

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

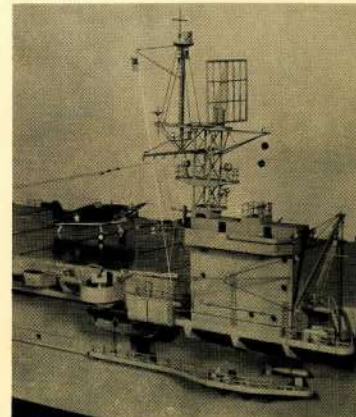


# THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 36, NO. 2

NOVEMBER 1994

---



*Van Ryper's  
Model Shop,  
Builders of  
Tisbury's  
Table-Top  
Fleet*

by ANTHONY VAN RIPER

**A Teen-Ager Vacations  
On the Island in 1906**

by LOUISE HUNTINGTON EDGAR

**A Running Account  
Of Matters & Things**

*The Diary of Henry Baylies,  
Principal of Dukes County Academy*

In Memoriam: Eleanor Olsen (1913-1994)

---

### MEMBERSHIP DUES

Student	\$20
Individual	\$30
Family	\$50
Sustaining	\$75
Patron	\$150
Benefactor	\$250

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

### Edgartown Main Street As Louise Edgar Knew It



Photo was taken in 1905. Edgartown Bank had not yet opened for business in building, left, vacated by Martha's Vineyard Bank. Postoffice is at right, on corner. Mendenhall's store (see p. 87) is second building past bank on left side.

# THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

Vol. 36, No. 2 © 1994 D.C.H.S. November 1994

*Van Ryper Model  
Shop, Builders of*

## Tisbury's Table-Top Fleet 51

by Anthony Van Riper

## A Teen-Ager Vacations On the Island in 1906 66

by Louise Huntington Edgar

## A Running Account Of Matters & Things 90

*The Diary of Henry Baylies,  
Principal of Dukes County Academy*

## Letters 95

## In Memoriam: Eleanor Olsen

*(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



## DUKES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Edward W. Vincent, Jr., *President*

Charlotte Hall, *1st Vice President*

David Vietor, *2nd Vice President*

Anthony K. Van Riper, *Secretary*

Catherine Merwin Mayhew, *Assistant Secretary*

Frederick W. Kingsley, *Treasurer*

### COUNCIL

Hugh E. Knipmeyer, James B. Richardson III,

Barbara Rowe, Donald Vose, Gladys A. Widdiss, 1995

Fairleigh S. Dickinson, Jr., Ernesto Franco,

Earle A. Ray, Judith Ann Bruguere, 1996

William E. Marks, Marcella Provost, James J. K. Norton,

Joseph E. Solitto Jr., Thomas Taylor, Peter B. Van Tassel, 1997

S. Bailey Norton, *President Emeritus*

### ADVISORY COUNCIL

John A. Howland

Lane Lovell

Keith M. Urmy

Frederick Williams

Theodore Z. Penn, *Executive Director*

Peter B. Van Tassel, *Library Assistant*

Jill Bouck, *Curator*

Bruce Andrews, *Membership Secretary/Bookkeeper*

Joanne Coffin Clark, *Secretary/Receptionist*

Dorothea R. Looney, *Registrar*

Catherine Merwin Mayhew, *Genealogist*

Arthur R. Railton, *Editor*

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

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

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

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



Van Ryper Model

Shop, Builders of

## Tisbury's Table-Top Fleet

by ANTHONY VAN RIPER

LIKE MOST writers I know, I keep the odds and ends of my trade — pencils, paper clips, old stamps, useless pens and the like — in a box on my desk. Nothing unusual there. But the front of the box is a piece of fine-grained mahogany and on it is a small half-model of the old Canadian-Australian liner *Maunganui*. Resplendent with emerald hull and a gold sheer stripe, the model is simple and undetailed. It measures only nine inches overall, but it admirably catches the feel of the original ship, long since gone to the breaker's yard.

Across the office is another model. It is a Dogboat, a clinker-built sailing dory, the first boat I ever owned. Built in a scale of one inch to the foot, the model is a marvel of the ship-modeler's art. Strakes, knees, oarlocks, everything is there, in scale, and in place. Her bilge gratings are removable; her mast can be stepped and her sail set. Even the rudder and oars can be shipped.

Both models are more than 50 years old. Both were built in the ship model shop founded by Charles K. Van Riper on Beach Road in Vineyard Haven.

Therein lies a story.

To begin with, there wouldn't have been a shop if a horse hadn't fallen on my father while he was playing polo in Monterey, California, breaking his back. While he was recovering, we all came east to spend time with relatives; first, with my grandmother in Blue Hill, Maine; and then

ANTHONY VAN RIPER of Vineyard Haven is a retired school teacher who began his career in the Tisbury School and ended it in 1976 on the faculty of Newton Junior College in Massachusetts. His first job, at 45 cents an hour, was in the model shop during school vacations. A writer all his life, he is the author of two volumes of poetry: *Velvet Tides* (1964) and *Widow's Walk*, illustrated by Alison Shaw (1991). He is Secretary of this Society and has served on its Council for many years.

on the Vineyard with my father's brother, Donald Van Riper, who was living there.

Like so many persons before and after them, Charlie and Helen Van Riper fell in love with the Island.

The ship-model idea first infected my father when, unable to do anything physical, he put together a very crude model of the Island ferry *Naushon* for me to play with. And so the concept was born. Ironically, my father couldn't have built a ship model that met his exacting standards if his life had depended upon it. He wasn't a model maker.

Charles K. Van Riper was born in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1891. His life before its Vineyard chapter had been a varied one. He had been a newspaperman, a free-lance writer, an inventor, a playwright, a soldier, a baseball maven, being one of the founders of the nation's first amateur softball league. Nothing to suggest an entrepreneur.

And yet, the small ship-model shop on Vineyard Haven harbor, next to Harry Peakes's icehouse, would never have existed without him. The men and women who built the models were as thoroughgoing a bunch of New England individualists as there ever were. It was C.K., (as the model makers called him),<sup>1</sup> who was the entrepreneur, the idea man, the salesman, the front man for the enterprise.

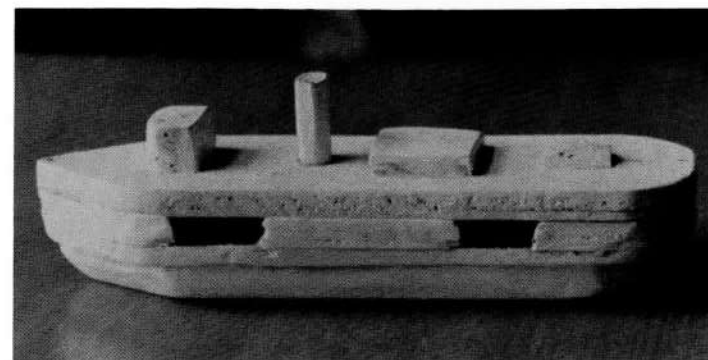
What he did superbly well was to channel the efforts of the model makers to produce a broad body of work that appealed both to the general public and to those for whom ships and shipping were a livelihood.

Appeal, the models did. In 1950, the files of the Van Riper Models<sup>2</sup> listed more than twenty people who had large collections of the models — some numbering over 150!

Van Riper Models opened for business in 1933, deep in the depression, not the most promising time for a business

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes he was called (but never to his face) "Whirlwind Charlie," a name given him in a wonderful cartoon by Pete Ortiz of the shop crew. I expect that occasionally there were other, far ruder names, as well.

<sup>2</sup> For 60 years there has been confusion about the spelling of the Van Riper name. My father always spelled it that way, with an "i", for his personal use. But he felt that using a "y" made Van Riper easier to remember, to spell and, most of all, to pronounce. So that's how it was spelled for the model shop: "Van Ryper—Vineyard Haven."



*Van Riper was no expert craftsman, as model of Naushon he made for his son proves. See p.62 for one built later in the Van Riper shop.*

to start. When it ceased operation in 1962, it had produced a fleet of over 15,000 models, ranging from a tiny harbor tug 1 1/2 inches long to a builder's model of a tanker more than 27 feet from bow to stern, so large it was shipped to the Kaiser shipyard in Oregon in five sections.

The shop was housed in a homely building on Beach Road, next to today's Gannon and Benjamin shipyard. Another small building (now a Century 21 office) nearer the road was moved there about 1940 when more space was needed. During much of the shop's existence, it had fewer than a dozen employees. In its early years, the mid-1930s, there were only eight: Arthur Andrews, Benny Baptiste, Frank Canha, John B. Canha, Raymond V. Chipman, Mel Doremus and Donald Van Riper, plus C. K., himself.

During World War II, however, when much of the production was for the U. S. government, nearly 50 men and women worked in three buildings on the site. For some hectic months in 1942 and 1943, two shifts were needed to meet production demands.<sup>3</sup>

### The Travel Series

In the beginning, the shop primarily built small-scale models of passenger and cargo ships, using production methods that made them available at prices the average

<sup>3</sup> The third building was across the road, next to the Artcliff Diner and was moved there in 1942 by Harry Horton. It is now a real estate office.



Model shop in early days, about 1938. Behind it is Vineyard Haven harbor. Huge firecracker suggests it was taken about July 4th.

ship passenger could afford. C.K.'s original premise, to be able to use standardized parts for various models, didn't work out. As a construction method, it was fine, requiring little thought: "Use hull 12, bridge house A, superstructures C-1 and G-4. . ." But the models barely resembled the originals and therefore did not sell.

C.K.'s basic idea was a good one as there were no such models being sold at the time, except as one-of-a-kind, built from scratch, far too expensive for volume sales. Some mass-produced models were made in England by Bassett-Lowke Ltd., but these were mostly die-cast in white metal. C.K. wanted his to be in wood, a more elegant material for ship lovers.

These models became known as the Travel Series. The *S. S. Kungsholm* is one example. Built early in 1940 in a scale of 1 inch equals 45 feet, it could be sold for about \$9.50, because of the construction method pioneered by Van Ryper. It was simply mass production scaled down (what else, in a model shop?). To achieve display quality, the models were made of poplar, a fine-grained, easily worked wood, sometimes known as whitewood. They were painted with sprayed-on automotive lacquer.

Rather than being built "one-off," the Travel Series models were generally built in batches of 12, 18 or 24. The workman



By 1947, the shop had expanded to these buildings, plus one across the road. The showroom was now in the building on the right.

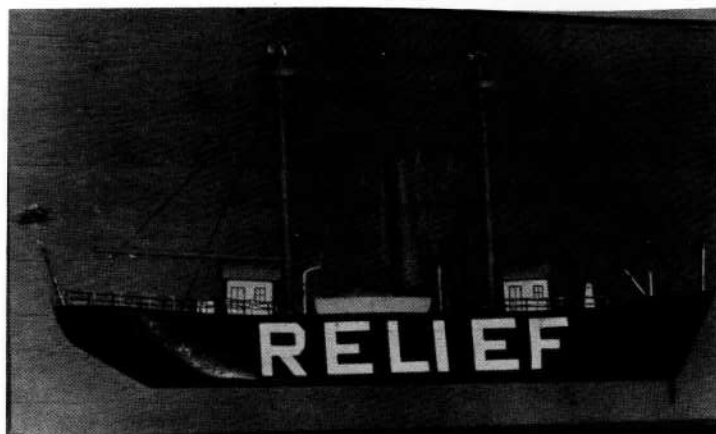
would cut 24 hull blocks at a time, 24 deckhouses and bridge houses. One setting of the power saw or sander could be used without re-setting, reducing production time greatly. The painter would finish 24 models, with a single mix of paint, saving time and material.

Similar simplification went into the design. The kingposts on the ship's foredeck are inexpensive carpenter's finish nails. Lifeboats are furniture beading sanded to the correct size. Davits and deck stanchions are common pins. The top of the rudder is a glazier's point and the masts, after-kingposts and cargo booms are standard brass rod. The masts, of soft brass, were tapered on a drill press rather than being turned on a lathe. Only the white-metal ventilators were "store bought," coming from a model-supply house.

