



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

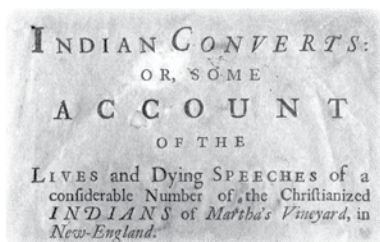
VOL. 55, No. 2

SUMMER 2014



Laura's Lights:
A Talk on Lighthouses
From Spring, 1938 —
In a Bygone Era of
Information,
Improvement &
Sociability

**The Invasion:
Rehearsal
for D-Day**



**Island Anomaly:
The Unique
Christianization
Of Martha's Vineyard**

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TO OUR READERS

SOMETHING OLD, something new, something borrowed. This edition of the *Dukes County Intelligencer* makes me think of that little ditty and the marvelous marriage there is between the Museum and the island.

For our something old, we have a transcript of a speech given to several Island ladies' clubs by Laura G. Vincent in the mid-1930s. Vincent, an aunt of longtime Museum volunteer Peg Kelley, was the daughter of Charles Macreading Vincent, whose Civil War letters home were lovingly transcribed by former Museum director Marian Halperin and published in 2008 as *Your Affectionate Son, Charlie Mac: Civil War Diaries and Letters by a Soldier from Martha's Vineyard*.

'Borrowed' is an excerpt from Martha's Vineyard in World War II by frequent contributor Tom Dresser and his writing partners Herb Foster and Jay Schofield. Their new book, published by History Press, features a forward by the Museum's oral history curator, Linsey Lee.

Lastly, our something new is a research paper written by former Museum intern Tara Keegan for her class on Colonial America regarding the conversion of Island Wampanoags to Christianity. As for the 'blue' of that well-known bit of doggerel, perhaps that's the cover of this edition of the *Intelligencer*.

— Susan Wilson, editor

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Laura's Lights

From the Civil Discourse of a Bygone Era: Information, Improvement, Sociability

by LAURA G. VINCENT

From the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the second half of the twentieth, ladies clubs were a fixture on Martha's Vineyard. These clubs promoted the tenets of 'information, improvement and sociability' for their membership, and served up lectures, curiosities, and refreshments. Guest speakers were popular or, lacking those, members volunteered to provide the educational aspect of the meetings. Strictly formatted, rigorously recorded, they were an outlet and a source of culture for a population of women who did not have the wide world at their fingertips as we do now. For more about the 'civil discourse' of a bygone era see The Dukes County Intelligencer's August 2007 history of the Triad Club.

LIGHTHOUSES HAVE ALWAYS had a great fascination for me, perhaps owing to the fact that when I was a small girl, I used to spend the greater part of my summer vacation on Cape Pogue. Dr. Worth was a cousin of mine and his father and grandfather served as Keeper and Assistant Keeper of Cape Pogue lighthouse.

I lived with my grandmother at Edgartown. My uncle would come up and say, "Well, Aunt Harriet, I've come to borrow your girl," and the girl, with a few clothes packed in a bag, would start off very happily. I need not say this was several years ago!

We would row across the harbor to Chappaquiddick, where Uncle J. had a team. I do not remember how long it took us, but the horse pulled us through the sand and was not urged to hurry. In fact, my uncle used to get out to spare the horse and I would follow suit, although I doubt if my weight at the time overburdened the horse. At any rate, she was spared.

When we reached the pond, we got into a boat and crossed to the other

NOTE: This speech was given by Laura Vincent to the DAR on March 4, 1938; to the Triad Club of Oak Bluffs on May 6, 1938, and also to the Woman's Club of Edgartown. The editor has taken the liberty of updating some of what Ms. Vincent reported on nearly 80 years ago.

side. I lost no time in running up to the house where my aunt greeted me. The tower was a short distance from the house and a lamp was lighted at sunset. About midnight my uncle used to change the lamp. I remember distinctly one night when there was a terrific thunderstorm, and how frightened we were when my Uncle J. had to go to the tower.

I used to enjoy being there when the supply steamer came. The sailors used to bring coal ashore in bags on their backs. Oil was left, books taken from the library and replaced by new ones — all sorts of things were brought.

Mornings my uncle would let me go up into the tower with him and what a thrill to be up so high, and look across the water. Uncle J. would get back of the door and make faces — and they were faces, too. But, oh, how spotless and shining everything was. However, I must not spend any more time reminiscing.

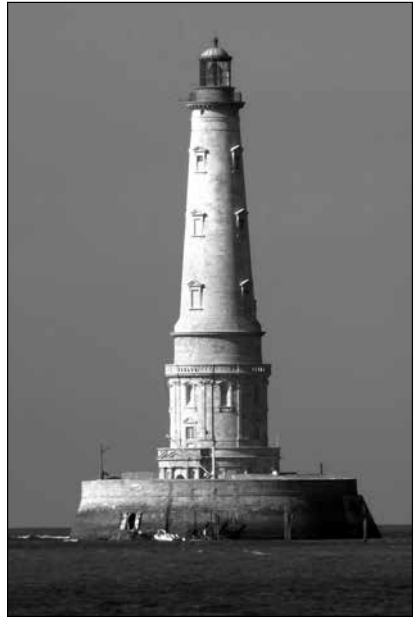


Light has always been a friend to man. Fires were made in the jungle not only to keep off wild beasts, but to furnish light as well. After many ships were wrecked upon rocks and treacherous shoals, someone conceived the idea of building fires along dangerous coasts as a warning, and so beacon lights became, we might say, a beginning of lights as guides to those who were on ships. Later, towers were built and, as we go back in history, it is interesting to find that a great lighthouse, probably the greatest that has ever been built, was constructed in Egypt twenty-two centuries ago.

The famous Pharos of Alexandria, the earliest lighthouse of which there is definite historical information, was regarded by the Americans as one of the seven wonders of the world. Alexander the Great, on his occupation of Egypt, founded, in 333 BC, the city of Alexandria — a Greek center in Egypt. Soon after, the great tower named Pharos after the harbor at whose eastern extremity it stood, was undertaken and it took about twenty years to complete. A Greek geographer says Pharos is a small oblong island and that its eastern extremity is a rock washed by the sea on all sides, with a tower upon it the same name as the island, admirably constructed of white marble, with several stories. Caesar, who went to Alexandria in 48 BC, describes the Pharos as a tower of great height of wonderful construction. From a writer, speaking of the celebrated tower, I quote, "This structure is singularly remarkable as much because of its height as its solidarity. It is very useful as it was illuminated by fire night and day to serve as a signal for navigators during their voyages. During the night it appears as a star, and during the day it is distinguish by smoke." In 1349, the Pharos was found in ruins. The present chief lighthouse at Alexandria is about two

miles from the site of the Pharos.

There were several ancient lighthouses marking the passage from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. Following the Pharos, a number of lighthouses were built by the Romans. It has been estimated that seventeen of the ancient towers of which are known can with certainty be considered to have been used for that purpose. One of these is still standing — Corunan, on the northwest coast of Spain, and is known as the tower of Hercules.¹ This was a square stone tower, having an unusual ascending way, winding a number of times around the exterior, and is believed to have been built in the fourth century. The Spanish government has restored the tower, encased it in granite and it has again been put into service as a lighthouse, after being dark for centuries. It is the oldest tower at present in use and is the only lighthouse of antiquity which



The Cordouan Lighthouse in France.
(image from Wikimedia Commons)

has survived. The seafarers of the Italian Republics were the first to restore the use of lighthouses to modern Europe. The earliest example now existing of a sea-swept lighthouse is the beautiful tower of Cardumnam,(sic) Cordu on a rock in the sea at the mouth of the Gironde river on the west coast of France.² This lighthouse has since been altered and raised in height. The original structure was elaborately decorated and one floor was occupied by a chapel, which still remains. The lighthouse stands upon a rock covered with ten feet of water at high tide (216 feet). Around the base is a circular building containing the Keeper's quarters. The light which was first used was poor.



The progress of lighthouse building was slow, and at the time of the building of Boston Light in 1715, it was estimated that there were but seventy lighthouses in the world, and for a century after the lighting of Boston Light the aids to navigation were still slow, the means of illumination crude and fog signals (except those of the most primitive character) were lacking.

1 La Torre de Hercules, La Coruna, Galicia, Spain. This landmark lighthouse is still functioning and is a symbol of the A Coruna province. -ed.

2 Cordouan Lighthouse. The first Fresnel rotating lens was installed in this French lighthouse in 1823. See *Shoreline Sentinels: The Lighthouses of Martha's Vineyard*, by Jill Bouck, MVM publication. -ed.

