



Friends of the Ogunquit Heritage Museum

Spring 2017 Newsletter

Mission of the Friends:

**To Support the Educational Goals and Programs
of the Ogunquit Heritage Museum**

We present the second, and final, part of Ogunquit in the Old Days by Elliot Merrick:

Aunt Del

Even in my childhood, around 1912, Ogunquit was a quiet collection of summer cottages and a few hotels. Aunt Del emerged from her Fieldstone estate and stirred up and galvanized the place each year whether we liked it or not.

She was a lively little body, bursting with energy and so determined to be artistic it almost hurt. White haired and goggle-eyed in thick spectacles, she swept through Fieldstone and Ogunquit with the drive and authority a wealthy situation made possible. To say that she was accustomed to getting things done is putting it mildly. A squeaky voice, quite unmodulated, added to her bird-like quality.

All this authoritative energy stood her in good stead when it came time each summer to organize her pageant. The summer folk were on vacation, wishing to take life easy. They didn't want to go to work rehearsing and costume fashioning for Aunt Del's blinking pageant. But they hadn't a chance. Aunt Del dragooned them into action like a Sergeant Major lining up a bunch of submissive recruits.

The pageant this year was to be a parade of boats progressing slowly past Fieldstone on the tidal river, each boat a historical tableau, so to speak: Washington Crossing the Delaware was one, Columbus Discovering America another. "I Have Just Begun to Fight," was represented by a torn and half burned bed sheet stuck up on a pole beside a pugnacious figure in Colonial uniform clutching a shotgun. There were many other naive and unrealistic portrayals.

Hundreds of people came, nevertheless, from miles away, lining the riverbank below Fieldstone

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Member's Open House
Saturday, June 17
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Ogunquit Heritage Museum
Obed's Lane, Ogunquit, Maine
New Exhibits
Refreshments

Museum Opens for the Season
Thursday, June 1
Hours: 1-5 Tues-Sat, June thru October

Available Again . . .
The New Friends
NOTE CARDS
featuring
**Our Favorite Black & White Photos
Of Ogunquit From the Past**
**A Packaged Set of Twelve Historic Views
of Ogunquit, With Envelopes**
Available at the Winn House
and
At Various Events Throughout the Season
Price \$15

"THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY GORGEOUS!"

Also Available by contacting Marsha at
marshanorthrop@gmail.com

President's Letter . . .

Hello and welcome back to another year at the Ogunquit Heritage Museum! I hope you wintered well and are as excited as I am to see the robins and daffodils.

The Dory is back outside at the Museum and Carole Lee has returned to set up her fabulous exhibits. Opening Day is just around the corner!

The Friends are busy getting ready for our Members Spring Open House which we are hosting on June 17th from 4:00-6:00pm. We hope you will be able to attend as we enjoy seeing our members and thanking all of you for your continued support. Without you we would not be able to fund our amazing projects and exhibits.

We are also beginning to plan our annual fundraiser...AN EVENING OF DINNER AND CHANCE. It will take place at Jonathan's restaurant on Sept. 24th from 6:00pm-10pm. There will be delicious food, music, artwork by local artists to bid on, and some fun raffles. We will soon be sending out information on how to purchase tickets to the event and/or the raffle. Please Save the Date and plan to join us for a fabulous evening!

One of our goals this year is to develop an email list of all of our members. This will enable us to send you reminders of upcoming events and pass along news as it happens. You may even receive this newsletter via email someday which would save us printing and mailing costs. Be sure to give us your email address when you mail in your annual dues.

Wishing you and your loved ones health and happiness,

Wendy Broms Levine



Amy Cabot; Perkins Cove



Ogunquit Heritage Museum Committee

L. F. (Sonny) Perkins, *Acting Chairman*
Gary Littlefield, *Vice Chairman*
Susan Meffert, *Secretary*
Eva Nudelman, *Treasurer*
Carole Lee Carroll, *Museum Curator Consultant*
Charlotte Tragard, *Museum Administrator*

Robin Fagerlund	Jay Smith
John Ross	Pat Weare
Marc Saulnier	Pete Woodbury

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*Friends of the
Ogunquit Heritage Museum
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Chairman's Letter . . .

