

\*\*\*John Greenwood

**Introduction:** As part of my preparations for an April 2012 presentation to the Newbury Historical Society, "We Remember Newbury" series, I received a number of e-mails with recollections/memories from many Lake Sunapee past and present residents.

Here is a collection of some of the comments I received – in no particular order. You will find some of the memories rambling and maybe overlap with others – but this is what they remember and you are reading first-hand accounts of what life was like in "the good old days"...

\*\*\*Judy Drevitson Emery Recollections

My Dad was the COA president like 15 years! :-) Starting in '53 or so, I think. Through till mid 60's probably. He brought in movies every Saturday with free admission. We had dances every weekend. Somebody would be up on stage, working 45's on the record payer. He had cartoons for the youngsters. He ran the Regatta. Blodgett's Landing Day, etc. Parades. Miss Blodgett's contest. Swim races.

Remember the other store (Community Store). Haden't thought of it in years. It was food I think the name of the owner was something like Gleason.. It sat beside the never to be built on worship grounds of the spiritual group that started Blodgett's. My mom and Dad used to tell me stories of their meetings. Their land is right in front of our cottage - also, never to be built on.



My folks bought the cottage (66 Lake Ave.) in the summer of '47. We sold it to Iacopino's after my Dad and brother died and my mom came to live near us in SC. The Darrah's lived on the other side; on the right as you're facing the cottage. Walter and Sally and kids are Wally, Linda and Bonnie from Concord, NH.

Our cottage was white when we were there. The cottages were so old, that my dad and brother had to crawl under it, when we arrived for the summer, and level the floors, every year! In old pics of the house, it had a porch the ran from the front and down Darrah's side. My Dad widened the living room over that side porch in the summer of '69.

We, and everyone on Blodgett's, had a septic tank in the yard. Families had to watch how many times the flushed / let water run or they'd have problems, The septic tank folks had a booming business on Blodgett's!

Do you know where Elsie Jordan lived on the back street? My Grandfather, on my Mom's side, owned the cottage to the left of their's, since way before I was born. (Franklin D. Packard)

Did anyone tell you about Elsie's parrot, Papedo? I've probably spelled it wrong. That parrot sang opera in several languages. But the best part about that parrot was that you could hear him when you walked by. If you called to Elsie, he'd yell, "Oh, come on in! You want a cup of coffee?" and he'd sound exactly like Elsie! Naturally, her friends, like my Mom, would walk right into their home, talking to Elsie, who wasn't there! Happened all the time! When it got towards evening, you'd hear the parrot yelling, "I wanna go to bed!!" again and again, till they covered his cage.



Do you know about Perry's boathouse? It was on of THE most popular places to hang out when we were kids. Morty Perry ran it most of the time. His Dad, Clarence, owned it, of course. (They lived in the first house as you entered Blodgett's on 103 A.) They rented out covered slots for boat storage. Us kids were out on the dock every day. We swam, water skied, and talked our lives away. Loved it.

Has anyone told you about the general store on Washington Street? I know that some time after I left, Jeff Jordan bought it. We used to go to the store all the time when our Mom's ran it.

out of bread, milk, etc. They had an old-fashioned soda fountain on the right as you walked it. Oh, I remember that fondly!

I loved Blodgett's. My Mom would have us kids there all summer and my Dad drove up on weekends. That was true of most families then.

### \*\*\* Judith Schiess Avila Memories

One thing I remember at Blodgetts was lake cleanup week. We did this for (maybe) two years. All the kids pulled any junk they could find out of the lake. The one with the most junk won. Can't remember the prize, but there were many good-hearted disagreements - with mothers all thinking *their* kids had removed the most junk from the lake.

I also remember when Blodgetts Landing Day involved swim races and beauty contests. AND one of my favorite memories involves the Cottage Owners Association hiring a social director who taught swimming, took kids hiking and camping, and arranged all kinds of arts and crafts and dances at the Casino. Bob Boynton was our first and most beloved social director.

### \*\*\* Karen Matthews Memories

I spent summers at Blodgetts from 1949 to 1968. My mother ran the boarding house at 18 Lake Ave. (Lakeshore House) and it looked like it does in your photos when we were there. My family owned it between 1949 and 1960-1961. I am fairly sure that it was operated as a guest house before that. I remember that there was a large closet we called the "game closet" and one of the "toys" in it was an old slot machine which I thought was a wonderful toy (the back was cracked open so I could keep getting the quarter back to play it again until the fruit lined up) and there was also a very large box of poker chips (which was not something my parents would have purchased) so I am thinking that at some point the guests there at one time had amused themselves with a bit of gambling.



