

BEAVER ISLAND

The Beaver Island group with a total acreage of approximately 12,000 acres are located to the west of West Falkland with Weddell Island to the east and New Island to the north. Included in the group were the four islands of Governor Island, Staats Island, Tea Island and Green Island.

Beaver Island was named after one of two whaling vessels of that name; more likely the first:

1. The whaling vessel *Beaver* was built in 1772 by Ichabod THOMAS near Situate, Massachusetts. In 1773 she was commanded by Captain **Hezekiah COFFIN**, a Quaker mariner, when she took a shipment of whale oil to London, taking a return cargo of tea to Boston and along with the *Dartmouth* and *Eleanor* was involved in the Boston Tea Party. Captain Hezekiah COFFIN returned to London with more oil to sell in February 1774 where he died and she was then sold and no further records have been found to date.
2. In 1791 the Nantucket whaler *Beaver*, built that year by Ichabod THOMAS, was the first American whaler to round Cape Horn and sail into the Pacific under Captain WORTH and crewed by seventeen men.

On 15 April 1874 **Henry WALDRON** was licenced to occupy 12,000 acres more or less being Beaver Island, Governor Island, Staats Island, Tea Island and Green Island for £10. [BUG-REG-2; 318]

By 29 November 1875 Henry had built houses and stocked Beaver Island as required by the Land Ordinance No 4 of 1871 and he was granted a 21 year lease from 15 April 1876 for an annual rental of £12 the first ten years and £20 for the remainder of the term, payable in advance. [BUG-REG-2; 369]

The 1246 ton 3-masted iron British barque *Yarra Yarra* of Liverpool left Portland, Oregon 12 February 1885 bound for the United Kingdom and after rounding the horn was a total loss on the Staats Island cliffs 29 April 1885. There were no survivors or bodies recovered and wreckage washed ashore as far as Carcass Island. A case of 24 books washed ashore on Beaver Island, in two of which, James EARLE, the master's name was written; in a Bible, Practical French Grammar, and Science of Music – Lily M McCure; and in a Spelling Assistant – Lydia Mary McCure. According to a deposition made by William DUNCAN to Henry WALDRON "*On or about the 28th April 1885 I was out for a walk on Stickout Bluff, Beaver Island; it was blowing a tremendous gale from the south so that I could hardly stand. I thought I saw a vessel without any sails drifting upon the rocks of Staats Island at Staats Bluff, where I saw her strike and did not see her afterwards. From the time I first saw the vessel until she struck would be about 20 minutes. No signals were flying. The vessel appeared to be abandoned, but its being at least 6 miles off, I cannot state positively to that effect. No assistance could possibly have been rendered, even if a lifeboat was here.*" Some of the wreckage recovered included a lifebuoy with Yarra Yarra, Liverpool painted on it, two or three piece of deck planking with splits in them filled with wheat, a teak head board with Yarra Yarra painted white in the carving. [H39; Report 2831]

Crown Grant 294, being the compulsory purchase of 320 acres on Beaver Island, was issued to **Henry WALDRON** on 5 May 1886 in consideration of £64. [CG 294]

On 12 April 1893 an offer of £10 from Mr WALDRON for a sealing licence was accepted but limited to those islands held by him under lease. [P3; pg 170]

George Stuart “Monkey” DUNCAN, age 30, was injured in a shooting accident on Beaver Island December 1896. *“He was out shooting last December and when three miles away from his home his gun exploded unexpectedly and literally blew away the side of his face – the cheek, a portion of the jaw and tongue, &c. He was alone but able to walk home. The Chance was in the neighbourhood and crossed to Spring Point for the doctor, who was fortunately at home. The latest accounts speak favourably of the progress of the patient.”* [FIM Mar 1897].



On 18 June 1914 Council approved the application of Henry WALDRON to purchase the lease of Beaver and adjacent islands of Governor Island, Staats Island, Tea Island and Green Island comprising 12,000 acres less the 320 acres freehold compulsorily purchased under Crown Grant 291 leaving 11,680 acres at 3/- giving a total of £1,752 to be paid by 10% on 15 April 1915 and the balance to be paid by six annual instalments at 3% interest. [P6; pg 58]

Henry WALDRON departed for England on board the *Potosi* March 1918. He died in the London Homoeopathic Hospital, Great Ormond Street, London, England 11 August 1919. In his will dated 29 May 1912 he bequeathed all his interest in Beaver Island to **Richard Waldron THORNHILL** who in 1921 was living in Punta Arenas, Chile. His estate on Beaver Island was valued at:

Buildings		200 lambs @ 3/-	£30
Manager's house	£250	12 rams @ 40/-	£24
Settlement houses & outhouses	£400	6 horses @ £12	£72
Furniture in houses	£30	30 head cattle @ £1	£30
Woolshed, yards & jetty	£250	Fencing	
Shop	£25	4 miles old fencing	£80
Cow sheds & corrals	£15	Plant	
Store	£30	1 hay press	£10
Tryshed & plant	£50	1 dinghy	£7
Shed & house, Staats Island	£30	1 cutter	£50
Live Stock		Stores	£20
600 ewes @ 7/-	£210	Material on hand	£5
300 wethers @ 8/-	£120	Dip bagging hoops	£10
180 hoggets @ 5/-	£45	In Manager's House	

Land 11,680 acres value £1,752 of which 2 instalments of £291-2-1 still to be paid.
Wages due to men £752-8-6.

[Obituary FIM Nov 1919: FIC/IE/2#36: FIC/EC/BEA]

Crown Grant 379, being all that land situated in West Falkland and known as Beaver Island, Governor Island, Staats Island, Tea Island and Green Island containing 11,680 acres was issued to **Richard Waldron THORNHILL** on 1 October 1921 in consideration of £1,782. [CG 379] He did not reside at Beaver Island but appointed **James DUNCAN** manager at £10 a month and 5% of net profits. He also employed **Jack, George and Howard DUNCAN** on £8

a month plus 2 ½ % of net profits, and **Katie DUNCAN** on £3 a month plus 2 ½ % of net profits. [FIC/EC/BEA]

On 28 March 1922 **Richard Waldron THORNHILL** conveyed "*All that parcel of land situated in West Falkland known as Beaver Island, Governor Island, Statts Island, Tea Island and Green Island containing Twelve thousand acres more or less*" to **John HAMILTON** for £5,000. [BUG-REG-9; pg 66]

On 17 December 1940 **John HAMILTON** granted Crown Grant 379 known as "*Beaver Island, Governor Island, Statts Island, Tea Island and Green Island containing 11,680 acres more or less*" to **John Hamilton Ltd** for a peppercorn. [BUG-REG-11; pg 241]



Beaver jetty, rafting wool – photograph Lizzie Anderson collection, JCNA

In July 1987 **Estate John Hamilton Limited** leased Beaver Island to **Tony FELTON** and **Sally PONCET**.

On 27 March 1991 **Estate John Hamilton Limited** sold Beaver Island to **Sally PONCET**.