

Childhood Exploits of the Penfield Clan



Penfield Cottage, our home away from home.

Compiled and Edited by Andrew Lyons

Editor's Notes

Each summer, for one or two weeks, I travel with my family to our cottage on Lake George in upstate New York. The property is collectively owned and maintained by the 150 or so members of my mother's side of the family who all take some time each summer to visit.

The stories and memory snippets herein have been collected from several of my relatives who generously shared their fond memories of childhood with me for this project. I must admit that I had some great fun in compiling all of these together, there is quite a variety of stories collected and I hope that all you reading this will enjoy yourselves.

Fiona Shearer

- Eating bowls of ice cream in the kitchen at night, after all the grown-ups have gone to bed ... and regularly forgetting to keep our voices down so that we wouldn't wake people up!
- Jumping/diving into the COLD water, and not being able to do more than gasp at the shock - because sound travels a long way on a quiet night over water!
- Splashing other people so that they're wet and cold too - or pretending that the water's really warm, so that everyone else will jump in too!
- Hiding, and then grabbing someone's arm - because everything's a lot scarier at night, in the dark - you never know what might reach out for you!
- Lying on the dock at night, drinking hot chocolate, or eating ice cream. Looking up at the stars - seeing how many constellations we can name, and keeping an eye out for falling stars and meteor showers. It's a great time for a heart-to-heart!
- Sleeping out in the hammock - going to sleep with the stars up above, and being woken by the sun, in time to see a beautiful sunrise. (Occasionally being caught out by rain ... and having to run inside in the middle of the night)
- There was a huge storm one night (I must have been about ten). We had all been in the Big House living room, playing games beside a roaring fire. Then it came time to go to bed. All the kids were sent to the cabin to put on our pyjamas - being told to come back for goodnight hugs and kisses. So we all trooped across to the cabin - but it was so wet that even though we ran, we were soaked through by the time we got inside. So we dried off, and changed into our pyjamas ... and then went back to the Big House to say goodnight. By the time we got there ... we were all wet again! So we dried off by the fire. When we were all dry and warm, we were sent back to the cabin ... and once more became soaked through ... so we changed into dry pyjamas once more,

and went to bed.

- Making tie-dye t-shirts on the porch at Birch Glen - though first we had to get from the Big House to Birch Glen (we have a photo of Jennifer and Janice both wrapped in a huge green raincoat - Jennifer's head is at the top, while Janice's head is poking out halfway up!). We had a great time making our shirts (and have a picture of us all wearing them later).

- Trying to water-ski in the rain - but it really hurts!

- Swimming in the rain is quite fun ... until Grandma points out that a thunderstorm is about to arrive, and anything moving on the water is very likely to get hit...

- Hiking up Sunrise Mountain to see the sunrise - twice in ten days! Hiking in the dark (in evening or morning) is pretty difficult - when we hiked in the morning, it got easier the further we went, as the sky gradually became lighter; in the evening, it was the reverse. Camping out on top was good fun - and particularly memorable because it rained - and we only had one, small, very smelly tent - so we huddled under tarpaulins and blankets - and really got very little sleep! Breakfast watching the sunrise is wonderful - no matter what it consists of ... ours included mini-Oreo's, graham crackers, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, grapes, chocolate chips, granola bars, apples ... a feast!? Then, of course, there's the following day, when everyone's half-asleep and walking around in a daze.

- We decided to take a hike up Black Mountain - and give Maisie [a cousin's dog] a chance to properly stretch her legs. We went up to Glen Island to get a permit - but were informed that dogs are not allowed to go up Black. So we promised to take Maisie home, and got the permit. We went to the foot of Black, and all got out except Rob and John and Maisie, who headed back to the cottage to drop off the dog, and then returned and hiked fast to try to catch us up. We had a great hike (I think Rob and John caught up just before the top) and a lovely picnic on top, and

