Thompson's Point

A Few Facts and Fancies About a Favorite Summer Resort

Dock, Thompson's Point, Vt., in June, 1910

By

JESSIE S. GIBBS
A huge airliner zooms over our cottage. I watch its very modern and important flight up the lake from my porch . . . a wonderful and inspiring sight. Yet, being an old-time Pointer, I can't help wishing that I were hearing instead the muffled roar of the paddle wheels as the steamer *Vermont* pushed slowly along the New York shore on its daily voyage to Montcalm Landing. Nor can I resist a slight wish that the Brown's naphtha launch was anchored beyond the Adsit's "speedboat" and Dick Irving's portly figure could be seen on The Big Dock, surrounded by his usual audience of rapt listeners.

Yet from the Sandy Beach I hear the laughter of children; another generation is enjoying, like their fathers and mothers and their grandparents and grandmothers, the blessings of a Point vacation. I know the Point is still the Point, a place whose beauty and freedom and happiness will long continue to give youngsters a storehouse of delightful memories to cherish through a lifetime in the difficult and nerve-wracking world of today.

Yes, the Point in essence is the same as when I first saw it back in the nineties, a grand vacation home for young and old. But there have been changes, many of them. When Fritz Sheppardson asked me to recount a few of them, to write a sort of brief history of the Point, he not only presented me with a formidable task; he gave me a delightful winter of reading among old books and yellowed newspapers. In fact, the chance to read Captain Stowell's diary, alone, was a tremendously interesting experience. For the good captain, one of the early Pointers, and a devoted camper-outer since his days in the field with a Vermont regiment in the Civil War, was meticulous in his recording of Point history. His daughter, Mrs. Julia W. Carroll, has been more than kind to allow that precious manuscript out of her hands through the winter months. Yet Point history doesn't start even with that splendid diary of early days. It starts hundreds . . . yes, even millions of years before.

For, although a certain sea monster of an early geologic era showed very bad taste when he settled down for eternity on Split Rock on the New York shore (as his yellowed remains still prove to the anchored fisherman) other more intelligent denizens of the sea must have found the Point a pleasant resting place.
And the twin boulders on the Currier shore which came down from Canada with the ice sheet liked the place and stayed.

There is no record that the doughty Samuel de Champlain visited the Point on his famous journey of discovery in 1609. But certainly its then forested outlines must have been noted by the French explorer. For the Point formed one end, Split Rock the other, of the boundary line between two then mighty nations . . . the Algonquins and the Iroquois. When they were at war, a none-too-rare occurrence . . . voyage beyond this boundary meant for the trespassing brave a quick removal of his scalp lock.

The wars between the Iroquois and Algonquin nations merged into far greater wars of Empire. It is difficult to think of our quiet, peaceful valley as an international trouble spot, the center of struggles which shook the world. Yet, for long years of the embattled Eighteenth Century, England and France fought for control of Champlain as the quickest, most direct way to unlock the Western continent. Later, when England tried to hold her reluctant American colonies, whole fleets fought these waters.

So if one wants to dream a bit, it is possible to visualize Arnold’s fleet of rugged little sloops and gondolas passing the Point on their way north to battle the British at Valcour Island. Or to see them straggling back, after that engagement so important to the American cause, heading for final haven in Button Mold Bay near Basin Harbor. Or from a vantage point on the bluff where the old windmill now stands, to watch Gentleman Johnnie Burgoyne’s proud armada on its way to defeat for England and a decisive triumph for colonial arms at Saratoga.

The first time the Point actually got in the news, though, was in the War of 1812. The British had bottled up the Lake again until Commodore McDonough’s little fleet sailed out of Otter Creek to defeat them at Plattsburg. According to the ancient story, certain Charlotters made an excursion to the Point to see the goings-on. While they were on the bluff taking themselves a good look at the British fleet, one of the gentlemen just couldn’t resist trying a shot at the British. So he upped with his fowling piece and pulled the trigger. The British quickly replied with a slight but very effective cannonade, forcing the gentleman and his friends to retreat to more comfortable quarters.

This anecdote may be more fable than fact. But discovery of various Indian and other relics has shown that the Point, with
its many little harbors, was, as now, a welcome encampment for voyagers heading north when the wind was really blowing. For many years, those voyagers held the fate of nations in their hands.

Recent biographers of Ethan Allen and novelists interested in Vermont's early days have made the story of the Hampshire Grants too well known to need detailing here. Yet, some reference must be made to the saga of the Green Mountain Boys. Removing the historical romance from their activities for the battle of the Hampshire Grants, it can be explained as an early feud between warring real estate interests. The Royal Governor of New Hampshire, Benning Wentworth, was a man of expensive tastes and liked to live up to them. The land between the Connecticut River and Lake Champlain looked to him like a real estate gold mine. So, in spite of some question as to his right under Royal Charter to sell off these lands to colonists, as Hampshire Grants, he did, as the saying is, "a land office business" in what is now Vermont acreage. New York's Governor soon got wind of the fact that settlers were moving into the Hampshire Grants, which he considered strictly within New York's own chartered territory. So, being a business man himself, he sent surveyors. He got a ruling from the king. He did everything he could to dispossess the Grants people. But, unfortunately for New York, one of the middle men in the real estate operation bore the name of Ethan Allen. Ethan organized the men of the Grants into a sort of guerilla band, called the Green Mountain Boys, and fought off New York attempts to get rid of the holders of Wentworth's debatably legal grants.

