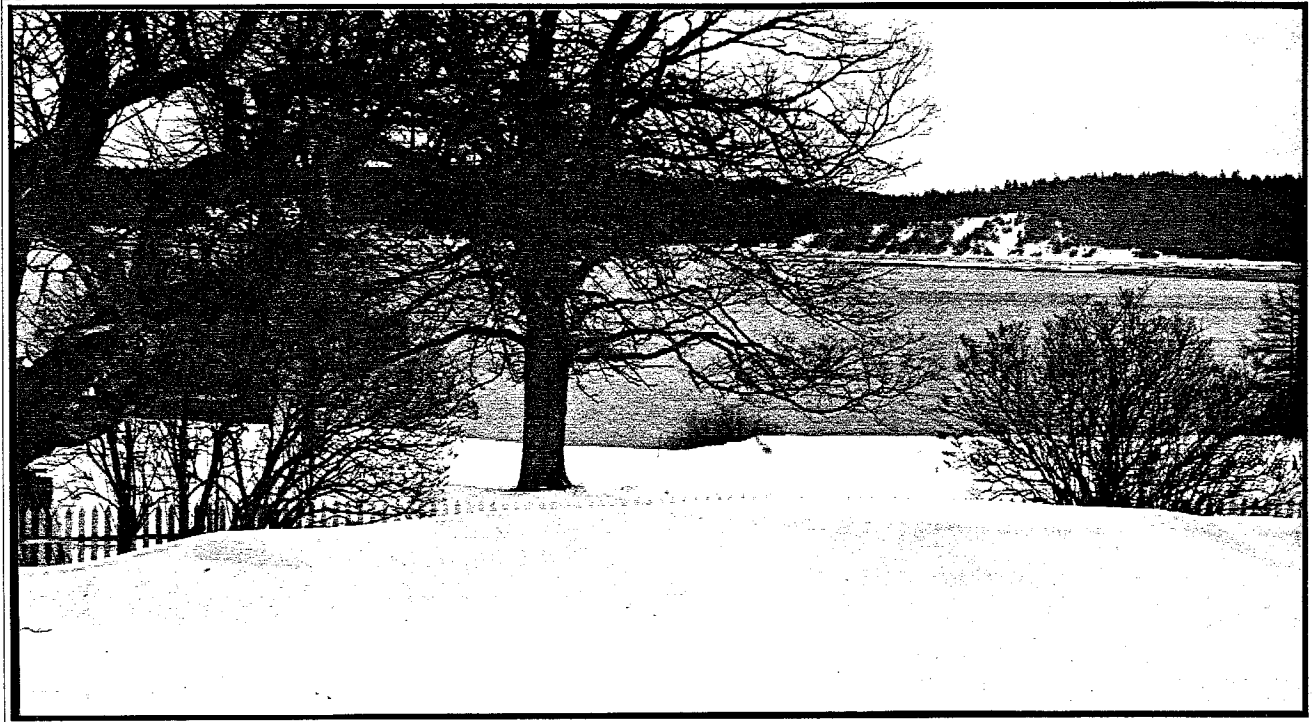


◆ The Thoroughfare ◆

Volume 1 Issue 2

The Roque Island Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 1993



Looking to North Beach after one of the many snow storms this Winter

◆ NATURE RESERVES

Squire's Point

Let us give some of the goodness back.

With the increase in demographic pressures and the rise of environmental consciousness, travel to nature reserves in order to study or merely admire the scenery and its flora and fauna is increasing. The benefits of nature tourism, as it is now called, can be considerable, but the adverse effects which inevitably accompany the positive ones need to be addressed by careful planning and effective management, according to a recent United Nations study (UNEP-IEP/PAC Technical Report, Series No.13, 1992).

Even though protected, such areas as Roque Island are not immune to deterioration from the surrounding population and overuse by tourists. A major problem, according to the U.N. study, is how to cope with the increasing number of visitors seeking recreation in natural environments. Scientists have even begun to study the impact of tourists on natural environments. In response to this very concern, the *Island Institute* is thinking of putting people on islands for the sole purpose of keeping others off. Carrying capacity estimates of the level of visitor use an area can sustain depend on many factors but in the end, the U.N. study concludes, they depend on managerial decisions and respect for the normal lifestyle and economic activity of the area.

