center in the Cranberry House.*

*The grounds also include 2 public trails to the shore, 3 gardens, Sammy Sanford's Cabin, Arts & Crafts Shop, Seawind 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Treasure Shop and 2 Fish/Frog Ponds, and the Kids' Smart Shack.*

*Every day during the summer a free shuttle carries visitors from the town dock down the length of the island and back.*

## MILESTONES:

### Passings:



**Michael Glazier**  
1/28/25



**Tony Frazitta**  
2/12/25



**Michael Richman**  
2/12/25



**Jennifer Westphal**  
3/21/25



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# Growing up on Great Cranberry Island

AUDREY GRACE SUMNER (EDITED LIGHTLY BY HER MOM)

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*Photo Courtesy of Darlene Sumner*



*Being a Cranberry kid, by Ford Thompson*

## June 25, 2025

OK. Where do I start? When I was growing up life was amazing ....

Swimming in the ocean, watching my sister surf, Christmas caroling, going to the boat works and sailing. But it got a little lonely sometimes.

When I turned six my friend Felicity moved here. We do everything together. Often, my Islesford friends, Zinnia and some others, come here to Great Cranberry. It is so much fun playing with all of them! Life is great!

Sometimes, I leave the island to go get groceries with my mom or go to dance class. Otherwise, I spend every night and day on the island.

I live near the transfer station and the gas station. It is kind of fun to see the cars go by. When we were younger my friend, Zinnia, sold rocks out front of my house. Mr. Jim [Singerling] was our best customer. We wanted to save up and buy a real RV camper. It was really fun!

I do go on trips to visit my grandparents. They live in Virginia. My brother Cooper, and sisters, Hallie, Kariah, and my foster sister Joyce (who is the oldest), lived in Virginia before I was born.

When they lived in Virginia, my mom was diagnosed with cancer. She had chemo and was told, "you won't be able to have a baby again." Then, my mom got pregnant. And now here I am! People call me a "chemo baby."

It is fun to swim, surf, and go to the Smart Shack to do crafts. My friends come here in the summertime. We all hang out.

I love going on the boat because my friend Joe is there and also my friend Norman. It is really fun to watch and hear the waves.

I feel like I'm meant to be here. Living on the island, the water in my hands, swimming, and getting my hair wet. It's really fun hanging out in my room and hearing the waves at night or during the day.

It is fun to go to the movies at the Cranberry House and to karaoke that is provided by Phil and Karin. Also, going to Hitty's Café in the summertime is really fun and getting ice cream that is provided by Cezar. Going to the general store is fun too! Hollie works there and Janice owns it. Hollie, Janice, Phil, Karin, and Cezar are all my really good friends.

In the wintertime it is cold. It's really fun to play in the snow and go sledding down the hill at Mickey's house. I also ice skate on a pond.

School is really fun right now! There are five students right now. We have a teacher, Ms. Ashley, and principal, Ms. Gloria, and my mom is the EdTech. It is really fun to learn, do

school lunches, and kids café.

There is a field behind the Ladies Aid, and we have Thanksgiving at the Ladies Aid. We do a lot of other stuff there too, like parties. When the power is out you can put stuff in the Ladies Aid fridge because they have a generator.

There is also a library where I go to read a lot of books and play on the playground. It's really fun! My cousin, Ingrid, works there.

The library is connected to the school. Every two years we switch schools [Two years on Islesford then two years on Great Cranberry].

I love living on the island and I hope you do too! And if you don't live here come and visit!

I hope you do at least have a great day and if you can come and visit!

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# The World According to Theo

THEO MANN (AND MOM, JENNA)

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*When asked by Mom what he wanted to dream about last night, Theo said, “the library, sea glass, and the ocean.”*



*Photos Courtesy of Jenna Mann*

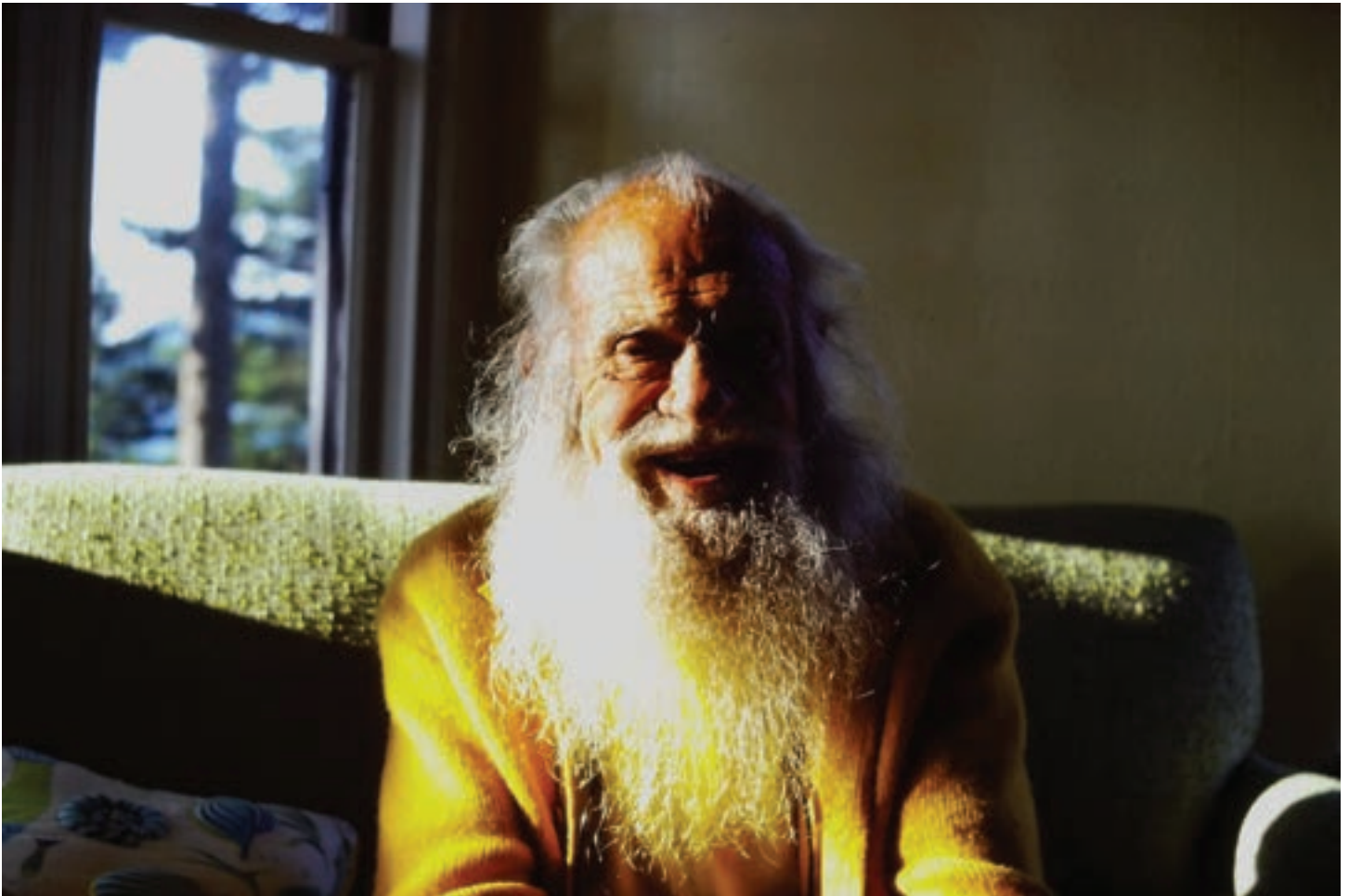


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# *Of Endless Wonder, The Life of* **Carl Nelson on Cranberry Island**

MORRIE NEWELL

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*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

**M**any islanders of my generation will be familiar with the 1969 documentary produced by David Westphal, then a professor at Brandeis University, about the life of Carl Nelson on Cranberry. That documentary “*Of Endless Wonder*” is, I think, the principal reason we have all had the pleasure of knowing the Westphal family, not to mention benefitting from all their excellent work. David must have been fascinated by Carl’s story, because after he produced the documentary, he and his wife, Ruth, packed up their family and moved to Cranberry Island in 1968. Here David traded the life of a professor

to one of boat building and repair. [Before moving here permanently, David and Ruth visited Cranberry decades earlier, at the invitation of Charles and Jean Wadsworth (parents of Geoff and Laurie), who were the guiding force of the artist community that thrived on Cranberry from the 1950s until well into this century.]

I reference this documentary (which can be viewed at the Northeast Historic Film in Bucksport) because it captures so vividly Carl’s view of his life and his work. Carl was an artist who found endless wonder in nature—the subject of so many of his paintings.

