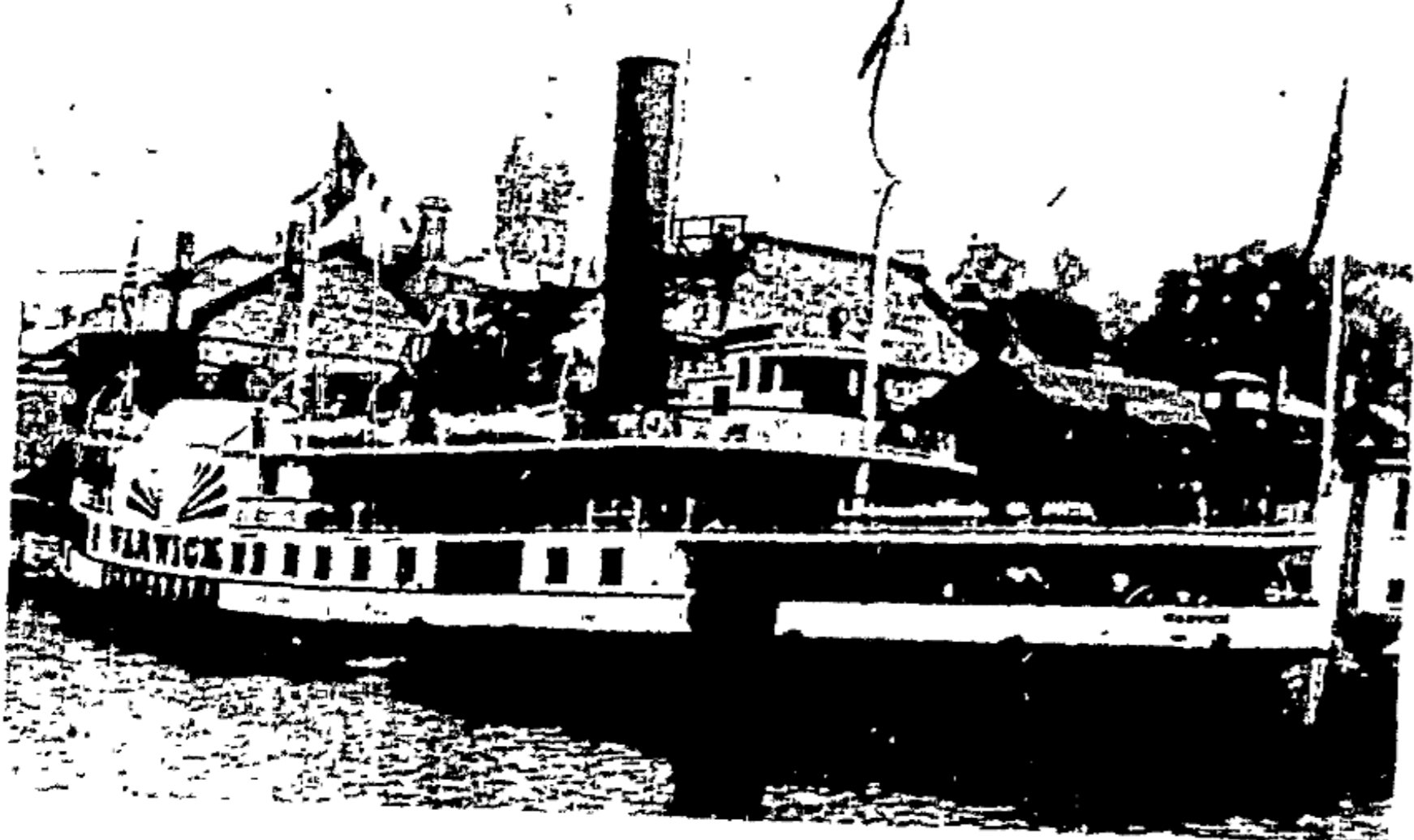
