Fish, Ships, Shoes, and Seaplanes: Industrial Speculations on the North Atlantic Sea

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Introduction

The colonial American town of Marblehead, Massachusetts, presents a unique case of maritime-industrial urbanism, which deftly reinvents itself across four separate enterprises between the early nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Unlike the sprawling mill towns of inland New England (e.g. Lowell, Lawrence, Manchester) or the mechanized, artificially constructed harbors of larger urban ports like Boston, Marblehead's industrial development takes place as a concentrated and adaptive dialogue with the distinct geomorphological qualities of its North Atlantic coastline. The pace and creativity of its iterations are made possible by a durable granite seawall, 10 to 20 feet (3 to 6 meters) high along the majority of its coast, facilitating the proximity of industrial buildings to the sea with minimal intervening infrastructure. The exclusivity of its investment structure and labor force result from a generational legacy of isolated enterprise and community building which is made possible by the town's peninsularity. American journalist and historian, Samuel Adams Drake, writes in 1875: "If not insular, your genuine Marbleheader is the next thing to it. The rest of the world is merged with him into a place to sell his fish and buy his salt. Even Salem, Beverly, and the parts adjacent draw but little on his sympathy or fellowship: in short, they are not Marblehead."[1] Finally, the generational impetus for engagement with the sea, which underpins each of the town's committed maritime-industrial efforts, is propelled by a gradated sequence of oceanic spaces along the coast (Fig. 1): 1) inland basins of exposed rock create small pools for young Marbleheaders to play with model sailboats—Redd's pond, a reservoir erected above one of these spaces in 1877, has been the site of model sailboat races every Sunday morning since 1894;[2] 2) Little Harbor (protected by Crowninshield and Gerry Islands) and Marblehead Harbor (protected by the Neck) present sizeable, weather-protected maritime space which acts as a platform for exploratory interactions (like testing the seaworthiness of ships and planes) — American journalist and historian, Frederic Lauriston Bullard, referred to Marblehead Harbor as a "pouch between granite cliffs… as snug an anchorage as ever beguiled a modern Ulysses into forsaking for a time his quest";[3] and 3) hundreds of smaller offshore islands extending as far out as Halfway Rock (3.8 miles or 6.2 kilometers from the mainland) create a prolonged, semi-protected threshold between the coast and the open ocean.[4]

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1   Samuel Adams Drake, *Nooks and Corners of the New England Coast* (Harper & Brothers, 1875), 244-45.

2   "It was a swamp. In 1877, the town appropriated $10,000 to excavate the area and turn it into a reservoir for use in fighting fires. A wall was built to around it to retain the water which would, through gravity feed, run through pipes to strategically placed hydrants. Sometime in the 1930's the WPA built an additional wall and walkways around part of the pond which has been the site of model boat races every Sunday morning since 1894." See Bette Hunt, (Marblehead Town Historian from 2002-2015), "A Doozie" (email to the author, September 25, 2019).

3   Frederic Lauriston Bullard, *Historic Summer Haunts: From Newport to Portland* (Little, Brown, and Co., 1912), 137.

4   Known locally as "Halfway Rock" because it is located half way between Boston Lighthouse and Cape Ann.

Fig. 1: Marblehead's geomorphological predisposition to the sea is evidenced as a sequence of gradated
spatial engagements: beginning at Redd's Pond (foreground), continuing into the harbor (mid-ground), then
launching into the open waters of the ocean (background)

Between 1815 and 1918, Marblehead becomes a palimpsest of industrial architecture, tracing
not simply a succession of chronological episodes, but typological mutations which exist within
a single cultural continuum. Each section that follows revisits this continuum from a different
vantage point, where the coastal landscape becomes a dispersed manufactory (FISH); ropewalks
and shipyards rationalize the shore into rational geometric forms (SHIPS); domestic archi-
tecture industrializes from within (SHOES); and the factory floor expands to the sea *and* air
(SEAPLANES).

Fish

Marblehead begins its life as an industrial endeavor when it is founded by fishermen with
"little or no religious motivation" four miles to the southeast of Salem: "the harbor was good,
there was room to dry fish, and the sailor-settlers looked upon the sea, and not the shore, as
being their home. So that Allerton's rough fellows, who in 1633 made their rude cabins on the
harbor's edge, were not looking for farms, but for codfish."[5] The town's first residents fish the
Grand Banks of Nova Scotia, use Marblehead's exposed granite outcroppings to dry their catch,
then trade locally with Boston and Salem. Many of the peninsula's natural features (preserved
today as public parks) are maintained as public property rather than built over because of
their value to the fishing industry (Fig. 2). American historian, George Billias, writes that in
pre-revolutionary Marblehead: "people were forced to compete with fish for space. More than
200 acres were given to fish flakes for drying the catch. Fish were cured everywhere — along the
beaches, in the fields, and even in the open areas between the crowded, weather-beaten houses.
The stench of fish hung over the community."[6]

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5   Samuel Adams Drake, *New England Legends and Folk-lore* (Little Brown and Company, 1906), 207.
6   George Athan Billias, *Elbridge Gerry: Founding Father and Republican Statesman* (McGraw-Hill, 1976), 12.
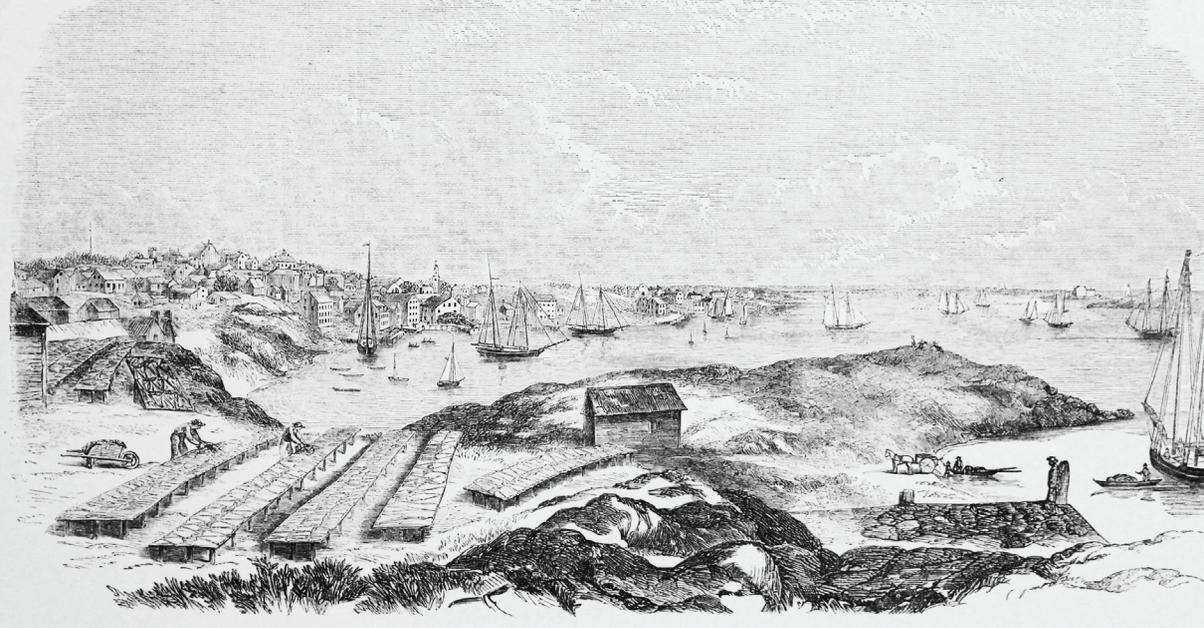
Fig. 2: Early structures compete for space with fish flakes (or drying racks), which claim large tracts of land along the beach, and on rocky outcroppings exposed to the sun

The flakes, stretching in orderly ranks along the shoreline, anticipate the linear geometries of later manufacturing structures, superimposing mechanical rationality upon an otherwise irregular terrain. Unlike later, more concentrated industrial efforts, however, these structures operate through dispersal: production extends across dozens of micro-sites, each adapted to a particular rock ledge or exposure to wind. The result is what urban historian, Dolores Hayden, would refer to as a "landscape of labor," in which natural and built environments seamlessly collaborate to sustain collective work.[7] (Fig. 2)

Residential structures are sited opportunistically, in response to the irregularities of the natural terrain: "The pathways followed the convenience of men's feet around the boulders, or the marsh or stream, between the tightly spaced houses directly to the wharves or fishing stages… Marblehead could not have cared less for its symmetry or system."[8] During this period, the town also establishes the political system which consolidates its collective value and ideas into a single creative force — direct democratic governance; from its incorporation in 1649, decisions about Marblehead's spatial development, by virtue of the vote, imply that at least a two-thirds majority of citizens consider them to be in the best interest of the town. The town meeting is the reason we can say "Marblehead did this" or "Marblehead wanted that" — it empowers the town's inhabitants with complete creative authority over the dynamics of its spatial composition.[9]

In 1715, Reverend John Barnard, who becomes minister of the First Church of Marblehead, engages Joseph Swett, "a young man of strict justice, great industry, enterprising genius, quick apprehension, and firm resolution, but of small fortune" to bypass the merchants of Boston and Salem and sail a vessel of fish directly to Barbados: "With this evidence Barnard restimulated widespread interest in Marblehead's deep harbor, prolific catch and rugged mariners with the result that new families […] moved to town and invested in new vessels for the West Indies trade. Artisans, tradesmen, merchants, craftsmen came on the tide of commercial optimism and participated in a period of unparalleled growth."[10] From 114 houses and 1710 colonists in 1674, the town expands to 450 houses and between three- and four-thousand colonists in 1747, then

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7   Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (MIT Press, 1995), 101-32.

