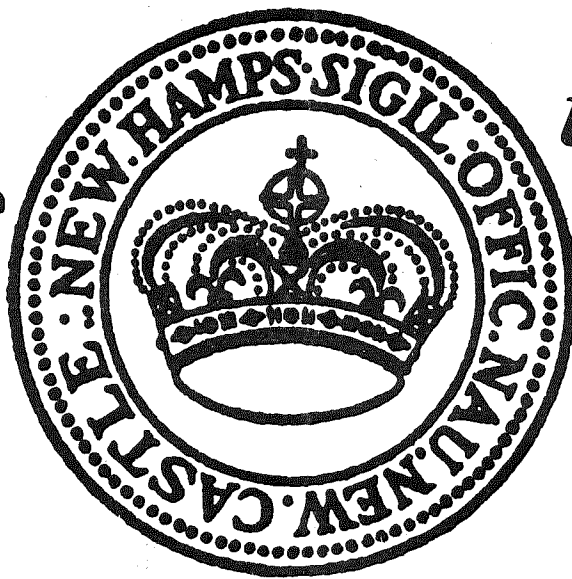


New Castle
N.H.
incorporated
1693



the
Great Island
settled in
1623

This folder prepared in 1973 in honor of the 350th Anniversary of Portsmouth, from which the Great Island was separated in 1693 and became the Town of New Castle.

The Story of New Castle

The first settlement in New Hampshire was made at Odiorne's Point in 1623 and many houses were also built "upon the Great Island which lyeth at the entrance of said river". (The Piscataqua River.) A fort known as the "Castle" was constructed on the north-east point of Great Island "for the defense of said island and river", and the dwellings of the settlers, as well as an Anglican church given by Charles I of England, were grouped near the fort.

The colonists had come to the new world to fish and trade. They found the ocean to be teeming with fish and the tall pines of the forest furnished masts for England's navy.

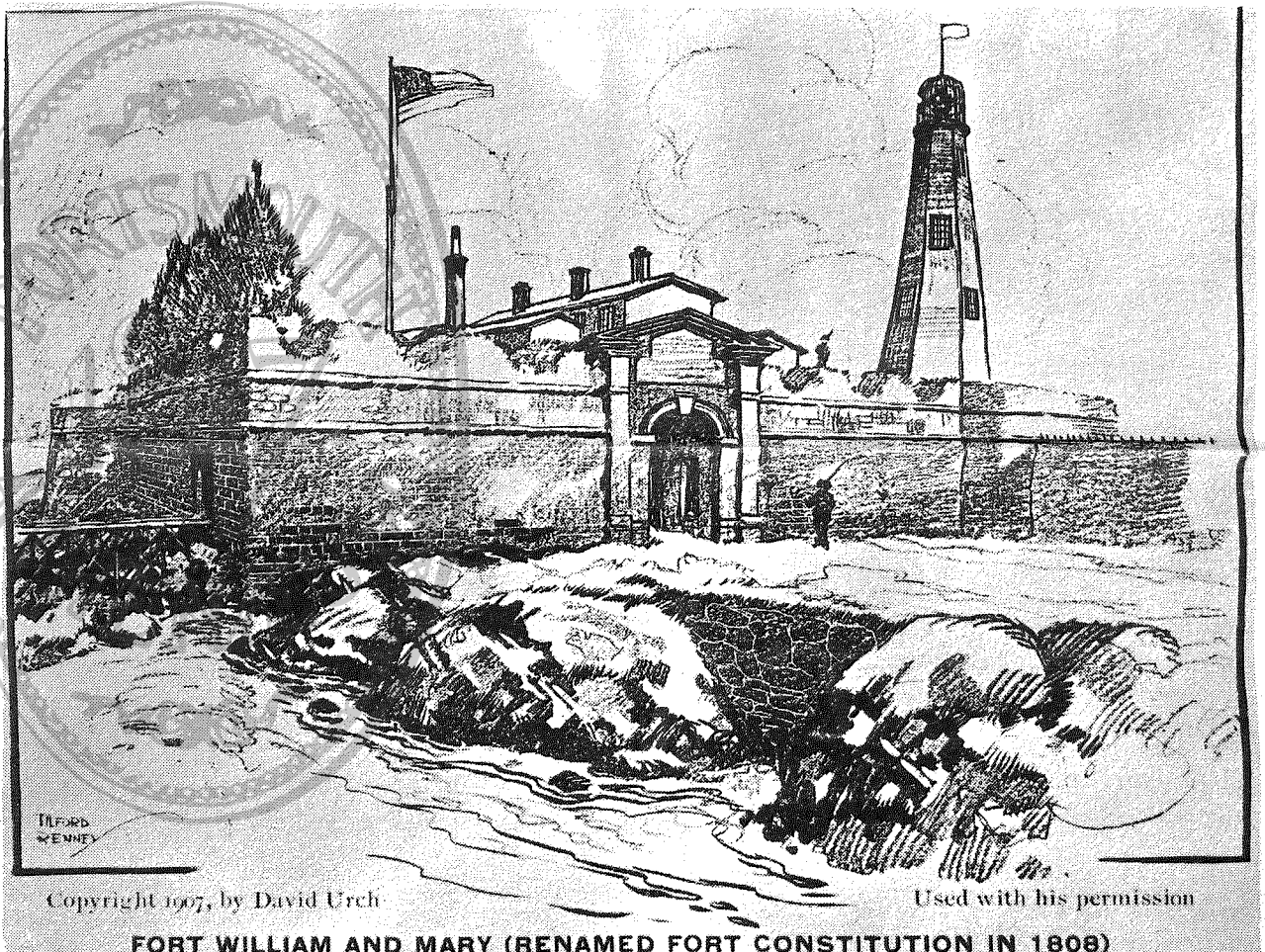
Great Island became the capital of the province, the meeting place of the Provincial Assembly, and the residence of the governors. The jail and stocks were also located in the town. The Province House was situated on a rise of land near the "Castle". (Directly across from the present Coast Guard Base entrance.)

