

Early Rusticators at Pulpit Harbor

In 1883, Walter and Elizabeth Cabot of Brookline, Massachusetts, visited Pulpit Harbor in search of a summer retreat from the city's heat and hubbub. When the Cabots approached Deacon Samuel Crockett with an offer to buy a portion of his farm, Crockett replied, "What do you want that for? It's nothing but rocks and spruce trees!" Undaunted, the Cabots purchased 100 acres and Walter Cabot described the property in a letter to his son Henry, "The land is very pretty and well-wooded. And it is the most attractive place on the island... There is room for a number of houses that wouldn't interfere with each other. So, if you want a base when you are married, there is your chance."

The Cabots, known as the pioneering summer family of Pulpit Harbor, eventually purchased the entire Crockett farm, built numerous houses, and established their long time summer retreat known as Cabotville. Their arrival to Pulpit Harbor in the 1880s, later followed by the Norton and Lamont families in the early 1900s, shaped the area's transition from a working harbor reliant on fishing, boatbuilding, and commerce to a summer community centered around sailing and pleasure boating.

In 1912, Charles and Katherine Norton came to North Haven on the advice of a Boston friend, Miss Fanny Curtis. The Nortons stayed at the Havens Inn and while touring the island they became smitten with Pulpit Harbor. In 1913, they purchased land on the south side of the harbor, with plans to build a summer home. Reportedly their arrival caused a stir among North Haven's early summer community because the Nortons were the first seasonal residents not from Boston.

As the once thriving community of Pulpit Harbor went into decline, due mostly to the dramatic drop in the mackerel fishery, the Nortons grew concerned about the many houses left abandoned when people moved in search of opportunities elsewhere. Piece by piece, Norton began purchasing properties throughout the Pulpit Harbor village and he persuaded the remaining residents to sell in exchange for life tenancy and taxes paid. By 1916, the Nortons purchased nearly all of the northern shoreline of Pulpit Harbor, minus a few holdouts, and in total tore down 17 buildings. In 1918, the Nortons settled into their summer home at the former Marion Beverage farm on Blue Point and stayed their 25 summers before selling it to the Cheston family.

When Charles Norton began to eye the nearby John Beverage farm overlooking the bay, his wife Kitty put her foot down, telling him he had bought enough land. She suggested they invite their friends Thomas W. and Florence Lamont to the island in hopes they would establish a summer home at North Haven. The Lamonts accepted the invitation and by 1917 they purchased the 100-acre John Beverage farm. A Belfast newspaper, dated December 19, 1917, reported the purchase:

The announcement was made Wednesday of the biggest real estate deal in eastern Maine for some time, the transfer of the 100 acre farm of John H. Beverage at Pulpit Harbor, on the North Shore of North Haven, to Thomas W. Lamont of J.P. Morgan Co., New York. Mr. Lamont will improve the property and make it his summer home. The farmlands purchased by Mr. Lamont have been in the Beverage family since 1810, and although the price was not made public, it is understood to have brought a fancy figure.

The Lamonts named their new summer home Sky Farm and by 1919, Mr. Lamont began buying other properties surrounding Pulpit Harbor in an effort to provide houses for each of his children. Priscilla Cunningham, granddaughter to Thomas Lamont, said “Grandpa’s idea was to have enough land so each child could have a house and he could be with his children and grandchildren, to whom he was extremely devoted, despite his busy life.”

Besides the generations of Cabot, Norton, and Lamont descendants at Pulpit Harbor, other summer families to settle in the area included the Chestons, Pools, Walkers, and Rockefellers. By the 1940’s it is estimated that most of the original members of the year round Pulpit Harbor village had either moved away or died and the area essentially became a community of summer residents.