then hiked down again. By the time we got to the bottom, we were all tired and ready to go home, so we got into the Penglide - and we were off. Only we weren't ... because the Penglide wouldn't start. We tried and tried and tried, but the engine just wouldn't start. So we all got out of the boat again, and ate the remains of the picnic lunch, while Rob and John tried to figure out what was wrong. They still couldn't fix it. Eventually, the LGP came past, and so we radioed a message asking someone to bring the Bassoon over to the foot of Black, so that they could tow us home. All there was left to do then was wait ... so we waited. And then it started raining ... so we put the cover on the boat, and hid underneath it - but that got very hot and sticky and smelly, so we ended up sitting under the shelter on land. At last the Bassoon came in sight - with James S driving, and Katharine and James L too. We fixed the towrope to the front of the Penglide, and very slowly moved off. Then the people in the front boat remembered the provisions that Grandma had suggested we might need - so Katharine spent most of the trip throwing Triscuits back to the Penglide (I'm not sure that any of them made it!). After a very long, slow trip down the lake, we got back to the cottage, and back to a wonderful supper. So that was the end of that experience, but by no means the end of the problems with the Penglide!

- Because the Penglide wasn't working, we decided to try water-skiing behind the Bassoon.

Unfortunately the boat really wasn't powerful enough - with the weight of a skier dragging behind, the boat tended to travel at a 45-degree angle - so we needed ballast (or Fiona) in the front to try to keep it down.

- Water-skiing really didn't work very well, so we dug out the old dive-board and tried that instead. It was quite fun being dragged through the water, tipping the board to move up and down, and seeing what was on the bottom of the lake. The only significant problem arose if you were wearing a two-piece swimsuit or loose shorts ... because the drag from the water tended to

pull them down, which was more than a little disturbing!

Peg Shearer

- I remember, from the days when the Cabin was strictly off limits to children (or was it just off limits to girls?), the one time Betty, Ann and I got to sleep there: we had German measles and were in quarantine from somebody who was pregnant (Aunt Connie, I think).

- From way back, I remember Grandfather Penfield "swimming" - i.e. floating on his back, with a bar of Ivory soap (which floats, you'll remember) balanced on his rotundity. And Grandmother Penfield sitting up in bed in the red room, making a toy mouse out of a folded-and-wrapped handkerchief and then making it jump (many years later, my father-in-law showed me how to make handkerchief mice, but I have since forgotten).

- Many, many walks over to the Association for Vespers (I liked to sit on the chapel steps and look at the view, rather than sit inside) or for square dancing (in high spirits, and if there were several of us, fancy-stepping along or sometimes chorus-line-kicking as cars came past), and home again, bare feet feeling the way in the dark along the smoothed center of the road. After square dancing (with far too much youthful enthusiasm for some callers), swimming in the wonderful cool water - and oh, the Milky Way and the constellations and the August meteor showers.

- Games of swing the monkey - somewhere we will find another indoor swing and show you how to hook your feet over the swing's rope and chalk-mark the floor as far back and as far forward as you can go without falling off. It makes charades (THE game, as we called it) look tame and refined.

- Boat trips to Lake George Village or Diver's Rock or Odell; hikes up Black, Tongue, Pharaoh,

Swede, Inspiration, Sunrise, Marcy (in the rain and mist, that one, but I guess I was over 20 then); camping at Pharaoh. The fire tower on Swede when it still had a warden. Bears and blueberries at the Hague dump.

- August Fools Days from the occasional silliness (Grum mustarding somebody's sandwich) to the stupendously outrageous (emptying Steve Gates' Cabin room entirely).

- Reading "Cry the beloved country" (Alan Paton's moving evocation of apartheid South Africa) aloud with Caroline Anker.

- Raccoon-trapping with John Bowser and sundry others.

- Swimming across the lake the first time - again with John B - he and I in the water and two canoes keeping us company, and swimming and swimming and counting strokes hundred after hundred and wondering if we'd ever get to Diver's and swimming and swimming - and then spotting a thunderstorm racing down the lake towards us, and suddenlywewereswimmingveryfastindeedandgottoshorejustasthefirstdropsfell and all of us sheltering under the two upturned canoes.

- As a little child, sleeping out on the porches (the swinging couch was a privilege) and braving the mosquitoes, spiders and bats, and loving the quiet safe feeling when it rained but you didn't get wet.

- Baptisms on the lawn by the bridge to the Humes' - it was years before I realized that baptism wasn't meant to be a baby's welcome into The Family.

