

HOLIDAY

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The Mixed Blessings of Cape Cod

A FRESH LOOK AT ARKANSAS ■ THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE ■ HANDBOOK OF COOKING DISCOVERIES

Broadway playwright and director Abe Burrows

with his wife, Carin, escapes from the urban summer scene to a beach near Provincetown, at the northern hook of the Lower Cape.

The New Look of Old Cape Cod

■ On a raw gray day in October, 1849, two men dressed in black city suits and clutching black umbrellas were making their way along the beach on the ocean side of Cape Cod. A northeaster was blowing, and its gusts of rain and wind made sails of their umbrellas and drove them forward in lurching, irregular spurts. Now and then they would rest in the lee of a dune and read aloud passages from a history of the region through which they were passing. One of the men has remained anonymous. The other was named Henry David Thoreau.

"The time must come," he later wrote, "when this coast will be a place of resort for those New Englanders who really wish to visit the seaside. At present it is wholly unknown to the fashionable world, and probably it will never be agreeable to them. If it is merely a tenpin alley, or a circular railway, or an ocean of mint julep, that the visitor is in search of—if he thinks more of the wine than the brine, as I suspect some do in Newport—I trust that for a long time he will be disappointed here."

It is my painful duty to report that Thoreau's hopes have been disappointed and his fears realized. Cape Cod has become agreeable to the fashionable world—and to the unfashionable as well. The modern equivalents of the circular railway and ocean of mint julep are all flourishing.

In addition there are things that Thoreau could never in his most imaginative moments have dreamed of. There are night clubs, fortune tellers and miniature golf courses. There are hotels, motels and yachters. The highways are lined with establishments named *Anchor Inn*, *The Sail Loft* and *The Captain's Table*. In a Falmouth restaurant this nautical whimsy extends to the lavatories, which are labeled *Buoys* and *Gulls*. At West Yarmouth there is a *Tastee Tower of Pizza*. At Orleans, near where Thoreau started his walk, a huge ice-cream cone revolves like a grotesque beacon above the struggling traffic. From beyond comes the crash of the bulldozer leveling the pine woods. It is a booster's and realtor's and shoddy builder's dream come true. It is what turns the editors of the Cape's newspapers into angry crusaders. It is what local interests in their long, though finally unsuccessful, struggle against preserving the Great Beach as a National Seashore, used to call "dynamic progress."

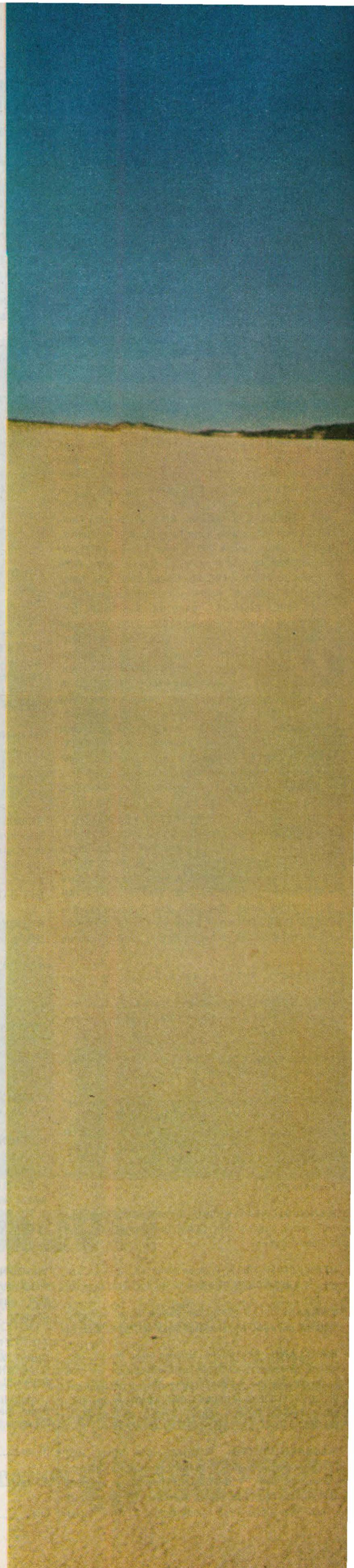
Thoreau called the Cape "the bare and bended arm of Massachusetts." The description has become a commonplace, but it is still a good one. The part that extends from the shoulder at the Cape Cod Canal to its elbow at Chatham is known as the Upper Cape. The forearm, from Chatham to the fist at Provincetown, is the Lower Cape. Whether you go to one or the other depends on what you are looking for.

Whatever it is, you are almost certain to find it. For so small an area, Cape Cod

by *Benedict Thielen*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED J. MAROON

*A magnificent arm of
sand dune and scrub wilderness
reaches into the sea
with its boisterous playgrounds
and serene retreats*





Sailboats race round a buoy in Pleasant Bay, just north of Chatham, in a Saturday afternoon Yacht Club regatta celebrating the 250th anniversary of the town.

Continued from Page 30 offers a remarkable concentration of practically everything. There is high society and low society, ultra-conservatism and unbuttoned Bohemianism. There is art, science and the very best in summer theater. There are smart shops, and shops whose contents stagger the imagination. There is nature at its gentlest and at its most austere. There are, of course, fishing, swimming and sailing, and as far as history is concerned, there is probably no other region in the country that contains as many bronze plaques per square mile.

Once over the Cape Cod Canal, the person bound for the Lower Cape hurries straight on and does not breathe freely till he has reached the open country beyond Orleans. The one who chooses the Upper Cape turns either toward Cape Cod Bay on the north or southerly toward Buzzards Bay and Nantucket Sound. The two shores are very different.

