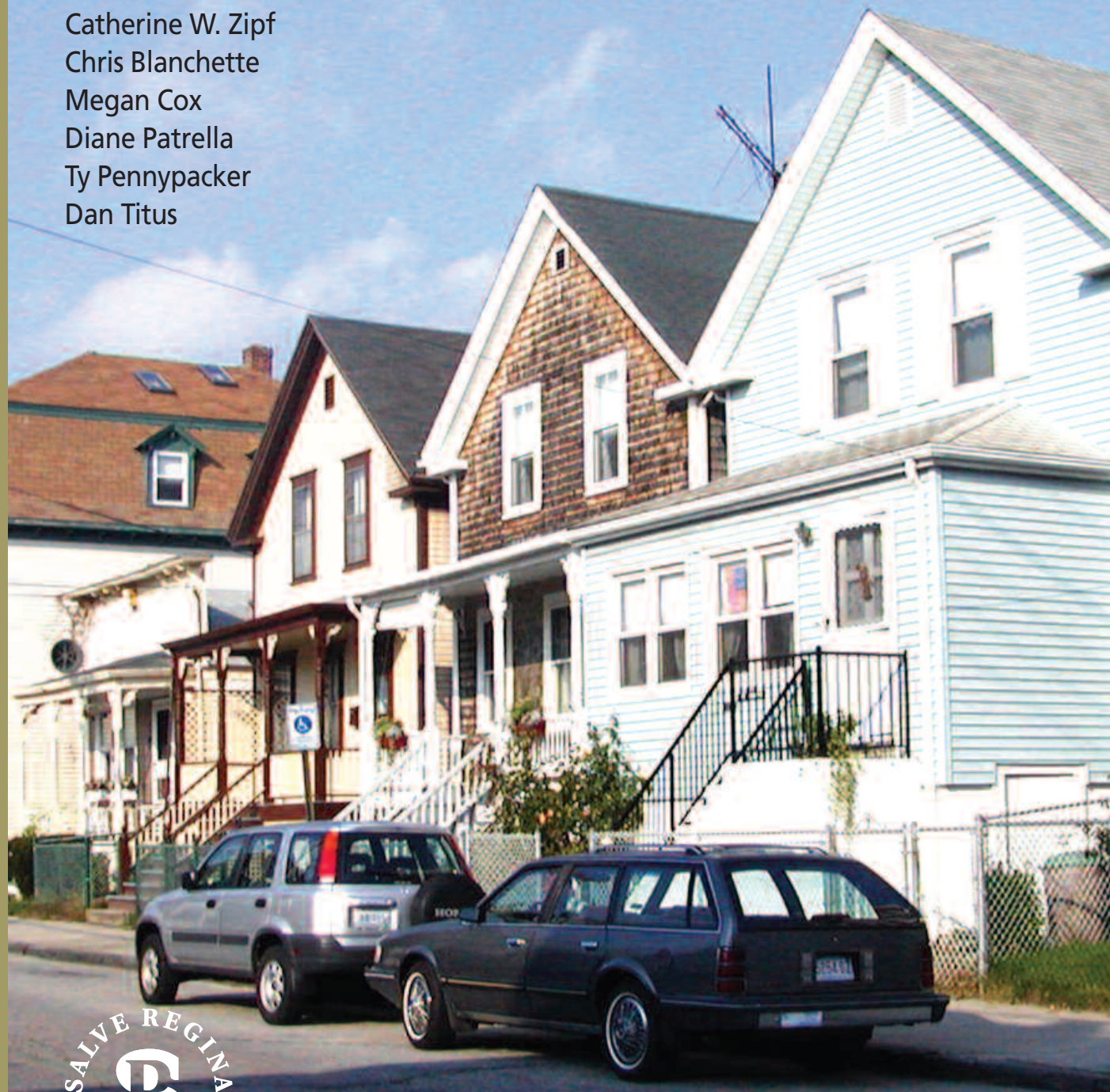


Between the Golden Age and the Gilded Age: A History of the Southern Thames Street Neighborhood

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The Southern Thames Street Neighborhood is an outstanding example of a 19th-century immigrant neighborhood built according to local, vernacular traditions. The area was home to a substantial portion of Newport's Irish immigrant population, a working class group who arrived in Newport between 1820 and 1920. This Irish population built many of the neighborhood's residential buildings, religious monuments and civic structures by their own hands and for their own benefit. They also provided an important source of labor for the neighborhood's mills and industries, and founded local businesses that employed neighbors, friends and other new arrivals. To preserve their culture, Irish residents formed religious and social organizations, and built buildings to house these important institutions. The resulting commercial and residential neighborhood was not only a vibrant immigrant community, but also an important factor in the development of Newport's reputation as the "Queen of Resorts."

The Southern Thames St. Neighborhood is located on the west side of Newport, Rhode Island, and occupies the southern half of its harbor. Drawing its name from a 1-mile section of Thames St., the neighborhood is bounded by Memorial Blvd. at Perry Mill on the north, Morton Park and Connection St. on the south, the waterfront and Marchant St. on the west, and Spring St. on the east. This area includes a thriving commercial waterfront, a residential district, and the social corridor of Spring St, which backs up onto The Elms, a prominent Bellevue Ave. mansion. The character of the neighborhood is defined by the relationship between the area's architectural fabric and the immigrant population that built it.

This publication resulted from a year-long, intensive neighborhood study undertaken by students in the Cultural and Historic Preservation Program (CHP) at Salve Regina University. As a partner with the Rhode Island State Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission and the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, the CHP program offered a seminar in the fall of 2003 that taught students how to research and document an historic neighborhood according to the state's professional standards and how to conduct primary research on a historic neighborhood. Their work created the body of knowledge needed to nominate the neighborhood for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and to produce this publication. ➤

Although the Southern Thames St. Neighborhood did not fully develop until after the revolution, its urban patterns followed those established during Newport's early years. Thames St., Newport's main artery, was laid out before 1641, shortly after the town's founding. It paralleled the coast along the "Great Common" (Washington Square) and formed a backbone for the area's smaller cross streets. A second major artery, Spring St., was laid out east of Thames, where it ran south from the town spring at the top of the common. Over time, Thames and Spring Sts. were extended as new wharves were built and new cross streets were laid out. By 1712, according to John Mumford's map, Thames St. extended as far as "Mile's End," or just north of present-day Pope St. Spring St. extended to present-day Ann (formerly Clifton) St. Ann, Brewer and Young Sts. were among the first cross streets laid out in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood and were certainly in place by 1740.

By the early 1700s, Newport had entered a golden age. Newporters of all economic classes earned a good living from the sea in areas like shipping, fishing and trade. As wharves and other waterfront properties began to fill up, the pressure from overcrowding moved quickly to Newport's southern areas. The Southern Thames St. neighborhood offered ample space for new docks, wharves, warehouses, storage sheds and housing. According to Ezra Stiles' map, four new streets, Fair, Gidley, Howard and Pope, were laid out before 1758.

The Southern Thames St. area was known at this time as the "Court End of Town." Many Newporters who made their fortune off the sea built large homes in the area as a way of remaining proximate to their shipping interests. One surviving example is the Francis Malbone House (392 Thames St., 1758). Traditionally attributed to Peter Harrison, the Malbone house is a 3-story block with hip roof, center entrance, pediment and cornice. The house originally sat in a modest garden landscape facing the wharves, allowing Malbone to watch over his waterfront shipping business. Subterranean passages connecting the basement with the waterway were probably used to smuggle merchandise without paying royal duties. This practice was common and may have been another reason for the proximity between mansions and wharves.

