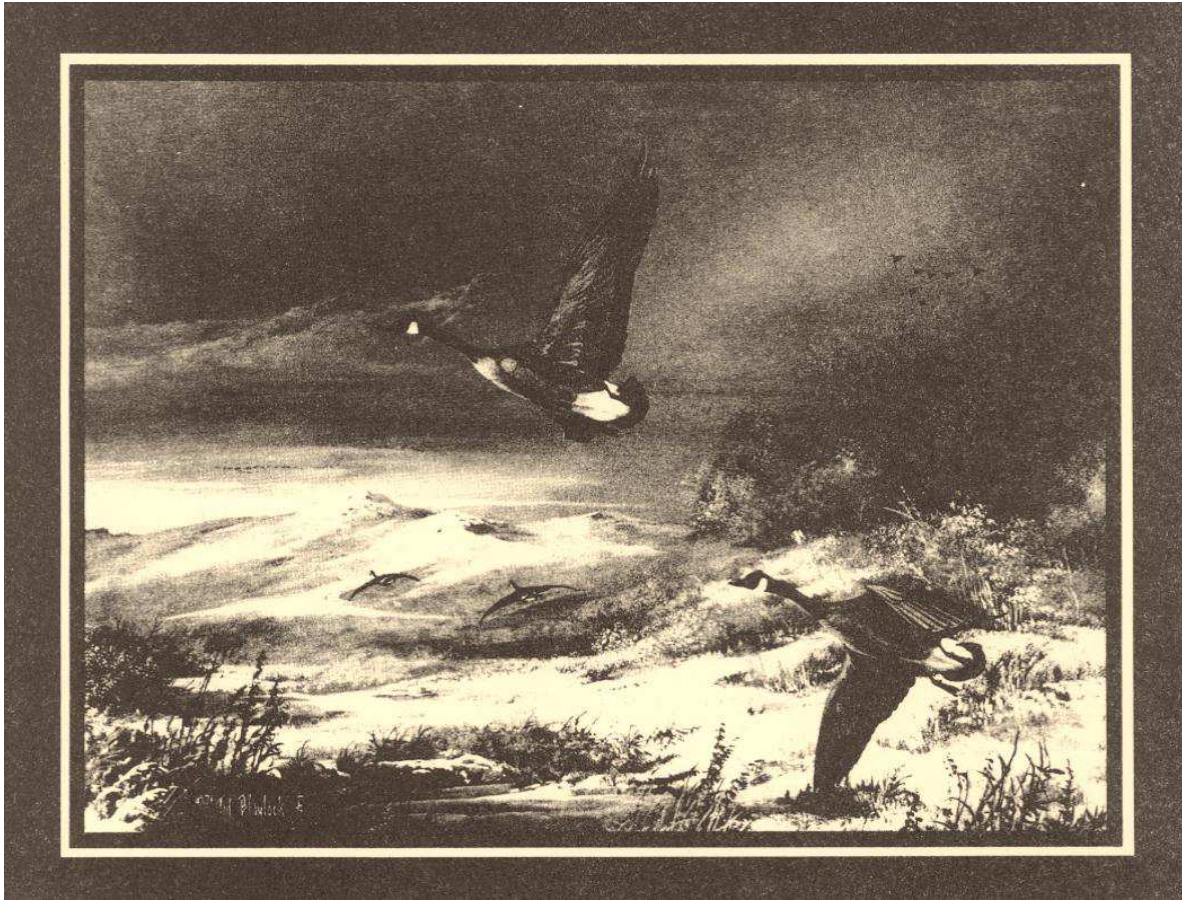


GREAT ISLAND



LAKE SUNAPEE

(Lake of the Wild Geese)

New Hampshire

Parts of the Davis "Family History," written by Grace T. Davis (Mrs. Ozora S.) between 1940-1944 as a memoir for her family. Excerpted and Edited by Elizabeth D. Burford in 1978-1979. Typed by Donna Tanzer, Davis family friend, in appreciation of The Island's unique beauty and character undisturbed by the modern world--a place to truly renew the spirit!

GREAT ISLAND

Because of the great importance of Sunapee in our family history, we are writing this chapter with special fullness and detail. The summers spent there for forty years had their effect upon the family, bringing striking gains in health and strength as well as subtler gains in resourcefulness, ingenuity, and adaptability.

Life at Sunapee was something ardently desired by young and old alike all through our long winters in the city. It was the shining part of our years, heavenly weeks to which we looked forward through the dark snowy days, the bleak fall days and the muddy spring days when there was little beauty to be seen anywhere.

At Sunapee the hills and the lake brought us to peace and loveliness, tempered with the zest of nature's changing moods. The mountain changes from one great wooded mass to many ascending ridges as the sun moves across the sky. At times clouds veil the top. In moonlight, it takes on new mystery.

The mountain's brother, the lake is equally mysterious and exciting. What do its depths contain? Once I heard a tale of a great fish there. Whether there be one or not, to catch a salmon or a lake trout--or even a bass--in the early morning and to bring him home for breakfast is like bringing an offering from Aurora.

The big fish are great, but we couldn't spare the sunfish. They are good for children to catch and for cats to eat. We had a kitten once, named Henry, who developed "une grande passion" for sunfish. He seemed to know, even on the other side of the cottage, whenever one of the children picked up a fishing pole, and he could get down to the wharf, scampering full tilt ahead of everybody. He sat there, and ate sunfish as long as we dared to let him, ate until his sides stuck out! In fact we were afraid the fish bones would come through and Henry would turn into a porcupine. But they never seemed to hurt him at all. So, evidently, sunfish are good for kittens.

All around our cottage on Great Island are the woods. They are an open, cheerful bit of forest with no dangerous wild animals, no poisonous snakes, a friendly forest where children may roam with no fear of harm. All through our woods run trails, made by both adults and children during the course of many years. Walking over these trails we come to know more fully the beauty of our Great Island's secret nature.

If we were going to hunt for "sermons in stones," this would be the place to search. Because granite prevails, this region has a quality inherited from the stone. We like to think that some of the strength of the granite has entered into the soil and its vegetation, and so into us. Sunapee demands strength from us because it is wrought out of granite. To handle it develops our muscles, necessitates prying, rolling, heaving. It is no easy thing to deal with granite!

