

THE BROWN FARM ON NORTH HAVEN ISLAND

A brief history of the Brown Farm as part of an orchard visit with John Bunker, Maine apple expert

Event presented by the North Haven Historical Society and the North Haven Grange

October 12, 2019

With thanks to landowners Anita Spertus and Jeff Holmgren and caretaker Jesse Lewis for permission to visit the orchard



The Brown Farm, North Haven.



Mary Jane Carver Brown who grew up on the nearby Carver farm and married John Brown III in 1868 .

Family history states that brothers, John and Oliver Brown, built a house in 1831 [some sources date it as 1828] on land that was part of the farm belonging to their parents, John and Lydia Carr Brown. As the story goes, the brothers were sea captains and wanted to build a house where their families could live together while John and Oliver were away at sea.

In 1838, Oliver died in Savannah, Georgia from a tropical fever and his share of the farm went to his widow and children. When his daughter Sarah married James Webster in 1856, so went a portion of the Brown farm and became what is known as Webster's Head today, although once known as Great Head or Spruce Head. Eventually, John and his wife May bought the remaining share of the two family homestead and it passed down through their descendants, with their son John (the 3rd) inheriting the farm after marrying Mary Jane Carver, from the farm next door on Oak Hill. Their son, Jesse Brown later inherited the farm and married Florence Beverage who also grew up on a farm, not far away on the Middle Road. Jesse, Florence, and their daughters, Elinor and Marjorie, were the last of the Brown family to live at the old Brown homestead.

Some miscellaneous notes about the Brown house...there were numerous out buildings including a barn about 150 feet west of the house. In later years there was a garage near the barn. I think it was a converted chicken house....There were two earlier houses, one in the orchard north of the present house and a log cabin between the Old Brown cemetery and the shore.

North Haven historian Sam Beverage (1917—2014)



Jesse Brown, who inherited the family farm from his parents, John T. and Mary Jane Carver

It was in 1910 I married my husband and moved up here. You see, his father and mother lived here — we moved right in with them. And my husband kept hens: he kept a lot of hens at that time, and he used to ship the eggs to Boston...We picked a lot of berries. We picked raspberries, n' we used to raise strawberries — in fact we used to raise strawberries to sell...The raspberries, well we used to have a place where we went over in Lewis Brown's pasture, way over across the swamp; and there the berries were real thrifty — great big berries, almost as big as cultivated ones, you know.

Florence Beverage Brown



Florence Beverage grew up at her family's farm on the Middle Road, was the eldest of eleven children, and married Jesse Brown in 1910.

There were half a dozen families 'round here then, and we'd get together evenings for games and things. Well, they used to have a lot of different games t' play — mostly card games, like Flinch and Muggins; and they had checkers n' Chinese Checkers so they used to have a lot of fun doing that...This is what we did, mostly, for entertainment.

Florence Beverage Brown



Florence and Jesse Brown with their daughters, Elinor and Marjorie.



Jesse Brown with his workhorse on his family's farm.

Jesse A. Brown *March 15, 1941*

This community mourns the loss of a citizen whose death occurred Saturday morning. Jesse A. Brown was born March 7, 1869, son of Mr. and Mrs. John T. Brown and the son of a Civil War Veteran. He was born on the old homestead where he spent his life. After finishing his school days here, he attended Shaws Business College in Portland.

On account of his father's impaired health he found it necessary to care for him and after his marriage to Miss Florence Beverage, settled on the old homestead to make his living and care for his people.

Two daughters were born, Marjorie and Eleanor, the latter who is now teaching in the Center School.

Mr. Brown had served his town as Selectman and was a member of the school committee. He was one of the men to help organize the North Haven Grange in 1909 and was the first to hold the office in that body as worthy overseer when Hanson T. Crockett was its first worthy master. It has been said that much credit goes to these men for the interest and help they rendered in starting the North Haven Grange which we have seen grow to be the helpful order it is today to the community.

Mr. Brown knew much of the early history of the island and anyone who came in contact with him always found him most interesting. His knowledge went back to the happenings of the Revolution and the war of 1812. From the old house, the original homestead, his people saw the British fleet when it sailed up Penobscot Bay to take Castine, then held by the French. Citizens will miss his presence as his active life among them made him very close to all.

Services will be held from the Baptist Church Tuesday at 2 o'clock. Interment will be in Fuller cemetery.

Survivors are his wife, Mrs. Florence Brown; daughters, Marjorie and Eleanor; and sister, Mrs. Myra Blackington.