

The GREEN

LIGHT



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BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

FOR YOUR DUES AND DONATIONS
ARTICLES AND QUOTATIONS —

ANYTHING UNDER THE SUN
THE POINT ASSOCIATION, P. O. BOX 491

Vol. XXIV

July 1979

No. 3

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

First, I want to thank Admiral and Mrs. Henry Eccles for letting the Point Association have the annual Plant Sale in their garden. We had a wonderful supply of plants and shrubs. The day was a great success and we made \$270.00, which gave us the best return yet.

The Point Association's thanks go to Mr. Bruce Howe for his more than generous contribution of plants, to the Newport Horticultural Society - Joe Vars, John Mazza and the committee who gave their services. My stand-bys were Posey, Rowan Howard, Bob Elster, Rose Favier and David Robbins, together with Theo Duncan - thanks.

The beautiful quilt was on display and many tickets were sold. As you know, the sewing women worked very hard, outdoing themselves this year.

The Navy Wive's Garden Club had their Flower Show and Garden Tour. The arrangements were beautiful and every single one should have had a prize. I feel if it is to be continued next year this event deserves more publicity. To Mary Rommel, Tony Peters and their workers who put it on, thanks.

Several letters have been sent to the proper people, concerning Storer Park, boat trailers parking on Washington Street, traffic and the usual things as we keep trying to make the Point the most desirable place to live.

Bob Stephenson and Jack Maytum are attending meetings of "The Concerned Waterfront" ref: "Hotel."

WILLIAM H. FULLERTON
President

PICNIC! PICNIC JULY 19th! PICNIC JULY 19th AT THE SANFORD COVELL HOUSE. BRING YOUR OWN PICNIC, PICNIC BLANKET OR CHAIR - AT SIX OR WHENEVER.

The Sanford Covell House is of course on Washington Street across from Willow Street. See you there!

CHARLES DUNCAN'S LETTERING AND DECORATIONS

After Bill Fullerton saw what Charles Duncan had done for the Plant of the Month in April, he said this talented new Pointer should sign his things. Well, he has - I guess - but in case you cannot see it that is who made up the page for William Fullerton's article on Bleeding Hearts this month.

NED AND JANET BROWNELL

The delightful letter here quoted was written after the Potluck Supper. We regret there were so many pressing articles for the April issue this is our first opportunity to print it.

"Dear Bill,

Your welcome and that of all the P.A.N members with whom Janet and I were able to meet at yesterday's supper was so heartwarming that I must get my thanks and thoughts down on paper. The glow lingers on for I am truly proud of you all and the progress you have made in all your endeavors. It is hard for me to believe the growth you have experienced from the humble beginning a very few interested and dedicated people were able to make so long ago.

I can't tell you how impressed I was with last evening's turn-out, even though you seemed to indicate it was now the usual. Even though we have followed the progress of P.A.N. in the "Green Light" all the years we have been away we certainly weren't prepared for yesterday's wonderful effort.

How pleased we were to meet old friends with whom we had been so close when the Association was brand new. How impressed we were with the number of younger families with children! There is your hope for the future, and I am sure it will be a bright one. I always felt "Point" folks were all very special people and today I am even more sure of it.

I envy you the opportunity to work with such an energetic, interested and interesting group. P.A.N. is a unique endeavor - keep it that way - with fresh and demanding goals. In your hands and in the hands of those who follow you is the opportunity to maintain and preserve the "Point" as the most interesting and (to me, the incurable romantic) the most historically exciting place in America. Only those who live on and love and appreciate the "Point" will do it or can do it.

Today finds me not a little homesick for no matter where I live now or in the future I will always think of the "Point" as home. From both of us - Gracias, Hasta Luego, y Buena Suerta. Thank you. 'Til we meet again, and Good Luck

Ned Brownell"

