

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



# THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 48, NOS. 1 AND 2

WINTER 2006-2007

*Aug / Nov. 2006*

## SPECIAL ISSUE

### The Arthur Railton Reader

A writing sampler from our retiring editor

### The Truth About Grey's Raid

A Remarkable Day (November 22, 1861)

A Remarkable Summer (1874)

And Thoughts about The Nature of History, Daniel  
Webster, Gale Huntington, and a Diarist's Life

#### MEMBERSHIP DUES

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

Tax deductible except  
for \$15, \*\$25 and \*\*\$35.

Printed at daRosa's in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts.

#### ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Arthur R. Railton, editor of the *Intelligencer* for almost 30 years, has retired. As readers of this journal know, his 2006 book, *The History of Martha's Vineyard*, grew out of a serialized history of the Island published in these pages over the last four years. But before the formal history started, there was much more: Dating back over the decades, Mr. Railton was the author of some 70 *Intelligencer* articles, on all aspects of Vineyard life, and the keeper of occasional columns, such as published correspondence with readers, and "Bits and Pieces," which commented gently on the business of collecting history. In this double issue, we have brought together some of his earlier – pre-book – writings. We reprint them here as salute and send off – and because we trust our readers will find them a happy record of a unique and intelligent voice, steering us through the years.

Regularly quarterly publication of *The Dukes County Intelligencer* resumes shortly.

# THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 48, NOS. 1 AND 2

© 2007 M.V.H.S.

WINTER 2006-2007

#### SPECIAL ISSUE

Executive Director's Report 3

*From Arthur R. Railton, in the Editor's Chair*

Bits & Pieces: History – and Trivia (May 1979) - 6

Island and Revolution: Grey's Raid (August 1983) - 7

Bits & Pieces: Camp Ground History (May 1985) - 15

The Summer of 1874 (February 1986) - 16

Edgartown: A Town for Walking (May 1986) - 26

Bits & Pieces: Daniel Webster (November 1988) - 31

Remembering Gale Huntington (February 1994) - 32

The Island Enjoys a Day of Ecstasy (May 1996) - 33

Remembering Marjorie E. Railton (February 2001) - 37

Henry Baylies: A Diarist's Life (November 2001) - 38

Founding Editor: Gale Huntington (1959-1977)  
Arthur R. Railton (1978-2006)

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

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

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



## MARTHA'S VINEYARD MUSEUM

Warren Hollinshead, *President*  
Christopher J. Morse, *Senior Vice President*  
Elizabeth Beim, *Vice President*  
Judith LoRusso, *Vice President*  
Mark A. Snider, *Vice President*  
Catherine Merwin Mayhew, *Secretary*  
Craig R. Dripps, *Assistant Secretary*  
Robert A. Lunbeck, *Treasurer*  
Hugh E. Knipmeyer, *President Emeritus*

### Board of Directors

(Who are not officers)

Alison M. Convery, Leslie O'Brien, James B. Richardson III,  
Renny A. Stackpole, David B. Vietor, Edward W. Vincent,  
Lynne Whiting, Preston N. Williams -- 2007  
Thomas Hale, Douglas Leavens,  
Mark Alan Lovewell, Eve Weinstein -- 2008  
John Botts, Judith Bruguiera, Paula Conover,  
Joseph E. Sollitto, Jr., Berta Welch, Dirk Ziff -- 2009

### Honorary Directors

Charlotte Hall, John A. Howland, Donald W. Vose

### Staff

Matthew P. Stackpole, *Executive Director*  
Betsey Mayhew, *Finance Director/Volunteer Coordinator*  
Jill Bouck, *Chief Curator*  
Dana Costanza Street, *Assistant Curator*  
Anna Carringer, *Curatorial Intern*  
Keith P. Gorman, *Program Director/Librarian/Archivist*  
Linda Wilson, *Assistant Librarian*  
Peter B. Van Tassel, *Library Assistant\**  
Mary Ellen Hill, *Library Assistant\**  
Capt. Charles Tucey, *Vanity Skipper & Caretaker*  
Amy Houghton, *Director of Development*  
Susan Wilson, *Development Coordinator*  
Deirdre Ling, *Major Gifts Officer*  
Linsey Lee, *Curator of Oral History*  
Lynne Whiting, *Education Director*  
Catherine Merwin Mayhew, *Genealogist\**  
Dorothea R. Looney, *Registrar\**

\*Unpaid volunteer

## Executive Director's Report

### A Reporter's Instincts Led Down a Remarkable Trail

by MATTHEW STACKPOLE

Welcome to a special issue of *The Intelligencer*. The Arthur Railton Reader is presented in recognition of Art's wonderful tenure as editor of our quarterly journal. This is not a compendium of "greatest hits"; rather, it is simply a sampler of some of Art's work, which we hope reflects both the breadth of his interests and his unique perspective and voice.

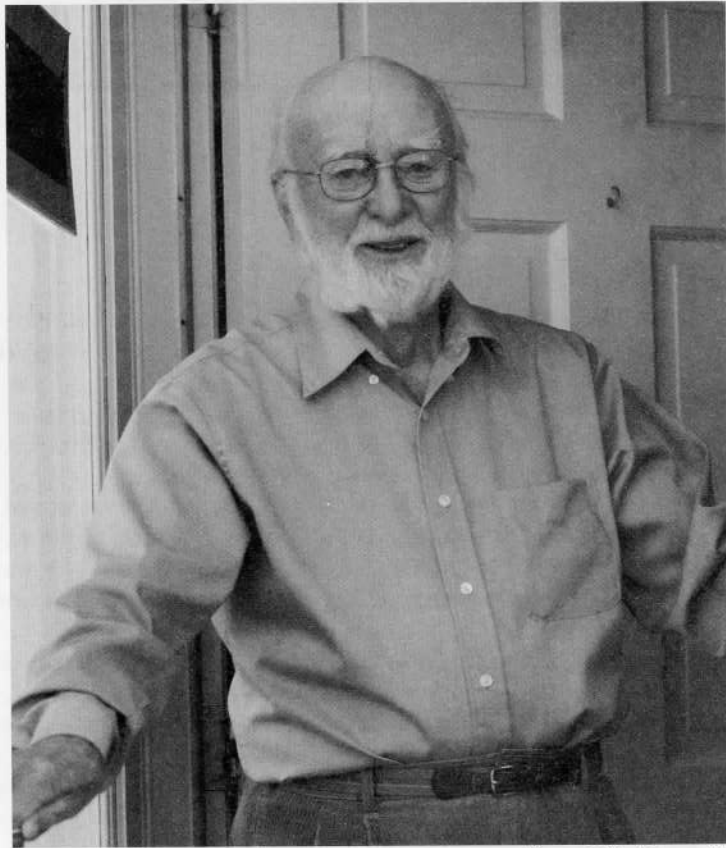
Arthur Railton first visited the Vineyard in 1923 when, at age 7, he came to visit his aunt Jane Fisher and her husband Everett. It is an interesting coincidence that the Dukes County Historical Society, now the Martha's Vineyard Museum, was incorporated that same year.

