Two Vineyard “Men of Color” Who Fought in the Civil War
by RICHARD MILLER

Chilmark’s 300th Birthday

The Hurricane of 1938: Chilmark’s Great Trauma
by HOUSTON KENYON Jr.

The Sad Voyage
Of Eliza Russell
by JOAN DRUETT

Rev. Henry Baylies’ Journal
MEMBERSHIP DUES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustaining</td>
<td>$75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patron</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefactor</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dues are tax deductible, except for $8, which is the cost of the Intelligencer.

Corrections

An inexcusable mental lapse by the Editor was responsible for two errors in Anna Josepha Nevin’s article on the Shiverick House in our most recent issue (May 1994). Joseph R. Shiverick of New Bedford was Dr. Clement F. Shiverick’s father, not his uncle, as incorrectly stated on page 180. Also, the caption on page 187 is in error. The house was never owned by Dr. C. C. Nevin. When the photograph was taken, it was still owned by Anna Josepha, although Doctor Nevin lived and had his office in it.

THE DUKEs COUNTY INTELLIGENCER


Two Vineyard “Men of Color” Who Fought in the Civil War

by Richard Miller

Chilmark’s 300th Birthday

The Hurricane of 1938: Chilmark’s Great Trauma

by Houston Kenyon Jr.

The Sad Voyage Of Eliza Russell

by Joan Druett

Documents: Rev. Henry Baylies’ Journal

In Memoriam: Natalie Norton Huntington

Inside Back Cover

Editor: Arthur R. Railton

Founding Editor: Gale Huntington (1902-1993)

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

Memberships are solicited. Send applications to the Society at Box 827, Edgartown, MA, 02539. Telephone: 508 627-4441. Manuscripts and authors’ queries should be addressed there.

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

ISSN 0418 1379
Two Vineyard "Men of Color" Who Fought in the Civil War
by RICHARD MILLER

ANY DISCUSSION of the Vineyard’s role in the Civil War must include Islanders of color who served in the Union Army and Navy. They have received little or no attention in history. Charles Edward Banks, our leading historian, names 185 army and 110 navy recruits who were credited to Island towns. Research indicates that at least eight were “men of color,” although Banks does not identify them as such.

But only two of the eight, James W. Curtis of Edgartown and James Diamond of Gay Head, were actually Vineyard residents. Neither was born on the Island. Diamond, an Indian from Waterford, New York, moved to Gay Head at some unknown date and in 1857 married a Native American, Abiah Manning, daughter of Marshall and Hannah Manning.

The other “colored” recruit, James W. Curtis, was born in Westport, Massachusetts. Although it seems unlikely, he, too, may have been an Indian. He is listed in the 1861 Massachusetts Indian Census as the head of a Wampanoag Indian family on Chappaquiddick. However, in the listing

2 Banks acknowledges that all those listed were not necessarily Island residents. To fill quotas, towns offered large bounties to attract volunteers from on or off Island. Those recruits were credited to the town paying the bounty, regardless of residence. Further, any man could pay someone to take his place, if drafted. The “subs,” as they were called, were usually credited to the town of the man paying. At least 30 of the 287 white soldiers and 6 of the 8 “colored” soldiers on Banks’s list may never have stepped foot on the Vineyard. Perhaps, there were other Vineyard men of color who served, but Curtis and Diamond are two soldiers we have been able to verify. See Footnote 4.

RICHARD F. MILLER, a Nantucket-based Civil War historian and reconstructor, is a member of the reconstituted 2nd Company, Andrew’s Sharpshooters, of the 22nd Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. He has specialized in the history of the Cape and Islands during that war and is co-author of a forthcoming book, Nantucket: The Civil War Experience.
he is described as "Colored, (for'ner), Mariner." Years before, in 1845, he had married a Chappaquiddick Indian, Francis E. Prince, daughter of Lawrence and Love (Madison) Prince.

In the Dukes County Vital Records, both bride and groom are described as "Colored," both "residents of Edgartown at time of marriage." The bride, born in Edgartown in 1827, is listed by her maiden name in the Federal Census of 1850, five years after the marriage. She is described as Black (there was no category for Indians, the Census Marshal's choice was White, Mulatto or Black). At that time, she was living in the household of Dr. Clement Shiverick as a maid.

Curtis and Diamond served in the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry (Colored), hereafter called the 5th Cavalry. Both survived the conflict and bore its scars in shortened or painful lives. Their story not only illuminates an important but previously unexamined aspect of Vineyard history, but also provides a view of the experiences of Civil War soldiers of color, Indian or Black.

It is the saga of two very different men who by two very different routes ended up in the same colored regiment. James Curtis took the conventional route. He enlisted for three years on January 18, 1864, shortly after President Lincoln authorized the recruitment of non-whites. On January 29, Curtis was mustered at Camp Meigs, the massive training facility in Readville, Massachusetts, where he was assigned to Company D, 5th Cavalry. His volunteering was praised by the Vineyard Gazette, stating that it made "seven recruits towards our quota. We are doing better than some large cities." James Diamond joined the 5th Cavalry through a very different and unlikely path. Years earlier, in 1858, he and Peter E. Johnson, both of Gay Head, broke into the Chilmark store owned by William C. Manter and stole 50 pounds of flour, 16 pounds of tobacco, six pairs of shoes, five pies and assorted other goods including ale, cigars, peppernut, sugar, meat, tea and soap. A few months later, they were apprehended. Johnson turned state's evidence against Diamond, who was found guilty and sentenced to 10 months hard labor at the Dukes County Jail, having already served four months while awaiting trial. Johnson was sentenced to six months.7

In less than two months, Diamond escaped from the jail and was not recaptured for nearly four years. During those years his second daughter was born, making it likely that he was not far from the Vineyard. In May 1863, his return was snidely reported in the Gazette: "We learn the jailer is entertaining his old tenant, Diamond, of Gay Head. He married about eighteen days."8

A jury on September 30, 1863, found him guilty of breaking out of jail and he was sentenced to one year's hard labor. The jury foreman was William Bradley, who was to become state recruiting agent on the Vineyard. As things turned out, Bradley may well have done as much to extirpate Diamond from prison as he did in placing him there. This became possible because a major change in the Union's enlistment policy occurred while Diamond was at large.

In the early years of the war, President Lincoln was vehemently opposed to non-whites serving as soldiers, perhaps on political, more than philosophical, grounds. When the Governor of Wisconsin wrote to Secretary of War

---

5 1861 Report of the Indians of the Commonwealth by John Milton Earle, Commissioner, March 15, 1861, Senate No. 96, Appendix, p.32. In the Report, "Foreigner [for'ner] is used, throughout, in the Indian sense, simply to designate one not of Indian descent." It's certain Curtis's wife, Francia (sometimes Frances) was Indian. In 1892, then a widow, she, along with several other Indians sold Chappaquiddick land, which had been deeded to their families when the Indian Lands were divided, about 1830. The land, consisting of a number of lots, sold for a total of $52.25, of which Mrs. Curtis, then living in New Bedford, received $31.63.

6 There may have been other Vineyard Indian volunteers. On January 29, 1864, the Gazette reported that "a colored man from New Bedford has enlisted five men from Gay Head." The editor demanded they be credited to Chilmark (Gay Head was part of Chilmark until 1870). Who these five Gay Headers were is unknown, but if they joined the army, they have not been identified.

7 Military and Pension Record of James Curtis, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Hereafter listed as "Records of Curtis."
Edwin M. Stanton in August 1862 asking him if any "encouragement" might be given to those who sought to raise a battalion of "friendly Indians," the Secretary immediately and bluntly expressed Lincoln's position:

The President declines to receive Indians or negroes as troops.\textsuperscript{9}

One month later, Secretary Stanton similarly informed the governor of Kansas of Lincoln's position: "You are not authorized to organize Indians, nor any but loyal white men..."

In the summer of 1862, the policy was clear. It was a white-only army. But soon the reality of the battlefield forced Lincoln to take a fresh look. It was obvious that blacks, especially freed blacks from the slave states, were a source of manpower than could no longer be ignored.

"Though he never announced it formally, on New Year's Day 1863, the president had dissolved all the bars against black soldiers."\textsuperscript{11} He began urging the enlistment of black units. With high hopes, he wrote to Andrew Johnson, the military governor of Tennessee:

The bare sight of fifty thousand armed, and drilled black soldiers on the banks of the Mississippi, would end the rebellion at once.\textsuperscript{12}

This policy reversal took place far from the Vineyard, but it changed the life of James Diamond, then awaiting trial for jail breaking. No doubt he heard the church bells joyously ring when the Union army scored victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in summer 1863. But those victories had come at a high price. More men were needed, many more, to replace the fallen. At the urging of governors, led by Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, Lincoln began calling publicly for the formation of units of "men of color." The first such in the eastern theater of the war were formed in the freed South, Louisiana and South Carolina.\textsuperscript{13} The movement spread north. Rhode Island and Massachusetts, eager to fill their recruiting quotas, actively recruited colored units to be commanded by white officers.

A battle involving the first Massachusetts colored infantry regiment occurred that summer and played a part in the future of Diamond and Curtis, although it is unlikely that either was aware of it. On the evening of July 18, 1863, the men of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry (Colored) double-quicked over a sandy beach in South Carolina in a brave but futile attempt to capture Fort Wagner, an impregnable Confederate earthwork guarding the approach to Charleston Harbor.

Though the battle was of little military significance, the stirring accounts of the bravery in combat of the 54th Massachusetts dispelled much of the racist fiction that black men could not or would not fight. The Atlantic Monthly spoke for many formerly skeptical whites when it stated, "the manhood of the colored race shines before the many eyes that would not see." Horace Greeley's New York Tribune declared that the attack "made Fort Wagner such a name to the colored race as Bunker Hill had been for ninety years to the white Yankees."\textsuperscript{14} The nation's pride was so affected that the blue-blood Union League of New York raised a fund to recruit a colored regiment "worthy to stand side by side with the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts."\textsuperscript{15}

The Fort Wagner assault and resultant acclaim accelerated the plans of Gov. John A. Andrew of Massachusetts to form a colored cavalry regiment.\textsuperscript{16} Abolitionist and Harvard Law

\textsuperscript{9} War of the Rebellion, Official Records, Series III, v.2, National Historical Society, Harrisburg, Penn., 1971, p.297. Hereafter, Official Records. The Navy had started to enlist blacks, but with restrictions. On April 30, 1862, Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, announced that contrabands (freed slaves) could be enlisted "freely in the navy... as boys at $8, $9 or $10 per month... to continue the excellent sanitary conditions with the approach of the hot and sickly season." Clearly, they were to be orderlies, not full-fledged sailors.

\textsuperscript{10} Official Records, p.299.


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p.61.

\textsuperscript{13} The very first "colored" unit had been formed earlier in the west, in Kansas.

