The Rev. Levi Whiting writing on Oct. 28, 1794, says of Provincetown, "The excellence of this harbour consists in these particulars; in it there are no rocks; and it opening to the south, and lying as it does, there is very rarely, in the most severe season, any ice in it, to prevent vessels from going safely in, even when the other harbours in Massachusetts bay are frozen up."

In the Massachusetts Historical Collections, published in 1832, Provincetown is mentioned as follows: "Cod Cape harbour is formed by the bending of the land, from Pamet river to Long Point, nearly round every point of the compass; it is completely land-locked—common tides in the harbour rise twelve feet. This harbour and the waters near it afford a great variety and abundance of excellent and profitable fishes."

Mr. J. M. Westgate, of the United States Department of Agriculture, in his report issued in 1904 on "The Reclamation of Cape Cod Sand Dunes," says, "The value of the harbor thus endangered can hardly be overestimated. It is the home port of a large fleet of fishing vessels, while as a harbor of refuge its position, capacity, depth, excellent anchorage, and land-locked condition combine to renders it one of the most important on the Atlantic coast." He further says, "Not only is the harbor of great commercial value, but in event of war its position is such as to render it of great strategic importance."

Although the concensus of opinion based upon early reports would indicate that the end of Cape Cod was forested, there is room for discussion on this subject, and in any event there undoubtedly was always more or less shifting sand near the strand which was exposed to the action of the winds.

Mourt's "Journal of a Plantation settled at Plymouth in 1621" says of Cape Cod Harbor, that it was "compassed about to the very sea with oaks, pine, juniper, sassafras, and other sweet wood. It is a harbour wherein a thousand sail of ships may safely ride." A note in the Massachusetts Historical Collections of 1902 commenting on Mourt's Journal, says, "Few trees are now left around Cape Cod harbour. That they were formerly common, appears from the stumps still remaining and from the name Wood End. An aged gentleman has informed the editor, that in 1740, there was a number of oaks in the woods north-west of East harbour."

The Pilgrims also mention "the ground or earth sand-hills, much like the downs in Holland, but much better; the crust of the earth, a spit's depth, excellent black earth." They also speak of boughs and bushes that "tore" their "very armor in pieces."

All this evidence would tend to substantiate the fact that a healthy growth of vegetation existed at the end of the Cape at the time of its discovery, but Thoreau is inclined to disbelieve the testimony of our early ancestors on this subject, and I am of his opinion. In his Cape Cod writings of his visit, in 1849 he says, "We saw scarcely anything high enough to be called a tree, except a little low wood at the east end of the town," and "We did not see enough black earth in Provincetown to fill a flower-pot;" also, "The greater part of the land was a perfect desert of yellow sand, rippled like waves by the wind, in which only a little beach-grass grew here and there." "For the most part we saw neither bough nor bush," but "rather beach and poverty-grass."

Thoreau did "not believe that the trees were large or the soil was deep there," and he accounts for the statements of the early explorers from exaggerations arising from optimism after the long and dreary voyage. He further says, "Very different is the general and off-hand account given by Captain John Smith, who was on this Coast six years earlier—he says: 'Cape Cod is the next presents itself, which is only a headland of high hills of sand, overgrown with shrubby pine forests, and such trash, but an excellent harbor for all weather.'" Champlain also adds, "Which we named Cap Blanc because they were sands and downs which appeared thus," and even the Pilgrim leader and historian Bradford speaks of the voyagers of the Ship Fortune, "they came into the harbor of Cape Cod, and there saw nothing but a naked and barren place."

Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that much of the land about the harbor was more or less covered with some sort of protecting vegetation in the early days. Since historic times the shifting sand has been a constant menace to the existence of the Town and Harbor, and the principal causes for this condition have been the pasturing of cattle, the destruction of the forests by fire, and the desolation of the timber by the inhabitants for shipbuilding, for fuel, both for the home and for evaporation purposes in salt manufacture, and for the pitch and turpentine industry.

The devastation reached it height about the beginning of the last century, although the seriousness of the situation to the community was a constant cause of much anxiety since the earliest days of its settlement.

In 1703 "local public measures were taken to prohibit the destruction of timber on the East Harbor land." In 1714 "the leasing and barging of pine trees for the production of pitch and turpentine" was stopped by State statute. In 1740 an act was passed prohibiting the pasturing of cattle on the beach grass tracts, but in 1825 the devastation had become so alarming that a committee was appointed by the State to investigate the condition of the dunes and to offer suggestions for remedy, the result of which was the passage of another act relating
a dike was constructed across East Harbor on the bay side, both to protect the harbor from the washing away of sand at ebb tide, and to aid in maintaining the State road to Provincetown.

