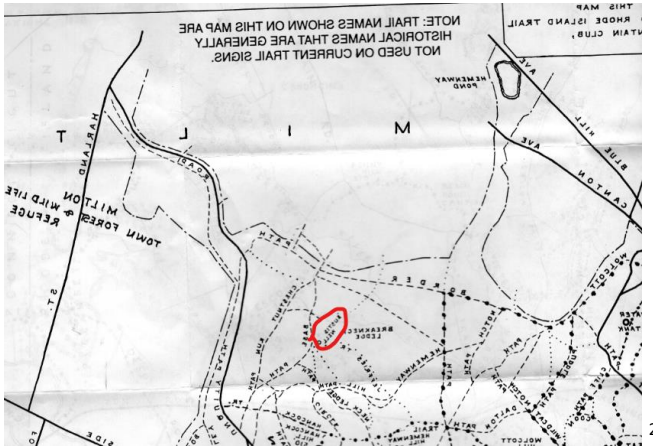


Blue Hills History - That well in the woods... and where it leads us.

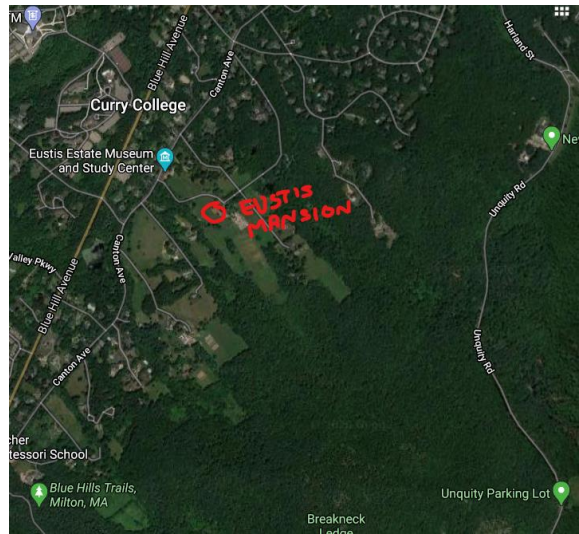
When we hike near intersection 1182, we see a fenced in well...



I'd always wondered "What's the story behind that?" Then I heard about the Eustis Estate, located at 1424 Canton Avenue, Milton (just down the hill) and figured there might be a connection. The Eustis Estate is now part of Historic New England. I had planned to go over there and ask them if they knew anything about the well up on Hemenway Hill. Then recently I acquired a copy of the map which was included in the 1995 "AMC Massachusetts and Rhode Island Trail Guide". Looking at the map of the Blue Hills I saw that the well was there... and labelled as "Eustis well". Bingo!



"Eustis well" labelled on AMC 1995 map



Google overview of the area

The Eustis Estate is now outside the Blue Hills... but that isn't necessarily the way things used to be. The estate is now 80 acres. Originally it was 250 acres, and the adjacent land belonged to related families. A portion of the Blue Hills to the north of Hemenway Hill was probably originally part of the Eustis Estate. The well was used to provide water to the estate, and you can still see portions of the pipe running

¹ Both photos from <http://mixcement.blogspot.com/2012/03/hemenway-hill-hancock-hill-in-blue.html>

² Map to accompany the 1995 AMC Massachusetts and Rhode Island Trail Guide.

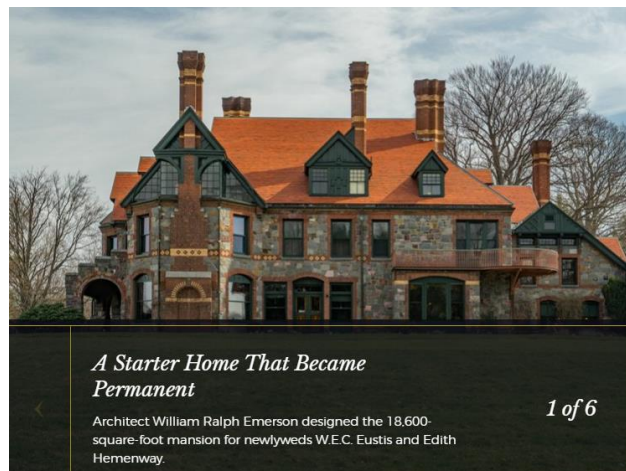
³ Google Maps 2020.

down the side of Hemenway Hill. “Why is that hill called “Hemenway Hill?” you ask... Well, the Hemenways owned land there too. And the Eustis and Hemenway families were inter-connected. OK, let’s back up a bit...

