

HISTORY OF BEAVER ISLAND(1781 - 1973)

by

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The following is a history of Beaver Island for the purpose of recording such information as I have at the present time. Some of this information may not be accurate, but it comprises what I have been able to find, without doing really thorough research. Much of it has been given to me over the years. I have not included any information which seemed inaccurate in light of known and recorded facts or which came from a source that I did not consider reliable.

The first reference to Beaver Island by that name that I have found is a record of a meeting of the original "proprietors" held in Portsmouth on December 24, 1781, which was for the purpose of dividing among themselves all of the unallotted territory from King's Grant in the Winnepesaukee lakes, including islands in the lake. Lot Number 13 was confirmed to Governor John Wentworth, original grantee, or his successors and consisted of:

"Beaver Island, 19 acres; Three Mile, 37 acres; Hall Island, 10 acres; Black Cat, 32 acres; Wallace Island, 2 acres, all in 'Middle Bay'(Center Harbor) and ***."

An accurate survey of Beaver Island in 1972 shows its area at 28.5 acres and since the lake level was probably lower in 1781 than at present, the stated area of Beaver was obviously incorrect.

The first record of Beaver Island that I have found in the Belknap County records is a map of the county in 1859 which shows the islands with that name. Beavers are not usually associated with a lake island, but in the summer of 1962 there were many bank beavers on the island and it may be presumed from the name that a similar situation existed prior to 1781.

The first deed to the island recorded in the Belknap County Registry of Deeds is from David Robinson and Mehitable Robinson of Meredith, dated February 9, 1866,(Vol. 43, Page 557) transferring it for \$180.00 to Levi Leach of Meredith. The description was:

"A certain island in Lake Winnepesaukee near John Leavitt's shore and lying northeast of Daniel Wiggin's land it known by the name of Beaver Island, it being the largest of three islands called by that name."

Little is known of either David Robinson or Levi Leach except that the former was an overseer of the Winnepesaukee grange and the latter, chaplain. It is noted that the land on Meredith Neck that is now used for access to the island was described in an early deed (to Eben S. Lincoln, March 28, 1901) as bounded:

"Northeasterly by Lake Winnepesaukee, southeasterly by the land formerly of Daniel Wiggin, southwesterly by land formerly of Rufus L. Veasey. Being a tract of land formerly belonging to the estate of Marquis D. Robinson, late of Meredith, deceased, and the same conveyed to Ebenezer Stevens by Jane Robinson, Rufus K. Robinson, Frank P. Meserve and other heirs of said Marquis D. Robinson."

It seems a reasonable assumption that the David Robinson signing the first deed was a member of this same Robinson family and the island may well have been a portion of a much larger holding of real estate.

Levi Leach owned the island from February 9, 1866 to March 12, 1887 or twenty years and one month and, except for the present ownership by the Standish family, was the longest tenure of ownership of which we have a record. He moved from Meredith to Franklin during this period. There is no evidence that he ever built on the island and it is highly probable that he lumbered the island during his ownership. A topographical map made in the early 1900's uses a 'fifteen inch pine' as a benchmark which indicates that most of the growth on the island was small and from what is known of the subsequent owner's character, and the use he made of the island, it is highly improbable that he lumbered it. It is likely that Levi Leach merely bought it for the timber in 1866, subsequently lumbered it, and sold it in 1887 to Samuel S. Kingdon for \$250.00 feeling that he had done very well. (The land on Beaver is now assessed at \$173,750.)

The skeletal history of Beaver Island begins to take on some flesh with its purchase by Samuel S. Kingdon on March 12, 1887, since he was a man of unusual and lovable character and appears to have been the first man to build a house or cottage on the

island. Our knowledge of Kingdon rests largely on an article that appeared in the Boston Evening Transcript of Sept. 9, 1925 entitled " A Journalist's Memory Haunts Great Beaver Island" written by William E. Brigham, the editor of the transcript; a letter from Mr. Brigham to Leland Powers dated May 12, 1928; some early photographs also supplied by Mr. Brigham and the meager information gained from the Belknap County Registry of Deeds and the Probate Court records which contain a copy of Kingdon's Will.

