

The GREEN

LIGHT



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JULY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The July general membership meeting of the Point Association will be held on July 23rd, Thursday, on Mrs. William MacLeod's lawn at 78 Washington Street. The July meetings have always been small, and the Board decided to try an outdoor meeting in a beautiful garden overlooking the water, for an innovation. **EVERYONE PLEASE BRING SOMETHING TO SIT ON!** There will be a short business meeting where three things have to be voted on:

1. The change in the By-laws.
2. Where to meet for the rest of the year.
3. What to do about street cleaning.

After this, we plan to have some folk singing by some of our young enthusiasts. Anyone who feels energetic can swim, and we can all enjoy the sunset.

April General Membership Meeting

The April General Membership Meeting of the Point Association was held at Mumford School on April 23rd, with about fifty members present. The secretary's report was read and approved.

Mrs. Francis Carr, Jr., has been appointed treasurer, to take the place of Mr. Dunn, who had to retire because of his health. Her report showing a balance on hand of \$3,954.87, was read and approved.

Mr. Sullivan reported that he had bought three beech trees, and one linden tree for \$50.00, as decided by the Board at their April meeting. Two beech and the linden are planted at Battery Park, and one beech at Ellery Park.

The Board recommended that the Point Association give \$100 to Dollars for Scholars, and a letter was read from Elizabeth Carter at Salve Regina, thanking

us for her scholarship last year. A motion to give the money was made, and carried unanimously.

The ever present question of street cleaning was then discussed, as many people were not satisfied with the cleaning done last summer. (See next page.)

A letter was written to the City Manager about repairing the stone work in the center of the wall at Battery Park, and also installing a bubbler at the park.

A change in the by-laws was suggested so that the terms of the president and the recording secretary do not expire in the same year -- this means changing the years that the recording and the corresponding secretaries are elected. The president, the 2nd vice president, and the corresponding secretary will be elected in even years,

and the 1st vice president, the recording secretary and the treasurer in uneven years. Mrs. Eccles made a motion the by-laws be so changed, the motion was seconded from the floor, and so voted.

There was nothing definite on a place to meet. Most members think the Little Shop is too expensive, and it was finally decided that the building committee -- Mr. Duffy chairman, Mr. Lewis, Weaver, Dunn, Mrs. Benson, and Mr. Harrington ex officio, meet with St. John's vestry, and Father Turnbull, to discuss the Point Association using the Guild Hall more often, and paying a definite sum each year.

After the business meeting, King Covell showed slides of the clambakes, and also beautiful views of the bay, and of especially brilliant sunsets, explaining how he got some of the unusual effects.

The Concentric Teens LH girls served delicious cookies and coffee with the help of Mrs. Duffy.

Horticultural Notes

The Board decided this year to plant a few more trees in Battery Park, instead of putting more maples around on the streets, and the three beeches (two at Battery Park, one at Ellery Park) and the linden tree at Battery Park, all look flourishing in spite of the drought. We hope it may discourage the ball players in the Park. Also the tubs of red geraniums are between the benches near the street, and blooming away. The maple trees planted over the Point are getting big, and even the ones the boys have peeled or broken look surprisingly well. The small gardens are handsome this year, and next year we may be able to have our spring garden tour, provided the winter is auspicious. We plan to show the slides of gardens taken by King Covell, with Miss Marion Galvin's help, at the fall meeting, to spur the horticulturists on to fresh enthusiasm.

The Guild Hall

The Point Association may use St. John's Guild Hall for as many as twelve meetings a year, if they pay \$220, the amount of the tax on the hall, and also pay \$5 at each meeting for the custodian. If we have four meetings a year as usual, this makes the cost \$60 a meeting. The

Board feels this is high, compared to the \$10 we pay to go to the Mumford School, and they recommend the meetings be held at Mumford for the rest of this year at least.

Street Cleaning

Many people feel that the street and sidewalk cleaning last summer was not satisfactory, and various possibilities for improving it were discussed. Admiral Eccles, who supervised a boy cleaning Battery Park last summer, thinks the best way would be to get five or six adults to divide the Point area, and supervise children doing the work! Where would we find so many dedicated people? Another suggestion was to get groups to clean Washington Street and the brows on Saturday morning. Publicity in the News and the Green Light might help? The Board, at their May meeting, felt that we should try, for another summer, paying a man part time to clean the whole area. This question will be discussed at the July meeting, so please be ready with your ideas.

Flag Poles and Lightning

The flag poles on Washington Street certainly attract lightning; last fall King Covell's pole was shattered, and this June the one at Battery Park was hit. The lightning came down it in a spiral, and for a few days we had an enormous barber pole. Now it is all razed, and many people are saying how much they miss it, and thinking of ways to get a new one. Mr. Harrington has had several good suggestions, and if anyone thinks of any plan, please call him about it. Someone will donate stainless steel halyards if we get a pole. And we've had several volunteers who will be sure the flag gets up and down at the proper time.

