Major John Mason’s
GREAT ISLAND

By James H. Allyn
Dodge’s Island
(Enders)

Map 4. Chippehuage or Great Island.
Major John Mason's
GREAT ISLAND
Major John Mason's
GREAT ISLAND

By James H. Allyn

ROY N. BOHLANDER  MYSTIC  CONNECTICUT
For

EMILY

My dearest friend and severest critic
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mystic River before the English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Capt. John Mason Comes to New England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Early Settlements in Connecticut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pequot Indian War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Inter-Colony Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>First Settlers in Mystic and Stonington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chippechaug or the Great Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mason in Stonington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Stonington — Connecticut or Massachusetts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Norwich and the Mohegan Indian Lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1651 to 1672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Town Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Early Roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Post Roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Second Mason Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Major Samuel Mason, 1644-1705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Capt. John Mason, Jr., 1646-1676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The Great Swamp Fight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Lieutenant Daniel Mason, 1652-1737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Growing Independence of the Colony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Local Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Life on the Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Civil Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The Third Mason Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Capt. John Mason III, 1673-1736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>More on the Mohegan Lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Final Solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The West Farm on the Mainland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Neck or East Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Andrew's Island</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before the Revolution

Money

Connecticut during the Revolution

The Walsworth Family on Masons Island

The Fourth Mason Generation

Andrew Mason, 1730-1812

The Fifth Mason Generation

Nehemiah Mason, Jr., 1754-1816

The Niles Family on Masons Island

Nathan Niles, Jr.

Nathaniel Niles

Elisha and Thomas Niles

Heirs of Nathan Niles, Jr.

War of 1812

The Hornet's Nest

Battle of Stonington

Taken in by a Yankee Trick

Mystic Privateers

The Women, God Bless 'em

The Sixth Mason Generation

Nehemiah Mason III, 1800-1864

Gen. Joseph Denison Mason, 1790-1833

Daniel Mason, 1792-1833, and Hannah

The Seventh Mason Generation

The Railroad Comes to Mystic

The Sawyer Family on the Niles Farm

Jeremiah Wilbur Wilcox

Pine Hill Quarry

Prohibition and the Volstead Act

John and Andrew, the Last of the Line

G.S. Allyn & Co.

Andrew Mason, 1830-1912

John Mason V, 1828-1917

The Last of the House

And After

Camping and Picnics

The Summer People

The Artists

Nauyaug Yacht Club
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

ILLUSTRATIONS

Page | Figure | Illustration
--- | --- | ---
5 | 1 | Fishers Island Sound
7 | 2 | Indian Fort in New England
16 | 3 | Masons Island Schoolhouse
38 | 4 | Mason House from South
38 | 5 | Mason House from Southwest
39 | 6 | Mason House, Front Door
39 | 7 | Parks House
51 | 8 | Woodcut of Mystic in 1836
57 | 9 | Pine Hill from Ridingway
57 | 10 | South from Ridingway
61 | 11 | Elizabeth Mason Colegrove
66 | 12 | Gurdon S. Allyn, Sr.
67 | 13 | G.S. Allyn & Co. Fish Works
70 | 14 | John Mason and Reuben Chapman
73 | 15 | Elizabeth Colegrove
74 | 16 | Catboat Nylla
75 | 17 | Andrew Mason
76 | 18 | Masons Island, West Side of Nauyaug
78 | 19 | Regatta Day, 1915
81 | 20 | Masons Island Ferry
82 | 21 | Laying Out Main Road
84 | 22 | Allyn Cabin in Chowder Forest
85 | 23 | Masons Island Air View West
86 | 24 | Masons Island Air View South
87 | 25 | Masons Island Looking South
88 | 26 | G.S. and Annie Allyn
89 | 27 | Author in France
90 | 28 | Old Yacht Club
91 | 29 | Yacht Club Menu
This is the story of a Stonington farm, its rise and fall through 263 years with seven generations of the Mason family. It follows the pattern of many New England farms, from the first settlement in 1654, through its high period of prosperity between 1760 and 1830, to its decline after the opening of the West. The last old Mason, suitably named John, died in 1917.

The family always clung to farming, and its fortunes rose and fell with the farm. They were never wealthy, as compared to the shipping and whaling families, but for three generations were "well off". They owned good farm land, for New England, and some built substantial farmhouses like several of their neighbors in the town. Never noted for religious orthodoxy, their strongest bonds were with the other old farm families.

Through the years, the Masons crossbred with other early settler families of English Yeoman stock. To the last, they were handsome, rugged men and women, with a dignity which marked the finest type of old Yankee. Even when the last two brothers were reduced to wearing the "hand-me-downs" of more prosperous times as they peddled their beef and lamb around town in a hand cart, it was always "Mr. Mason", never the condescending "John" or "Andrew".

The story of a farm cannot stand apart from the broader political and economic developments of the town, the colony, and the nation. Since the Mason family left no available letters, diaries, or accounts, I have gotten the bulk of my material from the deeds, wills, and inventories in the Town of Stonington Records, which go back to the first settlement of the town. I am indebted to Frances M. Caulkins History of New London from 1612 to 1860, published in 1895, which contains large excerpts from old state records. The History of Stonington, published by Judge Richard A. Wheeler in 1900, contains a wealth of carefully researched information. His daughter Grace Denison Wheeler in her Homes of Our Ancestors published in 1903, tells many old tales of the past. Since the printed word is often taken as gospel truth, I have taken great pains to check my facts. Word of mouth stories I have noted as such, even when printed, since I have found them the least reliable of sources. There are no distracting footnotes, references or addenda, but the facts are all from reputable sources.

The Genealogy Table of the Mason family includes only those members who were directly connected with the Stonington farm. The numbering system was taken from Richard A. Wheeler, since it has been used in other Mason articles. The maps I believe are self explanatory. Old place names are the original as far as I can determine. The aerial survey maps from the Stonington Assessor's Office have been invaluable, and I put twenty-five of them together to make a map about seven by twelve feet, from which these maps are reduced. The old boundary walls, farm tracks and marsh limits I have
tracked down on foot. Ancient stone bridges or abutments on the maps still exist.

Family name spelling changes with the usage of the family. Willcocks becomes Wilcox. Minor becomes Miner. The local river was spelled Mistick from the beginning. Only in the romantic period was it changed to Mystic. Where names were spelled in error, I have used the accepted spelling. For example, Worthington was once spelled Whortleton, after the common huckleberry "whortleberry". Punctuation follows the original. I have often been asked which is the "correct" spelling for the name of the Island, Masons or Mason's. The Mason family and legal papers until recent times spelled it Masons. Those who set store by rules of grammar have inserted the apostrophe.

Other sources include History of the Indians of Connecticut published by John W. DeForest in 1851, the Encyclopedia Britannica and various standard American histories. I have enjoyed recording the stories of Miss Elizabeth Colegrove who died in 1940, the last occupant of the Mason House, several teachers at the Masons Island School, mentioned later, and Alexander Murray, Jr. who is the last of the original "summer people".

Since putting this story together, I have gained a great respect for good professional writers. To paraphrase an old saying, "You can't come in off the street and write a book".

MYSTIC RIVER BEFORE THE ENGLISH

The Nehantick Indians appear to have been the original tribe around Mystic. Some time before 1600, the Mohegans, a branch of the Algonquin Nation, came down from east of present-day Albany to the New London County area. Their center was in Montville west of the Thames River, where their descendents live today. A group of hot-heads under their own war-like chief split off and formed the Pequot Tribe. They divided the Nehanticks, driving the eastern branch to the Pawcatuck River area, and the western branch to the Niantic River. All the small tribes from the Connecticut River east to Weekapaug Creek in Rhode Island were soon subjugated and made part of the Pequot territory. Only the large Narragansett Tribe to the east remained independent, and they were continually attacked.

Aside from possible landings in Rhode Island by the Norsemen six hundred years before, the first known explorer along this coast was Capt. Adrian Block. In a forty-four foot boat built on the Hudson, he sailed down the Sound and on to Cape Cod in the summer of 1614, carefully mapping the coast. Swinging into the Mystic River, he saw the bare rolling hills around Noank on his left, and the partly wooded Masons Island on his right. The Pequot Indians, living in their summer huts on the shores, were engaged in their usual clamming and fishing. Sounding the lead and following the winding channel, Block sighted to the north the high ledges on the west shore, called Gibraltar by later seafarers. Past the high wooded hill on the northwest of Masons Island, since cut down, were two small islands, now washed away and the area dredged for a boat turning basin. The larger island, a shoal in the late 1800's, was called the "Tickler" from scraping the centerboards of small craft.
Dead ahead lay extensive salt marshes running back to the high hill on the mainland. A long sand bar ran down from the north, later the location of Willow Street. Northwesterly on the west bank of the narrowing river rose another massive granite ledge, later called St. Jago's after a landfall in the Azores. North of that, a small creek made up where Pearl Street now runs. Between the creek and the main channel, a gravel spit came down from the north, ending near the west end of the present highway bridge.

Capt. Block, finding the tidal waters of the channel still carrying good depth, continued up river and swung east above Shipyard Point to avoid a long gravel bar coming straight out from the west shore. Even 250 years later, there was good water to Old Mystic, where the steamer Summer Girl made its runs. Dropping anchor for the night below the small Pequot fort atop the hill on the west side, Block and some of his men went ashore and made the acquaintance of Siccanemous, the Pequot Sachem. Later, drawing up a map of the river, Block named the river after him. However, the Indian name "Mistick" continued to be used, as a 1637 letter by Roger Williams shows.

From early settlers we learn that the hills around the river and parts of Masons Island were burned over each year to encourage the growth of huckleberries, first called whortleberries and then huckleberries. A part of the "Great Plain" was burned over two years ago, killing the trees and brush. It is now thick with huckleberry bushes. Dried berries were a staple of the Indian diet. After the Mason family settled on the Island, their sheep and cattle continued to keep down the brush and trees. There are probably many more trees on Masons Island today than there have been for several hundred years.

The Indians left few traces on the Island. Some arrowheads and a stone ax have been found. At the north end of the present pond was a spring which still feeds it. Before the road was built there, I uncovered a sizable shell heap and found a black wampum bead and the bowl fragment of an English clay pipe. Mrs. Minnie Wilson Lorello, one-time resident of the Island, recalls an Indian burying ground south of Wolf Ledge, as well as one at the south end of Coconke Point on the mainland. A grave was excavated there in 1912, but nothing was found but bones.

CAPT. JOHN MASON COMES TO NEW ENGLAND

"The land of Canaan will I Give unto Thee, though but few and Strangers in It."

So Major John Mason, Deputy Governor of the Connecticut Colony, concluded the story of his life in the New World. Like the other English Puritans of his time, he was brought up with the Old Testament, and thus they saw the new lands across the sea.

Mason was born in 1600, probably in Norwich, England. Elizabeth still had three years on the throne. The excitement of the Spanish Armada, the adventures of Sir Walter Raleigh before he went to the Tower, the rising political power of the Non-Conformists, all marked a feverish and often bloody year. As a young soldier, Mason served in the Low
Countries against the Spanish, along with Myles Standish, Lion Gardiner and others who later made names for themselves in New England.

He came to Dorchester in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1632 with a commission of Lieutenant, and was appointed by Gov. John Winthrop a captain in command of the militia to run down the British pirates who were plauging ships out of Boston. The Indians were not yet much of a problem. For the rest of his life he was sought after to help find new settlements and advise in the establishment of local governments. A man of high principles and strong character, he was noted for his hot temper, but could counsel moderation when the need arose. At the time of his death in 1672, he was honored and revered by a large body of his new countrymen, still English, but already showing the special characteristics of Americans.

**Early Settlements in Connecticut.** As early as 1636, a group of colonists in Dorchester were chafing under the heavy-handed restrictions on civil government by the established church. Now it was the Congregational Church instead of the Church of England. Church control had simply moved over to the colonies under a different organization. Inspired by the Rev. Thomas Hooker, they finally persuaded the colonial government to let them move to the Connecticut River. A settlement was begun at Windsor, and with other church leaders, at Hartford and Wethersfield. A governing body separate from Massachusetts was set up, called the General Court, to which representatives were elected. A governor was also elected, but his was largely an administrative position, and gave him no direct say in the making of laws. This separation of legislative and executive powers continued down to the present century.

The Colony was hardly settled before it established its “Fundamental Orders”, giving rise later to the term “Constitution State”. Breaking all precedent, it required no religious test for citizenship. Taxes still supported the church however. By 1659, there were getting to be too many voters who were not property owners, so the Colony required an estate of £ 30 for a man to be a voter. Those with less than that amount of property were required to pay a Poll Tax. Only paupers and imbeciles were exempted, and there were usually more of the latter.

A trading post at Nameaug was started at about this time, and then organized as a town called Pequot in 1646 by John Winthrop the Younger from Massachusetts. In 1658 the name was changed to New London, and the river was named the Thames. “Namas” was the Indian name for fish, and “aug”, “eag” or “og” meant place. In 1631, Winthrop had received a grant of Fishers Island (Fig. 1) from Massachusetts and built a house there.

Also in 1631, the Crown gave a Patent for lands at the mouth of the Connecticut River to Viscount Saye and Sele, Lord Brooke and others. Partly on account of threats from the Pequots, and the Dutch farther up the river, there was only a trading post located there for several years.

**Pequot Indian War.** From the start, all trading posts and settlements were threatened by the Pequot Indians. In 1633, two English traders, anchored in their boat off Block Island for the night, were killed by some Indians they had aboard. Three years later, the Pequots attacked Wethersfield, killing many people and burning houses. As they
came down the river in their large dugout canoes, they shouted at the people at Windsor and waved the bloody clothing of their victims. So in 1637, the Connecticut General Court, in cooperation with Massachusetts, commissioned Capt. Mason to lead an expeditionary force to clean out the Pequots at their stronghold in Groton. Forty-two men were enlisted at Hartford, thirty at Windsor and eighteen at Wethersfield. The Mohegan sachem, Uncas, who had been driven to the Hartford area by the Pequots, and was eager to reclaim his lands, joined up with about sixty of his men.

In their small flotilla, they sailed down the Connecticut to Saybrook. There they were joined by Capt. Underhill from Massachusetts with nineteen men. Mason sent twenty of his men back up the river to protect the settlements. More Massachusetts men were expected, but they didn't appear until about a month later at Groton, when the fighting was over. Mason headed down the Sound to the Narragansett country in Rhode Island, hoping to pick up some more recruits. On the way past Groton Long Point, the boats were spotted by the Pequots, who shouted and jeered, thinking the Connecticut River settlers were pulling back to Dorchester. Landing near Wickford, Mason persuaded Canonicus to furnish about 200 men. The sachem did this with great misgivings, as the Pequots were considered invincible. Uncas warned Mason that he could not depend on the Narragansetts, in spite of their colorful boasting. This proved to be the case, as many dropped out before reaching the Mistick River.

Mason and his troops started back along the Indian trail, but after crossing the ford at Pawcatuck, swung northwest to Taugwonk Hill above the head of the river to avoid detection by the Pequots. In the dusk, they went down the west side of the river and camped for the night at "Porters Rocks" between the high ledges. They could hear the Pequots still celebrating in their fort at the top of the hill just north of where the John Mason monument stands on Pequot Avenue. By this time, both the Mohegans and Narragansetts were getting cold feet. After a fight talk by Mason, Uncas swore eternal allegiance in return for Mason's, a vow which was kept by the descendents of both for over one hundred years.

At dawn the attack was made. The fort (See facsimile, figure 2) stood in an open field, and was made of tree trunks set on end in a circle with an opening on either side, blocked with brush about waist high. Surprise was complete, as no watch had been set, and the Pequots were asleep in their huts. At the first shot, there was a cry of "Owanux, Owanux" meaning Englishmen, which was their word for fox. The English burst in through both entrances. Meeting no resistance as yet, they set fire to the huts to drive the Pequots into the open. Mason was nearly shot with an arrow, but the swing of one of his men's sword cut the Indian's bow string. A slaughter followed. The forty or so who escaped outside were killed by the Mohegans and the outer circle of Narragansetts. Two English were killed and about twenty wounded.

As Mason and his men made their way to the Thames River through the woods, there were skirmishes with the rest of the Pequots who came out of their main fort on Fort Hill in Groton. Completely disorganized by the turn of events, most of the Pequot warriors fled west across the Connecticut River within the next few days, and were
defeated in a battle at the other end of the state. The survivors sought refuge with the Mohawks. Others from Groton fled east beyond the Pawcatuck, and northeast to Taugwonk and Cossatuck (Cowassatuck) Hill; “Cowas” meaning pine tree. About eighty women and children were later taken prisoner in a “swamp” as a thicket of woods was then called.

Several generations later, G.H. Hollister described the killing of women and children at a large fortified village of about twenty acres at Mystic. In the 1800’s, plowing in the field on the site turned up bits of charcoal indicating a circular wooden stockade of about one and one-half acres. Judge Wheeler doubts that there were noncombatants in either fort, as the Indians lived in the plains near their fields as a rule. It appears from contemporary records that the fort at Mystic was an outpost facing the Narragansetts and the Eastern Nehanticks.

Large numbers of Pequots remained in the area, especially at Noank (Naiwayonk), where they were centered for several years. Thirty years later they were moved to reservations in Ledyard and North Stonington, where their descendents live today. Some
stayed in Stonington, where they later worked for the settlers. The last Pequot of full blood died about 1847. With the invention of the early phonograph, a recording was made of an old woman's speech. I don't know what happened to it. A Pequot descendent, Clarence Sebastian, told me that when he was a boy in the late 1800's, he remembered some of the men on the reservation saying "Let's have a fight". They would go to their canoes hidden on the east bank of the Thames and paddle across to attack the Mohegans in Montville. No one was ever killed. I have an old Pequot tomahawk. The knob is the root of a sapling, inset with a broken piece of iron pot.

_Inter-Colony Organization._ As news of the defeat of the Pequot fighting force spread throughout the colonies, there was great relief and rejoicing. The late arrival of Massachusetts soldiers for the attack, the unreliability of Indian allies and the lack of any central organization, lead in 1643 to the formation of a confederation of the Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven Colonies. Mason, with the rank of major, was put in command of a combined military force. After the Pequot defeat, he returned home to Windsor, and became a member of the Governor's Council. Here his first three children by Anne Peck were born, Priscilla, Samuel, and John, Jr. (Fig. 32, Nos. 3, 4, and 5).

Before 1647, the Proprietors of Saybrook engaged Lion Gardiner, newly arrived near the end of the English Civil War, to start a permanent settlement at the mouth of the Connecticut. Gardiner persuaded his old acquaintance, Mason, to join him. There Mason built a new house and made his home for several more years, and there his son Daniel (Fig. 32, No. 8) was born in 1652. A letter of 1648 acknowledges his receipt of apple trees from England. From then on, an orchard was a feature of every farm. Apple trees flourished in New England, and cider surpassed in popularity the beer of Old England.

In 1650, the General Court, in recognition of their services, gave Mason 500 acres and his officers 500 acres of land in the Lyme area. The naming of the village Flanders, and the areas by the same name in both Groton and Stonington soon after probably indicates that some of the new settlers had fought in the Low Countries with Mason, and were commemorating their victories there.

**FIRST SETTLEMENTS IN MYSTIC AND STONINGTON**

William Chesebough, in 1649, was the first settler in the town of Stonington (Map 2). Coming from Rehoboth, Massachusetts with a grant from that colony, he built a house at the head of Wequetequock Cove. The Connecticut colony, claiming jurisdiction, called him to account, but he refused to move. In 1650, Thomas Stanton built a trading post on the west bank of the Pawcatuck River, and got from Connecticut an exclusive three year license to trade with the West Indies, although the colony at that time only claimed four miles east of the Thames. Capt. George Denison then moved in with a Massachusetts grant.
Chippechauge or the Great Island. On September 11, 1651, the General Court in Hartford, in recognition of his victory over the Pequots, gave Mason "the Island commonly called Chippechauge, in Mistick Bay—also 100 acres of upland and ten acres of meadow where he shall make choice". In November, the Town of Pequot, to confirm its claim to the whole area, also granted the land to Mason and gave him an additional one hundred acres, and the adjoining small islands. These included Andrew's Island, with both parts connected through the marsh. The south part, from an error by a map maker in later years, is now mis-labeled Dodge's Island. The other island, now called Enders, was first called Willcocks, then Dodge's from Capt. John Dodge of Block Island in 1756, then Baker's and then Keeland's.

The Mason Grant, then, was bounded on the west by Pequot-sepos (later Williams) Cove. The east bound was Wilcox Cove up to the head of tidal water, and thence in a line due north. The north bound was a line running due east from the head of Pequot-sepos
Cove toward the head of Quiambaug Cove. In addition, Mason was given the Sixteen Pole Way (264 feet wide) which ran across the north of his grant, and northeasterly to join the Pequot Trail just west of the new Meeting House at a spot called “Black Moar’s Head” from the rounded stone top of a small knoll. To the north of the Sixteen Pole Way lay the Denison land.

The present Mistuxet Avenue was laid out many years later across the Denison land. The original Sixteen Pole Way can be traced by old stone walls in the woods south of the present Junior High School. When it was narrowed in the next generation to Four Poles (66 feet) the new bound was also marked by a stone wall along part of the length.

*Mason in Stonington.* According to Wheeler’s *History* Mason moved to his new grant about 1654 and built a house on the east side of Pequot-sepos Cove near its headwaters, where it is still navigable. The exact spot is uncertain, but the location on the
map is likely. Here his last child Elizabeth (Fig. 32, No. 9) was born. I cannot confirm this, but if so, she would be one of the first, if not the first, white child born in the town.

Other Grants. Also in 1651, the Town of Pequot made grants in the east side of Groton beyond its previous four mile bound, and in Stonington. Choice land lay near the salt water, both for ease of transportation and for the salt hay in the marshes. Islands, needing no fencing, were especially desirable. Even Abigail's Island, called Ashowugcummocke, “a little island upland full of bushes” was sought after. In 1651 it went to Minor, in 1653 to Blinman, and finally in 1655 to Mason as part of his original grant. It is now much smaller in size.

John Winthrop, Jr. the founder of Pequot (New London) granted himself, in addition to Fishers Island which he already owned, Ram-Goat Island and Gates Island which was probably about two acres at that time. I remember the old house on Ram Island, which Winthrop undoubtedly built for a tenant, perhaps named Bradford, the name of the island for many years. The old house was later incorporated into an annex of the Mystic Island House. Winthrop also got land in the east part of Stonington and twenty poles (330 feet) on either side of the Mistick River from “the head of the river to Lantern Hill”.

In 1652, Capt. Denison was granted 200 acres between Mason and the Mistick River. This was in addition to the Homestead land which he was granted by Massachusetts in 1650. He built his first house in 1654. The present house was built in 1717.

Capt. John Gallup was granted 200 acres on the river above Denison. Thomas Minor soon got the land between Mason and Quiambaug Cove. This was later shared with the Wilcoxes.

On the west side of the river in 1652 were Packer, Burrows, ffish, Morgan, Starke, Beebe, Parks and Winthrop again. The Beebe brothers “removed to their farms in Mistick in 1654” at Beebe’s Cove on the Noank Road. By 1655 John ffish and Aaron Starke signed themselves as “of Mistick”. Thus 1654 seems a firm date for the settlement of Mystic.

STONINGTON – CONNECTICUT OR MASSACHUSETTS?

The Connecticut Colony and Town of Pequot grants of 1651 in the Stonington area were immediately challenged by Massachusetts. That colony claimed the land for its part in the Pequot War. It would give them a corridor to the Sound between Connecticut and the Providence Plantations. Meetings were held for several years by commissioners of both colonies in the Meeting House at Black Moar’s Head. Finally in 1658 a committee appointed by the Commissioners of the United Colonies decided to divide the disputed territory between the two colonies, with the Mistick River as the boundary. The area in dispute ran at the time from four miles east of the Thames River to Weekapaug in Rhode Island. Massachusetts immediately established a town called Southerton, and named
Capt. Denison magistrate and Walter Palmer constable. This division was challenged by Mason and the other Connecticut grantees.

