

W7
Wharves

OLD WHARVES OF PROVINCETOWN

Information compiled by Bonnie Steele McGhee

8/92

OLD WHARVES OF PROVINCETOWN

Thomas Lothrop was first to build a wharf in Provincetown. It was near Masonic Hall.

In 1833, "Union Wharf" was built. Jonathan Nickerson, Thomas Nickerson, Stephen Nickerson, & Samuel Soper were incorporated as the "Union Wharf Co."

The Central Wharf" was built in 1839 by Joseph Atkins, later it was owned by John Atwood in 1858. and in 1864, by Nathan Young.

Between 1830&1880, more than 55 wharves were built. In 1846 Freeman & Joseph Atkins asked for an extension of their wharf. In 1848, John Atwood Jr., Solomon Bangs, James Chandler, & Joshua Dyer, built wharves, along with Simeon Conant, in 1847, and Samuel Cook, in 1846. Jesse Cook extended his wharf in 1848, Parker Cook, in 1847. K.W. Freeman, Isaiah Gifford, Jonathan Hill, & Joseph P. Johnson, were granted permission to build wharves. Stephen Hilliard extended his in 1846, also Timothy P. Johnson extended in 1846, Thomas Lothrop, in 1844, John Nickerson in 1846. Seth Nickerson built his wharf in 1848, Godfry Ryder in 1845, Daniel Small, in 1848 and Elisha Young, in 1848.

John D. Hilliard built "Hilliard's Wharf" in 1846. Steven Hilliard sold it to T. & J. H. Hilliard & Co. Freeman & Hilliard succeeded them in 1859, until 1880, when John Hilliard continued the business.

Joseph Manta purchased "Manta's Wharf" in 1882. William Matheson purchased "Steamboat Wharf" in 1882. (This is where the Seaview Restaurant is now). "Market Wharf" was built in 1843.

Provincetown wharves remained active throughout the 19th century, but began to deteriorate at the turn of the century. Some were ruined from ice, and others were ruined during the Portland Gale in 1898.

In 1848, Freeman Atkins, Eben S. Smith, William A. Atkins, and others were incorporated as "Provincetown Marine Railway" to construct a railway east of "Central Wharf".

In 1852, Charles A. Hannum, Stephen Nickerson, and others incorporated "Union Marine Railway" with the power to build a railway at "Union Wharf".

In 1864, Epaphras K. Cook, Ephraim Cook, Ebenezer Cook, and others were incorporated as "Eastern Marine Railway" to construct a railway of E. & E. K. Cook. This was discontinued in the winter of 1874-75.

-Old Wharves Of Provincetown

Beginning at the Westend of Town:

1. "Steve Tom Nickerson Pier" from the Western Parking Place 500 ft., mostly fishing for trappers & Grandbankers.
2. "Jackson Williams pier" 300 ft. long, part of shipyard with bldgs. for storage (Capt. Jack's wharf)
3. "Myrick Atwood" foot of Nickerson St. where former "Wharf Theatre" stood - 300 ft. (now West End Racing Club)
4. "Union Wharf" 1000 ft. pier, once was one of the most important, with blacksmith shops, blockmakers, shed, saillofts, rigging yard, & marine railway. One building was used just for packing mackerel. "Sal's Place" is now in front of it, (99 Commercial St.)
5. "J.L.N. Paine Wharf" Just east of "Union Wharf", 700 ft. long, provided docking space for Grandbankers.
6. "N.C. Brook's Wharf" - 400 ft., foot of Kelly's Corner, lumber, schooners unloaded, heavy timber from Maine woods & Nova Scotia.
7. "James Burch Wharf" 200 ft. pier, housed storage for nets & fishing gear.
8. "Frank Freeman's Pier" 600 ft., later called "Cape Cod Cold Storage Wharf", fish wharf for packing, buying and selling to out of Town market. Pier was rebuilt twice and has now disappeared. This pier was probably at 125 Comm. St. near where Coast Guard Station is now.
9. "Nathan Freeman's Pier" - 300 ft. pier. He was brother to Frank Freeman. Wharf was used to unload fish. The brothers connected the two wharves with a bridge to make it easier. This wharf was later called the "Puritan Cold Storage Plant."
10. "David Smith pier" rear of 111 Comm. St., 300 ft. pier for unloading & shipping fish.
11. "Artemus Paine Wharf" _____, foot of Conant St., was 500 ft.
12. "Central Wharf" foot of Central St., between old Grozier Estate & Adam's property. This pier was 1000 ft. long and housed a sail loft, blacksmith shop, rigging, ballast rooms etc.
13. "B.H. Dyer Wharf" rear of present B.H. Dyer hardware store - 300 ft., used for fish packing.
14. "Joseph Manta Wharf" formerly by Crocker & Atwood, was 600 ft. & similar to B.H. Dyer's wharf, from this pier the Manta Fleet rigged out.