Summer visits to the Vineyard came to be a regular part of Art's childhood – and, later, a tradition as he raised his own family. He studied journalism in college, spent five years in the Army during World War II and began his career by working for newspapers in Wisconsin and Illinois. He served as automotive editor of *Popular Mechanics* before joining Volkswagen of America in 1960, where he became vice president for corporate relations.

In 1977, retiring from Volkswagen, Art moved permanently to the Vineyard. Within a year his good friend Gale Huntington, founding editor of *The Intelligencer*, asked Art to take over for a year. It was volunteer work. Twenty-eight years on, and some 5,000 pages later, Art has decided to retire.

The Mission of the Martha's Vineyard Museum is to "inspire interest and understanding of the Island's unique history, culture and physical characteristics by collecting, preserving and presenting relevant materials ... To accomplish this the Museum will present educational programs; add to its museum, library and archive collections; mount exhibits, and produce publications."

Since its founding in 1959, *The Intelligencer* has been the



Arthur R. Railton

Photo © Mark Lovewell

flagship of our publication efforts, the primary way our collection has been "presented" to the public. Art once said about his work: "There was so much history around here. But if it was just here, being preserved ... it might as well be preserved in the dump if nobody's ever going to look at it." As editor, Art explored our collections and produced copy reflecting the full spectrum of Vineyard history. He created a body of work that will aid researchers forever.

History has been defined as the collective memory of things said and done which provide meaning in the present and guide informed choices for the future. A community's history defines the context that explains its spirit and values. If we don't

remember and tell our own stories how can we understand who we are and "how we got to where we are"? This is one of the fundamental reasons any museum, and certainly this museum, exists.

Recalling his earlier newspaper days, Art refers to himself as "a reporter writing about old stories" rather than as a historian, and his active reporter's interest and curiosity in why things happened as well as what happened is evident in all his writing and in any conversation with him. In 2002, almost 400 years to the month after Bartholomew Gosnold's "discovery" of Martha's Vineyard, this reporter of old stories decided to tell them again in a new narrative of Island history he would produce by "serializing" articles in *The Intelligencer*. He did just that, over the next four years, and at the end of the process we had a book.

*The History of Martha's Vineyard: How We Got to Where We Are*, published last summer by Commonwealth Editions of Beverly, guarantees the material in our collections will gain a wider audience. This, like all of the reportage he produced in *The Intelligencer* over the years, is Art's true gift to the future. It is a gift created not because "Railton," as he calls himself when he answers his phone, set out to do it, but rather because his reporter's instinct, his curiosity, his intellect and his sheer perseverance carried him along until he'd covered the whole story.

As David McCullough said, "No one knows the history of Martha's Vineyard as does Arthur Railton, and this new book will be a treasure for everyone who loves the Vineyard."

For the book, and for his labors with *The Intelligencer*, this institution will always be indebted to him. While we wish Art a well-deserved rest, we have also pointed out to him that, as Editor Emeritus, there is space in these pages for another article, should his curiosity or knowledge lead him to it.

Turn the page... for selections from Art Railton's *Intelligencer*. Original dates of publication are cited at the top of each page.

## Bits & Pieces

As any fool knows who has ever involved himself (or herself) in such an enterprise, historical research often uncovers fascinating data which fit no category or chapter heading except "trivia." It is sheer waste to file and forget these tidbits. Some authors save them for cocktail-party chattering. Others slip them into footnotes, a bit of pedantic posturing that can be most uncomfortable.

So it is our intent to plant such bits and pieces here on the back page where they may be read, fertilized and (who knows?) one day bear fruit. Here are a few such.

In *Sketches of Martha's Vineyard* quoted herein, S.A. Devens, after many visits to the Island, states that Edgartown is "pronounced Edgar-ton."

Are there those among us who know this to have been so?

Devens further claims that "in the vicinity of Edgartown is a pond which is said to rise in dry weather and fall in wet." He continues, "Do you doubt it, reader? Many of three-score years and ten declare it upon their honor and would testify to it upon oath."

Any who can so testify today?

Still with the notion that the world changes little: Devens writes (in 1838, remember) that "Oil is money." The oil is from whales and not fossils. In those non-militant days, no demonstrators marched to save the whales. 'Tis better, is it not, to burn

fossils as we do now than the body oil from intelligent living mammals as we did then?

Devens loses current relevance, however, when you read the full quote: "Oil is money. Hence on the Island, the circulating medium is plentiful."

Think about it: were not our whaling captains the sheiks of their time? And wasn't Dr. Daniel Fisher, all by himself, yesterday's OPEC?

In the same book, published in 1838, Preacher Devens makes us aware that the world changes little. Coming from Boston, he was sufficiently impressed with the serenity of the Island to write: "At any hour of night the streets are perfectly safe."

Even in 1838, it seems, safe streets were rare enough to write about.

A Cape Cod boy (as he called himself) E. G. Perry, in his book *A Trip Around Cape Cod*, had this to say about our Island back in 1898:

"The island of Martha's Vineyard offers nothing wonderful, or even largely entertaining, in its ancient or modern annals to reward the lover of great deeds or remarkable events as told in story. . . . Here is simply an island in the sea, a gem of earth in ocean setting, so to speak, without historic fame or association, and appearing, for the most part, very much as in the beginning, when it was planted fresh from the hands of the Creator."

A dubious tidbit to end this piece with.

THE EDITOR

## Documents

### Islanders and the Revolution

*Grey's Raid, 1778*

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

HOW did inhabitants of Martha's Vineyard line up during the American Revolution? Were they Revolutionists? Did they sympathize with the Crown? Or were they neutral? It is not easy to be certain, but there are documents that help shed some light on the question.<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1778, Sir William Clinton, supreme commander of the British forces, ordered Major General Charles Grey to conduct a raid on New Bedford and Martha's Vineyard, because, he wrote:

I hope it will serve to convince these poor deluded people that that sort of war, carried to a greater extent and with more devastation, will sooner or later reduce them.<sup>2</sup>

Following Clinton's orders, General Grey and his task force had on September 6, 1778 arrived at New Bedford, from which harbor he sent in a report to his superior in New York:

On Board the *Carysfort* Frigate off Bedford Harbour. I shall proceed to Martha's Vineyard for the purpose of collecting cattle for Rhode Island, etc.; immediately after

<sup>1</sup>For a detailed account of the subject, with documentation from both sides of the Atlantic, see *The History of Martha's Vineyard*, Charles Edward Banks, Dukes County Historical Society, 1966, v. I. Historian Banks seems to want to believe that the Islanders were pro-Revolution, but swings indecisively towards neutralism.

<sup>2</sup>William B. Willcox, *Portrait of a General*, Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y., 1964, p. 251. What Clinton meant by "that sort of war" is not clear.

