



DUNE SENTINEL • Race Point Light • Provincetown, Massachusetts

The lighthouse at Race Point, set amidst the sand dunes, and guarding the entrance to the harbor of Provincetown, has recorded more than 100 shipwrecks along this treacherous section of coastline between the time it was established in 1816, until 1945. An early Treasury Department lighthouse report describes the site as a “tower and dwelling of stone, judiciously connected together by the kitchen.”



WHIRLED BY WIND • Race Point Beach • Provincetown, Massachusetts

The very snow in the air had a character of its own, for it was the snow of the outer Cape and the North Atlantic, snow icy and crystalline, and sweeping across the dunes. The wind has blown the sand entirely away . . . and left a withered tangle of roots and stalks sprawling in the wind.

Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*



THE BREAKWATER AND LONG POINT LIGHT • Provincetown, Massachusetts

First established in 1827, Long Point Light stands guard at the outermost tip of Cape Cod, at the mouth of Provincetown's historic harbor. During the last century, the lighthouse was not the only building on this narrow spit of sand, but part of an entire community whose buildings have since been floated across the bay to their present locations. Long Point and Wood End Light, only a mile apart, and identical in structure, were critical to the safety of maritime travelers.



FROM THE TOP • PILGRIM MONUMENT • Provincetown, Massachusetts

“The town is compactly built in the narrow space (from ten to fifty rods deep, between the harbor and the sand hills). The front yard plots appeared like what indeed they were: portions of the beach fenced in, with beach grass growing in them, as if they were sometimes covered by the tide.” Henry David Thoreau, Cape Cod



EVANESCENT LIGHT • Provincetown Harbor • Provincetown, Massachusetts

“Night is very beautiful . . . It is the true other half of the day’s tremendous wheel; no lights without meaning stab or trouble it; it is beauty, it is fulfillment, it is rest.”

Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*



TIDAL FLATS • Wood End Light • Provincetown, Massachusetts

Wood End Light, the youngest of Provincetown's lighthouses, is located mid-way on the arm of Cape Cod as it juts into the Atlantic Ocean, and meets the bay. When it was established in 1873, there was a keeper's house, an oil house, and a U.S. Lifesaving Station in close proximity. The lighthouse and oil house are the only remaining structures today.



HOLIDAY TWILIGHT • The Pilgrim Monument • Provincetown, Massachusetts

“A year indoors is a journey along a paper calendar; a year in outer nature is the accomplishment of a tremendous ritual. For the gifts of life are the earth’s and they are given to all, and they are the songs of birds at daybreak, Orion and the Bear, and dawn seen over the ocean from the beach.”

Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*



THE DUNE SHACK OF HARRY KEMP, "POET OF THE DUNES" • Provincetown, Massachusetts



COVER PHOTO:

Harry Kamp's dune shack was originally a chicken coop for the Coast Guardsmen at the LifeSaving Station on the stretch of back beach in Provincetown known as Peaked Hills. It was dragged there by horse and team in the 1920's and became home year-round to bohemian Harry Kemp, self-proclaimed "poet of the dunes", who took a dip in the ocean every day of the year, winter and summer. "Some days I went in for a minute or two," he says, "but I did go in. And always opened my eyes to let the salt water in them. It is good for the eyes." In 1958, due to failing health, Harry Kemp gave the shack to Rose Tasha who took care of him for the rest of his life . . . in another small shack which she and her family built for Harry in their yard in Provincetown. The Tashas still maintain the dune shack today.

During the 1930's, Hazel Hawthorne Werner fell in love with Provincetown and the dunes, purchasing two shacks which she named Euphoria and Thalassa. For years Hazel made the trek from town to her beloved shacks, until she passed away on May 26, 2000 at the age of 98 in Provincetown.

EUPHORIA • Peaked Hills • Provincetown, Massachusetts

"The dunes are an incredible, simple and cleansing experience . . . giving a serene, peaceful perspective. All you see is this great expanse of land, and its all incredibly simple. The softly undulating dunes, the sky birds . . . it gives you a serenity, so peaceful it cleanses you. It allows you to get back into yourself to see what is important in this crazy world."

