

# Cranberry Chronicle

NEWS OF CRANBERRY HOUSE AND GREAT CRANBERRY ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY • AUGUST 2024

## Great 2024 GCI Storm

BY MICHAEL TODD



*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy*

**A**s a child, many of us learned that Zeus was the fiercest and most feared Greek god. His ability to command thunder, lightning and the sky, while lording over Mount Olympus made mortals cower and tremble in fear. But Zeus' power over Cranberry Islands pales when compared to his brother, the mighty Poseidon, God of the Seas. January through March 2024 the winter tranquility, that is a hallmark of the Town of Cranberry Isles, was unceremoniously shattered by gale force winds, heavy rains and record level tides. All across

Downeast Maine historical buildings and waterfronts were helpless victims to Poseidon's wrath as they were reclaimed by the sea and enveloped into the Gulf of Maine. Buildings were flooded, streets were torn apart, and tides encroached upon and flooded homes that had been bone-dry for nearly a century. Shorelines were remodeled and wetlands, beaches, trails, cemeteries and parks were forever changed or destroyed by the encroaching ocean. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the January 10, 2024, and January 13,

2024, floods were the highest tides on record since recording began in 1947.

Evidence of destruction was striking throughout Great Cranberry Island (GCI). Cars parked at GCI dock were flooded, with water rising to as high as the doors for many of the vehicles. A quick survey of the post office found that a significant portion of its foundation had been reclaimed by the sea and left many to wonder if it was safe to enter. On the inside of the post office, there was debris and water damage throughout.

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*Darlene and Audrey Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*

## Notes of Appreciation

Thanks to Maine Seacoast Mission and Island Institute volunteers for providing support for beach clean-up and trail clearing.

Thanks to Maine Coast Heritage Trust staff and contractors for extensive repairs to the Whistler Cove Trail caused by winter storms.

Thanks to Blair Colby who, after being away for weeks for medical treatment, came home and jumped back in with both feet and being available to help with Golf Cart service and repairs.

Thank you to Darlene Sumner for her creative and steadfast leadership in managing and running the Kids Smart Shack each year since its inception and to Audrey Sumner the official Smart Shack Hostess.

## 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 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

### Births

**Zoe Lavender Wedge**  
daughter of Heath &  
Aubrey Wedge  
April 18th

**Shiloh Mann**  
son of Jenna & Kevin  
Mann

### Passings

**Cory Alley**  
January 5th

**Jim Garnett**  
February 15th

**Leslie Spurling**  
April 11th

**Robert "Bob" Hudson**  
April 28th

**Kevin Wedge**  
June 11th

### Transitions

**GCI Postmaster, Eileen Richards** retired after 18 years of service  
March 15th

**New GCI Postmaster, Christian Gonzales** started  
May 18th



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# President's Report

PHIL WHITNEY

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*Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*

**O**ur Winter season this year was a strange one. There was almost no snowfall, only several snow events that only amounted to minimal accumulations. Temperatures were generally milder, never reaching zero. However, as those who lived on the island in mid-Winter are well aware, high winds and constant rain was the norm. There were three major storms in December 2023 and March 2024, which did incredible amounts of damage. Spring

has been cold, but at least the winds and rain have eased off somewhat. GCIHS experienced heavy damage to both Whistler Cove and Preble Cove Trails. There were more tree blowdowns on Whistler Cove than ever recorded in previous years. Much of the trail was either flooded in places or extremely wet. Bog-bridging was disrupted in many places. This trail was nearly impassable. Preble Cove had one major tree blowdown, but the beach end revealed nearly all the bog

bridging totally disrupted, with many logs thrown 75-feet inland well into the woods! This has never been seen before, especially remarkable when considering this was the sheltered side of the island, mostly away from the heavy winds and seas. But the tides were well above normal and overflowed the normal high tide embankments, contributing heavily to the damage. Maine Seacoast Mission sent a volunteer crew out on the Sunbeam in late March to help

clear the trails and woods. There were approximately 20 volunteers altogether combining folks from Maine Seacoast Mission, the Island Institute and local Cranberry Islanders. The Spurling Cove, Preble Cove and Whistler Cove beaches were all cleaned up, and substantial clearing work in the woods was completed on the Whistler Cove Trail. In April, Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) sent a crew to totally renovate the Whistler Cove Trail. They repaired, replaced and added bog bridging, along with some additional tree cutting. The end result of all this work was perfection, transforming a total disaster into an easily walkable, beautiful trail again. MCHT plans to repair the Preble Cove bog bridging mess in late May.

Looking ahead towards another busy summer season, activity around the compound has steadily increased, which is normal for this time of year. Landscaper Ric Gaither has been busy repairing the Winter damage and preparing the gardens for Spring flower planting. Plans are being made to renovate the Smart Shack, which has had some water leaks and needs repairs to the floor and doors. Several new people have joined our organization in various support roles. New Cranberry Isles Realty Trust (CIRT) resident Jenna Mann has been hired as our year-round part-time Archivist. The intention is to have steady archival presence and work momentum on projects. She will be supported by our volunteer Archives Subcommittee, chaired by Wendy Todd. (See separate archives article.) Cezar Ferreira has recently returned for his 11<sup>th</sup> season at Hitty's Cafe. Grace will also be returning late in June to help Cezar in the cafe. The former gift shop is becoming a combination pottery and art studio, operated by Kaitlyn Miller and Katherine Emery. They plan to host visiting artists from around the region, as well as offer art classes and exhibits. The Seawind Second

Chance Shop, operated by Karin Whitney, has been reorganized very attractively. This shop is completely volunteer operated, and all proceeds are provided in support of Cranberry House operations.

The Cranberry House stayed open all Winter, as normal. A variety of events and activities were held, including movies, adult karaoke, kids' karaoke, Big Screen shows, town-sponsored meetings, internal committee meetings, and birthday parties. The Events Subcommittee has been meeting regularly since March, planning an interesting and varied array of programming for the summer season. As of this writing, an Open House (with accompanying Three-Day Trivia Contest), Volunteer Appreciation Day Trip to Isle au Haut, movies, karaoke, guided trail walks, several different lectures, several art/photography exhibits, several Big Screen Shows including the Olympic Games, and historical slide shows are all confirmed, with many other possible events being researched.

Much as everyone else is, we are facing increased challenges to meet our annual operating expenses due to rising costs and inflation. Insurance, utilities and off-island contractor labor costs are surging. Extra capital improvement costs, such as sorely-needed renovations to the Kids Smart Shack, are added financial concerns. I urge our regular supporters, as well as new members, to donate as much as possible in these difficult times to help us to continue to offer the quality entertainment and educational activities which have been our hallmark over the years. We also extend an invitation and encourage qualified volunteers to provide support. There are many ways to help, such as golf cart drivers and museum receptionists, events help, and administrative tasks. Cranberry House offers enjoyable experiences, working with great folks and meeting

hundreds of appreciative visitors and island residents.

The official Summer Season Opening Day is May 24th. The museum, cafe, art gallery/pottery shop and Seawind Secondhand shop will all open. I look forward to seeing you this summer, and enjoying with you the museum, cafe, shops, trails, arts center activities and golf cart travels. Come join us and make some great memories.



*David and Justin Bunker, Richard Beal and Joe Flores Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



*Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



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# News from the Office

SHARON MORRELL, Administrative Assistant

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*Ms. Rosie monitoring conditions in the museum Photo Courtesy of Sharon Morrell*

**A** new Archivist, Jenna Mann, has been hired part-time to help us with the work of growing and maintaining our collections. The Archivist position has recently been vacant for some time, and we are very excited to have Jenna taking over and offering her stewardship of our shared history. Jenna has done a wonderful job, along with Karin Whitney, in setting up the museum and making it ready to welcome visitors.

