

View from Capt. Ryle's Landing, Davenport's Point



In early days, the section now known as Davenport's Point was in a part of the territory called Southfield, a name still applied to the land just beyond. Indeed, this entire land was once given to the planting of "Winter corn" or to Summer pasture. Still, today, one finds several cart paths cut through it that lead directly to the shore. It is quite possible, in fact, that the narrow lane which takes one down to the old Capt. Ryle Landing was one of the original paths. The terminus of this lane is shown in the artist's drawing. It was here that Capt. Ryle carried on his oyster and lobster trade which to a great extent has been continued by his son, who bears his father's name.

Even to this day old barrels and lobster pots clutter the shore where Capt. Ryle used to land

with his morning's catch, and where one may still listen to exciting stories of the sea.

Judging from various accounts, it seems that Capt. Ryle always took delight in telling of a time when Stamford Light received its solid base and of how he was among a group of men who set this large base in position. It was an eventful day in 1881 and many people put out from shore to watch the slow, but interesting progress. Capt. Ryle was also harbor master at this period and was considered one of the best pilots to be found anywhere along the Sound, since he knew every point of danger from Stamford to Montauk. When the captain was not fishing, it is said that he was piloting and never seemed happy to stay long on dry land.

A story goes that in his diary of seafaring days, among many exciting events, he mentions the marine tragedy of Feb. 28, 1886, when the good ship "Idlewild" went aground and when nine persons were lost while trying to make shore. The accident took place not far from the spot where the Lexington was burned in 1841.

Today this little landing looks across at a different horizon and on to a harbor where large ships and swiftly moving motor craft come and go. Not that this is always considered an improvement. Occasionally an old salt will remark ruefully: "These modern times are all right for some people; but for us, mackerel don't seem to bite as good as they did when we were boys."

—Whitman Bailey.