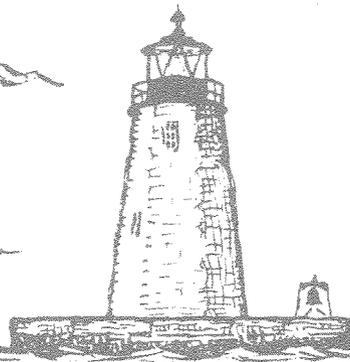


The GREEN

LIGHT



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APRIL MEETING OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION

The April meeting of the Point Association of Newport will be held on Thursday, April 22nd, at St. John's Guild Hall on Poplar Street. For the first time we are having a Pot Luck supper with Mrs. Elster in charge. She has had pot luck suppers all over the world and says they are easy, and lots of fun. The committee members will call (and if you are not called, call Mrs. Elster, 847-0563) to see how many of your family can come, and whether you want to bring meat, vegetables, or dessert. We plan meat loaf, scalloped potatoes, carrots, or any other vegetable, and pie - perhaps apple. If one of your family is coming, you bring three servings of the course you prefer; if two are coming, you bring six servings of the food you choose, and so on up. So each one gets plenty of variety, and you serve yourselves. Coffee for everyone will be furnished. The supper will begin at 6:30, so come early. After the food, Bill Fullerton will talk about gardens, and hopes many of you will ask questions.

JANUARY MEETING

The January meeting was a joint meeting with the Island Ecology group. The Guild Hall was packed with interested Newporters. Mrs. Grosvenor and Mrs. Milman spoke briefly but enthusiastically about the work of the Island Ecology group. Following this, the meeting was turned over to two men who spoke about the methods by which solid waste can be treated other than incineration. Mr. John Giglio described the huge pulverizing machine which his company has successfully erected in many parts of Europe. His slides of this machine in operation were most impressive. Next Mr. Freeman, who is associated with the All-American Engineering Company, read a paper explaining his company's methods. The All-American Engineering Company has a far more ambitious program, separating the various disposables, and recycling glass and paper. The final product of both companies is a valuable compost, which can be used for land fill, and enriching gardens and soil. The cost of the recycling per ton of solid waste is far less than that of incineration. Everyone was extremely interested by these new ideas, and many pertinent questions were asked. As a special favor, small packets of the compost were given out to the audience.

The meeting was adjourned, and refreshments were served.

BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Bill-Fullerton reports for the Beautification Committee that this year he is concentrating on the Cross Street Park and hopes to finish it this spring. There are a few wooden posts with chain links joining them, to be added to the ones already in place. Rhododendrons, dogwood, azaleas, etc., will be planted and a good ground cover will be added; hopefully most of these will need little care once they are established. This will take the place of the tree and shrub planting. The window boxes will not be filled again this year as many of them dried up last summer and the low boxes were too

tempting to the children who could not resist pulling out the plants, and even breaking up the boxes. If you want to plant your own box, it will be much appreciated, but please do not bring them back to Bill, as he has no storage room for them.

THE SPRING PLANT SALE

The Spring plant sale will be held this year on Saturday, May 22nd, at 10:00 A.M. in the Eccles' driveway. Mrs. Sargent and Mrs. Bates will be in charge and we hope for our annual deluge of plants. It doesn't matter what they look like, just treat them tenderly, and be sure to talk sweetly to them, and they will surprise you. Last year Mr. Spooner filled the geranium boxes in Battery Park, and we hope to do even better this year.

If you have by far too many flowers,
Dig them all up, and fill the holes with ours.

A WALK IN THE DARK IN 17TH CENTURY NEWPORT

Frank Goldie, in the January Green Light, mentioned the two sisters who lived in the present MacLeod House on Washington Street when he was a boy. They were two Philadelphia Quakers named Shipley, and were very proper. One of them was coming home after dark, when she realized she was being followed. She came to a street light, turned around, threw back the veil covering her face, and said, "Dost thou believe in Jesus?"

THE GREEN LIGHT has so far this year 461 paid members -- Local, 369 and Off Island, 92, which is nearly all the members. If you don't get your April Green Light, you might just possibly have forgotten your dues.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN ? Written by Mildred Goddard Rogers shortly before her death
last year.

