

GREAT ISLAND HISTORIAN'S LOG

2005 – 2020

EDITION II
October 2020

PREFACE

In about the year 2005 I had the privilege of becoming the Historian for the Great Island Association of Narragansett Rhode Island, an association of real estate owners and/or fulltime residents of Great Island. As I took on this responsibility I thought our members might find information about the Island, and its history informative and entertaining, including as well the history of surrounding areas of South County and the State of Rhode Island.

The Great Island Association was agreeable to have me write articles for our news letter, "The Great Island Gazette", and thus it has been my great pleasure to do so since then.

The Great Island Historian's Log consists of articles which have I submitted for the Great Island Gazette over the period 2005 to 2020 plus two additional articles from the Gazette from this period which I felt were appropriate for this collection. The first of these articles was from 2008 by Elaine Storms, then a GIA member, and the second was from 1998 by Mary Beth Shepard who was the Great Island Historian at the time. The article was reprinted in 2010.

Enjoy!

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

GREAT ISLAND HISTORIAN'S LOG

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1. SEPT 2005

EARLY REAL ESTATE VALUES IN AND AROUND GREAT ISLAND

continuing to escalate over the years, it's interesting to note that according to a newspaper ad from 1945 one could purchase a building lot on the Island for as little as \$249. A great selling point was that one could take three years to pay for it.

2. WINTER 2006

GREAT ISLAND FOUNDATIONS

Roland Beauregard plotted Great Island in 1945 opening up the island to significant development for the first time. It was only a short time later that the Great Island Improvement Association was born. The association was incorporated in the State of Rhode Island on February 1, 1952. There were five signers of the Articles of Association including George W. Boutillier, Harold B. Seamans, Edwin T. Kullberg, Roland G. Milton, and C. Theodore Anderson. A fee of \$5.00 was paid to record this incorporation with the state. The articles state that the “corporation is constituted for the purpose of Civic Pride and Improvement.”

Since it’s founding over fifty years ago, the association has worked toward continual improvement to the island for the benefit of its residents in many areas. Among these have been overall cleanliness and appearance of property, air quality, construction of the current bridge, installation of street lights, parking and other issues. In 1997, in recognition of the success achieved in many areas the word “improvement” was dropped from the Great Island Association’s name.

Today the Association continues to promote the best interests of the community and fosters a strong community spirit by offering a variety of social activities throughout the year.

3. APRIL 2006

CLAMS CASINO A NARRAGANSETT INNOVATION

A Providence Journal article from last August by Arline Fleming brought to mind a memory from my late teens and at the same time piqued my appreciation for a piece of our rich Narragansett heritage. Did you know that the tasty appetizer “Clams Casino” had its origin right here in Narragansett?

Though there may be some discussion concerning exactly when this dish was introduced, there appears to be no dispute Clams Casino originated at the Casino at Narragansett Pier. Though some sources list its debut as 1917 Arlene Fleming’s article pretty convincingly establishes the time frame in the mid 1890’s. During this period the Narragansett Pier Casino was the most prominent of the grand hotels of this glamorous seaside resort, and was renowned for its culinary offerings.

The story goes that a Mrs. Paran Stevens, a well known wealthy New York socialite who summered in Newport, was one of many people who regularly visited Narragansett in the 1890’s to enjoy the fine **beach and elegant dining provided by the Casino. One day Mrs. Stevens had left an order for “soft clams”** for her luncheon, but neglected to indicate how she desired them to be prepared. In response Mr. Julius Keller, the Maitre d’ at the time created a special new dish for her. When Mrs. Stevens inquired what the dish was called, Mr. Keller said “It has no name, Mrs. Stevens, but we shall call it “Clams Casino” in honor of this restaurant.”

My Mom and Dad, George and Eileen Crook would conspire in their kitchen on the “best” recipe for Clams Casino. We enjoyed this treat often during the summers they lived on Great Island during the fifties and sixties. Somehow, as life moved on and our horizons expanded to other places and wonders of the world, the memory of Clams Casino, unfortunately, faded. The Journal article revived the memory of Clams Casino, and since then my wife Mary and I have continued this tradition of searching for the “optimum” recipe. Here is what we have so far, based on my mother’s “original” recipe.

Clams Casino

- Open four medium sized quahogs per serving as for serving “on the half-shell”
- Sprinkle one teaspoon of Italian seasoned breadcrumbs on each quahog
- Sprinkle some chopped green onions and parmesan cheese on each
- Top with small piece of bacon
- Bake on a cookie sheet at 400 degrees for about 20 minutes

That many people enjoy creating their own Casino recipes is abundantly clear from a quick internet search. A myriad of recipes call variously for pimento, anchovy paste, minced celery, minced green peppers, white wine, lemon juice, and even tomato sauce. Good luck and have fun with your creations!

Robert Crook

04/24/2006

4. OCTOBERR 2006

1800'S NARRAGANSETT BATHING APPAREL

In the 1800's the town fathers in Narragansett passed an ordinance which threatened anyone who "bathed without being at the same time sufficiently clothed or dressed" with a \$20 fine for each offense. From the book "South County Trivia" by Elmer R. Smith.

Robert A. Crook

October 29, 2006

5. OCTOBER 29, 2006

POINT JUDITH BREACHWAY

Just prior to the permanent breachway's construction at the turn of the century, the Point Judith Breachway, according to a 1980 URI report, "An elusive Compromise: Rhode Island Coastal Ponds and Their People", was a shallow shifting channel varying in depth from year to year and even season to season. It's hard to imagine, but during the time of the American Revolution through the early 1800's, Point Judith Pond had been a harbor for small coastal traders and often saw vessels of up to 100 tons with a draft of up to 10 feet. The breachway in those days was located at what is now Sand Hill Cove was 30 to 50 feet wide, and from 10 to 15 feet deep. During the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 British sympathizers used this harbor to supply British warships off shore.

Robert A. Crook

October 29, 2006

6. FEBRUARY 2007

POINT JUDITH LIGHT – PART 1

Did you know that evidence points to a light at Point Judith since the end of the 1600's? The light at "Point Judith" shows on an English map from 1696. US government records show the land for the light was purchased in 1809 from Hazard Knowles, a prominent local resident (as in Knowles Way which intersects with Route 108 by Star of the Sea Church). The first "official" lighthouse, an octagonal wooden tower, was built in 1810. This was later replaced by a 35 foot stone tower in 1816 after a severe hurricane. In 1857 the current lighthouse, a 51 foot brownstone tower was built. Point Judith Lighthouse is on the National Register of Historic Places.

7. APRIL 2007

SCALLOPING ON POINT JUDITH POND

You might be surprised to know that the harvesting of bay scallops was once a very rewarding recreational and even commercial activity on Point Judith Pond. Scalloping on the pond developed following the establishment of the permanent breachway in 1909. The scallop population grew during the 1920's and 1930's, hitting its peak in the 1940's. At that time there were as many as 500 or more licensed boats dredging for scallops. During the 1950's many Great Island residents would band together with their neighbors for the opening day of fall harvesting. The men would man their small outboard powered boats, and drag metal ring mesh dredges behind to harvest the scallops. Dozens of boats would crisscross the pond repeatedly. The women of the neighborhood would gather at someone's house and "schuck" the scallops, to remove the meat of the single large muscle, and pack it into jars to be shared among the participating families. From personal experience I can tell you this was hard work, great fun, and great eating. In the 1960's the scallop population declined dramatically. In spite of a seeding effort by Rhode Island DEM in 1969, few scallops are to be found in the pond today. The reasons for this, though probably many, appear to be not well understood.

Robert A Crook

04/19/2007

8. JULY 2007

POINT JUDITH'S HARBOR OF REFUGE

How long ago was the Harbor of Refuge built? The US Congress approved plans for the Harbor of Refuge at Point Judith in 1890. The east and the west walls of the breakwater were completed by 1905. The primary objectives were to provide protection for rescue boat launching by the US Life Saving Service (the predecessor) of the US Coast Guard) and a safe "refuge" for coastal ships in storms. The east wall is 2240 feet long and the west wall is 3640 feet, though to those of us who have walked them, they seem even longer. The center wall is actually the longest at almost 7000 feet, and was not completed until 1914.

My thanks to Al Brooks, a GIA member, for providing me with an article from the Warwick Beacon, July 30, 1992 from which this information came.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

July 31, 2007

9. OCTOBER

THE BATTLE OF POINT JUDITH

The SS Black Point, a 396 foot collier was the last Allied ship sunk in the Atlantic theatre at the end of WWII. Naval Historians refer to this and the subsequent engagement as the "Battle of Point Judith". Ironically, the attack by a German U-boat on the Black Point took place at 5:40 pm on May 5, 1945, the day after the German High Command had ordered an immediate end of attacks on allied shipping. The Black Point sank within minutes resulting in the loss of 12 civilian and navy members of her 46 man crew.

The nearby US Navy destroyer escort USS Atherton and the Coast Guard frigate USS Moberly rushed to counter attack the German U-Boat (U-853). Between 10:00 pm and 2:00 am the next day the Navy ships delivered a deadly depth charge attack. In the morning two Navy blimps from Lakehurst, N.J. dropped additional depth charges and rocket bombs. Naval authorities now credit the Atherton and the Moberly with the sinking of U-853. Remarkably, the U-853 is the only enemy ship sunk in US waters since the War of 1812.

Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

October 23, 2007

10. FEBRUARY 2008

NARRAGANSETT ORIGINS

It's thought that the first contact between Europeans and Indians in this area occurred in the early 1500's. At that time all the land west of Narragansett Bay was controlled by the Narragansett's. By the mid 1600's trading posts had been established at Wickford and on the east slope of Tower Hill near the Pettaquamscutt River. In 1657 negotiations for the Pettaquamscutt Purchase opened South Kingston and other parts of what is now Washington County to European settlement, and the village known today as Wakefield was established.

Rowland Robinson, born in 1654 in Cumberland England, came to the colonies in 1675 where he settled in South County, binding himself as a carpenter. He married Mary Allen in Newport the following year. With hard work and good fortune in 1700 he was able to purchase land at Boston Neck, in Pettaquamscutt and Pt Judith on which he built homesteads. Robinson died in 1716, but his numerous heirs became one of the prominent families in the area along with the Hazard's, the Champlin's, and the Gardiner's. These families owned most of the land in today's Narragansett.

Thomas Hazard was one of the leading property owners in Narragansett in the early 1700's. Between 1698 and 1710 he purchased almost 1400 acres at Point Judith Neck near the "Great Pond". His purchases included a 26 acre farm from Benedict Arnold (grandfather of Benedict Arnold of Revolutionary War fame) in 1708.

In 1674, the villages around today's Wakefield including South Kingston, Charlestown, North Kingston, and Narragansett all became part of the "new" town of KingsTowne. In 1723 North Kingstown and Charlestown separately incorporated leaving South Kingston and Narragansett together. According to the census of 1730, the town of South Kingston (including Narragansett) had 965 whites, 333 Negroes, and 223 Indians.

Around 1800 a South Kingstown entrepreneur industrialist and mill owner, Rowland Hazard, founded the village of Peace Dale, naming it after his wife, Mary Peace. Around 1820, Hazard renamed the nearby industrial village of Wakefield after a town and family England. Prior to this Wakefield had been known as McCoon's or Mumford Mill. In 1882 Narragansett separated from South Kingston and was incorporated in 1901.

As you might expect, farming and the raising of livestock were major businesses in the early days of Narragansett, but did you also know that ship building was an important industry, particularly along Narrow River at Middlebridge. Fishing and shell fishing also produced food for the colonials' tables.

The story of Narragansett's growth and development as a prominent resort area and playground for the rich during the late 1800's and early 1900's is an equally fascinating story, but one which will be left for another day.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

February 29, 2008

11. May 18, 2008

THE TOWER AND HANNAH ROBINSON

One of the best known gateways to Rhode Island's South County is the Tower at Tower Hill.

As war broke out between England and Spain in 1739 the Colonial Assembly ordered two lookout towers to be built on a high ridge overlooking Narragansett Bay. Two stone towers were built. The location of one of these towers, located at what is today the junction of Routes 1 and 138 became known as Tower Hill.

The Tower Hill location, the highest along the RI coast, is certainly an ideal lookout location. In 1936 with construction of the Routes 1 and 138 interchange the State purchased a tract of land at the junction as a recreational area, and named it Hannah Robinson park. A wooden observation tower was constructed over the next two summers by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and was later replaced according to the original plans in 1988.