Samuel Kingdon was born September 7, 1841 in Mount Holly, New Jersey. His parents moved to Ohio in 1850 and in his early youth, Kingdon was a printer and publisher of local, unsuccessful newspapers. In 1864 he left home and came to Boston to study law in the office of William Gaston while paying his expenses by setting type for the Boston Evening Transcript and the Norfolk County Journal. He served briefly in the Union forces in 1864 and after the war continued to study law while setting type in Boston. He was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar in 1868 but spent most of his life as a Boston newspaper man. He worked at one time or another for most of the Boston newspapers and was dramatic editor of the Advertiser in 1884 when J. Edgar Chamberlain was managing editor. In 1890 he accepted a position with the Boston Evening Transcript and remained on the staff of that paper until his death in 1902.

Sam Kingdon bought Beaver Island on March 12, 1887 from Levi Leach. The deed shows that the purchase price was \$250.00 of which he paid \$50.00 at that time and gave a mortgage note for \$200.00 that was payable \$50.00 each six months with interest at 5%. He made the necessary payments and the mortgage was recorded as discharged on June 17, 1889. He built a cabin for himself on the point adjacent to the cove and undoubtedly his original cabin is the front or lakeside portion of the building now known as "Cub Cottage". This was the first building on the island. He also built a small wharf and a picture of Kingdon cove in 1902 probably shows him standing on the shore near where the present steps are to Cub Cottage.

Although the Brigham article contains several errors as to facts, it seems, in view of his own position as a managing editor of the Transcript and his obviously close personal relationship with Kingdon, that we

can accept his description of the "Patron Saint of Beaver Island" as accurate. The picture that emerges is that of a lonely man, 46 years old, an individualist who loved Beaver greatly. He was a sensitive person who would fish for food but not for sport and who would not permit any living thing to be unnecessarily killed--even the huge water spiders that abounded in his boat house. He had no children and there is no mention in the Brigham article of a wife; but at the time of his death, there was an apparently estranged wife living in California. His Will directed that she be paid \$440.00 annually during her life,"which she has accepted in lieu of dower and which is all that she is justly entitled to." Here he spent his vacations apparently alone for the most part except for occasional visits from the Newspaper Club. These visits, according to the letter of William Brigham to Leland Powers(May 12, 1928), were far from dry occasions.

Kingdon's love of the island and his loneliness are well illustrated by his instructions, given only a few months before his death to Brigham, for the disposal of his remains. The Brigham article states:

Selecting His Own Sepulchre

I arrived at Great Beaver Island in the dark, after ignorantly circumnavigating the place trying to win an answering hail from Kingdon. The next morning he led me to a sloping rock perhaps a couple of hundred yards east of the camp; and stepping up to its face he indicated a loose slab, and was immensely pleased to find that with proper tools and a little effort it could be removed. Then he issued his directions.

"Have me cremated", he said, "and bring the ashes here. Have no clergyman, but bring along a box of cigars, a case of beer, and a quartet. Have the quartet sing the drinking song from 'Girofle-Girofla' and Down Deep Within the Cellar"--and Mr. Kingdon was not a hard drinking man, either. "Then take out this slab, drill a space large enough to receive the copper case, place the case inside and seal the whole thing up with cement. Then cut away the trees in front"--

they were only saplings--"so that I can always look out and have a vista of the lake. And don't forget", he cried, as he seated himself atop the rock and whirled his cap, "I'll be here with you, Billy, I'll be here."

"How about an inscription?" I inquired. "What do you want, and where shall we put that?"

"That's the second detail," returned Kingdon. "Now we'll attend to that. Follow me."

By means of bits of cloth on the trees he had blazed a straight trail across the island to its southeastern extremity, and we came out directly in sight of a large boulder which lifted itself from the water some ten or fifteen feet from shore. It was rectangular at the base, but the top was beveled off to a point, and the side facing outward toward the channel was sheer and smooth. Nature had designed this monument for one who loved her much.

"Carve on it the work 'Kingdon'," was the order. "No, no date, no more of the name, nothing else."

