

The GREEN LIGHT



BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
Winter Holiday 2019



Children at the Point Holiday Party Sing Along with the St John's Choir

The GREEN LIGHT

LXIII No. 4

Holiday 2019

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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.



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The more I work with *The Green Light*, the more I am of the history the archives of this quarterly are ~ not only for our neighborhood but for all of Newport. I urge you to start at our first edition of *The Green Light* in 1955 and continue from there. I assure you, each edition is a "page turner".

This issue starts an occasional series on "How We Got To THIS Point" using reprints from the Archives.

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry when I first read "The Plan for the Point in 1962". Many of our current issues are the same as those in the 60's and 70's. Some recommendations were wise and some were real howlers when you think of how we look at things today. Fifty or 60 years from now, one wonders how wise the decisions we make will look?

I am grateful to Mark Taylor for permission to use some of his father's photographs. Jerry Taylor seemed to be everywhere in Rhode Island and Newport cataloguing the places and events of the time.

See you 'round the 'Hood.

Ann McMahon

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Cover photo by Ann McMahon. Back Photo by Jerry Taylor. Used by Permission

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Happy Holidays!

As we approach the end of 2019, I want to thank everyone for their support of the Point Association and especially thank all of the volunteers who worked tirelessly on the PA Board, the committees and the events. The Association is proud to bring neighbors together for the benefit of the Point and are glad that these gatherings also provide occasions for neighbors to get together for fun, food and festivities.

The Point Association recently sponsored our fifth annual Holiday Tree Lighting in Storer Park. As suggested by the Beautification Committee when under the leadership of Rich Abbinanti we “re-started” this rich holiday tradition. This event is now a highly anticipated event.

In 2019, we added a stroll down Washington Street while caroling, followed by a family holiday celebration in St. John's Guild Hall emphasizing activities for children. Mother Nature participated and provided a blanket of snow to help celebrate and the goats from Gurney's Hotel proved to be a special treat for the young ones! Over 100 neighbors participated in this wonderful evening which is our part of the official Christmas in Newport celebration.

Our thanks go to the many who spent countless hours organizing this very special event. On behalf of the Board and membership of the Point Association I send the warmest wishes to all neighbors for a happy holiday season!

Best regards,

Tom Hockaday
President

Tree Lighting and Holiday Party a Resounding Success

by Ann McMahon

‘Where did all these sweet children come from? Here they are, growing up on the Point, many of them from families associated with the Newport Shipyard. Laura Dana and Jennifer Huntley spread the word about the party and the PA volunteers made sure there were activities for the youngsters. The children certainly made this gala merry and bright. The grown-up attendees delighted in watching them even more than they enjoyed the terrific refreshments and activities by the Marley Bridge Players and the Carol sing by St. John’s Choir.

The Tree Lighting and Carol Sing is a Point tradition. Heretofore it had consisted of a brisk countdown to the lighting of our brave little evergreen in Storer Park, ending with the cries of well wishers as they went back to their own homes. This year, a group of volunteers worked hard to ensure a bright holiday after-party that was half tradition and the other half a twist on old traditions. Not just lanterns for the carolers, but, in addition, glow sticks all around. After greeting the Gurney Resort goats, and enjoying hot chocolate donated by Rich Willis, owner of Caleb and Broad Restaurant and Point Liquors, the group counted down to light the tree. They then caroled their way to St. John’s Guild Hall, lanterns swinging.



They were greeted by a wonderland featuring a gorgeously trimmed holiday tree and nutcrackers nestled in evergreens. Artist John Sawicki donated the tree and its decorations on behalf of the Point Association. A goodly

sum of money was raised for the PA Charitable Fund with the sale of raffle tickets for the tree. Young and old were entertained by the Marley Bridges Players. Led by that group of actors that included a story-teller, the children, many adorned with colorful reindeer antlers, participated in a variety of activities from a time long before television and video games.

Point neighbors Todd and Lisa Stuart contributed the Gingerbread Men cookies made by Xavier F. Mauprivez of French Confection Bakery. It was the idea of Karen Koval Mauprivez to decorate just half of the cookies and provide the whipped cream and candies so the youngsters could decorate the rest. Pizza, roll-ups and cheese plates were catered by Dave’s Market.



The purity in the voices of the children of St. John’s Children’s Choir always embodies the hopes of the holiday and the New Year. In addition to a short concert by the highly acclaimed choir, the ensemble, accompanied by Peter Burton on the piano, led young and old in a sing-a-long of Yuletide Carols. Many revelers brought what amounted to a wagonload of toys to donate to the MLK Center. Sloane Reitman of Point Monogram donated pretty red “Christmas on The Point” cocktail napkins.





