

The Gilford Islands  
by  
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TALK GIVEN BY

RUSSELL FOLSOM

ON

GILFORD ISLANDS

JULY 10 1978

AT

THOMPSON AMES HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

GILFORD N.H.

May I say that I appreciate very much, the opportunity given me to speak to the members and guests of the Thompson Ames Historical Society about the Gilford Islands. I thought you would probably like to hear a few facts and figures, as well as history. The facts and figures have been compiled through personal research and some of the historical information has been furnished by friends and acquaintances on various islands, for which I am very grateful and for which I thank them. I am not going to name too many names and those mentioned, for the most part, are long gone and part of history.

I am recording this, as you can see, so that several of my island friends, who could not be present tonight, can hear it and let me have the benefit of their expert advice as to whether or not I have a political future. Let me say this about that, - no more than 18 minutes will ever be erased from this tape.

I am speaking tonight as an island resident. I have been a summer resident of Round Island since the first year of my life, but I am also a permanent resident of Gilford, having moved here three years ago.

Lake Winnepesaukee is New Hampshire's largest lake. It is the third largest natural lake in the United States lying within the boundary of one state. There is a saying that there are 365 "outcrops" in the lake large enough to be called islands, but actually there are only about 274 which are habitable, with 20 to 22 islands within the limits of the Town of Gilford. Lake Winnepesaukee, in indian language, meant "Beautiful Water in a High place". I wonder what the indians would think of our "Beautiful Water now, with all it's boat pollution and milfoil?

Islands have always had a strong appeal to the imagination. Few subjects have been so celebrated in song and story. There is an excitement about islands which attracts adventurers of all ages the world over. That's probably why, years ago, early settlers in the Lakes Region merely "claimed" certain islands which took their fancy, staked out a claim, "so to speak", and settled in. There was probably no one to "say them nay" because the early Masonian Grant, in 1622, according to a very authoritative record, went only to the boundary of the Lake. Technically, the State holds title to all ungranted lands, most especially islands. The State has never asserted it's rights, so original "claimants" passed their island property down and eventually

deeds, etc. were processed. For the most part, it is believed that these islands were claimed for their lumber. In spite of the fact that Captain John Mason granted island property to various individuals, it is generally believed that he had no right to do so.

The report I refer to is that prepared by the State of New Hampshire in December of 1965. While this could be a very disturbing situation for owners of island property, it would seem that if the State tried to enforce it's ownership, which would be a crisis of great Magnitude to island property owners, the cost to the State would be of far greater magnitude. So, let's not worry about it, but at the same time be aware that the situation exists.

In my travels and dealings in and around the Laconia and Gilford areas over many years, I have been amazed at the number of people who have little, if any, knowledge of Lake Winnepesaukee's islands. There are many books about "old boats on the lake", but very little is written about the islands in the Town of Gilford. The only exception I know of is in The Gilford Story, dated 1962 and this is a fine history of Governor's Island, with which most of you are familiar.

This lack of history of our Gilford islands is rather a sad state of affairs and I hope something can be done, one of these days, to bring this up to date. Perhaps after tonight, we can get "islanders" to become interested, dig out old papers, documents, deeds, pictures, etc. to enable the Society to update The Gilford Story because these islands have been and still are an important part of the history of this Town.

All of us, probably, at one time or another, have thought we might like to have or live on an island. However, I can tell you from experience that islands can be "worrisome things". When the weather is good, there is no place better to be, but when the weather is bad, it is another story. Many times we have threatened to give the island back to the indians. Found in the historical documents we have been fortunate enough to see are incidents of man's battle against nature - small predatory animals, deer who love to eat our flowers, birds, bees, etc. These are all found on the mainland, of course, but the effect on life seems to be greater on an island.

Then one must have a good boat, a wharf which must be brought in every winter, also a marina in which to store the boat during the winter. If one is fortunate, there is electricity, a telephone and inside plumbing. If not, there is an outside privy, bottled gas for stove and refrigerator, and kerosene lamps. In spite of all these pitfalls,

and the high cost of maintaining island property, do you think people still like to live on islands? You're darned right they do. I know we wouldn't give it <sup>up</sup> for the world.

Since there are quite a few islands in Gilford, some quite heavily populated, we cannot do justice, in the time allotted, to all the historical data available. Some of them, the smaller ones, have very close knit groups - the larger ones do not have this same situation and data was very hard to come by. If any errors are noted, don't hesitate to bring them up at the end of the meeting when we may possibly have a question and answer period if desirable and if there is time.

Now we'll talk about the islands and take them in alphabetical order.

BIRCH & STEAMBOAT ISLANDS

I am grateful to my representative on Birch Island for the most interesting and comprehensive history of an island that I have ever seen. It covers everything, as the saying goes "from the womb to the tomb", on the approximately fifteen families living thereon, as well as everything of interest that happened during the period from 1880 to 1969. Records are in the process of being brought up to date since 1969.