8   Virginia Clegg Gamage and Priscilla Sawyer Lord, *Marblehead: The Spirit of '76 Lives Here* (Chilton, 1972), 67-69.

9   Lee Mondale, *Marblehead Matters: A Guide to Local Government* (The League of Women Voters of Marblehead, 1999), 13.

10 Gamage and Lord, *Marblehead*, 247.

Fig. 3: Map of the Marblehead peninsula (1856), showing its proximity to Salem (northwest), eastern exposure to the Atlantic Ocean, and labyrinthine spatial origins around the Harbor

to 519 houses and 4,954 colonists in 1765,[11] expanding its labyrinthine urbanism from Little Harbor, south along the coast of Marblehead Harbor. Marblehead also builds itself a new fishing fleet to transport cargo longer distances (forty- to fifty-ton schooners with wide, heavy hulls, low waists, and raised afterdecks) and upgrades its port facilities to host international marine traffic:

> "Harbor facilities such as wharves and warehouses were developed along the north shore of the harbor, particularly in the vicinity of Neck's Cove. […] In 1790, the state granted moneys for the purpose of improving and maintaining the harbor (and repairs to the Isthmus) in 1728 and 1762."[12]

During the intra-war period, however, including both the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and the War of 1812 (-1815), the proceeds of Marblehead's prosperity are assimilated and repurposed by the greater American narrative in its climactic confrontation with Old England. Its citizens are called to war, its resources (money, food, tools, building materials, fuel, ammunition, etc.) are depleted,[13] and its once-prosperous economy crashes: "…between 1790 and

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11 *Reconnaissance Town Survey Report: Marblehead* (Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1985), 4.
12 Ibid., 6, 9.
13 "In 1780, while still in the throes of war-induced depression, 477 (57%) of the 831 men living in Marble-

1810, and until the end of the period, construction was limited as Marblehead's economy took a downturn and its population growth slowed. [...] Between the Revolutionary War and the 1830s, not a street or road was laid out within the town."[14] (Fig. 3)

While traveling through New England and New York in 1796, regional scholar, Timothy Dwight IV, records his impressions, highlighting the uniqueness of its landscape and the decaying state of its infrastructure: "Marblehead, through which we passed merely for the sake of seeing it, is, like Salem, built on a peninsula; but more rough, rocky, and unpleasant, than any which I have seen. The rocks are often large; and so thickly lodged on the surface, that there seems to be hardly earth enough for the houses to stand on. On such ground regularity cannot be expected. The streets, or rather roads, wind where the rocks permit: and the houses are built where the inhabitants can find room. The great body of the houses, belonging as we concluded, to the Fishermen, are ordinary and decayed. A few, the property, as we supposed, of their employers, are valuable buildings. The inhabitants, it will be remembered, suffered very severely during the Revolutionary War. The town made a better appearance to my eye in 1774, than in 1796."[15]

In the industrial interlude that follows (1815-1918) (Fig. 3), Marblehead creatively mediates its transition between two distinct cultural identities. On the one hand, there is old Marblehead, the independent township of *old* New England (isolated, nonconformist, and uncompromising), which sustains the lingering dynamics of its origins as a prosperous, independent fishing station along the North Atlantic shore. And on the other hand, there is *new* Marblehead, Boston satellite town and historic "bedroom community"[16] of a post-industrial New England (inter-connected, co-operative, acquiescent, and accommodating). The town attempts to participate in the nineteenth and early twentieth century as an autonomous industrial force by reclaiming the oceanic mechanisms of independence which once enabled its maximum architectural expression.[17]

Following the signing of the Treaty of Ghent in February of 1815 (marking the formal conclusion of the War of 1812), Marblehead emerges from the American narrative determined to re-establish its role as an international fishing port and to recapture trading opportunities that are now monopolized by Salem and Boston—and begins again to fish the Grand Banks of Nova Scotia. By 1837, the total income of Marblehead's fisheries is still less than half the value of goods produced by its emerging manufacturing base, which is centered primarily on maritime paraphernalia including ropes and sails, barrels, fishing line, leather belts and straps, candles, soap, glue, gum, cords, and wheels: "*The New England Gazetteer* reported that in 1837, Marblehead's population of 5,549 produced manufactured goods worth $398,565, while its fisheries income was $153,487." The town's annual catch, however, gradually increases, together with the size of its fleet which, by 1840, includes nearly one-hundred vessels, "only three of which were under fifty tons."[18] The optimism which accompanies these developments, and the broader aspiration for maritime prosperity and cultural independence, is expressed by the decorative golden cod which appears throughout the town, from the domestic lintel to the ecclesiastical weathervane (Fig. 4).

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head were unemployed or out of business. The war wreaked havoc on the commercial and fishing sectors especially. Whereas "at the beginning of the war there were 12,313 tons of shipping owned, employed, and manned by the citizens of Marblehead... at its close the entire amount owned... was but 1,509 tons," an 88% drop." See, respectively, *Reconnaissance Town Survey Report: Marblehead* and Samuel Roads, *The History and Traditions of Marblehead* (Riverside, 1880), 152.

14 *Reconnaissance Town Survey Report*, 9-10.

15 Timothy Dwight IV, *Travels in New-England and New-York*, Vol.1 (Timothy Dwight, 1821) 460-61.

16 Ada Louise Huxtable, "Marblehead, Mass.," *Kicked a Building Lately?* (The New York Times Book Co., 1976), 175.

17 I have written at length about the unique, labyrinthine architecture which emerges from Marblehead's two prior building periods (between 1629-1717, then 1715-1775). Andrew Gipe-Lazarou, "The Marblehead Labyrinth: American Archetype of Irrational Urbanism," *Weird-Fictional Narratives in Art, Architecture, and the Urban Domain* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2024), 116-55.

18 Gamage and Lord, *Marblehead*, 164.

Fig. 4: The golden cod, symbol of the ocean's creative influence over Marblehead's cultural identity / repre-senting maritime prosperity and cultural independence, penetrates the town's historic urban fabric, appear-ing everywhere from the domestic lintel (left) to the ecclesiastical weathervane (right)

Two classes of citizens generationally define Marblehead's socioeconomic system—private investors (ship owners) and lower income seafarers; in an effort to support the mobilization of both during this period, the town founds the "Grand Bank" in 1831 to finance local vessels and voyages.[19] The bank is constructed of stone in the Georgian Revival style and, unlike the timber infrastructure of the enterprises to follow, survives a fire in 1871 which originates from the adjacent, wood-frame residence.[20]

Then, in 1846, Marblehead's ambition to re-establish its cultural autonomy as a fishery comes to an abrupt and conclusive end. In the afternoon of September 19th, the Marblehead fishing fleet is demolished in a storm off the Grand Banks of Nova Scotia—eleven vessels destroyed and sixty-five men and boys lost to the sea (Fig. 5).[21]

Marblehead poet and entrepreneur James J. H. Gregory records the town's solemn and reflective reaction to this maritime disaster in his 1901 poem, "Lost at Sea": "An echo from an unknown shore, / From whence our loved returned no more. / In the lone vastness of the deep, / Far down beneath the waves, they sleep, […] / Let him who walks our narrow streets, / Whose little homes the stranger greets, / As at each turn he often meets / Their queer array; think of mothers, / Sweethearts, fathers, sisters, brothers, / Who months and years did watch in vain / To greet the loved that never came."[22]

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19 The bank's name is a double play-on-words; in addition to playing off the name of Marblehead's most-fre-quented fishery, it also plays off the nicknames of the Marbleheaders who fished there: "Twice a year, men nicknamed "bankers" boarded double-mast schooners in the Marblehead harbor and sailed 1000 miles north to the Grand Bank (or Banks)." U.S. Department of the Treasury, "National Grand Bank of Marblehead Named in Honor of Brave Fishermen", Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, https://www.occ.treas.gov/about/who-we-are/history/1863-1865/1863-1865-national-grand-bank-of-marblehead.html# (accessed 11 October 2019).

