

The ^{new}

GREEN

LIGHT ^F



BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

Vol. XXI

July 1976

No. 3

OUR VARIED VISITORS RECOGNIZE AN IMPORTANT AREA

Now that the summer season has begun, we realize just how important our historic section is. We know that Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip will view the Point, traveling through Washington Street. We're aware, too, that thousands during TALL SHIPS WEEK will be visually evaluating us -- historically, architecturally, horticulturally, and in whatever other way may interest them. But, did you know that "Mrs. Duck" and her new family of six ducklings had visited us as well? Marching down Katzman Place, Third Street, Chestnut Street and Second Street, they nestled in a corner of my yard, while their mother flew overhead. They didn't stay long anywhere and we learned that their new home is at Prescott Farm.

Thanks for the continuing pride in the area. Restoration, renovation, and general sprucing up is evident everywhere; within a very short time the detoured traffic will leave the Point as road construction progresses and Farewell Street reopens.

Please support your Point Association Tall Ships program and the annual Day on the Point Fair. HAVE A GREAT SUMMER and store up any interesting summer stories for future Green Light consideration.

JOSEPH P.T. VARS
President

ATTENTION!

"DAY ON THE POINT"

ATTENTION!

Your attention is called regarding White Elephants for the Point Association Booth. If you have items to donate, please call Mrs. Odell Favier, Washington Street, and she will arrange to have them picked up -- or drop them off at her house if you prefer (41 Washington Street).

We have been given a beautiful reproduction "Newport, Queen Anne Chair" to be auctioned off during the Fair. It was presented by Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Campbell of Bridge Street. This chair was made by Mr. Campbell's shop in Maine. We are very grateful for this contribution and wish to thank the Campbells.

Please, you, dig out some items for us to auction off at the Fair. Call me at 847-5163, and I'm sure we can pick them up at a later date.

Anyone wanting SPACE on the street FOR THE FAIR call me as I have just two (2) left.

Don't forget to tell all your friends -- and come to the Fair yourself.

August 21, 1976, 10 A.M. until 5 P.M.

Refreshment Booth under new management this year.

CALL - Mrs. John Wilson (Edith) if you have items to donate for the Grandmothers® Table.

CALL - Miss Rosalys Hall, 6 Coddington Street, if you have Children's Books or Toys to donate.

William H. Fullerton, Chairman
"Day on the Point"

Dows anyone have an empty garage or shed where we can store some items until the Fair? We are desperate.

Under no circumstances would you be held responsible for them.

WELCOME TO ALL NEW MEMBERS

Mr. and Mrs. James Bartram, Jr.	Mr. Charles A. Bobeck
Mrs. Louise M. Browne	Mrs. Edward J. Butler, Jr.
Mr. Wesley Cayle	Mrs. Marie Cross
Mrs. Ernest B. Dane	Mr. and Mrs. Walter Everett
Miss Dorothy Fillebrown	Mr. Jerry Finn
Mrs. Polly S. Foley	Mrs. Heather Howard
J & J Point Deli	Col. and Mrs. William Jones
Miss Theresa Kelly	Mr. Peter Kent
Martin's Liquors	Mrs. Herry Naumer
Miss Ann Regan	Miss Elizabeth Russell
Mrs. T. L. Sears	Mr. and Mrs. Finton Wallace II
Miss Gertrude Walters	Mr. and Mrs. J. Watterson

Members new and old -

Enclosed you will find a form which we hope you will fill out and return to us, either by mail - Post Office Box 491, Newport, R. I. 02840 - or at the Waters Edge or at Martin's Liquors. We want to know what you'd enjoy doing for the Point -- I like to sew -- I like to carpenter -- I can boss the job -- If someone will boss the job, I'll -- What we want above all, however, is to know you and make you enjoy the Point. If, for instance, you find it hard to get around at night, write that in, too, and perhaps someone can pick you up for meetings, etc. We would like volunteers who will take care of welcoming new residents (and possibly new members) along their streets. Write on the form if you can help us spread the welcome.

Ann Huot

Mrs. Byron Dexter and Mrs. Robert Covell, together with our president, Mr. Vars, have recently been elected to the R. I. Council of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities

"H" you have corrected my typo and answered your own question; it was of course, "Were you brought up in a mill?" and your own grandmother might ask although she knew perfectly well you were not being brought up there.

"He sat there like a Stoughton bottle." (Fixed, unresponding, just dully there). A contributor sent this in. I asked several people about it; the saying was new to me. I found my answer in my beloved Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, Stoughton bottle - a bottle containing Stoughton's Elixir, a tincture of wormwood, germander, rhubarb, orange peel, cascarilla and aloes, once widely used as a flavoring for alcoholic drinks and as a tonic. -- to sit, stand, etc. like a Stoughton bottle - to sit, stand, etc. stolidly and dumbly.

