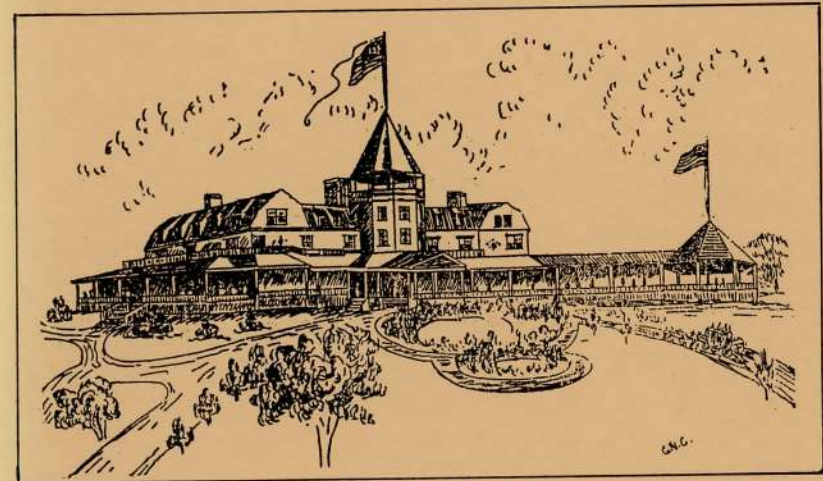




THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 45, No. 4

MAY 2004



Speculators stormed the Island in the 1890s. One Boston group lost over \$100,000 when this impressive Makonikey Inn quickly failed (see p. 167).

Fires, water, electricity, telephones & another new town.

The Story of Martha's Vineyard: How We Got To Where We Are

(Chapter Nine)

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

Documents/Diary

**William Worth Pease (1847 – 1892):
The Start of a Dynasty's Decline**

CORRECTIONS & ADDENDA

On page 104, February 2004 *Intelligencer*, it stated that among those who formed the Oak Bluffs Land & Wharf Company was "William Bradley, a wealthy Tisbury merchant." William Bradley did not live in Tisbury, but in Edgartown on South Water Street. He, with partners, ran a general store in Cottage City, then part of Edgartown.

On page 94, November 2003 *Intelligencer*, we listed the Vineyard men who died in the Civil War. There were a number of errors of commission and omission. Here is the correct list as far as we now know:

Soldiers who died.

John Carr, Edgartown, killed in battle at Port Hudson, La.

Thomas D. Cleveland, Edgartown, in Fort Monroe, Va., of a disease contracted in a Confederate prison.

Peleg B. Davenport, Tisbury, of wounds at Fredericksburg, Va.

Cyrus B. Fisher, Edgartown, of disease in Andersonville prison, Georgia.

William H. Harrington, Edgartown, of disease at Miner's Hill, Va.

Lewis P. Luce, Tisbury, of disease at Baton Rouge, La.

Timothy Mayhew, Chilmark, of disease at Port Hudson, La.

Alfred P. Rose, Gay Head, killed in battle at Petersburg, Va.

Benjamin Smith, Edgartown, of disease at Alexandria, Va.

Chauncey C. Smith, Edgartown, of disease contracted at Gettysburg. He was discharged, returned home and soon died.

Frederick M. Vincent, Tisbury, of disease at Ship Island, Miss.

Thomas A. West, Tisbury, killed in battle at Winchester, Va.

Sailors who died.

Francis Adlington Jr., Edgartown, of disease, aboard the *Vermont*.

Roland Smith, Edgartown, of disease at Chelsea, Mass.

Henry Clay Wade, Edgartown, of disease at Pensacola, Florida.

We are grateful to the member (who wishes not to be identified) for discovering these important corrections and additions.

THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

Vol. 45, No. 4

© 2004 M.V.H.S.

May 2004

Fires, water, electricity, telephones & another new town.

The Story of Martha's Vineyard: How We Got To Where We Are

151

(Chapter Nine)

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

Documents

William Worth Pease (1847 – 1892): The Start of a Dynasty's Decline

199

Editor: Arthur R. Railton

Research Editor: Edwin R. Ambrose

Founding Editor: Gale Huntington (1959-1977)

The *Dukes County Intelligencer* is published quarterly by the Martha's Vineyard Historical Society (formerly the Dukes County Historical Society). Subscription is by membership in the Society. Copies of all issues are available at the Society's library, Cooke and School Streets, Edgartown, Mass., or by mail at the address below.

Membership in the Society is solicited. Applications should be sent to P.O. Box 1310, Edgartown, MA, 02539. Telephone: 508 627 4441. Fax: 508 627 4436. Author's queries and manuscripts for this journal should be addressed there also, care of the Editor.

Articles 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 accuracy.

ISSN 0418 1379

MARTHA'S VINEYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Hugh E. Knipmeyer, *President*
Christopher J. Morse, *Senior Vice President*
Judith Bruguiera, *Vice President*
Paula Conover, *Vice President*
Arthur E. Flathers, *Vice President*
Thomas Hale, *Vice President*
John M. Morgan, *Vice President*
Craig R. Dripps, *Secretary*
Catherine Merwin Mayhew, *Assistant Secretary*
Warren Hollinshead, *Treasurer*
Robert A. Lunbeck, *President Emeritus*

Board of Directors

Alison M. Convery, Arthur E. Flathers, Judith LoRusso, Sharon S. Purdy,
Carroll Moshier, James B. Richardson III, David B. Vietor,
Edward W. Vincent, Lynne Whiting, Preston N. Williams – 2004
Douglas Leavens, Mark Allen Lovewell – 2005
Elizabeth Beim, Malcolm Goodridge, Mark A. Snider,
Joseph E. Sollitto Jr., – 2006

Honorary Directors

Charlotte Hall John A. Howland Donald W. Vose

Staff

Matthew Stackpole, *Executive Director*
Jill Bouck, *Chief Curator*
Dana Costanza, *Assistant Curator*
Linsey Lee, *Curator of Oral History*
Betsey Mayhew, *Assistant to Executive Director*
Susan Wilson, *Development Coordinator*
Lynne Whiting, *Education Director*
Peter B. Van Tassel, *Archivist/Librarian**
Mary Ellen Hill, *Assistant Librarian**
Catherine Merwin Mayhew, *Genealogist**
Dorothea R. Looney, *Registrar**
Arthur R. Railton, *Editor**

* Unpaid volunteer

The Story of Martha's Vineyard: How We Got to Where We Are

(Chapter Nine)

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

Fires, water, electricity, telephones & another new town

DESPAIRING AS RESIDENTS of Cottage City were over the purchase of their parklands by George C. Abbott of Boston, those worries must have seemed trivial to their neighbors in Vineyard Haven. A year before, they had lost their entire business district and much more in the most destructive fire in Island history.

It happened on Saturday night, August 11, 1883. Vineyard Haven, compared with Cottage City, was a quiet town, even on a Saturday night in the summer. The August day had been cool and raw, with a strong northeasterly wind and an unpleasant drizzle. Going to bed early was an easy choice – tomorrow would be better.

Then, disaster. At 9 p.m., flames were seen coming from the rear of Crocker's harness factory on Main Street. The men who spotted the fire ran to nearby churches and rang the bells, arousing threatened residents, who could do little except get out of their houses, taking the few possessions they could hastily gather. The village had no fire apparatus and no alarm system, only its church bells.

Neighboring Cottage City, newly separated from Edgartown, did have fire engines. At its very first town meeting as a town in 1880, citizens voted to buy two chemical fire engines. Much of the pressure to separate from Edgartown had come from worries about fire in the congested campground and especially when Edgartown refused to provide an adequate engine. Fire protection was a high priority in the new village.

As the wind-driven flames spread down Main Street from the harness factory, a call for help went out to Cottage City over the telephone line installed a only few months before.

ARTHUR R. RAILTON is the editor of this journal. He requests that members and others send him corrections and additions to this and previously published chapters.

Volunteer firemen responded with one of the town's two new fire engines, Champion No. 1, and its hook-and-ladder. But response took more than an hour: Cottage City was three miles away and the equipment had to be pulled by firemen on foot.

The clanging church bells brought out scores of Vineyard Haven residents, many carrying the leather pails that were the required fire equipment in every home. Bucket brigades were formed down to the harbor: the men passed the filled pails up the line while women and children passed back the empties. Buckets of water were no match for the flames, nor was the Cottage City apparatus. The fire roared down both sides of Main Street, making ashes of everything.

The *Cottage City Star* described the scene:

It now swept unchecked, and unchallenged even, along both sides of Main Street, taking all buildings, including the Baptist church, until it reached the end of Main street, beyond the Mansion House.

For six frightful hours, until 3 in the morning, the flames lit the sky for miles, bringing spectators and volunteers from West Tisbury and Edgartown.

When the last building on Main Street, the Mansion House, collapsed into a heap of glowing ash, the bucket brigade and the chemical engine were able to stem the advance. Helping them was the fact that with approaching dawn the wind had died down and swung to the south, sending the flying sparks back onto smoldering ruins.

During those six hours, more than 60 buildings were totally destroyed, half of them dwellings. Scores of residents were homeless. Destroyed, too, were the harness factory, the Baptist church, the Mansion House, four stables filled with hay, twenty stores, several doctors' offices, the postoffice and the Masonic hall.

Remarkably, no one was killed although one elderly woman, Mrs. James Davis, was so traumatized by seeing her home go up in flames that she died from a heart attack.

It was the most destructive fire in Island history.

Its heroes were the Cottage City firemen, who after pulling their fire apparatus for three miles, had desperately

tried to stem the inferno. Their own village had been obsessed with fear of such a conflagration for years. Now, it was happening to their neighbors in a town with no such paranoia, at least not enough to have voted to buy a fire engine.

At an emergency citizens' meeting the day after the fire, Vineyard Haven residents passed a resolution:

RESOLVED that the thanks of the citizens of Vineyard Haven are hereby tendered to the officers and members of the Cottage City fire department, the police, and to the citizens of that town generally who so promptly came to the aid of our village during the fire.

One Vineyard Haven home owner, away during the blaze, added his thanks in the newspaper:

The undersigned takes this method of expressing his grateful thanks to those – and more especially to the Cottage City fire department – whose energetic efforts in the late fire in Vineyard Haven were the means of saving his dwelling house and shop, during his absence from home. S. G. BRADLEY

Altogether, more than 70 persons were made homeless. Every Island village came to their relief, along with Nantucket, New Bedford and several other mainland cities, including New York and Boston. It was estimated that \$17,000 would be needed. Nearly that amount was raised.

The enormous destruction renewed old demands for an adequate supply of water in Cottage City. A letter writer from Brooklyn, no doubt a cottage owner, wrote to the *Star*:

Now that we have had such a terrible warning, that, together with the fact that our present fire apparatus is insufficient, will furnish a subject worthy of agitation. Take for instance the camp-ground with its numerous dwellings – should a fire gain headway, the consequences would be something awful.

Now let the Selectman take notice of the advantages that Lake Anthony offers, the water of which could be brought to the center of the camp-ground, then a few fire plugs judiciously distributed in the crowded portions would prove efficient in time of need.

A hastily called meeting of Cottage City taxpayers named

Volunteer firemen responded with one of the town's two new fire engines, Champion No. 1, and its hook-and-ladder. But response took more than an hour: Cottage City was three miles away and the equipment had to be pulled by firemen on foot.

The clanging church bells brought out scores of Vineyard Haven residents, many carrying the leather pails that were the required fire equipment in every home. Bucket brigades were formed down to the harbor: the men passed the filled pails up the line while women and children passed back the empties. Buckets of water were no match for the flames, nor was the Cottage City apparatus. The fire roared down both sides of Main Street, making ashes of everything.

The *Cottage City Star* described the scene:

It now swept unchecked, and unchallenged even, along both sides of Main Street, taking all buildings, including the Baptist church, until it reached the end of Main street, beyond the Mansion House.

For six frightful hours, until 3 in the morning, the flames lit the sky for miles, bringing spectators and volunteers from West Tisbury and Edgartown.

When the last building on Main Street, the Mansion House, collapsed into a heap of glowing ash, the bucket brigade and the chemical engine were able to stem the advance. Helping them was the fact that with approaching dawn the wind had died down and swung to the south, sending the flying sparks back onto smoldering ruins.

During those six hours, more than 60 buildings were totally destroyed, half of them dwellings. Scores of residents were homeless. Destroyed, too, were the harness factory, the Baptist church, the Mansion House, four stables filled with hay, twenty stores, several doctors' offices, the postoffice and the Masonic hall.

Remarkably, no one was killed although one elderly woman, Mrs. James Davis, was so traumatized by seeing her home go up in flames that she died from a heart attack.

It was the most destructive fire in Island history.

Its heroes were the Cottage City firemen, who after pulling their fire apparatus for three miles, had desperately

tried to stem the inferno. Their own village had been obsessed with fear of such a conflagration for years. Now, it was happening to their neighbors in a town with no such paranoia, at least not enough to have voted to buy a fire engine.

At an emergency citizens' meeting the day after the fire, Vineyard Haven residents passed a resolution:

RESOLVED that the thanks of the citizens of Vineyard Haven are hereby tendered to the officers and members of the Cottage City fire department, the police, and to the citizens of that town generally who so promptly came to the aid of our village during the fire.

One Vineyard Haven home owner, away during the blaze, added his thanks in the newspaper:

The undersigned takes this method of expressing his grateful thanks to those – and more especially to the Cottage City fire department – whose energetic efforts in the late fire in Vineyard Haven were the means of saving his dwelling house and shop, during his absence from home. S. G. BRADLEY

Altogether, more than 70 persons were made homeless. Every Island village came to their relief, along with Nantucket, New Bedford and several other mainland cities, including New York and Boston. It was estimated that \$17,000 would be needed. Nearly that amount was raised.