But, in order to study the reclamation of the dunes in detail, it will first be necessary to consider the peculiar sand formations themselves, whereby the conditions under which the remedies were applied will be better understood.

The ten square miles which compose the "tip" or extreme of the Cape, consist of sand which has been scooped around by the wind in the ages past, enclosing Provincetown Harbor in a book formation.

Here, as elsewhere on sandy seacoasts, the sand is constantly being washed up by the waves and, when dry, carried inland by the wind. Successive bars are thus built up on the North shore, which fast enclose "race runs", and soon form new beaches as the runs fill in, the blown-sand from them building up beach-ridges or fore-dunes, and eventually a dune range.

Government maps of this section made a dozen years ago show race-runs which have since filled in with sand, forming basins like unto the excavating and distributing action of giant machinery.

This process is comparatively slow and is not serious in itself, provided subsequently the dunes are covered with vegetation and later become forested.

Although the beach-ridge may be formed either by the deposits of sand cast up or from the filling-in process of the bar, in most cases the dune passes through a definite series of evolutions. It begins at the strand and travels inland. So long as the dune is active it is known as a "wandering dune", and when the action of the wind lessens and vegetation becomes established it is called a "fixed dune", when it soon after becomes forested.

The reversing of this condition may occur when a fixed dune is changed to a wandering one through spoilation of its vegetation, which is what has apparently happened on Cape Cod.

"A typical wandering dune presents a gradual slope toward the wind and an abrupt slope on the lee side. The wind forces the sand up the slope and it falls over the edge." The wandering dune is naturally bare of vegetation as the shifting sands do not permit of permanent seed germination.

The Cape sand is of such large size and angular form that, strange to say, it acts as a protective covering when the coarsest particles congregate through the drifting process of severe blows on the dune areas and the upper strata of lighter sand has been removed. On account of its size and color this sand was formerly used for building purposes, but this desecration has long since been stopped.

Although experience has taught that forested areas could not exist near the beach on account of the wind and spray, it is probable that the wooded sections extended much nearer to the strand in prehistoric times than during the occupation by man, and the remains of forest beds along the coast would substantiate this theory.

There are two main reasons for the lack of vegetation near the water; first, on account of the sudden and damaging changes in the temperature of the sand itself when night comes on, due to its low specific heat; and secondly, on account of the force of the wind, which hurls the sand particles with terrific violence against all exposed surfaces in its path. Mr. Whitman said, "the blowing sand scratched the windows so that he was obliged to have one new pane set every week, that he might see out." What might we, therefore, expect to be the injury to plant life?

These are the two principal causes for the difficulty of developing vegetation on the dunes, and not from any lack of proper food plant nourishment in the sand nor moisture, as healthy growths occur in protected sand areas while sufficient moisture rises to within a few inches of the surface on the dunes even in periods of drought.

Still another reason for shifting of sand is the lack of snow covering, which is conspicuous for its absence in the wind swept dunes.

Any obstruction placed on the dunes will immediately affect the action of the wind and in turn change the sand accumulations. Fences, brush and sand-binding grasses create different results, but beach grass (amphithila arenaria) has proven most successful, as it grows better in shifting sand than elsewhere.

The object in planting the grass is to hold the sand in place so that bushes and young trees may be ultimately developed, for the fixed dunes have remained most permanent when covered with forests, and bush or tree planting has been a failure when introduced without sand-binding grass as a bed and protection.

As the beach grass is short lived its object is to aid in the preliminary development of permanent vegetation, and is, therefore, merely a means to a better end. This, of course, does not apply to the narrow strip of sand along the strand which can only be held in place by the planting of beach grass.

"The work of fixation is thus divided into two rather distinct stages: (1) Preliminary: holding the sand in place. (2) Permanent; establishing a forest."

Mr. Westgate's report in 1904 says that "of the seven dune ranges constituting the body of the extremity of the Cape, only the inner four are at present forested. These ranges are covered with a growth of pine and oak, with an occasional beach in the more favored situations. The outer three ranges are covered with scattering growths of beach grass. It is probable that all these ranges, with the possible exception of the outer one, were at one time forested, but have been brought to their present unstable condition within historic times."
Cape Man Accepts Teaching Position

Ermond Morse of Brewster has accepted a position in Hampton, Conn. He will teach the seventh and eighth grades starting January 2.

