

Nahant Historical Society



East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy Sunday, July 29, 2018

Welcome, and thank you for coming out on this quintessential summer day in Nahant. It's wonderful to see so many of you with an interest in Nahant, and specifically East Point. East Point is one of my personal favorites, having spent the summer of my youth jumping from Castle Rock, swimming at Forty Steps and Canoe beach, exploring Bathing Beach, Pea Island and Swallow Cave, and.....perhaps taking a trip through the bunker.

This presentation is meant to provide a history of East Point and the role it has played over the last 1,000 years or so: First as a summer home for the Native Americans, then as a healing spot for the early white settlers. Next, it was the starting point of the summer cottagers and resort guests, eventually being used as a private residence, military installment and finally a place of learning. In all of those capacities, it has always remained a place of natural wonder and healing for the body and soul.

“Here it is beautiful! And here I should like to fix my dwelling!”

These are words that I know both my grandfather Cadigan and my own father may have uttered on their first visit to Nahant. But can you guess who was the first to have reportedly spoken these words?

According to Dr. Peter Kreeft, a professor of Philosophy at Boston College, it was none other than Thorvald Eirickson, Son of Eric the Red, who was brother to Leif Eirickson. It is well known that the Vikings were the first white people to explore the eastern coast of North America, or Vinland as they called it. Unfortunately for Thorvald, his wish to ‘fix his dwelling’ came true almost immediately. Upon landing on the shore, they came upon a group of ‘skraelings’, the Viking word for savages. They battled and Thorvald was mortally wounded. He instructed his men to bury him upon this hill.

Is he buried here? Don't know. Hampton, NH claims to have his burial site as does Newfoundland. To find out, I would have to read the *Vinland Sagas*, which detail Thorvald's part in an expedition of Vinland. In any event, he was the first Viking known to die on North America. I am not sure what time of year he landed, but I am pretty certain it was not during one of our incredible Nor'easters!

We know from Thorvald's account of being set upon by “skraelings” that the land was indeed inhabited. The earliest residents of Nahant would have been the Algonquin Natives of the Massachuset tribe. The Nahant and Swampscott area made up the “Band of Manatahqua” under the leadership of Manatahqua, also called Poquanam, or as we know his Black Will.

The tribe moved seasonally for food sources. They were primarily fishermen/hunters/farmers. They would likely live on Nahant in the Summer and move inland during the cold.

In 1630, we all know what momentous event took place. Thomas Dexter bought Nahant from Poquanam for a suit of clothes and a plug of tobacco. What Dexter did not know was that Poquanam sold Nahant to other settlers as well. However, being that it was considered part of Lynn, none of these transactions held up in a

Nahant Historical Society



East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy Sunday, July 29, 2018

court of law. You will not find these deeds recorded in the Land Court.

There were several hardy souls from Lynn who made their homes on Nahant. The first permanent white resident was James Mills, who built a small home on Great Nahant. He lived here for 22 years, until passing away. Nahant was once again uninhabited.

By 1631, only about 500 members of the Algonquin tribe remained due in part to a war with the Tarrantine, also known as the Mi'kmaq tribe, and a plague epidemic. The Tarrantines were spared from the 1617 plague epidemic due to their location further north in what is now Maine. They also had access to firearms, which made them more aggressive than the tribes to the south. Smallpox further decimated their population. Due to the European influence, the remaining tribal members converted to Christianity and moved into villages of the 'Praying Indians'. (The first of these villages was in Natick.) The Massachusetts ceased to exist as a separate tribe.

Poquanum's grandchildren eventually moved inland to what is now known as Lowell.

Having been used as a source of wood for building houses in Lynn, and for use in fireplaces, Nahant is now the perfect pasture for grazing livestock. (limit of 7 trees per person) For the next 70 years or so, few residents choose to live on Nahant. At most, there were three families here during the 1700s. However, that was about to change in 1706.

In this year, the Lynn Town Meeting authorized the division of all public land into Ranges. Being mostly uninhabited, Nahant had three of these ranges: Great Nahant, Bass Point (so named for the wonderful fishing) and Little Nahant. Great Nahant had 11 ranges, Bass Point had 6, and Little Nahant had 2. These ranges were then divided into lots, to be assigned by a lottery to residents of Lynn. Nahant had a total of 280 lots of various sizes.

