

Greenlaw Land on Deer Isle Before the Revolutionary War

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[William Greenlaw database](#)

The Greenlaws came to Deer Isle in 1760 or 1761. William Greenlaws and his sons Jonathan, Ebenezer and Alexander each possessed and improved lots on the island before the Revolutionary War. Although there is a part now called Greenlaw Neck, and an adjacent body of water referred to as Greenlaw Harbor, it doesn't appear that the family owned any land in that vicinity, at least before the Revolution. Hosmer, historian of Deer Isle, claims the family held 500 acres. There are no deeds of acquisition of the property, nor any evidence of patents, grants or instruments otherwise conveying the lots from the Plymouth Company, the purported owners of the island, to the Greenlaws. In fact, there were no grants on the island until after the War, and those by the General Court of Massachusetts. The Greenlaws certainly squatted on the land, improved it, and expected to eventually be granted title. So the dimensions of the lots were never clearly defined.

As the Greenlaws exited Maine to settle in New Brunswick, they released their claims on the property. Though they were lucky enough not to have had their land seized by the Americans, they appear to have received paltry sums for improved land with houses on them. Alexander sold his 200 acres [A] for a measly 5 pounds 19 shillings. Jonathan's 200 acres [B] were seized by the Court, for a debt of about 95 pounds. He had taken down his house to bring to St Andrews, but found no ship to take it, and so abandoned it. The original 100 acres occupied and improved by William Sr [C] was sold by his heirs in 1789 for 60 pounds. Ebenezer made the sale of his land practically just as he was getting on the ship fleeing Penobscot. His 300 acres [D], plus a nearby lot, and half an island [F: Conary Island. Alexander, Ebenezer and Jonathan each owned a part of the island, which was completely disposed by 1789.], "for consideration of Forty Thousand Merchantable boards." It is unknown if he transported those boards to New Brunswick to use, or simply sold them for cash.

The vague boundaries described in those deeds suggest that the Greenlaws claimed land from the area now known as Reach south to Fish Creek, the rear of the tract being 2 miles west from the shore. Modern maps show the ghostly shadows of those lines. Other evidence points to William Sr owning, improving, and perhaps occupying Campbell's Neck [E] too, before selling out some time before 1777. So in all, the family possessed possibly 800 acres fronting on Eggemoggin Reach, the arm of the bay dividing Deer Isle from the part of Penobscot which is now Brooklin, Sedgwick and Brooksville. Plus, it appears that the brother held land in common with John Campbell between Fish Creek and the Small Carrying place.

Two of Jonathan's sons returned after the evacuation to St Andrews. So Deer Isle continued to be the home of Greenlaws for several generation afterwards.

Sources:

Hancock County Registry of Deeds

Lincoln County Registry of Deed

An Historical Sketch of the Town of Deer Isle, Maine by George Lawrence Hosmer

The National Archives of the UK; Kew, Surrey, England; American Loyalist Claims, 1776-1835

Town of Deer Isle Tax Maps

Google Maps

Maps

Two maps showing the approximate location of Greenlaw land on Deer Isle before the Revolutionary War, and a modern tax map showing the same area.

From North to South

200 acres [A]: Alexander's Lot.

200 acres [B]: Jonathan's Lot.

100 acres [C]: William Sr's Lot.

300 acres [D]: Ebenezer's Lot.

77 acres [E]: Campbell's Neck.

Black Island [F]: Now called Conary Island.

Common Land [G]: Common land belonging to John Campbell, Ebenezer Greenlaw, Jonathan Greenlaw, Alexander Greenlaw and Charles Greenlaw

Lot A

Alexander's Lot

[Alexander's claim: 300 acres of father's land, 20 cleared]

1783 October 10: Alexander Greenlaw to William Foster [47 rods x 2 miles = 188 acres]

Lot B

[Jonathan's Claim: 300 acres, 40 cleared]

1784 September 1: Jonathan Greenlaw to Thomas Oxnard 200 acres [45 rods x back until 200 acres is completed ~ 2.25 miles]

Lot C

William Sr's Lot

1783 July 17: William Greenlaw Jr to Alexander Greenlaw s William Greenlaw Jr

1785 April 14: Jonathan Greenlaw to John Campbell quit claim [40 rods by 1.5 miles = 120 acres]

1789 September 29: Jonathan Greenlaw, Charles Greenlaw, Alexander Greenlaw heirs of William Greenlaw 100 acres [42 rods wide by about 1.25 miles back would make 100 acres)

1796 March 3: Alexander Greenlaw to James Sproul 1/6 part

1796 March 3: James Sproul to John Campbell 1/6 part

Lot D

Ebenezer's Lot

[Ebenezer's Claim: 300 acres, 40 cleared]