Bonnie Steele McChee
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Old Wharves continued

15. "J.&E..&G.Bowley Wharf", next to & just east of Manta's Wharf. (where Sea View Restaurant is now). Later this was known as "Fishermens' Cold Storage Wharf". Bowley's wharf very active. Whalers were outfitted & rigged there. The "S.S. George Shallick" docked at this wharf carrying passengers & freight from Boston.

16. "Joseph Atwood Wharf" rear of 205 Comm. St., 600 ft. Was a lumber wharf. George Allen Sr. was in import lumber business, was also called "Market Wharf".

17. "Seth Nickerson Wharf", where Post Office bldg. is now located - 400 ft., used as fishing pier with shop & storage space.

18. "Charles Nickerson Wharf" 400 ft. ft. long, fish pier, where "Cape Cod Garage" was. This was an unloading & flaking wharf for cod fish vessels.

19. "Benjamin Lancy's Wharf", later "Colonial Cold Storage Plant" - was a lumber & coal yard. (Old Reliable Fish House Restaurant is there now)

20. "Charlie Cook's Wharf" 400 ft., fish wharf; fish sheds, boat-room & storage, later this was used as the Artists' theatre. (probably where the Provincetown Playhouse was, at the foot of Gosnold St.)

"Frank Joseph's Wharf" "Monument Dock", "Sklaroff's Wharf", was a fish wharf.

22. "Alfred Small's Wharf" Next to "Board Of Trade", rear of old Lands End Marine. This was a lumber wharf, 300 ft. long. Across the street, where the old Cutler's Pharmacy used to be (near the Mayflower Cafe) was a large Flake Yard.

23. "Railroad Wharf", "Town Wharf". was rebuilt twice. Years ago it was 1200 ft. long, one of the most important wharves, had double set of railroad tracks and docking space for vessels.

* all of the above wharves were still standing until the "Portland Gale" 1898

24. "J.D. Hilliard Wharf", Higgins Lumber Yard, (Where Lands End is now), 600 ft., had fish flakes. Was a very wide wharf. Fishing and canning were done on her. Later it was used as a lumber yard, coal yard, & hardware store.

25. "George O. Knowles' Wharf" 600 ft. long. Was a fitting out wharf for Whalers & Grand Bankers. Was at the foot of Pearl St.

Continued

Bonnie Steele McGhee

Old wharves-----continued

- "26. "David Conwell's Wharf" 600 ft..was at rear of old "Quarter Deck Club", east of Pearl St..Large fleet of Grand Bankers.
27. "Ed Small's Wharf" 500 ft..Was later a canning factory.
28. "Kibby Cook wharf"-900 ft. long, part of a ship yard & marine railway. Whalers fitted out and came in here for overhauls. The Kibbe Cook House was owned later by Mary Heaton Vorse . The C.L. Burch Grocery store was once Kibbe Cook's store, (now Bryant's Market).
29. "Charles Austin Cook's Wharf" 400 ft. pier in back of Donald Macmillan's home. (now owned by the Bryant family) It had space for fishing gear & unloading facilities for Grand Bankers.
30. "H.S. Cooks & Sons Wharf" 1000 ft. wharf, was across from where "Figure Head House" is now. Henry & Sylvanus Cook were brothers. Henry owned "The Figure Head House." This wharf was for a fleet of Grand Bankers.
31. "Sam Swift's Wharf" , later called "Consolidated Cold Storage Wharf" Terminal for Grand Bankers. Only 100 ft. long. (probably where "Cold Storage Condos " are now.
32. "Phillip Whorf's Pier" 539 Comm. St., 400 ft. Was used for loading & unloading & outfitting Grand Bankers. Later it was used for trapping.
33. "Bangs A. Lewis Wharf" In rear of what was John Dos Passos' home. 900 ft., operated as a Grand Banker, lumber, coal, ice, & rigging wharf. "Provincetown Players" used this wharf. "Sixes & Sevens" club was in the large bldg. at end of pier. Behind 571 Comm. St.
34. "Conway's Wharf" - 200 ft. , used for tying up vessels.