Hard working volunteers for the event were: John Broughan, Maureen Cronin, Lauren Dana, Sheila Derochers, Tom Hockaday, Bill and Barbara Hogan, Jennifer Huntley, Pam Kelley, Bill and Joan Rauch, Joy Scott, and Gail Thacher



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Newport Historical Society Presentation at PA Fall Meeting

by Ann McMahon

What might have been described as an “amused gasp” escaped from the fifty or so attendees at the Point Association meeting at St. John’s Guild Hall the evening of October 28. The reason was Ruth Taylor’s listing of some of the artifacts housed at the Newport Historical Society of which she is the Executive Director. The article eliciting the most response was Roger Williams’ wallet. One can be assured that this is not your modern day money holder but a more decorated transporter of an important gentleman’s papers. Ruth went on to explain the work of the Society. There are small exhibits always at the Brick Market and as well as the Center on Touro Street by appointment. Some of the many objects in the Collection are a tea kettle by Paul Revere, the first wall clock built in America by Thomas Claggett and, for you fashionistas, many articles of Colonial attire.

President Tom Hockaday presided over the election of Mark Tagliabue as Vice President and the re-election of Bill Rauch as Treasurer. He also urged members to donate to our current fund raiser for the MLK Center. Attendees could view the Anchor Award given by the Center designating the PA as a “Keeper of the Dream”, as well as a proclamation from the City of Newport and letters from state elected officials.

Committee report summaries:

There is a plan to introduce more use of social media to communicate among neighbors according to Mark Marosits, head of the Communications Committee.

Membership chair Gail Thacher encouraged all to attend the December 3 tree lighting at Storer Park followed by a holiday party at St. John’s Guild Hall. A lucky raffle winner will take home a hand-decorated holiday tree.

Maureen Cronin Marosits, Beautification Committee head, thanked the neighbors for making the Plant Sale the most lucrative fund raiser for the PA last year and encouraged the group to again donate plants and garden related objects for the coming year’s Plant Sale.



Ruth Taylor, Executive Director of the Newport Historical Society addresses the Meeting

Lisa Brew described the extensive work she and others in the History and Archives Committee have done scanning and preserving the many artifacts of the Historic Point. Many of these can be viewed under the “Our Neighborhood” menu on www.thepointassociation.org. The Committee is working on a way for history buffs to view the actual items.

Father Humphrey from St. John’s outlined the extensive repairs and renovations being made to the buildings. He expressed hope that the neighbors on the Point would consider supporting the endeavor as it is as much “the Point’s” Church as it is the parishioners.

Treasurer Bill Rauch gave his review of the PA’s finances. The good news is that we are in the black and on our way to another successful MLK fund raiser.

From feedback from the attendees, it is apparent there is concern among members that fewer people are joining the Point Association even though the amount to join is quite low. Perhaps there is a membership drive in our future?

How We Got to This Point

The following reprint of the Draft *Plan for the Point* submitted by Admiral Henry Eccles in 1962 and the extensively researched article by Lisa Stuart on *The Long Winding Road to the Newport Bridge* are the first in a series of *Green Light* articles that will get new neighbors familiar with how the civic involvement of many led to our present day Point neighborhood and how it came to its present geographic boundaries.

It is worthy of note that our predecessors loved this beautiful place and, like our present Point Association volunteers, worked to ensure its beauty. A reader should bear in mind that Newport, like so many American cities, was preparing for urban renewal in the 1960's. Neither the landing spot of the Newport Bridge nor the location of its off ramps had yet been set. The Navy was still an overwhelming presence with no hint yet of the Fleet pullout that took place about ten years later. The Preservation Society was still in its infancy. There was a growing consciousness of the historic value of the Point and the Oldport organizations and Operation



Clapboard had begun purchasing historic structures and selling them to people who promised to restore them. Still, the Point was a long way from the restoration that gained momentum a decade or two later. There was no Gateway Center yet. The trains along Long Wharf were still active and delivered almost all construction and other building materials to J.T. O'Connell's property.

The Plan for the Point in 1962

This is a draft of a plan written by Admiral Henry Eccles to several agencies involved in Redevelopment. Eccles was at different times President of the Point Association and Chairman of the Bridge Committee.

This draft plan was to be sent to the general membership of the Point Association after approval by the PA Board. After approval, it was to be sent to: Newport Mayor Hambly; the Redevelopment Agency, Mr. Leys; the City Planning Commission, Mr. Perrotti; the City Manager; the Preservation Society; the Newport Chamber of Commerce; the Improvement Association; the Housing Authority; the Jamestown Bridge Authority and the Board of Health.

