

The GREEN

LIGHT



BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

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No. 1

THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING.

The January General Membership Meeting of the Point Association of Newport will be held on Thursday, January 26, 1967, at 8 o'clock at the St. John's Guild Hall on Poplar Street. Admiral Henry Eccles will show his slides of Newport, and especially of the Point. Bring your friends - all are welcome.

The October Meeting.

The annual general membership meeting was held October 26, 1966, in the Guild Hall of St. John's Church, and it was a great pleasure to be back in the familiar hall again. The reports of the secretary and the treasurer were read and approved; the balance on hand is now \$5,621.64.

The report of the nominating committee was read and accepted:

President - Mr. William Fullerton

2nd Vice President - Mr. Arthur Newall

Corresponding Secretary - Mrs. Robert
Lewellen

Nominating Committee for 1967 - Mrs.

Walter Whitley, Mrs. Robert Foley,
and Mrs. William Canole

Presented by the 1966-1967 Nominating

Committee - Mrs. Harold Arnold, Chair-

man; Mrs. Peter Bolhouse, Mrs. Walter

Whitley, Mrs. Gordon Bates, and Mrs.

Francis Carr, Jr.

The Executive Board has approved the publication of a book about Point houses, with their history and pictures. Miss Ade de Bethune will be in charge.

There is still no news about the flagpole from Goat Island which we hope to install in Battery Park.

Admiral Eccles read a resolution to be sent to the City Council, which was discussed at length, and accepted unanimously. The resolution follows.

Mrs. Peter Bolhouse, of the Newport Historical Society, gave a most interest-

ing account of the "Women in the Battle for Rhode Island." She read excerpts from diaries both of the women and their husbands away fighting, and showed what mixed feelings many of them had, and how they had to struggle along, not knowing when they might have to flee.

Refreshments were served by Mrs. Curtiss James, in her usual excellent way.

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The city has finally dug out the cement foundations at the Cross Street Park, a tedious job, as many of them were several feet deep. The Point Association will furnish trees and shrubs to plant it in the spring.

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In May Mrs. Eccles is hoping to have a morning coffee and plant sale, probably on a Saturday toward the end of May when her garden is at its best. So divide your plants, and start seedlings to be ready in time.

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Mrs. Eccles is also the Chairman for the summer Afternoon on the Point. The Committee has not yet decided exactly what the affair will be, but August 21st will probably be the date.

RESOLUTION OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION, NEWPORT, R. I.
October 27, 1966

By the construction of the Jamestown Bridge, by Redevelopment, by the encouragement of yachting, by the promotion of major music festivals, by the phenomenal growth of Historic Preservation and by the expansion of schools and colleges, Aquidneck Island, and particularly Newport, have clearly made their hopes for the future wholly dependent on the good-will and economic support of people coming from other states of the Union.

It is completely clear that within the next few years, this community will have the opportunity to profit greatly and permanently from the cash expenditures of these outside people we are striving so earnestly to attract.

It is also completely clear that the City organization, particularly its law enforcement policies and agencies and police and public works departments are utterly inadequate to cope properly with our present level of activity, let alone the activity that we hope to develop.

The evidence for this is shockingly apparent in the continued filthy condition of our City, the disgraceful vandalism, the waterfront and harbor thievery, and by the general contempt for traffic regulations and laws.

This unhappy situation is due to a variety of causes, some of which are:

The low pay and inadequacy of our Police Department.

The lack of adequate street and sidewalk cleaning.

The slovenly habits of many of our residents.

And from time to time an attitude of discouragement in the City Council and among other public officials.

This last is to a degree caused by years of frustration and disappointment due to an inadequate tax base and consequent budget deficiency, and partly caused by the apathy of the public itself. Regardless of causes, we should remember that public and official apathy feed on each other to the detriment of us all.

If these attitudes and situations are not changed, it is probable that Newport will be faced by a cultural economic disaster when the Bridge opens, for people in search of high-grade recreation will arrive only to find themselves in the midst of a filthy, confused, and disorderly community.

