

Ready, "Not Unduly Excited By Liquor"



PROVINCETOWN TOWN CRIERS
WALTER T. SMITH GEORGE W. READY

Above are shown two of Provincetown's famous Town Criers of an era when these dignitaries served a real purpose by calling news and announcements "up along and down along." They are Walter T. "Hoppy" Smith and George Washington Ready whose discovery of a most remarkable sea serpent won him widespread fame.

Cape End Town Crier Had World Agog With His Sea Serpent Story In '86

While many strange creatures have been taken from the sea by Cape End seamen and fishermen and even stranger yet creatures have been seen by them, it remained for George Washington Ready, the "Professor" who had been all over the world "and a good many other places besides," and one of Provincetown's most picturesque Town Criers, to startle that world with the most amazing sea serpent story of all times.

The Advocate is indebted to Mrs. Joseph E. Cook of Abington, mother of Mrs. William H. Adams of the West End for the following authentic account as given to a Yarmouth newspaper by "Professor" Ready himself back in 1886, copied by her from that paper.

Because his tale was so fantastic, Mr. Ready felt called upon to make this affidavit: "I, George Washington Ready, do testify that the foregoing statement (his account) is correct. It is a true description of the serpent as he appeared to me on that morning, and I was not unduly excited by liquor or otherwise. George W. Ready."

The Ready Serpent

The latest serpent and most colossal in dimensions has visited Provincetown. Professor George Ready, a well-known citizen here, was going from the town to the back side of the Cape and in crossing the sand hills saw a commotion in the water about a half mile from shore. It looked like a whirlpool and from his point of view appeared to be about 20 feet in diameter, from the center of which jets of spray looking like steam were ejected to the height of 50 feet. Intently watching this strange phenomenon he saw a huge head

appear above the surface of the water and point for the shore. The head was as large as a 200 gallon cask, concave on the under side and convex on the upper. Mr. Ready saw the creature coming towards the shore and secreted himself in a clump of beach plum bushes where he got a good view of the monster.

The creature swam to the shore with a slow undulating motion and passed within about 30 feet of where he was secreted. It was about 300 feet long and in the thickest part, which was about middle way, he judged as it passed, to be

about 12 feet in diameter. The body was covered with scales as large as the head of a fish barrel and were colored alternately green, red and blue. They did not overlap each other but seemed as if they were joined together by a ligature some four inches broad. The most curious feature was the head. The open mouth disclosed four rows of teeth which glistened like polished ivory and were at least two feet long, while on the extreme end of the head or nose, extended a tusk or horn at least 8 feet long. The creature had six eyes as large as good-sized dinner plates and were three feet from the head. It could see behind, before and sideways all at once. Three of the eyes were fiery red and the others were green.

A strong sulphurous odor accompanied the creature and intense heat was emitted, so much that the bushes and grass over which he moved had the appearance of being scorched with fire. On the end of his tail, on the broad part, was studded with very hard bony scales shaped like teeth of a mowing machine about one foot long and eight inches at the base, and cut everything smooth to the ground as it was dragged along over the surface. Pine and oak trees nearly one foot in diameter were cut off as smoothly as if done by a saw and had the appearance of being seared over with a hot iron.

The creature made for one of the fresh ponds and when in the center, the head, which had all the time been raised some 30 feet in the air, began slowly to descend and was soon under water, the body slowly following. As the tail disappeared, the water commenced to recede from the shore till the pond was left completely dry with a large hole in the center some 20 feet in diameter, perfectly circular, down which sounding leads have been lowered 250 fathoms and no bottom found.



Cape Codder George Washington Ready, author of a famous sea serpent story, was a noted Provincetown Town Crier.



Ready in front of Town Hall...
1908 -

Town Crier, Provincetown, Mass.