When Great Island was given a charter as a separate township by William and Mary of England in 1693, the town took the name of "New Castle" from the fort which had just been rebuilt and this was referred to as "the new Castle". The fort itself was called Fort William and Mary in honor of the sovereigns.

Shortly after the granting of the charter an Anglican church was built on Main Street to replace the old church on Fort Point which was in a state of disrepair. Due to the influence of the Massachusetts Bay Colony which had controlled the province for forty years, the Anglican faith was gradually superseded by Congregationalism, and in 1828, when it was necessary to replace this church by a new structure, the Congregational Society was organized. The building was purchased from the town, which up to then had been directing church affairs, and was taken down. A new church building on approximately the same site was completed about 1835. This is the present church.

In 1808 a group under the leadership of one Benjamin Randall of New Castle called themselves Free Will Baptists and in 1819 they built a church on Windmill Hill. This building was subsequently rebuilt and services were held until the early 1900's. In 1924 the building was purchased by the town and became the New Castle library.

In 1774, as a result of public reaction to the Stamp Act and the tax on tea imposed by the English government, an embargo was put on the export of arms to the colonies, and on December 14th of that year a raid was made on Fort William and Mary by the



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FORT WILLIAM AND MARY (RENAMED FORT CONSTITUTION IN 1808)

FORT CONSTITUTION — as a turn-of-the-century artist imagined its appearance during Revolutionary War days. It is now an historic site belonging to the State of New Hampshire. The fort is surrounded by the premises and activities of the New Castle Coast Guard Station.

Sons of Liberty who came down river from Portsmouth in gundalows and were joined by men from New Castle and Rye. The patriots removed one hundred barrels of gunpowder from the fort, meeting with little resistance from Captain John Cochran and his garrison of five men. Some of the gunpowder was used at the battle of Bunker Hill.

During the Revolution the name of the fort was changed to Fort Hancock and after the war it was again changed, this time to Fort Constitution.

When General Washington and his army crossed the Delaware River on Christmas night in 1776 before the battle of Trenton, it was a New Castle mariner, Captain

John Blunt who piloted them across the river.

The first lighthouse on Great Island was an eight-sided wooden tower constructed near Fort William and Mary in 1771 at the request of General John Wentworth after a molasses brig had gone ashore on the ledges. It was replaced by the present tower in 1879 and is now known as Portsmouth Harbor Light.

During the War of 1812 the brick Martello tower on the ledges at Fort Constitution was built to protect the town beach. It is alleged that the tower was constructed in one night by the garrison at the fort, assisted by townspeople, when three British ships lay off Appledore. In the morning, on sighting the tower, the ships sailed away after firing a single gun. The tower was named for a Colonel Walbach who was in command of the fort at the time.

When the Civil War began Fort Constitution was garrisoned and enlarged. After the war construction of a new fort was started on

CAUTION!

The New Castle Speed Limit
of 25 m.p.h.
IS STRICTLY ENFORCED!
NO CARS ARE PERMITTED TO
PARK ON THE HIGHWAYS!

CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO

THE STORY OF NEW CASTLE continued from page 1

Jerry's Point (at the end of Wild Rose Lane) where there had been earthworks, but this fort was not completed until the war with Spain in 1898. It was named Fort Stark in honor of General John Stark of Revolutionary War fame.

Although New Castle's trade with England was lost during the Revolution, trade with the West Indies was carried on and several families owned large fishing fleets. In 1817 it was voted at a town meeting that "all taxes assessed in this town may be paid in fish".

By the latter part of the nineteenth century the fishing fleets were gone, along with the fish houses and the wharves which had lined the shore. The fishing village was becoming a summer resort with summer "cottages" being built on the "Outalong", as the ocean shoreline was called, while "Inalong" there were several small inns. A large resort hotel was built on the southwest point of the island and named the "Wentworth" after Samuel Wentworth, the first inn-keeper of Great Island. Wentworth-by-the-Sea, celebrating its one hundredth anniversary, has had only three owners: Frank Jones; Harry Beckwith; and Mr. and Mrs. James Barker Smith who purchased it in 1946.

