

OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

Jol.XXIII

April 1978

SPRING MEETING, April 27th, at St John's Guildhall, on Poplar, at 7:30. We are so fortunate to have as speakers for the Spring Meeting Mr. and Mrs. George Mendonca of GREEN ANIMALS! They will tell of the plantings and how this world-famous garden is maintained, of the topiary and the use of boxwood and privet for borders. Mr. Mendonca even promises to show how to make your own topiary shape. Beautiful slides depict Green Animals in Vinter, Spring, Summer and Fall. There will be a demonstration of how flowers, herbs and fruit are gathered and preserved in various ways. This will be a Meeting to long remember. We shall learn things to make our gardens more lovely all our lives. Bring neighbors and friends for they will wish to become members!

SPRING? FINALLY! ... FLOWERS? OF COURSE!

This winter's very successful FOTLUCK SUPPER was certainly a wonderful showing of Pointers and guests. We had a greater number than in previous years, and all went so smoothly! Applause goes to our chairpeople Donna and Jack Maytum, to Dennis and Diane McNamara, and to their comm-

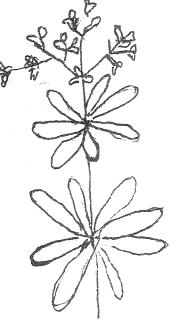
ittee. All deserve our thanks for a job well done.

Now -- after seeing the Boston Flower Show, the color of Spring, with its display of patio, terrace and container gardens, I can't imagine a better place to start them than on the Point. Have you ever considered growing tubs of cherry tomatoes, or large pots of marigolds or parsley? How about planting out varying sizes of wooden boxes with geraniums, petunias and radishes? These are some of the ideas that could be put to gay and joyous use right here in our limited space yards. How about trellis "cukes," strawberries, sweet peas and squash, on a bare fence or garage wall and below borders of fermy carrots, zinnias and deep marrow beet foliage? All this is leading up to more gardening on the Point!

Surely, since our historic houses are attracting attention .mationwide, we must complement them with such Colonial ideas as flowers, herbs and vegetables by the back door. Our front border gardens and front porch boxes and pots would add a new dimension to the historic Point. We've all been heartened by the first robin; by now we've seen our crocuses peeking through. The piles of seed catalogues are mounting. While your enthusiasm is running ligh, think of something different to do, some little extra to put in your gardening efforts. It is surprising what a package of seeds can do, scattered beside the front picket fence, where before weeds crept out onto the sidewalk. Our young trees that are doing to well would certainly enjoy the companionship of a ground cover, such as myrtle, ajuga, perhaps pansies or ground phlox.

Think about these possibilities, and let's see the Point blossom

this Spring and Summer!



FLOWER FOR OUR SEASON by William Fullerton The editor of The Green Light has consented to find space each issue for an article regarding a particular plant. This will be a plant known in the period between 1700 to 1800, a plant adaptable to gardens on the Point. Since so many of our gardens are plagued with an overabundance of shade, it was decided that this springtime's plant would be "Sweet Woodruff" (Asperula odorata).

This is a perennial, with slender rhizomes and erect, angular stems, growing up to eighteen inches high. It belongs to the herb family and smells very spicy. The plant adapts itself to either shade or sun. Sweet Woodruff is often found in quantity in the woods.

The short stalked white flowers are produced in small terminal inflorescences during May and June. It makes a handsome ground cover. Sweet Woodruff dies to the ground each year but come spring off it starts again, trailing across the earth.

This plant was used in making perfumes during colonial days. Also it was dried and made into a pillow for the bride to sleep on. What this did for marital bliss your guess is as good as mine.

THIS PLANT WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE PLANT SALE, MAY 20th.

## PLANT SALE\*\*\*\*\*PLANT SALE\*\*\*\*\*PLANT SALE\*\*\*\*\*PLANT SALE

Thank heavens the time has come to concentrate on gardens and plants! Enough of this SNOW. Again, Admiral and Mrs. Eccles have consented to the use of their lovely garden for the Point Association Plant Sale and Coffee Hour. The Plant Sale will be held Saturday, May 20th, 1978, from 16 A M until 12 A M.