The enormous destruction renewed old demands for an adequate supply of water in Cottage City. A letter writer from Brooklyn, no doubt a cottage owner, wrote to the *Star*:

Now that we have had such a terrible warning, that, together with the fact that our present fire apparatus is insufficient, will furnish a subject worthy of agitation. Take for instance the camp-ground with its numerous dwellings – should a fire gain headway, the consequences would be something awful.

Now let the Selectman take notice of the advantages that Lake Anthony offers, the water of which could be brought to the center of the camp-ground, then a few fire plugs judiciously distributed in the crowded portions would prove efficient in time of need.

A hastily called meeting of Cottage City taxpayers named

a committee to advise what should be done. When the committee submitted its report in March 1884, Cottage City citizens were asked, in town meeting, to appropriate \$15,000 for "the cost of introducing water for fire service and for fire apparatus." Capt. Shubael L. Norton made a strong case for approval. There was so much at risk, he said:

[Our] present apparatus is valuable but inadequate to guard from the danger of fire [to] the \$1,300,000 worth of property owned in Cottage City – the destruction of which would probably be the ruin of the town.

The \$15,000 would be spent to lay a 10-inch water main from Meadow (now Sunset) Lake, through the campground and along Circuit Avenue, with hydrants at several appropriate places. A pump house would be built at the lake to house a Herreshoff coil boiler of 40 horsepower that, in four minutes after firing, would produce steam to drive the pump. A water tower would store water to use until the pump began operating. Another fire engine would be bought, this one with a steam-driven pump.

If approved, the money would give Cottage City a fire-protection system that will make "our safety from fire as complete as it can be in a place of this size," the *Herald* reassured its readers. The voters approved.

Cottage City was the most prosperous village on the Island. Edgartown, the shire town at the eastern end of the Island, was moribund, even in decline. Its major business, whaling, had moved to the Pacific. The town's leading businessman, Sam Osborn Jr., was still sending out small whalers, mostly schooners, into the Atlantic to provide his refinery and candle works with oil. But it was a small operation.

Vineyard Haven was the only village that rivaled Cottage City in business activity. William Rotch had started a steam-driven grist mill near the steamboat wharf, the first on the Island to use steam. In 1882, the *Star* reported that he was running it "wide open," business was so good.

Crocker's Harness Works was also prospering. It advertised for 15 women to do light sewing, doubling the number of women it employed. There were not many opportunities for

women to find jobs. Crocker reassured parents and husbands, promising "they will work in a separate room from the male workers and will be in the company of several of our most respected women."

Up-Island, little was happening. Work there was mostly agricultural, sheep-raising in particular. In Chilmark and Gay Head, the clay deposits provided employment for a few, but not all year round. The Chilmark brick factory employed a handful of men and did not operate in winter. By the end of the 1800s, it was on its last legs.

The paint mill, also using clay, had been destroyed by fire in 1866, but was rebuilt quickly. Its peak years came in the 1870s. One day in November 1872, it shipped more than 1000 barrels of "paint" on a single schooner, each barrel weighing approximately 300 pounds (the vessel was so heavy she ran aground, but got off at high tide). Those barrels were not filled with paint as we know it today, but with a pigment of dried, finely ground clay of several colors, mostly red and yellow. The mill made from six to eight tons of paint a day.

Clay, separated by color, was placed in large outdoor vats to dry, protected from rain by movable covers similar to those used in salt mills. When completely dry, it was taken into the mill and ground between steam-driven grindstones, ending up as a fine powder that was put into barrels and called "paint."

Its principal use was in the production of a floor covering, oil cloth, made by coating a loosely woven cloth with the Chilmark pigment mixed into linseed oil. There were several oil-cloth factories on the mainland that used Chilmark paint. When linoleum went into production late in the 1800s, the market for oil-cloth declined as did sales of Chilmark paint.

Late in the century, investors made a final effort to turn up-Island clay into profit. The *Martha's Vineyard Herald* on November 22, 1894, published this item:

The Menemsha Clay Company of Gay Head, under the management of G. A. Duncan, is making a big stride towards getting out clay at Menemsha Creek, and thus far is establishing the best plant that has as yet been placed on the western part of the Island.

The clay will be carried to a wharf, which will soon be

commenced there, on cars weighing two tons, and large quantities are expected to be shipped after the plant is in good working order. Mr. Duncan states that the clay which they are about to mine is superior to any on Gay Head, and compares advantageously with Jersey clay. It will be shipped to Boston and New York principally for the manufacture of fancy fire brick and tiling. This is the company in which confectioner Huyler is extensively interested. At present a gang of eight men and teams are engaged in making a roadbed and other improvements.

What happened after that seems to have been lost in history. Perhaps some reader will be able to recount how Mr. Duncan's plan to mine "large quantities" of Menemsha clay turned out. Whether the new company brought jobs to more than "the gang of eight men" we don't know.

We do know that for years clay digging had brought some small income to the Gay Head Indians, struggling to survive on small gardens, sheep and fish. If Menemsha took over the clay mining, their income would be even less. During summer months, there was an infusion of money for a few who carried the tourists arriving on excursion steamers to the top of the cliffs in ox carts. Others, mostly women, sold hand-made souvenirs in tiny shops at the cliffs. Nearby, there was a restaurant operated by a down-Island woman with Indian help.

Although some excursion boats landing at Gay Head came directly from the mainland, most were day-trippers from Cottage City. That town, the Island's newest, was where things were happening. Not only was it first to have adequate fire apparatus, it was also the first with gas-burning lamps. The gas was supplied by the Cottage City Gas Works from its generating plant in Hiawatha Park. Laying the gas lines from the plant to town were off-Islanders, many of them different-looking "foreigners":

Our streets present quite a cosmopolitan appearance with gangs of men at work with pick and shovel laying the wrought iron pipe mains that are to carry gas to our cottages.

Supervising the project was another off-Islander, a man from Pennsylvania, according to the *Herald*:

The foreman of the Cottage City Gas Works and his wife, from Phoenixville, Penn., are here for the winter.

Vineyard Haven was too occupied with rebuilding its Main Street after the fire to think about a water system or gas lamps. Nor was it ready to spend money on fire protection. That would have to wait. Three years later, it got a water system when the Vineyard Haven Water Company was formed in 1887. It was headed by O. G. Stanley of Colorado who had been visiting Vineyard Haven and saw a money-making opportunity on West Chop, then undeveloped.

He convinced some wealthy friends in Boston to invest with him. Among them were blue-blood Bostonians with such historic names as Peabody, Weld and Forbes. Together, they put up \$75,000 and the company was formed. It bought thirty acres of land surrounding two spring-fed ponds at the head of Chappaquonset Pond (now Lake Tashmoo). From there it would pump pure, clear Tashmoo spring water into an iron standpipe, fifty feet high, on the high ground west of the village.

But the plan involved much more than water. The company had bought a square mile of land on West Chop where it would create a summer resort unequalled on the East Coast. Stanley's vision was boundless. On a tour of the property, he told the editor of the *Herald* that the Island would soon be "one vast resort from Edgartown to Gay Head." There was water enough in Tashmoo to supply 50,000 residents and he planned to bring them to the Island and to sell them water and land. Success was certain. A new day was dawning. Convinced, the editor wrote:

The land fronts mostly on the Sound. . . [it] rises gradually from the shore, in places with an occasional bluff. . . From the height the view is magnificent. The other shore, only four miles away, shows clearly, while to the east there is nothing between the eye and the Old World. The lighthouse standing on a small government tract occupies a prominent position. The territory is covered principally with an oak and pine growth and heavy undergrowth. It will be this winter's work to clear out all this and otherwise beautify the place. . . The

territory will undoubtedly be settled by Western people, as they better appreciate ocean resorts than do the people on or near the coast. An effort will be made to bring the people in colonies.

And it would all start with the pure water that poured freely from an Island spring, as it had been doing for thousands of years:

Water from Tashmoo Springs, which an eminent chemist has said is "good for all uses," will soon come flowing into the village of Vineyard Haven. This important event marks a new era for the Haven which some of the Vineyard's fondest admirers never dreamed of.

The *Vineyard Gazette* joined the chorus, pointing out that more than water was involved:

. . . the syndicate of Boston capitalists who are putting in the water works is made up of the same gentlemen who compose the West Chop Land Company . . . an enterprise of [this] magnitude would not have been undertaken did not its promoters intend, in their capacity as a land company, to take active measures for extending the demand for water by building up the territory which they hold. . . The future of Vineyard Haven may be said to look more promising than ever before in its history.

The future looked so promising that the editor, no doubt prompted by Stanley, urged the town to wait until spring to celebrate. In the spring, thousands of mainlanders would be planning their summer vacations. That was the time for the headlines. Editor Sheldon, a retired minister who was editing the *Herald* (owner Strahan was ill), sounded all the bugles:

Our near neighbors of Vineyard Haven have an opportunity at their command of advertising their place as a summer resort that should not be neglected. The proposed celebration of the introduction of water instead of being local in its character should be made general, and instead of this fall, it should occur next spring, about the time the public are looking about for their summer resting place.

A grand barbecue and clambake at Tashmoo Grove should tempt the inner man. Music by the Fitchburg band and a cho-

rus of 100 voices should intone the universal gladness. Orators with worldwide reputation should voice the beauties and merits of Martha's Vineyard as a watering resort, and the entire affair be gotten up on a scale that would attract the attention of the press.

It might be made a three days' jubilee. . . The West Chop Land Company would cheerfully join the transportation companies in meeting the expenses and the entire Island would add its mite to help make the celebration a success.

Everyone knows, and everyone says, that all Martha's Vineyard needs is to let the traveling world know of its advantages and they will flock here in crowds. Here is an opportunity that should not be lost. It needs but the will to accomplish it. Will Vineyard Haveners do it?

Vineyard Haven ignored the advice and the grand celebration was held on December 15, 1887. Houses and business were decorated with flags and bunting. A demonstration was made of the new water system by firemen spraying two columns of water on the roof of new harness factory where the disastrous fire had started a few years before. Residents filled Association Hall to celebrate. Before the program began, the master of ceremonies, Stephen C. Luce, presented a gold watch to O. G. Stanley as a symbol of the village's gratitude.

There was music:

The musical selections were charmingly rendered, the voices in the trio blending in wonderful harmony, and the solo (to which there was an encore) displaying the rare sweetness of Mrs. Strahan's voice and her command of the upper register.

Mrs. Strahan was the wife of the owner of the *Martha's Vineyard Herald*. She and her husband frequently sang in public gatherings such as this. Lieut. Gov. Brackett was the main speaker preceded by many others. After the speeches ended, 250 especially chosen guests walked over to Capawock Hall where a dinner of boned turkey, scalloped oysters and lobster salad was enjoyed, garnished by more speeches, toasts and songs. One of the songs, "Tashmoo Spring Water," had been written for the occasion (by whom, it wasn't said). There was a toast to "The Land Company" and another to the "Water Company," bringing "a lengthy recognition from Alex Porter

(one of the stockholders) filled with mirth-producing points."

By the time the celebrating ended, it was past midnight, as Mr. Stanley learned "by consulting his new watch." It was, he said, "the end of the most successful celebration ever known on the Vineyard."

The next morning, a group of grateful residents went to the wharf to send the visiting mainland investors off in style:

The Boston capitalists who came to attend the celebration returned on Friday morning, much pleased with their visit to the Island. Lieut. Gov. Brackett shook hands with those who went to the steamer to see the party off.

The water works was worth celebrating. Those "Boston capitalists" had spent \$70,000 to provide the village with good drinking water and fire protection. Of course, it hadn't done it as a gift. Its water bills were high. A local joke was that on one hot day a woman offered a passerby a glass of water, but he refused it, saying that he was afraid she would be charged extra for providing water to others. When the town took the company over in 1905, it was a somewhat unfriendly action.

As essential as a water system is in quelling fires, it didn't help save two major hotels in Cottage City when they went up in flames. The system was of no use. The fires were too far away from a hydrant.

The first hotel destroyed by fire was the Sea View House that burned to the ground in September 1892. Flames were spotted about midnight on a Saturday night. Fortunately, the wind was blowing out to sea, sending a shower of sparks harmlessly into the Sound, saving many nearby buildings.

Also destroyed was the footbridge from the Sea View to the wharf, plus an express office and the railroad ticket office at the head of the wharf. Destroyed too were the railroad tracks that ran onto the wharf and the "wye" track by means of which the locomotive was turned around for its return trip to Katama. The nearby skating rink (now renamed the "Casino") could not be saved. The heat from the enormous fire was so intense that the firemen were forced to stand behind improvised wooden shields to get close enough to douse the rink in their vain effort to save it.

The Sea View had been the crown jewel of Cottage City, its most imposing structure. Only twenty years old, it had been built by the Oak Bluffs Land & Wharf Company under President Erastus P. Carpenter. By a strange coincidence, he had come to Cottage City that same afternoon and watched his proudest investment go up in flames.

His company no longer owned the hotel, having sold it to its manager, Holder M. Brownell of New Bedford, in 1882. Despite Brownell's experienced management, it did not prosper and a few years later, in a foreclosure sale, it was bought by the Sea View Hotel & Wharf Company, created for that purpose.

In 1889, Col. Frederick J. Hart, operator of the Cochran Hotel in Washington, D. C., bought the hotel from the Sea View Company which held the mortgage. He carried \$39,500 of insurance on the hotel, but most of that would go to the mortgage holder. The cause of the fire was never determined, although it was reported that the gas jets in all the rooms were open when the fire started, certainly a suspicious fact in an unoccupied building.