Besides its rocks, the woods are filled with living things. The trees bear the slender leaves of white birch mingled with the round poplar leaves. Bushes and ferns spring into being from the decaying richness of past years to live in beauty for a season and then contribute their substance to the growth of the forest, an unbroken cycle. Here in our Great Island woods there is no sharp distinction between birth and life and death. The resources of the rain and the air and the sunlight are all included in this continuity of the woods. Here there is a unity of existence which helps us to rest in its security. We

who live on Great Island cannot help but perceive that we, too, are a part of this unity and this continuity. When even that small weed is included, it is unthinkable that we can be left out. In this, we find a deep sense of peace.

These metaphysical reflections are quite different from the actual study of the botany of the Island. Spruce, pine, hemlock, poplar, birch, beech, oak, maple and others make up a chorus when the wind plays its orchestra. Each has its own individual fitness for special uses. The needle trees remind us of Christmas. The maples give us their sweet sap in the Spring, and win our hearts in fall when their vivid red leaves outshine all the rest.

At this season of the fall foliage it seems as if our awareness of the wild life around us becomes more intense. This may be because of the stillness. So many of the summer residents have departed. The speedboats are stilled. Or it may be because the falling leaves render the woods more open and sunny. We can see farther and are more apt to wonder what is living in its hidden places.

Since the great hurricane of 1938 there are parts almost as impenetrable as a jungle. One can traverse them only through the treetops. What a place for the partridge to hide and breed. The hunters who used to despoil the island every October now have more difficulty in getting their game. When you have once seen the mother bird limping along before you, pretending she has a broken wing in order to distract your attention from her babies, you feel that you have seen a most complete exhibition of maternal love and willingness to sacrifice.

Who says that nature is altogether "red in tooth and claw?" Along with the bloody struggle for survival is the development of altruism and love. The two are strangely intermingled.

A year ago our next door neighbor, Mrs. Riegger, opened her back door early one morning and looking out was startled. Only a short distance away was what she thought was a man, prowling around on all fours. But then she saw it was a bear. Many of the envious neighbors tried in vain to get a glimpse of it later, but during the morning its mate began calling mournfully from the opposite shore, and finally Mr. Bear struck out and swam across, doubtless to give a good report of Great Island and its huckleberries.

We have been hoping that the abundance of berries this summer (1942) would lure more bears to visit us. There have never been so many berries before--raspberries in the open spaces where trees were blown down, blackberries, blueberries--almost enough to satisfy everybody.

As the fall comes on we also wonder occasionally about the insects and where they will spend the cold winter. I like to try to imagine them sometimes on a cold day in Chicago.

There will be many grey little cocoons, fastened securely to twigs, sealed under our piazza roof, fastened to the floor under the house. From these the moths and millers of next summer will emerge.

The hollow trees will be full of winter retreats. The bark of the Great Hemlock behind the woodshed will be a veritable winter hotel. This is our one great tree, now battered and eaten, towering above all the others. From it a swarm of winged

ants emerged early last July. Now from its branches little worms are swinging down. They make a network through the woods. For the last two nights a great swarm of tiny flying things have covered my table.

They are in all the cottages along the shore. Are they hatched from the descending worms? I do not know, nor what is going to become of them now that the frosty nights are almost upon us.

The field mice and the little grey mice will find a nest in our old clothes or bedding if they have a chance! I know! For many years a family of flying squirrels made their winter home in Elizabeth's house--the cleanest, most captivating wild tenants we ever had.

I suspect our "chippie" is going to spend the winter in the stone wall behind our kitchen, but I do not know. He has been dining at our expense all summer and I think he is fond of the place. I hope he has not grown lazy or let his teeth become soft on our bread, so that he has a good store in his winter pantry.

So many things, even insects, seem to become at home with us! I feel as if they belong here as much as we do. I cannot step out of my lighted room at night without a moth or a mosquito or something waiting to accompany me in. The spiders love my kitchen windows! I can brush the fat one, who has chosen the window above the sink, down every day, but by morning there she is again.

The bees attend us at every dinner. We have almost lost all fear of them. They wander over my plate and cut and tug away at a morsel so big that they stagger and can hardly get up into the air as they flyaway. They light on my hand and probably exclaim inwardly with delight over the smell of the fish I have been preparing for dinner. They are as loathe to sting as we are to harm them.

Then the ants. How they do love to get inside! Even up in my bedroom! Yes, one comes very close to Mother Nature's children here. They insist on being in our hair, and on our lap.

This has been an insect year. There have never been so many bees with us before--bees of various kinds. Many of them have their homes in the hollows made by the trees uprooted in the hurricane. It would be an interesting thing if someone would keep a record of the variations of wild life here from year to year over a considerable period. Just now we have peculiar conditions with our uprooted damaged forest and with our great supply of berries in the denuded spots. Next year, ten years from now, there will be changes, but just what?

A great many of them will depend upon the weather, and of all places where the weather is unpredictable this is the most uncertain. It is almost as if all the weather changes of the country round about were focused here, and Lake Sunapee manifests them in their most violent form. The hills and mountains are among the first which the Atlantic storms meet as they advance inland. Mt. Sunapee seems to take the brunt of them, and the clouds, saturated with moisture gather on her summit, precipitating rain, day after day. It is much like an English climate, and indeed the lake itself has often been likened to Windermere, a place where I passed as cosily rainy a week as any I have experienced on Great Island.

Standing nearly three thousand feet high Mt. Sunapee has her head in the clouds very frequently--like an absent-minded genius. She has the temperament of a genius also, with as many changing moods in a day as women are said to have! Sunshine, hailstorm, a thundershower and a rainbow--and she can end up with a glorious sunset, and be perfectly sane and sweet as the moonlight appears! She is now most despairingly sullen, and now most gloriously beautiful like Longfellow's famous little girl with "the curl on her forehead." One is always having to apologize for her to guests, but about the time the apology is finished she is apt to smile--her enchanting smile--and they fall in love. After that has happened nothing can alienate them from Sunapee, no matter what she does.

I used to think her thundershowers were the last word, and no place could do more to terrorize me. I have stood alone in the cottage, and seen the bolts crash around--and hear them--and quivered! It was certain that nature could do no worse!