The Plan: The attached plan for the protection, preservation and development of the Point Section of Newport is submitted to you with the hope that it will assist you in your share of the important task of the planning and development of the City as a whole. We have presented our ideas as a whole, and therefore you may note that some aspects of our plan may not apply to your particular responsibility. We hope that this overall view will make it easier for all the agencies to understand our situation and views and thus to improve the final effort. Finally, you will note that in some instances we have spoken in terms of the broad general objectives. We have done this so as to reach agreement on principles with the conviction that once these principles are understood and agreed upon, it will be relatively easy to work out the necessary details. Furthermore, many details must dovetail with other plans and stages in redevelopment as a whole and, therefore, cannot be specifically stated at this time.

The Point Association specifically:

Enthusiastically endorses the concept of redevelopment as prepared by the Redevelopment Agency and will cooperate

Plan for the Point (continued)

with this and other appropriate agencies to accomplish this work which is so vital to the welfare of our City. In particular, the Association stands ready to discuss various details of the plan so that the greatest harmony may be achieved. However, we must emphasize that we will vigorously oppose any plan which seeks to achieve a cheap solution to a vexing problem by destroying or injuring an important area of the Point.

1. Urges the full enforcement of the minimum housing code and its continued reexamination in order that it may be improved so as to prevent the development and growth of slum conditions and slum areas.
2. Urges the full enforcement of the laws and ordinances relative to health, sanitation and cleanliness. For if our laws are not enforced, it is quite likely that improvement in one section will be offset by deterioration in other sections.
3. Finally, the Point Association feels it would be completely futile to spend large sums of Federal and local money to make great capital improvement in the City by way of redevelopment, unless at the same time, the City and State officials provide a sincere and vigorous enforcement of our present laws and ordinances and unless the citizens awake to the opportunity offered and obligation incurred by such redevelopment.

II Historic Zoning

Type 1 – Houses to be preserved because of age – 1850 or earlier

Type 2 – Houses to be preserved because of either unusual architecture or association

No house in either Type 1 or Type 2 may be torn down or altered in such a way as to destroy its character without the approval of an appropriate board.

Protection from deterioration through neglect or abuse should be provided. (The City Minimum Housing Code should be enforced).

For purpose of historic zoning, the Point Association approves of the Historic Zoning boundaries as recommended by the Preservation Society in its meeting of May 11, 1962, except that the northern boundary should be Cypress Street rather than Van Zandt Avenue.

III Demolition

Any house which has deteriorated to the degree that it has become a menace to health or safety or has become a serious detriment to the atmosphere of the Point will be subject to the consideration review of an appropriate board which can direct either its demolition or reconstruction in accordance with the provision of existing laws and ordinances. (See Minimum Housing Code)

The Point Association urges that the Planning Board and the Redevelopment Agency invoke and use their full legal and financial resources to demolish the present slum areas of the Point, particularly in the Lower Third-Bridge-Marsh Street area. The Association will look with favor on the establishment of suitable low cost housing in these areas to provide decent living for the present residents of these slums.

IV Reconstruction

No new construction of commercial buildings or dwellings or institutions with more than three stories shall be permitted on the Point.

Plan for the Point (continued)

New buildings of any sort which may be built on the Point shall be of such architectural design as conforms to the general atmosphere of the Point. This requirement will be as interpreted by the ___(to be named)___ Board.

All new construction of buildings of any sort on the Point shall provide sufficient off-street parking or garage space to provide for automobiles of the residents or employees of normal customers of the establishment.

Any reconstruction on the Point shall be built on foundations high enough to avoid flooding during periods of abnormally high water.

V Business

By reason of both the history and the atmosphere of the Point, the development of the appropriate business establishments on the Point should be encouraged.

In particular, various crafts should be stimulated in every way. Furthermore, the small general stores and local service establishments not only should be supported, but they should also be encouraged to improve their establishments. On the other hand, package stores and bars should be kept to a minimum.

Furthermore, if and when Goat Island is used by business, special provision for a new heating and power plant should be made to prevent a recurrence of the smoke and fly ash nuisance which in years past did so much damage to the residential areas of the Point.

VI Traffic – Highways and Bridges

The Point Association urges that the present railroad tracks be converted to a through highway and that the access routes to the Goat Island Causeway and the Newport-Jamestown Bridge be so constructed as to channel through traffic to this new highway so as to minimize truck and through automobile traffic in the residential areas of the Point. In accordance with this basic principle of reducing fast and heavy traffic on Third, Second and Washington Streets, we respectfully request that the design of any Causeway or Bridge that may be built from Rose Island to Aquidneck Island be built so as to feed into the Goat Island Causeway and thence to a three way connection to:

- A new highway on the site of the present railway;
- The center of the City – Eisenhower Mall
- The new waterfront street

As new highways are constructed, care should be taken to provide for planting of suitable trees and shrubs along them for the important dual purposes of (1) protecting nearby residents from the sound of traffic; and (2) beautifying the approaches to Newport so as to attract tourists.