ARTHUR R. RAILTON is Editor of this journal and he thanks Arlene Shy of the William L. Clements Library, U. of Michigan for her assistance in obtaining some of these documents.

performing that service shall return with the troops to Long Island . . .<sup>3</sup>

The British troops garrisoned near Newport, R.I., were in need of rations for the approaching winter and that was Grey's purpose in going to the Vineyard. At the time, the British held only the area around New York City and around Newport.

Washington's Continental Army was in New Jersey. There was no evidence of war around the Vineyard.

Sir Henry Clinton, in his New York headquarters, received an intelligence report concerning Martha's Vineyard a few days later:

Writer: Intelligence

Date: 1778 Sept. 10

Respecting the island of Martha's Vineyard.

The Island of Martha's Vineyard is near 23 miles in length -- the greatest breadth about 12 miles, but generally from 4 to 5 miles wide -- The Soil is mostly Sandy and produces little grain, which is raised in Chilmark and Edgar Town Ships -- Almost all the bread consumed on the Island is procured from Connecticut -- Their other supplies were brought from Bedford & Boston. There is hardly any Timber of size on the Island, and Wood for fuel -- or building vessels -- chiefly brought from the Continent.

The Number of Inhabitants do not exceed 3500, exclusive of Indians of whom there are about 60 familys, who cultivate a little ground, and are possessed of about 60 herds of cattle & 200 sheep.

The Stock of Cattle on the Island by the most accurate information we can procure amounted to about 600 head of oxen, steers, etc., 560 cows & 13,000 sheep. The Militia under a Colonel & 5 Captains were swelled to the number 600 & upwards but from their being mostly bred to the Sea not more than two-thirds of that number answer at home, being employed as Pilots on board Privateers, etc.

They are possessed of few vessels properly owned here, having formerly shared in those fitted out at Nantucket & Bedford for whaling -- as they do now in their privateers."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Clinton Papers, v. 41:21, William L. Clements Library, U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

<sup>4</sup>Idem, v. 41:3.

On the same date that the Intelligence Report was prepared for Sir Henry, the Grey Task Force sailed into Holmes Hole. The actual "raid," which is not an accurate description of the expedition, occurred on September 12, 13 and 14, 1778. On the 15th, the Task Force sailed away and on September 18, 1778, General Grey, quite pleased with the results, wrote the following summary report to Sir Henry from his quarters aboard the *Carysfoot*, then in Whitestone harbor near New York City:

Sir:

In the Evening of the 4th Inst., the Fleet with the Detachment under my Command sailed from New London and stood to the Eastward with a very favourable wind: We were only retarded in the run from thence to Buzzards Bay by the altering of our Course for some hours in the night, in consequence of the discovery of a strange Fleet, which was not known to be Lord Howe's until morning. By 5 o'clock in the afternoon of the 5th, the Ships were at an anchor in Clarks Cove and the Boats having been previously hoisted out, the debarkation of the Troops took place immediately. I proceeded without loss of time to destroy the Vessels and Stores in the whole extent of Accushnet River (about 6 miles), particularly at Bedford and Fair Haven, and having dismantled and burnt a Fort on the East Side of the River, mounting 11 pieces of heavy Cannon with a Magazine & Barracks, completed the Re-embarkation before noon the next day. I refer your Excellency to the annexed Return for the Enemy's losses, as far as we were able to ascertain them and for our own Casualties.

The Wind did not admit of any further Movement of the Fleet the 6th and 7th than hauling a little distance from the Shore; Advantage was taken of the Circumstance to burn a large privateer Ship on the Stocks and to send a small Armament of Boats with two Galleys to destroy two or three Vessels, which being in the Stream, the Troops had not been able to set fire to.

From the Difficulties in passing out of Buzzards Bay into the Vineyard Sound thro' Quickses Hole and from Head Winds, the Fleet did not reach Holmes' Hole Harbour in



the Island of Martha's Vineyard until the 10th. The Transports with the Light Infantry, Grenadiers and 33rd. Regiments were anchored without the Harbour as I had at that time a Service in view for those Corps whilst the business of collecting cattle should be carrying on upon the Island. I was obliged by contrary winds to relinquish my designs.

On our Arrival off the Harbour, the Inhabitants sent persons on board to ask my Intentions with respect to them, to which a requisition was made of the Arms of the Militia, the public Money, 300 Oxen and 10,000 Sheep. They promised each of these Articles should be delivered without delay. I afterwards found it necessary to send small detachments into the Island and detain the deputed Inhabitants for a time, in order to accelerate their Compliance with the demand.

The 12th. I was able to embark on board the Vessels which arrived that day from Rhode Island 6000 Sheep and 130 Oxen.

The 13th and 14th were employed in embarking Cattle and Sheep on board our own Fleet, in destroying some Salt Works, in burning or taking in the Inlets what Vessels and boats could be found and in receiving the arms of the Militia. I here again refer your Excellency to Returns.

On the 15th, the Fleet left Martha's Vineyard and after sustaining the next day a very severe Gale of Wind, arrived the 17th at Whitestone without any material damage.

I hold myself much obliged to the Commanding Officers of Corps and to the Troops in General for the Alacrity with which every Service was performed.

I have the honour to be,

Etc., C.<sup>5</sup>

Colonel Beriah Norton of Edgartown had been one of the members of the group sent aboard the *Carysfort* to ask General Grey what his intentions were. After the fleet left, he (and several others, but he principally) devoted the next four years trying to get the British government to reimburse the Islanders for what had been taken. He made trips to Boston, New York and even to London in his quest for restitution.

<sup>5</sup>*Idem*, 41:14. The "C" signature is apparently for Charles.

Years later, on April 11, 1782, he went before a Board of Inquiry at General O'Hara's headquarters in New York and delivered a long and forceful brief, arguing the Islanders' claim to payment for what had been taken. In it, he makes many references to the behavior of the Islanders during the Revolution.<sup>6</sup>

Until the perusal of that paper<sup>7</sup> I had never heard it suggested either here or in England that General Grey's dissent on the Island of Martha's Vineyard was "in consequence of his having received undoubted intelligence that the people of Martha's Vineyard took a very active part in the Rebellion . . .

It is a matter even of public notoriety that the Inhabitants of Martha's Vineyard, did at the commencement of the Rebellion in this Country make the most explicit declarations that they would not be concerned with either party in the Controversy . . . When disturbances, riots and persecutions were prevailing in every other part of the Province, no irregularities were committed on that Island;

When Troops were levied in every other place to serve against the King not an individual was raised upon that Island for that service; nor has there been any assessment or Tax made or raised upon the Island since the year 1777, although frequent and repeated demands have been made by the Government at Boston.