Part of the boundary between the two colonies may be said to have existed for a time near the present Mistuxet Avenue, as Denison’s Massachusetts grant was on the north side, and Mason’s grant from Connecticut was on the south.

In 1660, Charles II was restored to the throne. In the same year, to replace Governor Haynes, Winthrop, Junr., with his powerful connections in the parent colony of Massachusetts Bay, was chosen governor of Connecticut over the older and more experienced deputy governor, Major Mason. Winthrop soon left for London, and returned in 1662 with the famous Connecticut Charter. Its most important features were the unusual provisions for home rule. There was no provision for royal or parliamentary control over legislation or justice. Of more local concern was the establishment of the Pawcatuck River as the eastern boundary. To the astonishment of the New Haven Colony, the western boundary was the Pacific Ocean. They in turn protested, but when the Duke of York got a charter for New York, with its eastern boundary at the Connecticut River, New Haven decided they would be better off with Connecticut, even though a lot of the new charter provisions were hard to take. New Haven was a strict theocracy, its only laws being the “Laws of Moses”. They did not even allow trial by jury. To make its inclusion more acceptable, Connecticut agreed in 1701 to let New Haven be a co-capital, with the Legislature sitting alternate years there and in Hartford. This arrangement, awkward as it was, continued until 1875. The old Roman “temple” capitol on the New Haven Green was then torn down.

The Charter of 1662 had called the eastern boundary of Connecticut the “Narragansett River”. All agreed that the Pawcatuck River was intended. Massachusetts gracefully withdrew its claims, and allowed Rhode Island to have up to the east side of the river. Less gracefully, Capt. Denison continued to function as Magistrate under his Massachusetts appointment. In 1664, the General Court pardoned all offenders against its authority by an “Act of Oblivion”, “Captain Denison only excepted”.

In October 1665 the name of the town was changed to Mistick, and in the following year to Stonington, after objection by the people on the Groton side of the river, who quite rightly said they had prior use of the name. The new town included the present towns of Stonington and North Stonington. Captain Denison continued to “plague the authorities” and was pardoned only in 1676 after his gallant work in the King Philip’s War. Succeeding Denisons never felt ashamed of his stand. Now we make a cult of our spirited founding fathers, but few will stand up for what they think is right, at the risk of being unpopular.

NORWICH AND THE MOHEGAN INDIAN LANDS

For some time, Mason had been looking over the Norwich area. With the extensive arable fields of its present border towns, two swift rivers for mills, and deep tide water of
the Thames running miles up into the farming country, it was an ideal location for a new settlement. In 1659, with the Rev. James Fitch and other men from Saybrook, Mason petitioned the General Court for permission to settle there. Not waiting for formal approval, he purchased nine square miles from Uncas and the Mohegans, who had taken nominal possession of the lands the Pequots had previously taken over. Approval was granted in 1662, but by that time Mason and the others had already begun their settlement. At the same time, Mason was granted 500 acres northwest of Norwich in Lebanon and Colchester. He was also named “Protector of the Mohegans”, and from them got title to their remaining lands to be held in trust, as he was familiar with the English laws.

Winthrop, newly back from London, declared that the deed was obtained by Mason as Agent for the Colony, and was intended to extinguish the Mohegan title. This might have seemed more believable if part of the land had been left to the Tribe. In any case, it was a highly popular political move, as new settlers were moving in from all sides.

The Winthrop faction had not counted on the obstinacy of Mason and his family, nor of the old oath of allegiance made between Mason and Uncas before the Pequot fight. Mason started frustrated attempts to legally establish Mohegan property rights. In a new deed dated 1665 which is recorded in the Stonington Land Records, “Unkos, Owanoco and Attwanhood, Sachems of the Monoag, give and grant to Major Mason and his heirs” their tribal lands to be held in trust for them. In a further attempt to nail down the title, Mason in 1671 deeded a lesser but specific area back to Oweneco, as more extensive areas had already been grabbed off. Far from settling anything, the dispute raged on. The next year, amid lawsuits and what we now call character assassination by the settlers with dubious titles, Mason died. He is buried in the old Burying Ground in Norwich.

1651 TO 1672

In the short twenty-one years from the time the first Connecticut grants were made in Stonington, the town was no longer a “howling wilderness”. There was not much more than a generation from the end of the Medieval period, and many of the types of houses and customs still held on. Small thatched houses with dirt floors, like the ones reproduced at Plymouth, dotted the shores of the sound and the coves. They were soon replaced by more substantial one and one-half story houses with wood shingled roofs and sides. Some of the newer ones had an A roof, but many more were built with a gambrel. An old saw mill and shingle mill run by water power has been reconstructed in Ledyard, and is operated for demonstrations during the summer when the pond is full.

The Sound must have been a busy place even then, with the Indian dugout canoes and the many tubby sailboats sailing from farms to markets and shipping points such as Pawcatuck and New London. The settlers, too, used dugout canoes for many years. There were no regular shipyards as yet, but there is mention of boats being framed up on farms, then taken down and put together and finished on the shore. Early in the next century,
The Royal Limb, a famous canoe, was made from the limb of a tree so large that a barrel of molasses could easily be rolled from one end to the other. The butt of the tree from which the limb was taken was forty-eight feet in circumference. The heart rotted out in its old age, leaving an opening on its south side where a score of sheep could take shelter.

The location of family burying grounds indicates the importance of water transport. The Mason Burying Ground is located just north of the present U.S. 1 on the east side of Pequot-sepos Cove. The Denison Ground is just south of the highway on the west shore. Gallup’s is west of White Hall on the east bank of the Mystic River. Minor’s is south of U.S. 1 on the west side of Quiambug Cove.

Farms were hardly started before trade began with the West Indies, especially with Barbados and Surinam. The larger farm owners like the Masons owned their own decked sloops. Unlike today, farmers were equally at home on land or sea. Horses were the first export, for use on sugar plantations. Molasses, sugar and rum were brought back to Stonington. In 1660, the branding and registration of horses became law. “Horse-coursing”, the local name for horse stealing, was common. The Narragansett pacer, an especially good breed of riding horse not more than fourteen hands high, was developed and exported, even to England, up to the time of the Revolution. There were no heavy work horses, oxen being used.

Colonial and town governments quickly passed all kinds of laws governing a variety of activities. In the English tradition, trees for beautification were an early concern. In 1651, the Town of Pequot voted to protect trees along highways, Town Common Land and within 10 Poles (65 feet) inside a man’s fence. Even on other private property, there was a fine for unauthorized cutting of a tree, especially a pine, which was marked “S” by the Town. This last was likely done to save timber for spars and framing. Today, some people yearn for the good old days when a man could do what he wanted to with his own property. In fact, it was just the opposite. There were more laws governing personal actions then than there are now. Some of the “Blue Laws” are still on the books, although seldom enforced. However, the planting of street trees continued well into this century. Today people carry on about cutting down old trees. If only their energies were expended in planting new ones.

Town Development. Stonington was almost unique among New England towns in not starting from a town center where everyone had a house lot. The Meeting House was built in the center of town on the old Pequot Trail, but people built houses on their farms near the shore. It was not until 1666 that they got around to laying out town lots and the Town Common. In 1668, the forty-three heads of families drew for twelve acre lots. Five hundred acres were reserved for the church, which used the Meeting House for services. There was really little separation between civil and church government. The town lands extended generally west of the Meeting House toward the Mystic River. Among the first buildings after the Meeting House was Lieut. Daniel Collins tavern. There was no Puritan law against drinking on the Sabbath. After that there were a few variety stores, but the Meeting House as the town center never took hold. The roads were terrible, and Long
Point (the Borough) soon became the port and commercial center. Town lands in the area were eventually granted for farms.

Taxes on property were established from the beginning. The rates were set on all tangible property, not just land and buildings. It included livestock, furniture, and later, notes and shares of stock and ships. In effect, it was a rough kind of income tax, a concept that Connecticut is now one of the last states to recognize. Taxes were to pay the minister, selectmen, constables, militia, road upkeep, and later, schooling. It was often paid in kind. In 1664, the Colony taxed the town £ 20, to be paid 2/3 in wheat @ four shillings a bushel and 1/3 in peas @ three shillings eight pence a bushel.

By 1671, the rough old Meeting House, twenty years old, was declared too small and beyond repair. It was very crude to begin with, and was not used in winter. It took two years to decide where to build a new one. One group wanted it at the same location, another farther east. After many hot meetings, and a final turnout of the whole population to look at the two sites which were only about a mile apart, they decided on the original site. It was named Agreement Hill, and the new house was built. The Masons and other town leaders got front locations and had box pews or “slips”, a nautical term. The rest sat on rough benches. Each family built its own slip or bench. The tradition of owning your own pew continued up to the present day.

This building lasted until 1829 when the present Road Church was built. The basement was paid for by the Town for its own use, the frame part of the building by the church “Society”. The name Agreement Hill had turned out to be a little premature. The Long Point and Pawcatuck people withdrew from the South Society and formed the East Society. They built a large Meeting House with two galleries on the optional site. Having made their point at considerable expense, they abandoned the church after thirty years and rejoined the West Society. By that time, the people at Long Point were ready to build their own church.

**EDUCATION**

From the start, education was a primary concern. All parents were required by law to educate their children. Every township with thirty or more families had to hire a teacher, paid by parents of children, not by a town tax. By 1766, this had developed into school districts, each of which handled its own financing. As time went on, state grants and town taxes were applied to schools. Private tutors and private schools provided higher education.

Here in Stonington, by 1676, a public school system was being established. The town by then was an important Port of Entry, and had a good income from excise taxes. The five Selectmen were authorized to draw from the Collectors of Excise the sum of £ 42 in notes from the tax on “spirits, liquor, tea, etc”. This money was distributed to the two School Committees in the North and South Parishes or “Societies”, now North Stonington and Stonington. By 1853, the Town assumed a regular collection of school
taxes from rates amounting to one mill. The increased number of School Districts still spent the money and hired the teachers.

In 1792 when the Mason House was built on the Island, a large second floor room was designated as the School Room. After 1806, it was used as the weaving room. In that year the Fourth School District was organized and a schoolhouse was built to take care of the growing number of children, mostly Mason, Niles and Parks. This was followed by a new “modern” school (Fig. 3) in 1863 on a piece of land granted for that purpose by the Mason family, located just east of the north-south division wall on the north side of the present School House Road. Some rough-hewn timbers from the old school were used in the roof framing. The foundation remains, but in 1968 the building itself was re-erected in the Smithsonian Institution, where one wall was left off to provide a clear view of the interior. The front of the building can only be seen from a storage room behind.

Figure 3. Masons Island Schoolhouse, 1915, now in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

It wasn’t until 1909 that a state law provided for town run schools, and about 1921 before most of the old districts were finally given up. The Masons Island School was last used in 1927, and there was still a Parks in attendance. Phebe Denison (Wilcox), mother of Mrs. Samuel Lamb, Sr., taught there in 1884. In 1902, the New London Evening Day carried an account of the graduation exercises. Bessie Ayers, the teacher, played several violin selections. The Rev. O.D. Sherman gave the principal address. Students taking part in the program were Ella and Bessie Rogers; Floyd, Mary, Archie and Bertha Chapman; Eva, Inez and Ruby Mitchell and Cora Smith. That fall the new teacher was Phoebe Stinson, sister of Jesse B. Stinson. Later came Julia Wilcox (Rathbun) in 1906, who taught through 1908. Later still were Eva Edwards and Aldeane Clark (Chapman). Ellen Boggemus started her teaching career there in 1911 after graduating from Broadway School at the age of 17. They all lived “ashore”, except in very bad weather when the old causeway at the Ridingway was flooded, and it was too icy or stormy for a boat.
The caretaker for many years was Reuben Chapman, who lived on the Island. He started the fire in the cast iron stove on winter mornings, brought in a pail of water to put next to the tin drinking dipper, checked the paper in the outhouse, and in the case of Eva Edwards who lived on the Groton side of the river, rowed across to the public landing at Shipyard Point at West Mystic to pick her up. When the river was frozen over, but not thick enough to walk on, she walked through the village and down across the causeway.

They spoke of the “School Visitor”, as the head of the school committee was termed. The last old John Mason, himself a fill-in teacher, would come in unannounced and sit quietly in the back of the room. He would leave after a couple of hours with never a word spoken. The last teacher was Georgia Fulton, who lived in her own house at the north end of the Island. She was well educated and had studied art abroad. When the school finally closed, she shook the dust of Yankee-land from her feet and returned to her native state. But she had become a Yankee herself after all, and soon returned to spend her last years on the Island and in Ledyard. An excellent portrait of her by Herbert Morton Stoops, a well-known Island artist and illustrator, hangs in the Mystic-Noank Library.

**EARLY ROADS**

For many years, the only “public” road in town was the Pequot Trail, which ran from Head of Mistick to the ford at Pawcatuck. In 1650, the town of New London decreed that landowners put in two days a year on road maintenance, with an ox team if available. The forfeit for not working when requested was 2/6 for a man, 6/0 for an ox team and cart. Considering the small population in Stonington for the next several years, it doesn’t sound as if much road work were done. No attempt was made to fill low land, cut hills or build bridges. A rough stone culvert was the heaviest construction. John Mason’s Sixteen Pole Way could have been no more than a horse track through the swamps and woods.

After Mystic was settled in 1654, there was soon a demand for a regular ferry service across the river. In 1660, the General Court licensed Goodman Burrows to operate a ferry at the “Narrows” where Elm Grove Cemetery is now located. Burrows’ place on the Groton side was called the “Half Way House”. It was later moved down to the village, where it still stands at 9 Grove Avenue. The path leading east from the ferry landing may be traced up through the woods, but it was abandoned after several years when the ferry moved down to the village growing up on the west shore. There the ferry ran from the center of the village at Packer’s Landing in front of the old Packer Homestead, still standing, across to Pistol Point. From there, a track ran up across the marshes, to later become Willow Street. It took its name from a huge willow tree which stood by John Denison’s house at the forks where a cart path ran down to the Denison Burying Ground (now Denison Avenue). From the intersection it climbed a zigzag track up over Slaughterhouse Hill to meet Mason’s Sixteen Pole Way at the head of Pequot-sepos Cove.
In 1669, at the insistence of the colonial government, the Pequot Trail was laid out as a town road four rods (66 feet) wide. Some of the farmers across whose land it passed wouldn’t recognize it, and put up fences and planted crops in its path. At best, it was a horse track, rocky and muddy a lot of the time, and practically impassable in winter. Thirty years later, the new County Courts were authorized to lay out roads once again. The road running east from the Pistol Point Ferry to the Meeting House became a County Road. Included in the stretch was the Sixteen Pole Way, narrowed to four poles along its south side. This Act singled out Stonington as being the worst offender in the State for neglecting its main roads! Still it was left to the towns to bear the whole cost. The Colony insisted that Stonington at least keep the way cleared of brush for a width of one rod (16½ feet).

It wasn’t until 1752, eighty years later, that the first Town Road, apart from the County Road and Pequot Trail, was actually surveyed and laid out. This ran between the port at Long Point and the bordering town of Preston in the north. It was supposed to cross from Pine Point to Quanaduck Meadow as the most direct route to the Meeting House, and western parts of the town, but in the meantime people used North Road. Finally about 1762 a Town Meeting authorized the bridge, but no money was appropriated. In the years before the Revolution, Stonington became one of the wealthiest towns in the County, but people in the north part of town refused to vote for building the bridge. At long last in 1784, the Legislature sitting in New Haven authorized a lottery of $300 to build it. The tickets went on sale for paper currency, but even before they were all sold, the money was practically valueless. The bridge was not built.

*Post Roads.* Under the United States Articles of Confederation at the end of the Revolution, a postal system was set up. Carrying of mail was let out to private contractors. Stonington still refused to improve its roads, claiming that the mail contractors should pay the cost. Finally, in 1795, the new State of Connecticut passed a bill forcing the towns to set up a road tax on ratable property and the poll. The Selectmen could choose the routes, but they had to be accepted at Town Meeting. This was too much for the North Parish. They couldn’t see paying for roads in the “rich” part of town. In 1808, after two previous tries, they seceded. They first wanted to name their new town “Jefferson”, but the church people objected. To name the town after a radical and atheist! So the town was called North Stonington. The people of North Groton ran into less controversy. They later named their town after the hero of Fort Griswold, Col. William Ledyard.

The people in the north part of Stonington itself then took up the battle against paying for the new Post Road. It was supposed to swing down through the unofficial town center, Stonington Borough, in 1808 the first such political subdivision in Connecticut. After a fight of several years, the County Sheriff opened the Pine Point Bridge, on what stayed a town road. In the end a private toll road company built the new Post Road from Head of River (Old Mystic) to North Stonington Village and on to Hopkinton, Rhode Island, where it connected with the road to Newport Ferry.

Also in 1808, the “County Road” from Packer’s Ferry at Pistol Point to the
“Mistic Meeting House” was getting a lot of use, but the old right-of-way along the Sixteen Pole section was impracticable for wheeled vehicles. The Selectmen were authorized “to view, lay and ascertain” a better route and make it forty feet wide. The order stated that the old route was laid out by the County Court Jury sometime before 1770. Actually, it had been laid out in 1699. The new description said it started south and west of Catherine Haley’s house at the ferry landing. In a little house nearby, the famous Tom Paine stayed when he was brought to Mystic in 1802 by Catherine’s son, Capt. Nathan Haley.

From the landing the road crossed a small bridge in the marsh and ran up Willow Street to another bridge over the stream, which ran from west of the present Broadway School to Holmes Cove. Here it met the “new” Point Road (now Broadway) and then passed the Denison house and continued up over Slaughterhouse Hill. This was a steep, zigzag climb, but there was no easier way over the long north-south hill. Continuing down to the head of Pequot-sepos Cove, it swung northeasterly away from the old “Mason Highway” and crossed the Denison land. A southerly bend around a swamp was straightened out in 1819 to form the present Mistuxet Avenue. The Denisons continued to own the land between the old and new roads, about seven acres, which was finally sold by Oliver Denison, Sr. to the widow of James Dean Fish in 1867. This tract was bought back by Oliver Denison, Jr. in 1931, who in turn deeded part of it to Oliver Denison III in 1950.

An amusing story is told by Bianca Ryley Bradbury, sister of Dr. Roger Ryley, about an incident at the Willow Street bridge. Their great-grandfather, Capt. Ryley, was home after a long sea voyage, and his wife insisted that he go to church and take their small son. Coming to the bridge, Capt. Ryley deliberately pushed the boy into the brook. Wet and muddy, there was no going to church, so home they went. While the Captain stood impassively by, Mrs. Ryley berated the child for being so careless. It wasn’t until sometime later that the truth came out.

In 1819 a private company was formed and a toll bridge was built across the Mystic River at the present location in the new center of town. In 1854, the bridge was sold to the towns of Groton and Stonington. Each town paid $4,000, and $2,000 was raised by public subscription. For the next thirty years or so it was still necessary to cross a bridge on West Main Street over the creek that ran up where Pearl Street was later built.

In 1826, the road to Head of Mystic on the east side was laid out, the present Greenmanville Avenue. It ran along its present location to meet the road from Head of Mystic to Stonington Borough, now called Jerry Brown Road.

The road and bridge across Pequot-sepos Cove was not built until about 1867, when they had to move several old Denisons to provide the right-of-way. Even then the road did not cross Quiambaug Cove, but ran up its west side through the Miner Farm.

By 1840, the town was laid out into Highway Districts which followed more or less the bounds of the School Districts. A tax list of that date for the Masons Island Fourth District lists twenty-three property owners. Besides Daniel Mason’s heirs, there were Thomas Avery, Ambrose Burrows, Oliver Denison, Isaiah Green, three Miners, two Niles,
two Parkses in Groton, three Sawyers and eight Wilcoxes. The total taxes that year came to $26. Only the Sawyers and Wilcoxes seem to have paid.

**THE SECOND MASON GENERATION**

When Major John Mason drew his Will in 1670, two years before his death, he left his property, mostly in New London County, to his four girls and three boys. No longer, as in the old country, did the oldest boy get everything. One of the first acts in the Fundamental Orders in 1639 was to outlaw primogeniture. Mason, in addition to his original grants, had gotten land in the north part of town, and in Lebanon and Colchester. In parcelling out his Stonington land, the Great Island was divided in half, as was the mainland grant (Map 3). This latter division, although very irregular, was carefully drawn to give each of two sons an equal share of marsh, meadow and upland.

Priscilla (Fig. 32, No. 3) aged twenty-nine was already married to the Rev. James Fitch, who had settled Norwich with her father. She was his second wife. She was left land in the North Parish of Stonington.

Samuel (Fig. 32, No. 4) aged twenty-six was living on the farm in Lebanon. To him went the east half of the Great Island, the “West Farm” on the mainland, and land on Quaquatauge.

John Jr. (Fig. 32, No. 5) aged twenty-four was left the west half of the Island, and land in Norwich and the North Parish of New London (now Montville).

The next two girls, Rachel (Fig. 32, No. 6) and Anne (Fig. 32, No. 7) aged twenty-two and twenty, were left land in the Lebanon area.

Daniel (Fig. 32, No. 8) aged eighteen was left the East or “Neck Farm”, land south of the Meeting House, Andrew’s Island and Enders Island.

Elizabeth (Fig. 32, No. 9) aged sixteen, who was to marry Major James Fitch, Jr., son of the Rev. James Fitch by his first wife, was left other land in the North Parish.

Major Samuel Mason, 1644-1705. About 1665, when he reached the age of twenty-one, Samuel (Fig. 32, No. 4) built his own house on Quaquatauge. By 1669 it was occupied by John Reynolds, but no trace of the house now remains. Apparently Samuel had gone back to Massachusetts to find a wife, for in 1670 he married Judith Smith of Hingham. They returned to his new inheritance to be on the West Farm and built a small rough house just south of the Sixteen Pole Way, east of the present Hewitt Road. If his father’s house nearer the Cove were still standing, it was probably let out to a tenant. No trace of Samuel’s house remains. The foundation stones were probably built into a later wall. None of the houses of that time were very substantial. Even the chimneys were often built of wood and plastered on the inside.

In addition to raising livestock like his neighbors, he quickly became active politically. Between 1674 and 1689 he was one of the five Selectmen. From 1678 to 1682 he was one of the four Representatives at the General Court in Hartford. In 1680 he sat on the County Court, and in 1683 on the new Town Court. On top of all this, he was
Governor's Assistant from 1683 to 1687. By 1692 he was a captain in the Militia, and at the time of his death in 1705, at 61, a major.

The greatest problems for the early livestock raisers were lack of help, and the small areas of cleared fields for growing hay for feed during the winter. They could make a good living, but there was no way to make much money at it. Samuel was fortunate in having on his farm a large open field called by the Indians "Koontoquahoods". In Indian names "hood" was a fairly common last syllable, but I do not know the meaning. During his lifetime he began ditching the marshes to the southeast. Aerial photographs show the tremendous number of ditches. Some of these permanently drained the fields and have now disappeared. Others in the salt marshes have since become blocked or covered. Other extensive ditches were dug in the salt marsh at the end of the point, called "Coconke" next to the Great Island. Samuel only had one son who survived, and he died in his 20's, so there wasn't much farm help in his family. There are references to having Indians do this work, and it is hard to see how it could have been done without them. Since the Masons seem to have originated in the "Fen Country" near Norwich, England, they were familiar with ditching.

Samuel's first surviving daughter Sarah (Fig. 32, No. 14) was to marry her first cousin Joseph Fitch, son of her Aunt Priscilla. Another daughter Anne (Fig. 32, No. 16) married her first cousin John Mason III (Fig. 32, No. 18). In 1693 his wife died and he married Elizabeth Peck of Rehoboth of his mother's family. They had two daughters, Elizabeth and Hannah (Fig. 32, Nos. 16 and 17).

