

*These men who grew up in such towns as Brewster were the men of energy of New England. They were ready to create, to build up their own fortunes, and in doing so they built up the fortunes of their town.. They were literally the Captains of Industry."*

from: *Brewster Ship Masters*, J. Henry Sears,  
C.W. Swift Co., Yarmouth, Mass., 1906

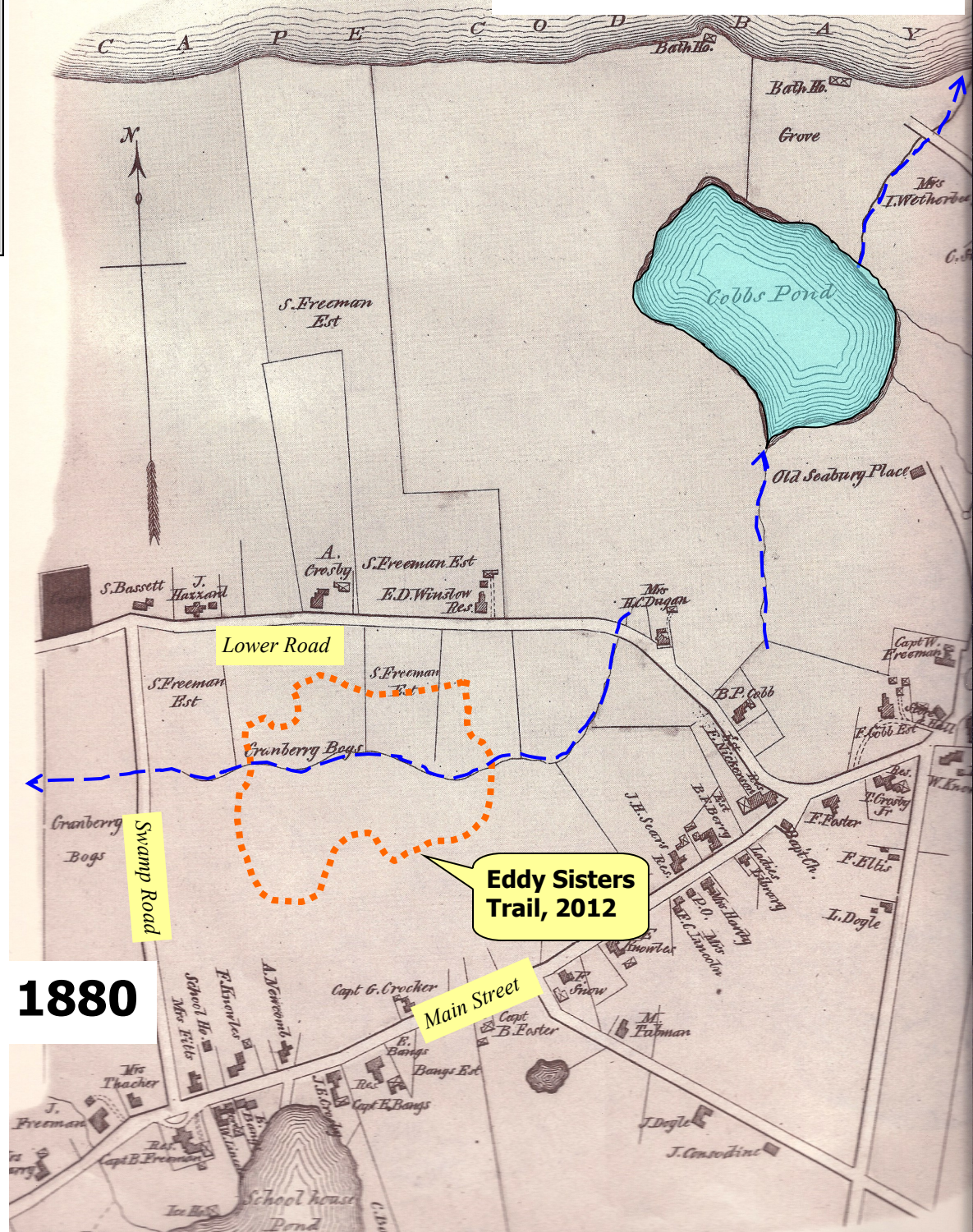
This 1880 atlas provided close-up detail of the Lower Road neighborhood, one of the few village districts highlighted in the county map, indicating its prominence as a settled area in Cape affairs.

Captain Solomon Freeman (1800-1887) was a Brewster Boy all his life. He mastered ships around the world after starting his sea service at 16 years old. He was one of the famed blue-water skippers who put Brewster on the map as the "Sea Captains' Town" in a sea-faring county. (Count on the map how many captains are listed as residents of just this small section of old Brewster.)

Capt. Freeman retired early to his Brewster farm and owned land on both sides of Lower Road that extended to the Bay. He had just died three years prior to the production of this Atlas, but his extensive holdings are seen as "S. Freeman Est." There is more on him on the next page.

On this map, we can see that Cobbs Pond had not yet been put to use as an irrigation source for the Lower Road bogs of Capt. Freeman. Swamps drained north into Cobbs Pond and the outlet stream discharged directly to the Bay. Using Cobbs Pond's water to flood the bogs was an idea whose time had not yet come.

Map source: *Atlas of Barnstable County, Massachusetts*,  
George H. Walker & Co., Boston, 1880.

