

Maine History

Volume 42
Number 2 *Digging Into the Past: Ordinary Lives
in Maine*

Article 2

2-1-2005

Lilacs, Cellar Holes, and the Courthouse: A Historian's Reflections on Re-Creating Mount Desert Islanders

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Recommended Citation

Sebold, Kimberly R.. "Lilacs, Cellar Holes, and the Courthouse: A Historian's Reflections on Re-Creating Mount Desert Islanders." *Maine History* 42, 2 (2005). <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal/vol42/iss2/2>

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Lilac bushes and cellar-holes open a window into the lives of ordinary people a century ago. With her colleagues, author Kim Sebold (standing with lilacs over Samuel Norwood's cellar) pieced together this history using a variety of sources, giving us a surprisingly detailed and textured story of the Norwood and Kelly families of Seal Cove Road, Mount Desert, Maine. Photo courtesy Peter Morrison.

LILACS, CELLAR HOLES, AND THE COURTHOUSE: A HISTORIAN'S REFLECTIONS ON RE-CREATING MOUNT DESERT ISLANDERS

BY KIMBERLY R. SEBOLD

In this article Kimberly Sebold outlines the process by which historians reconstruct the lives of ordinary rural people—in this case, fishermen, carpenters, farmers, and farm-wives living on Mount Desert Island. Using a combination of archival research, archaeology, landscape interpretation, and common sense, Sebold and her colleagues paint a surprisingly detailed picture of these seemingly obscure individuals and the community in which they lived and experienced the joys and hardships of nineteenth-century Maine life. Dr. Sebold received her Ph.D. from the University of Maine in 1998. She is currently an Assistant professor of History at the University of Maine at Presque Isle.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I had an opportunity to pan for gold at Sutter's Mill in California. As I stood there dipping my pan into the stream only to bring up rocks, sand, and other debris, my back aching and my feet freezing, I thought about the men who traveled thousands of miles on horse or on foot to engage in this tedious task in 1849. Did they understand the odds against them? If they had, they might have turned back after one look at the high and desolate Sierra Nevada. Yet, as I contemplated my fruitless efforts along the banks of the American River, I realized that as an historian, I pan for gold every time I research the lives of ordinary people. I have spent countless hours in libraries and archives, reading diaries, agricultural journals, and legislative petitions, looking for elusive nuggets of information. Some days, I would return home with my neck aching and my confidence waning, only to return the next day hoping to discover the mother lode—the one diary that would have everything I was looking for, and much more.

My greatest challenge came in the summer of 1998 when I became

the historian for a cultural land-use survey of Acadia National Park. Park officials had asked the survey team, consisting of myself, a historical geographer, and several archaeologists, to research the early history of the island. The island's most famous residents—the nineteenth-century “robber barons” who left behind great mansions, diaries, journals, letters, photographs, and other primary documents, would be easily traced in the historical record, but in fact, park officials wanted a history that focused as well on the island's fishermen, farmers, blacksmiths, house servants, caulkers, ship carpenters, and storekeepers, and their wives and children. Reconstructing these lives takes a great deal more time, patience, and persistence; the shards of their history have to be carefully recreated out of snippets of information, often derived from sources like cellar holes, orchards, gravestones, historic atlases, photographs, deeds, wills, census records, marriage and death records, store ledgers, newspapers, town histories, and folklore. These pieces, cemented together with applications of historical imagination and creativity, can reveal the lives of ordinary people like the Norwood and Kelley families on Seal Cove Road in Tremont, Maine (fig. 1). The purpose of this article is to introduce the sources used to develop this history and to provide some insight into how other researchers might use similar resources elsewhere.

One rainy spring day in 1998, geographer Stephen Hornsby, archaeologist Peter Morrison, and I made the first of many trips to Mount Desert Island. Armed with the Delorme Gazetteer, Colby's 1881 *Atlas of Hancock County, Maine*, and an 1887 *Map of Mount Desert Island*, we set out to determine which areas of the island we would study in detail for the survey (fig. 2).¹ After spending the morning on the eastern half of the Island, we crossed the island, spotted the Seal Cove Road, and decided to explore it. Noting the thick forest along the gravel road, I found it difficult to imagine we could find archaeological evidence of the people indicated on our early maps. Suddenly, Peter shouted, “Stop, a lilac bush.” We charged out of the car and up the hill toward the bush and discovered a cellar hole: the site of Samuel Norwood's home, according to the 1887 map. As Peter explained, lilac bushes do not grow naturally in the woods; people plant them on either side of the front door of their homes. Apple trees, cedar trees, and daffodils are similar signs.² After scouting the cellar hole we continued down the road, noting other living evidence of early habitation, then stopped at a gravestone at the edge of the road. The stone read “Phebe M. Kelley, wife of Nahum B. Kelley, died 1892.” Nahum's grave was nowhere to be found, but Phebe was not