Middle-and lower-class residents also populated the Southern Thames St. neighborhood during this time. Their homes were much smaller in size and tended to be wood-frame structures with hip, gambrel, or gable-on-hip roofs. One example is the Hunter-Whitehorne House (428 Thames St., before 1756). Hunter, a distiller, probably built this 2-story, hip-roofed house with a pedimented entrance to be close to his nearby distillery operations. Other mid-century surviving examples include the Edward Cole House (29 Howard St., c. 1760), the Sherman-Lee-Lewis House (283 Spring St., 1758-77), the James Carpenter House (406-410 Thames St., c. 1765) and the Overing House (479-81 Thames St., before 1777).



Commercial Wharf, c. 1900

**SEASIDE ACTIVITIES:
LIFE ON THE WHARVES**

Newport has long relied on its waters for prosperity and growth. Since the city's founding in 1639, its long wharves and sheltered landings have given testimony to the symbiotic relationship between the citizens and the sea. This has held true throughout all stages of Newport's development and is certainly true in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood, where the wharves were just as active a century ago as they are today. At the turn of the last century, for example, Perry Mill Wharf and Hammet's Wharf alone housed boat shops, woodworking shops, coal sheds and coal yards, boat builders, store headquarters, carpentry shops, and manufacturing shops.

As the first solid footing sailors would have had after disembarking from their ships, the wharves served as a welcome distraction from a mundane and repetitive life at sea. Ample diversions abounded, whether in the form of the pubs and taverns that could be found on the waterfront or the camaraderie of others who had been long at sea. Sailors would spend their pay with the utmost speed before reboarding their newly supplied ships and heading out onto the open waters again.

—Megan Cox

THE FRANCIS MALBONE HOUSE THEN AND NOW!

c. 1880



2004



At least four houses from this era have also been moved into the neighborhood, including the Benjamin Mason House (25 Brewer St., c. 1740), the David King House (28 Ann St., before 1730), the Bridget Brennan House (23 Bacheller St., c. 1750), and the John Sullivan House (600 Thames St., c. 1750).

Due to the mixture of commercial and residential structures, the Southern Thames St. area was from the start a neighborhood diverse in economic class and activity. By 1758, fifteen houses, seventeen shops, stills and stables, and fourteen wharves had been constructed within its boundaries. By 1777, according to Charles Blaskowitz's map, the area had grown to include 126 houses, stables, storage sheds and

warehouses. These buildings became home to a new group of shipping laborers, craftsmen, and seamen, all of whom were active in maritime trades or maintained the wharves, sheds, and ships. As a result, wealthy shipping merchants of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood mixed daily with working class laborers and craftsmen.

The activities of the neighborhood were abruptly halted by the British occupation of 1776-78. About 450 buildings were torn down for firewood or otherwise damaged by British soldiers. Newport's active maritime economy nearly ceased during this period, as did most other commercial activity. Many Southern Thames St. residents probably resented the British presence, but there was at least one loyalist, British Army

Recruiting Officer Edward Cole, who lived in the neighborhood at 29 Howard St. (c. 1760). Cole apparently saw the tide turning, since he sold the property during the Revolution to Benjamin Howard, for whom Howard St. is named.

Newport's trade economy suffered further, though to a lesser degree, under the French troops, who followed on the heels of the British. Between 1776 and about 1800, the shipping industry began to shift to other New England ports, forcing Newport's merchants to move their interests elsewhere or fade into slow ruin. Newport's economy spiked briefly at the turn of the century, but was quickly stalled by the Jeffersonian Embargo of 1807, which attempted to force the withdrawal of British

and French trade restrictions by blocking American ships from foreign ports. The War of 1812 finished Newport's maritime economy and by 1820, even the shipbuilding trades had reached an all-time low.

Between severely diminished fortunes and the threat of war, building activity at the turn of the century was extremely limited. Of the few that survive, most houses are stylistically consistent with pre-Revolutionary buildings. The Gaspar Castoff House (271-75 Spring St., c. 1785) is a 2½-story dwelling with gambrel roof, brick foundation and weatherboard siding. The John Price House (424-6 Thames St., c. 1780) and the James Boone House (422 Thames St., 1798) are 3-story, side gable blocks with weatherboard siding, center entries and symmetrical windows. Each of these show an interest in Palladian or classical architectural motifs with doorway surrounds, window moldings and decorative pediments, although the simplification of these forms strongly suggests the economic hardship of this period.

New arrivals in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood may have been introduced to one of the area's more famous residents, Newport Gardner. Gardner had been brought to Newport in a slave ship in 1760. By the time of his emancipation in 1792, he had converted to Christianity and learned English and French. He was also a founder of the African Benevolent Society, which provided education for African and African-American children. After the Revolution, Gardner was the first president of the African Union society, the first African-American cultural society formed in the United States, and a founder of the Union Congregational Church, the first African-American church in Newport. Gardner, his wife and his thirteen children lived in a small, African-American neighborhood on Pope St. This neighborhood may have formed before 1777, when it would have functioned as part of the city's southern boundary.

THE BRIDGET BRENNAN HOUSE



THE GASPAR CASTOFF HOUSE



THE HUNTER-WHITEHORNE HOUSE



THE EDWARD COLE HOUSE



THE JAMES BOONE HOUSE



The Bacchus Overing House*The Salmar Nubia House**The Peter Armstrong House*

NEWPORT'S NEIGHBORS: AFRICAN-AMERICANS ON POPE STREET

Newport Gardner's neighbors were men of great prominence in the community. Salmar Nubia, who lived at 21 Pope St., was the first representative and secretary of the African Union Society. Bacchus Overing, who lived at 29 Pope St., was also a member of the African Union Society and worked as a chef and a distiller. Peter Armstrong, a mariner and member of the African Union Society, may have lived at 38 Pope St. during the 1820s. The African Benevolent Society's school was located at the corner of Pope St. and East St., but no evidence of that structure survives. This African-American district thrived until about 1825, when Newport Gardner and other prominent African-American Newporters returned to Liberia as part of a campaign to repatriate former slaves. Gardner unfortunately died in Africa a year later.

—Catherine W. Zipf

The Gardners took up residency as early as 1810 at 25 Pope St. (c. 1810), a 2-story, brownstone and weatherboard house with a cross gable roof. This structure has been substantially rebuilt from Gardner's day, but it did serve as the founding site of African Benevolent Society. Gardner sold the property in 1825 before embarking on his return to Africa in 1826, which was organized by the Benevolent Society. After Gardner's departure, the African-American community on Pope St. declined substantially, to the extent that the 1880 census listed only one African-American head of household.

One prominent house from this period is the Samuel Whitehorne House (414-18 Thames St., 1811). This 3-story, Federal-style house with brick walls, classical, rounded porch and cornice, echoes the period of the Malbone house and survives with its garden area intact. The gentility expressed in this center-hall design is more characteristic of pre-Revolutionary times, yet it also exemplifies the difficulties of building after the British occupation: Whitehorne went bankrupt before this expensive, masonry building was completed. Other contemporary examples include the Samuel Durfee House (352 Spring St., 1803) and the Charles Russell House (28 Pope St., c. 1800). Despite a renewed interest in classical design, usually rendered within a standard wood-framing technique, the economic problems of the Post-Revolutionary period effectively ended this important foundational era in the history of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood. ➤

By 1820, Newport was still grappling with decline of its maritime economy. In addition to the severe drop in trade, other maritime occupations were also in steady decline, including whaling and shipbuilding. With many of Newport's wealthier citizens either bankrupt from the Revolution or departing for more prosperous cities, the center of power, and the responsibility for Newport's economic recovery, shifted to the working and artisan classes. The largest subgroup of these was Irish immigrants.

