

THE PROVINCETOWN *Railroad Heritage Trail*

Self-guided Provincetown Railroad Tour





TRURO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Introduction

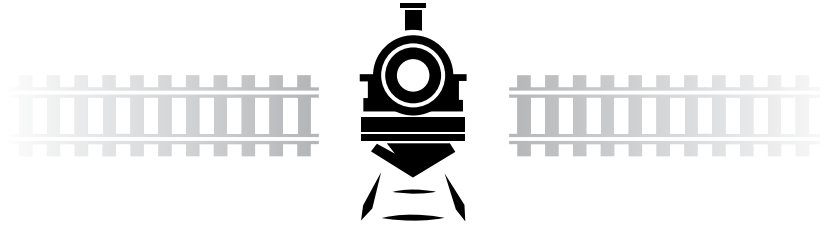
Before 1873, traveling to Provincetown was an arduous and long journey over rutted dirt roads or by sea voyage. Although there was regular passenger steamship service from Boston to Provincetown, there were few other destinations and few options for freight. Then in 1873, train service came to Provincetown. This connection to the rest of the Cape, Boston, and New York enabled an isolated fishing village to transform itself into a resort and artist community. Passenger service to Provincetown ran for 65 years, ending in 1938 with a brief revival in the summer of 1940. Freight trains provided service for 87 years, also starting in 1873 and ending in 1960.

The building of the 14-mile railroad extension from Wellfleet to Provincetown started in the fall of 1872 and finished the following year. On Tuesday, July 22, 1873, two inaugural trains brought local and state dignitaries to Provincetown for a flag-waving celebration. The Town, in holiday attire, joined in for speeches, a banquet, and an evening of dancing. The train had come to Provincetown, traveling 120.3 miles from Boston. The run from Boston to Provincetown took between 5 hours 10 minutes and 5 hours 45 minutes.

Railroad service opened new markets for the fishing and other industries, gave businesspeople, tourists and artists regularly scheduled and accessible transportation, and provided trolley-like service for folks going from one town to another on the Outer Cape.

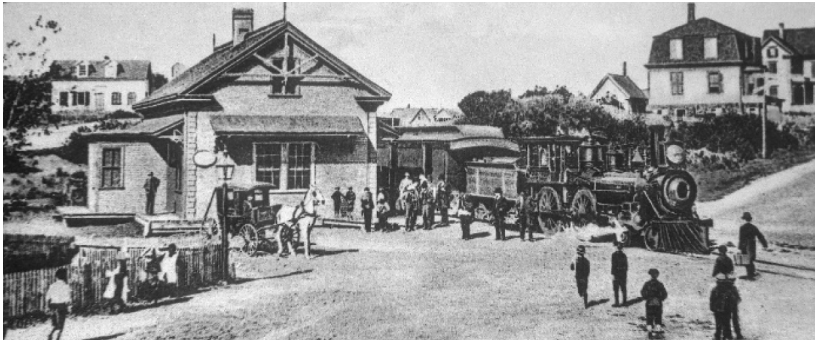
In the early 20th Century, the construction of Route 6 and the increasing popularity of cars and trucks led first to the demise of train service for passengers and then later freight service. In 1960, the tracks were pulled up on the Outer Cape and over the next few years portions of the railroad's right-of-way were sold to towns or individuals.

Today, some signs of the mighty "Iron Horse" still remain. This self-guided walking tour will tell the story of Provincetown's railroad and highlight points of interest. *Stop, Look and Ponder* as you'll need your imagination to see beyond the photos and descriptions. And if you're lucky, you might hear the far-off sound of the train's whistle coming into Town.



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J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

Stop #1 – Depot Square

Your tour starts at Depot Square, the plaza still evident today at the junction of Standish and Bradford Streets. The passenger Depot was located here, close to the center of town, in the approximate footprint of the current CVS store. Like many Cape Cod train stations, Provincetown's was a utilitarian wooden single-story gable-roofed structure with a waiting room, ticket office, and baggage room. It was heated by a coal-burning, pot-belly stove and might have had a penny gum dispenser.

The photo above shows the railroad in the good old days: the locomotive releasing steam, horse and buggy awaiting riders, kids playing in Depot Square.

The Depot was both a business and a social gathering place, especially around the arrival and departure times of the four daily passenger trains. It was a great location to see who was leaving and coming into Town and served as the place for exchanging local news and gossip. Over the course of its 65 years of railroad service, the station building was painted and renovated but after passenger service stopped, the local newspaper, the Advocate, tagged it as a "ramshackle affair."



