

Aug. '84  
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The  
GREEN

LIGHT

BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION  
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

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AUGUST 1984

Vol. XXIX No. 4

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## *The* GREEN LIGHT

### EDITORIAL

In a recent issue of one of our "priceless" newspapers, there is a long lament that Newport lacks "personality".

It does not take a penetrating intelligence to discover that there is a vast difference between personality and character. It is the character of Newport that is constant, and that character finds its expression in the willingness of the permanent residents of the City to work to protect all that makes life wholesome and pleasant in Newport.

We value our matchless location on bay and ocean, and we struggle against enormous odds to preserve our indigenous fishing industry and our waterfront against further commercial depredation. Our architectural heritage is the finest in the nation, and we are not willing to have the great work of the 17th and 18th centuries and of the Beaux Arts School overshadowed by work that would make a first year architectural student blush.

The character of Newport has nothing to do with the glitz and the phony glamour of those who deface our City and whose primary interest is commercial gain.

HELP!!!HELP!!!HELP!!!HELP!!!HELP!!!HELP!!!HELP!!!HELP!!!HELP!!!HELP!!!HELP!!!

THE POINT FAIR NEEDS:

- A CHAIRPERSON AND FOUR WORKERS FOR THE VERY IMPORTANT BAKED GOODS BOOTH.
- THEO DUNCAN NEEDS HELP WITH GATE-KEEPING, ABOUT 20 PEOPLE.
- THE VERY POPULAR HAMBURGER-HOT DOG STAND NEEDS SIX PEOPLE.

POINTERS ARISE!! YOUR HELP IS DESPERATELY NEEDED.

VOLUNTEERS MAY CALL 847-7317 (AFTER 6:00).

\* \* \* \* \*

NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY

At the Executive Board meeting, June 4th, the following actions were taken:

The Membership Chairman was authorized to send postcards to members who have not yet paid dues for 1983-84 and to distribute informational packets to new members.

The Point Fair Chairman reported the rental of 40 booths with a possible 15 more.

The Board (Herb Rommel abstaining), passed a motion to contract an attorney to represent the Association in reference to Steamship Landing at the Zoning Board meeting June 26.

The Board noted the recurrence of problems with fishing from the Goat Island Causeway. A letter will be sent to the City Manager and to David Roderick suggesting the fishermen's groups be contacted again to police the causeway and to distribute flyers to the fishermen giving information about public restrooms.

The Board voted to send a letter to the Mayor and Council in reference to the Washington Street Extension Pier emphasizing the position that the whole pier should be open for public access, and that no deed should be granted to anyone, the pier being over a public right-of-way. The Board also requested information about the ultimate size of the pier.

The Board voted (Herb Rommel abstaining) to join the neighbors in opposing before the Zoning Board the conversion to a 10 room guest house of property at 31-31½ Bridge Street.

The Board voted to appropriate up to \$100 for Jack Martin's post clean-up for the children on June 24th.

\* \* \* \* \*

A DAY ON THE POINT!

Come join us for a day of festivities on Saturday, August 18th, during our annual "A Day on the Point Street Fair". As in past years, we will have a multitude of craft exhibitors, baked goods, hot dogs, hamburgers, soda, and just plain fun. Activities commence at 10 A.M. and will continue until approximately 5 P.M. The quilt raffle will be held, and this year's quilt will again meet the same high standards set in past years for originality, quality, and craftsmanship.

We still need volunteers to help with the various committees that make our Street Fair such a smashing success. If you can donate any of your time that day, please call Bob Ogurek at 847-7317. He will relay your name to the appropriate committee chairperson.

Also, if you are willing to provide baked goods for our baked goods table (we know you have a favorite

that you love to "show off"), give Bob a call and he will contact the baked goods chairperson.

Come join us, and, if you can, provide valuable assistance as a volunteer.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Taff Roberts  
Marianne Barker  
Caroline Molloy  
Alice Weldon  
Jack Mazza

\* \* \* \* \*

#### NARRAGANSETT BAY INFORMATION

Sue Kiernan, local Director of SAVE THE BAY who spoke at the April meeting of the Association, suggests that many interesting pamphlets about the Bay, its history, its ecology, its state parks are available free from the office of SAVE THE BAY at 126 West Main Road in Middletown. The RI Dept. of Environmental Management has produced many of these. One especially interesting one

has a map of the Bay showing the island state parks. Interested persons are invited to stop at the office to see what's available. Miss Kiernan plans to have a booth at the Street Fair and will have information to distribute there, too.

