

## **Summers in Annisquam**

### **Part I**

I first visited Annisquam in September 1944 at the age of four, accompanied by my mother. My father was at war in North Africa or Italy. We stayed for a couple of weeks with the family of Tony and Mary Rundle. Rundle, was, I think, the British Consul in Boston. They had rented the house across from the Market on River Road, next door to Mrs. Chard.

It was apparently a relatively eventful time, marked by the Great Atlantic Hurricane of 1944, which blew a tree down in our yard. It was, by all reports, a powerful storm, but worse at sea than on land. I remember the fallen tree, but must have slept through the hurricane's worst hours.

One other moment marked in family lore was my falling into the Cove from a boat moored to the Market dock. Luckily I had learned to dog paddle on Tennis Court Beach, when not making sand mounds with Susan Rundle and her brother Jonathan, and Susan and Fanny Howe. My mother looked out the window of the house, the story goes, and saw my sailor hat floating in the water. I had been hauled out, soaking, by some kind soul. The hat was also recovered.

The following summer, my Australian grandfather spent time with my mother and me. My mother had us staying at the old Annisquam Inn above Cambridge Beach, rival to the Bryn Mere, for several days. My Grandpop taught me to stalk and capture frogs in the little pool adjacent. After a brief stay, we move to the Bunny Cottage on Arlington Street. We were there in that August, when I remained unaware of the birth of the Nuclear Age—Hiroshima and Nagasaki—but can remember parading around Squam, banging on a pot with a spoon to celebrate VJ Day with my Grandpop.

During the summer of 1946, we rented a house on Lobster Cove—then the last little cottage before the cemetery, now a substantial home with a glass-fronted outbuilding—and I was sent to a very small day camp for little boys run by Arne Frigard, father of Mike, who later skippered the Yacht Club launch. It was quartered on the second floor of Hose 8, a building now home to the Annisquam Historical Society. Hose 8 itself still occupied the first floor, and we were allowed to play on the aged fire engine on rainy days. That was the top activity to my mind, though building dams on Lighthouse Beach to hold back the stream which ran down out of the meadow, and seems not to be nowadays as mighty as it was then to a bunch of 5-7-year-olds. I don't recall who the other dam-builders were. One might have been Duncan Neuhauser, and another Jojo Lovejoy, but I wouldn't swear to either being in the group. I just remember them both as early Annisquam friends.

The Market dock became an important part of my life in following summers. As I grew older I spent a lot of time there, fishing with a brown handline, landing the occasional flounder, but mostly losing my clam or seaworm bait to the crabs. I got to know many of the lobstermen who put out from the dock after fueling, and landed their catch at the dock, dumping them into its cribs under their hatch covers. There were also great moments when a big bluefin was brought in by one of several classy boats whose captains summered in Squam or were natives with sport fishermen, even several times by lobstermen who handlined or harpooned their catch. They weighed the fish in on the scale at the top of the gangway after offloading them with the block and tackle that stood there, near the Market's gas and diesel pumps.

Some of the men I remember were Bunt and Wimpy Davis. Carroll "CP" Parsons, Doc Stanwood, and Danny Robinson. There were many others, but their names have gone away. One morning In 1950, while my mother was in Australia and my father was at his office in Harvard's Peabody Museum, I asked Wimpy Davis if I could go out fishing with him for tuna on his lobster boat. His other passenger was none other than Hyde Cox, who was one of the Cape Ann Museum's chief supporters, besides being a friend of Robert Frost and Andrew Wyeth, and who gave me the name Birdbrain, by which many of the dock's habitués. Cox had a great collection of books at his home on Crow Island, but I didn't know anything about him on that summer day. Wimpy set out a keg line and both men drank beer—an odd but friendly pair. I was so excited to have been out with them that I blurted it all out to my father when he came home to me and Mrs. Callaghan, a pleasant lady who was supposed to be minding the house and me. My father was not pleased. I had skipped day camp without a thought. I ended up getting a whaling, rather than catching a tuna.

Geoffrey Movius, October 22, 2020