



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 47, No. 4

MAY 2006

For a Very Long 20 Years, Darling's Was the Best

by CAROL CARR DELL
(with ARTHUR R. RAILTON)

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"Popcorn Harry" Collins: Darling's Traveling Salesman

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Departure and Arrival

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For a Very Long 20 Years, Darling's Was the Best

by CAROL CARR DELL

as told to

ARTHUR R. RAILTON

FOR WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN the longest twenty years in Vineyard history, the striped awning in front of Darling's Popcorn Store on Circuit Avenue, Oak Bluffs, boasted: "FOR 20 YEARS THE BEST."

When I began working behind the counter during World War II, the slogan was already out of date. I was about 12 at the time, so young that my father, who owned the store, told me to disappear if I saw anybody walk up who looked like an official enforcing the child-labor laws. He didn't tell me how I would recognize him.

For more than 60 years, that slogan never changed. In 1961, Lewina (later Lee) and Herbert M. Metell of Vineyard Haven bought Darling's and kept both the slogan, "FOR 20 YEARS THE BEST," and Darling's name. When the Metells sold the property in 1964 to George Munro, owner of the adjacent Boston House (who tore down the building), they kept the name, the slogan and the confectionery business and moved into a smaller store on Circuit Avenue near the Island Theatre.

In 1966, the Metells sold everything to Bernard "Bunny" Lewis, who continued using the name and the slogan until 1981, when he was bought out by Murdick's Fudge. It was then that the name, Darling's, and the slogan were dropped to survive only in the memories of Circuit Avenue old timers.

Darling's was such an appropriate name for a sweet shop. It is no wonder that it, along with the slogan, survived long after there was nobody named Darling in the company. (Sarah and John Darling had no children; Harris Carr, who took over the store after them, was their nephew.)

CAROL JANE CARR DELL of Oak Bluffs is great-grandniece of Carroll John Darling, who gave Darling's its name and for whom Carol was named (as close as a girl's name can get to a man's). Happily, she tells of the store that meant so much to her family.

Darling's wasn't the original name. The store began some time in the 1890s under different owners. The 1897 *Directory of Residents and Businesses* in Cottage City (now Oak Bluffs) lists a "Confectionery, Fruit and Popcorn" store at 122 Circuit Avenue with the name "Farwell and Greeley." It was in that store that Carroll John Darling from Albany, Vermont, went to work about 1900.

It was not the only confectionery store in town. There was another one, Noyes and Moore, at 143 Circuit Avenue, on the other side of the Arcade. Its co-owner, James M. Noyes, lived on Nantucket and seems to have sold his share of the business to Joseph P. Kenny early in the 1900s. A postcard at the Historical Society, mailed in 1908, shows that store on Circuit Avenue with a large sign proclaiming: "Kenny and Moore, Vineyard Pop Corn Works."

There also exists (*in my possession: C.C.D.*) an earlier, faded photograph of the Farwell and Greeley store taken soon after John Darling went to work there. Posing in front of the counter are eight persons, among them C. John Darling in work clothes and a fashionable woman identified by my mother as his wife, Sarah, also from Vermont. She obviously is not working at the store, dressed as she is in her Sunday best. The photograph must have been taken between 1900 and 1904, while the store belonged to Farwell and Greeley.

Carroll John Darling at 25 was not some adventurous teen-ager looking for a summer job at the beach. We don't know what attracted him, a farmer from Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, to the Island, but it didn't take long for him to make up his mind to stay.

Whatever his reason for the move, it was a happy choice for thousands of vacationers through the years that followed. Like bees attracted to fresh blossoms, visitors were drawn by the aroma emanating from Darling's open counter to buy a bag of buttered popcorn for nibbling on as they strolled along Circuit Avenue, a favorite recreation at the time.

Of course, not everyone bought popcorn; there were enough other sweets in the glass cases along the sidewalk to please all: taffies, peanuts, caramels, fudges, to list only a few.



Fading with age, a 1900 photo of store that became Darling's. Second from right, John Darling; second from left, all dressed up, some say, is wife Sarah.

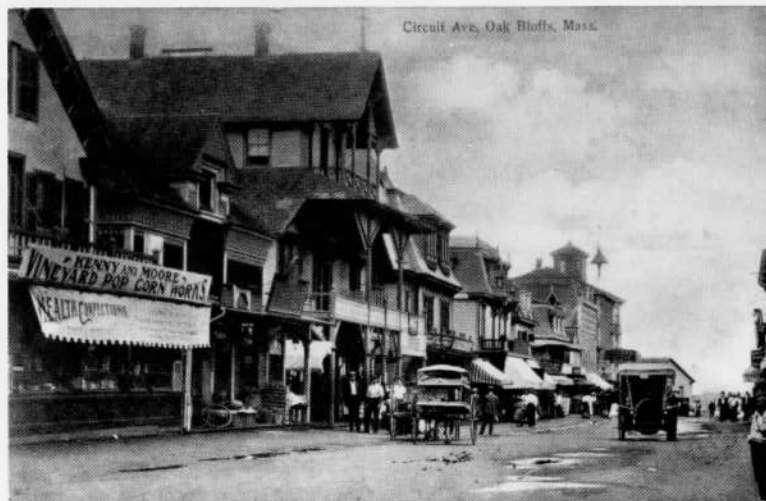
Almost everything sweet was on sale at Darling's.

Within a couple of years, John Darling bought Farwell's share of Farwell and Greeley. Soon after that, in 1904, he bought out Greeley. The sign over the storefront now read, "DARLING'S." By 1910, he was doing well enough to buy out his competitors, Kenny and Moore. He leased their building to Arthur Macy for five years with the stipulation that it could not be used "to manufacture and sell popcorn and candy." Darling's was now the only popcorn store on Circuit Avenue.

In the summer of 1919, as the business prospered, nephew Harris A. Carr from Lunenburg came to work for Uncle "CJ," as C. John Darling was called by family and friends. He met Edith L. Petersen of Marion, who was working as a nurse at the Martha's Vineyard Hospital. In 1928, they were married. I was their first child.

CJ's popcorn store became, along with the Flying Horses and the Japanese auction houses, a star attraction on Circuit Avenue. When CJ died in 1936, his nephew, Maurice, came down from Vermont to help settle the estate and decided to stay and work in the store.

The whole family, it seemed, couldn't resist the charms of Circuit Avenue and the sweet aroma of popcorn and taffy. At age 80, after selling his farm in Vermont, my grandfather, Frank B. Carr, began a new career, working at Darling's. Every summer until he died in his late 90s, grandfather came to Oak Bluffs to mix our many varieties of fudge and taffy. He was called "The Fudge Man." The store was a happy family place.



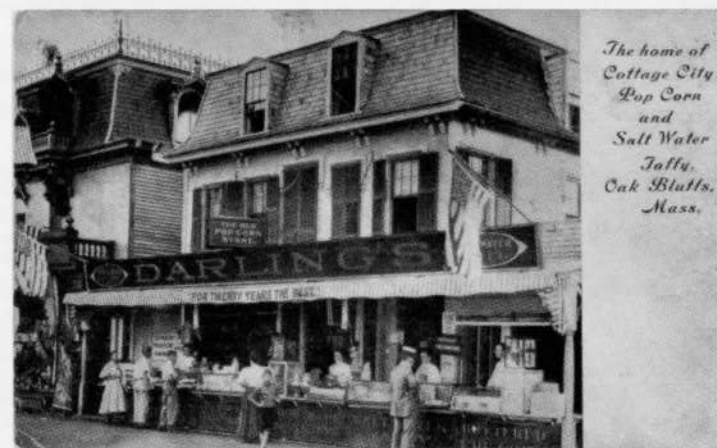
Postcard, mailed 1908, shows (left) what may have been the first popcorn store on Circuit Ave. Darling's bought it in 1910 to get rid of competition.

When I worked there, our customers included many celebrities. I remember Spencer Tracy, who usually bought a bag of unshelled roasted peanuts and Katherine Cornell, whose favorite was butterscotch caramel. Jimmy Cagney was also a regular, but I can't recall his favorite sweet. Celebrity or not, if you came to the Island, you were certain to buy some goodies at Darling's.

