

The GREEN

LIGHT



BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

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No. 3

A SPECIAL MEETING of the Executive Committee and members of the Fleet Landing Committee met with Mr. Wm. W. Corcoran, legal counsel, at 16 Battery St. on the evening of Feb. 20th.

Following some discussion of zoning laws, etc., Mr. Corcoran reported on additional facts regarding the so-called "Storer Park" area of the Section Base. Though the land had been acquired by the City as a gift through the efforts of Miss Agnes Storer and others, it was sold to the Navy for \$6500 in 1941 for Government use. The Navy was apparently not told of the intended use of the north end of the tract for a park, although the City was committed to such use by the intention of the gift.

Mr. Corcoran exhibited aerial views of the area and a plat from Land Evidence records.

There is a possibility that an equity action might be brought, to force the City to impress its trust.

However, the entire area is now being eyed by the State, and the Point Ass'n special committee is keeping in touch with all developments.

All agreed that a well-planned marina with architecturally suitable surroundings and access by way of Fourth St. would be the most acceptable use for the area - the north end to be retained as a small park.

MARCH BOARD MEETING: The Executive Committee met on the evening of March 9 at 16 Battery Street.

Minutes of the Special Meeting were read and approved. The Treasurer's report showed a total balance of \$3796.89, which still includes the Homeland grant, not yet decided upon.

Nuisance Inspector: Voted: to again write to the Council, urging reinstatement of the post and pointing out specific duties.

Section Base: Voted: to send letters to Senators Pell and Pastore, Gov. Notte, Rep. St. Germain and Senator Savage, outlining the aims of the Point Ass'n, the potentialities of the Point, and the importance of proper waterfront development.

Dog Ordinance: Voted: to write to the City Manager expressing our gratification at the directive for enforcement, but noting that we are impatiently awaiting effective implementation of the order.

The resignation of Mrs. W.F. Kitts as Refreshment Chairman was accepted with regret.

COMPLAINTS: At present, all complaints on nuisances should be made in writing to Mr. Wm. C. Harrington 96 Third St. Communications are confidential. A permanent chairman is being sought, but Dr. Nemt-zow is hard to replace.

IN ACCORDANCE with the vote of the Executive Committee, the Chairman of the Special Committee prepared the following letter, sent by the President to the officials specified. The letters were accompanied by a descriptive map of the Point:

"The purpose of this letter is to acquaint you with a particular section in the City of Newport - THE POINT. Bounded on the west by Narragansett Bay along Washington St., it stretches from Long Wharf to the Naval Hospital, with Farewell St. to the east.

"Save for Long Wharf, the Fleet Landing and the Section Base, no commercial development has taken place here. Two public piers and three cement ramps, maintained by the City, extend into the Bay from Washington Street. Clean swimming is available to our children, and any small boat-on-a-trailer, whether from Rhode Island or Massachusetts, can be launched from the ramps.

"The cultural heritage of this section is well known, as the Colonial houses on Washington Street have long been a tourist attraction. Thus the Point is a unique part of the City, with its historic interest, its nearness to the water, and its unspoiled character.

"In 1955, the residents here formed The Point Association for the purpose of protecting and developing the area. In the succeeding years the Association, now numbering some 450 members, has accomplished many projects. Understandably, we are vitally interested in the future of the Section Base and Fleet Landing at the south end of Washington St. Commercial development of a suitable kind will not destroy the Point and its potentialities. We ask that you will use your influence in helping us to maintain the character of the Point, which is such an asset to the entire City."

++++
FLY A FIFTY-STAR FLAG !
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THE CURRENT ISSUE of House Beautiful carries an article on Georgetown, Washington D.C. that all who are interested in the future of the Point would do well to read. The comparison may at first seem far-fetched - but the situation of the Point as a village-within-a-city, with its well-defined boundaries, its historic associations, its many interesting houses and its combination of urban living with privacy and charm, is not unlike that of Georgetown. And it has a great asset which the other lacks - Narragansett Bay at its door.

