

## DUKES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Edward W. Vincent, Jr., *President*  
Natalie Huntington, *1st Vice President*  
Herbert E. Tucker, Jr., *2nd Vice President*  
Anthony K. Van Riper, *Secretary*  
Charlotte Hall, *Assistant Secretary*  
Kenneth A. Southworth III, *Treasurer*

### COUNCIL

Ernesto Franco, James E. Lambert, Earle A. Ray  
Frederick Williams, 1993.

Dabbie Daniels, William E. Marks, Marcella Provost, Joseph  
E. Sollitto, Jr., Thomas Taylor, Peter B. Van Tassel, 1994.  
Anne C. Bacon, Catherine M. Mayhew, Gladys A. Widdiss,  
Barbara Rowe, 1995.

S. Bailey Norton, *President Emeritus*

### ADVISORY COUNCIL

John A. Howland  
Lane Lovell

Gale Huntington  
Arthur R. Railton  
Keith M. Urmy

Ted Penn, *Director*

Ann Coleman Allen, *Librarian/Archivist*

Peter B. Van Tassel, *Library Assistant*

Jill Bouck, *Curator*

Beverly Corwin, *Membership Secretary/Bookkeeper*

Joanne Coffin Clark, *Secretary/Receptionist*

Victor Haeselbarth, *Superintendent of Buildings*

Dorothea R. Looney, *Registrar*

Catherine Merwin Mayhew, *Genealogist*

Arthur R. Railton, *Editor*

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Indians and the English On Martha's Vineyard

### Part V: Gay Head Neck and Farm

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

When the news reached Samuel Sewall in Boston in 1711 that the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had purchased Gay Head Neck from Lord Limerick of Ireland, he was overjoyed. And, no wonder. It had been his idea. He had first visited Gay Head in 1702. The Neck, he saw, had only a narrow land access and "less than forty Rod of Fence takes it in." A fence would keep the English and their sheep from entering the Neck, ending a major cause of controversy.

Geographically, it matched his definition of land that should be set aside for the Indian. Such a plantation should, he wrote, have

Plain and natural Boundaries, as much as may be . . . it will be a vain Attempt for us to offer Heaven to them, if they take up prejudices against us, as if we did grudge them a Living upon their own Earth.<sup>1</sup>

He was so pleased that he immediately wrote to Wait Winthrop, a fellow Commissioner:

Mr. John Dixwell is returned from England with some degree of light upon his countenance. He left a packet at my house, which I found to be a large parchment deed. The Company [Society] have purchased Martha's Vineyard and Elizabeth's Islands of my Lord Lymerick, excepting several grants.

Winthrop may have been less enthused. He had bought Naushon Island, the largest of the Elizabeth Islands, from Matthew Mayhew in 1682. Now, Sewall was saying, the London Society owned it.<sup>2</sup>

No doubt, Sewall, the Society's paymaster, was eager to

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Sewall to William Ashhurst, May 3, 1700.

<sup>2</sup> No problem arose over Naushon. The Society showed no interest. It did pay John Weeks, who ran the farm for Winthrop, as missionary/teacher to the Indians.



talk to Experience Mayhew, missionary to the Vineyard Indians. He and Experience had become close friends. The missionary usually visited Sewall on his trips to Boston. Sewall's diary, July 22, 1709, hints at their friendship:

In the evening, Mr. Mayhew and I bath ourselves in Charles River behind Blackstone's Point.

These had not been happy years for the 36-year-old Vineyard missionary. His wife, Thankful, daughter of Thomas Hinckley, the last governor of Plymouth Colony, had died in 1706 at 35 years, leaving him with three children: Reliance, aged 10; Samuel, a mentally retarded 6-year-old; and Mary, aged 4.

Experience, often off-Island on Society business, sent daughter Reliance to live with a minister friend in Braintree. The two younger children may have moved in with their grandparents, the Hinckleys, in Barnstable.

The widower had little time for child care. He had become the Society's favorite translator. In 1707, he translated a discourse by Cotton Mather, "The Day Which the Lord Hath Made." He later translated more of Mather's lectures, including "Family Religion." In 1709, he was hired by the mission Society to translate the Psalms and the Gospel of St. John into Indian. With John Neesnumun, a mainland Indian, he worked on the project for a year, much of it in Boston, for which he was paid £100, plus £10 for expenses.

The missionary post did not require much of his time. In 1709, there were thirteen other persons on the mission payroll on Martha's Vineyard. Nine were Indians, preachers or teachers, and four were English ministers and "rulers" of the Indians.

Samuel Sewall's life had not been serene either. As a judge in the Salem witchcraft trials in 1692, he had voted to sentence 19 defendants, most of them young girls, to death by hanging. Soon after the executions, which he witnessed, he realized he had been wrong. That weighed heavily on his conscience for the rest of his life and his compassion for the Indians may have been influenced by it.

He, too, had recently lost a loved one. His daughter died

in 1710, after a brief illness. Experience was in Boston at the time and Sewall sent for him as she neared the end. He wrote in his diary,

I sent for Mr. Mayhew, who came and pray'd very well with her.

When the news of the purchase of Gay Head Neck arrived, Experience had just remarried. His second wife, Remember, was the daughter of Rev. Richard Bourne, missionary to the Indians at Sandwich.

Matthew Mayhew, Experience's uncle, had died in 1710 and the work of "governor" was taken over by another uncle, Thomas Mayhew III. After Thomas' death, five years later, Matthew's son, Paine, was made Chief Justice of the Court and Zacheus, son of Thomas, took over as "ruler of the Indians." In October 1717, Zacheus stopped at Sewall's house on Boston's Beacon Hill to collect his salary, signing the receipt book:

For governing the Indians for one year. . . as my Father, Thomas Mayhew Esq., was wont to doe.

Although the other Mayhews were the "rulers," Experience was believed by Bostonians to be the most knowledgeable on Indian matters. He was at ease in Boston society and is often mentioned in Judge Sewall's diary. Experience, no doubt, had an influence on Sewall's proposal for the purchase of Gay Head Neck. On Sewall's first trip to Gay Head in 1702, Experience was with him.

The Gay Head purchase was well accepted by Boston's leaders, who sent congratulations to London and Sir Henry Ashhurst, President of the Society, wrote Rev. Increase Mather, one of the Commissioners:

I am very glad. . . that what we have done in relation to the purchase of Martha's Vineyard is approved of by you and the Commissioners. I hope it will be a means to make the Indians live comfortably upon it and prevent their scattering abroad, which would certainly have brought their offspring back to their old Idolatry.

Ashhurst also wrote to Treasurer Sewall, ending with a more practical note about money:

I am very glad that our purchase. . . is so well approved

of. . . [its purpose] was to prevent the Indians being scattered up and down the Continent and returning to the barbarous Customes of their Ancestors, besides we are of the opinion that the bringing them to the sociable and civilized way of living after the European fashion is the best way to engage them to the English Interest and a good step towards making them Christians.

We do consider that this purchase so good a bargain that the present Occupiers, both English and Indian, may afford upon our giving them a certain Title to what they possess, to allow us some annual consideration [rent], which tho' small may reimburse this charge or at least amount to something more than the interest of the purchase money.

He told Sewall that the plan must be carried out with care: "We would have no vigour used. . . either with the English or Indian possessors," but it was essential that a way be found "of lessening the expense the Company is now at in sending Ministers among the Indians." Ashhurst emphasized that the rent money must not be given directly to the Indians, but should be dispensed by the Commissioners, "otherwise it would make them independent of the Company and frustrate our design in the Purchase." The glorious purpose, it seems, was not totally holy.

Sewall was instructed to have the Neck surveyed:

When any. . . go down to the Island. . . [they should] take a proper person with them to make an Exact survey of this Island, especially of the Land contained in the Purchase. . . We desire that this. . . be settled as soon as possible.

Clearly, the London men did not know exactly what Lord Limerick had sold them. Was it just Gay Head or most of Martha's Vineyard? At times, Ashhurst acted as though the Society owned the Island (and the Elizabeths), minus a few tracts belonging to the Mayhews. But in fact, because of exemptions listed in the deed by Matthew Mayhew when he sold the Manor of Martin's *[sic]* Vineyard to Lord Limerick, what the Society owned was Gay Head, its eastern boundary unclear, and a few tracts known as Indian Lands.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Included among the Indian Lands were parts of Chappaquiddick, Christiantown, Deep Bottom, plus land along the north shore of Chilmark and on east side of the Lagoon.

Among the land the Mayhews owned were the Manor of Tisbury (much of the center of the Island), parts of Edgartown, all of Quansoo, Quinames, Nashaquitsa and Squibnocket. The last named, Squibnocket, had been included in Dongan's purchase, but was later sold by Matthew, who was agent for Dongan (Limerick). Now, it was owned by Mayhews.

Although it didn't know exactly what it owned, the Society was told it got a bargain for £550. Cotton Mather wrote Ashhurst:

Your purchase of Martha's Vineyard was a very seasonable action; and it being worth, at a moderate computation, six thousand pounds. . . The intention of putting it into a condition to yield some agreeable revenues, to help the support of our main interest, will be a business of some time.

There was another reason why the purchase had been a wise move: Lord Limerick had promised the land to his nephew, who was getting ready to take possession. Because of this, the purchase had been made in haste, the Londoners using their own money to close the deal before Limerick backed out. Their concern was justified. The nephew was a worrisome threat, as William Ashhurst wrote to Sewall,

. . . he being a Papist and a person of no great prudence, he would certainly have made the poor Indian inhabitants very uneasy, if not wholly have disposed of them.

Samuel Sewall, who hated Catholics with a passion, must have been overjoyed. Why, that Irishman might have sent in the Jesuits to re-convert the Indians. Heaven forbid!

The following year, Ashhurst was optimistic about the rental income. There might even be a surplus to be used elsewhere, he wrote to Rev. Cotton Mather:

We hope the purchase will. . . yield some Revenue to be employed for the Service of our great Lord in other parts. . . we are Satisfied in the prudence and Integrity of the Commissioners, [and] we leave the whole management to them. . .

Sewall and another Commissioner, Peter Townsend, were ordered to go to Martha's Vineyard at once to take "livery and seizen." They were to

1. Ask the inhabitants how best to make the plan work.



2. Divide up Gay Head, assigning a lot to each Indian family.
3. Lease out the remaining land to provide funds for a school and inform the Indians that all money so raised "will be wholly applied for their Benefit."
4. Hire an agent to carry out these instructions.<sup>4</sup>

Judge Sewall was unable to go. He became ill at the last minute and sent his son in his place. The young man, along with Lt. Gov. William Tailer, Col. Penn Townsend and several other officials, arrived on the Vineyard October 4, 1712. They boarded "the Ferry" at Seccunnessett in Marshpee at 5 p.m., arrived at Holmes Hole at 9 p.m., "walked one mile 1/2 to Chases, then ridd to Sheriff Allen's [in Quansoo]. gott there by 12 o'clock at night." It had been a long day.

The next day, Sunday, was spent in church. On Monday morning, they went to Gay Head, after two nights at Sheriff Ebenezer Allen's house. At Gay Head, they

came to the Indian Meeting House, There Maj'r Skiff and myself [young Sewall] gave livery and seizen. Abel gott 80 sheep and 400 Lambs. Brave Land 6 oxen 6 cows 2 or 3 horses.<sup>5</sup>

The next day, the group travelled to Edgartown, stopping for lunch with Simon Athearn and Reverend Josiah Torrey in (West) Tisbury at Kithcart's tavern. In Edgartown that night, they lodged at the inn of John Worth.<sup>6</sup> There, on Wednesday, they

... had a great dispute about Chappaquiddick, the Sachem appearing before us and Mr. [Benjamin] Haws his Attorney for him. Mr. Turner plead for the English for their fight in the Herbage [pasturage].<sup>7</sup>

Two years later, Judge Sewall visited Edgartown and also stopped at Worth's inn. The "great dispute" over

<sup>4</sup> None of these seems to have been done. The visit was brief and without the senior Sewall there, it is no wonder.

<sup>5</sup> The animals were apparently payment to the Indians for Gay Head Neck. Who was Brave Land?

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Worth was the widow of Samuel Sarson, grandson of Governor Mayhew and an innkeeper. Worth was her third husband.

<sup>7</sup> Charles E. Banks, *History of Martha's Vineyard*, DCHS, 1966, p.483, quoting from *New England Genealogical Register* (no date given). Benjamin Haws was an Edgartown attorney, as was Mr. Turner.

Chappaquiddick was renewed. Sewall "demanded Rent of Mrs. Worth for the Neck." This neck, the western tip of Chappaquiddick, was apparently being used as pasture by the Worths.

The matter became the subject of a legal decision a year later. It involved the "the neck called Momenshace" (today called Menaca), the land west of Caleb's Pond, including today's ferry landing. The judgment was that it belonged to the English who had "purchased the Soil of the said Nack Memenchace." The rest of Chappaquiddick, they ruled, belonged to "Joshua Sieknout, the Indian Sachem, . . and his People, inhabitants of this said Island." The right of the English to pasture animals on the Indian lands between October 20 and March 25 was spelled out in detail. Finally, "the wood growing [on the said Island was] . . . not to be sold or transported off this said Island on any Pretense whatsoever. . ."<sup>8</sup>

This quarrel was of no interest to the men in London, who were impatient about Gay Head and money:

The Company would gladly hear what progress you made in the improvement of our late Purchase at Martha's Vineyard and whether without injuring or disgusting the Indians . . . anything can be raised yearly towards their Ministers' and Schoolmasters' Salarys."<sup>9</sup>

A year had gone by and nothing had been done. No plan to collect rents had been made. Gay Head hadn't been surveyed. The Londoners still didn't know exactly what they had bought. Early in 1714, another letter went to Sewall, asking for "a full account." But it wasn't simple to have the land surveyed in midwinter on Martha's Vineyard.

