

ISLAND SCRAPBOOK KEEPERS

Consider the careful saving, pre-digital age, of printed news, sentimental paper treasures known as ephemera, and other miscellaneous items flat enough to lie affixed within the pages of shoelace-bound scrapbooks. Add the Elizabeth Islands as the dwelling place of the collectors, and you will begin to enter the world depicted in the Cuttyhunk Historical Society's 2016 summer show "Scraps from the Past."

The many scrapbooks donated to the CHS over the years have just now been opened up and perused page by page. Virtually all were created by the hands of women who loved and filled a myriad of niches on Cuttyhunk Island in the 20th century.

The pages in the exhibit are pulled from the scrapbooks of Hetty Wheeler, Margaret Brewer, Doris Tilton Bosworth, Louise Taylor Haskell, Florence Tilton MacKay, Marjorie Snow Reeves, and Janet Bosworth.

Also included are items saved by members of the Brown family who lived on Pasque Island and from several unidentified scrapbooks.



A study of the scrapbooks provides a record of events that otherwise may have been overlooked, and thus contributes to the CHS mission: "to preserve records of the Elizabeth Islands for the present and future generations."

While some scrapbooks have overlapping contents, their individual collections and varied ephemera

reveal their makers' unique orbits within the same community. Saved mementos offer a glimpse into the lifestyle or personality of the scrapbook keeper.

Cuttyhunker Hetty Wheeler kept a note pad and pencil in a basket by her door. Her social nature is evidenced in the short messages and invitations that she found upon her return home, and often saved.

Found in a collection of Pasque Island papers is an article describing an obscure event. An invitational four-day deer-hunting season on Pasque and Naushon Islands in December 1950 resulted in a near decimation of the deer population. Disturbed, Naushon trustees announced that the islands would no longer welcome the public. And to this day, there is limited public access to the Forbes-owned islands.



To more fully imagine the thoughtful island scrapbookers, brief biographies follow of some of the people who cut and pasted items that mattered to them.

A page of ephemera from one of Hetty Wheeler's scrapbooks, with items dated 1943 & 1944.



Falmouth Enterprise

Falmouth, Massachusetts, Friday, December 15, 1950

Three Sections — Twenty-

Welcome Signs Will Be Removed From Beaches As Naushon Trustees Order Patrols To Bar Public

The Forbes family restricted island access in response to deer slaughter, 1950.



Margaret Brewer roasting marshmallows with island children, 1956. Flora Lovell photo



Respected townspeople Margaret Brewer (second from left) and Louise Haskell (second from right), with (from l to r) William Munds, Coot Hall, Connie Wood, and Louis Ramos at the presentation of a Medal of Honor to Mr. Ramos, former storekeeper, for a brave sea rescue, 1990. Flora Lovell photo



Margaret Brewer is perhaps best remembered canoeing around Cuttyhunk Island in her green canoe.



Louise and George Haskell on the steps of what is now the Spengler house.

MARGARET STETSON BREWER (1876–1972)

Margaret came to Cuttyhunk with a friend for a brief holiday in 1904. She would have walked up the boardwalk from the ferry dock, and followed a dirt road to the village, passing grazing sheep. She spent parts of the next 68 years on her “Beloved Spot,” returning each fall to her job as an assistant to the Brockton High School principal.

Margaret stayed at island houses including the Veeder boarding house (now the Astrues, at the end of Broadway) and at times with the Russell and Carrie Allen Rotch family.

She connected to the island and its people as an explorer—on foot and in her graceful green canoe. Fond of counting ships from the Lookout, she also kept a wildflower list containing more than 50 island specimens.

“Miss Brewer” taught Sunday school for more than 40 years, and participated in many gatherings. She was especially fond of the island children, some of whom recall the thrill of choosing and opening surprise “grab bags” sold at summer church fairs for a time in the late 1950s and ’60s. Remembered, too, are the Hershey bars she provided as consolation at sometimes sad ferry farewells.

She looked back at her first summer in a memoir *Cuttyhunk as I Remember It*, printed in 1979. And during this life fully lived, she created scrapbooks full of magazine articles, photographs, postcards and programs of island events.

LOUISE TAYLOR HASKELL (1894–1978)

Arriving from Waltham, Massachusetts in 1926 for a one-year stint as schoolteacher (at a salary \$1,300) at the island’s one-room schoolhouse, Louise Taylor was yet another woman drawn to stay on Cuttyhunk for many years beyond—and she stayed year-around.