When the treaty known as the "Peace of Portsmouth", ending the Russian-Japanese War was negotiated and signed at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in 1905, the delegates to the peace conference resided at the Wentworth.

In 1822 three bridges were constructed between New Castle and Portsmouth by way of Goat and Shapleigh's Islands. Because of the swift current of the Piscataqua River, the bridge from New Castle to Goat Island was replaced by a causeway. Toll was charged to use the bridges, but in 1926 they were freed and in 1928 the state road was put through New Castle. Since then all the bridges have been rebuilt of steel.

The first bridge to the mainland, a toll bridge, was built in 1759 and connected Great Island with Pannaway (now Rye). This bridge deteriorated for want of use and was replaced by a new bridge in 1791, the money for it being raised by a lottery. Again, in 1874, the year the Hotel Wentworth was built, it was necessary to replace the bridge.

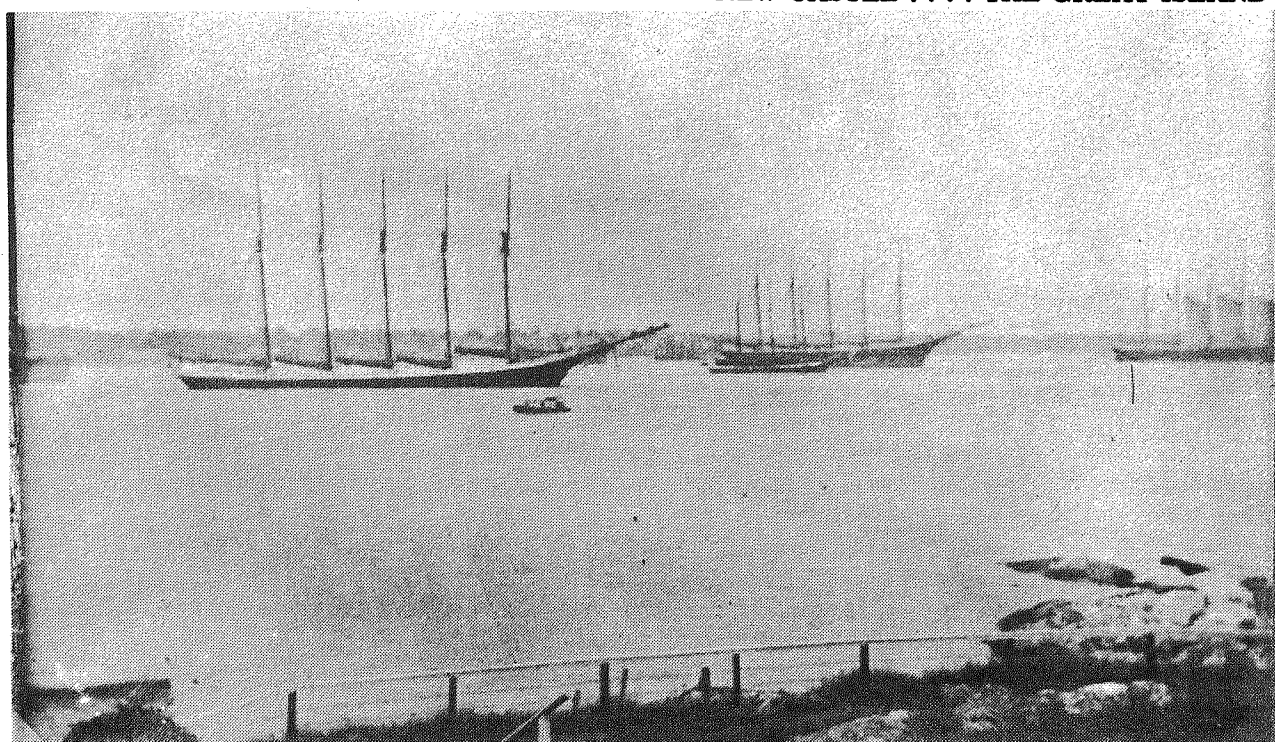
In 1908 the government acquired a large summer estate known as "Frostfield" and this tract, adjacent to the town beach, became the Government Reservation. During World War I Fort Constitution and Fort Stark were garrisoned by the Coast Artillery Corps.

In World War II a Coast Artillery regiment was stationed at New Castle. Fort Constitution was garrisoned; Camp Langdon was constructed on the Government Reservation; and a new fort, named Fort Dearborn, built at Odiorne's Point in Rye (now Odiorne Point State Park). The Navy occupied Fort Stark as the Harbor Entrance Control Post, and this fort was last used by the Naval Reserves for training purposes.

