

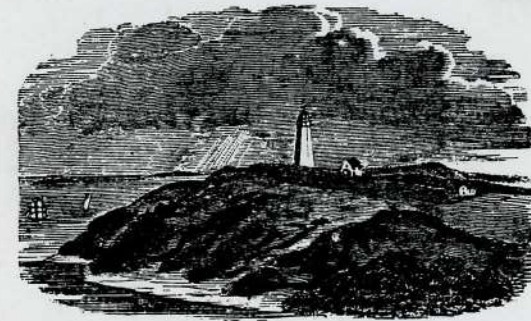
Journal of History of Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL.32, NO.2

NOVEMBER 1990



Gay Head as Seen by a German in 1844

by DR. ALBERT C. KOCH

Translated by Ernst A. Stadler

The Indians and the English On Martha's Vineyard

Part II, Thomas Mayhew Jr., Missionary

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

A New Map of New England in 1720

Documents: Jeremiah Pease Diary

Bits & Pieces

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THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

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Editor: Arthur R. Railton
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The Dukes County Intelligencer is published quarterly by the Dukes County Historical Society, Inc., Cooke and School Streets, Edgartown, Massachusetts. Subscription is through membership in the Society. Back issues are available at the Society offices.

Memberships are solicited. Applications should be sent to the Society at Box 827, Edgartown, MA, 02539. Manuscripts and authors' queries should also be addressed to that address.

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ISSN 0418 1379

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The Indians and the English On Martha's Vineyard

Part II, Thomas Mayhew Jr., Missionary

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

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Yet, by the mid-1600s, Martha's Vineyard had become well known to influential London businessmen. Its fame came not from its resources, not from its beauty, but from the missionary work of Thomas Mayhew Jr., and its praying Indians.

As a result, those Londoners began to send financial support to Mayhew, support that continued through various organizations for five generations of Mayhews. Certainly, per capita, no other place received as much money for mission work as did the Vineyard. It may have been the most costly mission in history, per Indian converted.

The Vineyard's path to fame began in 1649 when a letter from Thomas Mayhew Jr., was published in London. He had written the letter November 18, 1647, at "Great Harbour in the Vineyard." It appeared in 1649, in one of a series of pamphlets aimed at raising money for "the Attempts to Convert to Christianity the Indians of New England."

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That 1649 pamphlet also included three letters from John Eliot, pastor of the English church in Roxbury and

missionary to the Indians. Previous issues in the series, which had started in 1643, had been mainly about Eliot's work. The Roxbury minister began his mission to the Indians at about the same time as young Mayhew, but his work had become known in England much earlier.¹

Young Mayhew's mission work was no secret in the colony. Governor John Winthrop of Massachusetts Bay was aware of it. In 1648 he had urged Mayhew to leave the Vineyard for more fertile fields. The Governor's son, John Jr., had started a settlement at Pequot, Connecticut, in 1646 and was in need of a minister. Governor Winthrop called young Mayhew to Boston to offer him the post. It would be a more comfortable life than at Great Harbour, the Governor argued.²

Thomas turned down the offer, although he seemed agreeable to reconsidering it at some later date. At least, that's what Winthrop wrote to his son in Connecticut, July 26, 1648: . . .

I had spoken with Mr. Mayhew, who came into the Baye on purpose for Advice about his continuance etc. and tould me before his departure, that all had advised him not to remove as yet, so his Answer was to me at his going awaye, for I had tould him what conveniencye there would be at Pequott for himselfe, and as many Indians as he would carry with him, and English also: what opportunitye also of preaching to many more Indians than are at martins viney'd, etc: but he is resolved for the present.³

Thomas's letter to London had not yet been published. Edward Winslow, who headed the fund-raising campaign in England, received it too late for his 1648 publication. The letter pleased Winslow; he now had a second missionary

¹ John Eliot's personal fame was far greater than that of Thomas Mayhew Jr. He worked many more years and had influential friends in London. However, individual Vineyard Indians became better known to Londoners than did Eliot's. More than 125 had their stories published by the Mayhews through the years. In fact, more is known about the Vineyard Indians than about the English settlers, except the Mayhews.

² Thomas Mayhew Sr., and John Winthrop Jr., had business connections when the Mayhews lived on the mainland so the two families had known each other for years.

³ *Winthrop Papers*, v.V, 1645-1649, Mass.Hist.Soc., Boston, 1947, p.236. How different might the history of the Island have been had young Mayhew left, taking with him some Indians and English.

to write about, as he mentioned in introducing him: . . .

. . . before I come to this years Letters I received from Mr. Eliot, [I] shall begin with one came to my hand. . . after the last Treatise was put out. And I the rather take this course, lest the young man should be discouraged in his labours so hopefully begun; his name is Mr. Mayhew; who teacheth the Word both to English and Indians upon an Island called formerly Capawack, by us Morthas [sic] Vineyard, by which you may see 'tis not one Minister alone that laboureth in this great work.

It isn't clear what had prompted Mayhew to write the letter. Somehow, he must have known that Edward Winslow in London would be interested. Perhaps Eliot, Winslow's first correspondent, had encouraged him.⁴ Whatever prompted him, Mayhew was the featured writer in the 1649 tract entitled, *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England* . . .

Young Mayhew's letter was different from Eliot's, as were his later letters, being more human, more personal. As Thomas Prince wrote in 1726, ". . . the four Letters of Mr. Thomas Mayhew junior . . . are full of Entertainment, and breath a most excellent Spirit."⁵

The first letter recited three case histories of sick Indians who had come to him seeking a cure. Two were cured and became converts to Christianity. Among Indians, the pawwaws, or medicine men as the English called them, combined religion and doctoring. By calling on the appropriate god (the Indians had many) they healed the sick. The Indians assumed the English preacher, young Mayhew, could do the same.

As Francis Jennings wrote in a different context (praying for rain in a drought), it didn't mean that the English considered themselves superstitious like the Indians. The Indians were superstitious, the English believed, only because

⁴ Eliot, in a letter to London, claimed it was he who had "intreated" Mayhew to begin his missionary work, but later explained that he had not meant to say that. Mayhew was working with the Indians before Eliot, some historians believe.

⁵ Thomas Prince, *Account of Those English Ministers*, Boston, 1726, p.398.

they sent "their prayers to the wrong address."⁶

To Mayhew, discrediting the pawwaws was the key to converting the other Indians. He called pawwaws "those poor naked sons of Adam, and slaves to the Devil from their birth." If the Indian gods could be shown to be evil, the savages would turn to the Christian God.⁷

The first Indian healed by Mayhew was 60-year-old Ieogiscat, "sick with a consuming disease" and given up as incurable by the pawwaws. Mayhew wrote:

. . . upon a Lords day [he] came unto mee (the rest of the English being then present) to desire me to pray unto God for him. . . I commended this case unto the Lord, whereof he rejoyced, gave me thanks, and he speedily recovered unto his former strength.

The second case involved the eldest son of Vakapaneesue, "a great Sagamore of the Island," who asked the young minister to pray for his ailing son. After praying for his recovery, Mayhew departed. The young man soon "sought again unto Witches," returning to the pawwaws. When Thomas learned of this, he predicted that because of the young man's lack of faith, "God will kill him. . . and so it shortly came to passe."

Sachachanimo, eldest son of Sagamore Towanquattick, was Mayhew's third patient. He was racked with fever when his father asked Mayhew for help. Mayhew's prayers failed to cure him; the young minister then,

asked him (together with his friends) whether they were willing I should let him blood? . . . After some consideration, they consented . . . with my Pen-knife [I] let him blood; he bled freely, but was exceeding faint, which made the Heathen very sad; but in a short time, he begun to be very cheerfull, whereat they much rejoyced . . . it pleased the Lord the man was in a short time after very well.⁸

During this period, England was being racked by civil war. Anglican King Charles I had been beheaded some years

⁶ Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, U. of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1975, p. 51.

⁷ *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, v. IV, 3rd series, Cambridge, 1834, pp. 187-8.

⁸ It would be interesting to speculate what would have happened to the Mayhew settlement had the young man died.

before and the Puritans had taken over the country, abolishing the House of Lords. The new government was eager to spread the gospel of Puritanism into the colonies. In 1649, shortly after Winslow's tract was published, the Parliament passed "An Act for the promoting and propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New-England."

The law established a corporation of 16 persons to be called "The President and Society for Propagation of the Gospel in New-England." Most of the 16 men appointed, all Puritans, were wealthy London merchants with a commercial interest in the peaceful development of the colony.⁹

The act ordered that collections be taken in all parishes of England and Wales to fund the new Society. Ministers were told to "exhort the people to a chearful and liberal contribution." After their exhortations, the ministers were "to go with all convenient speed from house to house, to every of the Inhabitants of the said Parishes" to collect the money.

The fund-raising continued for ten years with the largest amount being raised in the army, which had just overthrown the Royalists. It seems possible that contributions by soldiers were compulsory. Individual donations were small, averaging about sixpence. But small amounts add up.

Rev. Henry Newcome, pastor at Gawsworth, Cheshire, who was more enthusiastic than most ministers, explained how he raised funds: . . .

I went up and down from house to house, and making every servant and child that had anything to give, I raised it to a pretty sum for that little place, seven pounds odd money.¹⁰

Compulsory collections for the colonies were not new. They had been held at various times for years. English ministers generally opposed them, claiming "what have wee

⁹ William Kellaway, *The New England Company 1649-1776*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1961, pp. 1517. There was more than commercialism involved; there was also the concern about the spread of Catholic missions in the New World.

¹⁰ *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome* (Chetham Society, 1852) p. 43, quoted in Kellaway, p. 29. By these "voluntary" collections, the ordinary folks in England subsidized the colonization of Martha's Vineyard.

to doe to raise great summes to promote the Gospell amongst naked people [when] the Gospell is going away from us [at home]? Wee had more need to support learning at home then abroad."

Historian Francis Jennings is sympathetic with the English clergy, pointing to cases of misuse of funds:

Englishmen quickly found that missions could be practical after another fashion. They discovered what may be most concisely termed the missionary racket. . . Both in Virginia and New England missions were organized to extract from pious Englishmen . . . donations that were diverted to ends other than pious.¹¹

Stories were told in England that previous collections, especially one taken in 1642 to transport poor children to New England as indentured servants, had not been properly accounted for. The fledgling Society, eager to avoid such criticism, asked "the Government of the Massachusetts . . . [to] give us from thence a word or two what account hath been given" of all previous monies raised.

Further to quiet anticipated criticism, the Society in 1650 called Rev. Henry Whitefield, minister of the church in Guilford, Connecticut, to London to publish regular reports on the missions. Sailing to Boston where he would board a ship for London, Whitefield made an unscheduled stop at the Vineyard:

. . . It pleased the Lord. . . that by reason of contrary winds, we were faine to put in at an Iland called Martins Vineyard . . . where there is a small Plantation, and a Church gathered,¹² where we stayed about ten days, in which time I had more leasure and opportunity to informe my selfe of the state of the Indians there; having heard formerly that divers of them began to taste the knowledge of Christ: For this end I had recourse to Mr. Mahu, who is the Pastor of the Church, and having attained a good understanding in

¹¹ Jennings, p.53. There is no evidence that the money was misused on the Vineyard; it was done elsewhere, Jennings states.

¹² Henry Whitefield, *A Light appearing* . . . , London 1651. During these years, the Island was often called Martin's Vineyard. This is the first contemporaneous statement by an outsider that a church was "gathered" on the Island and young Thomas Mayhew was its pastor. Winthrop's offer of the Connecticut pulpit in July 1648, suggests that young Thomas was the minister in Edgartown, but Whitefield's is the first personal observation.

the Indian tongue, and can speak it well, hath laid the first foundation of the knowledge of Christ amongst the Indians there by preaching unto them . . .

Whitefield visited with the praying Indians, witnessing at first hand young Mayhew's successes. He met their native minister, Hiacoomes, a "man well reported of for his conversation both by the English and Indians." Whitefield was impressed by the "sober and moderate spirit" of the 30-year-old Hiacoomes who had been greatly changed by his conversion. Young Mayhew described that change:

Thus it pleased the Lord to give both light and courage to this poore Indian; for although formerly he had been a harmlesse man amongst them, yet, as themselves say, not at all accounted of, and therefore they often wondered that he which had nothing to say in all their meetings formerly, is now become the Teacher of them all.

Hiacoomes preached to a small gathering of converts each Sunday. Reverend Whitefield, still awaiting fair winds, attended one service, asking the Indians questions and "some of them answered in the English, some in the Indian tongue. . . ."

The Whitefield layover on the Vineyard was a stroke of good fortune for Mayhew. Life was not easy for him and his family; his income was small. The tiny English congregation could not afford to pay him much, a point Governor Winthrop had used to try to persuade him to move to Connecticut. He lived a simple life, enjoying few comforts. That moved Whitefield, accustomed to the more luxurious life style of mainland ministers:

I made some enquiry about Mr. Mahu himself, and about his subsistence, because I saw but small and slender appearance of outward conveniences of life, in any comfortable way; the man himself was modest, and I could get but little from him; but after, I understood from others how short things went with him, and how he was many times forced to labour with his own hands, having a wife and three small children which depended upon him, to provide necessaries for them; having not halfe so much yeerly coming in, in a settled way, as an ordinary labourer gets there amongst them. Yet he is chearfull . . . none hear

him to complain. . .¹³

The wind changed and Whitefield sailed away, eager to tell Society supporters in London about this dedicated young missionary who needed help. Before leaving he urged Mayhew to "take pains to write me the Story of God's dealing with the Indians, from the first time of their coming thither, to this present time; which he accordingly did."