THE NORTH shore faces toward Boston. The south shore faces toward New York. There is as much difference between them as there is between the two cities, as between Park Avenue and Beacon Hill. The north shore is pure New England, old, dignified and retiring. The south shore is New England too—Falmouth and Chatham are almost as venerable as Yarmouth and Brewster—but it is New England jazzed up, its tempo heightened to please the summer visitor, its lights burning far beyond a sensible person's bedtime. In summer its towns have a bewildered look about them, like old ladies who have been dragged onto the dance floor and forced to drink champagne.

If you look at a map of the Cape, you will notice that along Cape Cod Bay the even curve of the shoreline from Orleans to the Canal is broken by only one sizable harbor. On the west and south there are dozens. Where there are harbors there are yacht clubs, and the little blue flags by which they are marked on the map show that there are twenty-three on Buzzards Bay and Nantucket Sound and only two on the opposite shore.

It is this vacation world of bright waters, certain breezes and, at the end of the day, crowded little harbors and cocktail flags flying from the mastheads, that draws people to the south and west shores of the Upper Cape. Sometimes the anchorages are so filled with small craft that your boat will be turned away and you will have to search elsewhere. It is an immensely gregarious existence, and one filled with constant motion. The beaches, the roads, the golf courses and tennis courts are as crowded and busy as the harbors. Summer in New England is incomparably beautiful, but it is brief, and you have the feeling that the people who come here want to seize every moment of it before it slips away.

On the Upper Cape it is only at Woods Hole that this sense of urgency disappears. Located at its extreme western tip, Woods Hole is a working rather than a playing community. It is relaxed because only here on the Cape are people not engaged in the serious business of having fun.

From its hilly, tree-shaded streets there are glimpses of its three harbors, of battered, salt-caked fishing boats bucking the swift currents between Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound, of the barren, high-cliffed moors of the Elizabeth Islands beyond. Many of the streets have unusual names: Maury Lane, Jaques Loeb and Morgan Roads, honoring

pioneers in hydrography, brain physiology and genetics. Even if you did not know that the brick buildings that face the waterfront house the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Marine Biological Laboratory and the Oceanographic Institution, you would sooner or later feel the air of science that permeates the town.

You see it in the people, too. Except for the kind of gentle scholastic vagueness which many of them have in common, they do not fall into any particular pattern. They may be wearing khaki shorts or a kimono, a beret or a fez. If there is something familiar about the face of the man next to you at a lunch counter, it may be because you saw his picture on the cover of a magazine last week. Woods Hole is a highly concentrated scientific crossroads of the world. Its atmosphere is that of a college town in which mental rather than social status is important.

Because Falmouth, of which Woods Hole is a part, is so close to the beginning of the Cape, it was one of its earliest summer resorts. Attracted by the charm of the village green with its tall elms, the handsome church and fine old houses, people were happy rocking on the porches of the big hotels at Falmouth Heights, overlooking Buzzards Bay. Their faithful, year-after-year returning made Falmouth one of the most prosperous small towns in the state. It is still prosperous. But it is a prosperity which many year-round residents would gladly trade for a greater measure of peace during the summer months. Accessibility has its drawbacks, and there are times when the beaches of Falmouth resemble a small-scale Coney Island or Atlantic City. On weekends, when the boys with the faddish hair styles move in from South Boston and the mill towns of Rhode Island, the people of Falmouth bolt their doors till Monday morning.

If there is sometimes danger, on fair summer evenings in Falmouth, of being hit by a beer can heaved from an open window or a passing hot rod, you can take refuge with confidence only a few miles farther on at Cotuit, Osterville or Wianno. If the weight of intellectual activity at Woods Hole becomes oppressive, and you long for the exhilarating aroma of money, you will also find relief in these three places.

Perched modestly above its pretty, sail-filled harbor, Cotuit gives off only a faint, well-bred, though still perceptible whiff of it. As you approach Osterville, the scent becomes more heady. There are high stone walls and clipped lawns. Down the graveled driveways roll cars driven by uniformed chauffeurs. The houses, losing their spare New England simplicity and straightness of line, begin to swell, to sprout turrets, bay windows and vast verandas. A proud Edwardian opulence sets in, like that of a very small Newport, with wood taking the place of the marble and granite of the robber barons' castles. Looming up above the marshes, facing a shore now strung with summer cottages, bathhouses and paved parking lots, the old houses look like bosomy and apoplectic dowagers. Because of their size and the ruthless march of economics, some of them have been sold and transformed into clubs or hotels. There are still many, however, on whose gates are names as reassuringly solvent as those of the corporations with which you associate them.

A short drive along the shore road from Osterville, past the broad crescent of Craigville Beach, will bring you to Hyannis Port. Though the town has become nationally famous as the home of the

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OLD CAPE TREASURES

Continued from Page 32 Kennedys, it is doubtful if any more votes were cast here for its leading citizen than in, for instance, Greenwich, Conn., or Montclair, N.J. Since most of Hyannis Port's summer residents come from these or other communities with similar social and political convictions, this is understandable. They bring their suburbs with them.