I remember those days at Blodgetts - it was a magical place to be a kid then. For a couple of years they even hired a recreational director for the kids who gave swim lessons, took us on camping trips, etc. It was a wonderful era.

I remember one day going exploring up that small stream that would have been just beyond there. I only recall this vaguely but I think I came across a small section of that stream that had been at one time dammed up, most likely to run a small grist mill. If this memory is correct then there was probably a farm there at the entrance road going down into the landing, a farm that was large enough to warrant building the small grist mill back in the early or mid 1800s.



A memory I have that is less likely to turn up in your research is regarding the old Carlson's boat house (it was where the marina is now). The Carlson's had a Lodge that more or less catered to fishermen as guests. George Carlson worked in one of the mills in Newport in the winter then ran the boathouse in the summer. He sold gas for motorboats and rented out fishing boats (small boats with 25-35 horsepower motors). There was a tank of minnows for bait, a tank of worms (night crawlers) and a large cooler of beer. It was where my Dad and some of the older fishermen would hang out, have a beer or two and swap tall tales of the big fish that got away. In those days the serious fishermen would get up at dawn (which, I am not positive but I believe was some time

around 4-5 AM in the morning to go out fishing) and I loved that sound of a single small fishing boat humming over the lake in the early hours as sun broke on our side of the lake. (which probably was not until around 7-8 and the fishermen were coming back in for breakfast). Also, George Carlson could play the piano by ear. He could play anything. There were many summer evenings when the sound of his piano would float out to the streets along with the not necessarily on key voices of guests staying at Carlson's Lodge. Another tidbit of memory is that when the Rogers had the boathouse there was a spot at the end of the dock that you could not see from the road and some of the girls would occasionally, especially in the spring before the summer people came, would indulge in topless sunbathing there.

My first recollection of it was as Carlson's boathouse, there was a main house (which is still standing) and what we called the "annex" ... which just had bedrooms and a bathroom at the end of the hall. I am not sure when it became Carlson's but when I was about 10 (which would be around 1959) it was sold to the Rogers and became to us "Rogers boathouse", they did not continue the lodge business but instead build several houses on the property (which included the section between the middle and back streets) and rented the houses to summer guests. I remember thinking how "cool" it was that Mr. Rogers had left a high end executive position at Lever Brothers to move to the Lake. He had a daughter, Janet who was older than I ... also a son, Dick who was older and another daughter Gail who was my age. I spent the winter there in 1960 and Gail and I rode the bus (which picked us up at the Blodgett's post office) to the two room schoolhouse in Newbury. I am not sure when Butterfield bought it, but it had to be after I left for college in 1967.



I am sure you have stories about "Jackie the donkey" in your collection.... Note: this is "Jackie" with Joan Obey and "Tiny".

Have people told you about the tradition of hiking up to the hermits? The "hermits" were something else altogether. They were two men (Rollins brothers?) who lived in a small house up on a hill overlooking the lake (We were able to hike there from the Landing so it had to be fairly close). I remember a long dirt road and then their small (small as in two rooms) house. There was a well with a hand pump in the yard (they had no electricity or indoor plumbing) ... and they would come out to say hello and offer us a drink of

water. They had just one cup, a rather rusty looking tin cup as I recall and we would pump the water into it and pass it around. There was a large field with a magnificent view of the lake below and a large vegetable garden.

They had a horse and carriage and would occasionally go into town for supplies.

The story about them that I remember, which may or may not have been true, was that they were veterans of World War II and after the war retreated to live there as hermits.

Hikes to see the "hermits" were usually spontaneous outings .... as in "what do you want to do today?" "I know, lets go see if the hermits are still there" .... it was a bit like kids daring to go up to the house that was haunted on Halloween. I am pretty sure I did not ever tell my parents that that was where I was going.

The sewers were not put in until after we had it (Lakeshore House). I remember the pipe that went out into the lake and drew water from there ... about ten feet past where the dock ended. The water was clean enough in those days you could drink it right out of the lake, despite the fact that many people took baths or washed their hair in the lake.

Florence Hoyt (from WA-SEE-WIC) made the most wonderful blueberry muffins .... I think it was on Wednesdays. I always managed to wander over there on Wednesday mornings and she always had a few left for me.

Also, most of the houses back then had at least a stand up piano and I remember at least one or two having baby grand pianos. By the early 1950s people were starting to bring (to the horror of others) televisions to watch, but I do fondly recall evenings when someone would play a piano and others would sing along. Everyone had a collection of sheet music in the back of a closet somewhere in those days.



Social director, Bob Boynton... (Bob stayed with us at Lakeshore House when he was the social director that was hired to set up activities) took us hiking on Mount Sunapee and Bald Mountain. These were camping trips where we camped out overnight. There were also some day hikes up Sunapee or Kearsarge.

