



This is site in Provincetown where Pilgrims first put foot on American soil. Arrow points to spot where Landing Place is commemorated by bronze marker.

Pilgrims Made First Landing At (The Castle on the hill) (Provincetown Inn, right)

PROVINCETOWN--NOT PLYMOUTH

By RUTH H. FROST

ASK THE AVERAGE American where the Pilgrims first landed in 1620; the chances are he'll answer, "That's easy. Plymouth, Mass." But the truth is that Provincetown was the doorstep of American history in New England.

Good-natured rivalry as to Pilgrim honors is traditional between the two towns.

The skirmish resolves itself into: "You may keep your Rock," says Provincetown to Plymouth, "As for us, we have the First Landing."

"It is all in fun," said Harry Kemp, president of the Provincetown Pilgrim Association and nationally known as Poet of the Sand Dunes. "Yet it has a serious side, too. Probably nine out of 10 Americans have it fixed in their minds that the Pilgrims first came ashore at Plymouth. Or,

if taught that the original landing was on Cape Cod, they assume that Cape Cod means Plymouth."

But Provincetown would have the rest of the world know that Plymouth isn't on Cape Cod by many a mile. You're not on the Cape until you cross over one of the canal bridges.

Schoolbooks of past generations were partly responsible for the misconception, according to Kemp. Even today, pop-

ular Almanacs continue to give the wrong impression when they state in a chronology of events, "1620: The Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock."

In Worcester schools, the Pilgrim story is taught in the sixth grade and again in high school. Two authors of textbooks in current use make it clear that the Pilgrims first anchored in what is now Provincetown. A third author states "The Mayflower reached the shores of Cape Cod."

STRANGELY enough, much of the blame is laid on the pen of an English woman who never saw New England in her life.

Legend has it that Felicia Hemans over in Wales once unwrapped a package of groceries done up in an old Boston newspaper from across the ocean; out of curiosity she began to read it. The account of Plymouth's Forefathers' Day celebration in 1824 so fired her imagination that she sat

down and wrote:

"The breaking waves dashed high, On a stern and rock-bound coast."

The popular poem helped make the country at large more Pilgrim-conscious—but somehow she slanted the American mind toward Plymouth in her "Landing of the Pilgrims."

Mention this verse to loyal Provincetowners and they point out that it certainly was no rockbound coast where our forefathers first landed. Look at it. Why, there's not a rock within miles. Just sand. Nice clean, white sand. A clam-bound coast would be nearer the truth, Cape Codders insist.

ONE OF the plans pioneered by the Provincetown Pilgrim Association, established last November, is to celebrate Nov. 21 as "Landing Day," locally first, state-wide next, then, who knows? Perhaps Landing Day may become a national holiday. Last year saw the beginning, with a modest pageant at the waterfront.

Another aim is to build a replica of the Mayflower from specifications found in the Mariners Library in London, to be anchored in Provincetown harbor as a national shrine for Americans to visit. Too visionary? Not at all; Provincetown's Pilgrim Monument was a dream 60 years before it became a reality.

For five eventful weeks the Mayflower lay in Provincetown Harbor. During that time the Mayflower Compact was drawn up and signed. The Pilgrims had their first encounter with Indians. The famous old ship came near being blown to bits, due to the mischief of a small Pilgrim boy. New England's first white child was born. Death came to four, including the drowning of the 23-year-old wife of William Bradford. And it was in Provincetown where Pilgrim mothers instituted our great national custom of Monday washdays.

AMERICA is fortunate to have first-hand accounts of these events. You may read them in Governor Bradford's own language in his history of "Plymouth," also in letters Bradford and Edward Winslow wrote back to England, later published and quaintly titled