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Humanizing the Seas

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into *Ocean Literacy and Stewardship*

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HUMANIZING THE SEAS

A CASE FOR INTEGRATING THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES INTO OCEAN LITERACY AND STEWARDSHIP

Integrating maritime heritage and ocean literacy: Free-choice learning along the Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail

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Abstract

This article introduces the Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail, an interdisciplinary public outreach project conceived by Maritime Studies Program faculty at the University of Connecticut. The Blue Heritage Trail focuses on human connections to Connecticut's marine environments, maritime economy, culture, and heritage, and aims to increase ocean literacy through free-choice learning. The project benefits from partnerships and collaborations with local outreach organizations, academic institutions, and historical societies, and encourages public engagement to promote a deeper understanding of ocean literacy and ocean stewardship. Beebe Pond Park and Mamacoke Conservation Area are examined in this paper in order to highlight the ubiquitous connections found between Connecticut's maritime communities and geographical locations, and to illustrate the Ocean Literacy principle that "the ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected." Facilitating the public understanding of this interconnectivity reinforces the importance of the ocean's impact on individuals and communities and encourages engaged conversations and increased conservation efforts.

Introduction

The Ocean Literacy campaign, launched as a response to education standards that failed to include adequate elementary ocean-related content, was a grassroots effort by a diverse group of educators and scientists affiliated with educational and governmental institutions designed to ensure "an ocean-literate society," as our future as a species is dependent on the health of our ocean. One of the seven guiding principles of the campaign states, "the ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected," a statement supported in part by a list of many resources the ocean provides, such as water, oxygen, food, medicines, and energy. The human impact on the ocean is also considered and high-

lights pollution, ocean acidification, and overharvesting of resources. Following this sobering list is a call to action: "Everyone is responsible for caring for the ocean. The ocean sustains life on Earth and humans must live in ways that sustain the ocean. Individual and collective actions are needed to effectively manage ocean resources for all." The Ocean Literacy campaign provides a framework designed by "scientists, educators, and policy makers" to increase ocean science education from kindergarten through high school.¹ But what about everyone else?

The Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail is a public outreach project conceived by faculty within the

Everyone is responsible for caring for the ocean — the ocean sustains life on Earth

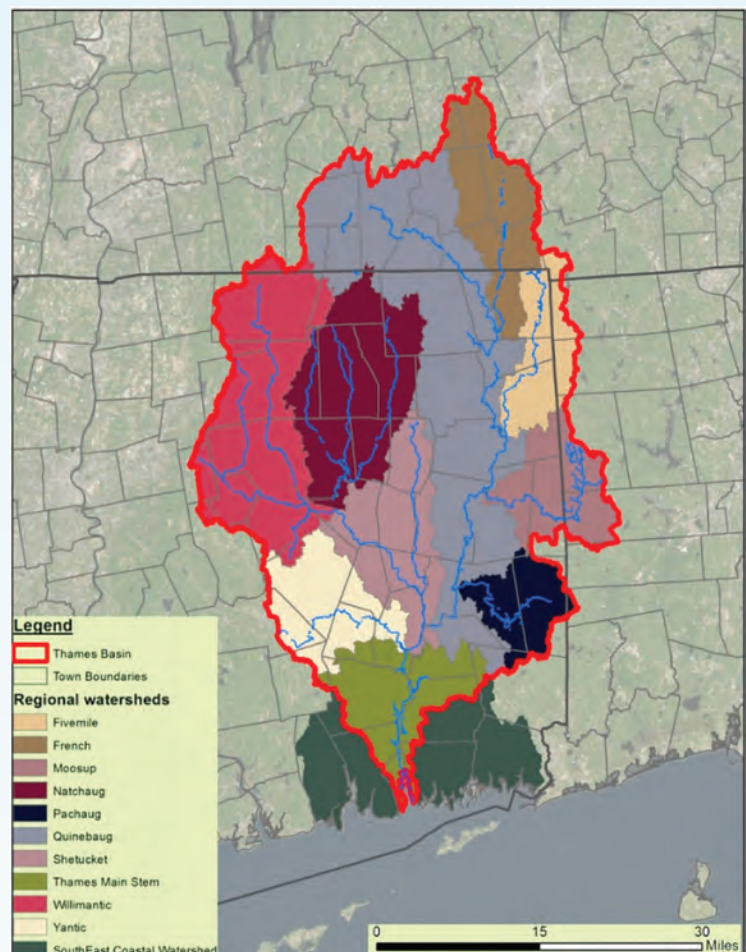
Maritime Studies Program (MAST) at the University of Connecticut (UConn) and supported by the US Department of the Interior's National Park Service, UConn, and Connecticut Sea Grant. The trail aims to raise public awareness of the importance of Connecticut's marine environment and maritime economy and culture by examining a variety of geographical locations with connections to Connecticut waterways throughout history. The trail is "designed to create, curate, integrate, and share information related to the state's marine environments and maritime heritage."² Designed to explore individual and community relationships with Connecticut's maritime world, the trail is an interdisciplinary project that will enable visitors to explore the past and present impact of the region's waterways. This project aims to raise public awareness of the importance and the scope of the relationship between humans and the maritime world. This will be accomplished through a content-packed website, physical signage, and walking, driving, and boating audio tours hosted online and playable on a smartphone tourism application. In part due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been some project delays. The website is in its early stages and currently under construction, the signage mockups are in development, and though there is limited content on the smartphone app, additional tours are expected soon. Due to these delays, this paper provides a glimpse into what the trail is expected to look like in the near future rather than a discussion of how much of the trail is available for exploration at the time of this writing.

The Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail is, in its pilot stage, focused around the Thames River watershed in Connecticut, as seen outlined in red in Figure 1. There are plans to expand the trail in the future to include sites throughout all of Connecticut that are linked to its rivers and waterways and that can be categorized as significant to the state's blue heritage. Meant to facilitate and enhance community efforts, the trail is a free-choice learning project that formally fosters community partnerships and collaborations through its Advisory Board, whose members represent a variety of local organizations that have an interest in preserving the state's maritime

heritage and highlighting the important of ocean literacy. The trail will also consist of a website to serve as a unifying and cohesive trail space, signage at 12 different high-traffic sites along the Thames River, and a collection of thematically relevant sites that can stand alone, or be combined to create thematic audio tours and quests while providing opportunities for student engagement in the form of service-learning projects and encouraging public engagement.

This paper introduces the Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail and demonstrates how research into Beebe Pond Park, one of the trail's sites, and Mamacoke Conservation Area, one of the trail's gateways, uncovered maritime connections woven throughout the histories of the people who lived on the land and those who worked on the waters around it. These connections led to the recognition of other sites and histories contributing to the mar-

FIGURE 1. The Thames River and its tributaries, with the river's watershed outlined in red as it extends from Connecticut into Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Map courtesy of Thames River Basin Partnership.



itime heritage of southeastern Connecticut while supporting the sixth principle of Ocean Literacy, that “the ocean and humans and inextricably interconnected.”

A free-choice learning project

The Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail aims to emphasize the importance of human relationships with coastal waters while creating opportunities for *free-choice learning*, defined as self-motivated learning that takes places outside a classroom setting, such as at museums, zoos, parks, and aquariums.³ More specifically, the trail examines the role Connecticut’s maritime world has exerted on shaping the uses, development, and cultural perceptions of a given location, referred to in this paper as a “point-of-interest.” The trail allows the public to explore different points-of-interest through a website, physical signage, and digital audio tours and quests using the izi.TRAVEL smartphone app.⁴ Visiting a point-of-interest and learning about it while physically engaged with the landscape provides a greater sense of place that augments the overall experience and often allows for a deeper understanding about how and why the history of a location unfolded as it did. However, maritime heritage should be accessible to all, so anyone in the world with access to a smartphone or a computer is able to explore these tours, making these collections accessible in the classroom, and to individuals who are physically unable to navigate the terrain, who cannot travel to Connecticut, or who wish to explore the tours from the comfort of the indoors—a feature especially useful during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Advisory Board

The intent of the Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail is not to duplicate community efforts, but rather to enhance and facilitate them, making the inclusion of partnerships and collaborations with other universities, organizations, and local historical societies an important trail component. The trail creators have fostered such partnerships and collaborations through the establishment of a formal Trail Advisory Board that includes representatives from many local and regional academic and outreach organizations. The partnership with Thames River Heritage Park (TRHP) is particularly strong. TRHP is “a new

kind of state park ... without boundaries ... [and] with almost 20 national and historical sites along the shores of the Thames River—linked by a water taxi—that tell the stories that shaped our nation.”⁵ A trail collaboration with the TRHP entailed the conversion, digitalization, and enhancement of four text-based walking tours. These tours, written for TRHP by historian Andy German, interpret the Groton Bank Historic District in Groton, are relevant to the trail’s blue themes, and are currently available on the izi.TRAVEL app under the Thames River Heritage Park profile.⁶

