

◆ The Thoroughfare ◆

Volume II Issue II

The Roque Island Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 1994



*View of the dock from the Mansion House
[Spring 1993]*

ROQUE'S BIRD LIST

- New Additions -

Arctic 3-Toed
Blue Grosbeak
Brown Thrasher
Golden Plover
Green Heron
House Finch
Northern Cardinal
Pectoral Sandpiper
Pine Grosbeak
Red-Shouldered Hawk
Saw-Whet Owl
Sedge Wren Woodpecker
Sora Rail
White-Rumped Sandpiper



SPRING MEETING: PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGES

Chairman's Notes



Winter snows have finally given way to spring zephyrs. Barbie tells us the Island weathered the winter well, the houses are all in final stages of preparation, and the sign-ups for summer visits are well advanced. Improvements to the wharf area, the Patten Cove dock, as well as fencing and other farm-related items continue apace. The Spring Meeting in Portland on May 1 was successful and informative, as the Secretary's minutes which you should have received by now indicate.

A number of items were discussed. The Long Range Planning Committee intends to have a

final draft of a long range plan by the fall, incorporating a mission statement, a description of the Tier System, a delineation of land use with sub-sections on Tree Growth, flora and fauna ecology and conservation, archaeological, and a description of water resources.

The response to the Tier System was extremely positive. Sign-ups for this year included 64 of 67 possible members for Tier I (the base Tier), of which 41 are regular members, 17 are junior members, and 6 have opted to be non-user members. Within Tier II, 10 Gardner family members have elected to date to join the Homestead, and 12 Monks family members the Mansion House. Tier III (Farm and Natural Resources) has 14 members to date. Tiers II and III are reminded that they are now directly

Continued, Page 4

IN THIS ISSUE...

<i>A Quest for the Meaning</i>	3
<i>Chairman's Notes</i>	1
<i>Croquet Challenge</i>	6
<i>Hidden Homes on Roque</i>	6
<i>News From Roque</i>	2
<i>Notes from the Editor</i>	3
<i>Roque Reveries</i>	5
<i>Squire's Point</i>	2
<i>Tree Growth Status</i>	3

ROQUE REVERIES

by
Ellen Monks Higgins

1938 was the year I first visited Roque Island and the source of all my subsequent memories. All of my happy Roque experiences seem to have sprung from that magic summer; the more so because before 1938 I did not know Roque existed.

Imagine the wonder of getting on a night train in Boston and heading into a dark, unknown northern place: the rattling and clanging of the railroad cars, the smell and feel of dusty red velour berth curtains, the swaying of little string hammocks holding books and clothing, watching the night change into day, and the conductor calling, "Cherryfield," "Columbia Falls," and "Machias." And then, a hearty welcome from Sewall Smith, the caretaker, with an introduction to small-town Maine - with its Downeast accents, woodsmen jackets, and the smells. Somehow, the air, the forest, the sea, and even the sun were more pungent and bracing than what I was accustomed to; we felt energized before we even reached the Island.

I was used to my grandmother Monks' summer house on the Cape with its retinue of servants, all old friends of mine, and her warm welcoming hospitality. Roque was another facet of Grandma, with her very personal touches all through



Steve and Dave cutting ice this past winter

the house and the same, pervasive scent of cedar, sun, and salt air. To greet us were four round jolly Nova Scotian maids who had run the house for many summers - I remember them in starched white caps and bib aprons. They were very kind to us; once we discovered what the bell pulls in each bedroom did I am afraid we made their lives miserable. Now, I sit in the kitchen and smile at the decorative iron bells so high on the wall.

I have read in John L. Gardner's diary of the feasts eaten in the diningroom. My memory says that we followed the tradition, nightly rolling away from the table - we were so active during

the day that the aroma and taste of food in the evening was sublime. I can still taste, in my memory, the toasted almonds always served with the first course. Since the Glenwood wood stove was the only cooking source, I now marvel at the culinary delights that appeared day after day. The ice box was just that, with ice cut from the pond in the winter, washing was done in the cellar with scrub boards in the laundry sinks, and the irons were heated on the stove (nothing but linen was used on both the beds and the diningroom table). The maids cleaned the kerosene lamps in the morning; in the evening, the lamps were lined up on the sea chest to light the way to bed.