*Information for this article was obtained from the following sources;

"Time And The Town"-Mary Heaton Vorse

"Provincetown Book"-- Nancy Paine Smith

Three articles that appeared in the "Advocate" in 1941, written by Irving S. Rogers.

"History Of Barnstable County"-Deyo

* Old Wharves continued

In 1842-43, the Steamer "Express", ran between Boston & Provincetown by way of Plymouth. In 1849, 50, & 51 Naushon, with Capt. Upham Grozier, Henry Paine, & Nathan Nicholson (of Welfleet) made trips to Provincetown & Welfleet.

From 1857-1861, "Acorn", Captain Gibbs of Hyannis, & later, Richard Stevens of Provincetown, made regular trips between Boston & Provincetown.

"George Shattuck" was built in 1862-63. It was commanded by Capt. Gamiel B. Smith, S.T. Kilbourne, mate N. Porter Holmes, clerk. It ran until 1874.

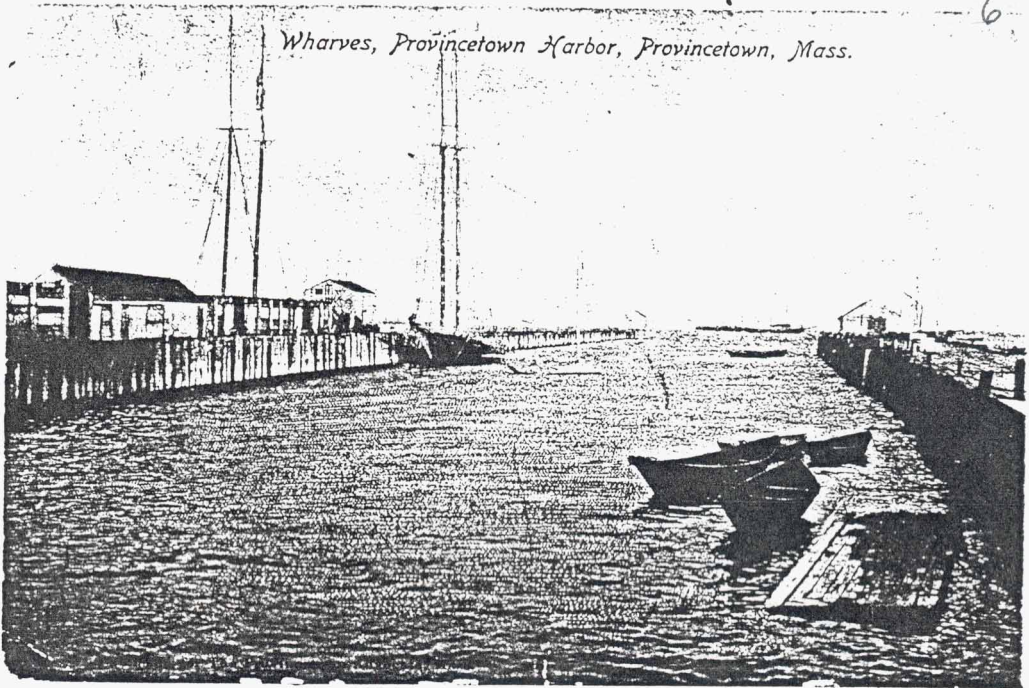
"United States" ran one season, and was succeeded by "Acushnet" in 1875, which ran two seasons.

In 1883 "Longfellow" was built. It was built for the route between Provincetown & Boston. Its Captain was John Smith.

In 1863 Bowley's Wharf, erected in 1849, was extended to accommodate the "Shattuck", and became known as "Steamboat Wharf".

*Information for this article was obtained from the following source,
"History Of Barnstable County"---Deyo

Wharves, Provincetown Harbor, Provincetown, Mass.