Our happy family was struck by tragedy in June 1958. As he did almost every day before noon, my father, Harris Carr, was getting ready to deep-fry a batch of nuts on the coal stove in the kitchen. As also was his habit, while waiting for the fat to heat up, Dad walked over to the Wigwam for his morning paper, stopping on the way back at the market to buy some meat for dinner. He wasn't in any hurry. He loved to talk and to visit. He was that kind of person and on that morning he may have done more than usual.

While he was away, apparently the fat boiled over and caught fire. The flames quickly spread to the ceiling of the kitchen and the room above it, the sugar-soaked wood creating clouds of black smoke.

George Munro, who owned the Boston House next door, was alerted by a passerby and called in the alarm. By this time,



Oldest view we have of Darling's is this postcard mailed in 1907. Already, on the awning trim is the long-lived slogan: "For Twenty Years the Best."

Dad, returning to his store, saw the thick smoke, ran into the back kitchen and desperately tried to put out the fire with a garden hose, but it was too late; the fire had made too much headway. When the fire department arrived, Dad, a volunteer fireman himself, was up on the roof with the hose trying to keep the flames from spreading. My mother, who had joined the onlookers, kept shouting at him, telling him to get down from the roof, but he continued to act like the volunteer fireman that he was. Before the fire was out, he was stricken with a heart attack and died despite the efforts of Dr. David Rappaport, who was immediately called.

My mother telephoned me and other family members. I was living in Millis when she called.

"Dad's gone," was all she could say and the phone went silent. "Where? Where did he go?" I asked, fearing the worst. She broke into tears and between sobs told me what had happened. We all came right down to Oak Bluffs and helped her through that difficult time.

The smoke and fire had done enough damage that the store had to be closed. My brother, Arnold, and our cousin, Dick Carr (Maurice's son), worked for several weeks repairing the damages and managed to re-open the store (with a

somewhat limited variety of sweets) for the rest of the season. By the next year, all was back to normal. My mother and Arnold took over and ran Darling's until it was sold in 1961 to the Metells. As I mentioned earlier, the new owners continued to use the slogan, "FOR 20 YEARS THE BEST."

In 1965, the building and business were sold to George Munro, owner of the adjacent Boston House. He wanted room to expand his restaurant. He tore down the old building and sold the contents and business to Bernard Lewis, who moved Darling's into the former Labelle's Bakery store, next to the Island Theatre.

By an uncanny coincidence, there was another fire at the store in 1971 at its new location. It was almost identical to the 1958 blaze. The *Gazette* described what happened:

Darling's popcorn and candy store on Circuit Avenue in Oak Bluffs is closed for the remainder of the season as a result of extensive damage by a fire early Friday afternoon.

The blaze was reportedly caused by a faulty cold-air draft extension in the candy stove in the rear of the shop. Flames leaped up the draft chute, ignited the roof and rafters, and burned for an indefinite period before being reported.

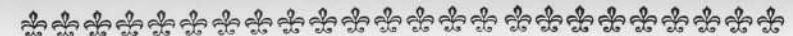
Again, the store was closed for repairs. Owner Bernard Lewis, who was working in the front of the store when the fire started, was quoted in the *Gazette*:

It's very simple, my store is on vacation – I'm closed for the rest of the year. My candy is ruined and I'd have to cook 24 hours a day to catch up.

The following summer, Darling's opened with all its goodies. Ten years later, in June 1981, the end came. Murdick's Fudge took over Darling's. The name and the slogan disappeared. Circuit Avenue was not the same.

It seems that "TWENTY YEARS" isn't forever.

The author is grateful to Eulalie Reagan, librarian at the *Vineyard Gazette*, for her generous help with this story.



Darling's Was Not Just a Store: It Was a Candy Factory

by CAROL CARR DELL

TO MOST OF ITS CUSTOMERS, Darling's was just a long counter of glass cases standing on the sidewalk, with many women behind it, waiting to fill their orders. But there was much more to Darling's than that. Unseen behind those women was a "factory," a candy manufactory, making the scores of sweet confections that filled the cases along the sidewalk.

Not a small operation, it employed as many as 14 persons at times. With such a variety of sweets to be produced, it was a beehive of activity all summer, spreading a delightful aroma along much of Circuit Avenue.

Making the salt-water taffy was the biggest job. It was very labor intensive despite the fascinating arm-waving taffy-pulling machine that worked its miracle in the front of the store, enticing customers to buy its wares. That machine is still displayed each year in some Circuit Avenue window (minus the taffy, of course). Old-timers stand there entranced as they remember how it pulled the taffy in three directions for hours every day all summer. (Taffy is pulled to add air to the mixture, making it chewier. Why it is called "salt water taffy" is a mystery – there is no ocean water involved.)

But the machine didn't do all the work. There was plenty of hand work before and after the pulling. First, the mixture had to be mixed and flavored before it was cooked on the stove in the back of the store. The mixing was delegated to Uncle Frank Carr, "The Fudge Man." There were thirteen different flavors as I remember: vanilla, clove, anise, peppermint, lime, cinnamon, chocolate, chocolate-cream, molasses, molasses-peppermint, molasses-walnut, peanut, and peanut-butter. Each flavor had to be mixed, cooked, and pulled separately.

CAROL CARR DELL is also described on page 111. We must add that it was while she was a volunteer at the Society that she decided (encouraged by another contributor, Clyde MacKenzie) to tell the story of Darling's, being published in this issue.

When each batch was cooked to the right temperature, it was poured onto a table topped by a four-inch slab of marble, edged with heavy metal bars to contain the soft taffy, fudge or caramel while they cooled. When the taffy reached a workable temperature, it was rolled into a shape like a large loaf of bread and placed on the arms of the magical pulling machine.

After the pulling, the taffy was put on another marble-topped table and colored stripes were added to identify the flavor of the batch. The thick loaf was then stretched into long snake-like rolls one-inch in diameter to be fed into the taffy wrapping machine. (The only taffy not wrapped by machine was peanut taffy, which had to be cut and wrapped by hand.)

That wrapping machine was Mother's "baby." She was the one person familiar with its idiosyncrasies; and it had plenty. Some batches would be wrapped in 20 minutes; others would take several hours while the machine misbehaved. Mother (known as "Pete") would sit behind the machine, coaxing it into action as she fed it the long rolls of taffy. The machine cut the "snake" into small pieces, wrapping each in wax paper. The wrapped taffy pieces would come out of the machine and fall into a wicket basket.

Sometimes, a few pieces would get through unwrapped and we sorted them out to hand-wrap. The many flavors of taffy were kept in separate metal boxes. When customers were asked what flavor they wanted, usually, after listening to our recitation of the long list of 13 flavors, their eyes would glaze over and they would reply: "A box of assorted flavors, please."

Filling boxes with assorted flavors was fun. We would dump a tray of each flavor onto the table (with two trays of peanut taffy, a big favorite), lift them up with our hands and arms a number of times to mix them thoroughly. The wrapped taffy pieces would cascade down our arms and we would have our mix. It was a fun operation.

Another daily chore was making the popcorn bars, of which we had, as I remember, four flavors: vanilla, chocolate, molasses, and wintergreen. Fresh-popped corn was chopped into fine pieces by a machine and mixed with the appropriate flavored syrup before being poured onto a tin-topped table.

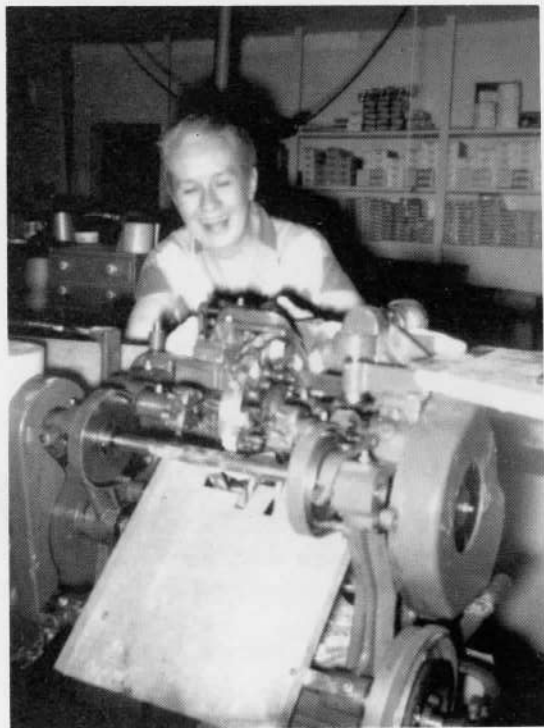


At work in 1961: standing center, Edith "Pete" Carr; Pam Spear (now Goff); the author, holding child; seated, wrapping taffy, Louise Bugbee.

