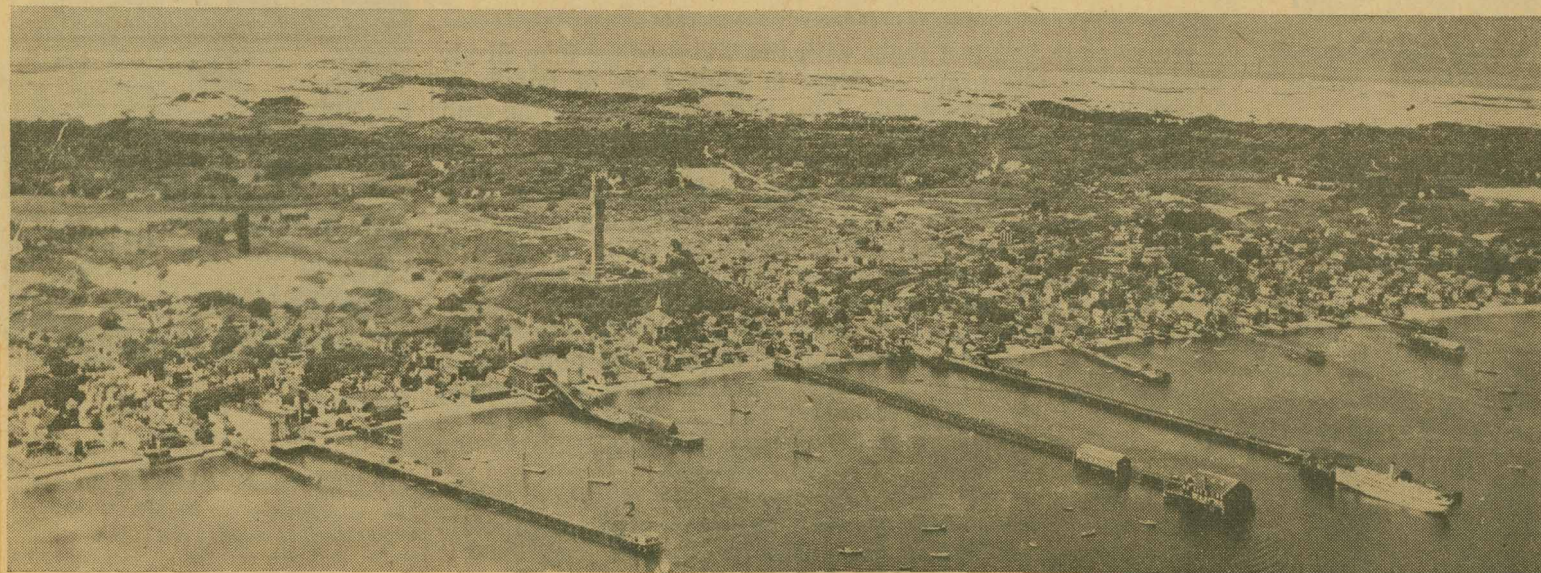


Provincetown, Mass., Looking from Railroad Wharf.

Centenary Church, left; Central House & Christopher Wren Church, Pilgrim Church, Town Hall & Town Hill Railroad Wharf; "Matheson's Clothier" Store; Higgins wharf with "Adams Market Leads Them All" on end Building; Center Methodist Church. Cold Storage at Johnson Street with "Water, Bait and Ice" printed on back; Lumber Schooner at Knowles Wharf. - - ABOUT 1906.

PROVINCETOWN, MASS.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 1969



Fifty-odd years ago the town reached long fingers into the harbor to serve water-borne commerce. At left is D. A. Matheson's Wharf, also known as Steamboat Wharf, at the foot of Court Street. Next, with sloping ramp for hoisting fish to the top floor of the packing plant, is the Colonial Wharf. Opposite the Pilgrim Monument is

Sklaroff's Wharf, now being rebuilt by the Cee-Jay Corp. Railroad Wharf was replaced in 1957 by MacMillan Pier; here the steamer Dorothy Bradford lies at its tip. Next is Higgins Wharf, and the last two short piers, long gone, remain unidentified.

COURTESY OF CYRIL PATRICK

FEBRUARY 20, 1969

Wharf History Amended

Editor, The Advocate:

In reference to the front page picture of the January 30th edition of the Advocate, I differ slightly with the issue of February 6th as to the identification of the wharves to the east of Higgins Wharf. The Provincetown Cold Storage wharf is first. Next is Knowles'. You will note that the inshore portion is missing. This occurred in the late twenties when a Coast Guard cutter was driven ashore in a gale, taking out part of the wharf. Next is Small's Wharf. Pickerts Cannery, which was destroyed in the gale of November '98" and was on the end of Small's Wharf, was rebuilt, but on Conwell's Wharf. Hawthorne held many of his art classes on Small's Wharf and on the nearby beach. You can probably verify the above with Mrs. Cross, who lives on Commercial Street near Law Street. The picture is no more than 40 years old; probably less.

Burleigh H. Cooper
Morton Illinois

February 13, 1969

More Corrections

A lady who wishes to remain unnamed in print gently corrected the Advocate's caption under the January 30 photo of long wharves in the old days. It was not D.A. Matheson, she said, who owned the Court Street wharf — Duncan Matheson had a department store east of Railroad Wharf in what had been a schoolhouse on Long Point in the mid-1880's. (That store burned some 18 years ago and was replaced by Arnold Dwyer's fireproof building on the same site.)

She is right. In J. Wm. "Bill" Burt's 1886 directory of Provincetown no less than 14 Mathesons are listed all of them active in business. It was Capt. William Matheson who owned Steamboat Wharf; another Matheson was freight agent for the steamer Longfellow. More about that remarkable family another time.

see article →