

The  
GREEN

LIGHT

BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION  
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

Feb. 1983 Vol. XXVII  
# 1



MacLeod's, Loylans' and Norman's piers as seen from the  
tower of St. John's Episcopal Church on Washington Street.  
- Winter 1934 -  
Courtesy of Jim Steel



# FEBRUARY 1983

Vol. XXVIII

No. 1

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Helen Holland

*Editor*

Virginia Covell

Catherine Hammett

Katharine O'Brien

Robert L. Stephenson

*Publisher*

## LATE BULLETIN

You are cordially invited to

**The Pot Luck Supper**

Sunday

February 6, 1983

6:00 p.m.

St John's Guild Hall

Entertainment

\$1.00 at the door

You'll be getting a phone call from the committee so please be prepared to tell us if you'll be bringing a green salad, a vegetable, a rice or potato casserole or a dessert (enough to serve 8 to 10).

Since the Chicken which we ordered last year was so well liked, we'll do the same again this year. So plan on paying \$1.00 per person at the door.

Please feel free to bring wine to share with friends (another new tradition tried last year). We will supply the coffee, tea and milk as usual.

Thanks for your cooperation. See you Sunday the 6th.

Jack & Donna Maytum



# *The* GREEN LIGHT

## EDITORIAL

The Green Light is a directional range light, so important to sailors that should all other beacons in the lower bay fail, the green light alone can guide them safely on course. Given the avowed aims of The Point Association to improve and to beautify the historical treasures of the area, and to promote community spirit, our Association serves a like purpose within our city.

Our efforts to preserve the unique character of Newport have met with unusual success. And yet, by a curious paradox, within the recent past the quality of life in our city has been seriously threatened by those who would equate commercial success with progress. We have learned by experience that beauty cannot look after herself.

If we are to preserve the loveliness of our island, we need the intelligent, purposeful, and unselfish commitment of all of our citizens to the common good.

"Unless the citizens be virtuous, the state cannot prosper."

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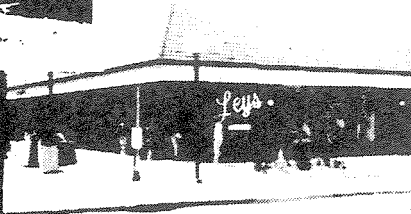
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### MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our newest members:

Mr. & Mrs. E. Guy Harrington  
Mrs. Florence T. Lake

And a reminder to our other members that dues for 1982-83 were due in October. If you find a red X on your mailing label, it means your dues have not been received prior to the mailing of this issue. Please use the renewal form at the back of this issue, or bring them to the pot luck supper. Look forward to seeing you all there.

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Point Association Board met on December 6th. Routine reports were accepted and, in addition, the following items of special interest were discussed.

In memory of Emelia Cresswell and Heidi Bach, Christmas in Newport has donated two trees which will be planted in Point parks. The trees will honor the women who were active supporters of Christmas in Newport as well as devoted members of the Point Association. As the trees mature, memorial plaques of identification will be attached to the trees.

Bob Stephenson has been appointed liaison to the new city-wide organization that is a coalition of neighborhood and civic organizations. Stephenson will represent and promote the goals of the Point Association such as beautification of city streets, preservation of waterfront areas, alleviation of traffic problems and the maintenance of the quality of life.

The following motion passed:  
"That the Point Association write a letter to the City Manager asking that the city reinstate the ice skating rink at Cardines Field".

The January Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, the 18th, at the Duncan home. In addition to regular business affairs, the Board will be discussing the pros and cons of placing the "Here's Newport" dome-tent on property near the city parking lot, west of the railroad station. The suggestion is that the dome-tent be positioned at the southern edge of the Point on a trial basis. Railroad executive, Fred Long, will address the Board.

Mary Jo Ogurek

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FIRST VISIT  
TO NEWPORT--FEBRUARY, 1756

Two of Washington's three visits to Newport have been frequently recounted in detail. The "Year of the French" commemoration in 1980 rehearsed the events of the second visit; the Touro Synagogue postage stamp, issued in 1982, highlighted his third visit. During both of these occasions, Washington was famous; he had proved himself "first in the hearts of his countrymen" as a victorious general and later as the first president of our new republic. His presence was celebrated with the balls, dinners, and parades that is accorded a much beloved personality.

When he made his first journey to Rhode Island, however, he was a relatively unknown colonel in the Virginia militia. Such colonial officers, no matter how competent, were subject to British officers who held their commissions from the king. Washington had distinguished himself in Braddock's campaign against the French, and he and his fellow militia men were feeling the arrogance of the British Royal officers. It was this subordination that motivated Washington to travel to Boston to consult General Shirley, commander-in-chief of His Majesty's forces. En route he stopped in Newport.

