

Cape Cod People and Places

BY WANDA BURNETT

With Illustrations by Staff Photographer Robert F. Sisson

WHEN I went to Cape Cod the first time, it was autumn—the middle of October, in fact. I went with the advice of well-meaning friends to wrap myself in layers of woollens for the hard Cape winter.

They warned me about those mad nor'easters which periodically tear along the Cape's long coast, moving mountains of sand, dune by dune.*

This long and narrow arm of land curls out from the main body of Massachusetts like a fancy half-handle on a teacup. It is linked to the mainland by giant steel bridges flung gracefully across Cape Cod Canal.†

From its bridge-hinged shoulder blade all the 65 miles down to the tapering fingertip of Provincetown it is flecked with moors and dunes, lakes and ponds, and threaded with streams and eager inlets from the sea.

It is long enough and broad enough to hold 15 towns and some 140 villages, and it has enough sandy bathing beaches to reach from Washington, D. C., to the heart of New York City.

Its natives are not unsociable but "careful." As one of them explained, "We jest don't let go our words to everyoldbody."

From Buzzards Bay to North Truro, Cape Cod is anchored to the earth's floor by a clay and solid rock foundation.

The Legacy of Glaciers

Some 35,000 years ago southbound glaciers thrust rocks and debris forward to form the peninsula. The hills and hollows of Truro mark the northern limits of the glaciers' fine work. From there northward the ocean donated "filched ground" to form the graceful finger of sand upon which Provincetown is built (map, page 741).

This strip runs northward and westward from Truro for approximately 10 miles.

In some places these offerings of beach land from other parts of the Cape have been so meager that only a scant half mile now keeps the ocean from reaching across to join the bay. The restless sand has been anchored by generous plantings of deep-rooted beach grass.

Up the Cape, around the shoulder blade, the land is much wider and the vegetation richer.

From Boston you go *down* to Provincetown and from Provincetown you go *up* the Cape

toward Boston. On this broad up-Cape section as much as 20 miles stand between the waters of Nantucket Sound and Cape Cod Bay. Trees grow taller. Ponds appear larger. Beach settlements are closer together.

Hyannis, the shopping center for the Cape, though not on this broad part of the land, is an up-Cape town. It has all the earmarks of a town but it is only a village—a village in the town of Barnstable, but a village which long since has outgrown the mother town. To me it appeared like a bulging muscle slightly relaxed after the summer tension.

There was still some activity when I arrived, even though the vacationists and summer people had gone and the numerous gift shops, one by one, were shuttering their windows and taking their stocks south for the winter.

Drugstores, grocery stores, dime-to-dollar stores, movie houses, summer-blooming night clubs and antique shops, and banks line the one-street village for many blocks. Railroad passenger service comes to a dead end and buses for on-Cape and off-Cape travel center here (page 742).

Tie and Snip Parties

The whist and rummage sale season was in full swing when I arrived. This is the time when housewives from surrounding villages clean out their attics and donate and sell and buy again. Churches and clubs "advertise" whist parties and bean suppers. Ladies have tie and snip parties—or just plain old-fashioned quilting bees.

At the foot of Pleasant Street, fishermen unload their catches of scallops, oysters, clams, haddock, flounder, and other fish. A small factory makes "pearls" from herring scales. Local restaurants proclaim Cape Cod clam chowder, Cape scallops, steamed clams, lobsters, and fish.

From this bustling Cape "metropolis" I set out to smaller, quieter villages, places the old whaling captains had once called home. I sought the lonely wind-swept beaches where the Atlantic pounds its fists against the cliffs.

* See "Collarin' Cape Cod," by Lt. H. R. Thurber, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, October, 1925.

† See "The Cape Cod Canal," by Commodore J. W. Miller, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, August, 1914.



A Harwich Port Boy Can't Believe What He's Caught

Puffers, or blowfish, sometimes inflate to three times their natural size to escape being swallowed. A tickle on the stomach causes them to draw in water, air, or even sand. When ballooned out at sea, they float, bellies up, until danger has passed.

I wanted to see the Cape's famous old "half houses" and its windmills waving their gaunt arms in the crisp autumn air.

I inquired of an old-timer just how I should get to these various places in winter.

"Well," he said, thoughtfully, "trains go some places. Buses might go, too." Then he added, "Most folks here get around on their feet."

"Not enough time," I told him. "And besides, it's winter."

"Time! Shucks!" he snorted. "Why, I remember tell when folks in these parts didn't even have clocks. Told time by lookin'

sun'ards. Daylight, sunrise, sun an hour, two hours, and three hours high—that's how they told time. Course, that was mornin' time. Afternoon time was sun low 'stead of sun high.

"And walk? Old Barney Gould, he walked. Walked all over this old Cape pushin' a handcart and collectin' road taxes. Sometimes he even walked all the way to Boston, folks say, jest to deliver a letter. He had a crazy idea that all the roads hereabouts belonged to him, and when he caught somebody else usin' 'em he jest charged 'em the regular tax, two cents. They paid, too."

Oldest Town on the Cape

I took the train from Hyannis to Sandwich and started my *down-Cape* trip from there.

"That's the oldest town on the whole Cape," I was advised. "Settled way back in 1637. Yes, sir, she's right old, as time goes."

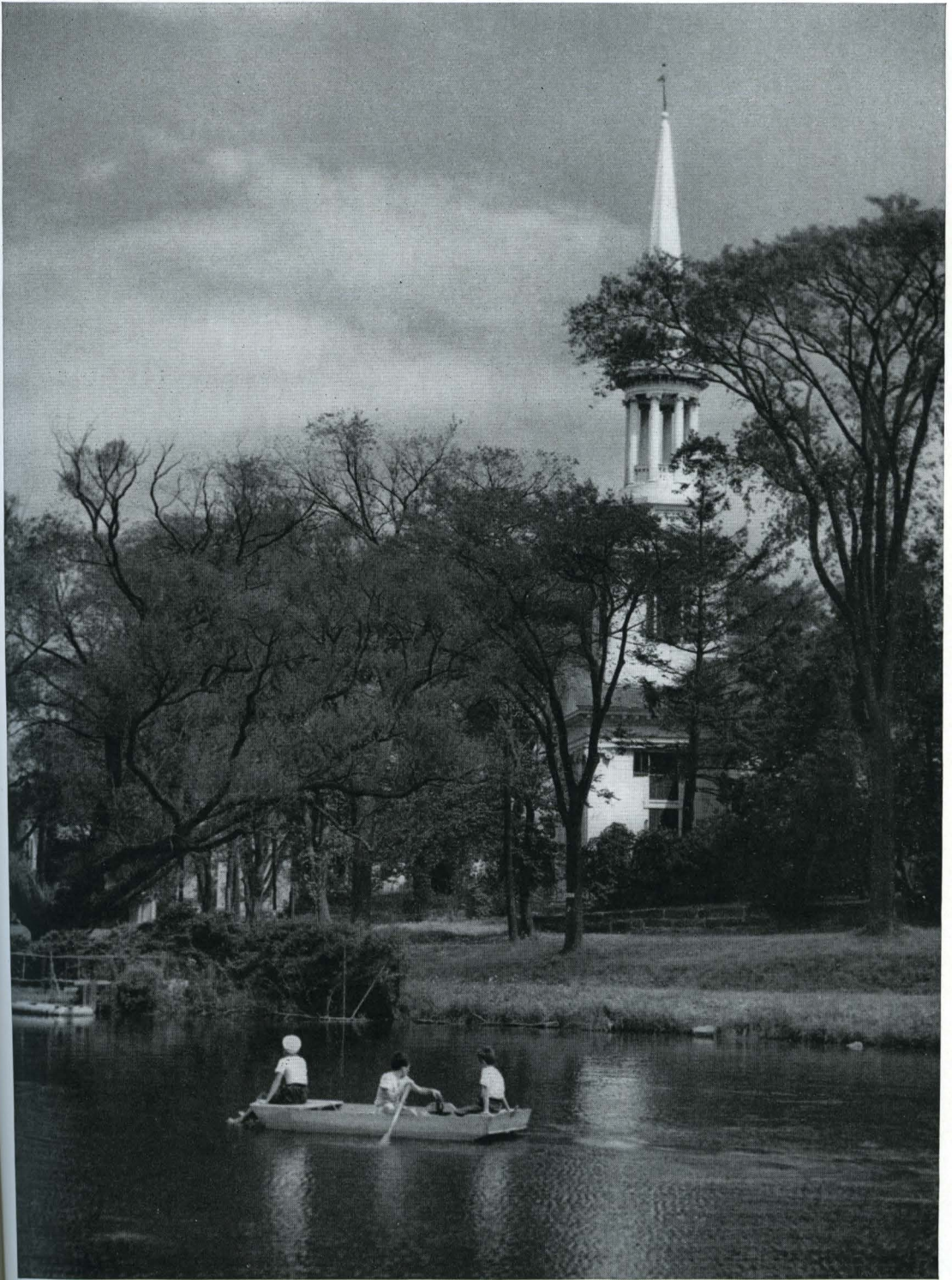
My guide told me there were a couple of graves in Sandwich I should see, and added: "Folks round here say they hold some of President Franklin D.

Roosevelt's ancestors—the Pilgrim ones.

"And don't forget the glassworks," he continued. "Kind of down at the heel right now, windows all out and everything; but maybe someday she'll come back.

"Folks—mostly summer people—still go pokin' around in the rubbish heap back of the factory lookin' for old pieces of Sandwich glass. Don't know jest what they expect to find. Must have been most a million of 'em round there since the old place closed down."

The "old place," I later learned, had operated for some 63 years before a strike caused the fires to be drawn and the factory closed in



Spire, Lake, and Trees Tell Three Reasons Why Artists Love to Paint Sandwich

Founded in 1637, Sandwich is the Cape's oldest settlement. In the 1800's the village gained its living from a famous glass, made in distinctive patterns and coloring. Today the factory is in ruins. It was not reopened after being closed down by a strike in 1888. The beautiful spire crowns the Congregational Church.