20 Ibid.

21 James J. H. Gregory, "Lost at Sea," *The Essex Antiquarian*, Vol. V., Nos. 10-12 (The Essex Antiquarian, 1901).

22 The poem's concluding lines, featured above, allude to the stone staircase leading to the crest of Old Buri-al Hill, where, in 1848, Marblehead erects a stone obelisk known as the Fishermen's Monument, to honor
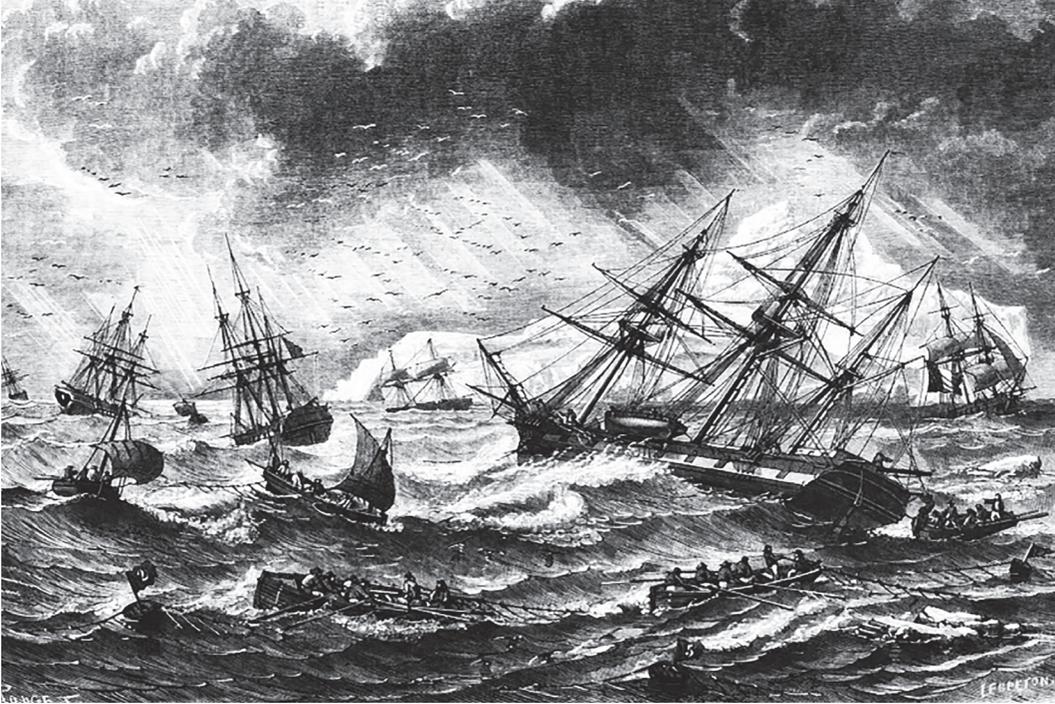
Fig. 5: "Cod fishing on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland," depicted in 1863

For the next half-century, Marblehead reluctantly relinquishes its identity as a fishing town: "Whereas, at the end of the previous period manufacturing represented 15% of the male occupation, by 1865 manufacturing accounted for 69% of male employment. Of the remainder, 17% were fishermen, 12.5% (135 men) worked on farms, and 13 (1.2%) worked in the coasting trade. […] The number of vessels engaged in fishing declined from 59 (averaging 75 tons) in 1832 to 23 (averaging 78 tons) in 1865. Likewise, the number of fishermen fell from 412 to 184."[23] Remaining fishermen fish locally and work odd-jobs around the ferry or the wharf, often expressing their unrequited maritime energies as creative conflict along the shore.[24] And the empty curing grounds and weather-beaten wharves become open urban voids, ready for new forms of maritime-industrial occupation.

Ships

Marblehead's shipbuilding practices are revived in the nineteenth century by Edmund Kimball, one of the incorporators of the Grand Bank, who opens a ship building yard at Red Stone Cove, about half a mile southwest of the State Street Wharf.

For forty years, between 1831 and 1871, the town's industrial operations are concentrated in and around massive factory buildings, which include dry docks, boat ramps, prefabrication shops, and stockyards built at Little Harbor and along the southwest coast of the Great Bay (at

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the lives of those "lost at sea."

23 "Unlike in the Federal period [1775-1830] when fish formed the crux of foreign trade; most of the fish caught in the Early Industrial Period was marketed domestically. In 1832 only $13,000 of the $132,500 in fish sold was sent abroad; the remainder was shipped to New York City and Albany. The two vessels engaged in the coasting trade in 1865 most likely were carrying fish to New York City." Jessica Rowcroft, "Marblehead Reconnaissance Report," *Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program* (Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, 2005), 11, 13.

24 "…gang battles were fairly common when the Wharf Rats took on the Barnegaters, or the Shipyarders challenged the Reed's Hillers, yet there was a quick local treaty if they all had a chance to take on the Salem Shags." Gamage and Lord, *Marblehead*, 201.

Fig. 6: Opportunistic integration of ship-building infrastructure on a sliver of coastline at Stearn's Yacht Yard (State Street Landing)

the State Street Landing, Town Dock, and Red Stone Cove) (Fig. 6). "The town was proud of the revival of shipbuilding and turned out in hundreds along the wharves and shoreline to see *Robert Hooper* launched in 1849. Then came another handsome vessel of white oak, *Compromise*, followed by *Anna Kimball*, *Elizabeth Kimball* and several others including the barque, *Riga* and a brig, *Curlew*."[25] (Fig. 6)

The shipyard, which demands expansive, level surfaces, is carefully integrated into the irregular coastal topography between existing homes and the water's edge. Builders carve terraces into exposed granite bedrock, infill deep crevices with rough-hewn stone, and erect timber platforms to mediate the connection between the yard and the surface of the Harbor. The resulting spaces, neither fully natural nor fully engineered, represent a third condition—the constructed shore—in which landscape and labor are fused. The same sites, during Marblehead's subsequent phase of seaplane-manufacturing, will ultimately be repurposed and enclosed into an undulating heap of adjacent and overlapping rectilinear volumes (the best example being the Burgess factory complex at Red Stone Cove).

A supporting program, located around the shipyard, is adapted to the predominant residential typology; woodworking shops, sail lofts, and chandleries occupy (what outwardly appear to be) single-family colonial homes built in the Greek Revival and Italianate styles popular between 1830 and 1880.[26] This physical and typological adjacency contributes to the ambiguous distinction between factory and city: workers understand the yard as both workplace and social stage; tools and talk circulate freely, forming a lived continuity between domestic life and industrial labor.

In the same areas, rectilinear ropewalks are constructed for spinning and storing rope, which is used for rigging, sails, and mooring. According to a map drawn in 1850 by local engineer Henry McIntyre, two covered rope walks are active along Barnard Street — the Marblehead Cordage Company building, the longest in town at around 950 feet long[27] and the Lackey rope walk, at around 725 feet long; one between Barnard and Commercial Streets — the D. Glover

25 Ibid., 175.

26 Ruth M. Strachan, "An Interesting Tour and Guide to Some Interesting Old Streets and Houses in Marblehead, Massachusetts," (Marblehead Festival of Arts, Inc., 1970), 4.

27 This number is disputed. Marblehead historians, Gamage and Lord, indicate that the town's longest rope walk building belonged to the Marblehead Cordage Company on Barnard Street, but was only 675 feet long. Gamage and Lord, *Marblehead*, 301.

rope walk (~225 feet long); one near the intersection of Washington and Pleasant Streets in Mid-Town along present-day Bessom Street — the Bossom & Co. rope walk (~300 feet long); and one near the intersection of Washington and School Streets, also in Mid-Town — the Evans rope walk (~200 feet long).