Shortly before his death at the age of sixty-one, Samuel seems to have built a new "mansion", that is, a two story house at the head of the present Masons Island Road. The house burned about twenty-five years ago. Only the cut stone retaining wall around the dooryard remains. He left the whole mainland farm to his two young girls, Hannah and Elizabeth, with the widow having the usual Thirds or Right of Dower. This referred to the lifetime use and income of one-third of the house and property. To his daughter Anne, recently married, he left his half of the Great Island. Presumably Samuel and his brother Daniel had been using the Island for grazing.

The interfamily marriages for the first five generations point up the very small social group to which the Masons belonged. Strict class distinctions continued strong for a long time. After the clergy, usually the only educated class in Stonington, were Yeoman and Husbandman for landowners. Goodman might be a small landowner, but more likely someone having a trade, although a man could be both. After that came such classifications as "tanner", "distiller", "mariner", etc. About half the inhabitants in 1700 were probably landowners with more than a small house lot. The Masons were not "Gentlemen", but more often Yeomen or Husbandmen. They did not marry out of their class.

Capt. John Mason, Jr., 1646-1676. John, Jr. (Fig. 32, No. 5) was living in Norwich when his father died. He married Abigail Fitch, another daughter of the Rev. James Fitch. Never a farmer, it was noted in 1672 when he was twenty-six, that he was "often at sea", perhaps making runs to the West Indies with his brothers' livestock and produce.
The Great Swamp Fight. Since the Pequot War of 1637, the Wampanoag Indians under their old sachem Massasoit, a friend of Roger Williams, and their neighbors the Narragansetts, had lived peacefully with the English. But in 1675 their new sachem “King Philip” succeeded his father. He realized only too well that the white settlers, unless eliminated, would gradually take over all Indian land. Forming a league of the Indian tribes in southern New England, including six from Massachusetts, five from Connecticut and two from Plymouth, he declared a war of extermination. Even the loyalty to the Masons of the Mohegans under old Uncas and his son Oweneco, was in doubt. Panic hit Stonington, Groton, New London and Norwich. It was decided that young Capt. John Mason, judged the best qualified and bearing the famous name, should be recalled from the sea and put in command of the local forces under Major Treat. In the excitement, six houses in New London were “fortified”. Young Capt. Denison built a “fort” next to his house at Stonington where the present Homestead stands, as a base for Stonington troops.

Seventy men were drafted from New London, forty from Stonington, and a share from the other settlements. The Indians first attacked Swansea, Massachusetts, burning the houses and killing several people. They next attacked Deerfield and practically wiped it out, killing a great many indiscriminately. Other settlements in Rhode Island were attacked. Capt. Mason moved his wife and two babies up to the family farm in Lebanon. Brother Daniel sent his wife and children from Stonington back home to Roxbury. In a cold and snowy December, the colonial forces surrounded about 3,500 Narragansetts and Wampanoags in the Great Swamp, in the southern part of Rhode Island, for a fight to the finish. Four English captains were killed and five mortally wounded, including Capt. Mason. One thousand Indians were killed and several dozen English. The Indians suffered a total defeat, ending for all time the threat to the southern New England colonies.

Mason died the next year from his wounds, at the age of 30. Before his death, he gave his half of the Great Island to his only son John III (Fig. 32, No. 18) who was three years old at the time. Included was a “Way or Free Passage” across the mainland up to the Sixteen Pole Way. The boy was also given his father’s farm in Lebanon, where he was living with his mother and baby sister. The mother had the lifetime Right of Dower. The baby sister Anne (Fig. 32, No. 19), when she reached sixteen, married Capt. John Denison of Saybrook.

Lieutenant Daniel Mason, 1652-1737. Daniel (Fig. 32, No. 8) was living in Lebanon when his father died in 1672. The next year, at the age of 21, he joined the newly formed troop of New London Dragoons, the first cavalry unit in the colony. First Quartermaster, then Lieutenant, he became Captain in 1701.

In 1674 he married Margaret Denison of Roxbury, where many of the Denisons were still living. Like his brother Samuel, he moved to his land in Stonington on the Neck Farm and built a small house south of the Sixteen Pole Way. This was probably located on the level place on the hillside east of brother Samuel. Here his first son Daniel, Jr. (Fig. 32, No. 20) was born in 1674. With the outbreak of the war in 1676, his wife went
home to Roxbury where her second child Hezekiah (Fig. 32, No. 21) was born. She died soon after, and the children remained with their grandparents.

Daniel moved back up to Norwich. There he started the first school and taught for the next two years. In 1679 he married Rebecca Hobart of Hingham, daughter of the Rev. Peter Hobart, and returned to Stonington to live. He seemed to have maintained his residence in the town, for in 1678 he was elected Representative and held the office for the next seven years. In 1691 he was also elected Selectman. The party system seems to have started to develop, for in 1686 all five Selectmen were voted out of office. He went back on the Board again in 1703 for two more terms.

After several years of working the farm, he too built his “mansion” nearer the Sound. The cellar hole may be found just south of U.S. 1 on the hilltop east of the V.F.W. building. From the looks of the foundation it was probably two large rooms on each floor. There was a later addition on the north rear side. Mrs. Samuel Lamb remembers it described as a “salt-box” house, that is, two stories in front and a “lean-to” addition in back. From the length of the rear wing, however, it may have been one story with an A roof.

Like his brother on the West Farm, Daniel too did a tremendous amount of ditching to drain the marshes. The largest area is south of the house, running out to a wooded point called the “Hammock”. The southern part of this farm, except for the end of the neck called Latimer Point, now belongs to Nature Conservancy. The other ditched marsh area runs up the west side of Wilcox Cove which is fed by streams from the Great Swamp. This swamp, too low and rough to ditch, takes in the whole middle part of Daniel’s land. When we think of all the hay of these meadows cut by hand, and hauled by small ox carts, the amount of labor involved is impressive.

Six more children were born to Daniel and his new wife between 1680 and 1693, including Peter, Samuel, and Nehemiah (Fig. 32, Nos. 22, 25, and 28).

Samuel is the first recorded member of the family to be buried in the Mason Burying Ground on the east side of Pequot-sepos Cove. Although a captain, Lieutenant is engraved on his stone, the rank he was always known by, to distinguish from his brothers Major Samuel and Captain John. The burying ground was laid out in 1721, so there may be more before him.

GROWING INDEPENDENCE OF THE COLONY

The last years of Charles II’s reign with the wars in Ireland, followed by those of his brother James II and the “Bloody Assizes”, left the home government with little time to be concerned with what was going on in the colonies. Both politically and in trade, they were laying a strong base for independence. By 1687, James realized that things were getting out of hand. He appointed Sir Edmund Andros the Administrator for New England. That winter Andros came to Hartford to demand return of the Charter of 1662. Both sides sat down one night at a table with the Charter between them. Suddenly the
candles were blown out. When they were relit, the Charter had disappeared. The famous Charter Oak became its hiding place. Two years later the “Glorious Revolution” took place, and William and Mary as joint sovereigns were called to the throne. By then, it was too late to return to the old control from London. Connecticut, having been left to its own devices, was no longer dependent upon English imports. It was, in fact, mining and fabricating iron and copper, and building larger ships for its export trade.

Local Industry. As early as 1680, Joseph Wells had started a small shipyard on the west side of the Mystic River near Burrows Ferry. After the second ship, however, nothing more is recorded. By 1701, whaling was carried on out of Stonington. The whales were brought in and “tried out” at the Kettle Works at Wadawanuck. Oil was sold as far away as Boston and the West Indies. Tin whale oil lamps began to replace pine knots and candles. Hay, grain, salt beef and pork replaced horses as the major export from the town. Some iron ore was found in North Groton, and in larger amounts in the Connecticut River Valley, so that iron pots, nails and farm tools no longer needed to be imported. Connecticut Yankee peddlers became common throughout the colonies. Hence the name of “Nutmeg State” from the wooden nutmegs they were supposed to have sold. Today, with more pretentiousness and less sense of humor, we call ourselves the “Constitution State”.

Life on the Farm. Crops were becoming more diversified, and included corn, wheat, oats, barley and flax. Flax provided both linen and seed. The seed was pressed for oil and also used to bait quail traps, which every farm had. There were no chickens as yet. They came later from China, but the woods had lots of turkeys. Two hundred years later, the last John Mason had turkeys running wild on the Island.

The term “quail trap” was used to describe a new type of roof that would soon be used on the more elaborate “mansions”. The four sides sloped in, with the two long sides meeting to form the ridge. The ridge, however, was extended to permit a small gable at each end. Perhaps from this, someone can figure out what a real quail trap looked like.

Women had an equal share in all the farm work. Girls as well as boys helped with the haying. Each farm had its spinning wheels and looms for the different fibers, wool, linen and later cotton from the south. Local dyes were learned from the Indians. Rough leather shoes were made at home. A travelling shoemaker did a brisk business, and was always welcomed for the news he brought.

Pork and beans was the Saturday Night Special. Brown bread was baked in a deep iron “dish”. Fruit “pies” were popular in season, but were more likely to be what we call “pan dowdy”. Besides apples and gooseberries, there were the native blackberries and whortleberries. I remember my grandfather telling me that his mother, many years after this period, used to bake up batches of pumpkin pies which were dried and stored in the attic. He said that sometimes it took a hammer to break them. Needless to say, the pieces were dunked in hot coffee.

Each large farm began to develop its own kind of apple. There were Chesebrough Russets, Prentice Russets, Denison Reddings and Rhode Island Greenings. They were all
bred to last out the winter. Indian Pudding of corn meal and molasses was as much of a treat then as it is today. There was always thick cream to put on it.

After a hearty supper around the long table in the big kitchen, the young ones turned to "Blind Man's Bluff". Although Sundays might be long and tedious at the Meeting House, the tavern was open between morning and afternoon services, and there was always the "Minister's Glass" in the well appointed household.

**Civil Government.** In 1698, the General Court was divided into two bodies. The lower house, now called the General Assembly, continued to be elected. The Governor's Council was formalized into the upper house, and in time became the elected Senate. In 1828, the senatorial districts were laid out according to population, and each town elected two representatives whatever its size. Only in recent years has the town unit of representation been eliminated.

At the 1689 Session, each town was required to take out a Patent, in effect an incorporation. For some reason, Stonington put it off until 1716. At that time, there were fifty-seven families in the town:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanton</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesebrough</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denison</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallup</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheeler</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frink</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and one each of Bennet, Billings, Hewitt, Main, Richardson, Searle, Shaw, Stephens and York. They were all cousins of one degree or another, and the names are still around today.

**THE THIRD MASON GENERATION**

*Capt. John Mason III, 1673-1736.* In 1701, at the age of twenty-eight, John (Fig. 32, No. 18) married his cousin Anne, daughter of his Uncle Samuel. They began married life on the farm in Lebanon, where their first child John IV (Fig. 32, No. 29) was born in 1702. Soon after, they decided to move to the Great Island (Map 4) and build a house. Samuel gave them his east half of the Island. Perhaps he wanted a strong young man around, as his own son John was failing, and would soon "give up the ghost". In any case, they built a new house on the slope near the shore on the east side of Money Point. The cellar hole was not filled in until the 1920's when the present stone house was built just above it. The old well still exists in the stone wall southwest of the site.

The pirate Capt. Kidd had left some treasure on Gardiner's Island about 1699. He gave the then Mrs. Gardiner a bolt of green India cloth woven with red, yellow and gold
thread, and a diamond ring. The story was soon out, and even before Kidd was captured and put on trial in London for piracy, the treasure was sent to Boston and thence to London. A descendent of the Gardiners, Andrew Fiske, formerly of Masons Island, has a small piece of the cloth. The ring is presumably in the possession of another descendent. Did the fact that Mason was digging his cellar hole at this particular time give the point its name? Since then, the deeds have referred to it as Money Point.

When the large house was built on the end of the point in 1938, a big hole about twenty feet across still existed on the flat land under the west side of the high ledge. Off and on for many generations people had dug there looking for the treasure that Mason was supposed to have missed. William Cushman, who lived in a house on the north end of the Island, told me when I was a boy that one time he and his son Fred had gone down there one night at the dark of the moon to dig for themselves. They set their kerosene lantern down and started in at midnight. After deepening the hole, they probed with a crowbar and struck wood which made a hollow sound. At that moment, there was a rush of horses upon them. The lantern was knocked over, and the Cushmans fled in terror. The next morning when they came back, there was no sign of their tools, and their hole was filled back in as if nothing had been touched. They never tried again.

In 1707, another son Samuel (Fig. 32, No. 31) was born to the Masons, the first white child born on the Island. Other children followed. After the birth of Elijah in 1715, Anne died, and John married Anne Sanford Nyes, widow of Dr. James Noyes of Stonington. She was the daughter of Gov. Peleg Sanford of Rhode Island, and granddaughter of Gov. William Coddington of Newport. They had one child, Peleg Sanford (Fig. 32, No. 35).

After settling in his new house, John began farming the whole Island. Livestock raising was still the main business, but already family sloops were giving way to larger ships for export trade. To separate his different herds and flocks, and keep them off the marshes and other haying fields, he built several stone walls which are still standing. One runs north from the shore along the east side of the marsh at the head of Pogy Bay, up to the Great Marsh, where it continued with a wood fence up to the head of Ram Point Cove. This I have shown on the map as the Money Point Wall. At the same time, the little Money Point Marsh was walled off. Another long wall divides off greater Ram Point on the River. This started on the shore west of the ponds and ran easterly to include the fresh water pond at a place afterward known as the “sluiceway”, and from there it ran up over Wolf Ledge and down to the north end of Ram Point Cove. Sometime later, the “dog-leg” ditch was dug across the point about half way down, instead of a fence. This ditch still exists, as well as the many marsh ditches which John had dug, like his uncles on the mainland. Many of these ditches on the Island are still kept cleared by the State Mosquito Control. This work, and the dredging of a channel up Ram Point Cove a few years ago, insures a good tidal flow over the many acres of marsh. Unlike so much marsh on the mainland which has been filled over in recent years, the Island marshes are almost entirely preserved.

As the demand for horses fell off, John turned more to selling salt beef and beef on
the hoof. Although a small salt works was operating near the Borough, most of the salt was imported from the West Indies. As trade increased, local vessels began making runs to Spain and North Africa. As large farms opened up back in the state, Negro slaves were brought in. A later census shows that there were more slaves in New London County than in any other in the state. From their estate inventories, it appears that the Stonington Masons never had more than a few house servants.

**More on the Mohegan Lands.** In 1679, seven years after the death of Major John Mason, old Uncas came under pressure from the colonial government, and gave it "jurisdiction" over the Mohegan lands, with the provision that he would receive compensation for any land it might sell. In the meantime, he and his son Oweneco had been selling off land on their own. In 1682 Uncas died, leaving the sachemship to Oweneco. Another son, Ben-Uncas, was considered a bastard under English law, but was to be used by the Colony against the Mason "Protectors" a few years later. Not until 1684, twelve years after the death of the Major, did his sons Samuel and Daniel take over the position of Protectors by agreement with Oweneco. Oweneco had his deed from the Major and was selling off tracts. The Colony, which didn't recognize this deed, had been selling land too. Samuel and Daniel persuaded Oweneco to deed what was left, many hundred acres, to the Tribe, with the provision that Oweneco and his heirs could not personally sell any of the land. These new arrangements were ignored by the Colony, which continued selling land in Lyme and Colchester, with no compensation to the Tribe or Oweneco. Things dragged on for several years.

In 1704, Queen Anne appointed an Indian Commission to investigate the dispute between Governor Winthrop, Jr. and his son and the settlers on one hand, and the Masons and Mohegans on the other. Samuel Mason was a member, but his brother Daniel had lost interest and returned to farming. Hearings were held in the Meeting House in Stonington, where Samuel was charged with illegal activities. They were the sensation of the day, and largely attended by townspeople. The Commission found for Mason and the Indians. The Legislature ruled the Commission decision invalid. Samuel then presented the Colony with a bill of £573 for lands the Colony had sold. He died the next year. John III (Fig. 32, No. 18) of Masons Island replaced him as Protector. The position by then was assumed to be hereditary. He was also willed by his Uncle Samuel any title he might have in the Mohegan land in the deed to Major Mason from Oweneco.

The following year a new deed filed in Stonington confirmed title in the land to the Mohegan Tribe, and in addition gave the Masons "one-half the profit and value" from the sale of the "Monhoagun" lands. This deed was confirmed in 1709 in a deposition by the witnesses to the 1705 deed, Capt. Benjamin Broughton and Lieut. Leffingwell of Norwich. In 1706, the Colony had appealed Samuel Mason's £573 bill to London. John III now felt that he had a monetary interest in the sale of the land through sales commissions. However, sickness kept him confined to his house for three or four years, and the Indian affairs became hopelessly confused. By 1711, with no decision from London, he resigned in despair, and turned the "Protectorship" over to the Commission. Oweneco died in 1715. His young grandson Mohamet became Sachem. The Colony put
up his uncle, Ben-Uncas. The Commissioners, without any Masons, confirmed most of the settlers’ claims.

By 1718, Mason was well enough again to have his own sloop built in New London. It was launched on March 8, and he took it on its first trading voyage to Antigua, returning on September 7. His wife dying that same year, he remarried the following year. By 1722 Mason was ready to tackle the Indian problems again. He reapplied for the old £ 573 bill, which was denied. He then petitioned the Legislature for expenses in behalf of the Mohegans, and his old job as “Protector”. The money was denied, but he was given a position with less authority, called “Guardian” forever.

Apparently he had not fully recovered from his “sickness”, for in 1727 he turned over the Island farm to his two boys John IV (Fig. 32, No. 29) aged 21, and Samuel (Fig. 32, No. 31) aged 15. With his wife and three younger children he moved to Mohegan, the Indian center in Montville, and built a house. He was then 54. At his request, the Colony paid him £ 15 a year to run a school for the Indians. One of his pupils was Sampson Occum. This brilliant young Mohegan later studied with Eleazer Wheelock and was taken by him to England. There he made such an impression on Lord Dartmouth and others, that Dartmouth gave Wheelock money to start an Indian school. This Wheelock did, moving it to New Hampshire where there were fewer advantages for the Indians. By now they had become a “cause”. The school, now the college, still charges Indians no tuition.

Ben-Uncas, the “Pretender”, died in 1726, and his claim to the Sachemship was taken up by his son Ben-Uncas, Jr., the “Young Pretender”. The Indian Commission appointed other “Overseers”, undercutting Mason. His house at Mohegan burned to the ground in 1729, and although neighbors and friends gave him money and labor to build a new one, he gave up his school and devoted himself to the cause of the Indian property rights, which seems to have become an obsession with him. By 1733, giving up all idea of returning to the Island, he deeded the house and half the Island to his second son Samuel who appears to have been more of a farmer and businessman than his older brother John IV. The deed reads:

“I, Capt. John Mason, Yeoman of New London (the North Parish, now Montville) to my son Samuel, Husbandman; one half of that my Island which was scituate in the Southwestern part of the township of Stonington and the dwelling house upon it, the said Island to be equally divided for Quantity and Quality between myself and my said son Samuel or our heirs ever and amen, for him or them to Have and to Hold, to Possess and Enjoy as a Good Estate in inheritance in Fee Simple”.

Then in 1735, in one last effort to confirm young Mohamet in the sachemship against Ben-Uncas, Jr. he sailed for London with his son Samuel and Mohamet. The Connecticut Assembly voted £ 100 to its agent Wilks to “prevent the ill designs of Mason”. That summer Mohamet died of the smallpox, and on Christmas Day, at his rooms on Lumbert Street, John died. Samuel, aged 28, returned home alone.

Final Solution. Samuel did not give up his father’s cause. In 1737, the Crown set
up another commission headed by the governors of New York and Rhode Island. They found for the settlers. Mason appealed to London and got a reversal, so the New York Commissioners quit. Six years later, the case was taken to the General Assembly. John Uncas, heir to Mohamet, was supported by the "Mason Party" which included many of the leaders of Norwich, most of whom were family connections of the Masons. Ben-Uncas, Jr. was supported by Governor Winthrop’s family. They, through colony grants, had taken over much of the Mohegan lands, but no longer held the respect that the governor had. The General Assembly voted 22 for Mason's John Uncas and 77 for Ben-Uncas. By this time, there were between 500 and 600 landholders on Mohegan lands. Few could have seriously expected that the Indian lands would be returned. Perhaps it was thought there might be a cash settlement. An appeal was again made to London, but nothing was decided.

By 1744, John III's two sons, John IV and Samuel were Overseers or Protectors, at least by hereditary claim. Samuel, owning the west half of the Island, bought up his brother's and sister's inherited interest in the east half. He then mortgaged the whole Island, the west half to Nathan Niles, and the east half to John Walsworth, both of Groton. After paying off various mortgages he had previously taken out to finance his struggle, he once more took off for London, this time with his brother John IV. John, like his father eight years before, died there of smallpox. It wasn't until 1781 that vaccination was introduced to Stonington. Samuel returned home with nothing settled and dead broke. The mortgages could not be paid off, and the new owners took over.

Twenty-two years later, the General Assembly declared an end to the controversy, saying "The Mason Party still manifested a factious and troublesome spirit". In 1769, Ben-Uncas, Jr. died. The Assembly rushed troops down to Norwich, to be met with violent opposition by Sampson Occum and the Mohegans on their still remaining lands in Montville. A further resolution stated: "Mason and party were continually plying the Mohegans with intrigues". Samuel, by then 59 years old, again appealed to London, but by then the British government had other things to worry about in America.

So, after just 100 years, a struggle involving four generations of Masons, and an impoverishment of one branch of the family, the rising tide of settlers swept over the County, as it was to do over the whole country in the years ahead. It would be easy to say that the Masons were the heroes of this drama, and the Winthrops the villains. Who can say at this date what their real motives were, or whether they were always consistent. Where are the Mason and Winthrop lands today, or for that matter, where are the Mohegans?

_The West Farm on the Mainland._ When Samuel (Fig. 32, No. 4) died in 1705, aged 61, his two older girls, Anne and Sarah (Fig. 32, Nos. 13 and 14) were already married, so he left the West Farm to his daughters Elizabeth and Hannah (Fig. 32, Nos. 16 and 17), with the Right of Dower going to his young wife. There was no one to run the farm, so some of the family may have taken over, or it was let out. Within two years of his death, his widow married Deac. Gershom Palmer, a widower of several years. Palmer built a new house on the east slope of Taugwonk Hill, where they and his step-daughters lived.
Hannah was never well, and died at the age of 25. Elizabeth, however, was according to Wheeler “rarely endowed by nature, with pleasing accomplishments, which made her the idol of her social circle”. At the age of 23, she married the new minister in town, the Rev. William Worthington, as his second wife. Worthington was graduated from Yale in 1716. They went to live in the “mansion”, to which her mother gave up her dower rights. Four years later Elizabeth died, perhaps in childbirth, as no children survive her.

Two years after that, Worthington, having inherited the West Farm, married Temperance Gallup, who brought him 140 acres on the east side of the Mystic River from her father Lieut. William Gallup. Worthington was the first minister in the North Parish, but after this third marriage he moved to Saybrook. After his death in 1739, his son sold the West Farm to Col. John Williams. The deed reads in part: “Reserving Liberty of ye family of ye Masons to bury their dead on ye farm at ye place where sundury of ye family now lie buried”. There was also a right for the Masons to pass from the Great Island up to the County Road. During the next twenty years, the Colonel bought up most of the Gallup lands “except for the Gallup burial place”. Thus he owned most of the land east of the Mystic River, except for the Denison Grant between the River and Pequot-sepos Cove. The Gallup tract was still in the Williams family when the Greenman brothers bought Adams Point for their shipyard in 1837.