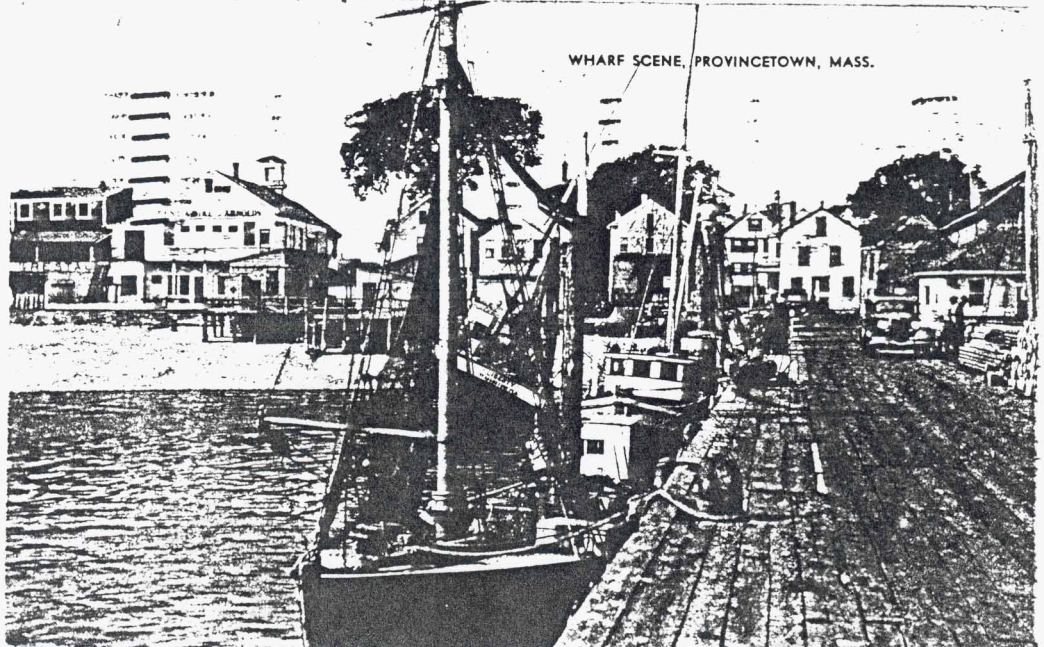
"STUDIOS ON THE SEA" CAPT. JACK'S WHARF, PROVINCETOWN, MASS.

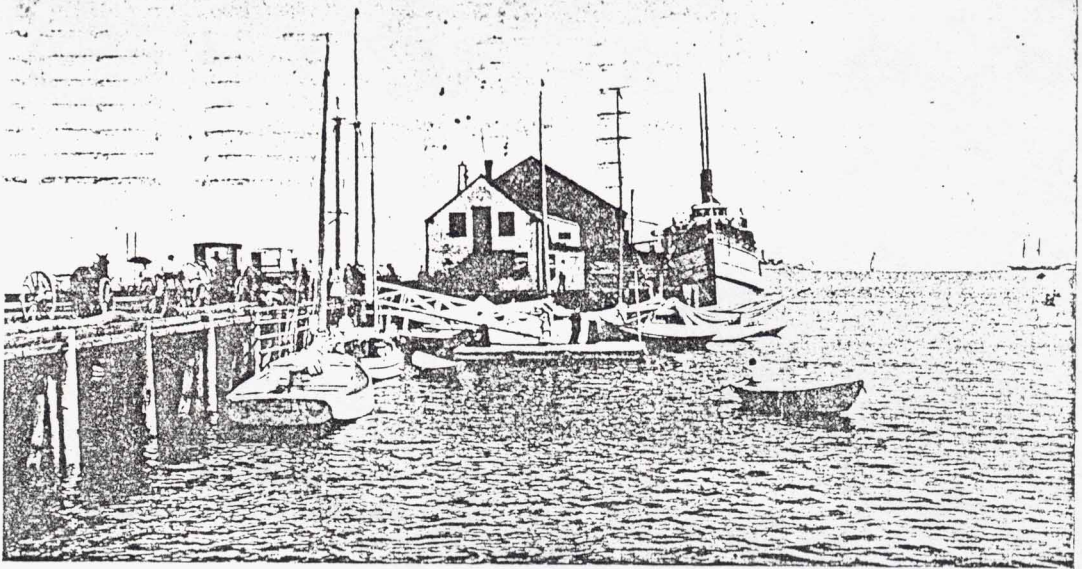
CAPT. JACK'S WHARF
JACKSON WILLIAM'S
WHARF



