

# Cranberry Chronicle

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

## President's Report

MICHAEL TODD



*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy/A&B Photography*

**D**ear Members of the Great Cranberry Island Community, As I step into the role of president of the Great Cranberry Island Historical Society, I am filled with gratitude and excitement for what lies ahead. First and foremost, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our outgoing president, Phil Whitney. Phil's dedication to our community has been nothing short of inspiring. Under his leadership, we have seen significant expansions in our facilities and services, allowing us to better serve our residents and visitors. Phil's vision and tireless work have truly set a high bar for me to follow, and I am deeply appreciative of his contributions.

As I introduce myself, I want to share a bit about my background. I graduated from the United States Military Academy and Case Western Reserve University School of Law and served as a soldier before transitioning into a career as a prosecutor and civil rights attorney. I bring a commitment to service, justice, and community engagement, and I am eager to work alongside all of you to explore how we can best support our island and evaluate our operations as we move into this new era.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the incredible efforts of our volunteers and board members who have worked tirelessly to

make this summer a resounding success. From running engaging children's programs to organizing movie nights, art shows featuring local artists, and lively karaoke sessions, your dedication has brought joy and enrichment to our community. The golf cart shuttle service has made it easier for everyone to access events and facilities, and I cannot thank you enough for staffing the museum and ensuring it remains a welcoming place for all. It is the enthusiasm and commitment of volunteers like you that breathe life into our society and strengthen our community bonds.

A special thank you goes out to Kaitlyn and Katherine for their partnership with their art studio, "Maker in the

## GREAT CRANBERRY ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD

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Sharon Morrell

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*Welcome back, Cranberry General Store! We missed you. Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

## Notes of Appreciation

*Peter Buchsbaum* - For providing approximately 10 years of guided nature trail walks to hundreds of nature enthusiasts, and for recently climbing aboard as an enthusiastic Cranberry Explorer golf cart driver.

*Holly Hartley and Molly Newell* - For researching archival records to correct and expand background information on the Wall of Fame photos, and for preparing wall displays of maritime photographs relating to Cranberry Island boating history.

*Amanda Bracy* - For generously sharing her talent and her amazing photographs from around the Cranberry Islands and allowing us to showcase some of them in our newsletter. Amanda has hosted a couple of successful summer art shows, so far, at Cranberry House and we look forward to more shows in the future.

*Gordon Hardy* - For assistance editing this edition of the Cranberry Chronicle.

## 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

### Passings

**Ruth Westphal,**  
August 27, 2024



*Ruth Westphal Photo  
Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

**Ann Sullivan,**  
September 22, 2024



*Ann Sullivan Photo Courtesy  
of GCIHS Archives*





*Maker in the Middle Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

Middle.” Your creativity and passion enriched our summer season, and the collaborative events we held together fostered a sense of unity and inspiration among artists and art lovers alike. It is partnerships like yours that remind us of the importance of collaboration in our community.

In the spirit of recognizing accomplishments, I would like to thank Eileen Richards and the GCIHS for their efforts in honoring Michael Westphal and his courageous battle against Parkinsonism. His story of resilience and determination serves as a powerful reminder of the strength found within our community. Together, we must continue to support one another and celebrate the triumphs of our



*Honoring Mike Westphal Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*



*Molly Singerling and Divot piloting the Cranberry Explorer Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

neighbors.

As we reflect on our summer successes, I want to express my gratitude to our dedicated staff who have kept our grounds beautiful and maintained our expanding facilities. Your hard work and attention to detail have ensured that our spaces remain inviting and functional for everyone, and we are thankful for your commitment to our mission.

To our generous donors, your support is the backbone of our organization. Without your contributions, we would not be able to operate or preserve the rich history of our community. We are on the cusp of announcing a significant fundraising campaign that will not only sustain our current operations but also ensure that future generations can enjoy and learn from the history of Great Cranberry Island.

I would also like to take a moment to welcome the new families who joined us this summer and are now part of the tapestry of island history. We hope you enjoyed your first summer on the island, and we look forward to getting to know you better. To our long-term residents—both year-round and

summer residents—thank you for your unwavering support and for making Great Cranberry Island a wonderful and nurturing community. Your presence is what makes our island truly special.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Great Cranberry General Store for reopening and supporting our island. Your efforts to provide essential goods and services are invaluable to our community. Not to mention, Holly's cookies are out of this world! Additionally, the Ladies Aid Society



*Bruce Komusin Memorial one of Cranberry House's Founders Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*





*Halloween Costume Party Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

deserves our gratitude for their ongoing support of various island events and initiatives. Thank you for fostering community spirit and helping bring our residents together.

Let us not forget the vital role of our fire department, which ensures our safety and well-being. Your dedication and readiness to protect our community is deeply appreciated. And to Cezar, thank you for operating Hitty's Café for another year and for feeding our island guests. Your delicious offerings bring people together and provide a respite for weary island travelers.

As I conclude my message, I want to sincerely apologize if I have missed thanking anyone. Each of you plays an essential role in making Great Cranberry Island the vibrant community it is today, and I am grateful for your contributions.

I am excited about the future of the Great Cranberry Island Historical Society and our community as a whole. Let us work together to embrace new opportunities, foster connections, and continue to cherish the history that binds us. Please feel free to reach out to me with your ideas, concerns, or just

to say hello. I look forward to engaging with each of you as we embark on this journey together.

Thank you for your support, and I look forward to another great year.

Sincerely,  
Michael Todd



*Summertime Fun at Cranberry House  
Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*



*Cranberry House Halloween  
Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*



*Eagles and Sailboat Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*



# Notes From the Office

SHARON MORRELL



*Rosie and Alistair*

*Photo Courtesy of Sharon Morrell*

Things seem subdued at Cranberry House, at this moment anyway. We head into winter, ready for a rest! For 2024-2025, the membership has voted some new members onto the board and shuffled around some of the old-timers. We look forward to a fresh approach and some new, inspiring, ideas to bring Cranberry House into the next decade.