France has not only excelled in the development of lighthouses, but has built many notable ones and there are a number of powerful quick flashing lights located on the principal points of her coasts. One of these is at the point of Créach, the northwest extremity of France; it is a light which gives, each ten seconds, two flashes of 30,000,000 candle power and is typical of the others. In this vicinity, on account of the dangerous off-lying reefs and commerce passing, a light and fog signal was later placed on the reefs. This handsome tower, the Jument Light, was completed in 1911, and has a special interest for the reason that money for its construction was bequeathed by a French traveler, though the French government had to add an equal amount.

The lighthouse service of Trinity House, England, is under the charge of [that] which also has certain supervisory [charge] over the Scottish and Irish lights. Trinity House is a body of great historic interest and received a charter from King Henry VIII in 1514. It was first charged with lighthouse duties during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, by an Act of 1665. This was the first English statute relating to aids for navigation. Trinity House is a body of great distinction and occupies a building near the Tower of London.

Early lighthouses were in the hands of private individuals, who, under leases, built and maintained them, paying rent and having the right to collect tolls from all the vessels that passed the light. In 1836, an act was passed vesting all lighthouse and sea marks on the coast of England in Trinity House, and authorizing the purchase of the ten coast lights that were then held by individuals. Let us visit a few of the lights of Great Britain.

Perhaps the most famous is the Eddystone, a sea-swept lighthouse off the coast of England and fourteen miles from Plymouth. Four successive towers have been built of this ledge. Each has been a work of great difficulty, as the rock is submerged at high tide and lies in an exposed condition. The first tower required four years of work. During the first year all that was accomplished was drilling twelve holes in the rock and fastening irons in them. During the progress of this work, the story is told that Winstanley, the designer, and his men were taken off the rock by a French privateer, their release being ordered by Louis IV, who said that he "was at war with England, but not humanity." Winstanley was so confident of the lighthouse that he wanted to be in it, "In the greatest storm that ever blew under the face of heaven." His wish was granted. In November 1703, he, with some workmen went to the rock to make some repairs. A great storm came up, the lighthouse was completely demolished and Winstanley, the Keeper and the workmen all perished. The lighthouse that now stands was completed in 1882 and differs from the other sea swept towers in that the base is vertical, and above this rises the tower of in-curving profile instead of the curved outline beginning the foundation.

Another notable lighthouse of the British Isles is that on Bell Rock. This dangerous reef lies off the coast of Scotland and was long a terror to mariners. The rock is ten miles from shore and covered with 12 feet of water at each high tide. That was a dangerous and difficult job. Bell Rock is the subject of Southy's ballad, "The Inchcape Rock" was where Ralph the Rover was wrecked and:

But even in his dying fear, one dreadful sound
could the Rover hear,
A sound as if with the Inchcape Bell,
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

On the west coast of Scotland, and exposed to the full sweep of the Atlantic, stands the Kerrystone lighthouse. During the building of this tower, the engineer says at times they could not work, "for miles around nothing could be seen but white foaming breakers, and nothing heard but howling winds and dashing waves."

Bishop Rock lighthouse is on the outermost rocks of the Scilly Islands off the southwest coast of England, in a most exposed position. The four famous British rock lighthouses, The Eddystone, Kerryvore, Bell Rock and Bishop's Rock have been described as the "most perfect specimens of modern architecture."

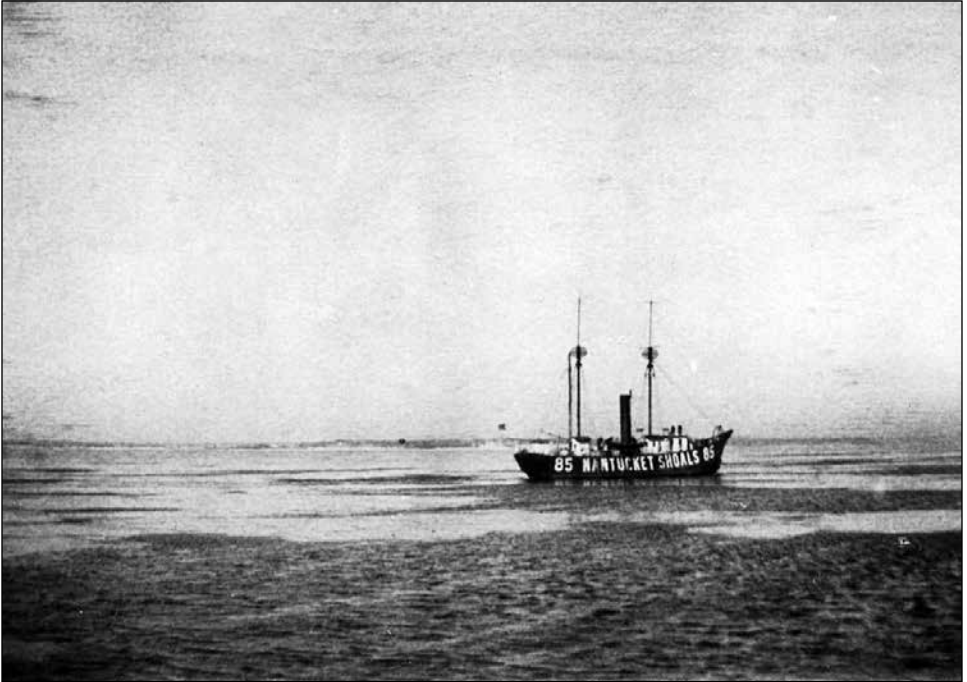
Northeast, the most northerly lighthouse in Great Britain stands on the top of a bare and precipitous rock rising nearly 200 feet from the sea. The buildings occupy nearly the whole available area of the rock and are accessible by stone steps cut into the rock.

Off the east coast of England lie the Faroe Islands and on these outermost rocks is Longstone Lighthouse. It was here that Grace Darling lived with her father who was Keeper of the light. We are all familiar with the story of Grace, who was 22 years old at the time (1838). She died four years later and her tomb in her native town bears the inscription, "Pious and pure; modest and yet so brave; though young, so wise: though weak, so resolute."

Fastnet Lighthouse, on a rock off the southwest coast of Ireland, is the point for which a large part of the eastbound vessels across the Atlantic steer.



But it is time we were turning our faces toward home. Our itinerary may be somewhat erratic, but that is the trend of modern times. I think lighthouses are like humans. All belong to one big family, each having certain duties to perform where ever they may be. Yet no two are alike, each having individuality. I quote the following, "a passenger came on deck on a misty evening and heard first faintly and then louder the blasts of a



Nantucket's No. 85 lightship was built in 1907 and served until 1923.
(image from the Museum collections)

steam whistle at regular intervals of half a minute. Then through the thin fog shone a white light eclipsed every quarter of a minute, and there soon loomed out of the mist in the dusk a little vessel at anchor rolling heavily in the swell, with a red hull and NANTUCKET in large white letters on her side. The great liner swept close by and on toward her port, and her master had definite knowledge that he was 200 miles east of New York Harbor." This lightship, anchored on one of the most exposed stations in the world, has given this message to many thousands of masters, and has been the first signpost to millions of passengers.

The approach to New York is well lighted. For New York Harbor and its immediate approaches there are 46 shore lights besides lightships, lighted buoys and fog signals. Naneink Light, south of Sandy Hook is the principal light for New York Harbor. Two lights were built in 1827 and the present brownstone, prison-like looking structure with two towers was built in 1862. In 1898, an electric arc lamp was installed by the South Tower with a lens of the lighting type. This is the only primary lighthouse lighted by electricity in this country and the only shore station having a plant for generating electricity. Other lights are Montauk Point, Block Island, Point Judith, while Race Rock and Little Gull Island light mark the entrance to the Race. The lighthouse on Race Rock is another constructed under great difficulties.

The coast of Maine is well protected. Among its lights are Petit Manan, a handsome slender granite tower 119 feet high. Mount Desert Light stands on a rocky islet twenty-two miles from the mainland, and is the most exposed station on the Atlantic coast. At Cape Elizabeth are two lights, shown from two masonry towers about 300 yards apart. Boon Island has a granite tower. Celia Thaxter writes of this in a poem, "The Watch of Boon Island":

"Fed by their faithful hands; and
Ships in sight with joy behold it,
and on land men cried,
Look; clear and stead burns Boon Island Light"

Celia Thaxter was the daughter of the Keeper of the Isle of Shoals lighthouse. At one time the tower was equipped with a revolving light of a patriotic character, as it alternated red, white and blue flashes. The blue flash was not long retained, probably because of the loss of light with this color. It is a brick tower built in 1859.

At the time of the organization of the U.S government on 1789, ten lighthouses owned by the Colonies were in operation, among them Boston Light, Brant Point Light and Nantucket Light on Great Point. Other lights were built, but not in operation at that time. They were known as Colonial lights. The story of Boston Light is rather interesting. A petition of the merchants of Boston was laid before the General Court of Massachusetts, proposing the erection of a lighthouse and lantern at the entrance of the Harbor of Boston for the direction of ships and vessels in the night time bound into said harbor. The petition was granted and a stone tower was built, showing its first light in September, 1716.

