

Dec. 15, 1966

## Truro Taxpayer Retains Counsel To Oppose Tearing Down Bridge

Although Truro's old railroad trestle over the Pamet River is due to come down and the voters have appropriated a total of \$5,000 for the job, the subject came in for lively discussion at a meeting of the Truro Neighborhood Association Monday night when Dexter Keezer, president, read a letter from Walter Prokosch, a seasonal resident of Tom's Hill Roadt expressing vigorous opposition to removal of the trestle and adding that he, Mr. Prokosch, had retained counsel to oppose the move.

Mr. Prokosch, reportedly an architect and engineer, expressed concern for the future of the river and surrounding marshland from filling and encroachment if the trestle were removed, and offered his belief that dwellers on the Corn Hill side of the river should continue to have access via the old trestle to the Town beach at Pamet Harbor.

Although sentimental attachment for the old railroad bridge — over which the first railroad train traveled to reach Truro and Provincetown in 1873 — has been widespread in the town, the trestle has been pronounced a hazard to foot travel and navigation.

It has fallen into acute disrepair since abandonment of the New Haven Railroad service to this area and the wooden foot path, parallel to the railroad track over the bridge, has been the source of worry to the Town from possible accidents.

Engineers have recommended its removal and at two Town Meetings a majority of voters agreed to appropriate funds for the purpose — \$2500 at each session. The Town has since paid \$2,000 to the railroad for 800 feet of New Haven right-of-way which includes the trestle area.

Selectman Vincent Benson reminded the well-attended meeting of the voters' action on the trestle and that the legal process for its removal was long since under way. Both the Town's Conservation Commission and Harbor Committee have given their approval to the taking down of the trestle.

Dr. L. Paul Todd of the Conservation Commission assured association members that state legislation now in force provided firm protection against filling in of the adjacent marshland and expained the means provided by the law to halt any would-be exploiters of the area.

### -December 29, 1966- IN OUR MAIL

#### Where They Were When Pilgrims Arrived

Editor, The Advocate:—

In The Advocate of December 15th there was a column in regards to the Pamet River Railroad bridge.

Some persons who has just begun to come to Truro and only stay about three months seems to have learned a lot about Truro in a short time. He may be an engineer and also an architect, but he knows very little about Pamet River.

Both Corn Hill and Pamet River were in their present location in 1620 when the Pilgrims arrived, and the tide has been flowing in and out twice a day ever since. The distance from the river to Corn Hill has nor decreased or increased and Pamet River was a booming business place until the railroad put up that trestle.

There were 39 salt works from Corn Hill to Ballston Beach. There was a sail loft and several fish wharfs, a shipyard, besides a very large Union Wharf on the north side of the river just west of where the bridge is at present, also a lighthouse built in 1846, but discontinued in 1857. In 1852 was the beginning of the river losing its usefulness, when the Truro Dyke was built on what is now the State Highway 6A. This harbor at that time was considered of sufficient importance for the government to erect a lighthouse there. This building stood on what is now, or was, the railroad tracks and about a mile northwest of where the Truro Railroad Station was located on the North side of the river that flowed nearly to the Pamet River Life Saving Station.

In 1847 the Brig Esehoh was built here, along with several other boats and all the lumber was cut here in Truro.

Then in the Winter of 1872 and 1873 the railroad bridge was built and since then the river has filled to such an extent that at low water it is almost dry.

The next detriment to the river was in 1919 when the State spent \$198,000 in dredging the harbor and never finished the job, as the con-

tract and first plan called for two jetties 150 feet long to extend out in the bay and the channel was to follow the old river, but here again some well informed person got it changed to its present location, then later the Town had the two jetties put out that were of no use and now this year another \$90,000 has been spent and in two years time that will have been thrown away. If we keep listening to all the well informed people and engineers we are going to spend a lot of money and have nothing.

When it was first proposed to remove the bridge and that is all that was wanted, it would only have cost the original \$2500 which was asked for and received. Then if it had been let out for bids at that time, it would have been done as it should have been and the matter closed, but somehow or other some over knowledged person got his two bits in and so they had engineers down, did some surveying and the consequences are that at the present time the cost has gone to \$10,000, and if what is now planned gets done the river will not be as it used to be.

That bridge has 99 piles under it and if they are removed we will get an outflow of water that will gradually clear the river. There is absolutely no need of all the work at present planned.

Another thing, the bridge is unsafe and if anyone gets hurt there, it will cost the Town more than what is asked to have it removed.

The Finance Committee has asked the Selectmen to put up No Trespassing signs on each end for their own protection but so far none have been put up.

That party who wrote that letter last week although he has obtained counsel to stop the removal, if he got hurt would probably be the first to sue.