The Summer of 2017 promises to be an exciting one. The Heritage Museum committee has asked me to take on the role of Chairman following Carole Lee Carroll's decision to focus more on the Curator's role at the Winn House. The incredible growth of the museum under her leadership has brought us to a point where it's very difficult to take on the role of Chairman and Curator. I appreciate the Committee's decision to have me step in as Chairman and I look forward to working with the committee and Carole Lee in building the public's interest in this exciting institution introducing the World to Ogunquit's wonderful past. Myself and the rest of the Committee want to thank you, Carole Lee, for all your hard work and dedication in assuring only the best programs and exhibits have been presented to the public. I look forward to continuing the hard work and dedication that you and our previous Chairman Barbara Woodbury started.

This year the Heritage Museum will be open to the public on June 1st with the Members open House set for June 17. Everyone is welcome to join in the festivities on the 17th from 4:00-6:00 p.m. I also want to welcome our newest member Jay Smith to the Heritage Museum Committee.

The Heritage Museum of Ogunquit is excited to announce its plans for this year's Winn House exhibitions. Carole Lee Carroll has once again used her magic to pull together a exciting visual history of Ogunquit's unique past. This year's displays include the artwork of "The Pine Hill Girls" that include the work of Gertrude Fisk and other female artists* from Pine Hill and the sur-



Artist Ann Carlton completes a painting en plein air at Perkins Cove

rounding area.

The "Lost Ogunquit" display includes numerous vintage postcards as well as pen and ink drawings by John Neill who was not generally known for this type of artwork.

Richard Perkins can be found most mornings at the Village Market with a group that could be called the "Breakfast Club of Ogunquit." Richard provides poems via email to this group and numerous others on a daily basis. Richard's work goes beyond his skill as a poet with his culinary work being some of the finest Ogunquit had to offer during the 60s and 70s. His restaurants were famous in the region. The pictorial past of Richards culinary and poetic skills will be on display in the Winn House.

The Heritage Museum is proud to display the history that continues to make Ogunquit one of the biggest tourist draws in New England. Ogunquit's Heritage Museum is proud to be able to bring to the public the iconic works of Ogunquit's historic past through the support of the town, the museum's supporters and the general public. We look forward to having you join us at the Winn house in 2017. We all have an exciting year ahead.

L.F. (Sonny) Perkins
OHM Committee Chairman (Acting)

**The other Pine Hill Girls were: Amy Wentworth Cabot, Charlotte Butler and Elizabeth Sawtelle, all students of Charles Woodbury. (Ed.)*



The Cove, Painting by Gertrude Fiske

Ogunquit... (from p.1)

mansion to see Mrs. E.R. Hoyt's nautical extravaganza.

Aunt Del had decided that my father should be Anthony, and my mother Cleopatra. It did not matter that Cleopatra's barge was a leaky old fishing dory; a few yards of crepe paper took care of that. Sis and I were burnt-cork little slaves in starched white muslin skirts that stuck out. I was paralyzed to think some of Ogunquit's small fry might recognize me. Our job was to fan Cleopatra with large palm leaves. The Egyptian Queen reclined in the stern on bright-colored cushions, dressed in purple robes, a gold paper crown on her naturally black hair. Dory sterns are rather narrow, so it was a tight squeeze for Father in a Roman toga sort of rigged out with short sleeves and a wreath of ferns on his bald head. The clumsy thole-pin oars were handled by Ed Holmes, also blackened to resemble a slave. He was a tall, lanky friend, an Associate Professor of Chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As he rowed, he kept muttering, "Damn...damn!"

When, amid much clapping, the parade of boats had passed, the next act took place. It was a drama in the sand dunes directly across the river from Fieldstone. In connection with her sand-dunes drama, Aunt Del seems to have been recalling the French-and-Indian War, when savages completely depopulated the Maine coast and its many offshore fishing-station islands. Those English settlers who survived fled to Boston, mostly by boat, and later the whole Maine coast had to be resettled all over again.

Aunt Del was nothing if not ambitious. Over there across the river she had had constructed in a hollow of the dunes a flimsy log cabin of poles. suddenly a scattering of painted Indians wielding tomahawks and uttering war whoops crept over the dunes and descended on the cabin in the hollow. From the narrow doorway a screaming settler wife in a shawl and clutching a baby made good her escape. She was followed by her pioneer husband firing a muzzle loader in the direction of the savages.

The Indians then set fire to the cabin, which went up in a satisfactory and highly pictorial blaze of flame and smoke.

