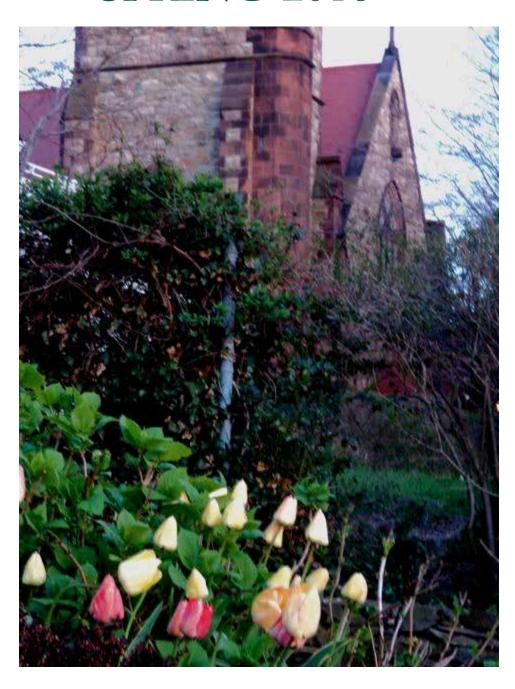


SPRING 2016



The GREEN LIGHT

LX No. 1 SPRING 2016

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Copies of *The Green Light* may be purchased for \$1.00 at Bucci's Convenience Store, Poplar at Thames Streets.



The Point Association

The Point Association is a group of neighbors working together to improve the quality of life in our neighborhood by getting to know each other; preserving our historic heritage; maintaining the Point's residential character; beautifying our parks, streets, and piers; and promoting public policies that

strengthen all of Newport's neighborhoods.

Cover photo: "Tulips a Sure Sign of Spring" by Jane Hence

The Green Light is published four times each year: the first week of March, June, September, and December.

As I look over this issue one last time before sending it off, I am struck once again by the sense of place shared by writers, photographers, and all those others who contribute to it (deliberately ambiguous) in so many ways. Our contributors are all people, it seems to me, who "connect the dots", who can see the role of past, present, and future in the forging and maintaining of a vibrant community. History and archives, our links to the people and the physical elements that defined our community in earlier times and in varying degrees live on in the present; the activities, interests and physical and social changes that inform our present; our concerns and plans for the future - all valuable constituent elements in that sense of place that in turn informs the Green Light. A particularly striking element for me is the way and extent to which our neighborhood has embraced technology to enhance communication with and among its members - and in so doing strengthening and enhancing the "ties that bind".

Thank you all for your contributions to community and to our journal.

Happy spring!

Alice Clemente

2 The Green Light SPRING 2016

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

GREETINGS!

As we enter a new year, I wanted to reflect back on the many things that our Point Association accomplished over the past year. Too often, people do not realize the work and value of our neighborhood association, and the importance it plays for our neighborhood and our community.

As you know, the Point Association is one of the most active neighborhood associations in our city. We pride ourselves in our work and volunteer endeavors to make our neighborhood a better place to live and work.

We should all be very proud of our efforts at the end of 2015 with our second annual fundraising effort on behalf of our valued neighbor, the Martin Luther King Community Center. Once again the Point Association and our neighborhood answered the call and raised \$6,864.50 for the MLK Community Center - a 45% increase over last year! Since our contributions will be doubled as part of their match drive, that means our efforts helped raise over \$13,500, enabling the center to continue and expand the services offered to Newport neighbors in need. Congratulation to YOU for your wonderful efforts and donations on behalf of this important institution in Newport!

But helping the MLK Community Center is just one of our many accomplishments. The Point Association has led the effort on many other important projects, including: staying actively involved with the city on infrastructure and other issues critical to our neighborhood ... working hard to protect the wonderful assets of our neighborhood – our parks, streets, the waterfront, and our historic properties ... offering community-building activities, such as our annual plant sale ... hosting social events to help foster a sense of neighborhood and community ... our ongoing beautification efforts to enhance the beauty of the Point ... and organizing a "newcomers group" to welcome new residents to our neighborhood – just to name a few.

All of this is important to maintaining the Point as a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family. How have we been able to accomplish these efforts? The answer is simple: through a vibrant and strong membership. The more members we have, the more we can achieve. So, if you are not a member, I encourage you to join today. You can join by going to our website: www.thepointassociation.org. If your membership has lapsed or is up for renewal, you can renew online, too.

In 2016, let's all continue our valuable work to protect and preserve our wonderful neighborhood. If not a member, we hope you will join us today. It's not too late to have a New Year's resolution to join and get involved in the Point Association!

Warm regards,

Tom Hockaday

3 POINT STREETS ADDED TO CITY PARKING BAN LIST

An ordinance amendment passed unanimously by the Newport City Council on Wednesday, January 27, adds Washington, Third and Farewell Streets to the list of those where parking is banned in the case of heavy snow. The three Point streets were among fifteen added to the list. According to the ordinance:

"The director of public safety is authorized to eliminate all parking of automobiles on certain streets for certain limited periods to facilitate the removal of snow from such streets. Motor vehicles parked on such a street one half hour after the public ban has been announced may be towed to a place of storage at the owner's expense."

What options do you have if you live on Washington, Third or Farewell and have no off-street parking? You can find a place on another street nearby. Or you can park your car for free under cover at the Gateway Center until the parking ban is over and plowing has been completed. This option is becoming popular with Point residents and spaces available at the Gateway are likely to be in great demand. Take your car early!

UPDATE – GATEWAY REPAIRS

The Newport City Council approved the Gateway Center repairs conceptual design at their November 2015 meeting committing 10% match funding for the \$6.6 million project while establishing an architectural subcommittee chaired by Councilwoman Naomi Neville. The subcommittee is providing input into design details such as color, lighting, and materials for the columns and pavement with particular consideration to long-term maintenance and the Americans with Disabilities Act compliance. The Federal Transit Administration, noting the local support, has approved its 90% contribution to the project.

