

Our Town Dump has now been relocated off the Race Road - or Conwell Street due to the new State Road, Route 6, being cut through to the New Beach in 1955.

- 1946 -

It is with considerable reluctance that many of us will say farewell to the old Town Dump. Despite its function it occupied a lordly site, possibly one of the most impressive in the whole country and through the years we have seen it grow, pushing its edge of boxes, cartons, busted refrigerators, old baby carriages, broken furniture, defunct beds, and all those things which make up a dump—pushing those edges out, further and further, like a glacier. It is now a high plateau from which one gets a commanding view of lily covered ponds, dunes and of the sky. There of an afternoon, after the fishing fleet has been cleaned up, assemble the great companies of gulls, impudent and unafraid, and there may be seen among the ponds rarer water birds and others that pause on the Cape. It was a lovely, lovely dump! To take one's own offerings there gave one an exalted feeling of having done a good deed and that feeling was intensified by the lift to the spirit which the surroundings provided. There'll never be another dump like it! The new one is reached by a road which opens from the State Road opposite the plant of the Cape and Vineyard Company.

sign

gulls

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The Cape Cod "Exchange"

BY HETTIE H. DUNKLEE

As one approaches the outskirts of a small Cape Cod town, one is likely to note a certain area guarded by an army of quietly watchful gulls and related birds. This, you later learn, is the Town Dump. Occasionally, when the wind is just right, its location is heralded well in advance by a pungent smoky odor - and once in a great while, by one not so relatively pleasant.

The Town Dump is a symbol of Democracy in action. Here, rich and poor, great and small, meet on common ground - in every meaning of the words. The wealthiest household shares with the humblest the necessity of disposing of garbage, waste and other unwanted materials. To be sure, there are in some localities agents who for a small fee will take care of this unattractive duty for you, but sooner or later every householder makes the acquaintance of the Town Dump and its habitués. Doubtless more interesting activities take place there than is generally realized. One of my neighbors, approaching the local dump one day, heard shots. He hastily got out of his car to see what was going on, and found a tall man wearing a "ten gallon" hat and holding a pistol in each hand. The stranger explained that he was keeping in practice by shooting at rats as they emerged from their routine check of edibles. (He turned out to be a Texan, so he is not likely to trouble these parts unduly.)

The Town Dump, in addition to its avowed purpose, tacitly engages in another very useful project - a sort of exchange of possessions. Most towns prohibit dealers in old furniture and other antiques from procuring their stock in trade from among the dump cast-offs of others. However, this does not prevent countless private individuals from taking advantage of the lavishness with which some Cape Codders dispose of their excess possessions. One elderly lady of whom I have heard regularly walks to the local dump, dragging behind her a small wooden trash

cart, which on her return trip is loaded with bits of lumber, old broken chairs and other homely treasures. Perhaps it is no coincidence that occasionally, during the summer months, the porch of this lady's house blooms forth with numerous ancient knick-knacks which catch the eye of passersby, and which may "just happen" to be purchased by summer visitors as quaint old souvenirs of Cape Cod. An acquaintance of mine suddenly became the possessor of a perfectly respectable washing machine after one of her husband's trips to the dump. To be sure, it had no motor, but that was subsequently supplied by an ingenious member of the family. Another's husband brought home an interesting old set of andirons, which, when polished, were an ornament to the living room. One young man accidentally came upon the major part of a vacuum cleaner. A few days later, returning with a barrel of refuse, he spotted all of the attachments. It works beautifully, too. And it is a known fact that so many refrigerators are left in town dumps that there is an ordinance against abandoning one with its doors still attached, because children have been found trapped in them.

Unlike the beachcomber, who deliberately sets out to find whatever may supply his needs, without contributing anything in return, the dump retriever, in most instances, does not consciously go to the dump for any other purpose than dumping. If he occasionally comes away with a prize of some sort, it is because some other Cape Codder has grossly underestimated its value - and it is always possible that some of his own discarded belongings may seem equally delectable to someone else. In many Cape Cod towns, there are stores devoted to the disposal or exchange of no-longer-wanted-but-still-good objects of art or usefulness, for which service a small commission is charged. Perhaps the Town Fathers are missing a good bet by not instituting some

such commission arrangement at Town Dumps. Who knows? the tax rate might even be reduced!

My husband, after reading the foregoing, nodded reminiscently, and said, "You know, that was a good chair I picked up at the dump during the war. I'm still using it at the shop."