East Point was range 1 and had 16 separate lots. This map was drawn in 1871 by Alonzo Lewis and John Q. Hammond. It shows the original 1706 lottery winners, with an overlay of who owned it in 1871. In 1871, it was owned by the heirs of John Ellerton Lodge, who we will hear more about later.

Over the next century, lands went back and forth. By the Late 1700s, most of the land from what is now the Whitney Homestead out to the far eastern point of Nahant, belonged to the Breed family. During the hot summer months, a few people started traversing the sandy causeway to Nahant on foot for relief and a day of playing on the rocks or walking along the cliff paths. The two Quaker families, the Breeds and Hoods, were situated along the main thoroughfare and offered visitors a meal before returning to the city. The word got out about the beautiful area and folks started coming by 'chaise' or 'barge', basically horse drawn wagons, to visit Nahant. They would come from Medford or Salem by the droves, bringing picnic lunches with them.

Nahant Historical Society



East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy Sunday, July 29, 2018

By the late 1700s/early 1800s, Nahant was a destination spot for many. One such fellow from Salem was the Reverend William Bentley. He visited Nahant regularly from 1790 to 1820 and kept a diary of his travels. On one of his many visits, he writes in his diary about having a meal at farmer Breed's after visiting 'Swallow Rock' and fishing on the beaches. On August 3, 1803 his entry reads: "Rode to Nahant. The hot weather has driven much company to this favorite spot. Nearly 100 daily...have driven down to the lower houses."

Before going on, I have to share two more of Reverend Bentley's entries. On July 24, 1806, he writes: "This day went down to Nahant...Found 50 carriages on the Nahant chiefly from Boston...The increasing number which visits this healthy spot for the sea air in summer will oblige more buildings." His last entry that I will share is from July of 1812, where he writes: "A company was formed to collect lobster in a large basket resembling a cage, opening at the top to receive lobster." Sounds like lobstering has come to Nahant!

Welcome Col. Thomas Handasyd Perkins, a Boston merchant specializing in the China trade, (cotton, tea and opium). Perkins eldest daughter, Elizabeth, had married in to the Cabot family of Salem in 1812. When her third son, Edward, was born in 1819 he was sickly. Fearing he might not survive, the Colonel who had visited Nahant on many occasions, suggested she take young Edward to Nahant in hopes that the wonderful sea air would make him well. It did. (On an aside here, this is also the year that Elizabeth's husband, Samuel Cabot, witnessed first-hand the Sea Serpent!)

Seeing that Nahant was a healthful spot as well as full of interesting and unusual happenings, Perkins suggested to his son-in-law that he build a summer cottage there. And Perkins would foot the bill! Could you turn that down? And so they built, and this began the 'summerizing' of Nahant. (The home was built on Spouting Horn, but is no longer standing.) The noun 'summer' became a verb 'to summer'.

Here I need to mention the Reverend Bentley's entry about his final visits to Nahant, also in 1819. July 8th: "Yesterday I visited Nahant. A greater change had taken place than I imagined. On the Great Nahant the house had doubled since I first visited it." (from three to six) "and the three old ones had been so rebuilt or repaired as to leave no trace of their former appearance." July 17th: "Yesterday I rode to Nahant with Miss H... and Miss Dodge... We visited the usual places and found a variety of company..... The expenses of a visit to Nahant are doubled." Here I will quote Bob Dylan, 'the times they are a changin'.

In 1821, Perkins purchased all of East Point from the Breed family. With Boston Stockbroker, William Payne, the plans for the Nahant Hotel were started. Upon completion, and the expenditure of close to \$60,000, the Hotel stood in the center of 37 acres on the Point. It stood 86 feet high by 54 feet wide and had a 12 foot deep porch all around on two floors. The style was reminiscent of the West Indies, but some folks likened it to an oversized pigeon house. Perkins laid claim to establishing the first hotel by the sea!