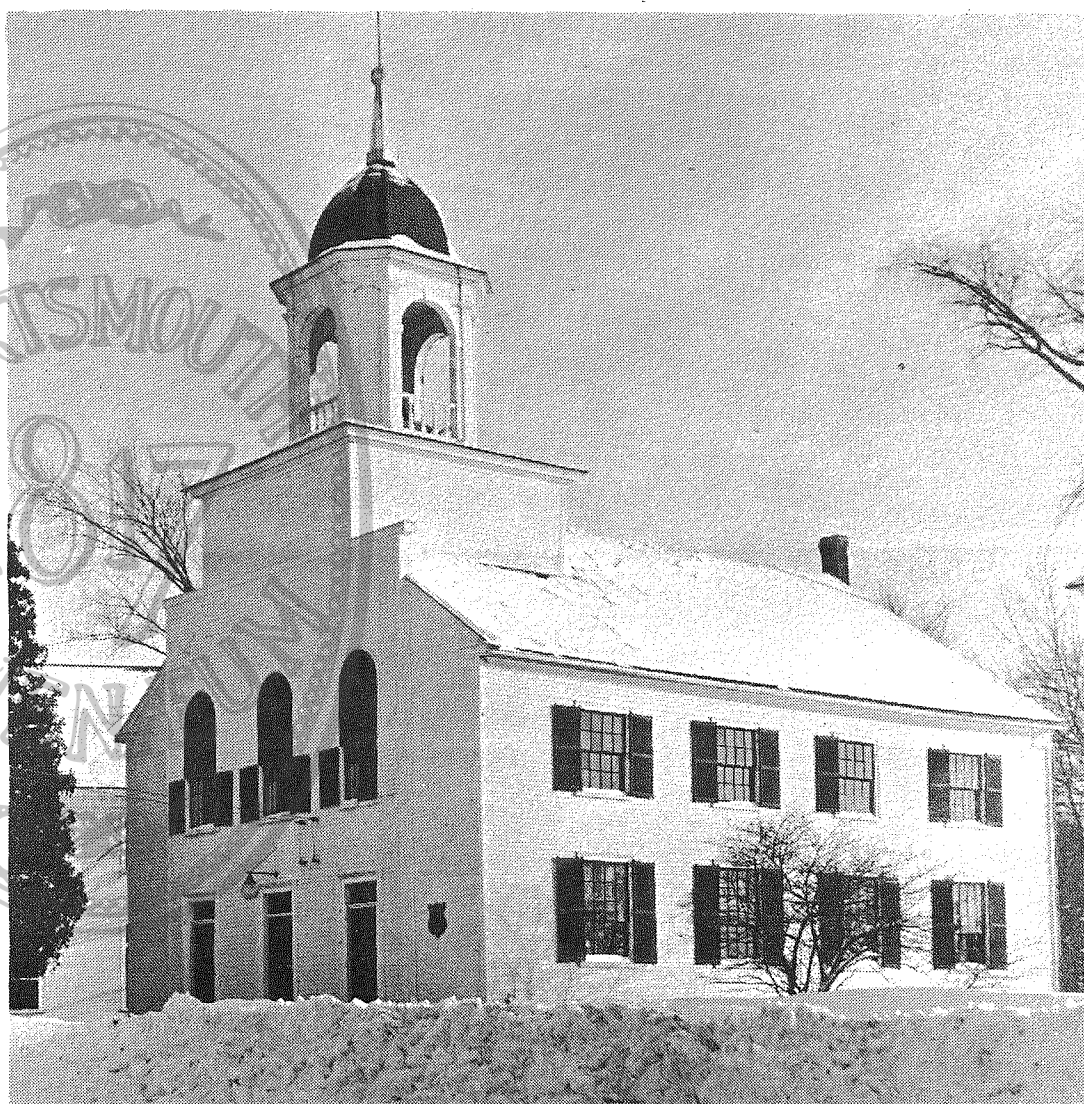
For two hundred years the population of New Castle averaged 600, however by 1970 it had increased to 875. Much of the land on the island has been developed into residential areas, the largest development being "Bosn'n's Hill". This formerly wooded tract received its name from the legend that a ship's boatswain hanged himself from a tall pine tree on top of the hill, and when a storm is coming his whistle may be heard on the rising wind.

Stonewalls that wander through this area once marked the boundaries of farms of early settlers, and old family names may be traced on gravestones in small burying grounds scattered around the island.

