

# CUTTYHUNK ISLAND and the ELIZABETH ISLANDS

## TIME LINE

### Pre History

Cuttyhunk, Elizabeth Islands, and Cape Cod formed by retreating glaciers during the ice age. The Elizabeth Islands extend 16 miles south west from Falmouth, MA separating Buzzards Bay from Vineyard Sound.

### Early History (Pre-1602)

Branches of the Wampanoag Indian Tribe hunt and fish on Cuttyhunk and Penikese and are known to live on Naushon, Pasque and Nashawena. The name Cuttyhunk comes from the Indian name Pocutohunkunoh, meaning 'Land's End.'

### 17th Century

- 1602 Englishman Bartholomew Gosnold departs Falmouth, England on the bark Concord with about 30 men, on March 26th and on May 25th, lands on Cuttyhunk which he names Elizabeth's Isle (after Queen Elizabeth I), later applied to the string of islands. They build a small fort and remain 22 days before leaving June 18th to return to England.
- 1606 Bartholomew Gosnold, second in command, sailed from England December 20, on an expedition to establish a trading post and ultimately, the first permanent English settlement in Virginia, that this time succeeded. After landing at Jamestowne (May 13, 1607), he was a member of the governing council, then died of malaria three months later on August 22. He was called the "prime mover" of both the 1602 and 1607 colonizing expeditions.
- 1606 Elizabeth Islands included by King James I in a grant to the Council of New England, which dissolved in 1635, after which the islands became the property of Alexander, Earl of Sterling.
- 1641 Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket sold by Alexander, Earl of Sterling to Thomas Mayhew; miller and businessman. Mayhew given right to plant on the Elizabeth Islands.
- 1635 "Great Colonial Hurricane", Category 5. Probably split "Elizabeth's Isle" into Cuttyhunk and Nashawena creating Canapitsit Channel.
- 1654 Mayhew receives the deed for Elizabeth Isles from Indian Sachem.
- 1663 Islands granted to the Duke of York's patent.

- 1668 Thomas Mahew sold Cuttyhunk to Philip Smith, Peleg Sanford, and Thomas Ward of Newport, RI.
- 1671 Mayhew states that “There are 15 families of natives at Elizabeth Isles, of which seven are praying families.”
- 1688 Peleg Sanford acquired his partners’ rights to Cuttyhunk and sells half to Ralph Earle of Dartmouth, who immediately sells it to his son Ralph, Jr. He becomes the first permanent settler. They stripped the island of all its lumber, leaving it bare and windswept.
- 1691 Control of Cuttyhunk passes from the New York Dutch to the British Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- 1693 Peleg Slocum of Dartmouth buys all of Cuttyhunk, Nashawena and Penikese. Slocum family grazes sheep on the Islands following deforestation that began in 1688. They continue to live on Cuttyhunk for 200 years.

### **18th Century**

- 1759 Paul Cuffe, noted black mariner, born on Cuttyhunk (d.1817) to Kofi Slocum, a West African Ashanti, and Ruth Moses, a Wampanoag Indian. Kofi was a slave of John Slocum, owner of Cuttyhunk, who later freed him.
- 1761 “Near 20 families” reported on the Elizabeth Islands.
- 1764 Kofi and Ruth Cuffe move their family of 10 children to Martha’s Vineyard. By 1766 they bought land in Dartmouth and moved there while continuing construction projects on Cuttyhunk. Paul Cuffe returned to work on Cuttyhunk 1776-1777. “Cuffe Rock” on the northwest side of the island is named after him.
- 1777 About 80-90 persons on the Elizabeth Island. Naushon 59, Pasque 21, Cuttyhunk 13, Nashawena, 10.
- 1790 Census: 103 People live on the Elizabeth Islands.

### **19th Century**

- 1800 Five Slocum heads of family live on Cuttyhunk.
- 1800’s Early fishermen, fishing for livelihood, use simple nets, hook and traps from shore or skiff.
- 1807 Two families living on “Cutterhunk”. (probably Slocums). Most islands denuded of forest growth and continued sheep grazing.
- 1815 “The great gale of 1815”, before recorded hurricane history. The few island families (probably Slocums) had no warning.

- 1822 Hannah Sherman Slocum (1775-1822) wife of Holder Slocum (a master mariner who settled on Cuttyhunk) died and was buried in the Slocum family burying ground near what is now known as “Barnacle”. Hers was the first engraved headstone in the cemetery. One older burial in the cemetery was marked with a rough cut slate stone with no inscription, the only slate stone in the cemetery. Other older graves marked with field stones.
- 1822 First Cuttyhunk Lighthouse built of stone with a separate light tower.
- 1830’s Beginning of Islanders piloting ships along Cuttyhunk shores. Piloting and rescue services provided the islanders livelihood until the early 1900s and the industrial revolution.
- 1832 Capt. Crandall of Ashaway Twine Co., RI, provided tarred cotton handlines to members of an informal bass club on Cuttyhunk.
- 1840 Capt. Crandall of Ashaway Twine Co., RI, provides Cuttyhunk with stronger, finer diameter twisted line for rod and reel.
- 1847 Mass. Humane Society established on Cuttyhunk and Nashawena. (1786 Mass. Humane Society founded- state rescue service). Erected three buildings or huts on Cuttyhunk with supplies, boats and mortars (for shooting lines across the decks of stranded vessels), to aid those shipwrecked.
- 1850’s Sportfishing popular relaxation for big city industrialists.
- 1850 Census lists 30 residents on Cuttyhunk.
- 1858 William C.N. Smith, Thomas Nye, and Eben Perry bought Cuttyhunk from Otis Slocum for \$50.
- 1860 The separate light tower at the lighthouse was demolished and a second story added to the keeper’s house which included a new attached light tower. (originally built, 1823)
- 1863 Lobstering was the summer fishing occupation on the islands.
- 1864 March 17th, Island removed from jurisdiction of Chilmark. Becomes incorporated as the Town of Gosnold with government seat at Cuttyhunk, although the first town meeting is held on Naushon.
- 1864 Cuttyhunk Fishing Club, founded and club house built by a group of members of the West Island Club on Seaconnet Point, who buy most of Cuttyhunk from Slocums. Remainder owned by farmers and fishermen. Eventually, the Club brought regular steamer and mail service to the island and built docks.