Carl was born in Horby, Sweden, in 1889. Emigrating with his family at the age of five, Carl studied at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, the Art Students League in New York and taught at the American Peoples School (NYC), Cambridge School of Design (MA), the Boris Mirski Gallery in Boston and both the Boston YMCA and YWCA. As a professor, Carl taught at the YWCA in Boston. I remember most vividly his stories of teaching at the YWCA; he just loved his women students—and I think they loved him as well.

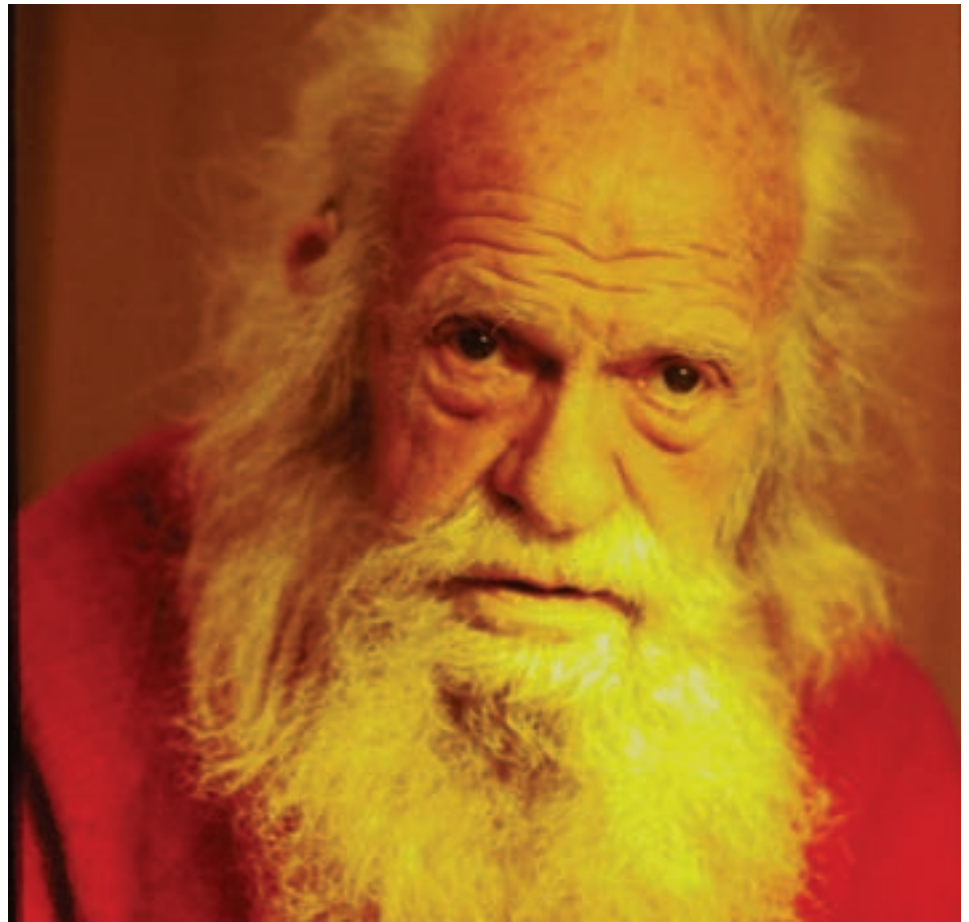
Carl created a distinguished career capturing the essence of American life through diverse subjects—landscapes,

botanicals, and domestic scenes of everyday life. He worked primarily in oils and casein paints but also painted in watercolor, pen and ink, and linoleum prints. He told me that he couldn't have been happier during the Great Depression, having secured an opportunity to paint for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in New York City. Through this engagement, he documented scenes such as children braving the cold in Central Park, which was captured in his 1934 painting that is housed at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

People were drawn to Carl Nelson. His friends and students from his teaching days in Boston numbered in the hundreds if not thousands. To keep up with his acquaintances, he printed a Christmas card each year, featuring a series of linoleum prints entitled "The Prince of Peace" illustrating the life of Christ. All of us lucky enough to have known Carl have at least one or several of these Christmas cards tucked away in some desk or closet.

Everyone on Cranberry knew Carl, including my parents. Throughout his time on Cranberry, my family and I stopped by Carl's house routinely to see the paintings he'd just completed. They were a joy to see and have them interpreted for us by the painter himself. These sessions would invariably end with Carl fixing us Tom Collins cocktails with homemade lemonade, which were incredibly strong. We would look at art, enjoy Carl's company and then walk unsteadily home.

In later years, when I commuted from Boston for as many weekends as I could, my first stop each Saturday morning was at Carl's house. I would walk up from Long Ledge to Carl's house, pushing my daughter, Jessica, in her Prego stroller. Often we would catch Carl on his side porch, shirtless, enjoying the morning sunshine while he ate his muesli. From there we'd head down the road, taking turns pushing Jessica, and often walk to the end of the



*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

road, or down to the Sherman property, before the Ward's purchase, and enjoy the surf and sunshine. I visited Carl throughout the years and enjoyed many wonderful dinners at what he called his home—Tosh Park.

Dinner with Carl was always an art lesson and a chance to hear about his fascinating life in the art world in Boston and New York. I suspect while he was a student at the Art Students League in New York, he was recruited to join an artist community during the summer at the estate of Louis Comfort Tiffany on Long Island—think Tiffany lamps and jewelry.

This group of perhaps a dozen artists were free to pursue their work in whatever venue suited them. One day Carl ventured out into the estate and set up his easel, paint and brushes in a particularly verdant pasture. The day was hot and as the sun rose, Carl proceeded to remove items of clothing to stay cool.

Of course, the inevitable happened, and Carl was standing naked before his easel as a party of a half-dozen of Mr. Tiffany's guests rode by in complete fox hunting regalia. Carl thought there was little to be done but to wave and keep painting. The guests loved it. Like most people, Mr. Tiffany was taken with Carl, and when the summer was over one year, he asked Carl if he'd like to stay on throughout the winter and paint there. Carl was delighted.

Carl did his best to serve his country in both world wars but was not successful. He was on his way to a ship headed toward Europe in 1918 when the Armistice was signed. He enlisted for World War II but broke his leg in training. He was sent to a hospital in Florida to recover. While there he started planting gardens around the hospital grounds. He made the compound so beautiful that the base commander figured out a way to keep Carl on staff at the hospital gardening,



giving him the perfect way to pass his time in the Army during the war.

Carl had a wonderful life in Boston, teaching most days, and enjoying the Boston Symphony Orchestra on a regular basis, but it became clear that he could support himself with his painting, and he moved to Cranberry permanently. He lived in the gray house about mid-island on the road, a house now owned by Garth and Elise Hallberg. He enjoyed many happy years in Tosh Park, with his closest neighbors, Polly and Tud Bunker.

He stopped by their place every morning for coffee. In return he gave the Bunkers one of his oil paintings of delphinium, which Polly proudly displayed in their living room. As everyone knows, Polly opened the *Whale's Rib* gift shop, initially by the shore when the restaurant was open (site of the Toogood house) and later moved it up the street next to her house after the restaurant closed.

Polly said that in one of her early encounters with Carl, he bought a dozen boxes of candles from her. His purchase was so large, he had to take it home in his wheelbarrow. Carl had this marvelous collection of more than a dozen brass candle sticks that he had collected over the years from antique dealers in New York and Boston. He needed candles.

Carl was much beloved by the island, having the entire community over for Christmas dinner on successive nights. Everyone came and enjoyed his fabulous cooking. As I recounted in an earlier article in *Cranberry Chronicle*, dinner was amazing at Carl's house: he broiled thick loin lamb chops over his woodburning stove while the candles were aglow on the table. The dessert that followed was crepes suzette.

Carl was a fixture at the Sunday church services long after his hearing was gone. He'd sit quietly in a pew, enjoying the peaceful ambience of that 1863

structure. We're fortunate that everyone can see his work, which hangs in the Ladies Aid Building.

He was a dear friend of mine. I named one of my kids after him. We are fortunate that we have one of his large oils, *Summer Birches*. It hangs right by our bed and each night when I go to sleep and wake in the morning I think of Carl.

