

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



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 32, NO. 4

MAY 1991

The Whip-poor-will
And James Thurber

by JOHN GUDE

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Thurber Reviews

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty

The Harbor View Hotel:
Now 100 Years Old

Did Radical Roger Williams
Outwit Businessman Mayhew?

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

•
Documents: *Jeremiah Pease Diary*
Bits & Pieces

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The Dukes County Historical Society was founded in 1922 to preserve and publish the history of Dukes County for the public benefit. It is a non-profit institution, supported entirely by membership dues, contributions and bequests, which are tax deductible. Its annual meeting is held each August in Edgartown.

The Society maintains two historic house museums, one in Edgartown, the other in Vineyard Haven.

In Edgartown, the Thomas Cooke House, circa 1765, on the corner of School and Cooke Streets, is a museum of Island history, open during the summer. Also in Edgartown are the Francis Foster Museum, the Capt. Francis Pease House and the Gale Huntington Library of History. These are open year-round. The Museum has a permanent exhibition of the Vineyard's maritime heritage. The Captain Pease House features changing exhibitions. The Library contains logs, journals, genealogies and Island documents, photographs and books.

Also in Edgartown are the Gay Head Lighthouse exhibit with the 1854 Fresnel lens and the Carriage Shed containing boats, wagons and an 1854 Button hand-pumper fire engine.

In Vineyard Haven, the Society maintains the Jirah Luce House, circa 1804. Due to a shortage of funds, it will not be open in the summer of 1991.

You are invited to support the Society by becoming a member. You will receive this journal four times a year and have free admission to our buildings.

The Whip-poor-will And James Thurber

by JOHN GUDE

A HIGHLIGHT in my memory, after all these years, is my friendship with James Thurber, the author-artist best known for his work on the staff of *The New Yorker* magazine. But Jim did much more than write for that publication. He wrote films: "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty." Broadway shows: "The Male Animal" and later, the smash hit, "A Thurber Carnival." And many books: *Is Sex Necessary?* (this with E.B. White) plus a dozen or so more.

A first-rate writer and artist, Jim was. A dear man and a true friend. I was with him when he died. It was one of the saddest moments of my life.

Along with Thurber, *The New Yorker* during those years had a diverse staff of writers, including S. J. Perelman, Wolcott Gibbs, John O'Hara, A. J. Liebling, Joseph Mitchell and Morris Markey. Although not a staffer, Robert Benchley was a regular contributor. It was a talented crowd. But, as Clifton Fadiman wrote at the time: "Thurber is the most individual, the least a servant to formula. He has the most unexpected and, I should say, the wisest mind. . . Thurber is more than a good writer. He is an artist."¹

Many have identified these men as "typical of The New Yorker school of humor," but to cite Fadiman again, there was no such "school." There was no more diverse group than this; these writers abhorred gags. Their humor was much richer, much deeper, than gag-writing. And the one with the richest and deepest humor was James Thurber.

¹ Clifford Fadiman, *Reading I've Liked*, Simon & Schuster, 1941, p.296.

JOHN GUDE retired some years ago and lives in the same Chilmark farmhouse where the Thurburs came to stay with him and Helen during the summer of the whip-poor-will. A longtime Society member, he has had several articles published in this journal.

I don't recall exactly how or when I first met Jim. It was sometime around 1930. I was working in the Press Department of the fledgling Columbia Broadcasting System, a "minor league" radio network at the time. Jim had been a staffer at *The New Yorker* since 1927.

As he told a *Vineyard Gazette* reporter some years later during a vacation in Edgartown, he started to work at the magazine as its managing editor:

Don't think it's any distinction. Everybody starts on *The New Yorker* as managing editor and works his way down. We have 37 ex-managing editors on the staff now and three of them are office boys.²

His career as managing editor didn't last long. His talent was in doing, not in telling others what to do. Soon he was writing short, humorous items for the "Talk of the Town" department. It was not until later that the magazine started publishing his cartoons, which began as doodles, many of them dashed off during conversations with E.B.(Andy) White, who shared the office.³ Jim would toss the doodles into the wastebasket, many ending up on the floor. Andy would pick them up and save those he liked, eventually getting them accepted for publication.

The sketches, some thought, looked as though they had been drawn by children. Thurber agreed. Anyone could draw that way, he told the *Gazette* reporter, who wrote, "he hopes they won't because then his pictures won't sell."

Thurber was a wonderful story teller, orally as well as on paper. He relished the humor he saw in human behavior. His work makes that abundantly clear. His humor was never vicious, never at someone's expense. There were no true villains, only interesting characters, lovably interesting characters. Even his "bad guys" were lovable. That was because he was genuinely fond of his fellow humans, even as he laughed at their idiosyncracies.

² *Vineyard Gazette*, August 20, 1940.

³ Elwyn Brooks White picked up the nickname "Andy" at Cornell. Students named White were called "Andy," in honor of the college's founder and first president, Andrew Dickson White. Andy, who didn't like Elwyn or Brooks, was happy to keep it. Incidentally, the author also has a nickname: "Jap," its origin equally frivolous.

At the time, I was doing publicity for CBS radio (there was, of course, no television then). We were trying to be a competitor of giant RCA and its network, NBC. The CBS flagship station, if it could be called that, was WCBS in New York and its major stations outside New York were WBBM in Chicago and WCAU in Philadelphia. William Paley, the late genius whose dream CBS was, had all he could do to keep the tiny infant alive. We occupied in total, including studios and offices, only two floors on the southeast corner of 52nd Street and Madison Avenue.

I believe it was in 1934 that Julius Seebach, head of CBS programing, invited Thurber to host, unpaid, a conversational program (today we call them talk shows) which would promote *The New Yorker* and would, as Thurber said, "fill the time when the piano player was on his coffee break." Because of our friendship, I was involved in setting up the show. The producer was Ann Honeycutt of CBS. Thurber's story-telling talents carried the program, but he didn't get along with the director (whose name I have forgotten) so the program didn't last very long. Anyway, Jim didn't like radio. He preferred paper and ink.

At about this time, my wife, Helen, and I, along with our infant daughter, Liz, rented a cottage from Prof. Marcus Jernegan on Trapp's Pond in Edgartown.⁴ It was our first vacation on the Vineyard. We spent the month of July discovering the joys of fishing and crabbing, among other wonderful experiences. In August we moved up to Chilmark, renting the Moore house on the road leading down to Menemsha Creek.

Each summer for several years we came back to the Moore house. My wife and children would be there for two months and I would commute on weekends from Manhattan, usually on the overnight train, *The Cape Codder*.

In 1936, Jim, who had just gone through a divorce, was living alone, feeling a bit sorry for himself, so I urged him to join us at Menemsha. He came down for a weekend. It

⁴ See *Intelligencer*, November 1986, for more about the Jernegans.

was during that summer, as I recall, that he began to notice changes were occurring in his good eye. He had only one working eye; the other had been blinded in a boyhood accident. As you would expect, any eye problem was of enormous concern to him.

But it didn't keep him from enjoying that Menemsha weekend. He loved the place and the activity down at the Creek. This was before the 1938 hurricane so there was no bulkhead as there is today. In fact, there was no basin. It was just a collection of fishing shacks along the Creek, each with its own tiny dock. I recall that there was an ice house next to the fish market which you got to by walking on a path across the dunes. Blacktop didn't exist at Menemsha then.

The following summer Jim, along with Ann Honeycutt and Edward Angley, a New York Associated Press correspondent, rented a cottage down at the Creek, overlooking the fishing shacks. They were an endearing trio of blithesome people. If their somewhat unconventional lifestyle (in that period in history) causes raised eyebrows or suspicions of wild sex orgies, dismiss such thoughts at once. Here were three friends, all possessed of great wit and charm, who shared a common, broad-based philosophy of life.

Nobody among all the friends we had in common ever called Ann Honeycutt by her given name. She was called Honey by everybody we knew, except Ed Angley, who called her — and all women under fifty — Sugar. Or, if I can put his deep-South accent into written form, Shugah.

The small cottage had a porch and the three of them, along with guests such as the Gudes, sat out there most every afternoon watching the sun set behind Cuttyhunk, drinking and talking. Jim was fascinated by the scene. The green light which blinked all night at the end of the jetty intrigued him. He composed a song extolling it. The title was "Menemsha Light on Menemsha Bight."

Menemsha Light On Menemsha Bight

Words and Music by James Thurber, 1937

*There's a light from stars,
And from fine cigars.
There's the light from the sun at noon.
There's the light that glows,
From the "stops" and "goes."
There's the light from the harvest moon.
There's the light from the fire called fox,
And the light from old flint locks,
But Menemsha Light, on Menemsha Bight,
Is the light that appeals to me!*

(As remembered by John Gude)

The music to the lyrics was never put on paper, surviving only in memory.

In that interview with the *Gazette* reporter, mentioned earlier, he called it "a sweet little song about the Menemsha light on Menemsha Bight, a song which makes no sense at all and is meant to be sung by a mixed barbershop chorus late at night, when you are drinking."

The song's only public performance, as far as I know, was not under anything like the circumstances Jim described. It was in a program at the Chilmark Tavern. The show was for the benefit of the Island's Animal Rescue League,⁵ founded by Katherine Foote. I helped direct the show and taught about a dozen teen-age Chilmark girls who made up the chorus to sing Jim's song. It was a big hit, as you might imagine. Unfortunately, Jim wasn't there to hear it, he was in New York at the time.

Thurber loved to sing, although he was not very good at it, and it was a joy to hear him, slightly off-key, joyfully rendering his song as he ingested the beautiful Menemsha evening along with his whiskey.

⁵ Now the Mass. SPCCA on Vineyard Haven Road, Edgartown.

Within a year or two, he remarried and with Helen Wismer, his new wife, spent several vacations at the Harborside Inn at Edgartown. Helen and my wife had known each other for years, having been classmates at Mount Holyoke College.

