

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



# THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 46, NOS. 2 & 3

NOV. 2004 & FEB. 2005



*Popular on postcards, the Naushon, last of the "Great White Fleet" of the 20s, was handsome, but impractical in the era of automobiles.*

*Enclaves, the Lindberghs, Minorities, World War II & the Change*

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

Chapter Eleven  
(Conclusion)

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

**In Memoriam:**  
**John M. Morgan**  
1940 — 2004

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#### EXPLANATION AND APOLOGY

The editor would like to explain to members his failure to publish the November 2004 issue on schedule.

First, he was ill for nearly a month during the time it should have been in the works. Nothing serious, but enough to keep him away from his work.

Second, the research required for the final chapter of the long series of Vineyard history was so overwhelming that it could not be completed in time for publication in November. This forced him to combine the November and the February 2005 *Intelligencers* in this enlarged issue.

He regrets that he had to do this and hopes that members will understand.

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Vol. 46, Nos. 2 & 3    © 2005 M.V.H.S.    Nov. 2004 & Feb. 2005

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Editor: Arthur R. Railton  
Founding Editor: Gale Huntington (1959-1977)

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

(Chapter Eleven)

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

*Enclaves, the Lindberghs, Minorities, World War II & the Change*

BEFORE 1900, the Vineyard, like much of New England, was homogeneous. Its inhabitants were mostly white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant (the acronym WASP labeled them years later). Some Catholics, Portuguese mostly, had settled on the Island, but they were few. By 1880, there were enough of them to build a Catholic church in Oak Bluffs. It was only a "mission church," with no priest in residence. One came over from New Bedford to conduct services two or three times a month. Not until 1903 could the congregation afford a full-time pastor.

Outside Oak Bluffs, there was less diversity, if any at all. Howard Andrews of Portuguese ancestry and living in Edgartown, recalled the 1920s:

All the Azoreans or Cape Verdeans lived over by the old Catholic church, down by Lake Street in Oak Bluffs. . . here in Edgartown there were no colored. There were Indians over in Chappaquiddick, Marian Harding. . . and her mother and her relatives [among them]. . . And no Jews, the only one was "Buzzy" Hall's father [Alfred Hall]. If you were Jewish and wanted to rent a room at the Harborside, they wouldn't rent it to you. . . I remember as plain as day when you couldn't rent a room in Edgartown if you were Jewish. Colored people just never tried. . . There was only the Open Door Club [on Cooke Street] for the colored servants.

But changes were on the way. With the arrival of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the nation began taking on a new complexion. Twenty million immigrants, most of them Europeans, arrived during the early years of the century, an average of one million a year. Few, if any, had Martha's Vineyard as their destination.

ARTHUR R. RAILTON is editor of the *Intelligencer*. This is the final chapter of a series he began in May 2002. The Society plans to publish the complete series as a book.



Certainly not one young man, a Lithuanian Jew, who landed in New York City in 1904. Samuel Krangle had never heard of Martha's Vineyard.

Two different stories are told by family members about his migration. The first, by his son David, was given in 1991 to Nancy Hamilton during an interview she had with him for a film. The second comes from his daughter Anne in a 1995 interview with Linsey Lee, the Society's Oral History director.

Both were asked why their father had left Lithuania, then part of Czarist Russia. David said it was probably to avoid military service. The Russo-Japanese War was going on and no doubt he had expected to be called up to serve.

Anne, David's younger sister, recalls the story differently:

He was brought up [in Lithuania] – at that time it was Russia. There were bad times and the Czar had to have a scapegoat, so who do they usually pick on? . . . the Jewish people. . . . They made a curfew for Jews, they couldn't be on the streets after dark. [My father] was the oldest in the family. . . . he used to get up very early and walk in the dark to work in a bakery. . . . Cossacks on horseback were on the streets at night and if any [Jew] was on the street they stopped him. . . . this Cossack took a whip to my father, who was 15 years old. He made up his mind right then "to leave this country just as soon as I can."

He dropped out of school to work full time. It took him two years to save the two hundred dollars to come steerage to America.

Take your pick of the stories. Both agree that soon after arriving in New York, the young emigrant, unhappy with his job in a screwdriver factory, left the city and moved in with a cousin in New Bedford.

One day his cousin spotted an advertisement seeking a young man to work for the summer on a farm on Martha's Vineyard. Applicants could pick up a free ticket at the New Bedford steamboat wharf. The young man liked the offer so his cousin took him down to the wharf and put him on the steamer. The ticket had been paid for by Capt. Hiram Daggett, a retired sea captain who owned a farm in Eastville, where the hospital is now.

After arriving in New York, he changed his name to

Samuel Cronig. Daughter Anne couldn't explain why he chose that name. She told Linsey Lee:

I don't know how he ever took the name Cronig. . . . He was going to be an American. . . . so he came up with the name Samuel Cronig. . . . and all his brothers took it when he brought them over later.

Samuel liked the Vineyard. At the end of the summer of 1905, he went to work for Bodfish & Call, grocers, living in a room over the store. (Bodfish & Call later merged with two other groceries to become Smith, Bodfish & Swift, the ancestor of today's SBS). He started out working in the back of the store, bagging potatoes and similar tasks. As his English improved, he moved up and soon was delivering orders in a horse and wagon. By 1909, he had saved enough money to send for his brother, Edward.

There is confusion about the arrival dates of the Jewish families. They spoke little English and no Islander spoke Yiddish or Russian so it is not surprising that the details of their arrival were not accurately recorded. Both Samuel and Edward Cronig are in the 1910 Federal Census, listed as living in Vineyard Haven. Samuel is shown as a salesman in a grocery store, "working on own account," and Edward as an apprentice carpenter, also "working on own account," meaning not in the employ of another. The statements are confusing as there is no record of Samuel owning a store in 1910.

By 1911, Samuel had saved enough money to send for Lizzy Levany (Levine), who lived in Minsk, Russia. Samuel had met her when he worked there after dropping out of school. After she arrived, they soon married and the following year their son David was born. A second son, Carlton, was born in 1914, followed by daughter Anne in 1917. That same year, 1917, Samuel, Edward and another brother, Henry, who had emigrated in 1914, started Cronig Brothers' grocery store on Main Street in Vineyard Haven. It was a bold move for three Lithuanian Jews, speaking poor English. Their store was in competition with several long-established grocery stores on Main Street. But their dedication and their personal attention to customers soon made it a success.



Several other Lithuanian Jews, all related, came to Vineyard Haven during these years. Among them were Eudice and Yudi Brickman, the first Jewish married couple to move to the Island. In 1916, their daughter, Dorothy, became the first Jew to be born on Martha's Vineyard. Eudice Brickman's brother, Essidor Issokson, arrived from Lithuania soon after.

When Ida, an older daughter of the Brickmans, married David Levine (Lizzy's brother) in 1931, her parents bought the tiny dry-goods store owned by Mrs. H. L. Tilton and gave it to the newlyweds as a wedding present. They soon expanded it into the Vineyard Dry Goods Company.

These Jewish families had broken through the WASP barrier. They formed a tightly-knit, devout Jewish community in Vineyard Haven. Through the years, they moved from Orthodox to Conservative to Reform, always marrying within their faith. The small, dedicated group founded the town's Jewish cemetery (Eudice Brickman was the first person buried there) and the Hebrew Cultural Center, the Island's first synagogue.

They were not the only Jews on the Island. Benjamin and Bessie Hall of New Bedford had started Hall's Department Store on Main Street, Edgartown, after buying a needle and thread shop from Martha P. White in 1911. They stayed in New Bedford, where they also owned a store, sending their son, Morris, to run the one in Edgartown.

Benjamin, the patriarch, died in 1917 and widow Bessie moved into an Edgartown house she had bought from Allen Mayhew a few years before. The house on South Summer Street had been built by John A. Baylies as his home in the 1800s. Baylies also built Edgartown's three 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestant churches. The house is still owned by the family.

Bessie's two sons, Morris and Alfred, went into the army in 1918 during the Great War. The war ended before they saw action and they returned to take over the store from their mother who had been running it in their absence.

The store could not support both brothers so Alfred bought Dr. Worth's drug store at Four Corners. He also opened a real-estate office. During the 1920s, he ran a brokerage house on the store's second floor. Edgartown's wealthy male summer

residents, lounging in leather easy chairs, bought and sold stocks while Alfred posted the latest ticker-tape prices on a large blackboard.

At the end of the summer of 1929, he closed down his brokerage business as usual, selling his inventory of stocks. It was a fortuitous move. The market crashed in October.

Arthur Hillman, president of the Edgartown bank, and W. Irving Bullman of Boston soon joined Alfred to form a company that bought Edgartown's movie theater, the Elms, from Richard L. Colter. No doubt, father-in-law Chester Pease (the town's richest man) helped Alfred finance his share of the venture. Family tradition has it that an aisle seat, with the one in front of it removed, was reserved for Chester, who had a stiff leg. Within a few years, the company had bought all the Island's movie theaters.

Alfred was a skillful entrepreneur. By 1940, he owned a third of the commercial buildings in Edgartown. He lived a long life, dying in 1992 at 94.

When Bessie Hall bought the South Summer Street house in Edgartown in January 1914, she was probably the first Jew to own a house in town. And the last for a while. Discrimination against Jews in Edgartown continued into the 1930s. It was "the last holdout of the WASPs," according to Dorothy West, the black writer and Vineyard resident.

Discrimination against blacks was equally severe, creating a problem for the many black domestic servants who worked for the town's wealthy summer people. For years, they had no place to relax on their days off. Restaurants and bars would not serve them. That changed when an enlightened summer resident bequeathed a small building and a plot of land on Cooke Street, opposite the cemetery, to a black couple who had been faithful family domestics for years. The black couple, Edna and James Smith, turned the house into a gathering place for blacks and it soon took on the appropriate name, "The Open Door Club." Once each summer, the black domestics put on a picnic at the club to which they invited their white employers, creating a much-talked-about integrated social event, the only such party in town, no doubt.

The blacks in Oak Bluffs were not impressed with Edgartown's Open Door Club, whose members, after all, were "domestics." The Oak Bluffs blacks were themselves property owners, many with black servants of their own. Dorothy West, in an interview, described how they bought their houses:

Before World War Two, Oak Bluffs was dying, and many houses were up for sale. . . and blacks bought some of these properties and improved them. Some blacks still claim they saved Oak Bluffs, because of the way they restored the dilapidated houses in the years before the war.

The houses they bought were between Ocean Park and Farm Pond. Some were large houses with water views. . . It was the "new" people who bought them. . . The "old" black families, like mine, owned much smaller cottages in the Highlands area. [Her family, came in 1915, Dorothy says.]

Many years later, Dorothy West wrote a column in the *Gazette* (she was its only black writer) called "Cottagers' Corner," describing the activities of those black summer people. The column's name came from a group called "The Cottagers," formed in 1955 by a number of black women, all property owners. Their properties were scattered around town, as Dorothy West remembered in 1971:

There were no separate areas [for blacks]. There were too few black vacationists to form a colony. They were Bostonians, a broad description that included blacks from Boston proper and the surrounding suburbs [West was from Brookline].

They did not live side by side in the city and it never occurred to them to settle together here. . . They bought the house they could afford, hoping to find one in a location to their liking.

Perhaps the greatest number were on Circuit Avenue, a number not exceeding four or five. . . There were two cottages owned by blacks, I do not think more, on what is now East Chop Drive. . . three, hardly more, in the Highlands. School Street was then exclusively year-rounders, mostly whites, a few more blacks [lived] in the little pockets of poverty on the side streets [later, School Street did become mostly black].

The bulk of the summer blacks began to arrive in the 1940s, the prosperous war years. . . but the peak of black participation . . . is the present [1971].

The Cottagers were an exclusive group: members had to be black, female and owners of Oak Bluffs property. Not many could meet those requirements. Mary Louise Holman, then a black servant in Oak Bluffs, tried to join when it began, but was turned down. That rankled her:

I couldn't join because I didn't own a house, I was working as a maid. . . When I bought this house, they asked me to join, but I said: "You didn't want me when I didn't have a house and I'm not going to join you now. I never did. When the NAACP came here, I joined that and I'm still on the board."

The club's membership grew as more blacks bought property and in 1968, it purchased the former Cottage City Town Hall on Pequot and Grove Avenues for its headquarters. The intersection soon was being called "Cottagers' Corner," the name that West adopted for her column.

Oak Bluffs was the only Island town where blacks could buy property. In other towns, blacks and Jews were not welcome, especially up-Island. This was done extra-legally, mostly by means of summer enclaves, cooperatives of a sort. A group of whites would buy a large piece of land and invite compatible relatives, friends or colleagues to join. These homogeneous enclaves had their own beaches and open spaces. Comfortable in their "playgrounds," residents spent their vacations happily in each other's company, rarely leaving their "reservation."

Of course, such selectivity is not limited to whites. All humans seek out others like themselves as their friends. It is a rare group, white or black, that chooses diversity. The Shearer Cottages in Oak Bluffs in 1900 was the first rooming house to welcome blacks, but it preferred the better educated for its clientele. Mary Louise Holman, who has been quoted above, recalled:

I visited Shearer Cottage once in a while. . . [it] dealt with a certain class of blacks, like teachers and doctors and lawyers. .

Doris Pope Jackson, a descendant of the founder of Shearer Cottages, and its current owner along with daughter, Lee Van Allen, seemed to agree with Mary Louise Holman in an interview she gave in 1996:

Everyone [who] came. . . all of these blacks were very, very

well educated blacks. . . judges, lawyers, teachers, artists, all beautifully dressed and educated. . . Most were New Yorkers. . . I can remember Herbie Tucker, the judge. His sister and he used to come up there. The Dabney family, Doctor Fuller, a renowned Boston physician. . . musician Harry T. Burleigh, a marvelous person, a generous man. . . As kids, he'd take us out for ice cream and candy. He spoiled all of us.

When [I] was young the Shearer Cottage took only blacks. Times have changed. I [now] have Italian guests and Jewish guests and Irish guests.

The first such restrictive enclave was Wesleyan Grove Campground, where only white Methodists were welcome. Its origin was spiritual, but it was a "protected" enclave that banned Catholics and Jews; blacks, of course, were not welcome. In recent years, the ban has been loosened somewhat.