Experts strongly believe that education is the main tool for managing visitors and influencing the behavior of local people.

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◆ **WORST WINTER IN TWENTY YEARS**

News from Roque

What a winter! According to all local reports, we've experienced the worst winter in twenty years! It was the first time that Shorey's Cove has been frozen to the mainland since about 1972. We were stuck on the Island for about two weeks without being able to move. The Coast Guard was ready to bring us provisions if necessary.

Just when it looked like Spring could be any day, we got the "big blizzard". Steve and I were the only ones on the Island. We had to snow shoe to Patten's Cove to check on the Peabody. The drifts were so high and wet that plowing was impossible. A cold arctic air moved in behind the blizzard and seemed to freeze everything. Water buckets were put on a plastic sled and dragged to the barn so the animals could have something to drink.

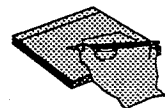
Someone got the bright idea that the tractor, being so heavy, could break up the snow so we could move it with the plow. **WRONG!** The snowdrifts had frozen solid and the tractor rode on top of them!

Well, the snow finally started melting and Mike Morse, our newest employee, spent most of his time cutting and hauling wood for next year. It was becoming quite warm and sunny and everything seemed to be moving again. Of course, with the all the melting, mud season becomes a new challenge! We had to start digging trenches everywhere, because water was running very fast, which was causing water to come into the basement of the farmhouse, Monks' house and a steady stream into the Gardner house!

The Steeple People are working on the Gardner house. The Red house is having a face lift by Joe Mawhinney. Estimates are being made daily for work in the Monk's house. I've started a bunch of seedlings for this

◆ **REPORT ON THE FIRST QUARTER**

Chairman's Notes



The Island has had a relatively quiet first quarter, as can be expected this time of year. Record snows in February and March (and some very cold temperatures) will mean a protracted "mud season." Despite the weather, work continues on the Gardner House, which will soon be buttoned up so that the Summer season can proceed in comfort for its visitors. Work on the exterior of the Red House is close to complete; rot was noticed in a number of places, making it fortunate that the project was attacked now. Rehabilitation will commence by the end of the month on Roque Bluffs dock - which suffered more than expected from the Winter storms - with a completion date of the end of July. The Island was also fortunate in locating and purchasing a used steel barge (with engine so that it can act as a landing craft on shore); the existing wooden barge will be sold.

The Trustees held a meeting on the 7th of February. Accounts for 1992 were reviewed, and an operating as well as a capital budget for 1993 were established. Further details will be presented at the Spring Meeting on April 25th in Portland. There was further discussion on the Tier System, with an agreement to "parallel" this year's operating budget, with full adoption for 1994's fiscal year, provided the concept is finally adopted later this year at the Annual Meeting. A preliminary report on the proposed Trustee Selection process was presented, and a number of questions and comments made, - work is continuing.

Overall, we have had a good reason to be pleased with the progress the Island is making. Staff morale is excellent, especially with the addition of Mike Morse and his handyman skills; his presence is obviating increasing calls we had been having for temporary labor. My heartfelt thanks is extended to Tanya Fischer for her continuing operational support. George Herrick is proceeding with a number of environmentally useful items (mostly funded "off balance sheet"), among them restoration of the old cemetery, a hydrological study of the Island sites, and a neotropical migrant bird study in cooperation with other islands and agencies in the area, and commencement of a forestry survey study which will be required for our tax status. On a final note, a new trail map, with contours and more accurate road locations based on aerial photography, is being prepared to replace the old supply which has been exhausted.

- John Higgins

year's garden, most of which have sprouted.

Everything has been progressing nicely, except all of sudden April Fool's Day brings in snow, sleet, freezing rain, hail, thunder and winds gusting from 25 to 35 miles per hour.

Well, that has been Winter on Roque Island, 1993. Let's just hope that the old-timers are right when they say, "a bad Winter makes for a great Summer!"