Joyce Johnson, journalist and sculptor

Sitting on the front porch of an abandoned dune shack has an edge of fantasy to it and an enormous sense of adventure and privilege. There are only time, wind and quiet here on this ridge above the ocean. Time for listening, feeling, and piecing together the whole wonderful, if complex, story of the dune shacks. Their great history, the movement for their preservation, the substantial presence of the Cape Cod National Seashore, and the great cast of characters encountered along the way are all part of this shifting tale. The enormous presence of the sand dunes and their surprising fragileness, "walking dunes" as Mary Heaton Vorse observed in her 1942 chronicle of Provincetown life, is another undeniable part of the story. The history of the dune shacks is one both humble and illustrious. In 1794 the Humane Society had built the first huts along the shore as shelters for shipwrecked souls. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Lifesavers of Cape Cod, later to become the U.S. Coast Guard, added more and larger stations. It was in 1918 that the dark, brooding Nobel Prizewinning playwright Eugene O'Neill moved into an abandoned Coast Guard Station and began his association with the Provincetown Players. He described his time on the dunes as "bringing a true kinship and harmony with life. Sand and sun and sea and wind - you merge into them and become as meaningless and as full of meaning as they are." For the lives of those touched and inspired by these slight dwellings amidst the shifting dunes, the impression remains, as does the hope that others may experience the peace afforded by these out of the way havens.

Mary Sicchio, freelance writer



CAST FROM THE SEA • Long Point • Provincetown, Massachusetts

The restless ocean may at any moment cast up a wrecked vessel at your feet.

Henry David Thoreau, Cape Cod



TWILIGHT TIDE • Provincetown, Massachusetts

The adventure of the sun is the great natural drama by which we live, and not to have joy in it and awe of it, not to share in it, is to close a dull door on nature's sustaining and poetic spirit.

So came August to its close, ending its last day with a night so luminous and still. . . . There are nights in summer when darkness and ebbing tide quiet the universal wind, and this August night was full of that quiet of absence, and the sky was clear.

Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*



SHORE BIRDS • Outer Beach • Provincetown, Massachusetts

But I believe there is something else about the beach that comforts and delights us. More than pleasure in the beauty of sand – sand ribbed and patterned by the lapping and pounding of the water, sand covered with the tell-tale marks of the feet of the birds, or the flurry swept by the tips of their feathers; more even than pleasure in the ocean itself, there is the awareness of the rhythm of the tides.

Clare Leighton, *Where Land Meets Sea*



BEACH PASSAGE • Race Point • Provincetown, Massachusetts • Cape Cod National Seashore



CERULEAN SOLITUDE • Wood End Light • Provincetown, Massachusetts

For every one of us there is an appeal in these isolated sentinels, suggesting hope and trust. Standing alone on the ocean highways, they represent the eternal watchfulness of their keepers, whose slogan through the ages has been vigilance.

Edward Rowe Snow, lighthouse historian/author
courtesy of *The Love of Lighthouses* by Alan Ross



SEASIDE SANCTUARY • Capt. Jack's Wharf • Provincetown, Massachusetts

Provincetown, on the far tip of Cape Cod! A unique position it occupies, firmly fixed upon the shore of a beautiful harbor, one of the most beautiful on our coast, securely settled upon the mainland, and yet far out at sea. Once here the sirens will sing such a song in your ears that to tear yourself away will be no easy task. Those of you who once go to Provincetown go many times, for the great salt sea has its odors to the nostrils, its sights to the eyes, its songs to the ears, its breath upon the cheek and its kiss upon the lips, fascinating, enthralling, satisfying.

Edmund J. Carpenter, *Provincetown, The Tip of the Cape*



AUTUMN'S CANVAS • Race Point Light • Provincetown, Massachusetts

Yet September, in its own right, is hard to imagine: it seems so always on the verge of being something else, so not-quite-finished with what went before. September seems not entirely to be *here* – it is always earlier or later, leaning back into the last of summer or charging ahead into cold, and it is an act of will to focus it, to take each changing day for itself alone. It is a moral act to see September, to see what is and no more, to feel it around you and to let your mind rest there.

Cynthia Huntington, *The Salt House, A Summer on the Dunes of Cape Cod*



SO ENDS THIS DAY • View From North Truro Towards Provincetown, Massachusetts

A year in outer nature is the accomplishment of a tremendous ritual. To share in it, one must have a knowledge of the pilgrimages of the sun, and something of that natural sense of him and feeling for him which made even the most primitive people mark the summer limits of his advance and the last December ebb of his decline. We lose a great deal, I think, when we lose this sense and feeling for the sun. When all has been said, the adventure of the sun is the great natural drama by which we live, and not to have joy in it and awe of it, not to share in it, is to close a dull door on nature's sustaining and poetic spirit.

Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*



Steadfast Sentinel • Race Point • Provincetown

The Dunes

The dunes, the silent sentinels of the land
That range along the lea,
In revery unbroken, there they stand
And gaze far out to sea

Across their wind swept crests the breezes play
In cadence sad and sweet,
The restless sands whip ever day by day
Their surf tormented feet.