Between 1880 and 1885, a group of Methodist ministers from southern New England vacationed on Lake Winnepesaukee, camping at different locations. In 1886, two of them, Walter Yates and George Bates, purchased a small island, then known as Belknap, from Mrs. Charles Brown of Lakeport. The name of this island, connected to Birch Island by a small picturesque bridge, was subsequently changed to Steamboat Island because of the fact that the first steamboat on the lake, The Belknap, was wrecked just offshore during a bad storm. She was towing a load of logs, apparently cut from one of the islands in the vicinity. The timbers of the Belknap may still be seen, on a clear day, half buried on the bottom of the lake.

Other ministers and professional men were attracted to Birch Island and in 1893, the group organized under the name of The Birch Island Camp Company, which continues to run the affairs of the island. One member said, some years ago, "the early pioneers on our beautiful Birch Island were ministers and professional men who came for rest and communion with nature and nature's God. He further indicated that they viewed life on Birch Island as "retreat" and not as resort only".

This History of Birch and Steamboat Islands covers a multitude of events and I cannot do justice to them all. They are - articles of association, building of camps, in detail and with interesting anecdotes, ownerships, who's who, methods of transportation, mail deliveries to the island by various floating postoffices, sports and events, many of which were in conjunction with Jolly islanders, fires and rebuilding of such camps, fauna and flora - animals seen - birds, snakes, etc., motor boats weddings, storms, births, christenings and deaths, with a special tribute to Ernest Abbott, who died on Birch Island in 1964 at the age of 74. Ernie was a caretaker for most of the camps, including many camps on other islands in the vicinity;-families through 3rd and 4th generations.

In 1897 religious services were held out on the lake. It is said that Captain Luce would anchor his boat in the lee of either Birch or Jolly island, where the setting sun could be seen. He always had his baby organ in the boat and other boats would gather around, tying boat to boat. The old hymns would be sung. Some one would offer a prayer and then, as the sun sank below the horizon, the boats would quietly drift away, singing "God be with you till we meet again". These were apparently very reverent and impressive services.

I wish every islander could read this history and that every island had something like this going for it.

Congratulations to the Birch Island Camp Company.

BREEZY ISLAND

In 1889 we find that a man by the name of Levi Ward was given a deed to Breezy Island, by Charles Brown, with permission to build a camp. Brown says he owned the island because he claimed it in 1852. He also stated that no one had disputed his claim in 20 years. Here is a good example of what I said earlier - islands were really just "claimed".

It is not a big island, only about two acres, and it has passed down through several hands. The present owners have only been in residence for about three or four years.

Back in the old days, this island was part of The Forties.

## CAMP and LITTLE CAMP ISLANDS

Camp Island is about 25 - 30 acres, with Little Camp about 2. In 1855, John Brown claimed it for George K. Brown. There are no records that this claim was ever disputed. Sam Follett was involved somewhere along the line and for a time, the island was known as Follett's Island. Also, at one time, it was also known as Uncle Tom's Island.

In 1879, George Brown deeded the island, including Little Camp, to his wife, Ellen. Brown also had an interest in Birch Island, Steamboat, part of Six Mile and Mink. In 1881, Ellen Brown deeded the property to her daughters, by names of Chandler and Nolan. Mrs. Nolan eventually sold a good portion of her share of the island, and at the present time, there are approximately ten to twelve camps on it.

The Nolans were staunch islanders, particularly Mrs. Nolan. She ran the boat like a veteran. They spent many summers and parts of many winters on the island. During the hurricane of 1938, Mrs. Nolan was on the island alone. She did not intend to leave. As things got worse, she apparently talked with John Goodhue, by boat radio. Knowing John, he probably said, "Edna, get the hell off that island if you know what's good for you" and she did. Even though she could not swim, she navigated her boat, the Eagle IV, I believe, across the broads to Glendale and arrived safe and sound.

The original Eagle, built in Lakeport, in 1886, for Charles Brown (one of Mrs. Nolan's kin) was used as a mail boat and stopped, when necessary, on Camp Island, even though the island probably was never on the schedule. Just last week, I was shown where the original dock had been.

There is a picture on the counter of the first house on Camp Island, built in 1881.

An interesting item just came to mind. John Goodhue owned a lot on Camp Island at one time and I remember this tale. Veronica Lake, you will remember her, was at the Playhouse. John took her, and others in the cast, for a moonlight sail over to the island. He thought that was quite a feather in his cap because she was quite the rage then.

## DIAMOND ISLAND

This island, of some ten acres, was originally granted, in 1781, to two gentlemen by the names of Tomlinson and March.

There was probably not much going on there for some time, except possibly lumber operations, but prior to the Civil War, because of the number of steamboats plying the lake, such good sized islands like Cow, Long and Bear, began to prosper, with hotels. Diamond Island came next, a hotel was built and a steamboat landing provided. The Lady of the Lake made regular stops there and by the outbreak of the Civil War, the island was well established in the summer tourist business. The old Mount Washington used to stop there also.

In 1880, the Weirs had assumed considerable importance as a summer resort and in order to gain a share of this business, the owners of the Diamond Island House decided to move that hotel to the Weirs. There it was renamed The Sanborn House, eventually the Hotel Weirs. After the removal of its hotel, Diamond Island was dropped from the steamboat schedules and it became just another island.