In 1719, the Keeper petitioned the General Court that a great gun be placed on said island to answer ships in the fog. This cannon was probably the first fog signal in the U.S. During the Revolution, when the British occupied Boston, a party of Americans visited the Tower, took the lamps and burned the wooden parts. An American eye-witness said he saw the flames of the light house ascending to heaven like graceful incense. The British began to rebuild and again an American expedition, on July 31, 1775, landed on the island, destroyed the work in progress and took prisoners. Later, the British restored and maintained the light again, but when the fleet sailed from Boston in 1776, they left a trail of gunpowder which blew up the light about an hour later. The first Keeper of Boston Light was George Worthylake, who was allowed a salary of 100 pounds a year. He, with his wife and daughter were drowned and this incident was the theme of a ballad, "Lighthouse Tragedy" written by Benjamin Franklin, who was then a boy of 13.

For seven years after the destruction there was no lighthouse at the en-

trance of Boston Harbor. After the Revolution, a new lighthouse was built on the same site, and, with few alterations is the present Boston Light.

Minot Ledge Lighthouse is a notable one in this country. It is six and one half miles from Boston's entrance. The dangerous reefs have been the scene of many disasters. It is said that in nine years forty vessels were wrecked on these Cohasset reefs and on six of these the entire crew was lost. An iron frame lighthouse was built on the Outer Minots. The seaward side was entirely exposed to the Atlantic, so that the drilling of the holes for the piles involved great difficulty, taking the greater part of two seasons. The light was first shown January 1, 1850, thus sending forth a New Year's greeting. It stood only a little more than a year. There was a great gale in April, 1851, and the following extract from the official report tells the story of the lighthouse tragedy:

The Light on the Minot was last seen from Cohasset on Wednesday night at 10 o'clock. At 1 o'clock on Thursday morning the lighthouse bell was heard on shore one and one half miles distant, when the sea was at its highest mark, and it was at that hour, it is generally believed, that the lighthouse was destroyed; at daylight nothing of it was visible from shore and hence it is most probable it was overthrown at or about the hour mentioned. Two keepers were in the tower and were lost.

Another light was promptly built. The present massive stone lighthouse was built on the original sight and was completed in 1860. It ranks, by the engineering difficulties surrounding its erection, among the chief of the great seacoast lighthouses of the world. Great precautions were taken during the building of the lighthouse. No person was allowed to work on the rock who could not swim; no landing from a boat was permitted without the company of a second boat; and a boat with men was stationed on the lee side to pick up men washed from the rock. The tower is built of granite, the lower part is solid to forty feet, except for a central well. There are 1079 steps cut into the tower, which is entered through a door forty feet from the base, reached by a ladder. In storms, the spray reaches the lantern and in winter tends to cover the glass with ice. Longfellow visited Minot's Ledge in 1871, and writes, "we find ourselves at the base of the lighthouse rising sheer out of the sea. We are hoisted up forty feet on a chair, some of us, others going up by an iron ladder." Again, he says, "The lighthouse rises out of the sea like a beautiful stone cannon, mouth upward belching only friendly fires."

We'll leave Boston Harbor and make a flying visit to Nantucket for a glimpse at Brant Point Light. In 1746, the town of Nantucket voted 200 pounds to build a lighthouse. This was constructed on Brant Point, on the west side of the entrance to Nantucket Harbor. It was maintained by the town for some years and in 1795 was ceded to the U.S. by Massachusetts. Seven successive towers have been built. The early structures were of wood



Nobska Light (the first was built in 1829) is visible on a clear night from Gay Head.
(image from Wikimedia Commons)

and burned. One tower was blown down in a gale of 1774, and a news item of that time says they had a most violent gust of wind, “that perhaps was ever known here, which in its progress blew down and totally destroyed the lighthouse.” The brick structure built in 1856, is still standing.

Nantucket Great Point, build by Massachusetts in 1784, on the north-east extremity of the island, was ceded to the U.S. in 1790. This was also a wooden tower and destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt in 1818 of stone and has a light seventy feet above the sea.

At the end of the Cape is Wood End Light on the beach at the entrance to Provincetown Harbor. It is the only lighthouse on Cape Cod which flashes an all red beam. It is a harbor entrance beacon and was built in 1872. It is well known that it’s keeper, Douglas Shepherd, had broadcast radio programs on the worth of the lighthouse and Coast Guard service for many years. In 1927, not far from Wood End, occurred the disastrous collision of a submarine rising to the surface after a trial dive and the Coast Guard destroyer, Paulding. The sub sank and 40 men were lost.

Cape Cod light is on the highlands on the northeast side of the Cape. It is a powerful light with a flash of 580,000 candle power each five seconds. At Nauset beach, on the east side of Cape Cod, there were at one time three small lighthouses, but in 1911, two of these towers were removed and in the one left is very brilliant light which has a triple flash every ten seconds.

When the Chatham lights were separated, one of towers was sent to Nauset and, with the two unused towers there formed a part of summerhouse dwelling. The dwelling is built around the lights and is a unique blending of old and new.

No doubt some of you have visited Chatham. It is said the interest to the visitor lies not so much in the lighthouse, as in the beauty of its location, the marvelous panorama of ocean spread out before it, and it's romantic association with the Pilgrims standing on the bluff at Chatham looking out to the southwest, to the shoals of Pollack's Rip here one sees the dangerous shoals and roaring breakers which turned the Mayflower back from its destination and made the Pilgrims New Englanders instead of Virginians.

Let us hasten to the familiar Nobska Light, we so often see on the bluff overlooking Vineyard Sound on the southwest corner of Cape Cod near Woods Hole. It marks the converging of the sea lanes through Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds and Buzzards Bay. Built in 1829, and rebuilt in 1876, it has a round steel tower 87 feet above sea level. Its range of light is 15 miles. On a clear night one may see from Nobska Dumping Rock, Gay Head, Tarpaulin Cove, West Chop, East Chop, Cape Pogue, and Hedge Fence Lightship. Nobska has a powerful fog signal which can be heard for miles at sea.



Several lights once tended by keepers are now automatic, our East Chop Light being among them. We know, of course, how many people are looking for apartments for light housekeeping. During the past few years lighthouses have been abandoned and offered for sale, so it is possible to get a lighthouse for housekeeping.

Halfway down Monomoy Point stands a veritable ghost of a lighthouse. About 19 years ago the federal government sold it. Not since its white beam ceased shining has it been painted. It's rusty sides still show red in the sun.

A New Jersey family has a summer home in an abandoned tower at Sandy Hook. Barnstable's South Hyannis Light was sold for a summer residence. The owner painted it white with the roof a brilliant blue.

I am taking a great deal of your time and yet we have not begun to visit many of the important lights; those on the Pacific Coast; Alaska and Florida; those on rivers, on islands, so often construed under difficulties that seemed insurmountable.

Just a few words in regard to our own well-known Gay Head Light. The keeper of this light, Ebenezer Swift, in 1805, made a petition for an increase in salary, a part of which I quote:



Group portrait on an outing to Gay Head Lighthouse, 1887. (from the Museum collections)

Sir, Clay and ocher in different colors, from which this place derives its name ascend in a sheet of wind by the high cliffs and catch the lighthouse glass, which often requires cleaning on the outside, a tedious service in cold weather and additional to what is necessary in any other part of Massachusetts.

He also said he had to cart water nearly a mile for family use. President Jefferson approved of the increase of his salary by fifty pounds, thus giving him two hundred and fifty dollars per year.

Gay Head is said to have 1003 prisms and to have cost \$16,000. I found the following in regard to trials given the lanterns:

The while dome of heaven from the center to the horizon was flooded with bars of light, revolving majestically on the axis of the tower. The luminous lens were clearly defined and we could clearly see the clouds and stars behind them. I have never seen anything that in mystical splendor equaled the trial of the magic lantern of Gay Head." (1880).³

The proper lighting and marking of the coasts is an obligation assumed by all maritime nations. The lights protect not only the ships of the country maintaining them, but the vessels of other nations. One example of international cooperation is the lighthouse at Cape Spartel, Africa, at the entrance to the Mediterranean which is maintained jointly by the contributions of eleven nations, including the U.S.

³ This is, of course, the First Order Fresnel light which operated in the Gay Head Lighthouse for 90 years. In 1952 the light was replaced by a high intensity electric beacon and the Fresnel was moved to its current location, on the grounds of the Martha's Vineyard Museum. -ed.