Sky Farm

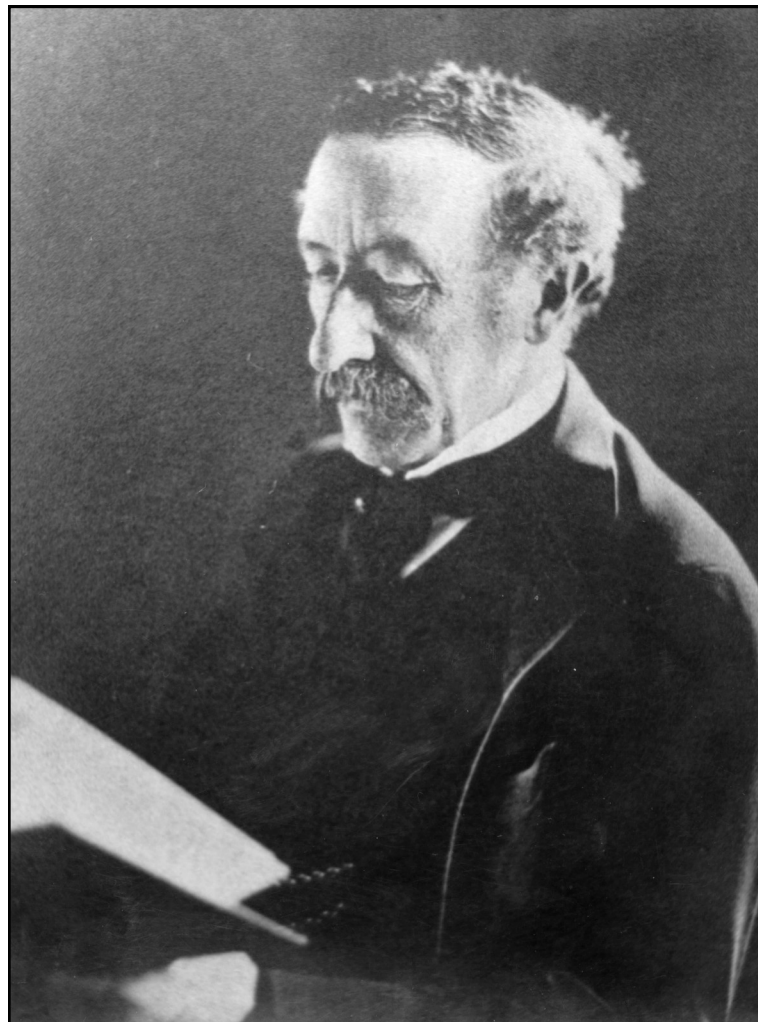


Clockwise from top left:

Charles Norton

Thomas W. Lamont

Walter Cabot, Sr.



Charles Norton and Frank Beverage: Correspondence

Charles Norton bought his first property here in 1913, a piece of land on the north side of Pulpit Harbor that had formerly been the location of the Roscoe Babbidge store and Post Office. As time passed, the Norton's purchased property from Alfred Bowditch on the south side of the harbor and continued buying land and farms around the harbor making life tenancy agreements with some of the older residents. Fish houses, barns and old homes were converted into summer residences and garages and boat houses. A number of residents found new employment as caretakers, boatmen and general handymen for the new summer families.

During the years when Charles Norton was making purchases at Pulpit Harbor, extensive correspondence passed between him and local land owners. Some excerpts below give a taste of the negotiations that took place- some ended in agreeable sales, others most definitely did not. In the excerpts below; it seems as if each man tries to outmaneuver the other:

~Frank Beverage to Charles Norton~
January, 1920

...While we had not thought any more about selling the lot of land you talked about some time ago, we might consider it if there was any thing in it worth while. If we were like Charles and wanted to sell, it would make all of the difference in the world.

We started on the square with you the first time we talked about the land when we told you that we did not care to sell unless we got very much more then it was worth for a farm....

We have tried to make this plain so we would know just where we stand.

We would sell and buy if there is any thing in it, so that both parties would be satisfied...

~Charles Norton to Frank Beverage~
February, 1920

My dear Mr. Beverage:

It is not an easy matter to learn just what the views of Charles B. are. After some correspondence I think I know enough about it now to put this question to you and ask you for a prompt reply, after receiving which I will take the matter up further. Would you be interested in an even trade for that property of yours?... If so, I may be able to buy Brown's place and make the trade.