\textsuperscript{14} As quoted in James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, Ballantine Books, N.Y., 1988, p.686.

\textsuperscript{15} Official Records, p.1107.

\textsuperscript{16} Massachusetts had two colored infantry regiments, the 54th and 55th. Most of their soldiers were not Massachusetts residents: "Although it [the 54th] was a state volunteer regiment, a majority of its men actually came from other states. The regiment attracted some of the finest young black men the North had to offer, including including two sons of... Frederick Douglass." Joseph T. Glatthaar, Forged in Battle, The Free Press, Macmillan, N.Y., 1990, p.138.
School Professor Theophilus Parsons had suggested the idea. When the governor proposed it to Secretary of War Stanton, he replied September 10, 1863:

My own impressions are entirely in favor of the measure. The infantry regiments raised by you have settled the question of the colored man’s fitness for infantry service; and I think that you would be able to demonstrate, in a manner equally satisfactory, their adaptation for cavalry service, which is the only point of dispute remaining unsettled. 17

War Department approval quickly was given. In the fall and winter of 1863-64, recruiting the 5th Cavalry was begun. It proved difficult. Massachusetts had no great supply of colored men of fighting age. To fill the 54th and 55th Infantry, agents had been forced to seek volunteers as far north as Canada and among the newly freed slaves of the south. 18

Being Massachusetts residents, Curtis and Diamond were in the minority in the 5th Cavalry. 19 This shortage of volunteers, no doubt, was a factor in the judge’s decision in Diamond’s case, as reported by the Gazette:

PARDONED.—James Diamond, of Gay Head, who was sentenced by the Superior Court, September, 1863, to one year in the House of Correction at New Bedford, was pardoned on the 4th ult., on complying with the condition that he should enlist in the colored regiment at Readville. He should be credited to the quota of Dukes County, and of the towns, Chilmark, being the most contiguous, should be allowed to count him in her returns, but probably Boston will claim him as she gobbles up all with complicity. 20

Perhaps it was no coincidence that the same issue of the Gazette mentioned that “our recruiting agent, William Bradley, Esq., who is now abroad on this special business,

18 Most blacks in the Union army were from slave states: 144,000 out of the 170,000 total. Glatthaar, p.135. See also Henry Greenleaf Pearson, The Life of John Andrew, v.11, Houghton, Mifflin, Boston, 1904, pp.91-94.
20 Gazette, April 1, 1864.

has obtained, we learn, about 25 men, which will give us a surplus for further demands.” Indeed, former jury foreman Bradley was in the thick of it, having been hired by a West Tisbury committee to find “substitutes” from off-Island. He would seek out men who were willing, for money, to enlist as residents of West Tisbury, thereby sparing local men from the draft.

And so it was that Curtis and Diamond, both non-white and both Vineyard residents, found themselves in the same cavalry regiment at Readville. They had something else in common besides skin color and first names. Both were 41 years old, 15 years older than the average Civil War soldier.

At his mustering, Private Curtis was described as having a black complexion, black hair, black eyes, and as standing 5 feet 6 inches tall, making him about two inches shorter than the average recruit. He was in good health. Dr. Edwin Mayberry of the Vineyard, who examined him immediately before his enlistment, found him “free from all disease, well and able-bodied.” 21 Unfortunately, this would soon change.

Perhaps due to his age, but more likely because he had made a favorable impression on his superiors, Curtis was assigned to the light duties of a guard and orderly at the regimental headquarters. Just before the 5th Cavalry broke camp to move to Washington, D.C., Curtis was furloughed home. On May 5, 1864, he left, the Gazette reported, for “the seat of the war” with Company D, 5th Cavalry.

Private James Diamond had already “enlisted,” on the order of the court, and was credited to the town of Chilmark, something the Gazette had doubted would happen. He gave his occupation as “seaman.” Mustered into Company I of the 5th, he was described as having an “Indian complexion,” black eyes and hair and standing 5 feet 9 inches tall. One examining physician described him as of the “Indian & negro race.” 22

Although he is shown to have been mustered in March, Diamond was absent from the unit until April 30. Perhaps

21 Records of Curtis.
he had been given time at home after his release from jail. At Camp Meigs, Diamond and Curtis were trained in cavalry tactics, following the system of drill formulated by the Union cavalry general, Philip St. George Cooke. Prescribing a single rank of cavalry, the drill emphasized group movements on horseback. No instruction was given in infantry tactics or in the use of muzzle-loading rifled muskets, the standard infantry weapon. Instead, the men were taught to use the cavalry’s breech-loading carbine. This lack of infantry training would have dire consequences for the 5th Cavalry, as we shall see.

The mission of cavalry differed from that of the infantry. It was primarily used to screen friendly troop movements, gather intelligence about the enemy, secure communications and conduct behind-the-line raids. Like colored infantry units, the 5th Cavalry had only white officers, with the ranks, including non-commissioned officers, being entirely men of color.

Eager to ensure the success of his colored regiments, Governor Andrew sought out white officers who were “gentlemen of the highest tone and honor.” But blue blood was not enough. As he explained to Francis G. Shaw, father of the young and later famed colonel of the 54th Infantry (Colored), officers should be “young men of military experience, of firm Anti-Slavery principles, ambitious, superior to the vulgar contempt of color and having faith in the capacity of Colored men for military service.”

An earnest attempt was made to recruit militarily experienced, socially prominent and politically correct men to lead the 5th Cavalry. Among those chosen were Henry Sturgis Russell, Charles Francis Adams Jr., Francis Lee Higginson, Nathan P. Bowditch and his brother Charles Pickering Bowditch, whose letters about the unit are an important source of its history.

How “superior” some of them were to “a vulgar contempt of color” is open to question. Charles Bowditch, soon to be promoted to captain, thought that the appointment of Henry Russell as colonel was “rather a come round, since he did not used to be quite right on the negro question.” Charles Francis Adams Jr., later regimental commander, referred to his men as the “nigs,” who might be skilled workmen, but were docile and lacking initiative. “I have little hope for them,” Adams said, “in their eternal contact with a race like ours.” Even Charles Bowditch, whose letters leave no doubt of his genuine respect for his men and his commitment to abolition, was not without shadows. He doubted whether blacks would be able to “sit up straight in the saddle, believed they “excelled” at physical work and, he wrote to his father, thought “Negroes [are] the hardest people to reason with that you can imagine.”

These attitudes were not without consequence. During Adams's tenure as colonel, near the end of the war, the 5th Cavalry was sent to Texas, there to be “chiefly employed in digging and other laborious work.” As a result, according to Adjutant General William Schouler, sick lists swelled because of “exposure and overwork.” This changed only after Adams was replaced by Col. Samuel Chamberlain in August 1865.

But for Privates Diamond and Curtis, and for all colored soldiers, there were more obstacles than a few prejudiced officers. Most bothersome was the fact that their pay was not equal to that of white soldiers. Despite the fact that Secretary Stanton declared in August 1862 that colored soldiers must be paid the same as whites ($13 a month plus free clothing, or a $3.50 clothing allowance), his order was ignored until Congress ordered equal pay in June 1864.

The pay discrimination was so onerous that some colored

---

24 “War Letters of Charles P. Bowditch,” Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, v.57 (1923-24), pp.414-415. Henry Russell would finish his service as a Brevet Brigadier General, as would Adams, whose brother Henry was the famous writer. Higginson and the Bowditch brothers were from prominent Yankee merchant families.
25 Ibid., p.454.
27 Bowditch Letters, pp.441, 454, 469, respectively.
units refused to obey orders, becoming mutineers. It was such a 
cause célèbre that Sgt. William Walker of the 3rd 
South Carolina Colored Infantry (U.S.A.) was executed in 
late 1863 for leading his company in a “mutiny” against 
unequal pay. It was more than money, the men said, it was 
demeaning. The 54th and 55th Massachusetts regiments 
“even refused Governor Andrew’s offer to use state funds to 
increase their compensation to the amount white privates 
received.”

Colored troops were often used as “uniformed laborers,” 
which added to their anger over unequal pay and with reason: 

Heavy fatigue duty wore out clothing as quickly as it wore 
down bodies. When black soldiers exhausted their $3 
monthly clothing allowance, quartermasters deducted the 
cost of additional clothing from their $7 monthly pay, thus 
salting the wound of discriminatory pay.

Another powerfully dissuasive issue existed, one that must 
have given Curtis and Diamond serious pause: the avowals 
of the Confederacy to execute all black Prisoners of War 
who were northern-born freemen and to return to bondage 
all black prisoners found to be former slaves. Announced 
by Confederate President Jefferson Davis in early 1863, the 
policy was never retracted, although it was later modified 
so that black prisoners who were freemen before the war 
were given proper Prisoner of War status. Not that such 
distinctions mattered under combat conditions. Reports of 
Confederate massacres of black POWs at Fort Pillow in April 
1864 and at the Petersburg Crater in July 1864 were only 
two of many confirmed stories of outright murder and 
atrocities by Confederates upon colored prisoners.

Following Jefferson Davis’s announcement, President 
Lincoln called on him to treat all prisoners, regardless of 
color, under the Rules of War, stating that all Union soldiers 

29 Berlin, p.21. When Governor Andrew advertised for colored recruits to fill his first 
colored unit, the 54th Infantry, the ad had stated they would be paid $13 a month (the 
same as white soldiers) plus state aid for their families. His offer to augment their pay 
was forced by reminders of that promise. A Rhode Island colored regiment mutinied 
against unequal pay as late as March 1864.

28 Berlin, p.24. Although colored privates were paid $10 a month, the $3 clothing 
allowance was deducted, reducing actual pay to $7.

were equal, black and white. This self-righteous position 
prompted a black Massachusetts soldier in the 54th Infantry 
to write to Lincoln pointing out his hypocrisy:

All we lack is a paler hue and a better acquaintance with 
the Alphabet... We have done a Soldier’s Duty. Why can’t 
we have a Soldier’s pay? You caution the Rebel Chief, 
that the United States knows no distinction in her Soldiers. 
She insists on having all her Soldiers of whatever creed or 
Color, to be treated according to the usages of War. Now 
if the United States exacts uniformity of treatment of her 
Soldiers from the Insurgents, would it not be well and 
consistent to set the example herself by paying all her 
Soldiers alike... [pay us] as American Soldiers, not as 
menial hirelings.

But there was no mutinous fever in the 5th Cavalry where 
Privates Diamond and Curtis were serving. After a brief 
training period, on May 5, 1864, the unit, consisting of 893 
men and 42 officers, left Camp Readville in a packed train 
for Washington, D.C. A week later, the regiment was set 
up at Camp Casey in Arlington, Virginia, one of the 
defenses ringing Washington.