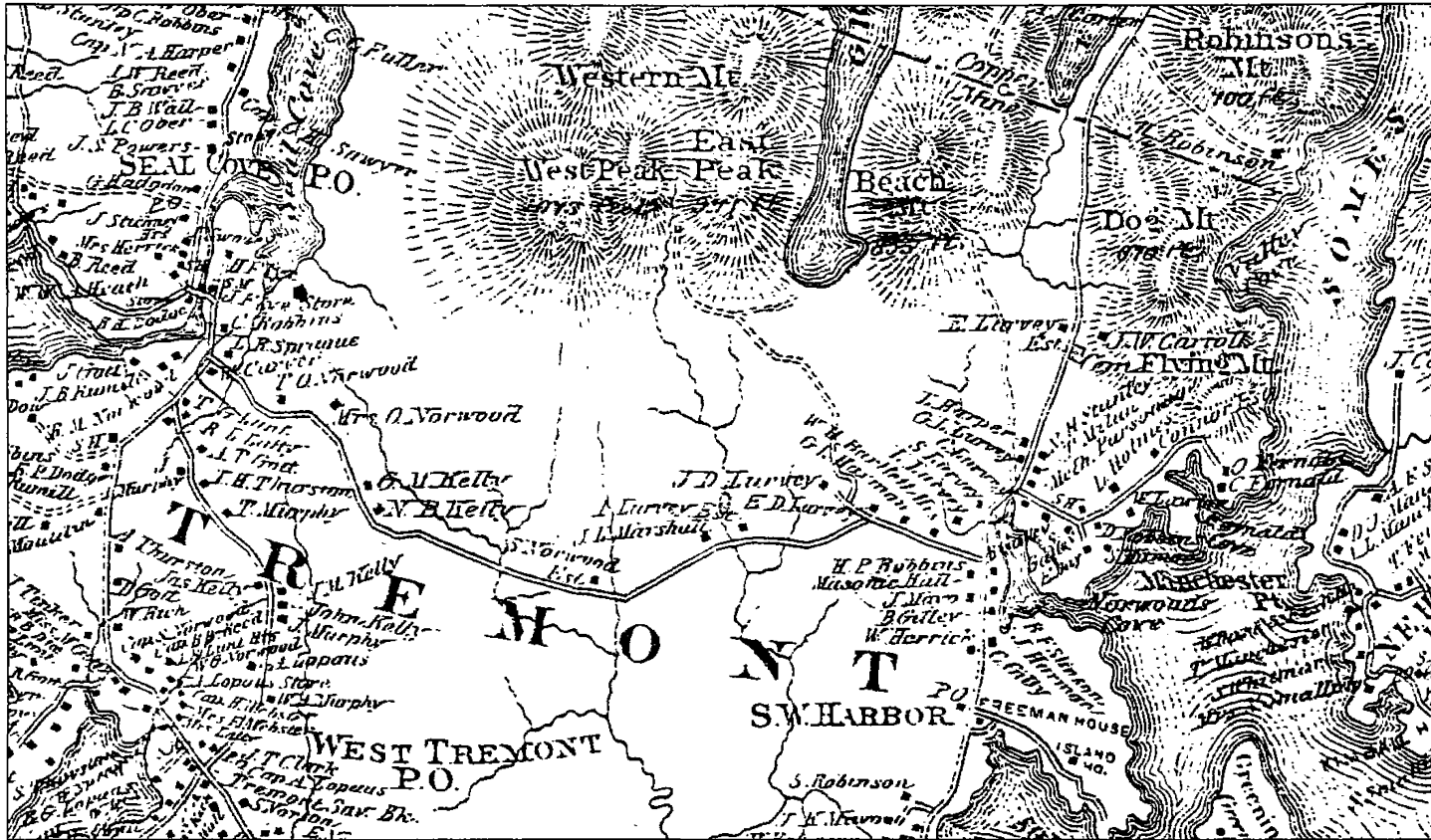


Figure 1: Farms along Seal Cove Road between Southwest Harbor and Seal Cove in 1881. The five properties between T.O. Norwood and the S. Norwood Est. are now situated inside Acadia National Park. *Colby Atlas of Hancock County, Maine* (1881). Illustrations provided by the author.

