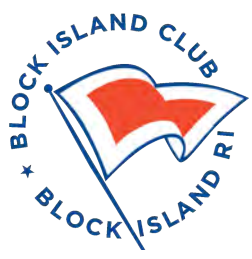




OUR PARTNERS ON THE POND SERIES



THE BLOCK ISLAND CLUB

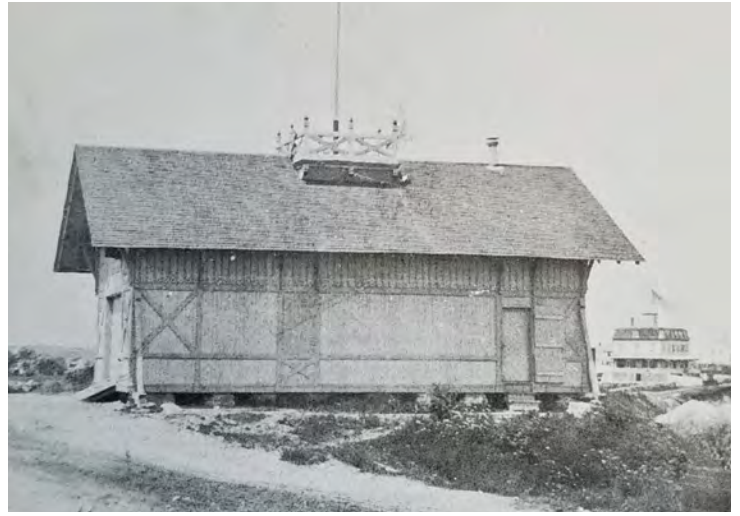
(Part 2 of 2)

History of the Clubhouse at the Block Island Club

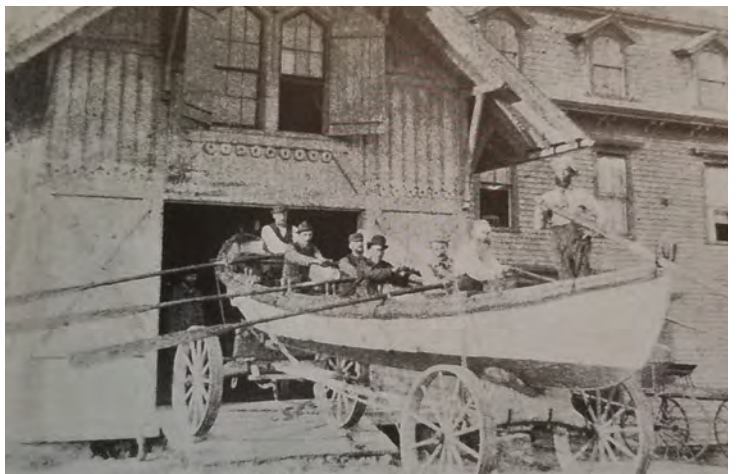
In 1871, Congress enacted legislation to establish a formal life-saving service under the management of a general superintendent who was an officer of the Treasury Department. This officially became the US Life-Saving Service in 1878 and was incorporated into the United States Coast Guard in 1915. It operated rescue stations on the Atlantic, Gulf, Pacific, and Great Lakes coasts.

The first Life-Saving Station at Old Harbor was built in 1874 to government specifications. This building stood on what is now a grassy lawn across from the current Empire Theater, adjacent to the Inn at Old Harbor, which was built in 1882. There was a boat-room and kitchen on the lower floor, two sleeping-rooms and a store-room above. The keeper, or captain, and crew of six surfmen lived in this 18 by 42-foot building from September 1st to May 1st, and this building served as a life-saving station for sixteen years.

Among the many items used for rescue operations was a surf-boat which was mounted on a light frame with four wheels so that it could be rolled across the sandy beaches by the crew. At the 1874 Old Harbor location, the surf-boat was rolled down the embankment at the edge of what is now a lawn with the surfmen aboard for launching into what was then water and is now a paved parking lot.



Life-Saving Station at Old Harbor, 1880 (photo from "Block Island - The Sea", by Robert M. Downie)



Life-Saving Station at Old Harbor, 1884 (photo from "Block Island - The Sea", by Robert M. Downie)

In 1963, this boarded up Victorian-style lifesaving station was sitting in town near Old Harbor when Dr. Dupont Guerry, "Bud" Pomeroy, and Dr. Edgar Frazelle, the three Block Island Club founders, were in search of a clubhouse for the new Club. They were willing to buy it and have it moved to the Club property, but the Mystic Seaport Museum wanted it taken to the museum in Mystic. The life-saving station was then moved to Mystic by barge, a replica was built for the Block Island Club by Mystic Seaport, and the replica was moved by barge to Block Island where it sits today at the Block Island Club.



Original Life-Saving Station taken by barge to Mystic Seaport Museum (photo courtesy of the Block Island Club)



Replica next to the original Life-Saving Station at Mystic Seaport Museum (photo courtesy of the Block Island Club)



Replica of original Life-Saving Station taken by barge to Block Island (photo courtesy of the Block Island Club)



Replica of the original Life-Saving Station, today, the clubhouse of the Block Island Club (photo courtesy of the Block Island Club)

The old original life-saving station is now on display at Mystic Seaport Museum where visitors may see a special demonstration of a rescue drill.



Original Life-Saving Station at Mystic Seaport Museum today (photo courtesy of Cheryl Moore)

To learn more about the Block Island Club please visit blockislandclub.org or call 401.466.5939.

This information was taken from *Block Island – The Sea*, by Robert M. Downie, and the *Mystic Seaport Museum Official Guidebook*.

OUR MISSION: To protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Great Salt Pond, including its shorelines and wetlands, and to promote appropriate and productive uses of the Pond's resources by residents, visitors and local businesses.

FUNDING: Individual contributions, membership dues, special events, program grants. IRS 501(c)3 non-profit. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please consider becoming a member of The Committee for the Great Salt Pond. For information and details, visit our website at cgspbblockisland.org.