

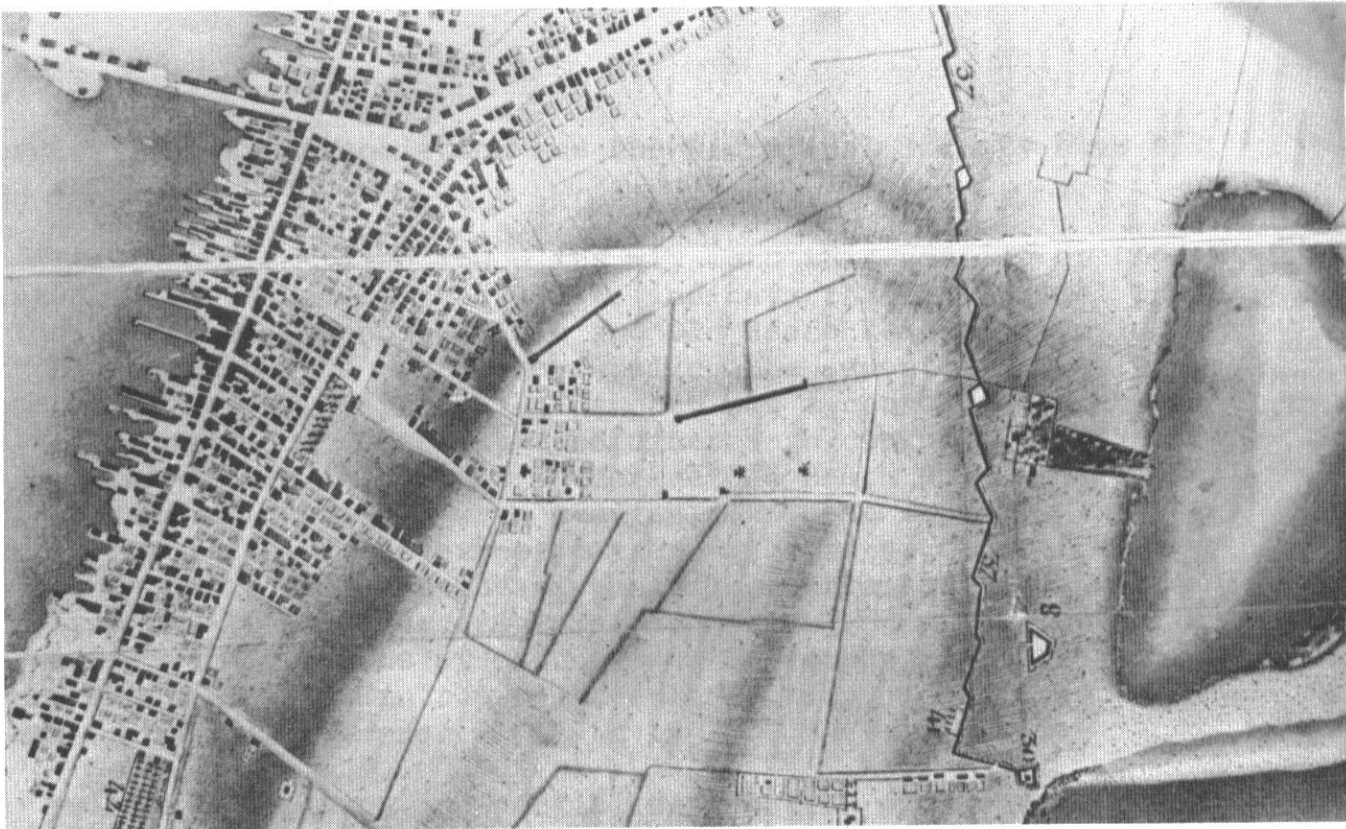
PART THREE: ANALYSIS

A. THE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES

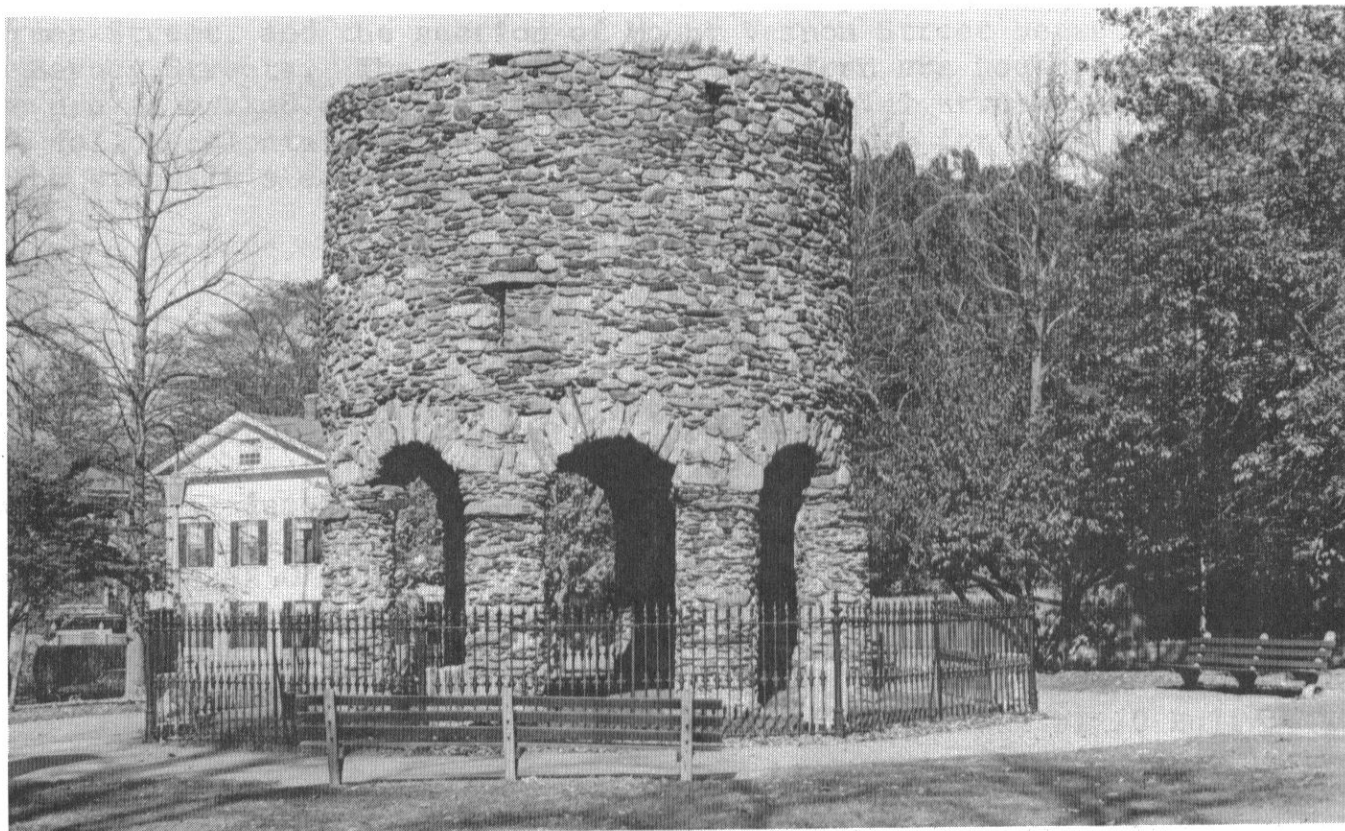
Newport's Kay Street - Catherine Street - Old Beach Road neighborhood achieved its greatest development in the era when Newport was the queen of American summer resorts. This period ran roughly from 1830 to 1910. Nevertheless, the area's earlier history is fascinating and merits telling on that count, and as a means of relating it to the adjacent and earlier section of the city.

Throughout the eighteenth century the area remained basically agricultural -- laid out in pasture land, orchards and garden plots. English and French maps of Newport dating from the period of the American Revolution reveal that this area had become the eastern edge of the built-up section of town. These wartime maps indicate the presence of a series of small fortification and communication trenches running across the brow of the hill and protecting Newport's east flank. These fortifications were built by the British and were expanded by French troops stationed in Newport in 1778. Late eighteenth century maps portray the nascent street pattern of the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood: Broadway, the western highway to the north; Spring Street, Touro and Barney Streets; and "Jew Street," the present northern section of Bellevue Avenue, where a few small houses stood in the vicinity of Redwood Library. Behind the library there was a series of short streets, alleys really, which today form Redwood and Elizabeth Streets, the northern half of Cottage Street, and sections of Catherine Street, Old Beach Road and Brinley Street (see map, page 10, figure 4).

At an early date the wealth and social diversity of colonial Newport fostered the institutional uses which still dominate Touro Street and northern Bellevue Avenue: Touro Cemetery (1677, restored in 1842), surrounded by a handsome fence designed by Isaiah Rogers; the Redwood Library (1748) and Touro Synagogue (1763), both designed by Peter Harrison; and the Sabbatarian Meeting House (1729), attributed to Richard Munday (moved to its present location from Barney Street). Nineteenth and twentieth century additions have augmented the institutional character of Touro Street and northern Bellevue Avenue. The Reading Room, the Mount Zion and Christian Science



F. 4 NEWPORT IN 1780
DETAIL OF ROCHAMBEAU MAP 41, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



F. 5 THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY STONE MILL
TOURO PARK

churches, the Art Association and the Historical Society have all been established here.

Light industry also found its way into this section on the outskirts of town. Maps of the 1770's indicate that a windmill stood at the corner of Greenough Place and Old Beach Road, and in Touro Park stands Newport's most famous relic, the seventeenth century Stone Mill (page 10, figure 5). Newport was a center for the production of ship's cordage into the nineteenth century. Several ropewalks were erected in the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road area where large tracts of open land were available. These ropewalks played a part in establishing the street pattern of this section of town. After they went out of business, their long straight sites were made into streets. This is the origin of the south end of Kay Street and the section of Catherine Street between Greenough Place and Rhode Island Avenue. Later in the nineteenth century, Tew's Court was formed in a similar manner.

British occupation and partial destruction of Newport during the American Revolution spelled an end to the mercantile prosperity of the town. As a result, Newport was in a state of decline verging on decadence which persisted into the 1820's. Despite the economic situation, two short streets adjacent to the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood were cut through in the early nineteenth century: Sherman Street, and the section of Mount Vernon Street between Bull and Barney Streets. The modest early republican era houses found here are in marked contrast to the robust colonial structures nearby. They follow colonial precedent in siting, however, for they are set on the sidewalk's edge.