Soon it will be time to divide your perennials, start cuttings, plant seeds. The Point Association will appreciate receiving all plants or shrubs for our Sale. Most of our gardens are intermingled, due to just such sharing of our plants.

Please call Bill Fullerton - 847 -5163 - if you find delivery a prob-

lem at all.

The committee for the Plant Sale is: Bill Fullerton, Bob Elster, Posey Hall, Sheri Murphy, Odell and Rose Favier. COME. EVERYONE. AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

> William Fullerton Chairman

Back in the early days of the Point Association, people were invited to an "Appleblossom Coffee." What a pretty name! There was even a small, green booklet in which guests signed their names. It is interesting to see who came.

When we shall see new faces this year at our Plant Sale, let us make

them very welcome.

THE POINT QUILT

Hurrah! We are to have another Point Quilt. Hurrah! Donation tickets will be available by the Spring Meeting, April 27th. They will also be available at the Plant Sale. In charge of tickets, Jan and Jeffrey Gordon.

Isabel Eccles, who is responsible for all the Quilts: ably assisted by needlewomen of the Point, says this will be the fifth. (Some will remember that in these years Mrs. Eccles had still another quilt, one celebrating and helping to preserve Old Ironsides - the Constitution. All her quilts are memorable.)

There was the Point Quilt that made the reputation, the one with the

many houses, the ferry and the Green Light.

There was the Pineapple Quilt with the glowing symbols of Newport hospitality.

There was the Quilt for the Bicentennial Year, with its eagles,

arrows. shields and other devices.

There was the Quilt for the Cup Race Year with its bold, lively boats. Of the newest Point Quilt, Isabel Eccles says, "This latest Quilt was inspired when a friend of Carrie Ericson wanted to give materials as a memorial to her. Carrie had so enjoyed working on our Quilts and sewing= projects! She learned to sew at classes held at St John's and at "Sewing Bees" when she was a child.

"Carrie Ericson frequently entertained us with accounts of her growing up on the Point. So, in memory of a beloved "Born-on-the-Pointer," who loved gardening and sharing plants and seedling, especially the calendulas so prolific in her garden, this Quilt is called \*Carrie's Calendulas. \*\*\*

In every block, four calendulas send out their leaves in such a way as to create a charming inner design resembling a flower in stone. Calendulas are spaced out on bottom and sides of the Quilt. Creamy beige, bedecked with the bright calico flowers and leaves, this coverlet will go in any bedroom and will be a joy always.

Those making the Quilt under Mrs. Eccles are Sherry Murphy, Aileen Sullivan. Dorothy Slocum, Mary Rommel, Angela Vars, Donna Maytum, Gloria

Hughes and Edith Wilson. Hurrah for them!



"DAY ON THE POINT" STREET FAIR

Save the date Saturday, August 19th. We want it to be even more fun for our residents and our visitors. It is also our chief fund raiser.

Thanks to Ilse Nesbitt, who manages the Christmas-in-Newport fair,

we have the names of new and interesting exhibitors.

Invitations have been mailed and responses are coming in. Surely a financial success is assured with all your help. Doug Campbell has agreed to take charge of the auction. Isabel Eccles and her loyal needlewomen are lasy with "Carrie's Calendulas," the new quilt, for which the Gordons will handle the donation receipts for chances. Some publicity has already been mailed and we hope for write-ups of this New England feature.

The Farmer's Almanac says, "Fine Sunshine."

## RECOLLECTIONS by King Covell

So many memories of persons and things as they used to be, memories far from lost, but filed away in the stress of every day activities!

Our neighbor on one side, in the Robinson House, was "old Mrs, Smith" as I used to think of her, with her white cap and quiet dignity and smile. Esther Morton Smith used to set up easel and paint views of the harbor from the lawn. One day, seeing my interest, she took me into the house and gave me a little canvas about 12x15 with an unfinished harbor view, including sailboats at moorings, the lighthouse and other familiar objects. The mystery of how one transferred such visual impressions into strokes of paint on canvas fascinated me, as it has ever since. Even visits to France and Italy, in later days, never quite impressed me so deeply with the wonder of it as did these early confacts next door.