— Ferdinand C. Lane, *On Old Cape Cod*



White Capped • Race Point Light From Herring Cove • Provincetown

The sheeted surfaces blown over by all winds rove on with their freight of light during the day, constantly changing.....and always the tidal balance, the surf's fall and drag at the sand's edge, whatever the season.

— John Hay, *The Great Beach*



SkyScape • Wood End Light in Distance • Provincetown

If there is nothing new on earth, still the traveler always has a resource in the skies. They are constantly turning a new page to view. The winds set the type on this blue ground, and the inquiring may always read a new truth there.

— Henry David Thoreau, *Cape Cod*



Compass Grass • Provincelands • Cape Cod National Seashore

*Or per chance the compass grass
Whirled by wandering airs that pass
Has engraved those strange designs
In its circumscribed confines.*

*Archimedes never drew
Circles more exact or true
Than each needle pointed blade
Razor edged and green as jade*

- Ferdinand C. Lane, On Old Cape Cod



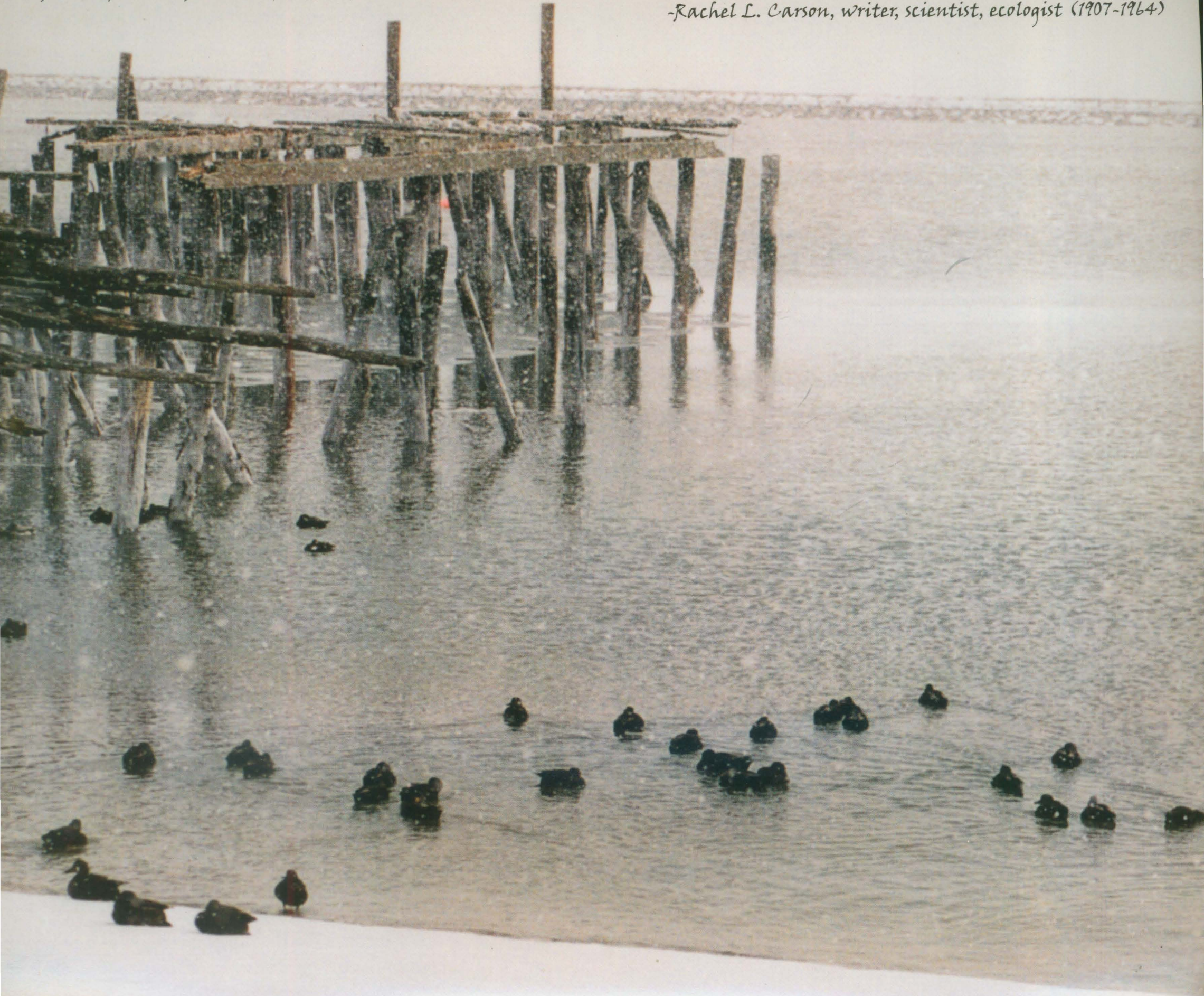
Departing Light • View of Provincetown from North Truro, Massachusetts