How the Green Mountain Boys went on to further glory at Fort Ti and how Ethan and his friends created the Republic of Vermont is for the history books to tell.

What is important here is that one of the Hampshire Grants was bought by a settler named McNeil. Another by a settler named Ferris, in 1762. And these grants bordered on our Thompson's Point. For in 1787, Ferris deeded half his land to a man named Scovil, and this deed describes the land as "lying south of Thompson's Point joining the Great Bay" with one boundary extending to a "dry cedar on Thompson's Point."

This is the first discoverable mention of Thompson's Point. Earlier, a New York merchant who owned land under New York grant from below Westport to Port Kent had called the Point
“Cloven Foot,” probably suggested by the gorge in the face of the cliff. It is this name which appears on English maps of 1765 to 1799. The bay on these maps is called “The Bay of the Vessels.”

Who, then, is Thompson? That question will have to remain among the unanswered. Though two guesses have been made. The Charlotte town records show that part of the McNeil grant was transferred to one Abel Thompson. But whether he was our Thompson or not... well, that’s the first guess. The second guess is inspired by the fact that Lake Champlain boasts two Thompson’s Points. The other, and of course lesser, being at Mallets Bay. This leads to the none-too-convincing theory that our Mr. Thompson was a hunter who made camp at both places so often they just naturally became Thompson’s Points.

We can’t be sure, then, exactly who Mr. Thompson really was. But we do know that in 1809, Stukely Westcott, grandfather of Mrs. Henry Field of Ferrisburg, bought more than one hundred and forty-six acres of the Ferris land. This area, now part of the present Town Farm, as well as the Point itself, were together purchased by the Town of Charlotte in 1839 for $4,200. Knowing what happened later, this cannot be considered a bad investment.

But in the early days of the Nineteenth Century, the Point was profitable only to the local hunters and fisherman who used it as a camping ground. To those who have difficulty these days bringing in even a small rock bass, I recommend reading some of the tales of Ferrisburg’s celebrated yarn spinner, the New England original, Rowland Robinson. There they will discover that in the lake, in the early and middle days of the past century, fish were prolific and would bite practically on anything. And the Point teemed with game birds.

Our Point colony, in fact, started as a sportsman’s club. The first building erected on the Point was a club house built near the gorge. It was only a tent with a board roof. But so popular was this first “club house” that, two years later, increasing club membership necessitated the construction of a wooden frame club house. Apparently, the club was more successful with canvas walls, for in seven years the club disbanded and the wooden building was moved across the road years later—becoming the cottage of Mr. John Stewart, of Middlebury.
Yet, though they gave up their club, the club members, like most Pointers who were to follow them, couldn’t give up the Point. They had already chosen various sites round the bay, and thus were the true founders of Thompson’s Point as we know it today—the first Point “campers.” These sites included the little fingers of land jutting out into the big bay: the present Furman cottage site, then, of course, without the Big Dock, an actual point; the McCormack point, The Colby point, and the Simpson point.

![McCormack Point](image)

As early as 1874, John Thorpe, one of the club members, and campers, had already passed beyond the tenting stage and had built himself a wooden frame cottage on the present McCormack point. By the Eighties, there were quite a number of cottages lining the lake shore. The Colby cottage rose in 1880. A Mr. Hubbell of Charlotte built the Furman cottage in 1883. The Fuller and Gibbs cottages date before 1887. As an appendix to this little history, I am listing the dates and owners of all the present (A.D. 1948) cottages on the Point proper. But anyone who wonders at our somewhat quaint architecture with its occasional marks of American Gothic and its complete lack of contemporary design must realize that the Point as a summer resort was born in the days when croquet was an active sport, and feminine charms were well swathed in what was more the Odd Look than the New Look.
As a matter of fact, anyone who would delve into our Ferrisburg writer's lore will find some of the strongest epithets in Rowland Robinson's arsenal directed at the effete Pointers of the Nineties who frightened the wild life away from Thompson's Point with their croquet and their new fangled interest in tea parties and gathering to meet the lake steamers. For, of course, a shocking change it must have been to the old fishermen and hunters who saw their camping place become a little Saratoga on the Lake. The days when Thompson's Point colony was a group of tents pitched in deep woods by the lake shore were over. Civilization had arrived.

