

Provincetown Advocate - February 3, 1972

## Town Gets Major Attraction With 'Wharf'

Phase Two of Dale Elmer's dream to see Provincetown eventually become a year-round national crafts center is entitled "Whaler's Wharf."

The Wharf is located in the Provincetown Movie Theater at 237 Commercial Street, a building that in recent years has housed a discotheque and an "arcade."

It represents Elmer's attempt to create a showcase for local craftsmen to present their work to the largest possible number of summer visitors.

The Whaler's Wharf is so-called because it resembles the wharf of a New England whaling village in the 1800's (perhaps Provincetown). Along the two interior walls will be a line of booths and stores, each one constructed differently, and all decorated with driftwood and shingles.

In front of the booths will be wood boardwalks, with a larger walkway running below the booths in the center of the building. There will also be a "tidal pool" inside the building.

And there will be a raised observation level at the beach end of the Wharf, which will be glassed-in, and will allow walkers to go right onto the beach.

Elmer is hoping the Wharf will become one of the Town's major tourist attractions, and is trying to make sure that only working craftsmen will be in the booths, and that there will be as much variety in the types of crafts as possible.

"Among the crafts I'm still looking for," Elmer told the Advocate last week, "are woodcarvers, relief carvers, scrimshaw, a glass blower, needle point, weaving, ceramics, and perhaps a commercial sign maker."

In order to attract more interest in its opening year, Elmer is attempting to keep season rentals low. For the smallest shops (approximately six feet by eight feet), he is charging \$400 for the season. For two small shops together, \$750, and for various other odd-sized areas, between \$600 and \$3,000.

The building housing the Wharf was purchased by Elmer last fall. Since 1963, he had been operating The Handcrafter next door. In the beginning, Elmer, who also has a crafts shop in New York City, worked out of The Handcrafter by himself, selling handwrought jewelry.

Eventually, he brought in other craftsmen to work with him, as well as some portrait artists, and The Handcrafter became the Town's first artisans' forum, where each craftsman received working space, display equipment and advertising from Elmer in return for payment of a percentage of his profits.

The success of The Hand-

crafter signalled the end of Phase One by proving that a large group of craftsmen could work successfully in Provincetown.

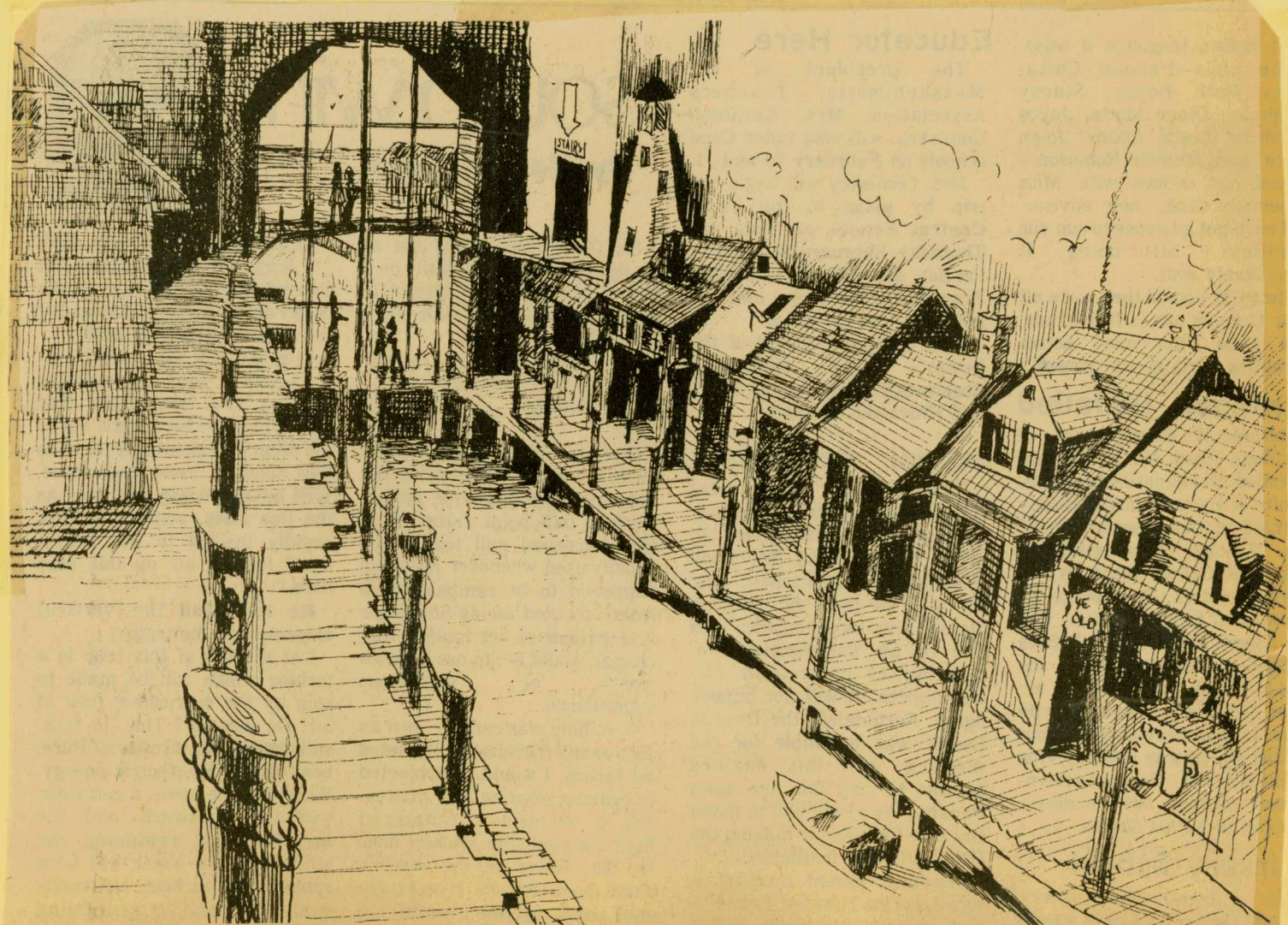
The Wharf, Elmer hopes, will help to establish in people's minds that there are a large number of craftsmen who live and work in Provincetown. Once Provincetown has been established as a summer crafts center, the next step will be to make it a year-round one, and that will be the end of Phase Two.

"This will be a place where

people can make money, and be economically secure," Elmer said. "It should also help lengthen the summer season of the Town."

Or, as its advertising brochure puts it:

"Whaler's Wharf is an opportunity for the buying public to observe beautiful things being made, to relate to artists and craftsmen in a pleasant environment of wharf, sand, and sea. The covered wharf idea is an attempt to bring outdoor living inside, to be enjoyed in all weather conditions and even at night."



Artist's conception of what the Whaler's Wharf mall of shops will look like when it's in operation this summer.