Another contribution - "Now, children, whittle your plates clean."

"Mend your clothes upon your back, poverty you'll never lack."

"Go fish or cut bait!" This if you stood by jawing at a busy man. Or, I long to use it to one elected to office who now sits around saying what the other officers are not doing.

"She's too airy fairy Lilian for me." There once was a lovely lady who made a theatrical success of floating about the stage. Separated from her, the saying grew to be not nearly so complimentary.

My friend's Irish mother never said, "Don't worry," she said, "Rest your heart." The driven snow was no whiter than her counterpanes; her whole house shone, yet if you mentioned cobwebs in yours, she'd demand, "And why not? 'Tis just the fairies spreading their laces."

It is well known that some of the Southern soldiers in the Civil War had never been taught what "left" and "right" meant. To train them, wisps of hay were tied to one ankle, and wisps of straw to the other. They drilled to "HAY foot. STRAW foot!" This soon led to a bit of doggerell:

"HAY foot, STRAW foot!
Yippy - i - aidees
Whaddo we care for the Boston ladies!"

~~Reproachful comment for not finding something near at hand:
" 'Been a bear - it woulda bitcha!"~~

Permission to eat a drumstick by picking it up - a rather smug: "Fingers were made before forks!"

My father when young loitered at the lunch call so that his beloved cockney nursemaid, Mary Thompson, would call: " 'ARRY, 'ARRY, Come HUP to the 'ouse!" It reminded him of Mary when years later he learned that in the War of 1812 when the British were "impressing" American seamen into their Navy -- they used to make the victims recite " Hurry, hurry, hurry, along the high, hard road!"

EDITH BALLINGER PRICE, everyone here knows, was the first editor of The Green Light. She did much of the writing and all of the illustrating and bringing forth, The noble green light of our masthead, the small one in the colophon, are both hers. Edith Ballinger Price is also a distinguished author of young people's books, a courageous civic leader, ~~She~~ is much missed here.

It is altogether fitting, we are proud, to have our original editor a part of this special issue with her poem.

THE TALL SHIPS

Back to the welcoming harbor of the past
They come at last!
Square rig and towering mast
Again shall print their pattern on the sky;
The sea gulls, wheeling high,
Shall greet them with a shrill, remembering cry.

Perhaps, when in the watches of the night
Only a riding-light
Shows them in shadowy sight,
Warehouse and wharf long gone will ghostly wake,
And for their sake
Into old business silently will break.

Turn back the centuries and bid them come!
Relive the hum
Of ancient commerce - and the drum
That sounded Freedom far across the main.
'Tis not in vain
The Ships to Newport Harbor come, again!

Edith Ballinger Price

Our recent Green Light gave us some delightful pictures of life on our waterfront. Living on our shores gave pleasure to the very young and the very old. Previous generations have commented on this fact also. One writer, Thomas Higginson, left much testimony. In a series of vignettes called Oldport Days he has recorded impressions of little corners of Newport, detailed and graphic. He pictures an old wharf, a "haunted" house, the wreck of an old slave ship, and the town's Green. Higginson loved the Point and frequently rowed his boat back and forth from Battery Park. One time he watched a burning ship sink off the Point shore. It was the Trajan, bound from Camden to New Orleans, which had taken refuge in our harbor when a fire broke out in its cargo of lime. The crew escaped unharmed, and the vessel was towed to a depth of five fathoms to be scuttled. Higginson says:

That vessel came in here one day last August, a stately, full-sailed bark, nor was it known until she had anchored, that she was a mass of imprisoned fire below... I watched her go down.... it was something stately and very pathetic to the imagination. The bark remained almost level, the bows a little higher than her stern; and her breath appeared to be surrendered in a suffocating wave. The face of the benign Emperor Trajan was on the stern; first sank the carven beard, then the rather mutilated nose, then the white and staring eyes, that gazed blankly over the engulfing waves.... Meanwhile the gilded name upon the taffrail had slowly disappeared also; but even when the ripples began to meet across her deck, still her descent was calm. As the water gained, the hidden fire was extinguished, and the smoke, at first densely rising, grew rapidly less.... I never saw anything seem so extinguished out of the universe as that great vessel, which had towered so colossal above my little boat.