W. D. Hise

It's Hot Work, but Midsummer Skiers Pick Up Speed on Cape Cod Dunes

On such sand hills along the Massachusetts coast, enthusiasts can practice for winter's snows. Even turns can be made on the fast runs, but spills are frequent because of sudden stops upon reaching the beach at bottom. Slopes carpeted with grass or pine needles are faster than those of sand alone.

1888. In its heyday it employed several hundred men and women and imported some of the best glass blowers, cutters, and engravers from England and Ireland. The blown, pressed, cut, and lacy glass, produced in large quantities then for everyday tableware, is now considered collectors' items.*

Every year the Cape is combed by dealers and hopefuls looking for rare cup plates or genuine dolphin candlesticks or for the harder-to-find pieces made by the workmen on their own time and for their own use.

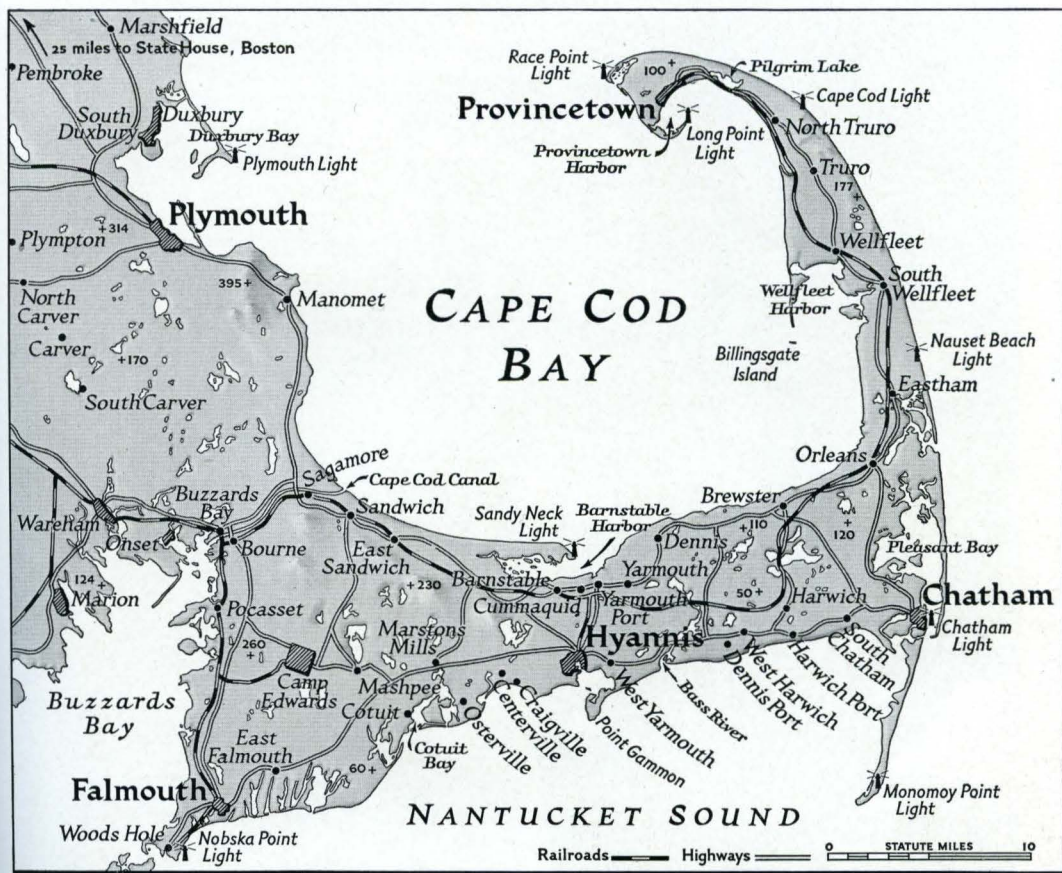
Deming Jarves, the founder of this glass company which once caused Sandwich to bustle and boom, was, apparently, a gentleman who kept a careful eye on his employees' health as well as their wealth. Not only did he finance small homes for his workmen in the "glass village," but he very generously allowed every child who had whooping cough one full hour a day in the company's gas house to "inhale the beneficial fumes."

But the activity that once surged through Sandwich is now gone. I found only a sleepy little village dreaming peacefully under its towering trees. A graceful white church spire lifted itself high above the housetops and appeared to be standing on tiptoe to catch a glimpse of its own beauty reflected in the crystal-clear pond at its feet (page 739). And at the other end of this pond, on a tombstone-covered hill, the early settlers had gathered to "sleep till the trompe of Judgement Day."

"History on Every Bush"

History was on every bush, in every house, and inscribed on the crumbling wind-bent tombstones. Off Tupper Road I found the graves of Edmond Freeman and his wife, Elizabeth—some of the Pilgrim ancestors of President Roosevelt—marked by two stones shaped like a saddle and a pillion.

* See "Glass 'Goes to Town,'" by J. R. Hildebrand, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, January, 1943.



Drawn by Theodora Price and Irvin E. Alleman

Massachusetts Wags a 65-mile Tail

Cape Cod is linked to the mainland by bridges across Cape Cod Canal, some 50 miles southeast of Boston. Two hundred miles of beaches fringe the Cape's shores. Hills and ponds characterize its interior.

After Freeman's wife had died and was placed beneath the pillion, he gathered his sons around him and told them to bury him, when he died, under the saddle next to his wife, for, he said, "Your mother and I have traveled many long years together in this world."

Edmond Freeman was one of the ten men from Saugus who in 1637 were granted permission by the court of Plymouth to "go forth and seek a place to sit down in" and there to "worship God" and, as one historian added, "make money."

The ten men chose the site of Sandwich for their "sitting" probably because it was only a few miles from the already established Ap-tuxet trading post (Plate I), and also because of the wide-reaching salt marshes filled with an abundance of fodder for their cattle.

But there was little time for sitting in those early years. Houses had to be built, crops raised, church attended. And there was always the wolf to be kept from the door.

At one time in the history of the Cape, these pesky animals were so numerous that it was proposed that a 10-foot-high fence be built from Buzzards Bay to Cape Cod Bay, near the line now cut through by the Canal, to keep the critters out.

But the plan was soon filed away when the people, after much deliberation, decided that distribution was better than concentration where the wolves were concerned, and that if they built this fine barrier they would actually pen themselves in with the wolves.

Another dark spot in the lives of these early settlers came in the form of "blackbirds," actually grackles. A single blackbird might be a thing of beauty, but when they came in clouds so thick they darkened the sky, the town fathers decided it was high time to look to their books and deal with the matter.

A law was passed stating that no man would thereafter be granted a license to wed until he had first killed his quota of blackbirds. Men over seventy were excused. So when a



At Hyannis, Railroad-coach Service Comes to an End, and Down-Cape Passengers Transfer to Buses

Buses, packed to the aisles, run on curving, high-crown roads. Obliging drivers stop at Tom Smith's house or Aunt Sally's beach-plum jelly stand. Hyannis is the Cape's summer business center (page 737). Rails continue to Provincetown, but they carry only freight.



A Cape Cod Auction Offers Everything from Bird Cage to Coffeepot. Buyers Dream of Discovering Antiques at Bargain Prices
At Hyannis the sheriff, who doubles as auctioneer, conducts an outdoor sale. Formerly a piece of famous Sandwich glass might be captured at auction; now it would likely be found only in an antique store. Directly behind the auctioneer, a woman calmly knits while waiting for her heart's desire to go on the block.



Cape Cod's Salt-water Dude Ranchers Go Ridin' the Old Beach Trail

These eastern cowboys were met by stagecoach at Yarmouth Port and jolted to the ranch house in Cummaquid. They enjoy fishing, bathing, and archery, as well as a bronco-busting rodeo. In season they build blinds along the beach and hunt ducks. At this point they like to gallop their ponies into the shallows. As a substitute for towering buttes, they have old Sandy Neck Light, now a private dwelling (seen across Barnstable Harbor). For sagebrush, they have dwarf pines.

single man went forth shouldering his gun in those days, the village gossips could nod wisely and say he was out gunning for a wife.

Improvident Were "Warned Out"

Sandwich was always a careful village with a great fear of "public charges." If a man couldn't show his money or might be inclined to lean on the village for support, he was "warned out."

Seth the peddler was warned out in 1669. He went, vowing to return and buy up the whole town. Thirty years later Seth did return, a swaggering gentleman with money in every pocket, and straightway bought up almost every parcel of land in the village. He built two fine houses, one for his son John and one for his son Seth.

Then, without explanation or apologies, he left Sandwich to tap its brow and puzzle over

where he could have made so much money and why, after he had built two of the best houses in the village, he stomped out, saying he "wouldn't live in the damn town, anyway!"

I found one of Seth's houses standing with its back turned in rightful scorn on the old graveyard which now holds the remains of those overcautious old-timers who warned him out almost 300 years ago.

There is another very old house in Sandwich, too, the Hoxie House, a tumble-down, gray-shingled, salt-box house that looks down from a green knoll above the millpond to the old graveyard and across to the church spire.

The granddaughter of an old whaling captain lives there now. And when the captain, many years ago, removed a brick from the chimney while "tidying up a bit," he found it had the date 1637 plainly marked on it.

"That makes this one of the very oldest



Fog Draws a Clammy, Treacherous Blindfold over Woods Hole Harbor

Hundreds of vessels have been wrecked off Cape Cod by fog, storm, and tide. Others have been spared a like fate by the construction of Cape Cod Canal (Plate 1). Even now, fishermen stay home on misty days. *Anna* is a fishing trawler.

houses on the Cape," the granddaughter proudly informed me.

