

# Mrs. Roosevelt, Eight Feet Tall

by Philip Hamburger, October 24, 1994, p.54

(Abstract)

ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS about sculptor Penelope Jencks of Cape Cod, who is sculpting a statue of Eleanor Roosevelt for Riverside Park. Writer visits her in the Bound Brook section of Wellfleet. Wellfleet is a venerable town (incorporated 1763) jutting out into the Atlantic on one side and Cape Cod Bay on the other, near the hooked elbow of Cape Cod. Jencks lives in a gray-shingled Cape Cod-style house on the bay side in a part of Wellfleet known as Bound Brook Island, and works in a shingled studio a short distance away. In the early days of the Republic, Bound Brook actually was an island. Then with the coming of the railroad and its dikes, the land was gradually filled in, and Bound Brook is an island no longer. Even today, though, driving over to Bound Brook (a matter of minutes) leaves one with a sense of having traveled to some dreamlike far-off place. You follow narrow, unmarked sand roads, framed by tall oaks and pines, up and down steep hills, and there are only a few spots where you can turn in and wait for an oncoming car to pass. Wellfleet residents take a certain fierce and obstinate pride in the signs that identify their houses. Metal nameplates would be considered scandalously *infra dig*. Residents merely find a small piece of wood, preferably of irregular shape, paint their name on it, and nail it to a convenient tree. Time and weather take their inevitable toll on the markers, and many of the signs have come perilously close to invisibility. Although these particular woods happen to be full of artists, poets and professors, there is nothing remotely spurious, or falsely modest, about the simplicity of these nametags . . .