Whenever I look at the swollen old mansions of Osterville, I have the feeling that their cellars must be stacked high with gold bullion and wired with an elaborate, if old-fashioned, system of burglar alarms. The houses of Hyannis Port seem more open, less on guard, as though the proceeds from Wall Street and Madison Avenue were flowing freely in and out their doors. In the streets there are fewer chauffeurs driving limousines and more young matrons in tweeds and cashmeres driving station wagons. On Friday evenings, when the plane lands or the *Cape Codder* arrives from New York, the husbands they are waiting to meet may look rather tired after their week in the hot city, but they bear their weariness with the cheerful grace of the seasoned commuter.

For three summer months all the little towns along this coast—Bass River, West Dennis, Dennis Port, Harwich Port—are filled with life, a coming and going as busy as the tacking back and forth of the white sails in their harbors. It is a shore made for summer, and when summer ends—which it does on Labor Day with the abruptness of a slamming door—its life ends too. The houses are shuttered, the sails furred, and everywhere from the Canal to Chatham Road there is the clank and creak of the marine railways hauling the boats up for the winter.

Across the Cape, on the north shore, some houses have been shuttered, too, some boats hauled out of the water. There are fewer cars on the roads and fewer people on the streets. The campers have left the woods of Nickerson State Forest. At Dennis old programs and ticket stubs are blowing across the empty parking lot by the Cape Playhouse. In front of the antique shops the spinning wheels and sea chests have been taken in off the lawns. There are signs of the summer's ending, but instead of the slamming of a door, it is more like the removal of a surplus layer. Underneath, the towns remain.

They have been there a long time. Through them you can trace the march of settlement on the Cape, from 1637 for Sandwich and Barnstable on the west, to 1639 for Yarmouth and Dennis in the middle, to 1656 for Brewster on the east. There are no village greens such as you find in other parts of New England. Instead their houses are strung along the old King's Highway, following the contour of the Cape. Except for a stretch of open country between Sandwich and Barnstable, they merge into one another. They are neat, well kept, freshly painted. Their low picket fences are half hidden under pink and scarlet rambler roses. The streets they face are arched over by towering elms. Unlike the rest of the Cape, where you must look for the best on the side roads, the best on the north shore is right on the sides of the highway.

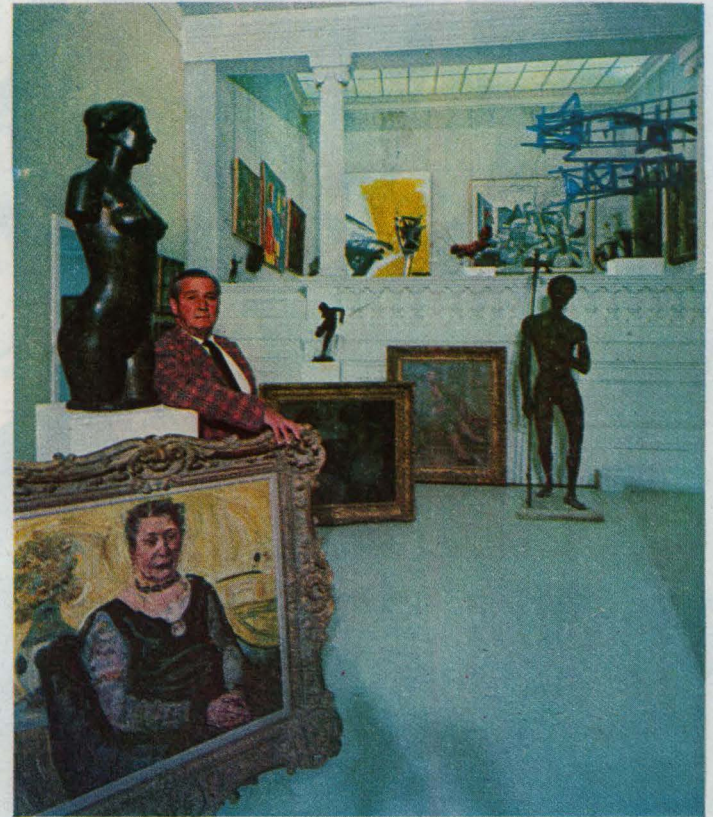
There are things on the north shore, as well as on the south, against which it is better to shut your eyes. But they are fewer. There are not many beaches to exploit. Instead there are great expanses of salt marshes whose winding creeks and green-and-golden wetness form a barrier against man. Like the faces of the people who live in them, the bay-shore towns have a sinewy quality, as though in their own quiet way they, too, could be

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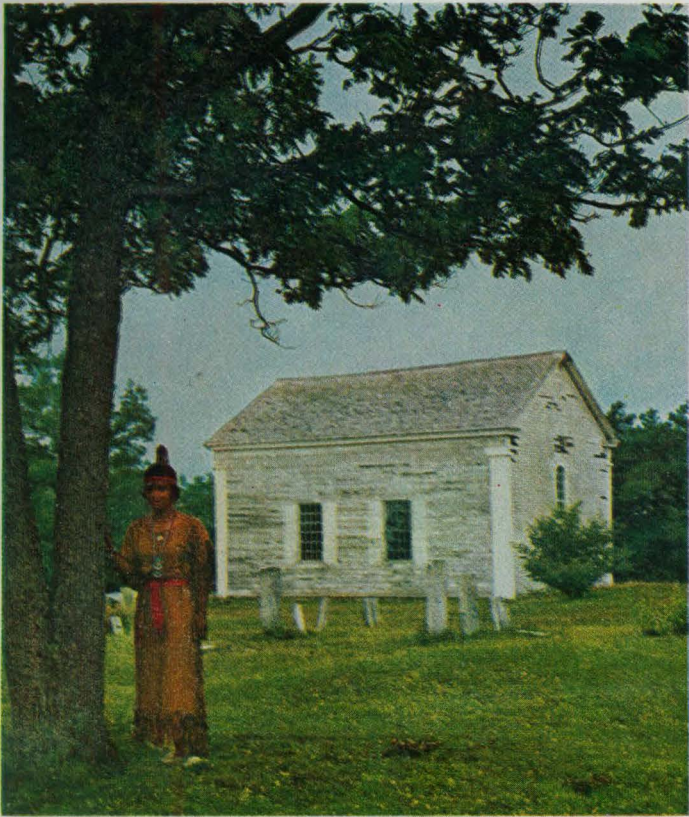