There are not a whole lot of physical changes to report in the building or on the grounds. We continue to hope to find the labor needed to remodel the kids' Smart Shack for next season.

The comfortable and well-appointed accommodations at Cranberry House remain available, over the winter, for various events, celebrations, and meetings. If you value all the benefits Cranberry House brings to our beloved island, please consider donating toward our mission.

Submitted by,

Sharon Morrell (and Rosie)



*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy/A&B Photography*



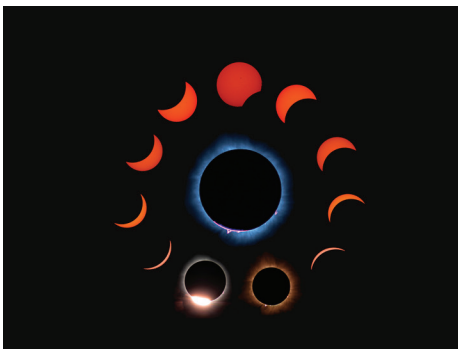
*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy/A&B Photography*

**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/](https://www.facebook.com/CranberryHouseGCIHS/)

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



*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy/A&B Photography*



*Majestic Buck on Carl Brooks' Lawn  
Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*



## Archives Update

The Archives Committee continues to fulfill public requests, collaborate with outside organizations, plan for next season, and make enhancements to our digital archive system. In August we received a visit from the curator and managing director of the Moritzburg Castle of Saxony, Germany who are putting together an international exhibit about the traveling show of Samuel Hadlock. During their visit we reviewed archives and toured the Preble House thanks to Robin Freeman. They hope to produce a condensed version of their exhibit to be shown in the area.

Great strides were made with updating the Wall of Fame booklet that provides information about the familiar faces hanging on the museum wall. At a glance you will see their occupation, immediate relations, and their island home.

We have so many other projects to move forward with but need you to lend a hand. If you are interested in sharing your time and talents to preserving and making accessible our community's history, please reach out to one of our committee members, Holly Hartley, Sharon Morrell, Molly Singerling, Nancy Wood, Karin Whitney, Phil Whitney, and Wendy Todd

## Hitty's Cafe

CHEF CEZAR FERREIRA

Hitty's Café had a great opening Memorial Day weekend but overall, this was a very challenging season for the cafe and for me personally. Between the bad weather and fog in June, critical shortage of staff, a lengthy bout of Covid and various supply issues, it was a very difficult season.

The Café had to close on Mondays for the first time in 11 years. As much as I hated to do it, I needed the time to allow me to manage all the business issues I could not deal with during serving hours, make supply runs and have a little rest. Even though, regrettably, I admit this year was not the most productive year since I started operating the Cafe 11 years ago, I remain proud to have served the island community, the tourists, and the day trippers.

Hitty's Café will be back next year, with a regular schedule, and happily, there are already more committed staff, so I will not have to be working alone. Signs are all pointing toward a great 2025 season. Thank you for your support. See you next year for Memorial Day weekend and beyond.



*Photo Courtesy of Cezar Ferreira*

## New Trustee Biography

MOLLY SINGERLING



*Photo Courtesy of Molly Singerling*

I am excited to be a trustee. I have wonderful memories from my childhood on Cranberry in the 1960s. I enjoyed freedom to explore nature and experienced wonderful role models from the year-round residents.

My grandparents, Sterling and Evelyn Newell, discovered Cranberry after being invited for a visit in the late 1940s by Maynard and Leah Murch. Once my grandparents purchased homes at the end of Harding Point Road, on Long Ledge, in the 1950s, my family was invited up for summers. Fortunately for us, our parents Hal and Ruth Newell were able to purchase the homes in the early 1980s. Today, my niece Emily Howell and nephew Phil Newell and their families have what was my grandparents' home and my husband, Jim, and I enjoy the home I grew up in.

Jim and I spend winters in Naples, Florida, and look forward to returning to the island for the summer months. It makes my heart full that our children Abigail and Hannah have created their own memories of growing up on Cranberry.

Many mornings you will find me walking the Cranberry Road with our dog, Divot.



# Part 7 of the Birlem Family Letters

PHIL WHITNEY



*We continue, in sequence, excerpts from the Birlem Family Letters. The letters printed in this **December, 2024 Cranberry Chronicle** were written between May 17, 1900 and March 12, 1911. 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*



*Frances Bulger Spurling*

*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

**Letter Dated Jan. 2nd, 1898**

*Saint Piere, Martinique Island, French West Indies*

*"Another New Year and a Happy New Year to All"*

**To:** Frances [Bulger] Spurling

**From:** Samuel N. Bulger

My Dear Daughter Frances,

I will write to you a few lines this pleasant Sabbath morning in answer to your much welcome letters of Nov. 21st and Dec. 5th which I received on my arrival here of the 30th after a hard rough and tedious passage of (26) days, almost sick and worn out.

I have been about sick most part of the passage but had to keep around and look after the vessel. I thought I shipped a mate that was a navigator, but he is not. The most he knows is profanity and how to tell what is not true. Frank (*the cook*) has done well this

hard passage. I have told him not to bother so much but to give them beef and bread but all had a square meal. All I ate for several days was porridge. That was my Christmas dinner. My side hurt me where my ribs are broken. Then it would go into the pit of my stomach and distress me terribly and my food made it all the worse. It is some better but I do not feel well. I guess something is the matter with my liver. I thought one spell I was going to cave in.

If I live to get home again, I am going to stay there. With the rest of what time I do live, still my ambition is to do what I can. God never put us here to idle away our days, but I think I have dragged on the ocean about long enough.

Not much money to be made nowadays by going. I guess we can get along some way.

Glad to hear Florence [Bulger Joy] and Bert [Warren Adelbert Spurling (1870-1965, called Bert)] had got settled down to housekeeping [married November 14, 1898]. Hope they will enjoy life and prosper. I think Bert's head was level for doing so. I think there is more comfort to be on your own roost.