As noted at the Alliance for a Livable Newport public forum last fall, drainage is a key local concern. State Representative Lauren Carson is facilitating connections with the Aquidneck Island Green Infrastructure Coalition to ensure project sponsors are up to date with best practices in control of surface runoff. Rhode Island Public Transit Authority and City project partners are also coordinating with the Coastal Resources Management Council and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.



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WHERE EVERYONE KNOWS YOUR NAME

by Beth Cullen

What do 944 (337 of those live on the Point) Newporters have in common? They all have signed on to Nextdoor.com. This organic, self-governed social media platform is not a Point Association specific tool, though it does characterize some of our neighborhood group's main pillars: getting to know each other; promoting neighborly spirit; promulgating information to preserve protect and enhance the wellbeing of those who reside on the Point and in all Newport neighborhoods.

Launched locally on a whim, this private and secure social network experiment has taken off. Laurie Shaw, PA VP, read an article in the *New York Times* about a new electronic way to connect people while building stronger and safer neighborhoods. She thought it would be great to try here in our little corner of town, so we did. The result is astonishing!

Since May 2012, word has spread. Now, because of Nextdoor, neighbors have a name to put with the unnamed person they waved to down the block, for years. Currently, the map of Newport is color-coded with eight "neighborhoods," with a total of 12 "Leads" who guide the platform. No one person moderates the conversation, resulting in an open dialogue that flows freely. Use is exploding, as more and more are finding the benefits of this simple, secure "place to be!"

Why register with Nextdoor? Because it is a useful virtual salon that brings people together to share common interests, answer questions, offer help, and find out what's "best" in the community. Want to find a good handyman? Unload an exercise machine? Get help finding a missing pet? Ask for snow shoveling, tree-trimmer, babysitter, house-sitter, or dog-walker recommendations? How about dip into a lively public policy conversation? Join Nextdoor and chime in!

Founded five years ago by Silicon Valley techies, with an aim to turn their good fortunes into an online friend making revolution, encouraging stronger, safer neighborhoods. Nextdoor networks are now in 57,000 neighborhoods around the world. This terrific mix of



tech and touch is bringing old-fashioned face to face, over the fence, clothesline chats back to our fast-paced, online world!

Many retired Point homeowners, wintering out-ofstate, find Nextdoor helps them participate in the daily hyper-local conversation. Be it a weather emergency, a crime-watch concern, power outage, Nextdoor allows "neighbors" to stay on top of what's happening in town while they are away.

Enhancing safe streets is one of the platforms greatest assets. From Seattle to San Diego to San Antonio to New York City, police departments have discovered Nextdoor as an effective communication, crime solving tool. Knowing your neighbor makes you more comfortable when the time comes to say something when you see something unusual. It is a very valuable community policing tool.

Nextdoor brings Brenton Point/Ocean Drive neighbors together with those in the Miantonomy/North End sections of the city. Common concerns are shared and the diverse civic conversations tear down unspoken barriers and bridge socio-economic divides. Add your voice, share some good news, build lifelong relationships. Start an interest poll, plan a block party or a book club. The possibilities are endless. And, if you find that someone is not "playing nice in the virtual sandbox" you can use the "mute" feature, and poof, they go away!

So, what's stopping you? Go to https://nextdoor.com/invite/nxwr21gsoy3hefz9uvpc and sign up today!

AD RATES: 4 issues
1/8 page \$75/yr
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ARCHIVE UPDATE: A Trip through Time

by Lisa Brew

As many of you know, a few years ago the Archive Committee was re- established and a small group of dedicated volunteers began sorting through years of collected and donated materials. What was in the collection was anyone's guess. Sifting through those materials has been both exhausting and exhilarating. What was thought to be storage containers filled with memorabilia has turned out to be a treasure trove of historical research, photographs, plans, and documents. Hours have evaporated just sitting at the corner desk with a cup of coffee and getting lost in the boxes of materials left behind for us to re-discover. Coming to life on the pages of these aging journals were the meticulously detailed stories of houses and the families who lived in them. Many of the homes have had different locations and the maps read something like a chess board with moving pieces.

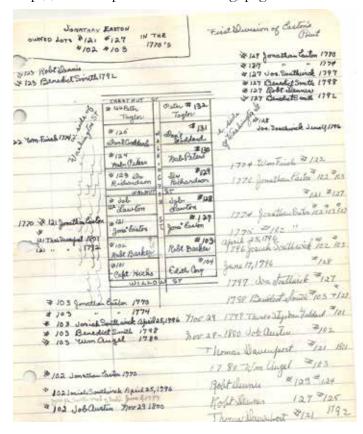
The collection we are working on contains the journals and scrapbooks of Louise Sherman, generously donated by her family. It has taken some time to go through the extensive research drawn and noted in these journals. It will probably take years to fully explore the depth of her research. Reading through her journals has brought us to know Mrs. Louise Sherman. Though no longer with us in body, she is most certainly here in spirit. She has left us an invaluable record of our neighborhood and reminded us that we are caretakers of these historic homes. We share their past and will make up part of their history for those who will come after us. Louise was a long time resident of the Point and her meticulous records written on the pages of her journals bring the past to life. To peak your interest, we have included a detail of one of the pages in her journal. The attention to detail is amazing.

Louise was born Louise Child. She was a Hummer and was born in Gull Rock Cottage on Van Zandt Avenue on July 29, 1912. She grew up on the Point, attended Rogers High School and graduated in 1932. She was a member of the Newport Historical Society, a charter member of the Point Association and a contributing writer to the *Green Light*. She married Clifford Sherman, lived to the wise old age of 89 and resided at 68 Third Street through her later years. She took over

some of the writing duties at the *Green Light* when Edith Price turned over the reins of what was then known as the Seagull. One of her earlier ventures was a column called "Pointed Questions". In the January 1962 issue we see an example of her knowledge of local history: "Mrs. Sherman welcomes questions from our readers, and answers one to spur you on. Question: What was the extent of Fourth Street in Colonial times? Answer: Blaskowitz's map of 1777 shows Fourth Street extending along the present railroad tracks from Elm to Walnut Street. Walnut Street was the only landlocked entrance to the Point at that time".