AMONG THE CAPE'S relics are these pieces of 19th Century Sandwich glass from the Sandwich Glass Museum. The mill (left) was built in 1654, and corn is still ground there for tourists by miller Vernon E. Prior. Behind the mill is a church steeple designed by Christopher Wren.

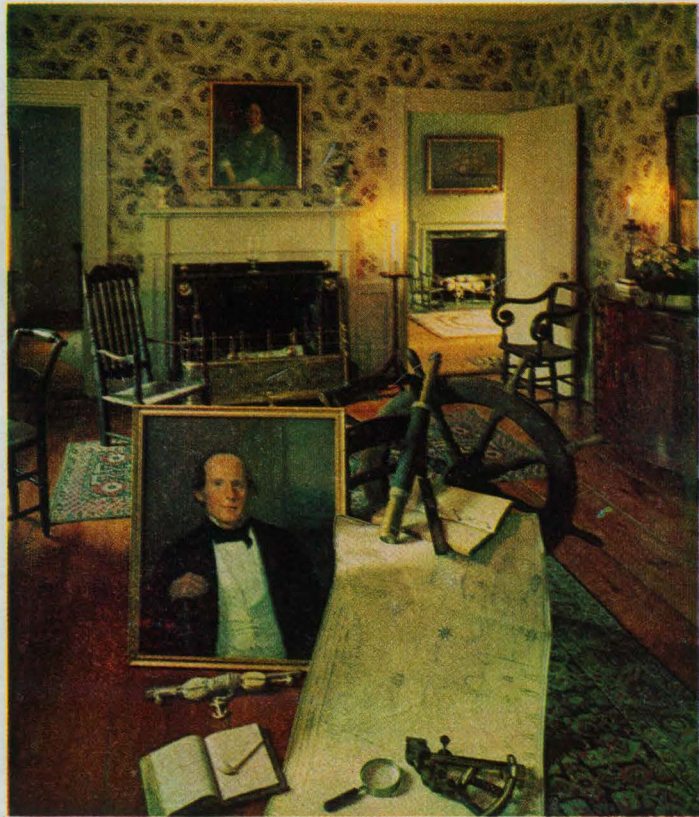
THE NEW CAPE BUILDS



WALTER P. CHRYSLER, JR., stands between Van Gogh's "Portrait of a Woman" and a sculpture by Maillol in the Chrysler Art Museum of Provincetown. The gallery was opened in 1958 in what was once Provincetown's Methodist Church. Mr. Chrysler lives in Wellfleet.



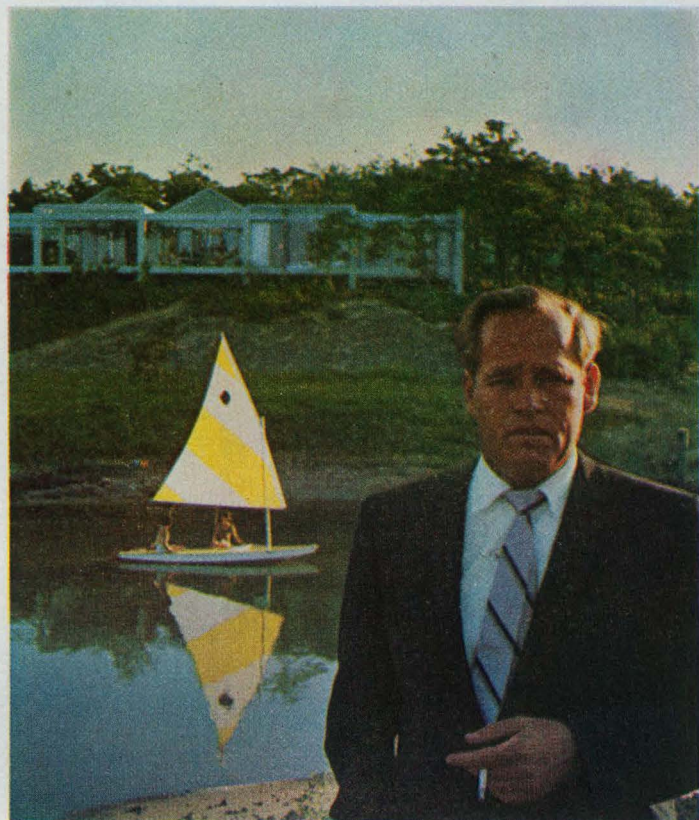
PRINCESS RED DOVE (Mrs. Earl Mills) is the wife of the chief of the Wampanoag tribe, which has about 400 members still living around Mashpee. The meetinghouse was built in 1684 at Briant's Neck for use by Indian converts, and in 1717 was moved to its present site.



CAPT. BANGS HALLET presides in portrait over his home, books and nautical instruments. His house, built in 1750 and restyled by him in 1830, is in the beautifully preserved Captains' Mile of King's Highway in Yarmouth Port, where once a hundred Cape Cod skippers lived.