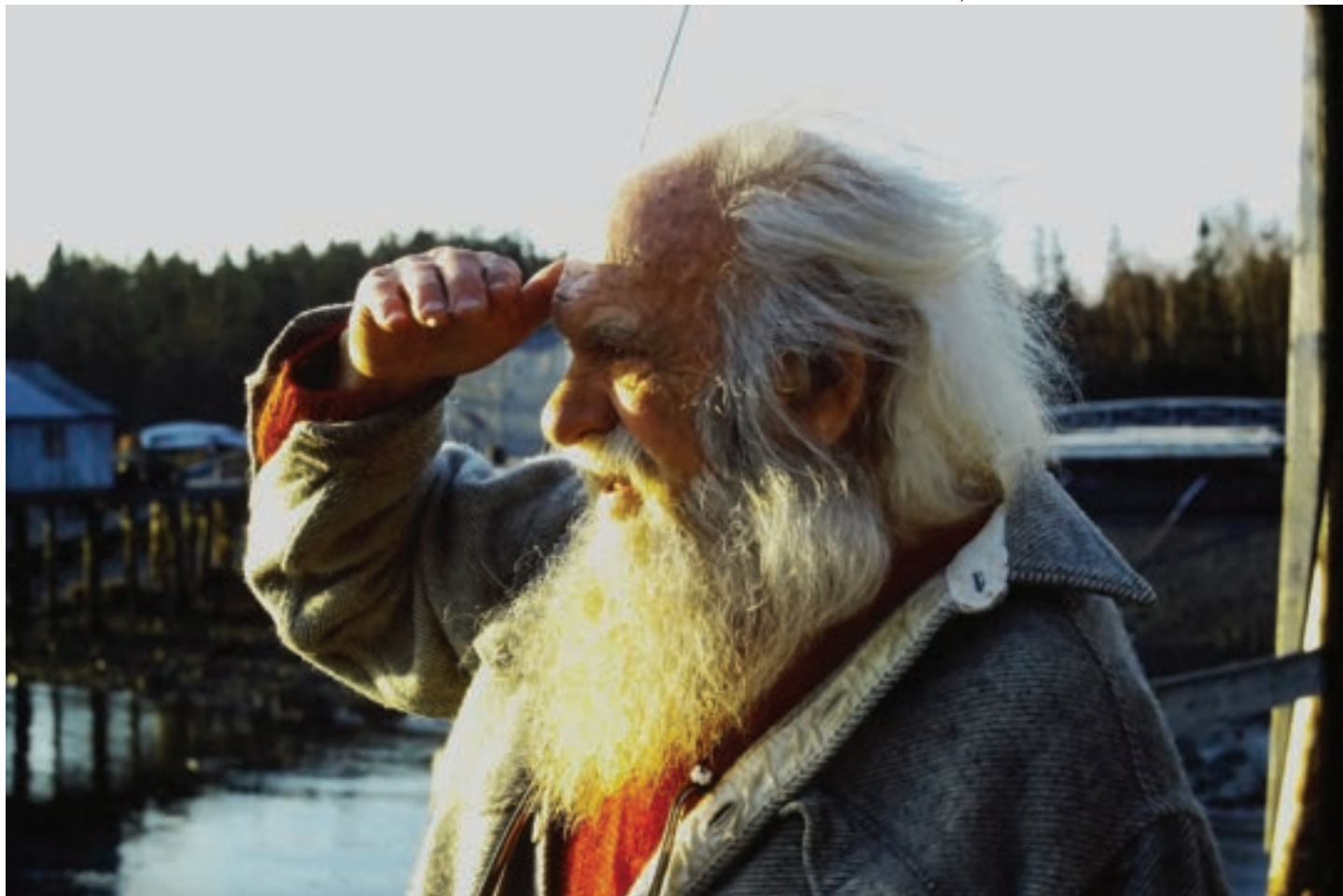
Aside from many homes on Cranberry, Carl's work hangs in the following museums:

Smithsonian American Art Museum (Washington, DC): *Central Park* (1934), painted during his time with the Public Works Administration program and the Works Progress Administration

Worcester Art Museum (Worcester, MA)

Addison Gallery of American Art (Andover, MA)

Portland Museum of Art (Portland, ME)



*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*



Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives

*Cranberry Chronicle*, and we will try to include them in our next issue, in December.

David Bunker once told me about the origins of the company. Apparently in 1950, Clarence Beal had a business disagreement on Islesford with Elmer Spurling who, at that time, was selling bait and lobsters, and running charter boats on the wharf now owned by Islesford Dock Restaurant. Clarence returned to Great Cranberry and subsequently formed a partnership with Wilfred Bunker, which became known as Beal & Bunker, Inc., and they launched a competing service to the Spurling operation on Islesford. Their first two boats were the *Bobcat*, built in 1947 and owned by Wilfred, and the *Malesca*, built in 1946 and owned by Clarence. Both men were year-round islanders. Wilfred was born on Cranberry, and Clarence moved to the island in the late 1920's from Beals Island as part of the Andrew Alley family.

(Excerpts from "Wilfred Bunker: End of an Era". Phil Whitney, *Chronicle* No. 25, February 2011)

The *Bobcat* served as the scheduled mailboat. The *Malesca* was used primarily for special charters. The Beal & Bunker wharf was completed

in 1952, replacing an old private fisherman's wharf. The dock rapidly became a busy center of activity for the community, especially in the summer months. It hosted the Porthole Restaurant, a lobster dealership, gasoline sales, marine supplies sales, bait shed and heating-oil truck deliveries, as well as separate adjacent boat-building facilities. Also, the post office operated there in later years. A separate summertime freight boat carried groceries and other supplies daily, and for several years a Chris Craft speedboat, the *Rogue*, was used for special, high-speed trips. (This boat was a favorite of Clarence Beal.) Scheduled ferry service was originally operated to Southwest Harbor at the Lower Town Dock, and later to the new Upper Town Dock. In 1972, service was transferred to Northeast Harbor, where it currently exists. (Wilfred once told me he changed harbors because Southwest Harbor became generally uncooperative with the ferry service and was not responsive to clearing a waterway channel wide enough to safely accommodate passage by the mailboat to and from the Upper Town Dock.) The business grew steadily, keeping pace with growing tourism in the MDI area. Passenger loads eventually required larger boats. In 1963 Wilfred built the

*Island Queen*. The *Bobcat* was sold to a Bangor party. Over the next 30 years the company built the *Sea Queen*, *Sea Princess*, *Double B* and *Cap'n B*. Eugene "Red" MacAllister played a large role in coordinating the boatbuilding projects.

It seemed like Wilfred lived his business day and night. He was arguably the best boat captain in the area. It was reported he missed only one mailboat trip in 50 years (something about a hurricane that day, I believe.) When the weather was tough, he would refuse to take passengers but go himself with the mail and freight. He received his captain's license in 1937 and held it until 2007. Unofficially, he may have been the longest active boat captain in America (70 years), but that is not confirmed.

Somehow, between all the boat trips and marine business, he found volunteer time to serve the community. He was both a selectman and school board member (for several years serving concurrently in both capacities.) He was an officer in the old Rockbound Grange on Islesford, and would carry Cranberry Islanders back and forth on meeting nights. He was always thinking about the future of the islands and once proposed building a bridge between Islesford and Cranberry many years ago. He operated the "movie boat" to the old Park Theatre in Southwest Harbor in the summertime, carrying large crowds, often transporting them in nighttime, pea-soup fog conditions. When lobstermen Roland Sprague and Fred Fernald from Islesford were found frozen to death in their boat after a March gale in 1959, he and Elmer Spurling and several other islanders risked their own safety to bring back the bodies, which were found near their boat on the beach up in Blue Hill Bay.

Yes, Wilfred Bunker was not only a good neighbor and successful businessman, he was also perhaps the best citizen the Town of Cranberry Isles ever had.

(Excerpts from *Transportation Lifelines to the Islands*, Phil Whitney, *Chronicle*





Wilfred Bunker, Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives

No. 33, December 2015).

In 1950, Clarence Beal and Wilfred Bunker formed a partnership, Beal & Bunker, Inc., to operate scheduled ferry and charter boat service between the islands and Southwest Harbor (SWH). Wilfred brought the *Bobcat* to the business and Clarence had his boat, the *Malesca*. The business proved successful from the beginning, with long hours and hard work paying off. In 1952, the partners constructed a wharf on the current location of the Shoreward Dock. Their services eventually expanded to include sales of fuel and general marine supplies, a lobster dealership, and a restaurant, aptly named The Porthole. The *Bobcat* continued as the scheduled ferry and mailboat, and the *Malesca* handled most special-call trips. The mail contract remained mostly with the company through the decades. During these years, an added service was the “movie boat.” Wilfred Bunker loved going to movies at the Park Theatre in SWH, so he figured: why not take along friends, relatives, and anyone else looking for some entertainment time away from the islands? It operated during the summer months on Tuesday and Saturday nights and was usually full of happy passengers. Both the *Bobcat* and the *Island Queen* were used

for this service. This all ended in 1972, when ferry service was transferred to Northeast Harbor (NEH). But old-timers still recall fond memories and anecdotes about the movie boat and Wilfred Bunker.

The 1960s and 1970s were notable for dramatic increases in tourism to the islands. Passenger loads were heavy. Freight business on the mailboat ballooned. In 1963, B&B built the *Island Queen*, a larger vessel designed to accommodate the growing business. It became the scheduled ferry and mailboat. The *Bobcat* was sold to a Bangor party. Deckhands were added to help carry freight and process passenger ticketing. Many an island teenager had their first jobs working the decks of B&B boats and later some even became ferry captains.

