

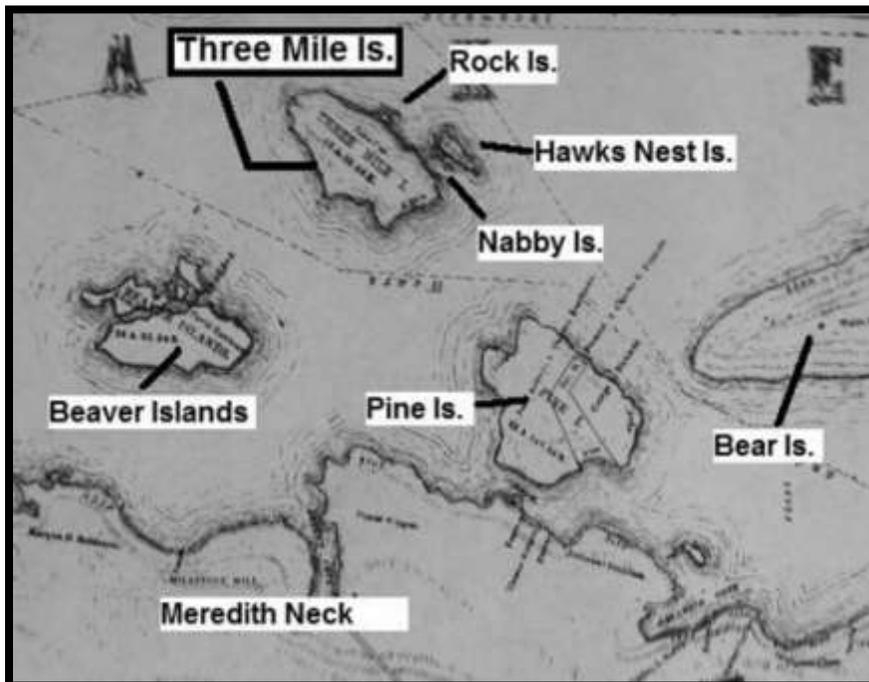
Three Mile Island Group (Three Mile, Hawks Nest, Rock, and Nabby)

At 47 acres, **Three Mile Island** was one of the large islands that the Masonians included in the lottery of islands in 1781. It was part of Lot # 13 that also included nine other islands.¹ The lot was drawn to the original right of John Wentworth. Lot 13 ended up in the hands of the Portsmouth merchant, Edmund Roberts, sometime before 1823.

In 1826, Roberts sold Three Mile Island to Joseph Senter of Meredith. The origin of the island's name found its roots in the deed of this sale. Roberts described the property as "a certain island numbered thirteen in the Winnepisiogee Lake, so called ...being about three miles from Centre Harbour..."² The description morphed into a formal name sometime thereafter.

Joseph Senter was a blacksmith who lived just west of Center Harbor bay in what was then still part of Meredith. He was the son of Moses Senter, one of the

earliest farmers to settle near the bay, and the nephew of Revolutionary Colonel Joseph Senter, who had settled earlier than Moses above the bay in what was then known as the Moultonborough Addition.³



Joseph Senter presumably used Three Mile for seasonal grazing and timber. He died in 1849. After his death,

the island passed to John Coe, a well known entrepreneur who gained ownership of several islands during this period. Coe was married to Joseph's niece, Lavinia. Coe

¹ The other nine were Beaver, Hull, Blackcat, Pitchwood, Whortleberry, Dow, Farm, Chase, and Ragged.

² B/P 9011/274. Center Harbor became a place of note c. 1787 when the postal system gave it the name when new mail routes were being laid out throughout New Hampshire. It was a major cross-roads location, thus necessitating that the 'place' be identified. The area was the nexus of three towns, including Meredith, Moultonborough, and New Hampton, although the lake frontage belonged to Meredith and Moultonborough. The town of Center Harbor was carved out of New Hampton in 1797. The new town did not have any land on Winnepesaukee. The Meredith portion of the bay was not annexed to the town of Center Harbor until 1873.

³ Moses farm was in Meredith on D3/Lot 9. B/P 9002/32.

retained ownership of Three Mile until his death in 1861. His estate administrator, Nathaniel Upham, subsequently sold Three Mile to Frank Brown in October 1862.⁴

Frank Brown was one of six sons of the early Long Island settler, John Brown.⁵ Brown did not hold onto Three Mile for very long. He sold it in September 1863 to Thomas Appleton of Laconia.⁶ Appleton owned a manufacturing operation in Lake Village but was also interested in the islands.⁷ In the late 1860s, Appleton's business took a turn for the worse, and he went bankrupt. His assets were sold off in 1868, and Frank Brown repurchased Three Mile.⁸ Thereafter, Brown owned Three Mile for almost three decades. His interest in the island was most likely seasonal pasture and timber. He did not build on it.