Years after the campground was formed, non-spiritual enclaves began to be organized, most of them up-Island: Windy Gates, Barnhouse, and the Squibnocket Fish and Game Club on the south shore; on the north shore, there was the oldest and largest, Seven Gates Farm.

Roger Baldwin and Evelyn Preston, his "wife" (they never were legally married), owned Windy Gates, an expanse of land along the south shore east of Squibnocket Beach. Evelyn was Roger's second "wife" (his first "marriage" had also been without legal binding; Roger was a free spirit). He and Crystal Eastman, sister of Max Eastman, later a Gay Head resident, were among the founders of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in 1913. Baldwin supported many unpopular causes such as his defense of teacher Scopes in Tennessee's "evolution" trial, his opposition to the banning of books written by James Joyce, and his protest against the first World War, for which he went to prison. His activities gave Windy Gates a reputation as a haven for wild-eyed radicals. It was even said (in shocked tones) around Chilmark that Baldwin and his guests went bathing in the nude on their remote stretch of South Beach. Today, he is remembered not for his nudity, but for the Chilmark Community Center, which he founded, and, of course, the ACLU.

A similar "wild" reputation was bestowed on Barnhouse,

founded in 1919 by Dorothy Kenyon as a summer "camp" for her friends, all white and, no doubt, Christian. Most visible among them was Boardman Robinson, another free spirit and artist for *The Masses*, Max Eastman's Socialist magazine.

Dorothy Kenyon and her friends bought the old Mayhew farm on South Road. With it came a huge barn that was the group's social center, giving birth to its name. As new members joined, space in the old farm house was inadequate and members renovated various chicken coops and outbuildings into sleeping rooms. Later, they built up-scale "chicken coops" to accommodate the growing membership. These coops were scattered around the property, without electricity or running water. A communal shower and privy were provided. It was a no-frills vacation experience and members loved it.

An aura of mystery about Barnhouse members built up among year-round Chilmarkers. Who were these well-to-do off-Islanders who came to the Island on vacation, content to live in chicken coops and mix cocktails with politics in a barn? They certainly must be radicals, maybe even Communists, after all, that Marxist artist, "Mike" Robinson, was one of them.

Thomas Hart Benton, the Island's most famous artist, and his wife, Rita, were frequent guests at Barnhouse. They would have been welcome as members, being of the "no-frills" variety, but they had no need for a chicken coop to sleep in. They owned a house nearby.

In his book, *Thomas Hart Benton: An American Original*, Henry Adams quotes Benton about Barnhouse:

We used to go over to the Barn House parties all the time in the 1920s. . . They always had a punch made out of bathtub gin and I got quite drunk on occasion.

Benton liked his liquor and he managed to get "drunk on occasion," prohibition or not. Craig Kingsbury was an up-Island supplier of illegal booze and Tom was among his regular customers. He is quoted by Henry Adams on the subject:

I used to bring [Benton]. . . liquor from Oak Bluffs, where they had a bottling operation in the cellar of a hotel. One of the selectman was running things and it cost a dollar a quart. . . I used to bring it up to Tom and if we brought along our own



food, Rita would cook it up for us. . . They were some hell-raisin' parties, but if things got too rough Rita would throw us out of the house. . . Benton was funny as hell, a rough, wild drunk, I tell you. He'd fight anybody. . . He was so small he'd go for the belly every time. . . I saw him beat up Max Eastman one night, but then Max couldn't fight worth a damn.

Rita and Tom had met in 1917, when she took a course in oil painting in Manhattan. A designer of women's hats, she had aspirations as an artist. The course was taught by Tom, earning a few dollars to support himself. He was taken by her Italian beauty and used her as a model. One summer, she and a girl friend rented a cottage at Ella Brug's on Boston Hill in Chilmark. The weather turned cold and damp and when her friend went home in disgust, Rita invited Tom for a visit. Tom brought his friend and agent, Tom Craven, and they stayed in the Brug barn while Tom painted Chilmark scenes.

The instructor-pupil relationship blossomed and in 1922 Rita and Tom were married, much to the displeasure of both sets of parents. Tom's were upset because he, coming from a famous and historic Missouri family, was marrying an Italian immigrant; a Catholic, no less. Rita's family was displeased because he was a struggling artist with no steady income and she would probably end up supporting him.

Fortunately for the newlyweds, his paintings began to sell, especially those he had made on Martha's Vineyard. Tom said the Island changed his style:

Martha's Vineyard had a profound effect on me. . . It separated me from the Bohemias of art. . . providing me with a homely subject matter and a great quiet for reflection. . . It was in Martha's Vineyard that I first really began my intimate study of the American environment and its people.

Through the years, Tom found much material for his art on the Island as Rita was sure he would, painting many landscapes, beaches and local people. One painting, "Picnic," is a bold treatment of Islanders on the Menemsha Pond beach just below the camp he and Rita built in 1927 for a summer house. The cliffs at Windy Gates were another favorite subject, as were the rolling hills and plain houses of Chilmark that he

painted in the bold, exaggerated style that some critics labeled as "caricatures."

His striking portraits of craggy-faced Chilmarkers, such as Frank Flanders, Dan Vincent and Chester Poole, helped build his reputation. Some deaf mutes, descendants of the group that had drawn Alexander Graham Bell to the Island many years earlier, lived near Brug's barn, Tom's studio. He painted portraits of a number of them. "The Lord is My Shepherd" is a portrait of George and Sabrina West, both deaf mutes, seated at a table in their home. Josie West, a deaf mute, was another of Tom's subjects and that portrait is now at the Society.

It is unlikely that Benton ever visited the largest of the summer enclaves, Seven Gates Farm, on the north shore. He would not have liked it; its residents were more intellectual than he preferred. Prof. Nathaniel Shaler, the Harvard geologist had started it in the 1890s by buying up 90 abandoned farms as "a playground for my old age." He had come to Martha's Vineyard to study the effects of the glacier and had fallen in love with its beautiful serenity. Sadly, he died before he could spend much time on his playground.

After Shaler died in 1906, his widow and their daughter, Mrs. Willoughby Webb, took over the enclave. Its isolation and loneliness encouraged them to invite friends to join them. The first was Russell H. Loines, a friend of Willoughby Webb. He and his family rented one of the old farmhouses in 1907. With only occasional interruptions, they returned each summer, eventually building their own house there. One of the Loines family, now Margot Willkie, still lives on Seven Gates (2005) and she recalled the early days in an interview:

There were fewer than 10 families living here (now there are 31). We'd meet each morning at 11:30 at Gray's Beach. It had very high sand dunes so that you could slide down them. They weren't clay, they were sand. . . after we swam we'd lie in the hot sun on the hind side of the dunes and talk about everything. . . there was an old tennis court at the Chase House when we lived there. . . my father made it better and everybody played on that court.

When we went to see Mrs. Shaler, I was in a white oggandy

dress, white rubbers, white gloves, white everything. . . she would be upstairs in a chaise lounge. . . we would curtsy to her and she'd ask how we were. . . there was a sense of *estate* when you went to the Shalers. . . everything was beautifully kept. . . it was very elegantly that way and seemed more like Beatrix Potter.

Going to the Webbs was also very nice. . . she was very sociable. She used to have the people from West Chop up for tea quite often. . . we'd pull taffy and we'd wrap it up and everybody would take it home.

There was this wonderful Luce's Candy store on North Road where you turn, coming from Vineyard Haven. We used to drive to Mrs. Luce's in our pony cart. You had to ford, go through the water, to get there (there's a bridge now) and we got our ice cream. . . Near the store, across the road, a man called Ollie Borgen lived "in sin" with a Mrs. Call. Nobody paid any attention to the fact that they weren't married. I mean that was one of the nice things about the Island. He played the accordion very well. Norwegian folk music mostly.

North Tisbury was a place of sin, we were told. . . Nellie Vincent lived opposite the ice-cream store. . . we boarded with her while we were building our house [at Seven Gates]. . . she had a party-line phone and listened on it from morning till night. . .

Mr. Burt was superintendent at Seven Gates. He was a wonderful character. . . a truly New England man and his wife was an Islander from way back. Really good breeding. You could see it in her face. . . they had seven children, one daughter and six sons, and every one got a college education.

Among the proper folk summering at Seven Gates were the Dwight Morrows of Englewood, New Jersey. Dwight later became a United States Senator from New Jersey and Ambassador to Mexico under President Coolidge. Among the children in the family was Dwight Morrow II, who married Margot Loines (later Willkie), quoted above. The younger Dwight developed a serious mental illness for which no treatment was known and in 1948 living with him became so unbearable for Margot and their children that the couple divorced amicably.

During those difficult years with Dwight, Margot became very close to his sisters, Anne and Con Morrow. By then, the

1940s, Anne was a well-known author and a celebrity, having married the world's most famous aviator, Charles F. Lindbergh. Margot Willkie recalls the family:

I just loved the Morrow girls, Con and Anne. . . they were very literary and just wonderful people. Those two girls were just superb. In 1941, the Lindberghs [Anne and Charles] came and took a house here [in Seven Gates] because I was here. They took this house up on the hill, the Saltonstalls own it now. It used to be open for rental.

Some years earlier, the Lindberghs had lived through a great tragedy when their first child, Charles Jr., was kidnapped and murdered. The arrest and trial of Bruno Hauptmann ended in his execution. During the long trial, the story made headlines around the world. Unable to find privacy in New Jersey, the family moved to Long Island, but by 1941 continuing public curiosity had so broken Anne's spirit that she decided they must move again:

I am sick of this place. We have no longer any privacy here; people telephone all day long. They even come out without calling up beforehand and look for us through the house and garden. . . I go off to Martha's Vineyard in desperation and find a house, much too small. . . not nearly as convenient as this, but in a windy, bare, free place with a beach of its own to escape to. . . I feel, desperately, that we *must* go.

Her friend, Margot, then living at Seven Gates, had urged them to come there on a trial basis. Anne wrote to her mother, explaining their plan:

We have taken – for two months or three – a house near Margot on Martha's Vineyard, with the idea (very much a secret) of looking around and seeing whether we could stay there all winter, maybe. We would have to move again into a house with heat, but there is one, in fact two, that would do. . . we are trying it for late summer and autumn first, and trying it very lightly, too. That is, saying we are only there for a month or two. . . so that the publicity won't get out that we're thinking about it as a semi-permanent home. . . The house we have taken is terribly small and means doubling up the children, the secretaries, etc. But it has lovely wild hills to walk over and miles of beach with practically no one on it.

On August 8, 1941, just before moving to Seven Gates, she again wrote her mother while flying to Cleveland with Charles. He was now deeply involved in the anti-British, anti-interventionist America First Committee, having been urged to be its president (he turned it down). There was talk that their marriage was in jeopardy because of America First and Anne was eager to dispel it:

[I am] on a plane to go to Cleveland with Charles! I did not plan to. . . but the Middle West is full of rumors that C. and I are separating on his America First work. There are lots of things (and people) I don't like in the work. . . but Charles stands for integrity. . . almost more than any person I ever met. And so I stand behind him.

One week later, now at Seven Gates Farm, Anne sounded much happier in another letter to her mother:

We have been here for two days and I expect C. this morning. . . I do not feel so overcome up here. . . no telephone calls, no people, no dates ahead. I feel deliciously lonely and hope I stay so!

Later that day, Charles arrived in the family car for his first visit to their new home. He had driven the packed car aboard the steamboat at Woods Hole like any ordinary person. During the year they lived on Martha's Vineyard, Charles Lindbergh, the world's most famous aviator, never came or went by plane, always by boat. After war was declared in December 1941, he had no choice. Coastal airports were closed and private planes were grounded. But even before that ban, he never flew in or out.

On the evening of that day, Anne wrote in her diary:

*August 15, 1941.* C. Arrives about noon with the car high with bags and bundles. . . We walk over the land, finding a place for the tent. C. says it is beautiful and that he can work here.

*August 17.* Great wind blowing, all blinds flapping. C. and I look for new site for the tent, more sheltered. . . I walk up on the hill and lie on the ground. The security of it and the beauty make me able to think out all the things I am possessive about. The hanging-on feeling – about life itself and its passing by, of youth and romance, of time itself . . . It is easier

here to "let go". . . I feel a new life is starting here, but I am just now at sea and do not know where it begins.

In his journal, Charles put down his first thoughts about the Vineyard. He is less poetic, but impressed:

*August 15, 1941:* Arrived Seven Gates Farm in time for lunch with Anne and the children. It is a very beautiful place. . . There are all kinds of trees on Martha's Vineyard and the change of tide has little effect on the appearance of the island. But there is the sea, and there are rocks and islands in the distance. . . Anne and I walked over the grounds and looked for a site where we can pitch our tent.

*Sunday, August 17:* Spent first part of afternoon writing. This is an excellent place to work – quiet, stimulating, inspiring. . .

*Monday, August 18:* Two men came to set up the tent house on the side of a hill overlooking the sea, in a slight hollow where it will be protected from the wind.

The importance the Lindberghs give to the tent provides a revealing insight into their lives. They both needed to be alone, not so much from each other as from everybody else. No doubt, the celebrity status that followed them everywhere was a powerful factor. Also, the new house was much too small for four children, plus two secretaries, a governess and a chambermaid. It would become even more crowded when Vineyarders Helen and Maynard Duarte arrived a few weeks later to be their cook and handyman. Many years later in a magazine article, Helen described their employers:

The Lindberghs never entertained and ate only simple food. Mr. Lindbergh always told us to call him Colonel. She was called Anne Morrow. She had all the money.

With so many crowded into that small house, the couple's desire for a quiet retreat is understandable, but it was more than that. Even after they moved into a much larger house for the winter, they still spent many nights sleeping in the tent. After losing their first child to a kidnapper, one would think they would hover over the children, but instead they preferred to keep them at arm's length, leaving the care and cuddling to nursemaids.