The Trail Advisory Board was also created to allow representatives from various local organizations to oversee and facilitate project development. Groups of board members are currently working on physical signage mockups, and teams of experts have been created to review undergraduate service learning projects for content and accuracy before points-of-interest are uploaded to izi.TRAVEL and tours are created. The Advisory Board has also spent a considerable amount of time determining “what makes a site blue.” Points-of-interest are evaluated against a variety of maritime themes that have been identified as worthy blue heritage qualifiers. To be considered a suitable addition to the project, one or more of these interdisciplinary blue themes must be relevant to each site’s history or present-day usage: *aquaculture, coastal biodiversity, coastal geography and geology, coastal habitats, coastal recreation, fisheries, maritime economy and workforce, maritime military and defense, navigation, and weather and climate.*

Website and signage

The website, though currently in the early stages of development, will arguably be the most important component of the trail as it connects all of the content in one place. The website is expected to have a page for every point-of-interest on the trail, containing the izi.TRAVEL content as well as all sources, suggestions for further reading, credits and acknowledgements, a place for visitor discussion, and thematic tags that will link points-of-interest and connect individual sites and tours into a cohesive trail. The website will allow people who do not have smartphones to navigate the trail and encourage visitors to share their own stories about

these points-of-interest that are so important to local communities, both past and present (Figure 2).

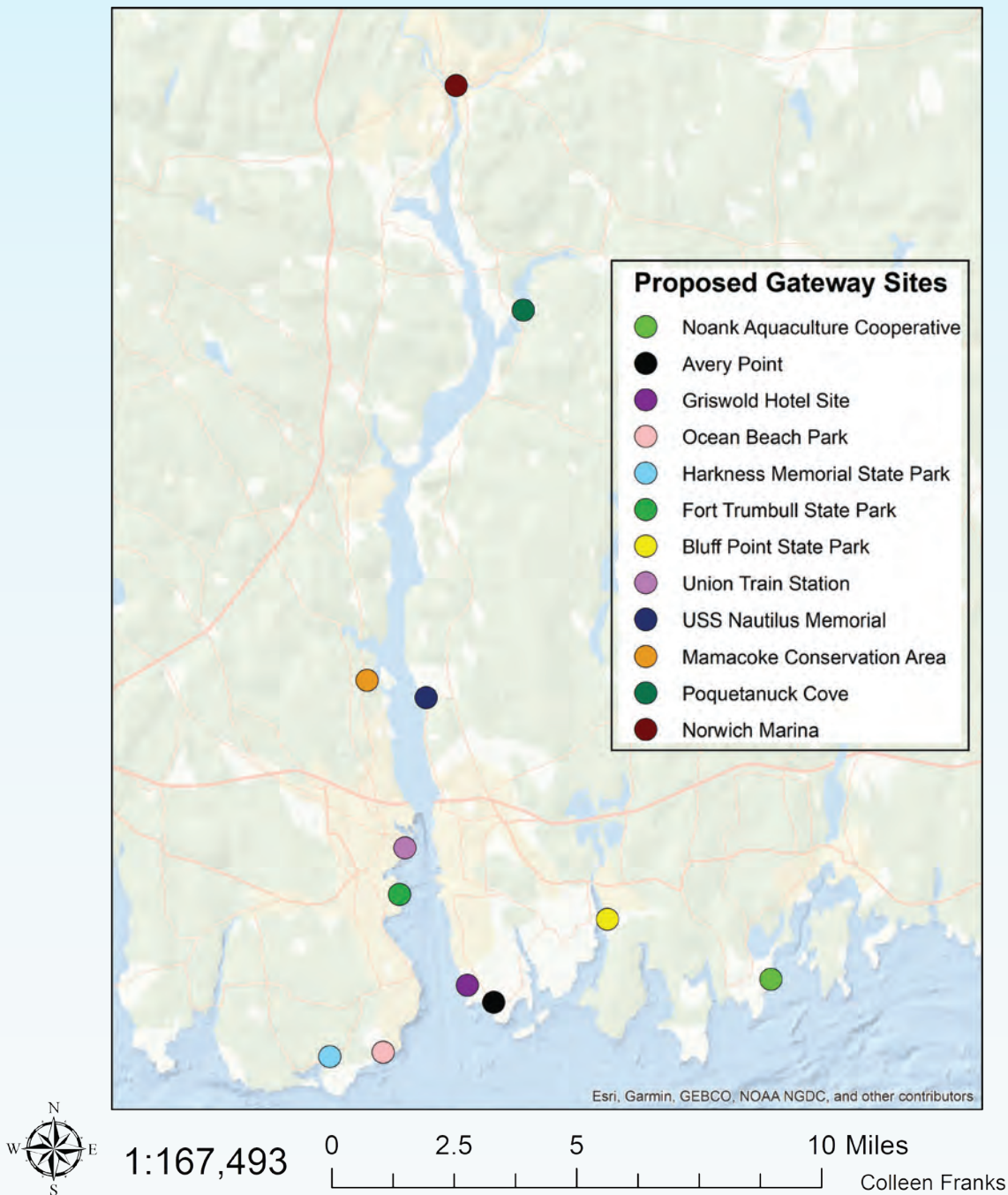
In order to make the trail more visible and accessible, twelve sites have been selected in areas adjacent to and within the Thames River watershed that will serve as gateways to the trail. Each high-traffic site chosen is connected to multiple blue themes, and will allow for points-of-interest to be connected thematically, geographically, or in many cases, both. Physical signage at these sites