When Independence was declared by the Congress in the year 1776 an order came from the General Court at Boston to the several Towns on Martha's Vineyard among the others in the Province, to assemble, and take the sense of the Inhabitants upon this very important transaction; on this occasion one of the Towns would not even meet, and the other two at their meeting positively refused to act on the matter;-- Since that time no members have been sent from the Island to the General Court at Boston -- not a single Military Commission has been received there since the declaration of Independence, and they have uniformly refused to take their quota of Arms distributed through the Province for arming the militia,

<sup>6</sup>D.C.H.S. Archives, "Beriah Norton's Narrative," April 11, 1782.

<sup>7</sup>Norton had received a copy of a letter written by General Grey to the King's Secretary of the Treasury, John Robinson.

tho' frequently called upon for that purpose;

It is truly astonishing that these Inhabitants should be accused of fitting out Privateers and Row-boats and taking many prizes into their Ports, when it is incontestibly true that no Privateer or Row-boat was ever fitted out from the Island, nor any part of one owned by any Inhabitant of it . . . I can safely defy any person to adduce . . . that there has ever been an instance of any public transaction that would justify the idea of the Inhabitation of Martha's Vineyard being active in the Rebellion.

Colonel Norton went on at great length with considerable documentation to prove that General Grey had said at the time that the inhabitants would be repaid for the livestock the Fleet was taking. Norton stated also that the Militia had delivered up its arms, weapons that had been provided by the King's government. "At the time of his landing," the Colonel stated, "not a man was armed, nor were any of them collected upon the occasion, but all remained quiet at home until summoned by the General's order to bring in the Stock demanded and such arms as were in their possession, which they faithfully and punctually performed . . ." The fact that 10,000 sheep and more than 300 cattle were collected from all over the Island in less than four days "and that the whole business was effected by the Inhabitants alone" was evidence, Norton argued, that there was no opposition to the operation. He knew the facts because, he said:

The whole of this business was negotiated between the General and myself; and I most sacredly declare that on the evening of the 10th of September on board the *Carysfort* Frigate, General Grey assured me that upon the stock being delivered according to agreement, I might depend upon its being paid for in full or in part and that every justice should be done to the Inhabitants.

The strongest evidence of the plan to reimburse the owners was the General's order that a careful inventory of each animal's weight and ownership and value be kept as

the animals were loaded aboard the vessels. "For what purpose?" Colonel Norton asks. "Surely such conduct was by no means consistent with the Idea of a contribution to be levied . . . as a punishment for their disloyalty, but clearly evinced a deliberate intention at the time that compensation should be made."

In conclusion, he described the poverty of the Island, not only because of the loss of so much livestock, but also because their fishing industry had been damaged by the war. The inhabitants, he argued, "have been taught to believe the faith of Government inviolable, and will be disappointed more than they ever imagined, in the failure of this application. They are already poor and miserable and unless relieved by payment for this stock will experience a degree of wretchedness which I dread to anticipate."

General Sir Guy Carleton, who had a few months earlier succeeded General Clinton in the supreme command post in New York, approved the finding of the Board "that the claim was meritorious" and he agreed to make payment of the 7923 Pounds Sterling the Islanders were owed in installments. The first payment was for 3000 Pounds Sterling and it was paid.

But that didn't satisfy Norton or his Vineyard clients. They wanted the full 7923 Pounds. Even after the treaty was signed later that year ending the Revolution, he continued to seek full restitution, making at least one trip to England.

By 1787, the new government of the United States was in operation, the capital city being New York. Colonel Norton took his case there and presented it to John Jay, the secretary for foreign affairs. The secretary, busy with other issues, dodged the question, stating to Congress that the National Government should not get involved in "such concerns and affairs of Individuals as are



unconnected with, and do not touch or affect the National rights."<sup>8</sup>

And so the quest for full restitution for the livestock taken by the British Fleet ended. Vineyarders were most unhappy, of course, and some felt Colonel Norton had been unduly influenced by the British and therefore had not adequately argued their case. That would seem to be an unfair judgement. He had been a dogged solicitor.

As for the question of the inhabitants' position in the Revolution, Grey's Raid provides evidence that they did not consider the British to be enemies. One doesn't sell to or negotiate payment with an enemy during a war.

Perhaps the reality was that the Islanders did not feel strongly about either side of the dispute, at least, not in 1778. Colonel Norton made that point when he told the Board of Inquiry that the Islanders had stated they would not take sides "at the commencement of the Rebellion." It was, he said, a matter of self-interest for the Vineyarders to remain neutral:

[B]y their local situation they were equally exposed to the resentment of both: they were on the one hand directly opposite and near to a part of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, where the Inhabitants could annoy them at pleasure; and on the other were liable from their insular situation to every incursion, either from King's ships or Privateers.

Pending a study of further documentation, that may be the best way to answer the question. The Islanders were neutral, they just wanted to be left alone.

<sup>8</sup>Banks, *op. cit.*, v. 1, p. 402.

## Bits & Pieces

**M**OST of you may not believe it, but working with history can be exciting. It is akin to exploration.

The research on the Camp Meeting history is an example. Among some old letters in the New England Methodist Library in Boston there is one written in 1823 by Ebenezer Skiff, keeper of Gay Head Light. He was writing to Rev. Frederick Baylies about the commercial worth of the cliffs, an unlikely topic to find in a religious library.

Skiff had "dug 25 feet below the surface of the sea but no bitumen could be found. . . . The most valuable article in the Cliffs is white clay, of which yearly there is 150 tons, more or less, conveyed to Salem.

" . . . The whole Gay Head tribe of male and female is employed digging clay . . . for which the people of color receive from the [Salem] Laboratory \$2.75 per ton put on board of any vessel sent by the Company . . . others pay \$3. per ton."

Skiff then tells us something we hear little about today:

"I have been of counsel to the Gay Head people nearly 40 years during which I have endured bitter reproaches."

He explains why:

"In the year 1810, I obtained final judgement . . . against a white man over a tract of the best grassland of

any of that size on Martha's Vineyard."

There are several stories about the first "cottage" on the Camp Ground and when it was built. An article in *Zion's Herald*, Sept. 2, 1869, gives us a clue:

"Cottage Park is an oblong full of trees and lined with dainty cottages . . . Family tents had become somewhat common when Rev. Frederic Upham changed his tent to wood. A storm came and wet through and blew down the cloth tabernacles. Out of his box he walked serene in the morning and rubbing his hands in his humorous and devout style, dryly remarked, 'Bless God for shingles.' Since then, 'shingles' have become the fashion."

That "box" (it was only 7 by 10 feet) was built with the help of the ubiquitous Jeremiah Pease in July 1851, six years before any of our historians had dated it (see *Intelligencer*, Nov. 1984, p. 85).

How do we know it was the same "box" that Jeremiah describes in his Diary? Well, during the Camp Meeting a month later, an exceptionally violent thunderstorm drenched the Campground, prompting Upham's blessing of the shingles.

Before reading *Zion's Herald*, we thought it was merely a wooden frame for the Upham tent that Jeremiah described. Now, thanks to the 150th anniversary we know better. It was the first "cottage" and built in 1851.