Writing to Cotton Mather, Ashhurst emphasized the importance of making Gay Head a source of income:

... we find by the perusal of the Commissioners' accounts. . . that Expenses do much exceed our Revenue, so there is a necessity either of improving the last or Setting some straiter bounds to the former. . .

<sup>8</sup> *Dukes County Deeds*, Book 4, pp. 463-4, Edgartown Town Hall.

<sup>9</sup> *Letterbook of Society for Propagation of the Gospel . . .*, Alderman Library, U of Va., Sept. 28, 1713, p.131 (hereafter, *Ltrbk*).



The Society income had dropped below £500 a year. About £140 of it was spent on salaries at Martha's Vineyard. Money had to be raised or expenses would be cut.

That spring, Judge Sewall set off for the Vineyard. With him was Major Samuel Thaxter.<sup>10</sup> They sailed from Woods Hole and, when the wind died down, had to row part of the way, landing at Lambert's Cove. With no dock there, they forced their horses to leap into the water and swim ashore. The party rode to Sheriff Allen's in Quansoo, arriving about 9 p.m.

The following day, Sewall was ill and did not leave the house, meeting there with several persons, including Thomas Mayhew III, "ruler" of the Indians. He wrote a letter to be taken to Gay Head, ordering the Indians to assemble the next day so he could speak to them.

This was Sewall's third visit to Gay Head Neck. He had recommended its purchase because it could be easily fenced in. Now, Thomas Mayhew told him, the Indians had

... of their own accord met together and run a Fence across the Neck. . . [Mayhew] tells me that a Ditch four foot wide and two deep. . . will cost but 6 shillings per Rod.<sup>11</sup>

Sewall's host, Sheriff Allen, who had no doubt heard about the plan to lease out part of Gay Head, requested first refusal. When the lease was made in June, he took it.

The following morning, the delegation left on horseback for Gay Head. In it were Sewall, Major Thaxter, Thomas Mayhew III, Rev. Josiah Torrey of Tisbury, Sheriff Allen, Robert Cathcart, lawyer Benjamin Haws, John Denison, Robert Homes, David Sinclair. Along the way, they were joined by Major Skiff and Experience Mayhew.<sup>12</sup>

The Gay Headers must have been overwhelmed by the size of the delegation. About 100 Indians, plus children, had gathered in response to Sewall's letter. The meeting was religious. Experience Mayhew "directed Joash Pannos,

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Thaxter was grandfather of Joseph Thaxter, minister in Edgartown years later.

<sup>11</sup> *Diary of Samuel Sewall*, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Series 5, v.6, p.435.

<sup>12</sup> Experience and Thomas Mayhew, Reverend Torrey and Robert Cathcart were on the Society payroll, administered by Sewall.

Minister of Gay-Head, to begin with Prayer."<sup>13</sup> Then Experience delivered a sermon in Indian, with occasional English headings for the benefit of the visitors. Isaac Ompany of Christiantown, an Indian preacher paid by the Society, closed with a prayer. Judge Sewall then spoke to the group. His remarks were translated, no doubt, by Experience. Finally, Sewall asked "if any could read English." There was considerable hesitation. Two young men were then led to the front. One read from the Psalm book Sewall handed him (the judge gave it to him after the reading).<sup>14</sup>

Sewall's diary suggests disappointment. The Society had been paying preachers and teachers for 60 years and yet only two persons in Gay Head could read English. "At last, only two young men were produced," he wrote in the diary.

Benjamin Mayhew had inherited Nashaquitsa, the land between Squibnocket and Menemsha Ponds, from his father, Rev. John Mayhew. Sewall visited him after the meeting and told him that since the Indians had made their half of the fence, he must put up the half "towards the South-Sea" so that the

Corporation Gate may be set up and the Neck Closed and then let a Ditch of four-foot Wide and two foot Deep be made all on the outside of the Hedge, and set within Thorns or Barberries all along the top of it.

The Society would pay for digging the ditch, but Benjamin Mayhew would have to maintain it, Sewall told him. Benjamin disclosed that he was leasing 10 acres of Gay Head land from Indian Sam Osowit. He was allowed to continue doing so, although it seemed to defeat the Society's goal of keeping the English from encroaching onto Indian land.

Later, Sewall met two Indian widows, giving one of them, Sarah Japhet, 12 shillings "to help Fill her Land." The other widow was Sarah's daughter, whose husband, Nicodemus, had died in the army at Port Royal, Nova Scotia, in the French and Indian war.<sup>15</sup> His widow, Bethiah,

... has one son, of 22 years old, who is helpless by reason

<sup>13</sup> Reverend Pannos was minister of the Congregationalist church at Gay Head.

<sup>14</sup> Sewall later gave the other Indian youth a New Testament.

<sup>15</sup> Was he the first Vineyarder to die in the armed services of the colony?

of Sickness; have one Servant 17 years old.<sup>16</sup>

The next day, Sewall held court, listening to Indians complain about land disputes among the tribe and to Thomas Paul of Christiantown, who was "angred that Isaac Ompane, of the same Town, lives in the Town's English House Rent-free."<sup>17</sup>

After a brief visit with Abel's widow in her wigwam,<sup>18</sup> Sewall and Thomas Mayhew rode their horses to the top of Prospect Hill and then to the north shore

. . . and by Mr. Thomas Mayhew's direction view'd the River [Roaring Brook] falling into the Sound, and the Shoar all along to the end of the 327 Rods which extends Southward to the middle Line, containing about 1000 Acres which belongs to the Corporation [Society].<sup>19</sup>

Before leaving Chilmark, Sewall paid under-Sheriff Thomas Tracy 20 shillings for "recovering some Lands of Oukakemy to the Indians."<sup>20</sup> They then rode to Edgartown, planning to sail from there to the mainland, but high winds made that impossible. For two days, Sewall stayed in Worth's inn, where, as mentioned above, he "Demanded Rent of Mrs. Worth for the Neck" on Chappaquiddick. To prove his case, he showed her a copy of the deed, but to no avail,

our Landlady scruples paying Arrears. Thinks I may be able to demand only what has grown due since my Lord Lymerick made conveyed [*sic*] his Lands and Lordship to the hon'ble Company.

On Monday he sailed for Woods Hole. Before leaving, he paid Job Soumauau, Indian schoolmaster at Christiantown, ten shillings.

In his report to London, Sewall wrote that he thought it best to proceed gently, and could not find it convenient as yet, to Lett out any part to English-men: Wherein I had the Advice of Mr Thomas Mayhew who is our Pole-star, understanding the Language of the Indians well; and as

<sup>16</sup> Was it common for Indians to have a servant?

<sup>17</sup> As we have seen, Reverend Ompane was the preacher at the Christiantown Indian church.

<sup>18</sup> Sewall had visited Abel in 1702 and admired the "goodness of his house." Abel was brother of the late Sachem Mittark.

<sup>19</sup> The Middle Line ran from Waskosim's Rock westward to Menemsha Pond and was the boundary between the Indian lands to the north and the English lands to the south.

<sup>20</sup> Oukakemy was the Indian name for Christiantown.

a Justice, very laboriously seeking their Wellfare.<sup>21</sup>

But the men in London, looking at the budget, disregarded Sewall's advice and directed the Commissioners in June 1714 to proceed with the leasing of 600 acres to Sheriff Allen for ten years at £50 a year, naming Daniel Parker and Zacheus Mayhew as agents. Money was needed:

We therefore entreat of you, with all convenient speed, to visit the land aforesaid, and exert the power which we now put into your hands, by assigning to each Indian family there, together with such as we now direct to be removed from the land we have leased unto Mr. Ebenezer Allen (whom we have desired to assist you with his best advice on this occasion) such proportions of the land as you may judge proper for their cultivation. . . We would also desire you to put these Indians into the best way of improving their lands, and that they may not be left unto a liberty of perverting their allowances unto purposes that will not well agree with our grand intention.

Parker and Mayhew were given a letter from the Commissioners to be read to the Indians, some of whom would be forced to move so Allen could take over:

Our good Friends and Brethren:

The commissioners love you, and seek your good in everything.

We direct that 16 families of you which are now on the land that we have leased to Mr. Ebenezer Allen, to remove unto that land which we think most suitable to be inhabited by the Indians. . . We have given power to Mr. Daniel Parker and Captain Zacheus Mayhew to visit you and settle your bounds and assign to every one of you a suitable portion that you may all live comfortably and that the rich may not oppress the poor among you.

We expect that you comply with the orders of these gentlemen. . . we shall use all the care of kind fathers to make your condition comfortable. Every penny received of Mr. Ebenezer Allen, or of any other, is all laid out only to make you a happy people. And we hope you will be glad that you have those to look after you, who love you like their children and are desirous that you may know and serve

<sup>21</sup> William Kellaway, *The New England Company 1649-1776*, Barnes & Noble, N.Y., 1962, p.222. Because they served as translators, the Mayhews had an advantage over the other Englishmen.



the Lord Jesus Christ, your only Saviour, and in all things fare as well as we do ourselves.<sup>22</sup>

The Society's money problems continued. President John Leverett of Harvard wrote that its Indian College, built by the Society, could not be used because of a lack of money. He was told that there was no money "for the Education of the Indian youth at your Colledge. . . [because] The Purchase we have lately made. . . at Martha's Vineyard. . . has put us much behind hand."

Rev. Cotton Mather of Boston, one of the Commissioners, became more interested in the Gay Head project at about this time. He believed that more action was needed if the glorious plan was to be realized, although he didn't state where the money would come from:

I must procure an Attorney. . . for the Christian Indians on Martha's Vineyard. . . [plus] a Tutor, to bring up Indians for the Ministry. . . [and] a Visitor for the Schools, to see that their Ends be answered.

But it was mid-winter and his ambitious plan would have to wait. The arduous trip to the Vineyard was not something he was eager to undertake just then. He asked his assistant, Benjamin Colman, to explain this to London.

. . . [I] entreat you [to] prepare a Letter of Excuse and Advice unto the contentious people who have been so weak as to expect our Travelling Fourscore miles in the depth of winter.

Those contentious folk in London didn't understand that Martha's Vineyard was difficult to get to. And that, once there, Gay Head was still remote.

But the Londoners persisted. And with reason. Several years had gone by and still no survey of the property:

. . . the account you give. . . is some satisfaction. . . but [it] does not come up to what we formerly desired, an exact Plann of the whole, drawn by some experienced and Skillfull Surveyor. The Company is desirous that you will employ some such Person to do the same [showing] not only the quantity and situation of every parcel of Land. . . but also the quality and in whose possession the same is at present. . . we are under great Straits at this time for want of money. . .<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Today, this would be called the work of "spin doctors."

<sup>23</sup> *Journal of the Commissioners of the Society of the Holy Spirit*, Feb. 12, 1715.

With the death of Thomas Mayhew III in 1715, another generation of Mayhew "rulers" of the Indians ended. His son, Zacheus, took over. Sewall recorded Thomas' death in his diary:

It seems my good friend Mr. Thomas Mayhew [has] died . . . This Loss is to us in a manner irreparable, respecting the Government of the Indians.

Gay Head occupied most of the attention of Sewall and the Commissioners although Christiantown, Chappaquiddick, Deep Bottom and Sengekontacket were also Indian Lands owned by the Society. These were part of the Limerick purchase of Gay Head Neck.

The Mayhews, too, seemed more interested in the western end of the Island. Most of them lived there. Thomas III had lived in Chilmark (Quansoo). He bought Squibnocket from William Homes in 1691, although he never lived there. Squibnocket was part of the Limerick purchase but had been sold by Matthew Mayhew, acting as Limerick's agent, in 1690 to William Homes, an Irish school teacher in Chilmark. It seems strange that a school teacher, on the Island only a year or so, would want so much land, so far from his house. One year later, he returned to Ireland and sold Squibnocket to Thomas Mayhew for "one good ew [sic] lamb not under the age of six wooks yearly and everie year for ovor." Thus, that large tract of Limerick's holdings ended up in the Mayhew family. In 1709, Thomas gave it to his sons, Zacheus and Zephaniah.

Also abutting Gay Head was another large tract owned by the Mayhews. It was Nashaquitsa which Rev. John Mayhew had bought from Joseph Mittark in 1684, immediately after Joseph's father, Sachem Mattack, died. Together, the Mayhews and the Society owned all the land west of Hariph's Creek.

These purchases had been challenged by the Indians in 1703, who claimed they were illegal under the order by Sachem Mattack that his land must never leave the tribe. The court in Barnstable ruled that Mattack's written order, witnessed by a Mayhew, was a forgery. The forger, Josiah

Hosewit of Gay Head, confessed that he had written it years after Mattack died. Hosewit, who was not punished, later became the Baptist minister at Gay Head.

Land ownership was constantly in dispute. In 1718, Experience Mayhew brought a claim that upset the Society. He claimed that much of the land the Society thought it owned on the north shore was actually his. The disputed land was part of the tract that Sewall had viewed with Thomas III in 1714. Experience said it was not Indian land because his father, Reverend John, had bought it from Sachem Tootooh in 1675. The Society was upset:

... what you mention of Mr. Mahew's Pretension to some part of the Company's purchase in Martha's Vineyard is a great surprize to us, being of opinion that our Title to the Land is good, as being comprehended in Mayhew's Sale to my Lord Lymerick, of whom we purchased. But as we cannot at this distance judge exactly of Mr. Mahew's right to this Estate, the Company desires the Commissioners will trouble themselves in making a strict enquiry into it. . . for altho' we would not deprive any man of his just right, yet we are suspicious that if we should too readily submit to such Demands, we shall not fail of having new claims set up every day by virtue of some old Sachem's grant or other.<sup>24</sup>

The Society, on the advice of the Commissioners, offered to pay Experience one half of what he wanted. He accepted, but later demanded more and, once again, the Society made a settlement.

