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CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY IN PLACE:

CELIA THAXTER AND THE ISLES OF SHOALS

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University of Nebraska, 2003

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This study explores rhetorical constructions of place and self in the non-fiction narratives and letters of Celia Laighton Thaxter. Thaxter was a 19th century poet, journalist and writer who grew up on the Isles of Shoals off the coast of New Hampshire. Widely published in her day, Thaxter was one of the foremothers of American nature writing. This study considers the significance of place in relation to Thaxter's development as an individual and as a writer. The study finds that the Isles of Shoals provided a foundation for Thaxter's personal and professional identities. Thaxter's relationship with the Shoals was intimate and personal, taking on many of the dimensions of a human relationship. This study also emphasizes the juxtaposition of Thaxter's island and inland lifestyles and their influence on Thaxter. Writing is found to be a vehicle through which Thaxter successfully integrated her "island self" and "inland self."

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This project has been a labor of love. I am thankful for the support of my family and, most of all, for the gift of the Shoals that I inherited from my parents. The Shoals are a part of my heritage and my sense of place. I chose to study Celia Thaxter because I love the Shoals, but I never imagined I would be so captivated by another person's life. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to learn about Celia Thaxter and, in the process, to learn more about myself.

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Introduction

Six miles from the mouth of the Piscataqua River in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, nine small islands lie bleak and barren in the frigid waters of the Atlantic Ocean. For almost four centuries, the Isles of Shoals have been a refuge and a "watering place" for drunken and boorish fishermen, pirates, tax evaders, clergymen, New England Transcendentalists, religious conferees and writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Sarah Orne Jewett. Once a thriving seaport where transatlantic ships loaded and unloaded cargo, the islands supported a competitive fishing industry for more than 150 years. Famous hotel resorts said to be business models for Ellsworth Statler flourished here in the mid- to late 19th century. Colorful island flower gardens inspired one of the first artists' colonies in the United States. Today, religious and educational conferences are held on the islands during the summer. The largest U.S. undergraduate research institute in marine biology is located on one of the islands.

The forbidding granite rock, worn down by sprays of salt, is as enchanting as it is lonely, especially to those whose history is intertwined with the islands. "There is a strange charm about them," Celia Laighton Thaxter wrote in Among the Isles of Shoals, "an indescribable influence in their atmosphere, hardly to be explained, but universally acknowledged" (7-8). Thanks to the foresight and diligence of many people, the natural and scenic beauty of the Shoals landscape remains much as Thaxter described it more than one hundred years ago.

Celia Thaxter, the writer Nathaniel Hawthorne called "the island Miranda" (437), will always be connected to the islands that shaped her identity. Born in 1835, Celia

moved with her family to the islands at the age of four. Her father was a lighthouse keeper who later built and operated a hotel on the islands. Married at sixteen, she and her husband, a Harvard graduate and New England "blueblood," took up residence in the Boston area, had three sons and later moved to southern Maine.

The Thaxters comfortably took their place with a literary and artists circle whose members included Hawthorne, Jewett, John G. Whittier, Thomas Higginson (Emily Dickinson's mentor) and James and Annie Fields. But they did not have a happy marriage. Levi Thaxter's health problems and the birth defects suffered by their first-born son strained the relationship, as did financial pressures. Intelligent and impractical, Levi was never able to find a suitable occupation. Celia did not have the help or support of female family members; she was her parents' only daughter and had no daughters of her own. Both Celia and Levi had artistic temperaments and suffered from chronic anxiety and depression. Over time, they grew further apart.

Writing during the period between 1860 and the mid-1890s, Celia was one of the most widely published poets of her day. The Isles of Shoals provided inspiration and material for her writing. She was a frequent contributor of poems and articles to The Atlantic Monthly and several children's magazines. She also authored more than ten books. Like some of her literary contemporaries, Thaxter struggled to find time to write amidst extensive family obligations. Her story is not unlike that of other women, bound by convention and societal expectations, who seek to find and express their own identities. That she should have accomplished so much is a testament to her energy and determination and the stability she found in being "rooted" in place at the Isles of Shoals.

As one of the country's foremothers of nature writing, Celia Thaxter broke new ground in her firsthand observations of the flora, fauna and natural landscape of the Isles of Shoals. Among the Isles of Shoals contains the first recorded natural history of the islands. Celia's accounts of island customs and traditions are invaluable from a historical perspective. She was one of the foremost china painters of her day and, through her informal salon on Appledore Island, inspired and supported the careers of many artists. Celia is perhaps best remembered today for the small, colorful garden she cultivated on the island that is the subject of her book, An Island Garden.

Yet after the turn of the century, Celia was virtually ignored by the literary community. Until recently, her writings were largely excluded from literary anthologies published after 1920. Relatively few scholarly studies have been conducted on her literary works. The most comprehensive scholarly study of her life and literary works, conducted almost twenty years ago by Jane Vallier, uses a rhetorical approach based on feminist theory. In addition, Vallier's study focuses on her poetry rather than her non-fiction works.

The emerging academic discipline of ecocriticism, the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Glotfelty 1), provides a new lens through which to examine Celia Thaxter's writing and life. Contemporary theorists who study women's self-development and relational psychology also can be brought to bear on consideration of Thaxter's sense of place and her relationship with her environment.

This exploratory study focuses on Celia Thaxter's sense of place within the context of her personal life and her writing. The study considers how Thaxter's self-

development and development as a writer was influenced by her environment. This interpretation of Thaxter's life diverges from Vallier's feminist perspective in several ways. First, it gives more weight to the influence of place on Thaxter's psyche and identity. This thesis asserts that the Isles of Shoals provided a foundation for Thaxter's personal and professional identities. Thaxter's relationship with the Shoals was intimate and personal, taking on many of the dimensions of a human relationship. Second, the thesis points to the juxtaposition of Thaxter's island and inland lifestyles and their influence on Thaxter's personal identity. Writing is seen as a vehicle through which Thaxter successfully integrated her "island self" and "inland self." Finally, this thesis provides a more balanced view of Thaxter's family based on review of historical documents and books published after Vallier's book.

Perhaps we are destined to be intertwined with the landscapes that shape us. This may be especially true for writers such as Thaxter. Henry David Thoreau could not escape identification with the canopy of the Eastern forest. Charles Dickens was haunted by the cold, wet streets of London. Celia Thaxter succumbed to the enchantment of the Isles of Shoals.

"She lived the island into her life," a literary critic once observed. "She became its scientist, its experience, its biography" (Lee 1). In life and in literature, Celia was the "island Miranda" and the "Rose of the Isles." But above all, she was a Shoaler.

1. Literature Review, Statement of Purpose and Methodology

1.1 The Genre of Nature Writing

"In wildness is the preservation of the world," wrote Henry David Thoreau in Walden, a journal of his two years at Walden Pond. As a literary tradition, the genre of nature writing in the United States is often traced to Thoreau, whose emphasis on humanity's relationship to nature and recognition that nature must be protected continues to have a profound influence on American culture. The genre of nature writing in English and American literature has been established for more than two hundred years. It encompasses most, if not all, of Thaxter's literary works of non-fiction, literary journalism and poetry. Yet its traditions are so diverse that nature writing, as a literary genre, is not well-known or understood by many people.

Nature writers examine the relationship between human beings and their natural context. The genre is a convergence of literary forms. On the one hand, it includes literature pertaining to the nonhuman environment, e.g., science writing. At the other extreme, the canon includes literature of personal identification such as personal essays and travel narratives. A unifying element of the genre is the focus on place, either one locality or a sequence of places. While the non-fiction essay comprises much of the genre, nature writing also includes poetry, fiction, letters and journals and autobiography/memoir.

The Norton Book of Nature Writing (19) marks the beginning of the genre of nature writing with publications by Carolus Linnaeus in the mid-1750s. Linnaeus was a Swedish naturalist and botanist who established the modern scientific method of

classifying and identifying all living things. As a literary tradition, however, the roots of nature writing are often traced to England's Gilbert White and, in the United States, Thoreau. In many ways the two authors' literary styles present dichotomous models. The "patron saint of English nature writing," White introduced the tradition of pastoralism into nature writing in his 1879 book, A Natural History of Selborne (Finch and Elder 20). White's descriptive and idyllic narrative about the countryside around him draws a contrast between the serenity of the simple, country life and the misery of the urban landscape. The narrative conveys little sense of the author as a person or character in the story.

But Thoreau was just as interested in exploring his own thoughts in his narratives as describing his surroundings. In books such as Walden, a chronicle of his two years at Walden Pond, Thoreau emphasized the marvelous, the unexplainable and the mysticism inherent in the environment. His focus on man's relationship to nature and recognition that nature must be protected continues to have a profound influence on nature writing today.

In the United States, several notable writers followed in Thoreau's and White's footsteps in the 19th century, including John Muir, John Burroughs, W.H. Hudson, Richard Jeffries and Jewett. The increasing popularity of literary non-fiction and the growing consciousness of environmental issues have contributed to an explosion of publications in this genre. Contemporary American nature writers include Rick Bass, Terry Tempest Williams, Linda Hogan, Barry Lopez, John McPhee and Peter

Mathiessen. By no means is the genre limited to American authors, although they have typically received more attention by scholars.

1.2 Ecocriticism: Theorizing and Studying Nature Writing

The emerging academic field of ecocriticism —the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment—can trace its roots to a "call" issued by Cheryll Glotfelty in 1989 at a meeting of the Western Literature Association (Branch and O'Grady 1). Noting that the feminist and civil rights movements had significantly influenced literary theory, Glotfelty wondered why the environmental movement had not had the same effect. She envisioned a field that could unify the fragmented studies of nature writing and serve as a bridge to other disciplines.

Glotfelty was not the first person to use the word "ecocriticism." The term was coined by William Rueckert in 1978 in an essay titled "Literary and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (Branch and O'Grady 1). But Glotfelty's remarks found a receptive audience at this meeting. The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was formed in 1992. The association now has more than 1,000 members, organizes academic conferences and has its own academic journal.

The definition, scope and practice of ecocriticism, and how it is differentiated from established literary theory and practice, is still evolving. Indeed, some scholars question whether the fledgling discipline is developing new theories and critical practices at all, or merely promoting the establishment of an "environmental camp" among literary critics (Sarver 1). Others welcome the broadening of literary studies beyond poststructuralism, as undisciplined as the field appears to be right now. As one scholar

suggests with tongue in cheek: "I might call such an approach 'compoststructuralism'" (Cokinos 1).

Ecocriticism examines some of the same questions as other literary critical fields: What is the nature and purpose of literature? Does literature reflect or construct reality? What is reality, and how do we come to know and interpret reality? But ecocriticism attempts to extend literary theory to encompass critical thinking about the constructs of culture, nature and the environment and how these constructs are reflected in literature. Ecocriticism also helps bring nonfiction, traditionally ignored by literary critics, into the literary canon.

Ecocritics look at how authors portray the environment and the human-nature relationship in text. Scholars ask questions such as: How do personal, cultural, political and societal influences affect perceptions of the environment and the human-nature relationship? How do language and literature reflect and communicate ecological values? How do we acquire knowledge about nature and the environment, and how is such knowledge shaped? How does literature reflect ecological thought and action?

Glotfelty sees parallels between the development of ecocriticism and feminist criticism as they progress through the following stages: (1) a concern for "representations," i.e., how nature is represented in literature; (2) the rediscovery and claiming of a literary heritage; and (3) a theoretical phase, examining the symbolic construction of humans in literary discourse (Birkerts 2).

Several books of essays on nature writing, ecocriticism and related areas have been published in the last ten years. Scholars are already staking out territory within the

fledgling discipline of ecocriticism, albeit more collegially than is often found in the academy. One point of discussion, for example, is the definition of the terms "nature" and "environment," and whether the literary works encompassed by ecocriticism are properly called *nature writing*, *environmental literature* or something else. The prevailing thinking seems to be that "environment," encompassing both natural and constructed (human) artifacts, is more inclusive than "nature." Yet ecocritical scholars have been somewhat slow to study urban environments, reflecting, perhaps, their own biases in defining what is natural or a yearning to find something pure and wild, untouched by human culture. Recent ecocritical studies have considered urban nature (parks and other green spaces), green buildings, sustainable design and other urban ecological themes.

1.3 "Re-visioning" Celia Thaxter

Ecological literary criticism has brought about a resurgence of scholarly interest in Celia Thaxter. The foremost authority on Thaxter, Dr. Jane Vallier, has called for ecocritical studies on Thaxter's literary works, and a handful of scholars have responded. Lawrence Buell cites her works of environmental nonfiction as "among the achievements of late nineteenth-century realism" (Imagination 6) and equates her literary perspective and style (in Among the Isles of Shoals) to that of Mary Austin.

> The desubjectification of the persona and the diffusion of perceptual center is [sic] common to their nonfiction, and the commonality makes historical sense. It reflects what premodern women were expected not to do (thrust themselves egotistically forward) and what they were supposed to do well (fine work with detail); but these conceptual constraints allow

> Austin, Thaxter, and others to bring into focus the necessity of approaching the environment on its own terms, not homocentrically. (Buell, Imagination 177)

Vera Norwood calls An Island Garden "the best garden autobiography of the late nineteenth century," noting that the book challenges the idea of gardening as a leisurely activity afforded women of privilege (102). Thaxter shows in her book that gardening is physically demanding work requiring skill and knowledge. Moreover, the activity of gardening lends itself to a deeper understanding of and connection with nature (110).

Marcia Littenberg (142-43) notes that Thaxter uses first-person narrative in her prose to convey an organic connection between the natural and human environments that gives voice to her sense of connection to both spheres. She portrays herself as being intimately connected to nature, not just a careful observer. Judith Fetterly (43) points to Thaxter's intentional focus on individuality and particularity that allows her to see and convey more detail about her island home, in contrast to Melville's "imperialist impulse to come, see, conquer, and then move on" in the Galapagos Islands. Thaxter's focus on nature's detail reflects her own self-image and sense of place. As Fetterly writes:

> Thaxter reveals her intimate association of island nature with the mirroring and holding a mother gives her child (131). Island landscape becomes for her a permanent resource that continues to mother the adult, making it possible for her to recover that sense of singularity, the miracle of her own particularity, that gives her authority as a writer and that provides her as well with the style that enables her to write. (48)

Jane Vallier's scholarship was prescient in restoring Celia Thaxter to the canon. Her 1982 book, Poet on Demand: The Life, Letters, and Works of Celia Thaxter, is an extensive literary biography of Thaxter and examination of the meaning and symbolism of her poetry. Vallier was the first scholar to argue that recent scholarship and theory in modern psychology and women's development should be brought to bear on a re-evaluation of Thaxter's writing in the context of the circumstances in which she wrote ("Role" 238-39). For Thaxter, writing (as well as painting and music) was a needed source of income and a tool used to construct and define her identity outside of her prescribed roles as mother and wife. Vallier asserts that Thaxter's poetry reveals the self-constructed identities of child narrator and heroic woman as well as objective reporter/journalist (Poet 68, 82).

> After the 1874 edition of Poems, Thaxter became more of what is called today a freelance writer than a poet. The distinction is critical because the professional writer and the poet bring different goals to their work. [...] The professional writer has a competence of expression, a precise mastery of his material, and he does not necessarily cultivate a unique personal voice in the writing. The poet, on the other hand, is more concerned with his personal vision. During the mid-1870s, Celia Thaxter made a painful but necessary transition from being a poet of genuine talent to being a professional writer or a journalist—also of genuine talent. Unfortunately, she did not seem to articulate this distinction clearly to herself. (Vallier, Poet 96)

Vallier's 1982 book was reissued in 1994, and she is continuing her own scholarship on Thaxter.

Perry Westbrook's 1947 article on Thaxter may be one of the first ecocritical works on Celia Thaxter. Westbrook (494) asserts that Thaxter was one of the first Americans to write about nature as indifferent, if not hostile, to man. Thaxter's balanced, dualistic view of nature was unusual for her time when nature was more typically viewed as either benevolent or outright hostile. Here, as Westbrook points out, we see some similarities between Thaxter's perspective and that of Melville. Westbrook even intimates that Thaxter's friend Lowell may have suggested Melville's Encantados to her as a model for Among the Isles of Shoals.

> Each is a description of a group of islands, with sections on flora and fauna, geographical and geological data, history, folklore and legends, and human interest stories. [...] It [Shoals] answers realistically—with an undertone of perhaps unconscious poetry—all the questions the stranger would want to know: How does the climate affect life here? What is the history of the place? How are the people different from others? How do they earn a living? And, most important of all to mortals, what makes life here worth living? (515)

Thaxter knew and wrote about man's natural tendencies toward evil in stories such as "A Memorable Murder," a true account of an axe murder of two Norwegian women at the Shoals. But unlike Melville, who often treated this "natural depravity" as a source of wonder, Thaxter's prose reflects a "degree of scientific detachment"

(Westbrook 513-14). To Thaxter, humanity's destructive tendencies and nature's cruelties were inevitable, but nature was also beautiful and benevolent.

1.4 Representing Place in Literature

Almost all literature is rooted in a place or setting. Place is a framing device for a story and creates atmosphere or mood. The natural world, including times, seasons, and conditions in which things happen, influences character and action. But place includes more than just the natural world. In life and in literature, place encompasses natural, constructed, political, cultural, and temporal environments. Place provides a context for self-expression and a vantage point from which one views the world—a perspective that may change over time. Rueckert (150) finds that contemporary writer Barry Lopez portrays nature as a predator—uncontrollable and wild—in at least two of his books. Legler (250) concludes that Annie Dillard represents nature as imperfect and illogical—both beautiful and horrific. In his earlier works, writer John McPhee represents nature as pastoral and a refuge from humanity's corruption and technology, according to Bailey (195). But in later writings, McPhee comes to view nature as a dynamic, powerful and oppositional system at odds with humanity, social and economic systems. Place can also embody symbolic qualities within literature. Suderman, for example, contends that James Fenimore Cooper used the prairie as symbolic of the landscape of the entire new republic: vast, naked, and bleak (162-63).

The feminine and masculine qualities of nature are also studied in ecocriticism. Kircher (158) finds that contemporary writer Terry Tempest Williams associates elements of the natural world with the feminine and portrays manipulation of the

landscape as a masculine action. Carew-Miller's study of Mary Austin's book Land of Little Rain reveals that Austin embodies the desert with sensual, wild and mysterious qualities that are considered to be feminine in nature (90).

Ecocritical scholars such as Lawrence Buell and Glotfelty have noted that many nature writers attempt to portray nature as its own character or entity, independent of human needs and values. Writer Susan Fenimore Cooper recognizes nature's "otherness" in its own right, independent of human needs and values, according to Johnson (78). Nature, as "other" (much like culture, class, race and other constructs of identity), participates in the formation of personal identity, and the self participates in the formation of nature in its various manifestations. The environment is portrayed dynamically--as a process rather than as a constant.

All narratives provide clues as to the writer's *identity*, self-concept, views and motivations for action. Writing a story is creating an interpretation of how things are perceived and what they mean. What words does the writer choose to tell the story? What does the narrative reveal about the writer's perspective? What does the writer want the reader to know and understand? Every narrative represents a particular epistemology or set of beliefs—a lens through which the world is viewed. These epistemologies are shaped by many influences: culture, family, race, gender, religion, politics and so on.

Thus, an environmental text reveals as much about the writer's identity as the environment itself. The intersection of identity and place in literature is just beginning to be studied. Scholars are asking questions such as: How does the environment act upon and transform the writer? How does the writer's narrative represent ways of knowing and

understanding our world? How do the writer's narrative voice and descriptions reflect his or her sense of place and sense of self? In the following sections, we will examine strategies or methods that scholars are using to try to answer some of these questions.

1.5 Representing Self in Literature

Many scholars also consider how the author's "self" is represented in text by nature writers. Through point of view, voice, and other literary techniques, writers communicate who they are in their narrative. Scholars ask questions such as: How does the writer represent his or her own identity in narrative and how is it constituted outside of nature? How does nature act upon and transform the writer? How does the writer's narrative voice reflect his or her experience of the environment? By studying how writers portray themselves in text (if at all), we often learn what motivates them to explore it and write about it.

In looking at self-representation in text, it is important to remember that writers have varying levels of presence and detachment in their narrative. In some cases, the writer distances him/herself from nature, focusing on recording observations rather than thoughts about what is being observed. In Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, for example, Annie Dillard records her emotional reactions to what she observes in nature in a very detached manner. Any changes in personal identity as a result of her experiences in nature are not portrayed in her narrative (Tallmadge 206).

Other writers have a strong presence in their texts. By analyzing their narrative voice, we can draw certain conclusions about their thoughts and emotions. Carew-Miller's study of Mary Austin (80) reveals that Austin's narrative voice is confident and

intimate (presenting a sensual portrait of the landscape) in some sections. In other parts of the text, however, Austin shows a more repressed, conventional side of her persona, reflecting Victorian tradition and her mother's upbringing. Scheese finds that Edward Abbey portrays himself as an "exemplary inhabitor of the wild" (305) in Desert Solitaire, with "(an) ego looming large in almost every chapter" (307). According to Scheese (306), Abbey often writes about his response to nature with a dramatic shift in narrative voice, and his works are often characterized by "a rhetoric of rage" for wilderness preservation and against urbanism. On the other hand, Tallmadge (202) finds that the narrative voice of Terry Tempest Williams, in Refuge, is that of a storyteller who weaves a series of tales together about her family and events occurring at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge.

1.6 Defining a sense of place

A sense of place is a fundamental part of human experience. Places have constructed boundaries and names which have social and personal meaning. Places have an important impact on human identity (Lavin and Agatstein 51).

> Places are matrixes of windows and doorways, streets and neighborhoods, shaped by the social and physical and psychological needs of humans. They embody symbol and spirituality. (Goodstein 172)

The ways in which we think about and respond to our environment (natural and constructed landscapes) is shaped by personal, cultural, political, social and other factors. Place helps develop a sense of continuity and belongingness. Because places embody personal and sociocultural meanings, their physical elements provide the basis for emotional attachment (Lavin and Agatstein 52).

A sense of belongingness in physical place is necessary for stable self-identity, according to Harold Proshansky, an environmental psychologist. This belongingness provides a reference point from which to view the world and organize our experience in memory. The characteristics of a place where people live affect their social ties, life experience and the "opportunity structure" within which they can construct a meaningful identity (Proshansky 523). Place also serves as a way to have repeated contact with desirable groups or preferred activities (Lavin and Agatstein 52).

Thomas Sanders argues that people who are rooted to the land have an oral sense of place—an articulated identity. Over time, people become so bound to a specific geography that they can speak of their land as Rupert Brooke did:

> If I should die, think only this of me;
>
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
>
> That is forever England. (qtd. in Stegner 105)

Regional consciousness involves a sense of belonging to a place, according to cultural geographer Barbara Allen, who conducted extensive interviews with people in the southern United States (152-53). Allen concludes that this feeling of belonging is grounded in personal and generational memories that are tied to place. A sense of place, then, is a filter through which people perceive the landscape around them, which structures their thinking about the land and the social relations carried out on it.

> Rarely were individuals named without mention of who their relatives were and where they lived, and places (that is, properties) were invariably identified by the names of their owners. [...] Residents of the

> neighborhood, past and present, are linked to one another by bonds of kinship just as their places are joined contiguously on the land. So when the people of Rock Bridge look around them, they see the landscape as a complex web of human lives lived on it; they see, in other words, a genealogical landscape. (Allen 156)

Many of us, however, no longer live in the landscape our parents knew. The disruption of ties to place impacts human identity and is often reflected in literature. Metaphorically, the barren ground of the desert provides fertile soil for the growth of a new self. This process is repeatedly reflected in literature and in scripture. Classic American works such as Walden and Huckleberry Finn feature protagonists who seek an alternate way of life—a new identity—in a new geography.

From a psychological perspective, people have various means of coping with disruption of place. Some maintain an identity with a "superordinate place" versus places of immediate experience. Others take part of the old, familiar place with them to the new environment. These elements serve as anchors to help create a sense of stability. A third way of coping is to embrace the new setting enthusiastically and become divested of old place attachments, thereby creating a new identity (Lavin and Agatstein 63).

Technological development and electronic media have had a tremendous impact on America's sense of place. Communication is no longer bound by place or confined by space. Yet media such as television use place to construct meanings (Goodstein 172). Even with electronic media and mass communication, people have shared memories of a

place that are kindled by shared codes and meanings. Most people can emotionally connect with a few special places in the natural or constructed environment.

1.6.1 A Woman's Sense of Place

Are women's experiences with nature and views of the environment different than those of men? Lorraine Anderson, editor of an anthology of women's nature writing, says that there is no such thing as a women's view of nature. However, she asserts that there is a feminine way of relationship with nature.

> This way is caring rather than controlling; it seeks harmony rather than mastery; it is characterized by humility rather than arrogance, by appreciation rather than acquisitiveness. (Anderson xvii)

Until recently, most scholars lumped men and women nature writers together, not studying the meaning of gender in relationship to perceptions and representations of landscape. Within the last fifteen years, scholars have begun to examine how women perceive and portray nature and relationships with the natural world.

Norwood (63) says that male nature writers such as Gilbert White and John Burroughs gave little thought as to what nature or nature/human interactions have to say about gender roles. Nature's household was not their own. In contrast, writers such as Susan Fenimore Cooper and Celia Thaxter placed a great deal of emphasis on the gender and identity of the writer and nature as home. Murphy (35) says that women writers see *relation* (as opposed to alienation or difference) as the primary mode of human-human and human-nature interaction. He says their writings communicate a cyclical, holistic vision of the natural environment versus a linear, hierarchical perspective of nature.

Recent research on women's psychological development would seem to indicate that these phenomena are not only limited to women's narratives, but in fact represent women's experiences and viewpoints in real life. Studies by Carol Gilligan, for example, have concluded that women have a more seamless, interrelational view of self in relation to the world (48). Men see their relationship in terms of separation, autonomy, and control, whereas women's development stresses attachment, continuity, and change in configuration rather than separation. Gilligan also argues that relationships and connectedness with others are of central importance to women (62) and that women's development often revolves around a concern for and sensitivity to others, as well as caretaking responsibility.

1.6.2 Relationship: The Intersection of Self and Place

The constructs of *relation* and *relationship* may be useful here in helping to examine the connections between self and place. As ecocritical scholar Thomas Lyon points out, relationship is "perhaps the essence of ecology" (277). Relationship involves mutual or reciprocal connections between people, things and/or places. Thus, one's sense of place arguably involves a relationship with his or her environment.

In looking at dimensions of relationship in literature, scholars ask questions such as: What are the connections between writers and the places they write about? How do history, culture and personal events affect the narrative? Is the writer native to and residing in the places that (s)he writes about? Is there a difference between the writer's narratives versus real-life perspectives or actions?

Several literary studies have touched upon dimensions of relationship and sense of place in nature writing. In The Inland Island, Josephine Johnson uses her home place of southwestern Ohio to position her own identity and authority as a writer. The Ohio landscape is her permanent home rather than a temporary retreat. She is knowledgeable of the markings and habits of the animals that inhabit her place, and she brings classical mythology and folklore into her narrative (Armbruster 12-13). Ranch land in South Dakota is at the center of writer Linda Hasselstrom's identity. Ranching provides her material and time for writing and the basis for her subsistence (Price 242).

The connections a writer feels with place can also be disrupted or severed. The writer may experience dislocation or alienation, feeling at odds with his/her "self-in-place" identity. Mary Hallock Foote never could separate her eastern upper middle-class identity to feel at home in the "wild West" (Blend 98). Linda Hasselstrom experiences an "unraveling of a physical and imaginative tapestry" when she is distanced from her home on the Great Plains. But dislocation gives her the psychological distance to take new risks in her writing (Price 249).

Other writers like Williams seek an emotional identification with the landscape, finding elements of nature that parallel the self. Norman MacLean, in A River Runs Through It, loses himself in nature. He achieves a state of grace and salvation—a transformative state of mind—through his interactions (Grattan 232-33). Aldo Leopold writes about a transformation in personal identity in A Sand County Almanac. After he kills a wolf and looks into the creature's eyes, he begins to have empathy for the animal. Jenkins (266) describes Leopold's response as moving toward a state of ecological

integration, when "boundaries of self and non-self begin to melt away and are replaced by an awareness of borderlessness, by an inexpressible sense of belonging to or inclusion within a larger perceptual framework." Leopold's experience changes his perception of his own place in the natural world as he begins to "think like a mountain" (Jenkins 265).

But a writer's relationship with the environment in real life is not always congruous with how it is presented in narrative. As Hasselstrom reveals in one of her essays, the "rootedness" she writes about is not always what she experiences in real life. She says she has always felt deeply alienated from her community, and she is isolated from the literary community to which she feels a stronger connection (Price 249). According to Kircher's study, Terry Tempest Williams presents contradictions in her book, Refuge, between what she advocates and who she is—a person whose lifestyle still incorporates consumerism.

> While many nature writers write about their rustic Walden-like cabins [...] Williams writes about the new home she and her husband have bought up the canyon, about shopping in elite department stores, about eating in expensive restaurants. With these allusions Williams seems to suggest that spirituality, which is so prevalent in *Refuge*, can still exist in twentieth-century materialistic America. On the one hand she should be commended for being honest. [...] On the other hand, it seems possible either that Williams's class privilege, which is evident and perhaps offensive to many readers of *Refuge*, might not be evident to her. (Kircher 169)

How does one define relationship for the purposes of studying it? What are the characteristics or dimensions of human-nature relationships? Much work needs to be done to define the aspects of what constitutes a human-nature relationship and how such a relationship can be meaningfully studied.

