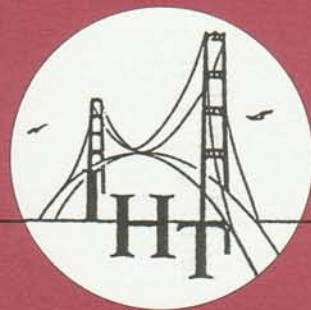


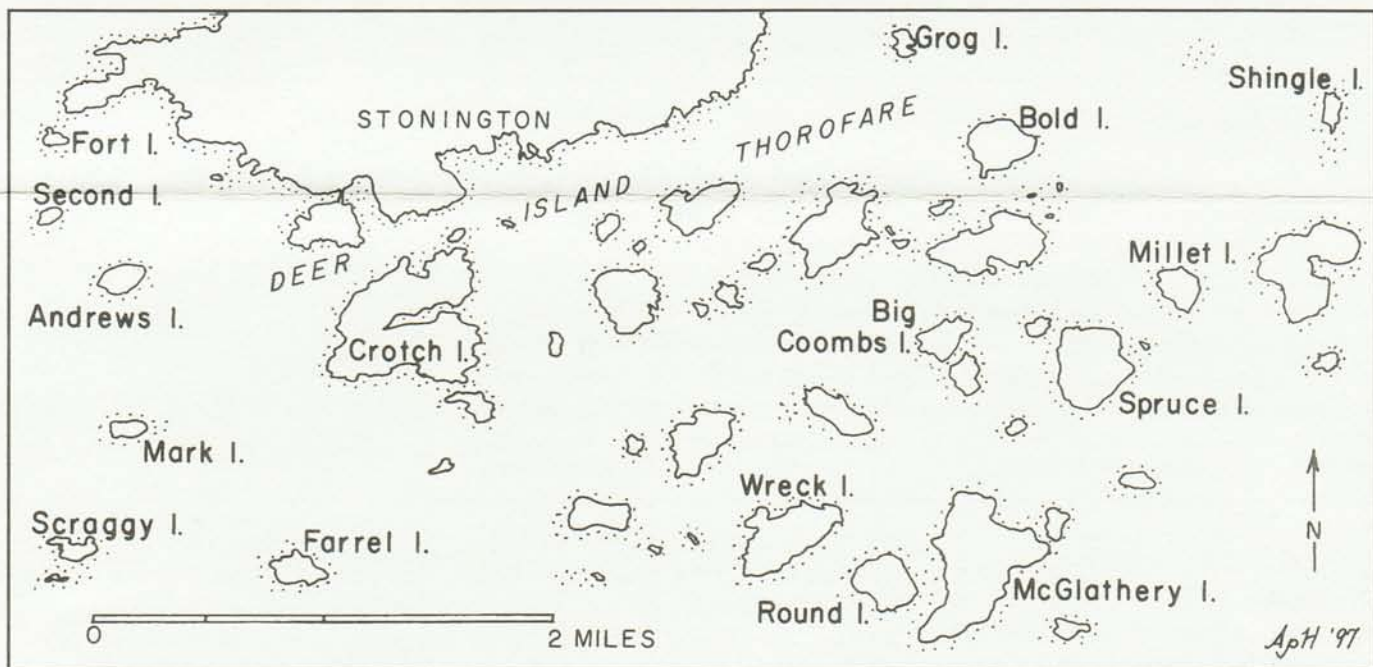
ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST



The Conservation Land Trust of
Deer Isle and Stonington, Maine, and Surrounding Islands

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IHT acquires Millet, Round, and Wreck Islands.

Local Stewardship for Local Islands

The archipelago just south of Stonington consists of more than 50 islands. While there are many lovely island scenes along the Maine coast, this grouping is especially remarkable. Nowhere else are there so many, so closely clustered, and so relatively undeveloped. Less than ten have man-made structures. The appearance of these islands is in sharp contrast to that of much of the Eastern Seaboard. They are not lined with seasonal homes, nor do they bristle with private docks. "An island is not only a piece of real estate, it is the ultimate purchase in the world. . . ." proclaimed a real estate brochure of several years ago. The

ad demonstrates the enormous pressure for waterfront development. Despite that pressure these islands have escaped extensive development, and the likelihood that they will continue to do so seems to be growing stronger.

The Island Heritage Trust's role in protecting this landscape is expanding significantly. It has just taken title to three of these undeveloped islands and accepted monitoring responsibility for conservation easements protecting three others. This transfer of stewardship responsibilities for local islands to local hands was initiated by The Nature Conservancy in a series of discussions that started

this past February. We welcome this added responsibility and see it as a logical evolution in the life of this island grouping. It encourages looking at all of these islands as an ecological system and as part of a larger panorama.