\* \* \* \* \*

As you know, Sally Mackay has mailed out raffle tickets to our Point Association members to help sell before the drawing for the quilt on the day of our Street Fair-August 18. Most of you have admired this year's quilt designed by Isabel Eccles--our own Green Light surrounded by cat-boats. Traditionally, this raffle has been our big money-maker for the Fair, but each year we face more competition from other organizations so we have to work harder to sell more tickets.

Please let Sally hear from you if you need to turn in money or get more tickets. She can be reached at 73 Thames St. or by calling 849-2369. Sally says thanks to all for all that extra effort.

\* \* \* \* \*

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## KIDS COME FORTH

On Saturday, June 23rd, our annual event, the Point Clean-Up Day, was held. Around 9 A.M., a group of about 35 children and parents gathered at Jack Martin's store at Walnut and Third. They had signed up to help clean up the Point. We picked up all kinds of trash and treasures from old clothes to cigarette butts. It was easy to fill up boxes which were then picked up by city trucks patrolling the Point. We worked about two hours and had a good time.

To reward the workers, a party was held the following day. Sunday, we all had a train ride to the Mussel Farm up the Bay and back to Hunter's Playground. Before "chow time", teams were formed and competed in races and tosses. A waterballoon toss, sack race, 3 legged-race, and wheelbarrow race were some of the team events. The barbeque consisted of hot dogs, potato chips, soda, and gum drops. We all thank Jack Martin who sponsored the clean-up and gave us the day of fun on Sunday.

Christopher Scott

\* \* \* \* \*

## OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

We've all been enjoying the gardens on the Point as we walk and peek over hedges and around fences. We've eyed the new planters in Storer and Battery Park. They look substantial, and we hope the flowers are, too. It's distressing to see vandalism with young trees and any public and private property. The June clean-up day by the children gathered much trash, but it's really a daily duty for all of us. Thanks to "Save the Bay" for the sponsored harbor clean-up, but again the human tide and Bay tides must be checked often. The barrels at our parks are not adequate for the large weekend population of visitors and need more frequent emptying. Perhaps the most distressing aspect of walks around the Point is the unsightly and unpleasant reminders left by dogs. Those of us with dogs are usually the ones to blame.

JIM WEYANT, Proprietor

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We live here and we walk our dogs along the sidewalks and to the parks without making any effort to clean up after them. So who can we blame but ourselves. Let's try to be more responsible and responsive to our neighbors.

\* \* \* \* \*

### SPECIAL NOTICE OF SPECIAL PEOPLE

At its annual meeting of June 28th, the Preservation Society of Newport County presented its first Antiquarian Awards to Mabel H. Watson and Nancy Hay "for distinguished service in the field of historic preservation". This is a story in itself. Mabel and Nancy and their firm, Restorations, Inc., specialized in reproductions of historic paints, fabrics, wallpapers, and hardware. Today it doesn't sound unusual until you remember their first shop was an ell in the house on the southwest corner of Bridge and Second Streets in the late 1940's. In our next issue, we'll tell you the story of these two "pioneers" interested in historic preservation who focused attention on the enormous resources that Newport had in its collection of 18th century houses and furniture. Congratulations to you both--and our sincere gratitude for all that you have done.

\* \* \* \* \*

### A FAVORITE SUMMER SPOT

We've had lots of fog, clouds, showers, downpours, winds, and threatening weather. But on June 28 we had a very warm welcome as we gathered on Fisher Benson's lawn for the Point Association picnic. It's easy to forget the long winter as we visit with our neighbors and friends in such a delightful spot along the waterfront--a lovely custom and such a gracious hostess. Many thanks. Remember, we'll do it again next year.

