

Horse Island

Horse Island sits just across the channel from the Dolly Islands, very close to the Neck (old Lot 82). Its name is said to derive from a long-ago incident in which a Neck farmer's horse fell into the lake while being barged to Bear Island, swam to the little island, and refused to leave it.¹ The island's early ownership history is unknown, beyond being part of the unnumbered islands. As such, George W. Sanders would have been the owner of record in the late 1880s. Given its small size, Horse Island was of interest to no one during the farming era. In 1896, William O. Tuttle, a Newton, MA vacationer, purchased the Meredith Neck point lot opposite the island.² There is nothing to indicate that Tuttle bought Horse then or any time thereafter.³ It appears that he simply 'assumed' ownership of it.

About 1900, Tuttle sold Horse Island to Robert Moses, a tinsmith and fishing devotee who lived in Meredith.⁴ A house was standing on the island in that year.⁵ The building on the property was or became a unique two- story, octagonal structure.



Horse Island c. 1907. (Courtesy of the Thompson family)

¹ Hawkes version of the story has it that the horse drowned off the island. Hawkes, *Winnepesaukee*, p. 46.

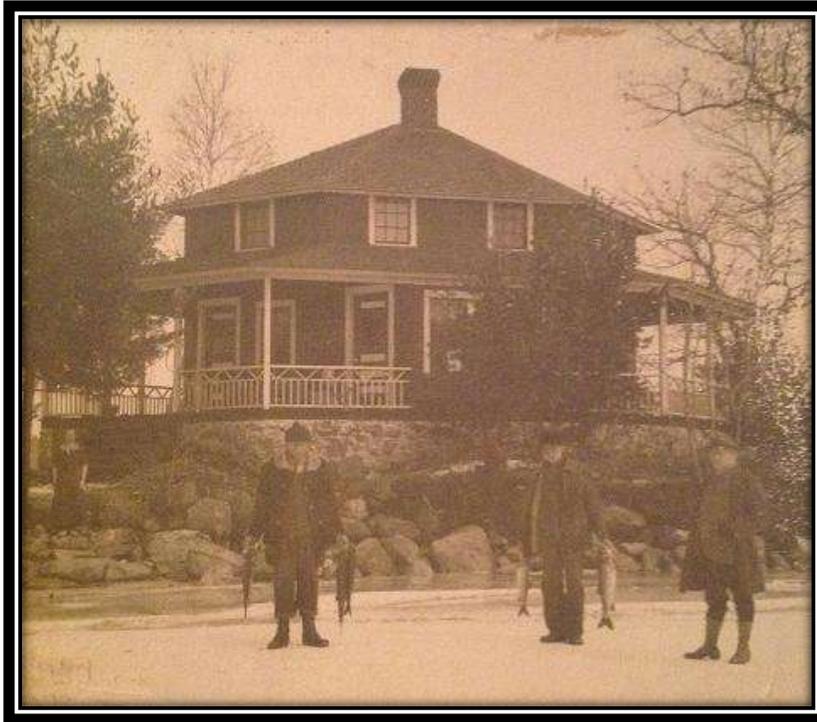
² B/P 95/595. The seller, Smith Paine, had purchased this part of the Neck from long-time Neck settler, William S. Mead, only the month before.

³ Horse Island was one of the names on Wells' list of unnumbered islands in 1912.

⁴ No deed was found to document the sale to Robert Moses. Tuttle's ownership and sale to Moses are referenced in B/P 121/253; 121/583; 122/240. The old original photo just above had notes on the back that the house was built in 1900.

⁵ B/P 122/240. Among other things, the deed indicated that the island was also called 'Wambeek' Island. Meredith Inventory report for 1906 shows the "Moses sisters" owned Horse Island & cottage.

In 1907, Robert Moses (by then 70) sold 1/4th shares in the property to each of his three daughters, Hattie Moses, Mildred Woodman, and Flora Moulton. Hattie sold



her share to Flora the following year.⁶ The island was used at least in part as a summer getaway by Hattie Moses, a Summit, N. J. resident, who taught summer school in Meredith. She occasionally brought some of her summer students to the island by boat for swimming and enjoyment. In 1908, and some summers thereafter, the students included Mei-ling and Ching-ling Soong, the young daughters of a wealthy Chinese family who

Fishing party at Horse Island early 1900s. Robert Moses on the left. were in the country for schooling. Hattie noted about Mei-ling: "While in Meredith she was fond of boating, canoeing, swimming and having trips by motor boat to Horse Island, near Bear, and other places for picnics."⁷ Years later Mei-ling became the wife of Chiang Kai-shek, and Ching-ling became the wife of Sun Yat-sen.⁸

The ownership was consolidated again in 1913, when Flora sold her half interest to Mildred, giving her a 3/4th ownership interest along with Robert Moses 1/4th interest.⁹ For a time thereafter, the island was the summer home to Camp Winnepesaukee, a school for boys that operated year round under the leadership of Hattie Moses.¹⁰ Mildred and her father apparently enjoyed a fruitful time of it for many years. They even managed to almost survive the Depression. But in 1939, their resources ran out. It may be that the hurricane of 1938 devastated the island and leveled their house. The bank foreclosed on them. Poetically, the island was sold out of foreclosure, not to brand new

⁶ B/P 122/240; 121/253; 121/583; 122/265. Despite Hattie's withdrawal, for years beginning in 1907, Meredith tax records list only Hattie Moses as owner of the island.

⁷ Van Veghten, Meredith Bay, p. 45.

⁸ Van Veghten, Meredith Bay, pp. 42-50.

⁹ B/P 138/84. As of 1910, Robert Moses was living with Millie and her family in Meredith. They mortgaged the property with the Laconia Savings Bank, perhaps to fund the camp. B/P 136/17.

¹⁰ "Meredith," The Granite Monthly, Vol. 46, Jan-Feb, 1914, p. 42.

owners, but back to Hattie Moses and Mildred Woodman.¹¹ The house burned to the ground in 1950 and was not rebuilt. The two sisters owned the island until 1955, when it was sold to the owner of the mainland property nearby.¹²

¹¹ B/P 238/399.

¹² B/P 360/465. This deed makes no mention of a building on the island.