

TIMELINE

1700-1900

1706-1737

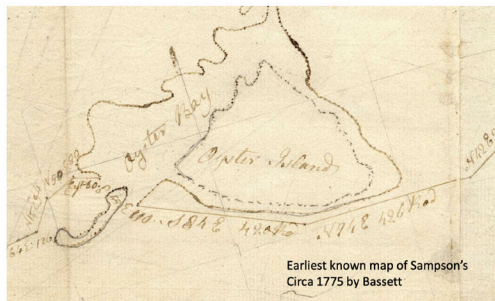
In 1706, John Crocker, Jr. and his family are given land, including an island, by the "Proprietors" of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The island is to be called Sampson's Island in 1800.



In 1710, the Wampanoag tribe sued James Lovell, one of the founders of Osterville, for possession of Oyster Island (now Grand Island) and Dead Neck Beach. Though they won the case, the tribe was forced to sell Oyster Island and Dead Neck to Lovell in 1737 to pay their legal fees.

Why is it called Dead Neck? "Dead" because most likely nothing of any value could be grown on it. "Neck" is an old English term for an appendage of land jutting out from the mainland.

Salt marsh hay is a very valuable commodity and was harvested on the islands to feed cattle. In 1839, it is recorded that two tons of salt hay is harvested per year on Sampson's.



During much of the 1800s, Cotuit had a lively maritime economy. Its harbor was too shallow for whaling ships, but it was fine for skiffs, coastal trading schooners, and the packet boats carrying food, wood and mail to Nantucket.

Lacking direct access to the Sound, Osterville wasn't as much of a seafaring village. To reach open water, Osterville seamen had to sail up through North Bay and down through the Narrows and Cotuit Bay — an added distance of up to 4.5 miles — or navigate the narrow Seapuit River.

1804

Josiah Sampson inherits Sampson's Island (along with most of Cotuit) from his mother Desiree Crocker Sampson, great-granddaughter of John Crocker, Jr.



1837-1847

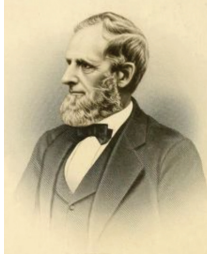
Daniel Childs, a salt maker, buys 15 acres of Sampson's from Ezra Crocker for \$35 and more acres from Josiah Sampson, Jr. for \$70.

In 1847, Childs sells Sampson's to Daniel Nickerson for \$100.

Even at the turn of the century, some locals still called the island "Daniel's Island".

1866

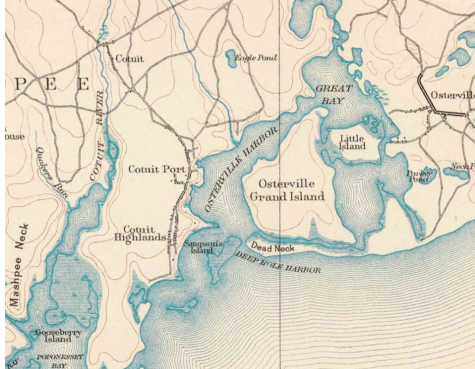
Cotuit Postmaster Charles Bearse was a land speculator, who was involved with many back and forth land transactions related to Dead Neck.



Lucinda Lovell sells Dead Neck to Charles Bearse, Alexander Childs and Andrew Lovell for \$80.

1874

Bearse and others sell Dead Neck to William Childs. Childs sells back to Andrew Lovell and Charles Bearse.



Spars and rigging for new ships were stored on Sampson's before being transported out to the ships' hulls in "Deep Hole", a very deep area on the southside of Dead Neck.

1885-1890

In 1885, Abigail Nickerson (Daniel's widow) sells Sampson's to Thomas and Abbie Childs for \$275. Five years later, the Childs sell the island to Charlotte Davidson, a Cotuit summer resident, for \$500.