In this way, models were built at a cost that allowed the retail price of the handsome Swedish-America liner to be held below \$10 until the period of general price rises after World War II.

The Travel Series was almost immediately successful, despite the end of private ocean travel during World War II. Their small size and low price made them an attractive purchase for travelers, whether transAtlantic or across Vineyard Sound. The 1937 catalog listed more than 250 ship models in stock at prices ranging from \$3.50 (for the

Courtesy Lane Lovell



The shop's best-seller was this half model of the lightship *Relief*, designed to identify the door of that necessary room.

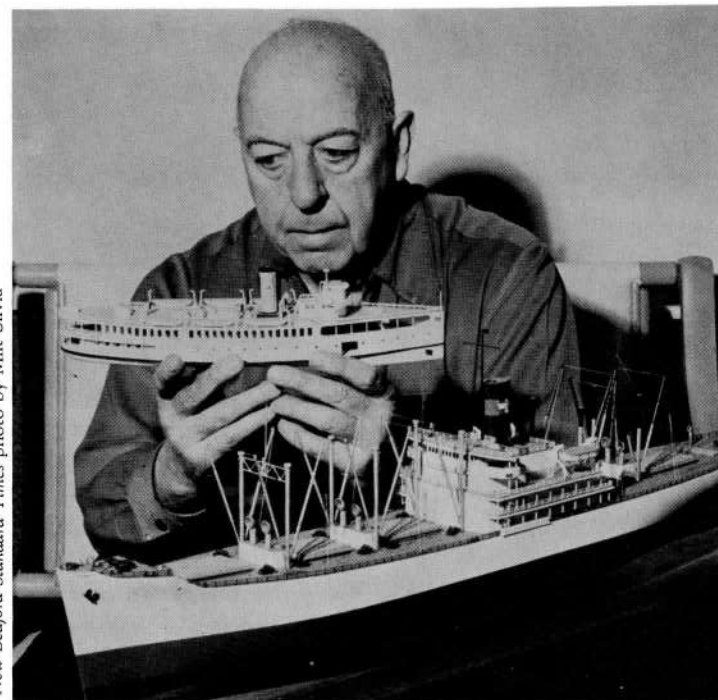
ferry *Martha's Vineyard*) to \$5.75 (for the S.S. *Mauretania*). More detailed models, such as one of the *Normandie* in a scale of 1 inch equals 64 feet, sold for as much as \$15.

The Travel Series were all waterline models that could rest on a shelf without an elaborate stand. After all, C.K. reasoned, it is only in drydock that the turn of the bilge and below becomes visible and few travelers ever see their ship in drydock.

A word about scale. Models in the Travel Series were never intended to be all in the same scale. Rather, they were designed to be a series, averaging between 9 and 11 inches long. As it turned out, the earlier ship models were in a scale (approximate) of 1 inch equals 45 feet. The much larger superliners of the late 1930s were scaled at about 1 inch equals 64 feet to keep them inside the limit.

These models were not intended to be highly detailed. From the first, my father decreed only as much detail as could be seen on a vessel passing from two to five miles away. Advertised as "Models of ships on which you've sailed," these models were the shop's basic stock in trade until the start of World War II. In addition to these basic production models, the shop branched out into more detailed yacht models in the late 1930s.

New Bedford Standard Times photo by Milt Silvia



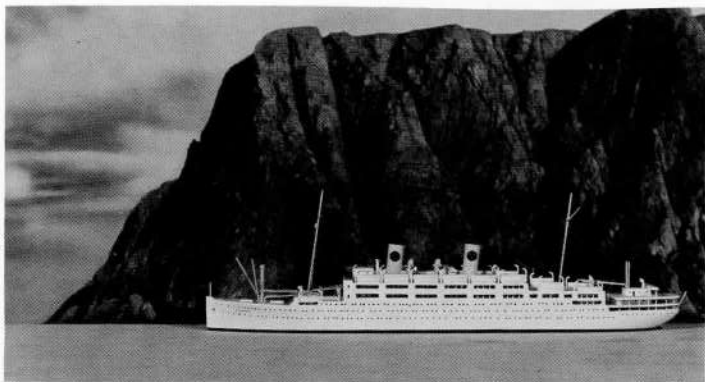
Van Riper in 1956, holding model of steamer *Martha's Vineyard*. Large model is American President line C-3 freighter, built to same scale.

The entrepreneur in Charlie Van Riper was always at work. There were always new ideas. Waste baskets painted in the funnel colors of steamships. Bookends shaped like funnels. If the paint job didn't come out right, the model would be sliced in half and its good side mounted as a plaque.

The shop's best-selling plaque (in fact, the best-selling item it ever produced) was the lightship *Relief*, a half model of the lightship of that name fastened to a blue-green backboard. It was, in a stroke of entrepreneurial genius, advertised as a means to "guide your guests to that certain door." One of these plaques still graces a bathroom door at the New York Yacht Club.

There were subsidiary operations: Tisbury Toys, Technical Model Service, Seven Seas Books, and others. But the





*Travel Series model of S.S. Kungsholm shown in a realistic setting.*

mainstay of it all, before World War II, was the Travel Series of 9 to 11-inch waterline models.

#### The War Years

Even before the war in Europe began in 1939, the model shop had converted to a war footing under contract with the Maritime Commission and the Bureau of Ships of the United State Navy. The first of many highly detailed models had been made in 1938 for Moore-McCormack Lines on a scale of 1 inch equals 96 feet, known as "eighth scale" because it is one-eighth inch to the foot. By 1940, the scale had become standard for the shop's production.

In 1940, the Maritime Commission contracted with the shop to build an eighth-scale model of the EC2-S-C1, a cargo vessel that later was famous as the "Liberty Ship." The Van Ryper Model Shop's first major military job was to replicate the entire Japanese fleet. These models were to be used to train American sailors and aviators to identify the various ships in the Imperial Japanese Navy. The contract called for 2300 models, a huge volume for the small shop. It was completed quickly, as Joseph Chase Allen wrote later in the *Vineyard Gazette*:

Speed was essential, and the entire order was delivered prior to Pearl Harbor. So well did these models serve their purpose that the "yard" was given an order for similar small-scale



*Two models of a Liberty ship, the famed World War II freighter. President Roosevelt owned a Van Ryper model in the larger size.*

models of German and Italian fighting ships. Details were taken from blueprints and photos furnished by Navy Intelligence.

Most of these recognition models, as they were called, were built in a scale of 1 inch equals 64 feet. Later, some were built at 1 inch to 100 feet.

It was in the building of the eighth-scale (1 inch equals 96 feet) and larger models that the Van Ryper shop showed its mettle. All during the war, many such models were built for various government agencies and civilian shipbuilders. One of them found its way into the collection at President Franklin D. Roosevelt's home in Hyde Park, New York.<sup>4</sup>

The largest model ever built in the Van Ryper shop was ordered in 1942 by the Kaiser Shipyard in Portland, Oregon. It was of the T2-SE-A1 fast Navy tanker and was made of metal. With an overall length of 27 feet, the model was built in five sections, the same as the actual vessel. Designed for mass production, the tanker's five sections were built separately and then welded together. The Van Ryper model was used to demonstrate to the Kaiser foremen how the five sections were assembled to form the complete ship.

Except for the exterior hull plating, the tanker model was complete from the deck down, with all the tank sections and their seven piping systems shown in entirety. Every rib, frame, stringer, deck and bulkhead was in place. The model,

<sup>4</sup> FDR's model was a Liberty ship (EC-2-SC-1), the mass-produced vessel that was the supply line between the U. S. and Europe.

being of metal, required lots of solder work and the shop's lead metalsmith was the late Stanton H. Lair.<sup>5</sup>

Four of the five sections had been shipped to Oregon when disaster struck. Early on a morning in July 1942, fire broke out in the model shop. When the firemen arrived, the blaze already had engulfed the building, gutting most of it.

Facing an approaching deadline, Charlie Van Riper moved the Kaiser production across the street into a house he purchased from Mrs. Ben Cromwell. Another work crew began rebuilding the charred interior of the main building. The Cromwell house was the company's sheet-metal shop from then on. The fifth section of the tanker model, under construction, was slagged down into a heap of twisted metal. The blueprints also were destroyed so a new set was shipped by air from Oregon.

Tracings were made of each piece of metal to be soldered into the section being rebuilt. These were glued to sheet metal which, when cut to shape, were soldered together by "Hun" Lair and his crew. In due course everything was back in order and, despite the upset, production schedules did not lose as much as one day's time.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps not, but it was a hectic couple of months!

While the huge T2 was probably the most complex model the shop ever built, surely the most far-out was an 11-inch model of a vessel that resembled a Florida condominium. Another unusual model, built in the late 1940s, was for a woman in California, who was a Bible student. She wrote, inquiring about a model of Noah's ark and was told there was none in stock. After considerable research, she furnished the probable dimensions of the Biblical vessel. It turned out, according to her specifications, to be about the size of an aircraft carrier. The model was made and shipped to the woman, apparently to her satisfaction, as her check came by return mail. As was his practice, my father had two of the ark models built, so one remained in his possession.

<sup>5</sup> Stanton "Hun" Lair later in his life became a well-known collector of historic Vineyard photographs.

<sup>6</sup> Anon., "A Model Merchant Marine," *The Mast Magazine*, March 1948, p.3.

Building models to the larger scale made it possible to add details which could never been included in smaller replicas. Even so, the one-eighth scale model of an average vessel does not take up an inordinate amount of display space. Most merchant-ship models are built to this scale, many being found in the galleries of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. Some of those exhibited there were built by Van Ryper.

These one-eighth models were built directly from blueprints and all the details on the plans and supplementary photographs were faithfully reproduced. There was less call for eighth models of warships, but a few were built, including the escort carriers, H.M.S. *Boxer* of the Royal Navy and the U.S.S. *Guadalcanal* (CVE-60). Usually, the Navy's model shop built their own.

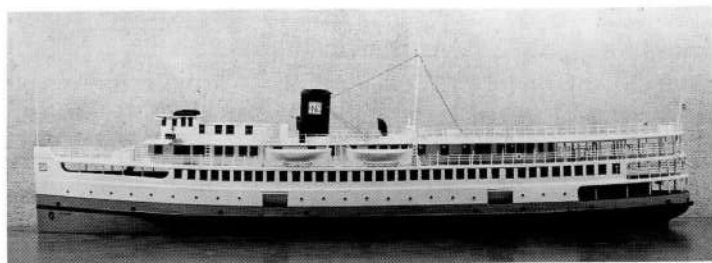
At the end of World War II, the Van Ryper shop received a citation of excellence from the U.S. Navy and its Bureau of Ships.

#### The Postwar Period

The postwar generation of ships differed greatly from those which had come before. Their sweeping curves and raked lines made them infinitely more difficult to produce using the methods that had been so successful with the pre-war Travel Series. Rising costs also drove the price of small models beyond the reach of the moderate purse. A freighter model that would have cost about \$4.50 in 1937 would be three or four times that ten years later. And, while the eighth models were exquisite and exact, few individuals had the desire or the money to order nor the space to display a five-foot-long model of anything.

Yet, the model shop carried on into the 1950s. Although there was little demand for naval vessels, it continued making eighth-scale models for shipping lines and shipbuilders. The Isbrandsten Line, for instance, ordered an eighth model of each of its vessels. (Ironically, a model of *Flying Enterprise* was being completed in the shop at the time Capt. Henrik Carlson was being taken off her as she sank.)





One-eighth model of Naushon, one of the steamers serving the Island in 1930s.

Model repair and restoration also figured into the work:

Many old-time ship models, some of them historic, were restored and saved from the trash heap by the ship model builders.<sup>7</sup>

Oil-drilling rigs, Coast Guard cutters, Mississippi River towboats and private yachts, all were part of the post-war production at the Van Ryper shop. And there were always the small models, made in volume, as John Bunker wrote:

A display room beside the Van Ryper shop attracts ship lovers, tourists, and naval architects. Here, you can choose the ship of your dreams, wrap it up and take it home for winter cruises beside the fire. Ships all so realistic it seems you could step aboard and sail them off into Vineyard Sound.<sup>8</sup>

In the late 1950s, caught between rising costs and a vanishing merchant marine, the model shop's useful life was approaching old age. The crew, all now considered "old timers," was once again down to the size it had been 25 years earlier.