So began the telling of the stories of our Colonial neighborhood. Our goal is to share her stories with you. As we continue reading through her journals, we will print or reprint material in future issues of the *Green Light*. Ultimately, we hope to make the entire collection available for your review on our website. Happy Reading!

Please take a moment to see what is available on the Point Association website. The archives are growing-http://www.thepointassociation.org/page-1789953.



THE USS CHAFEE (DDG 90) – AN UPDATE

by Winslow Coates

Commissioned at Newport on a very chilly but festive October day in 2003, what has been the 509-foot guided missile destroyer's deployment since? And where is the CHAFEE now? A significant number of Point residents were probably among the "nearly 5,000 people" reported by the Providence Sunday Journal to have attended the ceremonies at Pier Two and the post commissioning reception held at Kay Hall.

The invitation to the prior Bath Iron Works, Maine, November 2002 christening had included this brief summary: CHAFEE (DDG 90) is named to honor Senator John Hubbard Chafee (1922-1999), of Providence, R.I., who distinguished himself as a U.S. Senator, Secretary of the Navy, Rhode Island Governor and war hero — a Marine veteran of Guadalcanal with service both as an enlisted man and commissioned officer.

Concerning John Chafee's additional Korean War service, James Brady wrote on the very first page of his 1990 memoir, The Coldest War: "If this book has a hero, it is Capt. John H. Chafee."

After being put in service at Newport, USS CHAFEE proceeded to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, its designated home port, and then there followed varied and extended deployments throughout the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean. One of the most interesting voyages was as part of Task Group 150 off East Africa's Somalia coast. Fazul Abdullah Mohammed had been one of the masterminds of the 1998 calamitous bombings of the U.S. embassies at Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya. Local leaders in the Republic of Puntland (an autonomous portion of the Federal State of Somalia) detected his arrival with a group of extremists in fishing boats in June of 2007 and the CHAFEE, having been summoned to the scene, fired 20 five-inch rounds from its deck gun into the locale suspected of being contaminated with the unwelcome intruders. It was not until June 8, 2011, however, that Mohammed was killed at Mogadishu by Somalian government troops.

Now, the CHAFEE is back at its homeport, Pearl Harbor, having recently completed a South American deployment including a transit of the Panama Canal. The CHAFEE's present capabilities, as a multi-mission ship, are derived from "strike" (missile), anti-air, anti-submarine, and anti-surface warfare weapons systems. Unfortunately, however, the ship became one of five in its "Arleigh Burke" class of destroyers that, owing to budget constraints, will not receive what had been scheduled as a ballistic missile defense upgrade. It would seem that enough clout nevertheless remains to enable the CHAFEE to forcefully live up to the ship's motto which is "COMMANDING THE SEAS."







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THE 1925 DISASTER OFF NEWPORT by Dave Moore

Quartermaster Hanson asked permission from Third Officer Dreyer to go below for a few minutes. This left Dreyer alone in the pilot house where he now had the dual duties of officer of the watch and helmsman. It was a clear September moonlit and starry night with flat seas. The 175 passenger coastal steamer from Savannah, *The City of Rome*, headed eastward in Block Island Sound on the way to Boston. She was making ten knots and as everything seemed in order, her Captain, John H. Diehl, was in his cabin writing and making up his log. He had had very little sleep because of the

stormy passage of the last two days from Savannah to New York.

Lieutenant Rodney Hiram Dobson, Captain of Submarine S-51, stood on the conning tower bridge, along with Lieutenants Turner, Glasscock, and Pino as the 240 foot vessel powered along on the surface. She had left New London this evening on an engine test scheduled to run from 6 o'clock PM until the following morn-He had had some earlier concerns with the diesel engines and had to

shut them down for a short period as water was found in the forward fuel tanks. Switching to the stern tanks corrected the problem. Unbeknownst to him, he was six miles from *The City of Rome* and was on a collision course.

At 8 o'clock PM seventeen men went off watch on S-51. Seaman Alfred Geiger, Dewey Kile, and engine man Michael Lira soon retired to their bunks in the battery room and tried to get some sleep. Eight others slept in the torpedo room. The monotonous throbbing of the diesel cylinders was helping some and annoying others trying to get some sleep.

About 10:00 o'clock, a lookout on *The City of Rome* notified Officer Dreyer that there was a bright white light four points (45 degrees) off the starboard bow about six miles away. A moment later, Captain Diehl came into the pilot house and also saw the light. Helmsman Dreyer told the captain it might be a tug going west or more probably a Coast Guard boat because of its bright light. The captain first went to the port side to see if there was any traffic there but shortly returned to the starboard side, picked up the binoculars and watched the light intently.



After a short time the light grew even brighter and the bearing did not change. It was coming toward them rapidly. He came to the conclusion it was a rum runner and it was probably on its way to Newport. Soon Captain Diehl could not only see the ship's masthead but the red port sidelight. (It was an unofficial custom for the submarines to keep their port and starboard lights off unless there was nearby traffic.) Diehl knew the red light meant the other vessel was intending to pass close in front of him. He also knew

that under the navigational rules concerning crossing vessels, he was required to keep clear because he was on the port or left side. He thought this low visible vessel was a fast speed boat and was expected to keep clear of his slow maneuvering 309 foot liner, regardless of who had the right of way. He held his course. Captain Dobson, in command of a U.S. Navy submarine, defended his rights. Neither vessel changed course and when they closed to less than 600 feet, it was too late. Captain Diehl ordered the helm hard to port to swing the steamer sharply to the left. So close was the submarine, he pulled the engine room telegraph throttle to hard

astern. At the same time, he pulled the whistle cord for five short blasts of the danger signal. The helmsman had time only to spin the wheel one or one and a half turns before the crash. It had been only forty-five seconds from the first sighting of the red light to the crash. The collision seemed more of a slap on the bow to the passengers but it made a large hole forward of the sub's port engine compartment, just abaft the conning tower. Captain Diehl jumped down from the pilot house to the side deck and saw that the submarine had swung around alongside the steamer. She was so close her hull was rubbing alongside.