Because the trip was a hurried one, and because Washington was still not widely known, there is relatively little information about his Newport visit. No fanfare was present at his arrival on that cold February 26th. He was accompanied by his aide, Captain George Mercer, and two servants. There had been a few others in the company, but they had remained in New London where "some of the mounts needed attention".

The few details we know are gleaned from diaries and account books. Among Washington's expenses for February 26th he lists:

"by cash to Malbone's  
servants 4<sup>d</sup> Rhode  
"To a bowle broke 4<sup>d</sup> Island  
8<sup>d</sup> Virga.cury.

From this notation, we conclude he was entertained in the beautiful estate of Godfrey Malbone (who was a native Virginian) and that he broke a bowl while there. Some have suggested that there might have been a gay party to celebrate Washington's 24th birthday.

The diary also records an item of 11 shillings 3 pence to a "man-of-war crew" on February 27th, and since that is the day he arrived in Boston, it is suggested that he journeyed there on a man-of-war.

Washington's quest in Boston was successful. General Shirley received him and sustained his argument regarding the relative authority of colonial and royal commissioned officers. Thus, the way was made clear for the brilliant military career so vital to our War for Independence. It is a pleasant thought that Washington's first visit to our city was a small step in the course of an eventful and productive life.

Virginia Covell



"Bud used to be an astute  
observer of the local scene. Now he just watches."

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## A CHRISTMAS-IN-NEWPORT EVENT ON THE POINT: THE HOLLY TEA

On the day after Christmas, a tea was held in St. John's Guild Hall. Mr. & Mrs. Robert Elster, assisted by Mr. & Mrs. O'Dell Favier and an able committee dressed in Colonial costume, were in charge.

The hall was transformed by the decorations. Candles lighted the individual tables which were covered by brightly colored linens. Silver and crystal gleamed against the holly and other greens. Mr. Joseph Vars presided at the punch bowl, and there was a plentiful supply of homemade Christmas breads and other sweets. Background piano music was provided by Mr. William Fullerton.

It was a festive occasion where old friends met and chatted in an atmosphere that was truly Christmas.

Dorothy Fillebrown

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

In reference to the proposed Seaman's Statue by Felix de Weldon, I would like to suggest that Battery Park would be the most appropriate site for the memorial to the navy men who served in war and peace from the U.S. Naval Base here in Newport.

Battery Park was the most advantageous spot for long-range viewing of Newport Harbor. It was here that wives, mothers and friends of navy men came to watch their ships head out to sea.

Newport would be justly proud of a statue by Felix de Weldon, the noted sculptor of the flag raising at Iwo Jima and many other statues that grace the Washington, DC area. There are no statues of Felix de Weldon's here in Newport where he lives, works and maintains his studio.

I hope this location at Battery Park will be given serious consideration.

Sincerely,  
Louise C. Sherman

\* \* \*

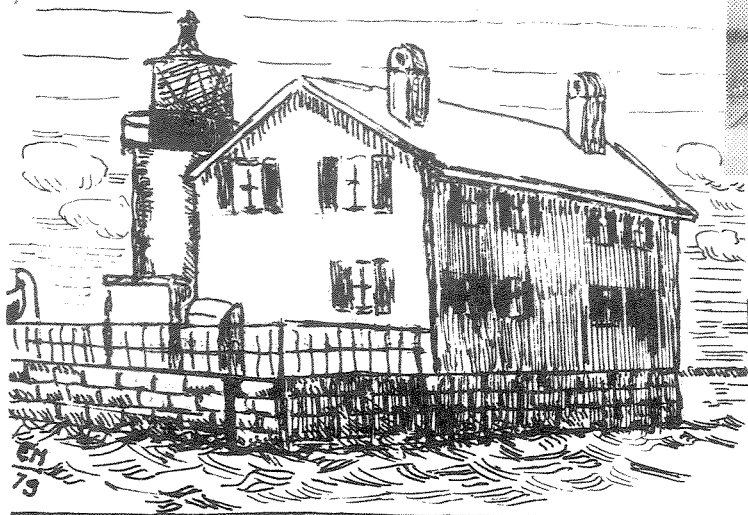
To the Editor:

In answer to your "Letters to the Editor" query concerning the house at 16 Battery Street, Eleanor Peckham of 95 Second St. informs me the additions were built by her father, the late Herbert J. Peckham and were planned by Albert G. Graff, Jr. (not Gibbs) who lived at 76 Third St. corner of Third and Battery. Mr. Graff is the brother of Sarah Graff Stein and the late Anna Graff, all of whom lived at 76 Third St. at that time.