Their tent was not a simple canvas shelter such as used by



campers. Charles called it a "tent house." A photograph shows it to be a rather large rectangular shelter, apparently a sturdy wooden frame covered by canvas. It stood on slightly higher land looking over a sandy beach a hundred yards or so from their house. Later in his journal, a grateful and admiring Charles wrote a detailed description:

[Anne] has made even this tent beautiful and inspiring, and she does all this with the utmost simplicity. She has put blue print curtains on the windows. . . tacked up pictures of Chartres saints and angels on plywood boards around the walls. . . in front of the unvarnished wood table are three Botticelli postcard reproductions and one Renoir. On the table are two very old, small brass elephants from Siam. Beside the elephants are a stone, a feather, and a shell.

The tent is a wonderful place to work, secluded – a view to islands behind the sea. It is very easy to keep warm. . . putting an occasional stick of wood in the little airtight stove breaks up the monotony of too constant writing.

There was also a bed in the tent, although Charles does not mention it. To him, it was "Anne's tent" and he encouraged her to spend more time in it working on her writing, which he greatly admired. "If anything happens to me," he once told her, "you can make your living by your writing."

He too used the tent for writing. He had been working on an autobiography, but he had put it aside for the more urgent task of writing speeches and articles opposing the war with Germany. As the leading spokesman for the America First Committee, his condemnation of President Roosevelt's tilt towards England had rekindled the public's interest in him, not totally in his favor. The America First Committee, with more than 800,000 members, held frequent rallies around the country, providing him a national platform. He was again in the news with the burden that comes with such a role:

*Monday, August 25:* I took the 1:05 train to New York. Had to pay two fares for a drawing room! I would much prefer a coach seat, but know I would soon be recognized. . . What wouldn't I give to be able to ride on trains and go to theaters and restaurants as an ordinary person.

Anne, too, was annoyed by the public's insatiable curiosity about herself and her family. At first, she didn't seem convinced that life on the Vineyard would be different. A month after they moved to Seven Gates, she wrote in her diary:

Land [son] goes with Soeur Lisi [the nursemaid] to get shoes. . . I can never shop with my children because then they are no longer just ordinary children but become stared-at children. Now it will be even worse.

Her last sentence refers to the public's growing opposition to Charles's stand on the war. Roosevelt and Churchill meet aboard a cruiser at sea to discuss how the United States can help England. The nation is increasingly turning against the isolationists. It was the start of a very difficult time for her. She wrote to a friend about her thoughts:

I have moved from Long Island to Martha's Vineyard. It is far away, windblown, isolated and very quiet. It is better. . . Here it is much easier to keep my sense of balance. And heaven knows things are going from bad to worse!

She tries to concentrate on making their new life at Seven Gates Farm as normal as possible, but Charles's upcoming speech haunts her:

*September 11, 1941.* C. (unexpectedly) [came] for five days to write his speech. . . The new couple [the Duartes of Vineyard Haven] a little bewildered and doing nothing right. Unpack the boxes (the cook wants a potato basket). . . The two secretaries are busy fixing up their little house, which I got them because this house is too small for a house and an office.

I try to pull the household together. If only I did not have to do it all before C.'s perfectionist eye. . .

Then his speech – throwing me into black gloom. He names the "war agitators" – chiefly the British, the Jews and the Administration. . . I hate to have him touch the Jews. For I dread the reaction. . . What he is saying in public is not intolerant or inciting or bitter and it is just what he says in private. . . Headlines will flame: "Lindbergh attacks Jews." He will be branded anti-Semitic, Nazi, Führer-seeking, etc. *I can hardly bear it. For he is a moderate.* [Italics in the original.]

I then work over the Jewish paragraph, rewriting it and

putting in some of the things he believes but never says. . . He takes almost all the suggestions. . .

I have a sinking of heart as he goes off. It is not [any] doubt in him, but if only people could see him as he really is . . .

I hear C.'s speech [on the radio] – direct and honest as a clean knife. The frenzied applause of the crowd frightens me. Can he keep in control what he has in his hands? Especially since he does not really want that control, that power.

The speech was delivered in Des Moines, Iowa, at a huge America First rally. Charles, unlike Anne, did not seem worried about the crowd's frenzy:

*Thursday, September 11:* [In Des Moines] I spoke for twenty-five minutes. It seemed that over eighty percent of the crowd was with us by the time I finished. . . When I mentioned the three major groups agitating for war – the British, the Jewish, and the Roosevelt Administration – the entire audience seemed to stand and cheer. At that moment whatever opposition existed was completely drowned out by our support.

Dozens of people came to our hotel rooms after the meeting, America First members. . . local officials, news-papermen, etc. . . Our opposition press, of course, picks out and emphasizes the radical and fanatical types who attend.

Anne at Seven Gates, reading the papers the next day, was devastated by the headlines and turned for solace to the Island's night sky:

*Saturday, September 13:* I go out under the stars, which are very brilliant. I need to get calm again after the papers, which confirm my worst fears as to the reactions to C.'s speech. He is attacked on all sides. . . as openly a Nazi, following Nazi doctrine.

I lie down in the grass on the bluff and look at the brilliant spread of stars through the giant wavering grass tops which loom over my eyes. The difference between Jew and Gentile does not seem very great, looking at the stars – nor do any earthly troubles. I cannot bear to leave, to go back to the house, to go back to tomorrow – to life. . . Lying there in bliss, I dread tomorrow's emotions with C.'s return. . . His coming will fill the house with warmth, with fire, with wind, with life. And also with problems. . .

[I walked] around the house with a lantern to look at the

sleeping children and put on an extra cover. The miser's hour for a mother – she looks at her gold and gloats over it!

When Charles returned the next day, their conversation was emotional. Anne, though unwavering in her love and admiration for him, was torn:

I cannot explain my revulsion of feeling by logic. . . he is incapable of being mean. How then explain my profound feeling of grief about what he is doing? . . He was naming the groups that were pro-war. No one minds his naming the British or the Administration. But to name "Jews" is un-American. . . because it is segregating them as a group, setting the ground for anti-Semitism. . . I would prefer to see this country at war than shaken by violent anti-Semitism. . . C. says that is not the choice.

To wash away those differences, they do something they rarely did. They went to South Beach where the Atlantic's surf pounds against the land and the air is clean and invigorating. That evening, they slept in a smaller tent, isolated from children and worldly concerns:

We have – in spite of the long discussion – a beautiful day on the south shore's wide, wind-swept beach, jumping the rollers with the children, C. and the boys.

To sleep in C.'s little tent, staked in a hollow on the hill, under the stars.

Charles, in his journal that day, makes no mention of Anne's concerns, nor of the family fun on South Beach. He is so certain he is right that the gathering public storm does not worry him as he slept under the stars:

*Sunday September 14.* Arrived home just in time for lunch. After supper Anne and I pitched our small bug-proof tent in a hollow in the hills west of the house. It was a clear and cool night, and we could leave the top of the tent open over our heads.

The public's fury did not subside. His Des Moines speech had caused panic at America First headquarters in Chicago. Lindbergh received a telephone call from Gen. Robert Wood, its president (also president of Sears, Roebuck & Co.):

*Monday, September 15:* My Des Moines address has caused so

much controversy that General Wood has decided to hold a meeting of the America First National Committee in Chicago . . . It seems that almost anything can be discussed today in America except the Jewish problem. The very mention of the world "Jew" is cause for a storm.

Remote though Seven Gates Farm is, it cannot isolate Anne from feeling the public's growing opposition to her husband. Her nights are sleepless:

The storm is beginning to blow up hard. America First is in a turmoil. . . The Jews demand a retraction. . . I begin to feel bitter. . . because I begin to see C. hated much as the Jews are hated, simply because he is Lindbergh. . . We sleep again in the little tent out on the hill, with the wind blowing. C. says he sleeps deeply and well, but I lie awake and think.

For the next two months, Charles and Anne do a lot of travelling, as he is the leading speaker at America First rallies. The German army is now deep inside Russia, which seems likely to fall. Once Russia is defeated, it is certain that Germany will attack England. Should the United States stay out of the war? Lindbergh still thought so.

For the second time in a month, the Lindberghs went to the beach. The October wind was chilling, but Charles and Anne took the two older boys to Gay Head. It is the only time either of them mentions that beautiful spot. Charles describes the joyful family outing:

*Saturday, October 11:* Anne, Jon, Land, and I drove to Gay Head. There was a strong wind and the seas were high. Jon and I found a barrel that had been washed up on the beach. He got inside, and I rolled him down the slope to the edge of the breakers. Then we carried the barrel to the top of the bluff, and Jon, Land and I pushed it over the edge.

With winter approaching, the family moved into the larger and more comfortable Webb house that once had been Professor Shaler's home. It is heated. Their decision to stay at Seven Gates through the winter confirmed the couple's fondness for the Vineyard. They would be virtually alone on windy Seven Gates, as most residents had left for the winter. Even Anne's sister-in-law and close friend, Margot, would soon be

going to California (her husband's doctor had urged the move). For the first time, Anne admits her need for a friend, someone to confide in. It would be a long, lonely winter. She would try to overcome her loneliness by her writing:

*November 1, 1941* Raining. We moved to the "Webb house" today. (Also on Seven Gates Farm.)

*November 6.* Webb House. The children and nurse have a separate wing. The nursery is really theirs, like the nursery of the old house in Englewood. . . I want to stop being a good housekeeper. . . I want to go back again to being a *bad* housekeeper and a *good* writer.

Margot comes over after lunch. We talk all afternoon in front of my fire. She is moving out West with the family. There is a lump in my throat to feel I shall no longer have the exquisite luxury of sharing day-to-day life with her. Oh, I shall miss her.

The larger, more comfortable Webb house pleases them. Charles, taking a break from speaking at America First rallies, is back writing his autobiography, *The Spirit of St. Louis*. Anne is envious. She isn't happy being a full-time housewife. The nurse maid and house maid have both gone back to France as America's involvement in the war seems increasingly certain.

Anne asks herself: "Can one be a good mother and write? Can one be a writer for half the day?" It seems that she would rather be a good writer than a good mother. But she tries to see the silver lining:

Work rather uninspired on "Women and a Career." I feel like the cartoon in the *Saturday Review* of the woman sitting in the middle of terrible disorder – dishes piled up unwashed, floor littered, cat into the spilled milk, baby crawling underfoot, while she, serene in the center, is typing away at an article for *Good Housekeeping*.

Supper alone with C.! Wonderful! And a quiet evening in the big room which I begin to relax in and survey with satisfaction. The cheap curtains, the bedspread over the sofa, the Vlaminck on the mantel, C. at the desk, I on the chaise longue, writing letters, to the music of WQXR. Very nice.

It is November. A cold wind whips across Seven Gates. It is warm in the house, "very nice," Anne thought, but that is



not enough for Charles. They leave the children with the Duartes and head for the tent:

*Friday, November 21.* C. suddenly decides to pitch the tent out on the bluff. It is very windy and flaps too much for me to sleep, but it is surprisingly snug and comfortable. C. says he sleeps very well after getting to sleep.

*Saturday, November 22.* It is lovely to wake in a tent and see it get incandescent with sunlight and then know from the inside what kind of a day it is!

The incandescent loveliness of the rising sun cannot erase Anne's torment:

I am – this is at the bottom of my unhappiness – angry and hurt by two references in the paper to C. . . I think: How badly he has expressed himself, how inadequately I have helped him, and how basely (chiefly this) they have abused him. . . He is so “idealistic,” so far into the future, so far beyond these nose-on-their-face idealists that it will take a generation or two before the average run of “idealists” catch up with him.

Seeking relief from child-caring, Anne went to New York City to hire a nursemaid. Charles and the children stay at Seven Gates with the Duartes. He is writing a speech for a major America First rally to be held in Boston on December 12. Anne, after interviewing potential nursemaids for a week in New York, finally picked one, but she was not satisfied:

And nurses – one after another until my mouth went dry – talking, trying to read them, endless conversations on the telephone and dreaming of them at night, very tired, wondering if any of them would do to put my tired head on their shoulder.

I finally took an old Breton peasant woman very temporarily. . . She had the earth quality and was gay and I hoped would do, though not perfect at all.

On Sunday I drove up to Woods Hole – a beautiful day, clear and cold and a tearing wind.

It was not just another Sunday. It was December 7, 1941, “a day that will live in infamy.” The Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. Anne, hearing the news on the radio, thought:

It is the knell of the old world. All army officers all over the

U. S. ordered into uniform. Espionage Act invoked. (If C. speaks again they'll put him in prison, I think immediately.)

Alone in the car, she tries to turn her mind to other things. The New York Philharmonic is playing a Brahms concerto, but the radio program is constantly interrupted by war bulletins. She arrives at Seven Gates after dark:

Jon and Land run out to me in night clothes excitedly.

C. says, “Have you heard the news?”

“Yes.”

The world had suddenly changed.

In the morning, Anne takes the two older children to school as though it had not.

I take the children to school. Land telling me the Christmas story. “And the angel said, ‘Fear not, New York City’ ”! How did he get that?

When I get back, C. is listening to the radio reports of what has happened . . . C. and I go out for a walk in between long-distance calls from Chicago, New York, etc. . . We listen to the President's declaration of a state of war over the radio at lunch at the table. . .

America First has decided to cancel all meetings. C.'s speech is brilliant and one of his very best. I am crushed it was not given, but it is impossible now. He gives out a statement. Very good, I think.

Lindbergh's statement was published in the *Vineyard Gazette* on the front page. It seems to be the only mention it made of the Lindberghs during their year's stay:

The America First Committee released a statement by Charles A. Lindbergh: “We have been stepping closer to war for many months. Now it has come and we must meet it as united Americans regardless of our attitude in the past toward the policy our government has followed.

“Whether or not that policy has been wise, our country has been attacked. . . and we must retaliate. Our own defenses and our own military position have already been neglected too long. . . When American soldiers go to war, it must be with the best equipment that modern skill can design and that modern industry can build.”

Mr. Lindbergh and his family have been staying at Seven

Gates Farm, West Tisbury, for several months. A meeting in Boston tonight under America First auspices, which he was to address, was cancelled by America First after the outbreak of the war.