- 1865 Fishing Club builds 26 fishing stands- long wooden platforms that stretched out from rock to rock into the surf- along the East, Vineyard Sound side of the island.
- 1865 On all of the Elizabeth Islands: 3928 sheep (310 per sq. mile).
- 1867 The Sadie Veeder house is built at the end of Broadway. Believed to be the oldest house on Cuttyhunk as of 2008. Later owned by Charlie Tilton and then the Astrue family. Prior to being demolished in (19?), the Mary Slocum Allen Dagget House (behind the Coast Guard Barracks) was the oldest house on the island.
- 1870 The U.S. Life-Saving Service was organized on island but the station for the Elizabeth Islands was not built until 1889. In the meantime, lifesaving was carried out jointly by the local men of the Massachusetts Humane Society (1847) and those with the federal U.S. Life-Saving Service.
- 1873 Cuttyhunk School built on land given by the Cuttyhunk Fishing Club.
- 1874 A description of the Elizabeth Islands by Rev. Elias Nason, M.A. and the State of Massachusetts gives this information:  
 Nonamesset is 1.25 mile long, Naushon 7.5 miles x 1.25miles., Nashawena 3.25 miles x 1.25 miles, Penikese is 100 acres, Cuttyhunk 2.5 miles x .75 miles, Uncatena and Pasque.
- The population of the Elizabeth Islands is 99, 13 farmers, 8,301 acres, 32 houses, 22 votes, 3, 270 sheep, 33 horses, 53 cows.
- Valuation of the Elizabeth Islands \$173,713, tax rate .37 per \$100
- 1875 For one year, Cuttyhunk and Pasque island Fishing Clubs shared “Helen Augusta” for transporting members to their hard-to-reach boys’ clubs.
- 1879 Hurricane of 1879, no warning for island residents.
- 1881 Cuttyhunk Union Methodist Church built on land given by Cuttyhunk Fishing Club. A gate and picket fence closed off the entrance to keep the roaming cows and sheep from dropping in.
- 1885 Five farms on the Elizabeth Islands with 3,770 sheep. Large portion of the islands engaged in fisheries;  $\frac{2}{3}$  annual catch are porgies. Lobsters are the principal business of the islands.
- 1897 Died, Mary D. Slocum Allen Dagget (1815-1897), could be called the “Mother of Cuttyhunk” for her relationship to four of the island founding families. The first church services were held in her home where she admonished, “Touch not liquor” and to “Do good and be good”. Her second husband, Alonzo Dagget (1810-1889), was the first postmaster. Both buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.

- 1888 The Bosworth House (built 1874) opens as a boarding house serving “shore dinners” as tourism increases.
- 1889 The Elizabeth Islands receive their first lifesaving station built at Canapitsit by the U. S. Lifesaving Service.
- 1889 Town Cemetery established on land donated to the town by the Cuttyhunk Fishing Club. Several Slocum family members already buried on the property (northwest corner) they had owned and sold to the Club in 1863.
- 1889 Capt. A.B. Miller (1852-1889), Captain of the shipwrecked bark Willie & Ida, drowned and was buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.
- 1891 Henrietta Akin (1857-1891) died in childbirth. Her husband, Timothy Akin, Jr. (1857-1893) died with 4 other men in the rescue of the crew of the Brig Aquatic, February 24, 1893. His death left their 7 children orphaned to be raised by islanders. Buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.
- 1892 Cuttyhunk Free Public Library built.
- 1892 First Cuttyhunk Lighthouse demolished at the West End and a new one was built with the house and separate tower connected by a covered way.
- 1893 February 24th, the Brig AQUATIC aground on Sow and Pigs Reef. Five Cuttyhunk Lifesavers drowned and one was saved in the rescue attempt. All on the brig saved.
- 1894 Elizabeth Islands have 48 dwellings.
- 1894 President Grover Cleveland fishes on Cuttyhunk at the Cuttyhunk Fishing Club.
- 1897 Weekly mail boats serve Cuttyhunk from New Bedford, weather permitting.

### **20th Century**

- 1900 Industrial Revolution, end of whaling era and shift to textile manufacturing. Tourism grows with trips to Cuttyhunk for seafood “shore dinners”.
- 1900 Cuttyhunk harbor was shallow and only boats with shallow drafts could come inside. Larger boats anchored outside the harbor and offloaded passengers and freight into catboats, dories, or skiffs. The channel engineering proposals of 1900 were designed to allow passenger and freight vessels into the harbor as tourism was increasing. (See 1907)
- 1900 The belfry and bell added to the Cuttyhunk Church that was built in 1881.

- 1902 President Theodore Roosevelt and President-elect William Howard Taft fish on Cuttyhunk at the Cuttyhunk Fishing Club.
- 1903 A small, stone oil house was built near the lighthouse at the West End, to store the sperm oil or kerosene to fuel the light.
- 1903 September 1st, Gosnold Monument Dedication at the West End, by the Old Dartmouth Historical Society who owns Gosnold's Isle.
- 1904 William Madison Wood , President of American Woolen Co. of Andover, MA, first comes to Cuttyhunk and tries to join the Cuttyhunk Fishing Club. His name at birth was Joaquim Medeiros Sylvia. He anglicized his Portuguese name to get a job in the textile mill, but it almost cost him membership into the exclusive gentlemen's fishing club. He was later admitted and ultimately bought all their holdings.
- 1905 Sheep population on the Elizabeth Islands 2,309, more than any other town in Massachusetts.
- 1907 First jetty, constructed by the State of Massachusetts, north side jetty 520 ft., south side jetty, 280 ft., Cuttyhunk Channel.
- 1907 Died Alonzo B. Veeder (1851-1907) who was elected to seven offices at the 1902 annual town meeting. Buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery next to his wife Albina Flanders Veeder (1868-1938).
- 1909 Eugene Terpeny (1849-1909) was one of the early lighthouse keepers. Buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.
- 1909 William Madison Wood buys as much Cuttyhunk land as the Fishing Club would sell him. He bought the rest of their holdings in 1923, when the club disbanded.
- 1909 Avalon built by William Madison Wood on property purchased from Tom and Jennie Jones who's house was razed for the construction project. Jones was Wood's private captain.
- 1910 Bowling Alley built by William Madison Wood.
- 1910 Walter and Lizzie Allen bought land from his father's estate for form the Allen House property. They started the Poplars Boarding House about 1910. The "Annex" was the original Massachusetts Humane Society building from the south side of the island. Lizzie bought it and brought it to its present location with a team of horses. For a long time, the well at the Allen House supplied the town water.
- 1913 August 17, Charles B. Church caught world record rod and reel striped bass from an oar-powered skiff off Cuttyhunk. The striper was 73 lbs., 60 inches long and 30.2 inches in girth. He used an Abbie & Imbrie 6lb, 11oz bamboo rod with J.B. Crook

