



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 33, NO.1

AUGUST 1991



Ad for Oak Bluffs
concert in 1885.

The African-American Presence

On Martha's Vineyard

by JACQUELINE L. HOLLAND



The Indians and the English On Martha's Vineyard

Part III: Thomas Mayhew Sr.

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

In Memoriam

Edith Bliss
1905-1991

It isn't easy to think of our Council member, who served the Society so well, as Edith Bliss. She was always Edie. Such a perfect Edie. She had all the credentials to be a formal and proper Edith, but that wasn't her style. And least not here at the Society. Here, she was a relaxed, human, down-to-earth person who had little patience for stuffiness. For years, in committee work and as a member of the Council, she gave generously both of her time and her talents.

She loved history and especially maritime history. An expert sailor herself, she wrote a cooking column for wives of sailors entitled "Down Your Galley" in *Yachting* magazine. Her home on the harbor in Edgartown is a veritable maritime museum.

Immediately after she died, another Society member, also a marine history expert, Townsend Hornor of Osterville, Massachusetts, wrote to us: "Edie was in every way my second mother. . . knowing her well was a priceless gift of love and caring. . . To us, lucky enough to be adopted, she was a true mentor — loving, understanding, sensitive, sensible and direct. And tough when that was needed. She loved life, managed it well, and taught us to do the same. . . Her death marks a sort of prototypical end of an era."

Edie was, as all of us who served with her know so well, a woman with class, someone who some years ago, before such descriptions became forbidden, would be called a classy lady. We shall remember her that way.

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The African-American Presence 3
On Martha's Vineyard

by Jacqueline L. Holland

The Indians and the English 27
On Martha's Vineyard

Part III: Thomas Mayhew Sr.

by Arthur R. Railton

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Edith Bliss
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Inside front cover

Mildred Dunnock Urmy
1901-1991

Inside back cover

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.

Articles published in *The Intelligencer* do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society or its officers. Every effort is made to confirm dates, names and events in published articles, but we cannot guarantee total authenticity.

ISSN 0418 1379

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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 African-American Presence On Martha's Vineyard

by JACQUELINE L. HOLLAND, Ed.D.

Introduction

THE General Court of Massachusetts showed its abhorrence of slavery as early as 1645. However, slavery persisted until 1783 when the state's highest court declared it had no legal basis.¹ The African-American presence on Martha's Vineyard predates the American Revolution (1775) by well over a half-century. Records indicate that African-Americans, even as a tiny minority of servants or slaves, contributed to the growth and development of Island life. Slaves on the Vineyard, as elsewhere in the colonies, were considered common property on which considerable monetary value was placed.

Estate Inventories and Vital Statistics

The estate of Samuel Sarson, Gov. Thomas Mayhew's grandson, who died August 24, 1703, included "a Negro woman, valued at 20 pounds."² Similarly, the estate of Ebenezer Allen of Chilmark, inventoried Dec. 4, 1734, listed Negroes valued at "200 pounds, along with two beds for servants, glasses — one pound, 5 shillings, knives and forks

¹ Allen Bradford, *History of Massachusetts, 1620-1820*, Holland & Gray, Boston, 1835, p.305.

² Dukes County Probate (DCP), Index 7, v.1,p.13. Twenty pounds equalled a year's wages for a common laborer at the time. The year Sarson died, Experience Mayhew was paid 40 pounds a year as missionary to the Indians.

JACQUELINE LOIS (JONES) HOLLAND, like great-grandmother Phoebe Moseley, bakes delicious bread, both on East Chop, where she and husband Albert have owned a summer home for 20 years and at Tappan, N.Y., their home the rest of the year. In 1883, when Phoebe first came to the Vineyard, she began a love affair that for more than a century her descendants have kept aglow. Since retiring in 1981, former school principal Jackie Holland has done a lot of traveling, but her heart, like Phoebe's, is on the Vineyard, where she grew up in the home of her grandmother, Caroline D. Jones.

at 18 shillings and 600 pair of sheep at 510 pounds and 17 shillings."³

The will of Jane Cathcart of Chilmark dated June 25, 1741, did "give and bequeath unto my molato [mulatto] servant, Ishmael Lobb, now in the service of Captain Timothy Daggett of Edgartown . . . his freedom during life after he shall arrive at age thirty, which shall be in November, Anno Domini, one Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty Two . . ." After her death, the inventory taken of her estate in 1750 makes no mention of Ishmael, then only 18. It is not known what happened to him. He may have continued "in the service" of Daggett until 1762, and then been freed, as her will ordered, but we don't know.⁴

Cornelius Bassett, was a "distinguished person," according to Banks's *History of Martha's Vineyard* (v.II). He was a lieutenant colonel in the county militia in 1761, Deputy Sheriff in 1768, Selectman from 1767 to 1773, and a licensed inn-holder from 1761 to 1773. After his death, the inventory of his personal estate included the following:

- One Negro boy, Pero 33 pounds
- One Negro woman, Chole [Chloe?], 27 yrs. . 150 pounds
- One garll [girl], Nancy, 7 yrs. . 180 pounds

Bassett's total inventory, real and personal, was valued at 11,822 pounds 15 shillings, as of February 23, 1779, making him a very wealthy man.⁵

Records for Joseph Chase of Holmes Hole, who removed to Nantucket (1729 to 1737) and later to Edgartown, show he owned property on the harbor. His and his wife are buried in that town. The Chases left one Negro man valued at 300 pounds and three cows at 40 pounds.⁶

Another Chase, Abraham, whom Banks describes as a ferry operator, inn-holder and trader, was also a resident of Holmes Hole. In his will, probated March 5, 1764, he included as property four Negroes, valued at 54 pounds,

along with 20 empty barrels, 2 hogsheads, valued at one pound 18 shillings, and 6 featherbeds.⁷

Samuel Bassett of Chilmark, like his father, Cornelius, one of the wealthiest "gentlemen" of the Island, owned land in both Chilmark and Edgartown. His will, probated in 1770, has these items at the bottom of his property listing:

- One Negro woman, two boys . . . 60 pounds
- Pitch forks, scythes, rakes⁸

Other official documents list Negroes as servants, as mariners and under various other job titles. These terms have broad meanings. Generally, servants lived in and took care of the house and the family. Mariners included deck hands, cooks, whalemen, sailmakers, ship's carpenters and even laundrymen, at times.

Blacks, when listed in the town's record of Vital Statistics, were named separately:

Births in Edgartown:

Chloe: d. [daughter] London [Lunnon] (servant of Jno. Sumner, Esq.) and Violet, bp [baptized] July 1751, CRI [Church of Christ, Congregational].

Dinah: d. Lunnon "Negro servant to Mr. Sumner," bp October 28, 1744 CRI.

Mark: child, Lunnon "Negro servant to Mr. Sumner," bp July 3, 1743.⁹

Deaths in Edgartown:

James, N. m [married]. b [born] Raratonga (South Sea Island). Consumption, May 16 [1846], a [age] 26.

_____, _____, "a coloured man from ship *Catherine*," Jan. 19, 1835.

This information, sparse as it is, was separated from the alphabetized lists of other names by the heading: "Negroes, etc."¹⁰ As property, it seems, slaves were documented with even less care than most land holdings.

According to historian Charles E. Banks, the first Federal Census in Edgartown (1790) showed these statistics: Total

⁷ DCP, Index 283, v.5, p.55.

⁸ DCP, Index 333, v.6, pp.43-4.

⁹ John Sumner (1705-c.1775) of Edgartown was Harvard educated, served as County Judge, County Treasurer and Representative to General Court.

¹⁰ *Vital Records to 1850*, Edgartown, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, 1906, p.88 (Births) and p.276 (Deaths). No Negro marriages are listed.

³ DCP, Index 100, v.3, p.46. Sarson was only 36 when he died.

⁴ DCP, Index 196, v.3, p.247.

⁵ DCP, Index 369, v.6, pp.162-3.

⁶ DCP, Index 191, v.3, p.277.

population of 1356 whites; 335 males were over 16 years of age and 318 below; 683 "free white" females; and 10 other free persons. Banks says this leaves a balance of ten which "are assumed to be Negroes."¹¹

The first Federal Census in Tisbury (also in 1790) lists a total of 1135 whites; 287 were males over 16 years, 238 males below 16, and 609 were females. Also listed were seven "other free persons presumably Negroes."¹²

Chilmark, the third of the early Island towns, could boast of only 73 residents in 1700. But by the 1790 census, there were 760 whites, plus "ten other free persons." These ten were presumably Negroes. All were living in white households.¹³

Eastville was included in Edgartown until Cottage City was incorporated in 1880. At that time, Eastville became part of Cottage City. According to Banks, in 1781 there were approximately 35 families (180 persons) in Eastville. He does not break the total down by race. In 1787, a number of Negro families had an established community in the Farm Neck area, between Sunset Lake and Farm Pond. For a while, Eastville was the largest permanent settlement in the area, continuing even after the campground began in 1835. Negroes were among those living there. The 1880 Census, which did not list Negroes separately, gave the total Cottage City population as 672.¹⁴ By this time, 1880, Eastville had declined in importance, as more residents lived in the new settlement around the campground.

Gay Head, which did not become a town until 1870, has little historical census data, as the early Federal censuses did not include Indians. Even after its inhabitants began

¹¹ Charles E. Banks, *History of Martha's Vineyard*, DCHS, 1966, v.II, "Annals of Edgartown," p.16. His reasoning is confusing. The Census shows only 8 "Other [non-white] free persons." All were living in white households, no doubt as slaves or servants.

¹² Banks, "Annals of West Tisbury," p.5 and 7. There is again a discrepancy in Banks' numbers. The subtotals of whites add up to only 1134. His seven "Other free persons" is correct, as shown in census data. Two of the seven are separately listed as "Negroes and Mulattoes," not living in white households. The other five presumably are live-in black servants.

¹³ Banks, "Annals of Chilmark," p.6.

¹⁴ Banks, "Annals of Oak Bluffs," p.5.

to be counted, Banks explains, "being of Indian extraction and a roving disposition, [the inhabitants] gave little concern to the census takers. . ." There are no racial subdivisions in the record. The population grew very slowly from 160 persons in 1870 to 173 in 1900. We have no way of knowing how many were Negroes, how many were Indians, etc., as Gay Head inhabitants were categorized as "People of color." In the 1850s, Lighthouse Keeper Ebenezer Skiff wrote to the U.S. Government that he had "no neighbors here but Indians, or people of colour."¹⁵

News of Freedom Comes Slowly

The facts listed above, when overlaid on the frequency of estate inventories of slaves owned by individuals throughout the Island, lead one to the assumption that blacks were not counted in the early censuses or were listed scantily in vital records during these years.

Though slavery had been declared illegal in Massachusetts, many Negroes continued to live as slaves well into the 19th century. This was often due to illiteracy among the slaves, as they were not permitted to learn to read, or those who could read kept it secret. This resulted in their having little or no comprehension of the law and of the news. A Dukes County Court case, *Edgartown versus Tisbury*, in 1852 provides an example of the confusion.

Edgartown sued Tisbury for reimbursement of money it had spent to support Nancy Michael, a "colored pauper," who, Edgartown claimed, was a resident of Tisbury. Nancy, born about 1772, was the daughter of Rebecca, a slave of the aforementioned Cornelius Bassett of Chilmark. When her mother died, Nancy was appraised and sold at auction to Joseph Allen of Tisbury.

Somehow, "Nancy fell into distress" in Edgartown in 1812 and the town supported her. It sued Tisbury for its expenses. Despite the fact that Joseph Allen had bought her and used her as a slave for some years, Tisbury claimed she had been "born free" and denied any responsibility for her support.

¹⁵ Banks, "Annals of Gay Head," p.5. Also *Intelligencer*, February 1982, "Gay Head Light: The Island's First."

The judge sent the case to the Superior Court. Whatever happened to Nancy or to the case was not reported in the *Gazette*.¹⁶

Jeremiah Pease in his diary for October 1854 made this entry:

Attended Meetings at E'ville. Rebecca, a coloured woman, died. She was the Daut. of Nancy Michael, aged about 50 years. She died about 8 o'clock A.M.

The following day, October 30th, Jeremiah wrote:

Funeral of the above coloured Woman, Rebecca. Service by Rev'd. Mr. Keller.

It would seem that Nancy and her daughter lived in Eastville and to have been mentioned in this fashion by Jeremiah suggests that Nancy and her children were well regarded.

Another slave case reported in the *Gazette* in 1854 highlighted the desperate state of a slave seeking freedom. The ship *Franklin* arrived at Holmes Hole from Jacksonville, Florida, with a stowaway slave on board. The *Franklin's* master, who discovered him a few days after sailing, planned to turn him over to the Customs officer, Henry Pease Worth, in Holmes Hole, but during the night the slave escaped in one of the vessel's boats. He abandoned the boat on West Chop and made his way to Gay Head, where he successfully concealed himself in a swamp for several days, despite the efforts of Sheriff Lambert to capture him.

Two abolitionist women from Holmes Hole learned of the escaped slave's plight, went to Gay Head and, with promises of food, clothing and safety, persuaded him to come out of the swamp. They had brought some female clothing and the fugitive put it on. Thus disguised as "the third woman," he and his benefactors made their way to a boat at Manainshe (Menemsha) Bite. The three "stept into the boat, the warp was unfastened and the already hoisted sails filled to the breeze," minutes before the arrival of Sheriff Lambert. At New Bedford, the two women took the slave to an abolitionist who forwarded him to Canada and freedom.¹⁷

¹⁶ *Vineyard Gazette*, June 4, 1852.

¹⁷ *Gazette*, Sept. 22, 29, and Oct. 6, 1854.

It is obvious that being a slave taught resourcefulness, cunning, perceptivity and a strong will to survive.

First Methodist on the Vineyard

Generally believed to have been the first Methodist on Martha's Vineyard was a former slave from Virginia, John Saunders. He and his wife, Priscilla, had earned their freedom through hard work and prudence and were brought to the Vineyard in 1787 aboard a vessel owned by Capt. Thomas Luce. They took up residence in Eastville in a small schoolhouse "standing a few rods east of the Colonel's [Davis] residence." A devout Methodist, Saunders, a zealous speaker and exhorter, "preached to the coloured people at Farm Neck." He and his wife were held in high esteem during the five years they lived there. Mrs. Saunders died about 1791.¹⁸

In 1792, the widowed Saunders moved to Chappaquiddick where there was also a settlement of "coloured people." There he married Jane Dimon (Diamond), who was of Indian blood. He had a son and a daughter by his first wife, Priscilla, and a second daughter with Jane. All three children were said to have been of good character and to have embraced Methodism.