Westward view of station, pre-1910: Pilgrim Monument not yet built

NOEL BEYLE COLLECTION, COURTESY OF BILL REIDY



Eastward view of passenger station, 1927

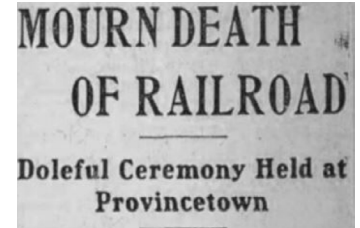
J.J. HARNESS COLLECTION - NEW HAVEN RAILROAD HISTORICAL & TECHNICAL ASSOCIATION (NHRHTA)

On May 21, 1935, Provincetown was visited by the streamlined Comet trainset, newly purchased by the New Haven Railroad and on its inaugural tour. The passenger station is on the right and the 1929 Railway Express Agency (REA) building is on the left. The REA was the UPS of the day. This REA structure would be the last railroad building to stand in Town and was later moved to serve as the freight depot at the foot of Center Street opposite the stationmaster's house (Stop #8).

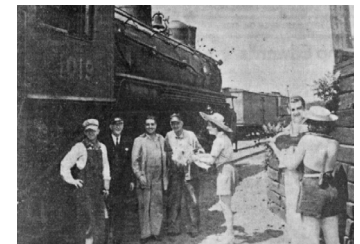


NOEL BEYLE COLLECTION, COURTESY OF BILL REIDY

It was on July 17, 1938 that passenger service ended. A sad event, although no coverage has been found in the Advocate. Was the Town newspaper too distraught? The historical Cape Cod Standard Times did run the photos on the right and a story that described the somber mood of the day. The station is draped in black crepe. The placard read "We mourn the death of our railroad. May it not rest in peace." Half-staff flags and a funeral dirge completed the scene as the last train departed. Locomotive and crew were feted in photo at right.



A brief reprieve in the summer of 1940 saw the use of a gas-electric car in the photo below.



By then, the station was adorned with Bell Telephone and Coca Cola signs, ads for Tarvers Taxi, and the Friendly Snack Bar inside!



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PROVINCETOWN ADVOCATE

The station stood until 1950 when Joseph Duarte bought about 36,000 square feet of the railroad property for his Duarte Motors business. By March of that year, the train station was torn down. In September, Duarte Motors and the Chevrolet sales showroom were built.

In 1985, the property changed hands, becoming Riley's family-owned Beach Store.

In 2019, CVS took over the property that once was the site of the Provincetown station.



J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION



J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

Stop #2 – On the Way to the Wharf

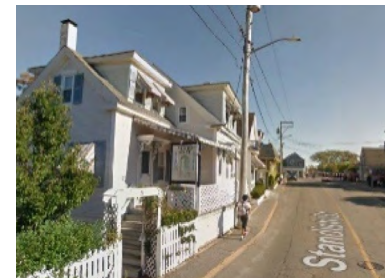
With your back to the Depot Square and CVS, look down Standish Street toward the harbor. When the Old Colony Railroad arrived in 1873, it laid track out to the end of what was soon to be known as Railroad Wharf. If you were standing in front of the Depot, now the site of CVS, in the early 1900s and looking toward today's Lopes Square, this is the view (top photo on right) you would have seen along Standish Street. The street is to the left and is fenced off from the railroad right-of-way that is curving toward Commercial Street. The second building on the left is today's Victoria House. The historic photo also shows the railroad freight house, which is the farthest building in the distance; the ramp is visible and boxcars are parked there. The railroad freight house was just about where the Chamber of Commerce office is today.

The 1917 photo, third on the right, shows the dwelling at 135 Bradford St. It was owned by the railroad and was reportedly the station agent's residence at one time. Note the fence at the extreme left separating Standish Street from the track. As you can see in the current picture on the right, the house is still standing today.

Also note the stone wall across the street from the Victoria House. It was built in 1873 to hold back the higher ground on the far side of the track when the railroad graded the right-of-way to the wharf. The wall is still there today as the last physical vestige of the railroad in Provincetown.



