

Testimony of Ross Mottell
Eastham Hearings - Dec. 10 - 1959

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CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE PARK

Senate

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON

INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

UNITED STATES SENATE

EIGHTY-SIXTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

S. 2636

A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE PARK

EASTHAM, MASS., DECEMBER 9 AND 10, 1959

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Ross Moffett
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very badly. Up until the last 3 years the gross agricultural product in Massachusetts was perhaps annually \$200 million. Within the last few years this amount has shrunken by \$20, \$25, \$30 million. Meanwhile, an industry that a decade ago we gave no significance to at all, the so-called recreational industry, has grown to almost double the size of our agricultural product.

Now, this is something that deals, of course, with the land and heretofore we have always thought of the land as producing carrots and peas, corn and livestock, grass and wheat, and so on. We haven't realized, perhaps, that the product of the land is the people themselves. One of the production items that we are so concerned with today is water. The livelihood of a farmer does not come from the product he raises in terms of a consumable necessity. It is his guardianship of the soil, and what he does with it and passes on to his children and to his children's children that is important. Our concept of this national park on the cape is the idea that it is a land use and a land use of the highest order. Frequently in the past we have thought of land use in terms of pure economics, that is, a higher use that will fetch a bigger price. Presumably, if you convert a farm or cranberry bog into a bowling alley, that is a higher use. But this is only in terms of economics.

On the cape we feel that this demonstration of a national park is a demonstration of the highest possible land use, approved of by a responsible sentry who will realize that each one of them individually may lose but that in the aggregate society will vastly gain and in order to show also to the farmers in a state of diminishing agricultural significance that this sort of controlled recreational opportunity is something that can be duplicated in miniature on many a farm land that is now nothing but a barren pasture and the example of this sort of thing, and I do hope that the National Park Service will have as strong consoling influence from the local citizenry as it imposes upon them, that is, the idea of allowing certain things to exist as long as there is zoning regulation, the local people should also have some influence on the Secretary to say we want to be sure that you maintain this park at the highest possible standard which may be far more demanding in the future that it is today as we learn more about this operation.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak and hope this is successful.

Senator Moss. Thank you, Mr. Renouf.

Miss Virginia Morrissey, or someone representing the Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

I do not see Miss Morrissey coming forward.

Yesterday we called Mr. Ross Moffett and Mrs. Walter Chrysler. I understand they are here today. Mr. Moffett would like to come forward and give his testimony. And then Mrs. Chrysler would be next.

STATEMENT OF ROSS MOFFETT, PROVINCETOWN, MASS.

Mr. MOFFETT. Senator Moss, and members of the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, I may say that I have been a legal resident of Cape Cod for the last 43 years. I settled in this area because of

the unique charm and beauty of the cape villages and countryside, and also because of the quiet and deliberate life of the friendly people I found here.

I am an artist, and the views I wish to express about the intended park and Senate bill S. 2636 for its establishment reflect, I believe, the views of most of those of my profession who live and work on Cape Cod during all or part of each year. An almost unanimous sentiment for the park within this group was disclosed last September when a letter endorsing the proposal and the present bill was signed by 139 artists, musicians and writers, with only two declining. This list, I may remark, includes many of the foremost workers in the arts in this country.

I do not, therefore, feel alone when I say that I am greatly disturbed to see the beautiful and traditional Cape Cod I have known so long being transformed through unregulated commercialism. We find that the interests of real estate expansion and the interests of conservation do not often coincide. We discover that already some of our beaches are denied for bathing and fishing. We see that one man with a bulldozer can in a few hours tear down a splendid hill. We observe that our historic places are being immersed in an atmosphere of neon signs and honky-tonk.

If this transformation is to be halted, if any part of the original and desirable character of Cape Cod is to be preserved, it will be, in my opinion, through our General Government. To think that the cape towns themselves can conserve their heritage is to be unrealistic, it is to strangely misunderstand or misinterpret what has gone on in this area during the last several years.

The bill concerned in these hearings beyond question represents great research and thoughtful consideration on the part of its sponsors and their staffs. There is little time here for me to remark on the provisions of the bill. I would like to say, however, that the proposed boundaries as defined in the bill appear extremely well chosen to embrace varying physical aspects of the lower cape.

The inclusion of the section of the cape west of Route 6, on Cape Cod Bay, seems particularly wise and necessary. I have long held that this region, which takes in the so-called islands, is one of the most scenic parts of all Cape Cod. It is also of much scientific interest. Geologists tell us that the glacial topography here is such as can be found nowhere else. The great marshes which lie below the bluff headlands and islands of this area are well adapted for the nurture and study of wild bird life.—I may also point out that here we have the only section of the intended park which offers the relatively warm, surf-free bathing typical of the west shores of the cape.

In this western section of the proposed park, if one excepts South Truro, there are rather few houses. Indeed, there is here one instance where a landowner has barred entry to some 7 miles of salt water shore with adjacent upland. This, of course, also denies land access of local townpeople to large areas of clam flats. It would be shortsighted and regrettable, I believe, were the Seashore Park to be reduced in this western quarter.

I would also like to say that after studying the text of this bill, the provisions for safeguarding all reasonable interests of homeowners within the park appear to me entirely just.

In summary, I wholeheartedly endorse Senate bill S. 2636 for a Cape Cod National Seashore Park. I feel sure that the passage of this measure by the Congress in essentially its present form will not only save from exploitation a good part of this unique region for the people who live here, it will save for the Nation and its future generations an area of great recreational, scientific and scenic value.

I thank you.

Senator Moss. Thank you, Mr. Moffett. We appreciate your statement.

Senator Moss. Mrs. Chrysler.