However, between trailing (I, usually unwilling), picnicking, fishing, helping in the barns, rowing, swimming, and walking, walking, and walking, we were so tired by nightfall that we collapsed under down comforters. I suspect that there was not an unlimited water supply because there were often balsam needles and sand in my bed, and my fingers were blue from berry picking. Limited bathing, what bliss!

I vividly remember one beach picnic with my grandmother when the maids arrived at the beach with the horse and wagon with a three-course meal which they served on a linen table cloth surrounded by hand-sawn stump stools and parasols.

Now I sit on the porch steps in the morning and very clearly see Duke driving his beloved horses, doing chores, and keeping tabs on all the animals. I see rows of codfish hanging to dry by the wharf, canoes upended in the grass, and always a boat or two coming or going in the harbor. Once in awhile, an Indian draws up in his canoe to sell us baskets. I often wonder what happened to our purchases. The only view in my memory that I do not want to see again is the meadow full of thistles, these were our enemies. I am glad that they have been vanquished!

The saddest day of that magical summer was the day we had to leave - but the balsam, rocks, and berry jam that we loaded on to the train were tangible reminders of our "Utopia," and we believed, even then, that we would always go back. ♦

1994 ROQUE ISLAND SCHEDULE

	HOMESTEAD	RED HOUSE	MANSION
MAY	13-26: George Herrick	27-31: John Higgins	27 -: Tanya Fischer
JUNE	30 -: George Herrick	6-13: Kate Gonzalez 15-22: David Cutler	--- 10: Tanya, cont. 20-30: Ellen M. Higgins
JULY	--- 20: George, cont.	2-9: Jason Herrick 11-18: Nina Herrick 20-27: Melinda Monks 29-: George Monks	14: Jennifer Donaldson 16-28: Alex Pertzoff 30 -: Nick Higgins
AUGUST	5-12: Eve Gardner 14-23: Rebecca Ames 25-: George Gardner	---3: George Monks 5-9: John Higgins 16-24: Chris Cutler 26-: R.C.S.Monks	--- 7: Nick, cont. 9-21: John Higgins 29-: Ann Barry
SEPTEMBER	---5: George, cont. 9-14: George Herrick 15-19: Tania Smith 20-24: George Herrick	---5: Bob, cont. 15-19: George Herrick 21-28: Melinda Monks	---5: Ann, cont. 7-17: Bill Monks 19-30: RAGM / EMHiggins
OCTOBER	6-11: Lyn Goodhue		

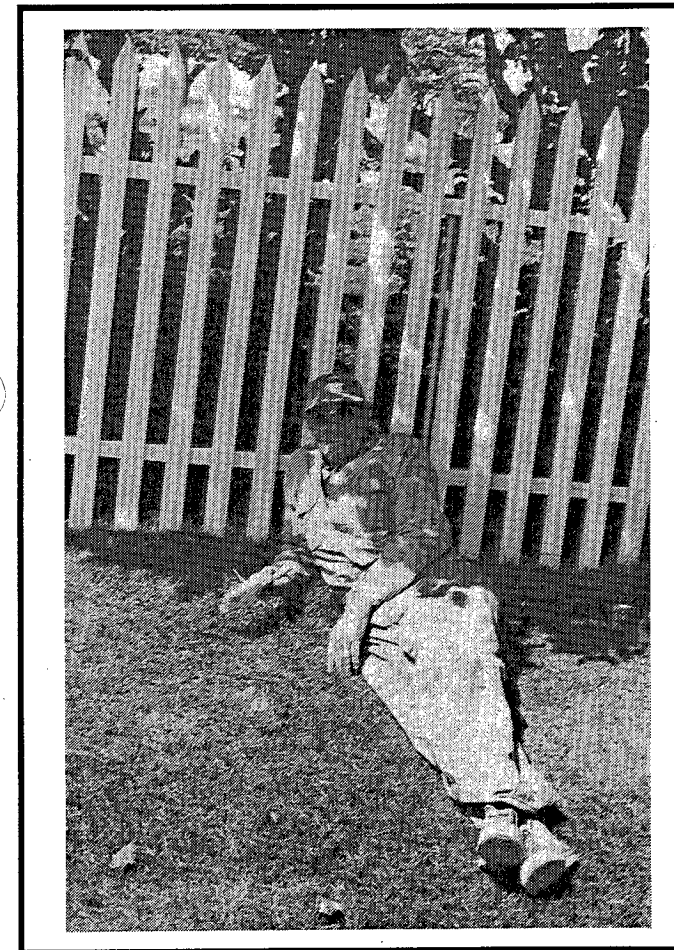
FREE DATES	May 28 - June 28 July 22 - August 3 September 26- October 4 After October 13	June 24 - June 30 September 7 - 13 After October 1	June 12-18 July 6-14 August 23-27 After October 1
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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Thank-you, all great contributors, for making this issue of *The Thoroughfare* a lot of fun. At long last, we are on the cusp of summer again and we have been blessed, yet one more time, for a chance to be at Roque! While you are there, keep in mind everything you experience - jot it down, draw it, embellish it, photograph it, but most of all remember it and share it with us.