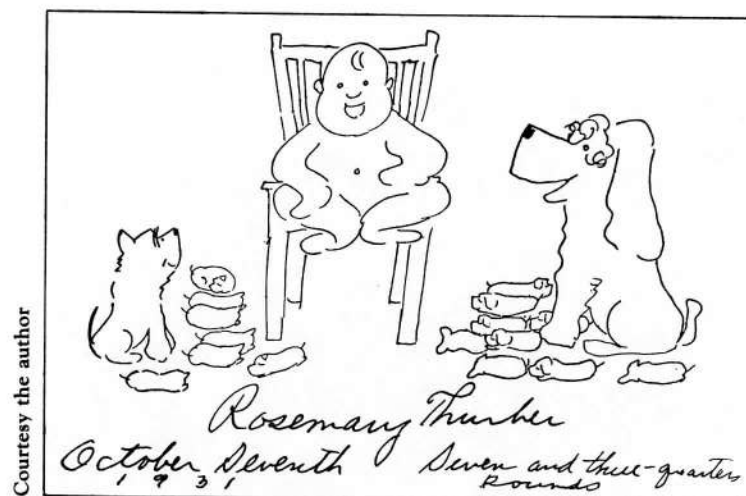
I think Jim preferred Menemsha, but Helen seemed to enjoy the less primitive life style down-Island. During these years, he was very busy. A show of his drawings took him to London one year and the next he spent several months in France. In 1940, his play, "The Male Animal," written with his great friend and former classmate at Ohio State, Elliot Nugent, opened on Broadway, bringing them fame and, more important, fortune.

But he became increasingly restless as his vision problem continued and he underwent, as I remember, five eye operations. None seemed successful. His worry increased. Being blind was something he, perhaps even more than most of us, was frightened of. His whole life was built around the keen observation of people and animals and of transcribing what he saw onto paper as words and drawings. Going blind would be grand tragedy, the worst thing that could happen.

One eye operation was in 1941. During his recovery, he and Helen rented Middle Mark, a house on Middle Road in Chilmark. It was owned by Arthur Urbane Dilley, who also owned High Mark and a beach house called Water Mark.

My wife and I (her name is also Helen) had bought an old farmhouse across from Lucy Vincent's place the year before and, with our children (by this time there were three), were spending our first summer in our own house. We were only a mile or so away from the Thurbers.

When they arrived on the Vineyard, Jim seemed to be doing fine. Along with the Middle Mark rental came the use of the beach house, Water Mark, on Stone Wall Beach and we all enjoyed that beautiful, unspoiled spot. Jim didn't go in the water. He preferred to sit and watch the waves



Courtesy the author

Birth announcement by Thurber for his only child. Her mother was Althea Adams, his first wife, who was granted custody in the divorce.

and the people.

As he confided to the *Gazette* reporter, the ocean didn't appeal to him: "I love the Vineyard. There are so many nice, quiet little roads that take you away from the water." About swimming: "I don't believe in getting wet. The salt was undoubtedly put in [the ocean] to keep people out."

Nor did he like boating. "I loathe sailboats. . . The *Queen Mary* is the only kind of boat I like. . . you don't see the water for days."

Despite this lighthearted bantering with the reporter, he was becoming more withdrawn, more discouraged, about his eye and its failure to improve. He turned more and more to alcohol to raise his spirits as his depression deepened.

He became difficult to live with and his wife, Helen, began calling my wife, Helen, asking her to come over to Middle Mark to help her cheer him up. My Helen seemed to have a special way with him. He and the two Helens would sit for hours, making up silly rhymes, trying to take his mind off his failing eyesight. And to keep him from drinking.

Then one day in Manhattan, I got a telephone call from



Menemsha Creek at the time Thurber rented one of the houses at right.

my wife telling me that I must drop everything and come up to Chilmark. She couldn't take it anymore, she said. Helen Thurber had called and asked if she and Jim could move into our house, he was too much for her to handle at Middle Mark. Helen couldn't refuse her tearful plea.

But with three young children to take care of and to cook for, she didn't think she could manage two guests without me. She insisted that I come up from New York. She was desperate, it was clear.

I couldn't get away until the weekend. When I arrived, the Thurbers were at our house. Jim clearly had been drinking and was deeply disturbed. As soon as I could talk him into it, the two of us went outside and walked around the yard so I could talk to him alone. I tried to convince him that things would work out if he would just get control of himself. He couldn't allow himself to disintegrate, as he was doing. But he didn't seem to be listening.

Suddenly, he stopped and grabbed my arm, squeezing it with such force that it had bruise marks for a week. He looked at me helplessly, "Please, Jap, please, don't let them

put me away."

There was such desperation in his voice and such fear in his viselike grip, that I knew I had to do something. And immediately. He was on the verge, I felt certain, of a serious breakdown.

Fortunately, we knew a psychiatrist in Chilmark, an acquaintance of ours, Dr. Ruth Fox, who, with her husband, the writer McAlister Coleman, lived on North Road. They had bought the old Cape Higgon schoolhouse and converted it into a lovely residence. I called her and she came over right away.⁶

She came every day for a week or so before having to leave the Island. She saved his life, I truly believe. He was very fortunate that she was there at the time. When she left, she urged us to get him back to New York and gave us the name of a doctor for him to see.

That summer, despite his problems, Jim produced two short stories, both inspired by his Vineyard vacation. Both were published in *The New Yorker*. The first, "The Departure of Emma Inch," was written while he was still in Chilmark. It tells of them coming to the Vineyard from New York with a woman, Emma Inch, whom they had just hired as cook.

With the Thurbers, she and her dog, Feely, an aged Boston bull, boarded the Fall River Line steamer, *Priscilla*, in Manhattan. The animal was seasick all the way to Fall River. Emma was frantic, but they convinced her all would be fine the rest of the trip. They took a taxi to New Bedford, where, after much persuasion, Emma and Feely boarded the steamer for the Vineyard. It was only a short trip over calm water, Jim lied.

Buzzards Bay was rough and Feely got as green as a bulldog can. Finally, the steamer arrived at Woods Hole where it docked to pick up passengers. When the gang plank was in place, Emma headed for it, announcing tearfully, "I'll get off here."

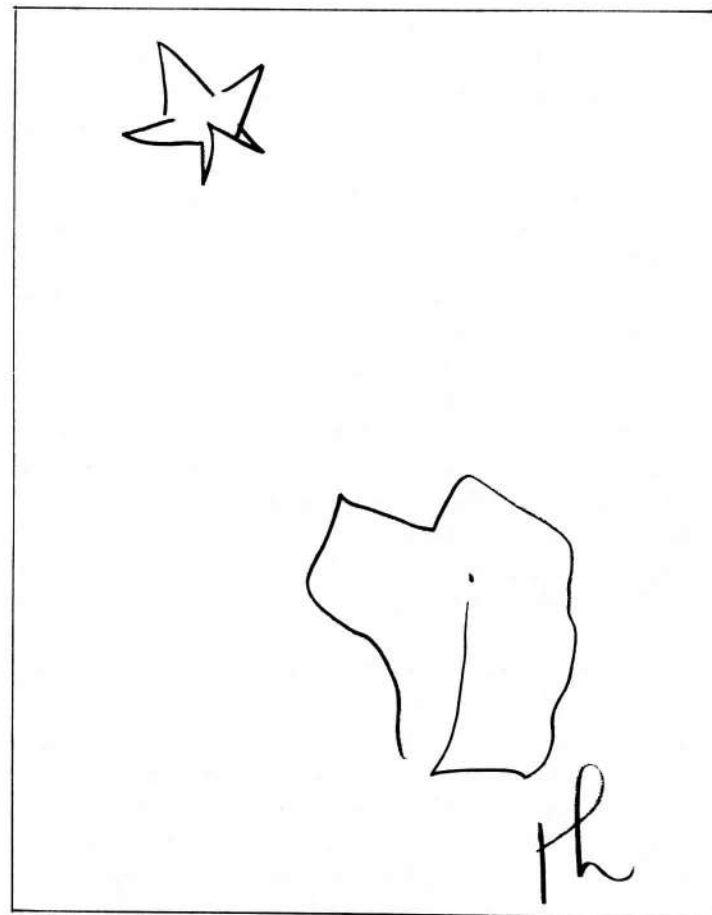
⁶ Their daughter, Ann Coleman Allen, is now the Society Librarian.

Courtesy the author



The author rescued these doodles from the trash and got Thurber to sign them. Above is actual size; on opposite page, about half size.

The two of them, Emma and Feely, got off, despite Jim's pleading. She had no idea where she was, no sense of how to get back to New York.



"How do you expect to get home from here?" Thurber shouted as she walked down the gangplank. Emma stopped and looked back. "We'll walk. We like to walk, Feely and me."

As the boat pulled away from the dock, "Emma Inch was standing there, her suitcase at her feet, her dog under one arm, waving good-by to us with her free hand. I had never seen her smile before, but she was smiling now."⁷

⁷ James Thurber, *The Thurber Carnival*, Harper & Brothers, p.115. Jim gave her the cash he had in his pocket and always wondered how she managed to get back to New York.

The Thurbers arrived in Chilmark without a cook. I got in touch with Ben Mayhew and he quickly found a young woman who took the job — and performed well. Mrs. Thurber, bless her, was helpless in the kitchen, she couldn't even make tea.

The second story, written when he returned to New York, has no joy, no humor. A horrific tale, it is clearly the result of his depression that summer. He had spent many sleepless nights at Middle Mark, tormented by the thought of approaching blindness, listening to the sounds in the woods around the house. Jim was a product of the city and nature's sounds were of intense interest.

Among them, boring into his brain every night, was the melancholy, repetitive song of a whip-poor-will, common in those days in Chilmark. It is a song that can drive a well-adjusted mind to distraction. For someone in Jim's condition, it was torture. As his character in the story, Kinstrey, exclaimed: "That damn bird! I'd like to wring its neck."

