

Dennis, Yarmouth, Brewster play role in expanding Provincetown Museum

The Pilgrim Memorial Monument at Provincetown on the tip end of Cape Cod was built to commemorate the first landing place of the "Mayflower," 67 days out of Plymouth, England. After a stay of about a month, the Colony moved across Cape Cod Bay to Plymouth, where their permanent settlement was made.

In Provincetown Harbor they wrote the famous "Mayflower Compact," the first document of democratic free self government on the North American Continent. (The Virginia settlement at Jamestown was ruled by a governor appointed by the King, and democracy was suppressed there.)

The idea of the Monument grew out of the organization of the Cape Cod Memorial Association in 1892, and the later merger of that with the Pilgrim Club of Brewster, which had been formed to call attention to this first landing on the Cape.

The town of Provincetown deeded to the Association the hill in the center of the town known as Town Hill or High Pole Hill. The General Court of Massachusetts passed an act granting \$25,000 to the project, provided a similar amount was contributed by popular subscription. The Town of Provincetown contributed \$5,000 by vote of Town meeting. Other contributors furnished enough to make up the sum required by the General Court.

SEARS FIRST PRESIDENT

Capt. J. Henry Sears of Brewster, elected President of the Association, spent several winters in Washington and succeeded in getting the federal government to appropriate \$40,000.

These sums made possible the construction of the Monument and in August 1907 the corner stone was laid in the presence of President Theodore Roosevelt who arrived in the harbor on the Presidential Yacht "Mayflower" (an appropriate coincidence) escorted by the Atlantic Fleet, a sight few who witnessed it will ever forget.

In August of 1910 the Monument was turned over to the Association by the Governments of the United States and of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Senator Henry Cabot

Lodge acting for the Governments. President William H. Taft officiated at the dedicatory ceremonies, again with the fleet in the harbor.

The Monument is 252 feet high built of Maine granite, and contains memorial stones given by many patriotic societies and by all the towns on the Cape and many more from Massachusetts and other states.

One stone near the top marked, "Siena (Italia) A Cape Cod MDCCCXVII," was given by the City of Siena, Italy from the Torre del Mangia, which was the original from which the Monument was designed. The Siena Tower is made of reddish brown brick, but granite was deemed more suitable for New England weather conditions. The architect of the Monument was Willard T. Sears.

THE TOWER

The choice of an Italian Renaissance Tower so distant from its home ground was caused by a wish not to repeat the Egyptian obelisk motif of the Bunker Hill and Washington Monuments. Also there was no distinctive style of monument indigenous to the eastern counties of England from which the leaders of the Colony came, nor to the Dutch cities in which they spent some years after being driven out of England for religious reasons. A completely different style was deemed the best idea, a complete break with existing monuments in the United States, and a unique departure.

Alongside the Monument was a small museum founded to keep memorabilia and fostered by the Research Club of Provincetown, organized in 1910 and incorporated in 1923 with the object of engaging in historical study relating to the town and the Cape and of collecting, holding, preserving, and exhibiting (in the words of the charter) books, papers, relics, etc. of scientific and educational interest. It is to this Research Club that we owe the present museum, developed from their efforts since 1910.

NICHOLS TAKES CHARGE

In 1960 it was decided to build a larger museum better adapted to the modern method of display of the

many objects already collected, and for which sufficient exhibit space did not exist. The matter was put in charge of Mr Melville Terry Nichols, a summer resident of Bass River whose wife is a granddaughter of Capt. Sears, and who made many trips to leading local museums in the East, Williamsburg, Sturbridge, Sherbourne, Vt., Salem and others. In the course of these visits he gathered the ideas incorporated at Provincetown, and designed the modern display cabinets.

The museum through the courtesy of Comdr. MacMillan, the well known Artic explorer, born in Provincetown, has been furnished with an astounding display of Arctic animals and birds, as well as one of the best collections in the country of Eskimo carvings, models of sledges, etc.