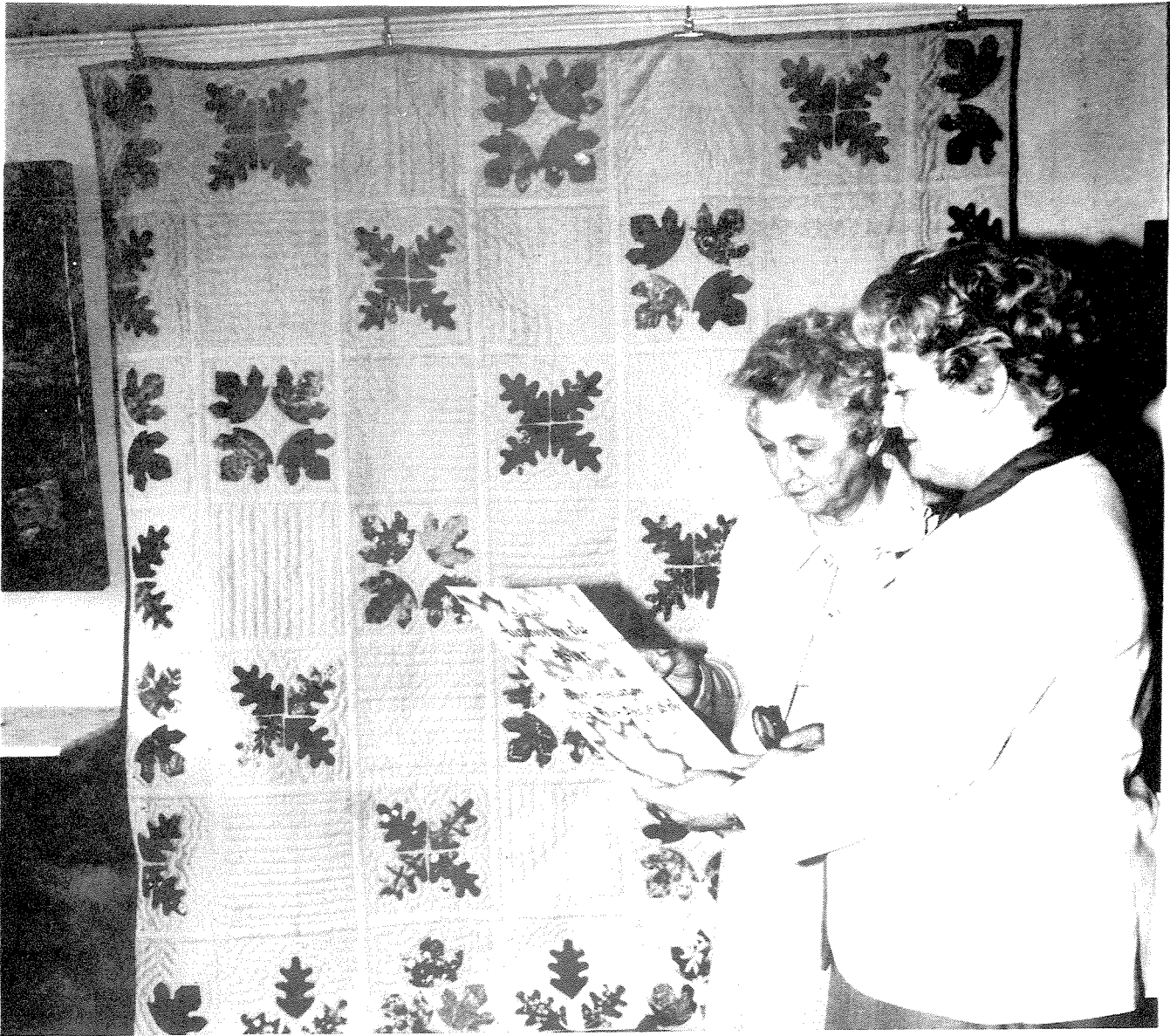
THE POINT QUILT - AUTUMN ON THE POINT

This year the Quilt is more special to the Point than ever. Together with Point workers, our own Angela Vars, our golden Angela, saw it through to completion. Isabel Eccles gave of her talent and knowledge to create the design, as usual. It is as lovely a one as we have had. How many fascinating blocks Mrs. Eccles has made!

Angela Vars, although already a busy lady, took good care of her committee and the work they did and managed all so well that the squares came together in this masterpiece of needlework.

By chance, Angela was not born in Newport. Her families belonged here and she went right up through the schools, from Coddington along to Rogers. Nowadays we don't think Newport could run without Angela and Joe.

These were especially difficult squares. Those who plied their needles so well were Angela herself, Gloria Hughes, Mary Rommel, Cheri Murphy, Edith Wilson, Lois Cooper, Dorothy Slocum and Donna Maytum.



By C.H. Barker

The first Point quilt



Recognize the ladies ?

WILLOW STREET
between Washington
Street and Second

STREET FAIR

Saturday
AUGUST 18th- Mark the
day!

Sold out! For the first time we are turning away applicants for space - and so early. Perhaps we are not charging enough - but while the Street Fair is our main fund raiser, its purpose also is to promote a friendly neighborhood and to give a pleasant day. So-o-o, the admission price remains the same - 50¢; and the booth price remained the same, with \$15.00 minimum. We have over a dozen new exhibitors this year. If there should be any booths you think are inappropriate, please let the chairman know. We give first priority to persons from Aquidneck Island and to previous exhibitors.

Quilt. We've done it again - surpassed the last year's quilt in beauty. Angela Vars is Chairman and Isabel Eccles is designer and technical advisor. Jan Gordon is in charge of donations. The quilt is named Autumn on the Point.

Sewing Basket. Rosalys Hall is chairman of an enthusiastic and creative group. They have some surprises for you.

Ethnic (including Yankee) Foods. Alberta Kazanjian is in charge of activities in the Guild Hall, and she has lined up the biggest group of Food Tables we have ever had. The Point Association will again have its own table with Heidi Bach and Eileen Peterson as co-Chairmen. Please bring a tasty donation - and let them know in advance what it will be. Make it an easy and pleasant job for these ladies who work so hard.

Entertainment. Dan Butterworth will again entertain us with two performances of his inimitable puppets. He has new ones!

Dianne McNamara is in charge of publicity and Annette Chramiec will again produce a poster of merit.

Children's Activities. Last year we had the most interesting and enjoyable program ever. This year we are privileged to have back Theo and Charles Duncan, to manage another success.