Mayhew's report was featured in the first pamphlet Whitefield published after arriving in London. The news of his unpaid work among the "savages" was read by the Society. The pamphlet was entitled, *A farther Discovery of the present state of the Indians in New-England*. Here is proof, Whitefield suggested in his introduction, that the money was getting to the missionaries, although, of course, none had yet gone to Mayhew:

I have adventured to put this smal Treatise in thy hand . . . [to show] there is a doore of hope opened for the poore Indians . . . [and that] I might undeceive such as are either apt, or do beleieve, that things reported of them are but a fable, and a device or engine used by some to cheat good people of their money . . .

In the report Mayhew described how his mission work began in 1643 when "the Lord stirred up the heart of an Indian, who then lived neer to the English Plantation, whose name is Hiacoomes¹⁴. . . [he] came to visit our habitations and publike meetings . . . at which time I took notice of him, and had oft discourse with him, inviting him to my house every Lords day at night." The report covered seven years, filling 10 pages. Mayhew summarized what had been accomplished in those seven years:

There are now [in 1650] by the grace of God thirty-nine Indian men of this meeting, besides women that are looking

¹³ *Mass.Hist.Soc.Colls.*, v.IV,3rd ser.,1834,p.108. This brings up the question: How did the Vineyard settlers support themselves? We have no record of any trading with the Indians. Where did the money come from to pay for houses, boats, churches, ministers, etc.?

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.109. Exact dating by year is impossible during this period unless the month and day are given. The colony still used the old calendar in which the year began March 25 instead of January 1. Thus, if Hiacoomes had come to Mayhew during the first three months of 1643, it would have been in 1644, not 1643, by today's calendar.

this way, which we suppose to exceed the number of men . . . These in general have the knowledge of the fundamental points of Religion . . . one of them [said to me] we serve not God for cloathing, nor for any outward thing¹⁵. . . The way that I am now . . . carrying out this great work, is by a Lecture every fortnight . . . first I pray with them, teach them, chatechise their children, sing a Psalme, and all in their own language. I conferre every last day of the week with Hiacoomes about his subject matter of preaching to the Indians the next day. . .¹⁶

Mayhew's account of Hiacoomes's conversion makes it clear that converting the Indians had not been the goal of the small group of English who had come to Great Harbour in 1642.¹⁷ That band of men from Watertown had invested in Mayhew's settlement for economic, not religious reasons. Some investors never even moved to the Island, planning, like speculators from time immemorial, to sell their holdings at a profit later.

The group had arrived without a minister. One had been expected to come, a young Harvard graduate named Henry Green, but he changed his mind, accepting instead a pastorate in the new settlement at Reading. Thomas Mayhew Jr., the group's leader in the absence of his father, took over the task of organizing a church although he had no training for the ministry.¹⁸

The exact date of the church's organization is not recorded, although the Edgartown Congregational Church, now the Federated Church, which traces its beginnings to Thomas Mayhew Jr., has always set it at 1642. Certainly, it was at about that time.

Mayhew's history can be interpreted to mean that church services were certainly being held in 1643. He gave that year

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.116. There was criticism in England that Indians were accepting Christianity for material gain, not out of genuine faith.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.118. Conversion was slow; here in 1650, after 6 or 7 years of missionizing, only 39 Indian men attended the meeting.

¹⁷ Because of the old calendar, this could have been in 1643, had they arrived in the first three months of the year.

¹⁸ Mayhew Senior had remained in Watertown, where he held public office, until 1645. His new wife and her son, Thomas Paine, went to England during this period to straighten out an inheritance.

as the date Hiacoomes first approached the English at their "publike meetings." One would assume that these were public religious meetings.

Thomas did not do any preaching among the Indians until several years after the Hiacoomes conversion. It was in 1646 or 1647 that he began, at the request of Towanquatick, the Sagamore whose son he had cured with his penknife. The Sagamore, impressed with Mayhew's curative power, asked to be told more about the English God:

... [he] desired me to give them an Indian meeting, to make known the word of God to them in their own tongue . . . So I undertook to give them a meeting once a moneth; but as soone as the first Exercise was ended, they desired it oftner then I could well attend it, but once in a fortnight in our setled course.

Those first meetings took place, Mayhew wrote, "about six miles from us," perhaps near today's West Tisbury. Towanquatick was Sagamore of the whole eastern end of the Island.

Just as he had not planned to be the settlement's minister, Mayhew apparently had not intended to be its missionary. Certainly, he had not sought out his first convert. It was Hiacoomes who had come to him, "when the Lord stirred up [his] heart."

After Hiacoomes's conversion, which seems to have been quick, the Indian was scoffed at by his brothers, who called him "the English man." He must have had some knowledge of the English language when he attended those first meetings. If there had been an English settlement in Great Harbour in the 1630s, before the Mayhews arrived (and the author believes that there was), he may have learned English from them.

Hiacoomes, Mayhew wrote, soon began proselytizing his family and friends, communicating "that knowledge he had amongst those he could; for some of them could not endure the light he brought . . ."

At about this time, an epidemic spread through the Indian population on the Island, but miraculously Hiacoomes and

his family were spared. A year or so later, during another epidemic, Hiacoomes again was spared, as were those converts who could "endure the light he brought." The apparent immunity of the Christian Indians became a major factor in persuading others to follow them.

As Thomas Prince, Governor of Massachusetts, wrote in 1726:

But that which especially favoured the Progress of Religion among them was a universal Sickness, wherewith they were visited in the following Year; wherein it was observed by the Heathen Indians themselves, that those who hearkened to Mr. Mayhew's pious Instruction did not taste so deeply of it, and Hiacoomes and his Family in a manner nothing at all. This put the Natives who lived within six Miles of the English . . . [to believe] that he who had professed the Christian Religion . . . should receive more Blessings than they. . .¹⁹

Other "acts of God" were helpful. One evening, Hiacoomes was in a wigwam with some of the unconverted, among them "his old enemy Pakeponesso," a Sagamore. Confident in his Christian faith, Hiacoomes ignored the Sagamore's abuse, stating that the English God would be his protector. That night, a violent storm came up, with powerful flashes of lightning. One bolt struck the wigwam, killing a young Indian, one of the scoffers. Mayhew described what happened:

... full of the vengeance of God, which killed the young man outright, and strook Pakeponesso down dead for a long time, and he fell . . . with one legge in the fire . . . being much burned. . . Hiacoomes . . . was brought more to rejoyce in God . . .²⁰

Another, more personal, triumph solidified Hiacoomes's faith in the Christian God. Daniel Gookin told the story this way:

This Hiacoomes. . . not long after he had embraced the gospel; his wife . . . being great with child, fell into travail of child birth and had great pains and sorrowful throws for

¹⁹ T[homas] P[rince], "Some Account of Those English Ministers . . .," published in same volume as Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, London, 1727.

²⁰ MHS Colls., v.IV, 3rd series, 1834, pp.110-11.

sundry days, and could not be delivered; — which is a thing unusual with the Indian women, who are ordinarily quickly and easily delivered; and many times are so strong, that within a few hours after the child's birth, they will go about their ordinary occasions: — But this woman . . . in child birth for several days, could not be delivered. . . several of their carnal and unconverted kindred . . . [urged] them to send for a powwow . . . But both husband and wife utterly refused their temptation . . . Mr. Mayhew, being affected with the case, got together some godly christians . . . and kept a day of fasting and prayer. . . And the Lord was graciously pleased to hear and answer their prayers, and shortly after gave the woman safe deliverance of a daughter; which the father named by a word in the Indian language, which signified in English, Return.²¹

Such miracles undermined the influence of the pawwaws. But Christian faith had not immunized the Hiacoomes family totally. When its infant son died shortly after birth, Mayhew used the tragedy to preach of resurrection:

the Lord took away [from] Hiacoomes his child which was about five dayes old; he was best able to make a good use of it, and to carry himself well in it, and so was his wife also; and truly they gave an excellent example in this also, as they have in other things; here were no black faces for it as the manner of the Indians is, nor goods buried with it, nor hellish howlings over the dead, but a patient resigned of it to him that gave it; There were some English at the burial, and many Indians to whom I spake something of the Resurrection, and as we were going away, one of the Indians told me he was much refreshed in being freed from their old customes, as also to hear of the Resurrection of good men and their children to be with God.

Mayhew, despite his success with faith healing, seems to have thought of himself as a lecturer, a teacher, rather than a minister to the Indians. It was Hiacoomes who was their spiritual leader. Mayhew lectured only every two weeks. The number of converts grew very slowly. Even in 1650, seven years after Hiacoomes began his missionizing, there were only 39 men attending his services.

Slow though the progress must have seemed, Mayhew's

²¹ MHS Colls., v.I, 1st ser., 1792, pp.155-6.

work was encouraging to the Commissioners of the United Colonies, who had been named agents of the Society. They reported to London on September 23, 1650:

Mr. Mahew hath made allso good entrance into the same worke [as John Eliot] and goeth on to fitt himselfe to open and display to these poor Natives in their owne language the unconceaveable exelency of that Prince of peace.

In the spring of 1651 the London Society reported that the "collection [was] hopefully begun" in the churches of England and Wales. The amount raised was enough so that in September it began its first contributions to the missionaries. Mayhew was informed by the Commissioners that he would receive not only financial support, but other help as well:

. . . wee thought good to let you understand there is paid by the Corporation in London 30 pounds for part of Mr. Genner's [Jenner's] librarye . . . (which is for your encouragement). We hope you have received . . . them from Mr. Elliott or any other that may have them or if ther bee any error wee desire to heare it; there are some howes and hatchetts sent over for the Indians . . . which youer Indians may have part if you think meet and bee pleased to give them a note to Mr. Rawson of Boston of what shal bee needfull for their use, especially those that bee most willing to labour. Wee are alsoe enformed there is 100 pounds given by some of Exeter toward this work of which som part to youer selfe but know not the quantitie.²²

The Society also bought a library for John Eliot and assigned him a share of the 100 pounds from Exeter. The library gift must have surprised Mayhew, but it was no surprise to Eliot. Never bashful about asking for things, he had written to the Society requesting it buy "brother Weld's" library for him. Weld was returning to London and, Eliot wrote, "I am loth they [the books] should come back to England." In the same letter he urged the Society to help young Mayhew by furnishing him with books also:

²² *Plymouth Colony Records*, v.IX, p.2056, letter from New Haven dated Sept.12, 1651. As copied by Richard L. Pease, DCHS archives. Edward Rawson was appointed steward "for receiving and disposing of such goods and comodities as shall be sent hither by the Corporation in England . . ."

Mr. Mahew, who putteth his hand unto this Plough at Martins Vineyard, being young, and a beginner here, hath extreme want of books; he needeth Commentaries and Common Places for the body of Divinity, that so he might be well grounded and principled . . . I will name no books, he needs all; I beseech you put some weight upon it, for I desire he might be furnished in that kinde, and other supplies will be needful for him.²³

In their response to Eliot's request, the New England Commissioners revealed, perhaps unwittingly, their true goal in mission work. It was as much to make the Indian respect English authority as it was to save his soul:

. . . the honer of Christ and of the Collonies . . . requireth that all Christian prudence bee used to judge aright of the Indian scope and aime in their profession lest they should onely follow Christ for loaves and outward advantage remaining enimies to the yoak and government . . .

This was the first support given by the Society to any missionary and it established Mayhew and Eliot as the pioneers in God's work. In 1652 and again in 1653, letters from the two were published in the annual fund-raising pamphlets. They became the Society's star exhibits, their reports proving that the money raised was being used for good purposes.

By 1660, after 10 years of soliciting, the Society had raised nearly 16,000 pounds, with Yorkshire and the city of London being, after the army, the largest contributors. To provide a steady income, the original act of Parliament had authorized the Society to invest the contributions in rental properties, the income from which was to be used for missions among the savages.

The annual salaries were paid to Eliot and Mayhew through the Society's agents, the Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England. This confederation had been formed in 1643 as a military alliance against the Indians and the Dutch. The colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut,

²³ Eliot, by his remark "he needs all," provides further evidence that young Mayhew had not planned to be a minister prior to coming to the Island. Certainly, had he so planned, he would have brought a religious library with him.

New Haven and Plymouth had agreed that if any of them was attacked the others would come to its help. Rhode Island was not included because of the maverick nature of Roger Williams. Meetings were held annually each September at Boston, Hartford, New Haven and Plymouth in rotation.

The London Society would ship goods to Boston, some to be given to the Indians, some to the missionaries and the rest to be sold in the market. The money raised by the sale went to the Commissioners to pay the salaries. At first, Eliot and Mayhew were paid 20 pounds a year.

The choice of items to be given to the Indians was curious at best. Among them, in 1652, was a barrel filled with the following: Spindles, "to spun on the knee;" Angellica seeds, Cardus seeds, Pipin Kernels, cherry stones and bay berries to be planted; a few small books, including "The Rule of the new Creature," and a tract against swearing plus another against drunkenness.

When he learned that he was to receive an annual salary of 20 pounds, the young Vineyard missionary, who had worked with the Indians for years without compensation, was genuinely grateful, as he wrote to the Society:

. . . although I should never have seen a return in outward supplies, as now through mercy I have, as an acceptable and very helpfull fruit of Christian goodness and bounty received from your selfe and Christian Friends, that the Lord hath stirred up both to pray earnestly, and contribute freely for the promoting of the work . . . amongst the poor Indians. . . those miserable Captives. . .

