

1936

MEMORIES OF A fog-bound collision 30 years ago in Boston Harbor that sent a Provincetown excursion steamer to the bottom, were revived recently when Commander Charles Nixon, who commands two vessels engaged in coast and geodetic surveys, announced that the long-lost hull of the sunken vessel had been found. The excursion steamer Romance, which had begun her daily Summer trips here in June, 1936, was rammed on September 9, 1936, by the outbound Boston-New York steamer, New York, in dense fog near Graves Light. The Romance was nearing Boston with 164 passengers when the large New York-bound vessel rammed a gaping hole in her hull. Quick thinking by the skipper of the New York saved passengers and crew of the Romance. He held the prow of his ship in the hole rammed in the Romance and passengers and crew of the sinking vessel clambered to safety on the New York — which then put back into Boston with the rescued. The New York, herself, went to the bottom off the Irish coast in 1944, the victim of a German U-boat. The vessel had been engaged in the government convoy service. The battered superstructure of the Romance washed ashore on Winthrop Beach, drawing crowds in search of wreckage, but her hull had not been found until a geodetic survey ship located it.

Advocate - June 23, 1966

- July 1, 1965 -

WITH UNRESERVED SYMPATHY for the efforts of the Town Manager and Selectmen to bring a daily excursion boat to Provincetown, The Advocate reports its adventures yesterday in checking down a report that the Island Queen II, of Island Queen II, Inc., was due here today to begin its Summer schedule. We checked the report with the Harbor-master, whose cheerful belief was that the steamer — whose owners had been hopeful she would make it the week before — would arrive at MacMillan Wharf at 1 p.m., or so. The Harbormaster said his confidence was based on intelligence from Attorney John Snow, counsel for the line. But Mr. Snow could only say that the line had informed him the day before that the Island Queen II had experienced some mechanical trouble on a trial run and her owners, therefore, would have to delay her arrival. Meanwhile, back at the Town Manager's office, the word was that the Town had not yet signed a lease for dockage. The lease would be signed as soon as the line paid the required percentage of the \$3,000 dockage fee, and the Coast Guard had inspected the vessel and given it safety clearance. At the time of writing this newspaper was unable to pin-point the location of the Island Queen II, or guess whether, with all difficulties resolved, the steamer was finally under way and headed for MacMillan Wharf. But the printer, who had caught some of the conversation with the involved parties, had a suggestion: "Why not have the Coast Guard run a steamer here?"

June 24, 1965

ALTHOUGH NEGOTIATIONS are continuing with Island Queen II, Inc., for operation of a Provincetown-Boston excursion steamer, the line has informed the Selectmen and Town Manager that daily sailings, scheduled to begin this weekend, are delayed. The line, however, says it intends to operate a steamer here, the Island Queen II, and that the delay is only temporary. Dockage fees have been agreed on by the Selectmen and representatives of the line.

THE NEW BOAT * PASSENGER SHIP "M.V. PROVINCETOWN"

Provincetown Advocate - November 30, 1972

Beantown To P-town By Water

Come this summer, you're going to be able to travel from Beantown to P-town without having to watch anything else go by except water.

You're going to be able to do it on a new boat. And that new boat is going to be called "Provincetown."

The "Provincetown" is being built for the Bay State Spray Cruises company, which last year was granted permission to dock at MacMillan Wharf.

Or at least it seemed to have that permission completely sewed up until it ran into a hitch. The hitch was the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard wanted to build a new station in Provincetown Harbor, and behind the

new breakwater, to replace the station out at Race Point. When it met resistance to building anywhere along the tax-valuable shore, the Coast Guard proposed a station on pilings off MacMillan Wharf.

This proposal threatened the space to be taken by the Boston-to-Provincetown boat. But the Coast Guard couldn't get its proposal to build off MacMillan Wharf past the voters at last year's Annual Town Meeting.

The Coast Guard went back to the drawing boards, and no one down here has heard a word from them since except that they are fishing for money for the project from Congress.

Thus the dock was left clear

for the boat of the Bay State Cruises Company.

The company revealed, in a letter to Town Manager Gardner Benson, that the new vessel is approximately halfway through its construction.

If the boat is finished in time, it will make the trip out of Boston to Provincetown and back once on both Saturday and Sunday during the last part of June and during July and August, the boat would go back and forth daily.

According to the agreement established last winter with the town, the vessel will leave Boston at 9:30 in the morning, arrive in Provincetown at 12:30, leave Provincetown at 3:30 and arrive back in Boston at 6:30. That's a three-hour trip, which is about the time it takes to drive the distance during the more dreadful periods of summer traffic.

The boat will not carry motor vehicles as did the former ferry from Boston.

- April 3, 1973 -

THE LAST BOSTON BOAT stopped operating in 1968, and the summer scene on the Wharf has never been quite the same. But this season the daily round trips will begin again. A formal announcement of the launching of the MV "Provincetown" this afternoon (Thursday) in South Bristol, Maine arrived at our office last week. We couldn't attend the launching, but we were pleased to note that the Bay State Spray and Provincetown Steamship Company's plans are proceeding as scheduled. The "Provincetown," according to these plans, will make one round trip daily (three hours in each direction), leaving Boston about 9:30 in the morning, and leaving Provincetown at 3:30 in the afternoon. She's 135 feet long, weighs 99 tons, and will carry up to 600 passengers. When she's been fully fitted out, she'll go into operation—but that may not be until August.