White Elephants. Again Bob Simmons will assemble at the Sanford Covell house all the treasures you will give him. He needs help manning the table on the 18th of August; please give him a call. No auction this year - other outfits seem to have bled us dry of items of auctionable quality. If this decision does not please you, please volunteer to take charge of the 1980 auction!

Gate Keepers. Mrs. Robert Covell assembles a group of dedicated members who man the gates and collect the 50¢. Would you believe, we have people who sneak in early to cheat us out of the Entrance Fee!

TO EAT. Again, the Clarke Cook House will have ice cream; Martin's will have coffee and cold drinks; Buttons will have hot dogs and such.

Thank you. To the residents of Willow Street, whose generosity and tolerance makes the Fair possible; to Art Newell, who lets us have our "Command Post" on his premises; and to our friends and neighbors, who work so hard to make the Fair an enjoyable and prosperous event.

HERB ROMMEL
Chairman, Day on the Point Fair

THE COMMON BURYING GROUNDS (continued)
by Lt. Col. Elton Manuel, R.I.M.

Just north of the Grant tomb lie the remains of the Champlin family. This family was also greatly interested in the merchantile industry. Christopher Grant Champlin was the son of Margaret Grant, another daughter of Sueton Grant. He petitioned the General Assembly for permission to use his mother's name as his middle one. He married Martha Redwood Ellery, a daughter of Benjamin Ellery and granddaughter of Abraham Redwood. He purchased the David Cheseborough Mansion that formerly stood on the south side of Mary Street facing into Clarke. His sister Peggy was chosen to dance with George Washington when he visited Newport in 1781.

Further north near the driveway is a stone erected to the Honorable Henry Marchant, Member of the Revolutionary Congress and U.S. Judge for the District of Rhode Island. He died in 1796. In the center curve was once a carved profile of this gentleman.

West is the tomb of the Honorable Richard Ward, colonial governor in the early 1740's. Prosperous Newport merchant, he owned our beautiful early American house at 17 Broadway before the Wantons, or the Lymans or the Hazards. He died in 1763, aged 75 years. Close below lies his son the Honorable Samuel Ward, who also was a Governor of the colony and later a member of the General Congress called in Philadelphia. Here he died of smallpox just before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. After services attended by the Congress, he was laid in the Quaker city but later removed here. Just north of the Wards lies Governor John Cranston.

A bit south of the Cranston plot stands an upright marble shaft, erected to the memory of Gilbert Stuart, the celebrated portrait painter. Stuart was born in Narragansett, R.I. in 1755, and died in Boston in 1832. His widow, along with twelve of his children whose names are not given, is also buried here. Here, too, lies his daughter Jane, who became a wellknown artist in her own right. She assisted her father to complete many of his famous portraits, and throughout her life was commissioned to paint a copy of one great personage or another. In days before photography this was common and respected practice. Another celebrated artist buried close by is Michael Felice Corne', who came to America from Elba, Italy, setting up a studio as a mural painter. He moved to Newport, eventually residing in the house, still standing, at the corner of Mill and the little street named for him. Corne' He died in 1845 at the advanced age of ninety-three. His works are highly prized and are sought by many of the art connoisseurs of the world. It is known that he first brought the tomato into favor in America.

A little south of the Corner stone lies Dr. Isaac Senter. ((Some of this gentleman's story was related in The Green Light of January, 1976. His memory was honored as part of the Bicentennial)) He studied medicine with the Scotch physician Dr. Thomas Moffitt who eventually became so hated as one of the Stamp Collectors he had to flee the town. Senter, however, went on to be honored and respected by all. Joining the Continental Army, he served throughout the campaign against Canada. After the war he became interested in the disease of smallpox and established a hospital to study it on Conanicut Island. He was honored by the Medical Society of London and by the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. He was well loved and considered to be one of the most successful doctors in New England. He died in Newport in 1799. Beside him lies his wife

Elizabeth. Also buried here is a son, Dr. Horace Senter, who had he lived might have been as famous.

It is impossible to mention all the early colonial merchants who are buried here with their families. Many members of the Vernon family are lying in a special lot on the north side of Warner Street. The Maudsleys, Malbones, Rathbones, Freebodys, Lucas', Chaloners, Buleids, Flaggs, Ayraults, Lyndons, Richardsons, Wantons - these are only a few of the names peculiar to Newport.

Various divines of all denominations are also at rest here. One finds the Reverend Daniel Wightman. Of this mason turned rector, his two houses still stand although the Baptist church where he served is gone. Here is the Rev. James Learning, with two sons who died in Africa; the Rev. Nicholas Eyres, the Rev. Gardner Thurston who owned the queer shaped lot that became Arnold Park.

Here, home from the sea, lie captains, foreign merchants --

GARDEN QUESTIONS FROM POINTERS FOR MR. FULLERTON

How may I start a Dr. Van Fleet rose of my own, using slips, or whatever, from my neighbors'? The neighbors and friends have offered me their services and whatever I need from their strong, old Van Fleet climbers, but we do not know how to go about it.