Reel, 15-thread haul line, while casting live eel. Church reported three locations as a diversion to protect his “honey spot”. His was the World record in the “lines not tested category”, IGFA. (see 1970)

- 1913 Died John Black (1851-1913), was a colored man who was shipwrecked off the island and settled to become captain of the Cuttyhunk Club boat. No one knew his real name and he was called “Black” because of his color. He was respected in the community and the town paid for his tombstone, but the simple inscription and location of his grave in the far southwest corner of the Cuttyhunk Cemetery, seems to reflect the social structure of the times.
- 1914 Died Estella Bosworth Snow (1887-1914) who was the first woman Selectman and Fire Superintendent. She is buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.
- 1915 Died Frederick Allen (1837-1915) who was a long time captain of the Humane Society and the inventor of an unsinkable lifeboat. He is buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.
- 1915 The US Life-Saving Service and the Revenue Cutter Service merged to become the U.S. Coast Guard; occupy the Canapitsit lifesaving station.
- 1915 The population of the Elizabeth Islands climbs from 99 (1870) to 155. About 50 on Cuttyhunk. Twenty-eight percent of the population of 155, was foreign born.
- 1915 Stores and summer hotels are operating on Cuttyhunk Island.
- 1916 Died Oscar H. Stetson (1853-1916) was the first keeper of the Cuttyhunk Store. Buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.
- 1917 Winter House built by William Madison Wood on land purchased from Fred Allen, whose home and barn were razed for the construction project.
- 1917 Avalon becomes the Wood family guest house, as Winter House becomes their primary summer residence. It remain’s so until 1954 when it was sold to the Ralph Stewart family.
- 1917 Freight service on the Alert I to CH begins as a result of William Wood bringing supplies to the island to build Winter House. The boat was commissioned by Wm. Wood and built by C.A. Anderson Boatyard, Wareham.
- 1917 May 17th, municipal water and sewer systems brought to Cuttyhunk by William Wood.
- 1917 William Wood built the Power House, using half of a sheep shed from the West End. Tom Jones was the original manager. At first the current was DC only. There was also power from Woods Hole. (See 2008)

- 1918 William M. Wood turned Avalon over to his daughter Rosalind, as a convalescent hospital for wounded Allied officers of WWI. The hospital was staffed and equipped by the American Red Cross and only operated two years. The property name may have been inspired by “Avalon”, an island in the Irish Sea where King Arthur is believed to have been healed from his battle wounds.
- 1918 The steamer Gosnold is sold to the U.S. government and Cuttyhunk is without a summertime excursion service. Walter Loveridge puts the 38 ft. steamer Queen into service between Cuttyhunk and New Bedford.
- 1919 Walter Loveridge, who owned and operated ferry boats for Cuttyhunk and the leper colony on Penikese, purchases the 57 ft. St. Francis for excursions to the island and runs it until 1922.
- 1921 The Cuttyhunk Fishing Club disbands (over-fishing of waters) and sells their properties to William M. Wood (1858-1926), club member and president of American Woolen Co. of Andover, MA. He was instrumental in introducing electricity, sewerage, town water, telephone and harbor improvements,
- 1924 August 26th, The Bark WANDERER, last square-rigged whaler out of New Bedford, wrecked at Cuttyhunk.
- 1925 William M. Wood dies and never completes “Summer House” planned to be built at the end of the “driveway” later called Tower Hill Rd.
- 1925 The Alert was purchased by Capt. Frank Wilcox and converted to a passenger vessel and regular passenger service to the island begins.
- 1926 Town Hall built and dedicated.
- 1927 Cornelius Wood, son of William M. Wood, began bringing friends as guests and tenants, creating the first summer colony on Cuttyhunk.
- 1928 Cuttyhunk Fishing Club farmhouse burned. After WWII, “Sea Breeze” moved to the site.
- 1929 June 16th, World War I plaque dedicated to Cuttyhunkers who served. Located outside Town Hall, eleven men are honored.
- 1930 “Coot” Hall introduces first strictly charter boat to Cuttyhunk.
- 1934 Poet Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979) spent several weeks on Cuttyhunk writing poetry following her graduation from Vassar. The landlord of her temporary home by the sea was Mr. Wuthenaur, a man who wanted to “simplify life” all the time, as noted in her journal. Bishop is a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and is regarded as one of the great American poets of the 20th century.



- 1935 The early Cuttyhunk Junior Yacht Club was formed by Cornelius and Muriel Wood for island youth.
- 1935 Died Annette Stetson Veeder (1857-1935), who was the first school teacher, and one of the first three library trustees. She is buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.
- 1935 Died Alpheus P. Tilton Sr. (1866-1935) who was one of the first surfmen of the lifesaving station built in 1889 and he had the first gasoline motor on his fishing boat Pulmer. He is buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.
- 1936 Congress appropriated money to make Cuttyhunk a “Harbor of Refuge”.
- 1938 September 21st, late afternoon, Hurricane of ‘38. Particularly destructive as there was no warning and it was a dead hit. Strongest N.E. storm: recorded-gusts 185 mph, sustained winds 115 mph., lowest pressure 27.94,, 15-20 ft surge, 25-50 ft waves.
- 1938 Coast Guard Boathouse built. Survived ‘38 hurricane.
- 1938 To 1939, new jetties were built and dredging was done to complete the mooring basin following the ‘38 hurricane.
- 1938 Died Albina Flanders Veeder (1868-1938) who a teacher and the first island librarian with a salary of \$5 a year. She is buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery next to her husband, Alonzo B. Veeder (1851-1907)
- 1939 Cuttyhunk Channel designated a “Federal Navigation Channel” under the Army Corps of Engineers. Jetty repair, 8 ft. high.
- 1939 Island dirt roads surfaced with macadam, a type of road construction consisting of three layers of stones laid on a crowned subgrade with side ditches for drainage.
- 1940 Jetty repair.
- 1940 Decline in population of the Elizabeth Islands to 136 and falling. Lost 12% of population since 1915.
- 1941 The beginning of World War II, brought the end of piloting, striped bass guiding takes over. Gasoline engine changes the sport of fishing. Guides began taking fishermen trolling. Sailing and power boating gains popularity.
- 1941 Coastal artillery and lookout bunkers installed on Cuttyhunk and Naushon as World War II begins. Cuttyhunk army installations disguised to resemble a fishing village nestled in the hollow just west of the Lookout (a top Tower Hill Rd.)
- 1944 September 14, the Hurricane of 1944, arriving during the nighttime. The spit connecting the Coast Guard Station at Canapitsit with Cuttyhunk, was breached.

