



2017.13, 20

# the Sloop's Log

Newsletter  
of the  
Chebeague  
Island  
Historical  
Society

Volume XIV  
Issue 2

Dear Sloop's Log Reader,

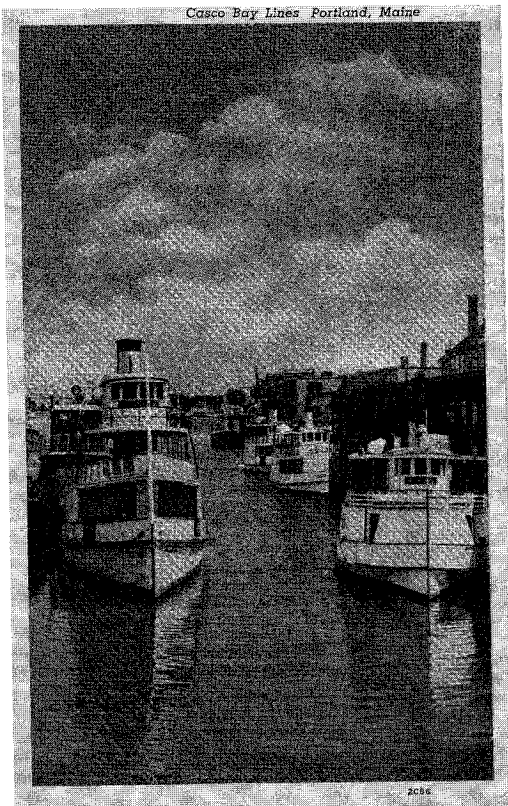
On behalf of the Chebeague Island Historical Society Board, welcome aboard and we hope you enjoy our historical pictures and news from the past. This summer our exhibit will be about how early tourism transformed the island. It will show how many of the descendents of these early visitors still continue to call Chebeague home after 100 years or more, whether they still come only in the summer or have been converted to year round residents.

In the process of gathering information about these early days many of the Exhibit Committee members have been reading the *Casco Bay Breeze* (Herein-after known as the CBB), a wonderful source of information and a highly tourist oriented newspaper of the time with definite ideas of how things should be. (A typical editorial comment from the paper is as follows: *There is a great tendency in the doings of Casco Bay town governments to take more each year from summer estates without thinking of the work which should be done if this Golden Egg Producer is to be kept in its present wealth giving condition.* CBB, April 1911.) We will be using many ideas and quotes from this paper throughout our exhibit, and I would like to also offer Sloop's Log readers some stories from the CBB about Chebeaguers and visitors of c. 100 yrs ago. I have chosen some stories about horse and carriage accidents, about town improvement projects, and about the suffragettes on Chebeague.

Also in this issue please find great stories about the Hamilton Hotel, the Hillcrest fire, the Rose family, 3<sup>rd</sup> generation babysitting at the East End, the Komlosy family, an introduction by Donna Damon to this summer exhibit, and a question about a mystery person.

Hope you read these with pleasure and will join us at the Museum and for our exhibit and our programs this summer.

Jane Frizzell, CIHS President



Casco Bay Lines Portland, Maine

Casco Bay Lines Boats in Portland. Steam on over to the Historical Society this summer for the Tourism Transforms Chebeague exhibit.

# Accidents

Where was 911 when you needed it?

The days of horses and buggies may appear serene to us, but there were some hazards. I have included descriptions from the Casco Bay Breeze of some non-injurious such accidents from this time period.

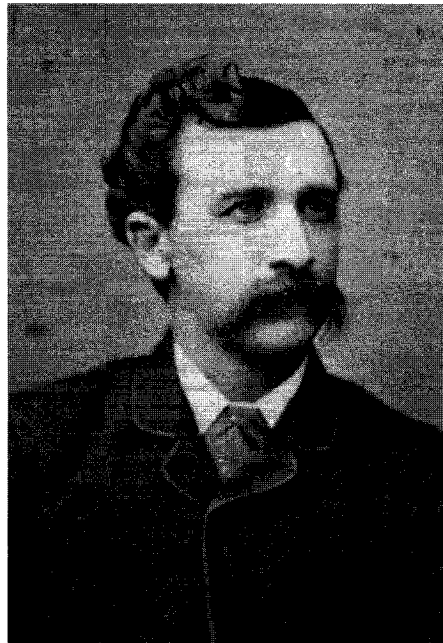
Then there was the advent of the "machine."

And baseball from the sidelines and boating have always been a little hazardous.

Jane Frizzell

July 20, 1906

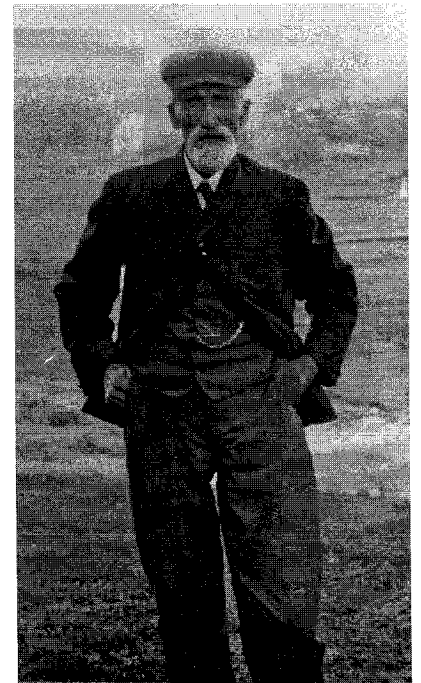
Messrs. Howard Pinkham of South Harpswell and Mr. A.R. Littlefield, the grocer of Chebeague, are congratulating themselves that this escapade of last spring when both went overboard from a swamped boat, has passed off without being generally known around the bay. The facts may be summed up in a few words. Mr. Pinkham, not then married, but with earnest intentions, sailed over from So. Harpswell, and bringing his boat to anchor he signaled for Mr. Littlefield to take him ashore. A punt was handy on the beach and Mr. Littlefield, who is always accommodating, and very likely scenting the future trade of the couple, pulled the short distance intervening between the shore and Howard's Dory, and the latter got aboard with some misgivings, however, as the punt was leaky. These proved to be well founded, as in spite of Ammi's strenuous efforts at the oars, she filled and sank some distance from the beach. The sequel was exciting to them both, and especially to Howard, who, it must be remembered was going courting. A few quick strokes in the icy water brought the twain to shore safely, but Howard could not visit his best girl in a soaking wet suit, so a shift of clothing was affected at Mr. Littlefield's house. Howard is about 6 feet 2 inches tall, but he managed to get enough of him covered to be presentable until it came to the boots. Here the limit was reached and he had to wear his wet ones, as there were no others to fit him in the vicinity. It is said Howard was at some trouble to shorten himself in order to fit his borrowed clothes better, the latter, especially the trousers looking like a two-piece bathing suit. He had a shrinking look all around, but soon recovered under the pleasant welcome he received at the North side of the island.



A.R. "Ammi" Littlefield

June 27, 1907

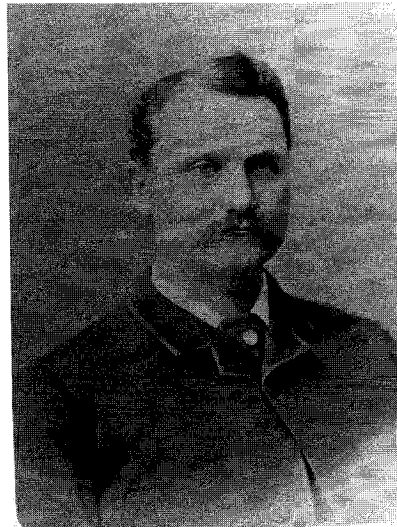
Captain James Hamilton, the veteran carriage driver, had an experience Sunday morning last that he will perhaps remember for many years to come. Mr. Hamilton was returning from the 11 am boat at Littlefield Landing where he had been for passengers and was on his return and just at about the High School building when without warning the fill[?] got loose from his carriage. This frightened the horse who at once started on a wild dash throwing the carriage over on its side and dragging Mr. Hamilton for a considerable distance. The animal in same fortunate manner cleared himself from the carriage after going a short distance and by doing so perhaps saved the life of Mr. Hamilton. Several persons who witnessed the accident ran to his assistance, and greatly to their surprise they found that outside of a few bruises and a bad shaking up he was none the worse for his thrilling experience. The horse ran into the woods in rear of Francis Hamilton's store where he was found and when examination was made his injuries were found to consist of only a few cuts at the hind feet. The carriage was badly demolished though not a total loss. It was most fortunate that there were no passengers in the carriage at the time, for should there have been, it is no telling what the result would have been.