\* \* \* \* \*

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*I remember ---*

*I remember ---*

No parking problems. Probably not even many cars. Stores around the corner. A simple life. There are many Pointers who remember these days and each will tell you of a favorite spot for lollipops, chocolate molasses sticks, or ice cream. A trip to Langley's or Westall's was a special treat or maybe a place to spend the weekly allowance earned by doing Mom's errands at the neighborhood grocery store. We all know of stores along Thames Street, but it's hard to picture the Point along Second and Third with a large population of markets. So check the map and see what you remember of these markets listed in the 1934 Newport City Directory 50 YEARS AGO. Also, remember that some of these establishments changed hands a number of times. As you walk, you will still see reminders of some, but as you know on these streets today, we only shop at Martin's--Walnut and Third.

Samuel Esner - 57 Bridge Street

First National Store - 25 Third Street, corner of Poplar

Louis Amler - 25 Poplar Street, corner of Smith Court.

Max Gillson - 28 Walnut Street, corner of Third.

Howard Goodwin - 83 Third Street, corner of La Salle Place

James Jestings - 27 Second Street

Hyman Katzman - 31 Walnut Street, corner of Second

Barnet Katzman - 28 Third Street

Philip Katzman - 64 Third Street

Peter Monteiro - 27 Washington Street, corner of Marsh

Abraham Nemtsov - 33 Second Street

Morris Slom - 92 Bridge Street

Nicholas Vasilou - 72 Bridge Street

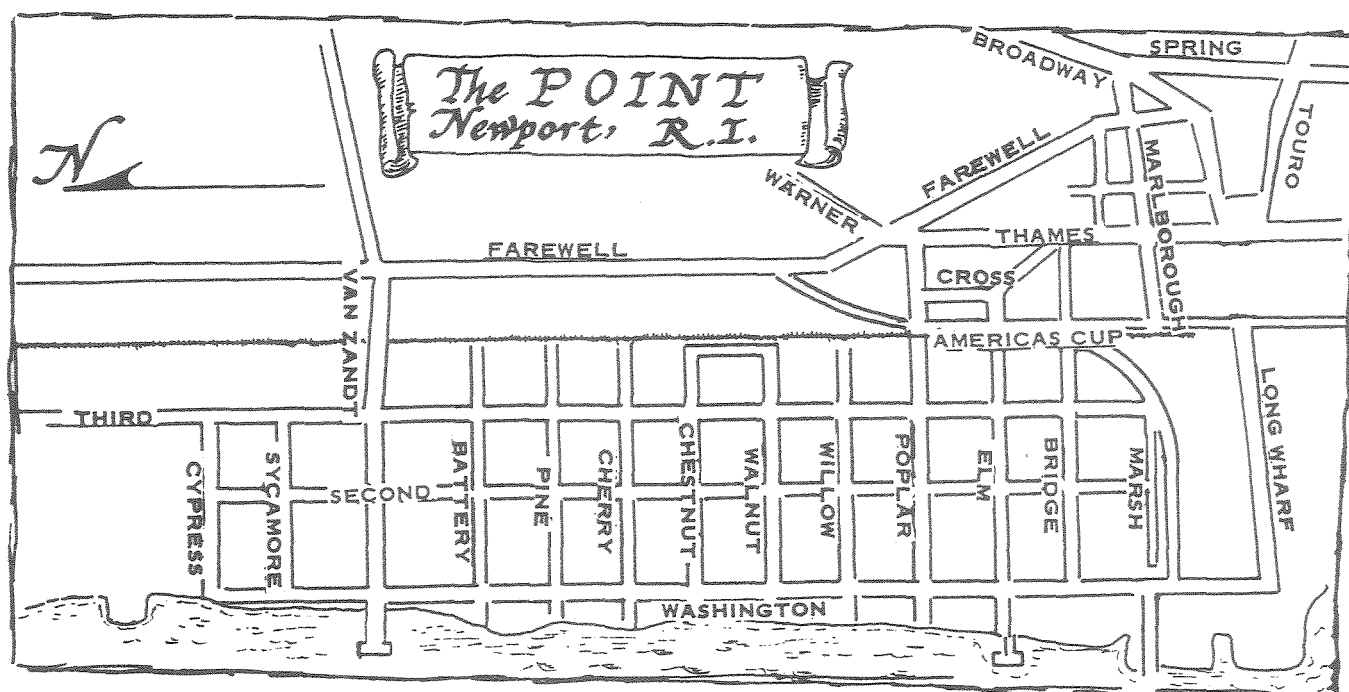
Celia Spiers - 103 Van Zandt Avenue, corner of Second

Robert Petritz - 74½ Third Street

Simeon Westall - 64 Bridge Street

Rowland Langley - 2 Chase Street

Do any of these stir memories? We'd like to include your thoughts in the Green Light. Send them along.





