

# Rogers Island bears original grantee's name

Among the beautiful Thimble Islands in Stony Creek is the 7.6-acre Rogers Island. It was granted to John Rogers in 1710 during Branford's 5th land division and remained in the Rogers

family until 1858. It is the only Thimble Island to retain the name of its original grantee. The island was used as a summer retreat,

housed a fish company and stone was quarried on the island in the late 19th century.

Captain John Jay Phelps of Hackensack, N.J., purchased the island in 1902. Phelps was a noted yachtsman, banker, industrialist, and graduated from Yale in 1883. He hired an architect named Taylor from New York City to design a 27-room Tudor mansion on the island at a cost of

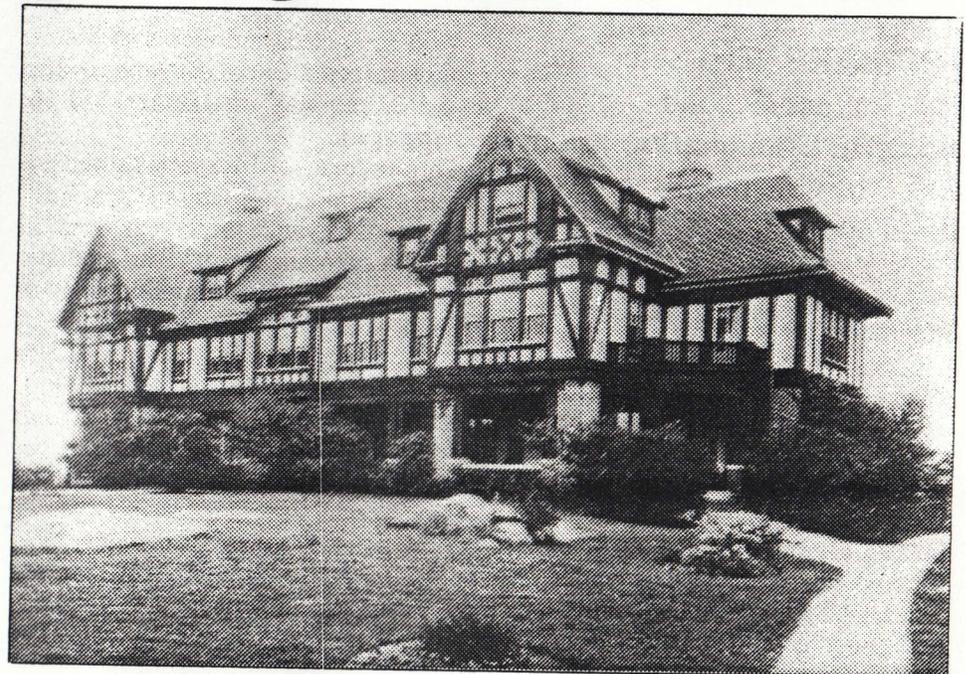


PICTURES  
OF THE PAST

Jane Bouley

\$50,000. Local contractor Oscar C. Kelsey built the mansion by hauling materials by oxen across the ice during winter. During construction two of Kelsey's employees quarrelled over a hammer and one was accidentally drowned. Phelps also built a tennis court, six-hole golf course, boat house, 250-foot pier, and planted 365 rose bushes on the island. Phelps called his island "Yonkomis" meaning "Big Crib" and named his mansion Scotch Pine. Locally the island became known as Phelps Island.

Captain Phelps died in Stony Creek in 1948 at the age of 86 and the island was purchased by Donald MacLeod of New York City. For the last 29 years it has been owned by Paul Brown of New York City. The late Art Paine of Stony Creek was caretaker of the island for 23 years during which time it weathered the '38 hurricane. After being on the market for a number of years, it was sold in 1992 for \$2.65 million.



*The Tudor Mansion on Rogers Island in Stony Creek was built by John Jay Phelps in 1904 and was called "Scotch Pine."*