



Massachusetts

New Bedford and Fairhaven Harbor Navigation Project

New Bedford and Fairhaven Harbor is located on the west side of Buzzards Bay at the mouth of the Acushnet River, in the communities of New Bedford and Fairhaven. Once the world's largest whaling port and a cotton manufacturing center, the harbor is now a major fishing port. A hurricane protection barrier, completed in 1966 across the lower harbor, protects the New Bedford-Fairhaven-Acushnet area from coastal storms (see page 46).

Initial work in the harbor during the late 1830s consisted of removing a shipwreck and sandbar. Modifications through 1906 entailed dredging an anchorage in the inner harbor above Palmer Island and an 18-foot-deep channel from Buzzards Bay to a point above the New Bedford-Fairhaven drawbridge that allowed access to the Fairhaven and New Bedford waterfronts.

The most recent work by the Corps of Engineers in New Bedford and Fairhaven, completed in 1939, consists of:

- A channel 30 feet deep, 350 feet wide, and five miles long, extending from Buzzards Bay to a point above the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge (U.S. Route 6). The channel has increased widths for anchorage and maneuvering purposes northwest of Palmer Island (along the New Bedford main waterfront) and above the bridge.
- A channel 25 feet deep, 200-250 feet wide and 1,050 feet long, extending from the lower maneuvering area along the New Bedford waterfront to the vicinity of Fish Island and the swing bridge.
- A channel along the Fairhaven waterfront extending northward from Pierce and Kilburn Wharf to a point 1,000 feet south of the old causeway pier, a total distance of about 3,700 feet. From Pierce and Kilburn Wharf to Old South Wharf, the channel is 15 feet deep and 150 feet wide. From Old South Wharf to a point 1,000 feet south of the old causeway pier, the channel is 10 feet deep and 150 feet wide.
- A 165-acre, triangular-shaped anchorage, 25 feet deep, along the east side of the main channel and north of Palmer Island.