That's the fun of history.

A.R.R.



## The Summer of 1874

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

IT WAS a summer long to be remembered -- the summer of 1874. Packed into it were celebrations, indiscretions, innovations and criminalities -- wonderment enough to fill a dozen summers. On an Island that a few years before had been quiet, secluded and sedate, visited only occasionally by outsiders, that hectic summer must have made Vineyarders ask: what have we created?

It was a watershed summer. There would be no turning back. The nation, in 1874, discovered our Island.

For two years, real-estate speculation had gone beyond the wildest imaginings of Vineyard residents. Spreading out from Cottage City were subdivisions of all sizes: Lagoon Heights, with 400 lots sold in a few weeks; Oklahoma; West Point Grove and Cedar Bluff on West Chop; Ocean Heights; Hines Point; all had their start at this time. Developers had grabbed over 2000 acres, dividing them neatly into tiny rectangles, eight lots per acre.

Buyers rushed to the Island, eager to get a spot before it was too late. Everywhere they looked they saw construction. The brand new Seaview Hotel dominated the Oak Bluffs waterfront and there was already talk of an addition, even larger than the first. The Highland House stood nearby and a few blocks away there were the Pawnee House and the Island House, plus a dozen more. As far away as Katama, the development was going on. The Mattakesett Lodge, within earshot of the pounding Atlantic, opened for business in August 1873, ready for a big summer in 1874. It must have seemed that the whole country wanted a piece of Martha's Vineyard -- hurry, hurry, hurry, before it's all gone.

That was also the mood of the nation: expand, invest, speculate, the future belongs to us.

Then in September 1873, the first crack in the national confidence appeared with the failure of one of the country's largest brokerage houses, Jay Cooke & Company, setting off the Panic of 1873 and the deepest depression the nation had ever experienced. It was to last nearly six years.

Jay Cooke, the man who had masterminded the financing of the Civil War for Lincoln, had overspeculated in stock of the Northern Pacific Railroad, eager to make a killing for himself and his friends. His collapse sent shock waves through the nation's financial community.

The effect on the Island seemed minimal. How could something as far away as the Northwest Territories be of concern here? There was, to be sure, the Cashier of the Merchants Bank of Lowell, I. N. Pierce, Jr., who somehow couldn't account for \$100,000 of the bank's deposits, "the result," one newspaper said, "of too high living. . . including an elegant establishment at Martha's Vineyard, where he has often generously entertained his friends."<sup>1</sup>

The Island wasn't so remote after all.

But its promoters pushed ahead. Early in 1874, in the face of Jay Cooke's railroad disaster, the newly organized Martha's Vineyard Railroad Company set out to buy the right-of-way to run a narrow-gauge railroad from Oak Bluffs to Katama, with a station in Edgartown. It would bring the brand-new Mattakesett Lodge within a quick train ride of the Oak Bluffs dock.<sup>2</sup> It would give Edgartown a piece of the summer resort business.

An Island railroad was needed, wrote Editor Edgar Marchant of the *Gazette*. "The 'snort' of the iron horse will arouse men from their lethargy and infuse new life into their veins."

<sup>1</sup>Whalemen's Shipping List, New Bedford, Oct. 14, 1873, p.2.

<sup>2</sup>The new Lodge would also be helped by the \$20,000 spent by the Federal government in October 1873 to open a 75-foot-wide channel between Katama Bay and the ocean. It was dredged six feet deep at low water and for a distance of 2500 feet.

There may have been talk of depression on the mainland, but this was the Island -- a special place, separate from such things.

And so the stage was set for the summer of 1874 -- the most exciting, most frenetic, two months in Island history. It was a high-water mark, to be followed by shattered dreams and lost fortunes.

But it was memorable. Here are some of the events that made it so:

- Editor Marchant had been right. Building the railroad did infuse new life into the Island's veins. The company went at the job with intensity. By the end of July 1874, only four months after the first planning meeting, all but three-quarters of a mile of track had been laid. Within a week, the engine and cars were to arrive. The Edgartown depot was nearly completed. The Governor of Massachusetts and a party of Bostonians had come down to admire the achievement.

With some exaggeration, Editor Marchant wrote: "Sixty-six days ago, the trees from which the ties were made were growing in Maine, and the iron for the rails was in the mines of Pennsylvania." It was, as he wrote, a miracle.

Then came the first letdown. In hopes of not frightening the Island's many horses with a huffing and puffing locomotive, it was decided to use a "dummy engine," a steam engine mounted inside a normal-looking passenger car. Horses, accustomed to street railways (there already was a horse-drawn trolley in Oak Bluffs), were not so likely to bolt. It was the type of engine used on the elevated trains of New York City.

The engine and cars were supposed to have arrived early in July, but they were a month late. It was early August when the test run was made. "All the loafing population turned out," the *Gazette* reported. What they saw was less than an unqualified success. "Some fear that it will never be able to do the work required of it." Although the *Gazette*

didn't mention it, one writer said that the dummy could not negotiate the sharper curves and was derailed early in the test run. A new engine, it was said, would have to be bought.

"The dummy speaks for itself," was Editor Marchant's only comment.

A new engine was ordered and delivered in record time (after all, the season was flying past). But there were more problems. As the engine, called the "Active," waited atop a flat car on the wharf at Wood's Hole for the steamer to haul it to the Island, two errant freight cars rammed into the flat car driving it into the caplog at the end of the dock. The flat car stopped, but the "Active" kept rolling, tumbling into the ocean. Recovered, a few days later, it was shipped to Boston for repairs, arriving back at the end of August, just in time for a few days of operation before the busy summer season ended.

On one of those early runs, as it snorted its way along the beach road between Oak Bluffs and Edgartown, it frightened the horses pulling a carriage containing a gentleman and three ladies. The horses broke loose and the carriage upset near the Sengekontackett bridge, causing injury to the ladies. Conductor Worth, viewing the accident, stopped the train, backed up, put the injured ladies on board and carried them to a doctor in Oak Bluffs.

The very late start had caused great financial problems for the company and by November the physical assets were in the hands of the Sheriff, pending settlement with several creditors, one of whom was the builder of the dummy engine.<sup>3</sup> An arrangement was worked out and the railroad was back in operation in 1875, continuing to lose money until 1877. Its biggest business came from day-trippers who were carried from Oak Bluffs to Katama for clambakes held

<sup>3</sup>The court ruled that the dummy engine be returned to the company which was ordered to pay the railroad \$2000 for the loss of summer business caused by the engine's failure to perform as promised.



at the Pavilion next to the Mattakesett Lodge. The railroad continued to operate until 1896.