THE NEW PROPRIETOR of the old Christopher Ryder House at Chathamport is Donald E. Kastner. When Captain Ryder built this inn about 1790, he couldn't have imagined it would one day contain not only a restaurant but an "Opera House" presenting reviews nightly.



PLANNER AND DEVELOPER Emil Hanslin, originator and supervisor of the New Seabury development on Vineyard and Nantucket sounds, visits Bright Coves, one of the vacation-retirement villages to cover 3,000 acres of beaches, ponds and woods between Hyannis and Falmouth.



HIDDEN FROM inland eyes by great white cliffs, and usually by morning fog as well, the beach at Nauset Heights is beaten by a heavy surf from the open, bass-rich sea it faces.



It is part of the long strip of beachland—sparsely inhabited and dotted with lighthouses—that stretches the full length of the outer cape, from Chatham all the way to Provincetown.

VETERAN CAPE CODDERS

Continued from Page 34 politely stubborn and resistant to change. The patina of the past is thicker here. It clings to the towns as the lichens plate the weather sides of their trees.

In the old Hoxie house at Sandwich, beneath all the quaintness of wide floor boards and massive walls, I always feel that earliest New England of primitive living and primitive fears, the fear of witches and ghosts, of joy and body. The small windows were made to shut out the cold and the night and the terrors of the unknown. The house stands on a little bluff above the willows of Shawme Lake. It is a lovely spot, but on the other shore, like a reminder of mortality, are the crumbling headstones of an old graveyard. It was not till many years later that the craftsmen of Sandwich dared make their glass sparkle like diamonds and glow with the sinful color of wine.

There is this past of grim piety, of the stocks and the whipping post and the bitter Sundays when, because there were no bells, people were summoned to church by the beating of drums. But at Barnstable, in the Crocker Tavern, there is a room they called "Hagar's bedroom," where men found pleasure in the risk of eternal damnation. At Barnstable, too, the New England tradition of respect for books and learning is there in the country's first library. In every town there is the understated beauty of the light-spined churches and the white-columned Greek-revival houses. Above all, there is the past of ships and the sea.

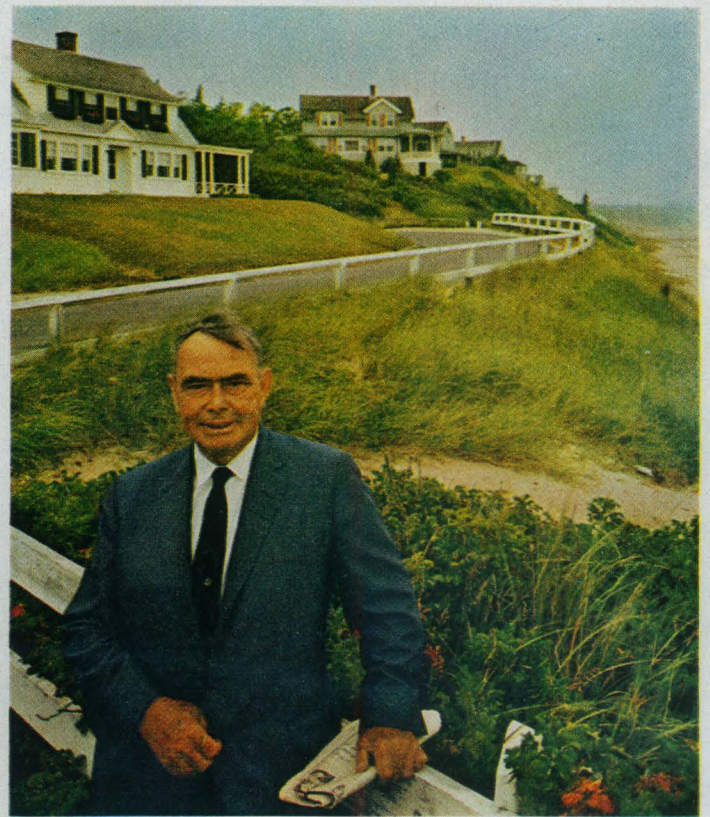
It is not the sea of summer sailing, of yacht clubs and cat-boats and cabin cruisers. It is not the sea of the amateur, happily blundering about among the rocks and shoals. It is the sea of the professional. It is the sea of "Mad Jack" Percival, who commanded the *Constitution* and whose grave is near the side of the road in West Barnstable. It is the sea of Captain Asa Eldredge of Yarmouth, who sailed the *Red Jacket* from New York to Liverpool in thirteen days and one hour. It is the sea of the whalers and the tea clippers with the singing names—*Flying Cloud*, *Sovereign of the Seas*, *Herald of the Morning*. Many of them were built at the Shiverick shipyards, near Dennis. Ninety-nine deepwater captains came from Brewster alone. Under the elms, among the trees-of-heaven they brought back from China, are the mansions they built, sometimes from the profits of one voyage.

A few miles beyond Brewster, at Orleans, all main Cape roads come together and from there on make one. Orleans is the crossroads, the end of the Upper Cape and the beginning of the Lower. You can feel the difference, the change from town to country, from the snug and sheltered to the wide-spaced, open and exposed. The land narrows and the waters move in closer on each side. The Upper Cape is washed by Nantucket Sound and Cape Cod Bay. The Lower Cape is attacked by the open Atlantic.

Down at Chatham, on a high bluff by the lighthouse and the Coast Guard station, there is a little park in which there are a number of monuments and memorial boulders. All of them have to do with the sea. One of them is dedicated to "the unknown sailors who lost their lives in the shipwrecks off the coast of Chatham."

