

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



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

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The Last of the Vineyard's Customs Collectors

Cornelius B. Marchant 1870-1886
Sirson Pease Coffin 1886-1890
Charles H. Marchant 1890-1895
Capt. Abraham Osborn 1895-1899
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Howes Norris Jr., Deputy, 1913-1937

by FLORENCE KERN

The Edgartown Engine Company And the Fires It Fought

1836 — 1906

(Part Two)

by STEVE VANCOUR

The Custom House Flag

by ANNIE M. VINCENT
(1935)

Book Review: *The Founders of America*

Documents: Henry Baylies' Journal

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The Edgartown Engine Company was renamed the Edgartown Fire Department in 1906 when the Water Company installed hydrants, making pumpers, or "engines" as they were called, less important. Here, Main Street is being dug up for the new water mains in 1906.

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Editor Emeritus: Gale Huntington

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

The Society operates The Vineyard Museum on its grounds at School and Cooke Street, Edgartown. The Museum includes the Thomas Cooke House, circa 1765, a house museum of Island history, open from mid-June to mid-September. Also on the grounds are the Francis Foster Gallery, the Capt. Francis Pease House and the Gale Huntington Library of History, open all year, as are the Gay Head Light exhibit with its 1854 Fresnel lens and the Carriage Shed containing boats, wagons, an 1854 Button hand-pumper fire engine and many other examples of Vineyard memorabilia, including the gravestones of Nancy Luce's favorite hens, circa 1860.

All buildings are open free to members. Non-members are charged a nominal entrance fee. Research assistance is provided in the Huntington Library.

You are invited to join the Society. You will receive this journal four times a year with your membership.



The Last of the Vineyard's Customs Collectors

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Howes Norris Jr., Deputy, 1913-1937

by FLORENCE KERN

WHEN President Ulysses S. Grant nominated Cornelius B. Marchant to be Collector of Customs for the District of Edgartown in January 1870, the old port was no longer bustling. The Civil War had destroyed many New England whaling vessels and the discovery of petroleum in Pennsylvania had reduced the market for whale oil. However, a few coastal vessels and whalers were still registered in Edgartown, although whaling voyages were fewer and lasted longer, sometimes more than four years as whalers went to the North Pacific to find their catch.

There were months when the office collected barely enough revenue from duties and fees to pay the deputy collectors, weighers, gaugers and inspectors, not to mention the collector's salary. The Custom House itself was a minor expense, being only a second-floor office on the northeast corner of Main and Water Streets. The rent was \$12.50 a month.¹

The *Gazette* published the news of the presidential nomination of Marchant on January 21. It apparently was

¹ The building, still little changed, has always had stores on its first floor.

FLORENCE KERN, who lives in Bethesda, Maryland, and Chappaquiddick, is a dedicated researcher of maritime history, specializing in the Revenue Service and the Coast Guard. This is the eighth and final article of her U. S. Customs series, which has added greatly to our knowledge of Vineyard history during the glory days of tall ships. We are grateful for her work in this much ignored field.

expected, as one week earlier the paper had reported that:

At a meeting of the owners of the ship *Europa*, of this port, held on the 11th instant, Hon. S. Osborn, Jr., was unanimously elected Agent, C. B. Marchant, Esq., having resigned.²

Federal law prohibited Collectors from having any interest in a commercial vessel, so it seems that Cornelius was clearing the way for his nomination, which came the following week:

President Grant has nominated Cornelius B. Marchant as Collector for the port of Edgartown.

Mr. Marchant is one of our best citizens, and, we think, the people of the whole County, generally, will be pleased with this appointment.

Hon. John Vincent, the retiring Collector, has held the office eight years, and has ably and efficiently discharged the duties thereof to the satisfaction of all concerned. Undoubtedly, his successor will exhibit an equally good record.³

Three weeks later, the nomination was confirmed and was duly reported, along with additional good news for Marchant:

Cornelius B. Marchant, Esq., has been confirmed as Collector of Customs at this port.

Always in luck, Mr. Marchant, has just received a commission from Gov. Claflin as a Justice of the Peace for Dukes County.⁴

Cornelius B. Marchant was born in Edgartown on November 14, 1815, the 10th of 12 children born to Master Mariner George Marchant and his wife, Abigail (Naby) Butler. The Marchant family were early settlers in Edgartown, having arrived from England about 1690 by way of Barbados and New England. They became influential members of the community. A year older than Cornelius, brother Edgar founded (and edited) *The Vineyard Gazette* in 1847. Another older brother, Capt. George R. Marchant

² *Vineyard Gazette*, Jan. 14, 1870.

³ *Gazette*, January 21, 1870. Vinson and Vincent were interchangeable spellings. A month later, the paper spelled it Vinson, as it was on his commission.

⁴ *Gazette*, Feb. 11, 1870. Governor Claflin owned a cottage in Oak Bluffs, where he vacationed.



Courtesy U. S. Customs Archives.

The Customs flag, which flew over the Edgartown Custom House, had 16 stripes, one for each of the states in 1799, when it was designed.

served as Keeper of Cape Poge Light in the 1860s. Among their ancestors were several named "Cornelius," one who lost the extremities of his feet from exposure when shipwrecked off Plymouth on the privateer *General Arnold* in the American Revolution.⁵

B for Butler or for Beetle?

The new collector's middle name is somewhat uncertain. Catherine M. Mayhew, Society genealogist, knows it only as "Beetle," while the 19th century genealogist, Harriet Marshall Pease, lists it as "Beetle/Butler."⁶

Whatever his middle name, Cornelius was a staunch Republican, a prerequisite for the job with Republican Grant in the White House. Marchant had for some time been secretary of the Edgartown Republican committee. Listed

⁵ At least ten of the crew were Vineyarders. All but Marchant died from exposure. See Charles E. Banks, *History of Martha's Vineyard*, DCHS, 1966, v.1, pp.409-410, for an account of the wreck; also see v.2, "Annals of Edgartown," pp.77-79, for the Marchant family history; and v.3, for genealogical data, p. 290ff.

⁶ Historian Banks lists it as Beetle, as does *Edgartown Town Records*, 1901, which cites the Congregational Church record as its source. That church record, kept by Rev. Joseph Thaxter, provides a clue as to the mixup. Thaxter's handwriting is such that "Butler" is easily read as "Beetle." However, careful study shows it to be "Butler," the more likely name, as his mother was a Butler.

in the 1850 Census as a Mariner, we can find no record of him as a whaling master. There was a Cornelius M. Marchant who did go awhaling, but no Cornelius B. When our Cornelius was appointed Collector, he was described as a "retired business man," no mention being made of any seafaring.

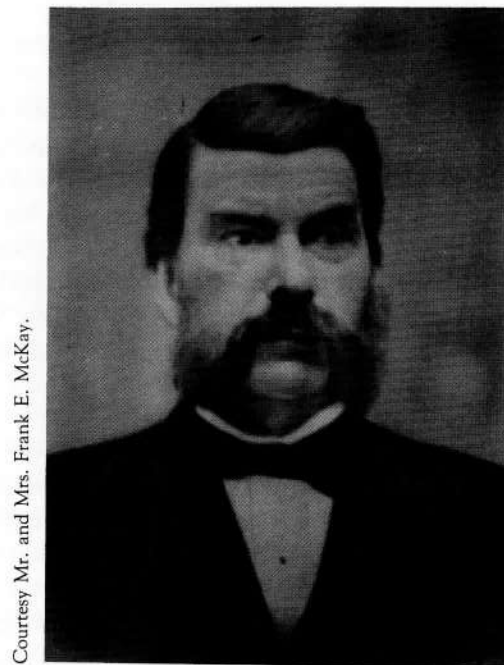
The collector's post was not his first government position. He had served with the Massachusetts Division of Internal Revenue, First District, in 1867. Locally, he was a Selectman for many years.

Collector Marchant began his duties on March 1 and immediately reappointed Jeremiah Pease Jr., as Deputy Collector, a position he had held for some years, as had his father before him. The *Gazette* described Jeremiah as "A good man and one of the most efficient officers in the Custom House service." For well over 50 years, the two Jeremiah Peases served as Customs officers on the harbor that became known as first class the world around.

Two weeks later, Shubael H. Norton of Edgartown was appointed Inspector of Customs with his office at Eastville on Holmes Hole harbor, where most of the shipping activity now took place. Howes Norris, the Associated Press correspondent at Holmes Hole, reported that for the year ending March 22, 1870, there were 7159 vessels arriving at Holmes Hole, 410 of them being of foreign registration (mostly British). Most of the total were coastal schooners, 6350, but there were also 52 steamers and 14 whalers.

The Keeper of Gay Head Light, Horatio N. Pease, grandson of Jeremiah Senior, reported that during the first three months of 1870, 2218 vessels had passed his station. So, despite the dropoff in whaling, Vineyard Sound continued to be a busy waterway, requiring close attention by Customs officers.

Inspector Norton at Holmes Hole was busy during his first few weeks on the job. Collector Marchant announced the seizure in April of eight bags and one barrel of sugar, two barrels of molasses, two demijohns of West India Rum, one of Bay Rum, one keg of Preserved Tamarinds, four bottles



Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. McKay.

Jeremiah Pease Jr., (1822-1890)
Deputy Collector for 30 years.

of Brandy, 200 cigars and one U.S. Army blanket.

Two public auctions were held on Water Street outside the Custom House to dispose of the illegal imports. The *Gazette* editor, Charles Macreading Vincent, who enjoyed puns, couldn't let either occasion pass without comment:

The first open sale of liquor in Edgartown for some time past, was made at the Custom House on Monday last. It was some of old "Seizer's" brandy. (*Gazette*, June 17, 1870.)

After the second auction, he wrote lightheartedly:

The sale of sugar, molasses and cigars at the Custom House, Monday, was a sweet success. (*Gazette*, July 22, 1870.)

Some of the money raised by these auctions augmented the Collector's salary, as did fines and fees collected for issuing documents. However, funds raised by selling smuggled goods had to be shared with informants, mainly officers of the United States Revenue Cutters on duty in Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds. During these years,

Customs worked closely with the Revenue Marine Service (later called the Coast Guard) in enforcing the law out to the three-mile limit.

The amounts paid at the auctions were carefully noted in huge leather ledgers now in the DCHS archives. The molasses brought \$59, of which Marchant paid informers \$23.18, forwarded \$11.58 to Washington and kept the remainder, \$21.24, for himself (perhaps sharing it with his Deputy Collector at Holmes Hole). The rum, brandy and army blanket were auctioned off for \$64, of which \$41.80 went to Washington, the other \$22.20 was his. He also received another \$28.89 as his share of the sale of cigars, sugar and more molasses.

The Changing Vineyard

Although the whaling industry was in decline during these years, the 1870s and 1880s were prosperous decades for Edgartown. Fortunes that had been accumulated in whaling were being invested in hotels, homes and businesses. Even a narrow-gauge railroad was built, connecting the shire town with the Island's tourist port of entry, Cottage City. The Sea View House, at the Cottage City terminus of the railroad, had opened its doors in 1872 with a celebration that brought many important men to the Island, including the influential Customs Collector from the port of Boston.⁷

The New York Yacht Club made its first appearance on the waters during its annual cruise in August 1870, sailing for the first time as far east as Edgartown.⁸ Later, the fleet began stopping in Vineyard Haven on its way to Boston and other points to the east. In 1891 it discontinued sailing around Cape Cod and built its own "clubhouse," Station Number Seven at Eastville, which became a regular stopover on its annual cruises.