The Point Association therefore calls on the City Council to:

- A. Increase the size of the Police Department and improve its pay, so as to stimulate its morale and improve its effectiveness.
- B. Enforce the laws on littering and publicize the punishment of offenders.
- C. Employ an official Nuisance Inspector to improve compliance with the laws.
- D. Increase street cleaning personnel and equipment and improve harbor and waterfront patrols.
- E. Examine the City Ordinances and improve them where necessary in order to reduce vandalism, public nuisance, and filth.

Well knowing that these proposals will require additional funds to carry out, but being confident that if carried out they will markedly increase the City's tax base and other revenues, the Point Association recommends that the Council immediately make the financial adjustments necessary to pay for these vitally needed improvements.

~~In this connection it must be emphasized that a decrease in littering, vandalism and of traffic and parking violations will decrease the costs of Public works and school maintenance, snow removal and other expenses. Thus these financial adjustments should not necessarily mean any significant increase in the tax rate.~~

The experience of the last few years has clearly shown that when a neighborhood organization takes active constructive measures to improve its own area, the City Council and the public officials have cooperated.

Therefore, The Point Association urges the formation of local neighborhood associations which will work actively to maintain their own areas in a state of order and cleanliness. And it urges individual householders not only to keep their own premises clean, but promptly to report offenses to City officials.

As evidence of its deep concern, The Point Association herewith sets aside One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) to be paid as rewards for information leading to the appre-

hension and punishment of litterers and vandals. Such rewards to be paid as determined by the City Council.

Finally, The Point Association invites the other civic and service organizations of Newport to join in this campaign for order and decency.

December 30, 1966

In addition to the usual fall activities, the Point Association took a major forward step in unanimously passing and sending to the City Council and other officials and organizations its Resolution of October 27, 1966, which is printed in this issue of the Green Light. This Resolution had been carefully prepared and discussed several times by the Executive Committee before it was presented to the general membership at the fall meeting. Its publication aroused both concern and enthusiasm. The City Manager made an excellent special report. The Newport Daily News on November 12, 1966, published a fine strong editorial endorsement. In the last two months various civic organizations and individuals have also endorsed the Point position.

In these endorsements and in the action taken by City officials, the element of a cleaner Newport has been stressed. Those of us who are in touch with the situation believe that substantial progress has been made and more can be expected.

We cannot, however, take the situation for granted. There must be a continuing follow-up and follow-through, not only by the City officials, but by the individual citizens of Newport. While the necessity for a clean Newport is obvious, we must not forget that even more important and more fundamental is the problem of a general civic improvement. This takes in two major areas.

First is the improvement in traffic conditions, the reduction of vandalism and theft, and the improvement of harbor policing and patrol.

Second, we must achieve a better sense of Island-wide cooperation in many areas. This Island community must have a consolidated refuse and garbage disposal facility, constructed and located so that Newport, Middletown, Portsmouth and the Navy all participate in its construction, operation and in the benefits to be achieved thereby. This is an inevitable and necessary development. The sooner specific planning starts, the cheaper it will be to construct the facility and the greater will be the community benefits attained.

The Point Association expects to do its share in promoting this work.

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In early December the Point Association submitted to the City officials its plan for the ultimate development of Storer Park - the area between the Hunter House and the new Causeway to Goat Island. Again, this was the result of very careful planning and consultation, climaxed by the very special work of Miss Ade de Bethune and Mr. Thomas Benson who drew up and reproduced the final plan. Of course, this plan still must be considered by the City authorities and must wait for some time before it can be accomplished. Nevertheless, we feel that it is another significant step toward the improvement of the Point and Newport as a whole.

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Now that the Point Association is getting a reputation for interest in civic affairs, it means a great deal to us to be able to say we speak for 400 Newport members. We are not quite that many so far this year, but if our members will send their dues, we'll have well over 400, not counting all our more distant friends.

Have you a dollar left today?
Mail it, and send it on its way.