Yet some of the old timers from the primitive days lingered on. There was Carl Thompson, a Yankee in the old Green Mountain Boy tradition, who knew the lake fishing instruments. Nigger Jim, a wonderful giant of a man, who like the other old Charlotte negro families, owed his free life in Vermont to the fact that Charlotte was once a station on the Civil War's underground railroad. And Old Lige who always accepted an offer of food or drink with the remark, "Seein' you've urged me so hard, I reckon as how I will."

It was one of these fine characters who had the Pointers in hysteries on the memorable night that the lake steamer brought President Theodore Roosevelt to the Point. Naturally, that was a big event . . . having the President of the United States visit Thompson's Point. Every cottage was decorated with Japanese lanterns and the colorful kerosene lamps, blue, red, green, which in those days were strung along each porch on festive occasions. There was even a torchlight procession. And leading it was this slightly over-stimulated gentleman, yelling in a fine loud voice . . . "Hooray for Cleveland."

In spite of the unusual greeting, the President enjoyed himself, spending a typically comfortable Point night at the present Ward Cottage as the guest of his Secretary of the Treasury, Leslie M. Shaw, a then Point resident. That the Point was, in those days, so close to Washington was due to the presence of that wonderfully wise and charming Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court, David J. Brewer. Justice Brewer for several years owned the present Currier cottage.

Of course, the President could have stayed at the Point's own hotel. For in 1896 such a hostelry had arisen. In spite of the
HOTEL
CHARLOTTE.

THOMPSON POINT

Much has been said of our beautiful Lake Champlain, its clear waters, and great fishing grounds where pike, pickerel, perch, and other kind of fishes are caught in abundance.

Its shores are dotted with summer resorts and cottages which are occupied from May until October, each season, by those coming from cities, to revel in the sunshine, beautiful sunsets and inhale the pure fresh air which gives new life and vigor, and gives them new energy for duties on their return home.

THE RESORTS
Are scattered along the shores of the lake and visits back and forth furnish a delightful variety and spice to lake life.

HOTEL
CHARLOTTE.

THOMPSON POINT

Is a new house, and newly furnished. It is located on a bluff which overlooks the lake for miles each way. It is shaded with cedar trees. It is noted for not having mosquitoes. There is also a fine bay where those who choose can enjoy the pleasure of bathing.

Nothing is so inspiring as life giving as a day about Lake Champlain, when the summer sun is shining—the blue sky, the crystal waters, the grand old forests with their inviting shades captivate one and arouse a love for the beautiful.

There are many shaded walks that extend back among the cottages, while others takes one along the shores of the lake. No more romantic spot could be selected for Excursions. Lunch can be taken and after that has been partaken of, what can be more entrancing to the fancy than to sit and quietly read by the shore, the waters rippling smoothly at your feet, or the time can be passed in rowing or floating about the bays.

HOTEL
CHARLOTTE.

THOMPSON POINT

Situated 22 miles from Burlington, 2 miles from Cedar Beach, 3 miles from Long Point and 10 miles from Westport.

The Hotel will accommodate forty guests. It is situated on the most beautiful site along the lake.

THE CUISINE

The tables will be supplied with eggs, butter, milk, cream, etc., vegetables, meats of all kinds, and such delicacies that are obtainable in their season. The management has taken proper care that the table appointments are first-class.

APPOINTMENTS

The rooms are large, airy and cleanly furnished. Every room permits a view of the lake.

AMUSEMENTS

A Steam Yacht can be chartered for the day or hour at reasonable rates, or boating and fishing can be had any where near the hotel.

People troubled with malaria will find this place a great benefit to them.
**HOTEL CHARLOTTE**

**THOMPSON POINT**

**HOW TO GET THERE**

The large and elegant Steamer Chateaugay lands at the wharf twice a day, making it convenient for any who desire to take a trip up or down the lake and back.

**TERMS**

Transient guests, $2.00 per day
By the week, $7.00 to $11.00

*Wm E HOSFORD, Proprietor*

CHARLOTTE, VERMONT

**HOTEL CHARLOTTE**

**THOMPSON POINT**

*Wm E HOSFORD, Proprietor*

CHARLOTTE, VERMONT

As Advertised
As It Was

advertising cards distributed by the first proprietor of the Glenwood Inn, originally called Hotel Charlotte, it was not the imposing three-story brick building he claimed, but a rambling wooden structure whose only honest boast through the years was a wonderful view of the lake toward Essex. Eventually it was purchased by Mr. L. A. Van Bomel, now president of National Dairy Products, and later became the garage now owned by Mr. Bond Davis.

But in no sense should the Glenwood Inn’s importance to Point history be minimized. Though it may have lacked much in architectural charm, cuisine and service, it was the center of Point life for many years. One room of the hotel was a combined cigar and candy store and, more important, the Thompson’s Point post office. Originally, mailing a letter was a complicated process. One either hurried to the boat landing and handed it to the captain or the purser of a lake steamer—or walked a mile or more to the Poor Farm where the Old Brick Store delivery wagon would pick it up. But the Glenwood Inn post office solved that problem until the coming of the R. F. D. in 1921. Though, to repeat, the Glenwood Inn post office was far more than just a place to get the mail. It was Thompson’s Point’s favorite town hall and forum. Here met the little group of men who tackled
such needs of our growing community as water, ice and light and winter caretaking.

