

The GREEN LIGHT

BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

VOL. VII

JULY 1963

No. 3

JULY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The July General Membership Meeting of the Point Association will be held on Thursday, July 25th, in the Guild Hall at 8 o'clock. Admiral Eccles will show some of his slides of Spain, Italy, and the Adriatic, a real treat. Many will be recovering from the Afternoon on the Point, and will enjoy seeing some foreign beauty.

Rose Island Clambake -- August 3, 1963

We are having the third annual Rose Island Clambake on Saturday, August 3rd -- if stormy, on the 4th -- and anyone interested in coming will please call Bill Harrington 847-6731. This is your notice -- no postcards will be sent this year. Seaweed gatherers, rock toters, clam diggers, potato and onion peelers will all be needed, if you can help get the bake ready. The number attending cannot be much over 50.

APRIL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The April General Membership meeting of the Point Association was a great success, with a large and enthusiastic audience. First was a short business meeting; the secretary's report was approved, and also the treasurer's, showing a balance on hand of \$3,996.98. The Green Light circulation is improving, and is well over 350. It was voted unanimously to hire a man to clean the sidewalks; he will work two hours a day, and be paid \$15 a week -- a cost for the summer of \$300 to \$400. There are new rubbish barrels on the brows, at Battery Park, and Van Zandt pier. For the Treasured Collections exhibit, see the enclosed flyer.

The first part of the program was a fashion show put on by a new 4H troop, the Concentric Teens, Trudy Duffy, President. Even the youngest girls had made something to model, and the older girls' dresses and suits were most professional. Jean

Fontaine was the announcer, and everyone enjoyed seeing the girls in their finery.

Next came colored slides of a few Point gardens -- the Watsons, Eccles, Fullertons, Bethunes, and Lulkins, shown by Harold Watson.

Last, Mr. Herbert Peabody, the county agricultural agent, talked about lawns, insecticides, and diseases to watch for, and so many questions were asked him, that he finally had to stop. Now we at least know what to do for our troubles.

Mrs. Barker served her usual delicious food.

The Point Spring Garden Tour was never held. When the Green Light came out in April, no one realized the winter damage to spring bulbs, even old standbys that had bloomed for years. So there was not the usual bright display, and we shall have to try again next year.

We are noticing continual improvement

on the Point, and more houses have been repaired and painted. The Newport Gas Company has purchased the Goddard House on Second Street and already all the windows are replaced and the garages in back torn down. The Weisses have bought the Lawton house on Walnut Street, and are doing a splendid job of restoration.

The flower boxes filled with red geraniums are in Battery Park again, and are flourishing. The maple trees are growing well in spite of the dry weather. The brows have new rubbish barrels, and they are cleaned often but there is still too much trash thrown on the ground.

Broken glass scattered everywhere is a real menace to children.

SAFETY FIRST

A lot of little children come down to the shore with inner tubes to float on. Fine if they can swim, but some who cannot swim paddle out on them and it is just luck that so far there has been no accident.

The Keeper of the Blue Rock beach is working hard on the job.

Joe Sullivan is to be thanked for much of the beauty in many gardens, with his donations of all kinds of bulbs, plants, and seedlings. He gave away hundreds of lilies this year. Other years it has been roses, iris, sweet peas -- whatever you want, Joe has it. He first planted the tubs at Battery Park, and is always thinking of ways to beautify the Point.

Miss Marion Galvin and King Covell together are now taking colored slides of Point gardens at their best; The Point Association furnishes the film, Marion drives around to find what gardens are at their best, and drives King to the place for a picture. For this super horticultural service, call Miss Galvin, 847-5438, or Mr. Covell, 847-0206.

The Concentric Teens, new 4H troop just formed, who put on a fashion show at the April Quarterly Meeting, are going to help at the Treasured Collections on July 20 and 21. The Board voted to give them two half camper-ships, which was \$24, and as eight girls were going, they divided it into \$3 apiece.

NEWPORT CATS

The Green Light, with the help of Harold Arnold, is beginning a collection of names of boats off the Point, which we hope will make our readers remember others. Here are some of the catboats, with anecdotes about their captains to start you reminiscing.

The largest was Captain MacDonald's Ursula. He used to take out sailing parties, and sailed for Miss Annie Paul, Miss Agnes Storer, and the Fairchilds who lived where Mrs. Tuckerman's house is now, and once had Robert Louis Stevenson visit them.