Experience's reputation in the colony continued to grow. He often went to Boston, preaching there and in Natick and Needham, as well as to the Indians in Roxbury. The Commissioners hired him in 1713 and 1714 to visit the Pequots in Connecticut to discover why the missionary there had done poorly. His report after the 1713 trip tells of his meeting with Ninnicraft, a Connecticut sachem:

He demanded of me why I did not make the English good in the first place: for he said many of them were still bad: He also told me that he had seen Martha's Vineyard Indians at Rode Island, that would steal, and these he said I should

first reform before I came to them.<sup>25</sup>

After his 1714 trip he reported:

Others [of the Indians] said they could not see That men were ever the better for being Christians, for the English that were Christians would cheat the Indians of their land and otherwise wrong them. . . their knowledge of books made them the more Cunning to Cheat others.<sup>26</sup>

As Experience's off-Island activities increased, the Vineyard mission was carried on by his Indian assistants. In the year 1717, Sewall's Receipt Book lists more than £70 being paid to Vineyard Indians. Several Englishmen were paid also. Rev. Josiah Torrey, the English minister at (West) Tisbury was paid £30 for "Gospelizing the Indian Natives." Experience received £60, plus a loan of £75. Sheriff Allen, who seemed to have sailed regularly between the Vineyard and Boston, in 1717 picked up £33 "For several Teachers, Magistrates & Schoolmasters." He also signed for £5 on behalf of Robert Cathcart on April 20. Cathcart himself picked up £10 for Abel Wowompaqueen and Daniel Shoko, Indian deacons. Zacheus Mayhew, now Justice of the Inferior Court, was paid £10 by the Society as "ruler" of the Indians. Miscellaneous payments in 1717 totalled another £8.

Indians rarely, if ever, went to Boston to pick up their pay. Sewall urged that they not do so. When Rev. Rowland Cotton asked if his son could pick up an Indian minister's salary, Sewall responded:

I think it a good method, that Indians do not spend their Time and enter into Temptation in fetching their Salaries: . . somebody must be appointed to call for them.

It wouldn't do to have praying Indians spending time in Boston! Who knows what temptations might befall them?

The cash that flowed from the Society payroll must have been an important element in the Vineyard economy. The recipients, English and Indian, surely were among the Island's prosperous. Paying them had become the Society's largest expense and the Londoners were eager to reduce it. One way to do that was to train more Indians as preachers.

<sup>25</sup> *Some Correspondence. . . of the New England Company. . .* Spottiswoode, London, 1896, p.110.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.120.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Ashhurst to Sewall, Feb.26,1718.



Their salaries were a fraction of what was paid to the English. But Indian families were not eager to have their sons leave home to be trained. Robert Ashhurst urged Sewall to be more persuasive:

... notwithstanding the obstruction you mention you meet with in the Education of Indian Youth, from the fondness of their Parents, and particularly their aversion to part with them, yet we do earnestly desire you will use your utmost endeavors to train up as many of those Youths as you can. . . for the Ministry.<sup>27</sup>

Life continued unkind to Experience Mayhew. In March 1722, his second wife, Remember, after giving birth to their sixth child, died of a fever, at 39 years. Their oldest child was only nine. Within a few days, the newborn infant died. Experience, once again, was a widower with young children. The youngest, Jonathan, was only 2. The understanding Commissioners increased his salary to £100. It isn't known who took care of the children, but they may have lived with relatives. Experience had no time for the task, as it was during this period that he wrote his greatest work, *Indian Converts*.

The book, which describes the lives of more than 100 religious Vineyard Indians, may have been suggested to him by Cotton Mather, who wrote in his diary March 6, 1713:

Some Godly Indians, having uttered very edifying Passages in their last Hours; Master Japhet [of Martha's Vineyard] in particular; I would propose a convenient Collection of them, to be anon employ'd for many valuable purposes.

Experience's book is such a "convenient Collection." He worked on it for years. His first published treatise on the subject was in 1720. In it, he described "the state of the Indians on Martha's Vineyard. . . from 1694 to 1720." There were, he wrote in that report,

... six small villages [of Indians], containing. . . about 155 families, and the number of souls may be about eight hundred. Each of these villages is provided with an Indian preacher to dispense the word to them on the Lord's days, when I am not with them. . . there is one assembly of

<sup>27</sup> *Ltrbk*, March 1, 1720, U of Va., Robert Ashhurst to Sewall. Robert had replaced his father as head of the Society.

Anabaptists at the Gay Head; but the number of people belonging unto this is very inconsiderable. . . The Reverend Mr. Josiah Torrey, pastor of the English Church in (West) Tisbury. . . has also for many years past preached as a lecturer. . . having for that end learned their language. . . The Reverend Mr. Samuel Wiswall, pastor of the church in Edgartown, has also now almost learned the Indian tongue, with a design to do what service he can.

As to their civil government, the Indians. . . are wholly under the English. . . Thomas Mayhew Esqr., [III]. . . was long improved in the government of the Indians. . . But he finished his course, July 21, 1715; and his son, Zacheus Mayhew, succeeding in that necessary but troublesome office. . .

There are yet but few Indians. . . that have houses of the English fashion. . . some have learned trades; . . . there are several weavers, one or two house carpenters, one wheelwright, who is so good a workman as to be frequently employed by his English neighbors. There are several tailors, and one if not more shoemakers, and one blacksmith, who. . . made his bellows and other tools; and one cooper, *viz.*, William Charles, who is a good workman. . . this shews that. . . the Indians are capable of learning such callings as English men follow.<sup>28</sup>

This report, or perhaps an amplified version of it, may have been what Samuel Sewall was referring to in his 1723 diary entry: "Mr. Mayhew of the Indian churches 25. pages in Octavo."<sup>29</sup>

The next year, Experience delivered the regular Thursday lecture at the First Church of Boston. These lectures were customarily attended by leading citizens, including the General Court. He took advantage of their presence to urge them "to endeavor a revival" of missions among the Indians, to make up for the declining London support. The lecture was published and its introduction states that Mayhew was writing a book on the lives of Christian Indians. That work was *Indian Converts*.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Experience Mayhew, Report to Commissioners, June 2, 1720, typescript copy DCHS.

<sup>29</sup> For a thorough discussion of *Indian Converts* and what led up to it, see Margery R. Johnson, *The Mayhew Mission to the Indians*, PhD dissertation, Clark U., 1966, p.234ff. This dissertation, available at the Society, is by far the most definite work on the Mayhew missionaries.

<sup>30</sup> Johnson, p.243.

It is clear that he devoted considerable time to his writing. The enormous detail in the book is testimony to that. He stayed on the Island more than usual during this period. Previously, he had been in Boston every three or four months, often staying for several weeks, but now he went only once a year, probably to pick up his salary.

In July 1724, he submitted the *Indian Converts* manuscript to the Commissioners, asking that they publish it. They voted to pay £6 to have it transcribed for possible publication, but made no commitment about publication. The hesitancy may have been due to the absence of his strong supporter, Samuel Sewall, who after a serious illness, had resigned.

Sewall's position as Treasurer and Secretary of the Commissioners had been taken over by Adam Winthrop. When Robert Ashhurst wrote from London to inform Winthrop of his appointment, he repeated the hope that more young Indians would be trained for the ministry:

... you were Chosen Treasurer In the room of Samuel Sewall Esq., who hath resigned. . . [we urge] that the most hopefull Children from among the Indians be Sought out and brought up In Learning to preach to them In their own Tongue.<sup>31</sup>

When the Commissioners took no action to publish the book, some of Experience's Boston friends circulated a broadsheet in May 1727 urging subscriptions. The book would be printed when 300 copies had been ordered at 10 shillings each. Handling the subscriptions, and no doubt inspiring the broadsheet, was bookseller Samuel Gerrish, Sewall's son-in-law.

The needed subscriptions were quickly gathered and in 1727 *Indian Converts* was published in London "for Samuel Gerrish bookseller in Boston." In the preface, Mayhew urged support of missions among "the miserable Indians:"

... I hope what is now said, will, in some measure, satisfy unprejudiced Persons, that the Things reported are worthy of Credit. . . And now, wishing and praying that the following Relations may prove edifying to the Reader, and

<sup>31</sup> Ltrbk. Ashhurst to Winthrop. Feb.25.1724. U of Va.

be a means. . . to save the miserable Indians, whether among us or in other Places.<sup>32</sup>

Experience dedicated the book to the "Honorable William Thompson, Esq., Governour and To the rest of the Honourable Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New-England and Parts adjacent in America."

Governor Thompson, after receiving a copy of *Indian Converts* from the printer, wrote to Adam Winthrop:

The Court have ordered Twenty five pound Sterling to be paid. . . to the Reverend E. Mayhew, not altogether for the Sake of his Book, which he has done the Company the honnour to dedicate to them, but for the Sake of his own and his ForeFathers' Zeal and Worthiness in the Good worke . . .

He added that the Court felt that Harvard should educate Experience's son, Nathan, on a scholarship, "but of this the Commissioners on your Side will be better Judges than we. . ." Nathan was later given a scholarship, graduating in 1731.

The publication of *Indian Converts* added to the high standing Experience already held. Despite its success, he had little chance to enjoy it. He continued to have tragedy in his family. Reliance, his eldest child and seemingly his favorite, had lived in the family of a Braintree minister after her mother's death. In 1729, she married Eliashab Adams of Barnstable and the couple moved to the Vineyard. The next year, Reliance died in childbirth. Her infant, Mayhew Adams, survived.

Experience's next oldest child, Samuel, was mentally retarded, as mentioned earlier. He lived until 1746, a burden, both financial and spiritual, on the father. Mary, the third child of his first marriage, married John McGee of Chilmark, sometime before 1739.<sup>33</sup>

The book apparently did not produce much income. With five children to provide for,

In December 1739 Experience again petitioned the

<sup>32</sup> Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, Printed in London for Samuel Gerrish of Boston, 1727, p.xiii. Also in the volume is Thomas Prince, *Some Account of those English Ministers. . . on Martha's Vineyard*, biographies of the Mayhew missionaries, including Experience.

<sup>33</sup> In his will, Experience spelled the name Meegee. John and Mary were bequeathed £150 plus 40 acres on Quansoo.



Massachusetts government in an eloquent statement of his financial straits. He reminded them of the 45 successive years of missionary labors, and claimed that he had been obliged to spend out of his own estate about £1500 for the support of "his numerous and sickly family." He was granted an increase of £10 a year.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to his Society salary, he received occasional payments from Harvard College from bequests in England earmarked for work among the Indians. The college reported in 1748 that Experience had received a total of 360 pounds, 13 shillings and 8 pence. Mr. Thomas West, English minister at Tisbury and preacher to the Indians, had been paid £301, according to the report, which did not define the time period involved.

Massachusetts had twice given Experience large tracts of land in response to his pleas. One, he sold immediately; the second, a large tract near Deerfield, he still held at his death, bequeathing it to his son, Jonathan.

The Society continued to have financial problems. Its income was down sharply. Due to poor administration and a depressed English economy, rental income, its main source, was off. In 1730, an audit of the Society finances disclosed that rents were also a problem on the Vineyard. Ebenezer Allen was in arrears, the auditor informed the Society:

. . . [the land] is lott to Ebon Allon for 100 pounds per Anno, but upon porusall of your acc'ts I don't find any credit given to the company since 25 March 1725 and then but 50 pounds for one year's rent. . . I am directed by the Court. . . to request you to give them an account.

The first lease to Allen in 1714 had been for 600 acres at £50 annually for 20 years. In 1724 he had requested another 400 acres. The Indians objected violently. Allen had his own objections against the Indians, claiming they had impounded his cattle, pulled down his fences, and insisted that the land was theirs. But three years later an agreement was signed by the Indians releasing another 200 acres to the Society to lease to Allen. The signing was witnessed by Experience Mayhew and William Hunt. In

<sup>34</sup> Johnson, pp. 258-9. He had to sell portions of his inherited land to pay expenses,

exchange, the Society "settled the whole of the Gay Head Neck upon the natives, with the exception of the 800 acres."

The document describes the tract as "the north-east part of said Gay Head, containing eight hundred acres of upland," which the natives gave to the Society

in consideration of [its] great care, kindness and expence towards us, the inhabitants of Gay Head. . . [and] that the said company have settled upon us. . . the bigger part of the land of said Gay Head. . . [reserving] the liberty of passing and repassing through gates or bars to mow and carry off the hay growing on a few acres of salt marsh.<sup>35</sup>

The 800 acres, later known as the Gay Head Farm, were "forever quitclaimed" to the Society, which then leased them for 21 years to Ebenezer Allen. The rent, which was to be paid in Boston, started at £40 a year, increasing over 21 years to £100, then

. . . at the expiration. . . of the lease [the said Allen is] peaceably and quietly to surrender and deliver up the possession of the said demised land and premises, with the appurtenances, with the Dwelling house, and wall or fence, that may be by the said Allen built thereon, in good tenantable repair.<sup>36</sup>

It was this 800-acre lease that the London auditor in 1730 had found to be in default. After receiving the auditor's order, the Society asked the Commissioners in Boston to explain. Allen's failure to pay the rent, they wrote, had been due to

the Obstinacy & perverseness of the Gay Head Indians in their hindering Mr Allen from taking possession of the land.

But, they said, the problem had been worked out. As for why they hadn't noticed that the rent was in arrears, it was because all the Commissioners responsible had retired "and their old Secretary being dead, [we] have ordered [our] new one to look into the records."

Rents were not the only problem in the Allen family. In February 1732, John Allen, brother of Ebenezer, the lease holder, charged Paine Mayhew, a judge and Agent for the Indians at Gay Head, with "sundry irregular Practices" in

<sup>35</sup> *Dukes County Land Records*, Book 4, p.199.