These Point fathers were considerably helped in their work by the arrival on a lake steamer one evening of a very erect and dignified member of the Abnaki Indian Tribe from Canada, Simon Obomasawin and his rather roly-poly squaw, Agnes. They were selling sweet grass baskets and originally considered the Point a mere sales stop. But Simon was to remain for many years, not only as the Point odd-job man, caretaker, and lamp lighter—but probably the closest approximation to the ideal of the “noble Redman” outside a Fenimore Cooper novel. Simon’s honesty, his unassuming dignity, his courtesy made him one of the most beloved of Point residents. If his good wife lacked all of these qualities, she made up for them in such contributions to Point lore as the bear episode.

One of the Point youngsters, now a respected grandfather, while walking beyond the Falby cottage at dusk saw what he believed to be a bear on the limb of a great tree beside the path. Hurrying home, he got a shot gun and was about to kill bruin. But before he could even lift the gun, the bear fell off the limb onto the ground and started making remarks in Abnaki. It was Agnes, Simon’s squaw, enjoying one of her rather frequent “Lost Weekends.”

Among the pictures of the Point of yesterday that I particularly cherish is Simon, with his long, lithe Indian stride, moving along the Point path at dusk lighting the kerosene lamps, sure warning to the youngsters playing “Red Rover” and “King Kang Kaloosh” that it was time for bed.

But to get back to our Point fathers. The first problem that faced the campers as the colony grew was pure water. In the early days, of course, it was simple, if slightly wearying, to take a pail to the lake’s edge, and fill it. Later the labor problem if not the purity problem was aided by the installation of typical old-fashioned farm kitchen pumps in the cottages. These pumped water from a pipe run out into the lake from each cottage. In 1896 it was decided that this was a pretty dangerous practice. So fourteen of the campers got together and spent four hundred and twenty dollars for a windmill, which they located on the bluff above the Currier cottage. The windmill pipe was extended far enough into the lake to insure pure water. A water tank was
built where the Bob Adsit, Jr., cottage now stands. And each
cottage furnished the pipe connecting with this for its own use.
Eventually, as more cottages joined this water system, an assess-
ment arrangement was worked out. Through the years the water
was repeatedly analysed by the State Board of Health Labora-
tory.

This was all fine and good except during too extended pe-
riods of calm, when the windmill idled. To solve this, a gasoline
pump was added. But the most impressive addition to our water
supply was the big tank raised in 1923 under the supervision of
one of the most Point-spirited members of our colony through
the years, Mr. Frank McCord. One of the leading construction
engineers of the country, Mr. McCord enjoyed a real busman’s
holiday recruiting Point labor and bossing the job as carefully
as if it were the framework for one of his New York skyscrapers.

Because of all this the per cottage assessment for the excep-
tionally large and imposing tank was only sixty-five dollars. The
story of Point water supply concludes with the replacing of the
gasoline engine with a quieter electric motor, of the original small
pipe line with one large enough to guarantee use for fire protec-
tion. This pipe line, laid in 1940, with the advice of the Burling-
ton Fire Department, has valves of correct size, at frequent inter-
vals for connection with regulation fire hose. A chlorinator was
added in 1941 to insure purity.

Another problem, faced originally by our Point fathers in
their informal meetings on the Glenwood Inn porch, was the now
outmoded need for natural ice. Originally each cottage had its
own ice house, which was filled individually. As ice was used,
these became roomy enough to supply Point children with play
houses. Of course, contemporary pediatrics would no doubt
frown upon these dark and dreary shacks as playgrounds. But
the sawdust with which the ice was packed had a sort of circus
tan bark quality about it. The ice houses were big enough to
become all manner of things from circus rings to acrobats’ head-
quartes, from forts and castles to Indian fighter stockades. So
what they lacked in health-building qualities they supplied in
springboards for the imaginations of our Point youngsters. Par-
icularly was this true of one, now the McCormack garage, which
boasted a trapeze of iron pipe, equal in splendor to anything
Ringling Brothers or Barnum and Bailey have ever boasted.
Unfortunately, the problem of getting these ice houses properly to function as ice houses became more and more complicated and expensive. So community action created, in 1922, a Thompson’s Point Ice Association which built a large ice house near our present club house. This association functioned as a consumer cooperative with each cottage entitled to one share of stock; which rated the stockholder a small discount on his ice bills from the association, and, even more, supplied him with a small dividend, when Mr. J. L. Hall, one of our outstanding Point fathers and prime mover in the ice association, closed his yearly books. The electric ice box brought an end to what was a sturdy example of community enterprise.