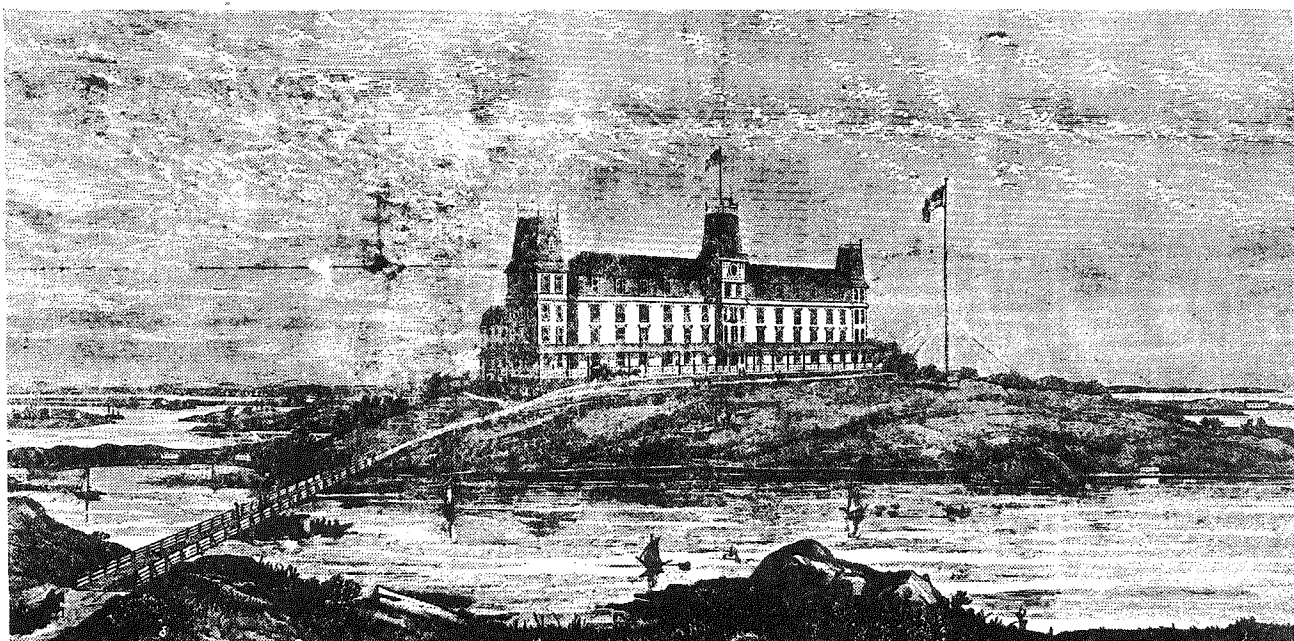
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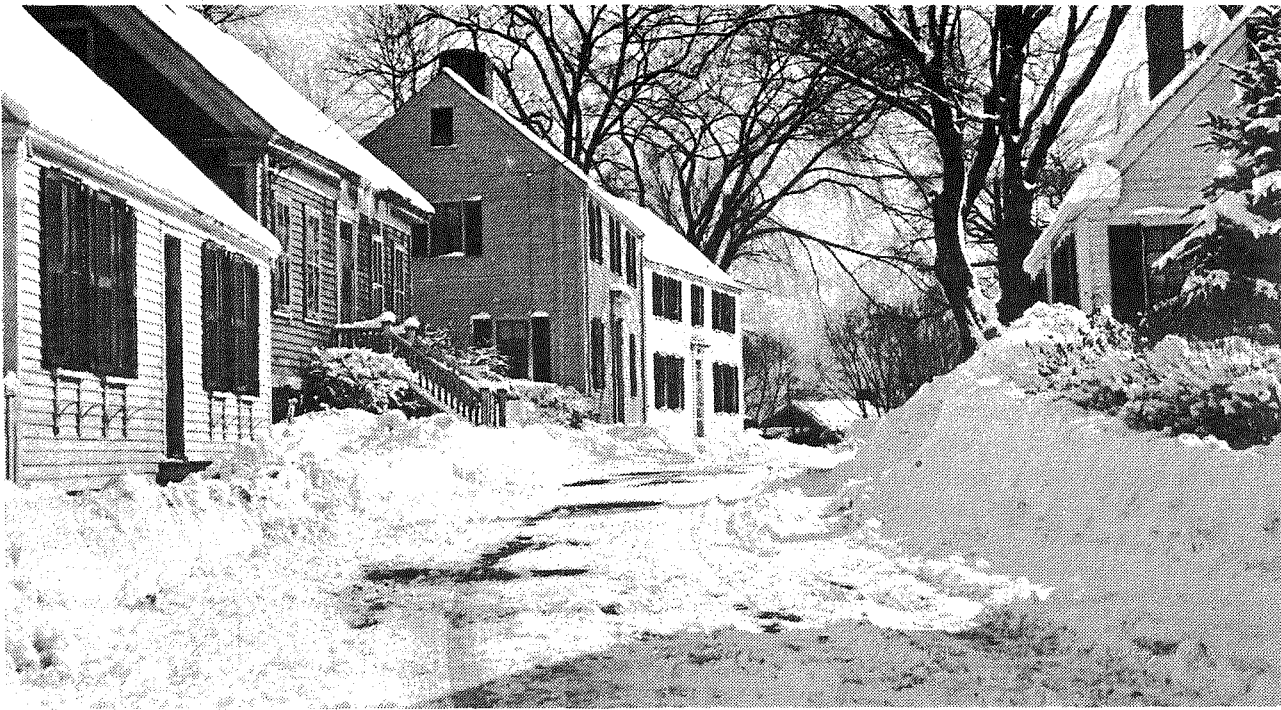
SCHOONERS AT ANCHOR — in the Piscataqua River, looking toward Kittery, Maine, taken about 1910. The early life of New Castle depended upon shipping and fishing, which provided the chief revenue for the town until the early 1900s. During the winter many ships were anchored in the protected areas of the river and harbor.