Mr Morse is the son of Mrs Mabel Morse. He was a graduate of Brewster High school in 1934 and of Hyannis State Teachers college in 1938.
Natural reclamation of the sand areas goes through distinct stages before forestation occurs, and in artificial reclamation the hand of man attempts to assist nature to acquire certain actions which will produce results in most fitting manner.

There seem to be two types of sand areas affected, which take on different characteristics in their natural development.

The areas that receive a gradual accumulation of sand, such as the depositing beaches, boast of the sea rocket, beach pea and cocklebur just above the high water mark, which assist in partially holding back the sand blown in from the beach. They are the pioneers, so to speak, of the beach grass, with the sea side goldenrod and sand wormwood, which appear on the sand deposits as they are built up and become second tiers of the series. Then the bayberry, wild rose and beach plum invade the latter space from the heavier vegetation beyond, and in turn are the pioneers for the pitch pine with the oak and sometimes the beach, although the latter is rarely met with. “The great bulk of the present forest covering consists of the pine and oak, although the white birch, white oak and red maple are to be observed in the lower areas.”

The forested areas also contain besides trees, such shrubs as the inkberry, huckleberry, green brier, bayberry, service berry, Virginia creeper, dwarf blueberry, coast arrowwood, wintergreen, hog cranberry, and varieties of grasses and of species of wild rose.

The areas not receiving gradual accumulations of sand, although subject to the force of the wind, are much longer in their natural reclamation. Beach grass first appears and is later joined by poverty grass, which mournful condition continues for a long period until the hog cranberry assists, in giving a mat-like surface to the ground. Then come the bayberry and plum, and the more advanced growths continue to gradually develop toward forestation, although it is more than likely that the ultimate forest area would not materialize in this type without artificial means.

In the natural formations of sand hooks, as at Long Point, salt marsh is created, and also fresh marsh has sprung up in the valleys between the dunes on account of the lack of drainage.

Salthort is found on the edge of the salt marsh, with salt reed grass and salt meadow grass which produce the salt hay. The cultivated cranberry is raised in the fresh marsh, although this industry has been discouraged and even prohibited by the State, in order to prevent the removal of bushes which are so valuable in forming the beginnings of the forest growths.

Mr. A. S. Hitchcock says in his Government Report of 1904 on “Methods used for Controlling and Reclaiming Sand Dunes”, that there are three principal

means employed for successful artificial control of shifting sand; “(1) Transplanting sand-binding plants, (2) covering the entire surface with some inert material which prevents the wind from reaching the sand, and (3) covering the surface with a netting or brush fence which, while not preventing the wind from reaching the sand, lessens its velocity and prevents drifting.”

Of all the plants tried for sand binding, none have been as successful as beach grass and it has a decided advantage on account of its accessibility, as it grows naturally on all sand areas along the Atlantic Coast.

Mr. Westgate says, “The long, tough, but flexible leaves of the beach grass enable it to endure the action of the wind with little detriment. A bunch of dead grass will withstand two seasons of wind action without becoming destroyed.”

It has been found that Autumn is the best season for the transplanting of beach grass, although the first experiments at Provincetown were undertaken in the Spring. The plants themselves are in a better stage of development in the Autumn, and the weather then is more apt to be foggy which lends moisture and assists both in planting and in prolonging the life of the slip in its new bed. Another element in favor of fall planting is the lower rate of mortality experienced in plants set out at this season.

The most suitable plants are those of two years growth, at which time they contain one or two nodes, whereas one year old plants have not sufficiently matured nodes, and older ones have lost their germinating vigor.

Extensive planting of beach grass was practiced as early as 1892, as in the Massachusetts Historical Collections of that date mention is made of “Great attention is now paid to the transplanting of beach grass, on the sides of the hills and other marked spots near the town. The roots are set three or four feet apart in the Spring; and the grass, being propagated both by the roots and seed, forms a close body in three or four years.”

President Dwight, when he rode into Provincetown over a century ago, was amazed at the bleak desolation and he was told that the inhabitants were required by law to plant beach grass every April to hold the sand in place.

