

PORTRAIT OF TWO ISLAND HOMES



Tarbox

BROTHERS SAMUEL AND CORNELIUS JR.

An Exhibit

AT WESTPORT ISLAND HISTORY CENTER

JULY 2022 – JUNE 2023

PRESENTED BY THE FRIENDS OF WESTPORT ISLAND HISTORY

PORTRAIT OF TWO ISLAND HOMES

Tarbox

BROTHERS SAMUEL AND CORNELIUS JR.

In about 1773, Cornelius Tarbox (1750–1813) and his wife, Bethia Tyler Tarbox (1749–1837) came here from Biddeford to what was then Squam Island, or “Jeremysquam”—part of what would become Edgecomb in 1774. Because his father and brother were involved in shipping lumber, he likely had some knowledge of that industry and may have had a role in establishing the mill on Long Cove.

But by the late 1770s, British Revolutionary War patrols had succeeded in choking supply shipments to coastal towns, and it is believed that Cornelius temporarily moved his family to Litchfield near other family to avoid starvation.

After the war, in 1784, he returned and purchased 137 acres on the south end of the island—property which is known in 2022 as the Tarbox Farm and Willis Point. Cornelius built his home in about 1784 and settled into life as a farmer—perhaps also cutting timber for shipment. He is thus known as the father of the Westport branch of the Tarbox family.



CORNELIUS TARBOX FAMILY HOME, BUILT CA. 1784

Cornelius and Bethia had eight children:

- ~ Lucy, born December 1772, Biddeford, Maine
- ~ Ezekiel Jordan, born March 13, 1774, Jeremy Squam
- ~ Royal, born August 22, 1776, Jeremy Squam
- ~ Samuel, born February 10, 1780, Litchfield, Maine
- ~ John, born February 26, 1783, Jeremy Squam
- ~ Cornelius Jr., born September 6, 1785, Jeremy Squam
- ~ Abigail, born October 29, 1788, Jeremy Squam
- ~ Bethia Tarbox, born October 10, 1791, Jeremy Squam

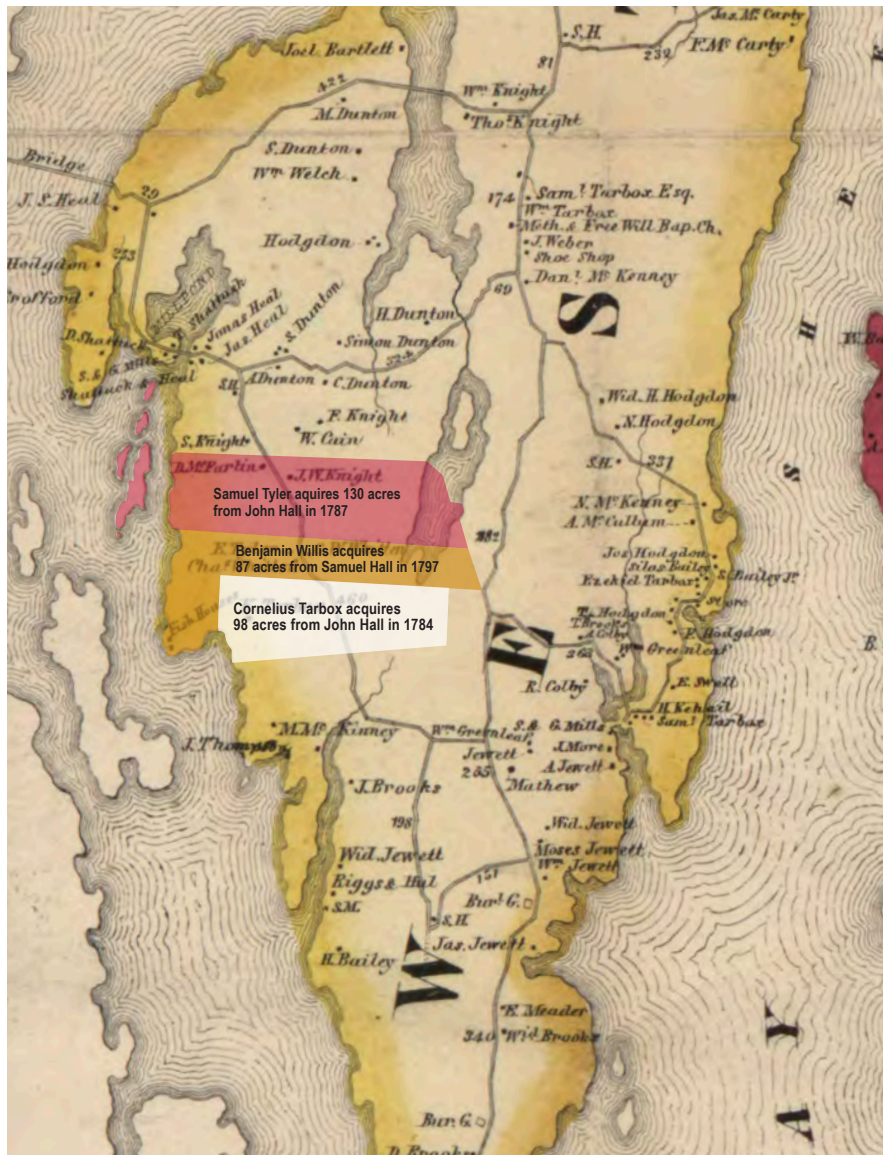
Two of those children, sons **Samuel and Cornelius Jr.** would take over for their father and leave a lasting legacy on Westport.

FAMILY RECORD.

BIRTHS.

DEATHS.

<p>Biddleford November Cornelius Tarbox in the year 1750 Bethuel Tyler Born in the year 1750 December 11</p>	<p>Died August 6 1813 Bethiah Tarbox Died February 19 1837</p>
<p>Cornelius Tarbox Born in the year 1751 August 24</p>	
<p>Lucy Tarbox Born 1772 December 26 in Biddleford</p>	
<p>Ezekiel Jordan Tarbox Born March 18 1774 in Westport</p>	
<p>Royal Tarbox Born August 22 1776</p>	
<p>Samuel Tarbox Born February 10 1780</p>	
<p>John Tarbox Born February 26 1783</p>	
<p>Cornelius Tarbox Born September 6 1785</p>	
<p>Miriam Tarbox Born October 29 1788</p>	
<p>Bethiah Tarbox Born October 11 1791</p>	



1857 MAP OF WESTPORT ISLAND SHOWING PROPERTY OWNED BY CORNELIUS TARBOX IN 1784

In 1771, Cornelius Tarbox married Bethiah Tyler in Biddeford, Maine. Bethiah's brother was Samuel Tyler.

