

Under full sail on a port tack the private yacht leaves Provincetown harbor.

L.M. Snow photos courtesy of John Bell.

The Last Great Schooner Launch

This page recaptures a Provincetown event of 73 years ago, the launching of the yacht *Charlotte*. The pictures were taken by L.M. Snow and the event was recorded in the June 20, 1901 issue of the *Advocate* in some detail. And why not, since no vessels had been built and launched in Provincetown in the preceding 25 years.

The 88-foot schooner was built on order at the Whitcomb shipyard and designed for near-shore and trans-ocean cruises. The two masts (65.5-foot mainmast, topmast, 33; 61.5-foot foremast, topmast 30) were made from Oregon pine and it was "the first craft to slide down the ways to the sea with masts standing and rigging all set up.

The yacht's construction attracted much in-town attention. The launching of a big yacht "that has grown bit

by bit, from the section of the keel up through the various stages of timbering, planking, ceiling, mast-stepping and rigging on the ways, all in plain, everyday sight, was a novelty, and the citizens were much interested in the launching."

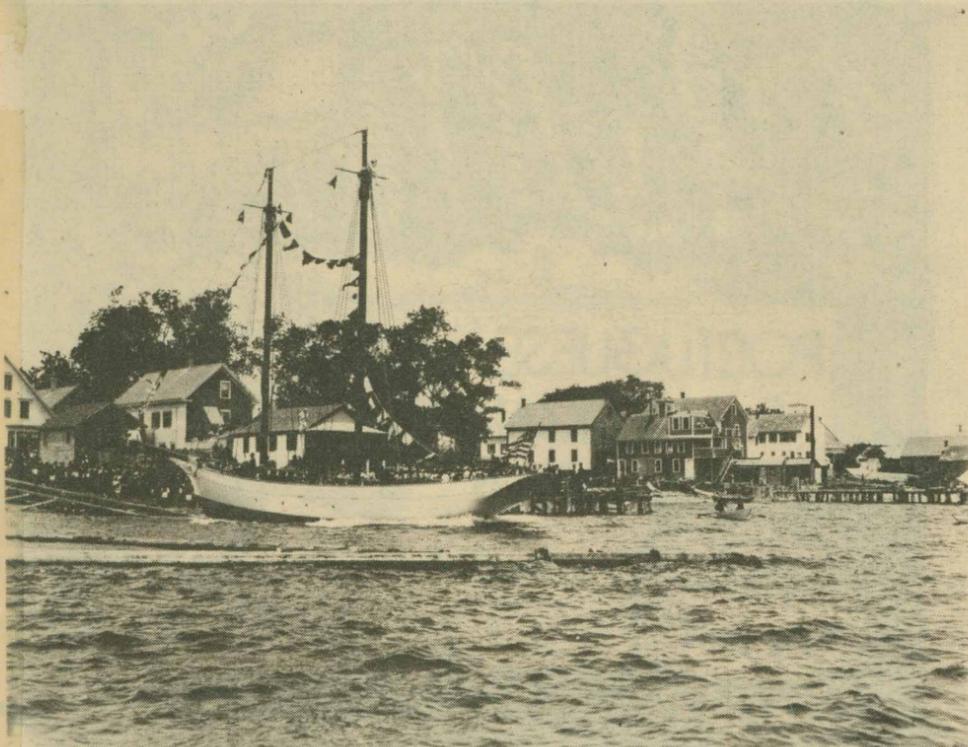
Following, the first portion of the *Advocate's* page 2 story on the *Charlotte* launching.

"The launching, June 18th, of yacht *Charlotte* may be noted as an event of rare occurrence and foremost among the events of 1901. In honor of the occasion the public schools were dismissed at an early hour. Hundreds assembled in the vicinity. Never before have the barges been so liberally patronized within a single hour's time. Every one was anxious to be upon the scene at the

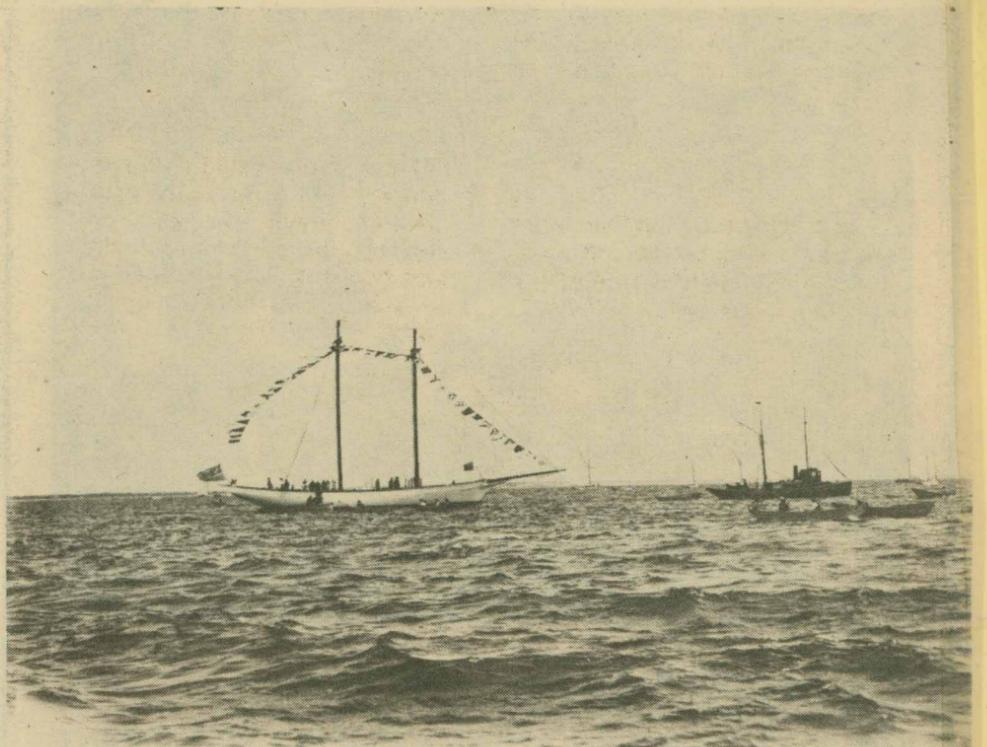
appointed hour. As the noon day sun recorded the hour of twelve slowly and gracefully, christened by Mrs. Lawrence with showers of sparkling champagne, yacht *Charlotte* glided into the waters of Provincetown harbor. The air resounded with cheers and applause, whistles serenaded and the yacht's cannon honored the occasion.

"Decked in holiday attire the *Charlotte* was towed by steamer *Vigilant*, Capt. Fuller, into mid-stream where a sumptuous banquet was served to a number of invited guests.

"Ship carpenter John G. Whitcomb is to be congratulated upon the successful launching of the yacht built under his superintendency the past year. We extend congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. James A. Lawrence," the *Advocate* said.



The yacht CHARLOTTE slides down the ways on the site of the current Bryant's Market parking lot. In the foreground is a floating breakwater setup for the launching.



CHARLOTTE being towed to "mid-stream" by the steamer vigilant after the June 18, 1901 launching.