“A Description of the Eastern Coast of the County of Barnstable” written in 1892 says, “Beach grass, during the spring and summer, grows about two feet and a half. If surrounded by naked beach, the storms of autumn and winter heap up the sand on all sides, and cause it to pile higher on the top of the plant. In the ensuing spring the grass sprouts anew; it again covered with sand in the winter; and thus a hill or ridge continues to ascend, as long as there is sufficient base to support it, or till the surrounding sand, being also covered with beach grass, will no longer yield to the force of the winds.”

Beach grass thrives better where the sand is constantly accumulating about it, provided it is not buried more than a foot each year, and consequently the dunes that require the most care are the ones where the sand is blown away rather than where it is deposited. After the grass has checked the sand removal, it has served its purpose and in fact it begins to deteriorate from the time it is set out until it dies after a period of about ten years, but before it disappears, the establishment of bushes has begun and vegetation reclamation assured in order for it to be a success. On account of its rapid deterioration it is necessary to begin the planting of bushes in the grass at an early date. “The bayberry has formed the bulk of the pioneer plantings of woody growth, and used in conjunction with the beach grass appears to be the only necessary forerunner of the pines. Of the pines, pitch pine, Austrian pine and Scotch pine are the best, and the pitch pine is used most exclusively and with better success.”

As beach grass has no downward development, the offshoots germinate in the sand accumulations and are mothered by the older plants until they reach the healthy vigorous growth, when the rejuvenation process is repeated. It was not until 1892 that the artificial reclamation on Cape Cod received proper attention, and the data available from the former spasmodic operations to temporarily alloy the trouble was so meager that the State was compelled to take up the burden in a rather experimental form.

Heretofore the common method had been to set out the plants in rows, and during these first two years four or five stalks of grass were arranged from 12 to 18 inches apart with the plants about 12 inches in the row. It was soon found, however, that to alternate the rows interrupted the lanes of wind currents, and that it was not necessary to set them closer than 20 inches apart, even on the most exposed dunes.

The plants were often protected with brush cut with the leaves attached, and this was found beneficial if placed at the top of the sand areas above the grass plantings where the wind action was particularly harmful. It was also used for road protection. The planting was begun on the west end and extended to the east, and from the base and proceeded toward the top of the dune.

It was not found expedient to level off the crowns of the ridges nor to fill in the valleys, as the action of the wind could do this more economically. Often the grass was removed from the knobs so that the bare sand would soon shift to the lower level below. In fact, one of the mistakes made was in attempting to plant the hill tops more to the exclusion of the sloping sides, which resulted in the destruction of the grass by the wind, although it is possible that the
SOUTH WELLFLEET MAN BURNED TO DEATH

Louis Hatch, 83, of South Wellfleet was burned to death Tuesday night when fire leveled the home in which he lived alone, and destroyed a large barn and horse.

The body was found across the sill of a door connecting the only room of the large home that Hatch used.

George Murphy of Wellfleet discovered the fire shortly after 7 p.m. as he was traveling on Route 6 toward Orleans.
first plantings were not as thorough as the later ones, which experiments even on ridges were found to be more successful.

Mr. Westgate says in his report that "The General Government has spent to June 30, 1903, the sum of $162,019.86 for the protection of the harbor. The State has expended for reclamation purposes during the ten years ending January 1, 1904, $31,929.78, and the total amount expended upon the harbor by the State and National Government is $325,719.78. This includes $131,770.14 expended by the State in 1868 for the construction of a dike across East Harbor."

Just how much more has been spent since then up to the present date I do not know, but constant attention has been paid to the reclamation process so that the Harbor's debt has grown.

But with all the time, energy and money laid out in retaining Provincetown and its Harbor from total obliteration by the fury of the North Atlantic, the result has been well worth the price paid, and it is now evident that "the encroachment of the dunes has been checked."

After the Government took hold of the problem and saw the necessity of permanent occupation and restriction of this important section of the Coast, the idea grew to convert this area into a marine park, which if carried out should eventually rank it with any similar ocean exposure on any coast, for "The isolation, beauty of natural scenery, and oceanic location, with its five miles of heavy surf and an equal frontage on the bay, combine to render the locality probably without an equal."

William B. Bragdon
Brewster Woman
Found Not Guilty

Mrs June N. Doyle, 23, of Brewster was found not guilty in District court on a charge of driving to endanger. The charge was brought as a result of an accident in which the car she was driving allegedly struck and instantly killed Charles L. Sullivan on Route 28, East Wareham, Dec. 4.