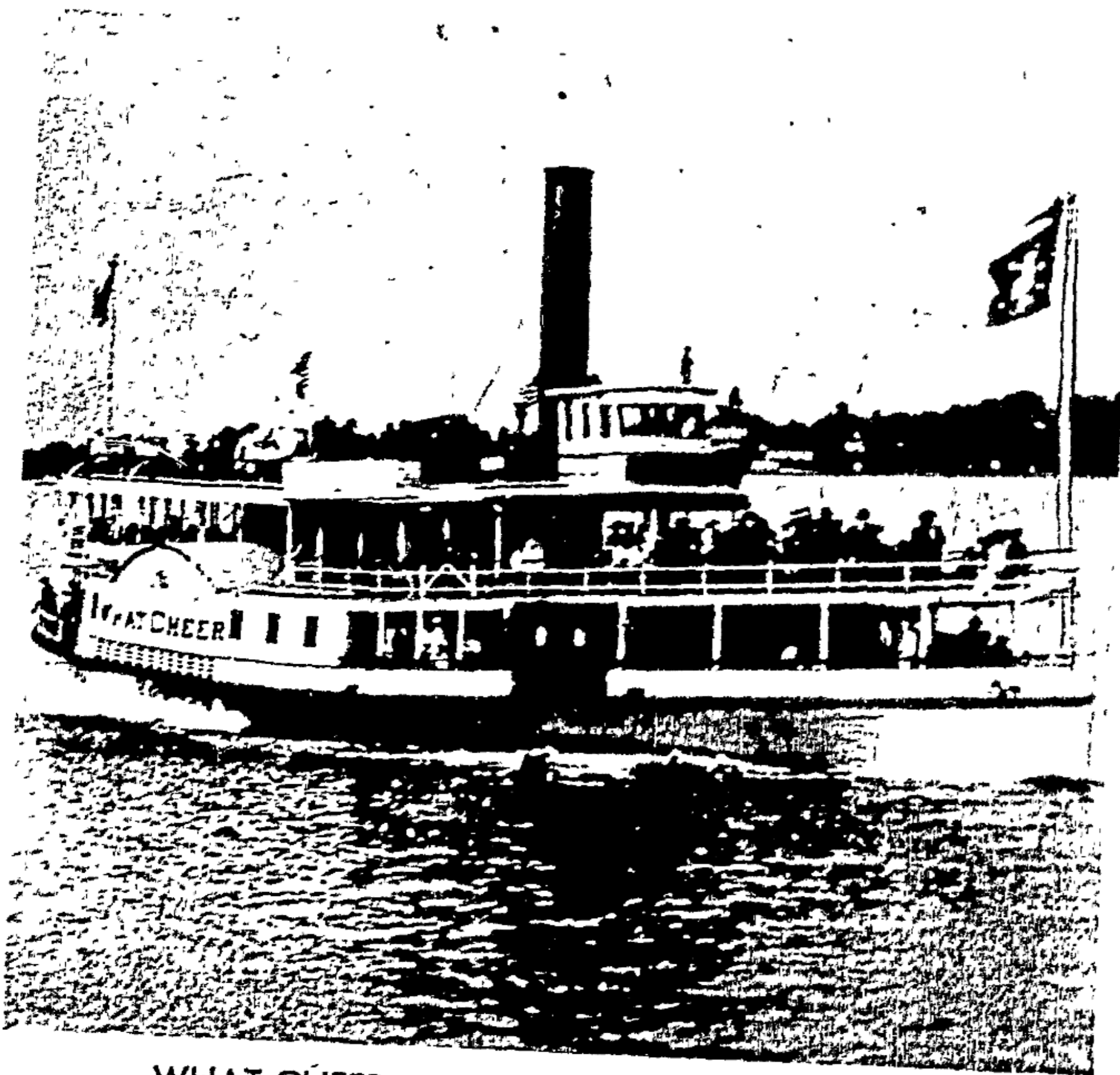