<sup>36</sup> DCHS archives, Box 130B.

the performance of his duty. Paine had impounded about 100 sheep belonging to Deacon Simon Mayhew, a distant relative, and refused to give cause or to allow Simon to appeal to a higher court. Paine was accused of the "perverting (if not withholding) of justice and the Oppression of diverse of His Majesty's good Subjects." He had, the suit claimed, fined Schoolmaster Francis Bryan of Chilmark for refusing to teach Zephaniah Mayhew's Indian girl to read, something he had no authority to do. It could be ordered only by the Chilmark selectmen, "not by every particular Inhabitant at Pleasure."<sup>37</sup>

The London office of the Society received other criticisms of the Mayhews as Agents for the Indians. One such came to Adam Winthrop in Boston in 1733:

The Company are concerned that the Messrs. Mayhew should occasion such a complaint from the Gay head Indians of Difficulties and Oppressions and you have done well to remonstrate against them, our business being to reconcile [the Indians] to us and not prejudice them against us by taking advantage of every inadvertant slip . . . It is very surprizing after so much loss, expense and trouble that the Company's Rights should now be called in question. . . . A dear-bought purchase and ought to be maintained.<sup>38</sup>

Experience, as spiritual emissary, was not usually involved in these governmental disputes, although on occasion he was appointed Agent for the Indians.<sup>39</sup> Ruling the Indians, as it was called, was the responsibility of his cousins, Paine, Matthew and Zacheus. During this period Experience took on a pastoral duty for the first time. In a 1741 letter, he wrote that there were four Indian churches on the Island and "Of one of these Chhs I have the Pastoral Care." He doesn't say which Indian church it was. He had been a member of the one at Christiantown, but had removed himself many years before this.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> DCHS, Box 2S, Env.6. Indian servants were common among the English, often indentured.

<sup>38</sup> *Ltrbk.*, Jos. Williams to Adam Winthrop, Feb.11,1733, U. of Va.

<sup>39</sup> In 1731, for example, he was appointed to represent the Christiantown Indians on a legal matter. Johnson, p.234.

<sup>40</sup> Johnson, p.265. Experience transferred to the Chilmark church in 1715, according to Rev. William Homes Diary, *New England Historical & Genealogical Register*, XLIX, p.414.

Whichever church it was, the pastorate probably was not taxing. Once again, he was spending time in Boston. His son Nathan had just graduated from Harvard and was still in Cambridge studying the Indian language in preparation for mission work. Experience was one of his teachers. Nathan seems not to have been a healthy young man. When he was given a £20 scholarship by Harvard to study Indian, there was a proviso that "his Father first give Bond for refunding the said sum to the College in case his son should live & decline the Indian Service." One year later, Nathan died and the college

Voted that the bond of the Rev. Experience Mayhew for refunding twenty pounds granted to his son be cancelled for as much as God in his Providence has removed his son by death.

Six years later, the Fellows at Harvard voted Experience an additional £25 to be paid out of a bequest from England, for the care and pains he took in teaching his son (now deceased) the Indian language, in order to qualify him for the Indian Ministry; and also for maintaining him the time he lived after his Degree in Learning said Language.

More and more the Society preferred to spend its money to support existing churches, rather than in converting the "heathen." Few Indians had not heard the Gospel by this time. It was more important to hold onto the converted. In 1734, it paid to build meeting houses at Gay Head and Christiantown. The lumber for Gay Head was taken there by John Allen, Tisbury shopkeeper, who recorded in his account book:

I am to pasture 2 yearlins all the year at Gayhead for carting Indians bords from Edgerton.<sup>41</sup>

By 1741, the London Society was beginning to question its investment at Gay Head. When the Commissioners urged it to purchase additional property on the mainland, the Vineyard experience dampened its enthusiasm:

. . . Wee have no exalted Notions of Estates in your Country when the proprietors live at so great a distance as between us and you (Martha's Vineyard has been a notable

<sup>41</sup> Account book, DCHS, R.A-12, p.20. John Allen was sheriff from 1714 to 1733.



Witness).<sup>42</sup>

The colonial government of Massachusetts in 1746, perhaps concerned about the Society's lessening interest, named three Guardians to oversee the Vineyard Indians. One was Zacheus Mayhew, who that same year sold "a Negro boy called Peter" to Ebenezer Hatch of Falmouth for £150.<sup>43</sup>

Indians were also sold into "slavery," although that term was not used. It was called indentured servitude, a punishment for crimes. Indentured servants could be, and were, sold like slaves, but for a limited time. While both Indians and whites were indentured, it was much more often used against Indians than the English. In 1690, Matthew Mayhew brought a complaint against his Indian servant, Hannah, for stealing money, corn, rum and clothing. She was convicted and the court ruled that she "shall be delivered to Mr. Matthew Mayhew Esq., to make sale of her for the tearme of thirty years in any part of their majesties dominions or Elsewhere."

In another case in 1693, Matthew complained that two Indian youths, also servants of his, had stolen eight pounds from a trunk in his house. Found guilty, the young men were turned over to Matthew to be sold into service for seven years. He sold them to Jacob Mayee in Southold, Long Island.

Such a practice was still going on as late as 1747. Mrs. Hannah Beetle charged Martha Job, an Edgartown Indian, with stealing a silver shoe buckle worth 53 shillings. The Indian pleaded guilty and, being unable to pay the fine, was sold for £4 to Peter Norton of Edgartown, "as a servant for ye Terme" of two years. The judge in the case was John Sumner, prominent Edgartown businessman and brother-in-law of Rev. John Newman of the Congregational church.<sup>44</sup>

As the Society was losing its interest in them, the Gay Head Indians were losing interest in the Society's religion.

<sup>42</sup> *Ltrbk.*, p.238, U. of Va.

<sup>43</sup> Box 10S, DCHS. "This boy will be Eleven years old the 2d. Day of November next."

<sup>44</sup> Charles E. Banks, unpublished notes, DCHS archives.

Off-Island, a great revival was underway among the English. Known as the Great Awakening, it brought many new members into the established churches. There was hope that this spiritual rebirth would spread to the Indians. Experience, in 1741, wrote that it was his wish that the Indians "may at Some Time or other be Sharers in Such Blessings." He added, hopefully, that there were "several among [the] Indians much affected."<sup>45</sup>

Whatever their spiritual awakening, the Indians were becoming increasingly resentful. The Society's grand plan to make Gay Head a secure place of contentment had failed. The English encroachment continued. Their Guardians, the Indians said, were making things worse. In 1749, they asked to return to the old system:

The Poor Indian Proprietors of Gay head met together, and by a vote make this Humble Petition To you the Honourable Commissioners, at Boston, and also the General Court Humbly Beseeching you for us Poor Indian Proprietors of Gay head, Earnestly Pleading for our lands at Gay head, we want. . . that we may have our fields, which the Guardians have let out. . . we are more Poor [than] Ever. . . we have not liberty to Pasture our Cretures, only as we Buy, or Hire Pasture, to this Day; It was not so before. . . we beseech, that we may have our land that is lett out. . . before this new law Come, the English had not Power to Do to us as they Pleased; . . . and also we say. . . by the Guardians we are Deceived. . . Every year there Comes 465 pounds, and we have another Peice of meadow Part of which They have hired out for 2 pounds, and the English have tooock another Part of Manampsha [Menemsha] from us and for all this money that Comes, only a few women and Children have their shears [shares] this first year, Come to Each one to have the first half year 15 shillings the other half year they had 14 shillings, and there are many People. . . that have no shear [share] given them. . . and the number of all the souls are about 165. and the number of our Cretures are about 400 (we know not

<sup>45</sup> Johnson p.265-6. The Edgartown Congregational church had a flurry of new members during the Awakening. From August 1742 to the end of year, 50 members were admitted; in 1743, 23 new members; in the previous 4 years, a total of only 12 admitted. Johnson says Experience preached in Edgartown from February to May 1742 during the illness of Samuel Wiswall. Church records do not show that, but during those years they are sketchy

the number of our sheep) what shall these Cretures do for Pasture, we have none only as we buy it. . . many are suffereing for want, and many have not food. and many times we have been with the Guardians to seek for money but they give no money, or other things; . . . we Humbly Pray that this new law be taken away from us. (Mr. Elisha Tupper, we beseech you, defend us about this.) Signed by 31 proprietors and by Zachary Hossueit, clerk at Gayhead, as a true petition.<sup>46</sup>

The petition, compelling as it is, was dismissed by the House of Representatives. It was just one of several petitions sent to the legislature between 1745 and 1767. Virtually all were related to continued encroachments by the English.

By the mid-1700s, the London Society had switched virtually all its funds and interest to the western part of the colony and to Maine and Nova Scotia. Its income continued to fall. In 1751, the Society informed Boston not to expect much help:

The Company heartily wish the Commissioners good success in their Endeavors to promote the Gospel at Martha's Vineyard . . . and [are] ready to remit you as their circumstances will allow.

Experience Mayhew was now nearly 80. He was still remembered as a 1755 letter from London to Boston makes clear:

One of the Comp[any] represented Mr. Experience Mayhew as grown old and worn out in the Service & they have allso ordered you to pay him 10 pounds Sterling.

Much was changing in the colony. Men were being drafted, including on the Vineyard, to fight in the French and Indian War. The Vineyard militia was called up in 1756 and Zacheus Mayhew, colonel of the unit, ordered a company of 18 men, under Capt. Peter West, to march to Boston to join the forces.<sup>47</sup> The company muster lists only ten soldiers by name, three of whom had been drafted and one was a paid substitute. The other eight men were carried on the roster merely as "(8 Indians)." These were not the

<sup>46</sup> Ives Goddard and Kathleen J. Bragdon, *Native Writing in Massachusetts* (hereafter, *NatWrit*), American Philosophical Soc., Philadelphia, 1988, Part 2, pp.779-800.

<sup>47</sup> Peter West was brother of Rev. Thomas West, preacher to the Indians under Experience Mayhew. Peter died of smallpox the next year at Fort Edward, N.Y.

first Vineyard Indians to go to war against the French. In 1710, a Tisbury Indian, Nicodemus Skuhwhannan, described as a "pious" person by Experience Mayhew, died at Annapolis Royal (Halifax), Nova Scotia, after the battle there. It was his widow, Bethiah, whom Samuel Sewall had visited in 1714, as we have seen. Nicodemus may have been the first Vineyarder to die in the military service of the colony.

What happened to seven of the eight unnamed Indians who went with Captain West in 1756 is not known. But one of them, Philip Metark, was captured at Fort William Henry in 1757 and forced into "Disagreeable Captivity," including servitude to an enemy Indian. He managed to escape and in 1759 petitioned the colony to pay him for his "time and suffering."<sup>48</sup>

On the Vineyard, the battle continued over land ownership. On Chappaquiddick, English were "buying" Indian lands:

For a mere trifle, the intruders. . . acquired valuable native land, erected nine houses, carried away five hundred cords of wood.<sup>49</sup>

The English were even encroaching on each other's property. In the final year of his life, Experience Mayhew warned the Commissioners that Gay Head itself was threatened. Some English, he wrote, were taking over land his family owned and must be stopped or else "the Gay head neck it self will be in danger of going next."<sup>50</sup>

Experience died of apoplexy November 29, 1758, and was buried in Abel's Hill Cemetery in Chilmark. His son Zachariah asked the Commissioners to pay £10 for his funeral and a gravestone "of a moderate size."<sup>51</sup>

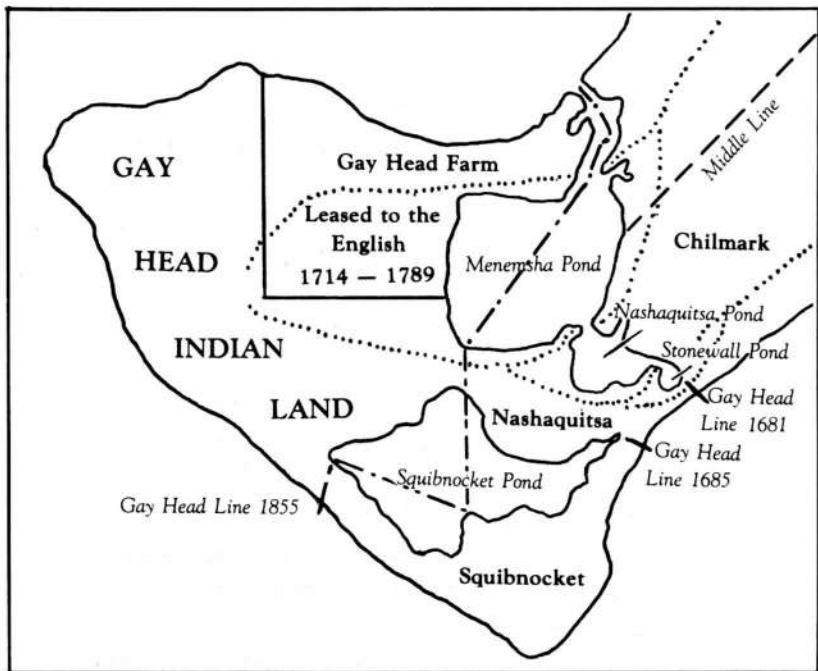
He left a fairly sizable estate, bequeathing £150 to daughter Mrs. Mary McGee, plus 40 acres at Quansoo, £210 to daughter Mrs. Abigail March, £300 to daughter Mrs. Eunice

<sup>48</sup> Johnson, p.276.

<sup>49</sup> Yasuhide Kawashima, *Puritan Justice and the Indian*, Wesleyan U. Press, Middletown, Conn. 1986, pp.67-8.