"There used to be willows all around that pond," she pointed out (page 739). "And my grandmother used to sit up in those old trees and write love letters to my grandfather. Now they're all gone. Even the letters. But the house—well, I guess that's why I hang on to it. Nobody but Smiths and Hoxies has lived in it since a few years after it was built. And my grandfather was a Hoxie."

She opened the door to the parlor, or "great room," as they were once referred to, so that I might see some of the chests and sewing cabinets the old captain had made between whaling trips.

There were several pieces of Sandwich glass on the old mantel. A particularly lovely clear red ball she pointed out to me as being a genuine witches' ball, guaranteed to keep even the most persistent witch from witching if suspended from a cord and hung in plain sight

in the window. It apparently had served well and long, for it appeared slightly crackled with age.

"These," she said, "were made by my brothers at the factory." She flipped the glass cups and pedestaled dishes with her thumb and forefinger to produce a bell-like ring as proof that these weren't just common glass.

Where Daniel Webster Stopped

On my way back to the railroad station I stopped for dinner at the Daniel Webster Inn. As I ate Cape scallops and topped my meal with a scoop of vanilla ice cream, I wondered just what Dan'l would have thought of the change in his favorite stopping place.

I wondered if the same chintz curtains that held their full-blown blossoms against the windows might also hang in the room where Dan'l used to prop himself up in his great double feather bed to drink his jug of ale or rum, which often was delivered to him by lift



Wanda Burnett

A Fortright Sign Goes Up: "Sorry, No Candy, Due to Weather"

In Yarmouth Port the Swift sisters, Carrie (left) and Saidee, make hand-dipped chocolates. Humidity and high temperature, they explained, cause their wares to dry in white streaks (page 748).

and slipped into his room through a small secret panel in the wall.

But long before Daniel Webster made the inn his Cape headquarters, the place was well known. It was the first licensed "ordinary" in the village of Sandwich, and the license provided that the tavern keeper could sell "strong waters, and wines, but must not let the town dwellers stay drinking unnecessarily at his house."

Early-day Boston to Cape Cod stagecoaches also dropped their passengers at the inn for "refreshment."

I had a few minutes to see some of the damage the hurricane of September, 1944, had done to this part of the Cape before my

train arrived to take me back to Hyannis. What I saw convinced me that I should take a quick trip down the Cape the next day.

I discovered then just what that blow had done and why I had to stumble from the railroad station to the inn at Hyannis that first night by the feeble flickering light of street "bombs."

This hurried and powerful wind had uprooted trees, swung houses around on their foundations, and ripped down electric-light wires before it finally swept out to sea, leaving the land to lick its wounds and heal in almost total darkness.

The bright-red cranberries which I had hoped to see were torn from their bogs. Oysters had been smothered in their beds. And even the brilliant fall coloring for which the Cape is noted had gone with that wind. Salt spray had blown over the land and scorched the grass. The pines which had managed to withstand the force of the violent gusts were seared and

brown. Others had been snapped off four or five feet from the ground.

But it was the big trees, the elms which had been planted so many years ago that oldsters now in their nineties had spoken of them as "the old trees" even when they were youngsters swinging on the branches—it was these trees that suffered most. A number of them had been torn up by the roots, and some had left cavities in the ground that actually looked large enough to lose a house in.

In all the excitement, Mother Nature had a change of mind, too. Seasonal confusion appeared. Lilacs began to blossom shyly on their leafless branches. Yellow forsythia shot out like beams of sunlight. Cherry and even

occasional peach blossoms blushed on their naked twigs. The salt-burned grass recovered and turned a bright spring green.

But down the Cape, along the rolling hills of Truro, autumn was still determined to have its fling, and bright-red leaves hugged the hills like rich carpeting. Then winter suddenly put in a bid for the land, and snow fell to lend a little more confusion to Nature's vague plans.

Capitalizing on a Hurricane

But Cape people are energetic and hopeful, and before the wind had scarcely died down they were reshingling their tattered roofs, taking their beached boats back to the water, and clearing up the debris. Hurricane conversation ran like a theme song among the natives.*

Pictures of the wind damage began to appear in gift shops and on drugstore counters. And, oddly, some of the villagers were actually hurt when their town's wreckage wasn't played up in the published works. One old fellow, well up in his eighties, told me it was "the old fogies in his town who kept out publicity and wouldn't let the place grow up!"

There were many theories as to the cause of this great wind among the Cape folk. And one day while I was leaning on a guide rope helping to hoist a huge pine tree which had toppled, but for which there was still some hope, I got the prize answer to the weather riddle.

"It's the shootin' over there," the owner of the tree informed me, and from his firmness I gathered he wanted no arguments from me when he embellished his original statement with this:

"It's the war and all that bangin' around



A Clam Dealer Gives a Friend a Fisherman's Haircut

Most Cape Cod men are Jacks-of-all-trades. Captain Higgins, proprietor of a shellfish shop in Wellfleet, is handy with a pair of scissors, besides selling clams, oysters, candy, tonic—and telling stories (Plates VIII and X).

that makes the elements nervous. That's why we have all these big winds—of course."

These people have definite ideas about us off-Capers, too. They refer to the two-weekers who flock to the beaches every summer to toast their bodies in the sun as just plain vacationists. Those who come for longer, who are more leisurely, but still head for home with the after-Labor Day crowds, are "summer people."

But for those few hardier souls who don't choose to shutter their windows and leave with the first southbound birds, but who "bank up" and stack their logs for the coming winter in real Cape fashion, the natives have a very

* See "Geography of a Hurricane," by F. Barrows Colton, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, April, 1939.

special tag. These few are the "permanents"—the almost, but never quite, natives.

On my way *down* to Provincetown I passed through several of the numerous little villages and settlements. From Hyannis to this sandy tip takes almost two hours by bus. The highway in some places follows the old Indian trails and the dusty roads over which the early stagecoaches once jolted.

I couldn't help noticing the openness of the countryside. Each house had room to stand and spread without bumping into its neighbor. Snow-white cottages sat primly among the more settled salt-grayed and weathered "half houses" of earlier days.

Along the elm-lined stretch of the highway at Yarmouth Port I noticed several of these old houses—some half, some three-quarter, and some full houses. But on the entire Cape I found very few which had not grown from the original half house to "accommodate the family" (Plate IX).

One old-timer told me with no little sadness that these few which hadn't extended themselves into numerous ells and added rooms were "really pitiful." According to his story, the reason was evident. There just wasn't any family.

Weather and Candymaking

It was at Yarmouth Port, too, that I really met Cape Cod. I met Saidee Swift and her sister Carrie—two youngsters in their early eighties—filled with wit, intelligence, and the type of old-time New England hospitality one often reads about.

It was quite by accident that I found their modest little sign swinging from the branch of a giant tree which laced its shadow across the highway. "Saidee Swift's Candy," it read, and it swung there with a carefree manner that neither invited, insisted, nor seemed to care.

The house in which Saidee "dipped" and Carrie sold had an aloof, stand-apartness air. It was not a true Cape Cod house. And when I later remarked about this to Carrie, she said it was a trifle haughty because it had traveled some. Her father, years before when lumber was very expensive, had bought the house in Nantucket and brought it the long water way to Cape Cod.

I could just see that house bobbing across the waves like a great dowager, but Carrie soon exploded my dream by telling me that it had been completely dismantled and then re-assembled on this pleasant rise of land overlooking the bay.

Tacked on the front door was a sign which puzzled me, as it no doubt had puzzled many another candy customer. In careful but firm

handwriting it read: "Sorry, no candy for several days," and under this was added: "Due to bad weather conditions" (p. 746).

Saidee was very busy "getting ready" when I arrived. This meant making the base, or fondant, which she would swirl in rich melted chocolate "the very minute the weather's right." But while she mixed and stirred and tested she took time to explain that making candy on the Cape was a real problem.

"Sometimes," she exclaimed, "I have to wait as long as a whole week for decent dipping weather!

"What we need this minute is a rip-roaring nor'easter. Then I could really get to work!"

She began checking up on the numerous thermometers placed at strategic spots all over the house. There was one on the front porch and one in the small shop where the candy was displayed and sold.

I later found them in the dining room, on the dipping table, in the bedrooms, and there was, of course, the huge candy thermometer in the kitchen which Saidee plunged into the boiling sirups at regular intervals.

But in the living room I discovered something really special, an ancient hourglass which dripped its grains of sand accurately, so I was told, unless the weather was too humid. Then, Carrie remarked, even time—as well as Saidee—just stood still.

Hourglass Timed Sermons

Carrie tapped the glass sharply to jolt the sluggish sand on its way and informed me that hourglasses were right handy little gadgets in the days when Cape ministers were over-inclined toward long-windedness. It was the sexton's solemn duty then to turn the glass at the beginning of the sermon, and while the allotted hour slipped away with the sand, the minister preached. The filtering through of the last few grains was anxiously watched by the entire congregation.

Apparently the minister had to keep an eye on the glass, too, according to Carrie's tale, for it was considered equally distasteful for him to finish his discourse before, or to continue after, the last grain had dropped.

Later that afternoon I walked to the village post office with Carrie, who took along a shopping bag filled with neatly wrapped packages of candy for the boys overseas.

Our way led down the King's Highway—U.S. 6. While we ambled along, Carrie obligingly pointed out the homes of several old sea captains and also the home of Mr. Amos Otis, who planted the saplings which have grown into the giant elms for which Yarmouth Port is now famous.



U. S. Maritime Service, Official

Future Skippers in Steam Must First Master Sails

Students of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy man this gaff-rigged cutter footing before a quartering breeze off Hyannis, their base. The cutter has 12 oar positions and room for 15 additional men. Massachusetts is one of five States maintaining maritime academies.



A Woman Whittler Makes Her Hobby Pay Dividends

By selling her creations in East Sandwich, Mrs. Clara Marchant has helped support her children. "I have to have a jackknife and a piece of wood in my hands or I'm lost," says she. "Like a clock, I guess, I just can't stop." Such wooden clippers sell for \$100.