One year later, in 1893, the Highland House, only a few hundred yards from the still-visible ruins of the Sea View, burned to the ground. As with the Sea View, the blaze was discovered shortly after midnight on a Saturday. Two men, returning from a dance in Vineyard Haven, spotted flames through the windows and sounded the alarm. By the time the fire apparatus arrived, the building was totally engulfed.

Again, Cottage City's fire-protection system proved of no use. The nearest hydrant was 1500 feet away. The chemical engines were ineffective against the conflagration. Constantly running out of water, they were refilled with water from Lake Anthony, but no amount of water could have saved the hotel. The fire had gained too much headway. In fact, the firemen didn't even try to save the hotel, playing their hoses on the nearby Agassiz Hall, home of the Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute and saving it.

Like the Sea View, the Highland House had been sold a few years before to new owners, one of whom was Augustus G. Wesley who owned the nearby Wesley House. The new own-

ers had renovated the hotel and, it was said, carried only \$6000 insurance. As the building had been unoccupied for weeks, authorities believed the fire could not have been an accident. The *Vineyard Gazette* agreed:

It is expected that the Selectmen will offer a reward for the conviction of the person or persons who set the fire, for it is the opinion of most of the people that the fire is of incendiary origin, and a thorough investigation will be made.

Sheriff Jason L. Dexter left Edgartown for the scene of the fire [in Cottage City] at 3:30 o'clock this morning . . . An investigation is being made, quietly but vigorously.

The incendiary theory was widely accepted. The *Martha's Vineyard Herald* urged vigilance:

Every man, woman and child in this town should become a private detective to ferret out the incendiary of the recent fires. Numerous summer residents have written urging a reward for the detection of the criminal who set fire to the Highland House.

Pressure to find the "fire bug" intensified two weeks later when John E. Francis, 26, a fireman in the Steamer Company, died from "overexertion" while fighting the fire.

Frightened Cottage City residents hired an all-night lookout to watch for fires from the tower of the Island House on Circuit Avenue. He had a direct electrical connection to the brand-new fire alarm so there would be no delay in calling out the firemen.

In the months that followed he was busy. With shocking frequency, he spotted fires in unoccupied cottages. All were put out by the firemen before major destruction, but the fear intensified that there was a fire bug in town. Where would he strike next?

The suspicion of arson caused the state of Massachusetts to send an investigating team to try to uncover the culprit. It accomplished nothing, the *Herald's* editor claimed:

It may be imprudent and even unjust in our citizens to condemn, as they do, the detective department connected with the State Fire Marshall for not discovering the perpetrator of the recent fires here, but our people feel perfectly helpless. . .

the fires continue as a regular weekly matter and our people are naturally indignant. . .

In that same issue, November 15, 1894, under the headline, "Another Fire," the *Herald* described a suspicious wagon that was seen driving around Cottage City very late on the night of November 13. Teams weren't usually on the streets at that hour. The village night watchman with two other men followed the team until it crossed the Lagoon bridge, heading for Vineyard Haven.

On the way back to Circuit Avenue, the men smelled smoke and discovered it was coming from the Wesley House on the edge of the campground. They sounded the alarm and the firemen quickly put out the fire with little damage. The smoke was so thick that they were forced to lie on the floor as they directed the water from their hoses. Some firemen inhaled so much smoke that they had to be helped from the building. Among them was Manuel Francis, 29, of the Steamer Company, older brother of John E. Francis who had died after the Highland House fire a year before.

It was the third Cottage City hotel to catch fire, each doing so while empty at the end of the season. All three fires began around midnight. All seemed suspicious.

The Wesley House fire was so clearly the work of the fire bug that Sheriff Dexter again called for the state to investigate. Something had to be done, as the *Herald* made clear:

For weeks the people of Cottage City have been wild with suppressed excitement at the presence of a fire bug in their midst. Scores of men were secretly tramping the town as detectives, and professional detectives were supposed to be here, and the fact that the fires continued to occur added dread to the mystery, and many families did not undress at all, but slept as if the next moment their place would be on fire . . .

State Fire Marshal Whitcomb began questioning witnesses, one of them being Augustus G. Wesley, owner of the hotel. There were discrepancies in his testimony about insurance so Whitcomb called him back for more questioning. His suspicions confirmed, he told the hotel owner he was going to arrest him. Wesley replied:

I am a good Christian, and like many another who has been wrongly accused, I can go to prison.

The popular French-Canadian had come to Cottage City as a restaurant cook in 1874, saved his money and built the hotel on land leased from the campground. His was a remarkable accomplishment. "Born again" on the campground soon after coming to the Vineyard, he changed his last name from Goupee to Wesley in memory of Methodism's founder, John Wesley, and he probably named the hotel more to honor John Wesley than himself.

When confronted with his own conflicting statements and other testimony, Augustus Goupee Wesley fell apart:

... he broke down and wept like a child, saying, "This has gone far enough, I will confess."

He signed this confession:

I, Augustus G. Wesley . . . on November 13, 1894, . . . went from prayer meeting at the Methodist church in Cottage City to the Wesley hotel, owned by me. I entered the hotel about half-past eight. I saturated some burlap in the closet under the stairs on the second floor with kerosene and wrapped it around a cigar box in which I placed a lighted candle. I did this for the purpose of setting fire to the building and contents in order to collect the insurance on them.

His arrest brought a sigh of relief. The *Herald* said:

... everyone, while lamenting the fall of such a man, involuntarily exclaimed, "Now we will have no more fires."

That week, Manuel Francis, one of the firemen overcome by smoke, died. His brother, John, had died after the Highland House fire a year earlier. These two Portuguese men were the first Island firemen to die in the line of duty. The *Herald* said that "the Portuguese were so enraged that it is well that Wesley was secure behind Edgartown jail bars."

Augustus Wesley was guilty of setting fire to his own property, but he was not the fire bug. He was securely in prison when a cottage on the Highlands owned by Mrs. Muhlback Duffy caught fire. The blaze began in a closet on the second floor of the unoccupied house. It was slow-burning and the

firemen put it out after only slight damage. A botched job, clearly the work of a clumsy arsonist.

Within a few days, two sisters, Julia and Lulu Demsell of Cottage City, along with Daniel Lewis of Tisbury, a boy friend of Julia, were arrested. The sisters were "colored," Daniel was white. On Daniel's testimony, he and Julia were indicted and tried for arson in Superior Court. They were found not guilty and released in May 1895. The fire bug was still at large.

Other Vineyard towns had fires, but not with the frequency of Cottage City. The Island's deadliest fire had occurred in Gay Head in March 1882. Mrs. Julia Johnson had left her three children in the house while she visited a neighbor. Somehow, a fire broke out and all three children were burned to death, the oldest being only five.

The following year, 1883, a Chilmark store owned by Mrs. M. Adams was destroyed by fire on a Saturday night in July.

In Eastville, a store burned to the ground in March 1884. It was owned by Howes Norris, editor of the *Cottage City Star*. By the time the fire department from Cottage City got there it was too late.

Cottage City's worst fire prior to the Sea View was in October 1886. It almost brought disaster to the village. An empty stable on the shore of Lake Anthony started to burn and before fire engines could get there the fire had destroyed several other sheds along the lake and was threatening to spread to Circuit Avenue. Fortunately, the firemen arrived just in time to prevent the flames from spreading to the Oak Bluffs Hotel and the Town Hall at the foot of Circuit Avenue. This was the first time water from hydrants had prevented disaster.

Perhaps bad times were a factor in the string of hotel fires. The country was in a depression. There were strikes and riots by unemployed workers. Coxey's Army, a band of 100 angry men from Ohio, marched to the Capitol in Washington in 1894. Arriving there, by now 400 strong, they were arrested for trespassing on the Capitol grounds. Their long march had been in vain.

The Cottage City fires had made insurance companies suspicious, but their investigators were unable to find any evi-

dence of arson, except for that of Augustus Wesley, who was already in jail.

Hotel fires didn't end in 1894. In June 1898, on the Oak Bluffs side of the Lagoon, the Prospect House burned to the ground. Then in July 1906, the Innisfail Hotel (variously called Oklahoma Hall and Villa Bristhall) was destroyed by a raging brush fire. It was empty at the time, as were all the other hotels that were destroyed.

Edgartown had no major fires. It was also spared any serious effects from the 1893 economic downturn, probably because it had benefited very little from the boom that had preceded it. For years, it had been struggling, kept alive by "old" money. Its fancy houses overlooking the harbor had been built before the Civil War by whaling captains, not by newly-rich entrepreneurs, as those in Cottage City had been.

In 1891, a sleepy Edgartown awakened. A small group of investors saw an opportunity at the end of North Water Street, then the outskirts of the village. Three men, a druggist and a minister from off-Island and one of the Edgartown Mayhews, bought some pasture land at the end of North Water Street and built the Harbor View Hotel. It was the town's first serious attempt to join in the resort business. A hotel had been built at Katama earlier, but it was so far from the village that neither it nor the railroad had done much for Edgartown.

Building the Harbor View was the most encouraging event the town had seen in years, but it was a gamble. Its major attraction was a spectacular view of the outer harbor and Cape Poge on the tip of Chappaquiddick, with Edgartown's new harbor lighthouse on its island in the foreground. Beyond the view, it offered little: no nearby parks with daily band concerts, no bath houses one could walk to, no skating rink or casino with day and night entertainment. There wasn't even the excitement of the steamboat arriving four times a day. Edgartown was a quiet, settled place, unlike Cottage City where something was going on all the time.

Patronage of the new hotel soon declined and a new manager was brought in. He was William D. Carpenter, son of Erastus, of Oak Bluffs history. The young man had started his ca-

reer as manager of his father's Sea Cliff Inn on Nantucket. From there, he moved to the Vineyard to take over Mattakesett Lodge at Katama, also started by his father. That hotel was failing and he was soon out of a job when it was sold at auction to the Old Colony Railroad for \$7200. Included in the sale was the run-down wharf in Katama Bay, several unoccupied cottages, a clambake house and about 500 acres of farmland – all for \$7200. The Mattakesett Lodge alone had cost \$30,000 to build twenty years earlier.

It was not a good time to be running a new hotel. Businesses were failing in great numbers. By June 1894, 200 of the nation's railroads had gone bankrupt. Times were so poor that the Island's only manufacturing plant, the Crocker Harness Works in Vineyard Haven, closed down for the first time. Still, there were investors who believed that the Vineyard, with its resort economy, was immune to such cycles.

One group of such investors built Makonikey Inn in 1893, the year the depression began. Located on a high bluff overlooking Vineyard Sound in an area known as Chickemoo, it was the Island's first hotel to have its own electric-generating plant. Four or five cottages were built nearby to attract buyers for the 200 lots that had been surveyed on the property. The developers were all from the mainland, the best known being E. H. Capen, president of Tufts College.

The Inn had twenty rooms, an electric light in each, bathrooms on every floor (perhaps with water closets, although that was not advertised). There was a bathhouse in the rear of the hotel, providing a choice of fresh or salt water bathing (a few of the porcelain tubs have survived). Designed for a discerning clientele, the Inn had three private dining rooms in addition to the main salon. It had its own beach. Steamboats from West Chop and the mainland brought guests directly to the new 200-foot wharf in the Sound.

Big expectations, they were. More than \$100,000 had been invested. But problems began soon after it opened.

According to Henry Beetle Hough in his *Summer Resort*, shortly after the hotel opened, Italian workers who had not been paid stormed into the lobby, frightening the guests who

hurriedly packed their bags and left. Hough wrote that the Inn closed its doors on that day, August 24, 1893, and never reopened as a hotel. But that is incorrect. Advertisements in the *Herald* show that it was still operating in 1895 and 1896.

Makonikey never was solvent; never able to pay its bills. At the end of the 1896 season, bondholders took it over and sold it to a Maine lumber dealer (one of the creditors). He built more cottages on the property but was unable to sell them. The entire place was vacant for a number of years. Early in the 1900s, George Mathews, a retired preacher, and his son planned to make bricks from the clay on the property, building a kiln in one of the maintenance buildings. The plan was to fire the kiln with lignite from nearby bogs. But they soon discovered there wasn't enough heat in the peat to run the kiln and the works soon closed.

The clay again was used when Andreas Andreassian, the "crazy Armenian potter," as some called him, moved in and began turning artistic pottery (some still exists, it is said). But, like the others, he soon shut down.

In 1913, the YWCA leased the property as Camp Makonikey for girls. It continued to be used as such until 1919. Today, the structure that dominated the high bluff east of Lambert's Cove for years has disappeared, its site marked only by traces of stone foundations, a couple of bathtubs, plus a few steel hoops and pipe from the water tower.

The building was demolished but not in an organized way. Its removal was the result of the gradual "borrowing" of wood by neighboring residents for their summer homes. Fine paneling and trim had been used in the hotel's interior and much of it is said to adorn nearby homes. The spirit of Makonikey lives.

The common thread that ran through all these hotel investments is that the money came almost entirely from off-Island. There were very few built with Vineyard money. Most of the large hotels, the Sea View, the Highland House, the Prospect House and others were owned by off-Islanders, as were the water companies and the electric companies. Vineyarders seemed little inclined to speculate.

Some Vineyard money went into Edgartown's Harbor

View Hotel, but most of its financing came from off-Island. Shares were sold to a few Edgartown residents at \$100 each.

The local money didn't seem to help. The Harbor View struggled during the depression years of the 1890s. Manager Carpenter was soon replaced by a former school superintendent from Winthrop, F. A. Douglas. He was luckier, taking over as the economic climate began to improve. Helping too, no doubt, was the fact that the two largest hotels in Cottage City were no more, victims of fire. Soon, the new manager bought the Harbor View and within a few years he had doubled its size, even adding a tennis court on the front lawn.