Another important development that occurred in the late 1960s was the uptick in barging vehicles. They had been barged on the islands since the 1920s on a very limited basis, but barging demands had grown. B&B often used the *Malesca* to steer a separate carrying barge to the islands. The number of vehicles on the islands increased substantially with this system.

A new transportation option came in the 1970s with the addition of the speed boat *Rogue*. It was added to the fleet to speed up trips between the islands and the mainland. A Chris Craft speedboat, it was very handsome and fast! It was usually captained by Clarence Beal. The boat operated only a few years and handled special on-call trips.

Between 1952 and the late 1970s there was no store on GCI. As the summer population increased, so did grocery and other freight demands. The mailboat wasn't large enough to handle all the passengers and freight, so a separate freight boat was established to ease the situation. Quite often island teenagers like Paul Peterson, Michael Richman and later Chuck and Rob Liebow would pilot this boat. Over the years two boats, the *Tripet* and *Driftwood*,

which were open cockpit launches with canvas hoods for rainy conditions and sun protection, were utilized. This service ended when the island store was established and the larger *Sea Queen* started operating.

The 1970s saw B&B become heavily involved in boatbuilding, eventually constructing several boats for use in their operation. With tourism booming in the summer months, larger vessels were needed. In 1973, the *Sea Queen* was launched and took over the scheduled ferry service and mailboat traffic. The *Island Queen* was never a favorite, considered too small and disliked in some navigational aspects. It was retired and sold after 10 years of service.

Coinciding with the transfer of operations to Northeast Harbor in 1972, B&B began a gradual downsizing of their various operations. Clarence Beal left the partnership in the mid-1970s. The restaurant business had already ended in the mid-1960s, and the lobster dealership and fuel sales wound down. The boat fleet saw changes as the *Malesca*, the freight boats, and the *Sea Princess* were all sold off. The business became more streamlined. In the 1970s, David Bunker became more involved in the business, and gradually took over the barging operation which, by this time, was very busy. He later became president of the company, as Wilfred grew older, moved off the island in the 1980s and gradually reduced his role. Finally, in the 1980s, the wharf



Clarence Beal, Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives

was sold to Chuck Liebow, and Beal & Bunker's land-based presence on Cranberry Island ceased to exist, except for one small office building used for summer boat dispatching services. A legend claims that Wilfred Bunker only missed one mailboat run in 50 years and that was due to a hurricane. In his 70s he was gradually retiring but not without a fight. He still captained the *Sea Queen* on occasion until 2007, when health reasons forced him to give up his captain's license, which he held for 70 years, possibly a record for longevity in the United States. Even after he could no longer operate the boats, he would dutifully show up at the NEH marina in the morning to greet the arrival of the mailboat, and make sure everything was running properly.

(Excerpts from "The Mailboat", Wini Smart, Chronicle No. 25, February 2013.)

It's 7:30 in the morning and the last of the men clump aboard the boat, carrying heavy metal boxes or pails of tools, coolers, their thermos bottles, and lunches, while balancing steaming cups of coffee. Other men have already loaded their tools, a chain saw, lumber, wallboard, and boxes of equipment. The boat is full of workmen headed out to the Cranberry Islands. It is standing-room only and many men have to find room outside on the open deck. A few women are aboard: cleaning women, gardeners, the schoolteacher for Islesford, and a grandmother who had babysat for her daughter, who lives ashore. Most of the tourists catch a later boat to hike or bike the islands. The early-morning sun slants into the harbor, highlighting the clouds of mist rising from the cold water. The boat creates a dark V as it glides through the still water, as another day begins for the Beal & Bunker Mail Boat.

James Bunker is the captain this day, grandson of the founder Wilfred Bunker who, along with Clarence Beal, started the business over 60 years ago. The men work hard on the mailboat as

they load anything and everything to the top of the cabin. Bags and bags of groceries, lots of freight, flats of flowers, bikes, couches and chairs, mattresses, refrigerators, washing machines, piles of lumber, on and on. And yes, bags of mail of course, but those go inside where it is safe.

On later trips of the day, the boat will be full of tourists and returning islanders. Dogs and groceries go free. Boat bags filled with groceries line the cabin and deck. Passengers need to step over the squirming dogs, many blocking the aisles. Small dogs are easier as they fit on a master's lap, expectantly waiting for their courtesy dog biscuit. In the cabin the two islands each have their own seating side. Port is for Islesford, starboard is for Great Cranberry. We wonder "what if" we sat on the wrong side.

The trip is long enough to catch up on the latest island gossip or your knitting, read a book, take a catnap, or just admire the beautiful scenery. A new visitor waits with great expectation to see the quaint islands, while the islanders are just glad to get back to their quiet lifestyle. The tourists stand with cameras ready to capture the darling lighthouse high on a rocky cliff of Bear Island. Others check the horizons for seals or seabirds.

On a clear day the view back to Mount Desert is worth the fare. The blue parade of mountains rises above the water, looking like a movie setting. Sleek sailboats pass, their white sails snapping in the breeze. The water is sprinkled with colorful lobster buoys like party decorations. A lobsterman may be there pulling his traps, with screaming gulls circling overhead. The local passengers seem oblivious to it all—it is ho-hum to them now.

In 1950 Wilfred Bunker and Clarence Beal joined forces to begin a mailboat service, naming it Beal & Bunker. The U.S. Postal Service contract was to carry mail and packages from Southwest Harbor to the Cranberry Isles. Wilfred owned the *Bobcat* and Clarence had the *Malesca*, named after his three daughters. They pooled their resources and each put up their own boat for use in the business. Wilfred lived on the island back in those years but he moved ashore to make his second wife happier. He lived on the mainland until his death in late 2012. Beal & Bunker had won the bid for the mail contract over Elmer Spurling. Elmer had taken over the duties for Eber Spurling, who had been doing it for years. Eber had grown too old to continue carrying mail in his small open boat with its single-cylinder engine. Mail was brought from Seal Harbor in those days. Anyone wanting



Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives





*"Bobcat with Wilfred and Elisha Bunker, circa 1947" Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

to travel to the Cranberry Isles had to hitch a ride with Eber or a fisherman. Wilfred remembers Eber going out into all kinds of weather in that small boat and recalled, "There was more salt water over his sou'wester than I ever traveled over!"

Wilfred and Clarence joined Red McAllister to open a boatyard along the north shore of Great Cranberry Island, next to the town dock. There was more demand for travel with summer people arriving daily. The boatyard built their next boat, the *Island Queen*. She was designed by Wilfred's brother, Raymond, to carry more freight and people. Other boats followed: the *Sea Princess* (a tour boat), the *Double B* and *Cap'n B'* (both work boats). Beal & Bunker also had a barging business. At first it was a small scow that could carry only one or two cars. Later they had a large steel barge built in Brewer, with a capacity of four cars or two large trucks. This barge is propelled by the *Double B*. The Town of Southwest Harbor wanted Beal & Bunker to use the Upper Town Dock. To reach shore it was necessary to climb a flight of steps, making the job of carrying heavy freight very difficult. This action by the town forced them to move to Northeast Harbor. The dock in Northeast was easy to drive on to load

or unload a waiting vehicle. They have operated from Northeast Harbor for over 40 years. Today the *Sea Queen* stops at Great Cranberry and Little Cranberry (Islesford) to pick up passengers and schoolchildren. If called in advance they will stop at Sutton Island and will even drop off a worker at tiny Bear Island, but only at mid- to high tide. For years the mail was put in a metal garbage can on the dock at Sutton Island, marked "U.S. Mail" in bold letters.

At age 92, Wilfred finally retired. Only a few years ago he took his turn running the boat. If not needed he would still drive to Northeast Harbor to check on things. His son David runs the barge, making many trips a day, carrying huge trucks loaded with gravel or building supplies, cement mixers, Bangor Hydro trucks or other large equipment, with a few cars squeezed in. This is the only way people can get their cars moved to and from the islands. People complained: "The fare was raised this year, too crowded, the boat was late." I once said to the Captain on a very packed holiday trip, that it was like a cattle boat. He quipped, "yes, we are 'MOOOving people.'" All the islanders should stop to think just what it would be like without the mailboat. It is the vital link to the mainland, a lifeline and

certainly, a necessity to the islanders' present way of life.

(Article "Thank You, Wilfred" by Gretchen Westphal from Chronicle No.25, February 2013.)

Clarence Beal passed away in 1990, and Wilfred in 2012. What's left now but to thank both of them?

Take a moment to reflect on how Beal & Bunker affected you. Were you employed by B&B as a teenager? Did your earnings go toward a college education, or to pay the bills or into a venture of your own? And think of all the connections you've made with islanders or day-trippers. Perhaps one particular day you sat next to someone who would become important in your life.