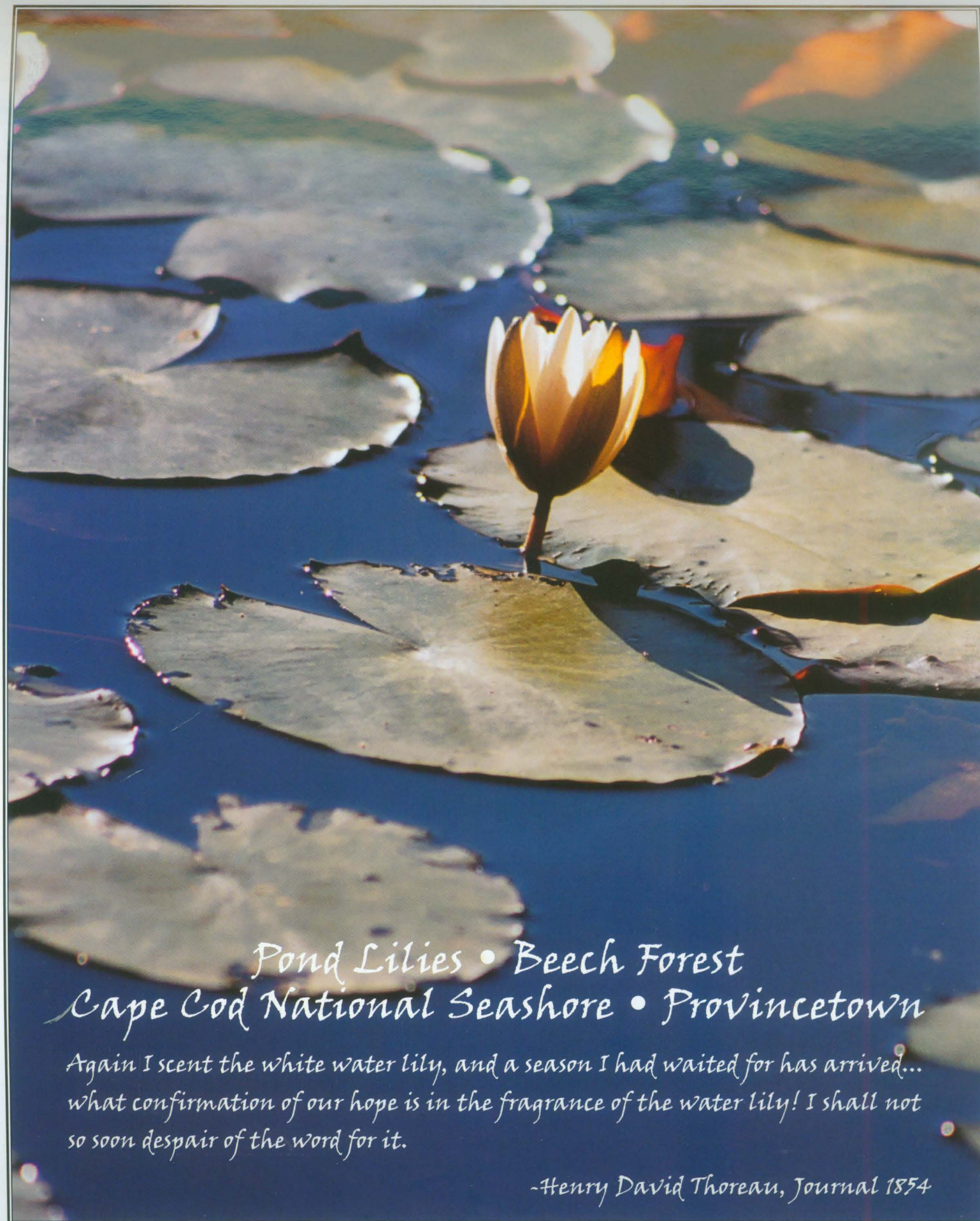
Winter's role in the year's wheel is an arresting, for the sake of renewal, a sleep, or half sleep, for later waking. Its order is of a different quality, having an inwardness and resistance, a bare, gray need to keep things inside and hidden down.

