

The Octagon House

Provincetown Advocate, Thursday, May 17, 1973



The Hatchway House, which has been forced to close by repeated demands from the state's Department of Public Safety. The house, which was built in 1834 by a whaling captain, is up for sale.

Hatchway House Rest Home Closes, 8 Senior Citizens Forced To Move

By Marylyn Donahue

The state Department of Public Safety has forced the closing of Hatchway House rest home in Provincetown. Its eight elderly residents have already moved out.

Mrs. Isabel Hatch, owner and operator of the rest home, will leave sometime next week. The well-known octagonal house at 74 Commercial Street is for sale.

Mrs. Hatch decided to sell after a seven-year battle with the DPS. The Department has required installation of a \$1200 sprinkler system for continuation of the rest home license. Such a system is required by law for the licensing of rest homes, but not rooming houses, in the State.

Mrs. Hatch felt that the sprinkler system would damage the original structure of the house. "I didn't want to spoil a lovely old house," she said. Mrs. Hatch also pointed out that the house already has adequate fire protection devices. There are smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in each room.

Mrs. Hatch, a resident of Provincetown for 38 years,

bought the early 19th century octagonal house in 1945. She and her late husband at first ran it as a family inn and then gradually began taking old people in for the winter. The house was licensed in 1957 as a rest home with a capacity for nine residents. The rooms of the house are spacious and sunlit with a porch in front overlooking the harbor.

The eight remaining residents, some of whom have lived with Mrs. Hatch for as long as twenty-five years, had to be relocated to various nursing homes throughout the state.

"It's a tragic thing," said Mrs. Hatch. "It's like uprooting a family of children and sending them all to different homes."

Mrs. Hatch found that some of the nursing homes had long waiting lists of a hundred or more applicants. "There are very few small rest homes like ours left," she explained.

Mrs. Hatch herself will move with her five cats back to her home town in Nova Scotia. "I just couldn't stay in Provincetown seeing someone else living in my house," she said.

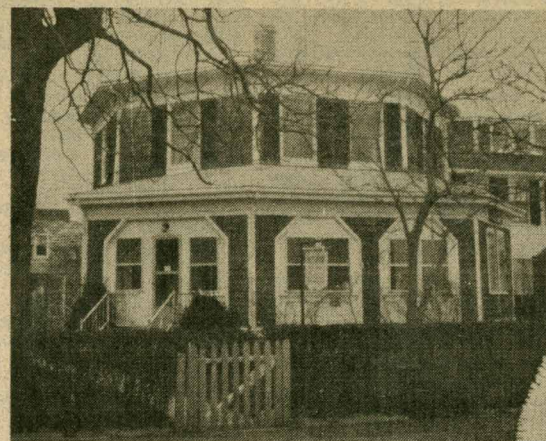
The license for a rest home has to be renewed every two years. "When the state told me to do something, I'd do it; but there's always something else," she said.

"They said we needed two sinks in the kitchen, and when we put in two sinks they said we needed three. Then they said we needed a dishwasher."

Mrs. Hatch, who has been to court several times and appealed to various state agencies for help, explained that she has received no response from state or local town officials. "I'm 77 years old and it breaks my heart having to leave," she said, "but there's nothing else I can do."

* May 4, 1973 *

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