Seaman Geier woke up in his bunk from the sound of the crash. According to his watch it was 10:23 PM. Some of the cork from the overhead lining hit him in the face. Water was spurting into the compartment from the battery room duct. He immediately rushed to the watertight door and attempted to close it but was swept back by rushing waters. Seaman Lira thought a battery explosion had occurred, as he jumped out of his bed. As he rushed to the conning tower, he saw Captain Dobson pause in the central operating room and heard him call his men to quarters. He then saw him climb to the deck where he pleaded for a line from The City of Rome. At this moment the sub's bow was down about ten degrees.

Geier, Lira, Kile and other panicked sailors rushed to climb through the conning tower hatch to the bridge. They were fortunate the ladder was only a dozen feet from the sleeping quarters. Geier saw the chief signalman aiding another man up the stairs to the conning tower hatch. Kile saw two other men climb through the hatch. He just made it out as the water poured into the tower and the wreck started to sink under him. Lira was the last to get out. He got caught in the antenna as the sub went down but freed himself in time. Lieutenant Dobson's last words before the sub sank were: "Please give me a line."

The suction of the sub sinking pulled Geier down with it. Holding his breath he popped to the surface and looked around. He counted six heads. The City of Rome was steaming away. He looked for his other friends and now saw only four of them. Gunners mate Cassidy and Fireman Milot and seven others had made it to the surface but were struggling and would soon disappear. None were wearing life preservers. Passengers on the steamer could hear their cries for help but could see no one in the water. Geier, Lira and Kile were experienced swimmers and treaded water for over an hour before a boat from the steamer found them. Geier was the first to be picked up when a lighted ring buoy was thrown to him. Kile was the last to be picked up and Lira suffered the most from exposure. The steamer threw over lighted ring buoys and had a boat down in six minutes. Search lights were turned on but shortly burned out from overloaded fuses. Flares were thrown up immediately. A ladder had been lowered to the water's edge and seamen with oars were standing ready. The captain ordered the vessel to circle around and around the spot on slow bell. The launched lifeboat brought in the three survivors. No others were found. The location of the collision was plotted and sent to the Navy Department. After standing by and seeing no signs of life, the ship proceeded to Boston at 11:15 PM. On inspection of the steamer's bow in Boston, a few scratches on the starboard bow were the only outward sign of her being in an accident.



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11 Farewell St Newport 847-6800 3001 East Main Rd Portsmouth 682-2220 17 Narragansett Ave Jamestown 423-1142 The S-51 sank in 127 feet of water in less than one and a half minutes after the crash. Most of the crew drowned at their duty stations. Seaman Teachmacher was at the wheel and his twin brother was in the engine compartment. Radio man Schofield died with his ear phones on and his hands on the equipment. One man died next to the throttle and had placed it in the stop position. Another was next to the gear controls where the engines were thrown out and the electric motors ready for reversing. Others were next to valve controls. Six men were on duty in the engine room. Someone swung the rudder to hard right to swing the craft out of the way of the steamer bearing down on her. The suffocating chlorine gas was released as the salt water entered the battery room. Divers examining the wreck later found eighteen bodies inside the sub and all the watertight doors open. This indicated there was a mad rush to escape to the conning tower. Captain Dobson's body was never recovered.

The two sunken submarines off Newport are roughly located in nautical miles as follows:

U-853 (sunk on May 6, 1945 with 55 loss of life), 16m from Newport and 6m from Block Island.

S-51 (sunk on September 25, 1925 with 34 loss of life), 15m from Newport and 16m from Block Is land. She was raised on July 5, 1926, towed to New York Harbor, and sold for scrap in 1930.

Ref:

The Newport Naval Log, September 25, 2015, pg. 9, "Our Naval History: Remembering S-51."

The New York Times (37) articles from 1925-1927.

Craver, Al, Song about S-51, 1925, Columbia Record 15044-D

Calling all Born on the Pointers! Were you or your child(ren) born on the Point?

The Point Association will be presenting certificates to these special "Pointers" at our annual Spring meeting.



Please email your full name and birthdate to Lauren Dana (laurenedana@gmail. com).

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THE MANUEL FAMILY PHOTO COLLECTION by Paul Manuel

I was raised on the Point, along with my three brothers and two sisters. My parents, Allan and Norma O'Neill Manuel, were both raised on the Point, and my grandparents and great grandparents also resided on the Point. Going back farther than that I'm not completely sure, but I wouldn't be surprised if a few more generations on both sides also hailed from the Point. In addition to my father's photo collection, I also have my grandfather Elton Manuel's genealogy work, which dates back to the seventeenth century. I plan to study these more when I have the time.



Abbie Manuel (Grandma) in front of 7 Walnut Street Cellar Museum and Book Shop.

I have been collecting photographs of my family for a long time, starting when I was about ten years old and found a large, oval-framed photo, circa 1911, of my grandmother, Abbie, and her twin sister, Sarah, taken when they were about eight years old. It had been tucked away in the attic of my family's house at 7 Walnut Street where I grew up, and where my father also grew up. I gave the picture to my grandmother and great aunt for their birthday that year. They lived together, along with my grandfather, Elton, at 32 Bayside Ave. on the Point. After they passed my parents visited us in Florida one year and brought the picture to return it to me. It has hung in our living room ever since.

Ever since finding that photo I've been hooked. A few years ago I came across two file drawers full of negatives at my father's house. These where the negatives of all the photos my father, Allan, took from about 1946 until about 1953, mostly in and about Newport. He served in Korea during part of this time and was a photographer for the Army there.