Charlie Van Ryper was still the driving force. Eldon West was the foreman and yacht model maker, working in a corner of the office. Freeman Leonard did much of the corporate work, passenger liners and freighters, assisted by the metalsmith, Stan Lair. Phil Horton, the decorator, worked at a bench in the attic. Rounding out the crew were Clifford Dugan, Pete Ortiz and Doug Stewart.

In 1960, following a stroke, Charles Van Ryper closed

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Chase Allen, "Charles Van Ryper—A Tribute," *Vineyard Gazette*, April 17, 1964.

<sup>8</sup> John Bunker, "Ships That Never Went to Sea," *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 15, 1947.



Photo of the S.S. Naushon, approaching the wharf at Oak Bluffs in 1939.

down the construction end of the operation. He kept the showroom open for two more years. It was not only a labor of love for him, but it was easier on a failing system as well.

Beyond all else, it kept the name alive: *Van Ryper of Vineyard Haven*. That meant a lot to him.

The showroom had always been busy in the summer and there are many who were young in the 1940s and 1950s who still fondly recall visits to "the model shop" on a rainy day. Occasionally, visitors were rather more than casual drop-ins out of the rain. One visit in 1960 provided a follow-up letter from George D. Wintress of Seamen's Bank in New York. He wrote that he had

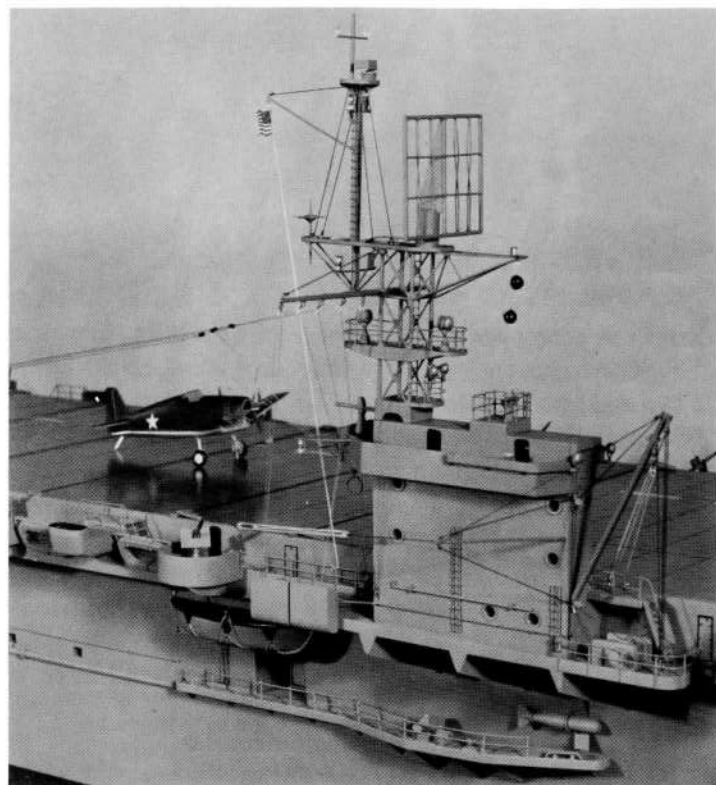
... an interested party, but it would necessitate [his] seeing the model, if the price was agreeable to all concerned.<sup>9</sup>

The price turned out to be agreeable and in October 1960, Charlie Van Ryper, as rock-ribbed a Republican as ever lived, found himself in Hyannisport, showing a model of the U.S.S. *Wasp*, a ship-rigged sloop-of-war of the old sailing Navy, to the President of the United States and his family.<sup>10</sup> The model sold for \$575 and today would be worth ten times that. Later, it was shipped to Washington by the family and today is in the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston.

Then, in 1962, "Whirlwind Charlie" Van Ryper decided to pack it in. Closing the shop, however, has not closed out the demand. Not a year has gone by since that time

<sup>9</sup> George D. Wintress, New York City, letter to Charles K. Van Ryper, August 15, 1961.

<sup>10</sup> My father returned from Hyannisport a committed Democrat, amazed by President John F. Kennedy and charmed by his daughter, Caroline. This purchase meant that two presidents have owned Van Ryper models, both Navy men. A remarkable tribute.



Close-up view of a one-eighth model of U.S.S. Guadalcanal, escort carrier, World War II, showing its excellent detailing.

that there have not been letters and telephone calls, asking "Do you have a model of the . . .?" In retrospect, the shop may have closed too soon. Today, buyers would be willing to pay the necessary high prices for the miniature ships. Van Ryper models are well known to collectors and it is a fact that models in good condition are still bought and sold at prices that would have made Charlie shake his head. A Florida man has a collection currently numbering more than 125 models.

But if the shop was still open, it would have to survive on nostalgia. There are no longer many "ships on which you've sailed." No longer do great ships excite the imagination of the public, their deep-throated whistles



Photos courtesy the author

Interior of Van Ryper model shop shortly before it closed.

raising goose pimples on romantics. And bringing dreams of faraway lands. Today, most ships are for cruising, "Love Boats" with more of the personality and character of Las Vegas than of seafaring.

The shop's first models had been of the Blue Riband Atlantic liners: *Mauretania*, *Bremen*, *Normandie* and *Queen Mary* and the like. Ironically, the last batch of 24 models ever produced by Van Ryper Models was of the *Andrea Doria*, another queen of the Atlantic which is now lying in 40 fathoms about 50 miles from the site of the former Van Ryper Model Shop.

Henry Beetle Hough characterized the model shop after the 1942 fire in an editorial that said it (as he always did) as well as it could be said:

Long ago, in peace times, the Van Ryper shipyard. . . represented ingenuity in launching on Martha's Vineyard a non-competitive industry. . . well suited to Island tradition and. . . temperaments. That Vineyard Haven should have her name spread over the world as the home of finely fashioned ship models was appropriate and pleasant, and the work required was work that Islanders could always be expected to do well.<sup>11</sup>

Charles K. Van Riper died in 1964. Over its 30 years of existence, his ship-model shop had produced more than 15,000 models, a little profit and a worldwide reputation.

<sup>11</sup> *Vineyard Gazette*, July 28, 1942.

## A Teen-Ager Vacations On the Island in 1906

The Diary of LOUISE EDGAR

What did vacationing teenagers do on the Vineyard back in 1906, in the days before tee-shirts and video games? Of course, nobody called them teen-agers then, they were just boys and girls. One teen-ager, Louise Huntington Edgar, kept a diary of that summer in Edgartown. Her immediate family consisted of her mother, three girls and one boy. Louise, 14, was the third child. Sister Margaret was 16 and brother Stuart was 15. The youngest sibling, Edith, was 12. There was also a live-in maid, Mary, who is scarcely mentioned by Louise.

It was, in today's terms, a single-parent family; the father, Howard Edgar, had died, a suicide, three years before. The mother, also Louise, was, it seems, financially secure, able to rent a house on South Water Street for the entire summer. She received much emotional, and probably financial, support from her husband's family.

The house they rented was owned by William K. Pent, an 80-year-old retired carpenter. His mother, Mrs. Eliza Pent, had died only a week before Louise's diary begins, although Louise doesn't mention it. When she died, Mrs. Pent was the oldest person in Edgartown at age 97. She lived on School Street with an unmarried daughter, Mary. Another Pent family, the town's undertaker, lived next door. Eliza's house faced down Pent Lane.

William rented his South Water Street house each summer, moving in with his mother and sister. Today, it is owned by Patricia Neal Dahl, the actress. William had bought it in 1885 from Thomas J. Coffin for \$875. It had been the homestead of

LOUISE HUNTINGTON EDGAR and her family from Nutley, New Jersey, spent the summer of 1906 in Edgartown in a house they rented on South Water Street from William K. Pent. Her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Carole C. Colie of Portland, Oregon, has given the Society a typescript of her diary, covering those months.

Capt. Valentine Pease, master of the whaling ship on which Herman Melville served (and from which he deserted) before writing *Moby Dick*.

After William's death in 1908, the house was sold to Henry B. Thomas, son-in-law of Melville, for \$2200. Some folks, anxious to add to local tradition, insist Thomas bought it because Valentine Pease was the prototype for Melville's Captain Ahab.

Neither Pease nor Melville is mentioned by Louise, while living in the house. Apparently, the connection was unknown to her. Or, more likely, it just was of no interest to the lively, vibrant teen-ager.

The Edgar family seem not to have come back to Edgartown and began vacationing on Barnegat Bay, New Jersey. When Louise, the diarist, married nine years later, she and her husband, a lawyer in East Orange, bought a house on the shore at Mantoloking, New Jersey, where they and their four children vacationed.

Louise's first Edgartown entry is the day before the Fourth of July, 1906. The family, except for Margaret, had arrived from New Jersey a few days earlier:

**July 3, Tuesday:** . . . We are in Edgartown now. I've brought all my fireworks and so has Edith. I've learned to play tennis and I like it a lot.

**July 4, Wednesday:** This morning I set off a lot of firecrackers and so did Edith. It rained almost all day. We couldn't go over to the bathing beach because it was so rough, so we went in off our pier. After bathing, we set off some more firecrackers and things and then Mr. Pent asked me to come down to his house and get some currants, so I went down and when we had picked a basketful I went into the house with him and he showed me a lot of things. He gave me a piece of whalebone which, he says, is a great curiosity because whalebones are almost always black, and he gave me an Indian arrowhead and two coins for my collection and a lot of tiny little pink shells.

Then I came home but I was late for dinner. . . At supper I spilled my glass of water so Mother said that I couldn't read this evening, but I forgot and did it, so Mother sent



me to bed. So I read in bed.

*It certainly was a different world in 1906 if punishment was forbidding a teen-ager to read! Today, she would be forbidden to watch television. The elderly Mr. Pent seemed to take a great interest in Louise. Another difference: Today, he would be suspect! On the photograph opposite, some one wrote about him: "Was very fond of us girls and used to watch us play tennis." Harmless, but today folks would talk. It is strange that he allowed her to shoot a gun in downtown Edgartown (see below).*

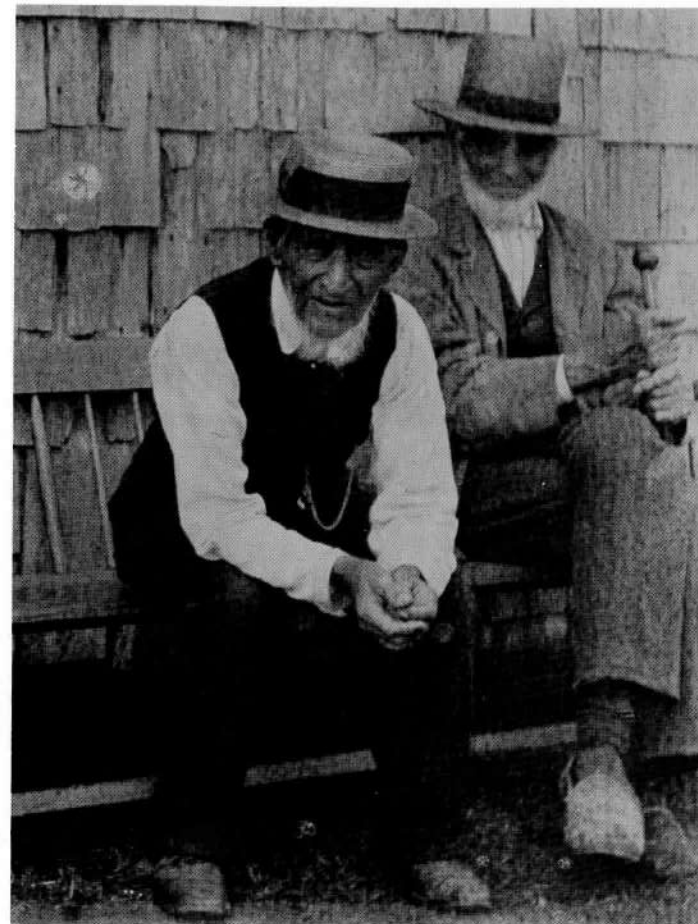
**July 5, Thursday:** This morning after breakfast I went up to Mr. Pent's to get some food for my rabbit and he let me shoot off a gun that he has. He has a revolver that has killed a man.

