

624 (a)  
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1.

Restoration of the Trapboat CHARLOTTE  
1977-1979

The restoration effort of the trapboat "Charlotte" was initiated by the Provincetown Historical Association, a friends-of-the-Provincetown Heritage Museum organization, in 1977 under the enthusiastic leadership of Cyril Patrick, then president of the Historical Association and also a trustee of the Heritage Museum. His initiative to move the project forward resulted in the participatory efforts of three contractors who donated their time and equipment to the job of hauling the derelict "Charlotte" from the harbor mud where she had lain for approximately eleven years, from about 1966 until 1977. These three contractors were: Warren "Pinky" Silva, organizer of the crew and engineer of the digging-out process; Frederick Pina of Harwich who provided the crane and equipment to raise her and who assisted Silva in the difficult process of lifting her out of her grave at the Provincetown Inn near the breakwater, and Phil Des Champs of Nauset Marine who donated his tractor trailer for transporting the "Charlotte" between Provincetown and the Cape Cod Technical Regional High School in Harwich and back again, once she was restored.

The "Charlotte" weighed 14 tons when removed from the sand, and her water-logged hull was not easy to resurrect without damage, but these men accomplished the job with loving care. (See slides of this phase of the project on pp. 1, 2 & 3 of Art. 624 (a) of this archive.) The two-year restoration process which was supervised by Richard Alberts of the Cape Cod Technical Regional High School (see p. 29) and Odd Lilleheil, who assisted him, resulted in a beautifully restored "Charlotte." Participating in this unique project were forty-three students of the Cape Tech School (see listing of names on p. 37 ). The "Charlotte" was proudly transported to Provincetown in May, 1979 and deposited in "Pinky" Silva's yard preparatory for transport to her final berth at the Heritage Museum. (See slides on p. 4 of Art. 624 (a). See also black and white photographs of the installation at the museum in this scrapbook, pp. 39-42).

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The dedication of the "Charlotte" took place on June 23, 1979 with Joseph Oliver, her first captain, christening the boat for her last voyage. (See slides on p. 5 of Art. 624 (a) of this archive). Other trap fishermen who were present at the ceremony were Joseph "Ducky" Perry who had been the consultant for the "Charlotte's" restoration and who had been both crew member and a former captain and owner of the trapboat, and Manuel "Cul" Goveia, owner and captain of the trapboat "Agnes & Stephanie." John Worthington, former manager of the Pond Village Traps in Truro, was also in attendance. Trustees of the Heritage Museum who were present were: Joseph Lema, Adelaide Kenney, Salvatore Del Deo, Claude Jensen, Nathan Malchman and Josephine Del Deo, chairman of the board, who gave the dedicatory address. Peter Carter, president of the Provincetown Historical Association, officially presented the boat to the Board of Trustees of the museum and gave an historical white and blue enamel plaque, made by Claude Jensen, to the museum to be placed on her hull as a permanent record of the restoration. Others present were Town Manager Charles Cobb, Odd Lilleheil and Superintendent of the Cape Tech School William Learned, plus numerous interested members of the community. Joel O'Brien, newscaster and journalist, taped the ceremony.

Subsequent to the remarkable achievement of the "Charlotte's" restoration, weathering and lack of proper maintenance, largely due to lack of funds, reduced the trapboat to a deplorable condition in the course of ten years. Strenuous efforts were made, however, by the Heritage Museum in the summer of 1989 to recommence a second restoration of the trapboat (see meeting agenda, Sept. 22, 1989 and Trustees' Meeting, Oct. 12, 1989, pp. 49 & 50). At this point, a sum of \$5,000 was available to do the first phase of the repair. After an unsuccessful attempt to begin work on the trapboat by Penn Colbert, Francis John Santos of "Flyer's" Boatyard was contacted to replace the deteriorated members of the hull and did, at that time, replace 16 ribs with new oak. The remainder of \$2,000 worth of lumber for this phase of the repair is still flaked in a separate building known as the "kitchen addition" in the rear yard of the museum. The high cost of labor and the difficulties of raising the needed funds to continue the work on the "Charlotte" precluded any further progress at that time.

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Renewed interest in the fate of the "Charlotte" by the present Board of Trustees and others in the community will hopefully yield a much-needed re-restoration of this last specimen of Provincetown's trapboat era.\* Her importance to the legacy of trap fishing as a symbol and surviving historical artifact is inestimable. The members of the former boards of trustees of the Heritage Museum understood this, and, although the "Charlotte's condition today is seemingly desperate, there is now renewed hope that through the determination and dedication of the present museum board of trustees and the kind assistance of the Mystic Seaport Museum, she may yet regain her former eloquent presence at the Provincetown Heritage Museum..

Josephine Del Deo,  
Provincetown, Massachusetts  
November 11, 1996

\* Refer to Provincetown Trapboat Fishing, The End of an Era, 1978, Provincetown Historical Association, Inc., Shank Painter Printing Co., Provincetown, MA  
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