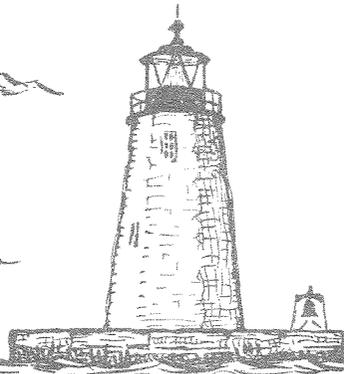


# The GREEN

# LIGHT



## BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

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No. 1

### THE JANUARY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING of THE POINT ASSOCIATION of NEWPORT

will be held at St. John's Guild Hall on Thursday, January 24th, at eight o'clock. The speaker will be Norris Hoyt, who will show pictures of his most recent cruise to Scandinavia. All of you who have heard him know what an entertaining speaker he is. We recommend him to all our members -- men, women and children -- a real escape from winter.

#### ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Point Association of Newport was held on October 25, 1962, at 7:30 at St. John's Guild Hall, with about one hundred present. The meeting was held early, to give more time for the square dancing which followed it.

The report of the secretary was read and approved.

The treasurer's report, showing a balance on hand of \$3,970.54, was read and approved.

Mr. M. Joseph Sullivan, the Beautification Chairman, said that so few adults had entered the window box contest that he felt the contest should be for children only.

Miss Ade De Bethune, Chairman, read six recommendations from the Advisory Committee:

(1) There should be a question box at the quarterly meetings so that everyone can say what he thinks, and ask for information. (Now let's hear from some of you who have unexpressed ideas.)

(2) A series of Point square dances should be held.

(3) Elect a standing publication committee for booklets, post cards, note paper, etc. The first booklet (published this summer) "Here and There on the Point" is doing well. Perhaps the next publication might be pictures of the houses, both exterior and interior. The plates of Edith Ballinger Price's post cards can be reprinted, and note paper with her small drawings would be a possibility.

(4) Improve the small beach at Blue Rocks  
(5) Seek professional advice on getting rid of the oil on the shore.

(6) Hold the Point Days more often, perhaps twice a year, but not so elaborate. (At this point groans from all the house owners.)

Here is a chance for the question box. Do let us hear your ideas.

To save time, the President, Mr. Harrington, read a resumé of the year, instead of having each committee report separately; his report will follow the report of the annual meeting.

Mr. Harold Arnold, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, then read their report:

Officers elected for two years:

President - Mr. William C. Harrington  
Second Vice-President - Miss Ann E.

Hagerty

Recording Secretary - Mrs. Gordon A. Bates

Nominating Committee elected for one year:

Mrs. Francis B. Carr, Jr.

Mr. John E. Benson

Miss Carrie Ericson

Nominating Committee:

Mrs. John H. Benson

Mrs. Frederick Morrissey

Mrs. Kenneth B. Stein

Mr. George Weaver

Mr. Harold Arnold, Chairman

The nominations were closed, and the secretary was instructed to cast one vote for the slate. The business meeting was

adjourned. Mr. Ken Van Westendorf began to teach us square dancing. His wife persuaded bashful men to get up and dance, and soon three sets were formed. Mr. Van Westendorf is an excellent caller, and audience and dancers alike had lots of fun. Cider and doughnuts made a welcome addition. Mrs. MacLeod was in charge of the arrangements.

#### Christmas on the Point.

We had a sad disappointment this year - vandals cut the wiring on our Christmas tree and smashed most of the light bulbs, so when we came to sing carols on Christmas Eve the tree was dark, and there was no tree lighting ceremony. But about twenty-five carollers, under the leadership of Robert Covell gathered in the shelter of a garage under a street light, and were much more comfortable at least. In spite of the usual cold north west wind we sang with joy at eight houses.

The decorations were beautiful, perhaps not so lavish as some years, but more original.

The prize winners were:

Most in the Spirit of Christmas - Mr. and Mrs.  
Howard Nagle

Most original - Mrs. William Hardy

Best display with least expenditure of money -  
Mr. and Mrs. George Weaver

Honorable mention: Mr. and Mrs. Francis P.  
Carr, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. John Scott, Mr.  
and Mrs. Joseph Zammer, Mr. and Mrs.  
William P. Harrington, and Mr. and Mrs.  
Gaston De Bethune

The judges were: Mrs. John T. Sheehan, Mrs.  
Edward P. Fagan, Lloyd Robson, and John  
Caswell

The committee in charge was: Mr. William  
Fullerton, Chairman, Mrs. Walter Curry,  
and Mrs. Harold Watson

