

# Incorporated in 1727, Town of Provincetown to Hold Celebration

## Anniversary Next Week Will Be Biggest Event Since the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims

The 200th anniversary of the incorporation of Provincetown will be celebrated next week and hundreds of people from all over the world who know and love Provincetown will journey to this town at the tip end of Cape Cod for the historical event. For the beauty of the ever-changing blue-green sea rolling in upon the white beach, the repose of the barren, picturesque sand dunes, the quaint enchantment of the winding streets and the lovely old houses—all must be seen and lived with to be fully understood and appreciated. Those who know Provincetown know its strange fascination—and it can't be told in mere words.

### HISTORICAL INTEREST

Here you will find just what you are looking for. A "new" place, and yet so old! It was here that the sturdy Pilgrims made their first landing at noon on Saturday, Nov. 11, in 1620, while the Mayflower lay at anchor in one of the most beautiful harbors on the coast. It was on the Mayflower while in Provincetown harbor that the famous Compact was signed. Monuments of great beauty commemorate the historical events that transpired here.

One of these monuments, rising almost 200 feet above the rolling hill upon which it is built, provides the visitor with his first glimpse of the town, whether you come by motor, train or boat. And no matter which you choose to come—for come you must—the trip is delightful and full of interest. The motor road is particularly good and is open the year round.

### EARLY HISTORY

To the stranger who has never visited the town, and knows it only from the generally accepted stories regarding the place, there would appear to be little of interest in the history, either of the place or the people, but to many there is and unending charm in its barren sand dunes, its ever changing marine views, its beautiful sunsets, the responsive

hospitality of its people, and one loves the old town both for its associations and its history.

The earliest record is of the landing of Thorvald with his crew of Icelanders in 1004; it is said that here he lost his ship on the treacherous sands of Provincetown, and here in an encounter with the savages, he was mortally wounded by an arrow and knowing that the end of life was near he requested his crew to bury him in the place "where we repaired our ship and place a cross at my grave and call the place Cape of the Crosses."

While the exact locality of that grave is unknown yet there is no doubt that the dust of this hardy navigator is mingled with the sands of Provincetown and structures of masonry and ruins of their habitations have been found buried in the sands.

Bartholomew Gosnold visited the place on May 15, 1602, and it is recorded that while here a codfish was caught and from this fact he named the place Cape Cod.

The next visitor was Capt. John Smith of Pocohontas fame whose life she saved when about to be executed by her savage father Powhatan; this visit was

## CELEBRATES 200TH ANNIVERSARY



Picturesque Provincetown as seen from the air.

in 1614. This early data, while somewhat hazy, has more or less foundation of fact.

The first authentic history is the landing of the Pilgrims at this place, Nov. 11, 1620 (O. S.) and from that date the history of the town is clear; for although their permanent settlement was at Plymouth the ship laid in this harbor for one month, here Perigrine White, the first English child born in New England, first saw light, and here Dorothy, the wife of Gov. Bradford, was drowned and her remains never recovered. Here also the "Immortal Compact, said to be the first form of constitutional government in history, was signed, the nucleus from which sprang the constitution of the United States; here, too, they built a vessel, and here Miles Standish marshalled his vallant army of 16 men, to explore the new country and to protect the colonists from attacks by the hostile savages who surrounded them.

Since that date, there has always been more or less of a settlement; the Pilgrims for years resorting here each fishing season for carrying on the fisheries, and more or less of them becom-

ing permanent settlers. The town remained a precinct for many years, but was incorporated as a town in 1727. At three different periods, June 12, 1913, March 2, 1829, and March 30, 1836, parts of the neighboring town of Truro have been annexed, and its boundaries extended. A large part of its territory was lotted land at first, for many years, and belonged to the state or province, and known as province land, hence the name of the town, and the inhabitants held their titles under "Squatters sovereignty," but section 5, chapter 470 of the acts of 1893 the titles to the land occupied by the inhabitants were confirmed, and the title to the remaining territory of the township is still vested in the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The town took little part in the revolutionary war; it contained at that time but 36 families, 205 inhabitants and 20 houses and being located on the most exposed part of the coast, the colonists were unable for lack of money and men to fortify the place, and it was regarded in a way as neutral, although many of its citizens were engaged on board of

privateers and in the Continental army, who were not credited to the town. For this reason the enemy made use of the harbor as a rendezvous for their warships, and by keeping men aloft on the lookout, could see over what is now Beach Point, and vessels going to or from Boston or other northern ports, which must pass back of the town, were seen and a ship could easily be sent out to intercept and capture them. For this reason it was a constant menace to Boston. The British ships when in want of water or provisions, compelled the inhabitants to supply them, which demand the town was in no position to refuse. It is recorded, however, that in no case did they neglect to pay for anything that the people supplied.

A similar state of affairs existed during the war of 1812, and the British warships made the same use of the harbor as in 1775, the government being unable to protect it, it was entirely in the power of the enemy, who did not hesitate to make exactions for supplies whenever they needed them.

At least one naval engagement took place off Provincetown, the battle between the American ship Chesapeake, Capt. James Lawrence, and the British ship Shannon, Capt. Broke, on May 29, 1813, within sight of the hilltops where the people of the town flocked to see the battle, and although the result was disastrous to the American ship, which was captured and taken to Halifax, N. S., and Lawrence and many of his crew were killed, yet it has always been looked on with pride by all Americans, for brave defense of the American ship and the last words of Lawrence as he was being taken below to die, "Don't give up the ship," has been a watchword in the American navy to this day.

From the earliest history of the town to the present time, its chief and its only industry of importance, has been the fisheries. In pursuit of this arduous calling the sails of Provincetown fishermen have whitened nearly every sea in the North Atlantic, their voyages have only been limited by the frozen barriers of the North or the heated belt of the tropics, and occasional voyages have been made into and even beyond these limits.