John was murdered in 1795 by Chappaquiddick Indians. The motive, according to his granddaughter, was Indian opposition to his marriage to Jane, "which exasperated the Indians there, on account of his African descent; . . . [that] and opposition to spiritual religion is supposed to be the cause of his being murdered in the woods."¹⁹ Although it is generally thought that no permanent Methodist Society emerged as a result of his work, Saunders can lay claim to having been the first to bring Methodism to the Vineyard, according to Jeremiah Pease.

Negroes Attend Methodist Camp Meetings

Beginning in 1835, with the start of the Methodist camp meetings in what is now Oak Bluffs, Negro ministers occasionally came to the gatherings, usually to appeal for

¹⁸ Mrs. Priscilla Freeman's Journal, *Intelligencer*, Nov. 1980. Jeremiah Pease in the same *Intelligencer* says Mrs. Saunders died after moving to Chappaquiddick about 1792.

¹⁹ Freeman, *ibid*.

financial help for their schools or church congregations.

In the meeting of 1867, Rev. Allen A. Gee, presiding Elder of the Nashville, Tennessee, district, spoke about the conditions in Central Tennessee. He described "the rebellious element still smouldering in the ruins of the fallen confederacy." The Freedmen's Aid Society, he reported, had done much for education, but it was hoped "that the system of free schools would be so fully in force in a year or two, as to be able to dispense with aid from that friendly source."

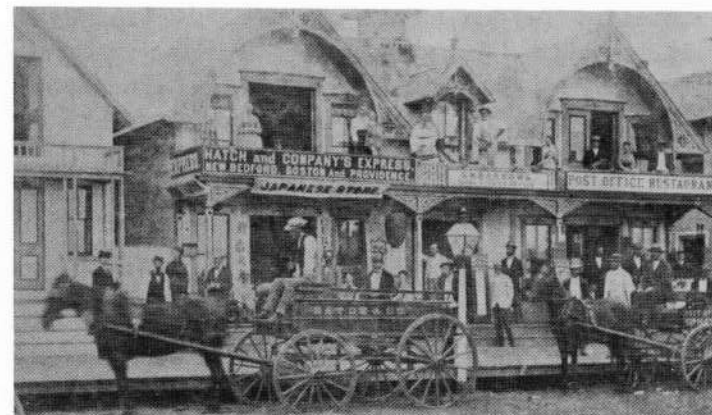
Reverend Gee's goal was to found a college to educate young men as ministers and teachers, to be called the Central Tennessee Methodist Episcopal College. He focused his appeal on helping Negroes of Tennessee by funding institutions of advanced learning.²⁰

It was not reported how much money the campers contributed to Reverend Gee's cause, but at another session the same year \$60 was raised for a similar purpose. Years before, at the 1844 camp meeting, Brother House of New Bedford made "a very pathetic appeal" for \$50 to help "a good colored sister . . . from Brooklyn . . . purchase her son from slavery." Sixty dollars were contributed and "she was heard by a few who stood near her, in a subdued tone of voice which indicated deep emotion, to thank us for our well-timed aid."²¹

Problems of Post-Civil War Negroes

The work of abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison was as much needed during the post-Civil War reconstruction as in the years leading up to the war. The scourge of slavery had set a deep stain across "the land of the free. . ."²²

On the Vineyard, blacks continued to have troubles. Priscilla Freeman, granddaughter of the first Methodists, John and Priscilla Saunders, was denied rights that she



Phoebe Ballou came to Cottage City in 1883 as housekeeper for the Hatch family. Mr. Hatch owned this express company on Circuit Ave.

should have had. Mrs. Freeman, who was called "a wronged woman" by the *Cottage City Star*, owned "land bordering on the Tisbury Great Pond, hence [was] one of the riparian proprietors." She requested that the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries include her in the leases that had been given to other riparians. She had been omitted from the list. She petitioned the legislature for help and had gotten other Vineyarders to help her in the petitioning process. The *Star*, which was relatively fair in its treatment of minorities, stated that,

Massachusetts will not suffer a person to be cheated out of their rights because Indian blood courses in their veins — rather is it a guarantee that their rights will be more equitably accorded them than if they were members of the white race. At least we hope so.²³

Some years later, the *Martha's Vineyard Herald* reported that "Martha James, colored, renting a cottage (on the Camp Meeting Grounds). . . was refused admission to the campground" because a Mr. Matthews objected to having a colored person lodging next to him. The real estate agent, Mr. Eldridge, did "the liberal thing," according to the *Herald*, and settled Mrs. James into another house, which "she

²³ *Cottage City Star*, Jan. 27, 1881. The blood that "coursed through the veins" of Mrs. Freeman was more African than Indian.

²⁰ Hebron Vincent, *History of Wesleyan Grove Camp Meeting, 1859-1869*, Lee & Shepard, Boston, 1870, pp. 183-4.

²¹ Hebron Vincent, *History of Wesleyan Grove Camp Meeting, 1835-1858*, Rand & Avery, Boston 1858, pp. 76-7.

²² *Gazette*, Feb. 7, 1879.

preferred to the one on the campground." Or so Mr. Eldridge said.²⁴

This occurred despite the fact that two years before, in 1881, when a similar case came up, the Camp Meeting Association had passed this resolution:

RESOLVED: That we, as directors of the Camp Meeting Association . . . judge it improper and illegal to make distinctions among our tenants on the ground of color.²⁵

Negro Church and Outings

While this worthy resolution seems not to have been strictly enforced on the campground, a multi-racial ministry did develop about 1900 in Oak Bluffs outside the enclave. It started when Rev. Oscar E. Denniston, a Negro, arrived to take charge of the Bradley Mission. A house was provided him on Masonic Avenue from which he ministered to neighboring families regardless of race, color or creed. Soon, he obtained use of the Noepe Hall on Circuit Avenue and there he continued serving the newly arrived Portuguese along with the Negroes. By 1908, the Mission had evolved into the Bradley Memorial Baptist Church. He continued to serve all who came to this church until his death in 1943.

After his death, the church went into decline until 1945 when the Massachusetts Baptist Convention assigned a student pastor to minister to its small, but faithful, congregation. This continued until April 3, 1966, when the church was deconsecrated. Mrs. Mildred Randolph, Miss Susan Tazzel, both of Oak Bluffs, and Mrs. Alice Anderson of Vineyard Haven were, along with the Denniston family, staunch pillars in the church. Mrs. Randolph served as church secretary for many years.²⁶

The use of the expression "people of color" to mean all persons not considered white was universal even until the late 1800s. An example of this, and of the confusion it now brings, was published in the *Cottage City Star* in October

²⁴ *Martha's Vineyard Herald*, July 13, 1889.

²⁵ *Star*, Jan. 27, 1881.

²⁶ Bradley Memorial Baptist Church program, "Service of Deconsecration," April 3, 1966. Courtesy Mrs. Mildred Randolph.

1879. Describing the annual cranberry picking at Gay Head, always thought to be only a traditional Indian festival, the *Star* reported in its Gay Head news column:

The annual "cranberry picking" began on Monday, and swarms of colored people from all parts of the island have gathered here. It would seem proper to name the event "the annual colored frolic," as it is converted into an occasion of social frolic. . . everybody with their cousins, aunts, etc., was present with cranberry rakes, forks, scoops and fingers, ready to get their share. Many persons came for a good time and had it, dancing and carousing until morning seems to be the order of the day on these occasions. Mr. Louis Attiquin opened his new house for a ball.

The Chilmark news column in the same issue reported that "Thirty-three ladies and gentlemen crossed Menemsha Creek in one day last week, bound to the Gay Head cranberry bogs. . ."²⁷

Negroes Take Part in Political Battle

Like Negroes in other parts of the country, those on the Island had not been encouraged to play a role in politics until the bitterly fought election of 1879 over the issue of the secession of Eastville and Farm Neck from the town of Edgartown. For years, residents of that northern end of Edgartown had been petitioning the Massachusetts General Court to make it a separate village.

However, the Island's representative at the General Court, Capt. Benjamin Clough, Republican of Tisbury, was strongly opposed to separation and successfully blocked all action on the petitions. As a result, he was strongly disliked by the Eastville population. The County Republican organization was controlled by Edgartown politicians under Samuel Osborn. In 1879 they nominated Beriah T. Hillman of Chilmark in place of Clough in an effort to placate the secessionists. In exchange, they nominated Clough for County Commissioner "as a reward for past services to Osborn," the *Cottage City Star* wrote. The election was county-wide and a strong anti-Edgartown vote had

²⁷ *Star*, Oct. 9, 16, 30, 1879.

developed, not only in favor of secession, but also over a controversy about the leasing rights to Tisbury Great Pond. The *Cottage City Star* blasted the Edgartown politicians: "Voters of Dukes County, will you longer submit to the dictation of Samuel Osborn and his followers?"²⁸

Disgusted with the anti-separation nominees, the pro-Eastville secessionists called a convention of their own and nominated Stephen Flanders of Chilmark to run against Hillman for Representative and Lorenzo Smith of Tisbury to run against Clough on what was called "The People's Ticket." The election on November 4, 1879, was a close one. It brought out the largest number of votes ever cast to that date. It was the first state election held in Gay Head, which had been incorporated only a few years before.

The vote tally showed that "people of color," as Indians, Negroes and Portuguese were called then, were a critical factor in the election. Gay Head voted 24 to 0 against Clough, the anti-division candidate for County Commissioner. Gay Head also went 23 to 1 against Hillman, the anti-division candidate for Representative. Island-wide, Clough lost by only 4 votes; Hillman by 40 votes. The "colored vote" had been a major factor in the Eastville secessionists' victory.

The anti-secession *Gazette* wrote disappointedly: "We have met the enemy — and we are theirs."

All Vineyard towns except Edgartown voted for separation. However, the Elizabeth Islands, which is the township of Gosnold and part of Dukes County, voted almost as one-sidedly as Gay Head, but for the other side, 15 to 2 against secession. In Edgartown, the vote was 307 for Hillman (anti-separation), 101 for Flanders (pro). The *Gazette* was critical of the 101 who supported Flanders:

Single-handed except for faraway Gosnold, she [Edgartown] contended almost successfully against the inexcusable combination formed by the other towns, while the foes in her own household were straining every nerve to accomplish



Black businessmen were rare in 1880. This photo seems to indicate that M. Costello was one. His barber shop was behind Wesley House.

her defeat.²⁹

Editor Howes Norris of the *Cottage City Star* lived in Eastville and had spearheaded the separatist drive. He wrote:

The people will not submit to the unreasonable and domineering rule of Mr. Samuel Osborn and his clique of sycophantic followers.³⁰

Clough was said to be going to try "to have the Gay Head vote thrown out for an informality in the warrant for the election." Norris blasted the idea, writing that any person except "a desperate man would overlook a trifling informality, if there is one, on the part of this young town, officered by our well-meaning colored friends."

The Edgartown establishment blamed the loss of the election on the Negro votes. For the first time, Negroes had

²⁸ *Star*, Oct. 16, 1879.

²⁹ *Gazette*, Nov. 7, 1879.

³⁰ *Star*, Nov. 6, 1879.

played an important role in Island politics and over a critical issue. The election was one of the most important in Island history. With Representative Flanders, a supporter of the Eastville secession movement, elected to the Massachusetts General Court, legislation soon passed separating Cottage City (now Oak Bluffs) from Edgartown.

Island Press Portrays Negro Stereotypes

During this period, Island newspapers, like those on the mainland, were portraying African-Americans as well as Africans in negative stereotypes. Descriptions of Negroes as infantile, dull and even comical creatures were common in newspaper advertisements and also in short, supposedly humorous, paragraphs which the Vineyard papers picked up and reprinted from other papers around the nation.

In a column entitled "All Sorts," the *Gazette*, with a smile, stated that "Forty tongues are spoken in Africa, but they have only one general way of roasting and eating a missionary."³¹

The *Cottage City Star* advertised a concert at Town Hall on Lake Avenue, Oak Bluffs, this way: "Grand Concert on Saturday Even'g, Aug. 1, 1885, by the Original Virginia and Texas Jubilee Singers — A genuine slave band, emancipated by President Lincoln's proclamation."³²

A news item after the concert stated: "Lovers of good music can spend an interesting evening in listening to these natural vocalists." Calling such accomplished singers "natural" vocalists, as opposed to "trained," seems condescending. Of course, the advertisement, which was surely controlled by the singing group, described it as a "genuine slave band." This, twenty years after the Civil War, seemed to reinforce another stereotype.

Another advertisement, this one in the *Martha's Vineyard Herald*, told of the attributes of Sanford's Ginger, a popular spice. It highlighted two black-faced cartoon heads, one a grinning "darker," the other a happy, smiling melon. Under

³¹ *Gazette*, Feb. 3, 1882.

³² *Star*, July 29, 1885.

 <p>GRAND CONCERT, —AT THE— UNION CHAPEL. Return of the favorites by request. Entire change of programme; consisting of more than twenty pieces of the most popular Jubilee music. <i>Friday Evening, Aug. 7,</i> —BY THE— Original Virginia and Texas JUBILEE SINGERS, A genuine Slave Band, emancipated by President Lincoln's proclamation. Admission 25 cents; reserved seats, 35 cents; children under 12 years, 15 cents. Reserved seat tickets on sale at Leach's Drug Store.</p>	 <p>HARMLESS WITH SANFORD'S GINGER. The colored brother laughs in anticipation at the feast before him. The melon is tickled beyond expression as it thinks of the kinks it will tie in the darky's stomach. The owl, wise bird, hovers near, knowing that SANFORD'S GINGER will soon be needed. Sanford's Ginger, compounded of Imported Ginger, Choice Aromatics, and French Brandy, convenient, speedy and safe, is the quintessence of all that is preventive and curative in medicine. It is sure to check summer complaint, prevent indigestion, destroy disease germs in all the water drunk, restore the circulation when suspended by a chill, and ward off malarial, contagious and epidemic influences. Beware of worthless "gingers" offensively urged by mercenary druggists on those who call for SANFORD'S GINGER. The Delicious Summer Medicine. 8 4 4t</p>
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Ads in the 1880s. This was the second concert for the Jubilee Singers.

the headline, "Harmless With Sanford's Ginger," the advertisement continued:

The colored brother laughs in anticipation at the feast before him. The melon is tickled beyond expression as it thinks of the kinks it will make in the darky's stomach . . .³³

A Bonding

Perhaps it was this hurtful kind of newspaper material that fed a natural and necessary bonding of blacks on the Island. Most knew each other by sight, if not by name. By the start of the 20th Century, there were two groups of blacks: the "year rounders"; and the "summer visitors." School Street in Oak Bluffs was mostly white in the early 1900s and blacks lived just off it on First Avenue and on the other

³³ *Martha's Vineyard Herald*, Aug. 14, 1886.

unpaved streets that meshed with "Portuguese Village," extending to the other side of Vineyard Avenue.³⁴ Some year-round blacks worked for the wealthy white summer people, opening and closing cottages, as well as cooking, cleaning and taking care of their children.