Unfortunately, when I found these drawers I unknowingly opened one of them upside down and scattered the negatives and their description cards all over the basement floor. Needless to say, I was careful enough not to do it twice. When my father moved into his apartment recently, I found the file drawers again

among the things he no longer had room to store. With his permission, I shipped them down to Florida along with other artifacts I found, such as photo albums that belonged to my grandfather Elton, grandmother Abbie, Aunt Sarah, and an album from the early 1900s that I believe belonged to Abbie and Sarah's parents. There is also Elton's artwork, which includes watercolors, posters and drawings of places in Newport. Many if not all of these pictures and artwork, all part of Newport history, might have been lost if I hadn't taken an interest in preserving them. They came very close to being discarded and ending up in a Dumpster.

One by one, I've been scanning the negatives on a scanner that turns them into high quality pictures. I've been posting some of them on Facebook, where Lisa Stuart noticed my posts. She asked me if I would be interested in sharing them with the Point Association and having them archived. I couldn't be happier about this. It's so important to me that these pictures, artwork and documents be preserved and accessible to everyone who's interested in Newport history. My father, Allan Manuel, has also been invited to participate in the Point Association's Oral History Project. He'll be interviewed about the photo collection, so *Green Light* readers can look forward to learning more about his photography in greater detail.

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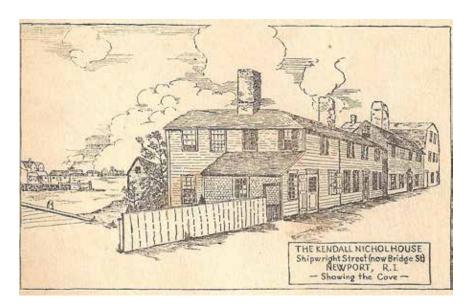
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MANUEL FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM

Inside Cover of "Merchants and Mansions of Bygone Days" by Elton Manuel



Manuel kids on a Spring day



Cars after a snow. At corner of Marlboro and Farewell, January 1948



Launching the SUSAN on Poplar St shore. King Covell at stern of boat

THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT SERIES

Robert Foley, Preservation Director, Newport Restoration Foundation:

OPERATION CLAPBOARD by Nancy Abbinanti

As part of the 60th anniversary celebration of the Point Association, a collection of oral histories is being recorded with longtime Point residents to learn about their experiences in the neighborhood. On August 18th, 2015, John Ward spoke with Robert Foley at the library located in Harbor House at 111 Washington Street to hear about the early days of Newport restoration and Operation Clapboard.

Mr. Foley has a long and distinguished career in the area of historic restoration in Newport. Operation Clapboard was founded in the 1960s by a group of concerned citizens who feared that in the wake of urban development many of the 18th century houses would be lost. Mr. Foley began his interest in historic preservation at a small college in Marlboro, Vermont where he studied early New England architecture. He studied 18th century New England architecture by visiting, drawing and photographing various historic buildings. He accepted a teaching position in Dover, Vermont.

One of his classmates in college was Tom Benson who was very familiar with Newport's rich collection of 18th century buildings and Mr. Foley would accompany him on his trips to Newport. The Newport houses were unique in that they weren't restored and were used for actual housing. Many of the 18th century houses they visited outside of Newport were fully restored and maintained as a museum. Mr. Benson was well known in Newport, which provided easy access to many of the homes on the Point. As they walked the various streets on the Point, neighbors heard them discussing architectural highlights and warmly greeted them when they discovered it was Tom Benson. On one visit they stopped at 25 Bridge Street and despite flaking paint in paneled rooms and hallway, Mr. Foley became in-



terested in buying the house and did so when the house and lot became available.

The neighborhood homes in the early 1960s were a combination of houses lived in by several generations, vacant houses and apartment buildings. There was also an auto body shop, a billboard lot and various other local businesses. The early in-

dividuals involved in Operation Clapboard, such as Tom Benson, Nadine Pepys and Pat Kirby, who provided real estate support saw that the Point Neighborhood was in transition. The Navy was changing and decreasing their presence in Newport. This had a negative impact on the area's ability

OPERATION CLAPBOARD

Here are a few additional sources of information about Operation Clapboard houses.

Houses with a plaque that has an acorn and an OC on them were restored by Operation Clapboard.



"Restoration On The Point: An Ongoing Story," *The Green Light*, 1957-2007, *A History of the Point Association Bulletin The Point Association, Newport, Rhode Island*, Date of Publication- 2008. Publisher: The Point Association pages 141-148. Jane MacLeod Walsh, a life-long resident of the Point, having grown up on Washington St., writes about her work with both Operation Clapboard and Old Port. The book is available for purchase at all Point Association Events.

The Point Association Archives has articles and photos about Operation Clapboard. Email HistoryandArchives@ thepointassociation.com to schedule an appointment.

Past *Green Light* issues contain many articles written during the 1960s by people leading the effort. To read these articles go to the Point Association's website, then go to the *Green Light* page. Put "Operation Clapboard" in the search box and hit enter. Links to the articles will show on your computer screen.

Newport Historical Society has an excellent collection of photos of Operation Clapboard houses. Contact them directly to arrange to see the collection. To schedule an appointment, contact Bridget Sullivan, Registrar, nonmembers. bsullivan@newporthistory.org. \$5 fee for NHS members \$10 fee for nonmembers.

Interview with Mr. Foley. For the complete interview visit with Robert Foley visit The Point Association's website at www.thepointassociation.org.

to keep the houses going. From World War I to the 1960s homeowners could rent their houses no matter how poorly the house was maintained. If Navy renters complained about the condition of the house and presence of fleas and rats, they would be told to look elsewhere as other renters were right behind them. Various houses were actually condemned during that time including the Kings Arm Tavern on Cross Street.

Operation Clapboard provided a process to identify houses for sale and encourage acquaintances and friends to purchase them. Not all of the early buyers were interested in 18th century houses but were attracted by the low prices and ability to own a second house or a simple home that met their needs. When a house was identified as being for sale and had historic value, Operation Clapboard would facilitate purchase by obtaining a 60 to 90 day option to buy with little down payment. Many of the homes were sold for as low as four to five thousand dollars. Individuals from Boston and New York City, including several artists, were the primary buyers eager to secure a low cost second home. Local tradesmen were recommended to new owners by members of Operation Clapboard to complete the renovations. Mr. Foley was hired by many to provide drawings and oversee the project. Owners also received guidance on options and use of local banks.