## THE SYCAMORE TREE

Of all the original species of trees for which many of our old streets are named, the sycamore (*platanus occidentalis*) is still represented locally. There are some fine specimens found along Second Street in the Carmelite property and in Stella Maris. The sycamore is sometimes known as the buttonball tree, plane tree, or Virginia maple. In England they are known as the London plane tree.

In Colonial times, the sycamore was used to make solid wheels for ox carts and hogsheads and in later times in such varied uses as barber poles, stereoscopes, and wooden Pullman cars. At the present time, sycamore is used mostly in furniture and in the manufacture of butcher blocks because the wood is almost impossible to split.

The sycamore is a decorative tree with its size and beautifully mottled bark on the trunk. Its buttonball fruit is not very edible, but it was said to have been the favorite food of the Carolina parakeet, the only parrot native to the U.S. Unhappily, the Carolina parakeet is long extinct and so are the giant sycamores of the virgin forests.

Donal O'Brien

\*\*\*\*\*  
THE TRUSTEES OF LONG WHARF

With all the discussions of developments of the Long Wharf area, one often hears the question: "What of the Trustees of Long Wharf? What part do they have in all this, today?" The answer is simple--NO PART AT ALL!

But the Trustees of Long Wharf are still active, and, in a quite way, are carrying out part of their 1795 charter which has to do with educational opportunities for the children of Newport. The first charter called for the building of schools; this was fulfilled with the building of Callender and Potter Schools, and in 1964, the charter was revised providing that money from sales and investments shall be used for scholarships and other edu-

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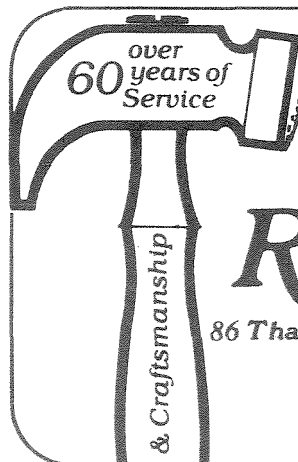
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cational purposes. The present board is made up of 21 citizens, with William H. Leys the President, and William A. Sherman the Secretary/Treasurer.

History tells the story that began when what was known as "Long Wharf", an area west of Gravelly Point and Washington Street, had been practically demolished by the British during the Revolution. A group was organized and chartered by the state legislature in 1795 to raise money by a lottery for rebuilding the wharf, building a hotel, and with

it in repair, and rented various parts of it. In 1862, the property was leased to the Newport and Fall River Railroad for 100 years. Under the lease, the railroad was responsible for making repairs, paying all expenses, and also given permission to enlarge the wharf. This transaction put the Trustees' Fund on a firm basis, securing annual income for years to come.

The Trustees turned their efforts to the second part of the first charter, and began plans for building a school. The first school, on Willow and Third Streets, known as the Willow Street School, was dedicated in 1863. It later was named Callender School for a prominent clergyman of the Colonial days.

In 1880, funds were sufficient to build a second school, on Elm Street, called Potter School, in honor of Simeon Potter. These buildings were built in cooperation with the Newport School Committee, and were turned over to the city to operate.

In 1907, consideration was given to building another school, but it was decided to enlarge Callender School. Use of both the schools was discontinued in the 1970's. Callender School was sold and has been transformed into condominiums. Potter School is still owned by the Trustees of Long Wharf, and is used by the City of Newport to furnish space to the state for the local Welfare Center.

In the 19th century, the lease to Long Wharf was acquired by the New York, New Haven, and Harford Railroad and was subsequently leased to the New England Steamship Co. for the Fall River Line Boats. This operation was terminated in 1937.