The story is titled "The Whip-poor-will." Its mood and its ending make clear the overwrought condition he was in during those restless days and nights at Middle Mark.⁸

Both of these tales are different from the usual Thurber fare, but especially "The Whip-poor-will." Both, while partially fictional, are rooted in the events of that anxious summer. They memorialize the depth of his depression.

His eye did not improve. Soon he was virtually blind. Yet he continued to write and to draw, dictating his pieces to his secretary, a wonderful woman who understood him completely. His sketches were drawn oversize, large enough to be visible to his weakened eye through a magnifying glass. He used many sheets of yellow paper to pen a short letter. It was slow and tedious, but it didn't dull his creativity. Nor his keen perception of humanity.

⁸ The story, like "Emma Inch," first appeared in *The New Yorker*. It was reprinted in *Alarms and Diversions*, Harper & Brothers, and also in *My World and Welcome to It*, Harcourt, Brace, N.Y.

Gradually, Jim adjusted to his handicap, becoming his old self again. But neither he nor I ever forgot that summer at Middle Mark, the summer of the whip-poor-will.



Another typical Thurber doodle.

Thurber Reviews *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*

On July 14, 1947, Jamie Thurber, as the Gudes called him, wrote a birthday letter to Helen Gude. It covered a variety of subjects, including the news that his wife had tripped on a rug in the bathroom and fallen, breaking two ribs.

She was thus unable to attend, a few days later, the "sneak preview" of his movie, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, starring Danny Kaye. It was the first time Thurber had seen the film and he tells Helen what he thought of it.

The pages in his letter that give his opinion of the movie are reproduced on the following pages: The first two lines on the first sheet complete a sentence that began, "She is quite miserable, what with her fracture, the Curse, and me . . ."

After his sight loss, Thurber wrote

with a blunt, soft-lead pencil on bright yellow paper. It was a large, bold script which, because he could see only faintly what he was writing, is often a scrawl, impossible to decipher, as you will discover. The size of the script meant that even short letters required many pages. This letter covered 18 pages, seven of which are printed here.

Most of the seven pages describe his reaction to Danny Kaye's interpretation of Walter Mitty. He was, as he had every right to be, very possessive of his character, a character who has become part of American legend. Mitty was born in a short story in *The New Yorker* that was reprinted in at least two books of Thurber's works. But his universal appeal took him into other media.

Along with the film which Thurber

writes of here, there were several radio programs featuring Mitty. Correspondence between Thurber and Gude indicates that the author was not happy with how script writers portrayed this man. Early in 1957, after reworking parts of a radio script, he wrote to "Jap" Gude, who was his agent as well as his friend:

"Walter would not mention his age, even by inference, since in the dreamer's mind he is always in his thirties. He should never actually kill anyone, the way they had it, and he should not be equipped with a weapon superior to his enemy's. Walter is the boy who uses fountain pens or nail files to fix complicated machines and he would use his fists to overcome pistols. I mentioned before that he should not have a Stutz Bearcat, since only the rich and privileged boys had them."

In another letter to Gude, Thurber wrote:

"It [the radio script] was written by an experienced hand, who seems good

enough not to have made the mistake that Walter is humorless. Nobody loves a humorless character and it would be impossible for a humorless man to have the imagination of Water. The author should know that the funny penguin in the Admiral scene is the invention of Walter, since he writes his dreams in his own mind. . . The way the Screen Guild players mangled Walter recently was commented on in a column or two. . . The guy that thinks that Garry Moore could play Walter scares me. . . I will keep an open mind about all this, Jap, and not try to bring up any merely petty objections."

The final two pages reproduced here provide a clue to the person, James Thurber. He apparently was not above sending in unsolicited questions to radio quiz programs, which were very popular during this period. A question about dogs, a subject of which he was certainly an expert, had been accepted and, with a dash of Thurber wit, he describes the prize he won.

sneak preview
Walter Mitty

Part of the full sheet, opposite, in the actual size of Thurber's handwriting. The following pages show the 8 1/2 by 11-inch sheets reduced two-thirds.

but will recover from
all save the last.

Her accident kept
her from going to N.Y.
last Thursday for the
sneak preview of
Walter Mitty.

but will recover from all save the last. Her accident kept her from going to N.Y. for the sneak preview of Walter Mitty.

km? Oh, the
 picture is hodgepodge
 and heartbreak. The
 first 30 minutes are
 fine, then the thing
 goes to hell.

[?] Oh, the picture is hodge podge and heartbreak. The first 30 minutes are fine, then the thing goes to hell.

on the early dream
 scenes, especially as

Gaylord Mitty, the
 river gambler, Kaye

supports my old belief
 that he is a skilful,
 even subtle actor,
 and there are some lovely

In the early dream scenes, especially as Gaylord Mitty, the river gambler, Kaye supports my old belief that he is a skilful, even subtle actor, and there are some lovely

moments until plain
orapadola are forer

exotica take over
beginning in the RAF
dream, done superbly
till he begins to
gittle-gattle and
yammer, a concept

moments until plain orapadola [?] and fancy exotica take over, beginning in the RAF dream, done superbly till he begins to gittle-gattle [?] and yammer, a concept

of his wife's in which
there are long moments

of imitating a carriage
horse breaking wind.
Melodrama of a musty
variety sets in and
the comedy is in part
vulgar + crass.

of his wife's in which there are long moments of imitating a carriage horse breaking wind. Melodrama of a musty [?] variety sets in and the comedy is in part vulgar and crass.

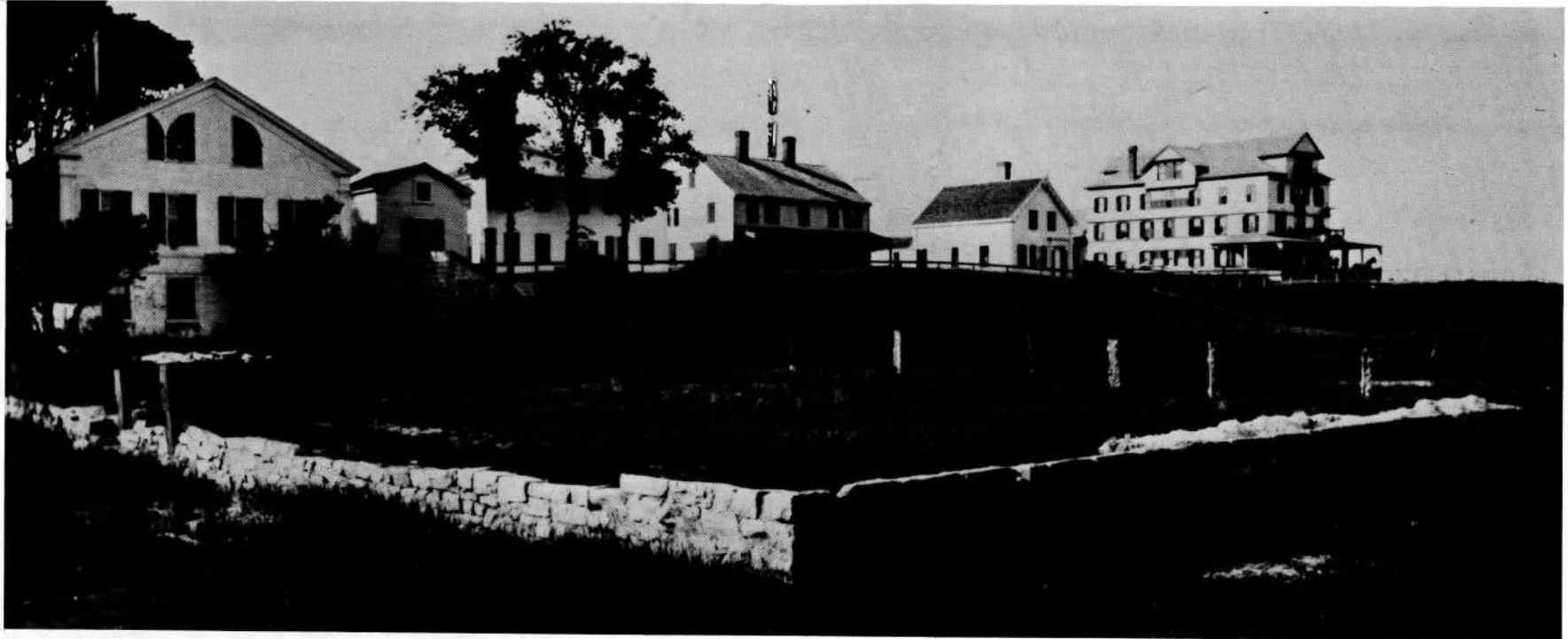
Put it down to loss
and loss, and experience

When the Hunting &
Fishing Club of the Air
used a question of mine
about dogs, I won
a Benrus wrist watch,

Put it down to loss and loss, and experience. When the Hunting & Fishing Club of the Air used a question of mine about dogs, I won a Benrus wrist watch,

an insecticide bomb,
and 90 boxes of matches
for my camping trips
which strike even after
4 hours of submersion
in water. I could only
stay under 30 seconds
for the lightest fine

an insecticide bomb, and 90 boxes of matches for my camping trips, which strike even after 4 hours of submersion in water. I could only stay under 30 seconds, but they lighted fine.



North end of Water St., the week the Harbor View opened. Next to hotel is Jeremiah Pease, Jr.'s house; behind trees, Jeremiah Senior's. Foundation may have been the candleworks.

The Harbor View Hotel, Now 100 Years Old

ONE hundred years ago this summer, Edgartown made a second major effort to become an important summer resort. It had been in decline for a decade while Cottage City, the Island's first watering hole, was booming. There, several huge hotels were prospering, their clientele pouring off the frequent steamers that arrived there from the mainland.

