

Boat-Building Art Thrives Here

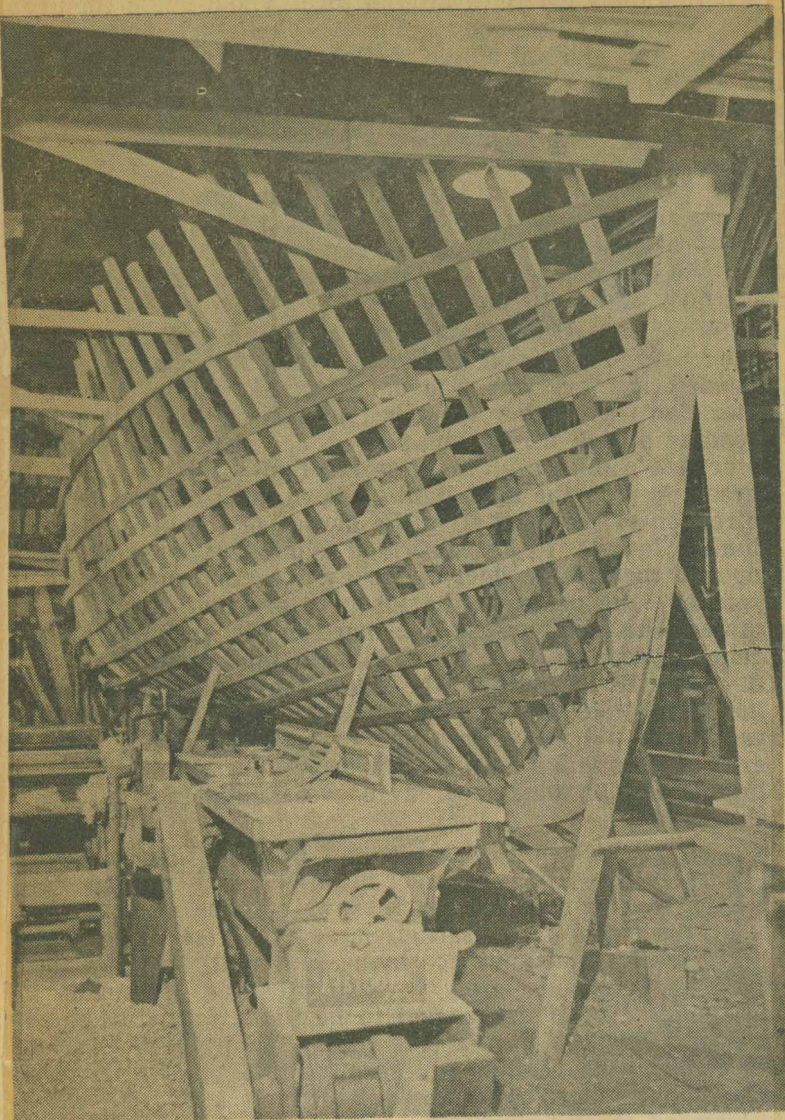


photo by Dick Medeiros

A rainy day when fishing is curtailed brings Cape fishermen all the way from Barnstable to Frank Taves' boatyard in the West End, there to watch a salt water craft taking shape from oak and mahogany and bronze — each week resembling more and more the sturdy boat that will serve her owner in fair weather and foul.

They come from Barnstable, Yarmouth, Chatham, Orleans and other Cape towns, to stand quietly around, smoking and watching the practise of an old art and craft that shows up best when man ply it by hand.

The mass-produced boat may be slick enough, the fishermen admit, but there's something about the boat built by hand that involves them as no factory-built craft ever can; wrapped up in her timbers, planking and screws are their livelihood and often their very lives.

Under construction at the Taves yard is a 38-foot, 10-inch lobster boat to be delivered in Spring to Herbert Lovell, Barnstable lobster fisherman. The Taves yard is now the only one on the Cape building large craft. Small boats — dinghies motor boats and sailing craft — are still being turned out at other Cape yards but the Provincetown boat builders are the only ones building large ones.

The Lovell boat — she will be called the Mayflower — has a five-by 16-inch one-piece keel, 32 feet long. She has a 12-foot beam. Her mahogany hull is fastened with Everdur bronze screws — there'll never be streaks from rusty screws down her hull — and her oaken frame is shaped of "steam bend" timbers, tough enough to take the rough seas when they come. Her timbers are being laid down on 10-inch centers.



PROVINCETOWN WATERFRONT

Flyer's Boatyard (Now "Taves"). Building in back on right is the Anchor & Ark. About 1955

John W. Gregory