And ... speaking of things we never told our parents about. Did you know there was a trap door under the Casino. It was never locked and occasionally a few kids would go in when it was supposed to be locked up. I don't think anyone ever did anything there, there was certainly never any vandalism or anything like that, but it was considered to be very daring and exciting just to be in there looking around when no adults were

supervising us.

One other memory about Perry's boathouse is of climbing up onto the roof of it to jump off. Every once in a while a few of us would do that until someone would come along and tell us to stop.

Angela Schiess was the "neighborhood Mom" that everyone wished was their own mother. Hoards of kids would hang out at their house. I remember rainy days playing a game called Tripoly at their big kitchen table.



Although rain never bothered us much, we would just go swimming anyhow. Unless it was a thunderstorm ... then the grown ups would make us come inside for reasons that seemed rather silly at the time.

I remember that soda fountain at the general store too. It was the old fashioned kind where someone would fill a glass with seltzer and then add flavors and stir it up. If you wanted to be adventurous you could mix interesting combinations of flavors or ask for the "awful awful" which had a squirt of every different kind of flavor all mixed together. They also sold ice cream sundays, milk shakes, etc. on one side of the store and then there was a meat cooler, milk and canned goods on the other side. You could get a hot dog or hamburger and there were a couple of booths to sit in, or you could sit outside on the large porch. There was also a pin ball machine. I was never very good at it, but I loved that pin ball machine. I think the record for high scores on the pinball was held by Jeff Jordan most of the time.

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Of course, the kids used to hang out in front of the store many evenings until they came out and chased us away.

Music was played on record players with 45 RPMs. This meant each record only had one song on it. However, you could stack several to play in sequence. Marnie and Donna Michaud (not sure of that spelling) had the best collection of records by far.

Comic books were a big thing then too. Most kids had a cardboard box full of them. And nobody ever locked their doors back then. I remember going to get Patty and Kitty Sullivan to do something and if they were not home I would go in and read their comics for a while and wait to see if they came back.

It was a very safe world back then at the Landing. I remember one evening Martha Smithers and I did not have a ride to get to the Barn for the dance and so we hitch hiked. Nobody really thought of that as being at all dangerous in those days.

\*\*\*Ruth Andrewski Memories

I am not sure if you would like new activities that were started in Blodgetts a few years ago, if so feel free to add this to Blodgetts memories. In 2009 a Blodgetts Landing Rock Bass Fishing Derby was started for the kids, friends and families gathering at the dock. Every child won a prize for largest, smallest, funniest looking, fattest, no catch etc.. We will be going in to the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the derby. The kids have fun and look forward to it every year. Sometimes we have it Labor Day weekend or Columbus day weekend during our horseshoe tournament at Bob Burnell's house.

\*\*\*Gay Sheary Memories of Blodgett Landing

Remembering the last day of school and the long car ride to a place we had longed for since last summer- Blodgett



Landing. A special place to spend the summer with the freedom to wander the landing and meet up with old friends from summers before. There wasn't a need to call on the phone as we would meet up at the red boathouse then owned by Clarence Perry and staffed by his son Morty who all the girls swooned over. Top on our list of fun was swimming, boating and water skiing. Our mothers didn't have to drive us anywhere for entertainment because we had everything we needed right here, our friends and the lake. Money was only needed for the pinball machines, candy and ice cream at the store. At one time we had 2 stores on Washington St.

On Saturday nights my dad would bring all the equipment up for record hops at the casino. We danced all night to the tunes of the 50's. The casino also offered a place for shows as it had a stage. Dinners could be prepared in the kitchen. There were rooms on the side for shuffleboard and ping-pong. There was a long porch overlooking the lake. The casino also had a little dock with bathhouses and a small beach area.

The stories remain the same from the time my grandparents bought a cottage in 1926 when my mom was 5 years old to myself and then to my children. My mom has related stories to me of the 30's and 40's, how the big bands played here and they danced at Birch Grove.

No matter our ages we all feel grateful to have shared this special place.

\*\*\*Mary Mansfield/Abigail Marcaccio (comments about Cressy Point)

Abigail M/ - I am Jacques Coleman's youngest grandchild. My grandfather owned Coleman and Co. in NYC, and summered on Sunapee. He divorced my grandmother in 1956 and remarried to Dorothy, whom we all called Dotsy. My grandparents had 3 daughters, my mother, Mary, was the youngest of the three. He died in 1995, and his wife



Dorothy kept the house at Cressy Point until her death a few years later. I'm longing for the high bush wild blueberries that grew all over Cressy Point. I have very fond memories of climbing that rock as a child. As a young person, that rock seemed very big, and I felt like a hiker ascending to the top of a big peak. There was also another big rock, which was flat and not very tall, on the other side of the island where I used to see what we thought were crayfish and could swim from it, as well. I believe my mother used to like to sunbathe and swim from there as well, in her girlhood and adolescence.