Samuel and Bethiah's father, Royall Tyler, had an interest in a saw mill in Scarborough, which he later sold to Sir William Pepperell. Pepperell, as well as two "Tylers," were shareholders in the "Jeremysquam Proprietors." They began selling land on Jeremy Squam island in about 1740.

Cornelius may have worked as a logger, a mariner, then on the Shattuck mill at Heal's Cove before buying his farm land in 1784.

BROTHERS SAMUEL AND CORNELIUS JR.

One son, **Samuel**, would oversee the separation of “Squam Island” from Edgecomb, and become a founding father of, and active participant in, its nascent town government. He would leave behind a homestead—the Squire Tarbox Inn—that is iconic and entwined with the identity of the island. Samuel started his adult life as a joiner, or woodworker. Later, as a land trader, fish merchant, and shrewd investor, he became one of the wealthiest residents of the island and a town leader.

The other son, **Cornelius, Jr.** started out his adult life as a mariner; he owned and operated fishing craft. He returned to the land to establish what would become a lasting homestead, farm, and refuge for his descendants—to this day the land is still farmed and is still home or a summer retreat for his descendants.

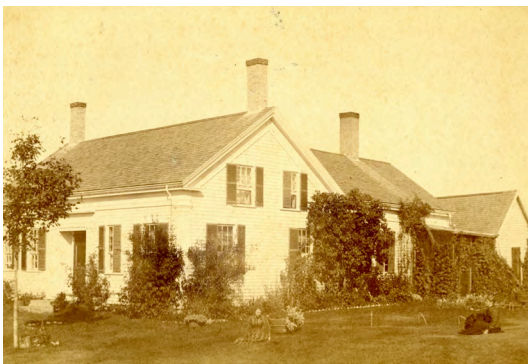
Both Samuel and Cornelius left a lasting imprint on today’s Westport Island. Within this exhibit, documents, letters, photographs, and artifacts from their lives and times will share some highlights of their lives and contributions.



▲ HOUSE AND BARN OF “SQUIRE” SAMUEL TARBOX, CA. 1845. SAMUEL TARBOX IS PICTURED STANDING IN THE ROAD BETWEEN THE STONE WALLS



▲ SAMUEL TARBOX HOMESTEAD, CA. 1890.



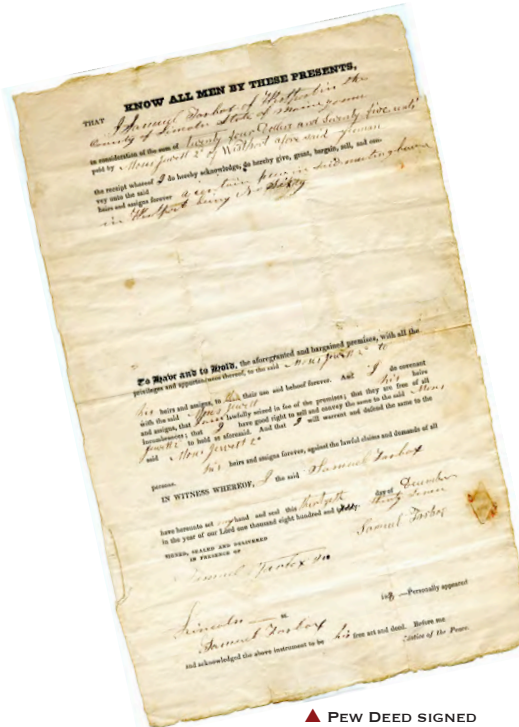
▲ CORNELIUS TARBOX, JR. HOMESTEAD, CA. 1906



▲ CORNELIUS TARBOX, JR. HOMESTEAD, CA. 1920

Samuel

BUSINESSMAN, STATESMAN

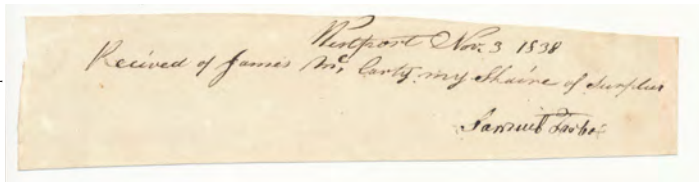


▲ PEW DEED SIGNED BY SAMUEL TARBOX



▲ SAMUEL TARBOX, CA. 1850

► RECEIPT SIGNED BY SAMUEL TARBOX ACKNOWLEDGING HIS SHARE OF STATE SURPLUS RETURNED TO THE TOWN, 1838



Samuel Tarbox (1780–1861) became known as ‘the Squire’ because of his wealth and stature as a businessman and founding father of the Town of Westport. His distinguished civic service included serving as a Captain in the War of 1812, as a member of the House of Representatives from Edgecomb in 1827 (where he played a role in facilitating Jeremysquam’s Petition to Separate from Edgecomb), as Westport’s first First Selectman in 1828, and as Westport’s first Postmaster in 1829. When Samuel purchased land on Jeremy Squam in 1806, he was a carpenter. His business interests evolved as he became an investor and statesman. As a family man, he and his wife Polly raised 12 children on the family homestead.

Cornelius Jr.

SEAMAN, FARMER



◀ ILLUSTRATION OF TYPE OF SCHOONER CORNELIUS TARBOX SAILED

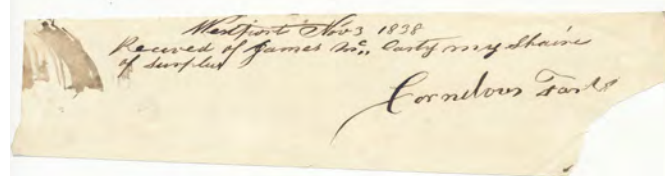


▲ COPY OF CORNELIUS TARBOX SEAMANS PAPERS, 1817



▲ TARBOX BARN, STONE WALLS, AND FIELDS, CA. 1914; TODAY PART OF TARBOX FARM/ SASANOA BREWERY

▶ RECEIPT SIGNED BY CORNELIUS TARBOX ACKNOWLEDGING HIS SHARE OF STATE SURPLUS RETURNED TO THE TOWN, 1838



As a young man, Cornelius Jr. followed the call of the sea. In 1811, events turned his attention landward. He traded seafaring for farming; and in 1819, he acquired his father's homestead and farm. Although Cornelius Jr. was now a serious farmer, he had other business interests as well. He commissioned ships for trade and fishing, including the *Sylph*, which he built on property he owned in Woolwich. He also operated a store on the waterfront where, according to his ledger, he sold gin, rum, tea, tobacco, molasses, candles, salt, butter, pork, bushels of potatoes, wheat, and corn to island residents.

He and his wife, Ruth, raised their 12 children here, and to this day, his descendants continue to call the homestead their home.