East Point came alive. It was no longer the quiet fishing retreat of the Rev. Bentley. It was no longer a safe grazing pasture, either. Sadly, business at the Hotel was up and down, relying on the weather and the

Nahant Historical Society



East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy Sunday, July 29, 2018

seasons. In 1827, it was auctioned off for \$3,400 to Dr. Edward Robbins of Milton. He had little experience in running a hotel, but by 1829 it didn't matter, as the country had gone into a depression. Perkins was able to purchase it back, this time leasing it to a well-known hotelier, George Templeton Strong. In 1839, for the Fourth of July celebration, balloonist Louis Anselm Lauriat performed a hot air balloon ascent on the point, thrilling hundreds of guests. But even this circus-like atmosphere was not enough to keep it in the black.

Change was once again in the air for East Point. With the popularity of abstinence from alcohol, came strict laws. A state temperance act was passed in 1852. In 1854, the hotel was now owned by Phineas Drew. Alcohol was served to guests who requested it and could pay for it. In August of 1854, a raid was performed against Phineas Drew and the Hotel by members of the Temperance Watchmen, who confiscated all of the 'intoxicating liquers'. The enforcement of temperance was ruining business.

In 1851, the Nahant citizens had petitioned the state legislature for separation from Lynn. They were denied. Phineas Drew seized upon this to get his revenge on the Temperance Watchmen and drew up a new petition. Thirty-seven eligible citizens signed it. It was presented to the legislature. When a contingency from Lynn appeared at the Legislature to oppose it, they found that it had been heard and passed on the previous day. While this group was incensed, another Lynn group signed a petition in support and well.... Nahant was established!

Now that Phineas held the wild card with liquor sales, the Hotel expanded, with the addition of two ells, to accommodate nearly 1,000 guests, incorporating three dining times. Steamboat traffic grew, with the *Eagle* and *Nelly Baker* making several trips to the pier at Joseph's beach and the Town Pier. The Nahant Hotel was owned or leased by at least a half dozen different businessmen, all with grand ideas of what would work best. But it wasn't enough to save the Hotel. While undergoing renovations, a great storm destroyed one of the ells. And in 1861, it burned. Change was once again coming to East Point.

John Ellerton Lodge purchased the property in 1861 with plans to establish a private family oasis. He did not live to see this development. The property passed to his children, Elizabeth Lodge James, and Henry Cabot Lodge. Elizabeth, married to George Abbot James, commissioned architect Charles Brigham to design a home on the point. The builder was George U. Perkins.

The first home was built on top of the hill, overlooking the promontory. Henry Cabot Lodge and his wife, Anne Davis moved into this house. The second mansion, very different in appearance from the first, was built down below, in what is referred to as the Lowlands. Thus the name of the estate.

Here you can see the locations. (point to slide)

Interesting note: George Abbot James was the Town Forester from 1881 to 1908. He was a quiet man, who basically hid his estate behind a wall of nature. As evidenced by the amount of plantings on the estate, we can see that he truly cared about the natural beauty which existed here and to which he and Elizabeth added.

Nahant Historical Society



East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy Sunday, July 29, 2018

I would like to read an article from the *Lynn Item* dated August 19, 1911. I want you to try to visualize the natural beauty as I read.

“The Lowlands”

Today, as you stray through the maze of garden path, upon that wider path, the Nahant road, perchance it may be vouchsafed you to enter the gates of the “lowlands” the estate of G.R. James, formerly part of the old Nahant hotel grounds – sheltered from the neighboring ocean by a natural mound of defense, hidden completely from the gaze of the passerby with tall shrubberies and overarching branches of ages-old trees, principally of the willow kind, followed by successive groves of noble maples chiefly. The winding avenue, guarded with tall posts capped with ornamented urns brought from the Far East, and flanked with sheltering shrubs, leads you suddenly out upon a magnificent grove of willows, the like of which, it is said, is not to seen in this country. A willow grove surrounding an artificial pond is your introduction to the ‘Lowlands’ trees whose extraordinary height and girth are beyond description – the ‘Twelve Apostles’ (a tree with 12 trunks) in venerable group, the ‘Three Sisters’ the other side of the pond, and sentinel willows just beyond, the tallest branches of all of them intertwining and meeting in a benediction of restful shade. You cannot forget these willows, their strength and grace.