will provide general information about the project, site interpretation, and images, and will instruct visitors how to access the digital components of the trail. Signs also will encourage anyone interested to go to the website and contribute their own stories, in their own voices.

Tours and quests

The tours and quests consist of thematically organized content, including historical research, archival images, and logistical information related to

FIGURE 2. The Thames River, with twelve proposed Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail gateway site locations. Map created by the author in ArcMap.



The quest is a fun way to explore the environment while becoming immersed in it

the site. Tours can be downloaded to a smartphone before arriving at the first stop, so the content is available regardless of data or Wi-Fi strength. In general, quests cannot be completed from home. Quests require active engagement from the user who must reach or explore each point-of-interest in search of clues that will direct them to the next stop. The Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail tours that are currently available include *Morton F. Plant's Avery Point Estate* and the *UConn Avery Point Environmental Quest*, as well as some independent points-of-interest. *Morton F. Plant's Avery Point Estate* examines the life and contributions of a wealthy philanthropist who was connected to the establishment of certain Groton- and New London-area roads, churches, schools, and hospitals, and whose remaining summer estate buildings now house the University of Connecticut's Avery Point Campus, home to the Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail.⁷ The *UConn Avery Point Environmental Quest* is designed to introduce visitors to the different coastal habitats and species found on the campus as well as the characteristics and impacts of the built environment. Originally created for students, the quest is a fun way to explore the environment while becoming immersed in it, and to introduce visitors to habitats and species that they may not be able to identify on their own. As the quest's introduction states, "in the end, you'll understand some of the environmental opportunities and challenges that exist here, on Avery Point."⁸

Service learning

The development of the trail provides ongoing research opportunities for university students, faculty, and staff. The *UConn Avery Point Environmental Quest* also demonstrates how students have contributed to developing the Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail through service learning. An assignment in an undergraduate UConn capstone course required

each student to choose a location of interest within a specified distance of Avery Point, find a blue connection, submit a proposal to include the site in the trail, and provide an izi.TRAVEL entry with suitable images and permission to use them. Final projects were to be presented on location to enhance the sense of place. As one of the students in this course, I gravitated to Beebe Pond Park, a small open-space preserve located in Groton, Connecticut (Figure 3). My eighth great-grandmother was a Beebe before marriage, her family was from New London, and I was curious to see if this park's namesake was connected to her. More about this later on, but, first, preliminary research revealed that Beebe Pond Park contains a tidal salt pond as well as the remains of an old ice house and dam that were built by Captain Silas Beebe, the early 19th-century landowner.⁹ Since I now knew the site contained at least two of the trail's required blue themes, *maritime economy and workforce* and *coastal habitats*, I decided on this site for my capstone project and hoped to discover if there was something unique about this location that made it suitable for a ship's captain to call home.

Beebe Pond Park, Groton, Connecticut

Protected harbors and access to valuable coastal and terrestrial resources provided ideal conditions for the early settlers of New London to develop



FIGURE 3. Overlooking Beebe Pond from the trails at Beebe Pond Park in Groton, Connecticut. Photo courtesy of the author.

communities along the Thames River and the coast of Fishers Island Sound. The extensive coastlines housed many landing sites that provided access to the New World via ship, were full of resources available for exploitation, and were vital for connecting trading communities via the ocean, sounds, and other waterways.

