

These are the panels you can find at the Fish Point Location. While these photos show you what they look like, the best way to see them is by visiting the location in person.

Yarmouth County Historical Society presents

BUG LIGHT HISTORY



EARLY HISTORY

The southern most end of Bunker Island was a hazard for vessels entering the harbour, especially in bad weather, so an unmanned beacon was placed there. In 1873 it was replaced with a small lighthouse. The Bunker Island beacon (known locally as Bug Light), was built on a wooden, rock filled base and was 27 feet high.

Lightkeeper Joshua Doane lit the lamp for the first time on February 16, 1874. It was a fixed red light visible for 10 miles. A fog bell was added in 1885 and rang every 15 seconds during bad weather. The lightkeeper lived on Bunker Island, but after dark and during bad weather he had to stay on duty in the beacon.



LATER STRUCTURES

In 1892, a new 36 foot diameter metal caisson filled with concrete and painted bright red was installed. The old light was moved to the new pier, raising it to 31 feet above water level. Frank Murphy was the second light keeper at the beacon and worked there for 34 years.

In 1929, to improve the navigation channel, the old beacon was removed and the shoal rocks were dynamited and dredged.

The new "Bug Light" was 350 feet closer to the island, reducing the turn in the channel by 50 percent. The new caisson was 48 feet in diameter and 25 feet high raising the new Bug Light another 10 feet.




Dismantling the old Bug Light in 1929



A post card from 1907



An original lamp from Bug Light






COTTREAU FAMILY

The new beacon was a vast improvement. The new caisson had a cistern capable of holding 1500 gallons of rainwater. The main floor had modern plumbing, a living room, kitchen, pantry and bell room. The upper floor had 3 bedrooms.

In 1930, Jules A. Cottreau and his family took over the operation of Bug Light. The Cottreau family, including the family collic "Teddy", lived full time in Bug Light.

Teddy became quite famous as he barked loudly when the steamships to Boston passed by. The ships would reply with 3 blasts of their whistle and the lightkeeper would ring the bell in response. Teddy would also bark anytime the fog rolled in and when it started snowing, but he would stop as soon as the lightkeeper started ringing the fog bell.

During many winter storms, the waves hitting the beacon light were high enough that the spray would break over the top of the building. In 1954, Hurricane Edna damaged the beacon light so badly that the family could no longer live in it. Living on Bunker Island, Mr. Cottreau remained in charge of the beacon light until 1959, when he retired.



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MODERN BUG LIGHT

A new Bug Light, built in 1963, was partly automated allowing the lightkeeper to live on Bunker Island. In 1984, the current Bug Light was built and fully automated. Since 1874, Bug Light has greeted passenger ships and crews entering Yarmouth Harbour and continues to serve as a useful navigational aid.







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BUNKER(S) ISLAND

EARLY HISTORY

In early Yarmouth Township land grants, Bunker Island was considered a central part of the new town. Accordingly, the 34.5 acre island was divided into 24 lots. Hezekiah Bunker, arriving in 1765, was granted 4 lots of 25 acres each and his brother Paul received a 1 acre lot. In following years, as other grantees moved further up the harbour, the Bunker brothers purchased their lots, giving the island its present name. Factual accounts show Hezekiah Bunker bought 4.75 acres on the island in 1777 for 79 Spanish dollars.



Yarmouth privateer ship "The Eagle"

WAR OF 1812

During the War of 1812, an earthen fort was built on the north west point of the island called Battery Point. Three large guns (cannons) were sent from Halifax for defense. From the top of the fort, these guns could fire either up or down the harbour.

Early in the war, two armed U.S. schooners with 8 cannons and 80 men each aboard raided Cape Forchu, capturing a brig and several prisoners. The people of Yarmouth and New England had a long, friendly relationship and this raid seemed contrary to the privateers' instructions. Following a petition subsequently passed by the state of Massachusetts, U.S. privateers never raided Yarmouth again. Privateer ships from Yarmouth captured 20 vessels during the war and lost 7 of their own.

According to old reports, in 1819, the U.S. privateer *Constitution* captured a Spanish vessel containing casks of aged Spanish wine and a gold-filled chest.

There were rumours that the chest was stolen but it has never been found. However, it was reported that a few Spanish coins were found in 1955.

Bunker Island continued to be used by local militia for training, especially artillery practice.

In 1890, the garrison artillery company is shown practicing from a gun emplacement on the south west end of the island. In this very formal exercise, the company is being evaluated by inspector Colonel McShane of Halifax.





MARINE HOSPITAL

In the late 1800s a "pest house" or isolation hospital was built on Bunker Island to contain a smallpox outbreak in Yarmouth. The letters M and H separated by an anchor signified it as a marine hospital.