- Stupidly wearing a two-piece bathing suit when fiber-glassing an early Sailfish - recipe for a very itchy tummy!

Catching salamanders and tadpoles in the stream. The tadpoles we kept in buckets in the Lodge basement room - until one day they became frogs and jumped out.

- Learning the jigsaw rules - only one look at the picture, and don't touch a piece unless you think you know where it goes.

- Playing "Up Jenkins" around the dining table, with Granddad Atwater among others. The rules are complicated, but it's a classic Twenties country house game - even appears in an Agatha Christie book.

Jennifer Shearer

- I must have been 10 or 11 and had been swimming every day (of course) during a lovely 2 weeks at Silver Bay. Friday before leaving on the Saturday I said, "I want to swim in from the marker". "Ok, sometime" was the reply but nothing happened and nothing happened and when I finally reminded people it was too late and too dark to try. So we decided that I would get up early the next morning and could try before we left. So I did get up and I did try and I did swim in. I was so pleased with myself. The phrase I used in my poem was "I grinned, pleased".

Everyone was out on the dock cheering to welcome me in and Grandma said "You are the first to swim in from the marker, no matter what happens next, no-one can ever take this away from you" ("And I grinned, pleased"). Then the very cool and grown up and exciting DP and Patty who happened to be at Silver Bay at the same time took me aquaplaning before we had breakfast on the raft - coffeecake all round. And then (in the style typical of small children's stories) we went home.

Carol Leonard

- Back in the 20's some of the conferences at the Association were heavily into inspiration and recruiting. For that purpose we often had an evening service in the Auditorium which ended with singing "follow the Grail", a slightly sentimental hymn from that period. Then the ushers came

down the aisle and passed out candles to everyone, children included. The candles were perhaps four inches long, with a three-inch cardboard collar. A lighted candle then ceremoniously passed along, lighting each one in turn. Then we all filed out of the building to form a huge circle on the lawn, with the candles for our only light. I get the cold shivers when I think of only two stairways from the balcony and the hundreds of people in the building. Just one stumble or a child who waved his light under someone's sleeve, could have started a fire in that dusty dry Auditorium. It would have been an inferno. Obviously someone stopped the practice. I don't remember it after the early thirties.

Ann McMillan

- Sleeping out in odd places was fun: when I was small we usually slept on the upstairs Big House porch on cots or in the swinging bed, with the green room as a kids' dorm. One time when we were teenagers we all slept on the lake-side lawn, another time on the tennis court (why?), once on the raft (bad idea--as I remember it, Holly fell in the water in her sleeping bag), a couple of times in the motor boat. When Val and I were short we slept in the Flying Scot one night. More recently the teenagers did overnight expeditions up Sunrise, freezing and getting soaked but clearly enjoying themselves.

- The living room swing was used steadily when I was small: the kids were always trying to kick the ceiling in front and bump their heads in back. Jud could swing to the ceiling in just a couple of pushes. We'd play Swing the Monkey, which meant hooking your ankles into the rope, and, using a piece of chalk, marking as far forward and as far back as you could reach on the floor. As the beams and floor and ceiling got ever more sway-backed, the swing was limited to people under a hundred pounds, and now it seems to be rarely used--maybe it will be more, with the

new Lindell-Duncan coming along. It used to be that we couldn't use the swing on Sunday, and when Grandma was young they couldn't swim or play cards on Sunday either.

- There used to be a lot of fish under the dock and raft--sunnies, perch, trout. There was a box of old bread crusts in the kitchen and we kids fished off the dock regularly. There weren't ducks around back then, though. We also chased and caught frogs a lot, in the stream between our house and the Humes'. Johnny Bowser and I spent a lot of time throwing rocks at frogs; once we hit and killed one and felt terrible about it so we had an elaborate funeral and buried it on the beach in a multi-layered sarcophagus made of stones and sand. Charlotte always wanted to catch a chipmunk (or do I have the generations mixed up?) so one time she made a trap with an old wooden crate propped up by a stick tied to a piece of string. Along came the chippie to eat the bread under the crate, she pulled the string, and Bam! The box came down and broke the chippie's back. Very sad.