B. ECONOMIC REVIVAL: 1825 - 1845

The period from 1825 to 1845 witnessed an effort to re-establish the economic vitality of Newport by investments in the whaling and textile industries. Eleven Newport vessels were active in the whale fishery and at least four steam cotton mills were erected in the town, most in the wharf area. Bull Street, established in this period, was, into the 1850's, the site of a cotton mill as well as an oil and candle factory. On Bull and Mount Vernon Streets are found a number of Greek Revival houses erected by local people for their own use. They are grander in scale than houses close by built in the early republican era. They include the Henry Bull House at 10 Bull



F. 6 TOURO CEMETERY (1677, 1842)
BELLEVUE AVENUE



F. 7 REDWOOD LIBRARY (1748)
BELLEVUE AVENUE



F. 8 THE SWINBURNE SCHOOL (c.1840)
115 PELHAM STREET



F. 9 THE BENJAMIN GARDNER HOUSE (c.1855)
28 MANN AVENUE

Street, and the Alfred Smith House at 12 Mount Vernon Street; both date in the early 1840's. Their siting reflects a change in planning concepts that affected the appearance of the city. Houses of this era are situated back from the sidewalk behind ornamental strips of lawn.

What has come to be known as the "typical" vernacular Greek Revival house -- a frame box with pitched roof, gable end to the street, and a side hall entrance -- though found in Newport, does not predominate. Here one encounters Greek Revival houses with the broad side facing the street, a central entrance, and either a pitched roof with the flank to the street, or a hip roof with a tall monitor. Frequently the street facade is finished with flush, matched board siding. With minor amendments, such broad, severe three bay Greek Revival facades became a prevalent Bracketed Style type found in the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood. Although the overall form of the Greek Revival house is retained in these houses, a piazza running the length of the facade is substituted for the central porch, and scrolled brackets are added to the wide plank entablature. 115 Pelham Street and 10 Bull Street exemplify the Greek Revival aspect of this house type; 28 Mann Avenue and 15 Bull Street, the Bracketed version (page 12, figures 8 and 9).

Though several of Newport's textile mills steamed on for twenty years and more, neither they nor the whalemens became a considerable factor in nineteenth century Newport's economy. The period 1825 - 1845 also witnessed the rapid expansion of a Newport enterprise which had been in existence on a modest scale for some hundred years or more: the resort industry. As early as 1729 wealthy planters and colonial officials were coming to Newport, attracted by its salubrious climate. A large portion of these visitors were South Carolinians and plantation families from the Caribbean Islands. Prominent southerners continued to summer in Newport until the Civil War. Members of the Izard family of Charlestown are listed in newspaper accounts of summer visitors of the 1770's and Ralph S. Izard built the stone villa on Pell Street in about 1850.

A review of the history of this development reveals that, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Newport's summer visitors stayed in rooms or houses rented for the season. They had little effect on the physical development of the town. This pattern began to change with the great increase in summer visitors during the 1830's. With the realization that in the purses of these summer visitors lay the economic future of Newport, hotels were built and

real estate entrepreneurs bought up large tracts of land to subdivide and sell for building sites. The Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road neighborhood was the first area developed largely in response to this influx. Here on "the hill," a pleasant rise overlooking the old town to the west and the beach to the east, the early hotels and cottages were built. As fashion changes, the role of the hotels declined and privately owned summer estates came to dominate the Newport social scene. By 1870, the conspicuously wealthy were taking possession of Bellevue Avenue south of Memorial Boulevard, Ochre Point and Ocean Drive. A more sedate, rather intellectual group gravitated to the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood.

C. THE ERA OF THE HOTELS

Hotel life, nearly forgotten in Newport today, and denigrated by Newport enthusiasts after the Civil War, played a key role in the evolution of the town as the nation's pre-eminent summer resort. In 1825, the first true hotel, the Brinley, soon renamed the Bellevue House, opened on Catherine Street (page15, figure10). In 1828 it advertised as follows:

BELLEVUE HOTEL Newport, (R.I.)

The public are respectfully informed, that the NEW HOTEL in this town, will be opened on the 1st of July, under the superintendence of Mr. F. Rouillard, an experienced landlord who will exert himself to give satisfaction. In addition to the Table d'Hote, private Dinner and Supper parties can be accommodated. -- Also, Soups and Coffee at all hours. The Bar will be furnished with the best of Wine and Liquors, and these of every description usually found in respectable Taverns. The Reading Room will contain the New York, Boston, Providence, Washington and some other Southern and Eastern papers. Board on reasonable terms, furnished by the day, week or year. -- The best beds, and their mattresses, entirely new.

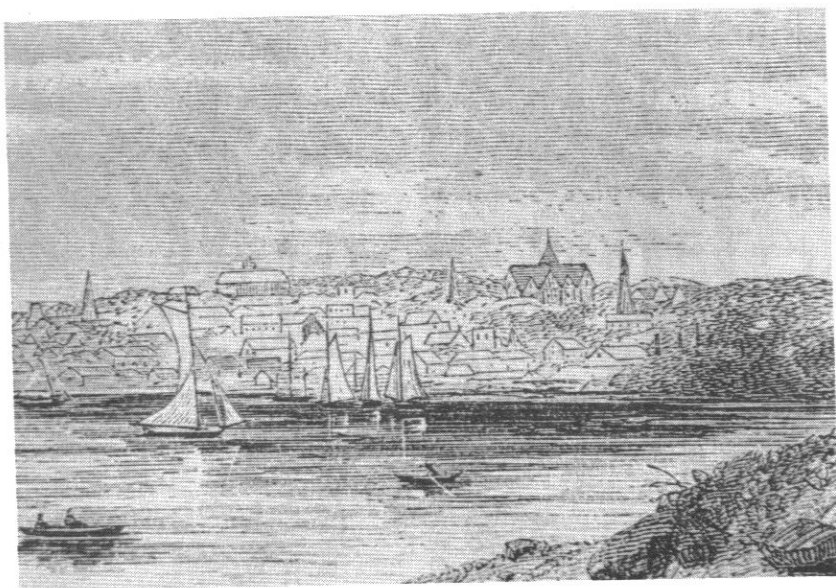
The heyday of Newport summer hotels commenced in the 1840's with the construction of the famous Atlantic and Ocean houses, both on Bellevue Avenue. Between 1855 and 1857 the Fillmore House went up on Catherine Street, where sections of it may still be seen. The



F. 10 THE BELLEVUE HOTEL IN THE 1850'S
FORMERLY ON CATHERINE STREET



F. 11 INTERIOR MOUNT ZION A.M.E. CHURCH
8 BELLEVUE AVENUE



F. 12 NEWPORT FROM THE HARBOR IN 1859



F. 13 EASTON'S BEACH IN 1859

west end of Catherine Street remained the location for similar establishments throughout the nineteenth century. Newport's principal twentieth century hostelries, the Muenchinger-King (now converted to use as offices and apartments) and the Viking, stand on Bellevue Avenue at the foot of Catherine Street.

The hotels of the 1840's were, for the most part, in the Greek Revival idiom. The Atlantic, the first Ocean House, the enlarged Bellevue and the Aquidneck on Pelham Street all had belvederes, near flat roofs, wide plank entablatures and extensive piazzas. Of these, only the Atlantic House had a temple-front, pedimented portico. The largest and most lasting of the hotels was the second Ocean House which replaced the original hotel of that name after a fire in 1845. The second Ocean House was in the Gothic Revival manner. During this period, however, such stylistic appellations are significant only in regard to decorative details. Structure, plan and materials were unaffected by style, be it "Greek" or "Gothic." And "style," in itself, was not necessarily consistent. Thus the Bellevue House, Greek Revival on the exterior, had an "Elizabethan Style" dining room. Though the hotel is gone, this dining hall remains. It was designed by Russell Warren in 1850, and now forms the interior of the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church on Bellevue Avenue (page 15, figure 11).

Newport's early hotels, great timber piles, had a striking effect when viewed from the deck of a steamer entering the harbor (page 15, figure 12). One saw the pediment of the Atlantic, the towers of the Bellevue and, in the words of G. W. Curtis, "the flaunting front of the 'Ocean,' impending over the town like the huge palace of a German duke. . . ." Throughout the season the hotels were the setting for dinners, concerts and balls. During the Civil War, the Naval Academy moved to Newport from Annapolis and was quartered in the Atlantic House. Though wartime, the presence of the affable "middies" generated a series of "hops" conducted in the hotels. Hotel life was, in all, a very gay, public, social scene.

The lasting effect of Newport's early hotels had been two-fold. First, it was largely from among the throngs attracted by the hotels that the town's early cottage owners came. Second, the hotels necessitated creation of new thoroughfares. The functioning of these vast hostelries spawned a network of back streets and allies to accommodate ancillary services -- housing for hotel personnel and guests' servants, livery stables and storage barns. These service streets -- Liberty, Downing and Fur streets, Fillmore Court and Bowler Lane -- remain, but no longer serve their original function,

for the hotels are gone. Instead, they accommodate usages at variance with the residential character of the neighborhood.

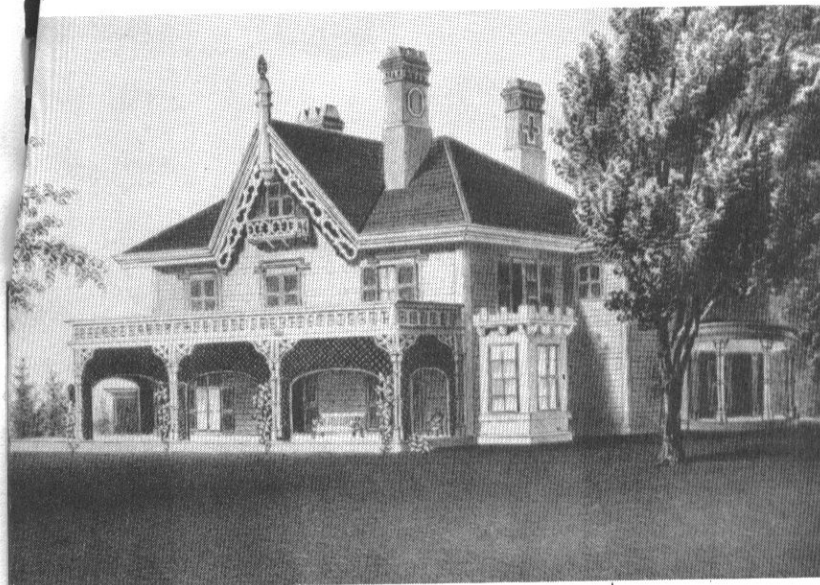
A major street was created for the convenience of hotel patrons. It led to Easton's Beach, one of the town's principal attractions in this era (page 15, figure 13). Salt water bathing was considered healthful and hotel guests took to the water for that reason; hence the original name, "Bath Road." It has been renamed Memorial Boulevard.