— John Hay, Nature's Year, The Seasons of Cape Cod

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature - the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.

-Rachel L. Carson, writer, scientist, ecologist (1907-1964)





*Pond Lilies • Beech Forest
Cape Cod National Seashore • Provincetown*

*Again I scent the white water lily, and a season I had waited for has arrived...
what confirmation of our hope is in the fragrance of the water lily! I shall not
so soon despair of the word for it.*

-Henry David Thoreau, Journal 1854



Windswept • Race Point Beach • Provincetown

*The sea provides a cold, unfathomed latitude.
On land, too, there is a kind of under-rhythm of things allowed,
or rather a special winter pace and timing, each life with its
relation to the cold.*

-John Hay, Nature's Year



Old Harbor Coast Guard Life Saving Station • Provincetown

The lifeboat men, also known as surfmen, were crews of the U.S. Lifesaving Service who patrolled the Atlantic's outer beaches, risking their own lives in order to aid mariners in distress. From Wood End in Provincetown to Monomy Point off Chatham, a string of 13 stations stretched along the treacherous shoals and beaches. Old Harbor, the one remaining station, once located on Chatham's North Beach and seriously jeopardized by erosion, was loaded onto a barge in two pieces and kept in Provincetown Harbor for six months where it weathered the blizzard of '78. It is maintained as a museum today at Race Point by the Cape Cod National Seashore where the National Park Service conducts regular demonstrations of life-saving methods.



*Monuments of Landfall • Wood End Light and the Pilgrim Monument
Provincetown*

The beach, standing out against the sea, is a further limit to America before it shelves off into the Atlantic depths. With all the known parts of the civilized world behind them, the Pilgrims found in this beach not an end but a beginning, whatever it might entail.

John Hay, The Great Beach



Pilgrim Monument • Provincetown

*Softly the evening came. The sun from the western horizon
Like a Magician extended his golden wand o'er the landscape;
Trinkling vapors arose: and sky and water...
Seemed all on fire at the touch, and melted and mingled together.*

-Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



The Moors • Provincetown

This grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere; the dew is never all dried at once; a shower is forever falling; vapor ever rising. Eternal sunrise, eternal sunset, eternal dawn and gloaming, on seas and continents and islands, each in its turn, as the round earth rolls.

John Muir



Winter Light • Provincetown

It was one of those chilly and empty afternoons in early winter, when the daylight is silver rather than gold, and pewter rather than silver.

-G.K. Chesterton



Race Point • Provincetown

There is a closeness with nature in the starkest form. It's a very barren place...sand dunes and grass, wind and water. So the relationship you have with those few elements becomes very intense. Your mind works in different ways out there. It becomes quieter, doesn't interfere with things of the spirit and of the soul.

*- Barbara Mayo, From the Peaked Hills,
A Collection of Writing and Drawing*



Race Point Light • Cape Cod National Seashore • Provincetown

For every one of us there is an appeal in these isolated sentinels, suggesting hope and trust. Standing alone on the ocean highways, they represent the eternal watchfulness of their keepers, whose slogan through the ages has been vigilance.

*- Edward Rowe Snow, lighthouse historian
Courtesy of Alan Ross, The Lure of Lighthouses*



Herring Cove • Provincetown

*How bravely Autumn paints upon the sky
The gorgeous fame of summer which is fled!*



Their note was like the sound of some vibrating metal, and harmonized well with the scenery and the roar of the surf, as if one had...touched the strings of the lyre, which ever lies on the shore: a ragged shred of ocean music tossed aloft on the spray.

- Edith and Frank Shea



*I'm amazed at the impudence
Of these insignificant clouds
Which, before the night begins,
Gather, and grow intense
Above the departing sun
Just as the day is done.*

- Harry Kemp

View towards Provincetown



Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.

- Lao Tzu



Give me the splendid silent sun...

- Walt Whitman

View towards Long Point Light • Provincetown



Adopt the pace of nature, for her secret is patience.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Race Point Beach, Provincetown



The realities of nature surpass our most ambitious dreams.

- Francois Rodin

Provincelands, Provincetown



There is a fullness on the land these days, a saturation of light and a feeling of calm.

- Cynthia Huntington, The Salt House

Capt. Jack's Wharf and Pilgrim Monument, Provincetown



Lingering

*in every pool of water -
spring sunlight.*

- Issa

Macmillan Pier, Provincetown



Never a day passes but that I do myself the honor to commune with some of nature's varied forms.

- George Washington Carver

Cape Cod National Seashore, Provincetown