Failing this, do you know where I may obtain a Van Fleet Climbing Rose from a Nursery or Supply place?

T.D.

I have a geranium that is bushing out nicely in leaves around the base. The only flowers are at the top of a long, spindly giraffe neck. Must I start out all over again - cutting off the "giraffe neck" and rooting it and - or is there something that will make it bush out and flourish?

Is there some special care for Ivy-leaved Geraniums? One summer we had those lovely overhead baskets in Washington Square, which could not have had much care. When fall came, many were still in very good shape. Mine are never happy! By spring of a new year, I have long, brown stems with some, struggling life at the ends. If I cut back the stems, the plant dies. If I try to start the new growth at the ends, I do not have much luck. Cutting back in autumn does not seem to be the answer either; I have tried that. I realize there may be many errors in how I do these things. Please let me know how, and when to care for them.

W.R

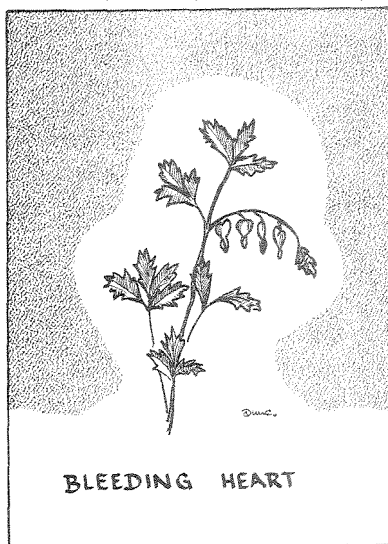
Is there a specific spray, fertilizer or whatever for geraniums? Mine are never as floriferous as other people's. I give one of my precious darlings away and, lo, it becomes a glorious thing such as I never had at all.

R.H.

Plants of the Month

Dicentra - Bleeding hearts, Fumitory Family (*Fumariaceae*)

The best of this group is *D. spectabilis*, the Bleeding heart or Lyre Flower. It is a true aristocrat of the border for the short period it is in bloom. A well established plant forms a large clump two and one half feet tall and up to three feet wide with arching stems bearing pink heartshaped flowers in late May and June. It prefers a rich soil, well supplied with organic matter, and results are always best if light shade can be provided. Specimen plants are preferable to groupings because each plant puts forth a lot of bloom. If it is situated in full sun, the foliage has a tendency to die down in the hot part of the summer. *Dicentra* is a very long lived plant, disliking being disturbed. It is truly a colonial plant and all early gardens had one.



Dicentra eximia - Plume or Fringed Bleeding heart

This species is of great value for its long flowering period from May to August. The leaves are grayish-blue, remain attractive throughout the growing season, and make a good contrast to the pink flowers. Its growing habits are about the same as *D. spectabilis* - can be planted in full sun yet is perfectly adaptable to conditions of light shade. *D. eximia* needs to be divided every three years. It grows only about a foot to eighteen inches high and is a lighter pink than its relative. There may be other gardens on the Point with this plant but the only one I know is that of Mrs. Clifford Sherman on Third Street. I am sure she would be happy for you to see it in bloom.

THE VALUE OF WEEDS quotes from the Soil Association's booklet, brought by Herb Rommel

The word 'weed' has been corrupted from the Anglo-Saxon word 'weod' meaning herb or small plant. A weed is a green plant, with all the characteristics and qualities of such a plant, the ability to utilize the sunlight, to provide food for animal and man, and to fulfil the vital function of feeding the soil population. When the soil was being formed, a process which took billions of years everything that had once lived was returned to the soil. By this very important "law of return" the fertility was built up and maintained in the soil. Because natural decomposition takes time, man speeds up the process by making compost. And there is no better contribution to soil fertility than an abundance and variety of weeds in the compost heap. (Best may be to hoe up and leave but -)

There is usually some reason why weeds appear in a specific place. A great deal is to be learned by observing them. If plants that have appeared naturally in an area are constantly removed and not returned in some form, the fertility of the soil will suffer, because these same plants have been instrumental in maintaining it. The appearance of certain weeds may point to some imbalance in the soil - poor drainage, lack of aeration or some deficiency (Certain plants are equipped to survive under such and such conditions, and dying to supply what is in shortage)) If there is a good reason why the weeds should not be hoed and left to decompose in situ, then the natural and logical way to give these nutrients to the soil is via the compost heap. In this form they are much more readily available and acceptable to the growing plant than any of the chemical substitutes.

As well as being a storehouse of nutrients, those weeds which have long tap roots, or which are otherwise deep rooting, act as subsoilers, aerating the soil and helping with drainage. How many times have you seen coltsfoot and dandelion thriving in heavy clay, the kind of soil that is difficult to put a spade into! Weeds are capable of lessening the impact of heavy rain upon the ground, and provide shelter and food for small animals whose excreta help to fertilize the soil.

The wise gardener would do well to take note of the appearance of certain weeds in his garden to discover if they are an indication of any special fault ((May be the wind or the birds or his own shoes may be the porter)). There is a good deal of truth in the saying that weeds growing in a particular place are those beneficial to its fertility. In other words, weeds in a garden are rich in the particular minerals that the soil may lack. A sudden crop of daisies may mean that the soil is lacking in lime. Daisies are rich in calcium and as they die and decompose they naturally enrich the soil with the calcium they have absorbed thus correcting the deficiency.