SAMUEL AND CORNELIUS JR. NEGOTIATE

After their father, Cornelius Sr., died without a will in 1813, both Samuel and Cornelius Jr. were interested in owning the Tarbox farm. They both had become involved in the fishing industry and each found the Tarbox farm an ideal place to establish an anchorage for fishing boats.

Each of Cornelius Sr.'s immediate family had inherited a share of the family farm. In an effort to settle the estate, Samuel bought the shares of Jordan, Royal, John and Bethiah for one hundred dollars each. Cornelius Jr. purchased the shares of Abigail and Lucy.

At the time, both Samuel and Cornelius Jr. owned adjacent property at the center of the island.

In order to resolve the issue between the two brothers, in 1817 Samuel agreed to sell his shares of the estate to Cornelius for \$500. He then purchased Cornelius' property for \$450. Samuel had now doubled the size of his farm at the center of the island, and Cornelius took possession of the original family farm and homestead.



▲ VIEW OF TARBOX FAMILY COVE, CA. 1900

<i>Samuel</i>		<i>Cornelius Jr.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born: February 10, 1780, Litchfield • Died: March 19, 1861, Westport Age 81 	<p>BIRTH/ DEATH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born: September 6, 1783, Jeremy Squam • Died: March 14, 1858, Westport Age 74
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Polly Brown (1786–1848) October 10, 1805, Richmond • Mary Fisher (1789–1861) July 4, 1850, Providence, RI 	<p>MARRIAGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruth Riggs Jewett (1790–1866) October 22, 1807, Woolwich
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 1806: bought land adjacent to Squam Creek from Stephen Parsons, which became known as the Samuel Tarbox Farm • Doubled the size of the farm in 1817 by purchasing brother Cornelius' adjacent land • 1819: purchased Willis Point property and established a fishing station • From the 1820s–1860s, the assessed valuation for his holdings was \$1,000+, one of the top taxpayers on Westport 	<p>WESTPORT LAND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1811: purchased farmland just south of brother Samuel from his father-in-law, James Jewett • April 1817: sold this property to Samuel and purchased Samuel's shares of the Cornelius Sr. estate (which included the shares of Royal, John, and Bethiah) • Purchased Beal Island to graze sheep • 1832: purchased Woolwich property for construction of fishing vessels • From the 1820s–1860s, the assessed valuation for his holdings was \$1,000+, one of the top taxpayers on Westport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originally a joiner (carpenter) • Investor/proprietor of Tarbox Cove fishing station and wharf • Investor in fishing schooners • Investor in saw mills • Land trader; bought and sold estates • Investor in Mariner's Bank, Wiscasset; Commercial Bank, Bath; and the Lincoln Bank, Bath 	<p>BUSINESS PURSUITS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originally a seaman/sailor • Owner and operator of fishing vessels • Established fish weirs in local waters • Investor in Woolwich/Bath ferry • Proprietor of store on Tarbox Cove, serving fishermen and residents • Farmer; raised sheep • Investor in Lincoln Bank, Wiscasset
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1814: Captain in Lieut. Col. E. Cutter's Regiment; service at Squam Island and Edgcomb, Fort McDonough • 1820: Justice of the Peace • 1826: Committee to settle town accounts, Road Survey Committee • 1827: State Legislature representing Edgcomb and Jeremy Squam • 1828: Presented petition from the residents of Squam to the Legislature to separate from Edgcomb • 1828–30, 1843–45, 1852: Town Selectman • 1829–47: Postmaster • 1832–33, 1835–37, 1848: Town Agent • 1831–41, 1847–49: Surveyor of Highways • 1833: State Legislature representing Westport • 1835–40: Constable • 1837–38, 1843–44, 1849, 1851: Superintending School Committee • 1840, 1846–49, 1854: Committee to settle town accounts • 1843: Overseer of the Poor • Member of various town committees; Juror; Surveyor 	<p>CIVIC LIFE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1828: signor of the Separation Petition • 1831–32, 1837–41, 1843–48: Surveyor of Highways • 1837: Committee to settle town accounts • 1841: Hog reeve • 1841, 1846, 1850: Fence viewer, field driver • Juror
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of the Methodist Episcopal Church • Owner of pews in the meeting house • Oversaw and contributed to repair of meeting house • 1843: Temporary custody of Sarah Ann Dunton of Ebenezer Dunton family • Became guardian of nieces Lucy and Drucilla Webber, daughters of sister Lucy • Believer of temperance; thought dancing was immoral 	<p>MORAL CODE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of the Methodist Episcopal Church • Owner of pews in the meeting house • Contributed to repair of meeting house • 1843: Temporary custody of Martin Dunton of Ebenezer Dunton family • 1847: split bill arising from the smallpox of Stephen Tarbox and family

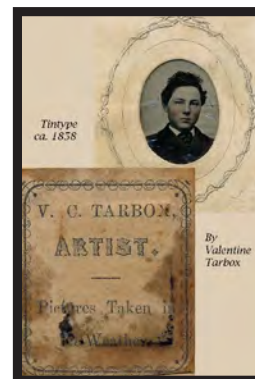
THE FAMILY OF
Samuel & Polly Tarbox

(MARRIED OCTOBER 1805)