But one must follow the winding roadway through greenest lawns and shrub-covered little hills and dales, yet the lowlands always – almost the sunken garden – and suddenly again, there is the residence, sequestered and reposeful-more screening hedges, trees and green lawns, inviting rustic seats and tables-and then many diverging paths, and in all direction the cardinal colors of many flower gardens and the flash of greenhouse roofs.

There is much to be seen, and in a brief visit all the beautiful sights cannot be taken in. Here is the rosary-all the tea roses, the Killarneys, the Laiserins and many another. ...Here are the long rows and beds of the fuschia, phlox, snapdragon, tuberous-rooted begonias, hollyhocks, cosmos, scabiora, gladioluses and yes beds of heliotrope in purple and delicate shades of purple. Yonder are strange urns from abroad-from China. And there is a sun-dial of the gardener’s own making. Thirty-eight varieties of cannas brighten this flower-land and near at hand are giant castor beds, also plots of celosia and or variegated cuphobia. In cool tanks of water are three varieties of the sweet scented African lily and their neighbors are brilliant leaved tuberoses. “

I assume you get the picture of how beautiful this property was. It makes it very difficult to believe that many townspeople were upset with Mr. James, because they no longer had access to the property, as they did when it was the Nahant Hotel. The town did have a right-of-way, much like we do today, through the middle of the two properties. The difference is that today it is a town owned right-of-way.

In 1886, Nahant was selected for its ideal geographic placement ‘as a site for mortar batteries’. While still in the planning stage, war with Spain was threatening. After the devastating sinking of the battleship, *USS*

Nahant Historical Society



East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy Sunday, July 29, 2018

Maine, in Havana Harbor, Cuba, intelligence suggested that there was a threat of a possible attack by the Spanish.

In 1898, East Point is used for military purposes for the first time. The First Corp of Cadet had its headquarters at East Point, with its primary responsibility being to protect the equipment and cables running the underwater mines in the harbor. A tent with powerful range-finding instruments was positioned at East Point. Fortunately, no Spanish fleet ever entered the sea around us. Though I understand that Swampscott mustered the troops after hearing that ships were seen emerging from the fog.

In 1910, Nahant was selected as a location for two powerful, long-range, 60 inch seacoast defense searchlights, which were built by General Electric Company at Schenectady, NY. One light was to be installed at East Point, the other at Bayley's Hill. The East Point searchlight was not approved for installation until 1917, as the war in Europe was escalating. Senator Lodge's only reservation about having this on his property was that the property be left in good shape when the military left. The searchlight shelter that housed and protected the light when not in use was located in a grove of trees near the seaward middle area of Senator Lodge's estate. A small wooden structure, designated as the power house containing a 25 kilowatt gas engine, generator, radiator and switchboard assembly was located about 400 feet from the searchlight near the Lodge's barn. The watcher's house, a small wooden structure, was about 160 feet off the power house and was adjacent to the Cliff Walk – giving a clear view of northern approaches to the Port of Boston.

In November of 1917, final plans for a gun emplacement were approved for East Point. The new battery would be a 'single-story' or 'horizontal ammunition-service' type emplacement. Exclusive of sand and soil fill, the emplacement was 245 feet long and 125 feet wide. The seaward and flank exterior walls were 8 feet thick, landward walls were between 2 ½ feet to 4 feet thick. The average roof thickness was 8 ½ feet over the magazine and power room area and 8 feet over the men's quarters.

Military activity ceased at East Point by February 1919, although Army artillery field pieces and antiaircraft guns, towed by large Army transporters, were brought to the site for recruiting display after the war and for the gala 1919 Welcome-Home parade honoring Nahant participants.

A little known fact from WWI activity here at East Point; On February 10, 1917, the US Naval Consulting Board created a Special Problems Committee to devise a program for detecting submarines by using waterborne sound waves. Little was known about submarines. The first laboratory of the Submarine Signal Company was located at East Point. It was built on the properties owned by General Charles, J. Maine, Mrs. Knivet W. Sears and Miss Clara Sears. Several small wooden buildings were constructed, as well as a 22 ½ by 12 foot general use/laboratory building.

The scientific minds who gathered here spent months developing the first hydrophone. On May 14, 1917, the Nahant scientists reported that they could detect propeller noises from a submarine moving nearly ten miles

Nahant Historical Society



East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy Sunday, July 29, 2018

away. Eventually, a school for training naval and civilian personnel to operate and repair this device was opened at the East Point Antisubmarine Laboratory under the tightest security. I could spend hours on this subject alone, but that will have to wait for a future lecture.