More about the use of weeds in specific ways, about what a given weed can supply will appear in a future number.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered."

THE GODDARDS AND THE TOWNSENDS

It is the custom in Newport to speak of Goddard or Townsend furniture with authority. Some of us put Goddard ahead of Townsend, or the other way about. We refer to Job, Christopher, John or Thomas carelessly, smugly. Yet this association of two families "bounded by ties of Quaker faith, intermarriage, and pride in fine workmanship embraced twenty craftsmen and four generations, forming a unique school of furniture makers." (J. Downes. Antiques, 1947) It also gave to Newport a lasting glory.

John Goddard, son of Daniel, a ship-builder and house carpenter, served his apprenticeship with Job Townsend, then married his daughter Hannah, in 1746. Job's shop was at the northwest corner of Third and Bridge sts. and no longer exists. Five of his sons were cabinetmakers, as was his brother Christopher, also, whose house with shop is still standing, over two hundred years later at the corner of Second and Bridge. John and Hannah had three cabinetmaking sons, Townsend, Stephen and Thomas. To these John left in his will "his business, tools, and the use of his shop." The Goddard house and workshop were on Washington Street, where the Sanford Covell house now stands. This section of the Point, called Easton's Point, was largely a Quaker community, the land having been deeded to the Society of Friends by Ann Easton, widow of Nicholas Easton. They were all born and raised Quakers, these Townsends and Goddards, and must have attended on First Day the Great Meeting House on Marlborough Street. In fact one of them, Daniel, was read out of meeting, as he took to privateering.

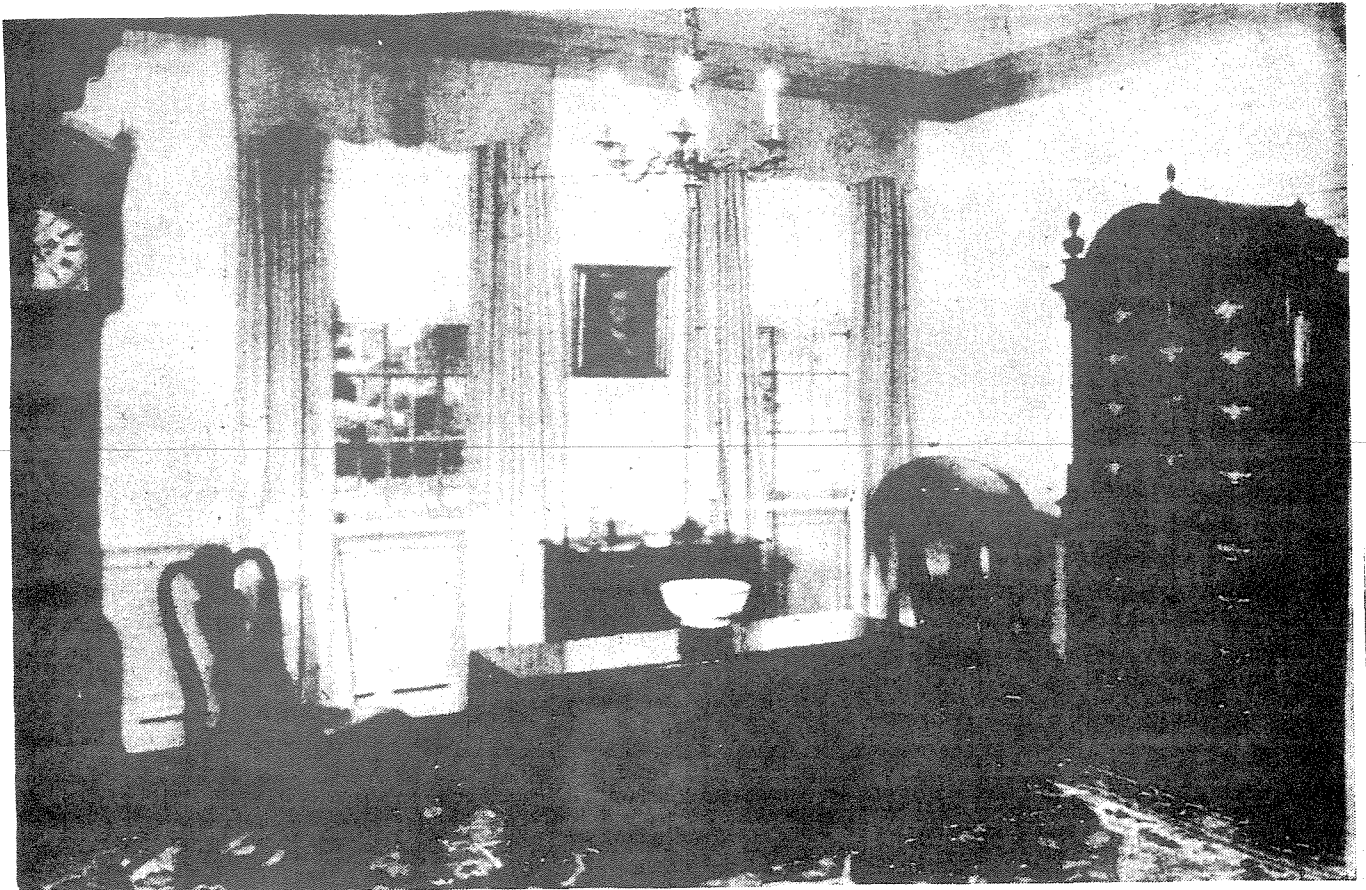
In the many scholarly articles devoted to this group of cratsmen the authenticity of any given piece is established with caution. When "Goddard" is painted in black on the back or underside of a drawer, it does not reveal which Goddard. There is a John Goddard paper label, upon which is drawn three pieces of Sheraton-like furniture, proving him to be a later John Goddard. Nor can we be sure of where these masters found their inspiration; possibly from examples of richly carved furniture from England or holland which existed in Newport. Miss Mabel Swan, who did extensive work on Goddards and Townsends, thought that James Townsend carved all the beautiful shells during his period in the shop, because in his will he left so many planes and fine chisels. It is these shells and the deep block front which are considered the particular contribution of the Goddard-Townsends workshops.