Those "miserable Captives" were steadily breaking loose from the chains of the devil. By October 1651, there were 199 men, women and children who had "professed themselves to be worshippers of the great and ever-living God," an increase from the 39 men and about an equal number of women one year earlier. This larger flock was now divided between two Indian ministers, Mayhew reported:

There are now two meetings kept every Lords day, the one three miles, the other about eight miles off my house:

Hiacomes teacheth twice a day at the nearest, and Mumanequem according at the farthest . . . I have . . . two Lectures amongst them, which will be at each once a fortnight . . . This winter I intend . . . to set up a School to teach the Indians to read, viz., the children, and also any young men that are willing to learn. . . .²⁴

Mayhew's fame as a missionary was spreading. Anthoney Bessey of Sandwich wrote in 1651:

There is a man that lives neer us, that comes from an Island that is called Martins Vineyard, where is a Minister that speaks good Indian, he doth preach to them every week, he hath told me that the Minister [Mayhew] told him, that there are some of them Indians that are able to give a better reason of their Faith, than some of the members of [his English] Church; some of them will Preach, and they have private meetings, and keep very good orders.²⁵

By October 1652, the number of praying Indians once more had increased, as Mayhew reported:

Since it hath pleased God to send his Word to these poor captivated men (bond slaves to sin and Satan) he hath through mercy brought two hundred eighty-three Indians (not counting young children in the number) to renounce their false gods, Devils, and Pawwaws. . . We are by the help of God about to begin a Town that they may Cohabit and carry on things in a Civil and Religious way the better. . . About 30 Indian Children are now at School, which began the eleventh day of the Eleventh month, 1651.²⁶

The Society tract in which this latest Mayhew report was published included a letter from an unpaid but "able Minister of the Gospel, viz., Mr. Leverich of Sandwich .

²⁴ Henry Whitefield, *Strength out of Weakness*, London, 1652, as reprinted in MHS Colls., v.IV, 3rd ser., 1834, p.188. The locations of the meetings and school are not given. Various historians have suggested Chappaquiddick, Farm Neck, Edgartown Great Pond, Takemmy (today's West Tisbury) and Christiantown.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.184. Bessey's information was slightly incorrect. Mayhew lectured only every two weeks.

²⁶ *Tears of Repentance*, London, 1653, MHS Coll., v.IV, 3rd ser., 1834, p.208f. In today's calendar, that would be Feb.11, 1652. The idea of creating Indian towns came from Eliot. He believed that was the best way to keep the praying Indians from reverting to "savages." It wasn't until 1669 that land on the Vineyard was set aside for that purpose by Sachem Keteannummin (who was not a convert himself). It included what is now Christiantown. It never became a true Indian town, as defined by Eliot. See *Intelligencer*, August 1959, "The Christiantown Story" by Eleanor Ransom Mayhew.

. . . whom the Lord hath stirred up to labour also in the Conversion of the Indians." Included also was a letter from Rev. John Wilson, Pastor of the Church of Christ in Boston who told of a recent visit by Mayhew:

There was here some few weeks since, the prime Indian at Marthas Vineyard with Mr. Mahewe (Humanequinn),²⁷ a grave and solemn Man, with whom I had serious discourse, Mr. Mahewe being present as Interpreter between us, who is a great proficient both in knowledge and utterance, and love, and practice of the things of Christ, and of Religion, much honoured and revered, and attended by the rest of the Indians there, who are solemnly Convenanted together, I know not how many, but between thirty or forty at the least²⁸ . . . when Mr. Mahewe cannot be with them (as at many set times he is) [this Indian] doth in the week time instruct himselfe from Mr. Mahewes mouth and prepare for their instruction on the Lords day, which they conscionably observe. . .

The Indian, Humanequinn, (and perhaps Mayhew) remained in the Boston area for more than a week, Wilson wrote:

This man had communion on the Lords day with Mr. Eliots Indians neer Dorchester Mill, unto whom he Preached or declared what he had learned himselfe from the Scripture, some two hours together, with solemne prayer before and after, and then ended with a Psalme . . . The Lords day after, he was in our Assembly . . . and truly my reverence to him was such, as there being no room, I prayed our brethren to receive that good Indian into one of their pews, which they did forenoon and afternoon . . .²⁹

Society members in London were no doubt pleased with the successes of Mayhew and Eliot, plus that of the still-unpaid newcomer William Leverich at Sandwich. Eliot, however, was not satisfied, but his dissatisfaction was

²⁷ Experience Mayhew in *Indian Converts* spelled the Indian's name Mononequem; Mayhew Junior spelled it Mumanequem. He was preacher of the meeting "about eight miles off my house," Mayhew wrote.

²⁸ Experience inserted "he might have said near 200" at this point when he quoted Wilson in *Indian Converts*.

²⁹ MHS Colls., v.IV, 3rd series, Cambridge, 1834, pp.176-77. Clearly, the English did not accept the Indian as an equal; not even an Indian minister. It took a special request for him to be invited to sit in a pew with them.

financial. He wrote to friends in London, who quickly spread the word, that his salary was only "20 pounds per annum which doth not bear his charges in so much as he runs in debt every yeare more and more." He was too poor to send his sons to college, he told them. His complaint revived the criticism that the contributions were not getting to the missionaries.

Understandably, the Society officials were upset. Rev. Hugh Peter, who had lived in New England but was now in London, was also making allegations about the misuse of money. Something must be done to stop this bad publicity, they wrote the Commissioners:

. . . now whether it bee or noe, wee know not, but verily believe the worke will suffer some thousands of pounds by itt, for it flyeth like lightning and takes like tinder, men being extream glad to meet with anything that may couller over their covetiousnes and dull their Zeale in so good a worke; Nay Mr. Peters . . . tould Mr. Winslow in plain termes hee heard the worke [of the missionaries] was but a plain cheat and that there was noe such thing as Gosspell conversion amongst the Indians. . . . wee have otherwise charitable thoughts of Mr. Peters; yet hee hath been a very bad instrument all along . . . wee are farr from justifying Mr. Elliott in his Turbulent and clamorous proceedings but the best of God's servants have their faylings . . .³⁰

The Commissioners confirmed that Eliot received only 20 pounds a year from the Society, but explained that he also got money directly from Lady Armine and others in England, the amounts of which he refused to disclose. Furthermore, he was paid "not less than sixty pounds per annum" by his English congregation in Roxbury, so his complaints of poverty were exaggerated. However, they realized that "in the low condition of New England, to bring up soe many sonnes att learning in a Collegiate way" would

³⁰ *Plymouth Colony Records*, v.IX, p.118, as copied by RLP. DCHS archives. Rev. Hugh Peter, along with Rev. Thomas Weld, had gone to London as agents of the Massachusetts Colony in 1641. He was considered a fanatical trouble-maker. He later was secretary to Oliver Cromwell. After the Restoration, he was executed as a regicide. His daughter married John Winthrop Jr., Governor of Connecticut and Thomas Mayhew's friend.

be expensive. Hence, they agreed to double his salary, raising it to 40 pounds a year. At the same time, Mayhew's salary was also doubled. Like Eliot, one must assume, he, too, was being paid by his English congregation, the Indian mission being only part-time work. Unlike Eliot, however, he seemed to have no other source of contributions.

So eager were the London officials to make Eliot happy that they promised "if there be cause [we] shall reddily inlarge further" the salaries. Mayhew may have heard of that promise because he soon wrote a long letter to the Commissioners outlining the need for more money, not for himself, but for his mission. There was so much to be done. He needed more assistants, plus he wanted an Indian meeting house and a boat. In September 1654, the Commissioners replied:

. . . wee have considered the contents [of your letter] and doe Rejoyse att the Information you give us of the blessing of God upon your labours among those poor barbarous people upon the Island . . . wee are willing to hope (at least for many of them) that it is in cinceritie and truly for the love of Christ himselfe and not for loaves . . . Wee have agreed to allow your selfe . . . the sume of 40 pounds; And for a Schoolmaster and one or two meet persons (as their needs may require) to teach the rest the summe of 10 pounds a peece per annum . . . alsoe that 10 pounds more bee comitted to you to dispose of to sicke, weake and well deserving Indians. . . . And for the meeting house which you desire to be built for the Indians, though wee conceive another form less chargable and of less capacitie then you propound bee sufficient . . . wee shall allow you . . . the summe of 40 pounds in Iron work, Nayles, Glasse and such other pay as in our agents hands, expecting the Indians should improve their labours to finish the same as they did att Naticke; and whereas wee are informed that a boat is nessesary and yett wanting for the safe passage of your selfe and Indians betwixt the Island and the Mayne wee have allowed eight pounds for that and desiring it may bee carefully preserved and imployed onely for the service intended and not att the pleasure of the Indians, etc., upon

other occasions.³¹

The Commissioners for New England, whose prime interest was in keeping the Indians peaceful, were concerned that Mayhew was moving too fast. They counselled him not to arouse the anger of the Sagamores:

Wee desire you would bee slow in withdrawing Indian professors from paying accustomed Tribute and performing other lawful services unto their Sagamores till you have seriously considered and advised with the Majestrates and Elders of neighbouring Collonies lest the passage and spreading of the GossPELL bee hindered thereby.³²

With a staff of paid helpers, Mayhew was becoming more an administrator and less a working missionary, being now responsible for two Indian meetings, a school with several teachers, and the construction of a meeting house. He, like Eliot, also had an English congregation to preach and minister to. He must have turned over much of the Indian missionizing to the native ministers and schoolmaster, Peter Folger.³³

His added responsibilities also required him to travel off-Island to meet with the "Elders of neighbouring Collonies" and with the Commissioners who paid his salary. His request for a boat to go "betwixt the Island and the Mayne" would support that.

In 1656, Daniel Gookin was appointed Superintendent of the Indians by Massachusetts and Mayhew went to Boston to meet him. He took Hiacoomes along. It was during this visit that Gookin was told the story, mentioned earlier, of how Christian prayers had helped Hiacoomes's wife give

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.124. The next year the boat allowance was increased to 15 pounds, the earlier amount "providing too little." The Natick meeting house had been built by Eliot's Indians, who thus learned carpentry. It was smaller and less expensive than the one Mayhew wanted.

³² In Indian societies, the sagamores and sachems were paid by each Indian a portion of his catch or harvest as "accustomed tribute." If the praying Indians refused to pay, the rulers might take strong action, the Commissioners thought.

³³ Folger, like Mayhew, was from Watertown. He came from England on the same vessel with the fanatical Rev. Hugh Peter. On the voyage he fell in love with Peter's indentured servant, bought her freedom for 20 pounds and married her. While teaching on the Vineyard, he became a Baptist. Forced to leave by Mayhew for his beliefs, he moved to Nantucket. Benjamin Franklin was his grandson.

birth to a daughter after her long labor:

. . . [it] was told me distinctly by Mr. Thomas Mayhew junior, their minister, Hiacoomes being present, in travelling on foot between Watertown lecture and Cambridge, the Indian that was the principal person concerned being with him; and this he related not long after the thing was done.³⁴

It is possible that they were walking to Cambridge to see Harvard's Indian college, it having been recently completed although not yet occupied by Indians. Hiacoomes's son, Joel, was one of two Vineyard Indians who would attend the college when it opened the following year.³⁵

The London Society, realizing that the workloads of Mayhew and Eliot had increased, urged the Commissioners in April 1656 to propose "to the Churches & ministry that some fitt persons might be . . . encouraged to assist" them. The Commissioners replied that it was impossible to find fitt persons among the English in the colony who were willing to learn the Indian language, which was a requirement.

Even after doubling the salaries of Eliot and Mayhew, the Society continued to be criticized. With all the money it had raised, why were there still only two paid missionaries in the whole of New England, both part-time workers with English congregations to serve? If the Society paid more, London critics said, ministers would sign up on a full-time basis. Schoolmaster Thomas Weld, a former minister who now ran a preparatory school in Massachusetts, agreed, stating that "Mr. Eliot & Mr. Mayhew are not comfortably provided for to carry on the worke." The Society, which seemed unable to decide what a fair salary in the colony should be, again demanded action. It was also worried that something might happen to its two star workers:

. . . the worke in our hands is much obstructed and retarded [by these complaints], wee therfore, for avoiding the same,

³⁴ It is too bad we don't know more about the relationship between the converted Indians and the English. Young praying Indians often lived with English families to learn to read and write. Were they treated as family or as servants? When Mayhew travelled, an Indian went along. Was it a master-servant relationship?

³⁵ See *Intelligencer*, Feb.1988, "The Vineyard's First Harvard Men Were Indians."

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³⁵ See *Intelligencer*, Feb.1988, "The Vineyard's First Harvard Men Were Indians."

[urge] that you would please to settle such sallaries upon them as may comfortably answere theire paines and travell in the worke . . . And because wee hear that none labour in the word and doctrine amongst the Indians but Mr. Eliott and Mr. Mayhew wee desire to know whether there been any other quallified there as may carry on the said worke in case the Lord should otherwise despose of them . . .

Criticism was now coming from the English government as well. The Society's bookkeeping was not the best, probably because the Commissioners, who handled the money, met only annually. The government ordered a full accounting.

To simplify its bookkeeping, the Society proposed a change in the method of payment. Under the old system, it shipped goods rather than money to the colonies. The money raised by the sale of the goods went to pay the missionaries and their helpers. Abuses had developed under that system. Some of the goods just disappeared. Records of which items were sold and which were given directly to the Indians and missionaries were haphazard. Furthermore, merchants in New England complained that by selling goods the Society was competing with them. They argued that businessmen in London, members of the Society, were getting rid of their excess inventories, shipping them to New England at depressed prices. In April 1656, the London Society suggested a change in the method:

. . . wee offer it as our judgments that [the missionaries] may bee paid in money heer in England and not by goods there . . . by means whereof wee shall not only give publicke satisfaction but alsoe remove those suspisions which att present both ourselves and you lye under. . .