The tramps coming down the railroad track and begging food at the homes on the Point -- at some places they would get good handouts so that they would move along and not do any damage.

An old farmer from Middletown named Dan Smith came to the Point two or three times a week and all the people would buy big pitchers of skim milk and vegetables. That milk was so good, and we would drink it all summer long.

Every year a man came selling blueberries, and also a man with a big wooden pail selling freshly ground horse radish.

Along the shore there was an open field where the Naval Hospital now is, where every year there was a big patch of wild strawberries; when ripe they were so sweet and we would eat and eat.

The nice well water that we were allowed to get at Covell's well.

Gathering horse chestnuts every fall at the big tree by St. John's Guild Hall and at Cunningham's (Stella Maris) on the Second Street side -- we raced to see who would get the most.

To walk out to the end of Third Street, cross the railroad track, and gather blueberries near Duffy's farm.

Old Home Week in August; one of the night parades would come up Thames from the Square, go down Poplar to Washington, down to Bridge and up Bridge back to Thames Street, amid numerous red lights and confetti.

Tripp's fire engine from the Bridge and Third Street station would hold a practise once or twice a year at the corner of Third and Willow Streets and everyone would turn out to see the pumper get hot.

A man with a fish cart came around the Point and blew his horn, and the women would buy nice fresh fish from him.

We went to watch the loading of the Fall River Line, especially after the summer Horse Show, when people would go to see the beautiful horses.

(From the Providence Sunday Journal, August 9, 1891) NEWPORT'S NEW PARK - FORT GREENE

The recent transfer of Old Fort Greene to the City of Newport by the War Department for use as a public park and pleasure ground, suggests a brief survey of the history of this beautiful spot. Lying far north on Washington Street on the upper harbor front, it is outside the beaten track of travel, and save for a few who have known and loved its natural beauties, has been deserted to the fisherman resting from drawing his nets, and the children of the neighborhood at their simple sports.

In March, 1776, the patriotic citizens of Newport, in common with their fellows throughout the colonies, rejoiced greatly at the repeal of the obnoxious stamp act. On the 18th of that month, on the site where afterwards was built Fort Greene, they fired a "royal salute" in celebration of that event. Less than a month later, from the same spot, pealed forth a very different sort of salute, for one day in April of that year, the British ship Scarborough, 20 guns, and Cinetar, 18 guns, anchored with their two prizes just south of Rose Island, in the outer harbor. Boat crews from Providence recaptured these prizes, and with the aid of a battery thrown up in a single night on North Point, the present site of Fort Greene, compelled the British vessels to seek refuge under the shore of Conanicut Island. Thence they were driven by a battery at the Dumplings, and put to sea under a vigorous cannonade from Brenton's Point and Castle Hill batteries.

Among other fortifications in Narragansett Bay which were reconstructed and strengthened shortly after this, as hostilities with Great Britain became more and more imminent, was this improvised battery at North Point, which was considerably enlarged and armed with 12 guns. These guns were a part of the hundred or more captured with other considerable munitions of war, at Nassau in the Bahama Islands by Commodore Hopkins, a brave Rhode Islander who commanded a squadron of light vessels, carrying about 100 guns fitted out in 1776 under authority of the marine committee of Congress. The battery as then laid out was not in the later semi-elliptical form, but showed on the water side an irregular broken line, with a certain suggestion of a curve, however, ending at the southwest corner in a sharp point or angle. The original number of 12 guns must soon have increased, as a chart of Narragansett Bay, made by one Blaskowitz in 1777 gives the armament of the North Battery as 20 guns, 18 and 20 pounders.

For two or three years during the Revolutionary War, as is well known, Newport and the Island of Rhode Island were occupied by British troops, who of course controlled and garrisoned the various military fortifications in the vicinity. When on August 8, 1778, the French fleet under D'Estaing entered the harbor for the relief of the city, and again as a few days later it sailed out to meet Lord Howe's fleet, it suffered considerable damage from the heavy cannonading maintained by the British batteries at Castle Hill, Brenton's Point, Goat Island, and North Point, or Fort Greene. Late in October, 1779, when the British finally evacuated Newport, leaving it almost literally a desolate waste, they levelled and destroyed the North Point battery. But during the following year, under the French occupation of the city, and with the assistance of the Rhode Island militia, all the works destroyed by the British forces were repaired, remodelled, and greatly strengthened. After the departure of the French fleet and army in 1781, the General Assembly of the State still further increased the efficiency of the North Battery by adding materially to the number of guns there mounted.