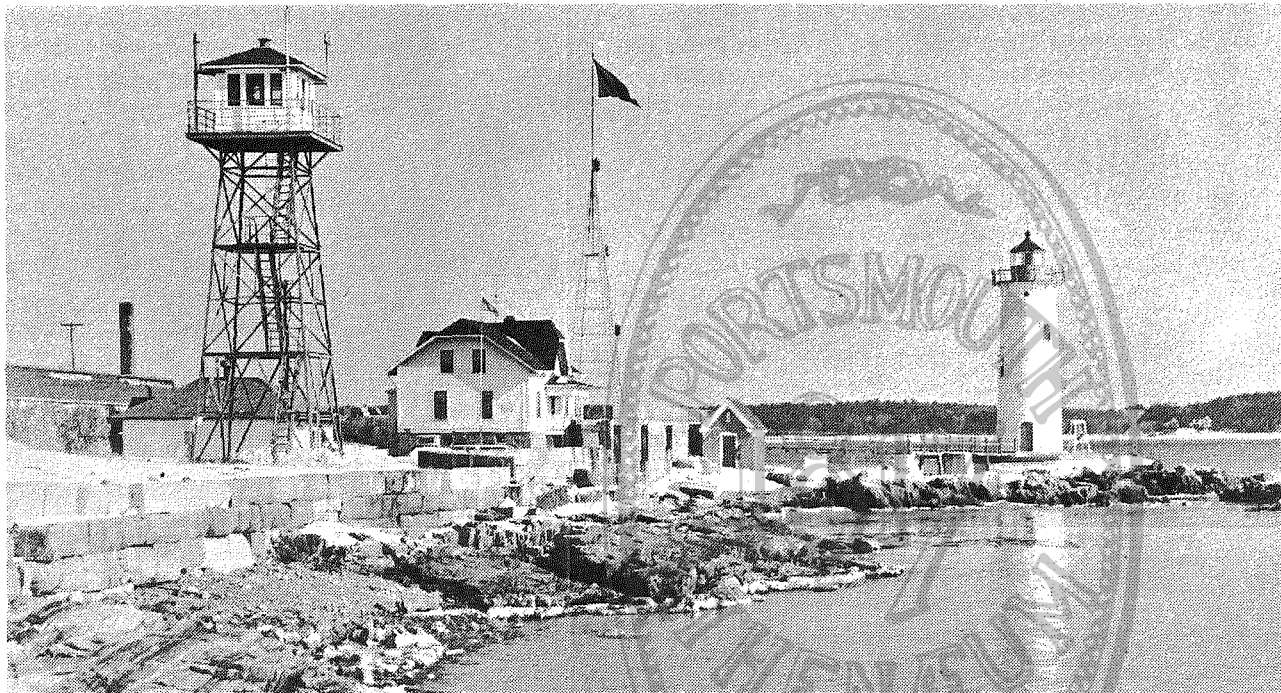
THE NEW CASTLE CHURCH — was built in 1828 on the site of an earlier church.



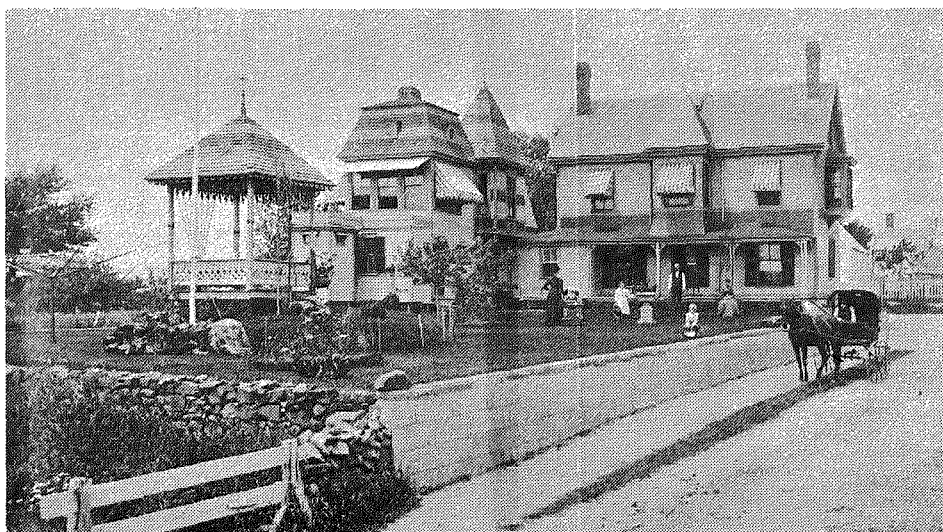
THE HOTEL WENTWORTH — which dominates the southern end of the island, has been a conspicuous New Castle landmark for a hundred years.