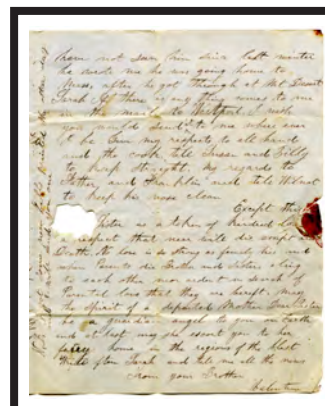
- 1807 ANDREW**
Andrew began sailing at an early age, becoming a Captain and owner of many vessels during his life, including the Samuel Tarbox. During his sailing years, his home was Woolwich, on property he bought from his father. After retiring from the sea, he lived in Bath, becoming involved in town affairs. Andrew married Louisa Hogan in 1829; they had five children.
- 1809 MARY**
Mary married Daniel Bartlett Webber in 1825 and joined him at his farm in Richmond, Maine. They had four children. Their eldest son, Stephen, came to Westport to take over operation of his grandfather Samuel's farm around 1850. The descendants of Stephen lived at the Samuel Tarbox/Webber homestead until 1957.
- 1811 LOUISA**
Louisa married William Greenleaf in 1836. They had four children. They lived near Long Cove on Westport and were the cove's largest landowners. For a time, William was in business with Samuel Tarbox Jr., jointly operating the mill, store, and wharf at Long Cove.
- 1813 SAMUEL, JR.**
Samuel was an industrious mariner at an early age, and owned numerous schooners. Like his father, he became a businessman investing in ships, property, and the mill at Long Cove which he operated with his brother-in-law William Greenleaf. He married Olive Parsons Hodgdon in 1838; they had four children. Olive died in 1863. Samuel then married Philena Pierce, by whom he had four additional children. By 1870, the family left Westport for Bath where Samuel became a commercial agent.
- 1815 WESLEY**
It is not known what sort of disability Wesley had, but he was well cared for, living his whole life at the Samuel Tarbox homestead. In 1862, Wesley inherited 1/2 of his father's estate, and was cared for by his nephew Stephen Webber and Stephen's wife, Caroline.
- 1816 JOHN**
Died at birth.
- 1817 ABALINE**
Abaline married Zebulon Greenleaf in 1839. He was lost at sea a year later. She and Zebulon had one daughter and lived on property deeded to her by her father Samuel. In 1846, she married another mariner, James Auld; they had two more children and moved to Bath in 1852. In 1870, James may also have been lost at sea.
- 1820 SUSAN**
Susan married William G. Tarbox of Gardiner, Maine, in 1840; they had six children. They moved from Westport to Bowdoinham in 1860 where she lived the remainder of her life. After William died, she married Salmon Thompson in 1865.
- 1823 SARAH**
Sarah married Wilmot Greenleaf in 1852; they had one son that lived to adulthood. Although Sarah died in 1859 at relatively young age, we know much about her life and times from letters she saved that had been sent to her by family and friends, dating from her school years through her marriage.
- 1825 HUGH**
Died at three months old.
- 1827 VALENTINE**
Valentine attended the Methodist Episcopal Academy at Kents Hill, Maine, writing many letters to his sister Sarah. He became a traveling daguerreotypist throughout Hancock and Washington Counties. During that time, smallpox was prevalent and customers wanted their pictures taken before they became ill and scarred from the disease. Valentine returned to Westport in 1855 where he established a studio on his father's property; then moved to Bath in 1860 becoming an insurance agent. He married Lavinia Tibbets in 1852; they had one son, Byron, before divorcing. Byron Tarbox died during the Battle of Little Big Horn where he is memorialized on the national monument. Valentine married Mary Ellen Coombs in 1861; they had one daughter.
- 1829 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**
Benjamin "Franklin" like his older brother attended the Methodist Episcopal Academy, Kents Hill, and then worked for a short time at a Boston bookstore after graduating. He returned to Bath where he established a grocery store. He married Marietta Webster in 1855; they had one son.
- 1832 ANN**
Died at two years of age.



SAMUEL TARBOX, JR. FOLLOWED IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HIS FATHER IN MATTERS OF BUSINESS AND TOWN AFFAIRS.



VALENTINE TARBOX WORKED AS A PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHER ALONG THE DOWN EAST COAST.



IN A LETTER TO SARAH, BROTHER VALENTINE WROTE ABOUT THE DEATH OF THEIR MOTHER, POLLY:

"...NO LOVE IS SO STRONG AS FAMILY TIES AND WHEN PARENTS DIE BROTHERS AND SISTERS CLING TO EACH OTHER MORE[] ARDENT IN SEARCH OF PARENTAL LOVE THAT THEY ARE BEREFT. MAY THE SPIRIT OF A DEPARTED MOTHER DEAR SISTER BE A GUARDIAN ANGEL TO YOU ON EARTH AND AT LAST MAY SHE ESCORT YOU TO HER FAIRY HOME IN THE REGIONS OF THE BLEST."

HOMESTEAD TO INN

Samuel Tarbox Homestead

In 1806, while making his living as a carpenter, Samuel bought land from Stephen Parsons, on the east side of Squam Creek. In 1817, he doubled its size when brother Cornelius sold him his adjoining land to the south. Over the years, Samuel acquired other properties, but this was the family homestead, then known as the “Samuel Tarbox Farm.” In 1825, Samuel built the main house, using the original house as an ell.

Samuel and his wife Polly raised 12 children here. As adults, their children—other than disabled son Wesley—moved away from the family homestead creating lives elsewhere on the island or in nearby Maine towns. About 1850, Samuel’s grandson Stephen Prescott Webber (1826–1897), son of Samuel’s daughter Mary and Daniel Webber of Richmond, Maine, came to Westport to operate the Samuel Tarbox farm.

In 1861 per the will of his grandfather, Stephen assumed the care of his uncle J. Wesley Tarbox at the Tarbox family home. Stephen ran the farm, and like his grandfather, served as Postmaster for many years. Upon his death in 1897, his wife Caroline was able to purchase the farm, which then became known as the “Webber Farm.”

THE WEBBER FARM

Stephen’s son, Eugene P. Webber (1852–1917), acquired the home after his mother’s death. Eugene was an engineer in the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service (later the U.S. Coast Guard). He and his wife, Margaret, and daughter, Maud, lived on the Webber Farm in the summer, and Portland in the winter. His renovations to the property included a porch in 1909.

After the death of her mother in 1945, Maud Webber (1878–1957), who never married, became the last Tarbox descendant to live at the family farm. She and her mother had become full-time residents of Westport by the time of her mother’s death, and Maud was very involved in town activities.

Maud became Westport’s first female Selectperson in 1928, serving for several terms. She was also a member of the grange and the Westport Community Association, and drove a “public car,” or taxi, on the island.

THE SUMMER KITCHEN

In 1956, Eleanor Harriman Siebert bought the Webber Farm from Maud, giving her a life tenancy. After renovations, which included converting the 1763 ell into a dining room, Eleanor Siebert opened the “Summer Kitchen,” a tea room and dining establishment. Her sister, Mary Wright, opened Wright’s Antique Shop in the adjacent buildings.

The Summer Kitchen specialized in “*Old Time Maine Cooking of Distinction and the Charming Atmosphere of a Century Ago.*” Specialties came from old Westport Island recipes.

In 1959, Eleanor’s son, Otto, and daughter-in-law, Phyllis, bought the Tarbox homestead. Soon, Phyllis started the first gourmet bread company in the area. From 1960 to 1972 she baked bread three times a week, turning 1000 pounds of flour into bread weekly. In 1972, she accepted a position as the Governor’s chef at the Blaine House where she would subsequently serve for 23 years and 5 governors.

Phyllis and Otto sold the Tarbox homestead back to her mother-in-law, Eleanor Siebert Smith, who would begin its next chapter. According to a subsequent owner, “*the birth of the Squire Tarbox Inn was in 1972, when two Harriman sisters, Eleanor Siebert (Smith) and Mary (Wright), welcomed neighbors and their friends, [and] summer visitors to have supper and to sleep at the farm.*”

Although the homestead has had a number of owners since 1972, the **Squire Tarbox Inn** has remained a welcoming place, offering guests a peaceful retreat surrounded by the breathtaking nature of Maine’s stunning midcoast.