Ms. Sarah Wentworth was one of those "year rounders." She owned her own home at the foot of School Street, where she lived alone. Hers was the last house on the left going "down street", opposite Whiting's Milk Company.³⁵ Sarah kept a neat, plain, gray-shingled, two-story house, perhaps one of those that had been moved from the campground. It was on the edge of the wetlands in back of Sunset Lake.

In summer, she did laundry for white folks in the Highlands, picking it up and delivering it on her bicycle. A plump, little woman, she would straddle her bicycle nimbly, adjust her black straw hat, setting it squarely on her head. Her hips generously distributed themselves over the bicycle seat as, with the laundry neatly stacked fore and aft, she pedalled very deliberately towards the Highlands. It was, folks recall, a sight to behold and one that commanded respect.

In the evening, it was comforting to hear Sarah's sweet, soft voice through her open curtained windows as she played her piano and sang her favorite Negro spirituals. She was at peace in her home — her own home.³⁶

Reminiscences of Summer

The black "summer visitors," like all summer folk, came and went with the closing and opening of mainland schools. They maintained a warm year-round relationship with the black year-rounders. Phoebe Moseley Adams Ballou was one of them. She first came to Martha's Vineyard in 1883 with her daughter, Caroline, age nine. Phoebe, who was from Paterson, New Jersey, worked for the Hatch family in

³⁴ Pronounced "Portagee Village," a term used to differentiate the Portuguese area from the black section (School St. to Vineyard Ave.).

³⁵ "Down street": Circuit Ave., or downtown.

³⁶ John W. Jones, in 1981 taped conversations with the author, his daughter.

the Highlands. The Hatches operated a successful express delivery service between New Bedford and the Island. Phoebe was governess to the Hatch children, as well as housekeeper and cook, and was treated like a member of the family.

Phoebe first lived in the Bradley Memorial Park area off Circuit Avenue. After a few summers, she could see her way to buying her own home out of her earnings and she bought the house next to the Wests on the waterfront near Call's Market.³⁷ Phoebe added to her income by making fresh bread and rolls for Mr. Call. Sometimes there were over 50 bread pans, loaded with dough, left to rise overnight to be baked in the morning. Phoebe was a hard-working woman and her fresh breads were in big demand at Mr. Call's.

In the summer of 1909, a fire destroyed Phoebe's waterfront home as well as that of her neighbors, the Wests. It ended many happy days for Phoebe's daughter, Caroline, whose son, John Wesley, narrowly escaped death in the fire. His father, Thomas Vreeland Jones, realizing his son was missing, dashed into the flaming building, snatched him out of his bed, and carried him to safety.³⁸

This disaster set the stage for Phoebe's next move. She bought a neat, white cottage (which had been moved from the campground) in Bellevue Heights. Since then, four generations have followed Phoebe in the family homestead at 25 Pacific Avenue. First was Phoebe's daughter Caroline and her husband, the hero of the fire; then came their children, Lois Mailou and John Wesley Jones. Next were John's children, Jacqueline and Robert, followed by his grandchildren, Laurence Wesley Holland and Carol Holland-Kocher, Todd Wesley Jones and Stacy Jones-Bevacqua.

³⁷ Today it is Our Market on Oak Bluffs harbor. The house was a duplex, one half owned by the Wests, the other by Phoebe. It was located on what is now the parking area for the market.

³⁸ Caroline Jones, in conversations with her grandchildren.

Today, the Pacific homestead is still in the Jones family, more than 100 years after Phoebe Ballou's determined efforts. Her descendants all agree, "the Vineyard is in our blood." One of them, artist Lois Mailou Jones, proudly affirms, "I developed my love for painting on the Vineyard. Menemsha and my mother's beautiful hand-designed hats were two strong sources of inspiration."³⁹ Today, the internationally famous painter enjoys the title of "Grand Dame" of the art world. Lois describes herself, quite rightly, as an American artist who happens to be black. She "paid her dues" for proper recognition in the United States during the Negro Renaissance in the 1920s and 1930s, having already earned respect, praise and admiration from the French while studying in Paris.⁴⁰

The West family was also among the "summer people." Dorothy, ("a terrific tennis player," Lois Jones recalls) spent many summers here at their waterfront home next to Phoebe's until it was destroyed in the fire. They then moved into the Highlands where Rachel, Dorothy's mother, nurtured her love for writing. Mrs. West kept a great collection of books in her Island house and ran an informal lending library for the neighboring children. They were welcome to take out a book for several days upon promise to return it to Mrs. West personally, often receiving a cookie in exchange. Dorothy's writing skills have made her a nationally known and respected author. Her book, *The Living Is Easy*, which returned to the book stores a few years ago, has been hailed as excellent reading by critics.

The Shearers are another family whose Island history spans nearly a century, having started in 1908. It began when Charles Shearer, a Baptist from Boston, learned of land for sale abutting the Baptist Tabernacle in the Highlands while he was staying at Mrs. Turner's. She was mother of Grace and Marie Turner, esteemed Boston school teachers, and

³⁹ Lois Jones, taped conversation, 1981.

⁴⁰ Artist Lois Mailou Jones, in her 80s, still paints and is exhibiting this summer on the Vineyard. Her late husband, Vergniaud Pierre-Noel, was an internationally known graphic artist.



Phoebe's house on Pacific Ave. Rear part was moved from campground. her doll collection is highly treasured on the Island.

Some years later, Charles bought one of Mrs. Turner's houses. Following that, he purchased a piece of land abutting the Baptist Tabernacle. There he built a bungalow and also a large shed in which he started a laundry, catering to the wealthy white folks in the Highlands. French pleating was the specialty. The women who ironed at the Shearer laundry brought their own irons and kept their own stoves fired. Electricity, of course, was not available at the time. Charles' wife, Henrietta, taught daughter Sadie to deliver the laundry in a horse cart. Another daughter, Lilly, kept the records.⁴¹

Shearer Cottage was formally opened as a rooming house in 1915 and soon became well known for its airy rooms with fresh, white tie-back curtains. Other attractions included fine family-style meals, a tennis court and a deep, front porch for guests to sit and chat. Board and room, at the time, cost \$18 a week. Lilly Shearer attracted guests from New York; others came from Boston and Philadelphia. Well-known black guests who came often to Shearer Cottage included

⁴¹ Taped conversation with Liz Pope White, 1981.

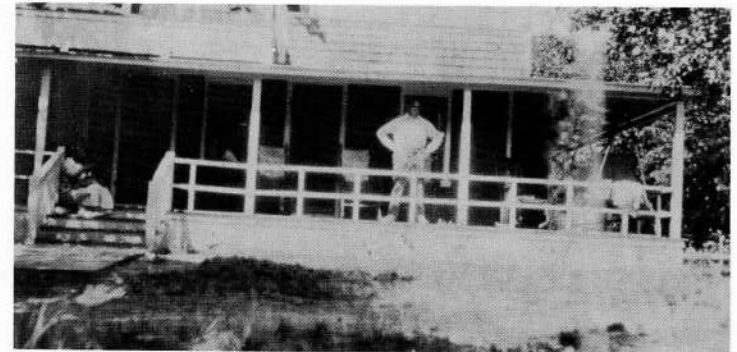


Composer Harry Burleigh, top, a regular Shearer guest, with Liz and Doris Shearer, children at bottom, who now run the Shearer Cottage.

Harry T. Burleigh, arranger and composer of such Negro spirituals as "Deep River," "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen," "Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray," and "Were You There?"

The Reverend Adam Clayton Powell Sr., Paul Robeson and Ethel Waters were among the regular guests at Shearer Cottage. Lillian Evanti, a native Washington, D.C., and the first black American to sing opera as a coloratura soprano and later as a lyric soprano throughout the world, visited the Island for several summers in the 1930s as a guest at Shearer. On one of her visits she gave a concert at the Oak Bluffs Tabernacle, which brought prolonged applause from a standing audience at its close. Adam Powell Jr., later bought a house in the Highlands, where his first wife, Isabelle, still summers today. Other Shearer guests, similarly impressed with the Island's beauty, bought homes and continued to spend their summers there.

Shearer Cottage remained a summer guest house for over half a century with Aunt Sadie Shearer Ashburn at the helm, assisted by her nieces and nephews, as well as a few of the children of summer residents, who waited table and worked as chambermaids until it closed in 1971. In 1983,



Shearer Cottage in the 1920s, a favorite vacation retreat for many prominent blacks from New York, Philadelphia and Boston.

it was reopened and has continued under Aunt Sadie's nieces, Elizabeth (Liz) Pope White and Doris Pope Jackson. Liz, a playwright, takes pleasure in tying bits of Island history together with stories, such as the following:

Mrs. Matthews, a dear friend of my mother, Lilly Shearer, ran an elegant dining room and catering service for whites in her home just down the road from the Shearers. A young man, Lincoln Pope, worked for Mrs. Matthews. When he met Lilly, they fell in love and were married in Mrs. Matthews' living room. They had three children, Charles, who died young, Doris and me. As we children grew, Mrs. Matthews' kitchen became one of our favorite places. We loved to watch Mrs. Matthews beat her delicious butter cakes with her hands. If you were invited into her kitchen, you were able to witness that marvel or, perhaps, even be offered one of her scrumptious cupcakes or hot buttered rolls.⁴²

About Shearer Cottage, it was said, "There's no place like it . . . blacks like to be together, especially to have fun and relax." Its history has been well guarded; its reputation impeccable.⁴³

Another Highland family, also well known for its delicious meals was the Pollards. Son Albert often provided light piano music during mealtime.⁴⁴

⁴² Taped conversation with Liz Pope White, 1981.

⁴³ *Gazette*, Aug. 8, 1986. For more about Shearer Cottage see *Intelligencer*, Aug. 1984.

⁴⁴ Taped conversation with John W. Jones, 1981.

"Summer People": 2nd and 3rd Generations . . .



Courtesy Lois Mailou Jones

Phoebe was the first generation, followed by daughter, Caroline, left, with her daughter, Lois Mailou. Right, Thomas Vreeland Jones, Caroline's husband, in 1915 was first black graduate of Suffolk Law School, Boston.

The Colemans, including Warren and Ralph, actors and entrepreneurs, are another clan whose theatrical and artistic talents have enriched Island life for decades. Luella Coleman, Ralph's wife, one of the original summer family residents, can still be seen driving downtown towards Oak Bluffs from the family compound in the Highland. She, her children and grandchildren now enjoy the Vineyard year-round.⁴⁵ She is truly a Vineyard treasure.

Blacks Give Back to the Island

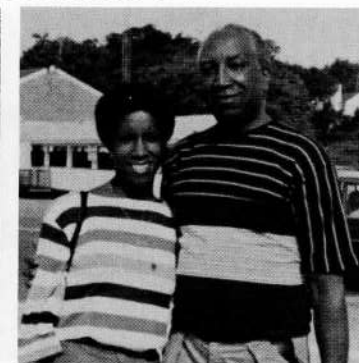
During the 1950s, two Negro organizations were formed in Oak Bluffs. The first of these began when about a dozen black women formed a club called The Cottagers. It now boasts a membership of more than 200.

"It was friends who just got together to enjoy themselves," explained Delilah Pierce, teacher and painter from Washington, D.C., and an original founder. "Then they decided they weren't really supposed only to enjoy themselves," she continued. "They were supposed to serve the Island."

As a result of the continuing work of Thelma Garland Smith, the group's first president, membership today is at

⁴⁵ Luella Coleman, in conversations with author since 1950.

3rd, 4th and 5th Generations . . .



John Wesley Jones, left photo, son of Caroline and Thomas, with his daughter, Jacqueline, author of this article. Right photo, Albert Holland, Jacqueline's husband, with their daughter, Carol Elizabeth.

an all-time high and the club calendar is full. Its fund-raising activities benefit such community organizations as the Regional High School, the Women's Services Division of the Community Services, the Oak Bluffs Fire Department, the Rufus Shorter House of the Nathan Mayhew Seminars, the local Chapter of the NAACP, the Oak Bluffs Library, and the Friends of Oak Bluffs. It also funds two high-school scholarships.

In the 1960s, a period of strife, racial and political, in the nation, the Cottagers purchased the former Oak Bluffs Town Hall on Pequot Avenue. There, black women, young and old, provide a series of activities for children, young adults and adults.⁴⁶

The second of these organizations is the Vineyard Chapter of the National Association of Colored People (NAACP) which today has more than 300 members. It has worked with Vineyard schools, providing courses in African-American history for students and teachers, conducted seminars and presented programs to the public. Its most recent programs were a moving playlet on the life of Dr. Gertrude Teixeira Hunter, former professor at Howard University Medical School, and a lecture by Dr. James

⁴⁶ Gazette, Aug. 8, 1986.

4th, 5th and 6th Generations.



Left, Laurence Wesley Holland, with mother and author, Jacqueline.
Right, his son, Touray Vreeland, 6th generation to summer here.

Comer of Yale School of Medicine on educational changes and the increased risks therein for black children. Mrs. Maggie Alston, a New Yorker who retired to the Island a decade ago, has been a steady beacon guiding its work.⁴⁷

So it is from strong family roots and extended family enrichment handed down by our forebears, that African-Americans have had an active presence on the Vineyard. Today, blacks come to live or to summer with friends from all parts of the Island. They are perhaps echoing a statement recently heard at a dinner party: "I don't know why, but when I'm on this Island, I seem to be able to laugh and to enjoy being with my friends."⁴⁸

Bless all those hard-working, fun-loving souls who preceded us and thus made possible our days in the sun on Martha's Vineyard.

⁴⁷ Gazette, Jan. 19, 1990

⁴⁸ From remarks by summer resident, Helene Wareham, August 1990.

The Indians and the English On Martha's Vineyard

Part III: Thomas Mayhew Sr.

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

THE year 1658 was long and painful for Thomas Mayhew Sr. His son, Thomas Junior, had sailed from Boston for England in November 1657 to take possession of an estate worth 150 pounds a year in rental income, a fortune in those days. With him were his stepbrother, Thomas Paine, who had inherited the estate from his father, and a young Indian, who, along with his sister, lived with the Mayhews, perhaps as servants.

Their ship was never heard from again. For nearly a year, the Mayhews clung to the hope that their fears were false, but sadly, they were true. The two Englishmen and the young Indian were lost in the Atlantic with 50 other passengers.