The West Farm itself had various owners and tenants over the next several years. John B. Stanton was living there in 1814 when he got a bond for a deed from Isaac Denison II, on which he got a mortgage from William Woodbridge, owner of Whitehall on the old Gallup Grant. Woodbridge bought the West Farm and the south part of the Neck Farm. When he died in 1824, he left everything to his nephew William Rodman. Rodman in 1845 sold the north part of the farm to James Dean Fish. While the Fish family owned it, they bought the strip between the old and new Highways from Oliver Denison. In 1889, Mrs. Fish, living in New York State, sold the upper farm to Benjamin P. Hewitt. He had been leasing it for so many years that it had become known as the Hewitt Farm. He laid out the present Hewitt Road in 1882.

The lower farm, with the old Samuel Mason “mansion” was sold by Rodman in 1845 to Joseph Griswold. In 1865 Griswold sold it to Nathan S. Noyes, so it was called the Noyes Homestead. Griswold and Noyes had also bought part of the Neck Farm. After Noyes death in 1899, the lower farm was sold to Benjamin F. Williams, and after that it was known as the Williams Place. In 1907, Williams laid out subdivisions on the whole farm and called it Industrial Place. It included the whole of Williams Point. The last piece of the farm, Williams Beach, was given in recent years to the Mystic Community Center by Clarence Williams.

**Neck or East Farm.** When Daniel (Fig. 32, No. 8) died in 1737 at the age of 85, he had already distributed part of his farm to his sons. The two oldest children appear to have stayed on with their Denison grandparents in Roxbury, as there is no mention of them in his Will.

Son Peter (Fig. 32, No. 22) had gone on an expedition to Canada in 1699 “with the
Indians" at the age of 19. When he married Mary Hobart in 1703, he was given land on Quiambaug Cove north of the Minor Farm.

When son Ensign Samuel (Fig. 32, No. 25) married Elizabeth Fitch in 1712, he was given land south of the County Road near the Meeting House. For marsh land he got the little point called the “Hammock” south of the “mansion”. In the Will he was left an additional forty acres south of his own farm, and one-half of the Sixteen Pole Way, now narrowed down to four poles or rods. He was also given the right to get firewood on Andrew’s Island for his own use. His wife Elizabeth died in 1715 leaving no children. In 1720 he married Rebecca Lippincott. She had nine children, most of them girls. Their son Samuel II (Fig. 32, No. 59) married Anna Minor and inherited his father’s land. Ensign Samuel, like his father, lived to be 85. Two years before he drew his Will, he built a new house on Quiambaug Cove.

Daniel’s youngest son Nehemiah (Fig. 32, No. 28) was given Andrew’s Island (not yet named) when he married Zerviah Stanton in 1722, and built a house at the top of north hill. The foundation and well are still there. In the Will he was left one-half of the Sixteen Pole Way, one-half interest in the Common Land west of the Meeting House, and land in Lebanon.

The upper part of the Neck Farm went by inheritance to the Minor and Wilcox families, a large part of which is owned by their descendents today. It is part hilly and part swamp. The hill fields, then and for many generations, were open grazing land or hay fields, divided by numerous stone walls. Today they are heavily wooded. In early times, only the swamps were wooded.

The “mansion” property and the “hammock” eventually passed to the Green family, and is still known by a few old-timers as “Green Hill” and “Green Hummock”. This land, south of the highway, is now owned by Nature Conservancy. The Neck itself, now known as Latimer Point, was acquired by the Wilcox family, who had a Fish Works on the west side of the point for many years. John Bindloss bought the south half of the Neck from the Wilcoxes in 1909, and it is still in his family.

Andrew’s Island. After Nehemiah moved to his island, his second son Andrew (Fig. 32, No. 66) was born. He died within two or three years, and presumably the island is named for him. The next son, born in 1730, was also named Andrew (Fig. 32, No. 67). Nehemiah might be described as a typical small farmer of his day. Besides his eighteen acre island, he owned the large salt marsh to the north of him and other land near the Meeting House, as well as the land in Lebanon. He never made enough to leave anything but his land, divided once again, among his children.

In a time when the husband owned almost everything, including the furniture, the inventory of his wife’s estate shows what a wife might own in her own name. When her Will was probated in 1771, she left two Negro girls, Rose and Deborah, valued at £ 20. To her oldest son Hobart (Fig. 32, No. 65), Yale 1748, who had married his cousin Margaret Copp, and was “now living in Dublin, Nova Scotia”, she left £ 30. In 1760, the township of New Dublin, in Lunenburg County, about fifty miles southwest of Halifax, was granted
to a colony from Connecticut. Hobart's wife died about 1771, having born six sons and three daughters. He soon after returned to Groton, and married a second time.

To daughters Hannah Gallup and Zerviah Holms, Zerviah left bedding and wood ware and a looking glass. To granddaughter Hannah, a new bed, bolster (mattress), coverlet, blankets, dishes, spoons, glasses. To grandson Nehemiah (Fig. 32, No. 93) $3 (probably in Spanish silver dollars) "to make him a pair of buckles". Young Nehemiah was sixteen years old.

Son Andrew (Fig. 32, No. 67) of the fourth generation inherited Andrew's Island and considerable other property. He turned out to be the most financially successful of all the family. Before he died in 1813, he had bought up three-fourths of Masons Island. He in turn left Andrew's Island to his only son Nehemiah, "Junr.". From him it went to his son Nehemiah III (Fig. 32, No. 101) in 1816. By 1832, Nehemiah III was living in Brooklyn, N.Y. The later owners were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Nehemiah Mason III</td>
<td>Benj. F. Stanton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>William Rodman</td>
<td>Joseph Griswold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Joseph Griswold, Jr.</td>
<td>Nathan S. Noyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Nathan Noyes Est.</td>
<td>Benj. F. Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Industrial &amp; Mfg. Co.</td>
<td>Orin A. Wilcox, Sr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Orin A. Wilcox, Jr.</td>
<td>Cottrell Lumber Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Cottrell Lumber Co.</td>
<td>O.P. Robinson III</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BEFORE THE REVOLUTION**

The years before the American Revolution saw a surge of prosperity in southern New England. New London County, midway between Boston and New York, had both farms and ports. Movement to New York State and the West had hardly begun. The Masons in Stonington and on the plains around Norwich shared in the boom. By 1774, whaling and cod fishing were a big industry out of the town. As a further encouragement, the property tax was dropped on all whaling and fishing boats, and the poll tax was rescinded for the time men were at sea. Even after the start of the war and the partial blockade by the British, coastal shipping and overland haul increased.

The Stamp Act of 1765 was strenuously opposed in Stonington, where almost its entire income came from shipping its produce and the imports that came back. Even stronger feelings were aroused by taxation of the colonies without representation in Parliament. Although the tax was repealed within a short time, the damage had been done. A move for independence was in the air.

**Money.** During the 1600's, trade in Connecticut was carried on largely by barter, except for the small amount of English money in circulation. For small amounts, wampum was used, and the value set at six white beads or three black beads equal to one Penny. In 1709, the Connecticut Colony, following the example of Massachusetts, issued
8,000 Pounds in notes to be accepted for payments to the public treasury at a premium of 5% to provide for redemption. Notes were limited to Two Shillings up to Five Pounds. Other series were issued, so that by 1713 there were 20,000 Pounds outstanding.

In 1708, one ounce of silver was set to equal Eight Shillings in notes. Thus an American Pound of 20 Shillings was worth $10.50 at today's price of silver. In 1718, the notes were made legal tender. Although the notes outstanding were reduced to 2,500 Pounds by 1732, they had declined in value almost from the beginning. With adequate backing for redemption in Connecticut, they had been declared to have the same value as Massachusetts notes, which did not have adequate backing, and had become greatly inflated.

In 1740, a war against the Spanish West Indies required more money, so bills of the New Tenor were issued, with stronger backing. Bills of the Old Tenor were declared to be worth half their face value. The next year, legal tender provision for all bills was repealed. By 1744, England was at war with both Spain and France. To defray war expenses in the West Indies, Connecticut issued a large number of New Tenor bills, and made them equal to 3½ of the Old Tenor.

Taxes were levied in 1751, 1752 and 1753 in New Tenor bills to discharge the debt. By 1756, the bills in both Connecticut and Massachusetts were mostly retired. In that year, Connecticut ruled that all accounts be kept in silver. The interesting thing about this period was that Connecticut was financing its own war in the West Indies to protect its trade. The reaction against the Stamp Act a few years later is all the more understandable.

Shipping by then was carried on in brigatines and schooners and even larger ships. It was a three way run between Gibraltar, the Barbary Coast in Africa and the West Indies. Silver was coming in from this trade, and for the next twenty years money remained fairly stable.

_Connecticut during the Revolution._ During the Revolution, the Continental Congress began issuing its own money, which was called Continental Currency. With no hard backing, it was a financial disaster, and lead to the expression "not worth a continental". Spanish milled Dollars had been common for several years, and continued to be used in business and between individuals. The new Confederation paid for its supplies with its own paper money, as opposed to the great amount of supplies Connecticut bought with its own "hard" money. However, the old maxim "bad money drives out good" was proving true, and Connecticut money continued to depreciate. The Masons and other smart farmers in the town quickly put their paper money into land.

The first shot at Concord sent troops from here to Boston, with generous supplies following over the roads. Tipped off that the British fleet in Gardiner's Bay was planning to seize livestock on Block Island and the islands nearer the mainland, herds were brought ashore and driven inland. The Masons sent theirs to the family land around Quaquatauge. On August 30, 1775, Comm. James Wallace sailed into Stonington in the frigate _Rose_. Sending his sloop-rigged tender ashore, he demanded the cattle, with the threat of "terrible vengeance" if the townspeople did not comply. Hastily summoned militia drove the tender off with their Queen Anne muskets. Wallace immediately followed up his
threat with a cannonade which lasted several hours. No one was killed and only one man wounded. Giving up his idea of burning the village, he finally sailed off, leaving Stonington the only town to have successfully resisted one of his forays.

Shipping was effectively blockaded, however, and remained so for most of the war. Sailors became a large part of the Connecticut land forces, which in 1776 composed more than half of Washington's army around New York. Attention turned to supplying the Connecticut troops, and eventually other American units. Governor Trumbull set up his military headquarters in Lebanon. The little building still stands. His son organized an efficient Commissary to feed and clothe Connecticut troops. In 1777 he requisitioned from Stonington 10,000 pounds of cheese, then another 20,000 pounds. A fixed price of 6 pence per pound was set, and local authorities were empowered to requisition any that was necessary to make up the quota. At the same time, the Town voted a war tax of 35 mills to buy clothing and other supplies for its own troops in the Continental service.

British General Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga that year convinced the French that it would be to their advantage to come out openly on the side of the Americans. In 1778, they began sending over troops to Connecticut and around Newport, and brought up their West Indies fleet to engage the British along our east coast. General Washington's situation, in the meantime, had become desperate. Only the arrival of Connecticut beef on the hoof had saved his little army at Valley Forge. Enlistments were continually running out, and the squabbling among his top officers lead to the defection of Gen. Benedict Arnold after outstanding service. In 1780, the Town voted an enlistment bounty of $60 in gold or silver, in addition to the State bounty. In 1781, additional town taxes were payable in gold, silver or beef cattle. The French troops quartered in Lebanon and before Newport were demanding the best in food, and paying in coin. Some local farmers also found that it was highly profitable to run the blockade not only to American shore ports, but also to the British on Long Island. This inflation of prices began to break price controls, and the issuance of paper money by Congress compounded the problem.

The British in New York and Long Island realized that if they could control Connecticut, they could effectively cut off vitally needed American supplies. In 1781, they attacked New London and burned the town. During this foray, they captured Fort Griswold on the opposite shore, killing and capturing most of the local militia men. Not daring to go up the river to Norwich, the main base of supplies, their assault in the end remained largely ineffective.

By now the war had moved to the south, and the surrender of Gen. Cornwallis at Yorktown in the same year ended the fighting, although the British blockade locally continued until the signing of the peace treaty.

THE WALSWORTH FAMILY ON MASONS ISLAND

When John Walsworth took over the east half of the Island in 1744 (Map 5) with Samuel Mason's (Fig. 32, No. 31) defaulted mortgage, he already owned considerable
Map 5. Niles-Walsworth Land, after 1744.
land in Groton. Like other large landowners, his family was already sailing its own vessels to the West Indies. In 1738, they lost a sloop in a hurricane there. News was brought to Noank by the Stocker from Nevis. Vessels at that time were decked sloops. Horses and cattle were carried on the open deck, while in the hold were barrel staves and hoops, salt beef or pork, grain and other farm products for the sugar plantations. The return trip brought molasses, sugar, rum and salt.

At the same time in 1744, Nathan Niles acquired the west half of the Island (Map 5). Between them they built a division wall running the entire length of the Island, much of which still stands. The description of Walsworth's land reads:

"Beginning at a Pepry Tree (pepperidge) near the bank somewhat southward of a cove and small swamp (This is at the foot of a high ledge on the east side of Nauyaug Point.) thence northerly to a Pine Tree standing at the head of a salt meadow in the croft of two swamps (This spot is at the head of Ram Point Cove Marsh, later called the Great Marsh, just south of the old schoolhouse site.), thence 100 rods (1,650 feet) north 12½ degrees east to a Rock in a Cove near the middle of the Island and "is near opeset Deacon Daniel Denisons Pint" (on the mainland), thence easterly, southwesterly and southerly and southwesterly and bounded all round with the salt water including all pints and nooks until it comes to the bound first mentioned."

The Pond did not exist at that time.

Apparently Walsworth acquired the land as an investment, for in 1756 he built a typical one and one-half story house, just northwest of the present Gate House and leased it to Andrew Mason (Fig. 32, No. 67) of Andrew's Island, then aged twenty-six. When Walsworth died in Groton in 1785, he left his Island property to his two sons, John, Jr. and Samuel. To John, Jr. went the west half of the house and the land running up to the north shore. Included was a strip 150 feet wide running south along the division wall. This strip looks puzzling on the map, but it includes a small fresh water pond and spring near the head of Ram Point Cove. This was important for watering stock. The spring still flows today. To Samuel went the east half of the house with all the rest of the land, encumbered with the widow's Dower.

THE FOURTH MASON GENERATION

Andrew Mason, 1730-1812. Andrew was the son of Nehemiah (Fig. 32, No. 28) on Andrew's Island. Two years before moving into Walsworth's house, Andrew, then twenty-four, had married Mary Gallup, then seventeen. They were living at the time on his father's farm in Lebanon. According to the records, they were married on March 20, 1754 and their son Nehemiah (Fig. 32, No. 93) was born on April 10. It was a warm summer in 1753. The Walsworths never did live in the house. After John Walsworth's death, his son Samuel was already living in Hudson, N.Y. From Samuel, Andrew bought
in 1786 all the Walsworth land south of the house for £ 456. At the same time, he leased the west half of the house from John Walsworth, Jr., and the east half from the widow, who had already married William Avery of Groton. The rent for the east half was £ 7/18/4 in gold and silver coin. Specie from the West Indies trade was commonly used, as the paper Continental money was becoming practically valueless.

Four years later, in 1790, the Revolution was over and Alexander Hamilton had become Secretary of the Treasury under the new United States. At his urging, the new Congress voted to redeem all the Confederation “Continental” bills, as well as the bills which had been issued by the various states. This action, along with the ending of the British blockade, gave a tremendous boost to the economy, especially for the farmer-traders in Stonington.

In 1791, Andrew bought the north part of Money Point from Nathaniel Niles. He started a stone wall division, still standing, but the following year he bought the south part. Thus the old house built by his second cousin once removed, John III, came back into the family. It was then occupied by the Parks family, who continued to lease it from Andrew. Also in 1792, Andrew bought the west half of the Walsworth house where he was living, and the land running north to the shore, for £ 125. At the same time, he bought the Widow’s Right of Dower and her son John, Jr.’s. interest in the east half, with about ten acres running down to the east shore. It wasn’t until 1816 that his grandsons bought the rest of the Walsworth property at the northeast end of the Island.

Andrew then built his own “mansion”, although that term was no longer used. A two story house was no longer uncommon. He used the west half of Walsworth’s house as a wing. It then became known as the Mason House (Figs. 4, 5, and 6). Plain of decoration in the New England tradition, it was well proportioned and finely detailed. A unique feature of the house was the omission of the central chimney. The typical two story house of the time had a cramped front stair hall, a front room either side, each with a fireplace letting into the central chimney, a large kitchen or “keeping” room in the rear with a very small unheated room either side. The Mason House was larger in overall dimensions. The chimneys at either end of the main house permitted fireplaces in several rooms including the old wing. The big cooking fireplace was in another chimney on the north side. This was later backed by another fireplace in the one story ell, which was used for a summer kitchen and probably in making cheese.

During the next few years, Andrew bought several pieces of good furniture. A desk with a book-case top, a couple of tables and mirrors, and some silver spoons. The most highly valued items in the inventories were beds and bolsters (mattresses). These all turned out to be the only good pieces the family ever bought. The maple desk, with spiral fluted columns on the upper part, is still on the Island. Most of their tableware was pewter and earthen.

Sometime during this period, Andrew built a one and one-half story house on the flat land overlooking Noank, southwest of the present dam. It was tenanted by the Parks family for so many years that it was known as the Parks house (Fig. 7). When it burned around 1910, the Parks family moved to the old Niles house northwest of the schoolhouse.
In 1797, in the midst of his farmer's prosperity, his wife died. Giving the Mason House to his only child Nehemiah, Jr. (Fig. 32, No. 93) who was living with his growing family at Head of Mistick, Andrew moved down to the old family house on Money Point. The next year, he married Anna Minor (Mason), the widow of his cousin Samuel (Fig. 32, No. 59). In a detailed marriage settlement beginning "it was not intended that man should live alone", it provided that Anna should have one-half of all her previous movable estate, one-half Rights in his dwelling house on Money Point, all of the garden, a cow kept winter and summer by his Estate and firewood found her, so long as she remained his widow.
Figure 6. Mason House, Front Door, c. 1933.

Figure 7. Parks House, Masons Island, c. 1910, showing west dam of Ice Pond. (Photograph by George E. Tingley.)
On her part, she gave up to him "the whole use and improvement in the Thirds or Right of Dower of her husband Samuel's estate, so long as they both shall live", also the Dower Rights to Andrew's estate and all her movable estate if she should die first. Anna did die first, in 1810, two years before his own death, leaving him in the care of her two black servants, James aged 32 and Rose aged 27, with the provision that they should both be freed when both of the old couple had died.

Anna's first husband Samuel had also left a slave girl to his two daughters, who had agreed to free her. The Certificate of Emancipation reads:

Whereas Hannah Avery and Wealthy Hewit both of Stonington in the County of New London hath this day made application to us the Select Men of said Town of Stonington for liberty to emancipate their negro wench named Zilph and the said Select Men having examined said Mistresses and Servant and find it to be the wish of said Mistresses to emancipate, and likewise the said wench's desire to be emancipated and we finding the wench to be 38 years old well and healthy and capable of getting her living, therefore give said Hannah and Wealthy liberty to emancipate and they are hereby authorized to emancipate said Zilph and make her free.

Dated at Stonington this 9th day of September 1799. Latham Hull
   Elisha Denison
   Edw. Swan
   Stephens Hall
   Nathan Pendleton

Select Men

In 1804, having reached the age of 74, Andrew decided to give his son Nehemiah the rest of his property except for the Niles land which took in Money Point and Nauyaug Point. It included the east part of the Island he had bought of Walsworth, the Neck Farm of about 80 acres which Anna had brought him, land northeast of the Neck Farm of about 28 acres which was bounded on the north and east by Minor and on the south and west by Jesse Wilcox and Mehitable Mason, a six acre part of the mowing field southwest of the old Daniel Mason Mansion House, the six acre mowing field in the marsh at the south end of Moconke, and Andrew's Island.

Andrew drew his Will in 1808, and when he died in 1812, the rest of his property went as follows:

Anna (she had already died) $40
daughter Mehitable Mason (Crary, Thomas) $800 in four annual installments beginning two years after his death.
Nehemiah, all his movable estate.
grand-daughter Mary (Hempstead) $100 within one year.
grandsons Joseph D. and Daniel, all his lands and Tenements he had bought from Niles on Masons Island, 75 acres valued at $2,100 and all other real estate whereever situated, including Abigail's Island at
$15 and the School House site west of the Road Church Meeting House, a vestige of the old Sixteen Pole Way 1/8 of an acre valued at $5.

When grandson Daniel reached 21, he was to give his Aunt Mehitable $800.

Andrew had already given his son Nehemiah most of the contents of the Mason House, so the Inventory of his "movable estate" was just what he had in the Money Point house:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Great Bible</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollaston's <em>Religion of Nature</em></td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>History of the Reformation</em></td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clothing</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Linen Coats</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Black &amp; 1 Grey Broadcloth Coat</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cotton Coat</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Broadcloth vests</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Jacket &amp; 2 vests</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pr. Black broadcloth breeches</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pr. Linen trousers</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 flannel shirts</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 linen shirts</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Great Coat</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hat</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pr. worsted hose</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 pr. yarn hose</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pr. mittens</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bedding</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 linen sheet &amp; pillow case</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Under bed &amp; pillows</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Coverlet</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Furniture</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Table</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Table</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 chairs</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Chest with drawers</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utensils</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Silver spoons</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Half worn pewter</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Candlestick</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Case, 2 bottles, 3 phials</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Mortar &amp; Pestle</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kettle &amp; frying pan</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Iron pot</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Chopping knife</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Peeler</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although we have no letters or diaries of Andrew, we have some idea of the kind of man he was. Having built a comfortable estate from a small inheritance, he lived simply but well for his time and situation, with a fine, but plain house, good, but not ornate furniture. The same could be said of his clothing. A religious man, but a thinking one, as the nature of his three books indicate. He had put his son through Harvard, the first Mason to go to college, though several daughters had married ministers. He was content to live simply in his old age with his second wife, an old friend of years standing. The turmoil of the Revolution was past. The coming war with England was hardly a threat, with Napoleon still rampaging on the Continent. His first two grandchildren died at 18 and 19, the remaining four boys were all turning into substantial citizens. When Andrew died two years later at the age of 82, we can well imagine his family and friends calling him a fine old man.

THE FIFTH MASON GENERATION

Nehemiah Mason, Jr., 1754-1816. Nehemiah (Fig. 32, No. 93) was born in Lebanon, an only child. His parents moved to the Walsworth house on Masons Island when he was two years old. They decided to give him the advantage of an education, so in his late teens he began tutoring with the Rev. Ira Hart, the minister of the South Parish, who prepared young men for college from 1771 to 1829. Nehemiah was graduated from Harvard in 1780 at the age of twenty-six. When he married Bridget Denison in 1782, they lived for some years on the farm near Old Mystic, variously identified as Head of River or Quaketaug. Here their first five children were born. Like others of his family, he served as Selectman, from 1785 to 1787. In 1797, they moved into the Mason House on the Island, where the last child Nehemiah III (Fig. 32, No. 101) was born. Within two years his wife died, and within the next few years, his two oldest children, who were still in their teens.

By 1804, his daughter Mary (Fig. 32, No. 94) had reached the age of twenty-one. A real “catch”, she had many suitors. One of them was Amos Miner from Quiambaug. Although a proper family connection, Andrew for some reason felt he would not do. There is a story from Grace D. Wheeler which carefully mentions no names, but I have figured out the principals from the dates. Nehemiah told the old black boatman, who transported visitors across the Ridingway in a small scow, not to bring Amos across. The boatman said afterward that he couldn’t tell one young man from another. In any case, Amos woed and won, and they were married in 1806. Their only child, Amos, Jr., was born nine months later almost to the day.