In July 1895, Frank Brown sold Three Mile and its tiny neighbor, **Rock Island**, to Mary Eastman of Concord, NH.⁹ She and her husband, Edson, were members of the Appalachian Mountain Club. In November 1899, Mary donated two and one-third acres of Three Mile to the AMC.¹⁰ The following summer, July 1900, she donated another three acres to the club.¹¹ The same day, she sold 10 more acres of the island to Rosewell B. Lawrence, of Medford, MA, who was the secretary of the AMC.¹² In February 1901, Lawrence sold this parcel to the AMC after a successful fund raising effort was undertaken to recoup Lawrence's cost.¹³ On the same date, Mary Eastman also donated the small parcel on the southern end of the island that she had retained. She included Rock Island in the donation.¹⁴

Three Mile developed into a core holding of the AMC. It became the organization's 'camping' headquarters. Major improvements occurred fairly quickly. The AMC commissioned the building of the main lodge in 1900; the boathouse in 1901; and an observation tower in 1902. The island was in constant use every summer thereafter. In 1903, one visitor captured it this way:

⁴ B/P 37/592.

⁵ He was born and raised on Long Island and "spent his life lumbering, rafting and boating on the lake." He later bought a farm on the mainland in Moultonborough. During the latter 1800s, he and his brother, Charles F., were very active on the lake, acquiring ownership of Hawks Nest, Six Mile, Mink, and Camp Island. By the 1880s, Frank had acquired a steam boat, the *River Queen*, and was providing excursions for private parties. The latter included week long tours around the lake for camping and fishing on the largely deserted islands. See, W.S. Hawkes: *Winnepesaukee* (1887), pp. 35, 41, and 46.

⁶ B/P 38/586.

⁷ He also bought Mink Island in 1864.

⁸ B/P 78/404.

⁹ B/P 94/535.

¹⁰ B/P 103/339.

¹¹ B/P 104/471.

¹² B/P 104/556.

¹³ B/P 105/490.

¹⁴ B/P 105/509. With specific regard to Rock Island, we have found is no further detail to add to its history. As a tiny (3/10ths of an acre), unnumbered island, it got the attention of no one during the first nine decades of the 19th century. It appears that Frank Brown 'assumed' ownership of it after he bought Three Mile Island in 1868. Rock Island first appears in the deeds when Brown sold Three Mile to Mary Eastman in 1895.

“As the visitor comes to this place on the steamer *Mt. Washington*, one of the picturesque sights of the lake is witnessed at Three-Mile island. On this island, which is the summer home of the Appalachian Club, are pitched a large number of tents, where since early in the season many of the club members have been enjoying out of doors life under canvas.”¹⁵

Hawks Nest Island (referred to as Little Three Mile occasionally in the late 1800s) is a small island about one and a half acres in size. It is located next to Three Mile Island. **Nabby Island** is a very small island between Hawks Nest and Three Mile. Like so many of the small islands in Winnepesaukee, the early ownership of the two is unknown. It would appear that Frank Brown also ‘assumed’ ownership of them after he bought Three Mile Island in 1868. In December 1886, Brown sold both to Winfield Scott Hawkes of South Hadley, MA.¹⁶ In concern over the title, Hawkes insisted that Brown include a clause that the purchase price would be refunded if Brown’s title were vacated by the Masonian Proprietors or the state.¹⁷

Hawkes was a Congregational minister who had purchased a lot (#432) on Bear Island in 1886.¹⁸ He was also the author of the railroad sponsored book, Winnepesaukee and About There, that was published in 1887 to attract vacationers to the Lakes Region. While doing his research, Hawkes was ferried around the lake for a week by Frank Brown. Around 1888, Hawkes built a fishing cabin on Hawks Nest. In November 1892, Hawkes sold the two islands to George H. Bates, the Methodist minister from southern Massachusetts who had purchased and then sold half of Steamboat Island.¹⁹ After George Bates died intestate in 1907, his widow, Abby, and one of his daughters sold the islands to George’s other daughter, Adella W. Bates of Boston, the following year.²⁰ Thereafter, Adella maintained ownership of the two islands for another 56 years. She died in c. 1964, around the age of 94. She left Hawks Nest and Nabby to the Appalachian Mountain Club.²¹

¹⁵ Boston Herald, August 23, 1903, p. 28.

¹⁶ The name ‘Hawks Nest’ was already in use when the island was sold to Winfield Hawkes.

¹⁷ B/P 76/529. Reverend Hawkes must have learned of the Browns propensity for ‘assuming’ ownership of small islands.

This is the only deed found that includes language like this.

¹⁸ B/P 76/231.

¹⁹ B/P 88/497.

²⁰ B/P 123/369.

²¹ See Meredith Tax Inventory for Non –Residents, 1965, MHS Archives which notes the bequest.