~Frank Beverage to Charles Norton~
February, 1920

My Dear Sir,-

Yours of the 17 inst, at hand. We note what you say about Charles B. farm and that it is not an easy matter to learn just what his views are. We think the same. By your letter either he asks you very much more for the land when we think it is worth, or you do not value ours at the same price that we do.

We do not care to talk trade on the terms as stated in your letter.

Unless some one comes along and makes us an offer for our hill, so that we can not afford to keep it, I think that it would be as well for us to keep it.

I am very sorry that you should want a piece of land that we did not want to sell unless we got an unreasonable price, as we would be willing to do anything we could to accommodate you. Trust that you and yours are well. I am very Truly yours.

~Frank Beverage to Charles Norton~
March, 1920

Now Mr. Norton it is just like this, there are some things that it is hard to put a price on, and this is one of them, but I will say that in my opinion it would be more than you have paid for any one piece of property you have bought in North Haven. That piece of land has been in our family for a large number of years, handed down from father to son, and I had thought that when I was through with it Arthur would still keep it in the family, but I find that may be impossible, as the land is being brought up on the Island, that a hill like that one must sooner or later go.

With the exception of perhaps two it is the highest land on the Island, and with the Camden Hills as the back ground it is surely the most picturesque place in town. As I told you the first time that we talked about it, it was not in the market, other parties have tried to get a price on it, but so far there has never been a price placed on the land.

We will not sell now unless we can get something worth while, and at the present value of money, it takes a lot of it to get you any where.

We have valued your friendship too highly to tell you what we would sell for, and now our better judgment tell us that we had better not put a price on the land.

After you have thought it over, and if you are still desirous of buying at a price that a few years ago would have seemed large, and even now is not small, (and strictly confidential) when I see you again we will tell you what we will take for the hill and land, and even at the price we shall name, we hope you will not want to buy, but I trust that we may be friends just the same.



Frank Beverage



Island Workmen take a moment to be photographed while working at Sky Farm.

Maine Garden

There is something almost magic about these flowers:
Their size, their perfectness; the way, in fog,
The colors ring and rock and clash together
Outraging every garden catalogue.
Calendars they ignore; whatever hours
Feel like summer, they use (knowing how weather
Observes the seasons) and since between cold and cold
Are not too many days of outright sun,
Dahlias lift autumn heads beside Sweet Peas,
And Bleeding Heart, which ought to have begun
Bleeding in May, has clearly not been told
To stop by August. To these inclemencies
Add the few inches that there are of loam
Between this shelf of granite and the sky-
A flower's a miracle on such a coast,
And yet- no more than any who defy
The rock and fog we're born to and who bloom-
The more superbly for hardship being their host.

by Evelyn Ames. Dedicated to Florence Lamont.