Nehemiah, Jr. died in 1816 at the age of sixty-two, only four years after his father. He had bought the Money Point marsh in 1804, but otherwise his holdings were the same as his father had left. To his two oldest remaining sons, Joseph Denison and Daniel (Fig. 32, Nos. 98 and 99), aged twenty-six and twenty-four, he left jointly the rest of Island property besides that which they had already received from their grandfather. In addition, there was an eight acre wood lot on Cow Hill in Groton. The family afterward used this
for firewood, rather than cut the big trees on the Island. Most of the Island at that time was bare grazing and mowing fields, except for the swamp areas and the wood east of the future location of the Ice Pond. There stood a grove of great old oaks. In the early 1900's, men from the State Forestry Commission estimated that many were over 200 years old. There were also smaller stands on the hilly parts of Money Point.

To son Peleg (Fig. 32, No. 100) aged 22, Nehemiah left the whole of his farm in Lebanon, "also all the beds and bedding which have been made in the family since my removal from the Head of Mistic River". To Nehemiah III aged 16, he left the Neck Farm and Andrew's Island. Also "one good bed with suitable covering for winter and summer". Since Nehemiah was still a minor, he chose his brother Peleg as guardian. Peleg posted a bond for $9,000. This may seem excessive, unless the inventory was undervalued for estate purposes. Nehemiah's share is listed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Neck Farm</th>
<th>2,890.00</th>
<th>Andrew's Island</th>
<th>750.00</th>
<th>Bed &amp; bedding</th>
<th>36.00</th>
<th>Total 3,676.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedding:</td>
<td>Bolster &amp; pillows</td>
<td>230.00</td>
<td>Coverlet</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>Bedstead</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2 blankets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To his only grandchild born at the time, Amos Miner, Jr., Nehemiah left $1,000 to be given him when he reached 21.

All the rest and residue of his estate went to his two oldest sons, Joseph and Daniel. His Inventory includes the contents of the Mason House given him by his father earlier, plus what he was left in the Will. It represents the Mason family at the peak of its prosperity.

Books:
- 1 Great Bible (still in the family) 2.50
- 1 Psalm book 1.00

Clothing:
- 1 Great coat 7.50
- 1 Black surtout 5.00
- 1 Brown coat 5.00
- 1 Hat 1.50
- 1 Velvet vest, 1 Nankeen vest 3.00
- 1 Striped coat, 1 Morning gown 2.00
- 2 pr. brown pantaloons 5.25
- 1 pr. velvet pantaloons .75
- 2 pr. blue nankeen pantaloons 2.25
- 1 pr. nankeen britches 1.25
- 2 linen shirts 4.00
- 2 flannel shirts 1.50
- 2 pr. yarn hose 1.00
- 1 pr. boots 1.50
- 1 pr. shoes 1.00

Bedding:
- 8 sets bolsters & pillows 163.00
- 1 feather bed 10.00

43
10 Coverlets. 31.50
  Green & white.
  Blue & white.
  Red & black & green birds eye.
  Red, brown, black & white.
20 linen sheets 16.67
  9 Flannel blankets 18.00
  2 kersey blankets 5.67
  1 Calico bedspread 2.12
12 Pillow cases 2.00
  2 Bedsteads & cord 6.00
  4 Bedstead underbeds & cord 10.00
  8 Windsor chairs 4.00
12 Slat back chairs 5.00
  1 Rocking chair & cushion .75
  1 Fall leaf table 2.50
  1 Mahogany tea table .75
  2 Maple tables 3.25
  3 Looking glasses 4.50
  2 pr. Shovels & tongs 2.75
  2 pr. Fire dogs 1.50
Utensils: 1 brass kettle 2.00
  2 iron kettles 3.00
  1 Dish kettle .75
  3 Iron pots 3.75
  1 Bake kettle .50
  1 Tea kettle .75
Tableware: 29 Pewter spoons 7.25
  3 Silver table spoons 7.50
  3 Silver tea spoons 1.00
  1 Tea set 1.50
13 Quarry ware plate 1.00
  2 Decanters 1.00
  5 Tumblers .40
  9 Bowls .75
Cheese 1 Cheese press 2.50
utensils: 1 Cheese basket & 2 doz. hoops 1.50
Farm tools: 2 plows 4.00
  2 axes 2.00
  2 iron bars 3.00
  2 Yokes & bows 3.00
  3 Pitchforks 1.50
4 Chains 4.50
2 pr. steelyards 3.00
2 tubs & 4 pails 3.50
2 saddles 6.00
2 briddles .75
2 carts 18.00
1 small scow 10.00
2 canoes 3.00
3 hoes 1.50
2 grindstones 2.00
1 Cross cut saw, 1 hand saw 4.00

Produce:
- Wheat in sheath estimated 52.50
- 45 bushels ryes 45.00
- 30 bushels barley 1.00
- 160 bushels oats 66.67
- 300 bushels potatoes 100.00
- 37 tons hay part salt 400.00
- 40 Cheeses Wt. 800 lbs. 72.00

Live stock:
- 2 Horse kind, 40. and 20. 60.00
- 2 Yoke oxen 120.00
- 9 Cows 90.00
- 9 Yearling cattle 54.00
- 11 yearling hogs & 4 pigs 100.00

Real Estate:
- Masons Island 136 acres @ 36.00 4,896.00
  (1/3 being wholly under
  encumbrance of Widow's Thirds)
- Neck Farm 85 acres @ 34.00 2,890.00
- Andrew's Island 25 acres @ 30.00 750.00
- N & E of Neck 28 acres @ 20.00 560.00
- Hammock 6 acres @ 20.00 120.00 (Widow's Dower)
- Salt marsh 4 acres @ 25.00 100.00 (Money Pt. marsh)
- Abigail’s Island 1/8 acre 5.00
- School House Lot 1/8 acre 5.00 (Meeting House)
- Groton wood lot 17 acres @ 20.00 340.00
- Lebanon farm 150 acres @ 28.00 4,200.00 (North of Susquitom-scot Brook)

Total 15,465.00

With the entry of births, marriages and deaths in the town records, went the registration of a “crop mark” on all of a man’s livestock. Andrew’s had been a “smooth crop on each ear and a slit in the left ear”. When Andrew died, his son Nehemiah III filed for the same markings. His sons Joseph and Daniel being joint owners, filed for the same marks. Like the colors on lobster pot buoys in later generations, there were a variety of
ingenious combinations, but they were usually a mixture of smooth crops, half-penny crops, slits and holes.

THE NILES FAMILY ON MASON'S ISLAND

Nathan Niles was newly married when his father gave him the west half of the Island in 1744, at the same time that the Walsworths acquired the east half. The Niles family owned considerable land in Groton south of the Beebe Farm on Beebe's Cove. The old house is still standing on the Noank Road. Unlike the Walsworths, Niles was to make the Island his home. He and his wife moved into the Mason house on Money Point, then forty-one years old. There their four sons were born, Nathan, Jr., Nathaniel, Elisha and Thomas.

Nathan Niles, Jr. In 1773 when Nathan, Jr. was about to marry, his father gave him a large part of his Island property, about 100 acres, excepting Ram Point and Money Point below the old Mason stone walls. Also excepted was the south end of Nauyaug Point south of a line running east from Deep Harbor. It was for a time called Windmill Point, as there was a gristmill there which others besides the family probably used. A short stone pier ran out from the west side for boats with grain to grind.

Nathan, Jr. built a new house for himself on the river south of Pine Hill on what was later called the Boat House Lot. The well was located in the north boundary wall, convenient to the property on the north side. Christopher McGaughey, who ran a stone cutting business on the west side of Clift Street in Mystic under the ledge, always insisted that his sister's house next door, now 71 Clift Street, was the Nathan Niles, Jr. house moved up from Mason's Island one winter. This may be so, as the moving of houses seems to have been common practice all through the 1800's. As his family grew to seven boys and several girls, Nathan sometime during the Revolution built a new house on the hilltop directly east of his first house and northwest of the schoolhouse. It is still standing, although the central chimney was removed years ago. Only the large fireplace in the cellar remains, with its great oaken lintel. Although a two story house, it was never called a mansion, being of rough farmhouse construction. North of the house, he built a stone wall dividing off the "Great Plain", which was probably planted to grass for hay, and later for wheat. It was at one time known as the "English Hay Field", indicating that it was sown with imported seed. Southwest of the house on the hilltop, the orchard was walled off, and nearer the house was the barnyard. All of these walls are still standing in part. West of the house was the Barley Field Lot, walled off from the grazing land on Pine Hill.

Nathaniel Niles. Under his father's Will in 1778, Nathaniel inherited the Money Point property, encumbered with the Widow's Dower. After his mother's death, he leased the property to the Parks family. In 1791 he sold it to Andrew Mason (Fig. 32, No. 67), saving only the Money Point marsh. This he sold later to Nehemiah Mason (Fig. 32, No. 93).

Elisha and Thomas Niles. Under their father's Will, Elisha and Thomas inherited
jointly all of Ram Point below the Mason wall. After several swaps back and forth, Elisha ended up with the Wolf Ledge Lot and Clam Point. Thomas owned the rest. The south bound of Clam Point was an extension of the line of the old "dog-leg" ditch dug by John Mason III several years before. In 1799, Sands Fish of Groton bought the whole of the point from both boys, except for a small piece of marsh just north of the east end of the ditch which Benadam Gallup had bought in 1796.

In 1803, Fish sold about 5 acres at the tip end of the Point to Samuel and Nathaniel Parks, Jr. This is the piece of which the Masons Island Company gave its interest to the Mashantucket Land Trust a few years ago. The point is probably at least two acres smaller today, having been washed away by storms, especially the hurricanes of 1815 and 1954, as old surveys show. Most of the remaining land stayed in the Fish family until 1866.

Elisha and Thomas also inherited from their father "all of my negroes, they providing and taking suitable care of the Aged and Infirm during their natural lives, and not to be sold Contrary to their Mind." Listed in the Inventory were a Negro man £ 70, a girl £ 20, and a boy £ 5. The old people apparently had no monetary value.

Heirs of Nathan Niles, Jr. When Nathan, Jr. died in 1794, he owned the west half of the Island, except for Ram Point, Money Point, and the Windmill Lot. The south part of the farm below a wall running east from the Money Point marsh was leased to the Parkses. His property continued to be called the Niles Farm, but after it was divided among his children, it was no longer a viable farm. Each of the boys, Nathaniel II, Jonathan, Lodowick, Peleg, Stoddard, Jeremiah and Nathan III got a piece, and the Widow Mercy her Dower Rights.

The Widow's One-third or Right of Dower was not always handled in the same way. Sometimes all of the property was left to the children, with the widow having the lifetime use of a particular part of the house and land, or even just a one-third interest. In this case, Mercy was left an actual ownership in a specific part of the house, in certain pieces of land, and a one-third interest in others, all of which went into her estate when she died.

In her part of the house were the East Room and the Bedroom and Chamber above. She had half of the kitchen, with the privilege to use the big fireplace and oven, also one-third of the attic, the north part of the cellar, use of the outhouse, the cheese house, one-third of the barn and barnyard, use of the well from her side of the boundary wall which was erected and is still standing, a strip of land running 120 rods south of the house which included a piece of the Great Marsh and the woods beyond. This last was hers outright, to dispose of as she wished. Finally she had Dower rights to one-third of the old Orchard and the Barley Field.

The Great Plain north of the house was divided into strips running from the Great Plain wall north to the shore. From east to west the lots went to Peleg, Nathaniel II, Stoddard and Jeremiah. The sons put up walls dividing off their tracts, most of which are still standing. Jeremiah also got a lot south of the house on the marsh. Nathan III got the Pine Hill, Crow Point and Boat House Lot property, bounded on the east by Barley Lot
Pond. Stoddard also got the west part of the house, and the barnyard, now the New Orchard, just west of the house. Jonathan got more land on Nauyaug Point above his Windmill Lot, and Lodowick the Parks lease-hold. The youngest son, Nathan III, also got a "riding horse, bridle and saddle". The girls got money.

Most of this careful division was soon wiped out. Andrew Mason (Fig. 32, No. 67), having bought Money Point in 1792 from the boys' Uncle Nathaniel, then bought in 1795 Jonathan's and Lodowick's portions, and from the widow her woods and marsh up to the head of Ram Point Cove.

Nathaniel II had already built a house on his north shore lot before his father died. It was a finely designed one and one-half story house with the new style peaked dormers on the south front. It was afterwards known as the Chapman house. After the division, Nathaniel bought his brother Peleg's lot on his east. Peleg had already moved to Long Island.

Lodowick turned out to be the smartest of them all. He took the money from the sale of his property to Mason in 1794, immediately after his father's death, and went into shipping. When he married Elizabeth Denison in 1797, he could buy the house on the corner of Main and Pearl Streets in the Borough, built in 1790. Before his death, he added the fine cut stone steps and "classic style" entrance. The house still stands. He was soon captain of his own ship, and the money poured in from his successful blockade running and probably privateering. He died at sea in 1812.

Jeremiah died soon after his father, and his widow re-married and sold the marsh lot south of the house to another brother-in-law, William Sawyer. The north lot on the shore she sold to Jonathan. Jonathan was trying to buy up as much of the farm as he could. He bought the Barley Field from his mother in 1799, and in 1801 the west part of the house and the new orchard from Stoddard. Soon after, his mother died, and he bought from her heirs the east part of the house and the remaining widow's lands. Thus he consolidated the farm, but much smaller in size. It was bounded on the east by the Niles-Walsworth division wall, on the north by the Great Plain wall, on the west by Barley Field Pond, and on the south by Fish at the old Ram Point wall. Excepted was the lot in the south corner owned by his brother-in-law, William Sawyer, altogether about fifteen acres.

It wasn't really a working farm. Jonathan probably worked for the Masons and kept up his orchard, barley field and two cows. He could never afford more than work clothes. You wonder if he were ever invited to his brother Lodowick's fine house in the Borough, and if so, if he ever went. The inventory of his estate at the time of his death in 1835 gives us a good picture of a workingman who owned his own home:

1 pea jacket & 1 cloth coat 1.00
1 pr. pantaloons & 1 vest 1.09
3 pr. drawers & 2 flannel undershirts .50
5 cotton shirts & 3 pr. wool stockings 2.50
1 pr. thread stockings & 2 old hats .37
1 wool cap, comforter & suspender .25
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 old pr. shoes</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Coverlets (yarn, light yarn, Birds Eye)</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 comforters, 2 bed quilts</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Feather bed, under bed bolster &amp; pillows</td>
<td>24.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7½ pr. cotton sheets, 1 feather bed</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pr. wool blankets &amp; 1 small ditto</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedsteads &amp; cords</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 pr. pillow cases</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 diaper &amp; kersey Table cloths</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 napkins &amp; 2 window curtains</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 rag carpet</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bureau &amp; 1 Pembroke table</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 old desk, 1 dining table, 2 kitchen tables</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 fancy chairs &amp; 1 stand</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 kitchen chairs, 2 rocking chairs</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Loom quill wheel and swift</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 wool wheel, 1 linen wheel</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 chest, 6 plated Table Spoons</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Silver tea spoons, 1 lot Tin Ware</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Lot crockery &amp; glass ware</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Lot stone &amp; earthen ware</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 sad irons, shovel &amp; tongs</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Fire shovel, 2 pr. andirons</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 pcs. Hollow Ware, 1 brass kettle</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 cedar pails, 1 cheese press</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 tubs, 1 bellows</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 lbs. Pork</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 lbs. cheese</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 empty barrells, 1 wood saw</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 iron bar, beetle &amp; wedges</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 old axe, 1 looking glass</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1¾ tons Hay</td>
<td>21.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hog</td>
<td>7.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cows</td>
<td>33.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 acres land with buildings thereon</td>
<td>1,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,282.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the end of the Revolutionary War, the local economy was soon booming. Whaling and sealing were fast becoming the biggest and most profitable businesses. The many fine new homes in the Borough attest to the fact that the old farm economy was passing, and money was to be made from the sea. The British became concerned at the new strength of its fledgling, and in 1800 cut off all trade with the Crown Colonies, especially in the West Indies. Far from having its wings clipped, the new country built bigger ships and extended its trade throughout the Mediterranean and into the Pacific. President Jefferson, after his purchase of Louisiana Territory in 1803, became more concerned with the growing West. In retaliation against the British action, he got Congress to declare an embargo against shipments from the East Coast. Reaction in Stonington and the rest of Connecticut was intense.

Local shipowners had turned to privateering and blockade running against their own government and the British as well. Britain, at war with the French, tried to enforce its position that there was no such thing as a neutral. It seized American ships caught trading with the French, and impressed sailors they suspected of being English. In many cases, anyone speaking English was enough proof. The Americans issued Certificates of Citizenship to native born or British immigrants. With no help from Congress, the New England states called a Convention in Hartford to propose secession.

Madison followed Jefferson as president. In order to assure re-election, he went along with the “War Party” in a declaration of war against Britain in 1812. The secession movement was dropped, although the Easterners were not in favor of the war. They called it “Mr. Madison’s War”.

The Hornet’s Nest. The British attacked up and down the coast. Mystic (Fig. 8) felt itself to be a likely target, having been described as a “hornet’s nest”. A “fort” was hastily thrown up on the top of St. Jago’s Rock, and named after Aunt Rachel who had a good spring next to her house under the ledge. It wasn’t much of a fort, simply large turfs cut from the marsh laid up like bricks and pinned together with vertical stakes. The gun was a little four-pounder.

On June 10, 1813, the alarm was given and the local militia mobilized, among them Sgt. Joseph D. Mason and his brother Pvt. Daniel. On the 12th, the British from their ships in the Sound sent a large detachment of marines up the river in the darkness in rowing barges, determined to burn the village and shipping. According to Frederick Denison, writing in 1859, “when they reached Pine Hill on Masons Island, the sentinel on Fort Rachel heard the fretting of their oars in the row-locks. In an instant, the alarm gun was fired, and the inhabitants of Mystic, many of whom were accustomed in these times to lie down in their clothes, were ready with muskets and cannon for their defense. The barges were happy to retreat with the best of their speed”.

But about two months later, when suspicion was lulled, the British made a second attempt.
ANCIENT DAYS—An old woodcut showing Mystic in 1836—the oldest known view in existence, looking north, upriver from a point near the present railroad bridge. Fort Rachel, earthworks thrown up during the War of 1812, can be seen topping the hill of rock on the left. The steeple is of the Mariners' Free church, later to become the Union Baptist church and to lose its steeple in the 1938 hurricane. The windmill on the right stood more than a century ago on Pistol Point where the Irons & Grinnell shipyard was located.

The account of this attempt has reached us through our esteemed fellow-citizen Capt. George Wolfe. And the manner in which he obtained the account is worthy of mention. After peace was declared, Capt. Wolfe made a voyage from Richmond, Virginia to Dublin, in Ireland, in the schooner Mary with a cargo of tobacco. The Mary belonged to Mystic, but hailed from New London. While in Dublin, a naval officer came on board the Mary, and learning what port she hailed from, asked Capt. Wolfe if he knew a place near New London by the name of Mystic. Being answered in the affirmative, the officer broke out in the following strange terms: "That is a cursed little hornet's nest—the worst place I ever had anything to do with. I never heard of more daring fellows than those Mysticers; they got up their devilish torpedoes to blow up our ships. We meant to burn their place, and we came well nigh doing it, too." The officer then proceeded to give an account of the effort made.

It appears that barges suitably manned and furnished, endeavored, on a dark night, to run up the river, and fire the village and vessels. Not thoroughly acquainted with the river, and the inlets and bays connecting it with the Sound, the barges attempted to come in on the east side of Mason's Island. (No causeway then connected it with the mainland.) Perhaps they chose this inlet from fear that the main channel was too carefully guarded. In the thick darkness, they lost their way, and ran up into William's Cove above Ridingway. While bewildered and feeling their way around this cove, the tide fell and left their keels in the mud. Alas! for their expedition. The sailors, however, were at once ordered overboard to
lift and move the barges towards better water; but the poor fellows only sunk to their waists in the abounding mud, to slowly push the barges into a yet more helpless and hopeless condition. One may imagine the mortification of these royal forces, as they stood, or stretched themselves, or floundered in the mud, in the muddiest part of this proverbially muddy cove, and of their fears, too as testified by the naval officer, lest the daring Mysticers, appraised of their inglorious state, should fall upon them with torpedoes, bombs, or guns, and so stretch their carcasses longitudinally and lifeless in the dreary domain of mud, as companions and food for the lusty eels and gaping quahaugs. Fortunately, however, for the red coats and royal gilt buttons, the flood tide awoke before the “rosy-fingered morn”, and so the valiant village-burners, with uncharred torches, dependent chins and clamorous stomachs, hastened to their majesty’s well-moored ships, thankful that they had escaped with untom skins. Time and tide did not favor another exhibition of navigation and valor.

**Battle of Stonington.** The following summer of 1814, the British decided to throw their full land and sea forces against the United States. Napoleon had been defeated and the Treaty of Fontainebleau signed in April. On the morning of April 9th, a British fleet sailed into Fishers Island Sound under the command of Commodore Thomas Hardy, the same Hardy who had held the dying Nelson in his arms at Trafalgar. A small boat put into the Borough with a terse warning to the inhabitants to get out of town before the village was destroyed. Tar barrels blazed on the distant hills, and the militia poured in throughout the night. The next morning, the bombardment started, and continued for two days. Several landing attempts were made, but in each case were repelled. Damage to the town was not severe, but the shore battery returned effective fire. Finally the frustrated British withdrew, but not to give up.

**Taken in by a Yankee Trick.** The sequel is told by Frederick Denison:

On the 12th of August, 1814, the next day after the signal repulse of the English at Stonington, the victorious Yankees, as if not satisfied with their noble defense of the borough, and the injury they had done to the English ships, planned to decoy a barge from the ships lying off the Hummocks, and to capture her. To this end a plot was laid by Capt. Eldredge Packer, and others of kindred daring, which was as follows:

First a few squads of militia men were detailed from the companies then near Mystic, lately called out for the defense of Stonington, and were put under the command of Capt. Packer. They were detailed as volunteers and the company numbered about 80 men. They were marched down behind the hills and through the woods to (Groton) Long Point, where they were secreted behind the eastern bank of the Point, ready to act upon a given signal. Captain John Barber was stationed in a concealed spot near a large rock where he could look out
upon the Sound toward the ships, to watch the movements, and to give 
Capt. Packer and his men the needed signal. Meanwhile, not knowing 
but the barge might be decoyed into the mouth of the Mystic River, or 
that the victors might be pursued by a second barge. Capt. Jonathan 
Wheeler, with the regular company under his command, was stationed 
on the west bank of what is now known as Light House Point, (Noank).

Second, a large sharp fishing-boat with a sail, resembling the present 
Block Island boats, was obtained and taken to the mouth of the river, 
where she was voluntarily manned for the errand by: Simeon Haley, 
Captain, Paul Burrows, Henry Park, Peter Washington and Ezekiel 
Tufts. (Tufts memorialized the event with engravings on his powder 
horn, which I have. It shows the sloop and the old Noank Lighthouse, 
as well as a schooner and brig.)

The boat now sailed out around Long Point, and made as if she was 
bound westward on business. She was soon spied by the English ships, 
and a barge from the bomb-ship Terror, with fourteen men, commanded 
by Lieutenant Chambers, was sent to overhaul her. The boat at first 
turned as if to run up towards New London, and then in her apparent 
fright and confusion, turned as if to escape into Mystic River. While 
tacking and filling, and rowing withal, as if for life, the barge was fast 
coming up with her.

Finally, as if in despair, the boat with full sail and bending oars ran 
straight on to the east beach of Long Point, and her men fled over the 
bank. The barge was hard upon her heels, and intent upon seizing the 
boat, as probably loaded with something valuable.

As the barge touched the beach, Capt. Barber rose up and waved his 
sword as the signal to the men in ambush. Instantly Capt. Packer and 
his men rose up, and firing on the barge, demanded her surrender. 
Lieutenant Chambers stood firm yet evidently confounded. Resistance 
was in vain. The Lieutenant simply remarked, “I have heard of Yankee 
tricks, but this is the first time I have experienced one”.