Well, Frances, I have four sturdy young fellows before the mast. The best I have ever had. All Christians and have been baptized; no profane language, no growling. Only from the mate who does not amount to a hill of beans, his is a

I have not had an occasion to speak a cross word to anyone on the voyage



*Charles Spurling (the elder)*

*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

outside of the mate. He lied to me. Told me he was a navigator. I might as well have kept Jim. When anyone deceives me, I have no use for them.

I am going up on board a Bath Schooner this afternoon. A Captain Terry of St. George has his wife with him. He has been on board of here three times. We was at Brunswick together. She was with him. I was on board and spent the evening. She told him



*Sam Bulger*

*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*





*Charles E Spurling*

*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

yesterday to tell me to come on board, so I guess I will go this afternoon. He is a fine man; we are there to Chadwick and Porter's together considerable. He has brought coal from Philadelphia.

I wish I knew where I was going from Forte-de-France (*west shore of Martinique*). Hope I shan't have to go north of Hatteras before the first of May.

Then I want to go home and stay there. If I do not hear anything from Chadwick when discharged I shall clear for the United States and go where the wind will admit me the best - from Wilmington to Jacksonville.

Monday Morning: Well, Frances, the lumber is going off deck pretty lively. I guess they will get the deck load off today.

Tuesday Morning: Well, Frances, I went and saw a doctor yesterday. The Consul went with me to his doctor. I have got to starve for a spell. Eat nothing but some light food. No coffee, hard to go without. No liquor of any kind. That does not bother me.

I remain your loving Father. Samuel Gastric is the trouble with me and indigestion.

**Letter Dated May 17, 1900**

*Cranberry Isles, ME*

**To:** Brother [*Charles S. Spurling*]

**From:** Mamma [*Frances Bulger Spurling*]

Dear Brother,

Your father and Lew (*Lewis Ladd*) fixed the launch yesterday and came down in her and went in the creek (Pool). today they are to the shore to work. They got word Tuesday night that the new boat could not be ready before the 15th of June.

Roy is going by with guns and cartridge box on his back. He has been outgunning but I think that is all there is to it. I don't see any birds.

Lyle Newman went to the westward this week; got 200 [*birds*]. Aunt Hide had them to get picked and ready for sale.

Uncle Asa [*Asa Doane Stanley*] died last Saturday [*May 12, 1900*] forenoon. He was buried Sunday afternoon; he looked very natural. Mr. Davie conducted the service.

Sadie was operated on last Friday morning. It was a critical case. She was in very bad condition. The doctors there said if she had waited three months longer, they could have done nothing for her. Her case would have been hopeless. She stood the operation all right and is doing as well as can be expected. Pink (*Bulger?*) is with her. She has a private room so Pink can be with her all the time days so if she wants to, she can have callers any time. The hospital is but a short way from Union Station [*In Bangor*].

I lost all my cucumbers; the ground froze, so no early cucumbers from my raising. It is such cold weather all the time. I do not believe anything will grow. It is a backward Spring. I doubt if your father's peas and potatoes come on.

The fishermen are all out. Sammy Sanford gotten bushels of herring; first he has got. Walter has got quite a lot. Bert [*Spurling*] and Willis [*Bunker*] baited there the other day; both times as soon as Bert has been ready there has been bait come in Walter's weir. I told Bert the lame and lazy were provided for. I don't know as he liked it.

Freeman said he did not throw a line over for two days last time out; he was seasick. It was fearful rough. Mr. Jarvis said he never saw anything like it since he has been fishing. It moved her chain box.

**Letter Dated March 12, 1911**

*Waterville, ME*

**To:** Aunt Frank [*Frances Spurling*]

**From:** Frederick Joy [*half-brother to Elvy Beal and nephew to Frances Spurling*]

*Written After Death of His Sister, Viola Joy, and written on Colby College Athletic Association, Baseball Department Stationary*

...Sorry you had such a time cleaning up after the fumigation and wish I could have been there to help what I could. Mamma [*Florence "Aunt Flo" Joy*] wrote me that everything of Viola's was laid away. Doesn't it seem a shame that one so young should have to give up life and leave this earth right in the prime of years?

Last night one of the college buildings burned. It was the Delta Upsilon House and all the boys were down to Augusta to the Delta Upsilon joint banquet with the Bowdoin Delta Upsilon boys. The house was all locked up and the fire was not discovered until it was too late to save the building or anything in it. All the personal belongings of the boys were burned and all they have now is the clothes they stand in. The building which was of brick and five stories high was simply "gutted" and the only remains are the brick walls.

Frederick - Teta Psi House



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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.



*Bar Harbor Fire*

*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

## The Bar Harbor Fire: October, 1947

The wind was blowing a full gale on Thursday, October 23, 1947. There had not been a drop of rain for many weeks. A blue haze smelling strongly of smoke had been sweeping across the island the past several days on a sou'west wind. It was rumored that forest fires around Kennebunk and Rochester, NH accounted for this.

We were aware of the fires burning the interior of Mount Desert Island to the north all the past week. Some night we could see the flames with a "glass," especially when the fires were burning the tops of Sargent and other mountains. For Mount Desert, it had all started near Dolliver's Dump at Salisbury Cove, where some burning paper had blown into the brush nearby. It was thought to have been extinguished but burned underground, starting up again.

So, as days went by, as viewed from Great Cranberry Island, two miles off-shore, the fires seemed to be burning freely with the wind. A great many of us had become used to it. "They will burn

themselves out," some said.

At three o'clock on that windy October afternoon, my son called me into the yard to see what appeared to be a tremendous thunder cloud, popcorn-like in structure, and above the hazy band of smoke over Bar Harbor. I said, "I'm glad to see it at last, we may get a little rain, perhaps," as we were still boating our water every day from Captain Lew's (Lew Stanley) well, about the only well not dry although salty.