Darlene Sumner, who has been the driving force behind the Kids Smart Shack and its programming since its start, has found a kindred spirit in new island resident, Jamie Thompson, and now they are working together to make sure that the Smart Shack continues to be available and active over the summer for islanders and visitors alike.

We are working to make the most of the space we have to offer by making the upstairs Arts Center available for folks to rent for private events. More information will be

forthcoming on this subject. We have been busy applying for grants and have a couple of applications outstanding. We are hoping for awards to help us with some projects around Cranberry House, such as a remodel of the Smart Shack, upgrades to our archives computer system, and energy-efficiency upgrades for the entire building. We also count on donations to meet the bulk of our operating budget and have expanded the options to accept donations through Venmo and PayPal.

Cezar has returned to open Hitty's Cafe. Ric Gaither continues to keep our gardens in pristine condition. Blair Colby has returned after being away for several weeks and helped us clean up the severe storm damage to the trails and serviced golf carts and made them ready to run for the summer. Our volunteer board members continue to meet regularly and do the work of keeping this ship afloat.

I hope you get an opportunity to visit Great Cranberry Island and Cranberry House this summer.

**For more information and updates on these projects during the winter and spring please visit:**

GCIHS Events Page  
[www.gcihs.org/events/](http://www.gcihs.org/events/)

GCIHS Facebook Page  
[www.facebook.com/CranberryHouseGCIHS/](http://www.facebook.com/CranberryHouseGCIHS/)

Feel Free to contact me at [manager@gcihs.org](mailto:manager@gcihs.org) if you have any questions or suggestions.



*New Exhibit*

*Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*

## Archives Update

The Archives Committee is preparing for a bustling summer that is sure to delight the curious. Be sure to check out the *Boats of Cranberry* exhibit upstairs in the Arts Center. Also, we are hoping to reel in some pictures from resident photographer, Amanda Bracy. She was able to capture the storms (and results of the storms) that battered the islands this past winter.

We welcome Holly Hartley and Molly Singerling to the Archives Committee. Both women have deep roots on Great Cranberry and are amazing resources for island history. Jenna Mann, one of our newest island residents, has accepted a part-time Archivist position to keep the momentum of cataloguing and preserving our rich history and ever-growing collection. Interested in helping, or just curious about what we do? You are cordially invited to come join us for a monthly meeting (zoom and in person) to share your interest.

Wendy Todd

Archives Committee Chairperson

## Hitty's Café

BY CHEF CEZAR



*Cezar & Grace*

*Photo Courtesy of Cezar Ferreira*

Hitty's Café opens again for another season on Memorial Day weekend. We look forward to a busy and happy summer season. There will be some new items on the menu, so keep an eye open for those. We look forward to seeing all the familiar faces – and the new ones.

-Chef Cezar



*Hitty Dolls brought to Cranberry House by a visiting group of Hitty enthusiasts in Summer 2023 Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



*Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



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# Part 6 of the Birlem Family Letters

PHIL WHITNEY

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*We continue, in sequence, excerpts from the Birlem Family Letters. The letters printed in this **August 2024 Cranberry Chronicle** were written between Feb 14, 1898, and April 29, 1900. We once again extend our appreciation to Birlem Family descendant Lynne Birlem of Southwest Harbor for helping transcribe and subsequently donating the original letters to GCIHS.*

**Letter Dated Feb. 14, 1898**

*Castine, ME*

**To** Mamma (*Mrs. Charles E. Spurling*)

**From** Daughter (*Mamie Spurling*)

Dear Mamma,

We are having a lovely vacation, ever since yesterday afternoon. I am afraid there will be school this afternoon though. The sun is shining but the sidewalks are not cleared off yet. I studied all of yesterday afternoon and evening until 10 PM. I have got to study my Geometry if I think there will be school this afternoon. I do not like this term at all. C Physics I like very much. We are going to begin the study of Electricity in a few days.

All of the schools in Waterville have been closed, so I suppose there must be more cases of small pox. I hope it won't break out here. You may tell Brother (*Charles S. Spurling*), I am very much obliged for my valentine. If it had not been so comical I do not know but I should have been disappointed. I got it yesterday afternoon. I pulled a chair up by the stove and got ready to enjoy reading my letter from home. I opened the letter and only found that comic Valentine and not a single word. I hope to get a letter from some of you today. Perhaps Aunt Flo or Grammie may write. I have had but one letter from each of them since I have been here this term. I guess they do not think very much of me and I can't blame them if

they do not, for I know that I am horrid without anybody's telling me of it.

I have a fine place to board. I could not ask for any better and we live well, too. It is a mystery to me why Mrs Perkins and Mrs. Coombs say such things about them (*the owners.*) I should not think they would unless they have good reason for doing so.

I am afraid we are going to have the pleasure of riding from here home. It will be a nice ride, won't it? The bay at Ellsworth is frozen over, so the boat (*steamboat*) will only be able to get as far as Blue Hill. Ina and I think if we have to ride, it will be best to get four or five of us here to hire a team (*horse & carriage*) to take us from here to Ellsworth, and then have Corson meet us in Ellsworth. I hope Papa will try and be at NEH so I can come home as soon as I get there for I do not want to stay all night, because it might blow the next day and then perhaps I could not get home for a long time. (*It was often a huge challenge in the winter just to travel relatively short distances, such as from Castine to Cranberry Island, via Ellsworth by land or NEH/SWH by steamboat. Then come across the water to Cranberry Island by rowboat or small sailboat.*)

Tuesday Night.

You don't know what a nice afternoon I have had. There was not any school this afternoon. I have spent my spare hours strumming on Miss Smiley's banjo and working on a doily, so I have enjoyed

myself very much. The mail has not got here from Bucksport yet. I guess it will not be here until tomorrow. They have only one horse and it is (18) miles. Perhaps they change horses on the way. I do not know.

**Letter Dated April 15, 1900**

*Cranberry Isles, ME*

**To** Brother (*Charles S. Spurling*)

**From** Aunt Flo (*Florence Joy*)

Dear Brother:

Bert (*Spurling*) has been at work on taxes the past two weeks. He is going to work on the vessel tomorrow. He hopes to be ready to start in a week.

Miss Hatfield is real pleasant. We like her real well. School began last Monday.

Have you commenced playing baseball yet (*at Hebron Academy*)? Ernest (*Spurling*) and Fred (*Steele*) are done going lobstering. They are scarce and low priced.

Mar is down helping Aunt Kate wash. She says she is going to write soon and for you not to eat too much sugar, for Aunt Kate says your worms (??) will get to working.

**Letter Dated April 22, 1900**

*Castine, ME*

**To** Mamma (*Mrs. Charles E. Spurling*)

**From** Daughter (*Mamie Spurling*)

Dear Mamma:

Yesterday was a great day for Castine. First the Jones (*Frank Jones, Maine Central Railroad steamboat*) came in the morning which started the ball rolling. I got up at 20 min to 7 so not to miss her. She looked so pretty, all painted up new. She had quite a lot of freight for here so we had a long time to look at her. She had just started when we saw the M & M coming with a crowd from Winterport & Bucksport to play baseball with the Normals (*Castine Normal School*), so of course we waited to see who was on board. Then Ina (*Spurling*) & I went down to the studio to find out when he would take our pictures. (*Graduation pictures.*)

When we got back to the house there were several boys and girls here from Winterport who know some of the girls that were in the club here. So I played some on the piano and Ina & I sang a song or two to help entertain them.