Powing across to Rose Island on one of those picnic voyages, perhaps in the good, old <u>Ann</u> or her later companion the <u>Esther Fisher</u>. If you sailed over in the <u>Kingfisher</u>, she was anchored in the sheltered water off the beach on the east side of the island and the passengers went

ashore in one of the rowboats towed astern.

Rowing suggests the long rows Esther Morton Smith used to take alone. A row to Jamestown and back was the customary thing. On pleasant summer Sundays, the Smith family would set out, the purpose of course being to attend a Friends Meeting in Jamestown. Often two boats set out in midmorning and returned early in the afternoon. For all of us, on other days, a row down into the harbor, along the wharves, over to Ida Lewis's, along into Brenton Cove, and then back to the upper harbor, was a pleasant way to spend the time. Father, in what free time he had from the store, used to row quite a bit, in a twelve-foot rowboat, built for him by his grandfather, William King Covell I, after the latter's retirement in the early 1880's.

Next south, the Collins House, in pre-World War I days was usually rented. Later the Lloyd Mayers had it for several years, and still later Edward Smith took it for use summers for his family. When a daughter married John Howard Benson it became their home. I am glad to be able to mention this talented resident. John Howard Benson's stature in the art world will, I believe, continue to increase as the years go by. Perhaps this will partly compendate for the dreadful vacuum that was left at the time of his passing. He was, indeed, a worthy successor to XVIIIth century residents of Washington Street.

Beyond the Collins House was one probably built by Mr. Mahoney, who, in the days of the Civil War and just before was "master mechanic" (or superintendent) of the steamboat repair shops. Here lived more good friends - Dr. Storer and "Aunt" Agnes." I remember Dr. Storer, at an advanced age, looking over my first scrapbook of steamboat items with real interest. He complimented me for preserving a record of the steamers and those who built and ran them. It had been his custom to go out early mornings picking up driftwood on the beach. There was enough to supply the Storer needs regarding firewood entirely.

On the other side of our house, in what is now known as the Finch House, lived the Shipleys. The older people I do not remember, but one of the Miss Shipleys used to come to call at least once a summer. Miss Hannah Shipley, was it? One summer evening we were sitting out on the piazza, looking over her land and up the shore. I remarked, "How straight and tall your elm tree is, Miss Shipley! Why, it would make a wonderful flagpole!" and her answer, "Why, yes, it is. Perhaps one day you can make a

flagpole out of our elm." The tree had a tall straight trunk, with relatively short outcurving branches, rather than the short heavy trunk and long outcurving branches of the typical elm. Alas, it was taken down while I was away at college, and probably carted away to the dump.

Miss Horning lived in summer in the next house north, bur other than a rather rare glimpse of her walking out to the end of the pier and back I seldom saw her. Bought as an investment by two ladies, it was rented to the Bozyans, who first lived there, I think, during that very cold winter of 1917-1918, when the harbor froze over for the first time in my memory.

Guy Norman lived in the next house and about the time of the first World War he tried out the experiment of having the outside of his house covered with stucco or plaster. I remember my Greatuncle John, my grandfsther's younger brother, saying that Mr. Norman had told him that he was going to make an experiment: it might not work well on a wood house, but it should save costs of painting at any rate. It seems to have succeeded, requiring only the painting of trim and door and window frames since.

Now for a word about my house. Milton Sanford bought the land and the two smaller houses formerly standing here, sold or given, and moved elsewhere. I wrote of it in "Villa Marina," appearing in The Green Light, and mother wrote of its purchase by our family and other matters concerning it in a book she put together called The Three Williams.

After the death of Milton Sanford, his widow lived on here, summers at least, for several years. She was a daughter of the famous Shakespearean actor Edwin Forrest, so renowned in Civil War times and just afterward. Mr. Sanford seems to have come from Massachusetts, and to have made money during the Civil War, in what way no one now knows. His chief interest seems to have been horses. The stable up Willow Street was unusually large and had space for six horses (four singles and two box stalls) and perhaps six to eight carriages. My mother converted it into an apartment house and still later it was moved to upper Washington Street.