- Janice says I should also mention when I trapped the red squirrel a few years back--they had been very destructive, chewed up the fox and both ruffed grouses over the winter, and kept eating stuff in the kitchen when we went up in June. We tried to trap them in a Have a Heart trap with vegetables, but they weren't interested. They were very audacious, and one sat right on the shelf eating chocolate Quik straight out of the can while I watched. So that night I baited the trap with Quik and sure enough, the next morning there was a squirrel in the trap and two of his family hanging around outside it on the counter. I did not have a heart (especially because the squirrels kept coming into my bedroom during the night) and I lowered the trap into the lake and left it there for a couple of hours. My kids thought I was horrible, but they weren't the ones who had felt the need to put a laundry basket over their heads while they slept. When I was young, Thorny had a .22 rifle, and whenever we saw a red squirrel running up the porch posts while we

were eating, he would jump up and shoot at them. I had a lot of nightmares when I was young about red squirrels biting my fingers.

- I hope someone has mentioned the regattas. I know they had them when Grandma's generation was young--they did a lot of elaborate costumed plays and had canoe races, etc. When I was young, the uncles (Dave, John, and Paul Jr.) would "kangaroo" in the heavy old canvas-covered canoes, standing on the seat at one end and bouncing the canoe way out of the water. More recently, the regattas included swimming races while we were wearing skis, paddleboat races by adults who could barely keep them above water, and a famous canoe race which involved about 8 people in each canoe, paddling furiously--with their hands. One team turned out to have a major disadvantage as we finally realized that Dick had tied our canoe to the dock's ladder underwater.

- We played with the dress-ups in the yellow room a lot when I was young, especially on rainy days. Our favorite items were a sexy metallic silver shawl from the 20's, Grandfather Penfield's 3-piece wool and cotton black bathing suit that covered us from head to toe, and a collection of paper masks that included historic figures from Martha Washington to Sitting Bull. More recently some cocktail dresses, evening gowns, and military uniforms from the 40's through 60's were added to the collection, and the current generation put on elaborate plays, including Cinderella and a complicated montage of several plays. The twins made a charming pair of ugly stepsisters.

Connie Bowser

- My Father was born and brought up in Colorado, (your great grandfather Atwater), and out there, there are severe storms in the Rocky Mountains where he spent his childhood.

Unfortunately, he developed a bad case of thunder and lightning fright. As he and my Mother were raising us children, he made every effort to absent himself during a thunderstorm to avoid the possibility that we would "catch" the fear from him. At Silver Bay, occasional storms would sweep over the mountains behind the house and travel across the lake. Mother made sure that we were enjoying the experience, rather than cringing, hiding and being frightened. She would take us to the upstairs sleeping porch and we'd sit on the hammock and get lightly sprayed with mist from the rain coming down through the trees and we'd enjoy the noise and sights of the sheets of rain as they traveled down the mountain and across the bay. I still enjoy watching a thunderstorm go over, wherever I happen to be.

- I must have been about 13-14 years old when we were at the Bay for the summer and my brothers, John, maybe 10 years old, and Dave, about 7-8 decided that they, and of course, me, were going to go up Sunrise Mountain and stay over night. That meant schlepping sleeping bags and some food for breakfast with us. I was the oldest, and according to my Mother, the "responsible" one, and thus had to carry the heaviest bag and be the one in "charge". We took off and missed the trail to Sunrise, had to do much backtracking, but finally struggled up the very steep last 500 yards just as it got too dark to see where we were going. The top of the hill was almost totally rock, and sleeping was not the easiest thing but I finally dropped off shortly before dawn but not for long.

A group of hikers from the Association had come up to welcome the sunrise and interrupted our sleep. We ate the few goodies we had and returned to the cottage. Got there before anyone had gotten up for breakfast so we roused them out and had a second breakfast. I must admit we slept most of that day, and I've not been up Sunrise again.