SUMMER DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 2, 1994

Best, Ari



This spring the picket fence surrounding the Gardner House gardens was replaced; the painting was accomplished almost instantaneously with a paint sprayer. In the 1960s our boatman, Capt. Garfield Berry, a.k.a. "Cappy," was assigned the job of picket fence painting during idle times on the shore. This often proved to be a long-term, arduous, and exhausting task — as you can see above!

A Quest for the Meaning

In July 1542 Jean-Francois de la Roque, Sieur de Roberval, Vice-Roy of Canada and friend of King Francois I, set sail for the coast of Labrador. Just off the coast he marooned his kinswoman, Marguerite de la Roque, with her female companion on one of what was then known as the Isles of St. Martha which today bear the name of the Harrington Islands. The crew member to whose attentions she had proved receptive, so angering the Vice-Roy, leapt into the boat with some supplies and joined them as castaways. Her two companions and subsequently her child did not survive but she was rescued more than two years later and returned to France. Marguerite became the subject of plays, novels, and scholarly studies almost from the time of her return to civilization. The most recent work, *A Colony of One, The History of a Brave Woman* (1983) by Elizabeth Boyer, still available from the Veritie Press in Novelty, Ohio, gives a full historical account of the incident and teems with information on the origin of the Roque family.



The name derives from an early feudal practice of building a fort or castle on top of a natural rocky outcropping, or *roque*, to make the building more impregnable. Feudal lords took their names from their *roques*. One encounters this word as a place name in Gascony, Provence, Guyenne, and Languedoc.

One of the chroniclers supportive of the Vice-Roy's action attempted to name the island(s) after him (Roberval) but the name did not stick, although the legend may have survived along the coast.

The historian, Samuel Eliot Morison, mentions the incident in *The European Discovery of America, The Northern Voyages* (1971) but does not take it into account when, as he cited, advancing a quite different kind of etymology for Roque Island's name as late as 1964 with the publication of John Peabody Monk's *Roque Island, Maine, A History*.

Many other people carried the Roque name, of course. It is said that a Lieutenant de la Roque was a member of Samuel de Champlain's crew. One Jean de la Roque published a book in 1716 about "A Voyage to Arabia the Happy, By Way of the Eastern Coast" in 1708-1710. John Roque, topographer to the King of England and map maker, visited the eastern coast of America in 1761.

- G.G.Herrick



Squire's Point, Cont.

Lake Como, and once, when for the first time, I heard you sing." George Battiscombe's *English Picnics* (1949) and M.E.W. Hern's *Picnic* (1987, unpublished) provide a rich history of the picnic which serve to remind us of our own.

-G.G. Herrick

News from Roque, Cont.

foundation and allow plenty of time to reseed the lawn for next spring. A new picket fence was also erected to replace the old one.

The Red House received a new ceiling in the livingroom area. Mike repaired the glazing in all of the windows. He also made a new tabletop for the outdoor furniture set for those warm nights when you want to dine out.

The houses are now all open. The painting and wallpapering for the year have been completed. Nick Higgins was the first guest of the year in mid-April. George and Nanette Herrick have just arrived for a few weeks and things will start getting busier by the end of May.

