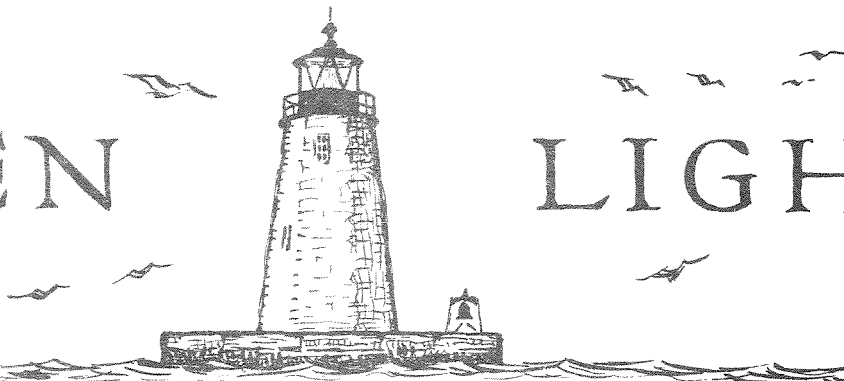


The GREEN LIGHT



BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

VOL. VI

OCTOBER 1962

No. 4

ANNUAL MEETING -- OCTOBER 25th, 1962

The Annual Meeting of the Point Association and election of officers for 1962-63 will be held in St. John's Guild Hall on Thursday, October 25th at 7:30 o'clock. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF TIME! After the business meeting, which includes important suggestions from the Advisory Committee (see the special report), and the election of officers, we are having a square dance, beginning at 8:30. Ken van Wessendorp from Providence is the caller, and there will be cider and doughnuts. For your own safety, as well as to protect the floor, ladies will please wear low heels. This square dance is for all ages, so why not bring the whole family to enjoy it.

General Membership Meeting

July 26, 1962

The July General Membership Meeting of the Point Association was held on July 26th in St. John's Guild Hall, just as we all were recovering from Afternoon on the Point.

The Secretary's report was read and approved.

The Treasurer's report was read, showing a balance on hand of \$4,391.34 and it was approved.

Mr. Sullivan gave out the prizes for the garden and window box contests, which were:

Class 1 - Flower and/or vegetable gardens, children. 1st, Paul Holbrook, outstanding; 2nd, Trudy Duffy; 3rd, James Douglas.

Class 2 - Weed, and remove trash, children. 1st, Gertrude O'Neill; 2nd, Charles Fitzpatrick.

Class 3 - Flower boxes, children. 1st, Corinne Kelly; 2nd, Paul Holbrook; 3rd, Trudy Duffy.

Class 4 - Flower boxes, adult. 1st, Mrs. Fred Johnsson; 2nd, Mrs. R. M. Bryer; 3rd, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Shivers.

Mrs. Bates reported for the Green Light that our circulation is now up to 340 with 42 off island, and the number of subscribers is growing steadily.

Mr. Harrington read two recommendations from the Board:

1. The Point Association give \$100 to the Newport Scholarship Fund. Admiral Eccles said the fund has shown leadership in the area, and he moves that the Point Association give the fund \$100. Miss Hardy seconded the motion. Mrs. Weaver asked if a Point child should be mentioned specifically. Admiral Eccles said the committee should have no restrictions. The motion was carried unanimously.

2. There is deep oil on the Walnut Street driftway, so the Board suggests the Association donate \$50 - \$100 to help the city clean it up. Admiral Eccles moved we spend not more than \$100 in co-operation with the city to clean it up. Mr. Arnold seconded the motion, and it

was so voted.

Mrs. Watson reported on the publicity for Afternoon on the Point, and read a letter from WPRO saying they were glad to cooperate at all times. The Newport Daily News used all the material sent to them, and their full page of interior pictures of the houses was especially appreciated. The Providence papers were equally generous. Mrs. Richard Weiss, Miss Edith Ballinger Price, and Mrs. George Weaver gave excellent talks on the radio, and Mrs. John Benson was our television star. Edith Ballinger Price made another of her artistic flyers; it was widely distributed, and many people from out of town came after seeing it. It was suggested that Mrs. Watson should be in charge of the publicity for the Yacht Races.

Mrs. Eccles reported on the Afternoon on the Point, which is reported fully on a later page. Mr. Harrington asked for a standing vote of thanks to Mrs. Eccles.

Plans for the clambake were discussed.