- Vice President Henry Wilson came to Oak Bluffs for a day and the President of Harvard University spent a week in a tent he pitched on the grounds of the Sailor's Free Reading Room, Union Street, Vineyard Haven. The Taunton Glee Club gave a concert. Professor Cromwell lectured on famous art works, illustrating his talk with pictures taken on his European tour. The Mattakesett Lodge, tired of waiting for the delayed railroad, chartered the steam yacht *Starry Banner* which made four trips a day from the Oak Bluffs wharf to the hotel's dock at Katama. Business was so good, the Lodge hired Reinbach's band from Boston to entertain its guests and announced it would build a bigger hotel on the knoll behind the present one for next year (it never did). The Hartford professional baseball team came to Oak Bluffs to play an exhibition game for the crowds. The game so excited the population that in October two local teams played the first game of baseball ever played in Edgartown. The players obviously needed practice: the final score was True Blues 40, Regulators 31. The Regulators evened the score the following week, beating the True Blues, 45 to 27.

- A New York woman, staying at the Highland House, returned to her room after an afternoon stroll to discover that her trunk had been broken open and jewelry valued at over \$1000 had been stolen. Another room in the hotel had been broken into and jewelry stolen. A New York man and a New London man were arrested after breaking into the residence of Mrs. Eunice Coffin of Edgartown. A "party of roughs from New Bedford, who had been indulging in the bad rum they brought with them, got into a dispute which led to blows" outside the Sea View House in Oak Bluffs. Constable James Pent of Edgartown was stabbed in the hip with a knife when he tried to break up the fracas. The new County Jail in Edgartown was completed just in time to handle the expanding criminal population.

- On the Fourth of July a purse of \$150 was awarded to the winning horse at the Martha's Vineyard Trotting Park. That was not the only racing that summer: the competing steamers raced each other between Oak Bluffs and Wood's Hole. On July 17th, the steamer *Martha's Vineyard* beat out the *River Queen* by more than a mile, the *Gazette* reported. Nobody asked what the passengers thought about it.

- President Ulysses S. Grant, his wife, and a party of about 300 very important persons spent a few days at the Campground. In the party were Vice President Wilson (his second visit), Surgeon-General Barnes, General Orville E. Babcock, General Horace Porter, Secretary of War William W. Belknap, Postmaster General Marshall Jewell, Publisher George Child of the *Philadelphia Ledger* and George M. Pullman, head of the Pullman Company of Chicago, manufacturer of railroad cars. They arrived on the *River Queen* and were met at the Highland Wharf by a flower-bedecked horse trolley. No one seemed to worry about the consequences to the nation if the *River Queen* had foundered.<sup>4</sup>

- The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, numbering 748 persons including "wives and other lady friends," held religious services in the Union Chapel in Oak Bluffs. The opening hymn began: "Behold how pleasant and how good, For brethren such as we, The Locomotive Brotherhood, to dwell in unity."

- Captivating as these events were, they all paled in comparison with one other that summer, one with all the trappings of frontier justice.

It began in the spring when a Worcester man, Samuel K. Elliott, a former sewing-machine salesman who had decided to get into real-estate, came to the Island. He soon owned several cottages, one being on Tuckernuck Avenue, Oak Bluffs, where he lived while on the Island. As he explained

<sup>4</sup>Several of these very important persons were forced to resign in disgrace a year later when the corruption in the Grant Cabinet was revealed. The Presidential visit deserves more space than it can be given here. We plan a future article on the subject.

later, he soon found he needed a housekeeper and he hired Mrs. P. R. Dexter for the job. She moved into the cottage, bringing with her a married sister, Mrs. Lizzie C. Dickson, whose husband was a sailor aboard a coastal schooner. Also in the house was the Deputy Sheriff of Dukes County, John N. Vinson.

In mid-summer when mariner Dickson came ashore, he demanded that his wife return to their home, but she refused, stating that she wanted to remain there with her sister, Mrs. Dexter, until her child was born. Mr. Dickson was understandably upset and, as Mr. Elliott described it, "threatened to shoot me and knock my brains out, tar and feather me," if his wife didn't come home. Other threats to Elliott and Deputy Sheriff Vinson were made and after several suspicious night-time activities outside the Tuckernuck Avenue cottage, Vinson, more cautious than his friend Elliott, left the Island for parts unknown.

The *Boston Globe* carried the story on the front page:

"The quiet atmosphere of Oak Bluffs has recently been disturbed by a scandal of some magnitude. Allen F. Dickson, a sailor employed on a coasting vessel, returned home a few weeks ago and found that his wife had deserted her home at Prospect Heights, midway between Oak Bluffs and Eastville, and was living at Oak Bluffs in a cottage with a deputy sheriff and other kindred spirits. On Thursday last, the facts became generally known, and at twelve the succeeding night, a party started for the cottage intending to tar and feather the inmates; but they [the inmates] had become aware that the place was too hot to hold them and had fled. The sheriff has not since been heard from."

Such a salacious story, seasoned with tar and feathers, made both the New York and Boston papers take notice. It was to become even more sensational, as this account in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* stated:

"For some weeks a good deal of scandal in connection with a Mr. Vinson of Edgartown and S. K. Elliot, from Worcester, who have occupied a cottage in company with

two married women belonging to Edgartown. These men have been threatened with a coat of tar and feathers and Mr. Vinson, fearing trouble, left the island some weeks ago.

"Last night, about eleven o'clock, a party of men went to the cottage and calling out Mr. Elliot, after considerable struggle forced him into a wagon in which was a pot of tar and a bag of feathers. Mr. Elliot drew a revolver and fired twice, the second shot killing Caleb Smith, a brother of the two women. The report of the pistol frightened the horse which ran away and threw the whole party from the wagon, when Elliot escaped and surrendered himself to the authorities."

The *Globe's* account of the event said that "although Vinson had decamped. . . it was determined that on Saturday night Elliott should be taken from his cottage and tarred and feathered. In a fierce rain-storm, with the requisite utensils, they halted their team opposite the cottage. . . which is occupied by Elliott. . . . After a severe struggle in which Elliott proved himself equal for them all, he escaped [after shooting Caleb C. Smith]."

Five days later, the *Gazette* gave a more detailed account:

"On the night of August 1st, Almar Dickson, Caleb C. Smith, John Gordon, George W. Watrous and Stephen Robins met at Dickson's house with the avowed intention of tarring and feathering Samuel K. Elliott, who, it was alleged, was living at 89 Tuckernuck Avenue in criminal intimacy with two sisters of Smith's, one of whom was the wife of Dickson. . . ."

The story went on to explain that Watrous, who was not known to Elliott, went to the door of the cottage asking to be shown a horse that Elliott had for sale. Elliott, by now suspicious of any night-time invitation, said he wouldn't come out, but that the stranger could look at the horse in the barn and come back the next day if still interested.