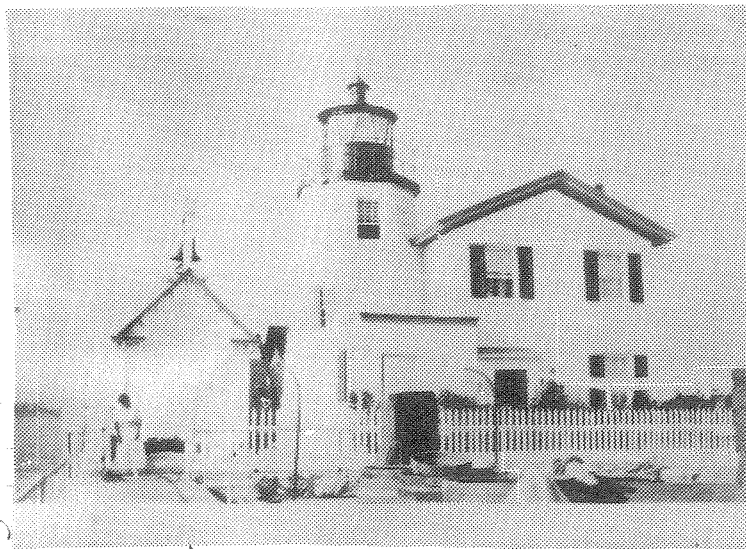
And yes, it was formerly the ell, which was attached to the house now owned by Chramiec at 107 Washington St.

Sincerely,  
Louise Sherman





THE OLD "GREEN LIGHT"



Our request for information about the former green light lighthouse (until 1922 it had a white light) brought a photograph from Leo Sullivan and a sketch by Elton Manuel who remembers the structure.

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## BOOK REVIEW

American Journey by Richard Reeves, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982.

Richard Reeves retraced Alexis de Tocqueville's 1831-32 journey through America. Both travelers began their journeys in Newport--but had encountered disastrous weather; in addition, the captain had neglected to provide enough food and drink for the passengers. Hence, Newport was a refuge and we have his comments about the city. His thoughts as he walks down Thames Street in 1831 give us an unvarnished picture of "the way we were". He was most impressed by the fact there were five banks in a place of this size. He concludes that making money was our primary aim in life; "breathless cupidity", he called it.

Richard Reeves, as he journeyed throughout the country, found remarkably similar problems to those that de Tocqueville encountered. He thinks many of de Tocqueville's predictions were almost prophetic, and cites conflicts between a strong government and banking interests, and the problems of feminism (de Tocqueville predicted the real revolution would come when equality was extended to women). There remains the familiar wide gulf between public idealism and many accepted practices. In the long run, both traveler/authors thought the distinctly "American" character prevailed over the strongest local differences, whether in New York, New Orleans, or Detroit.

Virginia Covell



## COOK'S CORNER

### Martha Washington's Crab Soup.

1½ Cups crabmeat  
2 Cups rich milk  
1 Tbsp. butter  
1 Tbsp. flour  
1 Cup fresh mushrooms, quartered  
½ Tsp. A-1 sauce  
1/3 Cup dry sherry  
1 Cup light cream  
Salt & freshly grated pepper to taste  
Freshly grated nutmeg

Clean crabmeat and set aside. Melt butter and flour to make a smooth paste. Scald milk and add gradually to flour/butter mixture, add mushrooms. Cook over low fire and stir constantly until slightly thickened. Add crabmeat and allow to simmer for about five minutes. Add sherry, A-1 sauce, and salt & pepper. Add cream and nutmeg and reheat but do not boil. Serves 4.

\* \* \*

### Newport Fish Chowder:

¼ lb. lean salt pork, finely diced  
2 medium onions chopped  
2 lbs. cod or haddock fillets  
2 cups water  
4 medium potatoes, peeled and diced  
scant tsp. salt  
freshly ground pepper  
3 cups light cream

Fry salt pork over medium heat in a heavy skillet until crisp. Remove pork, drain and reserve. Discard all but 1½ tbsp. of fat. Cook onions in fat until transparent.

Cut fish into 2" pieces and place in bottom of small soup kettle. Add potatoes, water and salt, and cook over low heat for about 15 minutes until potatoes are soft. Add onions, pepper, and cream to fish. Reheat but do not boil. Sprinkle with pork bits. Serves 4.

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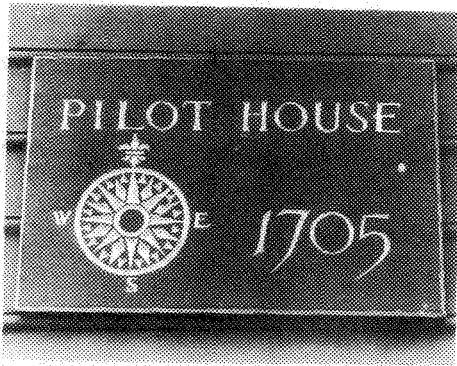
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## THE HOUSE THAT WENT TO SEA

Traveling north on Farewell St., at the junction of Thames and across from the Liberty Tree, one's attention is caught by a sign on a small house.