Unfortunately the fire of some of Captain Packer’s men was too low. 
One man, a Scotchman, was killed by a shot through his head, and two 
men were wounded. The barge was immediately brought to Mystic, and 
the prisoners marched overland. The Scotchman was buried with 
military and religious ceremony, with dirgeful fife, muffled drum, and 
fervent prayer. His body was laid in the northwest part of the old 
Packer Cemetery. The generous burial honors paid to the unfortunate 
marine, falling thus alone in the service of his country, far away from 
his native land, and paid too by his country’s enemies, most deeply 
affected the heart of Lieutenant Chambers, who was, indeed, a 
gentleman and a brave and generous officer.
The wounded men were taken to a house then standing near the Old Red Store (on the west bank of the river opposite Pistol Point). The men were so tenderly and faithfully cared for, that “they wished they might remain wounded, for they never in their lives fared so well”.

When the prisoners were exchanged, the citizens of Mystic presented to Lieut. Chambers a purse of one hundred dollars, in consideration of his gentlemanly and officerly conduct.

The captors received twelve hundred dollars for the barge, and fourteen hundred dollars for the prisoners. P.S. The above account is vouched for by Capt. Jonathan Wheeler who was living in 1859 when this article was written.

**Mystic Privateers.** Another tale by Denison goes as follows:

During the year 1814, while the inhabitants of Mystic were being sorely vexed by the English blockade of the coast, they meditated and carried into effect various measures of offense as well as defense. While they sometimes suffered the loss of valuable property by the English cruisers, they determined, if possible, to indemnify themselves by seizing British prizes. The barges of the enemy in their depredations, had even ascended Mystic River as far as Pine Hill (Mason’s Island), since the property of the bold Mystic men was especially courted by the enemy. The Yankees, however, were not to be outdone in diligence or daring.

A barge, named the *Yankee*, a forty-two feet long, double tanked galley, mounting twelve oars, built by Max A. Rogers in Waterford, was purchased by Mystic men for six hundred dollars, and properly armed and furnished for her former business. She was manned, first and last, so far as we have been able to gather the names, by the following courageous company: Lemuel Burrows, Capt., Amos Wheeler, Lieut., Peter Washington, Boarding Master, John Park, Pilot, Nathan Eldredge, James Sawyer, Dudley Packer, Henry Bailey, Eldredge Wolfe, Allen Holdredge, Roswell Packer, Robert Deuce, Abel Eldredge, William Wilbur, George Bennett, Havens Sawyer, George Wolfe, Peter Baker, Ezekiel Tufts, Nathaniel Niles and Elam Eldredge.

Posing as an English barge, she halted and boarded a sloop near Plum Island, which appeared to be laden with salt. Although her papers were in order, the *Yankee’s* crew, suspecting double-dealing, entered her hold and began to thrust their swords and ramrods into the salt, when, lo, their weapons met with obstacles. Removing the salt a little, boxes and trunks appeared. The truth was, the sloop was an English smuggler. She had just been into Gardiner’s Bay and taken from an English prize-ship this load of dry-goods, and covered them with salt as a ruse in case she should fall in with barges that might question her character. Her papers also were intended to aid in this deception. The *Yankee* now revealed
her true character. The sloop was seized as a prize and put under sail for Mystic River.

The goods thus taken consisted of boxes of silk, calicoes, cloths, some block tin, medecines and the like. For safety they were removed to Head of Mystic and deposited in the warehouse of Jedediah Rogers, where they were finally sold at auction for the snug sum of about six thousand dollars.

Further expeditions included capture of a laden sloop in Quick's Hole. A schooner overtaken near the east end of Fishers Island, appeared to be laden with corn and flour, with proper American papers, but later was captured and taken into Newport, where her English cargo sold for about thirty thousand dollars.

_The Women, God Bless 'em._ When peace was declared in 1814, jubilations were going on all over the country, and as Mystic had shared largely in the losses and victories of it, the good people thought they ought to take part in the general rejoicing.

So it was one day that the citizens got together at the house of Joseph Ashbey, near Fort Rachel on Portersville side, on the site afterwards occupied by the National Hotel, “where with good cheer, and plenty of every sort, they gave themselves to the joy of the occasion in right old style”. You! they must have had a high time, which was all right under the circumstances.

The narrator of that period stated that “in the exuberance of their patriotic exultation they unfortunately forgot their wonted Yankee gallantry and neglected to invite the ladies to aid and grace their festivities”. Such a slight didn’t please the women of Mystic, hence it was they proposed to celebrate on their own account. Mrs. Ann Borodel Holmes and Mrs. Fanny (Grant) Haley took the matter in hand and with others well filled with patriotism sculled around the village in search of powder in the dwellings, and having found a lot of it was no trouble to get sufficient flannel to make the cartridges (only necessary for any one of their number to follow the example of Anna Warner Bailey of Revolutionary fame at the Battle of Groton Heights).

On ‘Squire Fish’s old wharf was a six-pounder, and the women having made the cartridges loaded the cannon, touched it off, and the sound of its firing was heard by all the dwellers of that beautiful valley.

’Tis said the forgetful patriotic men-folk over on Portersville side of the river were astonished and mortified as they heard the roar of the women’s cannon, and in a gentlemenly manner doffed their hats to the patriotic women of Mystic they had slighted, yet who had so handsomely reproved them.

Moral: Never slight the women. I.H.P. 1899.
When Nehemiah Mason II (Fig. 32, No. 93) died in 1816, farming was no longer the main activity in Stonington. Estate inventories listed ships and shares, in addition to farm lands and furniture. Brigs and ships carried on the trade to foreign ports. Connecticut born John Fitch's steamboat proved to be more than a toy. By 1816, there was a regular steamboat run from New London to New York.

Newport never recovered from the war. New York had become the major shipping port. Whaling and cod fishing, long carried on out of Stonington in small boats, now became a major industry. The tide to the West by young men after the Revolution had become a flood. For the next generation the population of many county farming towns actually decreased.

The power of the old Federalist Party was fading. In the elections of 1816, they were defeated in Connecticut by the Democratic Republicans. The state constitution was still the Royal Charter of 1662. It was no longer adequate for the new industrial society. A new State Constitution was adopted in 1818. The Whigs replaced the Federalists, and political divisiveness became intense.

In Mystic itself, shipbuilding became a booming industry. As the old farms were split up, the young men who didn't go West entered the shipbuilding trade. Joseph Mason (Fig. 32, No. 98) turned to the Army as a career. Daniel (Fig. 32, No. 99) ran the still successful farm, but much of its produce moved through New York. Raising livestock and grain began to suffer from the competition of the new farms in the West. The Masons turned more to making cheese. Stonington cheese always had a fine reputation for quality and taste. Peleg (Fig. 32, No. 100) stayed on the Lebanon farm.

Nehemiah Mason III, 1800-1864. Nehemiah (Fig. 32, No. 101) moved to Brooklyn, N.Y. in 1832 and became involved in trade and shipping. No doubt he had made many contacts there in previous years, handling the produce from the Stonington farm. He soon set up his own business, and did well enough to buy the "Lord Willoughby House" believed to have been on Jay Street. Having been born on Masons Island, it was a new life for him and his wife, Lucy Ann Latham of Noank.

Gen. Joseph Denison Mason, 1790-1833. Joseph inherited the farm jointly with his brother Daniel. He never married, and was away much of the time. There is no record of any military exploits, but he spent a lot of money on uniforms. He and Daniel bought the northeast part of the Island from the Walsworth heirs, and smaller pieces from the Niles descendents in the northwest quarter. His income from private banking went into shipping shares and mortgages.

In 1824, the brothers built a causeway and bridge to the Island at the Ridingway (Figs. 9 and 10). Thus after 120 years of living on the Island, the Masons could walk over dry shod, at least when there was not a very high tide. I doubt if it were improved any during the next 110 years. I remember it as a one track way built of rough broken stones. The bridge itself was higher, with about a seven or eight foot span. There were four great logs laid over with rough sawn planks. When we drove over it in the old Nash touring car,
the planks bounced and rattled. It was very exciting for my brother Gurdon and me, but my mother clenched her teeth and clung to the dashboard.

Figure 9. Pine Hill from Ridingway, 1890, looking across English Hay Field.

Figure 10. South from Ridingway, 1914, with Mason House on hilltop. (Photograph by George E. Tingley.)
The present bridge was built in the 1930's with a town grant from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, a "New Deal" make-work job. The causeway is built up of cobblestones because the trucks for hauling were all loaded by hand.

An old newspaper story tells about building the first causeway. For several years, the families living at the north end of the Island had begged the Town of Stonington to build a bridge to the Island, but Daniel Mason would not permit it. After the end of the War of 1812, he was hard up for cash and could not pay his taxes for several years. The Selectmen seized the opportunity to make a bargain with him. They would remit his taxes if he would build a causeway and bridge at his own expense. The bridge was built.

Soon after building the bridge, the brothers built a one story wing on the back of the house for the cheese operation. This had a large fireplace backed up to the kitchen chimney, and a full cellar for storing the cheeses. The old separate cheese house was torn down. Daniel's son a few years later built an extension to the wing, making a right angle turn to the west, which included the Sink Room, Milk Room and Wood Room.

The earliest Mason deeds provided for a right-of-way from the Island Ridingway up to the Sixteen Pole Way, but no location was given. In 1824, having just completed the bridge, the brothers applied to the Selectmen for a definite route. After a meeting with the then owner of the mainland farm, William Woodbridge, a forty foot wide private way was laid out. It follows the present Masons Island Road up to U.S. 1 where the old farm house stood at the northeast corner. From there it ran slightly east of the present Hewitt Road and crossed a small stone bridge at the "First Gutter" as the little stream was first called. The bridge still exists about twenty-five feet east of the road. From there it continued across the high land of Koontoquahoods Field and made a bend to head straight for the head of the Cove to join the County Road. Where it crossed the "Second Gutter" in the field about 130 feet west of Hewitt Road, part of one old stone abutment still stands in the ditch. At the "Third Gutter" crossing near the presumed site of Major John Mason's first house, the little stream had been deepened and covered over with great slabs of stone to make a culvert for about 300 feet of its length. It is covered with about two feet of fill. The purpose seems to have been to drain the salt marsh and make a mowing field.

Other old farm roads are shown on the map. The way from Wilcox Curve toward Old Mystic was still passable with a bicycle when Samuel Lamb, Jr. was a boy. This road probably had a branch westward to the Cove below the Third Gutter for access to navigable water from the East Farm. Another road used to run the entire length of the East Farm. In the Great Swamp north of Sailor Ed's, a little stone bridge still crosses one of the streams. The road continues all the way down the "Neck", now Latimer Point.

Joseph was Selectman in 1815 and 1816, and Sergeant in the Stonington Militia. He filed a Will in 1822, presumably before heading for the Indian wars in the upper Mississippi. Back home, he was Selectman again from 1829 to 1831. He died in Stonington in 1833 at the age of 43. I don't know how he got to be general in so short a time. Perhaps the Connecticut unit gave him that rank so he wouldn't be outranked by the commanders of other units.
At the time of his death, a new Will had been drawn. Since his brother Daniel was to die within a few months, Daniel's widow inherited the whole property, in trust for her children. Joseph left his military uniforms to his brother Peleg, along with his interest in ships and notes to the value of $11,600. Everything else went to Daniel. The Island farm of about 240 acres was valued at $11,600 for his half interest. Included was Abigail's Island and the Groton Wood lot. Daniel also got all of Joseph's civilian clothes, which he was never to wear. For years afterward, Daniel's sons, John and Andrew, were to wear the clothes, which were of the finest quality. Joseph also left a half interest in:

- 400 lbs. cheese
- 1000 lbs. salt pork
- 500 lbs. salt beef
- 320 lbs. butter
- 400 bus. potatoes
- 56 tons English hay
- 144 sheep
- 13 cows

The Inventory of personal property ran as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>38.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes of Hand and Interest</td>
<td>7,365.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 shares Stonington Bank</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 shares Fire Insurance Co.</td>
<td>200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/64 Ship <em>Argonaut</em></td>
<td>3,937.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/16 Ship <em>Black Stone</em></td>
<td>1,047.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sealing schooners <em>Plutarch</em> and <em>Montgomery</em></td>
<td>566.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4 Smack <em>George</em></td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slip No. 31 in Stonington Meeting House, North Church</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books:</td>
<td>11.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Vols. <em>Donquixotte</em></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Old Histories</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>History of the War</em></td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Infantry Discipline</em></td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one-half interest, with Daniel. Much the same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as their grandfather Andrew had bought.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Maple desk and book case</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 chests, one with drawers</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Windsor chairs</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Looking glasses</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Fall leaf tables</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Feather beds &amp; bolsters</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 large, 4 small silver spoons</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron pots and kettles</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars, wedges, saws</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clothes, 1 Military coat 25.00
Military: 1 Military coat old 5.00
1 Military hat and plume 8.00
1 Officer’s sword and belt 23.00
1 pr. Epaulettes, Great Collar 20.00
1 Epaulette 4.00
3 Girts 1.00
1 Sash 1.00
1 pr. White boot tops & Valesse 1.00
2 pr. Spurs and stirrups 3.00
1 brace pistols with holsters 15.00
1 Housin and Holseter cap 7.00
1 Trunk and 2 pocket books 3.00
1 Small sword 1.00
Clothes, 1 Blue Cloak 4.00
Civilian: 1 Blue broad cloth coat 7.00
1 Olive brown, same 2.50
1 pr. Blue pantaloons 3.00
1 Box blue coat 1.50

Other items which included pantaloons, 5 vests, 12 shirts, stockings wool, cotton and silk, handkerchiefs cotton and silk, shirt collars and bosom, boots, shoes and small clothes 28.42.

Miscellaneous items to the value of 11.75 included an umbrella, a tablecloth, seven napkins, 3 razors and straps, 3 yards Satinette, an Ivory bodkin and toy, one pair Gold earrings, 2 Birds Eye Coverlids and one blanket.

The total valuation came to $22,232.25. It was appraised August 16, 1833 by Stanton P. Babcock and Ambrose H. Burrows of Dodge's Island. They were each paid $1.00 a day for four days. This last, more than anything, gives us an idea of the value of a dollar in 1833.

Daniel Mason, 1792-1833, and Hannah. Daniel (Fig. 32, No. 99) was always the farmer, although he attained the rank of captain in the militia. In 1817 at the age of twenty-five he married Hannah Stanton Punderson Williams. Her parents were already "old families" in 1796. When he died sixteen years later, he left Hannah with seven children ranging in age from fourteen to one year. He had gone on a business trip to his brother Nehemiah's in Brooklyn and died there.

Hannah suddenly found herself with a large farm, to be held in trust for her children. Fortunately she proved to be a good manager, and was undoubtedly helped by her brother-in-law in Brooklyn in disposing of her produce. Over the next few years, she paid off a sizable loan from Peleg in Lebanon, and bought in her own name the Sawyer house on the cove east of Pine Hill and other land around it, also the Wolf Ledge Lot from the Fishes. The Parkses continued as tenants, working the small farm on the south end.
It was a strenuous life all the same, with rising costs and scarcity of help. The young men who hadn't gone West or taken better paying jobs in shipbuilding, took off for California in 1849.

THE SEVENTH MASON GENERATION

When Daniel died in 1833, there were Daniel III, Bridget, Mary, Hannah, Jr., John V, Andrew and Elizabeth. Daniel III was then fourteen years old, and being nine years older than his nearest brother, gradually took over responsibility for the farm. Mary was the first to marry, in about 1845. Her husband was Alexander Young(s) of Stonington. Their daughter Alice became one of the last heirs. After that, Hannah moved to her own house on the north cove, possibly taking young Elizabeth with her. Bridget and Hannah, Jr. stayed on in the big house to take care of their brothers.

About 1850, Daniel III got the itch to move west, and settled in central Illinois. Apparently other local people moved to the same area, for within a span of fifty miles, there were settlements named Stonington, Mason City, Niantic, Saybrook, Palmer, Latham and Owaneco.

The next girl to marry was Elizabeth (Fig. 11) in 1855. Her husband was John G.
Colegrove of Stonington. The Colegroves came from Warwick, R.I. There was a big wedding in the Mason House. Afterward the young couple moved to Illinois, in the same area as Daniel.

Hannah died in 1857 at the age of sixty-one. The death certificate says of "convulsions". The boys John and Andrew were then twenty-nine and twenty-seven. The farm was already running down. In settling her estate and that of her husband, the Court appointed a committee to divide the farm between the six surviving children (Map 6). The chairman of the committee was David A. Daboll, Land Surveyor, whose family published Daboll's *Almanack* for many generations. Another member was Gurdon S. Allyn, who was operating a Fish Works for processing menhaden into oil and fish "guano" on the site of the present Yacht Club.

The division gave the two oldest girls, Bridget and Mary, each a half of the House, with land running up to the north shore. Hannah, Jr. got the Parks house which included the south end of Money Point, and a strip running through to the east shore. Elizabeth was given about forty-two acres on the east side, Andrew the southeast part of the Island including Nauyaug Point, and John the north part of Money Point with land running up through the middle of the Island. John immediately bought Mary's land and the west half of the House. Andrew bought Elizabeth's share. They all had an undivided interest in the smaller pieces of land and houses on the northwest part of the Island, which included from Hannah's estate her house and eighteen acres on Pine Hill Cove. There was also the Groton wood lot, and five tons of hay. The schoolhouse lot next to the Road Church Meeting House seems to have disappeared from the list of property.

Hannah, Jr. moved into her own house, called the Parks place. Some of the Parks family seem to have been living in the Money Point house, which was by now 154 years old. Somewhere along the line, it was abandoned for storing hay and sheltering sheep, perhaps after another thirty years when Hannah, Jr. died and the Parks family again occupied her house. One wonders what kind of a life Hannah had there. Did she live alone? Presumably the Parkses farmed the land.

Bridget never married either. She stayed on in the Mason House taking care of her brothers. When she died in 1891, Andrew got an interest in her east half of the house with the other heirs.

The Railroad Comes to Mystic. Before 1852, the railroad had been run from New York to New London. From the east, it ran from Providence to the Borough. Steamboats connected from there to New York. In that year, the New London and Stonington R.R. Co. was chartered to run from the "Thames River to Stonington by the shortest, most feasible and best route". In 1856 it was merged with the New Haven and New London R.R. Co. to "cross Mystic River at any point the General Railroad Commission might fix". The Company engineers chose the route from Noank to cross Sixpenny Island, Abigail's Island and Masons Island, and work was to start immediately. There was more to this than met the eye. The Commission was in the pocket of the railroad interests. It was the railroad policy to squeeze as many concessions as possible from communities along the way, including grants of land. The Mystic people wanted the railroad through town all
right, but thinking that the Company had no other choice in getting from Noank to Stonington, refused any concessions. The Company chose the islands route and actually started driving piles across the Mystic River. I remember a few still in place off Sixpenny Island in the 1920's. Having been "called", to use a poker expression, Mystic business men headed by Asa Fish got up a petition to the May Session of the General Assembly with 580 signatures demanding the route through town. Whatever concessions were made was not publicized. In any case, the bridge was built at the present location. A quarry was opened at Pine Hill on the Island for rock to build the river causeway. A small stone pier was built at Deep Harbor to get out more stone for the causeway north of Noank. Most of this stone came from breaking up boulders in the area, and breaking into ledges. With all the boulders left, it is hard to visualize how thick they must have been originally. Abigail's Island was mostly dredged away to provide gravel fill. The first bridge was wood, and the trains had to slow to a crawl. There was as yet no highway from Mystic to Stonington. It wasn't until 1889 that a railroad bridge was built across the Thames River.

William Ellery Maxson who had the shipyard at Willow Point made his own little deal with the railroad company. He built the station in return for at least one stop a day. In later years, one mail sack was thrown off, and another grabbed with a hook off a "gallows".

The Sawyer Family on the Niles Farm. This is as good a point as any to follow down the Niles Farm on the northwest part of the Island. It included everything north of the Ram Point wall and the head of Ram Point Cove. In 1822, James Sawyer, brother of William Sawyer who had married one of the Niles girls, built a house on the Stoddard Niles allotment on the cove east of Pine Hill. This was the property later bought by Hannah Mason, widow of Daniel. No trace of the house now remains. Six years later, William bought the Nathaniel Niles house and land, and the Peleg Niles land. Thus the Sawyers owned everything except the Niles house land, Crow Point and Pine Hill. A few years later, James sold to William Smith the north part of the Stoddard Niles tract which is still divided off by a dog-leg stone wall running east and west across the small marsh. Smith built a house which was afterward owned by George Payne. All of these people may be family connections, but I have not traced them down. Payne in turn laid out a narrow little lot on the northeast of his property which he gave to his son George C. Payne. These people probably worked in the shipyard across the river. Silas Beebe had bought the little lot under the east side of Pine Hill in 1824, and may have had a house there. After various subdivisions, the Nathaniel and Peleg Niles tracts were bought by Andrew Mason after his mother died. So, with Hannah's property, all of the Sawyer's land, except for the George Payne lot, came back into the Mason family. This left the small Niles Farm, the Boat House Lot, and Pine Hill outside the Mason family.

Jeremiah Wilbur Wilcox. Nehemiah Mason (Fig. 32, No. 101), before he had inherited his father's large holdings on the rest of the Island, had bought Crow Point. With deep water on the Mystic River channel, it was a good shipping point for the larger vessels coming into use. About 1835, he sold it to Jeremiah Wilcox, a family connection, who built a house there. The next year, after the death of the widow Mercy Niles, Wilcox
bought the rest of the river property, which included Pine Hill, the Boat House Lot and what I have labeled the New Barnyard. This last piece he sold to Hannah Mason to go with her Sawyer house purchase.

In 1846, Wilcox bought from the Fishes all that part of Ram Point below the Ram Point Ditch. This left the Fishes only the Fish Lot. In 1873, he bought all the rest of the Niles Farm from the heirs of Jonathan Niles. Wilcox died the same year, and left all of his property to his daughter Sabrina. She thus became the second largest property owner on the Island. She then bought the Sawyer lot on the marsh south of the Niles house, rounding out her property.

Having married a Main from Ledyard, she left her property when she died in 1886 to her two daughters, Allura and Julia. Allura Crandall inherited the shore property all down the river, and Julia Ecclestone inherited the Niles Farm bounded on the west by Barley Field Pond. Julia in turn left it to her unmarried daughter Emma Jane, from whom the Masons Island Company bought it in 1927.

**Pine Hill Quarry.** In 1908, Allura Crandall sold the Pine Hill Quarry to E.S. Belden & Sons. The quarry was in operation at the time, as the deed mentions the large dock and the guys on the mast and derrick. I was told by Clifford S. Belden, one of the sons, that the stone for the Nantucket Island breakwaters came from this quarry. The Narragansett Bay rock was shaley, and the nearest other good stone was at Cape Ann. Operations ceased before 1920. As boys we used to play on a hand cart which was used to bring stone down a narrow gauge track from the works down to the end of the dock. We would push the cart up the slope and then ride it all the way down to the end. There was a good bumper there.

**Prohibition and the Volstead Act.** The quarry dock was used by bootleggers during Prohibition. One day my brother and I noticed a large stack of liquor in cases covered with old canvas and seaweed. Thinking nothing of it at the time, I mentioned it to my father where we were living at the Gate House. He immediately jumped into his car and rushed over to the quarry. There was not a case left.

Another favorite unloading spot was the stone dock at Deep Harbor. We were staying into the winter that year. One night when the family was in bed, my parents in the little bedroom off the kitchen and my brother and I in our cots in the loft, a heavy truck rumbled by on down the island. I could hear my mother below begging "G.S., G.S., don't you get up! You stay right here in bed!" He did. The next morning there was a twenty dollar bill under the front door.