Lindbergh's America First platform had collapsed. Only a year earlier, his support had been so strong that Sen. William E. Borah, an avid America Firster, had urged him to run for president against FDR, then seeking an unprecedented third term. Borah was sure he would win, convinced the country was turning against the war. This was not the first time that Lindbergh had been urged to run for president:

During the lunch, Borah and I discussed the coming presidential election. . . [he] made the startling statement that he thought I might make a good candidate! . . . Many years ago – about 1927 or '28 – Henry Breckinridge [at the time a leading Democrat] suggested that I lay my course toward the White House. I concluded, however (and I have never regretted it), that my happiness and usefulness lay along other routes.

His pro-Germany position now discredited, Lindbergh was eager to join the fight. It wouldn't be easy. Every time he sought a place in the military or government, he was rejected. So he turned to private industry with the same result. Anne, alone with the children at Seven Gates, was more depressed than ever. Not only was Charles being rejected, but she learned that publishers no longer wanted her writing. She wrote in her diary, March 12, 1942:

C. is away – again looking for work. I am hurt for him when he gets another telephone call from a company which wants him but cannot afford to take him because of Administration disapproval. And I feel that his exclusion from the world of aviation is much more unfair than mine from the world of books.

That same month, his sympathetic relationship with anti-Semite Henry Ford was rewarded. Ford offered him a job at the new Willow Run bomber plant "to help with their aviation program." Lindbergh accepted, but advised Ford to clear his hiring with the War Department:

Ford was at first opposed to asking the War Department any-

thing about it; but I reminded him that we would have to have much contact with them in the future and that a good start would be of great advantage. Ford agreed. It annoys him to think he has to ask anyone about what he wants to do in his own factory. (And, as a matter of fact, it annoys me to have to ask the government's permission to make a connection with a commercial company: it's too damn much like Russia!)

Accepting the Detroit job meant leaving the Vineyard. Anne was pregnant and anxious to get settled before their child arrived. Charles, already working at Willow Run, rented a house in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, for the family to move into. In mid-June, he went to Martha's Vineyard for the last time, not without sadness:

Morning on routine – arrangements for packing, etc. Anne spent most of the morning in the tent writing. The tent arrangement has been very much worth while; she does most of her writing there. Croquet with Jon in the evening. Walk over the hills to the beach with Anne after supper. How we will miss the sea this summer! When will we find it again?

On July 18, 1942, Anne and the children moved into the house in Michigan. She is not enthused:

I feel rather depressed by all the ersatz elegance. . . I long even for the shabbiness of Mrs. Webb's house [at Seven Gates] – shabby Victorian, but it was decent.

Despite their fond memories of Seven Gates, it seems that the Lindberghs never again visited Martha's Vineyard. They began going to Maui in the Hawaiian Islands and it was there that Charles died of cancer in August 1974. When he learned that death was near, he asked to be flown to Maui on what was the final flight for the world's most famous aviator. Anne lived until February 2001, when after a long illness she died in the Vermont farmhouse that had been her home for many years.

The *Vineyard Gazette* had ignored the Lindberghs during their year at Seven Gates, but it was not because the *Gazette* didn't recognize news. Since 1920, it had been owned and edited by Henry and Betty Hough, both graduates of the Colum-

bia School of Journalism. They knew a news story when they saw one, but no doubt chose not to print anything about the Lindberghs out of respect for their privacy, as Anne had hoped would be the case when they moved to the Island.

The Houghs had been given the *Gazette* in 1920 as a wedding present by Henry's father, George A. Hough, editor of the *New Bedford Standard*. They were the first professional journalists on an Island that had seen many newspapers come and go. Among the non-survivors were the *Camp Meeting Herald*, the *Island Review*, the *Cottage City Star*, the *Cottage City Chronicle*, the *Seaside Gazette*, *Chick's Vineyard Haven News* and the *Gay Head Light*. Still publishing were *The Martha's Vineyard Herald*, the *Vineyard News* and the *Gazette*, the *Gazette* being the oldest. Despite its longevity, the *Gazette* was not the best. When the Houghs took it over, the paper had fewer than 600 circulation, mostly in Edgartown. The *Martha's Vineyard Herald*, published in Oak Bluffs, claimed to have more circulation and it certainly had more news.

Henry later admitted that they both felt that what they had been given by his father wasn't much:

[Betty] was wiser than I, and with a far better sense of reality. . . At first, we did not like the idea of taking over the *Gazette* because the whole enterprise seemed so small. . . The population of the whole Island was fewer than 5000 persons. Each of the three large towns had a newspaper, the oldest being the *Gazette* [circulation about 600 a week], the next oldest, the *Herald* [in Oak Bluffs], and the most recent was the *News* [in Vineyard Haven].

Hough had spent many summers up-Island as a boy, but he knew nothing about Edgartown. He didn't seem enthused:

We came to Edgartown to live in 1920 and took over the *Gazette*. It was pretty primitive. All the type was hand-set. . . the press was held together by wire. . . It was shimmed up by pieces of wood and had to be turned by hand [on press day].

I didn't know Edgartown at all. I never spent the night here until 1920 when we came. . . my wife had only been here a couple of times before. . . there was an opposition paper, the *Vineyard Haven News*. There was also a paper in Oak Bluffs, the *Martha's Vineyard Herald*. . . We traded our [old] printing

press for the *Herald* [and agreed not to compete with it for job printing] and we bought out the *Vineyard Haven News* for \$500. . . there wasn't business enough for more than one paper. . . [our] gross business was about \$5000 a year. . . We agreed to keep the old editor [Charles H. Marchant] on as long as he wanted to stay. He lived for about 10 years and was immensely valuable. . . We had to have [two] Linotypes and a new press. . . just as we thought we were making progress then came the Depression. . . it was a hand-to-mouth existence. After that came World War II. . . with no more national advertising. . . sort of a starvation period. . . then gasoline rationing, some [summer people] still came because they could ride bicycles here. . . We had the dim-out, every house had to be blacked out, the street lights were dimmed.

Henry did not like the day-to-day work of an editor. Writing, not editing, was what he enjoyed and he was very good at it. His style was more graceful than news reporting is supposed to be. So he wrote editorials, three a week. A major editorial success was his campaign to keep authorities from replacing the Edgartown harbor lighthouse, damaged in the 1938 hurricane, with a flashing beacon atop an ugly steel tower. His editorials forced the authorities to relent and to replace the old light with today's much-admired traditional lighthouse.

Henry also liked to operate the Linotypes, those huge, awkward-looking machines that arranged type matrices one letter at a time into a "line of type" on which molten lead was poured, forming a lead slug that was inked and printed by the press. The matrices were then automatically returned to their tiny bins to be used over and over. Henry was skilled at the Linotype keyboard, often writing editorials and short articles directly on it, no paper involved.

But what Henry liked most of all was writing books, which he did with frequency, turning over much of the responsibility for getting out the paper to Betty, Bill Roberts, their printer, and Joseph Chase Allen, reporter. Henry made no secret of that. In one book, he wrote about a press day in 1941:

Betty and I were hurrying to get to the *Gazette* office as close to half-past seven as possible. It was publication day. . . Bill Roberts and the two boys were already at the office, the type-



setting machines were going, and the forms were pretty well along. Bill had made up two or three pages the evening before. About eight o'clock, Betty took what last-minute news there was from Joe Allen, our outside man, and then began to write the last of the heads. I fixed up two or three short news stories and a personal item or two on the [Linotype] machine and then helped Bill pick out the type for the first page.

Henry's first book came out in 1936, sixteen years after he took over the paper. It was *Martha's Vineyard: Summer Resort*, the story of how a Methodist camp meeting with a few tents in an island oak grove had created a bustling summer resort. In some of his other books, he described how he and Betty ran a weekly newspaper in a small town, giving more attention to the interesting characters in town than to the paper itself. He was a keen observer of "town characters." After he retired, he began to wonder if he was becoming a "town character" himself. In *Tuesdays will be Different* [1971], he quoted from a letter he wrote to a friend:

I happen to be the old guy with the torn coat and old-style cap who is – well, let me say, conspicuous – as he walks a col-lie dog through the streets and roundabout day after day. I don't think I'm a character as yet, though there are plenty of idiosyncrasies no one, not even Lochinvar, would be likely to tell me about. I'll have to see how things go from here on in. You don't get to be a character by trying.

The most widely read of his books is *Country Editor*. It was followed by *Once More the Thunderer*. These two wonderfully entertaining books made the *Gazette* one of the nation's best-known weekly newspapers. He also wrote a number of novels with plots set on a fictional Vineyard, but with little success.

A year after the Houghs began running the paper, one of its biggest news stories in years occurred. On May 25, 1921, the huge gas tank in Oak Bluffs blew up. Fortunately, there was no loss of life. The tank was on Uncas Avenue with its gas-producing facility adjacent.

Gas had been available seasonally in Cottage City for many years. Early in the 1880s, the first gas mains were laid and lamps installed in the Campground, supplied by a small generator. In 1885, the Cottage City Gas Works, which may

have been the first gas company in southeastern Massachusetts, was formed. It bought seven lots on Uncas and Hiawatha Avenues for its plant. There was even talk of piping gas into Vineyard Haven (it never happened). Building the gas works was done during the winter of 1885-1886, the project headed by a man from Pennsylvania:

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

The iron gasometer and generators, in sections, are arriving on each trip of the *Monohansett*. The vessel comes through Quick's Hole, does not attempt Woods Hole. Now making trips every other day due to high freight volume.

The huge telescoping tank was supported by a separate steel frame that towered over the nearby shacks and gardens on the outskirts of the village. Gas from the tank was first distributed in the summer of 1886, with no service in winter. By 1900, electric lights had started to replace gas lamps in the homes of wealthy summer people, gas being used mainly for cooking. Year-round residents of Oak Bluffs rarely used either gas or electricity. Wood stoves were still adequate for cooking (and heating) and kerosene lamps for illumination.

When the explosion occurred in May 1921, the tank was being filled for the summer season:

For several weeks repairs had been under way in preparation for the opening of summer service, and at the time of the accident, the tank was being filled with thousands on thousands of feet of gas.

The plant manager was in the generator building. He heard loud noises coming from the tank. Looking out, he saw the top of the tank vibrating vigorously and immediately shut down the gas supply before running from the building. He was barely outside when the tank blew up:

The tank was tossed into the air, descending again on its side, into the receptacle which collapsed under the enormous strain. . . . the Negro settlement about the works was deserted

and the surrounding fields dotted with the migrating forms of the residents.

It was miraculous that there were no injuries. In the large lot across the street, many blacks and Portuguese lived in simple shacks alongside their gardens. Luckily, little damage was done to their houses.

Later, it was reported that the unpurged tank had been placed into service prematurely, allowing gas to flow into the partly purged mains. When an "inquisitive customer" ignited a fixture to see if the gas had been turned on yet, the flame raced back through the main to the tank. A small explosion occurred in the meter at the Island House at the same time, but whether it was the "inquisitive customer" was not stated.

The explosion brought an end to gas service in Cottage City. The crumpled tank was never replaced and summer residents had to turn to kerosene for cooking.

Electricity had been used in Cottage City to light its main streets with arc lights for years. In 1895, two companies competed for the business. The winning contract ran for three years at \$2500 a year, the company agreeing to keep 50 arc lamps operating from dusk to midnight during July, August and September, and 25 more to operate the rest of the year. Three more lights would be turned on at no additional cost "on any dark night."

Arc lights were open flames emitting dangerous fumes, making them unsuitable for enclosed areas. Nonetheless, a few were used in such large buildings as the skating rink. Most were outdoors at hotels, public squares and around the Tabernacle. So many were in use that one writer described Cottage City as a "City of Lights, a fairy land."

In Edgartown, the first indoor electric lights, no doubt using the newly invented incandescent lamps, were installed in the public library in 1913 and a year later in the County Court House. An article in the Town Warrant that year asked for funds to wire the Town Hall for electricity.

Only the largest houses in the village center had electric lights before the 1920s. Prior to that, a few impatient and wealthy home owners had installed their own generators.

When electricity had not reached West Tisbury in 1920, three neighbors, Judge Everett Allen Davis, John Whiting and Mrs. Newhall (she put up most of the money) bought a generating plant that charged one hundred batteries, enough to provide electricity for lamps in their homes.

As late as 1940, the electric company's wires had not reached Chilmark, as David Flanders remembers:

A lot of people up here had generators, before the electricity was put in. We didn't get our electricity in Chilmark until 1941, just before the war broke out.

It was years after World War II that electricity finally made it all the way to Gay Head. It arrived when the government decided to electrify the lighthouse, equipping it with an automatic beacon. Its historic Fresnel lens, a scientific marvel when it went into service in 1852, was declared obsolete. For 100 years, it had burned whale oil, lard oil, kerosene and finally acetylene gas to guide mariners. Now it stands on the grounds of the Society in Edgartown, a priceless artifact.

Telephones had come to the Island before electricity. In 1881, the first telephone line was strung between Vineyard Haven and Cottage City, connecting instruments in two hotels. During those early years, telephones were in hotels, railroad stations and stores. To make a call, you went to one of those places. There certainly were no long lines of residents waiting to use them as there were few places they could call. In 1882, there were only seven telephones in Cottage City, 18 on the entire Island, all listed as "Public Telephone Pay Stations." A year later, more places to call opened up when an underwater cable connected Vineyard Haven with the mainland, but service was undependable, often being cut off by boats snagging the cable with their anchors.

The telephone company, owned off-Island, limped along for several years. Then in 1894, Dr. Charles F. Lane of Vineyard Haven was granted permission by Cottage City to put up poles and wires from Eastville to the Edgartown road. Tisbury had already agreed for its portion of the route. Suddenly, the Southern Massachusetts Telephone Company began to have strong competition from Lane's company, the Public Tele-

phone Company. The *Martha's Vineyard Herald*, in May 1897, described how Lane was shaking things up:

The Public Telephone Company has placed telephones in the following places in Cottage City: T. D. Crowell's grocery, Allen Norton's stables, Pease's Grocery, the Pequot House and the residences of E. H. Matthews, George Burgess, and E. G. Beetle. The time is near at hand when the telephone will be as necessary in the household economy as a cook stove.

In January the next year, the *Gazette* reported that "there are now 70 Lane telephones installed around the Island."