The Poplars inn was home for 16 years, and Louise walked up the hill each school day to her gradually renovated school. There she taught the 3 R’s and, as a piano player who appreciated music, she led singing each morning and staged plays for the students.

In 1944 Louise married her 73-year-old cousin George Haskell, and they moved first into what was the Bosworth Cottage (now Asa Lombard II’s house, next to the post office) and later into the Stetson (now Spengler) house across Broadway.

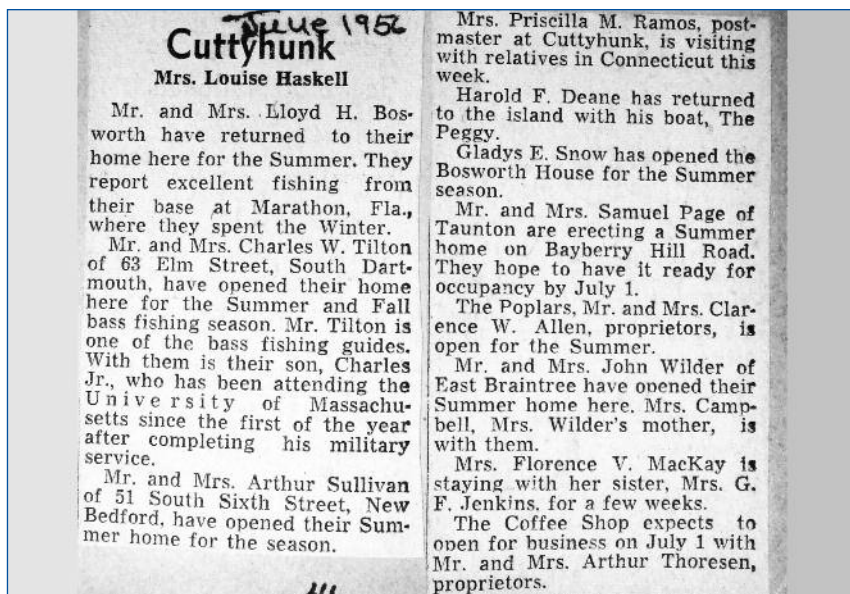
An occasional preacher at the island church during WWII and a careful follower of war events, Louise is remembered for taking it upon herself to ring the church bell on V-J Day (August 15, 1945). She then led an emotional impromptu service of celebration.

She retired from the school in 1949. Always intrigued by the island legends, geography, and history that she taught for years, she had time to pen the extensively researched booklet, *The Story of Cuttyhunk*, in 1952 for her “pupils.”

And, as was the custom in that era, she reported the comings and goings on Cuttyhunk, via a social column in a New Bedford newspaper.



Louise Taylor (Haskell), (center) with her Cuttyhunk students, 1927-1928.



After George's death in 1960, Louise began her 17-year tenure as island librarian next door to the school. Patrons who were then children carry memories of "Mrs. Haskell," bespectacled, with cropped curly white hair, draped in long floral dresses, scratching out their names on library cards with her fountain pen, in her distinctive old-fashioned handwriting.

She served the town in several capacities, including town clerk and auditor, and was a careful clipper of articles about Cuttyhunk.



Three people with deep roots in Cuttyhunk's original families also shared the pastime of keeping scraps, perhaps inspired by their school teacher.

FLORENCE TILTON MACKAY (1891-1969) traced her lineage back to her 5x great-grandfather, Peleg Slocum, who purchased Cuttyhunk in 1693. "Flossie," as she was affectionately known, married fisherman John MacKay in 1915 and they raised three children on the island. Grandchildren filled out her island life. She wore many hats during her life, including fire chief, librarian, auditor and tax collector.

MARJORIE SNOW REEVES (1912-2000) was one of four daughters of Estella and Coast Guardsman Roland Snow. She and sisters Bette, Gladys, and Eleanor grew up when the Coast Guard was active, and the island had more year-rounders. Typically there were 15-20 students in the one-room school as well as several restaurants open all year.

With Veeder ancestors and both parents and grandparents who ran the Bosworth House, Marjorie had many island relatives and a place to work when she was old enough.

Marjorie remembered Miss Brewer taking island children out in her canoe, but only after she had taught them to swim. "The canoe was her great summer pastime. She lost one canoe in a hurricane and bought a new one when she was 80," Marjorie said in a CHS interview.