D. THE EARLY SUMMER COTTAGES

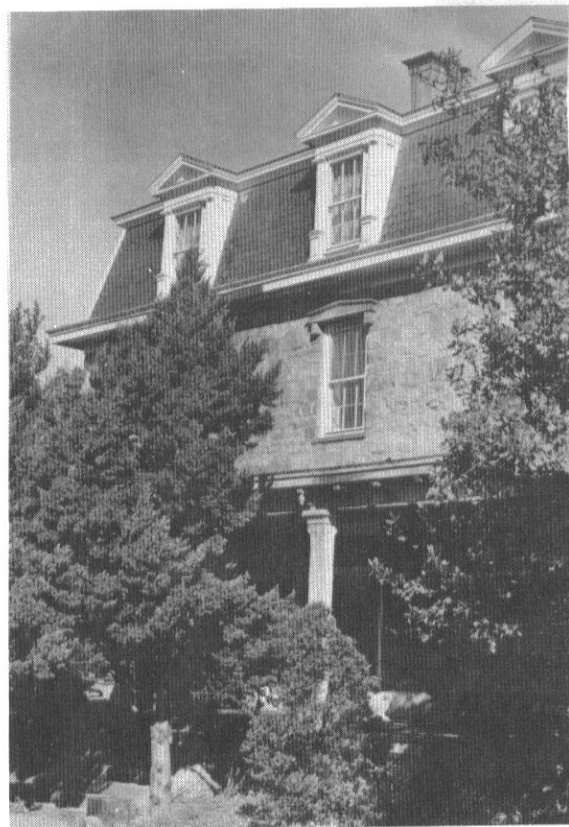
Newport's earliest summer cottages were also erected in the Kay Street - Catherine Street - Old Beach Road area. In 1835, Lieutenant Governor George Engs purchased the old Kay Estate from Trinity Church and laid out the south end of Kay Street. In that year he constructed four houses on the street, at least two of which were for summer rental. By 1838, the adjacent section of Bellevue Avenue was lined with summer homes, including those of Samuel Ward, a New York banker and father of Julia Ward Howe, a "Mr. Amory" of Boston, and Hugh Ball of South Carolina. Most of these simple frame buildings no longer exist, or have been so altered and enlarged that their early date is not apparent. This is the case with the Hugh Ball House (c. 1836), the nucleus of the Muenchinger-King Hotel.

From about 1845 to 1870, the residential section of the Hill was dominated by large estates. Principal among these were the Ralph Izard place off Kay Street (c. 1850); the summer home of Mary T. Porter from New Orleans on Greenough Place (1855); "Belair," the home of H. Allen Wright, a New Yorker, on Old Beach Road (c. 1850); and "Red Cross Cottage" (1844) built for David Sears of Boston, also off Old Beach Road (page 18, figures 14, 15, 16, and 17). The houses which were the focal point of each of these estates remain. Below these estates and overlooking Easton's Pond was the farm of R. M. Gibbes, another New Yorker. In the 1830's it had been used as a hotel frequented by sportsmen who came to Newport to hunt and fish.

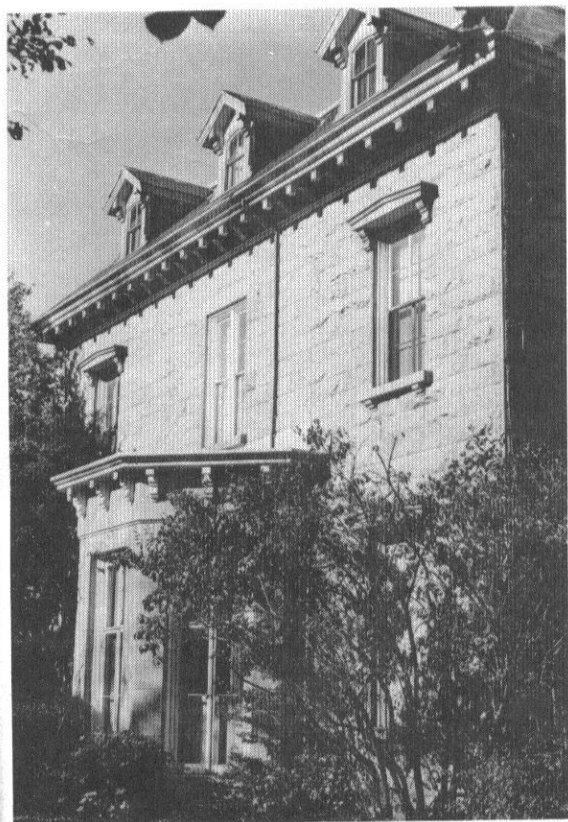
Though David Sears' estate was larger than the others, his house "Red Cross Cottage," was more in keeping with the scale and tone of the earliest summer homes. Now stripped of its extensive grounds and heavily altered, the house was a rather awkward Gothic Revival



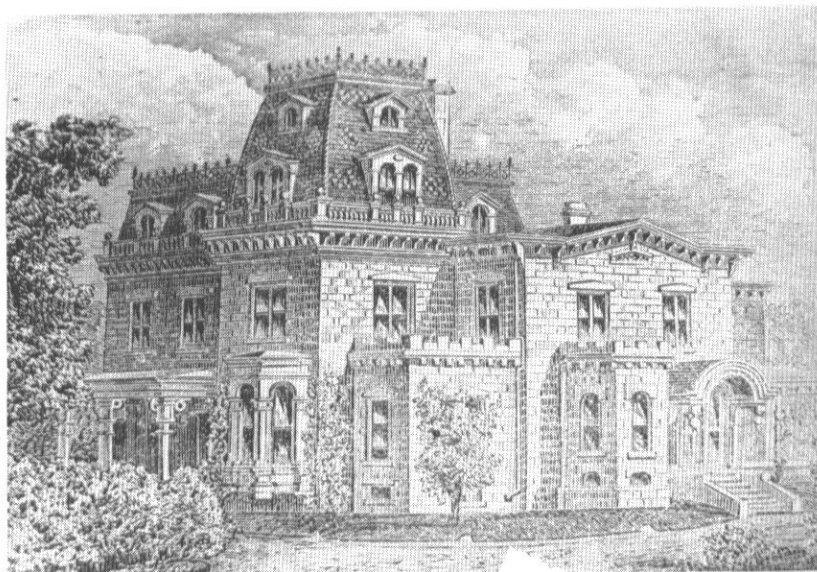
F. 14 "RED CROSS COTTAGE" (1844)
8 OAKWOOD TERRACE (VIEW AT REDWOOD LIBRARY)



F. 15 THE RALPH IZARD HOUSE (c.1850)
10 PELL STREET



F. 16 "PORTER VILLA" (1855-56)
25 GREENOUGH PLACE



F. 17 "BELAIR" (c.1850, 1875)
OLD BEACH ROAD

cottage. Designed by George M. Dexter, a Boston architect, it was framed in Boston and shipped thence to Newport. Gothic Revival cottages remained popular in Newport during the pre-Civil War period and six survive in the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood. The most widely known Gothic Revival cottage in Newport is "Kingscote" (1841) designed by Richard Upjohn and located a bit south of the survey area on Bellevue Avenue. Characteristically the Gothic Revival Cottage is a $1\frac{1}{2}$ or $2\frac{1}{2}$ story frame structure with a boldly accented high hip or pitched roof, set flank to the street. The roof is usually broken by one or more assertive cross gables, ornamented with carved bargeboards and pinnacles; on the ridge are pilastered chimney stacks. Across the front of such houses runs a broad trellised veranda. As with the design for similar houses in A. J. Downing's The Architecture of Country Houses (1850), the facades of these buildings are arranged symmetrically on a central axis. Only the most ambitious Gothic Revival houses - like "Kingscote" - displayed picturesque massing. This holds true for Italianate buildings of the period as well. Downing advocated vertical board and batten siding for wooden Gothic Revival cottages, but only one of those remaining in Newport has such exterior treatment. It is the somewhat altered house, now hidden behind Channing Memorial Chapel, used for Sunday school purposes. The best preserved Gothic Revival cottages in the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood are the Daniel Swinburne House, at 6 Greenough Place (page 20, figure 18), and the John Bush House, at 34 Mann Avenue.

The Izard, Porter and Wright houses (all built in the late 1840's and early 1850's) are of a class -- large, hulking stone villas, almost brutal in scale and detail, possessing a cold, wintry appearance curious in a summer home. A better known example of the type is the Wetmore House, "Chateau-sur-Mer," outside the survey area on Bellevue Avenue. The hauteur of this and the other houses like it contrasts with the unassuming summer houses built but fifteen years earlier. "Chateau-sur-Mer" and the Porter villa are both known to be the work of Seth Bradford, a local builder. "Belair" and the Izard house are attributed to him.

A series of large frame Bracketed and Italianate style houses were built in the vicinity of the summer estates, principally along the south end of Kay Street and Greenough Place. A very chaste example designed in 1853 by Thomas Tefft, architect of Providence, for Joseph Tompkins stands at 38 Catherine Street. More representative of Newport work is the house erected for Tillinghast Tompkins at 11 Redwood Street (c. 1852). A tall, square structure, it is set on



F. 18 THE DANIEL SWINBURNE HOUSE (c.1862)
6 GREENOUGH PLACE



F. 19 THE JOSEPH BAILEY HOUSE (c.1855)
30 KAY STREET



F.20 "MORNINGSIDE" THE W. B. ROGERS HOUSE (1871-72)
428 GIBBS AVENUE



F.21 THE CLEMENT C. MOORE HOUSE (1856 and later)
25 CATHERINE STREET

a high granite foundation and is capped with a hip roof broken by cross gables. The wide eaves are supported on paired brackets with pendant drops; window, door and porch trim is also bracketed. The near-identical houses at 27, 30 and 33 Kay Street are in the same manner (page 20, figure 19). They were built on speculation by Job Peckham in 1853.