The table had movable sides that squeezed the mixture when pressure was applied with a foot pedal. The compressed popcorn mix was tamped to smooth the top and carefully placed in a form which had slots to guide the knife we used to cut the bars into a uniform size. I believe it made eight bars at a time. It was a slow process. The bars were wrapped in wax paper by hand. We had to be careful not to break a bar or to tear the paper as we wrapped it. The corn bar would get soggy if exposed to the moist air.

Another labor-intensive task we did at Darling's was making potato chips. This involved peeling (actually skinning by being bounced around in a machine), slicing and frying. Our chips were freshly made and were so crisp and tasty that we were always running out of them. My father, a farmer from Vermont, knew potatoes and he selected them personally, as did Arnold after he took over.

Other goodies included four different fudges: chocolate, chocolate walnut, vanilla and vanilla-walnut; caramels of various flavors; roasted nuts, including peanuts, cashews, almonds, pistachios plus peanut brittle; plus chocolate and



"Pete" Carr and the taffy wrapping machine, a temperamental device that only she understood.

coconut-coated marshmallows. We had so many items to cook, dip and display that, looking back, I wonder how we did it.

We even sold popcorn of various flavors, including one that was flavored with a mix of wintergreen, vanilla and chocolate. There also was a sugar corn coated with molasses syrup (some customers called it caramel corn).

All these goodies were displayed in glass cases that rested on long tables or counters. These counters had heavy brass casters so they could be wheeled into the store overnight and out every morning. To make it easier (and safer), a smooth wooden floor extended out onto the sidewalk. The counters were rolled through an overhead garage door in the store front. On stormy days, the counters stayed inside the store and customers were served there.

Wheeling the huge counters in and out had to be done



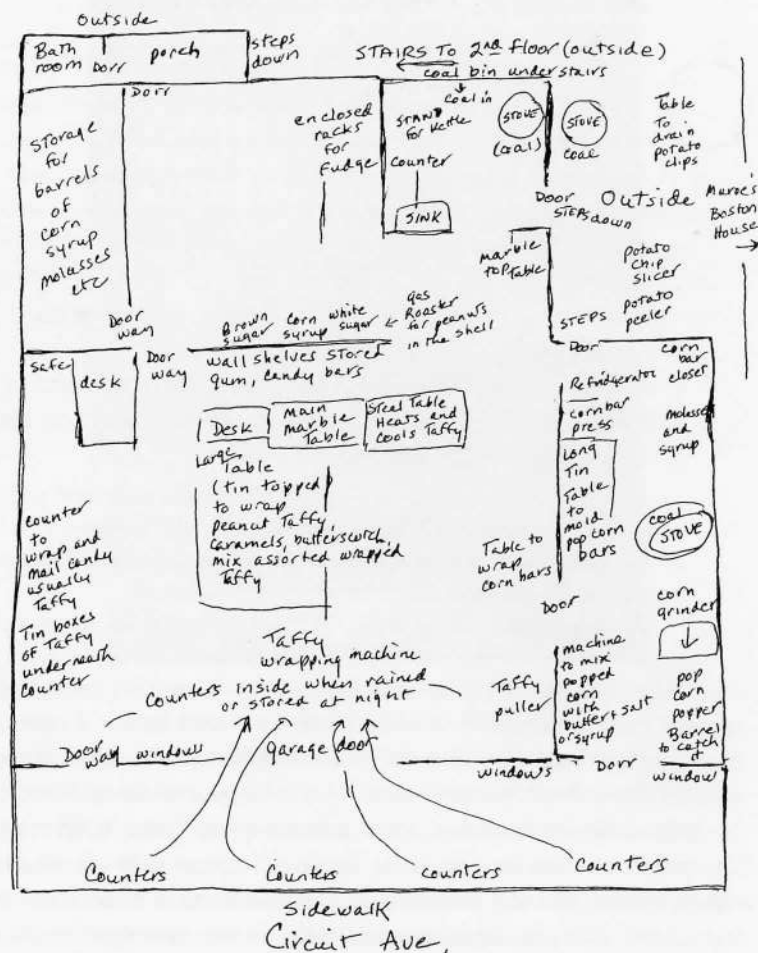
Frank Carr, "The Fudge Man," worked into his 90s, mixing and cooking the many offerings.

carefully. The glass cases on them were heavy as were the several cash registers. It would have been a disaster if one of the counters had tipped over. Thin blocks on the edge of the wooden floor kept the counters from rolling onto the sidewalk.

In addition to selling its delicacies on Circuit Avenue, Darling's also distributed many kinds of commercial candies to other outlets around the Island. We had a truck that went to the clubs, bathing beaches and drug stores taking orders. I often drove the truck and loved that part of the job. Later, I learned that when I was on the truck, sales were better than anyone else's, so I often got the chance (I am sure it wasn't my selling abilities, but rather that I was a young girl).

I have from memory (with the help of my brother) drawn the floor plan of the candy "factory" (see next page). It is rather crude (I am not a draftsman), but I hope it will give you some idea of the equipment and people it took to keep those glass cases on the sidewalk counters filled with goodies.

Darling's Lay Out NOT TO SCALE



Drawing by author, from memory; of the layout of the back room at the "candy factory," and showing how the counters were rolled in each night.

"Popcorn Harry" Collins: Darling's Traveling Salesman

ON "POPCORN HARRY'S" 61st birthday in 1935 the Vineyard Gazette called him "perhaps the most famous character on the Vineyard"—not a small compliment. Harry F. Collins of Edgartown was indeed famous, less because of the popcorn he sold than for his smile, his personality, and how he carved a role in life despite handicaps. His was a rather prosaic occupation, selling popcorn bars to strollers from wicker baskets as he walked the town streets, but he made it into something more.

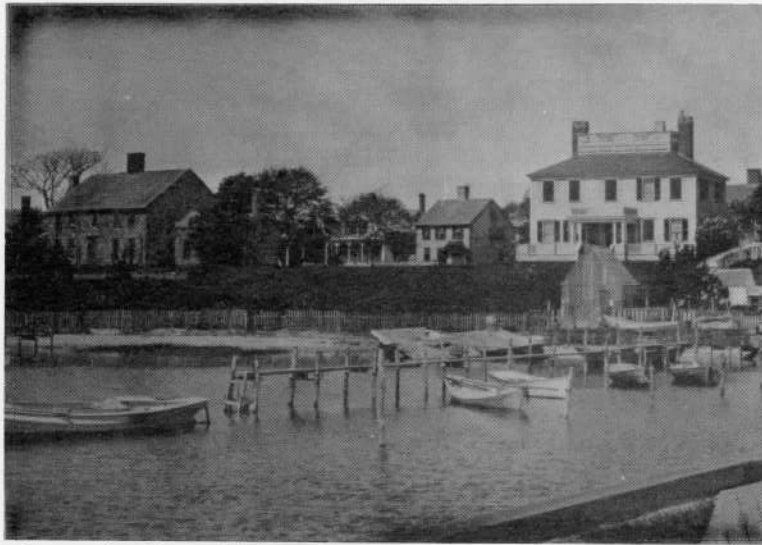
Even off-Island newspapers treated him with respect. In 1936, the *New Bedford Standard Times*, on what it said was his 72nd birthday (actually, he was only 62), wrote:

Harold F. Collins, Edgartown's self-styled town crier and popcorn vendor for nearly half a century, is 72. Mr. Collins is one of the most famous characters on the Vineyard. He is known to practically all summer residents and visitors.

