

1795  
In Provincetown harbor, many of the vessels had battled the stormy sea outside to seek refuge there only to be torn from their anchorage and driven ashore on the west end of the harbor until the count reached 19. Other vessels hung to their moorings only to be battered by the huge seas which flooded them, and they still rest there on the bottom of the harbor. Not a thing could be seen of these happenings - only by indirect messages that took time to render the necessary aid.

At Wood End Life Saving Station, Provincetown, this same fateful night of November 27, 1898, a beach patrol was sent out at midnight: F.C. Wages went north and A.L. Burch (Uncle Bert) south (toward Long Point). The keeper, I.G. Fisher, on duty in the watch tower, paced back and forth in the narrow space unable to penetrate the thick blanket of snow and sleet driving past the tower in fearful gusts. As early morn wore on, no reports came through. Wages came back at 6.A.M., but Burch had not yet appeared. Shortly after 6 o'clock, he came to the conclusion it was time to call the crew for a search for his south

patrol. Waiting for a last momentary glance through the clear between squalls, he caught sight of his man staggering through the heavy drifts to the station.

"Well, What's the trouble, Burch?" Fisher greeted him. "Trouble a-plenty, I guess, Cap'n. There's a schooner sunk on the edge of the middle sand bar and I believe there's men in the riggin'".

The crew turned out and the heavy surf boat was pushed and pulled through snow drifts and over bare tops of sand dunes to the edge of the surf. Repeated efforts to launch the boat were very hazardous, not only by the gale, sleet, and heavy surf that was running, but there was serious dan-

ger from the drifting logs that had washed ashore from the many wrecked wharves in town. Even after they had succeeded in launching and getting clear of the breakers and logs it was beyond human strength to row against such a gale, and they were going to leeward fast. Keeper Fisher bellowed an order: "S'no use, boys, head her inshore!" The forms of 4 townsmen loomed out of the sleet to offer assistance and



John R. Smith

After the Portland Gale - 1898.  
Union Wharf, opposite Cottage Street, (which is the second St. after turn)