For the final act over there across the water, the Indians crept away, and an old-timey sort of chap wearing fringed leggings and a coonskin cap advanced to the river's edge. He raised a megaphone to his lips and in a stentorian voice plainly heard by the crowd on the opposite riverbank shouted:

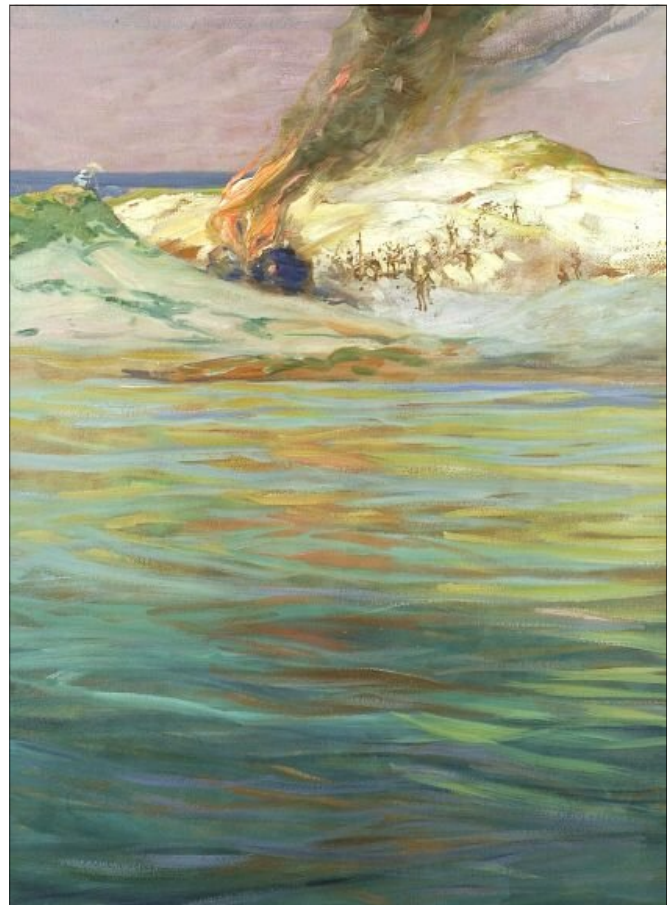
O - GUN - QUIT.

The pageant for that summer was over.

And we were glad.

Looking back now from the perspective of years, I realize Aunt Del was a thwarted artist, as so many are. And my hat is off to her, for she did the best she could, and that was not bad at all.

Summer after summer, Aunt Del turned from pageants to plays. Under her direction these plays became more and more professional. They eventually outgrew the make-shift hall and stage to



A scene from Aunt Del's pageant which portrays a settler's log cabin in flames on the Ogunquit dunes. The painting was rendered by artist Charles Woodbury, and is called, Bride of Ogunquit.

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Ogunquit... (from p. 4)

become the full-scale Ogunquit Playhouse, now one of the most impressive summer theaters in New England, where many a budding actor achieves his/her start toward stardom. All from such humble beginnings! Do you suppose somewhere from the shades Aunt Del's ghost wanders among the applauding, summertime audiences?

We sometimes had beach parties on the little beach in front of Beachmere.

We had a canoe picnic up the river each summer, always choosing an evening when the tide was high at about 9 p.m., so that we would have a fair current up river on the flood and home on the ebb. There were perhaps 20 people in 8 canoes.

Having paddled some miles up the river, we landed and pulled the canoes high out of reach of the tide; then we carried all the food and gear out of the canoes across and through the dunes to the wide ocean beach. Of course, we had to have a big fire of driftwood there, with hotdogs and marshmallows. We tried, too, if we could, to pick a full moon night so we could watch the great golden globe come peeking over the edge of the ocean to spread its shining path right at our feet, as though just for us.

After our sandwiches and hotdogs, we sang, to the accompaniment of a ukulele. "Lord Jeffrey Amherst Was a Soldier of the King" became one of the favorites, but "Far Above Cayuga's Waters" ran a close second. Someone told a joke or a story or a limerick. Nearly always, somebody recited from memory a Robert Service poem, usually "The Shooting of Dan McGrew." "Pitched on his head and pumped full of lead; Lay Dangerous Dan McGrew; And the woman who kissed him and pinched his poke; Was the Lady that's known as Lou." "The Cremation of Sam McGee" often came next. About this time, sweethearts began sneaking off into the dunes to "neck," as we called it, or, as Mother and Father called it, "to spoon."

At length, about 11, when the small fry began to nod or even fall asleep, it was time to gather up whatever trash wouldn't burn, the pop bottles, and such, and to lug the long-handled forks and steamer blankets back through the soft-sand dunes to the hauled-up canoes.