Mayhew Senior, nearly a year later, still was unable to accept the loss of his son and stepson:

I cannot yett gyve my sonnes over: if they com noe more,
my daughter & hir 6 children will want helpe. . .

He didn't mention, in that August 1658 letter to John Winthrop Jr., what effect his son's death would have on the Indian mission. As one would expect, it was his daughter-in-law and grandchildren that most concerned him.

The mission work continued, thanks in large part to Peter Foulger who had come to the Vineyard in 1647, shortly after the senior Mayhew.¹ He, like Mayhew Junior, was being paid by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the English mission society. His job was "Scoolmaster," teaching Indians the English language, with the help of two natives, Hiacoomes and Panuppaqua, who were also paid by the

¹ Foulger always spelled his name with a "u," as will be done here. Many writers spell it Folger. He had worked for Mayhew at his mill in Watertown.

society. Young Mayhew was the missionary, in charge of the work.

Once convinced his son was dead, the senior Mayhew suggested that the Commissioners of the United Colonies, agents for the missionary society, hire Rev. John Higenson or Rev. Peirson to take his place. Neither would accept.

Widow Mayhew, with Foulger and the Indian teacher, Panuppaqua, went to Boston to meet the Commissioners. She asked them to educate her three fatherless sons to become missionaries. Foulger and Panuppaqua urged that their teaching work be continued. The Commissioners agreed, even agreeing to pay an annual allowance to the widow.

But they did nothing to fill the post left vacant by the death of young Mayhew. Foulger, his logical successor, was not offered the job. Of course, he was not a trained minister, but neither were the Mayhews, Junior or Senior. Various writers have speculated about this. Some believe that Foulger had spoiled his chance by marrying an indentured servant, Mary Morrill, buying her contract from Rev. Hugh Peter for 20 pounds.

A more likely reason was Foulger's religious unorthodoxy. It hadn't kept the Commissioners from hiring him to teach, but preaching was different.

Foulger probably came to the Vineyard at Mayhew's request. The settlement needed skilled workers and he was a millwright, surveyor and accountant. To get him to come, Mayhew made him a half-share proprietor. He and his father, John Foulger, who joined him later, shared in the 1653 division of the common land, the Planting Field.

When Thomas Junior was authorized in 1654 by the English society to employ a "Scoolmaster [along with] one or two meet persons (as their need may require) to teach the rest, [for] the summe of ten pounds a peece per annum," he hired Foulger.² He became fluent in the Indian language

² His salary was later increased to 30 pounds, then dropped to 20 pounds in 1659. The two "meet persons," Indians, were paid 10 pounds each. Foulger may have taught the English also.

and, it is said, established an excellent relationship with the natives. Although intelligent and industrious, he was never accepted by the Mayhews as their equal; nor later by Macy and Coffin on Nantucket.

Perhaps Mayhew had not recommended Foulger, whom he felt would take the missionary position, because he wanted to keep it in the family. Cash did not come easily and the annual payments from England were of great importance. Furthermore, the money from England that missionary Mayhew dispensed to the Indian teachers and leaders was, no doubt, a factor in his authority, especially later when there were as many as twelve on the payroll.

However it came about, the senior Mayhew was given the position of missionary, untrained in religion though he was. The Commissioners sounded as though it was only temporary:

. . . in the mean time wee thinke that God doth call for youer more then ordinary assistance in this worke and are very well pleased that youer spiritt is soe farr inclined thereunto.

Two years later, Thomas Senior was still anxious to keep the top position in the family. He told John Winthrop Jr., one of the Commissioners, that when he died, his replacement should be his son-in-law, Thomas Daggett, who, as far as is known, had no qualifications other than having married daughter Hannah.

Mayhew didn't hesitate to use schoolmaster Foulger for jobs unrelated to the mission work. He was surveyor and accountant in the sale of Nantucket, negotiations for which then were underway. Early in 1658, Mayhew dispatched him to Salisbury, north of Boston, to work out a purchase agreement with Tristram Coffin Sr., Thomas Macy and several others.³ These men were seeking a new settlement because they were being persecuted for their unorthodox religious beliefs. They told Foulger they would buy Nantucket if he could get the Indians to sell the land. By July, Foulger had arranged the conveyances with the Indians.

³ Macy was a distant cousin of Mayhew, it is believed.

In May 1659, Tristram Coffin, Edward Starbuck and John Coleman came to the Vineyard to conclude the purchase. First, they visited Nantucket. Mayhew sent Foulger along as his agent and interpreter. In Mayhew's name, the western end of the island was purchased from the two Nantucket sachems for 12 pounds. On July 2, the quartet returned to the Vineyard and the papers were signed. That fall, Thomas Macy and family moved to Nantucket. Shortly, Edward Starbuck and James Coffin joined them, along with "one Daget [Thomas Daggett] from Martha's Vineyard for the sake of gunning and lived with him as boarders. At that time, there were near 3000 Indians on Nantucket."⁴

On October 4, Foulger took a bold step. He published in the Edgartown Records a statement of his religious unorthodoxy:

The request of Peter Foulger granted, touching the laying down of his creed as by the major part of the freemen and voted the same October (59).⁵

Whether his unorthodoxy was heightened by his dealings with the Nantucket buyers is not known. Certainly, working with them must have encouraged him to go public. Thomas Macy was non-orthodox, "having entertained Quakers" in his Salisbury home and had been fined for it. He was a Baptist, not a Quaker. Both religions were unorthodox and considered dangerous by the Puritans. Starbuck, with whom he had gone to Nantucket, was also a Baptist.

Foulger's renunciation of the established church certainly disqualified him from becoming the Puritan society's paid missionary, although his teacher's salary continued for two more years.

When Mayhew sold Tuckernuck Island to Coffin for six pounds, plus 60 acres on Nantucket, in 1659, Foulger again served as the chief negotiator with Sachem Pottacohonnet and his sons.

⁴ Zaccheus Macy, *Short Journal of the first Settlement of Nantucket*, MHS, Colls. I, 1792, p.156, as copied by RLP, DCHS.

⁵ Edgartown Records, I, p.147. This was a serious declaration. Under colonial law, anyone not taking the "oath of fidelity" to the established church could not vote or hold public office. A moot point on the Vineyard where there were no elections and all officers were appointed by Mayhew.

The next summer, 1660, Foulger spent weeks on Nantucket with the new settlers purchasing more land from the Indians and laying out the proprietors' lots. Mayhew had ownership of about 10 percent of the island and his sales agreement required that Foulger be involved in all land divisions, presumably to look out for his interests. In July 1661, Foulger and Mayhew went to Nantucket to approve the final division. During all this time, Mayhew and Foulger were being paid by the missionary society in England.

The junior Thomas Mayhew, now dead, had bought some land on Nantucket from the Indians some years earlier. For all the Mayhew rights (except for one large piece known as Quaise), the new owners paid Mayhew Senior 30 pounds, plus two "bever hats," one for him, the other for his wife. Apparently, Mayhew Junior's widow got nothing for her late husband's land, not even a beaver hat.

Foulger was the major player in the Nantucket purchase, being the only one who could talk with the Indians in their language. He had done all this while being paid by the missionary society. In 1661, the year the sale was completed, Foulger was dropped from the payroll. No reason is given in the record. It may have been his statement of religious unorthodoxy or it may have been that Mayhew no longer needed him, either for teaching or for land sales.

Mayhew had added six Indians to the society payroll in 1659, bringing the total to eight, perhaps to fill in for the absent Foulger during his long stays on Nantucket. With this enlarged staff, Mayhew had little need for Foulger. Nor did he need him in his real-estate business now that the Nantucket deal had been completed.

Years later, in 1677, Foulger, this time in trouble with the Nantucket establishment, described the part he had played in the purchase and settlement of that island:

I have bin Interpreter here [Nantucket] from the Beginning of the Plantation, when no Englishman but myselfe could speake scarce a Word of Indian, at which Time I am sure some of these Men that deal thus with me now, had felt Arrows in their Sides for reall Wrong that they did them, had I not stept in between them and made Pease.

Whatever the reason for Foulger being dropped from the Society payroll, the following year, 1662, he began preparing to leave the Vineyard. He sold some of his property to Richard Arey. His father had died in 1660, but his mother stayed in the family home until her death in 1663, after which it was sold to Mayhew. Eight of Foulger's nine children had been born on the Vineyard.⁶

In 1662, Foulger and his family left Martha's Vineyard to settle on Rhode Island, where his unorthodoxy was orthodox. But his stay was brief. In 1663, he was offered a half-share in the Nantucket proprietorship by the Coffins if he would move there to serve as interpreter, surveyor and clerk. He accepted. Soon, he was operating the island's grist mill and laying out its first roads. He served as attorney and clerk, keeping records of land sales.

He became one of the most important men on the island, but he continued to be an outsider, never part of the establishment. He soon became involved in a dispute with Coffin, when he refused to give him the town records without an order from higher authority. Arrested and "too poor" to put up bail, he was imprisoned in "a Place where never any English-man was put, and where the Neighbors Hogs had layed but the Night before, and in a bitter cold Frost and deep Snow."

In the dispute, Foulger, Richard Gardner and Edward Starbuck were opposed by the Coffins and by Thomas Mayhew, Chief Magistrate of the court. Foulger's crime was contempt of court for refusing to turn over certain land records. He and the other dissenters were craftsmen and mechanics, who had been invited to join the settlement as workers. As such, they were half-share proprietors and treated that way.⁷

While in the hog-pen prison, Foulger wrote a long rhyme

⁶ The ninth, Abiah, was born on Nantucket. She became famous as the grandmother of Benjamin Franklin.

⁷ This was not unlike the conflict on the Vineyard known as the "Dutch Rebellion," with Simon Athearn in the leading role. Vineyard dissenters were thought of as laborers, of lower class.

in which he shows his anger over King Philip's War, which was then going on, the church-state relationship and established religion. Here are a few excerpts:

They are the tribe of minesters, as they are sayd to be,
Which alwayes to our magistrates, must be the eyes to see.
Those are the men that by thyer wits have spun so' faire
a thred

That now themselves and others are of natives in a dread.
What dread is theire of sutch a feare if wee have dun
no ill

But its because that we have ben not doing of Gods will. . .
And I do really believe it's not your business
To meddle with the church of Christ in matters more or
less. . .

I would not have you for to think, that I am such a fool
To write against learning as such or to cry down a school.
But 'tis that popish college way that I intend hereby,
Where men are mewd up in a cage, fit for all villainy. . .
I am for peace and not for war and thats the reason why
I speake more playne then som men do that loves to daube
and ly.

But I shall sease and sett my name to what I heare inserte
Because to be a lybeller, I hate itt with my hert.
ffrom Shearborne towne wher now I dwell, my name I do
put here,

With out offence, your reall ffrend, it is . . . Peter ffoulger.

April: 23: 1676⁸

With Foulger's departure, Thomas Mayhew Sr., now 70 years old, was the only Englishman working for the society on the Vineyard. The Island still had no ordained English minister. Tradition tells us that the Mayhews, Junior and Senior, preached to the English and the Indians during these first years, but neither was ever ordained or paid by the town as its minister. Two other Mayhews were receiving money from the English society: the widow of Thomas Junior and her son Matthew in Cambridge studying to become a missionary.

⁸ The original copy of the rhyme, entitled "A Looking Glasse for the Times," is at Nantucket Historical Society. Many pages long, it is reprinted in *A Grandfather for Franklin*, Florence Bennett Anderson, Meador Publ., Boston, 1940, p. 306ff. Shearborne is Sherborne, then the village on Nantucket.

Although the society required that missionaries know the Indian language, in the elder Mayhew's case it seems not to have enforced the rule. He admitted to his friend, John Winthrop Jr., that his Indian language ability was slight. In a letter June 6, 1659, he wrote that he could communicate with the Indians despite having only a slight knowledge of their language: "I can clearely make knowne to them by an interpreter, what I know my sellfe." His interpreter at the time was Peter Foulger, now no longer there. As seemed to be routine, Mayhew added:

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.

Early the next year, he prepared a lengthy report of his work with the Indians and sent it to the Commissioners, asking them to forward it to London. The Commissioners did so, with this:

Wee received from Mr. Mahew an incurrageing account of
the progresse of the GossPELL among the natives of the
Vineyard; whoe living in several villages; and amongst them
some Pagans have very lately sollemly renewed their
covenant to owne and serve the Lord . . . wherof hee was
a witness; hee alsoe informed us of the low and poor estate
of his sons widdow; and sollicites us for a continuance of
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 we know not . . .

Mayhew asked that his report be published, as his son's had earlier. But after six weeks, the London directors ordered:

. . . The Corporation doe not thinke fitt to print Mr.
Mahews Manuscript, & give him thanks in the Corporation
name for his panes.

Matthew, as mentioned, was in grammar school at Cambridge preparing for Harvard to be educated to take up his father's work. The requirement of Indian language ability had prompted an inquiry from England about his progress. The report was not encouraging. He could have used the help of two other Vineyarders in school with him,

two Indians being prepared for Harvard's Indian College.⁹

It was at this time, 1661, that the missionary society in London was disbanded by King Charles II after he ousted the Puritans. For a year, there was uncertainty about the future of the work. But soon a new organization was created by Charles with the same purpose, but a different leadership.¹⁰

It was also in 1661 that Martha Mayhew, daughter of Thomas Senior, married Capt. Thomas Tupper Jr., of Sandwich. Tupper, like Mayhew, was a missionary to the Indians, uniting two missionary families, one on each side of Nantucket Sound.

King Charles's new missionary society, "the company for Propagation of the Gospell in New England, and the parts adjacent in America" became known as "the New England Company." It continued paying for Matthew Mayhew's education; also six pounds a year for his mother; and 30 pounds annually to Mayhew Senior. Eight Indian teachers were paid a total of 30 pounds a year, Hiacoomes getting 10 pounds, the others dividing the remainder.

The New England Company, with a smaller income than the previous society, was curious about Matthew. He had been in preparatory school five years and was 17 years old. It was time for Harvard. Had he learned the Indian language? The Commissioners, up to now very patient, passed a resolution, September 16, 1661:

. . . a considerable charge hath for his fathers sake bin
expended on him, [and] the Commissioners expect that
together with his other learning hee apply himself to learn
the Indian language . . . otherwise the Commissioners will
be neccesitated to consider of some more hopefull way of
expending the stock betruisted in theire hands.

Matthew's two Indian classmates had already entered the new Indian College at Harvard. They were among the first native Americans enrolled. It isn't clear how many were

⁹ See "The Vineyard's First Harvard Men Were Indians," by the author, *Intelligencer*, February 1988.