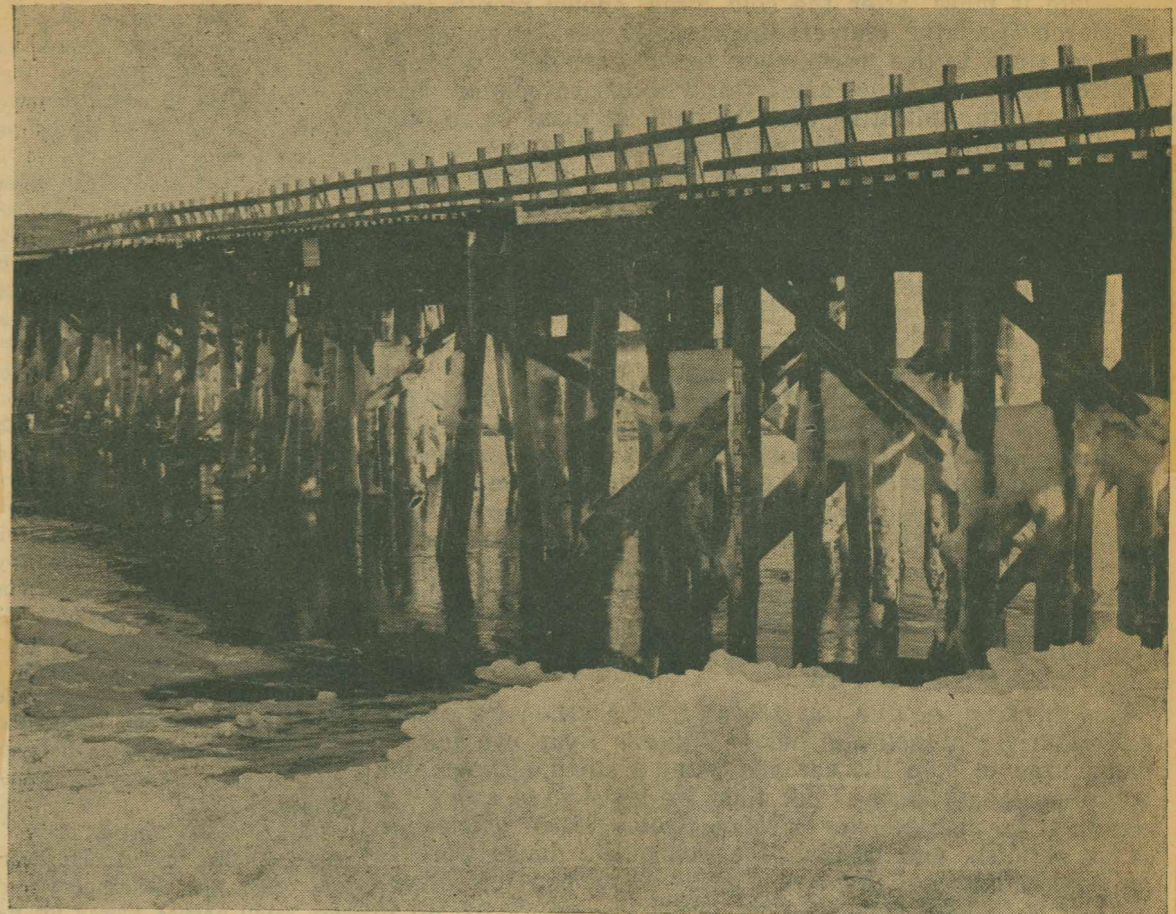
When that bridge is removed it will be an asset to the Town, and not a liability. I may not see it myself, but I have a large picture taken in 1872 before the bridge was built and I believe that in a few years the river will once again be usable at all tides.

Horace S. Snow, Sr.,  
Truro.

PROVINCETOWN, MASS.

THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 1967

## Time Runs Out On Historic Pamet River Trestle



Staff Photo by Paul Koch

This is it — the old trestle over the Pamet River in Truro that comes down this Spring, though not without some anguish from old-timers and indeed questions and outright protest.

It's a hazard to navigation, the Selectmen say and its dilapidated structure an accident menace to youngsters and grownups who still walk across its uncertain foot path lying beside the abandoned railroad track. The Harbor Committee agrees that it should come down and the Conservation Commission goes along with the belief.

The old bridge dates back to 1873 when the first railroad train chugged over it in gala ceremonies marking the extension of the Old Colony Railroad to Provincetown, and President Ulysses Grant, they said, on the rear platform. Truro youngsters for generations dived from it, fished from it and navigated their small boats underneath it — an adventure of high excitement when a full tide was running and wind and strong currents could slam their small craft against its pilings.

This is a close-up of the old barnacled pilings as they looked this Winter encrusted with ice. The tide is low here but when it comes in it reaches a much higher level.

In the era before the Old Colony built the trestle the river mouth and harbor sheltered a goodly fishing fleet and schooners at one time could sail up the Pamet nearly to its source, close to the back shore.

The river is historic, too. The flower sailed up the Pamet in their shallow and at Corn Hill, rising above the river on its Northerly side (to the left), they found the storied cache of Indian corn they were to plant the next year in Plymouth.

Truro, in fact, came close to becoming the Pilgrim settlement as the cold and weary Pilgrims searched for a harbor, with Winter only weeks away. The old trestle is a memento of the days when Truro and the Lower Cape towns had twice daily trains from Boston and in Summer a third.

Some Truro folk had tried to persuade the Selectmen to buy the old railroad right-of-way through the town when the New Haven Railroad some years ago ended even freight service to this area. They had hoped to see a bicycle trail through this picturesque section of town. The Selectmen said the price was too high.

When the trestle is demolished the foot travel here to the Corn Hill side of the river will have ended. Some questions have been raised about the effect on the surrounding marshes when the abutments on the North side of the trestle come down and cinders and sand may be washed in on them. But Antone Duarte of the Harbor Committee says, "We have to take the advice of the engineers."

The voters have authorized Town money with matching funds from the State Division of Waterways to remove the trestle. With the trestle goes a landmark vividly intertwined with the history of the Town for nearly a century.