E. THE STREET PATTERN: 1850 - 1883

Newport, so long in a state of suspended animation, was by mid-century a town on the move. An air of optimism was reflected in the decision to take on greater legal responsibilities, and in 1853 the town became the City of Newport. Major additions to the city's street pattern were in progress during the 1850's. These changes were made principally for the purpose of creating building lots for summer homes. Kay Street, Greenough Place, Catherine Street and Bellevue Avenue were extended, and Ayrault Street put through.

The development of Newport's new and extended streets was the work of assiduous land speculators. Chief among them was Alfred Smith, a native Newporter who made good in New York as a fashionable tailor and returned to his birthplace to make a fortune in real estate. In association with Joseph Bailey, he promoted continuation of Bellevue Avenue south to Bailey's Beach. The year was 1852. This move opened up a large tract of land held by Bailey and Smith for subdivision and sale.

In 1853 Smith promoted the lengthening of Kay Street. It was extended north as far as the present Rhode Island Avenue. Three years later Alfred Smith, "who," a newspaper account said, "seems to be foremost in measures for public improvements," got up a public subscription for extension and improvements to Bath Road, now Memorial Boulevard.

Alfred Smith had such an impact on Newport in the 1850's that contemporary accounts of the town describe him and his endeavors in detail. He rode about in a highly polished leather chaise, reins in one hand, a rolled-up map of the city in the other. He was likened to a field marshall, baton in hand. Observers claimed that substantial men of affairs staying at the hotels Smith combed for prospects avoided him as best they could, for once he corralled a potential customer, there was no escape. Smith's technique was

simple: after he got a man into the chaise, he would not let his prospect out until a sale had been made. Julia Ward Howe recalled in her memoirs how persuasive Smith could be. She was astounded when she learned that Smith managed to sell her normally cautious husband a run-down farm, way out in Portsmouth. Mr. Smith accomplished this sale in 1852.

Though the pattern for future development had been set by Mr. Smith and his associates, much of the Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road neighborhood remained almost rural in character into the 1870's. The built-up section extended no further east than Greenough Place (page 23, figure 22). However, Newport maps dating back to the 1850's indicate that streets were planned for the open land east and north of the built-up section (page 24, figure 23), and the Newport atlas of 1883 shows that a great change had taken place. By that date the estates had been broken up or were entirely surrounded by houses equally grand, set on smaller lots. The farm land to the north and east had been subdivided and became the scene of extensive building activity. Between 1870 and 1876, twenty-four houses were built in the section of the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood east of Greenough Place. Between 1876 and 1883 forty-two houses were built in the same section. This averages out to four new houses per year in the earlier period, and six houses per year in the later period (page 25, figure 24).

The former Gibbs farm became Rhode Island, Gibbs and Eustis avenues. The Sears estate was cut into small lots approached from Red Cross Avenue, Sunnyside Place and Oakwood Terrace leaving the original house on a small lot at 8 Oakwood Terrace. Everett and Francis Streets had been added, and the complex of lanes off Cranston Avenue, laid out in 1874, was beginning to be developed with inexpensive workmen's cottages. Newport was a very different place than it had been in 1828 when school was recessed so that the children could see a house go up -- the first in ten years.

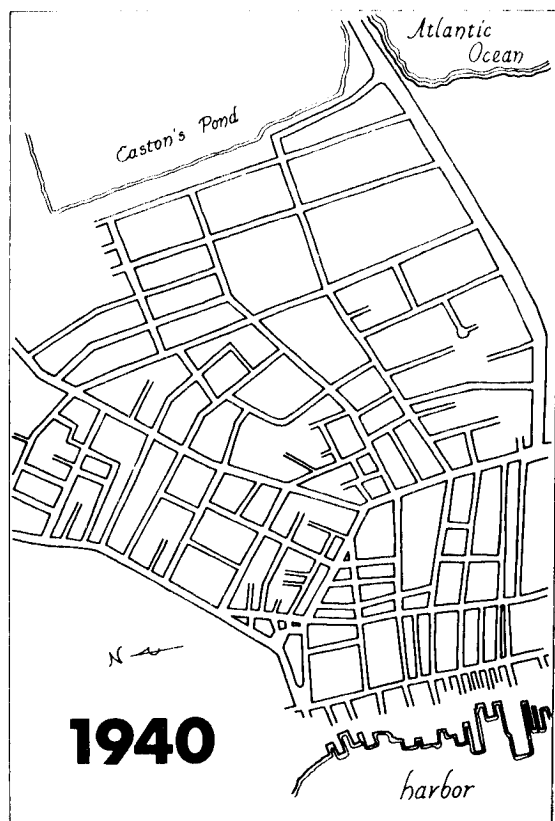
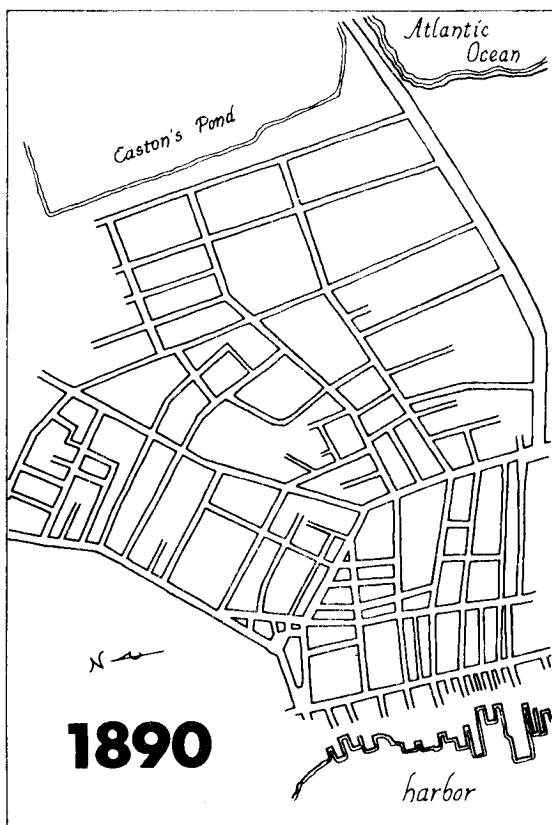
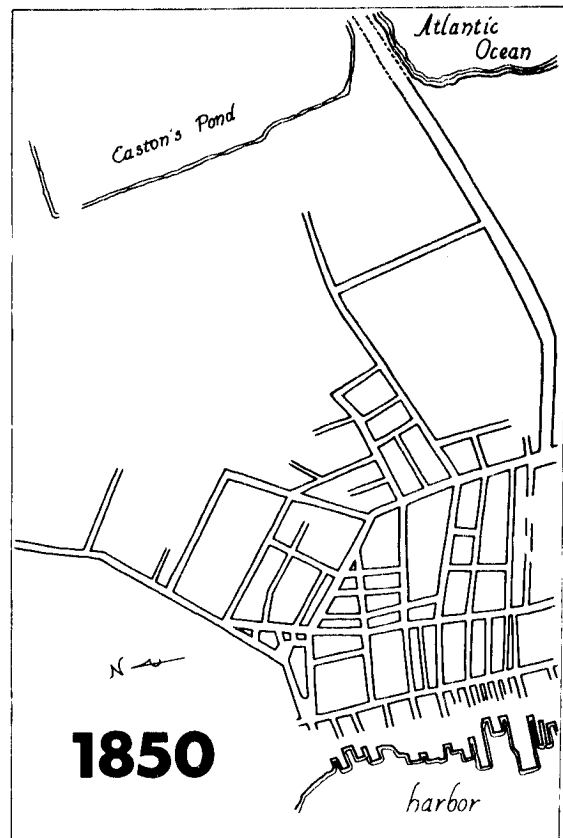
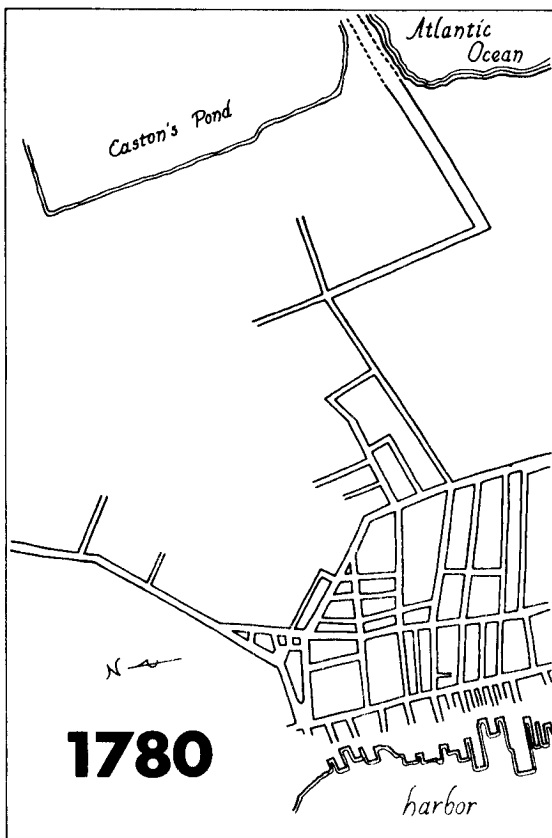
The smaller lots on which the summer houses in the neighborhood were built in the seventies and eighties made for an entirely different visual scene from that found on southern Bellevue Avenue, where extensive grounds still surround the palatial homes. The Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road area became a typically American suburban neighborhood, characterized by wide, friendly streets lined with well kept, but modest lawns, and over-arched by shade trees. What made this particular neighborhood noteworthy were its illustrious residents, and its outstanding, in some instances trend-setting, architecture.



F. 22 THE KAY STREET - CATHERINE STREET -
OLD BEACH ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD IN 1850



F.23 A SECTION OF THE KAY STREET - CATHERINE STREET - OLD BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD IN 1870



F.24 EVOLUTION OF THE STREET PATTERN OF THE
KAY STREET - CATHERINE STREET - OLD BEACH ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD

F. NEWPORT, THE COTTAGE RESORT

In the post-Civil War era, Newport became the premier "cottage resort." It was considered more distinguished than watering places like Saratoga Springs, New York, which continued to revolve around hotel life. Newport devotees were quite willing to forget the hotels which once were the focal point of their summer colony. Henry James differentiated between the Newport scene, where "life is public," and the atmosphere of Saratoga, which "is absolutely common." The difference was "between a group of indiscriminating hotels and a series of organized homes."