As has been said, the Ice Association was formed in 1922. A year later the Thompson’s Point Association, perhaps inspired by the formal structure of the Ice Association, adopted by-laws, chose a definite date for its annual meeting, and set up a few rules to be observed by the membership—rules which Charlotte’s Thompson’s Point superintendent has willingly and cheerfully helped enforce. The superintendent elected by the voters of Charlotte at their annual town meeting in March, is, of course, our true representative of government as the Point is still an area of small lots, rented on long-term lease from the town.

But the association, minus such formal trappings, had long been functioning. The wide porch of the Glenwood Inn was its birthplace. But early meetings of the self-appointed Point fathers took place at various cottages. There were officers, a president, secretary and treasurer. And a summer Sunday seldom passed without such Point worthies as Captain Stowell, Williard Green, Walter Blake, Alvaro Adsit, Austin Gibbs marching along the path on an inspection tour. And, as Sunday in the old days was a fairly formal occasion, the Point fathers were a stately and impressive sight in their blue suits and stiff straw hats.

It was they, of course, who voted in the lighting system which Simon Obomsawin so faithfully kept lit until the miracle of electric light made us momentarily forget the tragedies of World War I when Col. E. P. Woodbury brought it to the Point in August, 1918. Each cottage owner had his cottage wired at his own expense and also put up around seventy dollars for the more illuminating, if less romantic “street” lights. In 1920, a transformer was installed, completing the Point lighting system.
Equally important for the Point fathers to solve was the problem of docking facilities for the lake boats. To present-day campers, Champlain Lake steamers must seem completely non-functional relics of the past. Only an occasional evening visit from the truncated Ticonderoga, sweeping disdainfully round the Point and in a swift circle across the big bay, reminds us old timers that there was a day when the lake steamers were the most important elements in Point life.

In 1888, the Champlain Transportation Company launched the new lake steamer Chateaugay, pronounced "Shattygay." So it was necessary for the Point to have a good-sized dock if we were to be a port on the new steamer's daily voyage from Westport to Basin Harbor, Cedar Beach, Essex, Burlington, Port Kent and Plattsburg. The dock then on the bay side of the Hubbel lot was too small. So the first dock on the present site was built in 1892. This lasted until 1920 when a combined effort of the Association, the Transportation Company and the town of Charlotte built the present structure. The town was easily able to supply the lumber as a hurricane in 1918 had blown down more than five hundred Point trees.

The Ticonderoga, an even more splendid side wheeler, joined the fleet in 1906 and became the regular Point boat. The Vermont, grandest of all Point steamers, had been built three years before. But she never visited the Point, contributing merely a twice daily salute as she passed the Split Rock light house plus the remote thunder of her paddles and the distant gleam of her white flanks as she journeyed along Rattlesnake Mountain on her voyage from Burlington to Montcalm Landing.

The Chateaugay and the "Old Ti" were far more than remote thunder. They were, in turn, the alpha and omega of the Point day. The "Ti" left Westport at half past six. When you heard her tooting for the Point you knew it was breakfast time. In the late afternoon her friendly salute to Essex told you it was time to get supper on the table. And that grand, roaring blast as she came by the bluff and prepared to make her wide and majestic circle of the reefs preparatory to the Point landing was the signal for the entire colony to rush for the dock. There youngsters vied for the proud duty of grasping the ropes and making them fast to the posts. Surely an old Pointer can be excused for suggesting that the Point holds no present thrill to equal the moment when a
Point small fry was actually addressed by Captain Jack Rushlow, the “Ti’s” friendly skipper.

Enough has been said about the glamor which died in America when the lake and river steamers yielded to the automobile. I need only add my own quiet sigh and wish I could picture for Pointers who never enjoyed those friendly evenings welcoming the “Ti” the picturesque delight they gave us all. Though, of course, even this was small compared with the excitement offered the Point child, yes, or teen ager who was allowed to board the “Ti” for a Saturday evening Moonlight Sail to Westport. As the “Ti” made Sunday excursions from Burlington, she had to return Saturday night. That permitted a round trip from the Point to Westport. And Point people made the most of it. For years every cottage trimmed its porch with colored lanterns. The effect from the circling steamer matched anything modern neon can boast. The trip itself offered pleasures which would probably bore present day radio listeners. Two itinerant musicians, one with a wooden leg and a fiddle, the other with a harp supplied music for these Saturday evening boat rides.

“Corny” as it may seem to our young sophisticates, they played such tunes as “Good-night Ladies” which Point teen agers actually sang to the happy rhythm of the plunging paddle wheels. When the “Ti’s” search light picked up a pair of romantic canoists, joy, as the saying is, was unconfined.

Not only did the lake steamers set the pattern of Point life, they supplied never-to-be-forgotten episodes in Point history. Occasionally the “Ti” would offer a day time excursion to Port Kent and Ausable Chasm. This would bring out the local swains and their ladies in buggies which they would leave in the woods near our present Club House. This gave the Point juveniles a chance to change wheels on the buggies, and to use the horses during the day as cavalry mounts. The laments of the tired excursionists when they discovered the state of their equipment probably still haunt our North Shore woods.