Mr. Kingdon's Death and Burial

A week or two later I resigned from the Transcript staff to enter private employ. The last man in the office to bid me goodbye was Sam Kingdon, the tears starting from his eyes. On Sunday, Oct. 19, 1902, after dinner, I lay down at home for a brief rest when the thought struck me like a blow: "What if Sam Kingdon should die, and no one but me knowing how or where to carry out his wishes." Why this violent mental impact I do not know. On reaching Boston the next morning, I learned that Kingdon had died of heart disease at his home in Cambridge at 1:30 the day before, exactly the hour of my premonition--if it was that.

It was impossible for his close associates to leave Boston at this time, but Mr. Kingdon's body was cremated at Forest Hills and the ashes were preserved. The following May, Jay B. Benton, late city editor of the Transcript; Fred W. Ford, the present telegraph editor; Robert B. Anderson, a nephew; John Ritchie, Jr., two women and the writer went to

Great Beaver Island and the ashes were placed in the rock, although with two omissions from the ceremony, which Mr. Kingdon must have regretted deeply if he were "there". A local mason, from a row boat, cut the name into the smooth face of the chosen boulder. This is the story that has been forgotten.

The transfer of the island from the Estate of Samuel Kingdon to the next owner was not completed until June 2, 1905, and involved a rather complicated process. His Will which was dated July 11, 1893, (a copy is on file with the Probate Records of Belknap County) left the island to his nephews and nieces: Robert, Malcolm, Susan, and Emily Anderson. The record shows that Leora M. Kingdon who was the widow of Samuel Kingdon deeded the property to Robert Anderson on December 3, 1903. This, presumably, was to clear title to the property even though Kingdon in his Will said that she had accepted a bequest in lieu of her dower rights. Robert Anderson, with his brother Malcolm and his sisters Susan and Emily, deeded an individual one-half interest in the island to Harry C. Francis of Philadelphia on February 18, 1904. He made an agreement to sell him the remaining one-half interest at a later unspecified date for \$350.00 to be paid at the time of the passing of the deed on April 1, 1904. He finally did deed the remaining one-half interest on June 2, 1905. Mr. Roswell B. Lawrence, a Boston attorney, in a letter dated Nov. 13, 1913 to Mr. C. W. Hillyer, stated that Robert Anderson had been at the Harvard Law School. The same letter said he was "very punctilious about the business and would not sell the whole island until the two years elapsed after the probate of Mr. Kingdon's estate. That explains why there were two deeds." It may be that the heirs feared some difficulty with the estranged wife.

This point is of importance only in that it has a bearing on determining the date that Harry C. Francis began a major development of the island. The Brigham article speaks of Francis as "the railroad builder, of Philadelphia. Mr. Francis was an elderly man, of great experience in construction work of all kinds..."

The deed for the second half interest in the property from the Kingdon heirs to Harry C. Francis and Elizabeth H. Francis bears the date of June 2, 1905. According to Mr. Jesse Allen, a local man who has long been interested in Meredith history, Mr. Francis began immediately the construction of the original main lodge with its tremendous fireplace and chimney. Mr. Allen states that George Merrill of Meredith was the builder and that the chimney and fireplace were put in by a Mr. Sibley from Red Hill.

Francis, during the period of his ownership from 1905 to 1913, was the first real developer of the island. Evidence of this rests on (1) information given to me by Francis C. Chamberlain, a close friend of mine, who remembers much of the construction work done when he was a boy, (2) a blue print topographical survey map that is not dated but may be presumed to have been made in the latter part of his ownership and (3) detail plans for the reconstruction of the main lodge by Clarence W. Hillyer in 1914 which shows much of the original construction.

My notes on the information given to me by Chamberlain on August 18, 1964 are as follows:

"Francis Chamberlain's father was connected with the Boston Evening Transcript and was a friend of Kingdon who was also on the Transcript. He was one of the men who participated in the ceremony in 1903 of interring Kingdon's ashes in the ledge at the rear of the main house, although this is not so stated in the Brigham article. His father was probably J. Edgar Chamberlain of the "Advertiser" referred to in the Brigham article."

"His father also either owned or rented in the early 1900's a place on the mainland northwest of the island. Francis Chamberlain, who was born in 1894, spend a good deal of time on the island as a boy. The then owner, Mr. Francis, was friendly to him and the construction which was going on interested the boy."