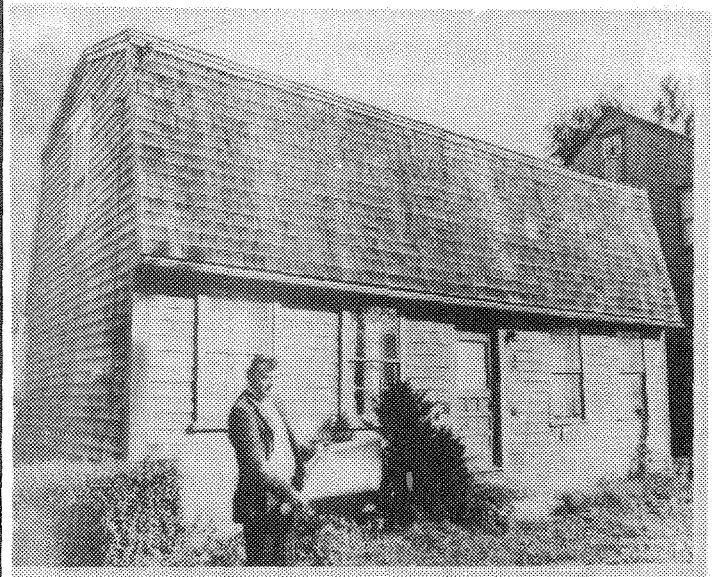
You know at once it is a gem of a restored building, but you may not know it is a sea-going house that traveled by barge across the harbor from King Park to Storer Park on Washington Street. Not only that, but it is an old Point house, returned to the area by its third move.

Its history goes back to the early 1700's when it was erected on Washington Street, across from The Lattery. It was a tavern, known as the Butterfly Tavern, and later as the Battery Tavern. Some years later, it was moved to Long Wharf, across the cove from a flight of stone steps to the water--The Queen's Hithe\*. The building was renamed The Queen's Hithe Tavern. In 1851, it was moved for the second time, reportedly across the ice of the harbor to Houston Ave., near what is now King Park. It was variously a dwelling, a laundry, and a candy store. Before

\* HITHE--a port or haven; a landing place (Oxford Dictionary)

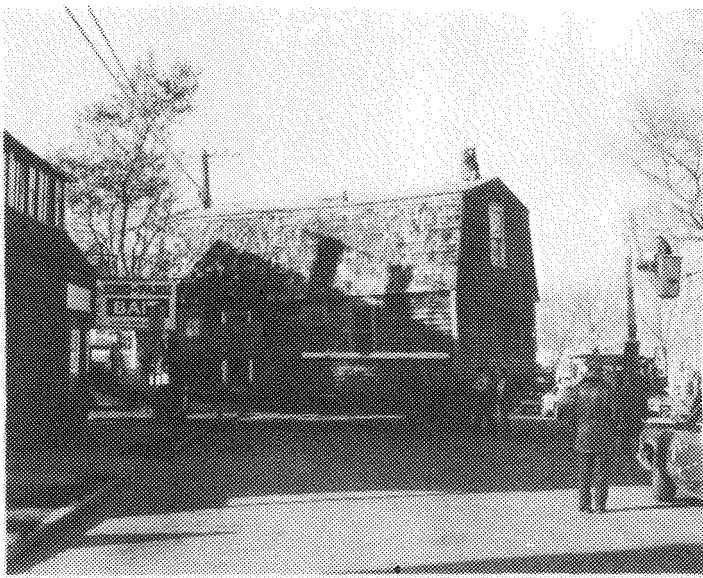
the 1970's, it was in very poor condition. The central chimney had shifted, threatening the structure; the chimney was demolished, and the bricks thrown into the yard.