I recall one night alone here with the children when they were small. The customary display grew worse and worse and although bedtime was long past I let them all--including four-year-old Wilfred stay up. Any sleep for them was out of the question. Down at Newbury there was a red glow. A fire had been started. Above the hills westward in the direction of Newport there was another red sky. The lightning seemed darting in every direction. Going upstairs away from the lighted sitting room, one of the children called, "Mamma, the woods behind the house are all pink!"

Sure enough! No fire could be seen, but there was a dull red glow all through the tree trunks. I got the children's wraps and took them out on the piazza. "Now, I'm going to get some things together. We may have to go in the row boat, but there's always the water, so we'll be all right."

But Wilfred refused to be comforted. He began to jump up and down crying, "We're all a'going to die! We're all a'going to die!"

Fortunately about this time Dr. Smart appeared. He had walked around the shore far enough to see that the glow came from a great fire on the hill above Blodgett's. A barn filled with hay was burning. He had known we would be frightened and had come over to reassure us. After that I did not expect to be greatly surprised by anything.

But I was!

It was September of 1938. We had been stoical for nearly a week, maintaining an optimism in spite of the repeated rains, and trying to make Wilfred's friend, Hazel Layton, have a good time, if possible. It was her first visit, I believe, to New England, and New England was certainly showing its worst side.

Beside Hazel, Elizabeth and little Margot, Wilfred and myself made up the family. The boathouse had recently been taken down in preparation for the building of a new one, and the Alexabeth was tied up at Dr. Smart's wharf, and the rowboat was fastened to the wharf still left in front of the house.

At last, the weather appeared to be clearing and the sun came out for a little while in the afternoon, so Elizabeth and I decided to walk over the Ridge Trail. There were great pools of water here and there in the woods. The wind was blowing

in a very erratic fashion, now this way and now that, but very often in a surprising fashion out of the North. At the same time, there was a roaring sound which had been going on ever since morning. We concluded it must be the noise of the brooks and swollen tributaries to the lake, now filled to an unusual degree by the steady rain. Mr. Morgan said he had never heard a noise like it before and did not know how to account for it.

When we returned to the cottage it was about time to prepare supper, but before we had done much the wind was so much harder that Elizabeth decided to go over to Bill's cabin and ask him to come and see if the boats were tied as well as possible.

By the time Bill reached the Alexabeth, branches were beginning to come down and some trees, and he decided he had better see if there was room to tie the boat up at Riegger's boathouse. He found that there was room, but by that time the waves and wind were so high that it seemed risky to start out. He and Elizabeth got the engine running, thinking the heavy gusts would probably subside after a little.

But instead of that the wind grew harder and harder, and the waves greater until they began to worry about Dr. Smart's wharf. Bill sent over word to bring some chains which were here thinking at least they could moor the boat to the trees. Elizabeth and he were trying to hold it, almost up to their waists in the water. But by then, the trees were falling all around them. They tied the canoes as best they could. Then the wharf began to give way! We cannot be too thankful that they abandoned the Alexabeth in time and let her go down!

It may have been seven or seven-thirty by then. They struggled back to the house in the gale. In the meantime I had given over the steel rowboat to its fate. Hazel was caring for Margot and had warmed a little tomato soup, which we drank hastily and then put out the fire. We did not dare to light the lamp as we were afraid the house might not stand.

By this time the gale and the noise were indescribable! They grew worse and worse. We lit a candle on the organ and all sat in that corner with our warm coats on and our flashlights at hand. The water was now sweeping in great waves against the front of the house, crashing in with the new stringers for the proposed boathouse, and we were afraid the foundations of the cottage would give way, in which case it would probably buckle. We thought we could escape by the back door, or by the front door if the big hemlock should fall on the house. So we waited while it became worse and worse.

I think it was about eleven o'clock that the hurricane showed signs of being a little less. We did not know at all what sort of storm we were experiencing and thought it might be circular or recurrent. But by midnight or a little later it was definitely abating. After a time Wilfred and Hazel started out to see if the houses on the other shore were still standing. Hazel's money and clothing were in Bill's cabin, and we were much afraid it had been blown away. I do not see how they made the trip in the darkness, but they did, and the house was there!

About two a.m. we went upstairs and lay down, dressed. But the storm was really over. The next morning we looked out and our island was transformed. There were no railroad connections left, no telegraph, no telephones, and the highways were blocked.

Our only communication was by air and planes brought in telegrams and newspapers so that we knew what had really happened. Hundreds of trees were down, but we were all safe! The boats were gone. But the house stood.

The probabilities are that we shall never see another such storm during our lifetime. And yet, I understand that there was a similar hurricane in the early eighteen hundreds which was described by Charles Dickens.

In a book, "Incidents in the Early History of New England," by Reverend Henry White, published in 1851, there is an account of a "Great Storm" in 1685, and it seems odd that he did not refer to the one of more recent date.

The following summer Lake Sunapee gave us another surprise-this time a very brief one, but startling. We thought that a thundershower was coming and were hurrying to close the windows upstairs and down when a miniature cyclone struck this end of the island. Elizabeth ran to put Margot under the big square piano, but before it could be done, in less than two minutes probably, it was over.

In that short time it had carried the chairs which were on the front piazza--about five of them--around to the east side, broken one of them hopelessly and smashed some of the railing, and wedged the chairs into the kitchen door. It had lifted a big garbage can of water on the back porch and landed the can on the other side of the house near the well. And it had moved the ice-house about two feet East by measurement.

Over at Dr. Allen's it had carried a rowboat up the bank about ten feet, and out in the lake by the salmon grounds it had spun a launch round and round until the owner thought his end had come.

Over at our next door neighbor's on the island to the west they did not even know that we had had a wind! Such are the vagaries of Sunapee! This exhibition on the part of our lake nearly disgusted us. Nearly, but not quite! We couldn't be vexed with our lake for very long, and perhaps this very story will help to prove how much we love her. Anybody has to love a rascal like her pretty well in order to forgive such vagaries. Whatever she does now I shall not be surprised. I'll never say again that she can't do anything worse-or that she can't be more lovely!

SUNAPEE'S INDIANS

Once Indians walked along the shore among the bushes and between the trees upon the very spot where I walk today. They stood upon this rock; they touched that one with their hands.

Every little while I say something like this to myself, but I cannot realize it altogether. And yet I know it is true. They were here!