A newspaperman at heart but a pop-corn salesman by avocation, he combines the two interests in his daily tasks. Every session of court finds him present with his pencil and pad and each accident or fire is well covered by Mr. Collins. He travels the full length of Main Street distributing high-lights in the news and any bulletins he may pick up en route.

It is unlikely than his court reports ever found their way into print, but he managed to "publish" them himself as he walked the streets, his strong voice announcing the day's news along with relevant Biblical quotations. It was said that he had memorized most of the Bible and he was always able to cite chapter and verse as he walked.

He started selling popcorn on the Martha's Vineyard Railroad in 1890, well before Darling's was in business. It isn't clear where he was getting his merchandise at the start, but later he became Darling's best-known salesman—a traveling one at that. A private entrepreneur, he would buy the popcorn bars from the store and sell them on the streets and at the beach. Throughout his life he clung to his goal of spreading



Large white house overlooking Collins Beach was Popcorn Harry's home. Photo is about 1900. Old Mayhew house, left, was torn down in 1910.

the news. When he died in 1939, the *Gazette* obituary noted:

He never missed being present at the *Gazette* office on publication day for a long period of years.

Harry died, as he lived, a beloved figure. He was the son of one of the Island's most important men, Capt. Grafton Norton Collins. Harry was born and died in the large family home overlooking Collins Beach (then owned by the Collins family, now a town beach) at the end of Cooke Street. Captain Collins, along with Benjamin Worth (who was his brother-in-law), built the wharf where the Edgartown Reading Room is today. The wharf was so busy handling whaleships and cargo vessels that the street running to it was named Commercial Street (it is now Cooke Street).

Captain Collins commanded the whaler, *Walter Scott*, on two voyages (1852 and 1855) before retiring to become wealthy as the agent for several Island whaling vessels. He took part in many of the Vineyard's successes and failures of the 1800s, being a major investor in the Oak Bluffs Land & Wharf Company, the Katama Land Company and the Martha's Vineyard Railroad.



Popcorn Harry, selling popcorn bars at an Edgartown beach, probably on Chappaquiddick, in the 1930s, near the end of his life. He died in 1939.

Harry's maternal grandmother was born Dorcas Worth of Edgartown, daughter of whaling master, Benjamin Worth. She married, in 1818, a "Native of Boston," according to the *Vital Records*. He was Polfrey Collins, a mariner and ship rigger. We know nothing about the Collins ancestry, but Dorcas's family dates back to 1700 when John Worth moved to Edgartown. He became a prominent inn-keeper and justice of the county court, with many descendants holding judicial positions.

With such a pedigree, there can be little doubt that Harry's career of popcorn peddler and local character was not something his family boasted about. It was known early in his life that he was somewhat mentally retarded but, while it was a

handicap, it didn't keep him from making a living. In the winter, he worked shucking scallops and was one of the best. Altogether, Harry lived a worthwhile life, respected by almost all. A few, usually young boys, would taunt him as he walked along shouting his Biblical messages. But such abuse was rare. He lived with his brother, Benjamin, and sister-in-law in the family home overlooking Collins Beach.

Newspapers were generous in their stories about him, especially in his later years (he died in 1939). A *Gazette* headline in 1933 proclaimed: "Edgartown's Town Crier, 61, Recalls First Pop Corn Sale." The story described how he began selling popcorn on the railroad that ran between Edgartown and Cottage City in the late 1800s.

He knew everybody in town and always had some news to relate, plus a verse or two from the *Bible*. As the *New Bedford Standard Times* said on his birthday:

A phenomenal memory is the outstanding characteristic of this Island native. He recalls with ease dates of important happenings years ago and has memorized passages throughout the *Bible*. He has an abundance of stories and tricks with which he amuses summer residents.

He died on March 20, 1939. The *Gazette* summarized his life as a "popcorn merchant" in its obituary:

**Harold Collins Dies. Popcorn Merchant
For Forty-Six Years Is Dead at 64.**

. . . he began to sell his wares [in 1890] on the Martha's Vineyard Railroad which ran between Cottage City and Katama. . . After the demise of the railroad in 1896, he sold popcorn on the streets of Edgartown and at the bathing beach and pursued his profession with great industry. He was popular with Islanders and summer residents as well and had a fund of knowledge in several fields which delighted those who knew him. . . . Since failing health confined him to the house, he had been cared for devotedly by his sister in law, Mrs. Clarence H. Collins. He is survived by one brother, Benjamin G. Collins.

The Island would never have another Popcorn Harry.

Mr. Priscilla Pearls: Mattakesett's Mystery Man

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

HE WAS CALLED the "mystery man" by puzzled Vineyarders when he began visiting Edgartown in the early 1920s. His name was Ralph H. Bodman, an instrument engineer at the Oceanographic Institute in Woods Hole. But he wasn't going to Edgartown to work on tidal instruments; he had something less scientific in mind. He went to buy herring, lots of them, from the owners of the Mattakesett Creek Fisheries at Katama.

The Mattakesett herring run has a long Vineyard history, dating back to before the English arrived in the 1600s. It was an important food source for the Native Americans from their earliest arrival. The late Dorothy Cottle Poole, writing in the *Intelligencer*, November 1978, connected it with the disputed pre-Mayhew "Pease Tradition":

Tradition, discredited by historians, places the Pease family in Edgartown before 1642 and, most believably, states that the first thing the Indians showed John Pease was their herring weir. Official records mention "Mattakeese" as early as 1665 and Crevecoeur's map of 1783 shows a "herring brook" which was the first Mattakesett Creek. . .

The *Vineyard Gazette* published an article on the history of Mattakesett on July 3, 1868. The article stated that in 1783 a group of ten Edgartown men recognized the economic value of the Katama herring run, having "gone to considerable expense and labor in digging and keeping open a water passage for the fish, called alewives, . . . from the sea into the great-pond."

Those ten men that year, 1783, incorporated the Mattakesett Creek Fishery, one of the first herring fishery companies in Massachusetts. Among them were riparian owners of the land along the creek and the pond. For exclusive rights to catch the herring that swam from the salt water into

Edgartown Great Pond to spawn, they paid Edgartown a fee of \$100 a year, an amount that was never increased through the years although the size of the catch multiplied many times.

For Massachusetts residents, the herring (alewife) catch was an important economic asset, going back to the earliest English settlement. A state report written in 1921 stated:

Ever since the landing of the Pilgrims, when the alewife provided the most readily available source of food, . . . it has been closely related to the prosperity of the shore towns, where it has always been held as a public asset. [Report upon the Alewife Fisheries of Massachusetts, 1921.]

In March 1866, the *Vineyard Gazette* reported that over fifty barrels of herring had been harvested on a recent night and shipped to New York the next day.

But the herring business wasn't always that good. It isn't clear what caused its ups and downs, but it may have been related to how well the run was being maintained. There are two kinds of herring runs: those that are natural outlets to the sea and require little maintenance; and those that depend on artificial, manmade creeks, requiring much attention. Mattakessett in its early years was a natural creek, but later, to increase the harvest, it was improved by the addition of a long, wide, manmade creek that required a lot of labor to keep it open. Some years it was better maintained than others, causing the catches to vary.

There were other reasons for the declines, including overfishing. When female herring were caught as they swam into the pond's brackish water to spawn, their bodies were loaded with eggs which would never be fertilized and the next generation suffered.

The *Gazette* reported a revival in the catch in 1894 after a few poor years. Once again, it said, large amounts of herring were being caught at Katama, "taking old settlers back to the times when the old Mattakessett Creek was in its glory." The herring weren't being caught for humans to eat (at least not directly). They were sold as bait to commercial fishermen:

Four Gloucester smacks have taken 55,000 pounds of herring, plus another 10,000 shipped by steamer. Many thousands of herring are now running through the creek and bait can now



Three men fill wagons with Mattakessett herring, trapped as they swam into Edgartown Great Pond to spawn. The building is an ice house.
be had by smacks in any quantity.

The Katama run was one of 14 runs on the Vineyard, but far outdistanced all others in volume of catch. It was also the most productive in the state, accounting for 3000 barrels of the state's catch of 16,000.