The Jack Rose, the Primrose, and the Rose were all built by Barker on Long Wharf, and owned by Frank James. Bill MacLeod bought the Jack Rose, the only Rose now left, when his boat sank in the hurricane, and she is now owned by Arakel Bozayan.

Edward Smith owned the Kingfisher, later bought by Lars Larson and renamed the Margaret -- she is now the Kingfisher again, and owned by Edward Smith, Jr.

The Atlanta -- Walter Curry

Papoose -- H. P. Arnold, N.W. Middleton

Emma -- Edward W. Kent

Madge -- Ray B. Wilson

Carrie -- Tom Shea

Gisela -- Mrs. Catherine Knox

J.A.C. -- the King brothers

Indian -- William Arnold

Vesper 1 -- Charles Plummer

Penguin -- J. Howard Benson

Humphrey Storer, Seth Battene, Charles Moran, Ace Mathewson and Oliver Merritt all had cats.

Answer to queries about Dyer Street:

Dyer Street runs from south of 183 Third Street across railroad tracks to Connell Highway. Situated midway between north and south boundaries of Dyer's land, it marked the division of property.

How many would be interested in starting an informal craft group helping one another with inspiration, knowledge, or lively company? Get in touch with Alice Fitzpatrick.

NARRAGANSETT BAY -- HIGHWAY OF THE PAST

During the last century, travel by steamboat up and down the bay was the usual and regular means of communication. Steamboats were running between Providence and Newport as early as the 1820's and in the next decade regular schedules were maintained. For almost one hundred years such transportation service was carried on. The "trolleys," just before and soon after 1900, first made an inroad into this set-up, and during the years immediately following the first World War the change became more rapid. During the depression years of the 1930's, many steamboats were retired, and none was built to succeed them. Today, except for the Jamestown ferry and an occasional diesel-powered boat, nothing remains of this once comprehensive transportation system.

A few Narragansett Bay steamers wandered far from their original home. The "Roger Williams" of 1845, built to run between Newport and Providence, started for California in 1849 at the time of the Gold Rush, but was found to be unseaworthy at Buenos Aires and so was sold, renamed "El Paraguay," and finished her days on the Paraguay River. The "Perry" of 1846, built for a Newport man, Rufus B. Kinsley, went into Government service during the Civil War, returned afterward to Newport, but left again in the 1870's to run on the Delaware River, was renamed "Delaware" in 1882 and ran until burned, at Salem, Delaware, in 1896. The "Day Star" of 1873, after years of service in local waters, was partly destroyed by fire in 1899 and was rebuilt as the "Warwick"; she left for New York in the mid 1920's and ran there until broken up, at Staten Island, early in the 1930's. The "General," of the Wickford Line, ended her career by running for a few years, late in the 1920's, from the Battery in New York to the Statue of Liberty. Several smaller boats, such as the "Pontiac" of the Pawtucket Line, also went to New York after their years of service on Narragansett Bay was ended by changing conditions. The same is true of the "George W. Danielson," for many years the "winter" boat to Block Island prior to the building of the "New Shoreham" in 1901, and also of the "Islander," which, with the "Awashonks" and others, ran for many years from Providence to Tiverton and down the Sakonnet River to Little Compton harbor.

