HISTORICAL CAPE TOWN
GREEN POINT COMMON

The Grand Vlei

DEPARTMENT of CULTURAL AFFAIRS and SPORT
Provincial Government of the Western Cape

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CITY OF CAPE TOWN ISIXEKO SASEKAPA STAD KAAPSTAD

THIS CITY WORKS FOR YOU

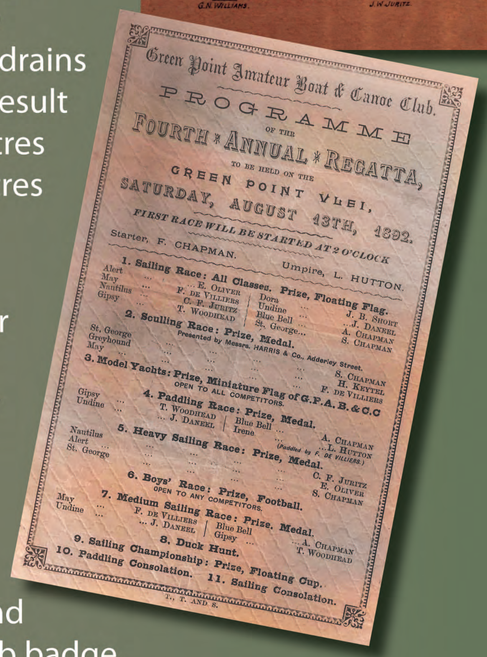
The water feature before you echoes back to a natural depression on Green Point Common that would fill with water each year as the winter rains set in.

Young yachting enthusiasts began sailing here and in 1887 established the Green Point Amateur Boat and Canoe Club. Two years later the Municipality was prevailed upon to deepen the vlei by raising its banks and directing a greater supply of water to the site through the construction of storm-water drains and additional furrows. The result was a body of water two metres deep and nearly two kilometres in extent, which came to be known as the Grand Vlei.

The highlight of each year for the sailing club was Regatta Day, held in early September and attended to with great ceremony and attention to detail. Members wore their club uniform of white duck trousers, blue serge jacket and yachting cap bearing the club badge. No effort was spared to ensure all was ship-shape with the club burgee flying proudly from the mizzen mast of each contestant's boat.

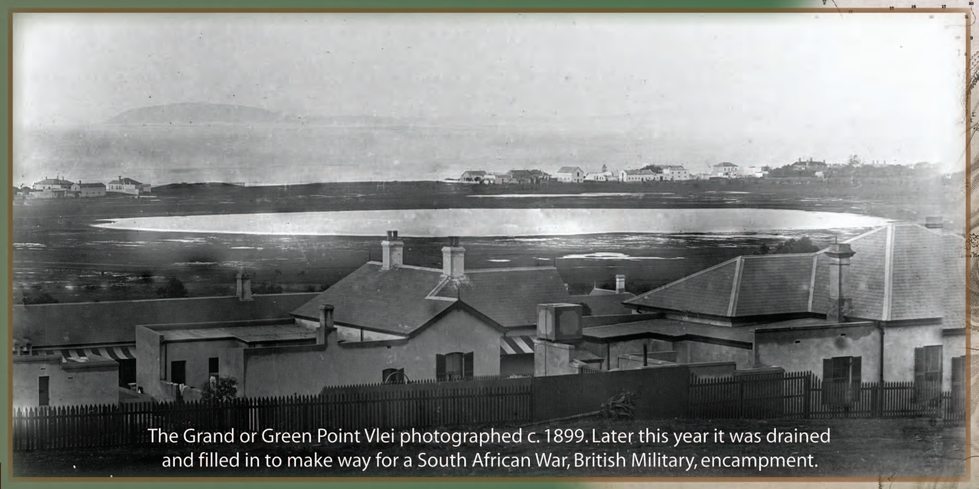
Sadly these halcyon days were to be short-lived, for as each season wore on, the vlei would dry out and become stagnant. A growing number of residents saw this as a health hazard and in 1899 the vlei was drained and the depression filled in.

REGATTA AFTERNOON ON THE GREEN POINT VLEI - 1891.


Green Point Amateur Boat & Canoe Club.
PROGRAMME
OF THE
FOURTH * ANNUAL * REGATTA,
TO BE HELD ON THE
GREEN POINT VLEI,
SATURDAY, AUGUST 13TH, 1892.
FIRST RACE WILL BE STARTED AT 2 O'CLOCK
Starter, F. CHAPMAN. Umpire, L. HUTTON.
1. Sailing Race; All Classes. Prize, Floating Flag.
Alert ... E. Oliver | Dora ... J. B. Smout
May ... F. de Villiers | Undine ... J. Daniel
Nautilus ... T. Woodhead | Blue Bell ... A. Chapman
Gipsy ... C. F. Juritz | St. George ... S. Chapman
2. Sculling Race; Prize, Medal.
St. George ... A. Chapman
Greyhound ... S. Chapman
May ... H. Keytel
Presented by Messrs. HARRIS & Co., Adderley Street. F. de Villiers
3. Model Yachts; Prize, Miniature Flag of G.P.A.B. & C.C
OPEN TO ALL COMPETITORS.
Gipsy ... C. F. Juritz
Undine ... F. de Villiers
4. Paddling Race; Prize, Medal.
T. Woodhead ... A. Chapman
J. Daniel | Blue Bell | Irene ... L. Hutton
5. Heavy Sailing Race; Prize, Medal.
(Handed in by F. de Villiers.)
Nautilus ... C. F. Juritz
Alert ... E. Oliver
St. George ... S. Chapman
6. Boys' Race; Prize, Football.
OPEN TO ANY COMPETITORS.
7. Medium Sailing Race; Prize, Medal.
May ... F. de Villiers
Undine ... J. Daniel | Blue Bell | Gipsy ... A. Chapman
T. Woodhead
8. Duck Hunt.
9. Sailing Championship; Prize, Floating Cup.
10. Paddling Consolation. 11. Sailing Consolation.
To T. and E.