While Collector Marchant and his assistants struggled with the spelling of "yacht," they found that "yatches" need not be registered or enrolled and were not required to

⁷ Judge Thomas Russell was the Boston Collector who spoke. Another speaker was Joseph T. Pease, eldest son of Jeremiah Senior. Collector Russell ended his speech with: "May Pease be with you always."

⁸ John Parkinson Jr., *The History of the New York Yacht Club*, 1975, v. 1, p.65.

"enter" and "clear" with Customs at each port. In a few years, there were more pleasure craft than working vessels each summer in Edgartown. For better or worse, Great Harbour had started its transformation into a summer resort.

Although Customs revenues continued to decline, Collector Marchant's duties remained the same as those of his predecessors. Supervision of the collection of duties was his major responsibility, but he also was charged with the supervision of navigational aids, including lighthouses and channel buoys. He was required to assess the cargoes of incoming vessels, prevent fraud and smuggling, register, enroll and license vessels in the district, control carriers, persons and articles entering and departing the United States and, his prime responsibility, to collect duty on imported goods unloaded on the Vineyard. Since most cargoes from abroad were not unloaded until they reached the mainland, revenues in this category were slim. Nonetheless, although they didn't pay duty, all vessels remaining in a port more than 48 hours were required to register at the Customhouse and receive clearance papers.

Collector Marchant held the office for 16 years, serving under four Republican Presidents: Grant, Hayes, Garfield and Arthur. Despite challenges by Tisbury, Edgartown held its status as county seat and as headquarters of the Customs District, which included all the waters around the Vineyard, the Elizabeth Islands and No Man's Land. Tarpaulin Cove on Naushon Island, like Holmes Hole, was a sub-port with its own deputy collector, serving under Marchant.

The year after Marchant took office, Tisbury, which had been incorporated in 1671, was divided into two towns, West Tisbury (the original town) and Tisbury (Holmes Hole). During that same period, the citizens of Holmes Hole campaigned to change its name to something more inspiring than "Hole." There was much public discussion, but the U.S. Postoffice finally made the decision when it named the postoffice, Vineyard Haven.

That harbor, far busier than Edgartown, had its own customhouse and deputy collector, as we have noted. The

office was located near the site of today's public library. Among the deputy collectors who served there through the years were Henry Pease Worth, Capt. Henry W. Beetle, Lorenzo F. Luce and Howes Norris Jr., all but the last-named reporting to the Edgartown collector.

By 1874, Vineyard Haven was recording five times as many ship arrivals and departures as Edgartown. In October of that year, for example, 338 vessels were listed, compared to only 64 in Edgartown. Of those entering Vineyard Haven, 320 were American coastal vessels and 18 were of foreign registry. Only one of those entering Edgartown was foreign, the brig *Jacinto*, hauling sugar from Surinam to Boston.

Activity at the Edgartown Custom House on Four Corners fell off drastically during the latter years of Marchant's term. In the 1880s, he was registering and enrolling only a few vessels a year. Among them: the 66-foot schooner *Fleetwood*, registered by Richard Flanders of Tisbury; an 82-foot schooner registered by Hiram Daggett of Edgartown; and a 203-ton square-stern schooner registered to merchant Edward W. Chadwick and shareholders Pease, Fisher, Mayhew and Vincent.

With such reduced activity on the waterfront, it must have been a heyday in December 1877 when Edgartown businessman Samuel Osborn Jr., fitted out the bark *Perry* for a trading cruise to the South Atlantic and India. Shortly before sailing, the crew took on board 13 casks of tobacco. (Was it locally grown? The record doesn't show, but Chappaquiddick was once known for its tobacco fields.)

Although these were lean years at Edgartown, it was quite the reverse for such ports as Boston, New York, Providence and New Bedford, where collectors had flourished under the Spoils System since the days of Pres. Andrew Jackson. In the highly political atmosphere of the era, some big-city collectors had thrived on flagrant fraud until 1869 when minor reform began with the establishment of a separate board of appraisers, consisting of members of each political party. In 1883, collectors lost more of their clout with the passage of the Pendleton Civil Service Act, but, even so,



Sirson Pease Coffin house on Winter Street. This is a modern picture; the women are wearing vintage dresses for the photographer.

appointments continued to be political. When Democrat Grover Cleveland became president in 1886 (for his first term), Collector Marchant lost his job. The position was given to Edgartown Democrat, Sirson Pease Coffin.

Collector Sirson Pease Coffin

The new collector, Sirson Pease Coffin, about the same age as Marchant, was described as "one of the town's most influential citizens." In his younger days, he had served as master of the Light Vessel *Nantucket*, but most of his career had been on land. He was a carpenter and lumber dealer in Edgartown and with those skills he had served as superintendent of grounds for the camp meeting, being closely identified with it all his life. He was promoted to Agent in 1855 and when the first postoffice was formed on the campground, named Vineyard Grove, he was appointed postmaster. Earlier, he served on the Massachusetts General Court from 1848 to 1851. No newcomer to Customs, he had been deputy under Collector Ira Darrow from 1855 to 1861, the most recent Democrat in the White House.⁹

⁹ Andrew Johnson, who became president after Lincoln's assassination, was a Democrat, but had been nominated for vice president with Lincoln by the Republicans on the National Union ticket.

A Custom House ledger given to the Society by Mrs. George H. Reid provides financial details from 1886 to 1889. It was not a profitable period. In the last quarter of 1886, for example, the office took in \$171.09, while dispersing \$950.05.

The next quarter, the first of 1887, showed more income, with \$507.99 collected, but the \$807.61 in expenses still caused a substantial deficit. The Edgartown office clearly was costing the U. S. Treasury money.

Its major expense was payroll. Yet, Collector Coffin was not well paid, at least as shown in the ledger; his pay apparently depended mostly on fees collected. In the first 1887 quarter, Coffin received \$72.81 as salary and commissions, while Deputy Collector Jeremiah Pease was paid \$273.75; the next highest pay went to Henry W. Beetle, deputy collector at Vineyard Haven, with \$193.60 for the three months; even the Tarpaulin Cove inspector, David S. Beetle, got more than Coffin, \$96. Other expenses included \$12.50 for quarterly rent of the Custom House in Edgartown (to Samuel Osborn Jr., later to Walter Osborn) and \$5. rent for the "rooms at Vineyard Haven," paid to Benjamin C. Cromwell.

Quarterly, the Boston office deposited funds in a New Bedford bank which the office drew upon. The deficits during these years ran between \$300 and \$800 each quarter.

Included as income was \$1 a day for care at the Marine Hospital of a foreign sailor, paid by his vessel and was given to the doctor; \$8.25 from the sale of three old Revenue Service boats; \$13.50 which belonged to a deceased seaman, and was unclaimed; plus \$3. from the sale of his brass watch and chain. In the four years, only two fines were levied, both on April 12, 1889. Each was for \$50, but \$40 of one was refunded by the Secretary of the Treasury.

Another Marchant Is Named Collector

Sirson Coffin's term of office lasted only four years. When the Republican Benjamin Harrison was elected President in 1888 (with fewer popular votes but more electoral votes than Grover Cleveland), politics dictated a change in the

Edgartown Custom House. It took President Harrison more than a year to get around to the Edgartown Custom Office, but on June 25, 1890, he appointed 33-year-old Charles Henry Marchant, a distant relative of Cornelius Marchant.¹⁰

Charles H. Marchant was born in Edgartown on March 22, 1857, but had moved to Middleboro as a youth, growing up there on a farm owned by his father, retired whaling master, Capt. Charles Marchant. It is an oft-repeated story that Captain Marchant spent only nine months of his first nine years of marriage at home and that son Charles was three years old before his father saw him.¹¹

Educated at Pierce Academy in Middleboro, Massachusetts, a school popular with Vineyarders, young Marchant had no interest in either whaling or farming. Instead, he went into printing and is said to have set his first stick of type for the *Middleboro Gazette* at the age of fourteen, while still in school. When he left school at 15, he signed on as a printer's devil (apprentice), learning the craft that he followed the rest of his life, working on various newspapers, including *The Vineyard Gazette* under Editor Samuel Keniston. At the time, he, along with his brother, wanted to buy the *Gazette*, but Keniston turned down their offer. He soon after moved to Minneapolis where he did well and was working there in early 1888, when he received a telegram from brother William, then a Boston businessman:

Have bought *The Vineyard Gazette*. Come at once.

That same week, on March 16, 1888, Editor Keniston of the *Gazette* announced his departure in the newspaper:

Having disposed of the *Vineyard Gazette* establishment — somewhat suddenly — within the present week, our

¹⁰ He was a nephew of Cornelius's cousin.

¹¹ Captain Charles was married in 1839. The first Starbuck record of a Captain Marchant (no first name given) was a whaling voyage from June 1842 to July 1846. The first Marchant child was born in 1844, the second in 1846, both within the first nine years of the marriage and both while Starbuck's Marchant was in the Pacific. Since no first name is given in Starbuck, it is not certain that this Marchant is ours. It would seem not. If the story is true, the "young Charles" mentioned must have been the second child, born in 1846, who was named Charles H. and died young. Our Charles H., the second so named, was not born until 1857, eighteen years after the marriage.

connection with the paper ceases with this issue. The new purchasers will publish the *Gazette* under the firm name of C. H. Marchant & Co., and Mr. Charles H. Marchant will be the editor and manager.

Charles wasted no time. He came at once to begin 32 years of utter devotion to the Vineyard and its weekly newspaper. He soon was one of the most popular men in Edgartown. He organized and was the leading member of the Home Club on South Water Street, the forerunner of the Edgartown Yacht Club. He served on the committee which established the Edgartown Water Works and was instrumental in bringing electricity to the village. A vigorous Republican, he was chairman of the Edgartown Republican Committee throughout much of his life.

In 1891, a year after he was named Collector, he married a young Vineyard girl, Edith Ripley, 19, the daughter of Henry Ripley Jr. Collector Marchant was 35 years old. In November of the following year Grover Cleveland, a Democrat who had already been president from 1885 to 1889, was elected once again, defeating Republican Harrison. As usual, that meant a change at the Custom House, although the change did not come quickly.

Ocmulgee Hero, Abraham Osborn Jr.

The appointment of Capt. Abraham Osborn Jr., Democrat, as Collector of Customs came several years after the election. By this time, the Edgartown district was not one of the highly prized posts on the East Coast. It was not until February 15, 1895, that President Cleveland got around to naming Captain Osborn to replace Editor Marchant.