We had a fine bath, but it was rather rough. Constance and I swam out to the raft several times. Stuart [her brother] got his boat today. This afternoon I went down to the beach and read and then I took five dirty little boys and two dirty little girls out for a row. After supper Cony came for us and we all walked out to the light-house.

*By having a "fine bath," she means a good swim. They swam almost daily at Chadwick's bathing beach on Chappaquiddick, getting there in their own rowboat or sailboat. The remark about the dirty children is puzzling, certainly not in character with the rest of the diary.*

**July 6, Friday:** This morning I borrowed Mr. Pent's lawnmower and cut the grass until bathing time. It was pretty rough in bathing. Mother sailed home in Stuart's sailboat. We rowed home and as the current was going our way, we just let the boat drift and steered with an oar. Just as we were coming in, Edith began to row with the other oar and turned me all around and I couldn't make her stop by asking so I just had to do it with my hands; and then she got mad and called me names so I splashed her with an oar and she splashed me back, and the water got all over Margaret and Margaret said that I began it and I didn't, and anyway it was none of her business.

Then when we came home I wanted to change my dress and Margaret wouldn't go out of the room and it is my room



*William Pent, left, whose house the Edgars rented, was a 49er in the Vineyard Mining Company. He wore a gold nugget on his watch chain.*

so she ought to have, so I tried to put her out. Then Aunt Fanny came and knocked on the door and asked what was the matter in a shocked voice and asked if she could come in. I said, not loud enough for her to hear, "No, you can't," and Edith put her back against the door, but she went round to the other door and got in.

She made the whole matter worse and she's an old busybody and a butt-in. Then Mama came in and Aunt

F. began to put all the blame on me and she said that I had snatched some letters out of her hands, but I never touched them and I told her so. Mother sent me up to her room and then let the others tell what the quarrel was about and, of course, they said I was to blame.

In the afternoon I raked all the grass up on the lawn. Mother told me that if I didn't beg everybody's pardon I couldn't sit with the family or have a light in my own room; but they'll sit together 'til they rot before I'll beg anybody's pardon who doesn't beg mine first.

Mother says that none of us can go in bathing tomorrow except Stuart. That is because of the row. Sigourney is coming tomorrow.

*Margaret was the oldest child in the family, two years older than Louise. The Gazette, on July 5, had announced that "Miss F. L. Smith of Newark and Miss Margaret Edgar of Nutley, N.J. are at the Mrs. Howard Edgar's on South Water Street." Miss Smith, the "old busybody," seems to be Aunt Fanny, an unmarried sister of Louise's mother. She and Margaret apparently had come to Edgartown separately from the others.*

**July 7, Saturday:** Sigourney came today. Margaret and Edith have begged my pardon and I have begged theirs. All this morning I was in the woodshed making a new coop for Goggles [her pet rabbit]. I sewed and played checkers most of the afternoon because it was rainy.

**July 8, Sunday:** It rained all morning. I went to church with Mother, and Edith had to go with Aunt Fanny because I went last Sunday. This afternoon I wanted to go out in the rowboat but Edith jumped in it from the wharf with such force that the bottom cracked and the water came pouring in, so we can't use it 'til it's fixed. Then I went for a long walk with Margaret, way out into the country and we found lots of flowers and a fine place for a picnic.

I shall never punish my children for an accident.

*It would seem that Louise, like most teen-agers, believes that her mother is too strict and too free with punishment. The "accident" must refer to the rowboat incident. The boat, it seems, was rented from Mr. Collins and damaging it was a serious matter*

*to Mrs. Edgar. When Louise writes that "Edith had to go to church with Aunt Fanny," it is obvious that the aunt is not a favorite with either of them.*

**July 9, Monday:** This morning we found that the rowboat was gone from the beach where we had left it and we haven't found it yet. Stuart sailed us over to the bathing beach.

**July 10, Tuesday:** Today a fisherman found our boat and gave it to Mr. Collins who brought it home. It was half full of water. I think Mr. Collins is going to take it back and we'll go over in Stuart's sailboat. Edith and I took a long walk this afternoon. We took our books and a lot of candy and read in a big pine wood.

*Mr. Collins could have been either Clarence or Harry, both of them lived in the large house just above Collins Beach. It was just a few houses from the Pent house, but on the opposite side of Water Street. Harry was known as "Popcorn Harry," the Bible-quoting eccentric who sold popcorn bars, first on the old Martha's Vineyard Railroad and later on the sidewalks and beaches of Edgartown.*

*The picture of these two young girls taking a long walk and sitting in a pine grove reading books and eating candy is truly idyllic. And Victorian.*

**July 11, Wednesday:** Aunt Addy and the kids are coming tomorrow. Mr. Pent mended our boat. Edith and I couldn't go in bathing because we had quarreled.

**July 12, Thursday:** Aunt Addy came in the evening. We went up to the Harbor View to see her. Our boat still leaks.

*Aunt Addy was Adriana, the late Mr. Edgar's sister, who was named for their mother, Adriana Augusta Meeker Edgar. She, unlike Mrs. Edgar's relatives, did not stay with the Edgars, but at the Harbor View on Starbuck Neck, the prestigious large hotel overlooking the harbor lighthouse.*

**July 14, Saturday:** This morning I had \$4.00 in my ten-cent bank. I took it to the bank here and got the people to lend me six dollars in ten-cent pieces and I put them all in my bank and it opened and I got my \$4.00 and gave them their \$6.00. Then I came home and wrote a letter to the Cycle Skate Co., sending them \$3.35 for a pair of Cycle

Skates to be sent by express. I registered the letter.

A boy was drowned here today.

Many of us remember those shiny cylindrical dime banks, with little holes in them so you could count the coins. They would not open until filled. Louise, an ingenious 14-year-old, went to the bank and "borrowed" enough coins to open it so she could buy roller skates.

The boy who drowned was Henry A. Strahl, 12 years old, son of Mrs. Victor Danberg and the late John Strahl. He had drowned in six feet of water in Eel Pond, Friday morning. His body was recovered by Lewis Hill, son of Charles L. Hill of Starbuck's Bluff, assisted by George N. Cleveland.

**July 15, Sunday:** Constance Goodrich is coming tomorrow and maybe Grandma, Aunty Beach, Mable and Uncle Morgan. I went to church. This afternoon Constance Alden, Lucy, Margaret, Edith and Sigourney walked over to South Beach and back.

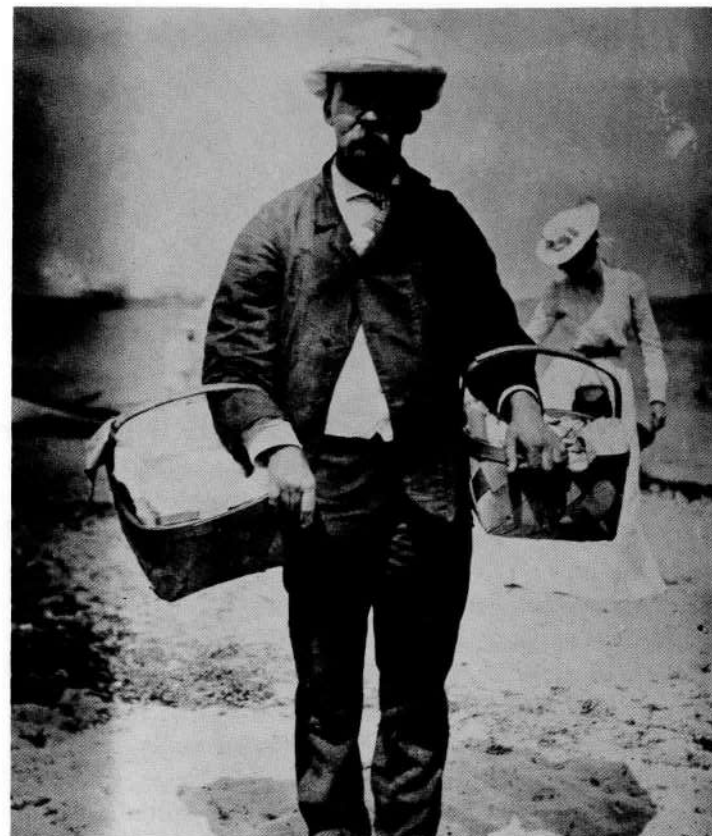
*Constance Goodrich, also of Nutley, was the sister of Lloyd Goodrich who became a well-known art critic and biographer of Edward Hopper and other America artists.*

**July 16, Monday:** Constance G. and Mable and all of them come tonight. Mable isn't pretty and I don't like her much.

*By Wednesday, July 18, she would "like Mable quite a lot."*

**July 17, Tuesday:** I expected my roller skates today but they didn't come. This evening Constance Alden and Lucy came here and we all played games with the boys.

**July 18, Wednesday:** This morning I went down to Mr. Pent's to get weeds for my rabbit. When I was there, Mr. Pent told me to go home and bring the other girls and then we could all pick cherries off his big tree. I did and the girls brought Mable too. We picked a lot and ate a lot. When we went in bathing, I was afraid to go out to the raft or even beyond my depth for I might get a cramp, having eaten so many cherries. I tried to shock Mable but she wouldn't shock. I like Mable quite a lot. She can swim finely. This evening Mable and Constance A. and Lucy came down here



"Popcorn Harry" Collins, a neighbor of Louise, would recite multiplication tables and Bible verses as he sold Darling's popcorn bars.

and we acted charades. The boys went out. Constance A. is stuck on Stuart. Uncle Morgan gave us a lot of Peter's chocolate.

**July 19, Thursday:** Uncle Morgan went home today. My skates haven't come yet.

**July 20, Friday:** This afternoon Aunt Fanny hired a big three-seated carriage and took us over to Cottage City. Edith and I got out at a roller skating rink there and the rest, Aunt F., Mother, Margaret, Constance G., and Mable drove on to see Vineyard Haven. Edith and I had a fine time. At first, we fell all over ourselves but after a while we learned



better. The rink was an awfully big place and there was a band.

I've been three times to the express office to see if my roller skates had come, but they haven't. If they don't come tomorrow I shall write the Cycle Skate Company about it.

*The roller-skating rink was new, replacing the much larger rink destroyed in the Sea View Hotel fire in 1892. Called the Casino, it was at the head of the steamboat wharf on Oak Bluffs Avenue and was owned by William H. Walker of Taunton. A brass band provided music. Admission: 10 cents. Skate rental: 25 cents. Open afternoons and evenings, it advertised.*

**July 21, Saturday:** My skates haven't come so I sent the letter. Edith and Margaret and Constance G. went to a dance at the Harbor View. This morning Stuart was in a boat race. He sailed with the Thayer boy in his (the Thayer boy's) sail-boat. It is a Herreshoff Model. They finished third but we don't think they didn't beat, because they had a time allowance over some of the other boats. Day-before-yesterday we all went to the Harbor View and the boys played the girls at baseball. The boys tried to be funny and played all wrong so we stopped.

*Louise's explanation of the handicapping is most confusing. The race was the annual Club Race. Scofield Thayer, who owned the boat, was from Worcester. His family rented the Chadwick house on North Water Street. Years later, he was Editor of Dial magazine in Paris. When he retired, he lived on Planting Field Way, Edgartown.*

**July 22, Sunday:** Today I went to church. I read most of the time before and after dinner until three o'clock. Then Edith and I got ready for bathing; we had a fine bath and swam far past the raft which made Stuart awfully mad.