The reasons for Irish immigration to America are complex. Political changes, local rebellions, and the decline of the Irish textile industry during the 18th century had forced the majority of Ireland's population into an agrarian existence. Complicating the situation was Ireland's explosive population growth rate, which at 1.6% was one of the highest in Europe. The growth rate placed substantial pressure on the agrarian system to produce more, in turn requiring more labor and encouraging the nation's growth rate. By the 1840s, nearly four-fifths of the population worked the land, making the population density in some places as high as 400 per square mile.

With such a high population density, most Irish were heavily dependent on the potato crop. Potatoes were a nutritious crop that could be grown plentifully in smaller acreages. In an ideal world, Irish families could support themselves on the potato crop within their allotment of land. Larger families could subdivide their acreage among the sons, giving each enough land to grow enough potatoes and in turn support their own families. All could expect to grow strong on this balanced and healthy diet.

However, the system was far from stable. Even before the Great Famine of 1845-9, most Irish had struggled to make ends meet. As textile and artisan work began to fade, government committees began to place more pressure on large landowners to reap taxable profits. From 1803 onwards, rents began to increase, forcing farmers and other middlemen to pass higher rents along to the lower classes. Corruption spread quickly as each class abused its next lower to meet its next upper's increasing economic demands. Sudden drops in crop prices, such as the one in 1814-15, further destabilized the system. These abuses, coupled with smaller, localized famines in 1817, 1822, 1831, 1835-7, 1839 and 1842, wreaked havoc on the Irish socio-economic system. With now very large families to support, many small farmers were forced into laboring positions by landowners who were consolidating larger tracts to meet their own obligations. By the end of the Great Famine,

subdividing land between sons was no longer possible, leaving a large segment of the population even more dependent on extended family or the limited government poor programs.

Religious oppression was another incentive to emigrate. Irish Roman Catholics had been oppressed militarily and politically by both British and Irish Protestants, who feared that Catholic emancipation would overthrow the Protestant Church and its landed aristocracy. Many Irish Protestants believed that those following the Pope could never be good subjects and needed to be controlled entirely. The fact that even poor Protestants were privileged led to a feeling of resentment among Catholics which, combined with the discrimination against their church, the suppression of Catholic organizations and a campaign of discrimination, made it difficult to be Catholic in early 19th century

Ireland. Given this situation, the religious freedom of Rhode Island may have been particularly appealing to this disenfranchised and disempowered group.

Although there was plenty of incentive to move, not everyone was in a position to do so. Before the Great Famine, landlords had exerted significant pressure on the lower classes to emigrate as the best solution to the growing agrarian crisis. Most were reluctant to go, but those who did, and about 50,000 per year chose to do so, took years to plan, save for passage, and, if possible, establish connections with others. The average Irish immigrant was often young and male, independent, intrepid, able to leave family, and had some savings. This profile is important because it suggests that immigrants who arrived in Newport in the early part of the 19th century, even those who were unskilled in a craft, were

equipped with all the right personal skills. They were also prepared to build a community of their own that compensated for the discrimination, abuse, and poverty they had experienced in Ireland.

Despite its economic problems, Newport offered much to its Irish new arrivals. In the abstract, Newport had available land, available housing, the few remaining opportunities on the wharves, and the promise of religious freedom. It also offered an island environment of similar climate located on a major body of water. But by far, the greatest temptation for new arrivals was the possibility of work at Fort Adams. Construction on the fort began in 1825 and continued until the middle of the century. The design involved a complex series of tunnels, vaults, stairs, ramps, earthworks, ditches, bastions, parapets, and masonry construction. Granite was brought in from Maine

FORT ADAMS: NEWPORT AND ITS MILITARY SOCIETY

After the Revolutionary War, the newly formed American government recognized the strategic importance of securing the nation's pivotal harbors. This point was driven home by the War of 1812, during which the British wreaked havoc on our nation via ship. As a result, the government set about to create a series of coastal fortifications to protect those harbors. Thus Fort Adams came into existence. The very epitome of technological ingenuity for the time, Fort Adams, when completed, became the second largest fort in America, second only to Fort Monroe in Virginia.

Despite its purely military design and construction, Fort Adams did not experience an existence as clean-cut as its purpose. Even before its completion it was well on its way to becoming an object of fascination for Newport's residents and summer visitors. Officers stationed there were practically

guaranteed a place in the social food chain. Attitudes towards enlisted men vacillated between romantic fascination and wary distrust. Either way, Newport made itself very aware of their going-ons.

The city likewise made itself involved in the fort's affairs, integrating it into their public events and everyday gatherings. Instead of regarding it with impartiality, they instead embraced the military culture and made it at least partially their own. Those at the fort were receptive towards this welcoming attitude and responded in kind to Newport's efforts.

— Megan Cox



Troop Exercises at Fort Adams, undated photograph.

for the walls, while other building materials, like brick, were fashioned on site. This active building site provided a great deal of opportunity for those skilled and unskilled alike and upon completion, Fort Adams became the first major architectural monument largely constructed by Newport's Irish population.

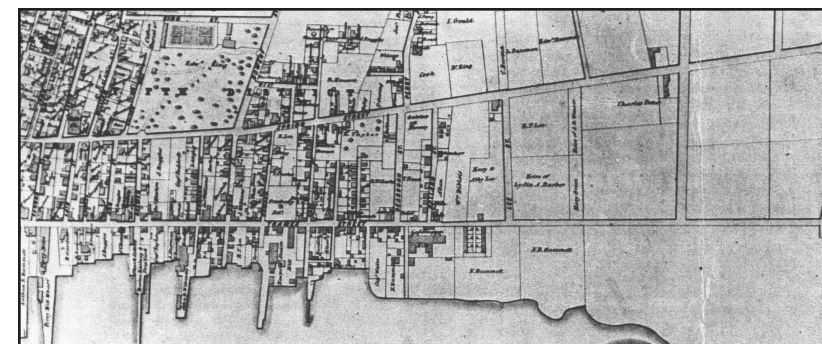
Adams made it a highly desirable neighborhood for those involved in the project and forced the first major building boom in the region after the Revolution. With increasing pressure for inexpensive housing, the area developed rapidly, first with the platting of several new streets. By 1850, Dearborn,

(then called West St.), Fountain, Pope and Perry Sts. were established east of Spring St. West St. had been started from its southern end but was not yet connected, nor well developed. Short streets along the wharves had also been constructed, as were half-blocks of Extension and S. Baptist Sts., which began at Thames but did not yet continue through to Spring St. Spring and Thames Sts. had been extended southward and the two main streets of Narragansett and Morton Ave. had been established, but only in their roughest forms.

The proximity of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood to Fort

Perry, Holland, and Lee Sts. had been laid out, and East, Bowery, Anthony

M. DRIPPS MAP, 1850



M. Dripps' map of 1850 shows that the new development continued not only the existing street patterns but also the level of density. Approximately two-thirds of the lots along Pope, Extension, S. Baptist, and Lee

SPRING STREET, THEN AND NOW.

c. 1900



2004



Sts. had been built on by this time. The Bowery-Perry section was also well established, especially along Fountain, Anthony, and East Sts. Larger blocks of land tended to fall along Spring St., while Thames St. continued to be built in a highly dense pattern. To the south, the tracts bordered by the future Narragansett and Morton Aves. were poised for development.