The Captain was one of the town's most famous whaling masters. He was a part owner and captain of the Edgartown whaler *Ocmulgee* when she was captured and burned by the Civil War privateer *Alabama* in 1862.¹² The raider was Capt. Raphael Semmes, one of the most hated men in the north. He and his well-armed, fast steamship roamed the world's

¹² The *Ocmulgee* was principally owned by Abraham Osborn Sr., father of her master, who also owned the whaling ship *Splendid*. The *Ocmulgee* had left Edgartown July 2, 1862, heading for the North Pacific, but had stopped, as whalers often did, at the islands off Africa to recruit and to do some whaling. She was cutting in a whale when captured.

seas looking for Union vessels. The first of 65 vessels captured and sunk by the *Alabama* was the *Ocmulgee*, making Captain Osborn an instant celebrity and a footnote in hundreds of history books. He and his crew were soon released by Semmes and the captain returned to Edgartown, where he became a successful businessman.

He was, according to the *Gazette*, "affable and kindly in his intercourse with his fellowmen, and was a man with a large fund of most useful information, which made him a very entertaining conversationalist."¹³

President Cleveland, an advocate of civil service, proposed the reorganization of Customs. Included was the elimination of the Edgartown office, keeping Vineyard Haven as a minor port of entry. There was great opposition in Edgartown.

Editor Charles H. Marchant (formerly Collector Marchant) sharply criticized those "Vineyard Haven friends" who supported the change:

...if these unwise agitators are not labored with by those who have the interest of all at heart, they will, peradventure, agitate the whole thing to the far shore of Buzzards Bay [New Bedford].

A petition was sent to the House of Representatives, with his among the 152 signatures protesting the plan. The names included Edgartown's elite. Whether their petition was a factor is not known, but the plan was dropped.

Abraham Osborn's term as Collector was brief. In March 1899, with the return of the Republicans to the White House under President Benjamin Harrison, Democrat Osborn was removed and the previous collector, Editor Marchant, took over the office at Four Corners.

Marchant Renamed Collector

The position was no longer time-consuming and the work was easily handled by Editor-printer Marchant with the help of full-time Deputy Collector John Wesley Pease, the third generation of that family to hold the job. He had taken over the position when his father, Jeremiah Jr., died in 1890.

Once again, Marchant maintained his two offices on

¹³ No doubt, many of his stories were about his experience with the blackguard Raphael Semmes.

Edgartown's Four Corners: one, the *Gazette* office, where he spent most of his time setting type on the second floor on the southeast corner of Water and Main Streets; the other, his Collector's office, directly across Water Street, also on the second floor. From the window of one, he could look into the other. When needed at Customs, he was summoned by a white cloth hung from the window.

Although Vineyard Haven had for many years out-paced Edgartown in Customs activity and revenue, the older town continued as District headquarters. Few changes had been made in east coast Customs Districts and ports of entry since they were established by Alexander Hamilton in 1789. They provided patronage jobs for loyal party workers and there was strong opposition to change. But in 1912, after years of Republican control, the House became Democratic and one of its first acts was to authorize the President, Republican Howard Taft, to

abolish or consolidate collection districts, ports and sub-ports of entry and delivery, to discontinue needless offices and employment, to reduce excessive rates of compensation below amounts fixed by law or Executive order, and to do all such other and further things that in his judgment may be necessary to make such organization effective and within the limit of cost herein fixed.

Taft postponed action as long as he could, but on the day before leaving office, March 3, 1913, he signed an executive order reducing the number of custom districts from 126 to 49, turning the task over to incoming Democratic President Woodrow Wilson. Custom Houses in Edgartown and New Bedford (along with many more) were abolished. Collector Marchant lost his commission and was ordered to ship all records to the Custom House at Boston. Vineyard Haven continued as a port of entry with Howes Norris Jr., as a Deputy Collector.

For Collector Marchant, it meant giving up a part-time job and a small salary. But for Deputy Collector John Wesley Pease, it was a major loss. And it marked the end of a family dynasty. The Pease family had, with only one brief and mysterious interruption, monopolized the post, passing it

from father to son for more than 90 years.

John Wesley, a very likable man, when describing the action some years later, said with a smile: "Then overboard we went."¹⁴

Before the cutback, Editor Marchant had decried the plan:

... the matter of collecting dollars for Uncle Sam in the average smaller custom house is only a little part of the varied duties which are performed, and [counting] receipts, so much, expenses, so much, cost to collect a dollar, so much, is a rather unjust representation of the matter to the general public.

He then devoted his life to the *Gazette*, even staying on briefly after it was taken over by Henry and Elizabeth Hough in 1920. (It was given to the couple as a wedding present by Henry's father.) Charles H. Marchant died, much lamented, in 1931.

His daughter, Elizabeth Marchant Sanchez, and his son, Leonard, still own the family home on Main Street, but are now living in the Long Term Care unit of the Martha's Vineyard Hospital. Mrs. Sanchez only vaguely remembers the old Custom House, but vividly recalls her days as printer-editor on the *Cambridge (Mass.) Chronicle*. She still receives a pension from the Typesetters' Union.

Vineyard Haven continued as a port of entry until 1937 when Deputy Collector Norris was ordered to close his office immediately and ship the records and government property to New Bedford aboard the Revenue Cutter *Algonquin*.

Thus ended 266 years of a Customs presence on Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeths. It was a presence that was begun by the British in 1671, was taken over by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1783 and then by the Federal government in 1789. In those two and a half centuries, it provided prestige and a steady income for a few Edgartown families and, among mariners, brought fame to the Island.

(End of the series)

¹⁴ He was a lover of cats. At the time, he had 13 of them in his house on North Water Street.

The Custom House Flag

by ANNIE M. VINCENT

(1935)

In 1935, soon after the Dukes County Historical Society took over the Thomas Cooke House, site of the first Custom House office, the W. R. C. (Women's Relief Corps) presented it the flag that had flown over the last Edgartown Custom House. Customs was then being conducted out of Vineyard Haven, with an obvious loss of pride to Edgartown. For the presentation ceremony, Annie M. Vincent wrote a poem, which she read on the occasion. Her handwritten copy of the poem, printed here, is in the Society archives.

This Flag that so oft
Did Greet our eye
As we passed up the street
In the days gone by
Flaunting aloft
Mid the azure hue
Its glorious colors,
Red, White and Blue.
If this flag could but speak
To you and to me,
Many wonderful tales
It would tell of the sea,
Of its former home
Over the old Drug Store
Where were books and chronicles
Score on Score
Filled with the names
Of ships and men
Who left our shore
Many ne'er to return again.
There were Captains and Pilots
And Sailors bold
Who left our shores
In those days of old.

Many quickly arose to fame
With the rank of Captain
Before their names.
This emblem has welcomed
One and all
Who made our Port
A "Port o' Call."
Ships and vessels
From every clime
Did visit our shores
In "ye olden time."
They have taken the "Customs"
To our Sister Town,
But she Never, Never,
Can win the renown
That came to Old Edgartown,
As we're told,
In those happy, prosperous
Days of old. We hear the first
Custom Officers did meet
In an upper room
On old Cooke Street
In that ancient house
Of great renown
Since become the Show Place
Of our town.
And what is more fitting
That this emblem should come
Back at last
To its very first home.
And so tonight, the W. R. C.
Present this Flag
To your Society.
Keep it and guard it
And long (with the Stars and Stripes)
May it wave,
O're the land of the free
And the Home of the Brave.

The Edgartown Engine Company And the Fires It Fought

1836 — 1906

(Part Two)

by STEVE VANCOUR

At the end of the first part of this article (Intelligencer, August 1993) Edgartown citizens had voted \$600 at the 1872 Town Meeting for the purchase of "chemical [fire] engines." Two men were appointed to make the purchase "if, in their opinion, the interests of the town require it." The two men were Shubael L. Norton, a retired merchant mariner and now a real estate agent. He had sold land between the campground and the ocean to the Oak Bluffs Land & Wharf Company some years earlier. He inherited the land from his father, who had inherited it from William Butler, the man who leased the original campground to the Methodists. The other man named by the town was Watson C. Clark, a carpenter and one of five Surveyors of Lumber. He seems to have moved to the Island between 1850 and 1860. Little is known of him except this.

Six weeks after the 1872 vote to buy the chemical engines, one of the town's most disastrous fires occurred. It began in Richard Shute's photographic laboratory. Sadly, the chemical engine had not yet been bought. It was all up to the Button hand pumper.

Shute's Photo Laboratory Fire, 1872

The destruction by the Lucas fire of March 8, 1867, was exceeded five years later in what was, perhaps, Edgartown's worst downtown conflagration. Like the earlier fire, it was on lower Main Street, just across from the site of the Lucas blaze.

The *Gazette* headline read:

Destructive Fire in Edgartown! Valuable Property Burned

At 2 a.m. Wednesday, May 10, 1872, fire broke out on the second floor of Charles Shute & Son's store and photographic gallery.³⁷ The alarm was sounded and "every man, woman, boy & girl assembled at the scene" to lend their assistance. When the Button engine arrived, it was set up on the Osborn wharf and began pumping water from the harbor. But by the time the pressure was up, the flames had already spread to an adjacent building. Both upper floors were completely engulfed in flames.

That adjacent building belonged to Jonathan H. Monroe, a tailor and merchant. Downstairs was his clothing store, which, his advertisement the week before had announced, "Just received a new and fashionable lot of fashionable Hats and Caps of the latest Spring styles." Monroe was a good merchandizer; in the same paper as the article describing the fire an even larger ad proclaimed a fire sale of items "Saved from the Fire!"

Even before the Button arrived, a bucket brigade was operating and pails of water were passed up to the roofs of nearby buildings, dousing the small fires that flying embers were starting in the shingles. Pressure up, the Button crew began playing its streams of water on the front of the buildings while the bucket line worked in the rear. Together, they were able to check the spread of the fire and save the next building, known as the Corn Exchange.³⁸ As in the Lucas fire, seamen from vessels in the harbor took part in the fire fighting.

STEVE VANCOUR, a member of the Society, is well qualified to write this history. Lieutenant of Hook & Ladder Company No. 1, he became curious about the department history and started assembling fire-related stories from old newspaper files. In the process, he became addicted to historical research. Now, he has broadened his interest to other fields. This is, we hope, the first of many articles.

³⁷ Fires were common in photographic darkrooms. The chemicals apparently ignited spontaneously when not properly stored.

³⁸ Does anybody know why it was called "Corn Exchange"?

The next building to the Corn Exchange was a rooming house at Four Corners belonging to Mrs. Joseph Wilbur. It was severely damaged when the hose being directed onto it burst and heat from the adjacent building soon ignited it. The walls were badly charred and the roof and the second story burned.

Major losses: Shute's store and photo gallery, \$5000, no insurance; Monroe's store and tailor shop, \$7000, insured for \$1000 (he saved about three-quarters of his stock, it was the second time Monroe had been burned out in five years); Oliver Vincent's Billiard Hall on the second floor of the Monroe building, \$1000, insured for \$500; Dr. John Pierce's store and library, \$3000, insured for \$700; Mrs. Wilbur's dwelling house, \$1500, insured for \$1000; "Corn Exchange" owned by Tristram R. Holly, and a shop occupied by Capt. Lorenzo Fisher, \$225, no insurance; and Daniel T. Webquish's store, \$100. Total loss estimated at \$14,825, making it the most destructive fire in Edgartown to this time.³⁹

Chemical Engine Arrives, 1872

In 1872, realizing the limitations faced by the engine company from a lack of water in certain parts of the village, the town formed a committee to consider buying a second type of apparatus: a chemical engine. After review, it was recommended that the town purchase two such engines, one for the village of Edgartown and one for the "Northern section," which included Eastville and the campground, by then the most densely populated section during the summer and entirely without fire protection.⁴⁰

However, at town meeting, Edgartown voters turned down the engine for the northern section, while approving one for Edgartown village. That aggravated the northern residents who, although taxpayers, had few votes in town meetings, being mostly summer residents.