Could it be that--sometime ten thousand years from now--all will be different again? But still the trees, the lake, the rocks, the stones, the same? If we were to lose great wars? If airplanes or great machines of the future or the growth of population transformed the hillside regions? If a great meteor fell? What could happen to change our Sunapee?

Yes, there were Indians here--a kindly tribe, they say, those men who named this place after the wild geese. They must have hunted here. Birch bark canoes or dugout canoes floated upon the lake. Their arrows flew and fell into the water. They came here to this island, for I hear it was their council place, the spot where the chiefs met apart to discuss their problems and perhaps to try their captives.

A neighbor here, who claimed she could see into the past, said once that their meeting place was by the big rocks in the center of the island. She had never been on our island before that day but she went straight to the place through the ground hemlock and the tangle of bushes as straight as an arrow of the old days, and there she seemed in a trance or in a strange state to see things that happened--things unspeakable. She said among other things that there was land then connecting us with the mainland at Burkehaven by way of Little Island and Tuxbury's Point.

Another time someone we knew, in a dream, saw Indians landing at the other end of the island opposite the boys camp, scrambling up on our shore at the place where the Tinkers once had a rustic seat, going off toward the great rocks.

Visions. Imaginings. We step off here into the dreamlike past. There are historical stories of a different sort, fact, I suppose,--which say that these Sunapee Indians were very kindly to the early settlers. Gentle and industrious, they fished and hunted and bade the white folks welcome.

But there were other New England tribes not so kind, and when the settlers led a punitive expedition against them they did not distinguish between the good and the bad, but attacked our Sunapee tribe and practically exterminated it. It was not a large one. The thought of this, if it really happened always humiliates me in a peculiar way. Some of our ancestors probably lived in this region. Did they have a part in it? That we could have done this to our Sunapee Indians! I wish they were living here still, their descendents coming down to fish in the lake of the wild geese. There is room enough upon all these hills.

There is a great pile of rocks underneath our house. Indeed, Norman Brockway, its builder, said once that he built there because it was too stony to attract any purchaser. Among the rocks are one or two of flint, and here some years ago Wilfred found a curious stone, an Indian hammer, with indentations on either side. I have just held it in my hand, thumb and finger where his were placed--a queer old stone. Possibly this was where he worked beneath my house!

If some night of the harvest moon, I should hear as I wakened, "chip, chip!" and then looking out of my window if I should see his canoe gliding out into the path of the moonlight, I should understand. Far overhead, "Honk! Honk!" The wild geese were going south!

ISLAND HOMES

The first building on the island, so far as I can learn was the bowling alley. It stood at the west end about opposite to where the Nancy Jane was parked, on the spot where the Aikens used to have a flower garden. There was another on Little Island.

A place to play, a house for fun on our Island was such a fine way to start! But "they say" it was "a dive." Did an island represent the degraded spot of the lake, with men stealing away from their respectable families at the Harbor or at Blodgett's to drink and play and carouse? Bowling balls clashing, liquor bottles, a row home after midnight singing drunkenly, as the boats took their crooked course against the wind and waves? I like that quite as little as the thought of the massacred Indians. I am afraid our island has had a history not all shining. When the wind blew down the trees, cutting a swathe past the great rocks; when the trees came down in the devastation of the great hurricane, when the fire swept the island about 1870, perhaps it was not all undeserved.

Later there was a fishing shack where the Wadsworth garden used to be. It had a pennant--blue with a white star--which Mrs. Ruth Davis now has in her cottage. Sheep had been brought over to graze on the island--a wonderful place for them safe from any dogs--after a fire had burned over a large part of it years before. The value of the land was very low. But it was now fifty years after the fire.

Norman Brockway, who had been camping with his sister and her husband on the land which is now part of the John Hay estates decided that here was an opportunity for a rise in value. Norman Brockway was in love with Sunapee and so was his sister, Mrs. Jennison, and fortunately for Lake Sunapee, Norman Brockway had the leisure to indulge his affection.

When he was forty years old, Norman had walked home from the little machine shop where he made guns--very fine guns, still remembered by experts. He had decided that he had made guns long enough. He had acquired skill. There was little more for him to learn about his trade, and why go on doing that one thing all his life when there was such a variety of new things which he might do and enjoy? In fact, why be tied to work and money and regular hours anyway when he had enough for subsistence saved already! With an economical life he could acquire that greatest prize of all--freedom to use his time as he liked!

For a New Englander this was a sort of heresy. There were two kinds of people at the two extremes--the right smart thrifty sort, and those who were shiftless. Norman from henceforth fitted neither of these classes or any of those in between. He was unique in that he was not idle but always useful, and in that he did not labor longer for any monetary wage. In Great Island he saw a prospect for an increase in value, it is true, but it was an interesting development also which he could watch and handle. He himself built the first cottage on The Island, a replica of his own at Brightwood, and built it on the stoniest land he found. This was the house which we purchased in 1903. It was then fifteen years old, having been built in 1888.

Even after it was sold he continued a neighborly interest in it. With his spyglass he sat on his piazza and surveyed the island at intervals down through the years. He sold us the old rowboat, the Swan, and he sold us the tiny launch which he built himself--the Ozark as we called it at first, later renamed in jest, the Lusitania. He built a sailboat and took friends sailing. He tinkered over our launch engines and kept them going, just for friendships sake. If anyone was in difficulty with anything mechanical they went to Normans so that he could look at it, while the women folk sat on the piazza with "Louisy Jennison" and "visited." She was always at home dressed in one of the old dresses which were cleaned and patched and worn year after year, waiting the time when they should be literally worn out. Most of them became really aged before they did wear out, but why throw them away while there was "still service in them?"

Louisy was four years older than Norman, I believe, and she was not very enthusiastic over new things. Why dig a cesspool for instance and have all the fuss of keeping pipes clear from her outdoor sink? "I just scatter my dishwater," she said, "throw it here and there, and the sun purifies it, and you don't have any cesspool trouble to worry about."

