MARBLEHEAD GREAT NECK

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Salem, Massachusetts

1937

In the year 1831 the town of Marblehead gave consideration to the construction of a lighthouse. On August 30th, a petition was brought by Eleazer P. Graves and others to the selectmen:

to call a meeting to take into consideration the subject of having a lighthouse erected by the Government of the United States on the point of Neck at the entrance of the harbour and to see if the town then assembled will petition Congress for that purpose.

Considerable discussion ensued, not only over the merits of such an undertaking, but also concerning its position. The agent for the Government was Mr. Henshaw, the Collector of Port at Boston. His advice was to locate the lighthouse elsewhere than on the Neck. The local committee, however, resolved:

that it is not our intention to enter into the strife of bargaining for said point of Neck, our only object is to have the best spot selected; we have a good harbour and we wish to make it easy of access to the care worn and weather beaten mariner.

In 1835, definite plans were under way. On May 21st it was voted that the following resolve be accepted, viz.: "that the lighthouse be commenced immediately." A committee of five chosen to carry out this resolve consisted of John Ingalls, Edmund Bray, Richard Caswell, Francis Smith, Peter Dixey, Jr. The premises for the lighthouse were conveyed by Joseph W. Green and Ephraim Brown to the United States on July 10, 1835, and for the sum of $375.00. Work was started immediately and was completed within the year.

There is an old foundation at the end of the beach butting on the United States property. Maybe one of Marblehead's first houses stood there. An extract of the deed for this property in measuring the land states: "on the harbor side of said Neck, to a cove, including in said cove to the east of said line, a landing for boats and vessels."

The erection of the lighthouse made so favorable an impression upon the people of Marblehead, that with a



THE LIGHTHOUSE OF 1835

Courtesy of Miss Mary B. Bailey



THE EASTERN YACHT CLUB, 1860

Essex Institute Collections

view to extending the facilities of the port appeals were subsequently made for breakwaters in the harbor. A survey, estimate and petition was sent to Congress in 1838 for such construction from either Jack's Point or Point of Neck "into the harbour, to break the force of the sea in North Easterly and Easterly winds and make a safe anchorage for vessels in winter."

In 1840 the town appealed to Mr. Saltonstall of the House of Representatives and in 1845 another appeal was made to the General Court. No funds were ever forthcoming for this enterprise, there was no unanimity of feeling, and it was concluded:

First, a pier on the ballast from the Neck towards Skinners Head might be constructed to afford a shelter for a few fishing vessels and a refuge for a few light coasters or small vessels in case of a sudden blow . . . to make this harbor, not less than thirty thousand dollars would be required to build a pier on the ballast . . . the committee think the disadvantages more than counter balance the advantages of a pier on the ballast.

Mr. Ephraim Brown, who, we have learnt, had acquired nearly the entire Neck, petitioned the General Court, in 1855, for authority "to make and maintain a wharf . . . on the premises of your petitioner, said wharf to extend one hundred and fifty feet from lands of your petitioner."

It is interesting to observe the procedure then, compared to present times. The petition was ordered to be published twice in *The People's Advocate,* Marblehead, and in the Salem *Register,* following which an Act of the Legislature, with the Governor's approval, furnished the necessary authority, as follows:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

Ephraim Brown is hereby authorized to build and maintain a wharf from his own land adjoining the southeast side of the harbor of Marblehead, and to extend the same one hundred and fifty feet from high-water mark; and he shall have the right to lay vessels at the end and sides of said wharf, and to receive wharfage and dockage therefor: *pro-*

and, in 1874, Mr. S. H. Sawtell operated the hotel under the name of the Atlantic House.

To revert to the history of the lighthouse for a moment, it is interesting to observe from the Marblehead *Ledger,* dated November 14, 1860, that the second keeper of the Marblehead Light was Miss Jane C. Martin. The announcement follows:

Lighthouse Appointment. We learn from the Boston Journal that Miss Jane C. Martin has been appointed Keeper of light on the Neck, vice Ezekiel Darling, resigned. Miss Martin is a daughter of the late Capt. Ambrose Martin, who kept the Baker's Island light for a quarter of a century, and as assistant to her father, gained a thorough experience in light keeping.

Captain Darling was appointed when the Marble head light first went into operation, twenty years ago, and is now compelled to leave from the infirmities of age, being entirely blind. Capt. Darling did good service in the war of 1812, and was actively engaged in several of the privateers, for which Marblehead was noted during the war.

After the Civil War the shipping activities of Marblehead yielded to other industries and to the growth of Boston as a port. Where formerly we have seen that upwards of one hundred vessels were employed in the fishing trade here, the number was now reduced to less than a quarter of that number. A résumé from the town records of 1865 on this situation follows:

Mackerel & Cod Fisheries	
No. Vessels employed in the Mackerel & Cod Fisheries	23
Tonnage	1792
No of Barrels of Mackerel taken	420
Value of same	$5180.
No of quintals of cod Fish taken	19514
Value of same	$149,025.
Value of Cod Liver Oil Sold	$9,979.
" " salt consumed in fisheries	$15,390.
Amount of capital invested in the business	$92,000.
Coastwise & Carrying Trade	
No of Vessels engaged in the trade	2
Amount of tonnage of said vessels	396
Value of same	$18,000.
Amount rec'd for freight	$7,320.