As the visitor enters the museum he sees ahead through a large window the entire height of the Monument. On the right and the left walls are interesting murals, described below.

BASS RIVER

On the left is a mural given by the Research Club of Provincetown, showing stages of the settlement and development of the Cape. Included are a map of Bass River, thought to be the landing place of the Norsemen, with two pictures taken from the book "The Lost Discovery" by Frederick J. Pohl (used with permission of the publishers W. W. Norton, Inc.), one showing the "mooring rock" and the typical Norse style of mooring, and the other a Norse ship.

The central panel shows the course of the "Mayflower" from landfall on Nov. 9th in 1620, Old style to anchorage in Provincetown Harbor on Nov. 11th. Particularly shown here is the course toward the shoals at the "elbow" of the Cape, which prevented the Pilgrims from carrying out their original plan to land in Virginia and forced them northward and into Provincetown (compiled by and used with the permission of W. Sears Nickerson)

The right hand panel shows views of Provincetown, the salt works with their windmills, the Town Hall,

since burned down, on the present site of the Monument, and above modern Provincetown, topped by a Portuguese fishing schooner of the type plying until recently out of Provincetown.

On the right hand wall is a mural dedicated to Capt. Joseph Henry Sears, of Brewster, President of the Cape Cod Pilgrim Memorial Association, and largely through whose efforts the Monument was built, as mentioned earlier.

At the top is an enlargement of the headline and photograph from the Boston Post of Aug. 6, 1910, showing President Taft, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Governor Draper of Massachusetts, President Eliot of Harvard College, Capt. Sears and others present at the dedication ceremonies.

THE ELLEN SEARS

On the left hand side of Capt. Sears' photograph are pictures of two clipper ships; the upper one the "Wild Ranger" which he commanded on her maiden voyage out of Boston in 1853 at the age of 24 years. The lower one is the "Glory of the Seas," of which he was half owner with his brother-in-law Capt. Josiah N. Knowles, and which was launched at Donald McKay's yard in East Boston in 1869, the last clipper designed by the famous builder, and which broke the record from Boston to San Francisco.

On the right is the "Ellen Sears", named for Capt. Sears' sister, and launched at the Shiverick Yard in East Dennis in 1862 and partly owned by Capt. Sears. Below is the "Fanuil Hall," which he commanded, taking her into San Francisco in February 1850, before his 21st birthday. He thus to his great regret, just missed being a "Forty Niner." (They went to sea and rose to command early in those days, but not much younger than the Air Force men of our own day, who were flying bombers and fighters before they were old enough to vote.)

The pictures are from paintings in the possession of descendants of Capt. Sears and used by their permission.

In the main hall on the right is the MacMillan exhibit and on the left the main object which catches the visitor's eye is the figurehead of the ship "Eugenie" launched in 1864 at Cape Elizabeth, Maine.

THE FUTURE

Now as to the future of the museum. Change and improvements are planned and will be effected as

Geo. F. Miller Again Heads Pilgrim Memorial Association

Officers were re-elected at the annual meeting of the Cape Cod Pilgrim Memorial Association held recently at the Gifford House. Those elected included George F. Miller, Jr., president; Herbert F. Mayo, Secretary; Myrick C. Young, treasurer; and Ralph B. Snow of Harwich Port elected to the post of honorary vice-president, a post caused by the death of Owen Z. Young.

Directors, most of whom were re-elected include Mrs. Ralph H. Snow, George Miller, Herbert F. Mayo, Myrick C. Young, John F. Rosenthal, Chester G. Peck, Bernard Collins and Melvin Nichols.

Annual reports were read, and it was announced that the move from the Commercial Street address to the present location was successful. Attendance has far exceeded that of previous years, it was announced.



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The Museum from the Monument in the building stage.

time permits. New exhibits are being arranged for and it is the intent of the management to improve the museum as rapidly as possible. One prominent Cape Cod family is planning to install the complete cabin of a clipper ship's captain with all details, table, bunks, compass in the ceiling etc., which will be unique in museums in this country.