At the beginning of World War II the US Army took over the Tower. Long range sighting instruments were installed and a year round watch was maintained until the end of the War. The Tower was returned to the State in 1945, reconditioned, and opened once more to the public.

Hannah Robinson, for whom the park is named, was the daughter of Rowland Robinson. Rowland in the 1760's was a wealthy planter who lived with his family in a large farm house near Saunderstown. Hannah, it is said, was very beautiful and was educated at a finishing school in Newport where she fell in love with her dancing and French teacher, Pierre Simonds. Simonds, it seems was not well thought of by Mr. Robinson and was never allowed at the Robinson home. This led to many secret meetings at a large rock about two hundred yards Northeast from the tower, from which there was a beautiful panoramic view of the surrounding coastal area.

Hannah and Pierre finally decided to elope. Unfortunately, Hannah was soon deserted by Pierre. She was found alone and sick in Providence and brought back to the family home, but she never recovered. Just before she died, she requested to be brought back to the rock for one last look. The Park is a memorial to Hannah's sad story.

Bob Crook

Gia Historian

May 18, 2008

12. SUMMER 2008

COAST GUARD STATION OF POINT JUDITH

Pt. Judith property was purchased on May 25, 1809 from Hazzard Knowles for the sum of \$5000. Pt. Judith has often been referred to as the “Cape Hatteras of New England”. The treacherous waters and rocky shoreline were the scene of many a shipwreck in the 19th century. In an effort to protect mariners, the Pt. Judith light house was established in 1810 by William Ellery, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

The lighthouse was built of rough stone, 35 ft high. The original lighthouse was destroyed in the hurricane of 1815 and rebuilt in 1816. There were ten lamps, each having 8.5 inch reflectors, arranged in two clusters and set on a revolving table to make the light flash. A 288 lb. weight provided power which turned the table. It took the mechanism 144 seconds to complete a revolution. This was 6 seconds slower than intended. The revolving light was necessary to differentiate Point Judith from the Beavertail Light.

A family dynasty of keepers that would span a half century began in 1862 when Joseph Whaley, native of Narragansett, arrived as keeper at a salary of \$350 per year. “Captain Joe” and wife raised three daughters and a son in their 27 years at the lighthouse. Their son, Henry, would become the next keeper in 1889 (at \$650 per year) staying until 1910.

In 1850, Pt. Judith Light was erected on a stone tower 40 ft. high and 74 ft. above sea level. Each revolution was 2.5 min. and was visible for 17 miles.

To further protect shipping, a life-saving station was established in July of 1875. This is the oldest station on a continuous location in the Coast Guard Group Woods Hole. It was one of five original life-saving stations the protected shipping on the southern shores surrounding RI. It was manned by regularly employed surfmen and was equipped with a life boat and breeches buoy apparatus. So successful was this, that a new and larger one was built in 1882 to accommodate newer equipment, and a larger crew.

In 1857, a new 51 ft brownstone tower and brick dwelling, connected to the tower by an enclosed walkway, were built. The lighthouse which still stands is an octagonal structure, fitted with a fourth-order Fresnel lens from Paris: which remains in place today. The upper half of the tower was painted brown and the lower half white.

In September 1933, the station was gutted by fire and rebuilt with the present building in 1937. The boathouse was destroyed by the 1938 hurricane, rebuilt in 1940. The 1857 brick keeper’s house was torn down in 1954, the same year the light was automated. The 1917 oil house and 1923 fog signal building still stand.

Shipping traffic past Pt. Judith remained heavy in the 20th century. In 1907, 22,860 vessels were counted passing the lighthouse in daylight hours. The traffic was four times greater than the traffic entering New York harbor.

Pt. Judith was very active in World War II, and just two days prior to the end of the war (in Europe) assisted in the rescue of the steam collier “Black Point” which was torpedoed four miles off the point.

In the summer of 2000, Pt. Judith Light underwent a major restoration, overseen by Coast Guard architect Marsha Levy. Some of the lantern’s panels were replaced and new galvanized steel windows with six panes of safety glass were installed, similar to the tower’s original wrought iron windows.

Some of the original brownstone had to be replaced, and though, hard to locate, was found in a quarry in Cheshire, Ct. The new stones were dyed to match the old stones. Cracks were patched inside and out of the tower. According to Levy, the architect, the restorations should last 100 years.

Today, Point Judith carries its proud history of assistance to seafarers in the same spirit and tradition of its predecessors over 200 years ago.

Article contributed by Elaine Storms

and the WWW

13. OCTOBER 26, 2008

THE NARRAGANSETT PACER

The Narragansett Pacer once was the “aristocrat” among horses in the American colonies. Although small in stature by today’s standards, only about 56 inches high, the breed was noted for its smooth gate, hardiness, endurance, and swiftness. Pacers were to be found in Rhode Island in the mid 1600’s. The Pacer, originally imported to Rhode Island from Massachusetts, was the product of selective breeding of European stock. The mild climate and fertile soil of the Narragansett Bay region were ideal for the development of large plantations with lush meadows, excellent for grazing. Point Judith Neck with natural barriers for containment was one area particularly well suited for raising horses. Horses soon became an important export product for the area.

The Pacer was a saddle horse favored by women due to its calm docile nature. On the other hand, Rhode Islanders, living in one of the more liberal colonies where horse racing was allowed, loved a good race. The Pacer was widely raced wherever the sport was allowed.

During colonial times up through the revolution, the Narragansett Pacer’s fame and ownership spread far and wide. In 1656 Pacers were at the center of the first Rhode Island lawsuit contested by William Brenton and William Coddington. The Pacer is said to be the horse which carried Paul Revere. It was also a favorite of George Washington and many others. Closer to home, William Robinson, Robert Hazard, and Captain John Hull were among early prominent Narragansett settlers who raised Pacers. In the mid 1700’s, Captain Simeon Potter of Bristol was engaged in trading with the islands of the Caribbean, exchanging Pacers for molasses, rum and mahogany for planking.

Amazingly, by 1800 the Narragansett Pacer virtually disappeared. Some have blamed the increasing use of carriages and wagons requiring larger horses. Others comment that breeders may have depleted their stocks through trading. However, it appears no one is completely satisfied with these explanations.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

October 26, 2008

14. FEBRUARY 24, 2009

CLAM CAKES – A RHODE ISLAND TRADITION

Clam Cakes are certainly a Rhode Island tradition, although admittedly their fame extends to south eastern Massachusetts as well. The question is where did they come from? Information about the origins of the clam cake appears to be about as hard to find as the county seat of South County, or the town center of Chariho. Evidently, clam cakes were featured prominently on the menu of the Shore Dinner Hall at the Rhode Island's famous Rocky Point Amusement Park sometime during the last half of the 1800's. However to say that was the origination might be a stretch. Can any of you help further with this?

Rhode Islanders know that the name "clam cake" can be a little misleading. They aren't cakes and they aren't made with clams per se, but more specifically, quahogs. Some years ago, a good friend of mine from the Chesapeake Bay area to whom I was introducing clam cakes was extremely surprised that, unlike "crab cakes", clam cakes were not jam filled with clams. Rhode Islanders also know clam cakes can be an extremely delicious, if not seriously addictive, treat.

Recipes for clam cakes abound in cook books and on the internet. Each claim the "trick" is either in the batter, the amount of clams, the size of the cakes and so on. So I have the following questions for you. One is which restaurant, clam shack, or other establishment serves "the best" clam cakes in the world? Another question is can you make better clam cakes at home than those available from these establishments, and if so, what is it that you think makes the critical difference?

If you respond to me at racrook@cox.net I promise to summarize and report back to you in a future writing of the GIA Historian's Log.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

February 24, 2009

15. MAY 2009

RHODE ISLAND'D NAVAL SHIPS

HISTORIAN'S LOG

RI NAVAL SHIPS (Continued)

The last issue presented the story of US naval ships named for Block Island and Narragansett. This issue continues the fascinating story of ships named for Rhode Island or Rhode Island cities.

The city of Newport has had three ships named after it. The first USS Newport, commissioned in 1897, was a 204 foot gunboat, constructed using wooden planks over a steel frame. During the Spanish American War the Newport captured four Spanish ships. In the early 1900's the Newport served as the training ship for the US Naval Academy and later at the Naval Training Station in Newport RI.

The second USS Newport was a Frigate launched in 1943 which served during WWII. During the Korean War the Newport supported the troop landing at Inchon, Korea. Surprisingly, the Newport also served in the Soviet Navy from 1945 to 1949 as part of the WWII "Lend-Lease" program and in the Japanese Navy from 1953 to 1975.

The last USS Newport, an LST (Landing Ship Tank), was christened in 1968 by Mrs. Claiborne Pell. The Newport served many years during the cold war, and most recently participated in both Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Providence can also boast of five US naval ships. The sloop Providence was launched in 1770 (originally the merchant sloop Katy). The Providence fought the first sea battle of the Revolution engaging a Royal Navy schooner off Conanicut Point in Narragansett Bay. The Providence was Rhode Island's first contribution to the Continental Navy and was John Paul Jones' first command. This first Providence was responsible for sinking or capturing forty ships. In 1776 the second Providence, a frigate built in Rhode Island in 1776 ran the British blockade of the Providence River on her maiden voyage, and was able to procure guns and ammunition from France for the fledgling US navy.

The third Providence, a gondola, was attached to General Benedict Arnold's command and was heavily damaged at the battle of Valcour Island on Lake Champlain in 1776.

The fourth Providence, originally commissioned in 1945 as a cruiser, was converted to a guided missile cruiser in 1959 and served as the flagship for the Seventh Fleet during Vietnam. The fifth Providence, launched in 1985 is a Los Angeles class submarine, and is still in active service.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

July 26, 2009

16. JULY 2009

RHODE ISLAND'S NAVAL SHIPS (CONTINUED)

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Bob Crook

GIA Historian

July 26, 2009

17. OCTOBER 2009

"IN DANGER AT SEA" BY CAPT. SAMUEL S. COTTLE

Did you ever think what it would be like if you could listen to one of the prominent "Old Salts" of this area talk about life around here from the late 1800's through nearly the present day? I recently had that experience, or felt as if I had. One of our extended family members, a long time Snug Harbor summer resident and fishing enthusiast, introduced me to the book "In Danger at Sea", by Capt. Samuel S. Cottle.

Samuel Cottle, a fishing captain himself, who fished out of the port of Galilee for many years in the 1950's and 1960's, is the grandson of the late Captain J.E. Clark. "Cap Clark", was a much loved and respected legendary Snug Harbor fishing captain, and entrepreneur. Captain Clark who was born in 1872, came from a fishing family, and as a boy often went out to sea with his father. Captain Clark began his own fishing career on Long Island Sound, fishing out of Connecticut. He moved to this area in 1902 and became the first major fishing operation in the harbor of Galilee. In fact, Captain Clark was a leader in establishing the permanent breachway from Salt Pond to the ocean, and is reputed to have given the names of Galilee, Jerusalem, and Snug Harbor to these areas. Cap established a dock, an ice house, wholesale and retail fish businesses, and a seafood restaurant. He retired from fishing in 1960.

Samuel Cottle was born in the early thirties and grew up in Snug Harbor in the 1940's.

His book describes experiences from the 1938 hurricane, and life in the 1940's in a community along a strategically sensitive coast. Even though the area was sparsely settled, by today's standards, life was hardly uneventful. Capt. Cottle describes an explosion from WWII ordinance on a dragger, the Jane Lorraine, a number of other encounters with unexploded ordinance, and even an encounter with German spies.

"In Danger at Sea" also narrates a number of thrilling accounts from an extensive fishing career.

As a boy Samuel Cottle worked regularly with his grandfather in his trap fishing business. That he absolutely revered his grandfather is abundantly clear from his characterizations of him, their experiences together, and Sam's rich description of family and community life in Snug Harbor. "In Danger at Sea" also describes many of the notable and colorful people of the Galilee and Snug Harbor communities during the first half of the 1900's. Sam also describes his grandmother, whom he refers to with great admiration as an "Irish princess". He talks about her Irish origins, life as a recent immigrant in Maine and her eventual courtship and marriage to Captain Clark.

Captain Cottle's book is a highly enjoyable, wonderfully written and exciting collection of stories of fishing, danger at sea, the area we now live in as it was many 100 years ago, and the extremely interesting people of those times.

Ref: Cottle, Samuel S. "In Danger at Sea". Camden, Maine, Down East Books, 2007.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

October 2009

18. WINTER 2010

GREAT ISLAND HISTORICAL FACTS

The following facts were submitted in the GI Gazette of Spring 1998, by Mary Beth Shepard who was then the Historian.