- Barbie Bubar



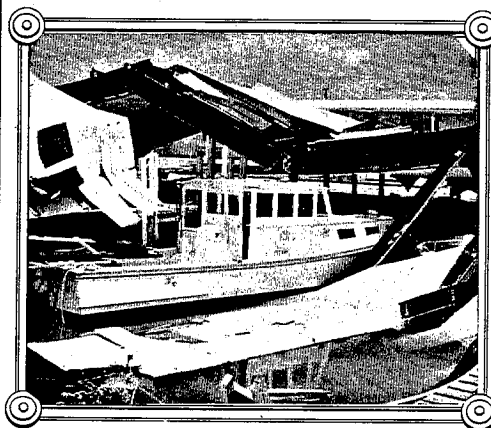
SQUIRE'S POINT, CONTINUED

It is a means to an end, for a nature reserve needs the support and goodwill of visitors and neighbors alike. Well-informed visitors and neighbors become allies in the cause of conservation. They should be acquainted with the purpose of the area and with the basic etiquette of reserve use as developed by nature tourism organizations.

While protecting, as we must against overuse by visitors, Roque Island has begun to receive visits by specialized naturalists in support of our conservation program. Perhaps, it is time to expand the effort to educate our neighbors - the people on the mainland, the people in Jonesport. Enlisting their understanding would help to win their support and foster shared responsibilities for the surrounding region. Let us give some of the goodness back.

◆ **WEATHERING A DIFFERENT STORM**

Flotsam

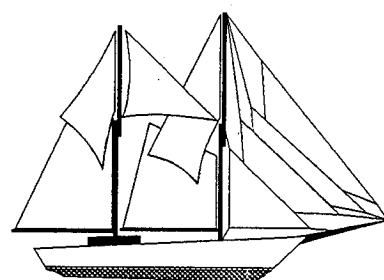


Posie Cutler Dana sent this picture, taken from an issue of Southern Boating, of the old Spruce and a letter to follow about what has happened to the Spruce and the Roque since they both left the Island.

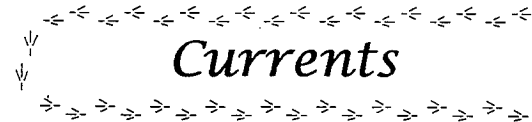
When we bought the Spruce from Roque we fixed her up and took her to the Bahamas where she was during Hurricane Andrew. She was in the water but under a large shed which collapsed on top of her during the Hurricane. Of the forty odd boats in Spanish Wells, Spruce was one of the only ones not sunk or demolished by the storm. She is now floating proudly on her mooring at Harbour Island.

We get so many people telling us how terrific it is to see a good ol' Maine lobster boat down there. As far as what has happened to Roque, we fixed her up - painted her black and she is now for sale in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. The New York Yacht Club has inquired about using her for a race committee boat in Newport this summer. So both boats have gone onto rather different second lives.

- Posie Dana



◆ **TRUSTEE SELECTION PROCESS**



During the course of the Newport Retreat last fall, two of the issues that elicited much concern and discussion were those of governance and communication. Both of these issues are integrally related: you cannot have one without the other. A recommendation to form a committee to examine the present method of trustee selection grew out of the meeting, and was approved at the General Membership meeting in December.

The present system of trustee selection was established in the by-laws adopted in 1973. The by-laws provide for 5 trustees to be elected by a plurality of voting members descended from Olga Monks and 5 to be elected by a plurality of members from the G. Peabody Gardner family. The selection of the slate of nominees is left to each group of trustees.

Since 1973, the family has grown, the family ties have become more diffuse and membership has diversified as another generational layer has been added. Choosing trustees now because of family representation no longer answers the needs at hand. Worse, the system has impeded good communication and has caused divisiveness. The membership should be better served. The following points are acting as criteria for us in our review of the present system of trustee selection and will be our guiding principles for making a recommendation for the future.