Mrs. Sanford, so it was said, became irresponsible and finally lost her mind. Attendants were kept here to care for her. Special bolt locks in some of the second floor doors were installed for security at that time.

One more incident. The City of Newport for many years ran up and down the Bay between Newport and Providence. She was the regular 'morning" boat to Providence for some fifty years or more. Leaving the Commercial Wharf at 7:30, she would pass the house at just about 7:40. As breakfast then was at 7:45, my grandparents devised a scheme to have me ready. If I were up, dressed, washed, ready for breakfast by the time the City of Newport passed the lighthouse, northward bound, I received the reward of ten cents from my grandfather! If she got past the light before I was ready, I got nothing that day. So, day after day, year after year, whenever I was staying with my grandparents, there was this daily morning race with the City of Newport. Once in a while, she might be a few minutes late in leaving the wharf, then I might have three to five minutes bonus, so to speak. My indulgent grandfather never disqualified me from the race for that cause. In later days, there used to be a similar race with the <u>General</u>, after 1916 when the <u>City of Newport</u> was retired. The <u>General</u> then made an early morning trip down from Wickford, and, if on time, reached the lighthouse and blew the whistle just at 7:25. If I were fully ready for breakfast before that whistle blew, the ten cents was mine! Sometimes, especially on cool mornings in early fall, when I was disinclined to get started, I would receive "bulletins" concerning

the race. Grandfather would call out, "She's just come in sight up at the Training Station," then a few minutes later, "She's down to full Rocks," then in another four to five minutes, "The's almost down to the lighthouse" - and then would come the whistle. I was always fond of the General, but at times I wished she would take a little more time on her early trip:

NEWPORT CITY BY THE SEA

by Eleanor S. Weaver

The's the City by the Sea
the Queen of the East,

From your eye to your heart
there's a never ending feast co
Along the docks of early Newport
they hanged more than twenty two
Swash buckling pirates by the
waters tinged with blue coAnd then they took their bodies
and here is where they lay,
On the Island known as Goat
jutting into 'Gansett Bay co
The sights within the city do
recall courageous times,

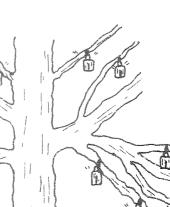
rung out in church bells' chimes of For creeds of all did come here to the City by the Sea,
And leave their mark, a heritage,
passed on to you and me co
It was Newport's brave who shouted,
in 1774, that liberty and justice

Which guaranteed our freedom









would be ours for evermore co Around the tree of Liberty now standing here today, The noble men and women pledged their all for freedom's way The names of early settlers will live on in Newport's lore, Like Coddington and Easton who lived along the shore co And later came the Goddards, the Weavers and the gibbs, The treasure that they left behind remarkably still lives co The silversmith, the painter, the spermacetti king, The seaman, merchant, former, all combine to make us sing The wonders of fair Newport, the City by the Sea, The eastern Queen of splendor, forever home to me

On Saturday afternoons during the Fall, Winter and Spring, the elderly, unmarried Wilbour sisters, Hannah and Mary, had a sewing school for the children who lived on the Point, at St John's Guildhall on Poplar Street.

In the early 1900's the Guildhall had a part in most young Pointers' social life. On Tuesday evenings, the girls in the neighborhood attended Catherine Jencks dancing class, and, on Thursday evenings, her sister Polly's gymnasium class.

The Guildhall was a very busy place during the week, what with choir practice, basketball, sewing school on Saturday afternoon, and once in a while a rummage sale or church supper, as well as the girls' dancing and gymnasium classes.

I aways hurried to get my chores done early on Saturday, so I could reach sewing school by two o'clock. I had to do the breakfast and the dinner dishes, waiting for the water to heat in the tea kettle, beat the mats hung over the clothesline, using a flat rattan beater with a handle, go over them with the broom -- What I detested was dusting the chairs, table legs and knick knacks.

The sawing school was divided into several classes. In the first one, we were taught simple stitches - outlining, hemming and the back stitch. We gradually advanced through the more complicated stitches of embroidery, crocheting and knitting. One of the first projects was to make a ball by weaving various colored worsted yarns in stripes around a ball made of rolled-up strips of rags. It was sectioned off like a tangerine in eighths with linen thread, through which we wove the worsted in and out until it was covered. It was a pretty thing and when it was finished we bought it for a nickel.