HELEN VALENTINE COLLECTION



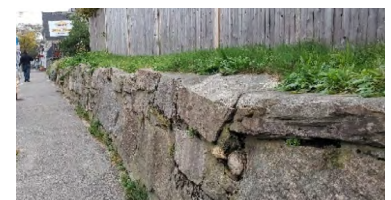
ROBERT JOSEPH BELLETZKIE COLLECTION



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ROBERT JOSEPH BELLETZKIE COLLECTION



ROBERT JOSEPH BELLETZKIE COLLECTION





J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

Stop #3 – Railroad Square

Continue down Standish Street, stand at the corner of Commercial Street and look toward MacMillan Wharf. Lopes Square was Railroad Square in the day. In today's view, the track would have been just left of the esplanade. Take a few steps west toward Town Hall and turn around to look east.

This photo below is of the railroad as it crosses Commercial Street. The sign says 'LOOK OUT for the ENGINE.' In 1929, this section of track was removed when rail service to the wharf ended, thus eliminating this hazardous crossing. The second building from the left is what houses today's Governor Bradford Restaurant.

Slightly farther west toward Town Hall and looking toward the harbor, this is the view (lower right) you would have seen up until 1929 when Railroad Square was deeded to the Town and new freight facilities were built at the passenger station. The gentleman with the cane is standing a little beyond the New York Store and looking at the old freight house with the large platform and ramp. Note the boxcars lettered in the script herald of the New York, New Haven & Hartford (NY, NH & H) Railroad which leased the Old Colony Railroad in 1893. The freight depot site is approximately where the Chamber of Commerce office is today.



PILGRIM MONUMENT AND PROVINCETOWN MUSEUM



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Stop #4 – MacMillan Wharf

Continue toward the harbor, walking out onto Macmillan Wharf which was built in 1956 just to the left of the old Railroad Wharf. The Town bought the old wharf in 1928 and demolished it 28 years later because of its deteriorating condition. Partway down the wharf, stop just after the Whydah Museum. Looking to your right you would have seen this freight house at the end of Railroad Wharf. The view above is from April 14, 1917.



PILGRIM MONUMENT AND PROVINCETOWN MUSEUM

The wharf saw mostly freight activity; regular passenger trains did not continue on from the station except for switching purposes.

Lengthy passenger trains on the wharf were used for special occasions such as presidential visits; Theodore Roosevelt coming in 1907 to lay the cornerstone for the Pilgrim Monument and William Howard Taft officiating at the dedication in 1910.



J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

This couple seems to be hamming it up at the bumper at the end of the wharf track: The photographer may be teetering at the edge! The wharf freight house, used mostly for the sea catch of the day, is to the left and the Pilgrim Monument looms in the distance.



PILGRIM MONUMENT AND PROVINCETOWN MUSEUM



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Stop #5 – Chamber of Commerce

Retracing your steps back toward the Depot, this view from the foot of Railroad Wharf shows the rear of the Commercial Street freight house, approximately where the Chamber of Commerce office is today. Again, note the NH boxcars parked on the house track (the siding for loading and unloading freight) that started midway out on the wharf and ended just past Commercial Street. Imagine railroad tracks crossing Commercial Street here today!

Just the corner of the freight house is visible in this photo below. Note the water is up to the rear of the buildings. Perhaps there was a moon-driven spring tide. This area was reclaimed from the sea to create the McMillan Wharf parking lot of today. Town Hall steeple is seen at far left.



PILGRIM MONUMENT AND PROVINCETOWN MUSEUM

Stop #6 – The New York Store

Walk back to the corner of Commercial Street and Standish. You are now facing toward the landmark New York Store. This 1917 historical photo was taken from the freight platform. The Pilgrim Monument is obscured by the phone pole, perhaps fog, and the poor quality of the print. A boxcar is stopped right at the curb and you can see the house track and main line merging just beyond Commercial Street. The fence separating the track from Standish Street is



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J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

once again visible and the passenger station is seen in the distance at Bradford Street. Today's view shows the New York store has changed very little.



J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

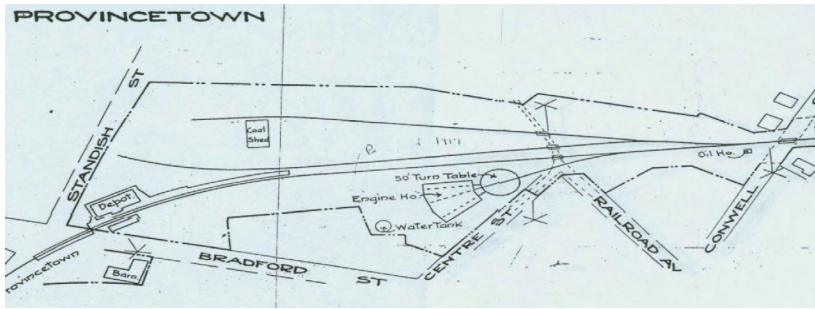
Stop #7 – The Provincetown Public Library

The Provincetown Public Library is located at 356 Commercial St. It was built in 1860 and began its history as the Center Methodist Episcopal Church. It changed hands a number of times and eventually was used as a heritage and art museum.