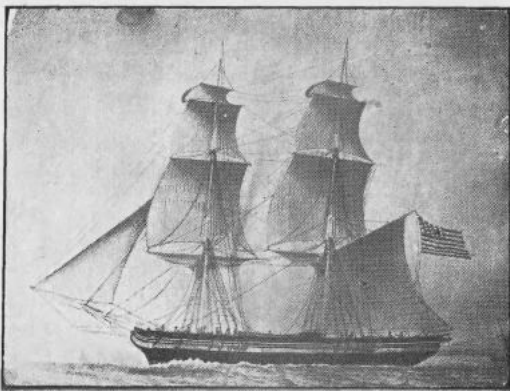


## CAPTAIN SOLOMON FREEMAN of Brewster

Born in Brewster in February 1800, he went to sea at 16 and later had command of several ships including the brig "Margaret" (shown here) and the ship Malabar. When he retired to Brewster he became active in town affairs and served several terms in the state legislature. He died in Brewster in April 1887. His son Solomon Jr. (b. 1833) was also a Brewster sea captain. The family home was at what is now 667 Lower Road.

Capt. Freeman was obviously a man of stern mien, as indicated in this essay he wrote in 1861 (long after being retired from the sea) on the topic of "demon rum":

My personal experience as a seafaring boy and man extends over a period of 37 years, 32 years of which I was in the capacity of commander of different vessels to various parts of the globe and in voyages varying in length of time from a few months to even two years. A bare synopsis of the many incidents and circumstances of which I was cognizant during that period bearing on the subject of Temperance would only be a repetition of the same yarn which you would obtain from every old salt of like experience and which you have already frequently listened to until disgusted with its hideous sameness of crime, misery and degradation. You might almost really call in question the wisdom of God in so constituting man as to be even capable or liable so far to efface his image as drink has done by making him a demon in human shape alike dead to every duty which God has commanded and to which reason and his better nature impels— until you have been compelled to leave the mystery where he has left it— in the declaration that God had created man upright but that he had sought out many inventions and if any one of these inventions has been the cause of ruin more than another it is intoxicating drink.



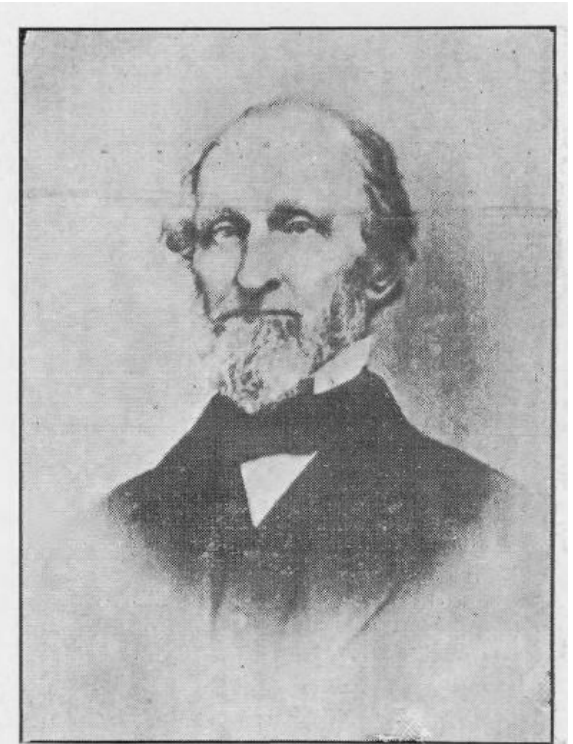
BRIG MARGARET

When I first commenced my seagoing life in 1816 and from that period until about 1826 it was the uniform practice at sea and on shore for men to drink freely, and rum brandy and gin were considered in a

per day with an occasional nipper called in sailor parlance "splicing the mainbrace" whenever any extraordinary exertion was required such as reefing topsails &c., or a bumper to sweethearts and wives on Saturday nights or on leaving or making land or any other joyful occasion. The officers drank when and as often as they pleased and not unfrequently to excess. I have crossed the Atlantic with a captain who was not sober for one single day on the passage after ten o'clock in the forenoon, thus greatly endangering the lives and property entrusted to him and this was by no means a solitary case— on the contrary it was quite common.

About 1826 the necessity of reform at sea as well as on shore was apparent by the philanthropic endeavors of certain individuals and the evils were made so apparent that the wonder was that it had been suffered to exist so long without any effort to correct it. Many owners and ship masters of Boston were induced to try what was then deemed an experiment on shipboard. Their success far exceeded their expectations.

I well recollect my first attempt I was one-fourth owner and master of a good brig bound for Surinam Without acquainting the principal owner, who was a distiller of New England rum, I omitted rum in my list of stores and shipped my crew with an agreement in large letters on my shipping articles—"NO GROG ALLOWED ON BOARD"—and I found no difficulty in shipping good and able men on these terms, but after the vessel was loaded and headed in the stream, the principal owner walked with me to the end of the long wharf to take a look at the vessel. I then informed him of the circumstances. He answered me that I should not succeed, said it was a visionary scheme of mine and insisted on sending a barrel of New England rum on board to be kept a secret from the crew to meet the emergency of not succeeding, which he was sure would be



CAPTAIN SOLOMON FREEMAN

the case. His arguments were so pressing, his plea so plausible, that I consented. Rum can be known by other means than the taste and that barrel of rum was soon smelled out by my steward and was the cause of so much trouble and wrong doing that I knocked the head in and had the contents pumped out with the bilge water. And thus ended the trouble and I have never put rum on board of a vessel as stores since.

*From: The American Sailor's Magazine, Vols. 33-34, American Seamen's Friend Society, November 1861.*