* The Great Island Improvement Assoc. was incorporated Jan. 31, 1952. It was formed by Harold Seamans, George Boutilier, Edwin Kullberg and Roland Milton. The Association voted to drop the word "Improvement" at the brunch on Sept. 7, 1997 because we thought the improvements had been completed. (little did we know)

* Roland Beauregard developed the Great Island properties which were plotted in 1945 and lots sold for \$249 – with three years to pay.

*The water level in the ponds raised almost 12 feet during the 1954 hurricane, and washed the sand where the escape Road is today, back into the pond.

* The Great Island Bridge was built in 1958.

* The horse breed that South County is famous for and some were bred on GI is the Narragansett Pacer.

* Point Judith is known as the "graveyard of the Atlantic" because of all the shipwrecks along its treacherous shore. They constructed the first lighthouse in 1806 and completed it in 1810.

* The Point Judith lighthouse can be seen seventeen miles out to sea. It is the third lighthouse on that spot and dates to 1857.

* Ancient artifacts that can sometimes be found on the island after a storm are Indian arrowheads. Indians lived here as long ago as 3000 years and at least eight Indian burial grounds are located in our Salt Pond region.

*Winter flounder breeding grounds are found in the upper reaches of Pt. Judith Pond between Gardiner Island and the Narrows.

* The color of the water in the upper pond during the early 1800's was either red or green depending on what dye was being used that day Peacedale Mills.

* The coves and inlets along our island shoreline provided a safe haven for rumrunners during the Prohibition.

*Certified septic systems became a requirement in new houses here in 1969. (most of you know how that certification has been updated).

* In the 1800's seaweed was loaded on boats, sailed up the pond and sold to farmers. It was as good as gold to the profit minded gatherers.

* Widgeon grass is needed for oysters to spawn-when the breachway was opened permanently to the Harbor of Refuge, the water became higher in salinity as it was tidally flushed causing the widgeon grass to be replaced by eel grass, leading in turn to fewer oysters.

*Our present Great Island sign was designed by a committee headed by Betty Aitkenhead. It was carved by Karin Sprague, a native Rhode Islander. It was put up in 1986. The lovely floral display around it is provided by Lynn Gagnon.

Mary Beth Shepherd

GIA Historian

SPRING 1998

19. MARCH 2010

THE QUAHOG

Given that quahogs remain one of the state's most important fisheries, it's not surprising that the humble quahog is Rhode Island's official state shell. The name "Quahog" comes from a Narragansett Indian name, "Poquahock" which translates as horse fish. The Latin name "Mercenaria mercenaria" was derived from the Native American use of the quahog's inner shell or "wampum" as a trading medium, as personal ornamentation, and as a gift to be given to others as a mark of respect.

The quahog also known as the round clam, hard-shell clam, cherrystone or littleneck or chowder clam (depending on size) can be found all along the Atlantic coast from the Gulf of Saint Lawrence to Florida, but is most abundant between Cape Cod and New Jersey.

Quahogs range from the legal minimum size of about an inch to 4 inches or more in length. In good conditions, they require 3 to 4 years to grow to legal size. It can take 12 years for a quahog to achieve a size of 4 inches. Just like a tree, a quahog's age can be estimated by counting growth rings on its shell. On a mature quahog the growth rings are very close together, requiring more patience to count them than most people have.

Quahogs are classified as "bivalves". They feed by taking in water through one valve and passing it over gills which filter food (microscopic algae and other small organic particles) and discharging it via another valve. A large clam can process about a gallon of water in one hour. Quahogs thrive in water with less salinity than the open ocean, hence their preferred habitat of bays and ponds such as our own Salt Pond. Populations vary widely but quahogs are most often found below the low-tide mark to depths of about 50 feet. They prefer a mud and sand bottom and are found typically in the top three inches.

The quahog has an extraordinary foot. Sensing danger it can quickly burrow deeper into the sand to avoid a predator. The foot alternatively forms a "T" anchor and pulls its body forward and then resumes a pointed form before rapidly repeating this process again.

The sex of a quahog is not necessarily determined during its first year. Quahogs become sexually mature in their second summer, and females will produce eggs each summer thereafter until they die. A female can produce 24 million eggs in a single spawn.

Beginning with the early Native Americans, and continuing through the centuries quahogs have been valued for food. Quahog (clam) chowder could very well have been the first "American soup". In large northern American cities during the 1800's quahogs could be found along side oysters, fish and other goods on street stands. Railroad transportation further expanded the demand during the late 1800's. During this time quahogs also became part of the New England and the NY culinary tradition of the clambake. With the approach of warmer weather we can now all do our part to continue this tradition with an expanded knowledge of our remarkable dinner guest – the quahog

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

20. SUMMER 2010

I REMEMBER

I remember Harvey, the fisherman from Succotash Boatyard in East Matunuck. From the perspective of a fourteen year old he was the oldest man in the world. But he not only rented a flat bottomed wooden boat to my Dad and me, but he also took us out fishing, and showed us how to tie on a snelled hook and sinker to fish for fluke. Now that's service.

As a sixteen year old, new driver's license in pocket, I arrived on Great Island and Starfish Drive. I was loving the dips and turns as you come along from Conch Road down Starfish Drive, only to have my father say, "If any of the neighbors complain to me about your driving, you'll never drive my car again." He only had to say it once, and I still think about this frequently.

The men in our neighborhood back in 1955 all had the same first name, "Mister". My Mom and Dad bought the Starfish Drive property with a small beach cottage on it from Mr. Mason. Mr Mason built "stuff." He built our boat, at least one for himself and one for Mr. Jennison, another neighbor. He built his house, the house next door to that, our house and the house next to us. The Mason's had two boys about my age, (give or take), whom he worked very hard on what seemed to me to be an unending list of projects. . . .build this, tear down that, dig up these stumps, move these rocks. I was glad to live in my house and not across the street. Then one day my folks decided to have Mr. Mason build an addition on the back of our house. Part of the deal was I was to be Mr. Mason's "assistant." As my carpenter skills at the time were infantile, at best, I was mainly the "go for". I'm sure Mr. Mason thought I was not a little spoiled, but we got along well, and I learned as much about "work" and becoming an adult from him as I did about building a house.

Mr. Jennison was unique when it came to big jobs, or jobs which required getting at tight spots. He regarded himself as an expert on "mechanical advantage," and so he was. Mr. Jennison built a floating dock for us at that time, about 12 by 12 feet, surely made out of solid oak, and using 50 gallon oil drums for floatation. It must have weighed as much as an automobile. Mr. Jennison could launch that dock, or retrieve that dock, and store it in our back yard for the winter all by himself. As a young adult, on more than one occasion at the beginning of the boating season I would join Mr. Jennison in a beer while he painted the bottom of his boat, standing erect under his boat which was suspended from the rafters of his garage by blocks and tackle. "That's the way a gentleman does it" he would proudly explain. Today, when my wife and I have a job to do requiring extra strength or peculiar positions, we often comment to each other, "I wonder how Frank Jennison would have done this?"

I could go on for many more pages about the wonderful people I have met over the years growing up as a teenager and young adult on Great Island, and our outstanding shared experiences, but perhaps these are best left for another Log.

Who do you remember? I'd enjoy hearing your stories, and I bet many other members of our community would as well.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

Summer 2010

21. JULY 2010

GALILEE – GREAT ISLAND BRIDGE OPENED TO TRAFFIC – OCTOBER 1958

The News Paper Headlines read, “Galilee – Great Island Span Opened to Traffic.” Shown in the article are pictures of the new span. Unfortunately the News Paper is the former Providence Evening Bulletin, and the date of issue is Monday, October 6, 1958.

The article states that Great Island residents had been very concerned about the speed with which the construction of the bridge was proceeding. Mr. George W. Boutilier, a founding member and President of the Great Island “Improvement” Association stated that “Pressure had been increasing from Great Island residents for action to speed work on the bridge.” The residents apparently were concerned about the safety of a temporary causeway put in place for the construction of the bridge, and that a severe storm might wash this causeway out.

The expectation was that the new “breachway” spanned by the bridge would increase “circulation of tidal waters around Great Island, and is expected to accelerate shellfish growth, and decrease the possibility of pollution.” The project was also to include “clearing a channel through the remains of an old road bed in East Pond about 100 yards east of the bridge to permit free circulation of the water.”

The article also states that the new bridge will replace a causeway built during the second World War to allow access to military installations on Little Comfort Island. Presumably this is the “road bed” mentioned above.

And so it appears that Great Island residents today are just as concerned as their counterparts of the 1950’s were to see a new “Galilee – Great Island Span Opened to Traffic.”

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

22. MARCH 2011

THE KINNEY BUNGALOW

For many years as I drove down Rt 108 past the light at Harbor Island heading for Great Island my curiosity was often stirred by this oddly attractive building on the right. You know, the one with all the windows. Today we know the property as Sunset Farms, and the building as the Kinney Bungalow.

In the late 1800's Francis S. Kinney was a tobacco and real estate millionaire from New York, who enjoyed spending summers in fashionable Narragansett. Francis Kinney, along with his brother Abbot had founded the Kinney Brothers Tobacco Company one of the leading cigarette manufacturers of the day which eventually merged with the giant American Tobacco Company. Just as many of his contemporaries were doing, Kinney built an elegant mansion on Ocean Drive, rivaling the great "Cottages" of Newport. The Kinney's were very active in Narragansett society and they enjoyed hosting and attending parties, often in connection with polo matches. The Kinney's were avid enthusiasts of polo, a sport in which their daughter, Beatrice, became quite accomplished.

The Kinney Bungalow, built in 1899, was designed by the Providence architectural firm of P.O. Clark and A.R. Spaulding in the style of an East Indian bungalow. Some say the design was influenced by Mr. Kinney's early days as a sailor. There are many explanations offered for why the bungalow was built. One is that Francis Kinney built the bungalow for his daughter Beatrice's "coming out party". Another explanation, though unconfirmed, is that Mr. Kinney built the bungalow as his own private club after being refused membership in the Point Judith Country Club. It may be no coincidence that this site, the old Anthony farm, is right across the road from the Country Club. At the bungalow on his farm (which he named Sunset Farm) Mr. Kinney hosted post-polo parties for several seasons and even provided shower facilities for the polo participants.

Francis S. Kinney died in 1908 and the farm was sold to the Chase family. In 1935 Mrs. Irving Chase left Sunset Farm to her daughter, Lucia Chase Ewing. Lucia Ewing of both Waterbury, CT and Narragansett also owned the Miramar estate on Ocean Drive. She was a ballerina and co-founder of The American Ballet Theatre. Until her death in 1986, Lucia used the bungalow for summer ballet company rehearsals. In 1986 Sunset farm was left to Lucia's son, Alexander Ewing. In 1991 he retained 14 acres and sold the rest to the town of Narragansett.

After extensive renovations Kinney Bungalow was opened to the public in 2002. The property is owned by The Town of Narragansett, but it is managed by the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust. Today Kinney Bungalow at Sunset Farm is an event destination, and remains a working farm. Just as in the days of Francis S. Kinney, the Bungalow is a place for parties and celebrations. At Sunset Farm there are also farm animals, fields of corn, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as a farm store.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

March 2011

23. MAY 2011

RHODE ISLAND TRIVIA

I happened across a very enjoyable web site the other day containing some intriguing trivia facts about the state of Rhode Island, some better known than others. The following, excerpted from 50states.com/facts/rdisl.htm, are ones I found most interesting.

1. Rhode Island is the smallest state in the United States, covering 1,214 square miles, running 48 miles north to south and 37 miles east to west.
2. Rhode Island shares a water border with New York.
3. Rhode Islanders were the first Americans to take military action against England with the sinking of the British armed schooner "Gaspee" in Narragansett Bay in 1772.
4. The first British troops sent from England to squash the revolution landed in Newport.
5. Rhode Island was the last of the thirteen colonies to become a state.
6. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both publicly acknowledged Roger Williams, the state's founder, as the originator of principles reflected in The First Amendment, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of public assembly.
7. Rhode Island never ratified the 18th Amendment on Prohibition.
8. The first circus in the United States was in Newport in 1774.
9. Polo was played for the first time in the United States in 1876 near Newport
10. The state was home to the first open golf tournament in 1895.
11. Rhode Island was the home to the first National Lawn Tennis Championship in 1899.
12. The Flying Horse Carousel in Watch Hill is the oldest carousel in the nation.