It was at Camp Casey that James W. Curtis was separated 
from the regiment. On May 13, the 5th was moved farther 
south, but Curtis was in the hospital with “Chronic 
Rheumatism,” a catch-all diagnosis that could and often did 
include almost anything. In Curtis’s case, there are 
indications that he was already infected with the tuberculosis 
that would eventually kill him.

It was also at Camp Casey that the 5th Cavalry received 
a major blow, not from the enemy, but from War 
Department bureaucrats. Charles Pickering Bowditch wrote 
to his mother, criticizing what had happened:

Just think of our being here in Camp Casey, turned into 
infantry and about to drill in Casey’s tactics. Horrid isn’t 
it? It is all very well to die for one’s country but to be turned 
from cavalry to infantry for one’s country is a very different

31 Harold Holzer, Dear Mr. Lincoln, Letters to the President, Addison-Wesley Co., Reading, 
Mass., 1993, pp.259-60. Soldier Gooding was from New Bedford. His letters from the 
field were often published in the New Bedford Mercury.

32 Records of Curtis.
thing.33

Being dismounted, Bowditch hoped, was merely “a temporary arrangement...to last only while all the troops are fighting big battles at the front and to prevent any untimely guerilla raid in the rear.” But the dismounting of the 5th Cavalry was not temporary. From then on, it was used as infantry. Its station was City Point, Virginia, the burgeoning supply depot and command center from which the final year of the war would be managed.

The monotony of army routine settled over the 5th. “Not much is transpiring here except the arrival of more troops,” Captain Bowditch wrote on May 28. While Generals Grant and Robert E. Lee were conducting fierce battles just a few miles away, Bowditch related some of the 5th Cavalry’s duties:

I rather think that you would consider we had something else to do than guard prisoners if you saw the way we have to work. Regularly every morning we have to get up at three A.M., and turn out our companies under arms. After the roll, they stack their arms and go to sleep in the rear of the stacks until five, one officer remaining with the men and keeping awake. At five, another roll-call and men have to keep their equipments on till seven. Then there is an order for five hours drill, which makes nine hours a day for the men to keep their equipments on.34

That dreary routine ended June 15. Grant had decided to surprise Lee by sending an advance force south to capture the city of Petersburg, Virginia. The 5th Cavalry, assigned to Gen. Edward W. Hinks’s Colored Division, left City Point and advanced west towards Petersburg, 10 miles away. Petersburg was lightly defended by the Confederates and Grant’s surprise move had to be accomplished quickly before the garrison could be reinforced.

At one A.M., 3747 troops, mostly colored, consisting of two brigades of infantry, which included the 5th Cavalry, and two batteries of artillery, began the march. Around 7 A.M., four miles before Petersburg, fierce Confederate fire drove back the cavalry which was leading the column, halting the advance.35

The infantry was immediately ordered up the road where it made a difficult flanking march through woods and a swamp before halting at a treeline bordering Baylor’s Farm, a clearing, nearly a mile square, straddling the City Point Road. It was an effective place for the Confederates to delay the Union advance so as to gain time for reinforcements to reach Petersburg.

The Union soldiers formed two parallel lines of battle. The 5th Cavalry was on the left of the second line. Dodging sharpshooter bullets on that sweltering morning, Private James Diamond had in front of him an open field of standing corn sloping gently upwards, cresting about 400 yards ahead. Atop the rise were Confederate earthworks concealing “some force of infantry” and six cannon with a clear sweep of the corn field.

After considerable delay, General Hinks gave the order to charge. The 5th Cavalry led the attack against raking artillery fire, “furiously assailed with spherical case, cannon and musketry along the whole line.” Colonel Henry Sturgis Russell, who headed the 5th in the attack, went down with a shot in the shoulder. Major Zabdiel B. Adams, another senior officer, fell with a shot in the chest. But the attack continued and by 8 A.M., the Confederate works were carried. The defenders retreated towards Petersburg, chased by Union troops. The skirmishing ended at nightfall. Despite the apparent Union success, the over-all attack had been a failure. Petersburg had not been taken as Grant had hoped. Soon its defenders were reinforced, prolonging the war by months.

It had also been a failure for the 5th Cavalry. Trained as cavalrmen, the regiment, forced to fight as infantry, met with disaster. Despite its apparent success in the charge, it was strongly criticized. General Hinks was blunt, calling the

33 Bowditch Letters, p.473. Casey’s tactics were in the standard infantry manual written by Union General Silas Casey. It is no wonder Bowditch was upset. There was an elitist quality to being in the cavalry, astride a fine, well-groomed mount.

34 Ibid., p. 475.

35 Official Records, Series I, v.XL, Part I-Reports, pp.720-723. The account of the 5th Cavalry at Baylor’s Farm is compiled from various reports in these Records.
unit (and two other black cavalry regiments involved) "unskilled in the use of muskets and entirely unfit for operations in the field, by reason of having been taught only the single formations of ranks as prescribed by Cooke's [cavalry] Tactics, and it is impossible to move them in line of battle with any precision, steadiness, or effectiveness."

Specifically of the 5th Cavalry, he wrote:

...I placed the Fifth Massachusetts Cavalry (dismounted) on the left of the second line of battle, and its awkwardness in maneuvering delayed my movement fully three-quarters of an hour, and when it finally advanced, though nobly and heroically led, it was but little other than an armed mob... Its losses were heavy... while its power to inflict injury upon the enemy was nominal. I could but commend its gallantry, but considering its inefficiency, decided that to further engage it with the enemy would be reckless and useless exposure of life to no purpose, and accordingly withheld it from participation in the final attack upon the enemy's works....

The 5th Cavalry's poor performance resulted, two weeks later, in it being assigned to guard Confederate prisoners at Point Lookout, Maryland, located on a spit of land jutting into Chesapeake Bay. With the exception of a brief moment of glory when it (perhaps because of its color) was chosen to lead the march into Richmond in early April 1865, the 5th was never again part of the actual fighting forces. Soon after Richmond it was transferred to Texas to serve as a labor unit.

Private James Diamond of Gay Head had been among the casualties at the disastrous battle for Baylor's Farm although not by enemy action. Hospital records do describe his injury as "Contusion — stunned by shell," but Diamond remembered it quite differently in an application for a disability pension he made 26 years later:

...it was a very hot day, we were in the woods and made a charge upon the Rebel Right a Cross the field and drove them back with the capture of one Cannon [and] brought it down to our Camp. My head commenced to ache as it has never done before. I remember of being taken to my tent and laid down. I could not see very well for some time.

How long I laid in that way I am unable to say but the next day I was taken to the Contraband Hospital... I have not got over that Sun Stroke from that day to the present time. 37

First Sergeant Charles R. Douglass, also of Company I, recalled the incident similarly. The Confederates, he stated, were hiding in a large field of waist-high corn. Company I charged the breastworks, capturing the cannon. Several men, including Diamond, were ordered to drag the cannon back to City Point. "[It was, Douglass wrote,] a very hot day, and over a sandy and dusty road... Diamond staggered and fell by the wayside, but was assisted on until he reached camp, where for some time he lay in his tent sick." 38

Sergeant Douglass also recalled that after this episode Diamond always wore a "white bandage or sort of a Havelock" around his head and that due to "severe pain in his head" he was excused from guard and picket duty during the summer months. Another comrade described how Diamond was judged by his peers: "[He] complained of not being well, then the Boys called him lazy." 39

The other Vineyard soldier in the 5th Cavalry, Private James Curtis, had missed all the action. He was still hospitalized with "Chronic Rheumatism." On June 13, 1864, he was transferred from Camp Casey to a hospital in Alexandria, Virginia, from which on August 5 he wrote to his wife, Frances:

I now embrace this present opportunity of writing these few lines to you to inform you that I am well at present and I hope that these few lines may find you enjoying the same blessing. I received your kind letter and I was very happy to hear that you got the money. I have been very sick since I sent you the last letter but thank God that I am getting better now only I have got a pretty bad cough. Yet I have wrote Down to my regiment about that money, and I have not received no answer yet but the money will be good and if you get it I will send it home. We had a very nice Celebration here on the first of August. I would like you to send me word

---

37 Records of Diamond, Affidavit, July 15, 1891.
38 Ibid., Affidavit, Charles R. Douglass, Nov. 7, 1891.
39 Ibid., Affidavit, George R. Johnson, Nov. 1, 1893.
how [you made] Out with Captain Osborn, wether you have done anything yet or not.40 i suppose that you have heard of the great battle at petersburgh. Our Color'd regiment lost about 1000 more than the whites, all by poor management. Some how my regiment is at point lookout.41 i would like you to pay Mr. browning a little something on that Little Debt that i owe him. i would like you to send me all the latest news and let me know [how] your garden Comes on this season and about Wm. Mathews, if he has ever got home yet or not. we have Glorious [religious] meetings here 3 times a week but i still find god precious to my soul.

send me all of the best news for you said that you did not tell me one half of the news. write soon and often and send them to the same place. Direct them to Dr. Barker. you had better have that Chimney to the floor this summer and if i was in your place i would have a little fireplace built to it. the next payment that i have i will receive all my back pay and bounty to.

the Dr. thinks that he will try to get me transferred to the navy, that is to go on the water. he says this country dont agree with my health and he says that i will do better on the water.

Give my best respects to all of the inquiring friends. i am in hopes to get home some time this fall if nothing happens.

Private Curtis did, as he had hoped, get home on a furlough some time later. But he was not well. “He was home nearly two weeks and during all that time was under treatment [for rheumatism] by Dr. Mayberry of Edgartown.” Mrs. Curtis stated in an affidavit in 1889. In June 1865 he was judged well enough to be released from the hospital and transferred to Clark’s Barracks in Washington, D.C. But a month later he was back in the hospital, this time at L’Ouverture General Hospital, Alexandria, Virginia, with “Consumption,” the scourge of the 19th Century. Shortly after, he was diagnosed as a “Convalescent” and transferred to Galloup’s Island, Boston Harbor, “for Muster out of the service.” His mustering-out occurred one week later, November 24, 1865.42

Meanwhile, Private Diamond, after two hospital stays with problems perhaps related to his sunstroke, in August was considered well enough to rejoin the 5th Cavalry at the Point Lookout POW camp. In a second account, he seems to be saying his sunstroke was not a consequence of the battle at Baylor’s Farm:43

After the battle at Baylor’s Farm, I was taken sick and was sent to Washington Hospital. ... Upon recovering I was sent back to my Regiment at City Point. ... [they] informed me that my Regiment had gone to Point Lookout to guard the Rebel prisoners. I was forthwith sent with a corps of men to Point Light and in going thither I was received the sunstroke. ... I was informed that I was three miles from City Point when the stroke occurred. ... I was put aboard of Steamer in route to the Portsmouth Hospital. ... [in August] I was sent to my Regiment at Point Lookout. Arriving there I was taken with the lung fever. I was lodged [sic] in the Regiment Hospital. In the following Spring we marched to Richmond, Va. After the capitulation of the City noted, we marched again to Point Light. ... the men were examined, those whose infirmities impaired them for service were sent to Fortress Monroe and I was one of that number.44

Casual as it sounds in Diamond’s account, the march into Richmond was a final moment of glory for the 5th Cavalry, at least according to its colonel. In April 1865, under the command of Col. Charles Francis Adams Jr., the 5th was among the first Union troops to enter the city, the final seat of the Confederate government. That was, Adams said, “the one event which I should have more desired as the culmination of my life in the army.”45 It was followed in a few days by General Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Court House, bringing the bloodiest war in American history to an end.