Just before our entrance into WWII, the U.S. Navy took over the wharf property by condemnation. In 1946, after years of legal negotiations, the U.S. government paid the profits from rents, to build one or more public schools. Money raised by the lottery and other sources did rebuild the wharf, but the hotel did not materialize.

The second purpose, that of building schools, was sparked by Simeon Potter, a former Newport resident, who gave land and property in trust to "support a free school forever for the poor children of every denomination". It was not until 1814 that a free school was established in the house formerly owned by Simeon Potter at the corner of Marsh and Washington Streets. This, the beginning of free education in Newport, was a school for "boys whose families were unable to educate them". The school served more or less successfully until 1832 when it was discontinued. The need for a free school was lessened by the building of a public school on Mill Street.

The Trustees of Long Wharf through these years had been given legal title to the land west of Washington Street. They rebuilt the Wharf, kept Trustees of Long Wharf \$25,000 for its holdings. This ended the Trustees' responsibility for Long Wharf.

In 1964, the amended charter gave authority to the Trustees to use funds for scholarships and grants for education purposes for the children of Newport. The proceeds from the disposition of Long Wharf and Callender School were invested, and the income is now used mainly for scholarships for college-bound students. In the past few years, 2 Rogers High School graduates have received four year grants of \$1,000 a year; thus at the present time there are 8 college students who are recipients of the scholarships. The grants are determined by the Rogers High School Centennial Scholarship Committee. Those receiving grants must be residents of Newport.

Other projects of the Trustees presently include a grant for micro-filming at the Newport Public Library, small sums through the Martin Luther King Center for young people to use in applying for college admission, and summer camp scholarships through the Y.M.C.A. and the Boys' and Girls' Club.

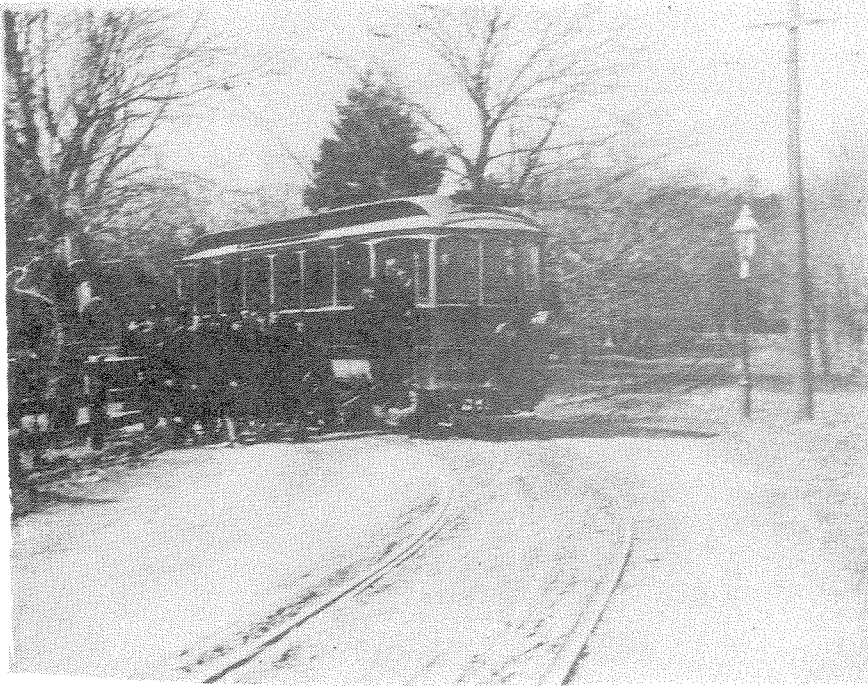
Our thanks to William Sherman for his information and help.