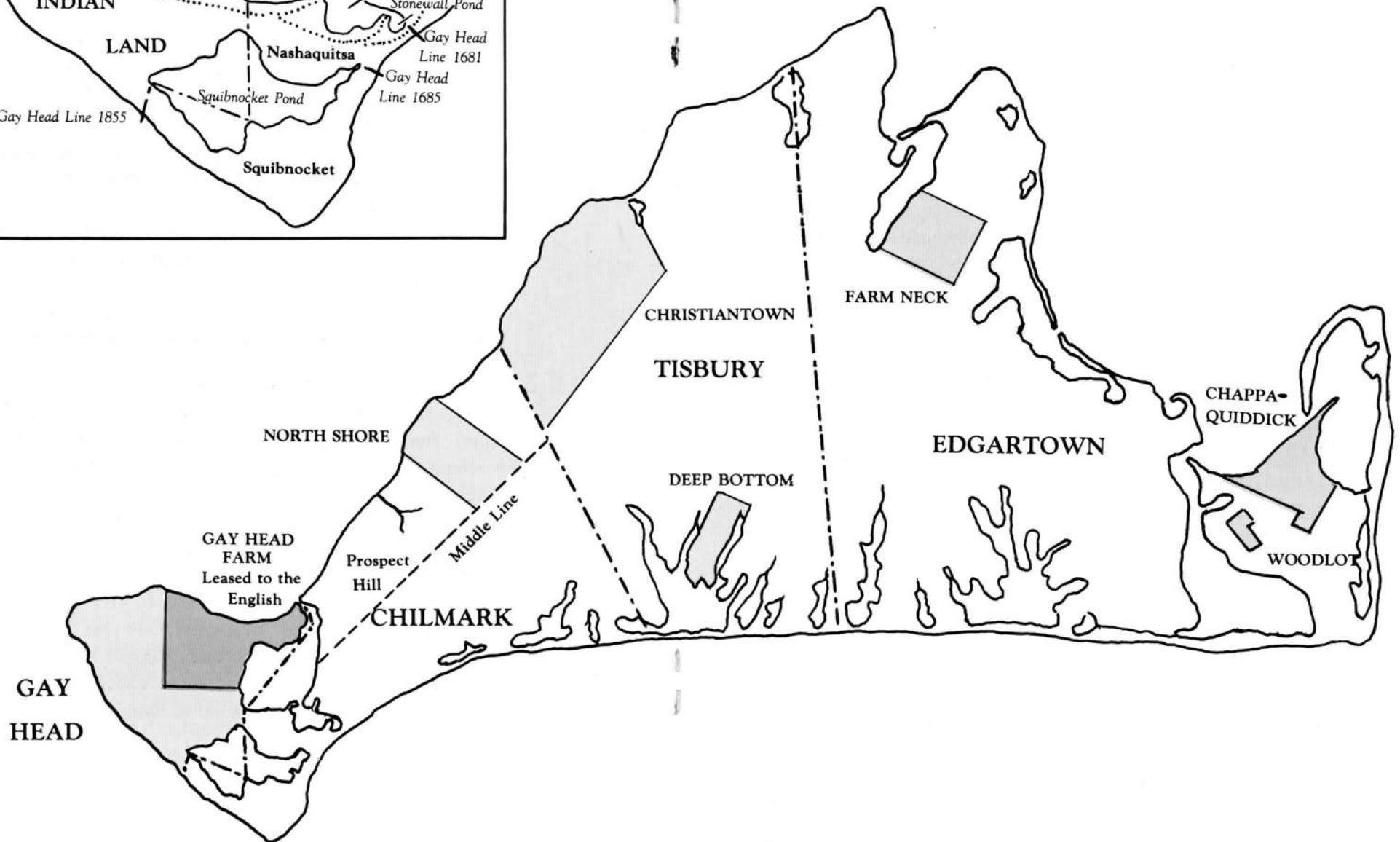
<sup>50</sup> Johnson, p.280.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.281.



## INDIAN LANDS

By the mid-1700s, the Indians were assigned certain lands (lightly shaded) in the three towns. The darker area at Gay Head was also Indian land, but was leased out to Englishmen as pasture. In 1789, the Indians reclaimed it by violence. Gay Head's eastern boundary changed through the years. In 1681, Sachem Mattack said it went to Stonewall Pond. In 1685, when Dongan (later Lord Limerick) bought Gay Head, Nashaquitsa was not included. In 1855, Squibnocket was also made part of Chilmark.





Belcher, his tract of land at Deerfield went to son Jonathan, along with half his library and manuscripts. Son Zachariah, his executor, received the Quansoo homestead and the other half of the library.<sup>52</sup>

A year later, Zachariah, who had been assistant to his father, reminded the Commissioners of the Indians in Boston of their promise that "if he continued his labors after the death of his father, his salary would be increased."<sup>53</sup> He wondered when it would happen. The English churches in Edgartown and (West) Tisbury had both asked him to be their pastor. Were the Commissioners going to make him their missionary? Nobody else was ready to take over.

While waiting for his promotion, Zachariah continued to serve. The work diminished with the decline of the native population. There were only 313 Indians in the county, 86 of them in Edgartown (Chappaquiddick and Sengecontacket), 39 in Tisbury and 188 in Chilmark (Gay Head). Of these, not more than one-third on Chappaquiddick were "pure" Indian, at Sengekontacket one-fifth, at Gay Head about one-quarter.<sup>54</sup> Most of them had become Baptists, leaving the church of the missionary society.

They were having disputes among themselves. In the mid-1700s, Elisha Amos of Christiantown was expected to be named justice on the Indian court which had jurisdiction over minor suits between Indians. Many on Gay Head disliked him. Furthermore, he was from Christiantown. Some of them wrote to John Allen:

You Mr. Major John Allen, we beseech you that you would make known our words of us poor Gayhead Indians. We say trule we need a judge at this place of ours at Gayhead. And we have heard. . . you have appointed. . . Elisha Amos. . . if this should be done we shall be much more miserable. This Elisha has robbed us of our gardens and also our fresh meadows and our land. . . if then this [person]

<sup>52</sup> These bequests were not small. In 1762, a year's pay for a laborer in Philadelphia was £60. Robert Blair St. George, editor, *Material Life in America*, Northeastern U. Press, Boston, 1987. p.233ff.

<sup>53</sup> Johnson, p.283.

<sup>54</sup> MHS Colls. I, p.206, copied by RLP, DCHS.

were to be a magistrate among us we shall lose all our land at Gayhead. . . just as the word of God says in *Job* 34:30.<sup>55</sup>

Legal battles were not limited to Indians. In 1765, the Mayhews were deeply divided by a law suit involving Jerusha Mayhew, daughter of Zephaniah Mayhew of Chilmark, and several other Mayhews. Two Bostonians, Robert Treat Paine and John Adams, came to the Vineyard to adjudicate the trial

. . . between Jerusha Mayhew and her Relations. . . a quarrell of the most invidious, inveterate and irreconcilable nature between the several Branches of the Mayhew Family, which had divided the whole Island into Parties. . . It destroyed all sense and Understanding, all Equity and Humanity, all Memory and regard to Truth, all Virtue, Honor, Decorum and Veracity. Never in my Life was I so grieved and disgusted with my Species.

The lawyers, Paine and Adams, argued the case on opposite sides, but decided it was impossible to find where justice lay. Adams wrote, "We were pretty free with our Vituperations on both sides and the Inhabitants appeared to feel the Justice of them."<sup>56</sup>

Experience had been dead for nearly ten years and still the Commissioners had not promoted Zachariah to missionary. In 1767, they decided they must make a decision. Each year in September praying Indians of Massachusetts, including those on the Vineyard, gathered in Mashpee to celebrate communion. Rev. Zachary Osooit, pastor of the Gay Head Indian church, was to preach that year and many Vineyard Indians were to attend. The Commissioners sent a committee that

. . . took this opportunity to mention a subject . . . has been lately under consideration. . . : the expediency of Mr. Mayhew's being ordained to the pastoral office at Martha's Vineyard. Zachary Osooit readily signified his approbation of the thing; and the other Indian ministers present expressed their concurrence. . . and that it would be best.

Zachariah's ordination was assured, but the Vineyard

<sup>55</sup> NatWrit, Part 1, p.225. The Biblical verse: "Let not the hypocrite rule."

<sup>56</sup> L.H.Butterfield, editor, *The Adams Papers*, The Belknap Press of Harvard U. Press, 1966, v.3, pp.284-5. Adams knew the Mayhews well. Joseph Mayhew of Chilmark was his tutor at Harvard who administered his admission examination; Rev. Jonathan Mayhew of Boston was a friend, with whose theology (and politics) he agreed.

Indians had more to say. Widow Augooche, sister of Reverend Osooit and "properly a Vineyard Indian," spoke:

[She] informed us that in old Mr. Mayhew's time, some lands at Gay Head were taken from the Indians; and Zachary Osooit acquainted us, that to this day some English people hold lands at a place called Deep Bottom, which were formerly leased to them by Mess'rs. Hunt and Sumner and Major Mayhew, when they were guardians to the Indians, although the leases had been expired some time; and that Elijah Luce holds land on the Indian part of Gay Head, which was let to him ten years ago by Mr. Mayhew; and [the Indians] desired that they might have no more guardians.<sup>57</sup>

Sister Osooit's outburst may have accomplished nothing, but Zachariah, now nearly 50 years old, was soon ordained minister, although never educated for the work, a fact that may have held up his promotion. Rev. Gideon Hawley from the Mashpee mission "gave the Charge to Mayhew."<sup>58</sup> It isn't known whether Zachariah spoke the Indian language, a requirement in earlier years. Samuel Sewall had been "the last really effective advocate of the Indian language" as a requirement for missionaries.<sup>59</sup> After he resigned, the Commissioners took the view that it made more sense for the Indians to learn English, the language of the colony, than for missionaries to learn Indian.

Zachariah served for more than 40 years. During most of those years, he was given use of the Society's 800-acre Gay Head farm to augment his salary. The Christiantown church seemed to be his favorite. Evidence of that is found in a 1828 document dividing the Indian lands at Christiantown, 22 years after his death. The Commissioners wrote:

We have set off a Tract of land for the accommodation of a Meetinghouse, being the same land occupied for that purpose during the faithful labours of the Rev'd. Zacheriah Mayhew.

<sup>57</sup> MHS Colls., v.III, 2nd ser., 1815, Johnson Reprint, p.17. the complaint was not an isolated one. Indians at Christiantown and Chappaquiddick petitioned in 1663 and 1670 for investigations into illegal takeover of their land.

<sup>58</sup> Johnson, p.286.

<sup>59</sup> Kellaway, p.228.

There is no mention of him in a similar document setting aside land on Chappaquiddick for a meeting house. Living, as he did, at the western end of the Island, it is likely that he spent little time with the eastern Indians. Although Zachariah had the use of the Society farm at Gay Head, he did not live there. He lived at Quansoo, on the family homestead. He probably leased out the Gay Head acreage to augment his salary, although the matter is confused.

Confusing the record even more is a note in the Society archives, written by Cornelius Bassett of Chilmark, perhaps the richest man in the town, on April 19, 1763, to "Brother Norton." It states that Brother Norton (probably Peter Norton) owed rent to the Indians for using Gay Head land to pasture his livestock. But the money was not to be paid to the Society for the education of young Indians, as had been the plan. Instead, it was to go to Bassett to pay off Indian debts. Not for debts owned by any specific Indian, but simply "the Indians." There was a schedule of payment based on "sheep rites" in place, so it must have been normal for Indians to charge the English pasture rights without involving the Society:

If you could conveniently Pay Me ye money Due to the Indians for their Rent it would Greatly oblige me, for I have Laid out my Money for them and am Short of money at Present. The Creatures you had Entered were 4 Oxen, which is 32 Sheep rites at 11 s/ pr. Sheep; one horse, 10 Sheep rites at 10/ per Sheep. The oxen comes to £17=12:0. The horse Comes to £5=0:0. From your friend and Sev't,  
Cornel's Bassett

Making the Gay Head arrangment even more confusing is a letter written three years later by the same Peter Norton to the Commissioners asking if he could lease the farm, which, supposedly, had been turned over to Zachariah:

. . . I understand There is a Tract of Land on The gayhead which you have to Let out which I Should be glad to Hire for So Many years as five, Six or Seven and To give you Annually forty five Pounds . . . and as The House wants Repairing To make it Tennentable If I have it That you give me orders To Repair it and If you Conclude To Let me have it To Let me Know as Soon as Possible it Being high Time

That The fences was Repaired to Enclose The Same. . . I will Come Down To Boston Some time in may next and Take a Lease for The Same. . .<sup>60</sup>

The Commissioners did not mention Norton's earlier arrangement with the Indians when they wrote on May 7, 1766, leasing him the farm. Probably they had no knowledge of it. Such a private rental was certainly in violation of the Society's plan. Within two months a dispute arose over the boundaries of the 800-acre farm:

. . . Whereas there is an Incorrectness in the Draft of the Release of the Gayhead formerly made by the Indians, which Incorrectness is followed in the Lease made to Major Norton, whereby it appears doubtful whether some Meadow belonging to the Indians is not included within the Bounds of the Land leased as aforesaid; And as Major Norton when he took the Lease, must have known that said Meadow did belong to the Indians, Wherefore to prevent all dispute with regard to this matter:

Voted that Mr. Oliver write to Major Norton upon it, and desire him to return an Answer, to be delivered to Mr. Mayhew to be forwarded; that so the Affair may be rightly understood between him and the Commissioners.<sup>61</sup>

Norton used the land to pasture his flock of sheep. He sold mutton, wool and leather and also used the leather in his cordwainer business. Six years later, in 1773, Mr. A. Oliver, writing for the Commissioners, told Norton he could "renew the Lease of the Gay Head Estate" but only for one year. "There are several other Persons now applying for a Lease of the Estate" and he must come to Boston to discuss it with them before it would be renewed again.<sup>62</sup> Norton ignored the letter. In 1774, William Phillips, a Commissioner, wrote him:

I have not a line from you respecting the Farm at Gay Head, nor have I rec'd more than Twelve Pounds on acco't. of the Rents for which [I] gave Mr. Mayhew a Receipt this day.