1899

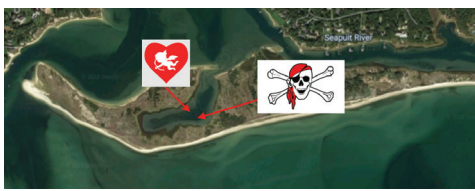
Dead Neck was a peninsula or "neck" of land that ran all the way from Dowse's Beach to the end of Dead Neck. It is not until the Osterville/Wianno "Cut" is completed that it becomes an island.



In 1899, work begins to make the Osterville/Wianno "Cut" from West Bay through the eastern end of Dead Neck to Nantucket Sound.

1900

The Corp of Engineers find only three feet of water in the historical channel between Dead Neck and Sampson's that joins the two islands together. With the merging, it leaves a shallow pond, that Oyster Harbor residents call "Pirates Cove" and Cotuit sailors call "Cupid's Cove".



1902

The town of Barnstable is given \$5,000 to dredge a three-foot channel out from deeper water in Nantucket Sound in through West Bay up into the boatyards.

Located in the West Bay area, Crosby boatbuilders have built, restored and maintained wooden boats for eight generations.

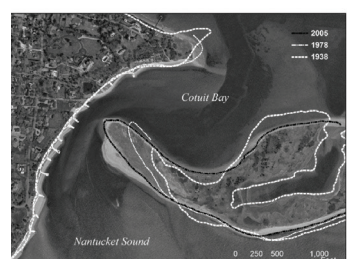


1906

Horace Sears, a Boston textile manufacturer, bought Sampson's from the Davidson family.

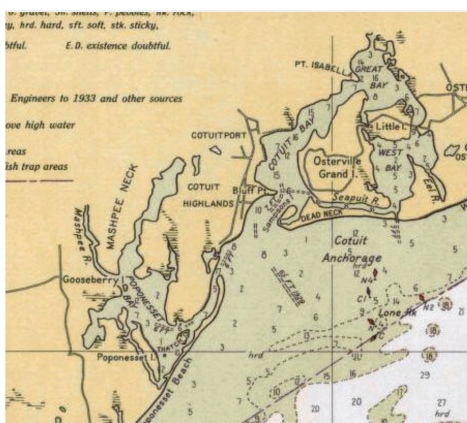
1910-1954

The State dredged a ten-foot channel through Cotuit Bay at a cost of \$27,000. Similar dredges happen in 1917, 1928, 1949 and 1954.



1923

Harry L. Bailey, Sear's secretary, inherits Sampson's upon Sear's death.



1953

Bailey, persuaded by Cotuit bird watcher Alva Morrison, donates Sampson's to the Massachusetts Audubon Society. (MA Audubon)



1986

Paul and Rachel Mellon buy Dead Neck from Oyster Harbors Inc.



1997

Three Bays Preservation, Inc. is formed to address the troubling problems of pollution in the Three Bays estuary as well as the erosion of the barrier beaches of Dead Neck Sampson's Island.

THREE BAYS
PRESERVATION, INC.

1998-2009

From 1998 through 2009, Three Bays Preservation, the Town of Barnstable and Barnstable County work together on dredging projects to re-nourish the shoreline of Dead Neck by moving sand from Sampson's, West Bay and Seapuit River. Approximately 300,000 cubic yards of dredge materials are spread on Dead Neck and to create critical nesting habitat for protected shorebirds.



2004

Five years after her husband's death, Rachel Mellon donates Dead Neck to Three Bays Preservation.

MA Audubon and Three Bays Preservation join to co-manage the two islands as a private wildlife sanctuary.



2011-2014

Due to the constant movement of sand along the southside of the island to the western end resulting in the narrowing of the Cotuit Cut, Three Bays Preservation, MA Audubon and the Town of Barnstable develop a three-phase maintenance dredging project that begins in 2018.

2017

Three Bays Preservation changes its name to Barnstable Clean Water Coalition with a new mission of restoring and preserving clean water throughout Barnstable.



2018-2020

Three phase dredging project starts in late 2018 and is completed in November 2020.