The steamers running to Block Island always have been associated closely with the bay and also with towns and cities on the Bay. For nearly forty years (1849-1888) the "Canonicus" ran regularly between Providence, Newport, and Block Island. In her early days, the inner basin, only, of what is now the Old Harbor existed at the island: hence the steamer had to anchor offshore and send her passengers in by small boats -- a sometimes hazardous undertaking in those waters of the open ocean, even in summer. Later, the outer breakwaters were built, and also a wharf along side the east breakwater. There the "Canonicus" could make a landing, and there also, for forty-six years, her successor, the "Mount Hope," made landings almost every day in summer. This latter steamer, one of the best known of the many operating in local waters, was the work of the late George Peirce, for many years superintendent of the Newport repair shops of the Old Colony Railroad and the designer of several much larger steamboats, especially those of the Fall River Line. The "Hope," as she was generally known locally, was built with shallow draft, to enable her to enter the shoal waters at the island, but she also had more than the usual breadth of beam for a boat of her size. The result: a vessel of unusual stability, even in the rough waters of Block Island Sound, and of greater than average speed for steamers of her kind. For many years, until approaching age slowed her down, she made the run from Castle Hill to the buoy off the Old Harbor in one hour and forty-five minutes: a record not even attempted by the later and smaller boats that have been on the run since her day. Often, when summer "Line" storms, recognized now as tail-ends of hurricanes which bypassed us by going offshore, stirred up heavy seas outside Newport, the "Hope" would make her regular trip to the island even although almost all other vessels stayed safely in the harbor. One wonders if she would not have performed equally well in the more exposed waters off the coast of Maine and one is tempted to think of her running to the ocean-swept rocky islands of the Hebrides, off the west coast of Scotland: a service which called for the sturdiest construction and best sea-going qualities for small steamers from more than a century of British ship designers. It is tempting to imagine her in such a corner of the world, where, we like to think, she could have held her own

in competition even with the graceful, fine-lined vessels built especially by experts for navigating those stormy waters. Of the local steamboats, perhaps she was one of the best, as well as almost certainly the best known, and certainly she was one of the fastest, most steady, and most economically successful. It is most unfortunate that we shall doubtless never see her like again.

Steamers more directly and intimately associated with Newport were those of the Wickford Line, of which there were three in all. The line was opened in 1873, with the purchase of the "Eolus," built in 1864 at Newburgh, New York. The name may be intended for Aeolus, the ancient Roman god of the wind, but even if so, the spelling as given, without the diphthong, was officially that of the name of this vessel. The purpose of the Wickford Line was to afford a somewhat shorter, day route, chiefly by train, between Newport and New York. The steamer made three or four round trips each day between Newport and Wickford Landing, connecting there with a local train which covered the few miles between Wickford Landing and Wickford Junction, at which latter place connection was made with the Shore Line trains to New York and beyond. While the Fall River Line continued to be the route favored by most travellers to and from New York, an appreciable number of people, especially in summer, favored the Wickford route. The "Eolus" ran until 1891 but was replaced in that year by a larger steamer, the "Tockwogh," which had come from Baltimore where she had been built two years earlier. The "Tockwogh" was a wood-hull side-wheel steamer like the "Eolus" but was somewhat larger and faster. Her career here was short, since she was destroyed by fire at the wharf at Wickford in 1892. The "General," a small iron-hull single screw steamer, built in 1889 to run on the upper Hudson, was purchased to replace the "Tockwogh." The "General" is the best remembered of the Wickford boats, since she ran some 29 to 30 years on Narragansett Bay, or until the Wickford Line was closed by the New Haven Railroad, early in the 1920's, because of falling off of travel. The "General" was a very well designed and maintained boat, having clean lines, ample engine power, and good speed. Her running time, 55 minutes, Newport to Wickford Landing, is a record that few vessels of her size, existing today, could equal.

The coming and going of the "General," occurring so often every day, was especially well-known to those who knew the water front of Newport some years ago. Her deep-tone whistle, the pitch of which was F, was a familiar sound for those living on or near the harbor, for she sounded the whistle when approaching the Newport wharf and also just before starting for a trip up the bay. My grandmother used to say that hardly ever did she entertain a caller, on a summer afternoon, without the "General" making her comment before the conversation had proceeded very far. And the "General" had a part in some of our lives as well. Mine in particular! It so happened that my grandfather's breakfast time was 7:30. The "General," on her early down trip, reached the lighthouse and blew her whistle quite promptly at 7:20. I, as no doubt with all small boys, was not too willing to be up and ready to go down to breakfast at that early hour: hence a subterfuge was brought into use. It was agreed that if I could "beat the 'General'", i.e., be dressed, washed, and altogether ready for breakfast before that whistle blew, I would get the reward of ten cents! Grandfather was the time-keeper, and the umpire. I would be awake but unready to get up, only to be told "Here she comes" at about 7:05. That meant that the "General" had made her appearance up the bay, just around the corner of Coasters Harbor Island by the War College Building. "Better hurry: she is almost here": that meant that the "General" had passed Gull Rocks. "Look out, or she will win" -- and the "General" had almost reached the point where the whistle was sounded: Breakwater Light. What a scramble, to finish last-minute preparations and pass inspection before the fatal moment when the "General" announced that she had won -- and that the dime would not be mine, that morning! If only we could hear that familiar sound again! How many dimes would it not be worth today!