Sadly, in 1917, Mr. George Abbot James passed away. His son, Ellerton, took over *Lowlands*.

In 1926, *Lowlands* was purchased by Frank C. Stuart of Lynn, whose intent was to divide the estate into several house lots. Let me read the headlines from the August 20, 1926 *Daily Evening Item*: **“Purchase of the Ellerton James Estate Nahant, May be Forerunner of the Commercial Development of one of the Shore’s Beauty Spots” “One of the most Picturesque and Attractive Sections of Entire North Shore. HAUNTS OF POETS OF OLD. Also Eastern Point was once famous as Scene of Many Society Functions.”**

However, Mr. Stuart passed on before he could implement his plan. The neighbors were relieved. One neighbor, Charles Hammond Gibson, convinced Mr. Harmon P. Elliott to purchase *Lowlands*. While Mr. James was quiet and unassuming, Mr. Elliott was quite the opposite. He took every opportunity to let everyone know about the substantial industrial contributions both he and his father made. He owned over 100 US Patents from a quadricycle to an automatic addressing machine. He proceeded to strip away all of the meticulous plantings so that people could see his estate and perhaps be envious. Here he is in his car which is on his yacht.

At the time, there were two other cottages nearby, the Bangs and Curtis cottages. Within four years, Harmon Elliott purchased both properties and had them taken down. He even replaced a neighbor’s run-down fence with a new one, thinking he was doing them both a favor. However, his neighbor was upset that the beautiful rambling rose that had run along the fence had been destroyed. The neighbor, Virginia Paine, wrote to him that ‘a good neighbor minds his own fence, not his neighbor’s fence’.

In addition to denuding the property of the plantings, Harmon built a pool on the beach side of the Point. That has long since been removed.

In 1940, with tensions rising in Europe, Nahant once more became a hive of military activity. The Government acquired the 14-acre Lodge Estate. In 1941, Harmon Elliott was informed that his estate was also being taken and was advised to immediately start taking out his furniture, rugs and anything else that was movable. He already owned the property at 6 Swallow Cave Road and purchased Swallow Cave Point. In addition to the rugs and furniture, Harmon also took all of the rich wood wall paneling from the living room and dining room, as well as the ceilings and bookcases, and installed them into his new home, *Cas-el-ot*.

Nahant Historical Society



East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy Sunday, July 29, 2018

Major changes are now happening at East Point. In July, 1941, The Chief of Naval Operations recommended that magnetic indicator loops, for underwater detection, be installed in Nahant and Scituate. In addition to the loops, the East Point station would consist of the support equipment required to operate, test and maintain the system. The operations building, after some back and forth between the Army and Navy, was positioned at '*Roaring Cavern*', facing the rock and ledge area on East Point proper. Loose ledge was removed by blasting and the foundation footings were set. The final building was a low-level, 14-foot rectangle, 10'3" high with one angular three sided face strategically set into rock outcrops.

By fall of 1945, most armaments at East Point were in standby status. The coast-defense systems were either being preserved or indefinitely stored. Antiaircraft guns and searchlight systems were transported to Fort Ruckman for protected storage.

After the war ended, the Magnetic Loop Station at East Point was decommissioned, and all equipment was removed. The Navy no longer needed the buildings and informed the Army that they were available. The Army told them that they could remove them. They were left in place and deteriorated over the years.

On January 30, 1952, the Nahant Police received a call from Fort Banks that an Army convoy would be going to East Point. The Cold War was on. In April, land clearing was completed in front of Battery John B. Murphy. Earth movers leveled the ground for four 90-mm antiaircraft guns with sandbag emplacement. The men were quartered and administered from the Lowlands Mansion. The Lodge caretaker's cottage was used by an officer and his family. The original ice house was a radio or communications room. The beach near the guardhouse was cleared of rocks by manual labor, which were used for a fireplace near the shore or dumped as fill into the Gun 2 gunwell of the former 16-inch battery. Sand was brought in from Winthrop by troop truck. Of course, the first good storm wiped out the entire area and it was not restored.