I was told several weeks ago that the island was owned by one family for a long period of time, but that rising taxes eventually forced the owner to break the island up into lots. Records indicate that the present time, there are about nineteen camps on the island.

DUD'S ISLAND

This island, one of the Forties, is only about half an acre. There was a camp on it at one time, owned by Dudley Parker of Gilford. He and my grandfather were great cronies, back in the late 1800's and early 1900's. In one of the pictures on the counter is shown a small steamer used by these two men.

At the present time, Dud's Island is own by the man who owns Fish Island. The two are separated only by a small inlet.

Between these two islands is where the horned pout used to bite the best, back in the good old days.

EAGLE ISLAND

This is a small island, probably under an acre, located west of Governor's Island. There is only one resident of this island, to the best of my knowledge. I am sorry to say that I have been unable to get any historical data on this island, although I read somewhere that there are 42 different types of trees and shrubs on the island.

There is one thing I learned last week, in listening to Paul Blaisdell speak of the Lake, and that is the fact that the deepest spot in the Lake is off the shores of Eagle Island.

FISH ISLAND

This island, one of the original Forties, some years ago, perhaps in the 1930's, assumed its present name of Fish. The present owner's father acquired it from Dudley Parker, of Gilford about this time. They also bought Dud's island, adjacent to Fish. I would say that there are perhaps five or six acres involved. They certainly have their own island retreat although in recent years, many fisherman have taken over the waters surrounding the islands. They have a very pretentious house, with many rooms and even a piano, I am told.

THE FORTIES

This is a group of islands to the northeast of Welch. To us, growing up, they were always known as The Forties although in later years, some of the islands took on different names. On one map, dated in 1941, the island called Morrison's is now known as Fish. Then there is Dud's Island, Pop's, Kinneho and Breezy. There are many rocks showing above water and I guess in the old days, these were considered as islands. The fishing is always good around these islands, because of the many rocks. Small mouth bass, in particular, like these surroundings.

When we were young boys, my brother and I had to row my grandfather, from Round Island over to The Forties, almost every evening, to fish for horned pout, in a great big Swampscott dory, with nothing but a kerosene lantern for light. Guess that's why I don't care for horned pout fishing now.

For years, The Forties have been designated by the New Hampshire Audubon Society as a loon sanctuary. How one gets a loon to accept and use a sanctuary like this is a mystery, but they nest there, nevertheless. They are in small numbers, however, and the loon population is going down every year. As a matter of fact, as we left the island this morning, there were two loons right close to our wharf. Years ago, there were many many loons on the lake and hearing them call is one of my fondest memories. I have reached the point where I can imitate their call very well, and I have conversations with them once in awhile.

Also, on The Forties, there have been many beavers, and dams. They have done considerable damage to the trees on these islands in the past few years. The owners have had them trapped, at times, and removed to places unknown, but they seem to keep coming back. Don't know whether they are there this year, or not.

Here, among the islands, is a spot which at times seems to resemble the Garden of Eden, before the apple was eaten. People like to come to these places, I presume, because they like to air their differences.

## GOVERNOR'S ISLAND

This island is the fourth largest in the Lake, approximately 495 acres, and it is probably the most famous. There are about 140 homes on the island, with about 30% being year-round homes.

The island was part of the original Gilmanton Grant. The first John Wentworth, Lt. Governor at the time, signed the grant on condition that he would receive the entire island. It remained in the possession of succeeding governors until united to the State during the Revolutionary War. Forty years later, in 1799, it was purchased by Eleazer Davis, of Gilford. History records that he gave it to his ne'er-do-well son, Nathaniel, to keep him busy and out of trouble. However, Nathaniel succeeded in his endeavors and the prosperous settlement of Davisville sprung up. During this period, it was called Davis Island. In 1834, the Millerite Sect craze took place and on one occasion, they gathered on the hilltop in "ascension robes" to await the end of the world, which incidentally, did not occur.

Ike Morrill, of Gilford, bought the island for \$5,000 from the Davis estate and later sold it, for a huge profit, in 1880, to Stillson Hutchins, a politician and publisher.

The "castle" or mansion house, was built about then. Many celebrities, among them President Cleveland and Teddy Roosevelt, were entertained there and prior to World War I, the German Embassy leased the property, where it was the scene of several diplomatic world conferences. This building was destroyed by fire in 1934.

There is a graveyard on Governor's Island, the Davis Cemetery, where Nathaniel Davis, his two wives and mother are buried, including others.

The island, of course, is connected to the mainland by a bridge, built in 1820. Incidentally, I learned at the Summer Town Meeting last Saturday, that there is a plan afoot to replace the bridge in the near future.

There are, of course, many other interesting historical facts about Governor's Island, but the history in The Gilford Story, referred to previously, is most complete and I think I'll let mine stand "as is".

JOLLY ISLAND

This island, of some 28 acres, and presently with eight to ten camps, was part of an original grant to a Mr. John Ringe in 1781. We might consider the fact, here, that he "claimed" the island. I'll mention here, although I think I did so before, many of these islands were originally claimed for their lumber, which also accounts for the fact that on many islands, back then, there was open space which was used for grazing.

