

Provincetown's Celebration

We have often thought that all that Provincetown lacked was a rock to make it equally famous with Plymouth. The tip of the Cape was the first landfall of the Pilgrims. In the harbor of what is now Provincetown they signed the Compact three hundred and seven years ago, and there laid the foundation of the colony afterward established at Plymouth, and of the American commonwealth. To this day, we suppose, the majority of people who have knowledge of Plymouth and Plymouth Rock and the colony the Pilgrims founded there are unaware of the fact that they first landed at Provincetown, although the monument, visible for miles in clear air, is impressive testimony of the historical importance of the clenched fist of the right arm of the Commonwealth.

"A word or too by ye way of this cape," says the Bradford History: "it was thus first named by Capten Gosnole & his company, Ano: 1602, and after by Capten Smith was caled Cape James: but it retains ye former name amongs seamen. Also yt pointe which first shewed those dangerous shoulds unto them, they called Pointe Care, & Tuckers Terrour; but ye French and Dutch to this day call it Malabarr, by reason of those perilous shoulds, and ye losses they have suffered there." Gosnold chose the name of Cape Cod "because they tooke much of yt fishe ther"; and up to this very day Provincetown has flourished as a fishing port. At the very end of the Cape it maintains itself resolutely against encroachments of sand and sea, a town with a distinctive flavor and individuality, unlike any other town that we know of in New England — a town in which the most architecturally pretentious buildings are likely to be cold-storage plants; in which the scarcity of lond on which to grow has made for narrow streets and tiny gardens; in which the large number of persons of Portuguese birth and descent have left their interesting impress; a town which has exerted a powerful attraction upon artists and literary folks. All in all, there is no place like Provincetown, and its celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of its founding this week is an event of more than neighborhood significance.