She told me that Yarmouth Port had many claims to fame. Here lived Ichabod Paddock, the whaling teacher who taught Nantucket men the fine art of catching the whale.*

Deep-water Captains, and Just Captains

"And right there," she said, pointing to a comfortable old house, "lived old Cap'n Asa Eldridge. Cap'n Asa set a record in 1854. Thirteen days to Liverpool in the clipper ship *Red Jacket*."

"We had a lot of deep-water men once," she reflected, "but Brewster probably had more. I guess there were more sea captains from that little town than from almost any other place of equal size in the whole country."

I discovered there was quite a distinction between "deep-water" captains and just plain captains. The captains, Carrie explained, were coast boating men, cautious, and mostly from the Cape's South Shore. Deep-water men were more venturesome and fearless. They searched the waters of the world. These came, of course, from the North Shore.†

This was the same old story—up-Capers versus down-Capers, North Shore versus South Shore, each feeling somewhat superior to the other. I had even heard up-Capers speak of the people who lived "below the bridges"—in this case meaning the bridges which span the Bass River and not the Canal—as "inferior folks." These, in turn, scoffed at the merits of the up-Capers. The score was never completely evened.

Strangely, too, I found that almost every off-Cape town or village, even those as far away as Plymouth, thought of themselves as being "on the Cape." And each on-Cape settlement felt that the

Cape really began, and probably ended, right in that particular town or village. As far down as Truro I heard summer people, permanent, and natives say very definitely, "Here the Cape *really* begins!"

At the post office I left Carrie and took the bus again. The drivers were a good-natured lot. They were the means of carrying news along the Cape as well as passengers. And when they were flagged down between village stops, it was usually by an old-timer who

* See "American Pathfinders in the Pacific," by William H. Nicholas, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, May, 1946.

† See "Northeast of Boston," by Albert W. Atwood, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, September, 1945.

asked to be dropped at such strange-sounding places as Thumpertown or Long Nook Roads. They kidded the drivers, compared their ailments, stood their ground on political issues, and frequently arrived at their destinations in a real huff.

But good-natured or not, most of the drivers, I soon learned, merely paused at post-office stops, and if you weren't there with one foot already raised and waiting for the bus step, they zipped away without you.

When I went through Dennis, a settlement four miles down from Yarmouth Port, I had the feeling that this neat little village had just been newly washed and combed and like a child been told not to get dirty. Its fresh white cottages and churches stood on their green lawns like stage props.

Even the trees and shrubs appeared as if they had been specially groomed for the passing through of the bus.

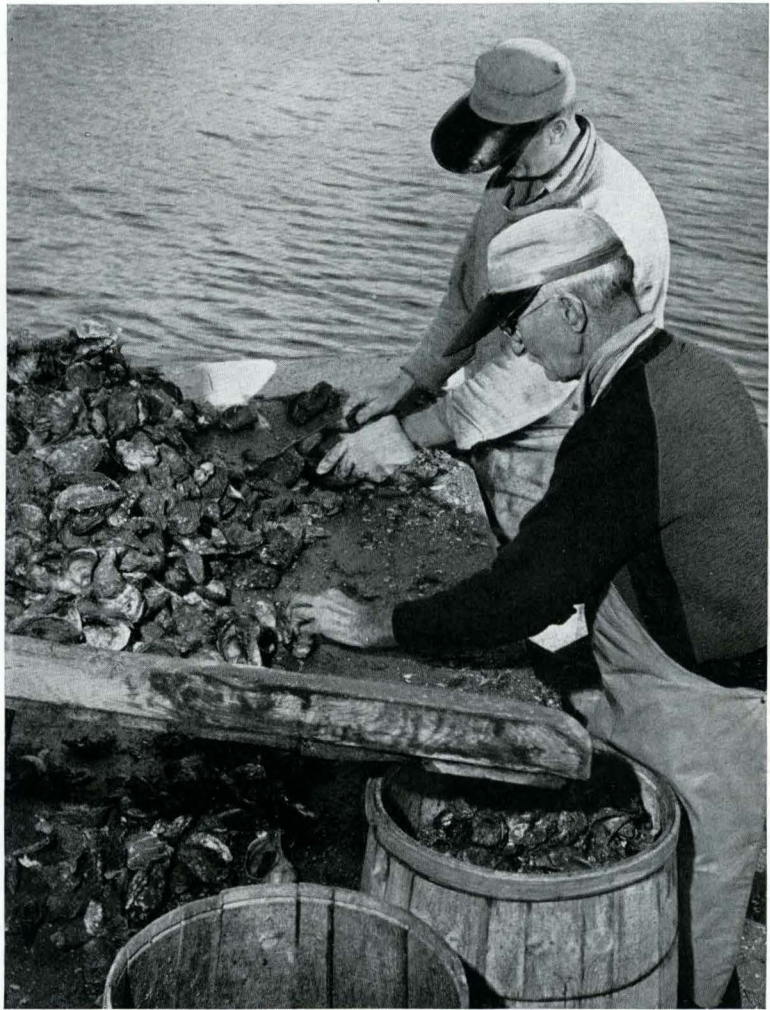
Years ago Dennis was populated almost entirely by seafaring men, who built some of

the graceful clipper ships of nearly a hundred years ago and who manned the fishing fleets.

Salt from "Sear's Folly"

Cape Cod's salt industry began here. When salt became scarce during Revolutionary times, and fishermen needed salt to keep their catches from spoiling, old Capt. John Sears decided to make the sun and the ocean do the trick.

Village folk shook their heads over such "workin's" and called them "Sear's folly." But when the sun actually evaporated the water in the long wooden vats which the captain had made and left only the pure crystals, not only Dennis people but folks all over the Cape be-



Cotuit Oysters, Like the Cape's Visitors, Are "Furriners"

Seed from Long Island is transplanted to Cotuit Bay to absorb the famous flavor, a quality enhanced by the chemistry of the water. These shuckers take pride in their speed; falling shells tinkle every few seconds. Long-visored tuna caps resemble naval aviators' "baseball" caps.

gan coaxing the ocean into vats and praying for the sun to shine long and hot.

At Brewster we paused just long enough for one passenger to board the bus and for me to catch a glimpse of a few of the old houses of early-day sea captains.

At Orleans there was a short pause and a great confusion while the driver searched for a sailor among the passengers in the back seats, "'cause his ma is out there a-lookin' for him."

I could well understand when I saw the productive fields of Eastham why some of the Pilgrims, after twenty-odd years of urging the lands of Plymouth to produce, had finally become discouraged and moved to Eastham

(then Nauset) where lay the "richest soyles for ye most part a blakish and deep mould" and where the Indians once raised quantities of "corn and beans of various collours."*

This appeared to be the flattest spot on the entire Cape. Fields rich with autumn produce stretched away from the highway on one side toward the blue waters of the Bay. On the other side the land wandered lazily over yellowed moors, interrupted by ponds and inlets, before it finally made its way across the dunes toward the Atlantic.

Pumpkins were piled in golden mounds and marked for sale. Eastham housewives, like other women on the Cape, had gathered beach plums and made them into jelly. Their efforts stood in jelly glasses on tiny makeshift stands all along the road.

A fellow passenger pointed out to me the distant spot along the bay where the Pilgrims had their first encounter with the Indians and in the same breath added that Eastham once grew the best darned asparagus in the country.

A Founder of the Banana Trade

The road began straightening out for the long dash toward Wellfleet, a town whose expectations, apparently, exceeded its development. Once famous for men who whaled and sailed, it also prides itself upon being the home town of a founder of the banana trade.

The United Fruit Company had its beginning when Capt. Lorenzo Dow Baker, from Wellfleet, made quick voyages back to the United States with bananas from Jamaica in 1870 and 1871.

But long before we reached the combination gas station, drugstore, country store, post office, Western Union, and bus stop of South Wellfleet, we were in the environs of the little town which had allowed itself so much room to expand and grow. And long after we had left the cluster of houses, churches, and stores of the main village, a sign by the side of the highway boldly asked: "Did you see our town?"

The first glimpse I had of Provincetown was when the bus suddenly rounded a curve, swept up an incline, and headed straight for the bluest patch of water I had ever seen.

The road at this point seemed to disappear completely, to be swallowed up by the water. Sand dunes, held in place by glistening crowns of pale-green beach grass, bordered the long flat reaches of Pilgrim Lake on the right of the highway.

On the left was the bay with its ever-circling gulls, its fishing fleet, and its towering and overpowering Pilgrim Monument (Plate VI).

After the roominess of the rest of the Cape,

Provincetown seemed extremely congested. Its strange houses, with little architectural plan or design, nudged and crowded one another closer and closer to the water's edge. Some appeared so eager for front-row seats and a better view that they literally stood on one another's shoulders.

A few brave ones had even waded out into the water and were standing precariously perched on spindly wooden legs. Others ran up the hill for choice balcony seats. Some had even spilled down the opposite slope, probably with the hope of watching the Atlantic tossing its waves along the beach.

Some of these houses are apparently very old. Others are unmistakably new or remodeled. Some have mellowed and grayed. Others have been tossed up for the summer crowds. These makeshifts wear ruffles and loose hems and have such fancy names as Bide a Wee, Home at Last, or Welikeit.

Older ones, with their twining ramblers and graceful trees, have drawn their shutters and closed their eyes in embarrassment at these mongrel types which have sprung up among them.

A Compact and a Child Are Born

One of the first chapters in American history was written here 326 years ago when the *Mayflower*, driven far off its course by storms, rounded the northern tip of Cape Cod and sailed into Provincetown's sheltered and spacious harbor.

While the boat rocked on the waves, the Pilgrim Fathers drew up and signed the famous Compact which was to govern their actions in the new land. And while the boat still bobbed on Bay waters, the first English child to be born in New England—Peregrine White—came into the world.