**July 23, Monday:** This morning Edith and I went over to the bathing-beach in the rowboat, and as the wind and tide were both going our way, we got an umbrella and put it up and sailed along. Edith held the umbrella and I steered with an oar. I'm thinking of putting a sail on the rowboat. Mother says that if by next year we know how to swim well

From William Conklin Collection



*Cottage City Casino near steamboat wharf, where Louise roller skated to a brass band. Admission: 10 cents. Skate rental: 25 cents.*

enough, she will get us a little catboat for ourselves. Dwight Douglas towed us home in his sailboat. It was so rough that some of the waves came right over the edge of the boat. At 11 o'clock today Sigourney went home. I'm awfully sorry he went because he's nice. My skates haven't come yet. In the morning I hung the skirt of my bathing suit over the stovepipe and it got all scorched and when I went in bathing it tore in about 19 places. I'm going to try and sew it up tomorrow.

*The stove must have been the kitchen stove for cooking. The picture of these two young girls using an umbrella as a sail on their way to Chadwick's beach on Chappaquiddick is a happy one. The harbor was peaceful as it was before power boats. Just about 1906, the first boats were being equipped with motors.*

**July 24, Tuesday:** This morning I tried to mend my bathing suit but I couldn't and Mother says it is too rotten and burnt and torn to keep so she is going to send for another and I can't go in bathing 'til it comes; but I went in off the end of our wharf this morning without any skirt.

*It seems strange that they didn't buy the bathing suit in Edgartown. At Chappaquiddick beach, females were required to wear bathing suits with knee-length skirts, plus full-length stockings. Louise got around the rule by swimming off "our wharf." The Pent house was not on the water, but a lane opposite it ran down to the beach. Mr. Pent seems to have had the use*

of a dock there (no dock was mentioned when the house was sold). The Edgar girls, Mrs. Colie says, were the first to go swimming on the Jersey shore without stockings. Bold, early feminists, they were!

**July 25, Wednesday:** Today I rowed Edith over to the bathing beach but I didn't go in myself. It was fine bathing and awfully rough. I wish I could go in.

**July 26, Thursday:** Constance G. didn't go in today so she lent me her bathing suit. I had a fine bath. Frank Gearhart sailed Constance A. and Edith and Dwight Douglas and me over to the bathing beach. It was awfully rough and we were the only people who went in.

**July 27, Friday:** My roller skates came today. They are fine. I can skate quite well. Constance didn't go in today so I wore her bathing suit again.

**July 28, Saturday:** Today I went on an excursion to Gay Head. It was fine. Mable and Aunt Beach went, and Mr. Pent took Margaret and Constance. The clay cliffs there were lovely. We had our lunch there. I had lobster and strong tea.

*It would have been an all-day trip by horse carriages. It seems that two were used, Mr. Pent providing one of them. The teenager thought it important to record that she had "strong tea."*

**July 29, Sunday:** I didn't go to church today. This afternoon Stuart took Edith and me out sailing. When we came home who should we find at our house but Anita Ohrtman! She is staying with her mother at a boarding house here for the rest of the season. I went to a dance at the Harbor View tonight. I didn't dance because I don't know how very well and I'm afraid to try.

**July 30, Monday:** Constance G. went home today. Margaret was going over to Cottage City with her, but Mother said she couldn't. I skated a lot today and I can do it quite well. My new bathing suit came today, but it was too late to bathe.

*It is not clear where she would go roller skating in town as most streets were not hard surfaced. Perhaps the sidewalks were.*

**July 31, Tuesday:** Tomorrow is my birthday and I shall



House where Louise lived is hidden behind the large white house on Collins Beach. This photo is about 1906. Old Mayhew house, left, was torn down in 1909.

be 15 years old. I went in bathing today. I jumped off the raft twice and went way under. I think I will try to dive tomorrow. Frank Gearhart sailed us over.

**August 1, Wednesday:** It rained today but I had my party. Miss Amy gave me \$10 and I got \$15 altogether. Mother gave me a tennis racquet and a ring and a lot of other things. Margaret gave me a tennis ball, Edith some Josh sticks, Stuart some candy and a match scratcher, and Aunt Fanny a scrap book, a checker board and the ice cream. Grandma gave me two dollars and Aunt Addy gave me one dollar and the little boys gave me a little white rabbit which died tonight. Aunt Daisy and Uncle George each gave me a dollar and a lot of things came from Bunny and Billy.

*This is the first mention of "Miss Amy," who gave her \$10, a very large sum. We don't know who she was, but clearly she thought a lot of Louise (and was well-to-do).*

**August 2, Thursday:** Today I swam across the harbor.

**August 3, Friday:** Margaret and Aunt Fanny left for Northfield today. I went up to a dance at the Harbor View.

*Northfield was an all-girls' seminary and apparently the 16-year-old Margaret was a student there. Clearly, she was a favorite of Aunt Fanny's, which explains the incident that occurred back at the start of the summer.*

**August 4, Saturday:** Tonight we (Edith, Stuart and I) went to a dance at the Edward's. Stuart didn't dance once but

Edith and I did. I had a fine time. Billy Baine walked home with us.

I forgot to say that we drove to the Edward's in Scofield Thayer's carriage.

I met the Dodd girls and a girl named Cornelia Metcalf; her father owns the "Felicia," a steam yacht that comes into the harbor to spend every Sunday.

*Cornelia Metcalf and family rented The Anchorage on South Water Street. Jesse Metcalf, her father, came to Edgartown each weekend from Providence, Rhode Island, on his steam yacht, Felicia.*

**August 5, Sunday:** I went to church today but I had a fine bath after it.

**August 6, Monday:** This afternoon Edith and I went out sailing with Scofield Thayer.

**August 7, Tuesday:** Nothing doing.

**August 8, Wednesday:** I went to Cornelia Metcalf's today. She has two ponies here and two more at home besides fifty-two other pets. I rode on the pony called Stella. You get awfully joggled up when you trot.

*The Gazette had reported on August 2 that "two ponies arrived on Saturday for Cornelia Metcalf." It is obvious that the family was wealthy.*

**August 9, Thursday:** I went to a dance at the Harbor View tonight.

**August 10, Friday:** I went to a baseball game between the Edgartown Juniors and the Summer Team. The Summer Team beat, 6 to 5.

**August 11, Saturday:** Today Cornelia and I rode over to North Beach on the ponies. I like galloping better than trotting. I fell off several times because Stella would be going along fast and then suddenly jump to one side and I'd go off the other side.

*Does any reader know where North Beach would have been?*

**August 12, Sunday:** I played tennis up at the Dodd's today. I played Cornelia and Margaret Dodd and beat them 6 to 2. Went to church.

**August 13, Monday:** Today Mother and Mable and Edith, Stuart, and I went up to South Beach on a picnic. We had a fine time.

**August 14, Tuesday:** Today I rode on the ponies again.

**August 15, Wednesday:** A dance at the Harbor View tonight. I had most of the dances with Donald Smith. I like him. He walked home with us.

**August 16, Thursday:** Constance was at our house last night and Billy and Carroll Baine and Scofield Thayer came in so we played cards.

**August 17, Friday:** I had a fine bath today. Donald Smith was over at the bathing beach and he couldn't dive because he had a black eye. Stuart gave it to him, he hit him in the face with a baseball, but he didn't mean to.

Donald and Ed Reed took me out for a row in Scofield Thayer's boat. Donald sat in the bottom of the boat and took things easy and Ed rowed and I steered. When we got back to the bathing beach they wouldn't row to shore so I jumped overboard and swam in.

This afternoon there was going to be a baseball match but the Juniors never showed up so that most of the boys went out sailing. Donald and Bobby Hill took Edith and me. Edith steered the boat almost all the time.

*It is clear that these Edgar girls were popular among the boys of the summer set.*

**August 18, Saturday:** Mother came over to the bathing beach today. Usually we go over alone and stay in as long as we want, which isn't very long, because when we get cold we come out, knowing that we can go in again when we want to, but by the time we get dry (from lying on the beach in the sun) we don't want to go in any more, whereas if Mother is with us we know we have just so long to stay in and we stay in all that time whether we're cold or not, so as not to miss any of it.

Donald was at the beach.

This afternoon Constance drove Edith and me to Cottage City and we went to the roller skating rink there. Edith was sitting down to take a rest and a boy came up to her



and asked her to skate with him. Of course, she refused.

When we got home we found that Cornelia had invited us to dinner out on the yacht. I didn't want to go because I wanted to go up to the Harbor View, but I had to.

*It is unfortunate that Louise doesn't describe the yacht Felicia for us. Or the dinner. Going dancing at the Harbor View with the young men was more to her liking than dining with the rich Metcalfs. It is also unfortunate that she is not more explicit about Constance driving them to Cottage City. Does she mean by automobile? In 1906, the automobile was making its first major impact on the Island. The Gazette was unhappy about it: "There are 175 automobiles on the island at the present time, nearly all get to Edgartown every 24 hours, it seems apparent on pleasant days. . .four of five autos are driven with care and consideration, but the 5th with a Public be d—d spirit."*

**August 19, Sunday:** We didn't have to go to church today. Stuart sailed us over to the beach. Edith and I were fooling around with Donald and Bob before bathing and we lost somebody's bailing can.

This afternoon Mother and Stuart and Edith went out sailing and I went up to Constance's.

This evening Donald, Bobby Hill and a boy named Douglas Cox came in. They stayed pretty late. Donald said that he and Bob had been up to take us out sailing in the afternoon but they couldn't find us.

**August 20, Monday:** Margaret Dodd was going to row over to the beach with us this morning but Donald, Bob and Everett Saunderson came in Bob's boat and took us all over. They took us back and Ned Reed too. Ned Reed and Ed Reed and Ted Reed and Edward Reed, beside Eddy and Neddy and Teddy and a few other names, all belong to the same boy.

This afternoon Constance, Margaret, Edith and I went to see the baseball game. The Summer Team beat the Juniors 19 to 13. Stuart pitched at the beginning of the game and Bob Hill at the last. Donald caught.

*Stuart, as we know by now, was her brother, one year younger*



*Chappy bathing beach in 1906. Rules: "Bare-legged women will not be tolerated. Must wear stockings, not sox. Bathing suit skirts must come to knees."*

*than she was. He joined the Lafayette Escadrille during World War I and was killed when his plane crashed in 1918. The Veterans of Foreign War hall in Nutley is named in his honor. Donald, it seems clear, was Louise's favorite boy friend. She doesn't tell us, but this week J. Pierpont Morgan arrived in his steam yacht Corsair and anchored near the harbor lighthouse. A teen-ager like Louise wouldn't have paid any attention to that. When Donald Trump arrives now, everybody, even teen-agers, would talk about it.*

**August 21, Tuesday:** I had a fine bath today. Donald Smith cut a great gash in the bottom of his foot on some of the barnacles. It bled like everything. This afternoon I went to a clam-bake. I had a horrid time and when we got home Mother punished me for not being agreeable. I wrote to Frances tonight and invited her up here to spend one or two weeks.

**August 22, Wednesday:** Donald didn't go in bathing today, but he came out and sat on the pier. We all go in bathing off the pier now; it's much better than the raft.

*This is not the pier near the Pent house, but the pier at the Chadwick bathing beach.*

Constance came up this afternoon and we all went down to the village on an errand for Mother. While there we met Donald and Bob who asked us to go sailing. They said that they had been up to our house to ask us, and Mother, who was sitting out on the front porch, had thought they wanted

Stuart and before they could say a word she called him out and they didn't want to say that they didn't want him so they all went off together.

We sailed up to a place near South Beach but the boat drew too much water to make a landing so we waited there for Stuart and Irving Chatman who were following us in Irving's boat which didn't draw so much water. When they came along we anchored Donald's boat (the one we were sailing in) and got into the other. We only got a little further in and then stuck so all of them, except Donald and me, took off their shoes and stockings and waded ashore. Donald had to be carried ashore for, because of his cut foot, he couldn't walk. My feet were wet anyway so I didn't bother to take off my shoes and stockings. We all went over to see the ocean and everybody went in wading but Donald and me. We didn't get home til six.

We went up to the Harbor View tonight. I sat out a lot of dances with Donald who couldn't dance because of his lame foot.