Houses built during this period responded directly to the needs of the Irish population by embodying a specific vernacular form. Most houses were two to three stories high with an end gable roof, stone or brick foundation, and weatherboard or shingle siding. This form was not only easy to build, but could

Clockwise from top left: The Freebody House, The Rebecca Lee House, The Horatio Tracy House, The Robert McIntosh House, The Margaret O'Leary House and the Burdick Cottage.



be adapted to suit a variety of living situations, including single or multiple family, or commercial/residential needs. It also allowed for owners to express their own personalities through architectural detail. Houses dating from this period include the Freebody House (28 Howard St., 1825-50) and the Rebecca Lee House (44 Pope St., 1825-50). These examples demonstrate two ways of adapting this common form; the Freebody House is larger in size but simpler in detail while the Rebecca Lee House is smaller in size but more architecturally elaborate.

The neighborhood's density was created by siting the houses close together and to the street, a quality that also contributed to the neighborhood's close-knit quality. Many buildings had front or side porches, allowing for social activity to occur right at the streetscape. Even enclosed porches contributed to the urban life of this area by facing onto the street and incorporating large numbers of windows. The patterns set during this period would continue throughout the remainder of the neighborhood's development.

Many houses built during this period were rental properties, such as the Burdick Cottage, (16 Extension St., c. 1845), a 1½-story cottage built in the Gothic Revival style by a Thames St. merchant. Others were multiple family houses, like the Horatio Tracy House (16 Dennison, 1836-46). Houses within this neighborhood also reflected a wide variety of contemporary styles. The Margaret O'Leary Cottage (23 S. Baptist St., 1845) was built as a 2½-story Greek Revival house with gable roof, corner pilasters and cornice trim, while the Robert McIntosh House (360 Spring St., c. 1840) a small, probably rental, cottage with bracketed front porch and end gable roof, was built in the Queen Anne style. The roots of this area's architectural diversity and vernacular traditions date squarely to this period of expansion. ➔

The first waves of Irish immigrants who arrived to work on Fort Adams were relatively small. However, their presence in Newport just before the great famine strengthened the connection between both countries, and tied the two together through chain migration. Their residence in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood was therefore of the utmost importance in connecting new arrivals with the advantages Newport offered. They formed the backbone of the substantial immigration that was to come.

After the Great Famine, Irish immigration substantially increased, forcing the development of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood southward once again. The DG Beers and Co. map of 1870 shows new houses along Lee, Bacheller, Byrnes, and McAllister Sts. New structures were also built on the eastern sides of Extension, S. Baptist, Holland, Lee and along Spring St. To the east of Spring St., West St. (originally named Perry Court) had been established and houses had begun to fill in that neighborhood. To the west of Thames, the northern stretch of Marchant and the eastern stretch of Simmons had been laid out with a handful of houses. With such a rapidly expanding population of similar culture and religious belief, it was only a matter of time before a number of cultural and religious institutions would join this thriving domestic landscape.

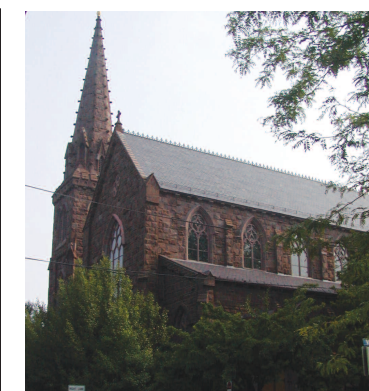
Roman Catholics living in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood between 1833 and 1845 would have worshipped at St. Joseph, a

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, THEN AND NOW.

c. 1907



2004



small Gothic-style church (1833-37) located at the corner of Barney and Mount Vernon Sts. As immigration picked up in the 1840s, the congregation rapidly began to outgrow this church, necessitating a new structure and, consequently, a new parish. The St. Mary's parish was formed in 1844 and a new church, the fourth purpose-built Catholic church in Rhode Island, was begun in 1847.

St Mary's Church was designed by Patrick C. Keeley (1816-1896) in the Gothic Revival style. Keeley was born in Thurles, Co. Tipperary, Ireland, in 1816, where his father had moved to work on the construction of Saint Patrick's College. Although Keeley was rumored to have trained under Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, England's most prominent Gothic Revival architect, he probably studied on site with his father, possibly on an 1838 hospital project in Ireland. Keeley immigrated to America in 1842, where he took work as a carpenter in Brooklyn and Long Island before gaining his first commission for the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Williamsburg,

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL



Brooklyn. In addition to St. Mary's, Keeley also designed the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (Albany, New York), the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist (Charleston, South Carolina) and the Cathedral of the Holy Cross (Boston, Massachusetts). He is reputed to have built between 500 and 600 religious structures, making him the most prolific builder of Roman Catholic churches in America.

St. Mary's style is typical of most mid-century Gothic revival designs. The rough-cut brownstone walls, high roofline and sculptural decoration evoke a combination of French flamboyant design and English country churches. Although it is unclear to what extent Keeley had experience with European church design, he would certainly have seen the components of this style in other churches around New York City and in contemporary architectural publications. St. Mary's was one of the larger buildings in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood to rely on local labor, following the trend established at Fort Adams. Many working-class parishioners provided the physical labor of the church, while prominent Catholic families who summered in Newport contributed funding. Over the next few decades, St. Mary's would continue to sponsor benevolent societies geared towards helping Irish immigrants develop as citizens and assimilate into American culture.

In addition to their community service, St. Mary's parish placed a great emphasis on education. A school was founded in 1846 on an unknown site on the eastern side of William St. School classes grew so quickly that by 1854, Reverend James Fitton, Pastor at St. Mary's, had turned daily operations of the school over to the Sisters of Mercy. In 1865, construction on a new school, also designed by Keeley, was begun on a lot at the eastern side of the church. Keeley's design, also in the Gothic Revival style, complemented the main church and

emphasized the commitment of St. Mary's parish to the local neighborhood. Although the school got off to a rocky start, by 1880 it had grown into the pre-eminent Catholic School in Newport.

Meanwhile, the Sisters of Mercy had likewise established a physical presence in the neighborhood. The Sisters of Mercy were founded in 1831 in Ireland by Catherine McAuley to help the poor, heal the sick, and provide education to the working classes. The organization was officially named in 1841 by Pope Gregory XVI and established in Newport in 1854, when the St. Mary's of the Isle Convent was founded.

The Sisters occupied a pre-existing building that Father Fitton had moved to a site at the corner of Fair and Spring St., across the street from St. Mary's. Two wings were added to the building at this time, possibly to provide additional space for teaching. The school taught about 60 students and was co-educational; two Sisters instructed the girls, probably separately in one of the wings, while Colonel W. K. Delaney, a former headmaster, instructed the boys in the other. The boys and girls were separated in 1865, when the boys were moved into Keeley's new school building. The girls remained at the convent, which was converted into the girls-only St. Mary's Academy.

In 1880, St. Mary's Church began construction on a new convent building for the Sisters of Mercy. This building was designed by Dudley Newton, a Newport architect about whom little is known. Newton was born in Newport in 1845, apprenticed under George Champlin Mason, and started his own firm in 1866. His design for the Sisters of Mercy involved the decoration of an economical, 3-story, symmetrical block with a cornice, front porch, center entrance, and decorative shingle siding. The Sisters occupied and ran the St. Mary's Academy out of this building until 1924, when the school was closed. The convent closed in 1991 and was moved from the lot on Fair

and Spring Sts to 394 Thames St. where it is now operated as a bed and breakfast.

