

June 4, 1964

Railroad Trestle Gets Going Over

Two of the six articles voted on at the recent Special Town Meeting, got major discussion. One of these asked \$2500 to remove the railroad trestle over the Pamet River. The other asked authority for the Selectmen to dispose of the building formerly housing the North Truro Library, and the land it occupies.

The railroad trestle got top consideration. It had been argued here that an accident on the hazardous trestle, badly in need of repair, could cost the Town money since responsibility for it appeared confused. Manuel Cook said: "The railroad should pay for taking it down."

Joseph G. Peters, Jr., held that the railroad, if pressed in the courts, could be forced to take down the trestle at its own expense. As to Town responsibility for any accident occurring on it, Town Clerk Tom Kane had a comment. He remarked that following a personal accident on the trestle, railroad detectives had been promptly on the spot to emphasize that the trestle was strictly private property and anyone who ventured on it was doing so at his own risk.

Someone Jumped

One quip lightened the discussion when Selectman John Dyer noted that someone had jumped from the trestle. A voter asked him if he were making this an argument for taking down the bridge, since people also jumped from the Empire State Building

When voters suggested the need of professional advice, about the trestle, Horace Snow, Sr., explained, "I didn't put the article in the Warrant. Another member of the Finance Committee, John Perry, did. He is not her but he consulted contractors and all gave him the same price for taking down the structure — \$2,500."

John Worthington of the Harbor Committee, however, pointed out that the \$2500 job could cause a possible \$50,000 damage, in the absence of professional engineering advice, since the effects of current flow here were critical to future protection of the harbor. From an engineering point of view, even the method of removing the structure was important, Mr. Worthington added. Mr. Worthington also advised

the Town that in any negotiation with the railroad, the "right-of-way between the bridge and Tom's Hill Road should be part of the deal." This right-of-way, he pointed out, could be highly valuable to the Town in controlling protection of the marsh area it involved.

- March 4, 1965 -

THE TOWN PARKING lot at Truro's Pamet Harbor is the scene of major activity as men and machinery are at work enlarging the lot, preparing to hardtop it, and to build a retaining wall to protect it from eroding tides. Two small buildings on the former Morris land there, now owned by the Town, have been removed to double the parking space. The \$13,500 project is authorized by the State Access Board, which has authority to provide funds for access to public waterways, and is financed entirely by the state. The project, approved by the voters was requested by the Pamet Harbor Committee, of which Antone Duarte, Jr., is chairman.

- July 1, 1965 -

Down at Pamet Harbor yesterday we noted that the contractor for the dredging job had delivered to the site, a considerable quantity of steel floats that will be used to support the discharge pipe and rumor has it the dredge will actually make its appearance on July 1. . . . Meantime, we hear tell the clam flats will be closed until the project is completed— but some folks are planning to take up a stand at the mouth of the discharge pipes to snatch up any shellfish as come through the tube. There's a fine point of law involved here, says shellfish warden Carl Atwood. ". . . Taking of shellfish is a phrase that occurs on our permits. Not digging— you see. And it would be a shame not to allow those clams to be taken, since they'd only die if they're pumped out on the open sand— but then, we'll see what happens."

Sept. 9, 1965 -

Dredging Resumed After First Halt

The Pamet Harbor dredging project, with no breakdowns, should be completed in another five weeks or so, the Harbor Committee estimates. The project goes slightly under the estimated \$100,000, of which Truro voters authorized \$25,000 — or a fourth of the total. A new engine became necessary for the dredge after it had begun operations here. What with the shallow water in the harbor, or the near absence of it at low tide, the dredging operation has encountered some difficulties, but with replaced equipment is now going ahead.

The dredging operation is not intended to provide a channel for large craft but will provide depth at low water for recreational-type boats. Before the dredging such boats could navigate the channel into the bay at only two hours before high tide and at two hours afterwards. After the dredging, low tide, it is estimated, will afford four to five feet of water under a hull. The Division of Waterways, State Department of Public Works, now has a maintenance program which will aid Truro, as well as it will other Cape towns, in keeping its channel cleaned out.