I hope you enjoyed these as much as I did.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

May 2011

24. AUGUST 2011

THE NARRAGANSETT RAILROAD STATION

Recently someone asked me "Where's the Narragansett Railroad station?" I said I could tell him but unfortunately, the last train left a very long time ago. The Narragansett Pier Railroad ended regular passenger service in 1952. Never-the-less, if you want to find the Narragansett Railroad station you can still find it, easily, at 145 Boone Street in Narragansett.

The Narragansett Pier Railroad Company was incorporated in 1868 by the Hazard and Sprague families. The Railroad was not built until 1876, but took only five months to build. The route began at the Kingston Station (one year after it was completed (at its current location) and ran 8.5 miles to Narragansett Pier. The line provided freight service to the textile mills at Peace Dale and Wakefield and passenger service to the developing prosperous resort of Narragansett Pier. From the Pier one could even connect with a steamboat to the exclusive resort of Newport.

At the same time the railroad was built three stations were constructed to accommodate the passenger service at Wakefield, Peace Dale and Narragansett. The stations, though relatively modest were all designed according to traditional railroad style architecture. Even today, as you drive down Boone Street you can easily pick out the building, and picture a train at the platform dropping off or picking up passengers. Today the building is home to a dive shop.

In 1911, the Railroad was leased to the Rhode Island Company for 99 years with a guarantee of 4% dividends. During World War I, the United States government took over the line, and failed to pay these dividends. In 1919 the Narragansett Railroad regained control of the line. Unfortunately, the future profitability of the line was already in question due to the establishment of a trolley line and bus service. By 1921 the company was already in financial trouble, and required funding from South Kingston and Narragansett to stay in operation. The Hazard's eventually sold the railroad to American Associates in 1946 for \$25,000.

The railroad ended regular passenger service on December 31, 1952, although limited excursion and freight service continued into the 1970's. During the 1970's the freight consisted mainly of fertilizer, lumber, and building products. Over the following years the line was shortened, from Narragansett Pier to Wakefield. In the end the route ran only 2 miles between Kingston and Peace Dale. Operations ended in 1981.

Today the track bed of the former Narragansett Railroad is largely devoted to the William C. O'Neill Bike Path.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

August 2011

25. NOVEMBER 2011

AMERICAN THANKSGIVING TRADITION

Did you ever think what a wonderful thing it was that Governor Bradford of the Plymouth Bay Colony thought up this novel idea for a thanksgiving celebration. Well, it wasn't actually such a novel idea. The early colonists of the American shores, including the Pilgrims were used to celebrating harvest festivals of thanksgiving in their European home countries. In fact, festivals of this nature have been noted for centuries even in Greek, Roman and other ancient cultures. Native Americans, themselves, also had a long lasting tradition of celebrating the fall harvest with festivals before the Europeans arrived in the new world.

In America, historians have noted other thanksgiving celebrations by European arrivals prior to that of the Pilgrims at Plymouth. One such celebration was held at St Augustine, Florida in 1565 by the Spanish explorer Pedro Menendez de Avile who invited members of the local Timicua Indian tribe to join them. On December 4, 1619, British settlers at a site on Virginia's James River read a proclamation designating the date as "a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God".

Never the less, the Pilgrims at Plymouth in 1621 held a harvest festival with the Wampanoag Indians that is acknowledged today as one of the first Thanksgiving celebrations in the colonies. Having arrived in September 1620 most of the colonists remained aboard their ship, the Mayflower, throughout the winter. Only half of the original party survived. When finally they went ashore in the spring of 1621, they encountered an English speaking Native American, Squanto, a member of the Pawtuxet tribe, who had been kidnapped by an English sea captain and brought to England. Eventually he managed to escape and make it back to his home in the new world. Squanto taught the Pilgrims how to plant corn and many other survival skills, and also helped forge an alliance with the Wampanoag tribe which lasted for over fifty years. In November, after a very successful harvest Governor William Bradford organized the festival and invited a number of the colony's Native American allies, including the Wampanoag chief Massasoit. The feast lasted three days. It is reported the menu included wild fowl, and deer; but not the pies, cakes and other sweets customary to us today, as the Mayflower's sugar supply had dwindled to almost nothing.

In the years that followed, there were various annual "Thanksgiving" celebrations by colonies and States and various "Thanksgiving" proclamations by numerous Presidents. Finally, after a 36 year campaign by a noted magazine editor, Sarah Joseph Hale, in 1863 President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday as the final Thursday in November. It was briefly moved back a week by President Roosevelt in 1939 and 1940 to spur retail sales following the Great Depression. Since 1941 Thanksgiving has been held on the fourth Thursday of November.

Happy Thanksgiving, Great Islanders!

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

November, 2011

26. FEBRUARY 2012

ORIGINS OF SOME OLD SAYINGS

I recently came across an interesting and amusing internet article from 2005 which sheds light on the origins of some old “sayings” dating back to colonial times. I hope you enjoy these little known “pearls” as much as I have.

In colonial times, without central heating and running hot water, men and women bathed rather infrequently, perhaps as infrequently as twice a year (May and October). Because of lice and other bugs, women kept their hair covered, while men shaved their heads and wore wigs. The men’s wigs were made of wool and couldn’t be washed. As a result the wigs were put inside carved out loaves of bread and baked for 30 minutes. The heat would make the wigs big and fluffy. From this practice the term “Big Wig” is said to have originated.

As a result of the personal hygiene practices of the day many men and women had developed acne scars by the time they became adults. The women would apply bee’s wax to their faces to smooth out their complexions. I’m sure we’ve all heard the admonishment; “Mind your own bee’s wax.” If a woman happened to smile while wearing the bee’s wax, it might very well crack. From which we also have today “to crack a smile.” And finally, if a woman wearing her bee’s wax happened to sit too close to the fire, the wax would melt resulting in . . . you guessed it, “loss of face.”

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

February 2012

27. AUGUST 2012

CAPTAIN COOK AND HIS SHIP, "ENDEAVOR" – PART 1

An article caught my eye in a recent edition of the Providence Journal (8/05/2012) which brought me back to my school days long ago. The article referred to Captain James Cook, a British explorer who was the first European to set foot on the continent of Australia. And I even remembered that his ship was named the Endeavour.

What I didn't know was the extraordinary career and the outstanding achievements of this great explorer, navigator, and cartographer. Cook, who lived from 1728 to 1779, made detailed maps of Newfoundland prior to making three exploratory voyages to the Pacific Ocean. On the first of these voyages (1768 – 1771) aboard his ship, Endeavor, he not only explored Australia, but also mapped the complete coastline of New Zealand. After an unfortunate encounter with the Great Barrier Reef, Cook limped into Batavia (now named Jakarta) for repairs. Three years after leaving England Cook and the Endeavour finally arrived home.

During his second voyage (1772 – 1775) Captain Cook is credited with circumnavigating the world at a very southern latitude, becoming one of the first to cross the Antarctic Circle. His Third Pacific voyage (1776 – 1779) took him to Hawaii, and even as far as California, Oregon and Alaska. Unfortunately in 1779, Captain Cook was killed in Hawaii following a native festival during a fight with some Islanders over a stolen ship's boat.

What I also didn't know was that Cook's ship (the Endeavour), many people believe, is right here in Narragansett Bay. Following her historic voyage to Australia, Endeavor mainly continued to serve the Royal Navy and served as a troop transport during the American Revolution. There is strong evidence to suggest that the Endeavour is one of thirteen ships scuttled by the British at Newport in 1778 prior to the Battle of Rhode Island.

The Providence Journal article describes the very ambitious plan of a marine archaeologist, D.K. "Kathy" Abbass, Ph.D., founder of the Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project, to excavate the sites of the thirteen ships and recover whatever is left of the Endeavour. Artifacts found during the excavation and search for Endeavour would be preserved in a yet to be built new marine laboratory and exhibited in a new museum. D.K. Abbass and the Marine Archaeology Project are attempting to raise \$300,000 for a comprehensive study to determine the plan's feasibility.

It will certainly be exciting to see the progress of this "endeavor" over the coming years. Perhaps one day the GIA Historian's Log can feature an article about the recovery of the ship's remains and the opening of the new lab and museum.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

August 2012

28. NOVEMBER 2012

GREAT ISLAND – THE EARLY YEARS

In September of 2006, I wrote an article for the Gazette, "Great Island and Great Island Association History." It's been suggested that it should be reissued. So below is the first of two parts.

GREAT ISLAND - THE EARLY YEARS

Great Island is the largest island in Point Judith Pond which is itself the largest of Rhode Island's tidal ponds encompassing some 1530 acres. Great Island, 150 acres in area, is a mile and a half long and a half mile wide at its widest point with over three miles of shoreline.

In pre-colonial times the area we know today as Great Island and the surrounding waters of Point Judith Pond were inhabited by the Narragansett Indians. The Narragansetts fished and farmed in this area. Over the years a number of Indian burial grounds have been reported in and around Great Island.

Point Judith Pond, although a tidal inlet, is also fed by the Saugatucket River from the north at Wakefield RI. In early times access to the sea was a variable and time to time thing depending on the action of storms against the sand dune barriers separating the pond and the sea. The Pond abounded with smelt, perch, eels, "buckeyes", oysters, and other brackish water species. During colonial times a breachway some 30 to 50 feet wide and 10 to 15 feet deep was located east of its present location in the vicinity of Sand Hill Cove providing a harbor for small coastal traders. A great coastal gale in 1815 washed this breachway away, filling it in and creating another just west of what is today Jerusalem. This eventually became the boundary dividing Narragansett and South Kingston.

By 1901 the breachway at the town line had filled up completely and a small breachway was opening and closing near the site of the current breachway. Local fishermen hand dug the opening to maintain a migration channel for white perch, smelt and other species. In 1909 a permanent stone breachway was established at the current site.

During the 1800's people who farmed the island and raised livestock on it traveled back and forth to the island at low tide. By 1870 Great Island had become the property of Howard J Knowles. A single farm house was built on the island in 1877, and remains standing today. At one point, according to a bit of folklore, this house served not only as a farm house but also housed three women who provided for the pleasures of men who would row down from Wakefield.

According to tax records of 1888 the land was valued at \$6500 and the tax was \$26.00. By then a stone causeway had been built connecting Great Island with Galilee. This causeway is located directly to the east of the current bridge. Piles of stone remaining from the old the causeway are still clearly visible at low tide.

In a letter dated March 1926 to a potential New York customer W. Herbert Caswell, a Narragansett real estate dealer, estimated that Great Island could be purchased from its new owners for between \$30,000 and \$50,000

By the 1930's the farmhouse remained the only dwelling on the island. Town of Narragansett archives indicate that between 1932 and 1934 three quarters of Great Island had been purchased by Anna B. Peckham, Arthur N. Peckham, and Richard F. Kenyon for \$1250 each. In 1934 Herbert M. Knowles bought Strawberry Head for \$300. It is not clear how these values relate to Mr. Caswell's estimate above.

Through this time, Point Judith Pond remained uncharted by the federal government. One had to navigate the shallow water channels by personal experience. In the mid 1940's a young man by the name of Charles Schock, who was raised in Kingston, RI and sailed extensively on the pond, managed to draw a navigation chart for it. To do this he used earlier maps and aerial photographs to supplement his own extensive personal measurements. These charts were sold in local stores at that time for 75 cents.

In a remembrance of Great Island written for the Great Island Association by Evelyn Arthur, a Great Island resident since the mid 1940's, she recalls soldiers who manned the war time coastal defense guns being barracked on Great Island.

In 1945 Roland E. Beauregard platted Great Island opening up the Island to significant development for the first time. Advertising of the day stated "Great Island is connected to the mainland by a causeway owned by the State of Rhode Island and included in its State Roads System". Lots were available from \$249 with up to three years to pay. Restrictions set forth in the deed stated that building plans were to be approved by the developer and that dwellings should have a value of at least \$3000. The restrictions also stated that camping in tents, Quonset huts or trailers was not allowed. (The restrictions terminated in 1965 in accordance with the deed).

During this period the year round inhabitants were mainly fisherman and others who made their living from the sea. Following 1945 the island began to grow. By 1950 there were 10 to 15 permanent residents and more than 30 summer cottages. In the aftermath of 1954 Hurricane Carol the current Bridge to Great Island was constructed in 1958.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

November 2012

29. APRIL 2013

GREAT ISLAND – THE LATER YEARS

In September 2006 I wrote an article for the Gazette, "Great Island and Great Island Association History." Responding to a suggestion it should be reissued, last month The Gazette printed "Part 1". Below is Part 2.