Mary M/ I loved that rock as a kid too! It was my special hiding place, and then as a teenager...my private "thinking place" great for adolescent angst :-> !

Some Sunapee recollections...

- going to the Blodgetts P.O. twice a day to collect the mail - seeing the "Fortuna" mail boat on its delivery route.
- was friendly with a girl that was a chambermaid at the Blodgett Lodge, went to square dance @ the Casino?
- leased a horse "Dawna" @15 yrs old from Ralph Gay/New London, had corral built on Point, rode horse from NL to Point, horse got loose & found in BL/103A field... only did that once...!
- Dad loved to have clambakes on knoll? once (in extra dry season) fire trucks came and insisted on putting out the clambake fire with a fire hose... Dad was @##\$%+\*\*...
- loved sailing a Star Class sailboat... also, first had a 1928 Chris Craft Cadet, drove around lake, waterskiing... replaced later...
- a WW2 balsa wood life raft was attached to the outside-right corner of the dock. Small kids could stand in it - bigger kids would sink it. It was given by a friend of Kay Summersby? (Ike's wartime driver/secretary) who inherited Ike's dog "Telek?".. Ike/ Summersby WW2 diaries served as logs of appointments, meetings and trips as well as journals where Eisenhower and Summersby recorded their candid observations on wartime events and personalities...



### \*\*\* Joe Digilio Memories of the Lake

Joe is part of a long and rich history at Sunapee, dating back to the farm, vegetable deliveries around the lake, etc. Here are some of his memories of the area.

- Casino - had 1st run movies in 1950s? - Mrs. Craft ran it.
- BL Day - since 1940s? - Digilio would donate a box of vegetables for the raffle.
- Sunday waterski shows. sometimes in Blodgetts from Sunapee Harbor water skiers.
- use to cut ice on Croft Beach - Digilio used ice in winter on farm.
- Joe's uncle use to sell vegetables from a boat in the 1930s?
- use to haul logs from Blodgetts across the lake in the winter-time to Sunapee. Lost a horse thru the ice once. Joe's uncle lost a whole horse team. Dead horses had to be hauled out of the lake.
- Casino had dances - with live bands - Joe didn't attend...
- Joe knew about the Colemans & the LSYC membership/not... Also knew Frank Gordon (his wife is still living) Joe use to deliver vegetables to Colemans & Bowles...

### \*\*\* Georgiana Forguson Recollections (about Great Island):

My mother's recollections of Island life are very good - she was a Mt. Holyoke graduate and a professional librarian. She loved the lake passionately, as so many did. The family connections with Blodgetts were somewhat tenuous, as Burkehaven, after Warren Morgan set up his store there was easier to boat to as the waters were more protected than coming across the open lake when the Northwest winds were coming down. Also, he and his wife sold ice cream. Unfortunately, my mother died over 30 years ago, and I am nearly 75 - so time is passing...



It was indeed a Great Island cottage, built by my great grandparents in the late 1890's, looking directly across the lake to Blodgetts. Unfortunately it burned to the ground in 1918.

The house was never rebuilt-instead, a small cabin was constructed which we finally sold in 1981, as we live in Canada. This picture of the house shows the ice house just to the east as well as the boathouse and the steam launch "the Georgiana" There is now a similar cottage, still standing, built on large the rock to the west by my great uncle. I am so glad

to have this view as the people in the picture would have been my grandparents and /or great grandparents... I can identify one of the women sitting on the rock as Ruth White Davis (she had remarkable posture) whose family owned the house on the lovely sandy cove now owned by Ron Wyman.



The Kerr House, later "twin cottage" was built on the rock to the west. You see it from Blodgetts-large yellow house , 2 stall boathouse, concrete dock. It - originally had indoor plumbing, a water tower, and a generator housed in the house behind the boathouse. It made an awful noise when it ran. He also had a cable laid for his telephone. My uncle who built the house loved to use concrete. My mother loved Sunapee and the Island, and has written her recollections of cottage life there before WWI. They went to the Blodgetts Post Office and shopped there until Warren Morgan established his store at Burkehaven. I do recall that she said there used to be Indian women (Watso) selling sweet-grass baskets in the Blodgetts area.

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Dr. Spillane's (now Stowell) house was originally the Southwick's. They came from South Norwalk, Conn. In 1908 or 1909 the Andrews family visited them. They lived in a tent in the grove near the dock. They bought the two lots next to ours that my grandfather had given my mother, and lived in a tent while their house was being built.