Old Port Day -- August 22nd

This year we are once more having an Oldport Day, and it seems an auspicious year to go back to it. Washington Street will be roped off, and the festivities will start at 12 with a parade from the Old Court House, down Long Wharf, and up Washington Street to

Battery Park. The Coggeshall Continentals, the Mariners, and the Newport Artillery Company are all marching with various units in costume, all led by the Town Crier. The Newport Artillery Company, with their wives and children, will all be in costume, and will fire their cannon every half hour at Battery Park, as this is the 150th anniversary of their defense of Fort Greene. There will be exhibition square dances on Washington Street, strolling minstrels, 4H girls selling hand made gifts, chamber music in the Covell House, pony rides behind St. John's church, a sidewalk display of paintings from the exhibition of the Women's Division of the Newport County Chamber of Commerce, a snack bar at Battery Park, and at St. John's lawn a sale of antiques, and a lawn party. At four o'clock there will be the grand costume parade, with prizes. As a grand finale, the Naval Station Band will give a band concert from 5 to 6 at Battery Park. Seven houses will be open, as also the 259 year old John Steven's shop. Four of these houses are recent restorations.

The committee is: Publicity - Mrs. James Douglas
 Parade - James Douglas
 Open Houses - Mrs. Howard Nagle
 Treasurer - Mrs. Francis Carr, Jr.
 Sale of Antiques - Mr. John Allan
 Coordinator - Mr. William Harrington
 General Chairman - Mrs. Gordon Bates

Assistance on any of these committees will be most welcome.

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REMINISCING

As I look back on our summers on the Point spent at our grandmother's house (later our aunt's) it seems like a magic time, all rowing, swimming and sailing. As soon as school stopped, down we came, and stayed until school started again. When we were small, my aunt and mother took the four of us rowing all over the bay, even as far as Agassiz' cove, and the Douglas estate, where we used to picnic. We also went around Coasters Island and under the bridge, and picnicked at Coddington Cove, and Bishop's Rock where there were rats. Whatever happened to Bishop's Rock? Our favorite expedition was to call on the lighthouse keepers, some of whom did not always appreciate our visits, but Mr. and Mrs. Shoneman at Goat Island light always welcomed us, and later we were allowed to row out there alone. We'd fish under the piles of the pier where the water was a clear cool green, with small sponge growths growing way down, and watch the fish investigating our bait. My aunt each year had permission to land on Rose Island, with small children, to pick up driftwood and shells on the beach, and we made the most of that privilege. I can still remember our fright when my mother once stepped from the high pier on the south side of Rose Island, into the water instead of the boat.

We often rowed over to Jamestown to go to Friends meeting in the old meeting house where George Fox once preached. We pulled up the boat in Potter's cove, and then walked up a long, hot, dusty lane to the meeting house on the hill, getting hotter and dustier at each step. I've often wondered since why we were allowed in that cool and placid meeting.

On week day picnics we went berry picking, and one summer we picked bayberries for my aunt, who wanted to make real bayberry candles in an old candle mold. We picked bushels and bushels and bushels, and when the berries were boiled, there would be a thin layer of wax on the surface, and I don't even remember that it had the delicious aroma that the modern bayberry candles have.

We made expeditions to Indian Avenue to pick mushrooms, and while we fixed them at home, a German band played outside -- probably only once, but that's the time I remember. Once a year my grandmother would hire one of those high four-seated surreys pulled by two horses, and we'd all go around the Ocean Drive -- we children were embarrassed the whole way.

We learned to swim early so that we did not need to wear life preservers, and were most scornful of the children who swam with one foot on the bottom, and held noses to duck under water. The boys paddled around on rafts, or borrowed boats to paddle in -- "Git outa that boat" was a common cry. Crabbing was fun, and we often fished with mussels too, and you should have seen my mother the day she caught an eel and had to take it off the hook herself. My first fish was a very small choggy. I took it up to my grandmother proudly, and said, "Now I'll catch fish for you all this summer."

Soon we started sailing, and our rowing trips were over.

THE JAMESTOWN FERRIES -- Part II

After the building of the "Beaver Tail" in 1896, little change was made in the ferry operation for another quarter century or more. The period was one when horse-drawn vehicles still predominated. Travel still was local: road connections to the west existed but were as yet little used. Year after year the "Conanicut" ran in summer between Newport and Jamestown and was laid up in winter; the "Beaver Tail" ran on the west ferry in summer and took the place of the "Conanicut" on the east ferry for the rest of the year.

