

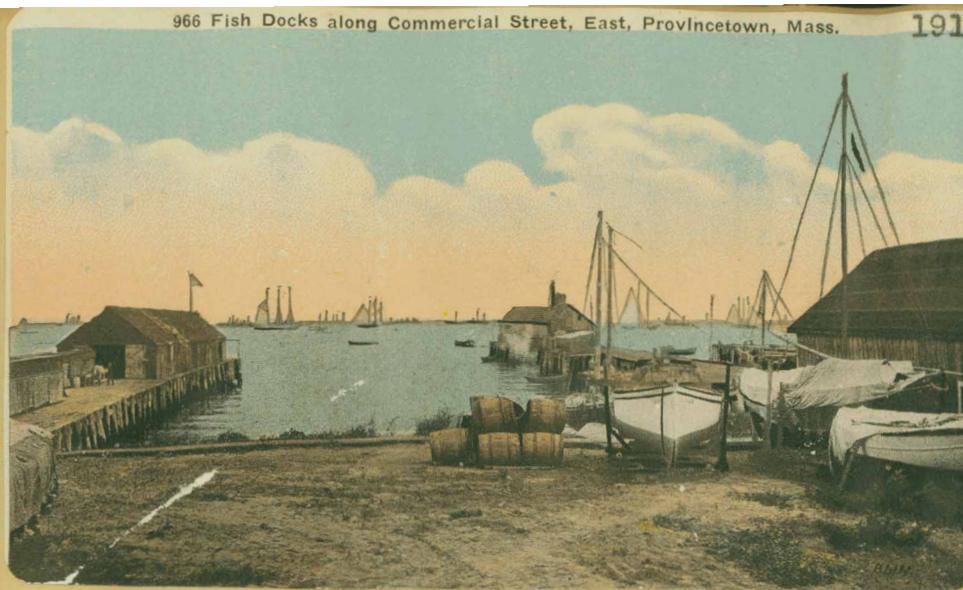
Early Wharves

The first wharf was built about 1835 at the suggestion of Thomas Lothrop. Prior to this new project, all cargoes from vessels were landed in baskets or "sedans." Though at first looked upon with doubt, the wharf proved a most successful venture and between the date of the building of the first wharf and the year 1848, 23 more wharves were erected. The Union Wharf in the west end of the town was considered the largest business corporation on Cape Cod, with Central Wharf as a close second. Each of these wharves had Marine Railways leading to cradles where ships rested when being repaired and painted. On these wharves, blacksmith's shops, ship's carpenter's shops and sail lofts were erected. Other shops along the waterfront sold equipment for repairing and fitting vessels. Spar yards were established. Block-makers, coopers, tin-smiths and ship-chandlers operated thriving establishments here.

With the majority of men in this locality active in all branches of the fishing industry, the making of oil from whales, blackfish, porpoise and dog fish developed. Early in the 18th century, oil works were established on Long Point. The pioneer in this business was Nathaniel E. Atwood. In 1886, Nickerson's Whale and Menhaden Oil Works were built at Herring Cove, located not far from Race Point Lighthouse. The next year a bone crusher and engine were added. This business increased and at the height of its prosperity, employed 30 or more men and circulated through the town an average yearly of \$10,000.

The discovery of petroleum fields in this country meant the decline of the whaling and whale oil industry. A large part of the whaling fleet was sold, while a great many ships were lost. There are no traces left of this once prosperous business. Even the wharves have decayed and been washed away. Yet, may this heritage of past history be an inspiration for the future. "Life is a continuous process of creation" and "We rise on the things that are under our feet," so let us go actively forward with faith and courage, believing that just beyond the horizon a glorious future is sailing towards us and someday soon it will round Long Point and drop anchor here, just as the Mayflower did in 1620.

The old pumps should also be mentioned. At the head of several of the wharves were the old pumps where water was put aboard the out-bound vessels. In these wells were the big wooden pumps and when they were filling the vessels there would be three or four men working together. The family wells had "the old oaken bucket." How refreshing on a hot day in summer to see the bucket drawn to the top filled with sparkling water and how much better it tasted then—than now when with just a turn of the faucet we quench our thirst!



September 22, 1938

Provincetown Escapes Serious Damage As Tropical Hurricane Lashes Shore

Telephone Service Disrupted—Lighting Company Quickly
Restores Service—Fishing Boat Stella Damaged—
Police Give Prompt Service

A mad, howling hurricane, blowing at a rate variously estimated at between 90 and 100 miles an hour roared into Provincetown from the southeast yesterday afternoon and for a time it seemed as though it might take its pick of the town with it. But the tip of the Cape, itself created by the fury of wind and sea, took it square on the chin, shuddered, rocked a bit and stood firm.

In fact, compared with the devastation which littered the path of the tropical storm in such cities as Providence, Lawrence, Lowell, Boston and suburban cities, Provincetown escaped really serious damage. At the height of the blow the tide was receding and on the change the wind began shifting to the southwest to give the town the safety of Long Point's long protecting arm.

Sand Storm

But with no sea on which to spend its force, the wind picked up tons of sand from the shore and hurled them against the buildings on Commercial Street. In the vicinity of Howland Street the main stem looked more like the beach, completely covered with sand and, to add a touch of realism, a dory had been cast a hundred feet to rest like Joseph's boat on dry land.

This morning found several boats beached and more or less damaged by the storm.

At Old Canning Factory Wharf, the 26-foot sloop Kitty, owned by R. MacNab Emery was hurled against the pier and sustained damages to her bowsprit and rail. Frank Fratus' cabin launch Rebecca and Mildred lay swamped at the same point. The yacht Chantey, owned by Charles Mayo, was driven ashore near these vessels with a smashed rudder.

Coast Guards said that it was the worst storm since the sinking of Patrol Boat 238 off Highland in 1926 and officers in charge of the stations were forced to call back men on leave and liberty to battle the storm and keep equipment available for any emergency. Communication between stations was disrupted by broken lines and special beach patrols were sent out.

Coast Guard repairmen said that the station line above Highland was broken in several places. Damage was caused by heavy sleet that clung to the wires and bore them to the ground.

During the height of the storm, Race Point Coast Guards plowed

through the drifts with the station tractor to repair a break in the line between Race Point and Highland, and the station truck rescued several cars that had become marooned on Race Road.

Tracks Cleared

For the first time in years, the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad sent a Flanger plow out to clear the track. The engineer said that drifts were heaviest for a distance of ten miles between Provincetown and Wellfleet, and that in several places the engine had difficulty in bucking through them. The snow was mixed with a fine sand.

A number of residents in out of way places found themselves unable to get through the drifts and were forced to abandon automobiles and proceed on foot. In several sections the snow was too deep for the truck plows and gangs of recruits were sent out with shovels.

The wind was from the northeast, and the Provincetown waterfront did not receive the full force of the storm. Coast Guards reported that giant combers lashed the back shore and threatened to break through at Pamet River and on Monomoy Point.