

# THE EAST HAMPTON STAR

SHINES ON SPRINGS

Because of an increasing interest in the history of the area, the Springs Historical Society will send THE STAR SHINES ON SPRINGS, a monthly collection of Springs-related articles



culled from past issues of the EAST HAMPTON STAR, to all SHS members. Our thanks to Helen Rattray, STAR President, for giving us permission to do this.

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**FEBRUARY 2008**

**Gardiner's Island Light No More**

Gardiner's Point lighthouse is now little more than a heap of ruins, in which the tide rises and falls. The tower still remains, but the dwelling attached has collapsed.

The bar on which the lighthouse is is a particularly dangerous one, as it guards the entire eastern portion of Gardiner's bay, and is directly in the line of vessels coming around Montauk Point to Greenport.

About two years ago, owing to the tide, a sluiceway was broken through the bar, and has kept constantly enlarging, so that it left the light on a small island. The action of the tide has carried the sand around and deposited it on the interior, so that the position of the island has practically been moved inland. This caused the lighthouse to become nearer to the exposed coast, and finally little better than in the surf.

The Lighthouse Board visited the place, made due investigation and ordered the light discontinued and the house abandoned. That was in the early part of last spring. Since that time several vessels have run on the bar, and it is probable that during the winter many more will share the same fate, unless proper means are employed to warn mariners of this dangerous obstruction. During the summer a gas buoy has marked the place, but it is now ordered that that too be discontinued.

12/28/1894

(From The Star, May 20, 1898)

**Gardiner's Island Fort**

The work preparatory to the building of fortifications on Gardiner's Island point is well under way. A big dock, to extend 200 feet into deep water, is being built on the inner side and will be used in facilitating the work of building the fortifications.

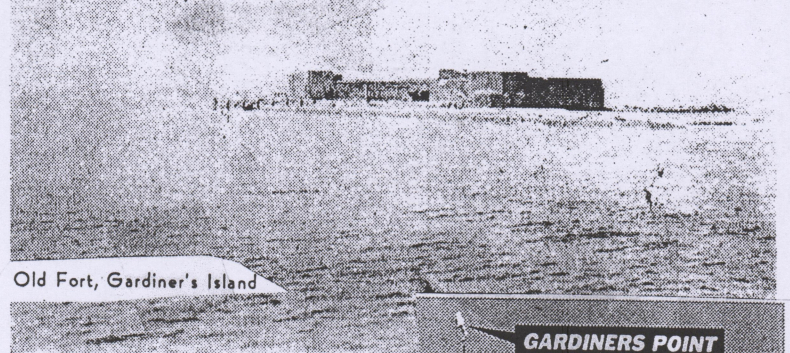
**INROADS OF THE SEA**

Tardy action in dumping stone at Gardiner's Point saved the foundation where it is petitioned that another lighthouse, to replace the one washed away in 1891, be erected, but fully two hundred acres of the long sand point is now submerged to a depth of from four to ten feet. Sailing vessels pass over the bar without fear of grounding, where fifteen years ago the writer had hunted gulls' eggs in the shingle and coarse beach grass. Gardiner's bay, once a safe harbor, by the neglect of the government is now an open roadstead of the sea.

12/1/905

**LONG ISLAND FORUM**

FEBRUARY 1947



Old Fort, Gardiner's Island

(From The Star, Nov. 30, 1906)

Army officers say that one of the most important strategic positions on the Atlantic coast is the extreme eastern end of Long Island. Many big guns are to be planted there to guard the approach through the channel to Brooklyn and New York. This is looked upon as the most important uncompleted military work on the coast. The Taft board of army experts, in reorganizing the plan of coast defense, asked for more money to fortify the eastern entrance to Long Island Sound than for any other spot on the coast line, save Puget Sound. The sum of \$8,201,000 was recommended for Long Island and \$9,800,000 for Puget Sound. The new guns will be placed on Gardiner's Island, Plum Island and Fisher's Island, as well as on the Connecticut shore.

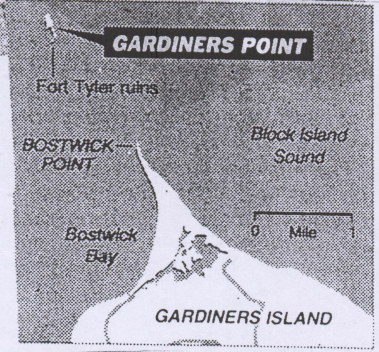
9/5/1924

**PARK COMMISSION TAKES OLD FORT**

The Long Island State Park Commission has just made an interesting addition to the system of state parks on Long Island which it was authorized by the Legislature to establish by the purchase from the United States War Department, of Gardiners Point in Gardiners Bay.

The cost was only \$50... Gardiner's Point is a sandy island covering about 3 acres on which stands a picturesque ruin, Fort Tyler, a concrete fortress built during the Spanish American War.

Gardiner's Point was probably once a part of Gardiner's Island, from which it is now separated by a mile or



more of shallow water. It was ceded by New York State to the United States government in 1852 for lighthouse purposes.

Early in the Spanish War, in 1898 when there were reports that the Spanish fleet was going to attack the North Atlantic coast, there was feverish activity in strengthening our coast fortifications. This work called Fort Tyler, was hurriedly rushed up, but the war was quickly ended and no guns were ever placed in their intended positions. The concrete structure is in fair preservation, with many enclosed rooms.

The fort was abandoned and has since been occupied by sea gulls and by occasional picnic parties from the mainland...The War Department decided to dispose of such useless military properties and a bill was passed providing for the transfer from federal custody to states, counties, cities and towns, in this order of preference...for park or other purposes.

The War Department offered Gardiner's Point for sale at \$50. The Long Island Park Commission, (whose chairman was Robert Moses) exercised the state's prior option and bought it. The deed has just been delivered by Sec'y of War John W. Weeks.

It would make a delightfully airy camping spot, swept by the breezes of Gardiner's Bay and Block Island Sound.