



Ah, had the Deacon lived another 182 years... A look at the Last Will and the estate of Deacon Joseph Mather.

When an 1840 inventory of Deacon Mather's real estate was made in conjunction with settlement of his will, the land totaled 53+ acres. That excluded two five acre parcels he had previously deeded to his sons, Joseph and Moses. It also excluded "House and yard, Barn and yard, wagon house, hog house, horse shed."

This year, the Town of Darien is planning to purchase the 60 acres of Great Island for \$103 million. The Deacon's 53+ acres were valued at \$4,259.

The Deacon's will provided for his widow to remain in the home for the rest of her life. The house was bequeathed to his two unmarried daughters, Rana and Phebe along with "...one bed a piece, with bedsteads and sheets and proper covering for the two beds..."

Now, how to divide the 53+ acres among 10 children. The deacon did it down to the rood and rod. (fyi, there are 40 rods in a rood; 4 roods in an acre.) He did it with specificity e.g. "...thence S 19-1/4° E 40 Rods thence Westerly..."

All ten received land. The largest tract of 14 acres, 1 rood, 2 rods, went to Nancy Bell and Betsy Lockwood. The smallest to Clara Street, 3 acres, 3 roods, 2 rods.

From nearly 60 acres (including the excluded items above), the Homestead shrank to approximately 12 acres and was home to Rana and Phebe until Phebe's death in 1886.



*Ann Elizabeth Lockwood,
Rana Mather, Phebe Mather.
Circa 1876.*