James Monroe Hamilton

July 15, 1909

Mr. Clinton M. Hamilton purchased a new horse in Portland last week and was trying out its paces Tuesday morning. While bucking around in his yard, the bridle broke and the horse swerved suddenly, breaking the shafts and at the same time two of the wagon wheels collapsed, throwing Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Fred Stegeman several yards. The men received no severe injuries although Mr. Hamilton's new straw hat suffered several compound fractures. The horse ran down the road to the schoolhouse where he was captured browsing peacefully by the roadside.

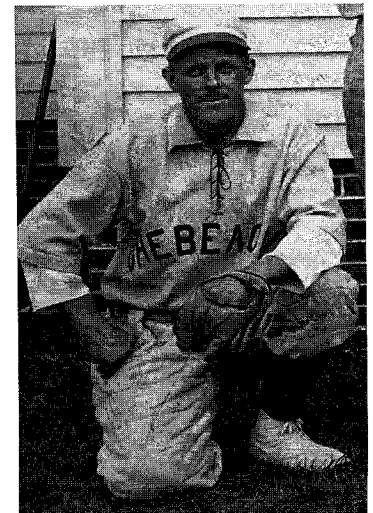


Clinton M. Hamilton

August 4, 1910

Capt. Ben Hamilton, one of Chebeague's most enthusiastic baseball fans, was unfortunately struck by a batted ball in the eighth inning of Saturday's game. Chebeague's safe hitter, Walter Curit, was at the bat. Suddenly swinging on a high ball, this left handed batter pulled the sphere around to the bleachers half way to first base. Capt. Ben was watching the play between Stanley, Chase and the base runner on the initial bag and almost simultaneously with the crack of the bat, sounded the thud of the ball as it struck him a somewhat glancing blow on the right eye. Capt. Ben had his glasses on and one lens was broken. He sustained two deep cuts and although not rendered unconscious was immediately taken to Dr. Hale's office where the wounds were sewed and dressed. It seemed doubly to be regretted that the accident so have occurred as Capt. Hamilton is 82 and has always been an enthusiastic supporter of the island team. Many of those present expressed the opinion that the seats are too near the diamond and that they should be moved at least fifteen or twenty feet back and down near to or beyond first base.

Walter Curit





Capt. Benjamin Hamilton  
and his wife, Sarah



Above: Young Ashley Johnson,  
driver of the runaway.

Right: Ashley's grandfather, Reuben  
Cleaves, at left on the porch of his  
store and Reuben's son, Clinton on  
the wagon.

August 11, 1910

The management has decided to defray the expenses of Saturday's [baseball] game which is \$15 from the funds of the treasury and the collection taken will be given to Capt. Ben Hamilton who was injured by being struck in the eye with a foul ball during the game two weeks ago. A generous collection no doubt will be realized.

July 31, 1913

An exciting runaway and one that might have proved serious to more than one person occurred on Tuesday afternoon. Master Ashley Johnson, Mr. Reuben Cleaves' grandson, started to climb onto a delivery wagon which was standing full of groceries in front of Mr. Cleaves store. The horse, for some unknown reason, took fright as the boy leaned down to pick up the reins prior to driving off to deliver the orders in the wagon. The reins were jerked from Ashley's hands and the horse went down the hill below the post office (in front of Beth and Jerry Wiles house) at a mad pace. The wagon rocked and swayed but Ashley hung on. Just as the horse rounded the curve by Fairview cottage (Barbara and Charles Marks' house), Ashley beheld Mrs. Ephraim Hamilton walking along the side of the road. Mrs. Hamilton thinking nothing was wrong even after she heard the fast running horse, never even turned her head until Ashley cried out, "Look out, Aunt Fan." Then she jumped for the bushes and landed in the ditch, unhurt, but badly scared, for the horse barely missed her. When the team arrived at the path in the woods (just beyond David Burgess) below the school house, the horse swerved sharply around and started off across the island. The body of the wagon and Ashley were hurled to the ground and all the groceries were either more or less damaged. The horse and wheels and frame of the wagon meanwhile continued at a wild pace straight across the island, headed for Mr. Roy Thompson's cottage (at the end of Aaron's Wharf Road) near



Noddle head. The horse rounded a tent standing in the yard and stopped short just at the edge of the cliff above the water. The wagon was badly ruined, but Ashley was only bruised and shaken up. Fortunately he had no bones broken and after three days' rest declared himself to be quite well.



Left: Hazel Jacobs, somewhat before she obtained her license to teach Driver's Ed.  
Right: Barbara Jacobs, somewhat before she became a "nurse."



August 30, 1917

Miss Hazel Jacobs narrowly escaped from being badly hurt last week, when her machine, driven by Mr. Harry Patterson, knocked her down, and ran over her. Miss Jacobs had just finished giving Mr. Patterson a lesson in driving the machine and got out and crossed in front of it, when Mr. Patterson accidentally started it, and it hit Miss Jacobs in the side and knocked her down, running over her. But as the machine was light, Miss Jacobs was more scared than injured. However, Mr. Patterson acted the hero quite naturally and jumped out of the car and carried Miss Jacobs into the house, where she was tenderly cared for by Miss Barbara Jacobs.

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Casco Bay Breeze

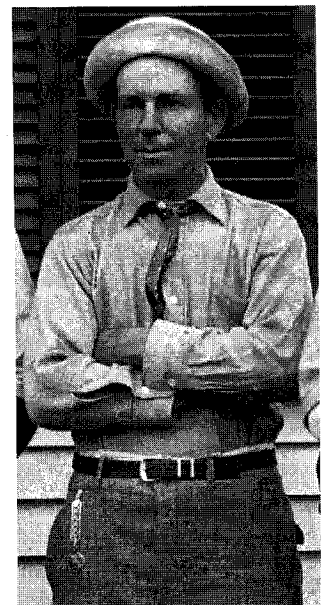
# Improvements

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## Mystery Person: Who was Albert "Clint" Robbins?

Mr. Robbins' name appears frequently in the *Casco Bay Breeze*. He apparently lived on the North Road year round (Mr. and Mrs. A. Clinton Robbins gave a dinner party Friday in honor of several friends and relatives. Their beautifully situated home is on the hill in the center of the island and overlooks the east and west ends as well as the western waters of the Bay). Mr. Robbins and his family were friends with many summer residents, especially the Harris'. He was manager of the baseball team and the bowling alley for some years and was a selectman representing Chebeague for the town of Cumberland from 1909-1914. Does anyone know how he came to be on Chebeague, became so involved in island concerns, or where exactly his home was? Donna Damon suspects his home was Petticoat Farm.

Albert "Clint" Robbins, Selectman  
of Chebeague 1909-1914



The selectmen from Chebeague were much involved in asking the town of Cumberland for help with civic improvements. Along with cries for telephones I found the following requests.

Jane Frizzell

August 19, 1909

### **Time To Act: Chebeague Island should have a Fire Apparatus and Organized Company** *Casco Bay Breeze Editorial*

It is some time since we have given space in our columns to the need of fire protection on Chebeague but in thus refraining, we have by no means lost sight of our original viewpoint.

In a 'Breeze' editorial published in 1907, we emphasized the deplorable condition in respect to the fire apparatus on Chebeague and expressed the hope that some action be taken in the near future. Nothing has been done. Meanwhile the island, everyday becoming more valuable to the town of Cumberland, owing to its unique situation, and the rapidly increasing worth of its real estate, its permanent popularity as a summer resort, and many other incidental factors, deserves better treatment from the town government. Had even a half-hearted attempt been made to guarantee the citizens and property owners of the island some measure of protection, full credit would be accorded. But even this has been denied. No sign of initiative in this direction, not even the shadow of a beginning, appears in the fatuous policy thus far pursued by those entrusted with the well being of the entire community.

For this apathy, the citizens of Chebeague are not wholly irresponsible. Municipal benefits are rarely showered upon an apparently apathetic community. Until it is definitely shown that the property owners of the island are a unit in demanding legislation by the town government along these lines, we expect to see little accomplished. Selectman Robbins, however willing and able to cooperate, can do little until he is armed with the powerful weapon of an awakened public sentiment. ....

The fire fiend is never asleep. Like the wolf he comes upon the unguarded victim. What sadder spectacle is there than a homeless family driven from their cottage by a night fire, watching the remorseless flame devour each familiar corner and crevice of the once sheltering structure.

The loss by fire of even one of the established hostleries of Chebeague would shrink the valuation of the town far more than the expense of the apparatus and greater than this is the inevitable setback to the investment of capital here which such a catastrophe would bring.

Prohibitive rates of insurance because of inadequate protection, combined with a destructive fire will do more to 'throw a wet blanket' on the prosperity and growth of the island, than any other one thing. If it be argued that the buildings on the island are isolated one from the other and therefore protected from the spread of fire, we reply that building conditions at Chebeague are rapidly taking form which is bound to produce congestion and added danger. The need for fire apparatus here is urgent, obvious, and can be satisfied with a very small outlay.