A passenger with Mrs Doyle at the time of the accident, Mrs Arlene Latham of Brewster, testified that she did not see Sullivan until he was within a foot of the car.
Leon W. Hall

Leon W. Hall, 64, prominent in business and fraternal circles of the Central Cape, died suddenly at his home in South Dennis Tuesday, the victim of heart disease. Mr Hall’s death came after he had spent a quiet holiday observance with his family. He was apparently in fine health.

Mr Hall had operated the Leon W. Hall Lumber Company in South Dennis for twenty-three years, taking over the old Sears coal yard at that time. He had built the lumber company to one of the largest on the Cape. He also operated a coal yard in conjunction with the lumber business.

Mr Hall was born in Providence, R. I., a son of Henry W. and Betsy W. Hall, both of Cape Cod parentage. During his younger life Mr Hall went to Chicago and was employed for about seventeen years with Swift & Company, meat packers and distributors.

As a Mason he was widely known. He was a thirty-third degree Mason and a member of Allepo Temple, Shriners. He was also a member of Mount Horeb lodge, A. F. and A. M, and belonged to Cape Cod lodge, No 128, Knights of Pythias.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs Mabel Emery Hall; two sons, Richard Sears and Leon T. Hall, and a sister, Mrs Charles Alton Crowell.
Grange Holds Holiday Party

Retiring Master Joshua Crowell presided at a recent meeting of Dennis grange in Carleton hall, with thirty-five members present. A Christmas party featured the lecturer’s hour. There were games, carol singing and an exchange of presents with Mrs Walter L. Dowse in charge.

Demits were granted to Nye Crowell, now living in the Panama Canal Zone, and Miss Elizabeth Goodspeed of Avoca, N. Y.

Plans for the installation of officers at the next meeting, preceded by a supper, were announced.
Dennis House
Burns to the Ground

Fire at the home of Mr and Mrs Francis Gibbs of New Boston on Christmas night leveled the building and destroyed its contents, causing a loss estimated at more than $2,000.

Sparks and cinders from the flames were blown by a strong northwest wind more than half a mile, endangering other houses. The Gibbs family were visiting in Yarmouth at the time.

Isaac Doane, a passerby, discovered the blaze as it was breaking through the roof of the five-room bungalow.

Fire apparatus from the North and South Dennis divisions responded, but firemen were unable to save the house. The firemen, under Chief Richard S. Hall, concentrated on protecting nearby property.

“A bitterly cold wind which froze water on the ground handicapped firemen in their efforts. Many spectators witnessed the fire.

Clothing, food and money to aid the Gibbs family temporarily were asked by Mrs Anson Howes, president of the Chatterbox club, in an appeal to Dennis residents, and response was prompt and generous.

Labor has also been asked by Mr Frank B. Howes should Mr Gibbs start building a new home, which at the present time he is planning to do.
A capacity audience witnessed the Christmas entertainment presented last week by pupils of the Dennis Consolidated school in the auditorium of the building, following a short business meeting of the Dennis Parent-Teacher association. William McIlin, principal of the school and president of the organization, conducted the program.

Miss Esther Thomas and Miss Cora E. Burnett, sixth and seventh grade teachers respectively, planned a play and selections by a chorus of boys and girls. Miss Lodena Merrill, eighth grade teacher, was responsible for the pretty costumes worn by characters in the presentation.

Included in the group which sang were Ernest Black, Wallace Doane, Manuel Gomes, Josie Speirs, Mary Monteiro, Celia Leighton, Loretta Abbe, Dana Weeks, Clifton Ellis, Robert Estes, Oren Foley, Ethel Foley, Evelyn Vanlenderstine, Margery Travis, Dorothy Sylver, Janet MacRobert and Norman Roberts. Accompanists were Priscilla Hall and Lois Loud.

Children of other lands, the sandman and toy characters figured in the play. Parts were taken by the following: Barbara Sears, Betty Dean, Lena Dearborn, James Marchant, Thomas Kelley, David Hodsdon, Dorothy Harriman, Betty McCarthy, Carl Nickerson, Helena Howes, Cathleen Long, Eunice Long, Edward White, Mahlon Chase, Cortes Brigham, Joseph Long, Charles Cobb, Laurence Cash, John Newkirk, Paul McDowell and Edward Crowell.


Mr. McIlin announced the next meeting of the association will be held Jan. 17, with Roger Gott, manager of the New England Telephone and Telegraph company for this district, slated to speak. An exhibit of telephone equipment, and motion pictures, will be included in the program.
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