Many pieces were ordered by British officers when stationed in Newport; then built and shipped home to England. Simple furniture was made in great quantity also, and traded for other goods, as was common at that time. In the John Stevens ledger of 1727-1735 is an account of such a trade.

<u>October 10, 1729 Job Townsend Dr</u>	<u>Contra John Stevens</u>
To one seller	
To one stack of chimneys and foundation	By cash to Mr. Hall
To 1000 lartha, 100 of bricks	By cash myself
To one day laying your steps	To one bedstead
To building ye wall under the bedroome	To one hogshead of molasses
	By one desk
	By one desk for Jonathan
To mending your hearth & stuff	

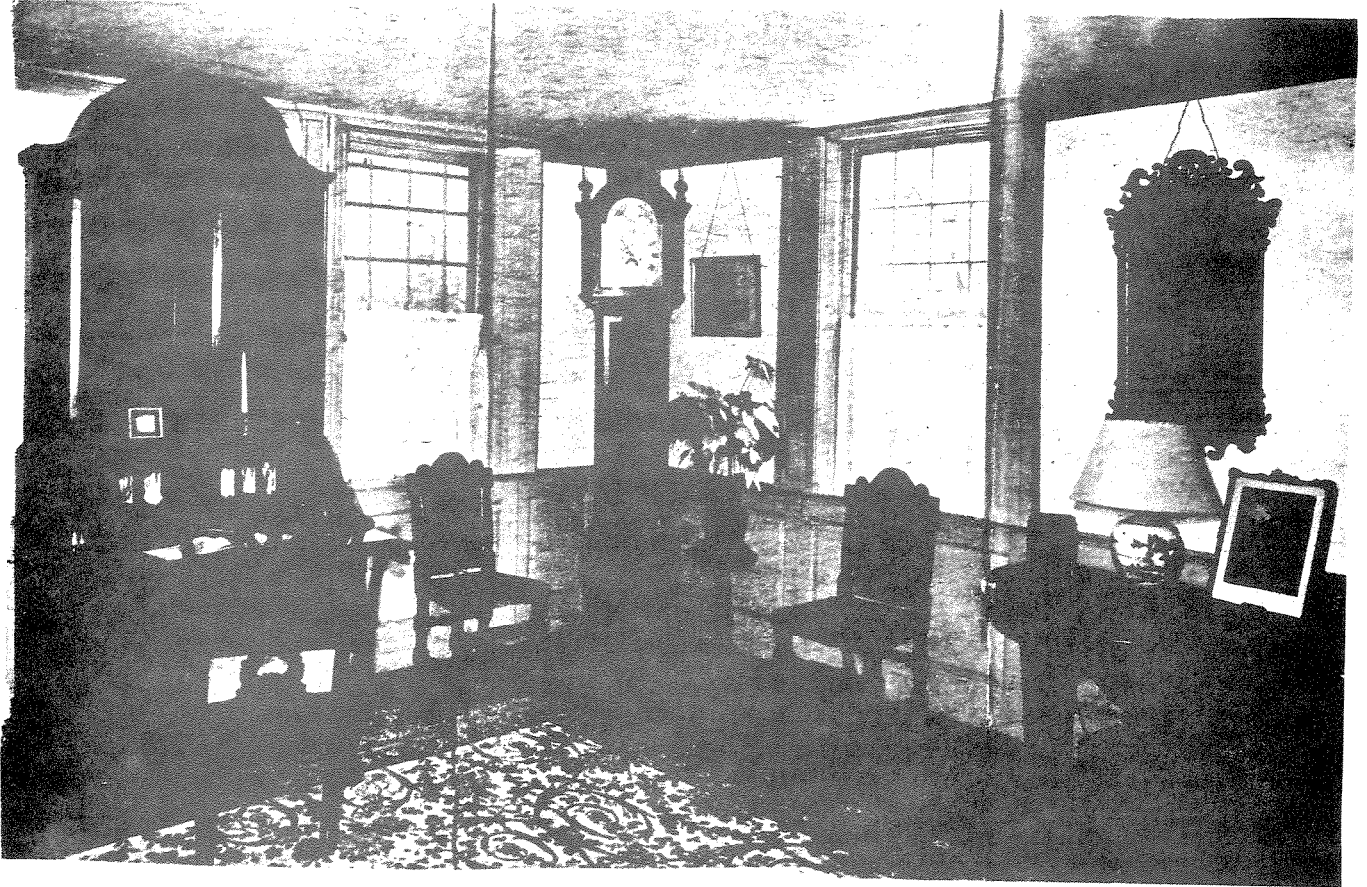
As with so many other enterprises in Newport, the flourishing period of the Goddard-Townsend workshops was brought to an end by the Revolution. Not only the lack of money to purchase the beautiful furniture, nor the cessation of trade with the home-country, but more serious the Quaker position on the refusal to bear arms. Quakers were considered British sympathizers. Some of them were. Some fled to Nova Scotia, as did Daniel Goddard who established his own cabinet-making business there. Many Quakers were neutral, but labeled traitors. Some were sent to prison. Thomas Robinson, good friend and next door neighbor to John Goddard, was a mainstay of the Quaker belief. Although he provided refuge and help in many ways to persecuted Quakers, he was not prosecuted himself. In the Robinson House when it was inherited in 1874 by Benjamin R. Smith, great grandson of Thomas Robinson, were many fine pieces of Goddard and Townsend furniture.