After it was vacated and fell into disuse, the property was conveyed to the Board of Library Trustees at the April 2, 2001 Town Meeting. Today, it is a remarkable library and a welcoming community spot with a must-see surprise on the second floor and spectacular views of the harbor from the third floor.

At the Library, there are a number of books for further reading about Cape Cod's railroads. Robert H. Farson's *Cape Cod Railroads Including Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket* (1993) gives an in-depth history of the railroads on the Cape (Call # 385.097 FAR). And, Andrew T. Eldredge's, *Railroads of Cape Cod and the Islands* (2003) gives an over-all, mostly pictorial account of the different stations and railroad's major events (Call # 385.097 ELD).

The Cape Cod Collection Room on the second floor houses multiple books and reports on Provincetown's history – the art colony, writers, poets, Town reports, and much more. It is easy to spend an afternoon browsing through these treasures.



1918 New Haven Railroad Yard Map

Stop # 8 – The Stationmaster House and Railroad Yard

From the library, continue up Center Street, cross over Bradford Street, and take the right-angle turn where Railroad Avenue begins today. To the right at 27 Center Street is the house that is usually identified as the residence of the stationmaster which has been verified through artifacts found within the home. When facing west toward the Monument, the stationmaster had a clear view of the railroad yard – the turntable, engine house, water tank, and, on the far western side of the yard, the station, REA building, and coaling tower. Our arrow (upper right) on the 1910 Barnstable County Atlas map at right shows Railroad Avenue went across the tracks and all the way to Standish Street at that time.



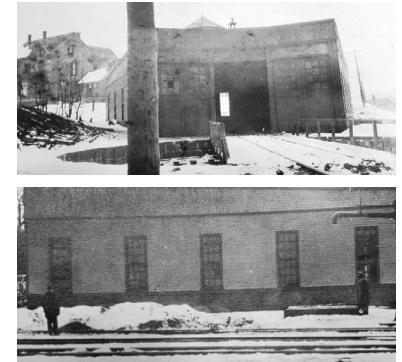
27 Center Street
J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

The stationmaster kept the comings and goings of the station and yard safe and running smoothly. Overseeing passenger and freight operations, managing railroad employees, defining roles and responsibilities, and choreographing locomotives and rail cars were significant functions, especially with



1910 Barnstable County Atlas map

two passenger trains in and two out of Provincetown each day. Then, there were the freight trains moving around the yard and heading out to Railroad Wharf. In smaller towns like Provincetown, the stationmaster also often threw the switches, manned the telegraph, sold tickets, and even served as postmaster since the railroads handled the U.S. mail. The crowd of passengers and town folks added to the commotion. The yard was a busy place!



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The person who held the position of stationmaster was a well-respected figure in the community. There were a number of stationmasters over the years but two had the longest tenure. Raymond Ellington held that position for 18 years from the 1873 extension of the railroad. A.E. Slade held the position for 21 years, retiring in 1937.

Above is the view of the 3-stall engine house as the stationmaster would have viewed it from his front door. The turntable, with safety railings on each side of the track, is seen in front of the engine house. Before motorization, the turntable in its stone-lined pit was rotated manually – hence the name an Armstrong turntable! – to line up the engine with the track into the stall it was to occupy. Locomotives were stored here to allow mechanics to work on them and keep them out of the weather. The side view also above shows the standpipe that swiveled to pour water into the tender from the big tank on wooden legs. The photo below is a 1957 aerial view of the rail yard.

The big water tank seen at center held thousands of gallons of water which the locomotive boiled to produce steam to turn the driving wheels. The tank stood right behind today's Sunset Inn.