1.7 A Sense of Place: Psychological Dimensions

To further explore the concepts of relationship and sense of place in nature writing, one could look to the field of developmental psychology and the study of human relationships. Erik Erikson's works are a good starting point. Erikson was a psychologist and scholar who published more than ten books on identity between 1950 and 1980 and who popularized the concept of identity in the field of developmental psychology. Erikson theorized that personal identity involves a mutual relationship between the individual and his or her world. That is, we shape the identities of others with whom we interact and they, in turn, shape us (Lavin and Agatstein 65). As developmental psychologist Ruthellen Josselson writes:

> People create their lives within a web of connection to others. The cast of characters in a life and the nuances of interconnection provide the richness, the intricacy, the abrasion, and much of the interest in living. Life unfolds as a kaleidoscope of relationships, with varying pieces in shifting arrangements. [...] Converging voices proclaim that we cannot have a viable theory of human development unless we can schematize development that takes place within, through, and for relatedness. Yet writers and theorists who have taken up this challenge have been stymied

> by the lack of language to describe these phenomena. [...] The nature of relationship has remained enshrouded partly because we have so few words and agreed-upon concepts to indicate the ways in which people connect themselves to others. (Josselson 1-2)

Josselson believes that we enter into relationship for the purpose of connection, i.e., to overcome our own physical separateness. We try to overcome our physical separateness through discourse and physical contact. We share our lives and thoughts and get as close as we can physically.

> There are many ways in which we reach through the space that separates us to make connections—ways that vary throughout life—and many motives that impel us to do so. Relatedness involves other people as objects of desire...but relatedness also serves as a context for the experience of the self. Theorists who have taken on the task of explicating relational experience have tended to do so emphasizing a particular aspect of connection....Each theorist, however, ends up with a unidimensional model. By putting these models together, we can construct a figure with many sides. (Josselson 5)

Josselson's book, The Space Between Us: Exploring the Dimensions of Human Relationships, outlines eight dimensions of relational connection. By substituting the word "nature" for "others" in her theoretical model, one can see how the model could be applied to the study of human-nature relationships in literature.

The first four dimensions are unconscious and often pre-verbal: (1) *Holding* – an internalized representation of trusting others, the need to be grounded and contained in order to grow; (2) *Attachment* - the instinctive inclination to attach and form a closeness; (3) *Passionate experience* – the search for an intense connection with others through touch and/or the symbolic or real expression of sexuality; and (4) *Eye-to-eye validation* – using the "other" as a mirror to learn about and validate ourselves (Josselson 6-7).

Josselson's remaining four dimensions are experienced later in life and are typically conscious: (5) *Idealization and identification* - looking to others to provide models for how and what to be; (6) *Mutuality* - moving in harmony with others, creating a bond between oneself and the other in sharing experiences; (7) *Embeddedness* – belonging, feeling included and sharing characteristics with others; and (8) *Tending and care* – caretaking of others and/or holding others (actually or symbolically) in our arms (Josselson 7-8).

Let us turn back to Celia Thaxter and specifically, to Judith Fetterly's observation that Thaxter's relationship to nature is similar to the mirroring and holding involved in a mother-child relationship. One can see that the activities of *mirroring* and *holding* connect with two of Josselson's relational dimensions: holding and eye-to-eye validation. The extent to which other relational dimensions are portrayed in Thaxter's narrative—dimensions that would illuminate and contextualize Thaxter's self-in-place—deserve further examination.

1.8 Statement of Purpose

This exploratory study of Thaxter builds upon and extends the work of Vallier, Fetterly and other Thaxter scholars. The study focuses on Thaxter's sense of place as portrayed in some of her prose and personal writing.

The study proposes to address the following research question:

1. What is Thaxter's sense of place within the context of her life and as portrayed in her two books of prose?

1.9 Methodology

This exploratory study uses historical research methods and qualitative methodology to study Thaxter's life as well as her sentiments about place as expressed in public and private narratives. Thaxter's sense of place will be analyzed by considering how she responds to nature (how it affects her), how she interacts with it (what is she doing, is it active or passive, etc.) and how she adjusts or changes her natural environment. Many of the themes that will be explored have ecological underpinnings. They include: rootedness and connection to place, intimacy with the land, "islandness," living *with* the land vs. *on* the land, place as a source of knowledge and authority, alienation or dislocation from place, emotional identification with elements of nature, intercourse with nature and place as liberating and empowering.

The first section of this study involves an abbreviated biography of Thaxter as well as key historical events at the Isles of Shoals from the early 1600s through the early 19th century. The purpose of this section is to provide factual information about Thaxter's life and the place about which she wrote so that her sense of place can be better understood in context. This information was drawn from biographical and

autobiographical materials on Thaxter as well as books and documents on the history and lore of the Isles of Shoals, many of which were in a personal collection. The researcher also has made two trips to the Isles of Shoals and to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to gather primary and secondary source materials for the study.

There are three primary sources (texts) of Thaxter's that will be analyzed. Her two non-fiction books, published more than 20 years apart, widely differ in theme and narrative style. They are emblematic of her perceptions of, and relationship with, the Isles of Shoals at two distinct time periods. Among the Isles of Shoals, published in 1873, is a non-fiction/autobiographical volume about the history, ecology and folklore of the islands and her childhood years on the islands. The material in this book was originally published as four separate essays over a two-year period in The Atlantic Monthly. An Island Garden, published in 1894, is a personal "how-to" book about gardening written in narrative form.

Letters written by Thaxter to friends and family also are used in this study. These letters, numbering more than 240, come from three different sources. The first is an 1895 book titled Letters of Celia Thaxter, edited by her friends Annie Fields and Rose Lamb. The second source is a 1963 biography titled Sandpiper that was written by Thaxter's granddaughter. This book contains many letters, or excerpts thereof, which were not in the 1895 volume of letters. In addition, ten unpublished letters have been located in the Portsmouth Athenaeum.

The first letter in this collection was written on March 2, 1851 to a female friend. The last letter is dated July 20, 1894, about a month before Thaxter's death. Many of the

letters are written to Annie Fields who was Thaxter's primary confidant. Others are written to male and female friends and family members. At least half originate from the Shoals. They contain various accounts and details of her daily activities, descriptions of her surroundings and the people with whom she comes in contact. The letters also reveal Thaxter's feelings on matters ranging from the winter weather to her husband's controlling disposition. An inventory of these letters, as well as a timeline of Thaxter's life, is included in the Appendix of this thesis.

2. Celia Thaxter and the Isles of Shoals: Formative Years

In 1839, at the age of four, Celia Laighton Thaxter moved with her family to the Isles of Shoals. Celia's father, Thomas Laighton, had accepted a two-year appointment as lighthouse keeper on White Island. The Laighton family's move from urban Portsmouth to the remote islands was a key event in the formation of Celia's identity. As she later wrote in Among the Isles of Shoals:

> I well remember my first sight of White Island, where we took up our abode on leaving the mainland...It was at sunset in autumn that we were set ashore on that loneliest, lovely rock, where the lighthouse looked down on us like some tall, black-capped giant, and filled me with awe and wonder. At its base a few goats were grouped on the rock, standing out dark against the red sky as I looked up at them. The stars were beginning to twinkle; the wind blew cold, charged with the sea's sweetness; the sound of many waters half bewildered me. Some one began to light the lamps in the tower. Rich red and golden, they swung round in mid-air; everything was strange and fascinating and new. (120)

2.1 The Laighton Family

Celia Laighton Thaxter's family and upbringing were far from conventional, even by today's standards. Born on June 30, 1835 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Celia was the second child of Thomas and Eliza Rymes Laighton; an older sister, Helen, lived only eleven months (R. Thaxter 6). The Laightons would have two more children: Oscar, born in 1839, and Cedric, born in 1840.

Thomas Laighton came from a well-respected family engaged in the shipping and import/export business. His father made spars—booms used to support rigging on a ship (Stearns 226). Laighton was born in Portsmouth in 1805. He was not college-educated, but he was good in mathematics and had an entrepreneurial nature. Laighton also was very energetic and driven, perhaps as a result of his lameness due to an attack of typhus at age 13 (Rutledge, Isles 61). He had a direct, no-nonsense manner and was known for being quick-tempered. According to historian Frank Stearns, "The chief impression he made upon strangers was of a man whom it was best of keep on the right side of" (232).

Celia's mother, Eliza Rymes, was born and raised in Newington, New Hampshire. She reportedly had never set foot beyond the harbor before the family's move to the Isles of Shoals eight years after their marriage (Laighton 2). Thomas and Eliza were married in 1831 and moved to a house on Daniel Street, close to the Portsmouth harbor.

Laighton was active in business and politics. He was employed as a clerk in the U.S. Customs House in Portsmouth. He and three friends organized the Portsmouth Whaling Company in 1832; it soon became a flourishing enterprise with a capital stock value of $100,000. In 1833, he was appointed assistant postmaster of Portsmouth under his friend, Abner Greenleaf, Jr. (Rutledge, Isles, 62). For a brief period, he and Greenleaf served as co-editors of the New Hampshire Gazette (now Portsmouth Herald), the oldest newspaper in continuous publication in the United States. Laighton also served as secretary of the Democratic Party for the district (Rutledge, Isles, 62).

In 1837, there was a financial panic that led to a business depression in New Hampshire and parts of New England (Cole 194-5, 214). That same year, Laighton was

elected to the New Hampshire Senate on the Democratic Republican ticket. He was defeated the next year but re-elected in April 1839 for another one-year term (Rutledge, Isles 62).

Laighton was not only a Democrat; he was a locofoco, according to author Richard Henry Dana, Jr. (qtd. in Randall and Burke 119). Locofocoism began around 1835 as a movement or faction within the mainstream Jacksonian Democratic Party. The name locofoco originated at a Tammany Hall meeting in which the reformers lit candles and self-igniting "locofoco" matches. The locofocos were also called "radicals"; they advocated a 10-hour workday, free public schools and restraints on the expansion of railroads and chartering banks. The battle between the conservative and radical factions of the Democratic Party dominated New Hampshire politics between 1836 and 1846 (Cole 185-6).

In the spring of 1839, Laighton and his brother-in-law, Joseph Cheever, took title to four of the Isles of Shoals: Hog (later renamed Appledore), Cedar, Malaga and Smuttynose (Rutledge, Isles 49). A few months later, Laighton secured a two-year appointment as lighthouse keeper on White Island. On September 29, 1839, Laighton sailed to White Island to prepare the lighthouse and the cottage. He moved his family to the island a few days later.

Why did Laighton decide to uproot his family to live in such a remote place? Tradition has it that Laighton had suffered some kind of political defeat and was seeking to re-direct his life. Oscar Laighton, for example, writes that his father was nursing his wounds after a defeat in the 1839 election for the office of Governor, "regretting that the

Islands were not farther off the coast" (introduction). Rutledge speculates that he intended to use the islands as a base for developing the fishing and shipping industries (Isles 62). His two-year appointment would provide an opportunity to assess his situation and develop a business plan while maintaining a steady income to support his family.

At the time of the Laightons' arrival at the Shoals, conditions on the islands presented a dramatic contrast to their urban, middle-class lifestyle in Portsmouth. More than one hundred permanent residents, most of who lived in the village of Gosport on Star Island, eked out a living in the fishing industry. From 1790 to the early 1800s, the islanders lived in poverty under very little, if any, form of government. No ministry was supported; there were no town officers and no regular schools. Cohabitation and intemperance were common. No records were kept of births or marriages. Isolated from the Euro-American culture on the mainland, the islanders had developed their own cultural norms and traditions over the years. Language had deteriorated to the point where it was often hard to understand (Bardwell 19).

> Isolated from their fellows, even if only a few miles separated them from towns ashore, and made up of the roughest type of human beings, including smugglers and not a few ex-pirates, the inhabitants of the Isles of Shoals at that time formed a community which was probably the most ignorant, vicious, lawless and illiterate in all America, the islands being referred to as the Godless Isles. ("Early Star Island History")

Living conditions on the islands had not improved much by the time of the

Laightons' arrival in 1839. Dana's account of his weeklong stay at a Star Island boarding house in 1843 takes note of about 20 unpainted weather-beaten houses, a strong fishy smell on the island and a shore full of fish heads and bones cast aside during cleaning (Randall and Burke 130). But temperance was slowly taking hold, perhaps due to the leadership of the island pastor, Rev. Origin Smith. Smith served as island pastor from 1837 to 1847. He reported about 40 islanders belonging to the Temperance Society, with only "four or five drunkards on all the islands" (qtd. in Rutledge, Isles 54). Considering the problems with temperance, the Laightons' arrival on the islands was probably met with mixed feelings on the part of the islanders. Dana wrote the following in a journal entry in 1843:

> This island [Hog], together with Smuttynose, the next largest, were bought, during the last year, by two traders from Portsmouth by the name of Leighton [sic]. They are noted rumsellers and loco-focoers, and the people on the islands are afraid that they will revive intemperance, which has been quite driven out from among the people by means of religious efforts and the total abstinence pledge... (qtd. in Randall and Burke 119)

Indeed, in less than a year's time, the enterprising Joseph Cheever had set up a dram shop on Smuttynose (Randall and Burke xx).

2.2. The Isles of Shoals: 1600 to 1840

Thomas Laighton was not the first settler seeking to re-define his life at the Isles of Shoals, nor would he be the last. The earliest known written history of the Shoals is

believed to date to 1605, when a French ship, whose company included geographer Samuel Champlain, observed the mouth of the Piscataqua River and some of the islands (Bardwell 19).

In 1614, Captain John Smith explored and mapped the Gulf of Maine coast, naming it New England (Rutledge, TMO 11). Smith came across the Shoals and named them "Smuths Isles or "Smiths Isles." He described the islands as replete with "barren rocks, the most overgrowne with such shrubs and sharpe whins you can hardly passé them; without either grasse or wood but three or foure short shrubby old Cedars" (qtd. in Rutledge, TMO 13). In 1623, Smith and a small group of entrepreneurs in England divided up Smith's map into 20 lots for the purpose of acquiring patent rights from King James. Smith's lot was the area comprising Smith's Isles. His four attempts to return to the islands to establish a settlement were thwarted by bad weather, pirates or shipwreck (Rutledge, TMO 13).

Englishman Christopher Levett's 1623 account of the islands notes the thin layer of soil covering the islands, the lack of trees and the excellent fishing grounds around the islands. In 1629, John Mason and Sir Fernando Gorges secured land grants from the Royalist British government for large amounts of land in Maine and New Hampshire. These grants also included the Isles of Shoals. At the Shoals, Mason and Gorges set up a short-lived business venture, the Laconia Company, which produced trade goods to ship to Europe. In 1633 the company failed and the joint estate was split between the two partners, neither of whom wanted to give up claim to the Isles of Shoals (Jenness 68). The islands were divided in half. The northern half—Hog, Malaga, Smuttynose, Duck

and Cedar Islands—went to Gorges. The southern half—Star, White, Londoners and Seavey Islands—were given to Mason (Randall and Burke xvi; Jenness 68). The islands are still divided today according to this settlement. Appledore (formerly Hog), Malaga, Smuttynose, Duck and Cedar Islands are in Maine, and the rest are in New Hampshire.

Fishermen most assuredly sailed into the Shoals' harbor long before John Smith. But no permanent settlement was ever intentionally established on the Shoals; settlement came about due to the fishing and shipping industry. Fishermen and businessmen erected small but permanent shelters on the islands, especially on Hog, Star and Smuttynose. William Pepperell, father of Sir William Pepperell, made his early fortune as a resident on Hog Island before he moved to Kittery, Maine (Randall and Burke xvii). The Shoals were an attractive place to settle because of bountiful fishing grounds and isolation from a potentially troublesome Native American population.

In 1652, Massachusetts annexed the state of Maine. The Shoalers petitioned for self-determination by establishing the township of Apledoore (Appledore) for the purpose of "regulating their towne affairs" (Jenness 102). The petition was granted in 1661. In 1679, New Hampshire became a royal province of England under the presidency of a former Shoals' merchant, John Cutt. In 1682 the township of Appledore was dissolved (Jenness 103). The Council of New Hampshire reported in 1682 that the Shoals were not under any government at all (Jenness 126), much to the satisfaction of the islanders who continued to ignore orders to pay taxes, to appoint a Representative to the New Hampshire General Assembly, and to build a meetinghouse on the northern islands (Jenness 126; Bardwell 25). Most Shoalers were living on Hog and Smuttynose and

subject to Massachusetts taxes which they considered unfair. At least 40 families moved from Hog to Star Island around 1679 or 1680, most likely to escape a tax imposed by Massachusetts on the northern portion of the Shoals (Rutledge, Isles 26-27).

In 1653, Shoalers built a stone fort on the western hill of Star Island overlooking the harbor. By 1692, the fort was in ruins. Fearing Indian raids and other possible attacks by the French, the Shoalers petitioned the government to have the fort rebuilt and restocked. The fort was rebuilt to a size of 50 square feet. The only documented Indian attack at the Shoals occurred in 1724, when Indians came down the coast and terrorized many of the settlements (Bardwell 25; Jenness 122-23).

For more than 150 years, enterprising island fishermen dominated the coastal fish market through a product called dunfish. Dunfish, made through a process called dunning, involved drying and curing fish on wooden frames. These fish sold for three to four times the price of other fish on the market (Rutledge, Isles 9-10). The islands also served as a thriving seaport for transatlantic ships to unload and reload cargo and as a distribution point from which goods were transported to mainland locations.

It is no wonder that this activity also attracted the western world's most famous pirates. According to Jenness, the islanders were probably indulgent and "sometimes friendly and serviceable in their intercourse with the numerous pirate ships which visited their harbor" (128). Captains Teach (known as Blackbeard), Scott and Quelch are three authentic pirates known to have visited the Shoals. The islands are said to hold hidden treasure by some of these pirates. It also is said that Blackbeard took his last bride to the Shoals around 1720 for their honeymoon and left her on Smuttynose to guard his

treasure, never to return (Bardwell 35). Thaxter, in Among the Isles of Shoals, recounts many of these stories and legends.

In 1715, the township of Gosport on Star Island was created and named by the New Hampshire Provincial Assembly (Bardwell 25). The total population of the Shoals ranged from 600 to around 1,000 until the beginning of the Revolutionary War. The independent Shoalers prospered in a community that seemed outside the bounds of civilization, much like a western U.S. frontier town in the 1800s. The continued presence of ministers did little to discourage the lawlessness, intemperance and boorish behavior of the islanders.

"The Shoalers had an interesting way of containing their sinfulness through the redemptive function of the church," observes local historian and photographer Peter Randall (Randall and Burke xviii). They would confess their sins at church and be forgiven by the church community. The Shoalers also resisted any attempts to establish law and order or to collect taxes. They repeatedly refused requests to send a representative to the New Hampshire General Assembly and sometimes assaulted police officers who attempted to restore discipline to the islands. Jenness suggests that the Shoals were generally ignored by public officials until 1851, when a Democratic legislature admitted their representative to the New Hampshire House.

> This indifference, or rather dislike towards all established authority, was a very natural characteristic of the motley shifting community of fishermen, seal hunters, sailors, smugglers and picaroons, who made the Isles of Shoals their rendezvous, and their home. Too remote from the mainland to

> be within effective reach of the feeble governments established there; able to set the law and its officers at open defiance, or to elude them by a ready escape into the open sea, these rude and hardy men would naturally despise all courts and their minions, and would come to look to their own sturdy right arms alone for the redress of grievances. (128-29)

The Reverend John Tucke was called to Star Island in 1731. A clergyman and physician, Tucke served for 40 years and was well respected by the islanders. He brought sobriety as well as law and order to the islands during his ministry. Accurate records of births, deaths and marriages were kept. His death in 1773 marked the end of an era on the islands. The fort was dismantled and the meetinghouse, torn down for fuel by a group of fishermen in 1790, lay in ruins (Randall and Burke 72).

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, the Shoalers were ordered by the U.S. colonial government to vacate the islands. Some wealthier Shoalers actually floated their houses across the ocean to York or Kittery. John Wentworth, the last royal governor of New Hampshire, fled to the islands and later sailed to England (Bardwell 29). Although some accounts suggest that the islands were completely vacated, Celia Thaxter suggests that some Shoalers defiantly remained throughout the war.

> Those who remained, with a few exceptions, were among the most ignorant and degraded of the people, and they went rapidly down into untold depths of misery. They burned the meeting-house and gave themselves up to quarreling, profanity, and drunkenness, till they became almost barbarians...In no place of the size has there been a greater

absorption of "rum" since the world was made. (Shoals 50-51)

In 1783, some people returned to the islands, perhaps seeking a better life than on the mainland. Dudley Tyng, collector of the port of Newburyport, visited the islands in 1799. He counted 102 inhabitants, "miserable Huts" and "deplorable ignorance." Tyng estimated that only about 25 percent of the population was literate and that only a few could even write their names. He wrote, "I am convinced they are as wretched a little community as ever excited the Charity of Man..." (qtd. in Randall and Burke xix).

Tyng's report to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North America initiated them sending a missionary to the Shoals, which they did for 50 years. The missionaries sent back reports on their work on the islands which have added much to the historical records of the early to mid-19th century of the Shoals. Tyng also initiated and supervised the construction of a new meetinghouse on Star Island. It was completed and dedicated on November 24, 1800 (Randall and Burke 74). The structure still stands today.

Reuben Moody, a theological student who accepted a three-month appointment as schoolteacher on Star Island in 1822, took note of the islanders' habits in his journal. He describes a man of about 70 continually swearing and running at everyone he saw, a mother with an infant "with a stone in her hand and an oath on her tongue," and an old man who drank 40 gallons of rum in a year's time (qtd. in C. Thaxter, Shoals 51-52). Moody estimates that the 65 islanders and 16 hired men imbibed more than 600 gallons of rum in less than three months (Randall and Burke 46; Jenness 159).

In 1855, Rev. J. Mason's report to the Society for Propagating the Gospel, etc.,

gave this account:

> The kind of business which the people pursue affects unfavorably their habits, physical, social and religious. Family discipline is neglected; religious duties in the household performed (if attended to at all), irregularly and in haste; and much time, apparently wasted, is spent in watching for favorable indications to pursue their calling...Furthermore, unconscious of any impropriety, they have sought the missionary to mow their grass, file their saws, repair their clocks, pull their teeth and make coffins for the dead. I speak of these insignificant matters only to give you an insight into some peculiarities of this people...To withdraw those humane Christlike influences, which your Society have...exerted on this population, however slight the impressions felt, would be ruinous. Their degeneracy into a kind of civilized heathenism would be rapid. (qtd. in Jenness 161)

On October 12, 1831, there was a public auction of three of the islands (Hog, Smuttynose and Malaga) which were owned by Benjamin Haley. They were bought by John Smiley, who sold them to Thomas Laighton and Joseph Cheever in 1839 (R. Thaxter 1-3).

2.3 Celia Laighton Thaxter: Early Years at the Shoals

White Island is one of the smallest of the Isles of Shoals, at approximately twenty acres. The original lighthouse on the island was built in 1820. The Laightons lived in a small house connected to the lighthouse by a covered walkway. Visitors were infrequent;

supplies for the lighthouse and provisions for the family were delivered two to three times a year. Laighton was supplied an 18-foot sailboat and a dory. In good weather, he sailed to the other islands or to Portsmouth, sometimes accompanied by family members. The difficult, often inaccessible, landing at White Island made travel difficult. Their sense of isolation was particularly keen during the long winter months when, as Celia later notes, there would often be no communication with the mainland for weeks. Even today, weather conditions often preclude travel to and from the islands.

To prepare for the winter, the family laid in a large supply of food and goods. The storeroom of the lighthouse was packed with provisions. Beef and mutton were hung in the lower story of the lighthouse (C. Thaxter, Shoals 122). During the first winter, there was a ferocious storm that washed away several boats and destroyed the covered walk to the lighthouse. The family's hens and henhouses were washed away. They saved the cow by bringing her into the kitchen (R. Thaxter 10).

Eliza Laighton was a dominant figure in the family--"a woman of remarkable good sense and strong physique" according to one historian (Stearns 226). Rutledge describes her as stoic, cheerful, competent, courageous and a devoted mother and wife (Isles 65). Eliza's cooking skills and disposition would later prove to be strong business assets. She would take an active role in the family's hotel business and, with her two sons, would continue to operate the business after her husband's death. The islanders were very fond of her. She, in turn, helped them when they were sick or in trouble (Laighton 14).

As the oldest child and only daughter, Celia and her mother were very close.

Eliza went to Portsmouth once a year to purchase cloth to sew clothes. Sometimes Celia would go with her—one of her apparently infrequent trips to the mainland during childhood (Laighton 14).

Laighton's original two-year appointment as lighthouse keeper lasted until 1847. During that time, he continued his business interests in Portsmouth and served two years as an administrative official on the Board of Selectmen for the City of Portsmouth (Rutledge, Isles 67). As previously stated, he served in the New Hampshire Senate from 1839 to 1840. One account indicates that the family moved inland, to Portsmouth or Concord perhaps, during this time (R. Thaxter 19). It is more likely that the Laighton family remained on the island in the care of other family and friends.

Laighton also started a wholesale fishing business, employing tenants and family members, including Eliza's brother William, who lived on Appledore (Laighton 13). The family's residence alternated between White Island and Smuttynose for a few years between 1841 and 1847. On Smuttynose, the family lived in a large house built by Samuel Haley that had once operated as "The Mid-Ocean House of Entertainment." With his wife's help, Laighton reopened the house to guests in 1846.

Celia and her brothers were educated at home by their father, who taught them to read and write. Much of Celia's schooling was in the oral tradition, through recitation and rote memorization. She memorized entire poems of favorite poets such as Alfred Tennyson. Celia grew to develop a strong interest in poetry and writing. But nature was also a teacher. Through interaction with the natural environment, Celia developed an eye for detail and an ear for language that would later prove beneficial in her writing and

artistic pursuits.

The Laighton children played on the long covered walk between the lighthouse and the house, danced after sandpipers on the beach and made crude boats from driftwood and set them adrift in the ocean. Celia maintained a small garden plot in which she grew African marigolds (C. Thaxter, Shoals 133). She collected seaweed and preserved it in albums (Curry 41). She helped her father with lighting the lantern in the lighthouse. The family lacked for human company most of the winter, but occupied themselves with books, plants, pets and each other. Spring brought company from the other islands and from the mainland, as well as deliveries of letters, newspapers and magazines.

Celia would later describe her childhood years as idyllic.

> I do not think a happier triad ever existed than we were, living in that profound isolation. It takes so little to make a healthy child happy; and we never wearied of our few resources. (Shoals 121)

Laighton's business and political associates, including Franklin Pierce (who later became U.S. President from 1853 to 1857) and New Hampshire Governor John Page, made occasional visits to the islands (Rutledge, Isles 72). After the Laightons opened up the inn on Smuttynose in 1846, they were visited by a group of friends from Newburyport--Nathaniel Hale and his sister Susan, with John Greenleaf Whittier's sister Lizzie and her friend Margie Curzon. They stayed on the island several days. When Lizzie Whittier slipped on the rocks and hurt her back, Celia helped take care of her. This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship among Margie Curzon, Lizzie Whittier and

Celia (R. Thaxter 18).

2.4 The Harvard Intellectuals

On the mainland, the Boston area was a hotbed of intellectual and cultural activity. Although English authors such as Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning dominated the literary scene, American authors such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (a young professor at Harvard), Edgar Allan Poe and Ralph Waldo Emerson were publishing and gaining recognition in the Boston area literary community. Americans were in search of a collective identity of their own, not just as an appendage of British culture.

Harvard College was at the locus of much of this activity. Henry David Thoreau had graduated from Harvard in 1840 and was beginning to advocate civil disobedience in Concord. Higginson's cousin Ellery Channing (who would become a Unitarian minister) had dropped out of Harvard to live in a cabin on the Merrimack. Harvard also spawned the growth of Transcendentalism, a philosophy and a literary, religious and social movement that began among Unitarians in New England, reaching its peak in the 1840s.

The strong connection between the American Unitarian movement and the American literary renaissance has been noted by Buell. According to Buell's research, about one-quarter of all creative writers in New England from the early to mid-1800s were Unitarians at some time in their lives, including half of the writers who would be considered "major."

> As numerous scholars have shown, the Unitarians were well positioned to play a leading role within the region as writers and tastemakers because of

> their status as the liberal wing of its best educated and most socially prestigious denomination, a denomination which at the beginning of the nineteenth century still enjoyed a sizeable majority in number of churches throughout the region. In New England's intellectual capital, Boston, the liberal presence was especially strong and conspicuous. ("Literary Significance" 163-65)

In Cambridge, three men who would later become good friends of Celia and her family were part of a group of college-age intellectuals who called themselves "The Brothers and Sisters." The Brothers and Sisters included Levi's cousin Maria White and her fiancé James Russell Lowell, Edward Everett Hale, Sam Longfellow (brother of the poet), and sometimes Henry David Thoreau. The group gathered at Elizabeth Peabody's bookstore in Boston for dramatic readings and discussions on books by Emerson, Browning, Tennyson and others. Peabody's bookstore was a gathering place for Transcendentalists and intellectuals in Boston. At the same time, Margaret Fuller was holding discussions at the bookstore with female intellectuals and started publishing a newsletter on Transcendentalism called "The Dial."

"The Dial" was edited by people who eventually called themselves the Transcendental Club. One of the editors was George Ripley, a Unitarian minister and Harvard graduate, who preached in Boston. He proposed to the club to start a new community that would adopt a new system of social life based on Transcendentalist principles, in contrast to the Calvinistic thought that prevailed in New England at that time. Labor would be honored, and no religious creeds would be adopted.

From 1841 through 1847, the community of Brook Farm flourished in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. Some of Celia's and Levi's friends and acquaintances would spend time at the community (Codman 137). Nathaniel Hawthorne was one of the earliest settlers; he left and returned to Boston after a year, finding the manual labor and surroundings to be less than satisfying to his taste.