I am grateful to one of my island representatives for furnishing me with a copy of a document entitled "Early Days on Jolly Island". While not quite as comprehensive as the Birch Island document, it is still a masterpiece, giving the history from 1846 to 1967, with more to come. It covers just about everything from weddings, deaths, storms and activities of all kinds.

The earliest date on the document is 1846, when Winborn A. Sanborn purchased it from Joshua Winslow Pierce, the price said to have been \$50. He was probably the original "claimer". Sanborn passed the property on to his daughter, Helen. She and her husband, John S. Wadleigh, sold their holdings to Charles S. Davis, in 1891.

Charles Davis was a Methodist minister and in making the purchase, acted with his brother, William (who turns up later on Welch Island), Andrew Coulter and Ben Simon. They each chose their own lots, contracted for dwellings and eventually did a lot of the work themselves.

In 1893, they formed an Association named, appropriately enough, The Jolly Island Association, which still exists today.

In 1894 they built a community icehouse and voted to charge members 1.00 for each piece of ice, 25¢ for all non-members. At about this same time they built a tabernacle and invited Birch Island residents to the services. In addition, they held Sunday evening vesper services in the boats on the lake, many coming from other islands to share these hours of worship.

Of course, Jolly Island has had Mail boat service for years.

Here is a notation in 1903 - The Association called to the attention of the Town, the fact that taxes were a trifle higher than the previous year. Wonder what their thoughts are today?

In 1917, Jolly Islanders react to taxes on motor boats and fishing

JOLLY ISLAND

licenses. They state "We wonder what new taxes will be presented to us in 1918? Wind and water are still on the free list at this time.

In 1921 campers and visitors gathered with pails of creosote, to be used in painting nests of gypsy moths. 2300 nests were destroyed, after which a feast was served, games played, etc. What great fun was to be had in those days!

Appropos to the possible State ownership of islands in Lake Winnepesaukee, referred to earlier, I quote from the minutes of the 1967 meeting of the Association. "The possibility that the State might lay claim to island property was raised. (An article in the Boston Herald of December 4, 1966 sounded the alarm). A representative of the Gilford Board of Selectmen replied in part "While the State might claim to have technical ownership, it is very doubtful if the claim will be pressed, and I believe it is quite possible that some legislation will be introduced in the future to insure title of the property already acquired. I think what the State has in mind is to possibly claim title to only those islands which have not been developed in any way, so that they may be retained as part of the wilderness. There are not many of these left.

KINNEHO ISLAND

This island, one of the original Forties, of about eight to ten acres, was purchased around the year 1905 by two sisters, Helen and Ruth True. Who sold it to them is unknown at this time, but undoubtedly it had originally been claimed by one of those previously mentioned "claimers", perhaps Charles Brown. He had claimed Breezy Island, right close by.

At the present time there are two families involved, both related, and in many cases to people living on nearby islands..

## LOCKES ISLAND

This island, of about 31 acres, and presently with some 40 - 45 camps, is said to be the first island in the Lake to be inhabited by settlers. This was in 1781 and once again, these settlers were "claimers", if you will. Samuel Leavitt could have been the "claimer" in this case.

In 1817 Thomas Thompson, son of William Thompson, Gilford, purchased the island and named it Thompson's Little Island. This Thompson is no doubt related to Samuel Thompson, who in and around those years purchased additional islands, including Round, Welch, etc.

We find that a John Smith was involved here somehow, although not too much on record, and a subsequent sale to Daniel Blaisdell, in 1829.

John Locke purchased the island in 1872, from which comes it's present name. He died in 1890, leaving his widow, Mary, and a daughter Cora, who married Otis Roberts. When Cora Roberts acquired the island, she leased property to various individuals and my island representative, who is presently tracking down these leases, tells me he is having some difficulty. He is working on a historical document of the island, which I presume will be like those on Birch and Jolly Islands. I would say that all camps on the island now are owned outright.

In 1891, one house was carried over to the island on a barge.

Lots of interesting events occurred between 1891 and 1930's but presently they are just not on record. In about 1942, a flash fire started on the south end of the island, set off, we are told, by carelessness of workmen installing telephones. My father, my wife and sister-in-law were on their way to the Weirs for an evening of fun and frolic, after having spent the day minding children, my wife, that is. They spied the blaze and hurried to Glendale as fast as the boat would go, which wasn't very fast. When they reached Glendale, my father and his boat were pressed into service to transport firemen to the island, and they didn't get through until midnight. The blaze was near the Kingston cottage. Mrs. Kingston had gasoline stored in her boathouse, was in hysterics, was taken to shore lying on the bottom of her own boat, with all her jewelry pinned to her corset, and there attended to. The fire did not do much damage, but they say it was a hot old time. Unfortunately, I was not there, as it was in the middle of the week.

At one time, in the 1920's, a Dr. & Mrs. Walsheid resided on Lockes

MARK ISLAND

This is an island of some 93 acres, granted originally, the record shows, in 1781, to John Ringe. There's that man Ringe again - seems like he really got around, to get his lumber. What he did with it between then and 1837 seems to be unknown, but in 1837 George Sanders of Gilford claimed it.