We heard the Bangor boat blow (*Eastern Steamship Lines Bangor Boat*), so Ina & I went down but did not see any body we knew. Did not expect to see any home faces but we like to go down just for fun. This is the way I signed my name to be put on my (*graduation*) diploma "Mary Frances Spurling."

Letter Dated April 29, 1900

*Castine, ME*

**To** Brother (*Charles S. Spurling*)

**From** Sister (*Mamie Spurling*)

Dear Brother,

He (*Father, Charles E. Spurling*) was 22 days going out, had gale after gale, carried away fore gaff and tiller. He said her hull was tight and strong but her ?? (*writing unclear*) is pretty poor. He

thinks she is the dullest vessel he was ever in. He is coming to Brunswick, GA and load lumber for Thomaston. Dunn and Elliott are going to have two vessels built. I wish they would give him one of them to sail, don't you? This is his address if you would like to write to him. He will soon be on to Georgia, so if you write you will have to pretty soon.

Brunswick, GA  
c/o E. H. Mason & Co  
Schooner James A. Young

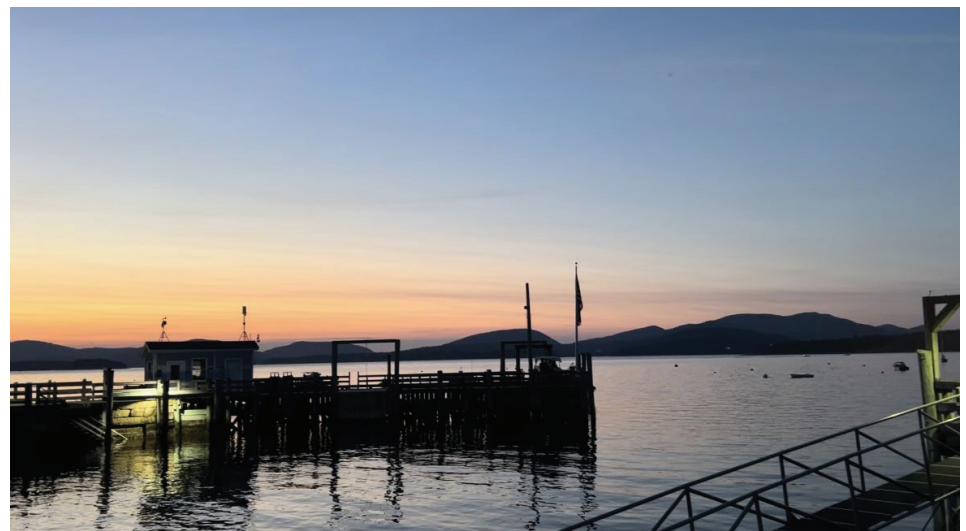
Everything goes on here in just the same old way - study, recite, review, exam and the same thing all over again. Tomorrow we are to have an exam in Astronomy. You have no idea how I dread it. I do not expect to get 10% in it. It is the hardest thing I ever tried to study in my life. I got back two of my exam papers this week. One of them was in Literature. I got 93%. The other, edagogy, I got 100%. That is the first hundred I have got this term.



*Karl Wedge's Lobster Boat Sonja  
Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



*Lyn Colby's Lobster Boat Emily  
Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



*Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



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# Cranberry Isles Sketches

PHIL WHITNEY (As Related by Dr. Louis Barrett)

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**T**his continues our series of Cranberry Isles Sketches, written by Dr. Louis Barrett, covering the years 1945-1951. We again express our appreciation to the Islesford Historical Society and their President, Gail Grandgent, for allowing us to reproduce these anecdotal stories in the Cranberry Chronicle.

## Buster Rice

Some of the men had set trawls out near Mount Desert Rock; it was getting along in the afternoon and they were on their way home. The wind was from the south; and it was breezing up rapidly. The following seas broke frequently. Now and then came an extra large wave, its crest all white; roaring and hissing as it came up to the stern, about a dozen feet high. These are always to be taken squarely, that the boat will not breach-to and roll over.

Buster Rice was as keen a boatman as the region can boast of, and he took the wave square on his stern, but he had a few tons of fish in the cockpit; the boat was loaded and didn't rise and fall quite like a feather; it was heavy and down in the water dangerously far. The wave broke, dropping tons of water on the stern. Over she rolled; Buster in the icy water under it all. He told me that, for a time, all that he could see or feel was that mess of fish all around him. Then various pieces of gear; anchors, buoys, rope and so forth, began clubbing against him.

"Suddenly I realized that I must get the hell out from under there or drown," he said. He reports that it took tremendous effort, but somehow he managed to break his way out and up into the air. The boat went down.

The fishermen have a habit of coming back more or less together for their common safety. It was good fortune that one boat happened to be nearby; especially a matter of luck that he saw Buster and was able to rescue him

before he drowned. Buster is not a man who does much swimming, ordinarily.

## Out To Traps with Erwin

It is really good for a newcomer to the islands to go out, now and then, with one of the fishermen while he hauls his lobster traps, and get himself all slime and salt spray. How well I remember being out one morning with Eber Spurling's "boy," Erwin, a huge, bewhiskered, Charles Laughton-like fellow. Jack Rosebrook was along as sternman, removing the lobsters, baiting again and sliding the traps back overboard while Erwin hauled and piloted the boat.

Erwin was telling us about Jim Crosby's yoke of oxen they'd just driven across the heath (pronounced "Hay-eth"). There were logs to be hauled and the path across the heath was the most direct way to the cutting. The heath is a flat area, about three quarters of a mile in diameter, on the southwest side of Great Cranberry Island. Pitcher plants and other unusual vegetation, including wild orchids, are to be found there plentifully. Perhaps the sea occupied this area once, but it must have been protected from the breaking waves. Centuries of floating vegetable matter slowly made it into a huge, floating field. I have often walked across it, but the ground rolls in a wave a yard or two ahead of one's feet. A long stick which, by the way, one should carry, is easily punched through, and then readily slips down out of reach. Erwin said that the oxen were nearly to the other side when

one punched its hind leg through. In its struggle, the other legs became mired. The men went for some planks and help, but before they returned, the other creature got into its belly, and the first one had only its head in sight. Slowly both oxen disappeared.

Just then, Erwin stopped talking for, as Jack lifted a trap out of the water up onto the rail, a shark swished its head after it. "Ease that trap back down, gently now, and then haul it slowly," Erwin directed. As Jack did so, Erwin reached down for the nine-pound long handled maul which lay handy. The shark came for the trap again, and as it turned, Erwin swung out with the maul, bringing it down on the shark's nose while, with his other hand, he was already reaching for his long knife lying on the deck edge by his side; with one easy stroke he slit a big gash just under the creature's gill clefts. They soon had him lying across the stern. It was all executed so gracefully and with such ease by this brawny man.

On the way back to the island, Erwin wanted to take a look at a set of trawl that Tud (Bunker) had out. Nearly a half mile of it; hooks every yard or so. To our amazement, that set of trawl appeared to be one long string of balloons. "What the hell," Erwin said. "Has someone been playing a trick on Tud? Looks like they've towed balloons all along his trawl!" They turned out to be fish; bloaters, they're called. They can puff up with air, but are not quite up to a haddock for a chowder. Laughing, we set course for the island and were

slipping along well, for Erwin now had a new diesel engine of which he was pretty proud.

Off to starboard Erwin pointed out another bloater. "That's no bloater," said Jack.

"The hell it ain't," replied Erwin. Finally, to settle the argument, we turned aside and took a closer look.

A keg.

"Pretty good lookin' keg," said Erwin.

"Let's gaff it aboard," suggested Jack.