Kit Hammett

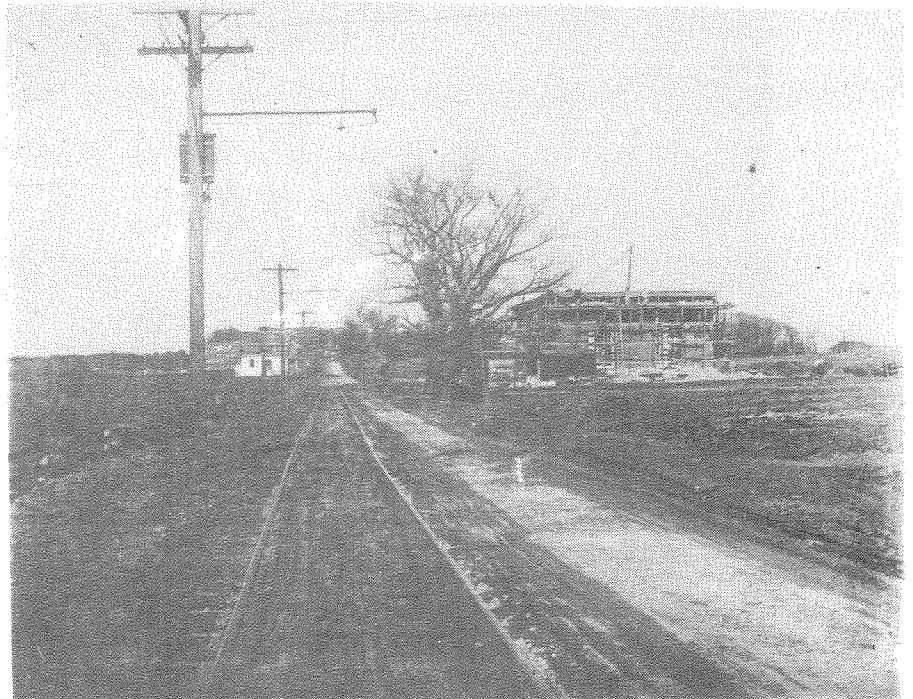
## THE THIRD STREET TROLLEY

Remember when Third Street was a two-way street and, from Walnut Street north, had trolley tracks? From 1904-1926, trolley cars ran from Washington Square along Farewell Street to Walnut, climbed a steep-grade bridge over the rail-

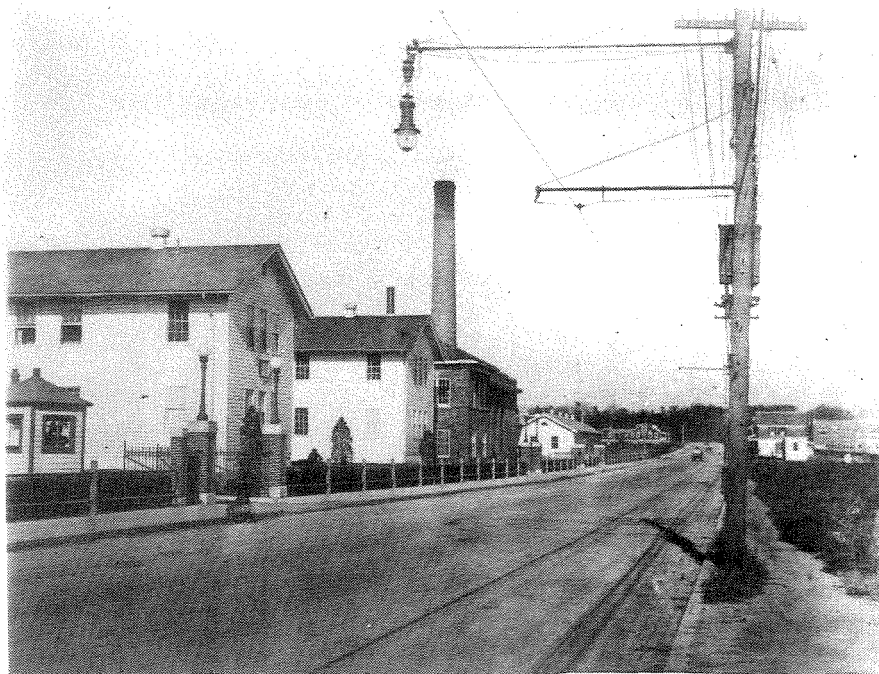
road tracks and turned north on Third Street to the Naval Training Station. To facilitate this turn, the curb at Third Street was cut wide. That northeast corner curb is still different from all the other curbs on Third Street.