The lighthouses and the lightships appeal to the interest and better instincts of man, because they are symbolic of never-ceasing watchfulness, of steadfast endurance in every exposure and of wide spread helpfulness. Safety is only to be found in certainty. Truly the lightkeeper stands in his vigils for all humanity, asking no questions as to the nationality or purpose of him whom he directs to safety.

Laura G. Vincent was born in Edgartown in 1870, the oldest child of Charles Macreading Vincent and his first wife, Sarah (Smith). She was orphaned at age 11, and she and her siblings spent the rest of their childhoods in Edgartown, living with relatives. She attended teachers' college in Taunton and taught in the Chappaquiddick school for many years. In later life she was a bookkeeper for Eldridges Fish Market, at the foot of Main St. attached to the Edgartown Yacht Club. She never married, and died in 1956 at age 86.

This transcript was donated to the Museum by Margaret Kelley, Laura G. Vincent's niece.



This family photograph, circa 1943-44, was provided by Margaret (Peg) Kelley. Pictured standing, from left, are Peg Vincent Kelley and her sister, Virginia Vincent Rowland. Seated, from left, are Kathleen (Sal) Vincent, Lil Matthews and Laura G. Vincent.

AN EXCERPT:

The Invasion of Martha's Vineyard: Dress Rehearsal for Normandy

by THOMAS DRESSER, HERB FOSTER & JAY SCHOFIELD

WEDNESDAY, August 19, 1942. "The war is on. Awakened at 5 a.m. by the roaring of motor boats and planes and shots in the direction of Seven Gates, sounding like the 4th of July. Out of bed before six and after attending to the oil difficulties, and orange juice and coffee, put on my hip rubber boots and went up on the hill. Nothing to be seen but hundreds of boats in the Sound and planes overhead."¹

Seventy-four-year-old retired newspaper editor George A. Hough (1868–1955) was jolted awake at that early morning hour by armed forces invading the bucolic island of Martha's Vineyard. Hough was a responsible reporter; he maintained diaries of his Vineyard experiences from 1899 until his death. He lived at Fish Hook on Indian Hill, in West Tisbury, and also owned the nearby Ephriam Allen house. Retired as editor of the *New Bedford Evening Standard*, Hough was father to George Hough, editor of the *Falmouth Enterprise*, and Henry Beetle Hough, editor of the *Vineyard Gazette*; he was the great-grandfather of author John Hough.

The invading force, as Hough was well aware, was made up of GIs from the Forty-fifth Infantry Division in a United States Army training maneuver, staging a practice attack to re-capture Martha's Vineyard from the "Germans."

Just days before the mock invasion, on August 14, Hough had recorded in his diary, "Fish Hook swarming with many officers at noon in two jeeps — colonels, lieutenants, captains. Visited Allen house with which they seemed [satisfied] for staff H.Q." Hough was proud of his involvement. "Served scotch on Fish Hook porch to head of defending commander of Martha's Vineyard and others." That evening, they sat by the radio, listening to an interview with the commander of the WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service).

This story is an excerpt from the new book, *Martha's Vineyard in World War II*, published May 2014 by History Press:

Earlier in that summer of 1942, Henry Beetle Hough had been notified of the impending invasion by the army and published a notice in his *Vineyard Gazette*.² “Large scale maneuvers are to be undertaken here, and the Army is announcing the plan in order to obtain the cooperation of the public.”

Field exercises would entail ferrying troops from Camp Edwards, on Cape Cod, across Vineyard Sound, with “landing operations along the north shore in the region lying generally between Chappaquonsett (off lower Lambert’s Cove Road) and Cape Higgon (off North Road).”³ (This spanned Martha’s Vineyard from Vineyard Haven to Chilmark.)

Plans called for a defending force on the Vineyard, consisting of local state guard companies. While the army sought permission from local landowners for the invasion, it promised not to destroy private property. The *Gazette* opined, “There is no doubt that the necessity for giving war training a right of way will be understood on the Vineyard.”

The *Gazette* urged landowners to “be good sports. They should not be excited or angry.” Trespassers’ rights had been requested and granted for permission to train soldiers. The army wanted rights on “every available foot” of Vineyard soil and ominously noted that even without permission, training would proceed on schedule. If property was damaged, however, the owner was to write Camp Edwards explaining the circumstances, and the matter should be resolved.

The Forbes family granted permission for the army to use their Elizabeth islands of Naushon, Nashawena and Pasque for military maneuvers. Editor Hough noted that Jimmy Cagney had offered his Chilmark home on North Road to staff officers for impending army activities. And another Vineyarder, John Daggett, wrote, “These preparations for war were exciting, but they had a grim side too.”⁴

Riley Deeble, of West Tisbury, recalled, “Retired Major General Preston Brown had built his house across from the entrance to Lambert’s Cove Beach. It’s a big house, with a large lawn, right on the curve [still extant]. He saw this thing coming, and he took the precaution of going to a print shop and getting signs that said, ‘Off limits.’ Soldiers would not tramp on his property.” Not everyone was eager to have army men stomping on their green grass.

The *Gazette* added the comforting comments that the invasion would not occur for a few weeks and live ammunition would not be used.



George Hough recorded intriguing details in his wartime diary: “Three jeeps at Fish Hook at noon. Escorted them to the Allen House. Herbert [Norton] told us troops were encamped on the road to the Christiantown chapel.” Hough was in the midst of army activities: “To the Nortons where I had a message from Camp Edwards from Major Christie. Found the Al-



len house converted into an Army barracks, but no one there. Posted message on main entrance." Hough portrayed himself as intimately involved in this military exercise.

Amid all the excitement, he captured the moment with an aside: "My

trusty Captain Cottle and his runner-up young Fisher, asked permission to postpone mowing the lawn until the war is over.” (Captain Eddie Cottle was from Cottle’s Lumber on Lambert’s Cove Road.)

Meanwhile, neighbors gathered at the highest point on Indian Hill, Mary Guerin’s house, to survey military maneuvers unfolding below on Lambert’s Cove beach, where troops had landed. At dinner that night, Hough’s story continued:

Virginia Berresford (artist) came down for supper bringing a baked casserole of jambalaya of her own composition. Superb! Three soldiers turned up as we were eating supper and asked for water. “Would you rather have a beer?” I asked. They preferred beer and consumed two quarts. Open house for the Army officials. Jolly hour with them until Virginia had to leave before darkness in blackout Chilmark. The boys lingered and started for camp in the dark.



Henry Beetle Hough, editor of the *Vineyard Gazette*, had editorialized about the impending invasion: “The soldiers are coming to Martha’s Vineyard—our own soldiers on maneuvers which are part of their training for that decisive part of the great war which lies ahead.” He was prescient in his observations.

These maneuvers were indeed training for the invasion of North Africa late in 1942 and manifest again, most importantly, in the invasion of Normandy, D-Day, on June 6, 1944. Seventy years later, we recognize that the invasion of Normandy was key to the defeat of the Axis forces. Preparation for that invasion began months, indeed years, before the actual attack, and a key element of the invasion, landing troops quickly and safely, was practiced right here on Martha’s Vineyard.

And yet, when troops did land on Martha’s Vineyard in August 1942, there was not a word in the *Gazette*. Censors strictly curtailed the press from reporting on the maneuvers.



On Indian Hill, war maneuvers continued the next day, August 20, as George Hough was awakened by the sound of a large military vehicle whose driver was lost. Hough directed him to his destination and then dealt with a pressing landlord dilemma: “Went to the Allen house to express my sorrow to the General [Keating] whom I poisoned [*sic*]. He was taken violently ill Tuesday night and attributed his illness to the water and asked to have it boiled.” Without hesitation, Hough responded: “Apon (*sic*) boiled it smelled like sulphur hydrogen. Investigation revealed a dead rabbit and two dead rats in the Allen house reservoir.” George Hough had his well cleaned, and “all the officers joined in praise of the Nortons and the Allen house accommodations.”



John Hough reviewing his great-grandfather's diary.
(Photo by Tom Dresser)

The invasion concluded that evening: "The roar of diesel engines continues as troops are being embarked in barges. The war ended tactically [*sic*] at 10 o'clock."