In 1798-1780 when war with France seemed probable, all the defenses of Narragansett Bay were repaired, enlarged, and rebuilt. This work, including the construction of Fort Adams, much the largest and most important fortification ever erected hereabouts, was in charge of Major Louis Tousard. At this time there was constructed on North Point an "elliptical stone scarp" battery for 12 or 13 guns. This fort had much the same outlines and general appearances shown at the present day, and when completed was named Fort Greene in honor of Rhode Island's most distinguished Revolutionary general.

Not since the war of 1812 has Fort Greene been garrisoned for actual service. The precise date when the guns were dismounted and its little band of defenders dispersed it is difficult at this late day definitely to determine, but it was probably between 1820-1830. In the early twenties, as is recalled by a few of Newport's older citizens,

the cannon still remained in position behind the ramparts, and the otherwise deserted fortification was left in the guardianship and care of one man, styled the "Keeper." Soon after even this small garrison was withdrawn from duty, leaving the place to sink year by year into the gray and ancient ruin of today. A high board fence still marked the limits of the enclosure. But this too some years ago yielded to the ravages of time and decay, and in the interests of safety was removed, since which time the ground has been open to the public to come and go at will.

In 1884 when William P. Sheffield temporarily occupied the seat of Henry B. Anthony in the United States Senate, a bill was introduced in that body by Mr. Sheffield looking to the transfer of Fort Greene to the City of Newport for park purposes. In 1886 Mayor Powel of Newport announced to the City Council that he had received information from Colonel Elliott in charge of the U. S. Engineers' Office in Newport that all the necessary steps for turning the fort over to the care and custody of the city had been taken by the War Department, and only the final passage of the bill by the U. S. Senate was necessary for the transfer. It was not until February 1887 that the act was finally passed by both houses of Congress and became law. The grant was subject to such conditions as might be prescribed by the Secretary of War. In September 1887 the conditions upon which the fort would be ceded to the city, a revocable license, naming certain conditions and agreements to be entered into, was presented to the Newport Common Council. The most important condition is that when the Secretary of War shall elect and give notice of such election to the public authorities of the said City of Newport, the use of the said property shall cease and be terminated, and upon such termination the U. S. may lawfully enter and occupy the same. The Council adopted a resolution authorizing His Honor the Mayor, in behalf of the city, to accept the grant of Fort Greene upon the conditions imposed by the Secretary of War. The Board of Aldermen, however, declined to concur in the action taken, on the ground that the expense of repairing the badly crumbling walls and putting the old fort in a suitable and safe condition, for use as a public park, estimated by the City Engineer as some \$1,200 to \$1,500 was greater than the value of the spot to the city for such purposes. This lack of concurrent action effectively disposed of the subject for the time being. At a meeting of the City Council in July 1888, a resolution authorizing the Mayor to accept the grant upon the conditions formerly named, was presented, and readily accepted by both boards.

The committee on city property at a meeting of the City Council asked for an appropriation of \$1,500 to place the grounds in suitable condition for public use.

The Daily News -- August 22, 1891

The work of changing old Fort Greene from an ancient shore battery into a battery park is progressing rapidly under the charge of the committee on parks and public property. The old fort was found to be much more substantial than was at first thought. The light outer wall of brick, supposed to be the only masonwork in the defense wall, was found to be merely a facing to a substantial stone wall, laid in lime mortar, which made it nearly as solid as a rock. About ten feet inside of this was another mortar wall, the space between being filled with dirt, which was nearly as dry as that seen on streets that have not been sprinkled. The roof of the magazine, into which so many generations of Newport boys have wished to peep, was also a very solid structure, evidently able to keep out any of the missiles of those days. The wall has been cut down and the hollow in the fort filled up about on a level with the old gun platforms, and the edge of the parapet will be capped by a stone curbing and an iron railing. After the place is sodded, it will make an attractive spot.

(With many thanks to Mrs. Gladys Bolhouse.)