W. King Covell

SIMEON POTTER -- PIRATE -- PATRIOT -- PHILANTHROPIST

With the passing of Potter School from the Newport school system, it is interesting to know that this was a school named after a pirate in honor of a generous gift he made to the town of Newport. Simeon Potter was born in Bristol, Rhode Island, in 1720. He shipped to sea as a cooper, building and repairing casks and barrels aboard ship. In 1744 at the age of 24, he held a captain's license, and on a voyage to Guadeloupe in the Carribean, he met and signed on as clerk young Mark Anthony de Wolf. De Wolf was as educated as Simeon Potter was illiterate and they formed a partnership. Potter brought De Wolf back to Bristol and Mark soon after married Simeon's sister, Abigail, in the new St. Michaels Episcopal Church, which was catercorner across from the Potter homestead. Within two weeks after the marriage, King George's war broke out against France and Spain. Potter had no love for George II, but saw an opportunity to profit from the war. He bought a quarter share in a Newport 90 ton ship "Prince Charles of Lorraine" and on September 8, 1744, was granted a commission to "set upon by force of arms, subdue, seize and take the Men of War ships and other vessels whatsoever, together with goods, monies and merchandise belonging to the Kings of Spain and France." The ship was registered in Newport, commissioned by the Royal Governor of Rhode Island and set sail the day of commissioning. It mounted 10 carriage guns and an overflow crew of eighty men with provisions for a six month's cruise. Most of the crew were Bristol boys with Simeon Potter as captain and Mark De Wolf as clerk. Two months after sailing, the Prince Charles cast anchor at Oyapoc in French Guiana, bringing terror to the inhabitants. On October 29th Potter and his crew seized the small garrison, pillaged the town and church and held Father Fauque, the Jesuit missionary, a prisoner. Potter was the only member of the raiding party to be wounded. In a letter to his superior about the occurrence, Father Fauque described Simeon Potter thus -- "He was a man of slight stature, dressed like the others in pirate garb, his wounded left arm in a sling, his right held a saber and there were two pistols in his belt." They took furniture, clothes and all the silver they could lay hand to including the sacred vessels of the church. Father Fauque was taken aboard the pirate ship and held prisoner for several days. After the crew had removed locks and hinges from doors, and all else of value, they burned the village, even the church. With the priest still captive, the Prince Charles next anchored off Cayenne. The boatswain and nine of the crew went ashore in long boats to raid the town. When they failed to return, the priest was sent ashore to bargain for the missing men, whom Potter feared had been captured. Father Fauque secured the release of seven men, and his own release as ransom. The boatswain and two crew men had been killed. The Prince Charles left the next morning and sailed to neutral Surinam in Dutch Guiana. Potter and his crew were ordered out of Dutch waters but the night before sailing, Potter invited some Dutch and British sea captains aboard, and auctioned off the Oyapoc loot, with the exception of the church silver, which Potter retained. When the ship returned to Bristol with a depleted and mutinous crew on April 24, 1745, a letter from the Dutch Republic awaited him at Newport. Potter had violated Dutch neutrality by selling Oyapoc loot to Dutchmen. At the same court, his crew brought action of replevin against him. Potter was described in court as "tall and slim with a long sharp nose, wearing light colored long clothes, and with hair tied behind; he was bent at the waist so his nose was always forrard of his feet." Potter won the suit despite the evidence, and promptly had the church silver from Oyapoc stamped with his initials. He continued privateering aboard the "Prince Charles of Lorraine" until the winter of 1747, when the ship broke up in a snowstorm off Seaconnet shore. Though still a young man of 27, Potter never went to sea again. His ships under command of Mark de Wolf continued to amass a fortune in sugar, coffee, indigo, ivory, logwood and slave trade. He invested his spoils in shipping and real estate, owned 11 slaves and was the wealthiest man in Bristol. Potter was involved in many lawsuits and though himself a warden of St. Michaels, his most notorious lawsuit in 1761 involved an attack on Reverend Usher, 73 year old pastor of that church. Reverend Usher had admonished Potter from the pulpit and was accosted by Potter and struck down suffering bodily injury. Reverend Usher brought suit against Potter and Potter frivolously brought suit against the pastor's son. Potter lost both suits and moved to Swansea until public indignation died down. He then returned to Bristol and presented a new bell with French inscription to St. Michaels Church (from the Oyapoc mission).