In the hospital at Fort Monroe, Virginia, where he was

40 This may indicate that Curtis, a mariner, had sailed for Capt. Abraham Osborn, one of Edgartown’s most successful whalers.
41 Curtis is referring to the Petersburg mine assault, one of the worst Union disasters. The 5th Cavalry, by this time, had been moved to Point Lookout so was not part of the slaughter.
42 Records of Curtis, Transcript, Sept. 25, 1878.
43 The sunstroke caused memory loss which may account for his confusion.
44 Records of Diamond. Letter to Lawyer George E. Lemon, July 25, 1886. There is no mention of the cannon in this later version.
45 The Adams Chronicle, p. 370.
sent soon after Richmond, Private Diamond was diagnosed as having "lung disease." He was discharged June 4, 1865, on a surgeon's certificate of disability.

Both Diamond and Curtis returned to the Vineyard after the war. Curtis, although never completely well, was for a time able to resume his work as a mariner. His letters to Frances from aboard ship make it clear he still had health problems. "I have a bad Cold at present and don't feel very well just now," he wrote aboard a ship in Boston in 1871. The next year, he wrote from New Orleans, "I have been very sick with the diarrhoea and rheumatism [and] I thought at one time I should have to go to the hospital." Away from home, he continued to find comfort in religion: "Since I have been here [in New Orleans] I have been to [prayer] meeting every night which I have enjoyed very much."

While on the Vineyard, he was under the care of Doctor Mayberry of Edgartown, who testified after his death:

"His health was uniformly good till after he enlisted in the Union Army in 1864. During the fatigues and exposures of a soldier's life, Aneurism of the thoracic aorta came on, from which he never recovered. . . [He] died March 7th, A.D. 1876, of Aneurism of the Thoracic Aorta." The day before he died, Curtis had written to Frances:

---

Dear wife

I set down to write you these few lines to let you know that I am not improving much here for these last two or three weeks past which I've had a very severe attack of fever and I'm getting better now and I'm in hope this will find you and all the family enjoying the blessing of good health.

Well, as I told you I was getting better, I am in hope by the end of the week if the weather continues so, I'm in hope I shall be able to come home, for the president of the Christian society promises to send me home, just soon I am able to travel and weather gets better I shall come home.

I've receive your letter and the money you sent. Give my love to the children. I have no more to say and god bless you all.

Four days later, the Gazette carried his obituary:

DED. CURTIS — At the U.S. Marine Hospital, Chelsea, 7th Inst., Mr. James Curtis of Edgartown, aged about 50 years. (Mr. C.'s life was insured for $1000). 47

The Vineyard's other soldier in the 5th Cavalry, Private James Diamond, also did not get with the unit when it was shipped to Texas because he was still in the hospital at Fort Monroe. On June 4, 1865, he was "discharged for disability" and, it seems, was paid $300 bonus plus $17.55 unused clothing allowance. He returned to Gay Head where, in 1870, the Federal Census listed him as a mariner, 50 years old, living with his wife Abiah, age 48. Together, they owned real estate valued at $800. Like many former soldiers, he joined the Grand Army of the Republic, the principal Union veterans' organization. Although the Vineyard had a GAR post, Diamond joined the one in New Bedford. We don't know that the Vineyard GAR was racially discriminatory, but such a policy was not uncommon.

His health continued to decline. By 1883, wife Abiah had left him for non-support. He continued to seek service-related disability benefits based on his sunstroke, but was always denied. However, he was drawing a pension because of "Rheumatism and Senile Debility."

In his weakened condition, he received considerable help and sympathy from his Gay Head neighbors. During the 1880s and 1890s, physically unable to fish or farm seriously, he was often hired by Gay Headers to work in their gardens and around the property. One neighbor stated that she saw him "on a average of four times a month" and that at best he could perform only "light work about the farm and house." Laborers were paid from one to two dollars a day, but "James Diamond could not do any of the work that demands the above wages," she said. 48

---

46 Records of Curtis, Contemporaneous records show he was born in Westport, Mass., not North Carolina.

47 Gazette, March 10, 1876. It is curious that the insurance amount was included.

48 Records of Diamond, Affidavit, Rossana G. Rodman, Jan. 1887.
Thomas Jeffers, another neighbor, testified in 1895:

I have known James Diamond since he came from the war. He has not been able to do about one third of mans work a day, but he is not able to work any now. He is in bed most of the time the last month on account of the disability incurred during the late war. He is a great sufferer and under the doctors care. His sickness is disease of the lungs and general disability in consequence of sun stroke.

The West Tisbury doctor, Courtland de N. Fairchild, also provided an affidavit in support of his sunstroke claims:

The first time I treated him [March 15, 1893], he was suffering from "oedema of the lungs" which he is subject to... He is unable to work out in the sun as it affects his head very bad and says it dates back as far as when he had the sun-stroke at "Baylee Farm, five miles from City Point, James River," while he was in the war. My last visit to the claimant was March 1st, 1895, having fell over a stone wall and causing a very bad sprain of his ankle joints, which prevents him from doing anything towards the support of his family. It will be a long time before he can use his foot as it is a bad sprain and he is an old man. He is confined to his bed.

Despite rejections, veteran Diamond continued to file claims for the sunstroke and lung disease he said he had contracted in the service. It seemed important to him that the Pension Bureau recognize his service-related disabilities, perhaps to validate the sacrifices he had made. Written in a shaking hand, one of his early pleas for such recognition survives:

I have been advised to apply for a Pension as a Soldier honorably entitled to the same and in My poor way have tried to do so hoping you will kindly and generously consider me and be assured that I am not trying, after serving My country, to defraud it. So please excuse all mistakes for My education is poor and memory shattered. 49

Former Private James Diamond died at Gay Head on March 27, 1897, age 74. No mention of his death appeared in the Vineyard Gazette. His widow, Abiah (Manning) Diamond, received a pension of $8 a month until December 4, 1905, when payments ended "because of [her] reported death. Date unknown." 50

We know that Diamond was an American Indian and it may be that Curtis was also. But to the War Department it made no difference. Both were simply "men of color" who served with Northern Blacks and Southern freed slaves under white officers. Their war experiences give a more accurate picture of the fate of Civil Warriors of color than the currently popular image of gallant black regiments in heroic charges against entrenched Confederate positions. To be sure, such desperate charges did take place. The terrible losses suffered by colored troops at Fort Wagner and the Crater at Petersburg are ample evidence of that. But there is no denying that Curtis's belief in white-officer mismanagement of colored units was often accurate. It was as true for the 5th Cavalry at Baylor's Farm as it was for the United States Colored Troops at the Crater.

The men of the 5th never had the opportunity to perform as cavalrymen for which they had been trained. That promise of fighting as mounted cavalry, like the promise of competent white officers, was not kept. By the end of the war, the 5th Cavalry had become a misused and abused labor battalion in Texas.

This was only part of the broken promise. Colonels Henry Sturgis Russell and Charles Francis Adams Jr., came out of the war as highly praised brigadier generals. With the failure of Reconstruction and the bloody Indian Wars that followed, it cannot be said that "soldiers of color" like Vineyarders Curtis and Diamond fared as well.

49 Ibid., Letter, Diamond to Attorney George Lamon, April 14, 1884.
50 Ibid., Pensioner Dropped Form, August 28, 1906.
The Hurricane of 1938:

1. Carl Reed's Store (the survivor).
2. David Butler's store.
3. E. C. Mayhew card room
   (Mystic Knights of the Sea).
4. E. C. Mayhew fish market
   and boat house.
5. Kerosene Depot for jetty lights
   (Daniel H. Flanders, keeper).
6. Carl Reed's boat house.
7. David Butler lobster shack.
10. David Butler's hen house.

On September 5, 1938, Joe Kraetzer of Chilmark photographed Menemsha Basin, looking south towards Menemsha Pond (opposite page). It was a postcard scene with fishermen's shacks, boats and gear.

Three weeks later, on September 24, from the same spot, he recorded the havoc wrought by the hurricane three days before (above).

Except for Carl Reed's store (far left) all that remained were a few spiles, marking the site of the piers and buildings shown in his earlier photo.

Three enormous waves, as high as 25 feet, had surged up from Stonewall Beach. The powerful waves raced north, washing a new house from its foundation and drowning a woman; they destroyed Hariph's Creek bridge and, racing across Quiris and Menemsha Ponds, drove along the Creek to the Basin, sweeping almost everything into the Sound.
Chilmark's 300th Birthday

The Hurricane of 1938: Chilmark's Great Trauma

by HOUSTON KENYON Jr.

This year, 1994, Chilmark celebrates its the 300th birthday. It is an arbitrary choice of birth date, as it is not known exactly when Chilmark was first settled. Rather than argue over that precise moment in history, the town has wisely declared its birth as having taken place in 1694, the first year in which it is listed in the tax records of Massachusetts Bay. Certainly, if it was paying taxes to the colony, it was extant. Nobody can argue that, but most agree that there had been English living in Chilmark earlier.

Charles E. Banks, in his History of Martha's Vineyard, states that the name Chilmark appears in a deed from Thomas Mayhew to Daniel Stewart, dated March 26, 1680. In it, Governor Mayhew described himself as "of the town of Chilmark in the Manor of Tisbury." The Society has in its archives a deed dated February 6, 1681, by which Matthew Mayhew granted Benjamin Skiff "all the Land westward of the said [Roaring] Brook, from the Sea or Sound side, until it meeteth with the Land of me, the said Mayhew, Called Neshowaguegewack, or Town of Chilmark..." So there is no doubt that Chilmark goes back more than 300 years, but in three centuries, who wants to quibble about a few years?

In all those years there was nothing more destructive than the Hurricane of 1938. It totally transformed Menemsha Basin, Chilmark's traditional fishing harbor. The storm, which hit the Island from the southeast on the afternoon of September 21, did enormous damage. The tide rose to the highest recorded level. It was accompanied by hurricane winds of 100 miles per hour, pushing a 25-foot wall of water over Stonewall Beach, into Nashaquisa and Menemsha Ponds, down Menemsha Creek and into the Basin, ending up in Vineyard Sound. Every structure along its course was destroyed. Buildings, mostly fishermen's shacks, and piers that had lined the Creek channel were obliterated.

