

The Barnstable Patriot -- 1973

Edward Rowe Snow's

Sea & Shore Gleanings



The Annie L. Spindler

It was on my seven-week hike around Cape Cod a quarter-century ago that I first learned the story of the Spindler. The tale was told to me by someone who was in on the whole affair and, not surprisingly, preferred to remain anonymous.

The part of the story which he allowed me to reveal began on the night of December 29, 1922. During a severe northeaster the rum-runner Annie L. Spindler, with a rich and forbidden cargo of Haig and Haig whisky, piled up on the beach opposite the Race Point Coast Guard Station. There were about 600 cases of liquor aboard.

Allegedly, the Spindler was running between Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and Jamaica, but those "in the know" later said that her actual destination was near Plymouth, Mass. At any rate, she never did reach port.

Her captain, a small but capable French-Canadian, later told how it happened. The Spindler had been caught off the Race by the northeast storm.

When the captain tried to square away in an attempt to get inside the arm of the Cape, he couldn't make it, and was forced to take a chance on getting ashore. Soon the Spindler grounded, each wave carrying her a little farther up on the beach.

The crew reached shore safely, and reported with their captain to the Race Point Coast Guard Station, a few score yards from where they had hit.

All was not lost, however. The captain of the Spindler told his story of how he had been caught off the twelve mile limit by the storm and hurled against Cape Cod.

Meanwhile the thirsty inhabitants of Provincetown had

already got wind of the disaster, and even then were raiding the Spindler.

This enraged the captain, who rushed out of the Coast Guard quarters and threw two of the "mooncussers" off the vessel and down on the sand. There was no more looting that night.

The next day the Coast Guard ordered every remaining case of liquor stored in the cellar of the station, where it was placed under guard.

The following week another Nova Scotia craft entered Provincetown Harbor. Hailing also from Yarmouth, her captain drove out to Race Point, showed his credentials, and asked that the Government help him load the liquor aboard his vessel.

All available trucks and men (some of them actually taken off their patrol against rum-runners) were assembled and within a few days the entire shipload of liquor was transported across the Cape and loaded aboard the Yarmouth schooner tied up at Railroad Wharf.

Then the Nova Scotia captain bade the residents of Provincetown farewell, and sailed for an alleged port in the West Indies.

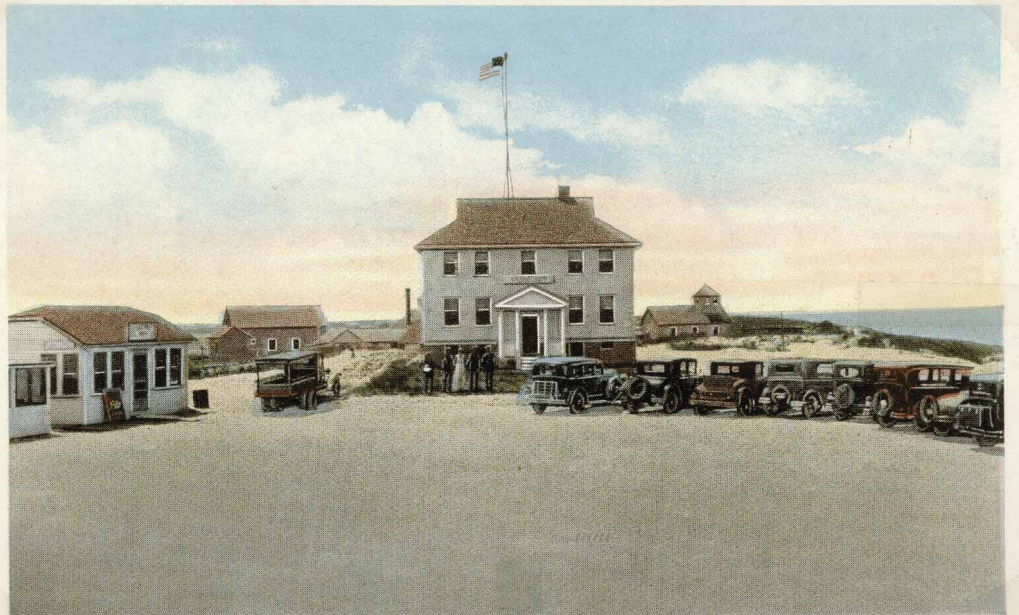
The teller of this story then stated that the cargo was landed that same night, not in the West Indies, but in a port northwest of Provincetown, also mentioned in connection with the landing of the Pilgrims.

SHIPWRECK, CAPE COD, MASS.



Remains of the Schooner, Annie L. Spindler, from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia; Rum Runner came ashore at Race Point, Dec.27, 1922

See stories preceding pages.



RACE POINT COAST GUARD STATION, PROVINCETOWN, CAPE COD, MASS.

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The new Coast Guard Station -- 1930's