The Society was so much on the defensive that its 1655 pamphlet included this notice:

The Corporation (appointed by Act of Parliament) for Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Heathen natives in New-England, desire all men to take notice, That such as desire to be satisfied how the moneys collected are disposed of, may (if they please) repaire to Coopers Hall, London, any Saturday, between the houres of Nine and Twelve in

the forenoone, where the said Corporation meet.

To have proof of the honesty of the payments by the organization, the London office ordered affidavits:

. . . a [letter will] bee sent to Mr. Eliot and Mr. Mahew that in regard of these various reports that are heere concerning this business they would send [letters] signed by themselves and Elders to attest the truth of this business [salary payments, etc.].

In September 1656, the Commissioners in New England agreed to pay more money and, reluctantly, to try the proposal to pay the missionaries with money in London:

Wee have considered what you write about settleing comfortable sallaries for the future . . . and have agreed to allow Mr. Elliott and Mr. Mayhew 50 pounds a yeare . . . out of the Stocks heer . . . with due Incouragements to Scoolmasters, Interpreters and some youthes both English and Indian to bee trained up at Scoole and att the Colledge . . . Wee know not why any of them should (unlesse to free themselves from the 4 pence on the shilling advance) desire theire paiment in England . . . though if you desire it some tryall may bee heerafter made . . .³⁶

In the same letter they reported that Mayhew had made a startling announcement at the meeting:

Mr. Mayhew now att Plymouth . . . informes of a farm and certain tenements lying about Greensnorton in Northhampton sheer worth about one hundred and forty pounds per annum . . . given by one Halton Barnes to the heire of the Paines which now proves to bee his brother-in-law, Tho. Paine, from whome this Mr. Mayhew hath an Interest in the same; hee further informes that Sir William Bradshaw, to us a stranger but by some supposed to bee papistly affected, hath the same land in possession but about 14 years since when Tho. Paines own mother and mother-in-law to Mr. Mayhew was in England to settle her son's Rightes; though hee challenged some interest during his Ladyes life; yett none to the inheritance; Tho. Paine then under age being by a Jury att the said Greensnorton found the true heire, the land being of a considerable vallue to Mr. Mayhew and Tho. Paine, Mr. Mayhew propounded to us his owne going over to Cecure . . . but wee being

³⁶ The "tryall" seems never to have been made. Perhaps the missionaries objected that it would be too inconvenient, as it would have.

assured that a worke of higher consideration would suffer much by his soe long absence advised him to send som other man . . . [but he insists on going, so] wee have given him a bill charged upon the Corporation for thirty pounds, parte of what was due to him last year [the rest will] have Credit next yeare.

Mayhew, against the wishes of the Commissioners, went ahead with his plan to go to England.

Complaints continued about the salaries. As with those made earlier, Eliot was suspected as the instigator. Young Mayhew seems not to have been involved. There is, however, one bit of contrary evidence in a letter, November 25, 1656, from London to the Commissioners:

Informed really by some come over from New England that those who carry on the worke are not lookt upon, but are constraind to take coarse cloth at Boston: or so this from Mr. Mahew . . . That Mr. Eliott and Mr. Mahew are not comfortably provided for to carry on the work. . . That it be offered as the Judgement of this Corporation that Mr. Eliott and Mr. Mahew and such others as preach to the Indians might for comfortable subsistance herein bee allowed 100 pounds per Annum . . . to bee paid heere in England to their Assignee . . .

Recommended also were salary increases for the other mission workers. Peter Folger, Mayhew's schoolmaster, was to get an increase to 30 pounds a year and Hiacoomes and Panuppaqua, the two Indian preachers and interpreters, to 20 pounds annually.³⁷

However, there is no record that the Commissioners ever increased the top salaries to 100 pounds. It would have meant doubling the current pay. Apparently, the Commissioners considered themselves better judges of such matters, as indeed they were, being on the scene in New England. The 1656 report shows 50 pounds still being paid to Mayhew and Eliot. Folger and the others did get the recommended increases to 30 pounds. Mayhew was given an additional 10 pounds to be used to treat sick Indians.

³⁷ These salaries were not meager. At the time, the highest paid artisans, such as carpenters, were paid 30 pounds a year, working six days a week. Houses were valued at 20 to 30 pounds.

While young Thomas was busy with religious matters, his father was occupied with governing and purchasing land from the Indians. On August 10, 1657, he completed a major deal, buying from Quaquaquinigat, sachem, the island of Nashana (Naushon). The price: "two coats, in full satisfaction for the same."³⁸

The Society in London continued to worry about its dependence on only two paid missionaries:

Wee doe againe make our request as in our former letters and for the reasons therein mencioned . . . that a special [care] bee had and taken (if it bee the good pleasure of the lord) that there may bee a constant succession of them without which the work will in time decay and our mutuall indeavors . . . bee rendered ineffectual. . .

In the letter the Society agreed to cash the note the Commissioners had given Mayhew:

relateing unto Mr. Mayhew [and] his brother-in-law Thomas Paine wee shal bee Reddy and willing to further your and his desiress . . . and to disburse the moneys charged upon as by your bill of exchang. . .

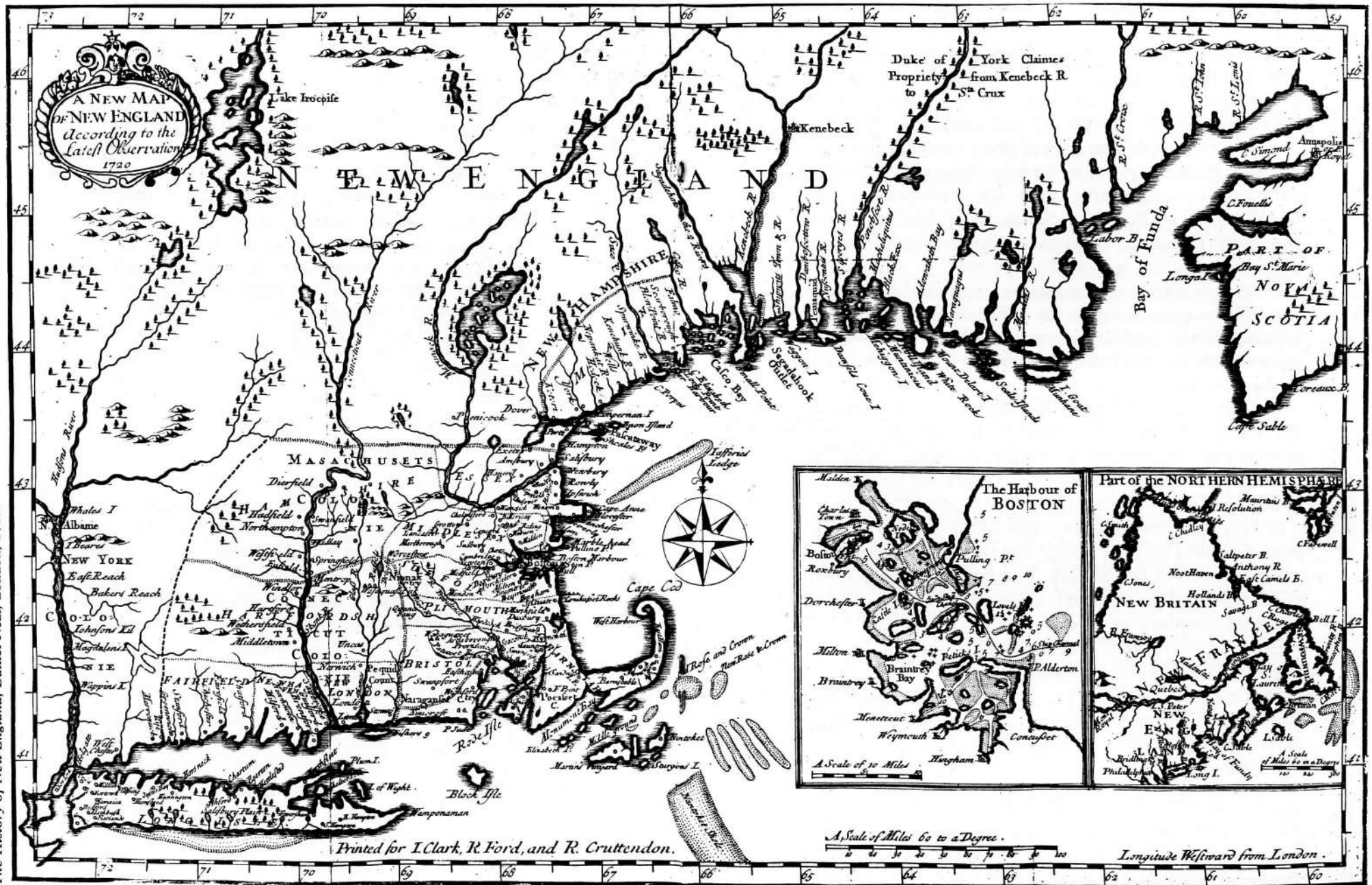
The Commissioners, at Mayhew's request, had sent copies of confessions made by several Vineyard Indians "that you may understand the fruite of his labours amongst them," and urged that they be published.

It is unlikely that these confessions showed an understanding of Christian theology, although Puritanism required such of its members. More likely, they were a litany of past sins, sins not so much against the code of Indian society as against that of the English. The converts had been taught by Mayhew that their religion was inspired by Satan; that their religious leaders were Satan's agents. Their confessions required a repudiation of their culture and were, some believe, destructive of their self esteem.

As Neal Salisbury described it: "The missionaries' message was quite simple: all Indians were living in a state of sin, and repentance was necessary in order to be saved . . . Indians had to reject their ethnic and cultural identity before

³⁸ Dukes County Records, Book A, p.22. No money was involved.

A New Map of New England in 1720



Map, drawn "according to the Latest Observation", makes clear how important rivers were to the early settlers. They were drawn far larger

than actual, dominating the geography. In 1720, Buzzards Bay was named Monument Bay; the islands, Martin's Vineyard and Nintoket.

converting. . . Many of the converts [denounced] their parents for worshipping Indian deities and for heeding the powwows."³⁹

Events proved that the Society's concern about its reliance on only two missionaries had been justified. Thomas Mayhew Jr., his stepbrother (and brother-in-law) Thomas Paine, and a young praying Indian, son of Miohqsoo,⁴⁰ left the Vineyard for Boston in November 1657. From there they were to sail to England to take possession of the property Paine had inherited.

It was to be a quick trip, as quick as trips could be in those days. Thomas was leaving many responsibilities: his English pastorate, his fortnightly lectures to the Indians, his weekly sessions with the two Indian preachers and his supervision of the new Indian school.

An Indian meeting house had been authorized by the Society, but it had not yet been built. Although Indian services were being held each Sunday, "there was no Indian Church here completely formed and organized here till the Year 1670" when Hiacoomes was ordained its minister.

In Mayhew's absence, the pulpit of the English church was to be filled by Peter Folger, the teacher of the Indians who was paid by the Society. The two Indian ministers, Hiacoomes and Panuppaqua, also on the payroll, would, of course, continue to preach.

Experience Mayhew in *Indian Converts* wrote that another Indian, Mononequem, "preached every Sabbath-Day twice to his Countrymen" at Nashaquitsa, between Chilmark and Gay Head. This was the Indian preacher who had gone to Boston with Mayhew in 1651 and about whom John Wilson had written.

³⁹ Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans: The Praying Indians of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot," *Wm. and Mary Quarterly*, Jan. 1974, pp. 47ff.

⁴⁰ The young Indian had been living, along with his sister, in Thomas Junior's house, having been "committed to the special care and charge of Mr. Mayhew" by his father. Daniel Gookin called him "an Indian who was a preacher among the natives." His father, Miohqsoo, was the Indian who, before being converted, asked Hiacoomes why he should give up his 37 gods for a single Christian divinity. Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, London, 1727, pp. 76-79.

That would mean there was a third congregation of praying Indians on the Vineyard. If so, its minister does not show up in the salary records of the Society. Nor was it ever mentioned by Thomas Mayhew. He told of only two groups of praying Indians: one three miles from his house, the other eight miles. Neither could have been at Nashaquitsa, 15 miles away.

Thomas apparently never attempted to convert the Indians at Gay Head, at least he never mentioned Gay Head in his letters. In 1652 he did describe one up-Island trip:

I was once down towards the further end of the Island, and lodged at an Indians house, who was accounted a great man among the Islanders, being the friend of a great Sachem on the Mayn; this Sachem is a great Enemy to our Reformation on the Island . . .

But that only puts him "towards the further end of the Island," which could not mean Gay Head, the absolute western end. He may have been referring to Nashaquitsa, about five miles east of Gay Head, where Momonequem was said by Experience years later to have preached. As far as Thomas's reports are concerned, his "farthest Lecture" was seven or eight miles from Great Harbour, which would put it about at today's West Tisbury. Other reports state that the first Gay Head conversion took place some years after young Mayhew died.