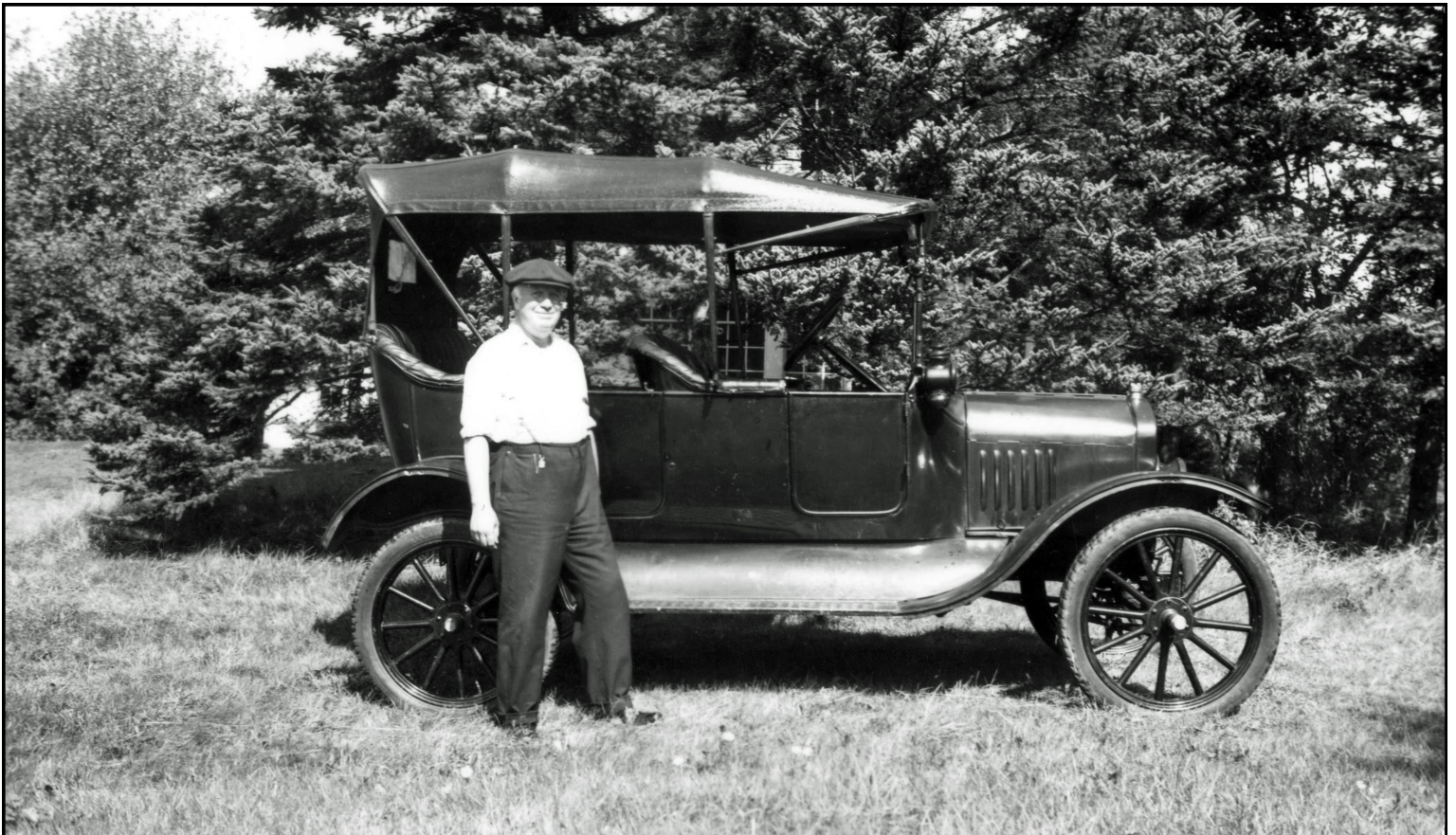


Lloyd Whitmore, Lamont's gardener at Sky Farm



**Left: Rose and Jetson Dyer
Jetson Dyer designed the sunken garden
at Sky Farm.**

Below: Phil Savage, Lamont's driver.



A Call to the Simple Life

I've exalted the charms of the sea-shore,
And tried to lure you away
From the cares and strife of city life
To my cottage across the bay.

But though you spurn my domicile
My hope is far from dead;
And still I think you're on the brink
Of sharing my daily bread.

How would you like to come with me
To the woods at break of day,
Where the icy breeze moans though the trees
And blows all care away?

We'll build a big brush fire,
And as the smoke rolls high,
You get you pan fast as you can
The bacon and eggs to fry.

As a rabbit scurries to cover,
Or a squirrel chips nearby-
The ring of my ax as I put in the whacks
Would frighten a city guy.

The old collie dog enjoys the life,
And I'm sure you would like it too;
For a day in the woods does everyone good-
And forget they ever felt blue.

So do reconsider my dear,
And come to my island cot
I'm a guy with class, and many a lass
Is willing to share my lot.

Although you're a maid of tender years,
Mother Nature will be your teacher,
So come across the sea and together we
Will call at once on the preacher.

Dan D. Lyon, 1932

