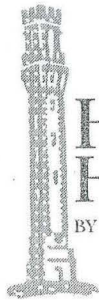


## Open Studio: William F. Halsall

There have always been those artists regarded with disdain by their peers who yet remain committed to a style not currently popular; William F. Halsall is one of these. Halsall seems destined to be referred to in art histories of Provincetown as an “old time” marine painter.

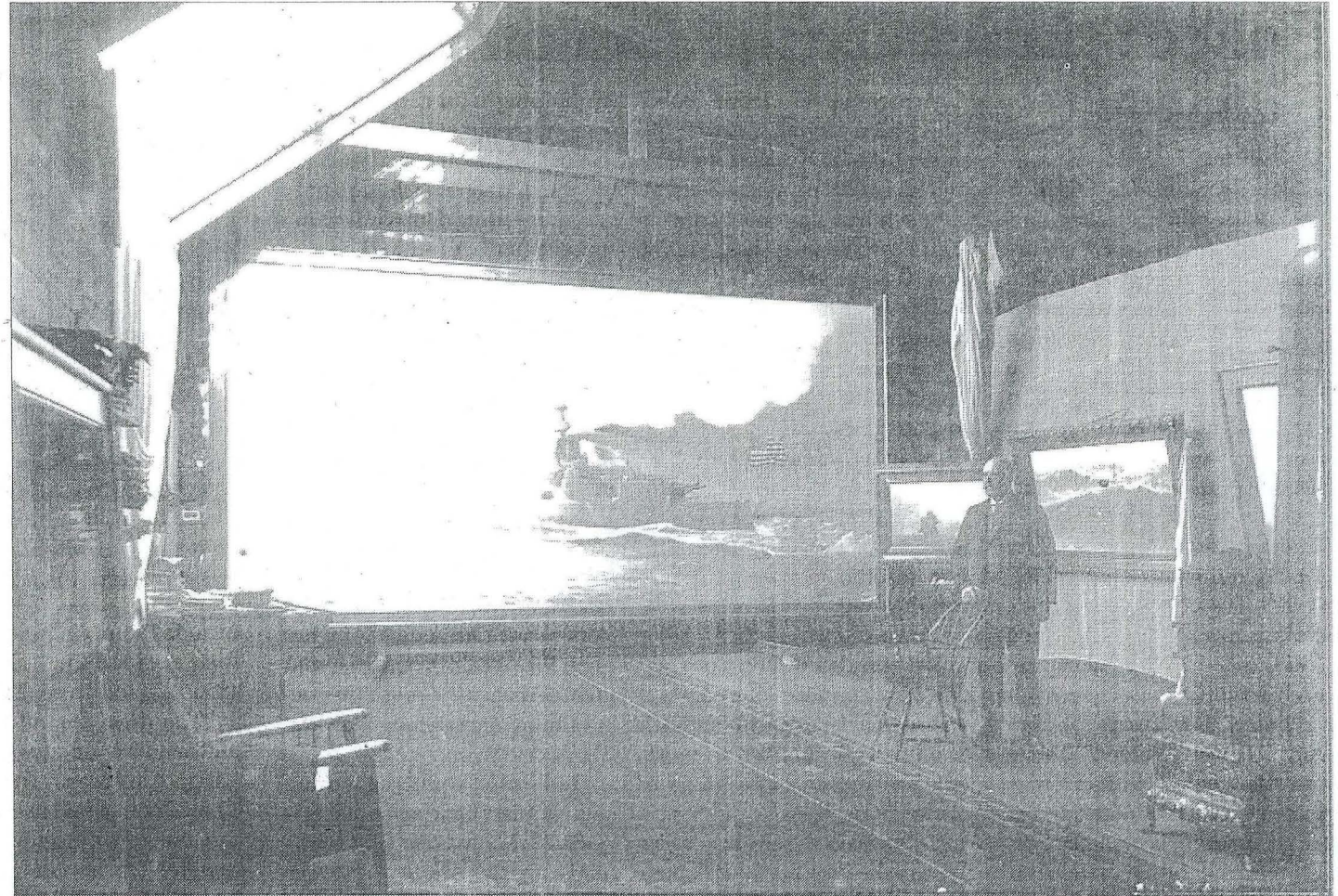
Ross Moffett writes, “Confirmed as he was in a school that predated even impressionism, Halsall, naturally, did not like art that savored of modernism, and he once said of a landscape by Oliver Chaffee, ‘It has neither the anatomy of color nor the grammar of drawing.’ This remark, we being young, bandied among ourselves, thinking it very funny and old-hatish.”

At the time when Hawthorne was at the height of his teaching career in Provincetown, Halsall was nearing the end of his life. He was born in 1841 and died in 1919. He worked as a sailor for seven years, studied fresco painting and then, when the Civil War broke out, enlisted in the Navy. Ross Moffett remembers Halsall recalling those war experiences often. After the war he gave up his fresco work and began painting marine



### History Highlights

BY LAUREL GUADAZNO



*William F. Halsall in the “shirt factory studio” on Court Street where he painted his painting of the Battleship Oregon rounding Cape Horn.*

subjects. He came to Provincetown in the first wave of visitors brought here after the train came in 1873 and made travel to town easier.

Halsall was one of the first artists to spend summers in Provincetown. At one time he had a studio in a building on the waterside of Commercial Street across

from Town Hall. He also worked in a studio in an old shirt factory on Court Street. In Provincetown he is probably best remembered for three paintings: a huge 12-by-30-foot painting of the Battleship Oregon rounding Cape Horn, commissioned by the government; a painting of the Mayflower in Plymouth Harbor

used in many school textbooks; and a large painting of Peaked Hill that still hangs in the main hallway at Provincetown Town Hall.

*[Laurel Guadagno is curator of education for the Pilgrim Monument & Provincetown Museum.]*