CHRISTMAS ON THE POINT

This year our Christmas celebration was held the Sunday before Christmas on December 18th at 5 o'clock, and we all felt it was the best one yet. The weather was good, and the place (next to Grafton House at St. John's) lies sheltered from the icy gales we usually had at Battery Park. The tree we planted last summer near Grafton House is flourishing, and was officially blessed by Father Turnbull when the lights were lighted. Everyone sang carols enthusiastically, and all ages enjoyed it. Afterward we adjourned to the Guild Hall, and had cake and hot cocoa, and a good talk with all our friends, many old, but also many new ones to welcome.

The judging of the Christmas decorations came on December 26th. The judges were: Mrs. Glenn Nippert, Mr. Richard Combs, and Mr. Richard Grosvenor. The winners:

Most artistic - Mr. and Mrs. George Weaver

Honorable mention - Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Mahoney

The true spirit of Christmas - Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Bryer

The best effect in lighting - Mr. and Mrs. Howard Nagle

Honorable mention - Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Young

INCIDENTS AT CALLENDER SCHOOL

Life in this school at the turn of the century was happy. It was a glorious time when one was old enough to be accepted as a new pupil in the entering class. Children were welcomed by two understanding teachers and a new life with gentle discipline was opened up before the wondering eyes of the newcomer. The music - how many remember among our songs "See my dog, nice old Carl - He will neither bite nor snarl - Come up close, do not fear" etc., or "Come little leaves said the wind one day - Come over the meadows with me and play - Put on your dresses of green and gold - Summer is over and the days grow cold" etc. Next learning to stand properly, salute the flag, march in step, handwork, patterns, and above all learning to be an agreeable classmate. Then June came, and "promotion day" to Grade One, where you learned to read and write, the opening of a whole new world. Now we're in Grade 2, where a kind principal was also the teacher. Work became more difficult, but we were still happy, as everyone was waiting for the eventful day in December when by magic through that round circular opening in the ceiling Santa Claus lowered a large, very large, bundle, and in that bundle was a package for everyone. June came again, and we moved to Grade 3, where we began to hear about strange things like the North Pole, etc., with another wonderful teacher to guide us.

Patriotic celebrations were always in order, as at that time on Lincoln's Birthday we could always count on a visit from members of the Grand Army. The production was usually a portrayal of Betsy Ross making the first flag of our country for George Washington. The aspiring young actors for these parts looked forward, hoping to be chosen, as early as Grade 2. One young heroine, whose sister had been the leading lady a few years before, and who knew all the songs, how to fold the paper and cut the star, spent many anxious moments offering in a gentle manner her suggestions on whom to choose (herself). The day of selection arrived, and lo, she was not chosen. Rehearsals went on, and one sad soul longingly stood by. Then, the day before production, the chosen Betsy Ross became ill to the director's sorrow, and our self-appointed understudy was welcomed eagerly, and a "Star was Born" at Callender School. Such is perseverance.

Another February event was the annual Valentine Box, followed by the big question - "Who received the most Valentines?"

In Spring, Arbor Day, with tree planting and various poems and celebrations, was a happy occasion.

All these events combined to make our first school a happy, happy memory.

THAMES STREET, 80 YEARS AGO

By William Holt, Captain of Van Zandt Pier
(From the Newport Daily News of June 24, 1921)

As I have read so much about ancient Newport of late, the stories that have been told about it, and the question has been asked who can go back of them, I feel as if I had been challenged to state how far back I can go.

I wrote some three years ago that my business when a boy from 10 to 16 years old was that of selling fish and lobsters out of a wheelbarrow. As there were no fish markets in Newport at that time, you see I had quite an experience of Thames Street as I stopped on the corners to sell my fish. At the age of 16 my calling was on the water; that was about the time Bailey and the others who tell what they know and have heard of were born, about 1847. They can perhaps tell more about Thames Street after that date than I, as I had very little use of Thames Street after that date.

