

Charles Nickerson Wharf which was also a fish pier. The pier was four-hundred feet long and quite important as an unloading and flaking wharf for the codfishing vessels. The yard where we now get the automobile refueled was used as a flake-yard and row upon row of cod formerly were put out there to dry.

At the Colonial Cold Storage plant the Benjamin Lancy Wharf presented the combined picture of a lumber and coal yard. The building now owned by the Provincetown Historical Museum Society was formerly the home of the owners of the six-hundred foot Lancy pier.

Where the Artists Theatre operates during the summer seasons and on the short pier where the audience relaxes between the acts Charley Cook maintained a four-hundred foot fish wharf. The pier consisted of a few fish sheds, a small boatroom for repairing dories, etc., and storage space for miscellaneous equipment.

What we now call Monument Dock (Sklaroff's Wharf) was formerly a short four-hundred foot pier called the Frank Joseph Wharf. This pier—like the Charley Cook Wharf—was also exclusively a fish wharf. When the vessels were beached during the winter months, February 22nd was a big day for the local boys. Each ship had a large ship's bell fastened to the foremast and on that holiday the youngsters made plenty of noise by banging away on the numerous bells. Some boys being more active than others used to borrow a pair of anybody's carriage wheels and suspending the bell on the axle, used to run through the streets clanging an ear shattering jangling.

Next to the Board of Trade building—and in the rear of the Lands End Marine Supply Company—the Alfred Small Wharf was doing business as a lumber wharf. The pier was only three-hundred feet long and handled mostly building materials. Diagonally across the street, where the Mayflower Cafe now stands, and also in the rear of Cutler's Pharmacy, was formerly a large flake yard.

Railroad Wharf, although some of us now call it Town Wharf, was still Railroad Wharf. The pier has been rebuilt at least twice but sixty years ago it was twelve-hundred feet long and was one of the most important wharves in town. There were a double set of railroad tracks running halfway down the pier with only a four-foot walk on the west side for foot traffic. The end of the wharf was, of course, planked over and there was plenty of docking space for vessels.

Provincetown's Wharves, Part 3:— According to the "oldtimers" all of the famous old wharves I have described were still standing after the wicked gale of 1898. New Englanders still refer to that savage storm as the "Portland Gale." Some-time during the night of November 26, 1898 the steamer Portland bound from Boston to Maine went down with two-hundred passengers aboard. Parts of her superstructure and the bodies which were later identified as passengers and crew members washed up on our shore. No complete story of that night's disaster can ever be told, for there were no survivors.

Provincetown was recorded as harboring a fleet of two-hundred and sixty-one vessels, coasters and whalers. The thirty-four wharves were vital to the very existence of the town and its inhabitants. Each flake yard, marine railway, ship yard, lumber yard, coal dock and salt works, was big business. The riggers, sailmakers, caulkers, carpenters, blacksmiths and laborers were dependent on the fleet for occupation. Every storm that harassed the vessels at sea was watched with dread by the families at home, and the townspeople often rushed to high ground looking for the sails of an overdue craft. In those days most every young man had a taste of salt water. Not all liked it and these soon saved up enough money to buy shares in three or four old vessels. The owners managed to stay at home and, acting as agents, they bought and sold provisions and gear for the fleet. The families of the men at sea were allowed to run up bills at the little stores which stocked everything from fuel to groceries and included clothing and furniture.

The old J. D. Hilliard Wharf, now Higgin's Lumber Company, was six-hundred feet in length. This pier has a history all of its own because of the numerous business enterprises listed on the records. Briefly, the wharf was quite wide and a number of fish flakes were spread along its breadth. Fishing was the most important industry carried on at this site but the pier was also a blacksmith shop, sail-loft and ship chandler's store. Later, in recent years, the premises have been used for a lumber yard, coal yard and hardware store.