The morning the “Ti” went aground off the Colby Point was another memorable occasion. As was the night when Joe Hanks, a Charlottter to whom the Saturday night excursions meant a chance to escape Vermont local option in the “Ti’s” bar, was told that there was such a thing as national Prohibition and “Ti” no longer could serve him as a floating oasis. His remarks to Cap-
tain Jack on that tragedy exploded with more noise than any rockets ever set off on a Point Fourth.

Can you blame us for being a sad little group the night in August, 1924, when the "Ti" docked for the last time? An era and a delightful one, had ended.

But depressed as we were to lose our "Ti," we were delighted the year previous when an abortive effort to run a Thompson's Point-Essex ferry ended. For a couple of years, this ferry, a converted yacht, had made port at a ramshackle dock which jettied out between the Carroll and Simpson cottages and made spasmodic trips to Essex, laying a continuous smoke screen.

No discussion of maritime life at the Point would be complete without a hasty reference to the bootlegging era. The hardy freebooters of Prohibition days purchased speedy cruisers and ran the gauntlet of the government revenue cutters to get Canadian liquor to thirsting New York. So the Point was treated to the excitement of ships that passed in the night... more than that, of having armed vessels lurking about our shores. But, as in the episode during the War of 1812, the Point served only as a scene of opera bouffe. For, after days of excitement, the revenue cutter which often harbored at the Point, weighed anchor one morning to give chase to a mysterious boat speeding beyond the South Reef. Of course, the Point hurried en masse to the dock to see the promised battle of Lake Champlain. Unfortunately, it developed that the enemy vessel was really another government boat. So none of the expected shots were fired.

But, if the bootlegger boats were sinister, they could not be compared with the Ploof's. The Ploofs were a family of sea-going or rather lake-going hillbillies. Their boats were probably the most original in the history of ship design. Constructed of whatever material drifted by their marine-squatting grounds in the slang of Lewis or Little Otter Creek, they boasted patched and dirty sails, and not too much speed. But to the Pointers' slightly amazed inspection their most interesting characteristic was the usual presence among the elements of the superstructure of some familiar Point object, such as boat house door or cottage shutters.

Because of their alleged kleptomaniacal tendencies, the Ploofs were none too welcome when their odd craft made harbor at the Point. The Ploofs with amazing fortitude, had argued their
right to docking privileges and shelter either from dead calm or storm anywhere along the lake shore right up to the Supreme Court in a case still familiar to all Harvard Law students. But Dick Irving kept them from the Point by very convincing gestures with a double barrelled shotgun. Simon Obomsawin, and from 1918, the equally faithful John Lucier, as caretakers, appointed by the Association, gave the Point protection from potential disreputors and pillagers of Point property during the off season months—a job now ably handled by the stalwart “Pete” Laberge.

For years Simon's snowshoe tracks were the sign of the law during Point winters. For years the sound of a strange car passing the Poor Farm set the faithful John’s moustache bristling while trespassers were told in stern French-Canadian-American to be off about less dubious business.

No Point saga, of course, would be complete without a salute to John Lucier. When he died, he was, as usual, cheerfully busy at his million and one Point tasks—tasks which had found him a hard and faithful worker for thirty-eight years. To those of us who for so long began our Point summers with John’s beaming welcome at the Point and later the Charlotte station, today’s arrival must mean a little catch at the heart. We are proud and happy to have the excellent Pete Laberge to solve our caretaker and jack-of-all-trades problems. But I am sure kind-hearted, thoughtful Pete would agree that a great personality left us when John B. Lucier departed to roar his grand laugh, yes, and even dance a fine John B. Lucier jig, in what I am sure must be a very cheerful paradise.

Perhaps it has seemed that I have lingered too long describing Point characters. But in the long winters when Point folk think of their favorite vacation spot—it is the people they think of—and particularly the people who by their singularity of character, their truly Vermont uniqueness stand out in one’s memory clear as Diamond Island on a bright summer morning.

Our little Club House built in 1922 has been enjoyed by us all. Club suppers have been served . . . and successful ones. The tennis courts have seen as exciting tennis as ever. And to move down the road and onto the Big Dock, Point children have had as much fun as any generation of Point youngsters—fishing and bathing from that rapidly disintegrating structure.
Yet to all but the newest of Pointers—Club House suppers, a tennis tournament, the Big Dock, above all the Big Dock, seem to be missing something, or rather, someone mighty important. Of course, I can only be referring to that grandest of all Point characters—Charles Edward “Dick” Irving. For many years Dick was the Point. As the skipper of a visiting yacht once asked when his ship moored at the Big Dock. “Is this the place where Dick Irving lives? I’ve come all the way from the Atlantic Ocean to see him.”