We are glad of Wilfred and Clarence's vision 60-plus years ago, and we are thankful to them, and their families, for the sacrifices they made on our behalf. These days many of us have our own boats to conveniently transport us and our guests to and from the island during the warmer months—but let's not forget the service Beal & Bunker provides year-round.

Thank you, Wilfred, for your part in establishing and growing Beal & Bunker, Inc. You did well and we wish your descendants, and hired hands, continued success.

(Article "Movie Boat Memories," Phil Whitney, Chronicle No. 25, February 2013.)

The movie boat has not run to Southwest Harbor since 1972. The Park Theatre in SWH closed in 1979. But surprisingly, reminiscences of both often surface in conversations among adults on the Cranberry Isles old enough to remember. Wilfred Bunker began the tradition of taking islanders from both islands to the movies in the late 1940s. The boat ran during the summer season, normally on Tuesday and Saturday nights. In the early days, prior to television arriving in Eastern Maine in 1953, the crowds were a mixture of

adults and young people. In later years, most of the passengers were youngsters looking for an evening of entertainment away from “the rock.” The first movie boat was the *Bobcat*, which was smaller than the next generation *Island Queen*, built in 1963. Although I rarely took the movie boat from Cranberry, I would occasionally catch it going in the other direction after the show. The boat was often very crowded, and generally everyone was in a festive mood.

In those days, boats weren’t equipped with radar, GPS or, even (before 1960) two-way radios. Captains relied solely on compasses and their intuitive experience at sea to navigate through the blackness and all-too-often fog. Travelling on the boat was quite an adventure, especially in tricky weather conditions. We never lost faith in Wilfred’s abilities to reach the destination safely.

In those days, the ferries landed at the Lower Town Dock in SWH, which was a very busy place for Cranberry Island traffic, especially at mail boat time during summer days. The movie boat was no exception, and the eager passengers would climb ashore, make their way over the wharf, and most would walk the 3/4 miles uptown to

the business district. Islanders didn’t own as many vehicles back then, and walking was routine. It took 10-15 minutes to make the trek. Businesses around the waterfront included the US Coast Guard Base, Beal’s Lobster Wharf, Manset Marine Supply, SWH Boat Corp, and a bowling alley. The crowd traversed the length of Clark Point Road, passing through the residential area, before arriving at the business district. There were two showings in the summer at the movie theatre, at 7:00 and 9:00 pm. The boat would arrive early enough to allow time for the walk uptown, and perhaps visit Jim Theodore’s Variety Store (on Clark Point Road), Carroll Drug Store (Main Street) or another business in town before the first show began. Many businesses stayed open on Saturday nights, before the era of Ellsworth shopping malls. Howard Robinson was the longtime owner of the Park Theatre. The theatre was located at the intersection of Clark Point Road and Main Street. It seated about 300 people, and did not have a balcony. It was never known for its architectural beauty, either inside or out. But some great memories were made on the movie screen (and perhaps in the back rows of the darkened theatre). Joe Trafton was the projectionist and

Mildred Palmer often held down the ticket booth in the small lobby. Tickets normally were 25 cents for kids, 50 cents for adults in the 1960s. Movie posters of coming attractions were displayed in the lobby. Patrons would then proceed through the swinging doors into the small inner lobby, where there was a popcorn machine and small candy counter. A turn to the left led down into the seating area. The old theatre was demolished to make way for changing times. McEachern & Hutchins Hardware now operates there in an entirely new building.

When the movie was over, everyone would trek back down to the dock in darkness, possibly stopping quickly to pick up an ice cream or candy bar. When destination home on GCI or Islesford was finally reached, the night on the town was complete (although sometimes The Porthole on the Beal & Bunker dock might still be open for a late night snack). Today the Park Theatre is gone, the movie boat is gone, and the boat captain is gone. Thanks, Wilfred, for the memories.

(A few more memories from the same Chronicle article:)

Annie Alley (GCI) remembers when the movie boat ran every Tuesday and Saturday evening. You could ride the boat (10 cents round trip), go to the movies (50 cents) and get a Coke (5 cents!), all for a grand total of 65 cents. Some moviegoers walked up town, but Wilfred had an old hearse, which others would pile into to get a ride up town. Annie also remembers the time Wilfred fell overboard. The cove was choppy, and Wilfred was putting the boat on the mooring. Someone must have seen him go over because they pulled the line in and there he was. He was alright, but like many islanders, he couldn’t swim. Gaile Colby (GCI) remembers that “Uncle Wilfred was always game to going somewhere to do something, and movie night was a big deal.” But she remembers the vehicle as being a paddy wagon, not a hearse. When Wilfred



*“Bobcat with Wilfred and Elisha Bunker, circa 1947” Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*



moved off-island, she thought that “we all would surely perish because he did everything.”

Anna Fernald (Islesford) and her husband, Warren, didn’t have an off-island car when they were first married, so the only way they could have a date night was to go with the boatload of moviegoers. “I was always a little embarrassed that we could never go on a date alone. But, I also recall that the *Island Queen* had a little space down below where it was dark and there was always a little cuddling going on, during the boat ride back from the movies. Beal & Bunker had their own dock with a restaurant. Wilfred would stop there on the way back so we could get a snack. That was great!!”

She goes onto praise him by saying that “Wilfred was the ‘captain of captains’ as far as I was concerned. One day when my kids were away at boarding school, the day for them to go back was not a good one, but Wilfred was going to take them anyway. I trusted him. The kids told me later that the weather was so bad that he fell to his knees at the

wheel.”

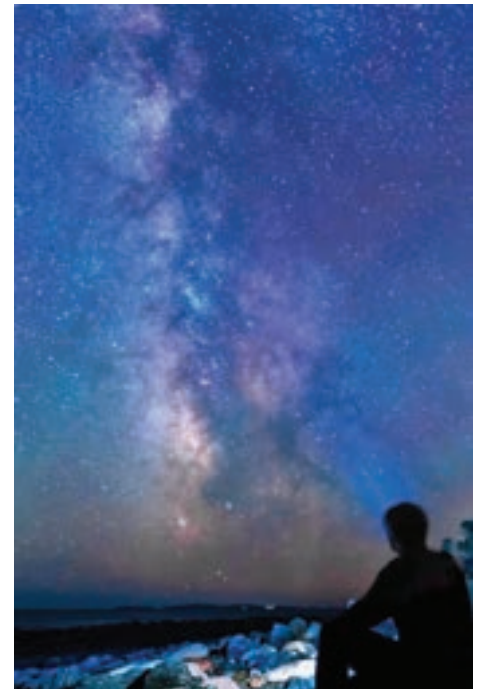
Wilfred also was instrumental in running boats for Rockbound Grange meetings and for the weekly card parties, one week on Islesford, the next on Great Cranberry. He and his wife Norma often attended those gatherings together. He was instrumental in keeping the two islands connected. After Wilfred died my daughter Karen said that he was the “bridge between the two islands.” Carl Brooks (GCI) remembers the time that he and his aunt were heading out of SWH with Wilfred on the *Malesca*....in a hurricane! This would have been in the fall of 1956 or 1957. Carl recalls that when they were passing by the Coast Guard station they could see the rocks at the bottom of the ocean while in the valleys of the swells. But Wilfred got them safely home!

When Clarence Beal departed the business and the island, and some years later Wilfred gradually reduced his role in the business, control of the operation passed to his son, David Bunker. During this time, the 1980s-1990s, the wharf was sold to Chuck Liebow,

and later the Ward and Shorey families. The wharf buildings were eventually torn down, and the wharf converted into boat docking rental spaces. In 2022 David passed away after a long illness. Ownership of the business was transferred to Paul Hewes and Joe Flores. It continues under their ownership currently (2025), and still retains the company name of Beal & Bunker, Inc.



*“Sea Queen at Bunker & Ellis Boatyard in Manset, circa 1972” Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*



*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy*

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# Hitty's Cafe

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Here's to a great 2025 season! It was another busy season. We implemented some new items on our menu, such as crab cakes and other delicious items. This season we welcomed Deborah Bunker who joined forces with the Cafe and helped the season run more smoothly. Hope to see you in 2026!

~Chef Cezar



*Photo Courtesy of Cezar Ferreira Facebook*

## Curry Chicken Salad Sandwich

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1–2 teaspoons curry powder (or to preferred taste)
- 1 tablespoon lime juice (½ medium lime)
- Fine salt
- 2 cups cooled cooked chicken, diced
- 1 celery rib, finely diced
- 2 tablespoons red onion, finely diced
- ¼ cup raisins
- ¼ cup roasted and salted cashews, roughly chopped
- 2–4 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- Serve on toast with lettuce and tomato



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## Welcome Hannah Cuvin

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Please welcome Hannah Cuvin, our new Archivist, who started in October. She is a College of the Atlantic (COA) student majoring in human ecology with plans to graduate next month. Her senior project focused on archival work related to Newfoundland folklore. She has experience working in the college's archives department, and assisting with and spearheading projects geared towards sharing the school's archives with the greater COA community. We are happy to work with Hannah. She brings enthusiasm and relevant experience to the historical society.