The chemical engine was made by the Babcock Engine

Company. It was a hand-drawn, two-wheel cart on which was mounted a 35-gallon water tank with 50 feet of one-inch rubber fire hose. The tank was filled with a solution of water and bicarbonate of soda. Also inside the tank was a small bottle of sulfuric acid.

At a fire, an engineman would tip the bottle of sulfuric acid into the water, causing a chemical reaction which produced carbon dioxide gas under pressure, propelling the water out the hose. The water, saturated with carbon dioxide gas, smothered the flames. While the chemical reaction was taking place, the solution had to be continuously mixed with a paddle inside the tank. Two men were required to operate the engine.

For smaller fires, the chemical engines were the most effective apparatus of their day, causing less water damage. They were credited with extinguishing 80 percent of the fires in which they were used.⁴¹

High School Belfry Fire, 1874

Not all fires in Edgartown were as severe as the two that had demolished much of lower Main Street. A smaller fire in 1874 was apparently the first in which the chemical engine played a part. At least, it is the first time it is mentioned in the newspaper. The news story, written by *Gazette* Editor Edgar Marchant, seems to indicate that he didn't hold the department in high esteem:

FIRE — At about nine o'clock Wednesday morning [June 24], smoke was observed issuing from the loft of the High School.⁴² The alarm of fire was promptly given. The fire department (a few of it) turned out, got out their machine, and posted up to the scene of the action. On arriving it appeared that there was no water on the premises and accordingly the engine was run down to Capt. N. M. Jernegan's house, two fences being overturned with great energy on the way, the hose run out, the brakes manned, and pumping began. These preliminaries occupied about

³⁹ *Gazette*, May 10, 1872.

⁴⁰ Cottage City, a part of Edgartown, had been demanding fire equipment for some time. The town refused, creating one of the driving issues that led to the division in 1880.

⁴¹ Paul Ditzel, *Fire Engines, Fire Fights*, Rutledge Books, pp. 153 and 155. Also 1913 *Annual Report*, Edgartown.

⁴² The High School, at Pease's Point Way and Planting Field Way, is now, much changed, Edgartown Commons.

Custom House Office and Its Officers, Edgartown District, circa 1900



Print courtesy Alison Shaw/Ralph Stewart.

Right, Collector Charles H. Marchant; left, Deputy Collector John Wesley Pease. Atop cabinet behind Pease, to the left, is the Custom House flag, carefully folded.

half an hour, all hands being officers and volunteering instructions with the utmost freedom. About ten minutes sufficed to exhaust the well, and by this time the stream had just begun to reach the locality of the fire, a great part of the water going off at a tangent through leaks in the hose. A cistern beneath the floor of the house was then uncovered, a small boy being first dropped in (probably to see if there was much water), the boy fished out, the hose shoved in, and pumping commenced again. But it seemed impossible to get power enough to send a stream into the belfry where the fire now was.

Perhaps the weight of a fireman sitting on a leak at short intervals broke the force. Finding their efforts vain to send a stream on to the belfry from below, a rope was rigged on to the pipe and the same hoisted on to the roof, whence, amid intense enthusiasm, a lively play was opened on the tower. But by this time the fire was out!

While the Department was operating on and with the engine, a continuous train of buckets was going up inside the house and so up into the belfry, (the ladies being conspicuous in the service), and by means of these and a small "chemical," by the time the engine had got fairly under way the flames were extinguished. Great praise is due the ladies for their untiring efforts, one squad carrying a heavy ladder all the way from the engine house on their shoulders. The fire caught from sparks left by boys who had been smoking sweetfern in the loft. Loss about \$100.⁴³

Railroad Depot Fire, 1878

A narrow-gauge train operated by the Martha's Vineyard Railroad in 1874 began running from the steamboat wharf at Oak Bluffs, via Edgartown, to the Mattakesett Lodge in Katama. Partially financed by the town, its purpose was to attract business from the boom-town of Oak Bluffs to the new and struggling resort hotel near Edgartown's South Beach. The half-hour trip to Edgartown ran along the sand on what is now State Beach.

Just beyond Trapp's Pond, the tracks turned inland through a wooded area to a depot on the corner of Main and Pine streets, next to the County Jail. Passengers bound for Edgartown got off there, while most continued on to Katama and South Beach. Train capacity was 150 passengers

⁴³ *Gazette*, June 26, 1874.

and it ran from July 1st to September 1st. In off season, the locomotive, named the "Active," was kept in an engine house behind the Edgartown depot. It was there, early in the evening of May 21, 1878, that the "Chemical," captained by Chase Pease, proved its worth. Editor Marchant of the *Gazette* was pleased:

FIRE.— An alarm of fire was given a few minutes before eight o'clock, Tuesday evening, and it soon became known that the engine-house of the M. V. Railroad was ablaze. A crowd soon gathered in and about the building. The first move was to fasten a rope to the locomotive and haul it outside of the building for, being immediately beneath the falling embers, it was somewhat scorched and heated about the wood-work.

The engine company having disbanded at their last meeting, it was some minutes before a fire-engine came up, and even then there was not water sufficient to supply this engine.⁴⁴ Mr. Chase Pease now came to the front with the chemical engine, and hose being run to the water tank in the north corner of the building, a stream of water was thrown upon the roof where most of the fire appeared and was soon extinguished.

It is thought that the fire caught in some oily waste that was in a closet at the side of the room, and firing the upright, ran to and spread about the roof. Mr. David J. Chadwick, who acted as pipe-man, fell from a ladder while doing his utmost to stop the flames, and received quite severe bruises, so that he walks with some difficulty.⁴⁵

Chadwick was the first fireman injured in the line of duty, as least as far as is known from the written records. Two weeks later, the *Gazette* reported that he was "rapidly improving from the injuries he received at the engine-house fire. . . damage to the engine-house is being thoroughly repaired by Messrs. Donaldson & Crowell."

This was the second time Edgartown's chemical engine had been used and the first time it had extinguished a fire unaided. Its success under conditions of a limited water supply confirmed the wisdom of having it as alternative to the Button.

Success with the chemical engine greatly upset the folks

⁴⁴ What was meant by "having disbanded" is not clear.

⁴⁵ *Gazette*, May 24, 1878.

in Cottage City. They were still without any fire apparatus despite their petitions and pleadings. Two months after the engine-house fire, they petitioned once again. A special town meeting was called, but no action was taken:

The petition, numerous signed by interested parties here [in Cottage City], praying the town to purchase a chemical fire engine, was promptly extinguished last Saturday, when, at a special town meeting held in Edgartown, the motion to "indefinitely postpone all action upon said petition" was unanimously carried. The Cottage City remains at the mercy of the flames, entirely defenceless and unarmed.⁴⁶

Silva House Destroyed, 1888

Shortly after midnight February 22, 1888, fire broke out in the back porch of Joseph K. Silva's house on Winter Street.⁴⁷ Sharing the house as tenants of the Silva family were Joel and Mattie Holand and their five small children. Owner Silva was an Edgartown shoemaker and Holland was in the U.S. Revenue Service.

In an excellent piece of reporting, the *Gazette* described the event in detail. The account provides a vivid sense of how a midnight fire affected the village and how the firemen responded. Editor Samuel Keniston adds a sympathetic description of the two families and their tragedy.

The headline on the article does not refer to an arsonist, but to the fire itself:

The Fire Fiend

Destroys One of Edgartown's Substantial Residences

The town was awakened at about 1 o'clock Tuesday morning by the cry of fire, which was soon followed by the ringing of the village bells and the gathering of townspeople from all directions. The fire was discovered to be in the rear of the lower rooms of Joseph K. Silva's house at the west end of Winter street, occupied by the family of Joel P. Holland, carpenter on the revenue steamer *Dexter*; and is believed to have started from an ash barrel in the porch.⁴⁸

The fire engine was gotten out with tolerable dispatch,

⁴⁶ *Island Review*, August 7, 1878. Earlier, the newspaper urged the town to provide Cottage City with "a couple, at least, of these excellent fire extinguishers," the chemicals.

⁴⁷ The "back porch" was really an el, often called a summer kitchen.

⁴⁸ The house was at Winter Street and Church Street.

all things considered — though they do say that the half dozen men who dragged it to the scene of the conflagration were none of them members of the department — and having arrived on the premises was run down to the hollow south of the North school house, where a large rain pond furnished abundant water.⁴⁹ Meanwhile the fire, which had started at the windward end of the house, had made such rapid progress that all hope of saving the house was soon abandoned, and after a storming party had succeeded in running Mrs. Silva's [*sic*] piano out through the front window the attention of the firemen was chiefly directed to the houses of S. P. Coffin and the estate of William P. Chadwick, which were immediately across and on the leeward of the narrow street and were soon perceived to be in imminent peril.⁵⁰

From that time for about an hour the front and roofs of those two buildings were swept by incessant and well directed streams of water, with an occasional dash to check the fierceness of the flames on the other side, until about half past two o'clock, when the roof and frame-work of the burning building fell in, and nothing remained but to drown out the still blazing timbers.

The two families, thus robbed of their homes in a single night — the head of one seeing so large a portion of the earnings of his industrious youth melting away in a moment before his eyes, the other absolutely stripped of scantier possessions — have the heartfelt sympathies of the entire community. Mr. Silva is a young man, highly respected and esteemed by his fellow-citizens, as well for his polite manners and accommodating disposition as for the evident business capacity which has enabled him to make so good a showing in the race with his associate tradesmen. . . His losses, including furniture, clothing and about \$200 in bills, foot up in the neighborhood of \$2500, with no insurance.

The Hollands, though their losses are small compared to the Silvas. . . [are homeless with their] five children from 7 years to 5 months. . .⁵¹

The community's sympathies for the families resulted in a fund being set up to assist them. The following week's *Gazette* reported that in one week "nearly \$300" had been pledged for the Hollands and \$200 for the Silvas.

⁴⁹ The rain pond still exists at the end of Winter Street.

⁵⁰ Both these buildings are extant.

⁵¹ *Gazette*, February 24, 1888.

Prince Tilton Place Fire, 1889

It was a year before the fire department was again called out (one of the amazing facts learned in this research is the infrequency of fires at a time when open flames were so common). The *Gazette* describes the competition that existed between the Button and the Chemical firemen to be first at the fire. As it turned out, despite their haste, neither piece of apparatus was needed. The ancient and honorable bucket brigade had put out the fire before their arrival.