Ships entering the harbour with sick sailors aboard flew a yellow signal flag. The sick sailors were transported to the island and isolated until they recovered. Hospital records maintained by Dr. C.A. Webster (1864-1941) contained each sailor's name, their disease, name of their vessel, the port it was from and dates of admittance and release.

Records indicate that John McGrate, Newcastle, England, age 39 (1902 - cancer) and Fred Holleman, Melrose, Massachusetts, age 22 (1905 - typhoid) were among those buried in a small cemetery on the island.

The keeper of the hospital, James D. Archibald, his son Ebenezer and their families operated a successful farm on the island as reported in these newspaper clippings from 1873. In 1882, James Archibald wrote a letter to officials in Ottawa protesting the militia gun emplacement on the island and the disruption it caused during artillery practice.


Beacon Lighthouse 1870

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

In 1860, a narrow bridge was built connecting the island to the mainland. It lasted until 1921 when it was washed away in a storm. In 1950, Lloyd Hatfield purchased the island and built a causeway at his own expense.

In 1873, the Beacon Lighthouse was built on the south west point of the island. An unmanned light built on Battery Point at the north end of the island began operating in 1905.

In later years, Bunker Island was home to a large sea product operation and subsequently a bulk fuel storage facility. Today the island is uninhabited.



Source: The Yarmouth Daily Mirror, 1873

Source: The Yarmouth Daily Mirror, 1882

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FISH POINT HISTORY

EARLY HISTORY

Long established as a seasonal fishing area, the Mi'kmaq, Acadians and New England fishermen used this site to land and process their catches before 1762.

In 1764, Yarmouth County's first ship was built and launched here. This was the beginning of a significant shipbuilding industry. Yarmouth became one of Canada's major shipbuilding centres in the 19th century, and by 1789 it had the second largest registered tonnage in Canada.

The low flat beach near the main channel allowed fishing schooners to anchor in the harbour. Fish would then be loaded into dories and rowed to shore, one load at a time.

Pleasure craft from Yarmouth have, throughout the years, used Fish Point as a landing site and continue to do so today.

A "Schooling" built at Fish Point in 1764

The large schooners are building slips at the John D. Reid and Walter D. Sweeney Shipyards in Yarmouth, circa 1927

STANWOOD'S INN

Enoch Stanwood's large homestead was eventually turned into Stanwood's Inn and his daughter Lois (Stanwood) Johnson continued this operation until 1896. The Johnson family continued to operate the inn until the 1930s.

Stanwood Inn early 1900s

FIRST SETTLERS

Between 1761 and 1792, New England settlers arrived to resettle this area. Their first landing point was at Chebogue and along the coast up to, and including, Fish Point. The families of Elishama Eldridge, Joseph Pitman, Stephen Gallisham, Benjamin Barnard and Enoch Stanwood were among those first families to settle at Fish Point.

Enoch Stanwood acquired several properties at Fish Point, where he built a large homestead. He and his wife Eunice (Foot) Stanwood married in 1792 and had seven children.

During the War of 1812, Enoch Stanwood captained the privateer ship *Fly*. In a confrontation at White Island Harbour, off the coast of Maine, he was struck and killed by two shots fired in a volley from the beach. Some of Enoch Stanwood's descendants still live in this area.

Samuel F. Stanwood

Samuel F. Stanwood was a captain on the Boston and Yarmouth steamships for 28 years. The grandson of Enoch Stanwood, Samuel was one of the best known and most admired of Yarmouth's captains of the time.

After retiring, and a short illness, Samuel died suddenly in Cambridge, Massachusetts on December 4, 1904. His remains were taken back to his Yarmouth home on his old command, the Steamship "Boston".

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STANWOOD'S BEACH

SETTLEMENT GROWTH

The settlement at Stanwood's Beach grew rapidly after the first settlers arrived in the 1760s. This was due to the proximity of nearby fishing areas and the large flat beach that was ideal for the early fishing operations. In addition, Stanwood's Beach was free land "not granted to any individual", so any hard working man could settle there. The 1911 Canada census showed 115 people in 25 families lived along this small stretch of beach.

STORES

John and Benjamin Barnard opened the first store at Fish Point in 1772. Parker F Atkins Co. operated a dry goods and fishing supply business from the 1880s until the mid 1900s. General goods were also sold at Emma Watkins store on Stanwood's Beach. In later years, Amos Brannen and Sons operated a store and sold fishing supplies. These stores were also gathering spots for story telling, gossip and complaining about the weather.

BETHEL COMMUNITY HALL

The Stanwood's Beach residents wanted to promote "in earnest Christian life among its members". They raised the necessary funds to build a Meeting House they called The Bethel. The Bethel was dedicated on Sunday June 22, 1884. This simple structure consisted of an anteroom off the entrance and the meeting room with seating for about 25 people. Church services were conducted every second Sunday by a Minister travelling from Yarmouth who was paid a yearly salary of \$50.00 in 1906.