GREAT ISLAND, THE LATER YEARS

By 1969 concern for the environment and the expanding population resulted in certified septic systems becoming a requirement for all new houses. By 1976 500 building lots were laid out and more than 280 houses built on the island. The first sign was installed at the entrance to the Island identifying the community in 1985.

Today there are over 380 families on the island with 40% of these being year round. Residents consist of a broad cross section of Rhode Island's population including doctors, engineers, fishermen, members of law enforcement, lawyers, realtors, teachers, and other business people.

In the early 1950's the Great Island Improvement Association was born. The association was incorporated in the state of Rhode Island on February 1, 1952. There were five signers of the Articles of Association including George W. Boutillier, Harold B Seamans, Edwin T. Kullberg, Roland G. Milton, and C. Theodore Anderson. A fee of \$5.00 was paid to record this incorporation with the state. The Articles state that the "corporation is constituted for the purpose of Civic Pride and Improvement"

Dues for the association began at \$2.00 per year in 1965, increasing to \$5.00 in 1982, and to \$8.00 in 1985. In 1986 they were set at \$10.00. In 1996 the dues were increased to \$25.00 the current rate.

Since its founding over fifty years ago, the association has worked toward continual improvement to the island for the benefit of its residents in many areas. Among these have been overall cleanliness and appearance of property, air quality, construction of the current bridge, installation of street lights, parking, and other traffic issues. In September 1997, in recognition of the success achieved in many of these areas the word "improvement" was dropped from the Great Island Association's name.

The Association began distributing news letters to its members relatively early in its history, but in 1995 Martin Misevic, Association president at that time, began publishing the Great Island Gazette to serve Association members. It has been in continuous publication ever since.

As of 2006 the association has had 20 presidents beginning with Roland Milton, followed by George Boutillier, Arthur Pickthall, Donald Charlton, Harold Arthur, Bill Burrows, Harry Jackson, Rudy Greiser, Chris Lawson, Esther Turner, James Kearney, Pat Lund, Penny Mathis, Martin Misevic, Bill Miller, Bob Taylor, Sue Green, Libby Long, and Ted O'Brien. A number of these have served more than one two year term.

At the recommendation of the GIA board a "Ladies Auxiliary was formed in July 1956, and operated thru at least 1958 as an enlargement of the social committee with its own officers for the purposes of "promoting the welfare of association members specifically in the "social and recreational fields".

Today the Association continues to promote the best interests of the community and fosters a strong community spirit by offering a variety of social activities throughout the year.

Over the years Great Island has survived hurricanes, an oil spill off the coast, and even a Hollywood movie. In 1954 Hurricane Carol hit the area with 100 mile an hour winds and a high tide 13 feet above mean sea level at Point Judith. As it happened the storm struck when the port of Galilee was crowded with sport fishing boats here for the Atlantic Tuna Fishing Derby. Jeff Tkacs, a young Great Island resident at the time recalls "one or two Galilee commercial fishing boats beaching their boats off the right of way on Starfish Drive. The boat crews then brought lines and cables to tie onto street utility poles". Jeff also recalls "small cottages or fishing shed roofs floating down the pond and flooded low lying streets."

The waters off the Rhode Island's South Kingston and Narragansett shores have historically constituted "one of the most healthy and most productive ecosystems on the East Coast" according to Carol Browner EPA Administrator at the time of the grounding of the oil barge North Cape off Moonstone Beach September 19, 1996. 800,000 gallons of home heating oil leaked from the barge killing thousands of lobsters, clams and other shellfish along with scores of sea birds. In spite of a massive clean up and habitat restoration the effects of this disaster would be felt along the coast for nearly a decade.

The habitat restoration project, deemed highly successful was just declared completed this year, 2006.

1999 brought Hollywood to Great Island with the filming of the Jim Carrey movie "Me, Myself and Irene". Filming took place at two homes on Mollusk Road for more than five days. In the movie Jim Carrey who played a Rhode Island state trooper hosts a barbeque at his home for fellow troopers. Needless to say the filming activity generated significant interest among island residents.

The above history has been assembled based on information found in Great Island Association files including newspaper articles, a variety of reports, written recollections of Great Island residents as well as research done by former GIA historians. Special mention is due to Pat Lund and Marybeth Shepard, and Esther Turner, former GIA historians, for their research and summarized results.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

April 2013

30. AUGUST 2013

RHODE ISLAND'S CIVIL WAR GOVERNOR AND NARRAGANSETT RESIDENT

William Sprague IV was born in Cranston, RI on September 12, 1830, the youngest son of Amasa and Fanny Morgan Sprague. William and his brother Amasa's educations were cut short when their father was murdered in 1843.

Both brothers went to work for their father's company, the A. & W. Sprague Manufacturing Company. In 1859, William IV and other family members became partners in the company, and it soon became the largest producer of printed Calico cloth in the world. The company also manufactured locomotives, and owned banks, as well as other businesses. William Sprague IV was one of the wealthiest men in America.

William IV followed in his uncle's footsteps into politics. William Sprague III had been Governor, US Representative, and a US Senator from Rhode Island. In 1860, William Sprague IV was elected Governor of Rhode Island, and at 29 years of age he became the youngest governor of a state at that time. He won reelection in 1861 and 1862.

With the Civil War coming on, Sprague trained and equipped the 1st RI Detached Militia, in 1861. He distinguished himself in the First Battle of Bull Run. Returning to Rhode Island he raised troops for the Union Army. In 1862 he attended the Loyal War Governors' Conference in Altoona, Pennsylvania which backed President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the Union's war effort.

He was elected to the US Senate, serving from 1863 to 1875. While in Washington, Sprague married Kate Chase, daughter of Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase in 1863. William and Kate purchased the 650 acre William Robinson farm in Narragansett, naming it "Cononchet." Two years later they built a lavish mansion there at an estimated cost in today's money of \$31 million. By 1873, their marriage, though it began well, eventually began to deteriorate as William's political and financial fortunes as well as those of the A. & W. Sprague Company declined rapidly as a result of the "panic of 1873." Their marriage ended in divorce in 1882.

In 1883 William married Dora Inez Clavert, a woman from Virginia who was sufficiently wealthy to support the estate. William's interest in politics returned. In 1900 he became the first Narragansett, Rhode Island Town Council President.

Fire destroyed the mansion in October of 1909, and William and Dora moved to Paris. During World War I, they opened up their apartment to convalescing wounded of all nationalities.

William Sprague IV died of complications of meningitis on September 11, 1915, one day short of his 85th birthday. In Narragansett today in his memory, we have the Sprague Bridge on Route 1A, and Sprague Park, adjacent to Cononchet Farm, formerly William Sprague IV's estate, and now home to the South County Museum.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

August 2013

31. MAY 2014

THE OYSTER AND RHODE ISLAND

Jonathon Swift, author of "Gulliver's Travels" and other satirical works once said, "He was a bold man that first ate an oyster." Never the less, oysters, and especially those raised in RI, are these days growing rapidly in popularity in Rhode Island. They can now be found on the menus of restaurants all over the state. Oysters, which must be alive when they are prepared, can be eaten raw on the half shell, or smoked, boiled, baked, fried, broiled, stewed or steamed. Oysters have a comparatively long shelf life (up to four weeks), although they do taste better when they are fresh. Oysters are low in calories (110 for a serving of 12 Oysters) and high in zinc, iron, calcium, vitamin A and B12, and are traditionally considered to be an aphrodisiac.

Along with the increasing popularity in our state as a delicacy, oyster farming is also undergoing a vigorous revival at several coastal locations. Oyster farming operations are underway on Charleston Pond, Ninigret Pond, Potters Pond, Point Judith Pond, and various other spots around Narragansett Bay.

Oysters played an important part in the lives of Native Americans living near Point Judith Pond which in those days had a bounteous supply. Some tribes harvested oysters only in the warm weather months. Others that lived near the pond year round would move oysters in the summer from deeper waters to shallow waters where they could maintain this source of food all winter long. Native Americans discarded their empty oyster shells back in Point Judith Pond. A number of these shell deposits "known as "middens" have been found in recent years in the pond.

Oystering was important to colonial Rhode Islanders as well. Oysters were not only a source of food, but their shells were used in the manufacture of lime for use in masonry mortar. Fortunately the Colonial Assembly outlawed the harvesting of oysters exclusively for this use in 1734.

The oystering business on Point Judith Pond expanded rapidly. Oysters were harvested from small sailing cat boats which would transport their catches out through a shallow and unreliable breachway to larger ships waiting off shore to transport the oysters to market in New York. In the late 1800's Oysters were also transported to Narragansett Pier to be shipped from there. In an effort to control Oyster harvesting, leases were established on Point Judith Pond, although management of them proved nearly impossible as many people disregarded regulations and limits on oysters completely.

In 1895 Oyster farmers with leases on Point Judith Pond, noting a declining oyster harvest on the pond at a time when production on Narragansett Bay was increasing, sought a study of the declining harvest. The study concluded that inadequate tidal flushing caused by the lack of a permanent breachway produced low oxygen conditions detrimental to the oyster population. Ultimately this led to the construction of the breachway circa 1909 which allowed more salt water to enter the pond. In the long run this may have been a mixed blessing as far as oysters are concerned since although oysters grow faster in saltier water, they have better success in spawning in more brackish water with lower salinity.

Creating the breachway and removing a sandbar which existed there also allowed larger motor powered boats access to the pond. These boats dredged the bottom of the pond and were able to produce much larger catches further aggravating the situation. Following this period oyster harvesting on Salt Pond eventually died out.

Bob Crook – GIA Historian, May 2014

32. JULY 2014

RHODE ISLAND'S STATE SONG

Did you know that Rhode Island has a "State Song?" In fact just about all of our states do.

Rhode Island's first song was "Rhode Island" with words and music by T. Clark Brown, adopted in 1946 as the state's song. It was replaced by "Rhode Island's It for Me" in 1996, and "Rhode Island" was designated as the state's march. The lyrics for "Rhode Island's It for me" were written by Charlie Hall, and the music was written by Maria Day. Charlie Hall is a Christian song writer and comedian. He has been known for poking fun at Rhode Island in songs composed for comedy troupes of "Charlie Hall's Ocean State Follies." In the early 90's someone asked him if he could write something "good" about Rhode Island. The result was "Rhode Island's It for Me." The words are as follows.

I've been to every state we have

And I think I'm inclined to say

That Rhody stole my heart

You can keep the forty nine

Herring Gulls that dot the Sky

Blue waves that paint the rocks

Waters rich with Neptune's life

The boats that line the docks,

I see the lighthouse flickering

The sailors to see.

There's a place for everyone:

Rhode Island's it for me.

(refrain)

Rhode Island, oh Rhode Island

Surrounded by the Sea.

Some people roam the earth for home;

Rhode Island's it for me

(Continued. . . .)

I love the fresh October days,
The buzz on College Hill,
Art that moves the eye to tear,
A jeweler's special skill.
Icicles refract the sun,
Snow falling gracefully.
Some search for a place that's warm:
Rhode Island's it for me.

(Repeat refrain)

The skyline piercing Providence
The State House Dome so rare,
Residents who speak their minds;
No longer unaware!
Roger Williams would be proud to see
his "colony"
so don't sell short this precious port:
Rhode Island's it for me.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

July 2014

33. MAY 2015

PORTRAIT OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

Which way is George Washington's image facing on our one dollar bill? If you have a good memory you might say to the right, and you would be correct. An interesting thing is that this image is taken from probably the most famous painting of George Washington (the one where his eyes appear to follow you wherever you are standing), in which he is actually facing left.

There are also a number of other interesting facts about Gilbert Stuart and this famous painting. Stuart, born in 1755 was a native of Saunterstown, RI as all Rhode Islanders know. He became one of America's most well known portrait painters, and George Washington was probably his most famous subject.

Washington first sat for Stuart in 1795. Stuart's technique for getting people to endure sitting for a portrait was to engage them in lively back and forth conversation. Washington, who had a rather reserved personality, was a particularly difficult case. Stuart finally won out by talking about horses, one of George's favorite topics. In this portrait Washington is facing to the right.

Martha Washington so liked this portrait that in 1796 she commissioned Stuart to paint a pair of portraits of her and George to hang at their home, Mount Vernon. One problem Stuart had in painting this picture was that Washington had only very recently acquired a new set of false teeth which swelled his mouth and distorted his jaw line. In this picture, which was to become his most reproduced image, George is facing left. (Do you suppose this had something to do with the new teeth?) As it happens Stuart never completed this portrait of George Washington and never delivered either painting. Although "unfinished" Stuart used this painting as a model for approximately 75 replicas he painted over the years. He humorously referred to this painting as his "hundred dollar bill," the price he charged for a copy.