#### The Green Light

With four issues a year, we try to have more articles in each one. Our circulation rose to 370 by the end of the year, one here and one there but we do have nearly sixty off island members. Mrs. Clifford Sherman writes our historical articles, and other members have volunteered articles on many more modern aspects. John and Ruth Benson are our illustrators now, both from the Rhode Island School of Design, and Ruth did the Christmas flyer in a few hours. The editorial staff remains the same: Esther Benson, Alice Fitzpatrick, Gladys MacLeod, and Esther Bates, editor-in-chief. So if there are errors and omissions, and if

you get bills just after you have paid your dues, blame it all on us, and be sure to tell us about it.

#### Membership

Dues are payable from annual meeting to annual meeting, from October to October, and the slips in the October Green Light mean that your dues are due - pardon us for mentioning this, but many members are confused about it. If you have not paid your current dues, from October 1962 to October 1963, this is the last number of the Green Light you will receive. But if you have paid your dues, forget it, and relax.

#### Square Dance

We are grateful to a group from the Middletown Club who attended the Point Association Square Dance on December 28th. The group included parents and children, all of them very skillful in executing some of the more intricate patterns. It was obvious that they also took real pleasure in their ability. This was an inspiration to the Pointers present. But it also shows that our group has something to learn and much to look forward to.

The next Point Association square dances will be held at the Poplar Street Guild Hall on Friday evenings January 25, February 22, and April 26. They will be held as a regular course of instruction. A small fee (50¢ a lesson or \$1.00 for the three) will serve towards paying for renting the hall (\$15.00). Any balance left over, if any, will be used to buy square dance records which will become the property of the Point Association.

Square dancing is an old time tradition very much worth preserving and adapting to today. All over the country, it is increasing in popularity but, to our knowledge, ours is still the only group in the City of Newport. Here is another instance where the Point Association is leading by action and example.

Mrs. William MacLeod  
Square Dance Committee

Report of the President for October, 1961  
to October, 1962

We had several major events this year, all most successful. First came the Christmas celebration with the Christmas decoration contest, and carolling. Next came Mrs. Eccles' delightful coffee hour to promote chances on Mrs. Wilbour's hooked rug. The garden and window box contest came early in July, followed by "Afternoon on the Point," well attended, thanks to our good publicity. The Clambake at Rose Island was a pleasant end to a busy summer.

The Quarterly General Membership Meetings were well attended, especially the birthday party for Edith Price, and we hope for larger audiences all the time. In January Mr. and Mrs. John E. Benson told very entertainingly of their winter in Rome. In April Mr. William Leys spoke on Redevelopment with support from Mr. William Corcoran. A party for Miss Price followed. In July Mr. Ponvert discussed Historic Zoning, and its relation to the Point.

The city has been most helpful. The new lighting at Bridge and Corridor Streets is a great improvement. Sand was dumped on the beach at Blue Rocks, and a strong seawall is being built at Battery Park. Before "Afternoon on the Point" the streets were thoroughly cleaned.

Committees: There is still no chairman of the nuisance committee, but two new committees have been formed. (1) The Advisory Committee - Chairman, Miss Ade De Bethune. (2) The Committee on the Development of the Point - Chairman, Admiral Eccles, to keep track of the proposed Jamestown Bridge, the access routes to the redevelopment area, the ferry, etc., and decide what they think is best for the Point.

Improvements: Flower boxes were again filled for the stores in the area. Flower tubs were planted with geraniums for Battery Park. Benches at the north and south ends of Battery Park have been restored and repaired. \$100 was voted to the Citizen's Scholarship Fund.

Suggested events for next year: (1) A work party in the spring to clean the oil from the Walnut Street beach, with a picnic, entertainment, etc. (2) Also in the Spring, a tour of the Point Gardens, smaller and more intimate than "Afternoon on the Point." (3) A Clambake. (4) A block party toward the end of summer.

## More Letters

Here are some of Edith Price's new activities at Virginia Beach, which we know are of interest to you all.

"... We've had wild wet windy weather, a lot of it - storm after storm. I never saw such waves! Sun is out at last. I've been gardening assiduously - 200 spring bulbs, also camellias, azaleas, potentillas and pittisporums! So I ought to be a bower of beauty next spring! The ground never freezes here, so you can keep on gardening all winter apparently. It isn't cold - about fifty degrees - just raw and lots of wind. In the storm my yard was covered with salt and about 1/4 inch of sand!..."

Another letter from Mrs. Briggs in California.