TOP: THE HOMESTEAD AS THE WEBBER FARM, CA. 1910



BOTTOM: THE HOMESTEAD AS THE SUMMER KITCHEN, CA. 1958

THE FAMILY OF
Cornelius Jr. & Ruth Tarbox

(MARRIED OCTOBER 1807)

1808

SOPHRONIA

In 1825, Sophronia married Ezekiel Tarbox, son of Ezekiel Jordan Tarbox. Ezekiel sailed as a young man, and afterward, became a ship owner, farmer, and land owner. She and Ezekiel lived on what is now East Shore Road; they had nine children.

1810

JANE EMMELINE

In 1830, Jane married Capt. Florence Jewett in Westport; she died a year later, in 1831. Her father had built a small cottage for his newly married daughter near the big house on the shore of the Tarbox farm. The house was later purchased by her sister Phoebe.

1812

SABRINA

Sabrina married Joseph Dunton in 1836 in Westport. Joseph was the son of Samuel Dunton, Jr. Sabrina and Joseph lived to the west of Squam Creek and had five children.

1815

STEPHEN

Stephen married Elizabeth "Betsy" Fowle in 1841 and after her death in 1846, married Eveline A. Snipe in 1848. He lived for a time on Beal Island and was a fisherman until the Civil War started, when he returned to the family homestead and took over the old house. He became a keeper of the bridge between Westport and Woolwich. Between Betsy and Eveline, Stephen had six children.

1817

ALICE

Alice married Henry H. Dunton in 1838 in Westport. Henry was a fisherman, master and part owner of the schooner *Sylph*. The family lived on the property of his father Samuel Dunton, Jr. on what is now Post Office Road. They had five children. Henry died in 1860. In 1879, Alice married George Moulton, a customs officer for the port of Bath, Maine.

1820

PHOEBE

Phoebe married Alfred Tarbox, son of Ezekiel Jordan Tarbox, in 1842. Alfred was a fisherman. For a time they lived on the Sheepscot, but later Phoebe purchased the home of her sister Jane Emmeline. They had one child.

1821

CORNELIUS

Cornelius died before his third birthday.

1823

JAMES LORING

James Loring was originally a sailor and part-owner with his father of the schooner *Sylph*. He married Hannah Anna Heal in 1852. In 1853, he loaned his father \$1000, using the new "Big" house as collateral. James and his family moved to a farm in Needham, Massachusetts in 1856. After his father's death in 1858, James returned to the homestead temporarily to manage the farm. In 1864, as his mother's health declined, he returned to Westport permanently. Upon his mother's death, he inherited the "Big" house, the old (original) house, and the farm.

James Loring and Hannah had four children. In 1895, James Loring deeded the farm and its buildings, excluding the "Big" house, to his son James Heal Tarbox. After the death of Hannah in 1902, he spent the winter months with his daughter Grace and died at her home in New Jersey.

1825

RUTH

Ruth married James Frederick Dunton in 1853. James was a mariner and, in 1856, may have died of yellow fever. Afterwards, Ruth lived on the Tarbox farm. They had one son.

1827

CAROLINE

Caroline married Elias Soule in 1851. Elias was a fisherman aboard the schooner *Sylph*. They lived in Woolwich and had five children.

1832

WILLIAM

William married Statira McKinney in 1857. For a time, they lived in Westport, but moved to Nova Scotia during the gold rush. William died from a virus in 1865 while in Nova Scotia. William and Statira had three children.

1835

BENJAMIN

Benjamin died at three years, 10 months of age.



TOP: THE CORNELIUS TARBOX JR.
HOMESTEAD, CA. 1900

BOTTOM: JAMES LORING TARBOX, CA. 1900

ENDURING HOMESTEAD

Cornelius Tarbox Jr. Homestead

Although Cornelius Jr. was a mariner in his early years, by 1811 he had come ashore to farm a piece of property he purchased at the center of the island. A few years after the death of his father, Cornelius Jr. acquired the Tarbox farm and homestead in 1817, and his family moved into the farmhouse. His mother, Bethiah, stayed with Cornelius Jr.'s family until her death in 1837.

With the acquisition of the homestead and most of its original land, including the waterfront, Cornelius was now a farmer on a substantial scale. He was also active in the building of ships for trade and fishing; he bought Beal Island across from Tarbox Cove as a place to graze his sheep, and ran a store on the waterfront.

In 1848, Cornelius built a new, "Big" house overlooking Tarbox Cove. This Greek Revival Cape was a stylish dwelling for him and his wife, Ruth, and their now-grown family of 12 children. The house is best known for the period murals of various maritime activities on the walls of the central stair hall.

JAMES LORING TARBOX

James Loring Tarbox was the youngest son of Cornelius Jr. He became a fisherman at a very young age and was the captain of his father's fishing vessel *Sylph*. After marrying Hannah Anna Heal, he moved to Massachusetts. When his father had a financial reversal in 1852, James loaned his father \$1000; the "Big" house was used as collateral. After his father died in 1858, he returned to the farm Westport to help his mother. Upon her death in 1866, Ruth deeded the Tarbox Farm and buildings to James Loring.

In March of 1895, he deeded the farm and the original farmhouse to his son James Heal Tarbox, and Beal Island to his son Cornelius Sumner Tarbox.

JAMES HEAL TARBOX

James Heal sailed on square rigged ships for several years, sailing as chief mate on ships owned by the Houghton Brothers of Bath. He returned from sea with his bride, Mary Powell Chisam, and lived on Westport.

James Heal's mother Hannah died in 1902. His father, James Loring, remained in the "Big" house while James Heal operated the farm. Soon, James Loring went to live with daughter Grace. James Heal and his family moved into the "Big" House.

James Heal and Hannah had five children: Eda, Dorothy, Anne, Ronald, and Adeline. Eda was the only sister to marry, and lived in Massachusetts. Dorothy became a successful nurse. Anne owned a tea room in White Plains, New York. Ronald was a ships engineer, and sailed on U.S. ships internationally, moving to Quincy, Mass. after he married. Adeline was a teacher in New York state, and operated a summer camp for girls on Westport.

THE THREE SISTERS AND RONALD TARBOX

James Heal died in 1931, and deeded the two houses by the cove to the three maiden sisters, Dorothy, Anne, and Adeline. Adeline and Ronald shared ownership of the fields and woods, plus the old house and barn. Their mother, Mary, stayed in the "Big" house during the summer and in Boston during the winter. Anne stayed at the homestead with her, until Mary passed away in 1937.

After serving in the U.S. Merchant Marines during WWII and other marine-related jobs, Ronald farmed the property for a time, but eventually moved back to Quincy, Massachusetts.