In these years and during the summer months the Lobster House occupies the site formerly known as the George O. Knowles Wharf. The pier was six-hundred feet long and primarily functioned as a fitting-out wharf for the whalers and Grand Bankers. When I was a mere lad of about fifteen the pier was still about six-hundred feet long and held up a large Casino Club. One night a Coast Guard cutter went

adrift in a gusty southeaster and plowed down most of the wharf.

Just east of the George O. Knowles Wharf the six-hundred foot David Conwell Wharf maintained a large fleet of Grand Bankers.

In the rear of the Quarter Deck Club the Ed Small Wharf also functioned with the smell of fish and more fish. The pier was five-hundred feet in length and until recent years flourished as a money-making proposition. As the earlier fishing industry became obsolete a group of strangers took over the property and erected a modern canning factory on the pier. When the Coast Guard cutter demolished the George O. Knowles Wharf it also cut the Ed Small Wharf nearly in half. The canning factory was left marooned out on its spiling with no means of approach. Of course the David Conwell Wharf had already been pulled down years before the cutter wentadrift.

The famous old Kibby Cook property formerly comprised the sites now owned by Mary Heaton Vorse. The Kibby Cook Wharf was nine-hundred feet long and was a part of the large ship-yard and marine railway. Whalers and bankers, fitted out at this pier and came in to this site for annual overhauls. The C. L. Burch Grocery Store was formerly the Kibby Cook Store.

The Donald B. McMillan home is directly in front of what was the Charley Austin Cook's Wharf. The four-hundred foot pier had reserve space for fishing gear and unloading facilities for the Grand Bankers.

Across from the Figure Head House sixty years ago H. S. Cook & Sons managed a long one-thousand foot wharf for a fleet of Grand Bankers. This pier was the longest in the east end of the town but due to the lack of a marine railway most of the rigging, caulking and repairing was done over in the Kibby Cook Yards.

Today we call it the Consolidated Cold Storage Wharf, but back in those sea-going times the Sam Swift's Wharf was a terminal for Grand Bankers. The pier was only a one-hundred footer and the sheds, and storage space, were mostly built on terra firma around the approach to the wharf.

At the present Manuel Silva property at 539 Commercial Street the Philip Wharf pier extended out into the harbor four-hundred feet. Mostly this wharf was used for unloading and outfitting Grand Bankers but in later years trapping was part of the routine.

The Bangs A. Lewis Wharf, in the rear of the John Dos Passos home, was nine-hundred feet in length and operated as a Grand Banker, lumber, coal, ice and ship's rigging

wharf. For a few years, before this pier went down before the winter elements, the Provincetown Players used this wharf for their headquarters. The property was then owned by Mary Heaton Vorse, one of the leading organizers in the summer theatre movement. The famous "Sixes and Sevens" club formed by writers, poets, playwrights, artists and musicians, ran a cabaret in the large building on the end of the pier.

The last pier in this memory record of sixty years ago was the Conway Wharf in the rear of the Sear's property. This wharf was a short pier of only two-hundred feet in length and was mostly used for tying up vessels.

All together this record listed thirty-four piers with very few signs left of the once numerous and important wharves. Before the onslaught of time, and with the passing of the Grand Bankers, the wharves have been destroyed or rebuilt into studios for summer vacationists. At the present time there are only five wharves of any length which are still in use.

Irving Rogers

Irving S. Rogers, 66, died Aug. 14 in Tombstone, Ariz. 1977

The son of the late Charles N. and Joanna F. (Moore) Rogers of Provincetown, he was a selectman here in the late 1930s and 40s, serving for long periods as chairman of that board. He was chairman of the board of health and as health agent, helped establish the Cape End Manor.

He was the veteran's agent and the local welfare representative until 1946, when he became the director of the Department of Public Welfare. He retired in 1965 and moved to Arizona.

He is survived by two nephews, William N. Rogers and Charles Rogers of Provincetown; and two nieces.

Burial was in Arizona.

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