Edgartown was eager to promote its first resort hotel. In one fun-filled weekend celebrating the hotel, the village put on foot races along Main Street, a high-jump competition, a baseball game in a field just past the County Jail, rowing races and a tub race in the harbor plus a "Greased Pig" chase at some place not recorded. That evening, the Harbor View Hop filled the new hotel with music and gaiety. Edgartown had shed its stuffy dignity. It was becoming a summer resort.

While Edgartown was boosting its new hotel, Cottage City residents demanded that something be done for their town, once the center of everything. It needed a new hotel, they said. A citizens' meeting asked the town to put up money to replace the destroyed Sea View and Highland Houses. If the town would put up some money, individual citizens would add more. A fine, new hotel could then be built and turned over, rent-free, to a competent manager for a few years.

Philip Corbin, the wealthy Cottage City summer resident from Connecticut, when asked to help finance the project, said that building a hotel is something the steamboat companies and the year-round residents should be doing – not the summer people who have "home towns" of their own.

Colonel Frederic J. Hart, who was owner of the Sea View when it burned down, seemed to be planning to replace it with a much larger and more ornate building. A romantic, he had just published a booklet, *Lover's Rock, A Summer Idyl*, containing a poem he had written of a romance that began when a lonely man, staying at the old Sea View, rescued a widow who

had fallen off the pier. He so exerted himself that he collapsed and almost died on the beach near Lover's Rock. Happily, he survived, married the widow and they lived happily ever after in her Cottage City cottage.

At the end of the booklet, he included a drawing of the new Sea View House he was going to build (see back cover). It would be atop the bluff just north of the steamboat wharf, and a magnificent structure it would be,

. . . three hundred feet long, facing the east and Vineyard Sound . . . every room looks directly out on the water. . . Music room and parlors. . . with three great fire-places. . . Reading rooms and card rooms, ladies' and gents' billiard rooms flank the parlors . . . The ball room, in the form of a half circle, opens into the lobby, utilizing [it] as a promenade for the dancers and the guests. The entire building will be lit by electric lights. Balconies at the end of each broad hall provide an easy descent to the ground below, forming perfect fire escapes.

After building up the reader's expectations of seeing a magnificent new Sea View that summer, he concludes,

I announce, with great regret, that this charming house, the best on the Atlantic coast, will not be ready for this season. The severe winter and many attendant delays have made it impossible . . . Next year, friends, our house and grounds will be perfect.

It was never built. He seems to have disappeared, leaving Cottage City to struggle with the job of clearing the still visible ruins of his burned-down Sea View and the skating rink.

A second Sea View House was built some years later, but it was an economy version of the original, located on a different site, adjacent to Waban Park.

When Cottage City got no response to its demand for a new hotel, it asked that at least something be done about the ruins. They were not an inviting view for incoming tourists, the *Herald* said:

Picturesque ruins are well enough, in their way, in the Eternal City, but the ruins of the Sea View and the Rink will never strike the sober tourist as being that sort of remains. Let's bury them.

Some cleaning up had been done by the steamboat company when it rebuilt the fire-damaged wharf. The replacement looked cheap and dowdy, the *Herald* said, but with age, it might become more picturesque.

More than fire ruins were bringing problems to Cottage City: George C. Abbott was back. It had almost forgotten about him after its initial trauma over his purchase of the parks. The *Herald* had even begun treating him as someone to joke about. In November 1885 and in several later issues, it referred to him as "poor Abbott and his sheep-pasture speculators." To be sure, the land he had bought was once "sheep pasture," but he had plans to fill those acres with houses, large houses overlooking the ocean. It was nothing to joke about.

Abbott, you will remember, was the Boston lawyer who, with his partner and financial backer, Neal, had bought the parks and a number of avenues in Cottage City from the Oak Bluffs Land & Wharf Company for \$7500 in the spring of 1885. That fall, the village widened, under a previous plan, Sea View Avenue and in doing so it took land from the edge of Ocean Park, then belonging to Abbott. He demanded reimbursement. The town offered him \$200, a nominal sum such as was customary in street-widening projects.

A ridiculous amount, Abbott responded and he sued the village for \$7000. In the trial, the jury awarded him \$2545. The town appealed. The appeals judge, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., set aside the award. A second trial was held and a hung jury resulted. Things were looking better for Cottage City. Maybe Abbott wouldn't be such a problem after all.

But George Abbott didn't go away. He still was determined to make money out of the parks, suggesting to one local resident a simple solution: there were 38 cottages bordering Ocean Park, all owned by well-to-do summer residents, and if each gave him \$1000, a total of \$38,000, and the village added \$7500, he would return all the parks to the village.

In another effort to get his money back, he told those with cottages around Hartford Park, a tree-covered oasis south of Ocean Park, that he would sell them the park for \$4000.

Nobody seemed willing to legalize the concept that Ab-

bott "owned" the parks. They belonged to the public and should forever remain that way. It was wrong for him to turn them into profit – some considered it to be blackmail.

Abbott had two strong Vineyard allies in the battle: Capt. Grafton Collins and Capt. Ira Darrow. Both were Edgartown residents, although Collins spent his summers in a cottage he owned on Ocean Park, being one of the few Islanders there. (Fewer than 10 percent of Oak Bluffs lots were owned by year-round Islanders.) Both Collins and Darrow had opposed the secession of Cottage City in 1880. When Carpenter made them directors in his Oak Bluffs Land & Wharf Co., he was hoping they would bring supporters from Edgartown for his Oak Bluffs plans. It hadn't worked out that way.

Collins never did like Carpenter, an off-Islander who had bought land from Capt. Shubael L. Norton and created that upstart, Oak Bluffs. Because of him, Edgartown had lost tax revenues and had fallen into decline when the economy's engine shifted to Oak Bluffs. Captain Collins, whose house in Edgartown overlooked Collins Beach (named for his family), took Abbott's side. He was quoted as saying: "All he [Carpenter] wants is to get a big name and make himself popular with the non-residents."

As one of its founders, Collins owned a large block of stock in the Martha's Vineyard Railroad. He sold the shares to Abbott, giving him enough, when added to those he already owned, to allow him to take control of the railroad away from Carpenter, its president. It was a clear victory for Abbott.

His power-grabbing moves so disturbed residents of Cottage City that fifty of them pledged \$100 each to finance a legal battle against Abbott's claim to the parks. Two of the longest civil trials in Vineyard history were the result. The first, held in Edgartown in June 1887, ended when the jury, after deliberating all night, was unable to reach a verdict.

A second trial was held in the summer of 1888 in the Bristol County Courthouse, New Bedford, before a master of the court. There would be no jury to persuade this time. Transcripts of the trial fill more than 1000 pages.

The case against Abbott was headed by the state's attor-

ney on behalf of the village of Cottage City. He set out to prove that the parks had been "dedicated" to the public from the start and therefore could not be taken over by a private individual. The land could be sold, but the buyer could not deny the public its use. That was the case the state would make.

Abbott was his own principal witness. His testimony took two days and covered 100 pages of the transcript. He insisted that the parklands had not been set aside for public use by the Oak Bluffs Company. Hiawatha Park, he argued, was used for the gasworks and the electric works, both privately owned, and there was even a piggery on Petaluma Park. That didn't sound like dedicated public land to him. At the time, these parks were at the outskirts of the village and of no interest to the public, unlike the centrally located Ocean and Waban Parks. Abbott had to prove that those two in-town parks had not been set aside for the public to use.

He called on James W. Tufts, the wealthy soda-fountain manufacturer, who had built the first two Roque courts on Waban Park. Tufts couldn't remember ever asking for permission; he just built the courts on the parkland in front of his house. But, Abbott pressed, "Weren't they exclusively for you and your friends?" Tufts had to agree as he locked up the sheds he had built to house the equipment when he left. Abbott claimed that proved the parks were not for all to use, but only for the few.

Most of the witnesses Abbott called were Edgartown residents who had opposed the separation of Cottage City from the old town. They didn't like anything about the new village. State's Attorney T. M. Stetson pointed that out that bias:

In view of the fact that nearly every witness called by Abbott, who undertakes to testify anything in his favor (*viz.*, Collins, Donaldson, Ripley, Marchant, Dunham, R. L. Pease, John Pease, Dean, and Monroe) are life-long residents of Edgartown, seven miles off, it may be worthwhile to call attention to the hostility that has existed between Edgartown and Cottage City ever since the new town was set off from the old in 1880 and Edgartown lost the revenue of its large tax list.

To dispute the testimony of those "life-long residents of

Edgartown," Stetson called on summer residents who had bought land from Carpenter and built expensive "cottages." All emphasized that they never would have done so had they not been assured that the parks were permanent.

Testifying were such wealthy men as Phillip Corbin, Timothy Stanley, Erastus P. Carpenter, George M. Landers and Dr. Harrison Tucker, owners of large summer homes on Ocean Park. They agreed that the public had unrestricted use of the parks and that many took advantage of it. Abbott's case was weak. He was unable to prove that the public had ever been denied access to the parkland, except in a few cases banning activities that were damaging the grass.

On September 21, 1891, the judge ruled against Abbott: the parkland had been "dedicated" to the public from the beginning by the Oak Bluffs Land & Wharf Company. Abbott might "own" the parks, but he could not prevent their use by the public and therefore could not sell them as building lots.

Cottage City was jubilant, celebrating with a bonfire in Ocean Park, followed by fireworks and a parade led by the Cottage City Drum Corps.

But the Island had not heard the last of George C. Abbott. He brought suit for damages of \$225,000 against the Oak Bluffs Company. The suit was denied. His one remaining weapon was his control of the Martha's Vineyard Railroad. It wasn't a strong weapon as it struggled to survive.

The railroad's reason for being, you will recall, was to carry tourists to the new resort at Katama, a favorite place of Erastus Carpenter's. Its hotel, Mattakesset Inn, never had been profitable, but the clambake pavilion did make money and had just been rebuilt. On the new pavilion's opening day in 1892, the railroad sold excursions that included a round trip from Cottage City to Katama and back, plus a genuine "Rhode Island clambake and shore dinner," with dancing to the six-piece Katama orchestra – all for one dollar!

It was the railroad's last gasp. While it still ran to Edgartown, the following year it dropped the trip to Katama, except for "special excursions when called for," as its schedules stated. In 1896, it shut down completely and put its tiny rolling stock

of one locomotive, four passenger cars and one baggage car up for sale. The locomotive, first named "Edgartown," soon renamed "Active" (the name it is remembered by), had just been re-christened "South Beach" in a futile effort to revive Katama. The little engine with the huge smokestack was sold off-Island and ended up as a switch engine in a freight yard.

When the locomotive left the Island, it steamed down Edgartown's Main Street on temporary tracks laid in short sections ahead of its slow journey to steamboat wharf. There, it was loaded on a schooner to be taken to the mainland. A few sad townspeople watched her leave.

The end of the railroad marked the end of another of Erastus P. Carpenter's dreams. He had created it to carry the public to Katama, a place he loved for its remoteness and its quiet, punctuated only by the pounding surf. The quiet and the surf survived. The railroad did not.

Nearly as remote as the Mattakesset Inn, the Prospect House on Lagoon Heights, west of Cottage City, found a way to stay in business. It was leased to a professor of music, Dr. Tourje of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston who filled it with his students in the summer:

The Doctor has been most fortunate in obtaining such a charming home for the young ladies of the Conservatory. . . . The House is open to a select few in addition

On the Tisbury side of the Lagoon, Oklahoma Hall had taken a similar course in the summer of 1883. It was leased to a Canadian lady who ran a summer school of theater:

A woman from Montreal has taken the entire Oklahoma estate for the summer. She intends to set aside one cottage as a summer school of the arts, with recitals, etc. The hotel will be run by her in peace and quiet.

She hoped to fill the hotel with guests seeking "peace and quiet," whom she would entertain with recitals and theatricals performed by her students. Her venture didn't last long. Most summer visitors were not looking for what she was offering; they wanted excitement. They found it in Cottage City, the Island's center of activity during the second half of the 1800s.

Cottage City was still a part of Edgartown, a sleepy village overwhelmed by its "child." Probably its biggest excitement during these years was in March 1883 when Samuel W. Vincent dug up three human skeletons on the shore at Caleb's Pond on Chappaquiddick island. He was building a dyke to form a herring run when he made the shocking discovery. The skeletons were clearly Indians. One was estimated to have been seven feet tall and was perfect in every detail, including the news account said, a complete set of teeth. We do not know where the bones ended up. The report said only that Vincent had carefully removed them from their graves.

While Edgartown village was abuzz with talk about Vincent's discovery of ancient bones, Cottage City was looking to the future. This was ten years before the disastrous hotel fires that would then set it back somewhat and there seemed to be no end to its summer prosperity. It may have been the first town in southeastern Massachusetts with electricity. A small generating plant was built at Eastville near the store of Otis Foss, its two generators driven by a steam engine. The electricity was fed to arc lamps mounted on poles at a number of street intersections and in front of the largest hotels. During that first year, interior electric lighting was rare. Only the ballroom of the Sea View and the huge floor of the skating rink had interior arc lights. Arc lights required red-hot carbon conductors and were too dangerous for general use inside. Soon the incandescent bulb would arrive and interior lighting would become commonplace.

Electricity brought problems of "not in my back yard." Residents of the Highlands, annoyed by the noise of the steam engine and the generators, demanded that the plant be moved. Such complaints and its shaky economic condition made its future seem in doubt. The *Cottage City Star* was worried:

What is to be done about the electric light this summer? It proved such an unqualified boon last season and was so universally indorsed [*sic*] that it seems a crying shame that we should forego it now because of the lack of interest of those who should have the matter most at heart. . . . there should not be the slightest hesitancy in taking measures for its intro-

duction here throughout every summer season. The company of last year failed to clear anything because the cost of running fifty electric lights amounted to enough to eat up all the profits; but the expense of maintaining a hundred lights would be very materially less in proportion. . . . the whole town should be pushing through to the consummation of the establishment here of a hundred of more electric lights. It would boom the place wonderfully.