Though none of these buildings have survived to the present day, we can take similarly constructed industrial infrastructure from nearby towns as example. The building form presented as an elongated shed, of repetitive wooden frames to accommodate walking spinners and early machines. In the ropewalk, the building itself participates in labor; its form dictates both the physical gesture and temporal rhythm of production—of workers moving backwards in unison, guiding rotating strands towards a whirling wheel. It also demonstrates the reconciliation of industrial demands with environmental adaptation, deploying passive strategies like orientation to the sun and responsiveness to the wind which echo priorities of maritime craftsmanship. Gabled roofs and walls are covered with wood shingles or clapboard siding and equipped with louvered vents to facilitate the ventilation of fibers and reduce the accumulation of dust. Their siting was especially deliberate; adjacency to open-air lanes meant for increased production in fair weather; and proximity to the waterfront meant easy transport to ships.[28]

In 1854, while staying at a boarding house near Devereux Beach (just south of Redstone Cove), renowned American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, visits Marblehead's rope walks, and renders the street-scene with a poem, associating the act of spinning rigging lines with the town's broader efforts to rekindle its once-prosperous, pre-revolutionary relationship with the ocean (i.e. to "walk its thread backward" in time): "In that building, long and low, / With its windows all a-row, / Like the port-holes of a hulk, / Human spiders spin and spin, / Backward down their threads so thin / Dropping, each a hempen bulk. / At the end, an open door; / Squares of sunshine on the floor […] / Ships rejoicing in the breeze, / Wrecks that float o'er unknown seas, / Anchors dragged through faithless sand; / Sea-fog drifting overhead, / And, with lessening line and lead, / Sailors feeling for the land. / All these scenes do I behold, / These, and many left untold, / In that building long and low; / While the wheel goes round and round, / With a drowsy, dreamy sound, / And the spinners backward go."[29]

In 1871, fire sweeps over the industrial zone bringing large tonnage shipbuilding to a permanent end — already tenuous because of its competition with the nearby Boston shipyards, which were more spacious, better-equipped (especially with fire protection), and better-staffed to handle large projects. After the fire, smaller and safer structures, occupying less land along the coast, are constructed for the production of smaller boats used principally for racing.[30]

What remains of Marblehead's second failed attempt to reclaim its cultural independence is a collection of parallel urban scars — five unusually-long, straight streets (present-day Hawkes, Barnard, Commercial, Chestnut, and Central) — which stand out against the adjacent labyrinthine historic district as an attempt to rationalize rather than adapt to the peninsula's irregular topography (Fig. 7). Barnard and Commercial Streets (the two right-most of the five streets) originate the five-street plan; the former being designed as an industrial rope walk and the latter used as a service corridor to bring raw materials arriving by boat at Bassett's Wharf (at Red Stone Cove) directly inland to Mid-Town. The other three streets (Hawkes, Chestnut, and Central) are later additions (driven primarily by residential development) that imitate the spacing and orientation of the original two. The streets are abandoned as a viable urban spatial strategy after the town's industrial period comes to a conclusive end in the early twentieth century and are then repurposed during the peninsula's indiscriminate suburban development following World War II. (Fig. 7)

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28 References taken from the surviving architecture of ropewalks located four miles north in Salem, MA. United States Department of the Interior. "Salem Maritime National Historical Park." *National Park Service* https://www.nps.gov/sama/ (accessed October 21, 2025).

29 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "The Ropewalk," *Poems of Henry Wadsworth Langfellow* (J.R. Osgood and Co., 1877), 220.

30 Gamage and Lord, *Marblehead*, 175, 184, 301.

Fig. 7: Five, linear urban scars north of Red Stone Cove (1) for ropewalks and access to Mid-Town; the 1882 map also depicts industrial shipbuilding sites around the Town Dock (2) and the State Street Landing (3)

Fig. 8: "Ten-footer" shoe shop, reminiscent of Marblehead's earliest residential structures, located at the corner of Front and Circle Streets

Fig. 9: The intermediate-sized Hooper Shoe Factory attempts to integrate into Marblehead's historic district, imitating the side-entrance "half-house" and filling out the street wall at 170 Washington Street, across from the Lee Mansion
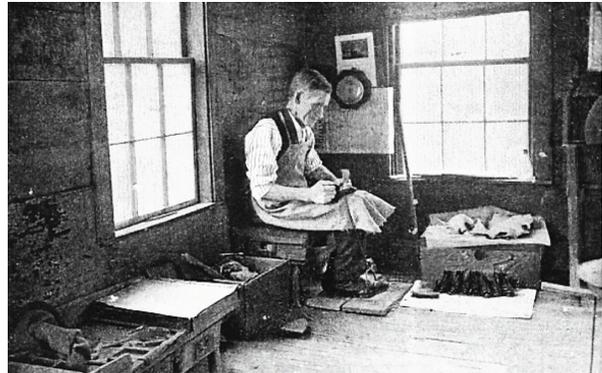
Shoes

At the end of the eighteenth century, Marblehead leverages its historied relationship with the ocean in its third attempt to revive its cultural autonomy — by manufacturing shoes. Until then, shoemaking had been an essential past-time for the Marblehead seafarer, who used the off-season to maintain his specialized footwear. Upon the emergence of a regional market in the early 1800s, the men and women of Marblehead begin to work cooperatively to produce shoes on a larger scale: "No longer was this a limited trade; now the work was widespread and most of the leather was imported. The women sewed the uppers at home and the men's work was done in an empty store or a tiny building where they shared the expenses of the materials and the wood to heat the ten by twelve by thirteen foot single-room shack.[31] Each man brought his bench and tools and was paid on a piecework basis. Neighbors and schoolboys dropped by and sometimes read the news or argued the town warrant over the incessant hammering."[32] (Fig. 8)

The first buildings dedicated exclusively to the craft of shoemaking are sheds, constructed within the historic urban landscape, in the spaces between colonial homes. They are colloquially known as "ten-footers" and exclusively produce heavy leather boots (Fig. 8): "[It] was a small public forum. The warm shack had a scent all its own — of men, leather, burning wood, tobacco and, perhaps, just a touch of rum."[33] As demand increases, Marblehead's shoemaking effort expands. Its first round of larger factory buildings, however, is more influenced by the architecture of its colonial homes than the industrial ethos of greater New England, exposing a collective desire for cultural continuity and demonstrating what architect and historian Aldo Rossi refers to as "the persistence of type" — namely, the inherent obligation of architectural form to mediate between historical memory and new function.[34] Among the compromising design strategies deployed during this period are attempts to integrate production-line program into the street-front profile of the colonial home (Fig. 9), square (as opposed to elongated, rectilinear) layouts assuming more the likeness of a mansion than a factory; the use of wood (rather than masonry) as a principal load-bearing material; the prevalence of Marblehead's distinctive clapboard siding (despite its self-evident vulnerability to fire); and the generous application of neo-classical ornamentation (e.g. cornices, roof brackets, pedimented doors and windows and quoined corners). Following the opening of the town's first railroad line (the Eastern Railroad Branch to Salem) in 1839, and the introduction of the shoe sewing machine, together with a number of mechanical innovations by Joseph M. Bassett (a Marbleheader who was also an investor and property developer, owning and operating five large factories),[35] shoe production in Marblehead rapidly expands and the area around the new railroad station (located along Pleasant, between School and Spring Streets) in Mid-Town becomes populated by factory buildings, which become larger in size and progressively less-deferent to the historic urban context.

"In 1832 there were fourteen shoe factories with 273 employees (51% men) and the total value of the product was $64,200. By 1865, there were some twenty shoe factories with 1043 employees (64% men), a 282% increase in employment opportunities. Likewise, shoe product value increased dramatically, rising 1095% to $767,218. This product value represented 90.7% of the total value of manufactured goods in 1865, a figure of $845,163."[36]

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31 This is known as the "put-out" system, "in which a central shop issued the cut uppers to the women by the dozens which, when sewn, were returned for cash payment; just half as much as the men were paid who finished the shoes in the cordwainer's tiny shop." Blanche E. Hazard, "The Organization of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts Before 1875", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Oxford University Press, 1913), 239, 164.

32 Ibid.,163-64, 244.

33 Ibid., 164.

34 Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, trans. Diane Ghirardo and Joan Ockman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 115.