An addition of fruit trees, berry bushes, and flowering shrubs will be found in the garden this year. The seedlings for the vegetable garden were started in March. Unfortunately, every time it looks as if Steve can start rototilling the garden, it rains. We're still sinking up to our ankles in mud.

Well, that the news from Roque - see you all soon!!

- Barbie Bubar

TREE GROWTH STATUS: REVIEW AND REPORT

After reviewing Roque's tree growth status and comparing it against the new amendments to the tree growth law, we have come to the conclusion to maintain our *current* tree growth status. In other words, we do not need to change anything. The operative words going forward are *plan* and *commercial*. We must have a commercial tree growth plan in place (just recently completed) and we must sell a portion of our lumber in a commercial transaction. However, in order to be considered commercial there is no required amount to sell, no formulas, nor any restrictions on whom to sell to. In a case such as this, what governs is the *process*. To the question, "do we have a plan and are we doing some cutting and selling?" - we can answer "Yes!" The good news is that the cutting we have performed in the last 10 years qualifies us to remain in the program. I do not anticipate much more work required by us in the future except to strike an arrangement with an outfit like Champion Paper, on our terms, to perform some selective cutting, at no cost to us (the mills are screaming for lumber).

- N.H.S.Higgins

Chairman's Notes, Cont.

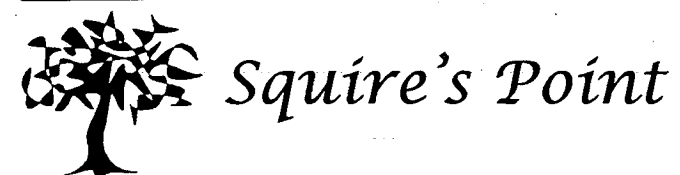
responsible for the oversight and fiscal planning of their areas, and should continue to coalesce themselves so that policies and operating decisions can be made.

The Trustees are currently considering an amendment to the By-Laws concerning the Trustee selection process. Among new features being considered are: an increase in the length of terms from 3 to 5 years; staggered terms such that 2 Trustees will be up for election each year; limitation on consecutive terms such that after serving a 5-year term, a candidate must remain off the board for 2 years before being reconsidered; the election of 8 candidates by the membership at large, plus 1 by each family directly as at present; constitution of a Nominating Committee comprised of two Trustees and two non-Trustees to seek out and encourage nominees (anyone can be on the ballot if he or she wishes) and supervise the election process. If this amendment is approved, it will be circulated to the membership sometime this summer for a vote by ballot, with results to be noted at the September Trustee Meeting. If adopted by the membership, Trustee elections would take place under the new system at the Annual Meeting later in the fall. The new Nominating Committee should be quite busy!

Overall, we look to a highly successful summer season. My warm thanks to Steve & Barbie for their dedication and constant attention to qualitative detail, as well as to Tanya for her generous purview of Island affairs.

John P. M. Higgins

CONSIDER THE PICNIC



Squire's Point

A quiet and rustic idyll snatched from the world's restlessness and disillusion? A touch of splendid folly in the Byronic manner? A longing to return to Paradise? Devotion to the spiritual vigor of a simpler life? A picnic is all of these and more.

Roque Island, of which Paradise is but a faint imitation, has a picnic legend all of its own. Do not the sun-bleached hampers of another generation have stories to tell? Bonney Point, Great Beach, Clam Cove, Double Shot echo the tribal memory and resound with remembered pleasure.

For historians of the picnic, a word that first appears in a French lexicon in 1694, there are a number of requirements that elevate it beyond a mere repast taken out of doors. The preparation can be spontaneous yet requires a lifetime of study and observation. The progression to the chosen site is light-hearted, even if it is arduous, and there is a ceremony to the journey and the arrival at the scene. An essential element of make believe attends the entire expedition. There must be a view, a prospect, remote and full of poetry. The prosaic necessities of fresh water, materials for a fire, freedom from insects, and shade intermingling with sunshine are understated but

cannot be overlooked. Mood, companions, and scene are everything as Sacheverell Sitwell insisted in his 1944 essay, "Picnics and Pavilions." The articles for the picnic's activities, be they fishing rods, binoculars, baseballs, or musical instruments, jostle gleefully with the hampers and thermoses in the boat or wagon moving toward the scene. It never hurts to pack too much equipment even though exploration, the prime activity, requires none.