Operation Clapboard was established as an Incorporated Business with the option for stock purchase. The funds were used to secure other properties using the 60 to 90 day option to buy while potential buyers were located. Tom Benson and Nadine Pepys were the co-directors of Operation Clapboard and there was a Board of Directors including Mr. Foley as an early participant in the organization. A split in the organization occurred when Tom Benson wanted to transition Operation Clapboard to have a non-profit arm that could accept donations to finance activities. This eventually prompted the formation of Old Port, a non-profit that also focused on building restoration.

Operation Clapboard activities decreased as time went on and housing prices began to escalate. In addition to Old Port, the Newport Restoration Foundation was established with John Perkins Brown, as its first director. Both Katherine Warren and Doris Duke provided support to the NRF which continued buying and restoring



18th century houses throughout Newport. Doris Duke was so interested in the restorations made possible by the NRF that

she wrote a check for ten million dollars and urged John Perkins Brown to go to work.

The Point Section and Newport as a whole would not be the vital historic neighborhood it is today without the vision and hard work of individuals who supported its restoration. The Newport Point Association History and Archives Committee are thankful to Robert Foley for participating in this oral history interview and sharing his recollections of early successful restoration efforts. Readers are encouraged to listen to the complete interview which is available on the Point Association Website. Mr. Foley has agreed to participate in a second oral history interview that will focus on the Newport Restoration Foundation.

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WHILE PASSING THROUGH THE POINT by Beth Cullen

As we walk our sleepy streets on quiet, wintry Point days, how often do we acknowledge the significance of the pavement, parks, piers, and peerless historic homes that are underfoot and in our viewscape? Do we take time to sense the spirit of yesteryear that wafts in the air as we pass places that played a part in the scheme of our country's founding story?

What we who live here often see as commonplace, others see as iconic specimens oozing with illustriousness. People travel across our country and from distant continents to peek at our unparalleled collection of one-of-a-kind architectural fabric that, yes, we often take for granted. Do we ever think, what would happen if these streets and homes were, indeed, history?

Thankfully, the Newport Restoration Foundation (NRF), a praiseworthy local institution, is looking forward, and caring for a good number of our city's notable historic homes, for today and for the future. The year was 1968, most of America was modernizing, frantically demolishing dilapidated "ugly" wooden structures reeking of the past, to make way for shiny new steel and plastic wonders. In walks Doris Duke, who stood up and said "STOP!" She saw the sins that were being committed all around in her beloved City by the Sea. Highways were planned, old rotting houses were in the way! We should be forever grateful that a few with foresight, like Miss Duke, worked fervently to preserve and protect so many buildings destined for the wood pile. Painstakingly, these structures were brought back to life and many are now stewarded by well-suited caretakers, disguised as 21st Century tenents.

The Winter 2016 issue of Preservation Magazine, The National Trust for Historic Preservation's quarterly publication, highlights the latest NRF gem to be re-burnished. Kathy Ward, first to live in the freshly restored cottage at 88 Bridge Street, joins her sister Beth Ward O'Shea and her brother John, all "tenant-stewards" caring for three Point Colonial beauties. The Point Association is fortunate to now have all three transplanted New Yorkers living in our neighborhood. The Wards are active on the History & Archives Committee, doing yeomen's work organizing Point history, digitally scanning materials in the collection, and conducting oral histories so posterity understands our times while passing through and caring for the Point.

Kathy told Nancy Frick Battaglia author of *Architectural Fabric: Saving Historic Houses in Rhode Island* (https://savingplaces.org/stories/architectural-fabric-historic-houses-newport-rhode-island#.VrTp_vkrLrc) that she plans to stay at 88 Bridge Street for as long as she can, carrying out Doris Duke's vision of a thriving community of caretakers.

"The house is just beautiful," she says. "It's a little bit smaller than my previous house, but that's fine for me. The Colonial era is just a fascinating period. The house needs to be cared for, and I do all I can to keep it up, but then you have NRF behind you supporting it as well. It is a great partnership."

With 83 refurbished structures in and around Newport, 28 on the Point, NRF is well aware of the weight and magnitude in their charge. Once saved from the ravishes of short-sighted, mid-20th century urban planners, these Colonial-era buildings must now face a new "enemy", flooding caused by the rising sea level.

Galvanized by the indomitable spirit of Miss Duke, The Foundation, headed by Pieter Roos, is taking this challenge head-on by organizing one of the first national conversations on the risks posed by sea level rise to historic coastal communities and their built environments, "Keeping History Above Water."

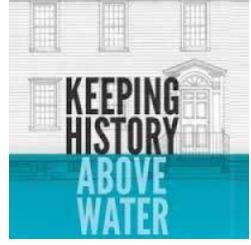
For four days, April 10-13, 2016, NRF has arranged for a slate of leaders from across the country and around the world, to come together and discuss strategies, share

> approaches, practical and offer firsthand experiences in the battle against this daunting global concern. Recognized experts from Scotland, the Netherlands, Venice, Iran, New York, Annapolis, Florida, New Orleans, and Galveston - specialists in the fields of preservation, oceanography, architecture, engineering, insurance, and environmental finance - will come together in Newport.



Their mission, to better define the new international, multidisciplinary community that will be collaboratively tackling this increasingly urgent concern, and to combine forces, involving all stakeholders, to design solutions that will counter the increasing threat of inundation.

Professionals, academics from all related disciplines, government officials and policy makers, college and graduate students, historic home owners, and interested community members, are



welcome to attend.

For conference details, visit: historyabovewater@new-portrestoration.org, or call, 401-849-7300

Map of Point Properties on Next Page

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HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED: THE SECOND ANNUAL MLKCC CAMPAIGN by Lisa Stuart

Thanks to the generosity of our members, the Point Association's Second Annual Martin Luther King Center Campaign exceeded our \$5,000 goal. And most importantly—our contributions will be doubled as part of their match drive, enabling MLKCC to continue and expand the services offered to Newport neighbors in need.