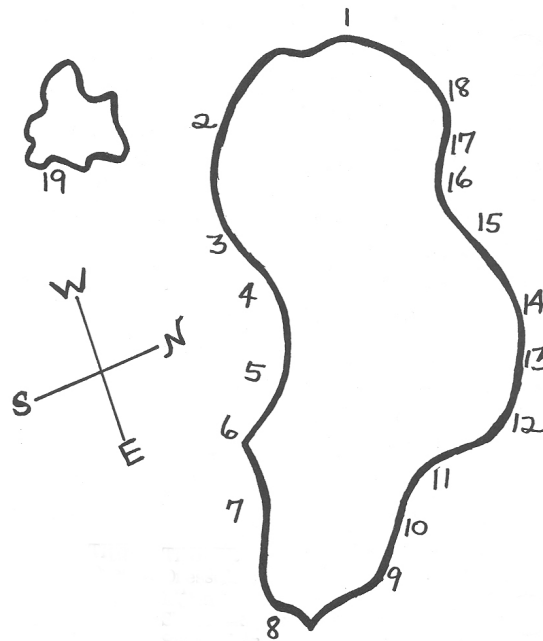
Then fireplaces! Such a waste of time and effort! "All the heat goes up the chimney. It doesn't take half the wood to keep the cottage warm in that stove, and you don't often need more than just the kitchen fire."

As to Norman, he thought one thing was often enough for any meal. Baked beans eaten from the can were quite sufficient for brother and sister and the dishes to be washed were reduced to a minimum. The spirit of camping-out was retained as far as possible even though they did live in a cottage with patchwork covers on the rocking chairs. And so they continued the simple life and the helpful interest in all that went on around them and in nature up to their nineties. Little by little they had to let go, and a niece came more often to look after them, but it was almost as if they were rooted in Sunapee, like grand old trees, a part of it which could hardly be separated from its rocky shores--on to the end.

The White Cottage--now Mrs. Ruth Davis' was built in 1900, making her the oldest continuous resident of the island. The Breen's was erected at about the same time. The Gales built their cottage in 1903. This was struck by lightning and the cottage belonging to Mrs. Arnold Riegger rebuilt on the same spot. The Smarts built the cottage belonging to the Allens in 1904. The Southwicks, I think came soon after. This sumptuous cottage was sold to the Treadways and now belongs to the Spillanes. The Andrews family camped on the Southwick land and later built their place on the other side of the island next to Ruth Davis. I am not sure of the date of the Brady place, later burned, but it was rather early 1906.* The Brady's relatives the Kerrs followed shortly after them in 1908.* The Smith family camped on our land for two years--about 1906-7 and later the son built the pleasant cottage on the other side of the Island. The Tinker house was erected around 1910. The Constantine Riegger place dates back to 1907 (??). The Cronyn house next door, a little later. The small house erected by James Wadsworth on the site of the Brady home is the baby of the settlement. We have not mentioned the three small cabins built by Dr. Benjamin Robinson, and another one built by Sandy, on what is now the Davis land. They are occupied by the Burfords and the Alexander Davises but are regarded as a part of the Davis estate.

Two houses we realize have been omitted; the Fulkerson's home (an earlier building), and a place built later by Mr. Bailey and nearly wrecked in the hurricane. This, I believe, completes the list--eighteen cottages in all. (I do not know dates when these last two were built).

* Dates supplied by Leroy Graham--taken from deeds.

OWNERS OF ISLAND HOMES (up to 1979--added by Elizabeth Burford)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 BREEN
Lena Breen and Herrick Aiken
Aiken sons and daughters, ending
with Charlie Aiken and family</p> <p>2 FULKERSON
Roxanne Fulkerson & Al Pattenden
Snively</p> <p>3 SOUTHWICK
Treadway
Spillane
Mortenson</p> <p>4 CRONYN
Helen Cronyn and Ray Olmsted
Cymerys</p> <p>5 CONSTANTINE RIEGGER
Ben Davis</p> <p>6 GALE
Arnold Riegger
Whitcomb</p> <p>7 O. S. DAVIS
Elizabeth Davis and David Burford
Margot Burford and George McLean</p> <p>8 SMART
Allen
Barbara Allen and John MacLeod
Nancy Allen and Ross Roberts Jointly</p> <p>9 ROBINSON
Burford
Martin-now Eleanor Martin Landis</p> <p>10 A. H. DAVIS
Sue Davis Jointly
Steve Davis</p> | <p>11 BAILEY
Chapman
Brown
Schmitt
Crews</p> <p>12 TINKER
Dressel
Leigh
Shattuck
Slaymaker
Shaw
Fagan</p> <p>13 SMITH
Forrest</p> <p>14 RAYMOND
Moore</p> <p>15 KERR
Jointly owned by a group including:
Cheever, Hemingway, King, Raymond,
Walton, and Ward Cheever
Judy Cheever and Leroy Graham</p> <p>16 BRADY
Georgiana Brady and Arthur Wadsworth
Helen Wadsworth and Doug Harris
Georgiana Harris and Lynd Forguson</p> <p>17 ANDREWS FAMILY
to the 5th generation</p> <p>18 WHITE
Ruth White Davis
Dorcas Thurston
Wyman</p> |
|---|--|

ISLAND PEOPLE

There is one sizable beach on the island--the one located on Mrs. Ruth Davis' lot--carved prettily with a small promontory running out toward "the large lake." Mrs. Davis is distinguished as the longest-time resident of the island. Her father built their cottage in 1900, and she has been coming here regularly ever since—forty-two years now.

Besides being "the first settler," Mrs. Davis is at the head of all of us, I do believe, in her interest in all living things upon the island--the insects, the birds, the changes in vegetation, none of these things escapes her watchful eyes. She is the first one I always think of if I want to ask a question about them.

Some years ago, she intrigued us by her special interests in spiders. Most of us ran for a broom with which to do execution upon any wharf-spider which we saw. They are surely ugly-looking fellows, big and hairy, and why they are not poisonous when they look like such villains I do not know. Anyway, we destroyed them and likewise the small varieties which infested our kitchen windows and piazzas.

But Mrs. Davis did nothing of the kind. Her piazza was a sort of spider sanctuary, where little spiders were bred and raised in unmolested webs and all the island children came to listen to Mrs. Davis as she explained the home life of the wonderful spiders.

Her cat was "belled," poor dear, so that the birds out on the point could not be caught, and Mrs. Davis observed them all. Her interest in living things extends to people and nothing pleases her more than to get hold of a new story about the Sunapee residents--or almost anybody! It's just an intense interest in humanity as such, with all its quirks and funniness.

