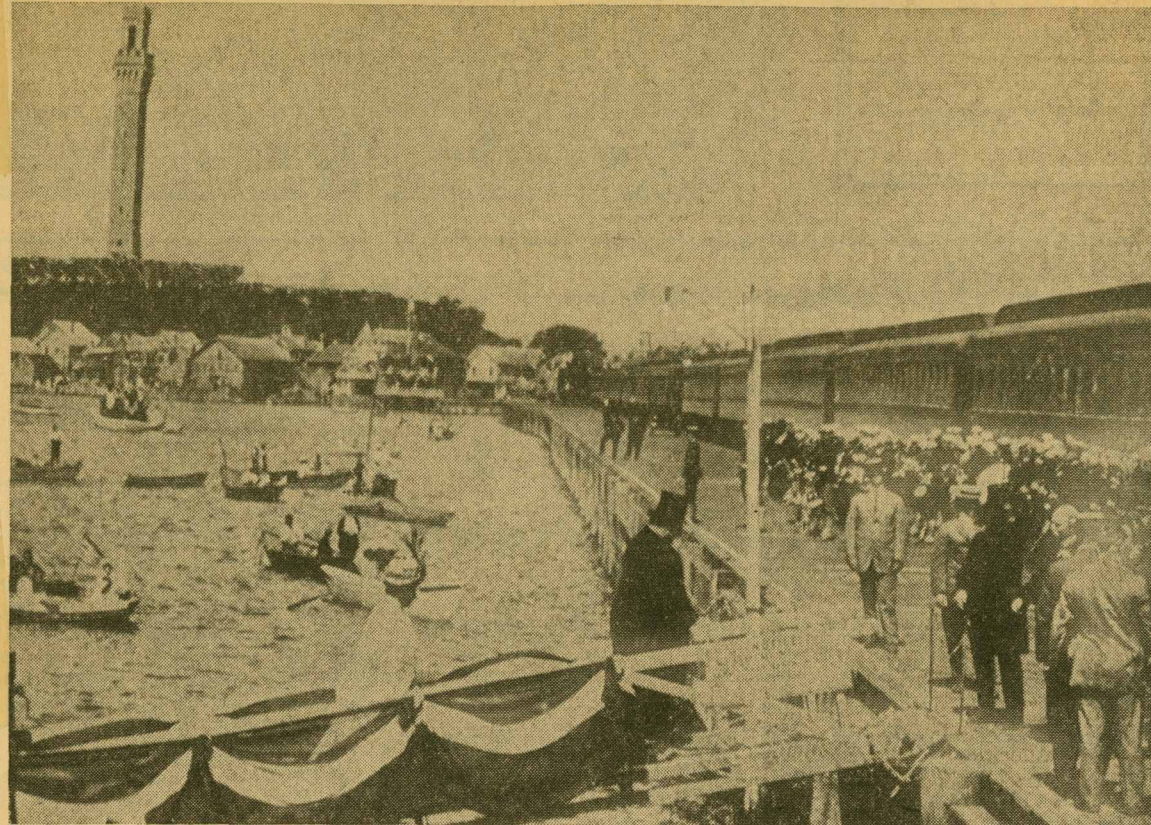


## 50 Years Ago Taft Arrived To Dedicate Monument



This historic photograph shows President Taft coming from the lading float to the old Provincetown Railroad Wharf followed by Mrs. Taft. In the rear are the railroad coaches on the tracks that extended to the end of the wharf and in the distance is the now famous Pilgrim Memorial Monument, which the President and his party came to dedicate 50 years ago tomorrow.

It was 50 years ago tomorrow when the Hon. William Howard Taft hoisted his presidential bulk up the gangplank to the old Provincetown wharf, followed by Mrs. Taft, young son Charles, and members of a distinguished party to figure prominently in the dedication ceremonies of the Pilgrim Memorial Monument, the building of which had been started three years earlier.

Naturally it was a great day in the history of Provincetown, marking as it did the completion of a major construction of this kind, not only for the town but for the nation as well. The date for the dedication of the monument had been selected as the 5th of August because that was the anniversary of the day on which the Pilgrims set sail from Southampton for the voyage to this country.