In describing the event, the *Gazette* gives us a gem of contemporary slang: "yunkets:"

The Precocious Yunkets

The cry of fire and the rushing in hot haste up Main street of men and boys at a little after 5 o'clock Tuesday afternoon, started many from their homes, who joined the throng heading towards the fire, which was reported to be the barn on the premises of Mrs. N. M. Simonton, better known, perhaps, as the Prince Tilton place. The two engines got away from their house very promptly, the chemical taking the lead, but the "Button" arrived at the scene of expected destruction a good second —thanks to a tow extended by Mr. Foster, who happened to be near with a stout horse as the alarm was sounded. The machines were not put to use, however, as the fire was fortunately subdued by the throwing of water from buckets, etc. The fire originated through the mischievous pranks of a couple of small boys who had made their preparations at the rear side, in a corner where a hennery joins the barn. Quite a place was burned through the barn at this point, and the building was full of smoke when discovered by the ladies of the house. The prompt arrival of Mr. Furber and other neighbors, and their exertions, soon got it under control. A few moments longer, and from the fact that a strong wind from the southwest was blowing, it is hard to predict just where it all might have ended.

It was a somewhat startling reminder of the predicament in which we would be placed with a fire starting in that section, and others as well, and no water provision. Parents cannot be too strict and emphatic in instilling into the minds of their precocious "yunkets" the alarming consequences which may result from playing with fire!⁵²

⁵² *Gazette*, May 3, 1889.

Grafton Smith House Fire, 1889

Chappaquiddick, the sometime island east of Edgartown village, was, like Cottage City, unprotected by the Edgartown fire department. It could never get there in time to save a building, even if it tried. As the *Gazette* account, November 22, 1889, informs us, Chappy residents protected themselves:

The house of Mr. Grafton Smith at Chappaquiddick came near burning last Saturday night. Fortunately, a good supply of water was already drawn in the house, which being vigorously applied by Mr. Smith, and family, the fire was put out without much damage.⁵³

Capt. Charles C. Smith House Fire, 1891

A long and informative account of a fire was published in January 1891 when the house of Capt. Charles C. Smith on Main Street caught fire. The blaze was minor, but very smokey, and being close to the fire station with a cistern nearby, it was soon extinguished.

It was on a Sunday afternoon at about 2 o'clock and after the alarm was sounded, "within 10 minutes 500 persons were gathered between Shute's corner and Jernegan & Huxford's store," the *Gazette* stated:

The fire was first discovered by Mrs. Eliza Marchant, who lived in the upper rooms. . . perceiving smoke as it poured up the stairway. Mrs. M. immediately alarmed Capt. Smith who was in the sitting room below, Mrs. Smith being at church.

The old and well-tried Button, the handy chemical, and their able crews, the scores of willing helpers composed of townspeople, nimble sailors from the U.S.S. *Gallatin*, who arrived in a body fully equipped with buckets and axes, and commanded by intrepid officers, men from the vessels in the harbor, and others, by combined effort were too much for the fire-fiend and after a resistance of about ten minutes he was brought into subjection and the fine residence was saved.⁵⁴

If the fire had not been checked so quickly, the *Gazette* stated, it "probably would have destroyed not only the

⁵³ It being Saturday night, it may have been bath water.

⁵⁴ *Gazette*, January 23, 1891.

Smith residence, but probably the block of stores near by, and possibly not have stopped until the harbor was reached."

In the same issue of the newspaper a letter, the writer unnamed, called on the town to do something about the lack of water for fire-fighting. There are, the letter said, only three cisterns in the village and they are "a miserable farce." It urged the town to test each cistern to determine how long each would provide water during pumping. If necessary, relief cisterns should be dug next to them and connected by pipes to increase the water reserve. In addition, at least three more cisterns should be dug: 1. at Main Street and Pease's Point Way; 2. at the corner near the old Harrison Mayhew house; and 3. on School Street near the residence of the late Nathan Jernegan.

Also in the issue was an explanation of the duties of the Fire-wards and a listing of their names: William W. Butler, Charles G. M. Dunham, Thomas G. Coffin, John N. Pierce, Holmes W. Smith and Jeremiah S. Weeks.

Henry Cleveland Outbuilding Fire, 1891

As we have seen, often the fire engines did not arrive in time to be of much help. In such cases, the townspeople took matters in their own hands. The *Gazette* was careful to give credit when such was due:

ALARM OF FIRE:— At about 7 p.m., Wednesday evening an alarm of fire was heard on Main Street and soon a large crowd gathered at the premises of Henry Cleveland where an out building adjacent to the barn was in flames. Fortunately there were two casks of rain water in the yard and a few bucketfuls of wet and a good deal of noise soon extinguished the fire. The Fire Department was in at the close.⁵⁵

Andariese Cottage Fire, 1891

Not all fires on Chappaquiddick had such a happy ending as the one at Grafton Smith's, mentioned earlier. By the 1890s, summer houses were being built there and their owners were not as well prepared or perhaps not as cautious as were year-round residents. With no engine company, the

⁵⁵ *Gazette*, September 11, 1891.

result, as in this case, was usually destruction:

Fire at Chappaquiddick

The Andariese Cottage Totally Destroyed

The fine cottage owned by Mr. Chas. H. Andariese of Brooklyn and located on the southwest side of the Island of Chappaquiddick was totally destroyed by fire Wednesday morning, the flames being first discovered about 7:30 o'clock, and in an hour's time completely destroyed the house, a very strong wind prevailing at the time. The fire is supposed to have started by a spark from the porch chimney lodging under the eaves of the main roof. Mr. Andariese's family and servants, assisted by Mr. Gridley and other neighbors succeeded in saving some valuable pictures, rugs and silver from the first floor, while the contents of the upper floors were destroyed with the exception of some valuable jewelry, which was saved. . . The cottage, built some three years ago. . . cost in the neighborhood of \$4500. . . On a high bluff overlooking Katama bay, it was in full rake of the brisk northeast wind.⁵⁶

Reading the newspaper during this period, one gets a feeling that the fire department was not well regarded by the *Gazette* editor. The apparatus often arrived too late to be useful and when it did get there, no water supply was nearby. This must have frustrated the firemen and, perhaps as a result, morale and discipline suffered. By the 1890s, the department had become more of a club than a well-trained company of firefighters.

This all changed in 1893 when Capt. Hiram J. Cleveland, a retired whaling captain, was appointed Foreman (chief) of the Engine Company. Captain Cleveland immediately set to the task of training. Routine drills were established and the equipment was once again being properly serviced. Captain Cleveland served as chief until 1897 when William Pent, his assistant, took over. For many more years, Captain Cleveland stayed on as Clerk of the Foremen (the officers of the company).

Captain Peakes House Fire, 1898

Training won't help when there is no water supply for the Button to pump. Fortunately, the chemical engine was

⁵⁶ *Gazette*, October 2, 1891.

always available in such cases, as this *Gazette* account tells

Fire in Peake's Residence

A fire occurred Saturday afternoon (May 21) at the residence of Capt. Thos. M. Peakes on Summer Street. A passerby, Mr. Thomas H. Chirgwin, who was on his wheel, saw smoke issuing from the kitchen roof and sides and immediately notified the family. The alarm was given and the Button engine was soon on the scene, but from lack of a cistern nearby most of the work of extinguishment was done by the chemical engine and by buckets of water carried by volunteers. After some minutes of vigorous work the flames were put out. The actual damage by fire was not great, although a new kitchen roof will be necessary, but water, broken glass, &c., caused the rear part of the house to present quite a scene of disorder. The fire started in a closet directly over the kitchen stove, in which had been a heavy fire, but which had apparently gone down. The family just previous to the discovery had been for some time in the front part of the house. The house is owned by Mrs. Doreas Ripley and is insured.⁵⁷

Allen Norton Farmhouse Fire, 1900

Although not separated by water from the village, other remote areas of town were as unprotected as Chappaquiddick. In 1900, a fire broke out in the small settlement of Pohogonot, on the south shore several miles to the west of the town. As was the case, when there were no men around, the women took on the task of fire-fighting. One brave lady did so, with the help of the family dog, on May 17, as reported in the *Gazette*:

Mr. & Mrs. Allen Norton, of Maple Street [now School Street], moved out to their Pohogonut farm on May 7th. Shortly after, Mr. Norton had gone to Scrubby Neck and Mrs. N. was busy in the kitchen where she had a brisk fire burning, she was attracted by the movements of the shepherd dog outside who was vigorously barking and looking up to the roof of the house. Mrs. N. went outside and discovered that the roof of the kitchen was on fire. Hurrying to the scuttle with a pail of water she climbed out on the roof and poured the water on the flames.⁵⁸ Several

trips were made in this manner and she soon had the fire subdued, but not until some of the shingles and boarding underneath had been burned a distance of several feet.

We opine that not many ladies would have had the courage to go out on a steep roof and put out a fire in the manner described. And it can also be said that not every dog would have had the intelligence to have sounded the alarm as promptly.⁵⁹

Dr. Walker's Drug Store Fire, 1902

At the turn of the century, acetylene gas was used by some Edgartown merchants to light their stores. The gas was produced by a generating unit in the basement. The generator was a potential source of explosion, if not properly serviced. At 6:16 p.m., December 9, 1902, on North Water Street, there was

... an explosion of acetylene gas in the basement of the Edgartown Drug Store. New carbides had been placed in the generator in the afternoon and the machine had been put in order except for the insertion of a plug at its base.

Large quantities of gas had escaped when Everett Averill and Walter Smith, clerks, were in the basement and Averill was in the little matched-board closet where the gas machine was placed with a lantern endeavoring to put the plug in place.

The flame in the lantern ignited the gas and there was a huge explosion. Plate glass windows were blown out, show cases were overturned, medicine bottles in the apothecary knocked to the floor, furnace ducts were twisted. Even the floor was forced upward by the blast. Averill was thrown across the basement.

The *Gazette* stated: "In short, Edgartown's first gas explosion presented a scene of confusion surpassing in detail that of a totally wrecked vessel. . . Commendation is due. . . for the speed with which the fire and chemical engines were brought to the scene." There apparently was no fire and, luckily, no serious injuries.⁶⁰

Doctor Walker, who owned the drug store, also owned a Saint Bernard named "Don," who usually spent the day

⁵⁷ *Gazette*, May 26, 1898.

⁵⁸ A scuttle is a trapdoor in the roof providing access for fire fighting and chimney sweeping.

⁵⁹ *Gazette*, May 17, 1900.

⁶⁰ *Gazette*, December 11, 1902.

at the store. After the explosion, Don could not be found anywhere. It was feared that he might have died. Fortunately, that was not the case. Don was found in the bed of the doctor's daughter, hiding under the covers.⁶¹

The Edgartown Drug Store explosion was the last time that both the Button and the chemical engine were needed except as reserve apparatus. Shortly afterwards, the Edgartown Water Company was established, providing water under pressure from hydrants around town. Pumps and cisterns were no longer needed within the hydrant network.

With the arrival of water mains, the name of the Edgartown Fire Engine Company was changed to the Edgartown Fire Department. The word "engine," which suggested creating water pressure, was dropped. The department now simply attached its hoses to hydrants and for the first time had unlimited water available.

