

Indian spirit saw the white man coming

By **CLIFF NITCHKE**

East Haven Historian

Lonotononket.

Probably every person who has gone to school in East Haven, knows that this was the Indian word meaning "Tear of the Great Spirit." It supposedly named by the Indians who believed that the Great Spirit foresaw the coming of the white man, and as he sat on the Hill, he shed such copious tears that the torrent washed out the valley and created Lake Saltonstall. Early settlers called it "the Great Pond, and the lower end was named Furnace Pond, for the Iron Melting furnace that was there.

It utilized the water power from the overflow to power a large bellows. This in turn forced air into the Crucible to heat the wood and charcoal order to melt the iron bearing meadow bog that was brought from North Haven. This area was called "Bog Mine Point" for many years. It is about where the Rib House and Twin Pines are now.

People have always fished and skated there, but our History doesn't make any mention of it until early in the 1800s, when the Great Pond became a winter and summer resort.

In the *Columbian Weekly Register*, June 24, 1857 the paper records the effort of the proprietors to put restrictions on fishing

through legislation in Hartford. The owners planned to stock the lake with salmon and other fish, and wanted time for them to propagate. The bill was passed, and a \$200 fine was put on poachers. The Indians were long gone by then because it is doubtful that they would have gone along with the law. To them, nothing was personal and all nature was the gift from the spirits for all to enjoy. One wonders if the law was ever repealed.

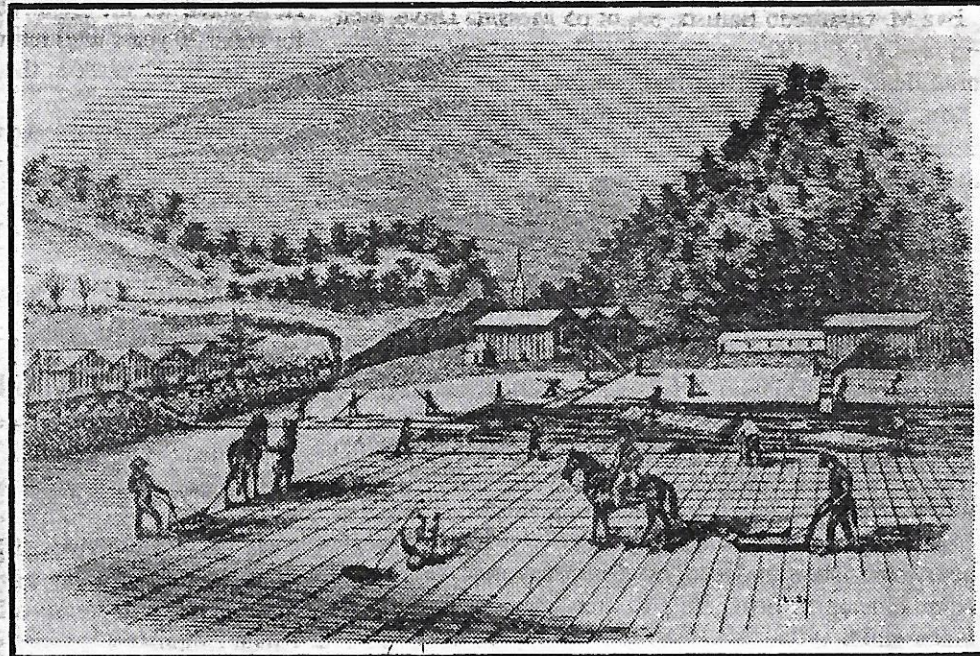
On Jan. 7, 1861, the *New Haven Daily Palladium* reported that an ice boat would be exhibited at Lake Saltonstall, weather permitting. The craft advertised by "Hindale and Company" carriage makers could carry 24 passengers. It was made in Troy, New York, and was touted as being a fine piece of workmanship. We know that ice has been cut from this lake for years before the above date in the sails made the boat skim around the open water patches. Can't you see the girls screaming in mock terror as the boys used the excuse to get a stolen hug or two.

On Jan. 1, 1861, the above paper said that on Dec. 31, 1860, the day before, 14 car loads of skaters left New Haven for Saltonstall. It was the New London Railroad that carried these people to the railroad station at the lake, as they did winter and summer. Fare for the special trips

evermore."

Well done salute: Too often we take town services for granted, something to be expected for our taxes. We fail to send a thank-you-note to crews of the Public Services Department for the incredible job of keeping the roads open during the recent storms.

The round-the-clock coverage kept the roads passable and added to the security of



The Saltonstall Lake Ice Company harvesting ice.

was 25 cents round trip. Oh, for the days of yore. Now a quarter hardly buys a candy bar.

The name of the railroad then was "The New Haven, New London and Stonington Railroad", and there was only one track at that time, and there would only be one, until about 1885. The tracks crossed the lake on pilings at that time, and there would only be one, until about 1885. They crossed the lake on pilings at that time, and gradually the present embankment was put into place, and completed when the tracks were doubled.

Summer outings consisted of the same round trip, and at the station, ferries could be boarded for the trip to the North end of the lake where there was games and food available.

The Trolley Company, or Street Railway as it was then called, wanted a part of the

business and this was the prime reason that trolleys first came to East Haven. Their track was laid past the Green and crossed over the Farm River about where Goodsell Road is now, crossing on a type of trestle bridge. From there, it went on up to the south End of the Lake on the West side of the hill. This was in 1894, and the Water Company finished buying the Lake and surrounding land the following year and closed off the resort so as to make a drinking water reservoir.

After the Lake was closed as a resort area and the tracks were removed from the trestle bridge, the trusses were planked for a pedestrian bridge, and used by East Haveners for a number of years until the thing became unsafe with age. It was finally removed some time around the early 20s.

Happy New Year to all from the East Haven Historical Society.

News & Views By Patrick O'Leary

Looking back: It has long been customary in the newspaper business to review the preceding year for the outstanding stories. I have never been an enthusiast for this practice, though a participant for several years. I prefer to let the old year end without recollection and to concentrate on what may lie ahead.

No doubt the television networks will fill the screen with trivia such as the best