Cape Cod's eroding shoreline creates major harbor problems not present where the land is more stable, notes John C. Worthington, of the Harbor Committee. The powerful force of tides and continuous movement of sand not only keep a shoreline here unstable but offer resistance to major engineering projects — indeed geologists give the Cape only some 10,000 years until the sea has claimed it all again. ("Not that that need concern you and me," Mr. Worthington points out).

When the Old Colony Railroad, in the 1870's, built the causeway here across estaurine water and when Wilder's Dyke was built, these radically affected the previous flow of the river, eventually leaving marsh or dry land where there had previously been water. Mr. Worthington points out that salt water "used to go all the way to Ballston Beach."

Meanwhile, though it comes at the end of the season, boatmen are looking forward to completion of the project. The Pamet Harbor Committee, of which Antone Duarte is chairman, has put much time into getting action on the Truro project.

Sept. 30, 1965

Made our usual afternoon trip down to the harbor this sunset-time, found the sand piled against the parking lot bleaching in the sun . . . noted the discharge line again aimed at Gull Island, with the dredge Seapuit resting in the basin against her chores of the morrow. . . . We hear tell the town fathers will request the Division of Waterways to alter the dredging contract so's the Seapuit will suck sand only to the mouth of the channel, complete her job next Spring, after the Winter storms have had their fling at the sand bars that block the entrance. Meantime, Capt. Scott proposes to truck his dredge over the road to Chatham, for his next job. It appears he dassent tow the craft around the tip of the Cape, since she's far from sea-worthy. All the sidewalk engineers at Pamet Harbor are standing by to see how the Seapuit will be dismantled for the journey over the road. . . .

It's always pleasing to hear the reminiscences of an older person on the subject of such an important project as the dredging of Pamet Harbor . . . and yesterday we quizzed our friend Snowie on the subject. "Yessir, I was ten years old at the time they did the first dredging job down here—that would be in nineteen-twenty—and I remember goin' aboard the dredge for an occasional meal. Wonderful food, as I recall. Big dredge did the job— hydraulic, she was, able to suck prob'ly five times what this little cuss is doin'. . . . The crew, on the off-shift used to live up to the house formerly owned by my late Uncle Norman, on Castle Road. Never forget the day they broke through the channel bar into the open bay . . . all hands got intoxicated, and they had turkey aboard the dredge.

And shortly afterwards the Iris, suspected of being a bootlegger, came into the harbor, and she grounded out on the shore, and she was about the biggest craft ever to use the basin . . . and some time later my late grandfather, C. W. Snow, who had disapproved of the layout of the channel, took a gang of men down to Pamet Harbor one moonlight night and had 'em dig through the isthmus that separated Pamet River from the South crick . . . shortly afterwards the two streams blended, and the channel filled up, and the whole area lost its value as a harbor. . . ." Snowie swears the original channel was dredged to a depth of thirteen feet at low water, although the figure seems a mite big to us, remembering as we do, the occasion when one of the Glass boys drowned in the channel in the mid-twentie's. . . . If memory serves, Seraphine Rego, then a surfman at Pamet River Coast Guard Station, reported the water, when he had recovered the body, at somewhat less depth.

- July 21, 1966 -

Old Railroad Trestle To Go In The Fall

Scott & Crosby, contractors for dredging the channel in Pamet Harbor, have not only fulfilled all terms of their contract but in addition have dredged two lagoons not called for by it, according to the Truro Selectmen.

One lagoon was dredged to prevent sand carried by the currents down-river under the railroad trestle from entering the channel. The

second was dredged to prevent a similar condition near Gull Island.

And the old railroad trestle over the Pamet River is coming down in the Fall, the Selectmen say. Oldtimers will feel more than a twinge at its passing. But the Selectmen assert it's a public hazard to foot traffic and a hazard as well, they say, to navigation. The first "down train" from Boston in 1873 passed over it and it was a happy part of the childhood of subsequent generations. It will be gone before another Summer.