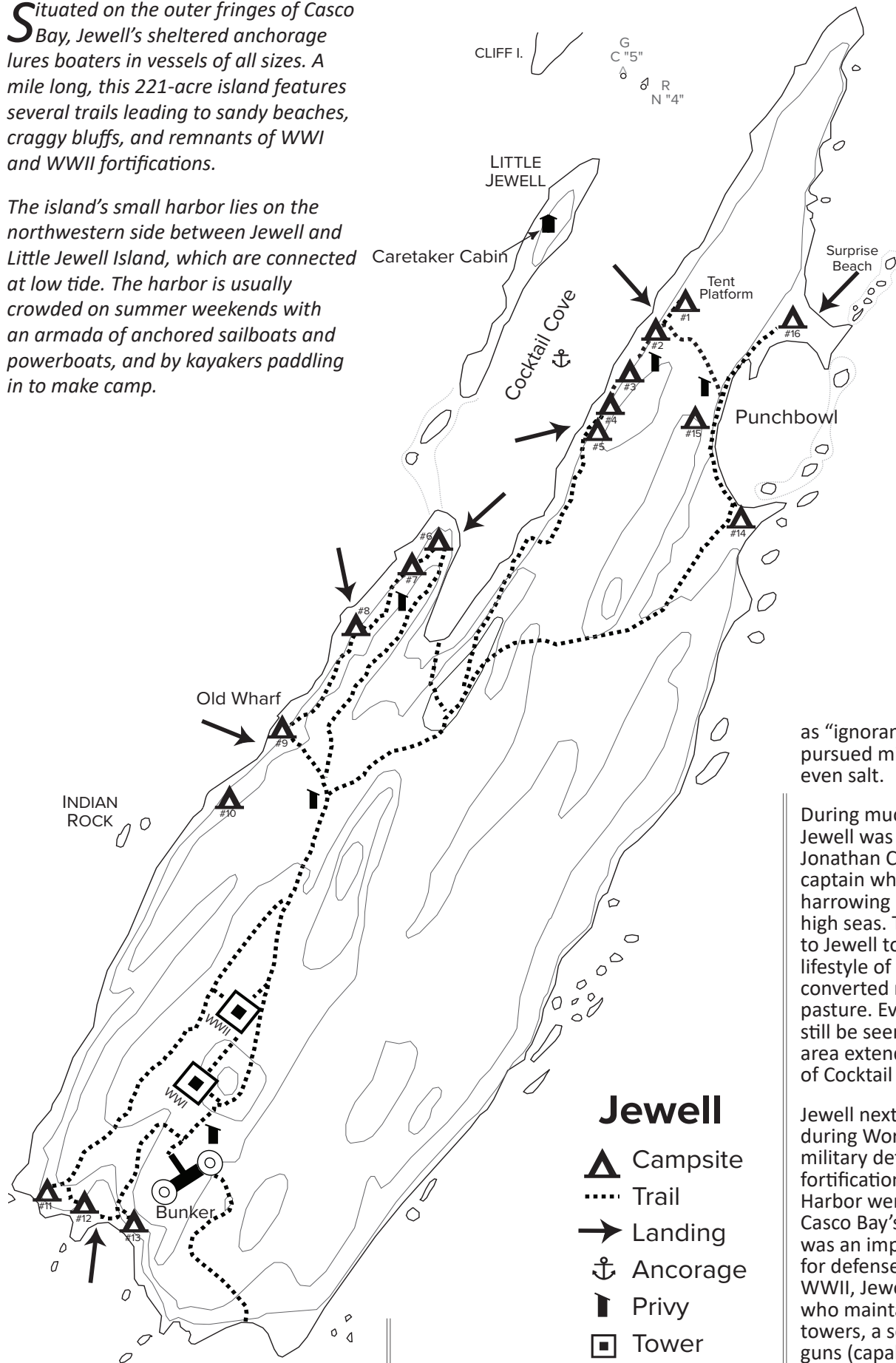


Situated on the outer fringes of Casco Bay, Jewell's sheltered anchorage lures boaters in vessels of all sizes. A mile long, this 221-acre island features several trails leading to sandy beaches, craggy bluffs, and remnants of WWI and WWII fortifications.

The island's small harbor lies on the northwestern side between Jewell and Little Jewell Island, which are connected at low tide. The harbor is usually crowded on summer weekends with an armada of anchored sailboats and powerboats, and by kayakers paddling in to make camp.



# JEWELL ISLAND

as "ignorant or artful impostors," pursued mining gold, silver, and even salt.

During much of the 19th century, Jewell was home to the retired Jonathan Chase, a notorious sea captain who had survived two harrowing pirate attacks on the high seas. The Chase family came to Jewell to pursue a more stable lifestyle of farming, and they converted much of the island to pasture. Evidence of agriculture can still be seen in the sparsely forested area extending inland from the head of Cocktail Cove.

Jewell next rose in prominence during World War II, when the military determined that the fortifications protecting Portland Harbor were inadequate. As one of Casco Bay's outermost islands Jewell was an important strategic location for defense. For a brief period during WWII, Jewell housed 400 troops who maintained two observation towers, a searchlight, two six-inch guns (capable of firing 100-pound shells 17 miles), and four 90-mm anti-aircraft guns. Although Casco Bay was never threatened during the War, a German U-Boat was sighted between Jewell and Cape Small in June 1942.