**August 23, Thursday:** Mary, our maid, went to Boston today and we all went up to Cattama [Katama] on a picnic. Constance and Mable came. Constance and I rowed up with Bob (not Bobby Hill) and some of the eatibles, and Stuart sailed the rest of the party. We had a fine time. After lunch Constance and Stuart and Edith and I had a game of Riggermoro. Stuart ran and I caught him. After that we all but Mother went in bathing. We got ready in the old hotel, each of us taking a room.

This evening Donald and Bob came to see us.

*This is the first mention of Mary, "our maid." It would seem obvious that, given their status, they had one, but she has not been mentioned before. At Katama, they used the abandoned Mattakesett Lodge as a bathhouse. Part of it, some time later, was moved to Starbuck Neck and became part of the Harbor View Hotel complex.*

**August 24, Friday:** We had a fine bath today. Douglas Cox cut his foot on the barnacles, but he said that he is going in bathing all the same. This evening we asked

Constance to come and stay all night. She came and we had a fine time. We rough-housed for about an hour after we got to bed (we all three slept in one bed), and then we told ghost stories til we went to sleep.

**August 25, Saturday:** This morning we woke up at five, but we went to sleep again. Cony and Edith and I went over to Cornelia's and rode on the ponies til bathing time, when we went over in Cony's boat.

This afternoon we drove over to the roller-skating rink and skated and then went and got ice-cream. Mrs. Alden's treat.

**August 26, Sunday:** We didn't go in bathing this morning because we had breakfast so late. Mable came to dinner. She and Grandma and Auntie Beach are going away tomorrow. Aunt Addy went yesterday with her family. We didn't go to church today.

This afternoon Cony and Edith and I went over to the bathing beach in Cony's boat. There were quite a lot of people over there. Donald asked me to sail home with him in Scofield Thayer's boat but I didn't want to.

Donald said that he and Bobby had been around to take us sailing but that we were having dinner so they went away.

This evening Mother and Edith went to church and just as they were gone, Donald and Bob and Douglas Cox and Frank Gearhart came in. I thought I was going to have the whole lot on my hands for the evening, but they all but Donald went out with Stuart and didn't come back for an hour.

*Donald's staying with her must have pleased her greatly, although she doesn't share with us her innermost thoughts.*

**August 27, Monday:** A fine bath today.

**August 28, Tuesday:** This afternoon Edith and I went over to ride the ponies. The Dodds were there and Helen Robertson and a girl named Mira West. We rode the ponies for a little and then put them up, and Helen went home and Kathleen and Cornelia went up to the Dodd's, so Margaret and Edith and I tried to get rid of Mira. We ran away from her and she chased us all over town, but at last

we lost her and then we went out for a row. We took Bob, my dog, I mean. Pretty soon we met Bob Hill in his boat with a lot of boys and he asked us to come in and have a sail. So we did and we took Bob [the dog] in with us. We had a fine sail but when we got home Mother was angry with us for not having let her know that we were going. Now, how were we to let her know when we were out in the middle of the harbor when we started?

**August 31, Friday:** I went in [bathing] today and so did Donald. We sailed home with Donald and Bob. This afternoon we played Rigerboro. Margaret Dodd and I ran and it was a long time before we were caught. Douglas Cox and Ned Reed went away yesterday.

**September 1, Saturday:** This afternoon we went out sailing.

**September 2, Sunday:** We went to church today so we couldn't go in bathing til this afternoon. We went over in Cony's boat. Donald (not Donald Smith) and Alden (I've forgotten what their last name is), two boys that Constance knows, were over there. They are only 12 and 13 years old, but they are quite nice. We climbed up on top of the bathhouse and ran around on the top of them in our bathing suits and they jumped down. The top of the bathing houses are about 10 feet from the ground so it was a pretty high jump but you landed on soft sand.

*And we think that today's teen-agers are a rowdy bunch. Imagine any of them running around on the roof of the Chappaquiddick Beach Club, the successor to Chadwick's!*

Then we tried to stand on our heads in the sand, but finding that rather harder than we had expected, we all went out to the end of the pier and dove off and had a good swim and came in to get dressed.

While we were in bathing, some boys came to shore in a sailboat and they had a snake aboard called a water nivot (or something like that) that they had killed in the water. It is deadly poison to be stung by one of them. Donald and Alden said that they had seen one swimming around in the water. Frances can't come.

*Frances was the friend she had written to earlier, inviting her to spend a couple of weeks with her in Edgartown.*

**September 3, Monday:** Mother is sick. I had a fine bath today.

**September 4, Tuesday:** The bathing today was perfect. This afternoon I went out sailing with Donald and his cousin, Everett Saunderson. I sailed the boat almost all the time.

**September 5, Wednesday:** Donald went away today. He went at two o'clock this afternoon. I wish he hadn't gone.

**September 6, Thursday:** Today Stuart went with a fisherman 'way out in the ocean to fish. He had to start at four o'clock in the morning. Edith and I got Constance and went out in Stuart's sailboat. We sailed it ourselves and we only jibed once. It was awfully rough. We had to have two reefs in.

This afternoon I read to Mother. Stuart didn't expect to be home until six o'clock; but it was so rough that the fisherman that he went with said that they ought to go home as the waves came right over the side of the boat. Stuart was awfully mad when he found that we had used his boat.

**September 7, Friday:** This afternoon the Edwards girls, Margaret and Katherine Dodd, Mrs. Dodd, Mr. Edwards, and I walked over to South Beach. Dexter Dodd and Walter Edwards sailed as far as Cattama [Katama] and from there walked over to South Beach where they met us. Then we all but Mrs. Dodd and Mr. Edwards walked back to Cattama and sailed home.

*Walking to South Beach and back was a lot of exercise. But then, they didn't go jogging!*

**September 8, Saturday:** There were very few people over at the beach today, but the bathing was fine. It was so rough that there were breakers. I love swimming on a rough day. Constance and I swam way out.

This afternoon Katherine and Edith and I went way past the pine woods over by North Beach to a sandpit there and made houses in the sand. There are steep sides to this pit and you can hollow out fine rooms in them. We got a ride





William J. Mendence, standing in front of his confectionery store on south side of Edgartown's Main Street. Date of photo is unknown.

home on a wagon full of old cornstalks that are used to feed the cows.

Another mention of North Beach, this time with more clues as to its location. Any guesses?

**September 9, Sunday:** I didn't go to church this morning, but went bathing instead. This afternoon I made fudge and it turned out well.

**September 10, Monday:** I had a fine bath, but I had to come in before I was ready because I tore a large hole in my bathing suit.

Constance went home today and so did Frank Gearhart. This afternoon Edith and I went out in the rowboat. We took Bob [her dog] and we went on board a yacht called the *Virginia* to make a visit. I don't know who owns it. Mother says that we mustn't go on yachts that we don't know the owners of.

Today, doing such a thing would be unthinkable!

**September 11, Tuesday:** This morning Edith and I helped Mother pack. We are going on Thursday. We went over



A younger Bill Mendence, right, inside his store, about 1890. Other man is not identified. Case, left, is filled with "penny" candy.

to the beach this afternoon. Margaret Dodd came over and we had some fun playing games.

**September 12, Wednesday:** We had our last bath today and it was pretty good. All the rest of the day we helped Mother pack. Edith and I got a letter from Constance today. I wrote to her tonight. All of the Dodds but Merrick and all of the Edwards, Thayers and Hills went home today. Merrick is going tomorrow, maybe at the same time that we do. The man came for the trunks tonight and took all but one, which is not going til we do. Mother kept it for extras.

Trunks, of course, were the standard method of carrying clothing and personal items. No proper family travelled without several of them. Hauling them to the steamer was a profitable business for the Island's teamsters.

**September 13, Thursday:** This afternoon at half past two we started in the stage for Cottage City. As we went past Mr. Mendence's store he was out on the sidewalk with a box of candy which he presented to Edith and me.

Was this usual? Or were the Edgar girls special customers of the William J. Mendence store, purveyors of "Fruit, confectionary and cigars"? It would seem unlikely that Bill Mendence would hand out a box of candy to riders on every trip of the Cottage



Girl on left is believed to be Louise. Others may be sisters, Edith and Margaret, plus a friend. Site of photo is not identified.

City stage. Chester E. Pease ran the stage line. His trips connected with the steamer arrivals and departures. He made three trips a day, leaving Edgartown for Cottage City at 8 a.m., 11:30 a.m., and 2:15 p.m.

I sat in front and drove a lot of the way. At Cottage City we took the boat for New Bedford, where we took the Fall River train. We had to change cars at Taunton. When we got to Fall River the train was so late that the boat had left; so we had to go on to Newport where we caught it.

We didn't go to bed until ten o'clock or to sleep til after eleven. At eleven o'clock we rounded Point Judith and it was pretty rough.

**September 14, Friday:** The boat "Puritan" arrived in New York at half past seven this morning. We went ashore at eight and took the 23rd street ferry for Jersey City where we had breakfast and then had to wait about an hour for the half-past nine train to Nutley. In the station we met Mr. Hunt. He is going to be principal of the Passaic School as the Dickensons have left. We saw several Nutley people going in to New York. Louie Ray met us at the Jersey City Station. We got to Nutley about ten o'clock and Uncle Morgan was at the station to meet us. We went to Crocket's for lunch and again for dinner. Louie was with Stuart all



Steamer Uncatena, which Louise took to New Bedford. The connecting train to Fall River was late and the New York boat had left.

day and in the evening he came over and we had some fun playing the pianists.

And thus ended the summer of Louise Huntington Edgar, as described in Book I of her diary. There seems to be no close connection between these Huntingtons and those on the Vineyard. Her family goes back to Judge Samuel Huntington of Connecticut, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. As her diary makes clear, Louise was an independent person and in her later years was an activist in social and political matters. Called "Weed" by her friends and family (some say because of how quickly she had grown, others say it was a corruption of the baby-talk pronunciation of Louise), she was a championship sailor, a skill she began to learn in 1906 on the Vineyard. A strong liberal spirit, she took part in the civil rights struggle of the 1960s, going to Alabama during the bus boycott to give rides to those who refused to take the bus. She died December 6, 1992, at 101 years. The house she owned on the New Jersey shore was destroyed by the ocean the week she died. Her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Colie, wrote: "It seemed poetically appropriate."

Respectfully  
Louise Edgar Colie

In 1964, Louise, 73, wrote Robert Kennedy demanding he stop the "unjust prosecution" of civil rights workers. This was her signature.

## Documents

### A Running Account Of Matter & Things

by Rev. HENRY BAYLIES

Henry Baylies (1822-1893) is an ordained Methodist minister who, because of a throat ailment, has temporarily given up his parish in Connecticut and is now (in 1850) principal of the Dukes County Academy in West Tisbury. He is 28 years old, an Island native, son of Frederick Baylies Jr., architect and builder of Edgartown's three church buildings (Methodist, Congregationalist and Baptist). His first wife, Hannah, died a few years ago after less than two years of marriage and he is now married to Harriett Budlong, a virtual invalid with some undiagnosed illness.

At this moment, he is in Providence, R.I., attending the annual conference of Methodist ministers. He and Harriett, who made the trip despite her illness, are staying with her parents who live near the church where the conference is being held.

In this installment, the meeting ends and Henry returns to West Tisbury, leaving Harriett to stay another two weeks with her parents. Before they went to Providence, Henry had moved their belongings to a new boarding house in West Tisbury. When Henry returns home, he moves into the new quarters for the first time, just as his second term at the academy is starting.

His interest in teaching seems secondary to that of saving the souls of his pupils. He rarely mentions his classes, but often writes about prayer meetings. It is obvious that he is more a minister than an educator.

As the installment begins, Henry's father, Frederick Jr., has just arrived in

Providence on his way to Boston. He is probably on a spring buying trip to stock his store on Main Street in Edgartown.

**Monday, Apl. 8, 1850.** . . Father Baylies arrived at 5 ½ from Edgartown on his way to Boston. He & friends generally are well. There being some misunderstanding relative to the Commencement of my next term, I sat down & wrote to mother informing her of the time & of the business of Conf. & the probable appt. of Bro. [John] Hobart to E. . . The Missionary anniversary this evening passed off ~~very~~ [crossed out] quite well & would doubtless have passed off exceedingly well but for the cry of "fire" about 9 o'clock, which very much dispersed the congregation.<sup>1</sup> . .