Alewife fisheries were common all along the eastern seaboard. In 1912, there were fisheries in 14 coastal states, employing more than 2500 persons. Nearly 150,000,000 herring were caught and sold that year in those states. The leading states were Maryland, North Carolina and Virginia with Massachusetts being about in the middle of the 14.

But Bodman wasn't involved in the commercial fish market. He wasn't buying fish for food or for bait. He used only the scales and not all of them at that. He threw away everything but the shiniest scales that he kept for some unknown purpose. It was no wonder he was a mystery.

He wasn't the only one in this mysterious business. Others on the Cape were doing the same thing. Even the experts in the state department of fisheries weren't sure what the scales were being used for. They had heard rumors, but could learn little, as their 1921 report indicates:

In 1919 a new impetus was given the industry by the utilization of the scales for a secret commercial process

concerning which it is impossible to obtain authentic information. Rumor is current that the iridescent coloring material of the scales is utilized in the manufacture of artificial pearls.

Be that as it may, the firm of Petro & Finkelstein at Hyannis purchased quantities of scales during 1919 and 1920, and Mrs. F. O. Proctor of Gloucester was carrying on an extensive business at Onset in 1920. The white lower scales only are taken and sell at 50 to 60 cents per pound, or higher, while the scalers received a minimum of 10 cents per pound.

At Herring River, Harwich, twelve to fifteen women were engaged in the process of scaling the fish on May 11, 1920. It is estimated that 3 to 4 pounds of scales may be obtained from one barrel of alewives. The high value of the scales is shown by the great increase in the sale price of the Agawam River fishery which rose from \$1255 in 1919 to \$11,000 in 1920. Whether this mushroom industry is a transient or permanent affair remains to be demonstrated. At any rate, it has enhanced the value of the alewife fishery.

The state report made no mention of mystery man Bodman who was eager, like the others, to take part in that "mushroom industry." He rented a fisherman's shack at Mattakessett Creek and barrels of the fish were trucked there. A group of men could be seen scraping scales from the fish and tossing the de-scaled fish bodies into a pit. The scales were carefully saved. Vineyarders were asking questions, but Bodman wasn't answering.

He rented space in one of the garages along Dock Street in Edgartown and installed some large tanks, along with other equipment, that had been shipped over from the mainland. Barrels of scales were trucked up from Mattakessett and taken inside. The windows were covered to prevent the curious from seeing what was going on.

Some years later, Bodman told the *Gazette*: "A lot of people thought we were crazy and they started all kinds of rumors about us. Some thought we were making glue."

He wasn't crazy. And he wasn't making glue. Instead, he was extracting from the scales a material he called "guanine crystal," the chemical that makes the herring shine. It wasn't a

Photo by Walter S. Osborn, gift of Carrie Osborn Secord.

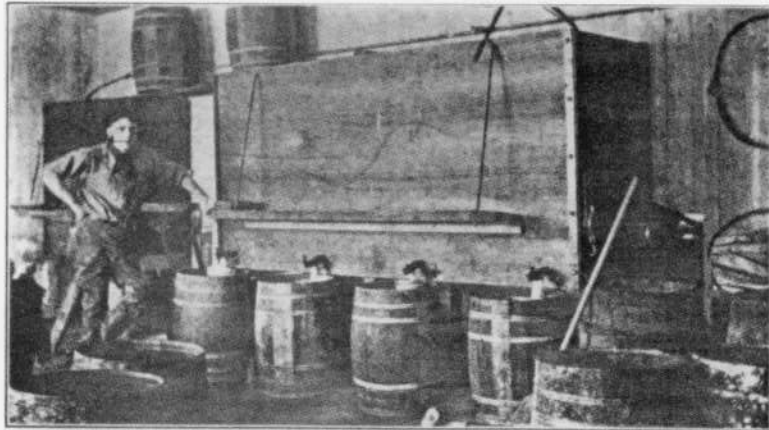


In 1913, on Osborn's wharf, Edgartown, the day's catch of herring being salted and put in barrels for shipment. None of these ended up as pearls.

new idea. It was a modification of an old, much cruder, procedure used in the Orient years before to make buttons shiny. Bodman had refined it and it was his secret until he could have it patented. Not even the men scraping the scales knew exactly why they were doing it.

Extracting the crystal was a laborious process. It took ten pounds of scales to produce one ounce of the essence. Later, when Bodman's secret process was safely patented, he put out a small booklet entitled "Katama Pearls" that gives some details of what he was doing. The late Frances C. Sawyer gave the Historical Society one of the rare booklets. Here is the description he gives of how the essence was extracted from the scales (he is giving away no secrets here):

The fresh scales are . . . put into large digesting tanks, mixed with a proper solution, and violently agitated by means



Photos from *Katama Pearls*, gift of Frances Sawyer.

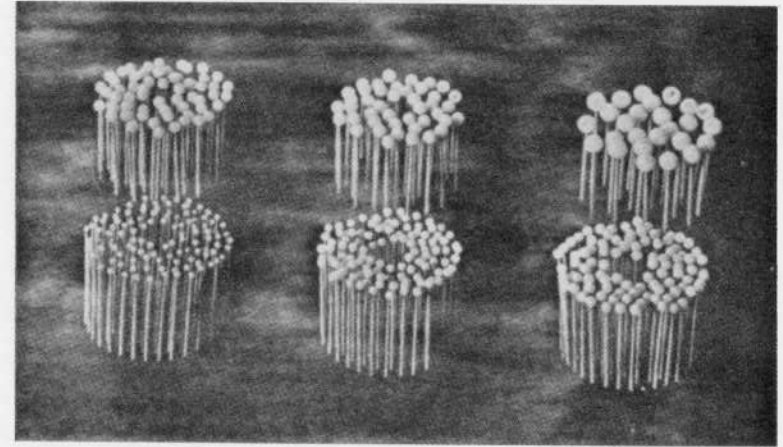
One of the tanks in Edgartown garage where Bodman's essence was extracted from herring scales. This area was kept "secret" for a while.

of fast running agitators in the bottom of the tanks until thoroughly macerated.

The mixture is then drawn off and allowed to settle. Fifteen hundred pounds of scales can be handled at a time. . . the settlings are put through a refining process that removes all dirt, fish fat, etc., and leaves it in a pure, lustrous state.

That "pure, lustrous" solution was what Bodman used to turn glass beads into handsome "pearls." The glass beads were mounted on pins and dipped many times (the number depending on the quality of luster desired) into the "lustrous" essence to which Bodman had added a lacquer to make it adhere to the glass. As many as twenty dips were required to provide the desired luster with a drying period after each dip.

We can find no record that Bodman produced his "pearls" on the Island. He seems to have shipped the secret essence from Edgartown to a costume-jewelry manufacturer in Rhode Island, where the dipping was done. The "pearls" were then shipped to Edgartown where Mrs. Lina Call ran a gift shop at the corner of North Water and Winter Streets. She and her husband, an Edgartown plumber, had bought the building some years earlier, the front part of it to be used for her gift shop and a room in the back for his plumbing business. The



"Pearls" of two sizes, mounted on pins, during a drying period in the dipping procedure that turned cheap glass beads into lustrous jewelry.

couple lived in the small apartment upstairs. She became an unofficial partner in the "pearl" business.

In her gift shop, Mrs. Call and other women strung the lustrous simulated pearls into strands of various lengths and various qualities. Some of the pearls were used in broaches, earrings, and other costume jewelry. They were sometimes mistaken for the much more expensive cultivated pearl beads that were created by inserting grains of sand into sequestered oysters. Dorothy Cottle Poole, in *The Intelligencer*, wrote of one woman's unhappiness when she learned that some of her friends thought Bodman's pearls were as beautiful as her expensive cultured strand:

Bodman's simulated [Mattakesett] pearls were reputed to be indistinguishable from genuine cultured pearls. Several wealthy summer visitors challenged this claim and at least one of them lost. A Mrs. Phillips from Eastville forfeited her exquisite necklace because she could not distinguish the herring-scale pearls from cultured ones. [We can find nothing more than Mrs. Poole's statement to document this delightful tale.]