Conventional wisdom has it that Lane had gone into the telephone business to provide his patients with a way to call him when necessary. That was never mentioned in the news accounts of his Public Telephone Company at the time. Mrs. Elizabeth Downs of Vineyard Haven worked for Doctor Lane for years and in an interview at the Society, she did not mention that patients were on his mind when he started:

Dr. Lane had his own telephone exchange and he worked on it himself a great deal. He would climb a telephone pole with his tall silk hat — he was a difficult man to work for. Crotchety, eccentric. . . very particular about everything being clean. . . he was a good doctor and very dedicated. . . I've seen him start for Gay Head in a terrible snowstorm. He would go as far as he could [in his carriage], then walk the rest of the way. He cared little for the law. He said, "I've broken all the laws." He performed abortions, he sold liquor without a license and other activities.

The telephone exchange was a big board in one of the back rooms [in Lane's drug store] and on it were 16 different bells with 16 different lines that went all over the Island. We had to learn the sound of all those bells. There were no lights or anything. . . There were several phones on a line, especially up-Island and there was a great deal of listening. He kept the drug store quite a long time and lived at the Mansion House with Sarah [his wife].

Lane was so energetic he needed a variety of things to do; practicing medicine wasn't enough. When he sold his telephone business in 1910 to the big mainland company, he took occasional jobs as a carpenter, a skill he had used to put him-

self through medical school. He built the Lane Block on Circuit Avenue, Oak Bluffs, doing much of the work himself. When he finally gave up his medical practice in 1926, he and his wife, Sarah, moved out of the Mansion House in Vineyard Haven, where they had lived during the years he was practicing, and into the Lane Block that he owned. They were living there when he died in 1931.

Lane was still treating patients when Martha's Vineyard Hospital opened in 1922. It was the first time the Island's six towns, each so jealous of its identity, had joined in a single project and it is impressive to see how quickly they got together to create a "cottage hospital."

In 1920, when the idea to build a hospital was first broached, committees were formed in each town and fundraising began, headed by Mrs. James Look of West Tisbury. Mrs. Look and other energetic women around the Island wasted no time in raising enough money to buy the farm house of the late Capt. Hiram Daggett in Eastville. Within two years, the Island had a hospital.

Rev. Newton James of West Tisbury, in his diary entry of June 9, 1922, described the new facility:

The formal opening of the Martha's Vineyard Hospital at Eastville took place this afternoon. This building purchased by the Hospital Association has been completely remodeled and partially equipped for the benefit of the Island people. It consists of a reception room, dining room, kitchen, laundry, pantry, bathroom and two private rooms on the ground floor; nurses' room, operating room, infant room, ward for 7 or 8 patients and a toilet room, upstairs. Basement is equipped with steam-heating plant. The Hospital is very pleasantly located overlooking the Lagoon on one side and the harbor on the front. Though not large, it will be of great benefit and as funds will allow it will be increased in size. . .

Generous donations of money and supplies were given by the large number of visitors who were very cordially received by the officials and nurses at the opening.

Long may this Institution live and increase in the healing ministry as a God-given benediction to Martha's Vineyard.

Seven years later, the facility had become too small. Frank



L. Norton of Edgartown was awarded the contract to build a larger hospital across the road in 1928. Soon, even that new building was not large enough to handle the demand. It had to be expanded five times before finally being replaced by the present hospital in 1974.

Islanders had never been enthusiastic Prohibitionists but at times they did vote for candidates running on that ticket. But not because they wanted to outlaw alcohol. On occasion, when a candidate they preferred (usually a Republican) failed to get his party's nomination, he would run as a Prohibitionist. The switch was not taken seriously. Anyone elected under that banner quickly forgot his adopted party's platform (few were ever elected).

But in 1919, the nation's temperance groups showed their power. The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment was added to the Constitution, banning the sale of alcoholic beverages.

The Island, its miles of remote beaches easily accessible to rum-running boats, discovered a new way to make money, illegal though it was. Craig Kingsbury, who knew about such things, described how easy it was:

It was god-damned lively here during Prohibition. . . this was a way station [for rum-runners] and we also had a lot of geniuses here cooking up their own bug juice. The old-time Portuguese were well into wine-making, also brandy. . . There was a bunch of guys that cooked the alcohol out of a mixture of swill and molasses. . . They put the mash in a tank, built a fire under it and the steam goes through a coil of copper tubing in a barrel of cold water. . . the alcohol vaporizes much before the other stuff and condenses and runs out the end and there's your moonshine.

Making moonshine was a cottage industry on the Island. . . one old guy peddled moonshine out of a baby carriage. My aunt used to say, "That lovely little man, he's always wheeling his little child along the street." Silk Stocking Sam, he was called.

The Tiltons used to bring in Belgian alcohol aboard their coaster. One day I was on Church's Dock in Oak Bluffs and George Fred [Tilton] comes in: "Hey, give me a hand here." and I did. He takes two gallon cans of Belgian alcohol, I take

two, walked me right up Circuit avenue to the Pawnee House. When we got back, George Fred says, "Thanks. Here's two bucks for your time, young feller." All the hotels sold booze to their guests. They wouldn't buy the local moonshine, but wanted the good stuff.

There was no problem getting a drink during Prohibition.

When the depression hit and Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president, the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment was repealed. The Island hardly noticed the difference.

The *Gazette*, of course, did little reporting on bootleggers. That was not a subject the Houghs chose to write about. They were successfully making the *Gazette* an all-Island family newspaper. They added more news from beyond Edgartown, with long columns of "personals" by village correspondents. If you went shopping in New Bedford, everybody knew it; or if your house was being shingled, you were in the news. If you were white, that is.

Rarely written about were the activities of the blacks, Portuguese or Indians – unless, that is, they got into trouble with the law.

Such discrimination in the news was not unique to the Island. All around the country, you had to read one of the black newspapers published only in the larger cities to find out what blacks were doing legally. When any mention was made in the mainstream press, the person being written about was always described as "colored."

Dorothy West of Oak Bluffs in her *Gazette* column was among the first to write about blacks in a "white" newspaper without labeling them as such. To her, they were just people doing things, like everybody else. Skin color wasn't relevant.

West recalled how little Henry Hough seemed to know about the Island's blacks in an interview she gave in the Society's oral history program. One day in the late 1950s, when she was just starting her column, she handed him what she had written for the week. After reading it, Hough turned to one of his staff and said: "You know, there are so many interesting blacks on the Island and I never knew they were here."

Dorothy West was shocked. This man had been editor of

the Island's oldest newspaper for thirty years and was unaware of the middle-class blacks who owned summer houses in Oak Bluffs. She said, "If he saw these well-dressed blacks walking down the street, he probably thought they were Edgartown domestics on their day off."

The Houghs may have shown little interest in the blacks, but like everybody on the Island, they were much concerned about the ferry service. When steam began replacing sail, it brought many changes and Vineyarders were slow to accept them. Nantucket, perhaps because of its greater distance from the mainland, was eager to put a steamer in service. In 1833, the Nantucket Steamboat Company began running the steamboat *Telegraph* on a regular schedule between New Bedford and Nantucket, with a stop at Holmes Hole (Vineyard Haven). She made three trips a week. Various steamers had run between Nantucket and New Bedford before the *Telegraph*, but they were so under-powered that they were unable to operate in strong winds and rarely maintained a schedule.

The earliest mention of the *Telegraph* we have seen is in Jeremiah Pease's diary. On May 30, 1834, he wrote of the steamer coming into Edgartown harbor on a sad trip:

Steamboat *Telegraph*, Capt. Barker, arrives from New Bedford with the body of Capt. [Jonathan] Fisher.

This was not the first time a steamboat had entered Edgartown harbor. In August 1833, Jeremiah had reported the arrival of the steamboat *Benjamin Franklin* with 150 passengers from Providence and Newport. He didn't give the reason why such a large group came to Edgartown, but it was probably a summer excursion by steamer, a popular diversion that was just beginning. Later, when the August camp meetings had become popular, many steamboats came to Oak Bluffs from ports along the south coast of New England. One day, seven different steamers brought "pilgrims" to the camp meeting.

Although the Nantucket Steamboat Company was not profitable, it was determined to stay in business. In 1842, it invested in a larger vessel, the *Massachusetts* and began making regular stops at Edgartown, giving that village its first scheduled steamboat service.

In 1845, the New Bedford and Martha's Vineyard Steamboat Company, was formed by Capt. Holmes W. Smith and Jared Gabor. Captain Smith was from Edgartown. He was not only an owner of the company, he was its captain. It isn't clear why he and Gabor felt another company was needed, given the financial woes of the one already operating. Perhaps it was local pride. Captain Smith, a whaling master, became captain of the company's new steamboat, *Naushon*. In his diary, Jeremiah Pease describes how Edgartown residents reacted:

August 26, 1845: Steam Boat *Naushon*, Capt. H. W. Smith, arrives from New York, having been built there for this place, she being the first Steam Boat ever owned here. Quite a rejoicing with many on the account.

August 27: Steam Boat *Naushon* sails for New Bedford with 320 passengers, principally from this town.

August 30: Steam Boat *Naushon* goes to New Bedford and returns at 5 p.m.

September 1: Steam Boat *Naushon* commences running regularly to New Bedford.

The new steamer was handicapped by a schedule that called for her to make a round trip between New Bedford and Edgartown in one day, three times a week. That required an early sailing, 8 a.m., from Edgartown, something not convenient for residents of other towns. The competing steamer running from Nantucket to New Bedford stopped at Holmes Hole at 10 a.m., a much more convenient time and place.

Despite that handicap, the *Naushon* ran for two more years, 1846 and 1847. She did not operate in 1848. It isn't clear what caused the shutdown. Some have said it was financial, but it may have been due to the illness of her skipper and co-owner, Capt. Holmes W. Smith. He died in January 1849 after a long illness.

In 1854, the New Bedford, Vineyard and Nantucket Steamboat Company was formed. Despite having New Bedford in its name, the company had its terminus in Fair Haven, just across the harbor from New Bedford. It began operating the steamer *Metacomet* in September 1854. The rail line from Boston ended at Fair Haven and the *Metacomet* connected with

the train, a convenience for Vineyarders. In October 1854, Jeremiah Pease, his wife and daughter went to Boston, taking the *Metacomet* to Fair Haven to get on the train.

The *Metacomet* didn't stay in service very long. For reasons unknown, she was replaced in April 1856 by the steamer, *Eagle's Wing*. Pease recorded the change:

April 14, 1856: Steamer *Metacomet* leaves this morning for the last time, the *Eagle's Wing* to take her place.

April 15, 1856: Steamer *Eagle's Wing* arrives on her first trip today.

That winter was one of the coldest ever recorded on the Vineyard. For weeks, the harbor was frozen and there was no ferry service. On January 31, 1857, Jeremiah wrote:

This has been the most severe month I ever knew. . . The thumometer [sic] has been from 4 to 12 or 13 degrees below Zero, the ice in the harbor is now 18 inches thick and extends to Cape Poge, and a great quantity floating in the Sound.

The harbor was closed until mid-February. Anxious to resume a connection with the mainland, one hundred Edgartown men went out to cut a channel through the thick ice so the new steamer could get through. Soon after they finished, the weather moderated and the ice left the harbor.

There were a number of changes in the various steamboat companies during the next forty years, attempting to make them profitable, but with little success. Part of the reason was that there were two, sometimes three, companies competing for the limited traffic, especially in winter. Steamboats, it turned out, were expensive to buy and to run. Perhaps the Vineyarders had been right: sailing packets may be better. But there was no going back.

In 1900, the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad, hoping to increase its passenger business between New York and the islands, bought one-third interest in the steamboat company. Ten years later, it decided to buy the remaining shares and take full control. Summer residents on the Vineyard and Nantucket opposed the move. They were disgusted with the deterioration of service under railroad ownership and decided to raise money to buy and run the ferry themselves.

Year-rounders on both islands refused to join the summer residents, fearing that winter service would suffer if the summer people ran the ferries. The plan collapsed and the railroad bought the stock, turning the entire operation over to its subsidiary, the New England Steamship Company, owner of the Fall River Line and other steamboat companies.

Service continued to deteriorate. By 1920, only two boats were operating: the *Uncatena*, a paddle-wheeler built in 1902 that ran from New Bedford to Nantucket with stops at Woods Hole and Vineyard Haven; and the *Frances*, a newer, smaller shallow-draft steamer the railroad chartered to make two trips a day between Vineyard Haven and Woods Hole. She was not popular with Vineyarders, in fact, the *Gazette* seemed to consider her a joke:

It was said that *Frances* can sail up Main Street, Vineyard Haven, on a rainy day, she draws so little water. She went into service on November 1st and has already missed five trips. . . It is impossible to total the number of persons she has made sea sick.

She brings to the Island in winter, a new and fresh element of humor and a hint of uncertainty.

Something had to be done. In 1922, the railroad ordered a new steamer, the *Islander*, to be built by the Bath Iron Works in Maine. She was the first of what came to be called "The Great White Fleet." The handsome steamer looked more like a scaled-down trans-Atlantic liner than a practical ferry. The designer had given little thought to automobiles and trucks, thinking more of passenger comfort:

In the lobby were rolled, wood-slatted, stationary benches on either side, with Windsor chairs placed in the center. At the base of the stanchions, brass cuspidors were conveniently located. A wide stairway led from the lobby to the saloon above. The base of the stairway was flanked to port by the men's room and to starboard by the smoking and card room. . . On the saloon deck, forward was an open deck with solid railing enclosures, followed by the interior compartment with state-rooms, or day cabins (each furnished with a couch, two chairs, a fold-away card table and a sink) and the ladies' room.

Automobiles had to be driven slowly up a narrow gang-



plank, through a side hatch, then jockeyed into position, sharing space with freight dollies. Unloading was equally slow.

The automobile problem didn't seem to trouble the steamship company. It ordered three more of the same design, the last being the *Naushon* launched in June 1929. She had twenty staterooms on her saloon deck and twelve more on a "hurricane" deck. Some of the staterooms even had private toilets. Nothing was overlooked, except the automobile and the future:

There was a huge glass enclosed observation room aft and she supplied her passengers with writing desks stocked with monogrammed stationery carrying the New England Steamship Company's insignia. . . she even had her own daily newspaper.

