



February 13, 1969

Town Loses 3 Elms 3 More Must Fall

Tree Warden Philip Alexander said yesterday "this is the worst year for Dutch Elm disease that we've ever had." He has had to condemn six towering trees, three of which fell to Bartlett Tree Service chain saws this week.

Felled already are two from the Frank Taves property at 129 Commercial and one of two elms fronting the Universalist Church. The second elm needed pruning only, and the chestnut tree between them is

healthy.

Three other diseased trees, two on Winthrop Street and one on Pearl Street, still stand. Bartlett workers say they are so far gone it will be dangerous work to climb them to lop limbs.

Mr. Alexander says he knows of no plan to replace the trees. Of disease-proof trees, English elm, he said, is preferable to Siberian elm, which is so brittle that recent gales have mutilated them. Two broken Siberian elms in front of the Meadows Motel on Bradford Extension will require surgery and painting to preserve them.

By: Thomas Kane

We're very happy to be involved in the project to restore and preserve the venerable old Unitarian-Universalist Church of Provincetown. Our title is chairman of the publicity committee, and in this connection, we've been delving into things Unitarian or Universalist in our local culture, so our releases, hopefully, will have a touch of authenticity. Here's a quote from Shebnah Rich "Truro, Cape Cod" anent the subject. In 1846 the Universalists built quite a sightly church edifice on the high hill at the northeast of Captain Lewis Lombard's. The building was finished on the outside excepting the windows. During a violent northeast storm, Thanksgiving eve it was swept to the earth, and so completely wrecked as to defy reconstruction. The society was small; had made great sacrifices and this unforeseen calamity so discourgaed them that no further effort was made. The location was well chosen and commanding, and the new church added considerably to the picturesque view of the crowned hilltop, at the center of town." Perhaps we Truro folks can help a bit to undo the damage caused by that northeaster of the distant past in the restoration project.

One of the features of the Provincetown Church we've previously mentioned is the rare tracker organ; no sooner had we mentioned the instrument in a previous squib than a reader called us, wanting to know what the term "tracker" meant. We learned long ago as a pedagogue that when you're ignorant about a subject, you do two things — first you say very frankly that you don't know the answer — then you try to find it. So we called Clifton S. Guild, formerly of Foxboro, presently living on Beach Point, where's he busy in retirement, building up sand surrounding his house so he can raise some beautiful growing things Mr. Guild has shared his working years equally between floriculture and the organ, and he was prepared to talk on either subject.

"What in heck is a tracker organ?" we queried — "is that the name of the man who built it perhaps?" Not so, corrected Mr. Guild in his quiet voice. "Tracking has to do with the linkage between the keys and the valve releases that let air into the pipes, creating a partial vacuum and creating the various tones. Nowadays, you see, this linkage is done electrically — sometimes with an electromagnetic system, sometimes with more sophisticated electronic hook-ups — but in all cases, the action is instanteneous and easy on the player's fingers, sometimes, however, the linkage fails, as it's bound to do when it gets complicated.

But in the old tracker organs, there's a wooden linkage all the way from the key you depress up through the innards of the organ to the valve at the base of the pipe. Sometimes the linkage has to turn several corners, and the resultant business looks like a Rub eGolberg design. And if there's a lot of humidity in the air, as we've had this summer, the wood will expand, and sometimes she'll bind, requiring the installation of some electric bulbs in strategic places to dry out the organ. Under the best of conditions it requires a considerable amount of push to operate the keys of a tracker organ, and when you're doing a number with fast figures in the notation, you'll find your hands tiring — man who plays a tracker all his life could develop fingers the size of bananas."