In this connection it is pointed out that the costs of such landscaping in the construction of a new highway is very small and that such cost is minor in relation to the payoff in the increased property values and money to be gained by attracting tourists.

VII Parks and Recreations

Since there is a great need for more recreation areas in Newport, and since waterfront parks are particularly suitable for a City of Newport's heritage and character, the Point Association urges that those areas of the present Fleet Landing (adjacent to Storer Park. *Ed.*) which are not used for a causeway or yacht marina be made into a public park.

Plan for the Point (continued)

VIII Waterfront and Driftways

In preparing the plans and budgets for redevelopment, special attention should be paid to the reconditioning and improvement of the seawalls and driftways. We can be sure that recreational boating will increase. We can be sure that future gales and storms will batter our waterfront. Therefore, it will be both a public service and a long-range economy to place these important facilities and vital safeguards in first-class condition.

IX Health and Safety

We request that all practicable measures be undertaken to reduce the prevalence of rats on the Point during redevelopment operations, and to insure that the lighting be brought up to adequate standards. In particular the Point Association urges that the Redevelopment Plan include effective measures to overcome the nuisance of the Newport City Dump (located where the former Newport Grand and adjacent parking lots are now. *Ed.*) which for years not only has been an eyesore, but also has created a health and a public stench greatly to the detriment of the whole city.

Update on Newport/Pell Bridge Ramps Realignment

Ann McMahon

Whatever else may change in the thirty day comment period, it seems pretty certain that the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and other agencies involved in decision making on the realignment of the Newport/Pell Bridge ramps have their collective hearts set on having a pedestrian and bike path shared along the railroad tracks that run along the east boundary of the Point. It is also pretty certain that this “Secondary Rail Corridor” will remain just that and not become a paved highway as feared by many living close by. A pilot program for a railed “people mover” has been planned. It would leave from a proposed park-and-ride lot with up to 300 parking spaces off of Connell Highway and travel to the Gateway Center. In the interim, there are plans for an *on-street* shuttle that would carry people from the Park-and-Ride to the Gateway Center.

This summer, one set of tracks along some parts of the way were removed and deteriorated rails, ties were replaced and new stones were put down alongside. Those people living on or near the “Courts” on the Point were surprised to hear a train chugging along the recently repaired tracks on Halloween evening. It turned out to be a rolling costume party for Newport’s children organized by the Newport Police. That sound had not been heard here in a year or two.

Other changes having a direct impact on the Point is the removal of the “Scenic Newport” off ramp which is the main goal of the project as a constantly stated goal was a need to improve safety by reducing the number of cars backed up on the Bridge itself. Those headed for the Point from the new configuration will have to travel further on a surface road to circle around to end up in familiar territory at the intersection of Farewell Street and VanZandt Street. Also, there is a plan to reconfigure the intersection of Third Street, Admiral Kalbfus Road and Training Station Road to “enhance safety and operations”. Perhaps those of us trying to head south on Third Street will be able to make a left turn in a timely fashion?



The Long Winding Road to the Newport Bridge

by Lisa Stuart

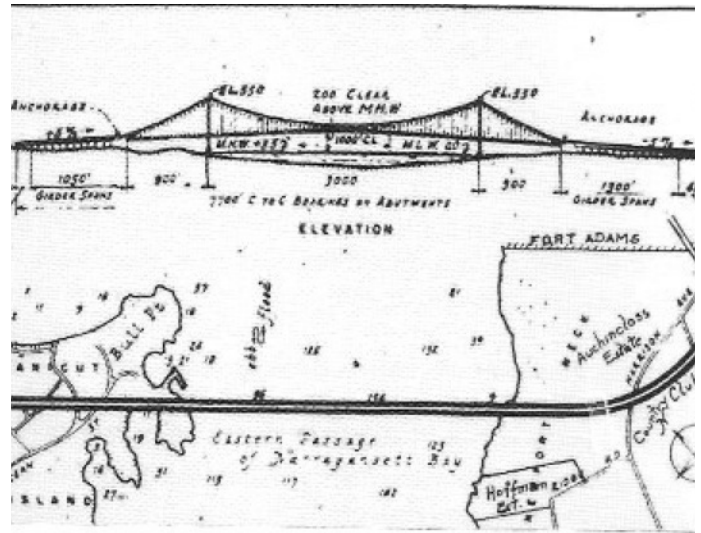
The Pell Bridge is an iconic image in Newport. It graces everything from t-shirts to paintings. The serene view of the sun setting over the bridge belies the economic and political wars that were waged during its planning and construction. Although it eased travel and brought business to downtown Newport, the bridge also divided our neighborhood and cost many Pointers their homes. It forever changed the Point.