We sat it up on end on the stern, next to the shark. A little later Erwin asked, "Did you hear that?" Adding, "that slosh; there's somethin' in that keg. Say, hand me that spike," he called to Jack. Erwin drove the spike through the side of the keg and out spurted a little stream, the size of a lead pencil, of a brownish liquid. Erwin stuck his finger in it and tasted it. "Rum," said Erwin. "That keg's drifted all the way over here, clear from Nova Scotia. Damned good rum, probably off one of the wharves over there."

"Tastes all right," agreed Jack.

We all agreed it was good rum, and being cold out there, we felt the need of a second tasting of this unexpected nectar. It was surprising how much jollier we returned, after a really hard half-day's work. The wind and the rolling of the boat made for difficulty in catching that golden stream, making Erwin remark, "Wish to hell we could get that damned keg where we could get a really good sample of the stuff." In time, we came up to the landing at Big Cranberry, and there were the women folks who'd come down as usual to see their husbands in from the sea, and to pick out some fish from the catch for supper. There were men working at baiting up tomorrow's trawl. Andrew Alley was there attending to the hogsheads of bait. Wilfred (Bunker) was helping move a huge engine to be repaired, and Ritchie Stanley came by with his wife who had awaited his

return from sailing. He glanced at the keg and smiled.

Slowly folks took interest in our keg, now standing firmly upon the edge of the landing, where all could help themselves. They did; I cannot name them all, for it was sort of confusing as some returned two or three times to refresh themselves. Even Pink Stanley's wife looked on. Ethel Wedge, the postmistress, didn't think the men folks very considerate and sent Oscar up to the house to get a dipper for the ladies. News spreads fast on the island. Folks move about and exchange news in passing, so that inside a couple of hours, it was exaggerated of course but, well, some said there wasn't a single sober soul on the island that night.

### A Sea Gull's Visit

One day, my family went to Boston to visit relatives, leaving me alone, with only the gulls for company. The gulls of the region all go about five miles out to sea every evening, to spend the night on Little Duck Island. They occupy the entire island. To land there is to walk in gull guano and to suffer their complaints, which are expressed by their noise and clapping with their wing tips if you come too close.

The gulls' young are everywhere under the ledges. Each morning, thousands fly back to the islands, and to the waters near the mainland where fishing boats discard old bait and parts of fish. One becomes very conscious of their ways, and loud and clear. Likewise, weather changes are forecast by their cries and actions. Now and then a storm brings a gull ashore, too sick or too tired to make his way home to Little Duck Island.

Alone that night of very thick fog, which was being pushed in by an easterly outside some fifty miles or more, I heard a sharp knocking on the door; it was quite late. I opened the door, first putting on the porch light, to find myself face to face with a very large gull standing there squarely before

me. He seemed to be looking me in the eye as he took a couple of quick steps toward me. "Come right in," I said, opening the screen door. He did. He looked everything over in detail, and then hopped onto the bed. I removed him. I hesitated because he was knee-high. He went over near the stove where a warm coal fire seemed to appeal to him. He declined all food, quite unlike a gull; always capable of eating almost anything. I turned on the radio and he seemed interested at once. He hopped up on the table next to it. There he must have remained all night; I retired. He awoke me at the very first signs of dawn, by clicking about with his clumsy feet and pecking loudly at the door. I opened the door. Out he went onto the wet steps, opened his wings out full a couple of times, yawning-like and took off into the "thick-o-fog."

Otherwise, it had been a lonely night. For the fog diaphone on Egg Rock and the deep prolonged moan of the horn on Great Duck Island, six miles to the south, sounded periodically. The boom of the rocks on the back side of the island and the big wash on the nearby shore, spoke of the wind that must be outside forcing in the fog, so it whipped up a rolling swell on the water. The crash of the rocks, at times, sounded like a freight train wreck. On clear nights, the lighthouse on Bakers Island flashed across the room every ninety seconds. This flash is welcome when walking home at night, as it lies directly in line with the road.



*View at Lahotan Property  
Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



# Cranberry Island Memories

HOLLY HARTLEY



*Grammy Newell and Chawa Glaser Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

**I** was moved and impressed when I read in the most recent Chronicle edition about the boyhood memories of my contemporaries, Morrie Newell and Nathan Rome. They were vividly written and told of a very different experience than my own. I felt quite jealous of their adventures, of the men that they knew and worked alongside. I began to look back at who the women were who enriched my life when I wasn't down on the beach turning over rocks to see what was under them.

On a foggy day, Robin Richman and I would say, "Let's go to Gaile's." She and her kitchen were welcoming. As she did her household tasks while we watched, she explained to us her technique. I remember how Gaile washed the drinking glasses by filling them part way full of soap and water and shaking the contents. Robin and I went to Bar

Harbor Hospital to see Gaile when Blair was born. He was adorable and she shared with us some of the messier details of giving birth.

Connie Savage was, among other things, the librarian and a woman well worth spending time with. Once after Stan Seimer had counted the houses that were occupied by "summer people" and "winter people," noting how the balance was shifting, I described this conversation to Connie. She would have none of it. "We are all one people," she said. I will carry this bit of wisdom with me always.

Evelyn "Grammie" Newell was a model. When I first met her, she was already caring for her husband who had had a stroke and couldn't care for himself. She didn't have a schedule of caregivers. She just did it. My fondest memory of her was leading the children's choir at the church. (I recently saw our choir robes

hanging limply there in the church). We had choir practice once a week and practiced singing, "Send Out Thy Light." Surely, we must have practiced the other hymns, but I always remember this one. She was the kind of person who didn't need to discipline us. We respected her.

One funny memory of joining women carrying out a challenging task involved the tennis court. When the tennis players arrived, we discovered that whoever had been charged with putting down the lines had failed to do so. Barbara Donald, Isabel Seimer, my mother, Betty Hartley, and I decided to do the deed. The clay court's lines were made of canvas straps that had to be nailed to the court. This involved a number of parallel lines, right angles and the whole thing needed to be lined up to the net. No one had ever done this before. There was a lot of debating, making little drawings, conferring and cooperation and success.

These are just a few childhood memories that stood out. Other women and men enriched and educated me as I grew older. Perhaps these little vignettes will prompt someone else to remember.



*Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*

**T**his photo spread is intended to compliment the recent article by Morrie Newell (Winter 2023 Cranberry Chronicle Edition) All photos credited to *GCIHS Archives*