STATEMENT OF MRS. WALTER P. CHRYSLER, JR., PROVINCETOWN, MASS.

Mrs. CHRYSLER. Mr. Chairman, Representative Keith, my name is Mrs. Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., and I live at 81 Bradford Street, Provincetown. As the wife of a substantial property owner and taxpayer in Wellfleet and Provincetown I am here to protest, in as emphatic a manner as I can, the seizure of privately owned property on Cape Cod by the National Park Service for a national seashore.

This is tyrannical destruction of the inalienable right of citizens to own, improve, dispose of, bequeath, or will private property. This arbitrary destruction of an individual's security is in opposition to democratic principles which encourage an individual to establish a home or business, of becoming a part of the social, religious, charitable, educational, cultural, commercial, and political life of any community of his choice, and by becoming a part of that community, to provide for a continuing relationship in that community for himself and his family which can extend into future generations.

This seizure of property, however adequate or inadequate the compensation may be, differs little from the movement, permanent displacement and often annihilation of large populations in Communist countries, with the attendant uprooting of homelife at the arbitrary discretion of political leaders.

Also I am objecting to the usurpation, at Government-defined values or at any value, of this or any other privately owned property anywhere in the United States, unless such land is obviously available without any deprivation of or infringement to individual rights of ownership. If this procedure continues, is there any security that remains in the ownership of land or are we to be relegated to the position of being temporary custodians of land which has been purchased and paid for, finances for construction of a home thereon arranged for, funds accumulated to pay contractors and labor, and money saved to possess home furnishings, only until such time as the Federal Government announces its intention to remove us, on one basis or another, from our privately owned land?

Are we to be forced to live only in such areas as shall be restricted to us by the Federal Government from time to time at the whim of any political opportunist?

Cape Cod is not an industrial community, nor is it an agricultural one; it is essentially residential. It has successfully resisted industrialization as such for 339 years. It is a community of homeowners and small businessmen serving the needs of the homeowners,

ROSS MOFFETT ARCHIVE: CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE PARK

TESTIMONY BEFORE SENATE: Dec. 10, 1959 by Ross Moffett

Subcommittee on Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and
Insular Affairs-United States Senate, Eighty-Sixth Congress on
S. 2636, Eashham, Mass. Dec. 9 and 10, 1959

Testimony before House: Dec. 16 & 17, 1960 by: 9 Provincetown
Artists & Writers +
Subcommittee on Public Lands of the 1 lawyer
Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs 1 architect
House of Representatives, Eighty-Sixth Congress

Those testifying:(Statements included)

Mary Cecil Allen
Fritz Bultman
Josephine Del Deo
Miriam Hapgood DeWitt
Ross Moffett
Jack Tworokov
Mary Heaton Vorse
Heaton Vorse
Hazel Hawthorne Werner

S. Osborn Ball (Provincetown)
Serge Chermayeff (Wellfleet)

Down

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Ross Moffett

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ORIGINAL DRAFT

at Dec. 10, 1959
HEARINGS FOR PARK

Senator Moss and Members of the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands:

~~At the start,~~ I may say that I have been a legal resident of Cape Cod for the last 43 years. I settled in this area because of the unique charm and beauty of the Cape villages and countryside, and also because of the quiet and deliberate life of the friendly people I found living here.

I am an artist, and the views I wish to express about the intended park and Senate Bill S2636 for its establishment reflect, I believe, the views of most of those of my profession who live and work on Cape Cod during all or part of each year. An almost unanimous sentiment for the park within this group was disclosed last September when a letter endorsing the proposal and the present bill was signed by 139 artists, musicians and writers, with only two declining. This list, I may remark, includes many of the foremost workers in the Arts in this country.

I do not, therefore, feel alone when I say that I am greatly disturbed to see the beautiful and traditional Cape Cod I have known so long being transformed through unregulated commercialism. We find that the interests of real estate expansion and the interests of conservation do not often coincide. We discover that already some of our beaches are denied for bathing and fishing. We see that one man with a bulldozer can in a few hours tear down a splendid hill. We observe that our historic places are being immersed in an atmosphere of neon signs and honky-tonk.

If this transformation is to be halted, if any part of the original and desirable character of Cape Cod is to be preserved, it will be, in my opinion, through our general Government. To think that the Cape towns themselves can conserve their heritage is to be unrealistic, it is to \equiv strangely misunderstand or misinterpret what has gone on in this area during the last several years.

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In this western section of the proposed park, if one excepts South Truro, there are rather few houses. Indeed, there is here one instance where a landowner has barred entry to some seven miles of salt water shore with adjacent upland. This, of course, also denies land access of local townspeople to large areas of clam flats. It would be short sighted and regrettable, I believe, were the Seashore Park to be reduced in this western quarter.

For several months we have heard on Cape Cod a great deal about dire consequences that would follow the establishing here of a park by our National Government. In regard to this I may observe that at Provincetown, where I live, we have had long experience in living beside what is in fact a government park, without suffering injury. I refer, of course, to the state owned Provincelands. It is believe a generally accepted fact that these state lands have been, and are now more than ever, the greatest single asset of the town they adjoin.

In summary, I wholeheartedly endorse the Saltonstall-Kennedy-Keith bill for a Cape Cod National Seashore Park. I feel sure that the passage of this measure by the Congress will, not only save from extinction a substantial part of this unique region for the people who live here, it will save for the Nation and its future generations an area of great recreational, scientific and scenic value.

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Respectfully submitted,

Ross Moffett,
Provincetown, Massachusetts.

I would also like to say that, after studying the text of this bill, the provisions for safeguarding all reasonable all interests of home owners within the park appear to me entirely just.