PHIL CHOATE COLLECTION, COURTESY OF BILL REIDY

Provincetown, MA



- Stop 1 Depot Square
- Stop 2 On the Way to the Wharf
- Stop 3 Railroad Square
- Stop 4 MacMillan Wharf
- Stop 5 Chamber of Commerce
- Stop 6 The New York Store
- Stop 7 The Provincetown Public Library
- Stop 8 The Stationmaster House and Railroad Yard
- Stop 9 The Charm Guesthouse, a Sears, Roebuck Kit House, at 156 Bradford Street

- Stop 10 Conwell Street and Harry Kemp Way
- Stop 11 The Old Colony Nature Pathway
- Stop 12 The Railroad Wye
- Stop 13 Snail Road
- Stop 14 Mount Gilboa Road
- Stop 15 Mayflower Heights
- Stop 16 Relocated REA Building
- Stop 17 Truro Stations

The Old Colony's *Highland Light* engine likely visited Provincetown and partook of its 'refreshments' and overnight accommodations. The *Highland Light* was a 4-4-0 American-type engine, the designation means four pilot wheels up front, four drivers to propel the locomotive and no trailing wheels behind the drivers. By the 1870s, 85% of the locomotives operating in this country were of this type. The attractive and colorful paint scheme was typical of the era.



J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

Locomotives first burned wood and later coal as forests were depleted. The coaling tower in Provincetown was apparently sold to private interests over time. Here, Atkins Coal looks to be making a few extra bucks advertising Purity Oats, The Bountiful Breakfast!



UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

In the lower right side of the photo below is the Railroad Yard circa 1940. Notice the sand-filled gondola cars and the freight trains in the yard and East Harbor in the distance.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

In later days, the Railway Express Agency building seen at right in 1948 across the track from the passenger station would be moved to the foot of Center Street opposite the stationmaster's house. The building stood there until the end of railroad service in 1960 and was later purchased and moved to North Truro (Stop #16) where it still stands today.



J.J. HARNESS COLLECTION, NEW HAVEN RAILROAD HISTORICAL & TECHNICAL ASSOCIATION (NHRHTA)

Ralph Tinkham, the last freight agent, is photographed with NY, NH & H President Patrick J. McGinnis (1954-1956) in front of the caboos that served as the freight office until the end of railroad service in 1960. The flamboyant McGinnis traveled by rail and was also chauffeured in a Cadillac fitted with flanged wheels! Here he is seen at West Barnstable headed in the direction of Provincetown.



UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Shown below on June 13, 1954 are three self-propelled Budd rail-diesel cars (RDCs). This picture is of one of the last few passenger trains into Town, used for 1950's fan trips. Bus service has since become the only form of ground transit to "Land's End" (Provincetown). Also seen here is a New England Transportation Co. (NETCo) bus, a bus and trucking subsidiary of the New Haven Railroad. The roof of the REA building is visible opposite the stationmaster's residence on Center Street.



CHARLES B. GUNN PHOTOS, BILL REIDY COLLECTION



CHARLES B. GUNN PHOTOS, BILL REIDY COLLECTION



DAVID R. SWEETLAND PHOTO, NEW HAVEN RAILROAD HISTORICAL & TECHNICAL ASSOCIATION (NHRHTA)





J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

Stop #9 - The Charm Guesthouse, a Sears, Roebuck Kit House, at 156 Bradford Street

Along with bringing passengers and mail, lumber, building materials, and household supplies to Provincetown, the train also delivered ready-to-build houses. The biggest supplier of these houses was Sears, Roebuck, who sold them in their catalogues from 1908 to 1940.

Kit houses came in thousands of pieces loaded into boxcars. Pre-cut lumber was stamped and numbered. Manufacturers included all of the materials and instructions for constructing the house. The popular Sears, Roebuck kit houses required that the building site of the home be no more than 2 miles from the railroad line.

This example of a Sears kit house, located at the corner of Bradford Street and Railroad Avenue, is the Castleton model, originally sold as an eight room house. Additional examples of kit homes are on Brewster, Winslow, and other streets in the vicinity of Provincetown's old railroad yard. The illustration at right is from the 1916 Sears catalog, courtesy of the Sears homes website.

Look at that price!



Stop #10 - Conwell Street and Harry Kemp Way

The train's final approach into Provincetown travelled what is now Harry Kemp Way. Retrace your steps up Railroad Avenue to Conwell Street. The next street off of Conwell going towards Route 6 is Harry Kemp Way.

Turn around for the view of the Pilgrim Monument as you would have seen it on the way to the Provincetown Depot. All traces of rail activity are gone. Until recently, you could see that the large parking lot had some sections showing the shape of raised railroad ties through the asphalt but in 2019 they were paved over.

