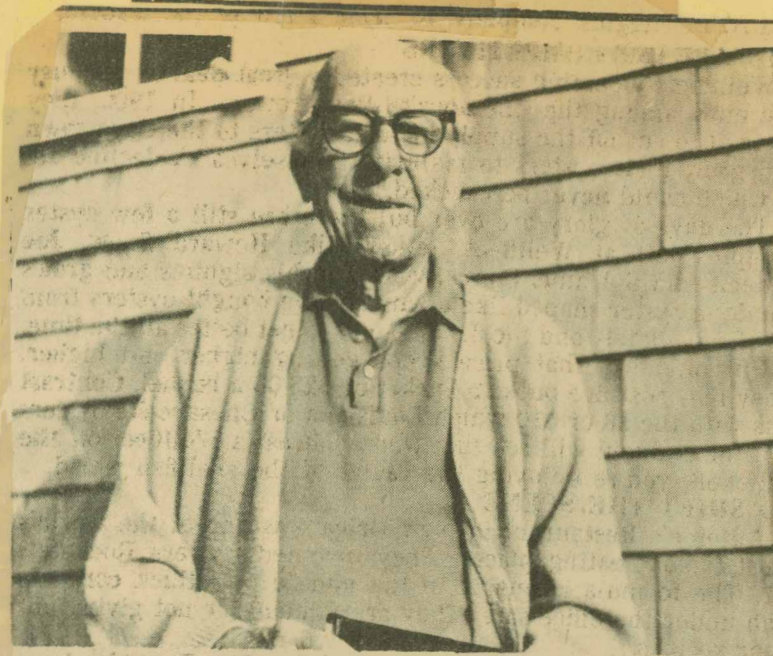


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- October 23, 1969 -



MEET ARTHUR BICKERS, museum curator and Provincetown historian.

About 20 years ago, the curator of the Provincetown Historical Museum, Miss Elsie Long, asked Arthur Bickers if he wanted her job; she was tired and not well. "They offered me enough pay," he recalls, "so I went." Today, although nearly 80 and stiff-legged enough to be taking a sick leave, he is still curator.

About 1910, the Research Club put on a public drive for \$6,000 to buy the Benjamin Lancy home at 230 Commercial Street and give it to Provincetown as a museum. About 50 years later, the Provincetown Historical Society deeded everything to the Pilgrim Memorial Association for \$1. In 1960, 37 truckloads of Americana went to new quarters on Monument Hill, and the Association sold the Lancy home. Arthur took up his duties in the new museum.

**SHIP-BUILDING FATHER**

His family has roots in England and Portugal. His grandfather, Joseph H. Bickers, came from England to learn shipbuilding from Donald McKay in East Boston; he married Elizabeth Freeman of Wellfleet and lived in Wellfleet during the Civil War. His mother's grandfather, Manuel Caton, came from Oporto, Portugal.

"Mother never liked the water," he said. "When she was six, her parents took her on a whaling

voyage. Her father died in Barbados, and she had some bad experiences coming home." Arthur himself cares little for fishing. "It never appealed to me to sit waiting with a baited line."

He was eight and living on Franklin Street when the Portland Gale of 1898 struck Provincetown. He remembers seeing men in dories rescuing people from flooded houses at the corner of Franklin and Commercial. His father, Capt. George H. Bickers, was in the thick of the hurricane as keeper of the Wood End Life Saving Station.

**DIDN'T LIKE GOOF-OFFS**

During World War II Arthur worked in Groton, Connecticut, as an inspector for a submarine building company. He's still disgusted with the flagrant waste and the goofing off he saw there.

Returning to Provincetown when his father died, he took care of his mother, until she too went, ten years later. He lives alone now, except for his boxer Koko, in the old home at 6 Central Street.

He's looking forward to a January visit to the Algarve, southernmost state in Portugal. Friends of his, guided by retired Provincetown fisherman Manuel Zora, bought a condominium there. Koko, boarded out during his absence, will miss him.