The story of the Bridge started in 1935 when the original Jamestown Bridge was being considered by the Public Works Administration (PWA). After crossing the Jamestown Bridge most people wanted to continue on to Newport or Cape Cod. But to do so they would have to take a ferry. There was frequently a long wait for passage by car and a mad rush for ‘the last ferry’ in the evenings. The ferries were losing money and would soon need major repairs. As a result plans were drawn for a Jamestown to Newport Bridge.

Every year, starting in 1936, a bill to build the bridge was introduced in the RI General Assembly. And every year it died in session. In the proposal, the bridge was to land at Gould Island well north of Navy property. When WWII started all thoughts of the bridge were abandoned.

As soon as WWII ended the bridge efforts were re-ignited. The bridge was not only to connect Jamestown and Newport, but was to be part of the state’s highway system bringing tourists and commerce to Newport. It was a time of optimism and cooperation. A bill was submitted to expand the responsibilities of the Jamestown Bridge commission to include building the Jamestown-Newport Bridge. The Navy stated they would no longer object. Businesses rallied behind the organization.

The bridge would have two sections—one from Jamestown to Gould Island and the other from Gould Island to Coddington Cove near Chase Lane in Middletown. But the forward movement came abruptly to an end. The Navy objected to the location and suggested it go from Bull Point to Fort Adams. Discussions about the location of the bridge continued.



One of the early scenarios of where the Bridge span would land. It went from “The Dumplings” near the south end of Canonicut Island to Fort Adams and down Bellevue Avenue.

Unhappy with the lack of forward movement, a bill was introduced in 1947 to form the Narragansett Bay Bridge Authority. In May 1948 Governor John P. Pastore signed two bills in the final hours of the General Assembly. The new organization was charged with getting the bridge built as quickly as possible. Commuters and businesses rallied behind the organization.

After many political twists and turns the RI legislature approved construction of a \$30 million toll bridge. Several more possible designs were considered. One of the designs would cross north of Rose Island with terminations on Taylor Point in Jamestown and Van Zandt Avenue in Newport. Even a tunnel that started in Taylor’s Point in Jamestown went under Coaster’s Harbor Island and terminated at Coddington Highway in Newport was considered. Endless studies and debates ensued.

All looked bleak until a group of bankers came forward in 1959 and re-energized the dream of the bridge. In 1963 the Bay Bridge Bill passed and sponsors pushed for work to begin. Frances “Gerry” Dwyer took the helm as the Chairman of the RI Turnpike and Bridge Authority. After waiting 90 minutes for the ferry he said, “It obviously made great sense to build it.” It would still be another few years before construction was started. During this time it became clear that the Point would likely be one of the final locations considered for the terminus of the bridge.

The Bridge and the Point

In 1961 shopping centers had sprung up in Middletown causing economic decline in Newport. The economy suffered further from the decline of wartime production. In response Newport embarked on an urban redevelopment project.



Work actually begins on the Bridge in 1966.

Photo courtesy of the Walker Family Album

By this time there were three bridge plans being evaluated: a northerly plan positioned in Jamestown and crossing to Brown's Lane near the Middletown-Portsmouth border, Jamestown to Goat Island and then Long Wharf and finally Jamestown to Van Zandt Avenue.

Newport Councilman Dennis Shea expressed his opposition to the proposed terminus of the Jamestown-Newport Bridge to Brown's Lane. "The battle going on for four years has finally been won. As far as the citizens of Newport are concerned, however, the battle for the bridge is not over yet." A termination in Middletown would route cars and the economic growth they represented away from Newport.

"If the bridge terminus is to be put out at Brown's Lane in Middletown, it would be of little help to the redevelopment projects of Newport," Shea said.

Bill Leys, Executive Secretary of the Redevelopment Agency stated that the construction of the bridge tied in

definitely with the success of the redevelopment of Thames Street and, possibly, Goat Island." Again, businesses banded together and took out advertisements stating the importance of the bridge terminus being in Newport.

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PETITIONS LOCATIONS

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 MEADOWS MARKET, 108 Van Zandt Avenue
 CHARLIE'S STORE, 92 Broadway, Bellevue Shopping
 CALVANI'S, 22 Broadway, Aquidneck Shopping Center
 PERROTTI'S DRUG, Bellevue Shopping, 176 Broadway
 McLAUGHLIN DRUG, 178 Thames Street
 COVELL'S, 165 Thames Street
 LOUIE'S BEAUTY SALON, 204 Bellevue, Aquidneck Shop. Ctr.
 JAFFE'S DRUG, 695 Thames Street

SIGNATURE: [illegible] 14-11-1966

In 1962 the Point Association developed a "Plan for the Point." The plan was submitted to the City of Newport and others involved in the development of Newport. With the Point being considered as a terminus for the bridge, it was time to make certain that the plan was implemented.

