

Provincetown in the 1940s

By **Lauren Richmond**

In the early 1940s, Larry and Helene Richmond were invited to spend a week in Provincetown with some friends.

Larry protested, remembering only the unpleasant smell of decaying fish on Long Point when he had first visited as a child, accompanying his mother on a day excursion from Boston on the ferry. Eventually his friend convinced him to make the trip from Manhattan.

The two couples stayed in a guest-house at the corner of Commercial St. and Atlantic Avenue. Being New Yorkers and having recently returned from a cruise, they were accustomed to formal dressing and arrived in tow with suits for the men and long evening attire for the ladies. All gussied up and raring to go, they went to dinner at the Flagship restaurant, THE place to go in those days, and quickly realized how out of place their formal city clothes were when they were shuffled off to an out-of-the-way table.

To blend into the local scene, the next morning they all bought denim pants and jean jackets at Herman Robinson's dry goods store and ditched the formal wear.

The rest of the week was magical; all four fell in love with Provincetown, spending their days swimming at "New Beach" (now Herring Cove) and evenings watching the sunset at Race Point. Larry, an avid amateur photographer, took 8mm movies of the trip, a copy of which has been transferred to videotape and is part of this exhibit.

The following summer, and for several after that, Helene and Larry returned to Provincetown's west end and stayed at Ursula

Maine's guest house at 30 Commercial St. where the proprietor was rumored to be a former "Madame" from Boston. Conveniently located two doors away was Gull Hill Inn, Jimmy Crawley's grandmother's restaurant. For \$7 — yes folks, \$7 a week — you could get breakfast, lunch and dinner. An additional 50 cents on Friday night bought you

and many others worked on restoring the house and, in the process, became Larry and Helene's lifelong friends. Arthur Anderson, then owner of the Masthead Cottages, had an antique shop in town and a furniture refinishing business in Worcester. He helped Helene and Larry restore the furniture they found in the house that had all been painted pink and gray!

Thus began decades of summers spent in Provincetown getting to know the locals, artists and other summer folk, entertaining friends and family and enjoying the pleasures of a beautiful physical environment and the riches of a diverse community.

Eventually Larry developed a passion for sailing through his association with "Flyer" Santos and his involvement at the Provincetown Yacht & Tennis Club.

Acknowledging a need for youngsters to have access to

Provincetown's magnificent harbor, the

two men, joined by several others, began the West End Racing Club, a non-profit, practically free sailing program for kids that continues to this day.

Larry served as president of the Provincetown Symphony and the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, eventually leaving a major portion of his art collection to PAAM. Larry treasured his personal relationships and friendships with many of the artists whose work he collected, among them Chaim Gross, Irving Marantz, Martin Friedman, Sol Wilson, Karl Knaths, Garrett Hondius and Phil Malicoat. Larry considered it a privilege to volunteer and contributed as best he could to the organizations that were dear to his heart. ▼



FROM THE BEGINNING: Lauren Richmond started coming to Provincetown with her parents the first summer she was born, in 1946. This photo of her was taken by her father around 1950.

a shore dinner complete with two-pound lobster, garden fresh corn-on-the-cob, and homemade blueberry pie! Life was, indeed, good!

Determined to spend more time in Provincetown, Helene and Larry contacted Ozzie Ball, a local attorney and Realtor, to search for property. Deciding against a 10-acre parcel of land in Truro, price tag \$1000, because the fog rolled in (!), they investigated a neglected home at the corner of Point St. and Commercial that wasn't even on the market. It belonged to Helena Rubinstein, aka Princess Machiabelli.

An offer to purchase was telegraphed to her in Europe and several days later a reply came that the offer was accepted. Jesse and Johnny Meads, Frank Aresta, Ernie Carreiro