

# The GREEN

# LIGHT



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

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No. 9

Today, September 19, as we sit at the typewriter preparing this stencil, Hurricane Esther is moving relentlessly toward the Virginia Capes. By the time our readers receive this little sheet, the Point may either be heaving a sigh of relief that we got no more than a stiff Equinoctial blow -- or we may be digging out from under the devastation of a major hurricane comparable to the 1938. Shocking and disturbing world events may be overshadowed by our own disaster.

In any case, the small doings chronicled in The Green Light may seem very unimportant indeed.

However - today the sun shines, the harbor is blue and beautiful, our flower-boxes at Battery Park still make a brave showing of color, and September shows us a gentle face. At this moment we can even forget the unexpected and vicious little storm of the 15th, which flung the Nunes' fine catboat on the Blue Rocks, and reminded us all too forcibly that this is the hurricane season. The brows are pretty well filled with boats, now, as prudent owners seek to outwit the possibilities of Esther's visit.

So we apologize in advance, in case our slender offering this month might come as a very flat anti-climax to larger happenings.

### SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING:

The Executive Committee met on the evening of September 14 at 16 Battery Street.

For the most part, there was general discussion of plans for the Annual Membership Meeting in October, pleasure over the many houses being painted and improved around the Point, gratification over the election of two men to City offices who have a definite connection with and interest in the Point, and hope that the new Dog Constable will be able to correct some of the dangerous conditions arising from the number of stray dogs in the area.

**DOG CONSTABLE:** The new appointee is Joseph Sanfilippo of 37½ Elm Street, VI 7-6316.

Mr. Sanfilippo is approaching his job in a conscientious and informed manner, and as a resident of the Point should be especially well acquainted with the problems of the area, though of course his duties include surveillance of the entire city.

A note should be made of his telephone number. Enforcement of the dog ordinance is not intended to work hardship upon conscientious dog owners, but to curb stray, unlicensed, neglected animals.

BEAUTIFICATION;

We must confess that we had grave doubts of the survival of the flower-boxes in Battery Park, what with dogs, vandals, and small children - but they are still reasonably intact, and have added a very pretty touch. We were interested to see that in the village of Wakefield, R.I., near which we have been vacationing, both sides of the main street are lined with flower tubs at intervals of about fifteen feet. There must be fifty or sixty of these tubs, all in good condition and adding much to the appearance of the street.

The Annual Meeting will probably be on October 26 - and it is to be hoped that a great many of our nearly 400 members will be there. We shall be electing a Treasurer, a First Vice-President, and a Corresponding Secretary. It would be pleasant if members brought friends who might be interested in joining, and if Old Timers got together to swap yarns of earlier days. The Point Association is a community improvement organization in which every Pointer should participate. It is not a club nor a clique. Let's all pull together!

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ANNIE LATHROP BACHELLER remembers when street peddlers were to be seen (and heard) all over the Point -

Horse radish was in five-gallon firkins with bail handles. It was measured out into your own receptacle. Mr. Peckham, who lived on Poplar Street, and later Will Twomey, sold it. The horse radish plant with leaves like plantain grew along the railroad track. The roots were scraped, ground, and vinegar was added to preserve it.

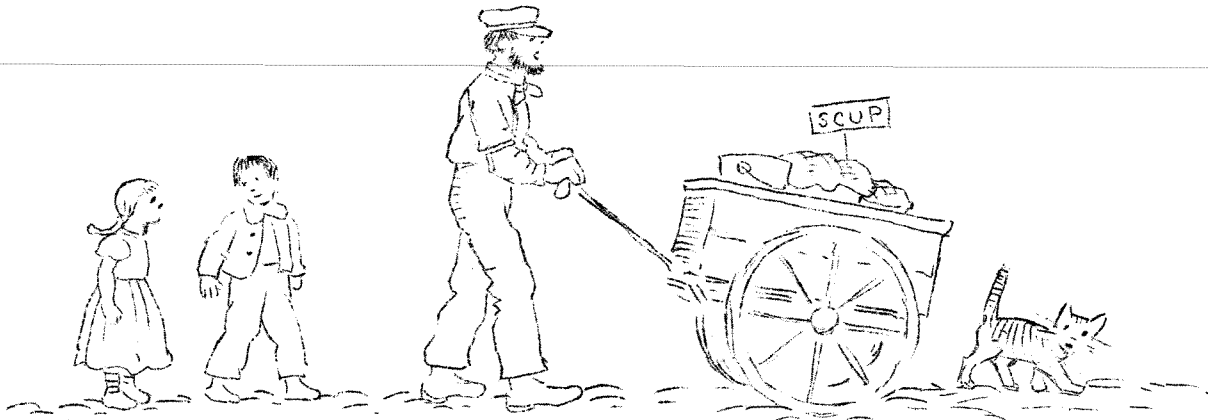
Hulled corn was made by a leaching process. Wood ashes were placed in a barrel with holes in the bottom. The barrel, about two-thirds full of ashes, was set on a grooved board, then water was poured over the ashes and caught in a wooden pail. This water, which had become alkaline was then used to soak the hull from the corn. The product was peddled from door to door in wooden firkins and sold by the pint or quart.

In the spring, a man named Dunbar pushed a cart with a handle on one end. He used to cry, "Fresh scup, fresh scup!"

A man by the name of Rosen went through the streets with a horse and cart, selling calico..

A peddler called Marden sold tinware. Point youngsters loved to ride on the back of his wagon as far as the Mall, and then walk home.

As for dandelions - boys sold them, for ten cents a "mess".



\* \* \* TWO GREEN LIGHTS \* \* \*



But neither used to be green, as many of us can well remember.

Newport Light, on the north end of Goat Island, was first lighted on January 1, 1825. Keeper Samuel Watson or W. Mumford occupied quarters on the island - but after the breakwater was constructed in 1836-38, access to the light could be made on foot instead of by boat.

By 1863, the stone house which is affectionately remembered by many, was constructed at the foot of the tower. Some early keepers were Pardon Stevens, John Cass, John Heath and Henry Crawford.

On October 1, 1882, the man who was to tend the light for the next forty years took over the duty. Captain Charles Schoeneman, who retired in July 1922 at the age of eighty, might have continued even longer at his post had not the light then become automatically controlled. Captain Schoeneman made many rescues - including the saving of eight sailors from the Destroyer Myrant, in 1912, when he was seventy years old. A wave of nostalgia sweeps over us as we remember the Captain's skiff moored in an angle of the jetty, and the bright geranium boxes against the sparkling white walls of the snug little house.

The house was demolished in June 1922, and the winking yellowish light was replaced by the brilliant emerald which gives its name to this publication. It first shone on July 1, 1922. The old light was rather dim in competition with increasing illumination around the harbor -- but don't you remember how fascinating it was to watch the shield which controlled the "flash" slowly revolving; from inshore it looked almost like a funny little gnome solemnly trudging round and round inside the lantern !

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We seem to find very little data on Gull Rock - except that it was lighted for the first time on or about September 20, 1887 - just 74 years ago. The light was at first placed on the peak of the roof; later moved to the steel tower. And now the quaint landmark is gone, and a rather feeble green flash on an ugly spindle is all there is left to remind us of that picturesque "witch's house" so long a part of the harbor scene.