In our next class, we outlined a design on a dishtowel or a tray cloth - called a place mat today - with red tambo cotton. The cotton was on a spool, otherwise being similar to our present-day embroidery thread.

As our fingers became accustomed to the simpler stitches, we were taught the more intricate ones of embroidering with silk floss. I started with a small doily designed with wild roses, and was soon able to pad, do seed stitch, shade and work with painstaking care on a leaf or the curled petal of a rose. Buttonhole stitching the escalloped edge of the doily was seldom easy for beginners, yet we learned to do it fairly well.

The only teachers I can remember there, besides the Misses Hannah and Mary Wilbour, were Mrs. Ennis, Mrs. Spencer and Miss Tew.

In April, we started rehearsals for a musical play to be given in June. Two or three times a week, after school, we went to the Guildhall to practice songs and dances.

The first number - the same every year - was put on by a group of little tots, none older than five, who were in the Primary Class of St John's Sunday School. They were too young to go to Sewing School, and I never understood why they were in our play. Invariably they started the show, filing to the front of the stage, all dressed in white and, each holding a doll, they sang,

"Here we come with our dollies dear, Dollies dear, dollies dear.

Here we come with our dollies dear, And we're their little mothers."

They sang several verses of how they washed and ironed their dolls' clothes, combed their hair, baked bread and cleaned their house.

I remember especially one year we older girls, those from about nine to twelve, put on an operatta malled "The Medding of the Flowers." Mary Thompson was the queen because she had the best singing voice and brown curls; and Al Knox, who sang in the choir of St John's, was king. The rest of us girls thought how simply romantic it was to have a boy taking part in our play! We envied Mary as she acted and sang duets with Al. The girl who was supposed to be an ambutus sang a solo, and so did the "modest and shrinking violet."

The beginners' class at sewing school, wearing crepe paper hats made to look like daisies, did a simple dance while they sang,

I'm a little daisy,
A daisy, a daisy.
I'm a little daisy
That peacefully grows.
Out in the meadow
Neath cowslips and clover
There among the grasses
I peacefully grow.

The girls in the chorus also wore white dresses. My mother bought some dotted muslin and had Maggie Clancy make one for me. It had a bertha, which was a deep collar that went over the shoulders and down the front, and it was trimmed with lace insertion and edging. I wore a blue satin sash with it, with slippers called "ties" and white lsle thread stockings.

On the first act, we wore crepe paper hats made to look like various flowers. In the second, some of us were fairies, with white crepe paper wings pinned to the backs of our dresses with safety pins. They were made very pretty with a painted and gilded design. Each of us carried a wand wrapped in colored tissue paper with a tinselled star at its tip. I'm not quite sure, but I think Mary Thompson wore a green satin gown with a long train, and Al Knox had on a white satin suit with knee britches. They both wore gilded cardboard crowns.

Regardless of whether the show called for it or not, there was always a Maypole on the stage for the last act. We formed an inner and an outer circle going counter clockwise, and with one group holding the pink and the other the white streamer, we skipped and wove, in and out, over and under, until we'd woven a pattern on the pole. Then we turned and went in the opposite direction to unwind the streamers.

Both before and after the show, folks gathered around what was called the Fancy Work table, at the back of the room, where the things we'd made at sewing school were displayed and sold. Each of the mothers usually purchased her own child's handiwork, of course.

There was a candy table where fudge and pendene quickly sold out.

The hall was cleared of chairs and an orchestra of pianist, violinist and drummer played for dancing. A few of the younger parents got up and did a two-step, waltz or schottische, but most of the mothers - few fathers came - just sat around and talked while the youngsters romped. Some of the girls who went to dancing school "showed off," as those of us who could not dance said. Finally, the orchestra folded up, we got our coats and left with our mothers, feeling sad the play was over, and that there'd be so more sewing school until Fall.

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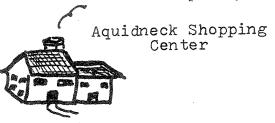
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