Who lived in “The Eustis Estate”?

“On November 7, 1876, twenty-five-year-old Edith Hemenway married twenty-six-year-old W.E.C. Eustis. A year later Edith gave birth to twin sons Frederic and Augustus. Shortly thereafter the couple began to build their family home on land given to them by Edith’s mother, Mary Hemenway. W.E.C. and Edith had a daughter, Mary, in 1885. The family lived on the estate for the rest of their lives.

Mrs. Hemenway owned the large estate to the south of this site, and W.E.C. Eustis’s family lived to the north. The Eustis mansion was the first building constructed on the property in 1878, and was designed by preeminent architect William Ralph Emerson. The property originally comprised more than 250 acres of fields, woodland, and gardens, with four original buildings built between 1878 and 1902.



Two subsequent Eustis generations lived at the estate until it was sold to Historic New England in 2012. It now comprises eighty acres of land, with many of the original outbuildings.”⁵ The Estate is open for

⁴ Three photos - <https://www.historicnewengland.org/property/eustis-estate-museum-study-center/>

⁵ Ibid.

tours (except during the present pandemic of course.) I haven't been there yet, but it was on my list of places to visit, and will be again when things settle down.

As noted, Edith was a Hemenway... another name we are familiar with. So, let's look at her family.

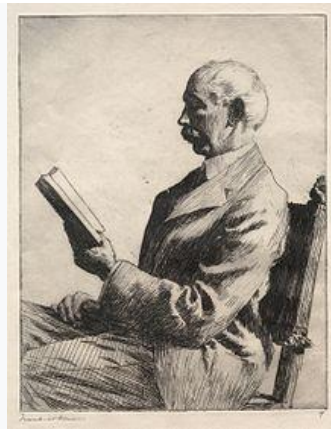
Her brother was Augustus Hemenway...

Augustus Hemenway

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Hemenway c1875



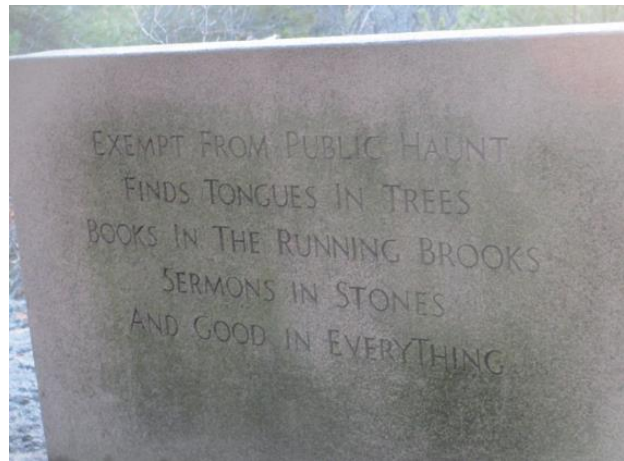
Augustus Hemenway, by [Frank Weston Benson](#), 1919

Augustus Hemenway (1853–1931) was a philanthropist and public servant in the latter part of the 19th century. He was educated at Harvard University, the son of Edward Augustus Holyoke Hemenway and Mary Tileston Hemenway. His siblings were Edith Hemenway Eustis [of the Eustis Estate, above.] (1851-1904), Charlotte Augusta (d. 1865), Alice, (d. in infancy), and Amy.

In 1878, he donated the Hemenway Gymnasium to Harvard and expanded it in 1895; he also served as an overseer of the university. He supported a number of other institutions in the Boston area, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Groton School, Metropolitan Park Commission, and MIT. In December, 1881, he married Harriet Lawrence, who became the cofounder of the initial Audubon Society; the Massachusetts Audubon Society; they had 5 children.

Hemenway served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1890 and 1891. Upon his death in 1931, it was said of him: "In the various interests ... thrust upon him he never failed to do his full share in attending to the work at hand."⁶

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustus_Hemenway



7

We know Augustus, specifically, because of his bench, which we see when we hike “Little Blue”. (He was also involved in Ponkapoag... Remember him, his name will come up again.)