While restricted from publishing reports on the invasion, the *Vineyard Gazette* did print a front-page letter on August 25, 1942, that read, in part: "I want to extend our sincere appreciation and thanks for the many courtesies which the inhabitants of Martha's Vineyard have shown us. I have not heretofore seen a group

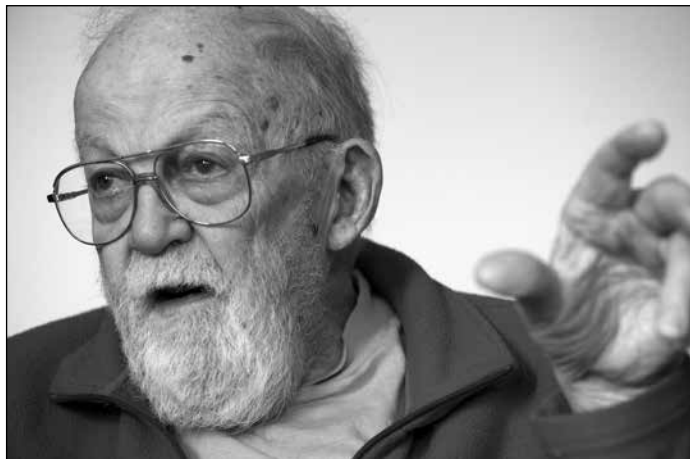
of citizens so genuinely sincere in their friendliness as those on your little Island." It was signed by Brigadier General Frank Keating of the HQ Amphibious Training Command, Camp Edwards. Keating had bunked at the Allen house and suffered ill effects of the polluted well water yet appreciated Vineyard hospitality. He had been promoted to brigadier general during the maneuvers.



While the Houghs, father and sons, viewed the mock invasion through reporters' eyes, the army considered it a serious training exercise. The Amphibious Training Center analyzed the maneuvers:

The training of the 45th Infantry Division (Texas National Guard) was terminated with a three-day amphibious exercise. The exercise involved a tactical situation concerned with the assumed occupation by German forces of Martha's Vineyard, an island in Vineyard Sound off the south shores of Cape Cod. The task of the division was to invade the island, drive out the German forces and secure the island with its airfield as a base for further operations against German forces occupying Nantucket Island.⁵

The Forty-fifth Division was composed primarily of the federalized Texas National Guard. The exercise was intended to be as realistic as possible in the limited area. "Demolitions were planted on the beaches and in-



Riley Deeble. (Mark Lovewell photo, courtesy of the *Vineyard Gazette*)

land to be exploded during the landing to simulate naval gunfire support, artillery fire, and land mines.”⁶

The Vineyard was defended by the Seventy-fifth Composite Infantry Training Battalion, “but the number of troops available in that unit was small, which resulted in the use of

flags and umpires to represent the enemy on a part of the island.”⁷

Parachutists dropped over the (Katama) airfield. Troops stormed the beaches. Observers evaluated the exercise, commenting that troops had to be halted too soon, which “tended to make them lose interest in the problem.”⁸

“Despite the numerous handicaps,” Captain Becker’s report continued, “the exercise was carried out successfully on 18, 19 and 20 August, amid loud explosions, smoke screens, dropping parachutists, and the roar of landing craft motors.” There were some learning experiences regarding use of lights, smoking, and “poor road discipline (and) improper camouflage.”⁹

The Engineer Amphibious Brigade implemented new procedures, including boat operation, shore-to-shore operations and signal communications. And the means to safely and swiftly transport troops onto beaches was revised.



Riley Deeble described challenges that faced the Allies in an invasion:

The Allies had been working on the technology of landing on the beach, all the way back to World War I, in the Dardennelles and the Mediterranean at Constantinople. They attempted to land on an open beach under the face of fire, and it didn’t work very well. When troops landed on the beach, you had the standard navy rowboat. The guys would row right up to the beach. The guys just couldn’t do it.

Andrew Jackson Higgins was a great boat builder in New Orleans. The coast guard requested fast, little boats. When the Allies contemplated the idea getting troops ashore in the face of the Nazis, they said, “Let’s figure a way to land on the beaches instead of the ports.” The result of this was solved when you saw the Normandy beaches.

Getting boats specially developed for that was the goal. The Hig-



Landing Craft, Mechanized (LCM) with bow down. (Courtesy of the National Archives, Waltham)

gins boats did not have the conventional rounded bow. They shaped the bottom of the boat so it would go up on the beach better. The bow had a ramp that went down, then people could walk off and tanks and trucks could drive off.

Deeble was a member of the amphibious brigade. He learned to pilot an LCM across Vineyard Sound and was knowledgeable in invasion training techniques. He recalled:

I was in Company C, the boat regiment, and we were stationed at Cotuit (Can Do It). Almost every day we'd get in the landing craft and take the boat over to East Beach on Chappaquiddick on a regular basis. That's where I learned to operate the LCM; that was the largest landing craft. LCM could carry one tank, or one 6x6 truck or one hundred men. I operated it with a crew of two.

We would cross from Cotuit to East Beach. On the LCM, the ramp covered the whole bow. You'd push it up on the shore. That was fantastic. No great trick. Get it ashore, then drive it in, the bow would be easy. There was a lever to open the ramp and crew of two.

To land the men on the beach was key to success. Troops would dash across the sand and make cover in bushes along the shore. Proper placement of the landing craft on the shore was the first element.

Once troops disembarked, "backing out was very difficult," Deeble continued, "because all the weight, the engines, was in the stern, and that was, of course, pivotal." Larger boats could ease off the beach, but "we had to concentrate to learn to back; we didn't have a cable to rely on."

I landed on Chappy to learn how to do it, must have been about twenty times. I remember my sergeant shaking his head, saying, 'You're never going to get it!' Actually, I did! And I was promoted to technician, third grade.



A second invasion of Martha's Vineyard was planned for October 1942. With additional training and education, the Amphibious Training Center believed its troops, which now included the Thirty-sixth Division of the Texas and Oklahoma National Guard, were ready for practice combat.

"It was planned that on this proposed D-Day [October 2, 1942] at H-hour [dawn] the main attacking force would land on Red Beach [Lambert's Cove] while supporting units landed on nearby Yellow and Green Beaches."¹⁰

John Galluzzo described the invasion: "The troops got in their boats with their equipment the night before the training. They hit the beach at first light. As they approached the shore, they came out of the night in silence, right on time."¹¹

The main invasion occurred an hour and a half before daybreak. "Across the dripping and chilly waters of Vineyard Sound moved the first wave of amphibious infantrymen being ferried by the amphibian engineers."¹²

Another account of the invasion was written years later by Anthony Cimino, who served as commander of Camp Edwards in the 1980s:

The First Engineer Amphibian Brigade ended its training with an invasion of Martha's Vineyard. The 36th Division was the combat unit. Troops and equipment loaded after dark and departed to hit the shore on the Vineyard at first light. Dramatically, the boats came out of the murky light in silence, due to offshore winds. In perfect formation the first wave plowed through the surf and hit the beach exactly at H-hour. Wave after wave of troops swarmed ashore as paratroopers dropped behind the beach to support the lands. The LCVs, LCMs and LCTs (landing craft, vehicle, mechanized, tank) unloaded tons of actual material.¹³

The report concluded, "In its first test, the concept of amphibious invasion was a success."



Although the invasion was supposedly cloaked in secrecy, Vineyarders knew what was going on. Galluzzo continued: "Even though the exercise was classified, many people from the Vineyard were out to see it."¹⁴

Henry Beetle Hough recalled, "Soon a fleet of invasion craft wore through Vineyard Sound and amphibian troops landed at three white beaches in the early morning and took our Island while small groups of civilians looked on from the hills."¹⁵

A film clip of the invasion was included in a video made by Cimino.

He described a “very secret mission. The boats crossed the Sound under tremendous secrecy and the cover of darkness and arrived by dawn or first light. They hit the beach, the boats opened and the troops came ashore. Everything went according to plan.” An amused voice-over observes that “most of the population of Martha’s Vineyard rose up from the sand dunes and cheered the approaching troops, so the event was not quite as secret as one hoped.”¹⁶



This time, Henry Beetle Hough of the *Vineyard Gazette* obtained permission to cover the invasion. The *Gazette* captured the beachhead landing: “Down clanked the jaw-like doors and on to the mushy white sands leaped the infantrymen.”¹⁷ The newspaper report continued:

Dawn was breaking. The assault boats were now visible in a long, endless line as they ploughed through the choppy waters of the Sound. More troops landed. Soon larger barges could be seen through the early morning haze. They roared up to the beach, unloaded their cargo and disappeared into the morning grey. Still more troops came....Thousands of Camp Edwards amphibious and amphibian troops stormed across Vineyard Sound in assault boats, invaded the Island of Martha’s Vineyard, smashed enemy obstructions, disrupted enemy communications, and forced the foe back into the sea in the most extensive land and sea maneuvers ever staged in this part of the country.¹⁸

The report of the military incursion was extensive. “Wave after wave of amphibious infantrymen stormed the Island at three different points, parachute troops seized the vital enemy held airport at Edgartown and aided the invaders in establishing a grip on the Island,” reported the *Gazette*. “After two days, the operation was called to a halt and pronounced a success. General McNair, the man who oversaw the invasion, returned to Washington with the firm conviction that the Army had found the one link that was needed to carry the attack to the enemy—the fast, accurate, and hard-hitting Amphibious Engineers.”¹⁹ In their mobile landing craft, the engineers proved key to the success of a landing operation.