Some concerted effort is however necessary unity of action by the citizens must first be secured. We suggest that a meeting of the voters and tax payers be called at once, with special notices to all interested persons, and that resolutions be presented, acted upon and filed with the selectmen of Cumberland, with a request for a meeting and immediate action. Once the apparatus is installed, we have no doubts that a competent fire brigade will be forthcoming. ...

This editorial from the CBB is somewhat typical in that it is very concerned with the bottom lines of those invested in the tourist industry on the island.

June 23, 1910

July 6, 1911

Selectman A.C. Robbins is in charge of the improvements that are being made about the cemetery here. About an acre of additional land has been acquired, the avenues and grounds graded, and a new fence built. The sum of \$600 was appropriated and when the work is entirely completed it will reflect credit to selectman Robbins.

A small appropriation was expended by selectman Robbins early in the spring in suppressing the browntail moths. It is estimated that 7,000 nests were destroyed by the men employed and they only covered a space 60 feet each side of the main roads. There are a number of thickly settled colonies existent now in the center of brush lots and in the forests and it is well that even the work done this year has been accomplished before the pests get too sure a foothold. Capt. Benjamin Hamilton had been in charge of the road work and was assisted by Archie Bowen and Stanley Bennett. Only about \$100 was expended and an excellent showing was made on this small sum.

July 8, 1915

Mr. Clinton M. Hamilton, selectman from the town, has been in consultation with the other two members of the board of selectmen for the past three weeks preparing the town tax. This work was completed Saturday last and the amount raised this year will be about \$18,000. Of this the island will contribute about thirty percent of the total amount to be raised. The tax rate is sixteen dollars and seventy three cents.

The selectmen of the town gave a hearing Wednesday afternoon at 1 pm at the Sinkinson property at Deer Point on the petition of Capt. Oscar Randall for a location for a pier. Capt. Randall, if granted the permit, will erect a fine wharf and will make daily trips to and from Portland from this point (in front of Mary Ellen and Chirp Webber).

Seated: Clinton M. Hamilton, Selectman 1883, 1890-91, 1915-17 and Addie Hamilton.

Standing L to R: Horace Hamilton, Marion Hamilton, Margaret Dahlbeck, James Hamilton.

Photograph courtesy of Roland Hamilton, C. 1915



September 12, 1915

*Much talk is being made among the summer residents of the East End concerning the lack of a float at the landing as the wharf is now it is very difficult for small motorboats to land passengers here. Also people last year were fond of going in swimming from the float. All the residents would be willing to contribute money toward the purchase of a float if requested. Is there not some person on the island public spirited enough to put in a little time to gather together the money and purchase a new float?*

August 19, 1915

*In response to a call issued by Mr. George F. Spalding of Newton Center, Mass., one of the progressive summer residents here, about twenty five persons met at the Golden Cross Hall Saturday evening last at 8 pm, to discuss the advisability of forming an Improvement Association with the idea of erecting at some future time a Public Library and a social hall suitable for the needs of residents and summer colony. The meeting was opened by Selectman Clinton M. Hamilton acting as chairman of the meeting. Mr. George F. Spalding spoke at length outlining his plans for the erection, maintenance and general plan of carrying the project to completion. His remarks were received with considerate attention by those present. ... Mr. Clinton Hamilton spoke in approbation of the plan and expressed his willingness to assist in anyway possible if the society was organized.*

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Casco Bay Breeze

# Women's Suffrage

*In reading the Casco Bay Breeze from the 1910's one finds several references to the fight for votes for women.*

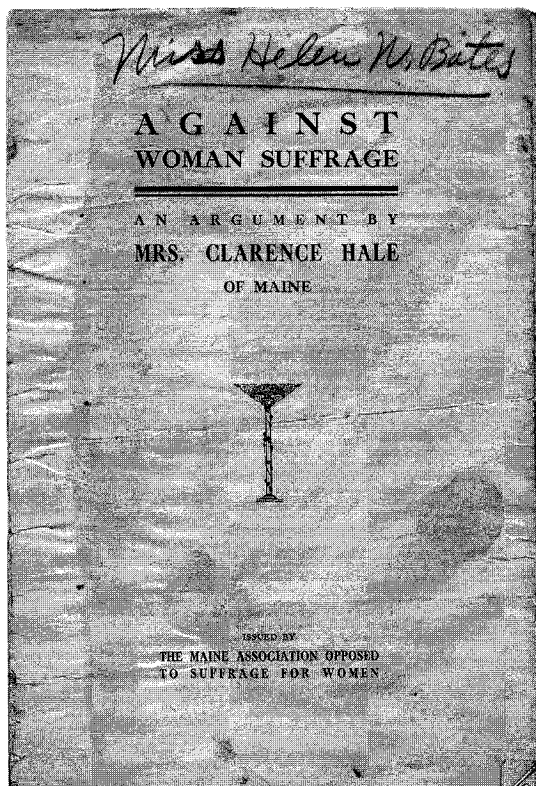
September 2, 1915

*Meeting in the interest of equal suffrage was held on the veranda and lawn of Mrs. Martha Newell on Friday afternoon at 3 o'clock. Mrs. Marion Booth Kelley, the distinguished speaker of Boston, Mass., made an eloquent appeal for the Cause, and the large audience listened very attentively. Mrs. Newell made a few remarks and then the speaker asked for questions, to which several responded.*



Casco Bay Breeze July 6, 1917

Monday, September 10, the voters of Maine are to decide whether the women of the State are to be entitled to the ballot. It is hoped that the voters of this island will give a large majority in favor of the extension of this franchise to the women, if we are sincere in our plea for democracy and equal privileges for all.



This pamphlet, belonging to suffragette Miss Helen N. Bates, indicates that she was keeping an eye on the opposition.

Image from the Collections of Maine Historical Society  
- #5473

July 19, 1917

Miss Helen Bates of Portland, the well known club woman and suffragist, formerly president of the Maine Association, is visiting her sister, Mrs. Antoine Dorticos, at the West End. Miss Bates is taking an active part in the Maine Campaign now taking place.

August 30, 1917

Mrs. George Hunt of Portland, the well known suffrage leader, delivered a very interesting address in the Golden Cross Hall last Wednesday night. About forty people attended. Mrs. Hunt has done as much, or more, for the advancement of women in Maine, than anyone interested in the best things in life. For over twenty years Mrs. Hunt was President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which was the 'clearing house for the woes of the women of Portland.' Mr. Remick opened the meeting with prayer and then Dr. Albion introduced Mrs. Hunt with the remark that he was only converted to suffrage about six months ago. He looked through all the magazines to find one good sound argument against suffrage, but was unable to do so. 'If, then,' he said, 'there was no reason for not giving equal suffrage a trial, we should do so.' Mrs. Hunt opened her speech by saying that democracy, patriotism and equal suffrage were equal terms. Democracy is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The United States is supposed to be a Democratic country, but if one half of the people have no voice in the laws, can it be a democracy? Many of the foreign nations think this is a timely, just and important time to grant equal suffrage to women, why should not America, whose women give their sons to the 'great cause,' grant it?

Mrs. Hunt went on to describe the benefits to the country of votes for women.

# Babysitting on the East End

For the 3rd generation of the Bissells/Layngs and Fraser/Trowers and their Friends

By Joan Bennett Robinson

I have never considered myself a summer native. I'm a spin-off of a native who came here summers and winters too and stayed with my aunt Mabe (Mabel Bennett Hill) or Auntie Phipps (Alberta Bennett Phipps).