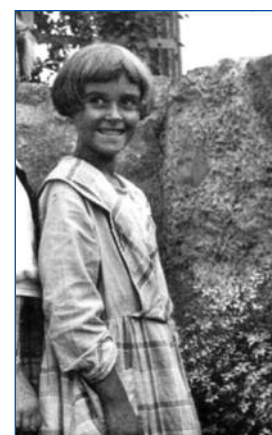
DORIS TILTON BOSWORTH (1924-1960), was Flossie's niece and the daughter of Sarah and Charles Tilton, Sr.. From childhood, she loved the island and its prevalent fishing culture. She married fishing guide Lloyd Bosworth.

Bev Snow describes her mother Gladys's friend Doris as "a serious fisherwoman, like Lloyd," and adds, "They would zip around in their boat *Loon* and also ride their motor scooters to the beaches and surf cast." The couple often said that they would "rather fish (almost) than eat." They lived and fished on Cuttyhunk during the summer and in the Florida Keys during the winters.

(above) Louise Haskell's June 1956 column was pasted into Doris Tilton Bosworth's scrapbook.



Florence Tilton MacKay



*A young Marjorie Snow.
Bev Snow Photo*



*Doris Tilton Bosworth
with a Cuttyhunk striper.*

Sources:

CHS Monographs:

Hetty Shepard Wheeler, by Carmen Dressler Ward; *Margaret Brewer*, by Janet Adair Wilder. Winter 1996.

Louise T. Haskell 1894–1978, by Ethel Twichell, Winter 1998.

Memories of Growing Up on Cuttyhunk Island, 1917–1925, by Marjorie Snow Reeves, Winter 2000.

Cuttyhunk as I Remember It (in 1904), by Margaret Brewer, Cuttyhunk Historical Center, June 1979.

People of Cuttyhunk, interview with Mary House, CHS, July 1986.

People of Cuttyhunk Island, Volume III, interview with Janet Blume Bosworth, CHS, 2011.

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Many of the past CHS Monographs are accessible on line.

www.cuttyhunkhistorical.org



Piney Wheeler at the Fish Dock, 1960.



Piney (in white dress) hosts Bruce and Becky Lovell, and Leila Hall (right) at a backyard picnic at "Seventh Heaven," 1959. Flora Lovell photo



Janet Blume Bosworth with prize swordfish.

Well-known in the fishing world, Doris appeared in national advertisements for fishing supplies. In October of 1959 Doris caught a 43-pound striper while casting on the West End. This fish earned the International Game Fish Association's World Record for striped bass for women anglers. In 1949, she and Lloyd were featured in *Sports Illustrated*.

The scrapbooks that Doris kept are detailed—sometimes annotated—and varied in their focus. Several are very much fishing related, but there is another scrapbook that is a trove of invitations, school program clippings, and other informational ephemera.



HETTY "PINEY" SHEPARD WHEELER (1880–1964)

A chance meeting with Connie Wood, Jr. on a west-bound train in the 1940s led to Hetty Wheeler's first visit to Cuttyhunk. Then a dean at Pine Manor Junior College, "Piney" was eager to return to the island. With the Wood family's help, she purchased the house later owned by Mary Sarmiento (and now by Grant and Cathy Schenck).

Retired in 1948, Piney enjoyed four-to-five month sojourns at Cuttyhunk until 1963. One year she was asked to substitute for Louise Haskell at the island school with seven young students, and she reportedly found them distinctly more challenging than college students.

Her scrapbooks contained news of islanders' and friends' births, deaths, and weddings; notes and invitations—some casually left in a basket by her door—and other memorabilia. She is remembered by visitors who came to play Scrabble or canasta, share books, sing, partake of "a proper tea," or to enjoy a backyard picnic at her new house "Seventh Heaven" (now Jane MacLeod's) built in 1955.

Piney's involvement in town life ranged from being a generous patron of the library, singing in the island church's choir, teaching Sunday School, and serving on the school board.



JANET BLUME BOSWORTH (1913–2002)

A final scrapbooker of note is Janet Blume Bosworth. Her volumes hold documentation of island community events, fishing, and the evolution of the Cuttyhunk Historical Society. Life with husband, fisherman Lloyd, included participation in—and photographs of—the high stakes Cuttyhunk swordfishing tournaments.

Janet channeled a curiosity about Elizabeth Island history into collecting artifacts, as well as researching and writing about local people and places. Ultimately she co-founded CHS and supported the construction of its permanent home, the Museum of the Elizabeth Islands. It is apt that her scrapbooks found their way into the 2016 exhibit, as the museum marks its 25th anniversary.

LOUISE GARFIELD