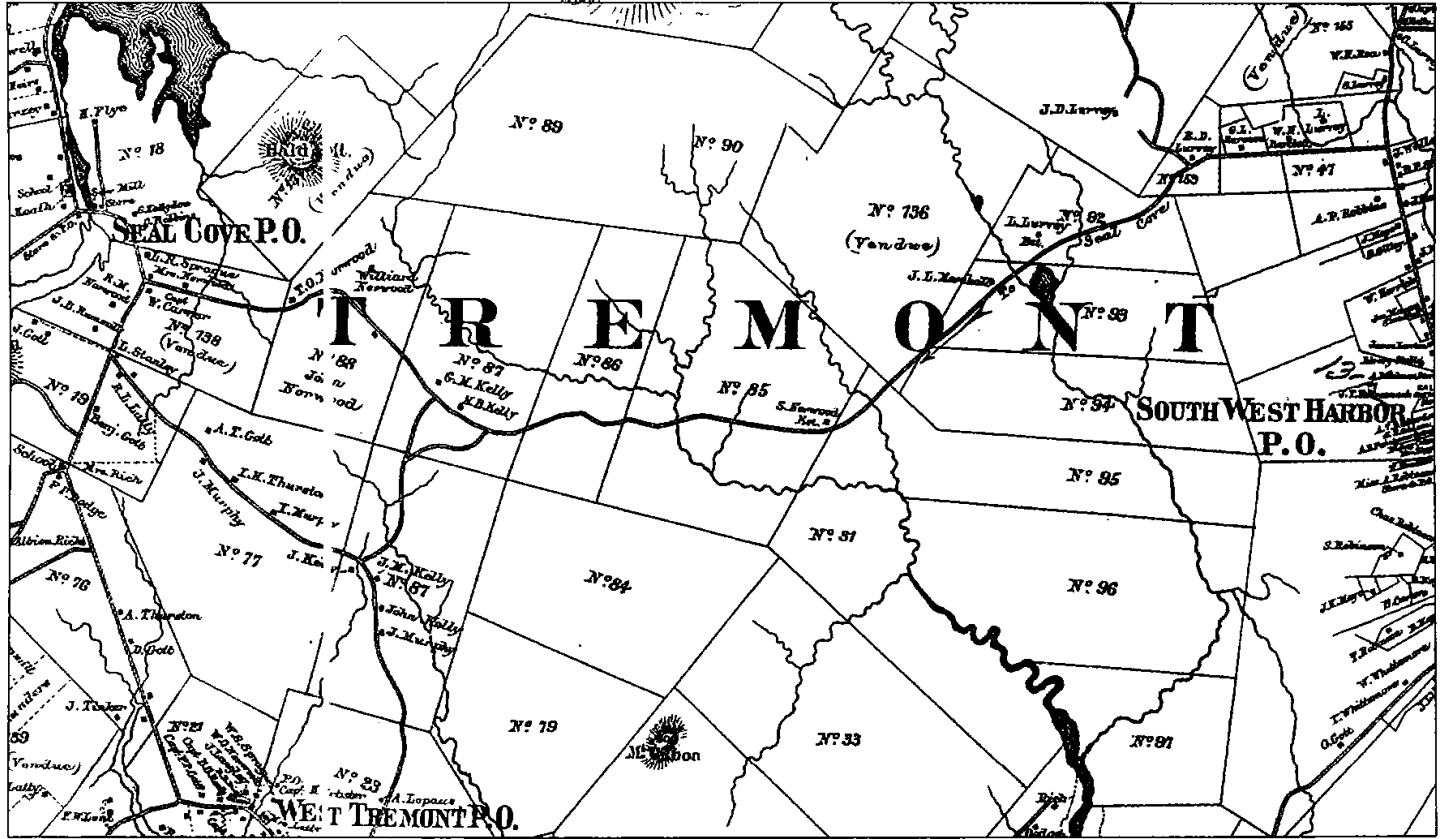


Figure 2: Seal Cove Road in 1881, from Colby's *Atlas of Hancock County*. The original map is located in Special Collections Department, Fogler Library, University of Maine.

alone: tucked back into the woods were the gravestones marking other members of the Kelley family: James Kelley, Sr. and his wife, Anna; Captain John W. Kelley and his wife Mary; and James Kelley, Jr. and his wife, Dorcas. The graveyard revealed a sad but simple story: John and Mary Kelley had a son, Ray, who died at the age of six. James and Dorcas had three sons, all of whom died in their mid-twenties, two within one year of each other. What would have killed these young men in the prime of their lives, and how did the parents cope with the loss of their three children? I gathered my thoughts and moved on to the next set of stones, which introduced me to the wives of George M. Kelley: Mehitable N. Kelley (died 1850); Sarah A. Kelley (died 1879); and Annie R. Kelley (died 1891). No stone marked the grave of George M. Kelley.

When the drizzle turned to a downpour, we returned to the car and continued on to Southwest Harbor. As we passed over the Bass Harbor Marsh on Route 102, the rain eased, and we stopped to examine the marsh. Since salt marshes are my specialty, I was delighted to spot the remains of a dyke—an earthen embankment used to “improve” the marsh for salt hay and crop production. The Norwoods and Kelleys probably harvested from these marshes. As we drove home, I tried to organize the clues this landscape offered. I was anxious to begin my search for the nuggets of information that would bring these lives to light.

The Kelley Family³

After gathering some contextual background information on the history of Mount Desert Island, I examined the U.S. population census in order to find the people listed on the 1887 map.⁴ For this I turned to the *Population Census of Hancock County* for 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1890. The towns were arranged alphabetically, so Tremont was near the end. In 1850, I found, George M. Kelley was a thirty-one-year-old farmer living with his five children, Mary, Ann, James, Elizabeth, and Mehitable, ranging in age between eight and three months. Listed after George was his father James Kelley, Sr., a joiner, age sixty-five, and his mother, Ann Norwood Kelley, age sixty-nine. Both were born in Massachusetts. Their youngest son Joseph, a twenty-nine-year-old joiner, was listed next along with his wife Mary and their four children, John, Nahum B., Francis, and Joseph, ages seven to six months. The final member of this Kelley clan to be listed was James, Jr., who at age thirty-four supported his family—his wife Dorcas, age thirty-one, and his sons George W., age seven, and

Orville C., age five months—as a mariner.⁵ This information gave me a good foundation, but it did not tell a very rich story.

