

Many Come Here For Dune Riding

Clarke Robinson Gives Grand Description In Christian Science Monitor

Joe Nunes started it and a number of others have followed suit. But each year the rides over the dunes, along the Great Beach on the Back Shore, over to distant lighthouses and to inaccessible wrecks grow in popularity and hundreds of people make special trips to Provincetown for nothing else than a ride over the dunes "with Nunes."

Unquestionably Joe has been responsible for directing toward Provincetown a great deal of publicity of the very finest kind since he was the first to make it possible to see the grandeur of the Cape End which might otherwise have been unknown to most of Provincetown's visitors.

In the issue of September 9 of The Christian Science Monitor, Clarke Robinson who lives in the Hotel Astor, New York City, wrote a particularly fine description of his ride with Joe this summer and yesterday a note from Mr. Robinson gave The Advocate permission to reprint his article.

The Vacation Peninsula

Someone has said that once over the Cape Cod Canal you are on the greatest summer vacation peninsula in the world. Lighthouses stand like sentinels and shaded villages exhale an individual charm. Beauty is everywhere—in the rolling lawns of estates and wild rambling woods, in the cranberry marshes and the quaintness of the outmoded fishing smacks, and even in the weather-beaten faces of the native mariners. But we wonder if the sands which form the almost continuous line of beaches that fringe the ocean from Falmouth to the dunes at its tip may not contribute more to Cape Cod's allure than any other one factor.

Certainly the dunes at Provincetown are quite the grandest I have seen. Geographically, the end of Cape Cod is High Head in Truro. All the rest, all the land from High Head around to Long Point, is composed of great sandbars washed up from the ocean by tides and currents. These are the dunes beyond Provincetown. The white sand and wild green vegetation stretch away, upslope and downslope, forming here a swelling and there a depression. Sparkling in the sunlight and fantastic and weird in the moonlight, they breathe magnificence. If you haven't seen them in the setting sun you have missed one of nature's treats.

Stuck In Sand

Not many years back, one of the Provincetown natives, out on the beach in his T model Ford truck gathering driftwood, got stuck. The sand was soft. His wheels spun. The more they spun the deeper into the loose sand they became embedded. Were he to summon aid any other car might suffer the same fate. Why not deflate the tires. He did. In less time than it takes to relate it, he was out of his predicament and thereafter drove the dunes at will.

One summer he was struck with another idea. Ten days later a mail order house delivered to him a set of huge balloon tires. And thereof an industry was born. Today as one strolls down rambling little Commercial Street in Provincetown, "Joe Nunes'" spick and span fleet of cars equipped with huge balloon tires will take any visitor out to "Ride the Dunes."

The sunset trip is best. "Joe" will tell you that himself. If you are fortunate enough to receive booking for it you ride out the scenic highway toward Race Point. Up over the hill you go, by the Coast Guard Station, and then down the sloping beach to the dunes.

Unusual Thrill

As the driver turns and the huge balloon tires sink in and take hold with a rolling, rocking lunge, the passenger has a sensation which we fancy might be duplicated if he were in a "howdah" on the back of an Indian elephant. Ahead for miles rise the isolated dunes. On your left are the long white lines of horizontal foam plumes of the surf shadowed in silver blue, breaking on the beach. Across, toward Plymouth, the stars have begun to come out and the sinking sun floods everything in a sulphurous rose color. Far and away on a ridge is the naked frame cottage where Eugene O'Neill first penned the plays that afterward made him famous.

A breeze comes from the ocean and the car begins to draw away from the shore up toward the mammoth sand bowl. It's a great deep hollow which appears miles around. You ride its sides. Sometimes at a 45-degree angle but with never a thought that you will tip. Up you go. Down into its center again, following the tracks of a hundred rides that Mr. Joe Nunes has driven before. Except for the motor, there is no sound. Just the overpowering great silence of the dunes which the thousands of tons of packed sand and tall green grass, hold. Shadows lie thin and become things of delicate beauty. The ride goes on.

Back on Beach

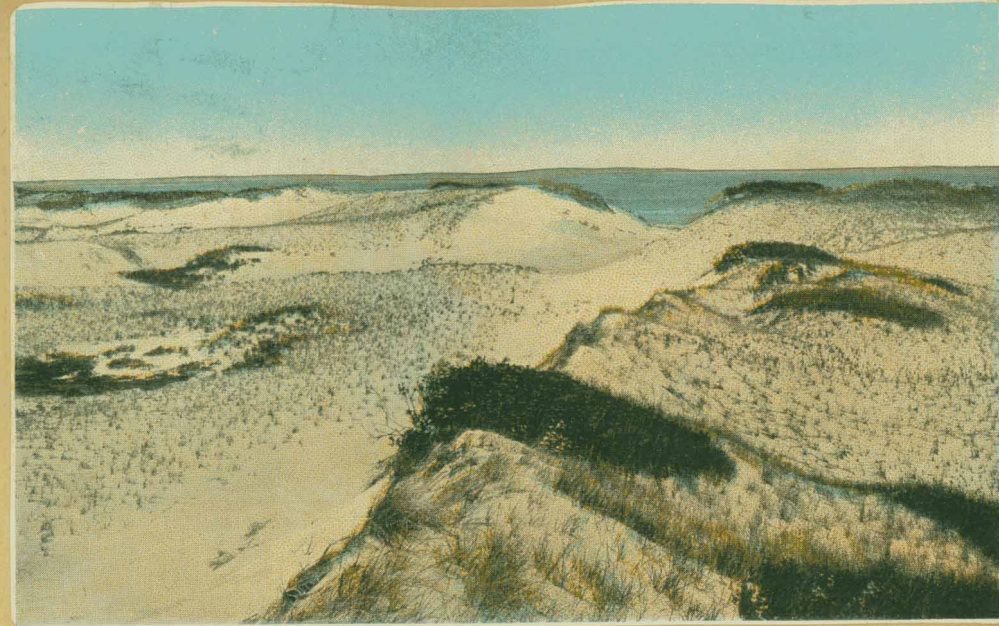
At last you are on the beach once more. Below the very sands upon which you are riding lies the wreck of the Somerset, British man-of-war of which Longfellow wrote. You plow on with the surf not a half

dozen feet away. Over the ocean the sun, half gone, looks as though it were a great orange slipped through a slit of paper in a range of rainbow pastels. Back toward the dunes you see a cloud of amber dust rise to bathe them in a powdery haze of unreality. Now the sky becomes a fixed dead pink with reserves of mauve fire behind it. You pass the Coast Guard Station again.

In the measured roll of the great balloon tires you find a rest and sensation you might never have known before. The panorama is captivating and complete. The white lighthouse at Wood End begins to wink its light. The one at Race Point answers it. Tresses of saffron shadows hang over the distant dunes as you make your way back to Provincetown in the enchantment of the quiet early evening.

Clarke Robinson.

1874



John R. Smith

This lone pine rears its stump proudly long after the forest, in which it must have once been growing, has been buried far beneath the sands.