John Broughan, our Campaign Chair, reported that the Point Association's campaign raised \$6,864.50 from 35 donors. This is a 45% increase over last year, and a 35% increase in the number of donors.

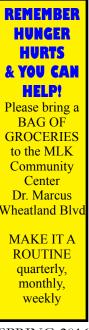
"My very best, and deepest thanks, to all our friends on the Point," wrote Alyson Novice, Director of Development, MLKCC in an email to the Point Association. "Your generous gifts nourish, educate, and empower approximately 3,000 children, adults, and seniors across Newport County each year."

John and several of our Board Members presented our check to Alyson on February 12th. The group also toured the MLKCC where they saw how your contributions are helping our neighbors in need year round.

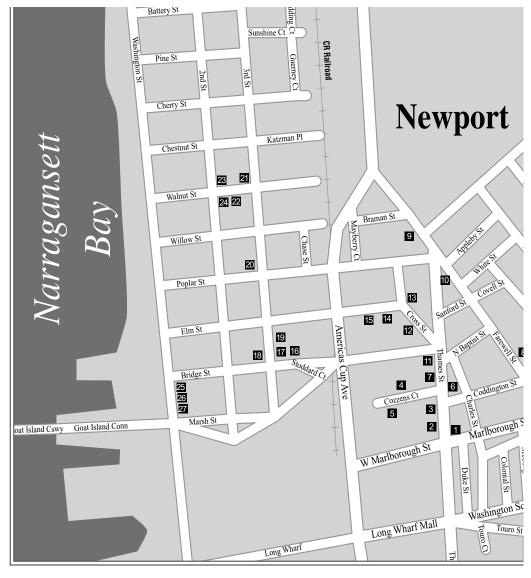
We will report further on the tour in our next issue.



Tom Hockaday, President of
The Point Association
presents check to
Marilyn Warren, executive
director the the
MLK Community Center.



The Green Light



POINT SECTION

- 1. 2 Marlborough Street John Coddington House c.1730
- 2. 67 Thames Street Richardson-Peckham House c.1740
- 3. 57 Thames Street Hathaway-Macomber House c.1715
- 4. 5 Cozzens Court NRF Barn c.1860
- 5. 3 Cozzens Court Swansea House c.1731
- 6. 58 Thames Street Cap't William Read House c.1740
- 7. 53/55 Thames Street Wilder House c.1735
- 8. 33 Farewell Street Clarke-Rodman House c.1711 & 1787
- 9. 56 Farewell Street Taggart House c.1710
- 10. 18 Thames Street David Braman House c.1700
- 11. 6 Bridge Street Howland House c.1721
- 12. 6 Cross Street King's Arms Tavern c.1700
- 13. II Cross Street Governor Gideon House c.1720
- 14. 4 Elm Street Sherburne-Nichols House c.1758-74

- 15. 6 Elm Street Mitchell Trevitt House c.1758 & 1828
- 16. 51 Bridge Street Wm. Gardner House c.1795/186c
- 17. 53 Bridge Street Thomas Townsend House c.1735-
- 18. 59 Bridge Street Martha G. Pitman House c.1743
- 19. 11 Third Street Daniel Lyman House 1795
- 20. 47 Poplar Street William Lawton House c.1758
- 21. 25 Walnut Street William & Joseph Wanton House
- 22. 30 Walnut Street Edith Cory House c.1725
- 23. 31 Walnut Street Knowles-Perry House c.1750
- 24. 51 Second Street Solomon Townsend House 1725
- 25. 39 Washington Street Brenton Counting House c.1
- 26. 35 Washington Street Issac Dayton House c.1725
- 27. 33 Washington Street Ann Webber House c.1794



IDA TO THE RESCUE

by Ed Madden

They called her Ida and this is the story of her life. Ida Lewis was the most famous woman lighthouse keeper in the United States in her era. Her parents christened her Idawally Zorada Lewis in 1842, naming her after older relatives. Her friends called her Ida.

In September, 1716, the Boston Light, the first lighthouse in North America, was built in Boston Harbor. The Lighthouse Establishment was set up by the U.S. government in the 19th century and in 1939 was incorporated into the U.S. Coast Guard. By the turn of the century, there were 24 lighthouses along the Atlantic coast. On site residence for the male lighthouse keepers and accommodations for their family were provided, with the wives and often the older children becoming adept in helping to maintain the operation of the lights.

In 1853, Captain Hosea Lewis, a ship's pilot on a revenue cutter, with his wife and 4 children, was placed in charge of the Lime Rock Light in Newport Harbor. Lime Rock was a cluster of 2 large and several smaller rocks arranged in a series of limestone ledges supporting a 2 story brick house and light tower. The brick house became the family home. Lime Rock was an island accessible only by boat, lying about half way between Fort Adams and Goat Island in Newport Harbor.

The oldest child in the Lewis family was Ida. She was 15 years old when her father suffered a disabling stroke in 1857. Ida and her mother had to assume the full time duty of lighthouse keepers. Ida became an excellent oarswoman, paddling her 2 younger siblings back and forth in a rowboat to the mainland schools on a daily basis. This made her particularly expert as a "rowboat skipper" in all kinds of weather. She became responsible for maintaining the light beacon, a duty she performed faithfully for the next 50 years!

Over the years, Ida became world renowned for her many lifesaving acts of heroism. There were 4 separate documented life saving episodes resulting in the rescue of 18 people from drowning in the treacherous stormy

weather of Narragansett Bay and Newport Harbor. To top it all off, she also had the distinction of pulling a foundering prized sheep to safety!

In 1866 a daring rescue of 2 drowning soldiers from Fort Adams in a violent storm while she was significantly ill brought her national publicity in a full front page spread in *Harper's Weekly Magazine*, the "Life magazine" of its time. Thereupon countless letters of admiration, numerous gifts, and several marriage proposals arrived at her doorstep addressed to "the most famous woman in America"! Even a personal visit from "the most famous man in America, Ulysses Grant, General of the U.S. Army" was paid to the modest 27year old lighthouse keeper in 1869!