There was very little activity on Mark Island until in 1920, The Mark Island Development Company was formed. Shortly after that, the Company was bought out by three local men and camps began to spring up. At the present time, there are about 20 camps on the island.

There is a hill on this island, said to be the highest on any island in the Gilford group.

The channel between Mark and Mink is known as Adelaide's Channel. Funny, I can't seem to remember why.

Here again, I must tell you that either my research ran dry or something happened -- too many facts to assimilate. Sorry about that Dick.

MINK ISLAND

Mink Island is composed of about 20 - 25 acres and old records do not seem to indicate any "claimer", probably because the property was included with other island land in the area. However, the same George Brown we have heard about before bought the island at some point in time because in 1879, he deeded the island to his wife and then to his daughter Mrs. Nolan.

In about 1955, Mrs. Nolan sold off lots and at the present time there are about 12 camps located on the island.

I regret not to have had a better report on this island because it is right next door to Round, to the northwest, and we are acquainted with several people on it.

PIG ISLAND

This is a small island, situated directly off Varney Point, and separated from the mainland by a small strip of water. I think one could almost walk to the Point and I would doubt that a boat could go through. This is an island on which my research has failed me or perhaps I should say I failed to research it in time. Sometimes the smallest things seem to present the biggest problems. I tried several times to reach the owner, but never called at the right time, I guess. If anyone is here who can give any details on this island, let him speak out. It would be appreciated.

My apologies for lack of history on this island, which is a very pretty little island, with nice buildings and well kept grounds. Can't help noticing it because we pass it on our way out to Round Island.

POP'S ISLAND or CRESCENT

This island is also one of the original Forties, has but one resident, who has owned it for some years. The original "claimer" is unknown right at the moment but will undoubtedly turn out to be one of those previously mentioned because the islands are so close together.

This is the island practically run over by beavers. It's amazing what these little critters will do. We visited it one fall, while on a fishing trip nearby and most of all the good trees had been knawed off about a foot from the ground to form the dam. It was a remarkable bit of construction work, but I wouldn't want them on our island.

ROCK ISLAND

This is another small island, very pretty, with a nice house, boathouse and grounds, of about a half acre or little more. Actually the house takes up most of the island. It is just to the east of Lockes Island, separated by a "NO WAKE" strip of water, with several confusing buoys. We have often thought, as we went by this island - wouldn't want to walk too far away from the house on a dark night. Fishing should be good on the east side of Rock Island if the number of boats anchored there is any criterion.

After numerous attempts to locate the present owner, I finally reached him yesterday, with not much time left to gather any important information. He said they had intended to trace the islands history but at the moment could not help me. He said he might possibly be here tonight. If so, perhaps he could give us a few more clues. If not, I shall go back to my research later and try to bring this history up to date.

ROUND ISLAND

Early records indicate that Samuel Thompson, there's that name again, purchased 18 acres on Round Island in 1819 and completed the purchase in 1820. He undoubtedly bought it from one of those "claimers". Thompson must have held the property for some time, possibly for lumbering purposes, for there were open spaces on the island at one time. We have a deed dated 1826, where John P. Smith, of Gilford, sold the island to George W. Roby, also of Gilford. While Smith was involved, the island had been called Smith's Island.

On September 23, 1887, George Roby sold the island to my grandfather, David C. Folsom. Total acreage at that time, and for years, was supposed to be 52 acres, but in a recent survey, it dwindled to 44.

David built a house in the next year or two and there are some pictures on the counter, showing the original house in both summer and winter. The steamboat referred to previously is shown. Also, there are some post-cards showing the early days in Glendale, when the trains were running and Noah Goss was station agent.

About the turn of the century, my grandfather sold two acres of land, a point on the south end, to a group of men from Massachusetts, who erected a large clubhouse and formed the Round Island Association. These men enjoyed their visits to Round Island for many years, until practically all had expired, at which time my father, Arthur, bought the building and land, bringing the entire island back into the family.

At the time my grandfather built his house, or camp, a crony of his, My Gate, from Loudon, secured permission to build a camp in a cove on the west side. He was to keep my grandfather's camp in firewood and do all the repairs.

My grandfather also let an old crony build a camp, such as it was, on the east side, opposite Nipple Rock. This was there for many years and since coming home this spring, we have found the names of two couples who spent their honeymoons in this camp. In 1950, we took over this old camp and built our own summer residence. Each of my two sons has a camp, one on either side. These three camps, incidentally, were built by us, with a little help from friends.

They say I learned to walk on Round Island. My children learned to walk there, also, as did my grandchildren. We have had five generations on the island, with the possibility of a sixth.

### ROUND ISLAND

While we don't have a historical document like Birch and Jolly Islands, we could easily have had one. In fact, one was started at one point in time. We just didn't seem to have the time to do it while we were growing up. Of course there are some names other than Folsom on the island now, because girls do have a habit of changing names.

My grandfather used to barge cattle, chickens, etc. over from the mainland in the good old days. His picture, along with my grandmother, father, uncle, cousin, etc. are shown on the counter. Otis Roberts, on Lockes Hill Road, kept a ledger of services and sales, to those in the area. It is a very interesting document, loaned to us by the present owner of the Roberts home. Eggs were 20¢ a dozen, milk 5¢ a quart, potatoes 5¢ a peck, boating cattle 50¢, etc.