When the two Thomases, Mayhew and Paine, with their Indian companion arrived at Boston, two vessels were ready to leave for England. Mayhew chose the larger one, under James Garrett, master. By coincidence, Daniel Gookin, recently appointed Superintendent of Indian affairs, was also going to London and, like Mayhew, had picked Captain Garrett's more luxurious ship. However, a dispute with Garrett over his accommodations made Gookin switch to the smaller vessel. Here is how he described it:

. . . An. 1657, in the month of November, Mr. Mayhew, the son, took shipping at Boston, to pass for England. . . intending to return with the first opportunity . . . [for] his heart was very much in that work, to my knowledge, I being

well acquainted with him. He took his passage for England in the best of two ships . . . whereof one James Garrett was master. The other ship, whereof John Pierse was commander, I went passenger therein. . . Both these ships sailed from Boston in company; Mr. Garrett's ship, which was about 400 tons, had good accommodations and greater far than the other: and she had aboard her . . . about fifty [passengers] whereof . . . persons of great worth and virtue . . . Myself was once intended and resolved to pass in that ship, but the master, who sometimes had been employed by me, and from whom I expected a common courtesy, carried it something unkindly, as I conceived, about my accommodations of a cabin; which was an occasion to divert me to the other ship, where I also had good company and my life also preserved . . . For this ship of Garrett's perished in the passage and was never heard of more. And there good Mr. Mayhew ended his days and finished his work.⁴¹

It was some time, of course, before word of the vessel's failure to arrive in England reached the Vineyard. The Mayhew family held out hope for months, but finally was forced to admit that its two sons and the young Indian had been lost at sea. The junior Mayhew left a wife and six children, the oldest being Matthew, age 11. Mrs. Thomas Mayhew Sr., second wife of the Governor, lost her only son, Thomas Paine, and her stepson, Thomas Mayhew Jr. An Indian family also lost a son, who surely had been the source of great pride.⁴²

At his death, Thomas had been a missionary for over a decade. During part of the time, he was assisted by a paid English schoolmaster, Peter Folger, "that instructs them on the Lords Day," and two Indian preachers, also paid from England. The records are imprecise, but it is likely that, out of the 1500 adult Indians on the Vineyard, about 300 had been converted. There were two Indian churches, one in Edgartown (perhaps Farm Neck), the other probably at Takemmy (West Tisbury). Indian services were also held, some said, at Nashaquitsa, five miles east of Gay Head,

⁴¹ MHS Coll., v.I, 1st ser., 1792, pp.202-3.

⁴² Tragedy seemed often to befall the educated Indians. The two Vineyarders who went to Harvard died young as did others at the school.

without the Society's support. These 300 converts, one fifth of the adult Indian population, were the harvest of 12 years of proselytizing by the Vineyard's first missionary, Thomas Mayhew Jr., and his assistants. Four out of five Vineyard Indians were still unconverted.

Widow Mayhew, having finally acknowledged her husband's death, asked the Commissioners to educate her sons so they could continue their father's work. They sent her request to London:

The Losse of Mr. Mayhew in relation to this worke is verie great and so far as for the present we can see, irreparable, our thoughts have bene of some, and our indeavors have improved to the uttermost to supply that place which is the most considerable in that part of the Country. His ffather (though ancient) is helpfull that way with one other Englishman & two Indians that instruct the rest upon the Lords days and at other times.

Mrs. Mayhew (the widow of the deceased whom he left poore with 6 or 7 children) desires that 3 boyes might be brought up in learning to fitt them for after service amongst the Indians, which we are slow to assent unto in regard they are very young & the charges wilbe great before they be fitt for employment & then uncertayne how their myndes may be addicted or their hearts inclined for this work, yet for the support & the incouraging of others we have allowed her 20 pounds & taken upon us to defray the charge of the eldest sonne of about 10 years now at School for this yeare & shalbe willing to doe further for him or her as you shall please to advise.⁴³

The elder Mayhew also wrote to the Commissioners, hinting that, despite his age, he was willing to take his son's place, but the pay had to be right:

I thought good to certifiye you that this ten yeares I have constantly stood ready to atend the work of God here amongst the Indians. Verry much time I have spent & made many Journies, and beene at verry much trouble and cost in my house, and I have reseved [received] one yeare 20 pounds and the last yeare 10 pounds. It is more then when

⁴³ Commissioners to Richard Lloyd, Sept.26,1658, published in *Some Correspondence . . . of the New England Company . . . 1657 [to] 1714*, Spottiswoode & Co., London, 1896, pp.3-5.

I entred on it I did expecte. Methinks that which I have had is verry little. Truely if I were now to be hired to doe ass much yearely as I have donne, thirtie pounds per annum, & more to, would not doe it.⁴⁴

He suggested that the Commissioners seek out some young ministers to continue his son's work. Young Thomas's widow and several others from the Vineyard went to Boston seeking continued support. The elder Mayhew did not go along, but sent a letter, asking that "John Higenson and Mr. Peirson" be invited to take his son's place. The Commissioners were not optimistic. If those two could not be persuaded, they replied, it was up to him to take over, even though he was 65 years of age:

Wee shall according to your advise move Mr. John Higenson and Mr. Peirson but doe greatly fear wee shall not prevaile unlesse the lord strongly sett in to perswade them; in the mean time wee thinke that God doth call for your more then ordinary assistance in this worke and are very well pleased that your spiritt is soe farr inclined therunto . . . your Neighbour Peter Foulgum [Folger] hath bine with us and hath received further incurragement, alsoe Thomas the Indian [Panuppaqua?] whom wee have paid; and shall doe the like for Iacomes when hee shall come or send, especially if the bearer brings [a note from your] self; wee would have these continued on the same sallary as before; your Daughter Mahew was also with us; and hath received such incurragement from us as wee thought wee might adventure to bestow; but shall be very free to doe further as the Corporation shall advise. Concerning yourselfe wee have ordered your last yearer payment twenty pounds and shal bee redde to Incurrage for the future; wee hope [God] will afford strength whoe hath given you a hart to this great worke.⁴⁵

Mayhew wrote to his former partner, now one of the Commissioners, addressing him: Worshipfull Mr. John Wyntropp, & My Verry Good Freind. He asked that his

⁴⁴ Mayhew Senior, perhaps, is overstating his previous involvement. His son mentioned him only once or twice in his reports. After Junior's loss, Senior was paid 10 pounds in 1657 and 20 pounds in 1658, as he mentioned, for filling in for the missing missionary. See Banks, v.I, p.232.

⁴⁵ *Plymouth Colony Records*, v.X, p.210, Sept.16,1658, as copied by Richard L. Pease, DCHS.

son's family be helped financially:

I cannot yett gyve my sonnes over [Thomas junior and stepson Thomas Paine]: if they com noe more, my daughter & hir 6 children will want hellpe. . . I pray if [the Commissioners] can find a way to kepe two of his sonnes at schoole, lend your furtherance & to any thing ells for hir good & hir children . . . Thus much I thought to write unto your kind, loving & honoured self, which is more than I should have written to any man ells . . . but I doubt not of any ylle or imprudent use to be made of it by your self. . .⁴⁶

In September 1658, the Commissioners paid widow Mayhew 20 pounds "in consideration of her husband's paines and labours amongst the Indians;" the elder Mayhew was also paid 20 pounds "for his paines in teaching and instructing the Indians this yeare to September 1658;" Peter Folger, "English Scoolmaster that teacheth the Indians and instructs them on the Lord's day," was paid 25 pounds; two Indian interpreters and schoolmasters, Thomas and James, "that instruct the Indians att Martin's Vineyard" were each paid 10 pounds; Mrs. Bland was paid two pounds "for healpfulnes in Phisicke and Chisurgery;" and "to goodman Phisanden, for the diett and other charges of Mr. Mayhew's son at Scoole" in Cambridge, five pounds.⁴⁷

The elder Mayhew was not satisfied with the amount paid to his son's widow. He claimed that his son had been on Society business when he was lost at sea and at the Society's request. Furthermore, he had not been paid adequately while alive, receiving only a total 120 pounds. A financial settlement of some sort was deserved, he argued, much more than the small annual payment.

President John Endicott responded, September 16, 1658, "in the name and by the consent of the rest of the

⁴⁶ *Winthrop Papers*, p.35.

⁴⁷ Mayhew, you will recall, had written that "30 pounds, or more to, would not do it" to pay him to continue his son's work. His salary was increased to 30 pounds the next year, 1659. The husband of Mrs. Bland was a mystery man. He is believed to have come to the Vineyard before Mayhew under the alias John Smith as part of the Pease Tradition. See Banks, v.II, "Annals of Edgartown," pp.41-46.

Commissioners:"

... wee know not that youer son was advised by any of us to goe into England (but deswaded) only it is possible some might say it might in some respects bee of good use [to the Society]; ... wee could show you that you mistake in saying that hee received but 120 pounds ...

But Governor Mayhew wasn't one to give up easily. He had other avenues to follow. On June 6, 1659, he wrote again to Commissioner John Winthrop Jr., his former partner, describing his current work among the Indians. He had been preaching sermons "aboute an hour" long despite language difficulties. "I can clearely make knowne to them by an interpreter," he wrote. He urged Winthrop to get the Commissioners to name his son-in-law Thomas Daggett to replace him on the payroll upon his death. He ended his letter with another plea for money:

Yow may be pleased to tell the Commissioners that I say, & 'tis true, that I have great neede to have what may be justly comminge to me for this work, to supply my wants.

In April 1660, the Society in London agreed to pay Thomas Junior's heirs thirty pounds. They informed the Commissioners that this was done "not doubting of youer carefull improveing and manageing of the same for the best advantage of the worke." As for Widow Mayhew and the education of her son, they decided:

... wee are well satisfied in the ten pounds allowed towards Mistris Mahewes Releife; and also with that respect you have shewed her eldest son for his fathers sake in bringing him up att Scoole to fitt him for the Indian worke; desiring to know his age and to what profficiency hee hath attained in the knowldge of the Indian language ...

The Society was still being criticized. It was being asked why so little progress had been made with the Indians when "there are about twenty Teachers under sallary ..." in New England. To add to its problems, "our books, accounts and actions have bine lately inspected by Sion Colledge, as formerly by the Councell of State and are exposed to the view of the Nation." It wasn't an easy time for the Society, but its problems were only beginning.

Less than a month later, on May 29, 1660, the royal house of Stuart returned to power when Charles II entered London, "amidst the acclamations of the people." The rule of the Puritans had ended. The Church of England was back.

Within a year, the Society was legally dissolved. The 1649 act of Parliament that had created it was declared invalid, as were all acts of that Parliament. Before that happened, however, it was business as usual for the Society, whose Puritan members kept hoping they could convince the King to allow their missions in New England to continue.

The Commissioners in New England continued to meet as though there had been no change. They reported to London after their September 1660 meeting that they had taken up the Mayhew family matter:

Wee received from Mr. Mahew an incurraigeing account of the progresse of the GossPELL among the natives of the Vineyard; ... hee alsoe informes us of the low and poor estate of his sons widdow; and sollicites us for a continuance of the relief during her widdowhood ... wee yet contynew the charge of the educating his eldest son, about twelve years old; his skill in the Indian language wee know not; but wee shall consider whether it bee not convenient to bee att further charge than this yeare unless his parents will give him up to us for this worke and hee bee willing to consent therto;⁴⁸ wee shal bee slow to take many more English or Indian youths upon our charge for education ...

At the same meeting, the Commissioners voted to sent Mayhew five pounds "to pay one Mistris Blande of the Vineyard for her paines and Phisicke bestowed on sicke Indians there ..."

On May 18, 1661, the London Society informed the Commissioners in New England that it had been dissolved, but not without hope. The letter was read to the Commissioners at their annual meeting in September:

Wee suppose you are not strangers to the condition of affaires; and particularly with respect unto ourselves being

⁴⁸ Apparently meaning Matthew would have to be indentured to them for a certain number of years, a most unlikely development.

now noe Corporation; though not without good hopes that the same wil bee renewed and confirmed by his Majestie though possibly the busines may bee acted by other persons.

Sharing the wish that the "same wil bee renewed" by Charles II, the Commissioners at the meeting voted to do a little lobbying of their own:

Whereupon the Commissioners thought meet to present his Majesty with a copy of the New Testament in the Indian Language; the printing of the Old Testament not then having been completed.

To make sure that the King would be impressed they had two copies specially bound, one for him and the second for the Lord Chancellor. These and 20 normal copies were shipped to London. A special dedication to Charles II was inserted in these copies, describing the Indian New Testament "as the first fruits and accomplishment of the Pious Design of your Royal Ancestors."⁴⁹

The next year, in February 1662, the Privy Council of His Majesty's government responded to the "good hopes" of the Society and set up a new corporation "by the name of the company for Propagation of the Gospell in New England, and the parts adjacent in America." As one historian wrote, "With a name so long, it is not surprising that in time it became known as the New England Company. . ."⁵⁰

Although its goal remained the same as that of the old Society, the new organization had a different religious and political leadership. Instead of the Puritans, Anglicans now held the majority and the presidency. There now were 45 members instead of 18. The new members appointed by His Majesty were from a different level of society than the businessmen who had run it before. Out of the 45 members in the new corporation, only nine were carryovers from the old Society. The new organization informed the Commissioners of New England of the changes:

. . . Wee are glad that through the goodness of God wee

⁴⁹ John Eliot had done the translation of the Bible into Indian.

⁵⁰ Kellaway, p.46.

are now in a condition to enforme you that . . . It hath pleased the King's Majestie and Counsell to graunt a Charter of Incorporation wherin many of the Nobillitie and other persons of qualitie and most of these Gentlemen that were formerly employed in the like worke are authorised and appointed to endeavor the carying on of that pious designe of converting the heathen Natives.