The Commiss'rs are much dissatisfied at matters laying thus unsettled, for which reason they have by their Vote

<sup>60</sup> DCHS, Box 4S, env.A, (Bassett) and Box 5S, env.8 (Norton).

<sup>61</sup> Document signed by A. Oliver, secretary to the Commissioners, 20 DCHS, Box 3S, env.2, July 1767.

<sup>62</sup> DCHS, Box 10S, env.3.

desired Mr. Jonathan Allen of Chilmark to settle with you for the Rent and to see that the conditions of the Lease are fulfil'd. . . You will accordingly pay him for the Two Years due the last March, deduct'g the Twelve Pounds above.

The collection of rent was clearly still a problem. Nobody seemed empowered to do it and, as a result, leaseholders were often in arrears. With no rents, no money was available, as had been the plan, for Indian education.

Disputes continued at Gay Head. In 1776, thirty-seven Indians petitioned the House of Representatives. Their complaint involved the late Elisha Amos from Christiantown whom many had opposed as justice. Amos, years earlier, had persuaded a few Gay Head Indians to turn over their land rights to him. The tracts enclosed a larger piece, which Amos, the petition charged, had taken over illegally, even building on it. When he died, he left the rights (including that to the illegal land) to Henry Amos, who soon sold them to Joseph and Israel Amos. The Guardians of the Indians were asked to stop this action or the land would never be returned to its legal owners. Under Gay Head "common land" practices, such transfers were not permitted. The petition also urged action on a different matter:

There is one other Difficulty which we are much burthened with at Gay-head, viz.: A very considerable number of Negroes and Mulatto's that have come among us built them Houses and settled amongst us, which we have not been able to prevent; some of the Indian Women that formerly resided at Gay-head have lately returned with a very considerable number of Mulatto's, as they say, Children, Grandchildren and even Great GrandChildren, which we are much afraid if they cannot be prevented from settling amongst us, will greatly impoverish, if not entirely Root us out.<sup>63</sup>

The Revolution was being fought at the time so it is doubtful that the petition got much attention in Boston. The following year, 1777, the English inhabitants in Chilmark, of which Gay Head was a part, wrote to the House of Representatives asking that troops be provided to

<sup>63</sup> DCHS, Indian Box S.



protect them. Soldiers had been sent to the Elizabeth Islands where only 100 persons lived, but none to the Vineyard with "at least five hundred families and about 2780 souls, exclusive of Indians living by themselves." The inclusion of Indians, "living by themselves," apparently would not have added weight to the argument, in their opinion.

One year later, 1778, the British did "invade" the Vineyard. A fleet, commanded by General Charles Grey, sailed into Holmes Hole to collect livestock for the beleaguered troops at Newport. Two affidavits in the Society archives describe what happened at Gay Head. Francis Mayhew of Chilmark said that

... when G. Gray was at the Vinyard taking of stock cattle and sheep, the Indians brought the sheep off of the Gayhead and yarded them on Mr. Benjamin Mayhew's land [on Nashaquitsa] near Gayhead and took out the Sheep that they had in keeping and drove them back to Gayhead. I was present at the yard when they took out their Sheep and went with the Indians and helped them drive their sheep back to said Gayhead and the rest of the sheep were drove eastward to go to Gray.

Thus, it would seem, no Indian sheep were taken from Gay Head. Whether or not Peter Norton's sheep, pastured on his leased land, were taken is not clear. What is known, from other records, is that Norton, Major of the militia, claimed to have lost 803 sheep from his Edgartown flock, making him the largest individual loser on the Island.

The second affidavit, signed by Nathaniel Mayhew, states that Norton still had sheep in Chilmark after the raid:

... I, being one of the oners of a Neck of Land called Squipnocket ... from the Year 1775 to the Present time [about 1783] do remember that in the Year 1778 not long before General Gray was at this Place taking off Cattle and Sheep, Major Peter Norton & his Sons had a number of Cattle and horses on sd. Neck in a pasture Belonging to Said Peter, Called the forty acres Lot. ... soon after sd. Gray went from this place people were yarding sheep in sd. town in order to find what they had remaining and I was then at a yard on Wm. Tillton's land where I saw Peter Norton's sons take out a considerable number of sheep belonging to sd. Peter & his sons.

The two affidavits tell us that Indian sheep were not taken in Grey's Raid and that Peter Norton had "a considerable number of sheep" still in Chilmark after the raid. Chilmark residents claimed to have lost 4116 sheep to Grey, but apparently many were not taken.

When the Revolution ended, so did the salary payments from England for the Indian missions in Massachusetts. Isaac Smith, then treasurer in Boston, urged the London Society to do something for the missionaries because some had been at it "too long. . . to be capable of applying themselves to any other employment." His plea had some success. Rev. Gideon Hawley of Mashpee received £200 which he considered inadequate, having expected to be provided for until he died. No money was paid to Zachariah Mayhew, but he was allowed to continue to use the Gay Head farm, although as we have seen, exactly what that meant is unclear.

The end of the Revolution also created uncertainty about the ownership of Gay Head. The London Society, still its legal owner, showed little interest in it once the colony was independent. It turned its resources to Canadian missionaries. Fortunately for Zachariah, a new Society came into existence in Boston.

In 1787, a group of Massachusetts men formed "The Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians, and others, in North America" to take over the work of the London Society. Its first money was "a handsome donation [from] the estate of the Hon. John Alford, Esq. . . With the income of this sum, the Society supports one school for the instruction of Indian children upon Martha's Vineyard."<sup>64</sup>

Income from the Alford endowment was \$414 a year, not enough to accomplish much. The Society requested voluntary collections be taken in Massachusetts churches. The result was disappointing, only \$1561 being collected. Individual gifts were then solicited and the endowment was increased enough to provide an additional \$338 a year.

Zachariah Mayhew was paid from this income. His use

<sup>64</sup> MHS Colls., 2nd series, v.II, 1814, p.45.

of the Gay Head farm, however it was used, didn't last long. In 1789, the Gay Head Indians took it away from him "by violence." He asked the London Society to reimburse him for damages and it did:

I acknowledge the receipt. . . of £233-16-3 which you was pleas'd to say was in full of all claims & demands whatever. The Farm at Gayhead. . . was by violence taken out of my possession in the year 1789. . . The pretence of the Natives was that they had no benefit from it. I have no doubt they were excited to that act of violence by evil minded persons, who wished to improve a part themselves. . . instead of the Natives receiving benefit. . . One Indian and a number of white Persons received the principal benefit. . . and the poor Inhabitants are deprived of the means of instruction for themselves and children, which they used to receive from the profit of it. . . I beg leave to suggest. . . [you] put it into the hands of the hon'able Society at Boston. . . to appropriate the Farm to the benefit of the natives, particularly for the instruction of their children. . . it would be so pleasing to them as to prevent all future acts of violence.<sup>65</sup>

The Boston Society, Zachariah's new employer, pressed the case, asking London to give it the farm:

. . . a certain valuable tract of Land situated in the Island of Martha's Vineyard. . . has since the peace between Great Brittain and the United States been fraudulently and by violence [the last three words are lightly crossed out] wrested from the occupancy of the Tenant who held it under you, and perverted to the private use and Emolument of certain persons, who have no right to it; and of whose pretended services to the Indians no evidence appears. It is the wish and desire of the body of Indians on that Island, amounting to about 400 Souls and of their best friends, that the said Land may be recovered from those persons and put into the care of this Society, that the income of it amounting to about 40 pounds per Annum may be applied to providing the means of religious instruction. . . this Society [is] small but. . . [is] making an annual allowance to the Revd. and Aged Mr. Mayhew who still preaches to them and in paying School masters and mistresses and providing books. . . If no steps be taken to recover the Land it must in a couple

<sup>65</sup> MHS Misc. Coll. April 1791. Zachariah never described the form of the "violence." Was this the only time a group of Indians did "violence" to the English on the Vineyard?

of years be wholly lost. . . the persons who now hold it will gain a title by possession.<sup>66</sup>

General Benjamin Lincoln of Hingham, one of Washington's top military men in the Revolution, in 1795 wrote a penetrating description of the Indian view of land ownership that helps explain the takeover of the Gay Head farm:

[The Indians] early discovered that among [the English] there existed a thirst for property, and a disposition to engross the right of the original owners. . . They believe that they were placed on these lands by the Great Spirit. . . and that no person can, consequently, have a right to dispossess them.

They have always been ready to retort to us, and say, "Where are the good effects of your religion? We of the same tribe have no contentions among ourselves respecting property; and no man envies the enjoyment and happiness of his neighbor."<sup>67</sup>

Confusion grew over who now owned Gay Head. An unrelated event in 1796 seemed to establish that the state of Massachusetts believed the Indians to be the owners. When the Federal government requested land for a lighthouse at Gay Head, Massachusetts asked the Indians to deed to it about two acres, which they did. The land was then given to the Federal government, suggesting that both governments accepted Indian ownership.

In 1806, Rev. Zachariah Mayhew died, the last of five generations of Mayhew missionaries. None of his four sons was interested in the work, all being farmers. The Congregational mission fell into decay. As the old Indian preachers died, none of their children took over. A small amount of money was being provided the Baptist Indian church by Harvard, using income from bequests left for Indian missions. The Congregational church with Rev. Zachariah Howwaswee as pastor, had declined. In 1808, Elisha Clap, a Congregational visitor, wrote:

I understand that his ministry. . . will soon become extinct.

<sup>66</sup> MHS, Belknap 79BC, draft of letter to London Society, Nov. 30, 1793. The Boston Society in 1794 paid Rev. Joseph Thaxter of Edgartown £45 for money he had spent on Indian schools. MHS, Belknap 80C.

<sup>67</sup> MHS Colls. v. 7. 1798. Johnson Reprint Corp. 1968. p. 9

Only a few aged Indians, who do not understand English, attend his meeting, as he preaches in the native language.

. . . Mr. Jeffers, a Baptist, the other preacher in the place, draws most of the Indians.<sup>68</sup>

Reverend Howwaswee and nine other Indians (calling themselves "the few remaining Indians of Gay Head,") complained about the Guardians in 1811, urging the General Court to appoint "some good and down right honest" replacements. The unrest at Gay Head, they wrote, was due to the "Negroes and Mulattoes [who] got in among us."<sup>69</sup>

Their petition brought an outcry from the Baptist Indians, calling Howwaswee an intemperate preacher who did not represent most of the population. They urged the Governor to appoint three members of the Mayhew family as Guardians. Lighthouse Keeper Ebenezer Skiff, the only white man living on Gay Head and a friend of the Indians, supported the Baptists.<sup>70</sup>

A few years earlier, in 1809, the Boston Society had turned the responsibility for the Indian schools on Martha's Vineyard and Mashpee over to Harvard, which had only meager funds for that purpose. It soon realized that it had been a mistake:

The situation of these Indians has attracted the particular attention of the Society. . . the funds of Harvard College were inadequate to procure for them such moral and religious instruction as their exigencies plainly required.

The Society wrote to Reverend Joseph Thaxter of Edgartown asking him to recommend a missionary. He proposed Frederick Baylies, who was teaching the Indians on Nantucket. Although not a minister, Thaxter wrote, he should be hired because a teacher was needed more than a preacher. The Boston Society hired Baylies who moved to Edgartown about 1810.<sup>71</sup>

Education was indeed the larger need. Concerned about

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in "Evidence for Proposed Finding against Federal Acknowledgement. . .," Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1985, p.22 (hereafter *PropFinding*)

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> His son, Frederick Junior, was the architect of several of Edgartown's churches.

the lack of schooling for the Indians of Chappaquiddick, a group of whites in Edgartown earlier had written to the Governor. Their complaint was the same one Indians had been making for more than 100 years:

. . . Mary Cook, Elizabeth Carter, Hannaretta Simpson and Charlotte Matteson, Coloured Women of the Island of Chappaquidick in Edgartown are about to apply. . . for aid and assistance to have the Gospel Preached among them. . . and to have a School for the education of their children. . . we are well acquainted with the Women — they Belong to the first families on the said Island. . . We consider that their Endeavor to have the Gospel Preached among them, and a School for the Education of their youth is a Laudable Pursuit and hope they may Succeed.<sup>72</sup>

Baylies, now on the Vineyard, echoed their plea. He proposed a plan to his new employers:

. . . the universal complaint is, "Our children are suffering for want of a school and we are not able to support one. Can you help Us?" Women schoolteachers, superintended by a man, would be productive of great good. . .

Reverend Thaxter reminded the Boston society that the Indians had released 800 acres at Gay Head to the whites "for the express purpose of obtaining instruction for themselves and their children." That had not happened. The Baylies plan was a good one, he wrote:

I have been acquainted with [the Indians] for near 40 years and am fully persuaded that schooling the children ought to be the first object: preaching to them, the second. Were the missionary intrusted with a small sum to employ a schoolmistress, it would be productive of a great good. . . Farm Neck and Christian Town are trifling objects compared with Gay head and Chabaquidick.<sup>73</sup>

Baylies was also responsible for the Indians at Nantucket, Narragansett and Dartmouth. He seemed to have no religious duties, limiting himself to education. At least, that was all he covered in his reports:

The Indians chose a committee of seven. . . and they agreed to pay the expense of the schools. . . [I] advanced them six dollars to commence a new school and promised them six

<sup>72</sup> DCHS, Box 4S, env. A.

<sup>73</sup> *Report of Select Committee of Society for Propagation of the Gospel . . .*, Cambridge, Mass., 1819.



more as soon as it should be wanted. . . Betsey Carter, a woman of colour, opened school at Chabaquiddick. . . over 20 scholars. . . Miss I. Luce opened school at the North Shore. . . 13 scholars. The schools are well supplied with books. . . from the Corporation [in London], the Society [in Boston] and the Bible Society. The Society is much indebted to Rev. Mr. Thaxter. . . It was by his advice that the cooperation of the Indians for the education of their own children was secured. . .