At the Conference at Provincetown last year I consecrated to the Lord for this purpose a \$5 gold piece which dearest Hannah presented me as a "Keepsake." I struggled at that time hard & long with convictions of duty & a variety of feelings & principles, which I suppose involved in the question whether I should keep the Keepsake in my own purse or place it in the Treasury of the Lord. I concluded to place it in the Treasury of the Lord, but did not do so then for certain weighty reasons, yet placed it at interest for the Missionary Cause & during the year have had at least 75 cents interest. At the collection this evening I put it in the box & have thus sent this \$5 gold piece forth in the name of the Lord & my sainted Hannah, an angel of mercy, to carry gladness & hope to many a sorrowing and desponding heathen amid the

<sup>1</sup> The fire must have been threateningly close if the congregation left the church to watch it.

terrors of vile superstition. Harriet approves this disposition. . .<sup>2</sup>

**Tuesday, Apl. 9, 1850.** . . the Assumption of \$8,000 of the debts of the Prov. Conf. Seminary, the subscription & collection of \$140 & more to make up the deficiency of interest due the Biblical Institution & all with such hearty good will are not unimportant items of the business of this day. The Missionary Collection last night was about \$70 or \$90, making in all collected this year in this Conference more than \$3,800 (4,000) for Missions.<sup>3</sup> . . Father left at 1/4 of 8 this morning. Harriet walked to Chestnut St. Church this afternoon & staid about 3/4 an hour, taking a peep at the preachers. She performed the walk there & back much better than I expected. Of course, she is fatigued & very much fatigued, but I think will rest during the night. Her impression of the intellectual appearance of the members of Conf. was not very favorable & I cannot demur at her judgement.

Today I learn from Bro. Stanton that Bro. Hobart goes to Pleasant St., New Bedford, & Bro. [C. H.] Titus to Edgartown. This arrangement is very pleasing to me & dear Hattie — I have suspicions & intimations of a marriage in a certain quarter which adds to my fraternal relations.<sup>4</sup>

Heard this noon the awful tidings of

<sup>2</sup> "Sainted Hannah" was Henry's first wife, who died less than two years after their wedding. One might suspect that his present wife, Harriet, would be pleased to have this reminder of dear Hannah removed from Henry's purse.

<sup>3</sup> The "4,000" was pencilled in above \$3,800, apparently later.

<sup>4</sup> A puzzling remark. Mr. Titus is already married with two children.

the destruction of 120 lives by the precipitation of the steamboat train on the Norwich & Worcester R.R. into a river because of the breaking down of a bridge. It is since reported that only from 3 to 5 lives are lost. I hope 'tis true.

**Wednesday, April 10, 1850.** Conference closed its session. . . after a week of harmonious meeting & vigorous action. . . [a closing] prayer by Father Taylor of Boston. . . was the most interesting prayer, if I may say so, I ever heard. Such flashes of eloquence, passages of beauty & touches of the pathetic I never heard. The shouts of brethren were almost deafening during the prayer.<sup>5</sup> The appointments were received with great apparent good feeling although, of course, there were some who thought their appt's hardly wise or expedient. The Bishop remarked that some might not feel satisfied with the appt's & indeed he himself nor the presiding Elders were satisfied but they were the best they could do under the circumstances. My app't was read off "Dukes County Academy, Principal & Connected with the Ch. Conf. at Chilmark."

This P.M. exchanged & purchased some books. . . Sent a beautiful volume of Tappan's [?] Poems to cousin Eliza P. [?] at Whittingham who was very kind to dear Hannah when sick & on

<sup>5</sup> Was loud shouting during prayer a customary Methodist response? Rev. Edward T. Taylor (always called "Father") had been the Methodist minister in Edgartown in 1824, at the start of the Island's greatest religious revival. A former mariner, he was said to have been the first minister to hold prayer meetings aboard whalers prior to their sailing, urging God to help these sailors kill whales. Now, he is pastor of the Mariners' Bethel in Boston.



a visit there as well as to me at sundry visitings.

Harriette has been quite comfortable today. Took a short walk this P.M. Thus the duties & anxieties connected with another annual conference have closed. The Lord grant that greater good may be effected by the labors of my brethren in the Ministry this year than in any former year of the history of the church.

**Thursday, April 11.** At 9 1/2 A.M. I took the stage for Pawtucket. At work till 5 o'clock packing my books & minerals. Succeeded after a hard, very hard day's work in getting my box "marked" & at the depot. Returned to Prov. by 6 o'clock cars. The former part of the day very pleasant — rather chilly towards evening. Have had a severe test of my strength. Dined & supped at Mr. Lewis' [?]. There I have got back to my former secretary board [?]. Well, it looks quite decent alongside the other. I shall never be hung for a Kalographer if my journal be the test.<sup>6</sup>

**Friday, April 12, 1850.** A snow storm this forenoon. The P.M. rather pleasant — not very. Feel very lame & tired today, the effect of yesterday's task. No permanent injury I trust. At 10 o'clock called over the river to visit the High School. Was introduced by the Superintendent of Public Schools, Mr. Bishop, to the Senior Class of masters under the Instruction of Mr. Harkness. There are six rooms occupied by six teachers, 3 male & 3 female. The course in this school may occupy three years & the pupils in each

department remain in their rooms one year each. Mr. B. remarked to me the pupils might go through in two years or less if they possessed the genius, but if they could not get through in three years, the city could not afford to instruct them longer.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Harkness was hearing a recitation in Chemistry (Johnson's). I was much pleased with the readiness of the class & the familiarity they evinced with the subject. I heard a recitation in Greek & Virgil. Mr. H. introduced me into Mr. Capron's room (the 2nd year). I recognized in Mr. Capron an old class mate for a short time at Wilbraham.<sup>8</sup> I rec'd a few suggestions which I trust will be of service to me — short method of long division.

Designed this P.M. to visit one of the Grammar Schools but, overcome by fatigue, I fell asleep & lost a portion of the afternoon.

At 4 o'clock, happening at the cars, I remembered I had forgotten to have a tooth filled which Mr. Gardiner of Pawtucket had filled & proposed to refill gratuitously. So I got in the cars with Bro. S. C. Brown going to N. Bedford & rode out to P. Did not succeed, Mr. G. being engaged. Made several calls & returned by the 6 o'clock train.

**Saturday, April 13, 1850.** Parted from my dear Wife at 7 1/4 o'clock this morn to take the cars for New Bedford. Dearest Hattie thinks best to comply with the urgent request of her parents & remain a fortnight longer with them.

I have consented, thinking perhaps her health may improve more rapidly there than here [on the Vineyard] & thinking it will be so pleasing to her parents. I really had quite a protracted struggle to reconcile my mind to this course. I hardly know how I shall be able to spend so lonely a fortnight. Dearest H. almost repented & had a thousand minds to accompany me. Our attachment to each other is strong & ardent. The Lord sanctify this relationship to our spiritual good & may our separation lead us to depend more upon the source of all good than upon each other.

Nothing occurred on the passage to N.B. of interest. Passage to H. Hole in the Boat was very rough. Quite a number of Edgartown passengers on board. Arrived at W. Tisbury at 3 1/2 & find my home at Bro. Asa Johnson's. Like the appearances of things so far very well.<sup>9</sup> Have this even been preparing a book for the registry of names, etc., etc.

**Sabbath, April 14.** This has without [doubt] been one of the most unpleasant days this winter. During yester P.M., last night & today, the wind has blown severely, rough & cold. Rained & hailed severely yester P.M., cleared towards evening with thunder & lightning, but during the night the ground was covered with snow.

Rather a lonely night. The clatter of windows & doors awoke me & I lay awake a long time. I must say I was lonesome without my dear wife. This

<sup>9</sup> This would be his first night at Johnson's boarding house, next to today's Alley's store in West Tisbury. It had taken 8 hours and 15 minutes to travel from Providence to West Tisbury.

has been the longest ~~night~~ [crossed out] day I have passed for months & too the loneliest.

Breakfasted at 7 1/2, went to church at 11, took a cup of coffee at 1, went to prayer meeting at schoolhouse at 7 1/4 & returned to my room at 8:35.<sup>10</sup> Rev. Mr. Chace preached this forenoon from "Fear not little flock for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." The old gentleman was not well & as he told me he had prepared a discourse for the unrepentant of whom scarcely one was present & was obliged to change his purpose.

I followed him with a few remarks & closed with prayer.<sup>11</sup> Only a dozen persons were present. Bro. C. was not able to preach twice & I did not think it prudent for me to attempt preaching, consequently he dismissed the congregation till evening. Mr. Hillman was to preach in the School House this evening, but was detained by the severe storm of wind.

We enjoyed quite a pleasant season in religious communion. I have been reading a portion of the memoirs of Payson. I question whether reading the part I read would not serve to induce doubts & unnecessary fears in the minds of young Christians. He seems in his early experience to have enjoyed little stability of experience — constant fluctuation. He in one place expresses a sentiment of value which he seems usually to have forgotten: "No good comes of doubting or of brooding over our sins." No glory to God: Jesus

<sup>10</sup> His first use of the modern form of stating the time: 8:35.

<sup>11</sup> An early example of ecumenism. Henry was a Methodist minister; the church was (and is) Congregational. It was hardly flourishing, only a dozen congregants, all penitents.

<sup>6</sup> His handwriting here is difficult to decipher with confidence. The underlined word (he underlined it) is probably his spelling of "calligrapher."

<sup>7</sup> An interesting description of high school education in Providence, a large city.

<sup>8</sup> Henry graduated from Wesleyan Academy, a preparatory school at Wilbraham, Mass.

take away sins. In speaking of prayer before study he expresses a truth I have often in past experienced. "Since I began to beg God's blessing on my studies I have done more in one week than in the whole year before." Would have students prayed more then they would know the benefits of prayer & would become more useful to the church.<sup>12</sup>

I have today enjoyed some of the sweet benefits of prayer & communion with God. I find when I have society I depend too much upon it, but when deprived of it I depend more upon God. This is my own fault. I have prayed much today for my dear sick wife — may the Lord bless her soul & body.

My thoughts have been much upon my pupils, who may be committed to my care & I have prayed fervently that God will convert them all. I want that my school may be a *revival* school & that every pupil may become a Christian. I am determined more than ever to exert myself to this end. I do long to be useful in the cause of my Redeemer, who has done all for me.<sup>13</sup>

I have found my Bible a precious book to me today. I too much neglect this sacred volume. I must read it more. I shall have more time now as my Conference studies do not press upon me. I desire to be a thorough Bible Christian.

**Monday April 15, 1850.** The beginning of my second term as a Teacher of youth and Preceptor of

<sup>12</sup> He is citing Rev. Edward Payson, Congregational minister at Portland, Maine, whose reputation is such that his memoir is a best-seller in New England.

<sup>13</sup> Again, the 1st Amendment comes to mind. However, this is not a public school.

Dukes Co. Academy. A very unpleasant day — high, cold, wintry winds. So that probably not all who design attending the Academy were present today.

Only 24 were present including 4 from Edgartown, viz. Velina B. Pease, Eliza M. Darrow, Joanna Morse & Geo. H. Larabee.<sup>14</sup> Another cause of the small attendance is the opening today of the public schools. Although the number of pupils is so small, I am desired to form Classes in Arithmetic, Geography, Grammar, Algebra, Natural Philosophy, Astronomy (Geography of the Heavens), Botany, French, Latin, Greek, French, Reading, Writing & probably History, etc.<sup>15</sup>

I succeeded in organizing & classifying the school this A.M. & the P.M. have attended to recitations.