One of Chilmark's largest non-resident property owners was the cooperative known as Chilmark Associates, or more popularly, "The Barn House." It owned (and still does) a pre-Revolutionary War farmhouse on South Road, just west of the Allen Farm, at which members vacationed each summer. They slept in the old house and in remodelled chicken coops. They socialized and ate dinner in a large old barn, hence the name, Barn House. The cooperative also owned part of South Beach, where they swam and picnicked. To get there, they walked over a narrow, wet path through a brush-covered bog. It was a simple, pleasant lifestyle that rejuvenated jaded New Yorkers (and others) physically and emotionally, every summer.

It is not surprising then that newspaper accounts of the hurricane's devastation brought great concern to the members. The buildings had been closed early in September, as usual, and were unoccupied. To determine what had happened, three New Yorkers appointed themselves as a Committee and headed for the Island.

One of the committee, Houston Kenyon Jr., became a self-appointed secretary, writing a report for the membership. It is a valuable first-hand, contemporary account of the most traumatic event in Chilmark's 300 years. And it is more than that. It tells us how uncomplicated it was 56 years ago to drive to the Island on an October Saturday. And of how leisurely motoring was before Interstates, passing through towns, stopping for a non-fast food luncheon. The return trip was even more relaxing via overnight steamer from Providence.

With the permission of Chilmark Associates and of Mr. Kenyon, we publish this slightly shortened version of his report. Omitted are some comments that would have meaning only to Barn House regulars and a few details involving the mainland portion of the trip.

Report of Select Committee (dually selected by themselves) to Investigate Hurricane and Social Conditions in the Neighborhood of BARNHOUSE, Chilmark, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

October 29-31, 1938.

YOUR committee in this matter acted under the Chairwomanship of Commissioner Dorothy Kenyon. The membership at large included Mildred and Houston Kenyon, but at the last moment Mildred dropped out because she claimed she had to be in Washington. In her place the remaining members of the committee selected as her substitute the Rt. Hon. Ray

HOUSTON KENYON Jr., a retired patent attorney and member of the Society, lives in Manhattan, as he has most of his life. In World War II he served as a civilian in the Pentagon on the staff of the Secretary of the Army. He will be 93 years old this month.

\(^1\) Also mentioned is "Menahsh" now called Menemsha. The payment was "One good Sheep," payable annually each November 15th.

\(^2\) In the early years, the preferred spelling was as one word, Barnhouse. Today, the preference is Barn House (B/H).
Brown, Mildred's uncle-extraordinary, to serve as non-partisan umpire and neutral observer. Mr. Brown will be henceforth referred to in this report as Uncle Ray. He served not only as distinguished guest, but also as raconteur, chief entertainer, and supplier and custodian of the Bottle of Whiskey. Later it turned out Uncle Ray had brought with him a flask of superb Armagnac, imported by his own hand from France, and so he just naturally took charge of that department. Uncle Ray also provided the rest of the committee with a nice Plymouth sedan which they drove for him, he scorning to touch the wheel.

Your committee swung north on the West Side Highway, Saturday morning, October 29th, at 7:05 a.m. precisely. The first hour was consumed in a witty discussion of how expenses were to be shared. Before any agreement was reached, we arrived at the Hendrick Hudson Toll Bridge. Dorothy paid the 10-cent toll and, frankly, we doubt if she will ever get any part of that expenditure back.

Beyond New Haven, your ghoulish committee began smacking their lips over scenes of wreckage and disaster. Guilford and Madison looked like community wood-piles, with cordwood stacked all over the main street... New London was a main stop... Parking the car, we walked down to the RR station to find seven steam trawlers jammed like sardines into the ferry slip, two partly forced up on the dock and the rest jumbled, splintered and partly sunk in one unholy mess...

After lunch, your committee expended 32 cents in a wire to Woods Hole to reserve space for the Plymouth on Dorothy's statement that on Saturday night the boat might be crowded... [After Providence] then came dark, and rain, and many lights, and the committee pushed on grimly into the blackness and finally caught the Naushon at Woods Hole by 15 minutes. Your Secretary's wire was seemingly of little real use, for there were only four automobiles in the hold of the big Naushon and no refund of the 32 cents could be had. Arriving at Vineyard Haven, we drove at once to the very pleasant house of Mrs. Pent, South Summer Street, Edgartown, known as "The Charlotte Inn." Your committee reports the accommodations first class and the food simply elegant. Mrs. Pent keeps open the year around. But your committee could think only of bed and sleep when they reached Edgartown, with the speedometer reading 300 miles since 7:05 a.m.7

Now the formal part of this report begins. On Sunday morning... the first call, as might be supposed, was upon Roger Allen... we borrowed the tin box of Barnhouse Keys and repaired at once to that bleak and windy spot. A stern northeasterly gale was whistling down across the moors, and the leafless trees were bending to it. It was chilly but not bitterly cold and low scudding clouds overhead made the day gray and dreary...

We entered the Barn and found it dark within, but all in order... [After examining the various outbuildings and finding little or no damage] two members of the committee then proposed a journey through the bog to the cliffs...

---

3 The West Side Highway, of course, was (and is) in Manhattan, where the Kenyons lived.
4 The bridge crosses the East River at the northern tip of Manhattan.
5 Dorothy Kenyon, brother of the author, was one of the Barn House founders.
6 The steamer Naushon was put into service in 1929 and was considered "the Queen of the Line," with 32 staterooms (some even with private toilets). Its enclosed observation deck had writing desks, ship's stationery provided.
7 The Charlotte Inn, today one of the Island's most elegant, was built in 1865 as the residence of Samuel Osborne Jr., a leading Edgartown businessman.
8 Roger Allen lived on the adjacent Allen Farm. Chilmark's finest builder, he was caretaker of many summer homes, including the Barn House.
On the cliffs we leaned against the full force of the northeaster, coming from behind as we faced the ocean. Examination of the cliffs revealed signs of considerable erosion. The steps have utterly disappeared... We could not descend to the beach, but walked along the cliff edge at a respectful distance from its apparent overhang... A section of Mrs. Vincent's rails fence pitches down to the beach... and if [she] didn't take up her steps before the storm, she or we will have to build new ones next year.10

Our next port of call was Menemsha. Here was stark tragedy. The road goes down straight and uninterrupted, as it always has, to the little store and Post Office on the right. A few feet beyond the Post Office comes a break in the pavement, then a few jagged blocks of broken pavement, and then sand and lapping water, still filled with debris. A stone's throw out, in the line of the road are a half dozen pilings at crazy angles, now accessible only by boat. Broad water runs through from the inner harbor across the end of the road to meet the main channel. The former sand spit parallel to the channel has been swept clear of every sign of human activity except for a sad little house that sits on one of its corners at the high point of the sand spit.11 All the docks and buildings that formerly marched in procession along the edge of the main channel are gone, and nothing remains even to show where they were.12

The sand spit is now an island. The only way to get over to it is to take a boat from immediately in back of the Post Office and row across open water to the shore of the sand spit. We then turned around and drove out the side road and parked on the spot where we have so often parked to

---

9 More than the stairs had disappeared. Raymond R. Cook of Martha's Vineyard estimated that the cliffs along the south shore lost an average of 30 feet in 1 hour.
10 The Barn House probably owned the steps. In July 1919, the group purchased from Florence C. Vincent, the land and beach then known as "The Vincent Cliffs" which sold in recent years. The beach is now today's Lucy Vincent Beach.
11 The "sad little house" was owned by William H. Hand, yacht designer and naval architect, a summer resident.
12 Menemsha was called the Creek, pronounced "Crick." The deepest water was along the western side of the sand spit before the hurricane. A few years later, the configuration of the basin was changed when the Basin was dredged and Duxbury's Dock was built along its eastern shore.
After the storm, Donald Poole rows across what had been the sandspit with a few traps he recovered. Spikes, left, are where the sandspit piers had been.

watch the after-glow of a summer sunset. The spot is still there, but the low bushes in front have been torn away and the bank eaten back somewhat...

As we sat thus, a scene of wreckage and desolation appeared before us. Along the shore at the right, boats, houses, timbers and general matchwood lay scattered helter skelter along this margin of the little harbor. The high ridge of sand leading out to the beach, along whose top we sometimes used to walk in order to reach the beach, had been leveled and the site covered with miscellaneous wreckage. I tried to go on foot toward this wreckage, but the little footbridge was gone and there was no convenient way of getting across the inlet.

Looking across the little harbor, towards the breakwater, we watched the spray leap high into the air around the blinker light, as sizable surf whipped up by the northeasterly gale seemed bent on completing the job of destruction commenced by the hurricane. The destruction here seems to have been confined to what the abnormally high tide

at the time of the hurricane could reach. The houses and trees on the higher ground were undamaged. Roger Allen estimates the tide was about 8 feet above the highest high water ever previously experienced and it ran so fast it took everything along that it could reach.13

Your committee next investigated Stonewall Beach and Bridge. Stonewall Bridge is the bridge which one crosses on the way to Gay Head, at the bottom of the long slope down from Chilmark as you approach one arm of Menemsha Pond.14 This bridge was utterly destroyed, and enough of the road on each side was eaten away to make a clear break from pavement edge to pavement edge of what looks to be 100 to 150 feet. All of this is clear green water with vertical banks, deep enough to sail a boat through.

A detour has been arranged, which we followed. To take it, you enter through the same gate by which you reach the High Cliffs property of the Barnhouse Association, and you

13 The tide was exceptional, but the major destructive force was the 25-foot wall of water, followed by two lesser waves. These waves seemed to have been limited to Chilmark, travelling up the tidal waterway from Stonewall Beach to Vineyard Sound (see map).
14 The bridge crossed Harip's Creek, which connects Stonewall and Nashaquitsa Ponds. The latter is not an "arm of Menemsha Pond," but connects to it at Chalker's Creek.
follow the same road a surprising distance across the moors, turning back till it seems as if you must surely come out at the top of our High Cliffs. Then a sign directs you to the right, and presently you come down a muddy and slippery decline onto the beach at the corner of the little pond now so adequately connected to Menemsha Pond through the 150-foot opening.

Here you are on a wide ribbon of flat sand, slightly higher in the center, with the ocean surf visible along the left-hand side, and the lapping waters of the pond fairly close to the temporary road, on your right hand. The temporary road consists of clay or gravel spread upon the sand, just wide enough for one vehicle, with one or two widened places to permit passing.

We stopped in one of these and went forth on foot to inspect the sandy spit. Not far away was a battered block of concrete, and near it the tops, just showing, or eight or nine new creosoted piles, all deeply embedded in the sand and nevertheless tilted at an angle of 20 degrees or more away from the sea.

