

WATCH HILL THROUGH TIME

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FOR *B.B.*, whose love of *Watch Hill* was limitless

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CHAPLIN BRADFORD BARNES

Watch Hill Through Time

The Evolution of a New England Shore Community

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THE WATCH HILL CONSERVANCY | 2005

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Preface & Acknowledgments

OUR FAMILY, brought by my aunt and uncle, Beatrice Putney Westerfield and Ray Bert Westerfield, came to Watch Hill in 1947. Since then, four generations have come to know and love this place.

My aunt, to whom these pages are dedicated, was known to young and old alike as “B.B.” Her love of Watch Hill and this coastline was a passion, and those of us who were privileged to enjoy it with her have shared that passion. Her smile was radiant, her laugh infectious, her wit sparkling, and her conversation scintillating. Life seemed always to be a joy to her, and she was never more joyful than when here.

My personal motivation for undertaking this history is my wish to share some of what I have learned about Watch Hill over more than half a century. My hope is that the pleasure of future generations may be enhanced by their being given a glimpse into the rich and unusual past of this place.

The Watch Hill Conservancy’s motivation for undertaking this publication is its commitment to the preservation of both the natural land of Watch Hill and the historic character of the community.

I AM ENORMOUSLY GRATEFUL to the many people who have assisted in a variety of ways in the preparation of this book.

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Every effort has been made to reach representatives of families mentioned, for any corrections they might wish to make or for further information they might be able to share. I am grateful to the more than one hundred people who responded to my letters, some in great and helpful detail. I have attempted to incorporate their suggestions and information.

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Julie Fry is responsible for the handsome design of this book, and for coordinating all aspects of its production. Lesley Baier, as editor, has applied her rare talents to a skillful crafting of the raw manuscript. Thanks to John Gambell, Yale University Printer, for persuading these two outstanding professionals to undertake this task. As photo-researcher, Chip Phelan has performed an invaluable task in assembling the visual materials. With the speed and precision that are hallmarks of his craft, Alex Trotter prepared the useful index. I am grateful for their professional skills and willing service. Thanks are also due to Judith H. Kelley of the Watch Hill Conservancy for her valuable assistance from the beginning of the project.

Thank you, all!

Finally, it must be said that only the writer has the responsibility for errors and omissions, and he begs indulgence for those that there may be.

Introduction

THIS STORY OF WATCH HILL is one that all who love this special place should know. We value its traditions, its natural and man-made beauty, and its seeming changelessness in a world of change. But change, including very dramatic change, is what has made Watch Hill what it is, and change will continue to reshape this peninsula.

The initial focus of this story is on the natural history of the place and on the forces and events that have shaped this point of land over time. It is hoped that the reader, looking at the landscape of Watch Hill today, will be helped to visualize it as it has been at various periods in the past. Since man-made features and human events have had their impact, the story also includes some of that human history.

While the prehistory of Watch Hill goes back to the Ice Age and the geological formation of the peninsula from debris left behind by the retreating glaciers, its recorded history is relatively brief, less than four hundred years. Its history as a resort stretches only 150 years.

With the advent in the seventeenth century of European colonists, the forests gave way to fields and pastures. In the nineteenth century, though fields and pastures became building sites for the hotels and cottages of the new resort, the land remained unforested and open. Then, in the early and mid-twentieth century, the trees returned, and today, as developed as much of Watch Hill has become, it is more forested than at any time since the eighteenth century. Great storms and other disasters have also worked their changes. Napatree, once wooded and then built upon, returned in little more than one hundred years to a natural state, albeit greatly reconfigured and substantially reduced.

Many choices present themselves to anyone who attempts to tell the story of how Watch Hill has evolved over time, the land over centuries and even millennia, the community over decades and even centuries. A particular challenge has been to accommodate the goal of highlighting geological and ecological changes, which are most clearly demonstrated in the

particular areas of Watch Hill where they have occurred, without sacrificing the chronological progression of the story. In the end, a compromise has been made. The chronological flow is maintained through the chapters titled *The Cottage Colony* and *Some Cottages & Cottagers*. The discussion then turns, in succession, to *The Watch Hill & Watch Hill Point; East Beach, the Salt Ponds, & the Fresh Ponds*; and *Napatree Point*. Within each of these discrete sections, there is a chronological progression, which runs parallel to that in the others. Next come chapters on *The Village* and *Some Watch Hill Institutions*. At the conclusion are some thoughts about *The Future*.

The chapter on *Some Cottages & Cottagers* deserves particular comment. It is both a summary of the development, street by street and house by house, of the cottage colony and a story of some of the diverse and remarkable people who have populated the colony over the past century and a quarter. Many were known to the writer at the outset, but others were not, and their stories simply appeared in the process of research. These have been a surprise and a delight.

How best to identify the houses of the “cottage colony” presents a challenge. With a contemporary readership in mind, one might be tempted to identify houses by the names of present owners. But owners change, and they also deserve their privacy. Properties are identified in the text by their street and road locations and, where possible, by cottage names. A map is also provided for easy reference, as are locations in Appendix A. Appendix B identifies those who have headed up Watch Hill institutions.

One objective of this publication is to bring together in one text some of the fascinating details of the history of Watch Hill which could otherwise be found only by recourse to many different sources. References consulted are by and large secondary and are available for further consultation, as detailed in the Notes and Selected Bibliography. Sometimes different dates are provided in different texts, and a judgment call had to be made. Where information available is only of an anecdotal nature, it is identified as such or prefaced by such words as *may* or *might*.

Occasionally the writer has allowed himself the license to make editorial observations, raise questions, and suggest future developments. He trusts these will be recognized as his alone and given no greater weight.

We invite all who know and love Watch Hill to learn more about its past and to be a part of our efforts to preserve it.

Watch Hill, As We Know It

LOCATED ON A NARROW PENINSULA, surrounded on three sides by the sea, Watch Hill relates to the ocean in a way that few mainland shoreline communities do.¹ On the east and south, it faces Block Island Sound, looking toward Block Island to the southeast and toward Montauk Point to the south. For all intents, this is open ocean, open to swells and storms. East Beach is noted for its ocean surf.

Watch Hill, together with Montauk Point to the south, forms the gateway to Long Island Sound. Watch Hill Point, also known as Lighthouse Point, separates the ocean to the east from the more sheltered waters of Fishers Island Sound to the west. To the southwest, Watch Hill looks over a string of reefs toward Fishers Island, New York. Little Narragansett Bay, the estuary that lies between Watch Hill's Napatree Point and Stonington's Barn Island and Osbrook Point and the mouth of the Pawcatuck River, is a sheltered arm of the sea.

A brief tour of a portion of Watch Hill will help orient the reader to the geography of the place. Approaching Watch Hill from Westerly along Watch Hill Road, one passes, on the right, various coves of the Pawcatuck River, the far shore being Connecticut. On both sides of the road is former farmland, largely built up, except for the portion of the Avondale Farm that has been preserved by the Westerly Land Trust.

Watch Hill Road turns into Westerly Road, and a turn onto Wauwinnet Avenue brings one into the village on Bay Street. Taking Bay Street south along the Bay, with the Watch Hill Yacht Club and the Beach Club of the Misquamicut Club to the right, one passes the Merry-Go-Round and, proceeding up the hill on Larkin Road, the Lighthouse to the right, and arrives on Bluff Avenue. The Watch Hill Chapel is on the left and the Ocean House on the right. Then taking Westerly Road to Ninigret Avenue and Ocean View Highway, with the clubhouse of the Misquamicut Club up the hill on the left and its lower golf course and ponds on the right, one arrives at Shore Road (Route 1A). A right turn takes one east to Misquamicut, Weekapaug,

Charlestown, and beyond, and a left turn brings one back to Watch Hill Road, left again to Watch Hill and right to Westerly.

This simple loop around Watch Hill is less than five miles long and takes only minutes. It passes through a terrain shaped by glaciers, over land and by sea hunted and fished by the Indians, farmed by the colonists, and lastly developed as a resort. Watch Hill's character has been shaped by that land and sea, by the architecture and institutions of the place, and by the generations who have lived here.

In early summer, the air is redolent of wild roses, honeysuckle, and beach pea, and at all seasons of the bracing salt of the sea. As summer progresses, adults and children flock to the sandy beaches and take to the water in boats. They play tennis and golf, and sail and swim at the clubs. They gather on manicured lawns for parties. They worship at the Chapel. And for three months, they live a life of active sociability or quiet relaxation in a charmed place.

Then those leave whose work calls them to the cities, and the children to school or college. Others travel. Here, as the bittersweet ripens to yellow, orange, and red, the brisk air of fall sharpens the pleasure of those whose schedules permit them to enjoy the generally mild and peaceful end of the season. Some head south for the winter; others return for the occasional weekend. Still others stay put and revel in the peace of the season and even in the exhilaration of the gales of winter. Owing to the moderating influence of the sea, winter is less harsh here than inland.

Known primarily as a summer place, Watch Hill is in fact a place for all seasons. And for those fortunate enough to have spent all or parts of their lives here, year after year, there is nowhere they would rather be. Careers may have taken them across the country, even around the world, but in the end, this is where they always truly come home.

BARN ISLAND

LITTLE NARRAGANSETT BAY

NAPATREE BEACH

NAPATREE POINT

FISHERS ISLAND SOUND



*Looking south from above Curtis Point to Foster's Cove, Battey Point,
the harbor, Napatree, and Lighthouse Point.*

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*A view to the southwest from above East Beach and the Anderson ponds.
In the distance stretches the crescent of Napatree Beach and Napatree Point.*

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From above Lighthouse Point, looking northerly to Napatree, Little Narragansett Bay, and the Connecticut shore, including Barn Island and Osbrook Point.

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Prehistory: From the Ice

STANDING ON THE BEACH on a warm summer day, one's thoughts would hardly turn to ice and the flow of glaciers. But the very fabric of the land of Watch Hill, as it rises from the sea, is the product of glacial forces that swept over the region more than twenty thousand years ago. The last great ice sheet, one of two to have reached southern New England, originated in eastern Canada and is known as the Laurentide glacier, from its origin in what became known as the Laurentian Mountains of Quebec. At its greatest extent, it covered all of New England and what, in time, became the ocean, extending out to Long Island, Block Island, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket, to a depth of several hundred feet.

During this greatest glacial advance, the level of the sea was some two hundred feet lower than it is today, and the coastline lay some seventy-five to 115 miles off the south coast of Block Island and Long Island, along what is today the continental shelf. What was then the coastal plain, and was later submerged by the rising sea, was tundra, a treeless plain such as is found today in the Arctic regions.² Dr. Charles F. Hickox, a geologist intimately familiar with this region, has written:

The tundra supported vast herds of grazing animals including caribou, musk ox, woolly mammoth and extinct species of bison. Harassing the herds were the carnivores — saber-tooth tigers, wolves and, by ten thousand five hundred years ago, man. Today, offshore fishermen occasionally bring up walrus tusks, mammoth teeth and stone artifacts from the earliest Americans.³

When the climate began to warm, the leading edge of the ice melted away, dropping its rocky load in a ridge more than one hundred miles long, running easterly and westerly. Marking the farthest southerly extent of the glacier and known geologically as the terminal moraine, that rocky debris formed Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, Block Island, and the south shore of Long Island.

Several thousand years after the terminal moraine was set down, the climate again cooled and ice once more flowed southward, carrying its load of sediments, to form a second moraine, known as the recessional moraine. Lying, like the terminal moraine, in an easterly and westerly arc, the recessional moraine formed much of the mainland coast of southern New England. It ran from Chatham to Wood's Hole and reappeared along the Rhode Island coast, forming hills and islands from Watch Hill to Fishers Island and the north fork of Long Island. The recessional moraine as it lies in western Rhode Island is known as the Watch Hill or Charlestown moraine.

In Watch Hill, this recessional moraine is seen in the great bluff—the “Watch Hill” from which this place takes its name—and in Napatree, Watch Hill Point, and the hilly area back from the shore. Ocean View Highway and Shore Road follow the foot of the ridge. All were formed from the accumulated load of boulders, gravel, sand, silt, clay, and other earthen debris scoured from the bedrock by the ice sheet, swept southward as on a conveyor belt, and finally left behind with the melting of this last ice sheet.

Marks of the glacier, apart from the ridges and headlands, include the boulders, seen everywhere, but most impressively, perhaps, in the great rocks that lie in the water off Watch Hill Point. Further evidence of the glacier includes other geological elements less obvious to the non-geologist, including kettles (or kettle holes) and kames. With the washout of gravel and other debris from the face of the melting glacier, large chunks of ice fell off and were buried in the gravel. When they later melted, they left depressions, known as kettles or kettle holes; and where the kettles filled with water, they formed kettle ponds. Kames were formed of glacial material collected in fissures between the ice, which, when the ice melted, formed steep-sided ridges. Kettles are found on the golf course of the Misquamicut Club, where they form four of the greens.⁴ A further notable local feature, fully visible until recent development along the Watch Hill Road portion of the Avondale Farm partially obscured it, is a kame, which has been described as “shaped like a sugarloaf and only about ten feet high, just beside the road from Westerly to Watch Hill, still standing where the ice set it down in a neat little pile.”⁵

Just to the east of Watch Hill, the recessional moraine forms the hilly land to the north of Shore Road (Route 1A). The kettle and kame topography of this land has been characterized by Hickox as “an array of glaciological phenomena” that he very much doubts “can be found in any other place in the world.”⁶ In 2004, the Westerly Land Trust acquired 135 acres of this area, to preserve it as the Dr. John Champlin Glacier Park.⁷

With the melting of the ice, the sea gradually rose to cover the continental shelf, and the higher hills of the moraines became islands as the sea poured through the moraine to form Block Island Sound and Fishers Island Sound. Between twenty thousand and twelve thousand

years ago, the sea level rose over two hundred feet, and over the next six thousand years, it continued to rise, nearly reaching its present level.

At the time of the last ice age, Long Island Sound did not exist. In its place lay a broad river valley draining what became the Connecticut coastal plain. During the period of glacial retreat, a large glacial lake formed there, and ultimately, perhaps around eleven thousand years ago, its waters overflowed the moraine, cutting channels at the eastern end of what became the Sound. Those channels are still noted by sailors as the passages between the various reefs that run from Watch Hill Point westerly to East Point, on Fishers Island: Watch Hill Passage, Sugar Reef Passage, Catcumb Passage, Lord's Passage, and Wicopesset Passage. Eventually, the channels drained the lake. In turn, over many more millennia, the rising sea filled the depression, turning it into an arm of the sea, Long Island Sound.

With the tapering off of the rapid postglacial rise in sea levels, sometime between six thousand and three thousand years ago, sediments were able to accumulate in protected areas along the coast, and salt marshes gradually formed. The shape today of the bluffs, hills, and beaches reflects the weathering effects, over millennia, of the elements and the sea.

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Indian Tribes & the First Europeans



EUROPEANS FIRST CAME TO NEW ENGLAND at the end of the fifteenth century, initially as sailors, fishermen, and explorers, and later as colonists, settling first, in 1620, at Plymouth, Massachusetts. They found a world that, for some ten thousand years, had been home to Indian peoples. Though these people are also referred to as Native Americans, they, like the Europeans, were immigrants to this continent, having crossed the Bering Straits on the land bridge that then existed between Asia and North America, perhaps as early as twelve to fourteen thousand years ago.

Over the millennia between the end of the Ice Age and the arrival of the Indians here, southern New England had evolved from postglacial barrenness to diverse and varied forest, “composed in turn of spruce, white pine, and finally, by about 7,000 years ago, the oaks and other hardwoods typical of the forest today.”⁸ Contrary to a popular misconception, the forests of southern New England were not all dense and impenetrable. The Indian custom of regular spring and fall burning eliminated dense underbrush, and in many places the forest presented conditions of parklike openness under a canopy of great trees. The peripatetic lifestyle of the Indians, who mixed hunting and gathering with limited agriculture, also contributed to the reduction of forest density. When the Indians moved from one place to another, as the land lost its fertility for crops, and as heavy cutting of the forest for firewood occurred, they often left behind large cleared areas of grassy open space. When Giovanni da Verrazano visited Narragansett Bay in 1524, he reported finding one such open space, which consisted of twenty-five to thirty leagues (a league being roughly three miles) of treeless land.⁹

1 Novi Belgii. John Ogilby/Arnoldus Montanus, London, Amsterdam, 1670. Based on an earlier Dutch version, this map, while reflecting the change from New Amsterdam to New York (1664), still identifies the colonies of New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island as New Netherland. The Parwcatuck River, identified as “Oester [East]” River, is shown as being in the territory of the Pequots (“Pequatoos”). Off the coast are shown Long Island (“t Lange Eylant”), Fishers Island (“Vissers Eylant”), and Block Island (“Adriaen Blocks Eylant”). The cartouche shows various aspects of native Indian life and a fine image of a dugout canoe.

The abundance of game in the forests of southern New England made a great impression on early visitors. There were elk, deer, beaver, hare, porcupine, turkey, quail, and ruffed grouse, and the predators which preyed on them: eagles, hawks, lynxes, foxes, and wolves. There were also bears. A significant feature of Indian life in southern New England was the seasonal move between fall and winter hunting grounds in the interior, and spring and summer fishing sites along the coast. The Narragansett Indian Tribe reports that tribal members had two homes, a winter home and a summer home:

The winter home would be called a long house in which up to 20 families would live in [*sic*] over the cold months. During the summer, the tribe would move to the shore and construct Wigwams or Wetus, temporary shelter made of bark on the outside and woven mats on the inside. They would dig out large canoes from trees which could hold up to forty men.¹⁰

There is, however, archaeological evidence from sites in Rhode Island and elsewhere along the southern coast of New England that, with the establishment of salt marshes in the coastal region, the native populations developed a more sedentary lifestyle, occupying the coastal salt pond and estuarine zone for most of the year as they grew to depend on the rich resources these ecosystems provided. A three-acre site on Block Island, located within the estuarine boundaries of the Great Salt Pond, provides evidence of a year-round settlement of some two hundred people living in long houses, some thirty to sixty feet in length, and subsisting on wild plants, game, fish, and shellfish.¹¹ Both Indians and colonists enjoyed the abundance of the coastal zone. In spawning season in the streams and rivers, there were smelt, alewives, sturgeon, and shad; in the tidal zone, mussels and other shellfish; in the coastal waters, lobsters, salmon, striped bass, blues, flounder, and cod; and in the salt marshes, wildfowl, geese, brant, and migrating hordes of passenger pigeons.

Archaeological finds in Westerly are few, and what archaeological studies have taken place here have been preliminary. But the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission notes that Westerly's location at the mouth of the Pawcatuck River, and its salt ponds and wetlands, suggest that many important sites may be located in the town.¹² Watch Hill, directly on the coast, was probably an area that attracted year-round habitation.

Before the Europeans first settled in western Rhode Island, between 1648 and 1660, there were three principal tribes on the mainland: the Niantics, the Pequots, and the Narragansetts. Their interactions, often including intertribal warfare, had an impact that continued to be felt even in the colonial period, as the land claims of the colonies often reflected the prior claims of the tribes who lived there.

Initially, the Niantics held sway along the coast from the Connecticut River to what they called Weecapaug, identified in some sources as being in Charlestown and in others as in Westerly. Clearly this was the vicinity of modern Weekapaug, Haversham, and Shelter Harbor.

From the coast, the Niantic territory reached back into the interior for at least twenty-five to thirty miles. All this changed with the arrival of the Pequots from their ancestral home near the headwaters of the Hudson River, in what became upstate New York. After a crushing raid by the Pequots in 1632 and their seizure of most of the Niantic domain, the remnant population was divided into two small tribes, a western tribe and an eastern tribe.

The Western Niantics settled between the Connecticut River and what became New London. The Eastern Niantics settled on the coast between the Pawcatuck River and Weecapaug. Their territory, which they called “Mishquamicuk” or “Misquamicut,” ran back into the forests about thirty miles. Under the leadership of the sachem Ninigret, the Eastern Niantics allied themselves with the Narragansett tribe, further to the east. The colonists, when they arrived, made little distinction between the two tribes, treating them essentially as one.

The Pequots, said to be the most warlike tribe in New England, continued to claim territory extending ten miles east of the Pawcatuck and sought to expel the Eastern Niantics from it. Further warfare ensued between the Pequots and the Narragansetts and the Niantics, in which Sosoia,¹³ a chief who had deserted the Pequots, sided with the Narragansetts. For these services, he was awarded title to the territory of Misquamicut by the Narragansett sachem, Miantonomi.

Ultimately, the power of the Pequots was broken in 1637 when a force of Massachusetts Bay colonists, led by Captain John Mason and supported by Narragansetts, Niantics, Mohicans, and Connecticut River Indians—in all some five hundred men—defeated some six hundred Pequots in a fiery rout and bloody massacre at their stronghold at Mystic. After the defeat of the Pequots, Connecticut based its claims to lands east of the Pawcatuck on those of the defeated tribe. At the same time, Massachusetts, which had supplied the victorious force, used the victory to justify its own territorial claims to western Rhode Island.

Other tribes of the region were the Manisses, the inhabitants of the island known as Manisses (later known as Block Island) and the Montauks, who possessed the eastern end of Metoac (now Long Island). Warfare occurred among these tribes and between them and the mainland tribes. A bitter feud between Ninigret of the Niantics and Wyandance, the sachem of the Montauks, led to one notable event at Watch Hill. On a still, moonlit night of Indian summer, 1654, warriors from the two tribes set forth on raids against each other across Block Island Sound, presumably in dugout canoes. The position of the moon and its reflection on the paddles of the Montauks allowed the Niantics to see the approaching raiders before they themselves could be seen. The Niantics returned to the shore near Watch Hill, where they concealed themselves and ambushed the invading force. They wiped out the Montauk raiders almost to a man. Encouraged by his victory, Ninigret is said to have set forth for Metoac and to have greatly weakened the defeated tribe on its own territory.¹⁴ These adventures demonstrate that even before the arrival of Europeans, Watch Hill was an important site, owing to its

strategic location. It was both at the mouth of a navigable river, and it commanded the passage from the eastern ocean into Long Island Sound.

There is also a tale of a war between the Manisses of Block Island and the mainland Narragansetts, in which a princess of the Narragansetts or the Niantics was taken captive and transported to the island. She was later redeemed at a great price with wampum secured from a Connecticut colonist, Thomas Stanton, a noted Indian interpreter and a founder of Stonington, who, in the early 1650s, had established a trading post for furs and skins at the ford of the Pawcatuck River, across from where the Westerly Yacht Club now stands. As a consequence of his assistance, he was awarded a grant of land in what became Charlestown. The Stanton legacy in Charlestown is memorialized in both the monument that stands in front of the Wilcox Tavern on Route 1 and in the name of the General Stanton Inn.¹⁵

Of no small consequence to the native populations of New England were European diseases, against which they possessed no immunity. The first recorded epidemic in southern New England, referred to as “plague” by some contemporaries, but possibly either chicken pox or the hepatitis virus, centered around Massachusetts Bay in the years 1616–19 and is estimated to have reduced populations there by as much as ninety percent. Serious outbreaks of disease occurred again in the 1620s, and in 1633 a smallpox epidemic spread along the southern Rhode Island coast west of Narragansett Bay, with mortality rates again more than ninety percent. These epidemics left many villages deserted, and land open and available for European settlement. It is generally accepted that by 1650, native populations in southern New England had been reduced by disease and warfare to one-tenth of their former strength.¹⁶

The Dutch, whose principal settlement to the west was known as New Amsterdam until its capitulation to the English in 1664 and its emergence as New York, were early visitors to the Rhode Island coast, where they traded with the Indians for furs. Dutch mapmakers, who were the first to chart the area, identified Watch Hill as East Point and the Pawcatuck River as East River (figs. 1 & 2). In 1614 the Dutch explorer Adriaen Block, who gave Block Island its name, explored Long Island Sound, sailing up both the Connecticut and Pawcatuck Rivers and then along the Rhode Island coast to Narragansett Bay and beyond. Sailing his craft, the *Restless*, 44½ feet long by 11½ feet wide, built on the Hudson in the previous winter of 1613–14, he is credited with having discovered the Pawcatuck River. Indeed, the first known map of the region, sketched by the Dutch geographer Johan or Johannes De Laet, is said to have been taken from Block’s 1616 journal, which has been lost. Block refers to the mouth of the Pawcatuck as “a crooked point, in the shape of a sickle, behind which is a small stream or inlet.”¹⁷ A similar description of Napatree and the Pawcatuck comes directly from De Laet, in his *New World*: “On the main land within the bay lies a curved promontory, behind which there is a small stream or inlet, which is called by our people East River, since it extends towards the east.”¹⁸

In discussing the Dutch commerce along the coast, Frederic Denison indicates that at least one of the region's salt ponds was of sufficient depth to accommodate coastal sailing vessels. He notes that Ninigret had formed a temporary compact with the Dutch which was still in effect in 1650, and that "Dutch keels entered a harbor that anciently existed on the shore east of Watch Hill, and which is now known as Quonocontaug [*sic*] Pond."¹⁹

Denison adds that the Quonochontaug Pond harbor mouth subsequently became filled with sand, and that as late as 1794, it was proposed to divert the Pawcatuck River by a canal into this pond, "to reopen and keep in condition the ancient harbor."²⁰ Denison says that the colony had offered to defray two-thirds of the cost. Nelson W. Pickering comments that "Such a channel would have reduced the flow of water in the Pawcatuck River and fortunately was opposed by many on the grounds of damage to river fisheries, mill power and navigation." He concludes, "The project died in the Assembly."²¹ Pickering also reports on the ancient ford of the Pawcatuck, which he says was a few yards downstream from the present bridge, and was used by the Indians as their main east-west trail, as well as by the early settlers for the same purpose. The ford was known to the Indians as "Pawcatuck," and thus the river took its local name from the ford. Westerly itself was first known as Pawcatuck Bridge.²²

Directly pertaining to Watch Hill is the revelation that before the colonial period, the Pawcatuck River flowed to the sea through Napatree Beach. Denison suggests that the entire course of the river might have changed over the years, originally flowing out at Watch Hill and only later winding its way westward toward Stonington. Writing in 1878, he states that "The old channel still terminates abruptly at the Watch Hill Landing," and that though a change in the river's mouth "occurred before the coast was possessed by the whites, yet a breach through the sand ridge remained till the beginning of the present [nineteenth] century."²³ Albert P. Pendleton amplifies on this phenomenon:

We start at what in ancient times was called the Old Breech, which tradition says was an open passage from the river to Long Island Sound. It was supposed to have been located a little west of Bay Street, near the bathing beach and enabled small boats to pass from the river to the sound without going out by Stonington. If such a passage existed, and probably it did, it filled up many years ago.²⁴

While supporting Denison's information about the channel at Watch Hill, Pendleton questions his assertion that there had been a change in the mouth of the Pawcatuck and suggests that the Watch Hill channel was one of two outlets of the river: "Although it might have been thought by some that this [Napatree] formerly was the only outlet for the Pawcatuck, there is not much doubt that the outflow of the water is and always was in its present channel [i.e., at Stonington]."²⁵

Denison refers to the arrival of the first settlers as being by boat along the coast or by Indian trails through the deep forests, making the first clearings in the dense wilderness. Their shelters,



2 Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova. Dated 1662, this later state of a 1635 map by William Janszoon Blaeu of Amsterdam was executed by Blaeu's son, Joan Blaeu. The Pawcatuck, "Oester Rivierken," is shown behind the sickle shape of Napatree, here quite accurately drawn. Fishers Island is misidentified as Long Island ("t'Lange Eyland"), while Long Island itself is identified by its Indian name of "Matourwacs." Dugout canoes and European sailing vessels ply the sea.

he says, were "log houses, sometimes half beneath the earth and half above, thatched often with slabs and bark, rarely furnished with windows."²⁶

The first European settlement of Rhode Island was by Roger Williams. Banished by the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony for his libertarian views, Williams made his way through the wilderness from Salem to the site of Providence, near the head of Narragansett Bay, in 1636. His tolerant attitude toward the native people set him apart from many others in the New England colonies, and he established the practice that other settlers in Rhode Island continued to honor, of compensating the natives for any land that they acquired.²⁷ Williams was

also responsible for obtaining a royal charter from England, in 1643, under which Providence and the subsequent settlements at Portsmouth, Newport, and Warwick were consolidated into a single colony, known as Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

The settlement of the western part of the colony followed the eastern settlements by some twenty years. In 1660 a group of Newport settlers purchased a tract of land twenty miles long and ten miles wide, lying along the coast between Weecapaug on the east and the Pawcatuck River on the west, from the Indian chief Sosoia, who had received it from Miantonomi (see fig. 5). This grant encompassed the present towns of Westerly, Charlestown, Hopkinton, and Richmond. Within it, of course, was Watch Hill. A year later, the grant was challenged by Ninigret, apparently through the influence of the Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay colonies, but its validity was supported by Wawaloam, the widow of Miantonomi, who in 1661 confirmed her husband's grant in an extraordinary document, signed with her mark of a bow and arrow. Two years later, a second royal charter put an end to the claim of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to the western part of the colony, as well as to Block Island.

The property conveyed by the 1660 grant was called by the Indians "Mishquamicuk" or "Misquamicut," which Williams translated as land of the red fish or salmon.²⁸ Westerly, as the new settlement was called at its incorporation in 1669, was by that date inhabited by thirty European families. The area was described as "dense wilderness"²⁹ traversed only by Indian trails. It was the first town incorporated in King's Province, later, after the Revolution, to be known as Washington County.

The increasing number of European settlers between the 1640s and the 1670s led to increasing tensions between the Indians and the Europeans all along the coast. Land and issues related to land were central to these disagreements.

To the English, a purchase of land, generally transacted with a specific amount of wampum, was a bounded finite transaction: the land became English when the wampum changed hands, and the people who sold the land were often required to leave it. To the Indians, at least at first, the exchange of wampum did not finalize a sale. Instead, it affirmed a new social obligation. The Indians would let the English use the land and, in exchange for that privilege, expected the newcomers to contribute to the social well-being of the Indian community.³⁰

But the differences were deeper and more intractable. They went to the heart of the social order of Indian culture.

The presence of European settlers turned the Indians' world upside down. Patterns of life which developed over thousands of years were now upset, as the deep-seated and long-standing character of life and culture changed. The objects of daily life, such as food, clothing, and tools, changed; the pattern of life also changed, as the Indian subsistence economy and self-sufficiency gave way to a market and trading economy.³¹

As a consequence of his facility with the language of the Narragansetts and the trust he had earned from them, Roger Williams was able to play a vital diplomatic role between the parties. Yet even he could not forestall the violence to come.

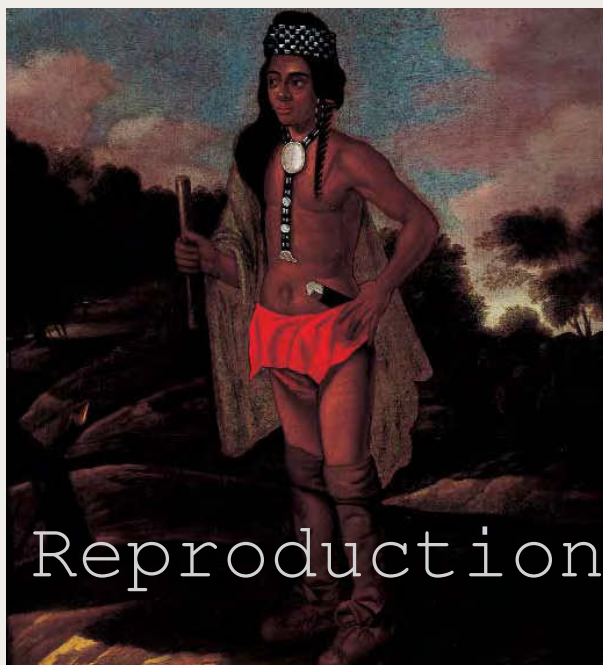
When the bloody conflict between the settlers and the Indians, known as King Philip's War, broke out in this region in 1675, the Westerly settlers were forced to flee their homes and take shelter in Newport. Metacom, or Philip, as he was called by the colonists, was chief of the neighboring Wampanoag Tribe, but he led the Narragansetts into the fight. Following the defeat and death of Philip in August of 1676, the settlers began to return to their homes, but so disrupted were civic affairs that it was another two years before any Westerly deputies were returned to the General Assembly.³²

The effect on the defeated Narragansetts was devastating, reducing their numbers from an estimated thirty thousand in the 1640s to fewer than one thousand after the war. The colonists rebuilt their communities, but the Indians were largely scattered, some as far away as Canada, and many others were enslaved or forced into servitude.³³ In the decades following the war, the colonial government of Rhode Island set up an Indian reservation. Officially established in 1709, it consisted of a tract of about thirty square miles in Charlestown:

The legislature specified that the land was set aside for Ninigret II and his heirs forever. The sachem was prohibited from selling the land without the colony's approval; he gave up a claim to other Niantic-Narragansett land in southern Rhode Island. Defeated in war, much of their land conquered, seized, and occupied, Indian people in Rhode Island faced an uncertain future.³⁴

Seaside Topics, whose seventy years of summer reporting and historical essays provide much fascinating detail of the history of Watch Hill, notes that it was only in 1882 that the State of Rhode Island purchased all the "right, title and interest" of the remnant Narragansett Tribe in its remaining land, some 922 acres, for \$5,000. There were then 324 surviving members of the tribe, forty of whom lived in Westerly. Each survivor received \$15.43.³⁵ This event, in effect, marked the legal extinction of the tribe. But it wasn't the end of the story. Nearly one hundred years later, in 1975, members of the tribe filed suit in federal court for the return of tribal lands. In 1978 the State of Rhode Island and the tribe entered into a settlement, which resulted in an award to the tribe of some eighteen hundred acres in Charlestown. In the same year, members of the tribe petitioned for federal recognition, and in 1983 the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs recognized the Narragansett Indian Tribe.³⁶

NINIGRET



3 Long identified as Ninigret, the subject of this painting of ca. 1700 is now considered to be an unknown, but authentically depicted, Native American sachem. Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Gift of Mr. Robert Winthrop.



4 The Ninigret Fountain at its first location at the intersection of Westerly Road and Ninigret Avenue.

CHIEF NINIGRET OF THE NIANTICS, whom Roger Williams described as “one of the chiefe sachems,” a “chiefe souldier” and “a notable instrument” among the natives,³⁷ is believed to have lived at Watch Hill, on the site of the Ocean House. According to Mary Agnes Best, “Ninigret, Niantic chief, transferred to Ezekiel Gavitt a tract of land a mile square for the consideration of a jug of rum, a few blankets and some gewgaws. The original Gavitt house put out to sea in the gale of 1704. On the very spot where Ninigret lived the Ocean House was built.”³⁸ Denison reports that Ninigret refused King Philip’s solicitation to join in his campaign to exterminate the white population: “He had received a present of a coat from King Charles, which greatly delighted him, and which he proudly wore when persons of rank visited him, and on occasions of state. Other gifts of utensils and ornaments, and the advantages of traffic, linked his attachments to the whites.”³⁹ It is not clear which King Charles made the gift, Charles I, who reigned 1625–49, or his son Charles II, who after the Restoration of the Monarchy, reigned 1660–85.

Denison notes further that a portrait of Ninigret was painted during a visit he made to Boston in 1647 and that it was in the possession of the Winslow family. It would be the model for the engraved image that appears in the frontispiece to his book, and the engraving in turn became the model for a stained glass window, dated 1894, displayed in the east entrance to the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly. In 1948 the painting was donated to the Museum of Art of the Rhode Island School of Design (fig. 3). Current scholarship does not support the tradition that the painting is of Ninigret, but confirms its authenticity as an image of a Native American sachem of about 1700.⁴⁰ An even more familiar image of Ninigret is the cast bronze sculpture that sits in the Watch Hill Village park (fig. 4). That sculpture, by American Enid Yandell, struck in Paris in 1911, is said to have been inspired by one of a troop of Indians who visited Paris with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show and who sat for Yandell. It was given to the Watch Hill Fire District by Mrs. Clement A. Griscom in memory of her husband.

Set on an imposing native granite plinth, the sculpture was originally placed at the junction of Westerly Road and Ninigret Avenue in 1913 as a fountain, water flowing from the mouths of the two fish Ninigret holds. It replaced an earlier iron fountain at the same site. In 1936 the sculpture was relocated to the park. It was transferred to the lawn of the Memorial House of the Watch Hill Improvement Society in 1951, only to be returned to the park later.

This Deed or Surrender bearing date the twentieth
 day of June one thousand six hundred and is
 and in the thirtieth year of the reign of our sovereigne
 King Charles the second King of England Scotland France and
 Ireland and all his Territories thereunto belonging witnesseth
 that I Sosoia an Indian Captain of Narraganset beinge the
 and lawfull owner of A tract of Land called ~~Misquamicut~~ Misquamicut
 for a valuable consideration in hand paid to my content
 have Bargained and sold unto William Vaughan Robert
 Stanton John Fairfield Hugh Masier and James Longbottom all
 of Newport in Rhode Island and other thire Associates which said
 tract of Land beinge bounded as followeth on the y^e west by
 Pawtucket River to a place called Mawmawick from thence
 by the country twenty five mile to a place called Madatomponie
 look northerly to a place called Shaganishhaskoke Easterly by a
 place called Wekapange southerly on the Ocean sea where
 said tract of Land so Batted and Bounded as above said I the
 said Sosoia doe for my selfe my Heires executors Administrators
 And Assigns Surrender up all my Right Title Name or Interest
 to the said Land fully whatsoever Inhabiting y^e said
 William Vaughan Robert Stanton John Fairfield Hugh Masier
 and James Longbottom and thire Associates thire Heires executors
 Administrators or Assigns to the said Land and proprietyes ther
 of to the world end In witness whereof I the said Sosoia
 have set my hand and Seal the yeare and Date above said
 sealed signed and
 delivered in the
 presence of
 George Gardiner
 Henric Gardiner
 his mark

the mark of Sosoia

This is a true copie compared with the
 original and entered by me Joseph Platt
 Towne Clerk

5 This is the June 29, 1660, deed by which Sosoia conveyed the tract known as Misquamicut to the English settlers of what became Westerly. The tract encompassed what today are the towns of Westerly, Charlestown, Hopkinton, and Richmond. A year later, the validity of the grant was challenged by Ninigret, who claimed that he and not Sosoia was the rightful owner of the land. Sosoia's title was, however, confirmed by Wawaloam, widow of the sachem Miantonomi, who declared that she had been a witness to the conveyance to Sosoia by her husband and her uncle Canonicus.

Early Watch Hill: The 17th & 18th Centuries

DENISON REPORTS that the first white settlers of Westerly arrived some years before the purchase of the Misquamicut tract from Sosoia (fig. 5). John and Mary Lawton Babcock settled near Mastuxet Brook, which flows into the Pawcatuck at Mastuxet Cove. A granite marker, identifying 1648 as the date of their arrival, stands on the west side of Watch Hill Road, near the point where, today, Winnapaug Road turns east toward Airport Road.

Watch Hill resident Reginald E. Peck, whose former family property is located at the northerly end of the harbor, just west of the old Fire House, accumulated a wealth of details about early Watch Hill in his privately published 1936 paper, *Early Land Holders of Watch Hill*.⁴¹ Peck writes that as early as 1675, the name “Watch Hill” is mentioned in the records of the General Court of Connecticut, in a decision confirming a land title.⁴² It should be noted that the claim of the Colony of Connecticut to this area was settled in favor of Rhode Island only in 1728.

Peck identifies the first recorded colonial landholder of Watch Hill as Captain (later Major General) Daniel Gookin, who in 1657 received a grant of five hundred acres from the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, for “publick service donne.” The property was bounded on the west by the Pawcatuck River, on the south by the Sound, on the east by land of one Thomas Prentice, and on the north by the wilderness.⁴³ Exactly how this grant squares with the grant of Misquamicut from Sosoia in 1660 is not clear. Certainly the Gookin land is within the area of the 1660 conveyance.

The first house recorded as being built at Watch Hill was erected by Gookin in 1662 for his tenant, Thait Strickland.⁴⁴ So, perhaps as early as 1658 and no later than 1662, land in Watch Hill was farmed, and the transition would have begun between forested and cleared land.

Gookin sold his property to Symon Lynde in 1671, and Lynde’s son Nathaniel, who inherited it upon his father’s death in 1688, sold the property and an additional five hundred acres to

Captain James Pendleton. The deed, which conveys roughly one thousand acres, gives some sense of the varied landscape included in the original grant.⁴⁵ It would appear to encompass all of what became Avondale and Watch Hill and included “missuges, tenements, edifices, buildings, trees, timber, wood and underwood, fields, feadings, pastures, moores, marshes, swamps, meadows, ponds, pooles, beaches, river, rivulets, water-courses, fishing, fouling, hawking, and all other privileges.”⁴⁶ Although this recitation of the elements of property conveyed is in part legal conveyance boilerplate language of the period, this should also be read literally as a description of the landscape of Watch Hill in the seventeenth century.⁴⁷ In the eighteenth century, the French-American author and naturalist Michel-Guillaume-Jean de Crèvecoeur reported of this area, “A man can fish with one hand and farm with the other.”⁴⁸

While farming spread, Denison reports that the town of Westerly retained heavy forests throughout the eighteenth century, but that “They were gradually consumed by the immense chimneys of the planters and the axes of ship-builders. Many of the primitive trees were overturned by gales; the last of them on the coast fell before the hurricane in September, 1815.”⁴⁹

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the keeping of domestic animals was a costly matter, as “Every domestic animal had to be folded [kept in a fold] at night.”⁵⁰ In 1696 the colony paid a bounty of ten shillings per head on wolves, and a year later, Westerly voted “twenty shillings in money to an Englishman, and ten shillings to an Indian, for every grone [grown] wolfe that is ceht [caught] or killed.”⁵¹ Denison attributes the disappearance of wild animals in Westerly early in the eighteenth century to the widespread efforts of the settlers to control wildlife populations:

So numerous were bears, foxes, wolves, and wild cats, that the people sometimes, for their own safety as well as that of their stock, would set apart days in which all the able-bodied men, armed with musket, pouch, and horn, and accompanied with their deep-mouthed dogs, would unite and “drive” the forests, hills, and swamps to diminish the insatiate *carnivora*.⁵²

“English muskets,” he writes, “were more exterminating than Indian arrows.” But, he says, some wild beasts “lingered in the swamps, ledges, and thick woods.” He then reports one incident when a bear rushed a hunter on Bear Hill, which he describes as “the highest bluff near Watch Hill,—then covered with heavy oaks.” The hunter, he says, managed to shoot the bear at a distance of only ten feet. “The rock crowning the hill was the hunter’s shield.”⁵³ Whether Bear Hill is the Watch Hill or what became known as Sunset Hill is uncertain, but it is likely that it is the latter.⁵⁴

In 1790, the year of the first U.S. census, three families—those of George Foster, Hezekiah Wilcox, and Peleg Wilcox, an aggregate of seventeen people—are identified as living at Watch Hill. In 1807 there were three properties contributing taxes in a total amount of \$8.67 to the Town of Westerly.⁵⁵ As noted in the chapter on the cottage colony, the old Foster homestead, built about 1733, still stands.



6 In 1800, Yale College president Timothy Dwight visited Westerly, then a village of some twenty houses. This map was created for inclusion in President Dwight's *Travels in New England and New York*, published posthumously in 1821.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College from 1795 to 1817, made a number of notable peregrinations through New York and New England (fig. 6). His report of these journeys was published posthumously in 1821 as *President Dwight's Travels in New England and New York*. In 1800, on his way from New Haven to Provincetown, Dwight passed through Westerly:

We crossed the Pawcatuck River, which divides Connecticut from Rhode Island. At the bridge there is a pretty village, principally in Westerly, containing perhaps twenty houses...

Pawcatuck River forms the only harbor in Westerly, and furnishes excellent fisheries for bass, eels, blackfish, shad and herrings. In the bay which is formed at its mouth [Little Narragansett Bay], these kinds of fish are caught in as great abundance as perhaps in any part of New England. Long and round clams, also oysters, and a little farther out in the sound lobsters are found in great numbers...

The land in this township is divided into two kinds. The border of the Sound, which is generally good; and that in the interior, which is a collection of hills, stony, sandy, and lean, originally covered with shrub oaks and pitch pines... Except the village above mentioned, Westerly is a collection of farms.⁵⁶



7 A fanciful aerial view of Watch Hill in the 1870s. The sickle shape of Napatree and Sandy Point are shown in the background, reaching toward the Connecticut coast. The Larkin House dominates the land to the west of the Great Bluff or the Watch Hill. The first Watch Hill House is on the high ground in the center, and below it the Atlantic House. At the far right is the Ocean House. Also shown are, on the far left, the cottage then known as "Ocean Mound" and, in the middle foreground, the "Alsop Cottage" and the "H. A. Grant Cottage," which were later moved to accommodate the building of "The Kedge."

From Farm to Resort



BEFORE THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, the landscape at Watch Hill changed once again, as farmland gradually was converted to resort uses (fig. 7). As early as 1833, Watch Hill's first hotel, the Watch Hill House, was built by Jonathan Nash, who had served as keeper of the lighthouse from 1807 until that year (fig. 8). Before his retirement, Nash had already launched what would become his second career, innkeeping, by hosting guests at the lighthouse, apparently a common practice among light keepers until the government issued orders prohibiting it. During his lighthouse tenure, Nash had acquired a sixty-one acre tract, which stretched from East Beach to Little Narragansett Bay.⁵⁷ The new hotel stood on the crest of the hill, south of the later site of the Chapel, its property fronting on Larkin Road and Bluff Avenue. Its first proprietor was Nash's son, Captain George M. Nash, who was noted for the excellence of his 25¢ lobster dinners. His bookkeeping, however, was distinctly informal, consisting only of markings in chalk on the doors of the guest rooms, indicating the number of days of an occupant's stay. He is said to have attended to many of his duties as manager, barefooted.⁵⁸

Portions of Jonathan Nash's property would later become the sites of other hostelries, some of which were operated by his children. In 1839, his son-in-law, Henry Dickens, and his son George bought property on the south side of Plimpton Road, together with a house, which became the Dickens Inn. There followed the Narragansett House, built by Nathan E. Nash about 1845 on Bay Street, to the south of Plimpton Road. The Narragansett was operated by Nathan and his brother, Winslow N. Nash, and was reported by one visitor to be the most hospitable hotel and to have the best food. In that same year, Winslow Nash bought the lot to the west of the Dickens Inn and opened the Bay View House.

Edwin R. Champlin, reminiscing about the permanent residents of Watch Hill in the 1850s and 1860s, more than sixty years later, had this to say about the Nashes: "The George M. Nash

8 *Watch Hill's first hotel, the original Watch Hill House, built about 1833 by Jonathan Nash. Shortly after this photograph was taken, the building was moved across Bluff Avenue to accommodate the new Watch Hill House, which, like the Chapel visible to the right, was built in 1877. Bluff Avenue appears as little more than a cart path.*



family was one of the most important members of the community. I remember them all from my earliest years, a family which in hospitable spirit, sense of service due the public and bent toward providing means of community growth was never excelled, if equaled, there.”⁵⁹ In those early days of the resort, the life of the local community remained simple and quiet, especially so in the winter. Champlin, who lived in Lotteryville (Avondale), recalled early wagon trips he made to the Hill, delivering barrels of flour, jugs of molasses, packages of tea, and various small groceries to the inhabitants. Two trips a week, he said, would serve the purpose of grocery delivery in the mild months and one in the winter. Of that season, he said:

It was a severe experience in the winter, both for the older and the younger riders, the boy who held the horse faring as hard as any one. No news was to be expected from the houses on winter trips, every family being snowed in and the houses ice-clad. There was a great amount of snow in those days in both Watch Hill and Lotteryville.⁶⁰

As the resort became more developed, providing it with fresh produce became an even greater undertaking, in which many suppliers took part. Foremost were the surrounding farms—the Avondale or Chapman Farm, Foster Farm on Beach Street in Westerly, the Champlin Farm at the Narrows, in Avondale, and the Clark Farm on Shore Road, just east of where Ocean View Highway intersects that road. Also playing a major role in provisioning the Hill was the Stanton or Davis Farm, across the river in Stonington. As John “Whit” Davis recently recalled, the Davis farm supplied dairy products daily. The cows were milked at 3 a.m., then the milk and

cream were transported by horse and wagon to the Davis dock, loaded onto a flat-bottomed skiff and carried across to Avondale, where another horse and wagon were kept at the Burdick property. Deliveries were made to the cottages and hotels before 6 a.m. Once a week, iced split chickens and vegetables also came from the Davis farm.⁶¹

Before refrigeration became common in the mid-twentieth century, ice was delivered daily to the iceboxes of the colony. One of the ponds providing that ice was located just to the east of Ice Pond Road, across Watch Hill Road from the Pawcatuck River and Babcock Cove in the late-twentieth-century development known as No Bottom Pond. The old icehouse, established in 1900 as the Westerly-Watch Hill Ice Company, was located along the water, on the south side of Ram Point. By 1946, the refrigerating equipment was operated by electricity.

As the years progressed, the summer community grew. Next of the hotels came the Atlantic House, built in 1856 for Henry Dickens and David L. Taylor (fig. 9). Overlooking the bay from the northerly side of Mastuxet Terrace, it was later renamed the Colonial House. It was there that J. Frank Champlin, proprietor of the Ocean House for over fifty years, began his career in the hotel business, as a dishwasher.

The Plimpton House was built in 1865 by Andrew S. Plimpton of Hartford, on the northerly side of Plimpton Road, on land that Jonathan Nash's son Joseph had acquired in 1845 (figs. 10 & 11). Plimpton had previously managed the Dixon House in Westerly. A guest in 1888 was former President Rutherford B. Hayes, who received friends there in the evening.⁶² The Dickens Inn and the Bay View House, both on the opposite side of Plimpton Road, became annexes of the



9 *The Atlantic House, later renamed the Colonial House, was built in 1856 on the northerly side of Mastuxet Terrace, a pedestrian thoroughfare, which ran from the Watch Hill House down the hill to Bay Street. In this view, the Narragansett House is visible at the left.*



10 *The Plimpton House, built in 1865, was on the northerly side of Plimpton Road and looked out over the Plimpton Dock to the harbor and the bay. It was later enlarged by a wing to the north.*



11 *Viewed from the rear, halfway up Plimpton Road, the Bay View House, an annex of the Plimpton House, is on the left, and the Plimpton House, across Plimpton Road, is on the right.*

Plimpton House. The Dickens Inn was torn down in 1906; the Plimpton House and the Bay View House (on the left in fig. 11) were torn down after the Hurricane of 1938. The Plimpton House property became the site of the Watch Hill Motor Court.

The Ocean House was built in 1868 by Captain George Nash, who had retired from running the Watch Hill House (fig. 12). He operated the new hotel only briefly, turning it over first to Edward Brewer of Springfield, Massachusetts, then to Champlin & Stone, and finally to J. Frank Champlin. The first of the hotel's three massive wings, that to the north, reaching to Westerly Road, was added in 1885. The two wings on the ocean side followed, and were them-



12 *The Ocean House, at its grandest, is seen from across Bluff Avenue about 1900, following the addition of fifty rooms in 1897. In the foreground, what later became the hotel's upper parking lot was first a lawn and then a garden.*

selves increased in size over the years. As late as 1917, an addition to the north wing increased the dining room capacity by 150 to five hundred. The Brewer family controlled the property from 1893 until 1937. In 1938, it became the property of the Louis D. Miller Co., Inc., and remained in their ownership until 2005.

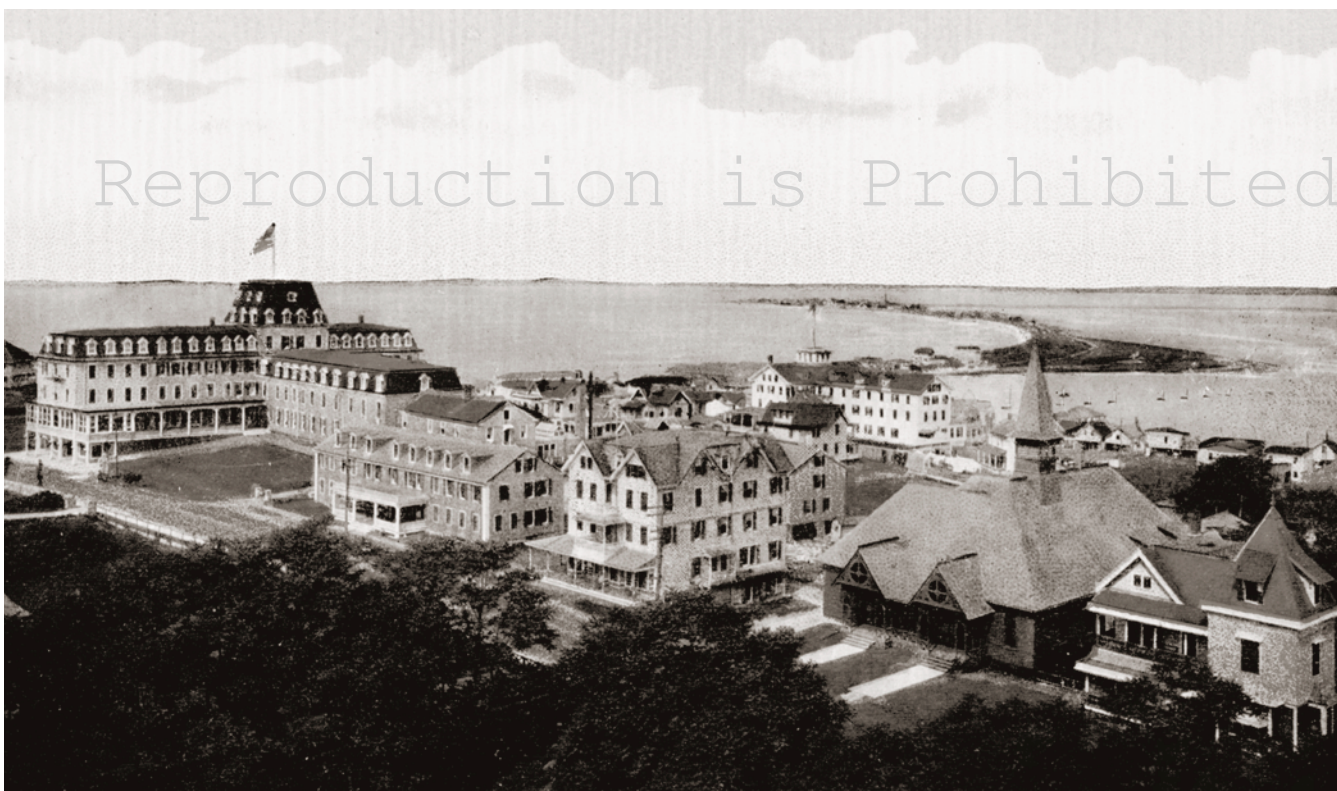
In 1868, Daniel F. Larkin retired as lighthouse keeper, a position he had held since 1861, and the next year he built the Larkin House (fig. 13). It was the largest and most glamorous of the hotels. In 1870, its second season, it advertised “strictly first class accommodations” at \$3 a day. Dudley Phelps reminisced in *Seaside Topics* about his childhood summers there:

My earliest recollections of Watch Hill were the three summers, prior to 1872, spent with my parents and grandparents in the Larkin House after it was built in 1869. I recall clearly the life there then which was very simple—only bathing, sailing, bowling and dancing. I can see now Capt. Larkin, the Proprietor, sitting on the N.W. corner of the piazza, where he could see all that was going on, smoking a big “segar,” wearing a high silk hat all day long. Also the dancing Saturday evenings in the dining room, cleared of tables, with John Herbert Miller’s “band” of four pieces furnishing the music and a room full of guests seated all around the floor (which was none too good) and Miss -- making a grand entrée in startling gowns, never repeated, worn over a large hoop skirt.

The band all played brass instruments on the corner of [the] piazza outside the dining room during the mid-day dinner every other day and played string instruments every other evening for dancing in the parlor. They did the same at the Watch Hill House alternately.⁶³



13 An 1889 view from the Larkin Dock shows the Larkin House and the cottages known as "By-the-Sea" and "Ocean Mound," the latter then topped by a cupola. The Watch Hill House is partially visible on the hill behind the Larkin House.



14 Seen from the Ocean House, about 1910, are the new Watch Hill House and its two annexes, first to the right, the original Watch Hill House (by then known as Mastuxet Lodge), and between it and the Chapel, Ninigret Lodge. To the right of the Chapel is the "Collins Cottage." In the center rear is the Atlantic or Colonial House.

A new Watch Hill House was built in 1877 on the site of the earlier structure, which, after several additions, was detached from the wing that had been built onto the north of the building, and then moved across Bluff Avenue (fig. 14).⁶⁴ Renamed the Mastuxet Lodge, it served as an annex to the new hotel. It was moved a second time in 1906, when the land on the east side of Bluff Avenue was sold to Miss Sophie Moen for her cottage known as *Sunnandene*. It finally ended up at the southerly end of what later became the Chapel parking lot, between the new hotel and another Watch Hill House annex building, known as the Ninigret Lodge, which stood at the northerly end of that lot. Unlike the principal building, which burned in the fire of 1916, the earlier structure survived until, unused and dilapidated, it was razed in 1936.⁶⁵

By the 1880s, Watch Hill, styled by promoters the “Queen of Atlantic Resorts,” had six major hotels, with a clientele coming from all over the East Coast and the Midwest. One visitor in 1883 commented that while Watch Hill had retained its “primitive ways” for a number of years, “the tide of improvement has at last reached its shores”:

The days of boarding houses, corn-cob mattresses, fishermen landlords, who had to be looked up when you wished to pay your bill, and who escaped importunate guests by the simple method of going to bed, of ox-drawn baggage carts, pop-corn cakes and root beer have fled. The era of great hotels, gas, electric bells, polite hotel clerks, cottage lots, soda fountains, and restaurants, has arrived.⁶⁶

In 1888, *Watch Hill Surf* reported that “a long-distance telephone of the American Bell pattern has just been put in at the Ocean House, for direct communication with Cincinnati.”⁶⁷ By 1901, there were twenty-seven telephones in Watch Hill.⁶⁸

In 1890, the last hotel—the Columbia House, also called the Columbia Hall Hotel—was built at the northerly corner of Mastuxet Terrace and Bay Street, later the site of the Olympia Tea Room (fig. 15). The hotel’s cupola is one of the most recognizable features in photographs of Bay Street of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Seaside Topics wrote of life generally at the hotels in a 1950 retrospective article:

The hotels were far from luxurious, their equipment for guests consisting of wooden beds, with none too downey [*sic*] mattresses, bowl, pitcher and jar. But their food was the substantial attraction and was chiefly supplied from the sea and nearby farms.

There was a friendly rivalry between the guests of the different hotels which was carried out in baseball games on the field by the Ocean House, sailing races and dancing competitions. There was music for dancing at each hotel, and it was a practice for young people to make the rounds of the hotels for the sake of novelty and to show off their skill, in the new steps of the day.⁶⁹

Even as the cottage colony developed in 1880s, the hotels were entering into their golden age. According to *Seaside Topics*, the Watch Hill House at first took the lead in the matter of social events, but was later surpassed by the Ocean House. There, the redoubtable J. Frank Champlin reportedly “required a financial as well as a social pedigree from his guests.”⁷⁰ The

15 Looking down Mastuxet Terrace, the Columbia House, built in 1890, is on the northerly, or right, side. The Watch Hill Pharmacy, established in 1879, is on the left. The Watch Hill Dock is visible in the harbor.



Ocean House annual ball was regarded as a brilliant event of the season. In 1904, the Ocean House advertised that it was the “most perfectly equipped resort hotel on the Eastern [sic] Atlantic coast.” That same season, the Watch Hill House claimed that it had “accommodations for 200 guests and caters to a refined family clientage...It is the intention to make the Watch Hill House as little like a Hotel and as much like a private house as possible.”⁷¹ The Proprietor of both hotels that season was Champlin.

The 1904 season saw the hospitality of Watch Hill being extended to the Rhode Island Yacht Club of Providence. At least fifty boats were invited to meet in Watch Hill waters, July 24 and 25, and the club accepted the invitation of Mr. Champlin to a reception and ball to be given at the Watch Hill House. *Watch Hill Topics* reported that “A brilliant assemblage of Providence folks” would be “present at this function.” Among the fleet was the thirty-five foot sloop *Little Rbody*, which had won the Eastern Yacht Club’s 330-mile race from New York to Marblehead, Massachusetts, and would therefore be awarded the one hundred guinea cup offered by Sir Thomas Lipton for deep-sea racing.⁷²

Phelps reports that in the early days of the hotels and long before Prohibition, Rhode Island had a local option covering the sale of liquors. Some years, Westerly prohibited the sale, but the law was openly violated. The Watch Hill House, he reported, had its bar under the east end of the house, and the Drug Store had one at the rear of the store.⁷³ The differing character of several of the hotels in the 1870s, as related to their policy regarding the provision of spirits,

is reflected in their nicknames: the Larkin House was known as “Sinners Retreat,” for its bar; the Ocean House, where even cards and dancing were prohibited at that time, was known as “Saints Rest,” and the Watch Hill House as “Purgatory.”⁷⁴ Perhaps unaware of the opportunities presented for the consumption of spirits at Watch Hill, the Friends of Temperance in Hartford County organized a two-day rail and steamboat excursion to Watch Hill on Wednesday, July 10 and Thursday, July 11, 1872. The promotional poster promised that “not a drop of intoxicating liquors is sold in the place.”⁷⁵ Captain Joshua Slocum, famous as the first man to sail around the world alone, from 1895 to 1898, reportedly settled his bar tab at the Larkin House by presenting two huge ocean scallop shells he had acquired in the Pacific.

Watch Hill’s maturing status as a resort was confirmed by the community’s decision in the mid-1870s to build a summer chapel. Previously, a religious service was held Sunday mornings in the parlor of the Watch Hill House, frequently conducted by the Rev. L. Clark Seelye, then president of Smith College, who was a regular summer visitor. Occasionally other visiting clergy and ordained residents officiated. In 1875, George Nash, proprietor of the Ocean House, gave the newly formed Watch Hill Chapel Society in the Town of Westerly a lot he owned, for a chapel site and for the conduct of Christian worship at Watch Hill “without any denominational or sectarian distinctions.”⁷⁶ The chapel lot was located on the west side of Bluff Avenue, across from the Ocean House and just north of the Watch Hill House and its annexes. The Watch Hill Chapel was completed in 1877. It commanded a magnificent view of the East Beach from its entrance porch and, as clergy still attest from its pulpit. Through the door to the left of the chancel, the congregation could catch a glimpse of Napatree and the waters of Little Narragansett Bay. The Chapel, while built for summer worship, contained a heated room in its basement, or Undercroft, which was used for Sunday school and, during the winter, for community gatherings.

The Chapel, of frame construction and in the English Gothic Revival style, was originally topped by a needle-like steeple, which was decorated with alternating bands of colored shingles (fig. 16). Its architect was George Keller of Hartford, who worked from a sketch prepared by Governor James L. Howard, later to become a president of the Chapel Society.⁷⁷ The pine-board construction of the original, central portion of the sanctuary strongly resembles the inverted hull of a ship. A visitor in 1893 noted that the original structure had been built “at a cost of \$10,000... paid for entirely before the shavings had been swept away, and the organ, worth nearly \$1,000, was subscribed for and its purchase guaranteed within three days.”⁷⁸

Additions in 1887 and 1902, both designed by Keller, expanded the interior to its present configuration, adding two aisles to the original one and extending the sanctuary twenty-five feet to the west, including a chancel. The new structure was roughly ninety feet by 110 feet. Its new capacity was estimated at 750 people, though numerous references over the years have

claimed it to be a larger number. Also in 1902, permanent pews replaced the original straight-backed chairs. The interior remains substantially unchanged from that date.