35 Gamage and Lord, *Marblehead*, 165, 189.

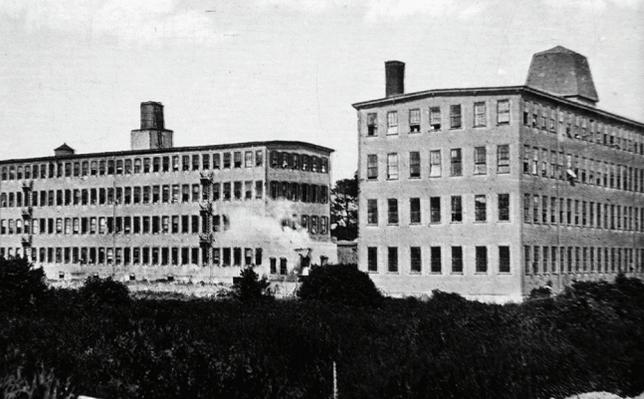36 Rowcroft, "Marblehead Reconnaissance Report," 13.

Fig. 10: Extra-urban masses: the Shoe Factory Association buildings, too large to integrate into Marblehead's historic core, are located inland at 24 and 30 Green Street. Life below deck in these stationary vessels occupies long, linear, wood-frame interiors, designed for assembly-line shoe making

Marblehead's final phase of factory design evidences a number of spatial strategies which are typical of nineteenth century shoe manufacturing plants, including: open plan interior spaces for the free movement of material between "gangs"[37] and "ample space for the economic placing of machinery" and assembly areas; restricted building width (to approximately fifty feet) and ample fenestration to maximize interior daylighting; detached mechanical space for the generation of electrical power and heat, together with a furnace for burning discarded material; and an average height of three to four stories, each of which hosts a different process in the sequence of manufacturing (Fig. 10).[38]

By the post-Civil War period, Marblehead is actively competing with neighboring shoe manufacturing centers like Lynn, Peabody, Salem, Haverhill, and Taunton and is "shipping over five million pairs [per year] or 10 percent of the New England total."[39] Industrial workers purchase small homes in Mid-Town[40] and factory owners line Pleasant and Elm Streets with ornate mansions.

"Hundreds of new buildings were erected. The center of gravity for this new building was not Market Square [the center of the Historic District] but the railroad terminus and depot at Pleasant and Sewall Streets. Elite residences were attracted to the spacious boulevard of Pleasant Street itself, between Spring and Washington. Small neighborhoods of modest working-class homes rapidly developed (Bassett the chief catalyst) to the north and west, immediately inland of the Colonial and Federalist core, and also at the southern waterfront, between Waldron and Chestnut Streets. Lookout Court (at Tucker, Mason, and Hooper) had by mid century deteriorated into a waterfront slum."[41]

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37 The shoe manufacturing process was divided into individual production phases, each of which were managed by an "expert" team of workers, colloquially referred to as "gangs." Frederick J. Allen, *The Shoe Industry* (Holt, 1922), 19.

38 "The four-floor system of the factory is found to be the most convenient for the sequence of processes in manufacture. The four floors provide space for six major departments of manufacture and for business offices. The sole leather department, which prepares the bottom parts of the shoe, occupies the first or basement floor. The upper leather and stitching departments occupy the fourth or upper floor, where it is always possible to obtain plenty of light. In these departments the leather upper parts and lining of the shoe are cut and sewed together and made ready for attaching the bottom. The making or bottoming department uses most of the third floor. Here the sole leather parts and leather tops and linings are brought together and the shoe is made ready for finishing. The finishing, packing, and shipping departments are upon the second floor." Ibid., xxxii-xxxiii.

39 "Between 1865 and 1875, the value of manufactured goods rose 63% to $1.37 million, primarily as a result of the growing local shoe industry. In 1875 35 of the 43 manufacturing establishments were shoe factories, and $1.30 million of the $1.37 million manufacturing product was derived from the sale of shoes." See Rowcroft, "Marblehead Reconnaissance Report," 15-16.

40 Industrial workers would have also populated Marblehead's historic district. It is suggested by local historians, for example, that the town's present-day Mechanic Street, Mechanic Court, and Mechanic Square may have been named after a concentrated population of mechanics who worked in Marblehead's shoe factories. See Bette Hunt (Marblehead Town Historian from 2002-2015), "Answers" (email to the author, October 13, 2019).

41 Rowcroft, "Marblehead Reconnaissance Report," 12.

Then, in the early morning of June 25th, 1877, an alarm woke the residents of Mid-Town as a small barn attached to the three-story Marblehead Hotel on Pleasant Street burst into flames. Located just twenty feet from the engine-house containing two fire engines and the town's only local water reservoir, the blaze spread uncontrollably before water could be deployed. By dawn, the fire had consumed 75 structures — including a church, boarding-house, printing-office, railroad station, fifteen shoe factories, two stables, and 32 homes housing over 40 families — leaving a landscape of smoking ruins and desolation.[42] Despite $500,000 in losses (present-day $15,000,000), 90 families left homeless, and 1,500 jobs lost, native factory owners resolve to start anew, and completely rebuild the Mid-Town business district, shopping area, and Marblehead's central train station.

Then, in a second equally devastating conflagration just over a decade later, Marblehead's venture into industrial shoe production comes to a conclusive end. In the early morning of December 26th, 1888, "the town was shaken by a great explosion which blew out the entire front of a building on Pleasant Street. A mass of flames shot up and down the street and […] with incredible rapidity the fire consumed the same area that had been destroyed in 1877. This time it included the new Allerton block, the Rialto shops, the new fire station, and depot and many new shoe factories."[43]

The town reacts by building a "third Central Fire Station" (this time of brick, not wood) and employing full-time firefighters; by connecting an "accelerated" water-supply system to the Legg's Hill pond; and by enacting regulation which requires any building over forty feet in height to be constructed of stone or brick. Despite these efforts and the temporary resilience of several native initiatives (including the Association Shoe Factory), its major investors move out of town: "…by 1905 there were only 35 manufacturing firms in Marblehead and product value had fallen 20% to $1.09 million."[44]

Ultimately, Marblehead's third major industrial effort is a violent interruption of the continuity of its cultural narrative — a desperate attempt to reorient its cultural activity from the boundless landscape of the open water and the marvelous dynamics of the sea to the architectural confinement of the factory building and the one-dimensional dynamics of industrial production. The feeling of loss and longing which accompanies this failed cultural transmutation is represented by the protagonist of Lucy Larcom's poem *Hannah Binding Shoes* (1858), who, like the Marblehead spirit, peers out across the limitless horizon, "sitting, stitching" and mournful, yearning for her heart's return from the sea:

"Twenty winters
Bleach and tear the ragged shore she views.
Twenty seasons: —
Never one has brought her any news.
Still her dim eyes silently
Chase the white sails o'er the sea:
Hopeless, faithful,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes."[45]

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42 Jonathan H. Orne, "A Short History of Marblehead," *The Standard History of Essex County* (The Essex Institute, 1878), 286.

43 A national textiles magazine reports the incident: "The entire shoe manufacturing district of Marblehead, Mass., comprising 60 buildings was burned, Dec. 26. 1,000 men are thrown out of employment. Loss, $600,000 [present-day $20,000,000]." See, respectively, Orne, "A Short History of Marblehead," 286, and Eugene B. Hagar, *Wade's Fibre and Fabric: A Record of New Industries in the Cotton and Woolen Trades*, Vol. VIII, No. 183 (Eugene B. Hagar, 1888).

44 Rowcroft, "Marblehead Reconnaissance Report,"15-16.

45 American poet Lucy Larcom (1826-1893) was, herself, a New England factory girl — she spent her childhood working at a cotton mill in Lowell, before embarking on her career as a writer. Lucy Larcom, *The Poetical Works of Lucy Larcom* (Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1895), 1-2.

Seaplanes

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Marblehead makes its final, most creative industrial effort to reclaim its socioeconomic independence. Following its disastrous failures to establish sustainable connections to the land and the sea, it turns its attention to the sky. In 1910, naval architect, Starling Burgess founds the "Burgess Company and Curtis, Inc." (later renamed the "Burgess Company") and constructs two airplane manufacturing plants — one at Red Stone Cove and one at Little Harbor — together with an aviation school. Burgess is influenced by the pioneering work of Orville (1871-1948) and Wilbur (1867-1912) Wright, who had recently completed the world's first successful test flight of a powered aircraft (in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, on December 17th, 1903), and with whom he trains as a civilian pilot. He is, furthermore, inspired by the potential of his Marblehead shipyards (which specialize in hydrodynamics) to design, manufacture, and test aerodynamic structures (Fig. 11).