- Shoaling narrowed the harbor entrance, so passenger and freight ferries had to be off loaded in the outer harbor.
- Lowest pressure 28.35, 100 mph sustained winds
- 1945 Army installation and coastal artillery units on Cuttyhunk, the Neck and Naushon removed. Many buildings sold for private homes and moved to other locations on island.
- 1947 The lighthouse built in 1892 is demolished and replaced by a steel tower navigation aid at the West End-near Sow and Pigs reef. The hurricane of 1945 had caused irreparable damage. Then end of the era of a manned station.
- 1948 Cuttyhunk Fishing Club sold to the Moore family by the Wood family.
- 1949 Work on Barges Beach begins to strengthen it after a breach in a November, 1944 Nor'easter. 10 New York train 'car floats' were run aground down the length of beach and 4 perpendicular, then covered with 150,000 cubic yards of fill over the two year construction.
- 1951 Mackenzie Cuttyhunk Bass boats debut and enable guides to fish close to rock caves where fish trophy 'cows' hydro-glide.
- 1951?? Stone jetty built.
- 1952 The second Coast Guard Station at Canapitsit removed and floated on a barge to Menemsha. Commissioning of the new station at Menemsha took place on March 12, 1954. In January, 1974, the Coast Guard officially changed the name of the station to reflect its actual location. A small Coast Guard "boathouse" remains on Cuttyhunk at Canapitsit and later becomes the Mel Dorr residence.
- 1952 Canapitsit Beach repair extended 500 ft., additional barge added.
- 1954 Avalon sold to Ralph Stuart by the Wm. Wood family.
- 1954 The flagpole and monument was erected in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery to honor the memory of Capt. Irwin C. Hall (1879-1954). Capt. Hall came to Cuttyhunk at twenty-one to be a member of the Cuttyhunk Lifesaving Service. He was a surfman at the station built in 1889 off Canapitsit. He married Myrtle Bosworth (1884-1947), whose parents ran a boarding house. Capt. Hall was a superb seaman and master navigator. He commanded a submarine chaser during WWI and was awarded a Navy Cross in 1927 from Admiral Sims. He was highly praised by his crew and commanding officers for his heroism and fairness. Later in life he was a yacht captain. His funeral was one of the largest on the island.
- 1954 August 7th, a Great White Shark in Cuttyhunk harbor shot and killed.

- 1954 August 31st, Hurricane Carol arrives during the early morning hours. The active season followed with Hurricane Edna (9/11) and then Hazel. Low pressure 28.35, 105 mph. sustained winds, category 3. Barges beach seriously damaged.
- 1954 Hurricane Carol rips off "witches hat" steeple cap on the Cuttyhunk Union Methodist Church.
- 1954 A new U.S. Coast Guard Station is built near 3 Corners, closer to the island it protects. (Closes in 1964)
- 1954 The fishing shacks rebuilt at The Point following hurricane damage.
- 1955 Canapitsit Beach repair, additional barge added following hurricane damage.
- 1955 A building boom following the hurricanes of '54 and '55. On the 250 acres of Cuttyhunk, 74 new homes.
- 1956 July 2nd, the Cuttyhunk Yacht Club reorganized (first founded about 1935).
- 1957 Church parsonage built next to the church on land donated by the Ashley family. It is the summer residence of the Methodist pastor. It was also the winter residence of the school teacher through 2008.
- 1957 Two wings added to the original section of the Cuttyhunk Library.
- 1957 Avalon sold by Ralph Stuart to the Music Corporation of America- David Baumgarten Family.
- 1958 Construction of new docks and marina heralds "discovery" of the island by yachtsmen.
- 1960 Watercolor artist Mary Lindenberg of New York and Dartmouth, MA comes to Cuttyhunk frequently to paint island village scenes, during the late 1950s and early 1960s.
- 1960 First International Swordfishing Tournament. It lasted until 1972, while the fish were running.
- 1962 Church sacristy/pastor's study/office added on to the church. Remodeled in 2009.
- 1963 Norman Gingrass begins Island Air Service to Cuttyhunk, based in Fairhaven. The seaplane lands in the harbor, parallel to the shore of Copicut Neck.
- 1964 March 2nd, the U.S. Coast Guard Station and Boathouse decommissioned. Coast Guard Service for the Elizabeth Islands continues from neighboring stations in Menemsha and Woods Hole. The U.S. Coast Guard Station & Boathouse are the last two remaining structures of our rich maritime heritage. The U.S. Coast Guard Station is

maintained and managed by the Coast Guard and the furnished apartments are weekly summer vacation rentals to active/retired Coast Guardsmen. Both structures are signature buildings with their distinctive architecture and regulation color.