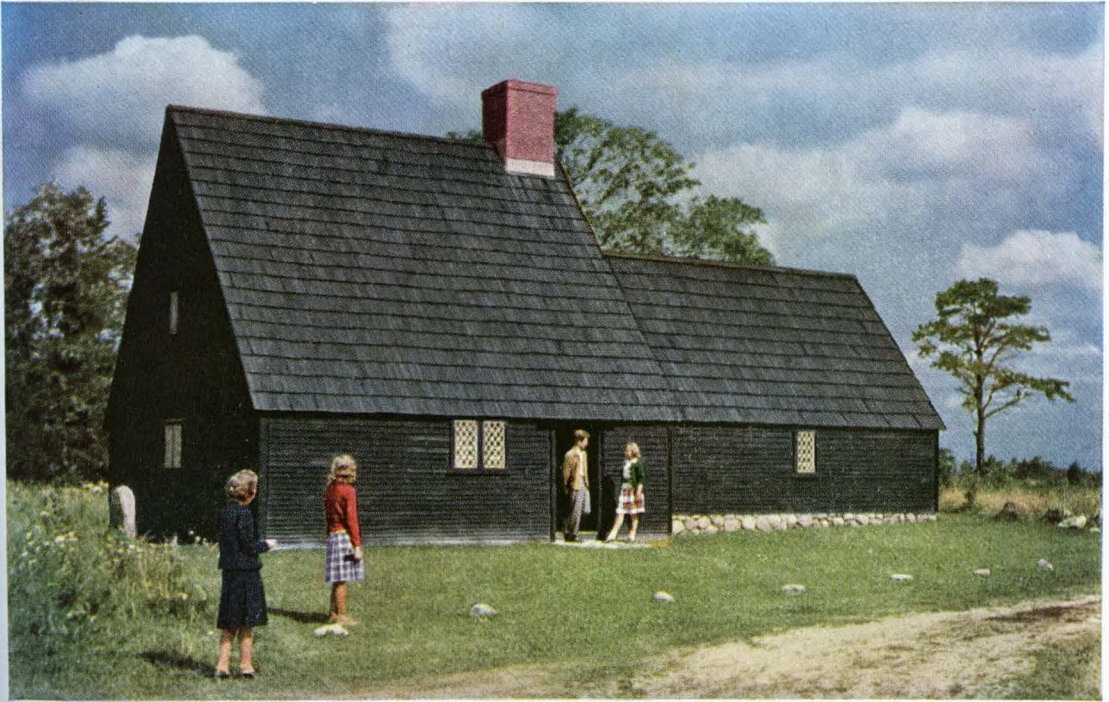
The travel-weary Pilgrims anchored offshore on Saturday, November 11, 1620, according to Provincetown's tablets and markers.

With due piety they stayed aboard over Sunday to "observe the Sabbath." But on the following Monday, the Pilgrim women, feeling no doubt that cleanliness was next to godliness—and that godliness had been taken care of the day before—bundled up their laundry and came ashore to dabble out their clothes. Thus they established a Monday-washday custom which still clings to most American homes.

But there were even earlier footprints than these left in Cape Cod sands. Almost a century ago, Provincetown, digging into its past, uncovered the remnants of what is believed to

* See "America's First Settlers, the Indians," by Matthew W. Stirling, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, November, 1937.

Cape Cod People and Places



First Trading Post of the Plymouth Colony Dates from 1627

Here, near what is now Bourne, the Pilgrims traded with Indians and New Amsterdam Dutch. In 1930 the Bourne Historical Society built this replica of the Aputuxet trading post on the original foundation.

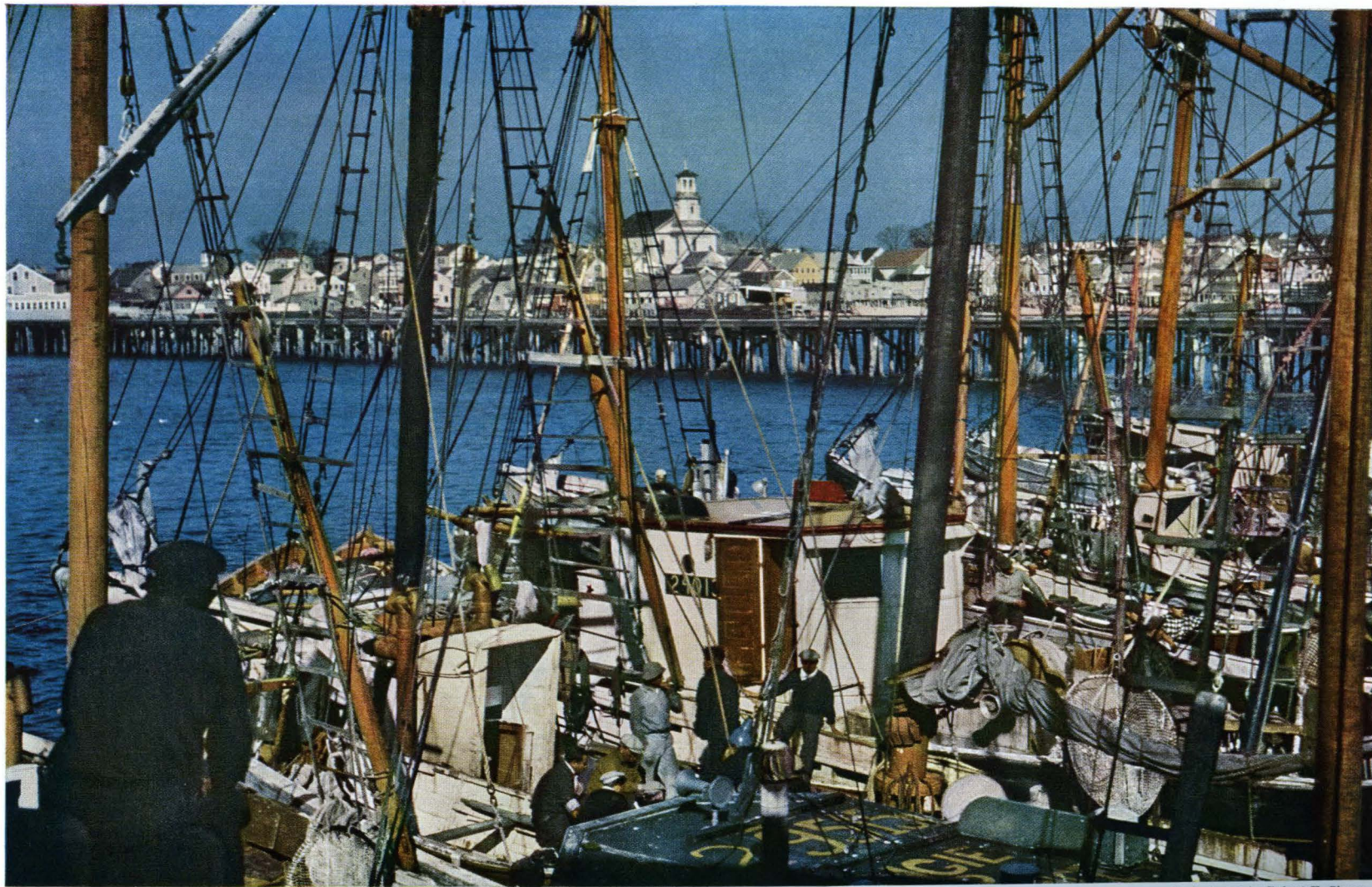


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Kodachromes by Robert F. Sisson

Cape Cod Canal, 8 Miles Long, Saves 60 Miles from New York to Boston

The Plymouth Colony envisioned such a short cut. In its day Indian paddlers used the route by portaging between rivers. The canal was opened in 1914. It is spanned here by Sagamore Bridge.

