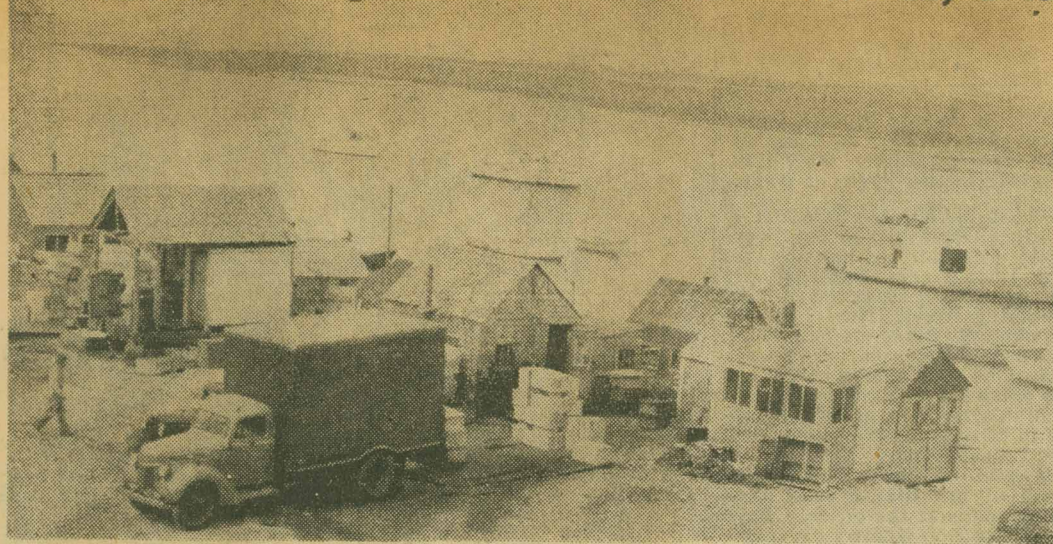


**Beachcombing in 1943:** For years now many of us have wondered at the strong fascination for taking occasional strolls along the Back Beach. It may be that the adventure and romance of beachcombing is really a hold-over from the early days when our forefathers were known as "wreckers" or "moon-cussers". Perhaps we are still pirates at heart and the old urge to uncover the steamer Portland's safe or find other buried treasure is an instinct that will live on for many generations. Regardless of what the circumstances may be the summer visitor and the native Cape Codder are all brother beachcombers.

Speaking for myself the fascination of prowling around on the Back Beach has been with me for years. Since the days when Eugene O'Neil was writing "Anna Christie" out at Peaked Hill Bars and my dad had a cottage in the same locality I've always wanted to go back there to spend an entire summer. Somehow the daily worries and routine cares seem to vanish under the influence of the Back Beach with its utter freedom of movement and mental stimulus. Whether the restless surf rolls in gently or in a mad symphonic roar, the peace and quiet are still there. Even the rasping cry of the tough old sea gull and the high screech of excited mackerel gulls doesn't break the tranquility. The sandpiper still scurries back and forth along the surf pecking away at the sea-fleas and always just one jump from the breakers. A ship sails past in the distance and frequently you may see a flying boat or naval blimp cruising aloft on submarine patrol. But, even though you can't get away from the war altogether and a tattered life-belt or a broken ammunition case can be found in the debris along the shore, the peace and quiet is still there.

A beachcombing trip along any of the Back Beach is an everlasting and unforgettable experience. The long crooked line of debris brought up by the seas and marking the highwater line is a regular grab-bag of fascinating discoveries. It may be anything from a dead sea gull to a decomposed body of a goosefish. Or the usual seaweed and a variety of lumber from a large timber down to stove size kindling wood. A broken orange crate or an old buoy from some fisherman's nets. Perhaps you'll find a tennis ball, electric light bulb or an old pint bottle. Whatever it is the article must have a story to tell and the curious mind automatically starts to weave a fantastic plot around the object. Each castaway object causes the finder to wonder, "Where did it come from? How long and far has it traveled?"



## CAPE AREA WHERE ANCIENT COIN FOUND

Fishing shacks line the shore at Chatham where several Cape Cod treasure-hunting expeditions are underway. The coastline in background has been the site of many shipwrecks due to the treacherous shoals.—(AP Photo).

