

Town Must Take O'Neill Property

Famed playwright Eugene O'Neill who, as a youth, began his climb to recognition in Provincetown and who wrote some of his best early plays in the bleak seawilderness of the Great Shore, near Peaked Hill, "Graveyard of the Atlantic" from which the Greek freighter Evgenia was saved only last Saturday, may lose title to some 46 acres of the drear expanse of shore and dunes unless he pays his taxes for 1951 and 1952 by tomorrow.

The Town tax collector has sent a number of bills to the playwright but they have been returned and, according to law, he must take title to the land. Taxes for 1951 are \$43.70 and for 1952 they are \$50.12. Interest brings the total up to \$99.24.

The O'Neills had a home near the beach on the property but the encroaching sea washed it away leaving only a few of the chimney bricks to mark its location. Although the property fronts on the Atlantic Ocean, it doesn't extend, as does much of the other property, according to original deeds, from shore to shore—Provincetown Harbor to Atlantic Ocean—and assessors said it doesn't come near the area in which the new Route 6 is being built.

Should the town be forced to take title to the 46 acres, O'Neill or his family can redeem it within two years by paying the taxes plus interest and costs.

When the deeds are returned to the town from the Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, possibly several months from now, anyone can take over the property for taxes and costs and have title to the property, subject to the two-year redemption provision.

Many Cape Enders Recall Early Days Of Great Playwright Who Died Friday

Many in Provincetown today are recalling memories of a quiet, almost taciturn young man who came here back in 1916, alien to even those with whom he sought to associate, whose early plays were produced in an old fish shed along the shore, thereby winning a fame that took him to the top of the drama world, leaving an afterglow which continues to stimulate thousands of visitors even yet.

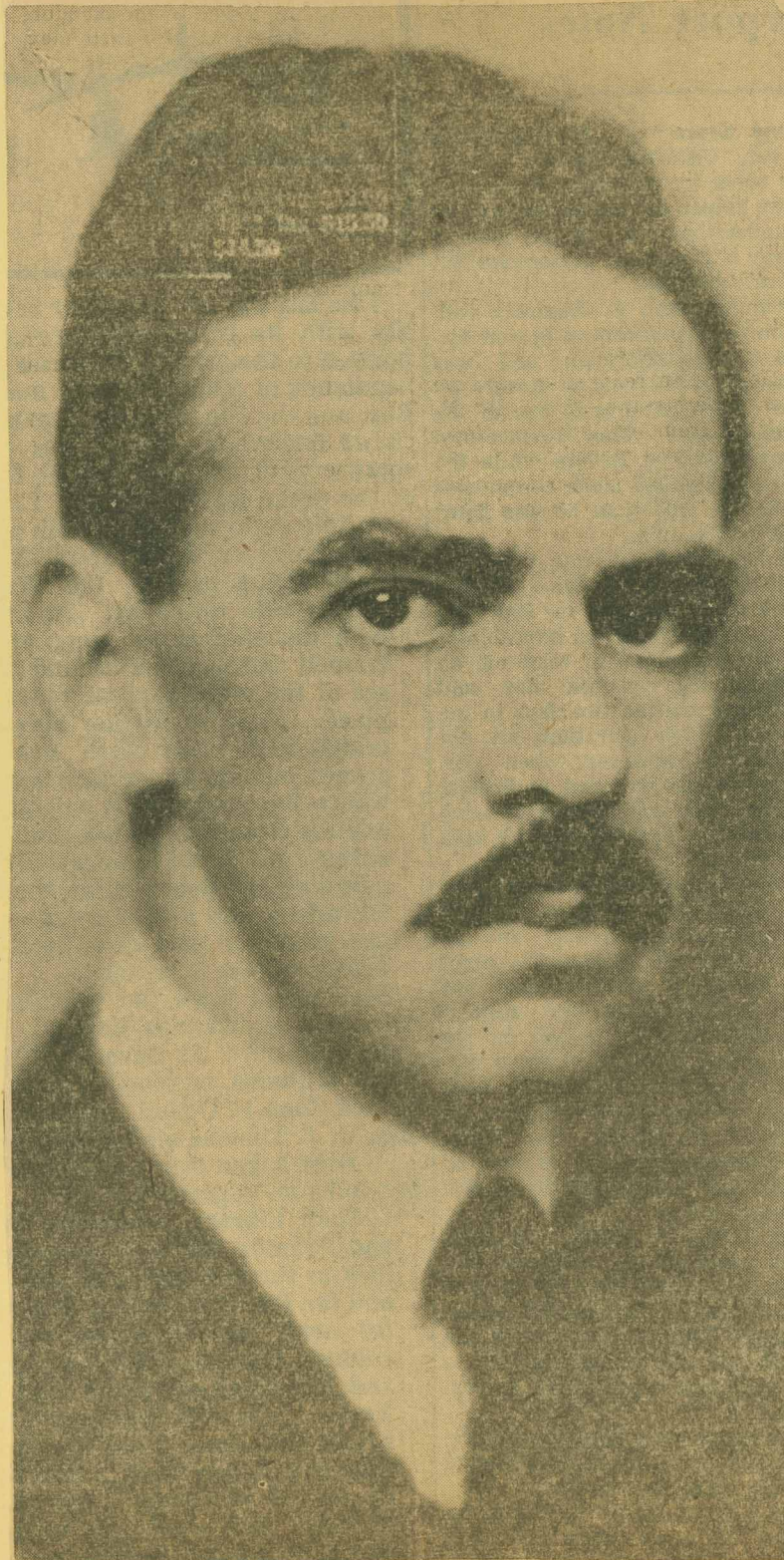
Such was Eugene Gladstone O'Neill, whose talents won him three Pulitzer Prizes and the Nobel Prize for Literature, the second American to receive that honor, who died at 65, in Boston on Friday of bronchial pneumonia, after a long and racking seige of Parkinson's disease, a form of palsy which made writing impossible and talking almost so. At his bedside was his third wife, Carlotta Monterey. His daughter, Oona, lives in Lucerne, Switzerland, and London, with her husband, famed actor Charles Chaplin.