The genteel, intellectual character of households located in the Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road neighborhood during the halcyon era of the seventies, eighties and nineties reflected the scholarly and artistic interests of those who lived there. Indeed, from the 1850's on, residents of the area formed a cross-section of the nation's cultural elite: Professors Raphael Pumpelly, William B. Rogers and Josiah P. Cooke -- all eminent scientists; Miss Wormeley, translator of Balzac, and George Calvert, translator of Goethe; Charlotte Cushman, the actress; Clement C. Moore and Sarah C. Woolsey -- both better known for their juvenile literature than their "serious" writing -- Moore wrote "The Night before Christmas," but his texts on the Hebrew language are all but forgotten; Henry Marquand, businessman and board chairman of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Dr. David King, prominent physician and first president of the Newport Historical Society; John LaFarge and Samuel Coleman, artists. . . , all kept homes here. (See page 20, figures 20 and 21; page 31, figure 30.)

William Morris Hunt, a painter, had a home and studio on the Viking Hotel site. It later belonged to his better-known architect brother, Richard Morris Hunt. William James, who became famous as a philosopher and psychologist, came to study in William Hunt's studio when he planned to make painting his vocation. In the late 1850's the James family resided on Kay Street, and then in a house at the corner of Old Beach Road and Tew's Court, before Henry James, Sr. bought property on Spring Street from Alfred Smith. William James' brother, the younger Henry James, who became one of this nation's most important novelists, accompanied William to the Hunt studio. In subsequent years Henry James visited Newport on several occasions and wrote about the city with his usual subtlety and insight. Julia Ward Howe, the Queen Victoria of Boston's late nineteenth century literary set, formed an intellectual "Town and Country Club" which met frequently in the home of Col. George E. Waring, a noted

sanitary engineer, on Catherine Street. Later Mrs. Howe's daughter, Maude Howe Elliott, wife of the printer John Elliott, and a prolific chronicler of Newport's literary and artistic history, lived on Rhode Island Avenue.

After Bellevue Avenue and Ochre Point, the Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road area was considered the most desirable neighborhood in Newport. The custom of renting summer homes persisted through the nineteenth century, and summer rental lists reflect the desirability of this area. In 1886 34 homes were listed in the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road area. Of these, ten could be had for the June through September season for from \$400 to \$1,000, nine from \$1,000 to \$1,500, twelve from \$1,500 to \$3,000, and three rented for \$3,000 to \$6,000.

G. THE LATER SUMMER HOUSES

From the sixties through the nineties, design of Newport summer cottages was so prestigious and lucrative that many architects of national reputation received commissions here. Thus discussion of Newport architecture of the period is appropriately accomplished by considering the work of individual architects in depth.

Throughout this period, although commissions in the Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road neighborhood were major undertakings, as a rule the most costly, and certainly the most pretentious summer villas were erected in the more grandiose sections of town. Richard Morris Hunt's "Chateau-sur-Mer" alterations of 1875 were more grand than anything that he planned for the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road area. And in the eighties, McKim, Mead and White, though very active in this neighborhood, produced more lavish schemes for the Ochre Point area (e.g., the Robert Goellet House of 1882-3, and the H. A. C. Taylor House of 1885-86). During the 1890's and into the twentieth century, construction of summer villas almost ceased in the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood, yet this was just the period in which the largest palace-cottages were built on Bellevue Avenue and Ochre Point.

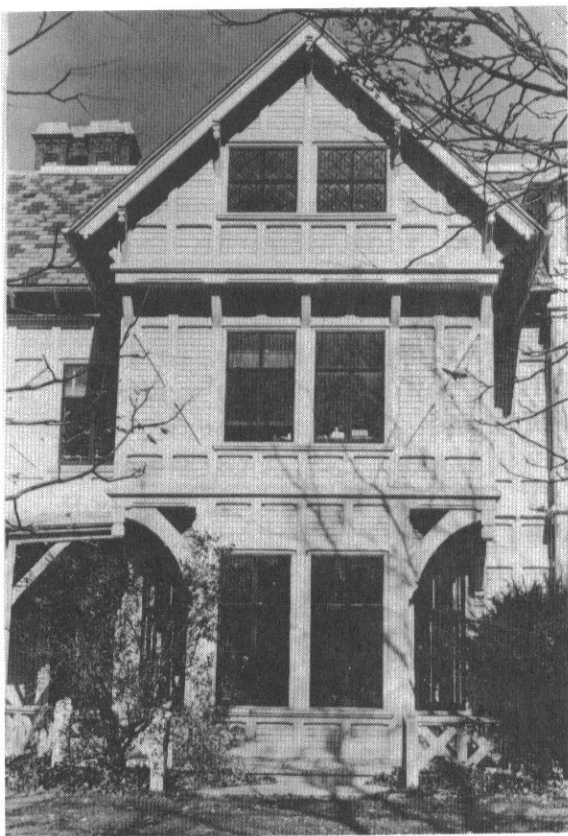
Richard Morris Hunt was the most prominent architect working in Newport throughout this area. His work in the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood is early, dating from the 1860's and 1870's. His first Newport commission was the J. N. A. Griswold House (1862-3)

at the corner of Bellevue Avenue and Old Beach Road (page 29, figure 25). It now houses the Art Association of Newport. This building is an early example of what Vincent Scully has named the "Stick Style" -- an essentially decorative approach to architectural articulation, most notable for the use of a sham exterior frame, braced and interlaced with saw-work panels, complex vertical massing and a rich variety of colors and materials. This style dominated advanced architectural design for "suburban homes" in the 1870's. It was known at the time as "Modern Gothic."

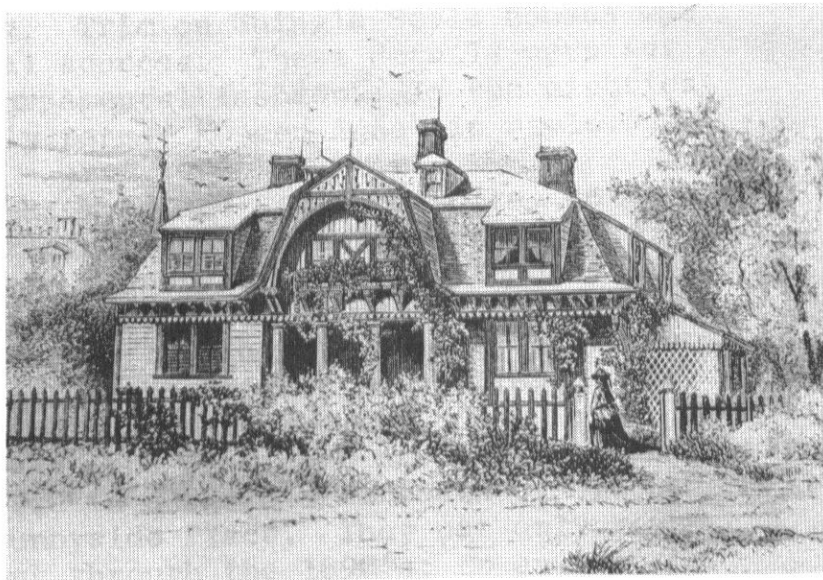
In 1871 Hunt designed a summer house for Henry Marquand at Rhode Island Avenue and Old Beach Road. All that remains of Marquand's home, known as "Linden Gate," is the granite-trimmed brick wall surrounding the grounds. Like the Griswold House, it was in the Modern Gothic Style. The first floor was built of quarry-faced random coursed ashlar, the second of patterned red and black brickwork with applied timber bracing. This fine house burned in February 1973. Hunt also designed the Cushman and Appleton houses which stood close by and which burned many years ago. The curious house Richard Morris Hunt designed and gave to Colonel Waring, the "Hypotenuse," remains, set diagonally to the intersection of Catherine Street and Greenough Place (page 29, figure 26).

The small but exuberant Pratt House (c. 1875), long attributed to Hunt but apparently designed by its owner Samuel Pratt, though sandwiched between twentieth century commercial structures on Bellevue Avenue, still catches the eye with its fanciful slate hung-side walls and turreted roofing (page 29, figure 27). Two large, well maintained houses in the same style are located just two blocks south, at the corner of Bellevue Avenue and Pelham Street, facing Touro Park. Here, on the site of the Atlantic House, are the Seth Stitt House (1878-1881) by the firm of George C. Mason and Son, now the Elks Lodge (page 29, figure 28), and the William Smith House (1878) by Dudley Newton, now the rectory of the Channing Memorial Chapel. The Masons and Newton were local architects who here, as elsewhere, followed the example of the leaders of their profession.

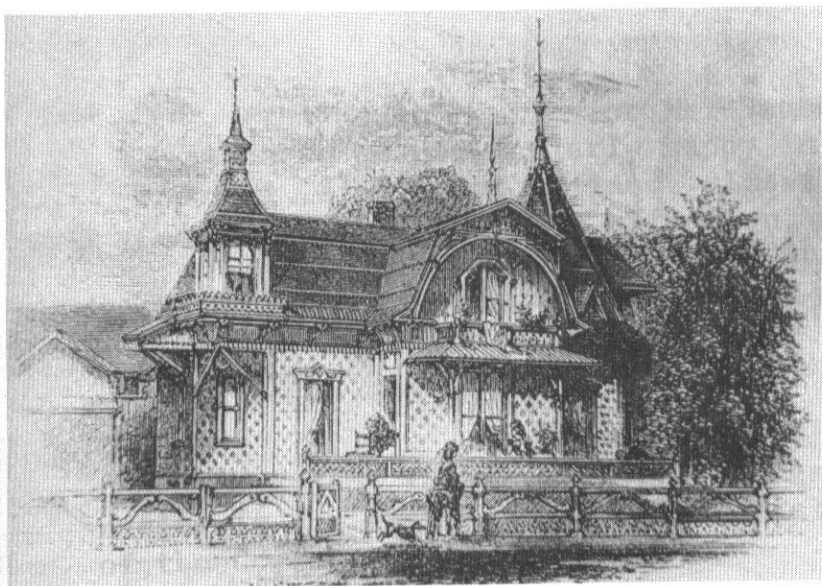
Richard Morris Hunt led architectural taste in Newport in the 1870's, and again in the 1890's. In the intervening decade a brash, new firm took the lead: McKim, Mead and White. It was their Newport Casino (1879-80) which set the taste of the eighties. Scully has dubbed the style of this monument the "Shingle Style." It was an approach to architectural articulation emphasizing compact horizontal massing and a concern for large, banded wall surfaces in which



F.25 J.N.A. GRISWOLD HOUSE (1862)
THE ART ASSOCIATION
76 BELLEVUE AVENUE



F. 26 "THE HYPOTENUSE" (1870-71)
33 CATHERINE STREET



F. 27 THE SAMUEL PRATT HOUSE (1871-72)
59 BELLEVUE AVENUE



F.28 S. STITT HOUSE (1878, 1881)
NOW ELKS LODGE, 137 PELHAM STREET

texture was of first importance. Trim on Shingle Style houses was frequently derived from colonial sources. These details were set upon the walls in a precious, ornamental fashion. In the eighties houses of this sort were usually termed "Queen Anne" in style.