This was the site of the new house which Roger Allen finished building last July. We saw its carcass hurled up far above the present water on a grassy slope across the pond, not far from the site of Stonewall Bridge. Roger reports to us that the house is not fundamentally injured and that he thinks he will be able to move it to a new lot which the owner has bought for it. All it needs is a new chimney, drying, scraping, and painting. But the owner has no further interest in his former site, and won't go back to it.15

Finally, just to make sure it was still there, your committee examined Gay Head. We report it is still there, without visible change. . .16

Returning to Edgartown (after returning the Barnhouse keys to Roger), our neutral observer and impartial umpire negotiated some glasses from Mrs. Pent and some “spackling water” from the drug store, and set up your shivering committee to a pleasant injection of fire water fit to warm a king. Uncle Ray, old-timer in the coast-wise trade and having fetched up off the cheery cliffs of Gay Head many a time, but never set foot upon them, had, it seems, slept soundly through our visit to this thrilling spot. He indignantly denied we had been there, and naught but the old devil rum would soothe his injured feelings. Never did your Committee find life more mellow than at this moment, content in the knowledge of hard work well done.

Later, your committee visited the Commodore of the Edgartown Yacht Club, whose wife is a friend of the chairwoman of your committee.17 These good people brought out the cup, and again your committee relaxed and unfurled their hearts, and thanked God for Martha’s Vineyard in a northeaster, and swore they didn’t care if it rained forever.

And so home and to dinner. A weary committee, buoyed by a sense of duty well performed, warned within by distillate of cheer, climbed slowly up to bed in the palatial residence of Mrs. Pent.

One fly, one ointment. The only boats in winter leave the Island at 6:10 a.m. and 4:40 p.m., the latter too late for a Providence connection. So up your committee got, in the dark of the night, by Mrs. Pent’s raucous alarm clock, almost, so it seemed, before they were well asleep, and drove on Monday morning through splashing rain, driving fog, and the first creak of dawn to the spray-laden dock at Vineyard Haven whence the Naushon sailed at 6:10 a.m.18

The rest may be lightly covered in this report. Woods Hole gave us one thing to remember; New Bedford one more. At Woods Hole, on the dock, stands a train made up and

15 A resident of this house on Stonewall Pond was the island’s only fatality in the storm. Mrs. Josephine Clark, 38, a West Indian cook for the Benedict Thielens, was drowned as she and the Thielens were engulfed by the surging wall of water, after abandoning the house moments earlier. Mrs. Clark could not swim. The scene is dramatically depicted in a Thomas Hart Benton painting. See also Virginia Beresford, Virginia’s Journal, Glen Publishing, Martha’s Vineyard, 1989, pp. 41 ff. Also Vineyard Gazette files of the storm.

16 Gay Head, protected by the highlands of Squibnocket, was not hit by the destructive wall of water.

17 Walter Barnum was Commodore of the Yacht Club in 1938.

18 October was “winter” in those days. The Naushon, the only ferry in service, ran between New Bedford and Nantucket twice daily, stopping at the Vineyard.
ready to receive passengers from the boat. At its head, a fine, big locomotive, then a baggage car, two air-conditioned sleepers, three streamlined coaches. The locomotive stands upon the switch, seemingly ready to move forward at the opening of the throttle. But it is only the ghost of a train. No wisp of smoke or puff of steam rises; the boiler is cold; the berths may be made up but no porter is on hand; the cars are locked. This train is the "Cape Codder," due to leave Woods Hole at 9 p.m. on September 22nd for the overnight run to New York. It never left. Between Woods Hole and Buzzards Bay, bridges are down, fills washed out, cuts choked with wreckage, causeways obliterated. The track has been so torn and destroyed that it will probably never be rebuilt. All passengers and freight now move by bus or truck and seemingly the day of rail transportation to Woods Hole is gone.19

At New Bedford, the dock at which the New York boat used to tie up in the old days has wholly collapsed in a mass of matchwood and no one has bothered even to try to straighten out the mess. In the middle lies a sizable fishing schooner, hurled up by wind and wave to sit disconsolate upon the wreckage while its owner ponders better days...

Finally, we wound up in Providence on board the New York boat, ourselves and car, and after a gay dinner and watching the moon come out over the calming sea near Pt. Judith, we crawled into our comfortable cabins to dreams of matchwood and of rum...

Respectfully submitted,
W. Houston Kenyon Jr.
Secretary
Select Committee, etc.


The Editor thanks Mr. Kenyon (and wishes him a happy 95th birthday this month). Thanks also to John Herzan,
Barn House archivist, for his assistance.

19 The railroad did resume operations months later, serving Woods Hole until after World War II.

---

The Sad Voyage Of Eliza Russell
by JOAN DRUETT

Much has been written about the "sister sailors" of the Vineyard, the wives of whalers who went awhaling with their husbands. You would think that the territory had been thoroughly mined.1 But now and then an undiscovered "sister sailor" surfaces.

Such was the case with Mrs. Eliza (Smith) Russell of Holmes Hole. But Eliza was not a happy sister sailor, as we shall see.

She was born in Holmes Hole in 1829 and, it would seem, should have felt at home aboard a whaler. Her father, Capt. Charles G. Smith, was a whaling master, having taken the ship Hope of New Bedford on a voyage in 1832 and the ship Mobile, also of New Bedford, in 1844. Her mother, Drusilla A. West, came from a family steeped in the nautical tradition.

So it must have been no surprise when Eliza, then 22 years old, married a 26-year-old seaman from New Bedford, Thomas N. Russell, on June 3, 1851. The wedding was in Tisbury, officiated by Rev. George W. Stearns, Methodist minister.

When the Vineyard Gazette published the announcement, it added that a "token of respect and future prosperity" had accompanied the notice, "for which," the editor wrote, "we return thanks." What that token was is not stated, but it

seems to indicate that the groom (or whoever prepared the announcement) knew the way to an editor's heart with a "token" of some kind.

We don't know anything about bridegroom Thomas's childhood except that his parents were Lewis and Sarah Russel (sic) of New Bedford. He listed his occupation as seaman. He must have gone to sea as a very young man because by 1854, three years after his marriage, he was captain of the 401-ton whaling ship Corinthian of New Bedford. The first two years of her voyage were in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, then in October 1856, he sailed her to the North Pacific, not returning home until April 6, 1858, after three years and six months at sea.  

It is not known whether Eliza was on the Corinthian, but we do know that she sailed with him aboard his next command, the Lancaster, leaving New Bedford on October 7, 1858. Captain Russell kept a journal on that voyage and often mentioned his wife, though never with the same affection he showed in describing their son, born on the voyage in June. He always called the baby his "Boy," written with a capital "B" and often underlined.  

The Captain's log begins December 5, 1859, at Lahaina on Maui in the Hawaiian Islands (then the Sandwich Islands). He tells of his concern about provisioning the ship for the voyage and about his eagerness to get "the Boy's ambrotype" taken. The couple managed to find a photographer on December 12 and "had two copies taken on leather to send home...[and] at 5 PM myself Wife and Boy went on board" and sailed off for the North Pacific.  

On Monday, December 26, Captain Russell noted in his journal that "today we are 14 months out and the Boy is six months old and well and may he keep so." The reader of the log hopes so as well. The Lancaster was heading for the rough waters of the whaling grounds off Japan. She continued northward to the Russian coast inside the Okhotsk Sea with its chill and fog. It was hardly the place for any infant, and certainly not for one who was ailing. The captain casually noted an occurrence on December 30 that must have distressed mother Eliza:

About 9 PM last night took some water in the side light and wet the Bed down as well as the carpet.

Surely this must have concerned the young mother, trying to keep her infant warm and dry. Eliza Russell had other reasons for concern, even fright. During the night of May 26, 1860, the Lancaster was run into by the ship Milo, fresh out of New Bedford, "striking us forward of the foretopmast stays" with an enormous crash that seemed to go on and on. Damage was severe. Carried away was the flying-jib boom, broken off was the end of that boom as well as the sprit sail yard. The foretopmast staysail was torn to shreds as the two entangled ships swung against each other. The Lancaster's best anchor was lost, the bow boat was smashed to pieces on its davits, and the gangway was chewed up. That nighttime collision with its thunderous noise and destruction was frightening, but the incident didn't end there. The next day there was a serious row on board when Capt. Thomas E. Fordham of the Milo had the sauce to come aboard to collect "his jibboom, it having broken off at the cap" while demolishing Captain Russell's foremost rigging. Clearly, it had not been a relaxing 24 hours for the young mother and her first born.

Eliza was not the only whaling wife to endure the tensions of life on the Okhotsk Sea. There were several other "sister sailors" on the whaling ground, among whom were Mrs. Wilbur Mancheater of the Harvest and Mrs. Daniel Tinker of the John P. West, both vessels from New Bedford. Despite their being from the same town, they did no visiting for months. The first gam that Captain Russell recorded was on September 12, 1860, when he wrote that the "ship Florida [of Fairhaven] here, also Capt. Williams and wife and child came on board and spent the Afternoon." That must have

---

2 His first voyage as master was a good one: 1842 barrels oil, 16,100 pounds whalebone.
3 Kendall Whaling Museum, Pacific Manuscripts, Microfilm 812. The "Boy's" name was Thomas, presumably Junior. Capitalizing Wife, Husband, Son and Daughter was customary, but Boy was different.
4 If the baby was full term, Eliza was a month pregnant when they left New Bedford.
5 The Florida had left port shortly after the Lancaster. Her skipper was Thomas W. Williams.
been the “Boy’s” first chance to play with, or even see, another child since leaving Maui.

The day before she went aboard the Lancaster, Mrs. Williams noted in her journal that they had been visited by Captain Russell, who said that Eliza was not well, a detail he had not mentioned in his journal:

We spoke the Lancaster, Capt. Russell, today. He has been aboard to see us. He has his Wife and little Boy with him. He did not fetch them aboard with him, for his Wife is not well. Her lungs are very much affected, and she is careful about going in the air. They have not done well this season.

Have taken about 300 bbls of Oil.6

Because Eliza was not fit to leave her ship, Mrs. Williams, who was also named Eliza, and her little son, Willie, were rowed across in a small boat for a visit. She described her visit most succinctly in her journal:

This afternoon my Husband, Willie and I have been aboard of the Lancaster to see Mrs. Russell. We spent the afternoon very pleasantly. The two children enjoyed it much.7

Captain Russell’s journal had given no hint of his wife’s bad lungs. The first mention of Eliza’s frail health came several months later on November 20, 1860. The Lancaster, by this time, was back in Honolulu. “My wife and Boy are going to stop here for the present,” he wrote, “as my wife is sick.”

Captain Russell and the Lancaster sailed off the next day, steering for the Society Islands to cruise for whales. It is obvious that Captain Russell missed his family. In a depressed mood on November 26, only five days out, he wrote:

I am about half sick today, sick to the stomach or Sea sick or homesick or Sick of the voyage. I do not know which or whether it is all together. Well, it is Tommy’s Birthday month today, 17 months old. I am in hopes he is not sick and also hope E is smart, but hope deferred makes the heart sick they say, perhaps that is what is the matter with me.