Mrs. John O. Morse called on me

<sup>14</sup> Velina, 15, was daughter of the well-known Jeremiah Pease; Eliza, 13, was daughter of Capt. Ira Darrow, prominent Democrat and mariner; Joanna, 14, was daughter of Capt. John O. Morse, famous whaler. George, 10, is a mystery. Who was paying George's tuition is unclear. Born in Vermont, he is listed as in the family of Eliza E. Sawyer, 31, who was born in New Hampshire. Probably mother and son, Eliza and George lived in the house of the widowed Mrs. Rudolphus (Margaret) Coffin, 36, along with 18 others (Coffins, Morses, Luces, Jernegans and Margaret's brother, Charles Butler). The house, now part of Edgartown's Charlotte Inn, was apparently a rooming house and Eliza may have been the chambermaid.

<sup>15</sup> An impressive curriculum for so few teachers, with little knowledge of such diverse subjects. It's surprising that the teaching of history is only probable. There is no mention of celestial navigation, which many writers have claimed was the major subject taught at the Academy. One must wonder how well all these courses were taught and how much time each was given, allowing for so much emphasis on religion.

this noon to commit her daughter to my especial care.<sup>16</sup>

After Tea, wrote a letter of 4 pages to my dear wife. This is my first epistle to her as my wife. Although absent

<sup>16</sup> Mrs. Mary (Smith) Morse was the second Mrs. Morse. Joanna, one of his Edgartown pupils and the first of seven children by the second marriage, had been named for Joanna Pease, the first wife of Capt. Morse who in the previous September (1849) had sailed as master of the ship *Sarah*, carrying Vineyarders to the California Gold Rush. Unsuccessful in gold digging, Captain Morse took the *Sarah* whaling in the Pacific in 1850. Becoming ill with dropsy, he was put ashore at Païta, Peru, at about the time of this diary. He never made it home, dying in Païta in February 1851.

## Letters

Editor:

I enjoyed Houston Kenyon's description of the damage caused by the 1938 hurricane (*Intelligencer*, August 1994). Accompanying the article was a photograph of the steamer *Naushon* with a caption stating that "that she was steaming from Nantucket to the Vineyard and suffered no damage."

That is correct. She was saved by the skill of her master, Captain Sandsbury, as I can testify. I was skipper of Howard S. Hart's yacht, *Quampache*, moored inside the Vineyard Haven breakwater. I had managed, with great difficulty, to get aboard her at the height of the blow, which had come with little warning. Standing in her pilot house, I watched in disbelief as the *Naushon* came steaming in, heading for the wharf. At the time, the wharf was underwater, only the tops of the

from her only 61 hours those hours seem almost as so many days. We need sometimes to be separated from friends fully to prize their society. I suppose indeed I missed Hattie's society fully before, but I find the want of it almost unendurable.

Since dark have been closely reading the syntax of my Latin Grammar, which I have too much indeed totally neglected since my college days. It is getting late & I am quite fatigued with the labors of the day & even. I trust I am trying to live near the Lord. "O, for a closer walk with God." The Lord bless my dear Harriette & watch over me. Amen.

pilings were visible. Sandsbury managed to maneuver the steamer across the end of the submerged wharf, but there was no way to tie up in that high water.

Skillfully, the captain worked the powerful twin-screw steamer astern around the corner of the wharf until she pointed directly into the wind. Then he slowly moved her forward until she was just about where Zeb Tilton usually anchored his schooner *Alice S. Wentworth* (today, the *Shenandoah* moors in that spot). It was an amazing piece of seamanship.

He then ordered both anchors dropped. The *Naushon* drifted rapidly leeward, swinging nearly sideways and bearing down on my boat. I was plenty worried. I started my engine and stood on the bow with a sharp knife ready to cut loose from the mooring if the *Naushon* kept coming. Fortunately, her anchors grabbed and she fetched up about 200 yards to windward of me. For a few minutes, she seemed destined



to wipe out most of the fleet of small craft moored behind the breakwater (those that had not already been blown ashore).

The intense wind soon diminished, hauling around to the southwest. The storm tide gradually lowered. The huge steamer had ridden out the storm safely, as did my boat, the *Quampache*. It was an exciting few hours.

Edwin B. Athearn  
Centerville, Mass.

Mr. Athearn, a member of the Society and a Vineyard native, has a book-length manuscript in preparation, recounting his experiences during a long life as a fisherman and mariner in the waters around Cape Cod and the Islands.

Editor:

I do not agree with Mr. Kenyon's article in the *Intelligencer* (August 1994) about the 1938 hurricane at Menemsha Creek.

I was there. The tide started to come into the Creek at about 7 a.m. By 11 a.m., it was three feet above normal. Soon it was running over the spit of land where the fish houses were located. The spit extended northward from the end of North Road. When the water rose to the height of the windows, they floated, pulling their foundation stakes out of the ground. The houses floated up the Creek, taking the docks and boats with them. Some ended up on the west side of the Creek, some went into Pease's Point Cove.

I stood on the hill above the Basin and did not see a wall of water come from Menemsha Pond. There was one

high wave that came over the beach, but by that time the damage had been done. One or two boats went out of the Creek into the Sound when the tide started to ebb.

Eric W. Cottle  
Menemsha

Mr. Cottle is referring, not to Houston Kenyon's description of the damage, but to the map and text on page 25 which were based on news accounts. Several describe three huge waves engulfing Stonewall Beach and Pond. Hariph's Creek bridge was wiped out by the waves. Whether that enormous volume of water was the cause of the extremely high tide at Menemsha is the question. The water that poured in from the south, filled the ponds and as it ran out into the Sound through the Creek, caused damage, but, Mr. Cottle writes, that was after the major destruction at Menemsha was over. He was there and his account is first-hand.

Editor:

I read the *Intelligencer* from cover to cover and enjoy trying to fill in the very infrequent blanks. In the August 1994 issue, on page 45, could "Impitus" be Jupiter? According to Edith Hamilton, Minerva (Pallas Athena) sprang from the head of Jupiter (Zeus) full grown and in full armor.

Marian R. Halperin  
Vineyard Haven

Of course, it should have been Jupiter! The Editor blushes with embarrassment at his lack of classical knowledge and thanks former Society Director Halperin and Edith Hamilton for clarifying the matter. Baylies's handwriting is not so indecipherable that he should be blamed.

## In Memoriam

Eleanor Olsen

1913 — 1994

A devoted volunteer and former Council member of this Society, Eleanor Olsen, died October 6 at her Edgartown home after a long battle with cancer. Unselfish with her time and her energy, she gave much of both to many groups on the Island, a place she loved. In most of them, she was a leader. It was not her style to carry a title while others carried the load. She believed that joining a group brought with it a responsibility to work. For such dedication many organizations, including this one, owe her much.

She performed many functions here, most of which went unnoticed, taking place in archives and closets. Among them was her work on our costume inventory, using skills she had learned at New York's Metropolitan Museum.

But her first task for us, and the one she enjoyed most, was highly visible. It began at an annual meeting more than a decade ago. The president urged members to become volunteer workers. Much needed to be done. Various tasks were described. One was maintaining the magnificent Fresnel lens, the centerpiece of the Society grounds. No easy task, it involved cleaning and polishing the more than 1000 prisms of fine French glass that make up the optical masterpiece. Each prism has three faces, all covered with dust gathered over a number of years. The challenge was a big one. But Eleanor, from whose home the rays from the light are visible each night, took the challenge and adopted the lens as her own.

Since that adoption, the Fresnel lens has sparkled like a diamond in a Tiffany setting. Daily for two weeks each spring, Eleanor climbed the steep stairs to the lantern of the lighthouse at 5:30 a.m., before the sun made working inside the lens unbearable. Lovingly, she cleaned and polished each prism, restoring to it the sparkle it had back in 1854 when it was first installed in the Gay Head Light.

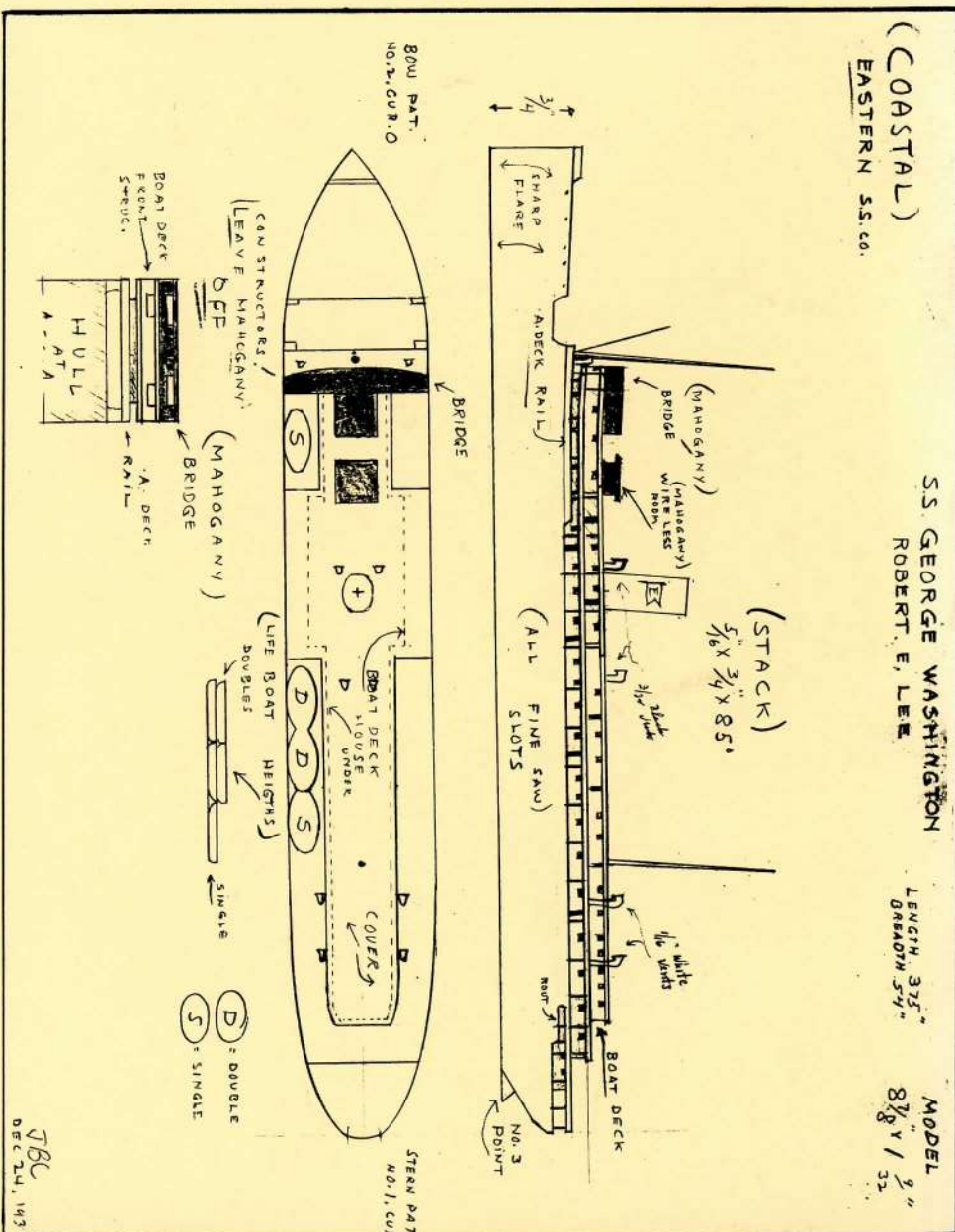
For a number of years, she worked alone in the quiet of those Edgartown mornings. She called it her time for reflection and her pun was intended. Polishing the smooth, perfect triangles of glass became an annual pilgrimage of joy. And she made the Fresnel a joy to behold.

In recent years, as her strength declined, she recruited assistants, eager to be sure the joyful task she began more than ten years ago would continue after she could no longer do it. And, thanks to those assistants, we know it will.

Farewell then to Eleanor Olsen, the sparkling lady whose memorial will always be "her" Fresnel lens, sparkling in the sunlight.



# Construction Drawing of a Van Ryper Model



Construction plan of a Van Ryper model in the Travel Series, drawn by John B. Canha in 1936. Scale: about 40' feet to the inch. Article begins page 51.