> When he [Hawthorne] went to Brook Farm, he thought that his manual labor might in a small way do a trifle towards aiding the formation of the ideal state, and evidently felt that in his leisure hours he could compose, write for magazines, and the like; but the hard, unwonted though self-imposed labor, the peculiar surroundings, the buzz and hum of the large family in which he could not fail to take an interest, distracted him from his purpose...He could not put his mind to his special work. The seclusion in which he had worked before, he could not find, and though "no one intruded on him," as he says, yet he was not in his best element. (Codman 20)

Up until that time, events on the mainland seemingly had little influence on the Shoalers. As Celia wrote, newspaper accounts of current events such as the war in Mexico and the Irish famine were read, "but the fate of Red Riding Hood was much more near and dreadful to us" (Shoals 123). That was about to change.

2.5 Higginson, Weiss and Thaxter

Among other visitors to the Shoals between 1843 and 1847 were three graduates of Harvard College, former classmates and good friends, who became well-acquainted

with the Laightons. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, with multiple talents and ambitions, would later become a Unitarian clergyman, outspoken abolitionist and advocate for women's rights, contributor to magazines such as The Atlantic Monthly and The Nation, and mentor to Emily Dickinson. John Weiss, a dramatist and humorist, would become a Unitarian minister and author of several books, including a biography of the noted Unitarian minister Theodore Parker. Levi Lincoln Thaxter would become a business partner of Thomas Laighton, tutor to the Laighton children, and Celia's husband.

Higginson was two years younger than his Harvard classmates. He and Levi Thaxter met in 1839 at Harvard and became best friends for the next several years. After graduating from Harvard in 1841, Higginson was still trying to find himself, and his strong-willed, opinionated mother was pushing him to get settled. He enrolled in Harvard Divinity School in the fall of 1843, graduating in 1847.

> Intellectuals in Cambridge were as common as blackberries; the naïve, sentimental interest in how the other half lives which was a strong motivating factor in the Brook Farm experiment was powerful in Higginson during his youth. For years he cherished vague dreams of being a mechanic, a carpenter or a blacksmith...And all his life he experienced a subconscious bond with the eccentric, the irrational, the extreme. (Wells 20-1)

Levi Lincoln Thaxter was a scholar of Greek literature and in the poetry of Robert Browning. He had graduated from Harvard in 1843 and from Harvard Law School in 1845. Born in 1824, Levi's ancestors were prominent in Massachusetts history and

traditionally graduates of Harvard College. Intellectual, gifted, sensitive and introspective, Levi—like his friend Higginson—struggled to find a career suitable to his talents and inclinations. His father, an affluent banker in Watertown, Massachusetts (outside of Boston), tried to convince his oldest son to follow in his footsteps. But Levi spent most of his younger years "in fruitless efforts to harmonize his lofty aspirations with the stubborn facts about him" (Stearns 229). As Higginson later wrote (about Levi) to Annie Fields:

> But in youth he was a master of the revels, full of fun and frolic; and his great desire was to be an actor and he spent a year in New York studying, to his father's great dismay. You speak of his deep attachment to his parents; it may have been so to his mother, but certainly not to his father, a rather grim country lawyer whose only desire was to make Levi the same, and who clucked after him like a hen who has hatched ducks. (29)

Perhaps influenced by his circle of friends in Cambridge, Levi developed a passion for the poetry of Robert Browning. Intending to pursue a career in the dramatic arts, he studied elocution with Charles Kean in New York City from 1845 to 1846. After an unsuccessful year in New York, Levi returned to Cambridge and "idled about Cambridge more aimlessly than Wentworth [Higginson] himself" (Wells 48).

The exact date of Levi's first visit to the Shoals is still not well established. Rutledge places him at the Shoals during the summer of 1846, when he stayed at the inn on Smuttynose (Isles 70, 81). Laighton invited Levi over to White Island for tea, and three days later, he was invited to board with the Laightons at the lighthouse. Vallier

records his first visit to the Shoals in 1843, right after graduating from college, to recover from anxiety and depression (C. Thaxter, Poems 11). It is more certain that Levi visited the Shoals in April 1847, staying four weeks. After this visit, he wrote to Laighton:

> And often I think of the lighthouse islands and those who dwell there; and then come musings and wonderings about the future, and with them what seems conviction that the mutations of life will sometime bring me to those favorite rocks as a central and lasting abiding place. (qtd in Rutledge, Isles 73)

2.6 The Laighton-Thaxter Partnership

Levi's friendship with Thomas Laighton soon developed into a business partnership to build a hotel on Appledore Island. His father's bank account and Levi's circle of friends were undoubtedly very attractive to Laighton. The islands, in turn, provided an anchor and a sense of purpose for Levi's life. The task of "civilizing" and cultivating the islands appealed to his idealism, as Higginson (referring to Tennyson's poem "Locksley Hall") notes in this 1847 letter to his mother:

> Levi popped in, on his way to the Shoals. He and Mr. Leighton [sic] have bought the most beautiful of islands; are going to bring it under cultivation, have a boarding house for invalids and aesthetic visitors, and do something to civilize the inhabitants of the other islands. It is really quite the "Locksley Hall" idea "to burst all links of habit," etc. He is in high spirits with the plan. (24)

With funds borrowed from Levi's father and capital secured by Laighton in a real

estate deal, construction of the hotel on Appledore Island began in the fall of 1847. Lumber ordered from Maine was loaded on one of the Laighton Brothers' ships and delivered to Appledore. Workers were hired from the mainland. Laighton resigned from the lighthouse keeper post and moved the family to Appledore in October, having built a small cottage on the island. The North Cottage, built earlier by Joseph Laighton and William Rymes (Eliza's brother), would be Levi's residence (Rutledge, Isles 74). Levi had agreed to tutor the Laighton children in addition to overseeing construction of the hotel and probably remained on Appledore for most of the next year.

The Appledore House opened to guests on June 15, 1848 (Rutledge, Isles 75). According to one account, the hotel attracted very little business its first season--mainly Levi's sister Lucy and other friends and relatives (Wells 63). Higginson and his wife, Mary, spent a few days at the Appledore House that summer. Mary was less than impressed with the experience. The winds were against them on the voyage to the islands and she was reportedly seasick the entire time. Upon arriving at the Appledore House, she found the fishermen's stone cottages to be far more charming than the salt-box type of hotel structure. She wrote in her journal:

> Mr. Laighton...is extremely unpleasing...and Levi did not appear happy and satisfied. He feels great responsibility and anxiety—it is an awful life for a young man of refinement and cultivation...I pitied him very much. Mr. Laighton is lame so that Levi appears to do more than his share—and while it was crowded he did a great deal of work—cleaning knives, etc....this sort of thing can hardly be agreeable to him. (qtd. in Rutledge,

Isles 76)

2.7 Celia's Engagement and Marriage

In the fall of 1848, the Laighton/Thaxter partnership began to fall apart and plans were made to dissolve the agreement. In the meantime, Levi had fallen in love with thirteen-year-old Celia, much to the dismay of some family and friends. Higginson did not like Celia; he thought she was silly, immature and affected—and far too young. Laighton also may have had some misgivings. Rutledge speculates that Levi asked for Celia's hand in marriage (Isles 77). According to tradition, Laighton flew into a rage and ordered him off the island. Levi's response was that he would build a hut and live on the island until Celia was old enough to make up her own mind. Nothing has been found to date that would substantiate these accounts.

On February 2, 1849, details of the Laighton-Thaxter partnership dissolution were signed (Rutledge, Isles 78). Levi retained ownership of the North Cottage while Laighton held onto the public house and hotel. Levi continued to reside part-time in the north cottage and continued his tutoring responsibilities. Much later, Higginson observed that the hotel venture was a "foolish enterprise" for Levi, who had no aspirations of converting the islanders religiously. However, Levi was apparently fond of the islanders and had "a special pet" named John, for whom he later named his second son (Higginson 29).

Levi spent the summer of 1849 on the islands. He visited Higginson that summer, after which Higginson wrote his mother:

> We had last week a visit from Levi...he lives in a house by himself with

> his man John, a native, inseparable from him—like Robinson Crusoe precisely and very happy. You should have heard his accounts of his cooking and other experiences and our shouts of laughter. (24)

From the fall of 1849 through the late spring of 1850, Celia attended Mount Washington Female Seminary in South Boston while Levi lived at home in Watertown. Celia visited the Thaxter family and other family friends in the Boston area. Higginson wrote that Celia had made a favorable impression on people in Watertown. Lucy Thaxter had observed that their father had predicted the impending marriage and was reconciled to it, although not altogether happy (Rutledge, Isles 78).

Celia returned to the islands in the summer of 1850. According to island visitor Sam Longfellow, Celia and Levi were engaged at that time (Rutledge, Isles 78). Higginson, Weiss and other friends of Levi spent an extended period at the Shoals that summer, where they engaged in boyish pranks and antics.

> Meantime little Weiss is uttering all sorts of maledictions; he declares Sam [Longfellow] and I depressed him merely because we preached on Sunday; but I wonder what you would think of his depression. Never a schoolboy in vacation was so full of glee, and his wild pranks with Levi are perpetually startling us, day and night. At night they have fireworks and get up at midnight blazing explosions on the staircase, with a mock alarm of fire, extinguished by themselves, with immense shouting and triumph, "with real water." By day, the sudden shrieking of a child is heard from Weiss's room. We are astounded, while Levi rushing up

> reappears with the little man in his arms, his wonderful face contorted into an entirely infantile wretchedness. And so they go on... (Higginson, 24-25)

Although Higginson's opinion of Celia had mellowed somewhat, he still found her unappealing, with "no positive traits," according to a journal entry (25).

Celia Laighton and Levi Thaxter were married in the south parlor of Appledore House on September 30, 1851, after the close of the hotel season. Celia was 16 and Levi was 14 years her senior. They were married by John Weiss, who by then was minister of New Bedford Unitarian Church. "We had a merry time," Levi later wrote, "and then I took my dear wife home in the beautiful night, bright and clear with stars and a growing moon" (qtd. in Rutledge, Isles 80).

3. Inland and Island Lives

Celia Thaxter probably had little premonition, at the time of her marriage, as to how fragmented and complex her life would become. For the rest of her life, she would struggle with the demands of her extended family and her own needs and desires. Celia spent her time in two primary locations—at the Shoals and in the city—and these places began to take on their own identity within the context of her life. In Newtonville, Massachusetts, where the couple eventually settled, Celia soon felt "land-locked." Tied down with three young children and a multitude of domestic chores by the age of 23, she had never had the opportunity to "bloom" on her own, as Levi had. It is no wonder that she came to resent him for being trapped in a domestic environment that, for many reasons, was not fulfilling enough for her. Celia grew increasingly homesick for the Shoals—a place where she and her children would have room to run. Celia's island and inland places would continue to pull her in many different directions.

3.1 Early Married Years

Celia and Levi Thaxter moved often during the first few years of their marriage. They spent most of the fall and winter months inland, probably in at least one of the houses owned by Levi's father in Watertown (R. Thaxter 37). Summers usually found Levi and Celia in residence at the Shoals, where they lived in Levi's cottage on Appledore.

During the winter months of 1854 and 1855, the Thaxters stayed in a house owned by the Curzon family in Newburyport. The Curzons were good friends of the Thaxters and the Higginsons; one of the daughters, Lizzie, had been a member of the

Brook Farm community (Codman 137). The property, called Artichoke Mills or Curzon's Mills, was situated at the confluence of the Artichoke and Merrimack Rivers.

Celia's and Levi's first son, Karl, was born on Appledore in the summer of 1852. The baby may have suffered some injury during childbirth. He grew up to walk with a slight limp and suffered from emotional disorders, including attacks of violent temper and severe depression, which began when he was a young boy. Karl's disabilities took a huge toll on the entire family, especially on Celia, who would shoulder much of the physical and emotional burden of his care.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, who had recently published The Scarlet Letter, was a guest at the Appledore House in September 1852. He was probably accompanied by his friend and college classmate Franklin Pierce, who had just been nominated as Democratic candidate for president and had commissioned Hawthorne to write his campaign biography. Hawthorne spent two weeks exploring the islands with Levi and making entries in his journal. Hawthorne's observations of the Shoals later were included in his book, American Notebooks. The book contains the only known account of Celia's and Levi's lives during this time period. In this excerpt, Levi had invited him to their cottage to drink applejack and to meet his wife.

> We found Mrs. Thaxter sitting in a neat little parlor, very simply furnished, but in good taste. She is not now, I believe, more than eighteen years old, very pretty, and with the manners of a lady,--not prim and precise, but with enough of freedom and ease. The books on the table were "Pre-Raphaelitism," a tract of spiritual mediums, etc. There were several

> shelves of books on one side of the room, and engravings on the walls. (415)

Hawthorne probably found a kindred soul in Levi Thaxter, whom he later described as "a peripatetic man of no settled occupation in later life" (666). Indeed, Hawthorne's experience at Brook Farm bore some resemblance to Levi Thaxter's hotel venture. For both men, the reality of manual labor and hard work got in the way of impractical yet well-intentioned ideals. In this journal entry, Hawthorne's intuition as to the future of Levi's and Celia's relationship was prescient.

> I spent last evening, as well as part of the evening before, at Mr. Thaxter's. It is certainly a romantic incident to find such a young man on this lonely island; his marriage with the pretty Miranda is true romance. In our talk we have glanced over many matters, and, among the rest, that of the stage, to prepare himself for which was his first motive in coming hither. He appears quite to have given up any dreams of that kind now. What he will do on returning to the world, as his purpose is, I cannot imagine; but, no doubt, through all their remaining life, both he and she will look back to this rocky ledge, with its handful of soil, as to a Paradise. (437-8)

Hawthorne undoubtedly saw many parallels between Celia and the fictional character of Miranda, King Prospero's daughter in Shakespeare's romantic comedy, The Tempest. It is logical to assume that Levi Thaxter, a dramatist and student of classical literature, would not only have thought about these parallels, but consciously sought to interject himself into the real-life drama that was playing on stage at the Shoals and re-

write the script. In Shakespeare's drama, Prospero is the former Duke of Milan who has been exiled to an enchanted island for twelve years. He is very learned and uses his time on the island to study magical arts, which enables him to rule over the island and command some of the natural phenomena around it. Miranda, his fifteen-year-old daughter who grew up on the island, is a totally innocent and ethereal personality—tender-hearted, unsophisticated, and entirely too trusting of other people, freely revealing her feelings to everyone. Levi Thaxter even bears some resemblance to another main character in Shakespeare's drama, Prince Ferdinand. Ferdinand is noble and well-bred, with an unblemished reputation (like Levi, as later described by Higginson). Ferdinand and Miranda fall in love. Although Prospero seeks Ferdinand out as the perfect spouse for his daughter, he pretends to disapprove of their love and makes him do menial tasks (as Levi did during his partnership with Laighton) to test his character. Ferdinand and Miranda end up together, Prospero's rivals are pardoned and forgiven, rightful order is restored in the dukedom, and the curtain comes down on the stage.

Thaxter would later be identified with another fictional Miranda. In Margaret Fuller's book, Woman in the Nineteenth Century, published in 1875, Miranda was "a child of the spirit," the eldest child of a father who firmly believed in the equality of the sexes. As Fuller wrote:

> She took her place easily, not only in the world of organized being, but in the world of mind. A dignified sense of self-dependence was given as all her portion, and she found it a sure anchor. Herself securely anchored, her relations with others were established with equal security. She was

> fortunate in a total absence of those charms which might have drawn to her bewildering flatteries, and in a strong electric nature, which repelled those who did not belong to her, and attracted those who did. With men and women her relations were noble,--affectionate without passion, intellectual without coldness. The world was free to her, and she lived freely in it... (38-40)

In reality, Celia was more "like a wild thing" than Margaret Fuller's Miranda, according to Annie Fields, who would become Celia's best friend (Authors 100). Not only did Celia dislike those who were unlovable to her, she (like her father) often made little effort to flatter or please them. Because of the fact that writers are often vulnerable to personal criticism, she undoubtedly set up her own emotional barriers to deal with any hurt and pain caused by well-meaning strangers or friends.

Levi was appointed to an interim ministry position on Star Island by Rev. Andrew Peabody of the Portsmouth Unitarian Church from 1853 to 1854 (Rutledge, Isles 82). The couple, along with Karl, lived in the island parsonage. At the end of the summer season, the Thaxters moved inland to Curzon's Mill in Newburyport. Their second son, John, was born in Newburyport in November 1854.

In the fall of 1855, Levi and Oscar Laighton were caught in a storm while sailing back to the islands from Portsmouth. They were thrown onto the rocks of Appledore by the waves of the sea. Celia later recounted the incident in her poem, "All's Well." According to at least one account, Levi never set foot on the islands again until 1879 and insisted that his family live on the mainland (Older 13). To a public that frowned upon

divorce, the story would provide an explanation as to Levi's and Celia's increasing physical separations in the later years of their marriage. Even though Levi's visits to the Shoals were infrequent after then, reports that he avoided the islands altogether until 1879 are exaggerated. Levi did sell his share of Appledore, including the North Cottage, back to Laighton in October 1858. However, Rutledge notes that Celia and Levi were at the Shoals during the summer of 1857 (Isles 83). Correspondence in 1866 from Cedric Laighton to Celia refers to Levi accompanying her to the Shoals, with a request for Levi to procure whiskey and gin for the hotel (McGill, Letters 117-8). Another letter from Cedric in May 1868 refers to an impending visit by Mr. Thaxter and Lony to the Shoals, as does another letter in October 1869 (McGill, Letters 131, 134).

3.2 Land-Locked

In 1856, Celia and Levi moved into a house on California Street in Newtonville, Massachusetts. Rutledge suggests that the house was given to them by Levi's father (Isles 117). Celia's inland life in the urban, sophisticated milieu of the Boston area was very different than her casual lifestyle at the Shoals. Levi's parents were much older and wealthier than her parents; their house was beautifully furnished and attended to by servants. Levi's two sisters, brother, uncle and cousins all lived nearby. His sister, Lucy, lived next door. Their friends were his friends—cultured, educated, intellectual and largely upper-class. Celia had no family nearby; her family remained at the Shoals year-round to run the hotel operation. She had much to learn and many expectations placed upon her.

At first, Celia took on her new roles with a childlike enthusiasm, almost as if she

were playing house. She was delighted to discover and experience new things and people. She immersed herself in books by Dante and Ruskin, sat knitting by the fire as Levi read out loud and whirled around in delight with the gift of a new bonnet. She and Levi went ice skating and sledding by the Artichoke River (R. Thaxter 48). She wrote of being "entirely happy" with Levi and the children (Letters 6).

But Thaxter's own sense of self, which never was fully developed before marriage, continued to erode as she gave of herself to others through caretaking and domestic responsibilities. The responsibilities and demands of motherhood weighed heavily on her. Celia's empathy and energy also made her vulnerable to the appeals and demands of family and friends. No wonder she longed for her childhood years and the relatively simpler life she had experienced at the Shoals. In 1857 she wrote to a friend:

> Little Celia is—not est. I sigh for her; the children sigh in chorus. If we could unite our sighs with yours for the same cause, what a breeze we should raise! (Letters 13)

In the early years of their marriage, Levi shouldered the responsibility of attending to his elderly parents in Watertown since his siblings had moved away. According to Celia's unpublished journal fragments found in the Portsmouth Athenaeum, Levi often traveled from Newtonville to Watertown, a distance of about six miles. Levi's father died in 1857; little has been found to date about his mother.

From 1854 to 1860, the Boston area was engulfed in a frenzy of literary, cultural and social activist activity. The Thaxters were in the middle of it. Ralph Waldo Emerson was delivering lectures on Transcendentalism. The Reverend Theodore Parker preached

impassioned sermons on abolitionism. The Atlantic Monthly, the nation's first literary magazine, was launched in 1857 under the editorship of James Russell Lowell. Celia's letters to Lizzie Hoxie in 1857 are full of personal comments on Parker's sermons, Charlotte Brontë's and Robert Browning's poetry, Ruskin's paintings and Dr. Kane's Arctic adventure books (Letters 5-10). A new world was opening up to Celia, and she was anxious to experience as much of it as possible. She lamented that she was not one of the "elegant young ladies" with free time on their hands so that she could read more of the books she loved (Letters 10, 13).

Celia had grown up learning the value of hard work from her mother and father. As was customary for women in the mid-nineteenth century, she was primarily responsible for childcare and supervising the household affairs, although she had household help. But Celia's energy and vitality, coupled with a sense of duty and responsibility, undoubtedly caused her to overwork. Early in her marriage, she wrote:

> Oh, these exemplary housekeepers, how much they have to do! I feel as if I were sinning against my conscience when I write a letter on any day but Sunday, because it is inevitable that I should neglect some important duty to do it, and I never do do it except in a case of vital importance. It is a good thing, after steady trying, to have your husband pronounce you 'virtuous' when you are doing your best, but sometimes it's a great bore being exemplary. (Letters 4)

Over the years, she would voice complaints about housework in letters to friends. Yet her letters also reveal a certain amount of compulsiveness and anxiety about this

work, as if she were striving to meet others' expectations in a role for which she did not feel particularly well-suited. Although she may have felt as if she were play-acting in a larger drama on stage in Newtonville, she sometimes longed for a simpler, quieter life. She mentions a gift of a "very handsome" silver service from grandmother (most likely Levi's mother) but goes on to say that it is "very horrid to take care of." She says, "Give me my iron jug and iron spoon, say I with Mr. Thoreau" (Letters 17).

As Annie Fields notes, Celia valued the "dignity of labor" and the joy of doing things well (Authors 248). She grew up with a strong sense of duty and obligation, and thus did not shirk her responsibilities, although she clearly resented many of the things she had to do. Her personal struggles were compounded by Levi's impatient temperament and insensitivity to her domestic burdens. Celia would often bend to his wishes at the expense of maintaining peace in the household, thus sacrificing her own needs and desires in the process. She expressed her true feelings privately to only a few close women friends, while undoubtedly keeping up appearances in public. She tried desperately to reconcile herself to her inland life, turning her anger and hurt inward. There was a growing "disconnect" between her public and private selves, and between the dreams she may have had as a young girl and the reality of being a wife and mother.

> John and Karl have grand times out doors, and get dirtier than a whole dictionary can express. I do my own washing now, and think of you all the time, and get tired to death and half dead, but unlike you I fret and worry when things go wrong, and scold and fuss. Oh, for your patience! How mine takes wing and leaves me forlorn and ugly and horrid! How it seems

> as if the weary load of things one makes out to do, with such expenditure of strength and nerves and patience, goes for naught, no manner of notice ever taken of all that is accomplished; but if anything is left undone, ah me, the hue and cry that is raised! (Letters 9)

The same letter contains a more direct comment on Levi's temperament:

> Next winter we shall regularly set about Karly's education and a precious time we shall have of it, I expect. His papa hasn't any more patience than a teething boy, and of course will have everything his own way—I remember with a sort of agony being taught by him ages ago and faint in the prospect of seeing the children undergo something of the same torture! (qtd. in R. Thaxter 170)

For most of their married life, Levi was apparently not engaged in a salaried occupation. The generosity of friends and family (and a rather nice inheritance from his father) enabled the Thaxters to live comfortably but not luxuriously. According to Rutledge, Levi Thaxter, Sr. had left $25,000 to Levi and "the use and improvement of the estate where he now resides...use, rent, improvements and profits of store on Commercial Street in Boston and other real estate holdings" (Isles 83-4). Throughout their married life, Levi and Celia were cautious with money, although there was apparently enough money to finance the children's educations and to provide more than the basic necessities (e.g., a piano) for all of them. But as early as 1873, Celia wrote that she was "stockpiling" poems for future use if she needed money (Vallier, Poet 96). Levi likely left her little, if anything, after his death in 1884. In 1888, she wrote Annie:

> I write a poem for my kitchen stove, and another for my parlor carpet, and another for the parlor stove, and another for my sheets and pillowcases and so on. (qtd. in Vallier, Poet 96)

Both Celia and Levi were highly sensitive and creative, prone to moodiness and anxiety. They had common interests in nature, poetry and music and similar political and social convictions. But the responsibilities and hardships of everyday life took a toll on both of them. For Levi, much more than for Celia, it was difficult to cope with the demands and responsibilities of a family. Levi's health was never very good, either. He always had a "somewhat gloomy attitude" and later suffered from what doctors called rheumatism of the chest (R. Thaxter 170). His health problems would necessitate spending part of each winter in the south and summer in the north, away from Newtonville and the Shoals. He would later take long trips, sometimes with one or more of the boys, to collect ornithological specimens. Undoubtedly these trips, along with Celia's frequent travels to and from the Shoals, were a drain on the family's finances.

The Thaxters' third son, Roland (later nicknamed Lony), was born in Newtonville in 1858. Celia felt even more tied down to the house in Newtonville. In early 1859, as Levi was making preparations for a solo journey north, Celia planned to take her three boys to the Shoals. She wrote the following to Lizzie Hoxie:

> We are going to the island in March, for in the summer Levi proposes wandering off to Mount Desert or some such preposterous place. There can never be such a charming sea place as the islands; how can anybody want to go further? I do not, most certainly. (Letters 16)

3.3 Literary Success

In the winter of 1860, Celia received a letter from her brother Cedric full of memories of their childhood at the Shoals. The letter must have triggered a wave of homesickness in Celia. In response, she penned a poem and sent it to Cedric that May. Somehow the poem made its way to The Atlantic Monthly. Lowell left the poem in the files for his successor, James T. Fields. Fields published the poem in March 1861 with the title "Land-Locked." As was customary in those days, the author's name was omitted. The poem, for which Celia received a sum of $10, marked the beginning of her literary career. It was a remarkable first-time accomplishment. Celia found herself in the company of writers such as Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Longfellow, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Levi, who had never made any money from his creative efforts, probably had mixed emotions about his wife's success. In a letter to her family on Appledore dated February 25-28, 1861, Celia wrote:

> When I came home I showed it [the check] to him (the first mention of the existence of the "poem" which we had made to each other. "Well," he said, "didn't you expect it?" "It never occurred to me," I replied—and that was all. But he called to me after I had gone into the bedroom to say that a lady had congratulated him on the subject that day. I know very well what he would say if I asked him if he liked it. Yet I think he is pleased. I would rather so much that he would like it than anybody else—but if nothing else prevented, the fact of his Landlocking me himself would prevent. He wouldn't go to Susy's party. It is funny—he feels as if often he were

> invited because I am a sort of 'appendage' – such an absurd idea! The other day I brought him several messages from different people when I came out of Boston – 'Oh', he said, 'I'm getting quite into notice.' (qtd in Rutledge, Isles 86-87)

The poem attracted the attention of the Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier, who sought out Celia in the summer of 1861 at the Shoals only to find he had missed her by days. Whittier had first met Celia at the Shoals in 1842 when he had visited the Laighton family. In 1863, Whittier revisited Appledore and renewed his acquaintance with Celia (R. Thaxter 224). Whittier had many women friends who were writers, including Lucy Larcom, Lydia Marie Child and Sarah Orne Jewett. Larcom and Jewett would later become friends of Celia's. A social activist and one of the earliest abolitionists, Whittier also was involved in the reform of New England mental institutions, and for this reason he may have taken a personal interest in Karl Thaxter (Older 15). More than anyone else, Whittier encouraged Celia's writing. They became good friends and regular correspondents. In letters dated as early as 1867, Whittier was encouraging her to write prose about the Shoals, saying that they were very dramatic stories. Celia later told Whittier's biographer: "...his sympathy and interest in all I did were invaluable to me. He never gave me any peace till I wrote the books about the Shoals. 'It is thy kismet,' he said, 'thee must do it.'" (qtd. in Rutledge 131)

Throughout the 1860s, Celia continued to submit poems to Fields for publication in The Atlantic Monthly. Fields held the position of editor and owner of the magazine from 1861 to 1871. Born and raised in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Fields attended Rev.

Theodore Parker's Unitarian church in the Boston area. Fields was a full-fledged member of The Saturday Club, an exclusive group of men who met on the last Saturday of each month in Boston for social activities and intellectual discussions. Membership in the club, established in 1856, was by invitation only. Its early members were Louis Agassiz, Dana, Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Whittier, and Hawthorne—many of whom had Harvard and/or Unitarian connections (Emerson vii-viii). Fields also established the publishing firm of Fields, Osgood & Company in 1868. Encouraged by Annie, his wife, he was in the position to help launch the writing career of many women including Celia Thaxter. Annie Fields would grow to be one of Celia's dearest friends and regular correspondents.

Thaxter's most well-known poem today, "The Sandpiper," was published in The Atlantic Monthly in March 1864. Lack of confidence and time on Celia's part kept her from attempting prose for several years, in spite of urging by James Fields and others. She wrote him in 1862:

> I'm sorry I've as yet no prosaic manuscript for you, patience for a little longer. Meanwhile here are some verses which have been evolved among the pots and kettles, to which you are welcome, if they're good enough for you. Verses can grow where prose can't. (qtd. in R. Thaxter 65-6)

From the beginning of her literary career, Thaxter held true to her convictions about her literary voice in spite of editors' suggested revisions. In an early note to Fields at The Atlantic Monthly, Thaxter wrote:

> I thank you very much for the kind things you have said about my little poem, and am grateful for the trouble you took in looking it over and

> making suggestions. I am sorry I could not act upon them all. I am not good at making alterations. The only merit of my small productions lies in their straightforward simplicity, and when that bloom is rubbed off by the effort to better them, they lose what little good they originally possessed. I'm afraid you will not think the unconscious quotation from the "Ancient Mariner" remedied by the mere transposition of words, but I cannot alter it satisfactorily and say what I wish. If the first and fifth verses do not seem to you too objectionable, pray let them pass. (Letters 23)

The demands of the hotel business and ill health of Celia's parents would frequently summon her back to the Shoals, leaving some or all of her family behind in Newtonville for weeks or months at a time. In May 1866, Thomas Laighton (who had not been well for years) died at home on Appledore. That fall, Celia took her mother on a trip to the New Hampshire White Mountains. Cedric and Oscar Laighton continued to operate the hotel, and Eliza remained on the island mostly year-round. Eliza's health and spirits were in good order until late 1870, when she began to fail and made persistent appeals to Celia to visit. Celia continued to travel back and forth between the Shoals and Newtonville.