As Mrs. Williams had mentioned, the voyage thus far had not been a successful one. No doubt, the small number of full barrels in the hold was contributing to the master’s depression. But there was a physical reason also. On November 30, he wrote that he had “had the diarrhea since leaving the Islands.” Russell seems to have been a gloomy chap, but the empty barrels made him more so. Normally it would be a day for celebration, but this year December 16 brought no happiness. He soliloquized:

It is my Birthday today and about half of my life so far spent on the water and how much more I shall live on the ocean God only knows. The less the better for me, if I am going to have such luck as I have had on this voyage.

Two months later, the Lancaster was back in Honolulu, where on February 15, 1861, he wrote:

... my wife some better although the Doctor thought she was not able to go to sea. the Boy is smart.

With Tommy in good health, he sounded more cheerful, but a week later, they received some sad news from the Vineyard:

Today, we hear of my wife’s mother being dead. Saw the death in the papers, have not got any letter... so ends another day of hard news, hard luck, etc., etc.

Later that week, Captain Russell sailed off alone again. On February 26, he wrote that Tommy was “20 months old today. May God spare both Wife and Boy that we may meet once more and give us Health, Strength and Prosperity.”

None of these seemed to be his lot. “I should like to see my wife and Boy and know that they are well,” he penned wistfully March 1 and two days later, his mood begins to sound mournful:

So ends another day and I should like to know E and T well today. I am in hopes they are well. I wish they were here but it is of no use to hope such a thing now. So I must keep on in the old track and time will accomplish all things the same as it ever has. All I can hope for now is that we may live to meet once more on earth. 22° 32 N, 176.09 W.

His spirits did not brighten. On March 26, at 32° 08 N, 166.14 W, this journal entry:

Tommy is 21 months old today and if I only knew how E
and T was I would give considerable but everything works against me.⁸

Adding to his depression was the fact that the Lancaster was leaking, barely seaworthy. On March 31, he turned her back towards Honolulu and his family:

If a man can hold to his religion after going through what I have this voyage, I will call him a Christian indeed.

But his troubles were only beginning; his worst fears were waiting for him on the Sandwich Islands. On April 7th, he “went on shore at Honolulu, found my Boy sick, Dysentery, was taken on the 2nd but thought he was getting better.” A few days later: “My Boy grows worse, had the Doctor in the Middle of the night. My God, what else is to come on me.” The next day, April 12, the journal has just the bleak statement: “My Boy just alive, do not expect him to live from one minute to another.”

Tommy’s death came the following afternoon and the distraught Captain Russell wrote in obvious anguish:

At 2 PM my Boy’s spirit winged away to a better world. So we are childless again. why God should afflict me So, I cannot tell. I know it is better for him but a poor consolation for us, if he had only spared him and been me instead I think it would have been better, that is if he had lived to have grown up a good man. but God only knows what is for the best So I suppose we must fog on and wait our turn. it will come by and by no doubt.

The grieving parents “had the body of our Boy preserved in Alcohol and intend taking him home. My God, what a blow to take one only child away from us.”⁹

After the “Boy’s” death, they prepared to sail home. On May 2nd, Captain Russell loaded 1000 barrels of oil from the ship John Howland to be carried as freight to New Bedford. It must have been added to his depression to take on board so much oil from another ship. He had only 660 barrels of his own after three years at sea. Two days later, May 4, 1861, the Lancaster sailed from Honolulu to “cruise and home.”¹⁰

The cruising was more productive. On February 2, 1862, they were reported as having 850 barrels on board. It was productive in another way. In February 1862, nine months after leaving Honolulu, the Lancaster interrupted her cruising and went into port at Santa Cruz, Peru. There, on February 14, St. Valentine’s Day, a bundle of joy arrived. At least Eliza must have thought so. Captain Russell expressed no great happiness, noting matter-of-factly: “My Wife was Safely delivered of a Girl.”

Perhaps a daughter was not what Thomas Russell wanted to replace his “Boy,” or perhaps he could not allow himself again to love so deeply another child — who might so quickly be taken away. Or perhaps he was simply too deeply involved with the rapidly deteriorating condition of the Lancaster and with replacing crew members who had deserted. The ship had been leaking badly for months and some of his men took advantage of being in port and left the unsafe vessel.

In early March, they rounded Cape Horn and began sailing north in the Atlantic towards home. They stopped off at Fermo Bucu, Brazil. On March 11, the Lancaster left port, heading for New Bedford, but she never made it. Arriving at St. Thomas on April 17, she was condemned, as too leaky to sail safely. We are not told how the family, with its three-month-old infant, Katie, and the body of their first born, Thomas, preserved in alcohol, made their way back to New Bedford. Captain Russell on April 8, without explanation, had discontinued writing in his journal.

We know they did make it home safely. But Eliza, after all her discomfort and grief aboard ship, did not have long to enjoy her daughter or their life ashore. On May 27, 1863, at 33 years of age, she died, leaving her year-old infant in the care of Captain Russell, who, the records seem to indicate, never went to sea again.¹¹

And no wonder, after that voyage.

⁸ The Lancaster was cruising between Midway and Wake Islands.
⁹ The voyage home would take months. What a sad trip it must have been with the body of their infant on board in a barrel of alcohol, probably in the captain’s cabin.
¹⁰ Whalen’s Shipping List, July 9, 1861.
¹¹ Eliza’s death was reported in the New Bedford Mercury. Whaling records do not show Captain Russell on any later voyage. The Civil War had brought whaling into a decline. When Eliza’s father, Charles G. Smith of Taunton died in 1862, listed as his only grandchild was Katie Russell, 14, of Providence, R.I.
A Running Account Of Matters & Things
by REV. HENRY BAYLIES

Rev. Henry Baylies, Methodist minister, was a devout man. His journal has frequent evidence of his gratitude to God for the blessings bestowed upon him. Yet, if anybody had a reason for a shaken faith, Henry did.

Even in his childhood, he lived with tragedy. He was the second of seven children born to Frederick and Velina (Worth) Baylies. Of the seven born, Henry was the only one to live beyond nine months. Father Baylies, during those years of sorrow, designed and built Edgartown's four churches. Two of them, the Federated (1828) and the Methodist (1842) are today admired as classics. The other two still stand, one is the Town Hall, the other (the Baptist church) a private home. During the years he was creating these four houses of worship, he and Velina were burying five infants in the town cemetery (the fifth, their first, was buried in Nantucket).

Henry's grandfather was also involved in God's work. His was, throughout his life, a missionary and teacher of the Indians on the Vineyard and southeastern New England. No Vineyard family was more devoted to God's work.

Our diarist had been a Methodist minister until he went on leave when a throat ailment made it impossible for him to preach the long sermons then expected. At 24, Henry married Hannah W. Wilcox of New Bedford. Hannah, ill with consumption, required his constant care. She died only 18 months after the wedding. Thirteen months later, Henry married Harriet Budlong of Providence, R.I. She too is in poor health, her illness undiagnosed as yet. It is hard to find evidence of the Lord's blessings in his family history.

Yet, his faith is deep. In this segment, he is attending the annual Methodist Conference in Providence, R.I., where he passes the pastoral exams without difficulty and is ordained, but, because of his health, he does not take a parish. Instead, he returns to West Tisbury to continue as headmaster of the Dukes County Academy, where he strives to educate his pupils and also to bring them to the Lord.

Harriette, still unwell, went with him to Providence. Her parents live there. They are staying in the family home, which is within walking distance of the Chestnut Street Methodist church where the conference is being held.

Monday, April 1st, 1850. Walked with Bro. Gould after breakfast in divers courses to divers places. Learned the Verdict of the jury against Prof. Webster for the Murder of Dr. Parkman. This is almost astonishing! Popular sympathy seems to be with Prof. W. & yet I judge almost all consider him the murderer of Dr. P. The feeling in community today is intense. What a fearful example of the majesty of the law. God save us from another such!

The brethren of the Conf. have been crowding in today. It is pleasing to meet & shake the friendly hand with

1 Dr. George Parkman was murdered at Harvard College by Prof. John W. Webster, who dismembered the body, burning parts of it in an attempt to conceal his crime. Found guilty, he was hanged. The public felt the crime had not been proved. Henry apparently concurred.

so many laborers in the glorious work of saving souls — brethren in the ministry. I was astonished today at a remark of Rev. Bro. John W. Case, who the last year has preached at Bolton, adjoining town to Hebron, Ct. He remarked the people of Hebron appeared to think I had come down [crossed out] from Impetus' [?] head (i.e. as Minerva, all perfect & armed, etc.).

I at first thought him rather musical in his way & did not attach the least meaning to his remark but he assured me the people of H. were exceedingly pleased with me & thought had I stayed with them they would have been able to keep up preaching & not close their church.

I must say I was astonished for I have never had one suspicion that I ever pleased them in the least degree. I hardly know whether to be pleased with this expression of their favor or to feel indignant, yet more indignant if possible than I now do. But I remember "Seventy Times seven." 2

Five of Henry's siblings were buried in Edgartown, all under 10 months of age.

Dear H. has been overhauling [?] too much today so that this P.M. she has felt very miserably. This evening she is rather low spirited. Perhaps however this may be accounted for from other causes.

Examination is appointed for tomorrow at 9 A.M. I must sleep sound to be bright for the task.

Tuesday, April 2nd, 1850. A delightful Spring's day. Breakfast through, prayers attended with the family, a large bundle of clothes packed & at 9 o'clock I was with the Committee & candidates at the Vestry of Chestnut St. Church. Called to order by Rev. Daniel Wise, chairman of Examiners, Prayer by Rev. Moses Chase. Places assigned the four classes & the business immediately entered upon. My class consists of J. B. Gould, Elishu Grant, Geo. B. Burnham, Spielstead [?], Rogers, A. H. Robbins, Dixon Stebbins & Henry M. Baylies.

The Committee were J. B. Master on the review of the whole course, S. C. Coggeshell on Barnes Introduction & Claude's Essay for the Composition of a

1 There will be several ceremonies this day so he is taking a change of clothes.

2 Henry had been minister at Somers, Conn., near Hebron. His departure must have been, in his mind, unpleasant. "Seventy times seven" refers to Matthew 18:22, being the number of times one must forgive a sinner.
Sermon & A. F. Park on Watson’s Institutes, 4th Part, & Compositions.

Bro. Hunter [?] occupied the forenoon in his examination. I had given no attention to a review of the course yet passed a very satisfactory examination as did all the class. Park & Cogshell occupied the afternoon from 1 1/2 to 6. I became excessively nervous by the confinement & enjoyed the exercises but little. I passed my examination perhaps satisfactorily but not so to myself.