Below, people are bathing in the shallow, sun-glared waters, and children are playing on the warm, brown sands. But beyond them, and beyond the long bare sandspit of Monomoy Island to the south, the surf is breaking on the jagged ledges of Monomoy

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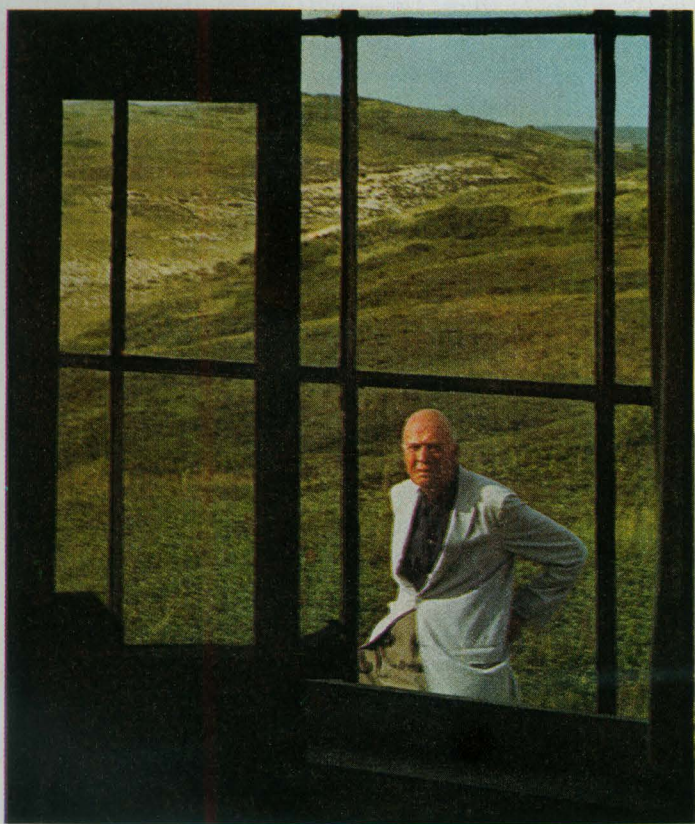


CONGRESSMAN Joseph W. Martin Jr., twice Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, has come for twenty-three years to his house at Sagamore Beach, a noncommercial town just west of the Cape Cod Canal and looking out across the waters of Cape Cod Bay.

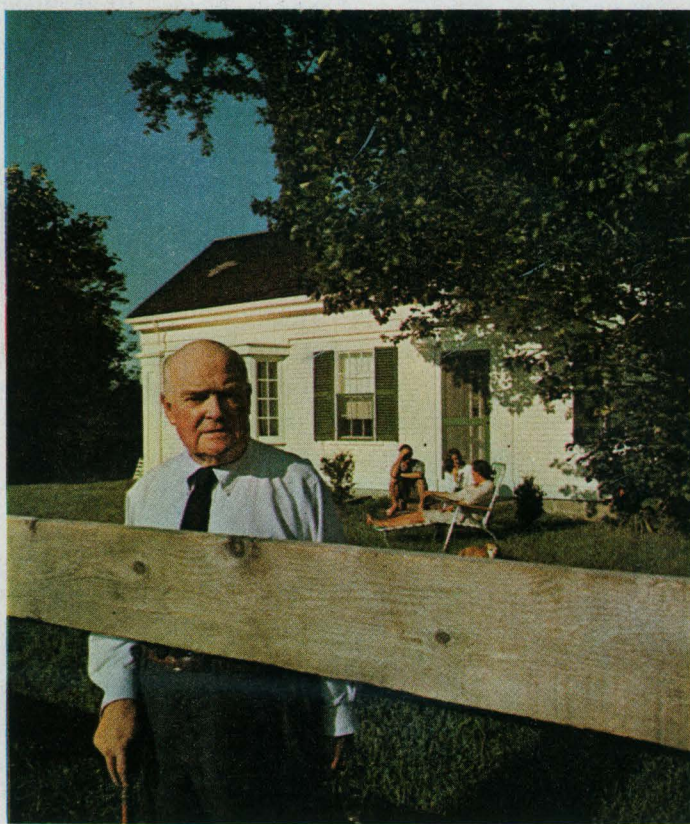
THE SUMMER BOARDERS



JOAN KENNEDY, wife of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and sister-in-law of the President, takes her four-year-old daughter Kara to the beach on Squaw Island, a small, private property, with only half a dozen houses, where the Edward Kennedys have kept a home for five years.