My son said that he believed the cloud might be smoke. I doubted this, but as I spoke an explosion was heard, and the cloud soared much higher in the sky. We know now that this was the time when the fire had reached the grand large hotels in Bar Harbor. Dynamite was used in an attempt to save some of the buildings.

As darkness came the entire mountain chain was outlined by fire; huge masses of flame could clearly be seen above Bar Harbor. As I maintained a dental office there, I now abandoned all ideas of ever recovering any of my equipment.

At seven o'clock that evening Edgar Bunker and his sister, Charlene Bunker, drove into the yard to report that the governor had telephoned a request, amounting to a command, that all men of the island having boats should go to Bar Harbor to help evacuate the village by removing a couple thousand frightened, endangered folk who had been driven by the flames to the water's edge and were now crowded onto the municipal landing.

We took off from the mooring into a sea that smacked the tops of waves across us, often into the cockpit. They washed across our windows with force. It eased up slightly as we approached the flashing buoy off Seal Harbor Head, but increased furiously at Schooner Head as we came out of the lee of the land. Ashes and soot from the trees and houses burning high above into the boat which, while continuously drenched by spray, nevertheless was endangered by the presence of oil and so forth, floating in the bilge. We also worried about the riding sail on the stern and sparks that might get down on the dry things below deck. One of the handsome large white houses with a great many tall chimneys, up on the ledges, could be seen all afire and pieces of burning debris the size of a finger fell freely into the boat. These embers were being carried by the high wind into the forest as well.

Beyond this burning estate above us, the night was too dark and the smoke too thick to determine how far from shore we were. We had to run by compass through the smoke. It was rough work at the wheel, being thrown across the boat at times. We were probably several degrees off our course. At any rate, we missed a buoy which clears a 21-minute run from the previous buoy, and which marks by its bell an awash ledge, between it and the land. We could not hear its bell, and likely there was little chance to, in that wind and noise of the sea. My son, who was in hip boots, went out on the deck to see if he could hear it, but knowing that one toss of the bow

could lose him, I made him come back in.

Then a large Coast Guard vessel, pitching heavily, overtook us close by to starboard. Rather than chance missing the next buoy and running onto the ledges which lie off Great Head, and in view of the capacity of the vessel that had just passed us, I decided that to continue on to Bar Harbor seemed foolhardy; because my small thirty-six-foot boat might be immediately overloaded with wild acting folk, and we'd likely not be able to find gas enough to make the run across to Sorrento in the wind.

And so, it seemed best to turn back and to see what we might be able to do for the people in Seal Harbor.

At Seal Harbor we found the Maine Seacoast Mission vessel Sunbeam already lying in at the wharf. It had commenced to rain a little. I called to her skipper. He seemed to think it unnecessary to go to Bar Harbor, but thought he'd go around to see how things were at Northeast Harbor. I replied that, after taking a look up in the village Seal Harbor, I'd also proceed to Northeast.

We found only eight or nine people remaining in the village of Seal Harbor. Smoke was pouring down into the village from Jordan Pond to the north, so strong that we had to use handkerchiefs and hold them over our faces. We coughed continuously. There was the telephone operator and also an old lady who lived upstairs over the exchange and refused to leave. There were the storekeeper and his family and only one or two others. They agreed that they'd stay as long as possible, although the storekeeper said that he had no hope of being able to save his grocery and market located in the center of town. The only road of escape for the people now remaining in the village would be the road along the shore to Northeast Harbor, but the fire was not far from that and there was uncertainty whether Northeast Harbor might be cut off at

any moment.

My son and I returned to our boat to find some people from Otter Creek; they had reached Seal Harbor by way of Upland Road after seeing their homes burn. Some were crying. Excitedly, they unloaded their little pickup truck, putting a trunk, some bedding, several guns, a lot of sugar, pictures taken from the walls of their homes, and small personal trinkets aboard my boat. One man put a handful of dollar bills into my pocket, saying "You'll be needing gas before this night is over."

After waiting a while to be quite sure what the fire was doing behind the village, and the direction it was taking, we proceeded to Northeast Harbor. there we learned that there were too many boats at Bar Harbor; they were in each other's way. The Navy had sent up a destroyer and the Coast Guard vessels working to evacuate the town.

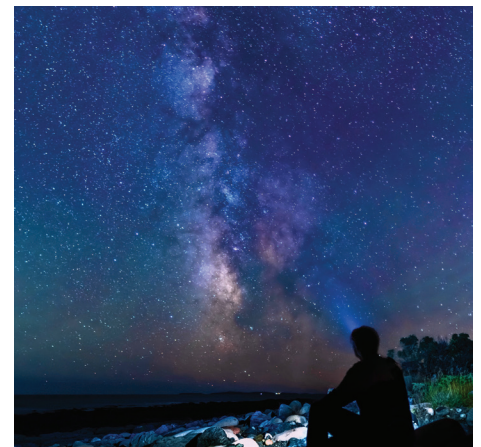
Sargent Drive, along the east side of Somes Sound, was still open up as far as Farnham Butler's boat yard, but at the mill above there, the fire was up to the road; it was feared it would cross when the mill burned. Otherwise, children had already been evacuated, some out to the Cranberry Islands. The men had remained and were trying to hold the fire back at the top of the hill. Around four in the morning, Flicker Flye came down to say they had it under control, enough so it didn't seem necessary to load store stock and machinery, etc., into the boats at this time. So, we sat around the fire station, listened to some of Erwin Spurling's stories and had coffee and doughnuts.

Reports came in from Bar Harbor that the fire, after burning its way through Hull's Cove, had been driven by the wind over three miles in twenty minutes, consuming the village lying between Mary Roberts Rinehart's estate and the business section of Bar Harbor, having already burned the Rinehart and the Henry Morgenthau estates to the ground. It then burned the big DeGregoire Hotel and would have

consumed the business district except that the wind veered slightly at the last minute.