Despite its Church of England leadership, the corporation continued paying salaries and support money to the Puritan missionaries. For the year 1662, Thomas Mayhew was paid 30 pounds; Widow Mayhew 6 pounds (a decrease from 10 pounds); Matthew Mayhew, still in preparatory school, for food and clothes, 13 pounds; his schoolmaster received 8 pounds for teaching Matthew and two Indians. There was also 30 pounds paid to eight Indian schoolmasters on the Vineyard: Iacomes, Mannachechen, Tacanash, Kesquish, Samuel [?], Nanasco, James and Annawamett.⁵¹

Thomas Mayhew was anxious to resubmit his daughter's case to the new management in England. He wrote to his friend, Governor Winthrop in Connecticut:

I humbly intreate yow to informe me what the Treasurers name is, of the Corporation, & where he dwells; and if it may suite with your judgment to write a word or two unto the Corporation in my daughters behallfe, & for some thing to further hir sonnes in learninge yearly . . .

It is unlikely that Mayhew's pleading would have done any good. The new Company had less money to spend than the previous Society and it had to cut expenditures.⁵² Rental income dropped as properties were returned to former owners who were Royalists. The old Society, it seems, had "bought" estates from Royalists who had left the country fearing their lives, but had never bothered to pay for them. In April 1663, the Company wrote to the New England Commissioners that,

. . . wee have not any money in cash, our present Revenue being not above 320 pounds per annum. . . which meanes

⁵¹ *Plymouth County Records*, v.X,p.277, as copied by R.L.Pease.

⁵² We will begin using the term "the Company" to refer to the new Corporation, short for The New England Company, its unofficial name.

wee are constrained to improve that little wee have for the best advantage. . . and for that end wee desire that for the present . . . the charges concerning Mistris Mayhew, Matthew Mayhew, Mr. Stanton's son, Captaine Gookin; extraordinary gifts to Indians; or any other expences that you upon your place shall think fitt to be spared may bee forborne.

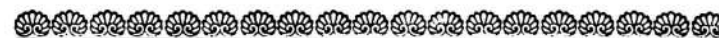
The Commissioners responded, stating that Mrs. Mayhew's late "husband [was] the first or one of the first whose hart God stired up effectually to laboure in this worke . . ." They said that for this year they would continue her allowance of "six pounds but shall lett her know shee must expect noe more . . . without your honors further order. . . . John Stanton and Matthew Mayhew bee according to your honors advise discharged. . . ."

Thomas Mayhew, now 71 years old, again turned to his former partner, Governor Winthrop of Connecticut, for help. The Governor had sent him some "cordiall powder," and Mayhew wrote to thank him. Despite his age, he said in his letter, he could still write without spectacles, but the heat bothered him very much. Nonetheless, he assured Winthrop,

I am strong for my years, rarely a man so strong . . . I pray,
Sir, take an opportunitie to doe what yow may with the
Kings Commissiōners to shew me all lawfull favour.

At three score and eleven years of age, the Governor wasn't ready to give up. And, as we shall see, he didn't give up until his death 18 years later. During those years, as he had requested, he was shown "all lawfull favour" by the New England Company, which kept him on its payroll until he died.

(To be continued)



Gay Head as Seen By a German in 1844

by DR. ALBERT C. KOCH

Translated by Ernst A. Stadler

IN 1844, Dr. Albert C. Koch, an amateur paleontologist and passionate collector of fossils, came from Germany to visit Gay Head, where, he had read, fossils were to be found in abundance.

He was not a stranger to the United States or to its language, having lived in St. Louis in the 1830s. There he ran a "museum" of sorts, the entrance fee to which was 25 cents, where he displayed various "intriguing and educational phenomena," including Egyptian and Indian mummies, plus wax figures of the Siamese Twins.

In Missouri, he unearthed the remains of two huge prehistoric animals which he took to Europe in 1843, selling them to the British Museum as super-mastodons he named *Missourium*. The next year he returned to the United States eager to resume his fossil discoveries. His first stop for fossils on his two-year journey which would cover much of the eastern United States was at Gay Head.

Arriving in New York from Germany, he immediately went to Boston en route to Martha's Vineyard. He described the trip in his journal, as translated by Ernst A. Stadler:

*Monday, July 22 [1844], at eight o'clock in the morning,
I departed from Boston by train to go via New Bedford
to Martha's Vineyard. . . I arrived at 10:30, and right*

ALBERT C. KOCH of Germany kept a journal of his journey in the U.S. from 1844 to 1846, providing an excellent account of America at the time. He covered much territory east of the Mississippi, going as far south as New Orleans. The journal, which begins with 19 days at Gay Head, was published in Germany in 1847. It became available in English in 1972 when, translated by Ernst A. Stadler, it was published by Southern Illinois University Press in its series "Travels on the Western Waters," John Francis McDermott, General Editor. We are grateful to Southern Illinois University for this work.

away had my things brought to the harbor into a small, dainty, four-masted ship which connects this place and the town Holmes Hole, on Martha's Vineyard. Although a steamboat also travels the same route, it runs only three times a week and was expected in only today. . . .¹

At eleven o'clock our boat set sail; the crew was very small, but the peculiar thing was that there was no common sailor among them. It was run by two very deft men, of whom the older was introduced to me as the captain and the younger one as the mate. . . . The wind was rather favorable, and so we covered the 28 English miles to Holmes Hole in four hours, landing at three o'clock. I had fun watching the captain and the mate alternate at the helm, and when both were needed to change the sails, how they fastened the rudder with a rope and left it alone. . . . Holmes Hole is a friendly town of 1400 inhabitants and lies on the slope of a hill which bounds the small harbor.

Tuesday, July 23rd, after ten o'clock, I started my journey to Gay Head . . . a distance of 18 English miles; the first 11 miles of the way can be traveled without risk by carriage and I rode the stretch with a man who, twice a week, carries the mail in a one-horse carriage. . . .²

The part of the Island which I now had to traverse on foot was very barren and showed traces of great earth upheavals which had taken place in prehistoric times; it is therefore no wonder that our white fellow citizens left this desolate region as the last refuge to the poor Indians. I left the carriage at the last house, which was surrounded by a few trees.³ From here the whole area showed only bare hills divided by somewhat more fertile valleys which were frequently broken by

¹ The steamboat was probably the *Massachusetts* which went into service in 1842 between New Bedford and Nantucket, with a stop at the Vineyard. The identity of the four-master packet is unknown.

² The mail wagon probably went along South Road, ending beyond Beetlebung Corner, Chilmark, 11 miles from Holmes Hole.

³ As we shall see, he had left his suitcases, etc., at Holmes Hole, taking only the essentials to Gay Head.

ocean inlets and small sand steppes. Yet those hills and desolate valley were separated into irregular fields by man-made walls of field stones, and here and there rose a house, which, while giving evidence of a certain prosperity, looked lonely and melancholy indeed without a garden or the shadow of a tree. . . .

After a very arduous march I arrived at the house of the old Indian who, I had been told, would, for pay, give lodging to strangers. . . . [I was provided] a very decent room in which a large genuine American double bed played the leading role. It was quite well furnished in the customary manner, even to papered walls, and, in the absence of a rug, the floor was painted with a brown oil paint. I mention this only to show the degree of civilization the local Indians have reached. The food I found quite in keeping with the already mentioned furnishings, for I ate and drank better than I could have expected to. . . .

Koch had come a long way to visit this place and he just couldn't wait until morning to see the cliffs. After a meal and a brief rest, he walked a quarter mile to the lighthouse and explained his interest in fossils to Keeper Ellis Skiff, the second generation in his family to serve as keepers. He describes him in his journal:

At first [the keeper] made a long doubtful face, but when I, noticing this, mentioned casually that I was staying with his Indian neighbor, his mien brightened noticeably and he was at once willing to show me the location of organic remains that had lured me here.⁴

In a few minutes we stood on the extreme edge of the Island, at least 200 feet above the ocean surface, and had below us and to the right and the left a view such as I had never before seen and which was so special and original that it is very hard for me to give a description of it.

For years the high, steep banks have been washed into the deep by the ocean surf and have entirely taken

⁴ Ellis Skiff, keeper, was a good friend of the Indians, representing them in court on occasion.

away had my things brought to the harbor into a small, dainty, four-masted ship which connects this place and the town Holmes Hole, on Martha's Vineyard. Although a steamboat also travels the same route, it runs only three times a week and was expected in only today. . . .¹

At eleven o'clock our boat set sail; the crew was very small, but the peculiar thing was that there was no common sailor among them. It was run by two very deft men, of whom the older was introduced to me as the captain and the younger one as the mate. . . . The wind was rather favorable, and so we covered the 28 English miles to Holmes Hole in four hours, landing at three o'clock. I had fun watching the captain and the mate alternate at the helm, and when both were needed to change the sails, how they fastened the rudder with a rope and left it alone. . . . Holmes Hole is a friendly town of 1400 inhabitants and lies on the slope of a hill which bounds the small harbor.

Tuesday, July 23rd, after ten o'clock, I started my journey to Gay Head . . . a distance of 18 English miles; the first 11 miles of the way can be traveled without risk by carriage and I rode the stretch with a man who, twice a week, carries the mail in a one-horse carriage. . . .²

The part of the Island which I now had to traverse on foot was very barren and showed traces of great earth upheavals which had taken place in prehistoric times; it is therefore no wonder that our white fellow citizens left this desolate region as the last refuge to the poor Indians. I left the carriage at the last house, which was surrounded by a few trees.³ From here the whole area showed only bare hills divided by somewhat more fertile valleys which were frequently broken by

¹ The steamboat was probably the *Massachusetts* which went into service in 1842 between New Bedford and Nantucket, with a stop at the Vineyard. The identity of the four-master packet is unknown.

² The mail wagon probably went along South Road, ending beyond Beetlebung Corner, Chilmark, 11 miles from Holmes Hole.

³ As we shall see, he had left his suitcases, etc., at Holmes Hole, taking only the essentials to Gay Head.

ocean inlets and small sand steppes. Yet those hills and desolate valley were separated into irregular fields by man-made walls of field stones, and here and there rose a house, which, while giving evidence of a certain prosperity, looked lonely and melancholy indeed without a garden or the shadow of a tree. . . .

After a very arduous march I arrived at the house of the old Indian who, I had been told, would, for pay, give lodging to strangers. . . . [I was provided] a very decent room in which a large genuine American double bed played the leading role. It was quite well furnished in the customary manner, even to papered walls, and, in the absence of a rug, the floor was painted with a brown oil paint. I mention this only to show the degree of civilization the local Indians have reached. The food I found quite in keeping with the already mentioned furnishings, for I ate and drank better than I could have expected to. . . .

Koch had come a long way to visit this place and he just couldn't wait until morning to see the cliffs. After a meal and a brief rest, he walked a quarter mile to the lighthouse and explained his interest in fossils to Keeper Ellis Skiff, the second generation in his family to serve as keepers. He describes him in his journal:

At first [the keeper] made a long doubtful face, but when I, noticing this, mentioned casually that I was staying with his Indian neighbor, his mien brightened noticeably and he was at once willing to show me the location of organic remains that had lured me here.⁴

In a few minutes we stood on the extreme edge of the Island, at least 200 feet above the ocean surface, and had below us and to the right and the left a view such as I had never before seen and which was so special and original that it is very hard for me to give a description of it.

For years the high, steep banks have been washed into the deep by the ocean surf and have entirely taken

⁴ Ellis Skiff, keeper, was a good friend of the Indians, representing them in court on occasion.

on the form of glaciers leaning against the land, but with the difference that glaciers have their beautiful play of colors only when the sun causes their rainbow colors, . . . while, on the shores of Gay Head, all colors of the rainbow show themselves in such a brilliance and such a beautiful fusion as only the richest fantasy of a painter could imagine. As a result, the landscape takes on an almost unearthly and magical appearance which probably has no equal in the whole world. . . the red color plays a leading role here. . . It results from a large mass of the best red ochre, which is found here in such quantity that in stormy weather the waves wash it off so that the ocean is dyed blood red for one English mile. In earlier times the local Indians painted their houses red with it (a color they especially love). The white comes first from an alabaster-white special sand, which I cannot remember having seen anywhere before, and which in appearance has much similarity to kitchen salt, secondly from a very beautiful white pipe clay, which is found in abundance and sold by the Indians to the whites for clay pipes.

The blue originates from a blue clay which likewise is frequently found here. The brown and black result from not-insignificant veins of very good brown coal — which is not used, however, because of the total lack of wood. Peat, which is found in great quantity in the hollows of the Island, is burned.⁵

The yellow is part of a great mass of fine ferruginous sand which covers one of the most remarkable conglomerates consisting of round stones, flint pebbles, and sand mixed with a large quantity of primeval shark and saurian remains. . .

Koch hired his Indian landlord and the two of them spent the next day digging for fossils. They found 15 shark's teeth and a few vertebrae of saurians. The sharks, he estimated, were 50 to 60 feet long; the saurians 30 to 40 feet. The next day, Thursday, he felt ill, having the day before "drunk too much cold water because of the hard work." But it was

⁵ Apparently he is saying that there was not enough wood for kindling a coal fire.



Geology of Mass., Hitchcock, 1841.

Gay Head in 1840. The house closer to the tower is the Keeper's dwelling; the other is probably where Koch stayed with the Indian.

raining so he didn't mind resting in his room.

Friday, Keeper Skiff showed him a spot where there were remains of "primeval crabs." He dug up many fossils and, he wrote, was "very satisfied with my day's work." Saturday, it was more of the same. Then on Sunday, July 28th, he went to church with his Indian landlord.

. . . [the] church service . . . was held in a large schoolhouse a distance of about 1 ¼ English miles from here. The house lies on one of the most imposing elevations of Gay Head. From three sides one has a view of the ocean; on one side the Elizabeth Islands show not far away, while one sees on the other side even closer the little island, No Man's Land, on which three families live. But here also as far as the eye can see there are no trees.

