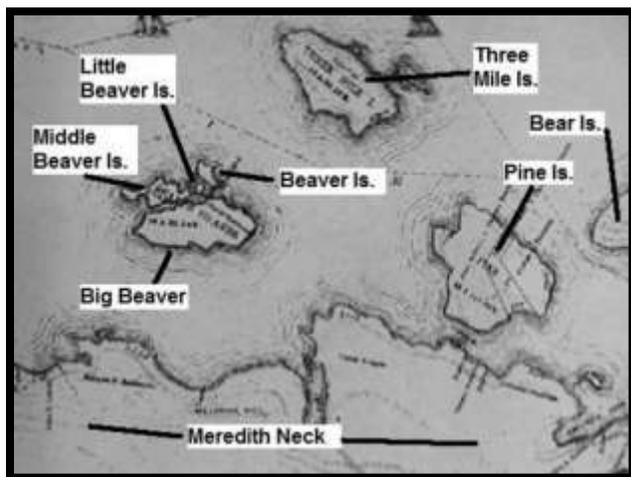


Beaver Island Group (Big Beaver, Beaver, Middle Beaver, and Little Beaver)

The Beaver Islands originally consisted of five islands. There are four today: Big Beaver, Beaver, Middle Beaver, and Little Beaver. Sometime during the 1900s, two of the islands were connected by a causeway to form Middle Beaver. The islands are located northwest of Three Mile Island. The name 'Beaver' was probably given to the group c. 1858 when the surveyor for the Lake Company completed his map of Winnepesaukee. The channel between Big Beaver and the other three was (and still is cyclically) a natural habitat for beavers.

Big Beaver is by far the largest. It was part of Masonian Lot #13, while the others were among the 'unnumbered' islands. The earliest ownership history of these islands is unknown. As part of Lot #13, Big Beaver ended up in the hands of a Portsmouth merchant, Edmund Roberts, sometime before 1823.¹ Roberts sold Big Beaver to Timothy Robinson in 1834.² Timothy was an inn keeper in Lowell, MA.³ In 1859, Robinson sold these islands to a Meredith farmer, David Robinson.⁴ Apparently a fairly wealthy family, they owned farmlands in the upper Neck portion of the Third Division, near the schoolhouse lot (L26).⁵ They presumably would have used the islands for seasonal grazing and wood. The Robinsons held on to the islands for varying lengths of time. The first to go were the three middle Beaver Islands (now Middle Beaver and Little Beaver). These were the least useful to Meredith farmers due to their small size. They sold Big Beaver in 1866 and finally Beaver in 1869. As a result of this timing, the ownership pattern for all of them took different paths.



David Robinson sold Big Beaver to Levi Leach of Meredith in February 1866.⁶ Leach was a Meredith Neck farmer who held on to the island for 21 years. After moving to Franklin, NH, Leach sold it in 1887 to Samuel Kingdon of Somerville, MA.⁷ Kingdon, a fairly colorful figure, began the vacation era on Big Beaver about the same time

¹ See B/P 9010/135 and 9011/274. Roberts was a seagoing merchant who was named Far Eastern ambassador in the 1830s by President Andrew Jackson. He married the niece of NH governor John Langdon.

² See B/P 9015/553, referencing this sale. The original deed cited is Strafford County Registry B/P 161/523. It is not found online.

³ See B/P 9015/551.

⁴ The deed of sale was not found, but Timothy Robinson was listed as the owner on Crocker's map of the lake in 1858. David Robinson's ownership in 1859 is derived from later deeds.

⁵ See B/P 35/347 and 43/557.

⁶ B/P 43/557. An excellent history of Big Beaver Island, laying out the modern era, was written in 1973 by Alexander Standish: "History of Beaver Island (1781-1973)". This can be found on-line at Winnepesaukee.com.

⁷ B/P 77/172.

that Solomon Lovejoy was making his first vacation sales on North Bear. Kingdon was a newspaper editor for the *Boston Evening Transcript*, among other papers. He enjoyed the island immensely. After his death in 1902, Big Beaver was inherited by his nieces and nephews, who sold a half interest in it to Harry C. Francis of Philadelphia in 1904. Francis gained full ownership of it in 1905. Thereafter, he began a more extensive vacation development of the island.