¹⁰ See *Intelligencer*, November 1990.

in that historic first (and only) class, but the two Vineyarders were the only ones who made it to their Senior year.¹¹

Despite years of missionizing on the Island, no Gay Head Indian had yet been converted. Chilmark was as far west as Christianity had gone. Then in 1663, Mittark, Sachem of Gay Head, went to Thomas Mayhew and asked to be accepted as a Christian. Here is how it happened, as reported some years later by grandson, Rev. John Mayhew, then a missionary:

Mittark, Sachim of the Gayhead. . . and his People were all in Heathernism till about the Year 1663. . . his people being dissaffected to him [because of his conversion], he left them, and removed to the East End of the Island where after. . . about three Years he returned home again and set up a Meeting at the said Gayhead, he himself dispensing the Word of God unto as many as would come to hear him.

Thus the first Christian meeting at Gay Head was about 1666. Mittark, like Hiacoomes years before, seems to have initiated his own conversion. Whatever brought it about, we don't know but the elder Mayhew is generally given credit for it. It was, Banks wrote, "the final great result of the labors of the aged missionary."¹²

The New England Company in London, that was paying for all this, was running low on funds. It ordered the Commissioners of the United Colonies to end support for Widow Mayhew and also to drop Matthew Mayhew and another student at Cambridge. The Commissioners balked at cutting off Mrs. Mayhew. They must continue, they replied,

that small allowance . . . her husband being the first or one of the first whose hart god stired up effectually to laboure in this worke . . . [we will] allow her as formerly six pounds but shall lett her know shee must expect noe more . . . John Stanton and Mathew Mayhew bee according to your honors advise discharged.¹³

¹¹ One was Joel Hiacoomes, son of the Indian preacher. The other was Caleb Cheeschamuck, son of a Holmes Hole sachem. See *Intelligencer*, February 1988.

¹² Charles E. Banks, *History of Martha's Vineyard*, v.1, p.239.

¹³ Annual payments to Mrs. Thomas Mayhew Jr., continued until 1667, a year after she married Richard Sarson. Matthew went back on the payroll about 1670 as "Ruler" of the Indians.

To Thomas Mayhew at Great Harbor, news of cuts in support was discouraging. Once again, he called upon his friend, Gov. John Winthrop Jr., of Connecticut, one of the Commissioners. Winthrop had sent him some "cordial powder" as a gift and Mayhew was writing to thank him. He added, "I pray, Sir, take an opportunitie to doe what yow may with the Kings Commissioners to shew me all lawfull favour."

The next year, perhaps as a result of Governor Winthrop's influence, Mayhew was shown more "lawfull favour" and his pay was increased to 40 pounds (up from 30). That increase was more than the annual cost of educating Matthew.¹⁴

Of course, the missionary pay was only part of the total Mayhew family income. Widow Mayhew had inherited her father's English estate (her brother, the other heir, had been lost at sea with her husband). That property was said to bring an annual income of 150 pounds. Historian Banks, commenting on Richard Sarson's marriage to widow Mayhew, wrote that "he acquired control of the inheritance of the Paine interest descending to his wife, and thus became a considerable property owner."¹⁵ With that much coming in from England, plus the missionary pay, there certainly could have been no lack of money in the Mayhew household.

Seven years after the death of Thomas Mayhew Jr., the village of Great Harbour invited 23-year-old John Cotton Jr., to be its pastor, offering "to give him Forty Pounds a year."

On May 24, 1664, Cotton accepted. The invitation had come at a fortuitous moment for the young man. Just two months before, he had been excommunicated by members of his famous father's church, the First Church of Boston, for "lascivious, unclean practises" with three women. A

¹⁴ In 1670, the highest paid craftsmen, carpenters and masons, in Boston were paid two shillings a day; working six days a week, 52 weeks, they would earn 31 pounds a year. *N.E.Qrly*, v.11, (1938), pp. 470.

¹⁵ Banks, v.2, "Annals of Edgartown," p.105.

month later, he made "a penitential acknowledgement" of his actions and was readmitted to the church.¹⁶

A Harvard graduate (1657), young Cotton thus became the first trained minister to serve on the Vineyard. It seems likely that Gov. John Winthrop had organized the move. By finding Cotton a position at the Vineyard, he helped his friend, the elder Cotton, get rid of an embarrassment and at the same time he helped another friend, Mayhew, fill the Great Harbour pulpit, which had been empty for so long. With the move, Cotton was put on the payroll as missionary to the Indians, even though he didn't speak Indian. Winthrop, one of the Commissioners, could have arranged that.

Immediately after he and his wife came to the Vineyard, Cotton began to study Algonquin:

... he hired an Indian at the rate of 12 pence per day, for 50 days, to teach him the Indian tongue; but his knavish tutor having received his whole pay too soon, ran away before 20 days were out; however, in this time he had profited so far that he could quickly preach unto the natives.¹⁷

Whether or not the story of Indian knavery is true (and the author is not totally convinced), Cotton had certainly "profited." For years afterward, he was a paid missionary to the Indians. He did learn their language and later helped John Eliot translate the Bible into Algonquin. Diarist Cotton Mather was his nephew, and fond of Uncle John. As a result, we know a little more about Rev. John Cotton:

Among his numerous relatives Cotton [Mather] most often visited his mother's brother, the minister John Cotton . . . A rather fat man with a 'handsome Ruddy yet grave Countenance,' he could cite chapter and verse for almost any words of Scripture quoted to him. Although regarded as a 'living index to the Bible,' something in him was quirky and unreliable.¹⁸

¹⁶ Kenneth Silverman, *The Life & Times of Cotton Mather*, Harper & Row, 1984, p.39.

Also Eugene Aubrey Stratton, *Plymouth Colony*, Ancestry Publ., 1986, p.191.

¹⁷ Nehemiah Adams, *Lives of the Chief Fathers of New England*, 1870, v.3, p.246.

¹⁸ Silverman, p.39. The last reference is to his philandering.

Cotton may have been the Vineyard's first Harvard-trained minister, but it soon would have its own native-born graduate. Or so it thought. Graduating in the Class of 1665 was Caleb Cheeschamuck, *Indus*. To be sure, his name was at the bottom of the list (the other seven graduates, all English, were listed alphabetically), but despite this discrimination, he was a historic figure. A son of the Sachem of Holmes Hole, he was the first Vineyarder, Indian or English, to graduate from Harvard and the first Indian ever to do so. Another Vineyard Indian, Joel Hiacoomes, Caleb's classmate during the eight years at Cambridge, was within a few months of graduation when he died in a shipwreck off Nantucket on his way back to school after visiting the Vineyard.

Caleb's story also had a sad ending. He never came back to the Vineyard. Soon after graduation he was taken ill with consumption, a common illness, it was said, among Indians in "civilized" conditions. He was placed under the care of a doctor in Charlestown, "where he wanted not for the best means the country could afford, both of food and physick."¹⁹ Despite that care, he died within a few months. His tragic death was said to confirm Governor Bradford's notion that "Hard study and confinement did not agree with [Indians]."²⁰

Had these two Harvard-educated Indians, Caleb and Joel, lived to return to their Island, history would have been different. Both were dedicated students. Daniel Gookin, who had met them as Superintendent of Indians in Massachusetts Bay, wrote:

I remember but only two of them all [the Indians], that lived in the college at Cambridge; the one named Joel, the other Caleb; both natives of Martha's Vineyard. These two were hopeful young men, especially Joel, being so ripe in learning, that he should, within a few months, have taken his first degree of bachelor of art in the college. . . a diligent student.

¹⁹ Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections of the Indians*, Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls., 1792, v.1, ch.5, p.173.

²⁰ Bradford's *New England Chronology*, p.67.

. . . writing the sermons and frequenting lectures; grave and sober in his conversation.²¹

For John Cotton, the missionary job was only part-time, as he was also minister for the English. Nonetheless, the Commissioners paid him 30 pounds a year. Mrs. Cotton was paid 10 pounds "for Phisicke and Surgery to Indians." In addition, the town paid Cotton 40 pounds a year.

The new missionary's stay was brief. He and Mayhew didn't get along. Within two years, things had become so disagreeable that the Commissioners stepped in. One historian suggests the dispute may have been about money: ". . . excellent though [Mayhew's] good qualities were, he was strong-willed and often irascible and, unlike his son, kept a jealous eye upon the Commissioners' moneys."²²

Perhaps Mayhew, who controlled such things, had stopped the town's salary payments because Cotton was being paid by the New England Company. With the two salaries, Cotton was earning more than Mayhew. But that's speculation. Whatever the reason, the disagreement brought prompt action. On September 15, 1667, the Commissioners summoned Cotton to their annual meeting at Hartford, Connecticut:

Mr. John Cotton appeered before the Commisioners and was seriously spoken too to compose those allianations between him and Mr. Mahew; otherwise it was signified to him that the Commissioners could not expect good by theire labours wheras by theire mutuall contentions and Invictives one against another they undid what they taught the Natives and sundry calles (as hee said) being made him by the English to other places; which in conjunction with the present fayleing of a certaine Revenew; hee was left to his libertie to dispose of himselfe as the Lord should Guid him."²³

²¹ Sibley's *Harvard Graduates*, Class of 1665, p.201. No other Vineyarder graduated from Harvard until 1731. He was Nathan Mayhew, son of Experience (who was given an honorary degree in 1723). Like Caleb, he died shortly after.

²² William Kellaway, *The New England Company 1649-1776*, Barnes & Noble, N.Y., 1962, p.99.

²³ *Plymouth County Records*, v.X, p.329, as copied by Richard L. Pease, DCHS. Banks believes it may have been the incompatibility of youth and age that created the disagreement. The "present fayleing" referred to the Company's declining income.

Cotton didn't have to worry about being left "to his libertie" very long, even with "lascivious, unclean practises" on his record. Among his "sundry calles" was one from Plymouth, which he promptly accepted. There, as at the Vineyard, he was also paid by the New England Company as missionary. His Plymouth stay lasted 30 years until, once again, he was ordered to leave, as Samuel Sewall wrote, because of "his Notorious Breaches of the Seventh Commandm't. . . A most awfull Instance!"²⁴

Cotton's brief stay on the Vineyard did provide us with a first-hand description of the Christian Indians. In a letter to Superintendent Daniel Gookin, September 14, 1674, Cotton wrote:

When I lived at the Vineyard, the praying towns were Chappaquidick, Nashamoies, Sengekontakit, Toikiming, Nashuakemmiuk, Talhanio; one church there gathered long before, but no officers. Since I lived here [in Plymouth], I went over with Mr. Eliot thither; and Hiacomoes was ordained pastor; John Tokinosh, teacher; John Nonoso and Joshua Mummecheeg, ruling elders. Since, I hear they are become two churches; the pastor [Hiacomoes] and one ruling elder for Chappaquidick; the teacher [Tokinosh] and the other ruling elder, for the other church, which hath some members, if I mistake not, in all the other towns above mentioned . . .²⁵

Great Harbour was again without a minister or missionary, except for the 76-year-old Mayhew. He had been counting on his grandson, Matthew, now 20. But he showed no interest in the work; he preferred to help govern. His brother, Thomas 3rd, 18 years old, also was not interested. Only the youngest grandson, John, now 16, seemed a likely prospect.²⁶ Nine Indian teachers/preachers were being paid

²⁴ Samuel Sewall, *Diary*, v.1, p.460, MHS Colls., 1878. Cotton then went to a pulpit in South Carolina where he died the next year.

²⁵ Gookin, *Hist. Colls.*, MHS Colls., Ser.1,v.1, p.206. The Chappaquidick village may have been on Caleb's Pond; Nasahmoies or Nunnepog on Edgartown Great Pond; Sengekontacket at Farm Neck; Toikiming or Takemmy, at West Tisbury; Nashuakemmiuk, at Squibnocket Pond, Chilmark; and Talhanio, perhaps Chilmark.

²⁶ Only Matthew had attended school off-Island. There's little record of early schools on the Island. They must have been occasional. As we shall see, sister Bethiah Mayhew never learned to sign her name.

to help Mayhew and were doing most of the mission work under Hiacoomes.

In the summer of 1670, the praying Indians were numerous enough to form a church at Great Harbour, with Hiacoomes ordained as minister. On August 22nd, the ordination ceremony was held in the Indian meeting house at Nunnepog. Missionary John Eliot came from Natick, along with the Island's former minister, Rev. John Cotton Jr., now of Plymouth. John Tackanash was ordained as teacher, John Nahnoso and Joshua Momatchegin as elders.

Some felt that the Indian services under Hiacoomes did not meet Puritan standards. One such critic was Cotton Mather, nephew of John Cotton. He wrote that "the worship was corrupt, nominally Presbyterian but mixed with Quaker practices."²⁷

Two years later, a second Indian church was formed, this one on Chappaquiddick. It was not because there were more converts, but it was more convenient for those Indians living on the smaller island. Hiacoomes moved over there and Tackamash took over the original church in Edgartown. Some say that Tackamash was even more highly regarded by the English than was Hiacoomes. On at least one occasion, he administered communion to the English. Experience Mayhew, writing 50 years later, described how it happened:

"This John Tackanash was ordained as a Colleague with Hiacoomes. . . in the Year 1670. . . as a Teacher of the same Church whereof Hiacoomes was Pastor. These for some Years went on Hand in Hand, as Fellow-Labourers in the same Church: But whereas the Members of the Church. . . lived partly at Chappaquiddick and partly on the main Island. . . at some Miles distance. . . it was at length agreed that the said Church. . . should divide into two: and it accordingly did so; Hiacoomes and Joshua Mamachegin, one of the Ruling Elders, taking Charge of. . . Chappaquiddick (where they now dwell) and John Tackanash and John

²⁷ *Selected Letters of Cotton Mather*, ed. Kenneth Silverman, 1972, p.122. There were other "corruptions" besides Quaker. The Anabaptist influence was becoming strong at Gay Head and by 1693 it prevailed.

Nohonoso taking charge of that on the main Island. . . where they lived. And thus they remained two distinct Churches. . . until Hiacoomes being superannuated. . . [then] these two Churches did, by Consent, become one again, under the pastoral Care of the said Tackanash;...Tackanash...was, so far as I can learn. . . blameless, being even wholly free from any Imputation of immoderate Drinking, which is the national Sin of our Indians. . . When there was no English Pastor upon the Island, some of our godly English People very cheerfully received the Lord's Supper administered by him; and I suppose none would have scrupled it, had they understood the Indian language. . . He lived at the East End of Martha's Vineyard, at a Place called Nunpang, and dy'd Jan. 22d, 1683-4."²⁸

The elder Mayhew, aging and occupied with governing, was spending less time on mission work than ever. He now had 12 Indians under him, paid to teach and preach to their brothers. Governing the English had become more difficult. Dissidents were demanding a voice. For too long, they said, Mayhew had controlled everything.

