

This is the latest in a series of profiles of former Norfolk Country Club members who achieved a certain prominence in their time, but are now mostly forgotten...

Julian Leonard Street (1879-1947)

Writer, Humorist, Wine Connoisseur, Gourmand



Very Much Of An Era

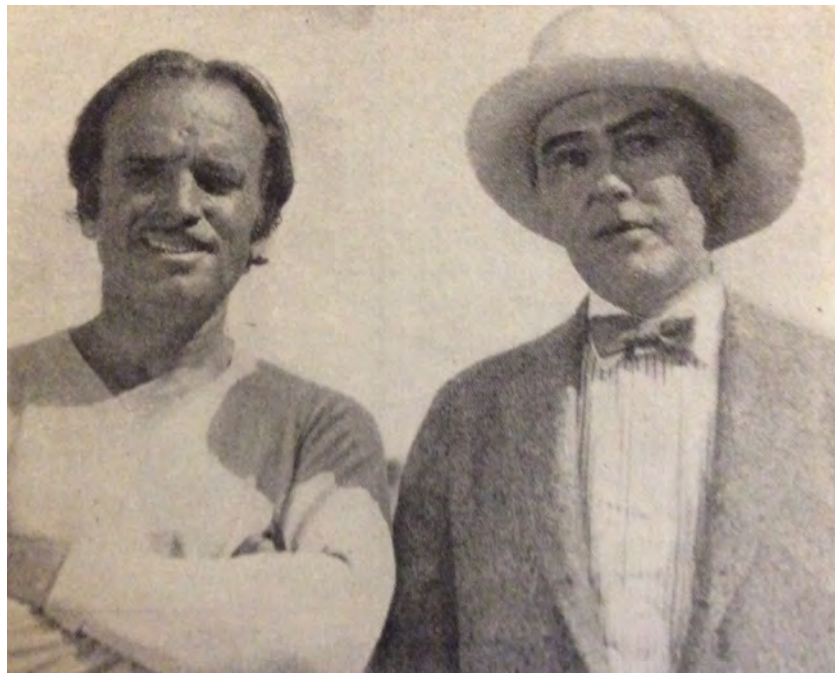
"I spend hours, days, weeks in toil... some of the days I work hardest I accomplish nothing. There's nothing that comes up to the feeling of satisfaction that steals over you when you realize that you've done something as well as you could possibly do it even though it's no more than one paragraph."

- Julian Leonard Street

Mention the name Julian Street to longtime NCC members and they invariably conjure up memories of **Julian 'Pete' Street**, an accomplished journalist and pioneer television

scriptwriter at NBC in New York, who was president of the Norfolk Country Club from 1959 to 1961. More about Pete Street later but, for now, we concern ourselves with Pete's father, celebrated writer **Julian Leonard Street**: novelist, humorist, journalist, arts critic, epicure, oenophile and travel correspondent who plied his craft a century ago, in the storied age of Edith Wharton and Marcel Proust.

Well before Julian Leonard Street became a member of the Norfolk Country Club, he was a prolific, highly-regarded American literary figure; a sophisticated man-about-town, who rubbed shoulders with the crème de la crème of New York and Hollywood society. Early in his career Street was known for his sardonic spoofs of America's upper crust. Later on, with a voluptuary's zeal, he concentrated his writing on extolling the sensory pleasures of food, wine and travel which, ironically, he most likely learned to appreciate through socializing with the swells he liked to caricature.



Douglas Fairbanks and Julian Street in Hollywood - 1920s

In 1916, Street wrote a biography of his good friend, Theodore Roosevelt called *The Most Interesting American*; and in 1917, he collaborated with another good friend, Booth Tarkington, on the Broadway comedy, *The Country Cousin*. Two of Street's short stories won O'Henry awards, one of which, *Mr. Bisbee's Princess* was, in 1926, turned into the silent movie *So's Your Old Man* starring W.C. Fields, with a screenplay written by Street.



W.C. Fields Movie Poster - 1926

A Few Examples of Street's Early Works of Humor Are:

A Bride and Bridle - 1903

Violets and Vexation - 1904

*My Enemy the Motor: A Tale
in 8 Honks and 1 Crash - 1908*

Ship-Bored - 1909

The Need of Change - 1909



Julian Leonard Street was born in Chicago on April 12, 1879 and attended Ridley College Preparatory at St. Catherine's in Ontario, Canada. In 1896 at the age of 17 Street dropped out of school and moved to Brooklyn to live with his uncle and become a journalist. Charming and ambitious, by 1900 Street was head of the drama department at *The New York Daily Mail* and was writing humorous features and stories for several popular magazines. Street had a mischievous, arch sensibility and wrote with 'an obvious but genuine sense of humor'. While working as art critic for *The New York*

Times, Street famously referred to Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* at the acclaimed 1913 Armory Show as: "resembling an explosion in a tile factory".



Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2 - Marcel Duchamp, 1912

Having achieved success as a novelist and humorist, Street traveled to Paris and channeled his three passions by writing two erudite, ebullient books on French cuisine and wine: *Paris à la Carte* - 1911; and *Where Paris Dines* - 1923.

An American high school drop-out from the midwest, Street wrote expertly and lucidly about food and wine in the gastronomic capital of the world during France's *La Belle Époque*. In *Paris à la Carte*, Street reviews, with verve and gusto, scores of Paris eating establishments: from high end restaurants frequented by the dukes and duchesses of Paris's *Haut Monde*, to casual cafés on the Left Bank and the Champs Élysées to the gritty bars and restaurants of Montmartre and Les Halles. Sixteen of the Paris restaurants Street described are still open, including the oldest, *Tour D'Argent*, founded in 1582. After World War I, during *The Roaring Twenties*, Street again ate and sipped his way through the arrondissements of Paris and published *Where Paris Dines* which, according to Street, was "about restaurants of all kinds, costly and cheap, dignified and gay, known and little known" - another *tour de force* on Paris cuisine, delineating the alimentary

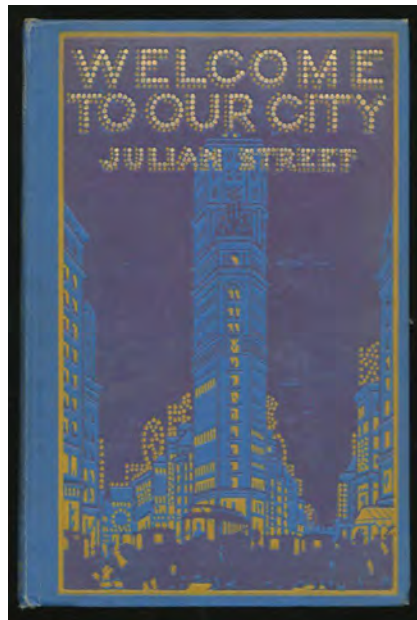
haunts of the City of Light and taking the reader on another gastronomic tour of over 130 restaurants in Jazz Age Paris.



Julian Street Caricature - James Montgomery Flagg, 1919

For his gourmandizing treatises 'popularizing the knowledge of French food and wine', Street was awarded the *Chevaliers Cross of The Legion of Honor* by the French government in 1935.

Not to overlook his hometown, in *Welcome To Our City*, published in 1910, Street captures with vivid imagery, the allure of New York's nightlife and society as it was evolving from gilded age privilege to a more egalitarian, bohemian city. Lamenting how fast everything was changing, Street writes: *Broadway - that over-lighted part of it... changes faster than the main street of a mining town. Its festivities, scandals, shootings, shows, celebrities... flicker across the surface of the year like moving pictures on a wide-spread sheet.* He was particularly dismayed by the dance craze raging through the city wherein, at highly respectable restaurants, people of different social backgrounds would get up in the middle of dinner to 'trip the light, and exceedingly fantastic, rag-time toe'.



The Transcendent Metropolis, 1910

Anticipating the 1920 onset of Prohibition, Street wisely stockpiled his wine cellar and managed to tipple his way through those thirteen long, 'dry' years. Poised for Repeal in 1933, Street published a primer for thirsty Americans, called *How To Drink* and wrote an article called *Civilized Drinking*, for *Redbook Magazine*.

Continuing his bibulous ways, Street also published, in 1933, an encyclopedic compendium of wine for Americans who, having depended on bathtub gin and bootlegged liquor for over a decade to slake their thirsts, knew virtually nothing about the seductive charms and subtleties of drinking wine. Called, *Wines: Their Selection, Care and Service* (including a handy fold-out map of European vintages), it is replete "with observations on harmonies between certain wines and certain foods, and on wine glasses, cradles, corkscrews, and kindred matters designed to provide a working knowledge of the world's principle wines in so far as such knowledge may be obtained without a corkscrew." Street writes in-depth about French wines from Bordeaux to Burgundy to Côtes du Rhone to Provence and also on wines from Chile, Hungary, Portugal, Palestine, Russia, the United States, and more. A stickler for quality, Street also designed his own line of wine glasses.



Julian Street - An Oenophile and His Muse

A peripatetic, intrepid traveler, Street traveled 5,000 miles across the United States in 1914, visiting 20 cities to write an amusing, wry travelogue, *Abroad at Home, American Ramblings, Observations and Adventures*. Included in the book is a passage on Cripple Creek, Colorado, a rowdy gold rush town where he wrote an unflattering account of Meyers Avenue, a wild west brothel-lined street. Outraged, livid town fathers got their revenge by renaming Meyers Avenue, 'Julian Street'.