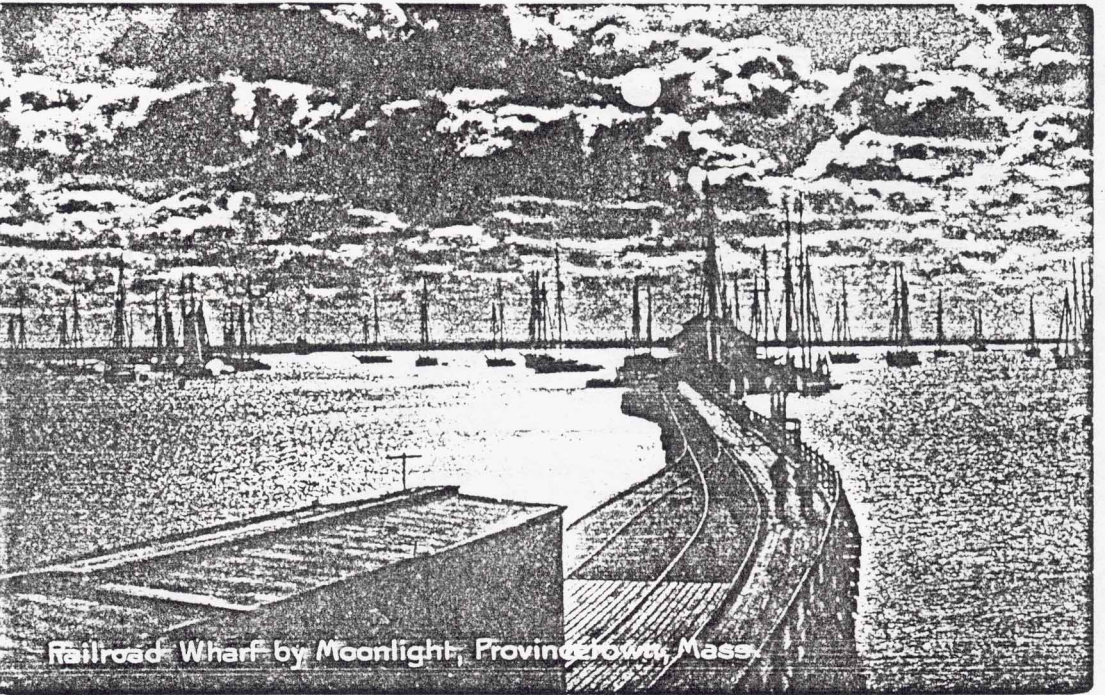
WHARF SCENE, PROVINCETOWN, MASS.