. . . standing near the entrance [were] a number of brown men, among whom the preacher stood out in his clerical garb . . . He is blind, can neither write nor read, and had not the slightest opportunity to train himself for the position which he has now been holding for twenty years. In addition, this man is one of the

last descendants of the local Gay Head Indians, and he plans to die here⁶. . . He is a man of approximately 45 years, of more than medium height, and, like all local Indians, of very dark color; his naturally black straight Indian hair is beginning to be mixed with gray, his face has something engaging and friendly which I cannot remember having seen on a blind man. To make the defect of his eyes less shocking, he wears green eyeglasses during the sermon. . . . After we had waited a short time outside the door we went into the house, where many women were already sitting on the left side; the men occupied the right one, and shortly almost all seats were taken.⁷

The local inhabitants are for the most part Baptists, and I heard during the sermon that a young man who is half-Indian and half-Negro would be baptized right after the service . . . Toward one o'clock the service was over, and we just had time to eat lunch hurriedly before the commencement of the baptism, which took place very close to our house, in the ocean, on whose flat shore all were assembled singing.

The preacher still wore his cassock, but now he had girded himself with a rope. The young man who was going to be baptized was lightly dressed and he wore a cloth bound around his head. After the singing was over, the preacher knelt and said a loud prayer; then he went alone up to his hips into the water; hereupon he came back and took the neophyte with him. When both stood up to their hips in the ocean . . . the preacher grabbed the neophyte with one hand behind the neck, and the other in front of his chest, and then submerged him backwards completely in the water. Then both stepped out again onto the land, and the baptism was over.⁸

⁶ The minister was Deacon Joseph Amos. Charles E. Banks dated his arrival as 1832.

⁷ In 1838, according to Barber, Gay Head had a population of 235, of which 47 were church members. Earlier, there was an Indian church building, built with missionary funds from England, but about 1800 it fell into disrepair and was torn down, necessitating the use of the schoolhouse.

⁸ According to Banks (v.2, *Annals of Gay Head*, p.22), the last infant baptism (Congregational) was in 1784. The church had been Baptist since then.

On Monday, Koch recorded the moving of Gay Head lighthouse a distance of "approximately thirty steps from where it stood before." It had been threatened by the erosion of the cliffs. This lighthouse preceded the present brick tower (built in 1856) and was "like many American houses in small towns, made only of wood." The move was accomplished by John Mayhew of Edgartown who was paid \$386.87 for his work.⁹

Koch continued fossil hunting, even walking for several hours to a different "part of the Island which is opposite my present abode." From there, he continued down-Island to a spot where a hill had been cut through by a road where fossils had been found. Because of the depth of dig required, he decided he would need help. Seeking to hire some men, he discovered that "wages are extraordinarily high and the laborers take their work very easy (one cannot get a worker for under \$1.25 a day)." So he returned to Gay Head convinced it "was the best and most productive place for my purpose."

Later that week, remote Gay Head had some distinguished guests. The Governor of Massachusetts arrived with his wife and, Koch wrote, "various other ladies and gentlemen in his retinue so that, with the servants, there were twenty people. Their headquarters are at the lighthouse but, because not all could stay there for the night, four gentlemen — a sea captain, two doctors, and a private citizen — will sleep with us."

Surely, those distinguished visitors did not walk from Chilmark, as Koch had. Doubtless, carriages at Holmes Hole could be hired to go to Gay Head. A few days later, in fact, Koch wrote: "Almost daily Gay Head is now visited by tourists since it is . . . a most remarkable peninsula which is connected by a very narrow strip of land with the much bigger island of Martha's Vineyard. . . ."¹⁰

⁹ See *Intelligencer*, February and May 1882, for the history of Gay Head Light.

¹⁰ The narrow strip of land connecting Gay Head to the rest of the Island is Stonewall Beach, Chilmark, across which the road ran before there was a bridge at Hariph's Creek. It wasn't until March 1847 that money was appropriated by the state to build the bridge.

The distinguished visitors left on Saturday. Those in the Indian's house stayed up Friday night until after 11 o'clock talking with Koch about his work and admiring his fossils.

Sunday, Koch again attended church and praised the blind minister who "preached as beautiful a sermon as could be heard anywhere. . . I was not only very edified by it but also very astonished."

The following day, Monday, August 5th, another exciting event:

This morning a boat arrived to take on a load of white clay, which is used in great quantities by alum factories as well as for the [manufacturing of clay pipes]. When such a ship arrives an Indian must tell his neighbor, whose duty it is to take the message to his next neighbor; this goes on until all know about it. For this clay is regarded as public property, and every inhabitant of Gay Head who is willing to dig and help load the ship receives a part of the profit, which for these people is not small. A ton . . . of this clay is sold for three dollars, and a man can, without much exertion, produce a ton a day. The ship which is now here loads approximately 90 tons. . .¹¹

The rest of the week Koch continued his digging. Thursday, he made a sketch of the cliffs for his report and Friday was spent "putting in order and packing my collection." Saturday, he prepared to leave:

. . . with the help of a half-breed, I put the things on a wagon and said farewell to Gay Head and my old hosts. The road was very bad and the weather very hot, therefore our journey went very slowly, but we also had to walk beside the wagon the largest part of the way; at least this had the advantage that we could refresh ourselves with the black raspberries which grew along the way.¹²

¹¹ It is surprising that Koch doesn't mention the possibility of fossils being taken away and turned into alum or pipes.

¹² Even years later, the road between Gay Head and Chilmark was still tortuous. A letter writer in an 1857 "Vineyard Gazette" complained: "I never saw its equal in my life. It is execrable in the extreme." In 1870 the County finally agreed to improve the road beyond the Chilmark line because of the increased tourist traffic.



Hist. Colls., Barber, 1839.

Holmes Hole in 1838, when it was called East Tisbury.

When we were still approximately 5 English miles from Holmes Hole, the man who carries the mail and with whom, as I remarked earlier, I had ridden most of the way to Gay Head, overtook us, and this man kindly invited me to take a seat in his small carriage, which I accepted with thanks. Safely arrived in Holmes Hole, I found my suitcases and everything I had left behind well taken care of. Many inhabitants of Holmes Hole came to see the objects which I had brought back. . .

The next day, Sunday, Koch attended church in Holmes Hole and he tells us something about the way it looked:

This morning I went to the local Methodist church, a very friendly small building which on the outside is painted with white oil paint and has, like almost all houses in Holmes Hole, green window shutters. The floor is covered with beautiful rugs and the inside is, on the whole, very nicely furnished but without any ostentation. The sermon was very good, as was the singing of the congregation. . . this place [also] has a pretty Baptist church and Presbyterian church. Almost all local inhabitants as well as the ones on the whole Island are more or less engaged in, or are participants, in whaling, whereby they seem to enjoy considerable prosperity.

The following day, Monday, the 12th of August, he was "busy with unpacking and repacking my Gay Head collection. It contains in all 585 parts, [including] 52 vertebrae of various animals; 19 bones . . . of various animals; 62 teeth of sharks and saurians . . . ; 1 tooth and 1 incisor of a large still-unknown animal . . . 3 incisors of a big saurian; 3 pieces of the exterior covering of saurians; . . . 325 large and small pieces of crabs. . . 40 pieces of large and small parts of a colossal cane species . . ."

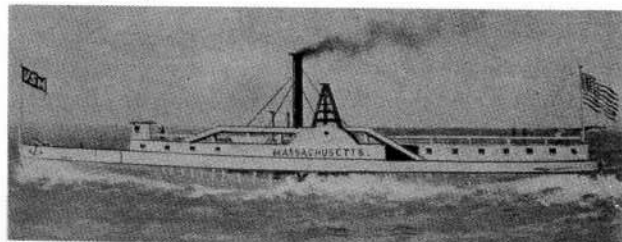
He had planned to leave on a small sailing packet Tuesday, but adverse winds prevented it, so his departure was delayed until Wednesday:

At twelve o'clock I went with my things from Holmes Hole onto the certainly not large but quite new and elegant steamboat, which carried me in the time of scarcely two hours to New Bedford.¹³ Because of the ebb tide, the water was very low, so I had the opportunity of observing the dangerous spot which all the ships that make this trip have to pass. Approximately at the halfway point Elizabeth Island almost joins the mainland, and a dam of cliffs here connected the island with the mainland. Here is left free for the ships only a very narrow passage, not wider than 150 feet, through which the water presses with such force as one finds only in rapid rivers.¹⁴

Arriving in New Bedford, Koch, after considerable difficulty transferring the huge boxes of fossils, got aboard the train for Boston. He arrived there at half-past five, less than six hours after leaving Holmes Hole.

¹³ This was certainly the Massachusetts, then only two years old.

¹⁴ Woods Hole passage.



"New and elegant" steamer Massachusetts, built 1842, 161 feet long.

Documents

Jeremiah Pease Diary

This installment of Jeremiah Pease's diary describes one of the busiest periods in his life. He, as Customs Inspector, has to inventory and store the cargoes of cigars and rum from two ships wrecked at Gay Head. Whaling is booming and several Edgartown vessels return, their holds filled with sperm oil, meaning more work for Jeremiah.

As for his personal life, wife Eliza gives birth to a son, their seventh child, but not the last. Twice, Jeremiah travels to Boston. He goes to New Bedford to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This was the July 4th made memorable by the near simultaneous deaths of two founding fathers and former Presidents: Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. Adams, a political foe of Jefferson, died bitterly disappointed, murmuring, "Thomas Jefferson still lives." Unknown to anyone in the room Jefferson had died a few hours earlier. The double deaths, to some, symbolized God's divine approval of the United States.

As a surveyor, Jeremiah is kept busy. The Edgartown harbor is surveyed, with his help, prior to building the lighthouse on the flats. When it was built, Jeremiah became its first Keeper.

As though all this wasn't enough, "Reformation John" Adams returns to the Island for two years. He is the Methodist spellbinder whose evangelistic fervor brought Jeremiah to God in 1822, something that influenced his life ever after. Methodism, along with whaling, is booming, its membership soaring.

April 1826

1st. SW. Watched with Mr. Richard Norton, being very sick.

2nd. SW. Mr. Norton dies, aged about 40.

3rd. Ditto. Annual Meeting. The Inhabitants this day elect me Moderator of the above Meeting.¹

4th. SW. Made preparations for moving my old Store. Attended the Funeral of Mr. R. Norton, service by the Rev'd. _____.

5th. SW. Moved the Store from the wharf to my lower lot.²

6th. N. Engaged in repairing the store.

7th. Ditto. Ditto. My Aunt Molly Pease dies at about 10 o'clock, PM.

8th. SW. Ditto. Quarterly meeting commences. Elder Ew'd Hyde Preaches and finished his 4 years as presiding Elder on the 9th.

9th. SW, Sunday. Brethren come from Chilmark & H.Hole to meeting.

10th. NE, snow & rain, storm. Engaged on business of T.M.Coffin & others.

11th. NW, very cold, some snow remains on the ground.

12th. SNW. Went to the Brig Clarissa of Kennebunk, James A. Pepper, from Havannah, castaway on Gayhead.

13th. SW. Mrs. Lydia Clark dies of old age.³

14th. Ditto. Returned from the wreck.

15th. Ditto. Attended the Brig, etc., Finished discharging Cargo.

¹ Jeremiah has more jobs than any other person on the Island!

² He must own a store building on a wharf that he no longer needs now that he is renting a store from Daniel Fellows. So he is moving the old store to his property.

³ Widow of John Clark Sr., Lydia, was 88 and a "Town Pauper."

17th. SW. Went to Chilmark, Gayhead, etc.

19th. SW. Returned at 2 o'clock AM.

20th. Ditto. Engaged in counting boxes [of] segars, etc., Cargo of Brig *Clarissa*.

21st. WNW, cold. Engaged in business for T.M.Coffin & H.Marchant. 1/2 day.

22nd. WNW. Engaged in setting Spiles for my new Shop.⁴

24th. E to SSE. Engaged in attending survey of the Cargo of B.*Clarissa*. Rec'd of B & F. \$____.00.

25th. NW to SW. Engaged in weighing Cargo of Brig *Clarissa*.

26th. Ditto. Ditto. My Shop raised, not able to attend myself. Sold oil for S.B.Mayhew to M. Hatch.

27th. Engaged in weighing Cargo of Brig C. Sold my oil to Jared Coffin of Nantucket. Finished weighing.

28th. NE. Engaged on business of the brig (1/2 day). Engaged in business of T.M.Coffin & others (1/2 day).

29th. SSE. Ditto. Ditto. Bo't. 14 M. of Shingles at \$3.58. Thunder and lightning with rain. This day I have dismissed Hebron Vinson & given up his Indentures he having lived with me between 8 and 9 years & has been very faithful; May God bless him in time of Eternity.⁵

⁴ This shop, like the one he sold, must be on the beach. Where this is we don't know.

⁵ Hebron Vincent was the son of Samuel and Betsey (Pease) Vincent, Edgartown. Now 21 years old, he had worked with Jeremiah for nearly 9 years as an indentured servant, learning leatherworking. Hebron learned more than that. He became a Methodist minister, a community leader and author of a two-volume history of the Methodist Campground. He married Lydia R. Coffin, widow of Holmes Coffin, in 1832 and lived in the Holmes Coffin house on School Street, Edgartown.

May 1826

1st. Wind SW, pleasant. Engaged on business of T.M.Coffin & others.

2nd. Ditto. Engaged marking wine, etc. Ditto.

4th. SW. Set out for Boston to attend the District Court as an evidence in the case of a libel against Brig *Clarissa* & cargo. Arrived the 5th. Attended Court on the 8th & 9th. Set out for home on 10th. Arrived on the 11th.⁶

12th. Wind S, fresh breeze. Commenced work upon my Shop.