The wind blew the fire, now one huge half-mile of flame, directly into the large, wooden hotels which bordered the village, and cut a straight path to the sea again just outside of the last houses on Main Street, near the Scott estate, bypassing the triangle occupied by the business part of town, and also saving the lives of the hundreds of people who were huddled on the municipal pier. The heat, smoke, gas and burning roofing would have made their chances of survival very poor indeed. It was all a matter of the wind direction changing at the last moment that saved them.

The tree tops which I observed later in the pines behind Morgenthau's still had the pine needles on them, but the trunks were burned through to the point that that many of them had fallen, and the seared soil was only a reddish-brown powder. The wind had been of such force as to act upon the fire much as a huge blowtorch might, winging to the left down through the many grand summer estates from Hull's Cove to Bar Harbor village, then swinging to the right and quickly consuming the grand famous hotels behind the village, cutting a straight path to the sea without touching the business area or the people who fled from there to the water's edge.



*Photo Courtesy of Amanda Bracy/A&B  
Photography*



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# Remembering Betty Hartley of Cranberry Island

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*Betty Hartley and Carl Nelson  
Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

**H**ow did she get to Cranberry Island? The story goes that her mother, Grace Eversman, saw a friend in a department store in her home in Toledo, Ohio, and asked, “Walter and I are looking for a place to go on vacation this summer. Do you have a suggestion?” Her friend said, “I think you’d like Cranberry Island.” They went and they did.

That first summer, in 1919, they stayed at Mamie Birlem’s (now Jan Moss’s house) and took their meals at Annie and Millard Spurling’s (now Eva Galyean’s). Over the years they stayed at various boarding houses and inns and then rented from the Spurlings (now Carl Brooks’s house) and began inviting family to join them. Her grandmother, Harriet Greenhalgh, read from Charles Dickens to the children each evening in the Store (now the Glaser’s). Mr. Spurling, the store’s owner, gave a piece of candy to each child.

Another part of island life was swimming at what was once called “the Green Spot,” near the Williamsons. Betty reported that her grandmother insisted that she swim in the ocean every day even though she thought it too cold and didn’t enjoy it. She was told it was “good for her.” When she was 21, she announced she was never swimming in the ocean again.

Mother took horseback-riding lessons at a stable on the mainland and sailing lessons from a captain she called, “Jesus Christ Dear,” because when they were sailing he would yell, “Jesus Christ, dear, pull in the main sheet,” and “Jesus Christ, dear, trim the jib.” She also learned to play tennis on the court her father built on the land belonging to the Spurlings across from their house. She remembers playing doubles with her father and Isabel Seimer and her father, Dr. Cumming. Betty said that her father was merciless to her on the court, constantly criticizing her. Later she commented to Isabel how nice her father was. Isabel said he was not so kind when they got home. Betty continued to play tennis well into her eighties, as long as she could move. Years later Betty gave a piece of land so that a new court could be built and the activity on the court would not disturb the Brooks family. Her donation is commemorated with the Betty Hartley Gate.

In 1939, Betty’s father, Walter Eversman, bought a piece of land on Preble Cove from Richie Stanley and built a house there. In 1943 Betty married Harold Hartley and they honeymooned on Great Cranberry Island. It is fortunate that he liked Great Cranberry Island quite a lot or the marriage might not have gone so well. They both wanted children and in pretty short order, they had Holly, Vicky, and Gracie, who also loved Great Cranberry Island. Betty loved gardening and worked every morning in her vegetable garden. On sunny afternoons she would go sailing and she instilled in her children a love of sailing and gardening. Vicky was an accomplished and avid gardener. Holly is fond of digging potatoes and other harvesting.

Betty loved preparing vegetables from the garden that she had nurtured to maturity. Her lobster dinners with popovers were famous for the delight that people experienced at her table. Some family members and friends called her “Lambie.” The story has something to do with a leg of lamb having been dropped on the floor on its way to the table.

Harold died in 1964 and Betty was a widow for 45 years. She was blessed with two grandchildren, Meg and Alex, and finally a great-grandchild, Seven. Meg was born in Bar Harbor Hospital and came home to Great Cranberry. When she cried, Betty would pick her up and say, “Don’t cry. It’s a good world.” This was a central belief of hers.

In later years she said she got through the Indianapolis winters by picturing herself on Great Cranberry Island, where she continued to garden, sail and play tennis. She attended church and was chairperson of the White Elephant Table at the fair, somewhat beyond the time when she could make change. But who cared? She made it fun. Part of her daily routine was going for the mail and on the way home stopping at Isabel and Stan Seimer’s for what they called “Holy Communion” --a glass of sherry and fellowship on their porch.

She moved to assisted living in Maine to be closer to Great Cranberry Island and continued to spend time on Cranberry until it became too difficult. She died in 2009 and some of her ashes were scattered in the Western Way and some laid to rest with her husband in Toledo, as was her wish. She lives on in our memories as a true lover of Cranberry Island.

# Remembering Happy Occasions at the Whitney Residence

KARIN WHITNEY



*Karin and Phil at Christmas Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*

Every year when we approach Thanksgiving, I find myself reminiscing about the wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings we used to have at our island home here on Cranberry Island. Phil, my husband, and I started a tradition of inviting the older single islanders who lived alone to have a Thanksgiving dinner with us at our home. The crowd at first included Mickey Macfarlan, Louise Millar, Bruce Komusin, Polly Bunker, John French, Charlene Allen, and Louise Strandberg. The guests were so grateful for a family-style Thanksgiving dinner that we decided to extend the invitation for a family-style Christmas dinner as well. I have so many good memories and stories from those gatherings that I would like to share.

One Christmas dinner Bill, Barbara, and Sophie Dowling showed up in time for dessert. Barbara had made a

wonderful Christmas yule log cake that was as beautiful to look at as it was tasty to eat.