The *Star's* editor need not have worried. Fresh money arrived in 1884, along with an off-Island expert, William H. Leslie, to supervise an expansion. The plant was moved to Hiawatha Park, safely away from complaining neighbors. Two new generators were ordered, but Leslie was so eager that he started operating before the second had arrived:

The electric light was started up Thursday night for the first time this season. As only one dynamo was operating only half the lights could be fed. Full operation expected next week.

By the following week, there were 45 arc lights burning in Cottage City: six of them in the campground. The resort was truly a fairy land ablaze with light. When the skating rink opened for the season, its new tin roof freshly painted a deep red and the birch floor sanded to perfection, it had eight new electric lights inside. A minor glitch developed that first week:

The failure of the electric light for a short interval was quickly remedied by lighting the gas jets. . . . The rink is now open for the season, three sessions a day, with the new octagonal floor.

In 1884, the Cottage City water company laid 1800 feet of cast-iron pipe from its Meadow Lake pump to supply two hydrants in the campground and five more on Circuit Avenue. A number of summer residents, including Dr. H. A. Tucker and Mr. Philip Corbin on Ocean Park, had the water line extended to their homes. The water was not safe to drink and was probably used for cooking and bathing, perhaps even for "water closets," then coming into favor among the wealthy.

These wealthy summer residents were pushing toward a solution of the problem that had troubled Cottage City for years: what to do about its "sanitariums," as privies were being

called. The Board of Health had set up strict regulations, requiring leak-proof vaults that could be cleaned only at specified times, their contents dumped in a town-controlled area by licensed haulers. The town bought a leakproof wagon to haul the fecal matter to a then-remote dump-site near Farm Pond. It was most sensitive to the problem created by its large summer population and knew that any outbreak of disease, traceable to sanitary failure, would be devastating to its business.

There was growing objection to privies for another reason: they were an esthetic disaster. They just didn't belong in such a fairyland. Something had to be done. If they can't be eliminated, they must be hidden. The *Star* editorialized:

... property owners should improve the rears of their cottages by enclosing outhouses with lattice work or fences and as far as possible hiding from public view everything offensive to the eye.

Increasing dependence on tourists was bringing greater sensitivity to public opinion all over the Island. That became apparent when a subject that had been quietly hidden for years came back into the news. In August 1884, the *Cottage City Star* made a brief mention of what would soon become a much bigger story:

Mr. F. Z. Maguire of Washington, D. C., is in town, searching various town records . . . and county records, for the purpose of obtaining information and tracing causes of the cases of the deaf and dumb mutes.

Frank Z. Maguire was the private secretary of Prof. Alexander Graham Bell, long a student of deafness and now the famous inventor of the telephone. He sent Maguire to the Island to do some research for him. Maguire managed to have some fun while "working," the *Cottage City Chronicle* reported:

Messrs. Frank Z. Maguire of Washington, D. C., Frank B. Skinner and Geo. N. Randall of Philadelphia, who have been guests at the Sea Side House in Edgartown, the past week, circumnavigated the Vineyard last Friday with Capt. John O. Norton as skipper, leaving the pier at 6 in the morning and arriving back at the point of departure at 6 the following

morning – the quickest passage of the kind on record.

The only stop was at Noman's Land at about 4 p.m. where the party remained a couple of hours while Mr. Maguire made some inquiries concerning deaf mutes there. Mr. Maguire who is investigating this subject generally, has today gone to Chilmark for more information.

Deaf-mutism on the Island was, of course, not news to residents, who treated it matter-of-factly. Most deaf mutes were in Chilmark, living normal lives as storekeepers and farmers. The "normal" residents had a general knowledge of a simple sign language, adequate for communicating with them. Deafness was no major handicap, Islanders thought. But it was not something they were pleased to see in the headlines. It might scare away summer people worried about "catching" it.

The story of Island maladies had first made headlines in 1860, when a Hallowell, Maine, newspaper published an article about a visit to the Vineyard, the new summer resort. It was a short paragraph unrelated to the main point:

A sad feature among the citizens of Tisbury is a predisposition to insanity. Within a few years, twelve persons have been carried to the Insane Asylum and several others in town are suffering from the same malady. The upper part of the Island contains an almost incredible number of deaf and dumb persons and many blind from birth. These calamities can only be accounted for . . . by the intermarriage of relatives.

The article was reprinted in the *Vineyard Gazette*, bringing an immediate response from angry up-Islanders. One letter writer, a Chilmark resident, shot back:

Within 50 years there have been eight families into which deaf and dumb children were born. In four cases, the parents were related, in the other four they were not. We know of no child ever being born blind in this part of the Vineyard.

The story surfaced again in 1869 when the *New Bedford Standard* made reference to deaf mutes in an article about the Indians of the Vineyard; again totally unrelated to the theme:

On the west end of the Island, where there are more deaf mutes among the white population than anywhere else in the

country, as far as we know, there have never been any deaf mutes among the Indians, living side by side with the white brethren of Chilmark and Tisbury.

Newspaper interest in the subject then died out, but now with the arrival of Bell's researcher, it had come back. And with Bell's famous name connected to it, the news would soon become national. Maguire went around seeking answers to the question: why were there more deaf mutes on the Island than elsewhere? His employer, now comfortably off with the income from his telephone company, had returned to his lifelong work in the field of hearing and speech defects.

That interest went back to his youth. He was the son of a doctor in Scotland who studied the anatomy of speech. Young Alec, as he was called, continued the work as a teacher of speech, helping those with speaking impairment. He saw that speaking and hearing were related. Because they couldn't hear sounds, deaf persons were unable to imitate the way words were spoken. What Bell was doing was teaching those who couldn't hear how to use their throat muscles and vocal cords to create intelligible sounds. He couldn't help them hear, but he could help them speak.

When he emigrated to Massachusetts from his birthplace in Scotland, he set up a school for speech therapy in Boston. He learned that deaf-mutism seemed to be inherited, but erratically. He wondered about other causes. This was before Mandel's genetic theories were refined and published so Bell had no knowledge of dominant and recessive genes.

He and his several assistants poured over census records to discover where deaf-mutes lived so they could interview them. The records showed many more of them, as a percentage of population, on Martha's Vineyard than average. Bell wondered why. He wanted to accept the idea of heredity, but it was flawed. There were too many cases of deaf mutes marrying and having normal children. He looked for other reasons, even speculating that, since most of the deaf-mutes were in Chilmark, the presence of so much clay might be a factor. It might be the drinking water from wells driven near the clay beds.

When Maguire got back to Washington, he no doubt told

Bell that the man who knew the most about the genealogy and history of the Vineyard was Richard L. Pease, clerk of the county court and Island historian. In 1885 and again in 1887, Bell visited the Island. He met with Pease and together they went to Gay Head. They found no deaf-mutes in the history of the Indians who lived on the largest bed of clay on the Vineyard. The clay theory was dropped.

Bell and Pease came to a financial agreement: in exchange for Pease's help and for access to his notes, Bell agreed to finance (up to \$2500) the publication of Pease's history of the Island, a book he had been working on for years. Bell would also receive help from Pease's daughter, Harriet, the Island's most active genealogist. It was a friendly arrangement.

The next year, on September 9, 1888, Pease died of cancer after only a brief illness. When Bell learned of it, he returned to Edgartown to meet with Mrs. Pease. The financial arrangement was discussed. After consulting with Mrs. Bell when he returned to Washington, Bell wrote to widow Pease :

In return for all the information [your late husband] could give me concerning the Vineyard Ancestry of Deaf-Mutes, I was to pay the expenses of publishing his History of Martha's Vineyard — my liability being limited to \$2500. Now, Mrs. Bell suggests that I simply pay you this amount . . . and you and your daughters [will] absolve me from all further responsibility . . . You, of course, are to allow me full access to Mr. Pease's Manuscripts until my work upon the Deaf-Mutes of Martha's Vineyard is ready for the press. . . The money would be raised by the sale of stock or bonds of the American Bell Telephone Company and perhaps you would prefer the investments themselves at the market price, instead of cash. You better consult some business man.

We don't how Mrs. Pease chose to receive the funds, but it is likely that she took it in cash. Had she chosen stock in the new Bell telephone company and held it, her family would have become very rich (had she invested it in Vineyard land her heirs would have done well also). Most likely, she used it for her living and dying expenses, as she did not die wealthy.

We have at the Society copies of several pages of notes in

Bell's handwriting, clearly written before he went to the Island. They are headed, "Martha's Vineyard, Gleanings from the Sixth Census [1840]." One note is headed: "Total Deaf & Dumb." It continues: "None in Edgartown; 5 in Tisbury; 11 in Chilmark. Total 16." Another page states there were 12 deaf mutes on the Island in the 5th Census (1830), all in Chilmark.

After his first trip to the Island, Bell presented a preliminary paper entitled "The Deaf-Mutes of Martha's Vineyard" at the National Academy of Sciences in 1886. An article was later published in the *American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb*, summarizing the report (with a few comments by Bell):

Nearly all the deaf-mutes of the Vineyard are natives of the little town of Chilmark, a scattered hamlet having in 1880 a population of nearly five hundred people, of whom twenty were deaf-mutes, which is in the proportion of one deaf-mute in twenty-five inhabitants. (Footnote signed A. G. B.: *Only two deaf-mutes were reported on the Island outside of Chilmark and West Tisbury, although the bulk of the population lies outside*).

Various causes have been suggested for this extraordinary phenomenon, such as heredity, consanguinity of parents, and the geological character of that portion of the Island, which is undulating – while the rest of the Island is flat – and which has a subsoil of clays of peculiar character . . . but the cause of the prevalence of deafness in this locality has not yet been established beyond question. Dr. Bell showed by elaborate and ingenious genealogical charts the curious relationship by blood and marriage that exists among all these families, and the probability, though not yet absolute certainty, of their being descended from common ancestors belonging to the families containing deaf-mutes who resided in Chilmark and Tisbury over two hundred years ago; also their connection with the large deaf-mute families of Sandwich and Pittsfield, Mass., and Winthrop, New Sharon, Hartford, Fayette, and Sebec, in Maine.

The article then quoted from a letter Bell had written to the editor of the journal while the article was in preparation:

My present investigation consists simply in the collection of a mass of genealogical material relating to the ancestry of the deaf. It has kept on widening to such an extent that I now

perceive that the labor of tracing all the ramifications is too great to be undertaken by a single individual, unless he is prepared to devote his whole life to the subject – which I am not.

With that admission, Bell gave up his work on the deaf-mutes of Martha's Vineyard, taking up a new and more exciting interest: flying machines. It was the time of the Wright brothers and Bell was designing more efficient wing structures.

Six years after Bell's last visit to the Island, a sensational article appeared in the *Boston Sunday Herald* of January 20, 1895, datelined "Squibnocket." Its headline read: "Deaf and Dumb in the Village of Squibnocket, Where One Person in Every Four Is Speechless." The reporter described a "peculiarly afflicted people," set apart from the rest of the Island:

In this isolated New England community of 146 persons, there are 36 men, women and children born deaf and dumb – almost exactly 25 percent of the population. In five families, out of 28 children, 15 are deaf.

The writer had been taken to Squibnocket from Vineyard Haven in a carriage driven by a "strapping big, blue-eyed fellow, uncommonly well developed physically, uncommonly bright mentally, but not able to tell me much about Chilmark which lives so much to itself and by itself that even the other Islanders have only the most general ideas of the state of affairs there existing."

The "uncommonly bright" driver might not have known much about Chilmark, but he knew enough to point out that the driver of the buggy passing them was from Chilmark. She was, he said, "one of the Adams sisters, those that used to travel with Tom Thumb and his wife."

The driver, knowingly or not, had added another twist in the shocking story that would be published of a peculiar, isolated people in a small area of Chilmark, called Squibnocket. Its publication brought a quick response from Florence Mayhew who lived in Squibnocket. She corrected some of the writer's "facts":

Chilmark has about 400 inhabitants, only 13 of them are deaf mutes. Three of the 13 are not natives of the place, but have

married Chilmark men at a school [for the deaf] at Hartford. . . Of the four families in which both father and mother are deaf mutes, there is but one deaf and dumb child or grandchild. . . The dwarf strain in the Adams family does not come from the Chilmark branch, but from an entirely separate line. . . Summer visitors can testify to finding Chilmark a panacea for nerves and tired brains, and the Chilmark people are hospitable even to unreliable reporters.

That same year, the story was continued when a scholarly journal published in Boston, the *Arena*, carried an article by S. Millington Miller entitled, "The Ascent of Man." A bound volume of that year's issues is at the Society. Written boldly on its spine by its previous owner is, "Chilmark's Tainted Stock." The first sentences in Miller's article emphasize that thought, hardly something the Vineyard wanted the country to read:

There is a secluded hamlet on the Island of Martha's Vineyard called Chilmarth [sic]. One out of every twenty-five of its inhabitants is deaf. Many are blind and some are idiots. . . Eleven years ago, Dr. Abraham [sic] Bell, the inventor of the Bell telephone, published a series of statistics showing that one-third (and he tells me that the ratio is actually much higher) of the children resulting from the intermarriage of deaf mutes are congenitally deaf; that such marriages are giving rise to a deaf and dumb species of the human race.

Miller, a medical doctor, argued for abandoning the sign language. Deaf persons must be taught to communicate orally, he wrote, so they will "mingle without disability in the general society." He came close to declaring that they should not be allowed to have children to prevent the "deaf and dumb species of the human race" from increasing.