This painting is Samuel Brecher's (1897-1982) "Railroad Crossing, Provincetown," showing a west-looking view of the Railroad Yard from the end of Harry Kemp Way crossing Conwell Street.

The Town authorized the purchase of this section of the railroad's right-of-way on March 14, 1966 at the annual Town meeting. Then on October 27, 1969 at a special Town meeting, the motion carried to name the old railroad right-of-way between Howland Street and Conwell Street "Harry Kemp Way."

Harry Kemp (1883-1960) was a famous American poet and prose writer who lived in a dune shack on Provincetown's back shore. Kemp was known as the "Poet of the Dunes" and was also a member of the Provincetown Players. A contemporary of Mr. Kemp's is said to have mused that "Harry Kemp would have rolled over in his grave, if he had one, if he knew that a street was named after him."

As you walk toward Howland Street along Harry Kemp Way, you will pass Aunt Sukeys Way on the left and Brewster and Oak Streets on the right. The Old Colony Nature Path, named for the Old Colony Railroad which brought rail service to Town in 1873, continues the journey as you cross over Howland Street.



J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION



Courtesy of Helen and Napi Van Dereck collection



J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

Stop #11 – The Old Colony Nature Pathway

Formerly part of the railroad's right-of-way, the Old Colony Nature Pathway, now a walking trail, runs parallel with Routes 6 and 6A from here across Snail Road to Mayflower Heights and the Truro town line. Signs of the railroad remain – pieces of coal, markers and some ties used as retaining walls.

Between Howland and Snail Roads, you will find Whistle Path Woods. Trains blew their whistles when approaching this area since there were many cranberry pickers and walkers in the vicinity of the tracks.

The path's roadbed is a mix of sand and dirt, with many sections elevated quite a bit above the surrounding terrain. Loads of sand and fill were dumped out of gondola cars to create the embankments. It is a testament to the quality of the construction that the roadbed is still intact after 150 years. It looks firm enough to hold trains today! Be sure to note the tie-post fence across the right-of-way, a later reuse of railroad relics, probably to discourage motorized vehicles from using the path.

The Old Colony Nature Pathway was established in 1995 and Whistle Path Woods in 2001. The Pathway is a Town gem and a wonderful area to take one of the guided nature tours given by the Provincetown Conservation Trust. Check their website for events. Walking here, it is best to use bug spray in the summer and be on the lookout for ticks as well.



J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION



J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION



ROBERT JOSEPH BELLETZKIE COLLECTION

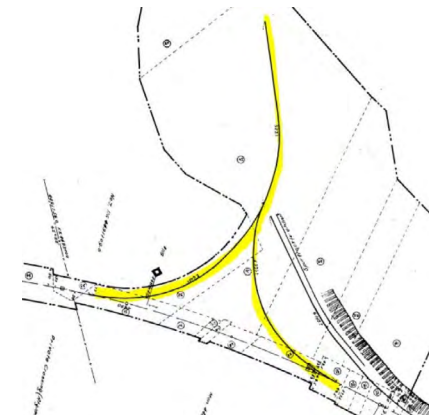


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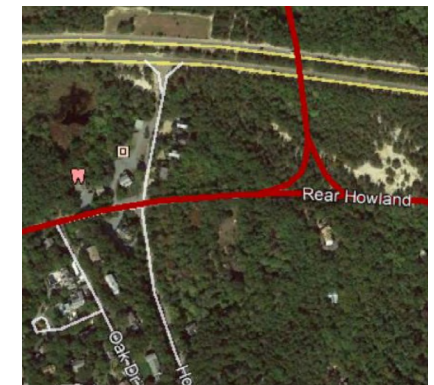
Stop #12 – The Railroad Wye

The fact that Provincetown was the end of a branch presented another challenge, like similar dead-end lines: How are locomotives turned around to reverse direction? Railroads had two ways to do this: the turntable and the wye. With the former, the engine could be rotated 180 degrees. As engines became too heavy and too long to fit on turntables, another solution was to use a wye.

The wye was a triangular arrangement of tracks where trains coming from any direction could pull forward on one of the three legs of the wye, back down the adjacent leg and then return to the original track facing the opposite direction. This 1915 map above shows the 1,000-ft wye on the Old Colony Nature Pathway (Stop #11) just east of Howland Street with its northerly most reach crossing what is today's Route 6, as can be seen on the aerial view. Look for the MHB (Massachusetts Highway Bounds) boundary stones that dot the wye area today.



UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS MAP



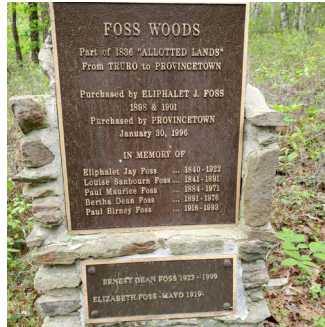
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J.J. HARNESS COLLECTION, NEW HAVEN RAILROAD HISTORICAL & TECHNICAL ASSOCIATION (NHRHTA)



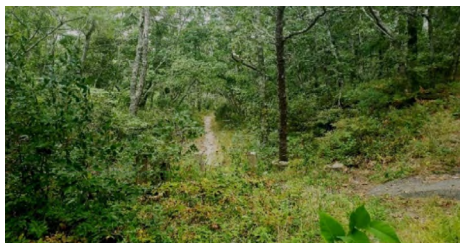
J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

Stop #13 – Snail Road

Snail Road in Provincetown's far-east end is an important link between Shore Road (Route 6A) and the Mid-Cape Highway (Route 6). Although the rails are long gone, the right-of-way continues on its way to Truro. The forested area east of Snail Road is Foss Woods. The land was donated by the Foss family in memory of family members across generations and retains the open space enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. The photo shows the Comet enroute from Provincetown to Boston on July 25, 1937 at Snail Road for rail fans and 'daisy pickers,' a summer outing for nature lovers and those longing for cool Cape breezes.

Stop #14 – Mount Gilboa Road

The crossing at Mount Gilboa road looks like this today. From the direction you are walking, turn around to see the view in the photo that looks back in the direction of Howland Street. Turning forward again toward Truro, you can see the view in the other picture of the narrowing right-of-way as you proceed to Mayflower Heights, a stop that the railroad dubbed Puritan Heights.



ROBERT JOSEPH BELLETZKIE COLLECTION

Stop #15 – Mayflower Heights

Mayflower Heights is at the far eastern edge of Provincetown on Beach Point near North Truro. The Railroad went through "the Heights," also known as Puritan Heights. This spot, one of the oldest summer colonies in the area, became a flag stop for the train from approximately 1906 to 1928. There was no station structure. Instead, at a flag stop, passengers signaled the train crew to stop and riders on board informed the conductor that they wished to detrain. According to the New Haven Timetable of 1913, the Puritan Heights flag stop was 2.5 miles east of the Provincetown Depot.



J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

The 'concrete walk' on the 1915 map marks where passengers would board or detrain. The 'walk' was on the south side of the track so Provincetown is to the right as you look at the map.



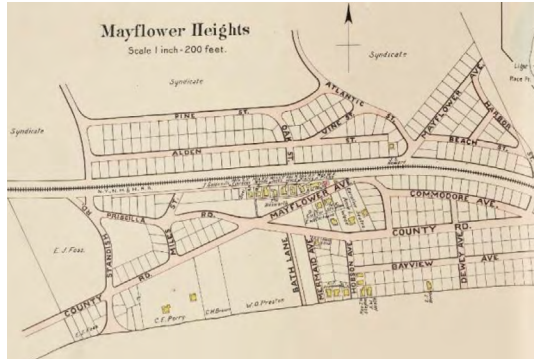
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Today, the photo below shows an ornate iron gate indicating that the public walking trail on the right-of-way ends here and it is private property thereafter.



ROBERT JOSEPH BELLETZKIE COLLECTION

There is not much information on how this stop came about but this 1910 Barnstable County Atlas map shows the plan for a new subdivision on Provincetown's eastern border. The majority of these streets were never formally built; some seem to exist today as sandy paths between cottages. The word 'Syndicate' top of the map indicates that there were investors who purchased the land and carved it into plots for resale to subscribers for the new community.



Near the Heights, on the other side of what is now the Mid-Cape Highway (Route 6), was a sand removal operation. Locomotives of the day needed oil and grease for lubricating moving parts but these lubricants dripped onto the rails making them slippery and reducing traction. Rain, ice, and snow also contributed. Steam engines carried a dome atop the boiler from which sand was piped down through a tube to the rail on each side of the locomotive.

Other industries also valued the sand, and it became a commodity that was exported off Cape. One major site for collecting and shipping sand was this sand pit located at the west side of Pilgrim Lake (also known as East Harbor) across from the Heights. A spur extended from the mainline into the dunes, and tons of sand-filled gondolas and hopper cars were used to transport the sand. It is reported that during World War II 1,200-1,500 cars of sand were shipped annually out of Provincetown for railroad and military uses, to make concrete, and for other building purposes.