Mme. Aubeis suggests that the Association collaborate with the city and hire a man to clean up the Point from May to November, and report any violations. Admiral Eccles moved, and Mrs. Watson seconded that this be sent to the Board for study and report to the next meeting. It was so voted.

Mr. Antonio Ponvert spoke on Historic Zoning and its impact on the Point. It is something the whole community has to do together, and the Point Association should work with the Preservation Society and the Trinity Church Committee.

Beautification Committee

Mr. Sullivan reported that three of the tubs of geraniums in Battery Park had been tipped over, but they are replanted, and look surprisingly well. He wishes more people would enter the garden contests.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee has been discussing the best use of the money we have collected, and has many ideas, several of which should make more money in the end. They feel it is most important to find out what everyone in the Association thinks, especially the silent ones, and at the annual meeting there will be a question box with paper and pencil for all to write their questions and suggestions, which will be discussed at the meeting.

The committee feels the Association should go into the publishing business. "Here and There on the Point", excerpts from the Green Light, has sold over 300 copies already, and more booklets can be added in time. Miss Price left the plates of her very popular set of post cards to the Association; they can be reprinted and sold. Also we can make a series of photographs both colored and black and white of various Point attractions.

The committee is strongly in favor of starting a square dance series, under the leadership of Ken van Wessendorp. The members feel that this is so worthwhile, that we are having a square dance after the Annual Meeting in October, which we are sure you will enjoy.

The committee has many other ideas, some of which will be brought up at the annual meeting.

The Green Light

The Green Light circulation is now up to 370, and of these 58 are off Island. Subscriptions are coming in steadily, even if slowly, and we have therefore decided to postpone any membership drive until after the annual meeting.

Afternoon on the Point -- July 21, 1962.

The Point Open House this year was a delightful occasion, and over 800 visitors came and enjoyed themselves. It is a do-it-yourself affair with everyone working willingly, and it is amazing how many talents are uncovered. The whole Point looked its best, with streets specially cleaned by the city, weeds cut around trees by several boys who later helped to direct the traffic, gardens full of flowers -- all most festive. The eight houses open had special exhibitions of great variety. The Claggett House had samplers, and home made bread, which vanished fast. The Peter Simon House had antique toys, and a room in the process of renovation. The Hunter House was graciously included in the tour by the Preservation Society, and as always everyone enjoyed its beauty. The Captain Warren House had an exhibition of silhouettes, and Mrs. Vernon Harvey also cut silhouettes. Miss Sarah Smith cut paper dolls for children on the porch. At the Dennis House, silverware from Mr. Cornelius C. Moore's collection was on exhibition, and he had had a brochure describing it printed, and talked about it himself in his charming way. This was easily the greatest attraction of all, and we are deeply grateful to Mr. Moore for his generosity. At the Finch House there was an exhibition of stencilling, and rug hooking was demonstrated. The Villa Marina showed old steamboat pictures and also clocks; two delightful programs of 18th century music were given. The Pineapple House had a collection of Apple head dolls, depicting old Pointers.

There were 4 H girls in costume who curtsayed to visitors as they entered the houses, and later under the supervision of Mrs. Carr served tea at Grafton House. Miss Carrie Ericson helped several younger girls to make little nosegays which they gave to the lady visitors, a delightful touch.

Mr. Joseph Sullivan gave generously of his flowers to adorn the houses on display, as well as providing flowers for the nosegays. Also he officially guarded Mr. Moore's silver collection. Billy Fitzpatrick printed all the strip tickets.

Mr. William Harrington was the treasurer, assisted by Mr. Watson, Mr. Wood, and Admiral Eccles.

Miss Edith Price made one of her attractive flyers which helped advertise the Afternoon on the Point. Also it is thanks to her that we were able to publish the booklet "Here and There on the Point", as most of the articles in it she wrote and illustrated while she was editor of the Green Light, and her help in getting the booklet ready to print was invaluable. What shall we do without her? Mary Perry sold Miss Price's post cards in one of the driftways.

These are a few who helped so generously, but there are many others willing to do anything at all who helped to make the Afternoon such a success. The Afternoon cleared about \$1,560, including entrance fees, "Here and There on the Point", the collection of articles from the Green Light, rug chances (by the way, the rug was won by Miss Katherine Manchester), bread sales, Apple Head dolls commissions, cutting of silhouettes and paper dolls, and Miss Price's post cards.