In the 1970's, the house was "rescued" by Pilot Captain Bruce Fisher, who lived on The Point, and was looking for a colonial house to restore. He found his



On Houston Avenue

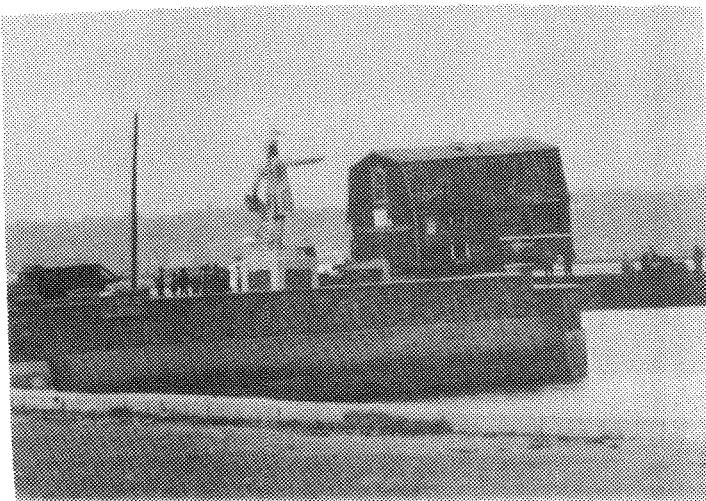
challenge in the Houston Avenue house. He wanted to move it to an area with restored Colonial buildings, which to him meant The Point. By land or sea? That was the moving problem to be solved. Over the water was the final solution, which posed fewer problems of expense, of complications of overhead wires, and of traffic than a land-move from the Fifth Ward to Farewell Street.



... on the way



On the barge at King Park



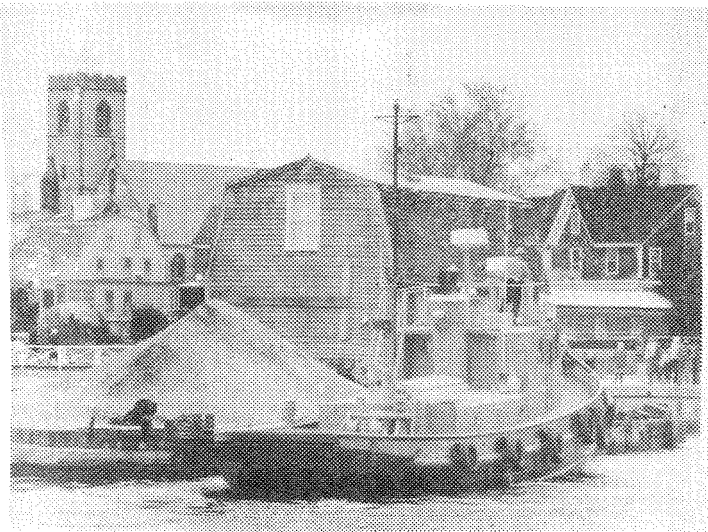
The move from Houston Avenue to the water's edge at King Park was made by truck and trailer. A derrick lifted the building onto a barge, and the voyage of about two hours began. The sea-trip ended at Storer Park, and another land journey began. Timing of the tides was a problem to be solved for the loading and unloading; 8 to 10" of lower water would prevent safe transfer from barge to shore. The important maneuver was accomplished. On the trailer once more, the building traveled down Marsh Street to the railroad tracks where planks, laid end to end, provided a roadbed to Poplar Street and the America's Cup Avenue, then under construction. From there, it turned north to Farewell St., then south on Farewell to the corner of Appleby Street, its new location. The move was directed by veteran house mover Tom Preece, who came out of retirement to supervise each step.

The resettlement and restoration of the house took over a year. The building rested in the back lot while an excavation was dug and the foundation laid, then it was moved to its final site. 3,500 bricks were salvaged from that demolished chimney, and used in the building of the new central chimney with five fireplaces. The open faces of these fireplaces are lined with the beautiful old bricks. The Fishers lived in one room while the restorations were completed, and did much of the work themselves. The house was enlarged in the rear, and a family room there was made to resemble an old tavern room.

Luce and Claire Fisher and their two young sons now enjoy the wondrously restored home. Many of the furnishings and pictures tell of Captain Fisher's interest in ships and the sea. He is a pilot with the Northeast Marine Pilots' Association, and has licenses to pilot square riggers or modern ships in eastern waters. A graduate of the Massachusetts

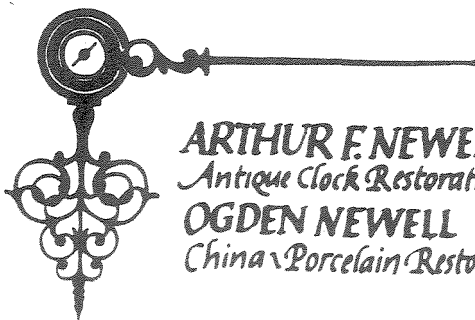


Up the Bay



Debarkation at Storer Park

Maritime Academy, he sailed as deck officer and master of ocean-going vessels before becoming a pilot. He captained ships that went around South America, through the Panama Canal, and to ports of Europe, the Pacific and the Far East.