# Beal and Bunker: It Would Be A Different Island Without It.

MORRIE NEWELL



Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives

**I**t's fair to say that Cranberry Island, Islesford and Sutton would be very different places to live without Beal & Bunker. Founded around 1950 by Wilfred Bunker and Clarence Beal, it provided the much-needed infrastructure that makes island living possible. Yes, beauty and the sense of community would still be present in these islands, but the practicalities of island life would be so much more difficult without the dedication and hard work of these two island pioneers.

I have an image in my mind of Wilfred and Clarence, both returning veterans from WWII, standing about where the post office is today and seeing a large thriving enterprise that could be created with a lot of hard work and foresight. Wilfred had a plan all along—after high school, he and his cousin Edgar Bunker delivered mail and passengers among the islands. His service during WWII, also in transport, was serving as a proud merchant mariner. He knew from his experience how vital transportation

and logistics are to making modern life work, particularly on an island.

They must have started by clearing a large swath of forest immediately behind the post office—I assume it all happened with hand saws since chain saws didn't see wide commercial adoption until later in the 50s. And how they drove those pilings into the ocean floor in constructing the Beal and Bunker dock is another mystery. We were decades away from power-driven piledrivers.

When you think about the early days of the enterprise—they built *everything*—the docks, the buildings and the boats. They relied only on other islanders in making all this work. Lorraine Bracy's father, Red McAllister (for whom I worked during summers in his boat yard—now Sam Donald's), built all the B&B boats with Clarence, Wilfred (and his brother Raymond—think Bunker and Ellis Yachts). We still see their handy work every day when you walk down for the 8:30 ferry. The *Sea Queen* must be 60 years old. I remember

walking across the beach back in the 1970's in front of the Moss family buildings seeing yet another sturdy craft being constructed. It started with the *Island Queen*, which was followed by the *Sea Princess* and *Double B*.

Many old-timers, like me, remember the early B&B boats—most prominently the *Bobcat* and the *Malesca*. They were just lobster boats without trap haulers. There was also an open launch and a landing barge from WWII for hauling vehicles and firewood. The Beal and Bunker dock was a very busy place. You had Wilfred running the mailboat while Clarence must have been largely responsible for everything else. And not to forget the hard work of Don Allen, married to Charlene, one of the Bunker women, who ran the Beal & Bunker office.

I remember riding with Clarence out of Southwest Harbor on the daily grocery run. The *Bobcat* or *Malesca* would be nearly full of groceries that islanders had ordered. In many ways, despite daily package delivery that fills the shed today, it was more convenient back then when home delivery of anything was a novelty.

There were five grocery stores in Southwest Harbor—Trundy's, Jacksons, Boyntons, Sawyers and the A&P—in fact three of them were all on Clark Point Road. It's an understatement to say that the operation of getting groceries to the island was a well-oiled machine.

But let's turn to the men, Wilfred and Clarence. Like many of you, I have clear images of both of them. I can see Wilfred leaning against the steering shelter in the *Sea Queen*; the huge radar planted squarely in front of him. While chatting amiably with his

friends and passengers, Wilfred could easily maintain course in the thickest fog, or roughest of seas while looking into the large rubber hood that made the primitive radar screen visible to the captain. Reminiscent of these times, there's the famous David Westphal black and white photograph of the early morning boat that includes a wonderful selection of old-timers like Harold Stanley, Les Phippen, Edgar White and others all engaged in conversation about the issues of the day.

I have a special fondness for Wilfred for all the times he held the last boat for me as I did my best to reach Northeast Harbor from my Boston job on a Friday afternoon. He knew I was coming, fighting the traffic out of Boston—through the infamous Portsmouth, New Hampshire toll booth (one could only dream of the E-Z Pass transponder that allows for uninterrupted traffic flow today).

When I arrived, I'd be full of apologies for delaying him and the rest of the passengers, but he was always so gracious. His kindness is a metaphor for how Wilfred thought of Cranberry, his home. He was dedicated to making life on the islands possible and more enjoyable. He and Clarence had such a strong sense of community.

Beal & Bunker is a clear example of that spirit. So are Wilfred's decades on the School Committee, the Board of Selectmen and formation of the Fire Club. Wilfred was always there when someone needed help, but people never abused that kindness. My brother Hal broke his leg jumping off the porch at Andy Storey's house during a party, but my grandmother wouldn't think of disturbing Wilfred at night. I remember my brother moaning through the night, but we knew that there was no trip to Southwest Harbor and onto Bar Harbor hospital until the next morning.

I've heard many people say that life on Cranberry changed when Wilfred moved off. There was no misbehavior by island youth. We all knew that Wilfred

would not approve of it, so the thought of raucous parties and vandalism was simply never considered, nor would it have been tolerated by Wilfred.

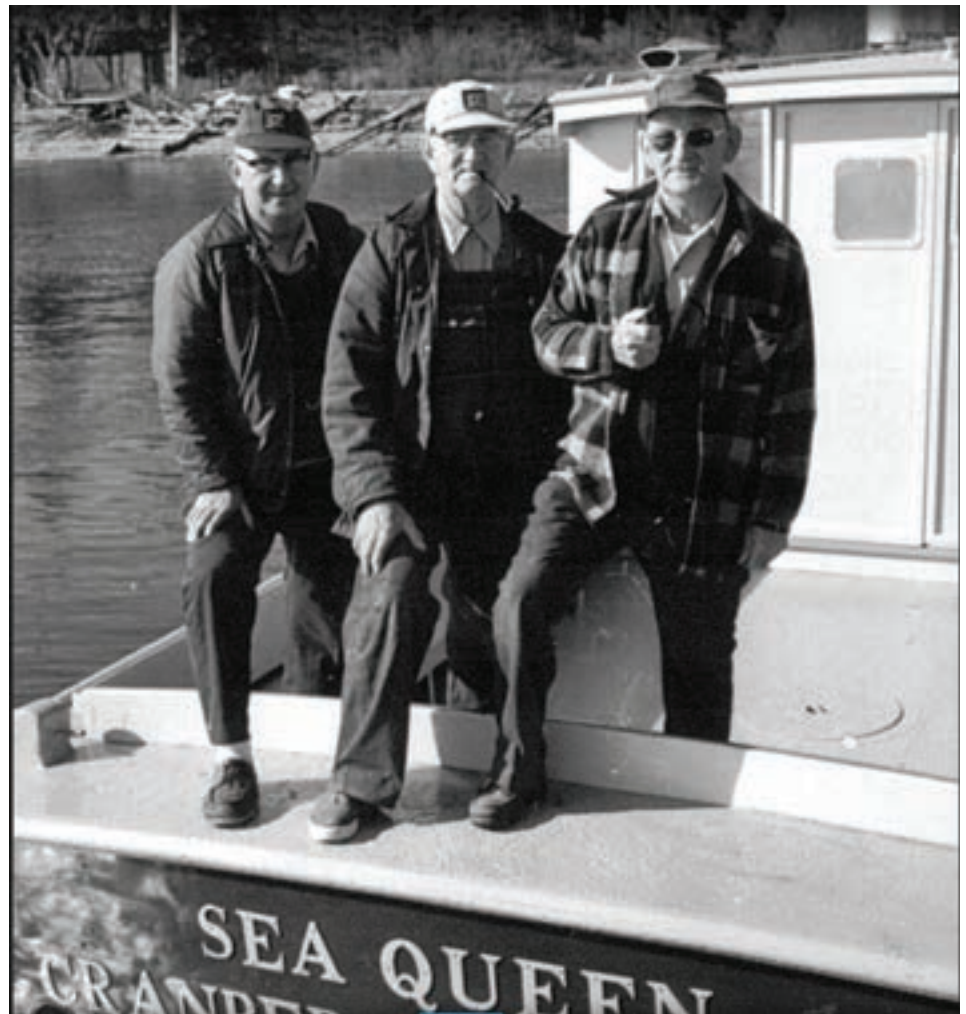
Wilfred lobbied the powers that be on MDI to ensure both islands had schools. There's a story in the literature about Wilfred braving a storm to pick up a member of the school committee because he wanted to show them how impractical it was to commute daily to attend mainland schools.

I also heard stories about how after the incredible scare of the 1947 Bar Harbor fire, Wilfred was instrumental in coalescing public sentiment around the formation of the Fire Club of today. There was smoke wafting over the Cranberry Isles from the mainland—even some cinders, so I'm told. During that fateful day the people of Bar Harbor were crowded onto the

town dock awaiting the arrival of Naval vessels that would evacuate them. At the last minute, the wind shifted so evacuation was not necessary.