TYPICALLY NARROW NEW CASTLE STREET — Piscataqua Street, like the rest on the island, is very narrow and has no sidewalk. Originally there were only footpaths on the island as horses and carriages had not yet arrived. When it became necessary to provide for automobile traffic many householders were obliged to step from their front door directly into the widened streets.



FORT POINT LIGHTHOUSE — was erected as a wooden structure in 1771 and was replaced by the present metal lighthouse about 100 years ago.



It is most unusual to find the evolution of a home documented through photographs as is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Woodward. Here are three views of their 260 year old home which trace its development through the last ninety years. The original structure, built in 1710, lacked the large porch and ell which show in the first photo taken about 1880. The second picture shows the drastic changes made in the intervening decade. Here the house is a fine example of Victorian architecture and very much a showplace of Great Island when this photograph was taken in 1890. The third photograph shows the Woodward's home as it is today. Extensive remodelling of both the interior and the exterior is still continuing to simplify the lines and adapt the house for the 1970s.

THE STORY OF NEW CASTLE continued from page 2

In 1946 the U. S. Coast Guard Station on Wood Island across the harbor was abandoned and the men and equipment transferred to Fort Constitution. The Coast Guard Base now occupies the entire Fort except the section formerly known as Fort William and Mary which has been acquired by the State of New Hampshire. The Base houses a search and rescue unit with four patrol boats. A twenty-four hour watch is maintained from the tower, and a helicopter pad is located on the Base.

New Castle is the home port of the Coast Guard cutters "Active" and "Decisive". The cutters patrol the offshore fishing grounds and their search and rescue operations extend from Nantucket Lightship to Nova Scotia.

After World War II Camp Langdon was abandoned, but in the 1950s was taken over by the Naval Disciplinary Command for retraining purposes and the grounds were cleaned up and the buildings repaired and painted. In 1962 the town was allowed to purchase the property at half price from the government for park and recreational purposes. Improvements have been made over the years and the result is the beautiful oceanside park with picnic areas, sand beach, recreation building, ballfield, and tennis courts known as "Great Island Common".