RONALD TARBOX JR. AND FAMILY

Anne died in 1982, leaving her title to the two houses to Ronald's son Ronald Jr., and his children, Jeff and Robin. Ronald Jr. followed in the family's maritime footsteps and served in the U.S. Navy. After retirement, he and his wife Cora, with son Jeff, restored the Tarbox homestead and split their time between Westport and San Diego. Jeff Tarbox now lives in the original circa 1784 farmhouse.



TOP: THE "BIG" HOUSE, OVERLOOKING TARBOX COVE, CA. 1890

MIDDLE: THE "BIG" HOUSE, CA. 1900

BOTTOM: CHILDREN OF JAMES HEAL AND HANNAH TARBOX. STANDING (L-R): ANNE ROBBINS TARBOX, EDA BRAY TARBOX, DOROTHY M. TARBOX; SEATED FRONT (L-R): RONALD LORING TARBOX, ADELINE GOODALE TARBOX, CA. 1900

Sarah P. Tarbox

(JANUARY 7, 1823 – MARCH 12, 1859)

DAUGHTER OF SAMUEL TARBOX

Although we don't have a photograph of Sarah Tarbox, we have letters written to her that are perhaps more illuminating. Her letters provide insight into the homelife and times of Samuel Tarbox and his children. They touch on tensions between generational progress and traditional values; and they provide highlights of farming, travel, politics, the emergence of daguerreotype photography, personal loss, and coming of age.



In 1977, 40 family letters, 34 of which were written to Sarah Tarbox, were found at a flea market in Gardiner, Maine. Sarah's letters span 18 years (1836–1854) following her from a 13-year-old grade school student, to the first daughter in her family to attend secondary schooling,



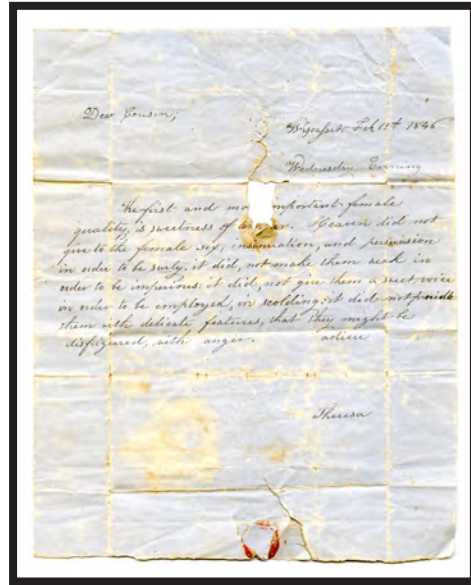
SARAH'S FATHER SAMUEL TARBOX GAVE THIS HOUSE TO SARAH AS A WEDDING GIFT

to becoming a teacher, all the while with hints of a courtship—then marriage in 1852—to fellow islander Wilmot Greenleaf. The letters end five years before Sarah's youthful death at age 36.

Sarah was one of 12 children of Samuel and Polly Tarbox to reach adulthood. She was

the youngest daughter, and, as the letters indicate, very close to younger brothers, Valentine and Franklin.

Sarah attended secondary schooling at Mrs. Fields School for Girls in Topsham, Maine—a progressive school with influential connections. Many of the letters were written to her there. After graduation, Sarah became a teacher, first in Westport, then Richmond, Maine. Sarah died in 1859, leaving behind husband Wilmot and their three-year-old son, Herman. Wilmot never remarried. Sarah's enduring legacy was her family's high regard and the story that her most valued letters tell.

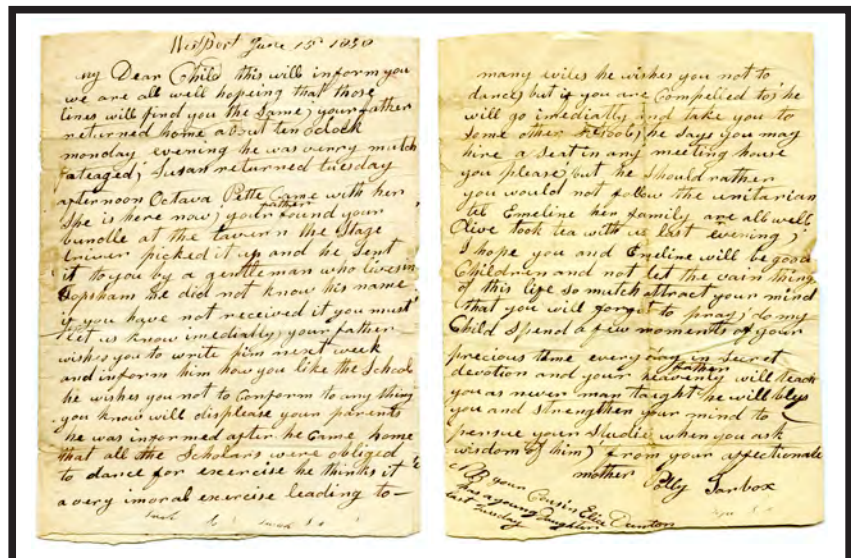


SARAH RECEIVED MARRIAGE ADVICE FROM A COUSIN—PERIOD-APPROPRIATE ONE-TIME COUNSEL THAT “SWEETNESS OF TEMPER” WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT FEMALE QUALITY:

The first and most important female quality, is sweetness of temper. Heaven did not give to the female sex, insinuation, and persuasion in order to be surly. it did, not make them weak in order to be imperious: it did, not give them a sweet voice in order to be employed, or scolding; it did not provide them with delicate features, that they might be disfigured, with anger.

SOON AFTER ARRIVING AT MRS. FIELDS SCHOOL, SARAH'S MOTHER, POLLY WEBBER TARBOX, WROTE HER:

... your father wishes you to write him next week and inform him how you like the School he wishes you not to conform to anything you know will displease your parents he was informed after he came home that all the Scholars were obliged to dance for exercise he thinks it a very i[m]moral exercise leading to — many evils he wishes you not to dance, but if you are Compelled to; he will go i[m]mediat[e]ly and take you to some other school...



Dorothy May Tarbox

(APRIL 15, 1890 – NOVEMBER 16, 1970)

GRANDDAUGHTER OF CORNELIUS TARBOX JR.

Westport Island's Dorothy May Tarbox served in World War I as part of a unit dubbed the "Bordeaux Belles." She graduated from Morse High School in Bath in 1910 (after which, she taught at Westport's South School) and graduated from the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) School of Nursing in 1915. In 1917, she answered the call to join the war effort as part of an MGH hospital unit near Bordeaux, France—"U.S. Army Base Hospital No. 6." Nurses were initially enrolled as Red Cross Nurses. After taking their oath of allegiance, they became part of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps. Nurses were required to be single and between the ages of 25 and 35. They were not given military rank, were required to provide their own uniforms, and were paid about \$50 a month.