- 1964 The U.S. Coast Guard removes the 100 ft. Lookout Tower erected at the top of Tower Hill Rd.
- 1965 The Canapitsit stone jetty and Church's breakwater projects started in 1959, completed. Purpose to create "structures to preserve the natural beaches, protect the harbor and reduce shoaling."
- 1967 Dr. John Ward comes to the Union Methodist church and welcomes worship services with Dr. Boone Porter and Rev. Wm Munds (Episcopal), and Fr. Philip Kelly (Catholic). These courageous men were discouraged by their superiors for this alliance.
- 1968 or 1970, The Allen House Inn is sold by longtime owner Lucille Parker Allen (and Clarence Allen) to George Achille.
- 1970 October 10th, Edward J. Kirker, new record holder 50 lb test line category IGFA, 72 lb. striped bass, Cuttyhunk Sow and Pigs Reef, live eel bait. Replaces the record of Charles Church (1873) with more accurate measurement and test line.
- 1972 Died Octave Ponsart (1899-1972) the last lighthouse keeper. Buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.
- 1972 First International Swordfish Tournament ended due to scarcity of fish.
- 1973 Capt. Brad Luther purchases the green and white Alert I, and continues ferry service to Cuttyhunk (until 1983).
- 1977 Windmill (80' high with 40' blades) built on Lookout Hill, to supplement generated electricity, but never integrated. Torn down in 1991.
- 1978 Cuttyhunk Historical Association founded by the Cuttyhunk Union Methodist Church. Later incorporated as the Cuttyhunk Historical Society.
- 1978 Died Louise Taylor Haskell (1893-1978) who was a longtime teacher in the school, author of "The Story of Cuttyhunk" and the first woman preacher in the Cuttyhunk Church. She is buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.
- 1980 October 8, The Cuttyhunk Historical Society Inc. becomes a not-for-profit corporation.
- 1982 Barrier Beach Inventory Project (Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies) identifies 7 barrier beaches on Cuttyhunk.

- 1983 Rededication of Gosnold Monument (built 1903).
- 1983 Bosworth House closes as an inn and restaurant and a year later becomes a private home for the Parsons, then Spenglers. (built 1874)
- 1983 Ray and Linda Hopps purchase the Alert I and Cuttyhunk Boat Lines Inc. from Capt. Brad Luther.
- 1984 Cuttyhunk Harbor Commission established. Public moorings installed.
- 1984 “Most of the larger Elizabeth Islands average 100 ft or less in elevation, an exception being Cuttyhunk (154 ft.), Nashawena (152 ft.), Pasque (118 ft.), and Naushon (136 ft.)” (Mass. Historical Commission Reconnaissance Survey Report)
- 1985 July 28th, the Pilgrim Belle runs aground off Cuttyhunk, on her maiden voyage. Steamboat style with Victorian interiors. Holes in the side were stuffed with mattresses to keep her afloat. Passengers off loaded to Cuttyhunk. Islanders offered beds and food.
- 1986 The 1980s bring record numbers of deer, mice, and rabbits showing ill health and being part of the cycle transmitting Lyme Disease to humans through deer ticks. The town tries to target the problem with Daminix a product to interrupt the cycle. Lyme Disease continues to be a health problem with higher incidence on the islands and spreading to the mainland. “Tick checks” become routine for islanders and visitors.
- 1986 Gary Hodges, manager of Naushon Farms, said that coyotes arrived there in 1986 and that 25 or 30 of his sheep were killed by coyotes that first year, including more than a dozen ewes taken in one night. "It was probably only a pair of coyotes hunting together," he added.
- 1987 First Annual Musical Evening at Winter House hosted by Oriel and Piero Ponzecchi. Organized and inspired by Judith Archer, local talent of all ages performs musical numbers. Winter House has two Steinway grand pianos. The Musicale moves to the church in 1997.
- 1987 Alert I, orange and white, wooden 1917 ferry, retired. Alert II (blue and white) steel hull, begins service. Cuttyhunk Boat Lines owned by Ray and Linda Hopps (1983).
- 1987 Norman Gingrass retires Island Air Shuttle after 24 years of flying to Cuttyhunk (1963).
- 1987 Dredging of the channel, sand dumped on Jetty, Canapitsit and Church’s Beaches.
- 1988 Gid Fisher begins Island Shuttle service to Cuttyhunk. (ends 1995)

- 1988 Town begins recycling at the landfill on the way to the West End.
- 1990 July, The Harbor Commission erects a flagpole at the Fish Dock in memory of “Coot” Hall, noted fishing guide, and Norman Gingrass, seaplane pilot.
- 1991 New Cuttyhunk Historical Society Museum building dedicated. Formerly, exhibits displayed at the school and library. In 2005, the building was named the “Museum of the Elizabeth Islands”. Land donated by Oriel Wood Ponzecchi in memory of her parents, Cornelius and Muriel (Prindle) Wood.
- 1991 August 19th, Hurricane "Bob", Lowest pressure 28.40, sustained winds 105 mph. Two breaches at Barges Beach. Overwash on the Road to the Landing and floods the Coast Guard Boathouse. The round pond at the Fishing Club is fouled with saltwater and begins to fill in with vegetation. The hurricane event resulted in the most dramatic change in vegetation succession of invasives toward reforesting of the the island, according to botanist/naturalist, Allie Thurston.
- 1991 Windmill on Tower Hill Rd. torn down after Hurricane damage. (built 1977)
- 1991 Cuttyhunk Elementary School, one room school house, closes for lack of students. Reopens in 1993.
- 1992 August 7th, Queen Elizabeth II runs aground "off Cuttyhunk", in Vineyard Sound. Cause determined to be uncharted rock.
- 1993 September, the Cuttyhunk Elementary School, one room school house, reopens with three students, one in kindergarten and two in preschool.
- 1993 Allen House closes as an inn and restaurant, and sold to the Boone and Vi Porter family .
- 1993 First Audubon presence on the island on Elkan Blout property.
- 1993 Cuttyhunk Fishing Club bought by Oriel Wood Ponzecchi returning it once again to the Wood family. (see 1948)
- 1993 Fr. Philip Kelly's last summer after 25 years flying in to conduct Sunday Catholic Mass at the island Methodist church. The inter-faith services began in 1967 with the cooperation of Fr. Kelly, Rev. Wm. Munds and Dr. John Ward.
- 1993 Zoning By-Laws adopted by the town.
- 1993 Assessors report the number of parcels: Cuttyhunk 187, Naushon 49, Nashawena 2, Pasque 6, 17 tax exempt.