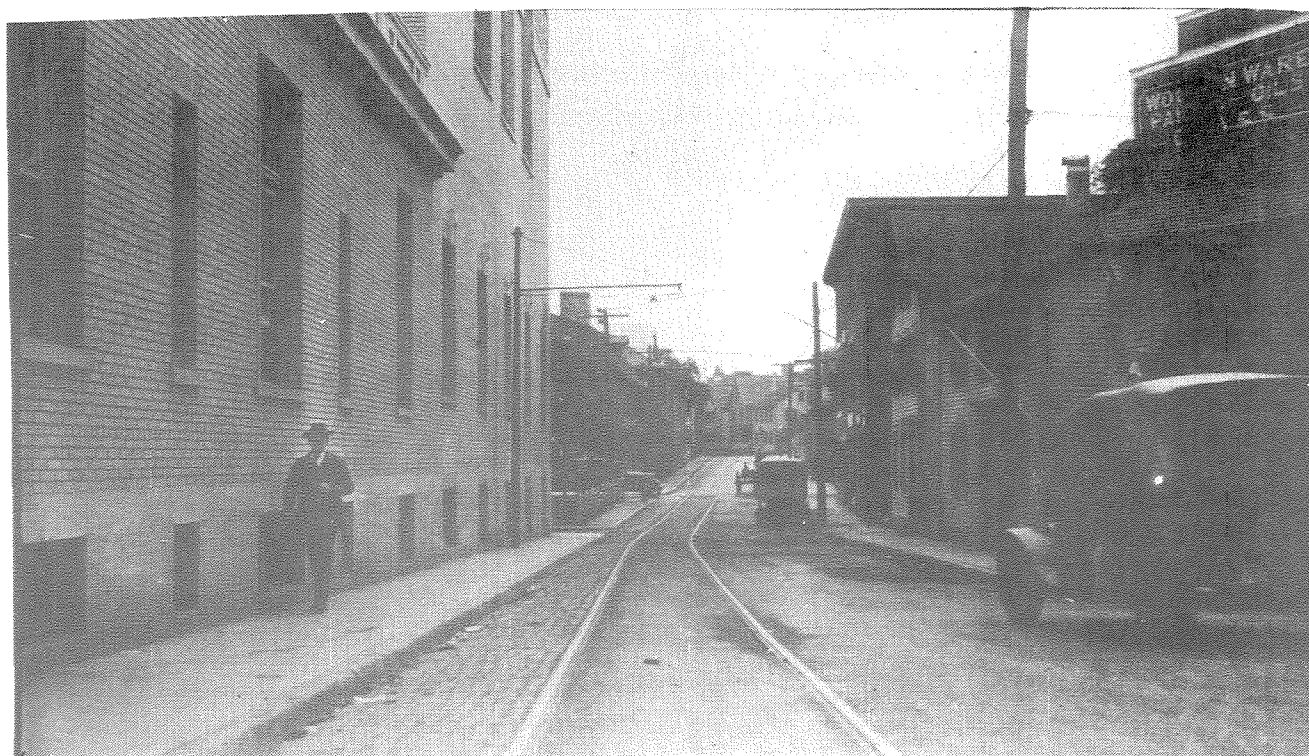
SAILORS BOARDING CAR AT THIRD STREET - about 1904



VIEW OF TROLLEY TRACKS - 1909



THIRD STREET - LOOKING NORTH - NAVAL HOSPITAL ON LEFT



THIRD STREET FROM THE ARMY POST OFFICE - ARMY POST OFFICE ON LEFT

The trolley was for local traffic-- at 5¢ a ride!--and also for the Navy personnel at the Naval Training Station and the War College. Third Street was "country" beyond Van Zandt Avenue at the time the Naval Hospital was constructed on the west side of Third, but trolleys kept a busy schedule.

trolley cars, and youngsters from Newport enjoyed the ride on Wednesdays to view the weekly parade of seamen at the Training Station.

Photos are from the collection of Donald O'Hanley, author of Newport-By Trolley (now out of print). Our thanks to him for his help.

Sailors on liberty jammed the

Kit Hammett