But, the best come last, our chairman, Mrs. Henry Eccles, and our Publicity Director, Mrs. Harold Watson, both so good that we wondered whether we should offer them to the Cup Race committee. Mrs. Eccles arranged everything so that we as well as the Point looked beautiful, and welcomed our guests graciously; she had small as well as large things under perfect control, never seemed hurried, and gave everything a special warmth. Mrs. Watson wrote such interesting articles that newspapers, radio and television accepted everything she sent them, including special pictures. The excellent publicity brought many newcomers to visit our neighborhood.

SECOND ROSE ISLAND CLAMBAKE -- A GREAT SUCCESS

Remembering the clambake of last year, Bill Harrington wanted the men who keep their boats on the shores to put on another that would be open to all the Point Association members. They agreed, and Dan Durfee offered to preside as Bake Master.

To put on the event required a great deal of work and cooperation. Everything from the beverages to the rocks used in the bake had to be brought out to the island by boat. One group went over to New Bedford to get a load of choice oak scraps. Another went out to the Drive and picked the needed rock weed. Under the careful hands of some Point women the food for the bake was prepared. The fish had to be all wrapped in brown paper, while the clams, corn, chicken and lobster all required their own special preparation. Under the direction of one of the most able chowder chefs, Ray Kelly, the quahaugs were opened and the chowder made. At last all was ready for the boat trip over.

Perhaps it would be good to describe the actual building of the bake, as few of us had ever seen it done from the sand up before. Dan Durfee, and his father before him, have been conducting bakes in Tiverton and Newport areas. We are very fortunate to have such an experienced hand as this among us. It is under the careful direction of the Bake Master that the bake is laid, cooked and served. Indeed a tremendous task.

First a layer of granite is put down, and over this a layer of oak. These layers were then repeated until they totaled about three feet in height. This first stage of the bake is then lit and allowed to burn down. After the wood is completely burned, the granite holds the heat. The stone is then raked till it is more or less flat on top. Next the green rock weed is spread over the hot stone. On top of the weed the trays holding the clams, fish, sausage, potatoes, corn and chicken are placed. By local custom the lobsters are left out of the bake. The trays are first covered with a thin cloth, then by a canvas. Pieces of canvas are placed around the bottom of the bake, and then a large piece spread over the whole bake.

Rockweed is the thing that really controls the cooking. The weed contains a great number of bubbles, each being filled with sweet salt water. As the weed gets hot, these bubbles break and the water turns to steam. The canvas is used to trap the steam around the food and cook it. Under the watchful eye of the Bake Master the bake was allowed to steam for two hours. During this time everyone enjoyed the fine chowder. Over this dish many interesting tales of the Point and of old times too, were exchanged.

At about 4:30 P.M. Mr. Bake Master opened his bake. Upon this word an eager company lined up with plates in hand. "Tastier than average", was the remark heard by one seafood fancier. Everyone ate until they were fully satisfied. An interesting note of appreciation came from one man as he finished his lobster, "really quite good -- delicious in fact -- once you have discovered how to get at it." He had never eaten such creatures before, but was later seen back at the bake for more. His expression of delight seemed to parallel those of the others.

Our deepest thanks go to Mr. Bake Master Durfee and all the men from the shore, notably Ray Kelly, Bill Fitzpatrick, Fran Chase, and Bill Miller, who by their generosity provided all with a deliciously rewarding and enjoyable time at Rose Island.

(This description was written by one of the young Point Hummers, who is a Junior at Middlebury College. The regular editors add a few remarks.)

Nearly 60 people came to the bake, from a two year old boy to an 85 year old man, Mr. Charles F. Child, who worked at Rose Island during World War I, and wanted to see what it looked like now. While waiting for the bake, we had a few appetizers, such as roast chicken, hot dogs, hamburg, and cool drinks. Everyone scattered, climbing the water tower, walking all around the island, swimming, sailing, seeing the lighthouse, or just relaxing. One even made a collection of snakes. This was supposed to be a way to spend money, but we came out about \$40 ahead!

Correspondence

As you all know, we welcome correspondents, and will always try to publish anything we think will be of interest. This month we have letters from two sisters in California which we hope will inspire some more of you to reminisce.

(From Mrs. C. P. Briggs, San Bruno, California)

I have just received my first copy of The Green Light, and I find it very interesting. I especially like the article re the No. 2 Engine House on the corner of Bridge and Third Streets. It brings back many fond memories. How very well I remember when Uncle Tom Tew - by marriage - was Captain, and my uncle Fletcher Lawton was a volunteer fireman!

