

## A History of Long Island

by Jane Rice

Readers may recall that a few issues ago, we had an article about the history of Moultonboro Bay, and Long Island, having so much history of its own, was left for a future issue. Well, the time has come, and we hope that our readers enjoy this look at a part of town that has a lot of history.

To begin with, Long Island was not a part of the original grant of Moultonboro, but was annexed to the town by an act of the legislature in 1799, so its history as a part of Moultonborough begins there. Its 1174 acres of land were divided into five equal shares of 234 acres, three quarters of an acre and eight square rods, each. It was good farming land, and seed potatoes were said to have been sent from there to Idaho. John Boody raised wheat that was so successful that he sold it to the federal government to aid the farmers in western states who needed higher-quality seed.

Here is how it was done: In April, 1840, Boody ploughed 150 rods of ground (a rod is 16.5 feet, and the square of this measure is 30.25 square yards, so 150 rods would be 13,612.5 square feet), put in eight loads of barnyard manure and harrowed it in, and harvested 300 bushels of potatoes, and then hauled in another 18 loads of manure, which he harrowed in the following spring. He planted corn in 1841, but a dry spell just when the silk was coming on the ears meant a harvest of only about 35 bushels. In 1842 he sowed a bushel and a half of Red Beard Black Sea wheat, and harvested 38 and a half bushels of wheat.

On the eastern end of the island was the farm of John Brown, who grew the famous King Philip corn, which had large ears with eight rows of grain per ear, and he held the record for the amount of corn grown per acre in New Hampshire for fifty years. His wife, Catherine (Follett) Brown, was known for making six or seven hundred pounds of excellent cheese annually. Robert Lamprey moved to Long Island in 1839, and also was successful with his corn crop, growing 131 bushels and seven quarts of shelled corn per acre. This is according to E. Palmer Clarke in his book entitled "Winnepesaukee", which was published in 1935. The Lamprey farmhouse was later moved to Geneva Point Center, where it is known as "Cottage A" and is one of the oldest buildings in town.

Robert Lamprey bought the 100 acres at the far end of the island from Isaac Brown, Jr., and married Polly Fogg, the first of three successive wives who gave him ten children. Benjamin Brackett Lamprey settled at the other end of the island, and married John Brown's daughter, Arvilla.

Interest and profitability in farming declined following the Civil War, and Robert Lamprey died in 1886 and Benjamin in 1890. Meanwhile, Dr. J. Alonzo and Frank E. Greene discovered the area, Dr. J.A. buying 40 acres from Benjamin's estate for \$1,000, and the 100 acres of Robert's farm for \$3,000. Dr. J.A. used his profits from the patent medicine "Nervura" to build "Roxmont", a castle-like home of wooden construction locally known as "Greene's Castle", which burned in 1930. It was located near the stone gateposts at the sharp curve on the Long Island Road.

The structure included a circular, crenellated tower, and inside there was an "Oriental" room with porthole windows and a secret compartment in the wall. The grounds included waterlily ponds, fountains, gazebos, an orchard, berry patch, grape arbor, and vegetable garden. Dr. J.A. Greene then

decided to become a gentleman farmer on the property which now comprises Geneva Point Center, and he had the old farm building moved over the ice one winter, making way for Dr. F.E. Greene to build his "Windermere" estate, which is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

All the building materials were moved across the lake by boat, since there was no bridge at that time, and about 100 carpenters camped in tents on the property while Winder

mere was being built. The plans were drawn by Boston architect J.H. Besarick, and the Busiel firm of Laconia did the building. There was a mansion, gate house, stable, ice house, pump house, and poultry house, plus a home for the caretaker. There was also a boathouse, which housed first the "Mohawk", a steam yacht which burned in 1906, and subsequently, the steamer "Windermere." The name of both boat and estate came from Lake Windermere in England, and the furnishings from world travels. The mansion was lighted by a gas plant located in the basement. Construction took two years and cost \$16,000. The Lamprey cemetery remaining from earlier times on that piece of land was moved to Lakeport.