- We would like to improve communication between the membership and the Trustees

- We would like to have a group that runs smoothly and efficiently

- A group that keeps in mind the long range requirements of the Island

- A group that makes good use of the talents and abilities of the membership

- To this effect, it would be good to ensure renewal and change within the group

With these lofty goals in mind, the Committee on Trustee Selection (consisting of Sandy Monks-Bowers, Randy Goodhue, and myself) has been working on a proposal that would best ensure these results. We hope to have an interim report ready for the Spring meeting in late April.

- Nina Kearns

ROQUE INVOLVED WITH STATE WOODLOT CONSERVATION PROGRAM

We have recently gotten involved with Maine's Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) which is a program designed to help Maine's private, non-industrial woodlot owners to improve timber, wildlife, water quality, and recreation values on their property.

The first step in the Stewardship Incentive Program is to have a Landowner Forest Stewardship Plan (LFSP) prepared for the property. The LFSP is a written plan for the property based on management objectives. The report is prepared by a trained and approved resource professional and overseen by the Maine Forest Service. Our local consulting forester is Teresa Davis, who is a licensed Site Evaluator and forester from Otis, Maine.

The LFSP will address timber, soil, water, wildlife, and recreation aspects of the Island as they relate to our management objectives. Also included in the plan will be a project outline covering other SIP practises that can be applied for after the LFSP is completed.

The SIP was applied for by Mr. George Herrick through the Washington County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS). The application was approved on December 31, 1992 and gives us access to \$10,000 per year in monies for the approved practises outlined in the SIP. The LFSP request was for 1,319 acres, which they will cost share at a rate of 50% on an \$8 per acre cost: the cost is estimated at \$10,552. The Washington County ASCS will pay \$5,276 and RIGHC will pay the remaining half.

The LFSP, once completed, opens the door to approximately 30 other practises; some of which can benefit Roque Island substantially. Some of the most beneficial to us include: recreation area improvement, recreation trail and walkways, fencing, woodland direct seeding, woodland pruning, woodland improvement, threatened and endangered species planting, and habitat modification. The cost of these practises is shared with the Washington County ASCS; and most importantly, those that are most beneficial to the Island are practises that are 75% funded by the ASCS. The LFSP, while expensive at the onset, will be more than paid back with the ensuing practises. The \$10,000 annual grant is available to us for ten years.

I hope to have given you a rough idea of the Program. It is a government program, so it involves a lot of paperwork and very technical instructions for the practises. If you have any questions or suggestions feel free to contact me.

Another project that we are starting in the late Spring is to improve the hayfields. Last Fall, soil tests were taken on the Barn, Rye, Stump, Weir, and Bonney fields and sent to the University of Maine Analytical Lab. The Barn field was the only one to pass. The other four fields will need a combined total of 80 tons of lime and 4 1/2 tons of fertilizer to be applied over a three year period. In regard to this, the Washington County ASCS was contacted for a cost share program it offers called, "Permanent Vegetative Cover Improvement." The ASCS will cost share 50% of this project, but it is limited to no more than 2 tons of lime per acre and nothing for fertilizer. The total we can expect to be reimbursed for from the ASCS for improving the fields is \$600. The cost for lime and fertilizer for 1993 is \$3,642.98, deducting their grant it will be \$3,042.98.

This program will enable us to eliminate purchasing and handling hay from the mainland. It also gives us ample hay for years to come as long as there is maintenance of the fields. The annual cost is a no-cost by-product of the animals, spread on the fields with the manure spreader each Spring. Also, there is an aesthetic value to maintaining the health of the fields!

- Steve Cirone

**PLEASE SEND SUBMISSIONS FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF THE THOROUGHFARE TO
23 CLEVELAND STREET, HYDE PARK, MASSACHUSETTS 02136
BY JUNE 11TH - FOR QUESTIONS CALL ARI FISCHER @ 617.364.8332**



HOUSE RESERVATIONS FOR SUMMER 1993

The following dates represent all *unreserved* dates (cleaning days have already been allocated so these dates represent exact dates of vacancy).