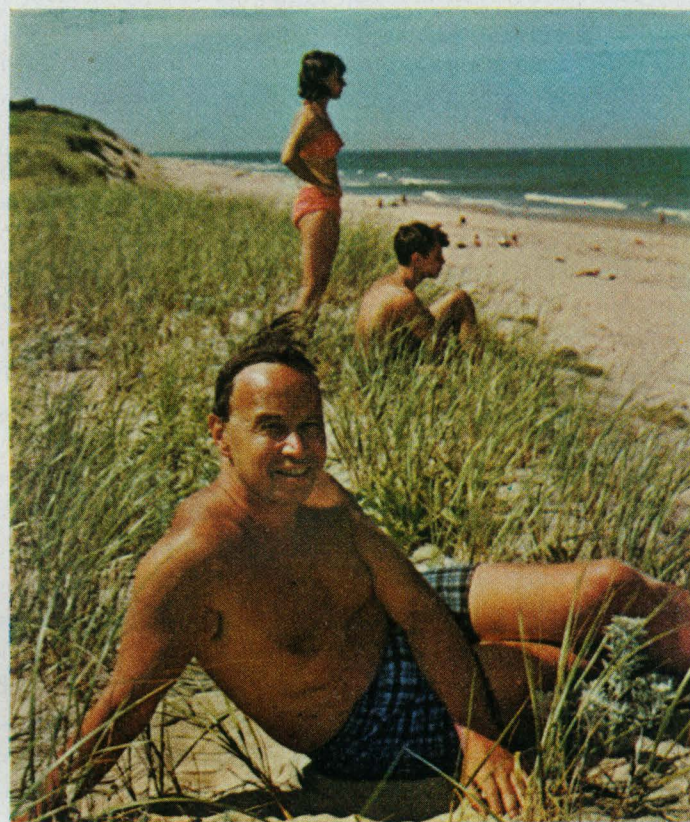
STILL AN ACTIVE painter at the age of eighty-one, Edward Hopper is one of many notable artists who live or summer at the Cape. He and his wife, also a painter, built this summer home in Truro in 1934, near many of the seaside landmarks he has made famous in his paintings.



NOVELIST AND CRITIC Edmund Wilson, one of the country's most eminent men of letters, enjoys a home in rustic Wellfleet on and off through the year. In the past, the Cape has been a refuge for such great writers as Eugene O'Neill, John Dos Passos and Conrad Aiken.



PRES. JOHN F. KENNEDY and Mrs. Kennedy leave the Church of Saint Francis Xavier in Hyannis after Mass. The First Couple spent much of the summer of 1962 in a leased house on nearby Squaw Island, near the area local observers refer to as the Kennedy Compound.



ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, Jr., Special Assistant to the President, and his children Christina and Andrew have been spending summers since 1956 at their house near Newcomb's Hollow Beach, not far from Wellfleet, in an area of woodland, fresh-water ponds and winding dirt roads.

Seen from above, the Pamet River with its hems of
marsh grass winds almost the entire width of the Cape's arm,
past the town of Truro, to empty into Cape Cod Bay.

Continued from Page 38 Shoals. Beyond are the light-ships *Pollock Rip* and *Stone Horse* and the buoys and beacons, and down among their moorings lie the wrecks of the ships. The narrow streets of Chatham slope down to the water, and the white houses face seaward, like people watching a dangerous and always present enemy.

At its lower end the Great Beach is a peninsula whose tip forms a barrier between Chatham and the sea. Only here is there some protection. No other town is built so near to the exposed shore. Orleans and Eastham and Truro are in the middle. The others lie close by Cape Cod Bay. They call all that part of the Lower Cape which is touched by the ocean the Back Side of the Cape, and I think this is the reason why: like animals huddling in the lee of a hill, the towns and little villages turn their backs to the enemy.

TO DRIVE off the main highway down one of the winding roads that lead to Cape Cod Bay is to move suddenly away from confusion. There are shining flats, slowly revealed and slowly covered again by the rhythms of the tides. Above Wellfleet the road curves inland for a time, moving through valleys among hills thick-grown with trees. Toward Truro the rolling moors begin, and the Pamet River spills over its silted estuary to the Bay. It is a country of marshes, creeks and small dunes, of pouring light and long shadows or the gray, enveloping stillness of fog. Often it seems held in an almost tranced sense of peace. The water scarcely laps against the level shore, and the sea seems far away.

But it is still there, close by. Although you may not hear it, you cannot long forget its presence. There has never been a time when the people of this quiet countryside were unaffected by it. At Wellfleet the church clock still marks the hours by the strokes of a ship's bell. At Truro, on the Hill of Churches, there is a memorial to the seven Truro vessels and the fifty-seven of their crews who were lost in a single storm on George's Bank. They say that in the century between 1780 and 1880 some 700 Truro men went down with their ships. There have been many widows on the Cape. There have been many little boys who, signing on for a first-timer at the age of ten, never returned.

The sea is always there, and there are times when these hidden villages, these graveyards with the white stones of their "remembering acres" where no bodies are buried, these fogged or wildly blowing moors, seem strangely haunted. It is not hard to believe the old Cape tales of witches riding the Night's Mare, of the ghosts of drowned sailors whom they called Jack-in-the-Mists, of the lost ships that rise from the ocean bottom on Midsummer Eve and sail again till dawn.

Behind the fantasy of legend is the fact of history. Like the gravel and sand that underlie whatever blooms in the thin Cape soil, it is harsh and uncompromising. To work the soil takes courage. To venture into this hostile land took courage. Within a stretch of a few miles you can see the beach at Eastham where the Pilgrims first met the flight of arrows, the hill near Truro where they found a cache of Indian corn, the first spring from which they drank. It was not at Plymouth Rock but at Provincetown that, on November 26, 1620, the *Mayflower* first dropped anchor.

That this historic event should be commemorated by a 252-foot granite replica of a Siennese tower is something I

have always found puzzling. On second thought, though, it is perhaps not a bad idea. By its sheer incongruity it does, in a way, prepare one for the phenomenon at its base.

Provincetown is built like a long ladder laid flat along the edge of its harbor. Bradford and Commercial Streets form the uprights, and thirty-nine block-long streets between them form the rungs. Commercial Street, which lies nearest the water, is well named, and the few private houses that remain on it display signs stating that they are not shops.