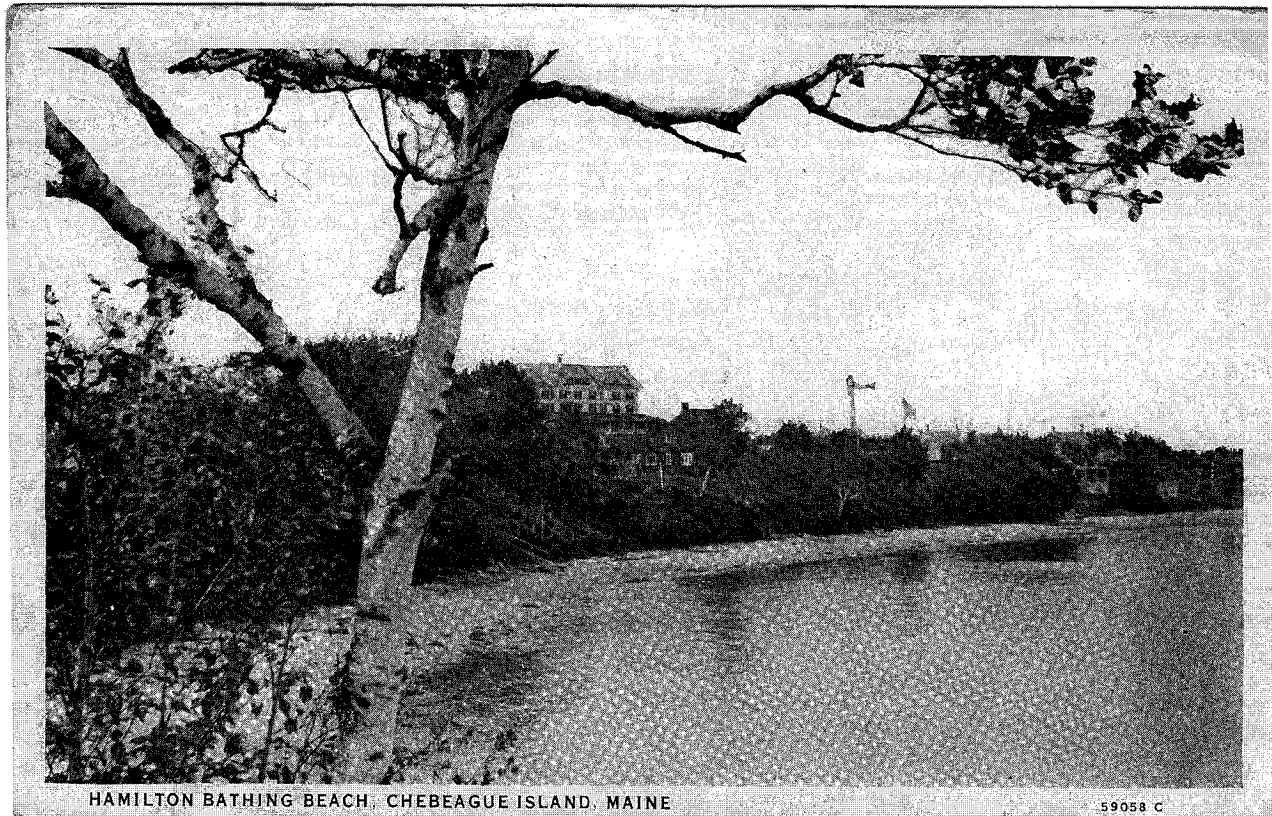
In the early 40's I'd arrive for the summer with my ration book (aunt Mabe loved those sugar coupons) and 2 pounds of butter. My father used to make butter from left over cream at Oakhurst Dairy in Bath.

Summers, as I got older, I worked at "Martha's Store" or "Berts" but the best fun was sitting on Hamilton Beach with Mary, Maggie and Nora Toohey, Joan, Brian, Sue and Sally Layng, Marty and Jennifer Trower and sometimes Steve Johnson, he liked to play with the girls and Brian too, of course.

Thinking back they were all awfully cute and good. I was never quite sure what Maggie was gonna do or say, I can't say she was my favorite, but she always liked to sit on my lap at the beach.

This story is just too good to pass up. Last summer I'm standing outside the Hall waiting to go into the children's play when along came Brian and his granddaughter Zoe. We're waiting to go in when Brian says to Zoe, "Do you know Joanie used to take care of me when I was a little boy?" she looks up and says, "You mean she's older than you?"

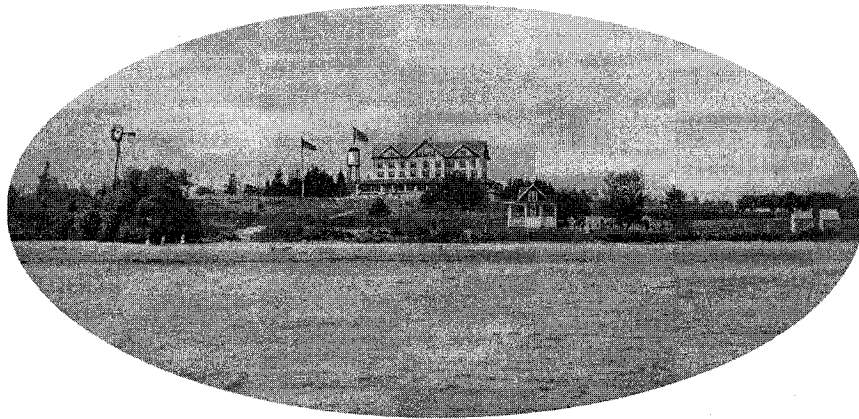
Fortunately Brian got a big kick out of it, and I've sure gotten a lot of mileage out of it. Zoe made my day, and many days after.



# The Hamilton Hotel: The Story Continues

By Donna Miller Damon

For several years the Hamilton Hotel was the diamond in the crown of Chebeague's hotels. Built on the scale of the grand coastal hotel, the Hamilton, had amenities and style that was not found in most of the neighboring family style boarding houses on Chebeague. Unlike its neighbors, the Hamilton had been built as a hotel. The Hill Crest, with its 1901 addition, was its only competitor when it came to the scale of operation, entertainment and dining.



Above: The Hamilton Hotel from the water.  
Below: The Hamilton at opening.



Harry Hamilton borrowed money to build the Hamilton Hotel. His home/boarding house known as the Woodside had burned in 1903, and it is assumed that he and his family moved in with relatives. Although he was a very successful builder, he didn't have the capital necessary to build a hotel the size of the Hamilton. He bought the land for the hotel from Rufus Soule in December of 1903. Before construction began during the fall of 1904, Hamilton mortgaged the property to a summer visitor, Eleanor Elkins Widener. Hamilton's entire crew of nearly twenty-five worked throughout the winter to finish the hotel on time. The Hotel opened with great fanfare and acclaim in June of 1905, but by October of 1905 he needed more capital to continue.

In 1902 Harry Hamilton had developed a close working relationship with Ellis Ames Ballard, a progenitor of many summer natives, when he built Ballard's summer home, Kathmandu. Ballard, a Philadelphia attorney, was impressed with Hamilton's ability to handle several projects at once. During the construction of Kathmandu, Hamilton's crew renovated the Mansfield farmhouse for Ballard's sister, Margarette Stewart, constructed the Thompson Cottage (Morse's High Tide), landscaped the properties, started the foundation for the barn/farmhouse, laid out

a golf course and a tennis court and began the construction of a summer cottage that was to be known as Kew. In addition, Hamilton's crew worked on several unrelated construction projects - an impressive agenda for any company anywhere! Ballard believed that the island needed infrastructure improvements. He generously contributed to every island fund drive for a myriad of projects ranging from improvements to the Methodist church to the purchase of new uniforms for the ball team. Ellis Ames Ballard set the bar for future summer philanthropy. He believed the story preached by the *Casco Bay Breeze*, which was that the future of the community of Great Chebeague depended on tourism, and tourism depended on first class lodging establishments. Thus Ellis Ballard invested in the future of Chebeague in 1905 when gave a mortgage to Hamilton for \$9500. Ballard would continue his business relationship with the Hamilton Hotel until his death in 1939. Business at the Hamilton was so good that the *Casco Bay Breeze* reported in June of 1907 that Harry Hamilton was contemplating building an addition on the hotel. The *Breeze* attributed the Hamilton's success to several attributes: "[Hamilton's] liberal and careful management, a first class clientele, and his hand and his energy have been the factors in giving Chebeague its first hotel of strictly high standard...No skeptic can deny that the benefit of a season at the Hamilton cannot be measured in dollars" (CCB June 13, 1907).



Above: Ellis Ames Ballard  
Below: Bessie Hamilton



While the Hamilton Hotel continued to prosper in 1908, it did so under new management. Harry Hamilton was ill, and his condition was debilitating. During the summer of 1907 he had spent much of the season at home. His daughter, Bessie, a graduate of a Portland business school, had been on site and was in charge of the day to day operation of the hotel. However, she conferred with her father on a regular basis via a telephone that connected their house and the hotel. Hamilton's condition deteriorated during the winter of 1907-08. While the family felt that Bessie and her sisters Ruth, Louise and Eileen could continue to operate the hotel, the investors disagreed. Edgar H. Paine was hired to oversee the Hamilton for the 1908 season. Paine was well-connected in Portland and many accomplished musicians performed at the Hamilton. The guests continued to visit the Hamilton despite the change in management.