Watrous took out a gun along with a set of handcuffs and demanded that Elliott come out. With that, Elliott drew

his own gun and "snapped it at Watrous, but failing to discharge it." Seeing all this, Caleb Smith, the disgraced brother, rushed out of the darkness and attacked Elliott who shot him in the chest. The five vigilantes quickly overcame Elliott and together, along with Smith who seemed unaffected by the shot, they loaded him into the carriage and sped off in the rain toward the southwest to carry out their plan. Suddenly, as they bounced across the field, they noticed that Smith was not in the carriage. In the resultant confusion, Elliott managed to escape. Going back, they found Smith lying on the ground in great distress from the bullet in his chest. He was rushed to a doctor, but it was too late to save his life. Elliott, sensing his life was now in danger, turned himself in for protection.

The next day, Sunday, a coroner's jury was convened. By late Monday, it delivered its verdict: Elliott had acted in self-defense and was not guilty of any criminal act. The four surviving vigilantes were arraigned for aggravated assault, riotous conduct and held for the September court session of the Superior Court. All but Watrous were able to post bail.

There is no record of any trial being held so it would seem that the grand jury failed to indict and the four men were set free.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Elliott, in a long letter to the *Gazette* the next week claimed his innocence. He had hired Mrs. Dexter to be his housekeeper and she had insisted on bringing along her sister, Mrs. Dickson, so she could take care of her during her confinement. Elliott offered, he wrote, to let Mr. Dickson stay with them when he was not off sailing. "The outrage of August 1st [the attempt to tar and feather him] was simply because I would not take Mrs. Dickson out of a house where she could be properly cared for. . . .

<sup>5</sup>By coincidence Mr. Elliott was a defendant in another case on the September docket. It involved his non-payment of a bill of about \$500 for goods received. He failed to show up for the trial and was ordered to pay the bill, plus court costs.

"As regards any illegal proceedings at my house, there have been none. . . I hold myself in readiness to answer to the law at all times. What I have done, I am truly sorry for. . . . It was wholly in self-defense. If a party wishes to dictate who I shall have for a housekeeper, or who shall have board with me, I wish to know where they get their authority."

He left the Island almost immediately. The *Gazette* does not say what happened to the Deputy Sheriff, who was quickly replaced by John Adams Pease, or to the two women.<sup>6</sup>

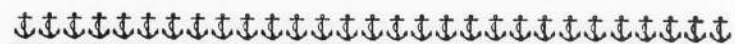
Thus ended the summer of 1874 -- a summer to be remembered.

<sup>6</sup>The Dickson-Elliott story didn't end there. Two years later, Mrs. Lizzie C. Dickson, living in Boston, and Mr. Samuel K. Elliott, also living in Boston, were involved in the sale of a house she owned in Oak Bluffs.



A sad picture, about 1900, the abandoned Mattakeeset Lodge, Katama. The locomotive, Active, was rolled ashore on this wharf in 1874.





## Edgartown: A Town for Walking

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

THE first Englishmen known to have set foot on Martha's Vineyard were Bartholomew Gosnold and some of the crew of his ship *Concord* on May 22, 1602. They went ashore, it is now believed, on Cape Poge, the northern tip of Chappaquiddick. Captain Gosnold, on that day, named the Island Martha's Vineyard, honoring his infant daughter.

Although they seemed to like what they saw, they did not stay. Returning to the *Concord*, they sailed westward to Cuttyhunk, the most westerly of the Elizabeth Islands (also named by Gosnold), where they did stay for some months, and built the first English settlement in New England before returning home with a load of sassafras.

Thus Edgartown, or at least a remote tip of it, was one of the first places known to the English explorers of the early 17th Century.

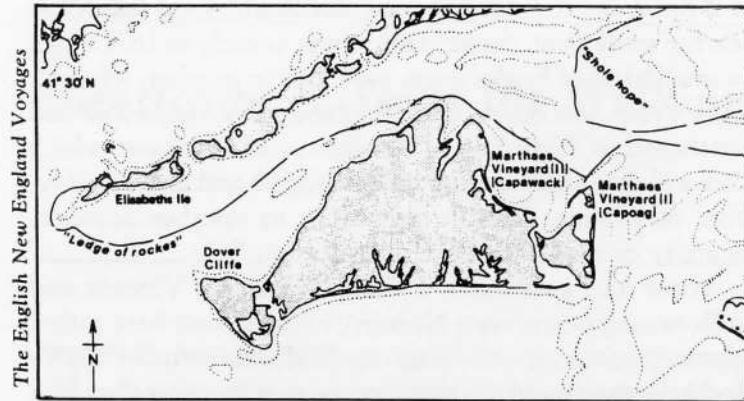
However, the first official settlement of Martha's Vineyard was not until 1642 under the auspices of "Thomas Mayhew, his son, and their associates," who had been given "full power and authority to plant and Inhabit" the islands of Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and the Elizabeths by agents of King Charles of England. The grant had been made in October 1641, but it was not until the following year that Thomas Mayhew, Jr., "and some other persons" sailed into what is now Edgartown harbor. It was first called "Great Harbour," the name Edgar Towne not being used until 1671, when the town was incorporated.

That is the recorded history, but local legend tells of an earlier settlement. Some claim it was as early as 1632 when a small band of Englishmen, only four in number, left their ship which was bound from England for Virginia and had anchored off Cape Poge, "on account of distemper, which like a plague raged among the passengers and crew, twenty-five of whome died, or according to another account, scarcity of provisions was the occasion."

Those four passengers, a Pease, a Trapp, a Vincent and a Browning (some say a Norton), chose to stay here rather than continue on to Virginia. With the help of native Indians, they survived that first winter in caves they dug into the bluffs on the west side of the inner harbor. When the Mayhew party arrived, some years later, with official documentation, the earlier settlers were given some land and allowed to remain. The legend, which has had many advocates through the years, is known as the Pease Tradition.

Whether the earlier settlement occurred or not, the fact is that the Mayhews and their associates were the first authorized English settlers and they did take over the Island. The name, Edgar Towne, was chosen to honor the only son of the Duke of York, brother of King Charles, who was childless. Edgar, a three-year-old, was next in line to the crown upon the death of his Uncle Charlie. The Mayhews, hoping to curry favor, chose the name, not knowing that Edgar had died a month before. It is said that this is the only Edgartown in the world. Had the youngster lived, there would be as many as there are Charlestownes and Jamestownes today.

The native Indians were not consulted on any of this. It has been estimated that there were about 3000 of them here when the Mayhews arrived. As far as written history is concerned there was little or no hostility between them and the newcomers. Of course, our history comes from the settlers, so we don't know the Indian version.



Gosnold, in 1602, made the first English landing on our Island at Cape Poge.

Five generations of Mayhews devoted their energies to converting the natives to Christianity and they were very successful, being helped in no small part by various diseases the settlers brought from Europe. Not having a built-up immunity to these foreign diseases, the Indians died in great numbers. Seeing that the Christians were not dying, the surviving Indians were motivated to worship the white man's God. By 1674, the Indian population had been cut by 50 percent. By 1720, less than 80 years after the white man's arrival, the Indian population totalled only 800, a quarter of its original size, and was segregated into several areas of the Island. In Edgartown, they lived on Chappaquiddick (the place where Gosnold first landed) and at Farm Neck, near today's Felix Neck.