In addition to church services, fund raising events, concerts and skits, funerals and weddings were also held at The Bethel. Bethel records show funds were provided yearly for a Christmas tree, which was probably the only one to be found in this small community. Sunday school services were held for the children living at Stanwood's Beach. Between 1928 and 1932, Grace Lorrey, a Stanwood family descendent was the Sunday School teacher.

FISH TRAP

A fish trap or "weir" was set out each spring. A trap is netting set out from the shoreline into shallow waters offshore and supported by long wooden poles. These poles were then anchored at their bases by large stones or concrete blocks. The poles were kept upright with a clever system of rope lines strung out to anchors on all sides of the trap. A successful trap could yield 250 barrels of herring or mackerel a day and continued for several weeks during a good season. Several men were employed to pull the purse line and form a small pocket in the weir.

WEATHER CHALLENGES

Storms along the low-lying area of Stanwood's Beach could be very hazardous. Often the whole area would be flooded with water several feet deep forcing residents to move to higher ground. Tragedies were bound to occur. On August 24, 1924 the 18 ton pinky *Lizzie E* was caught in a storm behind Yarmouth Bar. The skipper Howard L. Watkins, his twin brother Joseph, and Everett O Connell fought the waves to keep from going ashore. Joseph drowned while his wife Abbie and their 2 children watched from shore. Today Stanwood's Beach is still used by the local fishermen.

*Taken from the Bethel Hall Managing Committee minutes book.

Harbor or men were used for several boats including heading in the net to collect the trapped fish.

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YARMOUTH BAR



EARLY HISTORY

As fishermen began settling along Stanwood's Beach in the 1760s, they built wharves for their fishing boats to reach water when the tide was low. The development of commercial fishing continued throughout the years as the population increased. Fishing methods advanced, and sales to the nearby New England market grew significantly.

In 1869, there were 294 vessels and smaller boats from the Yarmouth area directly involved in the fisheries. This number increased to 648 by 1880.



Fishing schooner Garlew and crew at the Parker Eakins Co. wharf

PARKER EAKINS COMPANY

An important number of Yarmouth's fishing fleet were based at Yarmouth Bar. A large wharf was built to utilize the natural channel running through the southern end of the Bar.

The Parker Eakins Company was established in 1874, and operated a business on Water Street in Yarmouth until 1976. In 1880 Parker Eakins Co. began operating a wharf, supply store, warehouses, ice houses, the fish trap and a flake yard at Yarmouth Bar.

LOBSTER CANNEERY

In the mid 1870s, several small lobster canneries started operations along the shores of Nova Scotia to supply New England markets.

Parker Eakins Co. operated a large lobster cannery and fish processing plant at Yarmouth Bar. At the peak of the season, as many as 40 men and women, and boys as young as 9 or 10 years of age, were employed.

The large cannery building at the end of the wharf (image at lower left) contained the boiling room, cracker room and a room for packaging the meat in paper lined tins. Lobster shells were sold to local farmers for fertilizer. The central building had office space, the supply store and an upstairs bunk room. The long windowless shed held salted fish to be stored and processed for packing.





Fish Flakes on Yarmouth Bar



Damage to the wharf after Hurricane John in 1916

FISH PROCESSING

Parker Eakins Co. bought fish from fishermen working inland waters in small boats and even dories. The Parker Eakins Co. also had their own small fishing schooners. They often bought catches from schooners based in other ports, such as the Garlew, a 63 ton schooner out of Digby, Nova Scotia.

The fresh fish was sold locally, but most were split, cleaned, salted and cured. Once cured, they were rinsed of salt and put out on wooden drying racks called "flakes". The elevated flakes allowed air to flow around the cured fish.

At one time rows of flakes ran along both sides of the road at Yarmouth Bar. At night or during bad weather, the fish were stacked on the flakes and covered with specially built wooden boxes.



Seven large flakes along the breakwater

BREAKWATER CONSTRUCTION

The first breakwater connected the island of Cape Forchu to Yarmouth Bar in 1873. This breakwater was 2,800 feet long and 22 feet wide with an average height of seven feet. This structure protected the harbour channels and provided a transportation link. The breakwater could be impassable for several months due to ice build up during winter months. Ongoing repair was required to maintain the structure. In the early 1950s, the old wooden breakwater was replaced with a new one built with steel and concrete.



The Yarmouth Historical Society would not have been possible without the support of the Province of Nova Scotia. We are pleased to work in partnership with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to display and preserve our cultural heritage in a public space. We also acknowledge the support of the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth. www.yarmouthns.ca 902-754-7111