

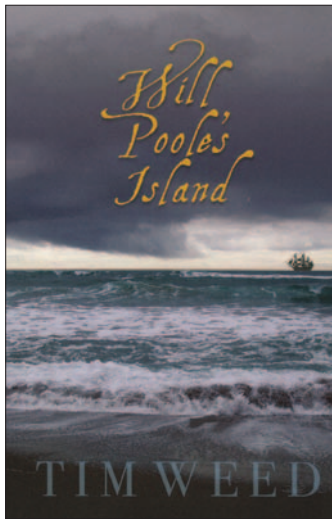
Historic Nantucket reimagined

“Will Poole’s Island”
set in 1600s

By **Kimberly Nolan**
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When researching archival material dating back to mid-1600s New England for his first novel, “Will Poole’s Island,” author Tim Weed quickly realized there wasn’t much available from the Native American perspective.

“All of the accounts are from the English perspective,” Weed said. “There was nothing written from the Native American perspective before the 19th century. As an historical novelist, if you have a period that really interests you and not a lot is really known about it, then you can take an imaginative leap.”



“Will Poole’s Island”

“Will Poole’s Island,” Weed’s first published novel, tells the story of a young Englishman who encounters Squamiset, a seemingly age-

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Weed: Novel reimagines historic island

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less Wampanoag tribesman, while hunting beyond the allowable boundaries of New Meadow Plantation, a 1643 settlement. A series of problems ensue for Will as his friendship with Squamiset deepens. The resulting mentorship requires Will to relinquish his place in English society.

Squamiset's guidance encourages Will to rely on his own intuition and follow a non-traditional path. Will discovers his destiny is part of a far greater existence than the narrowness imposed on him by his culture. "Will Poole's Island" topped the Nantucket Bookworks Teen Pick of the Month list this summer.

"Will Poole's Island" was not originally intended as a young adult book, but the protagonist is 17 years old, which places the novel in a specific publishing genre, Weed said.

"The book is intended for everybody," he said. "I've worked with a lot of kids in the same age group (as Will Poole.) That age is full of the most receptive readers. A book can really change their lives."

Weed said a large part of his career has been in educational travel, working with high-school students.

Prior to writing "Will Poole's Island," Weed researched life in New England during a time period that fascinated him, he said.

"I started to read stories of people including the one about my ancestor, Thomas Trowbridge, who came over with his three sons," Weed said. "He had to go back to England to fight in the English Civil War. He left his three sons under the care of a servant who turned out to be corrupt. The corrupt servant and these kids captured my imagination."

Weed said he wanted to explore the Native American side of history due to a longstanding interest in a culture that connects to his own ancestry.

"I was doing a lot of research and wasn't finding much, other than primary accounts of early English explorers or colonists," Weed said. "The Native American story was my way of imagining myself back at that time."

The book begins inside a tightly regulated English colony. After a harrowing journey, the protagonist eventually ends up on an island much like Weed believes Nantucket would have been, but never identified as such. His experiences there depict how an indigenous community may have been prior to outside contact.

"Nantucket has always captured my imagination," Weed said. "The English didn't get here until 1659. This was sort of an island out of time. A lot of my stories are set here."

The island resonated with Weed when he first began visiting in the late 1980s, he said. He and his wife met and married here. As a part-time resident, Nantucket's beaches and moors continue to inspire him, he said.

Weed received a master's in fine arts in creative writing from Warren Wilson College in Ashville, N.C. in 2002. He teaches in an MFA program for creative and professional writing at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, Conn. and also works as a professional tour guide and lecturer.

Weed has published many short stories including "The Afternoon Client," which is set in Nantucket that recently won the *Writer's Digest* Popular Fiction Award. He is currently working on an historical fiction novel about 19th century highwaymen from Ireland, along with a contemporary novel partly based on Nantucket, he said.