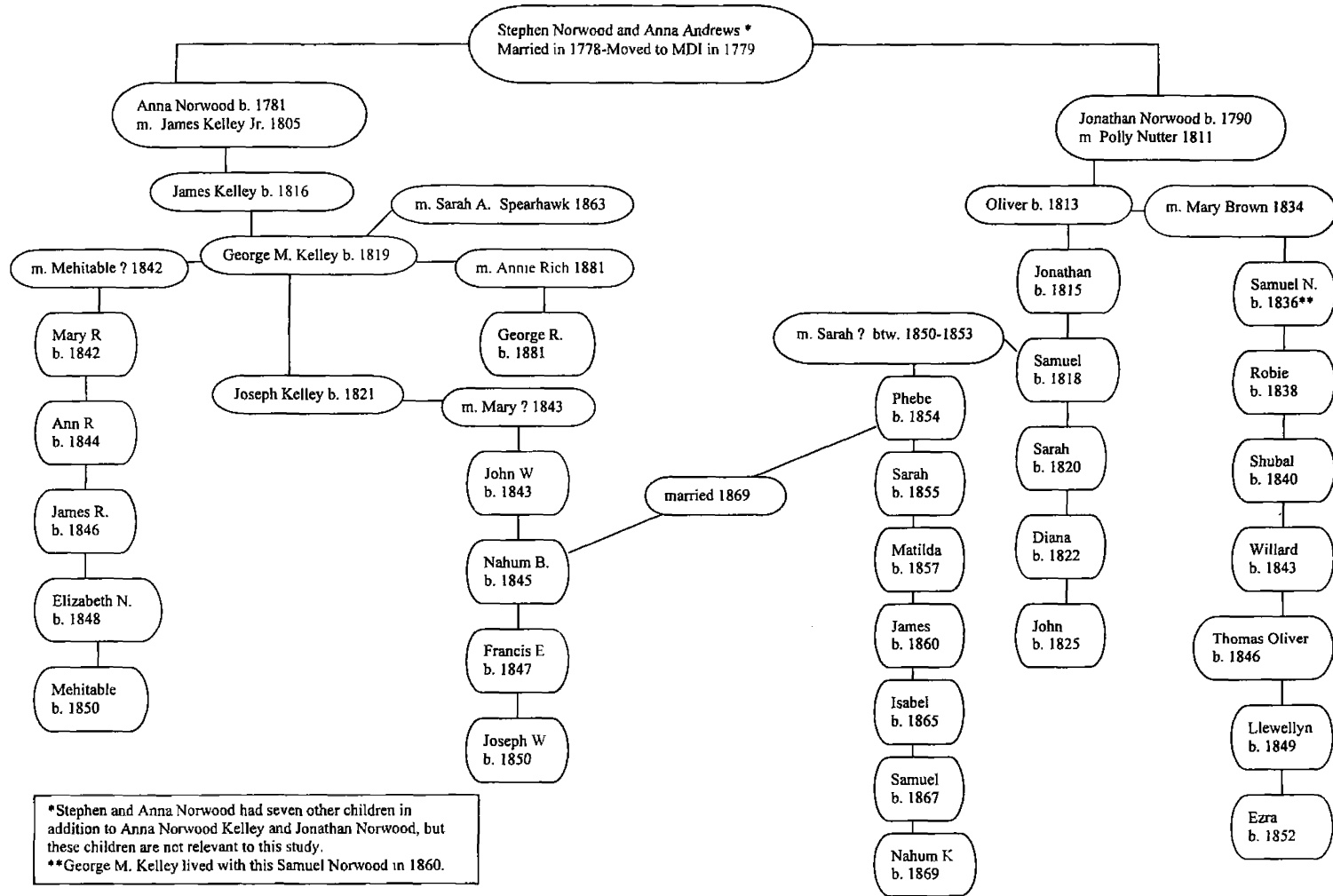
According to the headstone in the Seal Cove Road graveyard, Mehitable died in May 1850. Three months later, the census-taker arrived at the Kelley home and recorded George's three-month old baby, Mehitable, in the house, but no wife. Putting together information from the gravestone and the census, I determined that Mehitable died in childbirth and that George named the child after his deceased wife. In the time it took to answer the census-taker's questions, George had left clues to his life and the lives of his family members.

The Kelley family story became more interesting as I investigated the 1860 census. By this time George and his three youngest children lived with his cousin, Samuel Norwood, age 25, Samuel's wife Mildreth, and their son Charles. While the census records indicate that George was no longer head of his household, they did not tell how this had occurred. For whatever reason, George M. Kelley moved in with Samuel Norwood and used this time to re-establish himself.

In fall 1860, several months after the 1860 census-taker had visited Mount Desert Island, George's life took another turn. Notice of this change came from the Registry of Deeds in the Hancock County Courthouse in Ellsworth. After I had searched for an hour in the Registry of Deeds, George reached out to give me another clue: a land transaction appeared in the index to *Deed Book 135*. I eased the register off of the shelf and found that in November 1860, George purchased a lot on the Salem Towne map of the western half of the Island. I pulled out my copies of Salem Towne's survey map and Colby's 1887 *Map of Mount Desert Island* and realized that this was the farm that George had lived on in 1887; he bought the land from his brother, Joseph, for \$450.00.⁶ George now owned ninety acres of land, "excepting a lot now staked out for a graveyard, sixty feet by forty-four feet"—the graveyard where George buried Mehitable in 1850.

George's purchase of this property from his brother perplexed me. I was delighted with finding this nugget in my search for the mother lode, but I was mystified because I could not imagine where George had acquired the money to buy this land. And how had Joseph gotten the land? According to the 1860 census, Joseph, his wife Mary, their eight children, and his mother Anna lived with George Murphy and his family. This would suggest that Joseph could not fully support his family, or that he was working for Murphy. According to the headstone in the graveyard, James Kelley, father of George and Joseph, died in 1859; this would ex-

The Norwood and Kelley Families of Seal Cove Road



plain why his wife Anna was living with her son Joseph. It might also explain the 1860 land transaction. While I never found a probate will for James Kelley, Sr., I suspect that he left his land and perhaps some money to his sons, and that George used his money to buy his brother's portion of the land.