In 1826, Baylies reported that the Chapaquiddick school was held for 16 weeks and attended by 48 Indians and 9 whites. Among the Indians, 20 could write, 19 could read the Testament. At Christiantown, his school lasted 12 weeks, with 12 Indians and 35 whites attending. Eight Indians could write, 8 could read. At Gay Head, school was open 12 weeks and taught by two Indians, Mrs. Wamsley and Aaron Cooper. Mrs. Wamsley was paid by the Boston Society, Mr. Cooper by the Indians. Of the 37 Indians in the Gay Head school, 14 could write and 10 could read in the Testament.

A few years earlier, Baylies had asked Keeper Ebenezer Skiff of Gay Head Light to describe Indian life. Skiff had little faith in the Guardian system:

The place called Gay Head contains 2400 acres almost surrounded by water and is a suitable place for the Indians and people of colour to live at by themselves — Many artful plans have been contrived and many trials been made to get some part of it out of their hands, but they are now in possession of the whole except two acres ceded to the United States for the purpose of a Light House.<sup>74</sup>

I have been of counsel to the Gay Head people nearly 40 years during which I have endured bitter reproaches. In the year 1810 I obtained final Judgement at the Supreme Judicial Court. . . against a white man who sued for a valuable part of Gay Head. . . the best grassland of any of that size on Martha's Vineyard. . .

There are but few of the aboriginal here, the people are a mixed multitude of different colour. They are hospitable to strangers, kind to their own poor, which they support at great expense. They. . . hire out land. . . to raise money.

<sup>74</sup> It seems the 800 acres of leased land had been turned back to the Indians.

The sin which easily besets them is an intemperate use of ardent spirits which leads to other vices. . . They are as a people very sagacious and know what white men to put confidence in. . . [but] if they should be kept under Guardians I think their lands would soon be in the hands of white people and the Indians would become the Commonwealth's poor. . . [They] have little fuel, their fires are chiefly of Peat and small brush in winter and bushes and Cow dungs in summer.<sup>75</sup>

Reverend Thaxter also was asked by Baylies to report on the Indians. He knew little about Gay Head, his acquaintance was with Chappaquiddick. The aging minister disagreed with Skiff about the Guardians, who, he wrote, protected them from "Designing white men:"

. . . Mr. Baylies has a hard task. . . I believe he does good. To prevent Evil is to do good. They would be worse than they are was it not for his exertions. . . they are a mixed Brood. . . The natives, by mixture with the Blacks, have lost, I believe. . . They are a most improvident gang. They go to Nantucket and enter the Whaling Business and after a Voyage of Two or Three years often come home in Debt. In their absence, the Squaws scratch as well as they can and support themselves and children. . . Clams, Quahogs, Ells [eels], etc., afford them a subsistence and they are generally remarkably healthy. They are much given to Intemperance and Lewdness. . . They hold the Land in common and once in about 8 or 10 years a new Division for Improvement takes place. Perhaps some method might be adopted that might be advantageous. Let the Person who should clear a Swamp and bring it into meadow enjoy it for Life and even the next generation. . . Should they be made free men and have Power to alienate [sell] their lands they would soon become an insupportable Burden to the Publick. Christiantown and Farm Neck have and must suffer sorely in Consequence of this Practice. A few Designing white men have acquired Property and the Natives left to perish or live by begging. This is a hard way. . . I do fear that there are those who think it no Sin to cheat an Indian.<sup>76</sup>

By 1825 the Indians on Gay Head were holding "town meetings" and virtually running their town business, although still legally under guardianship. In this regard, Gay

<sup>75</sup> MHS, Misc. Bound, Feb. 3, 1823.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, March 1, 1823.

Head differed from Christiantown and Chappaquiddick.<sup>77</sup>

The struggle over land continued. In April 1826, six women and one man on Chappaquiddick presented a letter to Rev. Joseph Thaxter who "has ever been a frind and a father to the natives and people of colour on the Island." They described their situation as: "Neighbours against neighbours and childrend against parents or parents against childrend." Fencing was needed to end "that great evil. . . [our crops] being eat up by our neighbors cattle one half of the time every year." They had asked the Guardians to replace the partition fence between Indian and English lands, but "they declare that they have nothing to do with it." They asked Thaxter to urge the Guardians to make "a final division [of the land which] will be the only means of ending all confusion, as to our rights of land."<sup>78</sup>

A similar petition by "Samuel Peters and others, natives of Chappequiddic," in 1826 asked the state for "a permanent division of their lands, that guardians. . . be appointed, with power to settle all contentions, which may arise among themselves, without subjecting them to the expense of lawsuits; [and] that they may be empowered to erect a pound. . . to confine cattle that may trespass upon them."

The English were writing their own petitions. A group of them, living on Chappaquiddick and led by Cornelius Huxford, requested "a remedy against the further encroachments of the blacks on the Island of Chappequiddic, and that provision may be made for settling the disputes, relative to the division fence between said blacks and the white inhabitants and proprietors of said Island." Similarly at Christiantown, John Cottle, on behalf of the English, asked the state to compel the Indians "to build their half of a division fence."

The Guardian Act of 1828, passed as a result of these petitions, provided for the division of land among the Indian families, with a portion reserved "for the support of the poor"; further, it ordered a Guardian appointed; and that

<sup>77</sup> PropFinding, p. 24.

<sup>78</sup> Typescript copy, Letter, April 1826, signed by eight heads of families, DCHS archives, Box 141.1, env.22.

the Indians select Overseers, either from among themselves or from among "neighbouring white inhabitants."

The single Guardian was given dictatorial power. He could disburse funds, lease out Indian land, indenture Indians "for a term not exceeding three years," and even require owners of vessels to hold back a portion of wages earned by Indians for the support of their families.

Together with the Indian-chosen Overseers, the Guardian would select the police, levy taxes, run the schools, provide for the poor and, in an apparent effort to keep the Indians from escaping obligations by running away to sea, "to prohibit as far as they shall think proper, the intercourse between said Indians and people of colour, and persons belonging to any whaling or other ship, fishing boat, or any other water craft whatsoever, and for this purpose to. . . employ as many constables as they may deem necessary."

The law applied only to Chappaquiddick and Christiantown. However, when, "by a vote in town meeting," Gay Head accepted the act, it would apply there. Gay Head never did vote to accept, as the commissioners reported in 1849, twenty years later:

The [Gay Head] Indians, cherishing no very favorable recollections of the guardian system, have never accepted the Act. For about thirty years they have been without any guardian, and the division of their lands, and indeed the whole arrangement of their affairs, except of the school money, have been left to themselves.

Commissioner John Milton Earle, in his impressive report of 1861, made it clear that he felt their decision had been the right one:

It seems fortunate, in every point of view, that the Act of 1828 was not accepted by the tribe. That Act made provision for the division of the public lands, a measure which has proved disastrous to the. . . Marshpee tribe, and which would, unquestionably, have proved equally injurious, had it been carried out at Gay Head. . . The effect of it would. . . have been, probably, to concentrate in a few families, nearly all of this domain.

But the Indians of Chappaquiddick and Christiantown had no such option. The 1828 law was mandated for them.

Appointed to the post of Guardian was Leavitt Thaxter, Edgartown schoolmaster and son of the late Rev. Joseph Thaxter of the Congregational church. The act ordered the Guardian to have the Indian lands on Chappaquiddick and at Christiantown surveyed and divided among the Indian families. Up to now each family had simply used as much of the land as it needed, with no legal boundaries involved. Surveyor Jeremiah Pease and two other men began the division on April 16, 1828, as he wrote in his diary:

April 16th. NE, gail. Commenced business relative to the Indians & People of Colour at Chabaquiddic in company with J. [John] Hancock of Chilmark & Thomas Fish of Falmouth, esqs., being (with myself) appointed Commissioners to divide the Indian land at Chabaquidic & Christian Town.<sup>79</sup>

The three men spent six days dividing the Chappaquiddick Indian land among 14 families. Two lots of 15 and 79 acres were "set off in reserve for the support of the poor." One-half acre was set aside for a meeting house. Each family was given a share of the "so-called landing place," and of Tom's Neck. Those without peat on their land were given shares in a common peat bog. "The privilege of picking cranberries shall ever remain free for the Indians and People of Colour, but no one shall be debarred from making any improvements upon cranberry swamps within their respective territories which shall render them more beneficial to their interest. . ." There were, Jeremiah wrote, a total of 102 Indians and People of Colour living on Chappaquiddick, including nine orphans.<sup>80</sup>

For years, the Indians had been restricted to much less than half of Chappaquiddick, the land just south of Cape Poge Pond. This was the poorer land, as a 1860 report to the state stated:

In the division of the island between the Indians and the whites, the latter, as usual, obtained much the better portion. That belonging to the Indians is bleak and exposed,

<sup>79</sup> Jeremiah Pease Diary, DCHS. That same day Jeremiah recorded that the new Edgartown Methodist meeting house (today's Town Hall) was raised. Jeremiah was a devout Methodist.

<sup>80</sup> However, his list of individuals totals only 100.

the soil light, sandy, gravelly and barren, and without wood, either for fuel or fencing, yielding a precarious subsistence to the most untiring industry. Their fuel is peat procured from meadows on the territory. What fencing they have is of material procured from abroad, which is so expensive that little is used, and they are obliged to pasture their cattle on the tethering rope — a mode unknown to most of the inhabitants of the state.<sup>81</sup>

After Chappaquiddick, Jeremiah and his colleagues went to Christiantown on May 1, 1828. They worked there until May 10, dividing up the Indian land among its 13 families, setting aside four and one-half acres for the meeting house, "being the same land occupied for that purpose during the faithful labours of the Rev'd. Zacheriah Mayhew." They allocated 38 acres for the support of the poor. Also set aside for all were some woodlots and a communal spring.

Years later, in 1856, a dispute arose over whether heirs of the Christiantown Indians who had moved away had a right to cut wood. Jeremiah ruled that they had none; the wood was solely for the inhabitants, of which there were 49 in eight families of "Indians and People of Colour." At the end of September 1828, the final report, with its intricate division of family lots, was completed.<sup>82</sup>

In 1850, Jeremiah Pease made another division of the Indian land at Chappaquiddick. It seems to be very similar to the one he made earlier and it is not clear why it had to be done. It was ordered by the legislature, so there may have been some legal technicality involved. The Indian population had decreased in the ensuing 12 years, now only 13 families of 76 persons lived there.

The largest tract of Indian land on the Island, Gay Head, had not been divided, all land still being held in common. The legislative committee had, the year before, praised Gay Head's "system of self-government. . . that has so many advantages. . . [it ought] to be retained."

Gay Head had become what Samuel Sewall, more than a century earlier, had hoped it would, a separate, self-

<sup>81</sup> Typescript copy, DCHS archives, Box 17b, env.14a.

<sup>82</sup> Jeremiah Pease survey notebook, DCHS archives.



contained "reservation." Its remoteness helped. Getting there was not easy, as a German visitor, who stayed for 19 days in the "house of [an] old Indian," wrote in 1844. It was not only remote, it was "desolate:"

. . . the first 11 miles. . . can be traveled without risk by carriage and I rode the stretch with a man who, twice a week, carries the mail [to Chilmark]. . . The part of the Island which I now had to traverse on foot was very barren. . . it is therefore no wonder that our white fellow citizens left this desolate region as the last refuge to the poor Indians. . . After a very arduous march I arrived at the house of the old Indian who, I had been told, would, for pay, give lodging to strangers. . . [I was provided] a very decent room in which a large genuine American double bed played the leading role. It was quite well furnished in the customary manner, even to papered walls, and, in the absence of a rug, the floor was painted with a brown oil paint. I mention this only to show the degree of civilization the local Indians have reached. . . I ate and drank better than I could have expected to.

On Sunday, the visitor, Dr. Albert C. Koch, an amateur paleontologist, attended Baptist services . . .

in a large schoolhouse. on one of the most imposing elevations of Gay Head. . . [the preacher] is blind, can neither write nor read. He is a man of approximately 45 years, of more than medium height, and, like all local Indians, of very dark color; his naturally black straight Indian hair is beginning to be mixed with gray, his face has something engaging and friendly which I cannot remember having seen on a blind man. . . the local inhabitants are for the most part Baptists.

A young Indian was to be baptized in the ocean after the service and "all were assembled, singing" on the flat beach. Koch described the ceremony in detail.<sup>83</sup>

Leavitt Thaxter of Edgartown, who was a Commissioner of the Indians, wrote of the Gay Head preacher, Rev. Joseph Amos:

. . . being blind, he is not so useful, as he cannot be so active,

<sup>83</sup> Albert C. Koch, *Journey through a Part of the United States of North America in the Years 1844-1846*, Ernst A. Stadler, editor, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, Ill., 1972, pp.19ff. Thomas Cooper was probably his host and Rev. Joseph Amos from Mashpee, the minister. Much of Koch's fascinating account of his 19 days on Gay Head was published in the *Intelligencer*, November 1990.

as Mr. Edwards was. Much good, however, has been done; and the character and condition of the Indians are in every way much improved.

During these years, the only wagon road to Gay Head went along the barrier beach between Stonewall Pond and the ocean. At very low tide, there were three fords where crossings could be made: Hariph's Creek, Chalker's Creek and Pease's Point on Menemsha Creek.<sup>84</sup> In 1847, the state agreed to build a road from Chilmark to Gay Head, ordering that a bridge be built across "a certain tide water called Harry's Creek. . . between the town of Chilmark and the promontory of Gay Head: Provided that said bridge. . . permits boats, such as are now used by the inhabitants. . . to pass and repass with their masts down."<sup>85</sup> This road and bridge were to become especially useful when, a few years later, a new lighthouse was being built at Gay Head.