Admiral Eccles was named chairman of a committee to study the bridge crossing options and make a recommendation. He met with businesses, politicians and other stakeholders in an effort to push the building of the bridge forward while meeting the goals stated in the 1962 Plan for the Point. Admiral Eccles recommended the Point Association endorse the plan to bring the bridge to Goat Island and Long Wharf.

In 1963 a special meeting of the Point Association was called by President William Harrington to discuss the best location for the Newport end of

The Bridge and the Point (continued)

the proposed Narragansett Bay Bridge. The Point Association held a vote among its membership and a resolution was passed and sent to all the authorities concerned with planning the Bridge and the highway system and to the Newport Redevelopment Agency.

“December 2, 1963 Resolved: that the Newport-Jamestown Bridge be so constructed as to land at the Fleet Landing on Long Wharf to be incorporated into a causeway to Goat Island. A main highway on the site of the present railroad tracks should be contracted so as to move through traffic to the north without entering the center of Newport, and also to provide access to the downtown area and proposed waterfront street.”

Ade Bethune, the Point artist and activist recalled, “What upset people more [than the entrance of the Bridge on Farewell Street] was the plan for the roadway extending from the Bridge. People on the Point felt the State’s plan to build a superhighway along the railroad track would have cut the neighborhood off.”

In his document “The History of the Redevelopment Agency,” Bill Leys stated that America’s Cup was to become one of the major controversies in the renewal

program. The concept was to relieve some of the traffic congestion. “The State wanted the bridge connector road to run along side the railroad tracks through the Point Section of the City. This plan was vigorously opposed by residents of the Point neighborhood and was finally dropped by the State, although until this day you can still see the start of a ramp leading down toward the tracks.”

Using the railroad tracks for the roadway was met with concern and a study was undertaken. Judge Arthur Sullivan representing businessman J.T. O’Connell spoke at an Executive Session of the Planning Board of Newport on December 15, 1969 as an objector for dismantling the railroad tracks. Although the passenger service had long stopped, the railroad was still used to bring supplies and lumber into Newport. Mr. O’Connell noted that he pays \$55,000 in taxes, receives 125 carloads and has a payroll of a half-million dollars. He has 58 sub-contractors who depend on materials. Half of the supplies come in by train.

In a report from the planning director to the City Manager dated November 13, 1970 it was reported that 59 families would be displaced for bridge access and 6 more on Marsh Street. Houses would have to be condemned to make room for the roadway.

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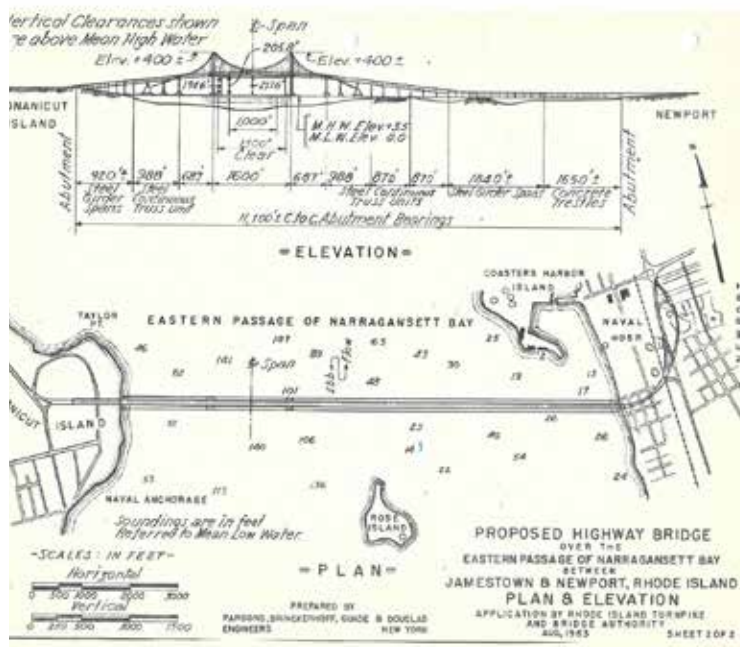
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The Bridge and the Point (continued)



Ade Bethune, hoping to minimize the number of homes lost, formed the Point East-West Committee. She estimated that 20 houses could be saved if the railroad tracks were abandoned. Senator Taylor supported the position saying that the railroad tracks were only barely usable and served only a few businesses.

The East-West Point Committee worked with Ecology Island, the Martin Luther King Center and R.I. Historical Preservation Commission headed by Antoinette Downing to save houses and prevent the division of the neighborhood.

