

November 6, 1952

A large building is being constructed by Maline Costa for the Lands End Marine Supply on the shore at the rear of the large store, for use in servicing fishermen with their various needs. It is interesting to note that in modern construction more and more heavy plywood is being used, partly because of the much better results and also because of the reduced labor costs.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1956

Steve's Own Corner

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By Steve Barrie



The Last Of His Kind: "I landed at the train depot, where the Duarte Motors, Inc., now stands, on November 10, 1902," recalled James McGuire, in a strong, clear voice that belied his 83 years. "And I'm the last of the sail makers alive in New England." Except for his deafness, Mr. McGuire, who is affectionately and respectfully known around town as "Mack", is a fit and spry individual who makes his daily visit to Cookie's Tap,—a good half mile from his home on top of the hill on Mozart Avenue,—on foot. "I enjoy visiting my friends there and have two beers," explained Mack. "A fellow has got to do something to keep going even if he's in the last quarter of a hundred."

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Born In Canada: "Mack" was born in St. Johns, Newfoundland in 1873. "My wife came from Canada, too," volunteered the wiry "Mack" who stands five feet five. "We courted a long time before we were married in St. Augustine's Church in South Boston." The late Mrs. McGuire, who died a little over a year ago, was born Emily Healy. While she and "Mack" were keeping company in St. Johns, her family moved to Brooklyn, New York. The Healys picked up roots in New York and finally settled in Boston. "Mack" left his home land for a job as a sail maker in Fall River, Mass. "I resumed my courting," reminisced "Mack" as he showed me a faded photograph of a pretty young lady. "Traveling from Fall River to Boston in those days was quite a trek. But she was well worth it. See, here. This is her picture. We had six children. Harry, Eileen, Gertrude, George, Kathleen and Jimmy, the baby who is 46. Some baby, hey?" And "Mack's" eyes twinkled as he laughed loudly.

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At Home With "Mack": "Come in, son," said the friendly octogenarian, as he opened the door to his home in answer to my knock. "Interview me? Well, what for? It's gosh darn foolishness. Who cares about me?" I explained I had heard that he made a set of sails for the clipper Rose Dorothea that brought the Lipton Cup to Provincetown in 1907. "Don't say set," corrected "Mack", "say suit. She's a lady and she has a new suit of sails made every three or four years. She wears the old sails in the summer and wears the best ones in the winter when they need to be strong because of the weather. I made a suit of sails for the Rose Dorothea in 1917, long after she won the Lipton Cup. Bill Morris and Adam King of Boston helped me. It took us about a week. We used 1600



Land's End Marine Store (behind the main store, and where McGuire's Sail-loft used to be. June 1, 1956

yards of canvas. Every stitch was made by hand. With the arm up and down movement we made 15,000 stitches to the hundred yard—making a total of 240,000 stitches for her suit. I got \$750 for the job."

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Provincetown Is His Home: In the early 1900's John Mitchell was boss of the coal mines—the John L. Lewis of his day. "Mack" then worked for the Crawley Fleet in Fall River. The Crawley Fleet carted coal in her three and four masters and tow boats. So when the coal strike started in the latter part of 1901 and went on through 1902, work slackened and "Mack" was out of a job. He went to Boston and had no luck, but the man in the sail loft he went to told him he had heard about an opening in Provincetown. He directed "Mack" to see Old Man Smith, a junk dealer who shuttled back and forth to the



Hilliards Wharf, left, Town Wharf, right. - - 1957

Cape's End. "I never heard of Provincetown," said "Mack", "but I needed a job and I'd go anywhere for one." Mr. Smith gave "Mack" the information. "Mack" wrote George W. Pettes that he would work for him if he would pay him \$3 a day. Mr. Peters telegraphed "Mack" to come to Provincetown. "When I got off the train like I told you," repeated "Mack"—"I was dressed like a dude. Some man at the station yelled, 'hey, you—your name McGuire?'—and when I said yes he told me he hadn't expected to see such a well-dressed person." "Mack" chuckled happily at this memory that brought back the days when he was a dandy. For 50 years "Mack" had his own sail loft on Hilliard's Wharf which is now called Macara's Wharf in back of the Land's End Building. "Yes, sir—Provincetown has been my home for 54 years—most of my life. I still don't know why you want to interview me. I'm 83 years old. I'm a damn ole son of a gun." And "Mack's" quick warm smile and his wonderful Irish wit and humor embraced the big room and hung like heavy dew on the family photographs and the large picture of Emily that crowded the walls around the room.

October 11, 1956

Personal memo to Althea Boxell of Holden, Mass.: Thank you very much, M'am—for those mighty kind words. It certainly is nice to hear that you've enjoyed our "Mack" column. I will follow through on your suggestion, and hope to come up with more "old-timer" columns. Best to you—and thanks again! . . .