When a little boy, B.R. Smith spent his summers in this house. A letter written by his mother in 1828 gives this pleasant picture; "Our dear little Benjamin is in perfect health, and very happy. He is constantly employed in driving horses with Sukey and Jane, in picking conkles for his father's collection, or in mending a large boat that is hauled up high and dry in the dock below the house. In this last occupation he is assisted by a nice little boy of nine or ten years old, the son of sister's neighbor Townsend. He is detached from school by the illness of his master, and devotes himself to Ben. He has made for him a complete set of tools, plane, saw, hammer, etc. all of wood - and they spend hours together every day, hard at work. When I propose to him to bathe in a tub of water, he replied, "No, I chuse to go into the fish-water." Accordingly every evening he and Jane go down to Sandy Bottom, he and his friend James strip, Jane wades in with them to a convenient depth, and there they play and splash to their great content."



Picture on previous page is of Newport Room, in Newport Historical Society building. At right is chest-on-chest by John Goddard. The table is Goddard also.

Picture below is inside the Robinson House with the heirlooms gathered over the centuries by this family. This is the Writing Room with the imposing secretary by John Goddard and the cane chairs by his son Thomas.



THE CANDIDATES' NIGHT was a great success! There were over a hundred people. All the First Ward candidates were there, some from the Second. All the candidates-at-large were there, with the exception of Mayor Donnelly, who sent his regrets. Questions and answers were lively.

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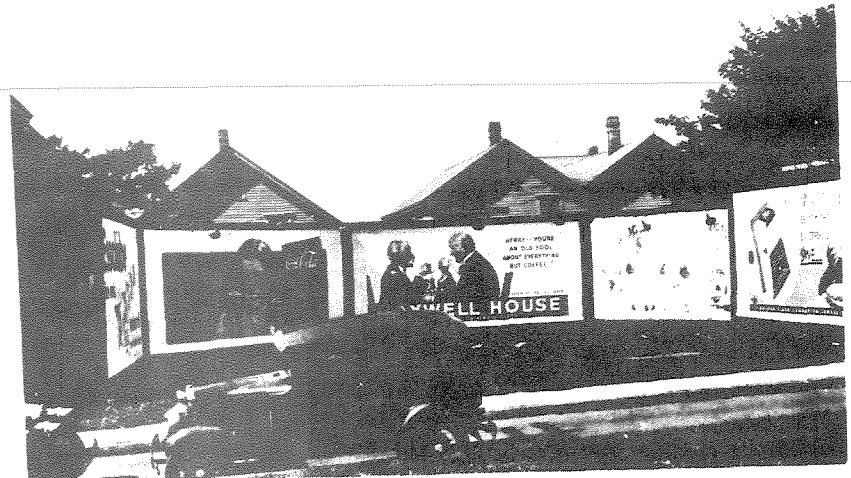
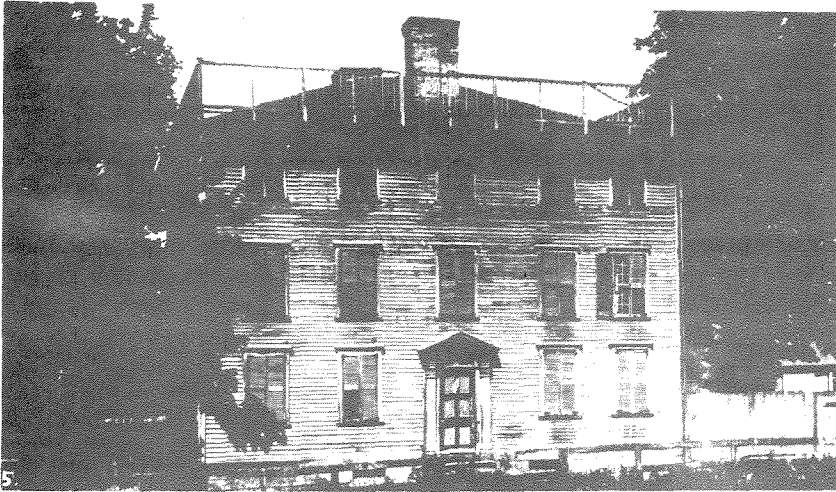
The William Ellery House