The Martin Luther King Center supported the East-West Point Committee urging people to sign the petition. Their flyer noting a meeting on September 9, 1971 stated, "The proposed highway as designed will affect West Broadway, your area, it will limit your access to the Point Areas...."

Beth Milham, Island Ecology, noted in a letter to the newspaper that the primary motivation of the East-West Point Committee is the preservation of a NEIGHBOR_hood—a unique combination of human beings living in harmony in a unique setting. Downing noted "All the coherence of the Colonial city and to its buildings will be lost and Newport and the State will suffer an irreparable cultural and historic loss."

The East-West Point Committee held a meeting at St. John's Church that was attended by over 200 people. Five to six hundred people signed a petition which was presented to the City Council stating that the "railroad through the Point district has outlived it's usefulness; and that termination where it leaves the Naval Base would be to the advantage of everyone...." Ade Bethune stated that in the future there would never be a transportation system that would cut through a residential neighborhood.

In a letter to Governor Chaffee's office dated January 26, 1965 Nadine Pepys, President of Operation Clapboard said, "Newport's greatest industry lies in it's rich architectural heritage, and Operation Clapboard has shown in a few months since it's inception, that this very heritage can, and is now, bringing in to Newport new people and new money, to say nothing of new work."

In a letter to The Honorable Erich A. O'D. Taylor Admiral Eccles noted, "I believe that the proponents of the railroad track are not bluffing and that they can easily tie the matter up in the courts for such a long time that the road will not be built for between five and ten years."

In concern over lawsuits delaying the building of the bridge terminus on Long Wharf William Harrington, President of the Point Association, stated that if having the terminus on Long Wharf was not practical that the second choice would be in the Cypress-Sycamore Street Area. He further stated that the Point Association has been aware of the value of the bridge and has never taken a stand against any location which would bring the bridge into Newport rather than farther out on Aquidneck Island.

Several pedestrian crossings were to be eliminated which would limit access to the Point. The East-West Point Committee lobbied to keep the existing ones. Under consideration was an overpass at Walnut Street. Ade noted that the old people, children with bicycles and mother's with strollers would have difficulty climbing the stairs. The crossing at Bridge Street would have a push light only requiring the person to push a button for a green light to allow them to cross. The East-West Point Committee was concerned for the safety of the children as they crossed Bridge Street to get to school.

George Weaver, a Pointer and the master carpenter



Photo from the Point Association Archives

The Newport Bridge connects Jamestown to Newport at Washington Street on the Point. The termination point put Cypress Street and the northern ends of Washington and Second Streets on the other side of the ramp. Some houses on Third Street were torn down.

for many of the Operation Clapboard and Newport Restoration Foundation houses, was Newport's First Ward City Councilman at this time. He opposed the plans presented by Ade. He stated that even with removal of the tracks the houses could not be saved. In response to her recommendation for more crossing points, Mr. Weaver said, "The streets of the Point cannot now handle the present traffic flow, let alone suggesting they be opened to the bridge traffic." He urged that there be no further delay and the roads be built.

"One of the principal concerns of all developers is the availability of good vehicular access, and since we have been successful in attracting developers to our community who have invested millions of dollars with the understanding that construction of highways was assured, we feel that it is vital that construction begin as soon as possible" said M. Thomas Perrotti, chairman of the Redevelopment Agency.

Construction on the bridge started on April 5, 1966. Under the care of Joseph "Tiny" Walker Chief of Maintenance and others, the bridge was built. It was open to traffic on June 18, 1969. Several of the people who were asked to join the motorcade across in celebration went from jubilation to dismay when they found they had to pay a toll to return home to Newport. That same day the ferry provided the last ride. V.I.P. passengers danced to "Auld Lang Syne" and "The Party's Over." A new era had begun.

America's Cup and the access roads were approved and construction started. Despite the petition signed by hundreds of residents, the decision was made to keep the tracks. According to reports, Mr. Herbert F. De Simone, Secretary for Environmental and Urban Services declared that "dual modes of transportation should be retained." The process of condemning the houses in the Point began. Our neighborhood was forever changed.

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Jerry Taylor and one of the foremen pose high atop the Bridge with a view of Narragansett Bay.

Photo from the Jerry Taylor Collection. Used by Permission.

Jerry Taylor, Photographer

Mark Taylor

A native Newporter, Jerry Taylor spent 60 years photographing everything Newport: presidential visits, high society balls, exciting yacht races and breaking news. He also broadcasted a local news and talk show on the radio for 40 years, making himself a daily presence in the life of Newporters. In addition to filming the Kennedy wedding for CBS and capturing the drama of the Andrea Doria disaster, Jerry worked as the construction photographer for Bethlehem Steel while the Newport Bridge was being built.

