

Haystack

47° 38.3' N x 054° 04.2' W

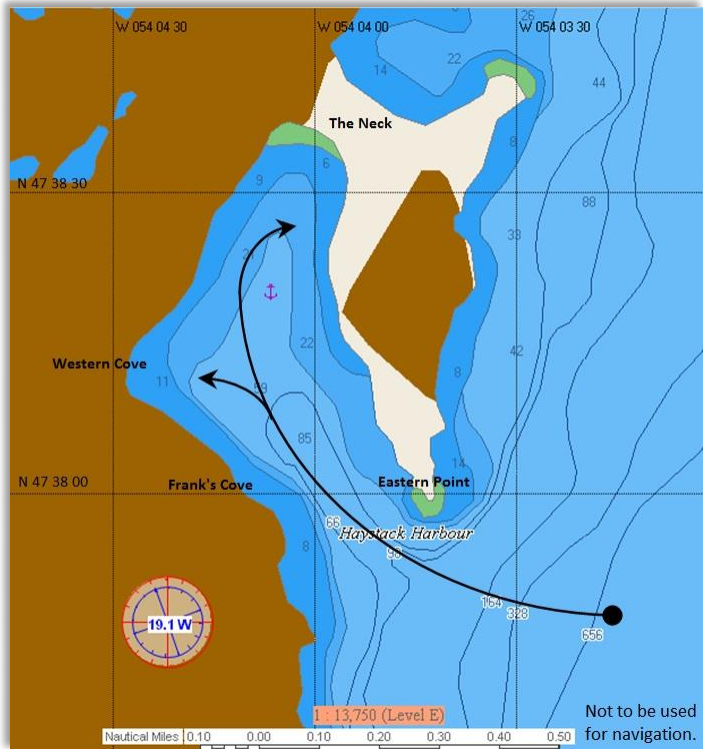
Charts # 4839, 4617

Situated on the Eastern Channel in the northern half of Placentia Bay's Long Island, Haystack's harbour provides sheltered anchorage free of unseen rocks or shoals.

Approach: Entering Haystack takes a vessel south of Eastern Point and thence into the harbour in a straight-forward manner. **Caution:** The approach to Haystack lies within the Placentia Bay vessel traffic management zone. Mariners destined for or departing from Haystack are advised to report their intentions to Placentia Traffic on VHF channel 12.

Docking/Anchoring: A community dock with a minimum depth of 8 feet along the dock face is available to Haystack visitors in the harbour's northeastern corner. Three community moorings, reported to be in good condition, are located in Western Cove and are also available to visitors. Western Cove also has several private docks. Permission should be sought prior to settling in at a private dock for anything longer than a temporary tie-up. Good holding ground may be found throughout the harbour; however, an anchorage location should be chosen with anticipated wind directions in mind.

History: Recorded land grants suggest that Haystack, named for haystack-shaped hills near the harbour, was occupied by the early 1800s. By the late 1800s Haystack had a population around 50 along



Source: BoatCruiser™ from [Navsim](#) with C-Map from [Jeppesen](#).



S/V *Staragan* at Allen's dock in Haystack's Western Cove with the Halfyard and Johnson summer homes seen ashore.

with its own church and school. The community was primarily sustained by the inshore cod fishery, the product of which was largely traded for needed goods with suppliers in Harbour Buffett on Long Island to the south. Haystack's population peaked at around 160 in the early 1900s but by the late 1950s only one year-round resident, Frank Drake, remained. Mr. Drake eventually, and most reluctantly, resettled to Arnold's Cove a dozen years later. His house, floated from Haystack, became his home in Arnold's Cove until his death in 2002. The house was subsequently acquired by the Town of Arnold's Cove and, in its present capacity as the Drake House Museum, it commemorates the resettlement episode in Newfoundland history and exemplifies the houses floated away in the hundreds from resettled communities throughout Placentia Bay. Although Mr. Drake was the only Haystack resident relocated under the government program that resettled thousands throughout the 1950s/60s, the circumstances of his resettlement and the present day use of his house have ensured Haystack's prominence in the painful and disruptive resettlement story.

Ashore: A short (½ km) trail originating in Western Cove leads east to Frank's Cove, another (1 km) leads from Western Cove northward to The Neck and thence (for an additional 2½ km) to Spencer's Cove in northwestern Long Island. In The Neck's eastern area two well-kept graveyards may be found with recently erected plaques listing each graveyard's known interrees. Here you'll find Frank Drake's grave with its modern gravestone prominent among weatherworn gravestones from an earlier period. A visit to Haystack is not complete without seeing the enigmatic lettering on the 'Haystack Rock'. Found at the water's edge near Frank's Cove, the Rock is under water when the tide is high but may be reached on foot and viewed at low tide. There is considerable agreement that the letters were deliberately made with some sort of metallic tool; however, several rival theories proffer competing explanations about who, when, and why the letters were made: one connects them with the voyages of St. Brendan, another holds the markings (known to former Haystack residents as the "Frenchman's Letter") date from the 17th and early 18th centuries when the French dominated Placentia Bay, yet another contends (with credible corroborative evidence) that the markings are the result of survey work conducted in the late 1700s by the British Admiralty.

Notes: Good cell phone connectivity was available throughout Haystack. Successful VHF ham radio contact was made with the Internet-linked repeater station VO1ARG (146.820MHz; -0.600MHz offset).



Western Cove at Haystack



Mysterious markings on the Haystack Rock

Further information on Haystack may be accessed through its location web card at <http://iprox.mi.mun.ca/PlacentiaBay.htm>. The assistance of former (now seasonal) Haystack resident Clayton Halfyard in the preparation of this report is gratefully acknowledged.

Jim Wyse aboard Staragan in 2013.