The Beebe family story begins in the United States with John Beebe of Broughton, Northhamptonshire, England, who traveled to North America in 1650 with his children. John died on the ship that carried him just after completing his will, and is reported to have been buried at sea.¹⁰

Captain Silas Beebe, the eponym of Beebe Pond, was the fourth great-grandson of the John Beebe who did not survive his trip across the Atlantic (Figure 4). In 1808, Silas Beebe purchased three acres of land at Goat's Point in Mystic from Joshua Packer, and by 1842 had acquired an additional 74 acres from the Packer Estate.¹¹

Over the course of his maritime career, Silas, a well-known captain, commanded the sloops *Eliza*, *Ranger*, *Rover*, and *Nancy*, in addition to other vessels.¹² Silas later became a whaling agent with his

partner, Jedediah Randall, and together they sent out several Mystic whaling vessels, including the *LaGrange*.¹³ Silas became the whaling captain of the *LaGrange* and also the *Betsey* and was part-owner of the *Aeronaut*. Built in 1822, the *Aeronaut* embarked on ten whaling voyages from 1834–1854.¹⁴

In 1817 the Black Ball Line of “fast-sailing cargo vessels” was introduced to provide scheduled, year-round service between New York and Liverpool for high-value cargo such as bullion, mail, and perishable goods. Packet ships, named for the relative size of the cargo they typically carried, promised to adhere to the route and the schedule even if the cargo hold was not full. This reliability made packet ships popular, for both cargo and travelers who could afford to travel on them.¹⁵ Captain Silas Beebe took advantage of the newly developed packet ship lines of trade after recognizing the value of scheduled supply runs, as he was already making regular trips between New York, New Orleans, and Veracruz on the *LaGrange*.¹⁶ He later commissioned a sloop called the *Ranger* to be built specifically for the packet ship trade lines.¹⁷ Historian Kathleen Greenhalgh, while commenting on Beebe Cove's geographical characteristics, noted the sloop *Ranger* as evidence that the harbor would have been desirable to any sea captain: “Capt. Beebe built the sloop *Ranger* and before the railroad was built across Sixpenny Island, he would sail his square-rigged ship into the cove at an anchorage just a short distance from his front door. At this time the cove was much deeper and made an excellent harbor”¹⁸ (Figure 5).

FIGURE 4. Portrait of Captain Silas Beebe, 1865. Photo courtesy of Mystic Seaport Museum, acc. no. 1939.1311.



In addition to the whaling and packet trades, Silas Beebe entered the ice business after he constructed a dam across a small stream that flowed into Beebe Cove and a brick house to store the ice. Although the ice he harvested was intended for his own personal use, by the 1850s fishers required ice for their catches once the demand for freshly caught fish outweighed the demand for dried salted fish.¹⁹ A means of preservation that would keep their catches fresh until they arrived at the New York fish markets was now required. Beebe's brick icehouse reportedly “supplied mostly fishermen before the railroad trestle was built across the Cove.”²⁰ Although his ice house was not the top supplier for the community, Beebe was successful in the ice market because it was in a prime location to supply the Noank fishers with the ice they required to keep their catches fresh.

FIGURE 5. A view of Beebe Cove and the Silas Beebe Homestead, 1912. Photo courtesy of Mystic Seaport Museum, acc. no. 1952.1180



Figure 6 shows the location of Captain Beebe's home in relation to Fishers Island Sound, Long Island Sound, and Noank. The marked railroad tracks apply context, as the cove was accessible only by boat before the tracks were laid. The large map shows the proximity of the site to Long Island and Fishers Island Sounds, which the sea captain would have appreciated for easier navigation to the sounds, and, from there, the world. The icehouse afforded the same easy access to the Noank fishers who did not have to go out of their way in order to obtain ice for their fresh catches before they headed to the New York City fish markets.