Dick, of course, was something to see. He weighed, well, to quote his own words, “Stant Williams’ scales aren’t big enough to weigh me.” Anyhow, it must have been on the far side of three hundred pounds. But, more important, Dick was something to listen to. He had fished practically every stream and lake from Canada to Key West. He had hunted game wherever you could flush a bird along the Eastern Seaboard. He had a fund of anecdotes that could have filled a hundred books. Like all the great story tellers, his imagination was active and unrestrained. To listen to him, particularly for Point boys and Point fathers seeking escape from the tedium of city life, was to enter a world of such adventures as the finest Abercrombie and Fitch advertisements could never even suggest.

Dick was the great grand nephew of Washington Irving. Perhaps the creator of Rip and the residents of Sleepy Hollow might, with a little aid from Dickens, have managed to build a personality almost as entertaining, as truly refreshing as Dick. He was the Mayor of Thompson’s Point. No child rowed a boat without advice from Dick, yelled in stentorian tones from the Irving porch. No child tried to fish without learning the importance of proper skill and well handled tackle from Dick. No New York business man, lost in the worry and struggle of metropolitan existence, spent a Point weekend without getting advice from Dick which he was to ponder and cherish, on truly enjoying Vermont and the simple life.

His huge gray felt sombrero, with the rattlesnake hat band, was a Point landmark. His laughter and the laughter of his ever present audience . . . are an undying part of the Point tradition. No doubt old Ethan Allen is enjoying at this very moment Dick’s story about the shotgun so big you could drop a silver dollar down the barrel. Or the one about the Civil War captain from
Vermont who sliced a Confederate's head off so neatly it was still able to order a drink at the bar.

Yes, Dick's hat has gone. No longer we hear such thunder as the day in the first World War when he stirred the Point into chaos by accusing a German spy of stealing the Point service flag from the Big Dock—only to discover it behind the piano in his own living room. No longer does a Point supper have the expert guidance of one of the great gourmets of all time. But, like Ethan Allen who is supposed to ride his great white horse arrayed in that fine green uniform the Irish gave him during his English captivity—across Vermont mountain sides on summer nights, so Dick, I am sure occasionally visits the Point to see whether it's lack of proper current or a full moon which keeps the fish from biting.

Anyway, I've rambled long enough. With Dick—my little Point story very fittingly closes. Fritz Shepardson should have known better than to get me started. For this has not been a very factual history. It's been pretty much sentiment and reminiscence—and chatter. But I hope it also has been in a little way, at least, Thompson's Point. For Thompson's Point, to me and I am sure to all of us, is more than just a neck of land stretching into Lake Champlain. It is more than just a place to go summers. It is a dream woven of friendships—heart warming as sunset across Point waters—a dream woven of memories, bright as the gleam of the September sun on the lake when the North wind pours the rollers across the bay. It is a little bit of heaven on earth which has brought eternal summer, fresh as children's laughter, into the lives of all of us who have shared the high privilege of being "campers" at Mr. Thompson's Point.
THOMPSON'S POINT COTTAGES—THEIR OWNERS
PAST AND PRESENT

The first sites chosen were the four points on the south shore
extending into the bay, and the first cottage was built by John
Thorpe of Charlotte in 1874. Later, about 1899-1900, this was
moved to Long Point. Fred Beckwith of Middlebury built on
that site, later sold to Col. E. P. Woodbury and in 1922 to Col.
W. H. McCormack.

The second point was that near the big dock where Mr. Hub-
bell of Charlotte built in 1883, sold to C. E. Irving in 1894 and
in 1947 to Dr. H. Furman of Princeton, N. J.

The Colby Cottage was built by Ovette Stone of Ferrisburg
in 1880 and sold to Prof. C. E. Colby in 1893. Since Prof.
Colby's death the cottage has been occupied each summer by Mrs.
Colby and daughter, Mrs. Dorothea Masacar, treasurer of our
Association.

The last point was that of the present Simpson cottage site,
built by Mr. Leonard Andrews in 1887. Previously he had
camped here in tents.

The Fuller and Gibbs cottages were built prior to 1887.

Martin Allen of North Ferrisburg built two cottages south
of the gorge in 1887. One was destroyed by lightning about
1907—the other, known as the Sarah Allen cottage in 1908 was
sold to W. H. Hackett of Ogdensburg and by his widow to R. J.
Adsit, Jr., in 1939.

The Russell Williams cottage was built by seven families from
Essex Junction in 1887 and sold to William Brown of Ruther-
ford, N. J. in 1909 and transferred in 1933 to the present owner.

The Carroll cottage was built by Capt. Henry Stowell in 1890.
Although he did not build earlier, he was among the earliest of
the ten campers who followed the Club members. As a young
man, he had fished along the Lake Shore... since 1850, returning
after the Civil War in 1866 to camp in tents with his family,
board at the Field home or rent the Ovette Stone cottage.

The Hicks cottage was built in 1894, sold to Mrs. M. De
The Blake Cottage now owned by Mrs. Edson Fuller was built by Willard Green in 1896.