It is a street of such unlikely juxtapositions that I often wonder why all Provincetown painters are not confirmed surrealists. It is a strange mixture of the serious and the absurd, the sophisticated and the naïve, the genuine and the spurious. Wedged in among the painfully artsy-craftsy are places that make and sell good pottery or jewelry. Next to them may be a store that features lamps mounted on gilded starfish or the Three Graces in imitation alabaster. To enter a restaurant without becoming entangled in the fishnets and lobster floats that drape its entrance takes some alert maneuvering. To avoid knocking over an easel or a painter takes even more. Elderly ladies in peasant blouses and willowy young men in sandals frisk about on the outskirts of the Arts. The clank of costume jewelry is exceeded only by the snapping of camera shutters.

At noon, when the *Boston Belle* docks at the town wharf, a thousand excursionists swarm ashore. The air becomes redolent with the odor of popcorn, salt-water taffy and bright-yellow hot-dog mustard. Wisps of pink cotton candy drift unheeded from the open mouths of the good people of Roxbury and Dorchester as they encounter men with beards and sullen girls in leotards. The atmosphere is one of carnival, but of carnival untouched by gaiety. The passengers of the *Boston Belle* seldom venture far from the center of town. They hesitate to explore little side streets. Rather than revelers, they give the impression of people watching dangerous animals caged in a zoo whose safety record is a poor one.

If my only acquaintance with Provincetown had been the harmless though not particularly edifying spectacle it presents on a typical summer's day, I should long ago have become concerned about the judgment of my friends who choose to live there. But I have been there in the spring and in the fall. On summer nights and early summer mornings I have walked out on the wharf. I have seen the draggers anchored in the harbor and listened to their crews talking with the accents of Boston, Nova Scotia, Italy and the Azores. I have smelled the good, rank rope and mud and salt as they load the trash-fish on the trucks that come here from the mink farms of Wisconsin. I have watched the fog roll in and listened to the warning whistle of Race Point, the siren of Wood End, the bell of Long Point. I have watched the beams of these lights swinging across the dark sky.

They sell popcorn and cotton candy in Provincetown, but they also bake sour-doughed, thick-crust Portuguese bread. In the night clubs the dreary entertainers wail and rock-and-roll, but around the corner, in the town hall, the Provincetown Symphony is playing. There are frauds and poseurs in the streets, but there are also a dozen art schools, and the gallery of the Art Association is in its forty-ninth year. Though there are times when the arts are so overlaid by the summer's nonsense that they seem nonexistent, they are still there, and still very much alive. *Continued on Page 42*



Mary Ann Mobley, Miss America of 1959, relaxes on Great Island, just east of Hyannis, between rehearsals at one of Cape Cod's many summer theaters.

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Because he knows this, the Provincetowner is able to dissociate his own particular sublime from the all-surrounding ridiculous. He knows, too, that just outside the town he can step off the highway and in a minute's walk be among the dunes. Except for a few shacks and beach buggies by the shore, the solitude is complete.

You see the dunes as you approach Provincetown, and from the tower near Race Point you can look down on them in a panoramic sweep. But it is only when you are actually among them that you feel their full enchantment and their special beauty. It is a simple beauty, made of white sand and shades of green, of pale shadows and the flowing purity of shapes sculptured by the wind. Seen from a distance, the dunes appear like waves caught and frozen against the sky. They seem held there without motion, and when you first walk among them, there is a great sense of stillness. But presently, below the breeze and the distant surf, you hear the sifting of the sand. The dunes are alive, always moving, restless as the sea itself. The roots of the spray-glistening grasses help to anchor them. Pine trees and snow fences have been planted to hold them. But the sand keeps drifting, the forms keep changing. After a gale their summits may be piled with driftwood thrown there by the waves. At their bases the ribs of long-buried ships may be thrust above the sands.

Somewhere along this shore from which the dunes slope up, the Norsemen landed nearly a thousand years ago. They called what they saw *furdustrandir*, the Wonder Strands. Today it is called the Great Beach. From Race Point to Monomoy it runs almost unbroken for forty miles. In summer its broad sands are tawny. In fall and winter, when the sun no longer has time or strength to dry them, they turn steely gray. In all seasons the waves, driven by 3,000 miles of open ocean break on its shore, the dunes and cliffs throw back the echo of their many voices. Above the Great Beach the weather of a continent rolls eastward, and the sea in its colors reflects its constant changes. The sky darkens with storms and with the wings of birds on their migrations. The waves run far up the beach. Nothing grows there.

Beyond the water's reach the plants are low, water-holding, deep-rooted: dusty miller, beach pea, bayberry and poverty grass. Where there are trees, they are so stunted and toughened by the winds that a twenty-year-old oak is little more than a foot high, and its fibres are like wires. Some people find this country bleak. But when the poverty grass blooms, the moors of Truro and the Nauset hills are hazed with gold. The gulls rise from the beach in fluttering bursts of white, like confetti tossed in the air to celebrate the day.

To stand on the cliff by the tower of Highland Light is to stand on the prow of a ship thirty miles at sea. In summer the water below is sometimes calm. The breeze can blow gently. But mostly it is a place of gales and booming surf, of blown spume and breakers whose pounding shakes the earth. Since 1626, when the ketch *Sparrowhawk*, bound from England to Virginia, was wrecked on Nauset Beach, more than 3,000 ships have foundered on these shores. In one storm a hundred bodies were hurled back to the land.

It is this strip of wind-lashed headlands and fierce waters that stands as a last line of defense against the steady forward crawl of the neon signs, the drive-ins and the filling stations. It is this lonely splendor of sea and sand and sky that has finally been saved from the greed of men.

THE END

