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The Shores of Bohemia: A Cape Cod Story, 1910–1960. By John Taylor Williams. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2022. Pp. 300. \$35.00 cloth.)

Nature writer Robert Finch described Cape Cod as a “storied place,” where nature, history, and culture are inextricably intertwined. This is especially true of the Outer Cape, the large area of windswept bluffs and beaches on one side and sheltered bays on the other that stretches south from Provincetown through Truro, Wellfleet, Eastham, and Orleans to Chatham. What appears to be a timeless natural setting of ocean, sand, fields, and forest has been shaped by successive generations of indigenous peoples and European-American farmers, fisherman, real estate developers, and conservationists. Beginning with Henry David Thoreau in the mid-nineteenth century, artists and writers have played a major role in shaping visitors’ perceptions of the Outer Cape, which has, in turn, reshaped the environment as the local economy shifted to support tourism.

The Shores of Bohemia closely follows two generations of artists, writers, and architects who lived through this dramatic transformation and at times accelerated it. Soon after the Portland Gale of 1898 damaged the local fishing industry, Charles Hawthorne founded the Cape Cod School of Art and writer Mary Heaton Vorse moved to Provincetown. Taking advantage of the depressed local economy, Greenwich Village artists and writers associated with either the art school, Vorse, or both started summering there, and a seasonal bohemian colony grew. Intellectual historians might disagree with the author’s definition of “bohemian” and who belongs in that set, but the approach works well here. Some errors arise, such as misstating when New York moved its capital to Albany (7), confusing the American Federation of Labor with the Western Federation

of Miners (44), and asserting that supporters of woman's suffrage were a "very different group of dedicated women" than supporters of Prohibition (78). But, in general, readers should approach this book understanding that the author largely succeeds in telling a Cape Cod story rather than a national or international saga.

Williams offers lively portraits of each character and narrates their interactions with great verve and geographical detail. Readers can use the extensive index and accompanying map to follow the exploits of their favorite artists, writers, and architects. Of special value is his chapter on "The New New Bauhaus," which calls attention to the area's distinctive mid-century modern architecture, much of it abandoned within the boundaries of Cape Cod National Seashore and only recently rediscovered and marked for preservation. To some extent, Williams is an insider, as the son-in-law of one character, artist and architect Jack Hall, the Harvard classmate of others, and the lawyer or literary agent for many more. Dividing his time over the past five decades between Cambridge and Wellfleet, Williams interviewed nearly sixty friends, acquaintances, and family members. Many readers, like this one, will enjoy Williams' talent for dishing about the area's rich and famous former residents and their children.

Williams ends his story in 1960, when "a generation that cared so deeply about the bohemian ethos was evaporating," and the establishment of Cape Cod National Seashore "instantly attracted thousands of suburban homeowners" (291). This link may be misleading, since, as Williams acknowledges, the National Seashore protected the Outer Cape from the type of sprawl that afflicted Hyannis and towns closer to the mainland. The final chapter is steeped in nostalgia for a time when families of modest means and artists and writers without enormous commercial success or a substantial inheritance could afford to live on the Outer Cape. As the character of the landscape has changed, and new Cape Cod stories are being written, *The Shores of Bohemia* captures the past in entertaining, accessible context.

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