"... I noted that a Mr. Charles Child, 85 years young, attended the clambake. Is that by any chance the Mr. Child, who, with his wife had a little refreshment stand at the Blue Rocks? They sold candy, peanuts, pop corn, etc., kept the stand open most days in the summer and always on a band concert night. My late cousin, Mildred Lawton and I used to stop and chat with them when we went to the Park.

It's sad to think that, along with lots of other things, band concerts are a way of life that is gone. Grown-ups and children too enjoyed the lovely music of the concert: music which was sometimes classical, sometimes popular. It seemed that on concert nights the weather was just about perfect, millions of bright stars twinkling in the sky, and a large beautiful moon turning the water to silver.

Reading about the Training Station reminded me of the time I was 7 years old, and my sister was 5. We overheard the grown ups talking about eating frogs legs. In those days there was a swamp called Hayes' on the right hand side of Third Street, out near the Training Station. My sister and I took a large gunny sack and went out there to gather frogs so that we could find out what frogs legs tasted like. We got about 7 or 8, and the sack was pretty heavy, so we said we'd take turns carrying it home. I carried it as far as Du Fresnes' store or the corner of Chestnut and Third Streets, then I told my sister it was her turn. Just as she picked the sack up, a frog jumped up and hit her hand. She screamed, dropped the sack, and ran all the way home. The poor frogs were hopping all over Third

Street. We've had many a laugh over that memory and have often wondered whatever happened to the frogs...."

Also, Mr. Harrington had a letter from Lenore Spector, 4812 Fourteenth Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. On July 9, 1960, she attended a Bazaar given by "the Point Association of Newport," given on the lawn of some big mansion or church, she thinks outside of Newport. She would be very glad if anyone could tell her what organization gave this bazaar, as she would like to come again.

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### Goat Island -- Its Forts and Fortifications

In Newport Harbor, about 500 yards west of Long Wharf and the Point, lies an island whose history is as crowded with events as its length and breadth are now crowded with buildings. On May 22, 1658, it shared with Coasters Harbour Island the date of purchase from Caganaquant, Chief Sachem of the Narragansett Bay Indians, and together on May 1, 1673, they were finally deeded by the purchasers Benedict Arnold and John Greene to the town of Newport. Coasters Harbour Island became a haven for the poor, sick and mentally afflicted, and Goat Island became a fortress. The Indians had called it Nantee Sinunk, the meaning of which is lost in history, but it became Goat Island, which meaning is clear. Its green grassed, rocky edged acres were ideally situated just far enough from town for quartering those much maligned quadrupeds, but if this accounts for the island's name that fact too is lost in history. In 1667, Report of the Dutch Fleet on way to recover New York from the British, alarmed the Colonists. An earthwork was hastily thrown up on Goat Island and mounted with guns for protection of Newport. On May 17, 1701, the Rhode Island Assembly appropriated 150 pounds to fortify Rhode Island waters. Part of this appropriation was used to improve earthworks on Goat Island. On May 6, 1702 the Assembly passed an act directing that a fortification or battery be built on Goat Island at the expense of the Colony, sufficient to mount 12 ordnance or cannon. Goat Island was chosen over Castle Hill as the most suitable site for the defensive works. The fortification was erected and named FORT ANNE after the then reigning Queen of England. An attempt was made at this time to homestead the island. Three and one half acres were reserved for the existing fort in the center of the island and one half acre to the south of it for further possible fortification. The remaining six acres were divided into 48 plots. Grants were offered at three shillings per share plus "one piece of eight" for each grant for cost of survey. Shares were to be drawn by lot, choice of shares to the first buyers. Buildings to be "so low as not to interfere with gunfire from the fort." Despite this attractive offer the plan failed and Goat Island reverted back to the City of Newport.

In 1723 two Pirate Ships, "Ranger" and "Fortune", were captured by British ship "Greyhound." The crew was brought to Newport and tried. Twenty-six of the pirates were convicted on July 19, 1723, and hanged at Gravelly Point (now the City Yard). They were buried between ebb and flow at the north end of Goat Island. On June 10, 1727, Rhode Island requested His Majesty George II to supply 50 cannon for which Fort Anne was designed. Some of the guns were supplied. The work on the fort was completed about 1735 and though not fully armed, had cost about 10,000 pounds. Three years later the name it had borne through two reigns was changed to Fort George.