I remember one afternoon when I was a small child, Uncle Fletcher Lawton stood me in General's stall under General's stomach. My mother was scared to death, but Uncle Fletcher laughed and told her that General was as gentle as a lamb, that he knew I was standing there and he wouldn't move a muscle; he didn't either. Sometimes when Uncle Fletcher drove General around the Point for exercise he let me ride with him. I recall also that General did walk up to the cemetery when Uncle Tom Tew passed away.

(From Mrs. Lex Baum, Healdsburg, California)

My sister, Mrs. C. P. Briggs, nee Frances Edgar, sent me her copy of the Green Light. It was very interesting and brought back very pleasant memories of my childhood on the Point. My name was Madeline Edgar. I started kindergarten at the Callender School in 1902, then to Potter School; Mr. Alger was the principal at that time. We used to go once a week alternately to cooking school and sewing school at the school up on Broadway next to the High School; is it Trinity? I just can't recall the name. My mother was Abby Lawton, daughter of Edward N. Lawton, co-founder with Mr. Warren of the G.A.R. in Newport. Her brother is Benjamin who still lives on 20 Russell Avenue. The late Fletcher Lawton along with his many other activities was director of Easton Beach for many years; also Joe Lawton who was fire chief for many years.

My father was George W. Edgar; he played in the Newport band, also at the Bijou Theatre, accompanied by Lena Flynn, later Downing, at the piano. My grandfather and grandmother lived on Walnut Street between Second and Third, one house down from Second Street on the south side. I have often wondered who is fortunate enough to possess the house now. It has or had a lovely old well in the back part of the front yard. My grandmother had beautiful flowers -- there were four hydrangeas in the front yard, planted in all four corners. When they were in full bloom they covered the entire front yard. There was a high lattice fence in back of them always white washed. Then in the back yard were all sorts of beautiful flowers and lawn, plus the well. Inside the house was a hand pump -- I can't recall if they had any city water or not.

Your mention of Battery Park brought back many pleasant memories. I don't suppose there are any band concerts there now. My grandfather used to have row boats. There was a ramp by the side of a pier at the end of Walnut Street. He also kept lobster pots out there all the time; how I would love to have one of those lobsters right now.

Everything everywhere has changed so much -- for the worse. However, I can't see how any great change could take place on the Point. It has been forty-three years since I left Newport. I just can't even picture automobiles on the Point.

No doubt you are getting tired of my rambling; what I really wanted was to send in my subscription for the Green Light, also to wish all concerned in the Point project loads of success.

Coasters Harbour Island

On April 30, 1639 Nicholas Easton and his sons Peter and John left the newly founded town of Portsmouth in Rhode Island, and coming by boat along the coast of Aquidneck Island landed on an island, which the Indians called Weenat Shassit. Here they stayed the night and named it Coasters Harbour Island. The next morning, May 1st, 1639, they sailed south, and turning into the main island (perhaps at the Cove), they built the first English building on land just south of the present Friends Church on Farewell Street. Thus began the town of Newport and thus also began the history of Coasters Harbour Island. The island continued to be Indian property until May 22, 1658, when Caganaquant, Chief Sachem of Narragansett Bay Indians sold Coasters Harbour Island together with Nantee Sinunk, alias Goat Island to Benedict Arnold and John Greene for the sum of six pounds, 10 shillings. On May 27th, 1672, John Greene deeded the islands to Benedict Arnold for 10 pounds current pay to be received by Arnold from the Town of Newport for money disbursed by Arnold fourteen years before. On May 1st, 1673, Benedict Arnold, somewhat reluctantly, deeded Coasters Harbour Island and Goat Island to the Town of Newport for 10 pounds. Since the amount of purchase and sale were equal, it is believed that Greene and Arnold were originally commissioned by the town to make the purchase. In July of 1716 the town appointed a committee to build hospital houses on Coasters Harbour Island, to be furnished at an expense not to exceed 120 pounds. The erection of hospital houses followed to accommodate those unfortunates afflicted with the smallpox, and in 1753 a boat was ordered built to ferry to the island those persons arriving from the sea, who were suspected of having smallpox. Hospitals succeeded each other as needs for accommodations arose. The cornerstone of the Newport Assylum on Coasters Harbour Island was laid on June 29th, 1819, for occupancy of the poor, feeble minded, and insane. It was situated several rods from the hospital. On June 8, 1860, the Old Hospital, which was untenanted at that time, was destroyed by fire. The fire was set by an inmate of the Assylum, whose apprehension was made possible by following the culprit's footprints in the newly fallen snow. Another hospital was built and this was later moved to Maple Avenue in Middletown. The removal began on August 3, 1872. In 1904 the graveyard where many of Newport's sick and indigent citizens were buried was eliminated by development of the Naval Training Station. The gravestones, dating from 1761, were laid flat and buried. Recently these stones were uncovered, when the tennis courts were enlarged, and will be placed around the tennis court area.