"Chamberlain says that Kingdon built a small cottage on the point which is a portion of what is now know as Cub Cottage. (The Brigham article describes it as a 'large one-room cabin.')

According to Chamberlain a kitchen was built somewhat back of the cottage and connected by a platform."

"During the early part of Francis' ownership there was a row of tents along the ridge which runs between what is now the boat houses and the main house. Francis also built the chimney and a house around it."

The blue print survey map fully supports Chamberlain's recollection as it shows the front room of what is now Cub Cottage as a building by itself and designated on the blue print as "Dining Room". About 20 feet behind it, joined by a 10 foot platform, was a building about 25' x 14' marked "Kitchen". It is probable that at a later date, perhaps after the property was acquired by Hillyer in 1913, the kitchen building was moved to join the present front room and the brick chimney may have been the original kitchen chimney. The back bedroom was a later addition that Leland Powers had moved from Brookline, Mass., where it had served as his daughter's play house.

The blue print shows that the main house, as Francis built it, did not extend beyond what is now the rear of the game room. The game room area was then kitchen and dining room and there were no bedrooms over the present side porches. Probably there were bedrooms on the second floor above the game room. It is doubtful that there was running water in the house(described on the blue print as the "Red Pine Shack") as outhouses seem to be indicated near the house and in the boat house area.

Francis also built the boat houses as they are at present. The cottage now known as "Berry Patch" appears to have been remodeled from a store house at that location and a large ice and tool house was located in the open area, back of the north-south path, in front of the present "Berry Patch" cottage. There were two tents near the shore north of Cub Cottage, one at about the present location of Mouse House, and two slightly behind the path from the boat house to the main lodge. The well behind Cub Cottage was dug during his ownership and now some 60 years later, it supplies cool, clear water in the summer and never freezes in the winter.

Mr. Francis is without doubt the originator of much of the stonework on the island. The tremendous chimney in the main lodge was described by Brigham thus:

...He spent thousands of dollars and years of effort in accentuating the natural attraction of the cove with artistic rock effects. He blazed a path clear around the island, a distance of two miles, more or less, and he built a chimney for the camp which in point of unique design and execution is without rival in the Lake Region. It is about ten feet square at the base, tapering sharply upward through two stories of the present "camp"; and not only Beaver and other islands were searched for stones of eccentric formation, but many if not most of the pieces used in the construction were taken from the bottom of the lake.

The stones stick out individually in the roughest possible manner, with the idea of presenting the peculiarity of each to the eye. Here is a tiger's head, there a Great Dane with a collar, next the body of a duck, bill and all; a piece of granite flecked through with veins of glistening quartz, a round stone like a great egg lying loosely in a natural receptacle for it; a twisting of shapes as if some giant force had reached beneath the waters and moulded a plastic ooze to its hand; gnarled specimens like fossile reproductions, shapes suggestive of many forms of life and familiar articles, like the plow of the farmer or the head of a bird. Mr. Francis personally assisted in removing from part of the cove great pieces of rock, and the bottom was covered with imported white sand, making a miniature beach safe for the many children who now play in the waters, and learn to swim not long after they have learned to walk. The path from the "camp" to the boat house is edged with great rock masses---To Mr. Francis, broadly speaking, goes much of the credit for the ornamental and expensive rock work about the place.

He also built some sort of rock and fill promontory in front of the house although it probably differed materially from the present "Belvedere".

Mr. Francis, after owning the property for eight years, deeded it to Clarence W. Hillyer of New York on Nov. 14, 1913.

Little is known about Mr. Hillyer who is described in the Brigham article merely as "a man of means and artistic instincts".

Leland Powers, a Boston lawyer, who later owned the island with two former Dartmouth classmates, told me that Mr. Hillyer was a somewhat elderly man who had married a very beautiful young woman, reputedly a Ziegfeld Follies girl. She died within a few years and he left the island immediately and never returned. Powers said that when the island was sold in 1919 the house was exactly as Hillyer had left it and his wife's clothes were still hanging in the closets.