Charles F. McKim, William R. Mead and Stanford White, so transcendently influential in American architectural practice from 1880 to the First World War, were responsible for five houses in the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood of Newport: the Wormely House (1879, McKim with additions in 1882 by the firm); the Tilton House (1881-2; page 31, figure 29); the Skinner House (1882); the Coleman House (1882-3; page 31, figure 30); and the Edgar House (1884-5). The last four of these were published and known nationally in the eighties. All are located in a small area south of Old Beach Road on Red Cross Avenue and Sunnyside Place. They not only represent an architectural ideal prevalent through the 1890's; to an important extent these buildings are the basis for that ideal. They are central monuments in American architectural history, and by extension, in American social history as well. They form a unique group -- an unparalleled collection of outstanding dwellings of the early 1880's.

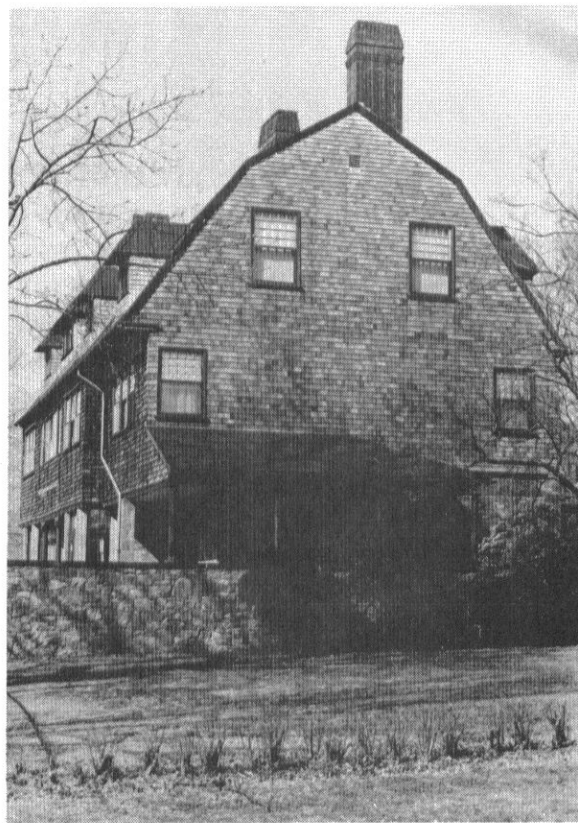
The Samuel Coleman House may be considered characteristic of these buildings. Though converted to use as apartments, its exterior retains the features which made it famous in its day. The Coleman House was discussed and illustrated repeatedly in the eighties. Mrs. Schyler van Rensselaer, in her series of articles on American architecture which appeared in Century Magazine in 1886, felt it was a paradigm of what an American "country house" should be:

(The house) built for Mr. Samuel Coleman, on Red Cross Lane, seems to me particularly happy in expression -- dignified yet rural, simple yet refined, almost picturesque yet quiet, and wholly devoid of that affection, that attitudinizing (so to say) which too often accompanies picturesqueness. The colonial roof has been cleverly adapted on the one hand and the "vernacular" piazza on the other.

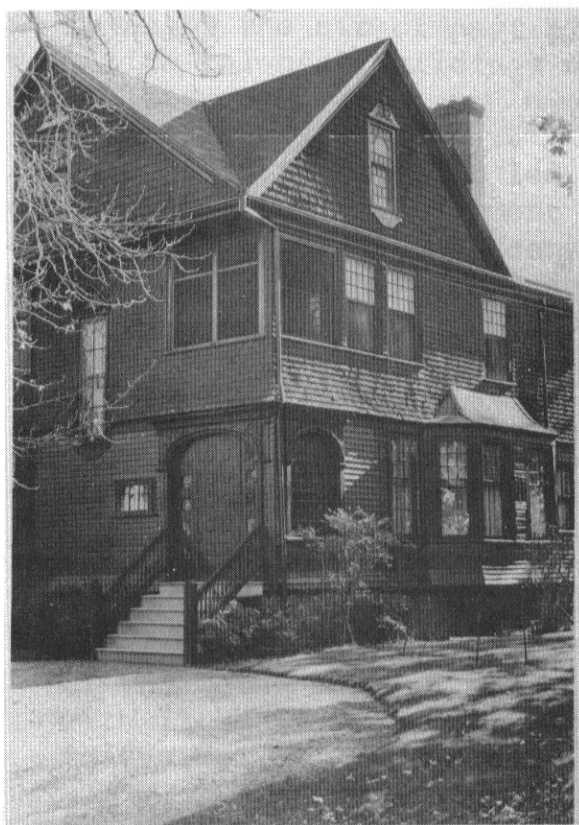
George Sheldon, in his Artistic Houses (1883), gave an interesting rationale for the presence of colonial-derived motifs in the design of the Coleman House:



F. 29 THE SAMUEL TILTON HOUSE (1881-82)
12 SUNNYSIDE PLACE



F.30 THE SAMUEL COLEMAN HOUSE (1882-83)
7 RED CROSS AVENUE



F.31 THE MRS. D. ARCHIE PELL HOUSE (1881)
11 FRANCIS STREET



F. 32 THE NOYES-LUCE HOUSE (1883)
15 FRANCIS STREET

The general style of architecture is colonial, in harmony with the spirit of old residences in that place (Newport), although Mr. Coleman perhaps would have preferred the effect of an Old English house, had the latter been appropriate to his present surroundings: but the architects (messrs. McKim, Mead and White) have preserved their independence in elaborating the scheme, greatly modifying the pure colonial style.

In contrast to the "greatly modified" colonial style of the Coleman House, McKim, Mead and White's last work for the Kay-Catherine Old Beach Road neighborhood, the Commodore William Edgar House, reflects a more monumental approach to colonial precedent. It is an early exercise in the "Colonial Revival Style." Symmetry has largely taken over, but the sensitivity to texturally rich materials remains, as does a relish for picturesque detail.

The origins of an interest in colonial architecture, so important in contemporary design from the late 1870's on, may be traced back at least to the 1850's. In that period Newport summer visitors began to appreciate the old town's quaint antiquity. Prior to that time Newport's decadence had been universally lamented. Yet visitors came to enjoy the air of past glory pervading "the little wooden town." Its colonial buildings were perceived to be the visual key to its history.

This historic interest led to a fondness for colonial architecture which mingled sentiment and an appreciation for the picturesque qualities of eighteenth century buildings. Henry James best expressed this combined attitude. In 1870 he described the look of Newport's time-worn habitations with the insight of a painter:

The plain gray nudity of these little warped and shingled boxes seems to make it a hopeless task on their part to present any positive appearance at all. But here, as elsewhere, the magical Newport atmosphere wins half the battle. It aims at no mystery -- it simply makes them scintillate in their bareness. Their homely notches and splinters twinkle till the mere friendliness of the thing makes a surface. Their steep gray roofs, barnacled with lichens, remind you of old barges, overturned on the beach to dry.

By the late seventies this attitude was not only pervasive but influential. It was given tremendous impetus, nationally, by the Centennial of 1876. The year before, Charles F. McKim had published a group of photographic views of eighteenth century architecture under the title Old Newport Houses. In 1877 McKim, Mead, White and Bigelow took their famous trip through New England in search of the colonial.

Architects began to use colonial architecture as a source for a vocabulary of decorative motifs. One sees in Newport, and most particularly in the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road area, a fascinating counterpoint resulting from an interplay between genuine colonial and early republican era structures with the late nineteenth century buildings designed with them in mind.

The work of Clarence S. Luce, an architect who has almost been forgotten, was also published and discussed in periodicals of the eighties. He is responsible for an important series of buildings erected in Newport during the early years of that decade which contributed significantly to the development of the Shingle Style. Clarence S. Luce embarked upon his career in the 1870's as a draughtsman in Boston. By 1874 he had his own office. Luce remained in Boston until late in 1882, when he came to Newport and set up shop in the Vernon House, an outstanding eighteenth century building in which early murals had recently been discovered. By 1885, Clarence Luce had again moved, this time to New York. In all, he designed ten houses for the Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road neighborhood; only one has been destroyed.

One of the earliest of the houses standing in the survey area which Luce designed was built for Mrs. D. Archie Pell in 1880-81 (page 31, figure 31). This house, 11 Francis Street, remains much as it was built. A description of it appeared in the Newport Mercury, April 30, 1881. That account evokes the spirit as well as the look of many Newport summer houses erected during the next twenty years:

Mrs. D. Archie Pell's cottage at the corner of Everett Street and Francis Place, is of the Queen Anne pattern from plans by Clarence S. Luce. It has a picturesque and broken outline, and is diversified by bay windows, projecting gables, piazzas, etc. It comprises two and a half stories. The first story

is clapboard and the second, shingled, while the gables are finished in cement and glass -- a new feature in Newport building. The house has five rooms on the first floor, six on the second and three on the third, besides a large open attic. The library is a very beautifully finished apartment, with ornamentations of carved pressed brick. The dining room is finished in black walnut. The hall is wainscoted in redwood, and the same wood is used for the staircase. The building is supplied with the latest in improved steam apparatus. The exterior is painted in bronze green on the first story, the second is finished in the natural wood with spar varnish. The cost of the cottage is about \$8000, and the builder was James Rudolph.

This article suggests the richness and variety of materials used in summer cottages of this period, and indicates the care and expense devoted to both interior and exterior finish.

The Thomas Hunter House (1880-82) at 77 Rhode Island Avenue employs the same design concepts as the Pell House. Again Clarence Luce resorted to a massive and complex roof design of flanking and cross gables. Below the roofline the facade is enlivened with an oriel window and colonial derived detail around the entrance porch. In the Noyes-Luce House (1883-84; page 31, figure 32) at 15 Francis Street, architectural character results from the shape of the roof with its gambrel cross gable, the tall brick chimney, and the shingling which covered the entire house. Shingled window caps and a semi-conical shingled pent roof over the entrance are the only projections from the facade wall, reading as undulations in the richly textural surface.

