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The Advocate, Thursday, September 28, 1978

OLD PAINT. Apparently this isn't the first time Provincetown has grappled with the question of what color to paint the new water standpipe. Many years ago, when what is now considered the old standpipe was new, the town faced the same dilemma.

Grace Collinson mentioned this week that back about 50 years ago, when the old standpipe was built, artists took an active role in persuading Town Meeting voters to accept a flashy design. No one could pinpoint the exact year, but artist Bruce McKain recalled the standpipe was design-painted when he got here in 1928.

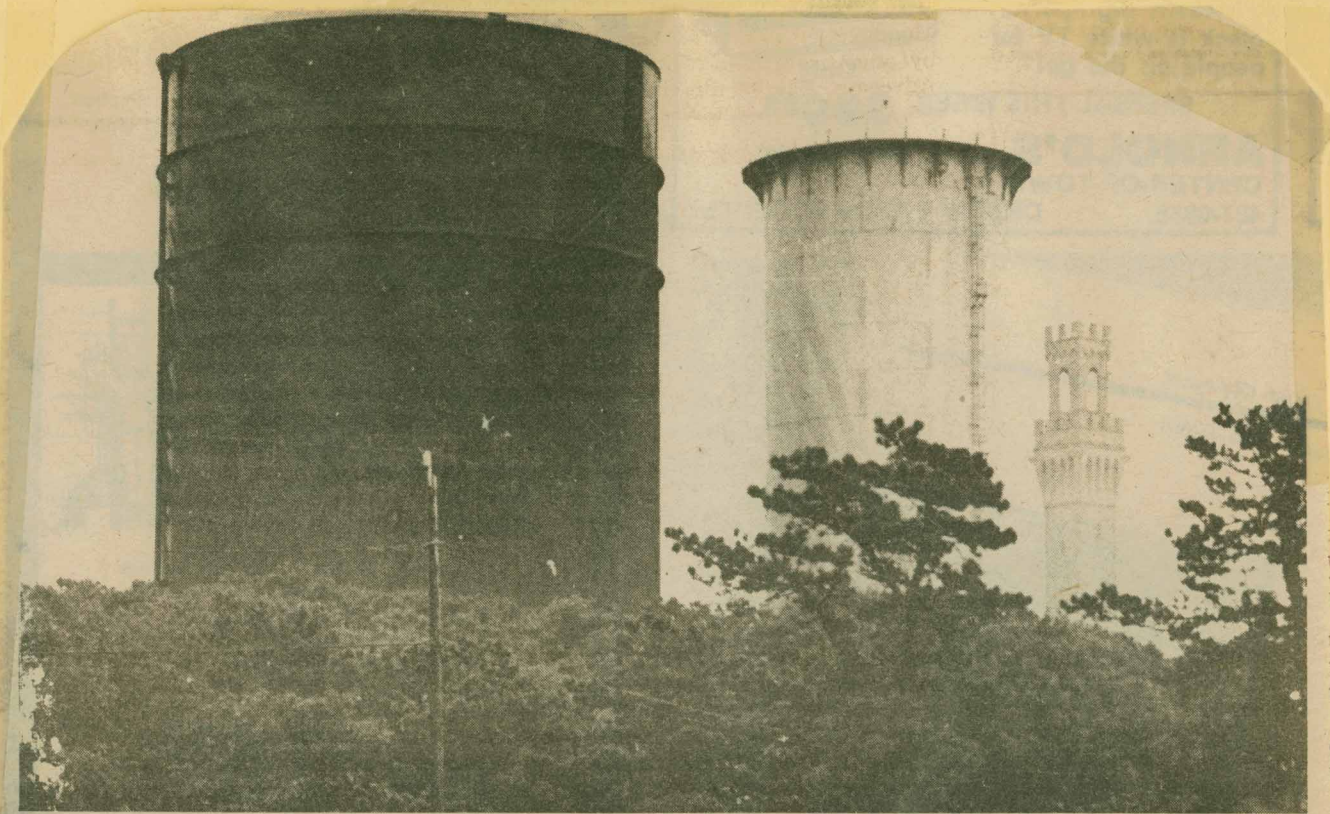
Similar to some of the recent suggestions, they said, the standpipe was painted with colors graduated from bottom to top. The tower was a dark brown, a rust or cinnamon shade, at its base, blending in with the land. The design worked up to shades of yellows and blues to depict

dunes and sky.