In September of 1954, the Army announced that a NIKE guided-missile station was planned for Nahant. The launcher area consisted of the launching control trailer, launching section control cabinet, twelve launcher loader assemblies, three underground missile storage magazines, power generation equipment and support buildings and appliances.

Two sites were chosen. The first was forward of the 16 inch gun emplacement. Here is where the three missile storage and launchers would be. The second site was reserved for future use if required and was on top of and slightly forward of the gun battery. Test borings and an evaluation survey were completed in the spring, and the design was done by July 1954.

Wexler Construction Company of Newton was awarded the contract. There was massive clearing and excavation, as the three magazines had to go deep into bedrock. The entire seaward cliff and ledge were stripped and sections were blasted down to bedrock. An endless parade of private contractors hauled fill to the site

Nahant Historical Society



East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy Sunday, July 29, 2018

The entire underground missile storage magazines were constructed entirely of reinforced concrete with foot-thick side walls. The launcher sections went from west to east. They were approximately 63 feet long by 49 feet wide. After construction, fill was deposited around each unit.

Fortunately these missiles were never launched from Nahant. There were many drills where the missiles would be raised and then lowered back down. With the exception of one time, when an unidentified bogey was spotted and the missiles were activated for real. The bogey was eventually identified as an Air France plane with a busted radio. That was the closest we came to an active firing.

As a child, I saw these missiles rise and it was incredible. I also remember the day they were carted out of town. I stood on the lawn of the Stone House, which overlooks Forty Steps Beach, (at that time the house was owned by John & Carolyn Dineen) while the missiles made their way along Nahant Road. I can remember actually stepping backwards as one missile was maneuvered around the corner. I did not think it would make the turn. Those military drivers knew what they were doing.

In 1961, the military base was decommissioned and *Lowlands* was evacuated. The Navy held on to the outer property for possible future use. The rest was now put up for auction as Government Surplus. For the kids in town, this meant we had a new playground. Yes, I admit to being one of the many who inched their way along the inner walls of the bunker. It was pitch black inside. You could not see your hand in front of you. I just kept praying that I did not fall in a manhole. Fortunately, we all made it out!

From here, I will read some points from a timeline of Town Meeting/Selectmen/Conservation Committee/Planning Board notes, regarding the next steps made in the disposition of the Military Reservation at East Point.

In 1962, the planning board recommends that the town purchase this land to be retained as a public park. In 1964, the town decided not to appropriate money for the purchase but would negotiate with GSA and US Navy to retain the right to walk the scenic pathway. At town meeting, FinComm recommended that the Town indefinitely postpone voting on the article to purchase the 28 acres, less area reserved for the Navy. The cost to purchase would be \$29,750, and the condition of the sale would restrict its usage to education, recreation or park and allow entrance to any citizen of the United States. It cannot be developed as a private park or recreational areas for Nahanters alone.

The following year, the ConComm supported Northeastern University's acquisition because the 'scenic and geologic advantage of leaving the area unspoiled' and that 'It is in the interest of the town to have the property pass to an educational institution, particularly if there were reserved to the townspeople the right to walk along a pathway on the coastal edge of the upland.' The GSA allowed the Town time to decide to make an offer. NEU did say at that time that 'no classrooms were planned'. But the deal had not yet been signed with the government.

Nahant Historical Society



East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy Sunday, July 29, 2018

In 1965, the planning board approved the transfer as being in the best interest of the town. In April of this year, Northeastern's proposal to acquire the property includes: A proposal for a marine science institute at Northeastern University. The draft states, "The University seeks to acquire the whole of East Point in order to make it a wildlife preserve.

At a public hearing in Nahant, there was a rising vote of welcome from Nahant to NEU. Northeastern assured the Town that it would work with the Town in the development of a walkway through the property which could be used by citizens and others to view the ocean and the cliffs. In February of 1966, Deed Without Warranty is issued to NEU, including a covenant that 'for a period of 20 years from the date of this deed the above described property herein conveyed shall be utilized continuously in the manner and for the educational purposes set forth in the approved program and plan contained in the application of NEU, dated June 16, 1965.