13th. SW. Engaged in shingling roof of my Shop. [14th through 17th, he worked on the shop.]

18th. SW. Wrecked Schr. *Nelson* comes up to the wharf.

19th. SW. Shipped 39 half & 71 quarter boxes segars to S.V.Bacon Esq. of Boston agreeably to his request, on board Schr. *Delight* of Holmeshole, B.Reynolds Master.⁷

20th. S. Engaged in surveying land for A.Coffin. 1/2 day.

23rd. SW. Engaged in painting my Shop.

24th. NE to S. Brother Oren Roberts sets out for home in the Schr. *Hiram* which sails for the Straits of Bellisle, Lot Norton Master, to stop at Boston. Engaged in painting my Shop. Paid Joseph Ray \$125. to be delivered to Mayhew Hatch of Falmouth on Acc't. of S.B.Mayhew [~~crossed out, but legible is the following:~~] and twenty-five dollars paid ditto for ditto on account of his shares of Ship *Loan*, etc., which I sold for him.

29th. NNW to NNE. Court detained

⁶ He doesn't tell us how he travelled. It would seem likely that it was by sail.

⁷ These cigars, you will recall, were on the brig *Clarissa*, wrecked at Gay Head.

at Nantucket on acc't. head wind. Engaged in Settling Ship *Loan's* Accounts, being one of the Committee. Engaged on business of T.M.Coffin & others 1/2 day. 30th. WSW. Court detained as above. 31st. SW. Court arrives and set.

June 1826

1st. Wind SW. Court sets with much business to be done. Moved from the Shop which I hired of Danl. Fellows into my new Shop, having occupied that 7 months & 21 days.

3rd. SW, rains a little at night. Referees set upon the business of the Salvors of Brig *Clarissa*. The Court adjourns until Monday. This is the first time that the court ever set a part of 2 weeks since I could remember.⁸

4th. SW. Brother S.Wilson preaches, having arrived here with his family on a visit. Rains a little at night.

5th. NE. Court sets again, being Monday.

6th. NE. Ditto and adjourned.

8th. SW. Went to Gayhead with Mr. Baylies. Carried \$910.71, being the sum awarded the Indinans [*sic*] as Salvors of Brig *Clarissa*.⁹

9th. SW. Returned from Gayhead.

14th. SW. Engaged in lathing.

17th. SW, very dry.

19th. ESE, very dry. Br. C.G.Chase leaves town having preached 3 Sabbaths to the great satisfaction of his Brethren & others.

22nd. NE, a little rain, blessed showers altho very light. Boarded Schr. *Laban Thatcher* from Port da Prince bound to

⁸ Life was simpler then.

⁹ Nearly a thousand dollars; a considerable amount of money in 1826. Those "segars" were valuable!

Boston per order of the Collector.

23rd. ENE, rains a little at night. Engaged in painting.

25th. SW. Brother Shipley Wilson leaves for Provincetown on his way to Portsmouth, being stationed there this year.

27th. SW. Went to H.Hole on special business.

28th. SW. Rec'd. \$150 of Brother Chase Pease for T.C.Esq. Interest due: \$6.18.¹⁰

29th. SW. Auction of Schr. *Nelson*, which was castaway on Gayhead.¹¹

30th. SW. Brother John Adams arrives with his wife, being stationed here this year. May God bless his labours.¹²

July 1826

2nd. Wind SW. Br. Adams preaches, today being Sabbath.

3rd. SW. Went to New Bedford in Sloop *Hero*.

4th. SW. This day being the 50th anniversary of American Independence was spent by 3 religious Societies in a religious manner. They united in worship, held their Meetings, 1st in the F.W.Baptist Meeting house, 2nd. in the Congregational Meetinghouse, 3rd. in the Methodist Meetinghouse. The greatest union and harmony prevailed. The Sermon, Prays & Music was

¹⁰ In October 1825, you may recall, Jeremiah "hired of TC (Thomas Cooke) 150 for CP." Chase Pease (CP), Jeremiah's brother, is now paying it back. The \$6.18 interest due figures out to about 7% annually.

¹¹ This is the second wreck at Gay Head mentioned this month.

¹² "Reformation" John Adams was the Methodist evangelist who changed Jeremiah's life in 1822, when he was "born again." See "Jeremiah's Travail," *Intelligencer*, November 1980.

applicable to the occasion. The performances of the day gave very general satisfaction. [Written later:] This day John Adam [sic] one of the former Presidents of U.S.A. dies, aged --- & Thomas Jefferson, one of the former Presidents, dies the same day, 3 or 4 hours difference in the Deaths.

5th. S to ESE, returned from N.Bedford.

7th. SW. Mrs. Almira Osborn dies at about 12 o'clock this night.

9th. SW. Attended the funeral of Mrs. Osborn, service by Revd. J.Thaxter at his Meetinghouse. 10th. SW. Mr. T.Coffin engaged in plastering my Shop.

11th. SW. Ditto. This day I was taken sick with the disentry.

12th. SW. Sick.

13th. SW. Unwell.

14th. SW to NE. Went to Chabaquidic with Eliza & others.¹³

17th. SSW. Engaged in surveying land for F.Smith & M.Clark at Chabaquidic, light shower of rain at night.

18th. SW, very warm & remarkable droth.

19th. SW. Elders Darrah & Wilson from N.London arrive for the purpose of Ordaining Revd. Henry Marchant as pastor over the 1st Baptist Society in this Town (with a number of the Baptist Brethren in 6 Spacks).

20th. SSW. Revd. H.M. ordained in Revd. J.Thaxter's Meetinghouse.¹⁴

22nd. SSW to SW. Sloop Thomas,

¹³ 13 Eliza, his wife, is rarely mentioned in the diary, even in childbirth, as we shall see.

¹⁴ Allowing a Baptist to be ordained in the Congregational Church is evidence that Rev. Thaxter has given up his struggle against the new religions. He is very old and not very well.

Capt. Geor. Osborn arrives from Charleston. Br. T.M.Coffin's son wounded by L.Norton.¹⁵ Br. John Adams Wife has a son Born this evening.

24th. NNE. Elders Darrow & Wilson sail for N. London. Paid T.Cooke \$150.¹⁶

25th. E. Schooner *Celer* arrives from Falmouth.

27th. N to E, light, rains in the afternoon, more than at any one time & I think more than all that has fallen for 3 months. Clears, very pleasant.

29th. SW. Set out for Chilmark in company with Br. John Adams to Quarterly Meeting. Visited Br. Jonathan Mayhew, being very Sick of a consumption. Our meeting was affecting, having been very intimate for many years & much attached to each other, being several months since I had seen him & now to take our farewell of each other, never more to meet in time. It caused a multitude of reflections. He was so weak as to be unable to speak to me, his lungs being much affected. His Character will be hereafter published I presume, therefore shall omit any further ac't. of him. "Farewell, bright Soul."

30th. SSW. Quarterly Meeting held at Br. Silas Hillman's. Congregation large. Presiding Elder could not attend on account of Campmeeting which is to be held on the Cape. Brs. Adams & Lamb attend, a blessed season. One member baptised & two admitted into Society. Returned at night.

30th. Frederick Baylies Jr.'s child, about

¹⁵ Please, Jeremiah, tell us more!

¹⁶ The money his brother Chase had borrowed from Cooke. Apparently the interest was not paid.

4 months old, dies.¹⁷ Schr. *Celer* sails for Ponobscut.

31st. SSW. Brig *Atlantic* which was wrecked on Gayhead last winter, having been got off, arrives.

August 1826

1st. SW. Attended the Funeral of F.Baylies Jr., Child. Service by Revd. J. Thaxter.

5th. S to SSW. Sow'd Turnips.

6th. SW. Br. Caleb Lamb preaches first time in this Town, being stationed on the W part of this Isd. Rains this morning, blessed showers after so great a drought.

7th. SW, rains, some Thunder. Mr. Thos. Benson dies of a consumption.

8th. NE. Mr. Benson buried. Funeral service by Revd. John Adams and Revd. J.Thaxter, rains.

11th. NNW, S & ENE, with thunder & a plentiful rain.

12th. SE. Brig *Resident*, Capt. Matthew Pease, sails on a whaling voyage in the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁸

Sunday 13th. Attended the Funeral of Brother Jonathan Mayhew, who died last Friday night at 12 o'clock. Funeral service by Revd. John Adams. The congregation was large altho a rainstorm. A solemn & Interesting season. How sweet his memory still. He experienced Religion about 4 years ago, lived a pious life till his death. He preached the Gospel when his health would admit for about 3 years & died of a consumption.

¹⁷ Baylies was the architect who later designed Edgartown's three church buildings: Congregational, Baptist and Methodist.

¹⁸ The *Resident's* voyage is a mystery. Starbuck lists no date of return. A note reads: "Sold part of her oil and took freight home." There are no later listings of any brig named "Resident."

14th. NNE. Set out for Boston. Arrived in N.Bedford at 5 o'clock.

15th. NNE. Ditto, in the stage. Arrived in Boston at ditto.

16th. Returned to N.Bedford.

17th. ENE. Returned home.

19th. ENE, rainy. Mr. Uriah Coffin's Wife died of a quick consumption.

21st. SSW. Attended the Funeral of Mrs. Coffin. Service by Revd. Henry Marchant & Revd. John Adams. This was the first funeral Sermon that Mr. Marchant ever Preached & it was delivered in a very acceptable manner, the scene was solemn & affecting. Rains.

26th. SSE. Mr. Philander Anderson, one of the U.S. Topographical Engrs., arrives to Survey this Harbour for the purpose of ascertaining the utility, etc., of a Lighthouse on the flats.¹⁹

28th. SE. Commenced assisting the survey above mentioned.

29th. SW. Engaged as above.

30th. Ditto. Ditto.

31st. NNW. Took the bearings of the Sun. Course from the rise of Ground to the East of E.Stewart's house near the bank is N86E (or E4N) from the variation of the Compas to 7 Degr. 24 Minutes West.

¹⁹ This was the first step towards building Edgartown Harbor Light in 1828. It was first lighted by Keeper Jeremiah Pease on Oct.15th of that year (another job for him).

Bits & Pieces

WHY are the most delightful tales the hardest to document? Local tradition is filled with wondrous stories, the frosting on the cake of history. And usually impossible to prove.

Take the famed Place on the Wayside near the Dukes County Airport. Charles E. Banks, Vineyard historian, tells its story in detail. Thomas Mayhew Jr., before leaving for England in 1647, went up-Island to say goodbye to the praying Indians. They "refused to consider this a farewell, and followed him homewards till he came to a spot . . . since known in song and story as the 'Place on the Wayside.'" "

There, the young minister repeated his farewell. So memorable was the ceremony that ever since "no Indian passed by [this spot] without casting a stone into a heap that, by their custom, had thus grown like a cairn, in remembrance of him," Banks wrote.

That spot is now marked by a stone, brought down by Gay Head Indians in 1901. On it a tablet recounts the story.

It is an endearing bit of history.

Sadly, there is no evidence that it ever happened. In 1694, Matthew Mayhew, eldest son of Thomas Junior, wrote feelingly about the love the praying Indians had for his father. He was so "esteemed of by the Indians that many years after, he was seldom named without tears."

He made no mention of mourning "Indians casting a stone into a heap" or even of the two farewell ceremonies.

Thomas Prince, writing in 1727,

repeated Matthew's words, "he was seldom named without tears," adding:

"I have myself seen the Rock on a descending Ground, upon which he sometimes used to stand and preach . . . And the Place on the Way-side, where he solemnly and affectionately took his leave of that poor and beloved People . . ."

He had been to the place yet he made no mention of a pile of stones.

The first account I have found of the pile of stones is in *The GayHead Light*, a small newspaper that came out only once, on April 11, 1866. On its front page an article by Richard L. Pease is headlined, "Indian Missions on Martha's Vineyard." Pease had been asked to write it by the editor. His article ends with the story of the pile of stones.

He wrote that "a large number of Indians from Gay Head" walked with the minister after the up-Island farewell meeting. "They were loth to part with each other. Finally, when within six miles of Edgartown, they halted by the roadside. . ." at the spot now called the Place on the Way-side.

"For years afterwards," he wrote, "as they passed that spot, made sacred by their last sight of their friend and teacher, they stopped to think of his instructions and recall his works, and strove to perpetuate the memory of the place of parting by adding stone after stone to the accumulating pile."

This, it seems, was the birth of the story. It's a lovely story, one to be treasured.

I think I'll keep believing it.

A.R.R

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Members occasionally ask: What can we do to help? They know that it takes a lot of effort to operate a historical society.

The biggest help you can be right now won't take much of your time.

What we need — and need desperately — is money. As you know, we are in a fund-raising drive to pay off the mortgages and to make it possible to preserve our historic buildings and their precious contents.

This journal, *The Intelligencer*, is beginning its 32nd year. It draws from the documents, maps, photographs and books in our library and archives for almost every article. With our new space we will be able to store these priceless materials properly and preserve them for generations to come. But that added space costs money, both to buy and to adapt.

Won't you please consider a three-year pledge to help your Society? We now have the space we desperately needed. It must be paid for.

We urgently need your help.

MAKE THIS CHRISTMAS HISTORICAL

Gift Memberships

Give a year's membership in the Society. The gift includes a subscription to the *Intelligencer* (four issues), plus free admission to our museums (including guest tickets), discounts on books, events and other items. The recipient will be notified of your gift. Send \$25 to Dukes County Historical Society for each gift membership.

Give a Book of Vineyard History

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