There are now seven camps on Round Island. We expect that probably some of the various grandchildren involved, some fourteen or so, will eventually want places of their own, but that remains to be seen.

I am sure that I could have spent the whole program on the subject of Round Island, but it is only one of those involved, so I will let it rest "as is".

TIMBER ISLAND

This is an island of about 110 acres, on which there is only one occupant. In 1871, the island was named Wentworth, subsequently sold to John P. Smith of Gilford, then to its present owner. He is a man who apparently dreamed of an island of his own, did something about it and now has plenty of space to roam.

Paul Blaisdell made a very interesting comment, which I quote "The generations of today who love Winnepesaukee, will never know its one time tranquility. Gone are the days of a peaceful picnic while moored in a bay on the west side of Mark Island. The mid-day "skinny-dip" once possible in the coves of Timber Island would now attract a multitude" Actually, a multitude of boats still moor off Timber and Mark islands on summer weekends and I'll wager there is plenty of skinny-dipping still being done there.

## WELCH ISLAND

In 1781, this island, of about 210 acres, was on the original record as Thompson's Great Island, also called Fisher's, Now Welch. We believe this was the same Samuel Thompson, of Gilford, whose name appears in connection with several other Gilford islands. What happened between then and the turn of the century, we don't know. However, a Mr. Welch owned it once and probably gave it its present name. In 1900 a Mr. French, a New Hampshire legislator, bought it and sold some land to Howard Buzzell and the Reverend William Davis, who was originally on Jolly Island.

In the early days, there was always plenty of open space and sheep grazed there, in the southern section, with stone walls to keep them in. As mentioned previously, early claimers took islands primarily for the lumber and that is why so much open space could be found then.

My representative's name on Welch Island shall remain anonymous, but both her maternal and paternal grandparents were early settlers there. She and her husband, married for 33 years, have spent four months out of every year on the island. He is a consultant for the U. S. Government and the other day related a very interesting anecdote:- He, together with a former Governor of New Hampshire, and Henry Kissinger were at a conference in Washington recently. The subject turned to New Hampshire and my friend said to the Ex. Governor - "We are part time residents of N. H." Where asked the Governor - Lake Winnepesaukee, said my friend. What part of the lake? Welch Island. Said the Governor - it happens that I have a cruiser on the Lake and often visit the Yacht Club on Welch Island, - where do you live in relation to that place? Right next door, said my friend. What a coincidence? and things like that are happening all the time. As a matter of fact, that very day I had seen a cruiser go in to the Yacht Club, had noted its name as it went by our island and it was that of the Ex Governor.

The Winter Harbor Yacht Club acquired property on Welch Island during the 1950's and on weekends thereafter, many large yachts and cruisers were "in residence" there.

In the early 1960's, electricity and telephones came to the island, which certainly changed the whole aspect of camp living.

There are now over 50 camps on the island, including one, the original one owned by Mr. French, which was considered to be haunted because Mr. French had died there in 1920. This camp was later rebuilt by the Yacht Club.

WELCH ISLAND

Two families have had five generations on the island and three or four have had four generations.

In 1936 - 1937 a weekly newspaper, The Welch Island Gazette, was published by two teenagers.

My representative's father was a minister and in the early days, as they did on Birch Island and Jolly, they held religious services on the water, in their boats grouped together. One day, when the Reverend was standing in his <sup>boat</sup> sermonizing, Mr. Buzzell, who owned considerable property on the island and was not apparently too church-minded, drove his boat at full speed right close to the group of boats. The resulting wash caused the poor minister to fall into the water, clerical garb and all. The latter was so incensed, he eventually built a fence between his property and that of Mr. Buzzell. Having known Mr. Buzzell, I am sure it bothered him not one whit.

There were many other gems of interest regarding the happenings on Welch Island over the years, but time does not permit more now.

THE WITCHES

I have never considered this group of rocks as an island, but perhaps I have been remiss. History records that once, years ago, there were trees and shrubs supported by the exposed ledges and it was called an island.

It seems that a summer resident on an island said to be Timber used to row periodically to the Weirs. One night on the way home, after having inbibed too heavily, he became lost and landed on The Witches. He was very frightened and spent the night in his boat on the rocks. Later, he related to friends that he had become lost on a barren island inhabited by witches. The area, because it is not really an island, was subsequently called "The Witches".

Probably more boats have gone on The Witches than any other area in the Lake.

Now that we have learned a little about the history of the Gilford Islands, let's consider other things, namely Police and Fire protection. For years, there was not much protection, but island residents sleep much better at night now, knowing that help is as close as the telephone, that is, providing there is a telephone. Most islands have them now.

Immediate police protection comes mainly from the Safety Service Division of the State of New Hampshire, based in Glendale, whose boats patrol the lake most efficiently during the summer months. Gilford police make periodic inspections of island property, I'm told, in the spring and fall, and sometimes during the summer months. They, of course, follow up on any break-ins or robberies.