- The summer of 1942, Aunt Deedle was going to be the one that ran the Cottage for the family,

with the Grandparents as "guests", not with Grandmother managing the place as had heretofore been the custom. Eleanor Penfield (now Spencer) and I were "hired" to be the cook and helper for the summer. We alternated weeks, first one of us was a cook, and the next week, she served as the helper, the one who set tables, helped clean up the kitchen, and did the cleaning. The weeks that I was cook, I remember eating almost raw bacon, and burnt black bean soup, the soft boiled eggs were hard and how any of the adults stood it, I don't know but not one of them complained, or at least I didn't hear it! The weeks that I was cleaner were a laugh. I think all summer the living room was really clean only twice, the first two weeks that El and I were still "in training" because when we were left on our own to fulfill our duties, we goofed off and sometimes got the wastebaskets emptied, and sometimes not... and the second floor was not cleaned when I was cleaner and I've heard later, that they weren't cleaned when El was the housemaid, either. Needless to say, neither of us was invited back to be the helpers.

- The Oneida Community Boathouse Board regularly, each summer, put on a regatta for the cottagers. How we looked forward to that. We practiced "kangarooing" the canoes around the bay, (standing on the gunnels near the rear of a canoe and bouncing rhythmically to advance the canoe in the water) and we practiced racing with various swimming strokes, and diving and the boys tuned up their putt-putts for the races and we worked up programs of aqua-planing (this was before water-skiing). We would sign up for everything we could and, because there were so many of us, each event was over-loaded with members of the Penfield clan. The only other group so well represented was the Parlin & Rowan group. The parents of our entries were well decorated by ribbons from races, both boat and swimming and "kangarooing" of canoes and, I can't think of the name it was called, but the older kids would pair up in canoes with a paddler and the other would stand on the canoe's gunnels and fight other canoes with long poles outfitted

with a ball on the far end (so we wouldn't hurt each other). The last canoe that remained after all the jousts was acclaimed the winner. Canoes would overturn and many contestants landed in the water, but it was fun and amusing to the bystanders.

- The Silver Bay Association was, and still is, a facility for both vacationers and conferences.

Some of the groups holding conferences returned each year and there was one church group that held meetings for many years during my childhood. I always felt pleased when we were there for the group that held annual candlelight services. You participated in a religious service in the Auditorium where you were given a small candle, larger than a birthday cake type of candle, about 4-5 inches high and 1/2 inch in circumference. It was poked through a five-inch square piece of light cardboard. At the end of the service the ushers went down the aisles and lit the candles of the end persons who lit their neighbor's candle and so on across the row. Then we filed out onto the lawn and down to the water's edge where each one placed his candle into the water. The candles would float out across the bay and into the lake. All the time of the procession we would be singing the hymn, "Follow the Gleam". The next day there were burnt out candles on the beach and bumping the dock but the sight of the lights traveling on the water, (and not once do I remember it being windy or with rough water), was well worth the efforts of the clean-up. I can understand why the procedure is not used today, because of the fire possibilities.

Carolyn Newman

- One of the best things about Silver Bay for me was that I felt lots of independence at an early age. Walking to the Bay by myself to play or go to the craft shop to create things was heaven to me. Walking up to the store at the top of the hill to buy newspaper or milk for breakfast and

saying "charge it to my Uncle Jack" to me was great, although the adults probably just viewed it as something they didn't have to do!

I often got to go up by myself, flying to Albany and being picked up by our Grum. We would often meet another cousin who invariably was arriving by another means such as Greyhound, then make several stops to do errands then finally head up to the cottage in Grum's hot (temperature) little American Motors Hornet (I think).

- Usually this was after school was out and then my parents would come up in August. My dad is a die hard fisherman, on Lake George only, and in those days bass season was in August so that is when our family went on vacation. It was good to see them, of course, but they moved into the Lodge and I stayed in a girls' dorm room or better yet in a tiny maid's room. The worst part of the summer was having to leave. We couldn't make quick visits because of the distance so when we left, we left, not to return for another year.

- My own boys anticipate our trip to SB as much as I did, but for their own reasons as well as a mixture of mine from my childhood. They love walking to the Bay, but to do archery. They make trips up the hill to buy candy and run quick errands for us for meals. They play golf a few times at the Ticonderoga Country Club, a place I went only for a very special dinner out. I always went to the grocery with Grum, they never do, but they do have to help unload the groceries as we all did/do when they get home. We all cherish the water, tennis, cabin (their own special freedom I think) and boisterous meals (but not the cleanup). Most of all we all can't wait to get "there" and dread leaving at the end of our stay.