General McNair was quoted as saying that “the Martha’s Vineyard war games were the most impressive he had ever witnessed.”



Bob Tilton of Vineyard Haven recalls the arrival of General McNair in an Aqua Cheetah, one of the original “ducks” or amphibian boat/cars. “I knew it was some kind of a big shot in the jeep. He kept coming once a week or so. We found out it was General McNair, who was the commander and officer of the invasion, either North Africa or someplace.”

During the Normandy invasion in 1944, General McNair was killed by friendly fire when a bomb landed in his foxhole.



Aqua Cheeta amphibious vehicle transits from ocean to beach. (Courtesy of the National Archives, Waltham)



“At long last the chatter of the machine guns was silenced,” the *Gazette* reported. “Raiding parties had completed their mission. And quite effectively. The infantrymen were charging inland now. Engineers were demolishing all enemy barriers and repairing and establishing roads for equipment which soon was to roll off the approaching barges.”²⁰ The next stage of the invasion was underway as the invaders moved inland.

Descriptions of the invasion proved eerily similar to accounts of the landing at Normandy twenty months later.



Other invasions of Martha’s Vineyard followed, but none so dramatic as the first. Of one invasion, Connie Frank recalled:

“My father had this wonderful garden on the corner of State Road and Look Street. There were men crawling through the vegetable garden doing maneuvers. It was really eerie. I would say there were fifteen to twenty soldiers crawling on their stomachs. It was weird. It was foggy. The garden is still there. It’s a good thing my dad didn’t see them or he’d be really upset with them rummaging around. I was afraid to tell him. This was in 1943. I just went back to bed.”

“I remember it like it happened yesterday,” said Charlotte Meyer. “And all of a sudden these boats came along and these doors in the front would open

up and these soldiers stepped out.” She was reclining on the beach, with her brother, mother and aunt. “My aunt yelled out, ‘Look at that! Look at that!’ We saw this boat landing. And I remember seeing men getting off, someone shouting where they were going to go and the men falling into formation. It definitely happened. At first I thought it was a mirage. It was a shock.”

“I know they came ashore on the north shore, up near Cape Higgon,” Rosalie Powell recalled. “Then they got into the Chilmark swamps, so they were in tough territory as they tried to get through all the green briars. Everybody went to see these LSTs with the ramp which went down. The soldiers and jeeps came ashore. They gathered and then marched somewhere. It was a big production. We were all very impressed and excited about this war thing.”

Bob Tilton recalled, “One woman called my father and said, ‘Donald, I don’t know what is going on up here but some big machine just went through my backyard.’ As it turned out, it was a tank. They were all over the place.”



Henry Beetle Hough wrote of that October 1942 invasion: “When they land along the north shore and make their way up through the woods and rocky hills, and the news of their arrival spreads, the chances are that most inhabitants of Martha’s Vineyard will think of another landing to be made in the future, on some enemy coast beyond remote waters.”²¹ And that’s what these mock invasions were training for.

Cimino reflected, “Less than a year after the first formation, the 1st Engineer Amphibian Brigade was hitting the beach, first in North Africa, then into southern Italy. Six months later they were coming ashore in Normandy.”²²

End Notes

1 George Hough maintained a diary of his experiences on Martha’s Vineyard. This entry is from 1942.

2 In *Once More the Thunderer*, a biography of his life as editor of the *Gazette*, Henry Beetle Hough reminisced on the impending invasion:

“An Army captain called up from Camp Edwards and said there would soon be troop maneuvers on and around the Vineyard, and the public should be prepared to take such occurrences as a matter of course. We concluded later that he expected us to print a small item. We surprised him—we made the news our lead story. But no harm was done.” p. 213.

3 *Vineyard Gazette*, July 7, 1942.

4 Daggett, *It Began with a Whale*, p. 48.

5 Becker, *Amphibious Training Center*.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Phelan, *From Carrier Pigeons to Carrier Pilots*, p. 5.

11 Galluzzo, *Camp Edwards*, p. 104–5.

- 12 *Vineyard Gazette*, October 9, 1942.
- 13 Cimino, *Camp Edwards*, p. 13.
- 14 Galluzzo, *Camp Edwards*, p. 103–4.
- 15 Hough, *Once More the Thunderer*, p. 213.
- 16 Cimino, *Through Soldiers' Eyes*.
- 17 *Vineyard Gazette*, October 9, 1942.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid. Phelan, *From Carrier Pigeons to Carrier Pilots*, p. 6.
- 20 *Vineyard Gazette*, October 9, 1942.
- 21 Ibid. July 7, 1942.
- 22 Cimino, *Camp Edwards*, p. 13.

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Herb Foster of Edgartown was a New York City teacher and administrator and is professor emeritus at SUNY-Buffalo. His father Max served with the Air Force in France; Herb's brother Jerry was wounded fighting with the eighty-fifth Infantry Division in Italy in World War II, and his brother Jack served in the Korean War. Herb has written many articles, as well as the book *Ribbin', Jivin', and Playin' the Dozens: The Persistent Dilemma in Our Schools*. Herb is completing *Ghetto to Ghetto: Yiddish and Jive in Everyday Life*. He is a trustee of the Edgartown Library.

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Tom Dresser of Oak Bluffs is a baby-boomer, born after the war was over. His father, Waldo Lincoln Dresser, served in the Coast Guard from Block Island to Normandy to the Pacific. Tom is the author of several nonfiction works including *Women of Martha's Vineyard* and *Mystery on the Vineyard* published by The History Press, and is a frequent contributor to these pages.

ISLAND OF ANOMALY

The Unique Case of Christianization On Martha's Vineyard

by TARA KEEGAN

BEING IN SUCH CLOSE proximity to Massachusetts, proper — a place balight with Puritan colonial endeavors during the time of British colonization — Martha's Vineyard was settled and developed largely in line with mainland dynamics. Total encompassment by water, however, should not be underestimated: the Vineyard, though part of the geography subject to colonialism in the seventeenth century, remained isolated enough to embody nuanced versions of colonial trends. Social, political, and religious dynamics on Martha's Vineyard during the colonial period reveal that colonialism could not be strictly prescribed; regional identities influenced the forms that colonization took.

We can explore this concept by interpreting an account of a Wampanoag woman in the year 1711. Written by an English preacher, the account speaks clearly to both Protestant New England colonial discourse, and to island culture as a distinct entity. What happened on Martha's Vineyard happened all over New England, and the New World: European missionaries aimed to convert their native neighbors, but the mechanisms by which this objective was undertaken on Martha's Vineyard, and the degree of its eventual success, distinguishes the island from its mainland counterparts.

By 1727, Experience Mayhew, grandson of Thomas Mayhew (the first missionary to reside on the Vineyard a century beforehand), had compiled an "Account of the Lives and Dying Speeches of a Considerable Num-

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ber of the Christianized Indians of Martha's Vineyard."¹ These accounts, published under the main title *Indian Converts*, span multiple generations and are divided into four sections: Ministers, "other Godly Men," religious women, and "Pious young Persons."² To understand just how idiosyncratic Vineyard conversion was, we turn to an entry for a religious woman, Hannah Charles, who died on the island in 1711.

After introducing Hannah by name and familial association, the account continues, "Her godly Parents taught her to read, and gave her a religious Education; and she, thro' Grace, made a good Improvement of these Advantages."³ This simple fact is all we are given about Hannah's preadolescent life, but it is enough for us to draw important inferences. Literacy was no guarantee anywhere in New England in the latter half of the seventeenth-century, but literacy and education were prized, even among females, in the campaign to spread Puritanism. In his paper, *Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha's Vineyard*, professor James P. Ronda of Youngstown State University suggests:

From the time of Thomas Mayhew, Jr., Christianity on the island was closely linked to formal schooling for converts. Educational opportunities extended to Indian women proved a powerful incentive for both conversion and continued Christian affiliation. The Indian churches promoted literacy among women and gave educated women a place to use their learning.⁴

Ronda's paper was published in 1981, but several of his conclusions relate directly to *Indian Converts* and have met virtually no scholarly dissent. He notes that out of thirty-seven women documented in *Indian Converts*, seventeen — that is just under 46% — were literate. In many accounts besides that of Hannah Charles, Mayhew references a desire to read and learn in the lives of the religious women. The fact that intellectual hobbies are continually mentioned in very brief accounts of people's lives shows that intellectual prowess was an admirable quality. Ronda mentions the link between Christianity and *formal* education on the island. The Vineyard formalized the educational dynamic that was characteristic of Puritanism by and large: the concept of a *sola scriptura* and the necessity to read and understand the Bible. In a small island community, collective education was feasible, and formal education practical. Of course, it contributed to Christianity's lure in the eyes of island natives.