- 1993 An historical marker survey of the Cuttyhunk Island Cemetery, near the Fishing Club, is conducted by Shelly Merriam for the Cuttyhunk Historical Society. The records are housed at CHS.
- 1994 Gonzalo Leon of Naushon elected first off-island selectman upon Wyatt Garfield's retirement.
- 1994 Dot's Gift Shop closes. The tiny doll house sized shop off Broadway, was owned by Dot Brown.
- 1995 May, lightning strikes and damages the Power House.
- 1995 July 1, Gosnold becomes an independent school district.
- 1995 All-island Fourth of July parade of golf carts reinstated. (Ed Camara, John and Sally Medeiros- organizers)
- 1995 Fuel Tanks installed near the Town Dock following damage from Hurricane Bob of 1991
- 1995 Asa Lombard IV takes over from Dick Cornell as cemetery caretaker. Past cemetery caretakers, Caroline Cornell and Dorothy Tilton.
- 1995 Gid Fisher's "Island Shuttle", seaplane service, ends. (begins 1988)
- 1996 Gary Small begins "Bayside Air" seaplane service. (ends 2004)
- 1996 Pilot whales sighted off the Neck in July.
- 1996 August, Old Texas tower removed from Sow and Pigs Reef and replaced with a new one.
- 1996 U.S. Coast Guard excavates the former lighthouse location at the West End, removing lighthouse battery by helicopter. (Also removed lighthouse artifacts found in the process)
- 1996 Town dump on the way to the West End, closes. Burning of trash ceases and a compactor is used.
- 1997 Off-island barging of trash and recycling begins.
- 1997 February 14, U.S. Coast Guard Boathouse given to the Town of Gosnold (Book 698 pg 181).
- 1997 August, the annual Musicale moves from Winter House to the Cuttyhunk Church.

- 1990s Island pay phones on Broadway and the Fish Dock fade from use as more people have cell phones. Island telephones switch to service from satellites rather than the cable under the bay. The cable was often cut by trawlers or draggers and had to be repaired by divers while the island was without phone service.
- 1998 The Cuttyhunk Store on Broadway closes- owned by Ginger Thomson Day and formerly by her parents, “Muggsy” and Flo Thomson.
- 1998 Cuttyhunk Fishing Club opens as a Bed & Breakfast owned by Oriel Wood Ponzeccchi and managed by Bonnie Veeder Perrier. Purchased in 1997, returning it to Wood family ownership after 50 years.
- 1999 A new section of the cemetery created by adding a row by moving the southeast fence on either side of the shed, up to the gate.
- 1999 Dr. John Ward and his wife Carmen, retire after 32 years of ministry at the Cuttyhunk Union Methodist Church.
- 1998 Island Market opens in the former Bakery location (Bonnie Veeder’s house) with co-owners Kris Lombard and Nancy Battini.
- 1999 Doctor-in-Residence Program at Avalon initiated by Dr. Seymour DiMare providing summer emergency medical assistance, partnering with Cuttyhunk Fire and Rescue. The volunteer doctors saw 58 medical cases in July/August. The program is made possible by the Pitts family of Avalon and Jono Camara, manager.
- 1999 The town works cooperatively with the Massachusetts Historical Commission regarding the town owned, decommissioned U.S. Coast Guard Boathouse and the proposed construction of a barge ramp adjacent to it. The existing pier, 1938 ramp/rails will be removed before construction. Shelly Merriam prepares an historical survey of the property (on file at CHS) and MHC deems it is eligible for National Historic Register designation.
- 2000 Tom Hale, model boat maker, creates a model of the historic 1938 U.S. Coast Guard Boathouse with finger docks, and ramps/rails into the water (Scale 1”=20ft). The model is a gift to the Museum of the Elizabeth Islands and exhibited in the 2003 exhibit “The U.S. Coast Guard, Lifesaving and Lightkeeping”.
- 2000 Island Market moves back to center of town under the management of Kresenia Lombard in a newly built location adjacent to son, Asa Lombard IV’s home on Broadway, next to the Post Office.
- 2000 West End Pond dredged.
- 2000 Fuel Farm opens near the Boathouse and Town Dock, almost a decade after damage from Hurricane Bob, 1991.



2000 The Gosnold Community Fund formed by George Shaw, David Twichell and Elkan Blout, to receive donations and distribute income to serve the needs of the Gosnold Community. In general, needs include education, training, health issues, affordable housing, recreation, historic preservation and the environment.

### **21st Century**

- 2001 Barge Ramp completed next to the Boathouse for container trash removal. It is the first phase of improvements at the harbor landing and transportation center.
- 2001 May, Capt. John Paul Hunter starts Sea Horse Water Taxi service between New Bedford and Cuttyhunk.
- 2001 Bart's Place restaurant (owned by Chuck and Dawn Vogt) at Four Corners closes. A few years later, food service becomes more practical with food carts, Bart's Cart (Vogts) and Island Dogs (Claudia Jenkins) at Four Corners and the Fish Dock.
- 2001 August 19, Cuttyhunk Historical Society granted non-exclusive right to use of the U.S. Coast Guard Tarpaulin Cove Lighthouse 2001-2026. The Naushon Trust accepts financial responsibility and maintenance and hosts an annual summer open house for visitors.
- 2001 August 31st, Scalloper Legacy goes aground near Canapitsit.
- 2001 August 25th, school playground upgraded and dedicated. Old pipe swing set and slide removed.
- 2002 400th Anniversary of Gosnold's landing on Cuttyhunk commemorated with a special exhibit, guest speakers and special events coordinated with other area museums.
- 2002 Electricity continued out to Copicut (Homer's) Neck. Some still choose to power by generator and run appliances on propane.
- 2002 Community effort designs & builds public bathroom facility at the Fish Dock.
- 2002 February 23, Fire levels one of Pete's Place cottages, caused by a defective gas stove. Quick response by island fire fighters saves the adjacent homes. Calm winds keep it from spreading to Broadway.
- 2002 Mark Storek brings 'mycuttyhunk.com' wireless internet service to Cuttyhunk.
- 2003 Archeology team headed by Dr. Jeffrey Brain, of Peabody Essex Museum, begin a series of archeological digs on Gosnold's Isle, at the West End, that result in NO evidence of artifacts c. 1602 and Bartholomew Gosnold's 22 day stay. (See 2005)