- April 18, 1968 -

**Noted Ship's Figurehead Given Historical Museum**

A 12-foot figurehead weighing over 1,000 pounds that once graced the ship Imperial has been presented to the Provincetown Pilgrim Memorial Museum by a granddaughter of the owner and captain of the Imperial.

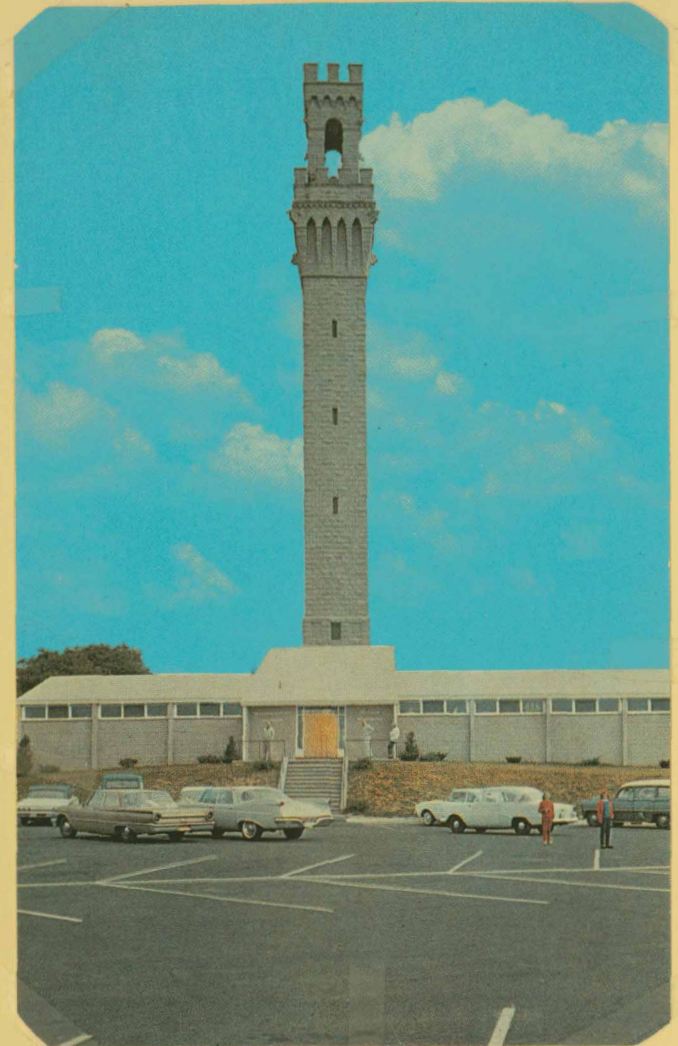
The shipowner was Joseph Henry Sears of Brewster, first president of the Cape Cod Pilgrim Memorial Association after the federal government had turned over to the association the Pilgrim Monument, dedicated in 1910. The Cape Cod Pilgrim Memorial Association owns and operates both the museum and the monument.

The Brewster man, owner and captain of a number of trading ships, worked for four years with President Theodore Roosevelt and the U. S. Congress in getting the government to set aside an area here in memory of the Pilgrims and to build the Pilgrim Monument on it.

His granddaughter, Mrs. Barbara Hoyt Ecker of Greenwich, Conn., had the figurehead from the Imperial in her garden for many years. She had a marine expert from Mystic Seaport refurbish the figurehead before presenting it to the museum and had it trucked to Provincetown at her own expense.

The figurehead is an outstanding example of marine art, says museum curator Arthur Bickers. It is valued at \$2,500. It occupies the center of the Marine Room of the museum where it is set off by several other figureheads.

The Pilgrim Memorial Museum, which opened for the season April 6 has drawn a record attendance thus far, with nearly double the attendance figures for the same period last year.



Museum at Rear of Monument  
- 1966 -



Marine Room in the Museum - - - - - 1965