Years after Silas' death in 1863, the land at Beebe Cove was partitioned and sold, and Carl Cutler purchased a portion.²¹ Cutler was one of the three founders of the Marine Historical Association known today as Mystic Seaport. According to the Mystic Seaport Museum, he spent years conducting research, which included producing over 30,000 index cards with arrival and departure information for "thousands of vessels." Cutler used this research to write *Greyhounds of the Sea: The Story of the American Clipper Ship* and, later, *Queens of the Western Ocean*, a history of American packet ships.²² After purchasing a portion of the land at Beebe Pond, he built himself a log cabin where he could concentrate on research and writing. The cabin was 19x24 feet, constructed with 14-inch diameter logs, and with a chimney fashioned out of stone taken from walls in nearby fields.²³ That Cutler chose to preserve maritime history on land that belonged to a former sea captain and that was connected to the packet trade, the whaling industry, and the fish markets, emphasizes that blue connections to one geographical location can be many and varied. As historian Carol Kimball stated, "Beebe Pond Park remains part of Groton's growing acres of open space. Its pond, woods, and hiking trails, reserved for visitors' enjoyment are a fitting reminder of Captain Silas Beebe, the [sic] was an intrepid mariner, and also of Carl Cutler who recorded so much of Mystic's maritime history."²⁴

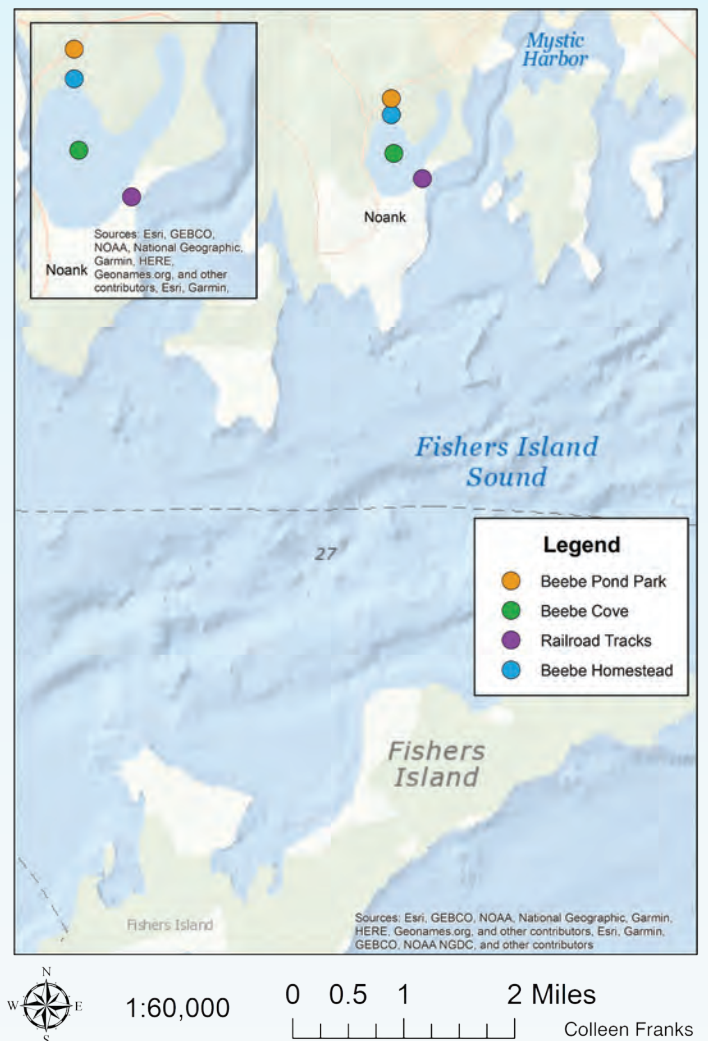


FIGURE 6. Beebe Pond Park and Cove with the location of the Beebe homestead (detail, inset map) in relation to Noank and Fishers Island Sound. Map created by the author in ArcMap.

Beebe Pond Park and Cove is currently a point-of-interest that can be explored on the izi.TRAVEL app as part of the Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail and is linked to several of the blue themes, including *maritime economy and workforce*, *coastal geography*, *coastal habitats*, and *coastal ecology*.

Research into Captain Silas Beebe revealed that the maritime threads piecing together generations of his family stories are interwoven with the narratives of many other people and places in the area. These people and their stories are all knitted together against the backdrop of the maritime world and Connecticut's coastal landscape. Once again, we are reminded of the Ocean Literacy principle that states, "the ocean and humans are inextricably connected." The frequency of these connections led to the discovery of many other potential points-of-interest located in nearby towns and near the Thames River. Mamacoke Conservation Area in Quaker Hill is one such example.