Meanwhile Harry Hamilton rented the family's new home to summer visitors, and his daughters operated a gift shop nearby. By the fall of 1908 Harry Hamilton's condition had deteriorated to the point that he was so physically incapacitated that he could not sign his own name on the deed when he relinquished his title to the Hamilton Hotel. When the property was conveyed to the Hamilton Hotel Company on December 2, 1908, his wife Mary Emma signed his name on the deed. The new corporation



Harry Hamilton and the hotel staff

assumed the mortgages to Widener and Ballard as part of the compensation to Hamilton. Ellis Ames Ballard, the Hotel's biggest creditor, was the principal stockholder in the new Hamilton Hotel Company and as such made most of the major decisions regarding the hotel's operation.

In February 1909, the *Casco Bay Breeze* reported that Harry Hamilton, an entrepreneur up to the end, had just ordered twenty new Chebeague postcards from the Rotograph Company for his gift shop. Harry Hamilton died in March of 1909, but thanks to Ellis Ames Ballard, the hotel that he had built and that carried his named survived for another thirty years.

E. H. Paine continued to operate the Hamilton during the 1909 season, but chose not to continue in 1910. The *Casco Bay Breeze* reported that Albert P. Bicknell was the new manager and Charles W. Hamilton, owner and proprietor of the popular and successful Hill Crest, was a silent partner. While this might sound illogical given that the Hamilton was the Hill Crest's chief competitor, it makes sense when it is known that Ballard had also invested in the Hill Crest and held a mortgage on that hotel as well as the Hamilton. By the time the 1912 *Casco Bay Directory* was published, the Hill Crest and the Hamilton were under one management. Hamilton and Bicknell shared the responsibilities for both hotels.

But the days of the grand summer hotels were waning. The automobile lured patrons away from long time stays in one location. The newspapers of the day enticed folks to buy cars and to travel around the country so that they might see many places rather than

just staying put in one site for an entire summer. Hotels on Chebeague also suffered from the competition of builders like Harry Hamilton's successor, his cousin, Howard Hamilton, who could put up an affordable summer cottage in no time. During this period many tourists who had evolved into loyal hotel guests, developed a deep connection to the island and commissioned contractors such as Howard Hamilton to build them a simple summer bungalow. They put down roots, and often times these families entertained guests at their own place rather than putting them up in a hotel. The cottages were frequently rented when the owner was not in residence, which took even more business away from the hotels.

At some point during this period (1912-1914) the Hamilton Hotel closed. But it would survive for another day! Once again Ellis Ames Ballard would come to the rescue of Hamilton Hotel.



If you want to find out about the resurrection and final demise of the Hamilton Hotel look for the final installment of this story in the Fall 2010 Sloop's Log, or better yet visit the exhibit, *Tourism Transforms Chebeague* at the Museum this summer. The story of the Hamilton Hotel, as well as the stories of all of the other hotels and boarding houses that flourished on Chebeague during the golden age of tourism, will be told and illustrated by vintage photographs, some of which have never been shared before! Don't miss this opportunity to be transported back in time! (Information for this article came from deeds, town records, family interviews, newspaper articles, *Casco Bay Directory*, Hamilton Hotel brochures, post cards, photographs and the *Casco Bay Breeze*)

# Fiddling While Chebeague Burned

By Donna Miller Damon

In 1995 Gertrude Felber Jones (1901-2002) wrote the following description of the Hill Crest fire, which occurred on August 3, 1924. Gertrude was the director of the Hamilton Hotel's female musical trio. She had visited Chebeague several years before she was hired to play at the Hamilton. Her professional career began at the Summit House in Kennebunkport during the summer of 1923. The trio played two hours a day for nine weeks and each member was paid \$5 per week. She played at the Hamilton from 1923-1930.

Gertrude's letter to her daughter shows the powerful connection that she felt to the island of Chebeague. If only more people would jot down their memories, how rich our understanding of the past would be! We thank Carolyn MacDermott for donating several Hamilton brochures and ephemera from the Trio to the Chebeague Historical Society. This summer's exhibit, *Tourism Transforms Chebeague*, will include several interesting items from this collection.



## The Hamilton Trio

Gertrude Felber	Violin
Anne McPherson	Cello
Beulah French	Piano

## Musical Program

Marche Militaire	Schubert
Swedish Folk Song	
Say it with a Ukulele (from Artists and Models)	
Evening Star (from Tannhauser)	Popular
Mignonette	Wagner
Minuet in G	Godard
In Love with Love (from Stepping Stones)	Beethoven
Stimmung	Popular
Forgotten	Henriques
Mazurka	Cowles
	Malling

Gertrude Felber Jones of the Hamilton Trio and their musical program.

Dear Carolyn:

I am so history conscious these days. The enclosed letter is something you all would like to preserve. Names, dates feelings as hard to come by if you depend on my memory-without proof! Anyway I am happy that you are getting involved with my dreams, because my days and many nights are filling my brain with memories and even future possibilities with an island like ours, which must be preserved. Dr. MacKinnon said yesterday that I must be doing something right because my blood pressure, heart etc were ok!! I talk Chebeague with him also! He was there once!! Martha sent a full envelope of press clippings...so I'll keep thinking Chebeague!

Sunday morning, August 3, 1924 was warm and sunny. The Hamilton Trio, Gertrude Felber (director and violinist); Beulah French, pianist; and Anne Macpherson, cellist, were planning their daily program which took place in the afternoon in the hour after dinner. Unfortunately the pianist was ill in bed on the top floor of the Hamilton. "What to do?"

Anna had an inspiration! Staying at the Hill Crest for a weekend was a family named Randall from Medford Mass and she knew that one of the Randall daughters was a pianist capable of being the substitute we needed for the day. Negotiations were carried through satisfactorily. The program went on as planned with a Randall daughter in the Hamilton Hotel playing the piano...while her father battled the flames and sadly went to his death in the Hill Crest fire trying to rescue the Medford Town Records that were in his care in the hotel room at the Hill Crest Hotel.



102 Hill Crest, Chebeague Island, Maine. PUB. BY F. E. MERRILL FREEPORT.

The Hill Crest before (above) and during (below) the fire.



Many Hill Crest vacationers, such as Mr. Mullin and Henry Macpherson, were on the water that day and came "home" to discover the loss of clothes and other personal effects. Ralph Rowe, manager of the "Hamilton Hotel" was aware of his obligation and was already preparing beds and space for those less fortunate, who would be looking for a place to stay.

And that is how Charlie Hamilton lost some of his faithful clients who moved to the Hamilton and never returned to the Hill Crest.

I remember the feeling, the excitement and the smell of smoke on that day as I fiddled while Chebeague burned.

People connected with the Hamilton Hotel in 1924 included Freddie Brewer, bell boy; Mrs. Bertha White, pastry cook, mother of Raymond White, who ran the boat for Henry Macpherson, who was a guest at the Hill Crest. (Macpherson later built the cottage owned by Gertrude Felber Jones that is now owned by Carolyn MacDermott, Gertrude's daughter). Several boat owners such as Mullin, Hamilton and Cleaves took hotel guests on afternoon trips for 50 cents a ride. Desk clerks included Mrs. Donohue and Hank Kneeland. The manager, Ralph Rowe, had spent several summers managing the Peaks Island House. During the winter he was the head of Portland Night School and was an expert penmanship teacher. Rowe had three daughters, Eleanor, Virginia, and Marjorie. They all worked at the hotel.

By 1930 the trio practiced at the Orchard Cottage, which had been acquired by the Hamilton Hotel because of its extra rooms.

GFJ

# The Komlosy Family Saga... Continues

By Martha Komlosy Hamilton

My father and mother married in 1921 and in 1923 they bought the Cleaves farmhouse on North Rd. That was also the year that I was born. My brother Sonny, as he was called before he went to MMA at Castine and became Fred, came along in 1929, Anne in 1931 and Jim in 1934. We lived and played in that marvelous house and barn, a bungalow out back, some 11 acres of fields and woods and ½ of Aaron's Wharf on the shore that we shared with the Cleaves family. We did not need to go anywhere else...and seldom did.

John Long kept a horse in the barn for many years and mowed our fields for the hay. There was a cow for some years, too and always chickens. He would mail eggs to us in the winter. As I grew up I was allowed to take the horse out of his stall, water him and do a little grooming, etc. while John had a job. He collected the garbage from the Hamilton Hotel. We would pick it up and take it down Fenderson Rd. to the site of the clam factory where it was dumped overboard and the gulls took care of most of it. I remember that the horse's hooves made sparks on the rocky ledges as we backed the wagon down nearer the water.

Before my brothers and sister arrived I sometimes played with Frances Ross (Todd) who came with her mother to visit Addie Ross across the road (Doug Ross house) and I would also visit "Nellie Hill" where the Holts now live. I always knew her as Nellie Hill but learned years later that she was a Hamilton. Her garden was her joy.