Central to the activities of the Green Point Amateur Boat and Canoe Club were three brothers - John, Charles and Walter Juritz. Many of the boats in the flotilla which graced the vlei were built in a workshop set up in the back garden of their family home, Villa Marina, nearby at Three Anchor Bay.

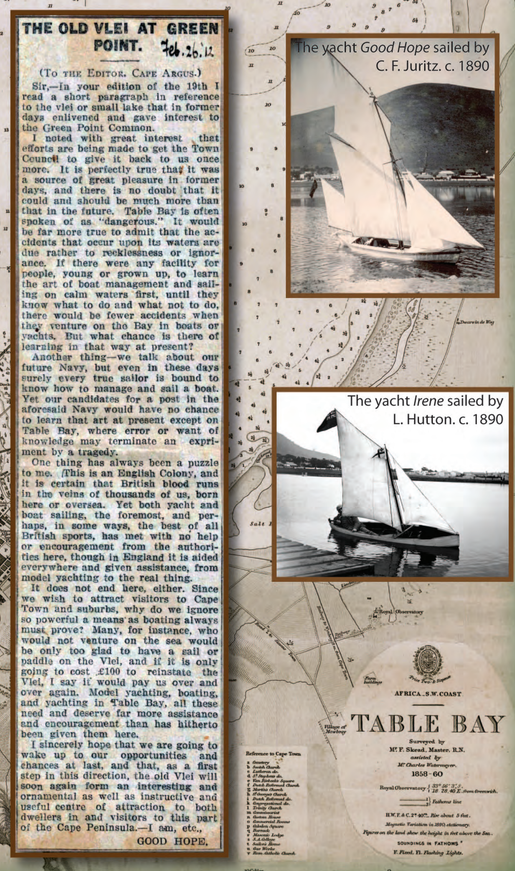
John, in particular, was a man of many talents - architect, shipwright, model ship builder and accomplished painter of ships and nautical themes. The above water colour is from his brush - a collage of memories from the1891sailing club regatta held on the *Grand Vlei.*


The Grand or Green Point Vlei photographed c. 1899. Later this year it was drained and filled in to make way for a South African War, British Military, encampment.

Young and old alike were encouraged to join in the fun and would queue on a jetty built out over the water for their chance to go sailing.

Yachts *Nautilus* and *Blue Bell* seen in the distance

Ladies were also welcome - note what was regarded as proper sailing attire in those Victorian times.


THE OLD VLEI AT GREEN POINT. Feb. 26. 12.

(To the Editor. Cape Argus.)

Sir,—In your edition of the 19th I read a short paragraph in reference to the vlei or small lake that in former days enlivened and gave interest to the Green Point Common.

I noted with great interest that efforts are being made to get the Town Council to give it back to us once more. It is perfectly true that it was a source of great pleasure in former days, and there is no doubt that it could and should be much more than that in the future. Table Bay is often spoken of as "dangerous." It would be far more true to admit that the accidents that occur upon its waters are due rather to recklessness or ignorance. If there were any facility for people, young or grown up, to learn the art of boat management and sailing on calm waters first, until they know what to do and what not to do, there would be fewer accidents when they venture on the Bay in boats or yachts. But what chance is there of learning in that way at present?

Another thing—we talk about our future Navy, but even in these days surely every true sailor is bound to know how to manage and sail a boat. Yet our candidates for a post in the aforesaid Navy would have no chance to learn that art at present except on Table Bay, where error or want of knowledge may terminate an expriment by a tragedy.

One thing has always been a puzzle to me. If this is an English Colony, and it is certain that British blood runs in the veins of thousands of us, born here or oversea. Yet both yacht and boat sailing, the foremost, and perhaps, in some ways, the best of all British sports, has met with no help or encouragement from the authorities here, though in England it is aided everywhere and given assistance, from model yachting to the real thing.

It does not end here, either. Since we wish to attract visitors to Cape Town and suburbs, why do we ignore so powerful a means as boating always must prove? Many, for instance, who would not venture on the sea would be only too glad to have a sail or paddle on the Vlei, and if it is only going to cost £100 to reinstate the Vlei, I say it would pay us over and over again. Model yachting, boating, and yachting in Table Bay, all these need and deserve far more assistance and encouragement than has hitherto been given them here.

I sincerely hope that we are going to wake up to our opportunities and chances at last, and that, as a first step in this direction, the old Vlei will soon again form an interesting and ornamental as well as instructive and useful centre of attraction to both dwellers in and visitors to this part of the Cape Peninsula.—I am, etc.,

GOOD HOPE.

The yacht *Good Hope* sailed by C. F. Juritz. c. 1890

The yacht *Irene* sailed by L. Hutton. c. 1890

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