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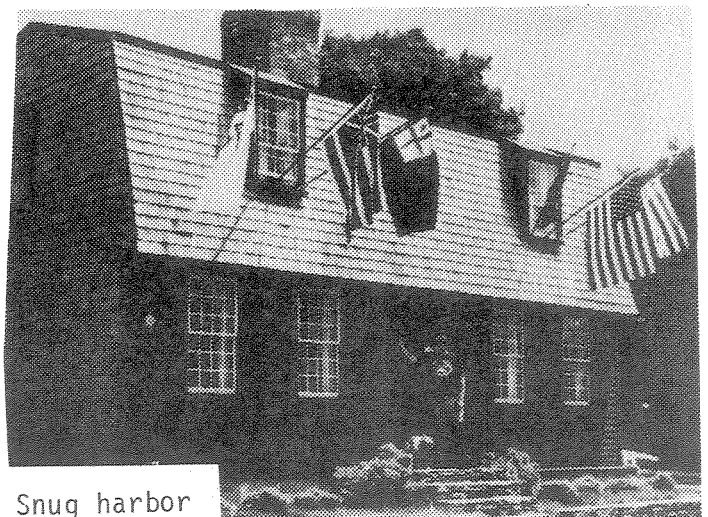


A fascinating article in the Providence Journal Sunday Magazine in July 1980 describes his piloting of a Texaco oil freighter from Boston to Providence. Even more fascinating is his own tale of piloting Tall Ships in 1976 and 1982. In '76, he piloted several of the ships into Newport Harbor, and to their berths; these included "Eagle", "Gloria", "Libertad", and "Tavarish". He was the pilot aboard the Coast Guard's "Eagle" when, as the USA host vessel, it led the Parade of Sail from north of the Newport Bridge to the Atlantic. In '82, he was the pilot for the entrance to the harbor of "Eagle", "Emeralda", "Blue Nose II", and "Suanen". The captain of Colombia's "Gloria" requested that he pilot her in the '82 Parade of Sail, which he did.

The largest ships Captain Fisher has piloted were the LNG tankers which are moored at the Navy Base. Piloting assignments include sea-going merchant vessels of all sizes to and from the New England ports of Boston, Portland, New Bedford, Fall River, Providence, the Cape Cod Canal, and Long Island Sound and New York's East River.

Piloting a 958 foot leviathan of the ocean or charting the course of a small building across local waters are all in a day's work for this skilled navigator.

Catherine Hammett



Snug harbor



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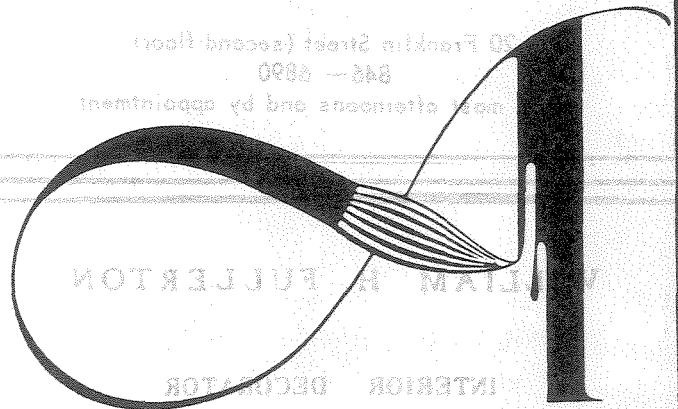
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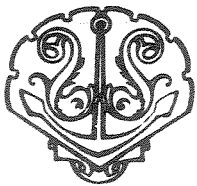
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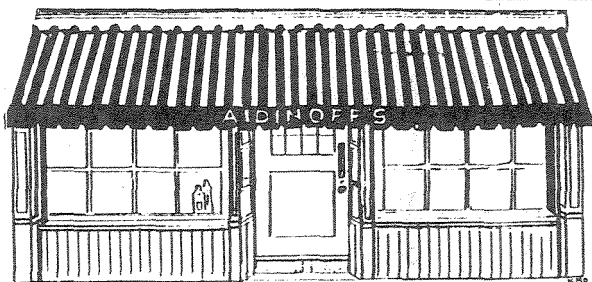
CAN SPRING BE FAR BEHIND?"

## THE TURNER HOUSE

To continue the series of the "before and after" sites written about by William King Covell in 1935 in Old Time New England, we present the area at the corner of Second and Willow Streets. In his 1935 article, he says:

"In the Point district of the town, which was laid out by the Quakers early in the 18th century, were formerly several middle and

late 18th century houses, but their number has been seriously diminished of late. On lower Washington Street no less than seven houses were destroyed all at once, shortly after the war at the word of the New Haven Railroad, their owner, which decreed them a fire manace and so had them demolished. A few other losses of like nature, but not of like magnitude, have occurred in this part of the town. The Turner House, at Willow and Second Streets, is a typical example. It was built about 1800 and was an interesting, although not remarkable, example of a small house of that period.