Tud Bunker, Wilfred's brother, dashed over to Northeast Harbor to bring his wife, Polly, back to the island. Before opening the Whale's Rib gift shop on Cranberry, Polly ran the restaurant and gift shop at the Asticou hotel in Northeast Harbor. When they arrived, they saw that most houses had buckets of water sitting on their porches. Wilfred recognized that this was no way to fight a fire.

The other strong image of I have of Wilfred is at the Ladies Aid Society building perhaps 10–15 years ago when Wilfred came over for what must have been his 90th birthday. He was quiet and reserved, yet smiling broadly, as all of us filed past him, shook his hand,



*Wilfred, Raymond, and Linden “Tud” Bunker Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*



and thanked him for all he had done for the island.

And the most touching part of the evening was a story Robbie Liebow told of how Wilfred had been instrumental in helping him overcome his shyness and stutter. Wilfred taught him how to communicate through this disability. Robbie overcame that to become Superintendent of Schools on MDI and other school districts, as well. At that party, Wilfred was in his element, surrounded by those who loved him and shared his same commitment to the community and love of Cranberry.

And finally, there's the image of Wilfred, now in his eighties, sitting in his car in Northeast Harbor watching his mailboat empty and load up. He kept his pilot's license into his eighties and was always available to the B&B crew to do errands or provide supplies to keep the boats running.

I know I have given short shrift to Clarence, which is not fair. But I simply had less contact with him. Perhaps others can fill in this part of the story. I do have a couple of memories of him, the strongest is his piloting the movie boat. I think it happened twice a week and we kids just loved it. We'd head over to Southwest, regardless of the weather, in the *Bobcat* or *Malesca*, land on the old Southwest Harbor dock near the Coast Guard station, walk into town to see whatever was playing at the Park Theater (currently home to the hardware store), and then hoof it back to the boat, over to the Porthole restaurant (another B&B enterprise) and have a sandwich or hot dog.

After piloting the boat, Clarence would be behind the counter cooking and serving customers. I can still remember the hot dog he fixed for me and told me "It's worth a lot more than the quarter I'm charging."

These men could weather any storm and knew just what to do in an emergency. Both Clarence and Wilfred and perhaps others from the island braved a ferocious storm in March of 1959 to help recover the bodies of Roland Sprague and Fred Fernald, lobstermen who'd been lost in this storm.

So, every time you get on one of Wilfred's and Clarence's boats, I commend you to take a moment to pay tribute to these giants of Cranberry—they were so brave and worked so hard to make island living possible. Thanks Wilfred and Clarence!



*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

## THE ISLAND

Come walk with me in misty time  
on Cranberry Isle by the shining sea.  
Our everyday worlds will morph sublime  
as a spotty dog dances down a path of mine.

Mushrooms sway in the moonlit breeze,  
ferns nod their other-worldly knowing,  
wood sprites gather 'round our knees  
to guide our green-eyed ghostly going.

Talking deer lie under breathing trees,  
sipping night's nectar off the leaves.  
Painted birds sway and dance in lines,  
twittering their secrets in nursery rhymes.

So sit with me in the interstices  
of silence and slow time.  
Wade barefoot with me in reality  
as we meld into our universal we.



## ROWING

If you were a summer kid from away  
you could row any way you wanted to,  
but it was always looking over your shoulder  
and orbiting the handles around each other,  
in a great big hurry to impress the girls.

For an islander there was only one way to row—  
as you'd always done, just like your father,  
when life on the sea was a timeless meditation,  
but no one would ever have admitted meditating.

Filmore on the back seat of a tiny two-seater dinghy,  
pushing it forward with the oars instead of pulling

Charlie swishing one oar from a punt's stern seat,  
leaning back and forth like a Venetian gondolier

Tudd standing high on the front seat pulling one oar  
to both sides, his pipe upside down in his smile

Pink Stanley in his huge old high-sided dory—  
standing high up, looking down into the big empty  
square tower of its inboard outboard motor well

stooping way over to push the huge oars forward,  
then straightening his back out later by pulling it  
in over the flats like a modern-day Volga boatman.

# Memories of Bruce Komusin

KARIN WHITNEY



*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

**F**ebruary 14, 2025, marked the 10th anniversary of the passing of Bruce Komusin, who died after a long battle with cancer.

After a decade, many island folks have no memory of Bruce, nor the special gifts he gave toward the preservation of Great Cranberry Island, its history, its people, and its economic development. His profound generosity created ripple effects throughout the island and continue to the present day.

To honor his memory, Karin Whitney prepared a summary of his gifts to the island and the consequential accomplishments that arose from them:

The Cranberry House and Historical Museum were established, preserving the history of the island and providing year-round educational and entertainment activities for residents and visitors.

Hitty's Cafe was opened, providing a gathering place for thousands of diners over (at last count) 17 years.

A gift shop, arts studio and (currently) pottery shop opened on additional acreage he donated to GCI Historical

Society.

The Smart Shack (Kids Recreation Center) opened on additional acreage he donated to GCI Historical Society.

The Second-Hand Treasure Shop, which provides all sales proceeds to Cranberry House operations, opened on land donated to GCI Historical Society.

Three storage sheds for antique boat storage, horse drawn carriage storage, and miscellaneous items storage were constructed on land donated to GCI Historical Society.

The Sammy Sanford Cabin was moved from the back shore to Cranberry House land donated to GCI Historical Society.

Bruce donated 10 acres of land to the Cranberry Isles Realty Trust (CIRT), which raised funds to build four houses. Eight adults and eight children now live year-round in the homes.

Bruce gifted the large house with four acres located on Preble Cove to CIRT. CIRT sold the property and used the proceeds to provide new housing on Islesford (Little Cranberry Island). Interestingly, the new owners of the Preble Cove house also chose to live year-round on the island, adding two adults and two children to the population. This is an excellent example of Bruce's generosity causing a ripple effect, throughout the Cranberry Isles.

Two hiking trails (to Whistler Cove and Preble Cove) traverse land donated to GCI Historical Society. These are currently maintained cooperatively with the Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

Bruce donated two cottages on the Cranberry Road to the GCI Historical Society. One two-bedroom cottage is occupied by the only EMT on Great

Cranberry. The second one-bedroom cottage is occupied by the Hitty's Cafe chef. A third adjoining building is a garage/workshop offered to rent by island contractors or others.

Bruce was also very supportive of the Great Cranberry Library with financial and technical support.

Many residents benefited from his generous (free) support and expertise with computer problems.

Although it has been 10 years, we remember Bruce every time we see and experience these beautiful gifts. Phil Whitney once told Bruce, when he was debating whether to move up to Great Cranberry year-round, that he could make a huge difference on a small island. The results far exceeded anyone's imagination.



*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*



# Oral History:

## Tud and Polly Bunker

**T**his article begins a new series of oral history memories provided by Linden “Tud” and Pauline “Polly” Bunker. The interview was conducted around 1979 by noted author and film actor Gunnar Hansen and transcribed in 1996 by Angela French with funding assistance from the Maine Humanities Council. We express our appreciation to the Islesford Historical Society and their president, Gail Grandgent, for allowing the Cranberry Chronicle to reproduce these memories. The transcription has been lightly edited for clarity.



*Photo Courtesy of  
GCIHS Archives*

### Relatives

**Gunnar Hansen:** I was wondering how far back you could remember about the island and your family?

**Tud (born 1907):** My oldest uncle that I can remember was Uncle Willie Bunker, and he lived down the road here where Winslow Bunker (currently Richard Sullivan) lives now. He would be Winslow’s grandfather. Winslow’s father (Percy Bunker) was Uncle Willie’s son, and that makes Winslow his grandson, wouldn’t it? His father was a brother to my father (Henry Bunker, aka “Pa Hen”), and then there was Uncle Ben Bunker and there was Uncle Elisha “Lisha” Bunker. Uncle Ben was older than Uncle Lisha. And then there was a George Bunker who was an uncle of

mine and there was also an Uncle Harry who was an uncle of mine.

**Gunnar:** I’ve heard a little bit about Lisha Bunker.

**Polly:** He ran a boat business and a grocery store.

**Tud:** He had a boat. Lisha had a store here for a number of years, but he run a boat business for a long while. They called it the Bunker Boatyard and I guess it still goes under that name. My father’s name was Henry Bunker.

### Island Schools

**Gunnar:** Back in 1915 what was the island like? The school was a lot bigger than it is now.

**Tud:** Oh God, yes. There was a lot of kids on here then. That schoolhouse was jammed full, both rooms, had two teachers.

**Polly:** Do you remember, there were what—three or four schoolhouses?

**Tud:** No, all I remember was just one schoolhouse. Well, there were two schoolhouses before that. There was one up here on top of the hill, the big hill you come up over, and there was another one down there just a step to the other side of where I picked you up.