Mamacoke Conservation Area, Quaker Hill, Connecticut

Mamacoke Conservation Area (Figure 7) is part of the Connecticut College Arboretum and has been designated by the National Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area.²⁵ There are several hiking and jogging trails that meander through the space, including onto Mamacoke Island, which is in actuality a peninsula connected to the mainland by four

acres of tidal salt marsh. The conservation area includes all tidal coves and waterways that surround the peninsula as well as Mamacoke Point itself.

There are four Native American archaeological sites that exist within the confines of the original Mamacoke farm parcel. According to a Connecticut College Arboretum Bulletin, Native Americans likely inhabited the majority of the area at least 4,000 years ago, and the Mamacoke Cove site is believed to have been inhabited during the Middle to Late Woodland stage: "A large Woodland village was probably located across the river on the current site of the US Naval Submarine Base in Groton, and the Mamacoke site may have served as a seasonal shellfishing station."²⁶ The location of Mamacoke also made the land valuable to colonists who began to settle and explore the west bank of the Thames River. The geography of the point made the land well-suited for settlement: "...one of the finest properties in New London. About two miles north of town, Mamacock—an Algonquian word meaning 'great hook,'—was a large jut of rocky land, with abundant salt hay and easy river access."²⁷ *An Illustrated History of Waterford* emphasizes the value of the land based on the extractable resources of the salt marsh, including salt hay (*Spartina patens*): "The European settlers' pioneer harvest was from the native hay found in the open areas of Fog Plain and (Upper) Mamacoke in 1645, the year of their arrival."²⁸

FIGURE 7. A view of Mamacoke Cove and Island (left) from the tidal salt marsh at Mamacoke Conservation Area. Photo courtesy of the author.



James Rogers, the first of his family to settle in New London, acquired the lands at Mamacoke from John Winthrop the Younger, governor of Connecticut Colony from 1657–1676. By 1672 Rogers' son John, during one of his many business trips to Rhode Island, joined the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Newport; in 1674 he brought Mr. Crandall, the church's pastor, to New London to baptize his two sons, which first brought the Baptist religion to the area.²⁹ By 1677 John and his growing family left the church, and he, adopting practices similar to the Quakers and the Baptists, began his own religious sect: the Rogerenes. In the book *Whaling City*, Robert Decker states

that, “While their religious views were basically orthodox and they were obedient to the civil laws, the Rogerenes got into difficulty by demanding freedom of conscience and religion.” According to Decker, the Rogerenes opposed taxation—including that of minister’s salaries—in support of religious institutions, and both public and private prayer except in certain circumstances where the individual felt prayer was appropriate. They also “rejected ... churches, medicines and civil or religious rites for marriage. After worship they went to work on the Sabbath.... [T]o the people of that day the Rogerenes were terrible people seeking persecution.”³⁰

The Rogerenes frequently disrupted Puritan religious activities by interrupting sermons, shouting, and disparaging ministers.³¹ The severe and frequent punishments for these acts included “fines, confinement in the stocks and whipping,” which did not halt the religious movement but rather encouraged the Rogerenes to continue their disruptive behavior. In her work, *The Rogerenes*, Ellen Brinton observes that “the Rogerene Quakers accepted ... all the imprisonments, fines, melted tar poured over their bodies, and other indignities which they suffered. They consistently practised their belief in abstention from violence.”³² According to Brinton, the Rogerenes were ultimately peaceful people, passively working towards securing religious freedom.

The Rogers family settled at Mamacoke because of the resources available and because it was a prime location between Norwich and New London. Joshua Hempstead’s colonial diary frequently mentions the days he spent working at Mamacoke, usually cutting, stacking, and hauling salt hay, with an occasional reference to sedge harvesting, plowing, fence-mending, and the transportation of cattle to Mamacoke, possibly via ferry on the Thames River, so they could pasture there.³³ According to historian Allegra di Bonaventura, the Rogers family lived in mild isolation just outside of New London while still maintaining easy access to the town via horseback, water, or foot. She notes, “The road to Norwich, entrepot for the fertile farmlands of the Connecticut River Valley, ran right through the

farm, bringing a steady flow of visitors and information.”³⁴ These factors combined to make Mamacoke a perfect area to settle and provided sufficient access to surrounding communities to eventually birth the Rogerene movement.

Mamacoke Conservation Area is connected to the Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail by several blue themes including, *coastal biodiversity*, *coastal geography and geology*, *coastal habitats*, and *maritime economy and workforce*, making it well-suited for a walking tour and a quest, and to serve as a gateway site for the trail.