Chuck Leonard

- Sitting in front of the fireplace in the cottage on Sunday morning listening to, and talking about Bible readings. Then Grum would pass around the box of chocolates.
- Jumpstarts off the raft and skiing pretty deeply inside the Bay were the standards in my youth. Amazing how quickly perceptions of acceptable behavior shift.
- I remember a "contest" between the young men (DP and Rich, I think) and women (Carolyn and Patty, I believe) splitting wood from the old elm.
- Making up "rainball", and other tennis court games, like "bean-the-guy-on-the-skateboard."
- Being "the Man" for the summer and hearing the same stories told by Grum at mealtimes, and noticing that the versions each new family heard, were never less interesting in the retelling.
- Fishing with Uncle Louis Spelman. Louis didn't come up to Lake George for a few weeks, but was a part of the Silver Bay environment, in my mind.
- Speaking of fishing, as a kid, I could throw a line anytime off the cottage dock and catch a bluegill, sunny, or perch. I remember taking a can of crickets and worms to the Boathouse and catching 11 perch in about 45 minutes. There was a school of them surrounding the Boathouse with their backs just cresting the top of the water.
- I remember the fire in the lodge chimney and trying to get to it with fire extinguishers before the fire department arrived. Also numerous trips to Silver Bay with extinguishers in hand, reacting to the Fire Bell.
- Seeing my first rattlesnake on a hike up Tongue Mountain with Patty and DP. My Dad and Brad Gilman were leading that blueberry-picking trip.
- I remember all the signs and funny sayings everywhere on the walls in the cottage kitchen. Years of family humor and young folk's inside jokes and important memories. I remember how

sad I was when I arrived one year and they had been removed. It was a warning to me that things can (and probably will) change and even family members you love can have different agendas and priorities.

- Attacking the Lake George Monster from the Penglide (with a Machine gun mounted to the foc'sle) as the tourists on the Ticonderoga cheered.

- The phone call that came during dinner from an Air Force Colonel who had just flown over the Lake, and tracked us down to vent his dismay that we were flying the American flag upside down on our flag pole. Would Mrs. Atwater please explain the reason? ...It was really Chuck Gosselink calling from Birch Glen with the kind of prank that is clearly genetic.

- Being called into the Red room by Grum and having her censor MAD magazine from my literary options.

- Paul Brown, who had just returned from a KNOLLS trip, took a number of us across the Lake and taught us cliff climbing and rappelling, as well as the 3 second bowline. It was the first time I learned that there was a road on the further shore.

- Diving off High Diver's at age 11 and being given a memento coin stating that fact by Bill Spencer and Bea Artz, who made the coin during a trip to Lake George Village that night. The positive impact of recognizing kid's talents or special interests was something that we all had impressed upon us by the example of Grum, who was a master of the technique.

Charlotte (Holly) Mertz

- Once upon a time a watermelon shell was emptied and refilled with a formulation of the reshaped residual rounds and other familiar fruits to be served at a family festivity. After dinner, though the fare had been fairly shelled out, the melon shell remained. The question of what to do

with the cavernous cadaver was solved by The Phantom Zucchini. Under cover of darkness, the hollow shell, like the Moses-filled ark parked amid the rushes of the Nile, found its way clandestinely to the Shumans' raft, just a few properties east of ours.

A note but hinted at the identity of the Phantom culprit. Response was quick, and retribution quiet. Through the remainder of the summer the seasoned shell and various variations thereof found their way hither and yon between the Shuman raft and ours, always in the depth of darkness.

Martha Atwater

-Dancing at the Bay. We always had enough family to make at least one square if not two. We'd dance every dance, stop at the ice cream shop, and walk on home on the very dark road then jump in the lake to cool down. Great time.

-Clearing out half of the Great Room in order to dance the Virginia Reel while someone rattled the keys of the piano. Maybe that's what made the floor so weak? At least we moved the rugs!