In 1739 on declaration of war between England and Spain the Assembly of Rhode Island ordered Fort George repaired and furnished with guns and ammunition without delay, and by 1740 the garrison at Fort George consisted of 52 men and authority for 43 additional men. In 1744 Fort George had 12 cannon and by 1746 the fort had battery of 25 twenty-four pounders and 12 eighteen pound guns. The cost was covered by a tax of \$5,000 levied on the People of the Colony. By 1749 Fort George had 25 guns in lower battery and 12 cannon on platforms. During the late summer of 1760 four pirates were tried at Newport, two of them were convicted and hanged at Easton's Beach, and buried on Goat Island.

In 1764 the first act of open resistance to British rule occurred. A boat crew of the British schooner St. John attempted to carry off an alleged deserter from Newport. The townspeople resisted, Fort George was seized, its guns were turned on the Admiral's ship Squirrel, and eight shots were fired from the fort. The citizens of Newport rebelled again in 1769. The British ship Liberty had seized a brig on suspicion of evading Naviga-

tion Laws. The captain and crew were ordered to come ashore leaving only the Executive Officer aboard. The Liberty was seized, run ashore on Gravelly Point, dismantled and scuttled. Despite a reward of 100 pounds offered by the Revenue Office at Boston for arrest and conviction of the participants, no arrest was ever made. On July 24, 1869, the tide raised the Liberty, which drifted to Goat Island and grounded near the burial place of the pirates. One week later it caught fire during a severe thunder and lightning storm and burned there for several days until entirely consumed.

At the outbreak of the Revolution, the fort was occupied by American forces and was reconstructed and named FORT LIBERTY. At this time the fort mounted 25 guns, eighteen and twenty-four pounders. The British occupied Newport and the fort at Goat Island in 1777 and it resumed the old name of FORT GEORGE. In July 1778 twelve ships of the French fleet entered Newport Harbor to cooperate with the inland American forces. They were heavily bombarded from British held Fort George, and suffering considerable damage were forced to retreat. Fort George was evacuated by the British in 1779, reoccupied by American troops, and renamed FORT LIBERTY. In their hasty departure the British were forced to scuttle the Flora dockside at Goat Island, where it remained till the end of the war. It was raised by Americans and sent to sea. One of her guns is now on the grounds of the Newport Historical Society.

Fort Liberty had been dismantled after the Revolution and was rapidly falling into decay. By act of the Assembly of Rhode Island October 4, 1784, the fortification was armed, the barracks repaired and the fort given the name FORT WASHINGTON after the Commander in Chief of the American Army. On May 29, 1790, Fort Washington fired the first salute announcing that Rhode Island had finally joined the Union of Thirteen United States by adoption of the Federal Constitution. In 1794 the Congress of the U. S. made appropriation for strengthening fortifications. The money appropriated for fortification in Newport Harbor was used at Fort Washington. A fort, citadel and air furnace were erected. On January 18, 1796, the Secretary of War reported to the U. S. Senate its completion. He recommended further expenditure to render defense completed at an estimated \$8,000. At this time, 1796, the fortification was christened FORT WALCOTT to honor the services of Connecticut's War Governor Oliver Walcott, and as a compliment to his son, Oliver Walcott, who was Secretary of the Treasury of the U. S. The former name of Fort Washington was transferred to a fort on the Potomac River opposite Mt. Vernon.

On April 16, 1799, Goat Island was legally turned over to the Government of the United States by the town of Newport for a consideration of \$1,500.00. From meagre details it is evident that the first troops to garrison Fort Adams which was dedicated on July 4, 1799, were a company of Artillerists and Engineers from Fort Walcott under command of Captain John Henry. During the Civil War Goat Island was occupied by the Naval Academy. The frigates CONSTITUTION and SANTEE were moored near shore for training purposes. The island became a favorite spot for outings and picnics.

On July 29, 1869, the occupation of Goat Island by the Navy Department was authorized by the Secretary of War and during the summer of that year the Torpedo Station was established. The disappearance of Fort Walcott was gradual, its position taken over by new buildings of the Torpedo Station. It was however shown on the 1876 Atlas of Newport. A pledge of secrecy was exacted from officers and an oath of secrecy from civilian employees in connection with work carried on at the Station. Once again Goat Island became, in effect, a fortress island. The manufacture of torpedoes continued through the Spanish American War and the two World Wars, and the Torpedo Station became an important part of Newport's growth and economy. Goat Island is once again the property of the City of Newport. It may some day become an actual arm of the Point. What future events are waiting in the wings? It will be interesting to see what lies in store for Goat Island.

References: A Paper on Goat Island by the late Horace S. Brown  
Pamphlet "U. S. Naval Torpedo Station, Newport, R. I." by  
Captain Lynch, U.S.N.