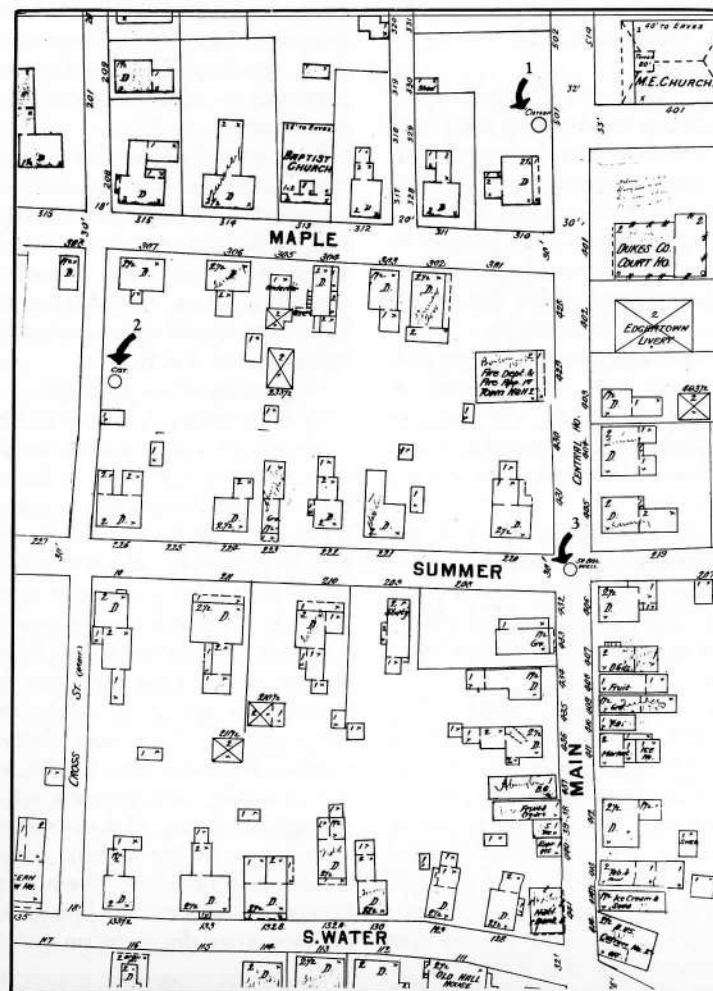
In the remote parts of the village where water mains were not installed, the department still relied upon its trusty Button and Chemical. But dragging such machines by manpower to distant fires was out of the question. By 1906, these engines had been relegated to reserve duty, called out occasionally to assist the hose companies.⁶²

Today, there is no chemical engine in town, but the 1855 Button hand-pumper is still available, although no longer part of the fire department. When officially retired in 1938, it was presented to the Dukes County Historical Society and is now on display there. In 1984, the Button was completely refurbished and put back into "ready" condition by fire department volunteers, headed by Michael Dolby. Each Fourth of July, the firemen shine up her copper dome, wheel her in the parade along Main Street and demonstrate her vigor by manning the brakes and sending a crackling stream of water into the air.

In August 1990, the Button was taken to an antique fire-

engine muster in Newburyport, Massachusetts, where it competed with other old hand pumpers from across the country, one from as far away as California. With 21 men working the brakes, half its rated manpower, the Button threw a single stream 142 feet. All in all, not a bad showing for a 135-year-old engine!

It was a performance that would have pleased Mr. Lysander Button.



In 1898 three cisterns provided the only water available to firemen in the center of town. Maple Street was today's School Street.

⁶¹ Gazette, December 18, 1902.

⁶² The present fire chief, Antone Bettencourt, believes the Button's last fire was in 1913 in the plumbing shop of Arthur C. Vincent, who, coincidentally was fire chief at the time.

Books

The Founders of America

by Francis Jennings

Published by W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1993. 457 pages. Illustrated. \$27.50

What a bold title! The Founders of America. *The founders!* And not a word about the Founding Fathers. Or the Declaration of Independence. But why shouldn't its title be bold? It's a bold book, with a bold thesis, presented by a bold author. Vineyarders who know Fritz Jennings will agree that he has always taken a bold course.

But this book is not merely bold. It is thorough. It is a *tour de force*. A massive work, and for someone, like this reviewer, who knows only a little about history, the depth of the research is awesome.

Scholarly though it is, it is not intimidating. The not-infrequent sprinklings of Jennings humor bring smiles, often in unexpected places, lightening some of the more weighty sections.

This major work, much of it conceived in Chilmark, will be a delight to readers willing to give up long-held notions. Those who prefer to hold to what they learned in school, secular or religious, should avoid Jennings. But for those open to seeing the settlement of this hemisphere in a fresh light, as an invasion rather than a discovery, then this is the place to start. For those who wish to go further,

to dig deeper, the bibliography is a roadmap to riches.

The hemisphere covers a lot of territory, but Jennings finds room for this tiny island as part of "the very special case of Massachusetts," in mission work. Members who have read the series on the English and the Indians recently published in this journal will be better prepared than many on the subject, perhaps even prepared to question some of his conclusions.

But it is not the detail that makes this book fascinating, although there is an abundance, a surfeit almost, of detail. It is the broad sweep of its thesis, the fresh view of history, indeed, the revealing of a civilization that Europeans refused to see, preferring to believe it was "savagery."

As Jennings writes (page 82):

"In its entirety, all this is the myth of the savage Indian, a creature other than normally human as understood by Europeans. When the natural man is placed among the beauties of nature seen as benign, his savagery is noble. When he is likened to nature seen as cruel, he becomes a beast of prey and his savagery is horrible. In fact, Indians are not, and have not been, any more natural, nor any more savage, than human persons of the most advanced societies. What they are is human, with all the nobility and baseness, all the strength and frailty, all the virtues and vices latent in the human animal. What distinguishes them from Europeans has been their history, and the time is past due to get on with it."

ARTHUR R. RAILTON

New Printing of Banks' History

During the past 37 years, the Society has brought out several printings of Charles Edward Banks' *The History of Martha's Vineyard*. It was originally published by Doctor Banks in 1911, first as a two-volume set. The first volume gives an over-all view of the history of Dukes County, beginning with the earliest discovery voyages. The second volume covers the annals of the several towns that make up the Vineyard, coming down to about 1900. Banks later published a third volume made up entirely of genealogies of old Island families.

All three volumes are indispensable source materials. The Society's supply has been exhausted and the book has been out of print for several months. Fortunately, the Higginson Book Company of Salem, Massachusetts, has just brought out a new printing. It is exactly the same as those the Society has been publishing.

Each of the volumes can be purchased separately. When all three

are ordered at the same time, there is a special reduced price. They are available through the Society or directly from the publisher. The price is the same. However, purchasing them through the Society will give it the retailer's commission, something we can make good use of, we assure you. We urge members to order it from us.

The bindings are luxurious and the type reproduction excellent. These books make wonderful gifts at any time, but especially at Christmas.

Prices are:

Volume I, General history,	
535 pages	\$53.50
Volume II, Town Annals,	
645 pages	\$64.50
Volume III, Genealogies,	
565 pages	\$56.50

Special price for the three-volume set \$159.50

Add \$6.50 for shipping and handling. Sales to Massachusetts residents subject to 5% sales tax.

History of Church Given National Recognition

Each year, the Congregational Christian Historical Society presents the Frederick L. Fagley Awards to those churches which, in celebrating an important anniversary, create and publish historical material of unusual distinction. All Congregational churches of the United States are eligible. There are two categories: churches of more than 350 members; and those with 350 or fewer members. The Federated Church in Edgartown is in the second category.

Dr. Fagley, for whom the award is

named, was a recognized historian of the Congregational Church.

The May 1992 issue of the *Intelligencer* published an article written by its Editor entitled "The First 30 Ministers of the First Church (1642 to 1878)." That article was awarded second place in the national competition for excellence "in research, imagination and narrative skill."

The Society is pleased to have had a part in bringing national recognition to the Vineyard's First Church on its 350th anniversary.

Documents

A Running Account Of Matters & Things

by REV. HENRY BAYLIES

We don't know how many pupils were attending the Dukes County Academy in 1850, when our diarist, Rev. Henry Baylies, was its headmaster. But we do know that two years later in March 1852, there were 62 pupils, 29 of them "Masters" and 33, "Misses." Their names are listed in a document in the Society archives.

Nine years earlier, in 1841, the third year of the Academy's existence, there had been 55 "Gentlemen" and 22 "Ladies" for a total of 77, according to an official report (also in the archives). Three were from off-Island: one from "Cutterhunk," one from Brunswick, Maine, and one from Deering, N.H. Four were from Edgartown and three from Holmes Hole; forty seven were from Tisbury and nineteen from Chilmark. No place of residence is shown for one of the pupils, Jane Mingo. She is merely listed as "Jane Mingo, a native, educated by a charitable Lady." She was not a native Islander, having been born (according to the 1850 Census) in Westport, Mass. As we learn in the diary, she is Jane A. Mingo, "the col'd girl," who lives, probably as a servant, in the home of Mrs. H. Look on Music Street.

One of the pupils in 1841 was Capt. John Adams of Chilmark, then 33 years old, the oldest student in the school. No doubt he was studying navigation. Captain Adams was the son of Capt. Moses Adams senior and uncle of the famed Adams sisters, Lucy and Sarah. He never married. Starbuck shows only one whaling voyage by a Capt. John Adams. It began

in 1835, when he would have been only 28. The vessel, the Parthian, was condemned at the Bay of Islands, New Zealand, in 1839. Whether this was the Chilmark John Adams is not certain.

In 1850, as the journal hints, the enrollment was down, although we are not told what it was. In 1841, there were two assistant teachers, plus the headmaster (then listed as "Preceptor"). Obviously, Baylies had assistant teachers, as he was absent from the school often, caring for his sick wife.

In this installment, Harriette is improving and by the end of it, Reverend Baylies is more optimistic. He also seems to feel better about his own health and is planning to return to the ministry at the end of the year. (You will recall that he had been forced to leave the ministry by poor health.) Clearly, his dedication is in God's work, rather than in teaching. The revival that was spreading across the Vineyard at the time has affected his pupils, especially the females, and he was pleased to think he had been an influence in their spiritual revival.

Saturday March 2nd, 1850. Thursday night I slept with Harriette while a watcher (by name) slept in an adjoining room.¹ H. slept all night as well as usual & I was up only two or three times to get medicines or arrowroot or rice (?) water. During yesterday she appeared very comfortable in body & happy in spirit. It is very encouraging & cheering to see her so happy & to mark the triumphs of grace in her.

In the night of Thursday a severe storm of rain, thunder & lightning &

¹ He does not name the "watcher," who, of course, does not have to watch Harriette with him sharing her bed, which explains his parenthetical remark.

the rain continuing with violence during Friday forenoon. Very few students were present all day. The Preparatory Lecture of the afternoon called away some of the scholars & as I wished to close early that I might go to Edgartown I heard all the recitations & by vote closed at 2 1/2 o'clock.² At 3 o'clock, carriage at the door, I took Mother to Edgartown that she might arrange affairs so as to return Monday & stay as long as may be necessary. Made sundry purchases, etc., at E. & returned arriving here about 8 o'clock. Every one I saw seemed very much interested about Harriette, inquiring very anxiously.

Last night I retired with H. but she was not so quiet as on Thurs. night. I was up several times with her & she fainted once. Today she is not feeling quite so well as yesterday. Dr. Ruggles came about 11 o'clock. He thinks Harriette might recover rapidly now. He thinks the blood does not come from her lungs, yet admits it may. He says she is not now consumptive he thinks, yet she is of right form for a consumptive & will probably die of Consumption some time, perhaps 50 years hence.