On another occasion when we were living in our new house east of the Pond, Bill H-\-y, a Noank fisherman, came hurrying up to the house one afternoon. "Doc, you've got to help me!" He explained that he had just tied up at the Yacht Club dock, and a Coast Guard patrol boat was after him. My father grabbed a pipe and his old Navy officer's cap from World War I and rushed with Bill down to the dock just as the Coast Guard boat pulled up on the other side. Seating himself on Bill's hatch cover and lighting up his pipe, he began swapping pleasantries with a nervous young Ensign, who didn't know but what he was talking to a retired admiral. My father, though only a Lieutenant (Medical Corps),
looked the part of a real old sea dog. The Ensign never did get up nerve enough to make an inspection, and after a half hour, sailed off. Bill, with profuse thanks, handed over two bottles "right off Rum Row". Afterward my father said, "Worst stuff I ever tasted".

*John and Andrew, the Last of the Line.* When their mother died in 1857, John Mason was twenty-nine and his brother Andrew twenty-seven. They had been brought up in comfortable circumstances, there was still a lot of money in the banks, but they were completely unprepared to handle or even recognize the situation they were faced with. For a few years, things went on as before. Andrew had the idea he might buy back the rest of the Island. In 1866 he bought the Fish Lot from William R. Fish. In 1868 he bought the Peleg Niles lot with a house and farm buildings, the Nathaniel Niles lot which had three houses by that time, and the small George C. Payne lot with its house. These, with his mother's house on the north end, and the Parks house on the south end, brought him rental income. There was also some income from the leases to G.S. Allyn & Co. of the Ice Pond, and the Fish Works (Fig. 13) sites.

![Figure 12. Gurdon S. Allyn, Sr., c. 1870. (Photograph by E.A. Scholfield, Mystic River, Connecticut.)](image)

With the shipbuilding boom in Mystic, rental houses were scarce. There was even talk of building a bridge down from Broadway extension on Denison Point. But the boom did not last. By 1876, Greenman and Mallory had built their last big ships. Mason C. Hill built the twin 130 ton menhaden boats *G.S. Allyn* and *Annie L. Wilcox* and quietly went out of business. Maxson & Fish over at Old Field on Willow Point went into bankruptcy.

*G.S. Allyn & Co.* Gurdon Spicer Allyn (1817-1876) of Ledyard went to sea at an early age with his father Capt. Rufus Allyn, Jr. When Rufus died, Gurdon (Fig. 12) married
Hannah Avery and went into business on his own. Seining and processing menhaden or "boney-fish" was a fast growing industry in Stonington. This was not a food fish, but brought a good return from oil and "scrap" which was dried and ground for fertilizer. Young Allyn first set up a "kettle works" on the east shore of the Island near the present Alley Dock. Here the fish was cooked in big iron kettles, the same that were used on whale ships. The oil was poured off, and the scrap spread on open air platforms to dry. Since a boat usually stayed out until the hold was full, the smell from cooking the dead fish may well be imagined. There were two other works on the Island, one on Ram Point run by John Chapman.

Figure 13. G.S. Allyn & Co. Fish Works. (Drawn by G.B. Mitchell from description by L.P. Allyn, Sr.)

About 1856, the 39 year old Allyn developed a process, which he later patented, to carry out the whole process in a "factory", which he and his partner, Capt. John E. Williams, who had put up a lot of the money, built on the site of the present Yacht Club. They built a double hull wrought iron boiler about twenty feet long as I remember it. It is now buried in the marsh west of the site. Steam was run between the inner and outer hulls, which cooked the fish inside. After the oil was run off, the steam dried the scrap which was stirred and cut up by large rotating blades like an old-fashioned lawnmower.
The smell was greatly reduced according to contemporary reports, although this may seem doubtful to anyone who has smelled a fish works in operation. There was a two story “Cook House” farther up the hill. The well is still there at the corner of Huckleberry Lane. There the men were fed, and the cook lived upstairs. My grandfather, Louis P. Allyn, told me that when the well was dug, they hit ledge about twelve feet down. His father drilled a hole for a blast in hopes of opening up a seam. Instead, water gushed up out of the drill hole and it still flows today.

The little cove west of the point was much deeper then. They would sometimes haul their fishing smacks in there for repairs. They called it the “Hospital”.

In 1857, to get ice for packing fresh fish caught by the Noank fishermen, Allyn built the dams which form the present Ice Pond. Under the hill, he built an ice house, and on the shore a loading wharf. The ice when cut could be slid down into the ice house, and from there directly down into the boats. Four years later, Andrew Mason finally got around to signing a lease agreement. It reads:

“This is to certify that I have let and rented unto Gurdon S. Allyn the Ice pond and land whereon the Ice House and fixtures were situated in Stonington on the south part of Masons Island for the term of seven years from the tenth day of December Eighteen hundred fifty six for the consideration of Six per cent of the sales of Ice from said Ice House. At the expiration of this lease I agree to pay Gurdon S. Allyn what it cost to clear the pond build the Dam lay the foundation for the Ice House also take the Ice House wharf and slide belonging thereto at its then real value or extend this lease. Given under my hand and seal this 4th day of July 1860. (signed) Andrew Mason.”

The present dams were rebuilt by my father, Gurdon II, during the 1930’s. At that time, the pond was drained and the retaining wall built around the pond. Before then, the marshy banks were a great breeding place for mosquitoes. Every spring there was a shrill chorus of peep-frogs, and the bull-frogs rumbled “jug-a-rum” throughout the summer nights.

Allyn also operated ice houses on the ponds at Old Mystic, above Beebe’s Cove and above Pequot-sepos Cove. To keep busy during the off season, he designed and built several substantial houses in Mystic, including his own at 14 New London Road. His copy of Minard LaFever’s Modern Builders Guide published in 1846 is still in the family, as well as moulding planes copied from the engravings. As if this were not enough, he bought with another partner several hundred acres of forest land in Wisconsin, Iowa and Missouri, and supervised rafting the logs down to St. Louis every spring. He even found time to start a water company on the west side of Mystic. The old stone reservoir was located just west of Allyn Street, but is now filled in. Some of the old wooden pipes have been dug up in recent years. He was the first of five generations of Allyns to serve in the State Legislature.

In the winter of 1875 there was a boiler explosion at the fish works. Allyn was injured and died the following spring, at the age of 59. They tell of Andrew Mason
warming himself in the boiler room and drying his shoes. The blast hurled him out through the door, unhurt. He picked himself up, found his shoes in the wreckage, and took off for home.

When Gurdon died, his young son Louis Packer Allyn continued the business with Capt. Williams, who had only been a "silent" partner. The business folded in 1883. After all his father's affairs were settled, Louis found himself with little but the house on New London Road, so he went to work for S.S. Brown & Co. on the Chesapeake.

**Andrew Mason, 1830-1912.** When Andrew (Fig. 32, No. 108) and John's sister Bridget died in 1891 at the age of 70, she left each of her brothers a half interest in the east half of the Mason House, which included the northeast corner of the Island and Orchard Hill. She also left them her undivided interest in tracts on the Niles Farm which they had all inherited from their father Daniel. John was then 64 and Andrew 62. By this time, their only farm operation was raising cattle and sheep which they slaughtered and sold locally. Andrew had started leasing cottage sites on his land at the south end of the Island, and just before he died, sold several pieces.

He was 82 when he died. He left no Will, so his estate was divided in thirds between his brother John, his sister Mary Young's children, and his sister Elizabeth Colegrove's children. His property consisted of the east and south part of the Island, except for the lots he had just sold, a half interest in the East Half of the House, land he had bought himself on the Niles Farm, and an undivided interest in the property there from his father. His Inventory comprised:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ the furniture</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ the hay</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 cattle @ 40.</td>
<td>560.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 sheep @ 5.</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 acres with 2 old houses</td>
<td>1,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160 acres open land</td>
<td>12,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groton wood lot</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash in banks</td>
<td>1,065.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due on lot sales</td>
<td>1,111.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due on rents</td>
<td>86.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due on cottage leases</td>
<td>92.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debits against the Estate: Reuben Chapman — bury dead cow</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barstow &amp; McKensie — headstone</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rossie Brothers — 5 yrs. interest on loan</td>
<td>582.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal and interest</td>
<td>1,712.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 yrs. property taxes</td>
<td>415.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16,799.00

Estate expenses and taxes were not listed, but balanced out at $5,668. The real estate, including the undivided interests, was sold by the Administrator for the Inventory
valuation to Gurdon S. Allyn II and his brother William Ellery Allyn. The two brothers, with their cousin Charles K. Stillman, then formed the Masons Island Company, which took title.

That left $8,368 to be divided among his heirs. Brother John got $2,790, the two Young nieces $1,395 each, the seven Colegrove nieces and nephews $348 each, and little Andrew and Cora, whose father had died, $174 each.

John Mason V, 1828-1917. John Mason (Fig. 14) died in 1917 at the age of 89. The Death Certificate says of “old age”. The same epitaph describes the Mason Farm.

Figure 14. John Mason and Reuben Chapman, c. 1908, in front of Chapman House, Masons Island.

When Andrew died, their niece, Elizabeth Colegrove, a handsome middle-aged woman with dark red hair, came on from Illinois to take care of old John. She missed the
plains of home, where she used to spend years in the saddle. On the Island she kept a milk cow and several sheep.

From the years of grazing, the whole Island looked like a great park. There were the rolling fields, stands of oaks, hickory and beech, and red maples in the little swamps. The cedars came later. Elizabeth was joined by a young relative, Hazel Bundy, from Monticello, Illinois. After John died, Hazel married Bernard Baldwin from Montville. She came back to Aunt Lizzie's to have her first child, Alicia Penelope, in 1919. Alicia was the last child born in the house.

John left no Will either. He owned the West Half of the House with an 80 acre tract running from the north shore down through the middle of the Island to include the north part of Money Point. He also owned a half interest in the East Half of the House with 37½ acres running up to the Ridingway. This he had inherited from his sister Bridget. The other half interest had been bought by the Company from Andrew’s Estate. There was also his undivided interest in the Niles Farm tracts. All of this went to his heirs, to be divided one-half to Alice Young, the surviving daughter of his sister Mary, and one-half to the Colegroves. Aunt Lizzie apparently was never paid for her services, since she put in a claim for $100 a month for herself and Hazel. This was contested by Alice Young, but allowed by the Court. John's Inventory consisted of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masons Island real property</td>
<td>2,700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groton wood lot</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash in six banks</td>
<td>12,934.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and furnishings, things that his great-grandfather Andrew had bought 120 years before</td>
<td>106.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 large and 9 small silver spoons, 2 silver watches</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major John Mason’s sword</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Samuel Mason’s sword</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15,802.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

His funeral expenses were $10 for the Rev. A.H. Withee, the Methodist minister. He had long since given up the family “slip” in the old Road Church. Miss Travena got $5 for singing.

John is buried beside his brother Andrew in the Great Field.

**THE LAST OF THE HOUSE**

After Hazel left, Aunt Lizzie stayed on in the House alone. Dr. Thomas B. Enders of Enders Island (or Dodge’s Island as it was always called) helped her buy her Uncle John’s west half of the House and its eighty acres. He financed several mortgages to keep Aunt Lizzie going, and after her death, owned the whole tract. This is the piece that the Company later bought from Mrs. Enders’ Estate, except for the Henderson lot and a small piece to Herbert.
The Company tried to buy up the heirs' half interest in the east half, but they could never agree on a price. It ended up by the Company swapping its half interest in the property for the heirs' interest in the Niles Farm pieces, in which the Company had an interest from its purchase of Andrew's interest.

When the contents of the House were divided up, the heirs, represented by Alice Young, owned three quarters, and the Company one quarter. The old silver spoons must have been pretty worn. They weren't appraised for much. Did the Colegroves ever get any of them? My father took the John Mason sword, and Miss Young the Samuel Mason sword. They agreed to give both swords to the Stonington Historical Society. Only the John Mason sword is there.

Aunt Lizzie must have been lonesome in the big house. She started taking in young artists to room in the summer. One was Fred Mosel, who later bought the “Haley Mansion” on Reynolds Hill. Young “hippies” of this generation think they started a trend. I remember one summer when I was living in the Gate House with my parents, I heard the thin sound of a violin coming up through the fields from the Burying Ground northwest of the house. It was being played by a young man completely bare except for a cross on a chain around his neck.

As Aunt Lizzie in her turn grew old, her nephew Andrew C. Colegrove, son of her youngest brother Andrew, came on from Illinois to stay with her. Andy put in electricity and kept up the West Half of the House. The East Half by then was falling into ruin. Aunt Lizzie (Fig. 15) died in 1940 at the age of 80. There was hardly a gray hair among the dark red.

In the end, the old House, ghostly and deserted, went up in flames from a grass fire in February of 1952.

In 1976, the last of the Colegrove heirs to the Island sold to the Allyn's the land where the east half of the house once stood, a little over an acre. Thus the old house site is rejoined after a lapse of one hundred and nineteen years.

But even now, the old well that the Masons used for 145 years, located southeast of the house, still holds clear cold water, but the farmyard is grown up to trees and brush.

\textbf{AND AFTER}

\textit{Camping and Picnics.} Starting sometime after the Civil War, the Island became a favorite picnic place for the people of Mystic. In rowboats they crossed over to Crow Point below the Quarry to Nathan Niles' old landing. Those with sailboats more often went down to Money Point. By the 1880's, newspaper articles tell of group picnics there. The old Mason well was always handy for water. In the 1890's, the two older Allyn boys, Lou and Jess, grandsons of G.S., Sr., earned money in the school vacations taking out charter parties in the big catboat \textit{Nylla} (Fig. 16) which usually ended up at the point.

It wasn't long before overnight camping began. Of course, no one owned a tent, but in those days there were plenty of old sails available. One night, before the boys were in
their teens, they went to sleep on the point with visions of old pirates in the woods. They awoke to the sound of heavy footsteps. The “tent” fell about their heads. Not daring to venture out, they found the next morning that one of Andrew’s cows had gotten tangled in the ropes.

The picnic staple always seemed to be clam chowder. The Mason brothers, tired of their bachelor diet, were always on hand to participate. By that time, they were not speaking to each other. Each lived in his own half of the house, cooked his meals at his own end of the great kitchen fireplace, and ate at either end of the trestle table carefully placed across the division line. Any communication was addressed to the cat in the other’s presence. Presumably, the cat was owned jointly.

Mystic people starting leasing camp sites from Andrew (Fig. 17) to put up little one room shacks or “camps”. The charge was usually $5 a season. There were several on the flat on Money Point near the old “treasure” hole. Four stood on top of the ledge. I remember one called “Breezy Bluff” about 1917 which even had an old melodeon, but was otherwise empty. One shack on the shore facing Seal Rocks had the front hinged so that it swung up to form a porch roof. There were also tents and camps along the east side of Poggy Bay.
The lessees were local people: Tracy Burrows, William Kegwin, Ernest Rossie, Amos Tift, Elizabeth Tomkins, May Bray, Malie Tryon, Frederic Moll, Charles E. Wheeler, Winfield Gaskell and John Lyman Allyn. This last camp is still standing at the foot of Skiff Lane, and is practically unchanged, except for electricity and water. The places on Andrews Road got their water from the old Parks well, which is located just north of the road at its beginning on Nauyaug Road.

By agreement with Mason, they all put their outhouses in a row against the foot of the ledge about 120 feet northwest of the well. It was always known as “Backhouse Row”, and facing the early morning sun, it was a popular meeting place when people made their calls there, and drew water for breakfast.

The Summer People. Around 1895, the first summer people from New York and New Jersey began to put up “cottages”. These were more pretentious than the camps, and consisted of one or two rooms, with a large porch and fireplace. The very first appears to have been built by Charles Van Winkle from Rutherford, New Jersey about 1897 followed by that of his brother Arthur W. Van Winkle. Others were built in the following years farther down on the west side of Nauyaug Point (Fig. 18).

In 1907, the New York Tribune ran a contest for attractive and inexpensive places to spend the summer. One of the spots was Masons Island. Maude Allen and her brother Henry in Little Falls read about it, and Maude wrote to her cousin in Noank, also named Maude Allen. So they came to the Island, and brought family and friends. The cottage was built in 1909, overlooking Deep Harbor and Noank, and is little changed today.
Just before Andrew Mason died in 1912, the various cottage owners prevailed on him to sell them their sites. Hasty surveys account for the odd shaped pieces of property in that area. Pauline A. Murray, Maude Allen’s sister, from Little Falls, bought the Wind Mill Lot on the end of Nauyaug Point. She never built on it, but rented the Sophia Nicolai cottage on Deep Harbor. Jennie Decker bought the next site on the point. Her cottage is still there. Henrietta Nicolai from White Plains, N.Y. bought the steep little knoll facing Noank. Her cottage blew away in the 1938 hurricane. Next to her facing the old stone dock were her sister Sophia and Hugo B. Froehlich. Their “camp” is now much enlarged.
and is still owned by the Murray family. The Nicolai sisters were a husky pair who were teachers of Manual Arts. They built their own camps, with the aid of friend Froehlich. Mason kept the dock at Deep Harbor. Perhaps he thought someone would come in with a barge to buy the rocks which he enjoyed blasting from the nearby boulders and ledges. Many pieces are still lined up approaching the shore.

North of Maude Allen's cottage on the next bluff facing south was Nehemiah R. Dodge from Brooklyn, who built in front of where the old Parks Place had burned a few years before. He just got in under the wire, as the payments were made to Andrew's estate. His lot ran back to include part of the little point on the Ice Pond. The old way to Nauyaug Point ran across his lot under the dam. The Dodges granted the Company the right to rebuild and maintain the dam which leaked badly, in return for a right-of-way up the Island to the Ridingway. No one had thought of that when they bought their cottage sites, since the only access for several years was by boat from Noank.

Next going north along the shore was A.W. Van Winkle. His cottage was later torn down after a division of land within his family. Also on the land was a camp previously owned by Charles E. Wheeler of Mystic. This still stands at the head of Andrews Road, but with several "improvements". Then came Elizabeth "Bessie" Gill, her brother-in-law Charles Van Winkle, and another brother-in-law Rowland Haynes. Haynes later got Gates
Island by “homesteading” and put up a cottage there. Cottage and island were washed away in the 1938 hurricane. These last three cottage sites were crossed by a little track named after Andrew Mason, and is still part of their properties.

On the top of the hill facing Enders Island were Charles Osborne of New York City, and to the south of him Catherine Van Horne from Morristown, N.J. Osborne soon sold his cottage to J. Howard Horn, which blew off the top of the ledge in 1938. Van Horne sold her cottage to Edward H. Leadbeater. Dr. Enders bought his island in 1914 and put up a substantial two story house, square with a cupola. It forms the center of the now greatly enlarged house, a series of additions built by his widow during the 1930's.

The “camps” on Money Point lasted until their leases ran out. One more had been built on the bluff east of the Ice Pond by Helen Brereton from Bolton, N.Y. She continued to lease the site from the Company, but never came back after the war (W.W.I).

The Artists. Henry W. Ranger was the first artist of national repute to paint on Masons Island. He came to Noank about 1902. I remember coming upon him one time when I was a child when he was painting on Money Point. Properly accoutered with folding stool, beach umbrella and easel, he was painting with one hand and swatting mosquitoes with a large white handkerchief in the other. He must have had a third hand, as I can't remember how he held his palette.

Lester D. Boronda and his father-in-law, W.F. Drew, were the first to build their own cottage, in 1924 on the Mystic River. It is now incorporated into a much larger building. They did architectural iron work at their studio in Greenwich Village. Lester also worked in oils.

Other artists who were to establish national reputations began coming down from New York in the 1920's. Murray P. Bewley, a young portrait painter from Texas, rented a cottage on the Crossover. He built his own house on what later became East Forest Road in 1925. The other fellows, Herbert M. Stoops, Y.E. Soderberg, Garrett Price, Hal and Ned Ryan, rented the little shacks on Money Point. Stoops became known for his book illustrations and magazine covers, Soderberg for his etchings and water colors, Price for his New Yorker covers and cartoons. The Ryans, besides illustrating, did comic strips. Of course, they all did “serious” painting too. Within a few years, they had all built their own houses on the Point.

As a young fellow in my teens, I sometimes posed for their sketches. I remember when “Sody” was doing a fresco on plaster, which remains in the Money Point house. He got me to pose for two of the figures. For the fellow pulling on the jib down-haul, I sat on the floor and tugged on a rope tied to the leg of a heavy sofa. Once I got quite excited about a job. It was an illustration for a young couple in a clinch. The only trouble was, there was no girl there. He knew how to draw the girl.

G.B. Mitchell, who spent years in the Rockies, brought back a wealth of old Indian clothing and regalia and war-bonnets. When I wore some of his things to my first Artist's Ball, I asked Herb Stoops, who specialized in Indian illustrations, to make me up. I never felt more like a piece of canvas as he squinted, stepped back and forth, and daubed at me with his brushes.
NAUYAUG YACHT CLUB

In the summer of 1914, the new property owners on the Island organized the Nauyaug Yacht Club. The officers were:

- Commodore: H.S. Osborne
- Vice Commodore: Charles Van Winkle
- Sec'y - Treas.: Sophia J. Nicolai

Directors: N.R. Dodge, Dr. G.S. Allyn, Dr. Thomas B. Enders

One of the little shacks standing near the cove at the mouth of Poggy Bay was to be used as a clubhouse. Bessie Gill was chosen to design a burgee. From sources which I have not been able to trace, the insignia was adapted from the written Indian word for Chippechauge, the original name for the Island. At least two flags still exist, one belonging to the small club of the same name formed in 1965.

Figure 19. Regatta Day, 1915.

At the Annual Meeting held on August 17, 1915, the officers were re-elected and a Regatta Committee chosen: N.R. Dodge, Mrs. A.W. Van Winkle and Elizabeth Gill. Aquatic events were scheduled for Saturday afternoon, August 29th (Fig. 19). There was even a printed program.

Motor Boat Parade: "The parade will start at 1 p.m. sharp from the float at Masons Island, proceeding to Noank Public Dock, thence to Light-house Beacon, thence returning to starting point via black buoy." Each family had its own open launch. The pipe frames which normally held a canvas awning were decorated with flowers and flags. A cup was awarded for Best Decorated.
Rowing, Diving, Swimming: “In order to save time, events for women and girls will be run off at the same time as events for men and boys.” “In the women's events correct form in rowing, swimming, diving, etc. will count twice as much as speed and distance.”

Starts were from A.W. Van Winkle’s dock. Ribbons were awarded for the first three places.

Tilting in canoes: (for men)
Blindfold rowing: (for women)
Rowing races: (women’s singles and doubles, men’s singles and doubles)
Race for toy or model sailboats: Cup awarded.
Greased watermelon contest: (for men)

The crowning event was the motor boat “Bang and Go Back Race”. This was a unique Nauyaug Yacht Club event. The intent of the rules was to give each boat an equal opportunity, regardless of its size or speed. All boats were to cross the starting line together. Anyone crossing before or after the gun would be eliminated. The course was straight out to Gates Island. At some point during the race, a gun would be fired from the Committee boat near Gates. The contestants would then make a right turn and head straight back to the starting point. Everyone was supposed to go full speed over the entire course, and if any boat made the return lap in more than a few seconds of the time going out, it would be disqualified. A pennant was awarded.

With all the special rules, it is not surprising that this Regatta was never repeated. In any event, the Club was not re-activated after its discontinuance during World War I, or the Great War as it was then called. Its successor, the Mason’s Island Yacht Club, was not formed until 1927. In the meantime, Harry Loutrel built a tennis court on his property, which was used by all the tennis players on the Island.

The first real sailing yacht was Howard Horn’s forty foot Herreshoff sloop, which he bought in 1926. There was always the question of which was the greater sensation, Howard’s new boat, or his language when it was under way.