Fire protection is assured now that the Town has acquired a fireboat, appropriately enough named "Snuffer". During the 1977 season, the fireboat responded on ten occasions - two boat fires, one island fire, three medical calls and four smoke investigations. We have the usual red sticker attached to our phones, with the number to be called in emergencies.

The Glendale Public Docks, parking and collection areas, used by a great majority of islanders, leave much to be desired. There is little police protection and most warning signs are down or bent out of shape. This matter was brought to the attention of the Town officials at a special meeting a month or so ago and again at the Summer Town Meeting held last Saturday, at which very few islanders were present. I am afraid that most do not want to "waste" a summer Saturday talking business.

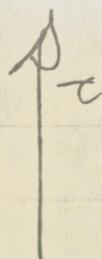
I had planned to give a percentage figure of the amount of tax money collected from island residents as compared to the amount anticipated by the town for all property taxes, but somehow couldn't come up with the appropriate figure. Would you believe that well over \$500,000 of tax money comes out of the coffers of Gilford island residents? This to me is quite revealing. Here is a group of islands, almost lost in the historical records of the Town, paying a good percentage of the tax money of the town. What would the Town do without these islands? What if the islands got together and decided to secede from the Town, as Cape Cod islands threatened to do recently? OR what if the islands decided to lay a proposition 13 on the Town. The Town of Gilford is very fortunate to have this source of revenue because, with the exception of Governor's Island, which undoubtedly does have children going to school, and also needs road supervision, the Town fares very well with these island dollars.

Actually, islanders need something to rally around. They have been shocked many times by rising taxes, but apparently not shocked enough. Would that there was a strong island organization to fight for proper recognition and representation.

I am afraid that I have "overshot" my time limit, which reminds me of a story I recently heard. A man was giving a speech and noticed another, in the audience who had fallen asleep during the boring talk. The speaker was so mad, he took the gavel and hit the sleeping man on the head. The sleeper woke up, took a look at the speaker and said, "hit me again. I can still hear you."

In conclusion, let me say that it has afforded me a great deal of pleasure to prepare this talk on the Gilford Islands and I hope that it was of interest to you.

# The Forties



CAMP

Mrs. GORDON HUNT

Kinweho

(Charles SWARTZ) + HUNT

John. Maggie "Cohn"