The use and ownership of these islands continue to evolve. These islands represented a livelihood to the early European arrivals. They were cleared for timber and fuel, colonized by families, quarried for granite, used for fishing camps and for pasturing sheep. Early in this century the islands were abandoned for an easier life closer to schools and a larger community.

Continued on page 2

Settlement Quarry Update

A little over a year and a half ago we acquired the 50-acre Settlement Quarry property in Stonington. A capital fund campaign was launched (now nearing its successful conclusion) and a planning committee was established to guide development of the site. All this effort is now coming to fruition.

As this is being written, a work crew is actively engaged in trail construction and arrangements are being made for the parking area and the entrance kiosk. Mapmaker Ann Hooke has led in the designing of the trails now being created. A general cleanup will begin once the foliage has died and the ground is frozen. Want to help? Call 348-6933.

Ian Walker will provide oversight of the construction activity to take place at the entrance of the property along Oceanville Road. Although visits can be made to the quarry at any time, results of our work will not be fully visible until next spring. We feel sure that all these improvements will enhance the enjoyment and interest of a visit to the quarry

Gordon Rittmeyer



Local Stewardship

Continued from page 1

The exodus from rugged rural life was matched by the seasonal exodus from cities by families seeking relief from summer heat and the solitude and beauty afforded by remote coastal shores. This second exodus that started as a trickle is beginning to take on flood-like proportions with our increasing leisure, mobility, interest in a shrinking natural environment, and a doubling of the national population in the past 50 years.

That this single archipelago has seen so little change in the last 50 years is indeed remarkable. Some of the reasons for continuity have to do with what was happening nationally, and some have to do with two far-sighted local citizens. The traditional private ownership pattern of these islands started to change in the 1950's when a newly-formed conservation group bought McGlathery Island to keep

it from being clear-cut for a paper company, i.e., "pulped." In 1962 Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring*, which was the beginning of the current environmental movement. The wider public became conscious of environmental issues and that consciousness altered people's views about the ways we use land.

In the 1970's some island owners began to think seriously about the long-term future of their property. They wrestled with the paradox that special places invite development until they cease being special. They could also see that as a country we were rapidly running out of opportunities to start over. An island easily becomes a metaphor for the larger world. Casual community use of private islands has a long history, but the "community" is becoming wider as the seasonal urban exodus becomes more like a flood. How should an island be shared? For some owners, a conservation ease-

ment restricting their island's development seemed to be a good solution. It acknowledged the community's interest in the protection of its natural resources and the preservation of its familiar landscape, while preserving for the owner rights that were most important to him. For other island owners the right solution was to place their island with a conservation organization that would allow public use but also act as responsible stewards protecting it from "too many footprints." Stonington's Emily Muir and the recently deceased Margaret Hundley both made this decision and not just once, but twice! In some cases the island was transferred as a gift and in other cases a "bargain sale" was arranged when the owner was unable to afford such a large gift.

In the early 1980's the state of Maine became interested in the ownership of Maine's islands and conducted a coast-wide inventory of islands. The result of the inven-

tory was that all islands lacking a legal title reverted to the state, thereby becoming public property. At least seven of Stonington's islands are owned by state agencies, but it seems unlikely that this number will grow in the future. The pattern started in the 1970's of island owners deciding to transfer some (or all) of their development rights to a conservation organization seems to be well established and continuing.

Approximately half of the islands in the Stonington archipelago now have some level of protection against the kind of development that could dramatically change its character. In addition, at least four other island owners are presently considering some level of long-term protection for their islands. It seems fair to say that there is a tide flowing that favors development restraint. However the future is always uncertain. The question is, will the tide hold long enough for the establishment of legal protections necessary to assure the natural beauty we now enjoy is preserved for our grandchildren?