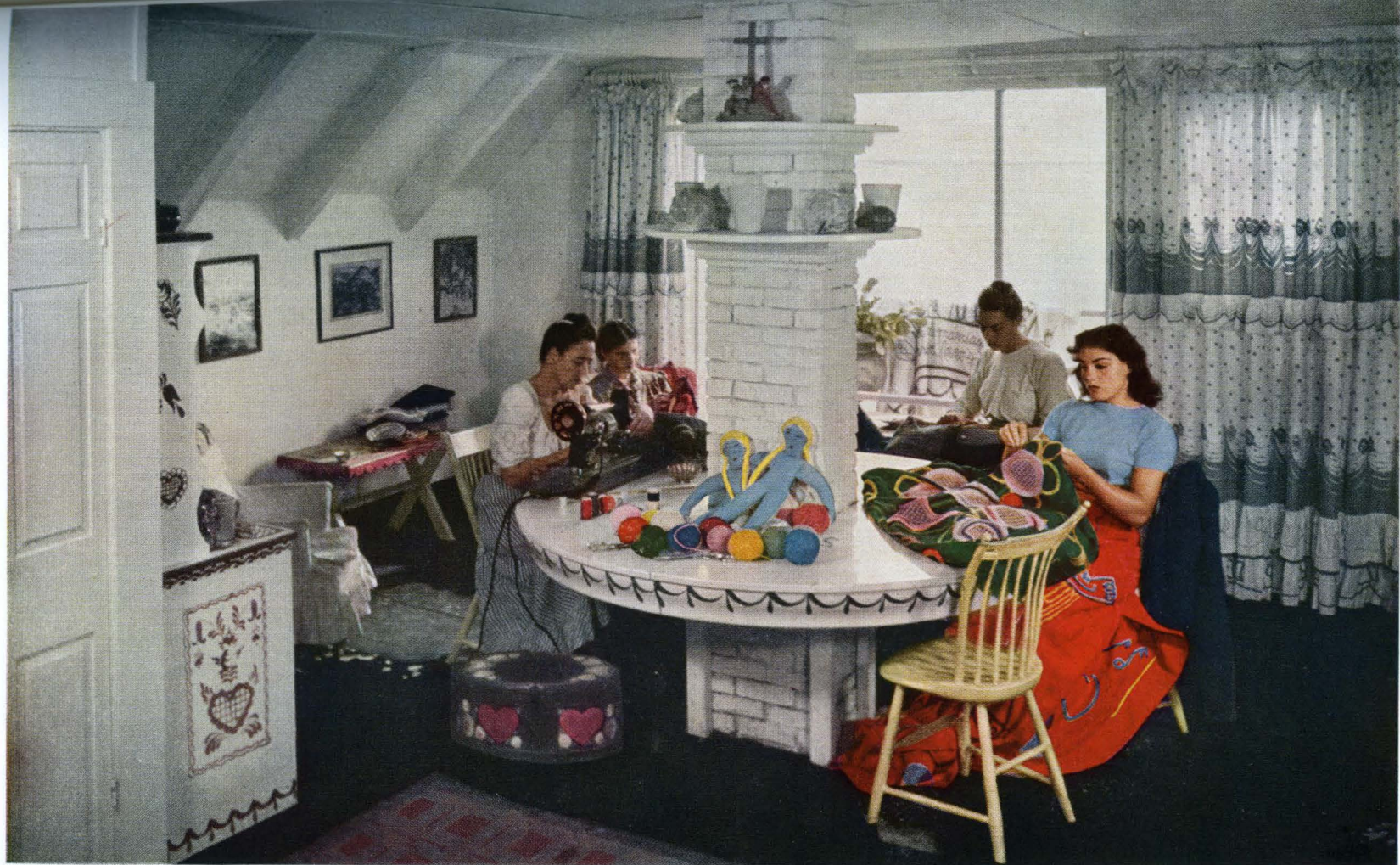


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Gloucester's Fishing Fleet, Awaiting a Moonless Night for Mackerel, Ties Up at a Provincetown Wharf

Crews of Italians, Portuguese, and Nova Scotians while away the time by telling stories, playing cards, and going to the movies. When the moon goes down, they'll hunt mackerel. They spot catches by watching for phosphorescent patches at sea. On bright nights the glow is not visible.



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In Peter Hunt's Studio Overlooking Provincetown Harbor, Girls Make Rugs in Old Portuguese Style

Designs are hand-stitched with bright wools; felt edgings are machined. Mr. Hunt, who creates the designs, is noted for his face-lifting jobs on old furniture—note the cabinet (left). Dolls on chimney table are another Hunt enterprise. Many Portuguese came to Massachusetts on American whaling vessels.



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Provincetown Art Students in Bathing Suits Set Up Easels on the Dunes and Paint One Another
Once Provincetown lived under the threat of being washed into the sea each time the wind shifted the dunes. To stay the wandering sands, beach grass and ground-hugging pines were planted. Now roots of this thin grass anchor the soil to a depth of 12 feet.



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Kodachrome by Oscar Langman

Pleasure Cruising Takes Them to Their Day's Work

Students of the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, set out on a hunt for sea specimens, which they will analyze at their laboratory. Small boats astern are used for landings.



Kodachrome by Robert F. Sisson

Breezy Seaside Studios Brighten a Wharf in Provincetown

To Captain Jack's wharf, carefree vacationists like to move in the summer. Provincetown is a favorite haunt of artists, writers, and actors. It has been an art colony since 1901.



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Kodachrome by Robert F. Sisson

Provincetown's Water Front, Where Long, Narrow Houses Vie for Space, Is Viewed from Pilgrim Monument

A crowd streams down Town Wharf to meet the Boston boat. To the left, Cape Cod curves southward. Long Point (right) is the Cape's sandy tip end. Families living there before the Civil War ferried their homes to Provincetown when storms ate into their land.



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To Catch Its Fish, Provincetown First Mends Its Nets

Nets spread to dry are a common sight along the water fronts in a number of Cape Cod towns. This fisherman, busy with repairs, submits to questions by his volunteer assistant.



Kodachromes by Robert F. Sisson

Relics of Whaling Days Ornament an Inn in Wellfleet

Time was, before the blockade in 1775, when nearly every Wellfleet man was a whaler. Old-timers left these instruments: a cutting spade for stripping blubber; a sextant for navigation; and scales for weighing fish.



Stormbound Fishermen Play Cribbage at "Spit and Chatter" Club in Wellfleet

Here by a cozy stove they wait for the weather to improve. Kibitzers, giving advice, stand by. The card-room is Higgins Shellfish Shop (Plate X).



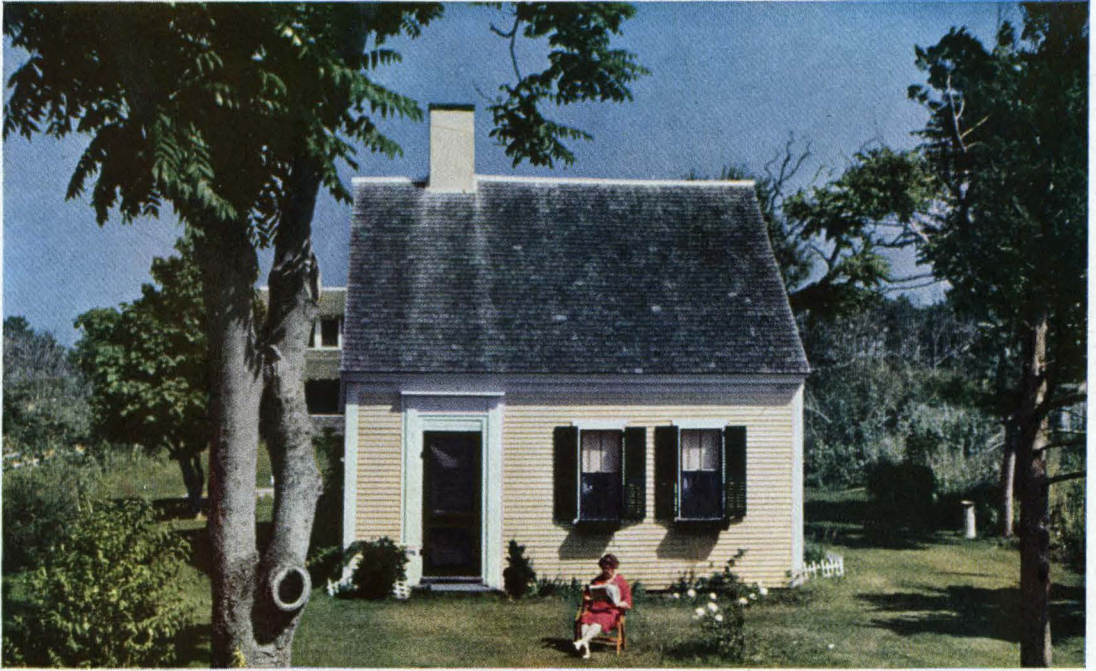
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65 Turns of the Wheel, 65 Dips in the Wax Vat—Out Come Fat Bayberry Candles

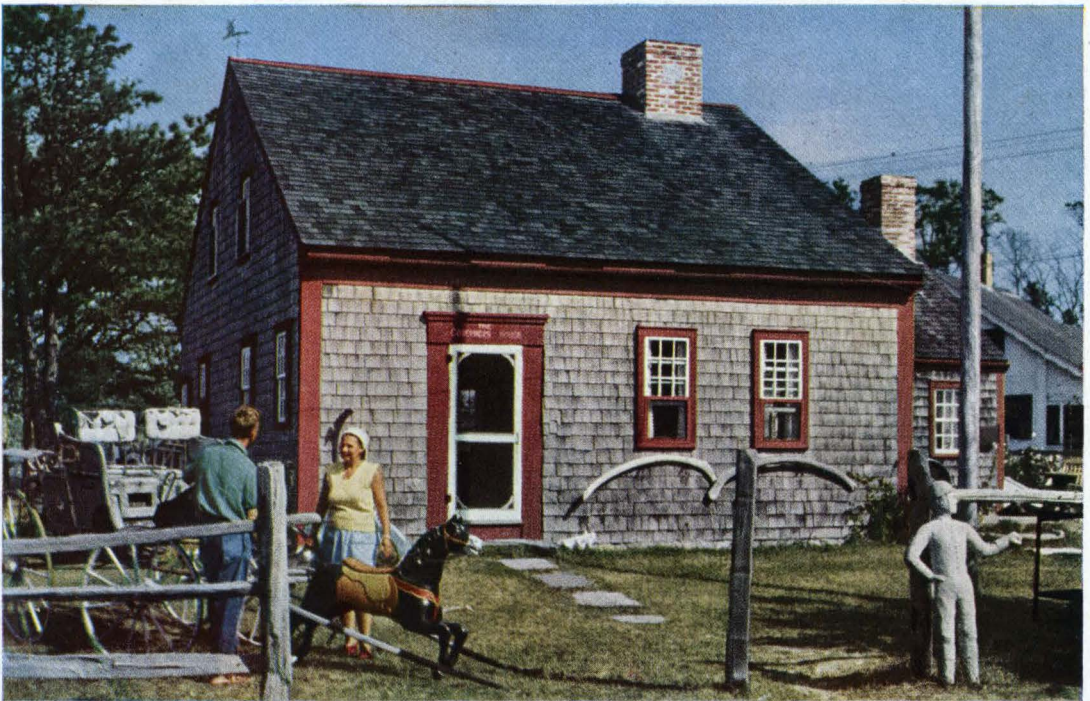
Since Pilgrim days Cape Cod folk have gathered gray-green, wax-coated bayberries after autumn's first frost (Plate XI). Boiled down, the fat goes into candles valued for their scent.

Cape Cod People and Places



Cape Cod Calls This a "Half" House Because It Fulfills Only a Part of the Plan

Tear down the wall (left), add a room with two front windows, and you have a "whole" house. An added room with one window makes a "three-quarter" house. In such fashion growing families are accommodated.