The Ward Cottage was built by Dr. W. S. Roberts of Burlington before 1899—sold to Mrs. Alice Sprague in 1906—to W. C. Staley in 1908 and to H. Clay Ward, Jr. in 1930. This cottage had the honor of having President Theodore Roosevelt as an over-night guest in August, 1902.

The Caldwell Cottage was built by E. B. Bailey in 1891, later sold to Mrs. Helen Doutney and then to Everett Caldwell in 1912.

The cottage of Mrs. George Hicks lost by fire in 1943 was built by Arthur Crane in 1899—sold to Stanton Williams and later to W. W. Sample. Mrs. Hicks has just built a very attractive cottage to replace the one destroyed.

The Peene Cottage was built by George Pease in 1897. Sold to Mr. Root of Charlotte and later to Mr. Stephen Peene of Yonkers.

The Eno (Mrs. Sarah Sherman's) cottage was built about 1896.

The Rugg cottage was built by E. E. Clarkson. Later sold to Mrs. Payne of Celery Compound fame and by the heirs to Dr. George Miller and Miss Lanou. Mrs. Miller and Miss Lanou were sisters of Mrs. Alvaro Adsit. Since 1924 this cottage has been owned by A. B. Rugg.

The Currier cottage was built by Frank Manchester in 1891, later sold to Justice David Brewer and by his heirs to Mrs. N. Webb and her sister, Mrs. Cole in 1923. Transferred to Mrs. John Currier in 1932.

The Bond Davis cottage was built in 1896 by George Foot of Charlotte, sold to E. C. Orvis of Manchester, Vt., in 1905, to L. A. Van Bomel in 1919 and to Mr. Davis in 1943.

New among the later cottages are those of Mr. J. L. Hall, 1902, still in his possession—the Guy Norton cottage which was sold to Prof. Ernest Braun in 1936.

The Blanchard cottage was built by Frank Jackman.

The F. W. Shepardson cottage was built by C. L. Atwood in 1900, sold to Mr. Cory of Shelburne. Later to Mr. William Paine, Brookline, and to the present owner in 1936.

The William V. N. Stowell cottage was built in 1914 and was sold to H. W. Bedford of Middlebury in 1947.
Also among the later cottages are the Sidney Falby cottage built by Dr. Blodgett of Bellows Falls; later sold to A. L. Davis and more recently to Mr. Falby.

Three cottages were built beyond this, one known as the Perry cottage which was destroyed by fire, lease of lot now held by Loren Palmer of Burlington. Next, cottage owned by Mrs. Lucy Palmer of Burlington.

Mr. Charles Sackett of New Rochelle, N. Y. and Mr. Hawley of Pittsfield, Mass., have built attractive cottages on the north side of the Point taking the last lots available for building.

Mr. Robert Cartmell of Middlebury built a large cottage with dock on the Point across the South Bay in 1896. After years of vacancy it was sold to D. K. Lillie, Montpelier. More recently to a nephew of the original owner. Between the last cottages in the Thompson's Point Association and the Cartmell Point several pretty cottages have been built around the bay. There is also a colony on Flat Rock and a few facing Poor Farm Bay—the oldest built by Mrs. Johnson of Burlington and for many years owned by Mr. George Hagar.

A Mr. Osborne of Middlebury built a very large cottage on the north side of the Point back of our present tennis court, erecting his own windmill. The family was eccentric and exclusive which both annoyed and aroused the curiosity of the campers. After Mr. Osborne's and a daughter's deaths it was not used and the children called it "The haunted house." They certainly haunted it and were spared broken bones notwithstanding many perilous ascents on that windmill. It later became a good hide-out for bootleggers, and finally was destroyed by fire. More recently a cottage was built on a lot west of this by Mr. C. Voorhees of Hartford. This is the last cottage on the North Shore included in the Thompson's Point Association and has recently been sold to W. D. Hammond of Ridgewood, N. J.

Mr. Alvaro Adsit built a very attractive cottage between the Fuller and Stowell cottages in 1902. This was sold to Mrs. Alice Sprague in 1908, destroyed by fire in 1912. Mrs. Sprague rebuilt it, selling it to Mr. F. B. McCord of Flushing, N. Y. in 1922, and by his heirs to Mr. G. S. Brush in 1944.

After selling to Mrs. Sprague, Mr. Adsit built on the north side of the Point. This cottage was sold by Mr. Robert Adsit to Col. Elbridge Colby of Washington, D. C. in 1947.
There is a cottage colony on the North Shore extending into that bay and to the Bucklin farm. Also another group on Flat Rock facing the South . . . all of which are on the original Thompson's Point grant. These are not included in the Point Association.

The Van Vleit cottage originally between Falby and Braun was given by Davis to John Lucier who moved it to its present site.

The last cottage in the Association is owned by George K. Bicknell of Jericho, Vt., and was bought from Mrs. Schaeffer.