—Journal Photo, H. Raymond Ball
MEMORIES. Mr. Flynn from his office window looks down Peck Street toward the river now empty of boats.



STR. WARWICK at her South Water Street dock.



WHAT CHEER carried early diners to Fields Point.



CITY OF NEWPORT on which Mr. Flynn worked several seasons as a purser.

on the Bay Boats

BY WILLIAM S. FLYNN

As told to John Ward

IT'S A PITY the excursion steamers are not running today to Fields Point for the clam bakes, the amusement parks and summer resorts the way they did back in the early 1900s. People would be a lot better off than on the crowded highways.

From my law office windows on lower Weybosset Street I can see down Peck Street to the river where many of them tied up—the *Mount Hope*, *Squantum*, *City of Newport*, *What Cheer* and others. I pursered on *City of Newport* several summers when I was going to school.

When I started, I was at Classical High School, looking around for a summer job. The day before the Fourth of July, Dick Winsor's father, a dentist and city councilman, who was superintendent of the Providence, Fall River and Newport Line, asked me if I had ever sold tickets. I had been hanging around the docks a week or so, waiting for a chance. Bill Huntley, a Brown University student still a lawyer in Boston, worked in the ticket office.

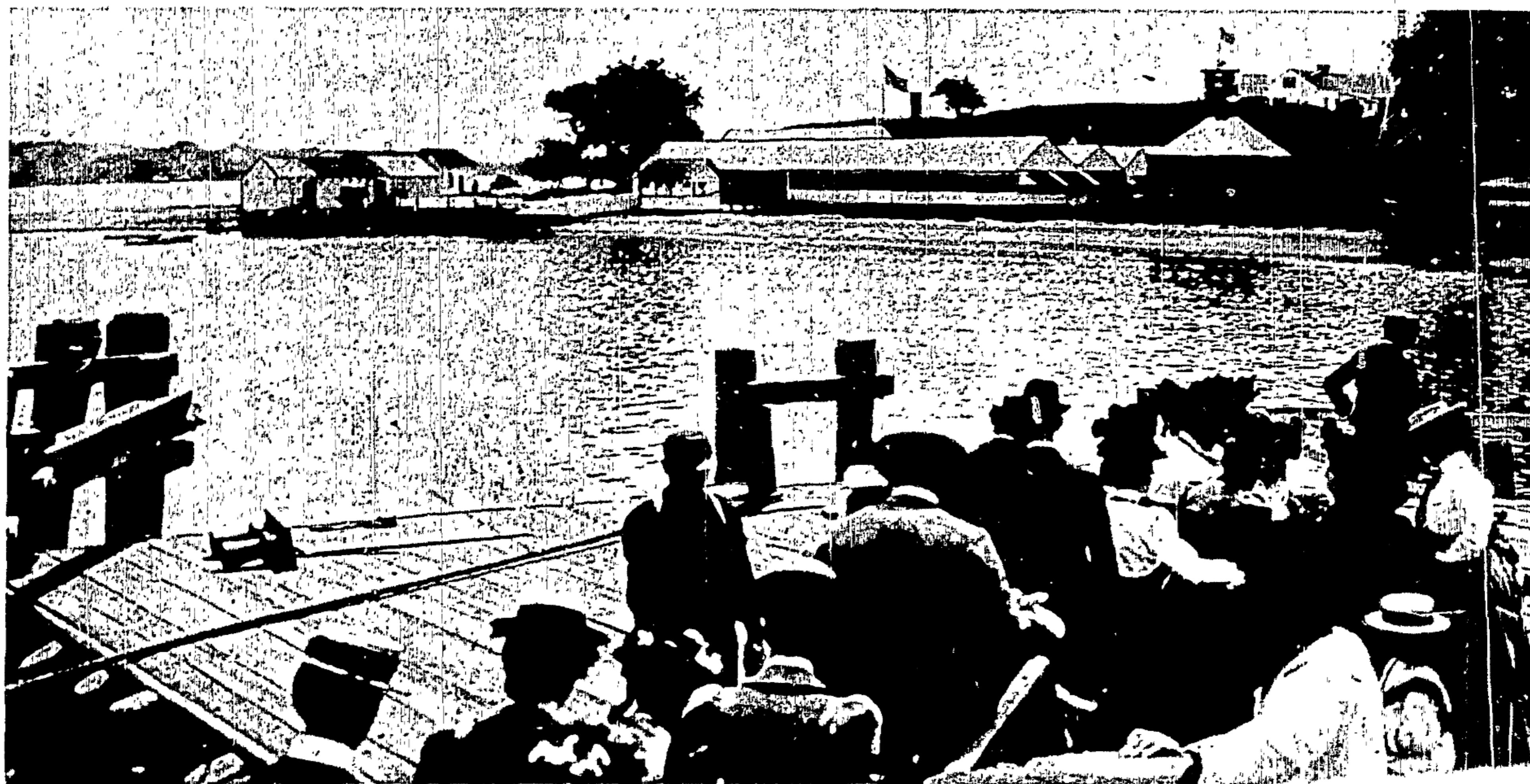
My brother, Edmund W. Flynn, later chief justice, worked on the boats and so did John T. Bannan, a lawyer; John L. Curran, who was purser on the *Islander* to Sakonnet; George E. Thurber of Smithfield; Chester W. Barrows, later a Rhode Island Supreme Court justice. There were also many Brown students.