Mr. Hillyer rebuilt the main house to a very extensive degree. The architect was William Neil Smith, 101 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. and a rather complete set of blue prints are still in the front window seat of the house. This rebuilding included converting the back of the main house to the billiard room, adding the present dining room, pantries and kitchen, building the two "els" with the large second floor bedrooms, installing the three second floor bath rooms and the two first floor toilets, doing the remarkable chestnut panelling, building the walls around the belvedere, installing the fountain, and installing the heavy tile roof which lasted fifty years before it was necessary to replace it with composition shingles in 1963. The very heavy structural support in the attic was designed to support the tile roof and winter snows. With the installation of the elaborate plumbing and complete electrical wiring throughout the house it is probable that he installed the original cable to bring power from the mainland.

The Brigham article states that in the rebuilding Hillyer became dissatisfied with the local labor and brought fifteen workmen to the island from New York. The total investment in the property was estimated by Brigham at over \$200,000.00 and dollars at that time had far greater purchasing power than does the current dollar.

The date of Mrs. Hillyer's death is unknown but the property was sold by Clarence W. Hillyer(widower) on Sept. 27, 1919 to Albert A. Merrill of Hamilton, Mass. Since the Brigham article states that she became ill at the island "and later died in California" it is apparent that the Hillyers occupied it for only a

short time after rebuilding. The stamps on the deed indicate that it was sold to Merrill for \$20,000.00 despite Hillyer's large investment.

Little is known of Mr. Merrill other than that he was a member of the firm Hillard and Merrill of Hamilton. He occupied the island for a few years and sold it June 9, 1924 to Howard M. Clute of Brookline, Mass. and Leland Powers of Newton, Mass. for \$20,000.00, taking back a mortgage of \$12,000.00 that was discharged in 1927. There is no evidence that Mr. Merrill made any substantial changes in the property. I was told later by W. D. Biddiscombe, a Meredith realtor, that Merrill bought it as a speculative investment.

The purchase of the island by Clute and Powers ushered in a unique period of "communal" living that lasted for twelve years. Howard M. Clute was a well known Boston surgeon associated with the Lahey Clinic. Leland Powers was the senior partner of Powers and Hall which had been founded by his father, who also had been a noted attorney and a member of Congress. To Mr. Powers, Sr., is given the credit for having legislation passed which established the first water mail route in the United States; but this was accomplished in 1903, long before Leland Powers acquired the island. The service of the mail boat to Beaver Island began in 1926. Clute and Powers had been at Dartmouth together--Powers in 1910 and Clute in 1911--and, therefore, were about 35 years old at the time of the acquisition which they intended to use jointly as a summer residence. Within a year after their purchase, they sold a one-third interest to another friend and Dartmouth classmate, 1910, Ben Ames Williams.

Ben Ames Williams had become a popular author writing primarily novels based in the imaginary New Hampshire community of "Fraternity" which were serialized in the Saturday Evening Post. Williams built a studio on the northern point of the island--now Lot III--in which he wrote for four hours daily except Saturdays and Sundays. When this trio finally sold the island, the Williams studio was moved to the mainland and is the small wooden building located adjacent to the present parking and docking area.

The Clute-Powers-Williams triumvirate, with their wives and children spent many happy summers on the island with one of the wives acting as chief housekeeper each year. The legal ownership was controlled by an indenture recorded in the Belknap County Registry of Deeds which provided:

1. It was binding on all persons who were co-tenants then or became so in the future.
2. Termination by agreement of all co-tenants or sale of the property, and also at the death of the last survivor of the co-tenants, their wives or children.
3. Each tenant could use the property with others, under majority rules, and would share expenses equally.
4. No tenant could sell or give a fraction or his entire share except to wife, husband, or lineal descendent without unanimous consent of the others; and if a tenant desired to sell his entire share, it must first be offered to the others at "book value".

Leland Powers later told me that the three families lived together in perfect harmony for many years, but finally small inter-family frictions developed and it was decided to liquidate the project. Dr. Clute built the house directly opposite the island on the mainland adjacent to the present parking lot. Leland Powers built the house on the mainland at the narrow opening between Pine Island and Meredith Neck while Ben Ames Williams moved to Freedom, N.H., near the Maine border.