When farming declined, and the new "growth industry" became summer people, the Browns established their Long Island Inn in 1874, with the steamboat landing known as "Brown's Wharf" just below the Inn on the western shore of the lake. The boulders which composed the wharf are still in place and can be seen from the lake today. The "Mount Washington" and the "Lady of the Lake" were among the steamboats which delivered guests and mail with five daily stops. Another was the "Lamprey", earlier known as the "Montclair", which was built on the beach on the southeast part of the island. The hotel, based on the Brown's original farmhouse, was operated by George K. Brown, son of John and Catherine, and later by George's son, Harry. Barbara and Will Austin now have it as a bed and breakfast. It once was able to accommodate 50 guests.

Another hotel was Blake's Island Home, operated by Levi Blake, Benjamin B. Lamprey's son-in-law. Capacity was 40 guests. Later it was operated by Dr. F.L. Davis as the Colonial Inn. It had stood empty for about 30 years before it burned in 1962.

Still another hotel was the TipTop House, proprietor M.D. Wentworth, which accommodated just 8 guests.

Following World War II, Gardiner Greene became the owner of Windermere, and he gradually sold off the two miles of shore land that once went with the mansion. It became apparent that a marina business would have a following, and Harilla Landing was built by Harold and Priscilla Sanderson, whose two first names gave the spot its name.

The first bridge was thought to have been started about 1868. Timothy Dame owned the land on the island side, and he began building a causeway of crushed stone and rubble, and lost his farm due to the expense. It is so noted in a publication of 1886. There is a current through the narrows there, and the causeway was replaced some time before 1900 by a bridge on concrete piers. Frances Stevens' father, Charles E. George, ran a ferry across to Long Island in the fall of 1935 when the bridge was being replaced. A barge large enough to carry cars was attached to a cable running across the water to the island, and was powered by his boat, the "Old New Hampshire", tied alongside. This arrangement was in

effect for about six weeks while the bridge was being worked on. The most recent replacement bridge opened in 1989.

Prior to the building of the bridge, there was a trumpet hanging on a tree on the Neck side, and when it was blown, and a Mr. Tuttle, who had the ferry at that spot, would row across and fetch whoever was waiting. It is said that the foundation of his house still shows on the easterly end of the beach. Many islanders took their own boats and did their trading in Melvin Village or Lakeport rather than in Moultonboro.

Long Island also had a school house and a post office. The school was on the south side of the hill on the left. The Post Office was in the Long Island Inn, opening in 1878. Postmasters were George F. Brown, Otis D. Folsom, Lillie L. Brown, George K. Brown, Sarah F. Brown, and Harry E. Brown, and Mary E. Blake. It was discontinued in 1917.

The town beach was once part of the Samuel G. Wentworth property, later owned by Alfred G. Wentworth, who rented the property to the Blake's for the use of the summer boarders at the hotel. It was sold to Henry M. Bartlett in 1909, and in 1928 it was sold to Alice Glover, daughter of Levi Blake. She and her sister Edith ran a girl's camp there for a few years, (possibly known as Camp Pukwana). They were descendants of the Lamprey, Boody, and Wentworth families, and owned most all the north end of the island. They sold the beach lot to Mrs. Mary Earle McCain, who fixed up the old Wentworth place.

The beach was commonly used by the public for swimming and picnicking, and Mrs. McCain's daughter Elizabeth did not care for the beer bottles and fire spots on the beach, so she put up a barbed wire fence. When people complained, thinking that it belonged to the town since it was so close to the road, the selectmen, Charles Banfield, Ernest Berry, and Horace Richardson, removed the barbed wire and the NoTrespassing signs, and put up trash cans. Mrs. McCain pointed out that she had a warranty deed to the property. The state took the property by eminent domain in 1948, Miss McCain sold out the rest of her land, and the Wentworth farmhouse subsequently burned. When Stewart Lamprey was first elected to the legislature, his first bill was to pay the owners \$6800 for the land, and it was done.

#### Pot O' Beans Road (Long Island)

Also known as Downing Shores Road. The Beane family of the Wilkinson-Beane Funeral Home in Laconia bought a camp on this road back in the 1950s (approximate), and Mrs. Beane made a sign shaped like a bean pot and bearing the name "Pot O' Beans" so that she could direct visitors how to find her place.

I'm sure there is lots more that needs to be recorded concerning the history of Long Island, and anyone who has pictures or information about it is invited to contact the editors of the newsletter so that copies can be made for the files of the Historical Society.