Three other churches built in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood during this period survive as well. Newport's denomination of Emmanuel Episcopal Church was established in 1849 as the result of a disagreement between Reverend Darius Brewer of Trinity Church and its vestry over the renting and selling of pews. Brewer purchased All Saints Cathedral on Church St. to make the first free Episcopal Church in Newport. The congregation operated in meeting format, and therefore grew rapidly. It moved twice, first into shared space in the Free Will Baptist Meeting House, located on the corner of Thames and S. Baptist Sts, and then onto a corner lot at Spring and Dearborn Sts, which it had purchased in 1852. The Free Will Baptist Church was demolished before 1884.

394 THAMES ST., FORMERLY THE SISTERS OF MERCY CONVENT
The first Emmanuel Episcopal Church on the Spring



EMMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH, C. 1914



and Dearborn site was designed by Richard Upjohn in the Tudor style and consecrated in 1858. There is little evidence of Upjohn's original building's design, but it may have been similar to the Church of the Holy Cross in Middletown (West Main Road at Oliphant Lane, 1845-8), a small, gable-roofed church with pointed windows and decorative shingles. Following the tradition of free worship, and the denomination's own origins, parishioners were not charged for the use of their pews. Instead, the church supported itself through donations, weddings, baptisms, funerals, pledges and bequests. With this policy, the parish grew rapidly and a new religious school was founded in 1860. By the end of the century both parish and school required a larger building and in 1902, the Upjohn structure was sold and moved to an unknown location to make way for a new church building.

The present Emmanuel Church was built by the prestigious partnership of Cram and Ferguson, a Boston-based architecture firm that had through its practice reinvigorated architectural church building. Cram, whose father was a Unitarian minister but who was himself a converted Roman Catholic, had apprenticed under Henry Hobson Richardson in Boston. As a young architect, Cram was seduced by the Gothic style and he took it upon himself to

update the style in ways that honored earlier traditions. To that end, Cram wrote more than 27 books over the course of his career, including *The Gothic Quest* (1915), *American Churches* (1915), and *The Ruined Abbeys of Great Britain* (1927). He is best known for his work with partner Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue on buildings like St. Thomas Church, New York (1908-14) and the West Point Military Academy (1904), which both embody the firm's modern Gothic style.

As was typical of the firm, Cram and Goodhue, who was not yet a partner, divided the design duties into interior and exterior. Goodhue's interior took the shape of a Latin cross with a small narthex, open, narrow nave and side aisles. Cram's exterior used buff-colored, Weymouth granite for the buttresses, tower and walls. The overall style was English Gothic

EMMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 2004



Revival, to which were added tracery, crockets and other sculpture. Lancet windows with stained glass created lively patterns on the limestone sills, piers and arches, tying interior and exterior into a seamless whole. The church dominated its street and site, leaving room for ancillary buildings while maintaining an important presence within the neighborhood. It also demonstrated many of the principles Cram outlined in his books, including a distinction between nave and chancel, the use of art and symbols to represent Christian history, the ability to both see and hear the preacher, and the creation of an architectural mood suitable to worship.

The last two late-19th century churches in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood survive in

drastically altered form. The Presbyterian Grace Chapel was built before 1891 at the corner of Wellington and Thames St. as a 1-story chapel with a 2-story tower. This structure was purchased by the Ancient Order of the Hibernians in the 1900s and exists today in altered form.

The Thames St. Methodist Church was founded in 1854 by Clark Burdick, a prominent Southern Thames St. resident, and Isaac W. Sherman. Their building on the corner of Thames and Brewer Sts. was built in 1865 as a presumably gable-roofed structure with front porch. A secondary structure also with gable roof was built behind the church on Brewer St. to hold a school and lecture rooms. In 1918, due to declining membership, the church was sold to St. Spyridon's, a Greek Orthodox con-

gregation, who remodeled the church into its present form. The coexistence of the Presbyterians, Methodists and Episcopalians with the majority Catholics testifies to the rich diversity of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood. The neighborhood continued to be heavily influenced by Irish immigrants, but it also embraced people of all faiths and reached out to parishioners all across the city of Newport. These four churches also document the religious diversity and freedom that Rhode Island has been known for since its founding days.

REAR OF THE THAMES ST. METHODIST CHURCH, THEN AND NOW.

c. 1914



2004



By 1850, Newport had recovered from its post-revolutionary depression and had begun to develop a thriving network of industry and commerce. Although much of this industry was located along the wharves, it had little connection with maritime culture, which had continued to decline. For the most part, the waterfront was used for industry that required, or was enhanced by, waterfront access. For example, the four textile mills founded within the Southern Thames St. neighborhood between 1830 and 1840 utilized the waterfront for coal delivery and processing. Two of these survive, the Aquidneck (or Newport Steam) Mill (c. 1831) and the Perry Mill (c. 1835). The other two, the Williams Woolen Mill (1836-1860) and the Coddington Mill (1837-1869), were destroyed by fire in 1860 and 1869 respectively.

Although Newport was never known as a mill town—it could never be one because of its lack of railroad, lack of water power, and lack of raw materials—it did have the largest number of mills in the area. The first mill built in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood was the Aquidneck Mill, originally the Newport Steam Mill, which was built in 1831 at a cost of \$40,000. The original 11-bay, stone structure with end gable roof, regular windows and eastern stair/bell tower was located on Howard's Wharf in close proximity to the waterfront. Its connection to the water was extremely important, since with no railroad siding, all materials had to be brought in from the bay. The mill contained 4,356 spindles and employed approximately 100 people until 1845, when additional lot space on the wharf was purchased and the storage capacity was expanded. Production was stopped in 1857 due to a depression in the cotton-manufacturing business. A year later the building was sold to a new owner, Rodman, who made a new investment in machinery and who changed the name to

AQUIDNECK MILL



Aquidneck Mill. In 1860, the mill caught fire and sustained substantial damage to the second and third stories. The damage was repaired and the building was sold twice more before landing in the hands of the Richmond Manufacturing Company.

The Richmond Manufacturing Company built a substantial 4-story addition on the east side of the building out of brick. Although the aesthetic was similar to the earlier structure, the difference in height and material made the addition stand out dramatically from the previous structure. The Richmond Co. may have also built a number of ancillary buildings at this time as well. They owned the property for 25 years, operating 9,632 spindles, 210 looms, and employing about 175 people. In 1884, the cotton-manufacturing industry hit another depression, forcing the closure of the mill. The mill changed hands several times over the years and was adapted for use by companies as varied as the Burnham Elastic Webbing Co. and the Edison Illuminating Co. By 1900, the property had been purchased by the Newport and Fall River Street Railway Company, who built the large, brick structure on the western edge of the lot. This building is visually a 2-story building, with blind brickwork on the lower level and large windows on the upper. It originally housed three motor generators, a large boiler, and a steam turbine, which were used to run the street railway. The Newport and Fall River Street Railway Company owned the property until 1911. Both structures are now occupied by the International Yacht Restoration School.

The other mill structure to survive is the Perry Mill, built in 1835 by the highly skilled Scottish stonemason, Alexander McGregor. At this time, McGregor's experience was on Fort Adams, but he would eventually also build Swanhurst, for Judge Swan, and the Newport Armory. Perry Mill was

THE POWER HOUSE OF THE NEWPORT & FALL RIVER STREET RAILWAY COMPANY



LOST BUSINESSES

THE WILLIAMS WOOLEN MILL

Probably the most enigmatic of all the textile mills in Newport is the woolen mill of John D. Williams. The mill was built c. 1836 on the north side of what is now Brown & Howard's Wharf (then called Williams' Wharf). The smallest of the mills, it employed about 50 people when it burned to the ground in April 1860. Little is known of the mill except that appeared on the 1850 and 1859 Dripps' maps and not on the 1870 Beers' map. By 1884, Brown and Howard had purchased the property and the city had installed its coal yard on the wharf, which would survive until 1921.