In October, 1934, the "Beaver Island Trust" was established with Ira M. Hamelburg, Max Shoolman and Herman A. Mintz as trustees and in November of that year ownership was transferred from Clute-Powers-Williams to the Beaver Island Trust. Recovery from the great economic depression was only beginning at that time and the selling price was \$14,000 or \$6,000 less than when it was purchased ten years earlier. It should be remembered, however, that deed stamps are based on the real estate only and the total purchase price of the property including furnishings may have been higher. This comment applies to many of the values in this account that are based on deed stamps.

In 1944, the property was purchased from the Hamelburgs for \$35,000 by John Shepard, III, who was president of the Yankee Network and the Shepard stores in Boston and Providence. John Shepard did little to change the buildings structurally; but he thoroughly renovated them at a cost, stated by Mrs. Shepard after Mr. Shepard's death, of \$50,000. During the six years that he owned it, he rebuilt the wharf, renovated the cabins, had new floors laid throughout the main lodge, replaced all the windows, had all the buildings screened, and installed the game room bar at a reported cost of \$5,000. In addition, he had barged to the island large quantities of loam with which the south lawn was built and planted virtually all the shrubs. He also refurnished all of the buildings. Mr. Shepard died aboard ship while returning from Europe in 1949 or early 1950.

For eighteen years prior to 1950, Alexander Standish and his wife, Elizabeth, had spent their vacations at Appalachian Mountain Club's Three Mile Island camp. They had grown to love the area to such an extent that, for several years, they had looked at properties on the lake for possible purchase. Standish was a partner of J. H. Whitney and Company in New York, but owning property in the Winnepesaukee area seemed feasible since at that time there was excellent non-stop air service between Laconia and New York, as well as a Pullman sleeping car every night between Concord and New York.

On Labor Day, 1950, Shep Brown who operated the boat basin at Lovejoy Sands said that he believed John Shepard's widow was willing to sell Beaver Island and its mainland access area. Standish immediately visited her and after a lengthy discussion obtained a 30-day option to purchase the real estate and most of the personal property, exclusive of the boats that she owned, for \$53,500. He then sought informed opinion concerning values in the area; and although the realtors he consulted generally felt that the option price was within reason, the presidents of the New Hampshire Savings Bank and the Meredith Trust Company were of the opinion that it was substantially overvalued at that figure. The property was assessed by the Town of Meredith at \$37,500; but Mr. Shepard had believed this to be excessive and had applied for a reduction prior to his death.

Standish felt, however, that while the purchase of the property might not prove an attractive investment, it was a property that he and his wife would like to own and that future development of the area would insure against financial loss should they wish to dispose of it. After further negotiation, an agreement was signed Sept. 26, 1950 for the purchase of the property for \$50,000.--detailed as \$35,000. for the real property and \$15,000 for personal property.

The first occupancy of the island under the Standish regime was over the Wshington's birthday week-end of 1951. Accompanied by Dr. William C. Walsh of New Hampton(then a medical student in New York) and his long-time friend, Leonard Stone of New York, the party walked across the ice from Shep Brown's Boat Basin and stayed the first night in Cub Cottage warmed only by a fire in the fireplace. It was a bitterly cold but very beautiful week-end. As the first night had been uncomfortable, Standish and Stone moved into the old laundry room--an addition at the rear of Berry Patch that has since been demolished--which was equipped with an old kitchen range. They were comfortable after consuming a wonderful steak cooked on the range but were surprised in the morning to find they could not open the laundry door as the heat had melted snow on the roof, and water had run down and frozen over the door. They were able, however, to open a small opening into the main part of the cottage and get out through its front door.

Expenditures during the succeeding years of Standish ownership were primarily in the nature of maintenance rather than capital improvements. All buildings were re-roofed, the island docks and boat house foundations were rebuilt and, of course, general maintenance such as painting and repairs. Capital improvements included such items as a new 2,400 volt cable to the mainland, installation of gas heating in the game room and two bedrooms on the second floor of the main house and in Cub Cottage and Berry Patch, construction of a new and enlarged mainland dock, enlargement and paving of the parking area and the building of the carport.