Street's love of travel took him all over Europe and the Middle East where he sent dispatches and profiles to newspapers and magazines back home in the United States. Venturing further afield, Street toured Japan in 1920 just as the Land of the Rising Sun was emerging as a world power and wrote an insightful, enlightening book called, *Mysterious Japan*. On this extensive trip, Street took numerous, intriguing photographs of everyday Japanese life, many of which he included in the book.



From 'Mysterious Japan' - photo by Julian Street, 1921

NCC Newspaper Caper

FIRST EDITION

Norfolk Daily Prune

A JOURNALISTIC SPASM

VOL. 1—NO. 1—NEVER AGAIN NORFOLK, CONN., SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1922 PRICE ONE DOLLAR

WEATHER
Yesterday Fair to
breeze with clouds.
The morning will be
partly cloudy, with
occasional showers.
Temperature 70 to
80.

MORE WEATHER
The forecast for the
week ahead shows a
partly cloudy day
with occasional
showers. The
temperature will
range from 65 to
75.

**LIGHTHOUSE WILL GRACE
SINISTER WALCOTT REEF
ON TREACHEROUS TOBEY**

Goethals, Snow and Blanchard to Undertake Hazardous Task, According to Statement Issued in Washington Yesterday by Forestry Department's Commissioner of Lighthouses and Buoys.

Washington, Sept. 15.—The United States Coast and Geodetic Survey today announced that it had accepted the offer of the United States Lighthouse and Buoy Service to undertake the task of reconstructing the lighthouse on Walcott Reef, off the coast of Maine.

**TRANSIT SYSTEM TIE-UP
CONGESTS NORFOLK LINES
AT MORNING RUSH HOUR**

Thousands Delayed in Reaching Work by Blow of Filamentous In Spruce Street Powerhouse — Superintendent Maloney Explains Accident Which Caused Hour's Inactivity on All Lines.

The morning rush on a set of filaments in the Spruce Street powerhouse, which occurred at an early hour yesterday morning, resulted in a tie-up of the entire Norfolk Rapid Transit system, including street, trolley and elevated roads, at a time when thousands of commuters were on their way to work.

**BRILLIANT VAUDEVILLE HELD
BY FAMOUS RUSSIAN TROUPE
FINAL EVENT OF HECTIC SEASON**

CHAUVE SOURIS
NORFOLK COUNTRY CLUB
Saturday Evening, Sept. 9, 1922

PROGRAMME

NOTE: The programme is provided for each and every number on the programme in the work of artists of the Moscow Staff's House Band.

- MUSICAL SELECTIONS — The Old British Country Club Orchestra
- THE LAST STAGE, a Tragedy in One Act by Y. Shtromsk, played in the Russian language, with a cast as follows:

Majak Gerasim Boris Yashinski E. Carlton Oakes
Masha Yashinski, his wife Mrs. Ernest Dillan
Yashinski, their son Julia Street, Jr.
Rosy, their daughter Mrs. Marjorie Bickford
Four Ladies E. S. Lee
Special Staff Kenneth Gilbert
- SONS, "Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Sloan"
- THE CONVENIENCE OF THE TELEPHONE, a Play in One Act by Mrs. David Henshaw and Comedians
- ON NORFOLK DOWN, Imitation — Display Mahon
- THE JEWELRY STORE, Imitation — Display Mahon

**Prominent Tourist and Family
Give Story of Trip from Canaan**

GOETHALS HERE
GIVES INTERVIEW

General George W. Goethals has arrived in Norfolk to assist with the reconstruction of the lighthouse on Walcott Reef, off the coast of Maine. He is accompanied by his family, including his wife and children.

**Thousands Delayed in
Reaching Work by Blow
of Filamentous in Spruce
Street Powerhouse — Superintendent Maloney Explains Accident Which Caused Hour's Inactivity on All Lines.**

The morning rush on a set of filaments in the Spruce Street powerhouse, which occurred at an early hour yesterday morning, resulted in a tie-up of the entire Norfolk Rapid Transit system, including street, trolley and elevated roads, at a time when thousands of commuters were on their way to work.

**Country Club Resplendent
as Norfolk is Dazzled by
the Chauve Souris—Favorable
Audience Attends
—Bill Varied by Both
Bitter Tragedy of Gerasim
and Scintillating
Comedy of Mrs. Good-**

The beautiful day yesterday evening at the Norfolk Country Club was a most successful one. The audience was large and the program was well received.