The course on which we were examined was sufficiently extensive for two years, together with the ordinary duties of a Pastor. I was unable to give any attention to the studies till December & since that have been engaged in Teaching besides was most confined with my sick wife. On the whole I may feel quite well pleased that I succeeded so well. The course for this year requires the study & examination on Horsme’ Introduction, Claude’s Essay on the composition of a Sermon & Fourth Vo. of Watson, together with reading Townley’s [?], 2 vols, 8 [?], Watson’s Sermons, 2 vols, 8 [?], Moshem’s Ecclesiastical Hist., 3 vols, 8 [?], Bancroft’s U.S. vols, 8 [?].

Thus has closed the Four Years’ course of Conference Examinations & I may now consider myself at liberty to mark out my own course of Reading & Study.

At 7 this Eve was at Hopkins Hall to listen to Rev. R. W. Hatfield. He preached a quite affecting discourse on “How can ye escape the damnation of Hell?” It was a fine wrought exhortation. Rev. Abel Stevens of the Herald followed with a short appeal in which he most touchingly referred to the case of Prof. Webster. Met a number of friends after service among whom, Sister Marchant of Nantucket, at whose house I stayed while detained at N. last winter a year ago. Also her mother & Mrs. Holly of N. & Sarah Jernegan of Edgartown, besides ministering Brethren in multitudes.

I procured my watch from Miller’s in Hopkins’ block. He says it is in fine order & warrants it for a year. It had been running 2 years. Quite a charge for cleaning & crystal: $2.25.

Weary, weary. I must sleep.

Wednesday, April 3rd, 1850. Providence Annual Conference of the M.E. Church commenced its Session in Chestnut St. Church at 9 o’clock this morning. I was detained from the opening exercises and did not hear Bishop Morris’ remarks. I came in to the Church just as the Bishop gave out the Hymn, which being sung, Fathers Webb & Bates joined in prayer. The usual business of Conf. was immediately entered upon, appointing Committees which occupied most of the morning session.

I received appointment on the “Committee on Education” with Abel Stevens, R. M. Hatfield, R. Alllyn & Sydney Deman [?]. This Committee met this PM for organization &

5 This would be the Zion’s Herald, the Methodist journal.

6 Sarah W. Jernegan was the daughter of Hiram and Abigail Jernegan of Edgartown. Henry misspelled the last name.

7 It was the equivalent of two days’ wages for a workingman.

business. I was elected Secretary. Before this Committee I presented my first Resolution which I believe I ever presented. It read as follows: “Resolved that while we interest ourselves in the various Educational Enterprises of our Church & Conference, we feel strong sympathy with the cause of Education generally especially with the efforts for the promotion of the Common School System of the States within which our Conference is located.”

This Resolution was adopted for the consideration of Conference. I have this evening prepared another Resolution to accompany the above Resolution that as ministers of the Gospel interested in the general diffusion of knowledge we should evince our sympathy with the Common School Enterprise by visiting the Public Schools in the vicinity of our residences & by such other methods as may seem requisite & advisable.

At 4 o’clock took stage & went to Pawtucket to attend to a little item of business & returned by the 6 o’clock train of cars. Waited a few moments at the Depot for the arrival of the Steam Boat Line from Boston for N. York. Met Rev. Bro. E. E. Griswold, R. Hoyt, Crawford & Banks of N.Y. Conf. Bro. Griswold was my pastor during a portion of College life.

Dr. Fabrian called this PM to see Hattie. She has not been feeling as well this PM. Her health is very feeble. I am feeling very well for me.

Thursday, April 4, 1850. [Gives details of conference meeting]... Bro. Ely, my

8 His resolution, well intended though it is, might have a constitutional problem today.

9 An interesting bit of trivia: “Train of cars” was the early name for the railroad, now shortened to train.

Presiding Elder, spoke of my ill health & remarked if I were able to preach I was capable of supplying any appointment in his District. Bro. Upham remarked similarly, only extending to any app’t. “in the bounds of the Prov. Annual Conf.” The only importance I attach to these remarks is that while I am turned aside from the duties of the ministry I may feel that I have served the Church acceptably to my brethren & have their sympathies in my afflictions.

The business of the Education Committee employed most of my time this PM. How easy it is to suggest plans but how difficult to execute them. So it is in these interests that come before us.

Listened this evening to a very disconnected, defective, unedifying & unsatisfying discourse from Rev. Phineas Crandall of the New England Conf. Perhaps I am uncharitable in my criticism. I trust not. . . .

Hattie has felt very feeble today. The Lord grant patience to suffer.

Friday, Apil 5. The business of Conf. progresses rather slowly. Comparatively little has yet been done... [several paragraphs about the conference have been omitted].

Dearest Hattie is really afflicted & relieved of one difficulty but partially relieved [and] another succeeds. She has had several discharges today of clear frothy blood to the amount of half a gill at a time. The Dr. thinks it is bloody piles. I hope nothing worse. Procured some medicine which has relieved it.

10 1/2 o’clock, tired & sleepy.

11 It is obvious that Henry was well regarded by his peers.
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.

Dearest Wife & myself repeat this childhood’s prayer nightly before closing our eyes in sleep.

Saturday, April 6, 1850. A very unpleasant day as most of the week have been. Snow most all day. As an Editor expresses it, “Winter lingers in the lap of Spring.”

[Omitted here are paragraphs dealing with Conference business.]

I handed Bro. Ely, my presiding Elder, a motion in accordance with the instructions of the Bishop, as follows: “Motion that this Conference request the Superintendent to appoint Henry Baylies Principal of Dukes County Academy West Tisbury, Mass.” A single question of explanation was asked, which the Bishop answered & the motion was passed without dissent so that I may now consider my appointment made.11 . . . Was urged to accept a nomination as visitor to the Biblical Institute & Prov. Conf. Seminary, but was obliged from my probable engagement at the Academy to refuse.

Hartie dear said this evening she has felt better today than on any day since she came home. I am feeling a little the labors of Conference, especially this writing into midnight. Such business engagements at Conf. do not conduct much to spirituality. Perhaps the reason why we do not now, as formerly, enjoy “revival Conferences” is that the brethren, many at least, are constantly engaged on Committees, which the extension of our work & the divers interest & enterprises have multiplied.12

Tomorrow a Sabbath of rest. The Lord prepare my mind for the solemn & interesting exercises of the Sabbath especially to assume the vows of ordination as an Elder in the Ministry of the M. E. Church. . .

Sabbath, Apr. 7, 1850. A delightful day. . . [This was the day of the ordination of ministers, one being Henry Baylies.] Thus by the app’t of God & by the choice of the church I am a regularly authorized minister of the Gospel in the M. E. Church . . . It has so happened that the dress coat in which I was graduated from College, married to Hannah, ordained Deacon, attended Hannah’s funeral, rec’d my 2nd degree of M.A., married Harriette, was in so good order and style that I wore it today while receiving my ordination as Elder. I think now this same old coat will do to be laid by, for the service it has rendered.13

11 Surely the Methodist Conference had no control over the Dukes County Academy. But Henry writes as though it does: “my appointment made.”

12 Today, we still struggle with this problem.

13 This tells us something about his physical condition. It would seem he had added no weight since college.

In Memoriam
Natalie Norton Huntington, 1921 - 1994

Among the volunteers who enjoy working at the Society none enjoyed it more than Natalie Huntington, who died unexpectedly on June 11 near her home at Quansoo. For years, she gave her talents and her time to the Museum, first as a Cooke House guide, later on the Council and as Vice President. In 1993, she asked to be moved to the Advisory Council.

But “advising” was not enough for Natalie. She continued as the sparkplug of the Museum Gift Shop, to which she had been devoted since it began. Two days before her death, she was here preparing for a busy summer season.

Natalie was a real Vineyarder. Her birthplace was in Ohio only because, she said, she had no control over it. She spent every one of her subsequent 72 birthdays on the Island which she loved.

Her ancestors arrived here in 1669 from Weymouth, making her a ninth-generation Islander, although as one of her family said, “She was not the type to make a big deal about that.” Her parents, Charles and Bessie Lee Norton, owned the farm in Indian Hill and it was there in her youth that she spent summers, tramping across the hills and swimming at the North Shore beaches.

After graduating in 1942 from Smith College, she worked in New York at Scribner & Sons Publishing Company. In the 1960s she returned to college to get her teaching certificate, after which she taught in Oak Bluffs and off-Island.

It was on the Vineyard that she met and married artist Wilfred H. Huntington, brother of Gale, founding editor of this journal. Their first home was one they built overlooking Quitsa Pond adjacent to the Huntington homestead.

But her favorite place was Quansoo, the plains bordering Tisbury Great Pond, where they lived for many years. It was there, near her home, that she died.

In 1960, when their two sons were growing up, she wrote a children’s book, A Little Old Man. Illustrated by Will, it was a Weekly Reader Book Club selection that year. She saw things through an artist’s eyes, always commenting on the colors of the flowers or the shapes of the clouds. With granddaughter Shaelah, she loved to wander around Quansoo, seeking and counting the lady slippers in blossom.

As her son Peter remarked at her memorial service, “She always saw the good in everyone and seldom said a negative word. If she did, you can be sure she said it tactfully.”

Some people get things done by making waves. Natalie got things done by smoothing them.
COLORED SOLDIERS!

EQUAL STATE RIGHTS!
AND MONTHLY PAY WITH WHITE MEN!!

On the 1st day of January, 1863, the President of the United States proclaimed

FREEDOM TO OVER

THREE MILLIONS OF SLAVES!

This decree is to be enforced by all the power of the Nation. On the 21st of July last he issued the following order:

PROTECTION OF COLORED TROOPS.

"WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,

"General Order, No. 93.

"The following order of the President is published for the information and government of all concerned:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, July 21.

"It is the duty of every Government to give protection to its citizens, of whatever class, color, or condition, and especially to those who are duly organized as soldiers in the public service. The law of nations, and the usages and customs of war, as carried on by civilized powers, permit no distinction as to color in the treatment of prisoners of war as public enemies. To sell or enslave any captured person on account of his color, is a violation of humanity, and a crime against the civilization of the age.

"The Government of the United States will give the same protection to all its soldiers, and if the enemy shall sell or enslave any one because of his color, the offense shall be punished by retaliation upon the enemy's prisoners in our possession. It is, therefore, ordered, for every soldier of the United States, killed in violation of the laws of war, a rebel soldier shall be executed; and for every one enslaved by the enemy, or sold into slavery, a rebel soldier shall be placed at hard labor on the public works, and confined at such labor until the other shall be released and receive the treatment due to prisoners of war.

"By order of the Secretary of War.

"E. D. Townsend, Assistant Adjutant General"

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN"

Recruitment poster distributed by the North to encourage contrabands (freed slaves) to enlist in the army. It promises equal pay and rights, something not given.

A year after the poster (top) and Fort Wagner’s heroics (pg. 7), this northern cartoon was published. The whites still kept their bigotry.