King Covell - Virginia Covell

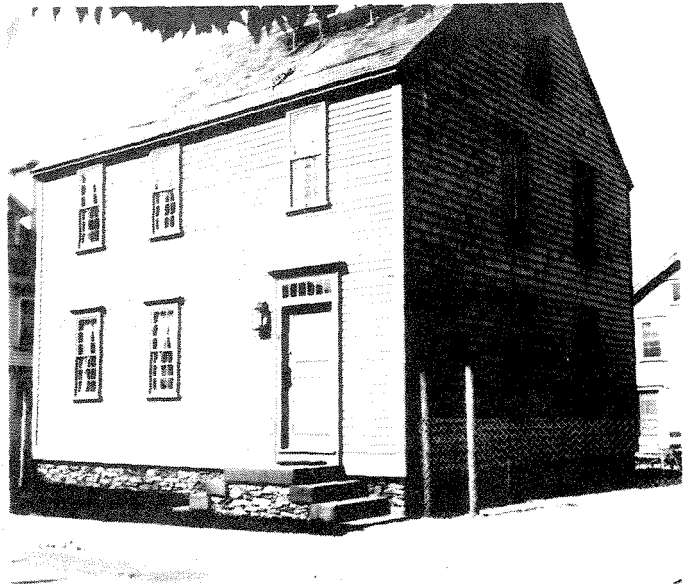
The third in the series of "Before and After" sites written about by William King Covell in 1935 is the William Ellery residence. He wrote:

On Thames Street, just to the south of Poplar, stood the Ellery House. This, the home of and built by one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, was of the three-story type, so often built in Early Republican days in Salem, Marblehead, and Newburyport, but so seldom seen in Newport. It is curious that the chimneys, instead of being placed laterally, as was the custom in such houses, were set on the main axis, with the result that a continuous through hallway, which was a characteristic gesture of spaciousness in houses of that era was impossible, and the hallway, in fact, was restricted to a small entry alone. The exact date of the house is uncertain, but it is thought that William Ellery built it in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, it disappeared some forty years ago, and its site, at times vacant, is now dedicated to the advertisement of the food and automobile products of American business enterprises.

To emphasize his point that "Before" was better than "After" he presented the following photographs:



13
In 1979, we can say with no regrets that the billboards have gone. In their place is a newly built house of Colonial design. Its proportions are more modest than those of the old Ellery House, but it is a welcome addition to the community of restored and refurbished houses in the area. It contributes to upper Thames Street becoming once again a place of family residences.



ALEXANDER NESBITT HONORED

We are proud our fellow Pointer had an Honorary Degree as Doctor of Fine Arts conferred upon him by Southeastern Massachusetts University.

It was said, "Alexander Nesbitt is a respected scholar, teacher and designer with nearly fifty years of experience. His knowledge of American typography and letterforms has made him a spokesman for the value of this tradition.

"As a writer he has contributed to the most prestigious professional magazines and is the author of five books on the history and techniques of calligraphy, color order and harmony, printing progress and title pages.

"He is a former Chairman of the Design Department at Southeastern Massachusetts University."

This was at the University's seventy-ninth Commencement, on the third of June of this year, at North Dartmouth, Massachusetts.

The Degree read, "Alexander Nesbitt, former colleague, notable for fifty years of enriching service as scholar, teacher and master of production design, we laud you as one of the world's most distinguished exponents of the art of book design. Your writings on the art of typography and lettering have won for you an international reputation, and your current proprietorship of The Third and Elm Press, dedicated to the cause of quality printing, is further evidence of your devotion to the beauty of fine craftsmanship. Because of your rich and consequential career and with the affection and esteem for one who so generously contributed to the scholarly and cultural life of this campus, Southeastern Massachusetts University takes justifiable pride in conferring upon you the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, Honoris Causa."

Pres: William H. Fullerton
Vice Pres: Herbert Rommel
and Emilia Cresswell
Treas: Dennis McNamara
Recording Sec: Heide Bach
Corr. Sec: Betty Stephenson
Beautification: Mary Rommel
and James Douglas
Historian: Virginia Covell
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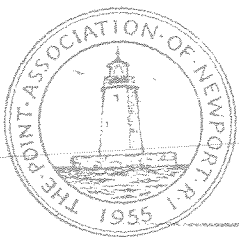
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Letter Carving on Wood and Stone

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See page 9 + ff



THE GREEN LIGHT
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