Stanley Myers



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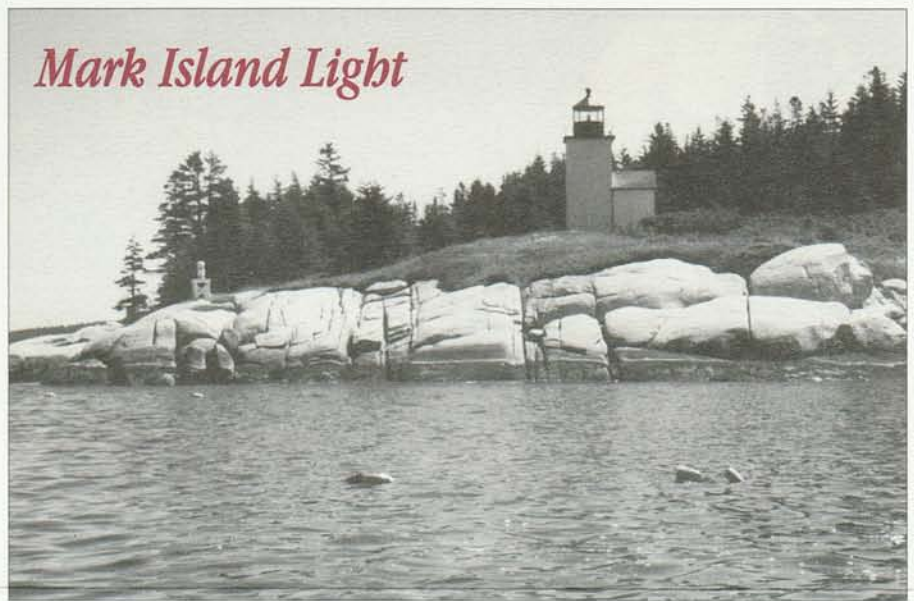
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Mark Island Light

PHOTO BY KEN CROWELL

IHT is applying for ownership of the Mark Island lighthouse.

The Mark Island Light has signaled the western entrance to the Deer Island Thorofare for 140 years. In recent years the neglect of coastal lighthouses has been occasioned by shrinking federal budgets. Now the US Coast Guard is giving up altogether on the maintenance of Mark Island and that of 35 other light stations along the Maine coast. Under an innovative program initiated by the Island Institute, the Coast Guard will transfer responsibility for all of its Maine lighthouse properties to other qualifying governmental agencies or non-profit corporations. The requirement is that they maintain the buildings in a manner that is consistent with their historical significance and that recognizes the public interest.

Ken and Marnie Crowell, members of our Land Committee, attended a conference earlier this summer that introduced the Maine Island Light House Selection Committee process. They gathered the background information necessary to help us decide that IHT should seek to acquire Mark Island. They also arranged for a joint meeting with the Coast Guard to inspect the condition of the brick light tower.

The Coast Guard has agreed to maintain "the bulb, the lens, and the horn . . . for as long as may be necessary for navigational purposes," but Mark Island and the light tower will belong to the IHT if our application is successful.

The Deer Island Thorofare Light, as it is known officially, was constructed in 1857. The keeper's house was destroyed by fire in 1959. Subsequently the light was automated and its fog bell was converted to the present horn. Both light and horn are now operated by a solar-charged battery system. Mark Island is a lovely place. Its six acres are mostly spruce-covered, and it is one of several sea-bird nesting sites in eastern Penobscot Bay.

When we acquire Mark Island it will be the tenth island for which IHT has stewardship responsibilities. The existing tower is sound. Its maintenance costs are judged to be nominal. Because of local interest we expect much of the care of Mark Island will be done by volunteers. An informal community group calling itself The Friends of Mark Island Light strongly supports IHT's application.

Stanley Myers

Ten Years of Achievement 1987-1997



PHOTO BY STANLEY MYERS

IHT's new office, Main Street, Deer Isle.

IHT Office to Move to Deer Isle Village

On December 1st the Island Heritage Trust will move its office to a storefront in Deer Isle Village recently vacated by Skeans & Clifford Booksellers. The new location gives us a space large enough for both the business office and the summer information and sales office, space which we have lacked for some years.

IHT was a summer presence on Main Street in Stonington for many years, with an office staffed by volunteers who provided information of all sorts to residents and visitors, as well as sale items, such as maps, notecards, posters, and T-shirts. In 1997 when summer approached, we were unable to locate an affordable space for this activity, and so to the disappointment of many, we did not have a public location. We are pleased that in the summer of 1998 we will be able to welcome our many friends and visitors to our office again. Come and see us in our new home after December 1st – but especially next summer!

For information about the new office and the work of the Trust call (207) 367-5950 until December 1st, and after that (207) 348-2455. Or you can write to us at PO Box 42, Deer Isle, ME 04627.

Rowan Wakefield

Order Now for Christmas!

Absolutely the best Map of Deer Isle!

A large (26" x 36"), four-color map prepared from the US Geological Survey 7.5' series.
Only \$16.50, shipping included.

Faith Munson Cards

A set of four views of Deer Isle, beautifully painted by Faith Munson, distinguished artist.
Eight full color cards in all, with envelopes.
\$10, shipping included.

Terry Lester Poster

of sunrise over Stonington Harbor,
\$10, shipping included.

IHT Video

A video of scenic Deer Isle and Stonington describing the conservation work of Island Heritage Trust is available for just \$2 to cover shipping. (VHS, 12 min.)



Call 207-348-2455 to order or send check or money order to
Island Heritage Trust, P. O. Box 42, Deer Isle, ME 04627

