



The village of Asticou, circa 1860–1870. Painting by Dr. John L. Hughes (1830–1894), the brother-in-law of A.C. Savage. *Courtesy of Kenneth Savage*

First Person: Asticou and Northeast Harbor

More than the five senses of touch, taste, hearing, smell, and sight, a sense of place depends on an awareness of the past. Mount Desert Island is richly infused with memory and history. Like W.B. Yeats' Ireland, "there is no river or mountain that is not associated in the memory with some event or legend."¹

Some forms of the remembered past are widely shared, like the marker events that cause whole generations to remember their whereabouts on September 11, 2001 or November 22, 1963. Memory and place are indelibly linked at the Blagden Preserve in Bar Harbor, where a row of trees is marked with a plaque that says, "Seth Harding planted these oak trees, which came from Ellsworth on the day Abraham Lincoln was assassinated 1865."

Sometimes a sense of place derives from recollections that are singular or shared by only a few. As a boy in the 1950s, Rick Savage clung to a rope swing tied to a tree and flew out over a pond whose banks were dense with alders. That tall white pine still towers above the pond at the Asticou Azalea Garden, though today it is surrounded by perfectly manicured plantings. Louisa Newlin has a more closely

held memory from the 1940s, of the handsome teenaged sailing instructor who made her little girl's heart beat faster and whose name she will never reveal.

We have assembled a few first-person accounts to gather memories of a small corner of the island, the little village of Asticou and nearby Northeast Harbor. Here are voices of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Though the authors speak from different times and circumstances, each conveys a powerful sense of place. "Memories of a Lifetime" is a brief autobiography written in 1902 by Augustus Chase Savage (1832–1911). Augustus' grandson Charles Savage (1903–1979) wrote a forward and notes to accompany his grandfather's work in 1972. "Growing Up in Asticou in the 1950s and 1960s" by Rick Savage and "Northeast Harbor in the 1940s: "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Louisa Newlin were memoirs composed for this issue of *Chebacco*.

¹ Quoted in Wallace Stegner, "The Sense of Place," in http://www.pugetsound.edu/files/resources/7040_Stegner,%20Wallace%20%20Sense%20of%20Place.pdf