-The ultimate fish story and it doesn't even have to do with a fish! We arrive at Silver Bay on July 4 (or maybe it was a Sunday) and my Dad and Granddad couldn't buy a fishing license. So they go out anyway. And they get caught. First time (and maybe the last time) they have ever been stopped by the patrol. They had a court date in Hague. The end result? Dad pays a fine and Granddad walks free. (Dad claims Granddad walks free due to an old war injury that the judge can relate to) When they return to the cottage, the family is waiting to greet them with a big sign over the garage "SINNER'S REPENT" And they never lived it down.

-Pyramid skiing. Dave Artz, Bill Spencer and Carolyn perched on their shoulders. It was a sight.

-Carolyn being thrown in the lake at least 5 times in one day and probably 50 times for the whole summer

-Aunt Peg's game "I see a bar! Over thar!" The end result of the game? Someone ended up in the lake unexpectedly, and most of the time it was Dick.

-The squirrel on the wall of the Red Room as I awoke one morning.

-Bats--many bats and many broken tennis racquet strings!

-'Coons--nothing like a raccoon outsmarting some 17 year olds. We knew we had one living under the porch because he would come out when he smelled a turkey on the table. (I guess we didn't know much about rabies) Well, the "men" (that would be the 17 year olds) of the house decided to trap him. Or at least try to trap him. Watching those guys throw themselves on top of the trap to catch this coon only to have the coon escape in time with the bait had to be one of the funniest happenings of the summer.

-Coons and critters. And then you have Aunt Charlotte who shared the Green room with me and proceeded to spook me every night saying that not only were there critters up in the attic, but they were looking down on us as we slept. I think she purposely ran her fingernails across the floor to add to my panic.

-Chipmunks--they ate my fruit in the kitchen fruit bins. Alas, the screen door on the bin made for me by Thomas B. Duncan. I'm forever grateful.

- I was up in the Maid's Room looking out my window at Grum, Betty and Dick sitting on the stone steps leading to the lake. I heard a joyful shriek from Grum. Only to see her place her own hands on her stomach like it was a ball. Alas! The reason why Betty was eating beets and cooked chard in the middle of the morning--she was eating for two!

Andrew Lyons

- Once, years ago, when my sister and I were both still rather novice sailors, we took out the 14' Sunfish for a spin. We made it about halfway out of the bay before we realized that we had forgotten the centerboard (that part that gives the rudder something to lever pressure against and thereby work when you try to turn the boat) back on shore. We tried very hard to turn the boat around and get back in to shore, but with the wind against us and negligible steering, we ended up having to run into the rocks at the far side of the bay to start moving slowly along the shoreline, shoving away from rocks and some very unfriendly rusted pilings as we made our way slowly back home. All considered, it was actually a fun experience, and we learned a valuable lesson that neither one of us has forgotten since.

- One of my favorite memories from my time vacationing at the cottage is when my sister, Katharine, my cousins John, Fiona and Willie, and I all got up at around 5:30 in the morning to go water-skiing. When we had all finally collected in the Penglide, our boat, it was just about the most comfortable looking ski trip that I had ever seen: over our trunks and suits, everyone was wearing flannel pajamas and sweats. We headed out, the air just cool enough to feel refreshing, and the sun almost high enough to be warm, and promising to heat us later. We arrived at the other side of the lake where the noise wouldn't bother anyone, and began. I remember the chill of the water seizing my breath when I jumped in and began putting my skis on. All prepared, I called out "Hit it!" and the engine roared, lifting me out of the water to glide smoothly atop it. The surface was like glass, neither another boat nor any wind to disturb it. This was the most relaxing ski that I have ever taken, the water flowing over my feet and spraying up in my face. After everyone else had had their turn, we packed up the ropes and headed back in to the cottage to find some breakfast and then go to bed.

- At our family reunion a few years back, my brother, James, and I were serving as “the men” during the first week for the 13 grandparents who were present. On our first night there, we had the longest, most violent lightning that I have ever seen. At around 11 o’clock when we were heading off to sleep, James and I had no need of flashlights to find our way to the cabin in the (should have been) darkness because the lightning was so fast and repeated that the yard looked like it was under a strobe light. When it was all over in the morning, the Humes next door had lost a tree to the strikes and there was debris all over the ground and water.