THE MASON'S ISLAND COMPANY

Like so many old Connecticut farms, the time came when the Mason Farm was broken up for housing. The actual development of this type of business has so far gone unrecorded, so that I feel that a somewhat detailed description of the origins and concepts of the Masons Island Company may be of interest in the future.

After the death of Andrew Mason in 1912, the two Allyn brothers, G.S. and Ellery, bought his property, except for the few lots which had been sold by him or his estate. Many of their friends thought it was a very foolish investment. There was no proper bridge or road to the Island. It swarmed with mosquitoes in the summer. The old Ice Pond might be nearly full in the spring, but by summer most of the water had leaked out through the old dams, and it reverted to a swamp. The marsh ditches hadn’t been cleaned out in years.

79
G.S. was practicing medicine in Waterford, where he was town Health Officer, and Chief Surgeon at the old Home Memorial Hospital in New London. Ellery was working for his father at the Fish Works in Harborton, Virginia. With their cousin Kirt Stillman they incorporated the business. Each brother put up $3,500 and Kirt $500. To raise the remaining $6,000 to buy the land and have $4,000 for working capital, they took out a mortgage.

The first roads and lots to be laid out were in the area between Poggy Bay and the south end of the Ice Pond. The first sales were made to those cottage owners who had not bought their sites from Andrew Mason, E.E. "Win" Gaskell, George W. Dart and John L. Allyn. Before any more lots could be sold, there had to be some way to get to the Island. A launch (Fig. 20) was bought with a glassed-in pilothouse and passenger section. It was powered by a heavy reliable Lathrop "make and break" gasoline engine, made in Mystic. Skippered by Charles Anderson of West Mystic, it started its runs in 1913 from the newly built Ferry House under the bluff on the east side of Poggy Bay to the Town Dock at Noank, where there was a train stop, as well as a general store and post office.

![Figure 20. Masons Island Ferry, Poggy Bay, 1914, showing old Mason House site to right of ensign. (Photography by W.E. Allyn.)](image)

New lot owners, like the older ones, drew their water from the old Parks well. If any preferred not to have their outhouses on their own lots, they could join the others on the "Row". There was no electricity or telephone service. When the United States entered the war in 1917, G.S. and Charlie Anderson joined the Navy, and Kirt the Army. Little went on for the next four years.

*Bridge over the Railroad Tracks.* After the war, automobiles were coming into general use. The road to the Island was a rough dirt track. After leaving the highway,
U.S. 1, it dropped into a narrow cut across the tracks, passed through a gate which fenced off Williams Point, and followed the old right-of-way down to the Ridingway Bridge where it passed through gates at either end. All these had to be opened and closed by anyone passing through. Once on the Island, the old road along the east shore to the Fish Works had been abandoned, but there was a track up the hill to the Mason House, which continued down the middle of the Island toward Money Point and the Parks house.

Discussions began on building a bridge over the tracks. The main question was, who would build it and pay for it. It was decided that the Town would let the contract, and the New York, New Haven & Hartford R.R. Co. would provide the design and specifications. Island property owners, the railroad and the town would share the costs. In 1921, the Company pledged $2,000, Dr. Enders $500 and fifteen other property owners an average of $100 each, for a total of $4,145. The Company offered to pay the Town 10% of its sales of land until it equalled what the Town put up toward the cost of the bridge and approaches. In 1925, the Town voted $5,000 and the railroad pledged $7,500. By May of 1926, work was under way, and the job completed the following spring. The estimated cost of $21,550 was within $2,000 of the final figure.

Other Improvements. With the bridge over the tracks assured, the Company began other improvements. It ran electricity and telephone lines down through the middle of the Island from existing services at the old quarry. That same year, the first water line was installed. An electric pump and tank stood at the southwest shore of the Pond, and a galvanized water pipe ran over the ground alongside Andrews Road to the Ferry House. When I went around each summer to collect the water rents, Mrs. Frederick Ashton always told me “This is one bill I never mind paying. It is such a convenience not to have to carry water from the well”.

That winter the Ice Pond was drained, and Sherman Hammond and a helper built a retaining wall around the whole pond. With only hand shovels, crowbars, stone hammers and a wheelbarrow, they built the wall and filled the marsh behind it with mud from the pond. That took care of the worst of the mosquito problem. The deep frost that winter also took care of the lily pads which had covered most of the water. It killed off all the frogs too. Living in our little camp (Fig. 22) east of the pond (Chowder Forest on an old map), I missed hearing the early peepers, and the frogs’ legs my brother and I used to get during the summers.

The next summer, the Maple Swamp by the old Kettle Works location was drained. After that we called it Maple Wood. At the urging of several shore towns, the State Legislature set up a mosquito control commission and appropriated money to clear the salt marsh ditches, which it continues to a limited extent. Self-styled “conservationists” today make a great outcry against touching the marshes, unaware of the fact that the flow of tidal water in and out of the ditches not only helps fish breeding, but also greatly reduces that of mosquitoes.

The Great Real Estate Boom. 1927 was the big year for real estate developments. Fishers Island was laid out into building sites, and the great summer places started going up. Florida became a speculator’s paradise, before the bubble burst. The Masons Island
Company decided the time was ripe to join the parade, needless to say on a much smaller scale. Ellery took a trip to Florida to see how the big boys did it. He came back with tales of lots under water and fire hydrants set unattached in the sand. The Company took out another mortgage for all it could swing. The Gate House was built. A new gravel road was run to it from the Ridingway, which the Town later took over. The road (Fig. 25) continued south across Company land, following the present main road, and branched off on the Yacht Club Road and Nauyaug Road west of the Pond.

A subdivision was laid out on the hillside south of the Gate House, and a real estate company was hired to push sales. It was going to be a clean up and get out proposition like all the others. A dozen small lots were sold and nine cottages put up.

From a drilled well at the Gate House, surface pipes were run to provide water to the first cottages in the area. It was one of my jobs to disconnect them in the fall and hook them up again in the spring. Each year, there was more rust and scale to be pounded out before the final connection to each cottage. As the years passed, we put in more wells, and gradually connected them with underground pipes.

Fortunately for the future development of the Island, everything came to a grinding halt with the Great Crash in the fall of 1929. It at least gave my father a chance to reassess the next move. He had plenty of time to think things over. To reverse the trend to summer cottages, he decided to build a substantial year-round house, little realizing what would be the depth and extent of the Depression. By 1936, things had gone from bad to worse. Sales hardly covered taxes and interest. By refinancing at the banks, my father bought out his brother Ellery’s interest. I felt myself lucky to get a job as shipfitter’s apprentice at the Electric Boat Company. I still feel eternally grateful for the

Figure 22. Allyn Cabin in Chowder Forest, c. 1920. Hickory in road fork is now in middle of the road. (Photograph by G.S. Allyn II.)
many sacrifices my parents (Fig. 26) made then and later to put my brother and me through college, and start us on our way. My father finally got the mortgages paid off before he died in 1951.

Business had hardly started to pick up before World War II came along. Land sales and building stopped again for several more years. The one bright spot was the chance I had in 1938 to design and build a big house for Elinor Stweart Ayers on the Mystic River. It gave me the chance to get married and start a family of my own. My brother and I (Fig. 27) both joined the Army when the war came along. He was lost after his company made a parachute drop in Normandy the night before D-day.

MASON'S ISLAND YACHT CLUB

Cyrus Henry "Harry" Loutrel came to the Island in 1921. From the start, he took an active part in Island life. On May 2, 1928, he called a meeting at the Essex Club in Newark for the adoption of a Constitution and By-laws for the Club. The incorporators were: Henry Allen, W. Ellery Allyn, H. Schuyler Horn, C.H. Loutrel, Herbert M. Stoops and Charles A. Van Winkle. The first officers and trustees were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officer</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commodore</td>
<td>C.H. Loutrel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-Commodore</td>
<td>Thomas B. Enders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear-Commodore</td>
<td>Walter H. Lathrop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

87
Active membership then included both residents and non-residents. It was provided that an officer of the Masons Island Company should be one of the trustees. One vote called for the issue of $15,000 in bonds at 5% interest, never fully subscribed. Other votes were for building a clubhouse not to exceed $7,000 with tennis courts not to exceed $1,000 and a dock not to exceed $500. One of the old Fish Works piers formed part of the dock. The Company donated two tracts of land, one for the club building and the other for the tennis courts. It only took another $2,000 appropriation to finish the clubhouse (Fig. 28).

The building had a large high-ceilinged room with a great stone fireplace, seldom used except for cigarette butts, a dining room facing the water, a kitchen and locker rooms. On the second floor was a room for the help, and two rooms to rent. One of the early occupants was the newly married Warren Clarks, Mary and “Red”. The employees' main duties were keeping house and running the restaurant. It was expected that family and friends would teach the children how to sail, swim and play tennis.
As might have been expected, the restaurant always ran a deficit, in spite of special lunches and teas (See menu, Fig. 29). Harry Loutrel usually made up the difference. There was a dance every Saturday night. Beginning in 1934, Francis Fain and his band provided the music. He still plays at the present club on special occasions. As also might be expected, there was soon agitation for the club to have a liquor license. It was finally resolved to keep it a family club with no license.

A Mason's Island One-design sloop was proposed. It turned out to be a first-class twenty-seven foot open cockpit day sailer. Five were built, for Ralph Halsey, Harry Loutrel, Alex. Murray, Jr., Herb Stoops and Charlie Van Winkle. This class was joined by 18 Foot Cape Cod Knockabouts, numbering about a dozen. For the "speed freaks", several members bought 16 Foot Sea Sleds built at West Mystic, which were powered by 16 Horse Johnson outboard motors. All classes raced on Saturdays, and some in the middle of the week.

One of the annual events was "Racing Starts", to provide competition between all of the sailboats. It has been continued ever since. Another race was designed to teach young children how to handle boats properly. It started with all of the boats tied to the dock with sails furled. At the starting gun, the crew jumped into the boats, raised the
sails, cast off, and headed for the first mark. At another gun signal, a member of the crew leaped overboard, was rescued, and the boat proceeded on its way. At the finish, the boats had to be properly tied to the dock, sails furled, lines coiled and crews ashore, all to the satisfaction of the committee, before the winner was announced.

Original Membership. Original local family members and bondholders in 1927 were:

| Henry C. Allen | Harry C. Cornwall | Charles P. Maxson | Herbert M. Stoops |
| Louis M. Allyn  | John C. Debrot    | Herman E. Myers   | Arthur W. Van Winkle |
| Louis P. Allyn  | Thomas B. Enders  | Lloyd R. Moore    | Charles Van Winkle  |
| Clifford H. Belden | H. Schuyler Horn | Garrett Price   | Theodore Van Winkle |
| Murray P. Bewley | James W. Lathrop | Edward Ryan      | Charles E. Wheeler  |
| Edward S. Bradley | Walter H. Lathrop | Y.E. Soderberg   | G.W. Blunt White    |
| G. Fred Brown   | Cyrus H. Loutrel  | Charles K. Stillman | John P. Wilbur    |

Figure 28. Old Yacht Club, c. 1930.

First National Frostbite Regatta. On May 14, 1933 the first “National” Frostbite Dinghy Regatta was held at the Club. “National” meant that the sailors from up Long Island Sound decided to include those from the rest of New England. Twenty-two boats were in the finals for Class B, competing for the Henry B. Plant Cup. It was won by Waldo Howland from Boston. Young Bill Dodge, in the only local boat Dodgit, came in eleventh. Bill Taylor in the New York Herald Tribune described Class B owners as “serious racing men, whereas most of the A boats are raced only occasionally”. Allan Clark of Port Washington and Bill Dyer of Providence tied for the George E. Roosevelt
Mason's Island Yacht Club

MENU

DINNER SPECIAL $1.00

Olives - Celery

Choice of:
Clam Chowder - Little Necks - Soup - Fruit Cup

Choice of:
Lobster, any style always available
Chicken, any style on order
Lamb Chops, on order
Steaks, on order
Potatoes and Fresh Vegetables in Season
Salad — Lettuce with Russian or French Dressing

Choice of desserts:
Shortcake - Apple Pie - Ice Cream - Pudding
Tea - Coffee - Milk - Ginger Ale

Special Breakfast — 50c
Luncheon — 75c
Sandwiches and Salads always available

Afternoon Tea and Toast with Cinnamon or Marmalade 25c

We would appreciate reservations in advance for large parties and any menu desired may be arranged.

Figure 29. Yacht Club Menu, c. 1930.
Cup in Class A. The racers were lodged and fed by Island people, although some stayed aboard their yachts anchored in the bay.

Broke. The Great Depression of the 1930's affected the club like everything else. By 1936 it was broke. Members and bondholders made cash and bond contributions, but it was not enough to swing the tide. Before things could be straightened out, the Hurricane of September 21, 1938 struck, smashing the clubhouse and dock. After the wreckage was cleared away, only the two locker rooms on the north end could be salvaged. These were squared off and the top covered with tar paper. They served as a clubhouse for the next few years.

In 1939, the club was reorganized under a new constitution and by-laws. Active membership was restricted to owners of real property on the Island. Another mortgage was taken out and a new clubhouse was built. It was much smaller than the old one, but has now been greatly enlarged. Between 1931 and 1966, the Company donated four more tracts of land, bringing the club property to its present size. After the new clubhouse was built, a young man was hired to teach sailing, swimming and tennis, and to police the building and grounds. As time went by, each committee wanted a man for its own activity, so the number was increased to four. Now the trend is the other way.

THE WHALE

The most spectacular event on the Island before the 1938 Hurricane was the arrival of the whale (Fig. 30). It wasn't a very big whale, but it was a very rare species. One afternoon in late November of 1937, young Arnold Herbert wandered down to the dock on the east shore. To his astonishment, a whale was lying along the north side, feebly moving its tail. By the next morning it was dead. My father notified the Peabody Museum in New Haven, and three men soon arrived who identified it as a “Bottle-nose” or “Sowerby's” whale, fifteen feet long and weighing about a ton.

With the aid of an automobile, the whale was pulled up on to a boat launching ramp, and the museum men set to work. After many photographs, they cut off the tail and flippers and made yard square plaster casts of the whole body. The next step was cleaning the flesh off the bones. Under the skin was about an inch of blubber. The flesh, like the liver and lungs, was jet black. Bloody bones and casts were loaded into our old wood-bodied Ford station wagon, which my brother drove to New Haven. Several times since, I have asked them when they were going to mount the skeleton and make a cast of the whale. The answer is always the same, “When we get enough money.”

THE 1940's

By 1940, the imminence of World War II hung like a dark cloud over everything. For the country, it was no longer a question of “if” but “when”. On the Island, there
were forty-five camps and cottages, and ten year round houses. The Company had begun putting zoning regulations into its deeds in 1927. These were strengthened during the following years, and provided one of the models for town zoning which was yet to come. Lot sizes were increased. Marshes and wood lands were preserved at a time when many shore front developers were dredging and filling to get the last square foot of water frontage.

Figure 30. Sowerby “Bottle Nose” Whale, 1937.

The first tentative steps toward community self-government started. An informal arrangement was made with the Mystic Fire District to provide fire protection at $25 a call. To insure that money would be on hand for immediate payment, Wilwyn “Bert” Herbert asked for contributions to start a fund. In 1946 he sent out a letter asking for more money, suggesting that each house owner contribute $5 for the fund and $5 as a gift to the Hoxie Engine Company.

Little attempt had been made to keep up the dirt roads, outside of a load of gravel here and there. A wood bridge was built around the Dodge property at the south end of the Pond. In 1941, this proved inadequate for a large moving van, so Loutrel and Mitchell Wallace bought a small corner of land from the Dodges, and the Company with contributions from other south-enders built the present causeway. This joint effort prompted other road improvements. The Company had already started to tar the main road.
THE 1950's

By 1953, the Money Pointers had organized under the title “Over the Bumps and Through the Woods Money Point Improvement Association” to collect money for road maintenance. The humorous title suggests Emma Cole. Two years later as the collections were systematized, the name was changed to “Money Point Boulevard Association”. In 1956, the other branch roads followed suit, with less formal identifications: Nauyaug Road, School House Road, the Seagull-Plover loop and the Yacht Club Road.

In 1955, Mrs. Thomas B. Enders, who by then had inherited the John Mason division of the Island, died. She had previously opened a quarry on her land to furnish stone for her island seawall after the 1938 Hurricane. The Company was able to buy the whole tract, amounting to sixty acres, except for the Henderson lot and Herbert piece previously sold by Elizabeth Colegrove. It ran from the north part of Money Point up through the middle of the Island to the north shore. This insured controlled development for the major part of the Island.

In the Fall of 1957, seventeen families held meetings with a view to establishing an association to serve the interests of property owners south of the Gate House. A committee was chosen to get things started, consisting of Henry Scheel, Charles Bartow, Stuart Law and James Allyn. On December 3, 1958 a proposed Constitution and By-laws for a voluntary membership organization was prepared by the four above and Hugh Cole, Duncan Henderson and Margaret K. Jones. It was approved by a more than two-thirds vote of all property owners. On May 31, 1959 an organization meeting was held, and The Mason’s Island Property Owners Association was incorporated under the new Home Rule Act of the Connecticut General Assembly. Its purposes, summarized, were: stimulate interest in the welfare of the community; fire protection; road maintenance; general improvement. Annual dues were to be based on the town property valuation, but this was changed to a fixed amount per family. Officers elected were: Henry Scheel, President; William Attwood, Vice-president; Reed Beal, Treasurer. The Directors were: James Allyn, Eunice Collier, Leonard McLaughlin, Louis Palmer and Albert Schaffrick. A budget of .4 mills was adopted on a Grand List of about $550,000. Two hundred dollars was approved for road maintenance from the Gate House to the Yacht Club, and the function of Bert Herbert’s Fire Fund was taken over. Since membership was optional, this proved an unsatisfactory way to raise money, but the organization had no taxing power.

Up to 1958, the Company had been obtaining water from wells it had drilled at different spots on the Island, and had been installing underground water lines. The drought that year made clear that there was not enough underground water to supply the future growth of the community, so the Company signed a contract with the Mystic Valley Water Company to furnish water, and at its own expense had an 8 inch main run from the top of the hill on Williams Point down across the Ridingway Bridge. From there, a 6 inch line continued to the Gate House. Another 6 inch line was run to the northwest part of the Island, with costs shared with some of the property owners there. Ownership of these lines is held by the Mystic Valley Water Company. All the lines south of the Gate
Figure 31. Masons Island, 1958. (Photograph by Perry Aerial Surveys.)
House were installed and are owned by the Masons Island Company. Costs of installing some of the branch lines were shared by a few of the property owners. The wells and water from the Pond were discontinued.

**THE 1960's**

In December of 1960, the Mystic Fire District, which had been providing fire protection for the whole area between Mystic and Stonington Borough at $50 a call, announced through its Board that it would now charge the area 7.5 mills on the town Grand List. Although this was the same rate as their own, it would not include hydrants, street lighting and garbage collection. Most critical was the fact that there were no districts in the area to collect the tax. About 250 of the outraged citizenry met at the Town Hall to find a solution. A committee was formed, with Scheel and Allyn representing the Island. The Stonington and Old Mystic Fire Companies offered to serve on a temporary basis. The Mystic Commissioners bowed to the pressure of their own taxpayers, and agreed to go along.

Early in 1961, the Quiambaug Fire District was incorporated under the General Statutes. Property owners inside the Gate, concerned about maintaining private roads and beaches, decided to form their Mason's Island Fire District at the same time. Its powers were less broad than might have been obtained under a Special Act, but it permitted collection of taxes for the purposes of extinguishing fires, street lighting, planting and care of trees, construction and maintenance of roads, sidewalks, drains and sewers, employment of watchmen or police officers, construction and maintenance of recreational facilities, collection of garbage and construction and maintenance of flood or erosion systems. The vote to establish the district was unanimous. The officers were to be the same as the Association.

With the active participation of both districts, the Quiambaug Fire Company was formed. Both districts contracted for service on an equal basis.

For the first two years, the Mason’s Island District, taking one cautious step at a time, collected money for fire protection only. The Association continued with a road maintenance contribution. Starting in 1963, the District appropriated $400 for the main road only, and $2,600 to Quiambaug. The tax rate was 1.4 mills. In 1964, .4 mills was voted to help maintain all District roads. This amounted to about $1,000. St. Edmund’s Novitiate on Enders Island and the Yacht Club continued their donations, which were gradually increased to $300 each. St. Edmund’s was tax exempt, and the Yacht Club provided for those members who were not property owners in the District.

By 1967, it was felt advisable to have a formal contract for road work drawn between the District and the Company. The chairman of the District at that time suggested that the property owners pay the cost based on their property valuations. I pointed out that under this scheme, the Company would only pay 2% of the cost. A formula was worked out whereby the proportionate shares of the cost would be based on...
This brought the Company share up to 35%, in addition to its regular tax assessment. Under the contract, the Company agreed to pay the entire cost of all new work, and the rebuilding of existing roads to bring them up to town specifications. All maintenance work and snow removal costs would be decided by mutual agreement. The District contributions for the rest of the decade averaged about $2,000 but are now running nearer $5,000.

Since the town property reappraisal two years ago, the District Grand List now stands at $9,400,000 which is about 70% of real market value. With a larger proportionate increase in the Company valuation, the previous road assessment formula has been dropped. Ownership of the roads by the District is now under consideration. Joseph S. Harris was chairman of the Road Committee for several years, and is responsible for putting the arrangements on a businesslike basis.

The District has assumed other responsibilities. A Security Committee hires and directs a guard at the Gate. A Parks and Recreation Committee has taken cautious first steps. Another committee started out as an Advisory Committee to the Company, but now restricts itself to passing on house plans. Unlike all other municipal bodies, the Mason's Island District committee chairmen are not members of the Board of Directors, which usually leads to less than well-informed meetings.

LOOKING BACK

To many people who have bought land on Masons Island in the last generation, it is just another nice place to live. To me, looking back over sixty years, it is still the old Mason Farm. There are the rolling fields and gray stone walls, the great gnarled oaks, the groves of cedars, the acres of marsh. Today, much of this still remains, but the fields are neatly divided into house lots with trim little shrubs from the nursery. Instead of the few old houses, stark and plain but always with the dignity and unpretentiousness of their early builders, there are the variety of houses and cottages, each expressing its owner's attempt to define his position in this modern world. Life in the old days really was more satisfying, in spite of the heavy drudgery, the deaths of babies and mothers and the young people who wasted away. There was the tremendous exhilaration of building a new life in a new land. The future stretched on forever.

I like to walk down to the end of the point in the winter where the cold wind off the water bends the brown dry grass, and the blue-gray waves break white on the rocky shore. As I turn back to my own fireside, I walk in the footsteps of the old Masons, coming home over the centuries. I can almost see the faint plume of smoke from the old Fish Works on the eastern shore. How proud my great-grandfather must have been the first time he fired up the boiler. How likely that his old father, Captain Rufus, shared his emotions. Surely the world was young.
Figure 32. Mason Family Tree.
Niles Family (M.I.)

Nathan Niles
  d. 1778

Nathan Jr., Nathaniel, Elija, Thomas N. P.

Nathaniel II: Jonathan, Lodowick, Peleg, Stoddard, Jeremiah, Nathan III

Allyn Family

Capt. Rufus Allyn Jr. 1767-1847
  m. Freelove Morgan

Gurdon Spicer 1817-1876
  m. Hannah Avery

Louis Packer 1851-1938
  m. Emily Fenner Maxson

Louis Maxson 1877-1946
  m. Laura Abby Greenman

Gurdon Spicer II 1879-1951
  m. Annie Balfour Hislop
  m. Marguerite Leonard Almy

Emily Maxson 1916- m. 1938

James Hislop 1908-

Louis Packer II 1939-
  m. Cynthia Madison Abell

Rufus III 1940-

James Hislop II 1961-
  m. Elizabeth Maxson 1964-

J. H. A. 1976

Figure 33. Niles and Allyn Family Trees.