My cousin, Paul Wolff, six months younger than I, would join us almost daily from my Aunt Florrie's house. When the new hay was harvested and the lofts were full again we would climb the ladders almost to the top of the barn and jump from the top beams to the hay mow, from the hay mow to the wagon and then go back up the ladder to do it again. Unfortunately



Above: Frederick and Andromache Komlosy  
Below: Martha Komlosy and Frances Ross







*Top: John Long, his cow,  
and Martha.  
Middle: A Young And  
Wary Martha Surveys the  
Water  
Bottom: Martha, Sonny,  
Anne, and Jim Komlosy*



it was not very good for the hay and John grumbled away at us but we had to do it once in a while to prove we were not too scared to do it. Those ladders always beckoned.

Some days were spent at the shore – all day – from high tide to low and back. We all learned to swim and dove off the deep end as we got older. One of our great delights was when the Ross brothers, Addie’s sons, Russell, Merle, and Weston would come to swim and dive also. It was a three ring circus as they cavorted and played tricks on each other. Their laughter could be heard at the Stone Wharf and Noddle Head. Between tides we would catch minnows in the tide pools and dug up the clay that was found along the banks. I tried sculpting with it but we used most of it to smear on ourselves so we had to wait for the tide and go back in the water to clean it off.

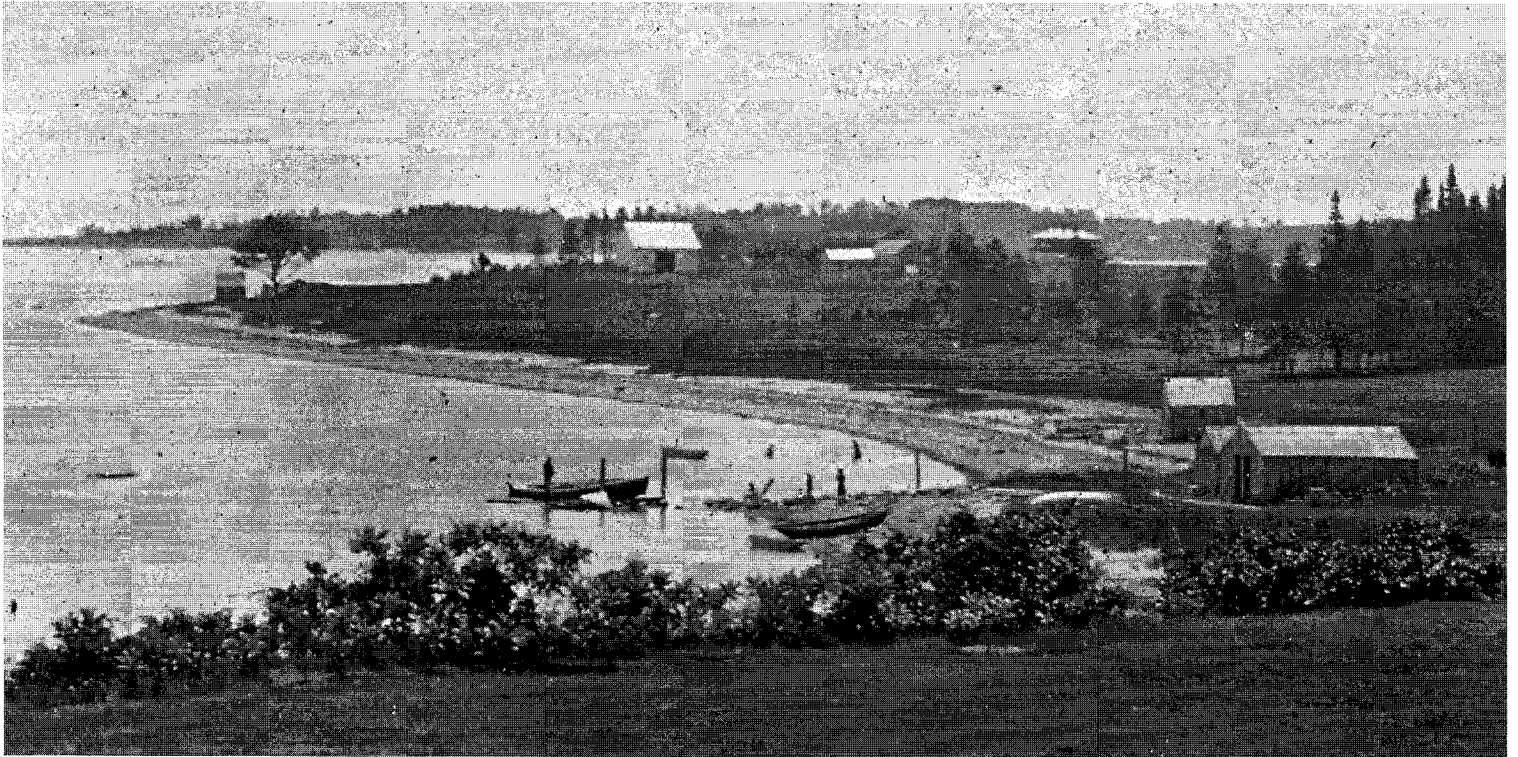
The bungalow out back had been a chicken house at one time but was plastered to make it habitable for a family to live there year round. We had a sand box on the porch for rainy days and rigged up a stage for a theater inside where we gave plays, often making them up as we went along. The aunts, uncles and cousins made the audience. We used old movie stills for inspiration. One caption read, “Curses, the villain is foiled” and we had a great time dramatizing that one. The butler (a very young Jimmy) got so scared that he had to go out and sit with his mother in the audience.

We seldom got to the island until after the fourth of July but we stayed until mid October as my mother decided we were better off outdoors here than in a schoolroom in Mass. These were the halcyon days of our childhood. Drastic changes came in 1940-41 when we moved to the island year round, but that is another story.

# An End to an Old Chebeague Homestead

By Ken Hamilton

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The era in which self-sufficiency, as the early settlers of Chebeague were forced to live, has always intrigued me. My recollections of the farms of Ed Jenks, Sylvanus Higgins, Walter and Howard Curit, and Martin Hamilton are quite vivid. When I was a teenager the Rose Farm was pretty much gone into disrepair with the aging of Bob and no sons to take over. Therefore I was very pleased to discover an article written by the well known author and Bob Rose's neighbor, Eric P. Kelly, describing the homestead and the Rose brothers. The following are excerpts from that article dated Dec. 24, 1944. My opinion is that it describes one of Chebeague's finest settlers.

*"Last week there was a simple service at the parish house on Chebeague Island for Uncle Bob Rose, whose passing brings to an end the history of an old New England homestead. Uncle Bob was somewhere in his nineties, but as he hadn't taken much count of the years of late he didn't know exactly how old he was. Yet at the time of his death he was the oldest man in the township of Cumberland.*

## A Link with The Past

There was in the man's life everything that was characteristic of the older dwellers of New England, frugality, conscientiousness, hard work, hatred of debt, humor, kindness, but above all a spirit of never-give-in, even when his legs failed him in his old age and he had to crawl up the bank to his house or cut his wood on his knees asking help from no one.

Out of these lives come epics. It was eighty years ago, that his father arrived from Block Island in a boat, in the middle of the winter, to find the farm house that he had bought occupied by another family. Besides the father and mother there were four boys and a girl, all part of the pioneer expedition to a new island. For once one has lived on an island, nothing but enclosing seas will suffice. Cities with their din and disturbances shut off the free air and cramp freedom. A gull cannot live in a cage.

So through the snow as night was setting in, the family trudged across the island to find lodging. Neighbors finally took them in, for the island has hospitality beyond the mainland, and while in a friendly kitchen the six emigrants warmed themselves and rubbed snow on the young daughter's feet for they were frost-bitten, food was brought them and beds were prepared on the floor.

But as soon as the farm house they had purchased was vacant, they move in, and began to go to work. Some clearing was made, wood was piled up, live stock made its appearance and was housed in the barn and sheds, and when spring began the development of twenty fertile acres which extended from the stone wall dividing the island down to the curve in the bay. The tract was ploughed and under cultivation, and soon the harvests began to come in, apple trees loaded with fruit, in due time, grapes on the vine by the waters edge, potatoes, cabbages, squash, and most important of all, beans, some green beans for summer, but for the most part, dry beans for winter, the brown pods flailed on the barn floor.

From the sea came the other part of their living. Herring in the bay for profit, with nets hung on uprights after each catch on the sweep of the sandy beach. Clams were to be had for a little digging, mackerel came in schools—lobsters were to be had from neighbors, for lobstering is an art in itself, and the Roses did not lobster. Besides the produce from the sea and land, for gradually boats were assembled on the beach, oxen in the barns, cows for milk, poultry for meat and eggs, there was profit for "working out". One brother, Enoch, built boats and attained skill as a carpenter. Zeke and Bob helped in building and even helped build the landing now used on Cousins Island. There were odd jobs in the fishing trade, and voyages in season took them up and down the coast.

