

MY PAMET

By Town Father

PROVINCETOWN
ADVOCATE -
April 30, 1981

force winds in a recent storm wrenched a storm door from her hands. And good luck and much business to Chris Wall, who will on May 1 open her slip-cover shop at Al Souza's Wilder School building on Depot Road. Comes the familiar voice of Johnnie Marshall over the wire this week, telling us he and his bride Anne are back from their winter junket in Mexico, opening their summer home (best view in the entire town) on the banks of the Pamet.

And while we're missing the herring run that used to occur annually in the Pamet, we're happy to report that dirt farmers, among them Harding Stephens of the Snow Field area, are reporting the first cutting of asparagus—a sure sign of spring.

The name of Fogwell came up recently during a title search at Town Hall. We dated ourselves by stating we knew the gentleman. We can see him now, Jerome P. Fogwell, to give him his full cognomen. He was superintendent of schools for the Lower Cape district, comprising the towns of Wellfleet, Truro and Provincetown.

A tall, portly man was Mr. Fogwell, with rimless glasses and thinning, premature gray hair. Used to visit the old Wilder School when we were in the sixth grade. When he drove up in his big Buick automobile, the kids knew that the strict schedule of the day would be somewhat modified, for it was the practice of the superintendent to hold private conferences with the two lady teachers in the building, Miss Bunny Francis (recently deceased) and Miss Helen Silva. On those occasions, the familiar clanging of the hand bells, summoning the pupils in from recess

and from the noon lunch period, would be delayed by substantial periods of time. We'd take advantage of the situation by extending the games of baseball in the nearby Holler, or travelling farther afield in playing fox and hounds.

Meantime, Mr. Fogwell would be inspecting the physical plant, from the duplex privy set in the beachplum bushes eastard of the building, to the schoolrooms themselves. Rumor had it he spent considerable time going over the school registers with the lady teachers to see if the figures balanced. Bob Morris peeked through the window of the Big Part (grades five through eight) one day, and reported to his schoolmates that Mr. Fogwell seemed to be "settin' awful close to Miz Silva at the desk, and she was blushin' all over." But then it may well have been a mite hot in the poorly ventilated classroom.

Well sir, when the bell finally did ring, and we trooped back into the building, all hands were treated to a lengthy discourse from Mr. Fogwell. Subjects varying from such ordinary things as care of town property—"I notice some of you have been carving your initials on the desks—this will cease forthwith."—to truancy. "Mr. Naylor Hatch, the truant officer, will apprehend any truant and enforce the State law. You will not be absent from school without a valid excuse from your parents."

Then he'd review the general accomplishments of the sundry grades. Arithmetic seemed to be average. The recent spelling bee had indicated superior skill in that area (Gertie Rose had finally gone down on the word pneumonia) and history and geography

were adequate. Vocal music, under the direction of Miz Josephine Patterson rated kudos. The Wilder singing group had done a superb job on "Now the Day is Over" (four part harmony) and penmanship, using the new Palmer Method, was superior. But don't forget to spit on the new nibs before you dipped them in the inkwell. It made the ink flow freely.

Then there'd be a pause as Mr. Fogwell removed his eyeglasses and polished them with his handkerchief. The superintendent was about to depart from routine discussion of school affairs and launch on a discourse of matters scientific, political, or whatever.

This would be the era of expansion in aviation. The Germans were experimenting with a lighter-than-air craft called the dirigible, a cigar-shaped affair filled with helium, and they proposed to set up regularly scheduled flights across the Atlantic. And a young daredevil named Charles A. Lindbergh was readying his monoplane, named the Spirit of St. Louis, to solo, first time in history, from the U.S. to Europe. Mr. Fogwell laid the background of Lindbergh's flight.

"I certainly hope this Lindbergh feller will chart his course well south of the North Pole," he said. "I've just finished reading an article on magnetism and gravity of our planet Earth. And from it I've learned that there's an aura, up near the North Pole where the earth loses its pull of gravity. If this young man gets up there, his plane will shoot off into space, and he'll never be heard from again." Lord, what would Jerome P. Fogwell say today, if he were alive to observe the accomplishments of our space program?