His control was challenged from off-Island in March 1664 when Charles II granted to the Duke of York the patent of New York, plus other lands, including "all those severall Islands called or known by the names of Martin's Vineyard and Nantukes, otherwise Nantukett." Ironically, at the time, the Dutch were occupying New York, but by September, the English had regained it in a bloodless invasion, backed by frigates and troops under Col. Richard Nicolls, who was named governor.

Mayhew was concerned. Would his rights, given by Lord Stirling, stand up under the new patent? He saw a chance to test them. A vessel had been wrecked a short time before on the Elizabeth Islands. Its master, William Weexe, had complained that Indians had gone aboard and stolen some goods, including "a woman's cloak from goody Daggett," Mayhew's married daughter.²⁹

²⁸ Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, p.1516.

²⁹ Goody was the familiar name given the wife of a Goodman, who was one step higher in the social hierarchy than the laborer. J.C.Furnas, *The Americans*, Putnam's, 1969, p.63.

Mayhew sent Governor Nicolls a letter, with a copy of the captain's complaint, asking how it should be handled. Nicolls, no doubt surprised to hear from a distant island, responded that it would be proper at this time "to putt forth my authority to strengthen your hands by a special commission" to resolve the matter:

Whereas the Sachems of the Elizabeth Isles, with others of their Confederates and people did take, Seize, Spoyle and Robb the Vessell and goods of William Wax, master, who with his Vessell and Company, by distresse of weather, were driven ashore upon one of the Eliz. Isles, the 18 of Nov. 1667 . . . [you are] to compell [them] by force of armes or otherwise to make restitutions. . . to the said Wax.

Mayhew seems not to have created the special commission, as ordered. After all, he had no way to "compell by force of armes or otherwise" the Indians on the Elizabeth Islands to reimburse the captain, so why bother? New York was very far away. But he had shown the new Governor that he was a responsible leader. He had made his point.

Two years later, a letter arrived from Gov. Francis Lovelace who had replaced Nicolls in New York. It was about another shipwreck, this one on Martha's Vineyard. The vessel had been driven ashore with a cargo of 40 hogsheads of rum, among other items, and the Governor wanted to know why Mayhew hadn't informed him. And what had happened to all that rum?

Mayhew waited six months before responding. He then sent grandson Matthew, now his chief assistant, to New York with a letter proposing a meeting to clarify his rights under the grants from Sir Ferdinand Gorges and Lord Stirling. Matthew returned with a letter, dated May 16, 1670:

. . . I doe admire it hath beene so longe before you have made yor Application to me, since yor addressing yorselpe for Reliefe against the Indians in a Businesse of a wreck to my Predecessor and his Commission to you thereupon, did intimate an Acknowledgement of being under his Royall Highness his Protection. Upon notice this last Yeare of the like Misfortune of a wreck upon your Island I sent Directions to you how to proceed thereupon, of wch I expect an

account, but have as yett heard nothing of it; but when you come hither, as you propose and wch I very much desire, I make no Question of receiving Satisfaction therein from you, as well as in diverse Particulars. . . bring all your Patents, Deeds or other Wrytings with you. . . for the future good settlement of those Islands.³⁰

Governor Lovelace ordered Mayhew to inform all who claimed ownership in the islands to come to New York with him within four months to present legal evidence.

Again, Mayhew was in no hurry. He wrote to Lovelace that he had to wait until the weather was right so he could travel by water. Going that far over land was too much for a man of his age. The next summer, July 1671, he sailed to New York. With him, besides grandson Matthew, were Macy and Coffin from Nantucket.

In New York, at Fort James, Mayhew must have presented his case well. On July 8, 1671, at the close of the meeting, Gov. Francis Lovelace praised him as

. . . doing a great Deale of Good both in settling severall Plantacons there as also in reclayming and civilizing the Indians. . . [in] Acknowledgement of his Good services: It is ordered . . . that the said Mr. Thomas Mayhew shall dureing his naturall Life bee Governor of the Island called Martin's or Martha's Vineyard, both over the English Inhabitants and Indiyans. . .³¹

Lovelace put some restrictions on the new Governor. One required him to form a court to serve Nantucket and the Vineyard. Another was that he hold prompt elections to choose magistrates of the court. About the Indians, Lovelace ordered that:

Mr. Mayhew is to bee Governor over the Indians upon Martin's Vineyard. . . Hee is to have Liberty to Purchase for his Royall Highnesse, and to make Returne thereof. . . That Mr. Thomas Mayhew as Governor over the Indiyans, doe follow the same Way and Course of quiet and peaceable Government amongst them as hitherto hee hath done.

The Governor also ordered him, as soon as he was back

³⁰ Franklin B. Hough, *Papers . . . Relating to Dukes County While Under the Colony of New York*, Albany, 1856, p. 21-22.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

home, to summon a meeting

of the Inhabitants (amongst wch I would not have chiefs of the Indyans omitted). . .[you shall tell the Indians] that having now taken them unto his Royall Highness' particular Protection I shall be very careful to Assist them in all Extremitie: expecting from them noe other Returne but that they live quietly and peaceably wth true submission to that Authority wch now is sett over them. You are to cause some of the Principall Sachems to repaire (as speedily as they can) to mee, that soe they may pay their Homage to his Majestie and acknowledge his Royall Highness to bee their only Lord Proprietor.³²

Lovelace proposed that the Indians be kept busy:

You are to encourage and sett to worke the Sewan making, to whom you may give full Assurance, they shall receive sufficient Recompence for their Labour. And. . .you are not to permitt any Shells to be exported to fforrainers, unless they pay a considerable Custome for them.³³

There was also a most unusual law written that day. It created a manor in the English tradition with Thomas Mayhew and grandson Matthew named Lords of the Manor:

Francis Lovelace, Governor General of York to Thomas Mahew and Mathew Mahew. . .several peices and parcels of Land & Islands to be Erected into a Mannor and called by the name of Tisbury Mannor. To be holden according to the Custome of the Manner of East Greenwich in the County of Kent in England in free and Comon Soccage by fealty only.³⁴

Rent for the manor was "two Barrells of Good Merchantable Cod-Fish to be Delivered at the Bridge in this City," bringing the total rent for the Elizabeth Islands, the Vineyard and Nomans Land to eight barrels.

³² There seems to be no record that Mayhew told the sachems to go speedily to New York to "pay their Homage" to Lovelace.

³³ Sewan or wampum consisted of cylindrical beads wrought from shells (such as quahaugs) and strung on cord. Often assembled into aprons or armbands, they were prized by Indians for ceremonial purposes. Europeans recognized sewan as valuable when Indians traded land and fur for it. Thus it became, to the English, sort of play money. Furnas, p. 128.

³⁴ Soccage: a tenure of land by agricultural service . . . not burdened with any military service. See Lloyd C.M. Hare, *Thomas Mayhew*, American Historical Society, 1931, p.151ff., for an excellent review of the manor concept.

Surely this manorial status must have been proposed by Mayhew who, no doubt, had dreamed of such since obtaining the rights to settle the Island. He, a mercer, tradesman, from Tisbury, England, was now Lord of the Manor of Tisbury, New England, and his grandson would carry on the title after him. A masterful achievement, he must have thought. The manor included most of today's Chilmark, plus the Elizabeth Islands. Also in it was Chickemmoo, the area west of today's Lake Tashmoo. He was now empowered to lease sections and collect rents.

The manor concept added fuel to the smoldering rebellion that was getting ready to burst into flame. The rebels had wide popular support, according to Matthew Mayhew, who wrote, "about half the People in a mutinous Manner rose, with many contumelious Words and Threats against the said Govournour." Included were names enshrined in Vineyard history: Norton, Skiffe, Pease, Trapp, Athearn, Arey, Robinson and Luce.³⁵ Its leader was Thomas Burchard. Later to be called the "Dutch Rebellion," it is an action separate from the Indian-English story and therefore not to be treated here, except to say that the Mayhew nepotism survived the onslaught.

During that busy week in New York, Great Harbour was renamed Edgartown, in honor of the young son of the Duke of York (unknown to the meeting participants, he had died). Before leaving, Mayhew persuaded Governor Lovelace to write to Gov. Thomas Prentice of Plymouth about money, a subject that Mayhew seemed always to bring up:

Mr. Thomas Mayhew of Martin's Vineyard haveing been here with mee. . .to take out Patents of Confirmacon for. . .Martin's Vineyard. . .At his Instance and Request, I doe Recomend it you, that you'l please to Graunt him some Enlargment of Recompence for his Trouble and Paines amongst the Indyans. . .for his Encouragement in his Ancient Dayes.³⁶

³⁵ Hough, *Papers*, p.66. Incidentally, James Skiffe, a dissenter, had only recently moved from Sandwich after his wife had gone to Virginia with another man. He was granted a divorce by the Plymouth court in 1670.

³⁶ Hough, *Papers*, p. 41.

It certainly was a successful trip, as historian Banks commented:

Altogether it was a most satisfactory seven days work for Mayhew and his interests. He was now Governor "for life," Chief Justice of the Courts of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, Lord of the Manor of Tisbury, and Matthew had been made collector and receiver of the customs for the Vineyard.³⁷

It was also a tribute to the strength and vitality of the 80-year-old Thomas Mayhew that he was physically able to make the long, arduous trip by water and to negotiate with such success.

While these momentous events were taking place in New York, serious trouble was brewing in New England. On the day of Mayhew's triumph, July 7, 1671, the Council of War at Plymouth began preparing to defend the Colonies. An attack by the French, Dutch and Indians was imminent, they believed:

Arms and ammunition were to be checked to see that they were in a state of readiness. Plans to evacuate women and children were to be made. Orders of war were prepared for the horse and foot soldiers. . . There was fear that Philip and his Wampanoags would join with the Narragansetts.³⁸

As soon as he returned to the Vineyard, Mayhew, now Governor and Lord of Tisbury Manor, "sent for all the sachems and chief men," telling them of his authority from the Crown to rule over them. Previously, he had had no such authority, having been granted only the right to settle the Island and to purchase land from them. Now, he was their Governor for Life. His authority, he said, was from the King of England, a ruler of great power. The Indians, Mayhew reported, "did with much thankfulness, submit unto his honour's act in setting me over them. . ."

Perhaps, one is forced to add, perhaps.

He described the meeting in detail in a letter to Governor Prence of Plymouth, who had inquired whether the Vineyard Indians were likely to join the threatening

rebellion. Mayhew's answer was reassuring:

. . . Honoured Sir, as to our Indians, in my best understanding there is no manner of plot known to any of the heads of this island; for before I went to York, considering the troubles in your colony, I went to all the towns, some English with me, and they did give in their names for to subject themselves to his Majesty, and to fight against his enemies and the enemies of his subjects, if called thereunto. This was upon the matter universal; only at Metack's place [Gay Head] were not many present; but himself, and those present, did freely give in their names.

But since I came home, bringing with me a commission to govern all the Indians of this island and Elizabeth isles, I sent for all the sachems and chief men, acquainting them with what was done. All the sachems, with many others, as well non-praying as praying men, did, with much thankfulness, submit unto his honour's act in setting me over them; and every person present, by holding up his hand, did promise to advance the worship of God. The like was never of them heretofore attained.

Then, to assure Governor Prence, no friend of the Indians at this stage, that he was not "soft" on the natives, he added:

Sir, it is so that my favour unto the Indians hath been thought to be overmuch, but I say my error hath been, in all cases, that I am too favourable to English; and it hath always been very hard for me to preserve myself from being drawn to deal over-hardly with the Indians.

Mayhew seemed to be enjoying his new status, now equal to that of Governor Prence. On the letter, he ordered: "Those at his house present with speed."³⁹

Kindness to the Indians was no longer in style. The approaching war claimed brotherly love as its first victim. Missionaries like Eliot were condemned for being too good to the Indians. Mayhew didn't want to be included. He made this clear in a letter to the Commissioners:

. . . I have alwaies Judged myself uncharitable enough to the Indians & too apt to take offence against them, though it has been usually apprehended to the Contrary.

The letter, dated September 21, 1671, two days after the

³⁷ Banks, v.I, p.152.

³⁸ Stratton, p.103.

³⁹ Thomas Mayhew's letter to Governor Prence, Jun 19, 1671, MHS Colls., v.VI, p.196, as copied by Richard L. Pease, DCHS, Mss.#1.

one to Governor Prence, summarized payments he had made to the Indians. Two were preachers: Hiacoomes (10 pounds) and Tackanash (5 pounds); eight were teachers (2 pounds each). He also listed payments to several Sachems of Nantucket, who "doe Countenaunce the work" there and also to Metark, Sachem at Gay Head (the sachems got 3 pounds each). Mayhew didn't include his own salary of 30 pounds. He told of his mission work:

. . .for the Vynyard the two Churches goe on verry well with whom myself & others have communicated; donne by them in a Solemne Manner. Myself, the two pastors & one of the elders doe usually spend the most pte of the last day of the weeke together for the better progresse of this greate designe: Those are many that have Cast off heathenisme and except those at the Bayhead [Gay Head] of all the rest I know not of any but will say they approve of the way of God. . .there are two Church meetings and three other. . .this is besides what is Donne by Metark at his place. . .besid this there are 15 families at Elizabethes lles, 7 whereof praying families.

He made no claim to being a preacher to the Indians: "My self, the two pastors & one of the elders doe usually spend the most pte [part]" of one day a week in preparation. That would seem to indicate he "usually" met some hours each week with his Indian assistants, probably in his home, hardly the perception most of us have of a dedicated missionary devoting his life to his flock.

Again, he takes the opportunity to ask for a "bounty," a bonus:

If a rule for bounty to me may be found, use it. I suppose when I am gone it will cost double to doe what I doe now or have donne.

Anxious to reassure the Commissioners that he had not been neglecting the work they were paying him to do on the Vineyard, he added a postscript:

I was but 29 daies from the lland in my Journey to York, the Thursday month I went off frome home. *Laus deo.*

Mayhew clearly wanted Prence and the Commissioners to understand that he was not pro-Indian. The

Commissioners, although paymasters to the missionaries, had as their main purpose the defense of the colonies. An Indian war was far more critical than the war against the devil. Mayhew, a friend of some of them, knew that.