The General Court of Massachusetts had appropriated the sum of \$30,000 to meet a portion of the expenses of the dedication, and of course, the Governor of the Commonwealth, the Hon. Eben S. Draper, expressed his enthusiastic acceptance of the invitation to be present. Charles W. Eliot, president emeritus of Harvard University, gladly accepted an invitation to make the principal address.

### Fleet In Harbor

On the day before—50 years ago today—the Atlantic Fleet of the United States Navy with eight battleships under the command of Rear Admiral Seaton Schroeder, entered the harbor to assist in the dedicatory ceremonies. The fleet included the battleships Connecticut (flagship of commander in chief), Michigan, Mississippi, Idaho, Louisiana (flagship of commander of second division), South Carolina, Kansas and New Hampshire; supply ship Celtic, repair ship Panther, tender Yankton, hospital ship Solace, collier Mars and tug Patuxent.

It is questionable whether President Taft enjoyed himself nearly as hugely as did President Theodore Roosevelt, who three years before, came to Provincetown to lay the cornerstone of the same

monument, nor, for that matter, were the people who gathered here as thrilled. Reading over the accounts, one gets the impression that President Taft was fulfilling a duty of an office he had assumed, initially, with more or less reluctance. In the case of "T. R." or "Teddy" Roosevelt, a newspaper account relates that the people here "fairly went wild in their enthusiasm. Had it been permitted, the enthusiastic bystanders would have taken the horses from the carriage and drawn the vehicle themselves."

### Famous Speech

Whereas "T. R." had used the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone as perfect for one of his famous speeches in which he castigated many of the prevailing evils of his time and advocated legislation limiting the hours of employment, insuring employees liability, and concern for the health of the country's people President Taft was content with a short address, again outlining a brief account of the story of the Mayflower and its significance. Following the dedication there

was an informal reception and luncheon in Town Hall where a large and distinguished company

enjoyed a menu which included lobster stew, salmon cutlets, with peas; cold roast tenderloin, with vegetable salad, roast turkey, with potato salad; cold tongue and ham, frozen pudding, ices, sherbets, cakes, fruit and coffee.

One of the legends of the day—50 years ago—was regarding the special bath tub installed in the White House to accommodate the 322-pound President, and amusing reference is made to it by President Taft in his remarks during the reception banquet. His speech on this occasion follows:

### Taft's Remarks

"I believe Governor Draper has a Lieutenant-Governor upon whom he can call to act as Governor. I have no such opportunity, unless it is like life insurance, where you have to die to win. Therefore, I cannot give you the variety of calling upon the Vice President to make a speech.

"This occasion suggests a good many thoughts to me. I had the honor of being Secretary of War when the money was expended which assisted in erecting this monument, and to meet many army engineers when supervising its construction. And there I made the very pleasant acquaintance of a gentleman whose part cannot be exaggerated, Captain J. Henry Sears. There was a question running through my mind today when I looked at the monument and saw everything completed, what Captain Sears is going to do after his occupation is gone.

"When you become President of the United States, or even if you only try to, you find out many things about yourself you did not know before, and I am bound to say that most of them you prefer not to find out. There is one exception in my case. I found when I became President I had the honor to be descended from one of those who came over in the Mayflower. You may think that shows great ignorance and blindness to possibilities of greatness, but one of the features of "genealogical-icy" is that the disease does not strike you until you get pretty well along in life, and as I have not attained the age which inspires you to look up your ancestors, I had supposed the first of my family came over in 1679. One traces back the name rather than the people. I presume a man is as much descended from one who does not bear his name as from one who does, if both are in the line of ancestry.

"I want to congratulate the people of Provincetown and the people of the Cape upon this very satisfactory and most interesting monument. The arrangements

have been most complete. Reference has been made to the fact that we came on the Mayflower. We did. The vessel is somewhat different in size and comfort and, I might say, in luxury from that which brought the Pilgrims, but

there are certain stories I should like to deny. We have no special bath tubs made for any executive of any particular size. (Laughter). I don't know whether they had bath tubs on the Mayflower. Presumably it was pretty cold for a bath when they arrived in these waters. It is particularly fitting that the vessel which brought the Chief Magistrate of the nation to the laying of the corner stone, as that the vessel which brought the another to the dedication, should be named the Mayflower. It did not happen from any particular arrangement, only that the vessel was the most suitable, leaving out the question of bath tubs. (Laughter and applause)."