HILLIARDS WHARF



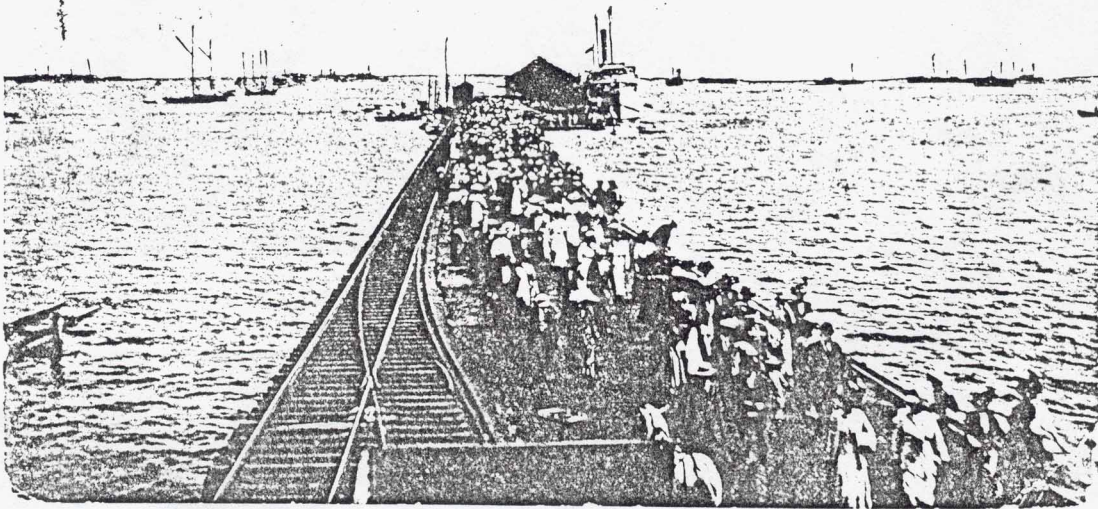


STEAMBOAT LANDING, PROVINCETOWN

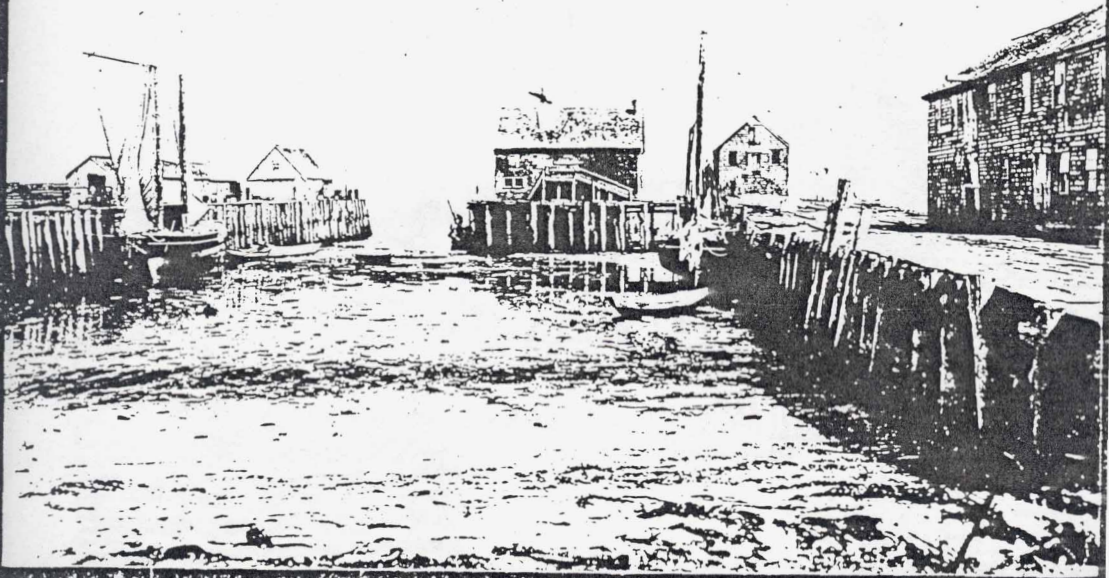


Railroad Wharf by Moonlight, Provincetown, Mass.

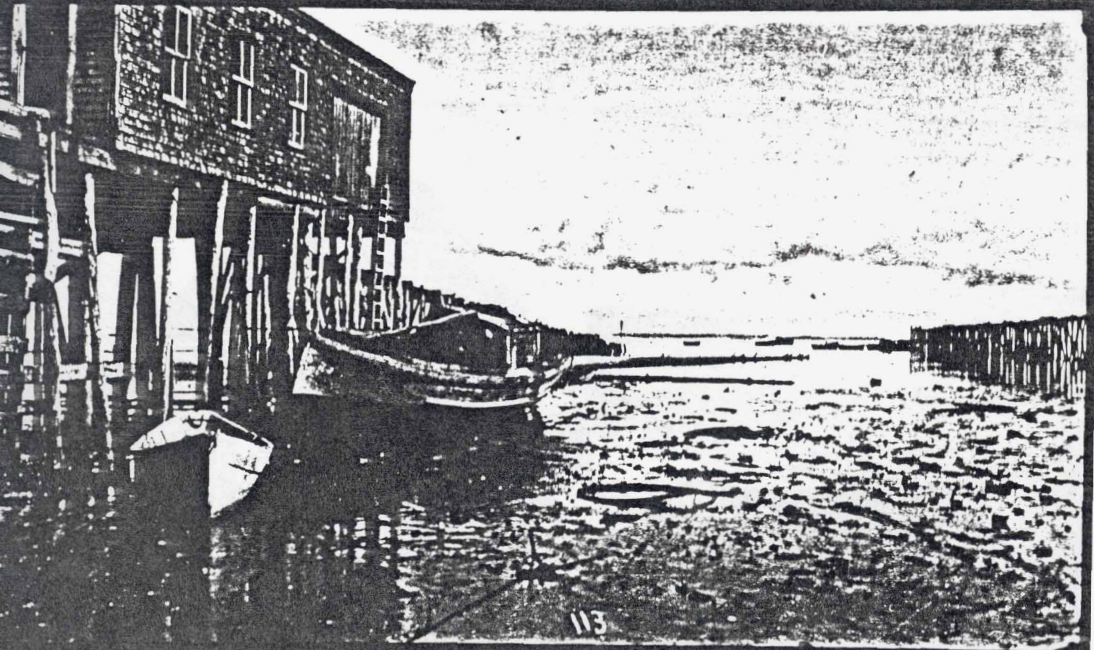
Tourists just landed at Steamship Dock,
Provincetown, Mass.