## A Real Tide-water Farm

But here was a farm, a real tide-water farm in all its glory, something that today is almost numbered among things that have been. From 4 o'clock AM in the summer until night fall the family worked steadily—early to bed and up again at an early hour. There was plenty of good water. In its extent the farm had plenty of land, cultivated ground, woodlots, and berry fields. In summer there were blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, and huckleberries and in June or July the little red strawberries shone in thick grass.

But the farm is at last deserted. He who kept it to the last is gone. Another day has come. In its youth New England was filled with farms similar to this, families that not only supported themselves, but raised their own crops and made the earth and sea furnish food. Somehow it seems as if this era is at an end.

Three of the brothers married and moved to other homes on the island. The father died. The mother became an invalid, but Uncle Bob stayed on the old place and took care of her. His own wife passed away, his daughter took up teaching and went to the city. At last he was alone. Living in the old house and keeping up the old traditions as best he might. Then when some years ago he tried to burn over his field for blueberries—mostly for the benefit of his neighbors who were never refused entrance to his farm, he burnt down the old house, and had to build another. He was then in his eighties, but with the help of Brother Zeke he put up the little building of two rooms that now stand deserted and carried on as best he might.

His brother Zeke came to the farm every day to visit. Together with Bob and sometimes with Brother Enoch they would sit on a bench by the side of the house looking out to sea. Zeke was a well informed man, a man who had ideas on most subjects and stated them in emphatic form. Enoch was the philosopher....When sheep ravaged the garden one summer, Enoch noted that they hadn't eaten the cabbages. "Wonder why?" Robert asked. "Couldn't find any corn-beef," said Enoch.

## A Popular Island Spot

Roses Point was a general picnic ground for the island. The road through the property was traveled by automobiles almost every afternoon in summer. Uncle Bob gave his blessings to all as long as they did not steal his meat or butter hung in the well. But age never conquered him. When his limbs were feeble he would carry on just the same. It was just as much his pride as was the fact that he owed man a cent, paid his taxes on the dot.

Sometimes, in his eighties, when wheeling a barrow full of wood from the shore, he would simply lie down and rest where ever he might be, much to the alarm of strangers who thought him overcome. Sometimes he had come up from the shore on hands and knees, but he wasn't to be licked by age. If he felt tired, he simply rolled over and lay still until his strength returned.

With Bob Rose's passing, Chebeague has lost a hard-working, kindly independent citizen, whose tongue retailed nothing malicious against anybody. The old homestead, too, is deserted. The conditions under which the Rose family lived can never come again."

Dora (Rose) Littlefield



Zeke Rose



Enoch Rose



Bob Rose

Donna Damon learned some time ago from her father some additional facts concerning the Rose brothers: "Zeke and Bob met every day by the pond just to visit. In fact, it was because Zeke did not show one morning that Bob initiated a search and Zeke was found collapsed in the woods road behind his house. The family which took them in that winter's night was Barnewell Johnson who lived in the old house in Parker's woods. The Eric Kelly house was built by Enoch. Enoch married a nurse who was employed at the orphanage once in operation on the Richard Ross property. Ezekial was the father of the boys who came to Casco Bay with his brother Spencer from Block Island as a Porgy fisherman. An early accident caused Spencer to be drowned." We know that Bob lost the farm house to fire. Zeke built and lived in the house recently owned by Nancy Adams and he spent a good part of his late years rocking on the porch with a wonderful view of Casco Bay. Enoch built the house now owned by the Birketts. He often was seen walking to the store for groceries and my brother remembers of always receiving a Needham from him if he was in the yard when Enoch walked by. Sister, Dora, the little girl who had frost-bitten feet, grew up to marry Ammi Littlefield. He was the great grandfather of Bob Brown who now resides in the Littlefield house. John, the half-brother, left the farm to marry Johanna Thompson. His small farm home is now the site of the Campbell house across from the Commons. His barn is long gone, but memories of him doing odd jobs with his horse and wagon remain. My biggest recollection of Bob was his ability to tell a very convincing tall tale. For example:

Fog used to roll in at times, as it does today, in very thick clouds over Roses Point. Bob was shingling his house in one of those dense fog banks and was very surprised, he maintained, to find that when the fog cleared to discover that he had shingled two feet out over the edge of the roof. "Believe It Or Not"

Oh Yes! If you hear an excursion boat explaining that Roses Point got its name from the beautiful roses growing there, you are now aware that the Point got its name from the Rose family who settled there.

# Creating an Exhibit: Interpreting the Past

By Donna Miller Damon

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The Museum of Chebeague History opened in 2003 with the exhibit "In Her Own Words" which was a depiction of life on Chebeague during the decade after the Civil War. Since that time the Museum has told a variety of stories about the island including the West End, Chebeague's religious experiences, the entrepreneurial experiences of the Hamilton family on Chebeague, the story of island education, and most recently the impact of World War II on the island. We are currently hard at work on our newest exhibit due to open this summer. *Tourism Transforms Chebeague* is a comprehensive look at the roots of tourism on the island and how the initiatives and interactions that occurred a century ago created the community, as it is today.

Each of these exhibits was very different but taken together they enhance our knowledge of how the island changed over time. Understanding the past provides common ground for any community, but it is

especially important for a new town like ours. We need to appreciate Chebeague's past if we are to shape its future. The influence of tourism on the community of Chebeague cannot be understated. That being said, it is not always easy to peel back the layers and create a common knowledge of how people who were living on Chebeague during the early days of tourism were impacted. The 2010 exhibit will examine what Chebeague was like when the tourists first arrived; what islanders hoped to gain from tourism; what the summer tourist wanted; and how these visions and experiences influenced the evolution of the community.

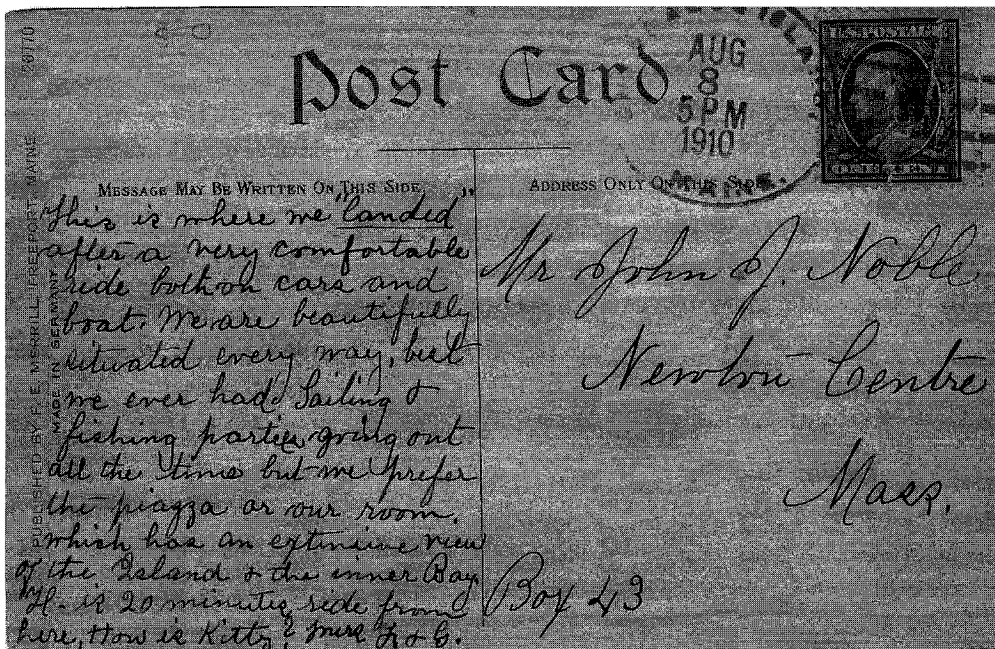
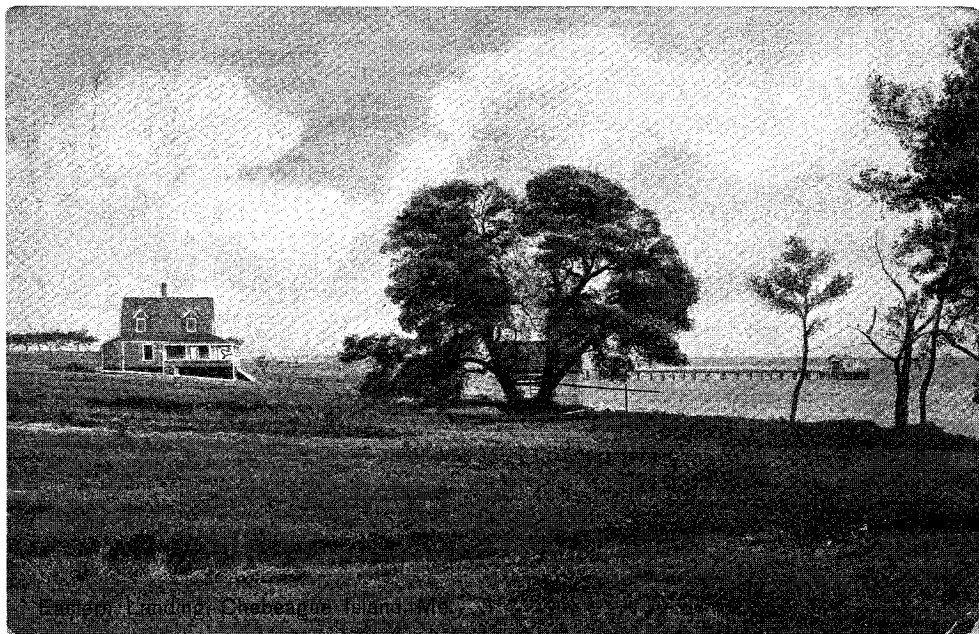
The introduction of the summer visitor into this island community had a multifaceted effect on Chebeague and its people at the time, and the impact continues to reverberate. The committee has tried to be honest about what it has learned, and it has attempted to tell the story from numerous perspectives. But as you can imagine a tension exists depending upon the source. The advent of tourism was viewed by all of the stakeholders through their personal lenses and experiences. There are no right or wrong interpretations, but there were and continue to be multiple points of view regarding the impact of tourism then and now. Is there a difference between a tourist, a day-tripper, a