The mottoes painted above the chancel and the organ in 1888 reflect the nondenominational nature of worship at the Chapel. They were originally executed in maroon and gold,⁷⁹ and were later changed to blue and gold. They are:

The Church is Many as the Waves, but One as the Sea.
In Essentials, Unity; in Non-Essentials, Liberty; in all things, Charity.
One Lord. One Faith.

The 1902 addition also resulted in the addition of a second entrance porch, identical to the first one, with a steep-pitched and overhanging roof (fig. 17). A more radical change to the exterior occurred in 1928, when the steeple was removed and the pitched Gothic roofs were subsumed under a flat roof. A small cupola housing a bell was added, and a classical portico replaced the two entrance porches (fig. 18). In the late 1990s, the lawn fronting Bluff Avenue was converted to a stone and brick terrace.

The Chapel parking lot, to the south of Chapel Lane, was given to the Chapel in 1976 as a bequest from Kate Davis Shinkle, whose home across Bluff Avenue was *Justhome*. The gift was made “in memory of the Shinkle family.” The lot, on which there is a small cottage occupied by the Chapel sexton and formerly by the Shinkles’ chauffeur, was on land on which the Watch Hill House annexes had stood.

Shortly after the Chapel was built, the resort acquired its famous Merry-Go-Round (fig. 19). The *National Register of Historic Places Inventory of Watch Hill* reports that the twenty carved wooden “flying” horses and the revolving superstructure from which they are suspended were built in 1876, and that they were left behind by a traveling carnival in 1883. However, late-twentieth-century restoration of the horses suggests an earlier date for their manufacture, the late 1860s, by the company of Christian and Dare (Andrew Christian and Charles Dare) of New York.⁸⁰ The horses are said to be “flying” because no platform supports them, and they swing out on the chains by which they are hung. Originally located at the opposite end of Bay Street, they were sheltered under canvas and propelled by a real calico horse.⁸¹ Later, water powered the mechanism and still later, electricity. In 1906, the present shingle-roofed enclosure at the southerly end of Bay Street was built to house them.⁸² Meticulously maintained by a fund established by the Hill Improvement Society, the Merry-Go-Round is the only surviving flying-horse carousel in the country. Whether it is the oldest carousel in the country is not certain, but its only rival for that honor is said to be the one at Martha’s Vineyard, also a product of the Dare company.⁸³

The Schoolhouse, located on the east side of Westerly Road just to the north of the Ocean House property, was built in 1852 on property purchased from George M. Nash, who was the



16 The Watch Hill Chapel after its first addition (a wing to the south) had been added in 1887. The building of the Chapel in 1877 was a sign of the maturing of Watch Hill as a summer resort. The “Collins Cottage” is next door, and the dormer visible to the right belongs to the original Watch Hill House, which had been moved across Bluff Avenue from its first location. It would once again move across the street, when “Sunnandene” was built on the site in 1906 (see fig. 14).



17 Enlarged again in 1902, the Chapel that year reached its present size. A second Gothic porch was added, and the distinctive color-banded roof and steeple shingles were replaced. The postcard caption reads “Combined Union Chapel, the only one of its kind in the country where all denominations worship, Watch Hill, R.I.”



18 The Chapel assumed its modern form in 1928. Gone were the Gothic steeple and the two Gothic entrance porches, the latter replaced by a classical portico.

first trustee of the school (fig. 20). Its average attendance was a dozen or so pupils, but one year it reached nineteen, and no more could be accommodated. It ceased to operate in 1901, and Watch Hill students were then taken to Westerly. The Schoolhouse became a private cottage in the middle of the twentieth century.

Together with the year-round post office, the Schoolhouse attests to the considerable winter population of Watch Hill in the late nineteenth century. But as the character of Watch Hill changed from farmland to resort, Watch Hill also became more of a part-time community. Only

since the 1980s, with the renovation and winterizing of the century-old summer cottages, has Watch Hill become, if not a year-round community, at least a year-round weekend and holiday one, populous out of season to a greater degree than at any time in the previous hundred years.

If the hotels dominated the landscape in the late nineteenth century, the land itself retained its character as former pastureland, open and treeless. An 1895 photograph, looking south from Sunset Hill, shows the Ocean House property cleared of stones and surrounded by handsome stone walls, and the rest of the landscape, still bolder-strewn, a legacy of the glaciers (fig. 21). Commenting on the open terrain of Watch Hill in 1882, a promotional pamphlet prepared for Charles J. Everett described it as follows:

these rocky hillsides and the intervening depressions, according to tradition, were once covered with a forest, but all trees have long ago disappeared, giving place to cultivated fields and pastures,



19 *The famous flying-horse Merry-Go-Round arrived at Watch Hill in 1883, reportedly left behind by a traveling carnival. It was first located at the northerly end of Bay Street. Here it is at its permanent site, where by 1906 it was sheltered under a shingled roof. The Atlantic House and the Watch Hill House are in the background.*



20 *When the Schoolhouse was built in 1852, Watch Hill still had a considerable year-round population. In this image of about 1887, the boy in the middle (fifth from left) is probably eight-year-old Edmund P. York, later to be postmaster.*

and where left wild, a tangled growth of bayberry and huckleberry bushes, of laurel and other small shrubs. The soil is quite capable of supporting trees, if desired; but, as at Block Island, their absence is hardly remarked after a sojourn of a day or two; and very slight inconvenience is experienced from the absence of shade and heat of the sun when tempered by the peculiar sea atmosphere of Watch Hill. The eye, if wearied, by the mid-day glare of the water or sandy beaches, is pleasantly refreshed by the cool green of many grassy fields and slopes.⁸⁴

With a hint to the future of Watch Hill vegetation, a description by J. R. Cole in 1889 noted that “Of late many fruit and ornamental trees have been planted. Each new cottage with its ornamental grounds adds to the beauty of the landscape.”⁸⁵

Both the position of Watch Hill, surrounded on three sides by the sea, and the openness of its landscape to the uninterrupted flow of sea breezes across the peninsula contributed to its reputation as a spot of unequalled comfort during summer heat waves along the eastern seaboard. The Everett pamphlet touted the climate—“The winds, from whatever direction, bring the cool, bracing sea air. The temperature in Summer never oppresses”—and went on to report that “On the memorable 7th of September, 1881, when the thermometer ranged from 95 degrees to 106 degrees F. in the New England and the Middle States,...it barely reached 80 degrees at the Watch Hill House.”⁸⁶ An article in the Springfield, Massachusetts *Republican* a year later elaborated on the theme:

Though in extent and variety of view Watch Hill is unequaled on the New England coast, the peculiarity which destines it in time to become one of the greatest sea-side resorts is its wonderful and unvarying summer coolness. Here is none of the dreaded land breeze of other watering places; its only land breeze can come from the north, and a north wind is always cool.⁸⁷

Reaching Watch Hill in the nineteenth century was a completely different experience from what it became by the mid-twentieth. In the early days, travel overland to Watch Hill was by horse and carriage. Until the 1860s, there was only one road, a “driftway” from Westerly to Watch Hill.⁸⁸ Running to Watch Hill Point, it passed through as many as eight gates, necessitating repeated stops to open and close bars.

Peck reported that most early inhabitants of Watch Hill belonged to Stonington churches, a phenomenon that he attributed to the greater ease of crossing the bay by boat than of negotiating the road to Westerly. But in 1867, the road from Lotteryville, later known as Avondale, was fenced in and opened.⁸⁹ The new road was laid out in the approximate location of the current Watch Hill and Westerly Roads. The Watch Hill House brochure of 1894 notes that Watch Hill “is connected with its township, Westerly, by a bluestone carriage road of six miles.” In Watch Hill, two side roads were laid out to run from it to the Bay—Plimpton Road and Larkin Road. Later a cut was made through the hills to create Wauwinnet Avenue, which also ran to the bay. In 1896, the Watch Hill Road was given a macadam surface.



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²¹ This 1895 view from Sunset Hill captures Watch Hill's then open landscape and the mix of hotels and cottages which comprised the resort of that period. The Ocean House to the left and the new Watch Hill House to the right are the dominant features. The Chapel, with its Gothic steeple and multicolored banded shingles, is in the middle distance. In the center foreground are, from left to right, the "Hunt Cottage," "Bouldercrest," and "Fairview." The photographer is the famous Edward Burdick, who took so many of the early views of Watch Hill.

Travelers from beyond Westerly generally arrived at Watch Hill by train and boat. In 1837, rail service between Providence and Stonington was established, and in 1859, through-rail service became available between Stonington and New York. A train ferry across the Thames River was part of this link until the railroad bridge was built in 1889.

Since Stonington was the terminus for Sound steamers from New York and for the railroad from Boston and New York, the sea link offered the easiest approach to Watch Hill. As Derryll G. Lang observed, this mode of travel "created a sense that the Hill was isolated from the mainland, accessible only by boat. This certainly would have heightened the belief that the Hill was an escape from the real world. Upon arrival, the guest was met with the image of the resort as a cluster of hotels surrounded on three sides by the ocean."⁹⁰ The following is only a brief summary of the very active steamboat traffic between Watch Hill and various area ports, including Westerly. A fascinating and detailed history of that shipping, just in the Pawcatuck River, is provided by Everett Barns in a 1932 paper delivered to the Westerly Historical Society.⁹¹

From 1871 to 1903, the steamer *Ella* ran daily from Norwich, Connecticut, to Watch Hill, stopping at New London and Stonington, and the *Watch Hill* ran six times a day, weekdays, between Watch Hill and Stonington, the first boat leaving at 9:30 a.m. and the last at 6 p.m.

There was an extra boat on Sundays and Mondays. The *Ella* had an interesting history. She was built in 1864 by Mallory & Co. at Mystic and, after being first run as an excursion steamer to Watch Hill, she was taken south under government contract and saw service in the Civil War. At White House Landing, Virginia, she served as headquarters for Generals Sheridan, Custer, and Roberts before the capture of Richmond by the Union forces.⁹²

The steamer *Block Island*, running between New London and Block Island on the “outside” route, stopped twice daily at the Larkin Dock, at 11:45 a.m. on its way to Block Island, and at 3:45 p.m. on its return to New London (fig. 22).⁹³ The *Block Island* connected at Block Island with boats for Providence, Newport, and Greenport, Long Island. Its dock at Watch Hill, the Larkin Dock, was located on the Fishers Island side, midway between the Merry-Go-Round and the Lighthouse, at the foot of the hill on which the Larkin House stood.

The water approach was also a favored route for those making local excursions to Watch Hill. In 1869, after the Dixon House had been built in central Westerly, the steamer *Belle* carried guests and townspeople down the Pawcatuck to Watch Hill. For thirteen years, *Belle* made two trips a day to Watch Hill during the season. In 1884 she became a barge in New York City. By 1871 there were three excursion boats serving Watch Hill. In addition to the *Belle* from Westerly and the *Ella* from Norwich, there was also the *Adela* from Stonington. By 1888, the *Providence Journal* reported, “Steamboats of various sizes make seventeen regular round trips daily from Westerly to Watch Hill.”⁹⁴

In 1894, the Pawcatuck River Valley Street Railway opened a trolley line between Westerly and Watch Hill. It ran along Main Street out Beach Street, Watch Hill Road, and over Wauwinnet Avenue to Bay Street, and terminated at the end of the street, by the Merry-Go-Round and the Bathing Beach. The rolling stock of the line consisted of four open cars, one



22 About 1910, the steamer Block Island takes on passengers from the Larkin (Block Island) Dock.

23 *Lanphear's Garage, later the Holdredge Garage, about 1910. By the 1920s, the gleaming motor cars of the colony were maintained and driven by some 100 chauffeurs.*



closed car, and one passenger/baggage car combined. The trolley ran year-round at quarter of and quarter past the hour during the summer months, and on the even hour during winter. The running time between Westerly and Watch Hill was forty minutes, and the cost was 10¢. As popular as the service was, however, competition from the automobile put the line out of business in 1924.⁹⁵

Around Watch Hill itself, bicycles became highly popular in the 1890s. According to Dudley Phelps, they were used by golfers, who for a time wore red coats with brass buttons and green collars, red and green being the Misquamicut Golf Club colors. In 1896, perhaps the first car appeared at Watch Hill, when Dr. William H. Merrill of Pepperell, Massachusetts, purchased an Oldsmobile runabout. By the early 1900s, a frenzy of what might be described as “automania” had gripped the Hill. There are innumerable references in *Seaside Topics* to the impressive cars which various residents had brought to the Hill. These included the Schoonmakers’ “big Mercedes touring car,” Mr. Bradford Perin’s “Franklin machine,” Dr. Williams’s “Thomas machine,” and Packards, Panhards, etc. Generally their owners, who were cottagers, would have come to Watch Hill by train and steamer, sending their trunks ahead by Railway Express, and chauffeurs and cars, too, together with other servants.

As automobiles came to replace carriage horses, livery stables became garages. The H. C. Lanphear Stable, built about 1885, became Lanphear’s Garage and then, in the late twentieth century, the Holdredge Garage after the Holdredge family acquired it (fig. 23). The Holdredges had earlier operated another Holdredge Garage, known in the early twentieth century as the

Fenelon Garage. That building was torn down in 1977, and the property became the parking lot of the Watch Hill Inn. The Fenelon family, including Edward J. Fenelon, Jr., known as “Hap,” who was a Rhode Island State Senator and Race Commissioner, lived two doors to the south in a building which still stands. A third garage, the Bayside Garage, was located at the other end of Bay Street.

The chauffeurs who operated these vehicles became the focus of interest following a mysterious gathering they held one evening in July 1905 in one of the Village garages and a banquet they held subsequently at Larkin’s Shore Dinner house. According to an article titled “Chauffeurs Organized (?)” in the July 22, 1905, issue of *Seaside Topics*, it was reported that there was “every indication that these young men have organized some sort of a secret society, the objects for which are closely guarded.” Their activity even attracted the attention of the police, who listed all the participants in the police blotter, “in case the movements of the society, supposing there to be such, should turn out to be prohibited by town ordinances.”⁹⁶ By the 1920s, the “chauffeurs’ corps,” as *Seaside Topics* referred to it, numbered nearly one hundred.

In 1911, *Seaside Topics* reported on a host of auto parties, made up of motoring day tourists who came to Watch Hill to enjoy luncheon or dinner at one of the hotels.⁹⁷ With the completion of the Westerly Railroad Station the following year, travel by rail directly to Westerly became an increasingly popular form of public transportation. Yet even into the second decade of the twentieth century, the annual trek to Watch Hill from places like Springfield could be daunting. Pennington Haile in 1969, recalled early summers at the Watch Hill House, before his family built *Highland Lodge* about 1900. As late as 1918, he says, his grandmother came from Springfield in a horse carriage, a trip which took three days and included a night at Willimantic, Connecticut, and another at Norwich. He reports that the road from Norwich to Westerly “remained a sort of challenging nightmare until just about that time.”⁹⁸

The passage that connected Bay Street to Bluff Avenue in the early days was known as Mastuxet Terrace. In early, pre-1916 photographs, it is seen as a broad tree-lined walkway, rising in steps from Bay Street, flanked by the Atlantic House on the northerly, or left, side, and on the southerly, or right side, by shops, including the Watch Hill Pharmacy (1879), and cottages all the way up the hill to the Watch Hill House (see fig. 15). All that changed, first with the fire of 1916 and then with the fire of 1938, of which more later. By the late twentieth century, Mastuxet Terrace was blocked at its easterly end, above the remaining steps which rise from Bluff Avenue, but it was actively used as a driveway as it entered Bay Street, just to the south of the Olympia Tea Room.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, only the Ocean House and the Narragansett House, later called the Narragansett Inn and still later known as the Watch Hill Inn, still stood. The Ocean House ceased operation in 2003, and in 2005 plans were expected to be approved for



24 *The Anderson windmill was one of many that dotted Watch Hill before the arrival of public water in 1901. The new Watch Hill House is visible in the background. In the center is the partially built “Wendell Cottage” (later “Road’s End”). The small cupola to the right belongs to the Anderson boathouse.*

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a major renovation by a new owner. The Watch Hill House, the Colonial House, and the upper portions of the Columbia House were destroyed in the great fire of October 18, 1916. Traces of the Watch Hill House, including some of its stone foundations, are still visible on the hill to the south of the Chapel. The lower two floors of the Columbia House emerged from the fires both of 1916 and 1938, rebuilt as the Olympia Tea Room. The Plimpton House and its annex, the Bay View House, were razed after being severely damaged by the Hurricane of 1938, though the garage to the north of the hotel remained and is incorporated into the property of the Watch Hill Court, which acquired it in 1963. There are five cottages on Plimpton Road associated with the hotel. Two of these are on the right, or southerly, side, as one turns up Plimpton Road from Bay Street, and the other three are on the left, or northerly, side, two on the road, just up from the old post office, and one behind.

Features prominent in the landscape of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Watch Hill were the many windmills which, prior to 1901, were the only source of running water for the cottages. After the Watch Hill Fire District was formed in that year and Westerly water was piped from White Rock to Watch Hill, the windmills were abandoned; by 1936, only two remained. One of these was located at the corner of Westerly Road and Ninigret Avenue, on the property of *Highland Lodge*, and the other was on Anderson property by the pond on the ocean side of Niantic Avenue, just below the knoll on which the cottage known as *Pomme de*

Mer was later built (fig. 24). Both fell victim to the Hurricane of 1938, the one on Westerly Road falling across the road and completely blocking it. On the subject of utilities, there were no street lights in Watch Hill prior to 1900. In the days before flashlights, people carried lanterns or candles, protected from the wind.

Other vanished elements of the early-twentieth-century landscape are the handsome cast iron fountains which served as horse troughs. There were ten of these at different locations around the town of Westerly, two of them in Watch Hill. The last of these in Watch Hill was a handsome 1902 fountain decorated with three fish (the emblem of the town of Westerly), which was first located on Bay Street. About 1915, it was relocated to Westerly Road, where it stood on the east side of Watch Hill Road, on a site just left of where the “new” Fire House was built in 1956. It was directly connected to the main water line from Westerly, and as late as 1956, long after the days of horses and carriages, it was still regularly used by passersby.⁹⁹ The fountain can now be found in central Westerly, at the left of the Broad Street entrance to the Town Hall.

At one time there were two burying grounds at Watch Hill, one belonging to the Nash family and the other to the Foster family.¹⁰⁰ The Nash burying ground was located on the site of the Ocean House, but the bodies buried there were removed in the nineteenth century and reinterred in River Bend Cemetery. The Foster burying ground is still located on the northerly side of Wauwinnet Avenue, at the base of Sunset Hill. The Foster remains have also been moved to River Bend, but a few stones are left. One of these, dated 1740, marked the grave of Israel Cudworth. A Cudworth descendant, Freeman Cudworth of Pawtucket, was still at Watch Hill in 1905, the owner of the yellow Victorian cottage on Lighthouse Road, known successively as *Ocean Mound* and *Seaswept*.

REPLACE

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25 The cottages along Ninigret Avenue viewed in the early 1900s from the high ground to the west of Mickill Pond, the site of "The Wickiup." The landscape remains open, as do the ponds, in this expansive view of the early cottage colony. From left to right are the "Wayne Cottage," "Ninigret," "Surfside," "The Cedars," and "Intermere."

The Cottage Colony



THE ERA OF THE GREAT HOTELS established Watch Hill as a notable resort, to which those who could afford it came for all or a portion of the summer months. It is, however, the second stage of Watch Hill's resort development, the building of summer cottages, which fixed its character as a family summer colony (figs. 25 & 26). Both of these stages of Watch Hill's development should be viewed in the context of a national trend among the upper classes of late-nineteenth-century American society to establish themselves not just in the cities, which were the source of their wealth, but also in simpler settings, closer to nature. Andrew Lipman comments on this trend and how it related to the development of Watch Hill.

The 1800s were a time of intense but erratic economic growth, spurred on by rapid industrialization and urbanization. These changes did not pass Watch Hill by; they helped to create it. Historians have long argued that events of the nineteenth century changed Americans' relationship with nature. Simply put, the radical transformations of the "civilized world"—growing cities, busy factories, and their resulting social and environmental impact—caused many to abandon older beliefs that championed "civilization" over "wilderness," and embrace more "natural" and "pastoral" settings. The physical changes to the Watch Hill shore would not have been possible without this intellectual shift.¹⁰¹

Watch Hill was, of course, only one of a number of spots along the eastern seaboard to be selected as a summer resort by families from a broad range of cities across the eastern half of the country. Others, to mention only a few, were in Maine, at Bar Harbor and the neighboring communities of Northeast Harbor and Seal Harbor; in Rhode Island, at Newport, Narragansett, and Narragansett Pier; in New York, at Fishers Island; on the south shore of Long Island, at East Hampton and Southampton; on the north shore of Long Island, at Oyster Bay and Locust Valley; and, north of New York City, at Tuxedo Park and Saratoga. In the Adirondacks, development was less communal and more baronial, as great camps were established on vast tracts of



26 This 1923 panoramic view from the Watch Hill captures the still open landscape of the first quarter of the twentieth century. In the center are the grounds of the Watch Hill House, which burned down seven years earlier. In the distance behind “Trespasso” are Napatree and its cottages and Fort Mansfield. On the left, between “Ocean Mound” and “The Point,” are the remains of the Block Island Dock, destroyed by the sea ice of the winter of 1918.

forests and lakes. While many Bostonians went to Maine, many others stayed closer to the city, and the resort communities of Massachusetts’ North Shore, South Shore, and Cape Cod tended to draw their summer residents from that nucleus.

In time, of course, some of these resorts became suburbs and lost their character as strictly summer places. This was the case along the north shores of both Massachusetts and Long Island. And some of the summer places—Newport, in particular, with its marble palace “cottages” by the sea—hardly qualified as simple. *Seaside Topics* noted that Watch Hillites viewed the other principal Rhode Island resorts from their own conservative perspectives, as one, Newport, being “ostentatious,” and the other, “Narragansett Pier,” being “fast.”¹⁰²

Watch Hill was unusual for a New England resort in that its cottage colony was first established by families who came not from the East Coast, but from the Midwest, most notably from Cincinnati. The happenstance of Watch Hill being developed by Cincinnatians often surprises strangers. It is not that surprising, however, if one remembers that the clientele of the hotels came from all over the eastern part of the country, not just from the East Coast, but also from the South and the Midwest. Further, visits from these Midwesterners were not limited to the summer season. The sportsmen among them often returned in the fall for duck shooting. In any event, they developed an attachment to this coastline and determined to develop it for their summer resort.

Derryl G. Lang comments on the Midwestern and Cincinnati phenomena in relation to Watch Hill.

Watch Hill, by virtue of its proximity to Newport and its location on the New England coast gave it a position of credibility for many of the families. Although principally concerned with an escape to a cooler climate in the summer, many of the Midwestern families of means were drawn to the East coast because of its position as the social, cultural and educational center of the country. It was also a place distinctly different from the industrial cities that they were leaving behind.



For the Cincinnati elite, the building of summer cottages in Rhode Island represented a further retreat from the urban world. By the 1860s Cincinnati families had begun to establish the first suburbs on the city's outlying hills, beginning the gradual exodus from the downtown...The old Cincinnati families who looked to the east for social inspiration were also retreating from the "new money" in Cincinnati and in Watch Hill they established a small colony among themselves and other families with similar backgrounds.¹⁰³

Later, after this area had begun to attract families from St. Louis, Chicago, and Detroit as well, some referred to Watch Hill as the "Newport of the Middle West."

As significant as the presence of families from the Midwest was at Watch Hill, it would be a mistake to ignore the very substantial representation in the early cottage colony of families from Philadelphia, New York, and Pittsburgh, as well as from the major cities of southern New England, in particular Hartford, New Haven, and Providence, and to a lesser extent, from Baltimore and Washington. By the twenty-first century, one would have to add the suburbs of New York, especially the towns of Fairfield County, Connecticut; Westchester, New York; and Essex County, New Jersey, as well as San Francisco and surrounding areas of northern California and, of course, Florida.

A late-nineteenth-century visitor to Watch Hill, Mariana M. Tallman, the author of an 1893 guidebook to Rhode Island, found that the mix of "prime movers in the summer colony's growth, gentlemen known as among the most influential of Cincinnati's citizens...[and] a congenial element [that] soon followed, prominent New Yorkers who were that happy combination of moneyed and modest people" made Watch Hill a unique summer community:

It would be difficult to find anywhere a summer colony representing the wealth and social prestige of Watch Hill, with equal unpretentiousness. The young girls dress with perfect simplicity in dainty gingham and outing flannels, rather than the over-elaborate raiment at Newport and the [Narragansett] Pier. It is true that in our recent stay there more diamonds and other precious

stones decked the hands of the fair dames than have blazed forth on us elsewhere in the season's tarrying, but they were worn where they should be—at high tea and the evening germans.¹⁰⁴

A number of early houses of course predated the development of the summer cottages in the 1870s and 1880s. Earliest were two eighteenth-century farmhouses, which were at the heart of the first two major subdivisions out of which the cottage colony grew. The first of these was the Foster farmhouse, which stands between Everett Avenue and Westerly Road and dates from about 1733.¹⁰⁵ It was later known as the Vose farmhouse after Lemuel Vose bought the 120-acre property in 1848. The Vose family both added acreage by a purchase from the estate of Jonathan Nash and also reduced acreage by sales to others before their sale to Everett.¹⁰⁶ Later still, when Charles Everett of Tenafly, New Jersey, bought the property from Lemuel Vose's son, Edward F. Vose, in 1882 and 1883, the house became known as the Everett farmhouse. Everett's tenure was, however, brief, as in 1886 he sold the property to a Cincinnati, Ohio, Syndicate. It then became the home of one of the partners in the Syndicate, Jacob S. Burnet. The house was remodeled in the 1880s and again in the 1890s, and named *Inglecote* (fig. 27). It appears today as a yellow Victorian cottage whose exterior belies its much earlier interior.

The second of these original houses was the former Potter farmhouse, located on the northerly side of Foster Cove Road on the shore of Potter's Cove. The house dates to 1778. When William A. Procter and William P. Anderson bought and subdivided the Potter Farm in 1896, they remodeled and enlarged the house, making it an inn, known as the Watch Hill Farm House. In 1917 it was acquired by the Barney family, who called it the Misquamicut Inn (fig. 28). The *National Register Inventory* calls the house "one of the oldest surviving buildings at Watch Hill."¹⁰⁷

Another early house is *Craigie Brae*, located on the northerly side of Aquidneck Avenue, opposite the entrance to *Sunset Hill* and looking over Foster's Cove and the bay. Dating from the



27 "*Inglecote*," the old Foster farmhouse.



28 The former Potter farmhouse, dating from 1778, became the Misquamicut Inn and later a private cottage. Here it is seen in the late 1920s.

late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, the house was much altered in the late nineteenth century, when it became a summer cottage.

Off Bay Street, at the northerly end of the harbor, is what remains of the *Peck Cottage*, dating from 1828 and known, successively, as the *Red House* and *Aborigines*. Still another early house is *Greycote*, formerly the *Hunt Cottage*, located between Plimpton Road and Wauwinnet Avenue and standing above the small pond on the southerly side of Wauwinnet Avenue. It was probably built about 1850 for James S. Nash, who sold it to Dr. Ebenezer K. Hunt of Hartford in 1871.

Also predating the development of the cottage colony are three mid-nineteenth-century frame farmhouses on Westerly Road, between Ridge Road and Ninigret Avenue. On the westerly side, just south of the entrance to *Sunshine Cottage*, is the former Captain Jonathan W. York House, which was built about 1850. On the easterly side are the Stephen W. Collins House, also built about 1850, and the Captain Edgar Pendleton House, built about 1840.

On Wauwinnet Avenue, on the hill above Bay Street, there are two York family houses known, respectively, as *Wildwood*, built about 1845, and *Fair View*, built in the 1870s. Finally, two cottages on Lighthouse Road predate the development of the cottage colony. They are the *Aldrich Cottage*, located at the entrance to Lighthouse Road and probably built in the 1870s, and the yellow cottage known first as *Ocean Mound*, located on the westerly side of Lighthouse Road, just before it dips down toward the lighthouse, built about 1880.

Both Peck and Marcelle Hammond Ham chronicled the early development of what *Seaside Topics* regularly referred to as the “cottage colony” of Watch Hill.¹⁰⁸ In 1904, *Watch Hill Topics*, as the paper was called in its first year of publication, ever the promoter of the colony, would explain the Hill’s special natural attractions: “High ground and a long stretch of ocean view

make Watch Hill an ideal spot for a seaside cottage. There is in fact no such attractive place on the coast all the way from Cape May to Bar Harbor.”¹⁰⁹

When, in 1871, Captain Albert Crandall sold his house, on the hill across Westerly Road from the Ocean House, to Julius Catlin, it became a summer cottage, probably Watch Hill’s first, if not the first built as such. Catlin, who was a former Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut (1858–61), was a founder of the Chapel and served as its first president. Catlin enlarged the house and reoriented it. Catlin’s grandson, Dudley Phelps, spent summers at the *Catlin Cottage* until he built his own cottage, *Meadholme*, on Ridge Road in 1902.

The first house at the Hill built specifically as a summer cottage was *By-the-Sea*, built in 1879 for James L. Howard of Hartford, whose firm, James L. Howard & Co., specialized in the manufacture of railway car trimmings and furnishings.¹¹⁰ Howard, like Catlin, served as a Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut (1887–89). He was also president of the Hartford City Gas Light Company and the Hartford Real Estate Improvement Company. The architect of *By-the-Sea* is believed to have been George Keller, also of Hartford, who had designed the Chapel. Howard, again like Catlin, was both a founder and a president of the Watch Hill Chapel Society. High peaked, *By-the-Sea* stands on the northerly side of Larkin Road, across from Lighthouse Road.

In 1886, the first major subdivision of Watch Hill occurred, that of the Everett Farm by the Cincinnati Syndicate. The Syndicate was made up of three Cincinnati businessmen, Lyneas Norton, Jacob S. Burnet, and Walter St. John Jones, who bought the farm from Charles J. Everett. Everett had sold eight lots of the farm in the four years of his ownership, but it was only upon the purchase by the Syndicate that the development of Watch Hill as a cottage colony began in earnest.

The Everett tract ran along the ocean on East Beach, just westerly of Everett Avenue, to just easterly of Manatuck Avenue, then westerly from East Beach to the bay and Foster’s Cove (fig. 29). It was bounded on the north by the so-called Syndicate Line, which was just north of Aquidneck Avenue. On the east, it was bounded by the Browning Farm. Its southern bound was the ocean. According to the Everett prospectus, the frontage on the ocean was three-quarters of a mile and on the bay, a half mile. The purchase price for the entire 130-acre tract was \$22,500.

Engaging M. D. Burke, a Cincinnati surveyor, the Syndicate divided the tract into 101 cottage lots, ranging from 4,891 square feet to 160,000 square feet, with the average lot being roughly 35,000 square feet, or four-fifths of an acre. A number of these lots were combined by subsequent purchasers. The Syndicate also laid out principal streets with a curvilinear plan, which reflected the topography of the land. These were Meadow Lane (later Water’s Edge Road) and Pawcatuck, Aquidneck, Wauwinnet, Neowam, Noank, Everett, Ninigret, and Niantic Avenues.

The prospectus of the Syndicate, published in 1887 and titled *A Cottage by the Sea*, spelled out the motivation for the development and the intentions of the developers. One can sense the enthusiasm with which these pioneers entered into their extraordinary business venture:

For several years inquirers for land for cottages at Watch Hill have been disappointed in their attempts to purchase. The hotel owners were unwilling to part with any further portion of their valuable seafront, or to permit cottages to intercept views of the ocean and bay; and all the land beyond the hotel lines, easterly and northerly, within accessible distances of the steamer landings and bathing beach, stretching from bay to ocean, was concentrated in a *single estate*, whose owner declined to sell in small lots.

This estate, which has so long retarded the growth of Watch Hill, consisting of 130 acres, has recently been purchased for the express purpose of division into cottage sites, of *dimensions, situation, and prices* to suit all tastes. Persons of very moderate means and economical habits may now enjoy the recuperative influence of ocean air and scenery at Watch Hill, in common with the wealthy, if they desire to do so. In position, variety of surface, and magnificent sea views, this property, with a frontage of three-quarters of a mile on the ocean, and half a mile on the bay, offers attractions rarely equaled on our coast. The estate joins the grounds of the Ocean House on the "East Beach," and of The Plympton [*sic*] House on the bay...

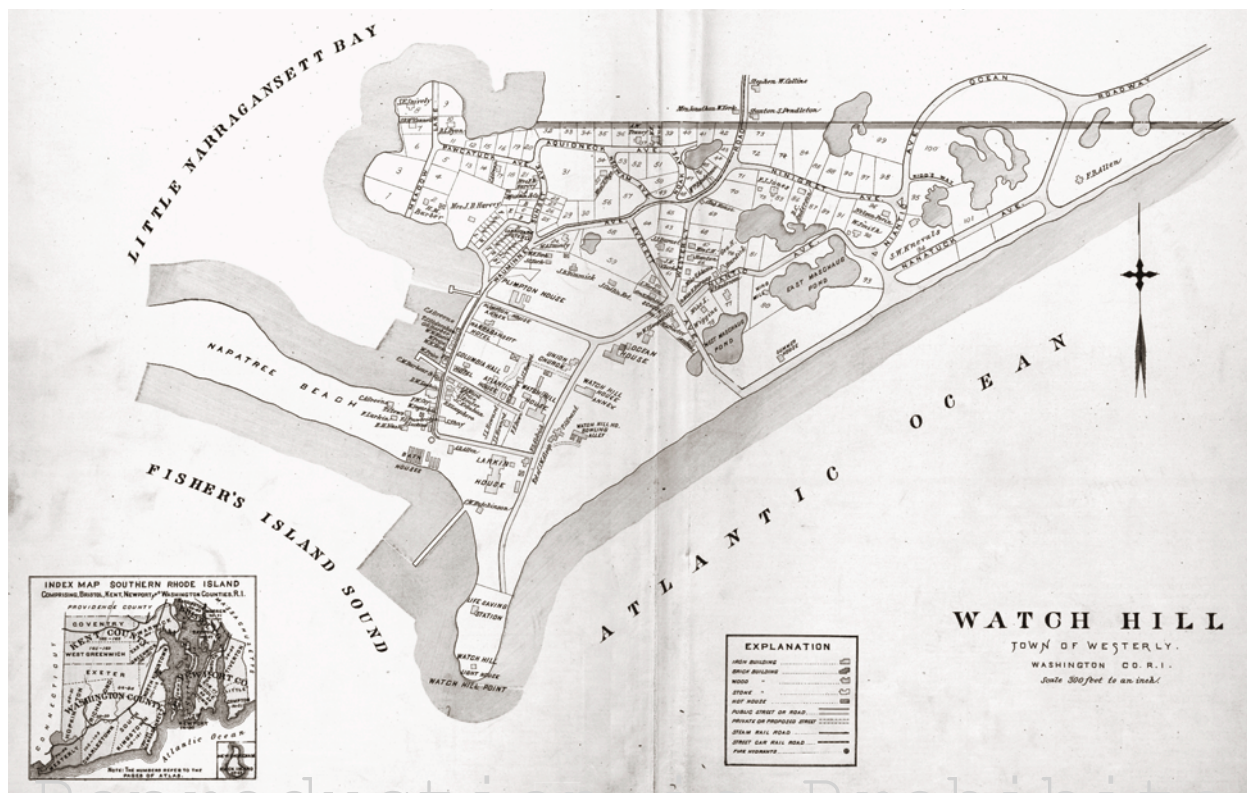
The extensive ocean beach belonging to this property is to be forever preserved in its natural condition, subject to no individual occupancy or interference, but as the common property of the associate owners. The nature of the ground, with its rapidly ascending slopes, will insure to every cottage owner the unobstructed sea view which gives value to his purchase.

It being the intention of the owners to guard this estate and the interests of all who purchase from the objectionable features of many seaside communities, the lots will be sold with covenants against occupation for objectionable business purposes, and requiring purchasers to drain all waste matter and fluids into cemented water-tight vaults, to be systematically cleansed.

The ever-increasing demand for summer homes on our sea-coast is steadily absorbing every foot of beach property within 150 miles of New York City, at prices which annually increase. It is within bounds to say that the value of land now offered will more than double in five years, by the healthy natural growth of the settlement.¹¹¹

Jacob S. Burnet appears to have resigned from the Syndicate in 1888, and his interest to have been acquired by Edward Worthington, also of Cincinnati. Worthington was a brother of Julia W. Anderson (Mrs. William P. Anderson). The remaining partners formed a new entity, the Watch Hill Land Syndicate.

In 1896, a second major development followed, that of the Potter Farm. The developers of this tract were also Cincinnati businessmen, William P. Anderson and William A. Procter, who bought the former Potter Farm and extended the developed portion of Watch Hill northerly from the Syndicate Line to the river and Potter's Cove and easterly to Watch Hill Road. They laid out Misquamicut Road (later Foster Cove Road) to connect with Aquidneck Avenue and also added a number of side roads, including Arraquat, Wapan, Nepun, Sequan, and Popon Roads. The subdivision was known as the Watch Hill Farm. William Alexander Procter was the son of the founder of Procter & Gamble and its first president. William P. Anderson was



29 This 1895 map shows the hotels, the major business properties in the Village, and the cottage sites developed by that date. The lots of the Everett Farm subdivision are identified by number. The line at the north is the so-called Syndicate Line, the northerly bound of the Everett tract. In 1896, the property to the north and west of Watch Hill Road would be subdivided as the Watch Hill Farm. In 1901, the Uplands subdivision would be created on the easterly side of Watch Hill Road, just north of the property of Stephen W. Collins.

in the cottonseed oil business. After his death in 1897, his widow, Julia Worthington Anderson, assumed his role in the partnership.

A third subdivision was made by another Cincinnati, Robert Burnet, who was the father of Jacob S. Burnet of the Everett Syndicate. Across Watch Hill Road from where *Sunshine Cottage* later stood, Burnet had carved out a large tract from the Potter Farm about 1890. This property ran easterly to the Browning Farm. In it, in 1901, Burnet established the area known as the *Uplands* and laid out Ridge Road, West Ridge Road, and Glen Way.

The last significant farmland to be developed began just east of Ridge Road and stretched easterly along both sides of Ocean View Highway. This was principally land of the Browning Farm, but also involved the Lanphear Farm and Burnet property. No major subdivisions occurred, but John Browning began selling off lots in 1900, and other lots were carved out of the other properties into the 1920s.

The last major area to be developed for cottage sites was along Larkin Road, Lighthouse Road, and Westerly Road. This was not farmland at the time it was developed, but it was largely the property of the Nash and Foster families. As noted earlier, it included the first house in Watch Hill to be built as a summer cottage, *By-the-Sea*, as well as the *Aldrich Cottage* and *Ocean Mound*. The largest tract in this area was the land on which the Larkin House stood. After Clement A. Griscom bought it and razed the hotel in 1906, it became the site of six cottages built for him and his family.

The first property on Bluff Avenue to be developed for cottage sites was that purchased by Robert F. Ballantine of Newark in 1901. There were already two cottages on the site, built on land which Governor Howard had sold in the 1870s: the *Alsop Cottage* and the *H. A. Grant Cottage* (fig. 30).¹¹² The Watch Hill House Bowling Alley was due east of the Alsop barn and stables, which were seaward of the Grant cottage. Ballantine gave the cottages to Courtland Babcock, who was then manager of the Watch Hill House, and had them moved to the northerly side of Larkin Road to accommodate his new cottage, *The Kedge*.¹¹³ Other cottage sites in this area were sold by Julius Catlin, who in 1871 acquired the former Albert Crandall property on the hill across from the Ocean House.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, two other areas of Watch Hill were developed. Across Potter's Cove from the Watch Hill Farm subdivision, a small family compound was developed along the Pawcatuck River about 1920 when James W. Taylor of New York bought property, formerly of the Breen farm at the end of Breen Road, and built three family



30 In 1881, the new Watch Hill House dominates the hill to the south of the Chapel. In the foreground are the "Alsop Cottage" and the "H. A. Grant Cottage," both later moved when "The Kedge" was built on the site. Behind them is the original Watch Hill House. Not visible but just to the right was the Watch Hill House Bowling Alley.



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³¹ *In the early twentieth century, baseball games between the teams of the hotels, Fort Mansfield, and the cottagers were enormously popular events which took place on the "diamond beside the sea," below the Ocean House.*

cottages for himself and his two daughters. Another enclave was developed at the northerly end of the upper golf course by Frances C. Griscom (Mrs. Clement A. Griscom) about 1915. This area was approached by East Hills Road.

Fourteen houses were built on the Everett tract by 1888, and the remaining lots were sold at auction in 1890. Fifty cottages were built at Watch Hill between 1886 and 1896. By 1902, the number had doubled to one hundred, and by 1904, there were 150. Even as the cottage colony grew in the early years of the twentieth century, the hotels continued to play a part in the social life of the community. *Seaside Topics*, in an article about the founding of the paper, wrote of life in 1904:

Watch Hill at that time must surely have been the best of all possible worlds, with the big hotels the center of so much activity—balls, cotillions, whists, concerts, lectures; with fierce competition between them for having the finest orchestra, the jolliest crowd, the most delicious food, the best baseball team. The summer cottagers joined in the hotel fun too and many also took their meals at their favorite hotel.¹¹⁴

The baseball teams merit a comment. In 1904, the "colored" waiters at the Ocean House and the Watch Hill House formed baseball teams. So, too, did the soldiers of the Eighty-eighth Coast Artillery Company at Fort Mansfield, on Napatree Point. A fourth team, made up of

cottagers who styled themselves the “Ivies,” from the Ivy League colleges they attended, was organized by Mr. J. S. Burnet, a Yale man, and as *Watch Hill Topics* noted, “there will be a rich Yale flavor to the cottage team.” The baseball field was located just south of the Ocean House, on the rise above East Beach (fig. 31). *Topics* noted that, “‘The diamond beside the sea,’ at the foot of the hill behind the Ocean House, is in use almost every day, either for games or practice... The hillside arising from the diamond makes a very comfortable ‘grand stand’ for devotees of the game.”¹¹⁵

In 1905, the young of the cottage colony and the children of guests at the hotels were invited to the Music Room of the Watch Hill House for dancing classes and private lessons. Miss M. Augusta Rodman, Teacher of Society Dancing, was the instructor and also the organizer of a series of Children’s Weekly Hops and of a cotillion held in the Music Room of the Ocean House.¹¹⁶

While the cottagers were regular participants in the life of the hotels, with the formation of the Misquamicut Golf Club in 1895, social activity gradually began to shift to the Club. The Club’s first clubhouse had been a corncrib, which was moved from the Foster Farm¹¹⁷ to the seaward side of Ocean View Highway, on the high ground where *The Timbers* was later built, about three hundred yards west of the intersection with Browning Road (fig. 32). The first fairway ran easterly, parallel to the road, with the No. 1 hole on the site where *Norman Hall* was later built; the course then crossed the road into the area of the present links.¹¹⁸ At the time the new clubhouse was being built in 1900, the old clubhouse was moved a second time, rugged by mule to the foot of Club House hill, to be used as a caddy shack and a workshop.¹¹⁹ As *Seaside Topics* noted of the new clubhouse (figs. 33 & 34), “in due time it became a popular social center and was one of the principal causes of social exclusiveness at the Hill. Here it was

32 An 1896 view of the first clubhouse of the Misquamicut Club. It had been a corncrib, which was moved in 1895 from the Foster Farm to Ocean View Highway and located roughly where “*The Timbers*” was later built. The 1895 map of Watch Hill (fig. 29) identified it as a Club House, when still at its original Westerly Road site.



possible to give dances and parties in a different atmosphere from that of the hotels. The latter were the losers.”¹²⁰

In the first decade of the twentieth century, a stagecoach provided transportation between the Bathing Beach and the Golf Club. It ran from Bay Street to the Club ten times a day, beginning at 9 a.m.; the last stage left the beach at 5:30 p.m. and the Club at 6:15 p.m.¹²¹ Club life, in addition to golf and tennis at the Golf Club, swimming at the Bathing Beach and, later, the Beach Club, and sailing at the Yacht Club, involved dinner dances Saturday nights at the Golf Club (black tie, of course), and usually an after-party, with someone bringing the orchestra

33 *This view of the new clubhouse from the rear shows putting on the 9th green shortly after the turn of the century.*



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34 *In the early 1920s, the clubhouse was expanded by a hexagonal addition and a porte-cochère.*





home for dancing into the early hours. Weekly events were the Sunday buffet lunches at the Golf Club and Sunday afternoon tea musicales.

The appeal of golf was widespread, and not just on the links of the Misquamicut Club. By 1917, the Club had an eighteen-hole miniature golf course just off the clubhouse veranda, where the putting green was later laid out (fig. 35). And at the Ocean House in the same period, clock golf on the course to the north of the main entrance was a serious sport. A croquet court was located to the south of the entrance.

Equally important as a social center of the community was the Watch Hill Yacht Club, founded in 1913. The Yacht Club regularly held annual meetings and events at Watch Hill House until the construction of its own dock and clubhouse in the early 1920s (figs. 36 & 37). Destroyed by the Hurricane of 1938, it was replaced the following year. The Yacht Club maintained a small racing fleet of jib-headed mainsail Herreshoff sloops, and it hosted dances and Commodore's teas after the Saturday races. Highlights of the season were the dances that young bachelors gave for their friends there.

Additional entertainment was provided by the tennis at Newport and the polo matches at Narragansett Pier. Nearer home, by 1928, there was the Watch Hill Riding and Polo Club on Shore Road, just east of the Hill. The club provided mounts, but also accommodated the horses of its members and maintained a network of bridle paths. During the season, it featured paper chases and drag races, and its annual horse shows were popular events.

If hotel guests were not generally included in the social life of these clubs, they were still granted golf and tennis privileges there, and so the hotels advertised well into the 1930s. *Topics* observed that the hotels paid liberally for being able to extend these privileges to their guests.

35 *In the early twentieth century, there was a miniature golf course on the hill to the east of the clubhouse. "Pleasant View" (later "Misquamicut") is visible in the distance.*



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36 The Watch Hill Yacht Club in the early 1920s. Its graceful lines belie its humble origins as the steamer ticket office and waiting room that stood for many years on the Watch Hill Dock.



37 After the Watch Hill Yacht Club was formed in 1913, the Club spearheaded an effort to remove hazards to navigation from the harbor, including these enormous boulders against which Earle Battey, son of the Commodore, measured himself. In all, some two hundred tons of rock were removed.

There were, of course, a number of families staying at the hotels who were part of the social life of the cottage colony. The summer social directories of the World War I period regularly listed guests at the principal hotels. As late as 1937, the Ocean House could still describe itself as “a social center for the Watch Hill summer colony. Highly restricted clientele.”¹²² One prominent family who regularly spent time at the Ocean House was that of Samuel Prescott Bush of Columbus, Ohio. The couple bridged both hotel and club communities, as Bush had become a member of the Misquamicut Golf Club in 1913. On the weekend of September 4, 1920, the Bushes were at Watch Hill to celebrate their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. The occasion turned to tragedy, when Mrs. Bush (Flora Sheldon Bush) was killed in a freak accident while walking with her husband along Watch Hill Road, near the Westerly Automatic Telephone station and Ridge Road. Friends of the Bushes had stopped their car to talk, when a motorist, coming from the same direction and around the sharp curve there, swerved to the right to avoid colliding with another car, which was turning in the road. The motorist struck Mrs. Bush, who died instantly. Mr. Bush, who was president of the Buckeye Steel Casting Company of Columbus and was a director of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and Mrs. Bush, then forty-six years old, were the parents of four children, one of whom was the twenty-five-year-old Prescott Sheldon Bush, later Senator from Connecticut (1952–63), and the father of President George H. W. Bush and the grandfather of President George W. Bush.¹²³

Ten years after the razing of the Larkin House, hotel life at Watch Hill was dealt a devastating blow by a fire that swept across the Hill on October 18, 1916 (figs. 38 & 39). It destroyed three of the remaining hotels, the new Watch Hill House, the Colonial House (formerly the Atlantic House), and the upper portion of the Columbia House. The cottages of William C. Hastings and Miss Julia Bush were also lost to the flames. The *Sun* called the fire the “greatest catastrophe” in Watch Hill’s history.¹²⁴ Fanned by a fifty-mile-an-hour gale from the southeast, the conflagration spread from Bluff Avenue to Bay Street, sending flames to a height of fifty feet or more and sparks out over the bay to a distance of a half-mile. The Watch Hill Fire Department, the Westerly Fire Department, the Pawcatuck and Mystic Fire Departments, the Coast Guard, and the Sergeant’s squad from Fort Mansfield were all credited with heroic efforts to contain the blaze. Peck notes that the disaster awakened Watch Hill Fire District voters to the need to provide their department with improved equipment. The immediate results were the construction of the first firehouse in 1917 and, spurred on by the ladies of the Improvement Society, the purchase that same year of Watch Hill’s first motorized pumper, a 1917 American LaFrance with a 750-gallon-a-minute pump, which could pump both fresh and salt water. That engine is believed to have been the first piece of motorized fire apparatus in the Town of Westerly. After it ceased to serve Watch Hill, it became a prized possession of the Groton Long Point Fire Department, known there as “Alfie.”¹²⁵

38 *Looking north along Bluff Avenue, the ruins of the Watch Hill House after the great fire of October 18, 1916. In the distance is the original Watch Hill House, later known as "Mastuxet Lodge."*



39 *Looking from Bluff Avenue to the bay, the ruins of the Watch Hill House after the fire of October 18, 1916.*



The advent of the Great War, 1914–18, aroused a patriotic response from the community. In 1915, two years before the United States entered the war, a group of ladies of the summer colony began to meet weekly in the ballroom of the Ocean House to sew for the war effort. In July of 1916, a meeting of the Watch Hill branch of the American Red Cross was held in the sun parlor of the Watch Hill House. However, there were also voices of pacifism heard at the Hill. In September 1916, the four-day Conference of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Fellowship of Youth for Peace was held at the Plimpton House. The conference program listed New York as the national headquarters of these groups and London as their international headquarters. Norman M. Thomas, later to be six times (1928–48) the Presidential candidate of the Socialist Party, was a principal speaker.

After the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, there was concern about the safety of a shoreline community such as Watch Hill, with the prospect of enemy ships appearing along the coast. *Seaside Topics*, trying to allay such fears, optimistically editorialized that the southern shore of Rhode Island “has the best protected coast line along the North Atlantic” with the “protection of the best equipped coast defenses on the Atlantic coast, namely, the forts and patrols guarding the eastern entrance to Long Island Sound.”¹²⁶ Never mind that the immediate defenses of Watch Hill—Fort Mansfield—had been proven ineffective ten years earlier, as related later in the story of Napatree. There was also nothing that *Topics* or anyone else could do to alleviate the inconvenience suffered by cottagers whose chauffeurs enlisted in the services.¹²⁷

Prohibition followed the Great War, as the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1919. If, as suggested by many sources, Prohibition was not fully supported by all members of the cottage colony, one small chapter in that thirteen-year-long national experiment was played out publicly at Watch Hill when in June 1925, Coastguardsman “Ted” Clark, the skipper of *C.G. 2026*, stopped a two-masted schooner off Watch Hill Point and confiscated her \$250,000 cargo of “licker.” *Seaside Topics* reported that it was the biggest alcoholic haul of the year and that the contraband was scheduled to be dumped into the water at New London.¹²⁸

Prohibition or not, Watch Hill did not have to make do without wine and spirits. One cottager from St. Louis who became a summer resident during that period could boast that one of Watch Hill’s main attractions was a highly popular local bootleg drop, somewhere along the immediate coastline. Later in the twentieth century, Clement A. Griscom III also suggested a view of Watch Hill not altogether in keeping with Prohibition, when he was famously reported to have observed, “Watch Hill, it’s a lot of shingled houses surrounded by gin.” It is also likely that the sobriquet for Watch Hill, “Cincinnati on the rocks,” probably referred as much to the ice cubes in a cocktail glass as it did to the boulders along the shore.

In the early 1930s, Watch Hill welcomed the arrival of the air age. Ludington Philadelphia Flying Service, Inc., arranged for the first regular air service between a local airport and New York. Weekend flights were scheduled between Camden, New Jersey, and Hyannis, Massachusetts, stopping at Charlestown for Watch Hill and Westerly passengers.¹²⁹ The following year, planes appeared at Watch Hill itself when on July 10, twenty-four seaplanes of the Aviation Country Club of America landed on Little Narragansett Bay on their first cruise, carried out according to the plan of the New York Yacht Club Annual Cruise. They flew from Long Island and went on to Narragansett, Nantucket, Marion, and Provincetown, returning to Montauk. The ten women and thirty men who participated were feted with a round of parties.¹³⁰

In addition to the formality of social life—the dressing for dinner, ladies calling on each other, afternoon chauffeured drives, the household staff and their rituals—there was a formality to family life before the Second World War almost unimaginable to someone born after the

middle of the twentieth century. Frances Curtis Hardie, who grew up summers with her grandmother, Mrs. F. Kingsbury Curtis, at *Shortlands* in the pre-World War II days, recalls that daily formality. Meals were at set hours, seated and served by the staff. Breakfast would be served at a precise hour, all the family present and a waitress in attendance. After breakfast, there would be a brief hymn and prayer service, led by her grandmother. Then the morning would be free for tennis, golf, swimming, and perhaps Mr. Freeman's classes. The family would return for lunch, seated and served, with three courses: soup, meat, and dessert. The afternoon would be free for rest or activity. All would reconvene for dinner—another three-course meal.

Mrs. Hardie remembers that religion played a major role in the life of her family at Watch Hill, including the Sunday morning service at the Chapel and a service in the afternoon at home. After the Chapel service, the family would rush to the beach for a quick swim, followed by a trip to "The Greeks," the Olympia Tea Room, where they could choose ice cream for dessert; all the children had to agree on the flavor. Sunday dinner was a grand and lengthy event at home, or, on occasions, a sumptuous buffet at the Golf Club. The tennis players would adjourn to the Sunday Round Robin there. But the children had to be back by 4 p.m. for hymns, prayers, a recital of the psalm that each had learned over the past week, and a brief talk by her grandmother. Mrs. Hardie reports that while she might not remember the psalms, she remembers perfectly the mixed ginger ale and grape juice and Bessie's (the cook's) cookies. The Curtis's cousins, the Nobles, the Husteds, and the McLanahans, would join them for this occasion. The cook would have the afternoon and evening off, and for the evening meal the family would enjoy a cold repast of salads, cold cuts, and dessert, all prepared by the cook in advance and left in the ice box. Mrs. Curtis seemed to believe herself to be performing the role of cook for that meal.¹³¹

William E. Fiske, in reminiscences of his childhood summers in the early 1920s at the Misquamicut Inn, provides another perspective on Sundays in the cottage colony. In his privately published memoirs, *A Curious Childhood*, he devotes an entire chapter to Watch Hill Sundays:

Sundays at Watch Hill were indeed a day apart, rendered conspicuous far more for the showy celebration and display of one's manifold and material possessions than for any Sabbath Day search for spiritual sustenance. The colorful variety and costly elegance of cars and clothing, and, later, the caviar and oysters, smoked salmon and pheasant, and chilled, silver punch bowls gracing the tables at the Misquamicut Golf Club's weekly buffet, all these spoke far more clearly of this world's ambitions clearly achieved than did the psalms and hymns or sermon proclaim the all too uncertain rewards of a distressingly nebulous life to come.¹³²

He describes, "the long, slow, Sunday parade of gleaming motor cars approaching the simple and charming non-denominational chapel," and following the service, the similar parade, "up the winding Golf Club drive, of British Rollses and Belgian Minervas, Lincolns and Packards and Cadillac V-Twelves and Sixteens, and the disembarkation [at the Club for lunch]...of the

SEASIDE TOPICS



40 For more than seventy years, Seaside Topics chronicled the life of the cottage colony. The September 3, 1954, fiftieth-anniversary issue had as its lead story Hurricane Carol, which had raged through Watch Hill only days before, on August 31, washing away the second Beach Club, built fifteen years earlier.

IN JULY 1904, Charles F. Hammond and his brother, James S. Hammond, both of whom spent summers at Watch Hill as children, began the publication here of a summer weekly paper they called *Watch Hill Topics* in its first season, and thereafter *Seaside Topics* (fig. 40). After James ceased to be involved, Charles carried on, and after him his daughter, Marcelle Hammond Ham. *Topics* focused on the social doings at Watch Hill, Weekapaug, and Stonington, and the paper's reports of various social events, weddings, the comings and goings of hotel and house guests, reviews of local theater, local restaurants, services at the Chapel, events at the clubs, and obituaries were central to the cohesiveness of the community. The Hammonds were an extraordinary family whose influence was felt in nearly every aspect of Watch Hill life for most of the twentieth century. They spent winters in Winter Park, Florida, where they also published a paper, *Winter Haven Topics*. They were also singers. For decades, Hammond, Mrs. Hammond, Marcelle, and her sister, Sally Hammond Trope (later Honan), formed the quartet at the union service at the Chapel. Marcelle was also a member of New York's Amato Opera. The last issue of *Seaside Topics* that she published—September 6, 1974—reported on a tribute organized by the community on the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the paper and held on Labor Day at the Misquamicut Club. Marcelle was presented with a gold link bracelet with a disk pendant, inscribed “Seaside Topics, 1904–1974, Marcelle Hammond Ham, Love, Watch Hill.” It was the end of an era, although the paper continued for another four years under other ownership. Public record of these subsequent editions is incomplete in the Local History Collection of the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly.

Seaside Topics remains the most complete source of information on life at Watch Hill. It is no overstatement to say that, through its historical articles, it served as the collective memory of the cottage colony, and, through its editorial pages, as both its cheerleader and its social conscience.

Not long after *Seaside Topics* ceased publication, a new publication whose format was remarkably similar appeared occasionally at the end of the season. It was called *Seaside Tropics*, and, tongue-in-cheek, it poked fun at prominent members of the community. Its rare appearances were greeted with high hilarity. Its publisher never identified him- or herself. But it was widely understood that he was a young man who later became a president of the Misquamicut Club.

ladies wearing their white gloves and vast, flowered hats and men in pin-striped white flannels, and brass-buttoned blue blazers and sporting black-tipped buckskin shoes.” On the terrace, at each end, were long buffet tables, “heavy with that burden of ineffable culinary delights already spoken of; the selection of vichyssoise and cold lobster, or, for those so inclined, roast pheasant with bread sauce and wild rice with a good Chablis in support, all magnificently to be concluded with the passing from table to table of flaming *bombe Alaska*.”¹³³ After coffee and liqueurs had been served, there followed a solo violin performance by Maestro Bernhard Levitow, who, with his trio, was “imported” each week from New York. At the conclusion, the assemblage gathered at the door for the summoning of chauffeurs and gleaming cars and the return home for the Sunday afternoon nap.

The Depression must have had an effect on the cottage colony, but, understandably perhaps, there is little reference to it in the glossy pages of *Seaside Topics*. One reference, however, is notable. The August 27, 1931, issue reported on the Depression Party which Mrs. Wrenn DuPont and Miss Betty Snowden had hosted at the Misquamicut Club dinner dance the previous Saturday night, for some “ninety of their contemporaries of the younger set.”

Everything was in keeping with the depression idea. The two hostesses greeted their guests in costumes fashioned from burlap bags, while the attire of their guests, contrasting oddly with the evening dress of other groups at the dance, consisted of a heterogeneous collection of garments that might have been picked up almost anywhere. Tramps, bandits, girls in overalls and ragged gowns, poverty-stricken men and women in attire too large or too small, arrived in expensive cars and took their places in the “bread line” as directed on a large placard which told them where to go. Other placards informed the guests of “No help wanted” and “factory closed,” while still another directed them upstairs to the “soup kitchen.”¹³⁴

Between the First and Second World Wars, a second great fire swept Watch Hill on February 15, 1938, severely damaging the rebuilt Columbia House building on Bay Street and destroying the entire Sisson Block to the south (figs. 41 & 42). Five business buildings were leveled, including the Watch Hill Pharmacy, Sisson’s Restaurant, and the Bayside Garage. This was the area occupied, in the late twentieth century, by the Inn at Watch Hill. In addition, four cottages located along the southerly side of Mastuxet Terrace were destroyed. Understandably, this event is overshadowed in memory by the natural disaster that occurred on September 21 of that year, but the two make the year 1938 truly an “annus horribilis” for Watch Hill.

The full story of the Hurricane of 1938 is told in the chapter on Napatree, but a few words should be included here about the community’s response to that appalling event. Even from the first days after the storm, the editor of *Seaside Topics* reported that the rehabilitation of Watch Hill was taken for granted. Mrs. Means Spencer, president of the Improvement Society, wrote to its members:

To the members of our Society comes a great responsibility this next year in helping Watch Hill get a new lease of life. To each one of us is given something that we can add to the building of a new Watch Hill. We are going to have a superb bathing beach. Our Golf Club will be as good as ever. The ocean, the bay, the sun and the sand are still here. Let us who have our homes make them sing a song of hope and confidence for the future of Watch Hill.¹³⁵

The Society immediately established a Hurricane Emergency Fund, which between September 1938 and July 1939 distributed some \$2,140 for community relief. Disbursements included lobster pots and rope for fishermen, food and disinfectants for the Village, help with funeral expenses, reading glasses with special lenses, park work, and cash given to the Red Cross. In July 1939, the Society turned over the balance of the Fund, \$352.50, to the Westerly Hospital.¹³⁶



41 On February 15, 1938, a second great fire swept through the Village, destroying the Sisson Block, eight buildings in all. The Yacht Club, across the parking lot, was unscathed.



42 Looking south along Bay Street, the still smoldering remains of the buildings between Mastuxet Terrace and the Fish Market, after the fire of February 15, 1938.

In its June 16, 1939, lead article, *Topics* wrote: “Now that the hurricane is a matter of history there is new appreciation for the beauty of Watch Hill and its loyal residents will set new and greater values on its enjoyment.”¹³⁷ Daniel F. Larkin II, grandson and namesake of the builder of the Larkin House, led the renewal, with the rebuilding of the bathing pavilions, which reopened in June 1939. Larkin had served as a Commodore of the Yacht Club, 1933–36. He served as a Navy Lieutenant Commander, first in World War I and again in World War II, in the Pacific. In October 1938, just weeks after the hurricane, Larkin erected a sign on the barren beach, reading “Better Bathing facilities for 1939.”¹³⁸ In 1939, the Watch Hill and Plimpton docks were restored, and the rebuilding of the Yacht Club and the Beach Club followed; both clubs reopened with gala festivities in July. *Topics* reported that the new Yacht Club, placed on the original club dock, was more commodious than the former building. Of the Beach Club, it commented that the building was further out on the beach and offered a more satisfactory arrangement than the old structure.¹³⁹

Even as the colony put its energy into rebuilding, it took time to mourn its losses at a special Service of Prayer and Thanksgiving, held Sunday, July 2, 1939, at the Chapel. The Rev. Remsen B. Ogilby, president of Trinity College, Hartford, and a Weekapaug summer resident, presided.