Old Union Wharf, Provincetown, Mass



Union Wharf c. 1860

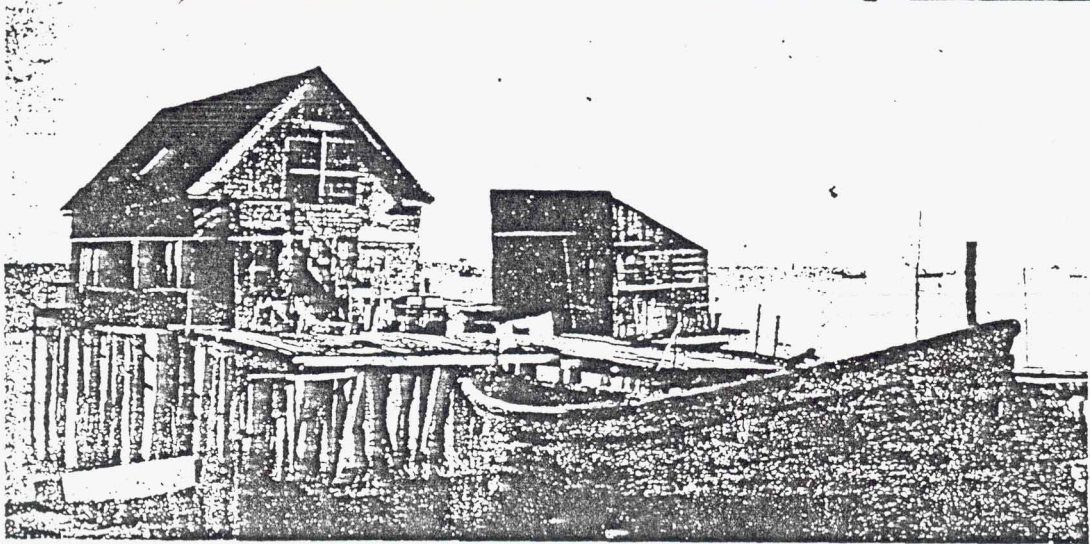


Cape Cod Cold Storage Wharf
and Trap Shed c/ 1910



LANCY'S WHARF
 COLONIAL COLD STORAGE

Provincetown c. 1870
 Old Town Hall (Top Center)



THE ORIGINAL PROVINCETOWN PLAYERS made this sail loft, jutting out into the harbor, their home by courtesy of the owner, Mary Heaton Vorse. In June of 1916 the doors opened with Eugene O'Neill's first play, *Bound East for Cardiff*. This was the start of summer theatre on Cape Cod. By 1920, many members of the original company had become famous. The same group opened the first successful off-Broadway theatre in New York, in an old stable off McDougall Street. (Seaman)

LEWIS'S WHARF

Lewis's Wharf



. . . Exact date of this historic ice jam is unknown but the photo was taken by the late Louis Snow between 1900 and 1910, probably from the back porch of his house at 163 Commercial. Other ice photos he took on this occasion show that the floes were up to eight feet thick, lending credibility to old-timers' claims that they could "walk to

Long Point" on such ice jams. Provincetown Harbor itself didn't freeze, but shallow inlets and Wellfleet Harbor did. Then, on a high tide, and with the right winds, masses of ice broke away from the shoreline and converged on Provincetown, smashing wharves, dragging moored boats and providing fun for youngsters and photographers.