Grace Bell said the designer was the late artist George Elmer Browne. Browne painted camouflage on U.S. Navy ships during World War I and many thought he was trying to camouflage the standpipe. However, Charlie Mayo, former selectman, said that much to the contrary, the design stood out.

Collinson said the pipe was repainted gray after the design peeled off. Clifton Nelson seemed to remember some discussion about whether aircraft would be able to see the pipe if it were camouflaged and that's why it was painted gray.

Bearing out the belief that history repeats itself, Provincetown is again divided over how to paint the newest standpipe. Since last week *The Advocate* has received numerous suggestions (see pages 14 & 15). Unfortunately, many of the drawings couldn't be reproduced.



New and old standpipes beside Monument

Advocate photo by Steven Schwadron

Provincetown Advocate, Thursday, April 27, 1978

Standpipe work almost done

Construction work on the new 3.8 million gallon water standpipe is due for completion by the middle of May, according to Whitman and Howard, the water engineering firm supervising the project.

The capacity of the new water tower is about twice that of the old standpipe located next to it. The new standpipe will be 108 feet tall with a diameter of 78 feet.

The cost of construction will probably exceed the contract bid of \$524,892 by about \$10,000 because of change orders during construction, said Arthur Stockus of Whitman and Howard. The federal government is underwriting improvements to the town's water distribution system with a large grant from the

Economic Development Administration.

The steel work, which started last July, is scheduled to be done by the second week in May, Stockus said. The firm began the project last May.

Once the steel work is finished, the standpipe will be painted. The town has not yet decided what color to paint the tower. Stockus said the painting subcontractors who bid on the job will supply paint chips for possible color choices.

The new tower should be available for service this summer, Stockus said. He also said the town may consider renovating the old standpipe, which will eventually be used in tandem with the new tower.

The contract for building the new tower contains no provision for renovating the old standpipe. Stockus said the town is considering taking the old tower out of service temporarily for repairs in the fall, once the new standpipe is in use.

After hours of serious deliberation

Standpipe to be painted light blue

By Susan Areson

After hours of serious deliberation, the Provincetown selectmen voted 2-1 Tuesday to paint the new standpipe "Northern Sky," a very light blue.

Selectman Fred Ambrose proposed the color and Mary-Jo Avellar voted with him. Selectman George Bryant was holding out for canary yellow and voted against the motion.

"I hate blue," Avellar said, "but I'll go along with it just to get away from gray." Avellar charged that Selectman Munro Moore, who abstained from the vote to avoid a tie, is dull because of his preference for gray. Ambrose agreed.

"Gray sticks out more than light blue," Ambrose said, adding that he had spent the last week studying the standpipe and its surroundings on his trips along Route 6. He said the pipe should blend in with its surroundings.

Moore argued that once the standpipe is blue it will detract from the Monument. But he was shot down by Avellar who said nothing can compete with the Monument. Moore's other objection is that all the standpipes will end up being different colors at the rate the town is going.

"I would vote in favor of blue if I could get a verbal commitment that if the others need to be repainted it would be done the same color," he said.

Bryant, who said blue was too cold a color, nominated

"Jersey Peach," a sand color, as a compromise to his first choice of canary yellow.

Although no one was at the meeting when the color was announced, Ambrose said he was glad the decision had been postponed because everyone in town had such a good time discussing the painting of the pipe. Two weeks ago the board decided to hold off on the color choice in order to get public input. Since then, Town Hall, the selectmen and *The Advocate* have received hundreds of suggestions for the standpipe painting, ranging from gray to fancy designs.

Descriptions and drawings of rainbows, landscapes and geometric designs were sent by those who felt Provincetown's artistic element should be represented in the new standpipe but many argued that a gaudy standpipe would stick out like a sore thumb.

Although still divided among themselves, the selectmen were determined to make the color decision at Tuesday's meeting because they didn't want the standpipe to rust away before the choice was made.

Old timers in town remember when the old standpipe was painted with a design done by the late Provincetown artist George Elmer Browne. Browne, who was a camouflage artist during World War I, designed the pipe with browns at the bottom, shades of sandy yellow in the middle and shades of blue at the top. The design was painted over in gray when the paint peeled off.

blue