Originally, Bodman called them Katama Pearls, after the location of Mattakesett Creek. But apparently Mrs. Call didn't like that name and renamed them Priscilla Pearls. She

sold Priscilla Hancock chocolates (made in West Tisbury) in her shop and apparently liked the name, causing some confusion, as there was no connection between the candy and the pearls.

She changed the name of her shop to "The Priscilla Pearl Shop." A friend of hers was quoted as saying that she was very fond of the name Priscilla. She kept the picture of a pretty little girl she had cut out of a magazine on the wall of her gift shop and referred to the smiling child as "my Priscilla." The sign, "The Priscilla Pearl Shop," hung on the building long after Mrs. Call closed her business.

Bodman's production of Priscilla Pearls ended when the Japanese began producing competitive strands. He was unable to compete with the lower-priced Japanese labor. He insisted that the foreign pearls were inferior to his because the scales used were not as lustrous as those taken from the clear water of Mattakessett Creek.

After closing down his pearl business, Bodman sought other ways to use his Mattakessett essence. Plastic was just coming into general use and he set out to make one that had the beauty of pearls. It was not a simple task as his original luster essence was damaged by the very high temperatures required in the plastic-injection process.

When he learned how to make an essence that could withstand high heat, he took over a defunct chowder-canning plant on the Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road to make luxury items such as compacts, jewelry boxes, and cigarette cases with his "pearl" plastic. He was at the factory completing the installation of machinery when his blowtorch fell into a pile of packing paper and cardboard. He was unable to extinguish the blaze and before the Edgartown firemen could get there, the building was destroyed, along with his dream. The *Gazette* (Aug. 23, 1940) said "the Vineyard's only factory" burned to the ground in less than an hour. Bodman's loss was \$10,000.

He stopped buying Mattakessett herring. He was no longer the "mystery man." By now, everybody knew what he had been doing with the scales.



Photograph by Dana Costanza of two strands donated to the Society by Judy Bruguiera

Being a Boy in Edgartown Before the Civil War

by THEODORE S. WIMPENNEY

WE DON'T KNOW when Theodore S. Wimpenny made this talk to the Edgartown Women's Club — the typewritten carbon copy at the Society is undated. His daughter, Mary Wimpenny, was clerk of the County Court for most of her life and some who knew her say he regularly dictated facts of Edgartown history to her so it is likely that she was the typist. He was born in 1850 and died in December 1949 just before his 100th birthday. The talk probably was given in about 1950, but that is a guess.

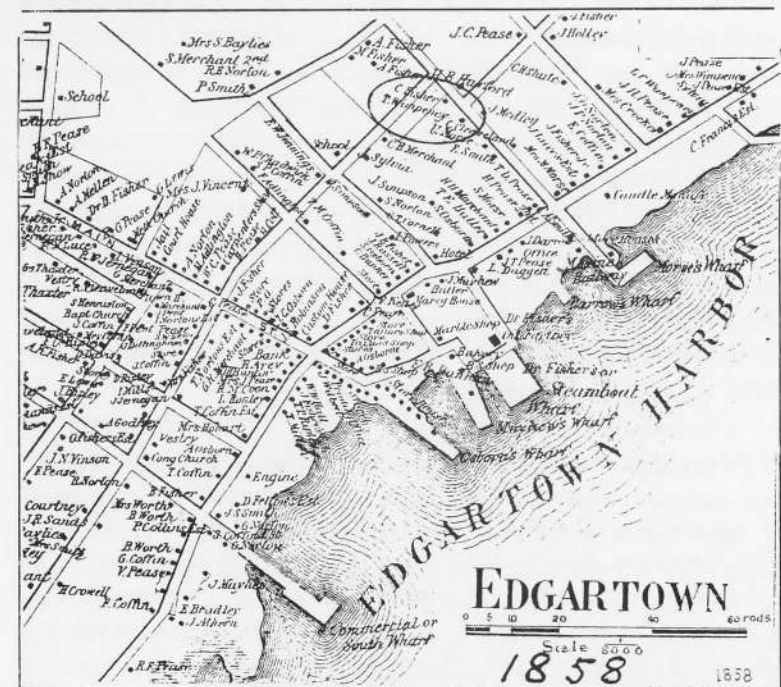
Wimpenny served as Edgartown selectman for a few years and for 34 years, late in life, he was the County Court Crier, a position of some honor and little pay. It no longer exists. When he died at 99 he held the Boston Post cane as the oldest person on the Island.

In his talk, Wimpenny does a lot of reminiscing about his youth, giving interesting sidelights on Island history as well as mentioning many Edgartown families and where they lived.

AFTER PROMISING to talk to you about my boyhood days in Edgartown, I felt sorry for having promised, thinking that there might be others who could do so much better than I. But I seldom go back on a promise, so I am here before you ladies this afternoon.

My earliest recollection of going to school was when I was a very small boy. My first school was at Mrs. Catherine Bassett's school [a private kindergarten, apparently]. It was situated on the corner lot opposite the house now of Miss Abbie D. Pease, on that small lot. The same building is now on the lower part of the lot owned by Mrs. Jenks, near the steamboat wharf. There were quite a number of children in that school. In looking over my parents' papers I found a bundle of receipts and what it cost, my tuition. It was twelve and a half cents a week. Some of the scholars that went to that school you may remember: the late Mr. John Wesley Pease, William Harlow Chadwick, and Leon Coffin.

From there, my next school was known as the North



Area Wimpenny describes, at the time of his youth. His home is circled. school. At that time, there were two primary schools in the town. One was in the North schoolhouse [on Pease's Point Way, an apartment house in 2006] now owned by Mrs. Burke. The other was in what is now called the South schoolhouse [at School and High Streets, in 2006 a private residence]. On the upper floor of the North schoolhouse was the Grammar school, downstairs was the Primary school. In the South schoolhouse, upstairs was the High school, and downstairs the Primary. The two Primary schools were to accommodate the children on each side of the town [each side of Main Street].

From Primary school, I went to the Grammar school and from the Grammar I went to the High school [on School and High Streets]. At that time there was no graduating from the High school and no diplomas . . . there were between 80 and 90 scholars in the High school. The school room was so crowded that some sat on the platform, and at one time some of them had to sit on the coal box in the rear of the building. One side

of the school room was for girls and the other side for the boys. I went to school there until I was about seventeen years of age and at that age I started on a whaling voyage around Cape Horn. [He sailed May 2, 1867, on the bark *Ionia*, Capt. John O. Norton, returned July 1, 1871.] . . .

All during my school days, the bell was on the North schoolhouse. . . There was no Superintendent of Schools. We had three on the School Committee, all professional men and qualified to teach the High school, languages, etc. And very often one of the committee would come into our school and talk to the scholars, telling them if they improved their time what they might accomplish in later life.

I remember one of the boys at school, after the teacher had taken him to due [for] some of his actions. He ran down the room and out of the door, and going out he took up a piece of coal and threw it at the teacher. The coal did not hit the teacher, but hit the blackboard right back of the teacher, quite near to him. The teacher said, "The boy is a candidate for State's Prison." He never reached State's Prison, but he did become insane afterwards and passed away years ago.

Boys were full of fun and they played jokes upon one another, just the same as they do today. I remember once, when my father had cows, and I did quite a lot of the milking, one day as I was milking the cow, one of the boys in the neighborhood stood in the barn doorway. I was back to him, milking this cow, and she was given very much to kicking, kicked most everybody. But I had had good luck and she had never kicked me. The sun shone into the door just on a partition right ahead of the cow, and showed this boy as he looked into the door and I could see his whole form on the partition in front of the cow. And I said to the boy, "Now be careful and don't play, because this cow kicks everybody that milks her but myself, and don't do anything to scare her."

Then all of a sudden on this partition, I saw the boy's hands fly into the air, waving them. The cow, seeing those hands go up, let go her feet and kicked me over, milk pail and all. I ran out after that boy, who was in the barnyard and he picked up a stick, what would be called a cart standard for a

wagon, and kept swinging it back and forth. I waited until that boy started to swing back. Then I ran in and grabbed him and you can guess, perhaps, what I did to that boy. . .

