



"Fort Useless" and "Fort Ridiculous" on Long Point - 1944

From Jennings' "Provincetown" book - 1890:

"The ruins of two sand batteries that were put up during the war of '61 - '65 are still to be seen; a company of soldiers were stationed there, under the charge of John Rosenthal, who had the officers headquarters in the last dwelling house left on the Point. The men were quartered in barracks built for the occasion!"

Written by the Editor of The Advocate



## To Fellows And Friends Afar And Abroad . . . .

Wednesday evening, July 28, 1943.

Dear Friends,

Strange how earth-bound our feet can become in this, of all towns, that has come up from the sea and has lived on it in one way or another since its very beginning! Perhaps because it's always there and will be there, so the swim's never taken, nor the sails unfurled nor that distant cove explored.

But this afternoon we went up to T. Furtad's, along about six, and took a skiff for a row out in the bay. The sun was bright and hot, the town, stretching along the shorefront, sparkled, and a bit of a southeast breeze clopped the water under the bow. Out along the catwalk of the Cape Cod Cold Storage with a thousand gulls lined up at precise attention, out past the trap-boats wait-

### Batteries Abandoned

During the Civil War two batteries were erected at Long Point in Provincetown. These abandoned harbor defenses were later referred to as Forts "Useless" and "Ridiculous."

ing to unlimber long before dawn in the morning, and past the traps, themselves, filling their nets with the fish of tomorrow.

Now certain man-made mounds on Long Point have always intrigued, and it seemed nonsensical to live in a town and never set foot on them. So that was the destination. From out on the bay Provincetown seems really to huddle together in a manner both comfortable and friendly. It's hard to believe that anything of animosity or jealousy or matters of low repute could find place there.

The shores of Long Point, like Tennyson's horizon, seemed "to fade forever as we moved." A little tinker gull, at rest on a float, stretched its wings to sharp points, took off, and was gone. A battered goose-fish floated past. Over toward the channel a couple of draggers chugged in, and a patrol boat dropped anchor. Finally the shore of Long Point was brighter than Provincetown's, and at last the skiff crunched on the sand.

These mounds on Long Point were thrown up during the Civil War to serve for batteries to protect Provincetown Harbor. Today they are firmly held together with bayberry, fern, strawberry vines and, unfortunately, plenty of poison ivy. If there were passages into the mounds, they are now hidden with foliage. During the Civil War these batteries were under the command of Ordnance Sergeant John Rosenthal, grandfather of Jack Rosenthal of the Corner and Mayflower gift shops, and a noted Indian fighter. One year after coming to this country from Alsace he joined the Army, fought the Comanche and Lepreau Indians in Texas, the Seminoles in Florida, then went out to Utah against Brigham Young and the Mormons, to New Mexico against the Navajo Indians. After being in command of the Long Point batteries for twelve years, he was sent to Fort Selden in New Mexico, then to Dakota, and finally ended his career in Maine where he retired, honored for long and faithful service to his country. When he stopped running around a wild country, fighting Indians and such, he settled down to be secretary of the then Nickerson Oil Works at Herring Cove, out near where New Beach is now.

Rugged men have gone into the making of Provincetown.

And as one sat on the silent shore of Long Point, it was hard to believe that once 38 families had their permanent homes there, with six busy mills pumping water for about seven or eight thousand feet of salt works, with an annual cut-out of between five and six hundred hogsheads of extra quality salt. Or that shore fishing, with seines, hand-knit by the women folk, brought in great quantities of mackerel, bass and white shad. Or that there were flourishing fish oil works, and that the hamlet was once busy and prosperous. It is even harder to believe that, house by house, every building was moved on scows across the harbor to Provincetown where they are still in use. The largest was the D. A. Matheson building, used on Long Point as a school and meeting-house, now owned by Arnold Dwyer and houses his radio and furniture business as well as apartments, on Commercial Street.

Not a sign of the old village anymore. Just clean sands, gulls, plenty of driftwood, and Long Point light out at the tip. Quietness and memories.

### Guns Rushed to Aid Of Provincetown

CENTERVILLE, May 31—During the Civil War, Captain Dennis Sturgis of Centerville transported Navy guns in his schooner Polly from the Charlestown Navy Yard to Provincetown.

A large fleet of Confederate privateers was operating in the North Atlantic at the time, and the Union government took this precaution against the possible capture of Provincetown by the Confederacy.

The Federal government proposed the construction of a mud fort on Long Point. It was never built. There was no mud.