As Thaxter's popularity grew, she attracted the attention of unknown curiosity-seekers who traveled to the islands to meet her. Strangers would follow her around the island, peer in her windows and steal flowers from her gardens. Her friends served as bodyguards to keep intruders at an arm's length on Appledore (Stearns 243). She commented on these unpleasant experiences in an 1865 letter to Elizabeth Whittier:

> I am almost alone here – the crowd has thinned to two tables-full of people. All my immediate family are gone…Mr. Thaxter came from Mt. Desert last Saturday, and this Wednesday morning went home with our two youngest boys, so I am left alone with Karl, and it is so lovely to be alone—(not that I'm not fond of my family!) I've had such a long siege of people…If people would only let an unoffending Christian alone! But when an unknown creature in petticoats comes up to me and inquires if I am the "Rose of the Isles," a decided loathing of my kind possesses my soul. Dear friend, forgive my intolerance and uncharitableness—if you had passed through so much of that sort of thing as I have you, even you, I think, would lose patience. (Unpublished letter, CT to Elizabeth Whittier, 1865, found in Portsmouth Athenaeum.)

By the late 1860s, Celia had written and published several poems. In January 1867, Celia and Levi Thaxter, along with J. Appleton Brown and Longfellow, were guests at a dinner party given by James and Annie Fields in honor of Charles Dickens. Annie Fields's diary notes that "…Mrs. Thaxter's stories took strong hold on Dickens' fancy, and he told me afterward that when he awakened in the night he thought of her" (qtd. in R. Thaxter 82). In April 1867, the Thaxters dined at the Fieldses with Longfellow and his daughter Alice, William Morris Hunt and his wife, Emerson and his daughter Ellen, and Oliver Wendall Holmes (R. Thaxter 82-83). The now sought-after "Rose of the Isles" was at ease with this distinguished and accomplished group of writers.

Shortly after her first meeting with Dickens, Celia may have felt emboldened or

inspired enough to try her hand at prose. But she continued to have self-doubts about the caliber and direction of her writing, as revealed in the following letter to the editor of a children's magazine:

> I have many little stories to tell of various birds and beasts and if you like I will send them. Please let me know and will you not do me the favor to point out any great imperfections which may affect my production, for I'm entirely unused to writing prose, and feel as if I didn't know how to use the King's English. (qtd. in R. Thaxter 83)

Celia would eventually write and publish several stories and poems for children, all on nature-related subjects. These were compiled into a book, Stories and Poems for Children, copyrighted by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. in 1883 and 1895 and published by The Riverside Press.

3.4 Island and Inland Lives

By the late 1860s, Celia Thaxter was an established author with a growing reputation. Now she struggled to live up to those expectations in addition to her roles as mother, wife and daughter. In the mid- to late nineteenth century, writing and the creative arts were some of the most popular and respectable vocations open to women. But artists and writers, especially women, were almost on the fringes of respectability, as Gorsky notes (154). Economically, writing was a good career choice for women. Women could earn a good income by writing for newspapers and magazines, and this income helped support their families. But in general, it was less than desirable for women of middle- and upper-class status to work outside the home. While women of lower-class status worked

together with men in factories and in the fields, most genteel women did not work outside the home or for pay (Gorsky 12-13). Women's status and social class were determined by their fathers and husbands; many women married up for money or status. Home and family were idealized in popular literature, and the woman was expected to run the household and look after the children.

Although the women's movement helped establish conditions that made divorce more acceptable in the 19th century, it was still stigmatized as well as impractical for most women due to financial considerations (Gorsky 71). Marriage was supposed to define a woman's life, and she was expected to sacrifice herself and her happiness to care for her family. Women such as Celia Thaxter were swimming against the tide by combining marriage with a vocation, and having mixed success as a result.

From 1869 to 1877, the Thaxter family endured several separations, mainly due to Levi's and Eliza Laighton's health. Celia continued to help her mother with sewing and other chores associated with the hotel business while, at the same time, maintaining the household in Newtonville. Although her writing income allowed her to hire outside help, Celia contended with the "servant problem" like many middle- to upper-class women of her day. In addition, she frequently traveled back and forth between the Shoals and Newtonville, a distance of more than 50 miles (and six nautical miles), during a time when long-distance travel was slow and difficult. Celia's extraordinary physical stamina, self-reliance and determination made it possible to fulfill the many roles of expected of her, but left her feeling increasingly fragmented, with little energy or motivation to write. In March 1869, Celia wrote to a friend from the Shoals:

> Did you know Karl and I are moored here for seven months? Such is the remarkable fact, and Levi, Lony, and John are gone down to Jacksonville, or rather to the state of Florida generally...and then return...sometime in May and stop here for a while to examine the windfall of birds killed by the lighthouse in the spring, and then they are to pursue their way up north, to Nova Scotia or the coast of Labrador, still to pursue the unwary sea fowl and cure the skin thereof and bring it as a tribute to the feet of Science! Our house is let and we're houseless and homeless. (Letters 39-40)

In January 1870, Celia wrote again to Mrs. Hoxie from Newtonville:

> I don't see but we have got to become a kind of human shuttlecocks and battledores, for Levi must go south in the winter and fly north in the summer, from rheumatism in winter and from fever and ague in summer. He has been slowly gaining strength, but is far from well, and this morning began with another threatening of rheumatism which troubles me and makes me feel very anxious to have him off. He and Lony are to go together, they don't know where, perhaps St. Augustine. Did I tell you John is to live with the Folsoms in Dedham, and Karl and I go to the island at present at least? Levi means to come home in May, or just as soon as it is warm enough. Then heaven knows where he will go or what we shall do, but something will have to be arranged for next winter. "Come home" I say,--there won't be any more home, which makes me

feel forlorn. (Letters 40-43)

She later wrote of having to be in Newtonville "with my dear tyrant, Roland, when he is at home," instead of staying longer with friends in Boston, and that "it seems to be forever my lot to be between two inclinations or duties" (qtd. in R. Thaxter 124-25).

In late 1870, a young Hungarian boy came to live with the Thaxters and attended the Friends' school with Karl (R. Thaxter 86). Levi again traveled south for the winter. That year, Celia loaned her brothers a total of $2,300 for construction of an addition to the hotel on Appledore (McGill, Letters 136). Oscar and Cedric also bought out Celia's share of Appledore Island which she had inherited from her father (R. Thaxter 101).

In October 1871, Levi decided to try a winter in Newtonville, and for a while, the Thaxter family was reunited. Cedric and Eliza Laighton visited them in Newtonville after Christmas until the spring of 1872.

In 1872, Celia's first volume of poetry, Poems, was published by Houghton-Mifflin. Levi Thaxter paid $500 in publication expenses and secured the copyright on her behalf (Rutledge, Isles 101). That summer was very profitable for the hotel; the entire Laighton family had extra money to spend. Celia was able to pay for music lessons for John and Roland and to hire a maid. It is likely that she completed the manuscript for Among the Isles of Shoals that fall.

In January 1873, Celia visited her mother on Appledore, staying only a short time and hiring a Norwegian girl from Smuttynose as her companion for the next two months. The girl was employed only two months, until Celia's and Karl's next visit in March. This time, Celia stayed on, leaving Levi and the other boys in Newtonville with a

housekeeper. The Newtonville house soon fell into disarray.

The Laighton family's hotel business was undergoing dramatic changes as well. In 1872, John Poor (of Stickney and Poor's mustard and spices fame) bought out most of the property owners on Star Island and began to construct a rival hotel. The Oceanic Hotel opened for the 1873 season. The two hotels engaged in a spirited competition for summer guests, although they attracted very different clientele. Writers, artists, musicians flocked to the Appledore Hotel while the Oceanic Hotel had a "sportier clientele who followed the regattas and preferred...a livelier crowd on Star Island" (McGill, Star 1).

Because she lived close to Boston, Celia was often called upon by the Laightons to run errands, procure goods for the hotel and arrange for shipment to the Shoals. These tasks left Celia with even less time and energy to write.

In March 1873, one of the most notorious events of the Shoals' history occurred on Smuttynose at a time when Celia was on Appledore. Anethe and Karen Christiansen, two Norwegian women who had settled with their families on Smuttynose, were brutally murdered one night by a former boarder who allegedly rowed out from Portsmouth to rob the house while the men were away in Portsmouth. Two years later, Celia's explicit account of the events was published as "A Memorable Murder" in the Atlantic Monthly. The events were recently re-told in Anita Shreve's book, The Weight of Water.

The Smuttynose murders in 1873 only served to pique tourists' interest in the islands. At the end of the 1874 season, the Oceanic Hotel and other dwellings on Star Island burned to the ground. Poor rebuilt the hotel over the following year, and it re-opened for the 1875 season. At the end of the season, the hotel was bought by a

partnership of the Laighton brothers and their cousin Christopher Rymes for a sum of $100,000 (R. Thaxter 105). They continued to operate both hotels successfully for more than 40 years (Rutledge, Isles 103).

From late 1873 through 1877, Celia spent much of four consecutive winters at the Shoals with her aging mother, who was in ill health. In this letter to a friend in November 1873, the harsh winter weather at the Shoals is a correlate to her feelings:

> Perhaps you don't know that I am a fixture here for the winter. My mother has been so poorly I could not leave her, and she would not leave my brothers, so I must leave my family to take care of themselves, and stay with her, for our family is so destitute of women it is really forlorn! No sisters, daughters, aunts, cousins, nothing but a howling wilderness of men! So it all comes on my shoulders...here we are imprisoned as completely as if we were in the Bastille, a mail perhaps once in a fortnight, and the demoniacal northwest wind mounting guard over us day and night, and howling like ten thousand raving fiends. My feeling of personal spite against the northwest is something vindictive and venomous in the extreme. I'd like to blot it off the compass...I miss my boys so much I can't bear to think of it. (Letters 49-50)

To pass the time at the Shoals, Celia tried her hand at china painting and became quite proficient. Several pieces commissioned by friends supplemented Celia's writing income. But Celia had not abandoned her writing career. Her second edition of Poems, with 28 new poems added, was published in 1874. A third edition of Poems was issued in

1876; no new poems were included in the volume. That year, she penned a new manuscript, Sea Sorrow, which was never completed nor published.

By 1877, Celia was putting most of her creative energies into china painting. In January, she wrote: "I am writing nothing. I haven't an idea in my stupid head—gibbering idiocy would set in if it were not for my china painting" (qtd. in R. Thaxter 118). She wrote on March 22, 1877:

> I have painted 114 pieces of china this winter, a great deal of immensely careful and elaborate work. We have had another terrific storm—I dread to hear of the disasters! I am growing old and decrepit fast—I hate the pictures I paint—I hate the poems and I hate myself for perpetrating either. (Letters 86)

Celia traveled to Newtonville in April for a short visit, and then returned to the Shoals. On April 29, she wrote the following:

> Had a telegram from Mr. Thaxter, saying he was on his way back, so I rushed to Newtonville, wrestled with the furnace fire and began cooking when my brother telegraphed from Shoals "Mother very ill. Come at once." (qtd. in R. Thaxter 119)

Eliza Laighton continued to weaken. That summer, she was moved to a hotel or boarding house in Portsmouth, where she died on November 14, 1877. During the last stages of her mother's illness, Celia worked on a new poetry collection, Driftweed, which was published in 1878. She took orders for special copies of the book with her own hand-painted illustrations (Vallier, Poet 95).

3.5 Later Married Years

Celia's presence on Appledore every summer attracted many guests to the island. Her cottage became an art gallery and center of activity for artists, writers, musicians and dramatists. Childe Hassam, J. Appleton Brown, Ross Turner, Sarah Orne Jewett, Samuel Clemens, William Dean Howells, Edwin Booth and Thomas Bailey Aldrich were among those who spent time on the island. Many artists' paintings were displayed for sale on the walls of the parlor in Celia's cottage.

Hassam, an Impressionist painter, took up summer residence at the Shoals from the mid-1880s until about 1916 in between travels to Europe. Celia was one of his earliest muses; they had much in common since they were both popular artists. He completed more than 17 paintings of Celia's parlor, her island garden and the island landscape. Some of these works are in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Institution. Hassam also provided freelance illustrations for some of Celia's works, including An Island Garden.

When Celia was away, Levi spent much time in the house in Newtonville with Lowell, Weiss and William Morris Hunt, a well-known painter. Hunt had been a student at Harvard in the early 1840s, along with Weiss and Thaxter. He joined The Saturday Club in 1869. Hunt was a singer, musician, dramatist, a mimic and—like Weiss and Levi Thaxter—a bit of an eccentric. Hunt and his sister spent the summer of 1879 at the Shoals with Levi and Celia Thaxter. Toward the end of the summer, Hunt drowned in a small pond on the island. Tragically, Celia was the one to find his body.

In the fall of 1879, Levi began the long-talked about process of selling the Newtonville house and buying a farm with his son, John. The farm would be a place where John, then 24, could engage in dairy farming, and it would also serve as a family home. Levi bought a five-acre oceanfront property on what is now called Cutts Island in Kittery Point, Maine for $9,000. The farm, originally owned by Richard and Robert Cutts, was named Champernowne Farm after the Cutts' stepfather, English sea captain Francis Champernowne. Levi and John decided to tear down the existing house on the property and build a new one. The Shoals can be seen from almost every room of the 4,000 square-foot house (Record, Manchester Union Leader, May 9, 1998).

Celia continued to worry about Karl, writing her son John in May 1880 that "I have never seen poor Karl so daft...I pity him so, I don't know what to do" (qtd in R. Thaxter 138). That summer of 1880, Celia's brother Oscar fell into a state of depression due to an unrequited romantic interest. It was determined that he was to go abroad as a cure for his illness, and that Celia would accompany him. The three-month ocean voyage took them to several ports in Europe, including Stratford-on-Avon, Milan, Venice, Genoa, Lyons, Paris and London. Many of Celia's lengthy letters written to Annie Fields during the voyage are included in the Letters of Celia Thaxter. Before the trip, she wrote:

> I am so busy. It is really settled that Oscar and I are to go abroad—I can't quite take in the possibility when I hear people talking of it as if it were all settled. It is much too good to be true. Mr. Thaxter has been here [at the Shoals] for a few days. He thinks it would be a fine thing for me to go! (qtd. in R. Thaxter 141)

In the meantime, Levi decided to try his hand at dramatic reading. From 1881 to 1882, he gave several readings of Robert Browning's poetry that were well received in Boston literary circles. He lived at the farm and with his sister, Lucy, in Boston; Celia resided at the farm and the Shoals.

Karl and John, who were both at the farm, continued their long-standing disagreements. In fact, all three brothers suffered some degree of sibling rivalry. Celia was often caught in the middle of these disagreements, taking on the role of peacemaker and family mediator because Levi apparently could not deal with the situation (he probably contributed to the problem himself). Celia wrote the following on November 12, 1881 as she prepared to leave the farm:

> I shall be glad to be in the center of human warmth, stir and interests. Yet I dread leaving these ill matched brothers to spend so many hours together. Everywhere, every moment there is needed a soothing hand to keep things straight. (qtd in R. Thaxter 158)

After Thanksgiving that year, she left her family at the farm (with some misgivings) while she spent time at the Shoals. She wrote:

> I worry especially for my little boy Karl. When they came to the Farm, his father and brothers promised to build him a little workshop of his own, where he could have his workbench and tools. But, while under the stress of other activities, this has not been accomplished. It kills me that this has been denied him. Especially as his eyesight is failing. He works patiently day after day making plans for an invention of his own, but no one but I

> seems to appreciate or care. Oh, if we could all have patience with each other! (qtd in R. Thaxter 159)

Celia's family troubles continued. She spent Christmas with Karl at Kittery and learned that he had encumbered a huge debt for carpentry supplies. When she spoke to him about it, "he fell into such a dreadful mood of wrath and despair" that she decided to stay with him the rest of the winter (qtd. in R. Thaxter 160). She later wrote to her son John:

> I know you have a great trial to your patience, but you often make too much of little things. [...] and I do think that sometimes you are not wise nor kind in the way you speak to Karl, considering that you are blessed with reason & superior intelligence. [...] Poor wretched, unfortunate fellow who has no chance in this life, & can never take his place among other men, who has not only a diseased mind, but a miserable diseased body & a complaint, so aggravated & painful that it alone is enough to make him half crazy. (Letter found in Portsmouth Athenaeum, sent Jan. 15, 1882 from 101 Pembroke Street, Boston)

On January 25, 1882, John and Karl had another argument. John telegrammed his mother saying his brother was dangerous and should be restrained. Celia left her friends' house in Boston and traveled to the farm to visit the boys. Two days later, she wrote Annie Fields that she intended to "take charge of him and help him do some steady work" (qtd in R. Thaxter 161). Celia and Karl moved to a small hotel in Boston.

The entire Thaxter family was at the farm for Thanksgiving in 1883. Shortly thereafter, Levi became seriously ill. He was taken to Boston where Roland, who was studying medicine, nursed him. He died in Boston on May 31, 1884 and is buried in a small cemetery at Kittery Point. After Levi's death, the estate was divided equally between John and Roland Thaxter.

3.6 Golden Years at the Shoals

The last ten years of Celia's life may have been her happiest, although they were certainly not carefree. Relieved of most of her caretaking responsibilities, she alternated residences between Boston and Portsmouth in the winter and the Shoals during the summer. The Laighton brothers continued to own and operate Appledore House and the Oceanic and offered Celia and Karl free room and board on the island for the spring and summer. Although Celia was sensitive about taking too much advantage of her brothers, she too often let others take advantage of her. In this excerpt from a letter to her son John, she responds to his request to get her brothers to buy butter from John's farm at 35 cents a pound:

> John dear, I should think you would know better than to think I would forget your interests for a single moment. [...] It is not an easy thing to push it, when they do feel poor with their hundred thousand dollar debt & Uncle C. will not even get a suit of clothes, or Uncle O. a hat, & they get their butter for 25 cts. a lb. Then I do always feel that they give Karl and me board & lodging for nothing so many months in the year & I have a kind of delicacy about it. But nevertheless for your sake I will try my best,

> & let you know what they say when I see them presently. I think your letter is very unkind indeed, & cross & horrid & I think you are cross to me continually, & you have no reason to be, & ought to have more consideration than to "jaw" at me the way you do. You don't know how it sounds & how it hurts me. You have no friend like your mother & you might be good to her while you have her. (Unpublished letter in Portsmouth Athenaeum, sent from the Shoals, June 22, 1885)

Thaxter's idyllic island environment about which she discoursed so beautifully was actually overflowing with people during the height of the summer season. Appledore typically counted about 500 inhabitants in season, including hotel guests, employees and others who lived in cottages on the island. No wonder Celia relished the solitude of the spring and fall months on the island. In June 1884, she wrote Annie Fields about the lovely time she had spent gardening that spring.

> I am dreading people, after all this peace, and old clothes, and informal existence. I wish summer could go on all through thus peacefully. (Letters 137)

Celia lived in the north cottage on Appledore and grew a flower garden. The garden attracted many visitors who marveled at her talents. Celia tackled gardening with the same intensity and passion as writing and china painting.

In July 1885, the Atlantic Monthly printed the poem "Within and Without." This would be the last poem of Celia's published in the magazine. A book of 50 poems,

Cruise of the Mystery and Other Poems, was submitted to Houghton Mifflin in 1886 and published two years later.

Both John and Roland were married in the summer of 1887. John continued to farm at Kittery Point while Roland was given a Harvard professorship in 1891. Roland's son, Charles Eliot, grew to be the delight of his adoring grandmother.

In the fall of 1887, Celia fell ill due to what her doctors deemed to be overwork. The next spring, she and Karl moved to a nine-room apartment on State Street in Portsmouth. That summer she suffered what could have been a mild heart attack, followed by another attack in the spring of 1889. In spite of her health problems, she continued to garden and started to make notes for what would be her last book.

Unfortunately, her troubles with Karl continued. In a November 1889 letter to Jewett, Celia reveals how anxious she is feeling about "poor, poor Karl," writing that "he seems to be losing his hold...he sits and weeps for hours" (qtd. in R. Thaxter 231-2). In April 1890, Celia wrote to a friend that she had been suffering with nervous prostration all winter, relieved only by a "wise old doctor" who prescribed champagne as a cure-all (Letters 174).

Around this time, Celia started to carry on a lively correspondence with noted ornithologist and nature writer Bradford Torrey. She joined the newly formed Audubon Society and was the local secretary (Rutledge, Isles 133). Celia also actively crusaded against the use of birds' feathers in women's ornamental hats, writing an article on the subject for the first issue of Audubon magazine.

The sandpiper was one of Celia's favorite birds, and she must have felt some kind

of personal identification with it. In addition to writing a poem about it, Celia and her friend Jewett affectionately called each other "Sandpiper" and "Owl," respectively, in personal correspondence. With its slim legs and habit of walking delicately on shore, tail constantly in motion up and down, the sandpiper is one of the most common shore and marsh birds. Its rather plain appearance paralleled Celia's costume on the island, as it was her habit to wear simple, neutral-colored dresses (gray, black or white) adorned only with a necklace or bracelet of shells.

Celia's last book, An Island Garden, was published in the spring of 1894. That summer, she visited old familiar "haunts" on the islands with some of her close friends. In this letter to a friend, Thaxter remarked that the island has not looked so beautiful since she was a child:

> Oh the delicious dawns and crimson sunsets, the calm blue sea, the tender sky, the chorus of the birds! It all makes me so happy! Sometimes I wonder if it is wise or well to love any spot on this old earth as intensely as I do this! (Letters 159)

In the early morning hours on August 25, 1894, Celia passed away quietly and somewhat unexpectedly. She was given a funeral on Appledore and buried next to her parents on the island.

Celia Thaxter probably had no sense of her place in history or even cared about leaving a legacy. Her life, although beset by hardship, was nevertheless full and rich. She met life head on with resolve and an inner strength that belied the sensitivity and vulnerability she truly felt. Out of love, compassion and duty, she gave too much of

herself away to her family and friends, which left her emotionally and physically bankrupt. "Her nature was replete with boundless possibilities," wrote Annie Fields, "and we find ourselves asking the old, old question, Must the artist forever crush the wings by which he flies against such terrible limitations? – a question never to be answered in this world" (Authors 251).

4. Among the Isles of Shoals

Among the Isles of Shoals is a volume about the history, ecology and folklore of the islands as well as reminiscences of Celia's childhood years on the islands. The 184-page book is the first to chronicle the natural history of the Shoals (albeit from an amateur naturalist's perspective) as well as the folklore of the islands. Annie Fields (Authors 230) compares the book to Gilbert White's A Natural History of Selborne and Henry David Thoreau's Walden. Others have compared the book to Melville's The Encantadas, a short book of prose about Melville's excursion to the Galapagos Islands (originally published in three parts in Putnam's monthly magazine). Among the Isles of Shoals is generally regarded today as Celia's best book of prose.

4.1 Imperfect Sketches

James Fields and John Whittier had long urged Celia Thaxter to try her hand at prose and write about the Shoals. But it was not until the winter of 1869 that Celia would begin to write the articles that would eventually comprise Among the Isles of Shoals. Preparation of the article series began while Celia and Karl were at the Shoals. Levi, needing a warmer climate for health reasons, had taken John and Roland on an extended trip to Florida. At the Shoals, Celia found the solitude and inspiration she needed to write the articles for the magazine, even as she assisted her family with housekeeping tasks in preparation for the hotel season.

The first of the four articles was published in The Atlantic Monthly in August 1869. The second and third installments were published in January and February 1870, respectively. The final article was published in May 1870. The articles, like Celia's

poetry, were well received by the magazine's readers and attracted more visitors to the islands. The articles also were printed in a 50-cent edition as a guidebook to be sold in railroad stations (R. Thaxter 102).

Over the next year and a half, Celia continued to write poetry and work on completing the manuscript for the book. Referring to the impending publication of the book, she wrote to James Fields:

> I shall be glad to have it done, not that I care to be in people's vestpockets, heaven save the mark, but I should be so deeply thankful to have Osgood's check in my pocket. (qtd in R. Thaxter 215)

The book was published by James R. Osgood and Company in 1873 with pen and ink illustrations by Whittier's artist friend Harry Fenn (R. Thaxter 89).

Among the Isles of Shoals reads as a lengthy essay. There are no chapters or other such organizing devices. The narrative weaves back and forth, creating natural breaks as the narrative voice shifts, flowing freely from one topic to another. This may lead the reader or critic to view the narrative as choppy or sketchy without considering the organic nature of the text as a whole. The arrangement of descriptive scenes, colorful anecdotes and personal recollections converges to form a holistic portrait of island life.

The first three original articles from The Atlantic Monthly appear sequentially through page 119. The first section of the book describes the natural features of the islands and their surrounding environment—the rocks, the sea, the flora and fauna. Thaxter also describes the effects of the environment upon those who stay on the islands as well as some of the human history of the islands. The narrative in the next section

(Article II) tells more about the history of the islands and the customs and traditions of the native Shoalers.

The third section of the book (Article III) is an account of the seasons as Thaxter experiences them on the islands. The seasons, which are a typical organizing device in environmental prose, are some of the most ubiquitous reminders of nature in everyday life and, as Buell points out, condition human behavior (Imagination 221). The narrative starts with the "lovely limits of summer" (91) and progresses through the winter-- the "ghastly whiteness of the salt-water ice, the cold, gray rock, the sullen, foaming brine, the unrelenting heavens, and the sharp wind cutting like a knife" (105).

The next twenty pages comprise original narrative about Celia's childhood on the islands that was written specifically for the book. The text is written in the autobiographical "I" or "we" and the narrative voice is that of a child of perhaps 11 or 12. The narrative proceeds to relate secondhand accounts of shipwrecks, and then turns back to the seasonal chronology that takes the reader through spring and early summer. In the final pages of the book, Celia has many anecdotes about storms and shipwrecks and recounts some legends about the pirates and ghosts that haunt the islands. The narrative then returns to the present in the final paragraphs of the book, where Celia writes that the town of Gosport "is obliterated from the face of the earth" to make room for a summer resort, and that "the future of the Shoals as a famous watering-place may be considered certain" (183-84).

Thaxter's chronicle of island life is written from a first person point of view. The author-narrator is a storyteller. Thaxter uses the autobiographical "I" to incorporate

personal experience, thoughts and emotions into the narrative. Her self-disclosure creates rapport and involvement with the reader. She presents examples from her personal experience, and then describes their effect on her thinking.

The voice of the "island Miranda," Thaxter's realistic/independent narrator, alternates with that of the "Rose of the Isles," Thaxter's engaging/intimate narrator, throughout the book. The Miranda voice reflects the self-assured, independent woman of Margaret Fuller's narrative. A third persona, the "island maiden," appears toward the end of the book. All three literary identities provide a perspective from which self and nature are constructed.

As Miranda, Thaxter often positions herself as a journalist or historian who reports information on the events and people of the Shoals. Thaxter writes clearly about her firsthand observations and experiences. "I am certain that cedars grew there...," she opines about the trees and shrubbery on Appledore (24). She is sure about her observation of the iris, goldenrod, wild rose and aster blooming together. (27) She begins narratives with, "I well remember..." (75) and ends the telling of a story with, "This is no fable" (73). Thaxter also admits what she doesn't know, e.g., what makes the soil so suitable for growing flowers (28).

For much of the book, however, Thaxter's narrative voice is like the "Rose of the Isles"--engaging and personal. Thaxter communicates an intimacy with her audience, as if she were engaged in conversation with good friends. The literary voice is consistent with many women authors in the 19th century who wrote in a style that communicates familiarity and intimacy. The reader becomes empathetic toward the author just as the

author displays empathy toward the people, things and places about which she writes.

4.2 Lurking Ledges and Bitter Brine

Thaxter introduces the reader to her domestic sphere—her beloved islands--in the first five pages of the book. Her account is written as if she is on a journey from Portsmouth harbor to her home. The reader is with her on this journey. Approaching the islands is akin to opening the door of her home. In this manner, Thaxter introduces the main characters of her story--the islands themselves, each with their own features and idiosyncrasies.

The rocks on the islands are granite, mixed with quartz, feldspar and micaslate (17). There are trap dikes running in all directions on the islands. The trap rock is softer than granite and is eroded in many places, leaving striking perpendicular walls of fifteen or twenty feet high. Although the shores are not "bold," they often have cliffs, rifts and chasms, gorges made from heaps of rocks piled on one another, and "stairways cut as if by human hands" (18).

The islands are small enough to know intimately, like one's family members and friends. Approaching the islands, one is likely to first see Appledore, the largest of the islands at around 400 acres. Appledore also is the most "agreeable" (29), having a greater variety of natural features on its surface. Smuttynose, about 150 acres, has a long black point of rock that stretches to the southeast upon which ships have been wrecked. At low tide, Cedar and Malaga islands are connected to it. Star Island, about 150 acres, is about one-fourth mile southwest of Smuttynose; on the northern end of the island is the small village of Gosport. Duck Island, about two miles northeast of Appledore, has "lurking

ledges" on two sides that are above and beneath the water, making it the most dangerous of all the islands. The most picturesque is White Island, a mile southwest from Star, with its lighthouse. With Seavey's Island, it forms a double island at low tide.

