

- October 12, 1961 -

Mrs. Mary E. Sparrow

Funeral services were held Monday afternoon at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Barnstable, for Mrs. Mary Evelyn Sparrow, 98, life-long resident of Provincetown, who died Saturday at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Ralph S. Barrow, on Main Street, Barnstable. The Rev. Paul Clark Martin, Rector, officiated and interment was in the Provincetown Cemetery. Rev. Gilman L. Lane, of the Provincetown Methodist Church, officiated at the graveside service.

The widow of Capt. William Chester Sparrow, Mrs. Sparrow had spent the winters for the last nine years at her daughter's home.

Born in Provincetown, the daughter of Andrew Thomas and Evelina N. (Soper) Williams, she was a co-founder of the Provincetown Historical Museum and a life-long member of the Provincetown Methodist Church. She had lectured extensively on the U. S. Lifesaving Service of which her late husband was a member.

Survivors include two daughters, Mrs. Barrow, and Mrs. Gordon M. Spooner of Boston; one sister, Miss Nina S. Williams of Provincetown; two nephews and one niece.

MEMORIAL TO MRS. SPARROW by a relative

Mrs. Mary Evelyn Williams Sparrow, widow of the late Captain William Chester Sparrow, died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Ralph S. Barrow, in Barnstable at 9 a.m., Saturday, October 7th.

Mrs. Sparrow was aged 98 years, 11 months and 30 days: had she lived one more day, she would have attained the ripe old age of 99 years. She was born in Provincetown on October 9th, 1862 and had lived the greater part of her life in the house at 73 Commercial St., which continues to be the family residence. She was indeed a life long resident of Provincetown, as had been her forefathers for four or more generations. Her only period away from her beloved native town was during her residence at Hull, where for 20 years her husband, Capt. Sparrow was the rather distinguished and doughty leader of the United States Life Saving Service (now U. S. Coast Guard) at the pivotal Point Allerton Station in Boston Harbor. Here at Hull she brought up her family of two daughters, Lillian and Isabel, and contributed to the immortalizing of her husband's humanitarian work by lecturing with notable charm up and down the New England Coast

on the true meaning and humanitarian values of the Life Saving Service. The dramatic slides used by her in these presentations are available to this day.

Mrs. Sparrow grew up in the West End in the days when Provincetown was a sturdy Yankee whaling and fishing community, where the men folks followed the sea and the women gave themselves to home, children, church and charity. Her Lincoln-like father, Andrew Thomas Williams, was the owner for several decades of the Union Wharf Company, Ship Owners and Ship Chandlers. He was a citizen himself of the highest order, never seeking public office, but ever devoted to the public weal in education and in civics.

Mrs. Sparrow's mother, Evelina Nickerson Soper Williams, a saintly person, was known as the lady of mercy of the West End and her daughter inherited from her this gracious role among her neighbors.

Mrs. Sparrow was from her girlhood on, a faithful and active member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. She knew and loved the old Centenary Methodist, which historic edifice burned to the ground in 1908. On returning to Provincetown after the Hull years she worshipped and worked in the new Centenary which was erected on the same site in the West End. She conceived the idea and was the first President of its Mother's Club.

Another great interest of this descendant of the Mayflower (William Brewster and Stephen Hopkins) was local colonial history. Together with the well remembered Grace Fielding Hall, Mrs. Sparrow was co-founder of the Provincetown Research Club, serving as its president for several years. From this club the Historical Museum sprung and was established in its present quarters on Commercial Street in the center of the town.

Mrs. Sparrow stood out among her fellow townswomen as a cultured lady of the old school, a true aristocrat of the spirit, ever given to all good works and to hospitality. As a speaker and reader in her younger years, she was much in demand at public gatherings, reciting as an accomplished elocutionist, classic selections from American and English authors. As her life work comes to an end there seemingly comes also the end of an age, an age of quiet dignity, intimate neighborliness, and church centeredness.

Mrs. Sparrow is survived by her sister Miss Nina Soper Williams, with whom she has lived at the old homestead since the death of



↑ -1904-

Capt. Sparrow in 1932, and her daughters, Mrs. Ralph S. Barrow of Barnstable and Mrs. Gordon M. Spooner of Boston.

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