Last summer the oldest resident on the island was Mrs. Andrews. She now "heads the procession" of those who move across our island stage toward the Great Mystery. I think most of us would agree also that "Gabby" has been one of our strongest personalities. She is one of those individuals who are not to be ignored or forgotten. She dominates a group.

One of the first things you learn about her is that she is an Episcopalian--a real honest-to-goodness Episcopalian. She could not be any other kind, being Gabby. For many years the little Episcopalian church at Burkehaven had a staunch supporter in Gabby. Never a Sunday came that she was not in her place in the choir. The church is a lovely little one of stone, a piece of devoted hand craftsmanship. It sits out in the field in the midst of a sea of white daisies. Each summer a professor from the Episcopalian Seminary takes over this responsibility and occupies the pleasant rectory on the shore.

We used to go there quite regularly when the children were small and we had more strength to manage the mile and a half trip. I remember the little field mice which ran about among the stones of the wall beside our pew. We felt very close to nature there as well as to God.

At home, Mrs. Andrews was, I believe, at the head of "The Girls Friendly." Some one of these girls used to come to the lake with her each summer for several years. Then there were her granddaughters, Dean's children, and later Stewart's sons to keep her company. So continuously there were young people in Gabby's cottage. Her daughter, Dean, was the beauty of the island. She was one of the most beautiful girls I have ever seen, and in spite of many personal sorrows retained her youth and loveliness for many years.

For a long time now it has been too difficult a thing for Mrs. Andrews to walk across the island through the woods.

Her calls have all been made by boat, with her grandsons "Tootie" and "Hoky," assisting. I was especially touched therefore a year ago when I was sick, and Mrs. Andrews, now well into her eighties, offered to come and spend the night. She had no thought but what she was an added support in time of trouble as always--and then there was the island tradition--where a neighbor is in need, one gives as a matter of course. Eighty or ninety, strong or feeble--if there is illness or trouble one is ready!

On the same side of the island live Mr. and Mrs. Kerr--Arthur and Hattie. Their house was a large one and for many years it waited, empty all, or nearly all, the summer for its owners. It seemed to some of us like such a waste to have it stand thus empty, a lonely cottage in the midst of all the beauty.

But at last they came! Mr. Kerr had reached the retiring age and from that time on they were the first on the island and the last to leave it. They had loved it so much after all! Probably they had rejoiced all those years to think that while they were in their busy years the house waited!

The Kerr lot is a large and beautiful one. It had the loveliest sheet of gray and green moss on all the island. Melrose Pier was on that lot. The fishing was good. However, Arthur Kerr started in at once with improvements, and he continued to improve the place through the years. A fine boathouse, with two luxurious boats, cement wharfs, an engine with plenty of water pumped for use in the house, good paths, the walks in tidy condition--upon the island home was lavished some, at least, of the money acquired in those busy years.

Hattie Kerr loved it too. But gradually, alas, deafness was closing in upon her. She was an imprisoned spirit. I can hardly think of anyone for whom this would have been more tragic, because of her love for companionship.

When I think of Mrs. Kerr I think of goodness. Her face shone with kindness. When I went to see her it lighted up with such hospitality that there could never be any doubt of our welcome. Sad that in those years my throat

troubled me so that it could not long supply the sound to match her deafness! But I like to remember my calls there.

I like to remember how she gave Sue the rubber kitty which was Sue's most cherished toy all through that following winter. Such a dear rubber kitty of the old-fashioned sort with bright green eyes!

I think the hurricane was a hard experience for Mr. and Mrs. Kerr. It must have been. In the morning after the storm when they opened their doors, they were treed in, with no exit front or -back. So much of their land, so finely cared for, was a mass of tangled destruction! They set to work to have it cleared. But it could never be the same again.

Just as they had come, with whole-hearted enthusiasm to stay as long as the summers permitted, so they went, suddenly stricken, both in one fall, never to return. They had waited long, they had come, and when they went, they went! The island had lost something precious. Hattie, with her love and friendliness has gone away.

The big Breen house at the end of the island has always been different from all the rest. It was built for Mr. John Breen, the undertaker at Lowell, Massachusetts, a man as devoted to his Catholic faith as could anywhere be found. Mr. Breen had a large family and he had many friends. His house was built and his summer life carried on, on the grand scale.

At a little distance under the finest evergreens on the island he set up an altar, and when Saturday came, he brought a priest from Lowell to conduct Mass for all the Catholics on the lake who were able to come hither. So the island has been, in a certain sense, consecrated.

The whole Breen life appeared of large proportions--in it's hospitality, it's home, it's activities, and even in the size of the Breens themselves, and later the Aikens, the family of Mr. Breen's oldest daughter. They were all large people. I wish I could recall some of the physical achievements, and accidents, and recoveries which Mrs. Aiken related to me one afternoon, things which had happened to her family. They were amazing and made me feel that most of us led a rather slow life as far as physical activity was concerned.

The opposite end of the island was quite a contrast. Protestant instead of Catholic, not employed in business but in the ministry and medical professions. Three ministers and three doctors have owned places and in addition Dr. Speight rented the cottage beside us for a summer or two.