In 1922, to raise funds to replace NCC clubhouse furniture which had been stolen the previous winter, Street and fellow NCC literati, novelists **George Barr McCutcheon** and **Phillip Curtiss** humorist, **Wallace Irwin** and Broadway playwright, **Edward Peple**, put together a one-time-only, satiric newspaper they called, ***The Daily Prune, a journalistic spasm***, in which they blithely lampoon NCC members and the town of Norfolk. Playful, jocular jabs, many of which would never fly with today's decidedly more diverse NCC membership, were embedded in columns such as 'In Society's Whirl!', 'Fashion Notes' and 'News of Norfolk's Literary and Artistic World'. Sarcasm and caustic wit abounded in overreaching headlines as evidenced above on the front page. Inside the four-page broadsheet are many other snarky headlines such as: 'Pete Street Denies Report of Bigamy'.



Prune Cartoon Depicting Winter 1921 NCC Clubhouse Furniture Heist

Seemingly way ahead of his time, Street moved from New York to Princeton, NJ. in 1921 to be near his son, Pete, who was a student at Princeton University. Upon his death Street's papers were donated to Princeton where a Julian Street Library is now located.

Drawn by Norfolk's flourishing literary and artistic climate of the time, Street spent many summers renting various houses or staying with NCC members, enjoying the social whirl at the Country Club and Norfolk's quiet rusticity. Still hard at work on new writing projects, one of which was a new edition of *Wines* (which was completed by his wife and published in 1948), Street died suddenly of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1947 at the age of 68 in Lakeville, CT.

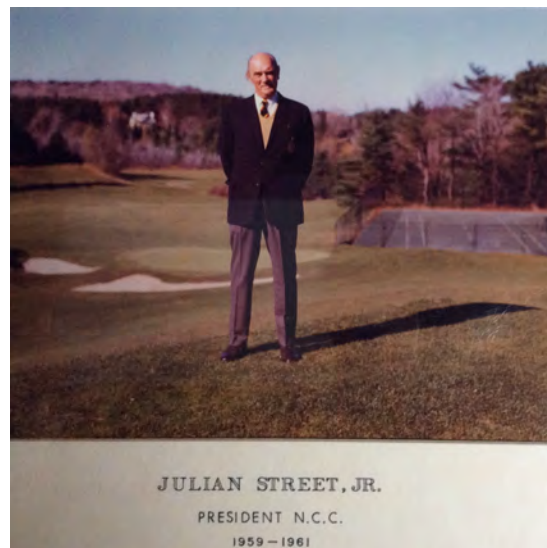
Pettiness, pomposity and pedantry, sins of lesser pundits of food and drink were foreign to Street's nature. He knew what he was talking about but he put it genially, with a twinkle in his eyes and a sparkle in his phrase. Sharers of the good life at his table weren't the restive audience of an egoist; he and they were a convivial, quippy discussion group doing honor to the meats he carved and the cellar treasures he poured. He was the gift of extracting from everyday life the essence of kindly humor, warm and friendly understanding, and these he dispensed with lavish generosity... in the quiet of his Connecticut home."

- Lawton Mackall, Gastronomist

Julian 'Pete' Street started summering in Norfolk with his family as a teenager and had a longstanding predilection for the remote village in the foothills of the Berkshires. In 1927, Pete married **Narcissa Vanderlip** (daughter of Frank Vanderlip, president of the National City Bank of New York) at the New Church on 35th St. in New York, followed by a lavish reception at the Colony Club attended by 1500 guests, including Vanderbilts, Roosevelts and Goulds. NCC member, **Christina Vanderlip** was related to the Streets by marriage. In 1938 the Streets engaged noted architect, Wallace Harrison to build them a landmark, experimental modernist fieldstone house in Briarcliff Manor, NY. which to this day is known as the Julian Street House.



Narcissa Vanderlip Street
Harry Cohn Portrait - 1954



Julian 'Pete' Street
NCC President's Photograph

In 1953, Narcissa and Pete bought the 19th century house at the corner of North St. and Ashpohtag Road in Norfolk where current NCC members, **Caitlin Macy** and **Jeremy Barnum** now reside. An amusing fillip to being a dinner guest at the Street's inviting home often would be

an invitation to traipse upstairs and view the bed once slept in by the Marquis de Lafayette of Revolutionary War fame. As he got older, Pete began spending more time in Norfolk, becoming a fixture around town and involving himself in civic affairs. A patrician gentleman, skilled raconteur and avid golfer at the NCC, Pete exuded much of his father's natural charm about whom he enjoyed telling wonderful stories. A founding member of the Norfolk Historical Society, Pete contributed several entertaining, folksy Norfolk anecdotes to the Society's 1976 bicentennial history book.

Narcissa Street died in 1963 at the age of 59. A year later, Pete married artist, Helen Moravec, known to everyone as **Hella**. Both Hella and Pete died in 1995, she at age 85, he at age 92 and they are buried at Pond Town Cemetery on Doolittle Drive alongside Pete's first wife, Narcissa.

Michael Cummings Kelly, Club Historian