The story of the U. S. Naval Training Station began on January 19, 1881. It was on that date that Newport's Mayor Slocum visited Governor Van Zandt with reference to turning over Coasters Harbour Island to the government for use as a naval training station. On March 6, 1881, the City Council was directed to execute deed to cede the island to the State of Rhode Island to be by said state ceded to the United States for location of the U. S. Naval Training Station. The appraised value was \$190,000.00. By order of the Secretary of the Navy, William E. Chandler, the U. S. Naval Training Station was established on June 7, 1883, and placed under the command of Commodore (later Rear Admiral) Stephen B. Luce. The crowning achievement of Admiral Luce's life was the founding of the Naval War College. The building given over for this purpose was the old Assylum, and here the first War College class came together in 1885. The inmates of the Assylum were moved to a new home on outer Broadway run by Mr. and Mrs. Bachellor, and where the Catholic school is now. At the dedication of the Naval War College building, Admiral Luce said, "Poor little house, I christen thee United States Naval War College." The

new War College was built in 1892. The first appropriation of Congress for the Station was in the Act of March 3, 1886 -- "For the Care and Preservation of Buildings on Coasters Harbour Island." This preserved the Assylum which was used for many years as the Administrative Building and is at present the Headquarters of the Commanding Officer of the U. S. Naval Station and his staff.

In the beginning, the training of recruits was limited to shipboard with the exception of occasional drills on shore. The U.S.S. NEW HAMPSHIRE was docked at South Point and the U. S. ships JAMES, SARATOGA, PORTSMOUTH, and MINNESOTA were anchored nearby. On May 22, 1894, the U.S.S. CONSTELLATION arrived at the Station to remain permanently for the training of boys. In September 1883 the first barracks was erected on South Point and became Barrack A, and by 1887 training was conducted entirely on shore. The average recruit's age was 16 years two months -- the minimum was 14 years. The pay of recruits was \$9.00 a month and 30 cents ration. Up until 1893 the largest part of the island was given over to the Commissary Offices for pasture, but during this year farming ceased, the cows were sold, and proceeds used to establish a "station store" to furnish small articles to the apprentices. In June 1892 the island was further developed by construction of causeway and bridge and the erection of the present Naval War College Building. Construction of buildings, sea walls, breakwaters, firing ranges and roads continued to change the island. During 1896 Building 19 was constructed and is now designated as Quarters "B" and occupied by the President of the War College. Barracks B was erected in 1900; Barracks C in 1904. Prior to and in the early 1900's practical seamanship was taught aboard the CONSTELLATION and the gunboat NEWPORT. At varying times the CUMBERLAND, BOXER, ANNAPOLIS, HIST, and REINA MERCEDES were used. The shiny cannons flanking the flagpole in front of the Administration Building were taken from the Spanish man of war REINA MERCEDES, which was sunk during the Spanish American war and reclaimed from the harbor of Cuba as an American prize of arms. Nearby is the Settlers Stone, which was unveiled on April 21, 1924, to commemorate the landing of Nicholas Easton and his sons in 1639. The anchor of the CONSTELLATION is presently located on the lawn in front of Quarters A. It was taken from the CONSTELLATION in 1906 and lay on the pier beside the ship for many years. In 1924 it was hauled to its present site by a team of 16 horses. It weighs about 6,000 lbs. and its over-all length of shank is 13 ft., 8 inches. In 1913 the CONSTELLATION was towed to Norfolk, Virginia, for repairs, and returned to the station. During 1946 it was towed to Boston Navy Yard for repairs. This brief history barely scratches the surface of the history of the Naval Station, but we hope it will give our readers a few little known or forgotten facts about Coasters Harbour Island, which is a beautiful and well known part of the panoramic view from the Point shore.

L.C.S.

U.S. NAVAL TRAINING STATION AND WAR COLLEGE
ON COASTERS HARBOR ISLAND
IN 1906



1. USS Constellation 1894
2. Adms. Bldg. - 1881
1819 - Formerly "Newport Assylum"
3. U.S.N. War College 1893
4. Barracks A - 1883
5. Barracks B - 1900
6. Causeway & Bridge 1892
7. Barracks C - 1904