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Kodachromes by Robert F. Sisson

West Harwich's Yankee Trader Sells Antiques at a Half House

Tracing descent from William Bradford, 30 times re-elected governor of Plymouth Colony, the dealer calls his place "The Governor's House." Two whalebones hang below the windows. The figure at right is a hitching post.

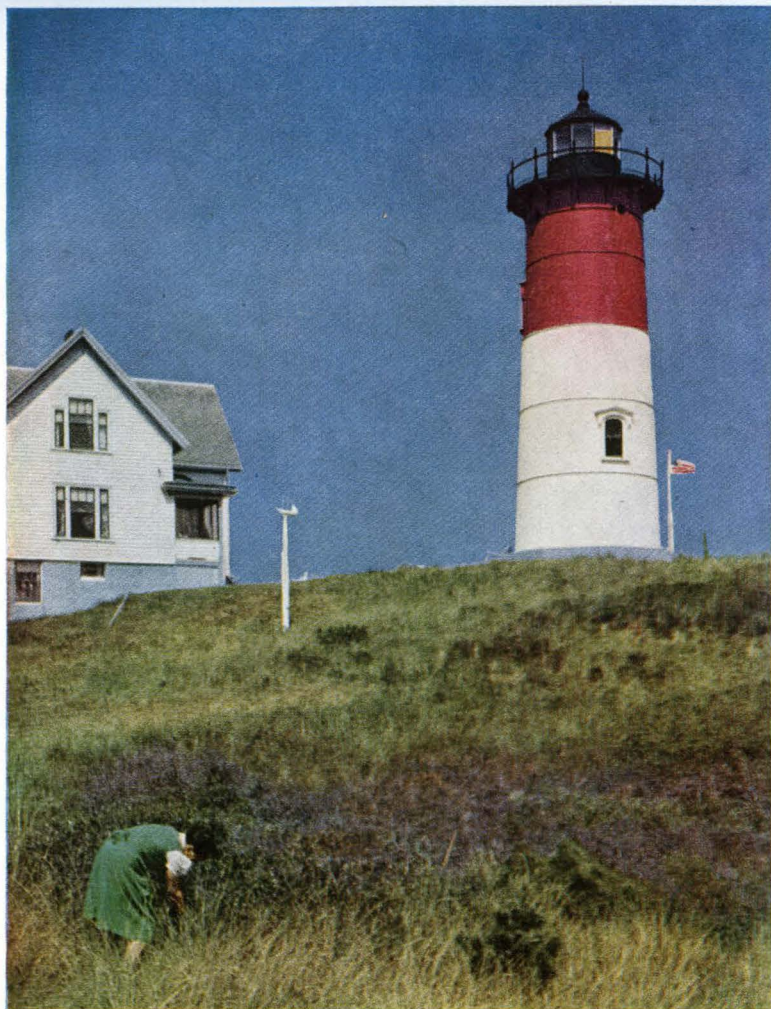


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Fishing and Clamming Cease, Men and Boats Rest, and Quiet Spreads over Wellfleet—It Is Sunday

Weather, politics, and fishing are the topics of the Spit and Chatter Club in Higgins Shellfish Shop (Plate VIII). Small houses (right) are for "summer people." Wellfleet calls them "apple-pie" houses because roofs are shaped like slices of pie.



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Nauset Beach Light Winks a 25,000-Candlepower Warning

It has not always stood at Eastham. In 1923 the light, one of twins, was moved from Chatham. Towering 114 feet above the sea, the beacon casts a beam visible 17 miles. The woman gathers bayberries (Plate VIII).



Kodachromes by Robert F. Sisson

Cascading Cranberries Sparkle in a Bog near West Yarmouth

Cape Cod produces approximately two-thirds of the United States crop. Pickers comb the bogs with long-toothed scoops, such as this woman empties. White flags mark pickers' lanes.



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Kodachrome by Robert F. Sisson

Craigville Exhibits a Sample of Cape Cod's 200 Miles of Silvery Beaches

Cape beaches are enjoyed for their pure-white sands; there are no sharp pebbles to bruise tender feet. For bathers who prefer "teakettle" water, Craigville is ideal. Summer water temperature ranges from 65° to 72°. There is little tide or undertow.



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Kodachrome by Robert F. Sisson

A Nantucket Island Steamer Docks at Woods Hole. As Hundreds Wait to Land, Other Hundreds Press to Go Aboard



Weathered Bones of an Old Rum Runner Lie Half-buried on Race Point

In prohibition days a gale tossed the outlaw vessel almost on the doorstep of a Coast Guard station. A fog bank creeps in over the horizon.



Sportsmen Land a 20-pound Striped Bass after a Battle with Surf and Fish
During October, Cape waters swarm with schools of bass moving south to their winter grounds.

Kodachromes by Robert F. Sisson



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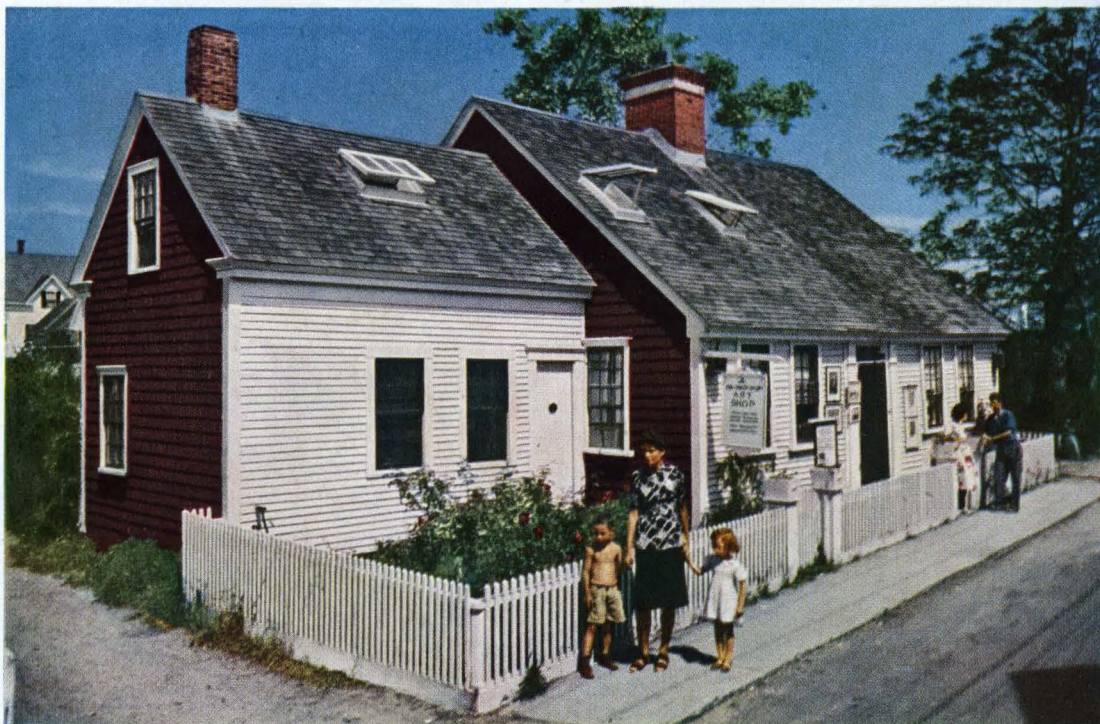
Commercial Fishermen Carry Their Catch from Dory to Weighing Station in Chatham

Cleaned, iced, and crated, the fish are transferred to trucks. Within a few hours they will appear on Boston or New York menus. Livers are saved. "They pay our fuel bill," these men said. Screaming gulls circle for waste bait cast on the water.



For Captains or Their Widows, a Railed Walk Crowns a House in Falmouth

Captain's walk or widow's walk? New England uses both terms. From the enclosure, anxious watchers used to scan the sea for incoming ships. This white mansion has stood since 1814.



© National Geographic Society

Kodachromes by Robert F. Sisson

A Whole House, Plus an Addition, Serves as an Art Shop in Provincetown

Built in the early 1700's, this cottage is one of the oldest in town. After Labor Day most art shops close.

be an ancient Norse wall, which indicated that seafaring Norsemen not only touched on the Cape in the 11th century but stayed long enough to build.

In 1498 John Cabot doubtless took a quick look at the Cape on his way south, and Henry Hudson probably allowed his men to go ashore to pick grapes before continuing on to New York and the river which bears his name. Capt. John Smith noted it on his map of 1614.

Gosnold's Search for Gold

At least half a dozen explorers touched on this Cape in the twenty years before the Pilgrims landed, but of these only Bartholomew Gosnold left an indelible mark. Gosnold sailed from Falmouth, England, in the spring of 1602 to "found a colony in some agreeable spot, preferably where gold was abundant," and dropped anchor in Provincetown Harbor some six weeks later.

He found no golden nuggets on the sandy shores, but he did find the waters crowded with codfish. After hauling in great numbers of these fish, he named the place Cape Cod, "a name," Cotton Mather later said, "it will never lose till shoals of codfish be seen swimming on the highest hills."

Today Provincetown is a magnet for artists, writers, and vacationists. It has one of the most elastic populations on the entire Cape. The winter-thinned, narrow-streeted settlement, consisting mostly of year-round Portuguese fishermen, actually triples its number of inhabitants during July and August (p. 773).

Artists set up easels along the water front. Portuguese fishermen become "colorful" subjects for canvases. Artists become such "interesting characters" to the fishermen (Plates IV and V).

The summer theater blossoms out with new plays and revivals of older ones. The tide of traffic flows steadily toward the center of town. Huge refrigerated fish trucks rumble along "Back Street," or Bradford, headed for New York markets with the catch.

But when I arrived, the town was in its more natural and more desirable state. Only the fishermen, the natives, and a few tenacious hangers-on were left. People who were ordinarily engaged with the summer rush now had time to sit and chat and remember.

The "Portland Gale"

Some remembered the big blow of 1898 when the *Portland* was lost with all aboard. Some spoke of the "boodle" which had been picked up along the beach after this great gale. Others had memories geared to the hurricanes of 1938 and 1944.