In 2005, there remains one survivor of that Great White Fleet, the *Nobska*, floating forlornly in Charlestown Navy Yard, while admirers seek money to put her back in service as a memorial, it would seem, to a design that was out of date almost from its launching.

The state legislature created the Steamship Authority in 1948, taking ferry service away from the railroad. Two years later, the Authority, no longer constrained by a railroad mindset, designed and built its first vessel, one that gave priority to loading and unloading cars and trucks. She was named the *Islander*, the third vessel to carry that name:

Designed specifically with the Vineyard service in mind. . . she looked more like a "ferry," than did any of the previous vessels that were built for the line. She was constructed in fact as a work horse whose basic concept would make her an economical, functional vessel, capable of decades of hard use. [Quotations from *The Island Steamers*, Morris & Morin, 1977].

More than a half century later, in 2005, the *Islander* is still in service, a favorite of Islanders, many of whom are saddened by plans to replace her.

In 1927, a faster way to get to the Island began with the start of airplane flights on summer weekends between Boston and Katama in Edgartown. The Katama airfield was simply a strip of flat, open grassland that farmer William G. Vincent

had leased to the flying service. It provided an ideal natural runway with a hard grassy surface that did not absorb water quickly, remaining hard after a rain.

The plane left Boston each Friday afternoon at 5 p.m., landing on Katama at 6 p.m., after a stop at Hyannis (it continued on to Nantucket from Katama). Return flights left Katama at 8:20 a.m., on Monday, arriving in Boston at 9:20 a.m. Round trip: \$25. Two years later, the Curtiss Flying Service, calling itself "the world's oldest and safest flying organization, established in 1911," took over the summer service.

Islanders were accustomed to flying machines. The first had arrived in July 1919, ten years earlier, when two Navy hydroplanes from Chatham Navy Air Base landed in the Sound off Oak Bluffs and taxied up to the beach. The Navy's purpose, the *Gazette* explained, was to "spur recruiting for the service and to let people see how the airplane funds have been spent."

Ten days later, a private hydroplane landed in the same waters, this time taxiing through the jetties to the Wesley House pier where its occupants went ashore: Melvin B. Fuller, Myron J. Brown and pilot Griffin. A reception was held at the Tabernacle, followed by a supper that evening in the Wesley House. It was a gala occasion.

Fuller and Brown, both East Chop summer residents, had flown from New York on the trial flight to determine whether to give up the long train and steamboat ride weekends and come by air. We find no record of their decision.

On Saturday, pilot Griffin, anxious to make his weekend profitable, took passengers up on sightseeing flights at \$10 each. Two persons sat in the forward open cockpit with an unobstructed view of the Island from heights few had ever experienced. On one flight, the passengers were Eugene O'Neill, a guest that weekend of Mrs. Henry Hand of East Chop, and Miss Priscilla Hand. The *Vineyard News* called O'Neill "a promising playwright from Provincetown."

A "promising playwright," indeed. The following year, O'Neill's first full-length play, *Beyond the Horizon*, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for drama.

In the summer of 1929, the Curtiss Flying Service, now

providing daily flights from Boston (and bringing the Boston newspapers), opened a flying school at Katama. It advertised that one could take a vacation at the beach while learning to fly. Its basic 10-hour course taught the rudiments of flying; a 25-hour course included navigation training; and its 50-hour course prepared those who hoped to earn a living as pilots. Its brochure did make it sound like a vacation:

A large, comfortable farmhouse, located but a short distance from the edge of the flying field, contains adequate facilities for a few students and the instructors. Completely equipped tents are located close by the house, and the students virtually live, eat and fraternize with their instructors during the entire period of their course at Martha's Vineyard. . .

A competent chef [is] in charge. . . Milk, cream, fresh eggs and vegetables are obtained from a neighboring farm. A private bathing beach adjoins the farmhouse, and it is possible for students to enjoy a swim at any time. . . the students may avail themselves of all the social life to be had, including yachting, bathing, tennis, golf and other sports. . . Arrangements are being made to provide for cards at the Edgartown Tennis Club and the Oak Bluffs Country Club, for the use of Curtiss students.

Daily flight service to Boston did not last long. We find no record of it operating after 1929. It was not a good time to introduce airplane travel. That October, the stock market crashed, leaving few willing (or able) to spend money flying to the Vineyard. The train and the ferry would do.

Curtiss did continue its Katama flying school into the 1930s, teaching the sons of well-to-do mainlanders who still had money after the crash. These young men, some driving expensive European sports cars, spent summer afternoons in Edgartown, swimming "at the Bend," today's State Beach.

The only fatality at the flying school occurred when lightning struck the farmhouse dormitory, killing one student. (That farmhouse, according to Mae Wannamaker of Edgartown, whose grandfather owned the Katama field, was later moved and is now the Square Rigger restaurant in Edgartown.)

Mrs. Wannamaker remembered that her grandfather, William G. Vincent, hired many Portuguese to work on his

farm. The Portuguese had been gardeners on the Island for many years. As early as 1900, some were living in the old farmhouses at Seven Gates Farm, raising vegetables for residents. Many more now lived in Oak Bluffs.

David Welch remembered:

[They lived mostly] from Vineyard Avenue over to Wing Road. . . and along where the ball park is. . . all the way up to Wing Road. Up to the Lagoon Heights was all Portuguese. . . The Portuguese Club was built probably in the 30s.

The Portuguese, more than any other minority, are essential to the story of Martha's Vineyard. Their presence began in the late 1700s when Capt. Joseph Swazey and his brother, Anthony, came to Edgartown. They were members of a distinguished Lisbon family, it was said (their father was Portugal's ambassador to England at one time).

But they were the exception. Most of the Island's Portuguese were not from the mainland of Europe. They came from the "Western Islands," Portuguese possessions off the coast of Europe and North Africa, many miles from Portugal. The first to come had crewed on whalers that stopped at those islands to fill out their crews before heading out for whales. When the whalers returned from their voyages, many Portuguese gave up whaling and stayed in New Bedford to work in its textile mills. Later, a few, unhappy with factory work, came to the Vineyard to become fishermen and laborers. That was in the mid-1800s. Those early immigrants were few in number compared with those who came later, during the great emigration from Europe in the early 1900s.

The Portuguese story is complicated. Coming as they did from different islands stretching over a thousand miles of ocean from north to south, they had many differences. Those from the northern islands, Madeira and the Azores, were lighter-skinned, being mostly of European ancestry, while those from the southern islands, the Cape Verdeans, were darker-skinned, their ancestors often North African. What they had in common was their Portuguese language, not their ancestry. But to Vineyarders, they were all Portuguese or, more often than not, "Port-a-gees," a derogatory term.

Many of those "Port-a-gees" lived in shacks they had built alongside their gardens on the outskirts of Oak Bluffs. They raised vegetables and flowers that they sold door-to-door from their wagons. Later, when they began selling in the markets, some became store owners, as they learned the trade.

Through the years, they became active in all economic and social levels. Today, many of the Island's leading families have Portuguese ancestry. Marianne Thomas of Edgartown has painstakingly gathered the genealogy of thousands of those families in two volumes available at the Society.

During the early years, however, they were considered second-class persons. Miriam Walker, granddaughter of Charles Shearer of Shearer Cottages, describes how blacks, she being one, felt about the Portuguese, and vice versa:

We weren't allowed to play with the Portuguese. And the Portuguese didn't want their children to play with the black families. . . I used to have a Portuguese boy friend. My mother would have died if she'd known I was seeing this boy.

There were other groups who were considered to be second class. Walker tells of a conversation she had with Ida Levine, who owned the Vineyard Dry Goods Store in Vineyard Haven. Ida was proud to tell her that her son was on the board of Harvard. She said to Miriam:

Can you imagine a Levine in such a position? You know what I mean.

Miriam Walker, a black, knew exactly what she meant. For Ida's son, a Jew, to be on the board of Harvard College was something neither of them could have imagined while growing up on Martha's Vineyard:

You know I know what you mean. This was a very anti-Jewish island. . . they let the Negroes in before they let the Jews in. . . Negroes were really accepted before the Jews.

Madison Denniston, a black whose father was then the Baptist minister in Oak Bluffs, described how the Portuguese lived when he was young:

The Portuguese were the poor of the Island at that time [early 1900s]. They raised pigs and were the swill collectors to feed their pigs. They lived in just one area, Little Portugal, you

might cail it. Mrs. Bradley did social work among the poor Portuguese.

Mrs. Susan C. Bradley, whom he mentioned, was an outstanding woman, who has been forgotten in Island history. She was born in 1832 in Stoughton, Massachusetts, into an important family. She and her sister, Ruth, established a private school in Brockton and ran it for years. Always anxious to help the less fortunate, Susan (then Miss Clapp) at the end of Civil War went to North Carolina as representative of the American Missionary Association to run a school for freed slaves.

When she returned to Massachusetts, she settled in Cottage City (now Oak Bluffs) and founded the Oakland Mission in her home. Rev. Oscar E. Denniston, who became her assistant at the mission, described her work in the obituary he wrote when she died in 1908:

She founded the Oakland Mission in 1890 and worked faithfully for more than 10 years among the colored people and Portuguese and the poor and unfortunate of the town. It was during this time that she became the wife of Stephen H. Bradley, whom she survived. . .

No one in Dukes County fought "Old King Alcohol" more severely than Susan Clapp Bradley.

She was one of the most unselfish characters that labored in the cause of Christ. . . She died in her seventy-sixth year.

Reverend Denniston knew her well, having worked for her when he came to the Island from Jamaica. He was a black minister who learned about Martha's Vineyard from Rev. Madison Edwards, chaplain of the Seamen's Bethel in Vineyard Haven. Reverend Edwards had gone to Jamaica on a vacation and he and Denniston became friends. When he came north a few years later, Denniston first settled in Boston, and after a year or so, moved to the Island, encouraged by Edwards. After working with Edwards at the Bethel for a year, he became the assistant to Mrs. Bradley at the Oakland Mission. By then she was getting old and soon Denniston had taken over, gradually turning the mission into a church.

That was the beginning of the black Baptist church on the Island. When Mrs. Bradley died, Denniston renamed it the



Bradley Memorial Mission in her memory. The mission soon became the Bradley Memorial Baptist Church.

Island blacks had preferred the Baptist faith for years, ever since it had become obvious that other denominations did not welcome them. The Baptist Temple on the Highlands, built in 1877, two years before the Methodist Tabernacle, served white Baptists only at first. A few years later, blacks began holding their services in it, conducted by black Baptist ministers who came over from New Bedford.

Those services were segregated, but when black choral groups from the south began giving concerts in the Temple, both whites and blacks attended. In 1883, a "colored quartette from Howard College" gave two concerts of "peculiar music of their section and race" in Cottage City, raising \$50 for their school. Singers from other black southern colleges gave concerts at both the Methodist Tabernacle and the Baptist Temple each summer, and attendance was racially mixed.

Reverend Denniston's church was black, but did not appeal to middle-class blacks who owned summer homes in Oak Bluffs. They were "proper" Episcopalians on vacation and could wait until they got home for church. Some years later, an Episcopal church was established in town and a few blacks worshipped there. Another black church, on Dukes County Avenue, was more traditional, with rhythmic, joyful gospel music. Little is known about it. The building still stands, but barely.

During the winter, Denniston's congregation was small, drawn from the year-round black community. In summer, it was increased by the black domestic servants who came to the Island with their wealthy employers. Sunday evening services were the best attended; domestics had to work during the day.

That attendance pattern continued for years. As late as 1962, when Rev. William B. Roane came to be the church's pastor, he described his new flock in the *Gazette*:

This church consists of 30 members who are year round and about 50 members who are here for the summer. They work here in hotels, private families and at various menial tasks and come here from all over the country. . . The congregation is noted for its melodious voices and fervent singing in worship services.

When Reverend Denniston died in 1942, the probate record of his estate listed a house on Masonic Ave (the original Susan Bradley house) and a church building on Circuit Avenue. The Circuit Avenue building had been the Noepe movie theater. Abandoned, it was in great disrepair when Denniston bought it in the early 1900s as his summer church. The church's property and his were intermingled. He never was guaranteed a salary, but was only compensated directly from the offerings of his flock each Sunday.

His life is a remarkable story. He came to Martha's Vineyard from Jamaica and soon became the leader of the black community in Oak Bluffs. There was some opposition to him, especially from the summer Episcopalian blacks. All of his many children finished college, some with graduate degrees. He said they did it on their own, working their way, but he and his two wives (when his first wife died, he went back to Jamaica to marry again) certainly deserve some credit.

The congregation dwindled after Denniston's death. A smaller building was needed and in 1958 members bought the Odd Fellows Hall on Pequot Avenue. There is a wonderful symmetry here: the building had been built in the late 1800s as the town's first Baptist church (whites only, of course) and now it was again a Baptist church, this time for blacks. The old Noepe theater on upper Circuit Avenue, that had been the summer church, was sold to Roscoe Heathman, a local contractor, who tore it down and used the lumber to build a house and workshop there.

In 1966, the Bradley Memorial Baptist Church disbanded. The building was de-consecrated in April that year. The building, unused for a time after that, is now, in 2005, once again a church: the Apostolic House of Prayer, attended by blacks and whites. But the black Baptist Church, the child of Reverend Denniston, is no more.

The Wall Street stock market crashed in 1929. The nation fell into the Great Depression soon after. Construction on the Vineyard, as elsewhere, came to a virtual halt. Some builders went bankrupt. Carpenters and laborers, their jobs gone,

turned to the ocean for income.

Edgartown's swordfishing fleet seemed little bothered by the downturn. Swordfish was becoming popular in fancy restaurants and demand was increasing. Five or six schooners from Edgartown would go out for a couple of weeks and return with a "cash crop" in their holds. After selling their catch in Boston, they would sail into Edgartown for a few days at home, their crews with fat rolls of bills in their pockets. It was a good time to be a swordfisherman, but little else.

Oak Bluffs was hit the hardest, although its hotels managed to stay open each summer despite the downturn. There was talk that they would soon have to close. The *Gazette* didn't like that kind of talk. In June 1931, it urged optimism:

There should be a limit to all this popular worry about the depression, the depression which is, incidentally, about over. . . . The Vineyard is, in truth, one of the least expensive of the worthwhile summer resorts. . . a vacation here is not an extravagance. . . This is a year to come, not a year to stay away.