I will start at the north of Thames Street on the west side, but will not pretend to treat every building or shop, as a great many of them were tenement houses that have since been made into shops. Opposite the old cemetery lived John Braman, the father of David Braman. Then there were a number of vacant lots until we come to the corner of Poplar Street where Lewis Lawton Simmons built his house. On the south corner was the Fales house, and next came the Wanton Ellery house in which lived four boys, William, Christopher, Benjamin and George, also two girls. I went to school with three of the boys. Next came the Doctor Saunders house, then several tenement houses. I remember one Katie Hall kept a little shop and sold candy, cakes and pies. She had one son Benjamin with whom I went to school. There was a house before you come to the Stevens' stone cutters shop, and I would mention that Samuel Marsh, grandfather to Samuel Marsh, now the undertaker, owned Gould Island at one time and he struck a vein of very soft black slate stone and brought some of it to town and he opened a room in that house where he and his son Johnston manufactured it into stove polish, labeling it "British Luster." From the stone cutters shop we come to the Captain William Messer house, who had one son Thomas who was about my age. At the corner of Cross Street and Bridge Street stands the Captain George Burdick house now occupied by Hurley, the painter.

It will perhaps be of interest to some to learn how Bridge Street got its name. There was a bridge built across the street about where the railroad crossing is now. The water as it ebbed and flowed ran beneath the bridge to Elm Street so that you would address any person living on that street as living on Point Bridge and when the streets were named it was called Bridge Street.

At the corner of Bridge Street Hanson Hull kept a grocery shop. He had one daughter who became the wife of Edward Marsh, the undertaker. Next was the residence of Daniel Dunham, father of David C. Dunham, the jeweler. There lived on the corner of what is now called Cozzens Court a Mrs. Allen. The house was torn down, and James Albro the boat builder built the one that now stands there. There was no Cozzens Court or Hazardsville in those days, as the water from the Cove flowed up within three or four hundred feet of Thames Street. What is called the Cozzens house was then occupied by Peter Turner, brother of Dr. Henry Turner.

Next stood the Simon Hart house, where James, his son, the boat builder, lived and died, next the Lacell house where an old colored man lived whose name was Cosh Moyet. This house was torn down and Dr. Jackson built his residence there which is now the Mt. Olivet Church. Next comes the house of Micah Spencer, a house carpenter, then the John Stacy house on the north corner of what is now called West Marlborough Street. There was no street then, as the water from the Cove flowed to the place where the engine house stands. I do not remember much about the south corner until we come to the Stephen Northam estate which was bought by William Southwick, where his wife, Fannie, kept a millinery shop. I knew Mr. Northam quite well as an old man. In his younger days he ran a distillery back of his house where vessels came in with cargoes of molasses which he manufactured into rum.

We have now arrived at the north corner of Long Wharf where I remember Thurston Almy kept rum and groceries for sale. I can see the old man now with his spectacles up over his forehead as he usually wore them. On the south corner is the Old City Hall where the lower floor was used by the butchers as a market; it was divided into

four stalls, my uncle Nathaniel Holt occupying one of them and Perry Irish and Wanton and Thomas Sherman the other three. The upper floor was used for the Probate Court and other city purposes. The west end on Long Wharf was used for the watch house. Next is the place where Epherame (sp?) Irish kept his drug and herb shop, and when he moved out, Katie Hazzard moved her crockery business from Washington Square down to that shop. Erastus Allen was her salesman and afterwards became the owner. Beside that stood Sherman Dry Goods shop, what is now the Century Store. This was kept by Job Sherman. I can remember him as he was a real old-fashioned Quaker; he had five sons, William, David, Edward, Albert, and Rowland. All five were in business on Thames Street, William and David holding the old stand. Next to Sherman's stood a house owned and occupied by two old ladies named Rodman. Then comes Marsh's Court. On the north corner was George Faisneau's barber shop. I remember him. On the other side of the court was a tenement house where Robert Wilson - they used to call him Dr. Wilson - opened a room and kept shop, his brother Frank being his salesman. That is now Doran's.