As Thaxter observes, each island has its own "rote." Shoalers attuned to the rote of the rocks—the sound of the sea on the rocks—can distinguish one island from another when at sea.

> The islanders at the Shoals can tell their whereabouts in the densest fog or the darkest night by the rote of the different islands and the mainland, so nicely educated is their sense of hearing. No matter how dark it is, they can judge with curious accuracy the distance between them and the sound, whether the breaking waves are gentle or furious, whether they break on the long sand beaches or the shore or the ragged rocks of the Islands and each island, each small isolated rock has its own peculiar rote, different from the rest. (qtd. in R. Thaxter 62-63)

Thaxter's extensive use of alliteration in describing the landscape—the lurking ledges (11) , bitter brine (13) , and ragged reefs (9)--brings a sense of familiarity and immediacy to the environment. With use of the pronoun "you," she invites her readers' participation in her story (and therefore, her life):

> ... If you are out of the reach of the ponderous fall of spray, the fine salt mist will still stream about you and salute your cheek with the healthful freshness of the brine, make your hair damp, and encrust your eyebrows with salt. While you sit watching the shifting splendor, up rises at once a

> higher cloud than usual; and across it springs a sudden rainbow, like a beautiful thought beyond the reach of human expression. High over your head the white gulls soar, gathering the sunshine in the snowy hollows of their wings. (119)

The "you" is sometimes transparent as the narrative consciously strives to bring the reader into the unfolding scene. The narrative switches from passive to active voice in the following passage:

> Perhaps someday the delightful danger of the wild geese is heard, and looking upward, lo! the long, floating ribbon streaming northward across the sky. (155)

The reader may, at first, be distracted and annoyed by Thaxter's discursive prose. In two long paragraphs, for example, the narrative rambles from natives' attachment to the islands to islands' geological characteristics to specific geological formations called trap dikes. Several sentences later, the narrator returns to describe the characteristics of the trap rock and how the shoreline looks at low and high tides. This kaleidoscope of images is beautiful and powerful. The reader senses that the narrator is seeing her subject for the very first time, or through the eyes of an artist who delights in seeing things anew or from a different perspective. She is delighted to share her thoughts and emotions with those who travel with her on the journey.

The discursive prose reflects Thaxter's perspective on the multi-layering of human experience and thought in relation to nature. Objective observations of nature trigger subjective interpretations, thoughts and questions about what is being observed,

and memories of past experiences. All are interwoven into a web-like pattern. The human-nature relationship, as Thaxter views it, is not linear or one-dimensional. It is mutual, dynamic and deeply personal.

Thaxter celebrates the wonders of nature and reflects on what she has observed. She is enraptured and awed with nature's wonders—flowers, sunsets, birds. She asks herself why the poppies bloom so colorfully in the soil (28) and how the scarlet pimpernel knows so much (128). Her keen observational skills are markedly contrasted with the dreamlike state that Thaxter says island life can produce.

> The eternal sound of the sea on every side has a tendency to wear away the edge of human thought and perception; sharp outlines become blurred and softened like a sketch in charcoal; nothing appeals to the mind with the same distinctness as on the mainland, amid the rush and stir of people and things, and the excitements of social life. (8)

As Thaxter describes it, the natural environment of the Shoals on a beautiful summer day is almost surreal. Awakening to the tranquility of a fresh summer morning, broken only by the song of a sparrow or the "caressing music" of the sea, the islands manifest a haziness as the day goes on. Boats come into the harbor, gulls "wheel lazily" and the distant shoreline seems to fade away from reality.

> And what if it were to slip down the slope of the world and disappear entirely? You think, in a half-dream, you would not care. Many troubles, cares, perplexities, vexations, lurk behind that far, faint line for you. Why should you be bothered any more?

> "Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
>
> And in a little while our lips are dumb."
>
> And so the waves, with their lulling murmur, do their work, and you are soothed into repose and transient forgetfulness. (16)

Tennyson's influence on Thaxter is evidenced by the numerous times she quotes his poetry in the narrative. English poets Edmund Spenser and John Keats also are mentioned, along with lesser-known authors such as Friedrich von Schiller (a German dramatist) and Thomas DeQuincey, an English essayist whose works include "Confessions of an English opium-eater."

The intertextuality of the narrative (the blending of genres, e.g., poetry with prose) lends to its originality. Thaxter sometimes uses direct phrases from poets such as Tennyson, set off in quotes, in the middle or at the end of a passage, such as the following:

> Yet so forbidding are their shores, it seems scarcely worth while to land upon them,--mere heaps of tumbling granite in the wide and lonely sea,--when all the smiling, "sapphire-spangled marriage-ring of the land" lies ready to woo the voyager back again, and welcome his returning prow with pleasant sights and sounds and scents that the wild wastes of water never know. (13-14)

Other passages are constructed as if each phrase, separated by commas, represents a stanza in a poem. The lyrical passages, like Thaxter's poetry, come to life when they

are read out loud. The narrative mirrors the rhythms of nature, particularly the sea, as the words ebb and flow. In a world without the sounds of lectures, concerts, and music, nature provides her own symphony. Thaxter's ears are well attuned to the language of nature, particularly to the sounds of the sea. The waves make music, the sea whispers and the sound of the water lulls one into a dreamlike state of mind. The breakers sweep upon the rocks with a sound like a rocket; they produce a "long and peaceful sigh, a dreamy, lulling, beautiful sound" (118). The wind "shrieks" and "moans" before or during a storm (94, 114). The curlews and plovers cry in autumn; the cries of the loons are varied and distinctive.

> At one time the loon language was so familiar that I could almost always summon a considerable flock by going down to the water and assuming the neighborly and conversational tone which they generally use: after calling a few minutes, first a far-off voice responded, then other voices answered him, and when this was kept up a while, half a dozen birds would come sailing in. It was the most delightful little party imaginable; so comical were they, so entertaining, that it was impossible not to laugh aloud,--and they could laugh too, in a way which chilled the marrow of one's bones. (112-113)

The island itself makes a "boding" sound before a storm, a sound that Thaxter describes as "a steady moan such as the wind makes over the mouth of an empty jar." Hearing this, the islanders say, "Do you hear Hog Island crying? Now look out for a storm!" (114)

The aural metaphors that Celia uses are typical of women's experience and personal development, according to some developmental psychologists who are pursuing research in what they call "women's ways of knowing."

> In describing their lives, women commonly talked about voice and silence; "speaking up," "speaking out," "being silenced," "not being heard," [...] and so on in an endless variety of connotations all having to do with sense of mind, self-worth, and feelings of isolation from or connection to others. We found that women repeatedly used the metaphor of voice to depict their intellectual and ethical development; and that the development of a sense of voice, mind, and self were intricately intertwined. The tendency for women to ground their epistemological premises in metaphors suggesting speaking and listening is at odds with the visual metaphors (such as equating knowledge with illumination, knowing with seeing, and truth with light) that scientists and philosophers most often use to express their sense of mind. (Belenky et al., Knowing 18)

Thaxter's aural "way of seeing" is reflected in her enjoyment of music and her writing of poetry (which she probably "heard" in her mind before she wrote the words on paper). She liked to read her poems out loud when her friends requested it, and they would gather in her parlor to listen (Fields, Authors 255). For Thaxter and other writers, reading is also synonymous with listening. She "reads" the landscape by listening to it.

Thaxter often ascribes human characteristics and actions to the landscape. The

land "wears a new aspect with every turn of wind and weather" (9), the trees "struggle" with the bleakness of the islands (24) and the fishing boats "steal to and fro" (15). Yet the "many-voiced waters" do not carry the "echoes of woe and terror"—the sounds of war and suffering--from the mainland to the islands (8).

The islanders make their own music in concert with their environment. At sea, the voices of the sailors as they cry "Yo ho, the roaring river!" are mingled with the "creaking and groaning of windlasses and masts" (83). A rainbow that arcs across a scarlet sunset after an August thunderstorm inspires such reverence and awe in Thaxter that she lifts up her voice (speaking up) in harmony with nature.

> I hid my face from the glory,--it was too much to bear. Ever I longed to speak these things that made life so sweet, to speak the wind, the cloud, the bird's flight, the sea's murmur. A vain longing! I might as well have sighed for the mighty pencil of Michel Angelo [sic] to wield in my impotent child's hand. Better to "hush and bless one's self with silence"; but ever the wish grew....the manifold aspects of Nature held me and swayed all my thoughts until it was impossible to be silent any longer, and I was fain to mingle my voice with her myriad voices, only aspiring to be in accord with the Infinite harmony, however feeble and broken the notes might be. (141-142)

The sea is a main character in this story; indeed, the sea often mirrors Thaxter's emotions. It is emblematic of life itself and humanity's struggle with life. As Westbrook points out, Celia Thaxter is one of the first American writers to view nature as indifferent,

even hostile, to humanity (492). Her writing shows the dualistic aspects of nature's moods, reflecting Celia's aural perspective. The waters of the sea have a "wonderful noise" (19) that is often dreamy, lulling and beautiful. But in a storm, the sea is like "a maddened troop of giants" (115). The waves beat unmercifully against the rocks and the shore, leaving behind swatches of dark-colored seaweed and objects too horrible to contemplate—a mismatched boot or a human foot. The sea brings driftwood to the shore for the islanders' use, but the driftwood is "always full of suggestions—a broken oar; a bit of spar with a ragged end of rope-yarn attached; a section of a mast hurriedly chopped, telling of a tragedy too well known on the awful sea..." (22). When one is lulled by the placid sparkle of the waters, it is best not to forget that the sea has many voices. The tides have a "blissful murmur," but they also roar and grind ships to pieces (42).

Nine miles of ocean "intervene" between the islands and the New Hampshire coast (9). The sea is a physical and psychological barrier between the mainland and the islands. Even today, the ocean off the New England coast can inconvenience or endanger those who travel on it. Islanders and visitors are often prohibited from traveling back and forth due to rough sea conditions. Because the lives and livelihood of the native Shoalers depended on the sea, they were duly cautious and respectful of it. Thaxter notes that the women were especially timid about the ocean: "Having the terror and the might of the ocean continually encircling them, they become more impressed with it and distrust it" (65).

Psychologically, the sea comes between the mainland and the islands, casting

each into a separate sphere. The two landscapes (the mainland and the islands) lie in opposition to each other. For some, the islands come to represent an idyllic "other world" that is pristine and self-contained. On the islands, you are "out there," free from many of civilization's constraints and left to your own resourcefulness. On a very small island, you can see the ocean from almost every direction. The experience of being totally surrounded by water is almost indescribable. You awake and go to sleep to the sounds of the sea. Even in calm weather conditions, you may feel insignificant and somewhat fearful, yet at the same time, cradled and soothed by the life force of water.

Don Scheese calls this an "island experience," in which time and history float by, leaving one undisturbed during an idyllic retreat (110). Some days the other world seems to be a distant memory, for the coastline is often hazy or not seen at all. As Thaxter notes, after living on the islands for awhile, you forget about life's worries and slow your pace. Life becomes almost dream-like. On a clear, black night, the lights along the shore beckon your return to the safety and bustle of mainland activity, leaving your illusionary world behind. But which world is real, and which is an illusion?

> There is no sound more gentle, more slumberous, than the distant roll of these billows,--"The rolling sea resounding soft," as Spenser has it...a dreamy, lulling, beautiful sound, which produces a Lethean forgetfulness of care and pain, makes all earthly ill seem unreal, and it is as if one wandered "In dreamful wastes, where footless fancies dwell." It requires a strong effort to emerge from this lotus-eating state of mind. (118)

The expansive "sea room" of the Shoals presents a dramatic contrast to the "leafy

walled horizon" on the mainland, as Whittier once described the landscapes (qtd. in R. Thaxter 209). The sea represents freedom and open space; the mainland's trees and houses are claustrophobic. In her narrative, Thaxter tells us about a youth (her brother Oscar) who first visited the mainland at the age of thirteen, and was so distraught by "the pressure of human society" that he hid in the cellar of a house for the first few hours (17). Although Thaxter says that it is not good to live one's entire life in a remote place, she understands the intense attachment that the native Shoalers have to their islands because she feels the same way.

The weather is a main character in this narrative. As in The Tempest, the wind sweeps the islands during a storm, especially in the autumn. The north and west winds "bite like demons" (102). Sometimes the islands are swallowed up by a vapor that looks like cold, black smoke coming from the mainland (95). On fall mornings, wafts of mist rise between the waves. When it is very cold, they rise in columns, like "shadowy phantoms...that stalk past like Ossian's ghosts" (95). In winter, the rocks wear a girdle of ice.

The rocks are a predominant natural feature of the islands and in Thaxter's book. They are rugged and severe-looking, yet their hardness is softened by the morning sun and by the green vegetation that grows in the summer. The rocks represent both danger and safety. During a storm, one is "safe on a rock that cannot move" (94), but rocks can be treacherous to those who sail the seas. Rocks give the appearance of stasis and permanence, yet they are worn down by the elements and become bleached with age—like the women on the islands. In some fashion, then, the rocks are symbolic of Celia

herself—she, who is pounded and worn down by life's daily struggles--who must "breast the whole force of the great Atlantic" on her shore or body (17).

But it is the island itself that best represents Celia in this book. The island is self-contained, separate yet connected with its environment, depressing and bleak yet enchanted and charming. It stands apart from the sensual, "undulating" shoreline that "wears a new aspect with every turn of wind and weather" (9). The island, like Celia, is worn down and aged by nature's forces, but preserves its own beauty with age.

4.3 Blinking Sandpipers

Thaxter's child narrator voice emerges in some of the last sections of Among the Isles of Shoals and in Celia's letters. James Fields had strongly encouraged Thaxter to add recollections of her childhood at the Shoals to the book. This "Island Maiden" persona is wide-eyed, curious, exuberant and wonderfully endearing to the reader. In the following passage, she tells the reader about her family's move to the islands, comparing herself and her brother to young blinking sandpipers.

> How delightful was that long, first sail to the Isles of Shoals! How pleasant the unaccustomed sound of the incessant ripple against the boat-side, the sight of the wide water and limitless sky, the warmth of the broad sunshine that made us blink like young sandpipers as we sat in triumph, perched among the household goods with which the little craft was laden! (120)

The island maiden persona is apt to end sentences and stanzas with exclamation points—one of Celia's frequent tendencies. She also is less passive than Thaxter's other

literary personas. Even some of her passive activities involve a degree of interaction with nature. She scrapes holes on the frosted windows with pennies to look out at the sea (121). She brings the blades of grass inside to study them. She plays with shells and makes crude boats from driftwood and sets them adrift. She lights a lantern and takes it down to the water, watching for her father's boat to return, and shouts to get a reply from the boat (135). Throughout the narrative, the lantern is emblematic of life itself. Without the lighthouse beacon, a sailor would lose his bearings and risk almost certain disaster. The lantern's light that guides men to safety is one of man's only defenses against an unpredictable, irrational nature. Laighton's trust in his daughter to kindle the lighthouse lamps was a very real, as well as symbolic, act of empowerment.

As a child, Celia developed a loving relationship with the wild flowers that grew on the islands. The morning glories would "lift up their faces" to her admiring gaze (131). Nature was a teacher, and she was an eager pupil. She picked the first blades of grass in spring and brought them inside for study (128). Celia's interactions with the island environment, however, encompassed much more than stereotypically feminine activities such as picking flowers. She and her brothers played in the long covered walk between the lighthouse and the house. They built mountains of gravel on the beach, climbed around on the rocks, and rowed boats around the islands.

Thaxter also experienced nature's oddities and cruelties. She and her brothers captured female lobsters and watched hermit crabs fight. They would pick out sea-spiders from the kelp and watch them disjoint their bodies, section by section (125-6). Thaxter once found a bat clinging to the back side of a shutter and held it in the palm of her hand,

whereupon it promptly transformed into "a hideous little demon" and bit her (127).

The scarcity of resources meant that they were much more appreciated. A handful of grass was much more precious than acres of meadows. The isolation of the winter months made companionship that much more enjoyable when spring came to the islands. "No one can truly appreciate the delight of letters till he has lived where he can hear from his friends only once in a month" (99). On the islands, absence is presence. There are no museums, streets, shops, theaters, concerts, lectures, or carriages. But there are the northern lights in the winter darkness, the brilliant sunrises and sunsets and the constellations that look like "the faces of old friends" (99).

4.4 Thaxter's Relationship to Place

Thaxter's sense of place, as portrayed in this book, exhibits many of the dimensions of relationship described by Josselson. The idea of *holding*, or feeling supported by one's "holding environment," is seen in Thaxter's being "lulled by the murmur of the encircling sea" as she slept (121). She watches the summer storms unafraid, listening to the thunder rolling over the ocean (136). Sometimes a gray haze covers the horizon "like an encircling arm" around the world (159). Thaxter positions herself "in the heart" of the environment that gives her life and energy. She sits contentedly with her lantern in the dark, "knowing my little star was watched for..." (135). Her *attachment* to the islands is characterized by a quiet security as well as a vulnerability to loss. Like the native Shoalers, she finds it hard to tear herself away from the islands, because "to wild and lonely spots like these isles humanity clings with an intense and abiding affection" (16). But her attachment to the islands also carries with it

recognition of the destructive side of nature. She and her family experience the loss of part of her home and livestock during the first winter's storm on the island (139).

The wildness and desolation of the islands carry with it an erotics of place. Like nature writers Mary Austin and Terry Tempest Williams, Thaxter often portrays the landscape as wild and sensual, and her interactions with nature are often intimate and erotic. The sound and sparkle of the waves as they splash upon the rocks is "the most suggestive of all the sounds in nature" (19). She shouts to the birds and dances after the sandpipers at the edge of the foam (123). She mingles her voice in communion with nature's own voices (141-42). She finds herself in nature's eyes, as nature mirrors her actions and responds to her. The morning glories lift up their faces to her adoring gaze, and the sunrise fills her with an absorbing, overwhelming joy (131). She lives for the times when she can have an uninterrupted "intercourse with nature" (163). She learns to imitate the cries of the loon and calls back and forth to them until they "come sailing in" (113). She mourns over a "little apron brimful" of dead birds found at the foot of the lighthouse tower (111). On a tranquil summer morning, the sea is calm, like a "vast, round mirror," and there is "dew lying like jewel-dust sifted over everything,--diamond and ruby, sapphire, topaz, and amethyst, flashing out of the emerald deeps of the tufted grass or from the bending tops" (131).

Celia's *idealization* of and *identification* with the island environment is seen in her descriptions of an idealized pastoral. She is drawn to the ocean with a feeling of longing (120). She hides her face from the beauty of the colors in the sky after a storm as she is overcome with emotion, finding it difficult to express nature's glory. As Thaxter

writes, "Ever I longed to speak these things that made life so sweet, to speak the wind, the cloud, the bird's flight, the sea's murmur" (141)

Nature is Thaxter's companion, and she often moves in harmony with it. Her *mutuality and resonance* with the landscape can be seen throughout the book. She loses track of time and dates after being on the island awhile, when all things become dreamy, and thought and perception are blurred until you no longer care (8, 101). Sitting on the rocks watching the ocean breakers, she is lulled into a dreamlike state of mind (118). She is soothed by the peace of a glorious summer morning just as the morning glories are (131). She once sees an owl silently perched on a rock, "meditative and most human in its expression," and longs "to ask of him the story of his life, or, if he would have permitted it, to watch him without a word" (108).

Celia is not just a visitor to her beloved islands; she belongs there. The islands are part of her heritage. As she writes, "My handful of grass was more precious to me than miles of green fields" (132). She lights her lantern, waiting for her father's boat to return, writing:

> I felt so much a part of the Lord's universe I was no more afraid of the dark than the waves of winds. (135-136)

Although she may not be as *embedded* to the landscape as are the native Shoalers, whose skin takes on the characteristics of the water, the sun, and the wind and dried fish, Thaxter nevertheless defines herself as a Shoaler. She takes on the nickname of "Grans," like the native Shoalers, and later calls herself "Sandpiper." The island is the soil in

which her other relatedness (with people and things) grows and is nourished. It is the context in which she defines herself. In April 1889, she wrote the following to Annie Fields about her love for the island:

> Never did the island look so lovely in the early spring since I was a little child playing on the rocks at White Island. Oh the delicious dawns and crimson sunsets, the calm blue sea, the tender sky, the chorus of the birds! It all makes me so happy! Sometimes I wonder if it is wise or well to love any spot on this old earth as intensely as I do this! (Letters 159)

4.5 The Dwellers on the Rock

Thaxter's portrayal of the islanders' peculiarities, albeit tinged with a bit of drama, belies the genuine empathy she feels for the native Shoalers who lead lives of hardship and exposure to the elements. Nature is a dominant character in this story; nature's indifference to man is a recurring theme in Thaxter's prose and poetry. The "dwellers on the rock" (98) lived *with* their island environment, not just *on* the island itself.

The plight of "poor fellows, wet, cold, hungry, sleepless" who fight against the sea's tumult is unjust to one who sits by the fire in a warm, quiet room. In the face of nature's anger, all are helpless, but birthright has determined who has the privilege of shelter from the storm. In the following anecdote about a fisherman whose epitaph speaks to his hospitality with seamen "in distress of weather," Thaxter writes:

> "In distress of weather!" One must live in such a place fully to comprehend the meaning of the words. (37)

The harsh elements particularly age the women, who bear the burdens of housework, childcare and other chores while their "lords" lounge around in the sun or "hold up the walls of the meeting-house" (66). Thaxter observes that while the sun and wind enhance the looks of the men, the women end up with complexions like "dried fish" (61).

> I never saw such wrecks of humanity as some of the old women of Star Island, who have long since gone to their rest. In my childhood I caught glimpses of them occasionally, their lean brown shapes crouching over the fire, with black pipes in their sunken mouths, and hollow eyes, "of no use now but to gather brine," and rough, gray, straggling locks: despoiled and hopeless visions, it seemed as if youth and joy could never have been theirs. (66)

Like their "lords" who cast their lot with the sea, the women are held captive to the whims of nature and men. Their husbands and sons go out fishing and get caught in a sudden storm. The pirate abandons his maiden on the island and her ghost, awaiting his return, forever wanders the rocks. The sea does not always bring men back.

But the "wrecks of humanity," as Thaxter calls them, do not include women of middle- and upper-class status. For women like Thaxter and her mother, domestic pursuits such as knitting keep one's mind sharp in such an isolated place. Household chores are a blessing, not a burden, and women seem to be more blessed than men in this respect. Thaxter writes: "No woman need ever have a vacant minute,--there are so many pleasant, useful things which she may, and had better do" (100).

Nevertheless, Thaxter's observations of the native fishermen and their families are those of an outsider -- as a hotel owner and manager with a middle class lifestyle, rather than as a member of the town of Gosport. She recognizes the limitations of her perspective. "Of their mode of life, I know little," she writes about the Shoalers (97). Perhaps this perspective, as much as literary convention, explains her self-effacing preface to the book in which she calls her narrative "imperfect" and her descriptions of the islands "fragmentary and inadequate" (5).

Thaxter often lapses into subjective thoughts about her subjects. She recognizes the dualistic nature of humanity as well as nature. She writes of the "long procession of the clergy, good, bad, and indifferent" (43), who served on Star Island, and of the "fine specimens of the hardy New England fisherman, Saxon-bearded, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, and bronzed with shade on shade of ruddy brown" (41). Her descriptions are colorful, perhaps a bit exaggerated, but without condescending overtones. At times she becomes didactic in her accounts of the Shoals' history during the 16th and 17th century. Even here, however, the narrative voice is that of an eager learner who is delighted to impart some newly-discovered knowledge. The reader is on the quest with her, sharing her fascination with what she has discovered.

Thaxter uses information from primary and secondary sources: books, firsthand and second-hand accounts, historical documents and her own experiences and observations. Her task is made more difficult by the inaccuracy and unavailability of historical records, as she notes in her book (37). She uses as her sources a 1712 book by Cotton Mather, Williamson's History of Maine, reports to the Society for Propagating the

Gospel among the Indians and others in North America, T.B. Fox's Christopher Leavitt's Voyage to New England, and other materials. All of these sources are attributed within the body of the narrative. Thaxter is careful to point out conflicting accounts and uncertainties to avoid inaccuracy.

The subjective strains, however, often take on an overt tone of judgment or moralizing. She observes, for example, that the summer visitors of middle and upper class backgrounds exert a bad moral influence (54), although the Appledore Hotel surely fueled the situation with its reputation as a "famous watering-place" (184). Her strongest opinions are reserved for the intemperance and living conditions of the Shoalers. Thaxter writes: "The misuse of strong drink still proves a whirlpool more awful than the worst terrors of the pitiless ocean that hems the islanders in" (52). She writes about the "rough characters" on the islands that have started many fires there. Once she heard the firebell ringing and was told, "It's only Sam Blake setting his house on fire" (46). Celia notes the irony of the Shoalers' airtight houses, filled with deadly smoke, intentionally constructed to keep out the healthy sea air (59). Nearly all the old women smoked tobacco. The unhealthy diet of the Shoalers may also have contributed to the high incidence of consumption. Thaxter once observed a two-year-old child eating a breakfast of pork and beans and black coffee.

> I spoke to his mother within; "Ar'n't you afraid such strong coffee will kill your baby?" "O no," she answered, and held it up to his lips. "There, drink that," she said, "that'll make you hold your head up!" (60)

The Shoalers were hard-working (perhaps too much so) and self-reliant. Celia

admired their independent spirit, as she writes in the following passage:

> Doubtless the reckless islanders needed the force of all the moral suasion good Mr. Brock could bring to bear upon them; too much law and order they could not have; but I like better this story of the stout old fisherman who in church so unexpectedly answered his pastor's thrilling exhortation, "Supposing, my brethren, that any of you should be overtaken in the bay by a northeast storm, your hearts trembling with fear, and nothing but death before, whither would your thoughts turn? What would you do? – with the instant inspiration of common-sense, "I'd hoist the foresail and scud away for Squam!" (45)

In spite of their roughness of character, Celia says the Shoalers showed a certain gracefulness. They were very polite to strange women, and in recent years they had apparently become more interested in improving their standard of living (54).

Celia's portraits of the islanders are often laced with wry humor. "Being youthful and romantic," as she describes herself in this anecdote, she suggests Frederick as the name of the first-born boy of a young Star Island family of whom she was very fond.

> Taylor being the reigning President, his name was instantly added, and the child was always addressed by his whole name. Going by the house one day, my ears were assaulted by a sharp outcry: "Frederick Taylor, if you don't come into the house this minute, I'll slat your head off!" The tender mother borrowed her expression from the fishermen, who disengage mackerel and other delicate-gilled fish by "slatting" them off the hook.

(77)

As Celia herself states, "the people along the coast rather look down upon the Shoalers as being beyond the bounds of civilization" (78). An imaginative storyteller could not assemble a more colorful cast of characters than those in Thaxter's narrative. The Shoalers' customs and traditions, including their speech patterns, were peculiar and amusing. Celia's proficiency at capturing the inflections and speech patterns of the native Shoalers speaks to her ear for music and language.

> It is impossible by any process known to science to convey an idea of the intonations of their speech, quite different from Yankee drawl or sailor-tank and perfectly unique in itself. (69)

The Shoalers' speech was typically laced with profanity. Any word that ends in *y* or *e* is pronounced *ay*, so that "Benny" becomes "Bennaye." The Shoalers' sense of fun, Thaxter notes, was evidenced in nicknaming anyone with any slight peculiarity. A minister's wife, very tall and thin, was nicknamed "Legs" by the Shoalers, who thereafter never referred to her by any other name. Other Shoalers were called "Squint," "Carpenter," "Bunker," and "Shothead." – to their face as well as behind their backs. Young boys in the heat of argument were known to call each other "nasty-faced chowderheads" (71). Grandparents were addressed as Grans (an abbrevation of grandsire) and Gwammy (70). Interestingly, Thaxter and her brother, Cedric, address each other by these names in correspondence between 1864 and 1872 (McGill, Letters).

Thaxter also takes note of some of the more interesting customs and traditions of the Shoalers. According to tradition, if a youth fell in love with a young woman, he lay

in wait and pelted her with stones. If the woman turned around and exhibited any curiosity about the source of the volley, signifying an interest in her suitor, she was pelted again. If she completely ignored the volley, her suitor was considered rejected (58).

Thaxter singles out a few Shoalers whose traits or actions made them memorable. Old Nabbaye was a woman with "a stubby and unequal growth of sparse gray hair upon her chin" and "grizzled locks standing out about her head like one of the Furies" (75). She shared a sleeping loft with her husband, Bennaye, and a small flock of chickens. One night, according to Thaxter's account, Nabbaye was heard calling to Bennaye in the loft. In this passage, we see how Thaxter attempts to capture the Shoalers' speech patterns:

> "Come, Bennaye, fetch me down them heens' aigs!" To which Bennaye made answer, "I can't find no aigs! I've looked een the bed and een under the bed, and I can't find no aigs!" (76)

Another old Shoaler, quite homely as Thaxter describes him, performed ballad after ballad to anyone who would listen. Thaxter recounts what she remembers of the lyrics of these songs and remembers his habit of dropping his voice at the end of each verse and saying, instead of singing, the last word. Of his violin playing, Thaxter writes:

> ...such dismal tones as never before were heard on sea or land. He had no more idea of playing than one of the codfish he daily split and salted, yet he christened with pride all the shrieks and wails he drew out of the wretched instrument with various high-sounding titles. (82)

4.6 Traces of Vanished Humanity

A recurring theme in Thaxter's prose and poetry is the transience of the human footstep on nature's soil. Indeed, Appledore has "traces of vanished humanity" – ancient graves and ruins of structures where people lived more than a century before Celia's time (29-30). The people have turned to dust and ashes, but the stones they laid still remain, overgrown with wildflowers. The land is storied; it carries our histories with it. What is perceived or seen (particularly the beauty of a place) often hides tragic events such as shipwrecks that have occurred in the same places, of which there is no visible evidence.