Once before, Edgartown had tried to cut into the other town's summer business. Some of its citizens, with financial assistance from the town, had built a railroad from the steamboat wharf in Cottage City to the Mattakesett Lodge at Katama. But that had not helped the village, even though for some years the Katama hotel had done well.

Now, in 1891, Edgartown investors were making a second attempt by opening an impressive hostelry, the Harbor View Hotel on Starbuck's Neck, the high land overlooking the harbor entrance. The hotel's first guests, Mr. and Mrs. George B. Elliott of Boston, signed the first line of the register on June 22, 1891.

There were other hotels in town, but they were older and operated as year-round inns, not as resort hotels on the beach. The new Harbor View excited the residents, who flocked to see it in the days before its opening, walking through its public rooms and peeking into its bedrooms, marvelling at the gas lights in every room and the size of the public parlors.

Even the illustrious Dr. Tucker, patent medicine

millionaire from Cottage City, came to inspect the building and predicted that it would bring hundreds of visitors to town.

That first summer was a great success. Manager J.W.Drew put on musical programs, recitations and similar entertainments of the Nineties to the delight of his guests. One evening, it was Prof. Frank L. Taylor, the eminent blind musical soloist, who entertained. Later that same week, Miss Mattie Josephine Atkins, elocutionist from Denver, Colorado, a guest of the hotel, was persuaded to perform, which she did magnificently. Her program included "Flying Jim's Last Leap," "The Debating Society," two scenes from Macbeth, as well as a recitation and song entitled "Dutch Dolls." She concluded her program with "The Slave's Lullaby." The guests were enthralled.

But the biggest event of that first summer was the reception and entertainment given on July 23rd by Manager and Mrs. J.W. Drew. More than 400 Islanders were invited to mingle with the hotel guests in an evening to be remembered.

Miss Christine Pease wore a gown of cream henrietta and silk. Miss Laura Jernegan was radiant in mahogany satin. Mrs. George B. Young, wife of the distinguished judge from St.Paul, Minn., was the envy of all with her white and heliotrope China silk gown and diamonds. The hostess and wife of the manager, Mrs. Drew, wore black figured silk grenadine and Nile green cheffonne. The *Gazette* printed a long list of the ladies and their fashions.

It was Edgartown's most gala event. The string quartette of the Fitchburg band provided music for dancing, which went on until a late hour.

But despite the success of his reception, Mr. Drew did not return the following summer. The new manager was W. D. Carpenter, formerly of the Mattakesett Lodge at Katama. Mr. Drew took over the manager's job at Mattakesett.

It was not an opportune time to open a summer hotel. The nation was beginning a financial downturn, which became



Harbor View Hotel in June 1891; "built on a generous scale," the ad read.

the Depression of 1893. The Vineyard was not exempt. Several buildings, including two hotels, in Cottage City burned to the ground. Another, the Wesley House, had been set afire by its owner, but the blaze was put out before major damage was done. Owner Augustus G. Wesley spent some time in jail as a consequence.

So the first years were not easy for the fledgling hotel at Starbuck's Neck. In 1895, another new manager was hired. He was the Superintendent of Schools in Winthrop, Massachusetts, F. A. Douglas. After two years as manager, he bought the place from its worried owners, Messrs. Walker, Mayhew and Townsend. Within a decade, he had doubled the Harbor View's size, put in a tennis court, and turned it into a profitable hostelry.

These photographs were made from glass plates taken by Richard H. Shute, Edgartown's premier photographer; the first two on June 29, 1891, the others in 1899.

They provide a good look at the hotel that began Edgartown's climb to fame as a summer resort.



Parlor, with fireplace and wicker furniture. Photographers will marvel at the depth of focus and the even lighting. It was obviously a long exposure.

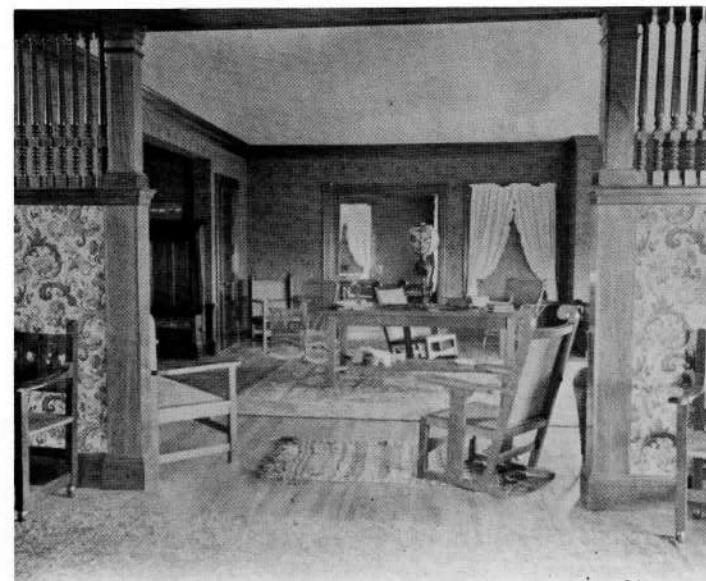


Opposite end of the parlor with its upright piano. Notice the gaslighted chandeliers. The main entrance is the wide door behind low partition.

Prints courtesy Alison Shaw



Dining room with family-type seating. No intimate tables for two. "Fish and other sea food will be provided, fresh from the surrounding waters."



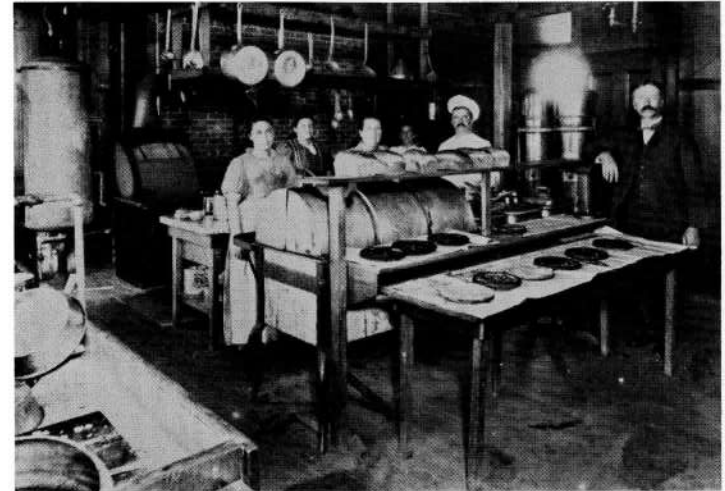
The library. These photos were taken about 1899 after former manager, Frank Douglas, bought the hotel and enlarged it. This is part of the addition.



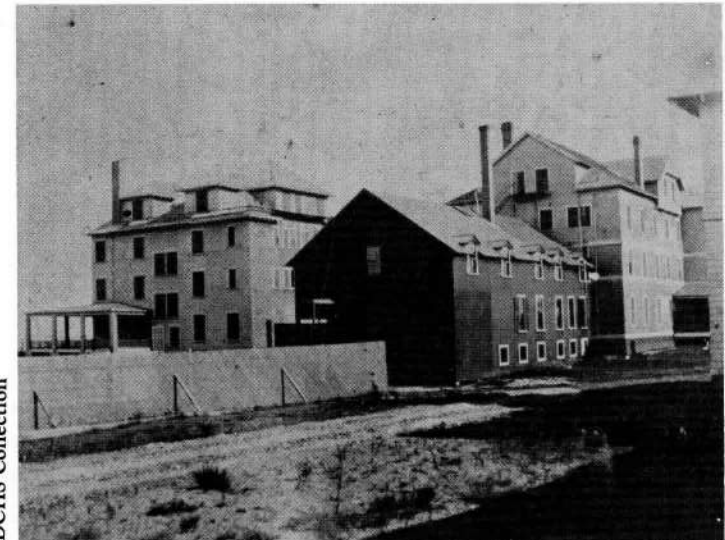
Bedroom with towels drying over rocking chair in front of washbasin. "The bedrooms are all outside rooms with all hair mattresses, woven wire springs. Bath and toilet rooms on each floor."



Waitresses and housekeepers pose for photographer Richard Shute on the back porch of the new addition. Head waitress Addie Kennon stands in the center. Visible in the background is part of the kitchen ell.



Kitchen with loaves of bread and various pies, fresh from the oven. The rates, all meals included: "from \$2.50 to \$3.50 per day, special terms by the week and season." At right, the new owner, Frank A. Douglas, from Winthrop,



DCHS Collection

Rear view shows the new addition at left. The black building contains the kitchen and laundry. Family visible at right is a 12-room "cottage" for private parties. It was moved from Water and Cottage streets.



Hotel office. Desk clerk is Shamus O'Shaughnessy. Counter was made by William P. Chadwick. Calendar shows August 1899.



The building at right was added after Frank Douglas bought the hotel, as was the tennis court on the front lawn. The brochure reads: "Sudden or extreme changes of temperature are unknown. Fogs are very rare . . . the situation of the hotel out on the point renders it always cool and breezy. On every breath that blows from the surrounding waters, comes refreshing coolness, renewed life, healthful ozone."

Did Radical Roger Williams Outwit Businessman Mayhew?

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

WHAT kind of a businessman was Thomas Mayhew? If we can believe the written record, he was not a very good one. In fact, there is evidence that he was guilty of so much negligence that it came close to being fraudulent.

In England, he had been a mercer, a tradesman dealing in textiles. It was this business, legend tells us, that brought him to the attention of Matthew Craddock, the first governor of Massachusetts Bay. Mayhew had sold to Craddock's first settlers the bedding and similar textile goods they would need in New England.