Jerry died in 2002 at the age of 81. His youngest son, Mark Taylor of Newtown, CT, and Summerville, SC, has spent the years archiving tens of thousands of Jerry's photographs posting them on his Instagram site *marktaylornewport* and the *If You Grew Up in Newport* Facebook site.

The Green Light is most grateful for permission from Mark Taylor to use Jerry Taylor's astounding photographs in our Newport Bridge story and on the back cover. Do yourself a favor and look him up on the Instagram site. He uses a technique called

Before & After Animation where the scene morphs from a very old Newport photo to what the scene looks like today. It is instant "Then and Now". Incredible! *Ed.*

The Walker Family Album.

photos from this Album were used by permission from Mr. Walker's son.



Joseph "Tiny" Walker

Upon the 50 year Anniversary of the opening of the Newport Bridge: My father, Joseph "Tiny" Walker, worked on the construction of the Newport Bridge from 1966 to 1969. He then returned to the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority to be the Chief of Maintenance from 1976 to 2002. He was very proud of his 30 years of service to the Newport Bridge and loved "his" Bridge. His work and dedication should never be forgotten. He passed away seven years ago on June 26, 2012.

Washington Street

By Ruth Corridon

Who lives on this street I no longer know,
But I used to many years ago.
These ancient homes have little changed.
The lighted candles in the windows seem the same
Welcoming wreaths beckon on entranceway doors.
I hear the soft whisper of the waves down by the shore
The street lamps catch the falling snow
Within their cones of golden glow
A channel bell tolls in a lonesome way,
Disturbed by wavelets on the Bay
Someone's dog takes exception to my presence
And barks, and jumps against his fence.
"Merry Christmas, Dog," I say as I smile and keep my
measured pace
Enjoying the memories that accompany me in this place.
I turn my head and look on back,
Noting that mine are the only tracks,
And they are filling slowly with the drifting snow -
There are only a few more blocks to go
Before I leave my old neighborhood
Before I leave my old neighborhood



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The Creative Point: Kathy Ward, Handweaver

Lisa Stuart Curator. Ann McMahon Interviewer

It was a hair-raising experience for Kathy Ward to watch her wooden loom hoisted into her antique Colonial NRF home through a second floor opening. It survived its high-flying adventure and is now quite at home with a room of its very own. Kathy discovered her passion for weaving while a Fine Arts major at the College of New Rochelle near New York City. After taking her first weaving course, she described the experience as “falling in love”. After a career in publishing and advertising in NYC, Kathy is now in Newport on the Point with her small business: *Kathy Ward Custom Designed Handweaving*



With this skilled craft, as it is with so many things in life, the best outcome is based on a good foundation. The choice of fiber with which to weave determines the sheen, the feel of the item and its “hand” – how it will drape and move with the wearer. Add to that the painstaking task of setting up the intricate designs on the loom. Kathy’s designs are mostly motifs from Colonial patterns which she incorporates into the item. It is only after these tasks are complete that the shuttle can fly. Kathy describes the process as one that can be frustrating as well as therapeutic. The result, even to an unpracticed eye, is the brilliant color and silky sheen of her work and the subtlety of the unusual patterns. Her attention to detail even to the painstaking twisting of the fringed ends proves her master’s touch.

Do you desire a custom item to go with that special coat? She is happy to put her practiced eye to work just for you. My personal recommendation is for a design Kathy calls the “Overshot” weave, often called the “Summer/Winter” weave because there is a subtle difference between the appearances of the weave from one side to the other. This 18th century technique was often used in decorative objects. Change of season? Flip the table runner over. There! Spring cleaning is complete.

You can choose something from her website: <https://kathywardhandweaving.com/> For an ongoing treat, follow her work on Instagram: @kwardweaving



Save the Dates

January 6, 2020: 6 PM - Point Association Annual "After New Year's Party". Newport Yacht Club

Every Friday and Saturday at 4pm until December 28, 2019. Holiday Lantern Tours will depart from The Museum of Newport History and Shop, 127 Thames Street, Newport, RI.

Purchase tickets by calling 401-841-8770 or by visiting NewportHistoryTours.org or at the Museum of Newport History & Shop.

We are winding up another Fundraising Drive for the Dr. Martin Luther King Community Center and will present the Neighborhood's donation to the MLK Center later this month. Thank you to those who helped with our fundraising effort and all who donated to this wonderful cause. Your support is greatly appreciated.

I hope you can join us as we celebrate the drive and the New Year on January 6th at the Newport Yacht Club. Tom Hockaday



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Photo: Jerry Taylor. Used by Permission

The very first cars roll across the Newport/Pell Bridge on June 28, 1969, profoundly changing the Point and Newport forever.

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