And while the fishermen mended nets and painted dories, they remembered their big catches and spoke of fishing as a good life, if the weather didn't get too "aired up."

The handkerchief-sized plots of lawn and flowers in front of many of the houses were grown on "imported dirt" brought in as ballast in returning ships years ago. "Front," or Commercial, Street, now hard-surfaced for its entire length, was once ankle-deep in sand.

But so averse were the ladies of the town to improving conditions that when plank sidewalks were proposed and finally laid, they merely hoisted their skirts a bit higher and took to the middle of the road. "The sidewalks," they said, "would be bad for young folks' morals. They would do nothing but walk back and forth on the fine walk."

I should have liked very much to stay on indefinitely. The unhurriedness of off-season Cape Cod was settling in my bones. But there were still other spots on the Cape to see.

A Stop at Truro

It would be a very simple matter to cut across the Cape at Orleans and within a few miles find yourself in Chatham. But the bus doesn't do business that way. It prefers to run breathlessly back to the railroad stop in Hyannis, repeating every stop it made on the way down, and there drop its passengers for points along the Atlantic side of the Cape.

I discussed this short-cut possibility with the bus driver, but he was firm. As we jogged along the road that wound through the hills of Truro, I thought I might stop for a night or two there.

The settlement, I remembered on my down-Cape trip, was thin and scattered and lay about halfway between Wellfleet and Provincetown. I wondered about accommodations. When I casually suggested to the driver that he might let me off in Truro, he tossed me a wise smile and asked, "Where?"

"Oh, anywhere, I guess. In the center of town. Wherever there's a hotel or inn."

"That reminds me of a story I once heard about Truro," he said as he swerved the bus around a sharp curve. "There was a passenger once came along here to see the sights. He wanted to get off in Truro, too. Said he wanted off at the most populated section."

Here the driver chuckled and rubbed his chin in anticipation of the rise he always got from his passengers when he told this story.

The bus was slowing to a crawl, and while I waited for the rest of the story the driver slammed on the brakes and came to a stop.

"And right here's where he got off!" To emphasize his point, he roared and swung his



Though Sawed in Half, the Lady Keeps Her Chin Up

In 1867 a Provincetown whaler, the *A. L. Putnam*, was in the Indian Ocean when the cry "Woman all adrift!" came from aloft. A rescue crew hauled her aboard—a figurehead. Capt. Ben Handy described her as "a colossal full-length presentment of womankind . . . fully eight feet from the placid brow to the underside of the sandaled feet." To save space, he ordered the lady sawed in half. Now the top half decorates Figurehead House in Provincetown. Mrs. Abbie Cook Putnam (at door) is descended from the *A. L. Putnam's* owner.

arm in the direction of emptiness that stretched away from the road, then added: "The most populated spot in all Truro—the cemetery!"

I declined his offer to let me off at the next most populated spot—the bus stop.

The following day and on another bus I went to Chatham. The driver cautiously picked his way down the byways between fallen trees and on past more hurricane damage. The road threaded its way through several small settlements, past Dennis Port, and past Harwich Port's beautiful little harbor with its small craft now tossed like loose kindling wood along the shore.

Chatham had not escaped the leisurely air that permeated the rest of the Cape, either. I soon found this out when I tried the door of a small antique shop on the main street. It was not too late in the evening nor was it too early in the morning for this shop to be open, but pasted on the door was a note which informed customers that it would be "open sometime—later."

Inside, the proprietor snoozed in his chair beside a comfortably warm and glowing stove.

Several hours later I tiptoed hopefully toward the door again. The sign was still there. So was the proprietor. But the fire had gone out.

A Handmade Driftwood House

The wind was howling along the beach when I visited Good Walter in his handmade driftwood house (page 772). There were Good Walter, Bad Walter, and "Weeked" Walter, I was told, but this well-preserved ageless man, whose eyes constantly searched the horizon while he chatted about "the treasure that lies buried out there in ships just off the bar," was Good Walter.

Anyone in Chatham will tell you about Good Walter, and Good Walter, in turn, can tell you anything about Chatham,



Provincetown's Crier Meets Visitors on the Wharf and Recites Town News

Carrying a bell and dressing in Pilgrim garb, he provides more atmosphere than news. In 1886 a Provincetown crier had a scoop. He solemnly told that he had seen a 300-foot sea serpent, with three red eyes and three green ones, its fiery breath searing the beach plums as it went ashore. He was not excited by "liquor or otherwise," he swore.

but it takes time. He'll also rent you one of his small boats or row you out where you can go clamming or where the fish are "schoolin'." He'll point out the dangerous waters where hundreds of ships have been wrecked in the stormy past.

And if you show a spark of interest, he may even toss in a few good yarns about "moon-cussin'" days when ships were lured to disaster and their cargoes looted by men with well-developed "beach eyes." He will probably explain lengthily how they came by this strange name—how they worked only in the dark of the moon and cursed the bright moon which shone on their dark deeds.

If you are fortunate and arrive in Chatham before the turn of the seasons has caused Aunt Clara to pack her bag and take the train to New York for the winter, you may also run into this delightful representative of Cape Cod.

Aunt Clara, though just past ninety, is as

ageless as most of the other Cape oldsters, and she will likely tell you that most of her social life has resolved into letter writing and crocheting. But she also has a hobby. All through the war she wrote to soldiers, mostly Cape boys who wanted bits of news about their home towns. In exchange they filled pages with their observations about Turkey, China, Australia, and other remote areas and rushed them on to Aunt Clara.

I first met Aunt Clara as she was extracting several of these answers from her mailbox. A well-worn path had been made from her door to the mailbox, and the grass on either side was tall and uncut. She smiled apologetically and said that it was amazing how a place could get so "grassed over" while a person merely wrote letters.

When I commented on the beauty of her neat little house and asked her its age, she said she didn't know, but they bought it



"Good Walter" Sits Dreaming of the Day He'll Find Another Golden Treasure

Chatham folk used to pay little attention to his tales of "treasure that lies buried out there." Last year he surprised them. With two other men he uncovered a cache of old coins concealed almost a century ago by "the King of Calf Island," a fugitive from Canadian justice. Key to the trove was a pin-pricked message decoded by a historian. Walter lives in a handmade house of driftwood (page 770).

years ago because it was the only house they could find that had "a little house for the horse."

A house for a horse, I discovered later, was really important. Horses in early days were scarce and transportation scarcer. Sunday-go-to-meetin' folks in many Cape villages either walked or rode horseback to church and shared their rides with neighbors.

"Share the Ride" in Horseback Days

"Tying and riding" was the vogue. The man who owned the horse usually rode in the saddle to the "halfway block" with his wife and possibly an infant perched on the pillion behind him. Here they dismounted, tied the horse, and made the last lap of the journey on foot.

"Share the ride" neighbors, having started earlier and walked the first half, took over from here. Young people were often foot

travelers for the entire trip. Careful ones, to save their shoes, frequently tripped along carrying their shoes in their hands until they reached the church, where they again donned them for the services.

Whether Aunt Clara had ever participated in any of these plans, I never found out. But I did find that she had been preserved for posterity by Mrs. Alice Stallknecht Wight, who painted the famous murals that hung in Chatham's Congregational Church for several years. The murals, depicting Christ as a village fisherman, with His followers well represented by Chatham residents, are now on display in Mrs. Wight's studio.

When the artist asked Aunt Clara to pose for one of the murals, she consented, but with reservations.

She said that if she were to stand so close to her Saviour, she most certainly must bow her head. In the finished painting Aunt



On Provincetown's Narrow Main Street a Bus Weaves among Pedestrians and Cars

Progressive citizens once moved to widen Commercial Street to 64 feet; when paving finally was laid, its width was 22. Sidewalks came in over strenuous opposition. "Young folks would do nothing but walk back and forth," standpatters warned. Walks are so narrow that people are crowded off (page 752).



Some Early New England Couples Did Their Courting in Bed, Called It Bundling

Winter was cold and heat inadequate. Young folks, fully clothed, were tucked under covers, a center-board separating them. Like speak-easy proprietors of a later era, parents cut eye-level slots through doors. This door is preserved in the Provincetown home of Mrs. Harriet Adams (left).

Clara, nearest the Saviour, sits with her head bowed in deep reverence.

After paying my respects to the oldest house in town, the lighthouse, and the spot "where one can look straight across the Atlantic to Spain"—and, I might add, see nothing but water—I started back towards Hyannis.

A short distance out of Chatham there is a small settlement which, unlike other Cape villages, lays no claim to historical importance. Mackerel schooners and scallop fishermen once dropped anchor in its waters, and saltworks and flake yards speckled its shores.

This is South Chatham, a village which has the courage to speak of its present-day comfortable life "with plenty of electricity, fresh eggs, and fresh fish, but *no* landmarks or monuments to famous explorers or Pilgrim footprints."

The weather had settled down to a real November blow when I arrived in Falmouth. The village green, where "thirty good, able-

bodied, effective men" trained during the Revolution to turn back the fire of the British who threatened to burn the town, shivered in the rain. The homes of the old skippers and whalers, and even the church which boasts of having a genuine Paul Revere bell in its tower, looked grim and bleak.

It was not a pleasant day for delving into the past or looking at the present. It was just the day, I decided, to leave the Cape, to take "that ancient crossing from the 'Cape to the Continent' used by white men for all the early years and by the Indians for a thousand years before."*

* For additional articles of general interest on Massachusetts in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, see: "Nantucket—Little Gray Lady," by William H. Nicholas, April, 1944; "Long River of New England (the Connecticut)," by Albert W. Atwood, April, 1943; "Massachusetts and Its Position in the Life of the Nation," by Calvin Coolidge, April, 1923; "Massachusetts—Beehive of Business," by William Joseph Showalter, March, 1920; and "Boston Through Midwest Eyes," by Frederick Simpich, July, 1936.