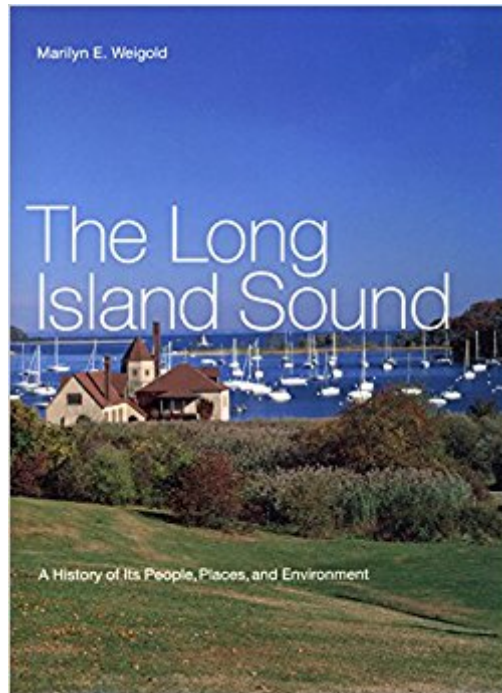




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# **The Long Island Sound: A History Of Its People, Places, And Environment**



## Synopsis

Spanning the shores of Connecticut and Long Island, New York, the Long Island Sound is one of the most picturesque places in North America. From the discovery of the Sound in 1614, to the adventures of Captain Kidd, to the sinking of the Lexington in the sound in 1840, the Long Island Sound also holds a unique place in American history. The Long Island Sound traces the growth of fishing and shipbuilding villages along the sound to the development of major industrial ports, resort towns, and suburban communities along the sound. Marilyn Weigold discusses the subsequent overcrowding and pollution that resulted from this prosperity and expansion. Originally published in 1974 as *The American Mediterranean* and long out of print, *The Long Island Sound* has been updated by the author with a new preface and final chapter describing the Sound in the twenty-first century. In this new edition, Weigold particularly focuses on environmental concerns, and describes more current milestones, like the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, who fought and won in 1995 to set aside 100,000 acres as NY State's first forest preserve; the continuous construction of the Long Island Expressway, with its forty-one miles of HOV lanes; the attempt made by several of Connecticut's coastal cities to reinvigorate urban redevelopment; and the Long Island Sound Study's investigation of toxic substances—both natural and man-made—which continue to contaminate the waterway. Through over 40 stunning photographs and many fascinating stories, *The Long Island Sound* tells the history of a vastly populated, but underdiscussed, part of America.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

First published in 1974 as *The American Mediterranean*, this volume has been revised and updated

with a new preface and a new last chapter. Extensively researched and accessibly written, this book is rich in information, providing detailed data on everything from battles fought in the area (Battle of Long Island, August 1776) to the development of railroads and resort communities, to the overcrowding of the region's beaches and coastal lands; already an issue in the early 1970s. This revised volume also addresses the current concern about PCB contamination in Sound fish. More than 40 photographs and illustrations capture the feel of the Sound and render a visual history of its transformation; ultimately, the book shows that despite the over-development of much of the Sound, there are still places that remain pristine and untouched. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"More than 40 photographs and illustrations capture the feel of the Sound and render a visual history of its transformation; ultimately, the book shows that despite the over-development of much of the Sound, there are still places that remain pristine and untouched." -Publishers Weekly  
"This popular presentation will make interesting reading for those who treasure the endangered Long Island Sound." -Choice  
"For anyone who cares about where we live, this profusely illustrated book would make a swell gift." -Greenwich Time

I am very disappointed in its handling of Native American communities. "A History of Its People, Places, and Environments" should include some account the original people who lived here before European contact. And yes, information is available on these people - I'm an archaeology professor (with active research in a different part of the world but teaching at a major university near the Sound) and there are readily accessible ethnohistoric and archaeological data sources had the author wished to consult them. For the record, Native Americans around the Sound were not a single ethnic group, but multiple cultures with distinct organizations, customs, and economies. Chapter 1 literally begins with the section "EUROPEANS COME TO THE SOUND: To boatman and sailors who know Long Island Sound, it might not be surprising to learn that the 19th century statesman-senator Daniel Webster called the Sound 'the American Mediterranean'. Perhaps the first European to sail on the waterway, the Dutch captain Adrian Block might have had similar impressions in 1614 when he traveled from Hell Gate eastward through Long Island Sound. He had crossed the Atlantic before and sailed along the east coast from Maine to Delaware, seeking contacts with the natives. Coming here again in 1613, he was able to establish friendly relations with the Native Americans of Manhattan, trading with them for furs..." Unfortunately none of Block's observations about the people inhabiting Long Island then were included. How fascinating it would

have been had the author collected information on the distribution of different Native American groups at the time of contact, and painted some idea of their economic bases and social organization. This would have merited a full chapter before Europeans are introduced. Then we would have known what the European explorers encountered, and had a richer understanding about why European settlement progressed the way it did. Instead, aside from scant, glancing references to faceless Native American populations, readers are left with the impression that Europeans were stepping into an unpopulated wilderness. This one-sided history continues on page 10: "The two parties, Hutchinson's and Throgmorton's, arrived in their new locale in 1643 after they had received patents from the Dutch. The Native Americans in the neighborhood, still resentful after what they thought was gross mistreatment on the part of the Dutch, broke the peace and attacked the English settlers and killed most of them, including Anne Hutchinson. Throgmorton fled on a boat that just happened to sail by as the Native Americans staged their raid. No remains of the settlement could be found, and only a few names commemorate those early pioneers." The bias inherent in the above quoted paragraph is just appalling. The "pioneers" were not actually "people of the Sound" at this point - by any indigenous perspective they were invaders seizing land. How can one say that the Native Americans "broke the peace" when none was created? Why should one call the Native Americans' sortie a "raid" when they were kicking foreign newcomers off of land that they (the Native Americans) had held for countless generations? In addition to ignoring the culture, economy and diversity of Native American groups around the Sound, and presenting egregiously one-sided views of contact conflicts, the author does not go into any depth about the displacement and extermination of the Native American population. As the book moves into later historic times these omissions become less grating. They would be understandable in a work penned in the 1960s or 1970s, but this was published in 2004. Weigold is a full Professor of History at Pace University, and her love of the Sound rings true ... so one would think she would do justice to all its inhabitants.

I have lived in this area for many years and did not know of the rich history we enjoy. Love the book.

Very informative

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