With all the excitement over the new Watch Hill and the pride its residents took in bringing the colony back from disaster, there remained a sense of concern for its future. The fear was economic and reflected the lingering effects of the Depression and the changing nature of society. Would property values hold? Would Watch Hill survive in a new economic and social climate? These were questions *Topics* posed in a lengthy article in its July 7, 1939 issue:

Property owners are more sensitive than ever to the influences that will carry Watch Hill up or down the scale of value and it behooves them to take such measures as are feasible for the protection of their own holdings. In the final analysis property values rise and fall on the thermometer not of the climate, which is delightful, but on how much demand there is to come and spend the summer here.

We are now in a transition stage. Our old Watch Hill was built up in a generation when only the well-to-do and leisure class could afford to enjoy the seashore for any period. Their patronage made the hotels and built the cottage colony. There seemed to be no end to the process of more people coming to the hotels, which did the advertising and provided the larger part of the entertainment. From their patrons came the cottage builders.

The situation now is quite different. We are caught in the dilemma of reduced incomes throughout the land resulting in a much diminished class who can afford summer homes, and a very large increase in the number of people who through the automobile find the seashore accessible and want to enjoy it at a minimum of expense. The problem at Watch Hill is how to maintain conditions that will continue to appeal to people of means.

The article went on to examine various uses of land for recreational purposes and the potential users, and it concluded on a more positive note:

The recreation customer has at his command such a flexible means of transportation in the private automobile that he can satisfy his tastes and get just about what he wants by going considerable distances at little extra expense or inconvenience to himself. This makes less certain the regular patronage of the summer visitor of today, but it also makes possible the attracting from a wider distance of a far greater number.¹⁴⁰

In the end, of course, Watch Hill survived, and by the beginning of the twenty-first century, property values had risen to levels that the cottagers of 1939 could never have imagined.

Watch Hill volunteers rose to the occasion once again in the Second World War. In 1942, they formed the Watch Hill Volunteer Defense Committee, which established an extraordinary structure of support activities, involving volunteers in more than three hundred positions of responsibility. The chairman of the Committee was Margaret L. Buck (Mrs. Howard C. Buck). Key elements of this effort were Air Raid Wardens, Surgical Dressings Workers, a Motor Corps, a Casualty Station, a Messenger Corps, a Blood Bank, Nurses Aides—Gray Ladies Serving the Westerly Hospital, Spotters for Plane Verification, Block Captains, Knitting, and Officers' Dances.

A Casualty Station was established in the Chapel Undercroft. The Fire District, the Improvement Society, the Chapel, the Westerly Hospital, and the Westerly Red Cross all contributed to these efforts. The community also organized various fundraising projects to assist the troops, including an amateur talent show and a paper-salvaging campaign. More than 180 Watch Hill residents, including six women, served in the war. Ten Watch Hill men are listed as having died in service in *Seaside Topics's* Watch Hill Honor Roll—1945.¹⁴¹

The end of the Second World War, marked by the defeat of Japan, was wildly celebrated at Watch Hill. On Tuesday night, August 14, 1945, the Chapel bell was rung, and fire sirens sounded. Chief Edwin Barber brought out the fire trucks and gave the community a chance to express its joy by riding around the Hill. At the Ocean House, when President Truman's proclamation was read during dinner, the orchestra broke into the "Star Spangled Banner," and the guests rose and joined in. Following dinner and a Red Cross Benefit, champagne flowed. Wednesday morning, there was a special Service of Thanksgiving at the Chapel. The festivities continued into the weekend, with a dinner dance at the Golf Club, celebrating the occasion of its Golden Anniversary.

In 1957, a potentially disastrous threat to Watch Hill came from an unexpected source when the New York State Commissioner of Public Works, resurrecting a dormant plan, proposed the construction of a 24.6-mile-long bridge and causeway from Orient Point, Long Island, to Watch Hill. The Eastern Long Island Sound Crossing was intended to benefit the economy of eastern Long Island and to relieve truckers traveling between New York and New England of the burden of traffic bottlenecks in New York City. The plan envisioned island-hopping spans

that would cross, in turn, from Orient Point to Plum Island, Great Gull Island, Fishers Island, and Napatree Point. The final Fishers-to-Napatree leg of this proposed construction was to involve a 4,000-foot-long steel bridge, with a center span of 400 feet and a vertical clearance of 70 feet. Including a causeway, the span from Fishers to Napatree was to be 2.2 miles long. The link from the northern end of the bridge to Route 95 in Hopkinton was to run straight along Bay Street.

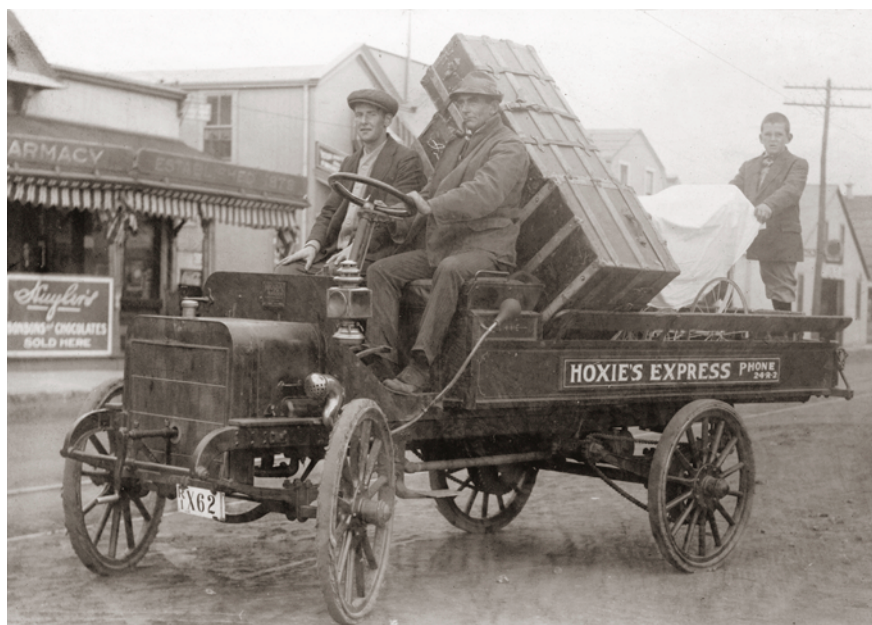
While the war chests and political influence of Fishers and Watch Hill might have been sufficient to defeat the proposal, it died a natural death when, in 1966, Rhode Island determined that the crossing was “not economically feasible.” It would be a mistake, however, to discount the role played by a local element in the death of the project. That element involved a formidable member of the Watch Hill community, Mrs. Philip B. Eaton (Anita McWynne Eaton), who lived in the cottage known as *Comynholm*, located at 2 Bayberry Road at the northeasterly corner of Ocean View Highway. Born in Scotland and raised in India under the Raj, she was married to Rear Admiral Eaton of the Coast Guard and lived in Washington, D.C. There, over many years, she had served as hostess and mentor to many political newcomers who later rose to national influence and power. One such newcomer was a young Congressman from Texas, Lyndon B. Johnson, who in 1963 became the 36th President. This was about the same time that Mrs. Eaton let it be known that she had decided to take the bridge matter into her capable hands. As she later reported it, accompanying the President as he flew to New London to address the Coast Guard Academy, she arranged to draw his attention to the beauty of the

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43 *An early-twentieth-century view of the Watch Hill Dock from the shore. An express pony cart awaits its load of baggage.*



44 *George Hoxie and his famous Express service about 1910. His son Porter is steadying the cargo at the rear of the vehicle.*



Sound and its islands and points below. She returned to Watch Hill with the welcome news that she had secured the President's commitment that no such bridge would ever be built.

Even as the twentieth century progressed, there remained a formality to social life at Watch Hill. As late as the 1960s, dressing for dinner (tuxedo for a gentleman and formal dress for a lady) remained the rule for dinner parties. Visiting for the first time to conduct the Sunday union service at the Chapel, a young clergyman and his wife from a prominent New York parish years later recalled hearing his hostess, having discovered that the couple had failed to bring formal attire, telephoning the other dinner guests to ask them not to "dress," as the couple had "brought no clothes."

It may surprise young readers and new purchasers of houses at Watch Hill to know that well into the twentieth century, cottages were generally sold and bought fully furnished, the only general exception being linen, china, silver, and special personal items. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was the common custom for cottagers to ship their most valuable possessions between their winter and summer homes, and these, of course, would not have gone with the sale of a cottage. Jane Hoxie Maxson, whose family operated Hoxie's Taxi and Express, remembers her grandfather and father meeting the trains in the spring and transporting the crates of valuables to the various cottages (figs. 43 & 44). In the fall, they would assist with the repacking of these items in excelsior-filled crates, returning them to railroad express or, in the case of near destinations, transporting them by truck to winter residences.

The Hoxies also performed various other services for the cottagers. In the spring and fall, they arranged for ladies from Westerly to clean and open and close cottages. And during the winter, they served as caretakers, walking through the cottages after storms to check for damage and arrange for repairs. Jane was sometimes allowed to accompany them and “found it ghostly with the shutters closed and furniture shrouded in sheets.”¹⁴²

Perhaps the greatest change in the lifestyle of the cottage colony from the early days to the present has been in the area of domestic help. The change was not abrupt, but beginning in the years after the Second World War, the considerable live-in help to which cottagers were accustomed gradually declined and ultimately withered away. Before the war, it was customary for a cottage to be staffed by as many as five or six live-in servants: a cook, a maid or two, one perhaps also serving as waitress, a chauffeur, and, if there were children, a nursemaid or governess. There might also be a butler. A gardener or gardeners would come daily, as might outside cleaning staff and, several days a week, a laundress. In the years before World War II, footmen had stood behind every chair at dinner parties at *Holiday House*. During Rebekah Harkness’s tenure there, the various chefs in the different apartments into which the house was divided were themselves catered to by a master chef.

The need to accommodate live-in servants influenced the design of the cottages. In general, the top floor and the basement were the exclusive realm of the domestic help. The top floor was devoted to servants’ bedrooms and bath. On the ground floor there were separate servants’ dining rooms, the butler’s pantry, and servants’ sitting rooms and porches. The basement was devoted to the heating plant, the coal stoves that heated the water for the house, storerooms, the laundry, and perhaps a servants’ lavatory. There also the laundress might have her own coal stove to heat the heavy irons used in pressing. An “Annunciator” hung on the kitchen wall, and the bedroom of each adult had a bell. The cook or the butler could dispatch the proper servant to respond to each call.

Even before the end of the twentieth century, live-in help was becoming increasingly rare. Younger members of families discovered the delight of sleeping in the highest rooms in the house, formerly reserved for the servants. Cleaning ladies (often called housekeepers) were jealously guarded. Summer help with children was more often provided by students, called “mother’s helpers,” “au pairs,” or “nannies.” Entertainment was generally catered, and gardens and lawns were tended by service companies. By the early twenty-first century, too, the elaborate spring and fall rituals attending the opening and closing of cottages—the sheeting and unsheeting of furniture and the shuttering and unshuttering of windows—were occurring in fewer and fewer cottages, as more were winterized and used at least periodically outside the summer season.

An interesting phenomenon which deserves note is the ecological transformation by which the landscape of the cottage colony over the twentieth century returned from bare and open to highly vegetated. George Y. Wheeler II sums up this change:

Early pictures show an amazingly bare landscape. The farm land on which the cottages were to be built was largely devoted to dairying-grass.... There were no trees, no shrubs, no hedges, plenty of rocks, a dotting of cottages, windmills, a stark environment. Slowly the windmills came down with the advent of city water, hedges were planted.¹⁴³

Noting the planting on the Misquamicut Club property of many red pine trees after the 1938 hurricane (later wiped out by blight in the late 1980s), Wheeler concludes: "The transition from an almost moonscape of a hundred years ago to beautiful trees and bushes and flowers was so gradual as to be more evolutionary than central planning. Nobody came to Watch Hill for the rocks and nobody will leave for the trees."¹⁴⁴

Wheeler notwithstanding, the land of the Misquamicut Club, roughly 210 acres lying on both sides of Ocean View Highway, acquired through a variety of land conveyances at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century, may, in its openness, more closely resemble the landscape of Watch Hill a century ago than most of the rest of Watch Hill. The Lighthouse Road area is, of course, an exception, for it too has retained much of the openness of the early cottage colony. The shoreline of Weekapaug, largely treeless along the coast, also gives a flavor of early Watch Hill.

The reforestation of Watch Hill has also had climatic consequences, as the returning vegetation has reduced the unimpeded flow of breezes across the peninsula. Even without reference to meteorological data, most observers today would agree that Watch Hill is warmer in the summer than it was in the mid-twentieth century. One result of that change has been the appearance of mosquitoes, which were all but unknown on the Hill in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *Topics*, which observed that in 1886, "Nobody had screens in their windows," attributed the phenomenon to the steady ocean breezes that in those days flowed uninterrupted by vegetation.¹⁴⁵ That happy condition, if indeed a fact, did not of course continue. Certainly, by the mid-twentieth century, the problem was clearly recognized, and it was agreed that something had to be done to combat it. The story of Watch Hill's mid-twentieth-century battles against mosquitos is told in the section on the Improvement Society in the chapter on Watch Hill institutions.

An aerial black and white photograph of a coastal resort. The image shows several large, multi-story buildings, likely hotels or resorts, situated on a hillside. There are golf courses and tennis courts visible. A winding road runs through the middle of the property. In the foreground, there is a sandy beach and the ocean. The word "REPLACE" is overlaid in large, pink, sans-serif capital letters across the upper middle portion of the image.

REPLACE

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Some Cottages & Cottagers

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45 *A pre-1938-hurricane view of the cottages on East Beach between Niantic and Manatuck Avenues. Left to right in the foreground are "Intermere," "East Dunes," "Longshore," and "Aloha." "Longshore" and "Aloha" were both destroyed. "The Cedars" is on the far left, across Niantic Avenue from "Intermere." Across Ninigret Avenue are the "Wayne Cottage," "Arcadia" (later "La Maritima"), and "Thalassa" (later "Shadybrook"). On the hill above "East Dunes" is "Treasure Hill," behind which "Green Shutters" (later "Rock Rose") and "Log Cabin" (later "Longshore II" and "Stella Maris") are visible. In the distance, on Ridge Road, are "Kenneth Ridge," "The Arches" (later "Ridgecrest"), and "Sunnylegge Cottage." At the upper right is "Windvale."*

MUCH OF THE HISTORY OF WATCH HILL lies in the development of the cottages and in the people who built them, as well as in the people who have lived in them in later years. The choice of cottages mentioned in the following summary of the progress of residential development at Watch Hill over the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth is intended to provide only a snapshot of that process.

An arbitrary cut-off date of 1950 has been selected, with the exception of certain prominent later structures. The reader who may be dismayed at the length of this section should feel free to focus on areas of particular interest. But since many details of Watch Hill's history are interspersed with the history of the cottages, a later look at portions initially passed over may be warranted.

The most valuable and comprehensive source of information on the historic structures of Watch Hill is the *National Register of Historic Places, Watch Hill, Rhode Island*, and the detailed information included in its *1985 Inventory–Nomination Form for the Watch Hill Historic District*.¹⁴⁶ The information contained therein has been supplemented here by reference to a number of other sources, including the Westerly land evidence, probate and tax records, newspaper articles, summer social directories, and conversations with long-time members of the community.

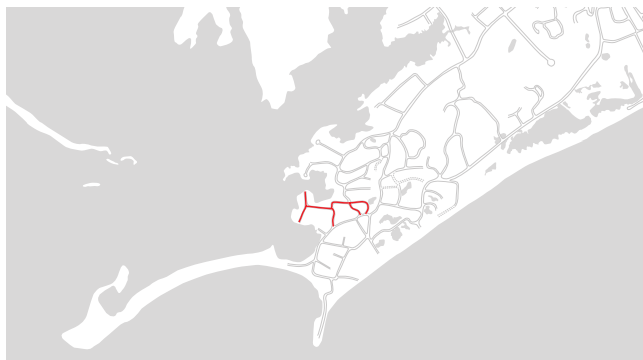
Cottages are grouped generally according to the date of the development of the particular area in which they are located. They are identified by their names, including those given by later owners, and by their location on various streets, and these streets are grouped roughly by neighborhoods. Locations keyed to a map are provided in Appendix A.

Initial cottage owners are mentioned, generally as identified by the *National Register*. Where later owners are known to have had particularly interesting careers or affiliations, or where families have had long tenure and prominence in the community, they also may be mentioned. But no attempt is made to list all owners or to bring ownership up to the present date. For reasons of privacy, names of current owners are not identified in the text, and for the same reason, where their names may be mentioned, biographical information is not provided.

First addressed are properties within the Everett Farm subdivision.¹⁴⁷ Next are those within the two subdivisions that followed, the Watch Hill Farm subdivision¹⁴⁸ and the subdivision known as the Uplands.¹⁴⁹ Still later are the properties along Ocean View Highway, which were developed from the Browning, Burnet, and Lanphear Farms. Next, because it is a relatively discrete area, the area of Lighthouse Road, Bluff Avenue, and Westerly Road between Bluff and Everett Avenues is treated. Finally, two small subdivisions which are geographically apart from the other developments, the Breen Road and East Hills Road subdivisions, are covered.

EVERETT FARM

Beginning in 1886, development of the cottage colony took place all across the Everett Farm tract. The earliest areas developed were along Little Narragansett Bay, sometimes referred to as Pawcatuck Bay, and Foster's Cove, around Sunset Hill, and on the ocean side, in the area of Everett, Niantic, and Ninigret Avenues and Westerly Road, between Everett and Ninigret Avenues.



Water's Edge Road & Pawcatuck, Sunset, Aquidneck, Neowam, & Noank Avenues

Blythebourne, which looks out across Little Narragansett Bay from the northerly end of the street, was built in 1888 for the Rev. Summerfield E. Snively of Brooklyn, New York, and later of Philadelphia, who was an officiant at the Dedication of the Chapel in July 1877 (fig. 46).¹⁵⁰ The Rev. Mr. Snively, who was first a physician and later a priest, was one of a family of Episcopal priests, including his father and his brother, the Rev. William A. Snively, who lived at *Bouldercrest* on Wauwinnet Avenue.

Mrs. Snively, who was Ida Eliot Selleck Snively, kept a journal, parts of which were shared with the new owner of *Blythebourne* in the early twenty-first century. She reports that her love of Watch Hill long predated her coming to live here. She had visited with her parents and had met her husband here.

In an 1889 entry, she writes that the previous summer, her husband "bought a lovely little point of land at Watch Hill and last fall he erected a cottage there. Cottage and land were a present to me from my dear husband. The cottage is small, but very pretty and the rooms are large, every inch of space being used. We have a lovely wide piazza, round three sides of the house." She further reports that

she had come to Watch Hill that summer of 1889, having been very sick, but that after a time in "my dear sea air" she was "soon better and stronger than I had ever been" since the birth of her last child. She notes also that the health of her four children had flourished in that same sea air: "The children who looked like drooping flowers when we left the city, revived like those same flowers when placed in a glass of water."¹⁵¹

Mrs. Snively's journal is full of references to her love of nature at Watch Hill and to the simple pleasures of being there in the early years of the cottage colony. She writes of daily rows to Napatree to bathe in the sea, swims in the bay, evening rows to the Plimpton Dock to enjoy the music at the Plimpton House, the Chapel—which brought her closer to her late "dear Mama than any other place on earth"—, walks on Napatree and the East Beach, great storms and high surf, teas with neighbors, excursions by boat to Barn Island, Stonington, and New London, drives to Westerly, visits to the granite quarries, sunsets and moonlight on the bay, displays of the Northern Lights, and sails to Fishers Island. She reports one September day of the appearance of a large school of porpoises, "fifty at least," gamboling in the bay. Mrs. Snively, sadly, died young, at age forty-one in 1895, but the family remained at *Blythebourne* for close to thirty more years, during which they substantially enlarged the cottage.

In 1922, the Snively family sold *Blythebourne* to the John B. Griggs family of Hartford. Mrs. Griggs was Valina Daskam Griggs, sister of poet and writer Josephine Daskam Bacon. Mrs. Bacon left her mark upon the cottage by way of a plaque, passed on with the house to the new owners. It reads

BLYTHBOURNE

Shall spell for every guest its meaning

HAPPY END!

Warmed with the love & gratitude of sister, child & friend,
Now furl your sails.

Watch the stars rise, that bid the storm to cease

And find in happy sunset days the well-worn port of PEACE.

October 6, 1939, Josephine Daskam Bacon

The cottage remained in the Griggs family for nearly seventy-five years, owned last by Mrs. Griggs's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Loring Griggs (Jane Zwegartt Griggs), who continued to visit Watch Hill after the sale of the cottage.



46 View from Sunset Hill to the bay about 1905. Cottages visible on what was then Meadow Lane (later Water's Edge Road) are, left to right, "Edgecove," "Blythebourne," and "Breezy Point" (later "Geranium Point"). At the far left is a corner of "Lermoh" (later "Baycroft"). To the right is Curtis Point, where "Shortlands" would soon be built.

Edgecove, diagonally across the street at the corner of Pawcatuck Avenue, and backing on Foster's Cove, was built for Daniel L. Lyon of Cincinnati in 1886 (fig. 46). It was owned by the Eugene F. Williams family of St. Louis from 1960 to 1969, and was the home of the families of the Williams daughters, Marie "Mamie" Williams von Gontard (Mr. and Mrs. Adelbert von Gontard) of Greenwich, Connecticut, and Georgie Williams Meyer Lewis (Mrs. Henry Lewis III) of Locust Valley, New York. In 1969, it became the home of the Charles H. G. Rees family of New York. Rees was associated with Whitney Communications in New York for more than twenty years and served as its president, 1982–85. In 1987, the cottage became the home of the William G. Clark family.

Next to *Edgecove*, at the north end of Water's Edge Road, is *Geranium Point*, formerly *Breezy Point*, built in 1902 for Henry A. Robinson of Yonkers, New York (fig. 46). In the pre-World War I days, the cottage was occupied by the G. R. Bunker family, also of Yonkers. The family included a son, Ellsworth Bunker, who would later become U.S. Ambassador to Argentina, Italy, India, and finally Vietnam, where he served from 1969 to 1973, the year Saigon fell to the Viet Cong. In 1955, the cottage became the home of the Francis J. Braceland family of Hartford. Braceland was chief psychiatrist at Hartford's Institute for Living and a president of the American Psychiatric Society. After his death in the 1980s, the house was sold and completely rebuilt. During the reconstruction in 1988, it was one of several Watch Hill locations for the film *Mystic Pizza*, starring

Julia Roberts.¹⁵² In 1992, the cottage became the home of the Robert E. Wilkes, Jr., family of Oldwick, New Jersey. Mrs. Wilkes (Wendy Wattles Wilkes) had grown up at *High Watch* on Bluff Avenue.

Across the street from *Edgecove* and next to *Blythebourne* is the *Anchorage*, later *Channel Mark*, built in 1913–14 for Mrs. Annie B. McConnell, wife of the Rev. Samuel D. McConnell of Brooklyn, New York. The site had earlier been occupied by another cottage—*River View*, later named *The Folly*, which the McConnells built in 1888 and had moved down the street in 1914. The new cottage still retains a portion of the foundation and the north chimney of the earlier cottage.

The George R. Summersby family acquired the cottage in 1938. Summersby was president of the Bradford Dyeing Association. After Mrs. Summersby's death, the cottage became the home of the John H. Katt family in 1951. The Katts sold it to Mary Hunter Marston Dow and her husband, Charles Mason Dow, in 1960. Neighbors remember occasional spirited late-night archery events involving flaming arrows in the early 1960s.

In 1966, Mrs. Gilbert G. Browne (Louise Barber Browne) of New York and Wilton, Connecticut, acquired the cottage, by then known as *Channel Mark*. In an indirect way, Mrs. Browne's family connections with Watch Hill had preceded her here. Her maternal aunt was Enid Yandell, who fifty years earlier had sculpted the statue of Ninigret, finally located in the Village park (see fig. 4). Yandell, who was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1869, and subsequently lived in Providence, had studied sculpture under Auguste Rodin and maintained studios in Paris and New York. Beginning in 1895 she exhibited regularly at the Paris Salon. The first woman member of the U.S. National Sculpture Society, she created public statuary and fountains in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Connecticut, as well as in Providence. In contrast to these sometimes monumental works, she also designed on a small scale for Tiffany & Co. Her work at the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exposition won a Designer's Medal.

Mrs. Browne's father was noted New York Beaux-Arts architect Donn Barber, who was also editor of *The New York Architect*. His tower for the Travelers Insurance Company in Hartford was sheathed with pink Westerly granite. Gilbert G. Browne, who died before the family came to Watch Hill, was a director of City Bank Farmers Trust Company, which after several mergers became Citibank.

In 1971, *Channel Mark* became the home of the William H. Gray family. Gray was for many years treasurer of the Fire District.

In the 1970s, he and Gurdon B. Wattles took legal action to challenge the State of Rhode Island's designation of many Watch Hill rights-of-way to the water as public; the litigation never went to trial.

At the southerly end of Water's Edge Road stands *Samoset*, with a view across the harbor to Napatree and out across Little Narragansett Bay (fig. 47). It was built about 1906 for William J. Battey of Brooklyn, New York, who was president of Battey, Trull & Co., operators of the Pawcatuck Woolen Mills at Potter Hill. He was also a founder and the first Commodore of the Watch Hill Yacht Club in 1913. The point on which *Samoset* stands is known as Battey Point. In 1926, the Batteys sold the cottage to the Thomas H. Eddy family of Pittsburgh. Mrs. Eddy (Jean Thompson Eddy) had grown up at *Sunset Hill*. The Eddys in turn sold it to the John Wilkie family of Poughkeepsie, New York, in 1943. In 1956, the George Y. Wheeler II family of Washington, D.C., acquired the property.

George Wheeler had served as a war correspondent in World War II. He is the hero of a remarkable exploit recounted by W.W. Chaplin in *The Fifty-Two Days*.¹⁵³ Wheeler was asked by NBC to cover the story of the expected reopening of the port of Cherbourg after the city had been retaken by the allies, on June 27, 1944. Here is how Chaplin reports Wheeler's actions after he arrived outside the port:

George noticed...that there were two Norman fishermen in a small motorboat among the minesweepers and he beckoned them over and invited them aboard the PT boat. With some eloquence and a few drinks of Scotch, he convinced them that it would be very nice if they would take him into Cherbourg through the lanes, which, under the influence of alcohol, they boasted they knew.

So George boarded the motorboat with the Frenchmen and started in. He had hardly left the side of the PT boat when glasses were trained on him from every minesweeper and escort vessel outside the harbor. If George could get in, if the Frenchmen really did know the lanes through the mines from having watched the Germans use them, then it might be possible for the minesweepers themselves to follow those lanes and gradually widen them for the use of cargo ships.

The little boat was more than halfway across the harbor and close to the jetty on which German forts had held out for several days after the city itself fell, when George noticed a group of three men in American uniforms on the jetty. One of the men was looking toward his boat through binoculars.

The other two men standing beside him were soldiers and they both had their rifles pointed directly at the French boat.

George suddenly realized that he was in a very tight spot...However there was nothing for it at this point but to push the bluff through. He stood up in the boat, folded his arms like Washington crossing the Delaware and put on a broad and false smile.

The officer made up his mind that it must have been all right because George saw the soldiers lower their rifles. The Frenchmen went along their twisting course and finally landed him close to the old Normandy pier, now a mere pile of wreckage.

So George was the first man of any Allied force to land in the city of Cherbourg by sea since 1940. In fact no one else landed for about three weeks afterward.

The story circulated in the officers' quarters that a crazy man had crossed the harbor by boat the day before. George realized that they were talking about him.¹⁵⁴

Wheeler began his civilian career with RCA and became a vice president of the corporation. At Watch Hill, he was both a president of the Misquamicut Club and the Club historian. Mrs. Wheeler (Katherine Gatch Orthwein Wheeler) had grown up at *Briar Rock* on Ninigret Avenue. Coincidentally, *Briar Rock* was later bought by William R. Battey, Jr., and Michael S. Battey, who were great-grandsons of the builder of *Samoset*, Commodore Battey. In 1993, *Samoset* was purchased by Wheeler's stepson, James B. Orthwein, Jr., who had grown up across Meadow Lane at *West Cottage*. *Samoset* was renovated and substantially enlarged at the end of the twentieth century.

Next to *West Cottage* and across the street from *Samoset* is *River View*, later *The Folly*, which, as mentioned earlier, was built in 1888 for the Rev. and Mrs. Samuel D. McConnell on the site later occupied by the *Anchorage* and moved to its present site in 1914.

The Rev. Mr. McConnell, an Episcopal priest and Archdeacon of the Diocese of Connecticut, was author of the 1890 *History of the American Episcopal Church*. Mrs. McConnell (Annie Bliss McConnell) was the first woman president of the Improvement Society, during whose term, 1900–1902, control was wrested from the men who had founded it and assumed by the women of the community.

River View was occupied for many summers by Daniel F. Larkin, Jr., and his wife, Dorothy Taylor Larkin, following the loss of *Northwind*, their cottage on Napatree, in the 1938 hurricane.



47 About 1910, left to right, “Samoset,” “West Cottage,” and “East Cottage.”



48 View of north side of the harbor. The “Peck Cottage” is in the foreground.

Dorothy Taylor was a daughter of John H. Taylor, corporation counsel to the city of Brooklyn, New York, and one of the founders of the summer colony at Weekapaug. Her mother, Emma Dean Taylor, was descended from John Dean, who served as Indian Agent and advocate in central New York in the late 1790s for the Brothertown Indians, the remnants of six New England tribes, including “Pequods, Stoningtons, Narragansetts and Mohegans,” who had been forced off their ancestral lands. The Brothertown Indians at first occupied land in Oneida County, New York, and later moved to Wisconsin.¹⁵⁵

In 1962, the Jabish Holmes family of New York, who lived next door at *East Cottage*, acquired *The Folly*. Holmes was Moderator of the Fire District, 1953–54. Mrs. Holmes (Mary Starr Griscom

Holmes) was the daughter of Rodman E. Griscom and had grown up with her brother, Clement A. Griscom III, at *Trespasso* on Light-house Point.

The two cottages on the harbor known as *East Cottage* and *West Cottage* were built as rental properties by Daniel L. Lyon in 1900 (fig. 47). *East Cottage* was also known as *Lyon No. 1* and called *Mijapoan* by the Jabish Holmes family, who purchased it in 1947 and lived there for nearly twenty-five years. In 1971, they conveyed it to the Gurdon W. Wattles family of Far Hills, New Jersey, and moved to *The Folly*. Wattles, an investment banker, engineered the merger, in the 1960s, of Mergenthaler Linotype Company and Electric Autolite Company to form Eltra Corporation, a diversified electrical and industrial products corporation; in 1979, it was acquired by Allied Chemical. *West Cottage*, also known as *Lyon No. 2*, became the home of the Grenville T. Emmet, Jr., family of New York in 1945. In 1959, it was acquired by the James B. Orthwein family of St. Louis. It remains in the family, which includes the Orthweins’ son, Percy J. Orthwein II, and daughter, Katherine Orthwein Snowden (Mrs. James M. Snowden, Jr.), of St. Louis. James Snowden grew up at *Sprayberry House* on Ocean View Highway.

The property along the harbor, east of *East Cottage* and abutting the northerly end of the Village park and the Lanphear’s (later Holdredge) Garage property, was acquired by the William H. Peck family of New York in 1907. It was not part of the Everett tract, but is identified on the subdivision plat as the abutting property of “Mrs. Harvey,” who was Mrs. John D. Harvey. A boathouse stands along the water, and on the rise are the remains—a rear ell—of the *Peck Cottage*, a house that dates to 1828 (fig. 48). Added to in 1902, it was originally known as the *Red House* and later as *Aborigines*. The greater part of the structure was destroyed by arson in the 1980s. On the hill directly behind the house was the 1930s stone and brick cottage of Reginald Peck, who is the source of so much valuable early history of Watch Hill. Beginning in 2004, new owners undertook major renovation and reconstruction of the several structures on the property.

The two early houses on the right, or southerly, side of Pawcatuck Avenue, as one goes from Water’s Edge Road to Sunset Avenue, are *Wauwinnet*, later *Hedgerow*, and *Idle Hour* (see fig. 50).

Hedgerow was built about 1897 for the Robert Drysdale family of Westerly. The Drysdales operated a plumbing and heating business in the Drysdale Building on Bay Street, a structure later known as

Harbour House. In the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, *Hedgerow* was owned in succession by the families of Sally Atwood Smith Dryden, Robert E. Knisley, Arthur M. Cottrell, Jr., and Arthur M. Cottrell III. The J. Dabney Penick family acquired it in 1984.

Idle Hour was built about 1890 for the Larkin family, owners of the Larkin House and of much of the village shorefront and the beach at the beginning of Napatree, including the Bathing Pavillions, the Merry-Go-Round, and the Larkin Block. The Walter Clothier family of Philadelphia occupied the cottage during the 1913 season. The cottage was subsequently owned by the J. Trowbridge Cottrell family (1956–60), who called it *Three Seas*. It later became the home of the family of Mrs. Ruth Whiting Chapin Greene of New York (1969–84). It was acquired by the William Weill family of Plainfield, New Jersey, in 1984.

The two cottages on the water side of Pawcatuck Avenue were built in 1902 and 1903.

Bungalow-on-Cove, later *Cove Cottage*, was built for the Rev. A. Herbert Lewis of Plainfield, New Jersey, in 1902 (see fig. 50). In 1910, it became the home of the William L. Russell family of New York. The Russells sold it to the Reginald H. Fullerton family of New York in 1943. In 1962, the cottage became the home of the George C. Moore family, also of New York. Moore had spent summers at *Sunnandene* on Bluff Avenue, and Mrs. Moore (Audrey Connell Moore) at *Overlook* on Ocean View Highway.

Next door, *Lermoh* was built in 1902–03 for the family of Robert N. Willson of Philadelphia (see fig. 50); Willson was a Judge of the Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas. In the 1930s and 1940s, the William P. Urban family of Buffalo made the cottage their home and renamed it *Baycroft*. Mrs. Urban was Harriet Andrews Urban and had grown up at *Windansea* on Browning Road. The John Norman Forker family of New York acquired the cottage in 1950. In 1972, the cottage became the home of the John L. McCormick family. Mr. McCormick had grown up at *The Bungalow* on Westerly Road.

Next door, at the northeasterly corner of Pawcatuck Avenue, as Sunset Avenue runs to Aquidneck Avenue, is *Pomptookit*, built about 1924 for the Henry H. Van Cleef family of New Haven. Mrs. Van Cleef (Mary S. Thompson Van Cleef), whose nickname was *Pomp*, had grown up at *Sunset Hill*. The Van Cleefs' son, William H. Van Cleef, Jr., was the second husband of Mary Hunter Marston Green, who had summered with her parents at *Aloha*. The house



49 Looking from Sunset Hill to Napatree before 1912. In the foreground are, left to right, “Bonnie View” and “Moorcroft.” To the left of “Bonnie View” is Lanphear’s (later Holdredge) Garage. “Iris Rock” had not yet been built. “Sunset View” (later “Appleby”) shows to the left, “Sunnyside” to the right.

remained in Van Cleef family ownership at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Across the street, at the southwesterly corner of Pawcatuck and Sunset Avenues, *Clinton Cottage* was built in 1897 for the Robert A. Mielhke family of Clinton, Massachusetts (see fig. 50). Mrs. Mielhke (Johanna Lange Mielhke), who had been the manager of the Columbia House in 1893 and 1894, bought the property the year before her marriage, in 1895. In the early twentieth century, there was a tennis court between it and *Idle Hour*. The cottage remains in the family of the original owner.

Turning right on Sunset Avenue, there are four cottages on the right or westerly side, between *Clinton Cottage* and the Holdredge Garage. They date from 1885 to 1912. Next door to *Clinton Cottage* is *Sunnyside*, built in 1895 for the Emilus Harvey family on a portion of the *Clinton Cottage* property (fig. 49). Harvey was the son of the John Dennison Harveys of the *Red House*, just to the west of the property. Mrs. Harvey was Anna Marie Lange, who was Mrs. Mielhke’s sister. In 1945, the cottage became the home of the C. Berkeley Cooke, Jr., family. Mrs. Cooke (Margaret Phelps Cooke), later Mrs. Paul Speer, was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Phelps and the sister of Ann Phelps Bishop (Mrs. F. Michler Bishop), who had inherited the family cottage, *Meadholme*, on Ridge Road. *Sunnyside* remained in the Cooke family for another forty years.



50 Looking south from above Foster's Cove about 1915. The cottages on the cove side of Pawcatuck Avenue are, left to right, "Lermoh" (later "Baycroft") and "Bungalow-on-Cove" (later "Cove Cottage"). Across the street are, left to right, "Clinton Cottage," "Idle Hour," and "Hedgerow." The Peck property runs from the south side of Pawcatuck Avenue to the harbor. See also the similar view almost one hundred years later, pages 18–19.

The two cottages to the south of *Sunnyside*—*Moorcroft* and *Bonnie View*—were both built for Charles Maxson on other sites and moved to their present locations in 1902 (fig. 49). They were summer cottages and frequently rented. Maxson was the owner of C. Maxson & Co., which he had founded in 1843. In 1866, C. Maxson & Co. was awarded the contract for laying out the new road between Lotteryville and Watch Hill. In 1868, the firm built the Ocean House. In later years, it altered and improved the Atlantic, Plimpton, and Bay View Houses. The firm was also the builder of several great hotels at Narragansett Pier. C. Maxson & Co. and its successor, Maxson & Co., operated by Charles Maxson's brother, Jonathan Maxson, operated for some seventy years. The Maxson name is remembered in Watch Hill not just for its buildings, but also for the Maxson docks, located along the northerly shore of the harbor near the old firehouse and the former Peck property.¹⁵⁶

Moorcroft, built about 1885, was for many years owned by the Horace Burdick family. Burdick also owned the building known as the Burdick Building and later as Bay Breeze, to the south of Harbour House. In the season of 1913, the cottage was occupied by U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Horace H. Lurton and his family. Lurton, a native of Tennessee, served seven years on the Tennessee

Supreme Court. He was subsequently appointed by President Grover Cleveland to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, on which he served with William Howard Taft. After Taft became President, he appointed his colleague to the Supreme Court in 1910. In the post-World War II years, the cottage became the home of the Ralph Craig family. In 1981, the Bradford B. Kopp family acquired it. Kopp served as treasurer of the Watch Hill Fire District for many years.

Bonnie View, also known as *Bonnie Brae*, was built about 1885. In 1902, Jonathan Irving Maxson, the son of Jonathan Maxson and, with his father, a principal of Maxson & Co., was living there. For many years painted red, *Bonnie View* later became the home of the Albert Young family. Young was considered *the* house painter in Watch Hill. Neighbors remember that, at age eighty, he was still climbing ladders to paint gables. His shop was located in the area now occupied by the driveway to the Holdredge Garage parking lot. For a time the cottage was owned by the family of Diana Lenes, who called it *Acropolis*. In 1982, the cottage became the home of the Newell Stamm family of Newington, Connecticut. Stamm served many years as a fire warden of the Watch Hill Fire District.

Between *Moorcroft* and the Holdredge Garage is *Iris Rock*, built about 1912 for Miss Lillian Washburn of Morristown, New Jersey,

who was the daughter of Charles Ames Washburn, who served as ambassador to Paraguay in the 1860s. *Seaside Topics* reports that Miss Washburn had been at a loss to come up with a name for her cottage, until she looked out into her garden one day and spotted a single iris plant growing by a large boulder.¹⁵⁷ In 1943, the cottage was acquired by Sidney E. Stockwell of West Hartford, Connecticut, who was owner of the Hartford Steel Ball Co. In 1945, Stockwell conveyed the cottage to his daughter, Eleanor Stockwell Payne (Mrs. J. Raymond Payne). In the 1950s, the cottage was occupied by the Fred T. Walker family of Larchmont, New York. Mrs. Walker (Evelyn Lee Walker) was an aunt of Janet Lee Bouvier Auchincloss and thus a great aunt of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis.

On the hill opposite, on the easterly side of Sunset Avenue, is the cottage known successively as *Sunset View*, *Wasigan*, and *Appleby*, built in 1899 for Dr. E. R. Lewis, a Westerly physician. For many years it was the home of the Moore family, the Misses Eleanor C. and Emma W. Moore, and later of the family of their brother, Cyril V. Moore, and the family of the Cyril Moores' daughter, Hatsy Moore. Hatsy Moore identifies the source of the name *Appleby* as being the English village of Appleby Magna, Leicestershire, from which the Moore family came to America.¹⁵⁸ She also tells a tale of her maiden aunts and the Hurricane of 1938. Secure on their hillside above the bay, they somehow managed to be oblivious to the destruction all around them until the next morning, when Miss Emma, looking out, was horrified to see that the cottages on Napatree, including their brother Cy's, had vanished. She cried out to her sister, "Cy's house is gone...Napatree Point is gone!" To which her sister replied, "Oh, Emma, go back to bed, you must be dreaming." Improbable story? Mrs. Moore reports that she heard her aunts tell it.¹⁵⁹

Turning back up Sunset Avenue, at the head of Pawcatuck Avenue and above Sunset and Aquidneck Avenues, is Sunset Hill, which on the Everett plat of 1883 is identified as being the site of a U.S. Signal Station, designated by Coast Survey as eighty feet above mean tide. There stands *Sunset Hill*, an imposing Italianate stone villa built in 1915 for Mary Thaw Thompson and her husband, William Reed Thompson, of Pittsburgh and New York (fig. 51). Its architect was the New York firm of Atterbury & Tompkins, which had earlier designed the Misquamicut Club. Mrs. Thompson was the daughter of Pittsburgh coal and railroad magnate William Thaw and

the sister of Harry K. Thaw, notorious for his 1906 murder of architect Stanford White. The Thompsons' daughters, Mary T. Thompson (Mrs. Henry H. Van Cleef) and Jean R. Thompson (Mrs. Thomas H. Eddy), later had their own cottages at Watch Hill.

Built of granite quarried on the site, *Sunset Hill* dominates the view of the hillside from the harbor and commands a spectacular view across the bay to Stonington and over Napatree to Fishers Island. It offered refuge to many Watch Hillites in the Hurricane of 1938.

After their cottage *Aloha* on East Beach was destroyed in the hurricane, the Hunter S. Marston family of New York acquired *Sunset Hill*. Mr. Marston was a founder of American Home Products. In 1985, the Howard M. Fry II family acquired *Sunset Hill*. Mr. Fry, an attorney, served as general counsel to the U.S. Agency for International



51 "Sunset Hill."



52 The "Page Cottage" (later "Sea Echo").

Development in the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush. Mrs. Fry (Nancy Nickerson Fry) was a founder and president of the Watch Hill Preservation Society.

Across the street is *Craigie Brae*, one of the early houses of Watch Hill. Around 1900, it was owned by Dr. James MacAlister of Philadelphia, who transformed it into a summer cottage. Dr. MacAlister was the first president, 1891–1913, of the Drexel Institute of Art, Science and Industry, later the Drexel Institute. *Craigie Brae* was the home of the William S. Leeds family from 1944 to 1960, when it was acquired by Mrs. Ernst R. Behrend of Greenwich, Connecticut, who called the cottage *Glenhill*. In 1978, renamed *Craigie Brae*, it became the home of the John M. Regan, Jr., family of Ocean Ridge, Florida.

Next to *Craigie Brae*, on the northerly side of Aquidneck Avenue, is *Bayridge*, built about 1900 by the Ashley H. Anderson family of Troy, New York. The property, formerly part of the Everett plat, became Lot 2 of the Watch Hill Farm plat at the time that Misquamicut Road was laid out. The property was sold to the Andersons by Julia W. Anderson and William A. Procter in 1899. In 1906, the Andersons sold the property to the Lewis H. English family of New Haven; English was president of the New Haven Savings Bank. That same year, English bought two additional lots to the north from Anderson and Procter. He also enlarged the cottage, roughly doubling its size. In 1912, he sold off one of the additional lots and a portion of the second to Cornelian Peyton Russell of Washington, D.C., who built *Edgewater*, later named *Gulnare*, on the property. The Englishes remained nearly forty years at *Bayridge*. In 1945, it became the summer home of the Charles H. Baird family of Philadelphia. Baird was a longtime president of the Chapel. Baird's daughter, Edith Baird Eglin (Mrs. Thomas W. Eglin) of Lawrenceville, New Jersey, later also became a president of the Chapel.

Across the street, on the southwesterly corner of Aquidneck and Neowam Avenues, and just east of *Sunset Hill*, is *Sea Echo*, built in 1890 for Dr. and Mrs. Charles W. Page of Hartford (fig. 52). Page was a physician. Even years after it became the home of the Westerfield family, in 1947, and was renamed *Sea Echo*, it continued to be referred to as the *Page Cottage*. Ray B. Westerfield was a professor of economics at Yale and the founder and president of the First Federal Savings and Loan Association of New Haven. After his death and Mrs. Westerfield's move to *Gitche Gumee*, the cottage became the home of their son H. Bradford Westerfield and his family.

Next door, the two cottages on the westerly side of Neowam Avenue—*Neowam* and *Wetumanetu*—were built by Dr. John Champlin of Westerly. A prominent physician, Dr. Champlin lived in the handsome brick Federal house at number 9 Granite Street, Westerly, which at the end of the twentieth century became a professional office building. He was also the founder and president of the Westerly Automatic Telephone Company, the first dial telephone company in the country.¹⁶⁰ The architect of both of Champlin's Watch Hill cottages was Henry W. Wilkinson of Syracuse. *Neowam* was built in 1900 and remained in the Champlin family until 1953, when it was acquired by Miss Anna E. Ford of Hamden, Connecticut, who rented it summers. Miss Ford was an owner of the Narragansett Inn in the 1930s. Occupants of the cottage during the period of her ownership were the Lewis W. Trayser family of Philadelphia and the Thomas E. Walton family of St. David's, Pennsylvania. Trayser was a vice president of the Curtis Publishing Company. The Walton family home in St. David's was the setting for the 1940 film *The Philadelphia Story*, which starred Cary Grant, Katherine Hepburn, and James Stewart. Miss Ford sold the cottage to Dr. and Mrs. Arthur P. Hotchkiss in 1967. It remained in the Hotchkiss family until the early twenty-first century.

The second of the Champlin cottages, *Wetumanetu*, located on the northwesterly corner of Neowam and Wauwinnet Avenues, was built in 1899 and remained in the Champlin family until 1951. Its name in the Indian language means "Medicine Man's House." In 1951, Col. and Mrs. Herman H. Pohl of Leesburg, Virginia, acquired it. The Pohls had earlier owned *Silversurf*, on Napatree. Later, in 1963, *Wetumanetu* became the home of Dr. John P. Wood and his wife, Dr. Pauline B. Wood.

Cedarhurst, on the easterly side of Neowam Avenue, was built in 1899 for E. A. Hart and E. J. Barney of Cincinnati. From 1902 to 1926, it was the home of the Effingham B. Morris family of Philadelphia. Morris was president of the Girard Trust Company, which in 1982 merged with the Mellon Bank. The Morris's daughter, Caroline Morris Byers, and her husband, J. Frederick Byers of Sewickley, Pennsylvania, owned the cottage from 1926 to 1949. Byers was chairman of the A. M. Byers Co., manufacturers of wrought iron. *Cedarhurst* became the home of the Louis W. Cappelli family in 1950. Cappelli was Secretary of State of Rhode Island, 1932–39, Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island, 1940–44, and finally a Justice of the Superior Court. In 1968, *Cedarhurst* became the home of the George C. Bass family of Delray Beach, Florida.



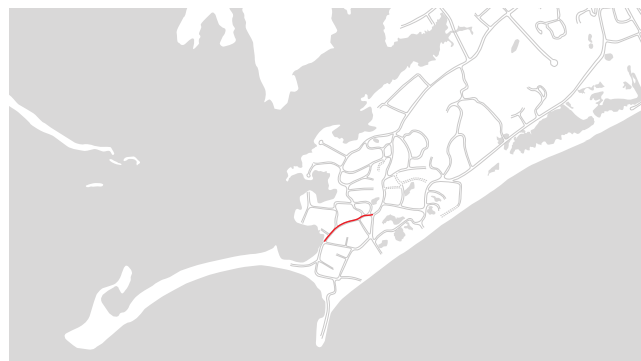
53 Looking over Doane's Pond up Aquidneck Avenue to "The Moorage" and "Echo Lodge." "Ridgeleigh" (later "Far Look") is in the distance.

At the northeasterly corner of Aquidneck Avenue and Foster Cove Road, where a 1970s cottage now stands, stood an earlier cottage, known as *The Moorage*, owned by the family of Judge Asa W. Tenney of Brooklyn, New York, a founder of the Improvement Society (fig. 53). Tenney, who had served as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, 1877–85, was serving as a Judge of the U.S. District Court for that same District at the time of his death in 1897. *The Moorage* was destroyed by fire about 1946.

Next door to the east, *Echo Lodge*, on Aquidneck Avenue as it turns into Noank Avenue, was built in 1886 for James Emott Doane (fig. 53). In 1894, it became the home of William H. Doane of Cincinnati. Doane was a successful businessman, president of the J. A. Fay Woodworking Machinery Co., but is better remembered as a composer of sacred music. He considered music an avocation, but he wrote more than two thousand hymns and served as editor of *The Baptist Hymnal*. In Cincinnati he served as Sunday School superintendent and choir director at Mount Auburn Baptist Church. Among Doane's many philanthropic bequests was his gift of the Doane Memorial Music Building to the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, in honor of its founder, his colleague, the equally famous evangelist Dwight Lyman Moody. Doane was also the donor, in 1895, of the building of the Doane Academy in Granville, Ohio. After the Academy closed in 1927, the building became Denison University's William Howard Doane Library, named in honor of Doane's service as a trustee of the university from 1874 until his death in 1915. Much of Doane's personal collection of books and scores is preserved in the

Cincinnati Library's William H. Doane Collection. In 1956, the James S. Richmond family acquired the *Echo Lodge* property from the Doanes and renamed it *Ushers Acres*.

On the hill to the northeast of *Echo Lodge* is *The Chalet*. According to the National Register, the cottage was built in 1897 for the Misses Susan Keith of Baltimore and Eleanor B. Congdon of Providence, who called it *Cedar Brae*. Owners in the second half of the twentieth century were Mr. and Mrs. William J. Foster of New York.



Wauwinnet Avenue

Going up the hill from Bay Street, on the right or southerly side of Wauwinnet Avenue, are two cottages which fall outside the Everett Farm tract and which were built by Joseph C. York, a sea captain originally from Stonington. The *York House*, or *Wildwood*, dates from about 1845 and was for many years a York family home. To the north, *Fairview*, built in the 1870s, was for many years the residence of Joseph York's son, Postmaster Winslow Nash York, who was appointed to the post in 1885. His son, Edmund P. York, succeeded him in that office and also served many years as secretary to the Watch Hill Fire Department. Mrs. Edmund P. York (Agnes Holberton York) served for fifty-three years as recording secretary of the Improvement Society. Both *Fairview* and *Wildwood* were owned by Moses Payne in 1951. *Fairview*, renamed *Mandalay*, became the summer home of the Robert J. Brockmann family of St. Louis in 1977. Brockmann served as moderator of the Fire District, 1985–95.

Next door to the north, and back within the Everett tract, is *Bouldercrest*, built about 1890 for the Rev. William A. Snively of Louisville, Kentucky. The Rev. Mr. Snively, a brother of the Rev. Summerfield Snively of *Blythbourne*, was a prominent Episcopal minister who was also a writer of religious tracts. The house became

the home of the Herman Muenchinger family in 1961 and remained in that family for more than thirty years.

Between Wauwinnet Avenue and Plimpton Road is *Greycote*, built about 1850 and formerly known as the *Hunt Cottage* after it was acquired by Dr. Ebenezer K. Hunt in 1871. It was enlarged by Dr. Hunt in 1879, and the piazza was extended along three sides. Additional land was added to the property by an 1885 conveyance of Charles Everett to Dr. Hunt. The cottage was further modified by Dudley Phelps in 1902. From 1942 until 1984, it was owned by the family of Sarah A. and Samuel R. Scott. In 1984, it became the home of the Albert C. Ewert family.

Across Wauwinnet Avenue, *Stonyhurst* was built about 1897 for Hines Strobridge of Cincinnati. Strobridge was the principal of Strobridge & Company, which became known, beginning in the 1870s, as a printer of fine posters. When in 1909 Ringling Brothers purchased the Barnum & Bailey Circus from the estate of James E. Bailey, Strobridge & Company became the sole printer to the new circus conglomerate. Strobridge prints have become prized collectors' items, the company being generally regarded as one of the premier American printing houses of its period. When the successor corporation, the Cincinnati Strobridge Lithography Company, was sold in 1960, the company made gifts of its collection of posters to the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Cincinnati Historical Society, and the Cincinnati Library. The latter gift, to the Library's Art & Music Department, comprises some 1,035 posters printed from the 1890s through the mid-1920s.¹⁶¹

In 1922, *Stonyhurst* became the summer home of the Samuel Rea family of New York and later of his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph U. Bercovici (Genevieve Rea Bercovici), also of New York. Bercovici was president of New York Navigation. Renters in the 1940s and 1950s included Mrs. Elton Parks of New York and Mrs. Walbridge Taft, also of New York. Elton Parks, Jr., was married to Joan B. Forgan, who had grown up at *Cedarhurst* on Browning Road. The cottage remained in family ownership for more than seventy years.

The Dormers, the cottage that tops the hill above Aquidneck and Everett Avenues, was built in 1907 for Miss Mary W. Lippincott, who owned the property from 1905 to 1919. It was later acquired by John M. Goetchius, a president of the Chapel, who gave it to the Chapel in 1938. The Chapel in turn sold it to the Reginald H. Fullerton family in 1944. The Fullertons had spent the previous several seasons at *Ridgeleigh*. Reginald H. Fullerton, Jr., served for many years as treasurer of the Misquamicut Club.



Everett Avenue

On the east side of Everett Avenue, south of the Memorial Building of the Improvement Society, is *Inglecote*, earlier identified as the eighteenth-century Foster and the nineteenth-century Vose and Everett farmhouse (see fig. 27). Living in the house in 1861 was the Benjamin Franklin Clark family, whose daughter, Susan Emily Clark, was born there that year. Married in 1880 to Gurdon Byron Hiscox, she and her husband would become the parents of Marion Hiscox, who, married to Thomas F. Moore, would become the mother of Thomas F. Moore, Jr., George C. Moore, and Susan Moore, later Susan Markham and, later still, Susan McShane. The Thomas F. Moore family would live at *Sunnandene* on Bluff Avenue.

In 1886, *Inglecote* became the home of the Jacob S. Burnet family. In the twentieth century, it became the home, successively, of Mrs. Ivers W. Adams of Dorchester, Massachusetts, and Miss Clara A. Adams of Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, and, in 1965, of the John R. Howell family of Sarasota, Florida. In 1975, it was acquired by the John F. O'Donnell family of New York.

At the southwesterly corner of Everett Avenue and Westerly Road is *Rock Ridge*, which was built about 1887 for Lyneas Norton, one of the three partners in the Everett Farm Syndicate. It was later the home of the Henry Bourne Joy family of Grosse Point Farms, Michigan. The cottage was subsequently occupied by the Joys' daughter, Helen Joy Lee, who in the Hurricane of 1938 survived a horrific trip across the bay from her cottage on Napatree. Over many years, Mrs. Lee, who later lived in Avondale, made numerous adventurous travels around the world and reported them in her column in *The Sun*, "Traveling with Gran'ma," and in a book of the same name.¹⁶² In 1959, *Rock Ridge* became the home of the George L. Wrenn II family, and, in 1971, of the John J. Smith family.

Just across Everett Avenue stands *Stony Path*. The *Stony Path* property was acquired by Frances A. Clarke (Mrs. Josiah H. Clarke) of Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1893.¹⁶³ Mrs. Clarke owned the house until her death in 1912 and left it to her daughter, Mary W. Newell (Mrs. Edward A. Newell) of Concord, Massachusetts. Mrs. Newell's sister, Frances A. Kinnicutt, became a subsequent owner. In 1933, *Stony Path* became the summer home of Col. and Mrs. George Marion Brown of New York and Greenwich. Brown, a graduate of the United States Military Academy, was the founder of General Roofing Manufacturing Company, predecessor of Certain Teed Corporation. In 1955, the cottage became the home of the family of Marjorie Walker Bliss (Mrs. Richard Ames Bliss) of Northampton, Massachusetts, and remained in their ownership until 2002. In the early twenty-first century, the cottage was thoroughly renovated.

Diagonally across Westerly Road, on the righthand corner of Everett Avenue, *Sea Shell* was built in 1940 as a chauffeur's cottage and garage for *Stony Path*. *Sea Shell* stands on the site of an earlier cottage, known by the same name and owned by Dr. W. P. Langworthy (fig. 54). That earlier cottage was razed in 1939, presumably by Col. and Mrs. Brown, who acquired the property that year. In 1951, *Sea Shell* became the home of the Francis E. Ahern family of Providence. Inherited by the Aherns' daughter, Joan Ahern Lemp (Mrs. Michael

A. Lemp), it has been substantially modified and improved over the years by its owners, Dr. and Mrs. Lemp.

Also on the right side of Everett Avenue, on the hill below *Sea Shell*, are *The Dunes* and *Road's End*. *The Dunes* was built about 1886 for William A. Procter of Procter & Gamble and Cincinnati (figs. 54 & 55). It later became the home of Charles Anderson, one of four Anderson brothers from Cincinnati to settle at Watch Hill: in addition to Charles, William P. Anderson, Joseph L. Anderson, and Davis Carneal Anderson. The Anderson family arrived at Cincinnati by way of Virginia and Kentucky. They were first at St. Peter's Parish, New Kent County, Virginia, in 1686, and then in Kentucky after the Revolution. In 1834, Larz Anderson (the first of that name) left Kentucky for Cincinnati, where he married Miss Catherine Longworth. The Watch Hill Anderson brothers were sons of that marriage. They were also first cousins of Major Robert Anderson, who defended Fort Sumter in the first engagement of the Civil War.

Larz Anderson III, a nephew of the Watch Hill Anderson brothers, while not himself building a cottage at Watch Hill, became a member of the Misquamicut Club in 1901. Son of their brother, Nicholas Longworth Anderson, he had a distinguished diplomatic career. After serving at the U.S. Embassy in London, he became Ambassador to Italy (1911–12) and then to Japan (1912–13). Following his death in 1937, his widow, Isabel Weld Perkins Anderson, presented



54 Looking north from the Ocean House along Westerly Road about 1900, are the Schoolhouse, the first "Sea Shell," "Seaview" (later "Gitche Gumee"), and "Wawaloam" (later "Crosswinds"). On the far right is "The Dunes," and next along Niantic Avenue are "Edgemere" and "Del Mar." The Anderson windmill rises above Anderson Pond.



55 About 1920, Anderson Pond and boathouse, with “Edgemere.” Along Everett Avenue are “Road’s End” and “The Dunes”; behind them are the Ocean House and its long-vanished staff lodgings.

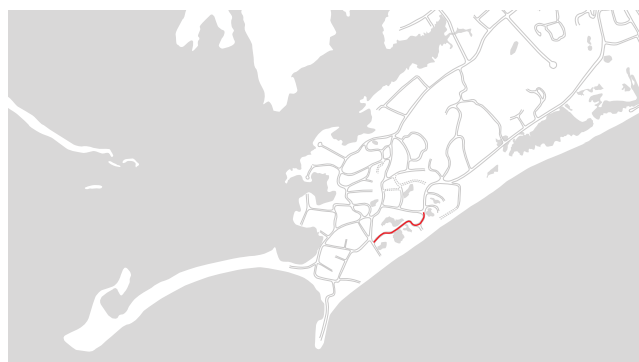
their home, Anderson House, on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington, D.C., and its extensive collection of decorative and fine arts to the Society of the Cincinnati.¹⁶⁴ At Mrs. Anderson’s death in 1948, she left their sixty-four acre Brookline, Massachusetts, estate (named *Weld* after her grandfather, William Fletcher Weld), and its collection of antique carriages and automobiles to the Town of Brookline. The Larz Anderson Collection became the nation’s oldest motorcar museum.

In the immediate pre-World War I years, *The Dunes* was owned by the family of the Rt. Rev. Samuel G. Babcock of Boston. Bishop Babcock was the Suffragan Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Massachusetts. In the same period, the Suffragan Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, the Rt. Rev. Thomas F. Davies of Springfield, and his family were listed in a 1914 summer social directory as being resident nearby on Niantic Avenue (whether at *Sunnymere* or *Belvedere* is not known). *The Dunes* became the home of the John Irving Romer family of New York in 1916 and remained theirs until 1937. Romer was president of Printer’s Ink Publishing Co. In 1968, the cottage became the home of the William J. Griffin III family of Greenwich, Connecticut.

Road’s End, known first as the *Wendell Cottage*, was built about 1885 for Atwood C. Collins of Hartford, president and chairman of the U.S. Security Trust Company (fig. 55). In the pre-World War I years, it was occupied by the family of Lucius F. Robinson of Hartford.¹⁶⁵ Robinson, a lawyer, was a partner of his family’s law firm, Robinson & Cole. In the 1950s, the Northam L. Griggs family of New York and then the Thomas G. Ahern family of Norwich, Connecticut, occupied the cottage. In 1959, it was acquired by the John S.

Burke, Jr., family of New York and remained in their ownership for nearly forty years. Mr. Burke, who had grown up summers at *Graydon* on Ocean View Highway, succeeded his father as president of the New York department store B. Altman & Co. and was also president of the Altman Foundation. In 1996, George W. Connell of Haverford, Pennsylvania, acquired the cottage. Connell had grown up summers at *Overlook*, on Ocean View Highway.

On Niantic Avenue, at the corner of Everett Avenue, is the cottage that has been known successively as *Seaview*, *The Dug-Out*, and *Gitchee Gumee* (fig. 54). It was built about 1895 for Miss E. Burnap of Baltimore and, as indicated by its second name, was at one time moved from its original site nearer Westerly Road forward toward Niantic Avenue; the original site was then dug out for the garden that lies behind the house. For many years the cottage was owned by the Campbell and Cheney families, first by Miss Harriet S. Campbell of Providence and then by her niece, Helen Campbell Cheney (Mrs. Philip Cheney). The Cheney family were owners of the Cheney Brothers Silk Mills in Manchester, Connecticut. In the mid-nineteenth century, the company was the first in this country to master the art of silk weaving and was at one time the largest company of its kind in the United States. In 1963, Mrs. Ray B. Westerfield acquired the cottage. Beatrice Putney Westerfield, who was known as “B.B.” to several generations of Watch Hill children, regaled them with stories, usually from the classics, afternoon after afternoon, on East Beach. She was a familiar character about town, usually sporting a Y (Yale) cap, either on her bicycle or in her open car.



Niantic Avenue

Across Niantic Avenue from *Gitchee Gumee* and across Everett Avenue from *The Dunes* lies a property associated with the William P. Ander-



56 *William P. Anderson
as a young officer.*

son family. *Edgemere* was built in 1886 for Miss Laura Wiggins of Cincinnati, who was the aunt of Mrs. William P. Anderson (fig. 57; see also figs. 54 & 55). When Miss Wiggins died in 1897, she left the house to her sister, Mrs. J. R. Skinner (Emma Louisa Skinner), also of Cincinnati, who owned it until her death in 1914. The property then passed to her niece, Mrs. Anderson, thus remaining in the family.¹⁶⁶ Mr. Anderson had died in 1897, and the original William P. Anderson house, *Del Mar*, just to the east of *Edgemere*, had burned about 1913 (fig. 58; see also figs. 54 & 57). The transfer of *Edgemere* to Mrs. Anderson created a single large Anderson family tract, running along Niantic Avenue from Everett Avenue to the Niantic Avenue entrance to East Beach and from Niantic Avenue to the ocean.