Beaver Island is the second largest of the group and located southeast of the others. David Robinson held on to this island the longest, finally selling it in 1869 to John F. Clough. With this purchase, John became one of the earliest vacationers on the lake. He probably used it primarily as a fishing camp. John (b. 1841) was a Meredith farmer, one of four sons of John and Ellen Clough who had moved to Meredith in 1843. He had three brothers, William (b. 1840), Frank (b. 1851), and Edward (b. 1860).⁸ John was also a Civil War veteran, a member of the 12th NH Volunteer Infantry. He was wounded at the battle of Chancellorsville, the same battle in which Oliver Bickford was captured and 10 other Meredith men were killed. He mustered out of the army in 1863, apparently due to his wounds.⁹ He returned to Meredith and became a butcher, living with his parents. By 1880, he moved to Manchester to find another career. Still in possession of Beaver Island, he sold a half interest in it to his older brother, William, in 1881.¹⁰ By this time, William was living in Nashua, NH, where he had become the editor of the *Nashua Telegraph*.

John and William maintained ownership of Beaver until 1893, when they sold it to their youngest brother, Edward H. Clough.¹¹ Edward was also living in Manchester, where he had built a very successful business career that included owning a coal delivery company and serving as postmaster for the city. But Edward had kept Meredith close to his heart, building a house at the base of Meredith Bay, situated at the junction of Pleasant Street and the D.W. Highway.¹² In later life, he was responsible for cleaning up the bay and building the stone retaining wall. Clough Park was named after him. Beaver Island remained in the hands of Edward, and then his widow, until 1975.¹³ In all, the property was owned by members of the Clough family for 106 years.

David Robinson sold the three islands that became **Middle** and **Little Beaver** to Meredith farmers, William P. Smith and William T. Fogg, in February 1859.¹⁴ Smith and Fogg were not interested in owning the islands for personal use; the next year, in

⁸ Hanaford, p. 157. All four of the boys came to own some of the Beaver Islands at one time or another.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Deed not found. Reference found in B/P 91/135.

¹¹ B/P 91/135.

¹² B/P 174/31. The seller was Harriett Moses who ran a summer school on Horse Island during the early 1900s. This house is now the Lakeside Deli and Grille.

¹³ B/P 658/365.

¹⁴ Deed not found. Sale information contained in B/P 35/347.

October 1860, they sold them to James M. Prescott and Charles S. Prescott.¹⁵ The latter two had purchased two-thirds of Pine Island just a few years before. The Prescotts owned the two Beaver islands for 12 years, but after James passed away, Charles S. sold them to the fourth Clough brother, Frank, in 1872.¹⁶ Frank only owned the islands for three years. In 1876, he sold them to his brother, William.¹⁷ Four days later, William sold a half interest to his brother, John.¹⁸

William and John held joint ownership of the islands until 1881 when William sold his half to John.¹⁹ About a month later, John sold the islands to Frederick Chauncey, a young (29) 'dyer' who was living in Meredith.²⁰ Chauncey was a native of Newfoundland and probably came to Meredith Village to work in the Hodgson hosiery mill. He owned the islands for four years, presumably using them as a fishing camp.

In 1885, he sold them to Samuel Hodgson²¹ who was the owner of the Meredith hosiery mill. An Englishman by birth, Hodgson had migrated to the United States in 1866. He had worked in a dye house in Lowell, MA, for a year or so before following his employer to Lake Village. He started his own manufacturing business there in 1870. In 1875, the Meredith Mechanics Association, which owned the village canal and water power system, lured Hodgson to Meredith where he developed the largest business in town.

Hodgson held on to the smaller Beaver Islands for four years. He was perhaps the owner responsible for building the causeway that linked the two islands that now form Middle Beaver Island.²² In 1889, he sold them to Elias Russell, a professor at the state normal school in Worcester, MA.²³ Russell's tenure on the islands was relatively short. In 1903, he sold them to Charles A. Weaver, a physician from New Boston, NH.²⁴ In 1905, Dr. Weaver sold the smallest of his islands to Frank Frisselle, a newspaper editor from Manchester, NH.²⁵ This became Little Beaver Island. The Frisselle family owned the island for 25 years.²⁶

¹⁵ B/P 35/347.

¹⁶ Deed not found. Sale information contained in B/P 60/467.

¹⁷ B/P 60/467.

¹⁸ B/P 60/475.

¹⁹ B/P 74/554.

²⁰ B/P 75/434.

²¹ B/P 75/440.

²² This assumption is based upon the comparative language in his deed of purchase (references three islands) and his deed of sale (references two islands). See also B/P 111/55 that suggests the same islands were involved in these sales. On the other hand, a hand drawn map attached to the 1905 B/P 111/55 deed shows three separate islands.

²³ B/P 82/153.

²⁴ B/P 111/55.

²⁵ B/P 116/301

²⁶ Meanwhile the Weaver family continued to own Middle Beaver until 1940. During their tenure, they called the island 'Tizdoc's Island', presumably as in 'it is doc's'. See, B/P 248/21.