1783 October 18: Ebenezer Greenlaw to Mark Haskell and sons [80 rods x 2 miles = 320 acres]

Lot E

Campbell's Neck

William Greenlaw Sr to Mr Blake

Mr Blake to Francis Haskell

Francis Haskell to Robert Nason

1777 May 5: Robert Nason to John Campbell

Lot F

Black Island now Conary Island

1783 October 10: Alexander Greenlaw to William Foster 1/2 the Island

1783 October 18: Ebenezer Greenlaw to Mark Haskell and sons 1/2 the Island

1789 October 2: Jonathan Greenlaw to Thomas Conary "one half the land on Black Island"

Lot G

Common Land belonging to John Campbell, Ebenezer Greenlaw, Jonathan Greenlaw, Alexander Greenlaw and Charles Greenlaw

1783 October 10: Alexander Greenlaw to William Foster 1/5 part

Figure 1: Approximate Location of Greenlaw farms.

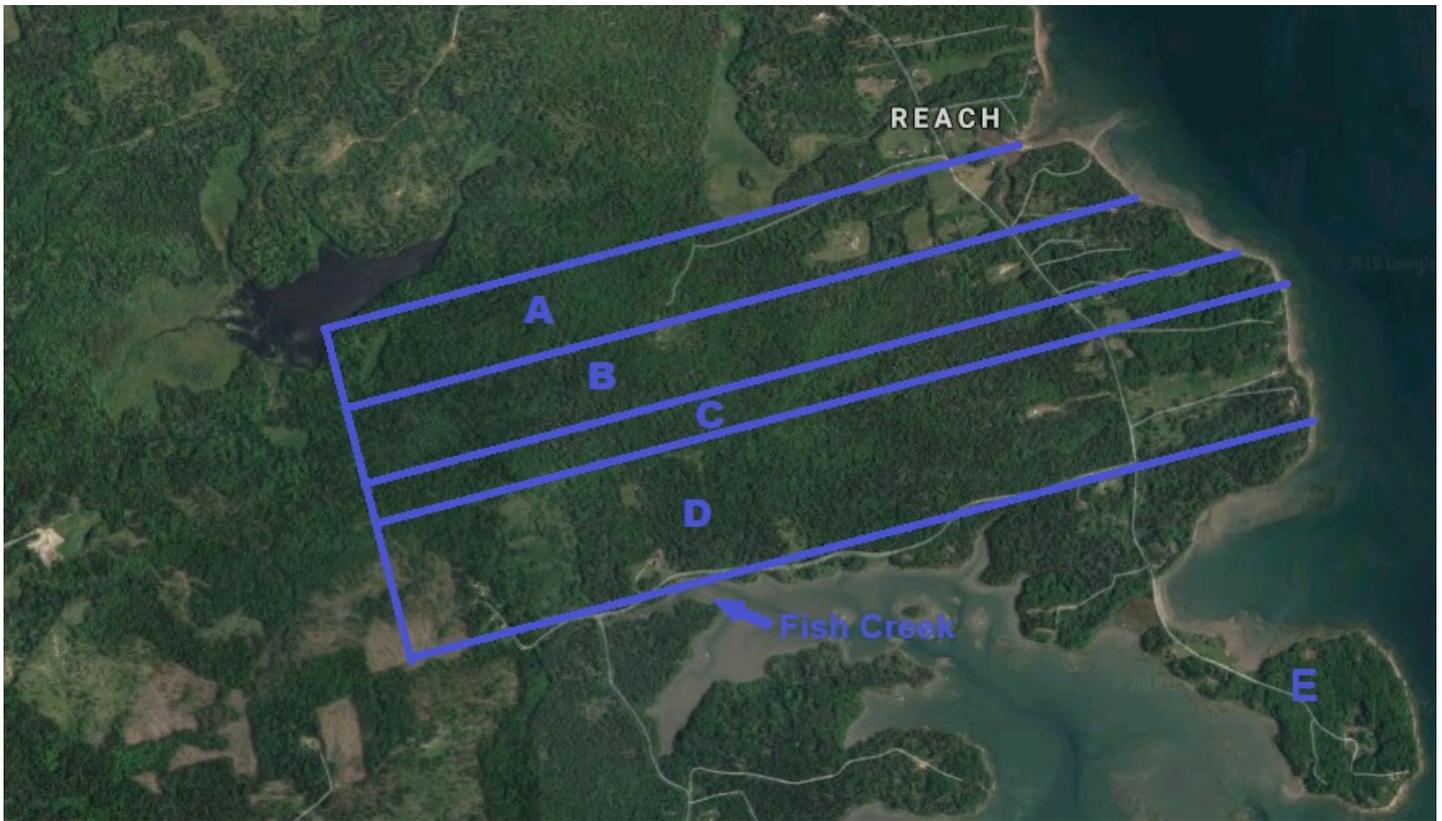


Figure 2: Location of Island and Common Land.



Figure 3: Tax map showing modern lot boundaries.



