

6-Year Old Boy's Haircut Is Spark

Provincetown Parents Revolt Against School Dress and Appearance Rules

PROVINCETOWN (AP) — A six-year-old boy's haircut has triggered a parental revolt against rules governing the dress and appearance of public school students in this Cape Cod resort.

Miss Rosemary Bowler, principal of the Veterans Memorial Elementary School, sent Romulo DelDeo home from his first grade class one day because she felt he needed a haircut.

"The regulation requires a conventional haircut trimmed so as to be above the ears and not touching the collar. This young man's haircut did not conform to that regulation," Miss Bowler said.

"I resent being told I have to cut my son's hair," retorted Mrs. Salvatore DelDeo, the boy's mother.

Mrs. Deldeo said her son's haircut was "longer than a crewcut" but "not a Beatle haircut."

Adopted in August

The dress regulations were adopted by the school committee last August. Along with restricting the hair styles of boys and girls, they bar the wearing of jeans and skirts above the knee. Boys are required to wear neckties with sweaters or suit jackets.

Now, Mrs. DelDeo has started a movement to get the regulations dropped.

Called the Committee of Parents and Voters to Test the 1965 Dress Code, the group is seeking signatures on a petition asking the school committee to repeal, said Mrs. DelDeo.

"I would say 60 per cent or more" of the parents support repeal, said Mrs. Del Deo.

But Arthur Malchman, superintendent of schools, said, "I



AP Wirephoto

PROVINCETOWN — Mrs. Henrietta Edwards and Mrs. Salvatore DelDeo (from left, in photo at left) outside high school at Provincetown. At right Maureen Joseph, 15, and Arthur Reis, 14, model approved clothes which include skirts to knee for girls and neckties and jackets or sweaters for boys.

think 95 per cent of the parents are happy with the code." He called the protesters "just a small hard core group."

The year round population of this town at the tip of Cape Cod is 3,400. In the summer, it reaches up to 15,000.

Jammed by Tourists

Provincetown's narrow main street becomes jammed with tourists strolling and stopping to browse in the numerous art galleries on summer evenings. On weekends, the town is a vast traffic jam. Longhaired girls

and boys are common summertime sights.

Mrs. DelDeo, whose husband is an artist who sells his work through a local gallery, said many children other than her own have been sent home or otherwise disciplined by school authorities for infractions of the code.

"Many children are being unnecessarily harassed by teachers and school officials and this harassment has affected their work and interfered with the process of education . . .

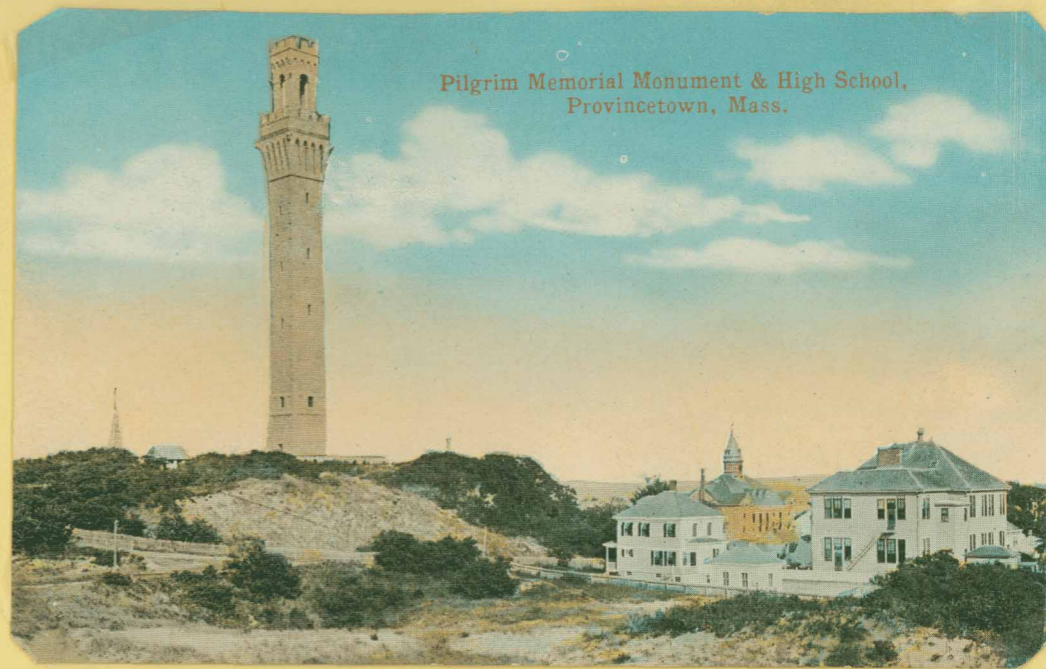
"The code was set up to do a good. It has proved to be a misguided conception," she said.

No one protested when the rules were adopted, she said, because the school board acted during the town's busiest season, at the end of August when preparations were being made for the Labor Day weekend.

All children, she said, "should go to school clean and well-dressed."

Some children are problems, she added, "but there are no more beatniks here than anywhere else."

"The idea is to teach a child how to think and how to use his mind, not how to wear a pair of pants."



Pilgrim Memorial Monument & High School, Provincetown, Mass.

Monument, Town Hall in background, Old High School on right. - 1912