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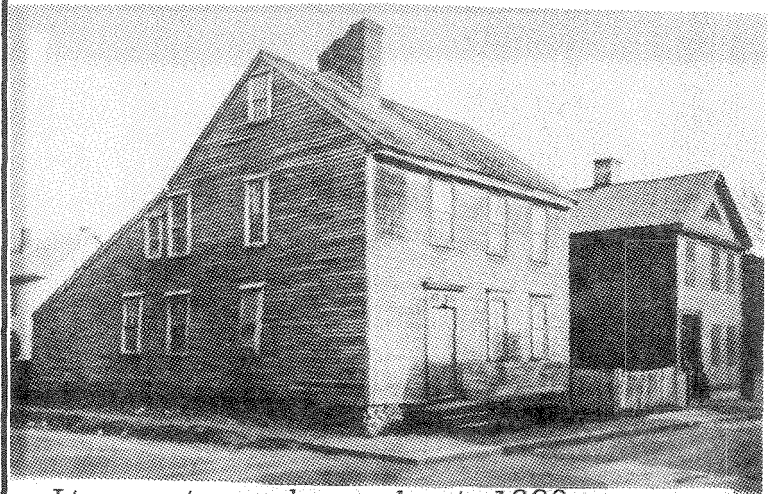
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Newport



It was torn down about 1890, since which time its site has been unoccupied except for billboards such as those which appear in the picture. Its neighbor to the south, whose neo-Classic details indicate such a date as c. 1840, is fortunately still extant.

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"Many Point residents will remember those billboards--blatant reminders that Newport had fallen on hard times; they seemed to tell us that our city was regressing from a residential haven to an abandoned place of unwanted acres.

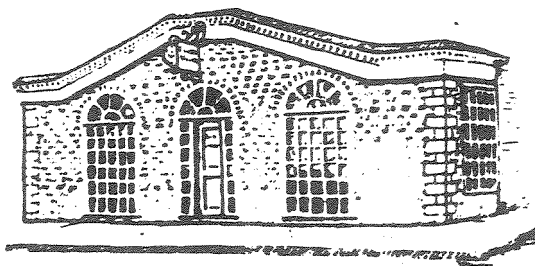


"Happily, as this recent photograph shows, they are gone, leaving the neighboring houses with welcome breathing space. The trees, planted by The Point Association, are a great addition; in another month, they will add color and shade to this little corner of the Point."

Virginia Covell

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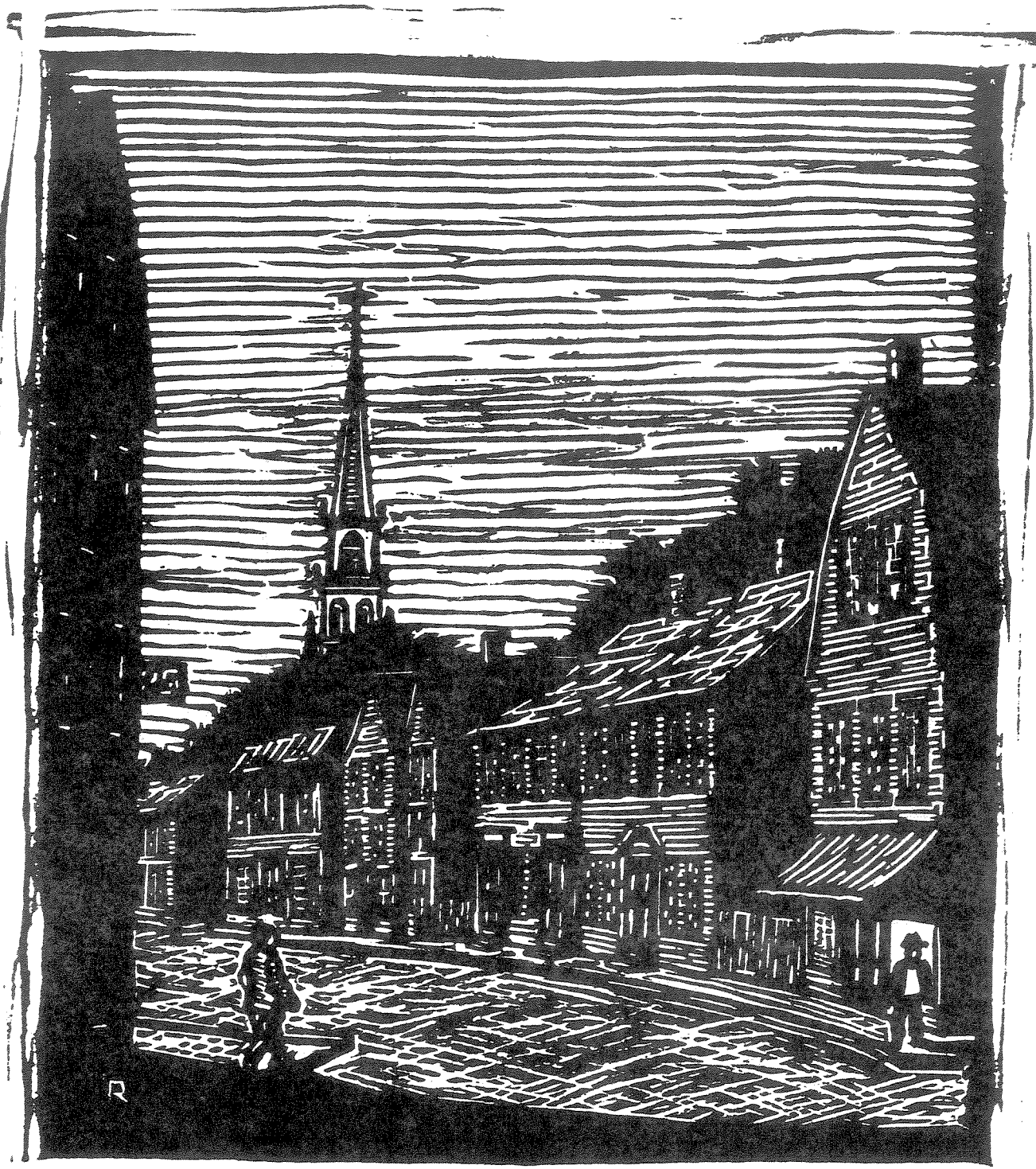
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Spring Street at Touro with Trinity Steeple in the distance.  
Linoleum Block Print by Lloyd A. Robson  
Courtesy of Redwood Library