There is allowance, indeed a demand, for individual style but there are clear rules for the picnic as Art. A picnic is a reenactment, an interpretation of all past picnics. An element of artifice or surprise heightens the illusion of the tableau; the prescriptions of ritual, protocol, and tradition are never far off stage. The freedom from restraint is counterpoint to the style of the life that will resume later in the day. The simplicity of the setting creates a demand and an opportunity for extending the art of food. As the composer and gourmet Rossini once said - when extolling the voice of an opera singer, "I have only cried twice in my life, once when I dropped a wing of truffled chicken into

Continued, Page 4

THROUGH WINTER, INTO SPRING

News from Roque

Hello everyone! Another summer is coming swiftly upon us. We have been rather busy this spring in preparation for the summer months to come.

Steve has had a very long lambing season with a total of 15 baby lambs (8 ewes and 7 rams). One of the rams got rather sickly and made a trip to the Brewer Veterinary Clinic where they administered penicillin, took his temperature and fell in love with him. One elderly woman there said she hadn't seen a baby lamb in 50 years and wanted to know if Steve would swap the lamb for her poodle. He stayed in the house with us for roughly a week and he adopted Steve as his surrogate "mother." The lambs have all recently discovered the outdoors and are frolicking and bouncing around like yo-yos.

On top of all the daily work and many other things he keeps up with, Steve has also been busy lining up the summer projects, what's going to be done and, of course, keeping within the budget. Mike has been kept occupied making minor repairs all over the Island, mostly in the houses. He will soon start repairing things around the barns and other out-buildings. Dave has been diligently working on the skiffs and wharf buildings and, of course, making several trips everyday for carpenters, painters, plumbers, etc. As for myself, I've been trying to keep up with all the carpenters, painters, etc. There seems to have been some work of one kind or another done in each house this spring that created major dust. It has taken many hours of cleaning to get everything up to par.

The chimneys and posts in the basement of the Monks' House were repointed causing cement dust to gather from basement to 3rd floor. A new electric heater was installed in the 1st floor bathroom that should make things nice and cozy in there for those foggy days when there's a slight chill on the floor. The kitchen sink that didn't drain well had a new vent installed and seems to work very well now. You may want to check out the new slip covers made for 3 pieces of furniture (they look nice!!).

The Gardner's House had 2 new ceilings put in on the 2nd floor causing dust to drift downstairs and up. The North wall was stripped and was replaced with new clapboards. Work on the barn ell will take place this fall which will give us time to do all the digging and drainage work around the

Continued, Page 4

HIDDEN HOMES ON ROQUE

A lot of the children (and a few grown-ups) who come to Roque Island during the summer have discovered a wonderful secret world. These are the Faerie Houses that can be seen *very low* lining the lane that winds across the Island. If you walk quickly, you will miss them - but, if you go slowly and look *very carefully*, you will see shiny paths of small stones and shells, arbors of thin twigs, even miniature fences - all leading to doorways carved into tree stumps and mounds of scented moss.



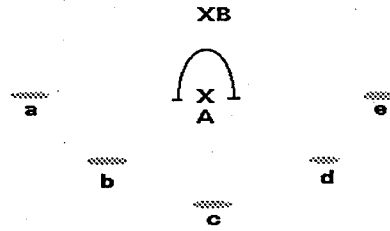
Last summer, after a careful study, I counted 22 of these very special small homes. I may even have discovered some of the secrets about the "little people" who live in them.

I have made lots of photographs and am writing a short book for all three of the houses so that next time you walk the main road you will know what to look for. Remember, not to bother the faeries who live inside.



- Nannette C. Herrick

Croquet Challenge



Practise split shots from -a- through -e- with player's ball ending at -A- and croqueted ball at -B-

LATE BREAKING NEWS:

Effective June 1, 1994, Steven ("Tex") Cirone has been hired as Roque Island's *Co-Manager, Operations* and Barbara ("Barbie") Bubar, *Co-Manager, Housing*. These promotions fill a void that we have experienced since the departure of Ken Rich, as manager, in the spring of 1990.

A.S. Fischer
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