—Dan Titus

NEWPORT FOUNDRY & MACHINE COMPANY

Little is known of the Newport Foundry & Machine Company. There is one reference to this industry in Sherman's "Newport and the Savings Bank," where he states that in 1838 "the Newport Foundry and Machine Co. opened a factory and workshop at the south end of Thames Street." There is also a reference made to a defunct date of before 1857, which is when the Newport Shot & Lead Company occupied the site. However, the most credible evidence is the deed of sale between the Newport Foundry and Machine Company and the Newport Steam Mill, which was recorded on December 27, 1847. This deed marks the sale of the plant and property for \$44,000 and the end of the company's existence in Newport.

—Dan Titus



PERRY MILL

a 5-story, 17-bay, granite structure located on Perry Mill Wharf at the northern tip of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood. The mill produced two kinds of cloth, first a fine, woolen dress fabric and then later on, printed cotton cloth. It operated between 1836 and 1850, housing a total of 8,000 spindles and employing 125 workers. Almost immediately after construction, the mill was surrounded by a sea of supporting buildings, two of which may survive as 16 and 20 Perry Mill Wharf. After 1888, Perry Mill, like the Aquidneck Mill, went through a series of sales and alterations to house generators for the first Newport Electric Co., a plant for the Aquidneck Pure Ice Co., and, later, a roller skating rink (c. 1913). The property was rehabilitated during the 1980s into a combination condominium-commercial structure.



THAMES ST., LOOKING NORTH

Many mill employees lived in single-family homes, boarding houses and tenements located on the inner streets of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood. Some also lived in mill-sponsored housing, such as the John D. Williams Tenement (Brown and Howard's Wharf, c. 1835), which was built for workers at the Williams Woolen Mill. The tenement, a 2-story plus clerestory structure with regular windows and Greek Revival details, was located parallel to Thames St. It is unclear whether the tenement



THE JOHN D. WILLIAMS TENEMENT

was built to contain retail space on the first story, possibly for the sale of products made in the mill, but by at least 1884, the commercial windows and doors were in place. As one of only two mill tenements ever built in Newport, this surviving example of mill housing is quite rare.

While the textile mills would have provided many newly-arrived immigrants with jobs, the thriving business interests of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood also offered opportunity. Most businesses were located along the Thames St. corridor, which had initially developed as a cluster on the northern end, but had continued to spread southward, following the neighborhood's pattern of development. A snapshot of this corridor at different times highlights its diversity. Of the 24 businesses operating between 1850 and 1857 there were 4 grocers, 2 carpenters, 2 butchers, 2 dry-goods dealers, a hardware store, a clothing dealer, a hair dresser, a plumber, a coal and wood company, a liquor store, a brewer, a shoemaker, a ship builder, a physician, a fish dealer, a confectioner, a sheet metal company, an ice company, and a tobacconist. Of the 74 businesses operating between 1885 and 1900, there were 11 boot and shoe maker or repairers, 7 liquor stores, 6 confectioner and fruit dealers,

4 carpenters, 4 bakers, 3 blacksmiths, 3 grocers, 3 confectioners, 3 hair dressers, 3 laundries, 3 coal and wood companies, 3 dry-goods dealers, 2 druggists, 2 clothing dealers, an ice company, a plumber, a physician, a tobacconist, a carriage builder, a florist, a carriage and house painter, a house and sign painter, a stair builder, an illuminating company, a trucking and teaming company, a tailor, a masseuse, a cabinet maker, a cooper, a lobster dealer, and a boat builder. Clearly, the business interests of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood were varied and diverse.

A later window, January-December, 1910, reveals even more about this business district. At this time, there were 122 businesses in the district. The business types mostly follow the earlier patterns in greater numbers, but several new types also appear, including a bicycle repairer, an undertaker, a druggist, an ice cream shop, and a taxi cab company. The 1910 snapshot also hints

THE JAMES CARPENTER HOUSE



at the rising ethnic diversity of the neighborhood. While the area was still primarily Irish and English, there were 4 Italian barbers, 6 Italian shoe repairers, and 3 Chinese laundries. There were also French, German, Scandinavian, and Jewish people running bakeries, liquor stores, groceries, confectionaries and dry goods shops. In addition, specialized areas within the business district had started to develop. For example, 5 physicians had offices on Spring St. between Memorial and Pope St., suggesting that this area was becoming known as a center for medical care.

Surviving examples of commercial architecture within the Southern Thames St. neighborhood speak to several themes. The James Carpenter House (406-410 Thames St., c. 1765) and the James M. Allen House (477 Thames St., c. 1850) exemplify the installation of storefronts into earlier structures. Many such plate-glass arrangements were made of cast iron, a common building material in the

THE J.J. LYNCH BUILDING



1880s. The J.J. Lynch Building (491-93 Thames St., 1886) represents a business with residential space on its upper floors. This arrangement was also quite common and can still be seen in many Thames St. structures. Large commercial blocks were built late in the century, like The Bartholomew Building (528 Thames St., 1895). As the business district continued to grow, other supporting structures were incorporated into the landscape, including Fire Station No. 6 (595 Thames St., 1891) and the Newport Armory (371 Thames St., 1894). Purpose-built, 20th century commercial structures, like the 1-story Edward L. Smith Building (469-73 Thames St., c. 1922) further demonstrate the eclectic architecture of this area.

THE BARTHOLOMEW BUILDING



The diversity of business is perhaps best represented by Thomas Galvin's Newport Exotic Garden. Galvin was an Irish immigrant who established his nursery business in 1845 on an extensive site at the intersection of Spring, Dearborn



FIRE STATION NO. 6

and Holland Sts. Galvin built his own house on the property as well as a heating plant, shop, equipment shed and nine greenhouses, in which he grew non-native fruit and off-season flowers for the local population and for the mansions. Although no records have survived, Galvin's landscape services may have employed several dozen people and possibly offered training to those interested in the craft. Galvin owned the property until just before 1921, when it was sold to George W. Callahan, who



EDWARD L. SMITH BUILDING

apparently demolished the greenhouses and other outbuildings. Galvin's house survives as part of a condominium complex on Holland, Spring and Dearborn Sts. The list of industries that do not survive in the district is unfortunately long. These include Silas H. Cottrell's shipyard (the bottom of Brewer St., c. 1835-c. 1880), the W. & A.W. Hill Brewery (Brewer St., c. 1850-1885), the Newport Foundry & Machine Co. (Howard Wharf, c. 1838-c. 1857), the

Newport Shot and Lead Co. (Howard Wharf, c. 1857-1867), the Newport Gas and Light Co. (Lee Ave. and Thames St., c. 1853-1975), and the Artificial Ice Co. (Howard Wharf, c. 1890). Regardless, the diversity of these interests demonstrates the different ways that the population of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood contributed to Newport's thriving, non-maritime economic interests, effectively ending Newport's post-Revolutionary depression. »

CHINESE LAUNDRIES IN NEWPORT!



20 474 Thames St.