Grandson Matthew, some years later, told of an incident that illustrates his attitude towards the Indians. An Indian prince from the mainland had come to ask the elder Mayhew for some favor:

This Prince coming to Martha's Vineyard, with his usual attendants, being about Eighty Persons, well Armed, came to Mr. Mayhew's House, and being admitted, sat down; Mr. Mayhew entered the Room, but being acquainted with their Customes, took no notice of the Prince's being there (it being with them in point of Honour incumbent on the Inferiour to Salute the Superiour:) a considerable time being past, the Prince broke Silence, and said, "Sachem (a word importing in their Language not more than Noble, or Worshipful) Mr. Mayhew, are you well?"

To which having a Friendly reply; and treating of several things, and of the Island Martha's Vineyard, being Peopled with English; the Prince desiring something wherein the English were concerned, Mr. Mayhew promising to effect what he desired; immediately Subjoyned, that he must First Speak with the Inhabitants. The Prince demanded why he recalled his Promise; for said he, What I promise or Speak is alwayes true, but you English Governours, cannot be true. . .[thus] greatly disdaining the Popular Government of the English in this country.

But, despite the Indian's belief, Mayhew was in no hurry to create a "Popular Government" on his Island. It was not until June 18, 1672, a year after the New York trip, that he and Matthew, the Lords of Tisbury Manor, called a General Court at which a body of General Laws was passed. Voting on the laws were the four members of the court: Thomas Mayhew, Chief Magistrate; Matthew Mayhew, Secretary; Richard Sarson and Thomas Daggett, magistrates. Both Sarson and Daggett were the Governor's sons-in-law. It was a family affair.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Even after Governor Mayhew's death, the nepotism continued. In 1684, Matthew was Chief Magistrate, his brother Thomas 3d replaced him as magistrate and the others continued in office.

The 28 General Laws dealt mostly with court sessions, debtors' rights, disposition of estates, weights and measures and such. Nothing was included about elections, either by the English or the Indians.

Three laws mentioned the Indians. One stated that "if any person shall bee Accused by any, either Indian or any other Person whatsoever, to have sold or furnished any Indyan or Indyans with Wine, Liquor, or any Strong Drink, Beer only excepted, hee shall either purge himselfe by Oath. . .or. . .shall pay for such Offence after the Rate of five Shillings per Pinte. . ."

The second stated no person "not inhabiting within this Jurisdiction shall. . .trade or traffique with any Indyan or Indians anywhere, either in Harbour, Creek, Cove or on Shore. . .without Leave. . .from the General Court. . ."

Only the third gave Indians any rights, if such it did. It was the right to appeal the rulings of any Indian court "as they shall hold amongst themselves" to the higher English courts.⁴¹

In August 1673, following a suggestion by Governor Lovelace, Mayhew assigned the land on the west side of Holmes Hole to the town of Tisbury, thus giving it access to the harbor. He shortly afterwards named himself "Town Clark," a post he held in Edgartown as well.⁴²

Although things seemed to be going his way, the life of the Governor was not to be placid for long. The Dutch recaptured New York, thus wiping out the base of Mayhew's authority, the Duke of York. The Island once again was adrift, governmentally. This was all the rebels, stifled under Mayhew authoritarianism, needed. Leading the dissidents now was Simon Athearn, "a contentious, pushing person."⁴³

Athearn was shrewd, "an avid reader of law books;" he had come to New England as a servant, but had married his master's daughter, providing him with a financial base. He and others had moved to Middletown (North Tisbury)

⁴¹ Hough, *Papers*, pp.46-50.

⁴² *Tisbury Town Records*, p.6.

⁴³ Anderson, p.223.

to get away from the Mayhews. With the Duke of York out of power in New York, the dissenters began to make demands.

While the Island revolt was building, off-Island a more violent conflict was heating up. The Indian threat of war seemed imminent. The Commissioners of the United Colonies were unhappy with their employees, the missionaries. They were being paid not merely to convert Indians, but to keep them under control.

Mayhew was not among those criticized. The Commissioners seemed to have written him off as too old to be useful. In an earlier report to England, they had not even mentioned him:

. . . Reverend Mr. Elliott. . . contiewes unwearied in his Indeavors for their Good, as alsoe some other persons that may in time be usefull instruments in that worke; one wherof is the son of that Reverend and Good man Mr. Mahew deceased whoe being borne on the Iland called Marthas Vinyard and now grown to man's estate and there settled is an hopefull young man and hath their Language perfectly.⁴⁴

The "hopefull young man," was John Mayhew, son of Thomas Junior, now 20 years old. In 1673, he began preaching to the English in Tisbury (West Tisbury), but it was not until 1678 that he started preaching to the Indians. Governor Mayhew immediately informed the Commissioners:

. . . John Mayhew he is laborious and the Indians with him are unyversally satisfied, [he] intended to come unto your honoured selves but where you now meete he cannot. . . The next yeare yf God permitt he by word of mouth may gyve a full accompt.⁴⁵

During this period, the 12 Indian teachers and preachers, headed by Hiacoomes and Tackanash, were doing the work in the field. John Eliot of Roxbury, still an active missionary, visited the Island at least twice during these years. Once he

. . . administered the sacrements in the English church, and

⁴⁴ *Plymouth Colony Records*, v.X, p.354, copied by R.L.P.

⁴⁵ He went on the payroll as missionary the next year, 1679.

they accepted the Indian church to join with them; I told them that Christ did please [them]. . .to embrace into their communion the Indian converts in church ordinance; another time I administered the sacraments in the Indian church, and such of the English church as saw meet joined us. . .Two praying Indians of the Vineyard were seduced by the English Anabaptists of Nantucket, but all the reste are stedfast. I praise God for it, and whether they are recovered I cannot say.⁴⁶

In 1674, when Daniel Gookin was preparing his history of the Indians, he had written to Mayhew, asking 15 questions about the Islands. The Governor replied, "I have not time to answer so many now, of which some are very difficult." However, he did send Gookin a frank and informative summary:

Briefly, the first church was gathered here just fifteen years since [in 1659]. . .which church is now become three churches, by reason of their habitations; two upon the Vineyard [the other on Nantucket]. There are near fifty [Indians] in full [membership], and suppose rightly in communion [on the Vineyard], by virtue of their Godly conversations. . .There are ten Indian preachers, of good knowledge and holy conversation; seven [Indian] jurisdictions; and six meetings every Lord's day. In every jurisdiction the heads are worshippers. The whole holds forth the face of christianity: how sincere, I know not.

For schools, sometimes there are some; sometimes, not. But many can read and write Indian: very few, English; none, to great purpose; not above three or four; and those do it brokenly. Myself and my two grandsons can speak the language of this island. But my grandsons not yet employed. John, the younger, doth teach the Indians, and is like now, I supposed to be encouraged [paid] by the Commissioners. Matthew, my eldest grandchild, hath also preached to them; and I think, when settled, will again.

In September 1674, neither Thomas nor Matthew Mayhew had much time to relax. They were occupied with the growing rebellion by the Athearn dissidents. How many hours they spent on mission work is not known. Both, of course, continued to be paid by the Commissioners: the

elder Mayhew as missionary, 40 pounds a year; Matthew as "leader" or "ruler" of the Indians, 20 pounds a year. Despite the expectations the Governor had mentioned in the letter to Gookin, John did not start being "encouraged by the Commissioners" until five years later.

It was normal practice for the Company to pay "rulers," both English and Indian, who were expected to keep the natives docile. As late as October 1717, Zaccheus Mayhew, son of Thomas 3d, wrote that his salary of 10 pounds was for "Governing the Indians for one year. . .as my father Thomas Mayhew Esq.[3rd] was wont to do."

In most years, the Mayhews had two family members on the payroll: one as missionary; the other as ruler. There were even some years when three Mayhews were being paid by the Commissioners.

Payments such as they received were paid to many in the colony and totalled hundreds of pounds annually, making them important to the New England economy. The money arrived in Boston as goods, shipped by the New England Company. The goods were then sold and the proceeds turned over to the Commissioners for mission work.⁴⁷

Salary payments, either in coin or bills of credit, were picked up in Boston by the missionary or his emissary. For the Mayhews, it meant a yearly trip to Boston. Very often, an emissary made the trip for them. In the early 1700s, the messenger was Ebenezer Allen of Chilmark, who apparently sailed a packet to Boston.

The Mayhews controlled the payments to the Indians. The payment book in Boston listed "Rulers & Teachers," among whom were Hiacoomes and many others. These Indians, earning up to 10 pounds annually, were certainly the wealthiest of their tribe. Control of the wages must have provided the Mayhews with a strong leverage over their activities.

Simon Athearn and the other rebels no doubt saw this missionary money as part of Mayhew's power structure. He

⁴⁶ Mass.Hist.Soc.(MHS) Colls., v.X, 1809, p.126.

⁴⁷ George P. Winship, MHS *Proceedings (Proc)*, v.67,p.59, 64.

controlled the flow of money and the enforcement of the law. It looked like an impregnable combination. Finally, they decided they had to take some action to get a voice in government. Twenty of them petitioned Governor Mayhew, urging him to place the Island under Massachusetts law, which required elections by freemen. They promised if he would give up his Governorship for Life, they would elect him Governor for one year, after that an open election would be held. He was now 81 years old. It was time he stepped down.⁴⁸

Mayhew refused. So the rebels put their complaint in a petition to the Governor of Massachusetts Colony on October 15, 1673, asking that the Vineyard

. . . be taken under [its] jurisdiction. They remarked. . . that when Mr. Mayhew first obtained a grant of his territory he was obliged to set up the government of Massachusetts, and since that government hath bene laid by, things hath grown from better to worse untill we are come to nothing as at this day. Now, for the Lord's sake, graunt us your powerfull hand to protect us.

But Massachusetts Bay had no appetite for more turmoil. Not at this moment. An Indian war was imminent and the colony didn't want to arouse the Vineyard Indians. It was thought that Mayhew controlled the Indians and if he was ousted, they might join their brothers against the English. The Secretary of Massachusetts, Edward Rawson, suggested as much in his response to the Athearn petition:

. . . we understand that this is a difference betwixt your selves and your ancient and long continued Governour, which is very grievous to us, but how to help we kno not, for at such a time as this is, to set in with a divided people we see not sufficient reson . . . to shew ourselves siding in a divission amongst our freinds and Country men we are all together Indisposed unto . . .⁴⁹

With all these problems, Mayhew had reason to celebrate. His widowed daughter, Mrs. Bethiah Harlock, had

⁴⁸ It is important to state here that Mayhew was not the only authoritarian in New World. Few early New England leaders, Roger Williams being one, were believers in equality. Despite what we like to think, they had not come to here to create a democracy.

⁴⁹ *Mass. Archives*, v.48, n.138, Record of Court of Assistants, Oct. 31, 1673.

remarried, this time to Richard Way of Boston, a wine cooper. The Governor, grateful to Mr. Way, gave the couple his rights to the water mill at Watertown "in consideration that he hath married my dear and loving daughter Bethiah." Apparently, Mayhew had retained his share since 1645.⁵⁰

In 1675, Sassamon, a converted Wampanoag who had returned to Indian ways to become aide to Metacom (whom the English named King Philip), was found dead in a pond, under the ice. He was thought to have been killed by Wampanoags who suspected him of informing the English of Philip's war plans. In June, Plymouth Colony executed three Wampanoags for the murder. In retaliation, Philip attacked the English at Swansea and the long-threatened war began. The Nipmucks joined the Wampanoags in a struggle that lasted until August 1676 when Philip was killed in a swamp below Mount Hope (Bristol, R.I.). The shot that killed him was fired by John Alderman, a converted Indian fighting with the English. Philip's body was dismembered and his head carried triumphantly to Plymouth where it was displayed atop a pole for 24 years. His wife and child were sold into slavery.⁵¹

The war, bloody though it was on the continent, had no effect on the Vineyard. Its Indians, along with those on Nantucket and the Cape, did not participate. Cotton Mather tells how Mayhew's son-in-law, Capt. Richard Sarson of the militia, went to Gay Head to make sure the Indians were not preparing to fight. He was instructed to take their firearms from them. Mather wrote:

He returns with the ensuing answer; that the delivering their arms, would expose them to the will of the Indians ingag'd in the present war, who were not less theirs than the enemies of the English; that they had never given occasion of the distrust intimated . . . they were unwilling to deliver their arms, unless the English would propose some means for their safety and livelihood. . . that as they had submitted to the

⁵⁰ *Tisbury Book of Records*, p.19, RLP copy. Bethiah sold the rights in 1678, signing with her mark.

⁵¹ Milton A. Travers, *The Wampanoag Indian Federation*, Christopher Publ., Boston, 1957, p.134ff.

crown of England, so they resolved to assist the English on these islands against their enemies . . . the government [then] resolved. . . furnishing them with suitable ammunition. . .⁵²

The war brought great suffering to the Christian Indians on the mainland. Rev. John Eliot told Robert Boyle of the missionary company in London how the English had treated his converts:

. . . The work (in our Patten) is under great sufferings. . . There be 350 soules or thereabout, put upon a bleake bare lland [Long Island in Boston harbor]. . . where they suffer hunger and could. There is neither foode nor competent fuel to be had & they are bare in clouthng . . . I cannot without difficulty, hardship & peril get unto them. . . [another group of 59 at Concord, and at Pentuket] poore Wameset Indians who in a fright fled into the woods untill they were halfe starved because some ungodly & unruly youths came upon them. . . called them forth. . . shot at them, killed childe of godly parents, wounded his mother & 4 more. . . All in Plymouth patten are still in quiet & so are all our vinyard Indians & all the Nantuket Indians.

John Eliot and Daniel Gookin, Superintendent of the Indians, tried to convince the English authorities that the praying Indians were trustworthy. But they were unable to overcome the animosity. Gookin was often insulted publicly on Boston streets. It was a disgraceful period.

Although the salary payments from England continued, the war brought the missionary program in Massachusetts Bay into a decline from which it never completely recovered. It was not entirely due to the virulent anti-Indian sentiment. There was a smaller population to be Gospelized. Many Indians had perished in the war. Even Praying Indian villages had been torched. Many natives moved westward and to the north. Those who remained hated the English. The distrust was mutual.

None of this was felt on the Vineyard. There, the only revolt was the political rebellion. It brought no violence, but the animosity kept growing. The Athearn dissidents

⁵² Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, v.II, p.377. Mayhew had always believed in arming the Indians. He was fined for having done so while working for Craddock, years before.

continued their demands for a voice in government. But the Duke of York was back in control of New York, giving Mayhew once again a friendly court. The Athearn group's chances were dim. For a time, during the war, it had seemed that Boston might come to their assistance. On March 19, 1675/6, Increase Mather, in Boston, wrote in his diary:

At Martin's Vineyard diverse honest people are in great trouble, their estates sequestered by reason of Mr. M[ayhew] complaining to the Governor of New York.

