

Gloucester Times  
May 23, 2012

**Letter: Could Birdseye better house Endicott research?**

To the editor:

For a few years, my mom worked for Lamont Labs in Palisades N.Y., in the 1950s when I was a little kid.

It was operated by Columbia University. At the time, Lamont was much smaller than it is today — just a mansion without buildings of similar area to the marine industrial space of the Fort on Gloucester Harbor. Just southwest of the Tappan Zee Bridge, the complex sits on a cliff or palisade overlooking the Hudson River with a nearby dock for its research vessel. Tom Brokaw narrated a short documentary on Lamont, now known as Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory (link to <http://www.ldeo.columbia.edu/ldeo-video/player.php?name=main>).

Miriam, or to me, "Mom," was a scientific aide to the researchers and scientists that were involved in major projects such as seismic analysis, core boring the ocean floor (13,000 cores to date) and mapping the ocean's mountains.

One of the many world-class scientists at Lamont was Marie Tharp who, along with Bruce Heezen, created a historic ocean mapping from their sounding data (and data from Woods Hole) proving there was a mountainous ridge that went north and south around both sides of the Earth. The 20-year project was green-lighted and a version of the Atlantic and Pacific map can be found on Google Earth.

Perhaps on a future campus on Gloucester's Fort, a student of Endicott College will be the "new Marie or Bruce" who will make a discovery from the use of academic knowledge and apply it to benefit the marine industrial world. Taking knowledge and working it into an application that yields a world-class outcome has been achieved every once in a while here on Cape Ann — including the history achieved at the Birdseye building.

If the Birdseye building is restorable — it is amazing what architects can create as a retrofit nowadays — would Endicott want to lease it? Apparently, lease agreements is what Endicott College is contemplating for other nearby Fort properties.

Ironically, Mrs. Lamont had the family estate on the market and its market value was diminished because of the failure to get hotel zoning to convert the mansion. Then, in 1949, she gave unrestricted use of the estate to Dwight Eisenhower, who was president of Columbia University just prior to his U.S. presidency. Eisenhower quickly made assignments to get Lamont Labs rolling.

President Kennedy's inaugural address mentioned "oceanography," resulting in a building boom at Lamont in the early 1960s, and, in the late 1960s, the Dohertys made a substantial contribution.

In the meantime I called my Mom on Mothers Day and she OK'd what I wrote about Lamont Labs, adding "don't say anything about me."

Hmmmm.

ROBERT MCGLINCHEY