Craddock, who had invested a lot of money in the Massachusetts Bay settlement with the hopes of making a profit, sent Mayhew to the colony as his agent in 1631. Craddock himself never came to the New World, depending entirely upon his employees, or as they were called then, his servants, to run the farm and trading post at Medford on the Mystic River. There were other branches of the Craddock business, including a fishing station at Salem.¹

Mayhew lasted less than five years as agent, holding the position from late in 1631 until 1636. His short stay was not unusual. Craddock had a reputation for being impatient with his employees. That's how Mayhew got the position, replacing the agent who had spoken out against the church and government of the colony. He was fired and banished, after having his ears cut off by the Puritans.

In various letters to Gov. John Winthrop, Craddock

¹ For more about Craddock and Mayhew see *Intelligencer*, May 1990.

ARTHUR R. RAILTON is the Editor of this journal.

describes his dissatisfaction with Mayhew's work.² But he is rarely specific, writing that Mayhew's replacement, a man named Jolliffe, would tell Winthrop the details. He does make statements such as: "The greylfe [grief] I have been putt to by the most vyle bad dealinge of Thomas Mahew hath & doeth so much disquiet my mynd, as . . . never aney thing ded in the lyke manner. The Lord in mercy freey me from this. . ."³

In a 1637 letter, Craddock told Winthrop that he had invested more than 11,500 pounds in Massachusetts, but instead of receiving any profits, he was continually "charged by Tho. Mayhewe . . . with great somes. . ." for a variety of expenses.

Mayhew's final mistake, the one that apparently brought about his firing, is described in a series of letters, also written to Winthrop, from Roger Williams, the radical founder of Providence Plantations. Although Williams doesn't explain it that way, he does seem to have bested Mayhew in a rather unbusinesslike transaction just before Williams was banished from the colony.

To understand how the deal came about, it is necessary to review quickly the events leading to the banishment of Roger Williams by Massachusetts Bay, an act which brought about a financial loss to Craddock and the founding of Providence Plantations.

When Thomas Mayhew first arrived in the colony, Roger Williams was the teacher (assistant to the preacher) at the church in Plymouth. While there he became a friend of the Wampanoags, as he wrote later, lodging "with them in their filthy Smoakie holes . . . to gaine their tounge. . ." He grew sympathetic with the Indian viewpoint that the English had no right to ownership of the land. It belonged to them, the native Americans.

He soon was speaking out on the subject, declaring the

² Craddock knew that Governor Winthrop was a friend of Mayhew. In his letter, he calls him "an intymate Well-willer to Mr. Mayhewe."

³ *Mass. Hist. Soc. Collections*, vol. VI, 4th Series, "The Winthrop Papers," pp. 122-3.

Royal Patent invalid, arguing that merely by their so-called "discovery" of New England, the English, in the name of the King, did not have the right to declare possession. Not content with antagonizing the King, he also took on the Plymouth church, demanding that it totally separate itself from the Church of England. The parent church, he said, was the official church of the King and subject to his orders. No government, he argued, had rights over a person's religion, nor did a church have any authority over a citizen's government. These two institutions must be kept separate, not interrelated, as they were in England.

These were radical views. In the colony, the church and the government were closely connected. To vote, you had to be a member of the church. To hold any office, church membership was required. Not membership in any church, but in the Puritan church.

Williams spoke out bluntly against these policies and, as one might expect, was called to task for his views.

Those in power in the colony, men like Rev. John Cotton and Gov. John Winthrop, saw him as a threat, not only to the colony's stability, but to their relationship with England, which they depended upon for economic support. When Williams refused to back down, he was dismissed from the church at Plymouth. Salem, a more courageous community, quickly hired him to take the place of Rev. Samuel Skelton who had just died. In the spring of 1635, Williams moved to Salem where he continued his outspoken demands for the separation of church and state.

His geographical move did not protect him from the authorities. Twice in the summer of 1635, he was called before a board in Boston and told that he must change his views. In August, he became ill and action against him was delayed. Then in October, he was called before his critics once again and was told to forego his errors or be banished. He asked for time to reconsider, stating that he was still too ill to defend himself. But in January 1636, the authorities ran out of patience and told him to admit his errors or he

would be banished.

Governor Winthrop, while publicly opposing his views, continued to be his friend for years. He warned Williams that troops were being sent to imprison him until passage to England became available. Williams hurriedly left his house in Salem, avoiding capture, settling for a brief time in Seekonk.

A clever man, he had prepared himself in advance for this move. Upon receiving the warning in October 1635, he had gone to Thomas Mayhew, agent for Matthew Craddock, and purchased the supplies that he would need to "survive in the wilderness." He had no money, or so he said, so he asked to purchase them on credit, using his house and ten acres of land as collateral.

Mayhew agreed to the deal, selling him more than 70 pounds worth of goods, with the understanding that he would be paid from the money Williams would get when he sold his house and land. But if he was banished, he would not be allowed to sell his property; it would be forfeited to the colony. Furthermore, Williams had never received the clear title from the previous owner, the widow of the former minister, who had been given the house by the town of Salem after her husband's death.

Aware of these difficulties, Williams, with the approval of the widow, conveyed the property to John Woolcott, a friend, before the banishment was ordered. After Williams was banished, Woolcott sold the house and 10 acres of land to William Lord for a price set by two arbitrators. Because of the clouded nature of the title, the arbitrators, both friends of Williams, set the price at only 15 pounds and 10 shillings, far less than the property was worth and only a fraction of the amount owed to Craddock.⁴

As agreed, the money from the sale was given to Mayhew, but there were still 50 or 60 pounds owed, Mayhew claimed. Williams saw it differently. He said Mayhew had agreed to take, as full payment, whatever the property sold for.

Craddock, looking at a loss of more than 50 pounds, was furious. This was too much, after all his other losses, so he immediately fired Mayhew.

To Williams's credit, it must be said that he spent the next few years trying to raise money to pay what Mayhew claimed he still owed. But it was not easy. He had no income. He tried to collect some bills that were owed him, but he had only limited success.

Before Williams left Salem, he had sold all his "better apparell" (and his wife's as well), plus a watch (worth three goats), to George Ludlowe, who traded with the Virginia colony. Ludlowe kept promising to pay for the watch with tobacco brought up from Virginia, but the tobacco never came. Ludlowe wrote that his vessel had sunk in a storm and, while the cargo had been recovered, the tobacco had been rendered valueless. He promised another shipment. Williams enlisted the help of his friend, Governor Winslow, in 1637:

Sir, I forget not your loving remembrance of me concerning Mr. Ludlowe's debt. I yet know not where that tobacco is: but desire if Mr. Craddock's agent, Mr. Jolly, would accept it, that it may be delivered to him in part of some payments for which I have made over my howse to Mr. Mayhew.⁵

Apparently, the tobacco did not arrive and Craddock was not paid. In October 1637, Ludlowe wrote to Williams informing him that he had

...paid Mr. Mayhew 8 [pounds] in lue of the 3 goats I should give you for your watch, but I conceive that there will be some more money due to you for the goats [would be] worth more than the 8 pounds...

Of course, by this time, Mayhew was no longer in Craddock's employ and was living in Watertown. Whether Craddock ever got the eight pounds or not, we don't know. We do know that in June 1638, Joliffe sued Williams for the money still owed, although it is difficult to see how he could bring suit against a man banished from the colony and

⁵ *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, Glenn W. LaFantasie, Editor, Brown U. Press, 1988, vol.I, p.127.

⁴ *Historical Collections of the Essex Institute*, vol.III, No.2, pp.109-111.

therefore without the right to return to argue his case or to pay any judgement. Williams again wrote to his friend, Gov. John Winthrop, from Providence:

. . . I owe betweene 50 and 60 [pounds] to Mr. Craddock for Commodities received from Mr. Mayhew. Mr. Mayhew will testifie (being Mr. Craddock's agent), he was Content to take payment, what (and when) my howse in Salem yealded. Accordingly, I long since put it into his hand, and he into Mr. Jollies, who beside my voluntarie Act and his Attachment since, sues as I heare for dammages, wch I question since I have not faild agst Contract and Content of the first Agent [Mayhew] but the holy pleasure of the Lord be done: unto whose mercifull Armes (with all due respect) I leave you . . .⁶

Whether or not the financial dispute was ever settled is unknown. Williams, in October 1638, was still counting on Ludlowe's tobacco, as he wrote to Governor Winslow, offering it as payment for a bill he owed the Governor:

. . . or if you better like from that debt of Mr. Ludlow for which he promised your Wo[rshi]p to pay me 800 weight of Tobacco but did not and I presume your Wo[rshi]p may with Ease procure it, but I subscribe . . . to your choice . . .

Years later, in 1677, defending himself against charges that he had profited from his settlement in Providence, he wrote to the Commissioners of the United Colonies:

. . . it is not true that I was Employed by any, made Covenant with any, was supplied by any, or desired any to come with me into these parts. My Soules desire was to doe the Natives good, and to that End to learne their language . . . and therefore desire not to be troubled with English Company . . . God was pleased to give me a Painfull, Patient spirit to lodge with them in their filthy Smoakie holes (even whilst I lived at Plymmouth and Salem) to gaine their Toung, etc. . . I mortgaged my howse and Land at Salem (worth some hundreths) for supplies . . .⁷

He failed to mention that the property "worth some hundreths" had been sold by his agent for less than 16 pounds and that, thanks to a mistake by Thomas Mayhew,

the Providence settlement which eventually became the state of Rhode Island, had been heavily subsidized by Matthew Craddock. Unwittingly, of course.

There is one point that we can speculate about: Had Craddock not fired him after the Williams transaction, would Thomas Mayhew have stayed on as Craddock's agent? And never have come to Martha's Vineyard? How different our history would be had that happened.

There will be more about Thomas Mayhew, Governor, missionary and Lord of the Manor of Tisbury, in the August issue, in Part III of the series, "The English and the Indians on Martha's Vineyard."

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol.I, p.160. There seems to be no record of any suit having been filed.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol.II, pp. 750-51.