PROVINCETOWN HISTORY PRESERVATION PROJECT



1985 photo looking west
ROBERT JOSEPH BELLETZKIE COLLECTION



2018 photo looking north
J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

Stop #16 – Relocated REA Building

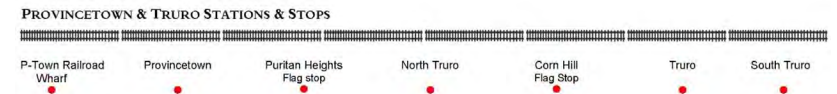
A short drive or bike ride from Provincetown is the Railway Express Agency (REA) building that was moved from the Provincetown railroad yard to 365 Shore Road (Route 6A) in Truro sometime after the 1960 end of freight service. Today it is privately owned and used for storage. Nearby Stott's Crossing was named for a local family who owned a cottage complex here.



ROBERT JOSEPH BELLETZKIE COLLECTION

Stop #17 – Truro Stations

There were four train stops in Truro: The first stop after leaving Provincetown was the station in North Truro at the end of Pond Road at what is now Cold Storage Beach. Next station was at Corn Hill, which was a flag stop. The Truro station was at the end of Depot Road at the Pamet River. And the final stop was South Truro station near Ryder Beach. From there, the train went through Wellfleet, Eastham, and Orleans and up the Cape to Boston. You'll need a car to drive to these sites.



Be sure to visit the Truro Historical Society's Highland House Museum and Truro's Cobb Library Archives for more information on the railroad in Truro. Also available is the Cape Cod Rail Trail, which



North Truro station
TRURO HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Corn Hill flag stop

TRURO HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Truro station, 1910

TRURO HISTORICAL SOCIETY



South Truro station

RAILWAY & LOCOMOTIVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
COLLECTION CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD
MUSEUM



MICHAEL MACINTYRE COLLECTION



J.M. WEISSMAN COLLECTION

runs for 22 miles through six towns from Wellfleet to South Dennis. An ancillary trail runs from Harwich to Chatham. Each town has a library and a historical society for those interested in the history of railroading on the Cape.

Vestiges Remain in Truro...

Old rail ties can be seen as you walk from Pamet Harbor heading to Corn Hill.

Remnants at North Truro are a small cottage and studio that were originally used as fish trap sheds. The fish from the Cold Storage processing plant was among the freight shipped off Cape.

A Timeline of Key Events

- 1873** The first train arrived in Provincetown, via the 14-mile extension from Wellfleet. (July 22)

- 1873** Regular service from Boston to Provincetown started. (July 23)

- 1874** President Ulysses S. Grant arrived by train in Provincetown to commemorate the completion of the Old Colony Railroad. (August 28)

- 1874** Steamship Wharf was renamed Railroad Wharf.

- 1873-1893** Trains were operated by the Old Colony Railroad, Cape Cod Division.

- 1893-1960** Trains were operated by the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad, Boston Division. Pullman cars were in service in the 1890s and early 1900s.

- 1908-1940** Sears, Roebuck houses were shipped by freight train to Provincetown.

- 1910** Pilgrim Monument completed.

- 1929** Tracks were removed from Standish Street to Wharf.

- 1935** The Cape Cod Canal vertical lift Railroad Bridge opened in Bourne, MA. (December 29)

- 1938** Passenger service to Provincetown ended after 65 years, revived briefly in the summer of 1940.

- 1950** Provincetown Train Depot demolished to make room for Duarte automotive center.

- 1954** Route 6 completed to Provincetown.

- 1960** Freight service to Provincetown ended after 87 years.



Train from Provincetown headed past Cold Storage Beach enroute to Boston.

George Yater (1910-1933) "Pond Village, Springtime," 1939, oil on canvas.
COURTESY OF MARJORIE ELLEN YATER COLLECTION

This walking guide was written by Jane M. Weissman and Robert Joseph Belletzkie. Jane, a long-time resident of Provincetown, is the author of *The Provincetown Railroad – The Tracks of Change* (2019). Bob is a Connecticut railroad historian and webmaster of TylerCityStation. Proofreading and editing by M.L. Bell. All three have a love of Provincetown, its history and diversity, and we thank all the people who shared their railroad recollections, photos, and expertise.

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We'd like to hear from you.

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