I recall every year, when I telephoned each of the guests and asked if they wanted to have Thanksgiving dinner or Christmas dinner at our house, there was always an enthusiastic answer, “YES, YES!” Mickey was the biggest fan of all. He was the ultimate appreciative dinner guest, who always arrived dressed up in a nice jacket, dress shirt, sweater, and tie and of course his beloved pipe. He always asked if Miss Millar would be there. He liked Louise a lot.

Louise Millar loved her Martini drinks—ice, vodka and dry vermouth (it had to be Martini & Rossi Vermouth, extra dry) and two olives, with a splash of the olive brine. Louise made the best dry martinis.

Polly and Charlene were renowned



*Bruce Komusin and Phil Whitney with Jack Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



*Bruce and Ruth Westphal Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



*Phil Bruce and Ruth Westphal Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



storytellers. We learned so much about the island listening to their tales. John told us about complicated physics—it was way over our heads, but we loved to hear about it.

After Charlene passed away, Polly always came by herself, along with John French. After Polly's passing John moved to Bath, Maine.

This wonderful holiday dinner tradition lasted about eight years, and then Cranberry House tasks diverted all our energy.

Bruce was also a regular dinner guest at our house and was like a family member. When I called Bruce and asked if he wanted to have dinner with us, he always said, "Oh boy! Yes, yes!" Bruce certainly did appreciate a home-cooked meal.

Every year in March we had a combined birthday party for Phil and Bruce. Phil's birthday is March 3 and Bruce's was March 26. Every birthday celebration, I would come into our dining room with the birthday gifts and the birthday cake, lit up with sparkles, and Bruce would always exclaim, "OH BOY!!" When Bruce said that you know he thought he got the best of everything.

At one of the birthday celebrations there was just Mickey, Louise, Bruce, Phil and me. Louise told me that was the best and coziest birthday party of all time at our house.

Bruce continued to be our guest for dinners, lunches and birthdays, until his passing on Valentines Day, 2015.

Other celebrations that we held during the year included Easter dinners, my birthday celebration in July, and an occasional spring celebration with Dick and Kitty Pierson, Ruth Westphal, Bruce, and the current visiting minister.

Louise Strandberg, Tony and Maryann Frazzitta, Ingrid and Ric Gaither used to come for pasta dinners and game nights at our house. It was so much fun. I am forever grateful for these wonderful memories of happy times in our lovely island home.



*Louise Millar and Ruth Westphal Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



*John French, Polly Bunker, and Charlene Allen Photo Courtesy of Karin Whitney*



# Some Thoughts on the Cost of Children, their Education, and How to Save for Both

KEVIN MANN



*Photo Courtesy of Darlene Sumner*

**T**here are few things that will force you to take a harder look at your finances than the arrival of children. About a week after our first son, Theo, was born, two pieces of mail arrived for him. The first was his Social Security card—a remarkably fragile, pale blue slip of paper which connected him to a very large pile of money of which a small amount would be disbursed to him exactly 62 years later. The other was from the hospital, and contained a bill

(again, for *him*). Somehow, in his first hour of life, he had incurred a debt of \$1,250.

Raising a child is, obviously, expensive. A 2015 USDA report estimated the average cost from birth to 18 to be \$233,000 (adjusted for 10 years of inflation, that's roughly \$310,000).<sup>1</sup> Education, not counting college, is estimated to account for 16 percent of this. How one meets this bill is a difficult question to answer. One piece

of that answer is, unsurprisingly, saving. In moving to Great Cranberry Island, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that Maine has a publicly supported education savings program.

Compound interest is a pretty remarkable thing. Consider this: if a child were to receive \$7,000 into an investment account like a Roth IRA (Individual Retirement Account) at birth, without making *any* additional contributions, by the time they retire at 65 the account would grow to over



\$1 million. This assumes an 8 percent annual return (historical averages are between 7 to 10 percent). The account receives this interest because the bank takes the money and invests it in a portfolio of stocks, bonds, etc. You don't do any trading, unless you want to. It's a managed investment account. A Roth IRA account is a powerful tool at any age, however. That same \$7,000 investment made at age 18, with monthly contributions of \$100, would yield \$800,000 by age 65. Even starting an account with a \$1,000 initial investment, and adding \$100 a month for 30 years would yield \$150,000 (tripling your investment of \$50,000 over the same 30-year period).

So, Roth IRAs are great. They have three important restrictions, though: (1) there is a yearly limit on how much can be contributed each year (in 2024, the limit is \$7,000) and (2) the contributions you make are "post-tax" dollars. You pay the tax on the money now, so you don't have to pay a tax when you withdraw it later in life. This differs from other investment and retirement accounts, which typically take a portion of your paycheck, before it's taxed, and put it in a retirement account like a 401k. And (3) the last kicker: there is a penalty if you withdraw the money before you reach the age of retirement (65). Enter the 527-education savings account. These function like Roth IRAs (you fund them with post-tax dollars, so there is no penalty to withdraw) but funds can be withdrawn at any time for education expenses. What's more, anyone can contribute to a child's 527 account, and a portion of the money can be rolled over into a Roth IRA when the child turns 18.

Maine has a public 527 program called NextGen. NextGen has a number of grants and matching mechanisms in place to increase the amount a child can save. Firstly, every child born in Maine automatically receives \$500 under the "Alfond Grant;" this money

is automatically deposited into their account as long as they have one (left alone, that \$500 would grow to \$75,000 at retirement. Wild!). Second, every child receives a \$100 grant once the account has been funded with at least \$25. Third, NextGen will deposit a \$100 "automated-funding" grant once six recurring deposits have been made. Lastly, each year, NextGen will deposit a 30 percent match of whatever you deposit, up to \$300. (Essentially, if you make \$1,000 in contributions, NextGen will deposit \$300. If you deposit \$100 over the course of the year, they'll deposit \$30.) Let's use the example of a wonderful new Mainer I know named Shiloh.