Although it is not clear how George M. Kelley obtained the farm on Seal Cove Road, it does signify a degree of prosperity. In 1861 the town of Tremont taxed Kelley for one house, one outbuilding, six acres of tillage, fifteen acres of pasturage, sixty-eight acres of unimproved land, five cows, and four sheep. This allowed him not only to support his family, but also to support a new wife, Sarah A. Spearhawk.⁷ George, his children, and his new wife worked hard to improve the farm and enhance their standing in the community. By 1870, according to the *United States Agricultural Census of 1870*, George's farm contained thirty-five acres of improved land, fifty acres of improved woodland, twenty-two acres of unimproved land and \$30 worth of equipment.⁸ His livestock consisted of one horse, two milk cows, two working oxen, and seven sheep, and he paid someone \$150 to help him that year. He produced twenty-five pounds of wool, two bushels of peas and beans, forty bushels of Irish potatoes, 200 pounds of butter, four tons of hay, \$60 in forest products, \$118 in meat, and \$11 in home manufactures. Together George's farm and livestock were worth almost \$800.⁹

The success of a farm like Kelley's depended upon each family member carrying out assigned chores and participating in the production of home-manufactured items. In addition to farming, George might have processed hides into leather, shaved shingles, harvested ice, and produced hand-crafted items like boots, barrels and axe handles. Sarah might have made butter, gathered eggs, and spun the wool from the farm's sheep. A ledger from a store in Seal Cove confirms that all of these goods could be used for barter (fig. 3). George Kelley, like other Seal Cove Road residents, did business at Fuller's store; some paid cash, while others bartered with farm products like lard, eggs, butter, hay, and firewood. Images of George and Sarah putting their homemade goods in the back of a cart and setting off for Seal Cove came to my mind. Upon their arrival, George most likely discussed the value of his goods with Fuller, then traded these items for "store-bought" merchandise like heavy boots, vinegar, molasses, tobacco, tea, sugar, and salt.¹⁰ Perhaps Sarah asked for several yards of calico, thread, and buttons—the makings for a new dress.¹¹

Despite George Kelley's successes, farming on Mount Desert Island

9	1852	Capt Ezra Dodge		
		bailed to Boston 11/2 doz eggs	Sold for 14	1.61
Oct 5		Rec'd of Capt Dodge by Payson for eggs		95
		Capt Dodge bailed to Boston 11/2 doz eggs	Sold for 3	54
"		Rec'd of Capt Dodge for eggs by Payson		3.00
30		Rec'd " " " " " "		2.56
Nov 5		Dr Geo Kellay 1/2 gall molasses	del'd by Kellay	44
		Dr Joseph Murphy 1 to Shingles nails	paid	5
Dec 1		Dr Adeline Gott's widow		70
		to 10 yds factory cloth 7-		
7		Margaret Rimmel 1 hair comb	paid	13
7		Dr Capt John Langley	May 66	
		2 yds white Cambric del'd Mary Reed	paid	60
10		Dr Maria Weston payment to be paid in one week	paid	91
18		Dr Doctor Spear 4 to Sugar & 5 other left		32
10		Dr Benjamin Murphy wife of Hannah Mann		
		1 Linoleum combinator, del'd by Murphy	paid	

Figure 3: Page from an unidentified store account book indicating George M. Kelley's business activity with the store. The original, "Tremont Maine Acct. Book of Store [Seal Cove], 1852-1853," is in Special Collections Department, Fogler Library, University of Maine.



Phebe Kelley's gravestone, Kelley cemetery, Seal Cove Road, Tremont.
Photo courtesy Peter Morrison.

was not generally profitable. In 1878, Samuel Wasson produced a survey of Hancock County in which he described the state of its agriculture.

A primary farming county this can never hope to be. There are natural obstacles, which art cannot remove. Its peculiar proximity to the ocean, its geographical position as the battle-ground of arctic and torrid temperatures, with their alternating climatic waves of heat and cold, producing long, cold and uncertain springs, with irregular extremes of thawing and freezing, so fatal to grass roots, the inexhaustible hydraulic power within its borders, the facilities for coasting and fishing, and the extraordinary aversion to farm labor, become characteristics in common, which forbid a prosperous and productive agriculture.¹²

By 1880, hardships like these seem to have prevailed: George Kelley's farm returns were not large enough to be listed in the *Agricultural Census* at all. The *Population Census* lists his occupation as a blacksmith and caretaker for six of the town's paupers. George may have continued to farm, but he found other sources of income to supplement his agricultural activities.

Death could be one reason why George had changed his occupation by 1880. In 1867, he buried his twenty-one-year-old son, James. Probate records reveal that George had to petition the court for the right to administer his son's property. Once again the documentation revealed only the cold facts: what possessions did this unmarried son own? How did George cope with the death of a second child—a third family member to go to an early grave?¹³ A little more than a decade later his second wife died. He buried Sarah in the family graveyard next to Mehitable.

One year after Sarah's death, the 1880 census revealed that sixty-one year old George had a new housekeeper, thirty-two year old Annie Rich. They were married on January 4, 1881, and a month and a half later, Annie gave birth to a son, George Randall Kelley. Ten years later Annie died, leaving her husband with a young boy to raise.¹⁴ After Annie's death, George too, all but disappears from the record. The last piece of information was a deed dated November 17, 1902, which gave his youngest son, George Randall Kelley, the property on Seal Cove Road.¹⁵ George's death certificate and his grave remain elusive. George Randall Kelley died in 1963 and was buried in the family cemetery beside his mother.

Just as George Kelley lost status as head of his household in the 1860 census, so too did his brother, Joseph. During this time, he and his family lived with George Murphy, from whom Joseph most likely learned the skills of carpentry. Perhaps he was an apprentice, which would explain why he was living with Murphy. By 1870, Joseph was a house carpenter and was apparently teaching his eldest son Nahum the same skills. Three of his other children found jobs in the booming fishing industry that employed many men and women in Tremont and Southwest Harbor. Joseph W., age twenty-one, worked as a sailor, while his two daughters, Hannah and Rebecca, worked in the lobster factory in Southwest Harbor. The income was useful, since Joseph's household now consisted of fifteen people, including his wife, his three grown children, six additional children between the ages of thirteen and two months, his son Nahum and Nahum's wife Phebe Norwood, and their one-month-old child, Ella May.