## Pirates' Gold Lures Seekers

### Cape Sands Off Chatham Hide Mystery Treasure

CHATHAM, June 22 (AP)—Magic talk of gold doubloons and "pieces of eight" is in the air at Cape Cod as treasure-seekers, landbound by war restrictions for the past three years, again hunt pirate hoards lost in shipwrecks off the Cape's treacherous shoals centuries ago.

With appetites whetted by raising of the ban on civilian activity off the coast, the fraternity of the mouldy, x-marked map is launching several well-equipped expeditions to pry loose the fabled riches.

Bill and Al George, diving brothers from Malden, have been working on a wreck in 18 feet of water off the Chatham shoals for the past few days. It may be the hull of the "Mary Ann," a pinkey lost after its capture by the notorious pirate Samuel Bellamy in 1717.

#### Tale of Lost Chest

The George's well-equipped boat, the "Egavlas," (salvage spelled backwards) is pumping sand from the hull.

A popular Chatham story is that a chest from the wreck was brought almost to the surface with a grapnel hook by Capt. John Howard, engaged in dragging for anchors 70 years ago.

The chest slid back into the depths when a hook broke. Attempts to retrieve it with the aid of divers hurriedly summoned from Boston were balked by the onset of Winter storms.

Two cannon, hoisted from the deck of the old ship, now are



## TREASURE TROVE FROM SEA

Spanish coins of gold and silver, one-time pirate treasure, found in the sands of Cape Cod in recent years. This picture was made by Edward Rowe Snow, Winthrop. Historian of shipwrecks and piracy.—(AP Photo).

mounted on the Summer estate of James S. Smith of North Chatham.

Some Chatham fishermen believe the hull is not the pirate prize but a British man o'war, lost in a Winter storm during the revolution.

#### Seek British Coin

They claim the craft carried gold and silver coin for payment of British troops, as well as bullion captured from French and Spanish privateers.

Definite solution of New England's greatest maritime mystery, the loss of the paddle-wheel steamer Portland in a November gale of 1898, may come this Summer.

The hull of the Portland, which carried to a watery grave all her passengers and a crew of 176 persons, has been tentatively located in 120 feet of water off the outer tip of the Cape. Grapnels have already retrieved bulkheads believed to be part of the Portland.

Edward Rowe Snow of Winthrop, Mass., chronicler of pirates and shipwrecks, hopes to make pictures of the sunken steamer within a few weeks, using a special underwater camera. A reputed large consignment of diamonds in the purser's safe heightens the treasure-hunters interest in the ill-fated Portland.

Prize objective of all Cape Cod treasure-hunters is Pirate Bellamy's great ship "Whidah," lost off Nauset on the Outer Cape in the same storm that wrecked the Mary Ann in 1717.

The equivalent of at least \$100,000 in bullion is reputed to be locked in her hull.

Henry Thoreau, famous author and naturalist, in his rambles along the Cape almost a century ago, sought a trace of the fabled ship and is said to have found a coin from her hoard of booty.

The iron Caboose of the Whidah is reported by Historian Snow to have been visible until shortly before the Civil War. Many Cape Codders have favorite theories as to the exact spot where her oaken timbers lie on the ocean floor guarding the pirate plunder.

Joining in the treasure hunt within a few weeks will be Lawrence P. Wolfson of Everett, who started activity last Fall. Wolfson has equipped a 60-foot boat, and with the aid of two former Navy divers hopes to strike the proverbial undersea pot of gold this season.

#### Fishermen Know Sites

Fishermen are aware of the location of some of the famous wrecks off the Cape. They must steer clear of the jagged hulks or risk losing valuable trawls. Conversely the best fishing and lobstering is oftentimes close beside the wrecks, which swarm with undersea life.

Hundreds of sailing ships are known to have been lost off the outer Cape in the century preceding the establishment of the present fringe of lighthouses. However Winter storms shift the sandy bottom constantly, making the search for treasure virtually a new adventure every year.

This Summer, if advance indications are borne out, the ocean may at long last yield some of its riches, and several old Cape Cod maritime mysteries may be solved by the modern seekers of pirate gold.

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