Documents

Jeremiah Pease Diary

This was certainly an exciting time in Jeremiah's life and in Vineyard history as well.

It was in this period that the Congregational Church in Edgartown lost its most famous pastor, Rev. Joseph Thaxter, who died at age 83 after serving his flock for 47 years. It was also the period when Rev. "Reformation John" Adams put on the Island's first camp meeting. It was on West Chop, not East Chop where today's campground stands. It was held only once there.

A strong religious revival was going on during the period, its fervor due, in large part, to Reverend Adams, who had recovered from his "deranged state" of a month earlier. Adams completed his tour on the Island and left, but seems not to have departed on good terms with Jeremiah, a convert of his.

Jeremiah is promoted from a part-time inspector of customs to Inspector, something of which he was understandably proud. His work load is great as an unusually large number of vessels come and go, many of them whalers.

But the biggest event is Jeremiah's sale of the old Methodist church to the Chilmark Methodists, who carried it up-Island and rebuilt it as their house of worship. He also engineered the purchase of the land on which the new and much larger Methodist Church was built. The church is now the Edgartown Town Hall.

Indeed, it was a busy few months for Jeremiah.

March 1827 (continued)

23rd. NW to WSW. Brig *Planter* arrives fr. N.York.

24th. NW to W. The late Capt.Thos. Fisher's clothing, etc., discharged from B. *Planter*.¹

25th. SSW. Sunday. Br. Horton preaches.²

26th. SW. Went to H. Hole, returned and Rec'd the papers of Thos. Fisher's Estate. Engaged in arranging the same.

27th. Wind SW. Engaged in business of the Estate of T.F.

28th. SSE to SW, rainy. This day a man (Sailor) boarding at Mr. Jonathan Fisher's breaks out with the small pox. The select men remove him to Simons Vincent's.³

29th. WNW to ESE. Brig *Pilot* arrives, having struck on Shoal in Miskekit channel (Schr. from N.Y.).

31st. ESE. Boarded number of vessels. The Ship *Apollo*, Capt. Isaac Daggett, arrives in H.Hole from the Pacific Ocean with full cargo Sperm oil.⁴

April 1827

1st. SSE to SW. Ship *Apollo* comes in & to the wharf.

2nd. SW. Town Meeting.

3rd. SW, pleasant. Town Meeting. Ship *Apollo* commences discharging.

¹ Capt. Thomas Fisher Jr., master of the *Planter*, had died on voyage from West Indies to New York, Jan. 8, 1827.

² Rev. Jotham Horton replaced Rev. John Adams in Edgartown Methodist church. This was his first sermon. See *Intelligencer*, Feb. 1991.

³ Vincent's was near Edgartown Great Pond. Isolation was the goal.

⁴ *Apollo* had left the Vineyard Dec. 7, 1824, for the Pacific.

5th. SW. Fast day. Br. Horton Preaches.

7th. SW, clear. Brig *Planter* appraised at \$1200 by T.Daggett, G.Norton and W.Coffin.

9th. E to S. Sold 1/4 of Brig *Planter* to Jared Coffin of Nantucket for C.B.Worth and Mrs.C.Fisher. Sold 3/16 of *Planter* to Thos. Milton.⁵

10th. SSW, foggy. Engaged writing in the Customhouse & other business.

11th. SW, foggy. Rec'd a letter from Capt.C.B.Worth containing a Bill of exchange for \$300 on Nathl. Goddard, Boston.

13th. SW. Rec'd copy of a Note on C.B.W. from Boston.

14th. SW. Engaged in writing at the Customhouse.

16th. E to NE. Set out for Boston. Arrived in N.Bedford. Ship *Hero* arrives.

17th. Arrived in Boston. Sloop *Thomas*, Br.Chase Pease, arrives from Charleston.⁶

18th. Finished my business [in Boston].

19th. Arrived in N.Bedford.

20th. SW. Arrived home. Sloop *Thomas* sails for Boston.

23rd. SSE. Engaged in painting floors, etc.

26th. NNE. Ship *Lima*, Swain, arrives. Rec'd \$15.86 of Wm. King for land sold him belonging to the Estate of Ephr. Pease deceased and \$1 for writing deed of same. Total: \$16.86

27th. NE, gail. Br. Horton holds a Meeting at Brother Joseph Mayhew's.

⁵ Jeremiah was now working as estate attorney and ship's broker. The *Planter* had been owned by Captain Fisher.

⁶ Br. Chase Pease is Jeremiah's brother and owner of the *Thomas*.

Miss Maria Norton experiences religion. A very interesting meeting. Miss Norton goes home with Sister Jedidah Pease and stays at our house (she living in my house) until Sunday.⁷

28th. NE, storm. Prayer meeting at our house (up chamber). Miss Norton speaks this evening very affectingly. Several appear very serious.

29th. NE, storm. Br. Caleb Lamb Preaches this day & Br. Horton in the evening.⁸

30th. NE, cold. Miss Charlotte Fisher experiences religion.

May 1827

3rd. N to SSE. Sloop *Thomas* arrives at night.

4th. SW. Schr. *Four Sisters*, which Thos. Mayhew bo't, arrives from Menamshi.⁹

5th. SW. Brother Frederick Upham arrives from Sandwich on a Visit and preaches this evening.

6th. SW. Sunday. Br. Upham preaches AM & Evening.

[For the next two weeks the only entries are of weather. In the margin he inserted, more than two years later, the following:] Dec. 31, 1829. This day I have surrendered the Commission mentioned below agreeably to the request of T. Cooke Esq., the only acusatation bro't. by him against me was that I did not sign his Remonstrance or Recommendation [*sic*].

21st. SW. Court of Common pleas sets.

⁷ Jedidah was wife of Abner, Jeremiah's younger brother, a mariner. She was living in Jeremiah's house. Abner died at sea five years later. We don't know who Maria Norton was.

⁸ Caleb Lamb was Methodist minister at Holmes Hole.

⁹ Menemsha.

22nd. SSE. This day I received a Commission as Inspector of the Customs for the District of Edgartown & surrendered my Old Commission as an occasional Inspector.¹⁰

23rd. SE, rainy. Court rises.

26th. SW. Engaged in surveying land for D. Smith & J. Coffin.

27th. SW. Schooner *Celer* arrives from Boston.

31st. SSW. Sloop *Pacific*, Wm. Marchant Master, arr. from S.C.

June 1827

1st. SW to NE, rainy. Ship *Loan*, J. Fisher, arrives from the Brazil Bank with a full cargo of Oil. The first Vessel which I have boarded since I rec'd my last Commission.¹¹

3rd. S. Sloop *Pacific* sails for Boston. My Son J. T. Pease goes in her. Sam'l. Osborn's Child dies (an infant).

4th. SW. Ship *Loan* hauls up to Wm. Mayhew's Wharf to unload.¹²

5th. SW. Funeral of S. Osborn's Child. Service by Rev'd Jotham Horton. Road laid out by the Selectmen from Front street to Pease's point road near the Mill.¹³

7th. SSW. Mrs. Love Courtney dies.

8th. SW. Funeral of Mrs. Courtney. Service by Rev'd J. Thaxter.

11th. NNE to E, fresh breeze am, pm

¹⁰ Now we know why he went to Boston. See *Intelligencer*, August 1988, p.253, for Florence Kern's explanation of the December 31st notation.

¹¹ Starbuck does not show this voyage. It must have been a short one, perhaps the ship came on a large pod of whales off Brazil.

¹² Mayhew's wharf was later Chadwick's Coal Wharf, between Osborn's [today's yacht club] and Fisher's [Memorial wharf].

¹³ Winter Street.

light. Sloop *Pacific* arrives. Engaged in weighing Whale Bone from Ship *Loan*. Watched with W. T.'s Wife, sick of the Dropsy.

12th. SSE to S. Surveyed a route for a Road near W.M. & P. Coffin's houses.¹⁴

13th. E to SSE. Settled with Wm. Marchant acc't of Sloop *Pacific*.

16th. NNE. Sloop *Enterprise*, H. Osborn, arrives from Charleston, S.C. Several Vessels arrive from different Ports.

20th. SSW. Capt. Jared Fisher appointed to Command Ship *Almira*.

22nd. SW, little rain. Ship *Almira*, Capt. J. Fisher, drops down to anchor.

23rd. SW. Sloop *Pacific* sails for Boston. Cornelius Marchant Esq's wife being much deranged in mind goes to Boston to the Insane Hospital. Rev'd. Wales comes to preach to the Congregationalist Society.¹⁵

24th. NE to SSW. Rev'd Mr. Wales preaches his first Sermon. Ship *Almira*, Capt. J. Fisher, sails for the Pacific Ocean.¹⁶

26th. SW. Brig *Planter*, Matthew Norton master, goes into the stream.¹⁷

28th. Wind SW. Brig *Planter*, Capt. Matthew Norton, sails on a Whaling Voyage in the Atlantic Ocean.

30th. SW, pleasant. News of the death of Capt. George Marchant arrives. He died at sea on board of the Brig

¹⁴ May have been Davis Lane.

¹⁵ Rev. Joseph Thaxter was critically ill. Reverend Wales was a fill-in minister.

¹⁶ Seems strange that Captain Fisher would be named master and only three days later leave for the Pacific on a voyage that would last until Feb. 27, 1830.

¹⁷ Gulf Stream? First time Jeremiah has mentioned it.

President of this place, Master M. Pease.

July 1827

5th. SW. Sloop *Chancellor* arrives from Charleston, S.C. The Musicians which had been employed at N. Bedford on the 4th of July and were bound to Nantucket stop here this evening. They play several times in Thaxter's Schoolhouse or Academy (as he calls it). They were a part of the Bridgewater Band. This was very gratifying to many of the Inhabitants, particularly the young, being the first musick of the kind ever heard by many in the place.¹⁸

6th. SW. Schooner *Celer*, John H. Pease Master, arrives from _____.