The Hartford school for the deaf that Florence Mayhew referred to and where Miller's undesirable sign language was being taught inadvertently helped to bring an end to "Chilmark's Tainted Stock." A number of Vineyard men who attended the school met and married other deaf students, many of them deaf for reasons other than heredity. The mixing of their genes reduced the Island's deaf population, helped along by the immigration of Europeans into Chilmark.

An interesting sidelight in Vineyard history is found in a letter Bell wrote to his wife from Edgartown on December 18, 1887. He was staying at the inn run by Capt. Abraham Osborne, Jr., (somehow, the name picked up an "e" after the Civil War). In a previous letter, Bell had described the inn as, "Capt. Osborne's house – dignified by the name of Ocean View Hotel. A queer place but I like it." The inventor of the telephone was comforted by its telegraph machine:

It is a comfort having a telegraph office right in the house where I am staying. I don't feel now so very far away. I can reach you in a moment . . . The telegraph however takes all the spirit out of letter-writing – when I can telegraph you in a moment why should I spend time in writing a letter that will not reach you for days!

It is ironic that Bell, who owned a telephone company, had to rely on the telegraph. There were telephones on the Island, of course. Five years earlier, in 1882, there was a total of 18, but only two were in Edgartown: one at the railroad depot on upper Main Street; the other in Capt. R. Holley's store downtown. In 1883, an unreliable connection to the mainland using the underwater Western Union telegraph cable had been established. Even with that, there apparently was no way to talk by telephone to Mrs. Bell in Washington. Had there been, surely the inventor of the telephone would have done so. Instead, he is pleased by the "comfort of having a telegraph office right in the house where I am staying."

Bell is very much taken by Captain Osborn. He tells his wife about the whaling master's confrontation with Capt. Raphael Semmes, the Confederate "pirate," during the Civil War. Osborn's whaleship, the *Ocmulgee*, was the first victim of the Semmes raider, *Alabama* (see Chapter 7, November 2003 for more details). Here is Bell's report of Osborn's account:

I have spent the evening . . . listening to yarns from the mouth of Capt. Abraham Osborne. . . I really shall have to try and put down . . . some of his stories, but they will lack the charm of sparkling eye and expressive gesture, and the quaint utterances of a seafaring man. If I could copy his language—"My stars!"—would be sprinkled through the whole story. . .

"Did you ever see the *Alabama*, Captain?"

"My stars! – did I ever see the *Alabama*? I was took by her! My ship was the first prize she made . . ."

Captain Osborn then described in detail how the *Alabama* had sent armed men aboard the *Ocmulgee*, killed his pet dog, ordered him and his crew to leave the ship and then set her afire. Osborn, in irons aboard the *Alabama*, watched her burn. The men were unharmed and soon set ashore on the Azores.

Osborn makes no mention of having any previous acquaintance with Semmes, as the traditional Vineyard version of the story has it. That tale, famous in Osborn family legend, states that before the war Captain Semmes had often been a guest in the Edgartown inn operated by Abraham's father, also Abraham, while an inspector in the federal lighthouse service. On his visits, the story goes, he stayed with the Osborns. The late Joseph Chase Allen, beloved raconteur of history, further embellished the story in *Tales and Trails of Martha's Vineyard*:

By some strange freak of fate, the first ship that he [Semmes] captured and sank was commanded by the brother of the girl to whom he had been engaged and with whom he had often broken bread.

In recounting the *Alabama* story to Bell, Osborn made no mention of such acquaintance. Yet, the tale has become as much a part of Vineyard history as the one about the three girls in Holmes Hole who, during the Revolution, blew up the town's Liberty Pole rather than have it taken by British sailors to replace a broken spar on their warship. Such tales survive because they are far more interesting than the truth.

Bell stayed in Edgartown and Vineyard Haven, going to Cottage City only to pick up telegrams that were brought there from the mainland by steamer when the telegraph line was out of service, as it often was. Cottage City had little interest for him. It had no deaf mutes nor any historical records in its town hall. In fact, being newly separated from Edgartown, it didn't even have a town hall. So Bell probably wasn't aware of its continuing problem with "sanitaries." He never mentioned it in his letters.

The only solution to the contaminated-water problem

would require the village to prohibit the use of wells in congested areas and provide the cottages with safe running water. As with anything that would raise taxes, the proposal met opposition. Running water would bring those new-fangled flush toilets and that meant sewers would be needed. The water company was privately financed, but sewers would require tax money. The *Herald* didn't seem concerned:

The saving of the labor at the pump handle; the comforts of a bath-room and water closet; the improved and ever verdant lawns and beautiful flower beds; the faculty for putting out incipient fires; the certainty of being able to check a conflagration; and the great reduction . . . in insurance rates are among the advantages to be gained by the introduction of pure running water.

Early in 1890, the privately owned Cottage City Water Company built its pumping station on the small fresh-water pond at the head of the Lagoon. That water was safe to drink. It would be pumped into a standpipe by a steam-driven pump and from there piped into town.

The company hired a gang of Portuguese laborers from off-Island to help build the pumping station. As the *Martha's Vineyard Herald* reported, a problem soon developed:

On Thursday of last week [April 10, 1890] about twenty of our Portuguese laborers were put to work by Superintendent Parks at the pumping station. They worked until Saturday morning at 9 o'clock when Joe Smith, their interpreter, demanded an increase of pay from \$1.35 to \$1.50 a day.

They were informed that their gang of 50 experienced workmen were paid \$1.35 and if they chose to continue at that rate they would have steady work and more of their companions would be employed this week. They positively declined and the company at once cabled for 40 more laborers.

The strikers were incensed and assembled at the Allen cottage, Lagoon Heights, to discuss the matter. Presently, they saw three Italians approaching, who had been sent as helpers to keep the masons at work until the new men telegraphed for could reach the Island. They were at once waylaid and threatened that if they went to work they would kill them.

Mr. Parks, learning the state of affairs called on the select-

men for a constable and Mr. Andrew Warren went to the spot and, explaining to the Portuguese the criminal character of their acts, soon persuaded them to quietly disperse.

This week, numerous petty depredations have occurred at night. Coils of rope for derricks, truck wheels and other implements for the work have been carried off . . . Arthur J. Barrett and John Walker were sworn in as special police officers.

The labor dispute was somehow resolved and two months later, in June 1890, the plant was ready. At exactly 8:33 a.m., on a lovely June day, pumping began. Outside the handsome castle-like building, a group of men and women gathered to celebrate. The *Boston Advertiser* took notice:

Beech Grove Spring Water [is] piped into every part of the community. The hydrant service for fire purposes is adequate to any possible demand. Rejoicing is universal over the improvement.

The town may have been rejoicing, but it waited until the end of the summer to celebrate. Three days of parades, band concerts, fireworks and a gala ball marked the memorable occasion. Over 600 children, "all dressed in white," attended "Children's Day" in the Casino (formerly the skating rink). At last, Cottage City was rid of the threat of contaminated water.

There were other reasons for celebration. Cottage City was the place to be, the Island's fun place. A wooden "toboggan slide" had been built near the skating rink in 1887. It was an immense structure, 40 feet high at its start, 1000 feet long and 8 feet wide. It cost \$1000 to build. We know nothing about who financed it or how the "toboggans" operated. There is one mention of "roller" sleds, so they must have had wheels. How they were steered or their fast descent controlled, we don't know. It seems mighty dangerous.

In any case, the slide didn't last long. No doubt, it went up in flames five years later in 1892 along with the skating rink and the Sea View House. It is shown standing next to the rink in a "Bird's Eye View" of Cottage City published in 1890.

There was a new steamer, the *Gay Head*. The Highlands wharf in Cottage City had been extended into deeper water to accommodate her greater draft. On Highland Beach (now the

site of the East Chop Beach Club) 100 bathhouses had been built, equipped with wringers and tubs for rinsing bathing "costumes" in fresh water. There was a new pavilion with a refreshment stand, the first such on Highland Beach. The Highlands company had also extended its street railway line from the campground down Lake Avenue, along Sea View Avenue to Waban Park and added four cars to handle the expected increase in business.

Booming Cottage City needed more electricity and to provide it a new company, the Electric Light and Power Company, was formed to replace the unreliable, inadequate power plant in Hiawatha Park. It promised electric power for both incandescent and arc lights in the whole town plus power for a street railway it planned to build. The generating plant would be at Eastville and it would, the company hoped, sell power to Vineyard Haven as well to Cottage City. Electricity would flow all year, unlike the seasonal supply furnished by the original company.

The planned electric railway would run between Cottage City and Vineyard Haven. There would be no more horse-drawn cars. Horses were not only too slow, they were too expensive, the company said. A horse that was bought in the spring for \$85, could be sold for only \$17 at the end of the season. The company advertised for investors to buy \$60,000 of its stock. The *Herald* was all for the plan, urging the company to extend its tracks to Edgartown.

But the electric cars never made it to Edgartown. There was even trouble getting them to Vineyard Haven. The problem was the drawbridge at the Lagoon opening. Not only was the bridge not sturdy enough to support the car, but there was trouble with the overhead trolley wire. The cars ran only as far as the bridge where the riders got off and boarded a "barge" that carried them across the harbor to Vineyard Haven. The barge service operated for one season (trains ran only in summer). It isn't clear if the bridge problem was ever solved. Even in the early 1900s, passengers walked across the bridge and boarded a waiting trolley on the other side to finish their trip to Vineyard Haven.

The sudden move to "go electric" created confusion, especially around Eastville where the power plant was located. Five different companies were stringing overhead wires, some even putting up their own poles along the same street. One company had put its poles in the middle of the road. Wires crossed and re-crossed; short circuits were the result. A hearing was called by the Cottage City selectmen in July 1895 to settle the matter. Attending were representatives from the street railroad (which had an overhead wire for its trolley), the electric company (its wire carried electricity for lights), the Federal Government (its telephone line connected the Island's light-houses), the Bell Telephone Company (it had come to the Island in 1891), and a wire for a second telephone company that was owned by Dr. C. F. Lane (it had just started operating).

During the long and argumentative hearing, little was resolved. All five organizations agreed to try to work out a solution. We don't know how the matter was finally resolved.

There were no such tangled wires in the other towns. Edgartown didn't get its first electric light until August 1894 when one light was installed in Shute's store on Main Street. It never did get an electric trolley. Its first telephone had come in 1882, when one "public" phone was installed in the railroad station on upper Main Street and another in a store downtown. Nor did Gay Head and Chilmark have problems with tangled wires. Most of Gay Head didn't get electricity until the end of World War II, sixty years later. It took even longer to get electricity to the lighthouse. That only came after Mrs. Frank Grieder, wife of the Gay Head lighthouse keeper, wrote to President Harry S. Truman when the nation exploded two atomic bombs ending World War II. In a conversation with the present author in 1980, she said:

I wrote to President Truman saying it was a disgrace that the lighthouse keeper on Gay Head still didn't have electricity and running water in a country that could make an atomic bomb!

She received word that electricity would be coming, but it took another seven years before it arrived.

It would have come much sooner if the plans of the Mar-

tha's Vineyard Electric Railway had materialized. In December 1891, a group of investors thought an electric railway running from Cottage City to Gay Head through North Tisbury and Menemsha would be profitable. It offered \$200,000 in stock to the public. The several towns were enthusiastic. Heading the company were five men: C. H. Emerson of South Framingham; G. M. Clough of Somerville; Charles Strahan of Cottage City, owner of the *Martha's Vineyard Herald*; plus Henry L. Whiting and M. F. Cummings, both of Tisbury. The company's success seemed so certain that when G. W. Eldridge published his detailed map of the Vineyard in 1892, the route of the railway was on it, labeled "Proposed Railway." When a second edition of the map came out twenty years later, the electric railway was still shown, still "Proposed."

It was, of course, never built.

The quiet village of West Tisbury in the center of the Island had been spared all the confusion that came with progress. It enjoyed its status. Although not officially named West Tisbury, it began using that name some time between 1868 and 1880. The town was officially Tisbury, its eastern part being called Vineyard Haven. In public talk, there was no Tisbury, no East Tisbury, only a West Tisbury.

That original village considered itself quite separate from Vineyard Haven, not only in geography but in character. The differences had become so marked that on the last day of 1884, a petition was presented to the Tisbury selectmen asking that the old village be separated from Vineyard Haven.

It was signed by ten leading citizens of West Tisbury. Their request was unlike the earlier Island secession movement in which young Cottage City petitioned for separation from old Edgartown. In this case, the old village, West Tisbury, was asking to be separated from its child, Vineyard Haven.

A public meeting was held in mid-January 1890 to discuss what action to take. Those favoring division were led by Henry L. Whiting. Opposing were Rodolphus Crocker, the harness maker, and several others from Vineyard Haven. West Tisbury's argument was a familiar one: its residents were paying higher taxes and getting little in return. And it would get

worse, they said. Fast-growing Vineyard Haven would soon demand more fire equipment and schools, while the smaller West Tisbury would be hopelessly outvoted in town meetings.

The meeting was noisy and getting nowhere. There was rancor on both sides. Exchanges were heated, often unpleasant. At a pause in the debate, one weary citizen from Vineyard Haven stood up and offered a motion:

Mr. [Willis] Howes moved to adjourn, which was carried, and everybody went home apparently satisfied that nothing was done.