But happy talk didn't bring more business, nor was the depression "about over," as Henry Hough had assured his readers. It continued for many years. The large houses in Oak Bluffs stood unoccupied in summer, their owners lacking funds to open them. That turned out to be good news for some, as Dorothy West recalled in her book, *The Richer, the Poorer*:

The great houses stood empty, too large to run without servants, and too few, if any, families could afford a staff. The hotels and shops that struggled to stay open were barely staying alive. "For Sale" signs were everywhere, and there were no buyers.

The black colony, [at first] no more than a dozen families. . . found more than they ever hoped that they would find: a place where they could stand to full size. The town was right for them, and, at the time, their coming was right for the town.

They made a massive imprint. They bought the big, neglected houses and other long-empty cottages, lifted their sagging facades, put in new plumbing and wiring, scrubbed and polished and painted.

A few others benefited from the hard times: Mosher's

Photo Shop in Vineyard Haven was one. When the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) set up a camp in the state forest, scores of unemployed men came to the Island. They cleared fire lanes, made roads, trimmed trees and brush. Many were from the city and the natural beauty of the Island impressed them. Eager to share their discovery with friends and family, they shot rolls of film, keeping Mosher's busy making prints for them to send home.

But the CCC men couldn't make up for the loss of business that Vineyard Haven felt when the Cape Cod Canal opened a new, shorter route between Boston and ports south. Since the 1800s, Vineyard Haven had been a lay-over port for vessels awaiting a fair wind and tide on their way to Boston. The canal changed that. It had been opened in the 1920s as a privately owned waterway, charging tolls, but it was too narrow and shallow to attract the larger ships. In 1928, the federal government bought it, but did little with it until the depression. Then, the WPA (Works Progress Administration) decided it would be a good project. About 1400 men were put to work, creating a sea-level canal 500 feet wide and 32 feet deep, said to be the largest sea-level canal in the world. The improved canal opened in 1940 and Vineyard Haven lost its shipping business. Tugs towed their barges on the shorter and more protected route through Buzzards Bay and the canal to Boston.

Somehow, even at the bottom of the depression, Oak Bluffs managed to stay alive. Guests still came to the big old hotels, still sat on their porches, rocking the hours away, entertained by the evening flow of vacationers and Islanders along the avenue. It was a joy for all who could afford to come. A nickel bag of Darling's popcorn or a cone of Rausch's homemade ice cream were enough to make an evening's fun. That was Oak Bluffs; the rest of the Island was less fortunate.

It wasn't until World War II that the other towns began an economic rebound. An early taste of what was on the way came even before war was declared when the Army built an observation tower atop Peaked Hill in Chilmark. The tower itself wasn't a big project (it wasn't clear what it was for at the

time), but a new road had to be built to get to it and that put a lot of men to work. A couple of years later, in 1943, with the war underway, the tower was replaced by a radar station, manned by about 25 soldiers. A barracks and other buildings were built and more Island men went to work. The soldiers stationed at the radar site were in the Army's Amphibian Force and wore stylish berets and high, shiny boots that impressed many young women along Circuit Avenue on off-duty hours.

With the country at war, the Island became the scene of mock invasions, bringing hundreds of soldiers with money to spend. One "invasion" was in early October 1942 when thousands of soldiers stormed ashore. Nothing was written about it in the newspapers, it was "secret," although thousands knew it was happening. To satisfy public curiosity, one week later, the Army put out a long press release from Camp Edwards. Here are a few excerpts:

Thousands of Camp Edwards amphibious and amphibian troops stormed across Vineyard Sound in assault boats, and invaded the island of Martha's Vineyard, smashed enemy installations, disrupted enemy communications and forced the foe back into the sea in the most extensive land and sea maneuvers ever carried out in this section of the country. . .

The amphibious infantrymen stormed the island at three different points, parachute troops swooped down, seized the vital enemy-held airport at Edgartown. . . Hour after hour, wave after wave, came the heavily-clad sea-going troops. . . The main landing was in the northwest side of the island by two combat teams, with other landings at two other points so as to draw the enemy away from the main sector.

The first boat struck shore exactly on schedule. Down planked the jaw-like door and onto the mushy, white sand leaped the infantrymen. . . they were met by thunderous explosions, which shattered the mysterious stillness of the early, dreary morning. The crackle of machine guns added to the din. An orange flash pierced the inky black sky. Another explosion. More boats landing. The incessant chatter of machine guns. More boats land. And still more.

Landings were made south of Norton Beach, southeast of Lambert's Cove, Sachem Spring and Chappaquonsett Pond, south of Paul's Point, north of Cape Higgon and North Tisbury.

Needless to say, the good guys won.

Several more such "invasions" followed. In August 1943, when amphibious forces came ashore at Edgartown, they brought a festive air with them. One of them, PFC Robert F. Phelan of Waterbury, Connecticut, wrote home about it:

The island is really nice this time of year and there is plenty to do. There are three towns here and I have been to two of them. We have the Brigade Band with us and they serenade us at meal time and play in town at night for our dances.

A few days ago we built some tank obstacles and had some tanks test them out. One of them turned over, but no one was hurt.

After the tank demonstration we had a track and field meet. . . Jimmy Cagney and Katherine Cornell, who are vacationing on the Vineyard, [watched] the track meet. After it was over, they were invited to talk to us. Katherine Cornell didn't say very much, but we really got Cagney going. He told a couple of corny Irish jokes and then someone suggested that he sing. They hauled the band up to where he was standing. . . and he sang Yankee Doodle Dandy, A Grand Old Flag, Mary, and a few more . . . the Fellows enjoyed him a lot.

After that, we had a hot-dog roast.

Once more, the good guys had won.

There were other mock invasions, but none with such a spirited result as that one. Richard Burt, a youngster at the time, remembers watching invasions on the North Shore at Seven Gates Farm where he lived (his father was superintendent there). He recalls airplanes dropping practice bombs into ponds on the Island.

Irving Willoughby of Edgartown recalled seeing paratroopers jumping from scores of airplanes and waves of landing craft swarming up on the beaches to disgorge their troops. "It was just like a war," he said.

David Flanders saw things during the war that were not make-believe. He saw the enemy:

I've seen German submarines come up and charge their batteries, during the war. They'd come up in the lee of the Island here. And the Coast Guard called in the artillery which was over by New Bedford. There was a fort over there, Fort Rod-



man, and they shot at them with, I guess, five-inch guns or nine-inch guns. I never saw them get any of them, though. The guns could reach the Island but they weren't very accurate. It was about the end of their range. And they had a lot of planes around here, you know, from the airfield, and PBY sea planes were flying around here looking for submarines.

He saw what he believed to be a German spy one day while delivering a telegram to an up-Island beach house:

Mother had a private line for her real estate business, the only telephone up here, so she had the telegram service. They'd call from Edgartown if there was something for up here. Mother had a little Western Union thing and she'd write it down and then type it as a telegram and she'd give it to me and I'd take it to the house.

There was a house right on the beach down here, and the guy that owned it had bought it just about the time the war started, 1941. He was in the import-export business. He came from Norway, I believe. I delivered telegrams there quite often. One time, maybe half-way through the war, 1943 maybe, I rode down on my bike and it was just coming dusk and I went to the house and nobody was there but I saw a light in the guest house. And I went down there, and then I could hear the sound of a machine, "tit-ti, tit-ti, tit-ti," the man was on a radio, he was talking. I kind of peeked in the window and his back was to me, he was sitting there and the antenna was up and he was sending.

It scared me. . . and I shouted, "Hey! Anybody here?" And he come to the door, and I gave him the telegram. So then I went back home and I told Mother that I'd seen him, he really was signaling with a teletype thing, a radio.

So she called up the number that we were supposed to call if we saw something. She told what I'd seen. . . They sent a man named Mr. Carpenter the next day, and I had to take him over. And he wanted me to show him which house it was and describe the guy and everything. So I did. And I know they were around there for a while, but I never knew what happened.

Many years later, I was at a fireman's dinner on the Vineyard and the guest speaker was a Mr. Carpenter from the FBI. After he spoke, I went up to him and asked, "Mr. Carpenter, were you here during the war?" I told him my story and he

looked at me and he says, "Yeah, you're that boy, aren't you?" I says "Yes!" So he told me what had happened, which I was very interested in.

They thought he was really talking with a submarine because they were in the area. But they didn't arrest anybody, they just followed him and looked where his contacts were and got the names and addresses of all those people. And they never did pick him up. He did get away without them knowing it. He went out on a submarine, they thought.

The Island didn't have any defense plants, but the Martha's Vineyard Shipyard in Vineyard Haven did defense work for the Navy. It employed well over 100 men, making wooden vessels of three designs. Only one was a combat vessel: a small landing craft designed to carry small groups of men to shore. The other two were utility craft.

The largest vessels built were so-called "Honey barges," large, ungainly scows, about 100 feet overall with a wide beam, used for hauling garbage from naval bases.

The third design was smaller, about 35 feet overall, built to ferry bombs and depth charges out to the Navy's flying boats. It was rimmed with rubber fenders to prevent it from damaging the fragile aircraft during the loading operation.

The shipyard was much larger than it is today (2005), extending for hundreds of yards on both sides of Beach Road along Vineyard Haven harbor. Its effect on the Island's cash flow was important and after the war, when it went into a quick decline, many Islanders suffered economically.

Early in the war, Islanders were warned about enemy air attacks. Leaflets advised them what to do if one occurred. Each town set up air-raid shelters where residents were to go during a raid. Edgartown had nine shelters, none, it would seem, affording much protection from falling bombs. Included were the town's churches, the county jail, the public library, the school gymnasium and the movie theater.

Air-raid wardens were appointed and provided with reporting forms to be filled out and rushed by messenger to headquarters immediately after an attack. The forms asked whether the bombs that had fallen were "High Explosive, Incendiary or Poison Gas," what was the approximate number of

casualties? ("If any trapped under wreckage, say so") and the "Position of unexploded bombs." No warden had to fill out a form during the war, it would seem.

With such concern about bombing and invasion, many Islanders volunteered for observation duty, looking for approaching enemy. Some developed an irrational fear of German invasion or sabotage. From lookout posts around the Island, they stared for hours, watching for incoming enemy, reporting lights, often imaginary, they saw flashing at sea and in the air.

Ensign Everett S. Allen, son of Joseph Chase Allen, long-time reporter and columnist for the *Vineyard Gazette*, was the officer in charge of the Naval Intelligence office on the Island, with its headquarters on Beach Road in Vineyard Haven. He wrote in his book, *Martha's Vineyard: an Elegy*, that he was not impressed with his importance to the war effort:

My principal duty as I saw it was to convince the Navy to close the installation. I came to that conclusion after no more than a few hours of searching for "flashing lights" that proved to have logical explanations, and "guttural accents" that derived from Hoboken, not Hamburg.

It seemed to me possible that a spy, saboteur, or traitor might show up on the Island. . . [but] if one did, he (or she) probably would not flash any lights or have a guttural accent.

He was flooded with reports of sightings. His favorite spotter was a woman in her sixties who "after spending twenty hours a day, looking, listening and taking notes," reported daily on the suspicious movements of vessels and people:

She was splendid about noting the precise times at which things happened, the compass bearing, if applicable, and she recited, with what I thought considerable grace, the manners and mannerisms of her subjects. . . I confess neither she nor I ever caught any spies or saboteurs, but I did look forward to her accounts; they sparkled and brightened otherwise dull days.

Although Allen may not have taken the threat of a German invasion seriously, others did. The Coast Guard manned stations along the south shore from Gay Head to Cape Poge. Men, carrying rifles and accompanied by dogs, patrolled the

shoreline 24 hours a day. They were quartered in summer homes along the south shore and in the hotel at Gay Head.

The Coast Guard controlled the use of pleasure boats. Certain areas were declared off-limits to all private vessels, being reserved for training exercises. Permits and passes were issued to fishermen to permit them to sail into the restricted areas. Their radios were sealed and the seal could be broken only to report enemy activities. Of course, as the war went on and little enemy action was seen, the rules were relaxed.

Coast Guardsmen were not the only ones patrolling the beaches. Island residents walked the beaches on the north shore. One of the volunteers was Craig Kingsbury of Tisbury:

I had East Chop night patrol as a volunteer. . . there was this little house, part of the Oak Bluffs Tennis Club, that had a little four-hole golf course out there close to the lighthouse. I'd walk, checking the beach three nights a week, a guy named McDonald had three nights, and then one night each week one of the girls took over. . . We'd go over there at 9 o'clock and come home at sunrise.

Lots of activity was going on. There were men over at Katama, practicing landings on the beach, but they didn't want civilians around. . . there was a camp down where Katherine Cornell's place is now, on Aunt Rhody's Pond. They rebuilt the road to get their equipment down there. . . and lived in wooden tents, bolted together.

There was a heck of a bunch of [sailors] out at the airport, probably 1800. . . plus about a hundred soldiers scattered around the Island. . . they'd fill the barrooms and gin mills in Oak Bluffs and Edgartown when they weren't on duty.

The airport's Naval Air Base that Kingsbury mentions was the largest war-time installation on the Island. Hundreds of Navy and Marine pilots and their support units came there for five or six weeks of flight training, landing and taking off from the short runways that simulated an aircraft carrier's deck. A flag man would wave approaching planes on or off as he would aboard ship. Being waved off required the pilot to pull up and circle back. Planes occasionally stalled out and crash-landed among the forgiving small pine trees around the airport. The damaged aircraft would be hauled to the huge hangar and re-

paired to fly again another day.

Repairing the wrecked planes and keeping the base running required nearly 1000 non-flying sailors who, no doubt, enjoyed being stationed on an island, far from enemy guns. They lived in standard GI two-story barracks. Nearby were quarters for the officers, plus a recreation building, complete with slot machines, off-limits, of course, to the ordinary sailor.