William P. Anderson, who was in the cottonseed oil business, had fought for the Union in the Civil War, serving on the staffs of Generals Terrill, Burnside, and Wright (fig. 56). He was wounded at both Seven Pines and Shiloh. At Watch Hill, he served as the first president of both the Improvement Society (1889–95) and the Misquamicut Club (1895–97) and was informally referred to as the “Mayor of Watch Hill.” He was regularly to be seen driving about in a one-horse surrey. His horse, which was stabled at Lanphear’s Stable on Bay Street, was noted for dependability and good sense, for at the end of Anderson’s drives, once unhitched, it regularly walked unaccompanied back down to Bay Street and its stable.

Remaining in the Anderson family, the *Edgemere* property passed to Anderson’s son, Vachel W. Anderson, and his granddaughter, Mary Anderson Coombe (Mrs. Harry James Coombe), and, subsequently, to her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Paul D.

Myers (Mary Anderson Coombe Myers, who was known as “Susie”). Stephen Birmingham tells a story about Mrs. Vachel Anderson, which he attributes to her granddaughter, Mrs. Myers. At the height of the great Hurricane of 1938, Mrs. Anderson, playing bridge at the house of a friend, looked at her watch and remarked that it was several minutes after the time that she had instructed her chauffeur, Walter, to pick her up and take her home.

While the storm raged on, and Walter still failed to appear, Mrs. Anderson became increasingly annoyed. There was a dinner party to dress for. When Walter finally appeared, soaking wet and close to hysteria, he explained that not only the car but the entire garage containing it had been swept into the sea.

“Nevertheless, Walter,” Mrs. Anderson said crisply, “you must learn to be more punctual.”¹⁶⁷



57 “*Edgemere*” and “*Del Mar*.”



58 *Anderson Pond, boathouse, and “Del Mar.”*



59 Niantic Avenue, looking west about 1915, Anderson Pond on the left and Mickill Pond on the right. The Anderson windmill dominates the view.

Paul Myers, president of the Cincinnati advertising firm Ralph H. Jones Co., was a president of the Chapel and twice president of the Misquamicut Club. The Myers were notably hospitable, and for some two decades in the 1960s and 1970s, their Labor Day weekend dinner dance at *Edgemere* was a festive fixture, marking the end of the summer season. After Mrs. Myers's death in 1980, the Chapel Undercroft was renovated and dedicated to her memory.

In the late 1980s, Myers sold *Edgemere* and built a new cottage, *Pomme de Mer*, on the knoll to the east, above where a vegetable garden and a garage, the latter converted in the 1960s into a guest cottage known as *Potato Patch*, had stood. Myers enjoyed telling a joke on himself. He had a particular fondness for the fine red potatoes that were available at Fiore's Market. He did not learn for some time that these delicacies were his, being provided to Fiore's by his gardener, and that when his cook bought them there, he was paying for his own produce. Myers continued the family tradition of hospitality at his new cottage. He also regularly opened *Pomme de Mer* to a Tuesday morning summer Bible class, led by the Rev. Hillary R. Bercovici, who had grown up at *Stonyhurst*. In the 1990s, his Boxing Day parties at *Pomme de Mer* became a regular feature of the Christmas holidays at Watch Hill.

In the years before the 1938 hurricane, there was a windmill on the Anderson Pond, just below where *Pomme de Mer* was later built (fig. 59; see also fig. 24). In the 1890s, there were a boathouse on the northerly side of the pond and a water toboggan slide in the pond. A boardwalk ran across the dunes to East Beach and a summerhouse.

Just across the street, on the northerly side of Niantic Avenue, stands *Belvedere*, built in 1890 by George N. Burdick of Westerly. It was occupied for a number of summers in the late twentieth century by the Edwin L. Russell family of New York. It was substantially renovated at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Smack up against *Belvedere* stands the little cottage called the *Studio* or *Sunnymere* (fig. 60), but most often referred to as the *Spite House*, since, as the story goes, it was built about 1895 by Miss Elizabeth Adams of Baltimore to spite the Burdicks, whose house, she felt, had spited her by obstructing the view east from her *Baltimore Cottage* (later *Crosswinds*) to the ocean.

Albert Einstein spent the summer of 1934 at *Sunnymere* as the guest of his friends Dr. Gustav Bucky and his wife, who had rented the cottage for the season.¹⁶⁸ Einstein distinguished himself locally that summer by numerous misadventures on the water, particularly on his sails on Little Narragansett Bay, where he "was notorious for leaving his sailboat high and dry after every outing."¹⁶⁹ John B. Severance offers other stories of Einstein's sailing exploits, including an incident related to him by Dr. John D. Tobin, who, fishing one day with his father off Lighthouse Point, noticed a small sailboat moving in the general direction of Block Island (some fourteen miles offshore):

There was no wind at all, and Einstein was riding helplessly on the outgoing tide. Usually he did not mind being becalmed because he could get out his notebook and work on calculations while he waited for the wind to come up. On this occasion, he was grateful to accept a tow. Another time, however, he refused help when the centerboard of the little catboat became stuck firmly in a sandbar at low tide. He waited patiently for high tide to free the boat. There were other hazardous moments, such as when he fetched up on some rocks off Fishers Island, or when he was saved, in the nick of time, from crashing the boat into a sea wall... The consensus was that Einstein was not a good sailor. He could not name the parts of a sailboat, did not understand the meaning of aids to navigation, could not plot a course with chart and compass, did not bother with life jackets, and could not swim. People in the village learned to look out for him.¹⁷⁰

Larkin family members recall that in order to safeguard Einstein, Daniel F. Larkin, Jr., was enlisted to try and teach him the rudiments

of sailing, but to little avail. In gratitude for his efforts, Einstein treated young Larkin to lunch. When Dan, Jr.'s father learned of this, he made the young man immediately reimburse Einstein for the lunch, so as not to jeopardize his amateur standing as a national junior sailing champion.¹⁷¹

Other tales are told of Einstein's time here. In addition to his sailboat, he also had a rowboat and took to anchoring it in the middle of the bay, sitting there in quiet contemplation. Perhaps feeling that his inactivity might arouse critical curiosity, he acquired a fishing rod as a prop, but was careful to leave it unbaited. When, on one occasion, Einstein needed to cash a check, he asked to be taken to a local bank and was introduced to the Washington Trust Company. Not having an account, he was told he would need an officer's signature, which the president, Arthur Perry, was happy to supply. Would Mr. Perry like to see some identification?, Einstein asked. "Oh, no, Dr. Einstein," replied Perry, "we know who you are."¹⁷²

In 1955, *Sunnymere* was acquired by the family of George L. Wrenn II and subsequently by his sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Farnham, and their children, Alexander Farnham, Joseph H. Farnham, Jr., and Susan Farnham Ford (Mrs. Achille F. Ford). Alex Farnham was a prolific landscape painter whose many views of Watch Hill were prized items at the biennial Improvement Society art shows.

Miss Adams's *Baltimore Cottage*, built on Westerly Road about 1887, was later known successively as *Seven Gables*, *Wawaloam*, and *Crosswinds* (fig. 61; see also fig. 54). In 1901, the cottage became the home of the Manton Metcalf family of Orange, New Jersey, who owned it until 1930. Upon Mr. Metcalf's death in 1923, he left a substantial bequest and his old master art collection to the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design. His generosity prompted his two brothers, Stephen O. and Jesse H. Metcalf, to give the funds for the construction of a new museum building. Their gift was made in honor of their sister, Eliza Greene Radeke, whose personal attention had largely shaped the museum's collections.

The F. Kingsbury Curtis real estate corporation, Tuxedo Houses, Inc., which acquired *Wawaloam* in 1930, owned it until 1939, when it became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Nelson (Daphne Brown Nelson) of New York, whose parents, the Browns, lived across the street at *Stony Path*. During the same period, the Nelsons' daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. James S. Richmond of

Savannah, lived next door at *Sunnymere*. The Browns also owned *Sea Shell*. The family and its four generations, therefore, had a four-cottage compound.

In the late 1950s and the 1960s, the Britton Browne family made *Wawaloam* their home. Mrs. Browne was Joan Gardner Browne, who had grown up at *Moana* on Larkin Road. In 1970, *Crosswinds*, as it was renamed, became the summer home, for some twenty-five years, of the O. Waring Mellick family of Greenwich. In the early twenty-first century, the cottage underwent major renovation.

Further down East Beach, at the junction of Ninigret and Niantic Avenues, Sherman W. Knevals built the shingle-style cottage called *Intermere* in 1887. Knevals, a New York lawyer, was a partner of Chester A. Arthur, later to become the 21st President of the United States. Knevals was a founder and the second president (1898–1905) of the Misquamicut Club.



60 "Sunnymere." To the right is "Belveduto."

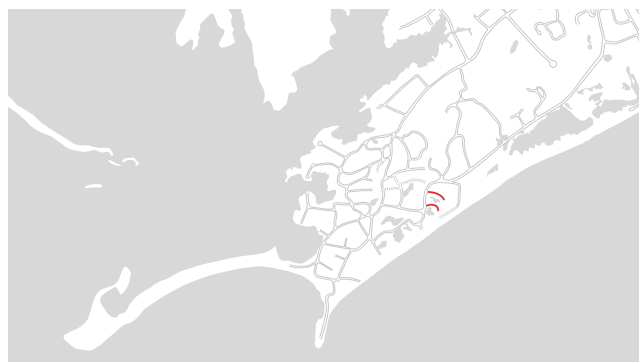


61 "Wawaloam" (later "Crosswinds").

Later, *Intermere* was for many years the summer home of the family of Judge Thomas Day Thacher of New York. Thacher, a lawyer and partner of the firm his father had established, Simpson, Thacher and Bartlett, served as a judge both of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York (1925–30) and of the New York State Court of Appeals (1943–48). He was also Solicitor General of the United States (1930–33). Judge Thacher's first wife and the mother of his children was Eunice Booth Burrall Thacher. After her death, he married Eleanor Morris Lloyd of Philadelphia. The second Mrs. Thacher, a daughter of the Effingham Lloyds of *Cedarhurst*, was the widow of Stacy Lloyd. She and Mr. Lloyd were the parents of Morris Lloyd, who married Hope Starr of *The Point*.

Inherited by Judge Thacher's daughter, Sarah Thacher Storm (Mrs. George L. Storm) of New Canaan, Connecticut, *Intermere*, renamed *Pine Beach*, became the home of the Lodewyk J. Jiskoot family of Greenwich, Connecticut, in 1959. "Lo" Jiskoot had been born and educated in The Netherlands and came from a prominent Dutch family. He was the grandson of J. L. Pierson, the founder of the investment bank Pierson, Holding & Pierson. Pierson was also a financier of the Canadian Pacific Railway and Finance Minister of The Netherlands. Jiskoot's mother, Anna Pierson, was a Lady in Waiting to Queen Juliana. At his death in 1979, Jiskoot was executive vice president of Thomson McKinnon Securities, Inc. He had previously been managing director of N.V. Deli Maatschappij, holders of large estates in the then Dutch East Indies, and chairman of Imperial Commodities Corporation, New York. During the Second World War, Jiskoot convinced Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia to establish the first free port in America, on Staten Island, allowing resources of the Dutch East Indies, including much of the world's supply of rubber, to be brought to New York for the war effort and preventing Japan from having access to them. As a result, and owing to his service with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in England, he was appointed an adviser to the U.S. State Department, 1942–45. Jiskoot was introduced to Watch Hill by Ambassador Arthur Gardner, whom he had known in Cuba, and it was at Ambassador Gardner's suggestion that he bought *Pine Beach* sight-unseen, over the telephone.¹⁷³ The H. Peter Dooney family, also of Greenwich, acquired the property in 1981.

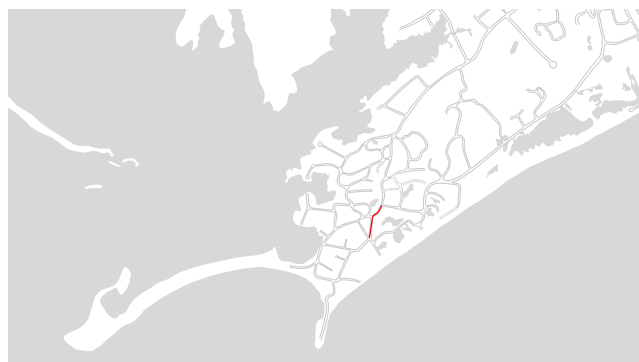
The adjacent chauffeur's cottage and garage of the Thacher house, on Kidd's Way, was transformed into a cottage by the Storm family, who called it *Wintermere*. In 1981, it became the home of the Richard Judson Gates family of Hartford and was renamed *Sea Sounds*.



Kidd's Way & Aloha Road

Next, eastward along the beach, *East Dunes* was built on Kidd's Way in 1898–99 for Edward Standish Bradford of Springfield, Massachusetts. Bradford had retired from the Hampden Cotton Mill in Springfield in 1885 to pursue a political career. He served as mayor of Springfield and then in both the Massachusetts House of Representatives and the Senate. In 1959, the cottage became the summer home of the George M. Laughlin III family of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Laughlin was a grandson of the founder of the Jones and Laughlin Steel Company of Pittsburgh.

The beach bungalows just to the east, toward Manatuck Avenue, were built, respectively, by the W. King White and Hunter S. Marston families on the sites of the cottages *Longshore* and *Aloha*, both destroyed in the Hurricane of 1938.



Westerly Road between Everett & Ninigret Avenues

On Westerly Road, next to *Warwaloam* (later *Crosswinds*), are three cottages—*The Wickiup*, *Wigwam*, and *Tepee*—built for Mrs. Clara H. Stanton (fig. 62). *The Wickiup* was built about 1890. In 1936, the

Frank G. Ahern family acquired the property and owned it until 1944, when they conveyed it to the Geoffrey L. Moore family. The Moores owned it for some forty years. In the 1970s and 1980s, the house was rented and occupied for a number of seasons by the family (unrelated) of the Hon. John D. J. Moore, who served as U.S. Ambassador to Ireland, 1969–75. Ambassador Moore's daughter, Anne Moore, M.D., became a professor of clinical medicine at Weill Cornell and chairman of the Breast Committee at New York–Presbyterian Hospital. The cottage was purchased by F. Bradford Westerfield in 1987. Westerfield had grown up summers with his family, the Putney Westerfields, around the corner at *Meramour*. His grandmother, Beatrice Westerfield, lived two doors away, at *Gitche Gume*. Mrs. Westerfield (Megan Herriott Westerfield) had grown up at *The Cedars* on Ninigret Avenue.

Wigwam was built about 1890 as a stable for Mrs. Stanton's horse. It was converted into a residence in 1900. In the mid-twentieth century, it belonged to Miss Frances Lally of Brookline, Massachusetts, who named it *Rosemont*. In 1960, it became the home of the Louis Calder, Jr., family of Armonk, New York, whose name in reverse, *Redlac*, became the name of the cottage. The Calders later renamed the cottage *Wigwam*.

Tepee, also known for a time as *Montrose*, was built as a rental house for Mrs. Stanton in 1899. In the 1940s and 1950s, the cottage was owned by the Rev. and Mrs. James G. Graham of Washington, D.C. The Rev. Mr. Graham was noted for his yearly communications to tenants informing them of improvements made to the cottage since the previous season, making it "even lovelier." Some neighborhood wags came to refer to the cottage itself as *Even Lovelier*. Among the tenants in this period were Mrs. Gustavus Ober, Jr., and her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. John Pierpont Morgan II of Oyster Bay, New York. In 1964, the cottage became the home of the Robert C. Gordon family of New Canaan. In 1983, it was acquired by the family of Dr. and Mrs. Donald R. Kelly of Glastonbury, Connecticut.

On the hill across Westerly Road is the *Rockpile*, a late-twentieth-century replacement of *Spencecliffe*, earlier known as *House-on-the-Hill*, which burned in 1988. All that remained were the handsome fieldstone first-story walls and terraces. The original cottage was built in 1902 for Jacob S. Burnet, a partner of the Everett Farm Syndicate. In the 1930s, it was owned by F. Kingsbury Curtis. From 1940, for some thirty years, the John R. Quinn family owned it, until it became the home of the Thomas P. Kellogg, Jr., family of Darien, Connecticut,



62 Westerly Road cottages viewed from the north, left to right, "The Wickiup," "Wigwam," and "Tepee."

in 1971. Mrs. Kellogg was Jane Ritchey Kellogg, who had grown up at *Westmoreland* on Arraquat Road. The Kelloggs renamed the cottage the *Rockpile*. After the fire, Diana Kellogg (later Mrs. Neil N. Burger), the architect daughter of the family, designed the new house, which greatly resembles the original one.

On the northerly side of Westerly Road, across from the *Rockpile* and *Tepee* and overlooking Doane's Pond, the small pond on Noank Avenue, is *The Bungalow*. The cottage was built in 1899 as a rental property for Mrs. Stanton. In the early 1920s, the cottage was occupied by the Harry Darlington, Jr., family of Sewickley, Pennsylvania. In 1941, it became the home of the James W. McCormick family of Westerly. The McCormicks owned McCormick's, the department store on Broad Street in central Westerly. In 1966, the James G. Reardon family of Worcester, Massachusetts, acquired the property and owned it for nearly forty years. Mr. Reardon, a lawyer, was moderator of the Fire District (1972–84).

Next door is *Hillside*, built about 1897 by William P. Anderson for his son, Vachel W. Anderson, who owned it for another thirty years. As an indication of the liveliness of the early Watch Hill real estate market, it should be noted that the *Hillside* property, Lot 46 of the Everett Farm subdivision, had changed hands three times in the four years between 1887, when the Syndicate conveyed it to William P. Langworthy, and 1891, when Frederick A. Jordan conveyed it to William P. Anderson. In 1914, the cottage was occupied by the Spencer family of Columbus, Georgia, and Washington, D.C. Samuel Spencer, born in Columbus, was the first president of the Southern Railway. His son, Henry Benning Spencer, also a president

of the Southern, later lived at *Hillside*. The Spencers occasionally came to Westerly in their private railroad car.

The Andersons' daughter, Mary Anderson Coombe (Mrs. Harry J. Coombe), who acquired the cottage in 1930, sold it in 1945 to Alice B. Painter Sloan (Mrs. Burrows Sloan), who had grown up at *Graydon* on Ocean View Highway. Mrs. Sloan in turn sold it to the B. Everett Joline family of Montclair, New Jersey, in 1951. The Hvolbeck family of Greenwich acquired the property in 1980.

Across Westerly Road, on the southerly side between *Tepee* and *Briar Rock*, is *Chenoweth*, later *The Ledges* and *Marbella*. The cottage was built about 1914 for Mrs. Stanton by R. A. Sherman's Sons Co. of Westerly. It became the home of the Charles E. Sherman family in 1946. In 1969 and for some thirty years, the cottage was the home of the Albert E. Carlson family.



Ninigret Avenue & Ocean View Highway to Overlook Drive

Early on, Ninigret Avenue was referred to as "Cincinnati Row."¹⁷⁴ On the ocean or southerly side of the avenue, at its junction with Westerly Road, is *Briar Rock*, built in 1911 for Charles Davis Jones of Cincinnati, an officer of the Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company and the Little Miami Railroad Co. Beginning in 1932, the cottage was for many years the home of Col. and Mrs. Joseph G. Miller of St. Louis, who had earlier rented *Wildwood* on Bay Street. In the early 1940s, *Briar Rock* became the home of their daughter, Caroline Miller Gatch (Mrs. Hayward H. Gatch), also of St. Louis, and her family. Mr. Gatch was the owner of Tennant Insurance Co. there. In 1980, the cottage became the summer home of William R. Battey, Jr., and his brother, Michael S. Battey, who owned it until 1997. The Batteys were great-grandsons of Commodore William J. Battey, who founded the Yacht Club.

Next door and to the east of *Briar Rock* is *Sunnymede*, built for Frank J. Jones of Cincinnati about 1888.¹⁷⁵ Jones, a lawyer, served as president of the Little Miami Railroad Co. and also as president of the Cincinnati Equitable Insurance Co.

In the late nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth, *Sunnymede* was occupied by the James Dawson Layng family of Somers, New York. Mrs. Layng had first come to Watch Hill in 1866.¹⁷⁶ The Layngs' daughter Agnas married Ashbel Green, whose family lived around the corner at *Hillside*. The Greens' son James was the first husband of Mary Hunter Marston, who had grown up at *Aloha*. Agnas's brother, James D. Layng, Jr., married Vernona Mitchell Spencer, daughter of Samuel Spencer and sister of Henry Benning Spencer. Vernona's older brother, Vivian Spencer, married Sara Means. The junior Layngs and the Spencers both lived on Avondale Road in Avondale, the Layngs at *Sunset House* and the Spencers at *The Lottery*. Sara Means Spencer was president of the Improvement Society (1929–39). The Layngs' grandson, Timothy B. Kniffin, later married Hatsy Moore, who grew up at *Appleby* on Sunset Avenue.

Beginning in 1937, and for some thirty-six years, *Sunnymede* was successively the home of the John Barnes Townsend family of Radnor, Pennsylvania, and of Mrs. Townsend's niece, Mrs. Richard G. Croft (Jean Brooke Croft). In 1973, it became the home of author Emily Kimbrough Wrench and Sophia Yarnall Jacobs, both of New York.¹⁷⁷ During their ownership of the cottage for more than twenty years, their good friend, the author Cornelia Otis Skinner, was a regular visitor.¹⁷⁸ Another frequent guest was Madame Pandit, sister of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India, and herself Ambassador to the United States and to the United Nations, where she served as the first woman president of the General Assembly. The singer Marian Anderson, who in 1939 had been barred, on account of her race, from giving a concert in Washington's Constitution Hall, was a weekend guest at *Sunnymede* in 1970.¹⁷⁹ A major restoration of the cottage took place in the 1990s.

Next door to *Sunnymede*, just opposite Valley Path, is *Sea Crest*, built in 1888 for Davis Carneal Anderson of Cincinnati (fig. 63).¹⁸⁰ It became the home of the Andersons' daughter, Rebecca Anderson Perin, and her husband, Nelson E. Perin of Washington, who had grown up three doors down the street at *The Cedars*. Perin served as president of both the Misquamicut Club and the Chapel. According to *Seaside Topics*, *Sea Crest* and *Surfside*, two doors to the east, were

the earliest cottages in the area. The Perins' daughter, Anne Wallingford Perin, served in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II. Her sister, Carnealia Perin Burling Tyler, was married first to Edward Burling, Jr., a partner of Covington & Burling, the Washington law firm which his father had founded. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the cottage was still in the family of the original owner, owned by Mrs. Tyler's daughters, Anne Burling and Lucinda Burling Emmet, the latter married to Grenville T. Emmet III, who had grown up at *West Cottage* on Water's Edge Road.

Just to the east of *Sea Crest* is *Ninigret*, which was built in 1899–1900 for the George A. Pope family of Baltimore (figs. 63 & 64). The Popes had acquired the property from Davis C. Anderson in 1899. In the 1930s and 1940s, occupants were the Frank A. Sayles family of



63 Looking west along Ninigret Avenue about 1910, left to right, “The Cedars,” “Surfside,” “Ninigret,” and “Sea Crest.” On the far right is “The Boulders” (later “La Maritima”).



64 Looking across Mickill Pond from Niantic Avenue are “Ninigret” and “Surfside.” A corner of “The Cedars” is visible on the far right.

Pawtucket. The Tylor Field family of Cincinnati acquired the cottage from the Popes in 1947. In 1957, the cottage became the home of the Edward Breck family of Springfield, Massachusetts, and remained in the family for some forty years. Breck was the president of the John H. Breck Company, manufacturer of Breck Shampoo and other hair care products. In the 1950s and 1960s, Breck's daughters, Nancy, Judy, and Connie, and their mother and two cousins were the glamorous “Breck Girls” in the company's ads. After being sold by the Brecks in the late 1990s, the cottage was substantially renovated.

Next to the east is *Surfside*, built for Walter Snowden Smith of Syracuse, New York, in 1886 (figs. 63 & 64). At the time, it was the only house between East Beach and Foster's Cove.¹⁸¹ In a 1902 map, a cottage called *Surfside* is shown on Niantic Avenue, on the slope just opposite the entryway to East Beach. The lot upon which it appears to have stood, Lot 92 of the Everett subdivision, became incorporated in the property of *The Cedars*. A well on the southerly portion of the property was for many years the only visible indication that there had been a house at that first location. If the same, *Surfside* was apparently relocated sometime after 1902 to Lot 91 of the Everett plat, fronting on Ninigret Avenue and running to Niantic Avenue. That lot was initially owned by Albert W. Whelpley, who bought it from the Syndicate in 1886 and sold it to Smith in 1893. In 1946, *Surfside* became the home of the John B. Hollister family of Cincinnati. Hollister was a partner of Senator Robert A. Taft in the law firm of Taft, Stettinius & Hollister. He also served as a U.S. Representative from the First District of Ohio, 1931–37, and as director of the federal International Cooperation Administration, 1955–57, an agency of the State Department charged with providing international development aid.

The Cedars, the rambling cottage just to the east of *Surfside*, at the junction of Ninigret and Niantic Avenues, was built about 1890 for Dr. Joseph Anderson of the Cincinnati family (fig. 65; see also figs. 63 & 64). It was later owned by Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Perin of Baltimore, the parents of Nelson E. Perin. Perin Senior was president of Baltimore's United Railways and Electric Company. At Watch Hill he served as the first treasurer of the Misquamicut Club. In 1944, the cottage became the home of the Samuel P. Rotan family of Philadelphia. Mr. Rotan served as U.S. District Attorney for Philadelphia, 1902–26. In 1954, *The Cedars* was acquired by the Sterling Orr family of Springfield, Massachusetts, who owned it for some thirty years. From the early 1980s into the early 1990s, it was the home of the Richard L. Herriott family.



65 "The Cedars."

On the north side of Ninigret Avenue, at the corner of Westerly Road, *Highland Lodge*, later *Meramour*, was built in 1898 for William H. Haile of Springfield; Haile was a Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts (1890–93). The Hailes still owned the property in 1938, when the great windmill there (one of only two remaining at Watch Hill) was levelled by the hurricane. In the 1940s, the cottage was the home of the family of Judge and Mrs. John Ferguson. It is Mrs. Ferguson's son, Ensign James Gordon Woodruff, in whose memory his mother gave the memorial stone bench at the corner.¹⁸² In the 1960s, the Putney Westerfield family of Greenwich owned the property. Westerfield, who was publisher of *Fortune* magazine, had summered with his parents, the Ray B. Westerfields, at *Sea Echo*. When the Putney Westerfields moved to California, Mrs. Westerfield (Anne Montgomery Westerfield), long active in conservation as an officer and director of the Garden Club of America, became a founding director of the Peninsula Open Space Trust and played an instrumental role in expansion of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Beginning in 1967 and for some thirty years, *Meramour* was the home of the family of Dr. Nicholas Daukas, who was the brother of John Daukas at *Rock Rose*. In the early twentieth century, the cottage underwent a major renovation.

To the east is *Pinecroft*, built in 1899–1900 for G. Pierrepont Davis of Hartford. It was later known as *Tick-Tock House*, when in 1950 it became the home of the Andrew Shiland family of New York; Shiland had his clock collection there. When the Whitney sisters, Elliot Whitney Wolcott and Florence Whitney Clark, acquired the cottage in 1971, they renamed it *Minnebama*, a native Indian name for by-the-water, after their grandmother's cottage at Westhampton. It

continues in family ownership through Mrs. Wolcott's son, Whitney George, and his wife, Meredith Mallory George.

Next, *The Fenways* was built in 1902–03 for Herbert N. Fenner of Providence. Fenner was president of the New England Butt Company. In 1957, the cottage became the home of Miss Kate Davis Shinkle. The Robert W. Richins family acquired the cottage in 1992.

To the east of *The Fenways*, Valley Path runs down the hill from Ninigret Avenue, past *Sunnyridge*, to the portions of four Ridge Road properties—*Meadholme*, *Kenneth Ridge*, *Ridgecrest*, and *Sunnyledge Cottage*—that lie beneath the ridge.¹⁸³ *Sunnyridge* was built in 1903 for Mrs. G. Richmond Parsons of Providence. The cottage was owned for many years by the Percy R. Owens family. In 1971, it became the home of the David V. Shields family of New York. Mrs. Shields (Margaret Barney Shields) had grown up at the Misquamicut Inn and *Misquamicut Cottage*.

Back on Ninigret Avenue and beyond a late-twentieth-century cottage is the *Wayne Cottage*, built in 1898 for J. Stark Wayne of Covington, Kentucky, a part of greater Cincinnati, located across the Ohio River. *Wayne Cottage* was for nearly fifty years (1914–61) the home of the George W. Eustis family. In 1961, it was acquired by the Charles G. Beavers, Jr., family of New York, who owned it until 1998. It underwent a major renovation in the late 1990s.

On the northerly side of Ninigret Avenue and, as Ninigret Avenue turns into Ocean View Highway, on its westerly side, are three cottages, all part of a Snowden family compound in the mid-twentieth century. *The Boulders* was built in 1898 by the New York firm of Tracey & Magonigle for William M. Greene. It was subsequently known as *Arcadia* when owned by Dr. Edmund Leroy Dow of New York, who was a moderator of the Fire District (1941–45). The cottage became the home of the James M. Snowden family, also of New York, in 1945, and they remained there until they moved to their new cottage, *Sprayberry House*, in 1952. The James Snowdens sold the property to the George Snowdens and they in turn sold it to the W. Rice Brewster family of New York in 1959. In 1966, the Brewsters sold it to the Albert Parreño family, also of New York, who renamed it *La Maritima*. Parreño, a lawyer and partner of Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle, served as moderator of the Fire District (1969–72). The Parreño family owned the property until 1998.

Next door is *Thalassa*, later renamed *Shadybrook*, built about 1900 for Mrs. G. W. Russell of Hartford. It was owned by the family of Dr. Edmund LeRoy Dow of New York from 1913 to 1944. In 1944,

the cottage became the home the George G. Snowden, Jr., family. At his death in 1964, Snowden was president-elect of the Chapel. The cottage remains in family ownership.

Just beyond is *Rock Rose*, known as *Green Shutters* when it was built about 1920 for Ashbel T. Wall (also known as A. Tingley Wall) of Providence. Wall was president of the A. T. Wall Company, gold and silver platers. Mrs. Wall (Mary Brooks Wall) was a daughter of the Frederick Brookses of *Overlook*. In 1948, the cottage became the home of the A. Webster Dougherty family of Rosemont, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Dougherty (Jane Snowden Dougherty) was the sister of George G. Snowden, Jr., and James M. Snowden and had grown up with them at *Holiday House*. Both Snowden brothers and their brother-in-law, Mr. Dougherty, served as presidents of the Misquamicut Club. The John B. Daukas family acquired the cottage in 1966.

Just across from *Shadybrook* and just beyond the junction of Ninigret Avenue and Niantic Avenue, on the easterly side of the road, is the rise known as Treasure Hill, formerly called Money Hill. This knoll is encircled by Kidd's Way, Ocean View Highway, and Aloha Road. There stood the cottage known as *Treasure Hill*, a steep-roofed, shingle and clapboard chateau, which was built for the Henry Bourne Joy family of Grosse Point, Michigan, in 1921–22 (fig. 66). Joy was president of the Packard Motor Car Company. He was also president of the Lincoln Highway Association, formed in 1913 to promote the construction of the Lincoln Highway, the first coast-to-coast transcontinental automobile road. Mrs. Joy (Helen Hall Newberry) was a sister of Truman H. Newberry and John S. Newberry, both mentioned

later. Their father, John Stoughton Newberry, served as a U.S. Representative from the First Congressional District of Michigan, 1879–81. The family is remembered by generations of Yale students in connection with their gift to Yale of the magnificent Newberry Memorial Organ in Woolsey Hall. Years later, William E. Fiske recalled the impressive fleet of Packard cars which the Joys maintained at *Treasure Hill* in the 1920s:

The Joys' fleet of Packard cars were a delight. They were all new every year, and never less than three at a time were always drawn up before their cottage, a different sequence of cars appearing almost daily, and it was a never-to-be-solved puzzle just how many there would be should a full assemblage of all occur at one time. They were of particular interest to me because...they were painted as a matching fleet...of the deepest maroon with black fenders and had brilliantly polished headlights, radiators, and radiator ornaments, and wheel discs, all of brass rather than of nickel. Whether this stationary parade, as it could be called, arose from some practical necessity or from a mistaken desire for ostentation, never crossed my mind. It did not matter. It was simply there as an endless source of interest.¹⁸⁴

In 1964, *Treasure Hill* was sold by the Joys' daughter, Helen Joy Lee, to Christ Church, Westerly, to be used as an Episcopal retreat, known as the Treasure Hill Retreat House. It returned to private hands in 1968, and after a devastating fire in 1976, was replaced by a new structure. That building in turn was much altered in the early twenty-first century. The property was divided in the late twentieth century and a second house built at the bottom of the hill, fronting Aloha Road. The perimeter wall and a small stone and slate-roofed gatehouse along Ocean View Highway remain intact from the 1920s. Legend has it that Treasure Hill and Kidd's Way are a site at which the famous pirate Captain Kidd may have buried treasure. None has been found.

Next on the easterly side of Ocean View Highway is *Log Cabin*, later *Windswept* and later *Longshore II*, built in 1903 for Samuel H. Davis, who was a moderator of the Fire District and a representative to the Rhode Island General Assembly. In 1913, Davis replaced the original *Log Cabin* with what *Seaside Topics* called "A handsome new up-to-date summer cottage [that] takes the place of the old antique little bungalow on this most commanding site."¹⁸⁵ In 1944, the house



66 "Treasure Hill."

became, and for nearly sixty years remained, the home of the W. King White family, including the Whites' son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bradley White. The younger Mrs. White (Anne-Starr Holmes White) had grown up at *Trespaso* on Lighthouse Road and *East Cottage* on Meadow Lane. New owners at the end of the twentieth century renamed the cottage *Stella Maris*.

Next to the east, on the right as Manatuck Avenue turns toward the beach, *Overlook* was built in 1902. The Frederick Brooks family of New York owned the cottage from 1916 to 1929. Brooks was a vice president of Brooks Brothers. *Overlook* became the home of the family of Dr. George W. Connell of New York in 1946. In 1954, it was acquired by investment banker Forrest C. Lattner and remained in the family for more than thirty years. Lattner was a managing partner of Lazard Frères and later, as chairman, built the Central Louisiana Electric Company into a profitable enterprise and then founded the Delray Oil Company in south Texas. The Forrest C. Lattner Foundation, which he established, has made many important gifts to the community. From 1986 to 1997, *Overlook* was the home of the Robert J. Smith family. In 1997, it returned to Lattner family ownership when Martha Lattner Connelly (Mrs. William L. Connelly, later Mrs. Keith Walker) acquired it.

Two houses down on Manatuck, *Beach Meadows* was built in 1900 for the Burnet family of Cincinnati. Helen Owsley Heard (Mrs. Drayton Heard, Jr.) reports that she was born in the house in 1920. Until the Westerly Hospital came into operation in 1925, Watch Hill babies born during the summer months were regularly delivered at home. The Owsleys owned the cottage until 1949. In 1967, it became the home of the Marcy B. Sellev family of New Canaan.

Further down Manatuck Avenue and along East Beach were five other cottages. The first of these East Beach cottages, known as *The Breakers*, was owned in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the Francis B. Allen family of Hartford. Allen, in 1919, was a vice president of the Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company. The cottage, which was subsequently destroyed by fire, was located on the right side of Manatuck Avenue, where the 1950s cottage known as *Ebb Tide* later stood. Next was the Marston cottage, *Aloha*, which the Marston family acquired in 1935. Earlier, the cottage had belonged to the George A. Driggs family of Waterbury, Connecticut. Driggs was president of the Driggs and Smith Co. and of the American Pin Company. Next was *Longshore*, a cottage of the Thacher family, leased by the W. King White family in 1938.

Finally, there were *East Dunes*, approached by Kidd's Way, and *Intermere*, later *Pine Beach*. *The Breakers*, *East Dunes*, and *Pine Beach* were the only ones remaining after the 1938 hurricane. Following the hurricane, as noted earlier, the Marstons and Whites built beach bungalows on the sites, respectively, of *Aloha* and *Longshore*. *Aloha Cottage*, the beach bungalow that replaced the cottage, was the setting for an elaborate lunch party given annually by Mr. and Mrs. Hunter S. Marston, Jr., on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend, the same day that Mr. and Mrs. Paul D. Myers entertained for dinner and dancing at *Edgemere*.

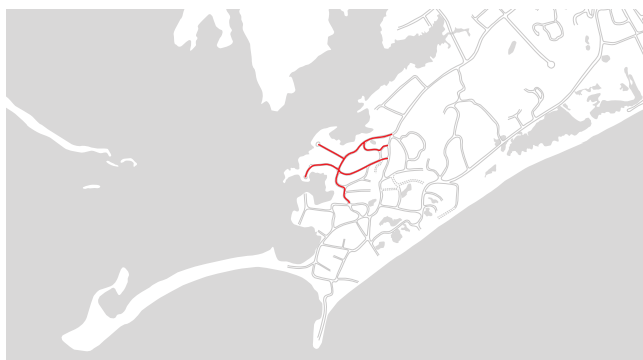
The Everett plat and early maps show Manatuck Avenue as running to the beach and then turning in a westerly dogleg along the beach to Niantic Avenue. In fact, the actual road ended at the beach, as it does today. But before the 1938 hurricane, there was a path running just behind the dunes, between them and a low stone wall that enclosed the lawns of the cottages fronting on the beach (see fig. 45). The dunes were much higher before 1938 than later, and the lawns were more extensive, as they stretched toward the dunes. Utility poles were located along the dunes and extended all along the beach. After 1938, they were repaired and remained until they were finally removed and rerouted after being damaged again by Hurricane Carol in 1954.

The cottage on the easterly side of Manatuck, directly on the beach, now known as *Sandcastle*, was formerly called *Rim Rock* and later *Cardome*. It was built in 1929–30 by the Carl F. Sturhahn family of Hartford.¹⁸⁶ Interestingly, the Sturhahns' son, Herbert C. Sturhahn, known as "Cobbles," who played football for Yale and was a member of the All-America team of 1926, had been informally coached by his Watch Hill neighbor across the street, John E. Owsley of *Beach Meadows*. Owsley, himself a Yale football player, Class of 1905, had continued to involve himself in Yale football and to help bring along promising young players.

In 1932, torch singer Libby Holman, fresh from her acquittal in the murder trial brought following the shooting death of her husband, Zachary Smith Reynolds of the tobacco family, spent a summer at *Rim Rock* with the couple's infant son and an entourage, which included bodyguards. The Percival O. de St. Aubin family acquired the property in 1936, and in 1942, it was left under the will of Marion de St. Aubin to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence. For some sixty years it was the summer retreat of the Bishop of Providence, but in 2003 the Diocese sold the property, and it returned to private ownership.

WATCH HILL FARM

A second major phase of development began in 1896, when Cincinnati partners William A. Procter and William P. Anderson bought the former Potter Farm and extended the developed portion of Watch Hill northerly from the Everett tract, just north of Aquidneck Avenue, to the river and Potter's Cove, and easterly to Watch Hill Road. This was the Watch Hill Farm subdivision.



Foster Cove, Arraquat, Wapan, Nepun, Sequan, & Popon Roads

Cloverly, on the easterly side of Misquamicut Road (later Foster Cove Road), was built in 1900 by Procter and Anderson as a speculative cottage. It became the home of the Frank Lawson family and later of their daughter, Lucile Lawson, and her husband, James A. Atwood, Jr. The Lawson and Atwood families owned it until 1958, when Mrs. Harry Parsons Cross (Lucile Lawson Atwood Cross) conveyed the property to the J. Trowbridge Cottrell family, who in turn sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Rudolf DeWardener in 1967. In 1975, *Cloverly* became the home of the Paul D. Griffin family. In 1999, Judith E. Lentz (Mrs. Walter J. Lentz, formerly Mrs. Griffin) sold the cottage to Mrs. Dane Anderson Nichols, who made major restorations. Mrs. Nichols was the niece of George R. Nichols III and had grown up summers visiting her grandmother, Mrs. George R. Nichols, Jr., at the original *Sunnycroft* on Nepun Road.

Edgewater, later *Gulnare*, was built for C. Peyton Russell of Washington, D.C., in 1913. In 1944, the cottage became the home of the John H. Heminway family of New York. Heminway was a member of the New York Stock Exchange. Mrs. Heminway (Jane Johnson Heminway) came from St. Louis, where she had been a Queen of the Veiled Prophet Ball. She was a niece of Mrs. Bradford

Shinkle, Jr., of *Meadowcrest* and of Mrs. J. Russell Forgan of *Cedarcrest*. Guests at *Gulnare* over the years included Clark Gable and David Niven. Mrs. Heminway was a lover of wildlife, and she took the initiative of having the Misquamicut Club designate its Maschaug Pond property a wildlife refuge.

Dune Hame, later *Fin-Lea* and *Still Waters*, was built in 1902 for the Samuel G. Dunham family of Hartford. Mr. Dunham was president of the Hartford Electric Light Company. His daughter, Ethel Collins Dunham, became an internationally noted pediatric physician. After graduating from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, she became the first woman house officer at New Haven Hospital and, in 1920, joined the faculty of the Yale School of Medicine. Specializing in neonatal care, she became chief of child development at the Children's Bureau, a national agency devoted to improving the health and welfare of American children. The American Pediatric Society awarded her its highest honor, the John Howland Medal, in 1957.

In the 1930s, *Dune Hame*, renamed *Fin-Lea*, became the home of the Edward L. Finn family of Northampton, Massachusetts. In 1965, the Joseph V. Schilling family of Scarsdale, New York, acquired the property and, calling the cottage *Dune Hame* again, owned it for nearly thirty years. Mrs. Schilling (Margaret Snow Schilling) was a noted portrait painter who painted many Watch Hillites, especially children, during her years here. She was also the guiding spirit and leader of a painting class that met regularly during the summers in the Chapel Undercroft. In 1992, the Schillings sold the cottage to the Thomas D. Lips family of South Glastonbury, Connecticut, who renamed it *Still Waters*.

The Schillings continued to summer at Watch Hill in an apartment in Bay Breeze, the former Burdick Building on Bay Street owned by their daughter and son-in-law, Linda Schilling Martine and Layng Martine. In 2004, the year of Mrs. Schilling's death, her Watch Hill students and friends formed the Marge Schilling Guild to perpetuate her legacy in the community. In August of that same year, the Guild and the Improvement Society held a retrospective exhibition of her work at Watch Hill, entitled *Moments in Time*.

Next door to *Still Waters* is *Westwater*, built by the McLanahan family of New York. The family had first come to Watch Hill in 1878, when Mrs. James Xavier McLanahan (Anne McBride McLanahan) and her son, George William McLanahan, arrived to stay at one of the hotels. Mrs. McLanahan was the widow of Congressman James

McLanahan, who had served as U.S. Representative for the Sixteenth Congressional District of Pennsylvania (1849–53). Mrs. McLanahan's father, James McBride, had been a successful fur trader, shipowner, and linen merchant in New York. The first McLanahan cottage at Watch Hill was *To Windward*, located above Ocean View Highway on Overlook Drive, formerly Pautipaug Way.

Westwater was built in 1902 by the second McLanahan generation for the third. Mr. and Mrs. George William McLanahan (Helen Day McLanahan) of New York built the cottage as a wedding present for their only son, George Xavier McLanahan, and his wife, Caroline Duer McLanahan. The 1902 cottage map shows the younger McLanahans living that season at *Moorcroft*, the Maxson cottage on Sunset Avenue. Early photographs of *Westwater* show a grass tennis court and roque court on the grounds. Roque is a form of croquet played on a hard surface, with surrounding walls off which the ball is bounced.

Westwater remained in the McLanahan family until 1927, when it became the home of the Gustavus F. Swift, Jr., family of Chicago. Swift was the son of Gustavus Franklin Swift, the founder of Swift & Company, the world's largest meat-packing company, and the inventor of the refrigerated railway car. He followed his father and his brother, Louis F. Swift, as president of the company, 1931–37. The Swifts added a large wing to the northerly end of the house, the ground floor of which was a ballroom and the upper floor a master bedroom suite. The cottage became the home of the Nelson C. White family of Lake Forest, Illinois, in 1965.

Next door, at the southwesterly corner of Foster Cove and Arraquat Roads, is *Everbreeze*, built in 1915 for Mrs. George X. McLanahan on the corner of the *Westwater* property. The cottage was occupied from the time it was built until well into the 1920s by Dr. Raynham Townshend, a New Haven physician, and his family. It later became the home of the McLanahans' daughter, Louise McLanahan Noble (Mrs. Lawrence M. Noble). In a letter written by Mrs. Ellery Husted (Helen McLanahan Husted) to her sister, Mrs. Noble, shortly after the Hurricane of 1938, she reported that the water had risen to the second story of the house.¹⁸⁷

Mrs. Noble herself, in 1982 handwritten reminiscences of events nearly seventy years earlier, recalled going as a child on excursions with the gardener from *Westwater*, where she lived, in search of boards from "old abandoned houses" in the north and west of Westerly. These, she reported, went into the construction of *Everbreeze*, which

her family was then building.¹⁸⁸ In 1954, the cottage became the home of the Walter E. Manuelli family of Wilton, Connecticut. Passing to a grand-nephew, George V. Smith III, who had grown up at *Edgecliff* on Larkin Road, and who added a wing, the cottage remained in that family until 1997.

At the end of Arraquat Road, on what is known as Curtis Point, are two cottages built about 1906. The first, called *Westmoreland*, was built by George W. McLanahan, who had concluded that he wanted a site by the bay and decided to move there from *To Windward*.

Westmoreland was constructed with stucco in the Mission style, on land which McLanahan had purchased from his lawyer and son-in-law, F. Kingsbury Curtis of New York. The other, called *Shortlands*, was built by Curtis and his wife, Cornelia McLanahan Curtis.

Westmoreland, which looks across the bay to Stonington, owes its name to events in the history of Mrs. McLanahan's family. Mrs. McLanahan was Helen Day McLanahan. The story involves her great-grandfather, James Deane, who was born in 1748 in Groton. At the age of eleven, he accompanied his missionary uncle to the Oneida Indian village Oquaga, on the Susquehanna River, and there was adopted by the tribe. After he had lived with them for ten years, the tribe gave him some two square miles of Oneida land in what later became the New York town of Westmoreland. He was a graduate of the first class at Dartmouth College and later served as an Indian agent and a major in the Continental Army during the Revolution.¹⁸⁹ Thereafter he settled in Westmoreland and became a judge of the court of common pleas. His story is told in a privately printed book entitled *James Deane*, written by Helen Day McLanahan and her granddaughter, Helen Day McLanahan Husted.¹⁹⁰

Westmoreland later became the home of the George W. McLanahans' granddaughter—the daughter of the F. Kingsbury Curtises—Cornelia Curtis Lombard and her husband, Laurence M. Lombard of Needham, Massachusetts. Later still, in 1967, the cottage became the home of the James V. Ritchey family of Sarasota, Florida, who owned it for thirty years.

The second of these cottages on Curtis Point was *Shortlands*, which looks across the harbor to the Beach Club and Napatree (fig. 67). Shingled, with a central core and flanking wings, it was built, as noted earlier, by the F. Kingsbury Curtises. Curtis, a leading corporate lawyer and partner of the firm of Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle, with which his family had been associated since its founding in 1830, was also the principal of a real estate development corpora-

tion known as Tuxedo Houses, Inc. Tuxedo Houses built and owned properties in the various communities in which Curtis maintained homes: in addition to Watch Hill, Tuxedo Park, New York City, and Venice, Florida. At the time he built the cottage, Curtis filled in the marsh between it and *Westmoreland* and built a tennis court, about which more will be said later. *Shortlands* remains in the family of the original owner. Tenants over many years have been the Edward W. Franklin family of New York.

On the southerly side of Arraquat Road, just west of *Everbreeze*, is *North Cove*, probably built by F. Kingsbury Curtis and Tuxedo Houses, Inc. The *National Register* dates it about 1910. Early occupants were the Frederick J. Kingsbury, Jr., family of New Haven. In 1923, Tuxedo Houses conveyed the property to the Pierpont Davis family of Scarborough, New York, who lived there for nearly thirty years. In 1952, the Davises sold it to the Thomas H. Eddy family of Pittsburgh, who remained there until 1967, when they sold it to the Peter B. Griffin family of Greenwich.

On the northwesterly corner of Foster Cove and Arraquat Roads, *Bayswater* was designed and built in 1950 as a family guesthouse by Frank G. Ahern, who lived across the street at *Ridgeleigh*. It became the home of Ahern's son, Thomas G. Ahern, and his family later in the 1950s.

On Foster Cove Road, between Nepun Road on the east and across from Wapan Road on the west, is the cottage known as *Toad Hill*, the home since 1976 of the Daniel P. Nugent family of Morristown, New Jersey. The house was built in the 1950s, but incorporated in it is an earlier structure, a portion of the historic eighteenth-century Samuel Buckingham house, which once stood in Old Saybrook, Connecticut. The house and the Buckingham family are associated with the founding in 1701 of the Collegiate School, later named Yale, and with Yale's first library.

In 1951, the State of Connecticut condemned the property on which the Buckingham house stood for the construction of a clover-leaf leading to Route 95 and the Baldwin Bridge over the Connecticut River. The main portion of the house, dating from 1768, and a kitchen ell, dating from 1695, were given to the Mystic Seaport. After being transported there by barge, the house was reassembled as part of the Seaport Village. A second ell, attached to the kitchen wing in the nineteenth century, was acquired by Edward P. Schell of Greenwich, Connecticut, and transported to the lot that he had bought on Foster Cove Road in 1953. When he built his house there, he incorporated



67 “*Shortlands*” and tennis court about 1910. See also fig. 126.

the earlier structure in the new building. This surprising fact was confirmed by historical research and the discovery of old timbers within the modern house.¹⁹¹

In 1958, Schell sold *Toad Hill*, then known as *Quail Run*, to Mrs. Harry Parsons Cross, and she in turn conveyed it to her daughter, Sally Atwood Smith Dryden, and her then husband, Franklin J. Wilkes, in 1968. It is they who sold the property to the Nugents in 1976.

On Wapan Road are three other cottages—*Stoneleigh*, *Wildacre*, and *Meadowcrest*—built by F. Kingsbury Curtis and his Tuxedo Houses, Inc. *Stoneleigh*, on the left or southerly side of Wapan Road, was built in 1915. In 1925, it became the home of the Allen T. West family of St. Louis. The Wests' daughter, Rebekah, would become Mrs. William Hale Harkness and live at *Holiday House*. The cottage was acquired by the Warren W. Woodworth family in 1976 and remained in the family almost thirty years. In 2004, it became the home of the Jackson J. Shinkle family of St. Louis. Shinkle had grown up across the street at *Meadowcrest*.

Wildacre, also on the left, was built in 1916. In 1963, the cottage became the home of the Alan J. Hruska family of New York.

Meadowcrest, across the road, was also built in 1916. In 1927, it became the home of the Bradford Shinkle, Jr., family of St. Louis. Shinkle, who had grown up with his older half-brother, A. Clifford Shinkle, at *Justhome* on Bluff Avenue, was a founder of the Johnson, Stephens & Shinkle Shoe Company. In 1920, Mrs. Shinkle (Florence Johnson Shinkle) had been Queen of St. Louis's Veiled Prophet Ball. She had a younger sister, Ada Johnson, who would become Mrs. J. Russell Forgan and live at *Cedarcrest* on Browning Road. Their niece, Jane Johnson, herself later a Queen of the Veiled Prophet, would

become Mrs. John H. Heminway and live at *Gulnare*. The Shinkles remained at *Meadowcrest* until 1973, when it became the home of the Thomas W. Smith family of Greenwich, Connecticut.

At the end of Wapan Road, *Shoreby*, commanding Rhodes Point and views across the Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay, was built in 1914 in the English manor house style for Frank Turnbull of Glen Ridge, New Jersey. Turnbull, who had come from Scotland, where he had known Robert Louis Stevenson, named the cottage after a village in Stevenson's novel *The Black Arrow*. He became the president of the Rogers Peet Company in New York. Descending to the Turnbulls' daughter, Jean Turnbull Crawford (Mrs. Douglas J. Crawford) of Montclair, New Jersey, and, in turn, to the Crawfords' son, Frank T. Crawford, it remained in the family of the original owner into the twenty-first century. Mrs. Frank T. Crawford—later, after Frank Crawford's death, Mrs. Robert M. Driscoll (Elizabeth Camp Crawford Driscoll)—had grown up around the corner at *Watersedge*. Mrs. Driscoll, then Mrs. Crawford, was president of the Improvement Society in 1986 when the Coast Guard decided to disestablish the Lighthouse. She formed the committee that developed into the first Board of Directors of the Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers Association, thus assuring local control of that landmark. Driscoll's first, late wife had been Margaret Moore, who as a four-year-old daughter of the Geoffrey Moores had, with her family, survived crossing the bay from Napatree in the Hurricane of 1938. Driscoll and Margaret Driscoll were publishers of *Tidings* magazine, which featured articles of local interest along the shoreline of southwestern Rhode Island and southeastern Connecticut, from 1983 until Mrs. Driscoll's death in 1993. Driscoll, who also served as editor, continued to publish the magazine for another four years.

Moving easterly on Foster Cove Road and backing on Potter's Cove are the cottages known as *Waveland*, built in 1930, and *Watersedge*, built in 1926.

Waveland was built for Mrs. Carlton Betts (Ruth Teal Betts) of New York, who called it *Waystones*. *Seaside Topics*, in June 1930, commented on "a striking feature" of the new cottage, its "vermillion hued window blinds."¹⁹² The builder was W. C. Hiscox of Westerly. Mrs. Betts sold the cottage to the Walter R. Herrick family, also of New York, in 1933. The family included Mrs. Herrick's children by a prior marriage: Elizabeth Knapp, Harry Kearsarge Knapp, and Theodosia ("Thora") Burr Knapp. Elizabeth Knapp became Mrs. Frederick H. Lassiter, and Thora Knapp became Mrs. Duer McLanahan. From

1946 to 1958, the cottage belonged to the Russell A. Lenihan family. In 1958, it became the home of the Walbridge S. Taft family of New York. Taft, a nephew of President William Howard Taft, was a partner of the New York law firm of Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft. He was a first cousin of Senator Robert A. Taft, who served as Senator from Ohio (1939–53) and who was four times a candidate for Republican nomination for President (1940–52). The Tafts renamed the cottage *Waveland*, and it remained in the family for forty years.

A glimpse into genteel neighborly relations at Watch Hill is afforded by the story of a small incident that occurred at *Waveland* in 1965. When Mrs. Taft built a garage at the entrance to her driveway, and her neighbor across the street, Mrs. Cross, mentioned that she was sorry to lose her view of the river, Mrs. Taft arranged to have a six-paneled mural painted of the view that had been lost. Later, after a daughter of the Tafts, Elizabeth Taft, married Gerald J. Johnson, Johnson's son by an earlier marriage, the artist David Collins Johnson, refurbished the panels and still later recreated them for Mrs. Taft. David Collins later married Ann Snowden, who had grown up at *Shadybrook* on Ninigret Avenue.

Next door to *Waveland*, *Watersedge* was built by the John McKesson Camp family of New York. It later became the home of the Camps' son, Gregory Nott Camp, and his wife, Edith S. Campbell Camp. Gregory Camp was for a time connected with a family company, St. Joseph Lead Company, later St. Joe Minerals Corporation, which his brother-in-law, Andrew Fletcher, served as president. After retiring early from an insurance business, about 1950, Camp led an active life at Watch Hill, serving as Commodore of the Yacht Club and as a member of the Westerly Town Council. Edith Camp was a journalist who wrote for such magazines as *Cosmopolitan* and *Good Housekeeping*. She was also a talented and prolific amateur painter. The Camps' son, John McKesson Camp II, a noted archaeologist and the director of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, inherited the cottage. It remained in the family until 2000.

Just to the east are the cottages (originally the laundry and servants' quarters) of the former Misquamicut Inn and the inn building itself, which has been identified earlier as the original eighteenth-century Potter farmhouse (see fig. 28). After it became the Watch Hill Farm House inn, under William P. Anderson and William A. Procter, it was operated by J. Herbert Segar of Westerly. Acquired by the Barney family in 1917 and called the Misquamicut Inn, it was presided over by the Misses Margaret and Annie Barney for more than twenty

years. Their brother Ned looked after the grounds, chopped wood, laid fires, put in screens, painted the house, and performed every imaginable chore.

The atmosphere of the inn was markedly different from that of the great hotels. Guests were primarily resident for the full summer and maintained their same quarters year after year, often vying to succeed to the choicer quarters of more senior guests. A charming picture of life at the inn in the twenties is provided by William E. Fiske in *A Curious Childhood*.¹⁹³ He writes of life in the colony and of the elaborate preparations, at their home in Morristown, New Jersey, of his family, his grandmother, Mrs. W. Palmer Letchford, and his mother, for their annual summer stay there, together with his nurse, Mrs. Letchford's personal maid and companion, and her chauffeur. Under the ownership of the Barney family, the inn was open both before and after the season and was a welcoming refuge for cottagers who wished to visit Watch Hill at those times. After the Misses Barney retired, their nephew, Harold B. Barney, and his family continued to operate the inn until in 1967, when it became the cottage of the John J. and Tina I. Barney family.

Just off Foster Cove Road, on the right or southerly side, are Popon Road and *Sowanniu*—later *Chuckle Hill*, *Greyside North*, and *High Wicket*—built in 1900 for Alanson Trask Enos, a New York manufacturer who was president of General Fixture Co., a division of General Electric. He was a direct descendant of John Enos, one of the first settlers and incorporators of the Town of Westerly.¹⁹⁴

The Ridley Watts family of Morristown, New Jersey, spent summers at *Sowanniu* in the second decade of the twentieth century. They later moved to a cottage on Napatree known as *Blue Shutters*. Watts was principal of Ridley Watts & Co., a cotton goods firm. He also served as chairman of the Association of Cotton Textile Merchants. He was the first chairman of the “Crusaders, an organization formed in 1934 to ‘preserve, protect and defend’ the Constitution of the United States and to arouse the people to a more alert and active interest in the nation’s affairs.”¹⁹⁵ After his death in early 1938, his family gave the drinking fountain in the Village park, with its sculpture *The Dreamer*, as a memorial to him.

In 1947, the cottage became the home of the Phillips R. Turnbull family, who called the cottage *Chuckle Hill*. Turnbull had grown up with his sister, Jean Turnbull Crawford, at *Shoreby*. In 1958, it became the home of the Claude Douthit family, who renamed it *Greyside North*. Douthit had grown up at *Bayberry Ridge*, which stands on

the hill on the right side of Watch Hill Road, the first cottage in the Watch Hill Fire District as one approaches from Westerly.¹⁹⁶ In 1986, the Scott Hamilton Smith family of Washington, Connecticut, acquired *Greyside North*, and once again the cottage was given a new name, *High Wicket*. The small cottage below the hill on which the cottage stands, across Foster Cove Road from *Watersedge*, was formerly the garage and chauffeur’s cottage for *Greyside North*. Called *Mini-House*, it was retained by the Douthit family and became the home of the Philip Simmons Douthit family of Greenwich.

Misquamicut Cottage, on the corner of Foster Cove Road and Popon Road, was built about 1910. It was for many years the home of the Barney family until 1995, when it was acquired by the George C. Moore, Jr., family. Moore had grown up at *Cove Cottage* on Pawcatuck Avenue.

Nearby, on the southerly side of Nepun Road, are *Sunnycroft*, *The Knoll*, and *Ridgeleigh* (fig. 68). A new *Sunnycroft* was built in 1957 by George R. Nichols III on the site of an earlier cottage, also known as *Sunnycroft*, which had been built by Procter and Anderson about 1900. The original cottage had been in the Nichols family since Nichols’s mother, Mrs. George R. Nichols, Jr. (Margaret Billings Nichols) of Chicago, had bought it in 1924. Her husband, a Cornell-educated engineer, had survived service in World War I only to die of septicemia from a tennis blister in 1919, while Mrs. Nichols was pregnant with their second son, George. After her husband’s death, Mrs. Nichols moved from Lake Forest to Chicago and brought up her two sons, Frank Billings Nichols and young George, in the home of her father, Dr. Frank Billings.¹⁹⁷

Mrs. Nichols summered at *Sunnycroft* from 1924 until her death in 1954. There her sons grew up summers. Her younger son George, who was known as “Tank,” is recalled by his contemporaries as one of the organizers, together with Walter “Wally” R. Herrick, Jr., of summer musical productions in the 1930s and 1940s. These involved many of the young of the community and culminated in an end-of-season production at the Misquamicut Club. The company called themselves “The Yearlings.” Their 1940 production was “Again, The People” and featured two numbers with local flavor, one titled “Misquamicut Night’s Dream” and the other, “Lo, the Poor Indian.” In one of the musicals, Tank’s older brother Frank, known as “Nick,” 6’ 4” and dressed as a baby, burst out of an egg. One veteran of these shows recalled, sixty-five years later, that they were great fun and did a lot “to keep us out of trouble.” At Yale, Tank chaired the Yale Dramatic Association.



68 Looking west from Sunshine Hill, with Sunshine Park on the left. On the right, overlooking Sequan Road, are, right to left, the first “Sunnycroft,” “The Folly” (later “The Knoll”), and “Ridgeleigh” (later “Far Look”). “Dune Hame” is visible on the far left, and in the center distance, “Westwater.”

After Tank inherited his mother’s cottage, he razed it and, in 1957, built a smaller cottage as a year-round weekend and summer home. The second *Sunnycroft* remained in the Nichols family until 1994, when Mrs. Dane Anderson Nichols, who had inherited it from her uncle in 1990, sold it to the James W. Stollenwerck family. Dane Nichols remembered the new cottage as a “gem” of design perfection. The Stollenwercks renamed it *Winter Watch*. Five years later, Mrs. Nichols decided to return to Watch Hill and bought *Cloverly* nearby.

The Knoll, originally named *The Folly*, was built about 1900 for Genevieve G. Hoadly (Mrs. George Hoadly, Jr.) of Cincinnati and Laura H. Scarborough (Mrs. Theodore I. Scarborough) of New York. The *National Register* tells the story that these two women bought the property in 1900 and commenced the building without the knowledge or support of their husbands, but that they unfortunately ran out of funds and had to turn to their husbands to finance completion of the project. Hence the name, *The Folly*. The cottage became the property of the William S. Innis family of Providence in 1918. In 1954, it became the home first of Mrs. Alfred M. Roberts of Baltimore and then of her son, Navy Commander Alfred M. Roberts, Jr. Commander Roberts, who had graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, served with the Navy in World War II as Senior Fleet Aviator, Central Pacific Cruisers. Shot down over Wake Island in 1942, he was awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. The Alfred M. Roberts, Jr., Charitable Foundation is a significant benefactor of local charities.