There were but three churches in Edgartown during my boyhood days, Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist, and they were well filled every Sunday. They had two sermons a day the ministers preached, and Sunday school; and in the evening was prayer meeting. And when they stood up to sing the hymns, the congregation would turn and face the choir. The ministers were paid a certain sum of money and a donation. When it was time to bring the donations, which was in the Fall, the church people would meet on a certain evening at the minister's house. Everyone that came brought something with them and laid it on the table in the dining room, then went into the other room and spent the evening socially.

We had no electric lights when I was a boy. Everyone had whale-oil lamps and we saw with them as well as we see today with the electric lights. When we had company we would light the solar lamp, which many of the people had. [Does any member know what a "solar lamp" was?] Some of the families had candelabras, which they would light on special occasions. There were no street lights at the time, but the people got along well without them.

We did not have the steamboats here as many times as we are having today. The boat came here every other day, leaving here Monday mornings. Yet with the aid of sailing vessels, the passengers and freight were well taken care of.

There have been many changes in the building and streets since my boyhood days.

[In the following description, *Wimpenney* starts about where the Harborview Hotel is today and moves along towards Main Street. The *Wimpenney* house was near the cow pasture. See map, p. 137.]

North Water Street, below the John W. Pease house, was a large tract of land, used for a cow pasture, fenced in with the old-fashioned rail fence. Starting from there and coming up the street, first was the J. W. Pease house, once owned by Mr. John Smith. The house was brought from Chappaquiddick.

The next house was once owned by Capt. Joseph Swasey

and my father told me the lumber was landed from a vessel right on the bluff near the house. At that time there was deep water there.

The next house is the Jeremiah Pease house, built by him [in 1832]. Then came the Capt. Silva house. Then, the Capt. Littleton C. Wimpenny house built by Robert Wimpenny in the year 1802. He was engaged in the China trade. After the house was built he sailed on a voyage, and the ship was never heard from. He left a widow with seven children, six boys and one girl. The house finally went into Dr. Whelden's hands and it was used at one time by Capt. J. W. Pease, son-in-law of Dr. Wheldon, as a boarding house, called the Ocean House, and several others later used it as a boarding house.

The Burke house was an ell to the Wimpenny house. I do not know if it was originally joined to the house or not, but Capt. Pease moved it off and made a very good house of it.

Next, the H. W. Spurr house was once the house of Mr. Joseph Kelley Sr. It was situated on the corner of North Water and Winter Streets. After it was moved to the present site, Mr. Spurr added some to it.

This takes us to the corner of Cottage Street on the north west side of the street.

To go back to the water side of the street: first, there were the salt works, managed by Mr. Heman Arey, a fine man who lived over 90 years. He in his younger days made many chairs. You will find many of them in the houses built sixty or seventy years ago. They were comfortable chairs, and strong today.

The salt works were nearly opposite the house formerly of John W. Pease, now owned by Mrs. Mildred Beatty. They were built up on posts about three feet from the ground, and they were like low boxes, the sides about five or six inches deep. And they had a roof over them which was on rollers. The water was pumped in from the harbor into these boxes. In dry weather these roofs were rolled off, so that the sun could shine on the water and evaporate it, leaving the salt. At night and in storms they hauled the roofs right over these vats, so that it would shed the water if it rained. They made salt used principally for salting fish. That was what the fishermen used at that time for salting



Theodore S. Wimpenny, probably in his 90s, as he may have looked when speaking to Women's Club.

fish. Mr. Arey stored it in a shop back of the stores on Osborn's Wharf, or Town Wharf, so-called.

You will find today a nice lawn opposite the Swasey house, where it was once water. I remember what happened to me when I was a small boy. There was a pond of water and lots of mud where the lawn is today and there was ice on this pond. I was there with some older boys. I broke through the ice. One leg went well down into the mud. The older boys helped me out, minus my boot. Boys and men all wore long leather boots at the time. They would not think of wearing shoes in the winter time. I was helped out of the mud, and went up to my Grandmother's to get dry. She lived in the Swasey house. They fished in that hole and found my boot.

The next house was built by Mr. Charles Francis in the

year 1842. It is now known as the Dr. Runyon house. It was a one-story house and Dr. Runyon put another story on it.

Next was the shop of Mr. Rodolphus Pease, where he repaired carriages and made wagons. Many were the hours I spent in that shop with other boys. We behaved ourselves, and Mr. Pease was a very congenial man, so there never was any trouble. I remember there were about twelve boys in that end of the town about that time.

The entrance to the bridge was near the shop of Mr. Pease [this was the long bridge that went to the harbor lighthouse]. And one day I remember very distinctly, when my mother and I were down to my uncle's, Capt. Littleton C. Wimpenny's, house. That was right opposite the entrance to the bridge. I ran out doors, bare-footed. The bottom of my feet itched a considerable, and I ran down on this bridge, and scuffed along on the bridge to scratch my feet to get clear of the itching, and I got so I could hardly lift my feet up because of the splinters that had stuck into my feet. I went up to my uncle's house and showed them my feet. And my uncle seated me down in a chair alongside of him, and I put my foot in his lap and he took those splinters out by cutting with his jack-knife. And the pain was so much from the splinters that I never felt the cutting that he did at all.

There are two corners to the bridge. The first one was 100 feet or more from the entrance [on North Water Street], turning to the left and extending for two or three hundred feet; it then turned to the right and went straight down to the lighthouse. Near that first corner of the bridge, the boys used to go sometimes on clear still nights, and listen to the echo that could be heard from that bridge. We would shout, "Hello," and the answer would come from Tower Hill, "Hello," and to anything that we called out the answer would come from Tower Hill.

Next came the William Hubbard Norton house, built by Mr. George Lewis sometime in the sixties [1860s]. The next building was a large building near the water, below where the Candler house now stands, where soap was made. It was torn down and one of our townsmen bought it and built a real comfortable cottage house of the lumber.

This takes us as far as Morse Street, and at the foot of that street was what was called Morse's Wharf or North Wharf. It was quite a large wharf. And it was used quite a considerable by the Nantucket people who fitted and discharged some of their whaleships there. The same building that is on the wharf today was there at that time. It was used for storing rigging and whaling utensils. All the woodwork of the old wharf has been removed. Two or three ships could lie at that wharf at the same time because the front of it was quite long.

On the land where Mr. Thomas A. Dexter's house now is, there was a store kept by Capt. Tristram D. Pease, an old whaling captain, where the whalers used to congregate and tell the stories about whales, and the foreign countries they had visited, which was all very interesting to the boys.

The landing to the ferry from Chappaquiddick was right down below Capt. Pease's store, and the price of the ferry was three cents each way, rowed across in a row boat.

A few feet up the street from Captain Pease's store was the boat builder's shop of Uriah Morse, where he made his whaleboats for the ships. There was a passage way between Captain Pease's shop and Mr. Morse's shop, where they went with horses to haul up vessels on the railway which was in back of those shops.

Going back to Cottage Street, on the northwest side of Water Street, the first house was that of Captain John O. Norton, who was captain of the whaling vessel I went to sea in. The house is commonly known as the Bradish house today. The next house, now known as the Coffin house, was then the John P. Norton house, one of the old houses of the town.

Next was Captain Edwin Coffin's house, built by Captain Edwin Coffin, one of the old whaling ship-masters. When the Civil War broke out, he enlisted in the Navy as a non-commissioned officer and during that time he was honorably mentioned in Washington for taking charge of a man-of-war that was on the southern coast in a gale of wind and getting her under way and working her off shore. There was danger, for if the ship had gone ashore some lives might have been lost. There were five hundred men aboard, and the commander did not seem to know what to do, and asked Captain Coffin the question, what he

would do in such a case as this. Captain Coffin's reply was, "If I had a whaleship's crew I would put her to sea." The Commander says, "Can you put her to sea?" Captain Coffin says, "Yes, sir." The Commander says, "This ship is in your charge. I want you to put her to sea," and gave him the brass trumpet.

Coffin gave his orders and made sail and started the ship off shore. Then he came and returned the trumpet with the remark, "Your ship is at sea, sir." And that commander mentioned Captain Coffin in Washington and he was made a lieutenant [in the Navy].

The next house, what is known as the Bliss house, was then the house of Captain Jared Fisher, grandfather of Elmer J. Bliss, and was built by Captain George Lawrence.