Father Actor

Mr. O'Neill was born on October 16, 1888 in a family hotel called the Barrett House which stood at 43rd Street and Broadway in New York City, a son of James O'Neill, an actor and for many years the star in "The Count of Monte Cristo," and Ellen Quinlan, born in New Haven and reared in the Middle West. Eugene's first seven years were spent trouping around the country as his father played various cities. Later he was entered in a Roman Catholic boarding school on the Hudson. At 13 he was entered in the Betts Academy in Stamford, Conn., considered the best boys' school in the country. On graduation in 1906 he entered Princetown but he terminated his studies there after ten months by heaving a brick through a window of the stationmaster's house.

Then began a long period of wandering, mostly by sea to far places. He went exploring in Honduras through the endless jungles and contracted a fever. He shipped as an ordinary seaman on a Norwegian freighter to Buenos Aires, then to Portuguese East Africa. Back in New York he lived at a waterfront dive known as "Jimmy the Priest's" and became an intimate with all kinds of fringe characters. For a time he tried newspaper work on the New London (Conn.) Telegraph but in 1912 he developed a mild form of tuberculosis which sent him to a sanitarium. It was there he began the

O'Neill As Cape Enders Recall Him



This photograph, loaned to The Advocate by Frank Shay, shows the playwright as a young man, about the time "Bound East For Cardiff" was written.

study of Strindberg and his interest in playwriting had its start. After his discharge he spent fifteen months in New London writing steadily. He wrote eleven one-act and two long plays. All of these he destroyed except six of the one-acts. His father paid for putting these in book form under the title of "Thirst". He also paid for a course under Harvard's famous George Baker who taught playwriting.

Comes To Cape End

In 1916 Mr. O'Neill moved from the Village in New York to Provincetown. Dune Poet Harry Kemp remembers him well, knew him somewhat before he arrived here. He lived with his huge Irish companion, Terry, a man considerably older and Eugene, for a time in the John Francis apartments and for a more significant period in a house out near the Peaked Hill Station, later completely washed out by the sea. It was here that he did much of his most important early work. It was in Provincetown, too, that he became one of a brilliant and talented group of about his own age; Mary Heaton Vorse then Mrs. Joe O'Brien, Hutchins and Neith Hapgood, Ida Rau, Jack Reid, Susan Glaspell and

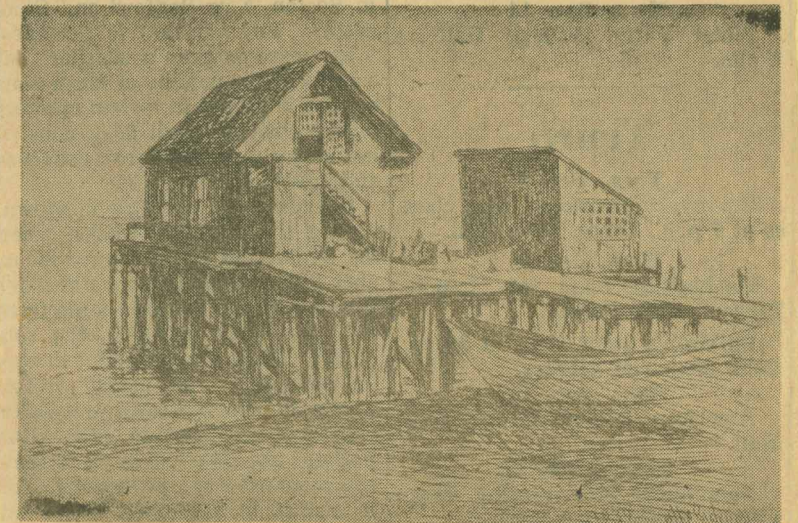
George Cram Cook, and Harry Kemp, then winning fame, and a little later Frank Shay who knew Eugene in New York in earlier days. Frequently Edna St. Vincent Millay, living in Truro would join with the group.

History Was Made

Harry Kemp remembers well the first reading of "Bound East For Cardiff"; how silence fell and remained on the small audience during which Eugene writhed in the torment of what he felt must be another abysmal failure. Then George Cram Cook, sensing the history-making greatness of the play, made a stirring speech paying the first tribute to the young author, telling him that their theatre was to be his theatre.



Theatre Birthplace Of O'Neill Fame



Mary Heaton Vorse owned this old fish shed, standing high on stilts in the East End and she offered it for use as a theatre. It was here that the late Eugene O'Neill's first play, "Bound East For Cardiff" had its initial tryout and launched him on the road to fame. Fog and its distant bell, sea winds and surf sounds freely mingled with the lines of the actors as those early O'Neill plays were given here.