cottager, a renter or a summer native? How has the relationship between year-round and summer people changed over time or has it not? These are tough questions that will be in the back of people's minds as they view the displays. This exhibit asks those questions not because we want to divide the community but rather the opposite. We hope that by understanding our past we can move forward as a more unified town.

Delving back into the past can be a challenge, but that work is made much easier if multiple primary resources are available. This exhibit is grounded in the many primary sources that can be found on Chebeague! People have opened their family photo albums; post cards with descriptive messages have been donated; and diaries abound. Thanks to a grant from MBNA and the generosity of the University of Maine and Maine Historical Society, we have microfilm copies of the *Casco Bay Breeze*, a tourist newspaper published from 1901-1917. Enlarged photographs will transport the viewer back in time as they study the fashion and hairdos of the era. Committee members have spent hundreds of hours pouring over turn of the century newspapers and Census records. Diaries, hotel records, steamboat time-tables, play bills, dance cards and more enhanced the committees' understanding of the period. Personal interviews, filmed by Joan Robinson

during the 1980s and 90s, provided the insights of islanders and summer folks who are no longer with us. Some of our most interesting sources come from EBay purchases! We have been able to buy post cards, booklets and other paper ephemera through the Margaret Bates Book Fund, and we have acquired artifacts such as souvenirs, china and glassware through the Leonard Fund. Our most unique purchase to date is a silver loving cup, which was won by the top woman scorer at the 1908 Chebeague Field Day. You will be amazed at what has returned home from places as far away as Texas, Oregon and Colorado. And of course no list of sources would be complete without mentioning the island's many attics that hold a storehouse of island records and memorabilia and the willingness of their owners to share their treasures!

Whether you are an islander, summer native, renter or tourist don't miss this exciting exhibit and learn more about the evolution of our community.

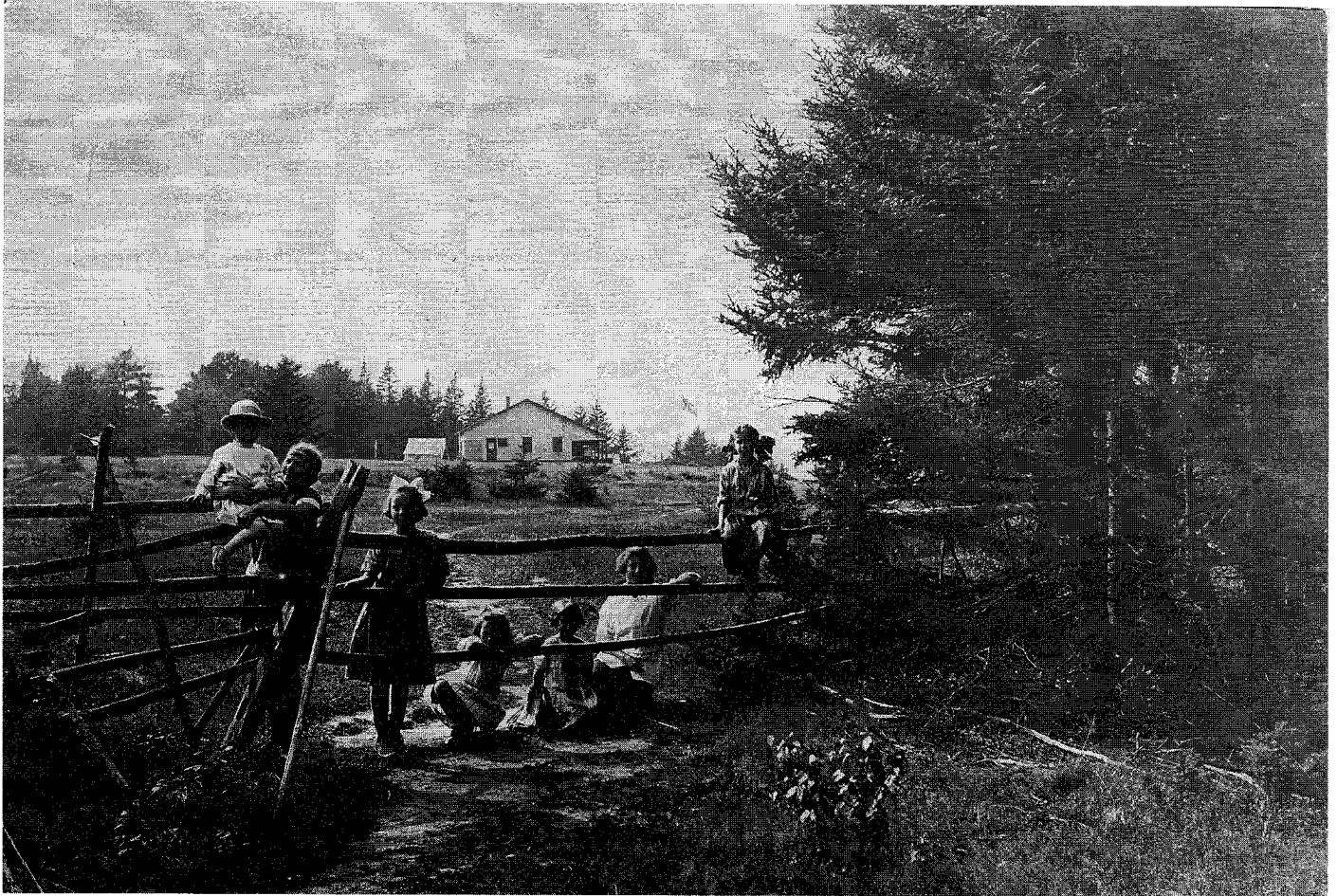


(Front and back shown)

Some well-pleased hotel guests sent this post card of Eastern Landing and the Old Willow that was located on Hamilton Beach to a man in Newton, Massachusetts. Their description of their activities provides a first-hand account of what it was like to visit Chebeague during the summer of 1910 and adds richness to the exhibit.

# Mystery Photo

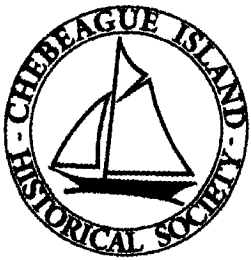
Can you guess where this is and who the people are?



Answer: These are the campers and their children at Juniper Lodge. It was established in 1914 by the Hadcocks. The property is now owned by the Gaslin Family.

*This advertisement for Stanley's Basket Stall comes from the Casco Bay Breeze in the summer of 1910.*

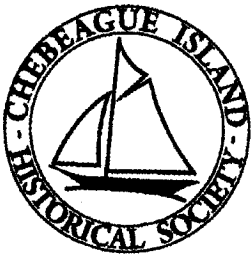
**STANLEY'S BASKET STALL**  
CHEBEAGUE ISLAND  
STANISLAUS DANA, Propr.  
Complete line of Sweet Grass and  
Fancy Baskets, Indian Clubs, seal  
Moccasins and Belts. Hamilton's  
Landing road, first tent on left be-  
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Issue 2

# the Sloop's Log

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*Jennie Mae Aldrich Jacobs  
waiting for the boat at  
Central Landing*