**Gunnar:** Were they both being used at the same time?

**Tud:** Yeah, yeah, both of them were being used but I don’t think there were any more kids in them two schoolhouses than there was in this one big one. There was a lot of, well it was a lot of

natives on here then that lived here year-round. Well, the old people died off, a lot of the young people moved away, and then the summer people bought up the old houses and fixed them up, and I don’t believe right now, there can’t be more than (65-70) on this island all together right now. When I was a kid there was (200-250) on here.



*Photo Courtesy of  
GCIHS Archives*

### Life Was Different

**Tud:** Of course, them days was different than they are now. You didn’t go off the island for much of anything. If you got to Southwest Harbor or Northeast Harbor once or twice a month you was doing well. But of course, there was two big stores on here that had everything in them. Everything you could mention. I don’t care what you wanted, it was in them stores. They had all their freight

come by vessels and brought it in here to the island and landed it and, you know, they had molasses come in barrels, they had kerosene come in them steel drums for people for their lamps, four barrels, and then they'd weigh it out in the store and sell it to you. And they had fishing gear and boots and oil clothes, fish line and fishhooks. You didn't have to go off the island for nothing, you had it right here. And then, of course, they had their groceries. It was an altogether different life than it is now.

People in them days, most every family had a cow. I should say five families out of ten would have a cow. And of course, we had all our milk and butter and eggs here. We didn't have to go to the mainland for nothing. We had no electricity. We had nothing to worry about with lights going out. Everybody had outhouses, and a lot of people lugged their water from the well to the house, and some had these old hand pumps in the house.



*Photo Courtesy of  
GCIHS Archives*

## Shopping by Lobster Smack

**Tud:** Every fall, when it come cold weather, cold enough so anything would stay froze, they'd send to Portland on the lobster smack. There used to be a big lobster smack come along here. I guess she was about 65-70 foot long, with what they called a wet well in the middle of her. She was all bored full of holes so water would come into her in the middle. All that was keeping her afloat was the bow and the stern, and they'd fill that hole full of lobsters, and the water circulated through them holes and kept them alive, and they'd fill her full and go to Portland with them, and then the people would order, I don't know, a side of beef, half a pig or whatever they wanted, and they's bring them back to them.

I know my father every fall would send and get a side of beef. We had three to four barrels of apples come and then he'd have a whole barrel of assorted cookies, all makes of cookies in this barrel, and two great big wooden boxes, oh they were big, full of these round biscuits that were, oh about as big around as that tea kettle, just about the size of a plate. They had two of them every winter, about three barrels of apples.

## Prices Then and Now

**Gunnar:** What did a pound of lobster bring in?

**Tud:** I don't remember but they were real cheap compared to what they are now. I know when I was a kid if we got \$.25 apiece for a lobster, we were getting what we thought was a good price. Of course, they didn't make so much money as they do now, but you had about as much 'cause everything costs so much more now. When I first started fishin', gasoline was \$.75 cents a can, five gallon can for gasoline. And when I was burnin' oil, kerosene in my cook stove when I lived up the road here, one of them 55-gallon drums, the first of it was about \$5 or \$6. God, now

I think kerosene is \$.63 or \$.65 cents a gallon, almost as much as what we paid for 5 gallons of gasoline. So you didn't have to make so much money to be practically as well off.

**Gunnar:** There is no grocery store on the island now?

**Tud:** No, there hasn't been one on here since Lisha let go, which would be about, what, 25 years now. So there is a big change. *[Editor's note: a new store, the Cranberry General Store, opened in 1977 It was destroyed by fire in 2022, and reopened in 2024].*



*Photo Courtesy of  
GCIHS Archives*



# Support Cranberry House

## Become a Friend of Great Cranberry Island Historical Society

<b>Friends:</b>	<b>\$25</b>
<b>Family Friends:</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>Donors:</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Supporters:</b>	<b>\$250</b>
<b>Patrons:</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Benefactors</b>	<b>\$1000</b>

Support Special Projects through your extra special contribution.

Donate in Honor of a Loved One.

Fill the Donation Jars at the museum and on the shuttle, or at the movies, lectures and other events.

Whatever you can afford, we will sincerely appreciate it.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit institution, contributions are tax deductible.

Donate through Amazon Smile. Select the Cranberry Island Historical Society as your charity of choice.

Remember—one forward-thinking person began the process with a single donation.

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John & Veronica Tyrrell

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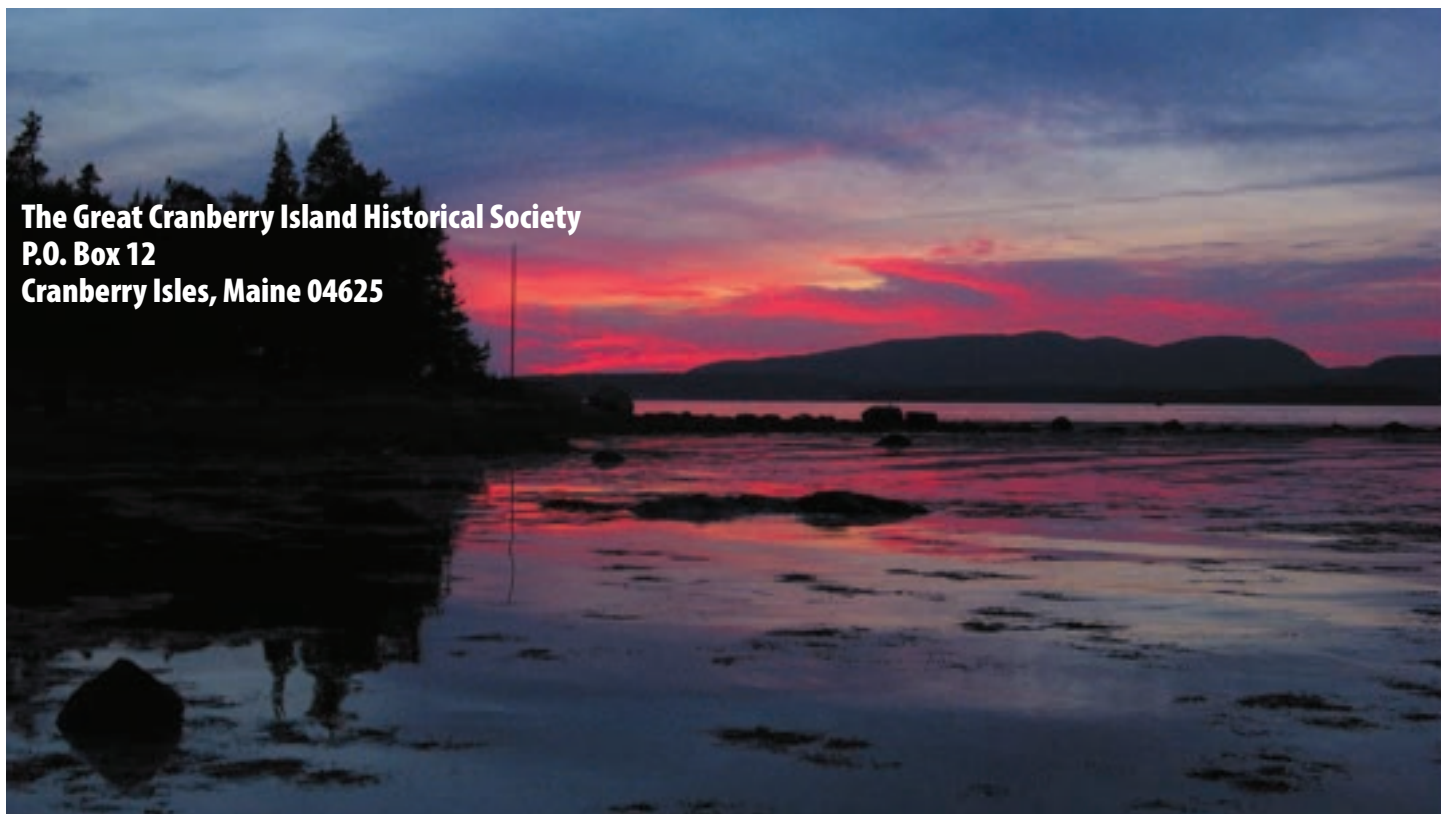


*Photo courtesy of Amanda Bracy*



*Photo courtesy of Amanda Bracy*

**The Great Cranberry Island Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 12**  
**Cranberry Isles, Maine 04625**



*Photo courtesy of Amanda Bracy*

### Order & Membership Form Instructions

1. Copy this page, including your address mailing label, right.
2. Add the desired giving level of your Friends Membership.
3. Indicate Newsletters by Email if you prefer digital copy.
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Indicate amount corresponding to the various giving levels.

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*The gang heading to breakfast at Sharon's Duck Diner Photo  
courtesy of Karin Whitney*