In the days of steamboat travel by water, rival or opposition lines sprang up wherever business was good and there seemed a possibility of profits by disputing the monopoly of an established line. On the Hudson River, such opposition lines operated, off and on, for many years, and such opposition appeared also on Chesapeake Bay, Long Island Sound, the "down-east" runs from Boston to the coast of Maine, and elsewhere. But an opposition ferry line was quite another matter. Few were attempted, outside of New York. But Narragansett Bay had one. Stillman Saunders built four boats in all and ran a ferry of his own in opposition to the Jamestown and Newport Ferry Company, on both sides of Conanicut Island, for several years just prior to World War I. His boats were the "J. A. Saunders" 1902, "West Side" 1904, "Narragansett" 1905, and "Newport." All were built at Saundertown, all had wood hulls, and all were driven by screw propellers. The first two were the smallest, and they ran for the most part on the west ferry. The "Narragansett" and the "Newport" ran on the east ferry. The "Newport" carried her two pilot houses on the top deck; an arrangement not repeated until the building of the "Governor Carr" in 1927. The Saunders ferry was sold to the original ferry company about 1914. The "Narragansett" and the "J. A. Saunders" were taken over by the old ferry and the other two boats were sold: the "Newport" went to Nova Scotia, to run on a short local ferry, where she continued for about twenty years; the "West Side" went into operation at the west end of Long Island Sound, but her years of service there were said to be short. In 1917, after our entrance into World War I, the "Narragansett" was sold to the Government, at the time of the first major expansion of the Torpedo Station, and she ran back and forth across Newport harbor for another twenty years or until replaced by a new diesel ferry, the "Aquidneck," built late in the 1930's. The "Narragansett" was laid up for several years thereafter but was broken up during or shortly after World War II.

The next boat acquired for the ferry was the "Jamestown" (II). She had been built in 1884 for the Newburgh-Fishkill ferry on the Hudson and was an iron-hull side-wheel boat with a steeple compound beam engine. She was sold by the Newburgh ferry about 1915 and ran for several years thereafter out of Bridgeport, Connecticut. In 1923 she was purchased as an addition to the Jamestown ferry. Her original name was "Fishkill-on-Hudson"; later she became "Huguenot" and still later "Jamestown." She had a greater car-carrying capacity than the "Conanicut" and "Beaver Tail" combined, and her purchase was intended as a means for providing more space for cars than had previously been available on the west ferry at the time when the number of cars built and operated first began to increase rapidly. Also, the function of the ferry as a link in a through route between New York and Cape Cod, especially in summer, was recognized seriously first at this time. The "Jamestown" operated chiefly on the west ferry but occasionally was called to substitute for one of the smaller boats on the

east ferry. She was equipped with an oil-burning system early in the 1930's and was the first ferryboat in these waters to use oil as fuel. During the Depression years she saw less service, being laid up for the most part at East Jamestown at the old dock north of the ferry slip, opposite the foot of Narragansett Avenue. In June 1938, after being tied up alongside the west ferry slip, she was sold, towed to Fall River, and was there broken up.

In 1927 a new boat was built for the company: this was the "Governor Carr," designed by the late Albert F. Haas of Newport and built at Quincy, Massachusetts. She had a steel hull and was of three-deck design; the main deck being planned wholly for the carrying of cars save for the middle section where the smoke stack and the stairways to the upper deck were placed. The second deck, with cabin and outer deck space, was for the passengers, and on the top deck were the pilot houses. The engine and boiler had come from the Arthur Curtiss James' yacht "Aloha" which had been converted to diesel power a few years earlier. She was launched, nearly complete, on February 11, 1927, and arrived here under her own power on February 18th. She replaced the "Conanicut" on the east ferry, on which run she continued for nearly thirty years -- except for periods when withdrawn for painting and general maintenance work -- not being retired until the mid-1950's when the State took over the ferry system. Structurally she was still in good condition, but her height on the main deck, about 12 feet, adequate when she was built, was not enough to admit the moving vans and trucks that had come to be built in more recent years. For this and other reasons, she was laid up for several years, finally at the old Fort Adams wharf. She was sold about 1958 and was towed to Providence, where her superstructure was destroyed by fire in October 1961: her hull, sunk at a wharf in Providence harbor, still exists. Mention should be made of her being blown ashore, north of the town beach and below Taylor's Point in the first of the recent series of hurricanes in September 1938. Two months and more later, after a new temporary launching ways had been built under her, she was successfully relaunched and, after minor repairs, but back into service. It was during that same storm that the "Hammonton" was caught on the spile tops in the west ferry slip and only released after considerable work had been done, and the "Beaver Tail" ended her career by being beached and badly broken on the east shore of the island near Conanicut Park.

One last sidewheeler, a small boat with a wood hull and beam engine, saw brief service on the Jamestown ferry: this was the "Mohican," originally the "Fairhaven," built in 1896 to run across the harbor between New Bedford and Fairhaven. She had been sold about 1920 to run between New London and Groton, and had been renamed at that time. She was sold in July 1929 to the Jamestown ferry and was brought here in August to run with the "Jamestown" on the west ferry. Being of limited capacity, she was used on that run only for a short time. After being laid up at Jamestown for two to three years, she was dismantled there in January 1934. Her hull was sold and was used that summer as a floating headquarters for a fishing company at Greenport, Long Island. In December of the same year, when under tow for Newport, she broke adrift and went ashore on the west side of Block Island where the hull broke up.

The purchase of two more steam ferryboats, the "Hammonton" and the "Wildwood," together with the short-term ownership and operation of the diesel-electric boat "Jamestown" (III), is the last phase of operations under the old company management. That, and the retirement of all the older boats at the time of the acquisition of the two present boats, now named "Jamestown" and "Newport," along with the closing of the west ferry at the time of the completion of the Jamestown bridge, may be described at a later time.

William King Covell