1 Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts or, Some Account of the Lives and Dying Speeches of a Considerable Number of the Christianized Indians of Martha's Vineyard, in New-England* (London, 1727).

2 Mayhew, *Indian Converts*.

3 Ibid, 156.

4 James P. Ronda, "Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha's Vineyard," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38 (July 1981): 387.

INDIAN CONVERTS:
OR, SOME
ACCOUNT
OF THE

LIVES and Dying SPEECHES of a
considerable Number of, the Christianized
INDIANS of *Martha's Vineyard*, in
New-England.

V I Z.

- I. Of Godly Ministers.
- II. Of other Good Men.
- III. Of Religious Women.
- IV. Of Pious young Persons.

By *Experience Mayhew*, M. A. Preacher of
the Gospel to the *Indians* of that Island.

To which is added,
Some Account of those *ENGLISH* MINISTERS
who have successively presided over the *Indian* Work
in that and the adjacent Islands. By Mr. *Prince*.

Acts x. 34, 35. *I perceive that GOD is no Respector of Persons :
but in every Nation he that feareth him, and worketh Righteous-*
ness, is accepted with him.

Acts xv. 8, 9. *Giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us :
and put no Difference between us and them, purifying their Hearts
by Faith.*

Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. *Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, &c.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Samuel Gerrish*, Bookseller in *Boston* in *New-England*,
and sold by *J. Osborn* and *T. Longman* in *Pater-noster-Row*,
M.DCC.XXVII.

This lure not only meant conversion, but as Ronda states, “continued Christian affiliation.” Women learned but also taught. The duties of motherhood included praying and reading with children to solidify and practice faith. Indeed, Mayhew’s account declares:

She [Hannah Charles] went but little abroad, but tarried at home with her Children; labouring diligently with her Hands, to provide the Necessaries of Life for them. She also diligently instructed them; and when her Husband was not at home, prayed with them.⁵

Again we see the inclusion of what might contemporarily read as a minor detail, but because it is included in an account of an entire life condensed into ten paragraphs, we should consider it essential. Experience Mayhew celebrated Hannah Charles as a good mother because she fulfilled the gender and religious demands of the era, which consisted of being educated and to a degree, confined to the home and children.

Ronda suggests that Christianity’s appeal towards women penetrated deeper than providing a source of and outlet for education. He says:

Christianity attracted Indian women by honoring their traditional tasks, [and] rewarding their special abilities...Indian churches also provided certain women with special support and solace in the face of a steadily worsening social problem. By the 1680s, alcoholism and the violence bred of excessive drinking had become epidemic among island Indian males.⁶

This notion, especially the idea of solace in Christianity, is clearly exhibited in Mayhew’s account of Hannah Charles:

...after she was grown up, marrying with *Amos Charles*, who proved a Lover and Follower of strong Drink, she was sometimes drawn into bad Company by him; and, as was reported, drank more than she should have done...it was not long before, being convinc’d of all her Sins, she...made publick Profession of Religion, and join’d her self as a Member in full Communion to the Church...Being now *a believing Wife*, she endeavour’d to save her Husband.⁷

Hannah is painted as a misguided soul turned good by the grace of Puritan faith, and like a good, obedient, Christian wife, she played the role of missionary to save her husband. Mayhew states that she did indeed have success — “People for a time began to entertain good hopes concerning him” — but upon Hannah’s death he revived his old habits.⁸ It is as though Hannah assumed the role of leader of her family, and kept the family attuned to Christian goals both by “saving” her husband and by the previ-

5 Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 157.

6 Ronda, “Generations of Faith,” 387.

7 Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 156.

8 Ibid.

ously mentioned interactions with her children. Hannah's efforts may have been private to a large extent, but in Mayhew's book they are made public. Hannah is not merely 'seen and not heard.' Quite contrarily, her conduct is praised. The positive rhetoric in Mayhew's account surrounding female success is in many ways a challenge to the dialogue surrounding gendered conversion in mainland New England, where places like Harvard Indian College were aimed at the conversion of male natives, and praying towns functioned by the English, patriarchal model. Perhaps it was not merely Christianity that attracted Indian women, but *Vineyard* Christianity.

The last paragraph of Mayhew's account is, "I shall only add, that our *English* People who were acquainted with this Woman, do give a very good Character of her."⁹ The sentence reads almost as if an afterthought, but the implication is important. About a third of Mayhew's account defines Hannah's worthiness in the eyes of God. He says that she "acknowledg'd her utter Unworthiness of God's Favour, and magnify'd his Mercy," as well as prayed often and embraced the idea of death.¹⁰ Once Hannah's godliness is established, Mayhew legitimates her earthbound existence, not in the eyes of God, but in the eyes of the English. Like the preacher Mayhew, white island inhabitants apparently held Hannah in high regard, complete with her female strength born of trying times.

The moments in Mayhew's book that speak to the mutual respect between the white settlers (natives adopting Christianity and the English "[giving] a very good Character" of converted natives), plus the factual evidence that virtually no settler vs. native violence took place on the island, suggest that the Vineyard is historically a peaceful place.¹¹ Furthermore, the peace was not merely superficial or a product of convenience. The conversion that took place on Martha's Vineyard is believed to have been genuine, voluntary, and more culturally compatible with traditional native lifestyle than virtually any other place in New England for several reasons. Perhaps the earlier discussion of the degree to which women were considered important and essential in the conversion process, and to the betterment of society, is the best example of the successful mingling of two cultures. But there is more. Ronda makes the comparison, "On the mainland, the mission was part of a wider attack on Indian land and leadership mounted by a large and well-armed English population, but Thomas Mayhew's preaching had no such resources or ambitions."¹² Initially, Ronda suggests, this lack of force meant that Mayhew's campaign reaped little success. Once an epidemic hit the island in 1645, however, "the failure of

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Even in the case of King Philip's War, a heated and bloody Wampanoag-driven event, conflict did not escalate on the island.

12 Ronda, "Generations of Faith," 370.

the powwows to cure the sick touched off a rapid series of conversion.”¹³ The traditional native worldview that had for centuries explained life on earth no longer applied once contact with Europeans and the consumption of alcohol in excess turned the perceived world on its head. Christianity was a new explanation, one that might, as stated before, offer solace for a struggling population.¹⁴

Conversion was not a total forfeit of Wampanoag identity, though. Ron-da explains:

No codes required Vineyard Indians to cut their hair, wear English clothing, give up customary mourning ceremonies, or attend church meetings...political power and cultural leadership remained in Wampanoag hands...Christianity Indianized as well as Indians Christianized.¹⁵

The fact that Vineyard Christian culture was a middle-ground between preexisting Wampanoag culture and English Puritan culture is the ultimate reason why Christianity succeeded with a genuineness that sculpted a peaceful, biracial society at that time.

Can we really believe that Martha’s Vineyard, or perhaps a similar geographically isolated community, were the only places that such a society could have existed? Did no other missionaries, even when vastly outnumbered by the targets of their conversion campaigns, cede some of their religious culture to native culture?

The history of conversion in the New World is a consistently rigid, unyielding one. From the days of the Spanish *Requerimiento* in 1510, the complete adoption of a European faith was the only means to escape the blatantly threatened, “War against you in all ways and manners that we can.”¹⁶ The Spanish document defined conversion as the acknowledgement of:

The Church as the Ruler and Superior of the whole world, and the high priest called Pope, and in his name the King and Queen Dona Juana our lords, in his place, as superiors and lords and kings of these islands and this Tierra-firme...¹⁷

There was absolutely no room for compromise. Considering the natives did not actually hear, read, or understand the *Requerimiento*, even those who did convert could hardly be considered genuinely invested in or at peace with their new faith.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid, 390.

15 Ibid, 371.

16 *Requerimiento* (1510). John H. Parry and Robert G. Keith, eds. *New Iberian World: A Documentary History of the Discovery and Settlement of Latin America to the Early 17th Century*. 5 vols. (New York: Times Books, 1984), 1:288-290.

17 Ibid.

Spanish conversion tactics improved only when forced by the threat of violent revolt. The Franciscan missionaries who went to the north end of New Spain as late as the latter half of the seventeenth century met little success. It is true that they did not exhort brutal force like that mentioned in the *Requerimiento*, but they did force labor and strictly Spanish Catholicism onto the natives of the region. The ultimate result was violence in the form of the organized Pueblo Revolt. After a hiatus, these missionaries returned with a new plan: a policy of synchronism that had to be adopted in order for conversion to work. Perhaps, to borrow the phrase from James Ronda, Christianity Indianized in the region, but that “Indianization” was not the original conversion strategy; it was not a byproduct of mutual respect and probably fear; the situation was not like the one on Martha’s Vineyard.