The Baptists, their membership growing, were still without a sanctuary, holding services in the school house, as Koch had mentioned. Deacon Simon Johnson went to Boston in 1849 to ask the General Court for funds to build a church. In response to Johnson's plea, the state appropriated \$600 for "a decent and suitable house in which [the Indians at Gay Head] can meet and worship God." In 1851, the Boston Society for Propagating the Gospel began making an annual appropriation of \$200, which was dispensed by Leavitt Thaxter. In 1856, after the death of the blind Reverend Amos, the Society donated \$400 for a parsonage, hoping to attract a year-round minister. The church building, paid for by the state, is still in use although it has been moved to a different site.<sup>86</sup>

The dedication of the new church was important enough for the *Vineyard Gazette* to send a reporter:

The new and neatly finished Meeting house is situated on an eminence that quite overlooks the Peninsula. . . The interior

<sup>84</sup> Hariph's Creek was probably named for Hariph Mayhew (1791-1880); Chalker's was named for an Indian, Pechalker; Pease's Point was named for John L. Pease who owned it in the mid-1800s.

<sup>85</sup> As late as 1847, the state seems to have thought Gay Head went as far east as Hariph's Creek.

<sup>86</sup> The Gay Head Baptist church dates back to 1694, making it the first Baptist church on the Island.

. . is finished in good taste and by the liberality of an [anonymous] individual is handsomely furnished. As a token of his regard, the Governor of Massachusetts presented the church with an elegantly bound Bible. . . the audience [was] large. There were many visitors from Chilmark, Christian Town and Tisbury. . . the hospitality of the people was truly generous — a People who are now a mere remnant of the once powerful tribe of the Aborigines of America. . . now reduced to a small number of 230. They are an interesting people, only wanting the fostering hand of science and letters to make them quite equal to their white brethren.

A few years later, in 1856, the church, according to a reporter from the *Namasket Gazette*, had 50 members. Preaching was provided "for the most part. . . by a fund at Harvard College." The Indian school, he wrote, had between 40 and 50 pupils and "would compare favorably with the schools in this town [Namasket]."

The reporter described the chief sources of income for Gay Headers:

This part of the island seems for the most part to be a bed of valuable white and red clay. It is worth \$3.50 per ton on the spot and is carried off in cart loads to Providence, Taunton and other places. Sometimes in calm weather, large ships anchor near the cliffs and load; at such times they all turn out, the women as well as the men; the men cut out the clay in lumps; while the women stand in rows down to the vessel and pass it along in their hands after the manner of passing pails of water sometimes at fires; they afterward divide the money, one man having as much as two women. As another source of profit to them, I will mention their cranberries, of which some years they pick nearly 300 bushels.<sup>87</sup>

Two events, both happening elsewhere, occurred at this time and changed the character of Gay Head more than Samuel Sewall and the mission Society could have ever imagined. The first was the growth of the Campground at today's Oak Bluffs, bringing to the Vineyard an increasing number of visitors each August. Soon, they were numbered in the tens of thousands and entrepreneurs were offering

tours to Gay Head to view the magnificence of the Cliffs. Excursion steamers carried hundreds from Oak Bluffs to a dock on the north side of Gay Head during camp-meeting week. The Indians began providing oxcart service to the top of the Cliffs. Inevitably, shops and eateries opened and the once remote and lonely place took on an entirely new character with a new and unexpected source of income.

The second event was the construction in 1856 of a state-of-the-art lighthouse with a wondrous Fresnel lens of the First Order, brought over from France. It, like the beautiful clay strata, became a tourist attraction. With the new road, it was no longer such an arduous journey. Suddenly, Gay Head and its Indians had become a part of the Island.<sup>88</sup>

As noted, the state government seemed to consider Hariph's Creek to be the boundary line between Gay Head Neck and Chilmark. That was a reasonable assumption as it was the water boundary and, in fact, Sachem Mattack had declared it to be the boundary. However, the Mayhews, who had bought land west of the creek on Nashaquitsa, said their property was not part of Gay Head. The Indians disputed this and "How-was-wee and others, Overseers of the Gay Head Indians," petitioned the Governor of Massachusetts in 1855 to establish the boundary. Governor Henry J. Gardner named three men to supervise the survey: John Vinson of Edgartown, Asa R. Nye of New Bedford and J. Whelden Holmes of Tisbury.

The directive given to the trio, however, was not to determine where Gay Head Neck began, but to establish the line "between the lands of the said Indians and. . . the white inhabitants of Chilmark." Hired to make the survey once again was Jeremiah Pease. It did not take him long, as his diary tells us:

December 17, 1855. SSW. Went to Gay Head with the Commissioners to run the lines between the White Inhabit. and Indians.

December 18, 1855. W, cool. Engaged at G. Head. Ret'd. at nt.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> *Vineyard Gazette*, Nov. 28, 1856, reprinted from *Namasket Gazette*, Middleboro, Mass.

<sup>88</sup> For a detailed account of the famous lighthouse see *Intelligencer*, May 1982.

<sup>89</sup> *Intelligencer*, Aug. 1986, p. 39.

On those cold December days, with a west wind nipping his fingers, he spent only about eight hours surveying the line. His order was not to settle the bigger question of where Gay Head Neck began, but only to determine where the Mayhew land ended. That was several miles west of Hariph's Creek. Thus, Squibnocket and Nashaquitsa, both purchased by Mayhews in the 1700s, were not on Gay Head Neck, but in Chilmark. Jeremiah based the line on the old stone wall at the western end of Benjamin Mayhew's farm. The wall ran from Squibnocket Pond to Menemsha Pond, near today's Herring Creek. It may be that the wall was the "fence" the Indians had built in 1714, pleasing Samuel Sewall so.

The commissioners reported that the stone wall had existed for many years and "by tacit agreement, has long been regarded as the true boundary line between the land of the whites and that of the Indians." Of course that was true. But it did not answer the question of where Gay Head Neck, as purchased by Lord Dongan in 1685, began. That deed, signed by young Joseph Mittark, clearly placed all Squibnocket Pond on Gay Head Neck. It stated that the boundary ran from Menemsha Pond to Squibnocket Pond and then "alongst the east side of that [fresh-water pond], over the beach, unto the sea." Jeremiah's boundary zig-zagged across Squibnocket Pond, placing all but a small portion of its shoreline in Chilmark. Had he followed the original deed, all of Squibnocket, including all the pond, would be in Gay Head.

After following the old stone wall to Menemsha Pond, the rest of the line, running north, is entirely across water, Menemsha Pond, then along the channel of Menemsha Creek to the Sound. This last portion, Jeremiah stated, was not fixed, "the said channel being somewhat subject to change."

The Commissioners concluded the report with an environmental comment:

Owing to too close Feeding, and other causes, the sands of the beach, no longer covered, as formerly, with an

abundant growth of beach-grass, become the sport of the breeze, and are every year extending inland, covering acre after acre of meadow and tillage land. . . [which] now lie wholly waste and useless. It is painful to behold this Sahara-like desolation. . .<sup>90</sup>

Deep Bottom, which had been Indian land for many years, had been ignored by the government. Then in 1855, Jemima Easton, an Indian living there, petitioned the Massachusetts legislature to divide the land among its inhabitants. An act was passed authorizing it and the work was completed in 1856, dividing the land among six families, four of them headed by women.<sup>91</sup>

This left Gay Head as the only Indian land on the Island still owned in common. Some other Indian lands in the state still had not been divided, as well. The legislature decided that the matter could no longer be ignored. An act was passed in 1859, calling for a census of all Indians, with a report on their life styles, racial purity, marital status and economic conditions. Its purpose was to determine whether or not the Indians "can. . . be placed. . . on the same legal footing as the other inhabitants of the Commonwealth."

John Milton Earle was named to conduct the study and in 1861 he submitted his report. It is a masterful work, far too detailed to be printed here, even in brief. While it discusses all Indians in the state, it goes into considerable detail about Gay Head, Chappaquiddick and Christiantown, the inhabitants of which "reservations . . . are recognized as wards of the state." He recommended that those Indians "be placed at once on the same legal footing as the other inhabitants of the Commonwealth. . . [and] that any member. . . who wishes to become a citizen may do so by filing a certificate to that effect with the clerk of the town where he resides and paying a poll tax."<sup>92</sup>

Earle felt that major changes were not needed at Gay

<sup>90</sup> Report. . . to Establish the Boundary Line Between Gay Head and the Town of Chilmark, Resolves of March 9, 1855, Massachusetts legislature, 1856, p.9 (the Gardner Report, so-called). The title is misleading. The resolve ordered the line be drawn "between the lands of the said Indians and. . . the white inhabitants of Chilmark."

<sup>91</sup> Jeremiah Pease survey notebook, DCHS archives.

<sup>92</sup> Earle Report. . . concerning the Indians of the Commonwealth. March 1861.



Head except to give the Indians more control over their affairs. The school, being run by a school committee "without legal authority," has

. . . no power to punish or exclude contumacious or rebellious scholars, and thus parents disposed to make difficulty have the opportunity, if they choose to take advantage of it, greatly to mar the usefulness of the school, if not even to break it up. For this evil an adequate remedy should be applied.

In conclusion, he argued for justice for all Indians:

. . . involved [is] the welfare of nearly a thousand of the unfortunate children of the State, and their posterity — unfortunate, because, for no fault of theirs, they have been despoiled of their property, robbed of their civil rights, shorn of their manhood, and made the unoffending and unresisting victims of a most cruel social proscription. . . all they ask. . . is justice, so long delayed, — simple, naked justice. . . with anything short of it we should never rest satisfied.

The legislature designated Gay Head as a District in 1862, which was, some thought, "a way station between plantation status and incorporation as a town, a transition point for Indians between wardship and citizenship."<sup>93</sup> Shortly afterwards, Charles Marston, treasurer of the Mashpee Indians, was named to divide the land on Gay Head among its inhabitants. However, he died with the work unfinished. Richard L. Pease of Edgartown was named as his replacement and in 1866, he and his cousin, Joseph T. Pease, son of Jeremiah, finished the work. This division of land threatened the historical structure of the community, which had always been based on communal land. Unlike Chappaquiddick, the Gay Head Indians had not asked for this and were not eager for it to take place, especially as it seemed to be the first step toward incorporating it as a town.

They petitioned the General Court, opposing future incorporation because it would mean a loss of financial support from the state. They were too poor to be incorporated and yet they did not want to be part of

<sup>93</sup> *PropFinding*, p.27.

the town of Chilmark.<sup>94</sup>

In 1869, despite the local objections, the Massachusetts legislature designated the inhabitants full citizens of the state and the following year incorporated Gay Head as a town, bringing about another report. Written by Richard L. Pease in 1871, it contains the first census of Gay Head, giving birthplaces of parents, occupations of residents, livestock owned and other details.<sup>95</sup>

With the report was a map, dividing the land among the families. The boundary with Chilmark is the one Jeremiah Pease drew in 1856. He had died in 1857. John H. Mullen was the surveyor on this project, working from January 1871 until June 1874 and earning \$2560.50. The total cost of the report was \$16,542, which was \$1500 more than the total valuation (\$15,010) of all real estate and personal property in the new town. More than half of the cost of the report, \$9400, was paid to members of the Pease family.

This must have raised some questions because a later report contains a section headed: "Payments to the Pease Family." Listed were: Richard L. Pease, Commissioner, \$5978; Joseph T. Pease, Commissioner, \$2956; Joseph T. Pease Jr., laborer and carriage driver, \$55; Horatio N. T. Pease, laborer, \$144; John Pease, transportation, \$75; James C. Pease, horse and carriage, \$197.

Richard L. Pease, in his introduction, explained that it was difficult to determine tribal membership:

It is not an easy matter to enumerate all who ought to be numbered as Gay Head Indians, and none but those; for the rule has been, "once a proprietor, always a proprietor." Those who have left, either permanently or temporarily, claim still to belong to the tribe. . . So this census, although prepared with much care, can only be considered as approximately correct.

He praised Gov. William Claflin, a summer resident of Cottage City, and quoted the Governor's address to the General Court:

It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the reasons why this

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28.

<sup>95</sup> *Report on Gay Head*, Wright & Potter, Boston, 1871. Richard L. Pease was an experienced census taker, having done the Federal Census of 1850 for the town of Chilmark.

political anomaly should so long have existed. . . It should exist no longer. These persons are not Indians in any sense of the word. . . A majority have more of less of the marked characteristics of the aboriginal race, but there are many without a drop of Indian blood in their veins. . . the Indians of this Commonwealth are as well fitted to exercise all the functions of citizenship as any other of our citizens. . . the sooner they are merged in the general community, with all the rights and privileges, and with all the duties and liabilities of citizens, the better it will be for them.

Pease concluded the report with a wish:

Gay Head is now become a town, and its future history will, it is hoped, vindicate the wisdom of the course which has been pursued in relation to its inhabitants.<sup>96</sup>

There were, no doubt, some on Gay Head who still believed what Rev. Joseph Thaxter had written in 1823:

I do fear that there are those who think it no Sin to cheat an Indian.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

#### The End of the Series

#### CORRECTION

In Part III of this series (August 1991), on page 38, it states that when Rev. John Cotton Jr., came to the Vineyard in 1664 as minister, it moved him out of Boston, ridding his famous father, Reverend John Cotton, of embarrassment caused by the son's indiscretions. The senior Cotton had died in 1652 and, thus, was removed from any earthly embarrassment. The editor is grateful to David McGrath of Washington, D.C., a descendant of the Cottons, for pointing out this error.

#### MEMBERSHIP DUES

Individual	\$25.
Family	\$40.
Sustaining	\$75.
Patron	\$150.
Business and Corporate Patrons	\$250.
Life membership (Individual)	\$1000.

Members receive the *Intelligencer* four times a year.

Vol.34, No.3

©1993 D.C.H.S. February 1993

Editor: Arthur R. Railton

Editor Emeritus: Gale Huntington

*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

# Five Generations of Missionary Mayhews

(And other Mayhews mentioned in this series)