> When man has vanished, Nature strives to restore her original order of things, and she smooths away gradually all traces of his work with the broad hands of her changing seasons. The men who built the Pyramids felt this; but will not the world spin long enough to level their masonry with the desolate sands? (32)

Toward the end of the book, Thaxter turns once again to the familiar themes of reality versus illusion. What, indeed, is real? The shoreline is often a mirage, nature smooths away man's footprints, and the shadows of ghosts linger around the island.

"I have before me," Thaxter writes, "a weird, romantic legend of these islands, in a time-stained, battered newspaper of forty years ago" (177). It is the story of a gentleman who came to the Shoals for health reasons, who encountered a figure of a woman standing near him on the rocks, wrapped in a long cloak with flowing light hair. She stood, facing east toward the ocean, without moving or making a sound. The man, thinking that she was a resident of one of the islands who was watching for the return of a

boat or a lover, asked her, "Well, my pretty maiden, do you see anything of him?" She turned toward him and said quietly, "He *will* come again" (178).

> Fairly at home again, he was inclined to look upon his adventure as a dream, a mere delusion arising from his illness, but concluded to seek in his surroundings something to substantiate, or remove the idea [...] After that, day after day, when the weather would permit, he visited the desolate place, to find the golden-haired ghost, and often she stood beside him, "silent as when I first saw her, except to say, as then, 'He *will* come again,' and these words came upon the mind rather than upon the ear. I was conscious of them rather then [sic] heard them,--it was all like a dream, a mysterious intuition. (179-180)

The golden-haired ghost is like Tennyson's "Marianna," who awaits upon the lonely moated grange for the return of her lover, repeatedly saying, "He cometh not." Perhaps it is she who casts her shadow over us even now, beckoning our return to these beloved islands. There is a time-honored Star Island tradition of sending off a boat with friends aboard. Those on the island stand at the dock and shout, as the boat pulls away from the harbor, "You *will* come back! You *will* come back!" Those in the boat echo in return, "We *will* come back! We *will* come back!"

> Landing for the first time, the stranger is struck only by the sadness of the place,--the vast loneliness; for there are not even trees to whisper with familiar voices,--nothing but sky and sea and rocks. But the very wildness and desolation reveal a strange beauty to him...He sleeps with all the

> waves of the Atlantic murmuring in his ears, and wakes to the freshness of a summer morning; and it seems as if morning were made for the first time. For the world is like a new-blown rose, and in the heart of it he stands (14-15).

Our journeys on this earth are transitory. Over time, nature erases our footsteps on the earth. Raindrops wear away the "deeply cut letters" on our gravestones (40).

> A few more years, and all trace of them will be obliterated. Soon will they be entirely forgotten; the old, old world forgets so much! And it is sown thick with graves from pole to pole. (42)

As Thaxter reminds us, we are seekers of truth, "waiting so helplessly and blindly for the unraveling of the riddle that has troubled every thoughtful soul since the beginning of time" (176). She finds no satisfactory answers in religion to those age-old questions. Who are we? Who came before us? What is our purpose on this earth, in this lifetime? But there are no voices to answer us except for the "great, gentle whisper of the sea...and now and then a sigh from the autumn wind" (176).

5. An Island Garden

After Levi Thaxter's death in 1884, Celia spent most of each spring and summer on the islands. Celia lived in a cottage on Appledore and grew a small flower garden with more than 50 varieties of flowers. The garden attracted many visitors who marveled at her gardening abilities, and friends urged her to write a book about it.

Thaxter's letters reveal that she had a more difficult time writing this book than in writing Among the Isles of Shoals. She wrote that she had been editing her manuscript "without a particle of enthusiasm, in a most perfunctory manner..." and that she "had no heart in it at all" (Letters 198-99). Thaxter's continuing health problems and lack of stamina probably contributed to the difficulty she had in completing the project.

Houghton, Mifflin & Company issued Celia's last book, An Island Garden, in 1894, just a few months before her death. Childe Hassam's paintings and illustrations of the Shoals and Celia's flower garden are interspersed among the text. The 126-page book has a four-page prefatory written by Celia that ends with a poem titled "Dust." The facing page of the opening chapter of the book has a diagram of the 50-foot by 15-foot garden that shows the exact location of every flower variety. This plan was used to reconstruct the garden in the 1980s.

The garden was planted adjacent to the piazza of Celia's cottage, about a two minute walk from the hotel (Rutledge, Isles 120). A "stone's throw" from the ocean, the garden sloped to the south along the edge of the piazza (21). It was sheltered from the north winds and mostly exposed to the sun, although partially shaded by the thick vines that overhung the piazza (18). The flowers in the garden were "mostly the old-fashioned

flowers our grandmothers loved" (44). Although the garden was small, it reaped a large reward in terms of enjoyment and in terms of material for a book.

An Island Garden is divided into untitled chapters. The narrator uses the autobiographical "I" voice throughout the book. Although the narrative weaves in and out, there is a smooth transition from one subject to another. Celia wrote the book from a first-person point of view, and she has a strong presence in the book. There is little mention of any other person in this narrative. In several places in the narrative, Celia paints wonderful pictures of herself, depicting a self-sufficient, cultured persona who is keenly passionate about the activity of gardening as well as the place where she gardens.

Celia's narrative voice is alternately poetic and matter-of-factly realistic (often with a tinge of humor). The writing shows she is more grounded in her writing and in her own identity. The narrative voice is truly hers, not a voice that mirrors or mimics other authors. Celia writes more confidently and less apologetically. She is not afraid to show her vulnerability or her emotions. In this book, Celia has truly bloomed to become the "Rose of the Isles," displaying more congruence between her literary and personal identities at this point in time than there was 20 years hence. Thaxter's confidence in her writing at this point in her life is also revealed in this 1889 letter to an admirer:

> One rule I laid down for myself, to keep religiously, one or two, perhaps I should say, but this one in especial, namely, Never to use more words than I could help. And give my full meaning: never to speak a sentence that was not as crystal clear as I could make it: never to sacrifice anything to the allusionments of melodious rhyming. (Unpublished letter, CT to Rev.

George Bainton, April 15, 1889 from Appledore)

In contrast to the broad landscape portrait that Celia painted of the islands in Among the Isles of Shoals, this book is almost like a thumbnail sketch. Its narrow focus on the garden and gardening allows the author to convey much more detail about her subjects. The book also shows the extent to which Celia has developed as a naturalist. She speaks authoritatively and extensively about the different varieties of flowers and birds—knowledge gained through hours of self-study. Her intimacy with the different varieties and what they need to flourish and survive can be gained not so much from textbooks, but from direct experience over an extended period of time.

In An Island Garden, the anchor of Celia's identity has shifted from the island itself to the garden, where she positions herself as caretaker and co-creator with the "mighty Inventor" (76). This book reflects Celia's identity transformation as she has re-established her connection to the island (her first anchor) through gardening, just as her writing had allowed her to do before. Gardening, not writing, is the vehicle through which Celia's relationship to her environment is established and maintained. Perhaps this is Celia's lasting legacy, as a tender/caretaker of beauty and cultivation—not only of flowers, but also of other artists.

5.1 "A Tiny Space of Tangled Bloom"

In the first chapter of An Island Garden, Celia introduces the main characters of the story—the flowers, their enemies (insects and birds) and the gardener (Celia) who fights them off with ingenious strategies and just plain hard work. Celia writes about what flowers and gardening mean to her, the effort involved in gardening and the rewards

gardening brings, and the general cycle of working the garden throughout the calendar year.

The opening pages of the narrative introduce the reader to the garden through the island maiden narrator—the "lonely child" who turned to flowers to comfort and inspire her, and who felt so sorry about picking them that, when they withered, carried them to a final resting place between the rocks (v-vi). The narrator then turns despondent, lamenting the friends who enjoyed her garden who have since passed away. "But because of tender memories of loving eyes that see them no more," writes the empathetic narrator, "my flowers are yet more beloved and tenderly cherished" (vi). At the end of the prefatory, the island Miranda voices her thoughts about the narrative that follows. With hopes that the book would provide helpful instruction to other gardeners, she spares "no smallest detail...no suggestion that might prove helpful" (vii).

The threads of this personal essay continue to the next section of the book. Celia discourses about the various gardening tools she uses, the pleasures that come from planting and growing seeds, her daily battles with weeds, the birds that delight and frustrate her, and the characteristics of some of the flowers grown in the garden. The narrative then proceeds chronologically according to a year in the life of a gardener. Some of the narrative appears to have been copied from journal entries in which she has recorded her daily gardening activities (and thoughts about such activities) in much detail. As in Among the Isles of Shoals, Celia sprinkles her narrative with quotes and passages from other writers such as Gilbert White. (In fact, there is more extensive use of these quotes than in her previous book.) Interestingly, there is no noticeable shift in

narrative voice with these passages. There are places where she has obviously expanded the narrative to explain certain things, e.g., how she goes about weeding by laying down boards with a piece of carpet and kneeling or half-reclining to get as close to her work as possible (59). Although the text in her journal was probably consciously written with the idea of incorporating it into her book, it maintains a congruity with the rest of the book. The narrative weaves back and forth from one topic to another with a fluidity in which every individual element is brought together to form a montage.

The narrative then turns back to an essay format for most of the rest of the book. Celia writes about the arrangement of flowers in the garden and their appearance in full bloom in July and August. She marvels at the splendor of God's creations and the care and tending that is required of a gardener during this period (77). She is fascinated with "the great laboratory of Nature" and discourses delightfully on the joys of intimacy with flowers (87).

Several pages in this section give a detailed description of her cottage parlor on Appledore. The parlor is akin to Celia's studio; she spends much of her time here. Celia writes, paints, listens to music and engages in conversation with friends and visitors in this room. It is a delightful gathering place for the summer guests on the island.

The garden's twilight comes in late summer and early autumn. The gardener can now take time to enjoy the fruits of her labors. Summer thunderstorms bring much-needed rain to the parched soil, but the wind and rain is also destructive to the flowers. The storms bode the cold, bleak winter weather and an end to the garden for another season.

5.2 Cherished Treasures

Flowers are the main characters and symbols in this book, and Celia has a long-standing relationship with them. As she writes:

> Ever since I could remember anything, flowers have been like dear friends to me, comforters, inspirers, powers to uplift and to cheer. A lonely child, living on the lighthouse island ten miles away from the mainland, every blade of grass that sprang out of the ground, every humblest weed, was precious in my sight, and I began a little garden when not more than five years old. From this, year after year, the larger one, which has given so much pleasure to so many people, has grown. (v)

The relationship is also very personal. Celia calls her flowers "precious," "dear," "cherished treasures" and "pets" (46, vi, 7). She speaks to them in the garden as if they are human, and often ascribes human characteristics to them. They "grasp" the trellis, "stretch" their tendrils and "clasp hands" (47). They "pine and suffer" in the hot summer sun as they wait for a cool bath (105). The flowers even take on personal pronouns; Celia refers to a tall red Hollyhock as "he" and "him" (60). Celia says it is interesting to observe the plants, to think about the things they do, to help them if they need it, and to sympathize with their experiences.

> As I work among my flowers, I find myself talking to them, reasoning and remonstrating with them, and adoring them as if they were human beings. Much laughter I provoke among my friends by so doing, but that is of no consequence. We are on such good terms, my flowers and I! (92)

As Celia notes, flowers and other plants can be quite resilient. According to one writer who Celia quotes, plants live and breathe according to their own instincts (90). When they lose buds or suffer some other kind of damage, they will try hard to repair the damage if the cause is removed. "There is a lesson to be learned of them on which I have often pondered," she writes (65).

In this book, the flowers and plants are symbolic of Celia's own life and of nature in general, in contrast to the prominence of the ocean and the island as symbols of nature and self in Among the Isles of Shoals. Some of the descriptions of the plants and flowers in An Island Garden are thinly disguised allegories for Celia's own life. She relates an anecdote about a tree that was placed in poor soil by an old wall, a few feet from rich soil, that threw out a root to the new soil and gained a solid footing "so that by degrees...it changed its place, let its original roots die, and lived resuscitated upon the organ that had set it free" (89). When she was living on the mainland, Celia often cast out her roots to the islands. The islands allowed her to gain a foothold to breathe freely (to be resuscitated) and live her life freely, without most of the constraints of socially prescribed roles.

To Celia, flowers are emblematic of nature's glory and marvels. The blossoming of a flower from a tiny seed is "wonderful" and "surprising" (3). Flowers also represent the cycle of life—birth, death and re-birth or renewal. Unlike friends who have died and will never come back, flowers come back year after year, providing inspiration and nourishment for the soul. Indeed, they are "summer's very soul" (42). Flowers in bloom add color, perfume, beauty and cultivation to one's environment. A flower blossom

"breathes a glory of color into sense and spirit" (75). As Celia watches the flowers blossom, she marvels at the glory and power of the "great Inventor" who must enjoy his work as much as she does (76).

5.3 Subtle Bonds of Sympathy

Tending to the flowers gives Celia a sense of purpose. The flowers are like children whom she nurtures and protects, much as a mother cares for her children. She tenderly takes wilted flowers to be buried. She carefully nurtures her seedlings and plants as she would a member of her own family.

> They seem like sentient beings, as if they knew me and loved me, not indeed as I love them, but with almost a reliance on my sympathy and care, and a pleasure in my delight in them. I please myself with the thought that if anything goes wrong with them, if a vine or tender stalk droops for lack of support, or if some insect is working them woe, or threat of harm comes to them from any quarter, they say to each other, "Patience! She will be coming soon, she will see our trouble, she will succor us, and all will again be well." (113)

According to Celia, a true lover of flowers is born, not made (5). The simple admiration of flowers is not the same as passion or love (4).

> Often I hear people say, "How do you make your plants flourish like this?" as they admire the little flower patch I cultivate in summer, or the window gardens that bloom for me in the winter; "I can never make my plants blossom like this! What is your secret?" And I answer with one

word, "Love" (4-5).

The act of gardening requires love to be truly successful. It also requires patience, perseverance and constancy, selflessness and a "subtle bond of sympathy" (5). Gardening is hard, laborious work that requires a great deal of planning and preparation. Celia starts preparing the garden soil the preceding autumn by using barn manure or compost heap (12-13). She grows seedlings indoors in January and February that are later transplanted to the garden. Because she thinks that some flowers (such as poppies) are sensitive to being moved, Celia has devised a clever way to deal with the problem. She half fills shallow boxes with sand into which she sets rows of egg shells close together. The egg shells are filled with dirt and Poppy seeds; the egg shells will break and decompose easily after they are placed into the ground (16).

Around April 1, Celia prepares to transplant herself (and her seedlings) to the island. She writes that the sight of the boat sailing down the Piscataqua River, outfitted with her plants and flowers, must seem like a "May Day procession" (17). Someone spades the garden for her during the first week in April; after then, she is the sole caretaker (18-19). She gets up and starts work in the garden before the sun is up, commencing to transplant, hoe, rake, weed, and do other chores (46, 51). She sometimes transplants flowers from other parts of the island, and gathers sticks (for the sweet peas) from across the island in a wheelbarrow (57-9).

5.4 Legions of Enemies

Sometimes the gardener must employ ingenious strategies in the course of her work. Having heard that toads were a natural enemy of the vile slugs that invade her

garden, Celia set out to import some of the creatures to the island. She writes about some of her experiences with toads in a July 1889 letter to Annie Fields. This delightful passage from An Island Garden describes what happened.

> I snatched at the hope held out to me, and immediately wrote to a friend on the continent, "In the name of the Prophet, Toads!" At once a force of only too willing boys was set about the work of catching every toad within reach, and one day in June a boat brought a box to me from the far-off express office. A piece of wire netting was nailed across the top, and upon the earth with which it was half filled, reposing among some dry and dusty green leaves, sat three dry and dusty toads, wearily gazing at nothing. Is this all, I thought, only three! Hardly worth sending so far. Poor creatures, they looked so arid and wilted, I took up the hose and turned upon them a gentle shower of fresh cool water, flooding the box. I was not prepared for the result! The dry, baked earth heaved tumultuously; up came dusky heads and shoulders and bright eyes by the dozen. A sudden concert of liquid sweet notes was poured out on the air from the whole rejoicing company. It was really beautiful to hear that musical ripple of delight. I surveyed them with eager interest as they sat singing and blinking together. "You are not handsome," I said, as I took a hammer and wrenched off the wire cover that shut them in, "but you will be lovely in my sight if you will help me to destroy mine enemy;" and with that I turned the box on its side and out they skipped into a perfect paradise of

food and shade...(9-10).

Gardening also requires one to go to war against the "legions" of enemies that invade the garden like armies: mildew, cutworms, weeds, and other bugs and worms. Celia attacks the invaders with determination. It is a messy, often disgusting operation. She carefully sprinkles poison on the tops of bushes and on the under side of leaves. To get rid of the cutworms, she digs up the soil around the roots of the plants, extracts the worms from the soil, and drops them in a jar of alcohol.

Of all the different bugs and worms that assault the flowers, the worst is the loathsome, repulsive slug. In fact, the reviled slug is the main villain in this drama. Immune to most poisons except for salt and lime, the slug is "a mass of sooty, shapeless slime" that causes no end of anxiety (7).

> Last night, after having given myself the pleasure of watering the garden, I could not sleep for anxiety about the slugs. I seldom water the flowers at night because the moisture calls them out, and they have an orgy feasting on my most precious children all night long...At twelve o'clock I said to myself, You know the slugs don't care a rap for all the ashes in the world, but the friendly toads may be kept away by them, and who knows if such a smother of them may not kill the precious Peas themselves? I could not bear it any longer, rose up and donned my dressing gown, and out into the dark and dew I bore the hose...and washed off every atom of ashes in the black midnight, and came back and slept in peace (61-2).

Celia is more tolerant of the antics of the song sparrow, who likes to attack her

sweet peas. The sparrow will yank and twist the stems of the plant to get at a pea. Although the sparrow is a "marauder," Celia loves to hear him sing. She reacts to the bird's mischievousness just as a mother might react to her son's naughtiness—with bemusement, exasperation and a bit of tough love.

Weeds are among the most formidable of enemies to a gardener, and Celia takes a no-nonsense approach to getting rid of them. She pulls them up as soon as they appear, making sure not to leave part of the root in the ground. It takes her longer than most people to weed her garden, she writes, because she does such a thorough job (59). In fact, she does not mind the task. She observes that weeds are plants that are disposed to get into the wrong place, just like people (35). Plants also must be thinned out, a task that is less enjoyable to Celia but nevertheless necessary. She soothes her conscience by saving the plants she digs up and giving them away to people on neighboring islands (36). After the plant population is thinned, she leaves them to their destiny. "Let it be a case of survival of the fittest," she writes (61). This statement clearly represents Celia's awareness that nature has her own design independent of man's actions--sentiments that correspond to some of the narrative in Among the Isles of Shoals.

5.5 Perfect Days

There comes a time, in late June, when the gardener can take a breather from the hard work to enjoy the fruits of her labor. These are "the most perfect days of the year," when it is hot on the mainland but cool on the island (71). Life on the island is idyllic, and the distant coastline is again a mirage, lying so far away from reality. In this passage, her narrative voice shifts from the poetic to the realistic, juxtaposing the two spheres.

> Outside the garden fence, it is as if the flowers had broken their bounds and were rushing down the sloping bank in a torrent of yellow, where the early Artemisias and Eschscholtzias are hastening into bloom, overflowing in a flood of gold that, lightly stirred by every breeze, sends a satin shimmering to the sun. Eschscholtzia—it is an ugly name for a most lovely flower. California Poppy is much better (75).

Throughout the summer, the flowers "hold carnival" with their beauty and thrive in this environment.

> Often have I watched the great red Poppies drop their fiery petals wavering solemnly to the floor, stricken with arrows of melodious sound from the matchless violin answering to the touch of a master, or to the storm of rich vibrations from the piano. What heavenly music has resounded from those walls, what mornings and evenings of pleasantness have flown by in that room! (102)

The indoor garden spills outside. Open doors and windows lead out onto the vine-wreathed veranda, with the garden beyond. People sit in the parlor among the flowers and listen to the music; others gather outside where it is cooler, "lovely women in colors that seem to have copied the flowers in the garden" (103). The "floods of moonlight" make the night seem magical. Then the flowers go to sleep, and nothing disturbs them "save perhaps the wheeling of the rosy-winged Sphinx moth that flutters like the spirit of the night above them as they dream" (104).

For Celia and her island guests, the island provides an observation point from

which to consider one's own life. The garden and the piazza overlook the harbor and the boats at the pier. Beyond the dock lies the ocean; the coastline is hazy and recedes into the distance. The islands and their inhabitants are at the center of the tableau. While the rest of the world is lost, those on the islands are finding themselves.

5.6 Bringing the Outdoors In

Celia's indoor environment—the parlor—integrates the aesthetic elements of nature and culture into an organic whole. The parlor is an extension of the garden. It opens out onto a long piazza next to the flower beds, extending almost the entire length of the garden. The walls of the parlor are painted light green, the predominant color of nature. The wood floors are covered with throw rugs that look like "patches of warm green moss on the pine-needle color given by the polish to the natural hue of the wood" (94). The parlor is furnished with sofas and pillows that are mostly shades of green. Light olive-green curtains hang over the windows. In the middle of the room, to one side, is a piano. Low bookcases are placed around the room, and there are high walls to the ceiling that are covered with paintings done by her friends.

Celia brings the outdoors in through her carefully arranged vases of flowers on the bookcases. There are 32 vases of flowers altogether. The glasses in themselves are quite beautiful; nearly all are white or clear, with a few colored in pale shades of green, rose and blue (95). The flowers are intentionally arranged in a linear progression of color, beginning with "the dazzling white single Poppy, the Bride, to lead the sweet procession" (95). As Celia writes, "The color gathers, softly flushing from the snow white at one end, through all rose, pink, cherry, and crimson shades, to the note of darkest red" (96). The

effect of such an arrangement is striking. One wonders, though, if they were arranged this way for business purposes. Because Celia sold the flowers to visitors on the island, it would have made sense to arrange them by color.

The objects Celia has around her in the parlor reflect a simple yet cultivated lifestyle. In addition to the flowers, she surrounds herself with books, music, artwork, and painting and writing instruments. Nothing is ornate or pretentious. This is a working artist's studio; individual aesthetic elements are jumbled together in this palette of a room to appeal to many different senses. The colors of the flowers and the artwork are visual delights. The flowers' fragrances appeal to the sense of smell. The music played on the piano and other instruments inspires those who hear it, and they respond by touching pen to paper and brush to palette. One can even imagine those who gather in the parlor sipping a glass of wine or liqueur as they pleasantly converse. In this manner, as with the garden itself, Celia shapes her environment to her own identity. The parlor and the garden are a reflection of what is important to her at this point in time. Celia has personalized the landscape and has cultivated it to fit her. This denotes an active, intimate relationship with the environment in which she is involved in creating her environment, not just observing it.

5.7 Dimensions of Relationship

Thaxter's relationship to nature, as portrayed in An Island Garden, reflects many of the dimensions of relationship as described by Josselson. Celia talks about her attachment to the flowers and how they look at her. She senses the personality of each flower and greets them as if they were human, needing her sympathy and care (113). As

she writes, people are born with a passion for flowers in one's soul (4). Celia's relationship to the flowers and plants is very physical. She gets her face as close to the soil as possible during weeding (59) and carefully pulls apart the roots of plants during the transplanting process (42). After the ground is spaded, "no hands touch it" except her own throughout the entire gardening season (19). A friend of hers says that when he sits on his piazza, his wisteria vine leans toward him and lays her head on his shoulder (5).

Thaxter is validated by the sight of flowers that "lifts and refreshes the human heart" as well as the morning landscape and seascape (41, 47). She idealizes the flowers' beauty and perfection (75-76) and marvels that the flowers grow like she does. Every flower needs a different set of condition in which to thrive, she says, and each plant has its own characteristics (25, 87). In the process of gardening, Thaxter moves in harmony with the land. Her body is attuned to the movements of "combing" the soil (25). In turn, the flowers "know and respond to everything that is done for them" (37). The flowers and birds are her friends and companions. As Thaxter and the birds go about their business during the spring months, they keep each other company. They watch each other but don't bother each other (20).

5.8 "Strange and Remarkable Creatures"

Toward the end of the book, the loveliness of summer turns into the serenity of autumn, when "all things are wonderful and beautiful" (124). The rocks are covered with the glitter of the morning sun and seals who lazily sun themselves. After a busy hotel season on the island, the Laightons welcomed the time for rest and renewal. Celia describes the rhythms of the summer season in this letter:

> Until the middle of June the quiet is undisturbed; then comes an eddy of humanity from the great world,--chatter of voices, patter of feet, much empty sound up and down the long piazzas, women with carcasses of the birds I love borne in simple vanity above their faces. [...] In September away the crowd blows, like leaves in wind, and down comes the healing balm of quiet again upon the place. (Letters 176-77)

As winter approaches, the flowers are put to bed "for a long winter nap beneath the snow," and Celia makes preparations to move inland (126). The garden, like Celia's soul--will be re-born the following summer. Life comes full circle and will begin again, although there is no predicting where the journey will end and what course nature will take. Nature, as Celia believes, is predictable only in its capriciousness, and therein lies its transcendence.

> It takes Thoreau and Emerson and their kind to enjoy a walk for a walk's sake, and the wealth they glean with eyes and ears. I cannot enjoy the glimpses Nature gives me half as well, when I go deliberately seeking them, as when they flash on me in some pause of work. It is like the pursuit of happiness: you don't get it when you go after it, but let it alone and it comes to you." (C. Thaxter, Letters 54)

All summer long, a white bat has been hanging around the island. "Of a white bat never before have I heard," Celia writes, "but all kinds of strange and remarkable creatures find their way here, and I am surprised at nothing" (126).

6. Constructing Identity in Place

Shoals' visitors called Celia Thaxter the island maiden, island Miranda and Rose of the Islands. In life and in narrative, Celia embodied all of these ascribed identities. The Isles of Shoals, and all that encompassed island life, were the central anchor of her identity throughout her life. In her younger years, the islands represented the security of familial love in a domestic sphere dominated by her mother, father and brothers. Later, the islands provided a refuge from Celia's discordant family relations. They also were central to her writing and artistic pursuits. Celia claimed the domestic space of the islands for herself, bringing some of the wilderness under cultivation through her garden and surrounding herself with a circle of friends who placed her at the center.

6.1 Different Lives, Different Selves

Celia Laighton and Levi Thaxter were raised in very different environments in families of different social classes. The Laightons' unconventional "country" lifestyle presented a marked contrast to the traditional, urban lifestyle of the Thaxter household—and that is part of what attracted Levi and Celia to each other. The relative isolation of the islands fostered a sense of interdependence among the Shoalers; their lives were intertwined with the islands and their inhabitants. The Laightons also had to work together to assure the survival of the family business. Although Celia and her brothers were afforded much freedom on the islands, they were expected to work hard to contribute toward the upkeep of the household and the hotel. These constraints had a profound influence on the family. Celia's letters to and from Laighton family members clearly show how much they loved and respected each other and depended on each other

for emotional and financial support.

The island's isolation allowed for a more reflective, slower-paced life that was congruent with nature, not distanced from it. The sense of containment in such an isolated environment led to focused, creative, and contemplative pursuits such as reading and gardening—activities that Celia enjoyed throughout her life. But the world was a wide open place, yet to be explored. The islands provided a safe place from which she could venture out--and then come back home. As Stephen Trimble writes in The Geography of Childhood:

> The first six years of life work their subtle power on us throughout our lives. We remember few specifics. But our bedrock emotional security—our trust—comes from this time. [...] We start with our general emotional outlook on the world fixed by the magical code of our genes. The bent of personality that makes a girl or boy receptive to natural history may well be something we cannot instill, but rather something with which an individual starts. Nevertheless, genes work in context. [...] Infants push out toward the adventure of the unknown, but only so far: the security of the known tempers their reach. This tension between the old and the new, safety versus growth, dominates much of infancy and childhood. (22)

Celia Thaxter undoubtedly felt deprived of some of the educational and cultural opportunities she might have had if she had grown up in an urban environment. As she grew into her adolescent years, she may have even felt displaced or "out of place" when compared with the more cultured and educated young women who visited the islands.

Her year at the boarding school gave her a taste of the outside world, and she was curious to experience more of it. Levi Thaxter could give her some of what she was missing. But the islands were Celia's security. They were home.

> The natural world does not judge. It exists. One route to self-esteem, particularly for shy or undervalued children, lies in the out-of-doors. [...] The sun, the wind, the frogs, and the trees can reassure and strengthen and energize. [...] No matter that we differ a bit from our peers: difference is the norm. Understanding difference empowers us to grow and to care. (Trimble, Geography 22-23)

Celia grew up with nature in her backyard. Nature was an integral part of her home and domestic environment and her sense of self. Even today, people who grow up in cities or in the suburbs have a difficult time understanding and appreciating this primal perspective. Don Gayton, in Landscapes of the Interior, writes the following:

> A poet friend of mine has a theory about children. She says there is a period in their lives when they bond with a particular home landscape, and the image of that landscape stays with them through their lifetime, as a profound psychological imprint. I think I believe this theory; in fact I can imagine such imprinting occurring within a single childhood afternoon, as familiar sounds and smells and light entwine and expand to a kind of sensory maximum. The receptive child then looks up momentarily from a round stone or a creek, feels a light emotional detonation somewhere within the rib cage, and is imprinted forever. This primal landscape, as my

> friend calls it, then forms part of that grand dream we call 'home,' and becomes a semi-conscious reference against which the individual will then compare all other landscapes. [...] Discovering places similar to the primal landscape will naturally evoke strong positive feelings. [...] Dissimilar landscapes, ones that contrast strongly with the primal landscape, can generate unease, even active disgust. (72)

Levi Thaxter also felt displaced and different from others as he grew up in Watertown. Born into genteel circumstances, Levi Thaxter was a true "gentleman" whose father was prominent and well-established in the urban community of Watertown (R. Thaxter 26). The Thaxters came from an upper-class, educated, and privileged background. They placed a great deal of importance on family tradition and obligation as well as the values of education and culture. Levi's closest friends came from the same background. Shy and intellectual, he was most assuredly in his element at Harvard in a world of books and ideas. Raised by traditional parents (especially his father) who expected their son to assume a traditional role within his family and community, Levi rebelled against these prescripts most of his adult life. He found his way to the Isles of Shoals, a place where he could distance himself emotionally and physically from the identity that had been constructed for him by his family's background and expectations.