Georgetown now, as we all know, is a most exclusive region - but it began as a really blighted area, and only the courage and initiative of a few pioneers in the '30's started it on its upward course. The initial plunge was made by people of very modest circumstances; only later, as the movement progressed and the example became known, were wealthy home-seekers attracted.

That same sort of courage, initiative - and faith in the great potentialities of the Point, might well produce a similar result here beside the harbor.

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"GOOD FRIDAY" a Passion Play by John Masefield, will be presented in St. John's Church on the evenings of March 24th and 25th.
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Interesting to note that Newport is still a whaling city !

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"I am convinced myself that things cannot be expected to 'turn up' of themselves. We must, in a measure, assist them to turn up."
-Charles Dickens
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BABY-BLANKETS
Hand Knit to Order
Mary B. Perry
16 Battery St. VI 7-3341
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Don't throw papers down -
pick them up !

MARY ROBINSON HUNTER spent her childhood in the Robinson house and much of her married life in the Hunter house. The letters from which the following excerpts are taken were written from the Hunter house and give us a glimpse of the life there 130 years ago. They were directed to her son Charles, a nineteen-year-old Midshipman in the U.S. Navy.

Midshipman Charles Hunter, U.S. Frigate Potomac, Pacific Ocean.

Newport, October 29, 1831

. . . You have been absent nearly three months & I am desirous that in some way or other you should hear from your friends at home at least once a month. . . This I shall send by the ship that was on the stocks at the shipyard (Crandall's) when you left. She goes to the Pacific on a whaling voyage & there is a chance of your receiving it. She is named the John Coggeshall. . . Miss Stewart (sic: Jane Stuart, daughter of Gilbert, then living next door at the present Benson house) has persuaded Tom to sit for his portrait & she has succeeded in taking a striking likeness. She intends to exhibit it in N. York in her gallery there when she goes to pass the winter. . . (This portrait now hangs in the Historical Society.) (Charles did not receive the above letter for more than a year - December 2, 1832, by the brig Amanda out of Rio Janeiro)

Newport, November 12, 1831

. . . Newport seems to be quite looking up, and several rich people from Boston are erecting cottages for the warm season & many strangers intend staying here through the winter. . . Mr. Goddard (Thomas) finished a beautiful boat for Mr. Toulmin for which he paid him \$220. Mr. G. finding no other way of getting her to N. York got two men to go with him and carried her there himself. They were two nights on the water and had very fine weather. He came back in the Chancellor. Quite a Quixotic expedition for a man past seventy, was it not? . . .

(This letter was more than two years on the way: received May 31, 1833)

Newport, December 12, 1832

. . . I wish you ^{could} have witnessed Kate's delight (Charles' 11-year-old sister) on opening the box containing your valuable present - all of us were assembled in the little kitchen when Tom brought it from the steamboat - and all with equal interest and delight explored the different parts and contents. The ivory cutters marked with the familiar names of brother and sisters - the fragrant nutmegs in their native shells, tucked in by your hand, coming so far to us - the old teaspoon which I gave you sent back by your care - all "so much like Charley" resounded from every mouth. It (a gold thimble?) now stands on Eliza's worktable under the glass in the back parlour, where Kate takes great pains to direct the attention of every visitor to "Charles' present".

. . . We practice now the strictest economy. . . your Father and myself take comfort together - have a little fire in the little parlour, which we use as a kitchen by day, a lodging room at night, having our bed turned up under a curtain, which occupies very little room. You know our bedchamber was cold and dreary and as the family was small and no servant in the way, we like the arrangement much. . ."

(Having recently lost a younger son, Mrs. Hunter was especially solicitous, and her letters are filled with tender and anxious advice to the young midshipman, as well as much family news. Sitting by her "little fire" in the chill of the big house, she could hear the ring of hammers from the Crandall shipyard next door. One letter was sent out by the Audley Clarke, a Crandall whaler which finished her days at the hands of the Chinese during the California gold rush of 1849. . . Our thanks to Mrs. Bolhouse and The Historical Society for these excerpts.)

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