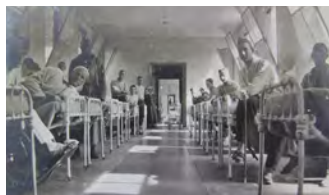


Dorothy Tarbox earned three gold service stripes and a gold star on her sleeve as well as numerous civic awards for her service in WWI. Once back home, she continued a prestigious career in nursing, retiring in 1955 from the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary after serving 28 years as superintendent of nursing.

U.S. ARMY BASE HOSPITAL NO. 6

According to the *History of the Massachusetts General Hospital Training School for Nurses*:

A Base Hospital Unit was the special contribution of the Massachusetts General to the war. Its nursing personnel consisted of sixty-four graduate nurses, all but eight of whom were graduates of the Massachusetts General Hospital School, and four of the others had done affiliated or graduate work in the Hospital.



This Unit, which became United States Base Hospital No. 6 was called out in June, 1917. It was located in Talence, just out of Bordeaux, France, and functioned there until February 14, 1919, when it sailed for home.

The day armistice was signed, there were 4,319 patients in the Hospital and ninety-nine nurses on duty. The Base was a source of supply from which teams were sent to evacuation hospitals, trains, mobile surgical units, and camps.



DOROTHY TARBOX OFF TO WAR

DOROTHY TARBOX MORSE HIGH GIRL NURSE-OVERSEAS



DOROTHY TARBOX

One of Maine's most active girls now engaged in hospital work overseas is Miss Dorothy Tarbox, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Tarbox of Westport. Miss Tarbox is well known in Bath having been graduated from Morse high in 1910. She is with the American expeditionary forces in France at base hospital 6. There is no 54 hour law for Miss Tarbox who works from seven to seven, seven

days each week, with very little time off, but she does not complain for she is doing her bit. How interested she is in her work in war torn France is told in the following letter received recently by her parents:

"I have been very busy in the two weeks since I last wrote but I have thought of you often and wondered what you are doing while we are flying around caring for our soldiers, who are a fine lot. They are brave and jolly in spite of their horrible wounds and it makes us all feel more revengeful than ever towards those Boches. It is interesting to hear the different stories they tell. Most of them are anxious to return to the front and see the end. We are quite encouraged by the news we have had and only hope the good work will continue.

"For the last week we have worked from seven to seven with very little time off and most of that at meal time. How I wish I had half a dozen pairs of hands and could make them do all the things that are waiting to be done! I have nearly 50 patients in my ward and another nurse and orderly to help me out. I wish I could write more but I fear the censor would not approve.

"Our dry-spell has been broken by a few days of rain and although gardens have suffered during it there have been no forest fires, thank goodness. I hope you have not had them either. I am anxiously waiting for mail."

BATH INDEPENDENT, 1918



NURSES OF BASE HOSPITAL NO. 6

NURSES OF HOSPITAL BASE HOSPITAL NO. 6

FROM THE BOOK: THE HISTORY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR NURSES

Maud Eugenie Webber

(JUNE 5, 1878 – JUNE 26, 1957)

GREAT-GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER OF SAMUEL TARBOX

Maud Webber played prominently in the history of the Squire Tarbox Inn as the last family member to live in the Samuel Tarbox family homestead. Her imprint on the island was much deeper, however. She loved the island and shared her family's ancestral tradition of generously devoting time to Westport Island community service.



MAUD AND FRIENDS ON THE FRONT PORCH

Maud's father, Eugene, was an engineer in the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service (later the U.S. Coast Guard). When he inherited the Samuel Tarbox farm after his mother's death in 1907, he and wife Margaret and daughter Maud lived on the farm in the summer and in Portland during the winter. After her father's death in 1916, Maud and her mother became full-time residents of Westport where Maud became a fixture in town activities.

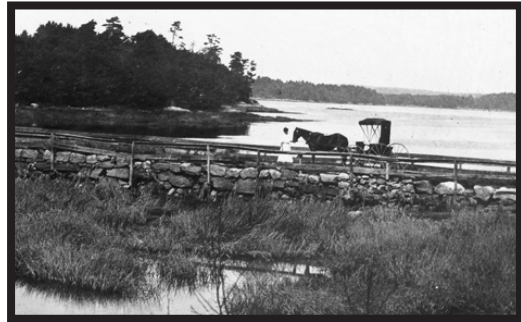
Maud was elected as Westport's first female Selectperson in 1928, serving from 1928–1935. Other civic activities included serving as a member of: the Island Centennial Celebration Committee, the Grange, the Westport Community Association, the Island WWII Civil Preparedness First Aid team, and the Island Republican Committee. She also served as Librarian for the Westport Library Association and drove a "public car," or taxi, on the island. As a public car driver,



she ferried voters to the polls on election day, brought visitors from the ferry to island destinations, "bussed" children to school when the school bus needed repairs, and drove those needing a ride to doctor's appointments. She was also known to drive the school bus when Walter Greenleaf was away.

Phyllis Siebert, who knew Maud and whose mother-in-law purchased the Tarbox Homestead from Maud in 1956, shared memories of Maud. According to Phyllis, before the Community Association was formed in 1955, Maud had her own set of keys to the Community Church and was responsible for looking after the church. When the dug well between the Squire Tarbox property and the church would go dry (the water source for the Town Hall and the church) she helped carry water to supply the buildings. Phyllis said Maud's two loves were the family homestead and her touring car.

One of Maud's lasting legacies will be the photo album she left behind which provides a photographic essay of the Samuel Tarbox farm while she and her family lived there—a final glimpse of the homestead as home before starting its next chapter as a business and an inn.



MAUD WEBBER WITH HORSE AND BUGGY ALONG SQUAM CREEK AT HIGH TIDE, 1918



THE EUGENE WEBBER FARMHOUSE, CA. 1910



Mary Chisam Tarbox

(APRIL 20, 1856 – JUNE 19, 1937)

WIFE OF JAMES HEAL TARBOX

Mary Powell Chisam was born to a life of adventure as the daughter of a well-respected, well-sailed mariner. She was the second child and only daughter of Capt. James Chisam and Mary Bray Norman. According to her great-grandson, Ronald Tarbox Jr.:

Mary Powell was born in Bath, Maine when her mother was visiting her in-laws. They quickly returned to Liverpool, England to join Captain Chisam who commanded a ship carrying emigrants to Tasmania. Mary was baptized at sea on August 11, 1857...

In her teens... Mary and her parents spent three years aboard her father's ship coasting up and down the Chinese Coast where she celebrated her 13th birthday...