Other architects of national reputation designed houses for the Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road neighborhood of Newport. They include A. F. Oakley's J. Griffiths Masten House (1883) at 43 Everett Street; Peabody and Stearns' house for Grace Rives (1883) at 30 Red Cross Avenue; and the particularly interesting Mary Eustis House (1882-83), "Elmtree Cottage," at 336 Gibbs Avenue, designed by William Ralph Emerson.

Though Newport architectural practice was dominated by out-of-town architects, local men naturally produced a large share of the work. One of the most important local architectural firms was that of George C. Mason and Son. George Champlin Mason, Sr., began his

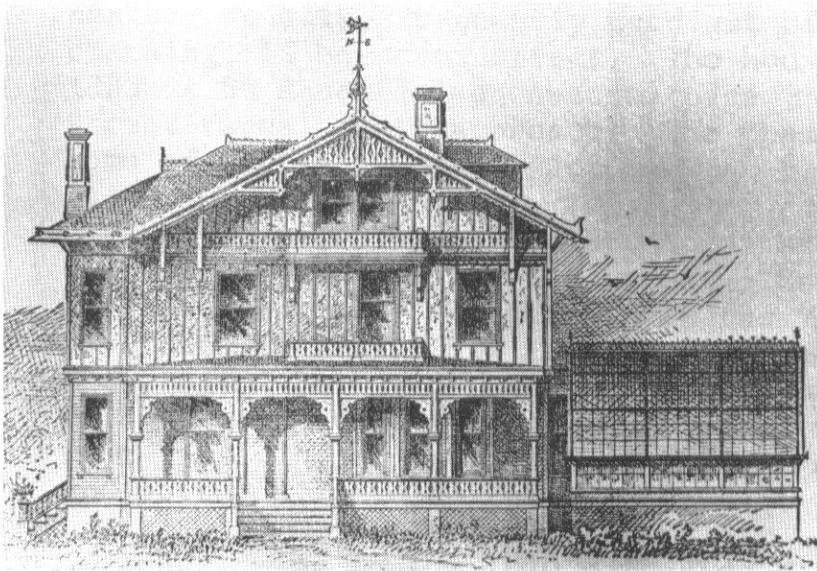
architectural career in 1858. In Newport he is remembered not only as an architect, but as an artist, writer and historian. In 1854 he produced Newport Illustrated, a guide book which was revised and re-issued through the 1890's. In 1875 Newport and Its Cottages appeared, with photographs and descriptions of Newport's villas and principal sites. Mason also wrote The Old House Altered (1878), and The Life and Works of Gilbert Stuart (1879). In the eighties, and until his death in 1894, George C. Mason, Sr., concentrated his literary efforts on the subject of local history. In 1884 his Reminiscences of Newport appeared, and between 1890 and 1894 he published a series of "annals" for Trinity Church and Redwood Library.

George C. Mason, Jr., started out as a student in his father's office in 1865. By 1875 he was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, and held the office of Secretary of that organization from 1883 through 1887. By the late eighties it appears that George C. Mason, Jr., handled most of the work of the firm. He, too, published numerous articles, and two pamphlets, Thoughts on Architecture (1879), and Architects and their Environment, 1850-1907, published in 1907. By the early nineties the younger Mason had established an office in Philadelphia. The firm ceased activity in Newport after the death of the elder Mason.

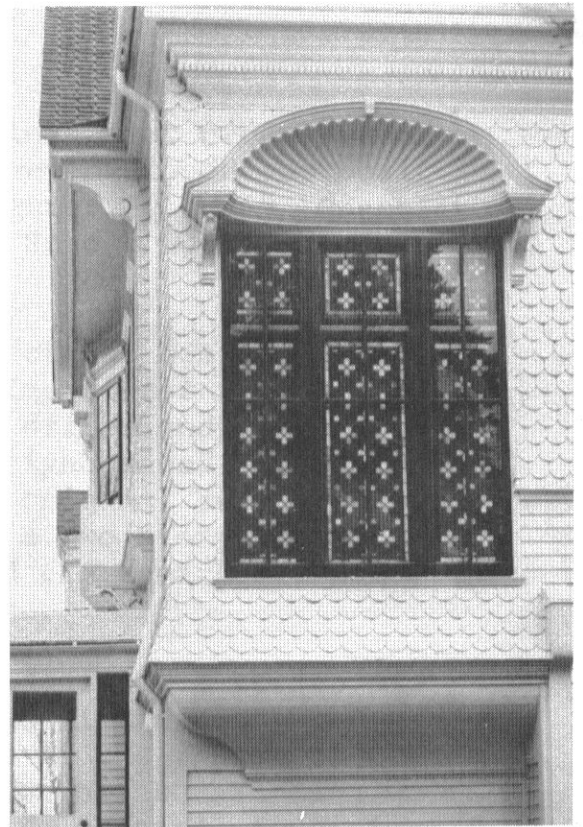
The Mason firm's early work, designed by George C. Mason, Sr., is in the Second Empire Style -- massive, cubical structures, capped with high mansard roofs. The house designed for James B. Finch on the northeast corner of Touro and Mount Vernon streets exemplifies this fashion. Fine examples stand at 54 and 60 Kay Street, both dating c. 1871, and attributed to the firm.

Houses designed by the Masons tend to reflect an awareness of national and period styles. The home of George C. Mason, Sr., on Old Beach Road (1873-74) is modeled after a Swiss chalet (page 36, figure 33). Perhaps the most handsome "chalet" cottage in the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood is the Isaac P. White House (1872) at 66 Ayrault Street. It is also the work of George C. Mason & Son. Later, the firm designed an outstanding masonry house in the Flemish Renaissance style for Sarah T. Zabriskie. This striking stone villa, erected in 1889, now known as "Stone Gables," stands at 100 Rhode Island Avenue.

The Masons' interest in local history led them to be influenced by another period style: the American colonial. The firm's colonial or "Queen Anne" manner is unique. Mason-designed houses after this fashion are hung with a wealth of elaborately sculptural eighteenth



F. 33 THE GEORGE C. MASON, SR. HOUSE (1873-74)
31 OLD BEACH ROAD



F.34 THE MORRIS HOUSE (1882-83)
86 RHODE ISLAND AVENUE



F.35 THE SWINBURNE HOUSE (1875-76)
97 RHODE ISLAND AVENUE



F. 36 THE KING-BIRKHEAD HOUSE (1872)
20 CATHERINE STREET

century details, frequently used out of context, yet producing a charming, if bizarre, effect. The houses they designed and built in 1883 at 86 Rhode Island Avenue (page 36, figure 34) and 5 Champlin Street reveal their approach. The Champlin Street house was the home of George C. Mason, Jr.

Dudley Newton was another local architect who designed a large number of houses in the Kay Street - Catherine Street - Old Beach Road neighborhood. He trained in the Mason office and was active from 1866 to 1907. His first work in the neighborhood was the remodeling of "Belair," done in 1870. To the original bracketed stone villa Newton added a large tower block with a two story mansard roof (page 18, figure 17). In 1875 he added the remarkable stable and porter's lodge to the estate.

Beginning in the 1870's, Dudley Newton designed a series of appealing one and a half story frame cottages distinguished by extensive piazzas and busy mansard roofs. One of the finest of these was commissioned in 1872 by Dr. David King for his son-in-law, Dr. William Birkhead. It stands, virtually in its original condition, at 20 Catherine Street (page 36, figure 36). The building has one of the first examples of the "Newton Roof" -- a high, vertical mansard with projected dormers having moulded casings which are continued below the roofline into a decorative parapet set above the gutter. Other one and a half story mansard roofed cottages by Newton include 62 Ayrault Street, built in 1871, and 21 Ayrault, built in 1882.

The house Dudley Newton did in the Modern Gothic Style for Henry Swinburne in 1875 is one of his best. It is at 97 Rhode Island Avenue. The exterior is brick on the first floor, with clapboard and board-and-batten siding above -- the whole articulated with an ornamental braced stick framework (page 36, figure 35). The design vocabulary employed by Newton in the Swinburne House relates directly to the decorative qualities of the chalet cottage type. Newton produced several chalets for the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood, all in a freer manner than those done by the Mason firm. His Benjamin Rhodes House (1871) at 45 Everett Street is representative.

By 1883 Newton was working with forms lifted from colonial architecture. The T. K. Gibbs House on Gibbs Avenue is characteristic of his early "Queen Anne" manner. The gambrel roof on this brick-trimmed granite house is typical in that, though it copies an eighteenth century form, it giantizes the source,

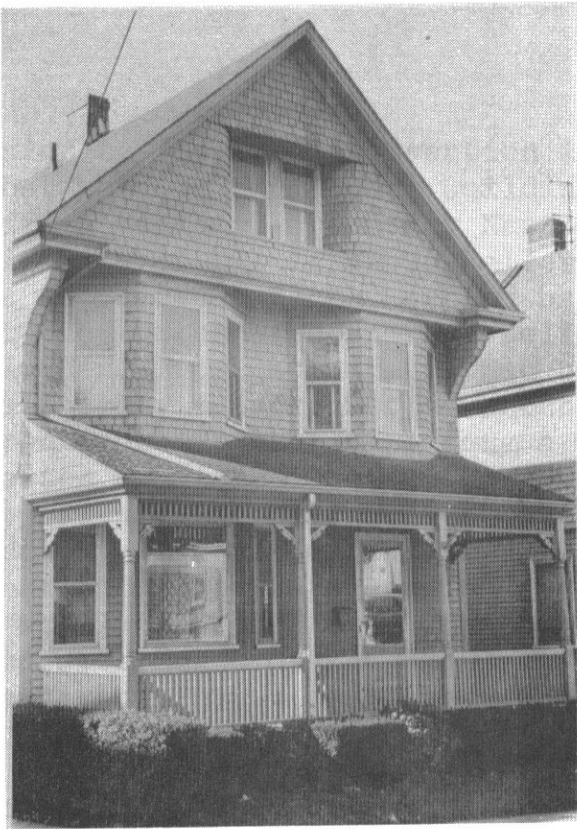
enlarging the scale in a self-conscious way. Dudley Newton's last house in the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road area, the Susan Weaver House at 59 Kay Street, is in the fully evolved academic Colonial Revival Style.