On February 28th, 1910, the company completes its first successful test flight of the Herring-Burgess biplane, jointly-named after Augustus H. Herring, an aviation pioneer (claimed to have invented the motorized aircraft before the Wright Brothers) with whom Burgess worked closely.[46] A year later, on February 1st, 1911, the company purchases a license to manufacture Wright aircraft — for $1,000 (present-day $33,000) per aircraft and $100 (present-day $3,300) per exhibition flight and becomes the first licensed airline manufacturer in the United States.[47] In 1912, the Burgess Company fits a Wright Model F airplane with catamaran-type pontoons and begins to test-fly it in Marblehead Harbor.[48]

The building infrastructure which supports these developments takes advantage of the same coastal geography which is adapted by shipbuilders in the century prior. Burgess' factory at Lower Harbor occupies a rocky plinth along the shore, the edges of which are filled in and levelled with rough-hewn stone and, later, reinforced concrete. The factory building itself is a long, rectilinear, pitched-roof structure with an open-floor plan for the manufacture of variably-sized and shaped airplane parts, located adjacent to a furnace (and chimney) for metallurgy. A crane and pulley system affixed beneath and parallel to the central roof beam allows for the easy hoisting of test-ready biplane models from the factory floor, out beyond the building volume, directly onto the surface of the Harbor (Fig. 12).

While visiting Marblehead with her sister in the summer of 1916, Hildegarde Hawthorne (daughter of esteemed American writer, Nathaniel Hawthorne) records her observations of the company's industrial activities: "…it is in [Little Harbor] that Burgess and Curtiss have their aeroplane plant, and if you are lucky enough you can see the flyers being built, in the sheds where a few years ago the Burgess Company was making yachts and schooners for the coastwise trade. We saw one of the machines being tried in the shed, preparatory to the next day's first flight in the open. There it hung, anchored and straining, like a huge wild bird in a cage, its engines humming and singing, its planes vibrating slightly, a thing to send the imagination soaring."[49]

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46 "The Flying Fish was taken in pieces from Marblehead to Chebacco Lake in nearby Hamilton, MA, where the frozen surface acted as a runway for the tiny plane balanced on three skids. Herring was finally ready to take off and did — 30 feet into the air for a distance of 120 feet and a near-crash landing." Gamage and Lord, *Marblehead*, 208.

47 Howard Mansfield, *Skylark: the life, lies, and inventions of Harry Atwood* (University Press of New England, 1999), 13.

48 The design violates the companies' original licensing agreement (which stipulated that the Wright Brothers' designs could only be reproduced unmodified) and it is terminated two years later by mutual consent. That same year, after acquiring a license to produce (and modify) the model D.8, the Burgess Company continues designing and producing seaplanes, the most notable of which is the Burgess-Dunne, first flown in March of 1914. See, respectively, Royal Aero Club of the United Kingdom, "The Dunne Aeroplane," *Flight: First Aero Weekly in the World*, Vol. II, No. 25 (Royal Aero Club of the United Kingdom, 1910), 477-81, and David Mondey (ed.), *The New Illustrated Encyclopedia of Aircraft* (Greenwich Editions, 2000), 127.

49 Hildegarde Hawthorne, *Old Seaport Towns of New England* (Dodd, Mead & Co., 1916), 171-72.

Fig. 11: The "Burgess Aeroplanes" factory repurposes the site of Marblehead's first colonial settlement at Little Harbor to give the town a fresh start; the skills of its nautical craftsmen are repurposed for the manufacture of seaplanes, which are assembled, then delicately lowered onto the Harbor for testing
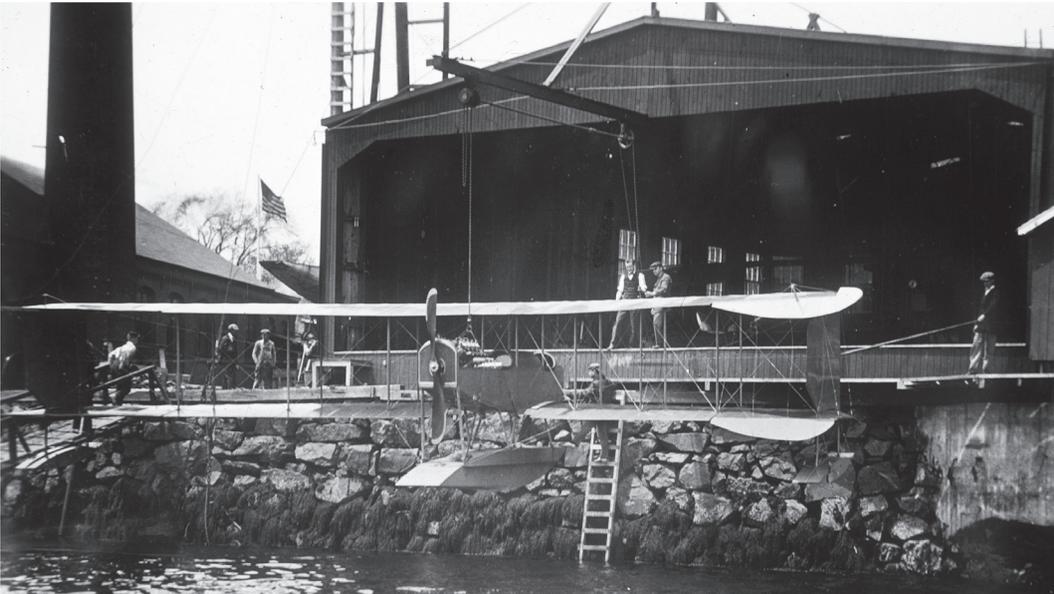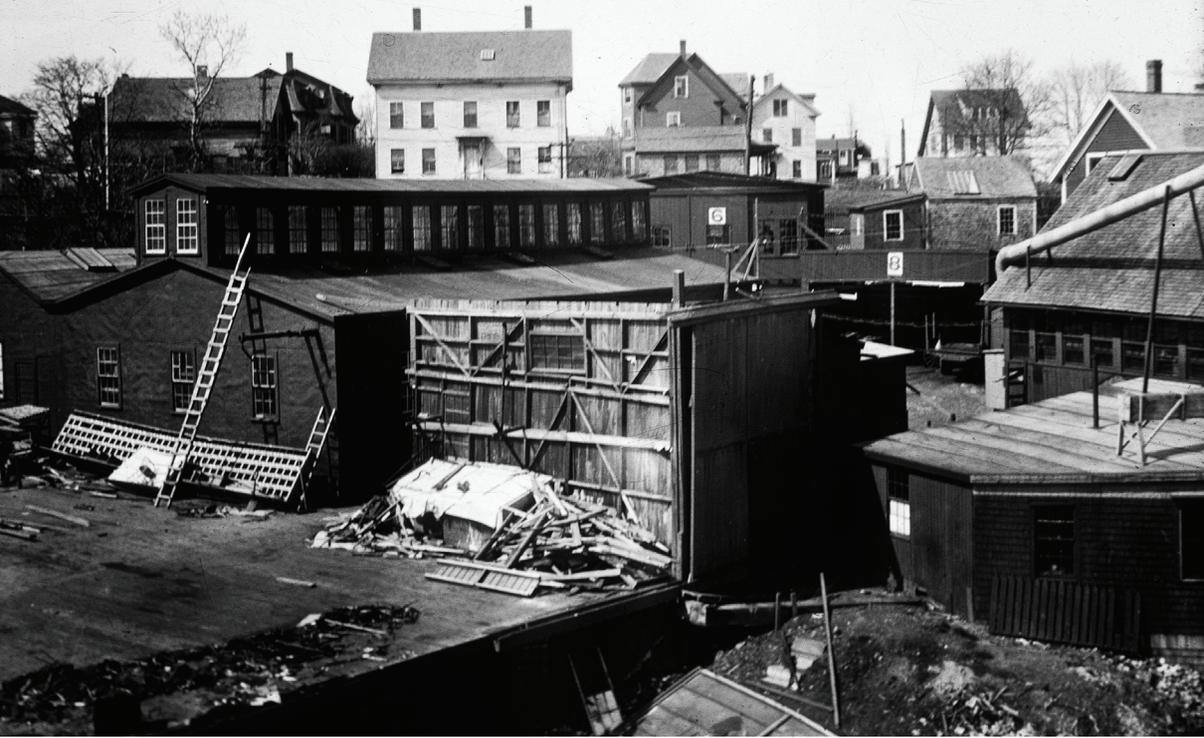
Fig. 12: Integration of airplane manufacturing infrastructure at the Burgess factory complex of Red Stone Cove (above); and a Burgess biplane ready for a test flight, entering the Harbor on a makeshift wooden ramp (below)