Gardner House Monks House Red House

	Gardner House	Monks House	Red House
May	1st - 10th	1st - 23rd	1st - 25th
June	8th - 27th	Full	4th - 16th 22nd - 28th
July	Full	Full	12th - 16th
August	Full	Full	28th - 31st
Sept.	17th - 30th	Full	1st - 10th 21st - 30th
Oct.	Free	13th - 30th	Free

THOUGHTS ON THE ORIGIN OF ROQUE'S NAME

Several years ago, some friends from Paris visited me on Roque. They were interested in the Island's name; it naturally occurred to them as French, and they wondered if there was any particular tower or fortification in evidence which might have been built by earlier inhabitants. In modern French, "roque" is the noun derived from "roquer," meaning to castle one's king in chess;

the castle piece is "rook." While I was not aware of any towers, I became curious. Roque is an unusual name, and further the "fog that enshrouds (its) origin" was acknowledged by John Peabody Monks in the Appendix to his *History of Roque Island, Maine*, published 1956. JPM ultimately agreed with historian Samuel Eliot Morison that Roque most likely derived its name from "Isle aux Perroquets" (Island of Puffins). Samuel de Champlain, the 17th century French explorer, gave this name to Machias Seal Island on his 1607 map. However, the origins of Roque's name may have come from a simpler source.

The earliest spelling of Roque in its modern form can be found in Joseph Peabody's account books from the year 1815. In August, 1816, a schooner was built on the Island by John Shorey and was registered in Machias as "Roque". Also, a phonetically useful reference in the 1830 census which shows eight households living on "Rokes Island". It is highly unlikely that these spellings were made up. Yet this is in apparent contradiction to all previous major deed and survey references show Roque, among other unrelated names, variously as "Rouges" (Thomas Kelley to Francis Shaw, Jr. 9/18/1773), "Rogue's" (Commonwealth of Massachusetts to John Coffin Jones, et.al., 3/22/1788) to "Rogues" (Jonathan Stone 1785 survey of Township XXII; Fenno to Peabody 9/4/1815). What could have been inaccurate about these deed references?

The Treaty of Paris in 1763 ended the French and Indian War (effectively capping a long series of territorial conflicts between the French and the British begun in 1689 and known as King William's, Queen Anne's, and King George's Wars). At that point, a tide of English settlers was able to surge into eastern Maine. France had been humbled and forced to cede all of its North American holdings to Britain; the Indians - allied with the French and fiercely hostile to English intrusion - were exhausted; and demographic pressures from the Massachusetts Bay Colony sought virgin lumber stands (masts and planks for the Royal Navy), and new fishing and farming grounds. Due to a severe drought in western Maine, colonial settlers had come to Machias as early as 1761. All this new English dominance in the region was bound to have an impact on place names and spellings.

I agree with Morison's observation cited in JPM's book: "corrupted names almost never gain part of their corruption by changing a common letter for an uncommon one". Therefore, the "Q" in "Roque" is highly unlikely to have been corrupted from the commoner, "G" in "Rogues". Rather, the "Q" was probably always there, but was displaced by English scribes who had a hard time understanding such an uncommon letter out of context, and who simply wrote it as, "G", which indeed it resembles and moreover fits nicely into an intelligible and common English word. Even today, I routinely see billings from vendors to "Rogue Island".

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ETYMOLOGY OF ROQUE, CONTINUED

Champlain was the first to document passage along the eastern Maine coast where Roque is located; he made at least four voyages in 1604-5. In his 1607 map, there is a line of islands from Great Wass to Cross which he simply identifies as "les isles rangees" (ordered islands). Undoubtedly, Roque is among the many dots depicted, but even this is not certain as there is never any mention in his journals about features which correspond with Roque, such as a "great beach". In June of 1605, he describes as follows, "coasting along the inside of Manan, an island three leagues from the main land, we came to the Rangees on the seaward side, at one of which we anchored, where there was a large number of crows, of which our men captured a great many, as we called it the Isle aux Corneilles (old world crows)." There is a "Cap Corneilles" on his map, but geographically it seems to correspond more closely with the tip of Head Harbor Island than Roque (this was Morison's conclusion).