Now enter Simeon Potter, PATRIOT. In 1772 he took part in the first American action against England. In his own longboat with a crew of Bristol boys, he rowed with muffled oars up Narragansett Bay to participate in burning His Majesty's revenue schooner "Gaspee."

On October 7, 1775, an English squadron of 15 sails approached Bristol from the British garrison at Newport, led by Captain Sir James Wallace aboard the gunboat Rose, and proceeded to cannonade the town. At the height of the bombardment Potter strode alone to the wharthead and signalled for a truce. Wallace ordered Potter to row to the flagship, where he demanded 30 fat cattle and 200 sheep as price of a cease fire. Potter bargained the price down to 40 sheep and no cattle at all. The bombardment ceased, the British returned to Newport, and Simeon was once again hailed as a hero. Potter was in Swansea the day the British burned 32 houses in Bristol including his own and Mark de Wolf's and St. Michael's Church. Following the Revolution, slave trade was revived and under Potter's guidance, Bristol became a smuggler's paradise.

And now enter Simeon Potter -- PHILANTHROPIST. Though he could hardly write, he gave 300 dollars to Bristol to found a public library and name it in his honor and presented the Encyclopedia Britannica in twenty volumes. It was during this period of penance and philanthropy that Potter heard of a lottery to be held by the Trustees of Long Wharf in Newport to raise money for the purpose of building a free public school. On June 12, 1795 Potter deeded to the Trustees two lots of land at the northeast corner of Marsh and Washington Streets containing a large house and oil house to be used as a school or as the trustees direct for a Public Fund to erect a free school in the town of Newport. Simeon Potter did not live to see his house on the Point used as a school. He died on February 20, 1806 at the age of 86, and was buried at the southeast corner of Bristol Common.

From the time of its gift, the property was rented and rents applied to improving the property, and so it continued until 1814. At a meeting of the Trustees of Long Wharf on August 25, 1814, it was resolved to commence a free school in Newport in the Potter House. A contract was made with Elizabeth Finch, wife of Captain Joseph Finch, second floor tenants, to school 25 boys in reading and spelling for the winter at \$1.50 per quarter, 15 dollars to be deducted from their rent each and every quarter and the balance to be paid in cash at the end of each quarter, firewood and books to be furnished by the committee. Joe Gibbs, first floor tenant, who was in arrears in rent was ordered to make necessary changes to the second floor to make a large schoolroom 40 ft. by 15 ft. with two fireplaces. School commenced here on October 3, 1814, and by April 10, 1815, its attendance was increased to 40 boys. At this time Captain Joseph Finch taught writing, arithmetic and navigation. He and his wife were each paid \$1.80 per quarter, and furnish firewood. The school flourished until 1829, when with the death of Captain Finch, it became a school for smaller boys under the care of his widow. In 1832 the Potter house school was discontinued, as Public Schools under town direction were then fully established. The house which had been occupied, was sold at auction in 1834 to George Tilley for \$505.00, and the proceeds deposited in the Savings Bank where accumulated interest amount to \$2,293.38 when withdrawn in 1862 to aid in the erection of Callender School.

In April, 1880, a committee was appointed to confer in regard to building a new school. In November a lot was purchased on Elm Street for \$3,000.00, school plans were approved in December and the following June contract was made with P. G. Case to build the schoolhouse. It was completed in April, 1882, at a total cost of \$21,245.18. The trustees approved the action of the committee in naming it Potter School in honor of Simeon Potter. It was dedicated on August 30, 1882, and for 80 years was an important part of the Newport School system. Many Pointers past and present received a part of their education within its walls. On June 24, 1963, this building, newly renovated, became the Welfare Center of Newport. Simeon Potter, the philanthropist, would surely have agreed that this was fitting and proper.

Louise C. Sherman

Ref. Mount Hope by George Howe

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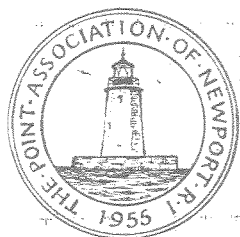
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