But the debate did not stop with the meeting. Unhappy with the lack of a decision, the West Tisbury citizens sent a petition to the state legislature calling for a hearing. In February 1892, several days of hearings took place in the State House. The *Martha's Vineyard Herald*, in favor of division, reported that the lawyer for West Tisbury, former New Bedford Mayor Walter Clifford, started off,

. . . with consummate skill and cleverly wrested some of the best verbal weapons from the commander of the Vineyard Haven forces, Attorney Marcus B. B. Swift of Fall River . . . [He argued] it is a case for a division of a town that fell outside the lines of those that had previously been considered . . . It is not the case of a young offshoot of an old town, grown tired of the conservatism and old-fogyishness of its parent and seeking to control its own affairs; but it is an appeal on the part of a parent for protection. . . [from an] offspring . . . laying on her expenses for development and improvement . . . from which she derives no appreciable benefits. It is an appeal on behalf of a farming people to be set off from a people whose tendencies are "citified," and to be relieved from . . . the taxes which were perfectly proper for a seaport and summer resort, but were a heavy burden on farmers and fishers . . .

Attorney Clifford called as his first witness, William J. Rotch, who pointed out that Vineyard Haven's larger population, 1100, twice West Tisbury's 555, meant that the old village had little control over how its tax money was spent.

The main opposition witness was Rodolphus W. Crocker, owner of the Island's largest business, the harness factory, and

Vineyard Haven's political "boss." He had been for the division at first, but when he learned that most people in town opposed it, he changed his mind. Asked what he thought was behind the petition, he said it was inspired by the politicians in Edgartown who saw Tisbury as threatening their control of the county. As Vineyard Haven grew, he said, Edgartown "sought to retain its prestige by securing a division of Tisbury."

Witnesses on both sides mentioned politics so often that at one point the chairman, Senator John R. Thayer of Worcester, interjected:

Is there anything but politics on that Island?

Allen Look of West Tisbury stated the case for the separation of the two settlements very clearly:

Formerly a man who owned 300 acres in West Tisbury was regarded as prosperous and influential . . . Now, a man who owns 300 acres is to be pitied. He is burdened with the support of a watering place.

Capt. William M. Randall of Vineyard Haven, a Democrat, said that except for the political ring's opposition, everybody in Vineyard Haven was for division:

The Republican party are the ones who do not want division. . . Since the division question has come up, the lines between the two old parties have been somewhat obliterated . . . we Democrats have to vote for a Prohibitionist.

A most informative witness for division was Prof. Nathaniel Shaler of Harvard. A Kentuckian, he had known the Vineyard for more than 30 years and had "quickly acquired an affection for the Island and its people":

A number of years ago I acquired considerable land in what is known as the North Tisbury section to use as a playground for my second childhood. It consists of 24 or 26 abandoned farms. And they were really abandoned. . . the houses were unoccupied and dilapidated. Of some two score houses only eight were worth saving. . .

In this case, the division is one by nature. . . The people at the port [Vineyard Haven] are extremely prosperous, make money easily and can afford to pay large taxes. After you leave

the town . . . you pass through waste and desolation until you get to . . . North Tisbury. This section is rendered hopelessly sterile by nature. I know that, for I bought a tract at \$1 an acre . . . but found I could make no use of it whatever. . .

You cannot expect to reconcile a people divided by a diversity of interests and by nature and distance. On the one hand are a people who make money easily and spend generously, and on the other a people who can only live by the exercise of the greatest thrift. In view of these facts, I have come to the conclusion that a separation is essential.

The bill to divide the town of Tisbury passed the state legislature on April 28, 1892, and was signed by the governor the same day. Two days later, the village celebrated:

A great demonstration was held and . . . nearly all the dwelling houses and the trading emporiums were brilliantly illuminated. Sky-rockets, Roman candles, etc., were in abundance on Wilton Terrace. . .

At about 8 p.m. a procession of over one hundred people formed near Geo. G. Gifford's store, and headed by a fife and drum corps, R. G. Shute of Edgartown, leader, with torchlights and fish-horns, marched through the principal streets. At about 9 p.m., it proceeded to Agricultural Hall, where a bountiful repast had been prepared by the ladies, who had neatly and abundantly provided four large tables (three on the main floor and one on the platform) with delicious collation.

Taking part was a delegation from Gay Head:

It was most weird and spectral to see the descendants of the famous Pokanoket tribe of red men who had journeyed from Gay Head Saturday evening to West Tisbury, as they danced amid the flaming glare of torches and with enthusiastic whoops around the hanging effigy of Cape Cod's senator [Senator Simpkins had opposed passage].

The "new" village of West Tisbury could now officially use the name it had been using for years. Vineyard Haven was now Tisbury, beginning a confusing system of names that continues into the 21st Century. Road signs point to a place called Vineyard Haven, but you never enter it. When you get there, a sign says you are entering Tisbury, although you had no desire to go there. You wanted to go to Vineyard Haven, but there is

no town by that name.

Similar confusion now exists over Aquinnah and Gay Head. Visitors want to go to Gay Head, but when they get there they discover they are "Entering Aquinnah."

When you leave West Tisbury, heading up-Island (another mysterious term understood only by Islanders), you pass a sign saying you are "Entering Chilmark," just beyond the old Agricultural Hall. If you are driving on the right-hand side of the road, as most of us do, you are not entering Chilmark but are still in West Tisbury for another mile. The town line runs down the center of the highway until Nab's Corner.

During the 1880s, a movement to get rid of the name "Cottage City" began. In the first place, proponents said, it was not a city, it was only a town. Furthermore, residents did not like to be thought of as "cottagers," living in flimsy summer houses. It was the most modern town on the Island, leading all others in electricity, telephones and running water. The name Cottage City conjured up images of a campground. It had to be changed. The steamboat company didn't sell tickets to Cottage City. Porters had no luggage tags with Cottage City printed on them. Everybody called the place, Oak Bluffs. That's what its name should be.

It was a long struggle. Demand for a change started in 1884, but it didn't come about until twenty-three years later. By then, 1907, only the people in the post office were still using the name Cottage City.

During all those years, the Island's best known person was probably Nancy Luce, who lived in West Tisbury. On their way to Gay Head (now Aquinnah), sightseeing carriages regularly stopped at her home on New Lane. Miss Nancy was an eccentric lady who had become the Island's first resident celebrity and the first person, male or female, to earn a living by writing and painting. Truly the Island's first "artist," she was never thought of that way, either by visitors or natives. To all, she was "that crazy hen woman," often an object of pity and sometimes of scorn. But as the years have passed, she is being seen as a tormented woman of unusual imagination and talent.

The Society has a few of her original works in its archives

and no one can examine them without admiration. It is appropriate that we record here some of the torment she endured.

She was especially abused during the week of the Agricultural Fair in West Tisbury, as she lived only a mile or so from the fairground. It is shocking that such behavior went unpunished by the authorities. Here are a few news items from the *Cottage City Star* during the final ten years of her life. She was then in her 70s:

Oct. 20, 1881. Miss Nancy Luce was visited by several parties during the fair. Report says she showed her bravery when persecuted by some of the parties by firing off a pistol, loaded with powder. One unlucky swain received the flash too near his face.

Feb. 23, 1882. Miss Nancy Luce is fine. Those noisy visitors have other things to do, giving her poor, sick head a chance to rest.

April 27, 1882. Nancy Luce has bought an old single-barreled pistol to drive off young men who annoy her at times in the summer. She will load it with much flash powder, but no shot.

Oct. 26, 1882. Miss Nancy Luce, a maiden lady who lives alone, was visited recently by two unknown young men and she thought it best to defend herself by showing a pistol. They wrested it from her hands and her cries aroused a neighbor, who went to her assistance. She now has a new pistol and claims she has a right to defend herself. During the last day of the Agricultural Fair, twenty carriage loads of people visited her. Some of them carried their fun a little too far by shutting their hostess in a closet, but they made up with her by purchasing a large number of her books.

Feb. 8, 1883. Miss Nancy Luce is in her usual health and has not much been troubled by "her tormenters" of late; but she has been very much afflicted by the death of one of her neighbors, one she considered her best friend. Her grief has been so great that she thought it best to don the habiliments of mourning.

May 23, 1883. Miss Nancy Luce is enjoying better health. She has not been tormented of late by those wild, rattle-headed young people that at times have so afflicted her.

Nancy Luce died in April 1890 at 79 years. She had suffered a small paralytic stroke in 1882 and had become so feeble

that she no longer was able to keep her hens or her cow and depended upon a neighbor to bring milk to her each day. Bread soaked in warm milk was her basic food. One day, the neighbor found her lying on the floor of her small house, conscious but unable to get up. Doctor Luce, her doctor and friend (no relation), was summoned. Within a few hours, she was unconscious and by morning she was dead. Her funeral was held in the Baptist church near her house on Wednesday, April 9, 1890. It would be interesting to know who attended and what was said about her life.

An obituary in the *Martha's Vineyard Herald* stressed her eccentric nature, describing the marble tombstones she had bought for each of her three favorite hens (these stones are on display at the Society). Here are excerpts from the obituary:

At one time she was an object of very great interest, and in the summer the "foreigners from the Camp Ground," as Nancy called the summer visitors, came in large numbers to see her, hear her talk, and to buy her books and photographs. . . . Of late years her visitors have been very few, comparatively, and she sold such a small quantity of books she feared she should have to be supported by the town, but declared she would not go on the town, but would lie down and die if she could prevent it in no other way. . . . [Nancy had written to William Rotch, another friend and adviser: "I will not be on the town. I will not be under no one, I will pitch down on ground and die first."]

A small amount of money was found in the house, quite a lot of postage stamps, and some provisions. Two loaded pistols, cocked and capped, were also found. The neighbors were very kind to her, and visited her often to see that she did not suffer for anything. A two months' supply of milk had been paid for in advance.

With Nancy's death, the village of West Tisbury lost its tourist attraction. And the Island lost a remarkable woman who deserved a more sympathetic treatment from all.

Her memory soon faded, overwhelmed by events that crowded into the last decade of the 19th Century. Most of them have been described in this chapter. When the decade ended, an event of enormous significance took place. It was in August

1900, the first summer of the new century. The writer for the *Vineyard Gazette* reported it as though it was merely the latest fashion. Little could he know what was beginning:

Edgartown is in the swim with the other resorts. The horseless carriage is here. The first to appear is the locomobile of Mr. Elmer J. Bliss, president of the Regal Shoe Company, who brought this vehicle down from Boston Saturday night. Mr. Bliss had his locomobile out on Sunday and it worked very satisfactory on our streets.

Soon more such "locomobiles" arrived — and more — and more — through the years that followed, bringing changes that nobody could have predicted. Nothing else ever had the impact of the "horseless carriage." The Island would never be the same.

(To be continued.)

When that calls on me, mu-
 st come with good hearts, ten-
 der feelings, speak the truth,
 to my face, & behind my
 back, but gross sinners
 must keep away.
 Strive for the love of God in
 your hearts.

Nancy Luce.

1965

Final paragraph of Nancy Luce's hand-printed and bound booklet entitled "Sickness, Etc." She was in considerable pain at the time.

William Worth Pease (1847-1892): The Start of a Dynasty's Decline

IN THE 1800S, the Peases were the Island's most influential family. They were, it seemed, on the way to becoming a dynasty. Sired by brothers Isaiah and Jeremiah Pease was an assemblage unequaled in Island history. Consider the list: Richard L. Pease, historian and genealogist (see p.181), son of Isaiah, the Island's longest-serving sheriff; Joseph Thaxter Pease, president of the Island's first national bank; Jeremiah Pease Jr., Edgartown's political leader for years; Cyrus Pease, portrait artist and U. S. Revenue Service officer; and his twin brother, William Cooke Pease, famed pioneer captain of the Revenue Service. These four men were sons of Jeremiah, founder of the camp ground and a devout Methodist leader. Sister Isabelle married Capt Littleton Wimpenny, master in the Star Line of merchant ships.

William Worth Pease, son of Captain William, had the sad fate of being forerunner in the family decline. He was a weak shadow of those who had come before him.

The Society has a brief diary that William kept in 1866-67. It describes the funeral of his father, Captain Pease, who died from typhoid fever in Charleston, S. C., on December 31, 1865, while commander of the Revenue Cutter, Kewanee. Son William briefly served in the Revenue Service as a sailor, never becoming an officer, although he had hopes of doing so.

His diary shows why. He lacked the intelligence, the energy, the focus, of his illustrious ancestors. The journal, primitive in style and in content, is a sad testament to the decline of the most accomplished family in Island history.

But it does provide important details of Island life during those two years, such as the wreck of the vessel *Christiana* off Chappaquiddick in which only one man survived. It describes the delay in rescuing that survivor, Charles Tallman of Osterville. He had clung to the rigging of the sunken vessel in freezing temperatures for several days before being saved, losing his fingers and feet to the cold. The crippled Tallman appealed to residents of Oak Bluffs for help and raised enough money to build an octagonal peanut stand in which he sold pictures of himself along with the nuts. The building, much modified, still stands, a souvenir shop next to the Flying Horses.

Also in the diary notebook are a number of other items written by William that reinforce the above assessment.

William was a poor speller, as you will see. The text has not been corrected; some punctuation was added for clarity. Entries describing only weather have been deleted. The diarist skips long periods between entries at times and often does not provide precise dates. We have added a few for clarification.

Jan. 10, 1866: Snow on the ground. No snow falling. Windy. Blowing strong. Snow lying in banks. Vessles frozen into the Ice. The Cutter *Dobbin* frozen in so no boat can leave her without cutting through the Ice. Vessel reported ashore on Hawses Shoal. Six men in the riggin, colors half mast, union down and sunk as seen from Sampsons hill Chappie Chooodic [sic] Sun out towards noon. moderates a little. Reported at 4 o'clock, five of the men that were on the vessels riggin were not to be seen this afternoon, two on the mast – this afternoon.

Capt. Usher went down to the beach to see if he could do any thing for the men. they launched the life boat but could not manage her so they had to give it up for a bad job.