Shiloh is born in Maine. Nice. He gets \$500 at birth. His parents (great people) scrounge \$100 a month for his account, so he receives \$100 from the initial deposit grant, and \$100 from the automated-funding grant. Because his dad has deposited at least \$1,000 in funding (\$1,200 in total from the monthly deposits of \$100) he receives another \$300 from NextGen. Once Shiloh turns one, his account will be \$2,200 plus any interest earned that first year. Assuming things stay on track, Shiloh will receive \$1,200 a year from his parents, and \$300 a year from NextGen. By age 18, without factoring in interest, this adds up to \$27,700. With an 8 percent return from interest? \$65,000. At this point, Shiloh has the option of rolling over up to \$35,000 into a traditional Roth IRA. The remaining funds in the 527 can be used for college, student loans, or even transferred to another child in the family. But let's assume that Shiloh is able to rollover that \$35,000 into a Roth IRA. At retirement, *with no further contributions*, the account will be worth **\$1.3 million**.

No article about time is complete without an old Chinese proverb. Here's a fitting one: the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago, the second-best time is now. The power of compound

interest is in time, which, fatherhood repeatedly teaches me, turns faster and faster as the months and years go by, spinning Theo and Shiloh toward kindergarten, adulthood, and, if the market allows, a comfortable retirement during which they remember their frugal parents fondly, preferably in oil paintings above a mantle.

*For more information on the NextGen program, visit: [nextgenforme.com](https://nextgenforme.com). The account can be set up entirely online, and is managed by Merrill Lynch. The compound interest calculator I used for this article can be found at: [investor.gov/financial-tools-calculators/calculators/compound-interest-calculator](https://investor.gov/financial-tools-calculators/calculators/compound-interest-calculator). I'm also happy to help with whatever; you can reach me at [kmann2@nd.edu](mailto:kmann2@nd.edu), or at 609.836.4555.*

1 <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnpp/2015-expenditures-children-families>



*Photo Courtesy of Jamie Law Thompson*

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# GCI House Histories:

## The Nanny Spurling House

PHIL WHITNEY

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*his article continues our series on GCI House Histories.*



*Sidney Hamor Bunker (on left) and Daughter, Julia Bunker Spurling (on right)*  
*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

This house has been owned by Cameron and Nancy Wood since the early 2000s. It is located on Cranberry Road diagonally across the road from the residence of Phil and Karin Whitney. It was named by my grandparents, Elwood and Ella Spurling, and my mother, Dorothy Spurling Whitney, for my mother's grandmother, Julia Bunker Spurling, who was nicknamed "Nanny" by family members.

The house was built in 1844, in advance of the marriage in 1847 of the first occupiers, Captain Warren Rogers Bunker of Great Cranberry and Sidney Hamor of Eden (Bar Harbor.) They were married in the house by Captain Thomas Bunker, his father.

(The foundation of the former Thomas Bunker residence is located several hundred feet away down the driveway to Linc Lyman's cottage.) In those days most of the surrounding land on both sides of the road was farmland, with stone walls and fences separating grazing lands for animals and subsistence gardens. A two-story barn was built at the same time on the west side downhill toward the Heath. A hand-dug well was located between the house and the barn. The main road, known as the Cranberry Road, today, prior to 1913 curved eastward near the intersection of Dog Point Road, and followed around the eastern sides of the former David Bunker house and the current Cameron and Nancy Wood house, before curving

back westward past the north side of the current Richard and Ann Sullivan home. That is why the front porches of those two homes face the eastern side. Around 1913 the road was straightened out, eliminating the curve, and was run straight, cutting between the Wood house and the barn, which was razed around 1970.

Captain Warren Rogers Bunker and Sidney Hamor Bunker had two children. Sarah, born in 1849, and Julia, born in 1850. Sarah married Edward Brewer and moved to Holbrook, MA, spending the rest of her life there. They had one daughter, Alma. Julia married Captain Joseph Wilbur Spurling in 1868. Warren Bunker died in 1870. Sidney Bunker continued living in the family home with Joseph and Julia Spurling until her death on August 2, 1918. An interesting anecdote: Both my mother and grandmother were visiting Julia Spurling (Nanny) and Sidney Hamor that day in the front living room. Sidney suddenly stood up, stated "Now ain't that queer?", and dropped dead on the floor. Captain Joseph Wilbur Spurling died suddenly in 1887, at home, at age 38. Julia lived in the house thereafter with Sidney until Sidney passed away in 1918. Julia then lived one more year, passing away in 1919, having lived her entire life in the residence.

It appears the Bunker/Spurling families were quite prosperous for those times and region. Small fortunes were made in the fishing and maritime shipping trades. The new house was one of the



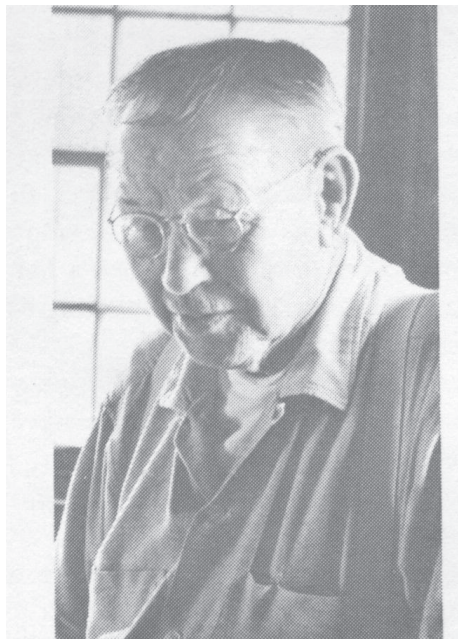
finest - and largest - on the island at that time. Also, Sidney Hamor came from a prosperous Bar Harbor family. Her father, David Hamor, was one of the earliest settlers in the area, and active in business ventures. When Warren Rogers Bunker passed away, much of his estate passed to Sidney and, indirectly to Captain Joseph and Julia. At some point in the mid-1800's, a two-story ell was constructed at right angles to the main house on the west side, running in the direction of the former David Bunker house. Over the years it served as expanded family rooms and later, as children grew up and moved away, as rental lodging spaces. Joseph and Julia Spurling had five children. Some are still remembered today because of their business activities or craftsman skills.