*Clarence Beal on left, Wilfred Bunker on right*



*Clarence Beal*



*Beal and Bunker Dock*

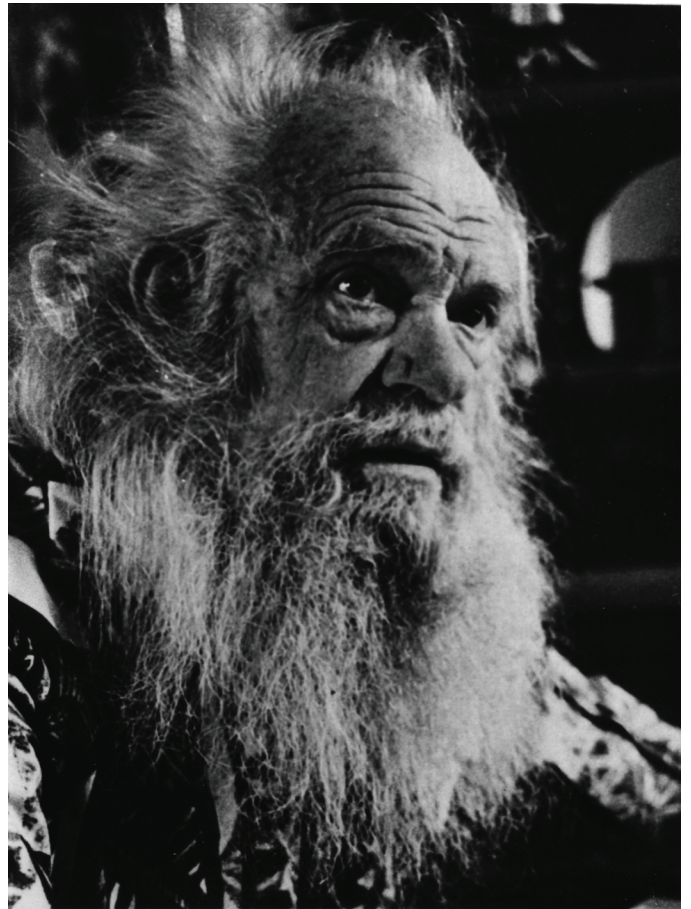


*Leslie Rice*





*Elton Buster Rice*



*Carl Nelson*



*Harold Stanley and Lena*



*Junior Bracy Fishing*



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# The Cranberry Years

EILEEN COLBY RICHARDS

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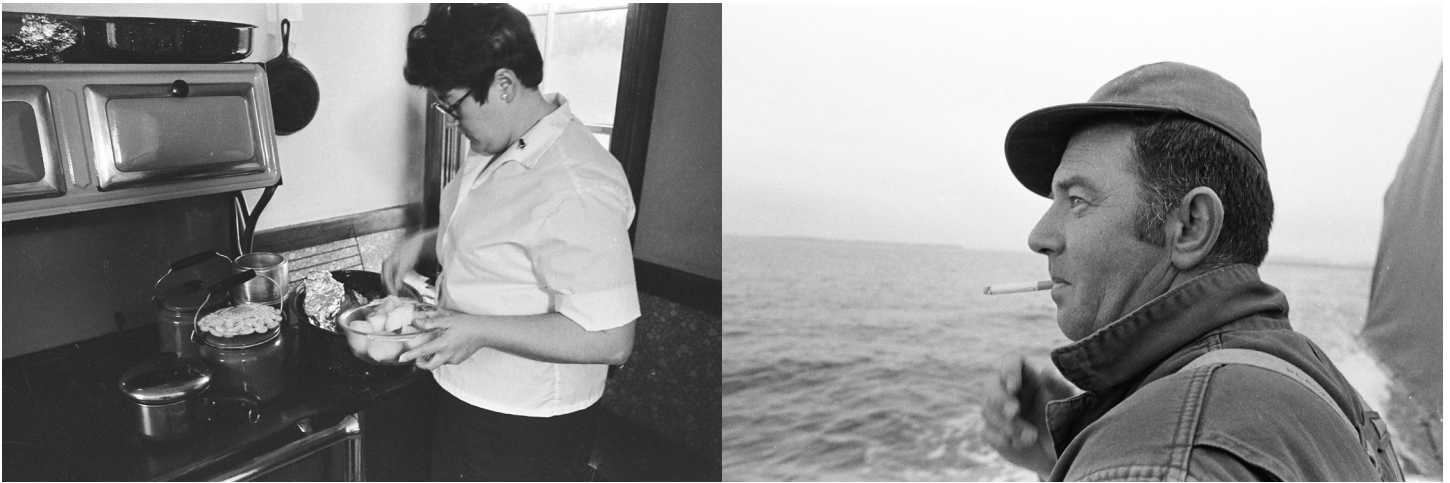


Photo Left: *Gaile Colby* Photo Right: *Tinker Colby* Photos Courtesy of Fred and Buzzy Day.

**T**he photos above perfectly tell the story of my childhood on Cranberry Island with Mom cooking on the old Sears “Royal Blue” cook-stove which has gone from wood to oil and now back to wood and my father, Royal “Tinker” Colby, who worked many jobs to support the family from fishing, driving truck off island to his many years as Captain for the Blair family out of Northeast Harbor. It was a good childhood, we were warm with plenty of food, freedom, love, and a crazy village to raise us.

I was born in 1954, the second child with big brother Lyndon arriving two years before me. My sister Rhonda was born seven years later. I remember Lynn and David Bunker were rowing in the Pool when I told him the baby was a girl and he threatened to never come ashore! Our very active Blair arrived two years after Rhonda and then my baby sister Renna’ surprised everyone five years later. It was like 3 families with Lynn and me being the test subjects, Rhonda and Blair with fewer restrictions and then came Renna’ who was mom’s mini me and never let you forget she was the

baby.

When I was growing up, we had no cell phones or computers and all day in front of the black and white TV with tin foil wrapped rabbit ears was not going to happen. We would row in the Pool and at the shore, we fished, swam and played at the playground. Other activities included playing badminton on the front lawn of Kitty Peterson’s house and Capture-the-Flag on the huge lawn at the Leibow home on the Lane. I remember playing hopscotch on the hill in front of Karl and Clara Wedge’s house while potatoes baked in the pile of leaves that had been raked and saved for just this event. I have never had a potato to match those.

Winter meant ice skating on the pond behind Aunt Ada and Uncle Charles’s house (now Watson’s) on Dog Point Road. All the kids would work after school and on the weekends as well to keep the pond shoveled. We were always making improvements to the wooden plows we would make to clear the snow. We probably spent more time repairing the plow than actually using it for its intended purpose. Uncle Charles

had a cellar full of skates hanging up for those who had outgrown last year’s hand-me-downs, and his brother Buster Rice would sharpen them if needed. I remember a few bonfires and hot cocoas but mostly just that feeling of freedom when finally, being able to skate after all the work of clearing the snow. When I could skate backwards, I thought I was Peggy Fleming!

We all worked as soon as we could whether mowing lawns, babysitting, or working for Beal & Bunker. I started babysitting when I was 11 or 12 and at 14, I began working at the Cranberry Cove Restaurant during the summer and stayed all through High School. This was an excellent lesson in hard work, manners, and the value of a dollar. At 14 I went away to High School at Lee Academy in Northern Maine. Many kids were there from both islands. I would return home a few times after graduating for short stints until my return in 1999. I worked with my sister-in-law Emily Colby and at the Cranberry General Store with Renna’ until August of 2000 when my sister Rhonda called from Ellsworth. Her Cystic Fibrosis was worse and needed



me to come. Renna', my daughter Heather and I gave her the holidays she wanted. She passed away in 2001 and I stayed for a while with her two sons. I came home in 2004 to work and be with family. I worked at the store and in 2006 I became a Postmaster Relief at the Cranberry Isles Post Office.

My beloved sister-in-law Emily was diagnosed with cancer, and I was asked to move in with her and Lynn to help. We lost Emily in 2007 but I stayed on with Lynn as his Cystic Fibrosis was worsening. We would watch the jewelry channel and cooking shows, Rachel Ray was a favorite and having Gary Gould visit and share a meal was a highlight for him. Lynn passed away in 2009.

Renna' also had Cystic Fibrosis, but she lost a battle with cancer in 2010. Mom and I cared for her at the trailer

where she lived. Renna' was the person who loved playing cards and board games. Many a winter night was spent disagreeing over Yahtzee scores.

So much loss, my father died in 1977 of a brain aneurysm and the recent passing of my stepfather Arvard Savage who was Dad to us all, and my mother Gaile's passing two years ago from cancer.

It is very strange for me when I bring up one of the siblings in a conversation and they are not known to the person with whom I am conversing. I think, how do you not know them, they were Cranberry. I can hear Lynn laugh at the store, Rhonda's giggle after a glass of forbidden wine and Renna' declaring loudly that she was the baby. I am sorry if you did not know them; they were amazing as Blair will testify.

These are some of my memories of

Cranberry, funny, sad and beautiful. You will have your own and, if you just arrived on our beautiful island, welcome and enjoy every minute making amazing memories on these shores. The people and places are one of a kind and they will always have your back.