Nahum Kelley married Phebe Norwood in 1869. The two most likely grew up together, since Phebe's family lived along Seal Cove Road. Nahum saved enough money to buy six acres of land in 1871 from Isaac Murphy, son of George Murphy, who housed Nahum and his family in 1860.¹⁶ Colby's *Atlas of Hancock County* indicates that the farm was located next to that of his uncle, George Kelley, on Seal Cove Road. Because farms like these were family operations, the connection between

George and Nahum and their families was an important asset to both. Phebe was also within walking distance of her mother, Sarah Norwood, and her younger siblings.

The Norwood Family

The Kelley families supplemented a sparse income from farming with blacksmithing and carpentry. Members of the Norwood family, who also lived on Seal Cove Road, provide additional insight into these multi-occupational strategies; the Norwoods augmented their farm work with fishing. The first member of the Norwood clan to arrive on Mount Desert Island was Stephen Norwood. He brought his wife, Anna, to Mount Desert Island from Gloucester, Massachusetts, after the death of their first child from smallpox in 1779. Soon after they arrived, their next child, Anna, who would later become the wife of James Kelley, was born. She was followed by eight other children, including Jonathan, who was born in 1790.¹⁷

As with the Kelley family, I started my search for information on the Norwoods by looking at the population census. The 1850 census lists Jonathan Norwood as a sixty-year old farmer living alone. Jonathan's son Oliver, a thirty-five-year-old mariner, lived nearby with his wife Mary, his sons Samuel age fourteen, Robie age twelve, Shubal age ten, and Willard age seven, and his wife's sister, Susan M. Brown, age eighteen. Also included in the 1850 census were Oliver's bachelor brothers, Jonathan Norwood, age thirty-five, and Samuel, age thirty-two. The two men lived together and most likely worked together, as Jonathan was a carpenter and Samuel was a joiner.¹⁸

Since the Kelley graveyard held no apparent clues to the Norwood family, I decided to try the Hancock County Courthouse. I started with the Probate Office, where I found Jonathan Norwood, Sr.'s will. He died in 1854, and his will revealed that Jonathan had married Polly Nutter in 1811, and that he had purchased lot 88 on Seal Cove Road. Polly delivered their first child, Oliver, on February 22, 1813. Two years later in June, Jonathan was born, and in March 1818, Samuel followed. Polly had two daughters and another son over the next seven years.¹⁹ As the family grew, Jonathan purchased more land on Seal Cove Road, including lot 86, so that he could provide his sons with farms when they became adults. In 1839 he sold a portion of the original homestead to Oliver and Samuel.



Stone-lined cellar-hole from the Jonathan Norwood farmstead on Seal Cove Road.
Photo courtesy Peter Morrison.

While Jonathan Sr. provided for his family, he could not protect them from the hardships of everyday life. They suffered the loss of their mother at an early age. Jonathan's will revealed that he married a woman by the name of Margaret sometime after 1850. Following Jonathan's death in 1854, Margaret lived in their house and died around 1860; upon her death, the house became the property of Jonathan's two eldest sons, Oliver and Jonathan. In 1861, the town of Tremont taxed Jonathan Norwood for two-thirds of a house and Oliver for one-third of a house. Several years later, Oliver purchased all of the land from his brother.²⁰

Jonathan married in his forties to twenty-three-year-old Mary Brown. His marriage and the subsequent births of his sons explains why he bought the remainder of his father's property from his brother. By 1860, the Norwood household included seven sons—Samuel, Robie, Shubal, Willard, Thomas Oliver, Llewellyn, and Ezra—and Mary's relatives. During the early years of his marriage Oliver was a mariner, but by 1860 he had become a laborer, and by 1870 a farmer. There are three possible reasons for these changes. First, Oliver may have been affected by the death of his sixteen-year-old son, Shubel, who was lost at sea in 1857.²¹ Second, he may have worked as a laborer, a farmer, and a mariner at different times of the year, and his changing occupation in the census may simply reflect this subsistence lifestyle. A third possibility

is that by 1870 Oliver had acquired enough property to focus more on farming. In 1870 he had ten acres of improved land and twenty acres of unimproved land valued at \$300.00. He worked his farm with \$20 worth of implements and machinery and paid out \$200 in wages for farm labor for one year. He owned one horse, two milk cows, and twelve sheep and harvested six tons of hay, two bushels of peas and beans, fifty bushels of Irish potatoes and \$3 in market and garden produce. His sheep supplied him with thirty-six pounds of wool and his cows with 100 pounds of butter.²²

Oliver's homestead consisted of a large farm house with a stone foundation, a large barn, and at least three other outbuildings. Oliver also planted an apple orchard near the house, and he and Mary probably worked hard to make their home appear neat and manicured; the lane that led to the farm buildings is still marked by parallel lines of old birch trees. Oliver was probably considered a prosperous and progressive farmer, and he was probably aware of the information contained in agricultural bulletins published by the state board of agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, many of which discussed property beautification, farm management techniques, and modern farming methods.