Champlain's voyages marked the start of French influence in this region, known as "Acadie". Acadia's capital was Port Royal (Annapolis, Nova Scotia), from which a mixture of settlers, trappers, and adventurers sailed forth in the 17th century. In 1613, Father Biard established a colony briefly at "Mont Deserts". While recorded expeditions in the middle part of the century east of Mount Desert have not yet surfaced, a lot of general commercial activity must have been eked out of this wilderness. In 1686, an account of Acadia prepared by French authorities in Port Royal names as many as twelve families on an island in the "Megesse" (Machias Bay), primarily known for fur traders with French surnames. French authorities from Quebec were encouraging feudal "seigneuries" (fiefdoms) as a basis for settling Acadia, thereby fortifying boundaries against the British: in this manner, Sieur de Cadillac was granted Mount Desert Island and six square miles of adjoining coast in 1688; Sieur de Castin established a

settlement at Pentagoet (Castine). British settlement at this time went only so far as the fort of Pemaquid, despite the fact that English expeditions and traders show up from time to time farther east.

In 1692, the French governor of Quebec ordered Sieur de Cadillac to make an expedition along the Maine-Acadian coast and report his findings. Among other observations, he describes encountering seal fisherman near the "roca" three leagues off the Majais (Machias) River. This "roca" was, of course, Machias Seal Island. To me, this reference is significant, not as much for its geographic placement (which is important) but for its use as a common root word. Indeed, other references in French accounts refer to "rocs" on their voyages. In the Oxford English Dictionary there is no "roca", but "roque" is described as a 17th century variant of "roc," which in turn is an obsolete form of "rock." "Rock," among other definitions, is described as a "large rugged mass of stone forming a cliff, crag, or natural prominence on land or in the sea." Further, it derives from the "Old French roke, roque, roque(feminine)."

It did not immediately occur to me as to what was so unusual about Roque Island that it could potentially have been associated with a mass of rocks to earlier visitors. To my modern eye, the beaches were far more significant. Then I discovered a photograph in a box at the Island. In 1854, the Great Head at Roque was entirely burned over, cause unknown. Some years later, this photograph of the Head was taken, making it suddenly clear to me how prominent a feature this great rock formation really was. The Head is approximately a mile long, eminently visible from water from both north and south, and at its highest point reaches 202 feet above sea level. There is no equivalent height for several miles in either direction on the coast. It was indeed possible to see where a 17th century voyager/trapper could have named it the equivalent of Rock Island, or at least refer to it as the principal star in a constellation of "rocks" ranging from Ballast to Pulpit to the Brothers to Halifax, Double Shot, Anguilla, and the Spruces.

To date I have come up empty with the 17th or 18th century map references to Roque's current spelling. The earliest known map of the Island, which we actually have in our possession, is a survey prepared by Daniel Merritt in July, 1769, but with no name identification. In 1770, a pre-revolutionary map names Roque as "Read" Island, probably after a member of the surveyor's party since there were no locally recorded inhabitants of that name. However, in 1776, the British Admiralty prepared its famous "Atlantic Neptune" series of maps: on one of them is a cluster showing Roque and the outer islands reasonably outlined. While Roque itself is labeled as "Great Island," Little Spruce is depicted as "Rough's Id." not far off the spelling of "Rogues" in the colonial deed references.

Another thought on the origin of Roque's name goes back to the word "rook," which is the equivalent of an old world crow or raven, typically nesting in trees rooted in rock forms well up from the water. "Rook," aside from chess implications, derives from Middle English "rok" and Old French "roc." Coincidentally, there is a "Raven's Cleft" on the westerly shore of Roque near Parker's Head; we also know of the crows encountered by Champlain.

JPM mentions several persons, and there are others, with "Roque" or quasi-"Roque" surnames as having some connection with Acadia in these early times. However, none are known to have actually ventured or settled close to this part of the coast. Also, per JPM, the original Indian name for Roque appears to have been "mehsepehik" ("at the land of a large body of water"), from which present day Moosabec Reach is probably derived. However, there is no apparent connection with the spelling of Roque.

For the moment, absent further historical input, I favor the Old French equivalent of Rock Island.

- John Higgins

