

## **Half Staff – George E. “Ned” Cameron**

**February 10, 1992**

George E. “Ned” Cameron, 67, husband of Lois R. (Schaefer) Cameron, of 1 Gap Head Road, Rockport, a well-known building contractor and consultant who was more recently known for his active involvement in the restoration and development of Thacher Island, died on Friday evening at the Addison Gilbert Hospital following a short illness. He was born in Gloucester on Sept. 25, 1924 to the late George E. and Mildred E. (Tarr) Cameron Sr.

Mr. Cameron, a lifelong resident of Cape Ann and partner of Thomas L. Hogan of Cameron and Hogan, Inc., Building Contractors, was in business over a span of about 40 years before retiring in 1987. The business was well known for its more than 50 quality, custom built, private residences. Since retiring, Mr. Cameron has operated Cameron Building Consultants at an office at the Whistlestop Mall in Rockport, a service that offered architectural plans, house inspections and appraisals.

Since 1980, Mr. Cameron was known for his untiring devotion to the efforts to restore the buildings and natural resources of Thacher Island. He served as chairman of the town’s Thacher Island Committee from 1980 until his death, and as president of the Thacher Island Association from 1980 to 1991. He had been the catalyst that resulted in the island’s return to its original splendor when it once housed multiple families of the United States Lighthouse Service. His primary goal was to make the island available for everyone to enjoy.

Mr. Cameron was an active member of the Sandy Bay Yacht Club, an avid yachtsman and sailboat racer, and will be remembered by several generations of Rockport youth for his active involvement in the Rockport Sea Scout program.

He served as chairman of the Board of Directors of the Rockport National Bank from 19789 until his death, and had been a director since 1960.

Mr. Cameron was a graduate of Gloucester High School, class of 1942.

He was a veteran of World War II, serving in the U.S. Coast Guard in the Pacific Theater and particularly in the invasion of Okinawa.

After the war, he attended Wentworth Institute and, soon after graduating, entered into his partnership with Thomas Hogan.

Mr. Cameron was a life trustee of the Addison Gilbert Hospital, a member of the Gloucester Schooner Races Committee, the Rockport Rotary Club and the Edward Peterson Post No. 98, Rockport American Legion.

He served on the Ladder Company of the Rockport Volunteer Fire Department for 28 years before retiring in 1978.

Mr. Cameron also co-authored a humorous compilation of Rockport nicknames with Tony Torrisi of

Rockport, a booklet published by the Rockport National Bank, now in its second printing.

In addition to his wife, Mr. Cameron is survived by three sons, Douglas B. Cameron of Corpus Christi, Texas, Richard B. Cameron of Cape May, New Jersey, David C. Stroud of New York City, NY; a daughter, Roxanne C. Robey of Rutland; five grandchildren, Samantha, Shawn, Cassandra, Alexandra and Andrew; two brothers, Roger T. Cameron, David Cameron, both of Rockport; and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his first wife, Jeanne (Fears) Cameron; a son, Peter Cameron; and a sister, Mary Alice Bridges.

Memorial services will be held in the Rockport United Methodist Church, Broadway, Rockport, on Wednesday morning at 11.

The Rev. Gregory Appugliese, pastor, and the Rev. Laurence C. Cedrone, pastor of St. Joachim's Church, Rockport, will officiate.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made in his memory to the Thacher Island Association, P.O. Box 73, Rockport, MA 01966 and/or to the Addison Gilbert Hospital, 298 Washington St., Gloucester, MA 01930.

## **Friends remember Ned Cameron**

Ned Cameron, a sailor and builder, was a man who loved the sea and loved taking part in the community. In Rockport, he was able to combine both.

George "Ned" Cameron, who died last Friday, is probably best remembered by his friends for his work in getting Thacher Island restored and functioning again. A skilled builder, Cameron worked with Tom Hogan for nearly 40 years building homes in town. "He did good work and he did it right," said Hogan. "The town has lost a brilliant builder."

The two men even vacationed together after building a log cabin in Maine in 1951. And though they were semi-retired, they always met at the Coffee Shop.

Cameron is known as a great sailor and for his old racing days on the Manchester I Boat he called the "Nipper". He later had other boats also called by the same name.

He is remembered for the spinnaker-flying rides he gave others off his cruising boat, also named the Nipper, at Front Beach. On a windy day, he'd anchor the boat by the stern and set the spinnaker with a bosun chair tied to its bottom corners. The rider would take off up and over the bow of the boat and sometimes 20 feet in the air. He also took youth sailing classes out for a ride to show the children a big boat.

"He did just about everything there is to do with sailing," said Dick Whittaker, a close friend and Commodore of the Sandy Bay Yacht Club. "He was one of my best friends. He was a generous guy and he'd do anything for you. He'd give you the shirt off his back. He will be missed."

“Anything that had to do with the ocean and boats was his hobby,” recalled Ray Smith, a lifelong friend. “He also had an insight for things in business that were good and not so good. He was always an A-1 businessman and a great man to do business with.”

“He was very fond of Rockport and wanted to help whenever he could,” said Peter Schmink, a local banker. “He was interested in the whole town, and people in general.”

Cameron was known as a man who did things in a quiet way.

He was known among many as a great community resources from repairing a roof at the Sandy Bay Yacht Club to overseeing the repair of the boathouse on Thacher Island after it was destroyed by the October 30, 1991 storm. Though the government disaster relief representatives said it could not be repaired, Cameron saw it in different ways, and the collapsed walls are again standing, said Selectman Ted Tarr.

“He was a man’s kind of guy,” said John Thompson, a fellow yacht club member. “He was a real giver. He gave a lot more than he took. If we all did that, this would be a better world.”

As an example of how he helped others, one day he called Dr. Sydney Wedmore and asked if he did “island calls.” When the doctor agreed, Cameron picked up the physician and took him to the island to attend to “preventative maintenance” for one of the lighthouse keepers.

“He was one of those people who quietly did a lot for other people without them necessarily knowing about it,” Dr. Wedmore said.

Cameron held Thacher Island close to his heart.

“He has been the driving force behind the Thacher Island movement,” Whittaker said. “They ought to rename the island,” he said, half in jest.

“He took the idea and ran with it. Mostly due to his hard work, we are in the position we are in today,” said Tarr. The town leases half of the island from the Coast Guard, though the town oversees the entire island. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife owns the other part of the island.

Cameron was planning new projects up until the end. Tarr said that Cameron was planning to collect information on the outer breakwater in the hopes of receiving state aid to stabilize the structure.

“Anything of community service, Ned was involved in somehow. We would drag him in because of his knowledge, and his willingness was tremendous. He had a lot of tenacity. If he thought it was right he would go for it, and if he thought you were wrong, he would tell you,” Tarr recalled. “This will be a setback for many areas in town.”

He described Cameron as “industrious, ingenious and dedicated.”

Thompson thinks of Cameron every time he looks out his window over the ocean and sees the amber light from the Thacher Island lighthouse. He calls it “Ned’s light.