7th. SW. Went to H. Hole. Returned at evening.

11th. SW. Mrs. Molly Cleveland dies at about 5 o'clock.

12th. SW. Funeral of Mrs. Cleveland, attended in the Congregationalist [sic] Meetinghouse by Rev'd. Jotham Horton.¹⁹ Mr. Elenezer Dexter's Wife dies.

13th. NNW, very warm. Funeral of Mrs. Dexter attended as above. Mr. Timothy Coffin dies suddenly being sick 4 days only. Watched with him, he died at 3 minutes past 11 o'clock pm. AE 72 y. 10 months. [In margin, written later:] Rev. Mr. Martin comes to Preach to the Congregational Society.²⁰

¹⁸ It being the first band music heard on the Island says something about its insularity.

¹⁹ Mr. Horton is the Methodist minister, conducting a funeral in the Congregational Church. Unusual.

²⁰ Rev. Joseph Thaxter of the Congregational Church is near death. Rev. Martyn has arrived to replace him as minister.

15th. NNW to SW. Funeral of Mr. Coffin. Service by Rev'd. Mr. Martin. 1st prayer, Sermon Rev'd Mr. Pease, last prayer by Rev'd. Mr. Horton.²¹

16th. NNE. Engaged in painting my house.

17th. SW. Sloop *Pacific* sails. Mr. Abishai Norton dies. Watched with Wm. Jernegan Esq.'s Wife.

18th. SW. Rev'd Joseph Thaxter dies Aged _____ (this morning). Rev'd. Mr. Swift being sent for to attend the Funeral of Mr. Thaxter, arrives from Nantucket.

19th. NNE, warm. Funeral of Mr. Thaxter, attended in the Meetinghouse. Congregation was very large. Service by Rev'ds. Mr. Martin & Swift.²²

20th. SW, warm. Engaged in painting my house for several days past.

24th. NE to ENE. Engaged on rye.

25th. NE to ENE. Ditto. Finished reaping & cradling.

26th. E to SSE, rains. Very good season for grass grains, etc.

August 1827

1st. SW. Preparing campmeeting. This day I have contracted to purchase

²¹ Martyn, the new Congregational minister; Pease, the Baptist minister; Horton, the Methodist. The Coffins were important people.

²² It is revealing that Jeremiah writes no eulogy for Reverend Thaxter. Not even a word of sorrow. No gratitude for Thaxter's long service to the community: 47 years. It reveals the deep rift that had developed between the two men. Jeremiah had learned bonesetting from Thaxter; had married the daughter of his eldest Deacon. It is sad that their friendship ended like this. Reverend Swift, a Unitarian, came for the service probably because Thaxter asked for him. The new minister, Martyn, was a Trinitarian; Thaxter, a Unitarian.

Herman Arey's house lot near the courthouse for the purpose of swapping with Chase Pease for a lot near Jarvis Marchant's house to build a Methodist Meetinghouse upon. Agreed to give Mr. Arey \$12 per rod for his land to be delivered to me (as one of the Committee of the Methodist Society) in October 1827.

Set out this day for Camp Meeting in the Sloop *Chancellor*, Capt. Geo. Osborn, who with his other Owner, Mr. Wm. Cooke, very politely & generously offer to carry our Minister, Rev'd. Jotham Horton, all our Brethren & Sisters of the Methodist Society & those who wish to accompany us to the meeting free of expence. The Sloop lying at the end of Coffin & Osborn's Wharf. All the passengers being on board, about 90 in number, Brother Horton delivers an address then comends the Company to God by Prayer. We then set sail with a pleasant breeze from the SW. Arrive at the West Chop in about an hour & twenty minutes. Meeting commences this day. Ministers present: Rev'ds. John Lindsey, George Pickering, Jotham Horton, Wm. Barsto, John Adams, Caleb Lamb, George Weeks, Benjm. Hazelton, LayRoy Sundeland, Jacob Sanburn, _____ Lambert, _____ Barker, Edward T. Taylor, [Leonard] Griffin, Frederick Upham, Amos Dining, [Hezekiah] Thatcher, [Benjamin] Keith, [Enoch] Bradley.

There were about 40 very large Tents erected & on Sunday there was tho't to be about four thousand people present.²³

²³ This is the longest entry Jeremiah ever wrote. It describes the Island's first camp meeting, the

7th. Wind NE & Se & SW. Returned home from Camp Meeting. Sloop *Pacific* arrives.

9th. SW. This day, Mr. Heman Arey to my great surprise refuses to comply with his agreement on the first of this Month, saying that his wife did not like to sign the Deed. This conversation takes place at & near Mr. F. Baylies Jr.'s house. His wife come up at the time of our conversation and tells him he may do as he pleases, he then says to me since you have said so much about it I shan't let you have the land, much conversation takes place between us on account of his disappointing us, as we had sold our Meeting house on account of his promise. I then left him, went to Brother Chase Pease, told him the circumstances, he immediately agrees to sell us the same lot which he had agreed to swap the one which I had verbally bo't of Mr. Arey for. The conduct of Mr. Arey was to me astonishing.²⁴

9th. SW. This day Brothers C. Pease, I.D. Pease, T. M. Coffin & myself measure off the land for our intended new meetinghouse to stand upon.²⁵

13th. N. Capt. Clement Norton's Child dies.

14th. N to SW. Funeral of the above Child. Service by Rev'd Mr. Martin.

one on West Chop, initiated by Rev. John Adams. With 4000 persons attending, it must have been inspirational for Jeremiah and the others. Camp meetings had been held at Yarmouth, Wellfleet, Truro and Falmouth, beginning in 1819. See *Intelligencer*, February 1991, for more details.

²⁴ This may be the second longest entry. Jeremiah's anger pours out.

²⁵ The new meeting house is today's Edgartown Town Hall.

15th. NE. Went to N. Bedford. Arrived there about 9 in the evening.

16th. N to SE, rainy. Funeral of Mr. Charles Butler's Child who died on the 15th. Service by Rev'd. Horton & H. Manchester [?].

17th. NE. Returned home.

18th. E. Sold or conveyed by bill of sale our Methodist Meeting house to our Brethren in Chilmark.²⁷

19th. SW. Sloop *Enterprise*, Capt. Henry Osborn, Sails for Bangor after Lumber for our Methodist Meetinghouse.

20th. SW. Engaged in surveying land at Chapaquidick for the heirs of Timothy Coffin.

22nd. SW. Engaged in painting my house [same entry for next 6 days].

29th. SE, NE, calm. Brother Mayo arrives with a view of labouring on this circuit instead of Br. Lamb. Returns same day.²⁸

30th. SE. Rev'ds. Mr. Smith & Martin arrive. Mr. Martin having lately been married to Mr. Smith's daughter.²⁹

31st. SW. Mr. Smith preaches in the Congregational Meetinghouse.

September 1827

1st. Wind SW. Watched with Mr. Jernegan Esq's. Wife.

3rd. SW. Rev'd. Mr. Smith leaves

²⁷ The building, now too small for Edgartown's Methodists, was disassembled, moved to Chilmark and reassembled to be that town's Methodist Church on Middle Road.

²⁸ Rev. John Adams had left the Island last week without a mention by Jeremiah, his most important convert. That is even sadder than Jeremiah's break with Reverend Thaxter. Br. Lamb had been Adams's favorite.

²⁹ Bridegroom Martin (Rev. I. Henry Martyn) is the late Reverend Thaxter's replacement at the Congregational church.

Town for his home.

5th. NE. Went to N. Bedford on business relative to Revenue Boat.

6th. NNE. Returned from N.B.

9th. NE. Remarkable Northern lights. Sloop *Enterprise* arrives. [This last is underlined. It brings lumber for the church.]

11th. SW. Engaged in piling lumber for the Methodist Meeting house. Myself and James E. Vinson. [Same entry for next four days.]

13th. SW. Br. Hebron Vinson goes to Situate. Br. Wm. Barsto coming from Chilmark.³⁰

16th. SNW. Went to Chilmark, returned. Remarkable meeting at Br. Ripley's.³¹

17th. SE, stormy at night. Sick with a disentary.

22nd. SW. Went to Holmeshole. Carried my Daughter. Rains a little. Returned PM.³²

25th. SSW. Court of Common Pleas sets.

27th. WNW. Court rises or adjourns.

28th. NE. Watched with Wm. Jernegan Esq.'s Wife (very sick).

October 1827

2nd. SSE, rains. Went to Chilmark with Rev'd. William Barsto to survey

³⁰ Vinson (Vincent) had been Jeremiah's apprentice as a cordwainer. Recently had been Edgartown's Methodist minister, helping Reverend Adams. He is being replaced by Reverend Barstow from Chilmark. The Edgartown churches, Congregational and Methodist, were both having pastoral changes.

³¹ The Reformation continues, even with Reverend Adams gone.

³² One of his rare mentions of family members. His only daughter at this time is Isabel Worth Pease, b. 1816, m. Capt. Littleton Wimpenny in 1839.