Now I have come to the end of my Cranberry years with retirement and selling the house. My son Kenneth and I begin a new adventure closer to my daughter Heather and her family. There are many things that I have not had in my life, but my Cranberry memories are unique and precious and will go with me on my new adventure. Thank you.



*Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



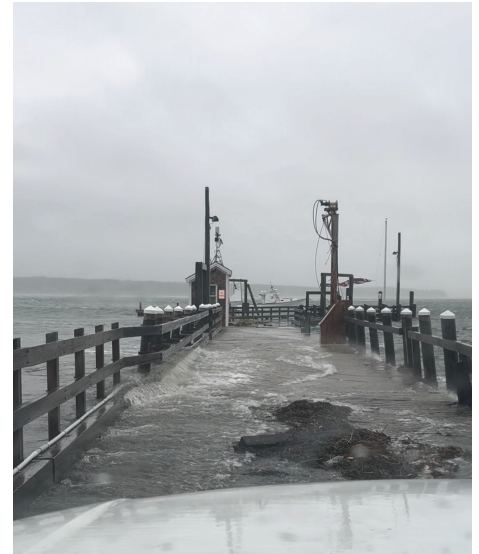
*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy*

wrath of the storm, where the ramp to the floats was twisted, turned and resting in the water. Making the prospects of daytime docking of boats for spring and summer residents looking dubious. On Mink Brook Road, the seas melded with the Heath to make almost one uninterrupted water way with no beach or road to traverse. Waters assaulted Newman and Gray Boatyard bringing their destructive power to the threshold of the buildings and many of the winter-stored boats kept on their property. Homes all over the island had standing water on or near their property and a number of homes closer to the shore dealt with significant property damage. Island infrastructure such as electrical lines, septic systems, and roads, all suffered damage as well. Nothing on the island escaped the strength of the January storms.

GCI was not alone. Little Cranberry Island (LCI) also felt the sting of Poseidon's rage and suffered tremendously from the storms. Notably, Islesford Dock Restaurant and other dock businesses situated along the

Fortunately, despite the beating from Mother Nature, the restaurant held on, thanks to earlier work on its pilings and the efforts of caretakers. However, the storms caused steps leading to businesses on the dock to disappear, and rocks washed ashore near the neighboring museum making them practically inaccessible. As they prepare for tourist season, which is vital to the island's economy, the businesses must consider what mitigation can be undertaken to save them in the future. Islesford Boatworks, where aspiring boatwrights learn the trade, also suffered significant damage. The flooding required heavy repair and caused some concerns about whether a class would be able to attend this summer. Cranberry Isles Fisherman Co-op was not spared either as one of its buildings washed out and was beyond repair.

Life on Sutton Island came to a virtual standstill as Sutton Island's dock was entirely eviscerated. The lifeline to the mainland and a critical service for those living on Sutton Island over the spring and summer disappeared overnight,



*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy*

leaving the Town to search for solutions to rebuild the dock quickly. Sutton Island caretakers and craftsmen were unable to care for and provide support to island buildings and were left in limbo as locals searched for ways to bring materials and items to the island.

Across all of the Town of Cranberry Isles, the floods reshaped the coast by moving Atlas-sized rocks across the shore, shifting massive dunes of sand from one area to another, and leveling vegetation. It was as if the Earth was a giant Etch-A-Sketch that was given a tremendous shaking and then had to recraft the shores from memory, with a semblance of how things were but nothing being quite as you remember.

For residents on GCI, these storms were a double blow. Barely a year before, GCI lost its General Store to a fire and work was still ongoing toward its eventual reopening. The island was dealing with two tragedies in less than 13 months.

However, the most significant blow to islands came as Islanders



were still preparing for the storms. This blow was not one that could be repaired or mended, no matter the Islanders' grit or resolve. On January 5, 2024, Cory Alley, Chair of the Town's Select Board, set out for provisions to ensure his family could weather the upcoming storms. On his way to his lobster boat, Cory collapsed in his outboard and suddenly passed away. The community was left without its leader and, along with Cory's family (wife Cari and his four children), were left to mourn.

No matter the storm's devastation, every setback gives an opportunity for people and the community to show their combined grit and strength. Cranberry Islanders once again displayed that they are resilient, caring and community minded. Only three days after storms, Maine Seacoast Mission and a platoon of volunteers took to the beaches and areas along the coast to clean up debris. In one day, they were able to gather 20 contractor-sized trash bags of rubble from the shores.



*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy*

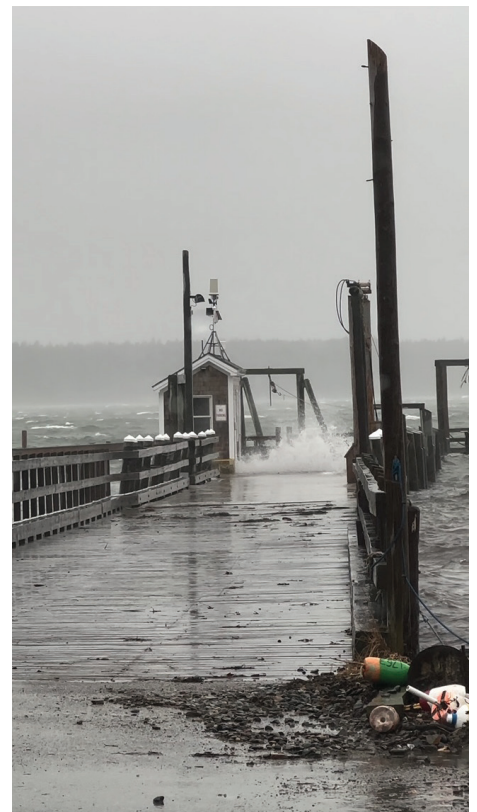


*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy*

On Islesford, the students and teachers at Ashley Bryan School helped volunteers clean up the beach, while taking the opportunity to play a little show-and-tell with the volunteers about their school. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hopped into action by flying helicopters overhead to survey damage and to determine how they could best provide support to Maine's Downeast region. As a result, FEMA offered a number of grants to local communities, of which the Town was a beneficiary and plans to use to help rebuild the damage done to the Cranberry Isles.

On May 26, 2024, the community recognized Cory Alley and his contribution to the community with a flotilla that included approximately 49 vessels and over one hundred people. In typical

islander fashion, life continues on despite the challenges. The resolute nature and sense of community of those who brave the shores of Cranberry Isles is embodied by their ability to persevere and continue on with day-to-day life despite challenges and in the face of adversity. As Poseidon dives back into his watery abode to slumber once more, Cranberry Islanders prepare to work the seas and start life anew, with a greater appreciation of the special community that we live in.



*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy*



# Three Families Find Home on Great Cranberry Island

JENNA MANN



*Photo Courtesy of the Mann Family*

I'm writing this in April, and here on Great Cranberry Island, spring has just begun to perk up. We've had a couple of blue-sky days strung together, mid-to-upper 40s, which is the kind of weather you can comfortably wear a sweater in if the sun is hitting you just right and the breeze is quiet. Or, if you're a kid growing up on this particular island in Maine, the kind of weather you can run around in shorts and a T-shirt, having an epic nerf battle and not feeling the slightest bit cold.

This is what's happening outside of our windows today – the other two families that also moved in this year, the Wedges and the Thompsons, have children around the same ages and on days like this we are greeted with the extremely wholesome sounds of kid-laughter and squeals as they run past the windows and dive into the grass dodging foam bullets. It's a welcome noise after the long quiet of winter, when most

catching up with neighbors happens on the mailboat to Northeast Harbor and back, and most of the sound coming from outside is wind howling through the trees. Our son, Theo, is too young for nerf battles but the other kids always greet him with excitement, dance to make him laugh, blow bubbles he chases with his arms stretched towards the sky. Our three families moved in just this past year and yet there is already community (within the already tight-knit community of Great Cranberry Island) in our little section of it.