Next door stands *Ridgeleigh*, a white stucco cottage built on property which George W. Hamilton of Cincinnati and Covington, Kentucky, acquired from Julia W. Anderson and William A. Procter in 1902. The *National Register* lists the date of *Ridgeleigh* as 1902–3. Its builder was the Boston firm of Chapman & Frazer, which built *Meadholme*, also a stucco cottage, on Ridge Road. The Hamilton family remained at the cottage until 1936, when Katherine Hamilton Banning conveyed it to Mary Frances Ahern (Mrs. Frank G. Ahern). Mr. Ahern was president of the Ahern Textile Print Company of Norwich, Connecticut, and of the R. E. Briggs Company, cotton brokers, in New York City. He later (1950) built *Leitrim* on Nepun Road. From 1951 to 1967, *Ridgeleigh* was owned by the Leonard A. Yerkes family. Yerkes for many years held top management positions at the DuPont Corporation, in Wilmington, Delaware, and played a major role in developing and marketing cellophane and company products. The family had previously occupied *East Dunes*. A Yerkes grandson, William H. J. Yerkes (known as Peter), later married Liberty Lassiter, who had grown up at *Ivy Cottage*. In 1967, *Ridgeleigh* was acquired by the Forrest C. Lattner family and became the home of the Lattners’ daughters, Martha Lattner (later Mrs. Keith Walker) and Susan Lattner (later Mrs. David Lloyd). They called the cottage *Far Look*. It remained in the Lattner family until 1999.

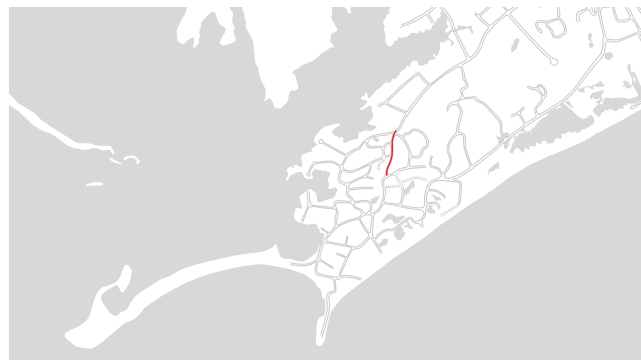
The brick and shingle cottage on the northerly side of Nepun Road, known as *Leitrim*, *Dolobran*, and *Crow’s Nest*, was built about 1950 by Frank G. Ahern. After his death, it became the home of

Mrs. Ahern. In 1967, it became the home of the Clement A. Griscom III family and remained in their ownership until 1981. The name Griscom gave it, *Dolobran*, came from his grandfather's estate in Haverford. In 1993, the cottage became the home of the Barrant V. Merrill family.

At the corner of Foster Cove Road and Watch Hill Road stands what remains of a large nineteenth-century frame cottage, much altered. The cottage was brought to Watch Hill from Springfield, Massachusetts, in pieces in 1923 and reassembled on a three-acre parcel by the Lewis J. Powers family (fig. 69). Powers was president of the Powers Paper Company. The house, built about 1840, had been known in Springfield as the Daniel L. Harris House. Harris, its owner in the mid-nineteenth century, had been president of the Connecticut River Railroad and a mayor of Springfield. At Watch Hill, the cottage was named *Windover* but was more often referred to as the Powers Mansion. Its gardens spread over the property to the west, occupied in the late twentieth century by two smaller houses, the stone bases of arbors and pergolas still visible today. In 1946, the Powers property was acquired by the Leigh B. Cushing family, who operated the house as the *Lion-Gate Inn* for some fifteen years. In the 1970s, the building was reduced to a single story at the road facade. It underwent further major changes in the early twentieth century. On the exterior, the handsome carved entrance door and the flanking pilasters are original to the house. The massive stone garages under the rear facade date from the relocation of the house to Watch Hill. The stone gateposts at either end of the circular drive each formerly supported a couchant lion.



69 The Powers Mansion — “Windover”—after its reassembly in Watch Hill. The Misquamicut Inn is in the background.



Watch Hill Road between Foster Cove & Ridge Roads

Next to the *Lion-Gate Inn*, also on Watch Hill Road, are two cottages built, respectively, in 1903 and 1902. The first of these, originally known as *Merrivale*, was owned for nearly fifty years, 1907–53, by the family of John E. Sanborn of New Rochelle, New York, who called the cottage *Belvedere*.¹⁹⁸ In 1953, it became the home of the Henry A. Stearns family of Providence, who owned it until 1972. New owners at the end of the twentieth century renamed it *Merrivale*. The second cottage, set on the northerly corner of Watch Hill and Nepun roads, is known as *Louisiana* and was built for Miss Heloise Cenas of Baltimore. According to the *National Register*, it was for many years occupied by the family of Jacob Stoll Detrick, also of Baltimore. Detrick was a mechanical engineer and inventor, who was president of the Detrick & Harvey Machine Company.

Particularly notable among the cottages built in the Watch Hill Farm subdivision was *Sunshine Cottage*, built for William A. Procter in 1898 and sold in 1916 to Richard B. Mellon of Pittsburgh, who had rented it from Procter's estate since 1907 (fig. 70). Richard Mellon was president of the Mellon National Bank, founded in 1870 by his father, Thomas Mellon, as T. Mellon & Sons' Bank. He was also a director of the Federal Reserve Bank. Mellon's brother Andrew became Secretary of the Treasury and was a founder of the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Located on a hill on the southerly side of Nepun Road and the westerly side of Westerly Road, north of Ninigret Avenue, is the *Sunshine Cottage* property. The cottage is approached by a driveway which crosses over a stone bridge. The property originally stretched westerly from the hill to include the area along Sequan Road known as “Sunshine Park,” and it was landscaped by the Olmsted Brothers firm. The name “Sunshine Park” is carved in a granite



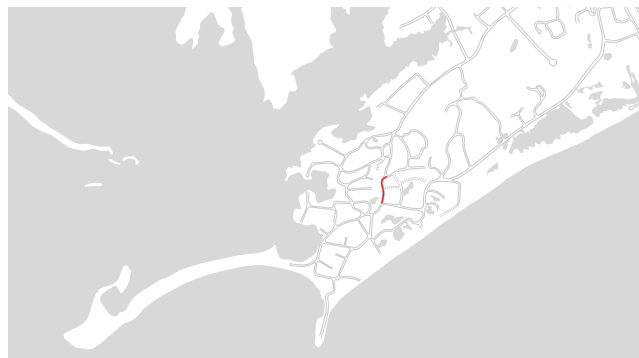
70 “Sunshine Cottage,” viewed from its park about 1915.

step leading to the property from Foster Cove Road, near the corner of Sequan Road. A memorable event of the Mellons’ years at *Sunshine* was the dance they gave in 1922 for their daughter Sarah and her fiancé, Alan M. Scaife. *Seaside Topics* reported that “Japanese lanterns were strung all about the spacious lawns and porch and the dance orchestra’s music floated out over the village. Favors were of solid gold, compacts for the girls and cigarette cases for the young men.”¹⁹⁹

Mrs. Gretchen V. Schoonmaker, who acquired *Sunshine Cottage* in 1942, held Sunday evening hymn sings to which she invited the community. She sold the property to Donald C. Lillis in 1967. Lillis subdivided its seventeen acres, and a number of lots were later split off and independently developed. After Lillis’s death, his estate sold the property to the family of Dr. and Mrs. Robert E. Knisley in 1970. The Knisleys’ Christmas Eve parties were festive occasions, the house fragrant with paper whites and bright with candles and poinsettias, and a throng of teddy bears were additional genial hosts. The Knisleys lived at *Sunshine Cottage* for thirty years.

On the same hill as *Sunshine Cottage*, but to the north near the corner of Nepun Road, are the stone foundations of a cottage known as *Casa Loma*, belonging to the George W. Tapley family of Springfield, Massachusetts. Beginning in 1899, the Tapleys assembled Lots 54–57 of the Watch Hill Farm, running along Westerly Road from the *Sunshine* property to Nepun Road. They owned the property until 1931, when the Mellons acquired it and added it to the *Sunshine* estate. The Mellons razed the cottage, and in 1931 *Seaside Topics* reported that it was rumored that “a new artistic cottage” would be constructed on the site for their daughter, Mrs. Scaife.²⁰⁰ Many years after the Mellons had sold the property, another house was built on the foundations. The garage on Nepun Road, later a guest cottage,

was built by the Mellons and added on to by the Schoonmakers. It became the home of the Spencer E. Gray family in 1972. From 1960 to 2001, Gray served a remarkable forty-two years as the tennis pro of the Misquamicut Club.



Watch Hill Road between Ridge Road & Ninigret Avenue

Now, for some brief later history of the mid-nineteenth-century farmhouses mentioned earlier, the Jonathan York, Stephen Collins, and Edgar Pendleton houses. Although mentioned here for geographical convenience, these are not, of course, located in any of the cottage subdivisions, but lie between the Watch Hill Farm, the Uplands, and the Everett Farm.

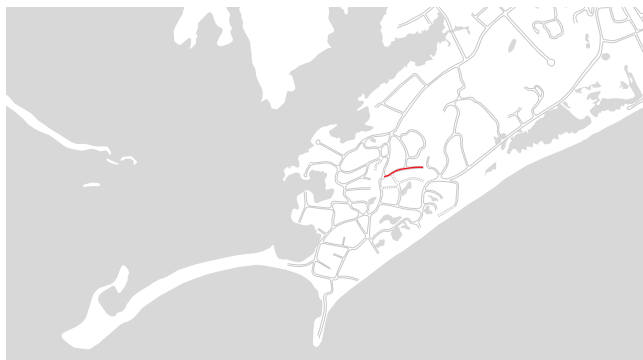
In 1946, after the death of Walter R. Herrick and the family’s move from *Waveland*, *Ivy Cottage*—formerly the Jonathan W. York House—became the home of Mrs. Herrick and her children, Elizabeth, Harry, and Thora Knapp. In 1982, the cottage became the home of the William Bennett family, who renamed it *Stonesthrow*.

The Collins House, later *Main Brace* and *Pennicumquik*, was the home of the Abbot Geer family from 1937 to 1971, when it became the home of the family of Dr. and Mrs. Edwin J. T. Moore of Waterbury, Connecticut. The Moores renamed the cottage *Manhan*.

The Captain Edgar Pendleton House, renamed *Monabri*, belonged to the Ralph J. Burnard family of Bala-Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, from 1959 to 1968. Subsequent owners were the Calder family, Mrs. Louis Calder and her son, Peter D. Calder, and later Mrs. Hilary A. Heminway. Mrs. Heminway, who had grown up at *Gulnare*, renamed the cottage *Fairsigh*. Later still, in 1982, the cottage was acquired by Susan Kozel Bach (Mrs. James Bach) and her family.

THE UPLANDS

Across Watch Hill Road from *Sunshine Cottage*, Robert Burnet of Cincinnati, the father of Syndicate partner Jacob S. Burnet, had carved out a large tract from the Potter Farm about 1890. This property ran easterly to the Browning Farm. In it, in 1901, Burnet established the area known as the “Uplands” and laid out Ridge Road, West Ridge Road, and Glen Way.



Ridge Road

Meadholme, earlier identified as the 1902 summer home of the Dudley Phelps family, is the first cottage, stucco and half timber, on the right or southerly side of Ridge Road. Mrs. Phelps was Margaret G. Burnet Phelps, who was a daughter of Jacob S. Burnet. *Meadholme* later became the home of the Phelps's daughter, Ann Phelps Bishop (Mrs. F. Michler Bishop), and her family. The cottage remains in the family.



Next door, of special note in the Uplands area, is *Kenneth Ridge* (fig. 71), the sprawling cottage built on the southerly side of Ridge Road in 1898. The house dominates the ridge that overlooks the low land to the north of Ninigret Avenue. *Kenneth Ridge* was built for Daniel J. Sully, a Providence and New York commodities broker known as the “Cotton King” after he cornered the cotton market in 1903–4.

The Sullys' daughter Beth married Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., in July of 1907, in the sun parlor of the house. Guests arrived from as far away as London. One columnist reported that “toute la Rhode Island” was included. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., spent many childhood summers at *Kenneth Ridge* and recorded the pleasures of a child's Watch Hill summer in the first quarter of the twentieth century in his autobiography, *The Salad Days*.²⁰¹ Fairbanks writes with special affection of his participation in the Watch Hill Boys' Club, an institution that flourished for four decades, from 1921 to 1958, presided over by its director, William G. Freeman.²⁰² Mr. Freeman, who was the physical education director at the Grosse Pointe Private School, was invited to Watch Hill by the Newberry family in 1921 and continued to operate the Boys' Club for another thirty-seven years. In the 1940s and 1950s, Freeman expanded his classes to include girls. All his charges were known, as the boys had been earlier, as “Freeman's Demons.”²⁰³

Guests at *Kenneth Ridge* included Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, and Enrico Caruso. In 1916, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., starred with Jewel Carmen and C. A. de Lima in *American Aristocracy*, a romantic silent film set in Watch Hill, which in the film is called “Narraport-By-the-Sea.” Douglas, Jr., age seven, appeared as a newsboy.²⁰⁴

71 Looking north from Ninigret Avenue, two Ridge Road cottages, “*Kenneth Ridge*” and “*The Arches*” (later “*Ridgecrest*”) dominate the barren landscape about 1910.

Kenneth Ridge ceased to be a private home after the Sullys sold it in the early 1920s. Douglas, Jr., and his mother continued, however, to visit Watch Hill, staying at the Ocean House. *Kenneth Ridge*, for a number of years the Kenneth Ridge Inn, became a retreat for the Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic in 1955. In the early twenty-first century, the Sisters could claim to be serving the poor in thirty-one different countries in a wide variety of ministries.

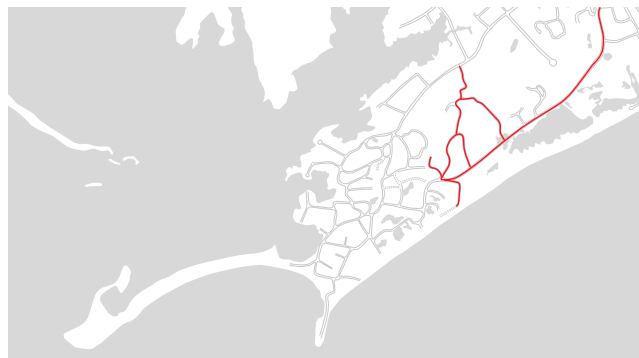
Next door to the east along Ridge Road stands *Ridgecrest*, built in 1903 for Mrs. C. Byron Cottrell of Westerly and first known as *The Arches*, from the porches that encircled the house (fig. 71). In 1920, it became the home of the Walter E. Hope family of New York. Hope, a lawyer and partner of the firm of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy, served as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the administration of President Herbert Hoover. Hope died suddenly in August 1948, on the train from Westerly to Grand Central Station. Mrs. Hope (Florence Talcott Rogers Hope) is remembered for a memorable appearance at a fancy dress ball at the Misquamicut Club during her husband's term as president, in the early 1930s. Having given a large dinner party before the ball, but not having planned to attend the ball afterward, she let herself be persuaded by her guests to join them. But not having planned a costume, she was forced to improvise. She hit upon the idea of putting the numerous lobster shells accumulated from the table to good use, by pinning them to a sheet, which she then donned, attending the party as a lobster. It was a warm evening, and the shells emitted a pungent odor. As a consequence, Mrs. Hope found her dance card strangely empty. Nevertheless, she remained a popular hostess and often entertained at musicales, at which she also sang.

In 1958, *Ridgecrest* became the home of the Paul E. Hollos family of New York. Hollos was president of American Swiss Credit of Zurich and New York. Mrs. Hollos (Innes Kane Drury Hollos) was an Olympic skater. In 1986, she became the first woman to serve as a governor of the Misquamicut Club and the first woman to serve as a trustee of the Chapel.²⁰⁵

To the east, *Sunnyledge Cottage* was built about 1920 for the Philip B. Stanley family of New Britain, Connecticut. The Stanleys, who had purchased the land in 1919 from Norman Grey, had spent the previous two seasons next door at *The Arches*. Stanley was president of Stanley Rule & Level Co., which in 1920 merged with Stanley Works. In 1930, the cottage became the home of the Eugene F. Williams family of St. Louis and remains in the family.

BROWNING, LANPHEAR, & BURNET PROPERTIES

In 1900, the Misquamicut Golf Club began building its new clubhouse, and cottage development spread eastward along Ocean View Highway, on lands developed from the several farms to the east of the Uplands.



Ocean View Highway, Overlook Drive, Manatuck Avenue, & Yosemite Valley, Massachussetts, & Browning Roads

In 1916, on land formerly of the Browning Farm, just to the north of Ocean View Highway, Mrs. George W. McLanahan built the stone and shingle twin houses *Windvale* and *Windridge*, as an investment (fig. 72). For many years the houses were owned, respectively, by the families of her children Duer McLanahan and Helen McLanahan Husted (Mrs. Ellery Husted). Their brother, George X. McLanahan, Jr., inherited *To Windward*, next door (fig. 72). The *National Register* lists its date as 1902–3. From 1953 to 1997, *To Windward* was the home of the John E. Farrand family of New York and Verbier, Switzerland.

At *Windridge*, Mrs. Husted, a poet and writer, compiled an anthology of poetry, *Six Centuries of Love Poems*. Her account of the 1938 hurricane was published in *Tidings* in 1993.²⁰⁶ Her husband, Ellery Husted, was the architect at Watch Hill of both the second Beach Club and *Sprayberry House*. He was involved in plans for the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs and was project manager for the construction of national airfields in Greece, Turkey, and Ethiopia. At the time of his retirement, in 1960 he was working with Eero Saarinen on designs for Dulles Airport. The Husteds' daughter Helen, known as "Nell," married Prince David Chavchavadze of Russia and of Georgia, from which his family had emigrated at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution.²⁰⁷ Chavchavadze came to the

United States at the age of three in 1927 and was later educated at Andover and Yale. He served in the Second World War and, for twenty-five years, in the CIA as an officer in Soviet Operations. Nell, described by her former husband in a 1990 autobiography as “an authentic linguistic genius,” was also a Soviet specialist and was fluent in French, German, Russian and Spanish.²⁰⁸ The Husteds’ daughter Priscilla, known as “Prilly,” married Clement A. Griscom IV, Watch Hill oceanographer and the historian of Fort Mansfield. *Windridge* was acquired by the William Dixon Stevens family in 1951.

On Ocean View Highway, between Overlook Drive and Yosemite Valley Road, the Spanish-style white stucco cottage known as *El Reposo* was built in 1901–2 for George H. Babcock of Plainfield, New Jersey (fig. 73). Babcock was president of the Babcock & Wilcox Boiler Company. In 1943, *El Reposo* became the home of the Harold Q. Moore family and, in 1949, of the Louis B. Cappuccio family.

Farther along Ocean View Highway, the cottage known as *Graydon* was built for Mr. and Mrs. Park Painter of Pittsburgh in 1900 (fig. 73). Its architect was Henry W. Wilkinson. Painter had recently sold his company, Painter Wire Works, to Andrew Carnegie and had been looking for the right summer resort for his family. Having considered Newport, he settled on Watch Hill. In what may be the only three-generational family leadership of a Watch Hill nonprofit, Mrs. Painter, her daughter, Mrs. Burrows Sloan (Alice B. Painter Sloan), and her granddaughter, Mrs. Frank E. Rutan, Jr. (Frances Sloan Rutan), were all presidents of the Improvement Society; Mrs. Painter served twice.

In 1943, *Graydon* became the home of the John S. Burke, Sr., family of New York, whose cottage on Napatree, *Windyways*, had been destroyed in the Hurricane of 1938. Burke was president of B. Altman



73 Along Ocean View Highway, the first cottages built were “Graydon” (right) and then “El Reposo.”

& Co. in New York. Since 1970, the cottage has been owned by his daughter, Jane Burke O’Connell (Mrs. Ralph A. O’Connell).²⁰⁹

Just up Massachaug Road from *Graydon* is *Wildmoor*, built in 1915 for Lester N. Godfrey of Brookline, Massachusetts. In 1919, the house became the home of the J. Frederick Eagle family of New York. Eagle, a lawyer, was a partner of the firm of Patterson, Eagle, Greenough & Dacy. In mid-century, Broadway director Dwight Deere Wyman occupied the cottage and entertained a number of well-known stars, including Bea Lillie, Charles Coburn, Clark Gable, and David Niven. Subsequent owners were the Rudolph DeWardener family (1960–64). In 1964, the cottage became the home of the Thomas C. Burke family.

Yosemite, later *Belfort*, on the easterly side of Massachaug, was built in 1917 in the English manor house style for Charles J. McIlvain, Jr., who had purchased the land from John M. Browning in 1915. McIlvain, from Ardmore, Pennsylvania, was an architect with the firm of McIlvain & Roberts. The cottage was the home of Miss Katherine Foster from 1953 to 1963, when it became the home of the John F. Sullivan family, who owned it for forty years. Mrs. Sullivan (Marian Breck Sullivan) was a sister of Edward J. Breck.

Across the street on the ocean side of Ocean View Highway, at its junction with Manatuck Avenue, is *The Timbers*. With its rambling Tudor revival brick and half-timber main house and dependent structures, the house was built in 1917 for Mr. and Mrs. George Hewitt Myers of Washington, D.C. Its architect was John Russell Pope, who was later commissioned by Andrew Mellon to design the National Gallery of Art. Myers was a half-brother of John Ripley Myers, one of the founders, in 1887, of Bristol, Myers, later Bristol-Myers Squibb.



72 Left to right, “Windvale,” “Windridge,” and “To Windward,” all McLanahan cottages.

After his brother's death in 1899, George Myers became a major stockholder in the company. Trained at the Yale Forestry School, Myers was associated with the U.S. Forest Service. He was also a founder of Y. E. Booker and Company, which merged with Alex Brown and Company in 1943. A noted collector of textiles, he founded the Textile Museum in the District of Columbia in 1925 and continued to collect for it until his death in 1957. The museum is housed in his townhouse, also designed by John Russell Pope, at 2310 S Street, N.W., and in the next-door house of his mother, at 2320 S Street, both in the Kalorama district of the capital. From 1966 to 1976, *The Timbers* was the home of the Myers's grandson, David M. Pugh, and his family. It was substantially renovated in the early twenty-first century.

Just to the east, also fronting on East Beach, *Stone House*—later *Norman Hall*, and more commonly known as the Castle—was built in 1915 of stone quarried on the site for William W. Lawrence, who was president of the National Lead Co. (fig. 74). The architect was Mott B. Schmidt of New York, and the builders were R. A. Sherman's Sons Co. of Westerly, one of the most prolific builders of Watch Hill cottages.²¹⁰ When Lawrence died a month after the completion of the house, the property was sold, in 1917, to C. Bai Lihme of Chicago. Lihme, a native of Denmark and a chemist, had become a naturalized U.S. citizen and, after marrying Olga Hegeler of Chicago, succeeded her father as president of the Matthissen & Hegeler Zinc Company of LaSalle, Illinois. He was also a noted art collector. In August 1923,

the Lihmes' daughter Olga married Clement A. Griscom III in the Chapel, with the reception following at *Norman Hall*. Griscom was a son of Mr. and Mrs. Rodman E. Griscom of *Trespaso*. The couple would become the parents of Clement A. Griscom IV. Two years later, in August 1925, the Lihmes' daughter Anita married Prince Edward "Edi" Joseph Lobkowitz of the aristocratic Bohemian/Czech family. Lobkowitz had distinguished himself in World War I as an officer in the free Czech forces under Allied command in Africa. He then became a stockbroker in Paris. That wedding also took place in the Chapel, with the reception again at *Norman Hall*.

Norman Hall was later occupied for a number of seasons in the 1950s and 1960s by the Charles W. Engelhard, Jr., family of Far Hills, New Jersey. Engelhard was the chairman of Engelhard Minerals and Chemicals, Inc., a leading international trader of minerals and metals and the world's largest producer of kaolin, a key element in the production of fine paper. Because he dealt in precious metals, he was known as "the platinum king" and was thought to have inspired the title character in the James Bond novel *Goldfinger* by his friend Ian Fleming.²¹¹ Engelhard was also a noted art collector and a sportsman who raised thoroughbreds at his stables in Aiken, South Carolina, and in England, at Newmarket; one of them, Nijinsky II, won the English Triple Crown. Shortly following Engelhard's death in 1971, in an article in the *New York Times* reporting on his successor at the Engelhard corporation, he was described as having "lived like an Indian rajah, moving majestically with his retinue among his houses

74 "Stone House" (later "Norman Hall"), viewed from East Beach.



and apartments in various parts of the world. He was best known to some people for his racing stable, but better known to others for his multimillion-dollar art collection.”²¹²

Mrs. Engelhard (Jane Brian Mannheimer Engelhard) played a major role in the arts. First enlisted by Jacqueline Kennedy, she was active in efforts to restore the White House over some four decades. She was also a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, whose Charles Engelhard Court was a gift of the Charles Engelhard Foundation, and of the Pierpont Morgan Library. The Engelhard’s eldest daughter, Anne or Annette, became Mrs. Oscar de la Renta. For years, the lawn of *Norman Hall* was the site of the annual Field Day exercises of the Boys’ Club and also of pick-up touch football games out of season.

It may surprise readers to learn that the impact of the Cold War was felt even on East Beach and at *Norman Hall*. That the Lobkowicz family lost their historic properties to the Communist Czech regime is a matter of history.²¹³ But that there was a direct impact of the struggle on their Watch Hill property is not generally known. In 1952, however, the U.S. Coast Guard and Mrs. Lihme and her daughter Princess Lobkowicz entered into an agreement under which the government was permitted to install and maintain security telecommunications equipment—telephone and telegraph lines and poles—on the property “for the purpose of national defense in time of war and saving life and property in time of peace.”²¹⁴ The Coast Guard entered into similar agreements with the owners of two neighboring shorefront properties, James M. Snowden and J. Russell Forgan. In 1965, the Lihmes sold the cottage to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery as a retreat house. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the Order offered the property for sale, and in 2004, it became a private home again.²¹⁵

The pink Bermuda cottage next door to *Norman Hall* is a more recent addition. Mr. and Mrs. James M. Snowden of New York built it in 1951 on land conveyed to them in 1949 by Olga Lihme Griscom. As noted earlier, their architect was their summer neighbor, New York architect Ellery Husted of *Windridge*. The Snowdens called it *Sprayberry House* after an oil lease, known as “Spraberry” [*sic*], which the Snowdens owned and whose royalties helped pay for the house. Family members recall that when the cottage was built, its poured concrete construction attracted attention and provoked speculation that it was designed to serve as a fallout shelter in the event of a

nuclear attack. If not that, it was designed for a certain measure of self-sufficiency; it had its own gas pump and underground storage tank. In 1966, the cottage became the home of the Reynolds Spring-born family of Pelham, New York, and remained in their ownership for some thirty years. It later became known as *The Pink House*.

To the east of *The Pink House* is *Dunbar Rocks*, the cottage and pool house built by the Thomas R. Wall IV family of New York in the early 2000s, on a site first developed in 1987 by Charles H. G. Rees, the father of Mrs. Wall (Nancy Rees Wall). The *Dunbar Rocks* property was formerly part of the Snowden land associated with *Sprayberry House*. The land on which the *Dunbar Rocks* pool house stands was originally owned by the J. Russell Forgan family of Chicago and New York. Mr. Forgan had founded and owned the investment company Glore, Forgan & Co. During the Second World War, he served as commander in Europe of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the first U.S. foreign intelligence agency. Mrs. Forgan was Ada Johnson Forgan from St. Louis, the sister of Mrs. Bradford Shinkle, Jr., of *Meadowcrest* and the aunt of Jane Johnson Heminway (Mrs. John H. Heminway) of *Gulnare*.

The original Forgan tract ran northerly from the ocean, across Ocean View Highway and up Browning Road. The remainder of the Forgan property, including the cottage known as *Cedarcrest*, built in 1915, lies on the hill across Ocean View Highway, on the left or westerly side of Browning Road. In 1976, the property was acquired by the Chateau Ste. Michelle division of UST Inc.

Farther up Browning Road, also on the left, is the whitewashed stone Provençal villa known as *Windansea*, built in 1922 for the William Henry Andrews family. Mr. Andrews, who was chairman of Pratt & Lambert, Inc., manufacturer of varnish, lacquers, and enamels, had purchased the land in 1917 from John Browning. The cottage was designed by noted New York architect Mott B. Schmidt, who had designed *Norman Hall* several years earlier. A New York house that he designed for Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt at 1 Sutton Place later became the residence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Mrs. Andrews was Kate Gresham, whose father was Walter Quinton Gresham.²¹⁶ Andrews died the year after the cottage was built, but it remained in the Andrews family until 1963. His son, Walter Gresham Andrews of Buffalo, New York, owned the cottage after his mother’s death in 1938. The younger Mr. Andrews served as U.S. Representative from the 40th and 42nd Districts of New York,



75 "Ridge End."

1931–49. After his death in 1949, his sister, Harriet Andrews Urban (Mrs. William P. Urban), also of Buffalo, inherited the cottage. In 1963, it became the home of the Louis Panciera family.

Farther along Ocean View Highway, on the northerly side and east of Browning Road, are three more early cottages. At the northeasterly corner of Browning Road and Ocean View Highway is *Windemere*, later *Sea Change*, which the *National Register* dates about 1920 and suggests was probably built as a combination garage and chauffeur's cottage for *Idle Rest*, next door. It has been much modified and expanded over the years. In 1930, it became the home of Harry H. Caswell of Springfield, Massachusetts. Subsequently, it was the home (1966–74) of the family of Mr. and Mrs. Clement A. Griscom IV. In 1979, the cottage became the home of the L. Patton Kline family of Kansas City, Missouri, and New York.

Just to the east is *Idle Rest*, later named *Fairways*, built about 1916 for the Charles E. Sherman family of Westerly. In 1965, it became the home of the Chauncey G. Parker family. Mrs. Parker (Elizabeth Crawford Parker) had grown up at *Shoreby* on Wapan Road. In 1976, the cottage was acquired by the family of Mr. and Mrs. George Kirkpatrick. Mrs. Kirkpatrick (Susan Moore Markham Kirkpatrick), later Mrs. Gordon McShane, had grown up at *Sunnandene* on Bluff Avenue. The cottage remains in the family.

Next door, and sharing a driveway with *Fairways*, is *Sunny Hill*, formerly the *Ward House*, built, also about 1916, for Wilfred Ward of Westerly. *Sunny Hill* later became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Rodman E. Griscom, Jr. Mrs. Griscom was Elizabeth Snowden Griscom and had grown up at *Holiday House*. The Griscoms conveyed the cottage

to the James W. McCormick family in 1960. Mr. McCormick had grown up at *The Bungalow* on Westerly Road.

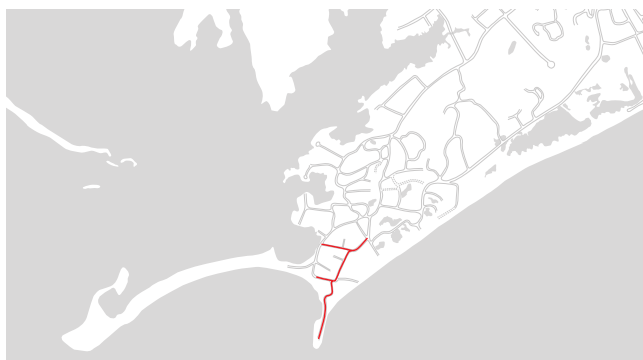
Other significant houses include two on Yosemite Valley Road. *Ridge End*, on the ridge along the westerly side of the road, was built in 1907 for the A. L. Dickinson family of New York (fig. 75). Acquired by the John S. Newberry family in 1916, the cottage became a retreat for the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas in 1968. During the summer months, the Sisters and their associates from other religious orders come for rest and vacation, and during the balance of the year, other religious groups use the house for retreats.

Farther up the road, on a hill on the left or westerly side, stands the imposing neoclassical white cottage with massive stone chimneys known as *Clarmar*. It was built in 1931 for Mr. and Mrs. Clarence R. Bitting (Jeane Margaret Bitting).²¹⁷ Its architect was Warrington G. Lawrence, who had been associated with the firm of McKim, Mead & White before opening his own office in New York. The name of the house is said to derive from the first four letters of Bitting's first name and the first three of Mrs. Bitting's middle name. It also is appropriate as a joining of the Latin words for "bright sea," *clarum mare*. The property, approached by two entrance driveways from Yosemite Valley Road, and originally some thirty acres, had bridle paths, a tennis court, and a hot house. Bitting was president of the United States Sugar Corporation and assistant president of the Fisher Body Company. In 1954, he gave the property to the Marist Fathers of Boston, who owned it for some thirty years. The house contains a private chapel, and during their tenure at *Clarmar*, the Fathers invited the Watch Hill Roman Catholic community to Mass there on Saturday afternoons. Mass was sometimes celebrated in the chapel, on other occasions in the sunroom, and sometimes in the garden.

In 1955, the order acquired the neighboring property on which was located the cottage known as *White House*, which had become the "White House Inn." That structure, which was destroyed by fire in the 1970s, was used by the order to house some of the retreat visitors, priests, brothers, sisters, and lay-persons who could not be accommodated at *Clarmar*. The Rev. John W. Lynch, S.M., wrote of the order's time at *Clarmar*, "There is hardly a better spot, other than Eden, for rest and relaxation."²¹⁸ In 1983, the order sold the property, and it returned to private ownership. Much of the land surrounding *Clarmar*, including the *White House* property, was subsequently subdivided.

FOSTER AND NASH PROPERTIES

By the middle of the nineteenth century, this portion of Watch Hill, stretching from what became the Everett subdivision to the lighthouse property (formerly property of George Foster), was owned predominantly by the Foster and Nash families. Over the next few years, individual parcels carved out from these properties became both hotel and cottage sites.²¹⁹



Lighthouse Road, Larkin Road, Bluff Avenue, Plimpton Road, & Westerly Road to Everett Avenue

The development of the major cottages on Lighthouse Road dates from the acquisition of the Larkin House property by Clement A. Griscom of Haverford, Pennsylvania, in 1906. The Larkin House, the largest hotel at Watch Hill, with its landmark twin cupolas and nine-hundred-foot piazza, had for thirty-seven years commanded sea views from Weekapaug to Stonington and dominated the landscape. But in 1906, Frank Larkin, who had inherited it from his father, Daniel F. Larkin, in 1900, and who had a deep fear about fire in the vast structure, sold it to Griscom.²²⁰ Griscom razed the hotel and redeveloped the property with family cottages. That event dramatically signaled the end of the heyday of the hotels at Watch Hill.

Clement Acton Griscom, who was perhaps the foremost American shipowner of his day, was involved in a wide range of business interests, including railroads, oil, transportation, banking, and insurance. He had in 1886 acquired the Inman and International Line, which in 1888 launched the *City of New York*, a ship of unparalleled luxury on the North Atlantic run, New York to Liverpool. He became president of the International Navigation Company that same year. Later, in conjunction with J. P. Morgan and Co., he converted his

business into the International Mercantile Marine Company (IMM), which assumed responsibility for 136 vessels and an array of transatlantic lines, U.S. and British, including the American and Red Star Lines, the White Star Line, the Atlantic Transport Line, and the Leyland and Dominion Lines. Griscom was chairman of IMM when the White Star Line commissioned a trio of superliners, *Olympic*, *Titanic*, and *Gigantic*.²²¹ He died seven months after the *Titanic* disaster, in November 1912 at age seventy-one.

Griscom's position of influence in business and commerce was such that he was often called upon to entertain and be entertained by significant international figures. On one occasion, Griscom entertained the Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovitch of Russia at his Haverford estate, *Dolobran*. On another, he, P. A. B. Widener,²²² and J. P. Morgan, all members of the board of directors of IMM, were invited to stay with Kaiser Wilhelm II when on a business trip to northern Germany. Griscom's son, Lloyd C. Griscom, who later pursued a diplomatic career, serving as Chargé d'Affaires at the American Legation in Istanbul and as Ambassador to Italy, recalled the perquisites that the son of a man of the wealth and economic power of Griscom enjoyed:

The era of great fortunes which permitted individuals to own whatever they desired was also the era of unparalleled privilege. Because I was my father's son, I could walk into any telegraph office, compose as long a message as I wished, sign his name to it, and walk out; I could express anything I wanted anywhere free of charge; I could step on any steamship and be transported to any point in the Seven Seas; I could board any train and ride from Portland, Maine to Portland, Oregon, without paying a cent.²²³

Mrs. Griscom was Frances Canby Biddle Griscom. The Griscoms had six children, three of whom had their own cottages on the Point. As noted elsewhere, Mrs. Griscom gave the Edith Yandell sculpture of Ninigret to the Fire District in memory of her husband. The sculpture was unveiled at a tea party Mrs. Griscom gave at *The Manor House* (later *The Point*) in early September 1914. *Seaside Topics* noted that it had recently been on exhibition at the Paris Salon. Among those present for the great occasion were "the members of the Improvement Society and their husbands, the Westerly Town Council, the State Roads Commissioners and Watch Hill officials."²²⁴

The Larkin House or Griscom tract encompassed the hillside south of Larkin Road, from east of Lighthouse Road, west to just above the Merry-Go-Round and south to the lighthouse property. It included rights granted by Courtland P. Chapman in a 1906 deed to Griscom, “to gather, take, bank and cart away sea-weed.”²²⁵ Across the tract ran Lighthouse Road, the U.S. Government’s right-of-way to the lighthouse. Griscom relocated the road westerly of its earlier location, reconfiguring it around two earlier cottages—the *Aldrich Cottage* at the northeast corner of the property and further down the hill, *Ocean Mound*, later *Seaswept*—to permit the development of the property of his cottage, known first as *The Manor House* and later as *The Point* (fig. 76; see also fig. 79).

The *Aldrich Cottage* was built in the 1870s, according to the *National Register*, as a rental cottage for the Watch Hill House,



76 “The Manor House” (later “The Point”), viewed from the beach. “Trespaso” is visible to the right.



77 “Ocean Mound” (later “Seaswept”) was topped by a turret at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century.

which stood across Larkin Road. In 1883, Daniel F. Larkin deeded the property to his daughter, Sarah E. Aldrich, who was married to Frank S. Aldrich. In 1944, after the deaths of both Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich, the cottage became the home of the Fenelon family, Edward J. Fenelon, Jr. (known as “Hap”), a Rhode Island State Senator, and his sisters, the Misses Bessie and Mildred Fenelon. It remained in the Fenelon family for forty-six years until it was acquired by the William J. Hayes family of Avon, Connecticut, in 1990.

The yellow Victorian cottage called *Ocean Mound* by the Griscoms and later *Seaswept*, located across Lighthouse Road from *The Point*, had been built about 1880 and was, in the nineteenth century, topped by a gabled turret (fig. 77). Its architect is said to have been George Keller of Hartford. This cottage also was acquired by the Griscoms and was for many years the home of their youngest daughter, Miss Frances Canby Griscom of “Water Oak Plantation,” Tallahassee, Florida.

Seaside Topics credits the coming of the Griscoms to Watch Hill to Miss Griscom having visited Watch Hill to play in an early women’s competition at the Misquamicut Club, and thereafter encouraging her family to establish their summer home here. Miss Griscom, as a young woman of nineteen, and her mother were painted by Cecilia Beaux in an 1898 portrait, *Mother and Daughter* (fig. 78). The two women are shown standing side-by-side in floor-length formal gowns and cloaks. The painting is part of the nearly one hundred items in the Beaux collection at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. It won the Carnegie Institute’s 1899 gold medal and the Academy’s 1900 Temple Gold Medal for the best figure painting.²²⁶

Miss Griscom, who was known as “Pansy,” was an outstanding sportswoman. She became national Women’s Amateur Golf champion in 1900. The previous year, her father had given part of *Dolobran* to expand the original golf course of her home club, the Merion Cricket Club, from nine to eighteen holes. Miss Griscom’s participation in the 1905 British Ladies’ Amateur championship resulted in the formation in 1932 of the legendary Curtis Cup golf matches, played biennially between teams of amateur women golfers from the U.S., Great Britain, and Ireland. After her national championship, Miss Griscom, with photos of her form at golf, was featured in a 1901 article in *The Ladies Home Journal*. At the beginning of the twentieth century, she was one of the first women to own and drive an automobile in Philadelphia, and during World War I she served as an ambulance driver. An expert horsewoman, she kept a coach and four at her Florida plantation.



78 In 1898, Philadelphia artist Cecilia Beaux painted Mother and Daughter, a portrait of Mrs. Clement Acton Griscom and Miss Frances Canby Griscom. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Gift of Frances C. Griscom.

Ocean Mound was acquired by the Whitney W. Addington family of Chicago in 1968 and renamed *Seaswept*. Mrs. Addington (Ada Forgan Addington) had grown up at *Cedarcrest* on Browning Road. Shortly thereafter, the Addingtons painted the cottage yellow, its former color having been a dark brown, a color which Miss Griscom was said to have favored as being long-lasting. In 1974, some of the Addingtons' friends decided to have fun at their expense. They also used the occasion to poke gentle fun at the Improvement Society. "Borrowing" stationery from an officer of the Society, they composed a letter, signed by a fictitious member—an Elizabeth Sutcliffe (Mrs. James Sutcliffe)—who wrote that she had been commissioned to convey the feelings of the Society:

At the last meeting of the Watch Hill Improvement Society the topic on the agenda was the beautification of Watch Hill. A lively discussion developed about the new yellow color of your adorable house on Lighthouse Point. A few of the ladies were in favor of the new color as it reminded them of pleasant times on the Italian Riviera. However the vast majority felt that it was slightly out of place in Watch Hill. I was commissioned to convey the feelings of the Society to you. I hope you will not take offense with our feelings and we assure you of our continued good wishes. However if there

is any possibility of reconsidering the color in the future, we would consider it would be to the long term benefit of our cherished community.²²⁷

It was some time before the family learned that the letter was a hoax. When they discovered the truth, they took it in stride, and placing the letter in a yellow frame, gave it a place of honor among family memorabilia.

Four of the five substantial cottages the Griscom family built on the Larkin House property remain: *The Point*, formerly *The Manor House* (1906), *Trespasso* (1906–7), *Moana*, formerly *Aktaion* (1906), and *Edgewater*, formerly *Edgecliff* (1907). Architect Edward F. Hinkle was active in the design of all four. *The Point* was built for the senior Griscoms (fig. 79). For several seasons during the World War I years, the Frederick F. Brewster family of New Haven occupied the cottage. In 1925, it was acquired by the Isaac T. Starr family of Philadelphia. Starr was a member of Starr & Co., stockbrokers. The cottage subsequently passed to the Starrs' daughter, Hope Starr Lloyd (Mrs. Morris Lloyd), and her family. Mr. Lloyd, who was a partner of Drexel Burnham Lambert, had grown up at *Cedarhurst* on Neowam Avenue and at *Intermere* on Ocean View Highway.

Just up the hill, *Trespasso*, which stands squarely on the site of the Larkin House, was built for the Griscoms' son, Rodman E. Griscom of Philadelphia (fig. 79; see also figs. 76, 80, & 81). Rodman Griscom was a principal of Berton, Griscom & Co., Bankers. Mrs. Griscom was Anne Starr Griscom and the sister of Isaac T. Starr. In 1946, the cottage was acquired by the Benjamin Eshleman family of Villa Nova, Pennsylvania, and subsequently passed to the Eshlemans' daughter,



79 Lighthouse Road and Point about 1907 with, left to right, the "Aldrich Cottage," "The Manor House" (later "The Point"), and "Trespasso."

Lorine Eshleman Vogt (Mrs. William T. Vogt) of Haverford. Mr. Vogt was an internationally recognized tennis player. He won the U.S. Open Court Tennis Doubles crown from 1963 to 1966 and, in the latter year, won the British Doubles Amateur Championship. He and sons William, Jr., and Peter won the U.S. Father–Son Doubles Court Tennis Championship eight times. He served as president of the Chapel and, an unprecedented three times, as president of the Misquamicut Club.

Hinkle built *Aktaion*, later *Moana*, for himself, on land given him by Mrs. Clement A. Griscom (fig. 80). Adjacent to the property was the Block Island steamer dock.²²⁸ In 1922, the cottage became the summer home of the family of John W. Anderson of the Ford Motor Company and Detroit. Anderson, a lawyer, was one of the twelve original investors in the new company in 1903. In 1951, the *Moana* property passed to the Andersons' daughter and son-in law, the Hon. and Mrs. Arthur Gardner of Washington. Gardner was U.S. Ambassador to Cuba, 1953–57. For many years the Gardner motor yacht, also called *Moana*, was a fixture in the harbor. In 1970, the Gardners' daughter, Suzanne Gardner MacLear (Mrs. Frank R. MacLear) of New York, inherited the cottage. Frank MacLear, president of MacLear & Harris, yacht designers, was a noted naval architect and

yachtsman. He was the navigator for the 1958 America's Cup challenger *Weatherly*. He made seven Bermuda races, eight trans-Atlantic crossings, and three trans-Pacific crossings.

Edgecliff, later renamed *Edgewater*, another cottage on the Larkin Hotel site, was built for Mr. and Mrs. Clement A. Griscom in 1907. It stands above the Merry-Go-Round and the Bathing Beach. The cottage became the property of the George Valentine Smith family of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, in 1925 and remained in their ownership for some sixty years. George V. Smith, Jr., was twice a president of the Misquamicut Club. In 1984, the cottage was acquired by Harriet Behrend Ninow (Mrs. Earl Ninow), from whom her son, Richard H. Sayre, inherited the property in 1986. Mrs. Ninow had spent summers at *Glenhill*, also known as *Craigie Brae*, on Aquidneck Avenue.

Another Griscom cottage formerly located on the ocean side of Lighthouse Road, below and west of the Watch Hill and east of *The Point*, was *Napatree*. That cottage was destroyed in the Hurricane of 1938. As reported by *Seaside Topics* in its account of the storm, its owner, Mrs. Samuel Bettle (Helen Biddle Griscom Bettle), a Griscom daughter and an invalid at the time, was determined to weather the storm in her house. She was saved only by the heroic efforts of her chauffeur, who picked her up and put her in the car. As they drove up

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80 Looking from the roof of the Atlantic House about 1912, the two cottages moved from the site of "The Kedge" (later "Hill House") are first the "Alsop Cottage" and next the former "H. A. Grant Cottage"—"Buena Vista." On the left is "By-the-Sea." "Trespaso" and "Aktaion" (later "Moana") are directly across Larkin Road.

Lighthouse Road, they looked back to see the house collapse under the gigantic hurricane seas. The sole remaining features are the ruin, still flecked with mosaics, of a Florentine garden fountain, visible as a semicircular projection at the top of the retaining wall abutting the Watch Hill, and a small portion of a stone garden wall with an arched gateway. *Chaos Cottage*, built on the site by the Lloyd family in the 1970s, was situated at a higher elevation than the preceding structure.

A smaller Griscom cottage on Lighthouse Road, just across from *Trespaso*, is *Taurento*, which was built for Rodman E. Griscom in 1907 as a rental cottage (see fig. 81). Family tradition has it that his mother, Mrs. Clement A. Griscom, was the principal in the development of the property. She viewed it as a business project in which she could demonstrate her own entrepreneurial capabilities, her husband's being legendary. It was Mrs. Griscom, too, who gave two of the cottages, *Trespaso* and *Taurento*, their humorous names—*Trespaso*, because the Griscoms objected to what they felt was the trespass of Block Island ferry passengers on their beach, and *Taurento*, a cottage built to be rented. In 1921, *Taurento* became the home of the Charles W. Moore family of St. Louis and, in 1970, of the Moores' grandson, Andrew S. Gagarin, and his family. Mrs. Gagarin (Mary "Missy" Marston Gagarin) had grown up at *Sunset Hill* and the *Aloha* beach cottage.

A new cottage between *Moana* and *Edgewater* replaces the 1913 building which served as a garage and chauffeur's cottage for *Moana*. Under the ownership of the Britton Browne family (Mrs. Browne was Joan Gardner Browne), the original structure was remodeled and known as *The Grogde*. In 1992, the Charles M. Royce family of Greenwich, Connecticut, acquired the property and built the new house, known as *The Cottage*, and a guesthouse fronting Larkin Road, known as *The Gatehouse*.

Across Larkin Road from *Trespaso* and *Moana* is *By-the-Sea*, earlier identified as the first summer cottage built at Watch Hill (fig. 80); it was owned for many years by the F. Joseph Paradiso family. To its west is the former *Alsop Cottage*, better known as *Mastuxet* and then as the *Hartley House* guest house. It was built about 1880 on the Bluff Avenue site of the *Kedge* or *Hill House* and later moved, when that house was to be built. Originally, it was much smaller and resembled the *Aldrich Cottage*. *Seaside Topics* reports that it was substantially enlarged in 1913 by its owner, T. D. Babcock, and that it had been occupied the previous season by Mrs. Jacob S. Burnet. The house returned to private ownership in 2000. A second house, also owned



81 "Holiday House" (later "High Watch"). Behind it are "Taurento" (left) and the "Aldrich Cottage" (right). Across Lighthouse Road is "Trespaso."

by Babcock and later by his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Loomis, and known as *Buena Vista*, was also moved from the *Hill House* property and relocated on Larkin Road, directly in front of the other (fig. 80). It too was enlarged.²²⁹ *Buena Vista* burned in 1969. In 1989, its site became the upper parking lot of the Yacht Club.

One of the most notable cottages of Watch Hill, *Holiday House*, later called *High Watch*, was built in 1929–30 for Mrs. George Grant Snowden (Pearl Pinkerton McClelland Snowden) of Philadelphia, whose husband had died in 1918 (fig. 81). It stands as a landmark for sailors on the great bluff from which Watch Hill takes its name. Mrs. Snowden had acquired the historic and dramatic site from the estate of Eugene Atwood in 1929.

The Snowdens, beginning with George Grant Snowden's father, James McKean Snowden, who was born in 1831 and lived in Pittsburgh, had made their fortune in oil and gas exploration. George Grant Snowden and his brother, James H. Snowden, explored for oil first in Pennsylvania and then in Texas and New Mexico. An unanticipated result of their explorations in New Mexico was the discovery of what at the time

was the largest potash deposit in the world. The next generation, George Grant Snowden, Jr., and his brother, James M. Snowden, continued the family business from an office in New York.

James M. Snowden, Jr., remembers skyrockets and roman candles being set off from the terrace over the ocean on the Fourth of July in the 1940s. These fireworks were launched from glass milk bottles that were current then. He recalls that one guest, Joe Thomas, senior partner of Lehman Brothers, lit the skyrockets with a large cigar. Mr. Snowden also remembers hearing from his father about an attempted kidnapping, some years earlier, involving a plane which kidnappers had landed on the golf course. Owing to confusion as to which was the house of their intended victim, the attempt failed. Even though the Snowdens were not the target, for the next several weeks at *Holiday House*, a night watchman was stationed with a submachine gun at the end of the hallway where most of the bedrooms were.²³⁰

In 1948, *Holiday House* became the property of William Hale Harkness. Harkness was heir to his family's Standard Oil Company fortune, his great-uncle, Stephen Vanderburgh Harkness, and his grandfather, Daniel M. Harkness, having been initial investors with John D. Rockefeller. He himself had been an initial investor, in 1922, in a fledgling publishing venture launched by two Yale friends, Britton Hadden and Henry R. Luce. That venture was *Time*, *The Weekly Newsmagazine*. Harkness came to Watch Hill through his second wife, Rebekah West Pierce Harkness, whom he had married the year before. Rebekah Harkness, known as "Betty," was from St. Louis and had summered all her life at Watch Hill, where her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Allen T. West, owned *Stoneleigh* on Wapan Road.

William Harkness brought with him his eighty-foot yacht, *Ardea*, which was the committee boat of the annual Yale-Harvard Crew Race at New London, the oldest intercollegiate sporting event in the country. The finish judges' boat at those races was another famous boat, also associated with Watch Hill, *Aphrodite*, formerly John Hay Whitney's cruiser, which in the 1990s was acquired by Watch Hill summer resident Charles M. Royce and was regularly docked at the Plimpton Dock.

Biographer Craig Unger describes *Holiday House* as "the single most imposing structure in Watch Hill":

Situated on the bluff after which the town was named, the white clapboard house dominates the area. It is so large and

rambling—with more than forty rooms, four chimneys, and half a dozen terraced sundecks—that it is hard to believe it is a single-family summer dwelling. Near the top deck is a room with windows on three sides from which one can see for miles up and down the Rhode Island coast.²³¹

After Mr. Harkness died suddenly in 1954, Mrs. Harkness, an amateur musician who had studied under Nadia Boulanger, the celebrated French teacher of composition, and at the Mannes College of Music and had written a number of popular songs, entered upon a career in dance. Reportedly at the suggestion of Yehudi Menuhin, she also took up yoga to improve her musical technique, importing a yoga teacher, B. K. S. Iyengar, to *Holiday House* in the summer of 1956 to teach her and her three children, Allen and Terry Pierce, and Edith Harkness, ages, 16, 12, and 7.²³² Neighbors' children were invited to join in the lessons. Mrs. Harkness announced her intention to go to India the following year, for advanced lessons with Yogi Iyengar.

In the early 1960s, Mrs. Harkness became a patron of the Joffrey Ballet, bringing the entire company to Watch Hill for two summers, 1962–63. They practiced at the old Fire House, which she had purchased and converted into the Holiday Art Center, and on the terrace of *Holiday House*. In 1964, she founded her own company, the Harkness Ballet, principally with dancers from the Joffrey. She invited the new company to Watch Hill for the summer of 1965. The new company also accompanied her to Washington in September of that year, when they performed for President and Mrs. Johnson at the White House on a new portable East Room stage which she presented to the house on that occasion. In 1966, she had an outdoor practice floor, covered by a blue plastic Buckminster Fuller geodesic dome, constructed on the lawn to the east of the house. The dome outraged neighbors, who sued on the basis of zoning violations. They prevailed, and the dome was dismantled.

Not long thereafter, Mrs. Harkness left Watch Hill, establishing herself at a new country location nearer to New York, Sneden's Landing on the Hudson, a half-hour north of the city. She put *Holiday House* on the market. A local partnership, the Watch Hill Associates, was formed to protect the property, and Mrs. Harkness conveyed it to them in 1973. Fearing that no single purchaser would be found to acquire the entire property, the partnership subdivided it into three lots, the center one, Lot 2, containing the house. The deed to Lot 2 required the buyer to reduce the size of the house at each end and to

establish appropriate sideline distances for any structures that might be built on Lots 1 and 3. The *Westerly Sun* ran a photograph of the house with the caption, "Probably to be Demolished."²³³ All three lots were sold in 1974, the Gurdon B. Wattles family being the purchasers of Lot 2. They renamed the cottage *High Watch* and over the next four years acquired the other two lots. They reduced the cottage in size, and no further structures were built on the Watch Hill.

In 1985, Gurdon B. Wattles and seven of his friends turned fifty, and they celebrated with a spectacular birthday party dance at *High Watch*. The others were Whitney Addington, Malcolm Barlow, Jane Buffum, Arthur Cottrell III, Robert Knisley, Suzanne MacLear, and John McCormick. It was a flawless, full-moon August evening with a big band orchestra playing on the terrace and a steel band below, by the pool. Fireworks over Lighthouse Point were provided by Grucci. The Wattles family remained at *High Watch* until 1996.

Just to the east stand three cottages on the ocean side of Bluff Avenue. The first of these is *The Kedge*, built in 1903 for Robert F. Ballantine of Newark, New Jersey, president of the Ballantine Brewing Company. Fronting on Bluff Avenue, the property is bounded on the south by the Bluff Avenue right-of-way to East Beach. As noted earlier, the site originally contained two cottages, which were removed from the property and relocated to lots on the northerly side of Larkin Road. *The Kedge* was later owned by the Ballantines' daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. J. O. H. Pitney of Morristown, New Jersey. The cottage was renamed *Hill House* when the Hon. and Mrs. Truman H. Newberry of Grosse Pointe Farms acquired it in 1927. Mr. Newberry served as Secretary of the Navy under President Theodore Roosevelt (1908–9) and later as a U.S. Senator from Michigan (1919–22). In the early 1950s, the cottage became the home of Mrs. Pardon Miller of Providence. It was later, briefly, the home of the Gregory Nott Camp family. Thereafter, for thirty years (1958–87), it was the home of the Robert M. Nelson family of New York. In 1987, the Nelsons' granddaughter, Nancy Nelson Richmond, sold the cottage to the Francis P. Jenkins family of Chappaqua, New York.

Next door to *Hill House* is *Justhome*, later *Seaesta* and *Weonit*. It was built in 1905 for Bradford Shinkle of Covington, Kentucky, who was president of the Covington & Cincinnati Bridge Co., and of the Champion Ice Company and the Cincinnati Tobacco Warehouse Co.²³⁴ He became a member of the Misquamicut Golf Club in 1895, the year of its incorporation. Born in 1845, he died in 1909.²³⁵

A. Clifford Shinkle of Cincinnati, whose family next owned *Justhome*, was the oldest son of Bradford Shinkle. He became president of the Central Trust Company and the Fourth & Central Trust Company of Cincinnati. He was also president of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio and of the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce. Howard Hughes was a guest of the Shinkles' daughter, Kate Shinkle, at *Justhome* in the 1930s. Miss Shinkle was appointed the first woman harbor master of the Town of Westerly in 1948. Another son of Bradford Shinkle was A. Clifford Shinkle's younger half-brother, Bradford Shinkle, Jr., who, as noted earlier, would live at *Meadowcrest* on Wapan Road.

Justhome was the home of the J. D. Wooster Lambert family, 1956–63, and, renamed *Seaesta*, of the George Lauder family, 1963–87. The Richard C. King family acquired the property in 1987. The rooftop observation room is a late-twentieth-century addition.

Between the Shinkle property and that of the Ocean House, directly across from Chapel Lane, the third of these Bluff Avenue cottages is *Sunnandene*. Built of stucco and half timber in 1906 for Miss Sophie Moen of Boston, it was later owned by Miss Julia Howard Bush of Troy, New York, who was a granddaughter of James L. Howard. In 1943, *Sunnandene* became the home of the Thomas F. Moore family of Westerly, including Thomas F. Moore, Jr., George C. Moore, and Susan Moore. Moore was president of the George C. Moore Co. Susan Moore and her husband, Dean F. Markham, and their family acquired the cottage and lived there from the 1960s to the 1970s. Markham served as executive director of President John F. Kennedy's Commission on Narcotic and Drug Abuse and also as director of the President's Council on Physical Fitness. The cottage continues in the family, owned by the Randolph G. Abood family. Mrs. Abood was Marion Markham, who had grown up there.

Across Bluff Avenue and down Chapel Lane is a small cottage known as *Breeze Cote*, which probably served as a garage and chauffeur's cottage for William C. Hastings of Yonkers, New York; it was built about 1885. Hastings was a nephew of James L. Howard, and his cottage was one of the buildings destroyed in the great fire of 1916. Still further down a driveway from Chapel Lane is *Sea View*, later *Sea Down*, built about 1925 on property formerly of the Colonial House, which also fell victim to that fire. It was built for Miss Julia Howard Bush, who moved there from *Sunnandene*. Another cottage

belonging to Miss Bush stood just to the east of *Sea Down* and had also been lost to the fire. In 1945, *Sea Down* became the home of the family of Mrs. Louise DeKoven Phelps of Lake Forest, Illinois, and of her son, Hubbard Phelps. Mrs. Phelps, over a thirty-one year period, 1927–58, won fourteen Women's Misquamicut Club golf championships. Mrs. Hubbard Phelps (Nancy Drake Phelps) was Miss Rheingold of 1948. Hubbard Phelps, a noted photographer, was twice Commodore of the Yacht Club.

Next to the Chapel stands the cottage originally known as the *Collins Cottage*, built in 1880 for Howard S. Collins. Collins was the owner of the Collins Axe Company, located in Collinsville, Connecticut. The company manufactured quality cutting tools, including axes and machetes. The machetes particularly were valued as harvesting tools in sugar cane growing countries. Collins, together with Edward S. Brewer, then owner of the Ocean House, whose lot on the corner of Bluff Avenue and Plimpton Road abuts the Chapel lot, contributed additional property along the rear of the Chapel to the Chapel Society in order to facilitate its expansion in 1902–3.

In 1936, the Gordon J. Anderson family acquired the cottage, for which they used no name. Dr. Anderson and Mrs. Anderson (Mary Isabel Patton Anderson), a registered nurse, had together founded the Margaret Edward Anderson Hospital, which was located on the westerly side of Watch Hill Road, north of Avondale. This private hospital opened in 1924 and functioned on a full-time basis until 1966. The Andersons' daughter, Joan Anderson Atterbury, did not recall any patient being turned away for lack of funds even in the days before insurance plans and guaranteed payment systems. "Those who could not pay would often barter for their treatments and supplied the hospital with fresh fish, clams and vegetables or other services."²³⁶ In 1960, the cottage became the home of Mrs. Atterbury and her husband, Henry C. Atterbury, of Westport, Connecticut.

At the head of Bluff Avenue, as Plimpton Road turns into Westerly Road, are four cottages. Two of these, at the top of Plimpton Road as it meets Bluff Avenue, were built for J. Frank Champlin, then proprietor of the Ocean House: *Intercrest*, built in 1898, and behind it *Altomare*, often referred to as *Altomary*, built in 1901–2. During Champlin's ownership, these cottages served as lodges of the Ocean House. They were later owned by Judge John Ferguson, who acquired them from the Champlin family in 1946. In 1956, they were acquired by Henry Saglio, of Glastonbury, Connecticut. Saglio, a poultry

geneticist, was called "father of the poultry industry" by his friend and colleague, Frank Perdue. At Watch Hill he served as a president of the Chapel. The Saglios renamed *Intercrest*, *Stone Hen*.

Next are two cottages which, though not owned by the Ocean House, may from time to time have been rented by and served as Ocean House cottages. On the same side of Westerly Road and across from the Ocean House is *Russula*, later *Tredegar*, built in 1900 as a rental property for Dr. William H. Merrill, who was married to Anna K. Phelps, also known as Anna Kinsman Merrill, the sister of Dudley Phelps. The property was part of the tract which her grandfather, Governor Catlin, had owned and which she and her sister, Miss Mary C. Phelps, had inherited. Frederick Brooks of Brooks Brothers was an early occupant of the cottage. The property was acquired by the Gregory Nott Camp family in 1945 and by the Misses Frances and Kate Davis Shinkle in 1955. In 1957, *Tredegar* became the home of the William J. Miller family of Pittsburgh. Mrs. Miller (Muriel McKaig Miller) had spent summers in the 1930s and 1940s at the Ocean House with her grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. F. Raymond Holland, and her stepfather, Moorhead B. Holland. Dr. Holland was the first director of Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum. An accomplished athlete, Muriel played baseball in the cottage colony games as a member of the Ivy team. Later she won the Misquamicut Club's women's golf championship eleven times between 1948 and 1970, as well as several women's singles and doubles tennis titles. In the late 1970s, the Millers came to live year-round at Watch Hill, moving to a cottage, *Prospect*, on the river. Their New Year's Eve dinner parties were a festive feature of the holidays, replete with mid-night fireworks on the terrace above the frigid river.

Next door to the east, as Westerly Road turns at the Ocean House, is *Red Top*, also built in 1900 as a rental property for Dr. Merrill. *Red Top*, like *Tredegar*, is located on former Catlin land. The cottage was first occupied by Miss Helen C. Frick of Pittsburgh. Miss Frick later built the research library at her father's, Henry Clay Frick's, Fifth Avenue mansion, which became the Frick Collection after his death in 1919. Frick himself became a member of the Misquamicut Club in 1900. Between 1945 and 1957, *Red Top* was owned by the Gregory Nott Camps. In 1989, the cottage became the home of the James B. Downing family of London.