Wednesday Jan 11th 1866. Pleasant weather in the morning, wind Still blowing hard. Reported this afternoon that a boat had been manned with men from some of the vessels in the harbor and gone out to the vessel on Hawses Shoal to see if any of the men that were seen the other day were on the vessels mast yet and if so to see if any of them were alive. no news from the boat yet. dark but Stars out. Wind gone down at night. . . Boat arrived at night could not get to the vessel. Sea to high.

Thursday Jan 12th, 1866. Disaster of the Schooner Christiana.. Pleasant weather in the morning, Sun Out. Killed a Loon. One of the men from that vessel was taken off alive, his hands and feet were frozen badly. The Capt. died last night lashed in the riggin. They brought her flag ashore and I made out her Name. her Name was *Christianna* of Falmouth, Main. The *Range* Capt. Chadwick will bring the other two. Cutter gone out. Ice broke up. 3 o'clock *Range* arrived with the other two men. the Capt. was hanging over the spring Stay, doubled all up. they found \$7.00 in one of the mens Pockets, in the others \$4.00 and a half a Sovereign. the man that the whale boat took off alive was named Tallman, brother-in-law to the Baptist

minister at Holmes Hole. he said that he Shook hands with one of the men to Jump Overboard and end their Sufferings but the man backed Out and he Said that he told him that he would hang on as long as he could.

Friday Jan 13 1866. Expected Fathers remains but they did not arrive. mother had two beautiful letters from Lieut. Irish of the *Kewanee* at Charleston, S. Ca.

Saturday 14 1866. . . floating ice passing by the Cutter. . . at 4 o'clock Cutter *Dobbin* went out to go to New Bedford to get Father's remains but she did not get any farther than Holmes Hole and the Capt. of the *Dobbin* went on board of the Cutter *Miami* which was then lying in port at Holmes Hole and she steamed up and went to New Bedford. Cutter expected at 12.

Sunday 15th 1866. Fathers remains arrived this afternoon in the cutter *Miami*. The funeral was to have taken place this afternoon but it was thought best to put it off until tomorrow at 2 o'clock. There was a great display of friend Ship showed to his remains, the Cutters fired minoret guns and the remains was brought ashore and carried to the house and left there. Fathers effects arrived the same time the body arrived.

Monday 16th 1866. Father was buried today at 2 o'clock. a great many at the funeral. the masters and Officers of the Cutters and Sailors and a good many citizens were at the funeral. minoret was fired from the Cutters.

Tuesday Jan 17th 1866. . . Cutter *Miami* gone out. Cutter *Dobbin* in port. 1 Box arrived today from Charleston, S.C.

Wednesday 18. 1866. Cold and bleak. . . Cutter *Dobbin* gone out. Mother had a letter from the Rev. W. B. Yates of Charleston, S. C. Father went to his Bethel Sundays. the last intelligent words uttered were: "Blessed are the Righteous." These few lines were from a letter written by the Rev. W. B. Yates. I had a very good letter from Miss Sara C. Campfield of Newport R. Island.

Thursday Jan 18th 1866. Capt. George Duncans child died this morning between 4 and five o'clock. It was a Girl. She was about 4 years and a half old. She died with a fever. Received News of Uncle Littleton's death.¹ he broke his leg on his

¹ Littleton Wimpenny was his uncle, married to Isabelle Pease, his father's sister.

passage out to New Orleans. News came by the Fery Hellen Aguster [Helen Augusta] of Tisbury. Fathers Funeral expenses were \$4.00 Casket cost \$1.65². . . Jeremiah opened one of the Boxes that contained Fathers things and took out his gold watch and chain and \$90 in Gold and two Gold rings.

Friday Jan 20, 1866. Boxes opened and things taken out and hung up in the office to be aired. . . Went to my Rabbit trap but found nothing in it. It was sprung and full of Ice. Took a gun with me, did not Shoot anything, nothing to shoot at.

Saturday Jan 21 1866. . . Cyrus came last night and [illegible] came the same time. Jeremiah recieved a letter from Mr. Newton of Newport R.I. about Father. Horse and carriage backed off of the wharf at Holmes Hole at night and horse and carriage and man all lost. man found at last report Carriage nor horse not found.

Sunday Jan 22, 1866. Cold this morning. Opened the Office to air it. took out four bunches of cigars that belonged to Father. took Out Fathers Gun and Pistol yesterday. . . Cold.

Monday Jan 23, 1866. Cold and unpleasant. Vessle ashore on the South beach. Capt. dead. died four days ago, mate run the vessle ashore on purpose. Wagon and horse found that was backed overboard at Holmes Hole. Man found down to the Camp meeting wharf. Vessle high and dry. Pirates taken possession of her, meaning the Dunhams,³ men all saved. loaded with timber and brick.

Tuesday Jan. 24. The Dunhams unloading the vessle on the South beach. Deck load off. Aunt Isabell recieved a letter from New York Saying that the boddy of Uncle Lit would be inbalmed and sent home in the *Empire State*, remains expected in N. B. [New Bedford] Saturday. Pleasant tonight Stars Out. . . Cutter gone Out. . . to Homes Hole. Isabell recieves a letter from the Directors of the Star line.⁴ Resolutions wer passed. Flags [on ships] to be half mast for the usual length of time.

² These costs seem impossibly low, but that is what he wrote, except that there is no decimal point in the casket cost. He wrote \$165. But clearly \$4.00 for total expense.

³ The Dunhams were "wreckers," so-called because they were paid to unload wrecked vessels, sometimes refloating them. Wreckers were often accused of stealing some of what they found on board, hence his pejorative term, "pirates."

⁴ Littleton was captain of one of the Star Line's merchant vessels.

Wednesday Jan 25, 1866. Cold. not much wind. Cutter arrived. that mans feet [Tallman's] that the Drs thought would haft to be cut off was not cut off as reported. Dr. Mabery went up to Holmes Hole to see him said that he had feelin in his toes and that he should not cut off his feet [later they had to be amputated]. . . Cold tonight. wind breezing up. Stars out.

Monday, Feb. 4th. Rain and wind clear at noon and quite pleasant night. . . Cutter Active came in to day. H. A. Kenyon Capt., Cyrus W. Pease 1st Leiut. . . Cyrus gave me a pipe to day. Wrote a letter to Ellen Ryan Hunter [?].

Feb. 5th. Pleasant Sun Out. Drew Out \$1.00 to pay for fixing watch. went on board of the Active.

Friday 15th. .went with Capt Fengan & brother a fishing. did not get any, to cold for them. had an Introduction to Mr. Charlton, 3rd Lieut of Rev. Cutter Active.

Sunday, Nov. 17, 1867 . . Mary Bell was Married to night to Eric Gabrielson in the Methodist Church. Cutter fired two Guns in honor of the Marriage. One for Eric and One for Bell.⁵

Monday 18th. Cold wind N.W. Saw Phebe som and had a long talk about old times was with her all day today. bought a pr of gloves at J. H. Monroes. Price \$1.25 (so the world goes).

Tuesday 19th 1867. Good Skating. went part way home with Phebe Ann had good time, talked about Old Times. Dance to night at the Hall got up by Cpts of Coasters in the Harbor. Good Times for them I suppose, poor fun for me. (that's so).

Wednesday March 10th. wind S.W., blowing hard. Went to see Phebe Ann but when I came back could not launch my boat. I tried it three or four times but she filled every time.⁶

Played Croquett with Phebe Ann & Sams wife. I had to haul the boat up again and leave her there and come over in the ferry boat. . . Had a picture taken for Phebe Ann, gave it to her today. (so ends this day)

Sunday, Nov. 24. Pleasant Sun Out. went to meeting on

⁵ Mary Belle Wimpenny was his cousin, daughter of Littleton. Eric was a lieutenant in U. S. Revenue Service, stationed in New Haven.

⁶ His girl friend Phoebe Ann lived on Chappaquiddick and he went over in his boat. He was 20 years old at the time. They didn't marry. He married Agnes Chewen three years later.

Sampsons Hill. Darkey preached. 3 P.M. (So ends this day)

Tuesday 17, Dec. 1867. Phebe Ann went hom. had a tough time a going, Snow Knee deep in some places.

Tuesday 24, Dec. 1867. Pleasant Sun Out. . . went to See Phebe Ann today. Played Croquett. Parties that played: Phebe Ann & Josephene Huxford, Eliza A. Huxford & myself. Got home at 20 m. past 10. had to get a boat out of One of the boat houses on the point. . . (So ends this day).

Wednesday 25th, 67. Pleasant. clear Sun Out. 12 noon went to Cape Pogue with Uncle John and Ira Darrow and brought the boat back again alone.⁷

On same page as the final entries, but written much later: "Grand Father Died Sept 3, 70, Burried Tuesday the 5th. (Mother's Father)." He was Capt. Valentine Pease, master of the whaler *Acusnet* on which author Herman Melville sailed.

During 1870, William was a sailor on the Revenue Cutter *Active*, Uncle Cyrus was her first officer. He listed: "Money Sent to Mother During the year 1870 During my time in Cutter *Active*." The amounts add up to a total of \$56.

In the book is a copy of a letter he sent from New Bedford to his grandmother, Serena Pease, in Edgartown on February 26, 1871, asking her if Uncle Joseph or Uncle Cyrus will lend him \$150 or \$200 so he can buy a horse. He needs it because "I am anxious to be adoining something to help the bussiness along." He was selling wood and coal in New Bedford.

There is a copy of letter he wrote to Mr. Macy, Newport, R. I., on Feb. 26, 1871. He wants to be appointed Lieutenant in the Revenue Service and asks Mr. Macy to "inform me who it is best to apply to."

Written in New Bedford, Feb. 22, 1871, is this: "Death of Jigs -- \$200.00 Lost." He wrote: "Lost my Horse. he died about half past three. he had the Stoppage. he weighed 1240 lbs. he was a good faithful horse. he has gone to rest. he was a real Christain if ever there was one. he was faithful to the last."⁸

⁷ No mention of Christmas. That celebration would soon become popular.

⁸ Horses were not cheap transportation. It takes him about four months to earn \$200 He paid 20 cents an hour, \$2. for a ten-hour day, six days a week.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Student | \$25 |
| Individual | \$45 |
| (Does not include spouse) | |
| Family | \$60 |
| Sustaining | \$100 |
| Organization/Business | \$150 |
| Patron | \$250 |
| Benefactor | \$500 |
| President's Circle | \$1000 |

Printed at daRosa's in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts.

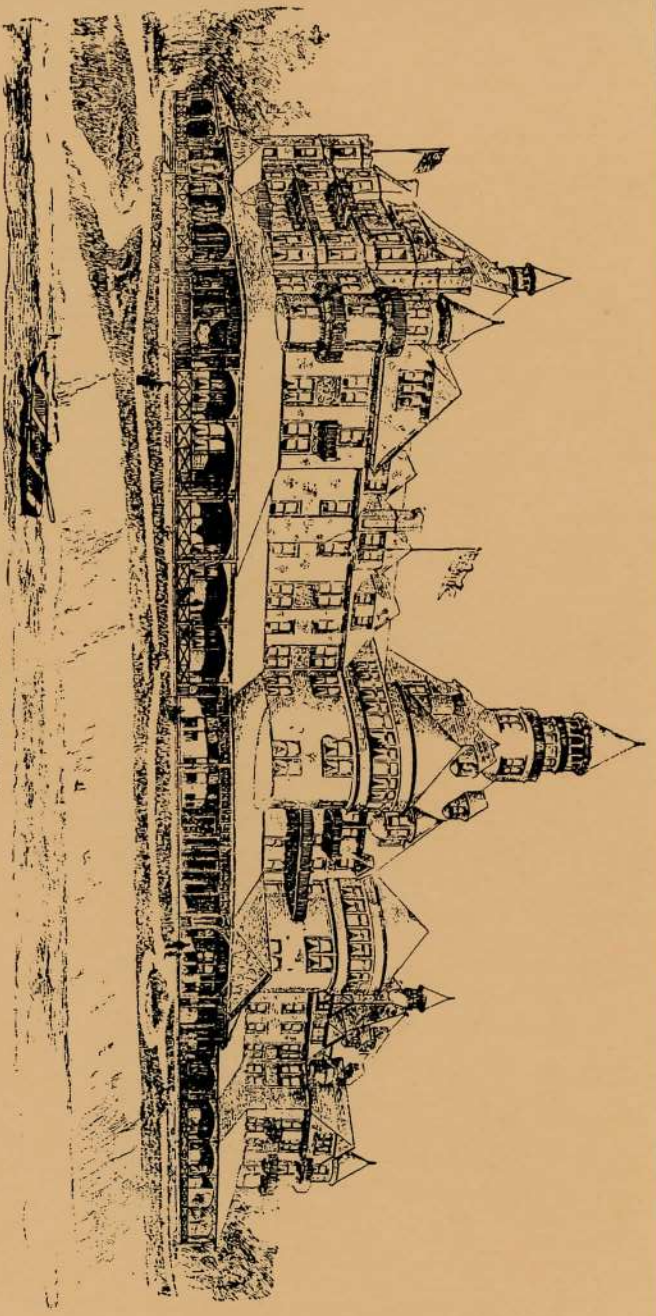
TWO VINEYARD CELEBRITIES OF THE LATE 1800s



Miss Nancy Luce of West
Tisbury (see p.195).



Charles S. Tallman of
Oak Bluffs (see p.200).



THE SEA VIEW, COTTAGE CITY, MASS.

Colonel Hart, a Washington D. C. hotel owner, also owned the Sea View in Cottage City when it was destroyed by fire in 1892 (see p. 161). He planned to replace it with this monster near the site of the old hotel. Fortunately, it was never built.