In describing this episode of the slow sinking of a burning ship, Higginson notes a certain exclusive ability on the part of sea-faring men to drift into a graceful old age. In most land vocations, he mused, the gradual decay of the body is accompanied by a forlorn isolation; youth pushes age aside, and there is little sympathy or social intercourse between them. By contrast, the author notes:

But the superannuated fisherman graduates into an oracle; the longer he lives, the greater dignity of his experience; he remembers the great storm, the great tide, the great catch, the great shipwreck, and on all emergencies his counsel has weight. He still busies himself about the boats, too, and still sails on sunny days to show the youngsters the best fishing-ground. When too infirm for even this, he can sun himself beside the landing, and dreaming over inexhaustible memories, watch the bark of his life go down.

Virginia Covell

OLD DANCES

The minuet was danced to the spinnet, the flute and viol. The invitations read for seven. The guests were prompt. Can we hear the music faintly, glimpse the dancers? At the spinning wheel girls learned grace; the movements of the work may resemble a ritual dance. Oh, we can imagine the minuet.

But here in Newport, since '76, there had been few dances. Crushed by occupation, blockade and the ensuing poverty even those townspeople most fortunate could not afford candles to celebrate what victories there were.

Then, at last, there came tall ships, the tall ships of France, on July 11th, 1780. On the dancing waters off the Point were -- seven ships of the line, two frigates, a number of transports -- 46 vessels in all, carrying 6,000. Soon the tall ships were anchored before the town where the flags were flying and the bells were ringing. That night the town was illuminated.

There followed a round of gaiety, with balls and parties every day. In summer, there was dancing in the open air. Finery came out of the covers where it had rested so long, and now it was rarely put away.

With March of 1781, Washington came to Newport to confer with Rochambeau. The week was made gay, the most brilliant ball being given by the French. To open it Washington lead out the beautiful Miss Champlin. The French officers took the instruments away from the musicians and played A Successful Campaign. (Remember last year when with our good neighbor town was reenacted Hopkinton's Reply how excited we grew? Imagine that ball!)

Dances favored then were "Flowers of Edinburgh," "Pea Straw," "Boston's Delight," "Haymaking," "College Hornpipe," "Faithful Shepherd," "Love and Opportunity," "Lady Hancock," "Merry and Wise," "Stony Point," "Miss McDonald's Reel," "A Trip to Carlisle," "Freemason's Jig," "Soldier's Joy," and "I'll Be Married in My Old Clothes."

With the minuet we may have some acquaintance. To dance A Successful Campaign lead down two couples on the outside and up the middle, second couple do the same, turn contrary partners, cast off right hand and left. Stony Point was a favorite dance, made so probably by the successful storming of the place by General Wayne. To dance it, -- first couple three hands round with the second lady; allemand; three hands round with the second gentleman; allemand again; lead down two couples; up again; cast off one couple; hands around with the third, right hand and left. In dancing Merick's Graces the first couple crossed over to the second couple and back again, the gentlemen passing between the ladies and the ladies between the gentlemen; then they were

expected to set the corners, each give the right hand to partners, turn half round and close with hands right and left. When it came to Lord Eath's Gate they were expected to cross hands four; back again; cast off; one couple allemand; lead down in the middle; up again, and foot it; lead through the top; cast off and foot it.

The Spaniard the first gentleman foots it to the second lady, and both turn single; the first gentleman turns his partner; the second the same; down in the middle and up again; cast off and hands round. Innocent Maid first three couples haze; then lead down in the middle and back again; close with right hand and left. For the Corsino, three couples were to foot it and change sides; three couples allemand and the first fall in the middle; then right hand and left. How fortunate we are we still have the houses in which such charming scenes were enacted! Once more, the editor is endebted to Mason's Reminiscences of Newport.

There was to be an early garden recreated on the Point -- and the no more about it. Some said it was because at first the settlers had no gardens. What utter drivell! God planted Him a garden and the like of it will not be seen again until man gets rid of himself, which may be right soon after all. Read Roger Williams" Key Into the Language of America lately? Any of the early published accounts? Not all could write but any man capable of sending a letter to England must needs add a postscript, "My wife's compliments, and is it possible for you to secure her some slips of - - " A hundred years later, Redwood must have exotics for his garden maybe because he must go far afield to be extraordinary.

Rhode Island's official flower was chosen by the school children. In May of 1897 a poll was held and the violet won an overwhelming victory. Violaceae may be shy, it is also determined. In Illinois and New Jersey the legislators also chose the violet. Here the children made the selection!

A careful gentleman writing of the plants of Rhode Island gives eleven species of violets growing in the wild state here. Who has not bought the candied violet where it was a specialty! The leaves are delicious in a salad and are full of vitamins.

In future issues I shall write of our columbine, which is a child of America; of chicory, which rode ashore in the first earth ballast, and of many others.

THE POINT ASSOCIATION OF NEWPORT

Name: _____

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Interests: _____

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