

Old 'Waterside' Struggles Against Modern Times



The Stamford Advocate, drawing from its files of pencil sketches by the late Artist-Historian Whitman Bailey, is republishing Mr. Bailey's sketches together with the historical background written by Mr. Bailey.

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There is but little left of Stamford's early "Waterside" section, and what there is, one finds mostly hidden under the shadows of great oil tanks and modern coal pockets. "Waterside" today is rapidly turning into a progressive city harbor front. Here marked progress has been noticed during the past few years. Old buildings which once had a Cape Cod appearance have now nearly disappeared. Structures more adapted to modern use border the wind-swept horizon.

Yet, if one hunts long enough, one can suddenly stumble onto a bit of early New England, struggling against

modern times. It can be found at the foot of Waterside Lane, where sea captains once loitered with their corn-cob pipes after some weary journey across the "blue." Indeed, an old sea captain's house still stands in this section of Waterside and is pictured at the right of the artist's sketch. It recalls those simple days along the waterfront when sailing vessels came here to port, and a crescent-shaped beach crept up to the old house itself.

There was a grocery store at the corner of Oliver Street, known today as Pulaski Street, where a Waterside ghost story was told. It appears a ghost was once seen coming out of a small

burial yard near by, and the town constable was sent for, to chase it. The story goes that the constable nearly had the ghost when it suddenly passed into just empty space. The gossip was so intense the next day along this waterfront that people did not dare venture out after dark until the ghost had actually been caught. Tradition states that the ghost was caught, and turned out to be someone playing a joke and dressed up in a common bed sheet. As time went on the ghost story was gradually forgotten, and is now known only by a few people who have nearly reached the century mark.

—Whitman Bailey