

UF INTERESTS 1994

De East Haven

# Oh, those summer days in town

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Over the years from 1860 to 1950, many ferry boats made the run from Savin Rock to Lighthouse and from Lighthouse to Momauguin and Short Beach in Branford. Among these were the Cynthia, Resolute, Alice, White City, Isabelle, Zephyr and for a short time around the turn of the century an electrically driven boat that had its beginning at the World's Columbian Exposition, and was used with its mates in the Grand Basin of the Fair.

It was later in service at Lake Saltonstall, where it carried passengers to Glen Cove, the picnic grounds on the north end of the lake. This boat called the Electra, was purchased by George Townsend and operated by Captain Baldwin. When he used it on the harbor run he found that the waves required too much power and so the craft was converted and a gasoline powered engine installed.

In all probability, it was used in the Momauguin to Lighthouse run after 1916 when the Baldwins started their ferry service. I am told that the remains of this historic vessel finally rotted out on the grounds of the Townsend estate, the taffrail with the name was the last to go.

The resort at Lake Saltonstall, started in the 1800's was closed as a holiday area in 1895 when the water company purchased the whole area to insure

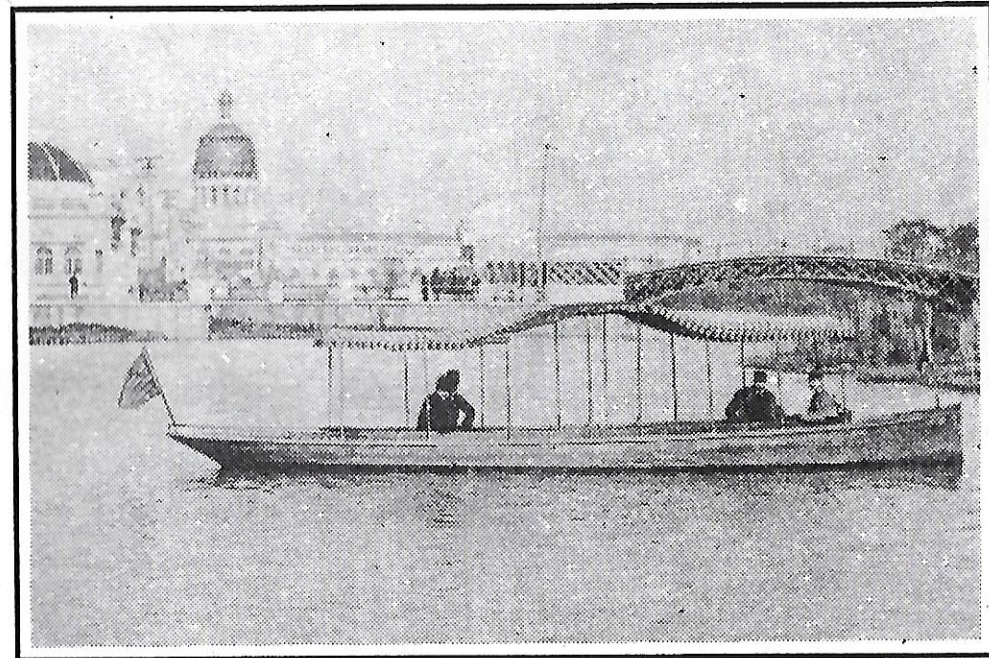
adequate drinking water for its customers.

In its day, both winter and summer, it saw large crowds using its facilities for rest and relaxation. Winter fun was ice skating and the lake once boasted a very large and swift modern ice boat to give your girl a thrill, especially around the open water where they had harvested ice for the southland trade. 3000 fun seekers were not unusual on a nice day, winter or summer.

Summertime meant swimming, fishing, boating or just plain girl, boy watching time, and then the fun seekers had to find other places to spend a day; the trolley tracks were ripped up and the train station discontinued. Deborah's River bridge was removed and even the end of the trolley line tavern was moved and made into a private home. Now to find another place play, with most going to the area shores on the Street Railway.

In 1898, we find new trolley tracks to Momauguin, a whole new exciting place to rent a bathing suit, towel and change closet, and go canoeing and bathing, not swimming, the suit weighed a ton. Hot dogs, frozen custards, crisp french fries and clams held the inner man until supper time, or as we say now, dinner time.

From 1865, on and especially after the horse cars gave way to power, Savin Rock amusement park was a must to ride and eat and of course ride



Electra was purchased by George Townsend and used on Lake Saltonstall 1894 and 1895 for picnic excursions.

the ferry back and forth across the harbor.

A typical holiday was to trolley to Momauguin, swim and play for awhile, then ferry to Lighthouse on one of Baldwin's three boats, the Echo, the Now-we-go or the Lena, ride the carousel at Lighthouse and then ferry to Savin Rock for a shore dinner, spend a few dimes in the stand to try to win a Teddy Bear or a Japanese set of dishes, then home to bed on an open car; and this all for a family of four, for less than ten bucks.

In the East Haven Historical Society building we have slides and pictures of the above, as pertains to East Haven and we are prepared to show these at your meetings. Momauguin and the center are well loaded, but Foxon area pictures are not often offered for us to copy, and so we can't offer much in pictures of this area. We still have some Streets of East Haven books to sell that would make good Christmas gifts. You are welcome to drop in any Wednesday from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., or at any time by appointment.