I started on July 4, 1904. I would help fill up the *Mount Hope*, selling or taking tickets at the gang plank for the 10 o'clock run. I worked with the late Joseph Troy, brother

A former governor recalls when the harbor was filled with busy steamboats and happy days when the two-hour-for-lunch set went to Fields Point for a bake



WILLIAM S. FLYNN, R. I. governor 1923-25.



HUNGRY PASSENGERS disembark at Fields Point bound for one of Colonel Atwell's bakes.



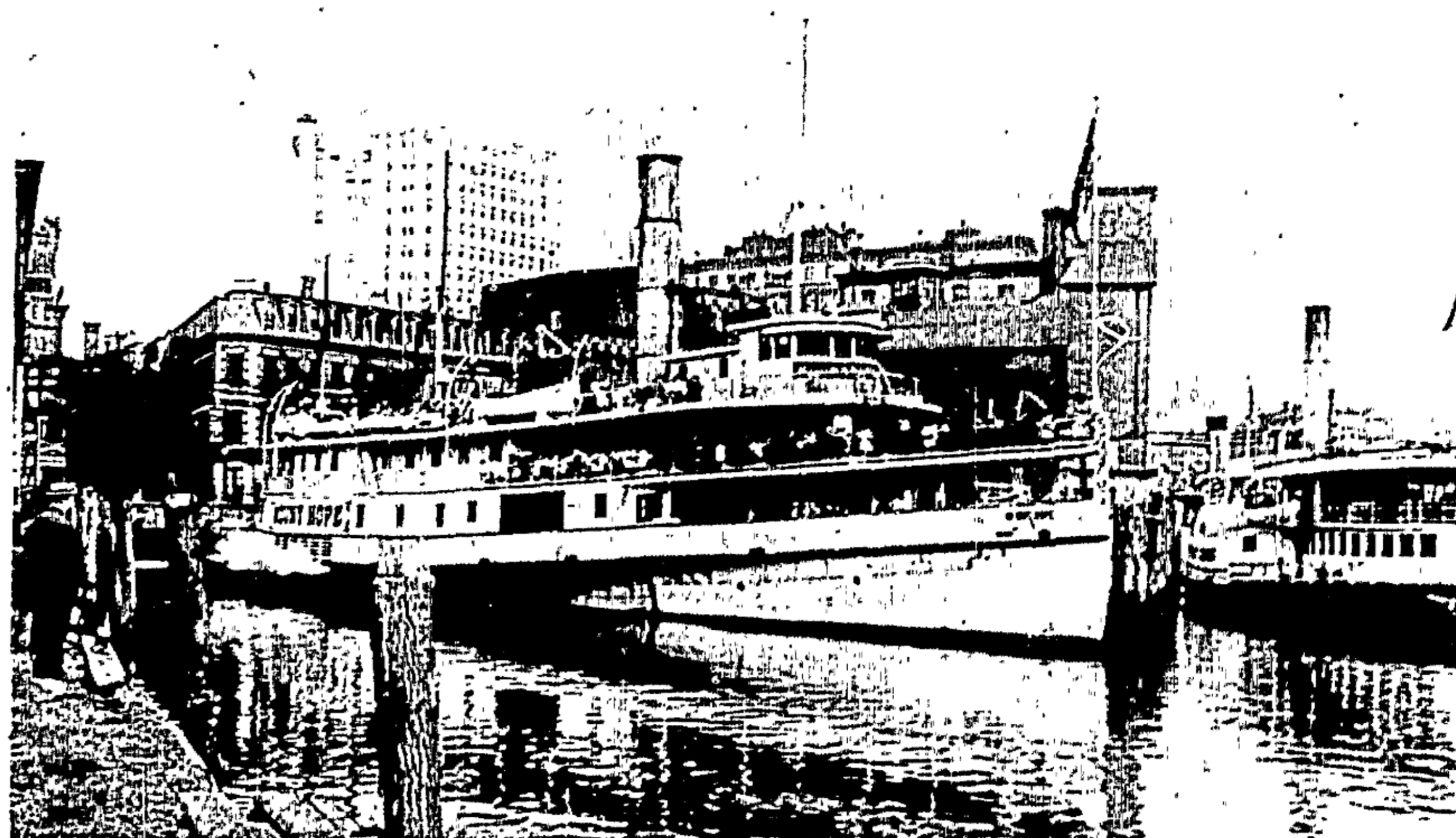
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MOUNT HOPE in her slip at the foot of Hay Street takes on passengers.