In 1972, Maine's Bureau of Parks and Recreation acquired the southern end of Jewell, and four years later, the State bought the remainder of the island including Little Jewell. Little Jewell was privately leased until 2007 and now houses the Jewell Island caretaker's residence. Jewell has been administered as an undeveloped recreational use island since 1972 and in 1988 became one of the first islands on the Maine Island Trail.

Peter Benoit of Cliff Island has written a complete account of Jewell Island's history; the book is available from the Cliff Island Historical Society.

## HISTORY

*Jewell Island is in the homeland of the Wabanaki People. Maine Island Trail Association respectfully acknowledges these People of the Dawn – past, present and future – and their sacred connection to these lands and waters.*

## POST-COLONIZATION

Although tales of pirate treasure abound, the island is actually named for George Jewell, who reportedly bought the island from Native Americans in 1636 in exchange for a bottle of rum and a few other items. Jewell used the island as a stage for a fishing operation, but shortly after

purchasing the island he drowned in Boston Harbor after a night of debauchery.

Jewell Island continued to attract settlers who attempted to base farming and fishing operations on the island. Forty years after Jewell's death, a group of settlers from Harpswell moved to the island in hopes of finding refuge from King Philip's War. However, in 1676 a group of Native Americans attacked their house, kidnapping several of the inhabitants.

By 1713, peace had returned to Casco Bay and an interesting sequence of settlers began seeking their fortune on Jewell Island. Many of them pursued fishing and farming. Some successfully mined alum while others, later remembered

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As visitors to Jewell, we are guests in a natural coastal setting. Jewell is kept in a marvelously natural state as an “unimproved state park,” and that status will last as long as the island is well cared for by its visitors. Please do your part to learn about Leave No Trace guidelines and practice them during your stay.

- **Please stay on designated trails and campsites to protect the fragile plant life and island soils not yet impacted.** It doesn't take many footsteps for an area to be permanently damaged.
- **Please use the privies or pack out your waste.** Human waste is an eyesore and a health hazard.
- **Carry out litter and garbage, your own and any you find.** Trash doesn't belong on natural coastal islands. If you need a trash bag, just ask the caretaker.
- **If you choose to have a campfire, kindle a small, safe one in a designated ring.** Please collect driftwood from the shoreline or dead and downed wood adjacent to the trails. An uncontrolled fire on Jewell would be devastating; please make an extra effort to be safe with your fire.
- **Please respect the local wildlife by not disturbing or feeding them.** Take care to secure your provisions from gulls, raccoons and rodents.
- **Please leave what you find intact for future generations to enjoy.** The natural and cultural resources on the island are important to the recreational experience.
- **Keep your pets leashed at all times and pick up their waste.** Unleashed pets often run off trail and trample vegetation. They can also disturb wildlife and other visitors.
- **Please respect each other on this shared public land.** Jewell is a busy place. From the bustling harbor to the ever-popular lookout towers to the crowded campsites, you are bound to bump into other visitors.

## THINGS TO DO

Quiet footpaths plumb the island's dark interior, which is dense with spruce and balsam fir. For a quick stretch, follow the path from Cocktail Cove across the island to the spectacular Punchbowl on the eastern side. At low tide, ledges completely encircle the broad crescent beach, and the shallow body of water invites waders and tidepooling. If you move animals or rocks while tidepooling, please return them to the same spot. The beach has an abundance of rugosa rose, driftwood, birds, and beach peas.

For a longer walk, follow the paths to the WWI and WWII installment ruins at the south end. Two concrete observation towers invite exploration and offer great views of Casco Bay.

## ECOLOGY

Despite its wild appearance today, Jewell's landscape has changed radically from generation to generation. It has been deforested and reforested many times over, reflecting the various ways in which its settlers lived with the land and sea. Many of the lightly forested areas you see today, particularly near the head of the harbor, are actually reclaimed pasture lands which used to support livestock on the island.

Fog is a common feature on the Maine coast. It contributes to the ecology of islands, providing a plentiful source of water for organisms. It allows lichens to establish a foothold on the bedrock. Other factors such as the size of the island, exposure to the seasonal rigors of the Atlantic, and the quality of soil also affect the island's composition and appearance.

Red spruce is the most dominant tree species on Jewell. On the island's eastern side there is a thick buffer of white spruce that absorbs the southwesterly winds, making it possible for less hardy species like firs and even some

hardwoods to occupy the protected western shore. Apple trees and raspberry bushes, the legacy of previous generations, grow along the western shore. Wild flowers such as violets, star flower, and rugosa rose are abundant on the island.

Jewell Island supports animal life as well. Deer, raccoons, songbirds, gulls, and marine ducks make their homes here. Also, take special care to protect yourselves from ticks, poison ivy, and browntail moths.

## CARETAKER PROGRAM

Jewell Island is managed in a partnership between the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands and the Maine Island Trail Association. The resident caretaker serves as an educational resource to promote a sustainable recreational ethic. Please bring your questions or concerns to the caretaker between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

For more information about the Maine Island Trail Association or to become a member, please contact MITA at 100 Kensington Street, Second Floor, Portland, ME 04103, (207) 761-8225 or [www.mita.org](http://www.mita.org).



## MAINE ISLAND TRAIL ASSOCIATION

*MITA's mission is to establish a model of thoughtful use and volunteer stewardship for the Maine islands that will assure their conservation in a natural state while providing an exceptional recreational asset that is maintained and cared for by the people who use it.*