As we drifted with the ebbing tide down the

moonlit river, it seemed wrong—a letdown—that we were leaving all this for ordinary living. It seemed as though we should sleep the night on the beach by our fire, waking to watch the moon ride across the sky, listening to the sea, hearing the breeze whisper in the dune grass.

At Perkins Cove, when I was about 14, we had an old centerboard dory, which we sailed on the open ocean. Perkins Cove was only a niche in the rocks, and there was nowhere else to go. It was a real clunker, covered with many layers of paint, about 18 feet overall. This boat was almost too heavy to row, and didn't sail well either, although I had added one whole panel of white duck to the sprits'l. A young kid sewing and sewing away by hand, sitting on those Perkins Cove rocks, happy as happy could be because I had a sailboat at last. It had thole-pin oars that were quite heavy too.

Well, Father and I were sailing off the rocky



Dory fishermen in heavy seas from an etching by Charles Woodbury.

coast one afternoon. We tried not to go very far out into the ocean. Inexperienced as we were, we did not notice the telltale small, puffy white clouds appearing from the northwest, sure heralds of fierce northwesterly squalls. All of a sudden they hit us with a blast that heeled us to the gunnel. With no keel to stiffen us, we couldn't beat to windward against this offshore gale. The sail was

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Ogunquit... (from p. 5)

flapping madly, so Father took it down by the simple expedient of lifting the pine mast out of its socket and laying the thing down on the thwarts; then we set ourselves to rowing, taking turns. Obviously we weren't getting anywhere. Quite the reverse; Ogunquit's shores with its cottages and hotels were beginning to recede in the distance as the suddenly cold wind swept us farther and farther out to sea. I couldn't help wondering whether we should ever see all that again. We tried anchoring, but our line was too short and wouldn't touch. Next stop Portugal. We had no food or water, so we'd certainly not arrive alive. Too bad. We didn't say anything, just kept up our futile rowing with the clumsy oars.

At this point, along came a fisherman in his husky motor lobster boat. He hove up close. He knew my father from those early days in Maine.

"Breezy, ain't it, Elliott," he called.

"Yes, it is a mite," my father replied.

"Shall I toss you a line?" asked our friend.

"Mightn't be a bad idea," said my revered papa.

And so he towed us into Perkins Cove and our lives were saved—in typically noncommittal, terse, Maine fashion, no words, no thank-yous, just do it.

We were very quiet at supper that evening, my father and I, and I know Mother was wondering.

But we never told her how near she had come that afternoon to losing us.

Miss Ruggles was Uncle Ned's mistress. She patted me on the head and said I was a darling little boy.

Uncle Charlie had a mistress and so did Uncle Ned. But my father, though half Hoyt (his mother was a Hoyt, sister to Uncle Ned and Uncle Charlie), never seemed to need a mistress. Maybe that was on account of my mother's beauty, and deference to him, a good wife, who sang and played at home so sweetly, and worked hard to keep romance alive. However, my father loved to flirt with the young Ogunquit summer girls, and to dance with them and make eyes at them—they too at him, a game, a happy game that was fun, innocent, and they knew it and were glad of that innocence, no complications, no wrong, which made it more fun than ever. I suppose I idealize, but it seems as though everything was innocent in

those days. Probably that is because I was so innocent myself.

About the Ontio tennis tournament—it was a small affair. Most of the players were from the Ontio Hotel or the Lookout or the cottages round about, hardly any strangers.



Early view of the Ontio tennis court. Also shown is the Lookout Hotel, with Mt. Agamenticus in the distance.

The drawing and all that

Father managed the drawing and collecting the entrance fees, which were only a couple of dollars apiece, to purchase a small silver cup for the winner. Father usually won the tournament. It would do you good to see him beat some stripling half his age, pulling out all the stops, driving his opponent crazy with his traps and drop shots and half volleys, and then whizzing one past down the alley line at 90 miles an hour.

When I was a child, Mother and Father were only about 35 years old, very young in heart and athletic. Father nearly always won the men's singles tennis tournament at the Ontio, which he organized, and he and Mother regularly won the mixed doubles. They were favorites among the college kids, so I was privileged to string along on many an expedition.

At the Ontio every Friday evening, the dining room was cleared, so that three waitresses could play for dancing to the tune of piano, violin, and cello. The waitresses were all college girls from Berwick or some local college, collected by Hobbs Knight, who taught there and owned the hotel. We all went, and danced, or rocked in the

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porch rockers. It was folksey and pleasant.