As seems to be the case with most people who move here, each of us found the island in different ways. Back in April of last year Heath and Aubrey Wedge (along with their four children: Maddie, Otto, Marigold, and Rosie) moved into the Woodlands house. Many readers will already know that Heath grew up on Great Cranberry, and the CIRT (Cranberry Isles Realty Trust) housing opportunity was the perfect way to move his family back home. A few weeks ago, Aubrey and Heath welcomed their beautiful baby girl Zoë into the world and a few days later brought her home to the island. It has been heartwarming to watch our new community surround their family with support and love, but it is also a testament to the joy and warmth their family has brought to the community. On a sunny day it is rare to walk outside without seeing one of the Wedge kids running around, always greeting us with a big wave and wanting to share something--the ring of a bell on a new bike, a tadpole egg on a finger, an invitation for Theo to come out and play.

The Thompson Family felt immediately drawn to Great Cranberry Island when they looked down at a fatefully opened



*Photo Courtesy of the Thompson Family*

newspaper while in a laundromat in Southwest Harbor and discovered the CIRT ad on that same page. After traveling the country for two years with their son Ford, Dane and Jamie were looking for a place for their family to live. They were not sure exactly what they were looking for until they read the ad but knew right away that it would be a perfect fit. According to Jamie they were aware of the physical beauty of the island before they moved here in November, but what has surprised them the most is that they have found that the real magic lies in the community, in the people. As their next-door neighbors we can attest that the Thompsons bring that same magic with them wherever they go. When we first moved in, we did not have an island car for a few months, and during that time they would often help us with rides to and from the dock. The ten-minute walk can feel refreshing in the spring– but on a freezing, windy winter morning when you are pregnant and running late with a baby in a stroller...it can be a journey. When I thanked Dane for all the rides he shrugged and said simply, "This is what we do." I believe the he was referring to was humans, and maybe Great Cranberry Islanders, but it is more accurately, what the Thompsons do. Their whole family radiates kindness, and we are lucky to be their



neighbors.

When we got the news that our family had been selected to move into one of the CIRT houses in December there was a good percentage of family and friends from our home state of New Jersey who thought we were crazy. My husband Kevin had just graduated from a master's program at Notre Dame, we had spent two years out in Indiana – away from the beaches we had grown up close to – and we were seeking the ocean once again. At the time Theo was only a few months old and it felt especially important for us to find the right place to live. We were looking for a place where he would be safe, where we would be surrounded by nature, and where we could all find a real sense of community. The search was getting

exhausting, and truly I'm not sure too many places exist at the center of that very specific Venn Diagram. With a bit of desperation, I kept zooming out on the map on the housing website I was searching until I saw a little dot pop up in the ocean off the coast of Maine. We had a lot of questions, went back and forth on the idea for a while – the move being such a drastic lifestyle change and one we didn't know too much about – but when we visited last June and were met with the specific feeling of peace that welcomes everyone who steps off the boat here we knew we had to go all in. People would ask if we were prepared for the isolation of living in a small island community but truthfully it is far less isolating here than most of the other places we have been. We get

on the mailboat, and people greet our son by name, already smiling when they see him. The things that feel isolating about modern American society – as my husband puts it, moving from box to box to box (home box, car box, work box) – are simply not prevalent in a community where people genuinely know each other and strive for each other's friendship. There is no traffic or commute between where we live and nature, we are quite literally in nature. The air is clean, the stars are clear, and one day Theo and his brother (who will be born in July) will get to run around with their friends dodging nerf bullets, laughing outside of windows, and wearing shorts when the grownups think it's still too cold.

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## A Life Well Lived

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*Photo Courtesy of  
Fred Quackenbush's Family*

**F**red Quackenbush was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on September 23, 1929, the only child of Fred W. and Elizabeth Quackenbush. He was the original "Free Range" kid. At 6, he got a job cleaning rental fishing boats on the Manasquan River inlet. He progressed from there to being a tour guide for city folks who wanted to come dig clams on the shore, or go crabbing, and saw it as quite a novelty to have an elementary age child as their guide! At 14, he began to crew a charter boat that went out into the Gulfstream for giant tuna. Many of the customers on this boat were family from NYC! They tipped well and Fred helped support his parents during the recovery from the Great Depression. During summers, he slept on the boat and seldom went home. He had his own small boat too, and helped retrieve dummy torpedoes from the bay and return them to the testing areas.

In high school, Fred played the trumpet and even the double bell euphonium. He enjoyed playing the trumpet for many years afterwards. He always played Auld Lang Syne outside every New Years at midnight, much to the annoyance of some of the neighbors!

Fred joined the Navy after graduating from high school, hoping to continue to be near the sea. Alas, the Navy realized he had great aptitude for electronics and put him stateside working as an electronics technician.

Although the first girl he ever kissed was Wini Smart, it was Jessie Geddes who won his heart. Fred continued to date his high school sweetheart while in the Navy. When he was in Mississippi, Jessie and her family came down from New Jersey to visit him. While they were there, they decided to get married. (Jessie's father said he wouldn't put any more money in parking meters

until they did!) They were married on February 9, 1951. Their marriage lasted 57 years.

After his wedding to Jessie, they began to have a family; first Richard, then Lorrie, so Fred returned to civilian life. In the early days of color TV, he had a TV repair business. The electronics business was growing rapidly in the 1950s. It eventually led his family to move to Hollywood, Florida in 1956, where his company developed a plotting board and worked on the Space Shuttle program for NASA, as well as military and private ventures. The family became very active in the new and growing Hollywood Hills United Methodist Church.

Fred was a great tease. During the Cuban missile crisis, the family had an underground bomb shelter installed in their Hollywood back yard. He convinced his niece Brenda that it was a stranded submarine! In another joke, he and some fellow engineers built a telephone booth-sized contraption at work and called it an "Argon Accumulator." They convinced other employees that a few minutes inside would sharpen their minds and give them a real pick-me-up!

Son, Richard, married Ginny Tew. They have three children: David, Sharon and Michael. Michael and his wife, Anne Marie, have a daughter, Quinn. Fred enjoyed watching her grow in his later years, as they live in Hixson.

Daughter, Lorrie, married EB Beasley. They have two children, Melinda and Brian, and four grandchildren: Margaret, Madeline, Eric and Kaylynn. They all live in the Houston area.

Fred enjoyed playing tennis and sailing. He and Jessie enjoyed travelling, going to Europe, Scandinavia, the Holy Land, Australia, Hawaii, as well as many travels around the USA in their succession of RVs.

After a brief move to Gainesville, Florida, where Fred worked for another company building mobile health

testing units, Fred and Jessie returned to Hollywood. He decided to return to school at 54 years old and earned a Bachelor of Science with Distinction degree in 1983 from Nova University.

As Jessie's health began to decline. Fred became her caregiver until her passing in 2008. Jessie had left Fred a list of "acceptable spouses" if he were to consider remarriage. Wini Smart was on the list, so Fred reunited with his childhood friend from New Jersey! Fred and Wini were married in 2009. This marriage brought him four stepchildren: Gail Cleveland-Waite, Debbie Martinez, Diane Polky, and John Diehl.

Fred and Wini spent time as missionaries in the Dominican Republic, where Wini's daughter Debbie ran a school. They traveled between Boca Grande, Florida and Southwest Harbor, Maine, as Wini had art studios in both locations. It was a busy and rewarding life.