Next is the corner of Swan's Wharf where Harvey Sessions kept a dry goods shop. He was an invalid, and rode around the shop in a wheel chair. It is now the Five and Ten Cent store. Beside the Harvey Sessions house stood the Robert Lawton house. I think he was a retired Navy man. It is now the Boston Store. Next was the John Sherman wood and coal wharf; at the head stood the building that burned down some years ago where James Sherman kept a tailoring establishment. One of my older sisters learned her trade there. It is now the Bee Hive. Next to that stood what was then Zenos Hammond's paint shop which is now the William K. Covell block. Next is where Amon Parmenter and his brother opened their dry goods shop, and next the Swinburne coal yard. I don't recollect the building that stood where the gas building now stands. Then came the J. M. K. Southwick store now kept by William Tibbetts, then the DuBlois house which was owned by Gorton Anderson's wife, which was raised and occupied by his barber shop. Next was the building that John Denham raised and occupied as a dry goods and millinery shop.

Next comes the place where Joseph Hammett kept his tailor shop and sold ready made clothing. There is no doubt some who remember him as he went about the shop with his tape measure around his shoulders and his snuff box in his pocket as he was a great snuff taker. That building is now Perry's Coal office. Then comes Lopez Wharf where George Eng's carried on the lumber and hardware business with the golden eagle over the front, afterwards carried on by the Finch and Eng's Company. Next was the Daily News building which was built by Daniel Swinburne and August Goff. Joseph Weaver kept a hat shop on that site, before the present Daily News building was erected. Somewhere in this vicinity George Lindon had a lottery shop. He was post boy and delivered all the mail around the town from a small basket. Next to the Daily News building stood the William Stevens paint shop. He was the father of Henry Stevens, the banker. Then the Swinburne and Peckham hardware shop, then the bank which is now occupied by the Sheffield law office, then the Titus building where Alfred Barker and his brother kept a furniture shop; then came George Cole's grocery shop, afterwards made into the bank, where Benjamin Mumford was the cashier, then the Robert Barker wholesale liquor shop, left him by his father. Next to the shop where Philip Rider's father kept an assortment of candies and cakes, I used to buy those little sponge cakes for one cent that we pay 5 for now; that is where James Eddy is now located.

Then comes the corner of Ferry Wharf, where George Norman, the waterworks man, first went into business keeping a shoe shop. On the south corner John Cranston kept a grocery and bar where he sold drinks. There was a small building in his yard on Ferry Wharf where the first ice was stored in the town, Mr. Daniel Cook, the house carpenter, acting as agent for the company and delivering ice from there. That was about 1845 or 6. On the north corner of Bowen Wharf George and Edward Tilley kept rope for sale, on the south was the Post Office kept by Robinson Carr, then the bank, then the barber shop kept by George Nason, father of George and Thomas Nason. Then came William Brownell, the tinsmith, then Bannister's Wharf, on the south side of which was a building where two brothers named Price had a wholesale business; they had old scales with a standard on the floor and a beam across the top and two platforms, one attached to each end of the beam by chains. I remember going by one day and seeing

them packing codfish on one of the platforms, then putting the iron weights on the other platform to balance. In those days the fish were put up in 112 pound packages called a kentle. The iron weights were marked 56, 28, 14, and 7 pounds. I supposed the fish came from Block Island; all codfish was salted in those days. It is now George Stanhope's shop.

Next was John Stacy's grocery shop and then Simeon Davis' bakery. Then I must skip down to Sayer's Wharf with his shop on the corner, next door to Wait's Wharf where Thomas Seabury kept a boarding house. I have carried many a mess of lobsters down there to him. I can remember when John Cozzens, the clothing dealer, first came here and boarded with him and later married his daughter. Next comes Commercial Wharf, and next the Langley Wharf. I remember the brothers who carried on business from there. Then comes the Perry Mill, then Hammett's Wharf and hardware shop. Below that was the ship yard that was managed by Silas Cottrell. The last whaling ship that belonged here was built by him and named "Damon." Joseph Rector had a grocery shop below that and farther down were the old woolen mills.

(This ends the west side of Thames Street and we shall skip the east side. Anyone interested, can look it up in the paper at the Historical Society.)