Breeze

Wolken

Hewson Swift

Saints Rest

crescent

Lahoy

Pops

fish

North

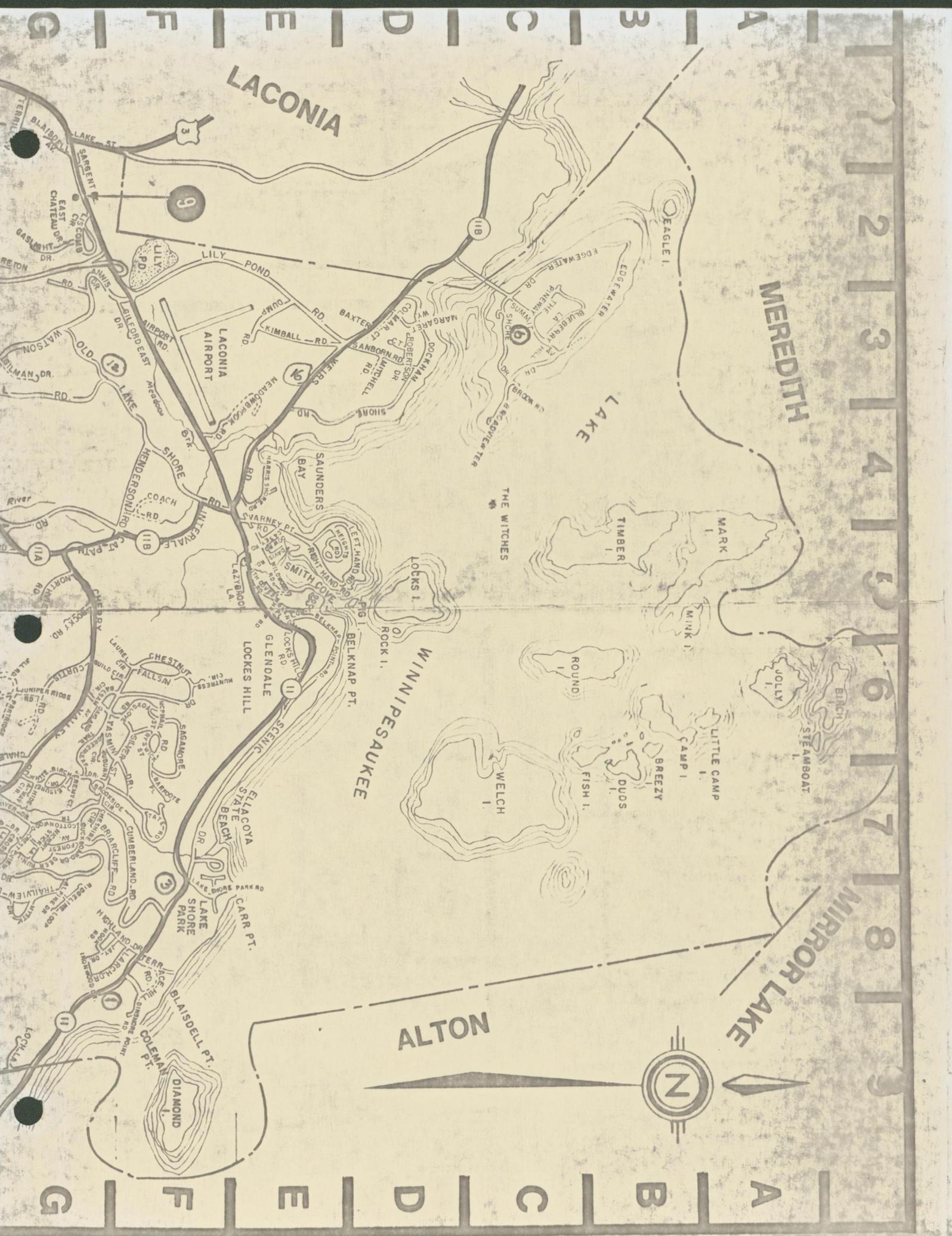
Vessie

Sylvia

Whitney

Rafie

Rich



LACONIA

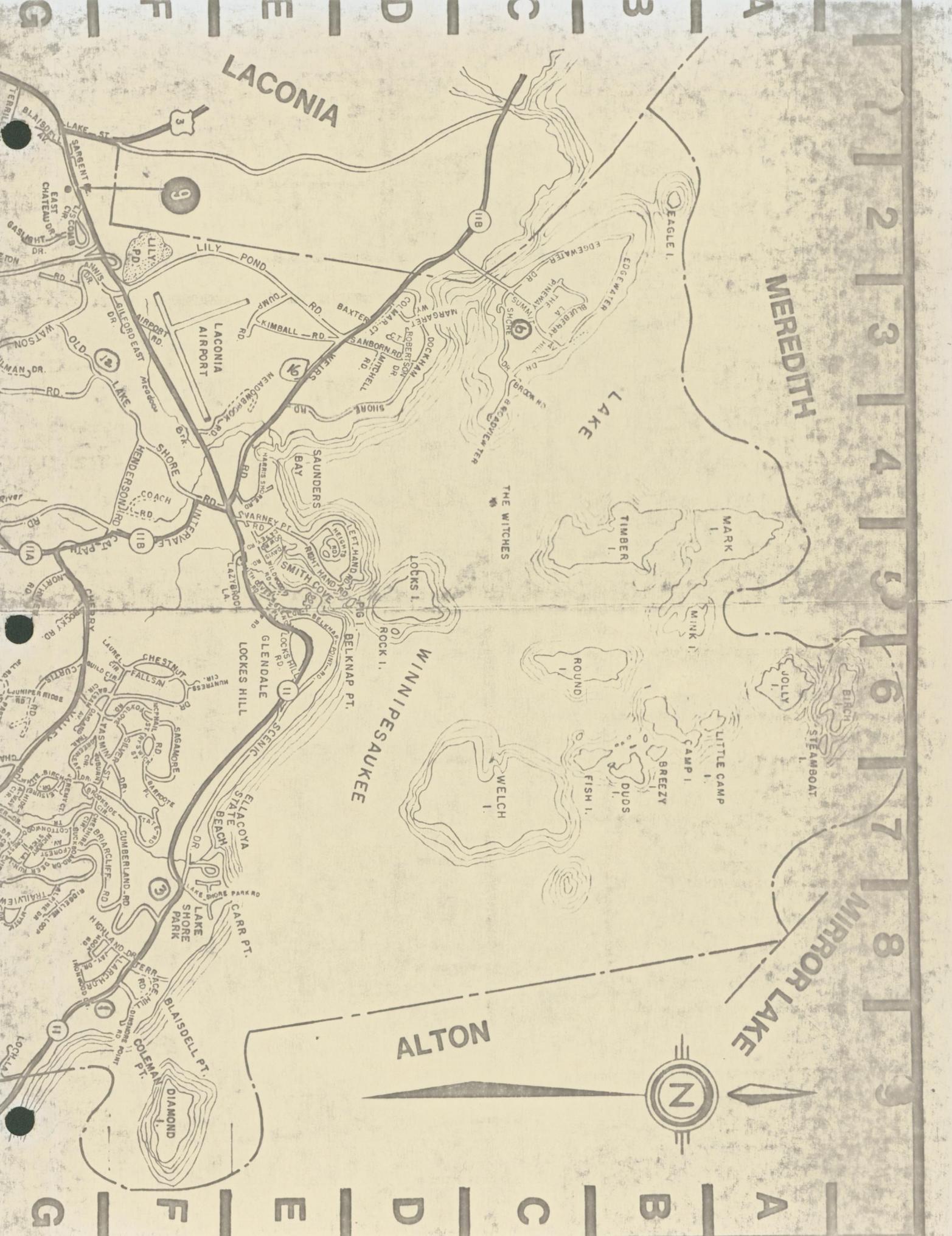
MEREDITH

LAKE

WINNEPESAUKEE

ALTON

MIRROR LAKE



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