



Save the Harbor Save the Bay

For Everyone

The History of Long Island

Long Island, situated in Quincy Bay, in the middle of Boston Harbor, MA. The island forms part of the City of Boston, and of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreational Area. Only accessible by road over a 4,175 ft. causeway from Squantum peninsula of North Quincy to Moon Island and from there, over a 3,050 foot two-lane steel bridge.

- Island is 1.75 miles long and covers 225 acres

History of Long Island

- Originally used and populated by Native American Indians & during American colonial period
- April 1, 1634, island granted to City of Boston, along with Deer Island & Hogg Island (orient Heights in E. Boston)
 - Rent for 3 islands was two pounds per year
- Long Island derived name from its length – a mile and three-quarters long and a quarter mile wide
- October 6, 1676, during panic caused by French and Indian War, Mass residents collected all of the local Indian population and herd them to the dock in Watertown on the Charles River.
 - Indians marooned on Deer Island for winter and only converted Indians were counted and recorded
 - Hundreds died due to starvation and exposure to weather conditions
 - Spring 1677, serving Indians were allowed to cross over to Long Island. One of most horrific historical events ever recorded in Boston Harbor
- 1768, Revolutionary War times – occupying British forces used Long Island for grazing their sheep, swine, and cattle. British also harvested hay.
- July 12, 1775, Colonel John Groaton with a detachment of 500 American soldiers, in 65 whaleboats, raided Long Island where they “liberated” all the sheep and cattle grazing there, and captured 17 British sailors who were guarding the animals
- “Long Island Battery”
- “women in scarlet” –Mary, the wife of the Troy, William Burton, a cannonball from Long Islands Battery struck Mary. She was buried on East Head after her body was sewn into a red blanket.
 - Her ghost haunts the island; reported sightings by fisherman and guards on duty
- 1794, lighthouse built on the northern head of the island, replaced by a bigger tower in 1819.
- 1844 – 1st cast-iron lighthouse in US was constructed on Long Island Head

- 1870 – 10-gun battery was constructed at Fort Strong on East Head on Long Island
- 1872 – a large hotel was built on the current site of Long Island Chronic Disease Hospital
- 1882 – City of Boston began purchasing property on Long Island for institutional care facilities
- Long Island is currently used to support social service programs, as it has since 1882
- Boston Fire Department Engine Company 54 station house is located right on island
- Historical Buildings and cemeteries date back to Civil War to Cold War

Geology

- The island is composed of three drumlins, reaching an elevation of 95 feet.

Habitats

- A fresh water marsh is located on the west side of island between Bass Point and West Head.
- Extensive tidal flats surround the island.
- Estuarine intertidal wetlands are the predominant wetland type in the shoreline habitats of Long Island.

Vegetation

- Long Island contains an abundance of cultivated and naturalized plant species.
- The oldest trees are located within the Long Island Campus including shade and apple trees. There are also many ornamental shrubs and perennials.
- Long Island Head is now undergoing rapid succession with species such as sumac and poplar.
- The East Head of the island contains an extensive grove of pine, most likely planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.
- The freshwater wetland on the southwest side of the island is has a diversity of plant species.

References

National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, www.nps.gov

Boston Harbor Islands, www.bostonislands.org

Wikipedia, Long Island (Massachusetts), [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_Island_\(Massachusetts\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_Island_(Massachusetts))