This portrait ultimately became the source for the image of George Washington used for over a century on our one dollar bill – only with George facing to the right!

After Gilbert Stuart's death in 1828, the still unfinished portrait of George Washington, sometimes known as the "Athenaeum Portrait" as well as Martha's portrait were sold by the artist's heirs for \$1500 and donated to the Athenaeum, an early Boston library. In 1876 the Athenaeum had the portraits hung at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

May 2015

34. JULY 2015

1958 GREAT ISLAND BRIDGE (LOOKING FORWARD TO ITS REPLACEMENT)

It was Monday, October 6th, and the Providence Evening Bulletin headline read “Galilee-Great Island Span Opened to Traffic.” Unfortunately, the year was 1958 and the “span” in question was the current Great Island Bridge now under demolition and reconstruction.

According to the article the new bridge was said to replace a causeway built during WWII to allow access to military installations on Little Comfort Island, and was described as a “138 foot wooden structure being built to span a breachway to be constructed connecting East Pond with the Point Judith channel.” The breachway was to allow free circulation of tidal waters around Great Island increasing shellfish growth, and decreasing the possibility of pollution. The state would also clear a channel through the remains of an old road bed in East Pond about 100 yards east of the bridge, also to improve circulation.

Great Island residents of the day had been using a temporary gravel bypass since the construction of the bridge had begun. In the article, the president of the “Great Island Improvement Association” at that time George W. Boutilier (one of the original founders and first president of GIA) discusses the growing impatience of Great Island residents with delays in construction, describing the bypass as potentially dangerous, and expressing concern that a “severe storm might wash it out leaving the island isolated.” Construction on the bridge had begun early in the summer, and was supposed to be completed in August.

At the time of the above Evening Bulletin article the “approaches to the bridge were not completed, and some work remained to be done on the bridge itself, but the bridge was open to two lanes of traffic.

In contrast to the above schedule, in June 2002, the RI Department of Transportation announced its intention to replace the Great Island Bridge (described by the Narragansett Times then as being 180 feet long). Although no engineering plans were available yet, a public meeting was held in Galilee to solicit comments from local residents. At a further public meeting in Galilee in May of 2003, it was reported that a design study had been completed and the basic architectural approach had been selected for a 200 foot long bridge (very similar to the design currently under construction today). In July of 2013, the US Coast Guard announced it had received a request from the RI DOT for a permit to replace the Great Island Bridge. Construction began in the fall of 2014. The new bridge currently under construction is scheduled for completion by June 2017.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

July 2015

35. JULY 2016

THE LOBSTER

At one time, about 1911, a University of Maine professor was using ground up lobster shells to make cores for golf balls. Unfortunately, they only provided about 70% of the distance of a regular golf ball. Read on to enjoy learning a number of other lesser known facts about the lobster.

During colonial times lobsters were so abundant they could be found washed up on the beach in two foot high piles after a storm. Massachusetts Bay colonists thought of them as trash food, only fit for indentured servants, convicts and other indigent people. In fact, during this time, indentured servants demanded contracts which limited the number of times per week they could be fed lobster to just two or three. Native Americans even used lobsters as bait or to fertilize their crops.

For a time during the 1800's when consumers in Boston could buy baked beans for 53 cents a pound, canned lobster sold for just 11 cents a pound. Lobster didn't become popular in this country until the mid 1800's. I've seen two explanations for this. The first is that commercial fisheries only prospered after the development of a type of fishing boat known as the "lobster smack" which had open holding wells built on deck to keep lobsters alive during transportation. Another explanation offered is the expansion of the country's railroads. Railroads considered lobster as a pleasant tasting, inexpensive, yet exotic, food which could be profitably served to their customers. Its popularity began to grow.

Some other interesting, but lesser known facts about lobsters include:

Lobsters can grow up to four feet long and weigh as much as 40 pounds. It is believed that lobsters can live up to 100 years. Lobsters are normally caught in traps. There are limits regarding the minimum size lobster which can be taken. The size of the lobster traps limit the size caught on the upper end. When Lobsters of size 20 to 30 pounds or more are caught, it is often because its claw has become caught in the entrance to the trap, not because the "big lobster" is in the trap. Lobsters have a "crusher" claw and a "pincer" claw. Crusher claws can be on either the right side or the left side of the lobster. A lobster claw can exert pressure of up to 100 pounds per square inch.

As they grow, lobsters shed their shells, or "molt." Lobsters reproduce by laying lobster eggs. After molting the female sends a signal to the male that she is ready. When Lobsters mate the eggs are not fertilized right away. The female carries both the male's sperm and her eggs, chooses when to fertilize the eggs, and then carries the eggs until they're ready to hatch. Don't ask me how our scientists know all this.

Other characteristics of lobsters are that they have brains no bigger than the tip of a ball point pen. Lobsters have very poor eyesight, but have highly developed senses of smell and taste. Leg and feet hairs identify food. Antennae, in front of their eyes, are used for finding food that's farther away. Lobsters have a grinding mechanism in their stomachs for breaking up food, much like having teeth.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

July 7, 2016

36. OCTOBER 2016 (REVISED OCTOBER 2020 AFTER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BECAME AVAILABLE)

SCARBOROUGH CARRIAGE HOUSE RUIN

One of my very favorite places to enjoy in our area is Scarborough Beach, especially in the off season. The north end of the beach is particularly fascinating to me. At the end of the beach is a remarkable stone structure ruin where the land juts out to "Black Rock" just off shore. What was this intriguing structure? It is apparent that this structure could not have been alone on this land during its "grand days." The answer to this question turns out to be quite interesting.

The stone structure is the carriage house for the estate named "Windswept" built for the Davis family in about 1895. Two prominent features of this estate were an elegant 21 room mansion, complete with servants' quarters, and the carriage house.

Perry Davis (1791-1862) invented Perry Davis's "Vegetable Painkiller" in 1840. It was the first nationally advertised patent medicine specifically for pain. Distributed by Christian missionaries around the world, and widely used during the American Civil War for both troops and horses, the elixir contained mainly opiates, and ethel alcohol and was perhaps the most successful patent medicine ever made.

Perry Davis had a son and a grandson, both named Edmund. Grandson, Edmund W. Davis (1853-1908), sold the rights to the Davis name to another patent medicine firm and used some of the proceeds of the sale to build his estate, Windswept. It was known to the locals at the time as "the mansion built with painkiller money".

Perry's grandson, Edmund W, benefited greatly from his grandfather's wealth. Sometime after attending Harvard University for two years, he became involved in the family's business. At age 27 he inherited a share in the family's wealth, allowing him to actively enjoy the social aspects of his avid interests in hunting and fishing.

In the 1880's the Quebec government was encouraging fishing along its Grand Cascapedia River, leasing the fishing rights to various very wealthy people. One of these people was Robert G. Dun, a founder of Dun and Bradstreet, who owned "Dunmer" the expansive and magnificent neighboring estate to the Davises, still observable today from Ocean Drive in Narragansett. Dun built himself a fishing camp on the Grand Cascapedia, which he named "Red Camp" and at some point he invited Edmund Davis to the camp for salmon fishing. Davis soon became enthralled with catching giant Atlantic salmon and he returned to the river year after year, eventually becoming a renowned salmon fishing expert in the Cascapedia region. When Dun died in 1900, Davis acquired Red Camp from the estate.

On June 19, 1908 Edmund W. Davis was found dead of a gun shot wound on the front porch of Red Camp. How this happened, and who was responsible is still a mystery today. With little evidence, the death was quickly labeled "accidental" and Davis' body was removed from Red Camp the next day and taken back to Rhode Island.

In 1939 the Davis family sold Windswept to Paul and Alfred Castiglione who established a high end restaurant there, "Cobb's by the Sea." The property was again sold in 1952 to the Lownes family. For some time after this, the house was empty and the target of vandals. After three fires in three years the house was razed in 1974, and in 1980 the land was purchased by Rhode Island DEM. The carriage house ruins remain to this day.

Bob Crook, GIA Historian

Revised October 2020

37. MAY 2017

POINT JUDITH LIGHT - CONTINUATION

One of the most well known and most visited historical sites in our area is Point Judith Light. Point Judith Light has stood guard over the entrance to Narragansett Bay as well as the entrance to Long Island Sound since the earliest of times. Rough seas, heavy fog, and dangerous shoals have made this point one of the most dangerous along the Atlantic coast for sailors and their ships. Some form of beacons, lighting the way for ships, existed at Point Judith prior to the American Revolution. These beacons consisted of large wooden tripods from which were hung baskets of burning wood. Not unexpectedly these tripods would catch fire regularly and need to be replaced often.

Land for the first lighthouse at Point Judith was purchased by the U.S. Government from Hazard Knowles in 1809. The lighthouse was completed one year later in 1810. A Government document concluding the transaction was signed by Knowles along with another Rhode Islander, William Ellery a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

The first Point Judith Light was a wooden structure which cost \$5700 including land, the building and the equipment for the light, itself. This light served mariners through rough seas and harsh unpredictable weather for five years. On the morning of September 23, 1815 one of the strongest hurricanes on record devastated this area. Without the warning, the storm referred to as the "Great Gale" of 1815 hit sending millions of tons of water and destruction across area beaches and up Narragansett Bay toward Providence. At some time during the storm the pounding surf completely destroyed the lighthouse.

By the end of 1816 the second Point Judith light was built at a cost of \$7500. It was a 35 foot octagonal stone tower and lighted by "ten lamps" powered by whale oil and backed by a large reflector which revolved on a turntable. The rotating mechanism was one of few things salvaged from the old tower.

The life of the Point Judith light house keeper was not an easy one. His duties in those days were many and varied. He had to tend the buildings (paint and repaint), pump fuel for the light, turn the light on and off as needed, and maintain the light, especially at night, including trimming the wicks, cleaning the sooty lenses. He had to wind the clocks which drove the lenses. In cold weather the light house was so cold the family had to sleep in the kitchen. There were also ledgers and logs to be maintained. The keeper had to be prepared for various inspections. In addition to the above, the lighthouse keeper had to be a gracious host to other visitors. For all this the keepers pay in 1857 was \$357 per year.

In 1857 a new light, which still stands today, was built with a 51 foot octagonal brownstone tower with a new keepers house attached. A fourth order Fresnel lens was installed making the light visible up to 16 miles at sea. Over the years since then several other improvements have been made including an oil house, a fog signal (surviving to the present), radio beacon. In 1937 the US Coast Guard constructed larger quarters and added additional buildings. The light was electrified in 1939 and automated in 1954. A major renovation was done in 2000.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

May 2017

38. AUGUST 2017

GIA HISTORIAN's LOG

This log is for all you Great Island golfers. Judging by the weekly major tournaments on TV as well as, of course, our own upcoming Great Island Golf Outing, this must be "mid golf season." Have you ever thought about when and where the sport of golf began?

As with most of these types of questions, the answer is not completely straight forward. There are a number of historical references to "golf like" games in Holland, Belgium, and elsewhere in Europe during the 13th century. Never-the-less, the modern game of golf is generally considered a Scottish invention. The game was played on the eastern coast of Scotland in the kingdom of Fife during the 15th century. The game involved hitting a pebble around a course in the sand dunes using a stick or primitive club.

During the mid-15th century, Scotland was preparing to defend itself against an English invasion. King James II was forced to ban both golf and soccer as distractions detrimental to military training. The ban remained in place until the treaty of Glasgow in 1502, although people largely ignored it, anyway.

During the 16th century, King Charles I popularized the game of golf in England, and Mary Queen of Scots introduced the game in France while she studied there. In fact, the term "Caddie" is derived from the French military term for "Cadets."

The first international golf match took place in 1682 near Edinburgh at Leith, the most well known golf course of the time. The Duke of York and George Patterson, playing for Scotland, beat two English gentlemen.

The "Gentlemen Golfers of Leith (1744) was the first club formed to promote an annual competition, with a silver golf club as the prize. Duncan Forbes drafted the club's rules, some of which were similar to today's rules, others were at least somewhat more colorful in their expression, for example: "At hoeling you are to play your ball honestly for the hole, and not play upon your adversary's ball, not lying in your way to the hole."

