

## Tarpaulin Cove

*Herman Ward*

This is one place, I know, that has not changed in thirty years,  
Perhaps in a century.

The cove remains soft and wild;

The abrasive dialogue of sea and sand goes on

Uninterrupted. We are still in the old New World.

Of course, the Indians have gone and the pirates are no more.

Lovell George, the old lighthouse keeper,

And his Swedish wife, who made bread to greet the dawn,

Have departed; a button turns on the beacon in their place.

We visitors are motor-driven and wind-driven

Though the shore if it had eyes to see

Would surely notice only those who come by sail.

Today the sky is being swept by a northeast wind.

Clouds skate across blue ice,

Play at being seahorses, flowers, fields of wheat, old men –

We sing back to the sirens

Who hide behind each wave and unexpected gust of wind.

*From Cape Cod Poems, p. 20. Published by The Belle Mead Press, 1982.*



MBL Invertebrate class collecting at Tarpaulin Cove, 1943. Farmhouse and barn buildings on right with Lighthouse and keeper's house in the distance. Photo by B.R. Cornfield. Courtesy WHHC.