During 1953, Little Beaver Island was offered for sale by David and Roslie Ackerman and it was purchased by Elizabeth

Standish largely as a protection to the value of Big Beaver. (When Big Beaver was purchased, it was done in Elizabeth's name for estate planning reasons.) It was subsequently improved by providing electricity from Big Beaver and wiring the main house and boat house, installing a hot water heater and the necessary piping, re-roofing and other minor improvements. It was subsequently rented to long-time friends,--J. Mulford Oliver for five years and thereafter to Leonard and Dorothy Stone. The prior history of Little Beaver has not been researched but the house appears to have been built in the early 1900's.

Standish decided to leave New York in 1951 and moved to Canterbury, New Hampshire. Beaver Island served as a happy gathering place for the Standish children and grandchildren and the Standish's love of the island grew year after year. By 1971, however, it was becoming clear that thought must be given to the island's future as both Mr. and Mrs. Standish were in their seventies. It was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain adequate help and the task of physical maintenance of the property was proving a burden. Ownership was also straining the family budget as Standish had retired from active business while all costs had risen including taxes which had jumped from \$1,700 annually to more than \$5,200.

Read estate developers had made several offers to buy the property at very high figures; but, as Meredith at the time had either no or inadequate zoning and subdivision regulations, Standish was unwilling to entertain such proposals which could only result in the island being cut into small lots which would destroy its beauty. The problem of finding a method of liquidating it and at the same time preserving as far as possible its beauty was complex since the Standishes wished to occupy their buildings as long as possible, they wanted to obtain an adequate price for the benefit of their heirs and both capital gains and estate taxes were material factors.

There were discussions with the Three Mile Island Committee of the Appalachian Mountain Club to acquire it on a part sale and part gift basis; but it was vetoed by the Club's senior officers in Boston. At that time the Club was engaged in a capital raising

campaign for its mountain trails and facilities; and it seemed that there would be a major management problem if it were managed as a summer resort in conjunction with Three Mile. Bowdoin College also studied in detail a similar proposal with the thought of using it as a summer conference center. The college Trustees decided reluctantly against it as the college was operating at a deficit; and they did not feel they should dispose of income producing investments in order to acquire, even at substantially less than its market value, a non-income producing property.

The best solution appeared to be the development of a subdivision plan, without involving professional realtors whose sole motive was profit, that would preserve the island beauty. To this end, a plan was drawn up dividing the island into four large areas as designated as A, B, C, and D on the attached map. Area A consisted of the area and buildings that the Standishes wish to occupy; Area B on the northerly end of the island consisting of three lots with a combined shore frontage of 1,453 feet; Area C on the southerly end with four lots and a combined frontage of 1,870 feet and Area D with 11.1 acres and 1,278 feet of frontage along the channel between Big Beaver and the smaller islands. Area D was to be owned jointly by the lot owners as common land and to be restricted against all building except for boat houses, service roads, leaching fields and power and telephone lines.

This plan was approved by the New Hampshire Water Supply and Pollution Control Commission and the Meredith Planning Board in 1972. The Standishes then, for estate planning reasons, gave their daughters a 48% undivided interest in Areas B and C. An interior service road was constructed, new large power and telephone cables were laid to the island from the mainland and overhead power and telephone distribution lines constructed along the road in a manner that concealed them from the lake.

There were many delays and frustrations which, perhaps, a professional developer would have avoided; but, by the summer of 1973, the project was well underway. The first lot (Lot VI) was acquired by Dr. Gordon S. Brown, a long time acquaintance and an engineer who was retiring from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Brown had spent vacations at Three Mile Island for many years; and he and his wife, Jean, loved the area and

wanted to see that its environment and ecology was preserved. Dr. Brown also consented to act as consultant and co-manager of the development.

The second lot (Lot VII) was purchased by David R. Buley, President of Lewis & Saunders, Inc. of Laconia and his wife, Dorothy. Mr. Buley had studied the island for the Appalachian Mountain Club at the time of the earlier discussions with that organization. Standish's daughters, Mrs. Stewart L. Leach of Weston, Massachusetts and Mr. E. K. Smith, Jr. of Boulder, Colorado acquired Lot I. They had no immediate plans for building on the lot but wanted a portion of the island they dearly loved to remain in the family.

Thus began in 1973, a new chapter in the history of Beaver Island.