Fig. 13: Sky and sea, together at Marblehead Harbor as civic spectacle, viewed by the public from Crocker Park (above), demonstrating the reappropriation of hydrodynamic design expertise for the manufacture of the Burgess biplane, shown during landing with the belfry of Abbot Hall just above its right wing tip (below)

For a brief, eight-year period (from 1910-1918), the Burgess Company activates the space *above* Marblehead, by projecting the seafaring spirit into the sky (Fig. 13): new aeroplane designs, manufactured by Marblehead craftsmen, are regularly test-flown in and over the Great Bay; one of the world's first recorded parachute jumps is made from a Burgess plane into the waters of Marblehead Harbor, by career parachutist Rodman Law (1885-1919), nicknamed by Marbleheaders "the human fly";[50] and the company innovates and produces some of the world's first flying boats (i.e. "hydroplane" or "seaplane"), which are licensed for use by the United States Navy and the Canadian Aviation Corps. The Burgess factories blur the boundaries between workshop, laboratory, and landscape. Workers built aircraft by hand, planning spruce spars and doping fabric skins with varnish. Families gather along the headlands to watch takeoffs, turning industrial testing into civic spectacle. The sound of the engines echo off granite cliffs that had once rung with the pounding of caulkers' hammers. Hayden's notion of the "power of place" — the capacity of landscape to mediate collective memory — is vividly expressed here.[51] The harbor functions as both stage and participant in the drama of flight. To witness a Burgess flying boat lift from the tide was to see the continuity of local craftsmanship and global modernity compressed in a single gesture — the seaplane presenting as a vessel, not only of motion, but of memory.

Then, on November 7th, 1918, while producing aircraft for the American military during World War I, the Burgess Company's main production facility at Little Harbor catches fire and burns to the ground. Despite Burgess' interest in carrying on operations, World War I ends a few days later, on November 11th, 1918, and the company's government contracts are cancelled, bringing Marblehead's fourth (and final) industrial effort to a decisive end.[52]

Memory

> "It is my belief… that our mechanical & industrial age is one of frank decadence. […] We live on memories - & I think that is all we can ever live on now, since mechanical invention has so appallingly divorced us from the soil & from those conditions of our forefathers around which the aesthetic feelings of the race are entwined."[53]

In a personal letter written on February 18th, 1927, weird-fiction writer and New England native, Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937), critically reflects on the bifurcation of New England's cultural identity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, lamenting the period's prioritization of "the tiled bathroom and steam radiator" over "the Doric portico and the temple of philosophy."[54]

Between 1815 and 1918, Marblehead makes every effort to reconcile its machine culture with its historied relationship with the sea. At first, the town attempts to integrate its industrial alter ego, fitting factory buildings along the shore of Little Harbor, supporting program into colonial homes, early shoe factories / ten-footers throughout the historic district, etc.[55] Integration

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50 His sister, pioneer aviatrix Ruth Bancroft Law (1887-1970), attended the Burgess Aviation School in Marblehead in 1912. See Eileen F. Lebow, *Before Amelia: Women Pilots in the Early Days of Aviation* (Potomac Books, Inc., 2002), 202.

51 Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 9-15.

52 Marblehead Current, "FROM THE VAULT: Airplanes take flight around Marblehead Harbor" (Marblehead Current, 2024) https://marbleheadcurrent.org/2024/03/07/from-the-vault-airplanes-take-flight-around-marblehead-harbor/ (accessed 22 February 2025).

53 H.P. Lovecraft, *Selected Letters 1925-1929*, Vol. II (Arkham House Publishers, 1968) 103-04.

54 Ibid., 304.

55 In one ridiculous effort, the town attempts to create a toll booth for boats at Little Harbor: in 1805, the Little Harbor Corporation proposes to widen the entrances to the harbor by dredging the entrances around Crowninshield and Gerry Islands, and to construct an entrance gate for charging a fee to incoming vessels. The project was ultimately abandoned as both too "ill-defined" and "a great risk and expense to the town." Gamage and Lord, *Marblehead*, 310.

had worked well for a small-scale fishing community, but the rapid and rapacious expansions necessary to accommodate the competitive manufacturing of ships, shoes, and seaplanes proved anathema to the town's historically slow and temperate growth. Ultimately, industrial Marblehead is compelled to create a new urban center at Mid-Town, ostensibly connected to the sea, but essentially oriented inland by rail.

The agent of Marblehead's rise and fall during this period is not water, but fire. Locomotives rely on fire to generate steam; fire is used to steam and soften wooden planks (allowing them to be bent into hydrodynamic shapes) and to melt protective coatings (like tar and pitch) to waterproof rope and wooden hulls; machines for cutting, stitching, and finishing shoes rely on steam-powered generators; and furnaces are essential for forging, shaping and connecting metallic aircraft components.

With the integration of these technologies and the influx of larger, denser, more fire-prone industrial construction throughout the nineteenth century, Marblehead inherits the inevitability of immolation. Building fires had been a familiar risk throughout its history, accepted and acquiescently responded to, but never at scale.[56] Industrial Marblehead witnesses the Great Boston Fire in 1872, the New Bedford Cotton Mill Fire in 1874, the Fall River Spinning Mill Fires in 1884 and 1891, the Lawrence Textile Mill Fire in 1887, and the Lowell Textile Factory Fire in 1893, to cite a few examples local to Massachusetts. Despite the self-evident risk, the town persists; even its streetlights are fueled by kerosene until the end of the nineteenth century.[57]

While the cycle of conflagration and reconstruction preoccupies its inland industrial incarnation, historic coastal Marblehead is gradually rediscovered. In 1880, Marbleheader Samuel Roads Jr. presents the town with the first comprehensive account of its history;[58] in the same year, a steam ferry service begins operating between the historic district and the Neck in response to a sudden increase in summer tourism;[59] and eighteen years later, in 1898, the town's first volunteer preservationists found the Marblehead Historical Society and set the Marblehead preservation project in motion.[60] The project is Marblehead's final effort to reinvigorate its intimate relationship with the sea. It is accomplished by artificially preserving the material and immaterial historical expressions of its pre-revolutionary golden age and

56 The town's first fire was recorded on February 1st, 1634, by Massachusetts Bay Governor John Winthrop: "Mr. Cradock's house at Marblehead was burnt down about midnight before, there being in it Mr. Allerton and many fishermen whom he employed that season who all were preserved by a special providence of God, with most of his goods therein, by a tailor, who sat up that night at work in the house and hearing a noise, looked out and saw the house on fire above the oven in the thatch." The town's first "board of fire wards" was established in the mid-1700s because of the "constant fire hazard" of "oil lanterns and candles in cheek-to-cheek wooden houses," and in 1751, Marblehead purchased its own fire engine (no longer relying exclusively on its "spontaneous, serpentine bucket brigade"). Gamage and Lord, *Marblehead*, 84.

57 "Every night about 7:00 (except the long summer's day or in bright moonlight) lamplighters carried their ladders along the streets, lighting each lamp and then returning to extinguish it between ten o'clock and midnight. …street lights totaled thirty in 1870 and doubled in number by 1886." See, respectively, John Winthrop, *Winthrop's Journal: "History of New England" 1630-1649* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 119; and Gamage and Lord, *Marblehead*, 84, 192.

58 Roads supplements his effort to provoke Marblehead into a state of historical self-consciousness with several lesser-known (but equally-significant) publications, which include *A Guide to Marblehead* (1881), *The Marblehead Manual* (1883), and an uncredited contribution (attributed by the Marblehead Museum) to a historical review of the town's First Congregational Church. See, respectively, Samuel Roads Jr,. *A Guide to Marblehead* (Marblehead: Charles H. Litchman, 1881); Samuel Roads Jr., *The Marblehead Manual* (Marblehead: Statesmen Publishing Company), 1883; and *Manual and Historical Sketch of the First Congregational Church, Marblehead, Mass. 1684 to 1901* (Marblehead: N. A. Lindsey & Co. Printers), 1901.

59 "*Lizzie May* made a dozen trips a day and connected [i.e. was synchronized] with all the trains." See Gamage and Lord, *Marblehead*, 198.