Mary's mother died in 1883. It was believed she was very despondent after her mother's death. She accepted an invitation from family maritime friends to accompany them on a voyage to San Francisco. There, she met James Heal Tarbox of Westport Island, Maine, a mariner who generally sailed as a chief mate. They were married in San Francisco, California on August 7, 1885. They traveled by train back to Maine where she had five children in seven years. James continued to sail for several years and then came ashore and managed two of the island's tidewater mills as well as taking over the family farm which had been in the family since 1784.

Although Mary Powell was educated primarily in England, she also spent time in Bath, Maine schools, when, in her words, "Bath was full of romance."

In a short autobiography written before her death, Mary captured anecdotes from her many travels at sea with her parents. The family's travels took her multiple times to Tasmania; to Callao, Peru; to the Chincha Islands where guano was loaded for England; to Shanghai,



THE TRAVELS OF CAPT. CHISAM AND HIS FAMILY SPANNED THE GLOBE

China transporting coal; and up and down the China Coast for four years. Memorable moments included seeing the Great Wall of China from afar and Madame Tussauds Wax Museum in London.

The worldly young woman brought a world view to her domestic life on Westport where she created a "sense of place" for her five children who found success beyond Westport Island—likely influenced by the adventurous lives of their mother and father. Her descendants return to their island roots—as home or refuge—to this day.



MARY POWELL CHISAM IN HER MOTHER'S ARMS



MARY POWELL CHISAM (RIGHT) AND FRIEND.



MARY POWELL CHISAM TARBOX WITH HUSBAND JAMES HEAL TARBOX, CA. 1920.



MARY & JAMES TARBOX (ON RIGHT, WITH HATS) SURROUNDED BY FAMILY ON WESTPORT ISLAND, CA. 1925.

THE LEGACY OF

Home

In Colonial America, women were the hub of homelife, as were matriarchs Mary “Polly” Brown and Ruth Riggs Jewett in the Samuel and Cornelius Jr. families—strong influences on ties to home and family. A letter to Samuel’s daughter, Sarah, from cousin Warren Brown in 1848 reflects on the draw and comfort of home:

...I do love home so dearly that I almost wish myself there and I have, this morning, been reading a book entitled “Home by Miss Edg Sedgwick” which has brought to my mind the recollection of many past scenes & caused me to think more tenderly of home than ever...

Over the course of the lives of the Cornelius Jr. and Samuel Tarbox children, homelife took different directions.



THE ROAD HOME



BATH SHIP SERVIA, JAMES HEAL TARBOX, MASTER

In the Cornelius Jr. family, son James Loring Tarbox and his son James Heal Tarbox began their adult lives as sailors. Throughout the 19th century, the transition from sailing ships to steam ships may have had an influence on the men leaving the sea in favor of farm life. As recorded in *Shipping Days of Old Boothbay*, James Heal Tarbox favored “deep-water life and a square rigger.” He returned to Westport in his 30s when no such ship was available, as had both his father and grandfather before him—drawn to the family land. Under his care, its productivity increased, becoming one of the most successful farms on the island and a family “place to come to.”

In the Samuel Tarbox family, livelihoods, marriages, and the succession of the family home worked to reduce ties to the family homestead. The death of Samuel’s wife and family matriarch Polly Brown Tarbox in 1848, along with the introduction of a stepmother in 1850, may have been an initial catalyst. A letter from Valentine Tarbox to his sister Sarah in 1851 suggests a fracture in ties to the homestead...

...You say the Old woman that Father has got is rather turbid you ought to take her by those curls she wears and lead her all around the same as an old turkey does a rooster sometimes. She is an old childish thing I should not mind any thing she said only I should go right straight along and if she troubled me about my own business, I would not exchange words with her but I would throw something at her head that would stop her for a while. Sarah I should stop at home just as long as I pleased. and if I was you I would board there after I was married...



POLLY TARBOX DIED IN 1848

After Samuel Tarbox died in 1861, his estate provided for the care of his disabled son, Wesley. None of his children took over the family farm; rather grandson Stephen Prescott Webber and his wife Caroline assumed care of Wesley and the farm. After Stephen’s death, his wife purchased the farm. The homestead stayed in the Webber family until the 1950s when it left the family and began a new life in the hospitality industry—ultimately becoming what is known today as *the Squire Tarbox Inn*.

IN THE *Tarbox Home*



Photo by Steve Harrington. Taken at Old Bedford Village, PA.

SPINNING WHEEL, CA. LATE 1800S

Called a “Walking Wheel” in the United States, this spinning wheel is meant to be operated while standing.

Spinning is one of the oldest crafts and much older than writing. While there are no records of its origin, the paintings on Egyptian pyramid walls show people preparing their fibers, spinning yarn and weaving.

For more than 90 centuries, all yarn and thread were created by hand spindles. People depended on this simple tool for all their clothing, blankets, rugs, string, and textiles for tents and sails. The spinning wheel evolved from the hand spindle, and was introduced into Europe in the late Middle Ages. It made spinning faster and easier. Until

200 years ago, in nearly every household, someone was busily spinning from dawn to dusk, producing yarn.

The Walking Wheel was operated by the spinner turning the drive wheel with her right hand and using her left hand to spin by walking back from the wheel. Then while reversing the wheel, she walked forward to wind the spun yarn onto the spindle. All parts were made by wooden pegs or wedges.

This Walking Wheel came out of the Cornelius Jr. house and is believed to have been passed down through several generations of the family.

FLAX HACKLE WITH WOOD LID, 19TH CENTURY



Flax Hackles were designed for splitting and straightening flax fibers in preparation for spinning them into linen.

The role of flax in daily colonial life was incredibly important. Being able to raise, harvest, and produce your own cloth meant less dependence on England.

Flax is an annual, and is planted each year. The plant grows up to three feet high. The woody stem is the valuable part, which, when dried, hollows out to become flax fibers—the raw material for linen.

In Colonial New England, flax stalks were ready to harvest by the end of July or August, and were picked by hand and dried. The seed pods and leaves were removed using a comb-like tool or “ripple.” The stalks were then “retted” or soaked in water to separate the flax fibers from its core.

After retting, the fibers were dried again, then put through a flax “brake” to break up the inner core, leaving the outer bundles of fiber unharmed. The flax was then beaten, or “scutched” with a wooden knife against a vertical board to help remove the remaining bits of inner core.

The fibers were then ready for hackling—a method of combing and aligning the fibers through a series of “hackles,” or beds of nails. This was the last step in creating the fiber that a spinner would spin into linen yarn.

This hackle came out of the Cornelius Jr. house, having been passed down through the generations. Many colonial households had both a larger spinning wheel for wool and a smaller spinning wheel for flax; sometimes smaller wheels could be used for both wool and flax.



CANDLE SNUFFER AND WICK CUTTER



SPINNING WHEEL AND ACCESSORIES FROM CORNELIUS TARBOX HOME