We also know the family name from “Hemenway Hill”, and “Hemenway Hill Path”. So, the Hemenways were rich, and owned a lot of land around the Blue Hills... Where did they get their money?

Edward Augustus Holyoke Hemenway

Was the father of both Edith Hemenway Eustis and Augustus Hemenway. His story is rather interesting. Again, from Wikipedia...

“At the age of 13, he started working in Boston as a clerk in Robinson & Parkers’ dry goods store. He went to work as a supercargo for Benjamin Bangs, a wealthy shipowner and merchant in Boston, and for a few years was his agent and partner in South American trade. Hemenway became owner of extensive silver mines in Valparaíso (Chile), and lived there for eight years. He owned a township in Washington County, Maine, where pine was cut on his own land, sawed into lumber at his own sawmill in Machias, and carried to Cuba, where he owned a sugar plantation, or to Valparaíso on his own ships, which returned to Boston with copper and nitrate of soda. He spearheaded the commercial enterprise of the US with the west coast of South America. When he went to Chile, he established his own business by 1838. He established many large silver mines, reaping huge profits. He was extremely hard working and ensured that all details of his business were personally attended to by him, including the loading of ships.

This overwork resulted in a nervous breakdown in 1860; he spent 14 years in Dr. Buel's Sanitarium in Litchfield, Connecticut recuperating. Upon his recovery in late 1873, he wrote his wife that "I have been thoroughly cured of my insane desire to turn hundreds to thousands, thousands to millions and so on 'ad infinitum' and shall hope to live in future, not for myself only but for others, especially the poor and needy." He resumed his business affairs, traveling to Cuba in 1876, where he fell ill and subsequently died. At his death, he was one of the wealthiest men in America. In his will, he provided \$100,000 to be distributed among corporations organized for public charity, "distributing it, as much as possible, among those most worthy, avoiding all such as make two paupers where there was but one before, and those with any appearance of sham, where the managers derive pecuniary profit from the management. . ." His widow, Mary, continued with philanthropic works, including the saving of the Old South Meeting House of Boston as an historical landmark.”⁸

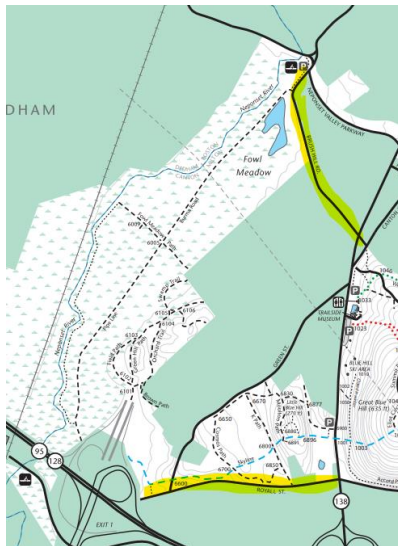
⁷ Both photos from <https://halperns.wordpress.com/2012/12/23/littlebluehill/>

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Augustus_Holyoke_Hemenway

How much land did the Hemenways own? Well, as Mrs. Hemenway gave the land for the Eustis Estate we know they owned that area east of what is now Rt. 138 and north of Great Blue. They owned more.

“[Augustus] Hemenway Jr. owned the land from Brush Hill Road in Milton to Royal Street in Canton and called it Hemenway Farm. This land includes the current Green Street, Green Lane and Hemenway Drive. The area has one of the little hills that is part of the Blue Hills. For this reason, most residents in the area belong to a neighborhood group called Friends of Little Blue.

As Hemenway’s family grew and new generations were born, parcels were given or sold modestly to various family members. Eventually a trust was formed that donated land for conservation, created covenants, documented shared rights of way, and added restrictive land-use language to deeds. These efforts continued through the generations and the language is still in place for many of the current property owners, most of whom have no relation to the Hemenways. The intention was to preserve wildlife, nature and open space — something all seemed to agree on.”⁹



Since it used to be his land, we can thus understand why the Hemenway bench is located on Little Blue...

As Paul Harvey would have said “And now you know...The rest of the story.” (Or at least more of it.)

Until next time...

Bob Vogel

⁹ <https://www.thecantoncitizen.com/2013/03/01/milton-canton-40b-part-1/>