We met in Ogunquit, a lovely reunion, all our summer friends, every year, from Chicago, Cleveland, Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia. Many of these young girls and boys married as the years rolled on. When we sadly drove away at summer's end in our old Hupmobile with suitcases strapped along the running boards, 50 people were in the grassy field waving goodbye, summer over, calling "See you next year." This went on for nearly 20 Years.

It was another world.

Almost no people are alive now of those who loved Ogunquit in my childhood days and came every summer.

But an increasing number of the summer hordes are changed and touched by the place. Feeling its magic, they return in spring or fall to wander the Marginal Way or the Long Beach relatively alone. And they come to know the spirit of lovely Ogunquit's beaches and rocks and ocean--its unforgettable atmosphere that makes life poignantly worth living.



Author

Elliott Tucker Merrick III, born in Montclair, NJ on May 11, 1905, was a teacher in Labrador where he met his first wife. Author of 9 books, True North was on the NY Times best seller list for 17 weeks in 1942. He was also a science editor for USDA Forest Service publications in Asheville, NC, where he died on April 22, 1997.

Obituary

Elliott Merrick, 91; Wrote Stories Set in Labrador

By WOLFGANG SAXON

The New York Times - May 1, 1997

Elliott Merrick, a writer, editor, teacher, farmer and sailor who distilled his experiences into acclaimed, enduring books about Labrador and northern Vermont, died on April 22 at

his home in Asheville, N.C. He was 91.

His "Northern Nurse" (1942) told the epic tale of Kate Austen, an Australian nurse he met and married in remotest Labrador, where he journeyed in 1929 to teach at a mission school. The book was on national best-seller lists for months.

Mr. Merrick's last novel was "Green Mountain Farm" (1948), a tale of farm life in northern Vermont, where he and his wife took refuge during the Depression. It remains in print today, as do "The Long Crossing and Other Labrador Stories" and his very first book, "True North," a diary about living in Goose Bay, Labrador, originally published in 1933.

Elliott Tucker Merrick 3d was born in Montclair, N.J., and graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy and Yale University. He tried newspaper work in Passaic, N.J., and a lucrative advertising job in Manhattan and hated both.

His next stop was the Grenfell Mission's northernmost school on the desolate Labrador coast. He traveled to interior lakes and rivers and wrote of the region's inhabitants in "Front and Fire" (1939).

He taught English at the University of Vermont, worked as an editor for the Office of War Information and joined the merchant marine in World War II, which provided the background for "Passing By" (1947). He also wrote for magazines, including *The New Yorker* and *Reader's Digest*.

Mr. Merrick then joined the United States Forest Service in Asheville, and served for 22 years as a science editor and publications officer at a station responsible for experimental forests in five states. After his retirement, he spent much of his time cruising with his wife on their 20-foot oceangoing sloop.

Kate Merrick died in 1994. He is survived by his second wife, Patricia Herring Stratton; a son, Austen, of Kansas City, Mo.; a daughter, Susan Hoover of Wenatchee, Wis.; a sister, Josephine Mock of Edwardsburg, Mich.; a brother, Addison, of Craftsbury, Vt.; a stepson, William D. Stratton of Eugene, Ore., six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Source:

<http://www.nytimes.com/1997/05/01/arts/elliott-merrick-91-wrote-stories-set-in-labrador.html>

Accessions . . .

Julie Twombly

Vintage Homemade Beach Chair

Eunice Sinclair

Wells Town Reports; Large Collection

Lenny Wyman

Ice House Tools, Seaman's Essentials,
Panoramic Photo of Beach ca.1895

Susan Meffert

Various Catalogues, Brochures, Newspapers,
Books and 2 Auction Cards from Barn Gallery

Gary Littlefield

Engineer Survey - The Erosion of the Marginal
Way, 1981

Pat Weare

Post Card of Littlefield's "Ogunquit Camp,"
YCCS Whistling Oyster Fire of 1976

Endowment Contributions . . .

In Memory of **Barbara Hilty** from:

Karen W. Brown

Sarah Newick

Ellen Kimble

Susan Meffert

Benita Braggiotti

Wini and Paul Mason



Charlotte Butler, Interior of Studio



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AN EVENING OF DINNER AND CHANCE

JONATHAN'S RESTAURANT

BOURNE LANE, OGUNQUIT

SEPTEMBER 24, 2017. - 5:00 p.m. TO 9:00 p.m.

DONATION \$40.00 PER PERSON. - CASH BAR