- 2003 May to August, renovation of Coast Guard Boathouse exterior by the Town supported by donations (new red roof, white paint exterior, new windows, green doors, black shutters).
- 2003 Fuel farm and transfer station near the Town Dock is complete and enclosed with a wire fence.
- 2003 The old orange and white “Alert I”, sold in 1987, broke apart being hoisted and is scrapped. Former owners, Ray and Linda Hopps have the quarter board and ships wheel.
- 2004 Oriel (Wood) and Piero Ponzecchi celebrates her 80th birthday with a three day, all-island party.
- 2004 Houses on the Elizabeth Islands: Cuttyhunk 150 on 500 acres, Naushon 40 on 5,500 acres, Nashawena 3 on 1,800 acres , Pasque 1 on 860 acres, Penikese 1 on 75 acres.
- 2004 Archeology team headed by Dr. Jeffrey Brain, of Peabody Essex Museum, begins a series of archeological digs on Joe Slate’s Island in Cuttyhunk Harbor. There is hopeful evidence in finding green glass shards that seem to date back to c. 1602 and Bartholomew Gosnold’s 22 day stay. Further evidence is needed, including soil core samples from the harbor to confirm it was fresh water in 1602 (See 2003).
- 2004 October 10, Bayside Air, owned by Gary Small, closes and ends seaplane service to Cuttyhunk from New Bedford. No one comes forward to continue service. (Small’s service began in 1996)
- 2005 After about 20 years- spring storms reverse the rocky conditions and make Barges Beach, sandy once again.
- 2005 Army Corps of Engineers and the Town of Gosnold submit plan to construct a stone dike 1300 ft. long and 10 ft. high along the top of Barges Beach, to “protect and stabilize the barrier beach and keep the channel open. Six agencies are against the proposal and encourage a “No Action Alternative” and dredging of the channel.
- 2005 Fish Dock and guides' shacks completely rebuilt in the original style by islanders, adding one more shack. Plumbing and electrical upgraded.
- 2005 June 24, the Red Sox bring the 2004 World Series trophy to Cuttyhunk. Pres./CEO Larry Lucchino delivers it by helicopter to the lawn of Avalon for viewing by the islanders. Lucchino noted that the 86 registered voters of the Elizabeth Islands equals the 86 years of the “curse” of the Sox, selling “Babe” Ruth to the Yankees, that blocked a Red Sox trophy.
- 2005 Basketball court at Coast Guard Barracks rebuilt with concrete surface by islanders with a grant by the Gosnold Community Fund.

- 2005 Town water tank (Tower Hill Rd.) behind the DiMare's home, demolished. Three new tanks installed and surrounded with a fence on top of Tower Hill Rd. Affectionately, called "The Zoo" by locals.
- 2006 March, MV Cuttyhunk Ferry Co. service begins. Owned by Captain Jono and Sue Billings and their dog, Pal.
- 2006 July 10th, the Godspeed, replica of Gosnold's ship that sailed to Jamestown in 1607, visits Cuttyhunk and receives a memorable island welcome.
- 2006 August 6, Dedication of "The Ward Parsonage", adjacent to the church.
- 2006 September 15th, Alert II, Cuttyhunk Boat Lines owned by Ray and Linda Hopps and Ricky Hopps, ceases service after 33 years of ownership. Alert II sold to a gulf oil drilling company in December.
- 2006 December 2nd, a Power House fire started at 3 a.m., with a spark from a compressor. Repairs were successful. Heroic efforts by power house superintendent Wayne Perrier and island firefighters.
- 2006 A new section of the cemetery was created for cremains only on the southwest side of the cemetery by narrowing the driveway to a path and moving the fence for the new rows of plots.
- 2006 December 20, First Annual Santa Cruise on the MV Cuttyhunk. Santa Claus arrives with gifts for the island children and an open house (boat) party for islanders.
- 2006 The Cuttyhunk light removed from the West End, Sow and Pigs reef area, by the U.S. Coast Guard. No navigational aid remains.
- 2007 The Town appoints a Conservation Commission, the last town in the Commonwealth to do so.
- 2007 Asa Lombard, Harbormaster reports 4,000 boats used the harbor services this summer.
- 2007 November, Verizon erects a microwave communication tower at the top of Lookout Hill to serve the island landline telephones. The receiver is in New Bedford disguised as a brick chimney near the Whaling Museum.
- 2008 Temporary meteorological tower erected at the West End to measure wind velocity for one year, collecting data for possible wind farm.
- 2008 The Cuttyhunk Union Methodist Church roof and steeple are repaired and restored after 127 years. A new access ramp and porch are added, replacing the steps, at the entrance to the church.

- 2008 May Town Meeting passes new zoning by-law dividing Cuttyhunk into two zones. Town center and suburbs?
- 2008 Allison Thurston, island naturalist, celebrates 20 years of giving her “nature rambles” on Cuttyhunk.
- 2008 Three new, quiet, energy efficient generators replace the old ones at the Power House, thanks to the efforts of Wayne Perrier, Superintendent and Paul Zimbone, Chairman Power and Light Commission and Jeff Spear. The generators are computer automated and 20% more fuel efficient. However, their reliability is shaky in the beginning.
- 2008 July 21, a leatherback sea turtle washed up on Cuttyhunk (Barges Beach), the third one this summer along the Southeast coast of Massachusetts. It was tagged in West Trinidad/Tobago. The turtles are following the warmer Gulf Stream waters that have been pushed farther north this season by hurricane activity in the Atlantic. This adult turtle was about 600 lbs., with a shell 5 ft. wide and flipper span of 8 ft.
- 2008 November 30, a fin whale washes up on the west side of Canapitsit. It measures 60 to 78 ft. long and is the second largest mammal on earth, next to the Blue Whale. It is among the fastest of the whales, capable of bursts of speed to 23 mph. They prefer temperate to Arctic waters and open seas.
- 2008 December, the Cuttyhunk Ferry Co. hosts the first Cuttyhunk Creatives Holiday Fair on board the boat in New Bedford. The boat is transformed into a Christmas wonderland with islanders selling their wares and food items. An economic boost for islanders and fun socializing for visitors.
- 2009 Spring, the Cuttyhunk Union Methodist Church Pastor’s Study is remodeled for use as a community conference room and pastor’s office. The addition was built in 1962.
- 2009 March, rebuilding of the Town Dock begins and is completed by early June. The MV Cuttyhunk ties up at the Fish Dock during the reconstruction. The reinforced design of the Town Dock includes a new fuel shed and safer laying of fuel lines to the pumps. Dedicated 8/13/09 with state and local dignitaries.
- 2009 A engineering survey of the island cemetery, southwest of the Fishing Club, for the first time in its history. Magnetic pins mark the rows and plots in the newer sections to make plots easier to define.
- 2009 September, begins communication between the Town and the Commonwealth looking into possible sites for a wind farm that includes the area around Sow and Pigs Reef off Cuttyhunk. Area later removed from consideration in favor of a project further off shore to the southeast.