Warren Adelbert (Bert) Spurling was born in 1870. In the late 1800s he was involved in fishing and maritime coastal trade activities. In the early 1900s, he moved to Islesford. He owned the big yellow house (currently Beisswanger) located at the top of the road from the dock. At various times between the 1920s and 1950s, he established the Islesford Dock, which bought lobsters, sold fishing supplies, and ran boat transportation services. He established the seasonal Islesford Ferry service and, in 1958, at the ripe old age of 88, bought and operated the Woodlawn Hotel. He died in 1965.



*Uncle Bert Spurling*  
*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

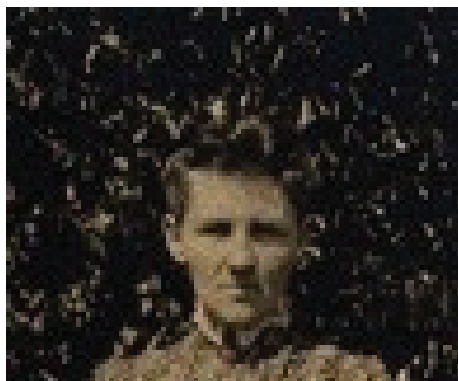
Arthur Milton (Chummy) Spurling was born in 1873. He was an accomplished carpenter in the late 1800s. He also moved to Islesford in the early 1900s.



*Arthur Spurling*  
*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

He owned the large tower house (currently Dickson) located between the intersection of Main Street and Cross Road. His rowboats and day sailors are collectors' items today. One is on display in the Acadia National Park Museum on Islesford. A big birthday party was given him at his residence on his 102nd birthday in 1975. As people were departing, he dropped dead of a heart attack.

Alta Irma Spurling was born in 1876. She married Henry Bunker in 1894 and moved down the Cranberry Road 200 feet to the current residence of Colleen Bunker. She lived there the remainder of her life, passing away in 1969. Her entire life was spent within a 200-foot



*Alta Spurling*  
*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

radius. She was most remembered for producing seven children, many who are still remembered today: Vincie Bunker Hulbert (1895), Alton Bunker (1897), Edgar Bunker (1899), Alvah Bunker (1902), Raymond Bunker (1906), Linden "Tud" Bunker (1909) and Wilfred Bunker (1920).

Ernest Wilbur Spurling was born in 1880. He was a fisherman. He used to live in the "Rice House," currently owned by Jordan Merchant. He committed suicide on Cooksey Drive in Seal Harbor in 1935.



*Elwood Spurling*  
*Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives*

Joseph Elwood Spurling was born in 1882. He was at various times a farmer, lobsterman, herring weir fisherman, and sailed for wealthy summer people. He was Town Road commissioner for 30 years. He married Ella Bates Spurling in 1904. They had one daughter, Dorothy Spurling Whitney. "Nanny" built a large two-story residence approximately 200 feet east of the house, located equidistant between her house and the old Thomas Bunker house foundation. This was a wedding present for Elwood and new bride Ella. The house burned down in April 1928, the result of a chimney fire. He came across the road and built a new house in the summer and autumn of 1928. It is currently the home of Phil and Karin Whitney. Elwood died suddenly in the house in 1960.

Up until the early 1900s, the surrounding lands were primarily used for farming. The family kept a number of horses, oxen, cows, chickens and possibly pigs and goats. Also, sometime between the death of Julia Spurling's

husband, Joseph, in 1887 and into the 1900s, Julia kept a small store in the house. An alcove off the front living room facing toward the former David Bunker residence was utilized. It was a small operation, and she apparently sold garden produce and simple confections. Little is known about it.

When Nanny died in 1919, Elwood Spurling was the executor of the estate. In 1920, the house was sold to Blanche Atkinson of GCI. The house was used minimally until the 1940s, when it was sold to the Lobcowicz Family, which included the late Louise Strandberg. During this time, the wing facing the David Bunker residence was taken down. In the 1960s it was sold to Burton Jones, editor of the Boston Globe art section,. It subsequently passed along to Robert and Sally Bloom in the late 1970s. Bob Bloom was a highly renowned oboist. Bloom built a small garage attached to the main building where the former wing had been located.

In the early 2000s, the house was sold to Cameron and Nancy Wood. They have remodeled the kitchen, installed exterior siding, and painted it white, as opposed to the former gray shingle siding.

The house currently has a small basement (constructed in 1844), a small garage on the western side, the former store alcove on the north side, a kitchen area, interior living room with fireplace, and exterior east side living room and northeast corner library. Upstairs there are four bedrooms. A steep main stairway runs upstairs from the front entrance door on the east side. A secondary narrow back stairway runs between the upstairs and the kitchen.

A final note: Cameron claims there is a ghost of a woman in the basement. He claims to have seen her sitting in a chair. His description of her resembles Sidney Bunker. Cameron states he has taken pictures of the ghostly image, but has never remembered to bring up photo copies from Virginia. Oh, well..



*Julia Bunker Spurling (top left), her daughter Alta Spurling Bunker (top right), Vincie Bunker Hulbert (lower right), Sidney Hamor Bunker (lower left)*  
Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives



*Nanny Spurling's House in Winter*  
Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives



*Dorothy Spurling Whitney (on left) with Summer resident Thomas Theirault (on right) circa 1917*  
Photo Courtesy of GCIHS Archives



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*Ms. Bee and Luna visiting Toby*  
*Photo courtesy of GCIHS Archives*