The first Chinese laundry in the Southern Thames neighborhood opened in 1900 at 398 Thames St. Its owner, Charles Lee, operated his laundry until 1915, when it passed to Daniel Lee, possibly Charles' son. The Lee's laundry appears to be the longest surviving Chinese laundry in existence during the 20th century. Other locations and proprietors included:

- Sing Kee, 474 Thames St., 1901-02
- William Lee, 577 Thames St., 1901-03
- Sam Hing, 474 Thames St., 1904-11
- Chung Lee, 577 and 514 Thames St., 1905-12
- You Lee, 514 Thames St., 1913-20

The arrival of Chinese Laundries in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood coincides with the overall increase in business during the early 1900s. Due to The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Newport's Chinese population must have migrated from either the West coast or from another East Coast city.

—Diane Patrella

The stabilization of Newport's economy had an enormous impact on the city's demographics. Population growth between 1850 and 1880 had continued at a steady but impressive average rate of 12% per year. By 1885, the rate had doubled, putting enormous pressure not only on the Southern Thames St. neighborhood, but on Newport as a whole. The result was another growth spurt in the southern areas of Thames and Spring Sts. By 1884, East, West, Anthony, Fountain and Bowery Sts. had been laid out to their present form and many of the lots had been purchased and built upon. West of Thames St., Sharon, Simmons, Grafton and West Narragansett Sts. had also been laid out and were open for new construction.

Street development continued over the next decade. By 1891, the success of the Newport Gas Works had caused the layout of Dean Ave. on vacant land between Underwood Ct. and Holland St. Nearby, Goodwin St., originally named Ring Court, was also opened for new development. Construction on Thames St. had grown south to Lee Ave., while Spring St. had filled in to Holland St. All streets, including the



Page G of the 1893 Atlas of Newport showing new residential development south of Wellington Ave., near the Newport Gas Works.

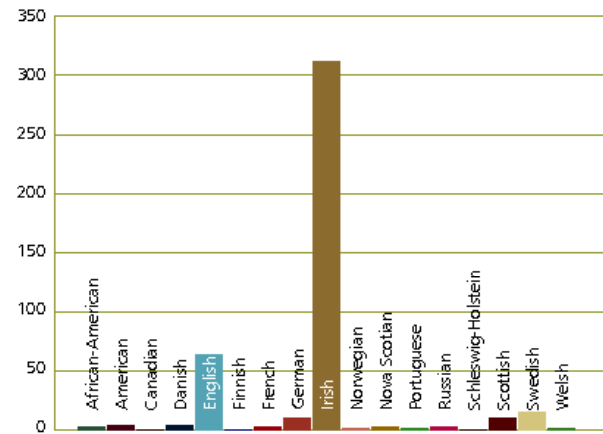
wharves, had continued to see infill development as the neighborhood's density increased. By 1896, Wellington, Simmons, Grafton, West Narragansett, Stockholm, Lucas, Potter, Connection, Marchant, Dixon, Hammond, Narragansett, Carey, and Webster Sts. had been laid out according to their present-day boundaries. Lots on Thames St. south of Lee Ave. had also been platted and small multi-building developments, like 15, 17 and 19 Carey St., had fleshed out this southernmost area of the neighborhood. By 1903, Morton St. had been laid out, bringing the neighborhood to its present-day boundaries. All construction after this time would be on preexisting lots.

ETHNIC TRENDS IN THE SOUTHERN THAMES NEIGHBORHOOD

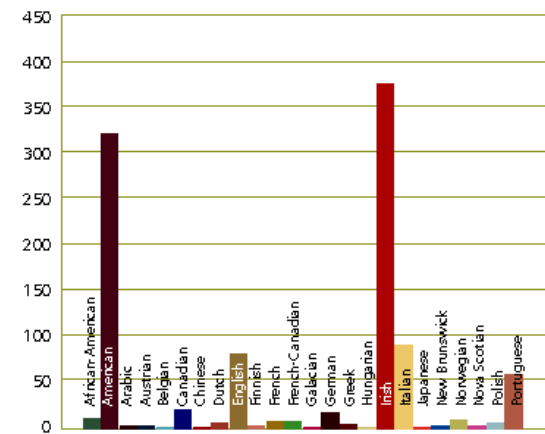
The majority of immigrant homeowners in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood were Irish, but they were not the only ethnic group represented by far. By 1880, 18 different ethnicities lived in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood. By 1920, the number had grown to 33. These two charts demonstrate the area's ethnic diversity and growth over the turn of the century.

—Ty Pennypacker

1880 CENSUS



1920 CENSUS



By 1880, a new immigrant pattern had begun to emerge. While the neighborhood remained predominantly Irish—70% of the heads of household listed in the 1880 Census were Irish—other ethnicities had begun to move into the area. Those of English descent formed the second largest group of about 15%, but Canadians, Danish, Finnish, French, Germans, Norwegians, Nova Scotians, Portuguese, Russians, Scottish, Swedish, and Welsh were also represented. The assets of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood would have applied equally well to these immigrant groups, as would the diversity of religious establishments within the neighborhood. The fact that the Southern Thames St.

neighborhood welcomed immigrants is echoed by the 1920 census. Again, Irish, American, and English residents dominated the area at about 31, 29 and 7 percents respectively, but the neighborhood now included Arabians, Austrians, Belgians, Canadians, Chinese, Dutch, Finnish, French, French-Canadian, Galicians, Germans, Greeks, Hungarians, Italians, Japanese, Norwegians, Nova Scotians, Polish, Portuguese, Puerto Ricans, Romanians, Russians, Scottish, Swedish, Swiss, Ukrainians and Welsh. The Rhode Island Census of 1885 lists the Southern Thames St. neighborhood as having the highest percentage of foreign born residents, at 42%.

Newport's reputation as a resort town contributed to the city's growing population rate. Good climate, picturesque scenery, clean beaches and an active social life had attracted tourists to Newport since the 18th century. By the mid 19th century, Newport's tourist economy had caused a substantial building boom, starting with Chateau-sur-Mer, the first of the Bellevue Ave. mansions. As new construction continued along Bellevue Ave., more people were called into the building trades, such that by the middle of the century nearly 30% of all Southern Thames St. neighborhood residents worked in construction. House construction also provided an important alternative occupation for those living along the waterfront who were

SERVING THE MANSIONS: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CHARLOTTE BAKER



21 Dean Ave.

Charlotte Baker lived on 21 Dean Ave and worked as a housemaid in one of Newport's private residences. Her job was to serve the family's needs, which she did from early in the morning until well into the evening. Her daily routine exemplified what working on Bellevue Ave. was like during the nineteenth century.

Charlotte arrived at work before her family got up. Early morning chores included replacing candles where needed, cleaning up after the previous night's activities and completing other small jobs. She would have dressed in a work dress to accomplish all these tasks.

When the family awoke, Charlotte would have donned a pinafore over her dress, or changed her dress entirely, to

prepare for the breakfast meal. After serving the meal, she would return to dusting and cleaning the furniture. She would also brush and fold clothes and hats and, when needed, she might help receive items at the rear of the house.

Dinner was the most important meal in the household. Charlotte would have helped prepare for this event by ensuring that the table, chairs and setting were properly presented. Once again, she would have changed into a clean uniform for the serving duties. She would also have assisted the family or any of the family's guests with their attire. And, she would have helped serve all the different courses of the meal and with cleanup. Before returning to her own home, Charlotte would have assisted with the closing of the house and with any other after dinner activities. It would have been a very long day indeed!

—Chris Blanchette

affected by dips in various maritime industries.