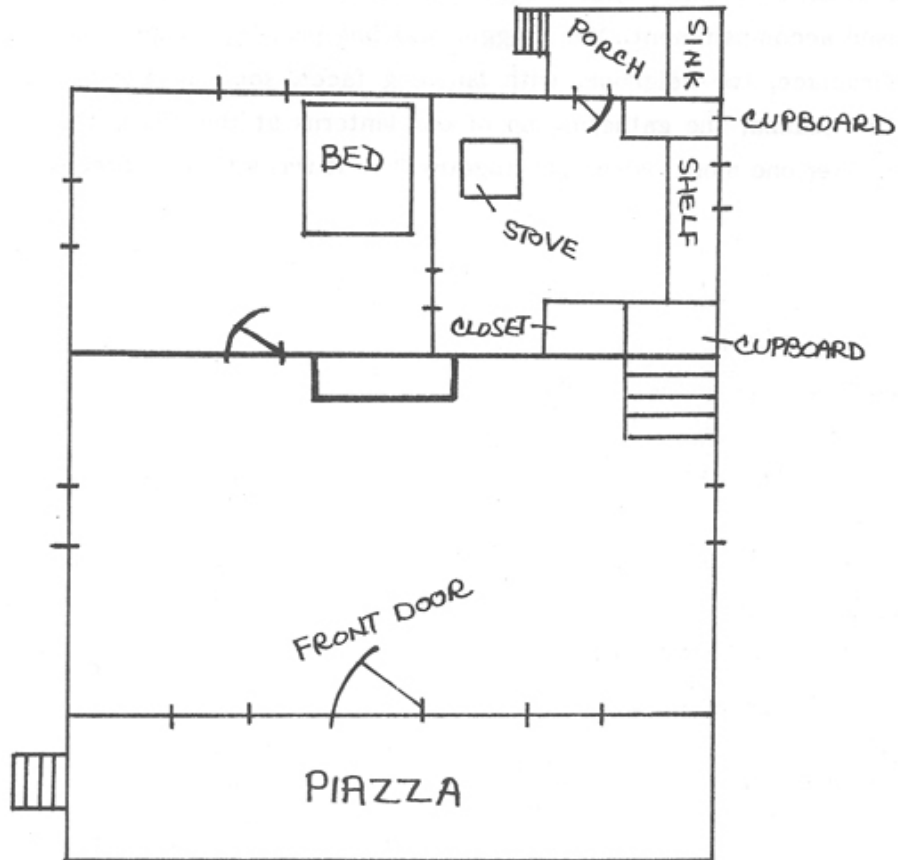
We have been very grateful for all our doctors, not forgetting Dr. Gorton, who visited on the other side of the island in past years. I have repeated how we rely upon each other when there is need, but underneath and all the time we feel better--really safe cause there are doctors on the island! We are proud of the fact and proud of them individually and of all their achievements, and when we say this we would want to include also their capable wives, with all their nursing training and all their kindness.

We cannot write of every person who has lived on Great Island during all these past forty years. But we do want to mention just one other--Mrs. Constantine Riegger. I think it is an amazing fact that we have all come to The Island from such a variety of places, and from such a variety of social settings and have all been such good neighbors with never a single hint of friction in all those years.

If there was anyone individual who helped to start us off on the right path it was Mrs. Riegger. Each family has had its own type of contribution to make and the Riegger's contribution was a little different from all the rest. They were musical and they were given to entertaining. For a time they were the only ones at one end of the island who had a piano. So every Sunday evening all the islanders were invited to the Riegger house to sing hymns. Mr. Riegger sang tenor and he played the violin. Mrs. Riegger played the piano and sang. All the children were musical. There were little talks given by various ones on something they had studied or seen or done, travel experiences, the story of what each one had done through the winter, games, -- all sorts of little informal stunts. I can see us all so plainly, Mrs. Riegger sitting before the piano, reciting a poem to an improvised accompaniment, Mr. Riegger standing proudly nearby, violin in hand, the fire in the fireplace, the neighbors with laughing faces, some of the young people perhaps out on the piazza, the gathering up of our lanterns at the close, the going home along the path after one more "island get-together" -- it was a time of precious experiences.

INCIDENTS

Naturally some of the things I remember most vividly were in the old kitchen because that was where I spent a large part of my time. It was not the same kitchen as now, but a part of the original house, which then had no fireplace but was partitioned as below.



I remember one evening in the old kitchen and I think it must have been the first or second spring we owned the house, when we had gone up there for just a few days the last of May--Ozora and I. The smelt were running, and that is always a very special season, for it lasts only three or four days out of all the year -- or rather nights. At dark the smelt go up from the lake to spawn in the brooks and the numbers of them are amazing. The village people down at Edgemont could go out with nets and in a short time fill their pails. Nothing is more delicious than these tiny fish dipped in cornmeal and fried to a crisp for breakfast.

But it must all be done at night and the brook at Edgemont -- or Mount Sunapee, as we called it then -- was five miles away. I stayed behind in the old kitchen with a fire in the stove to keep me warm -- the only person on

the island. Ozora had said he would be back in two or three hours, but the minutes dragged by and he did not come -- and he did not come! I began to get anxious, but I tried to keep my mind on my book, "The Story of Cyrus Hamlin," which I was reading, trying to get ready to write a chapter in "Hero Tales." Cyrus Hamlin and the smelt will always be associated in my mind, the cold Spring night, the worry, and then Ozora with his pail -- at last!

We returned a little later with the coming of summer bringing Elizabeth (1904). About that time we took down the partition between the bedroom and kitchen, leaving a couple of feet or more at the floor so that the bedroom became a sort of big pen, over which we could step but where Elizabeth was securely imprisoned, away from the stove and mischief. I can remember her so well standing behind her little fence with her plate of crumbs or other edibles, while we dined on the other side at the shelf before the window. It was rather a unique arrangement and most convenient.

There was a big box or two of magazines sent down about this time -- along with other things, -- from Father and Mother Davis. Sunapee had one of its southeast storms, right off the Atlantic and it rained for day after day, and was cold and damp. Nothing would dry, and the kitchen was the only comfortable place for the baby. I can remember keeping the little stove going and sitting beside the west window day after day reading those old magazines, while I tended the baby. I think it was my first experience of a real Sunapee rain.

The Swan, our first rowboat which came with the cottage, played a large part in life those days. It was painted a light blue and was most seaworthy, but oh, so heavy! However, father's muscles were young and strong, and I, myself, could pull a fair one. We went all over the lake. A trip up to Job's Creek in the old Swan was nothing unusual about 5 miles, each way. That was the place for pickerel and fishing was the main business at Sunapee. On one trip the weather was good enough at the start, but before we got home the wind was straight out of the southeast.

As we approached the end of the island and Breens it got harder and harder, great waves pounding back the boat. That was one time when "the Boss" was fairly winded! At last he said, "Take the oars. Just keep her from going backward a few minutes while I rest." Even that was a task, but we made home finally.

It was a great day when we bought the Alexabeth from Mr. Moore down at Brightwood. Two hundred and fifty dollars, I believe, -- half as much as the house. But was she worth it! She did us good service for thirty years, until the great hurricane battered her to death and she went down still running.

