



From the Center Methodist Church Steeple - 1900
Library, behind trees. Centenary Church,
left background; Universalist
next, then the Town Hall.

THE CAPE CODDER

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CAPE COD FACTS

By OLIVER KNOWLES,
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Religion was one of the most important factors in the lives of the early settlers of Cape Cod. Everyone was forced to attend church whether he willed so or not, and the three-hour sermons were agony to the younger people.

The Pilgrims came to this country for freedom in religion, but after they obtained it they were rather narrow-minded with others, for during the early days of Sandwich Quakers were heavily fined for attending their own simple devotions and then fined again for not attending the Puritan meeting. Two heavy fines on a single count.

The good Puritan people were fined for even deigning to speak to a Quaker, and to entertain one would be regarded as sufficient reason for a sound flogging. In just three years the Quakers of Sandwich were fined 700 pounds. These fines being in the shape of cattle, sheep and horses, and in addition many were flogged, banished, or had their ears cut off.

Many of the people were not in favor of these drastic punishments, but these rules, like many others, were forced on the towns and churches by the Plymouth Colony. The saving grace was, that they differed from the witch burnings of the towns beyond Boston, because they were not prompted by personal hatred.

Years later the Quakers, after standing all even their patient souls could endure, moved in a body to Falmouth. They were made welcome and also immune to the ministerial tax, a thing hitherto unheard of before.

At this time the Congregational Church was the accepted denomination; all others were either discouraged or openly destroyed. The first Methodist meeting house that was started in Provincetown met with heavy opposition, even to burning the ship-load of lumber that was landed for the building. But when the church was finally built it was the second in all New England.

It was as late as 1816 before Wellfleet, the last town to exempt Methodists from paying a tax to the Congregationalists, joined the others and religion was allowed to take the denomination it chose.

The minister's wages were derived almost wholly from this tax, and in 1776 amounted to 75 pounds in cash, the use of the parsonage, 18 cords of wood at the door, and 14 tons of salt hay. An idea might be presented that the ministers are as underpaid now as they were then.

Loved Their Rum

The Indians seem to have a born love for rum. Mr. Stone, the settled preacher at Provincetown, used often to preach to the Mashpees, who were quite devotional. One of the deacons was asked how he liked Mr. Stone. He said: "Mr. Stone one very good preacher, but he preach too much about rum. When no no preach about

rum Injun think nothing 'bout it; but when he tells how injun love rum, and how they drunk, then I think how good it is, and think no more 'bout the sermon, my mouth waters all the time so much for rum." When asked whether he liked Mr. Stone or blind Joe (a Baptist minister) best, he said: "Mr. Stone, he make best sermons, but blind Joe he make best Christians."

Truro—Cape Cod, Shebna'h Rich

"Preach Too Much About Rum"

"THE third minister (of Provincetown)," writes a local historian, "the Reverend Nathaniel Stone, often preached the evils of rum to the Indian members of the congregation, but with doubtful success.

'One of them said, 'Mr. Stone one very good preacher, but he preach too much about rum. When he no preach about rum, Injun think nothing 'bout rum; but when he tell how Injun love rum, then I think how good it is, and think no more 'bout sermon—my mouth waters so much all the time for rum."