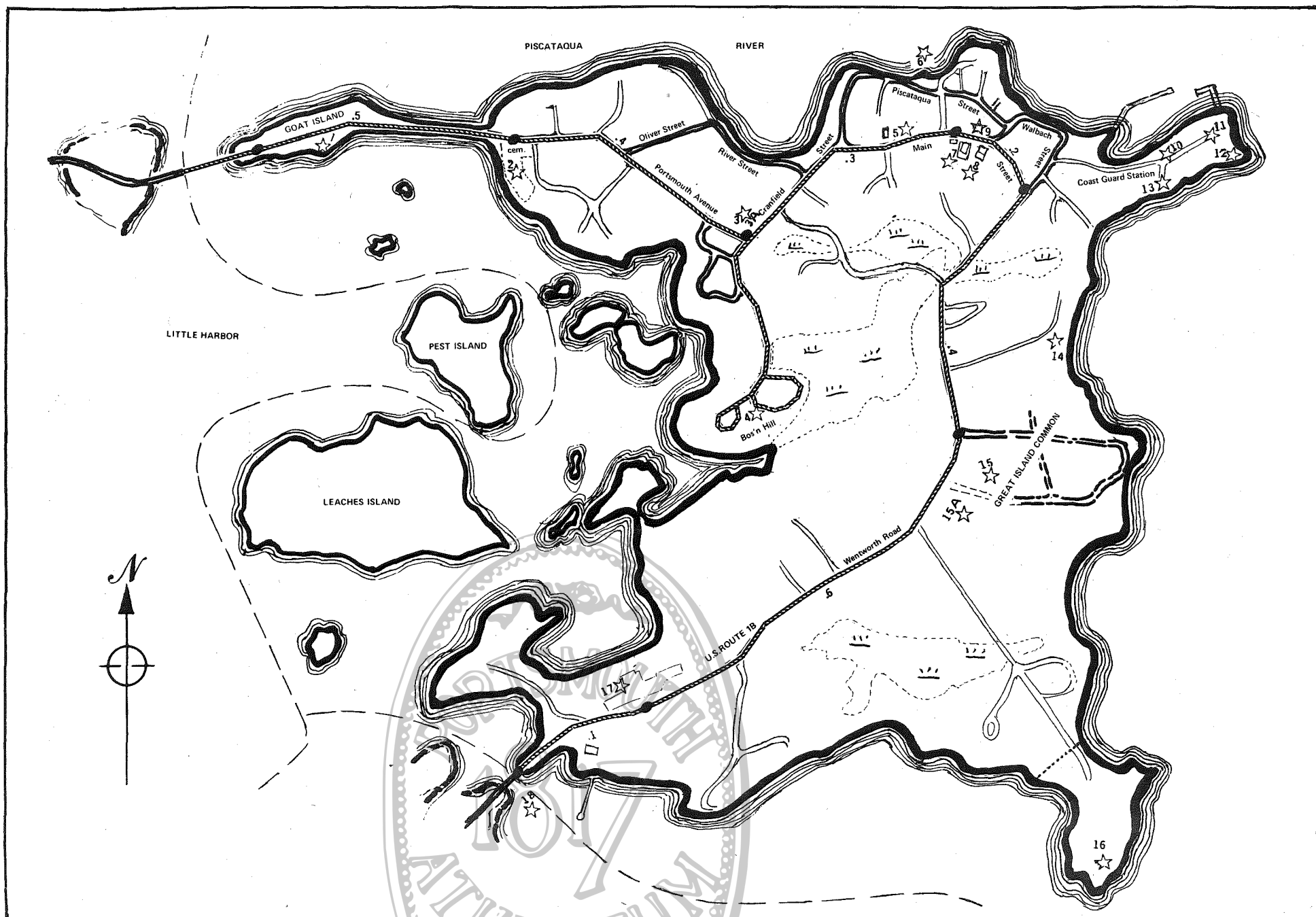
— Anna B. White

The Old Homes of New Castle

Very few of the old houses in New Castle can be traced back to their original builders. The dates on most houses are estimated from details of their construction — hand-hewn beams, hand-wrought nails, and types of brick and plaster. Some houses have been so altered as to belie their early construction.

Approximately 90 houses in New Castle are estimated to have features over 100 years old. However, New Castle is not exclusively an antique town! More than 150 homes have been built in the past 40 years.

Walking Tour of New Castle—August 13 - 16



KEY TO THE WALKING TOUR OF NEW CASTLE MAP

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Causeway to Goat Island and Bridges to Portsmouth (opened in 1822). | the oldest yacht clubs in U. S. A., moved from Portsmouth to New Castle in 1938). | 13. Walbach Tower (Fortification built during the War of 1812). |
| 2. Riverside Cemetery (Established about 1870 — older headstones were moved from family burying grounds). | 7. New Castle Church. | 14. Town Beach (NO PARKING PERMITTED ON OCEAN STREET) (No Bath House Facilities). |
| 3. Maude Trefethen School (Grades 1 through 6 — only school in New Castle). | 8. "Old" Town Hall (Built in 1895; formerly used for town meetings). | 15. Great Island Common (Formerly a military reservation, now under the supervision of the New Castle Recreation Commission). |
| 3A. PARKING IN THE SCHOOL YARD FOR WALKING TOUR VISITORS. | 9. Pre-Revolution Cemetery (Oldest grave is that of Hon. John Frost, brother-in-law of Sir William Pepperrell, dated 1732). | 15A. PARKING AT GREAT ISLAND COMMON FOR WALKING TOUR VISITORS. |
| 4. Bos'n Hill (Residential area developed in the 1960s on a rocky promontory, formerly heavily wooded). | 10. U. S. Coast Guard Station (Home port of the cutters "Active" and "Decisive"). | 16. Fort Stark, U. S. Naval Reservation (NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC). |
| 5. Library (OPEN TO THE PUBLIC) (The building was originally a church built about 1820). | 11. Fort Constitution (Site of the first overt act of the American Revolution, December 14, 1774). | 17. Wentworth-by-the-Sea Hotel. |
| 6. Portsmouth Yacht Club (PRIVATE, NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC) (One of | 12. Fort Point Lighthouse (NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC). | 18. Bridge to Rye, New Hampshire. |

notice...

PLEASE Leave cars only in the designated parking areas indicated on the map above. Volunteers will be at both parking areas with maps and instructions for you and will provide assistance in whatever way possible. Distances are indicated on the map; the entire distance between the two parking areas is less than 1 mile. Where you have to drive, please remember the 25 m.p.h. speed limit and watch out for dogs and children.

No residences are open to the public! The church will be open and the library will have an exhibit of projects relating to the 350th anniversary done by New Castle school children.



The New Castle Committee for the Portsmouth 350th Anniversary is very grateful to the many people in town who have supplied pictures, information, encouragement and funds to cover the printing costs of this issue.

Miss Francis Badger Mrs. Janet Macomber
Mrs. Richard P. McDonough

Picture Credits

Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Woodward, their residence; Mrs. Elizabeth Plumer, the New Castle Church, the Schooners at Anchor, Piscataqua Street, and Tree in Winter; Mrs. James Barker Smith, old print of the Wentworth-by-the-Sea; Piscataqua History Club (Mr. Thomas C. Wilson), old print of Fort Constitution; The Portsmouth Herald, Fort Point Lighthouse.