Then came the house later known as the Failing house, then the Captain Jason Luce house. The Captain John C. Morse house was on the corner of Morse Street and Water Street. The house now known as the Dinsmore house, on the southeast side of Water Street, was then owned and occupied by Captain Ira Darrow, who was the only coal dealer in town at that time. Below his house was the wharf where his vessels used to come loaded with coal for his business. I have seen occasionally a whale-ship there, but it was used mostly for coal vessels.

The next wharf was called by some, Dr. Fisher's wharf, or Steamboat Wharf, and I think the Doctor owned it at one time. From that wharf up to Water Street the buildings, of which there were several, were used by Dr. Fisher in his manufacture of candles, spermaceti candles, and refining of oil. It afforded employment for quite a number of people.

Then we come to Mayhew's wharf, down at the foot of Kelley Street. Across Dock Street, on the upland and near the wharf, was a bakery where they baked bread for the ships, and it was quite an interesting place for the boys to go and see the power than turned the machinery. It was horse power. There was a large circular wheel and when they wanted to start up the machinery for kneading the bread, etc., the horse was fastened by the traces and whiffletree to one side of the building and the horse stood on this wheel. When they wanted to start the machinery, they told the horse to go along and as he walked, the wheel went around

and that wheel turned the rest of the machinery. That is where they made the hard tack for the sailors. The wharf was owned by Mr. Joseph Mayhew.

On the corner of Kelley Street and Dock Street was a pump-maker's shop, where the old gentleman, Mr. Joseph Kelley, made large wooden pumps for the ships. And on the other side of the street, where Mr. Samuel Osborn's garages are, there was nothing but water and shore, where they used to haul up the whale boats and vessels' spars, a regular landing place, and that land where Mr. Osborn's is, is all made land.

The next wharf was Osborn's, or what was called Town Wharf [at the end of Main Street], and on that wharf, from the corner of Dock Street, were four grocery stores. On the other side of the street, coming up from the wharf, were two other grocery stores and a meat market. Leading off of Main Street was an open way to the westward that led to the shop of William A. Pease, who made blocks for vessels, a block-maker's shop.

Not a great ways from that to the westward was Captain Milton's bathhouse. That was a building built out over the wall at the foot of the house lot now owned by Mrs. Harriet Worth, and in this building, which perhaps might have been ten by twelve, was a bath tub with a pump that went right down through to the water and he used to pump the salt water up into that bath tub so he could take a salt-water bath. That is the first bath tub I ever saw as a boy. The next wharf was what was called Grafton Norton's wharf, at the foot of Cooke Street [in 2006, the Reading Room is there].

All of the wharfs that I have mentioned were occupied mostly by the vessels in the whaling industry and there were always several ships in the harbor fitting out or discharging, for Edgartown at one time owned twenty ships. And it used to be quite a sight to see the ships that were being repaired and hove down. What we used to call heaving down was to fasten a purchase at the mast head of the ship and with a powerful purchase, the fall leading to a capstan on the wharf, she would be hauled over until her keel would be out of the water. Then with a stage in the water, a floating stage, men would work putting on the new cover boards and copper, and sheets of copper up where

the water line would be. Of course in taking off the old copper there would be more or less ragged pieces that would fall into the water and the boys used to make quite a business of rigging a piece of seine on an iron rod with a rope attached and dragging it along the bottom to catch that copper; and in that way they sometimes picked up quite a little pocket change, because one of the stores on the wharf, one of the grocery stores, bought that copper from the boys. . .

My mind now carries me back to the homestead of Mr. Joseph Mayhew on South Water Street [just past today's Reading Room], now occupied by his descendants, where I have known 25 or 30 boys at a time on that hill in the winter time sliding down right in front of the house. It was a very steep hill and it was a good place to slide. . . .

On Main Street, between Dock Street and Water Street, on the left-hand side coming up, there was an outfitter's shop, a flour and grain store, and a doctor's office. On the corner of Dock and Main Streets was a building used by the shoe company which at one time was capitalized by Edgartown people and ran for a while and then failed. Here they made shoes and sold them.

On the corner of Main and Water Streets was a men's clothing store where the market is now. The clothing store burned down and the building there today was moved there later. Where now is the Edgartown drug store was a clothing store, where sailors got their outfits. And on the opposite corner was the Martha's Vineyard Bank, now it's the Edgartown National Bank. The post office was in where Dr. Worth's office was. The greater part of the town's business was down below the Four Corners.

The court house was in its present location and the jail was on the west side of the same lot. It was moved and is now the summer residence of Mrs. Putnam. The town hall was in its present site. There were very few buildings at that time on the upper end of Main Street beyond the West Tisbury Road.

The waterfront was a very busy place. A great many men were employed on the ships at most all trades: carpenters, caulkers, painters, riggers, sail-makers, masons, and blacksmiths. All those trades had a hand in working on the ships. There would be in the harbor at times, especially in a northeast wind, from

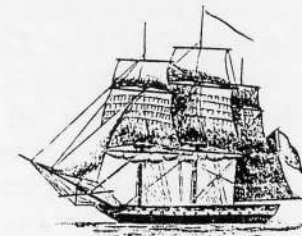
sixty to seventy-five coasting vessels. I have seen enough fishing smacks between the wharves so you could walk from one wharf to another by walking across their decks.

There seemed to be plenty of money in town. . . Whalers would be coming home with five hundred dollars and some with five thousand dollars or more in their pockets. . . There was no trouble in new enterprises that were started, like the shoe company, the union store, or anything like that, or investing in the steamboats. You could easily raise twenty thousand dollars; stock was taken in any new enterprise at that time.

After one of my father's voyages, when I was about eight or nine, my father and mother were in the dining room. I had gone to bed. I heard quite a rattling on that dining room table and I got up out of bed and came to the door and looked over their shoulders. They were shuffling over some Spanish gold that my father had in a canvas bag, and had tipped out on that table. They were counting it out. And I told them at that time I wanted one of those yellow Spanish doubloons. But they told me to get back into bed, so I had to leave. There was more gold than I have ever seen since. . .

The whalers were good citizens, staunch, responsible men who could be looked up to. . . the boy that would go to sea aboard of a whaler at sixteen or seventeen would quickly become a man . . . Even though it was his first night at sea, if the call was to go aloft and reef the top-sails, he had to go with the other men. He could not stay down below and say, "I am sorry I came," but the thought would come across him, "I am here now, and I have got to fall in and work with the others." It made a man out of him. . .

I thank you ladies for the patience you have had in listening to this rambling tale . .



DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL

Some words are easier to write than others. These are among the hardest. After 28 years of being wedded to this journal and to this cluttered basement office, I am retiring as editor. It is going to be an interesting period of adjustment for someone who has been totally immersed in Island history for so long. How will it feel to get out of the water?

The *Intelligencer* editorship has meant so much to me. It has given me a new career, a totally unplanned career, one that has opened so many windows, provided so many friendships.

As many of you know, in 1978 I was asked by my good friend, the founding editor of this journal, Gale Huntington, to take over as editor while the Society looked for a permanent one. "It will be for a year at the most," Gale said. I asked him why he didn't do it. "I am too old," was his response. "I'm 72, that's too old for the job."

Well, at 90, I am beginning to feel too old.

My editorial confidence is declining, along with my eyesight (essential in this work) and my ability to concentrate. Plus the fact that I am getting old! I no longer feel capable of producing a journal of which I am proud.

So, I say goodbye. This issue is the last I will edit. (Sorry it is so late; the preceding paragraph explains why.)

To all who have contributed articles, who have helped with research, who have given me encouragement and advice through those 28 years, I say, "Thank you."

A fortunate (also unplanned) coincidence is the arrival of my book, *the History of Martha's Vineyard: How We Got to Where We Are*. Without my years here at the Society, it never would have been written. This going-away present from me and the archives makes it a bit easier to say, "Goodbye."

Thanks.

ARR



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"I generally take home ten pounds of your wonderful homemade candy, Mr. Darling, but this year I'm on a diet so I'm only going to take nine pounds."

Denys Wortman, then an Islander, made Darling's famous with this cartoon printed in more than 100 newspapers in the 1950s.

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