I REMEMBER THE BAY BOATS continued

Five Wash Tubs of Cucumbers

of George and William, the lawyers. We would load the *Mount Hope* with her full complement of 1,900 passengers. She had to drop off all but 900 at Newport for the run to Block Island. Every Saturday, Sunday and holiday, sweethearts and entire families would come aboard for the sail down the bay.

Captain Stinson was on *The City of Newport* and she would come up from Newport on her regular trip. At one o'clock I would go on her as one of the pursers on the run to Fields Point, then cross to Crescent Park, back over to Rocky Point and return. On her Newport runs, she also stopped at Prudence and Conanicut.

The City of Newport was a sidewheeler and a fine boat. She would pull away from her dock on a Sunday or holiday with all pennants flying, her whistle tooting, and all sorts of happy people out on the decks, crowding the rails. We would drop a lot of them off at Fields Point and take on some more. The *What Cheer* would have made the first stop there for the 12 o'clock bake, and other boats also dropped off people for the shore dinners, so that there was a boat about every half hour.

Summer residents made the trips to get to their homes down river. Colonel Atwell, who made the Rhode Island clam bake famous, had a residence at Fields Point. I worked there several seasons and made \$1 a day. I would walk from what was Sherbourne Street and is now Trask and get there around 7 a.m. A lot of the college boys waited on table.

My place in the morning was out on a primitive dock where, each day, I would peel and slice five wash tubs of cucumbers and two or three firkins of onions. *The Mount Hope* would go by, so close you could see the people's faces and if, at that time, I was half done with my peeling, I knew I was all right.

After we had our lunch I would dress up to help greet the diners at the main dining

room. There were three or four bake masters. For 50 cents, you'd get all the steamed clams you could eat, chowder, fish, sweet corn, vegetables, brown bread, watermelon. They put on an Indian pudding that was magnificent. They sold chowder for 5 cents a pail to take home. There was never anything left over for the next day.

When the first boat would land its passengers each Wednesday, we would see this woman leading the parade up the dock. She always sat at the first table, where John Martin was one of the waiters. She loved the steamed clams. One time she missed the first boat and was on the next boat. She had to sit at the second table and later complained about not getting enough to eat.

John Marshall, one of the waiters, says to me, "Come with me." He took me to where she had been sitting and there was a huge mound of empty clam shells at her place at the table. They also had a special dining room where James A. McCann, later a Providence physician, was the star performer as a waiter. For an extra 25 cents, you got more table room and broiled lobster.

But it was on the excursion steamers that we had the most fun. I used to collect tickets on one side of the boat and another fellow the other side. One day, two young ladies got on at Fields Point for the sail down the river. They told me that one of them had their pocketbook stolen so I made the rounds of the boat.

I got a tip and took a big chance and went up to this fellow. I told him I was going to put him in chains if he did not come across. He coughed up the pocketbook.

Generally speaking there were well behaved crowds on the boats. It was always an enjoyable sail in clean air on clean salt water. It's a pity the bay steamers are not running today. Can you imagine a businessman taking a 15 minute sail from here to Fields Point for a clam bake and be back at his office, all within two hours?

End