July 1827

10th SSW

11th d° Mrs. Molly Cleveland dies at about 5 o'clock.
 Mr. Ebenezer Dexter's wife dies at night

12th d° Funeral of Mrs. Cleveland attended in the
 Congregationalist Meetinghouse by Rev. Solham
 Boston. Mr. Ebenezer Dexter's wife dies

13th N. N. very warm. Funeral of Mrs. Dexter attended
 as above. Mr. Timothy Coffin dies suddenly being
 sick 4 days only. Watched with him, he died
 at 3 minutes past 11 o'clock. Aged 72 y. 10 Months

14th N. N. W. 1. SSW

15th d° d° Funeral of Mr. Coffin service by Rev. Mr.
 Martin 1st prayer, sermon Mr. Rase, last prayer
 by Rev. Mr. Horton

16th N. N. E. engaged in painting my house

17th S. W. Sloop, Pacific sails. Mr. Abishau Norton
 dies watched with Mr. Jernegan Esq's wife

18th S. W. Rev. Joseph Thaxter dies (aged this morning)
 Rev. Mr. Swift being sent for to attend the
 Funeral of Mr. Thaxter arrives from Nantucket

19th N. N. E. Funeral of Mr. Thaxter attended in
 the Meetinghouse congregation was very large
 Service by Rev. Mr. Martin & Swift

20th S. W. warm engaged in painting my house for
 several days past

21st N. W. fresh breeze

A page of Jeremiah's diary. Here, he records death of Rev. Thaxter, July 18, 1827.

some land for the Methodist Meeting
 house. Accomplished the business.
 3rd. SSW. Returned home. Went to
 Holmeshole. Mr. Worth, Depy.
 Collector being sick with sore arm.
 Remained there until the 9th and
 returned on that day.
 9th. S, some rain. Mr. Dan'l Butler's
 child buried, having died yesterday.

11th. NE. Engaged in setting off land
 with Wm. Mayhew & Wm. Jernegan
 Esqs. for Timo. Coffin's house lots.
 13th. N, light. went to S. Smith's to the
 records of the Estate of T. [Thomas]
 Fisher.
 14th. NE. Sloop Chancellor, Capt. Geo.
 Osborn, sails for Charleston, S.C.
 16th. NNW, fresh breeze. Rec'd a

July 1827

22nd S. W. N. E.23rd N. N. E.24th N. E. 1. E. N. E. engaged in my25th d° d° d° " finished reaping & cradling26th E. E. 1. E. N. E. very good season for grass grain27th S. W.28th d°29th d°30th d°31st d°

August 1827

1st S. W. preparing camp meeting. This day I have
 contracted to purchase Herman Acrey's
 house lot near the courthouse for the purpose
 of swapping with Chas. Rase for a lot near
 Jarvis Marchants house to build a Methodist
 Meetinghouse upon agreed to give Mr. Any
 \$2.00 for his land to be delivered to me
 as one of the committee of the Mathis
 Society in October 1827

Set out this day for camp meeting in the sloop Chancellor Capt. Osborn who
 with his other son Mr. W. Osborn very politely & generously offer to carry our Minister
 Rev. Solham Norton, all our Brethren & Sisters of the Methodist Society of those who wish
 to accompany us to the meeting free of expense. The sloop lying at the end of Coffin's

August 1st was a big day for Methodism. These pages are two-thirds original size.

pleasant Visit from Brother John G.
 Pray of Portsmouth, N.H., he having
 arrived at H. Hole from the W. Indies,
 comes to visit his Brethren here.³³ Ship
 Foster, of Nantucket, Capt. Edy Coffin,
 arrives with a full Cargo of Sperm Oil
 from the Pacific Ocean.³⁴

³³ It isn't clear who John Pray is.

³⁴ The Foster had sailed June 7, 1825.

17th. SW. Assisted in securing Tho.
 Cooke Esq.'s saltworks.
 22nd. NE, ESE storm at night. Engaged
 in the division of the house and land
 of Love Norton, B.B. Norton, Dan'l.
 Norton & others, with T.M. Coffin &
 Theo. G. Mayhew. Meeting of the
 Sabbath School Union at my house
 this evening.

Bits & Pieces

ON a July evening in 1891, 100 years ago, the most memorable social gala in Edgartown history brought together the town's leading citizens, summer residents and the guests in the brand-new Harbor View Hotel.

It was a reception, entertainment and dance in the style of the Gay Nineties. J. V. Drew, hotel manager, had invited 400 guests and, doubtless, they all came.

Imagine the scene. The hotel was brand-new. It had opened only 30 days before. Located "just out from the quaint old town," at the end of North Water Street, it overlooked the old lighthouse and the harbor entrance. There was not another building beyond it on Starbuck's Neck.

That night, the hotel's "broad piazzas" were strung with Japanese lanterns. The Fitchburg String Quartet played the latest tunes, as guests arrived. The street, a narrow carriageway, had Edgartown's first traffic jam as scores of carriages brought guests to the party of the decade.

Hotel advertisements boasted of "airy dining-rooms, ample parlors and open fireplaces. All the sleeping apartments have fine water views and are neatly furnished, with electric bells and gas lighting. . . the sanitary arrangements are of the latest improved patterns."

Each bedroom, photographs show, had a wash stand and a large washbowl, plus two pitchers. Not visible was a receptacle of importance,

which, one must assume, along with the "bath and toilet rooms on every floor," were the "sanitary arrangements of the latest improved patterns."

The "electric bells" signalled the desk clerk when you wanted service. A battery-powered call board above the front desk announced the room number so a maid could quickly respond.

The main sponsors of the hotel were Thomas J. Walker, druggist, Rev. Luther T. Townsend, a summer resident from Watertown, and one of the Mayhews. They were the largest stockholders, but many townspeople bought shares at \$100 par value.

It was the "most complete and delightful summer hotel on the New England coast," the brochure said. The townspeople looked it over, satisfying their curiosity about how the rich and famous spent their money.

The gala reception was so important socially that the *Gazette* listed virtually every local resident in attendance, and, in New York style, described each lady's gown. The locals surely talked about it for days.

The new hotel gave the town a real lift after years of decline. Photographer Richard Shute sold pictures of it for 50 cents each—a lot of money in those days. The Society doesn't have any of his prints, but we do have his glass plates, splendid examples of interior photography before flashbulbs, strobe lights and fast film.

And splendid examples of how things have changed.

A.R.R.

1991 Regional High School Historical Essay Contest

Again this year the number of entries increased sharply as did the quality of the research and the writing. All students who submitted essays have earned the Society's congratulations and its thanks. The task of selecting winners is becoming increasingly difficult.

Essays must discuss some element of Dukes County history and the research must be done, to a significant degree, at the Gale Huntington Library of History. This requirement serves to acquaint students with the resource materials and assistance available at the Society.

We are pleased to announce the 1991 winners:

First Prize, \$50.

Rachel Wise

*The Roles of Women on Martha's Vineyard
During the 17th and 18th Centuries*

Second Prize, \$30.

Woody Vanderhoop

*Christianity's Early Effects on
Sachem Tawanquatuck and Other Noepe Wampanoags*

Third Prize, \$20.

Lukas Kendall

*The Penikese Island School:
Success from Failure*

Honorable Mentions:

Cameron Cuch

*Hiacombs, the "English Man,"
From a Native American Perspective*

Vanessa Engley

*Penikese: Solely a "Pile of Stones"
Or Something More?*

Katarina Jonsberg

*Capt. Hartson H. Bodfish,
A Whaler at Herschel Island*

Kristen Knight, Eliza daRosa and Martha Kane

(A team project)

An Island in Winter:

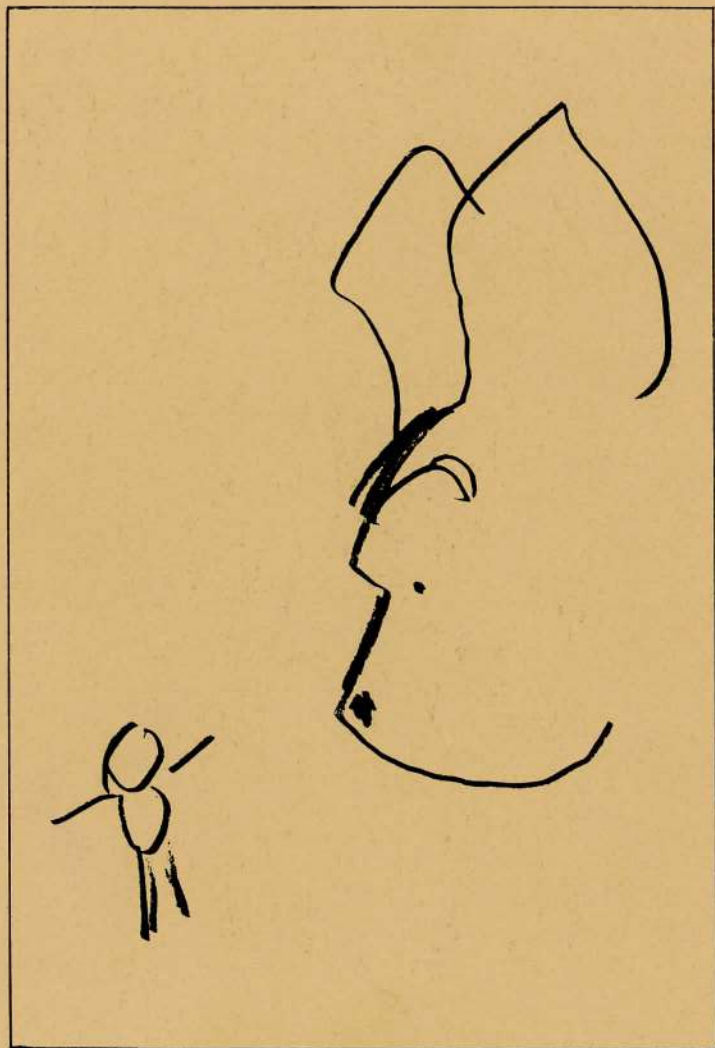
Mrs. Jane Smith and Mrs. Mary Bassett

The Society congratulates the winners and extends its thanks to all students who submitted essays. It is our hope that in doing so they have developed a heightened interest in Island history.

All receive a one-year membership in the Society, which includes a subscription to this journal.

The Essay Committee is grateful to those teachers at the High School who helped make this year's contest so successful. Special thanks go to Ann Coleman Allen, Society Librarian/Archivist, for her dedication and generous commitment of time to this project.

Courtesy John Gude



James Thurber made hundreds of doodles, some good, some not. Here is one that Chilmarker John Gude saved from oblivion. In this issue, Gude writes of friend Jamie Thurber's visits to Martha's Vineyard.