60 Its culmination begins in 1967, when the boundaries of the Historic District are registered in the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth (of Massachusetts); and concludes in 1984, when the District becomes an American landmark and is included in the National Register of Historic Places.

abandoning the spatial inheritance of its recent industrial failures.[61] Its new industry, which is pursued to the present day, becomes the commodification of memory — what urban historian Françoise Choay refers to as the exploitable "monumentalization" of spatial heritage — ultimately leading to the "museumification" of Marblehead's historic district.[62]

When Lovecraft happens upon the town in December of 1922, four years after its final industrial effort, he is ecstatic to find Marblehead's colonial spatial heritage "intact and unchanged," writing:

> "It is a dream — a grotesque and unbelievable anachronism — an artist's or antiquarian's fancy stept out of his brain and fixt to earth for publick inspection. It *is* the 18th century. There are no modern shops or theatres, and no cinema show that I cou'd discover. The railway is so remote from the town-square, that its existence is forgotten. […] Shades of the past! How completely, O Mater Novanglia, am I moulded of thy venerable flesh and as one with thy century'd soul! God Save His Majesty, George the Third, and preserve his Province of the Massachusetts-Bay!"[63]

Conclusions

Marblehead's maritime-industrial efforts between 1815 and 1918 are an alternate manifestation of the responsive seafaring spirit which inspired the design of its labyrinthine landscape two centuries prior. Its cyclical reconfiguration of labor, material, and spatial form demonstrate an organic industrialism in which development maintains an intimate dialogue with pre-existing urban heritage and the landscape. The town's distinct peninsularity and coastal geography facilitate adaptive, small-scale industrial strategies and the generational alignment of its labor system and investment structure make possible committed iterations of building and rebuilding within and beyond its historic city limits. The pace and creativity of these explorations, however, simultaneously carry the risk of permanently disrupting the town's careful negotiation between continuity and invention — revealing the cultural tension of maintaining the "historic city as reference" during periods of industrial change.[64]

Marblehead's trajectory is ultimately indicative of a broader trend in the development of peripheral economies — that each unsuccessful advance precipitates an accelerated retreat from the agency of advance to an ethos of preservation. In the words of cultural historian, Jan Assmann:

> "…'memory' is not a metaphor but a metonym based on material contact between a remembering mind and a reminding object. Things do not 'have' a memory of their own, but they may remind us, may trigger our memory, because they carry memories which we have invested into them… In order to be reembodied in the sequence of generations, cultural memory [exists] in disembodied form and requires institutions of preservation and reembodiment."[65]

61 Not until relatively recently has this heritage been foregrounded in the town's preservation efforts; the volunteer-run Marblehead Museum, for example, began featuring artifacts of the town's shoemaking industry in public exhibits in 2013 and efforts to preserve one of the last ten-footer shoemaking sheds (located on Orne Street) are currently underway. See, respectively, Marblehead Museum, "Fishing and Shoemaking in Marblehead: Marblehead 101 Part Six," https://marbleheadmuseum.org/fishing-and-shoemaking-in-marblehead-marblehead-101-part-six/ (accessed 21 October 2025); and Grey Collins, "Local History Preserved: A 175-Year-Old Shoemaking Shed Reborn," *Marblehead Current*, July 3, 2025, https://marbleheadcurrent.org/2025/07/03/local-history-preserved-a-175-year-old-shoemaking-shed-reborn/.

62 Françoise Choay. *Le patrimoine en questions: Anthologie pour un combat* (Paris: Seuil, 2009), 12-41.

63 From his letter to Reinhardt Kleiner, written on January 11th, 1923. See H.P. Lovecraft, *Selected Letters 1911—1924*, Vol. I (Arkham House Publishers, 1965), 205-06.

64 Referring to the cultural standard or temporal "reference point" set by a particular period and/or area of the historic city. Françoise Choay. *The Modern City: Planning in the 19th Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969).

65 Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, eds. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 109-18.

The town's granite headlands, narrow streets, and converted workshops continue to speak in the language of their former uses through tourism, art, and nostalgia. Beneath the clapboard restorations and cobbled alleyways, the presence of abandoned enterprises is still detectable: the rhythm of rope spinners, the shuffle of cobblers, the hum of propellers echoing over the harbor. Assmann refers to this phenomenon as the "afterlife of cultural forms" — the survival of meaning through recontextualization. In the end, Marblehead achieves a paradoxical triumph — preserving its maritime identity by transforming the sea into a remembered landscape and industrializing the curation of its own cultural continuity.

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Fig. 1: Eyal Oren, *Sailing on Redd's Pond*. Photograph, from Wednesdays in Marblehead. https://wednesdaysinmhd.com/2017/06/01/sailing-on-redds-pond/ (accessed 12 March 2020).

Fig. 2: Frederick Gleason, *View of the Town of Marblehead, Massachusetts*. Engraving, from *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion* (Boston, 1854), 376.

Fig. 3: Henry Francis Walling, *A Topographical Map of Essex County, Massachusetts* (Boston: Published by Smith and Morley, 1856). https://www.loc.gov/item/2012592410/ (accessed 10 March 2020).

Fig. 4: Rob Kipp, *Cod Atop Old North Church, Marblehead*. Photograph. Rob Kipp Photography, 2009. https://robkipp.com/oldtown/d300_5599.htm (accessed 15 March 2020).

Fig. 5: Le Breton. *Pêche de la morue sur le grand banc de Terre Neuve*. Engraving, in *Le tour du monde; nouveau journal des voyages*, Vol.3, edited by Edouard Charton (Paris: Libraire de L'Hachette, 1863), 409.

Fig. 6: Permission granted from Marblehead Historical Commission: Object ID (2002-007-1649) / Title (Sterns Yacht Yard). https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/archive/BE3E8D80-9ED5-419C-A8B0-950113518785 (accessed 14 June 2020).

Fig. 7: *Marblehead, Massachusetts. Map, 1882*, by O.H. Bailey & Co. https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:x633f963f (accessed 14 June 2020).

Fig. 8: (top) Permission granted from Marblehead Historical Commission: Object ID (2001-070-0402.43) / Title ("Ten Footer" shoe shop at corner of Front and Circle Streets). https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/F863BD38-2D3A-41EB-A3B9-371635120010. Citation: "'Ten Footer' shoe shop at corner of Front and Circle Streets." Photograph, Marblehead Historical Society. https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/F863BD38-2D3A-41EB-A3B9-371635120010 (accessed 22 October 2025); (bottom) "The Old Marblehead Shoe-Maker, Marblehead, Mass." Photograph, Marblehead Historical Society. https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/archive/4CD738EC-9D72-4A14-8F07-651305108041 (accessed 22 October 2025).

Fig. 9: "Hooper Shoe Factory." Photograph, Marblehead Historical Society. https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/05981CAA-3C55-4DAD-B5B6-875316364946 (accessed 22 October 2025).

Fig. 10: (top) "Association Factories." Photograph, Marblehead Historical Society. https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/4BAAF0E4-7AFD-426A-9E5D-131386362151 (accessed 22 October 2025); (bottom) "ShoeFactory." Photograph, Marblehead Historical Society. https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/449F088E-83E6-4417-AB19-068022965015 (accessed 22 October 2025).

Fig. 11: (top) "Burgess Aeroplanes." Photograph, from Harris, Gordon, "Taking to the Air in Ipswich, 1910." *Historic Ipswich* (blog). https://historicipswich.net/2021/04/30/burgess_flight-ipswich/?unapproved=28884&moderation-hash=d3404b8e2f14f486f1647b8991060e11#comment-28884 (accessed 18 October 2025); (middle) "Burgess Workers." Photograph, Marblehead Historical Societ. https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/C0D5AD95-027D-4927-8906-360971542079 (accessed 22 October 2025); (bottom) "Burgess Hydroplane." Photograph, Marblehead Historical Society. https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/B6BB8603-65FF-48D1-B016-463708103249 (accessed 22 October 2025).

Fig. 12: (top) "Old Plant at Red Stone Lane." Photograph, Marblehead Historical Society. https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/C1707F1A-8747-4A10-A76E-076696162553 (accessed 22 October 2025); (bottom) "Burgess Planes in harbor." Photograph, Marblehead Historical Society. https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/A5410B6B-243A-499A-9E1F-403883471214 (accessed 22 October 2025).

Fig. 13: (top) "Rodman Law, Parachute." Photograph, Marblehead Historical Society. https://marbleheadhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/6B7BA2D1-05E6-4932-8CCE-791128496251 (accessed 22 October 2025); (bottom) Untitled photograph, from "Dan Dixey: Historic Marblehead Images." Northshore Magazine. https://www.nshoremag.com/artsculture/marblehead-museum-presents-dan-dixey-historic-marblehead-images/ (accessed 16 June 2020).