We are both very much pleased with him as a Physician & man. He thinks it will not be necessary for him to call again unless something new occurs. He sent her up some Red, Lavender & Blue Pills. I yesterday bought 4 oz. Lavender at Edgartown of Dr. P_____³ which is really unfit for her to take & has almost made her sick in taking. It continues to give

² By vote! Democracy in the school room.

³ The doctor's name is crossed out, but enough is legible to identify him as Dr. John Pierce. He was 44 and from Lebanon, Connecticut.

H. a sharp taste, green goaccum (?), which in her case is injurious. Thus several times lately I have bought medicines unfit for use — complete impositions & yes sold by apothecaries who themselves are Physicians. Imposition upon the sick is too cruel, not to say base.

The Religious interest here is unabated. Yesterday morning as I entered the Academy, Miss Caroline M. Smith, a fine young lady of 15, met me smiling & shook my hand. She had met with a change the night previous, together with another pupil, Miss Melvina Mayhew. I am told more than 15 rose for prayers Thurs. Eve.⁴

There is great solemnity in my school & strong indications of a general work. God grant it that I may be permitted to be an instrument in his hands of promoting the work.

Rec'd. a letter from Rev. Bro. J. B. Gould, Quincy. Bro G. is almost discouraged at his app't. & is looking forward to Conference for a change. Unitarianism or rather Socinianism⁵ has destroyed all spirituality in that place & doomed the people to almost total heathenism. The Lord bless & strengthen Bro. Gould. My health suffers a little from the passing circumstances yet not more than might be expected. My spiritual strength has been greatly renewed. The Lord be praised. Amen.⁶

⁴ Caroline M. Smith, 15, daughter of Josiah H. and Isabella Smith, Edgartown; and Melvina (Malvian) Mayhew, 12, daughter of William A. and Eliza L. (Athearn) Mayhew, Tisbury.

⁵ Socinianism, like Unitarianism, denied the divinity of Christ.

⁶ Mainland Congregationalism was deeply split over revivalism. Rev. Horace Bushnell of Hartford had boldly denounced the Calvinist doctrine that humans were born sinners and

Sabbath, March 3rd, 1850. This first Sabbath in Spring has been to me quite unlike a Sab. of rest, physical or spiritual. Harriette, my dear wife, has been again to all appearance near the grave. I slept with her last night & her sleep was very quiet & refreshing & quite as good as formerly. When we awoke this morning, she appeared very comfortable & happy & cheerful & I felt encouraged [that] we should spend a delightful Sabbath together at home. According to directions, I gave her, in absence of Holman's Restorative, a dose of Rhubarb to work off the Calomel of a blue pill she took last night. Immediately on taking the Rhu. she vomited. I gave her another dose, putting in more Brandy to settle it. She threw up a portion of this. She was immediately seized with great distress in the pit of her stomach, so severe that it almost threw her into spasms. The rush of blood to her head consequent upon the emetic almost immediately produced delirium, which with little interval continued throughout the day.

Thus throughout the day I have been incessantly employed in applying snow water to her head to determine the blood to her feet. Towards evening she became greatly distressed in breathing by reason of her pain through her left lung to shoulder & a spasmodic affliction of her throat.

I at length concluded to call Dr. Luce, the Physician of the place, to bleed her. She had long said that bleeding & that alone would relieve her. I called him & he pronounced it

urged that the church should not encourage the revivalists' emphasis on being "born again." Clifton E. Olmstead, *History of Religion in the United States*, p.300.

not only impracticable, but impossible to bleed her, the circulation being so low. He applied mustard poultice to side, but without the least effect.

Harriett still insisted on being bled & I told the Dr. to do just as she said. Consequently, he opened a vein in her right arm while I held her & the bowl. He, as well as I, was astonished at the color of the blood which was, as he remarked, the darkest he ever saw from a human person — as black as tar & very thick. He was immediately satisfied that bleeding was the thing. He had not thought of the quality, but only of the quantity of the blood. He took away probably a pint of blood when her lungs felt almost perfectly relieved. Within ten minutes the change was from the severest pain & difficulty of breathing to a freedom from pain & ease of respiration.

I feel that this too is in answer to prayer. "I will be glad & rejoice in thy mercy: for thou has considered my trouble: thou hast known my soul in adversity." Ps. XXXI.7.

Harriet rested finely during the evening & declared she had not felt so well for months. I expected to read a great deal today, but have only read a short lesson of CH [unintelligible].

Winter has fairly changed places with Spring. Today there has fallen considerable snow & this evening it is clear & very cold.

Our neighbors are very friendly — several called in this eve to offer assistance, etc. Mrs. Shubael Davis stopped tonight.⁷ My health has not been very good today, but this evening since Harriette's relief, feel five years

⁷ Mrs. Matilda S. Davis, 30, whose husband, Shubael, was a cooper.

younger & very much better.

In all these circumstances connected with H.'s sickness I think I discover a special superintending Providence. The Lord be praised, Amen! Amen!

Monday, March 4, 1850. Dear Harriette slept very comfortably last night & during the day has been quite free from pain, either in head or lungs. There remains however a little soreness in her left lung consequent doubtless upon the distension of the blood vessels. This is really a great & speedy relief. Her appetite is quite good. This has been a very severely cold day & yet dear Mother came up this P.M. to stay with us. Bro. Upham very kindly volunteered to bring up Mother. He has shewn himself very much interested in us.

Tuesday, March 5, 1850. Rather a milder day. Dear Hattie remains very comfortable today — a little heat in her head. Esq. Wm. A. Mayhew, by request, called on me in the early evening. He says the Trustees have not yet fully determined whether to continue the school or not, but he thinks there is no question if I will continue the school they will employ me, otherwise they will have no school. He mentioned that in a few terms I might have a very good school — that we could not expect much from this class of pupils — that I had already accomplished more than they could anyways have expected.⁸

Went this evening to the meeting. There was some delay in commencing

⁸ Mayhew's report doesn't describe the Academy as the prospering school local tradition makes it out to have been. In its 16th year, it is one of a number of private "academies" on the Island. There were no public high schools at the time.

the prayer meeting so that only three prayers were offered before the commencing of the public preaching. Deacon Pease called on me & I led in prayer. Mr. Van Houton preached one hour & a quarter from the texts: "Ye do all resist the Holy Ghost" & "Quench not the Spirit." There were good thoughts enough for a sermon of 20 to 30 minutes, which on such occasions is sufficiently long.

After sermon Bro. V. requested me to speak, when I presented an urgent exhortation founded on the texts. Invitation was extended to seekers to rise, when five arose, three of whom were my pupils. Bro. V. called upon me & I again lead in prayer. How much ministers at such times need wisdom & discretion. It is sadly deficient, if I judge rightly, in this Bro., yet he is, Bro. Upham says, a "good brother." I was pleased to hear Miss Caroline M. Smith pray for her young friends. The Lord bless & convert my pupils, all of them, for his name's sake, Amen!

Thursday, March 7, 1850. Time moves on with little of particular interest. My school prospers finely, considering the material of which it is composed & my own inexperience as Teacher. Hattie dear is improving finely today. Yesterday I had serious fears of a relapse as she had considerable fever, some soreness of lungs & pain in head. Today she feels very, very well. Her religious experience is much improved since her sickness & she has been is [sic] in a very happy frame of mind. Few persons that I have seen possess such clear views of religious subjects & experience.

The bleeding from her arm relieved her head & indeed her entire system

so that she appears more cheerful & happy than I ever before saw her. My love for her daily increases. I had never hoped to find one whom I should love so fondly.

Quite a number of the young ladies of my school have within a few days called on Harriette, mostly for the purpose of religious conversation. In this way H. is brought in contact with them & feels she is engaged profitably although sick. Mother is still with us & we enjoy ourselves very well.

A tremendously severe storm last night. Today quite unpleasant. Read & studied Navigation & Algebra last evening,⁹ tonight been reading Nusheim, *Ecl. Hist.* Do not accomplish much nowadays in my Conference readings. Rather doubtful if I quite complete the course. Shall very nearly.

Friday, March 8, /50. Another week's task complete in the school. I have felt today & this evening quite fatigued in mind & body, probably from the labor, care & anxiety of the fortnight past which has afforded me little time for rest. All I need is rest & I shall doubtless immediately recruit.

Dearest Harriette remains today very comfortable. She has set up much of the day & sat down at the table with the family at tea. As she set up this evening, she remarked she had not felt so well able to sit up in the evening for a great while & has not felt so well since we were married or for a length

⁹ Male and female pupils had separate courses, except for singing. Math and navigation were only for males. In 1841, only "a few gentlemen [were] engaged in Nautical education . . . In the Male Department attention is given to Practical Mathematics and Astronomy. . . ." (1841 *Report of Academy*, DCHS).

of time previous to that.¹⁰ All she appears to lack is strength, of which severe suffering & bleeding has deprived her. The Lord be praised for his manifold mercies to us. I feel that I am fully rewarded for all my labor occasioned by her sickness in the increased love I have towards her.

Today, dear Father, anxious to see Hattie, came up & as she was improving so finely Mother returned with him.¹¹ We have very kind, attentive friends whom may the Lord bless a hundred fold.

Have read & looked over about 50 pp. of Nosheim — Dry, very dry. 10 o'clock, to bed.

Monday, March 11, 1850. Since last Friday have completed the last (3rd) vol. of Nosheim's *Ecl. Hist.* & the first vol. of Watson's *Sermons*. Not much accomplished in this line till evening when I closed Nosh. Yesterday, Sab., I spent at home with my dearest Hattie. Completed Watson's *Sermons* Last evening, attended church. The Preaching was as usual, proceeded & followed by prayer & exhortation. Mr. Van Houton called on me to speak after sermon when I gave in brief the substance of a sermon from the text, "Work out your own Salvation with fear & trembling for . . . etc.," in which I took occasion incidentally & without the possibility of offence to correct certain views advanced on the subject of conscience. He gave Conscience supremacy over almost everything, the

¹⁰ This would indicate that she was ill when they married.

¹¹ Father Frederick Baylies, a carpenter and architect, also ran a general store on Main Street, Edgartown, selling dry goods, clothing, shoes, hardware and groceries.



Frederick Baylies, architect of the Edgartown churches and father of Henry, our diarist.

Bible not excepted. He affirmed that C. [conscience] was always right. I assumed this point on condition the C. were always controlled supremely by the word & the spirit of God. Otherwise there might be in men an evil conscience of unbelief — a conscience seared as with a hot iron. I spoke perhaps fifteen [minutes] & as a physical consequence was very restless all night.

The affairs of school have proceeded [?] today as usual. Mr. Abraham Marchant visited the school this A.M. & dined with me.

Have commenced a brief review of Homes' Introduction, preparatory to examination at the Conference.

Dear Harriett yesterday stepped out on the door steps or platform. She is

improving rapidly & feels very happy & very well. How infused [?] the goodness & mercy of God. I love Him supremely for he is the God of My Salvation. I feel occasionally almost restless to be at work in the ministry but then I yield all into His hands knowing, trusting, that it is best. My prayer to God is what wilt thou have me to do?