Proximity fostered a live/work relationship between the Bellevue Ave. neighborhood and the Southern Thames St. neighborhood. While the mansions offered work to servants, gardeners, coachmen and grooms, the Southern Thames St. neighborhood provided housing, a thriving business network, a variety of religious institutions and a labor force, all within an easy commuting distance. As both neighborhoods grew, their relationship perpetuated a new cycle of economic activity—the mansions attracted visitors, increasing the need for hotels, restaurants, drivers, policemen, firemen, schoolteachers and other service workers, which in turn

attracted more visitors and required more help at the mansions. This cycle also fueled the infill of housing within the Southern Thames St. neighborhood itself.

Real estate speculation was a good investment. Aside from building new homes, the growing population also required temporary housing, creating a solid rental market. Tenants were so plentiful that purpose-built boarding houses can be found in all areas of the neighborhood. Examples include the Vito Havarra House (13 Holland St., pre 1884), the Margaret M. Sullivan Boarding House (28 Narragansett Ave., 1899) and the M.J. and C. Burns House (25 Young St., 1880). Rental properties also took the form of duplexes, as at

10-12 Dixon St. (pre 1895), the Joseph W. Kelley House (15-17 Dennison St., pre 1859-76), and the Bella Rothnie House (39-41 Webster St., pre 1883).

Home ownership was an important achievement for the immigrant working class. The formation of the Newport Cooper-ative Association

THE MARGARET M. SULLIVAN BOARDING HOUSE



10-12 DIXON ST.



THE TIMOTHY P. CROWLEY HOUSE



THE C.W. AND N.E. NORTH HOUSE



for Saving and Building in 1888 provided mortgage loans to its shareholders and encouraged saving. This association helped many in the Southern Thames St. neighborhood purchase houses, or purchase lots and building materials. For the streets south of Lee Ave., it was not uncommon for the owner to build his own house, using friends as laborers. The majority of the area's buildings were built between 1880 and 1920, and by local hands.

The residential architecture of this period continued to reflect the myriad of housing options available to those in the neighborhood. Single-family homes remained the most common within the area, but multiple-family homes, boarding houses, and tenements were built or converted from existing stock in all areas of the neighborhood during this time. Most structures, even the boarding houses, followed a common vernacular form, that of a 2-3-story building with end gable roof, stone or brick foundation, and weatherboard or shingle siding. By placing these forms in close proximity to each other and the street, the neighborhood's vernacular form created a unique urban quality that is recognizable on its streets to this day. Architectural details could vary greatly from simple moldings around doorways and windows to elaborate verge-board decora-

tions. Many buildings had front porches, some enclosed, with decorative brackets, turned posts, and scrolled decorations.

Despite the simplicity of the basic vernacular form, houses in this neighborhood express a variety of architectural styles. The most frequently-used architectural style was the Queen Anne, although the Colonial Revival, Shingle Style, and Second Empire were also well represented. Because it was common for lot owners to build their own houses, architectural detail and style offered an opportunity for artistic expression. The Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles were flexible in their detail and could therefore be elaborated upon according to personal taste. The use of the vernacular form in this way reflects a neighborhood-wide approach to building that is likewise unique in Newport's history—one where the personal tastes of the builder/owner were merged with a neighborhood-wide approach to building. The M.L. Leeson House (18 Webster St., 1903), the Timothy P. Crowley House (13 Hammond St., 1900), 9 Dean Ave. (1891), the William W. Marvel House (6 Pope St., c. 1865), the C.W. and N.E. North House (27 Brewer St., pre 1884), and 8 Stockholm St. (pre 1896) are testimonies to this trend, as are many others within the Southern Thames St. neighborhood.

Two examples demonstrate how the basic form could be altered according to choice. The Catherine M. Sullivan House (38 Hammond St., pre 1888) is a 2-story, Queen Anne-style house with center chimney, end gable roof, and brick foundation. The front porch determines the style, with its simple, brackets, clean lines and gentle curves. Other architectural details are kept to the minimum—the gable has simple moldings and the porch rail is straight. In contrast, the Timothy J. Sullivan House (30 Narragansett Ave, 1902) alters the basic format in the opposite direction. Its end gable form has a subordinate gable covering an octagonal, 2-story, bay window. The porch is shrunk to half the façade length and the scrolled brackets are more muscular. The house is also taller and uses a combination of decorative shingles and plain weatherboards. Both houses read like the

THE CATHERINE M. SULLIVAN HOUSE



Southern Thames St. neighborhood type, a simple end gable house, but their variations clearly reflect each owner's personality.

Some houses testify to greater architectural ambitions. The John Carey, Jr., Cottage (523 Spring St., c. 1876) exemplifies the diversity within the building stock of this neighborhood. Carey, son in law to John Jacob Astor, owned one of the estates that backed up to Spring St. and in 1876 built a gardener's cottage at the corner of Spring and Narragansett, across the street from his property. The building was designed by Sturgis & Brigham, a prominent Boston architectural firm, as an elaborate, Swiss-chalet with cross gables, porches, decorative shingles, and spindle posts. Although the architecture of this building is a departure for the area, it fits the neighborhood's working-class theme, as it, too, was built for a laborer and his family.

THE TIMOTHY J. SULLIVAN HOUSE



As the largest ethnic group, the Irish dominated this unified but architecturally diverse neighborhood, to the extent that even their social institutions found a presence in the landscape. The Ancient Order of the Hibernians, an Irish fraternal society, was founded in 1870 and moved into the former Grace Chapel (2 Wellington Ave., c. 1888) after the turn of the century. The Protective Club was founded in 1904 and currently occupies the Jeremiah Crowley House (596 Thames St., 1893). The Knights of St. Patrick also had a chapter, although no physical location associated with this group survives. These cultural organizations fostered pride within the Irish community and brought them together as a group. They also provided support for newly-arrived immigrants, offered a network of support for businesses and were a focal point for the expression of Irish music and culture. ☘

THE JOHN CAREY, JR., COTTAGE



Despite a number of 20th-century encroachments, the integrity of the Southern Thames St. Neighborhood is generally good.

Most buildings survive with minimal alterations and retain much of their original architectural character. Only three major gaps exist. The first is at the intersection of Thames and Wellington, formerly the Newport Gas Light Company but now a gas station and postmodern shopping center. The second is a late 20th century condominium development built on the waterfront side of Coddington Wharf. The last is a series of condominium and postmodern shopping centers located between Brown and Howard's Wharf and Perry Mill Wharf. These gaps are either hidden behind historic buildings on Thames St. or fit into established neighborhoods, making them less apparent to the eye. These encroachments reflect efforts on the part of the local community to improve its economy through postmodern developments.

Fortunately, the effect of these developments has been diminished by Newport's stringent zoning requirements, which have generally maintained the historic scale of the neighborhood streets. The overall character of the Southern Thames St. neighborhood has not been changed, nor has look of the neighborhood been compromised. Instead, the neighborhood retains most of its original character as a late-19th-century, working-class neighborhood. The high quality of the surviving historic fabric is readily apparent in the neighborhood's residential, commercial and industrial buildings, making the Southern Thames St. neighborhood one of the most cohesive in the area.

The Southern Thames St. neighborhood today reflects the achievement of the American Dream. Learning from the hard times of the potato famine, its Irish immigrant population built a community that mixed their native values with their adopted American values. The social, religious, economic, industrial and commercial institutions that they founded not only provided for the welfare of the community but also found a distinguishable architectural expression within the landscape. The close-knit Irish community and the neighborhood that they created thrive to this day. ➤

THE SOUTHERN THAMES NEIGHBORHOOD FROM FORT DENHAM, C. 1874



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