As was standard in the Navy, officers were well taken care of by orderlies. These were a company of black sailors quartered in Quonset huts across the road from the others. Joseph Stiles was one of the orderlies. He described life at the base:

We took care of the officers' food and took care of the officers' club and their living quarters. That's as far up in the Navy a black could get at that time. Just in the kitchen.

We had to walk across the road to the nearest white barracks to take showers. The Navy was very prejudiced, we were second-class. . . The base was so bad that we couldn't eat at the same tables with the whites.

There was a lot of racists. That's why I signed up for ship duty as soon as I could. . . I got tired of going on liberty and having to fight my way back to camp. . . we were scared, going on liberty at night. There was always a fight coming back.

We'd hit the night spots in Oak Bluffs, catch the last bus to camp, and we'd have fights all the way back. There'd be six or eight of us blacks and 40 of them [whites]. They'd get on the bus real drunk and some of them would come to the back, shouting, "Let's get the niggers."

All the way back there'd be fist fights. The driver tried to get to camp as fast as he could, but there was a governor on the engine. He couldn't speed it up.

That's why I asked to be transferred to a ship. It was too much for me.

Stiles never had any trouble with Vineyard residents, only with the white sailors at the airport:

There was nothing like that on the Island. The Island people were great to the blacks. That's why I came here to live afterwards, because Island people always treated us beautiful.

What happened at the air base was secret, of course, and rarely reported. It is known that a number of Navy pilots, at

least as many as six, were killed when they crash-landed in the ocean off the Island due to mechanical failures. There was a period when maintenance of the aircraft was shoddy, caused, some said, by too little discipline and too much alcohol. A few fires were started on the Island when planes inadvertently dropped signal flares. Sometimes, bombs were dropped accidentally, but because they were usually target bombs, they had little explosive power. No civilian casualties are known to have occurred. But there was damage to a few buildings, including to one house on North Water Street, Edgartown.

Near the end of the war, discipline greatly improved at the base and the number of maintenance-related accidents dropped. The base's mission was changed about then to the training of night-attack pilots in radar guidance, a system then brand-new. The Navy closed down the base in May 1946.

The Army leased some land from Edward T. Vincent at Katama early in 1943, for some purpose not stated. Later than year, the Navy took it over and built a gunnery range. The public was banned from the entire area, including the beach, as live ammunition was being used. Barracks and ammunition depots were built there at a cost of \$3 million, providing more work for Islanders. There were complaints from fishermen about not being able to use the beach.

One of the saddest things that happened on the Island during the war was when two sailors drowned in a tank of aircraft gasoline at the Naval Air Base. The story was covered up. The Navy stated only that the men had been killed by fumes while cleaning the tank. The facts were different, as we learned from Ed Krikorian, who was assigned to the base in January 1943, a year before the accident.

He was on his tour of duty, expecting to be relieved as usual by his friend, Richard Holden. When Holden failed to show up, Krikorian asked another sailor if had seen him:

The guy said, "He's over there."

So I went over to see. There was a lot of people standing around looking down into a gas tank buried there. I was told that Holden and a fellow named Goodwin had volunteered to go down this ladder into the tank and measure it to see how



much gasoline it held.

Goodwin felt a little faint and tried to climb out. The fumes got him and he fell back, pulling the ladder down with him. William Ping, a sailor from Detroit, jumped into the tank before I got there. I grabbed a rope that was on the ground and tied it around me, handed the other end to some guy standing there, and went into the tank. The gasoline was up to my chest.

I kicked around the bottom of the tank and kicked somebody. He was soaked with gasoline and heavy. I finally got him up until somebody reached down and grabbed him, shouting, "I got him." Then I passed out. They pulled me out with the rope. When I woke up, I was laying on the ground, doctors over me and the whole bit.

The guy I pulled out was Goodwin. Two guys died: Holden, my friend from Fall River, and Ping from Detroit. Goodwin was from New Hampshire. Afterwards he was real sick from swallowing so much gasoline. I wrote a letter for him to send to the Veterans Administration and he got a pension. I never applied for one.

I don't know why they had to die in that gasoline. It was a stupid order. Two men drowned in the tank. Goodwin lived and I lived, but I threw up every time I smelled gasoline for a year or so.

The Navy told the newspapers that two men had been overcome by fumes while cleaning an empty tank. That was not true. There was five feet of gasoline in the tank and the two men drowned in it.

I had just married an Island girl and was still sick in her house four days later, when a Navy man knocked on the door, carrying my sea bag that somebody had packed with my stuff. He handed me a ferry-boat ticket and off I went to Navy headquarters in Boston. They sent me to Philadelphia to a Navy school. All of us who seen what happened in that tank was shipped out right away.

Ed Krikorian was so saddened by the useless deaths of his fellow sailors that many years later he had a memorial plaque with their names on it placed at the site of their drowning.

David Flanders of Chilmark was a teen-ager during those years and some of his memories of the war are happier:

My mom worked in real estate, and she rented houses to peo-

ple that came from England and France during the war. The English gentlemen would send their wives and all their kids over here, to get them out of the Blitz, out of England, out of London.

I got to know a lot of the English boys and girls that came. They'd come for the whole summer, three months. I'm still in touch with some of the kids that were my age. I had a fellow call last year that I hadn't talked to since '45 or '46. He had three brothers. We used to go beach-combing every Saturday, we walked all the shore to Gay Head. And we found all kinds of stuff from boats being torpedoed. Life chests and oars and food sometimes would come on the beach, and gasoline drums filled with gas.

I remember I found some gasoline drums and my dad needed gas, awful gas shortage here. It was aviation gas, very high octane. My father had five-gallon oil cans, I siphoned the gas with a hose into the oil cans. Then I got the oil cans up on the beach and put them in the bushes. I got my bicycle, with a cart on the back, and I'd ride back and forth pulling these cans back home. I had a lot of cans full, about fifty gallons. My father diluted it, put kerosene in it. We ran the tractors on it, the cars, the boat, everything.

Not all Vineyarders had such pleasant memories of World War II. Our records show that 614 Islanders served during the war. Of the total, 380 were in the Army, 152 in the Navy, 35 in the Coast Guard, 34 in the Marines and 13 in the Air Force. Tisbury had 220, Edgartown had 181, Oak Bluffs 173, Chilmark 16, West Tisbury 15 and Gay Head 9.

The records we have show that 15 Islanders were killed in action or died of wounds. Another 7 died in the service for reasons other than enemy action.

***Killed in action or died of wounds:***

Arthur C. Andrews  
Edmund J. Berube (Navy/Marines)  
Douglas C. Brown (Navy/Marines)  
Adelbert E. Colby  
Lester E. Healy  
Walter H. Hermenau  
Walter Karzhewsky  
Donald F. McEachern

William H. Monahan  
 Jean D. Ouelette  
 Willard H. Sawyer Jr.  
 Morris Shapiro  
 John P. Silva  
 Donald S. Swift (Navy/Marines)  
 Joseph J. Zasada

***Died, Non-Battle Causes:***

Manuel A. Enos  
 Napoleon R. Gagnon  
 Robert R. Gilkes  
 John D. Kelley  
 Lawrence J. LeBlanc  
 John A. Silvia  
 Richard R. Thompson

This list may not be complete and may have errors, but it is based on the best information we have. The Navy/Marines data do not indicate cause of death, so we are not sure whether those three men died as a result of enemy action or not.

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The war had been good for business in Oak Bluffs. Not only did the men from the Naval Air Base fill its bars during off-duty hours, but family and friends who visited them kept its hotels and restaurants filled. With the war's end, things changed, as David Welch explains:

With all the sailors and the soldiers on the Island, all their girls came and they had to have places to stay. The hotels were pretty busy. After the war, the hotels couldn't survive, there were too many of them. And the people who came then wanted motels or condominiums and beachfront rooms and stuff like that. . .

They took the top two floors off the Pawnee House and the other big hotels were torn down for the lumber. . . There was no need for all the hotels they had.

When its big hotels were torn down, much of the joy of Oak Bluffs disappeared. Gone were the guests in rocking chairs, watching vacationers stroll along the avenue each evening, munching on Darling's well-buttered popcorn. Gone, too, were the bands that entertained from those hotel balco-

nies. Instead of strollers filling the avenue, the automobile had taken over. The avenue was no longer a place for strolling.

The Naval Air Base was turned into a hen farm when an entrepreneur bought the empty barracks and filled them with thousands of cackling hens. It wasn't long before the two-story buildings began to fall apart as the hens' droppings rotted the wooden floors. A sorry ending to a wartime chapter.

Much more than the war had ended. An era had ended with it. Henry Hough recognized that:

The end of WW II . . . [brought] a break in continuity with the long past. For 300 years the Island had been singularly homogeneous. . . a combination of farming and fishing carried on by the same people. . . Those old traditions fitted the Island so well. . . the Vineyard was uncrowded, there was a rhythm to the seasons.

Hough understood that rhythm well. In *Martha's Vineyard: Summer Resort*, he wrote about an Island that for two months a year took time out to be a resort. The rest of the year, it was a normal, coastal New England community where residents were farmers, fishermen and laborers.

After World War II, the nation began to "discover" the Vineyard. Celebrities, even a President, made it *the* place to be. It began to revolve around the business of summer.

The change was seismic. Never again would Martha's Vineyard be what it had been: a quiet island of fishermen and farmers. Being a summer resort had become its full-time job.

*(End of the series)*

***In Gratitude***

During the several years that this series has been in progress, many individuals have helped the author, too many to list here. He hopes he will be forgiven. You know who you are and you know that his deepest thanks go to each of you.

There are several others, whose assistance was more frequent, being called on for help with almost every chapter. They must be thanked here: Helen Gelotte, Catherine Mayhew and Eulalie Regan, for their research; Jean McCarthy and the author's son, Stephen Railton, for their copy and proof reading.



## In Memoriam:

John M. Morgan

(1940 — 2004)

John M. Morgan, a Society vice president, died on August 28, 2004. He had been a guiding force in the work of this organization for a number of years.

John was a person who was not content merely to offer suggestions, hoping somebody else would carry them out. He worked at getting them done, often providing generous financial aid himself.

The Society grounds, he thought, were not as attractive as they could be and he convinced the Board to do something about it. With his encouragement, shrubs and flowers were planted around the property. But they were not just any shrubs; they must be plants native to the Island. Labels were placed near them, describing their local connection. The plantings became a museum of nature, just as the buildings they decorate are museums of artifacts.

It was John, too, who led the move to restore Oscar Pease's catboat, *Vanity*, insisting she not be a static exhibit in a shed, but instead be maintained as a working boat, typical of the catboats that provided a livelihood for so many Island men in the past. Built by Manuel Swartz Roberts for Oscar's father, *Vanity* had provided a livelihood for two generations of the family, taking them out for quahaugs, scallops and fish.

John wanted *Vanity* returned to the harbor. Now each summer, she is at her mooring in Edgartown, one of the oldest boats floating there. Capt. Kevin Ledwell keeps her shipshape for any who wish to take a sail. That is what Oscar Pease would have wanted her to be: a working boat.

Any who would like to experience the joy of sailing in this handsome, century-old catboat may call the Society. It is a wonderful way to spend a few hours, being taken back to Edgartown summers of long ago. Thanks to John.

John M. Morgan was buried in Connecticut, his home before retiring, but there is a memorial to him on the Island. She swings at her mooring in Edgartown harbor all summer.

## WARDENS REPORT FORM ISLAND OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD

Commence with the words "AIR RAID DAMAGE"

WARDENS SECTOR NUMBER

LOCATION OF DAMAGE

TYPE OF BOMBS.	H.E.	Incendiary	Poison Gas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Approx. No. of Casualties  
(If any trapped under wreckage, say so)

If Fire, say so

Damage to Mains.	Water	Gas	Electric	Sewers
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Names of Roads Blocked

Position of Unexploded Bombs

Time of Bombing (approx.)

Services already on Spot

Remarks

Finish with the words "End of Message"

ORIGINAL	} These words are for use with a report sent by messenger.
DUPLICATE	
Delete whichever does not apply.	

World War II artifact, never used. Report to be filled out when the bombs fell.



# AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS TO CIVILIANS

## A. PROCEDURE DURING AIR RAID

1. Keep off the street.
2. Stay in your own house, if possible.
3. Avoid all unnecessary travel by automobile.
4. Keep away from windows.

## B. FIRE PRECAUTIONS AND PREPARATION OF ATTIC

1. Clear attic of all inflammable materials.
2. See that all parts of the attic are always accessible.
3. Fill cracks in attic floor; cover floor with linoleum or building paper, with 2 inches of dry sand or earth over it (if flooring will stand weight).
- \*4. Woodwork should be painted with heat-resistant paint.

## C. EXTINGUISHING INCENDIARY BOMB

1. If you reach the bomb within 50 seconds, you can control it by shovelling DRY SAND on it. Pick it up with long-handled shovel, dump in Sand Bucket, cover with more sand and carry outdoors. Scrape up any charred wood, wet down flooring and carry scrapings outdoors on top of Sand Bucket.
2. After 50 seconds, too late to handle as above, and must be controlled with VERY FINE SPRAY of water,—“FOG” or “MIST” SPRAY from the Stirrup Pump. Use FINE SPRAY ONLY on bomb. Use FULL JET on surrounding inflammable materials, walls, etc.
3. Never pour water on bomb, nor turn full jet from stirrup pump on it. Will increase its violence and may cause explosion.
4. NEVER USE CHEMICAL EXTINGUISHER. In combination with bomb, will create POISON GAS (Phosgene).
5. Keep pails of Dry Sand, Long-handled Shovel, Scraper, Buckets of Water, and Stirrup Pump with 30 feet of hose ALWAYS in attic.

## D. BLACKOUT MEASURES

1. Board up all skylights.
2. Have a strip of about 4 inches wide as a permanent fixture down the side, across the bottom and top of the windows.
3. Use a curtain made of Sisalcraft paper to pull down like a roller shade.
4. The theory of a blackout is to keep house cheery inside.

## E. MAKING AND EQUIPPING OF A REFUGE ROOM\*

- \* For further information consult your local air warden.

**DO NOT DESTROY THIS SHEET**

*Nobody could say there weren't instructions as to how to behave when the bombs fell in World War II. Be "cheery" during the blackout, D4 tells all.*