Tuesday, March 12, 1850. A great variety of weather today. Severe snow storm & bright sunshine & all the intermediates. Sent a basket of clothes for the wash to Edgartown via H. Hole & mailed a letter written on Sat. to Father Budlong, Prov., this morning.¹²

¹² Father Budlong, as we have seen, is Harriette's father, living in Providence, R.I.

School has progressed about as usual. I proposed to the school to engage for a half hour at the close of the school in a religious meeting. I was very much gratified to see 27 of the pupils remain. I spoke to nearly all personally. Several of the youngest girls were very much affected & wept bitterly. Miss Ann F. Hancock, to pray for whom I was called out at midnight, is I fear far gone back.¹³ I asked her if the Lord had pardoned her sins? She replied, "I think it is time they were pardoned" & smiled. I made some remarks which applied to her very closely when she seemed to feel very sensibly.

On the whole, the meeting was very pleasant & I trust profitable. I have since heard those present were very much pleased with the meeting. I think I shall repeat the appointment & may the Lord bless these exercises to the Salvation of the whole school. I thank God these little children may become the children of God.

Ann Eliza Smith, daughter of our landlady, thinks she met with a change last night & Harriett considers her evidence very good. She remarked to H. she had had only one doubt & that was suggested by her mother — that "Perhaps she might be deceived." For the moment, said she, I thought it might be so, but I resolved if I was not converted to seek till my dying hour.

Why not leave this business of suggesting doubts to young converts & especially to children to the Devil

¹³ Readers will recall that two weeks before, Baylies had gone at midnight to the home of Mrs. Holmes Allen, at her request, to pray with Ann, who was at 22, a rather mature young woman to be a pupil at his school. She was certainly not one of the "little children" he mentions shortly. Headmaster Baylies was only 27.

whose appropriate business it is? What an astounding fact — the *First* doubt at the suggestion of a *Christian mother*!!

At the tea table Mrs. S. [Smith] spoke of children's conversions rather slightly & strongly objected to their joining a church & remarked they would get along just as well out of the church as in. This is like *throwing* a child overboard for fear it might sometime *fall* overboard. Children no more frequently disgrace the church & wound the cause of Christ than grown persons. I doubt, very much doubt, if they do so frequently. The Lord bless & convert the Children & gather them into His church & open blind eyes that professed Christians may not blindly lead the children & thus both fall into the ditch.

My sympathies are with the children, for God in mercy converted me when a child of nine years & I know the trials of children. I have yet to learn that 15 or 20 years spent in sin is profitable training to make a person a better Christian, a more consistent Church member.¹⁴

Dear Harriette is steadily improving through the divine blessing. She is however troubled somewhat with diarrhaeia [?]. My own health remains pretty good. I felt very much fatigued by the school & meeting exercises. It is rather too much for me, but I shall try to sacrifice a little strength if by so doing I may advance the cause of Christ in my school.¹⁵

¹⁴ Baylies never mentions a male pupil in the Academy as being converted. It seems that only young girls were "born again," although, of course, he had been in his youth.

¹⁵ The Academy was a private school, of course, but in 1850 there was little, if any, objection to sectarianism even in public schools.

Wednesday, March 13, 1850. A pleasant morning, changing to cloudy & stormy towards evening. Found myself obliged to enforce the rules of my school more rigidly today. I find it will not do to "ease away" at all. Called after school on Mrs. Hannah Look to obtain board for next term, provided I should engage to teach. She is every way prepared to take us & I think we would be very well pleased with the place.¹⁶ I find some difficulty in procuring a boarding place. Mrs. Smith, our landlady, is unable by ill health to keep us longer & there are few places where I would like to go, especially on dear Hattie's account. I am to call on Mrs. L. tomorrow to receive her answer.

Mr. Rotch, a committee from the Trustees of the Academy, called this evening to engage me for the next term to commence as soon after the close of this as will suit my convenience. On inquiring I find it is probable there will be no term in the fall — not till Dec., as the funds of the Inst. are low & the masters are mostly employed in the warm weather.¹⁷

With this understanding I did not engage to take the school, preferring to consider the subject further. If the Fall term could commence the last of Oct., I could then have two terms before Conference 1851, when I hope to take an appointment. This would give me the time from July 1st to last of Oct., about four months, including the hottest weather & the pleasantest months (Sept. & Oct.) to teach [an

¹⁶ Mrs. Look lived 200 yards west of the house he was then living in, on the opposite side of Music Street, only a short walk from the Academy.

¹⁷ The "masters," of course, are the male pupils, of whom he has very little to say.

illegible word here is crossed out] & pay me \$450 cash, which is better than I could do in most any of our Academies & devote all the time. The Lord will doubtless direct & I will do accordingly.

Harriette has been today very comfortable. I discover however today some cough — not very hard. I was much pleased on coming in this P.M. to find her dressed as formerly, having doffed her house gown & donned her Thiber [?].

Have not read much today or evening. I expected to do a great deal this A.M. but Mr. Rotch tarried till 20 m. of 10 preventing.

The meeting this evening I am told was a very solemn one. Two of my scholars professed conversion yesterday. The Lord convert them all for his Son's sake.

I am unusually fatigued this evening. Governing fatigues me very much more than teaching. 10:40 o'clock & I must seek tired nature's surest restorer, now.

"Now I lay me down to sleep

I pray the Lord my soul to keep

If I should die before I wake

I pray the Lord my soul to take.

Amen." H.B.

Thursday, March 14. A very severe rain storm today — moderating & clearing towards evening. Very few pupils in attendance. Called at Mrs. H. Look's after school, according to agreement. She had stepped out to neighbors, but had left a note for me saying such is the state of her affairs she can not have the care of boarders. When I stepped up the steps before knocking, I lifted a fervent prayer to God that if it was His will he would dispose her mind favorably toward us so that she

might take us into her family. As I rapped, the col'd girl, Jane A. Mingo, came to the door & I saw at once we were to be refused for Jane looked very sad.¹⁸ Jane has taken a great liking to Harriette & is very anxious Mrs. L. should take us. For the moment, on reading the note, I felt rather disappointed but immediately remembered my prayer before entering & gave it all up as right & went home quite cheerful. Dear Harriette said it is all right.

While at tea, Jane came in, her countenance very cheerful & told me Mrs. L. had concluded to take us & wished me to come down & look at the room. I judge she left the note preferring not to give me a direct personal refusal & it appears the neighbor on whom she called advised her to take us & she yielded & this about the time I was praying on the door step. Truly, "the Lord is my shepherd [sic], I shall not want!" Why should I not consider this an answer to prayer. I had rec'd two positive refusals, one indirectly & the other directly & after all she concludes to take us. "The hairs of your head are all numbered."

Harriette dear has not felt so bright today. I account for it principally from the open languid weather & want of sleep last night.

Have read or reviewed some of Home's [?] Intro. & since school have been looking over Algebra & Navigation, solving some knotty points which I rather hurried over in the class

today. My Conf. studies requiring all my time out of school, I do not get opportunity to look over the recitations in advance of the classes so that occasionally I find myself rather cramped. I manage in such cases as best I can, never that the pupils may think I do not know — that would not be well.

So far I have had few such cases & have worked out of all with one exception. This I think is on the whole doing very well for there is not a book in the school I ever studied & when I laid aside those studies I never designed to resume them, much less to teach them. I have done nothing with Algebra since my Freshman year (nearly 8 yrs. ago) and most other branches have been neglected longer than that.¹⁹

I owe my success as a Teacher, which is acknowledged on all hands I hear, mostly to Divine assistance. The Providences of God have seldom been so marked in my history as ever since I proposed taking this Academy. I have had not one doubt that I am in the way of duty & God's appointing. It is pleasant thus to live, Children of Providence. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow"! Amen & Amen.

THE ANNUAL AWARD OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

GIVEN IN MEMORY OF DR. FREDERICK L. FAGLEY
FOUNDER AND FIRST EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Category churches under 350, Second Place

Awarded to Federated Church of
Edgartown, Massachusetts

for program and printed materials presented by churches
of our constituency on the occasion of the celebration
of an important anniversary or special event.

May 4, 1993
Date

James L. Holden
President
Harold F. Wathley
Executive Secretary and Archivist

The article, "The First Thirty Ministers of the First Church (1642 to 1878)," published in the May 1992 Intelligencer, was awarded second place in this annual competition among all Congregational churches in the United States.

¹⁸ Jane Mingo, 20, born in Westport, Mass., was apparently a servant in the house. In the 1850 Census, Jane is described as "Black," one of 12 "Blacks" in Tisbury. All but two were female.

¹⁹ Baylies is amazingly frank about his lack of knowledge in the subjects he is teaching. He doesn't make a strong case for the Academy.

Disbursements for the Quarter ending June 30th 1888.

Date of Check.	Name.	Nature of Expenditure.	No of Check	Amount Paid.
1888.				
June 30.	J. P. Coffin.	Collector & Commissioner.	114	62 80.
	Jeremiah Ross.	By. Inspector & C.	115	182 00.
	Henry W. Beattie.	"	116	182 00.
	Ernest E. Morris.	Inspector.	117	132 00.
	Samuel Osborn Jr.	Port.	118	12 50.
	Benjamin C. Cornwall.		119	5 00.
	J. H. Tallman, Cashier.	<small>Message to Baltimore Washington June 26 1888. Disburse July 26 1888. In the Baltimore Banks of Commerce New England Bank</small>	120	8 00.
				<u>586 30</u>

September 14, 1888. Initials J. H. M. Balance due the U.S. \$800

September 30th 1888.

1888.				
September 29.	J. P. Coffin.	Collector & Commissioner.	125	62 86.
October 1	Jeremiah Ross.	By. Inspector & C.	128	184 00.
" 1	Henry W. Beattie.	"	129	184 00.
" 1	Ernest E. Morris.	Inspector.	130	146 00.
September 29	Samuel S. Osborn.	Port.	126	12 50.
	Benjamin C. Cornwall.	"	137	5 00.
	Balance due the United States.			<u>38 00</u>
				<u>632 36</u>

Dec. 22, 1888. Initials J. H. M. Balance due the U.S. \$52.00

December 31st 1888.

1888.				
December 31	J. P. Coffin.	Collector & Commissioner.	134	62 90.
	Jeremiah Ross.	By. Collector. Inspector & C.	135	184 00.
	Henry W. Beattie.	"	136	184 00.
	Ernest E. Morris.	Inspector.	137	142 00.
	Samuel S. Osborn.	Port.	138	12 50.
	Benjamin C. Cornwall.		139	5 00.
	Samuel S. Osborn.	Coal for Custom House.	140	16 00.
	B. H. Cornwell.	By. Collector. Y. Morris.	141	6 60.
	Ernest E. Morris.	Painting Revenue Boat.	142	14 61.
	Ernest E. Morris.	Smile & Smile.	143	50 00.
	Balance due the United States.			<u>42 00.</u>
				<u>719 66</u>

By the U.S. M. Dept. of the Treasury. Difference arising from Commissions Short Charges 65 cents.

Collector Coffin was the lowest paid member of the Custom House, his pay being based on