When Wini's health declined, Fred became a caregiver again. After her death in 2017, he decided to move to Hixson to be with Rich and Ginny. After Rich passed away in 2018, Fred's grandkids moved him into Ginny's house on Mother's Day weekend, 2018. He became active at Hixson UMC and enjoyed his "retirement" here.

Fred's faith was always growing. Ginny would joke that she had a holy man living in her "father-in-law" apartment, as he would get up about 5:00, eat one Krispy Kreme doughnut with his coffee, and have devotional time until he came upstairs for breakfast with her at 8:30! His faith sustained him, gave him joy and purpose, and helped carry him to his final home on May 11, 2024.

Fred had the brain of a genius, the heart of a saint, and the soul of a poet. His was truly a life well lived, and he will be missed.

His service will be June 22, 2024, at Hixson United Methodist Church. Visitation will be at 10:00 and the service at 11:00.

In lieu of flowers, please consider the following charities that Fred strongly supported:

The Missionary Church International  
PO Box 1761  
Columbia, SC 29202  
Attn: For Dominican Missions

Chattanooga Food Bank  
2009 Curtain Pole Road  
Chattanooga, TN 37406  
[www.chattfoodbank.org](http://www.chattfoodbank.org)

Doctors Without Borders  
40 Rector St, 16th Floor  
New York NY 10006

Habitat for Humanity  
322 W Lamar St  
Americus GA 31709-3543



*Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



# Spurling House History

PHIL WHITNEY



*This is the house which burned down in April, 1928. Phil Whitney's grandfather, Elwood Spurling, came across the road and built the current house in the Summer/Autumn of 1928.  
Photo Courtesy of GCIHS*

**T**he “Spurling House” was constructed during the summer of 1928, after the Spurling’s previous house across the road burned down in the spring of 1928. A chimney fire started while Elwood Spurling was using the kitchen wood stove. He was alone in the house, as Ella and Dorothy Spurling were living in Ellsworth for the winter, while Dorothy spent her Senior year at Ellsworth High School. The fire was discovered by Tud Bunker, who ran to the house to let Elwood know that the place was on fire. There was no fire department back then. But with neighborhood assistance, much of the downstairs furniture and other items (such as Dorothy’s old grade school papers, etc.) were rescued before the house burned flat. These rescued items found their way across the road to the new house, and most are still in existence in the new house today.

The Spurlings, who were my grandparents, were known by most island natives as “Aunt Ella” and “Uncle Elwood” since they were related to just about everybody around

the Cranberry Isles. Summer folks usually referred to them as “Mr. & Mrs. Spurling.” (As a *wee tyke* years ago, I could always tell who-was-who on the islands by how they addressed my grandparents.) Ella (“Nanna,” to brother Deane and myself) was the first schoolteacher at the new Longfellow School in 1905. She was a Bates from Brooksville, and had been educated at Castine Normal School, now Maine Maritime Academy. She married Elwood (“Papa”) the previous year of 1904.

Elwood didn’t have much education, having left school in the 6th grade, after jumping through a window to avoid a whipping by the teacher, never to return. During the early years of the 20th Century, he was a farmer. (A horse and cow barn stood until ca. 1970 in the field across from “Nanny’s House” (Julia Bunker Spurling, Elwood’s mother), which is now the Cameron & Nancy Wood residence. He then became a lobster fisherman, operated several herring weirs, sailed for various wealthy summer folk during the season, and was for many years during the 20’s, 30’s, and 40’s, the Town Road Commissioner. He also had very extensive real estate holdings on Cranberry Island, mostly inherited, which were gradually sold off up through the 1950’s. He sold most properties for several hundred dollars here and there. He always said they weren’t worth much and he needed the money. As an example, he sold (28) acres on the Backside in 1945 to some family friends for \$300. The family friends sold this land in the early 1990’s for over \$200,000.

When Dorothy Spurling married Philmore Whitney in 1935, they established Whitney’s Electric

Service in Southwest Harbor. When not sleeping in the back room of the store, which at that time was located on Clark Point Road, they commuted down to the island and stayed with the Spurlings at the house. This lifestyle lasted until they left for Boston in 1942 where Philmore had wartime work at MIT in Cambridge. During the wartime years and into the late 1940’s their son, Deane Spurling Whitney, often lived with his grandparents and went to school on the island.

The Depression made life difficult for most islanders, and the Spurlings fared no differently. To help bring in extra money, rooms were rented to the schoolteachers during the late 30’s and early 40’s. Some of the teachers who stayed there were Ralph Springer, Lawrence Standish and Margaret Nice. All became good friends of the entire family. (Side Notes: Lawrence Standish left Cranberry Island to join the military service in WW II. He was not heard from in nearly (50) years and was believed killed in the war. One day, sometime around 1990, he suddenly appeared at the back door of the Whitney House in Southwest Harbor. It is a gross understatement to report that my folks were shocked and thrilled to see him again. Margaret (Mulroney) Nice married Millard



*Whitney house year ca. 1930  
Photo Courtesy of GCIHS*

Nice of Bass Harbor and lived there for many years. Her First Cousin, Brian Mulroney, went on to become Prime Minister of Canada in the 1980's. During the late 1950's, as the Spurlings grew older, they began spending portions of the winter months in Southwest Harbor with Philmore and Dorothy Whitney. Elwood would come back down to the island for several days occasionally to check up on things. He was in declining health in 1959-1960. One day in August, 1960 after having lunch, he complained of not feeling well and lay down on the living room sofa. He went to sleep and never woke up. He was 78 years old. Ella moved off island that day and never spent another night in the house. She lived with the Whitneys in Southwest Harbor and passed away in November, 1979 at age 102. The house was used sporadically by Deane and Phil Whitney and their families, mostly during the summer months, until September 1, 2001,

when Phil and Karin Whitney retired from the Foreign Service and moved back, year-round, to Cranberry Island and the "Spurling House."

#### Additional Notes:

- 1) This house was the first one to be wired for electricity on Great Cranberry Island, as electrical service to the island was first established in September, 1928. Many of the original light fixtures are still in use.
- 2) The Spurlings may have had the first electric lights on the island, but they were rather slow to catch up with certain other modern conveniences. Their first telephone was not installed until Summer, 1957. (The original phone book, still in excellent condition, was found in 2001 when Phil and Karin Whitney opened up and cleaned the living room fireplace for the first time in nearly fifty years.) Until 1957, writing letters between Cranberry Island and Southwest Harbor was the primary means of

communication for the Spurlings.

- 3) The rear porch of the house was originally open air until the late 1930's. It was then glassed in. The separate garage, which was formerly Elwood's boathouse, was moved from the shore at the Pool to its current location sometime in the early 1930's. In 2023, a new addition doubled the size of the garage.

- 4) Vinyl siding was installed at the house over the wood exterior in the late 1980's.

- 5) In 2017, the rear (west) side of the house was extended out six feet, and the side entrance door also transferred westerly six feet. This enabled the kitchen to be remodeled and expanded into the old back porch space, and also a downstairs rear bedroom was transformed into a larger office area. The house exterior and the remaining interior rooms still look much the same as the day Nanna and Papa left the Spurling House in August 1960.



*Spurling House Photo Courtesy of GCIHS*



# 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.

### 2023–2024 MEMBERSHIP LIST

#### Benefactors

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Richard Beal  
Garth Hallberg and Elise White  
Holly Hartley  
Mr & Mrs Orton P. Jackson, Jr.  
John W. Goodwin, Jr. Construction  
Alex Johnston & Kate Valenta  
David Milliken  
Dr. Richard N. Pierson, Jr.  
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**The Great Cranberry Island Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 12**  
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