The first mention of Golf at St. Andrews was in 1552. In 1754 the St. Andrews Society of Golfers was formed to compete in its own annual competition using Leith's rules. Stroke play was introduced in 1759, and in 1764 the 18 hole course known today was established. King William honored the club with the title "Royal and Ancient" in 1834 and the "new famous" clubhouse was built in 1854. The first women's golf club in the world was formed at St. Andrews in 1895.

In the early days of golf, through the mid 19th century golf equipment was hand crafted and expensive. Once metal clubs and modern golf balls were coming off production lines, golf began to spread rapidly. By the end of the 1800's golf clubs had been established in England, India, Ireland, France, Canada, South Africa, Japan, and the United States.

In the US, the South Carolina Golf Club in Charleston was established as early as 1787. Several other clubs were also established in the 1880's. In 1895, delegates from five clubs (including the Newport Country Club) met to form the United States Golf Association (USGA). By 2013 there were over 10,600 affiliated clubs.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

August 2017

39. OCTOBER 2017

INCORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF NARRAGANSETT

The 1700's were busy times when it came to incorporating new towns into our colony, and later our state, of Rhode Island. Closest to us here in Narragansett there was, first, Washington County, itself, which was created as King's County in 1729 within the colony of Rhode Island, and renamed in 1781 as Washington County in the State of Rhode Island in honor of George Washington. South Kingstown, our neighboring town, was founded in 1669, and was incorporated 1723. Additionally, New Shoreham on Block Island was incorporated in 1672. Charlestown was incorporated in 1738. Newport was incorporated as a town in 1784. So what about Narragansett, do you know when the town of Narragansett was Incorporated?

In 1658 and 1659 investors completed the historic Pettaquamscutt and Atherton purchases from the Narragansett Indians, including land which would later become the town of Narragansett. Over the next two hundred years wars were fought including the King Phillip's War versus the Narragansett's, the American Revolution, and the War of 1812. The population of the area expanded, and commerce grew as mills were established, ship building began, and large plantations produced a variety of products. A shipping pier named "Narragansett Pier" was constructed in 1781. Was this when Narragansett's incorporation took place?

The situation in Narragansett began to change dramatically in 1848 when Joseph Heatly Dulles of Philadelphia (the great-grandfather of John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State to President Dwight Eisenhower) visited Rowland G. Hazard of neighboring Peace Dale. Hazard, a textile mill owner supplied Dulles, a wealthy cotton broker from South Carolina, with cloth. Hazard introduced his visitor to the outstanding beauty of the Narragansett seashore. Dulles was so enamored of the vista before him that he immediately booked an entire local boarding house for his family and close friends for the entire following summer, and for some summer's thereafter.

As a result of Dulles' great interest in the area, tourism flourished. The first major hotel, the "Narragansett House" opened in 1856. In the years between 1866 and 1871 ten new hotels were built at Narragansett Pier. In 1876 the Hazard family constructed the Narragansett Pier Railroad connecting Narragansett's south pier to their mills in Wakefield and Peace Dale, and linking them to the Stonington Railroad, providing connections to Providence, Boston and New York. The new line also eliminated the uncomfortable ten mile stagecoach ride between Narragansett and Kingston.

The incredible Narragansett Casino opened formally in July 1884 and was completed in 1888. The Casino was one of the most outstanding resorts in the country during the 80's and 90's. Was Narragansett incorporated as a town in the state of Rhode Island at this time?

"And now for the rest of the story." as Paul Harvey used to say. For many years Narragansett was part of the town of South Kingstown. In 1888, however, the State of Rhode Island recognized the widely different pace of civil and economic life between South Kingstown and Narragansett and decreed Narragansett a separate voting district. This eventually led to Narragansett's incorporation as a Rhode Island town on March 28, 1901, in spite of the calamitous fire of September 12, 1900 which consumed not only the Narragansett Casino, but also most of the city center.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

October 2017

40. AUGUST 2018

PLUMB BEACH LIGHT

Ever since I was a young fellow as I have driven over the Jamestown Bridge I have been quite intrigued by a “little” lighthouse which seemingly rises right out of Narragansett Bay just on the North side of the bridge. This is the Plumb Beach Light, a so called “Bullet” light, because of its shape. I often wondered if this light was big enough to warrant a light house keeper, and what it would be like for the keeper of such a light, especially in a big storm. A fascinating book which I have recently read, Brilliant Beacons, a History of the American Lighthouse by Eric Jay Dolin answers these questions and a host of others making up the colorful story of the American lighthouse.

The Plumb Beach light was built in 1899 using the “pneumatic caisson” method. A large wooden “caisson” topped with the beginnings of a cast iron cylinder, 33 feet in diameter, was lowered to the bottom of the bay. The water was then pumped out of this structure, and workers inside dug out dirt from the bottom sinking the structure 30 feet into the bottom of the bay.

When completed the lighthouse consisted of a basement storage area for oil, coal, food and fresh water. A kitchen and living area constituted the first level with an exterior deck surrounding the lighthouse with storage space for two small dories. The next two levels provided two bedrooms, one each for the keeper and his assistant. An additional level contained the fog-bell machinery. At the top of the lighthouse the final level was the lantern room.

On September 21, 1938 substitute keeper Edwin Babcock and assistant keeper John Ganze occupied the lighthouse, unaware (as were many people) that one of the fiercest hurricanes ever to strike New England was bearing down on them. Babcock had already been on duty at the light for three days, and that afternoon he headed home rowing one of the two dories. Rapidly realizing the futility of this effort he was barely able to return safely to the lighthouse.

The two keepers, becoming extremely concerned by the rapidly deteriorating weather battered down the lighthouse, closing portholes and securing doors. Waves were soon crashing over the deck, ten feet above the normal sea level. A short time later the keepers were forced to retreat to the keepers quarters on the upper levels, and eventually to the fog-bell machinery room. The lantern room above was too exposed to the weather to provide further refuge. As time passed the lighthouse shook as it was battered by the wind and waves and the men watched as the remains of houses, boats and trees flashed by. At one point, out of desperation, the men even lashed themselves to the metal column in the center of the lighthouse.

As the winds increased, the waves nearly reached the top of the fifty-four foot tower. The lighthouse was suddenly struck by a great wall of water and the cement walls lining the inside of the building began to crack. The men opened the portholes to equalize the pressure inside and out. Finally, after what seemed like endless hours, the worst of the storm had passed and the winds and the waves subsided.

The next morning the lighthouse was in a shambles. Most of the contents of the lighthouse were washed into the bay. The coal stove had been hurtled across the room. The deck was severely damaged. Boulders, which formed the riprap protecting the lighthouse, weighing up to four tons had shifted or were swept away. There were numerous cracks in the lighthouses iron shell. Though the keepers survived the storm it wasn't until eleven pm on the evening after the storm when two men rowed to the lighthouse to take the men back to shore.

The completion of the Jamestown Bridge in 1941 rendered the Plumb Beach Light obsolete and the abandoned lighthouse deteriorated over time. The non-profit Friends of Palm Beach Lighthouse gained ownership in 1999 and historical restoration work finally began in 2003.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

August 2018

41. OCTOBER 2018

CAPTAIN JAMES COOK AND "ENDEAVOR" – FOLLOW UP TO AUGUST 2012 ARTICLE

Captain James Cook, the renowned British explorer, navigator, and cartographer who lived from 1728 to 1779 and his famous ship, the bark HMS Endeavor, were the topics of my GIA Historian's Log of August 2012. Captain Cook made three exploratory voyages to the Pacific Ocean. On the first of these voyages (1768-1771) aboard his ship, Endeavor, he mapped the entire coastline of New Zealand, and continuing West, in April of 1770, he and his expedition became the first Europeans to set foot on the southeastern coast of Australia, claiming it for England. On his second voyage Captain Cook became one of the first to cross the Antarctic Circle and to circum-navigate the world at a very southern latitude. His third Pacific exploration took him to Hawaii, and even as far as California and Alaska.

After the Endeavor's historic voyage, the British Royal Navy sold the Endeavour, resulting in the ship being renamed the Lord Sandwich. With the outbreak of the American Revolution the British chartered the ship as a troop transport, and later as a prison ship.

My historian's log of 2012 was based on a Providence Journal article from (8/05/2012) which described research originally begun in 1993. A number of people, notably a marine archeologist, D.K. "Kathy" Abbass, Ph.D., founder of the Rhode Island Marine Archeology Project (RIMAP), believed that Captain Cook's ship, the Endeavour, was right here in Narragansett Bay. There was evidence that the Lord Sandwich (formerly the Endeavour) was one of thirteen ships scuttled by the British at Newport in 1778 to block a French attack just prior to the Battle of Rhode Island. The article described the plan to excavate the sites of the thirteen ships to determine which, if any, of them was the Endeavor and to recover artifacts from the ship. Artifacts recovered during the search for the Endeavour would be preserved and exhibited in a new marine laboratory and museum to be built. At various times over the years the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) also participated in the project and recently became a partner with RIMAP in the research effort.

Fast forward now to the week of 9/16-9/22/2018, several articles in various mediums including CNN, the Guardian (an Australian newspaper), and our own Providence Journal (Thursday, 9/20/2018) all announced that Captain Cook's ship the Endeavour may have been found, or has been found, in Newport harbor off Goats Island. Cathy Abbass of RIMAP stated "We think we know which one (ship site) it is." RIMAP's Web site states that they had "identified a possible site in Newport Harbor that might be the Lord Sandwich ex Endeavour" but that it required "detailed work . . . to prove it." At a media event at Gurney's Resort on Goats Island, Newport on Friday 9/21, RIMAP and its ANMM partners supported their thinking based on when and where the Endeavor was built, the size of the Endeavor (the largest of the ships scuttled in that area) and the corresponding dimensions of timber samples uncovered.

Also described at the event were the challenges faced by the project including scavenging of anchors and gear by French sailors, WWII Goat Island Torpedo Station explosive tests, poor under water visibility, and the subtlety of the sites. The work remaining to be done to prove the site is that of the Endeavor includes selective excavation, additional measurements and photography, as well as artifact analysis, requiring the construction of a conservation and storage facility.

In this year, 2018, it has been 250 years since Captain Cook departed on his historic first voyage to the Pacific in Endeavour. 2020 will be the 250th anniversary of Captain Cook's discovery of Australia. The definitive identification of the Endeavour (Lord Sandwich) in Newport Harbor during this period would certainly be a significant contribution to the celebration of these events. Stay Tuned!

Bob Crook, GIA Historian, October 2018

42. APRIL 2019

THE PERRY FAMILY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY – CHRISTOPHER RAYMOND PERRY

This is the first of a two part article describing the great Naval tradition engendered by the Perry family of Washington County and our neighboring town of South Kingstown, Rhode Island.

James Freeman Perry (1732-1813), was born in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, and served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. He was a surgeon and also Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas in Washington County, RI. For many years he also served as President of the Town Council of South Kingstown. James Freeman Perry was the father of eight children, one of whom, was Christopher Raymond Perry (1761-1818).

One version of a widely popular story of the times was that when Christopher was barely 16 years old, he was serving in a local colonial militia, the Kingston Reds. One day a squad of Kingston Reds under the command of Colonel Jonathan Maxson marched on the farm of a local Quaker farmer, Simeon Tucker, and demanded that he supply food and blankets for the Continental army. When Tucker refused the colonel told his squad to level their muskets at the Quaker and gave the order "Fire (over his head)!" Tucker fell dead! Christopher Raymond Perry's bullet pierced his heart. Everyone else "missed." Perry either didn't hear the last part of the command, or in his zealousness, disregarded it. Shortly thereafter Christopher Perry went to sea. It is also told by some that Colonel Maxson later married Simeon Tucker's widow.

Christopher Perry first served on privateers. After a number of engagements, he was taken prisoner by the British and confined on a prison ship in New York harbor, but fortunately was eventually able to escape. In 1779 Perry joined the Continental Navy as a seaman on the frigate USS Trumbull which was later engaged against a British ship in a hard fought battle with many casualties. He then enlisted on another privateer and off the coast of England was once again captured . . . and, once again, escaped.

After the war Perry returned to South Kingstown and pursued a career as a mate, and then captain on merchant ships sailing all over the world. In 1784 he was married and a year later in 1785 their first child, Oliver Hazard Perry was born. Christopher and his wife Sarah would produce five sons, all of whom were officers in the US Navy who died in service.