At the outset, Levi had a romantic attachment to the islands. Laighton offered him what seemed to be an ideal opportunity—to strengthen his attachment to the Shoals through their business venture. Unfortunately, reality has a way of intruding on such idealism. When the venture turned out to be less than satisfactory, he maintained

connections to his version of Eden through his friendship with the Laightons and his eventual marriage to Celia. When after a few years, the Shoals became less and less idyllic, he sought to find another Eden through his nomadic excursions up and down the Eastern coast.

Celia was a part of the islands that Levi found so fascinating, and it is not surprising that he would have found her attractive. (One wonders if he had met her away from the islands whether he would have had the same attraction.) They met and fell in love when their identities were still not fully developed. Perhaps this is one of the things that attracted them to each other. Neither had experienced any other romantic relationship or interest. Levi fancied himself to be a teacher; in fact, it is curious that he apparently never considered teaching as a vocation. Perhaps Levi thought of himself as a Pygmalion—he could mold impressionable, unspoiled Celia into anything he wanted, and that would be his purpose in life. Celia was his eager student and his audience, and they continued to play these roles during their early married years. As it turns out, Levi's restless, active nature would be placed in direct opposition to Celia's domestic rootedness.

Celia's identity, already transformed through the responsibilities of motherhood at such a young age, was further influenced by moving and settling inland—in her husband's home town. Unlike most other women of her times, she lacked the proximity of her family (especially her mother) for help with domestic chores and for emotional support. Although she had friends (and even a substitute mother) in Lizzie and Margie Curzon, Celia was rather isolated even in her inland environment. She rapidly began to

lose her own sense of self as she attempted to adapt to her new environment. Her sense of isolation and despair continued to grow.

Thaxter's own sense of self, which never was fully developed before marriage, continued to erode as she gave of herself to others through caretaking and domestic responsibilities. The islands provided an anchor when she was emotionally drowning. Her emotional longing for the islands was a desire for the warmth and joy of family as much as an attachment to the landscape. The Laighton family was situated in place, and the two were inseparable in Thaxter's mind. The islands continued to beckon her return when she was "landlocked" in Newburyport, Newtonville and Portsmouth.

The responsibilities of marriage and children proved to be stressful for both Levi and Celia. Their financial circumstances were such that they constantly worried about money and were careful about their spending. When Celia took on the role of family breadwinner--in addition to being a mother, wife, daughter, sister and housekeeper—Levi undoubtedly felt as if his traditional masculine role was being undermined, sending him into a further state of depression.

Celia, on the other hand, was left to pick up the pieces and deal with the never-ending demands of her family and her career. The work-family conflicts experienced by the Thaxters were similar to those of today's middle-class American families. In response to this stress, Levi withdrew even more from the world, especially from his family. But Celia's tendency was to work harder. Unfortunately, this caused her to overwork, leading to feelings of incompetence and frustration in all facets of her life. Indeed, she may have thought that if she worked hard enough, everything would be all right.

As Celia and Levi increasingly lived separate lives, they situated themselves in separate places that were congruous with their childhood environments. These places formed the context of their identities in adulthood. Levi spent most of his time inland, at the Newtonville and Kittery residences, and Celia spent more time at the Shoals. Celia's inland home in Newtonville fell into disarray in her absence. From reading her letters, one has the impression that Celia's time in Newtonville and Kittery was often spent trying to "make things right" by cleaning and sprucing things up. It is easy to understand how she began to feel emotionally distant from her inland homes—she had very little control over them much of the time. Her comings and goings kept her from feeling as if she truly belonged in these places. At the same time, Celia's back and forth excursions lent a fresh, detached perspective toward her environment, inspiring her creative activities. Like Willa Cather, who was inspired to write about her native Nebraska when she was far away from it, Thaxter's self-location in opposition to place often helped motivate her writing.

> Edith Cobb, in analyzing the roots of creativity in great thinkers, found that many had experienced a pivotal childhood "discontinuity, an awareness of [one's] own unique separateness and identity, and also a continuity, a renewal of relationship with nature." Cobb marveled at what can grow from this paradox: "...a delighted awareness that knowing and being are in some way coincident and continuous...and that this kind of knowing is in itself an achievement of psychological balance. (Trimble, Geography 22-23)

Celia longed for her family when she was away from them, and she appreciated the cultural and social aspects of inland life that much more after being deprived of them on the islands. Moreover, as much as she loved the Shoals, Thaxter did not always idealize or romanticize the islands--or want to be there. A friend of Celia's related a story in which a mutual acquaintance ventured an opinion about how wonderful island life was. Thaxter looked out of the window onto a busy Boston street and started laughing. "Did you ever try it?" she said. "I've had enough of the wilderness. Give me a horsecar!" (Phelps 179)

6.2 Literary and Personal Identities

Celia Thaxter constructed her literary identity through place—by using the Shoals as ground from which she could position her own authority as a writer. Her writing took her back home on a journey of self-discovery. Through research and writing, she was able to reclaim her heritage and sense of self. Over time, place and self became more fused. Her literary identity shaped her real-life persona, and vice versa.

Thaxter wrote out of her own direct experiences; the fact that her writing was validated through critical acclaim and financial remuneration enhanced her self-esteem and position of authority in her personal life. Although she never had the benefits of much formal education, something she always felt self-conscious about, the stories she told of the islands from her direct knowledge were just as valuable in her circle of friends. Thaxter could comfortably take her place with Dickens, Whittier, Fields and others of much more education and accomplishment. Writing was a path to place, but place was the vehicle that led Thaxter back to herself.

Celia's identity also was being constructed by her reading audience, the visitors to the island such as Hawthorne, her friends, and others. She became a mythical character who captured the imagination of the public because of who she was and who she represented herself to be in narrative. The Shoals already were legendary, replete with pirates, ghosts and other shadowy characters. Celia's stories and poems added to those legends by placing her at the center of the island's newest drama. Consider this subtly satirical passage from an anonymous author who recalls her first sight of Celia Thaxter at the Shoals:

> We were spending a week---a party of merry young people, cousins and friends—at the Appledore house, then kept by Mrs. Thaxter's father, Mr. Laighton,--now by her two brothers. The father's history was interesting, and the subject of much speculation to the loungers about the hotel verandas and halls. He was a disappointed politician, and, disgusted with the thanklessness of the people, had fled the world and tried to live in solitude. But somehow, though he would not go to the mainland, the mainland had come to him,--will or nill nobody knew which,--he had found himself the center of a throng of summer visitors. "We girls," however, cared not so much about the politican father's mental struggles as for the romance of his daughter [...] "Only to think of it!" exclaimed dainty Miss Aristocrat of Beacon Street, Boson. "Mr. Thaxter, her husband, is a Harvard graduate, and, they say, is 'cultivated' and polished, and might have married in his own or the first circles. But he is so

> dreadfully eccentric, and he came down here, and fell in love with that rough girl, and I dare say he'll be as coarse as she is, some day." And we all shook our heads, and sighed at the perversities and eccentricities of Harvard students, and went on with our embroidering, and crocheting, and gossipings, until our week's trip was over. Then we went back to our various "circles" of society, such as our respective modicums of money, blood, or culture, had made them, and Celia Thaxter went her way, and "milked the little dun-cow" as of old, in the matchless summer-mornings... (qtd. in C. Thaxter, Heavenly Guest 136-37)

As curious strangers sought her out, Celia lost her anonymity and retreated behind a self-protective mask. She turned more and more to pursuits such as china painting that required her to surrender less of her soul. As she was experiencing the emotional pain of her mother's illness and death, china painting was a welcome diversion that gave her a renewed sense of purpose. In the process of emotionally distancing herself from her writing (and her own feelings), she became much like the island itself, surrounded by a barrier of ocean.

The island must have been a welcome refuge for Celia in the midst of such emotional turmoil, but it also was a stage on which human dramas were enacted. Celia and Levi Thaxter and Thomas Laighton were among the cast of characters in a new drama that was playing on stage. They added to the mystique of the islands and became the subjects of much conjecture by a curious and romantic public. To this day, we really don't know the complete truth about the circumstances of Thomas Laighton's move to

the islands as well as Celia and Levi's courtship and marriage. We don't know the truth about the aftermath of Levi's 1855 boating accident, and whether the accident was really the cause of his absence from the islands. We don't know who to credit for putting Celia's poem "Land-Locked" in the hands of the editors of The Atlantic Monthly. We succumb to the fairy tale of the handsome prince rescuing the young maiden from a life of poverty among the fishermen, and we engage in discussions about whether Celia or Levi was more to blame for the eventual breakdown of their marriage.

It is ironic that while Levi Thaxter and his friends sought a sort of Utopian community at the Shoals, Celia came closest to realizing their vision. Her presence on the island during the summers drew many friends and acquaintances who were artists, musicians and writers. Here, they could divorce themselves from reality and contemplate life. Members of this island community engaged in dramatic readings, poetry readings, and musical concerts just as others had done at Brook Farm, and as they do today at the Shoals.

6.3 Self in Place

Through writing and the visual arts, Thaxter expressed her emotional attachment to her beloved islands. Thaxter's relationship with the Isles of Shoals was a love affair that deepened over time. It was perhaps the only love affair that Celia ever had (or permitted herself to experience). Writing provided a vehicle for Thaxter's self-expression and reclaiming of her island identity. Through writing, Celia was able to transform her own reality by putting into her inland environment the mnemonics of the Shoals. Writing enabled Celia to be somewhere else in spirit if she could not be there physically. The act

of writing transcended the physical distance that separated her from the object of her love. Contemporary nature writer Terry Tempest Williams talks about her mother's love of the natural world and her feeling that the natural world was the third partner in her marriage (qtd in Pearlman, Voices 128). And so it was with Celia and Levi Thaxter. Nature brought them together but also came in between them. In the end, Celia was left quite alone, as we all are in this life on Earth. As she wrote to Bradford Torrey in 1889:

> Don't think it arrogance when I say I think I have a deeper enjoyment and understanding of your book than most people; it is only because I have lived so much of my life quite alone with nature. It seems as if a spring of joyful recognition leapt within me, as you were of my kin. People do go through life so blindly, so dark and deaf to this beautiful world you know so well, so dead to the keen and exquisite enjoyment Nature offers to all who will take it. (Letters 169-70)

Toward the end of her life, Celia reflected on the congruities and complexities of her life in a letter to a friend, observing that the moonlight on the water looked the same then as it had forty years ago on her wedding night. "How many lives we seem to live in one!" she wrote (Letters 165). Two months before she died, she took a small group of friends on a walking excursion around Appledore, stopping at her childhood haunts and playgrounds. Perhaps this was a way to integrate the disparate parts of her identity—to become "re-rooted." In her 59 years, she had lived many lives and had played many parts. Now it was time to go home.

7. The Isles of Shoals Revisited

The small Laighton family cemetery on Appledore is still maintained today and is accessible to island visitors. The Appledore House and adjacent buildings, including Celia's cottage, burned to the ground in 1914. The hotel on Appledore was never rebuilt; only two of the original cottages remain on the island. For years, the island lay desolate with dilapidated buildings and grounds overgrown with poison ivy.

For more than 25 years, the Shoals Marine Laboratory has leased Appledore Island from the Star Island Corporation, a non-profit corporation that retains majority ownership of the Isles of Shoals. The Shoals Marine Laboratory is a joint project of Cornell University and the University of New Hampshire. Each summer, more than 70 undergraduate students participate in studies in residence.

Celia Thaxter is still a part of her beloved islands. The most vibrant reminder of Celia's spirit is her restored garden on Appledore. Following the detailed layout that Celia had included in An Island Garden, the garden was reconstructed in the mid-1980s by the Shoals Marine Laboratory with the help of many volunteers. Although some flower varieties are not available today, the garden remains remarkably true to the original layout.

In 1897, the Isles of Shoals Summer Meetings Association—organized by Thomas Elliott of Lowell, Massachusetts (an 1896 guest at Star Island)—had its first conference on Star Island. Summer educational and religious conferences have been held yearly on the island since that time. The Oceanic Hotel, rebuilt in 1874, is one of many buildings on the island that houses conferees. Vaughn Cottage, built in 1960 on Star

Island, houses the "Celia Thaxter Room" with artifacts that include Celia's hand-painted china and writing desk (Rutledge, Isles 164). Even today, Celia's lyrical prose and poetry are read at candlelight worship services on Star Island. And so the traditions and the spirit of the Shoals are passed down from generation to generation of Shoalers, and the islands become a part of their own landscape. The islands are idyllic, even magical, but the islands requires careful stewardship in order to preserve this little bit of Utopia for future generations. For what is here—the marine environment, insularity, the artistic tradition, the old and new buildings, and the religious and ethical underpinnings "that make each visit to Star a pilgrimage" (McGill Star 225) is fragile and vulnerable.

> There is an intimate connection between, on the one hand, those five treasures which we inherit, enjoy together, and then pass over to our Island heirs; and, on the other hand, that elusive something which we call "the Spirit of the Shoals." The relationship we can guess at but can never know completely. The reason is that some components of the Spirit come with us from the mainland, and for each of us the Spirit is highly subjective. [...]
>
> At age eighteen, I first stepped ashore at Star...Eighteen years had taught me more than I knew I knew, all of it assimilated from a loving family, from school, from church, from friends, and from independent reading....All of these were with me when I learned about this benign Spirit that bathed our Island; yet the historical events that survived for the telling were mainly violent, including piracy and murder and greed. It

took, for me, some sorting and discarding and merging; but the Spirit became eventually a synthesis of everything I believed was good, and it floated across the rocks and in and out of the Chapel windows and settled on us all when we had long discussions in front of an open fire.

I assume that for others the Spirit of the Shoals is equally subjective. I assume also that in all of us it absorbs what we consider highest, noblest, and even most heroic in the human spirit. Because through good fortune we have achieved this synthesis at Star Island, and because we recognize this as our common experience, we have become a community of the spirit reaching together toward our ideals and encouraging one another in the process.

Star Island in no way supersedes the churches that sent us here. It asks no uniformity of belief. Simply, it asks of us a certain height. (Star 231-232)

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Appendices

Appendix A

Excerpt from Star Island Candlelight Service
Written by Joyce Ball (mother of Deborah Derrick)

This week we have been "writing our life"...our histories. Tonight I am inviting you to share in that part of my life which has been entwined with Star Island. It is a very emotional experience to bring some of this to the surface, as you will realize at some points. The phrase "I am a part of all that I have met" came to my mind; Star Island is a part of me, and I am a part of it.

I first came to Star in 1939 as a member of the Young People's Religious Union, a marvelously romantic time to come to this romantic place. I remember coming down the Oceanic stairs, then open to the lobby, in the formal dress which we always wore on the last night of the conference. That was the nearest I ever came to being Scarlett O'Hara.

After World War II my husband and I came to the first conference when the islands were re-opened. He was sure it couldn't possibly be as beautiful as I remembered it, but the candlelight service had its magical effect on him, and I soon found myself describing him as a Shoaler instead of a Unitarian. The candlelight procession and recession were profoundly religious experiences for him.

Later we came to family weeks, from which I have an album of mental snapshots. My older daughter as an infant falling asleep in her high chair in the dining room while waiting for her lunch. A 7-year-old girl, handicapped by deafness, who adored my second daughter, then 6 months, and baby sat with her many times. My son, at the age of 7 or 8, unhappy over the very reasonable boundaries to his wandering on this island, never

overcoming his dislike and never coming again until our whole family came four years ago, including this time a son-in-law and 2-year-old granddaughter whom we enjoyed watching on the playground equipment. I think, incidentally, they had the same room I've been living in this week.

For many years after the children grew up, we came alone again, to many different types of conferences. And now here I am alone again, as the circle of life has come around. [...]

There is something *special* about these islands. Around every turn in a path and from every porch there is a scene to paint or photograph, or to inspire a poem. There is *fellowship* and *interdependence*. It is never possible to go far away from people on an island. We need each other. One is always reminded here of being prey to the elemental forces of nature which we cannot control. We learn to say and to live with the great "Maybe." There is *history* here, the folklore and the artifacts, the furniture, the gravestones and the well-worn chapel path. The bell has been ringing for more than a hundred years. The hymn books we are using tonight were published 80 years ago. We give something unique to the island and take away our own memories.

You can understand why Celia Thaxter felt as she did when she wrote "Landlocked," of which I am using a few stanzas.

> ...I dream
> Deliciously how twilight falls tonight
> Over the glimmering water, how the light
> Dies blissfully away, until I seem

To feel the wind, sea-scented, on my cheek,
    To catch the sound of dusky flapping sail
    And dip of oars, and voices on the pale
Afar off, calling low,--my name they speak!

O Earth! Thy summer song of joy may soar
    Ringing to heaven in triumph. I but crave
    The sad, caressing murmur of the wave
That breaks in tender music on the shore.

Appendix B

Timeline of Shoals, New England and U.S. History, 1800-early 1900s

Dates	Events	Source
1800	Society for Propagating the Gospel (SPG) sends Dr. Jedediah Morse to visit Shoals and assess conditions to see if islanders are receptive to ministry and schoolmaster. Morse finds Haley family on Smuttynose (20 people) and 15 families (92 people) on Star	Rutledge, *Isles* 50; Jenness 155
August 1800	Dudley Tyng (collector of Newburyport) reports to the SPG (based on 1799 visit)	Rutledge, *TMO* 83
Oct. 1800	Star Island meetinghouse rebuilt by clergy volunteers organized by Dudley Tyng. John Low installed as minister, but only serves 3 months.	Rutledge, *Isles* 50
Spring 1801	Rev. Josiah Stevens installed as minister on Star.	Rutledge, *Isles* 51
5/27/01 *	Stevens marries Susanna Haley; Star Islanders build parsonage for them.	Rutledge, *Isles* 51 (*Jenness, p 156, and Rutledge, *TMO* 83 say marriage in 1802)
7/2/04	Rev. Stevens dies on Star	Rutledge, *Isles* 51
1806	Rev. Daniel Lovejoy on Star	Rutledge, *Isles* 51
1807	Rev. Enoch Whipple on Star (summer)	Rutledge, *Isles* 51
2/7/1811	Samuel Haley Sr. dies on Smuttynose	Rutledge, *Isles* 49 and *TMO* 83
1812-1815	War of 1812	*World Book* Vol 21, p. 30
1/14/1813	Spanish ship Sagunto (?) crashes on southeast point of Smuttynose – still debatable as to which ship it was	Bardwell 40-41; Rutledge, *Isles* 47 and *TMO* 83
1816	Capt. Sam Haley Jr. takes title to Hog Island under grant from Massachusetts	Rutledge, *Isles* 48
1816	Control of NH state politics passed to the Democratic-Republican party, dominant until mid-1850s.	Encarta.msn.com
1817	Rev. John Dutton on Star (summer)	Rutledge, *Isles* 51
1819	Shoals' population at 86 people	Jenness 113
1820 (or 1819?)	1st White Island lighthouse, cottage built	Rutledge, *TMO* 56, 84
1820	Maine removed from Mass. Jurisdiction and admitted to Union as a state	Rutledge, *Isles* 49
1821	US govt. reconstructs Smuttynose/Malaga	Jenness 7

	sea wall and builds wall from Smuttynose to Cedar Island	
1822	Rev. Reuben Moody on Star (spring,summer only)	Rutledge, *Isles* 51 and *TMO* 84
Oct 3, 1823	Miss Hannah Peabody opens schoolhouse on Star	Rutledge, *Isles* 53
1824-6	Rev. Samuel Sewall on Star	Rutledge, *Isles* 52
1824?	Interior of Star meetinghouse burns	Rutledge, *Isles* 53
1824	Shoals' residents number 64 people	Jenness 113
1/2/1826	Star meetinghouse interior damaged by fire	Rutledge, *TMO* 84
1826-30	No minister on Star	Rutledge, *Isles* 52
1828	Capt. Sam Haley sells Hog Island to Benjamin Haley for $200	Rutledge, *Isles* 49
1830	Society for Promoting Religious Instruction at the Isles of Shoals dedicates new Star Island meetinghouse	Rutledge, *Isles* 53
1830-31	Society (above) engages Clementina Peirce of Portsmouth as schoolteacher on Star (until October 1831)	Rutledge, *Isles* 53-4
6/23/31	Thomas Laighton and Eliza Rymes married	Rutledge, *Isles* 62
10/12/1831	Public auction of Hog (Appledore), Smuttynose and Malaga Islands formerly owned by Benjamin Haley. Islands bought by John Smiley.	*Sandpiper* 1-3
1835-47	Rev. Origin Smith sent to Gosport, serves 12 years supported by S.P.G.	Rutledge, *Isles* 54; qtd in Jenness 159
1836	Emerson publishes *Nature* (transcendentalism philosophy); Transcendental Club established in Boston	*World Book*, Vol. 6, p 259
1836	Thomas Laighton and Abner Greenleaf Jr. are co-editors of *New Hampshire Gazette*	Rutledge, *Isles* 62
1837	Thos. Laighton elected to New Hampshire Senate	Rutledge, *TMO* 84
1837	Henry David Thoreau graduates from Harvard	*World Book*, Vol 19, p 266
3/18/39	Laighton and Cheever buy 4 islands from John Smiley	Rutledge, *TMO* 84
6/30/39	Oscar Laighton born in Portsmouth	Rutledge, *Isles* 62
Sept 1839	Thomas Laighton accepts lighthouse keeper 2 yr appointment at White Island; Thaxters move from Portsmouth to White Island	Rutledge, *TMO* 84
10/16/39	Capt. Samuel Haley Jr. dies	Rutledge, *TMO* 84

12/15/1839	Northeaster strikes isles; Celia's first Christmas	Rutledge, *Isles* 63
1840	Dudley Tyng visits Shoals, reports back to the SPG. Notes Joseph Cheever has set up dram shop on Smuttynose.	qtd. in Randall & Burke, page xx
1841	Brook Farm cooperative community established in West Roxbury, MA	*World Book*, Vol 2, p 648
1844-47	Rev. Abraham Plumer minister at Star	Rutledge, *Isles* 54
Summer 1846	Laighton opens Mid-Ocean House on Smuttynose	Rutledge, *TMO* 84
7/24/46	Levi Thaxter first visits Shoals	Rutledge, *TMO* 70, 84
1848	Boston founds 1st major public library in US	Encarta.msn.com
Summer 1848	Laighton opens Appledore House for business for its first season	O. Laighton, qtd. in Rutledge, *Isles* 75
9/11/1848	Miss Underhill drowns off southeast point on Star Island	Rutledge, *Isles* 76
2/3/1849	Laighton-Thaxter partnership officially dissolved	Rutledge, *TMO* 85
1851	Maine state legislature passes nation's 1st prohibition act, the Maine Law (repealed 1934)	Encarta.msn.com
1852	Franklin Pierce, Democrat, first NH native elected U.S. president	Encarta.msn.com
August 1852	Nathaniel Hawthorne guest at Appledore, writes in his journal about islands	*Sandpiper* 39-46; Rutledge, *TMO* 85
1853-54	Levi Thaxter appointed to interim ministry position on Star by Rev. Andrew Peabody of Portsmouth (on behalf of Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America)	Rutledge, *Isles* 82
1854	Thoreau publishes *Walden*	www.walden.org
1854	Population of Shoals at 103	Rutledge, *TMO* 85
1855	Rev. J. Mason on islands, reports to S.P.G. about character and condition of Shoalers	Qtd in Jenness 160-1
1856-69	Rev. George Beebe serves ministry position on Star Island	Rutledge, *TMO* 85
1856	Atlantic House built on Star by Lem Caswell	Rutledge, *TMO* 85
1857	*Atlantic Monthly* started; James Russell Lowell first editor	Rutledge, *TMO* 85
1858	Schooner "Springbird" comes unanchored from Appledore and gets wrecked	Oscar Laighton

1858	Dr. Henry Ingertsoll Bowditch visits Shoals, stays at Appledore House. Reports 14 families and 115-120 residents at Gosport with 15-20 houses on Star.	Randall & Burke 1
1858	U.S. in throes of a "financial panic"	*Sandpiper* 55
1860	N.H. votes Republican (Abe Lincoln) for president for first time	Encarta.msn.com
1860	Brig from Havana to Portland wrecked near Diamond Cove	McGill, *Letters to Celia*,1
1860	Ben Whaling dies near the end of the year	Rutledge, *TMO* 85
1860s	Tremendous growth of US liquor industry	Encarta.msn.com
Early fall 1861	Whittier travels to Shoals to seek out Celia but misses her	Rutledge, *Isles* 88
Summer 1861	Franklin Pierce visits Shoals	Rutledge, *TMO* 85
1861-5	Civil War	World Book, Vol 3
1862	North wing of Appledore Hotel open	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
1863	Hawthorne makes second visit to Shoals	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
1864	John Smith monument erected on Star Island by Rev. Daniel Austin of Portsmouth for 250th anniversary commemoration	Rutledge, *Isles* 8 and *TMO* 86
1865	Present-day White Island lighthouse tower built; six drownings this season	Rutledge, *TMO* 57, 86
5/16/1866	Thomas Laighton dies on Appledore	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
1867-9	Rev. Barber on the Shoals	Jenness 163
1869	Rev. Hughes on Shoals	Jenness 163
1869	Rev. BF DeCosta visits Shoals; publishes *Rambles* in 1871	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
1869	Rev. George Beebe retires from ministry but continues to live on Star Island	McGill, *Letters to Celia*, 158
9/8/69	Schooner wrecked on Cannon Point, Appledore	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
1870	Cedric, Oscar Laighton buy out Celia's share of Appledore Island for $4,000 to enlarge the hotel.	*Sandpiper* 101
1871	Celia loans $2,300 to her brothers for second hotel addition. South wing of hotel opens.	*Sandpiper* 101
1871	James Fields resigns as editor of the Atlantic Monthly; succeeded by W.D. Howells	*Sandpiper* 211
Aug. 1872	John Poor visits Appledore, wants to buy Smuttynose from Laightons (refused).	Rutledge, *Isles* 103 and *TMO* 86

	Laightons learn he is "secretly buying out the inhabitants of Star Island and the whole village of Gosport."	
9/10/1872	Gosport Town Meeting; sale of Star Island to Mathes partnership approved to make way for construction of hotel. John Bragg Downs and Rev. George Beebe were the two holdouts whose property was exempt from the sale. Construction starts on Oceanic Hotel.	*Portsmouth Evening Times*, qtd in Randall and Burke 90; McGill, *Letters to Celia*, 158
3/5/1873	Smuttynose murders	*Sandpiper* 93
Summer 1873	Oceanic Hotel opens on Star Island. Laightons build long pier on Appledore similar to one on Star.	Portsmouth Daily Chronicle, qtd in Randall & Burke 95.
1873	Laighton Bros. build landing pier on Appledore	*Sandpiper* 104
1873	Jenness publishes Isles of Shoals	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
Fall 1873	Panic of 1873; beginning of global economic depression (until 1878)	www.u-s-history.com/pages/h213.html
1874	National Women's Christian Temperance Union formed	www.worldbook.com
6/25/1875	Louis Wagner executed for Smuttynose murders	Rutledge, *Isles* 114
11/11/ 1875	Oceanic House on Star and other buildings burned	Portsmouth Daily Chronicle, in Randall & Burke 94. Also Rutledge, *TMO* 86
3/14/1876	Town of Gosport holds last town meeting before being annexed to Rye, NH	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
Summer 1876	Oceanic Hotel, rebuilt by Poor on Star Island, reopens for summer season	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
Fall 1876	Poor sells Oceanic Hotel to Laighton Bros. and Christopher Rymes (Rymes later withdrew from partnership)	Sandpiper; Rutledge, *Isles* 135.
Summer 1877	Oceanic Hotel reopens under Laighton management	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
9/8/1879	William Hunt dies on Appledore	Rutledge, *Isles* 180
1881	Cedric Laighton and Julia Stowell married; live on Appledore	Rutledge, *TMO* 87
April 4, 1881	James Fields dies	Rutledge, *Isles* 178
1885	Hontvet house on Smuttynose burned	Rutledge, *Isles* 114
9/11/1888	Cedric, Oscar Laighton sign agreement with J. Ingersoll Bowditch to build cottage on	Rutledge, *Isles* 140

	island (to get extra income)	
8/26/1894	Celia Thaxter dies on Appledore	C. Thaxter, *Guest* 142 and Rutledge, *TMO* 87
Summer 1896	Isles of Shoals Summer Meetings Association (now Isles of Shoals Association) formed	Rutledge, *TMO* 87
July 1897	First conference held at Star Island and Appledore Island	Rutledge, *TMO* 87
6/5/1899	Cedric Laighton dies in Florida	Rutledge, *Isles* 140
1902	12 waitresses and 2 waiters from Oceanic Hotel staff drown off western coast of Appledore	Rutledge, *TMO* 87
1911	Mid-Ocean House on Smuttynose burns	Rutledge, *TMO* 88
1914	Appledore Hotel and other buildings burn	Rutledge, *TMO* 88
1915	Star Island Corporation formed	Rutledge, *TMO* 88
1916	Star Island purchased by the Corporation for $16,000; dedicated July 22-23	Rutledge, *TMO* 88
1924	Star Island Corp buys 7.5 acres, 3 buildings on Appledore	Rutledge, *TMO* 88
1929	Star Island Corp. purchases 95% of land on Appledore	Rutledge, *TMO* 88
4/4/39	Oscar Laighton dies at age 99 years, 9 mos.	Rutledge, *TMO* 89
5/23/39	US submarine *Squalus* goes down southeast of Star Island; 26 men lost	Rutledge, *TMO* 89
1942-1945	Isles of Shoals closed to visitors during World War II. Radar tower built on Appledore—island used as training facility for Army and Navy	Rutledge, *TMO* 89