Elizabeth used to take her naps, lying on the launch cushions while we rode around. The dear old boat contributed not only to our happiness with every day, but it made all hospitality easier. And as the years went on, we had guests a plenty!

First and foremost, the relatives, of whom Ozora had many, all the Boston families Uncle Fred's, and Uncle Ham's in particular, and then young people and other friends from the various parishes.

Occasionally hospitality took on hyperbole. There was the day of the island clambake, for example. Ted Bailey made a special trip to the shore and brought back a load of seaweed and a barrel of clams. Some way it seemed a bit insulting to dear old Sunapee with all its aristocratic golden trout and land-locked salmon, as if we weren't satisfied with our bass-chowders and all that she had to offer. But the island craved a clambake, and there were the makings, seaweed, clams, watermelon, and all.

The men-folk went to work and a big fire was started just back of the ice house, and stones lined the fire pit. They kept it going all the morning, carefully calculating the time and it was all a glowing mass of coals and just the time to rake off the charred sticks and put the clams on the hot stones at about four o'clock. On they went!

But just then Sunapee with all its "natural-contrariness" put on an act. A sudden shower came up and the rain poured down. All the islanders were at attention. Would it last long enough to soak the seaweed and cool the clams and hot stones?

It did!!

There was nothing to be done except to move the whole bake into the kitchen and entertain the guests on the piazza. Approximately thirty-six people came. The condition of things can be imagined. The old wash-boiler steamed away with the clams on the stove, and they were ladled out into all our biggest kettles and watermelon rinds covered the piazza chairs. But what a good time we had that rainy evening with lanterns and lamps lighting up the festive scene. Everybody ate and ate. And ate some more! It was worth all the trouble.

Then there were those Sundays when we would come home from Mt. Sunapee or wherever Ozora was preaching and find guests who had arrived bringing a picnic lunch with them. I remember one such Sunday when we added our Sunday dinner to the picnic baskets and set the tables on the piazza for twenty-six people. Those were jolly Sunday afternoons.

As for overnight guests our record was the "Cheney Shindy." Some arrived earlier but most were with us for two nights or more and there were eighteen in the family for that weekend. These guests also brought food and shared the family housework, so it was not so very arduous after all.

One of the most arduous days was when Ozora was away and Emily was gone so that the children and I were carrying on alone. Six of Ozora's relatives whom I did not know very well had come to spend the night. They left from Burkehaven rather early and Elizabeth and I were doing the dishes and planning to have a bit of breakfast ourselves when Sandy returned with the boat. Supplies had run low, so we had not eaten with them, but excused our waiting on the grounds of helping them with their early start.

When Sandy came he had a message. Nettie Weiss with friends would meet us at Granliden at, I believe, ten o'clock. Nettie is a victim of infantile paralysis, unable to walk, and I could guess what this proposed visit had cost her. We left the dishes, took a doughnut in hand and started at once for Granliden, which was several miles away and the Alexabeth -- none too fast.

We reached there in time, wondering how we could ever manage the difficulties of that trip to the cottage for one who could not walk. Luckily Nettie had a strong chauffeur in her party. There was too, I remember -- a much travelled lady of uncertain age, whom the children named, "the old war-horse." Once at the cottage we rounded up what supplies we had.

Pork was out of the question, of course. But there were some eggs! Somehow we got through the day and took the party back to their cars with the end of the afternoon. Again, we managed to eat but little for fear of our guests going hungry.

As we returned, weary but content, in the boat after their departure, thankful that soon we could attack the mountain of dishes, left from breakfast, dinner and afternoon tea, and then relax, we saw that the steamer was just leaving Auburn. A thunder shower was brewing too, and the clouds were thickening. As we drew closer we saw a great heap upon the wharf.

Boxes and barrels--lots of them! Things in burlap! What could all that be? And then all of a sudden it dawned upon us -- All the things which we had packed at the Glover, Vermont house (grandmother Davis' things) and sent to Sunapee had arrived -- a mountain of them, or so it seemed.

We forgot our weariness and everything else except getting these precious things and some were very precious -- under cover. The darkness deepened, the lightning flashed nearer, while we almost ran with the loaded wheelbarrow between the wharf and the house. The first drops fell as we carried the last of the goods up and under the piazza roof.

It was nine o'clock as we went out into the kitchen stacked high with the days debris. We looked at each other. Aside from that early doughnut we had had practically nothing since the night before. We reached for whatever small things were still left. And then we went to bed. It had been "a real day!"

Sometime later I learned one of the reasons why we had so many guests. Dear Ozora had made a little map of our island and how to reach Lake Sunapee from nearby highways, and with it an invitation to all friends to stop and see us. He had had a lot of these mimeographed, ready to slip into any letters he might be writing! He did love company! And people came--of course! One never knew when the day dawned what it would bring. At last I understood!

In the spring of 1921, I went to Sunapee with Ozora for the entire Spring quarter. The lake was still covered with ice, but cracks were already showing here and there indicating a break-up very soon. So we remained on the Island only three days and then were obliged to go over to Burkehaven for a stay of about two weeks in the little cottage up behind the store. While we were there the temperature dropped so that we had to keep close to the little stove for warmth when sitting still. I can remember the way we set the bacon under the stove to keep it from getting cold while we ate breakfast.

At night the ice boomed like the report from cannon; and occasionally we heard the honking of wild geese as they flew overhead. The going-out of the ice was a great sight! It gradually disintegrated until it was in crystals, like many pencils set upright side by side. Then, all at once, it fell apart, and there was nothing but water in a great space where a moment before the ice-sheet had appeared solid. But, in other places, the ice shifted to and fro crowding one great cake upon another or upon the shore. After it went out, thin glass-like ice formed in transparent patches close to the shore, making boat landing difficult. It was that way when we made our first trip back to the Island, on Easter Sunday. I went up to the attic and found a straw hat left from a preceding summer -my Easter hat!

On June first, 1921, Ozora had to return to Chicago. It was decided that I should stay at the cottage for the two-and-a-half weeks until the children could come. Nearly all of that time I was the only person on the Island and the wind was so heavy that I was practically marooned there. I kept very busy about the place, painting the floors, sawing up wood, shingling the outhouse, painting benches, and so forth. It was a great experience to be thus by myself and perhaps those days at Sunapee stand out more clearly in my memory than any other I ever passed there.