But reform did not come. It was an ugly, disturbed period in Vineyard history. Governor Mayhew and grandson Matthew used every means possible to penalize the dissidents, fining them exorbitantly for minor infractions. Several felt so persecuted that they left the Island, which was probably what the Governor wanted. His repressive attitude did much to tarnish a reputation built over years of work with the Indians.

Historian Charles E. Banks, who may have studied Mayhew's life more thoroughly than any other, explained that after his control was assured by the return of the Duke of York, Mayhew "was fortified in his desire to punish the 'tratcherous.' . . He was a man who ruled. . . without brooking disobedience, and. . . could and did get into violent passions."⁵³

As far as the records show, no elections were held during his lifetime. In 1671, Governor Lovelace in New York had ordered that elections of magistrates be held, but Mayhew ignored the order, filling the court with family members. What Franklin B. Hough wrote in 1856 about Nantucket also applied to the Vineyard:

The Orders of the New York Governors appear to have been obeyed or disregarded according as they favored or opposed the Views of the Parties in Power. . .

Mayhew and his family filled every important governmental position. He ran the courts like a king. His control over the Indians was equally total. He was a strict, benevolent ruler, controlling the "savages" by economic and religious

⁵³ Banks, v.I, p.165.

means. Some suggest that his control was possible because his Indians were isolated from those on the mainland. It is true that travel across the Sound was limited, but Daniel Gookin reported that some did take place:

I have seen and spoke with divers of the Indians of those islands [Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket] that usually every summer come up to our parts, about Boston and the towns adjacent, to work in harvest labour and other employ. Many of them I have judged pious; and most of them, sober, diligent and industrious. . .⁵⁴

There is no evidence that the Governor, or any other Mayhew, was anti-Indian or was cruel in his treatment. The family, through the years, certainly took advantage of the Indian at times, as did others, but for five generations they earned their living by working with them, by persuading them to be Christian. A noble cause, they felt. No other family, on-Island or off, for so many years was so involved in this work.

But the process was destructive of the Indian's self-esteem. Daniel Gookin describes an early incident involving Quakers on the Vineyard that demonstrates that:

. . .the Quakers. . .told the Indians that they had a light within them, that was sufficient to guide them to happiness; and dissuaded the Indians from hearing Mr. Mayhew, or reading the scriptures; . . .The Indians heard all this discourse patiently; and then one of the principal of them that could speak English, gravely answered. . .You are strangers to us, and we like not your discourse. We know Mr. Mayhew, that he is a good and holy man; but you we know not. You tell us of a light within us, that will guide us to salvation: but our experience tells us, that we are darkness and corruption, and all manner of evil within our hearts.⁵⁵

Mayhew, like most colonial leaders, carried no banners for democracy. His rule over his people, both Indian and English, was close to dictatorial. He was, after all, the Lord

of Tisbury Manor and Governor for Life. He knew what was best for the Vineyard. Even with half the population in rebellion, he refused to surrender his absolute control. Non-Mayhews were allowed to take part in government only after marrying into the family. It was the route taken by Richard Sarson and Thomas Daggett.

There was no place for the dissidents to turn for help. The Commissioners of the United Colonies were not interested in changing the policy. For years, they supported the Mayhews with missionary money. In 1680, two years before he died, Governor Mayhew was paid 28 pounds; his grandson John Mayhew, 5 pounds; 20 pounds were paid to various "Rulers and Teachers," one being Matthew Mayhew.⁵⁶

It is certain that the ancient Governor, by now nearly 90, was spending little time with the Indian mission. It is unlikely that he ever devoted as much time to it as family historians have claimed. Years later, grandson Matthew wrote of him walking across the Island, sleeping in smokey wigwams, Gospelizing the natives for days at a time. But the evidence seems otherwise. Mayhew was an administrator, supervising Indian teachers and preachers. And by doing so, he accomplished what he was paid to do. As for those accomplishments, they are confused. In 1674, after the teaching and preaching had been going on for more than 25 years, Mayhew told Gookin that few Indians could read and write English, "none to great purpose, not above three or four, and those do it brokenly." Most Vineyard Indians had been converted, but were soon to become Baptists, because the established church of the Mayhews did not satisfy them. Their population was now about 1000, down from 1500 when the Mayhews arrived, a decline due mostly to disease. Unlike mainland Indians, none had died in war. That may have been the greatest accomplishment: there had been no war.

But they had lost their land, large areas were now being

⁵⁴ Gookin, MHS Colls. I, p.207.

⁵⁵ MHS Colls. I, p.203. Gookin's account didn't date the event. On Feb. 2, 1657/8, two Quakers were tried in Plymouth Court. Their crime: attempting to spread their religion on Martha's Vineyard. If these were Gookin's Quakers, it would place it in Thomas Junior's time.

⁵⁶ Winship, MHS Proc., v.67, p.55ff. As late as 1760, the Mayhews were still being paid. Then it was Zachariah Mayhew, missionary.

fenced off, reducing their territory sharply. To be sure, the sachems had "sold" it, but for nothing of value. They had lost rights to whales washed ashore, rights to fish in certain ponds. Slowly, but inexorably, they were being pushed into the less desirable sections of the Island. It was no different from what was happening on the mainland.

Experience Mayhew, great-grandson of Mayhew Senior and a paid missionary for many years, described the lives of more than 100 Christian Indians, young and old, who lived on the Vineyard during the years of the Mayhew mission. Many had fallen into sinful ways, drunkenness and fornication mostly, before being converted late in life. Those years of "sinful" living were Mayhew's missionary years. Experience also writes about "Pious Children," none of whom lived to adulthood, most dying in their early teens of disease brought by the English.⁵⁷

Experience is proud of the salvation of these Indians by their conversion before death, but he is describing lives of unhappiness and depression caused by English imports: alcohol and disease.

Were the natives better off than before the Mayhew settlement? The answer, it seems, must be negative. But the blame cannot be placed on the Mayhews, who had, with good intentions, saved them for eternity. The blame, it seems, rests on the European invasion, as Francis Jennings defines colonization.

Now nearing death, Mayhew put his affairs in order.

. . . [he] deeded to his grandson, Matthew Mayhew, "all that land or lands, islands, and privileges, rights, titles and privileges which is to me, the said Thomas Mayhew, granted, and now in my possession and tenure by virtue of certain deeds or grants. . . I say all lands not yet purchased of the Indians which is usually understood and termed, patent propriety."

Matthew, the Governor's partner in government, was now 34, well trained to follow in the old man's footsteps. The title of Governor for Life would end when his grandfather

⁵⁷ Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, Samuel Gerrish, London, 1727.

died, but Matthew continued as Lord of Tisbury Manor.

Rev. Thomas Prince, writing in 1726, described the last days of the Governor, as he was told by Matthew:

. . . the time of his Departure was near at hand; but he earnestly desired that God would give him one Opportunity more in publick to exhort the English of the Town. . . which he had for some time been also obliged to teach, thro' the want of a regular Minister. God granting him his Desire, he taught them the following Sabbath and then took his affectionate Farewel of them: and falling ill that Evening, he assured his Friends, That his Sickness would now be to Death.⁵⁸

The exact date of his death is not certain. It is thought to have been between March 24 and 28, 1681/82. Historian Banks believes it was March 25, a few days shy of his 90th birthday.

On May 29, 1682, the Commissioners of the United Colonies informed London of his death:

Old Mr. Mayhue of Marthas Vineyard is lately dead & there will be one wanting to have oversight there; the place being remote, and ye Christian Indians numerous upon it.⁵⁹

But they need not have worried. His replacement was already there. On the payroll was John Mayhew, Governor Mayhew's youngest grandson, minister of the English church in Tisbury and missionary to the Indians in the area, representing the third generation of Mayhews so employed.

It is a family unequalled in American missions. As Rev. John Eliot had written some years before:

If any of the human race ever enjoyed the luxury of doing good, if any Christian ever could declare what it is to have peace, not as the world gives, but which surpasses the conceptions of those who look not beyond this world, we may believe this was the happiness of the Mayhews.⁶⁰

(To be continued)

⁵⁸ Rev. Thomas Prince, *English Ministers on Martha's Vineyard*, appended to Experience Mayhew's *Indian Converts*, 1727, p.301. Note that Mayhew asked "to exhort the English," not the Indians.

⁵⁹ It is revealing that they used the wording "to have oversight there," indicating that the need was for an administrator, not a minister.

⁶⁰ *Some Correspondence . . . of the New England Company*, Spottiswoode & Co., London, 1896, fn, p.xxiii.

CORRECTIONS TO MAY 1991 ISSUE

Editor:

In the article about James Thurber's visits to Martha's Vineyard, Mr. Gude may be conflating two visits. "The Departure of Emma Inch" was published in 1935 and "The Whip-poor-will" almost exactly 6 years later in 1941. This, however, is a minor point. The article is informative in adding a setting for one of Thurber's darkest stories. Thank you for this addition to our Thurber collection.

Robert A. Tibbetts

Curator of Rare Books & Mss.

Ohio State University Libraries

Mr. Gude agrees. His facts are right, his timing off. He adds: "My memory does play tricks. After all, it is 89 years old!"

Ohio State, James Thurber's alma mater, has a special collection of his works and letters.

Editor:

I'm afraid *The Intelligencer's* cryptologist misread or misinterpreted James Thurber's word on page 168 of the May issue, when he or she guessed "orapadola."

The context suggests "crapadola," and what happened was that Thurber closed the "c," something he tends to do elsewhere, as in the last word "crass" on the following page.

Norman Corwin

Los Angeles, California

Mr. Corwin is right. The misinterpreter was the Editor, not Mr. Gude, who certainly would have known better. *Crapadola*, it is, of course.

Thanks to both correspondents.

moments until plain
crapadola are fancy

... moments until plain crapadola and fancy ...

Because of the length of article about the Indians and the English, both the Jeremiah Pease Diary and Bits & Pieces had to be omitted from this issue. They will return in our next issue.

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Life membership (Individual)	\$1000.
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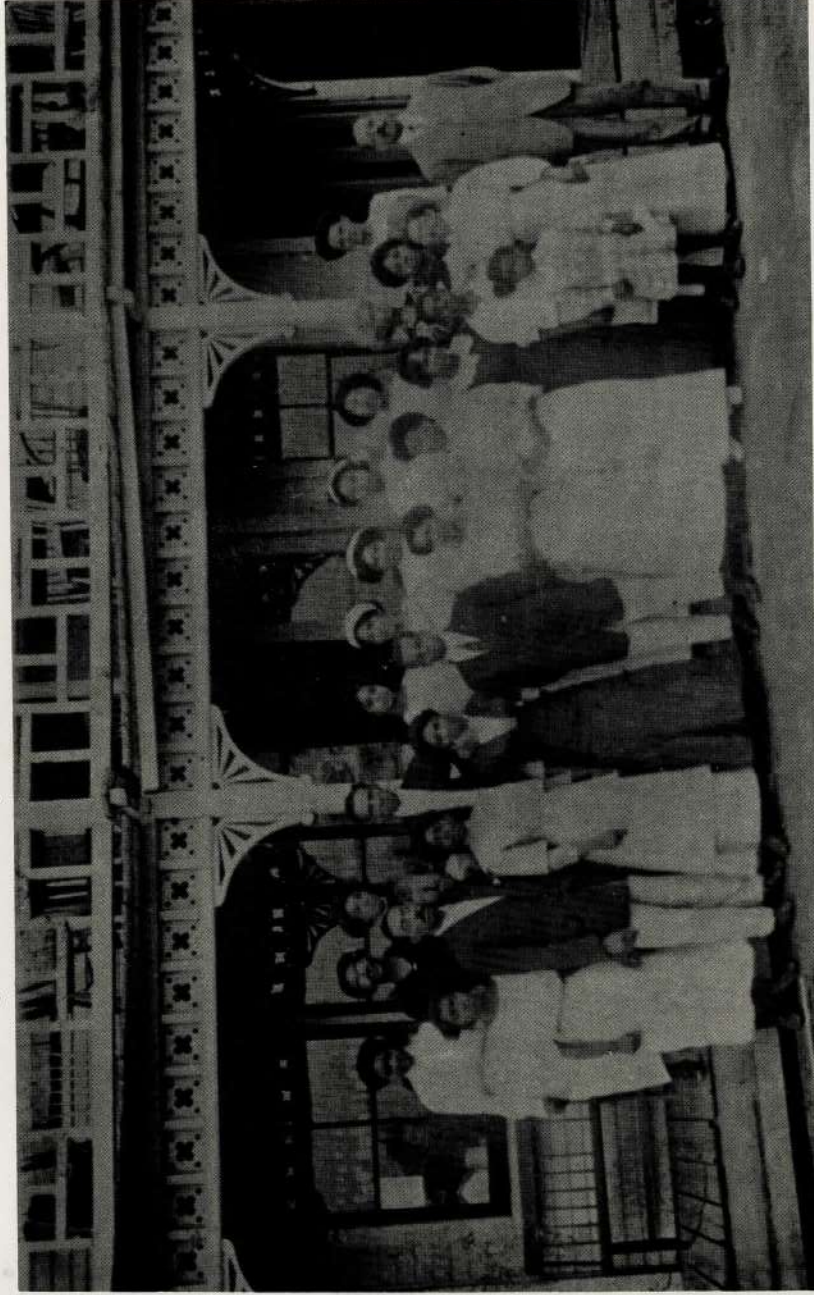
In Memoriam

Mildred Dunnock Urmy
1901-1991

Actress Mildred Dunnock, wife of Keith Urmy, Council member and former Society Treasurer, came to Martha's Vineyard in the 1940s to perform in the Rice Playhouse, the Island's well-known summer theater and acting school. While her activities with the Society were limited to social, her presence at such events was always notable. She was nominated for Academy Awards for her roles as Linda Loman, the salesman's wife in *Death of a Salesman* (1951) and for her role in Tennessee Williams's *Baby Doll* in 1956. She played in many outstanding dramas, including *The Corn is Green* (1940) and Lillian Hellman's *Another Part of the Forest*.

The Officers and members of the Society extend their sympathies to her husband, our dedicated colleague, Keith Urmy.

The Jones Family and the West family about 1909.



Two African-American families, the Jones's and the Wests, outside their duplex house on Oak Bluffs harbor about 1909, the year it was destroyed by fire. Second from left, back row, is Rachel West, writer Dorothy West's mother. In front of her is

Thomas Vreeland Jones, Phoebe Ballou's son-in-law. Phoebe bought the house about 1890. Whist games were regularly held on upper porch and a cigarette accidentally dropped between the floorboards was thought to have started the fire.