Appendix C
Laighton/Thaxter Family Chronology

Date	Event	Source
June 23, 1831	Thomas Laighton and Eliza Rymes married	Rutledge, *TMO* 84
June 29, 1835	Celia born to Thomas and Eliza Laighton at 48 Daniel Street, Portsmouth	Rutledge, *TMO* 84
March 1839	Thomas Laighton and Joseph Cheever buy Hog, Smuttynose and Malaga	*Sandpiper* 6
June 30, 1839	Oscar Laighton born	*Sandpiper* 6; Rutledge, TMO 84
Sept 29, 1839	Thomas Laighton assumes position as lighthouse keeper on White Island	Rutledge, *TMO* 84
October 3, 1839	Laighton family leaves Portsmouth for the Shoals, accompanied by Ben Whaling	Rutledge, *TMO* 84
Sept 4, 1840	Cedric Laighton born (probably on mainland)	*Sandpiper* 12
Summer 1846	Thos. Laighton opens Mid-Ocean House on Smuttynose	Rutledge, *TMO* 84
July 24, 1846	Levi Thaxter first visits Shoals	Rutledge, *TMO* 70, 84 (citing Thos. Laighton journal)
Winter 1846-7	Levi Thaxter studies elocution with Charles Kean in New York	Rutledge, *Isles* 72
Spring 1847	Thomas Laighton sells share of family land holdings in Portsmouth to finance construction of hotel on Hog Island	R. Thaxter 20
Sept 1847	Levi Thaxter/Thomas Laighton partnership discussed between the two partners. Levi Thaxter Sr. sends $2500 to Laighton on 9/1/47 for investment in partnership (one-half of Hog Island). visits islands, brings parents to meet Laighton (9/30/47). Thaxters spend 4 days on Smuttynose, loan Levi money for hotel.	R. Thaxter 21; Rutledge, *Isles* 74
Sept 15, 1847	Laighton family moves from White to Hog Island.	R. Thaxter 22, 24
Sept 30, 1847	Levi Thaxter brings parents to islands for 4-day visit. Thaxters stayed in the North Cottage (one of two houses built earlier on the island by Joseph Laighton and William Rymes). Around this time, the island's	Rutledge, *Isles* 74

	name was changed to Appledore by the Laightons.	
June 15, 1848	Appledore House opens for business. Levi's family spends season at the Shoals.	R. Thaxter 25
Feb 3, 1849	Laighton-Thaxter partnership officially dissolved. Thaxter retains some property on Appledore Island.	Rutledge, *TMO* 85
Winter 1849-50	Celia attends Mount Washington Female Seminary in Boston. Levi lives nearby in Watertown with his parents.	Rutledge, *Isles* 78
Summer 1850	Celia returns to live on Appledore with her parents. Levi Thaxter stays on the islands; the Higginsons and John Weiss were also guests.	Rutledge, *Isles* 78-79; Higginson 25
Spring 1851	Celia writes her friend Jennie telling her of engagement to Levi Thaxter	Rutledge, TMO 85; *Sandpiper*
Sept 30, 1851	Celia and Levi married on Appledore	Rutledge, *Isles* 79; Higginson 26
Winter 1851-2	Celia and Levi live inland, probably in one of houses owned by Levi's father in Watertown.	R. Thaxter 37
January 1852	Celia and Levi due to visit Laightons at Shoals, but Celia unable to travel because she is pregnant.	R. Thaxter 37-8
July 24, 1852	Celia and Levi in North Cottage on Appledore; Karl Thaxter born	Rutledge, *Isles* 81
August 30, 1852	Nathaniel Hawthorne arrives for a stay at the hotel on Appledore, writes in his journal about islands	R. Thaxter 39-46; Rutledge, *Isles* 81-82
Spring 1853-Fall 1854	Levi Thaxter appointed to interim ministry position on Star by Rev. Andrew Peabody of Portsmouth (Unitarian); Thaxters live in parsonage on Star Island	Rutledge, *Isles* 82; R. Thaxter 46-47
Fall 1854	Thaxters move to Curzon family house at Artichoke (Curzon's) Mill, MA	R. Thaxter 46-47
Nov. 29, 1854	John Thaxter born at Curzon's Mill	R. Thaxter 47
Summer 1855	Celia and Levi Thaxter spend season at the Shoals	R. Thaxter 49
Fall 1855	Levi Thaxter and Oscar Laighton caught in storm while sailing back to islands from Portsmouth.	R. Thaxter 49-50
Sept. 1856	Thaxters settle in Newtonville, MA in house on California Street	Rutledge, *Isles* 83

1857	Levi's father has stroke and dies toward end of the year	Rutledge, *Isles* 83
Jan 1858	Cedric (age 18) visits Celia and Levi in Newtonville	R. Thaxter 56
Aug. 28, 1858	Roland (Lony) Thaxter born in Newtonville	Rutledge, *TMO* 85
Oct. 8, 1858	Levi Thaxter sells his share of Appledore to Thomas Laighton for $600	Rutledge, *TMO* 85
Winter/Spring 1860	Celia receives letter from Cedric about childhood haunts on Appledore; writes poem in response and sends to Cedric, who acknowledges receipt of it in May.	Rutledge, *Isles* 86
March 1861	"Land-Locked" published in the *Atlantic* (James T. Fields, editor)	Rutledge, *TMO* 85 and *Isles* 86
Summer 1861	Franklin Pierce visits Shoals	Rutledge, *TMO* 85
Early Fall 1861	Whittier travels to Shoals to seek out Celia but misses her	Rutledge, *Isles* 88
1861-2	James Fields asks Celia to write a prose piece about the Shoals	R. Thaxter 65
Summer 1863	Levi goes on birding trip to Grand Manan in Maine; Celia takes boys to Shoals.	R. Thaxter 74
Summer 1863	Whittier and Hawthorne revisit the Shoals. Hawthorne finds Thos. Laighton in ill health.	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
May 16, 1866	Thomas Laighton dies on Appledore	Rutledge, *Isles* 100
Summer 1866	Celia friendship with Whittier begins	R. Thaxter 202
Fall 1866	Celia and Eliza go on trip to New Hampshire White Mountains	R. Thaxter 80
Jan. 15, 1867	Celia invited to dinner given by James and Annie Fields for Charles Dickens	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
1867-68	Thaxters enjoy dinners/parties with literary people in Boston area. Celia starts to write prose (children's stories)	R. Thaxter 81-83
Feb. 1868	Celia spends some of winter at the Shoals, leaving family in Newtonville	R. Thaxter 84
Sept. 1869	First of four *Atlantic Monthly* articles published on the Shoals	R. Thaxter 209
Feb/March 1869	Levi, Roland (9) and John (13) go to Florida; Celia and Karl to Shoals	R. Thaxter 85; Rutledge *TMO* 86
Jan 1870	Second of four *Atlantic Monthly* articles published	*Atlantic Monthly,* pp 16-29
February 1870	Third of four *Atlantic Monthly* articles published	*Atlantic Monthly*, pp 204-213

December 1870	Levi ill, goes to Florida. Celia and Karl at the Shoals.	R. Thaxter 86
1871	*Poems* by Celia Thaxter published	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
1871	Celia loans $2,300 to her brothers for second hotel addition. South wing of hotel opens.	R. Thaxter 101; Rutledge *TMO* 86
1871	James Fields resigns as editor of *Atlantic Monthly*, succeeded by W.D. Howells	R. Thaxter 211
Summer 1871	Celia writes "All's Well," "Tryst", "The Hag of Star" and "The Ballad of Heartbreak Hill" on Shoals; Levi in northern Maine	R. Thaxter 88
Winter 1871-2	Levi decides to try winter in Newtonville; family together. Cedric and Eliza Laighton visit after Christmas until spring	R. Thaxter 89
Fall 1872	John Poor buys most of Star Island and starts hotel construction.	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
January 1873	Celia visits Eliza on Appledore; hires Norwegian girl from Smuttynose to help her for 2 months	R. Thaxter 89
March 1873	Celia and Karl go to Shoals for summer, leave Levi and other boys in Newtonville with housekeeper	R. Thaxter 90-91
May 1873	Fourth of four *Atlantic Monthly* articles published	R. Thaxter 209
1873	*Among the Isles of Shoals* published	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
March 5-6, 1873	Smuttynose murder	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
Summer 1873	Oceanic Hotel opens on Star Island. Laightons build long pier on Appledore similar to one on Star.	*Portsmouth Daily Chronicle*, qtd. in Randall & Burke 95
Winters 1874-77	Celia spends four consecutive winters at Shoals nursing mother; takes up painting	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
1874	New/enlarged volume of *Poems* published by Celia	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
1875	"A Memorable Murder" published in *Atlantic Monthly*	R. Thaxter 97
Jan 1875	Celia leaves Newtonville, spends 3 weeks in Portsmouth before going to Shoals. Levi in Jamaica.	R. Thaxter 112
March 1875	Levi returns from Jamaica, Celia returns to Newtonville to open house and stays there until the summer	R. Thaxter 114

June 25, 1875	Louis Wagner executed for Smuttynose murders	Rutledge, *Isles* 114
Nov. 11, 1875	Oceanic House and other buildings on Star burned	*Portsmouth Daily Chronicle*, in Randall & Burke 94. Also Rutledge, *TMO* 86.
Winter 1875-76	Celia begins writing new manuscript "Sea Sorrow" but never finishes; Poor begins Oceanic hotel reconstruction, incorporating 3 old buildings into main structure.	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
Mar. 14, 1876	Town of Gosport holds last Town Meeting	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
Summer 1876	Oceanic House re-opens for season under John Poor's management.	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
Fall 1876	John Poor sells Oceanic Hotel to Laighton/Christopher Rymes partnership	Rutledge, *Isles* 135
Summer 1877	Oceanic House reopens under Laighton management; Christopher Rymes, Manager	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
Summer 1877	Celia studies china painting with John Appleton Brown at Shoals	R. Thaxter 120
November 1877	Eliza Laighton dies in Portsmouth (29 State Street); Celia returns to Newtonville	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
Summer 1878	Celia at the Shoals; *Driftweed* published	R. Thaxter 127-130
November 1878	Celia returns to Newtonville; Ross Turner studio built on Appledore	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
June 1879	Levi and William Hunt at Appledore with all of Thaxter family	Rutledge, *Isles* 115-116
Sept. 8, 1879	Hunt dies on Appledore	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
Summer or Fall 1879	Levi and Celia put Newtonville house up for sale.	Rutledge, *Isles* 117
Spring 1880	Newtonville house sold at auction; Levi and John Thaxter buy farm on Cutts Island in Kittery Point, Maine	R. Thaxter 136, Rutledge, *Isles* 117
Summer 1880	Celia at Shoals with Karl	R. Thaxter 137-138
October 1880	Celia and Oscar go abroad (10/1). Levi starts reading engagements in Boston	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
April 1881	Celia and Oscar return from abroad	Rutledge, *TMO* 86
Spring 1881	James Fields dies	R. Thaxter 157
1881	Cedric Laighton and Julia Stowell married; live on Appledore	Rutledge, *TMO* 87
January 1882	Celia and Karl at farm in Kittery Point	R. Thaxter 160
1882	Celia develops interest in spiritualism	R. Thaxter 164
Nov 1883	Entire Thaxter family home for Thanksgiving in Maine	R. Thaxter 180

Dec 1883	Levi Thaxter becomes ill; nursed by Roland in Boston	R. Thaxter 180-181
May 31, 1884	Levi Thaxter dies in Boston	Rutledge, *TMO* 87
June 1884	Celia at Shoals (Celia and Karl at hotel in Boston in winter from 1884-7)	R. Thaxter 184-185
July 1885	*Atlantic Monthly* prints "Within and Without", their last poem of Celia's published	R. Thaxter 226
Fall 1885	Celia and Karl move to Hotel Clifford on Cortes St in Boston (from Fall '85 to spring '88)	R. Thaxter 185
1886	Celia joins Audubon Society, is local secretary	Rutledge, *Isles* 133
June 1, 1886 (or 1887)*	John Thaxter marries Mary Gertrude Stoddard	*Rutledge, *TMO* 87 says 1886; R. Thaxter 192 says 1887
June 15, 1886 (or 1887)*	Roland Thaxter marries Mabel Freeman	Rutledge, *TMO* 87 (*note same date discrepancy as with John Thaxter)
Fall 1887	Celia falls ill due to "overwork", has morphine shots	R. Thaxter 228
1888	*Cruise of the Mystery* published	R. Thaxter 191-192
Summer 1888	Celia at Shoals but not feeling well	R. Thaxter 227
Fall 1888	Celia and Karl move to 9 room apartment on State Street in Portsmouth	R. Thaxter 228-229
Spring 1889	Celia travels to New Haven to see grandson Charles Eliot (Roland's son)	R. Thaxter 230
March 1889	Celia has another attack/seizure	Rutledge, *Isles* 134
May 1889	Celia begins correspondence with ornithologist Bradford Torrey	Rutledge, *Isles* 134
Summer 1889	Celia takes up gardening again as health returns	R. Thaxter 230-231
Summer 1891	Celia's health improves rapidly; Roland given Harvard professorship	Rutledge, *Isles* 135
1892-93	Celia works on notes for *An Island Garden*	R. Thaxter 237
Spring 1894	*An Island Garden* published	Rutledge, *TMO* 87
Summer 1894	Celia visits old "haunts" on islands with friends	R. Thaxter 240
Aug. 26, 1894	Celia dies on Appledore	Rutledge, *TMO* 87
June 5, 1899	Cedric Laighton dies	Rutledge, *TMO* 87
1911	Mid-Ocean House on Smuttynose burns	Rutledge, *TMO* 88
1914	Appledore Hotel and cottages burn	Rutledge, *TMO* 88
April 4, 1939	Oscar Laighton dies, age 99 years, 9 mos.	Rutledge, *TMO* 89

Appendix D
Celia Thaxter Letters Referenced in this Paper

Date	Addressed To	Sent From	Source
3/2/51	Jenny Usher	Appledore	*Sandpiper* 31-33
2/12/56	Oscar Laighton	Newton	*Sandpiper* 48
5/25/56	Elizabeth Hoxie	Appledore	*Letters* 1-3
1/18/57	E.C. Hoxie	Newtonville	*Letters* 3-8
3/28/57	E.C. Hoxie	Newtonville	*Letters* 8-10
11/22/57	E.C. Hoxie	Newtonville	*Letters* 10-12
1/30/59	E.C. Hoxie	Newtonville	*Letters* 14-17
?	Nanny Hoxie	(unknown)	*Letters* 17-19
Spring 1861	Oscar Laighton	Newton	*Sandpiper* 67-70
7/10/61	E.C. Hoxie	Newton	*Letters* 19-23
9/23/61	James T. Fields	Newtonville	*Letters* 23
9/4/62	James T. Fields	Appledore	*Letters* 24
1862-no date	Annie Fields	Newtonville	*Letters* 24-25
10/23/62	Annie Fields	Newtonville	*Letters* 25-26
10/25/62	James Fields	Newtonville	*Letters* 26-27
2/20/63	James Fields	Newtonville	*Letters* 27
No date-early spring	Annie Fields	Newtonville	*Letters* 28
8/10/63	Kate Field	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 74-75
8/20/63	Mary Lawson	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 75
9/1/63	Elizabeth Whittier	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 76
9/6/63	Lucy Larcom	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 76-78
1863?	John Whittier	(unknown)	Unpublished letter in Portsmouth Athenaeum
Fall 1863	Annie Fields	Newton	*Sandpiper* 78
1865?	Elizabeth Whittier	Shoals	Unpublished letter in Portsmouth Athenaeum
4/24/67	E.C. Hoxie	Newtonville	*Letters* 28-29
1/6/67	James T Fields	Boston	*Letters* 29
1/14/67	Mary Maples Dodge (ed. Young Folks)	Newton	*Sandpiper* 83
2/16/68	J.G. Whittier	The Shoals	*Letters* 30-36; *Sandpiper* 207
2/18/68	J.G. Whittier	The Shoals	
6/17/68	Anson Hoxie	Newtonville	*Letters* 36-39
8/21/68	Kate Field	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 84
Summer 1868	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 85

3/6/69	Roland Thaxter	Appledore	*Sandpiper* 246-247
3/7/69	E.C. Hoxie	Appledore	*Letters* 39-40
5/4/69	Annie Fields	Appledore	*Letters* 41-42
No date	J.G. Whittier	?	*Letters* 42-43
1/24/70	E.C. Hoxie	Newtonville	*Letters* 43-44
5/19/70	E.C. Hoxie	Appledore	*Letters* 44-45
12/4/70	Annie Fields	Newton	*Sandpiper* 86
3/11/73	Elizabeth D. Pierce	Shoals	*Letters* 45-49
11/13/73	Feroline W. Fox	Shoals	*Letters* 49-52
1/31/74	J.G. Whittier	?	*Sandpiper* 216
January 1874	Mr. Ward-editor of The Independent	Appledore?	*Sandpiper* 109
3/19/74	Feroline W. Fox	Shoals	*Letters* 52-55
5/20/74	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 55-56
6/16/74	Feroline Fox	Shoals	*Letters* 57-58
9/22/74	Feroline Fox	Shoals	*Letters* 58-59
Fall 1874	Annie Fields	Newtonville	*Sandpiper* 110-111
9/26/74	John Weiss	Shoals	*Letters* 59
9/29/74	Elizabeth Pierce	Shoals	*Letters* 60-61
10/17/74	John Weiss	Shoals	*Letters* 61-62
11/22/74	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 111
11/22/74	John Weiss	Shoals	*Letters* 63
11/23/74	Arpad Sandor Grossman	Shoals	*Letters* 63-64
2/11/75	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 113
2/23/75	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper*113
3/14/75	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 113
3/26/75	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 114
3/26/75	Anna Eichberg	Shoals	*Letters* 64-68
3/29/75	Grandfather	Shoals	Unpublished letter-Portsmouth Athenaeum
Summer 1875	John Weiss	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 114
Autumn 1875	John Weiss	Shoals	*Letters* 68-69
11/13/75	Annie Fields	Newtonville	*Letters* 69-70
February 1876	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 114-115
March 1876	J.G. Whittier	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 217
3/4/76	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 115
3/8/76	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 115
3/14/76	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 115-116
3/22/76	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 70-74
3/26/76	Anna Eichberg	Shoals	*Letters* 75-76

3/28/76	Anna Eichberg	Shoals	*Letters* 76-78
4/4/76	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 78-80; *Sandpiper* 116
6/29/76	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 80
Fall 1876	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 117
12/11/76	Richard Derby	Shoals	*Letters* 80-83
1/7/77	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 117-118
1/17/77	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 118
2/24/77	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 118
3/2/77	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 118
3/22/77	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 119
4/21/77	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 119
4/29/77	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 119
5/16/77	Annie Fields	Appledore	*Sandpiper* 120
6/11/77	John Thaxter	Appledore	*Sandpiper* 120
8/15/77	Annie Fields	Appledore	*Sandpiper* 120
11/14/77	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 121
1877 winter	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 84-86
8/21/77	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 87-88
11/14/77	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 88-90
3/6/78	Annie Fields	Newton	*Sandpiper* 126
3/7/78	Annie Fields	Newton	*Sandpiper* 124
4/12/78	John Thaxter	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 126
4/16/78	Annie Fields	DeNormandies-Portsmouth	*Sandpiper* 127
4/21/78	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 126-127
5/6/78	John Thaxter	Boston	*Sandpiper* 127-128
5/29/78	John Thaxter	Newtonville	*Sandpiper* 128
June 1878	John Thaxter	Newtonville	*Sandpiper* 128-129
6/2/78	John Thaxter	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 128
6/11/78	Lucy Derby	Shoals	*Letters* 90-91
6/13/78	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 91-92
7/11/78	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 129
7/22/78	Appleton Brown	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 129-130
8/21/78	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 130
9/4/78	Annie Fields	Shoals	Portsmouth Athenaeum
9/10/78	Feroline Fox	Shoals	*Letters* 93
11/12/78	James Fields	Newtonville	*Sandpiper* 130-131
6/24/79	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 132
7/19/79	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 93-94; *Sandpiper* 132-133

1879	Annie Fields	Portsmouth	*Letters* 96-97
3/2/80	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 136
4/4/80	Annie Fields	Newtonville	*Letters* 97-98
4/13/80	John Thaxter	Newtonville	*Sandpiper* 136-137
4/19/80	John Thaxter	Newtonville	*Sandpiper* 137
4/24/80	Mrs. William Dean Howells	Newton	Mentioned (not quoted) in *Sandpiper* 137
4/29/80	John Thaxter	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 137-138
5/12/80	John Thaxter	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 138-139
8/2/80	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 141
10/8/80	Annie Fields	At sea	*Sandpiper* 141-142; *Letters* 98-100
10/15/80	Annie Fields	Stratford on Avon	*Letters* 100-104; *Sandpiper* 142-144
11/14/80	Annie Fields	Milan	*Letters* 105-111
11/21/80	Albert Laighton (cousin)	Venice	*Sandpiper* 145-146
11/24/80	Annie Fields	Florence Italy	*Sandpiper* 146-148
12/8/80	Annie Fields	Naples	*Letters* 111-115; *Sandpiper* 147-150
12/24/80	??	Genoa	*Letters* 115-116; *Sandpiper* 150
7/3/81	John Thaxter	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 155-156
12/31/80	??	Mentone	*Sandpiper* 152
1/13/81	Annie Fields	Lyons	*Sandpiper* 153
1/18/81	J & A Fields	Paris	*Letters* 118-123
1/27/81	J & A Fields	London	*Letters* 123-124
1/28/81	Robert Browning	London	*Sandpiper* 248
9/9/81	J.G. Whittier	Kittery Point	*Sandpiper* 218
10/2??/81	Mrs. Julius Eichberg	Kittery Point	*Letters* 124-145
11/2/81	Annie Fields	Kittery Point	*Letters* 125-126
11/12/81	Annie Fields	Kittery Point	*Sandpiper* 158
11/15/81	Annie Fields	Kittery Point	*Sandpiper* 157-158
11/21/81	Annie Fields	Kittery Point	*Letters* 126-127
11/25/81	Annie Fields	Kittery Point	*Letters* 128-129
No Date	Annie Fields	Kittery Point	*Letters* 129-131
1/15/82	John Thaxter	101 Pembroke St.	Unpublished letter, Portsmouth Athenaeum; (excerpted in *Sandpiper* 161)
1/27/82	Annie Fields	Kittery Point	*Sandpiper* 161

2/19/82	John Thaxter	Winthrop House, Boston	Unpublished letter, Portsmouth Athenaeum
2/24/82	John Thaxter	W. House, Boston	Unpublished letter, Portsmouth Athenaeum
3/18/82	Mrs. Lang	(unknown)	*Letters* 131-132
3/24/82	John Thaxter	Winthrop House, Boston	Unpublished letter, Portsmouth Athenaeum
5/18/82	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 132-133
6/27/82	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 165
8/22/82	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 197
9/26/82	Annie Fields	Boston	*Sandpiper* 165
10/4/82	Julius Eichberg	Kittery Point	*Letters* 133-134; *Sandpiper* 180
Date?	Mrs. Ole Bull	Portsmouth	*Letters* 134-135
June 1883	J.G. Whittier	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 219
12/30/83	John Thaxter	Boston	*Sandpiper* 180-181
6/8/84	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 135-137
3/12/85	Ross Turner		*Letters* 137-138
3/13/85	Louise Phelps (artist Ross Turner's fiancée)	Boston	*Sandpiper* 186-187
3/20/85	Ross Turner	Boston	*Sandpiper* 187
6/5/85	Feroline Fox	Shoals	*Letters* 142-145
6/22/85	John Thaxter	Shoals	Unpublished letter, Portsmouth Athenaeum
Date?	Annie Fields	Boston	*Letters* 145
4/1/86	Feroline Fox	Boston (Cortes St)	*Letters* 145-146
5/21/86	Annie Fields	Shoals	Sandpiper189-190
6/28/86	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 191-192
10/21/86	J.G. Whittier	Cortes St., Boston	Letter, Portsmouth Athenaeum; *Sandpiper* 220-221
3/31/87	Margaret Bowditch	Boston	*Letters* 147
5/17/87	Mr. Samuel Ward	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 167
7/16/87	Ross Turner	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 225
9/1/87	Rose Lamb	Shoals	*Letters* 147-148
9/11/87	Rose Lamb	Shoals	*Letters* 148
9/23/87	Ellen Robbins	Shoals	*Letters* 148-149
3/12/88	Rose Lamb	Shoals	*Letters* 149-151

3/14/88	Ross Turner	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 226-227
6/24/88	J.G. Whittier	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 221-222
7/29/88	Rose Lamb	Shoals	*Letters* 151-152
9/17/88	Mrs. Ward	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 227
9/25/88	Rose Lamb	Shoals	*Letters* 152-154
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November 1888	S.G. Ward	Portsmouth	*Sandpiper* 229-230
11/10/88	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 154-155
12/7/88	Adaline Hepworth	47 State St, Portsmouth	*Letters* 156-157
12/12/88	ML Padelford	Portsmouth	*Letters* 156-157
1/17/89	Bradford Torrey	47 State St, Portsmouth	Unpublished letter, Portsmouth Athenaeum
2/5/89	Annie Fields	(unknown)	*Letters* 157
4/8/89	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 157-158
4/11/89	J.G. Whittier	Shoals	Letter, Portsmouth Athenaeum; *Letters* 158-160; *Sandpiper* 222-224
4/15/89	Rev. George Bainton	Appledore	Unpublished letter, Portsmouth Athenaeum
4/20/89	Annie Fields	Shoals	*Letters* 160-161
5/21/89	Bradford Torrey	Shoals	*Letters* 161-162
5/27/89	Bradford Torrey	Shoals	*Letters* 162-163
7/15/89	Annie Fields	Shoals	Sandpiper 231
8/29/89	Rose Lamb	Shoals	*Letters* 163
8/31/89	Rose Lamb	Shoals	*Letters* 163-164
9/4/89	Rose Lamb	Shoals	*Letters* 164-165
9/5/89	Rose Lamb	Shoals	*Letters* 165-166
11/5/89	S.O. Jewett	Portsmouth	*Sandpiper* 231-232
11/10/89	Bradford Torrey	Shoals	*Letters* 166-168
12/13/89	Bradford Torrey	Portsmouth	*Letters* 168-169
12/20/89	Bradford Torrey	Portsmouth	*Letters* 169-170
12/27/89	Bradford Torrey	Portsmouth	*Letters* 170-171
1/5/90	Bradford Torrey	Portsmouth	*Letters* 171-173
1/9/90	Mrs. Arthur Whiting	Portsmouth	*Letters* 173-174
2/22/90	S.G. Ward	Portsmouth	*Sandpiper* 232
4/8/90	Adaline Hepworth	Portsmouth	*Letters* 174
4/16/90	Mr. And Mrs. Ward	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 233
4/17/90	S.G. Ward	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 232
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5/12/90	S.G. Ward	Shoals	*Sandpiper* 232
6/8/90	Adaline Hepworth	Shoals	*Letters* 177-178
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1/17/91	Mrs. Ward	Portsmouth	*Sandpiper* 236
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3/18/91	Anna Eichberg King	Portsmouth	*Letters* 181-182
4/21/91	Anna Eichberg King	Shoals	*Letters* 182-183
5/21/91	Bradford Torrey	Shoals	*Letters* 183-185
11/22/91	C.E.L. Wingate	Portsmouth	*Letters* 185-186
1/2/92	Clara K. Rogers	Portsmouth	*Letters* 186-188
1/7/92	Mrs. Arthur Whiting	Portsmouth	*Letters* 188-189
1/10/92	Annie Fields	Portsmouth	*Letters* 189-191
1/15/92	Bradford Torrey	Portsmouth	*Letters* 191-192
8/28/92	Evelyn Benedict	Shoals	*Letters* 192-193
10/10/92	Annie Fields	Portsmouth	*Letters* 193-194
12/14/92	Bradford Torrey	Portsmouth	*Letters* 194-195
12/31/92	Bradford Torrey	Portsmouth	*Letters* 195-197
2/6/93	Sophie Eichberg	Portsmouth	*Letters* 197-198
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2/5/93	S.O. Jewett	Portsmouth	*Letters* 199-200; *Sandpiper* 227-228
1893	S.O. Jewett	Portsmouth	*Letters* 200-201
3/16/93	Rose Lamb	Portsmouth	*Letters* 201
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6/4/93	Ignatius Grossman	Shoals	*Letters* 204-205
6/4/93	E.C. Hoxie	Shoals	*Letters* 205
7/1/93	Feroline Fox	Shoals	*Letters* 205-206
9/28/93	S.O. Jewett	Shoals	*Letters* 207; *Sandpiper* 238
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1/20/94	Rose Lamb	Portsmouth	*Letters* 209-210
3/31/94	Mina Berntsen	Shoals	*Letters* 210-212
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4/21/94	Rose Lamb	Shoals	*Letters* 213-214
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