As an aside, in May of 1965, the *Lowlands* Estate was destroyed by fire. Now, I will admit to being in the building with some friends on the day it burned, but we did NOT set it on fire. We could actually walk into the fireplaces, because they were so tall. We were standing in one when we heard voices from upstairs – teenagers! They scared us out of there. An hour or so later, it was on fire. Not my fault!!!

On October 29, 1969, the Edwards Building (former military barracks) was dedicated as Edwards Marine Sciences Institute (present day Marine Science Center). At the dedication, moderator John Lowell said, 'Nahanters are most grateful to NEU for restoring the area's natural beauty and those of us who live close by are especially appreciative of the supervision being given to the property by the university.

In 1970, NEU tried to acquire the remaining 7 acres when the Navy indicated it was no longer needed by them. They were not successful, and in 1976 Nahant purchased the parcel that is now Lodge Park.

In 1986, the 20 year use restriction on NEU expired. The Planning Board Report observed the 'people generally like Nahant as it is and want to give up as little of what exists as possible. Protection rather than change is the center of what needs to be in Nahant.'

April of 1988: Nahant votes to appoint a committee to protect and manage open space. They are charged with developing an open space management plan, intended to implement a set of planned strategies for acquiring or otherwise protecting important open space areas. Lodge Park was dedicated for the first time.

1989: The ConComm (with MSC Interim Director Joe Ayer as Chair) issued a Request for Proposals for further development of Lodge Park. At the time this was written, the Lodge Park site was still paved. References to paths and wildlife are, therefore, references to Northeastern University's portion:

NEU acquired 24 acres in 1967: **the northeast portion of NEU's property and the rocky coast are maintained as a wildlife sanctuary and ecological study area.**

Nahant Historical Society



East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy Sunday, July 29, 2018

“We (ConComm) would like to return East Point to the character it possessed prior to WWII.... It is quite feasible to re-establish the flora and scenic character.”

“Due to its position in the migration pathways, East Point attracts a broad variety of endemic sea and migratory birds. Bird watching is a major activity at the Point, and we would like to maximize vistas for this activity without disrupting the activities of the fauna.”

“East Point is a potentially important passive recreations facility for Nahant Residents. At present the major forms of recreation are walking, jogging, sitting (several benches with vistas are provided), photography, painting, sunning, fishing, nature study, star gazing and bird watching.” Pretty much the same today as it was in 1989.

The desired developments that the ConComm would like included: **‘the former Cliff Walk restored and the top of the Nike Site reshaped from a parking lot to more natural contours to enhance exciting vistas’.**

In 1990, the annual Report shows that Article 45 was to see if the Town would raise \$30,000 for further implementation of the master plan for Lodge Memorial Park, East Point. Nahant amended zoning bylaw map to change the entire East Point zone to Natural Resource District.

The Lodge Park landscaping plan is approved at Town Meeting. With fill from the Big Dig, the missile silos were filled in. Tons of topsoil is delivered to allow for proper seeding of the park, and truckloads of pea stone is provided to create a walking path around the park. Lodge Park is re-dedicated on July 2, 1994.

In 1995, a local astrophysicist, Peter Foukal, installed a small solar observatory at East Point on top of Murphy Bunker. It was opened to the public by appointment with a professor who was not affiliated with NEU. In 1997, with assistance from Johnson School Science teacher, Lonnie Stephens, a grant was awarded from the Space Physics Education Outreach Program of NASA, which allowed for a science education position at the observatory. In 1998, local scout, Rick Manzano, assembled volunteers to construct a railing along the path from the base of the MSC to the observatory. Sadly, due to lack of continued funding for staffing, the observatory was recently dismantled (2018).

In 2017, Northeastern developed a Smartphone Audio Tour for East Point. The Society was pleased to have provided factual information for this project. We are also pleased with the wonderful response NEU has to any concerns we (the Society) have regarding the historic *Lowlands* ice house located on the circular green.

Nahant is now facing the possibility of another change, with the planned expansion of Northeastern University’s classroom and conference space. Today, we have presented you with the facts as we know

Nahant Historical Society



**East Point Lecture By Julie Tarmy
Sunday, July 29, 2018**

them. East Point has been the site of many transformations over the past 400 years or so, but it has never surrendered its natural beauty.

Thank you.