On the hill above is the *Catlin Cottage*, mentioned earlier. In 1945, the cottage became the home of the Floyd T. Starr family of

Philadelphia. Starr was a brother of Mrs. Morris Lloyd (Hope Starr Lloyd) of *The Point* and of Edward J. Starr, Jr., whose cottage on Napatree, *Sunny Beach*, was destroyed by the Hurricane of 1938.

Just to the east, at the foot of the hill, is *The Snuggery*, which was built about 1890 as a rental property for George N. Burdick of Westerly. In 1939, renamed *Cragsmoor*, it became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Paul J. Moore after their family cottage on Napatree was destroyed. In 1968, it became the home of the Arthur Riordan family. Mrs. Riordan was Marguerite Riordan, a noted antiquarian and dealer in early American antiques. From 1984 to 1997, the cottage was the home of the O. Gilbert Brim family of New York. Brim, a sociologist, was president of the Russell Sage Foundation.

Across the street is the old District II Schoolhouse, built in 1852 and used as such until 1901. After the fire of October 1916 destroyed the Watch Hill House, Miss Jane Grey Stevenson, who had operated her gift and antiques shop, "Little Shop," there, relocated it to the Schoolhouse. Later still, in 1945, the Schoolhouse was converted to a private residence by Mr. and Mrs. John C. Newman of Middletown, Connecticut. The Edward P. Schell family of Greenwich acquired it in 1958 and renovated and enlarged it.

Next to the Schoolhouse, at the northeasterly corner of the Ocean House property, were in succession two structures that are no longer standing. An early-twentieth-century photograph taken from the Ocean House and encompassing a broad view to the east shows a very substantial gabled Victorian Queen Anne cottage, directly to the east. An examination of the stone wall running from the Ocean House to the Schoolhouse reveals two cuts in the wall which must have led to a circular walkway to the vanished structure. It is not known whether it burned, and, if so, when. An artist's studio later built on the site was used in the interwar years of the twentieth century by artist C. Bennett Linder, who painted numerous portraits of members of the cottage colony, including the young Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., the Misses Olga and Anita Lihme, Senator Truman Newberry, and, as late as 1955, John H. Breck, Jr. Summering at Watch Hill, Lindner lived in New York and maintained a studio in Carnegie Hall. Among his other subjects were King Gustav of Sweden and Henry Ford. After Linder ceased to use it, the building was abandoned and gradually fell into decay, simply rotting away under the bittersweet and other vegetation that for many years covered the site.

BREEN ROAD & EAST HILLS ROAD PROPERTIES

Two areas a bit apart from the major cottage colony developments are worth noting, although, curiously, they were not included in the area designated as the Watch Hill Historic District. They are the Breen Road neighborhood, located across Potter's Cove from the Watch Hill Farm subdivision, and the cluster of cottages on East Hills Road.

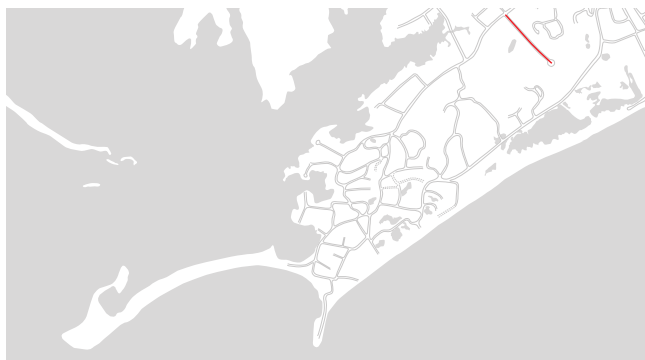


Breen Road

In 1919, James W. Taylor of New York acquired the point property of the Breen farm at the end of Breen Road. Over the next two years, Taylor built three cottages there, one for himself and one each for his daughters, Dorothy Taylor Gutterson (Mrs. Wilder Gutterson) and Elizabeth Taylor Russell (Mrs. John F. Russell). Taylor's own house, the middle of the three and known as *Midway*, was the first built. The Russell house, *Snug Harbor*, located at the northerly end of the point, was next, followed by the Gutterson cottage, known as *Potter Cove* or *River House*, located at the southerly end and completed in 1921.

In 1915, Mrs. Russell was one of the first women admitted to the New York Bar. Her son-in-law, Charles S. Whitman, Jr., who was the son of Charles S. Whitman, who served as Governor of New York (1915–18), himself served as a judge of New York City's Civil Court. Judge Whitman was both president of the Chapel and moderator of the Fire District (1960–68). Mrs. Charles S. Whitman, Jr. (Janet Russell Whitman) served twice as president of the Improvement Society and could be relied upon to settle any parliamentary question that might arise in any community meeting. The Whitmans' daughter-in-law, Christine Todd Whitman (Mrs. John R. Whitman), was governor of New Jersey (1994–2001) and, subsequently, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under President

George W. Bush. Her mother-in-law, Janet Whitman, humorously wondered whether she might be eligible for inclusion in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the only woman to be both the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law of a governor. Taylor descendants were still living at *Potter Cove* and *Snug Harbor* in the early twenty-first century.



East Hills Road

Also apart from the early major subdivisions of Watch Hill is the neighborhood of East Hills Road, once called Griscom Road.²³⁷ East Hills Road, which runs easterly from Watch Hill Road to a point on the golf course across from the clubhouse near the tenth tee, has the distinction of being one of the last unpaved roads in the Watch Hill Fire District. It runs, by way of a right fork, to a circle around which are located three cottages, built circa 1915. In 1912, Frances C. Griscom (Mrs. Clement A. Griscom) bought a substantial tract, including the properties on which these cottages stand, from Ethel A. Burnet, and it is Mrs. Griscom who built the cottages.

The first, on the right side of the road as it forms the circle, is *Wendover*, the long-time cottage of the noted landscape architect Marian C. Coffin of New Haven and New York, who designed the Village park. A 1904 graduate of MIT, Coffin was only the second woman to be elected to the American Society of Landscape Architects. Some of her most important work was in Delaware, at Henry Francis du Pont's Winterthur estate and at the University of Delaware, where she served as university architect, 1918–52; but her influential private clientele was nationwide. Coffin acquired the property from Mrs. Griscom, who called it *Araconda*, in 1921 and summered there until 1957. The cottage was owned by the John T. Hornblow family from 1979 until 1997, when it was acquired by the Dooney family.

The two other cottages on the circle were owned by the Henry C. Rowe family of Bath, Maine, from 1920 until 1942. Henry Rowe, who had come from New Haven, where his father was in the oyster importation business, was credited by *Seaside Topics* with being “largely instrumental in converting Long Island Sound into the immense oyster farm which it now is.”²³⁸

On the northerly side of the circle is the cottage known originally as *Barrocentra*. In the 1920s, when owned by the Rowes, it was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. William English Walling of Greenwich, Connecticut. Walling, who had joined the Misquamicut Club in 1919, was one of a small number of millionaire socialists at the beginning of the twentieth century. Born in Louisville, he played a major role in the American labor movement. He worked closely with William Gompers as a founder, in 1903, of the National Women's Trade Union League, and following the 1908 race riot in Springfield, Illinois, he played a major role in founding the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Mrs. Walling (Anna Strunsky) was born in Russia. She was heralded as the “Girl Socialist” of San Francisco at the beginning of the twentieth century and coauthored an epistolary novel with Jack London, *The Kempton-Wace Letters*, in 1903.²³⁹ She and her husband married shortly after they were in Russia together, observing the unfolding of the failed revolution of 1905. In 1917, Walling, together with a number of prominent socialists, including Upton Sinclair, broke with the Socialist Party and favored American intervention in the World War I. Until his death in 1936, he continued his social reform activism, working with the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and writing prolifically. His 1926 book, *American Labor and American Democracy*, was praised as an important statement of the principles and policies of the American organized labor movement.²⁴⁰

Barrocentra was owned from 1942 until 1964 by the Stephen Somers family. In 1964, as the home of the family of Baron and Baroness Gregors Wedell-Wedellsborg of New York, it was renamed *Esta-Es-Su-Casa*.

Across the circle is *Contremer*, owned by the family of Edith L. Bauerlein of New Orleans from 1942 until 1959, when it became the home of the George C. Masterson family of Weston, Connecticut.

Just to the north of the circle, abutting the properties on which *Contremer* and *Barrocentra* stand, is the cottage known as *Maisonette*, which was long the home of the Charles F. Hammond family of Winter Park, Florida, the publishers of *Seaside Topics*. It was burned in the 1970s and subsequently rebuilt.

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES

The July 1985 *National Register of Historic Places Inventory–Nomination Form* for the Watch Hill Historic District characterized the buildings of Watch Hill as follows:

Although a number of new buildings have been constructed here in the past forty-five years, Watch Hill remains primarily a product of its development as a resort during the years from 1870 to 1940. The houses in the district exemplify American domestic architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. They illustrate the use of eclecticism to create a form of architectural expression based on an inventive synthesis of elements adapted from historical sources... This country-house architecture for the well-to-do represented the epitome of good taste...

The houses at Watch Hill are also notable as a collection of buildings by architects from all over the United States, a consequence of the common custom in resort communities of seasonal residents bringing in outside architects for commissions, usually but not always from the patrons' home towns. Among the architects who worked at Watch Hill were people distinguished in their own localities and those of national reputation, together with some whose backgrounds cannot be readily traced.

Watch Hill is a remarkably well preserved historical community notable for its architectural and environmental quality and its evocation of an important phase in American social history.²⁴¹



82 The Hudson River School painter Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902) visited Watch Hill in the late 1870s and painted this shimmering image (oil on paper) of the Great Bluff and East Beach. It shows rocks off the point in the foreground, a picnic party at the foot of the bluff, and fishing boats off the coast. The painting, dating from 1876–77 and in a private collection, shows the Great Bluff as barren and undeveloped.



The Watch Hill & Watch Hill Point

THE “WATCH HILL” — alternatively known as the “Great Bluff,” the “Great Bank,” or “Lookout Hill” — the highest point along the shore, some seventy feet above sea level and commanding a nearly 360-degree view of the coast from east to west (figs. 82–85) — Block Island Sound, Fishers Island Sound, Long Island Sound, and Little Narragansett Bay — was always of key strategic importance. The Indians watched from the bluff for hostile tribes approaching by water, as well as for whales and schools of fish. As early as the 1740s, during the French and Indian Wars, the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations established a beacon or watch tower at the point. Denison reports:

Watch Hill was the point of lookout. This promontory was so named from a “watch tower” and “signal station” built there, on Bear Hill, during the old French war in 17[45]. The old signal was fire and smoke, — smoke by day, and fire by night. This watch tower was renewed in the Revolution by the “guard” of the coast, looking out for British ships and barges.²⁴²

Denison further relates the story of Venture, a former slave who lived near Watch Hill and, during the Revolutionary War, was captured by the British as he fished off the point.²⁴³

Mary Agnes Best confirms that “In all the wars, Colonial and American, Watch Hill has been a strategic point.”²⁴⁴ She notes that in 1776, the Westerly militia was ordered to the Hill to throw up earthworks, and that in 1777, Oliver Burdick was paid \$10 for the use of his house near Watch Hill beach as a guard-house. During the War of 1812, when Stonington was bombarded in 1814, the Westerly militia was standing by at the Hill to repel any attempt at landing.

The early watch was intended as a warning system for naval attack, rather than as a navigational aid. But from Colonial times to the present, more than one hundred vessels are reported to have been wrecked at Watch Hill or on its surrounding reefs.²⁴⁵ The first Watch Hill beacon was destroyed during a storm in 1781 and was not replaced until Congress provided for the erection of another structure in 1806. President Thomas Jefferson signed the Act authorizing

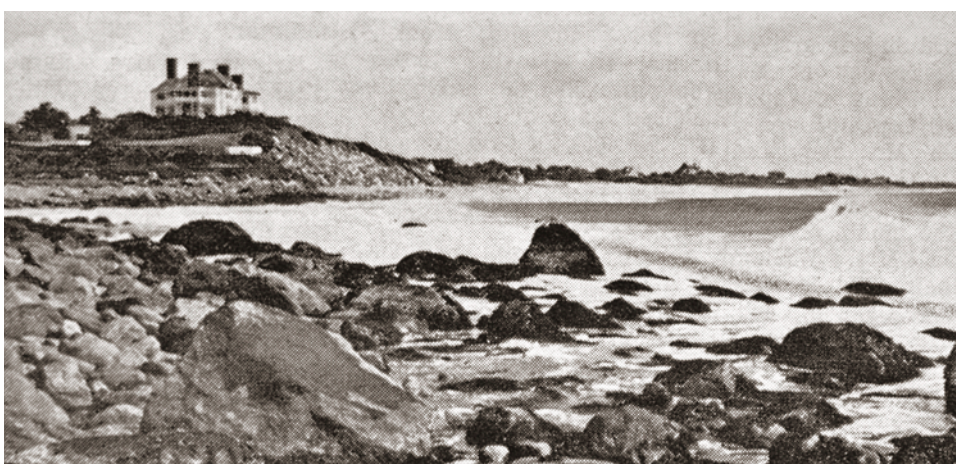


83 *This view of about 1890 from the same vantage point as Bierstadt's painting (fig. 82) shows the Watch Hill House on the left and, on the right, the first cottages along East Beach and, most prominently, the Anderson windmill.*



84 *By the first decade of the twentieth century, the Bettle cottage known as "Napatree" appears at the westerly foot of the still undeveloped Watch Hill. Higher on the hill, the cottage known as "The Kedge" is also visible.*

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85 *In 1929–30, the Watch Hill was radically changed by the building of the Snowden cottage, "Holiday House." This view shows the granite blocks that were brought in to fortify the bluff after it was severely undermined in the 1938 hurricane.*



86 *This view of the lighthouse and the point shows the massive granite blocks that were placed there in 1855 to control severe erosion. The crowd is gathered to watch an incoming wreck.*

the new lighthouse on January 22, 1806. On May 3 of that year, George and Thankful Foster sold Watch Hill Point, containing about four acres, to the Lighthouse Service of the United States. A meeting of the freemen (voters) of the Town of Westerly had previously voted to give all rights and interest of the Town to the State of Rhode Island, so that the state could in turn cede all rights and interest to the federal government. The new lighthouse, constructed of wood and shingles and consisting of a thirty-foot round tower, was completed in 1807. A bank of ten whale oil lamps supplied the light. A house also was built for the keeper and his family. These structures stood for almost fifty years, until destroyed by a storm in 1855.

By that date, erosion of the point by the action of the waves had become severe. When construction of a new lighthouse began, the building was set back some fifty feet northwest of the earlier site. The new structure, constructed of great blocks of gray Westerly granite and completed in 1856, was the forty-five-foot, three-story tower we know today. It was capped with a cast-iron and glass lantern, and contained a single Fresnel fourth-order lens.²⁴⁶ An adjoining house was built for the keeper and his family. In an attempt to halt the erosion of the point, the natural form of the bluff was altered by the placement there of huge granite blocks, also taken from the Westerly quarries (fig. 86).

Further changes on the point included the construction of the Watch Hill Life Saving Station, just inside the gate, in 1879. The new facility was built in response to the public outcry that followed the sinking of the steamer *Metis* off East Beach in the early morning of August

30, 1872 (fig. 87). The heroic but largely futile efforts of the rescuers dramatically illustrated how ill-prepared the community was to meet a maritime disaster in its waters. That event, even a half century later, was referred to as “the greatest disaster of [the] New England Coast.”²⁴⁷ In a southeast gale, in predawn darkness shortly before 4 a.m., the Providence-bound New York–Providence night boat, the Neptune Line steamer *Metis*, heavily loaded with a cargo of cotton for the textile mills of New England, and carrying passengers, collided approximately five miles south of Watch Hill Point with the schooner *Nettie Cushing*. The *Metis* was a modern two-hundred-foot propeller-driven steamer, an exception to the side-paddle-wheel vessels that made up the bulk of Long Island Sound shipping at the time. An inspection below decks revealed no serious damage and no water coming in. Tragically, therefore, aid from another passing steamer, *Nereus*, was rejected, and the *Metis* proceeded on her way. But in fact the schooner’s bowsprit had penetrated a watertight compartment, and some half-hour after the impact, water rushed in and the steamer began to sink. There was an inadequate number of lifeboats, although those passengers who escaped from the hull and the staterooms appear to have been equipped with life preservers. Some passengers clung to bales of cotton that were swept overboard, while some fifty-three passengers managed to reach the high or hurricane deck, which finally broke away as the ship foundered and sank. The deck was swept shoreward and toward the breakers on the beach below the Ocean House.

87 In its September 21, 1872, issue, Harper’s Weekly published this dramatic engraving of the lifesaving efforts undertaken in the aftermath of the wreck of the steamer *Metis*, on August 30, 1872. The Ocean House is seen just to the right of center, the first Watch Hill House, flag flying, to the left and, to the right, the “Catlin Cottage.”

At dawn, J. C. Gavitt, the head porter of the Larkin House, climbed the hill and discovered the disaster. Best records his experience as reported in a letter to his niece: “Rain was falling, a



high gale blowing, ‘breakers like young mountains’ were hitting the shore with the roar of thunder. What at first seemed to Gavitt storm-tossed seaweed, he soon discovered was wreckage, to which human beings clung.”²⁴⁸ Upon an alarm from Gavitt, two boats were launched, one from the point and one from the beach, and a call went out for assistance from Stonington. The Revenue cutter *Moccasin* arrived at noon. Captain Daniel F. Larkin, age fifty-five, a retired light keeper and the owner of the Larkin House, put out west of the point in a twenty-foot metal boat, which had been supplied by the Massachusetts Humane Society (a prime mover in the establishment of lifesaving stations), with Captain Jared S. Crandall, the light keeper; Albert Crandall; Larkin’s son Frank; and Byron Green. Boat captain John Harvey and crewmen Courtland Gavitt, Edward Nash, Eugene Nash, and William Nash launched a seine boat from East Beach. Crowds gathered on the beach to watch as the boats fought their way through the tremendous seas.

As the hurricane deck and other debris approached the beach, observers there prepared for rescue. Safety lines were tied about the waists of those who were to enter the surf, each line held by several others who were to draw the rescuer and the rescued to the beach. But at the outer line of the breakers, the deck failed. As *Harper’s Weekly* described the scene in an article three weeks later,

At the outer breaker the frail deck, floating broadside up, was seen to wave and bend like a field of rotted ice; then, lifted by a succeeding wave, the deck inclined toward the shore for an instant, a following sea capsized the deck, and crushed it to fragments... The surf at this moment was filled with human beings struggling amidst fragments of wreck.²⁴⁹

Rescuers on the shore began to haul the living and the dead from the raging waters.

Accounts of the casualties differ greatly. There were apparently many more on board than the 104 on the passenger list and the crew of forty-five. Daniel F. Larkin II, grandson of the lifeboat captain, wrote in the *Westerly Sun* in 1968 that “Stateroom capacity was oversold — people were sleeping and sitting in all available places in public rooms and passages. Bodies were recovered for several weeks from the shores of Block Island Sound, from the shores of Block Island and the Rhode Island coast as far east as Point Judith.”²⁵⁰ A letter from Captain Larkin, dated December 30, 1872, and published by the younger Larkin, is the source of information that thirty-three were saved by the rescue boats, thirty-two by the lifeboat and the seine and one by the *Moccasin*.²⁵¹ There is no record of the number who reached safety on the beach or of the number of bodies washed up there.

Daniel F. Larkin II believed that the loss of life approximated 160. On the other hand, an early-twenty-first-century account cites the list of 150 saved, published by the *Narragansett Weekly* a few days after the incident, as possibly having been misinterpreted by later sources as being the number of those lost, and suggests that the number of the dead may have been closer



88 *The Life Saving Station about 1900. It had been built some twenty years earlier after the Metis disaster.*



89 *The second Life Saving Station and crew about 1910.*

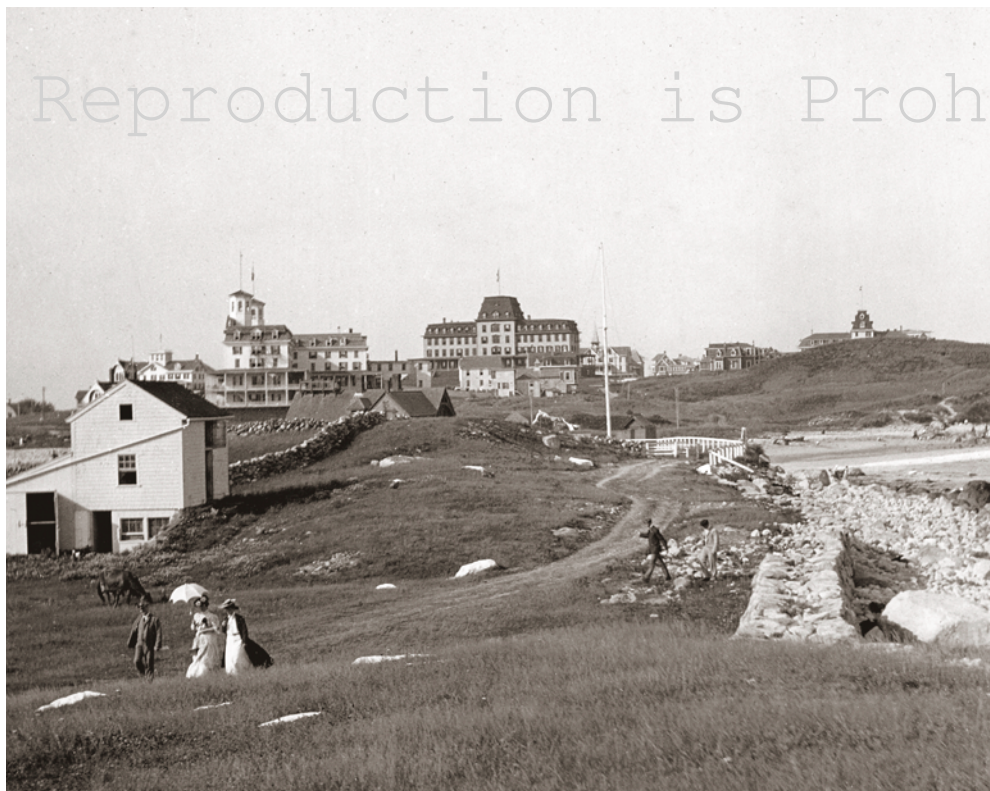
to twenty-five. Given the enormous impact of the tragedy at the time and in legend, knowing that the ship was severely overcrowded, and recognizing the Larkin family's major role in the event, it is hard not to imagine that a much greater number did in fact lose their lives.²⁵²

A year after the tragedy, Congress authorized President Ulysses S. Grant to award gold medals for heroism to each of the men who had manned the boats. In 1878 Congress authorized the construction of a Life Saving Station, and the new facility was built the following year; Daniel F. Larkin was appointed its first Captain. The new structure, built by C. Maxson & Co., was two-storied, with the upper story containing a Keeper's Room, a Crew Room, a storeroom, and a porch (fig. 88). Looking back on the tragedy, *Seaside Topics* reported in 1916 on the improved capability that had been achieved:

The Watch Hill U.S. Coast Guard Captain W. H. Davis in command of a crew of seven men now patrols the beach in search of ships in distress. If the present self-righting, self-bailing life boat, as large as any in the coast guard service could have been put out on that memorable August 30, the wreck of the *Metis* might not hold such a prominent place in the tragedies of the sea.²⁵³

A new Life Saving Station building was erected on the high ground just inside the lighthouse property in 1907 and used as a dwelling for the crew (fig. 89). It was shingled, painted white, with three stories and a turret. About 1923, a new boathouse was built, only to be washed off its foundations by the Hurricane of 1938.²⁵⁴ The 1879 station disappeared between 1935 and 1938, as no sign of it appears in the wreckage left by the hurricane.²⁵⁵ After the hurricane, two new structures, a garage and maintenance shop (on the site of the 1879 building) and a new boathouse (on the site of the 1923 building), were completed the following year. The station remained active until 1947, when it was placed on a Light and Lookout basis and relieved of search and rescue work. The 1907 station dwelling and the two supporting structures were abandoned in 1963. The station was turned over to the Watch Hill Fire Department and burned in a firefighting exercise in May of that year. The garage and boathouse were dismantled.

Few traces of the lifesaving station remain. Iron runners for the boats and pilings can still be seen running into the waters of Fishers Island Sound from the site of the boathouse. The site of the 1907 station building itself is still identifiable by the concrete steps and walkways that run from the road to the knoll on which the building stood. Yet another structure was built on



90 *A view of about 1890 from the lighthouse to the Watch Hill and the hotels, the Atlantic House on the far left, next the Larkin House, and, center, the Watch Hill House. The Ocean House is visible above the crest of the hill.*



91 *Vacationers stroll the beach in this 1895 view of the point from the base of the Watch Hill.*

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92 *The view from the Watch Hill about 1900.*



93 *A view of the point from East Beach about 1910 shows both the second and the first lifesaving stations.*

94 *After the Hurricane of 1938, the severely eroded Watch Hill was stabilized by gigantic granite blocks. The ruins of “Napatree” are visible beyond the wall.*



the point and is no more. At the beginning of the Second World War, the Coast Guard erected a rectangular, white concrete observation tower on the easterly side of the point, adjacent to the old oil building, later a museum. The tower was razed after the war; no trace remains.

The Watch Hill was originally wooded, but it stood deforested and bare by the nineteenth century and even into the 1920s (fig. 90). Below the Hill, a sandy road wound its way, unwalled, between the ocean (Block Island Sound) on the east and Fishers Island Sound on the west, to the tip of Watch Hill Point (figs. 91–93). The Watch Hill itself stood open to the sea into the early twentieth century. But after Mrs. George G. Snowden built her cottage at its top, in 1929–1930, a seawall was constructed at its base (see fig. 85; see also fig. 81). Even so, the bluff was severely eroded in the 1938 hurricane. It was reported that the seawall was hardly damaged, as it was under water all through the storm, but the sand face of the bluff was blown and washed away, cut back some thirty feet, almost to the foundations of the terrace. Three-hundred-pound capstones were blown off the terrace wall.²⁵⁶ Following the storm, the bluff, like the point, was fortified by granite blocks, some weighing as much as fifteen thousand tons, brought down from the Westerly quarries (fig. 94). These shielded its entire seaward face. *Seaside Topics* credited Mrs. Snowden with saving the Watch Hill for the future:

Long before Mrs. Snowden built her villa on its top, the sea had been nibbling away and most Watch Hillites feared that some big storm would carry it off altogether. In the old days there was nothing to stop the wind from blowing away its surface sand and no seawall to stop the breakers from tearing into it. Youngsters used to help its destruction by running down, carrying the sand with them. Every year some of the hill dropped off at the top...And so Watch Hill may now be counted on to stand far into the future. If it is not a rock-ribbed hill, at least it has some rocks on its side.²⁵⁷

REPLACE

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East Beach, the Salt Ponds, & the Fresh Ponds

EAST BEACH, ITS DUNES, AND SALT PONDS have always been recognized as one of the great natural treasures of Watch Hill. So, too, are the fresh ponds that dot the peninsula. In his description of this area, J. R. Cole in 1889 observed: “The East Beach is one of the grandest attractions of the place. On this magnificent shore the surf never ceases. Here there is no bar outside, and the deep water continues so near the shore line that the great waves break and thunder at one’s feet continually.”²⁵⁸

The partners of the Everett Farm Syndicate attached signal importance to East Beach in their subdivision plans. Then, and for many decades thereafter, the ocean at East Beach was perceived as being distinctly dangerous. The beach was splendid for promenading, and the surf made for dramatic viewing (fig. 95), but sea bathing was considered best enjoyed in quieter waters, such as those along Napatree, in Fishers Island Sound, and in the lee of Lighthouse Point. Charles L. Norton, in his 1871 *American Seaside Resorts*, written over a decade before the Everett subdivision, commented on the two beaches.

The surf on this beach [Napatree] is always moderate. The writer has bathed there in safety when a south-easter was hurling seas heavy enough to swamp a frigate upon the outer [East] beach, within five minutes’ walk.

Last of all is this outer beach, which owing to the undertow, is considered dangerous for bathers. It is, however, unsurpassed as a promenade, and, when viewed from the bluff, presents a scene which will not be readily forgotten.²⁵⁹

Deeds to the lots, as laid out in 1886, included “a perpetual right to the use and enjoyment of the East or Atlantic Beach as a promenade or pleasure ground,” defining this area of the beach as “a strip of land bordering the Atlantic Ocean, 3,850 feet in length, and fifty feet in width, bounded northwesterly by a line drawn parallel to the Ocean shore fifty feet above mean

96 *An unusual winter view of East Beach in the early years of the twentieth century. The winter storms have washed away sand, revealing a mass of shingles and uncovering a portion of a wreck. In the background are the Watch Hill House and the Ocean House.*



high water mark.”²⁶⁰ It is interesting to note that the language of some of the deed grants to East Beach contains a disclaimer, which suggests that the Syndicate owners were considering the possibility of some development on the beach itself: “But nothing herein contained shall be construed...to prevent [the grantors]...from building a pier or piers or breakwaters across or upon the said beach, with all necessary or convenient driveways, approaches and other structures incidental thereto.”²⁶¹ Included was the right “to construct works on or across said beach for the drainage or overflow, or other improvement of the adjacent ponds, marshes or lands,” but it was also provided that there should be no sewage discharged upon, across, or under the beach.²⁶²

The matter of property rights to East Beach and other waterfront property continues to be an issue of major importance to Watch Hill, to the state of Rhode Island, and to the visiting public. It was a hundred years after the subdivision of the Everett Farm that the often-contentious issue of the ownership of beach property was finally decided under Rhode Island law. In 1982, the Rhode Island Supreme Court determined that the public, i.e., the state of Rhode Island, controls only the area below mean high tide, or the wet sand beach. The rest is private, although rights-of-way exist to permit the public access to the wet sand beach and the ocean. The decision is a highly technical one, which, in practical effect, limits the area of shoreline public use to the water.²⁶³

With the exception of the deeded promenade, the dry sand beach of East Beach is owned privately by the owners of the abutting lots and the owners of interests in the beach, as in Lot 108 of the Everett plat. That lot, divided into sub-lots “A–M” on the beach itself, ran from Niantic Avenue past Manatuck Avenue and into the dunes in front of *The Timbers*. Legally, it was described as being “located on the ocean front south and east of Manatuck Avenue.” The tract was called the “Sand Dunes.” Even at the time the subdivision was made, this property

would have been difficult to develop, but ownership in it was considered desirable as conferring rights to the beach. The Syndicate sold Lot 108 off in 1/19th shares to the owners of the lots abutting Manatuck Avenue and its extension as the path along the dunes, and to purchasers of other lots in the Everett tract. The original owners were seventeen Cincinnati residents and Davis C. Anderson, described as of Watch Hill, and Sherman W. Knevals of New York.²⁶⁴ Toward the end of the twentieth century, some of the owners of those 1/19th interests gave them to the Watch Hill Fire District and the Watch Hill Conservancy.

In 1900, the Misquamicut Club constructed its new clubhouse. The following year, it built a modest bathing facility across Maschaug Pond, on East Beach. Wheeler describes the structure:

The building itself was 66 by 22 feet with shingle siding. There were a dozen cabanas in each wing, most individually owned, some for seasonal lease. There were showers, cold. Water was pumped from a well into an elevated tank. Life guard on duty. Life lines in the sea and a diving float on order.²⁶⁵

Access to the beach and the bathing facility was at first by way of a small ferry, which, pulled by a cable, made the trip in about a minute and a half, barring head winds. The ferry was shortly thereafter replaced by a causeway, which ran across the pond until its destruction in the Hurricane of 1938. Today the only remnants of the causeway are several inconspicuous earthen mounds rising out of the pond, still running in a roughly straight line toward the beach. The right-of-way that accessed the causeway is by a small gate south of the Club driveway, directly opposite the entrance to Montego Road. It is highly unlikely, under the state Coastal Management Plan in effect since 1971, that the Club would be permitted to reestablish access over the pond to its half-mile of the barrier beach. Under that plan, the state is given strict regulatory control over all activities in the coastal zone.²⁶⁶

While the susceptibility of coastal structures in Watch Hill to destruction by the sea is most dramatically seen in the devastation wrought on Napatree by the Gale of 1815 and by the two great twentieth-century hurricanes, 1938 and Carol, these are not the only examples of storm flood devastation at Watch Hill. A number of incidents have occurred along East Beach. In the earliest days of settlement, the house on East Beach of Ezekiel Gavitt—later the site of the Ocean House—is reported to have “put out to sea in the gale of 1704.”²⁶⁷ In the Hurricane of 1938, half a dozen cottages were destroyed on East Beach, three of them near Manatuck Avenue: *Longshore*, *Aloha*, and a cottage on the *Aloha* property. Further east along the beach, three others were swept from their foundations into Maschaug Pond and across Ocean View Highway. After the hurricane, the Marstons and the Whites built their beach bungalows at the Manatuck Avenue sites, but the other area remains undeveloped barrier beach, property of the Misquamicut Club. In Hurricane Carol, the bungalow of Mrs. Richard Ziesing (formerly Mrs. W. King White), built on the site of *Longshore*, was severely damaged.

The salt ponds behind the East Beach dunes are also an important feature of the coastal zone. Cole described them, together with the freshwater ponds, in 1889:

There are also quite a number of lakelets, some so near the beach that they are overwhelmed from the ocean during the winter storms, and continue brackish all the year round. Others farther inland, fed by natural springs, are always fresh. These small sheets of water could easily be stocked with fish, and at slight expense could be converted into attractive and safe boating and fishing ponds for children.²⁶⁸

Historical photographs show ponds all over Watch Hill. Some have disappeared; others of the dozen or so that still exist were clearly much larger in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than they are today.

Some of the salt ponds that are shown flowing to the sea no longer do so. Even those that have long ceased to be regularly connected to the sea were often in the past subject to the inflow of seawater from periodic storm surges over the barrier beach. In many this process has ceased to occur. But it should be noted that a long-approved technique for the management of salt ponds in Rhode Island is the occasional breaching of the barrier beach to permit the ocean high tide to flush out the ponds, or to relieve storm flooding; this was still provided, by permit, under the Coastal Management Plan.

Peck reported that the small pond at the foot of Everett Avenue was at one time twice the size it was in 1936.²⁶⁹ Known first as Brick Hill Pond, from the manufacture of bricks which took place just above it and below the hill on which the old Schoolhouse stands, and then as Anderson Pond, from the Cincinnati family that acquired it from the Everett tract, that pond once extended onto Ocean House property and appears in early photographs to have been open

97 *Looking from Niantic Avenue over Anderson Pond on a September afternoon late in the twentieth century. The open "lakelet" of the late nineteenth century has been greatly reduced by the ubiquitous phragmites. "High Watch" crowns the bluff in the distance.*





98 Local artist Alexander Farnham captured East Beach in this late-twentieth-century oil painting, *After the Storm*.

to the sea. A bridge was required to permit access across it to East Beach over Everett Avenue. It has not been directly connected to the sea for many decades, but now, as an unintended consequence of successful conservation efforts to build up dunes along East Beach since 1954 and Hurricane Carol, even the periodic influx of storm seas no longer occurs. The drop in salinity has played a part in the changing vegetative composition and configuration of this pond (fig. 97).

Another nearby pond, to the south of the Ocean House baseball field (between the hotel and East Beach), was known as Clay Hole Pond, and by 1936 Peck described it as having been filled in.²⁷⁰ The Ocean House baseball field is, of course, also long gone, as is the adjacent Watch Hill House bowling alley, which was located down the hill from Bluff Avenue.

A freshwater pond on the *Sunshine Park* property, southerly of Sequan Road, has virtually disappeared under a thick growth of scrub and vines. The reduction in size of ponds continues to be a phenomenon, especially as invasive species of plants, such as phragmites, spread and fill in the margins. Over the years, experimental efforts have been made to eradicate the invader and to restore ponds.²⁷¹

The matter of the safety of East Beach, so much a concern in the early days of the resort, remains one today, even as the numbers of people who come to the beach increase. This is especially problematic, inasmuch as the beach is private. Public funds may not be available to provide protection, nor should the private owners assume the expense and the liability of attempting themselves to provide it. For many years, the Ocean House maintained a lifeguard on its portion of the beach. After the hotel ceased operation at the end of the 2003 season, there was no longer a lifeguard anywhere on the beach, and in 2004 a summer visitor drowned in high waves and rip tides, the first such fatality in memory.



99 In this view from Napatree around 1880, the mansard cupola of the new Watch Hill House is the dominant feature on the high ground along Larkin Road and Bluff Avenue. The steep-pitched roof of "By-the-Sea," Governor James Leland Howard's new cottage, the first house in Watch Hill built to be used as a summer cottage, is visible just below and to the right of the hotel. The Larkin House, lit by the afternoon sun, dominates Lighthouse Point and commands views from Stonington and Fishers Island to Montauk Point, Block Island, and Weekapaug Point.

Napatree Point



WITHOUT QUESTION, the most traumatic events in the history of Watch Hill and the most dramatic changes in Watch Hill's landscape have occurred at Napatree Point (fig. 99). Denison writes that in late eighteenth century, not only was Napatree Point heavily wooded, but also it was so broad that it contained a swamp and a pond that served as a haunt for foxes. Suggesting even greater breadth in earlier times, he notes further that "the roots of ancient trees now far from the shore, are frequently torn up by the waves in heavy gales."²⁷² It should be noted that the Point's name comes from its wooded character, Nap of Trees, "nap" being an abbreviated form of nape or neck.

The point was forever radically changed by the Great Gale of September 23, 1815. This storm was, of course, a major hurricane. Nor is it the only hurricane recorded in New England before 1938. Nearly two centuries earlier, another great gale had struck the New England shore on August 15, 1635. That storm, referred to since as the Great Colonial Hurricane, struck Plymouth Plantation, then in its fifteenth year, and the Massachusetts Bay Colony, then in its fifth year. Massachusetts Governor John Winthrop wrote in Boston that "The wind caused the tide to rise to a height unknown before and drowned eight Indians flying from their wigwams."²⁷³ And Governor William Bradford of Plymouth described it as "such a mighty storm of wind and rain as none living in these parts, either English or Indian, ever saw. It began in the morning a little before day, and grew not by degrees but came with violence in the beginning, to the amazement of many."²⁷⁴ Although no part of Rhode Island had been colonized as early as 1635, Denison reports an account that a Doctor Holmes gave of the storm hereabouts:

An extremely violent storm of wind and rain from the southeast, on the 15th of August, did great injury in New England. Immense numbers of forest trees were destroyed. Many houses were unroofed; many blown down; and the Indian corn was beaten to the earth. *The tide rose twenty feet perpendicularly. At Narragansett, the natives were obliged to climb trees for safety; yet, the tide of flood returning before the usual time, many of them were drowned.*²⁷⁵

Denison writes of the 1815 storm that it affected the coast chiefly between New Bedford and New Haven, nowhere more severely than on the Narragansett shore:

The ocean wave, raised by the gale, rose ten feet along the coast, rolled over all the beaches, swept cattle from the pond islands, stacks from the shore meadows, and swelled the river nine feet above its usual height at the head of tide-water. Two porpoises were driven up into the village. The spray of the sea was borne far back into the country, so that salt was collected on the window-panes upon Pendleton Hill [North Stonington], and as far back as Plainfield, Conn. [more than twenty miles inland]. All the forests on the coast were prostrated.²⁷⁶

Peck's account of the 1815 storm focuses on Watch Hill and Napatree. The "terrible gale... did irreparable damage from which the shore line never recovered."²⁷⁷ He reported that mountainous seas had denuded the Naps of its thick woods and reduced it in width. Wooded though the point was, there was apparently one house there, belonging to Samuel Bliven, which also was washed away.

Peck notes that Jonathan Nash, the first keeper of the Watch Hill Lighthouse (1807–33), related that he could remember when the coastline from Watch Hill Point to the Naps was almost a straight line. If, as Peck speculates, Nash may have exaggerated "a little bit," he himself nevertheless recalled how in his own lifetime, year by year, more and more of the beach had been washed away.

Following the Gale of 1815, Napatree was significantly built upon. At the end of the nineteenth century, the point became a U.S. Military Reservation and the site of one of a series of coastal fortifications that the government established along the entire U.S. coastline, over a twenty-year period, beginning in the 1880s. These stretched from Portland, Maine, to Puget Sound, Washington, via Key West and Galveston. In the immediate area of the eastern Long Island Sound, the Watch Hill facility—Fort Mansfield—was one of a ring of five fortifications that were built within a three-year period, 1896–99, stretching from Watch Hill to Long Island.²⁷⁸ In 1898, the government purchased some sixty acres of Napatree, including the point and Sandy Point, and began construction of Fort Mansfield, which was intended to protect that portion of the Sound between Watch Hill Point and Fishers Island (fig. 100). The story of Fort Mansfield is told in Clement A. Griscom IV's 1984 monograph, *Fort Mansfield, Napatree Point, Watch Hill, Rhode Island*.²⁷⁹ When completed in 1902, the fort consisted of three coastal batteries, two at the end of the point, known respectively as Battery Wooster and Battery Crawford, and the other, Battery Connell, on the ocean side, some five hundred feet down the beach toward the Village. There were bulkheads established along both the bay and ocean sides, and a 195-foot wharf was constructed on the westerly side of the point. A swamp, located toward the bay from the outer two batteries, was filled with sand. Some thirty buildings were erected as barracks, officers' quarters, and support structures; at full strength, the fort was garrisoned by some 120 men.



100 *The guard at Fort Mansfield about 1900. Built in 1898, the fort was the base for more than a hundred men until, in 1907, it was discovered to be inadequate to defend the entrance to Fishers Island Sound. By 1928, the government had abandoned the fort, sold the land on which it stood to private interests, and razed the buildings. All that remains are two bunkers at the end of the point.*

The fort, however, never saw action, and a series of naval and land maneuvers in July 1907 demonstrated that it could not be defended from an attacking fleet. After a sham battle on July 22, in which the “Enemy” Navy took advantage of a “dead angle” east of Watch Hill Point and passed safely into Fishers Island Sound under the guns of the fort, and a Navy landing party successfully landed on East Beach and charged the fort, also out of reach of the fort’s guns, the days of Fort Mansfield were numbered.²⁸⁰ Col. C. D. Parkhurst of the Headquarters Artillery District of New London commented: “I see no possible chance for Ft. Mansfield to help itself; in fact I believe I could capture Ft. Mansfield with a fleet of coal barges, equipped with 6-inch rapid fire guns.”²⁸¹

In 1911 the fort was essentially abandoned and relegated to the status of a practice fort. One hundred men were transferred out in January of that year. By 1916 there were only six on duty. By the authority of an Act of Congress, in two sales in 1926 and 1928, the government sold the property at auction to a Watch Hill syndicate, the Napatree Corporation, at a price of \$365,000. There were seven tracts and nearly 113 acres involved. In 1928 all government buildings were torn down, leaving only the three batteries standing. Following a default by the syndicate in 1931, the property was foreclosed on by the lender, the Washington Trust Company. But in 1945 the bank sold it to the Watch Hill Fire District.

Griscom, writing in 1984, reported that all that then remained of the fort were the two batteries at the end of the point. The third, he wrote, was rapidly disappearing under the sea, a pile of rubble visible at low tide. Between 1936 and 1984, the beach had eroded two hundred feet at that location. Of the 195-foot wharf, only a few dozen pilings remained. He summarized the cycle of development and destruction:

Today, 1984, the scene at Napatree is far different from that portrayed in this monograph. The use of the land has come full cycle, from the wild, undeveloped nature of the land in the 1890s, through the military construction of the early 1900s, to the summer resort development of the 1920s, and then to its undeveloped state again by way of the hurricanes of 1938 and 1954.²⁸²

Other structures on Napatree in the late nineteenth century were a boarding house, the Halcyon House, midway on the beach, and a hotel, the Peninsula House, farther out toward Fort Mansfield. The Peninsula House, in an earlier incarnation, had been a dance hall on Osbrook Point, from which it had been floated across the bay to Napatree. Two other buildings were erected just east of the Peninsula House in 1879, one of them containing a dining room and a billiard and barroom.²⁸³ In 1891, a storm apparently washed the Peninsula House off its Napatree foundations, and two years later it was reported to have been “carelessly set back” on piles and to be windowless and vacant.²⁸⁴

The Bathing Beach, unlike East Beach, was deemed safe for bathing, its waters protected by the natural breakwater of Lighthouse Point (fig. 101). Originally serving as a Larkin House amenity, by the early twentieth century it had come to support the grand two-story galleried pavilions of Frank Larkin’s and later his son Daniel F. Larkin’s Watch Hill Beach Association (fig. 102). The pavilion closer to Bay Street was for day visitors, and the other for the seasonal use of cottagers and hotel guests. In all there were 1,350 bathhouses. In addition to the piazzas where guests could watch the action on the beach and in the water, the beach was equipped with a raft and diving chute and a rope line to which surf bathers could cling. There were also showers and an “up-to-date drying plant.” In 1904, *Watch Hill Topics* reported that Percy F. Cavill, whom

101 *A view published in Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper in 1888 shows bathers in period costume enjoying the surf on Napatree’s Bathing Beach. A lifeline provides security.*





102 *About 1910, groups of bathers gather on the beach at the private pavilion. Spectators observe from the gallery above.*

it identified as “the Australian Champion,” was teaching swimming at the “new private swimming raft.”²⁸⁵ The Improvement Society regularly held its annual water carnival at the beach. *Seaside Topics* reported on life at the beach in 1925:

The bathing hour at Watch Hill is from eleven to twelve-thirty and at that time the whole summer colony gathers at the beach for a dip and sociability...

The Watch Hill beach is truly a brilliant picture with its attractively costumed women and pleasant hubbub. Little groups cosily sprawl under the big sunshades.²⁸⁶

A line of chauffeured limousines marked the bathing hour, as the cottagers were generally driven to their bathing appointments and, later, to the Golf Club or home, for lunch.

In the early years of the century and especially during the 1920s and 1930s, there was an active development of cottages along the ocean side of Napatree, between the Bathing Beach and the Watch Hill Beach Club at the east end, and Fort Mansfield at the west (fig. 103). By 1938 there were thirty-nine cottages. Of these, fourteen belonged to the Larkins’ Beach Association, one being the family’s cottage, *Northwind*, and the others rental cottages.

Reached by the Fort Road, which ran along the bay from the Village parking lot to the fort, the Napatree cottages fronted on the ocean behind their seawalls and lawns (figs. 104 & 105). At their rear was Little Narragansett Bay. Those who lived there recall it as a paradise—the beach and swimming to the south and, to the north, the bay and sailing; water on all sides and ocean breezes, and sunrise and sunset over the water.

Paul Johnson Moore, a lifelong summer resident of Watch Hill, and Moderator of the Fire District (1955–59), has written a moving story of his search for the body of his sister, Havila Moore, who with their stepmother, Jessie Moore (Mrs. Frederick Moore), was lost in the destruction of the family’s Napatree cottage in the Hurricane of 1938. Mrs. Moore’s body was found shortly after the storm, but Havila’s was the last body to be found; it was discovered in the wreckage on Osbrook Point, Stonington, only on October 3. Moore begins *The Search* with an evocative remembrance of life on Napatree before the hurricane:

103 *An early-twentieth-century postcard captures the view of the Village, Fort Road, and Napatree from the top of Mastuxet Terrace. Beyond the bathing pavilions of the Watch Hill Beach Association, some of the first cottages on Napatree are visible, as is Fort Mansfield in the distance. Shortly thereafter, the Fire District bought up the bayside waterfront and began removing the buildings on the water side of Bay Street.*

I learned to love Fort Road as no other place on earth...it was everything a place could be. Salt air, sunshine, and surf. Air blown over a thousand miles of open sea. Sunshine on sand and water from glorious sunrise over the ocean to gorgeous sunset over the bay. Ceaseless, ever-changing surf that sometimes shook the earth, but lulled one to sleep at night with its rhythm. Night at Watch Hill. Foggy nights, stormy nights, clear starry nights, moonlight nights, each worth treasuring in memory.

Fort Road was a place of freedom; a place for many moods. There was solitude in the walk out to the forts. There was exploration on rocky Napatree Point beyond the last fort where the ocean had worn away the Naps...There was always something to arouse interest and stir the imagination.

To live on Fort Road was to live as near the water as one could. All of its three dozen cottages were actually a stone’s throw from the ocean and were protected by low seawalls, which could be washed by a heavy sea at high tide. The cottages were only a few feet back from the seawalls, and this nearness to the sea was their fatal charm.²⁸⁷





Although New England had experienced two major hurricanes, most New Englanders in 1938—more than a hundred years after the last such storm—were not of a mind to think of hurricanes as occurring in this region. “Line storms,” yes—gales which frequently occurred around the time of the autumnal equinox, September 21, or thereabouts. But not hurricanes. This is important to remember in terms of the reactions of those who in 1938 found themselves in the midst of a storm which had not been predicted and which, when it arrived, was not at first recognized as being what it truly was.²⁸⁸

The Hurricane of 1938 arrived with no warning on the afternoon of September 21. In a matter of hours it brought to an end more than a century of human habitation of the point. The storm, which had initially been tracked as it skirted the Florida and Carolina coasts, was assumed by Weather Bureau stormwatchers in Washington to have headed out to sea and to be a threat only to North Atlantic shipping interests. To the contrary, wedged between a Bermuda High to the east and a high-pressure system to the west, it barreled up the coast at speeds as high as seventy miles per hour, in mid-afternoon reaching Patchogue, Long Island, with sustained winds of over 120 miles an hour. According to R. A. Scotti in her book *Sudden Sea*, the impact set off seismographs in Alaska.²⁸⁹

The full force of the storm struck the Connecticut and Rhode Island coasts at approximately 4 p.m. Scotti writes that the Blue Hill Meteorological Observatory in East Milton, Massachusetts, sixty miles from the eye, recorded sustained wind of 121 miles per hour and gusts of 186, the “second-highest rate ever recorded in the Northern Hemisphere.”²⁹⁰ *Seaside Topics* reported that local wind estimates were “125 to 150 miles per hour, in short periods and higher in gusts.”

The hurricane made landfall in Rhode Island at the highest tide possible. Even without the storm surge, the high tide on September 21, a spring tide, would have been a foot above normal as a consequence of the new moon. Of the tide and tidal surge, *Seaside Topics* reported that

104 By the summer of 1938, the full cottage development of Fort Road can be seen in this view from Larkin Road over the roof of the Bathing Association. Until the afternoon of September 21, there were thirty-nine substantial cottages along Fort Road on the dunes between the ocean and the bay.

“Coming on a rising tide the waters were driven before the wind like a tidal wave which was variously estimated by witnesses at 15–30 feet.”²⁹¹ The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency provides similar estimates of eighteen- to twenty-five-foot tides from New London east to Cape Cod.²⁹² It reports that downtown Providence was submerged with a storm tide of nearly twenty feet. An article in the *Bulletin of the American Geological Society* estimated a more modest but still catastrophic surge of ten to fifteen feet above mean high tide in the area studied, which was between Sandy Point and Noyes Point, Weekapaug.²⁹³

The eye passed over central Connecticut, but the most dangerous righthand semicircle of punishing winds passed directly over southern Rhode Island. In the harbor, the captain of the Marstons’ yacht, the *Hellu*, was attempting to secure the boat when he saw a wave unlike any he had ever seen. It looked, he said, “like a roll of cotton.” Towering thirty feet, it advanced on Napatree with a deafening roar. It struck the Yacht Club, splitting it in two, and swept the *Hellu* over the seawall and onto the park, where it landed in front of the firehouse (see fig. 107).²⁹⁴

The devastation was complete. All thirty-nine cottages, the Beach Club (built just two years earlier), the Bathing Pavilions, and the Yacht Club were destroyed, and fifteen Watch Hill lives were lost in the maelstrom that engulfed Napatree (fig. 106). The storm killed 682 people, more than half of them, 433, in Rhode Island, 136 between Mystic and Narragansett, sixty of them in Westerly. A bronze plaque given by the Improvement Society, set in granite and located in the Village park to the left of the Plimpton Dock, lists the names of the fifteen who were lost at Watch Hill.²⁹⁵

Twenty-seven other people were caught on Fort Road, unable to escape to higher ground as their houses disintegrated around them. Trapped by the rising water as they went from the ground-floor to the second- and then the third-floor levels, they survived after the collapse of their houses only by clinging to wreckage as it was swept on the tumultuous seas from Napatree across Little Narragansett Bay to the marshes and fields of Stonington. So overwhelming was the assault of wind, rain, and surf that survivors were unable to tell, until they actually reached land, whether they were headed for land or out to sea. The saga of that day is dramatically recorded in the pages of the special edition of *Seaside Topics* that appeared shortly after the storm.²⁹⁶ More recently it has been retold in part by Scotti. The tales of courage and destruction are part of the history that every Watch Hill child should know.

The 1938 hurricane not only removed all trace of human habitation from Napatree. It breached the barrier beach at three locations, one in the area of the present Yacht Club cabanas, the second, just northerly of the tip, where Sandy Point had turned toward Connecticut, and the third farther to the north (fig. 108).²⁹⁷ The three breaches were, respectively, three hundred feet, sixteen hundred feet, and nine hundred feet wide. As the *Bulletin of the American Geological*



105 This view from about 1930, from the Plimpton House, shows the new private bathing pavilion and the row of cottages along Fort Road. Not much in the picture would change until the Hurricane of 1938 changed everything.



106 Taken from the same vantage point as fig. 105, this photograph shows the devastation wrought by the hurricane. The Plimpton House was severely damaged, and the Plimpton and Watch Hill Docks were destroyed. The Yacht Club, the bathing pavilion, the Beach Club, and all thirty-nine cottages were gone. Napatree was a desolate waste; only the bunkers of Fort Mansfield remained.

107 On the afternoon of September 21, 1938, the captain of the Marstons' yacht, the *Hellu*, was attempting to secure the boat when a wave unlike any he had ever seen swept it over the seawall and onto the park, where it landed in front of the firehouse. "Peck Cottage" is visible in the background.



108 The Hurricane of 1938 created a great breach in Napatree Beach, about where the Beach Club had stood. That breach healed; but the breach created at the end of the point left Sandy Point an island adrift in Little Narragansett Bay.



Society described it, "A continuous beach nearly 3 miles long was broken into three islands with more than a half mile of water between them."²⁹⁸ The first Napatree breach was filled and healed. The second and third were permanent and turned Sandy Point into an island, which itself was breached in two. Sandy Point, like Napatree, has drifted northerly over the ensuing six decades. Napatree Beach also was—and remains—substantially narrowed.

Only six years after the 1938 hurricane, another hurricane struck on September 14, 1944. While the storm was severe, arriving at ebb tide, it was by no means as devastating as the Great Hurricane of 1938 or even the one that followed ten years later, in 1954. Still, the 1944 storm did substantial damage along the coast and on Napatree, once again destroying the west Bathing

Pavilion and the Beach Club cabanas, which had been rebuilt in 1939, but not the new Beach Club itself.

In 1945, the Fire District approved the purchase of all available land on Napatree. In August of that year, at a cost of \$75,000, the District purchased Daniel F. Larkin's Watch Hill Beach Association beach property. Included in the Larkin purchase were the Merry-Go-Round, 256 bathhouses and twelve cabanas, and some twenty-three hundred feet of beach fronting on Fishers Island Sound. Not included were the Larkin Block shops and buildings owned by the Association, fronting on Bay Street and Fort Road. At the same time, at a cost of \$10,000, the Fire District acquired the former Fort Mansfield property from the Washington Trust Company, which in 1931 had foreclosed on the mortgage of the Napatree Corporation, which had bought it at auction for \$365,000 less than twenty years earlier.²⁹⁹ A portion of the point property was subject to a lease held by the government for use as a bomb target site. Some twenty-three lots remain in private hands, with the owners not prepared to sell. Many of these have since been acquired by the District, which by the early twenty-first century owned approximately ninety percent of the barrier beach and the point, a tract of approximately eighty acres. Roughly a dozen lots still remained in other hands. One is owned by the Town of Westerly, another by the State of Rhode Island, and two by the Watch Hill Conservancy; the remainder are in private ownership.

On August 31, 1954, the fury of a third twentieth-century hurricane, Hurricane Carol, was vented on Napatree, the eye of the storm passing directly over Watch Hill (fig. 109). After hours of raging winds and seas, the second Beach Club was, like the first, swept across the bay and up the river. Boats in the bay and shops in the Village also sustained considerable damage.

There was no loss of life at Watch Hill in 1954, and since for the most part the vulnerable sites of the cottages lost in 1938 had not been built on afterward, there was only moderate loss of residential property. But once again the vulnerability of Napatree to the forces of nature was demonstrated.³⁰⁰

In the midst of the havoc they wreak, great storms sometimes play strange tricks. *Seaside Topics* reported that Henry L. Bogert, driving down to Fort Road to inspect the damage, spotted a box in the road near the Yacht Club. Gift-wrapped, it turned out to be an intact wedding present addressed to his daughter; it had been washed out of the Tilden-Thurber shop, located in the Larkin Block at 12 Fort Road.³⁰¹

As in 1939, the Misquamicut Club rebuilt its Beach Club after Hurricane Carol. The new Beach Club was ready for the 1955 season, its spare modern form in stark contrast to the clubhouse it replaced. The new structure was designed by the firm of Rockwell King DuMoulin of Wakefield to weather the effects of severe storms. Its windows and walls could be opened to yield to high winds, storm surges, and waves; the building was also built high enough on the

dune to permit storm waters to pass underneath it. These features thus minimized the resistance to storm forces such as those that had destroyed the two previous structures. The new Beach Club was recognized by the Museum of Modern Art as a fine example of design respecting environmental conditions. In the half-century thereafter, no hurricane has matched the force of Carol or the Hurricane of 1938, so the theory was not put to the test. But after determining that the structure had deteriorated to such an extent that it needed to be replaced, the Misquamicut Club razed the third clubhouse in late 2004 and replaced it with a fourth, which was ready and open for the 2005 season.

In 1955, the Watch Hill Yacht Club leased a portion of the Napatree beach east of the Beach Club for cabanas to be built and maintained by members of the Club. An original twenty cabanas became more than fifty over the next half-century.

While changes effected by major storms may be dramatic and readily recognized, it is not always easy to spot incremental geological change even when it occurs at a relatively rapid rate, as it has on Napatree. Earlier references provided by Denison (1878), Peck (1936), and Griscom (1984) indicate considerable shifting in the contours of Napatree (fig. 110). In 1995, students at Connecticut College published a paper in *Tidings*, further documenting these changes, as well as even more radical shifts in the configuration of Sandy Point. By comparing U.S. Coast and Geodetic Charts dating between 1839 and 1991, the researchers reported that during the seven years after Sandy Point broke away from Napatree (1938–45), Napatree Beach retreated about three hundred feet into Little Narragansett Bay. Further, that between 1942 and 1991, while

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109 *Larkin Square and the Yacht Club at the height of Hurricane Carol, August 31, 1954. While the Beach Club was washed away, the Yacht Club weathered the storm and the five-foot surge of water that swept through its first floor.*





110 Local artist Lori Zummo has captured Napatree Beach on a summer's day in the late twentieth century. The beautiful and fragile barrier beach, once substantially developed, returned in little more than a hundred years (1815–1938) to its natural condition, albeit devoid of the trees which gave it its name, and much reduced in width. The conservation of this remarkable resource presents an important challenge to twenty-first-century Watch Hill.

Watch Hill Point and Napatree Point underwent only minor erosion, Napatree Beach retreated 250 feet. They also noted an earlier study of aerial photographs taken between 1939 and 1975 indicating that over that period, Napatree Beach retreated at an average of almost six feet a year. The paper concluded with the following assessment and prediction:

Every time a storm wave washes sand over the dune-lines the bay becomes a little shallower and Sandy Point Island and Napatree Beach shift a little bit further shoreward. If present trends of migration and sedimentation continue unchecked, the bay will fill. The boat channel, from Watch Hill to Stonington Point, will silt up. Initial shoaling will probably occur in front of Barn Island. Time, tide, and shifting sand wait for no man.³⁰²

REPLACE



III By 1890, Watch Hill was both a full-fledged hotel resort and on the cusp of becoming a cottage colony. The great hotels visible, from left to right, are the Plimpton House, the Narragansett House, the Ocean House, and the Atlantic House. The just-completed Columbia House, with its distinctive cupola, is visible on Bay Street. The Village shoreline slopes gently to the harbor, and numerous commercial buildings line the water side of Bay Street.

The Village

THE VILLAGE WAS, of course, the hub of transportation, whether by sea or land, and its beaches a center of the social and recreational life of the colony (see fig. 120). A certain amount of information about the Village has already been provided, especially in the chapters *From Farm to Resort*, *The Cottage Colony*, and *Napatree Point*. But it may be helpful to provide further detail, especially as to the development of the waterfront and the park, and to give a sense of the commercial variety that once characterized the Village.

The appearance of the Village changed radically in the early twentieth century. Like Lighthouse Point and the Watch Hill bluff, the shoreline of Watch Hill Cove (the harbor) had originally been open and had sloped gently to the water. By the late nineteenth century, the shoreline had been developed and was lined with some dozen and a half commercial structures (fig. 111). These both obscured the view from Bay Street to the water and presented a distinctly infelicitous first view of Watch Hill to visitors approaching by sea (figs. 112–114). Peck refers to these buildings on the water side of Bay Street as “a number of ugly looking shacks.”³⁰³ *Seaside Topics* describes the scene in further detail:

It is hard to imagine now what it must have looked like in those days, when one and two storey frame buildings housing shore dinner houses, curio shops, grocery stores and photo shops crowded the street, with their ugly back porches, and garbage and sewage pipes the most prominent view seen by yachtsmen and people arriving by boat.³⁰⁴

Under pressure from the Improvement Society, the Watch Hill Fire District, which had been formed in 1901, agreed to buy the property on which these buildings stood—a tract running from the Peck property at the northerly end of the waterfront to the Larkin Block, as it came to be known, at the southerly end—and to demolish these buildings. The Rhode Island General Assembly at its 1909–10 session authorized the purchase. Six tracts were involved. At the



112 *The harbor as seen about 1890 from the hill above the Village, the site later of a parking lot. The Plimpton Dock is to the right, and a portion of the Watch Hill Dock shows to the left.*

113 *The Improvement Society and the Fire District made the removal of these unsightly buildings a priority in the first decade of the twentieth century. After the Fire District purchased the waterfront property in 1910, they were demolished, and an unimpeded view of the harbor from Bay Street was secured. Ultimately the area became the Village park.*



northerly end of the harbor, there was property of the Maxson family, then the Plimpton House dock belonging to John C. Kebabian (owner of the Plimpton House), next, property of James L. and Nathan E. Nash (owners of the Narragansett House), then land of Walter S. Price (owner of the Columbia House), next, Frank Larkin's Watch Hill Dock, and finally a tract conveyed by Joanna Larkin, including the land on which stood the famous Shore Dinner, owned by her husband, Daniel Wayland "Whale" Larkin. This latter became the Fire District parking lot.

The process of clearing the waterfront took nearly a decade. It was not until 1920 that the last two buildings, the Shore Dinner house and the Bayside Market, were eliminated. The only structure remaining was the firehouse, which had been built only three years earlier. At the same time, the Larkin Block, described by *Seaside Topics* as "an attractive business block," was

114 *Bay Street, looking north from the Merry-Go-Round in the first decade of the twentieth century.*



established by the Watch Hill Beach Association along the south side of the parking lot. The Association, under the new ownership of Daniel F. Larkin II, who had taken over from Frank Larkin, was also credited with developing and improving “all of the east end of Fort Road, tearing away many of the little fishing shanties which have so long been eyesores.”³⁰⁵ As a part of the development process, Bay Street was widened by some ten feet (see fig. 119). Subsequent alterations to Bay Street involved the removal of an old stone wall along the waterfront and the installation of a concrete retaining wall, with a walkway on top. In the early twentieth century, the Watch Hill Dock was topped with a covered pavilion, which housed the steamer ticket office and waiting room.