In the 1890's, many workmen's cottages were built in the Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road neighborhood, in the vicinity of Calvert Street and Cranston Avenue. These pattern book structures commonly exhibit features extrapolated from the "Shingle" or "Queen Anne" style. They are simple two and a half story frame houses with a pitched roof, gable end to the street, and a three-bay facade with a side hall entrance. They have a piazza running the full width of the front with a shed roof supported by turned posts. The siding is clapboard on the first story, shingle above. In more costly late nineteenth century models the shingle-work is patterned and bay windows project from the wall surfaces. In early twentieth century versions of this house type the pitched roof is suppressed and a low hipped roof substituted. The siding may be clapboard over all, and Colonial Revival detail will appear, frequently in the form of a front door with sidelights and Tuscan columns in the place of more elaborately turned porch posts. In the costlier Colonial Revival examples a central hall plan is found. The "Shingle Style" version of this house type is represented by 14 Lincoln Street, 24 Greenough Place, 27 and 29 Mann Avenue; 30 Calvert Street, 26 Greenough Place and 52 Ayrault Street exemplify its Colonial Revival aspects (page 39, figures 37 and 38).

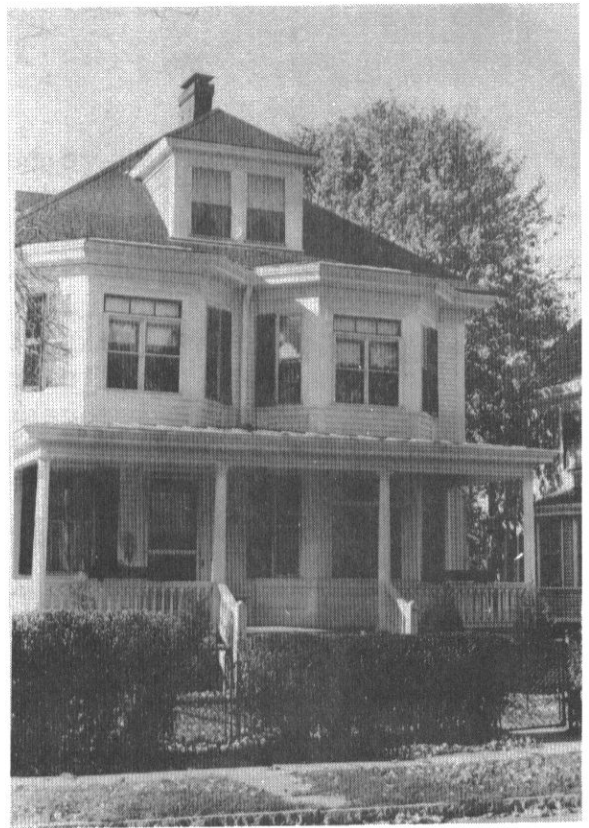
H. NORTHERN BELLEVUE AVENUE AND TOURO STREET

By the 1850's the needs of hotel patrons and summer residents prompted development of a commercial area along Bellevue Avenue from Kay Street south to Memorial Boulevard. Here were located small shops, many open only during the season, catering to the "carriage trade," and offices of real estate agents and architects. The shops along this stretch of Bellevue Avenue still serve residents of the Kay Street - Catherine Street - Old Beach Road neighborhood, and the remnants of the summer colony.

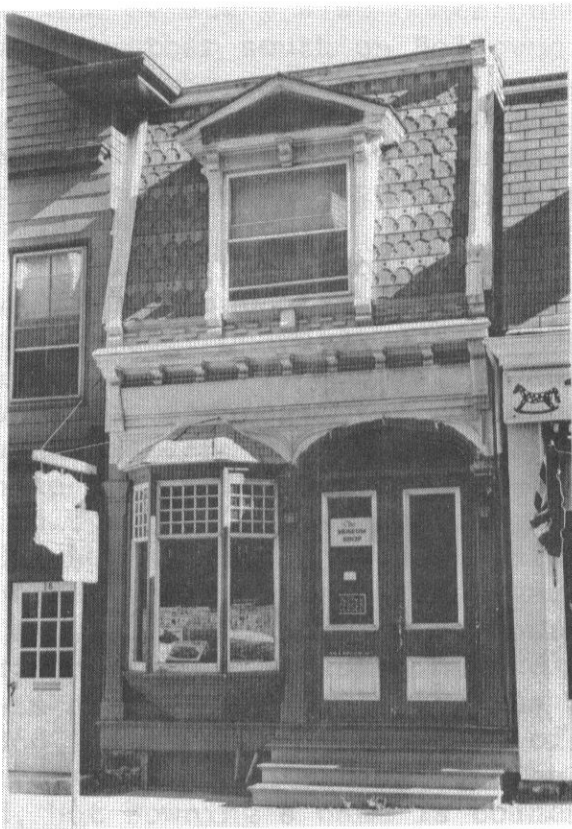
Few of the extant commercial structures on northern Bellevue Avenue are the first structures on the site. What is, perhaps, the oldest remaining commercial building is 136-138 Bellevue which, though altered, shows some detail suggestive of a construction date



F. 37 29 MANN AVENUE (c.1895)



F. 38 26 GREENOUGH PLACE (c.1900)



F. 39 THE DUDLEY NEWTON OFFICE (1872)
20 BELLEVUE AVENUE



F. 40 THE ELLEN MASON HOUSE (1902)
180 RHODE ISLAND AVENUE

prior to 1860 (this assertion is supported by map evidence). The most notable commercial building here is the small mansard roofed office designed by Dudley Newton for his own use in 1872 (page 39 figure 39). It is at 20 Bellevue Avenue. Beside it, on the south, is the Fludder Block, dating back to the 1860's. Immediately south, at the northeast corner of Bellevue Avenue and Catherine Street, James Fludder, local architect, had his home and office. The two and a half story mansard roofed structure has been raised up over cast iron store fronts which form a new ground floor. Next north of Newton's office is a two story building he designed in 1891. It typifies commercial buildings of the nineties and the early twentieth century with its exterior of the standardized "Shingle Style" variety. Just off Bellevue Avenue on Catherine Street stood the Mason office, a small clapboard structure with a large tripartite round head window characteristic of the 1850's. The building has been moved east on Catherine Street and converted to use as apartments.

Among the business structures of northern Bellevue Avenue, and down along Touro Street, are buildings used for institutional purposes. From these one may learn much of the social history of Newport. In this area the historic presence of Newport's old Jewish and black communities is most evident. Touro Synagogue and the Jewish Cemetery are well known monuments. The family responsible for restoring the synagogue and cemetery also contributed the greater part of the cost of Touro Park, further south on Bellevue Avenue. Judah Touro, brother of Abraham Touro who restored the synagogue and cemetery, left ten thousand dollars to purchase land for the park. The price, however, was sixteen thousand dollars. Few realize that a share of the balance was donated by a black man, George T. Downing.

This was not Downing's only contribution to the public welfare. He was a prominent black abolitionist, offered his home in Newport as a shelter for runaways, and worked to get Rhode Island schools desegregated. George T. Downing is among the most important of the entrepreneurs who developed the commercial section of Bellevue Avenue. Downing began his career as a caterer in New York, and after the Civil War, while continuing his Newport business, he held the restaurant concession for the Capital Building dining rooms in Washington, D.C. In 1846 he launched a Newport catering and confectionary business which specialized in picnic fare, game suppers and "french and other made dishes sent to families." Downing also advertised musicians for private parties. By 1849, he had purchased land on Bellevue Avenue. On this property he built the Sea Girt Hotel in 1854. When it burned in 1860, reportedly by the hand of an arsonist, Mr. Downing erected a commercial block on the site. The Downing Block has long since disappeared, but Downing's name is commemorated in the area by Downing Street.

The chief extant architectural monument of Newport's old and historically important black community stands half hidden behind the Jewish Cemetery: the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church. This building has a colorful history. It was erected in 1850, a few hundred yards south and east of its present location, as a dining room for the Bellevue Hotel. In 1866 the structure was relocated and altered by Cranston and Burdick, local builders, to serve as a hall for concerts and balls. It functioned in that capacity for nine years, a precursor to the Casino. The building was purchased in 1875 by Newport's largest black congregation. This structure, retaining a major public interior designed by Russell Warren, and associated with Newport's black community for nearly a century, is, nevertheless, among the city's most neglected historic and architectural monuments.

I. TWENTIETH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

Until the Great Depression the integrity of Newport's Kay Street-Catherine Street-Old Beach Road area remained little challenged. But the neighborhood was at a standstill; construction of large new homes almost stopped. Two houses built in the early twentieth century both replacing earlier summer houses deserve note: an important stucco house by Irving Gill in his Hispano-California manner executed in 1902 for Ellen Mason on Rhode Island Avenue (page 39, figure 40); and "Ayrault House" on Catherine Street at the head of Ayrault, an elegant and very academic colonial style brick mansion built for Virginia Hoyt of New York, c. 1916. "Ayrault House" is still a private residence. Gill's Mason House is now Saint Michael's School.

Since the Depression, significant changes have occurred in the Kay Catherine-Old Beach Road neighborhood. Of these changes, the most damaging have involved alterations to the nineteenth century buildings and new construction. Unlike the eighteenth century section of the city, outright demolition of historic structures has not as yet become common. So far, the only "hole" in the streetscape resulting from demolition is the parking lot now on the site of the rear wings of the Muenchinger-King Hotel, on Catherine and Redwood streets.

Few of the great houses remain single family residences. The large nineteenth century structures are considered neither fashionable nor economically viable. As a result they have been cut up and made into apartments. Many of these houses have been systematically stripped of their trim for reasons of economy and from a misguided notion that their appearance would be improved by "cleaning them up."

Land surrounding the summer houses has been subdivided into smaller lots upon which low "Ranch" and "Cape" style houses have been erected. Many of these are well built for this day, and expensive. None are appropriate to the neighborhood in scale, massing or design. Three contiguous government sponsored housing projects have been undertaken in the southwest section of the neighborhood on Chapel Street and Edgar Court: Chapel Terrace (1954), Edgar Court (1962), and 19 Chapel Street (1968-69). They, too, are inappropriate to the area due to their design. Fortunately, they are visually isolated, and their primary access is from Memorial Boulevard. But future projects of this variety could severely damage the architectural integrity of the Kay Street - Catherine Street - Old Beach Road neighborhood.

Several minor streets have been created during the twentieth century in sections of the neighborhood where estates have been subdivided. These include Central, Bush, Marin and Pell streets, Kay Terrace and Red Cross Court. Most are not obtrusive. Unhappily, Pell Street is an exception. This narrow road was cut through the former Izard estate, connecting Greenough Place and Kay Street. On one side a row of near identical frame houses were built, cheek-by-jowl, facing the great stone villa across the way.