ELTON MANUEL: ARTIST, MUSICIAN,  
WRITER, HISTORIAN...

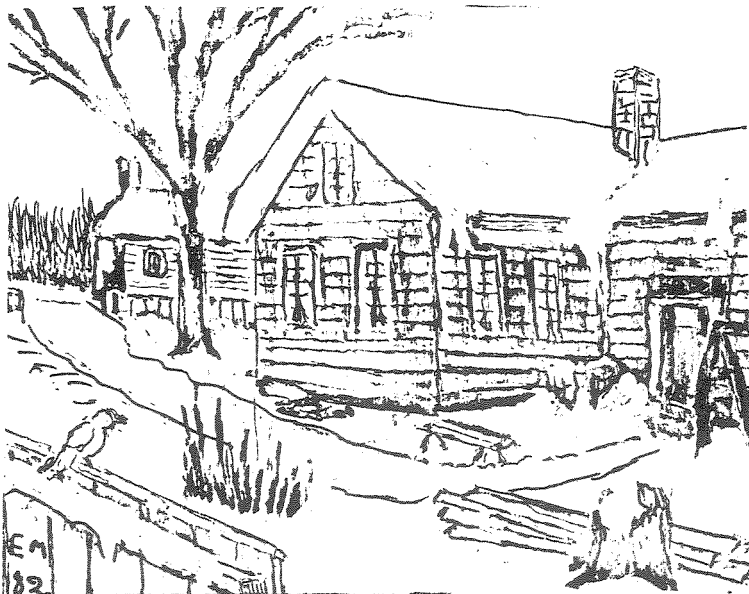
If you called my neighbor, Elton, by any of these complimentary terms, he would disclaim them heartily. He is one of the many citizens in our area who has truly hidden talents and who has never owned a horn, let alone blow one for himself.

This sketch and the one of the lighthouse are samples of his work; these he "tossed off" to decorate envelopes. He has drawn almost every interesting house in Newport. An exhibition of all of them would be too large for most galleries; and the very word "exhibition" makes him retreat behind such phrases as "I can't draw."

Concerning his knowledge of Newport history--I find myself calling on him more and more for factual information. He has a wonderful memory, but he's not so sure of himself that he scorns serious research. That he does too, carefully and well.

In 1939, Elton published a pamphlet entitled, "Merchants and Mansions of Newport". He is now re-writing it so that it can be brought up-to-date. I sincerely hope he publishes it as planned because it may bring him the recognition he deserves.

Virginia Covell



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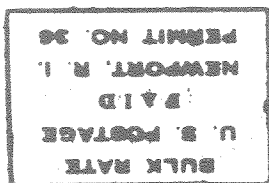
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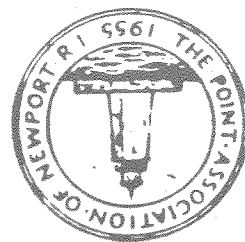
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