French Jesuit missionaries more closely resembled Thomas Mayhew’s band of friendly Protestants in terms of outward compassion in converting, but with fundamental ideological differences as well. France never issued an *Exigance* to match Spain’s *Requerimiento*, but neither did it send forth missionaries who genuinely established reciprocated respect with colonies’ original inhabitants. The rhetoric in Father Paul LeJeune’s annual reports from the 1630s, as compared to the rhetoric in Mayhew’s *Indian Converts* surrounding the character of the natives, is entirely different in tone and implication. Although the Jesuit reports focus on the importance of paying respect to native customs, Father LeJeune refers to the natives only as “Savages” and “Barbarians.”¹⁸ Subsequent Jesuit missionaries use these same words and others like them in the continuing annual reports that extended into the next decade. Perhaps in New France, missionaries adopted an immediate policy of cultural inclusion, but doing so was in itself a tactic and an illusion. Behind the polite smiles and gracious acceptance of native food and customs were shrewd and determined Jesuit agents following strict guidelines: guidelines that only superficially embraced native lifestyle. Yet again, a line of foreign conversion failed to equal that of Mayhew’s Protestants on Martha’s Vineyard.

Of course, if any group was likely to achieve the same dynamic that islanders did, it would have been other New England Protestants — some who may well have made their trans-Atlantic voyage at the same time as those who would end up on Martha’s Vineyard. But as stated before, conversion could not be implemented in one, infallible equation. This inability was not the result of a lack of effort. John Winthrop’s very first “Reason for Emigrating to New England” was to “be a service to the Church of great

18 *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Co., 1897).

consequence to carry the Gospel into those parts of the world, to helpe on the coming of the fullness of the Gentiles, & to raise a Bulwork against the kingdom of Antichrist which the Jesuits labour to rear up in those parts.”¹⁹ As it turned out, the carrying of the Gospel on the mainland did not ensure peace or successful conversion. Indian praying towns emerged only after the brutal Pequot War, and as part of a strategy for protection: Christian Indians should not pose a threat to their white Christian neighbors.²⁰ Evidently this logic was flawed. King Philips War in 1675 proved that natives held settlers in contempt, and settlers viewed even praying Indians (in some cases *especially* viewed praying Indians) as savage enemies.²¹ By the time the Vineyard was comfortably settled (comfortable enough for Mayhew to produce *Indian Converts*), Spanish and French missionaries came closer to resembling the island dynamic than any other Puritan New England settlement. Thomas Mayhew Jr., and the wave of conversion he set in motion, was an odd case.

Indian Converts is over 400 pages and accounts for the lives of four generations of Vineyard Wampanoags. Even in the two-page entry on Hannah Charles, a third-generation Christian Wampanoag woman, we find ourselves at a remarkable vantage point through which we can understand a major aspect of the island’s history. Hannah Charles learned her religion as a child, embraced it genuinely as an adult, and passed it along to her own children. For all of these acts, Experience Mayhew, and his white comrades on the island, praised Hannah. She was considered of sound judgment, both by God and by man, and she belonged to a native population that accepted a foreign religion on its own terms and in its own way. Mayhew’s book, so complete in itself, is a highly rare snapshot of a biracial region that avoided warfare and revolt, all because the level of cultural respect was high enough even to drench the pages of religious documents of the era. Even though other sites in the New World eventually merged multiple cultures in contact and established something lasting, it was never done so swiftly or seamlessly as it was on Martha’s Vineyard.

19 John Winthrop, “Reasons for Emigrating to New England.” (1631). Reprinted in R.C. Winthrop, *Life and Letters of John Winthrop*, 2 vols. Boston, 1869. 1: 309-311.

20 Linda Yankaskas, lecture on the Pequot War (Colonial America, Muhlenberg College, Pennsylvania, October 19, 2011).

21 Instances of this type of interaction can be found in Mary Rowlandson’s captivity memoir: *Mary Rowlandson, The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, ed. Neal Salisbury (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1997).

A “Cultural Tourist” Discovers Vineyard History in Virginia

ONE OF THE MAIN reasons I enjoy my job as the executive director of the Martha's Vineyard Museum is because I love history, and so I am one of those “cultural tourists,” seeking out educational and intellectually entertaining places to visit. This spring I spent most of a week in Jamestown and Williamsburg, Virginia.

While on a tour led by the chief conservator at Historic Jamestowne, I found myself standing just outside the excavated limits of the 1607 fort. I was lagging behind the group, as usual, still looking at details from the prior section presented, and, as the seats were all taken, I found myself standing next to a cross located just off the visitor path. Looking down, I read *Gosnold*. The conservator was speaking about the vice-admiral of the Jamestown expedition, whose remains were unearthed in 2003, and Captain Bartholomew Gosnold's leadership role in establishing the colony. Of course, I raised a hand and interrupted the chief conservator with a question: “Is this the same Gosnold who, in 1602, discovered and named Martha's Vineyard?” From the seated group comes: “... and Cape Cod?” The answer: Indeed, the very same individual.

As the tour ended, we connected with our guide who brought us into the Nathalie P. and Alan M. Voorhees Archaearium to see the display of



Photo by Kate Hastings

In Jamestown, paying a visit to what is believed to be the burial place of Capt. Bartholomew Gosnold.

Gosnold's remains. Gosnold's well-preserved skeleton is suspended at a comfortable eye level, with his decorative leading staff, found on top of the coffin and now restored, hovering over the captain's body. The staff and coffin were a sign that this person was a 'mover-and-shaker' in the colony. Gosnold died in August 1607, just three months after arriving in Virginia. He was buried outside the fort and with great fanfare, partly to allay any suspicions held by the Virginia Native Americans regarding the doings of the colony.

Given the combination of archeological and forensic evidence, the experts have every confidence that they have discovered, according to *British Heritage* magazine in October 2006, "a lost hero, a man who perhaps more than any other single individual is responsible for the establishment of British North America, a man who history ought to have recognized in one sense as at least the Founding Grandfather of these fair colonies."

Discovery is what this trip for me and my family was about. Discovery is what every issue of the *Intelligencer* is about — discovering the connections between Martha's Vineyard and the world, as Gosnold's explorations connected this Island with the birth of American history.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Nathans". The signature is stylized, with the first letters of the first and last names being large and prominent.

David Nathans
Executive Director

SUPPORT for the *Dukes County Intelligencer* is always welcome. Please make your tax deductible contribution to the Martha's Vineyard Museum. If you enjoy receiving the *Intelligencer*, consider making a gift of membership to a family member or friend so that they too can enjoy the journal of the Martha's Vineyard Museum, as well as all the other benefits of membership. See our website, www.mvmuseum.org, for more information about how you can support our work.

CHRISTIANTOWN CHAPEL, WEST TISBURY

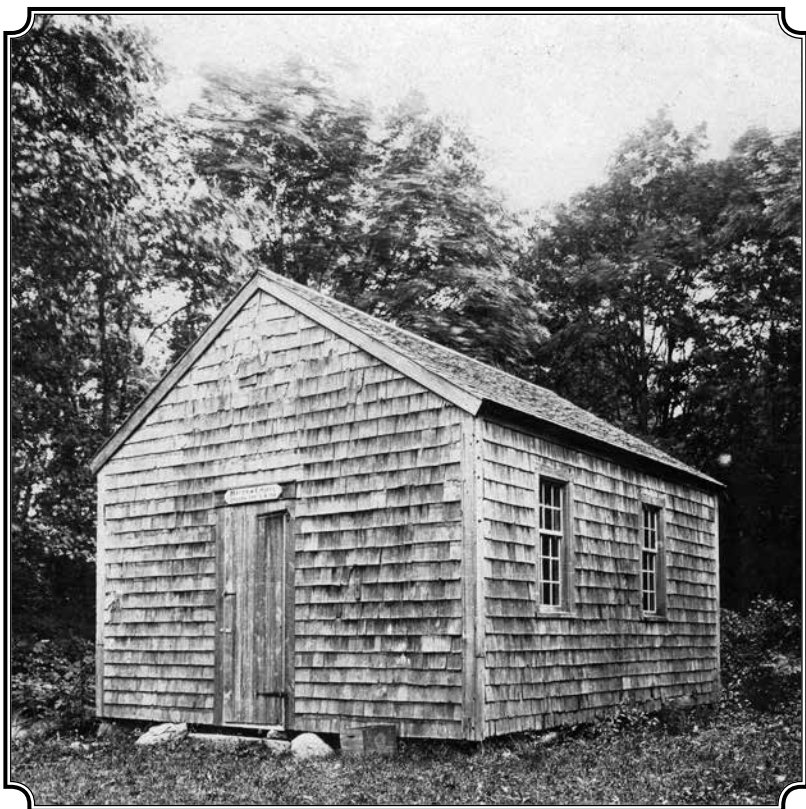


Photo from the Museum collections.