The Village park, designed by noted landscape architect and Watch Hill summer resident Marian C. Coffin, was finally completed and dedicated in 1936. A central feature was the sculpture of Ninigret, which was moved that year from its busy location at the juncture of Ninigret Avenue and Westerly Road. Other notable features were the two semicircles of memorial stone benches and the memorial drinking fountain, the latter given by Mrs. Ridley Watts in memory of her husband.

No one could have imagined that just two years after its dedication, the park would be ravaged by a hurricane. It was of course put back in order afterwards. But by the 1990s, when it was felt that another restoration was in order, the Fire District’s Park Commission turned to Miss Coffin’s original plans for guidance. The memorial to the fifteen Watch Hill residents who died in the Hurricane of 1938 and that given in memory of Shepard W. Simmons, who was to have been the next Fire Chief at the time of his untimely death in 1996, are both mounted on granite boulders and located to the left of the Plimpton Dock.³⁰⁶ In the late 1990s, the Lattner family

115 After the waterfront was cleared of buildings, the Post Office was moved to this site, just north of the Plimpton House. "Fairview" and "Bouldercrest" are just up the hill. "Stonyhurst" and "Wetumanetu" are visible further up Wauwinnet Avenue in this view of about 1915.



made a memorial gift to the Fire District of the gazebo, which is located in the park at the foot of Plimpton Road. It was given in "loving memory" of Frances Howe Lattner (1902–97) by her daughters.

A U.S. Post Office was first established at Watch Hill in 1883. The first post office was in the Watch Hill House before being relocated to the west side of Bay Street, just north of the steamer waiting room and the Watch Hill Dock. In 1909 it was moved up and across Bay Street, to a two-story house on York property, northerly of the Plimpton House and across Bay Street from the Burdick Building (fig. 115). After damage suffered in the 1938 hurricane, the owner of the building, Edmund P. York, decided to tear it down. A new post office was then built halfway up Plimpton Road, on the lefthand side. The Watch Hill Post Office operated year-round until 1933. Thereafter it was open only during the summer, until it was closed altogether in the 1990s. The last building occupied by the Post Office was converted to a private cottage toward the end of the twentieth century.

The first firehouse was built in 1917, on the water side of Bay Street in the area of the Watch Hill Dock (fig. 117). In 1933 it was replaced by a new brick structure, built on land given by Mrs. C. Bai Lihme,³⁰⁷ located at the northerly end of the harbor, just to the west of the commercial block known first as the Burdick Building and later as "Bay Breeze."³⁰⁸ In the Hurricane of 1938, the doors of the firehouse were washed away and the fire engines submerged, but during Hurricane Carol in 1954, Chief Edwin Barber managed to evacuate the fire trucks to his Watch Hill Garage. The second firehouse itself was flooded by the tidal surge and had to be abandoned by the Fire Department. A third firehouse was built inland, on Watch Hill Road, in 1956–57. For a time in the late 1950s, the second firehouse served as the Holiday Art Center, Inc., incorporated

in 1958 and funded by the Harkness Foundation. The Center operated an ambitious program of lectures, readings, exhibitions, film screenings, and artistic demonstrations. Ballet lessons were also held there for children. In 1962 the Center conveyed the property to the Foundation, which sold it eight years later; the building was then converted to commercial purposes.

The Watch Hill Yacht Club, established in 1913, built its first clubhouse in 1922 on pilings just to the south of the park and at the entrance to Fort Road. The actual club building was the old structure that had housed the ticket office and waiting room on the Watch Hill Dock. It was moved to its new site by crane and lighter, and remodeled (see fig. 36). After the first clubhouse was destroyed in the Hurricane of 1938, the current one was built in 1939.

At the southerly end of Bay Street, on the east side diagonally across from the Merry-Go-Round, the Bathing Beach, and Nash's newsstand, was the Box Ball Bowling Alley (see fig. 114). It was replaced about 1912 by a building, still standing: the Crown Theater, later known as the Ninigret Theater, which opened as a silent film theater but introduced talking films in 1930 (figs. 116 & 118). In warm weather, the management regularly opened the doors on the south side of the building to admit the sea breeze, thus unintentionally also permitting the nonpaying public to enjoy the films from outside. Immensely popular in the early days, it had lost much of its patronage by the 1940s and ceased operation about 1946. In 1951 the building was converted to become Fiore's Market.³⁰⁹ Next to it, on the south side, was Leon's Specialty Shop, which featured ladies' coats and wraps, waists, sweaters, kimonos, mandarins, hats, and summer furs. Later, fronting on Larkin Road, was a log cabin housing a hotdog stand.

On the north side of the theater was a one-story building housing a small restaurant. After a second story was added in the early twentieth century, the building became H. A. Littlefield's Restaurant. In 1955 it became Bernard Gordon's Book & Tackle Shop. One door further north was the Larkin Fish Market, followed by the Bayside Garage, later known as Barber's Garage and operated by George McFarland of Brooklyn, New York. Then came Sisson's restaurant and, to the north of it, Furcolo's Shoe Shop and the Watch Hill Pharmacy. All buildings south of Mastuxet Terrace as far as the fish market were lost in the fire of 1938.

Prior to 1951, Fiore's, originally the Eugene Barney Co. market, had been located at the north end of Bay Street, in a storefront space in the Narragansett Inn (formerly the Narragansett House), up a few steps from Bay Street. The market's move to the old theater building at the other end of Bay Street was occasioned by its proprietor's concern for the comfort of his customers. Mr. Fiore explained that one particular and important customer who marketed daily with her cook was no longer able to negotiate the steps; he needed to move to a street-level location. It was in Barney's, at its original location, that many of the Village merchants and residents took refuge above the floodwaters on Bay Street during the Hurricane of 1938. After the Narragansett Inn became the Watch Hill Inn in the 1980s, the area was covered by new



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116 Looking south on Bay Street to the Merry-Go-Round, about 1915. The trolley stands in front of the Crown Theater.



117 The first firehouse was built in 1917 on the water side of Bay Street, close to the Watch Hill Dock. Its construction was a community response to the devastating fire of October 18, 1916.



118 The Crown Theater became the Ninigret Theater by 1920, and in 1951 the building became Fiore's Market.

front decks. There were two additional markets in the early twentieth century, the Mastuxet Market, located in what became the northeasterly corner of the Larkin Block and operated by Palmer Chapman, and Segar's, William Segar & Co., featuring, as it advertised in 1917, groceries and fruits, vegetables, confectionary, and cigars.

Some of the business enterprises at Watch Hill in the early twentieth century were Charles F. Fisher, "New York Tailor," who advertised "cleaning, scouring and pressing" at the Manhasset Building on Bay Street; the Norwich Tailoring Company, which also provided cleaning, pressing and repairs, and "suits made to order" at its Mastuxet Terrace shop; Samuel B. Donchian of Hartford, who offered "the finest grade oriental rugs, embroideries, brassware and unmounted precious stones of rare quality" at its shop in the Ninigret Lodge of the Watch Hill House; the Watch Hill Bazaar, which sold "fancy dry goods and notions" at its store on Mastuxet Terrace; and on Bay Street near the Bathing Beach, N. J. Gorra & Bro., which sold knitted sports suits, decorated table linens, "French underthings," and beach and lounging pants.

The P. H. Opie Company, which sold dry goods, house furnishings, carpets, draperies, and linens at its two locations—High Street in Westerly and Bay Street in Watch Hill—claimed in 1904 to be "the only complete department store in either Washington County, Rhode Island, or New London County, Connecticut." The Watch Hill Pharmacy on the corner of Bay Street and Mastuxet Terrace promised to supply "the wants of the Watch Hill summer colony." In 1904 it advertised a Sun Burn Cream that would "positively remove tan, freckles, and sunburn, preventing blistering and peeling": no modern-day tan for the fair complexions of the Edwardian Age.

In the 1920s there were two hat shops on Bay Street as well as what *Seaside Topics* referred to as "numerous branches of the most stylish New York dress shops." M. A. Zahloot of Pittsburgh, at their shop in the Price Block to the north of the Olympia, featured "an exclusive line of hand made waists and lingerie, laces and embroideries and a choice selection of fine Oriental rugs."³¹⁰ And Mme. Najla Mogabgab of East 47th Street, New York, offered Ladies' and Misses' evening gowns, dresses, suits, millinery, and sports clothes at her shop in the Plimpton House.

More exotic, perhaps, were the Camel's Bell, located in the Burdick Building, the Russian Shop near the Narragansett Inn, and the Japanese Shop in the Larkin Block. There was also the Manila Shop in Chapel Lane. The Camel's Bell advertised itself as a branch of "Helen Burton's Famous Camel's Bell in Peking, China," with wares of jewelry, jade, and antiques.³¹¹ The young William E. Fiske recalled its "very expensive and very beautiful Oriental wares":

In the windows magnificent vicuna "throws" were casually draped over antique, dusky-red or black-lacquered Chinese spice or camphor chests with corners and key-plates of engraved and polished brass. Peaked straw coolie hats for beachwear and exotically flowered Japanese silk kimonos, as well as cashmere scarves and robes, must surely have watered the mouths of my elders, but not mine.³¹²

For Fiske, it was the Japanese Shop that elicited “a long and longing pause...always the order of the day”:

Once inside, the exotic, utterly delightful, and pungently sweet scent of incense, burning in little candle-heated, brass cups, was overwhelming. But the eye, even more than the nose, was entranced. There before me was a heterogeneous assemblage of every conceivable trifle that might captivate the childish heart. Tiny packets of tightly curled papers which, when one of them, like a pill, was dropped in a glass of water, magically unfurled to display a multi-colored bouquet; and there were those enchantingly painted wooden, Japanese doll figures, carved to nest one within another in an astonishingly numerous succession of grotesquely porcine and enigmatically inscrutable Buddhas... [There were] tiny gold and red paper packets...of miniature fire crackers strung together with thread...glass glycerine-filled globes containing tiny temples...rice paper lanterns...with clusters of painted glass bangles melodiously tinkling and chiming together...Oh, no Aladdin's cave or captive genie could possibly produce delights to rival this endlessly intriguing storehouse of treasure trove and Arabian nights' delight.³¹³

These magical emporia were gone well before the middle of the twentieth century. But even then, the shops in the Village continued to meet a number of daily necessities that by the end of the century would no longer be provided for there. In addition to Fiore's, which sold meats, vegetables, and staples, there was the Watch Hill Fish Market (formerly the Larkin Fish Market) located just to the north of Littlefield's and the old movie theater. Nancy Vocatura, who was the last proprietor, maintained the finest quality fish and would also prepare hors d'oeuvres for take-out. Both Fiore's and the Fish Market would deliver, one or more times a day as requested; and if by unusual chance no one responded to the ring of the bell or the call at the door, they would themselves put perishable items in the customer's icebox. It was a fact of life at Watch Hill, until the last decades of the twentieth century, that doors were rarely closed and seldom, if ever, locked, for the three months of the season. Indeed, one of the critical moments at the end of the season was to find the key. Luckily, the caretaker could be counted on.

Along Bay Street there were also a barber shop, a hairdressing parlor, and a bakery, the latter a branch of Westerly's Gulino's Bakery. Sisson's Bayside Luncheonette, which had replaced the earlier Watch Hill Pharmacy, operated for three-quarters of a century by the Vars family of Westerly, offered breakfast and sandwiches and over-the-counter medications as well as prescriptions, which were sent down from Westerly. It also featured a gift shop, known as Davy's Locker.

In addition to clothes shops for women—Tat Saunders (Watch Hill, Palm Beach, Boca Grande, Manchester-by-the-Sea, and the Ritz Carlton, Boston), William Coppolla (Watch Hill and Palm Beach), Ladd's (The Breakers, Palm Beach, and the Jupiter Island Beach Colony), Scott's Women's Shop (Watch Hill, Palm Beach, and Hobe Sound), Lilly Pulitzer, and the Mayan Shop—there were also shops that catered to men. These were Frank Saunders

(operating in the same locations as his sister Tat's shops), Scott's Men's Shop (also Florida), the Mayan Shop for Men, and later the Ninigret Men's Shop. All of these provided well-tailored resort clothing.

Most of these amenities were gone by the end of the twentieth century, partly, as noted by long-time villager David Sisson, as a consequence of rising real estate values and increasing rents. In an article published in 1987, he commented that the number of stores had increased, but that they were smaller and directed more to the transient trade than to the people who actually lived in Watch Hill. Well before the end of the century, Watch Hillites could no longer satisfy most of their purchasing needs right in the Village. Sisson commented that "the relationship between the village and the people who live here has grown apart over the years because the new stores just don't have what they want."³¹⁴

No summary of life in the Village would be complete without mention of the two Greek families who for many years operated two different eating establishments, which continue to attract Watch Hillites today. The Olympia Tea Room, founded in 1916 by the Tramis brothers,



119 *Looking north on Bay Street about 1925.*



120 This vibrant artistic recreation of Watch Hill about 1890 by Maxwell Mays was commissioned by the Improvement Society in anticipation of its 1989 centennial. It shows the Village and the harbor as they might have appeared from a hot air balloon on an idyllic summer day. The Plimpton House and its annexes and the Columbia House line Bay Street. The Ocean House is in the left distance. Center, on Mastuxet Terrace, are the Atlantic House and the Watch Hill House. The Larkin House is to the right. The steamer Belle is approaching the Watch Hill Dock, and a lively crowd surrounds the Merry-Go-Round.

Speros, Mike, and Teddy, has been at the heart of the community for nearly a century. Its manager was Speros Tramis, who boasted that he never took a day off. Patrons surmised that his only personal luxury was his signature bright blue cashmere V-neck pullover, and that he might have had a number of them, all the same. The Tea Room was located on the lower floor of the Columbia House. Until 1932 it operated as a soda fountain, but the Depression forced a change in the business, and it added restaurant service and grocery items from S. S. Pierce of Boston. After the fire of 1938, the Olympia was rebuilt and remains substantially unchanged today. Going to “the Greeks” was always first on the list of things to do at the beginning of the summer season, and its owners always welcomed those returning with genuine warmth and pleasure, and children with a chocolate bar. Specializing in lobster, steaks, and chops, the Olympia continued to boast a remarkable soda fountain and ice cream bar.

In 1973, in an article in the *Providence Evening Bulletin*, Speros reminisced about fifty-seven years of operation. In World War II days, he said, “There were huge parties here then, when the wealthy could still afford to have maids and butlers. The rich women would come down here at three and four in the morning and want breakfast after partying all night...and we’d be open because we had so many customers we couldn’t close.” The article continued, “[Speros] knows Watch Hill is wealthy and popular, and predicts it will remain so as long as it doesn’t become too commercialized. ‘It’s a real nice class of people who live here,’ he said.”³¹⁵ In a 1976 *Boston Globe* article, Sally Steinberg commented on the Olympia, “Who would have expected to find Greeks running a soda shop called a tea room which is really a restaurant serving lobster or sundaes to everyone from teenagers in sheared jeans to tycoons in tuxedos? There is no end to the surprises of Watch Hill.”³¹⁶ When the Tramis family retired after some seventy years, the Olympia continued to operate under new management, that of the John Felber family (Jack and Marcia), who acquired the business in 1981. The Felbers continued the restaurant’s tradition of excellence, but with a new cuisine and a new addition, wines and cocktails.

On the westerly side of Bay Street, just to the south of the Larkin Block, on the site of Trilby’s, an earlier ice cream establishment, the John Traggis family in 1942 established the St. Clair Annex, a Village reinvention of their restaurant and soda shop in uptown Westerly, which had closed. Here, too, ice cream was a popular feature, as was the popcorn machine, presided over by Mrs. Traggis. Adjacent to the restaurant, in the building which had served as a USO Center during the Second World War, was a penny arcade with pinball machines, known as Playland. The first Bay Street Annex building was destroyed by fire in 1973 and was rebuilt the following year, as the St. Clair Annex Ice Cream and Sandwich Shop. The family of the Traggises’ daughter, Irene Traggis Nicholas (Mrs. James Nicholas), continued to operate the landmark into the twenty-first century.³¹⁷

Another popular twentieth-century restaurant was Sisson’s, opened in 1922 and operated for many years by David Sisson’s mother, Mrs. Harriet Wilcox Sisson, later Mrs. Olaf Berentsen, on the east side of Bay Street, just north of the Fish Market, in the buildings known as the Sisson Block. In the 1980s that property became the Inn at Watch Hill.

Some Watch Hill Institutions

A SUBSTANTIAL PART of the history of Watch Hill is contained in the story of its institutions and is more efficiently told in connection with them than as part of the general narrative. It might surprise those not part of the community to realize how great a commitment of time and effort those responsible for these organizations make and how many hours, especially on summer weekends, are devoted to their meetings and their business. The heads of the various organizations since their founding are listed in Appendix B. The organizations are described here, chronologically by the date of their establishment.

The Watch Hill Chapel

The Watch Hill Chapel Society in the Town of Westerly, its corporate name, was established on September 1, 1875, for “the erection and maintenance of a Chapel at Watch Hill, and the support of Christian worship therein during the summer months, without any denominational or sectarian distinctions.”³¹⁸ Following the adoption of initial By-Laws, an Act of Incorporation was passed by the General Assembly of Rhode Island on February 8, 1876. A Board of Trustees was elected at the first annual meeting of the Society in August of that year. The Chapel’s Constitution and By-Laws were framed by the Hon. Benjamin K. Phelps, son-in-law of one of the founders, Governor Julius Catlin. Phelps was at the time Attorney General of the City and County of New York. Originally the Trustees were seven, but their number was later increased to twelve. By custom, former presidents are invited to serve as Trustees Emeriti (fig. 121).

In the years prior to the founding of the Chapel, informal worship services had been held in the hotels. The officiating clergy had been invited from among the hotel guests irrespective of denominational affiliations; thus began the Chapel’s tradition of nondenominational services.

In the Chapel’s early days, the Protestant—or “union”—nondenominational service was held at 10:45, Sunday morning. Sunday School was held in the afternoon, and there was an

evening service in the Undercroft for “colored worshippers.” Beginning in 1887, Roman Catholic Mass was celebrated early Sunday morning. The Undercroft, the only part of the Chapel to be heated in winter, was, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a community gathering place during the winter months.

In the early twenty-first century, the Chapel, with its two Sunday morning services — Roman Catholic Mass at 8:30 a.m. and the nondenominational union service at 10:30 a.m. — remains at the heart of the community. Both congregations come together at the annual summer Hymn Sing and the Thanksgiving Day service. During the season, the Chapel Undercroft, dedicated to the memory of Mary Anderson Coombe Myers (Mrs. Paul D. Myers), is also the site of art and photography shows, a children’s day camp, and an artists’ studio.

The Preface to the *Watch Hill Chapel Prayer Book* comments on the Chapel’s nondenominational nature:

It has been said that the Chapel is truly unique among religious institutions in this country. Its membership is comprised of individuals from all Christian traditions, and its services reflect that diversity. Roman Catholic Mass is celebrated each Sunday of the summer months, and Protestant worship is conducted from week to week by clergy representing a wide diversity of Protestant denominations.³¹⁹

Two prayers, written a half-century apart by members of the Watch Hill Chapel Society, Beatrice Putney Westerfield and her nephew, Chaplin Bradford Barnes, are traditional

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121 *The Trustees of the Watch Hill Chapel Society, August 1989. At the far left is the visiting minister, the Rev. John C. Harper, D.D., D.C.L., Rector of St. John’s Church, Lafayette Square, Washington, D.C. The trustees are, standing, left to right, John J. Dyett, John S. Lloyd, Elizabeth C. Crawford, Chaplin B. Barnes, Judge Charles S. Whitman, Jr., Paul D. Myers, Edith B. Eglin; seated, left to right, William T. Vogt, Charles H. Baird, Henry Saglio, Howard M. Fry II, John E. Farrand, Daniel P. Nugent, and Robert Marvel.*

elements, respectively, of the opening and closing services of the Chapel's summer season.³²⁰ The closing service of the season concludes with the singing of the hymn "God be with you till we meet again."

In 2003 the Chapel began a major structural restoration supported by contributions from the community. The architectural survey, undertaken as a part of the restoration project, revealed, among other structural issues, that the cupola had become so dilapidated that it required replacement. A new cupola was installed and dedicated, in the summer of 2004, to the memory of the late Judge Charles Seymour Whitman, Jr., president of the chapel, 1984–89. The project revealed a memorial inscription on the bell that had remained unseen for nearly a century:

PRESENTED BY
JULIA HOWARD BUSH
A.D. 1912
IN LOVING MEMORY OF
HER GRANDPARENTS
1818—JAMES LELAND HOWARD—1906
AND
1821—ANNA GILBERT HOWARD—1909
LORD I HAVE LOVED THE HABITATION OF THY HOUSE
AND THE PLACE WHEREIN THINE HONOUR DWELLETH

James Leland Howard was, of course, a founder of the Chapel and one of its early presidents.

Sources for additional information on the Chapel are the Introduction to the *Watch Hill Chapel Prayer Book* and a simple leaflet produced by the Trustees and available in the rear of the Chapel.

The Watch Hill Memorial Library & Improvement Society

In 1889 a group of eight leading men of the community formed the Watch Hill Improvement Society for the purpose of "developing and improving the village...cultivating public spirit, quickening the social and intellectual life of the people, securing public health by improved hygienic conditions in the village...and rendering Watch Hill a still more inviting and desirable place of residence." The Act of Incorporation was passed by the Rhode Island General Assembly on March 28, 1889.

One of the Society's first projects was to lay down sidewalks along the northerly side of Ocean View Highway. Though time and nature have had their effect, a portion of these remain more than one hundred years later. The Society was also instrumental in seeing to the laying of sidewalks in the Village and the seasonal oiling of roads. At the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, the Society was an important advocate of municipal water and street lights being brought to Watch Hill.



122 *Presidents of the Watch Hill Improvement Society (1971–1989) shown meeting at tea under the watchful eye of Ninigret, in 1989. Seated, left to right, Mrs. Charles S. Whitman, Jr., Mrs. Gregory N. Camp, Mrs. John E. Farrand, Mrs. Robert E. Knisley, Mrs. John B. Daukas, and Mrs. George C. Moore; standing, left to right, Mrs. Frank T. Crawford, Mrs. Gerald J. Johnson, Mrs. Michael A. Lemp, and Mrs. H. Bradford Westerfield. Absent: Mrs. Alan J. Hruska.*

The first presidents of the Society were William P. Anderson and Judge Asa W. Tenney. Much has been written earlier about Anderson. Tenney, who had served as United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York (1877–85), was serving as a Judge of the U.S. District Court for that same District at the time of his death in 1897.

By 1900, the composition of the Society changed radically when the women of the community took charge. Apparently the men had been largely inactive—dues had been collected, but no disbursements made—and the women were determined to act. According to the membership booklet of the Society, “On learning this, the gentlemen quickly turned over their charter, by-laws, and assets totaling \$388.75 to the women, and then resigned.”³²¹ Mrs. Samuel D. McConnell (Annie Bliss McConnell) was the first woman elected president, and all presidents since have been women (fig. 122). While the Society remains very much in the hands of its women members, a small handful of men are also members, afforded that privilege as a consequence of the membership of their late or former wives. The Society’s members whimsically refer to themselves as “The Imps.”

The Society is housed in the small stucco and timber Memorial Building located on the southeast corner of Wauwinnet and Everett Avenues. The land on which the building stands was given by Miss Ethel Burnet in memory of her mother, Mrs. Jacob Burnet (Annie Stubbs Burnet), and was part of the adjoining Burnet property on the hill to the east. The structure, built in 1917, was given by Mrs. Edward A. Newell (Mary Clarke Newell) in memory of her mother, Mrs. Josiah H. Clarke (Frances Ayres Clarke).

Over the years the Society has played a major role in improving Watch Hill. The clearing of the commercial buildings on the water side of Bay Street and the development of the park were

perhaps the most visible actions taken by the Society in its early days. The women of the Society were also the prime movers behind the acquisition by the Fire District of modern firefighting equipment after the disastrous fire of October 1916. Women did not yet have suffrage, locally or nationally, but it is they who told the men of the District how to vote; they also made a generous contribution toward the purchase of the splendid LaFrance engine in the season of 1917.

Following the success of DDT in combating malaria in Asia during the Second World War, the Improvement Society brought DDT to Watch Hill. For more than two decades, until the substance was federally banned in the early 1970s, the Improvement Society's Mosquito Control Program sent a spray truck through the streets of the community one evening a week, its TIFA machine diffusing dense clouds of insecticidal fog (DDT in a kerosene base) reaching as high as attic levels. Its advent was greeted with glee by children not yet in bed, who ran out to witness this spectacle. The force behind this program and a regular presence on the truck was Mrs. Philip B. Eaton (Anita McWynne Eaton), who was known as the "Mosquito Queen" and was sometimes referred to as "Anita Mosquita."

The Society has been enormously supportive of new initiatives in the community over the years, lending its tax umbrella to fledgling nonprofits sharing its mission. Those groups have included the East Beach Association and the Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers Association. The Society's current most visible annual contribution is to the maintenance of the Merry-Go-Round and its legendary "flying" horses, an activity led for many years by Mrs. Cyril V. Moore (Harriet Chappell Moore). Flower boxes along Bay Street and other beautification projects enhance the appearance of the Village, and annual art classes have done much to encourage artistic talent in the area. The Society conducts programs for children, including a traffic safety initiative and an annual Fourth of July bicycle parade. More recently, it has broadened its services as a lending library, to become, at its Everett Avenue headquarters, the summer local branch of the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly. Hence the Society's new name, the Watch Hill Memorial Library and Improvement Society.

The Misquamicut Club

In 1895 a group of residents formed the Misquamicut Golf Club, the first president of which was William P. Anderson. The other officers were Vice President, Sherman W. Knevals; Secretary, Dudley Phelps; and Treasurer, Nelson E. Perin, Sr. The first meeting of the Club took place on July 13, 1895, but according to Club historian George Y. Wheeler II, "it seems pretty clear that an unincorporated Golf Club was a going entity well before that year."³²²

With property assembled over some twenty years from a number of parcels on both sides of Ocean View Highway, the Club by the 1920s had acquired more than one hundred acres on the ocean side of the road and a similar number on the north side. Beginning in 1898, when the

Misquamicut Land Co. was formed to acquire land for the golf course, the property, both sold and given, came from a variety of sources. Tracts on the northerly side of the road were carved out of the Browning, Burnet, and Lanphear lands and came also from Frank W. Coy, J. H. Williams, and H. C. Rowe. And on the southerly, or ocean side of the road, tracts were acquired from Ethel Burnet, Cornelia McLanahan Curtis, F. Kingsbury Curtis, S. H. Davis, and Thomas Thacher. In all, between 1899 and 1922, the year in which the Club celebrated the opening of its new Donald Ross course, there were thirty-seven conveyances to the Misquamicut Land Co. and the Misquamicut Golf Club. In addition to its clubhouse, built in 1900 (see figs. 33 & 34) the Club maintains its Donald Ross eighteen-hole course, driving range, and putting green, a tennis pavilion, ten tennis courts, and a platform tennis court.

In 1945 the Watch Hill Beach Club, a separate corporation formed in 1934, merged with the Misquamicut Golf Club, and the Misquamicut Club (no longer Misquamicut Golf Club) became a golf/tennis/beach club (figs. 123 & 124). The Beach Club property at the entrance to Napatree Point is leased from the Watch Hill Fire District under a long-term lease, with the Club owning the clubhouse.³²³ As noted earlier, the new 2005 clubhouse is the fourth on that site.

Changes in the Meadows property of the Club, the land between Ocean View Highway and the ponds on which the lower holes of the golf course are located, occurred in the late 1950s, after several major hurricanes and severe winter storms had breached the dunes and raised

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123 Prize Day at the Misquamicut Club, Labor Day weekend 1955. Standing, left to right, David Ross Winans, John Galuscio, Ernie Cummings, Mrs. Reginald H. Fullerton, Harvey Connell, James M. Snowden, Mrs. David H. Smith, Mrs. William J. Miller, Mrs. Floyd T. Starr, Mr. Starr, Thomas C. Burke, Mrs. William Dixon Stevens, George Y. Wheeler II, Mrs. Charles S. Whitman, Jr., and Thomas G. Abern; kneeling, left to right, James W. McCormick, Peter Fullerton, Linda Smith, Maisie Lloyd, Anne Curtis, Margot Camp, Nancy Starr; seated, left to right, Jeremy Richdale, Alfred Fuller, Johnny Barney, Larry Griggs, Sandy Whitman, Mopsy Smith, and Cynthia Fuller.

124 *Children at the Misquamicut Club for tennis lessons, 1989. Spencer Gray served as tennis pro for forty-two years.*



the level of the ponds. In 1961, to halt the intrusion of salt water from the ponds, the Club constructed a dike, one mile long, six to eight feet high, and three times that in width. The next major reconstruction of the lower course, in the 1990s, addressed the problems of fresh-water run-off from the higher land on the north side of Ocean View Highway. Even with these improvements, and even without a significant rise in sea levels, the maintenance of the dunes on East Beach is critical if inundation by salt water is to be avoided.

In 1995 the Club celebrated the 100th anniversary of its founding with a Centennial Ball, a Victorian costume gala in a tent on the lawn. Layng Martine, Jr., a member and a composer from Nashville, Tennessee, wrote three songs for the occasion: “Watch Hill Street Song,” “Our Club is Here to Stay,” and “The Boys from Cincinnati.” Performing these and various “songs of the decades” were the Century Singers, comprised of Robin Driscoll, Ann Snowden Johnson, Layng Martine, Jr., Geordie Moore (George C. Moore, Jr.), Anita C. Rich, and Wendy W. Wilkes. Edward Franklin narrated, George Moore provided musical direction, and Caroline Franklin Berry directed.

Those interested in more information about the Club are encouraged to read the thoroughly engaging history written by George Y. Wheeler II, a former president of the Club, on the occasion of its 100th anniversary, *The Misquamicut Club: 100 Years, 1895–1995*.

The Watch Hill Fire District

Chartered by the Rhode Island General Assembly in 1901, the Watch Hill Fire District is technically a quasi-municipal corporation, not a municipality, but one that performs a number of limited governmental functions. Its chief elected officer is the Moderator, chairman of its annual meeting and in effect CEO of its Council. The District Council is comprised also of a

Deputy Moderator, the Treasurer, the chairmen of its Parks Commission and Finance Committee, the Fire Chief, and two Members-at-Large. Other District officers are the Clerk, the Tax Assessor, and the Tax Collector. The first Moderator of the District was Frank Larkin, 1901–11.

The geographical boundaries of the District are spelled out in very precise metes and bounds language in the District Charter, first enacted by the General Assembly in 1901 and periodically revised by special act of the Assembly. With the exception of the lots fronting the east side of Watch Hill Road, between Shore Road and Avondale Road, the District encompasses all property south of Shore Road between Watch Hill Road and Ocean View Highway; all property on the west side of Watch Hill Road, south of Avondale Road; and all property south of Ocean View Highway, west of a line that runs across the lower golf course from Bayberry Road to the ocean. A map produced by the Watch Hill Conservancy in 2002 and regularly updated shows all the District properties, by Westerly Assessor's plat and lot number, and a map key identifies owners and lot addresses.

In addition to the Fire House on Watch Hill Road, the District owns and manages, through its Park Commission, the Village park, the docks, the parking lot, most of Napatree Point (some eighty acres), the Merry-Go-Round, the Public Bathing Beach, and the property on which the Misquamicut Club's Beach Club and the Watch Hill Yacht Club's cabanas are located. It also provides trash removal from all properties within the District.

The District's operations are funded by a special tax on the properties within its boundaries and by lease payments from the commercial operations that take place on District property. While it is Westerly ordinances that control zoning and police protection in the District, the District is a perennial advocate for increased police protection and is frequently heard on matters that come before the Planning and Zoning Boards of the Town of Westerly.

District business is conducted by the voters at an Annual Meeting, held in July, and at special meetings held as required. The District Council operates as an executive committee between meetings of the voters.

The Watch Hill Fire Department

Watch Hill Hose and Engine Company Number One

The Watch Hill Fire Department began operation as a volunteer company in 1902, the year following the formation of the Watch Hill Fire District. Its volunteers have played a key role in the community ever since, not only in fighting fires but also in helping Watch Hill address natural and man-made disasters and in coming to the aid of individuals in trouble on land and along the shore. The Watch Hill Hose and Engine Company Number One was established as a separate corporation in 1934; it continues to operate under the umbrella of the Fire District, which supplies its budget and elects its Chief and Assistant Chiefs at the Annual Meeting of the District.

The current Watch Hill Fire House, the Department's third, is located at 222 Watch Hill Road. The building also serves as the meeting and office place of the Watch Hill Fire District and the Watch Hill Conservancy. The company is the central player in Watch Hill's annual Fourth of July parade, when children on bicycles and on foot follow its two engines and ladder truck around the Village. The Department also holds annual educational programs on fire protection and safety.

A note about some members of the Fire Department and family service to the community is appropriate. Perhaps the most legendary of the Fire Chiefs was George W. Hoxie, who served as Chief for twenty years, 1925–45. From the turn of the twentieth century, he was also the community's taxi driver and operated an express service; in addition, he was caretaker of many of the summer cottages. The building which housed Hoxie's Taxi and Express still stands today; it is the first structure on Bay Street, south of the parking lot of the Watch Hill Inn (formerly the Narragansett Inn). George Hoxie and later his son Porter, who served as a Captain of the Department (1926–30), regularly met the boats and trains and toted the baggage of guests to the hotels and of summer residents to their cottages.

For decades, two families who have owned and operated the Watch Hill Garage have also played a major role in the Company. Edwin C. Barber was Chief, 1945–69, the longest term of service of any Chief. In 1945 he also became the owner of the Watch Hill Garage. His son, Charles E. "Bud" Barber, who succeeded him as Chief and served, 1969–78, also succeeded him in ownership of the Garage. Bud brought in as his business partner Shepard "Shep" Simmons, who served as Captain, 1972–73 and as 1st Assistant Chief. At the time of his death in 1996, Shep was scheduled to become Chief. Shep's son, Jason S. Simmons, was the 1st Assistant Chief in 2005. Bud's son, Andrew "Buck" Barber, was owner of the Garage, operated as European Import Services, Inc. Shep Simmons's uncle, Shepard Desillier, a long-time member of the Company, remained an Honorary Member and a member of the Board of Engineers in the early twenty-first century.

Other long-time service has come from the Hall family, including Robert Hall, who served as Captain, 1940–57, and his nephew, John F. Hall, who served in that capacity, 1973–89, and from the Lanphear and Gaccione families. Vincent A. Gaccione was Captain, 1959–65, and his son, Vincent G. Gaccione, who served as Captain, 1989–91, was Chief, 1998–2004. In 2004 Scott Harold, the great-great-grandson of the second Chief, Frederick O. Lanphear, became Chief. Many others of these families have also served.

The Watch Hill Yacht Club

Founded in 1913, the Yacht Club, like the Misquamicut Club, is a social center of the community, and there is substantial overlap in the memberships of the two. The following outline of the

125 *A 1940s post-sail gathering on the deck of the second Yacht Club. Harry Knapp leans against the piling at the left. Frank Crawford (back to camera) is in conversation with Liz Camp (later Mrs. Crawford). Malcolm Crawford, Fred Loney, and Ethel Albertson are seated at the right. Susie Moore stands behind them.*



Club's history is taken from Robert M. Driscoll's "History of the Watch Hill Yacht Club," published in the Club's Membership Directory and on its Web site.³²⁴

The first meeting of the Club was held at *Samoset*, the cottage of William J. Battey, July 19, 1913. A Constitution and By-Laws were adopted, and officers elected: Commodore, W. J. Battey; Vice Commodore, F. Kingsbury Curtis; Rear Commodore, Francis Dunham; Fleet Surgeon, Dr. W. R. Lewis; Secretary, F. S. Turnbull; and Treasurer, C. Robinson. Colonel Dick, owner of the Watch Hill House, offered the use of the hotel ballroom for "an annual dance and any other entertainment the Club may desire to give." The first Annual Meeting of the Club was held at the Watch Hill House, September 6, 1913. During that first season, Commodore Battey organized a fund drive that permitted the Club to remove two hundred tons of massive rocks from the Watch Hill Cove the following spring, allowing larger vessels to enter the harbor (see fig. 37).

The first clubhouse was built in the early 1920s (see fig. 36). Daniel F. Larkin and Albert C. Larkin, who owned the shorefront, gave the Club a right-of-way to the water. A dock was built, and in 1922 the building that had served as steamer ticket office and waiting room was moved from the Watch Hill Dock by crane and lighter and placed on the new dock. The building was remodeled according to plans drawn by Mott B. Schmidt, the architect of *Norman Hall*, with Mrs. C. Bai Lihme donating the cost. The new clubhouse was officially opened on June 20, 1923.

That same year, the Club added eleven jib-headed mainsail Herreshoff sloops to its racing fleet. They were a modification of the Buzzards Bay 15-footer called the Watch Hill Class. By the end of the twentieth century, the Watch Hill 15 fleet had grown to twenty-five boats.

After the loss of the first clubhouse in the 1938 hurricane, a second building was designed by the firm of Rockwell King DuMoulin, from plans drawn by member Eben Knowlton, and was ready for operation in July 1939 (fig. 125). This was the same firm that later designed the third Beach Club, in 1955. The sill plates of the building were bolted to the dock piles and stringers, a precaution deemed to have made possible survival of the structure when, during Hurricane Carol in 1954, five feet of water surged through the first floor (see fig. 109).

In 1955 the Yacht Club, acting on behalf of its members, entered into a lease with the Fire District for a four-hundred-foot strip of Napatree Beach across Fort Road from the clubhouse, on which some fifty-six cabanas have been built. The cost of the enterprise was borne by the members/owners who constituted the Cabana Group.

The East Beach Association

The Association was founded in 1970 by three East Beach property owners, John S. Burke, Jr., Paul D. Myers, and Charles B. White, with support from the Improvement Society. Incorporated that same year, the Association plays a major role in maintaining the quality and the structure of East Beach. Its establishment of snow fencing on the dunes has led over decades to a substantial rebuilding of eroded dunes along much of the beach, and its daily collection of trash during the summer months is critical to the maintenance of the beauty of the beach. The Association also cooperates with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the protection of the beach nesting sites of the endangered piping plovers.

The Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers Association

In the mid-1980s the U.S. Coast Guard Service announced a plan to automate the lighthouse and divest itself of responsibility for the lighthouse and the Point. Interested agencies were invited to apply for qualification to assume this responsibility. Under the auspices of the Improvement Society, a small steering committee was formed to explore the possibility of local control. They established a new association, which in 1986 was awarded a thirty-year lease to the lighthouse property. The officers were F. Charles Swerz, President; Susanne S. Knisley, Vice President; C. Shepard Desillier, Treasurer; and Chaplin B. Barnes, Secretary. The Association successfully solicited funds from the community to permit it to maintain the Point and the buildings, including a small museum, which was established in the former oil house. The federal government retained responsibility for the navigational signals—the light and the foghorn, etc.—and the Association assumed control of the rest of the Point, including the lighthouse keeper's house, which it leases to individuals who are expected to help provide security.

The operation has been a smooth one over the decades. In the late 1990s the Association turned again to the community for funds with which to restore the house, and the government agreed to extend the lease until 2029.

The Watch Hill Preservation Society

Members of the Society, which was formed in 1988, played a lead role, together with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, in establishing the Watch Hill Historic District, which in 1985 was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Society's 1988 booklet, *National Register of Historic Places, Watch Hill, Rhode Island*, which contains the National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, is an invaluable source of information on the history of Watch Hill and its historic buildings. The Society has also been responsible for the placing of historical plaques on Watch Hill buildings. Members of the Society are currently developing a photographic history of Watch Hill cottages, entitled *Watch Hill Then and Now*.

The Watch Hill Security Trust

The Watch Hill Security Trust, incorporated in 1996, contracts with the owners of property on East Beach to provide security on their beach properties. The Trust's regulations for the conduct of visitors on the beach are posted, and also provide information as to the ownership of the beach.³²⁵

The Watch Hill Conservancy

This newest of Watch Hill nonprofits is Watch Hill's land trust, incorporated in 1999 but first active in 2001. Its Board of Directors is made up of representatives of the various Watch Hill nonprofit institutions other than the Chapel and also includes a number of at-large Directors. The Conservancy works to protect Watch Hill's open space and natural environment by acquisition of undeveloped land, with a particular reference to ecologically sensitive areas such as "coastal waters and beaches, dunes, freshwater ponds, wetlands, inland waterways, woodlands and fields." The Conservancy has established as an acquisition priority the properties on the Napatree barrier beach not owned by the Watch Hill Fire District. The Conservancy cooperates with the Park Commission of the Fire District in various Napatree conservation projects including dune restoration. The Conservancy also seeks to educate the public concerning the natural and historic heritage of Watch Hill.

As noted in the section on the Watch Hill Fire District, the Conservancy maintains a map of the properties of the District and a map key providing information as to property location and ownership.

The Future

THE FUTURE OF WATCH HILL depends on a number of factors, some human and some natural, some controllable by the community and some over which the community has little control. The visual integrity of Watch Hill, including both its landscape and its architecture, is universally cherished, but its preservation cannot be taken for granted. Concerted community effort will be required to prevent inappropriate development, which can erode and destroy the historic and natural values that make Watch Hill what it is. Fortunately, Watch Hill residents have a long history of banding together to acquire property that might attract undesirable development. In an interesting undergraduate thesis, Princeton graduate and lifelong Watch Hill summer resident Sarah Jane Sculco made a particular point of what community collective action has done for Watch Hill in the past.³²⁶

Following the 1916 fire, which destroyed three hotels and two nearby cottages, a syndicate, Watch Hill Estates, was formed to buy up the property on which those structures had stood. Over the years the group acquired a number of other properties. The last lot owned by the group, located on the northerly side of Larkin Road, the site of the cottage known as *Buena Vista*, was sold in 1989 to the Watch Hill Yacht Club for a parking lot and for the location of its septic system.

In 1926 and 1928, a Watch Hill group, the Napatree Corporation, stepped up to buy the federal property of Fort Mansfield. After the syndicate lost the property in a 1931 mortgage foreclosure, the Fire District took action to reclaim the property in 1945.

In 1970, when the John H. Ahr family put the seventy-four acre property known as “Seawood,” located at the northerly end of Watch Hill—fronting Shore Road, between Watch Hill Road and Ocean View Highway—on the market, a Watch Hill partnership, Seawood Company, was formed to acquire it. It was through their efforts that much of the property was

acquired by the Watch Hill Woods Corporation, which subdivided it and established a new residential neighborhood along Turtleback, Oenoke, and Camelback Roads.

When *Holiday House* went on the market in 1973, a group of Watch Hill residents again formed a partnership. The Watch Hill Associates, made up of some forty-three concerned citizens, bought the house and the surrounding land at the top of the Watch Hill, subdivided it into three lots, placed restrictions on it, and then sold it to residential purchasers.

Still later, in the early 1990s, when the Holdredge family placed their garage on the market, the Watch Hill Limited Partnership was formed by some forty members of the community to acquire and operate it. Located at the northerly end of Bay Street and substantially restored, it still functions as a parking garage and lot and also houses retail businesses and apartments. More recently, local individuals have stepped forward to acquire, renovate, and restore the historic Ocean House.

The value of land in Watch Hill continues to rise. The first million-dollar house sale occurred in the mid-1980s, and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, houses were being sold for many multiples of that price. A tax revaluation at the end of 2003 supported those new values. With the rise in value of land, and with sales advertised in the international media, the attention of developers who had never heard of Watch Hill only a few decades ago will increasingly be focused on development opportunities here.

In 1985 the Watch Hill Historic District was placed on the federal National Register of Historic Places. This distinction, while welcome, did not confer any legal protection on the historic structures of the District. In the early 1990s, the Watch Hill Preservation Society attempted to remedy this situation. The Society worked with the state Historical Preservation Commission and the federal Department of the Interior to develop a historic zoning ordinance, which, if adopted by the Town of Westerly, would have afforded legal protection. The voters of the Watch Hill Fire District, however, did not support the effort. Instead, many speakers at the meeting at which the proposal was presented voiced fears that they would be subjecting the most basic of property decisions to the caprice of preservationist bureaucrats. The proposal was defeated, and a subsequent attempt on the part of the Preservation Society to enlist the support of the Town of Westerly was unsuccessful.

The fact is, historic zoning ordinances can easily be crafted to avoid intrusive regulation, and, if enacted, can provide the legal teeth by which a community can defend itself from inappropriate development. Watch Hill has been lucky so far that the market has not in any major way diminished the quality of the community. Luck, however, is not enough, and some day it may not be sufficient to fend off a disaster. It is important for Watch Hill to revisit this issue and to work with the State and the Town to develop a historic zoning ordinance that will offer the protection Watch Hill's historical heritage deserves.

Even with proper zoning in place, the character of Watch Hill may still be threatened by economic change. The enormous rise in property values, and hence in assessed values and real estate taxes, puts great pressure on property owners—especially those who are older and on fixed incomes, but also on siblings who own properties jointly and who may have differing priorities—to sell, take their gains, and leave. Every new Westerly tax assessment provokes talk of secession and dissatisfaction with the level of services Westerly provides in return for the very significant portion of town revenues that Watch Hill taxes provide. The issue has been around for many years. As long ago as 1886, Watch Hill and Lotteryville (Avondale) petitioned the General Assembly to be set aside as an independent town. With the greater complexity of infrastructures that now bind the town and the Fire District, it would be even more difficult to achieve today. But with ever greater numbers of Watch Hill people spending more time here and becoming increasingly involved in the institutions of Westerly, and with increased attention on the part of Westerly to the needs of Watch Hill, it may be hoped that the sometimes contentious relationship between the town and the resort will improve.

Vast wealth has changed the character of other resorts. One need look no farther than to Long Island and its southern fork, known generally by the end of the twentieth century, as “the Hamptons,” rather than by the names of its historic constituent towns. Watch Hill, itself “discovered,” may face similar change. These economic factors will undoubtedly have an impact on this once singularly cohesive community.

While many old families, very much part of the Watch Hill social scene, have always enjoyed the quiet charm of Avondale and the seclusion of several private points on the Pawcatuck River north of Avondale, as early as the 1960s a Watch Hill matron was taken aback to hear that a young married couple, including the bride who had grown up in the Fire District, were buying a house of their own in Avondale. Looking for something supportive to say, she blurted out, “Well, it has the *flavor* of Watch Hill.” The couple took the remark in stride and ordered license plates with the initials “FOWH.” At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a sort of Watch Hill “diaspora” is occurring as families who formerly lived within the Fire District are selling and moving to the surrounding areas of Avondale, No Bottom Pond, Misquamicut Hills, and Ocean Ridge or buying houses for their children outside the Fire District. This trend will no doubt continue.

Watch Hill has always taken seriously the length of the tenure of its residents here. Sometimes that interest has been expressed in a humorous vein. One year in the second half of the twentieth century, the organizers of the end-of-season event at the Beach Club—involving, among other activities, kite flying, egg tossing, a sandcastle competition, a tug of war, and musical chairs, and known as “Family, Field, Fun & Frolic”—came up with the idea of giving out campaign-style buttons with legends relating to the participants’ status, old or new, at Watch

Hill: “I am Watch Hill,” “I married Watch Hill,” “I Found Watch Hill,” and “I am a Townie.” Some were able to sport all four buttons.

In 1944 *Seaside Topics* listed twenty-four families who had been coming to Watch Hill for as many as five or six generations.³²⁷ Fewer than half of those families were still part of the community at the beginning of the twenty-first century. While in the intervening years, many families not included on the 1944 list have been accumulating their generations here, Watch Hill also saw a major influx of new families. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, only seven families could be found still living in the cottages that their ancestors had built at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.³²⁸ While new blood can be a source of strength to the community, there is a need to share with new property owners the history and the traditions that have helped to make Watch Hill what it is, and to encourage their participation in the various Watch Hill institutions.

Watch Hill has always valued its privacy and preferred that the world beyond the Fire District be unaware of its existence. As late as 1959, Cleveland Amory, noted for his writings about American resorts and society, listed Watch Hill as one of his ten favorites in a *Holiday* article titled “My First Resorts.” He observed that it possessed “a positive advantage of not being known.” Not a single publication had, to his knowledge, ever “covered” Watch Hill:

And, as more and more resorts are beginning to learn, it is not only the rich who spoil resorts... it is also a curious combination of Society and Publicity—which I have called “Publicity.” Of this group, Watch Hill has next to none, and what has saved Watch Hill, I believe, is that the people who would want to go to Watch Hill to “go to Watch Hill” don’t know enough about Watch Hill to want to go there in the first place. And since that is exactly as Watch Hillers would wish it to continue to be, I have no other course to take than to discontinue this report.³²⁹

Amory may have discontinued his report, but others, less reticent, followed him, and the floodgates of outside attention were open for good. Over the last decades of the twentieth century, numerous articles appeared in *Travel & Leisure*, *The Providence Sunday Journal*, the *Boston Globe*, *Yankee Magazine*, *Condé Nast Travelers*, *Town and Country*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *The New York Times*, and *Coastal Living*, among others. How Watch Hill manages to accommodate the consequences of its unwelcome popularity, including how it responds to parking problems and traffic congestion in the Village, fleets of boats in the bay, and crowds on the beaches, will determine how well it manages to survive.

One possible positive change may come as a consequence of the conversion under way of major parking lots to other uses, residential as well as commercial. It is not unreasonable to imagine that, with fewer parking places available for visiting day trippers, the character of Village businesses, now more geared to transients than to residents, will once again become more responsive to the needs of the residents of Watch Hill and nearby shoreline communities.



126 *For evidence of rising sea levels, one need look no further than Arraquat Road and Curtis Point, where the “Shortlands” tennis court (see fig. 67) in less than a century reconstituted itself into a salt marsh.*

A number of issues for future action were suggested in the 1980s, when a broad-based group of Watch Hill residents formed a Long-Range Planning Committee and developed “The Watch Hill Comprehensive Plan.” Its recommendations continue to deserve attention.³³⁰

From an environmental perspective, present signs of change and past events at Watch Hill suggest concerns for the future. In the 1970s, a conservation plan for Napatree was proposed but never fully implemented. Quite apart from the geological changes that the future may bring, if the beauty and rich diversity of this remarkable barrier beach are to be preserved, it will be necessary for Watch Hill to take decisive action to develop a comprehensive management regime and the manpower to enforce it.

A subtle phenomenon affecting all of the shoreline is the rising of sea levels. Clear evidence of this trend can be seen nearby on Barn Island, Stonington, just across Little Narragansett Bay. There, stone walls which only three hundred years ago divided pastures, by the last decades of the twentieth century divided salt-marsh meadows.³³¹ Even in Watch Hill, and over a much shorter period, this same phenomenon is evident in the transformation of an early-twentieth-century tennis court, located near the bay on Curtis Point, into a salt marsh (fig. 126).

This is hardly the place to debate the issue of climate change. Suffice it to say that even conservative estimates of global warming over the twentieth-first century and of the impacts

of melting polar ice on ocean levels suggest substantial consequences for the coastal regions.³³² Given that the average range of tides at Watch Hill Point varies between two and three feet, it is reasonable to imagine that even the mid-range estimate of a rise of nineteen inches, suggested in 2001 by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, will have substantial impact, especially when storm surges are involved. The time may come when Napa-tree will again be breached, perhaps permanently.

A carved boulder on the slope of the Misquamicut Club hill — across Ocean View Highway from the lower course and the ponds — memorializes, at some dozen feet above the road, the high-water mark of the 1938 hurricane, the one-hundred-year flood mark.³³³ However, as time goes by and as ocean levels rise, a future storm of the same magnitude, coming again at high tide, might be expected to reach a still more significant level.

What does the future hold for Watch Hill? If it is possible to suggest an answer, it is that Watch Hill and the people who live here have always demonstrated the determination and the capacity to protect it. Over the century and a half that Watch Hill has been a resort, it has weathered hurricanes, fires, disasters at sea, and even the strains of war, and it has held together and rebuilt when necessary. There is every reason to expect that Watch Hill will remain vigilant, determined, and resilient and thus able to meet whatever challenges the future may hold.

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Sunset over Napatree. To the left is Fishers Island; to the right, the Connecticut shore.

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APPENDIX A

Cottages & Locations

Significant historic cottages are listed alphabetically by current name, with former names, if any, in brackets. Final numbers correspond to locations on the map.

Aldrich Cottage 2 Lighthouse Road 130
Altomare {*Altomary*} 20 Plimpton Road 149
Appleby {*Sunset View, Wasigan*} 5 Sunset Avenue 20
Baycroft {*Lermoh*} 3 Pawcatuck Avenue 13
Bayridge 8 Aquidneck Avenue 23
Bayswater 1 Arraquat Road 85
Beach Meadows 7 Manatuck Avenue 75
Belfort {*Yosemite*} 9 Massachaug Road 118
Belveduto 8 Niantic Avenue 45
Blythebourne 3 Water's Edge Road 1
Bonnie View {*Bonnie Brae, Acropolis*} 8 Sunset Avenue 18
Bouldercrest 14 Wauwinnet Avenue 32
Breeze Cote 6 Chapel Lane 145
Briar Rock 1 Ninigret Avenue 58
Bungalow, The 5 Westerly Road 55
By-the-Sea 3 Larkin Road 139
Catlin Cottage 23 Westerly Road 152
Cedarcrest 6 Browning Road 123
Cedarhurst 3 Neowam Avenue 27

Cedars, The 15 Ninigret Avenue 63
Chalet, The {*Cedar Brae*} 9 Noonatch Road 29
Channel Mark {*Anchorage*} 5 Water's Edge Road 4
Clarmar 16 Yosemite Valley Road 129
Clinton Cottage 2 Pawcatuck Avenue 15
Cloverly 44 Foster Cove Road 77
Collins Cottage 3 Bluff Avenue 147
Contrémer 26 East Hills Road 160
Cottage, The 8 Larkin Road 135
Cove Cottage {*Bungalow-on-Cove*} 7 Pawcatuck Avenue 12
Craigie Brae {*Glenhill*} 6 Aquidneck Avenue 22
Crosswinds {*Baltimore Cottage, Seven Gables, Warwaloam*}
14 Westerly Road 47
Crow's Nest {*Leitrim, Dolobran*} 11 Nepun Road 100
Dormers, The 3 Everett Avenue 35
Dunbar Rocks 35 Ocean View Highway 122
Dunes, The 13 Everett Avenue 40
East Cottage {*Lyon No. 1, Mijapoan*} 16 Water's Edge Road 7
East Dunes 7 Kidd's Way 50
Echo Lodge {*Ushers Acres*} 14 Aquidneck Avenue 28
Edgecove 6 Water's Edge Road 2
Edgemere 3 Niantic Avenue 43
Edgewater {*Edgecliff*} 10 Larkin Road 137



El Reposo 4 Yosemite Valley Road 115
Ésta-Es-Su-Casa {Barrocentra} 24 East Hills Road 159
Everbreeze 2 Arraquat Road 81
Fairsigh {Pendleton House, Monabri} 240 Watch Hill Road 107
Fairways {Idle Rest} 46 Ocean View Highway 126
Far Look {Ridgeleigh} 20 Nepun Road 99
Fenways, The 6 Ninigret Avenue 66
Folly, The {River View} 12 Water's Edge Road 6
Gatehouse, The 8 Larkin Road 136
Geranium Point {Breezy Point} 4 Water's Edge Road 3
Gitché Gumeé {Seaview, The Dug-Out} 2 Niantic Avenue 42
Graydon 24 Ocean View Highway 116
Greycote {Hunt Cottage} 18 Wauwinnet Avenue 33
Gulnare {Edgewater} 41 Foster Cove Road 78
Hedgerow {Wauwinnet} 10 Pawcatuck Avenue 10
High Watch {Holiday House} 16 Bluff Avenue 141
High Wicket {Sowanniu, Chuckle Hill, Greyside North}
 8 Popon Road 94
Hill House {The Kedge} 12 Bluff Avenue 142
Hillside 3 Westerly Road 56
Idle Hour {Three Seas} 6 Pawcatuck Avenue 11
Inglecote {Foster, Vose, Everett Farmhouse} 11 Westerly Road 36
Iris Rock 4 Sunset Avenue 19
Justhome {Seaesta, Weonit} 10 Bluff Avenue 143
Kenneth Ridge 7 Ridge Road 109
Knoll, The {The Folly} 18 Nepun Road 98
La Maritima {The Boulders, Arcadia} 14 Ninigret Avenue 69
Lion-Gate Inn {Daniel L. Harris House, Windover}
 215 Watch Hill Road 101
Louisiana 221 Watch Hill Road 103
Maisonette 22 East Hills Road 161
Mandalay {Fairview} 20 Wauwinnet Avenue 31
Manhan {Collins House, Main Brace, Pennicumquik}
 234 Watch Hill Road 106
Marbella {Chenowith, The Ledges} 4 Westerly Road 57

Mastuxet {Alsop House, Hartley House} 7 Larkin Road 140
Meadholme 5 Ridge Road 108
Meadowcrest 11 Wapan Road 90
Meramour {Highland Lodge} 2 Ninigret Avenue 64
Merrivale {Belvedere} 219 Watch Hill Road 102
Midway 17 Breen Road 156
Mini-House 16 Foster Cove Road 95
Minnebama {Pinecroft, Tick-Tock House} 4 Ninigret Avenue 65
Misquamicut Cottage 11 Popon Road 96
Misquamicut Inn {Potter Farmhouse} 11 Foster Cove Road 93
Moana {Aktaion} 6 Larkin Road 134
Moorcroft 10 Sunset Avenue 17
Neowam 4 Neowam Avenue 25
Ninigret 9 Ninigret Avenue 61
Norman Hall {Stone House} 29 Ocean View Highway 120
North Cove 4 Arraquat Road 84
Overlook 17 Ocean View Highway 74
Peck Cottage {Red House, Aborigines} 33 Bay Street 9
Pine Beach {Intermere} 1 Ocean View Highway 48
Pink House, The {Sprayberry House}
 33 Ocean View Highway 121
Point, The {The Manor House} 8 Lighthouse Road 132
Pomme de Mer {Potato Patch} 7 Niantic Avenue 44
Pomptookit 1 Pawcatuck Avenue 14
Red Top 27 Westerly Road 151
Ridge End 12 Yosemite Valley Road 128
Ridgecrest {The Arches} 9 Ridge Road 110
River House {Potter Cove} 19 Breen Road 155
Road's End {Wendell Cottage} 15 Everett Avenue 41
Rock Ridge 7 Everett Avenue 37
Rock Rose {Green Shutters} 8 Ocean View Highway 71
Rockpile {House-on-the-Hill, Spencecliffe} 9 Westerly Road 54
Samoset 11 Water's Edge Road 5
Sandcastle {Rim Rock, Cardome} 8 Manatuck Avenue 76
Schoolhouse, The 20 Westerly Road 154

Sea Change {*Windemere*} 7 Browning Road 125
Sea Crest 7 Ninigret Avenue 60
Sea Down {*Sea View*} 8 Chapel Lane 146
Sea Echo {*The Page Cottage*} 6 Neowam Avenue 24
Sea Shell 11 Everett Avenue 39
Sea Sounds {*Wintermere*} 3 Kidd's Way 49
Seaswept {*Ocean Mound*} 9 Lighthouse Road 131
Shadybrook {*Thalassa*} 4 Ocean View Highway 70
Shoreby 13 Wapan Road 89
Shortlands 12 Arraquat Road 83
Snug Harbor 15 Breen Road 157
Snuggery, The {*Cragsmoor*} 19 Westerly Road 153
Stella Maris {*Log Cabin, Windswept, Longshore II*}
11 Ocean View Highway 73
Still Waters {*Dune Hame, Fin-Lea*} 39 Foster Cove Road 79
Stone Hen {*Intercrest*} 20 Plimpton Road 148
Stoneleigh 6 Wapan Road 87
Stonethrow {*York House, Ivy Cottage*}
239 Watch Hill Road 105
Stony Path 6 Everett Avenue 38
Stonyhurst 9 Wauwinnet Avenue 34
Sunnandene 6 Bluff Avenue 144
Sunny Hill {*Ward House*} 50 Ocean View Highway 127
Sunnyledge Cottage 11 Ridge Road 111
Sunnymede 5 Ninigret Avenue 59
Sunnymere {*The Studio, Spite House*} 6 Niantic Avenue 46
Sunnyridge Valley Path 67
Sunnyside 12 Sunset Avenue 16
Sunset Hill 5 Aquidneck Avenue 21
Sunshine Cottage 235 Watch Hill Road 104
Surfside 11 Ninigret Avenue 62
Taurento 4 Lighthouse Road 138
Tepee {*Montrose*} 8 Westerly Road 53
Timbers, The 19–23 Ocean View Highway 119
To Windward 10 Overlook Drive 114
Toad Hill {*Quail Run*} 20 Foster Cove Road 86
Treasure Hill 2 Kidd's Way 72
Tredegar {*Russula*} 29 Westerly Road 150
Trespaso 3 Lighthouse Road 133
Watersedge 17 Foster Cove Road 92
Waveland {*Waystones*} 23 Foster Cove Road 91
Wayne Cottage 12 Ninigret Avenue 68
Wendover {*Araconda*} 21 East Hills Road 158
West Cottage {*Lyon No. 2*} 14 Water's Edge Road 8
Westmoreland 11 Arraquat Road 82
Westwater 35 Foster Cove Road 80
Wetumanetu 2 Neowam Avenue 26
Wickiup, The 12 Westerly Road 51
Wigwam {*Rosemont, Redlac*} 10 Westerly Road 52
Wildacre 10 Wapan Road 88
Wildmoor 14 Massachaug Road 117
Windansea 20 Browning Road 124
Windridge 6 Overlook Drive 113
Windvale 2 Overlook Drive 112
Winter Watch {*Sunnycroft*} 12 Nepun Road 97
York House, The {*Wildwood*} 8 Bay Street 30

APPENDIX B

Leadership of Watch Hill Institutions

WATCH HILL CHAPEL SOCIETY

Presidents

Governor Julius Catlin 1876–1888
Dr. Ebenezer K. Hunt 1888–1889
James L. Howard 1889–1906
William C. Hastings 1906–1916
John O. H. Pitney 1916–1926
Walter E. Hope 1926–1932
John M. Goetchius 1932–1934
Frank Hibbard 1934–1936
Truman H. Newberry 1936–1939
A. Clifford Shinkle 1939–1944
Nelson E. Perin 1944–1965
George G. Snowden, Jr., *President-elect* 1964
Claude Douthit, Jr. 1965–1969
Charles H. Baird 1969–1980
Claiborn M. Carr, Jr. 1980–1981
Paul D. Myers 1981–1984
Charles S. Whitman, Jr. 1984–1989
William T. Vogt 1989–1992
Henry Saglio 1992–1994
Chaplin B. Barnes 1994–1999
Edith B. Eglin 1999–

THE WATCH HILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY AND IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

Presidents

William P. Anderson 1889–1895
Judge Asa W. Tenney 1896–1899
Mrs. Samuel D. McConnell 1900–1902
Miss Mary Catlin Phelps 1903–1904
Mrs. Park Painter 1905–1906
Mrs. Nelson Perin 1907–1908
Mrs. Park Painter 1909–1914
Mrs. Nelson Perin 1915–1916
Mrs. Annie B. McConnell 1917
Mrs. Davis C. Anderson 1918–1928
Mrs. Means Spencer 1929–1939
Mrs. Burrows Sloan 1940–1942
Mrs. Means Spencer 1943–1944
Mrs. John F. Russell, Jr. 1945–1948
Mrs. Douglas J. Crawford 1949
Mrs. Gregory N. Camp 1950–1951
Mrs. George W. Connell 1952–1953
Mrs. Ray B. Westerfield 1954
Mrs. Frank E. Rutan 1955–1958
Mrs. Frank G. Ahern 1959–1960
Mrs. Ralph J. Burnard 1961–1962

Mrs. Philip B. Eaton 1963–1964
 Mrs. Charles S. Whitman, Jr. 1965–1967
 Mrs. George L. Wrenn II 1968–1970
 Mrs. H. Bradford Westerfield 1971
 Mrs. Robert E. Knisley 1972–1973
 Mrs. Alan J. Hruska 1974–1975
 Mrs. John E. Farrand 1976–1977
 Mrs. Michael A. Lemp 1978–1980
 Mrs. John B. Daukas 1981–1982
 Mrs. Gerald J. Johnson 1983–1984
 Mrs. Frank T. Crawford 1985–1986
 Mrs. George C. Moore 1987–1988
 Mrs. Charles S. Whitman, Jr. 1988–1990
 Mrs. William F. Bennett 1990–1991
 Ms. Marian C. Hvolbeck 1991–1993
 Mrs. Edgar Burkhardt 1993–1995
 Mrs. John L. MacDonald 1995–1997
 Mrs. Robert E. Wilkes 1997–1999
 Mrs. David C. Johnson 1999–2001
 Mrs. James R. Pierce 2001–2003
 Mrs. Donald R. Kelly 2003–

THE MISQUAMICUT CLUB

Presidents

William P. Anderson 1895–1897
 Sherman W. Knevals 1898–1905
 Truman H. Newberry 1906–1907
 Dudley Phelps 1908–1911
 Harold A. Howard 1912–1913
 George A. Driggs 1914–1915
 James M. Pendleton 1916–1918
 Walter E. Hope 1919–1922
 Thomas D. Thacher 1923–1924
 Frank Hibbard 1925–1926
 Elton Parks 1927–1928
 A. Clifford Shinkle 1929–1931

J. Frederick Eagle 1932–1933
 Hunter S. Marston 1934–1937
 Nelson E. Perin 1938–1945
 Walter E. Hope 1945–1946
 Phillips R. Turnbull 1946–1948
 George G. Snowden, Jr. 1948–1949
 Hunter S. Marston 1949–1951
 A. Webster Dougherty 1951–1953
 James M. Snowden 1953–1956
 Thomas G. Ahern 1956–1957
 George V. Smith 1957–1960
 A. Britton Browne 1960–1962
 William T. Vogt 1962–1964
 Charles B. White 1964–1968
 Paul D. Myers 1968–1971
 George Y. Wheeler II 1971–1974
 Paul D. Myers 1974–1976
 George V. Smith 1976–1978
 Ralph U. Bercovici 1978–1981
 Frederick R. Loney, Jr. 1981–1985
 William T. Vogt 1985–1987
 Anthony J. A. Bryan 1987–1991
 L. Patton Kline 1991–1994
 William T. Vogt 1994–1998
 Thomas D. O'Connor 1998–2002
 William J. Miller, Jr. 2002–

WATCH HILL FIRE DISTRICT

Moderators

Frank Larkin 1901–1911
 Arthur Lowes Dickinson 1912
 Samuel H. Davis 1913–1919
 John W. Sweeney 1920–1924
 Henry L. Burdick 1925–1933
 Edmund LeRoy Dow 1934–1938
 Clarence R. Bitting 1939–1940

Edmund LeRoy Dow 1941-1945
 Robert M. Nelson 1946-1948
 A. Webster Dougherty 1949-1952
 Jabish Holmes 1953-1954
 Paul J. Moore 1955-1959
 Charles S. Whitman, Jr. 1960-1968
 Albert J. Parreño 1969-1972
 James G. Reardon 1972-1984
 Robert J. Brockmann 1985-1995
 Frederick B. Whittemore 1996-

WATCH HILL FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chiefs

William E. Chapman 1902-1905
 Frederick O. Lanphear 1905-1908
 Stephen W. Collins 1908-1913
 Walter H. Nash 1913-1925
 George W. Hoxie 1925-1945
 Edwin C. Barber 1945-1969
 Charles E. Barber 1969-1978
 Duncan L. Cushing 1978-1985
 Carl A. Greene 1985-1998
 Vincent G. Gaccione 1998-2004
 Scott J. Harold 2004-

WATCH HILL YACHT CLUB

Commodores

William J. Battey 1913-1920
 John O. H. Pitney 1914-1915
 William T. Howard 1916-1917
 Ridley Watts 1918
 John Watts 1921-1922
 George L. Babcock 1925-1927
 Eben Knowlton 1928-1929

Thomas Denny 1930
 Harvey D. Cowee 1931-1932
 Daniel F. Larkin 1933-1936
 Raynham Townshend 1937-1938
 Geoffrey L. Moore 1939
 Daniel F. Larkin, Jr. 1940-1941
 Nelson W. Pickering 1942-1946
 Gregory N. Camp 1943-1945
 Lawrence M. Noble 1943
 James G. Graham 1944
 Wilder Guttererson 1947
 Hubbard Phelps 1948-1949
 Arthur M. Cottrell, Jr. 1950-1952
 Frank Crawford 1953-1954
 Peter G. Ogilby 1955-1956
 Frank E. Rutan, Jr. 1957-1958
 John F. Sullivan 1959-1960
 Courtland R. Chapman 1961-1962
 Robert A. Green 1963-1964
 Avar E. Fuller 1965-1966
 Rev. Alexander Ogilby 1967-1968
 Charles N. DeRose 1969-1970
 Herbert W. Rathbun, Jr. 1971-1972
 Robert A. Green, Jr. 1973-1974
 Richard C. Holliday 1975-1976
 Hubbard Phelps 1977-1978
 William B. Thornton 1979-1980
 John M. Regan, Jr. 1981-1982
 Mrs. Rita Y. Ahearn 1983-1984
 John R. Payne, Jr. 1985-1986
 Warren F. Woodworth 1987-1988
 John B. Daukas 1989-1990
 Stuart W. Weier 1991-1992
 Peter D. Griggs 1993-1994
 Fred A. Allardyce 1995-1996
 Judith E. Lentz 1997-1998

Edwin G. Hebb, Jr. 1999–2000
Wayne M. Boylan 2001–2002
Lawrence E. Keefe, Jr. 2003–2004
Ernest Chorneyi, Jr. 2004–

EAST BEACH ASSOCIATION

Presidents

John S. Burke, Jr. 1970–1979
Joan Ahern Lemp 1980–1986
O. Gilbert Brim 1987–1989
Philip Wiggengauser, Jr. 1990–2005
George W. Markham 2005–

WATCH HILL LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Presidents

F. Charles Swerz 1986–1990
Susanne S. Knisley 1990–1993
Judith E. Lentz 1993–1994
Richard H. Sayre 1994–2000
Michael W. Dush 2000–

WATCH HILL SECURITY TRUST

President

Frederick B. Whittemore 1998–

THE WATCH HILL CONSERVANCY

President

Frederick B. Whittemore 1999–

NOTES

1. Watch Hill appears on maps and charts, as follows: NOAA Chart No. 13214, United States-East Coast, Fishers Island Sound, Rhode Island-Connecticut-New York, corrected to April 14, 2001, Published at Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ocean Service; and Watch Hill Quadrangle, Rhode Island-Connecticut, 7.5 Minutes (Topographic), Watch Hill, Rhode Island-Connecticut #41071-C7-TF-024, rev. 1953, Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey.
2. Peter C. Patton and James M. Kent, *A Moveable Shore: The Fate of the Connecticut Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 25-31, 34-38.
3. Charles F. Hickox, "The Geology of the Dr. John Champlin Glacier Preserve" (unpublished paper prepared for the Westerly Land Trust, 2002). See also Charles F. Hickox and Charles F. Hickox III, "Deep Freeze," *Tidings* (June 1989).
4. George Y. Wheeler II, *The Misquamicut Club: 100 Years, 1895-1995* (West Warwick, R.I.: KS Designs, 1995). Wheeler identifies the four greens as Two, Seven, Eight, and Ten—"kettles which have been scoured out by rocky debris at the base of the retreating glacier 17,000 years ago and left filled with melt water" (18).
5. Betty Flanders Thomson, *The Changing Face of New England* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), 90.
6. Hickox.
7. A prominent physician in Westerly in the early twentieth century, Dr. Champlin was the owner of this remarkable property, which at his death passed to his Lathrop family heirs.