Timeline of Greenlaw Land on Deer Isle

1760: The claim Ebenezer Greenlaw made in 1787 for compensation for lost property for his Loyalism stated that the Greenlaws settled Deer Island 1761. A deed of Alexander Greenlaw granting land in 1783 claimed he had held land in the island for 23 years.

1777 May 5: Deed Robert Nason to John Campbell indicating that William Greenlaw once owned this lot. land being a gore adjoining Eben Greenlaw's Farm and running a west course from a large stone at the eastern end of the gore aforesaid
said line turning a west course until it run out to the water at the Fish Creek
formerly to be improved by William Greenlaw
was first granted from William Greenlaw to Mr Blake of Bagaduce
secondly to Francis Haskell of St Georges
thirdly from Francis Haskell Jr to me Robert Nason Senr

1783 July 17: Deed William Greenlaw s William to Alexander Greenlaw. William Greenlaw Jr left Deer Isle by 1775, living at Georgetown, Penobscot, and Nobleborough.
land in Deer Island
bounded northerly on land of Jonathan Greenlaw
southerly on land of Ebenezer Greenlaw

1783 October 10: Deed Alexander Greenlaw to William Foster 5 pounds 10 shillings. Alexander Greenlaw sells out before leaving for St Andrews.
Land on Deer Island
a lot of land fronting on Eggemagan Reach the southside line adjoining Jonathan Greenlaw's Land bounded by an oak tree near a small brook at the shore
then running a west course 2 miles back
then beginning at a said south line and running a north Course 47 rods
thence an east course to Eggemagan Reach to an heap of Stones encircling a stake
together with a fifth part of the undivided land lying between fish Creek and the small carrying Place [isthmus between Deer Isle and Greenlaw Neck] so called
the said undivided belonging to John Campbell, Ebenezer Greenlaw, Jonathan Greenlaw and said Alexander Greenlaw and Charles Greenlaw
together with a fifth part of a fresh meadow belonging to said Company and 1/2 of the Island known by the name of Black Island lying in said Reach which land I have been in quiet possession of 23 years [1760]

1783 October 18: Deed Ebenezer Greenlaw to Mark Haskell and Sons. Ebenezer Greenlaw sells out before leaving Bagaduce. The deed said that an adjoining lot belonged to his mother, suggesting that she was still living at the time.
"certain Lots of land being part of Deer Island in said County of Lincoln take up by me Ebenezer Greenlaw, on Lot of said land partly cleared & improved by me, together with my Dwelling House & Hovel on said Lot of land, fronting Egamogan Reach, North side line joining Mother's Lot or at where the Fence stands, by a dry Pine & running a West course two Miles & then a South course eighty rods & from thence an East course to the Fish Creek, said South line joining Mr Jno Campbells said Lot taking in a piece of Salt Marsh on said Creek. Beginning to the Eastward of said Creek & running an East course where the line Fence is joining said Campbells until you come to the Shore together with two other Lots of land, the one upon the upper part of the Neck joining the little carrying place & ox? point & also one half of an Island the Eastern half laying the Southern end of John Campbell's Neck."

1784 July 23: Judgment against Jonathan Greenlaw. Jonathan's lot is seized for payment of a debt.
Land containing two hundred Acres and lying on Deer Island in said County & bounded as follows, to wit,

laying on Edgamagen Reach, beginning at the Shore on the Southerly and easterly Corner of William Fosters Land which he bout of Alexander Greenlaw, thence southerly as the Water goes forty five Rods at right Angles to Land formerly belonging to William Greenlaw, thence keeping said Width of forty five Rods a West course till two hundred Acres are compleated being bounded Easterly by Edgemogin Reach Northerly by Land of William Foster Southerly by Land late in Possession of William Greenlaw

1785 April 14: Jonathan Greenlaw quits the claim on his parents' lot. The deed indicated that his mother was last in possession of the lot but probably dead by this time.

all manner of Right Title and Demands whatsoever which by Law or Equity or otherwise soever I the said Jonathan Greenlaw ever had of the Farm formerly possessed by my Mother Jane Greenlaw the said Moiety or Tract of Land lying and bounding on my own Farm and Ebenezer Greenlaw's containing in Front 40 Rods and a Mile and a half back and likewise my Part of the Meadow

1789 September 29: Heirs of William Greenlaw to John Campbell. William Sr's children release their claim on their parents' farm.

100 acres on Deer Isle original settlement of our aforesaid Honoured Father William Greenlaw deceased lying eastwardly on the Sea shore southwardly by Mark Haskell and Son's Land westwardly on commonland northwardly by land lately owned and possessed by Jonathan Greenlaw 42 rods wide

1789 October 2: Jonathan Greenlaw to Thomas Conary. Jonathan sells his last lot.

30 pounds

one half the land on Black Island [now Conary Island off Campbell Point], the second Island lying in Edgemegin Reach