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By Tom Kane - Advocate June 26, 1980

TRURO FORESTS. In the fall, Advocate columnist Robert Finch described how the forests on Cape Cod had disappeared by the late 1800s. This week E. Otis Dyer of Truro, son of the late Samuel Dyer, has photographs of Truro at the turn of the century.

One photo, taken by his father, shows the elder Dyer's home which later belonged to Phyllis Duganne. Another is a close shot of that old home from

about the same time.

"These pictures are worth the proverbial 'thousand words,' as they show hardly a tree in sight except for a few around the houses for shade," Otis wrote. As he requested, we will pass the photographs on to the Truro Historical Society.



Dyer homestead in top photo is at far right in lower picture.



The Town Hall in background on the Hill of Storms. Wilder Dyke, right (See postcard on preceding page.)

Got to thinking as we picked up Ronnie Grozier this morning for his morning's work in South Truro Cemetery that, just a stone's throw from his home, up the road a piece, is the site of the old billboard that used to welcome folks to Truro as they drove in from Provincetown. And a tastefully designed billboard it was. Advertized U.S. tires, and had a big quill sprouting from the top of the display, and it summarized some of the historical facts of the town. "Truro, called in early days Pamet, or Dangerfield, was incorporated in 1709. On a hill nearby, lanterns were displayed in the belfry of the Congregational Church as beacons to guide vessels entering Pamet Harbor." It went on to say that the whaling industry had been established in New England in great part thanks to the efforts of a local expert on the subject. Other interesting local trivia was spelled out on the billboard.

But we remember the structure for other personal reasons. For the stilted underpinning of the billboard provided a sort of hiding place for the local kids. Many's the time we'd adjourn from Truro Square, when the usual activities called as we were waiting for the evening mail to come in, to the billboard on the hill. And there we'd gather, the Ormsby brothers, Don and Ralph, and Ernie Snow, and Mike Howard and Bob Morris, and maybe the Roses from Long Nook, to exchange gossip of the summer, and tell the latest dirty stories, and perhaps chew a candy bar or split a bottle of soda pop.

Well sir, one evening, just as we had all steeled down in the shelter of the billboard, Bob Morris produced a pair of Postmaster cigars he'd managed to buy from Miz' Burhoe, clerk at Eben Paine's

store. "Told 'er I was buyin' 'em for Mr. Arnold Slade. Two fer a nickel. I delivered a special delivery letter from the Post Office, so's I had some spare change, and she gave 'em to me. What say we light up?"

So Don Ormsby bit the end off one of the stogeys, and someone produced a wood kitchen match and torched the fat cigar, and Don drew mightily exhaled a cloud of blue smoke. Then he passed the cigar to Bob Morris, and Bob did likewise. On the second draw he pursed up his lips and blew a rather wobbly smoke ring. Murmured applause. And then Ralph Ormsby reached for the Postmaster, clamped it in his teeth, squeezed the surplus juice from the cigar, and spat heartily in the grass, and pulled on the weed. Our turn next. We examined the gaudy band to stall a mite for time, finally popped the cigar between our incisors, and everlastingly drew in.

Sensibly, on the draw, we captured the smoke in our mouth, and sensibly we blew 'er out. But the second draw we mistakenly inhaled, drawing it deep down into our lungs. Bob Morris was to describe our condition at a later date.

"My gosh. First you coughed. Sounded like poor Eleanor Burris when she was headed for the TB Hospital up Cape. And then you sort of turned green, gradual like, drooled from the mouth, got real flushed, tried to stand up, and staggered all over. Finally you gagged and..." Enough.... enough. To this day, the sight and smell of a cigar makes us a bit squeamish. Even a U.S. tire gives us pause for thought.