Concluding thoughts

The stories uncovered when researching Beebe Pond Park and Mamacoke Conservation Area are in some way, large or small, tied to the waters of the Thames River, Long Island Sound, and Fishers Island Sound—waterways that were and still are so vital to the growth and development of “The Whaling City” of New London, and to southeastern Connecticut. But these stories are connected to us as well. While researching Beebe Cove I discovered that Captain Silas Beebe is in fact my fourth cousin, seven times removed. Following the threads connecting him and these communities, I uncovered the identity of my ninth great-grandfather to be Samuel Beebe, one of the first settlers in New London, and “a wealthy and leading Rogerene Quaker who got into much trouble with the Puritan authorities in New London.” His son, Samuel Beebe, Jr., married Elizabeth Rogers, daughter of John Rogers of Mamacoke.³⁵

My work on the Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail has made it impossible for me to ignore the strength and ubiquity of the human relationship with the ocean and other waterways.³⁶ The stories of Silas Beebe and of the Rogerenes are important to me on a personal level now that I know these are also the stories of my ancestors, but they are significant on a larger scale as well. They both emphasize the impact geography and its watery connections have on human development. The location of Beebe’s home was chosen due to conveniences made possible by the landscape, and the benefits in part served the local community. Similarly, the Rogers

family prospered, in good measure, from the coastal resources that supported their farming practices. Observing the “inextricable interconnections” between the Beebe and Rogers families and the ocean may help individuals increase their ocean literacy, better understand the importance of becoming ocean stewards, and encourage them to take action to help preserve the ocean. There are many more stories of “inextricable interconnections” out there to discover, and projects such as the Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail connect not only geographically relevant sites and blue themes, but also the people in this community.

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 33. Joshua Hempstead, *Diary of Joshua Hempstead of New London, Connecticut: Covering a Period of Forty-Seven Years, from September 1711, to November, 1758; Containing Valuable Genealogical Data Relating to Many New London Families, References to the Colonial Wars, to the Shipping and Other Matters of Interest Pertaining to the Town and the Times, with an Account of a Journey Made by the Writer from New London to Maryland by Joshua Hempstead*. New London: New London County Historical Society, 1901, 73–393; https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=z_ULAAAAYAAJ.
 34. Di Bonaventura, 26.
 35. Ambrose M. Shotwell, *Annals of Our Colonial Ancestors and Their Descendants; or, Our Quaker Forefathers and Their Posterity ... A Genealogical and Biographical Register ... of the Shotwell Family in America....* (Lansing, MI: R. Smith & Co., 1895), 245; <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=QLpRAAAAMAAJ&rdid=book-QL-pRAAAAMAAJ&rdot=1>.
 36. I began working on the Connecticut Blue Heritage Trail three years ago as an undergrad-

uate in the MAST Program at Avery Point. As a student, I took several classes and paid internships with service learning projects that were intended for, or could be adapted to, the trail. I unearthed the history of Beebe Pond Park and Mamacoke Conservation Area; used GIS software to create a geospatially referenced story map of Dredged Material Management in Long Island Sound; profiled Alton Beaudoin, a local 20th-century mariner; and researched—with the intent to restore—a local cemetery for enslaved people. After graduating I continued my work on the project as a research specialist and the trail’s only paid employee. Over the course of the last three years I created walking trails using the izi.TRAVEL app, worked with Thames River Heritage Park to convert text tours to walking trails in Groton, Connecticut, and assisted with the creation of new trail content, both independently and with faculty (some of which is still under development). These trails include Morton F. Plant’s Avery Point Estate, the Avery Point Environmental Quest, the Poquetanuck Cove Canoe Trail, and a series of 24 different campus exploration quests, each specifically tailored for a large group of Early College Experience high school students and therefore not available to the public. My work has also included engagement with undergraduates; I have presented the trail to students before they began their own service learning projects, assisted them with source identification and research, and worked with them on the tour adaptation process, including providing instruction on uploading content to the izi.TRAVEL app. Additionally, I have presented about the trail with UConn Faculty at various conferences, including Fairfield University’s 2018 *Imagining the Coast* public symposium, the National Council on Public History’s 2019 Annual Meeting on “Repair Work,” as well as at the Groton Bank Historical Society, the New London Port Authority, and on Connecticut Public Radio.