In 1798, during the "Quasi War" with France Christopher Raymond Perry was commissioned a captain in the US Navy. He commanded the frigate "General Greene" on which his son, 13 year old Oliver Hazard Perry, served as midshipman. In 1799 the General Greene sailed to Havana and later to Santo Domingo. In these waters, along with the frigate USS Boston the Greene captured the Schooner Flying Fish and recaptured the American schooner Weymouth. Additionally the General Greene intercepted supplies headed for rebels fighting in Haiti. The Greene also on one occasion prevented a much larger 74 gun British ship of the line from boarding an American merchant ship.

Perry along with most of the other officers in the Navy at that time were discharged by the Peace Establishment Act of 3 April 1801 which greatly reduced the size of the military. Only nine of 42 Navy captains were allowed to remain in service. He died in Newport on June 1, 1818 at the age of 58 years.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

APRIL 2019

43. AUGUST 2019

THR PERRY FAMILY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY – OLIVER HAZARD PERRY

This is the second of a two part article describing the great Naval tradition engendered by the Perry family of Washington County and our neighboring town of South Kingstown, Rhode Island.

Oliver Hazard Perry (1785 – 1819), born in South Kingstown, RI was the oldest son of US Navy Captain Christopher Raymond Perry (1761-1818) and his wife Sara Wallace Alexander. He was the older brother of Commodore Matthew C Perry.

One year after Oliver Hazard Perry's father was given command of the US Frigate General Greene, 14 year old Perry wrote to his father requesting permission to join the navy. Captain Perry appointed his son a midshipman aboard the General Greene. Oliver Hazard Perry served in the West Indies during the Quasi War with France. During the first Barbary War Perry served aboard the USS Adams and later was first Lieutenant (second in command) of the USS Nautilus. He later served on the USS Constitution and the USS Essex. In 1809 he was given command of the sloop USS Revenge which ran aground off the coast of Rhode Island and was lost. Seeing that he could not save the ship he put his full attention to saving his entire crew. The subsequent court-martial exonerated Perry.

At the beginning of the War of 1812 Perry requested and was given command of the Naval forces on Lake Erie. His first task, working with a talented ship builder, was the construction of a fleet of ships for duty on the lake. There were many significant problems to overcome including a very severe winter, difficulty obtaining the wood needed for the ships, and capable seamen to man the ships. With much hard work and significant good luck Perry was ready when the battle began in September 10, 1813.

The two largest of Perry's ships were the USS Lawrence, commanded by Perry and the USS Niagara commanded by Master Commandant Jesse Duncan Elliot. The plan was for Lawrence to close in quickly on the British because it did not have long range guns. Niagara was to follow closely behind. The British concentrated their fire on the Lawrence causing heavy damage and extremely heavy casualties. At this point. Perry and five seamen rowed to the Niagara where he immediately took over command sending Elliot to rally the smaller vessels. Perry sailed Niagara right through the middle of the British ships raking them with broadsides. Within 15 minutes the battle ended, with all British ships captured or sunk. Following the battle Perry sent the famous message, "We have met the enemy and they are ours!" Perry's relationship with Elliot remained hostile for the remainder of their lives.

The battle of Lake Erie which was the biggest US victory of the war to date, and the first time the US Navy had defeated an entire British squadron changed the course of the War of 1812. Perry was reassigned to the East Coast where he participated significantly in several actions against the British.

In 1814 Perry commanded the USS Java, a 44 gun Frigate in the Mediterranean during the second Barbary War. Upon his return his feud with Elliot was reignited leading eventually to Perry's filing formal court-martial charges against Elliot. To avoid further scandal between the two decorated naval heroes The Navy Secretary and President Monroe offered Perry's diplomatic mission to Venezuela. On July 15, 1819 Perry in command of the Frigate USS John Adams arrived in Venezuela. By August 11th a favorable treaty was signed but as they headed home many on board, including Perry were stricken with yellow fever. Perry died on route to medical assistance on his 34th birthday, August 23, 1819.

Bob Crook, GIA Historian

JUNE 2019

44. NOVEMBER 2019

GREAT ISLAND'S ROCK

OK, so now we've got a rock on our door step. It's a very nice rock with a broad flat face, and it would probably make a great marker proclaiming our wonderful island. Many communities in our nation have markers proclaiming their towns or villages. The question becomes, what kind of proclamation should this be.

At first thought the answer appears obvious: The vast majority of these markers say, "HOME TOWN, Founded XXXX" (or Established XXXX). OK, that's easy, I thought , but when was Great Island "founded" or "established?"

Villages, Towns, and Cities for the most part are political entities whose founding dates are determined by an organization of some sort, council, committee, and documented by tablet, letter, report, charter, law, meeting minutes, or at least "post it" notes. So what about Great Island?

Roger Williams founded Rhode Island in 1636. By 1659 real estate speculators had completed the Pettaquamscutt and Atherton purchases from the Narragansetts including the land which eventually became Narragansett. Unfortunately, Roger Williams and his contemporaries were too busy dealing with the Indians as well as the neighboring colonies of Connecticut and Massachusetts to worry about naming, much less founding Great Island.

Great Island has been here probably for thousands of years, and its first inhabitants were, no doubt, Indians. Great Island in Native language might very well have been its name. After all, the Native American word "Narragansett" translates roughly into English as "people of the small point." I do have a copy of a map from 1895 with Great Island shown on it. There's a house indicated on it as the "Champlin Farm House" built in 1877 as the only identified feature. According to tax records of 1888 the Great Island land was valued at \$6500. By the 1930's the farmhouse remained the only dwelling on the island. Town of Narragansett archives indicate that between 1932 and 1934 three quarters of Great Island had been purchased by Anna and Arthur Pecham, and Richard Kenyon. Population records show that Narragansett grew very little between the 1890's and 1940. I'm sure that Great Island's paralleled this.

The town of Narragansett, itself, was only incorporated in 1901. I also have a copy of the first development plot plan for Great Island dated 1940. In the early 1950's I remember my family visiting the "real estate field office" somewhere near where the bridge is today looking for possible "beach property."

In 1952 a number of the residents on the island at that time formed the "Great Island Improvement Association, for runner of the GIA. George W. Boutillier was the first President.

So as far as Great Island's founding goes, there are no government declarations. One can choose between the first house, the first development, or the Establishment of the Great Island Improvement Association, or possibly one of a few other "unnamed draft choices." At the GIA Brunch this past September, our members voted not to proceed with engraving a proclamation on our rock at this time. So . . . save your ideas in a safe place. One day, Great Island's founding may yet be carved in stone.

Bob Crook

GIA Historian

November 2019

45. APRIL 2020

US LIFE-SAVING SERVICE IN RHODE ISLAND

During the late 1700's and early 1800's maritime commerce expanded, significantly, along the east coast. The period following the Civil War saw a large growth in maritime traffic to match the significant growth in industrial economic activity. At the same time road transportation was far from highly developed. Shipping exceeded all other modes of transportation by orders of magnitude. During the year of 1893, alone, 60,000 ships passed Point Judith, including 34,000 coastal schooners and numerous coal barges, converted from large multi-masted vessels which were no longer seaworthy under sail. Along with the exponential growth in shipping came a corresponding growth in maritime disasters including collisions, groundings and damage or loss of ships from storms.

A great many of these disasters occurred along Rhode Island's southern shore. During this time a number of ocean-facing light houses were established along the Rhode Island shore including the Beaver Tail light on Jamestown, Point Judith Light, Block Island Light (Sandy Point), and the Watch Hill Light, But these facilities were not able, by themselves, to provide sufficient assistance once these maritime disasters occurred.

In 1848 the federal government began to fund life-saving stations along the Atlantic coast which were manned by volunteer crews. In 1854 it was determined to hire "keepers" for each station. Finally, by 1878 the US Life Saving Service was founded, and the stations were manned by a keeper and six man crews of "surf men".

The one purpose of these stations was to save lives. The surfmen's motto was, "You have to go out, but you don't have to come back." The crews lived together at their life-saving stations, performed beach patrol between their stations and when a wreck, grounding, or other disaster occurred or was about to occur, they fired a signal flare alerting the station crew members who then launched their rescue boats or breeches buoy equipment and took whatever other action was called for to save as many lives as possible. In Rhode Island surfmen were strong, dedicated men of well-known South County families.

There were ultimately nine life saving stations established in Rhode Island: Narragansett Pier (1872), Brenton Point (1874), Point Judith (1876), Watch Hill (1879), Quonochontaug Station (1891), Green Hill Station (1912), and three stations on Block Island: Block Island Station (1872), New Shoreham Station (1874) – the house still stands at the Mystic Seaport - and Sandy Point (1898). Why three stations on Block Island? Some say it had as much to do with the hemp trade as it did with stormy ocean conditions.

The original Narragansett Life Saving Station was built in about 1872 on the town beach near the current site of the Dunes Club. The property, part of Canonchet Farm, belonged to Governor William Sprague. The patrol area for this station ran in one direction to Narrow River, and in the other direction to Scarborough Beach. A new life saving station was completed in 1888. The new station was made of stone, was right in the town's center, and made life boat launchings much easier. In 1889 Ex Gov. Sprague, reportedly was engaged in a dispute, involving a shotgun, regarding possession of the old station. The new station, of course, would eventually become the Coast Guard House Restaurant.

In 1915 the U.S. Life Saving Service and the U.S. Revenue Service were combined to become the United States Coast Guard. In the period from 1871 to 1915 The U.S. Life-Saving service assisted at 28,121 ship disasters involving 178,741 people, and only 1455 people lost their lives, an outstanding record!

Bob Crook – GIA Historian

46. AUGUST 2020

CAPTAIN CLARK AND SNUG HARBOR

Snug Harbor, as we all know, is the busy harbor village across the pond, featuring a fuel dock, bait and tackle shop, sandwich shop, charter port, private yacht harbor, and boat repair facilities. It's also a village of South Kingstown with private homes, rental dwellings, and its own fire department. Snug Harbor, in comparison to many other South County villages and towns is still relatively new. It was founded by the highly respected and revered Captain J. Everett Clark in 1902.

Captain Clark was born to a sea faring family in East Marion, Long Island, New York in 1872. His father was a fisherman. Capt. Clark in his youth had served as a cabin boy on square rigged ships (as did his father before him) and in the military during WWI. In 1895 Capt. Clark began fishing in Connecticut waters. In 1902, At the age of 30, he moved his family and his trap fishing business to Point Judith. His was the first big fishing operation in the harbor, and his trap boat, the Olive, at 30 feet in length was one of the biggest fishing vessels there. He bought 40 acres of waterfront land which he named "Snug Harbor" where he built his house .

One of Capt. Clark's first challenges at Point Judith was to improve the breachway from Point Judith Pond to the ocean. Prior to this time the local people would repeatedly hand dig an opening in the sandbar separating Salt Pond from the ocean beyond, allowing limited passage for a few weeks until the gap would fill up with sand or silt. Capt. Clark organized the fishermen and other local people to construct a more permanent breachway. Later the Army Corps of Engineers brought in heavy equipment and millions of tons of heavy stones to further improve the breachway.

According to Capt. Clark's grandson, Captain Samuel Cottle, Captain Clark named the west side of the breachway Jerusalem, and the East side Galilee. He also named the area at which he built his house as Snug Harbor. Capt. Clark reinforced his waterfront and built an ice house and a substantial dock extending out to the deepest part of the channel to develop a marketing center for fish, lobster and other shellfish caught in and around Pt. Judith. It soon became the center of the local fishing industry.

He then built a long shed on the dock for a seafood restaurant and an area where fish, not well known to the public, were processed into marketable offerings and shipped to New York. There was also an area where fish and lobsters would be prepared for cooking with chutes through which scraps were dropped into the water attracting green crabs which would be caught and sold for bait. There were also large rectangular crates with slatted sides and bottoms in the water allowing unique looking fish to be observed. Visitors could also rent fishing gear and buy bait to fish off the end of the dock, or for a fee, could also join in trap fishing, including a box lunch.

1938 brought what is probably the greatest hurricane in the recorded history of Rhode Island with a loss of over 300 people including 3 in the area of Salt Pond. Just prior to the storm, Captain Clark and two of his men secured his trap boat, Olive, up behind the northeast side of Great Island, and rode out the storm there. Meanwhile, Captain Clark's wife had barely escaped their house at Snug Harbor when it was severely damaged by a great wave. In Galilee, 24 fishing boats were lost, almost the whole fleet. Along with the damage to Captain Clark's house, his docks with restaurant and fish market were completely destroyed along with at least one of his fish traps. It took many years for the Galilee/Salt Pond fishing industry, along with Captain Clark to recover from the 1938 Hurricane.

Bob Crook, GIA Historian

August 2020