As time passed, Ida received innumerable medals and awards honoring her bravery and exploits. At the age of 39, she was the first woman ever honored by the U.S. Life Saving Service as well as receiving a gold medal from the U.S. Congress with the accolade that "she was the bravest woman in the United States."

By the mid-1800s, an increasing number of lighthouses were co-managed by women. A famous quote by Ida stated that "anyone who thinks it is unfeminine to run a lighthouse and save lives has the brains of a "donkey." A rescue by Ida in 1877 of several soldiers and marching band members from the waters off Fort Adams required all her strength and stamina, resulting in a prolonged illness from her exposure to the elements. A tentative diagnosis of diphtheria was made, with a slow recovery over many months. Finally her value to the country was recognized with a permanent appointment as a lighthouse keeper with an annual salary of \$750.00 from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury.

However, although she was pleased with the responsibility entrusted to her in manning the lighthouse, Ida's life was not a happy one personally. Her parents and the majority of her siblings died over the years and her only marriage to a seafaring man in 1870 was devoid of love and pleasure. The marriage ended within 2 years and was childless. So, this somewhat retiring, quiet and non-boastful young woman found herself immersed in a worldwide publicity campaign over which she had no control, lacking the support and the innate tools

to deal with her situation. People came from all over the continent to see her. Even the famous Belleview Avenue "cottage folk" – the Astors, Vanderbilts, and Belmonts – came to meet her.



Ida kept the light burning until October 21, 1911. On that day, she was carrying a bundle of logs from one room to another when she had the onset of a severe stroke and fell to the floor unconscious. She was found by her brother. A doctor was summoned but within 3 day, on October 24, 1911, she was pronounced dead. She was moved to a local funeral home in Newport where 1,439 people came to pay their respects. Six soldiers from Fort Adams acted as pall bearers from a service at Trinity Church to interment at the Old Cemetery on Farewell Street. Some dignitaries from Washington, D.C. attended the funeral.

Ida's brother continued to care for the light after her death. In 1927, the Lime Rock Lighthouse was put up for sale by the U.S. government. A private, well financed local group, the Narragansett Bay Regatta Association, made an offer of \$72,000 with the plan to make the area into a yacht club. This was accepted and a wooden causeway was constructed to connect the island to the mainland. The Ida Lewis Yacht Club became a reality and a replica light was placed in the light tower acting as an aid to navigation.

The final thought about Ida concerns a rumor that on stormy nights in the area of the Ida Lewis Light, some people have heard a female voice murmuring "the light is my child and I know when it needs me even when I'm asleep." Could this be Ida checking on her flock?

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ACCESSING THE WILD APRICOT SYSTEM or How to Renew Membership

We know that, despite the advantages of the Wild Apricot system we're using for the PA, there are times when it seems overwhelming. We hope that this article makes things easier for members to engage online through www. thepointassociation.org.

First, we would love to have you log in, but if you are one of the few members who has an email account but hasn't yet shared your email address with the Membership committee, you won't be able to get a password. We absolutely positively will not share it with anybody else! So, that said, please send a quick email to membership@thepointassociation.org and tell us who you are, and we'll add your email address to your profile, and then we'll let you know it's done. Now you can get a password, and you will always be in the know because you'll receive the fabulous bi-weekly Points of Interest news-notes!

Second, if you have shared your email address, but you've never logged in, you're going to need a password.

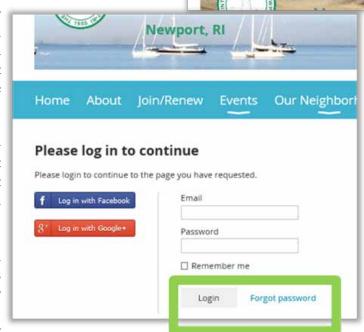
Just follow these steps to get a password:

1. Open your favorite browser and go to http://thepointassociation.org/

2. Even though you might be tempted, do not click on the Join/Renew link in the blue menu!!! Instead, click on the gray Login button above the PA logo in the nighttime picture of the bridge.

- 3. The page will change now you'll see a lovely daytime shot of boats on the bay in the banner, and you'll be asked to log in to continue. Scroll down and you'll see a lighter gray Login button, and right next to it is a blue link for Forgot password. Yes, we know you haven't forgotten anything!
- 4. Click on the Forgot password link, and you'll be taken to a page where you can reset (or create for the first time) your password. Don't forget to fill in the code that lets the website know you're a real human being instead of a computer, and click the submit button.
- 5. Check your email and you'll get a message with a link that lets you set your password. This process can't work if we don't have your email (which is why you need to let us know if you haven't before!).

Once you've set your password, you can log in any



time you want, and if you have a renewal coming due, you'll see that as soon as you log in. You can then click to pay your renewal, and follow the steps to pay through PayPal. Remember you DO NOT have to have a PayPal account – just read the page you'll be taken to and look for the link to pay by credit card.

And that's all there is to it! If you have questions, don't hesitate to email membership@thepointassociation.org for help!

Best regards, The Membership Committee

20 The Green Light SPRING 2016







HAPPY NEW YEAR PARTY at Newport Yacht Club

Greeters:Kitty & Joan

The Wards (yes Beth O'Shea is a Ryan) and Mary Mang

Kathy & John Ward, Beth O'Shea, Bill Martin, Lisa Brew and Rep. Lauren Carson

Kitty, Barbara, Donna, and Pam



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SAVE THE DATES

3rd Annual Newport Daffodil Festival April 16 to 24 http://www.daffodillion.org/

> Point Association Plant Sale Saturday, May 28th

PLEASE NOTE: The Board has cancelled the POT LUCK SUPPER and the SPRING MEETING will be scheduled for a date in MAY Notification for the meeting will be announced in Points of Interest