Modern farming methods ranged from feeding silage to cattle to reclaiming salt marshes in order to increase a farmer's tillable land or pasturage. In January 1866, Oliver Norwood, Samuel Norwood, and Joseph Kelley joined fifty-three other members of the Tremont community in signing a letter to the state legislature requesting the right to incorporate as the Bass Harbor Marsh Company so that they could build and maintain a dyke across Bass Harbor Marsh Creek. The petition asked for power to form a corporation in order to "build and maintain a dam across the Bass Harbor Marsh creek for the purpose of diking and draining said marsh . . . as we consider [the dam] . . . not to be an injury to anyone but [rather] a public benefit."²³ The legislature authorized the dam, which would restrict the flow of tidal salt water into the marshes and cause the salt content of the soil to dissipate, leaving the land fertile enough to grow crops. The Norwoods and the other farmers who supported this venture also knew that while they waited for the salt to leech from the soil, the land would produce valuable salt-marsh grasses that could be harvested as a supplemental winter fodder for their livestock.²⁴

The dyking petitions sent me on a quest to find the dyke. We surveyed the area near the dyke we had seen on our first trip to the area and discovered the remains of a structure in the place described in the peti-

tion—across the street from the Tremont Town Hall. Stone abutments lay on either side of Bass Harbor creek where it flows into the bay, and a picture given to me by Stanley Reed of the Tremont Historical Society confirms the existence of this structure. But the size and stability of the structure suggests a dam rather than a dyke. In addition to controlling the flow of the tide onto the marsh, it also served as a bridge, and it may have been part of a tidal mill as well. Unfortunately, no more documentation has surface to reveal whether the dam met the petitioners' expectations.

Oliver Norwood may have thought, like other patriarchs in the company, that by investing in a reclamation project he could provide more farming opportunities for his sons when they came of age. Improved farming conditions might also help them supplement the income they made from maritime pursuits. Four of his sons worked as sea captains or sailors. Eventually Willard seems to have focused more on farming, as he took over his father's farm in the late 1870s or early 1880s. Willard moved into the old homestead with his mother, Mary, and his brother, Llewellyn, who were allowed to remain in the house as part of a deal by which Willard paid his brothers and his mother \$400.00 to relinquish their rights as heirs to Oliver's farm. Thomas Oliver built a home nearby but remained a sailor according to the 1880 census. Whether as sailors or farmers or a combination of both, Oliver's sons remained on Seal Cove Road to care for their mother long after Oliver's death.

Some time between 1850 and 1853 Oliver's brother Samuel married a woman named Sarah, seventeen years his junior, and settled down on lot 85 of the Salem Towne plan as a farmer. By the 1860 census their first child, Phebe, was seven years old, and they had three younger daughters. Over the next ten years, Samuel and Sarah had four more children and took in another child, Ida Gott. Samuel's farm consisted of three acres of tilled land, four acres of pasture, eighteen acres of unimproved land, two cows, and six sheep. In addition to farming, Samuel was a joiner, but he changed his occupation several times.

By 1870, Samuel Norwood's health seems to have declined, as the population census listed him without an occupation for that year. His fifteen-year-old daughter Sarah is listed as a domestic servant, implying that perhaps her work provided some extra income for the family. Samuel died between 1870 and 1876, and once again this information left me with more questions than answers: the Tremont Town Office holds no death record, and a search of the Probate Office in the Hancock County Courthouse turned up no will. If Samuel Norwood had left a



Cellar-holes and lilacs, the author discovers, reveal as much about the history of ordinary life as wills, diaries, ledgers, and other documents. In the end, this diverse collection of facts brought to light many valuable lessons about the people who lived on Mt. Desert Island in the nineteenth-century. Photo courtesy Peter Morrison.

will, I might have learned the number of rooms he had in his house, the objects found in each of those rooms and their worth, the livestock and farming equipment he owned, the types of outbuildings on the property, and his cash worth. The population census hints that Samuel left Sarah as the sole provider for her six children, ranging from age fifteen to one year. Sarah most likely received help from her son-in-law, Nahum Kelley, and from her father-in-law, Oliver Norwood, both of whom lived close by on Seal Cove Road. Sarah did not remain a single parent for long, however. In 1876, she married Benjamin Jordan of Bucksport, who moved in with Sarah and her children. Four years later the census taker recorded Jordan as a sailor and Sarah as a housekeeper who not only took care of her own children but boarded a hotel worker named Matilda Thurston and her one-year-old-son, Granville.²⁵

The Kelleys and Norwoods in Perspective

In the end, my panning for historical riches on Mount Desert yielded more nuggets than the stream at Sutter's Mill. To my surprise, the lilacs proved as valuable as the census records in piecing together these lives. This diverse collection of facts brought to light many valuable lessons about the people who lived on Mount Desert Island. The first is the importance of family and community. For the Kelleys and the Norwoods, living on Seal Cove Road meant living near family members who provided them with day-to-day emotional or physical support and a place to turn in times of crisis. Samuel N. Norwood offered his cousin George M. Kelley a home and assistance in raising his young children. Perhaps Samuel learned the importance of family help from his father, Oliver, who provided for his stepmother Margaret after the death of her husband, Jonathan. Oliver and Samuel Norwood understood the importance of community when they joined with their neighbors to incorporate the Bass Harbor Marsh Company, which helped them secure better land, not only for themselves but also for their children. Interdependence and cooperation were facts of life in an era of very limited government assistance.

Another lesson we learned in our search for the Norwoods and Kelleys is the importance of the physical landscape. Colby's *Map of Mount Desert Island* showed us where the Norwoods and Kelleys lived, but it was only by walking the land that we gained a true impression of these old homesteads. The stone cellar hole on the Oliver Norwood property revealed a rough layout of the building, complete with a northeast entrance and a stone-based brick chimney in the rear of the home. This and the foundations of three other buildings gave us a sense of the farm's organization and a feel for the spatial configurations of the Norwood family daily activities. An overgrown road added another dimension to this understanding. The Kelley homestead included a stone-lined cellar hole and a foundation for what may have been a blacksmith shop. The presence of relic lilac bushes, apple trees, and cedar trees suggests the care and effort these families took in transforming their lands into graceful farms. The homesteads were not the only landscapes we examined: dykes on the marsh showed the importance of community cooperation in the families' efforts to improve their lives. But perhaps the most greatest lesson we learned from the landscapes, the census records, the legislative petitions, and the tax records, deeds, wills, and town histories we examined was the importance of flexibility. none of these sources

turned up a mother lode, but in piecing together the bits of information each source yielded, we found we had nuggets enough to give us a better understanding of the daily activities, the life-strategies, and maybe even the hopes and dreams of the Norwoods and Kelleys of Seal Cove Road, Mount Desert, Maine.