8. William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 32.
9. *Ibid.*, 49.
10. "Historical Perspective of the Narragansett Indian Tribe," online at www.Narragansett-tribe.org/history.htm.
11. Kathleen Joan Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England, 1500-1650* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 66.
12. *Native American Archaeology in Rhode Island* (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2002), 57.
13. Soso's name is recalled today in Soso Lane, the small road at Thompson's Corners that runs from Watch Hill Road, by the Westerly Yacht Club, to East Avenue.
14. *Drake's Indians of North America*, 11th ed., 131-48, referenced in *Seaside Topics*, August 10, 1945.
15. On Stanton see the Rev. Frederic Denison, *Westerly (Rhode Island) and Its Witnesses, for Two Hundred and Fifty Years, 1626-1876* (Providence: J. A. & R. A. Reid, 1878; reprint, Salem, Mass: Higginson Book Co., 1994), 23-24. See also an account of him written by a ninth-generation descendant, Stanton Saunders, "Thomas Stanton of Stonington," *Tidings*, September/October 1984. In Stonington, the 330-year-old Stanton homestead on Greenhaven Road, built in the 1670s, still in the hands of the original family, would become the Stanton-Davis Homestead Museum. Dates provided by John "Whit" Davis in conversation, April 6, 2005. The family has sold the development rights to 258 acres of the farm to the State of Connecticut. Thus, that property, directly in view of Watch Hill and Avondale, will remain forever open.

16. Bragdon, 28.
 17. Denison, 37.
 18. J. Franklin Jameson, ed., *Narratives of New Netherland, 1609–1664* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909; reprint, New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1937), 42. A footnote to the passage identifies the “East River” as the Pawcatuck River. *New World* or *Nieuwe Wereldt* was published in 1625, 1630, 1633, and 1640.
 19. Denison, 38.
 20. Ibid.
 21. Captain Nelson W. Pickering, “Notes on the Maritime History of the Pawcatuck Valley,” *Some Papers Delivered Before the Westerly Historical Society, During the Years 1940–1954* (Westerly: The Utter Company, 1957), 23.
 22. Ibid.
 23. Denison, 38.
 24. Albert P. Pendleton, “The Pawcatuck River,” *Some Papers Delivered Before the Westerly Historical Society of Westerly, Rhode Island, During the Years 1916–1927* (Westerly: The Steadman Press, Inc., 1927), 40.
- Different references in different sources refer to the “Watch Hill Landing” as both the Watch Hill Dock in the harbor and the Larkin Dock, the Block Island steamer dock off Watch Hill Point, in Fishers Island Sound. It is clear from Pendleton that Denison's reference, as his also, is to the Fishers Island Sound location and that the sand ridge through which the breach passed was Napatree Beach. It is tempting to imagine that the breach nearest to the Village opened up by the Hurricane of 1938 may be at the site of the ancient outlet.
25. Ibid.
 26. Denison, 45.
 27. Ibid., 44.
 28. It was only in 1928 that the Westerly shore community which lies between Watch Hill and Weekapaug changed its name from Pleasant View to Misquamicutt, later Misquamicut.
 29. Denison, 45.
 30. *Native American Archaeology in Rhode Island*, 27.
 31. Ibid.
 32. Denison, in his Roll of Representatives to the General Assembly, notes—for the five years, 1673–77—“Town business broken up by Philip's War” (154).
 33. “Some Indian prisoners of war were sold into slavery outside Rhode Island; some were forced into long terms of forced labor here.

Indian children were indentured until their thirties; Indian adults were sentenced to seven years of labor.” *Native American Archaeology in Rhode Island*, 29.

34. Ibid., 31.
35. *Seaside Topics*, August 10, 1945.
36. *Native American Archaeology in Rhode Island*, 39.
37. Quoted in Denison, 22.
38. Mary Agnes Best, *The Town that Saved a State: Westerly* (Westerly: The Utter Company, 1943), 191.
39. Denison, 53.
40. The painting did indeed descend in the Winslow family and in 1948 was given to RISD by a descendant, Robert Winslow, who recounted his family's tradition that Ninigret had saved the life of Edward Winslow, Jr. RISD curators note that there is no historical record of such an event. They believe that the painting dates from about 1700 and note that “the figure's adornment with wampum (headpiece, necklace, earring) his hairstyle, trading cloth mantle, and loin cloth all conform to what we know about Native Americans of this region in the contact era.” They find no support for connecting the image with Ninigret or Ninigret II. Letter from Ann S. Woolsey, Assistant Interim Director, The RISD Museum, February 17, 2005.
41. Reginald E. Peck, *Early Land Holder of Watch Hill*, paper first read at a meeting of the Westerly Historical Society, May 21, 1936 (privately printed, 1936).
42. Ibid., 8.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. A note about the date. The deed in the Stonington Land Records is dated February 25, 1688. When Peck refers to the date as February 25, 1689, he is reflecting the date according to the Gregorian calendar, adopted in Great Britain and the colonies in 1752. Dates from January 1 to March 25, before 1752, were according to the Julian calendar, hence in the prior year, since March 25 was the New Year under the Julian calendar.
46. Peck, 9. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines a “messuage” as a dwelling-house and its outbuildings, and a “feeding” as a grazing-ground or pasturage.
47. Note that J. R. Cole's *History of Washington and Kent Counties, Rhode Island* (1889; reprint, Salem, Mass.: Higginson Book Co., 1993), 269–70, provides the metes and bounds description of the tract in a form considerably easier to read and decipher than the copy of the deed in the Stonington Land Records.

48. Quoted in Best, 84.
49. Denison, 141.
50. Ibid., 58.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., 139.
54. The 1877 Larkin House brochure identifies Bear Hill as “the next [after the Watch Hill] and most prominent hill, which is larger than Watch Hill [and] is one-half mile to the north and is called Bear or Sunset Hill.” Local History Collection, Memorial and Library Association of Westerly. However, Denison’s references appear contradictory. He seems to relate the Watch Hill to Bear Hill (p. 118), but his reference (p. 139) to “the highest bluff *near* Watch Hill” (emphasis supplied), would tend to suggest Sunset Hill. Yet another source, a twentieth-century map of “The Pawcatuck River with Little Narragansett Bay” (J. E. Dodge, 1949), which includes many popular features, including steamers, and contains various historical notes, shows the Watch Hill as “Indian Lookout on the Hill (‘Bear Hill’) Two Six Pounds Here in Revolution.” Nevertheless, given the geographical specificity of the Larkin House description, the Sunset Hill identification would appear to have greater credibility.
55. Peck, 15, 17.
56. Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York*, ed. Barbara Miller Solomon with the assistance of Patricia M. King (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), 3: 20.
57. Robin Driscoll, “Watch Hill’s Nash Family,” *Tidings*, September/October 1986.
58. *Seaside Topics*, June 30, 1950.
59. Edward R. Champlin, “Watch Hill People in the Sixties,” unidentified newspaper article, annotated with the date March 3, 1921. Local History Collection, Memorial and Library Association of Westerly.
60. Ibid.
61. Information provided by John “Whit” Davis, the patriarch of the Stanton-Davis family, twelfth-generation descendant of Thomas Stanton, who came from England to America in 1635, in conversation, May 2004.
62. *Watch Hill Surf*, 1888, reported in Lido Mochetti, “In the Beginning...”, *Tidings*, August 1983.
63. Dudley Phelps, “Recollections of Early Days at Watch Hill,” *Seaside Topics*, September 4, 1942.
64. Peck, 19.
65. *The Westerly Sun*, June 25, 1936.
66. Unidentified article, purporting to reprint an article from the August 28, 1883, edition of the Springfield, Mass. *Republican*. Local History Collection, Memorial and Library Association of Westerly.
67. *Watch Hill Surf*, 1888, reported in Mochetti.
68. Wheeler, 16.
69. *Seaside Topics*, June 30, 1950.
70. *Seaside Topics*, July 7, 1950.
71. *Watch Hill Topics*, July 9, 1904.
72. Ibid.
73. *Seaside Topics*, September 4, 1942.
74. Ibid.
75. Andrew Lipman, “The Wild New England Shore: Reinventing Nature in Watch Hill, Rhode Island, 1830–1890,” *The Log of the Mystic Seaport* 54, no. 4 (Spring 2003), 77.
76. Larkin family tradition. Conversation with Briggs Larkin, October, 2004.
77. Keller, who was born in Ireland in 1842 and with his family emigrated to America in the early 1850s, lived much of his adult life in Hartford. He is particularly remembered for his Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch at Hartford’s Bushnell Park. But in a long career from 1863 to 1931, he is also known for numerous other structures he designed around the country—office buildings, churches, schools, hospitals, libraries, bridges, houses, and monuments. He designed more buildings for James L. Howard than for any other client. David F. Ransom wrote of Keller, “using a powerful Gothic idiom, [he] designed picturesque and simple buildings...With a literate style, with verve, and a use of honest materials, with a determination that form followed function, Keller avoided sham, pretense, and the siren call of the classical revival” (*George Keller, Architect* [Hartford: The Stowe-Day Foundation, 1978], 43–44). The book, incidentally, is dedicated to James Leland Howard.
78. Mariana H. Tallman, *Pleasant Places in Rhode Island, and How to Reach Them* (Providence: The Providence Journal Company, 1893), 28–29.
79. *Watch Hill Surf*, 1888, reported in Mochetti.
80. Gary Anderson, “The Watch Hill Merry-Go-Round,” *Tidings*, August 1995. In 1993, Anderson was engaged by the

Improvement Society to paint and resaddle the horses. He found himself undertaking a major restoration.

81. Tallman, 29.

82. *The Westerly Sun*, December 24, 1957.

83. Mrs. Harriet C. Moore, "The Story of the Watch Hill Merry-Go-Round," *Ocean Views*, June 13, 1980. A charming children's book based on the history and legend of the original Merry-Go-Round horse was published by the Watch Hill Memorial Library and Improvement Society, by arrangement with Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, in 1976. It is *The Runaway Flying Horse*, by Paul Jacques Bonzon, translated from the French by Susan Kotta and illustrated by William Pène Du Bois.

84. *Watch Hill, R.I.: A Description of Its Three Beaches, Its Climate, Scenery, Etc.* (Englewood, N.J.: Office of the Englewood Times, 1882; reprint, Watch Hill: The Book & Tackle Shop, 1994), 3, 7. This is the prospectus of Charles J. Everett, who sold his property to the Syndicate.

85. Cole, 267–69.

86. *Watch Hill, R.I.*, 3.

87. Unidentified newspaper clipping, inscribed "1883" and purporting to reprint an article from the Springfield *Republican*, with dateline, Watch Hill, August 28. Local History Collection, Memorial and Library Association of Westerly.

88. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines a "driftway" as a lane over which cattle or horses are driven to pasture or market.

89. Peck, 22–23. Along that road, located in the triangle between it and Avondale Road, just before the farmhouse of the Avondale Farm, is a granite monument that recalls the founding of Avondale as Lotteryville and the story behind the change in its name. It also identifies the farmhouse as the Great House of Captain Joseph Pendleton and the area as the original seaport of Westerly, noting that its old houses were home to whaling captains and sealers. A further detail noted is that it was "on these shores" that Captain George Potter's company "stood ready to repel the British in 1814." The Great House, dating from 1657, became the home of the Chapman family after a Chapman married a Pendleton daughter in the early nineteenth century.

The monument was erected by the Avondale Improvement Association in 1962. Lotteryville (Avondale today) was so named because in 1750 Captain James Pendleton, owner of lands on which most of the village stands, in order to recoup the loss of his Brigantine and its

cargo on a return trip from the West Indies, was permitted by the Rhode Island General Assembly to hold a lottery for the sale of some 126 house lots to the general public. By the end of the nineteenth century, lotteries, common in the previous century, had fallen into disrepute. Best reports that when the community petitioned the Federal Government for a post office in 1893, the government "insisted that the objectionable name must go" (188). The village submitted the names Ninigret, Mastuxet, and Avondale.

90. Derryl G. Lang, "The Development of a Summer Resort: Watch Hill, Rhode Island" (Master's thesis, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University, 1988), 6.

91. Everett Barns, "History of Pawcatuck River Steamboats," a paper submitted to the Westerly Historical Society and printed by the Utter Company, Westerly, 1932. Records and Papers—Westerly Historical Society, 1913–1963.

92. Unidentified newspaper clipping, dated Thursday, August 13, 1903. Local History Collection, Memorial and Library Association of Westerly.

93. Carol W. Kimball, "The Block Island," *Tidings*, July 1997.

94. Best, 99.

95. Gregory C. Benoit, "Clang Clang, Clang, Went the Trolley," *Tidings*, June 1984.

96. *Seaside Topics*, July 22, 1905.

97. *Seaside Topics*, July 8, 1911.

98. *Seaside Topics*, August 15, 1969.

99. *Providence Evening Bulletin*, June 20, 1956.

100. Peck, 26.

101. Lipman, 75.

102. *Seaside Topics*, August 16, 1974.

103. Lang, 47–48.

104. Tallman, 28.

105. *National Register of Historic Places: Watch Hill, Rhode Island, Watch Hill Historic District*, prepared by Rupert O. Jones, Jr. (Watch Hill: The Watch Hill Preservation Society, 1988), 65.

106. Peck, 21.

107. *National Register*, 42.

108. Peck, 23ff; *Seaside Topics*, five-part series, August 8 – September 5, 1969.

109. *Watch Hill Topics*, July 9, 1904.

110. Peck dates the cottage 1870, but Howard did not acquire the land until 1872. Lang and the *National Register* support the 1879 date, which is confirmed by an unidentified 1879 newspaper clipping, which reports that “The cottage of Mr. James L. Howard is nearing completion.” A covenant in the 1872 deed by which Howard acquired the property prohibited it from being used for the erection of a hotel. Deed of William H. Chapman, Harvey Campbell, Jr., and Daniel F. Larkin to James L. Howard, Westerly Land Evidence Records, Book 24, page 14, April 30, 1872. The clipping is in the files of the Local History Collection of the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly. For information on Howard, see Lang, 41.

111. The Syndicate Prospectus, published in *Historical Souvenir of Watch Hill, R.I.: Watch Hill, Rhode Island and Its Attractions as a Summer Resort* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., Printers, 1887; reprint, Watch Hill, The Book & Tackle Shop, 1977), 20–21. The Syndicate Prospectus is also included in a *Tidings* reprint, August 1996. The text was taken in large measure from the prospectus published in 1882 by Charles J. Everett: “Cottage Sites at Watch Hill” (see n. 84 above).

112. Deed of James L. Howard to Elizabeth W. Alsop, August 10, 1878, Westerly Land Evidence Records, Book 23, p. 281; and deed of James L. Howard to Dr. H. A. Grant, May 19, 1875, Westerly Land Evidence Records, Book 13, 158 (or 178). See Westerly Plat Book 3, p. 4.

113. *Seaside Topics*, August 22, 1969.

114. *Seaside Topics*, August 29, 1969.

115. *Watch Hill Topics*, July 9, 1904. See also David Panciera, “Baseball, Our First 40 Years,” *Tidings*, June 1985.

116. *Seaside Topics*, August 26, 1905.

117. The corncrib was located on Westerly Road near the corner of Ningret Avenue, on the property that was later the site of *Marbella*.

118. *Seaside Topics*, August 1, 1969. For development of the golf course, see also Wheeler II, *The Misquamicut Club* (see n. 4 above).

119. The *National Register* identifies the architect of the new clubhouse as the New York firm of Atterbury & Tompkins, the designer later of *Sunset Hill*.

120. *Seaside Topics*, July 7, 1950.

121. Wheeler, 16.

122. *Summer Social Directory* (Watch Hill: Seaside Topics, 1937).

123. *Westerly Sun*, September 7, 1920.

124. *Westerly Sun*, October 19, 1916.

125. *Watch Hill Fire Department, Celebrating One Hundred Years of Dedicated Service to the Watch Hill Residents and Community*, 2002.

126. *Seaside Topics*, May 19, 1917.

127. *Seaside Topics*, August 1, 1917.

128. *Seaside Topics*, June 24, 1925.

129. *Seaside Topics*, June 26, 1930.

130. *Seaside Topics*, June 26, 1930.

131. Reminiscences of Frances Curtis Hardie, notes for “Mini-Memoir,” 2004.

132. William E. Fiske, *A Curious Childhood* (Madison, N.J.: Madison Printing Company, 1975), 68. Fiske was born in 1916 and writes of summers spent at the Misquamicut Inn with his grandmother, Mrs. W. Palmer Letchford of Morristown, New Jersey, 1920–23.

133. *Ibid.*, 70–71.

134. *Seaside Topics*, August 27, 1931.

135. *Watch Hill in the Hurricane of September 21st, 1938* (Watch Hill: Seaside Topics, November 1938), 21.

136. *Seaside Topics*, July 28, 1939.

137. *Seaside Topics*, June 16, 1939.

138. In 1944, following the total loss, in another hurricane, of one of the rebuilt bathing pavilions, Daniel F. Larkin, Jr., erected a sign similar to that erected by his father six years earlier. Both father and son ended their World War II service as Navy Commanders.

139. *Seaside Topics*, June 16, 1939.

140. *Seaside Topics*, July 7, 1939.

141. *Seaside Topics*, August 31, 1945.

142. Reminiscences of Jane Hoxie Maxson, September 14, 2004.

143. Wheeler, 57.

144. *Ibid.*

145. *Seaside Topics*, September 11, 1942, May 19, 1917.

146. *National Register* (see n. 105 above).

147. Plat of Cottage Sites, “Everett Farm,” Watch Hill, Washington County, R.I., Made by Jacob S. Burnet, Lyneas Norton, Walter St. Jno. Jones, M. D. Burke, Surveyor, Cincinnati, August 1, 1886, Westerly Plat Book 2, p. 21, filed September 17, 1886.

Amended Plat of Part of Everett Farm, Watch Hill, Rhode Island, Made by Messrs Burnet, Norton, and Jones, June 1887, Scale 100 feet per inch, Westerly Plat Book 2, p. 28, filed August 1, 1887.

Map of Cottage Sites, Everett Farm, Watch Hill, Rhode Island, Made by Jacob S. Burnet, Lyneas Norton, Walter St. John Jones, 1886, From survey by J. H. Serviss, C. E., 1881, Westerly Plat Book 2, pp. 86, 87, filed December 21, 1887.

Supplementary Map of Cottage Sites on a part of the Everett Farm, Watch Hill, Rhode Island. Made by the Order of Lyneas Norton and Walter St. John Jones, January 1891, Scale 100 feet to the inch, Westerly Plat Book 2, pp. 90, 91. A notation on the plat reads, "This map is to show the Sub Divisions of Lot 108 and several ponds, No 1-2-3-4 & 5 in the final sale of the Syndicate Land at Watch Hill, R.I."

Map of Property of Charles J. Everett, at Watch Hill, R.I., No. 1, 1882, Scale 100 feet per inch, Westerly Plat Book 7, pp. 36, 37, filed January 27, 1883.

148. Map Showing Building Sites & Roads on the Watch Hill Farm, Watch Hill, R.I., Surveyed by John L. Kenyon, Map and Roads by Constable Bros., Architects & Engineers, N.Y., Redrawn by John L. Kenyon, Wyoming, R.I., scale 100 ft. = 1 in., Westerly Plat Book 2, pp. 94, 95, filed February 4, 1899.

149. Plat of the Uplands, The Estate of RW Burnet, Watch Hill, R.I., Aug. 1, 1901, John Kenyon Surveyor, scale 100 feet to an inch, Westerly Plat Book 3, p. 5, filed November 1, 1932.

150. Although the *National Register* gives *Blythbourne's* date as about 1885, the formation of the Syndicate in 1886 provides a more likely terminus post quem. Family history supplies the date of 1888.

151. Journals of Ida Selleck Srively, Year 1889, reproduced by Robert C. Cosbey (grandson), Regina, Saskatchewan, April 1995. Provided, kindness of Margaret I. Cosbey (great-granddaughter) and Christopher B. and Cynthia B. Galvin.

152. The others were the Vogt cottage *Trespaso*, the Gutterson cottage *Potter Cove*, and the Misquamicut Club.

153. W.W. Chaplin, *The Fifty-Two Days* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1944).

154. Ibid, 133-35.

155. *Memos of John C. Dean* (Indianapolis, privately printed, n.d.).

156. Dwight C. Brown, Jr., "C. Maxson & Co, Builders," *Tidings* (July 1995), 16-21.

157. *Seaside Topics*, June 28, 1913.

158. The family of Cyril V. Moore includes his three brothers, Geoffrey L. Moore, Harold Q. Moore, and Thomas F. Moore, and their families. The brothers were sons of George C. Moore of the George C. Moore Company and his wife, Elizabeth F. Moore. All were Watch Hill cottagers.

159. Notes provided by Hatsy Moore, October 2004.

160. Helen Lathrop, "The Most Famous Telephone Town in the Country," *Tidings* (April/May 1989).

161. See www.cincinnati.ohiohistory.org.

162. Helen Joy Lee, *Traveling With Gran'ma, Camping Around the World* (Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1952). In addition to her account of the 1938 hurricane in the special edition of *Seaside Topics*, her story is also told in a book, *Watch Hill Hurricane, September 21, 1938*, written with her daughters, Marian L. Lee and Eunice Lee (Watch Hill: The Book & Tackle Shop, 1996).

163. The *National Register* reports that the cottage was built about 1890 for John H. Clark, an Ohio attorney who became first a judge of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio and then an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court (1916-22). That information, however, would appear incorrect, as there is no evidence that Justice Clark ever owned property in Westerly. Josiah H. Clarke of Worcester, whose wife, Frances A. Clarke, actually owned the property, had of course the same initials as the Supreme Court Justice.

164. It should not be necessary to note that the Society of the Cincinnati is unrelated, except by name, to the Ohio city. Both take their name from Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, a farmer and military leader of the fifth-century B.C. Rome. Twice called from his farm to lead Roman military forces, he saved Rome from the enemy, each time refusing reward and returning to his farm. George Washington was considered the Cincinnatus of the American Revolution. At the end of that struggle, in 1783, his Continental officers formed the society in his honor and in honor of their achievement. Members of the society, of whom Larz Anderson was one, are descendants of those founding officers, usually the eldest son according to the rule of primogeniture. Anderson House, at 2118 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., is a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its museum and library are open to the public.

165. The Wendell name is puzzling. The cottage was built for Collins, and there is no Wendell in the Westerly Land Evidence Records. But the reference is in the *National Register*, and an early cottage directory confirms the cottage name.

166. Vera M. Robinson, in an unpublished paper, "Watch Hill, Rhode Island: A Unique Maritime Resort," December 18, 2001, provides the probate information that supports this title information, which varies from that provided by the *National Register*. Ms. Robinson's paper is in the Local History Collection of the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly.

167. Stephen Birmingham, "Victoriana Under Glass, Watch Hill — an American Anachronism," *Travel & Leisure* 7, no. 4 (April 1977).

168. John B. Severance, in his biography *Einstein: Visionary Scientist* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Clarion Books, 1999), has clarified Einstein's time at Watch Hill. He was there only one summer, that of 1934, not, as is popularly believed, for more.

169. Brigid Rooney Smith, *Watch Hill by River and by Sea* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 1999), 33.

170. Severance, 106–107.

171. Briggs Larkin, daughter of Daniel F. Larkin, Jr., in conversation, September 2004.

172. Harvey C. Perry II, in conversation, 2004.

173. Judith M. Jiskoot Elliot, second wife and widow of Lodewyk Jiskoot, notes provided, 2004.

174. It is a feature of the Everett subdivision that the pond (Mickill Pond) below the properties on the southerly side of Ninigret Avenue was divided into individual pond lots, which ran from their southerly boundaries to Niantic Avenue.

175. *Watch Hill Surf* reported that ground had been broken for the cottage in 1888. Reported in Mochetti (see n. 62 above).

176. *Seaside Topics* in obituary, June 18, 1931.

177. David Panciera, "Emily Kimborough," *Tidings* (August 1985).

178. Emily Kimborough and Cornelia Otis Skinner coauthored *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, a humorous account, published in 1942, of a shared European vacation. Both, together with Mrs. Jacobs, were regular fixtures of the Watch Hill summer scene in the mid-twentieth century.

179. *Seaside Topics*, September 4, 1970. In 1939, Anderson planned to give a concert at Constitution Hall in Washington. The hall, however, was owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), which refused to let her perform, because she was African American. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Mrs. Roosevelt were outraged and arranged for the concert to be held at the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday. Anderson performed before an audience of 75,000.

180. The *National Register* lists the date as 1886. However, *Watch Hill Surf*, in the summer of 1888, reports that Dr. Davis C. Anderson had "gone to New York to decide upon his plans of his cottage, which he intends shortly to erect on Ninigret Avenue" (reported in Mochetti).

181. *Seaside Topics*, August 8, 1969.

182. Ensign James Gordon Woodruff, USNR, died in the Battle of Midway, June 6, 1942.

183. In the case of *Ridgecrest* and *Sunnyledge Cottage*, the road runs to separate lots at its easterly end. As a paper road (a road shown on a plat, but not constructed), Valley Path also runs to Ridge Road, and another paper road, Orchard Lane, runs from it to Westerly Road.

184. Fiske, 45–46.

185. *Seaside Topics*, June 28, 1913.

186. The *National Register* states that the cottage was built about 1915. However, Westerly land evidence and tax records show that there was no building on the property until 1929, when the Sturhahn family began to build the cottage; it was apparently completed in 1930.

187. Helen McLanahan Husted, "I'll Never Forget..." *Tidings* (September/October 1993).

188. Louise McLanahan Noble, notes to her family, February 2, 1982.

189. The curious coincidence of two Watch Hill families, the Larkins and the McLanahans, being descended from two eighteenth-century Indian agents with similar surnames is just that. There appears to be no relationship between James Deane, the ancestor of the McLanahans, and John Dean, the ancestor of the Larkins.

190. Helen Spencer Day McLanahan and Helen McLanahan Husted, *James Deane*, Compiled from Historical Records and from Stories Related by Electra Deane Spencer, Daughter of James Deane (Privately printed, n.d.).

191. Samuel Buckingham, whose house it was that was condemned, was the great-grandson of the Rev. Thomas Buckingham, who settled in Saybrook in 1670 and was one of the ten founders and original trustees of the Collegiate School, founded in 1701 and later renamed Yale College. Thomas's son Daniel was a justice of the peace and custodian of the Yale library. When Yale moved to New Haven in 1718, the books were left behind and later secured from Saybrook only by order of the legislature of the Colony, and in the face of violent local opposition. The event was known as the "Battle of the Books."

Daniel's son, Daniel, Jr., built a house in the Ferry District of Saybrook near his father's house. His son Samuel, who was born in 1740 and served in the French and Indian War, built his own house in the same area in 1768. It is thought that the 1695 kitchen ell was attached to the house at the time the house was built. The house and the kitchen ell, displayed at Mystic, are known as the Buckingham-Hall

House, the second name coming from William Hall, Jr., who bought the house from the Buckinghams in 1833. It is this house from which the second, nineteenth-century rear ell came to Watch Hill.

While no record has been discovered documenting the arrival of the Buckingham ell at Watch Hill, the story comes from a childhood recollection of the author, who knew Edward P. Schell and heard the story from him. The author also remembers seeing the small structure on the empty lot on which *Toad Hill* was later built. It was supported by documents in the possession of the Old Saybrook Historical Society and of the Mystic Seaport, as well as by ones provided by the Connecticut Department of Transportation. These substantiate the condemnation process and the transport of the main house and its 1695 ell, by barge, from Saybrook to Mystic. Photographs show the house as it stood at Old Saybrook with the additional nineteenth-century ell. Further details of the history of the Buckingham house are found in William N. Peterson and Peter M. Coope, *Historic Buildings at Mystic Seaport Museum* (Mystic: Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc., 1985).

192. *Seaside Topics*, June 12, 1930.

193. See n. 132 above.

194. Lang, 49.

195. Obituary, *The Day* (New London), January 2, 1938.

196. *Bayberry Ridge* became the home of the Thomas D. O'Connor family in 1973. Mrs. O'Connor, who was Nancy Breck O'Connor, had grown up at *Ninigret* on Ninigret Avenue. O'Connor was president and chairman of the family-owned Mohawk Paper Mills, Inc., Cohoes, New York. He also served as president of the Misquamicut Club and was a founder of the Watch Hill Conservancy.

197. Dr. Billings was a leading physician in Chicago, the first chairman of the University of Chicago's Department of Medicine, a founder of its Medical School and Billings Hospital, and a president of the American Medical Association. He received the Legion of Honor and the Croix de Guerre for his service in World War I and was the subject of a biography, *Frank Billings: The Architect of Medical Education, An Apostle of Excellence in Medical Practice*, by Edwin F. Hirsh, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1966 thirty-four years after his death.

198. Curiously, the name "Belvedere" appears on the key to the Frank W. Coy 1925 map of cottages, attached to the Powers Mansion. But summer social directories of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s show the Sanborn cottage as *Belvedere* and the Powers Mansion as *Windover*.

199. *Seaside Topics*, August 16, 1974.

200. *Seaside Topics*, July 2, 1931.

201. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., *The Salad Days* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1988), 17.

202. Ibid.

203. Mr. Freeman's clubs kept the youth of Watch Hill "busy, fit, and out of trouble, morning and afternoon" with a program as advertised in *Seaside Topics* of "swimming, boxing, calisthenics, beach games, arts and crafts, baseball, rowing, fishing and educational trips with recreational jaunts to nearby points of interest."

204. The movie was based on a story by Anita Loos and directed by Lloyd Ingraham.

205. Governors of the Misquamicut Club serve in a capacity identical to that of trustees or directors of other corporations.

206. Husted, "I'll Never Forget..."

207. Georgia is, of course, not the U.S. state, but the Black Sea nation, which in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a part of the Russian Empire, later a Republic of the Soviet Union, and after the demise of the U.S.S.R., once again an independent nation.

208. David Chavchavadze, *Crowns and Trenchcoats (A Russian Prince in the CIA)* (New York: Atlantic International Publications, 1990).

209. Interestingly, the Burke and O'Connell families are connected by ties of relationship in addition to the marriage of Jane Burke and Ralph O'Connell, Dr. O'Connell and Mrs. O'Connell's sister-in-law, Mrs. John S. Burke, Jr. (Stan O'Connell Burke), having been cousins.

210. *Seaside Topics*, May 19, 1917.

211. Wendy Moonan, "From a Life of Luxury, Some Favorite Things," *The New York Times*, March 11, 2005.

212. Robert Walker, "A Tough Act to Follow," *The New York Times*, April 11, 1971.

213. In the late 1980s, in the wake of the collapse of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, the Lobkowicz estates in Czechoslovakia were returned to another American branch of the family.

214. Deed of United States Coast Guard Telephone Lines Service to Olga Hegeler Lihme and Anita Lihme Lobkowicz, May 10, 1952, Land Evidence Records of the Town of Westerly, Book 70, p. 552.

215. The Provincial of the Order commented, "For over thirty years, Watch Hill was 'home' to many of our sisters during the

summers, and many happy memories remain with us of people and places.” Letter to the author from Sister Sally M. Hodgdon, Provincial, Sisters of St. Joseph, September 13, 2004.

216. Gresham, a lawyer, was appointed United States District Judge for Indiana by President Ulysses S. Grant in 1869. In 1883, he became Postmaster-General and in 1884 Secretary of the Treasury, both in the administration of President Chester Arthur. In the same year, he was appointed United States Judge for the Seventh Judicial Circuit. He was a candidate for the Republican nomination in both the 1884 and 1888 presidential campaigns. In 1893, he was appointed Secretary of State in the administration of President Grover Cleveland and served in that capacity until his death in 1895. President Cleveland, incidentally, was a visitor to Watch Hill, at the time he was Mayor of Buffalo, staying at the Watch Hill House.

217. The *National Register* originally listed the house as having been built in 1900, but a later revision has corrected this information. The 1932 Seaside Topics *Summer Social Directory* refers to the house as “new” that season.

218. Rev. John W. Lynch, S.M., “‘Watch Hill’—God’s Little Acre,” undated and unpublished reminiscences.

219. Peck, 18–21.

220. Reminiscences of Briggs Larkin, granddaughter, October 2004.

221. *Gigantic* was ultimately named *Britannic* after the *Titanic* disaster.

222. Peter Arrell Brown Widener, Philadelphia industrialist, art collector, and philanthropist, was the father of George D. Widener and the grandfather of Harry Elkins Widener, both of whom went down with the *Titanic*. Mrs. George D. Widener, who was also on the ship, but was saved, gave the Widener Library to Harvard in memory of her son Harry.

223. Lloyd C. Griscom, *Diplomatically Speaking* (New York, 1940), quoted in William Henry Flayhart III, *The American Line* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 109.

224. *Seaside Topics*, September 5, 1914.

225. Deed of Courtland P. Chapman to Clement A. Griscom, July 2, 1906, Westerly Land Evidence Records, Book 38, 6.

226. Beaux, a Philadelphian who had studied at the Academy and in Paris, was pronounced “the greatest woman painter of modern times” by noted artist William Merritt Chase. A retrospective exhi-

bition of her work, *Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture*, was held at the National Portrait Gallery in 1995–96.

227. Fictitious letter of Elizabeth Sutcliffe (Mrs. James), July 11, 1974.

228. Just below the hill from *Trespasso* and *Moana*, reaching out into Fishers Island Sound, were located in succession two Block Island steamship docks, the first built in 1881 and the second in 1905, both of which serviced steamers running on the outside route from New London to Block Island. The docks were located roughly one hundred feet westerly of *Ocean Mound* or *Seaswept*. They appeared as the “Larkin Pier” in Larkin House promotional material. Since they were located not on the Larkin House/Griscom tract, but on land owned by Frank Larkin, the second dock continued to be used after the Griscoms had acquired the Larkin House property in 1906. All service came to an end after the second dock was irreparably damaged by heavy sea ice in the severe winter of 1917–18 and some years later removed.

229. *Seaside Topics*, June 28, 1913.

230. Family tradition, shared in correspondence of James M. Snowden, Jr., October 2004.

231. Craig Unger, *Blue Blood* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1988), 59.

232. “A New Twist for Society,” *Life* (August 20, 1956).

233. *The Sun*, April 5, 1974.

234. *Seaside Topics*, August 26, 1905, refers to the construction, which was to begin in the fall.

235. Jim Reis “Bradford Shinkle Made Own Name in Business,” *The Kentucky Post*, March 4, 2002 (www.kypost.com/2002).

236. Letter to the author from Joan A. Atterbury and Henry C. Atterbury, September 5, 2004.

237. See Henry C. Rowe plat, November 15, 1934, Westerly Land Evidence Records.

238. Obituary, *Seaside Topics*, June 18, 1931.

239. Jack London and Anna Strunsky, *The Kempton-Wace Letters* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903).

240. William English Walling, *American Labor and American Democracy* (New York, 1926; new edition, New York: Arno, 1971). References to his work and life are included in Richard Schneirov’s “The Odyssey of William English Walling: Revisionism, Social Democracy, and Evolutionary Pragmatism” (www.historycooperative.org/journals/jga/2.4/schneirov); in James Boylan, *Revolutionary*

Lives: Anna Strunsky and William English Walling (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); and in Jack Stuart's review of the Boylan book, November 1999 (www.findarticles.com).

241. *National Register*, 9–10.

242. Denison, 118. Other sources identify the date left blank here as 1745.

243. Denison, 119. Born about 1729, the son of a prince of the tribe of Dukandarra in Guinea, Africa, and named Broteer, he had been captured and sold into slavery at age six. Bought first on shipboard by Robertson Mumford of Fishers Island and named "Venture" by his master, he was later sold to Thomas Stanton II of Stonington and then to Col. Oliver Smith, also of Stonington. By dint of prodigious hard work beyond his labor as a slave, Venture (whom Denison called "Vester") was able at age thirty-six to buy his freedom and later that of his wife, three children, and three other slaves. He ultimately settled at Haddam Neck in Connecticut. When he was about seventy, Venture related his life experiences, including his escape from the British, to a schoolmaster, Elijah Niles. They were published in 1798 as *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, A Native of Africa: But resident above sixty years in the United States of America. Related by Himself* (New London: C. Holt, at the Bee-Office, 1798), available online at www.venturesmith.net. I am indebted to Douglas R. Jones and his research on Venture.

A testament to the close relationship between the Stanton family and their former slaves is the fact that a descendant of Venture is buried in the family plot. The owner of the Stanton homestead in the early twenty-first century, John "Whit" Davis, a twelfth-generation descendant of Thomas Stanton, noted in conversation that after two centuries of lost contact, his family and that of Venture, still living in Connecticut, reconnected and established friendship.

244. Best, 190.

245. *The Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers Association, A Commemoration* (Watch Hill: The Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers Association, 1988).

246. In 1822, French physicist Augustin Fresnel developed a ring-like lens that could control the intensity and direction of light. By 1859 virtually all U.S. lighthouses were using the new device. With the automation of lighthouses in the late twentieth century, more economical plastic lenses replaced these classical lenses. Watch Hill's, a fourth-order Fresnel lens, was removed when the Coast Guard automated the light in 1986, prior to transferring the property to the

Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers Association under a long-term lease. The Coast Guard placed the lens on time-term loan to the Association, which in turn displays it in the small museum that the Association operates in the former oil house adjacent to the lighthouse. See *The Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers Association*, n. 241.

247. *Seaside Topics*, August 19, 1916.

248. Best, 193.

249. "The Wreck of the 'Metis,'" *Harper's Weekly*, September 21, 1872.

250. Margaret Woodbury Carter, *Shipwrecks on the Shores of the Town of Westerly, Rhode Island and Adjacent Waters* (Westerly: The Utter Company, 1973), 34–35; Carol W. Kimball, "Summer's End," *Tidings* 4, no. 3 (August 1986); and the Web site of the U.S. Coast Guard, www.uscg.mil.

251. *The Westerly Sun*, August 9, 1968, reproduced in Carter, 34–37.

252. *Narragansett Weekly*, September 5, 1872; and Lipman (see n. 75 above).

253. *Seaside Topics*, August 19, 1916.

254. An article and photograph in *The Sun*, dated March 19, 1963, identifies "the boat house and launchway built in 1923." This is clearly incorrect, inasmuch as the boathouse shown is the one built in 1939, as shown in a photograph in the *Providence Sunday Journal*, December 3, 1939. The date 1923 would, however, appear correct for the previous boathouse, which appears in a pre-hurricane postcard, identified as being 1935, reproduced in *Tidings*, September/October 1992, 26–27.

255. The 1935 postcard referred to in the note above shows the 1879 and 1907 stations and the new boathouse. The 1879 station is shown on the site of the garage and maintenance shop built in 1938/39.

256. *Watch Hill in the Hurricane of September 21st, 1938* (Watch Hill: Seaside Topics, 1938), 17.

257. *Seaside Topics*, June 23, 1939.

258. Cole, 269.

259. Charles Ledyard Norton, *American Seaside Resorts; a Handbook for Health and Pleasure Seekers* (New York: Taintor Brothers, 1871). Excerpt quoted from the 1887 Larkin House brochure.

260. Deed of Jacob S. Burnet, Annie S. Burnet, Lyneas Norton, Emily C. Norton, and Walter St. John Jones to William P. Anderson, dated October 1, 1886, Westerly Land Evidence Records, Book 27, p. 410. This is the deed to Lot 77 of the Everett Farm, the property on which Anderson built his cottage, *Del Mar*.

261. Ibid.

262. Ibid.

263. *State v. Ibbison*, 448 A. 2d 728 (R.I. 1982). The Ibbison case involved alleged trespass on shoreline property in Westerly. Citing Article I Section 17 of the Rhode Island Constitution, which guarantees shoreline privileges that include, but are not limited to “fishing from the shore, the gathering of seaweed, leaving the shore to swim in the sea and passage along the shore,” the Rhode Island Supreme Court determined that the boundary between private and public lands is the mean high tide, defined as “the line formed by the intersection of the tidal plane of mean high tide with the shore” (p. 730). Mean high tide, the court said, is the “arithmetic average of high water heights observed over an 18.6 year Metonic cycle.” Meton was a fifth-century B.C. Athenian astronomer whose cycle is defined by *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* as “A period of 235 lunar months, or about 19 years in the Julian calendar, at the end of which the phases of the moon recur in the same order and on the same days as in the preceding cycle.” The decision and its ramifications have been analyzed in a special presentation by Janet Freedman and Megan Higgins of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council: “What Do You Mean by Mean High Tide?” available online at <http://scagrant.gso.uri.edu/coastssymposium>.

The practical implications of the calculations on which the Ibbison decision was based have been interpreted to mean that what is legally defined as wet sand beach (and therefore public) may, with rising sea levels, be at all times under water. Nevertheless, the public continues to have the right to use the beach along the water and to access it over certain rights-of-way. While the ownership of these rights-of-way is in doubt, East Beach property owners do not dispute the public’s right of access, and they also permit the public to use the beach. The Watch Hill Security Trust assists the owners by providing the legal jurisdiction under which their beach property can be policed; it posts regulations spelling out the ownership issues and appropriate conduct by the public in its use of the private area. The following is taken from the regulations of the Watch Hill Security Trust:

EAST BEACH VISITOR RULES

East Beach above the mean-high-tide line is a private beach. Use of the beach is reserved for owners and guests. Use by the public is permissive, but permission may be withdrawn at any time, for any reason. In Rhode Island, the private property

boundary is the mean high tide line. The mean high tide line is the landward line of the average high water heights observed over 18.6 years. Only the land seaward of that line is reserved for public use. The U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey can provide further information to persons interested.

The East Beach Association maintains snow fencing on the dunes and is responsible for daily cleaning and trash collection during the season.

264. Deed of Lyneas Norton and Walter St. John Jones, as Trustees of the Watch Hill Land Syndicate, to Frank J. Jones and eighteen others, dated December 4, 1890, Westerly Land Evidence Records, Book 29, p. 499.

265. Wheeler, 15.

266. The Rhode Island Coastal Management Program, enacted by the General Assembly in 1971, established a Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), which is charged with the policy “to preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, restore the coastal resources of the state...through comprehensive and coordinated long-range planning and management” (R.I.G.L. 46-23). The CRMC’s policies and regulations are found in numerous publications, including the fundamental text, *Coastal Resources Management Program, as Amended* (the “Red Book”), and area-specific publications, such as *Rhode Island’s Salt Pond Program Region: Special Area Management Plan*; and *The Pawcatuck River Estuary and Little Narragansett Bay: An Interstate Management Plan*. The Program is described online at www.ocrm.nos.noaa.gov. Publications are found online at www.crmc.state.ri.us/pubs.

267. Best, 191.

268. Cole, 269.

269. Peck, 10.

270. Ibid., 11.

271. In 1983, Clement A. Griscom IV was engaged in advising homeowners in their efforts to reclaim Mickill Pond on Niantic Avenue. This is the same pond where neighbors were engaged in similar efforts in 2003–5. See Clement Griscom, “Phragmites Communis, There goes the neighborhood...,” *Tidings*, July 1983.

272. Denison, 118.

273. Quoted in Scotti, 182.

274. Ibid.

275. Denison, 227.

276. Ibid., 201.
277. Peck, 18.
278. The others were Fort H. G. Wright on Fishers Island, Fort Michie on Great Gull Island, Fort Terry on Plum Island, and Fort Tyler on Gardiners Island. Fort H. G. Wright was the headquarters for the Harbor Defenses of Long Island Sound; Fort Mansfield was a subpost.
279. Clement A. Griscom IV, *Fort Mansfield, Napatree Point, Watch Hill, Rhode Island* (Westerly: Sun Graphics, 1984).
280. Clement Griscom, "Fort Mansfield on Napatree Point: Our Achilles Heal," *Tidings*, August 1984. Peck also writes of the incident: "The Navy under command of Admiral R. D. Evans landed safely on the East Beach, out of reach of the fort's guns, and charged down the Fort Road. The landing party was under the protecting fire of the ships' guns, so the referees gave the Navy the decision. If the fort had been equipped with high angle mortars, the fleet would not have been able to approach the coast and land marines ('first to land') and sailors without hindrance" (25).
281. Griscom, "Fort Mansfield on Napatree Point," 30.
282. Griscom, *Fort Mansfield*, 28.
283. Unattributed 1879 newspaper clipping, Local History Collection of the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly.
284. Tallinan, 27.
285. *Watch Hill Topics*, July 9, 1904. The raft, 24' by 10', was described as having "all the latest devices, including springboards and safety life ropes."
286. *Seaside Topics*, June 17, 1925.
287. Paul Johnson Moore, *The Search: An Account of the Fort Road Tragedy* (Westerly: Sun Graphics, 1988), 1–3.
288. There were exceptions, and the Paul J. Moore family was one. Moore says that he and his family had indeed thought about hurricanes, especially after reading Peck's description of the Great Gale of 1815, published just two years earlier. His wife Audrey (Audrey Seiter Moore), he reports, had observed that if such a storm had happened once, it could happen again. He had replied that "such a storm could be repeated, but wouldn't do much damage because the seawalls would hold." After all, he writes, "in 1815, there probably weren't any seawalls and the ocean had had its own way" (ibid.).
289. Scotti, 98.
290. Ibid.
291. *Watch Hill in the Hurricane of September 21st, 1938* (see n. 256 above).
292. "The Great New England Hurricane of 1938," online at www.her.noaa.gov/box/hurricane1938.
293. Robert L. Nichols and Alwyn F. Marston, "Shoreline Changes in Rhode Island Produced by Hurricane of September 21, 1938," *The Bulletin of the Geological Society of America* 50 (September 1, 1939), 1361.
- The full quotation is as follows: "The storm tide at Providence, Rhode Island, was 13 feet 9 inches above mean high tide. This exceeded the previous record of September 23, 1815, by 1 foot 11½ inches. In the area studied the authors estimated that the storm tide was between 10 and 15 feet above mean high tide. The factors which contributed to make this abnormal high tide were: (1) The predicted high tide for September 21 was a spring tide, and (2) the hurricane struck the coast at approximately high tide."
294. Scotti, 149. *Seaside Topics* reported in 1971 that Hunter S. Marston had given the *Hellu* to the International Oceanographic Foundation in Miami.
295. Scotti provides the total death toll and that in Rhode Island, 216–17. Area and Westerly tolls are provided in *The Hurricane, Sept. 21, 1938* (Westerly: Sun Graphics, 1938), 50–51. The fifteen who died at Watch Hill are listed on the Village plaque: Emma Behnfield, Adelaide Byrnes, Barbara Byrnes, Elizabeth T. Byrnes, Havila Moore, Jessie H. Moore, Annie Nestor, Frank Pasetti, Elliefair Price, Roy Rainey, Martha Riebicki, Mary Stevenson, Margaret Tetlow, Lini Uisimaki, and Ethel Watson. The plaque was dedicated in September 1941.
296. *Watch Hill in the Hurricane of September 21st, 1938*. See also the account of Mrs. Geoffrey L. Moore, "Fort Road, Watch Hill," reprinted in *Tidings*, September/October 1996.
297. It has been noted earlier that it is likely that the first breach occurred in the same area that may have been the ancient outlet of the Pawcatuck River to Fishers Island Sound.
298. Nichols and Marston, 1365.
299. *Seaside Topics*, July 20, 1945.
300. The situation at Watch Hill in 1954 was dramatically different from that at neighboring Misquamicut. There, cottages had been built back on the barrier beach after 1938, and some two hundred were swept away in Hurricane Carol.
301. *Seaside Topics*, September 3, 1954.

302. “The Shifting Sands of Napatree, Nature is ever changing its plan for Little Narragansett Bay,” *Tidings*, June 1995.

303. Peck, 24.

304. *Seaside Topics*, September 5, 1969.

305. *Seaside Topics*, June 29, 1920.

306. The list of those lost at Watch Hill is included in n. 295 above.

307. *Seaside Topics*, August 20, 1931.

308. The *National Register* provides a date for the construction of the second, brick firehouse of 1910 rather than 1933. The dates supplied here are, however, based on documentation provided by the Fire Department and other recorded material, such as newspaper articles.

309. *The Sun*, February 19, 1951, reported on the conversion to the grocery store.

310. *Seaside Topics*, August 16, 1974.

311. *Summer Social Directory* (Watch Hill: Seaside Topics, 1937).

312. Fiske, *A Curious Childhood*, 51.

313. *Ibid.*, 51–52.

314. John Cooper, “Change is slow, but it’s there,” *Sundial Magazine*, May 7, 1987, 3–4.

315. Dan Hackett, “Just in Case...Caviar Still available at \$19 for Four Crances,” *Providence Evening Bulletin*, April 16, 1973.

316. Sally Steinberg, “Watch Hill Still Magnet for Wealthy,” *Boston Sunday Globe*, July 25, 1976.

317. Irene Traggis Nicholas, “The Traggis Family,” *Tidings*, July 1987.

318. Original By-Laws of the Watch Hill Chapel Society in the Town of Westerly, adopted September 4, 1875.

319. *The Watch Hill Chapel Prayer Book* (Watch Hill: Watch Hill Chapel Society, 1999), vi.

320. The Chapel Opening and Closing Prayers are:

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, Heavenly Father, we rejoice to meet once again in this beloved and hallowed Chapel, to give Thee thanks and praise.

We thank Thee for preserving us through the long winter months, to know again the beauty of Thy creation in this place, to behold again Thy shining light upon the waters. We thank Thee for the joy of friends and families united. Bless them and us as we enter into this season of rest, refreshment and recreation.

We remember summers past and those who have gone from us, the memory of whose lives still brightens ours. We remember especially [*names of those who have died since last summer*]. May Light Perpetual shine upon them. In our worship of Thee in the weeks ahead, open our hearts and minds to Thy Word. Let the joyful noise of song and instrument lift our spirits unto Thee. And grant that we may come to know Thee more fully in the beauty, peace and fellowship of this place.

Give us, we pray, the Grace to become more worthy of Thy blessings so generously bestowed upon us.

Sustain us and give us the strength and courage to do Thy will in all things. And continue to surround us with Thy never failing love and grace.

All this we ask through Thy Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, be all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

Chaplin Bradford Barnes, 1998

CLOSING PRAYER

Send down Thy truth, O God, and illumine our lives with righteousness, engendered by Thy Grace.

As we leave this Chapel, the place of our happiest and most fruitful hours of the endearing summer season, may we take with us, to bless us throughout the winter months, the memory of Thy Light upon the waters, the majesty of Thy ocean in calm and in storm, the joyous companionship of united families, the loyalty of friends, the glorious shining of Thy Love in this beautiful place.

Accept our gratitude for the beneficent joys of these summer days together. In the long weeks before us, may we remember the hours here with Thee, and draw strength and courage for whatever Thou in Thy infinite and loving wisdom may ordain.

Bless us and keep us and draw us ever nearer to one another and to Thee in love, in harmony, and in thankfulness. Amen.

Beatrice Putney Westerfield, 1950

321. By-Laws of the Watch Hill Memorial Library and Improvement Society, History of One Hundred Fifteen Years of the Watch Hill Memorial Library and Improvement Society (rev. 2004), 1.

322. Wheeler, 5.

323. The first Beach Club was, of course, destroyed in the Hurricane of 1938. The second, built in 1939, was destroyed by Hurricane Carol in 1954, and the third was built on the property in 1955. That building was razed in 2004 and a fourth structure was completed in 2005.

324. "History of the Watch Hill Yacht Club" also appears online at the Yacht Club's Web site, www.whyc.net/history.

325. The regulations are listed in n. 263 above.

326. Sarah Jane Sculco, "Nature and Society's Influence: Watch Hill, Rhode Island" (unpublished paper prepared for the undergraduate American Studies Program, Princeton University, 1999).

327. *Seaside Topics*, September 8, 1944.

328. The seven families and the ancestors who built their cottages are: the Burlings/Emmets (Davis C. Anderson) at *Sea Crest*, the Burkhardts (Johanna Mielhke) at *Clinton Cottage*, the Bishops (Dudley Phelps) at *Meadholme*, the Curtises/Hardies (F. Kingsbury Curtis) at *Shortlands*, the Crawfords/Driscolls (Frank S. Turnbull) at *Shoreby*, the Whitmans/Gleasons (James W. Taylor) at *Snug Harbor* and *River House*, and the Van Cleefs (Mrs. Henry H. Van Cleef) at *Pomptookit*.

329. Cleveland Amory, "Mr. First Resorts," *Holiday* (July 1959), 56–63. The article featured a full-page photograph of the author, Mrs. Harkness, and other guests lunching on the terrace of *Holiday House*. Amory wrote the article more than a decade after his book *The Last Resorts* had been published by Harper & Brothers, New York, 1948. *Who Killed Society?* followed in 1960, also published by Harper & Brothers.

330. "The Watch Hill Comprehensive Plan" prepared for the Watch Hill Fire District by the Watch Hill Long-Range Planning Committee, Peter B. Griffin, Chairman, Watch Hill, May 1, 1985.

331. The Barn Island example is cited in Patton and Kent, *A Moveable Shore*, note to Plate 4, following p. 32. See n. 2 above.

332. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's *U.S. Climate Action Report 2002* states that global sea levels rose by about 4–8 inches during the twentieth century, significantly more than the rise that was typical over the previous few thousand years. Looking to the future, the report noted that climate models project that global warming will increase sea levels by 4–35 inches during the twenty-first century. The report notes that the June 2001 report of the

Committee on the Science of Climate Change, convened by the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences, had assumed a mid-range value of sea level rise of 19 inches over the century. See Chapter 6, "Impacts and Adaptation."

333. As noted earlier, the storm surge of the hurricane at Providence was 13 feet 9 inches above mean high tide, a level 1 foot 11¾ inches above the previous record set, September 23, 1815. In Watch Hill it is estimated to have been 10 to 15 feet above mean high tide, according to Nichols and Marston (see n. 293 above). Other sources suggest levels as high as 30 feet.

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Seaside Topics. Newspaper published weekly during the summer months, July 9, 1904–1979. Offers a gold mine of information about Watch Hill, reporting on both its contemporary social doings and its history. For more information about it and its publishers, the Hammond family, see page 80 in the present volume.

Tidings. Magazine published six times a year, 1983–1999. Contains fascinating articles about the life and history of the eastern Connecticut and Rhode Island shore. Its publishers through 1997 were Margaret Moore Driscoll (she until 1993) and Robert M. Driscoll.

The Westerly Sun. Daily newspaper, Westerly, Rhode Island, 1857–.

SUMMER DIRECTORIES

There is a varied and random collection of sources on the Watch Hill summer residents in the early twentieth century, including directories published by the *Westerly Sun*, *Seaside Topics*, the Salem Press Co., and the Stedman Press. Those which survive are generally separate issues, and it is not known over how long a period some of these were published. A number of issues are to be found in the Local History Collection of the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly.