Since writing the above I have thought of several old timers of whom I shall speak. There was Albert Sherman who kept a dry goods shop on the lower Main Street and Christopher Handy; then there was Rowland Sherman, who was salesman for his brother Edward for a great many years. There was also an old Frenchman we called Daddy Mias who sold his fish and lobsters out of a wheelbarrow at the corner of Town Hall; then, at the corner of Ferry Wharf George Sherman stood with his meat wagon and sold meat until 12 o'clock; his cousin Perry Sherman had his meat wagon at the corner of Bannister's Wharf. In the afternoon they would go up to the slaughter house and load up their wagons for the next morning's trade. Then there was William Record, he would take his wheelbarrow on Sunday mornings and go down the road that is now called Bellevue Avenue to the Boat House and get a load of lobsters, and sell them at the corner of Bannister's Wharf. I also remember a good many of the old men of these times - Captains Robinson Potter, Seth Macy, Samuel Bailey, Stephen and Robert Gardner, Captain Bigley, Bryer Wait, Bennie Freebody and Kelly Peckham. David Holloway kept a grocery shop on Perry Wharf and Andrew Melvill kept an eating house, Thomas Peckham a grog shop, and Minturn Hall a grocery shop, all on Ferry Wharf. Then last, but not least of all there was Ned Willis, a portly old man weighing about 250 pounds. They said he used to be one of the home talent actors and took part when they played Romeo and Juliet in the Old City Hall, when the upper story was used as a theatre.

Say! Do any younger old timers that have been talking so much about ancient Newport know anything about these old-fashioned fireplaces, as I do with the andirons standing in each corner to lay the wood on, and the crane that used to swing out and in over the fire with hooks on it to hang the kettles on. I remember the baking pan with a bail on it that it might hang on the crane; the cover had a rim around it about an inch high. Mother would have a good fire going, then she would put the bread in the pan, place the cover on, hang it over the crane and swing it over the fire and shovel some of the coals on the cover to bake the top. The rim around the cover kept the coals from falling off. Then the johnny cake board made of hard oak, about 15 inches long and 8 inches wide. Mother would mix the cake and put it out on the board about an inch thick and stand it on the brick hearth close to the fire.

I tell you I don't taste anything now-a-days any better than those biscuits and johnny cakes did. They were mixed out of the pure stuff, no patent yeast cakes or baking powder to puff them up to make them seem more than they were. Then, when the weather became cool, the old wood stove was set up with its wings on each side and the furnace in the middle to put the wood in. I remember that old stove quite well as it was my lot to saw and split wood enough to fill the old fireplace full to the top every night for use the next day, and Saturday there had to be two days supply to last over Sunday as my father brought me up to keep the Sabbath and I never forgot, as I followed my business, for 68 years I never hauled a lobster pot or wet a line on Sunday.

I was about eighteen when we bought our first coal stove and I tell you my mother was pleased when she could put in a hod of coal to last hours instead of watching to

see that the wood fire did not burn out. That is a long time ago but those days are as fresh in my memory as if they were yesterday. I am now in my ninety first year, but I can do a good day's work now, such as painting roofs, ceilings and walls with the aid of a ladder, and Dr. Sullivan, who looks after me, says that if I don't fall off the ladder and break my neck I may live to a good old age.

Well, I have sailed a good many different crafts and been through some rough water and had a great many hard knocks but last of all of them is this; I met Dr. Storer one day and he congratulated me upon being commissioned captain of Van Zandt pier. I managed her for three years. In the winter there came a storm and drove her from her moorings onto the lea shore and she became a total wreck. It was two years before the owners could be persuaded to build a new one to take her place; they did finally and gave her the same name, Van Zandt Pier. The small amount of funds appropriated was not enough to rig her properly. However, she has a staunch hull and is fastened to the old moorings; she really needs seats with an awning over them. When the passengers come on board, they find it rather tiring to stand in the hot sun, therefore have to go below and wait for the evening breeze. It is now about 8 bells, so I shall take my watch below.

William Holt was born on the Point in 1831, he married Sarah Groff, lived on Poplar Street near Third, and died in 1932, aged 101 years. Some of you can remember him walking every day up to Van Zandt Pier with his broom to keep his ship clean.