NOTES

1. George Colby, *Atlas of Hancock County, Maine* (Ellsworth, Maine: S.F. Colby & Company, 1881); George Colby and J.H. Stuart, *Map of Mount Desert Island, Sorrento, Portions of Lamoine, Hancock, Frenchman's Bay and Adjacent Islands, Maine* (Houlton, Maine: Colby and Stuart, 1887). The author would like to thank Janet and Wayne Patten and Stanley Reed of the Tremont Historical Society for their help in this research.
2. See D.W. Meinig, editor, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); John Fraser Hart, *The Rural Landscape* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Thomas W. Neumann and Robert M. Sanford, "The Use of Vegetation Successional Stages Cultural Resource Assessments," *American Archaeology* 6 (no. 2, 1987).
3. Variouslly in census records, wills, deeds, and gravestones, Kelley is spelled Kelly or Kellay as well. I have used Kelley throughout for consistency.
4. For local context see Richard W. Hale, Jr., *The Story of Bar Harbor* (New York: Ives Washburn, Inc., 1949); Virginia Somes Sanderson, *The Living Past* (Mount Desert, Maine: Beech Hill Publishing, 1982); George E. Street, *Mount Desert: A History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926); Nellie C. Thornton, *Traditions and Records of Southwest Harbor and Somesville, Mount Desert Island, Maine* (Auburn, Maine: Merrill and Webber Company, 1938); Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Story of Mount Desert Island* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).
5. Wills and deeds show that James Kelley and Joseph M. Kelley are the sons of James Kelley, Jr. and Anna Norwood Kelley, but determining George M. Kelley's relationship to them was a little more difficult.
6. Salem Towne was a surveyor who produced a map of the land on the western side of the island. An original copy can be found in the Hancock County Courthouse. The Colby and Stuart Atlas Company reproduced the Salem Towne lots on its *Map of Mount Desert Island*.
7. The census for 1870 listed Abigail Kelley as keeping house for George. The gravestone in the Kelley graveyard lists Sarah A. as his second wife, who died in April 1879. Perhaps the middle initial "A" stood for Abigail. The Tremont Town Records indicate that George M. Kelley married Sarah A. (Abigail?) Speakhawk in 1863.
8. In order to be listed in the U.S. Agricultural Census, a farmer needed to have

fifty acres under production. The only year that anyone on Seal Cove Road was listed in the U.S. Agricultural Census is 1870.

9. U.S. Agricultural Census, 1870.

10. Richard W. Judd, Edwin A. Churchill, and Joel W. Eastman, *Maine: The Pine Tree State from Prehistory to the Present* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1995), pp. 245-269; Account Book, Seal Cove, 1852-1853, Special Collections Department, Fogler Library, University of Maine. Although the account book had not been identified, the *Maine Register* for 1855 (Portland: Blake and Carter, 1855) listed Charles Fuller was the most likely owner, since the account book listed people who picked up their mail from the post office located in the store, and Charles Fuller was postmaster for Seal Cove, and he also owned a general store.

11. For more information about farming in Maine in the nineteenth century, see Judd, Churchill, and Eastman, *Maine: The Pine Tree State*.

12. Samuel Wasson, *A Survey of Hancock County, Maine* (Augusta, Maine: Sprague, Owen & Nash, 1878), 45.

13. Hancock County Wills, 3152, James R. Kellay, Hancock County Probate Records, Hancock County Courthouse, Ellsworth, Maine.

14. Tremont Town Records, Town Hall, Tremont, Maine.

15. *Deed Book 383*, pp. 368, 371; *Deed Book 443*, p. 254, Hancock County Registry of Deeds, Hancock County Courthouse, Ellsworth, Maine.

16. *Deed Book 139*, p. 559, Hancock County Registry of Deeds.

17. William Otis Sawtelle, *Notes on the Norwood Family* (privately printed), pp. 22-23.

18. Sawtelle, *Notes on the Norwood Family*, pp. 22-23; U.S. Population Census, 1850.

19. Sawtelle, *Notes on the Norwood Family*.

20. Hancock County Wills, no. 2327, Jonathan Norwood, Hancock County Probate Records, Hancock County Courthouse; Tax Valuation Book, 1861, Tremont Town Office; *Deed Book 71*, p. 465, Hancock County Register of Deeds.

21. Unpublished cemetery notes, Seal Cove Cemetery, Tremont Town Office.

22. U.S. Population Census, 1850, 1860, and 1870; U.S. Agricultural Census, 1870.

23. "Petition of Henry H. Clark and others to incorporate the Bass Harbor Marsh Company," Box 409, Chapter 93, Legislative Laws, 1866, Maine State Archives, Augusta, Maine.

24. For more information on the reclamation of salt marshes in Maine see, Kimberly R. Sebold, "Low Green Prairies of the Sea: Economic Usage and Cultural Construction of the Gulf of Maine Salt Marshes," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maine, 1998.

25. U.S. Population Census 1870 and 1880.