- 2009 A Connecticut bee specialist, Jerry Stage begins a project on Cuttyhunk and Naushon to study the local bee population attracted by seasonal flowering. He conducted a similar study on Penikese 25 years ago that provided new information on the distance bees travel attracted by pollen.
- 2009 Private grass landing strip with east/west approach approved by the Town for Alan Spaulding's small plane, on his property at the West End. Mel Dorr has a landing strip for his plane at Canapitsit, behind his home. Public seaplane service ended in 2004.
- 2010 April 9th, the old fire engine catches fire in the station next to the Power House, apparently from a battery charger. Wayne Perrier smells smoke, discovers the blaze, drives the new firetruck out of the garage and uses it to extinguish the burning old truck.
- 2010 An Avian monitoring device placed temporarily on the lawn of the CH Fishing Club as part of a study to track spring and fall migrating birds.
- 2010 Gosnold's Gas, managed by Jono Billings of Cuttyhunk Ferry Co., begins bottled propane service to the island. The town conducts island-wide inspections bringing propane storage up to code.
- 2010 Off island, bulk delivery of propane and heating fuel offered as an alternative to local services.
- 2011 February, The Penikese Island School, Inc. suspends its program serving troubled boys through the "Massachusetts Department of Children and Families as they are no longer funding residential placement of Penikese appropriate kids." The new board of directors is working to get Penikese licensed as a substance abuse treatment facility with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to supplement funding and provide a clinical, educational and residential program still consistent with the Penikese Island School mission. The bird sanctuary program continues.
- 2011 The Town affixes identifying numbers to every dwelling to assist in fire, police and rescue response.
- 2011 July & August, First Annual Model Boat Races on Cuttyhunk, in the spirit of the Bennett Yacht Club model boat races every Labor Day weekend on Naushon Island since ?
- 2011 August, First Annual Cuttyhunk Fire Department 5K race fundraiser.
- 2011 August 28th, Hurricane Irene. In August 2010 the West End Pond inlet was re-dug after 10 years of good flushing. The August 2011 Tropical Storm Irene filled in the inlet by about 85%, and an October storm closed the rest of the inlet. This closure was a premature occurrence since past track records show the inlet stayed open for at least ten years at a time. Efforts were made during the fall and winter to secure state or

federal disaster funds to help with the costs of reopening the inlet. On the state level these efforts are still ongoing.

- 2012 The Island Market, managed by Kris and Asa Lombard, closes for the winter due to only 18 people living on island and the skyrocketing electricity rates of 60 cents per kilowatt hour! The highest rate in Massachusetts (mainland rates are about 7 cents per kilowatt hour). The first time the island is without a market over the winter. In the past, the market would open for an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon. It was an important gathering place to keep in touch with neighbors who wintered over.
- 2012 The Channel is dredged in early June after a complicated permitting process now required by State & Federal laws and environmental regulations. There is ongoing concern for the erosion of Barges Beach during winter storms, depositing sand in the channel.
- 2012 Allie Thurston, local botanist/naturalist, notes the gradual return of Cuttyhunk to a “forested” landscape due to the abandoned historical practices of seasonal burning and grazing sheep.
- 2012 Lyme Disease from a deer tick bite is a continuing presence and concern on the island. Dr. Sam Telford of Tufts University is seeking volunteers for a research study to determine the public health burden of tick borne infections on Cuttyhunk. The study is open to people who spend more than 2 weeks here each year and are exposed to ticks. The results will be provided when the testing is completed.
- 2012 August, Dale Lynch finds a 1796 ships bell that he salvaged from what is believed to be the bark Willie & Ida, whose Captain A.B. Miller (1852-1889) died in the shipwreck and is buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery.
- 2012 October 29, Hurricane “Superstorm” Sandy causes major flooding and erosion to Cuttyhunk Church’s and Barges Beaches, Fish Dock and Shore Rd. (near Coast Guard Barracks). The storm raged through full moon/high tide conditions with wind gusts to 90 mph.
- 2012 November, there are 148 registered voters in the Town of Gosnold for the 2012 Presidential Election, Barak Obama vs. Mitt Romney. 87 voters participated (60 percent).
- 2013 February 8<sup>th</sup>, the Blizzard of 2013 clocked winds of 100 mph and brought several inches of snow that necessitated plowing the 2½ miles of island roads!
- 2013 The final phase of improvements to the harbour landing and transportation center near the U.S. Coast Guard Boathouse is underway. The plan has been approved, permits secured, matching funds raised and grant application made to Mass. Seaport Council. The plan will separate the ferry landing from the fuel dock by removing the remaining finger dock on the west side of boathouse, replacing it with a ferry dock.

- 2013 June 5<sup>th</sup>, Alan P. Spaulding, Jr., a Wood family descendant, died when his small plane crashed upon take-off on his Cuttyhunk West End airstrip. Spaulding was the founder of WTG (Wind Turbine Generator) Energy Systems in Buffalo, NY. During the last decade of his life, he dedicated himself to the design and building of his, and wife, Holly's home on the West End, that would exist entirely off the grid. He was within a few months of completing his life project when he died.
- 2013 There are 239 people buried in the Cuttyhunk Cemetery, 176 gravestones and 64 veterans. Since its gift to the town by the Cuttyhunk Fishing Club in 1889, the individuals remembered here reflect the island's history of pilots, fishermen, lifesavers, lighthouse keepers, town politicians, war veterans, teachers, storekeepers and occupations related to tourism services. Also buried here are generations of families who have enjoyed the island as summer residents. Never to be told are the stories of those who washed ashore from shipwrecks and have remained nameless or those who died young before their stories began.

PLEASE NOTE YOUR ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS WITH YOUR NAME AND WHO SUPPLIED THE INFORMATION. Email to: [sjmerr22@gmail.com](mailto:sjmerr22@gmail.com).  
THANK YOU.