By 1764, the Island had 2300 white inhabitants (924 of them in Edgartown) and only 313 Indians, a small number of the total being on Chappaquiddick.

The white residents had done well in the first 100 years. While some were farmers, most had turned to the sea for their livelihood. Their real prosperity, however, was not until the early 1800s, the boom years of whaling. Although Edgartown never came close to having as many whaling vessels as New Bedford or Nantucket, many of its men did



Built about 1670, Thomas Mayhew's second home, was torn down in 1910.

crew, and command, whalers. As early as 1775, Martha's Vineyard had 156 seamen employed on whaling vessels. By the 1800s, more than 100 Edgartown men were masters and when they returned from a voyage with a full cargo, they were rich beyond their dreams. Most of the historic houses you will see on this walk were built for whaling masters during the golden era of whaling, from 1830 to 1845.

A smaller number of historic houses have survived from the 1700s. These houses are less pretentious and, to some, less impressive, but they are much older, with much history within their walls. They range from very small to very large, as you will see.

Edgartown is a town for walking. Its narrow streets, with old houses standing close to the sidewalks, give a strong feeling of history. If one can erase the images of the automobile and the power lines, it is not hard to imagine how the village looked a hundred, or even two hundred years ago.

After the Civil War, whaling went into a decline as petroleum became abundant, cheaper and better than whale oil. The Island was rescued from financial disaster by a religious happening, by which it was discovered to be a

lovely summer vacation spot. It was all started by Jeremiah Pease, who had no such purpose in mind (you will see his house on your walk). In 1835, he convinced the Edgartown Methodists to hold a camp meeting in an oak grove he had selected in today's Oak Bluffs, then part of Edgartown. The camp meeting became an annual event, taking place each August and attracting at first hundreds, then thousands of Mainlanders. They discovered more than religion -- they discovered the lovely vistas, the sandy beaches and the blessed tranquility.

The word spread and soon off-Islanders, with few religious intentions, were building and buying summer houses in Oak Bluffs. It was not until nearly 1900 that these visitors discovered Edgartown and its stately houses. Gradually, the huge Captains' houses began to be bought by wealthy summer visitors and, to the benefit of all, have been kept from decline, preserving the flavor of an earlier period. Only a few of the larger homes you will see are owned and lived in by year-round residents. Today, most are owned by off-Islanders who come here each summer to enjoy this lovely town, a town that has maintained its sense of history.

## Bits & Pieces

CHOLERA was in epidemic nationwide when Daniel Webster visited the Vineyard in 1849 and he mentioned it in his address to the Edgartown assemblage. It remained prevalent for a long time and nearly a year later, President Zachary Taylor died of the disease.

But there was no epidemic on the Vineyard, the *Gazette* Editor assured his readers: "We hardly know of a case of sickness at the present writing [in Edgartown], the same, we believe, may be said of the island generally." Always a local booster, he urged mainlanders to "drop down" where they would be safe from cholera.

Strangely, in the same issue, only two paragraphs below the invitation to the mainlanders, there was this item:

"THE CHOLERA! A Mrs. Cooper, at Gay-Head, ate the best part of a decayed water melon, was seized with cholera-morbus, and died. No occasion for alarm." (*Gazette*, Aug. 23, 1849)

Was this evidence that the residents of Gay Head, "colored" as they were called in those days, were less important than those elsewhere on the Island? Had Mrs. Cooper been an Edgartown resident, would he have written "no occasion for alarm"? Or did he mean that "cholera-morbus" was not the same as the cholera epidemic?

Senator Webster's talk was brought to an unscheduled ending by some young men creating a disturbance at the door. There is no explanation of their motivation. Webster was opposed

to the abolitionists. Could these young men have been anti-slavery activists? The news account says nothing about a cause, if there was one:

"There are many very bad boys in this little village of ours. It is a lamentable and mortifying fact. . . . These bad boys almost nightly disgrace themselves and our town by their rowdyism. They have not even learned to treat strangers with respect; and ministers of the gospel are not safe from their insults and ruffianisms. . . . [they] ought to be publicly horsewhipped and placed in the stocks."

We hear much these days about the failure of our politicians to talk to the issues. Instead, they wrap themselves in the flag and await the cheers, which are always forthcoming.

In 1849, Senator Webster seems to have used the same tactics. His Edgartown talk, although shortened by those ruffians at the door, never mentioned the issue of the moment: slavery. Several new states were soon to be admitted and the question was, should they be free or slave? Less than a year later, he came out in support of the Clay compromise, accepting slavery and opposing abolition. But the Edgartown speech said nothing of that divisive issue, only that the Islanders were a "vigorous race" while Europeans were down-trodden, ignorant of freedom, and would be wise to copy our system (slavery included, one must assume). The crowd cheered.

But even as they cheered, the issue that was soon to split the Union grew more critical.

What is that about the more things change?

A.R.R.



## In Memoriam

E. Gale Huntington, 1902 - 1993

It will be a long time, a very long time, before reminders of Gale Huntington disappear from the Society. And not because his name is on the Library building. There is much more evidence of his work than that.

Gale's handwriting, sometimes close to unreadable, is on thousands of envelopes inside the hundreds of archival boxes he organized after he came here as Librarian on his retirement from teaching. His organizational work became the foundation of the Society's archives.

And he did much more. In August 1959, he was the founding editor of this journal and, with the exception of one year when he thought he would again enjoy teaching on the mainland (he was wrong, his love of the Island brought him back in a year), he was the journal's editor during its first 19 years.

There are many other reminders. In our photographic archives we have scores of photographs with his inimitable captions attached. An example, on a photograph of Rev. "Pop" Chase, who performed the wedding ceremony for Gale and Mildred in 1933: "He didn't seem to enjoy the ceremony. He evidently felt that he was throwing one of his pet lambs to the wolves." Another, on a photograph taken in 1945 in the kitchen of their apartment in New Hampshire, where Gale was teaching: "Gale, as usual, is washing the dishes."

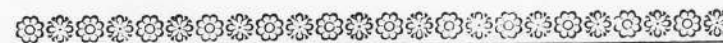
Those of us who knew the Huntington life style remember Gale's insistence on presiding at the sink after every meal, "washing the dishes." It was a task he enjoyed.

But he enjoyed much more than washing the dishes of life. There were few areas of knowledge that he did not savor. An accomplished musician, folk singer, amateur archeologist, teacher, fisherman, gardener, researcher, historian and author, Gale Huntington got everything possible out of life. Except money, that is. As he wrote on a photograph of him at Pinewoods folk music camp in 1979: "It was the only time my music made me much money."

And he passed his love of life along to many others, helping and encouraging hundreds of students, researchers, musicians. His associates at the Society will remember him with affection, gratitude and respect.

Sadly, during his final years he was debilitated by illness, many times being near death. But his body, like his determination, was strong and he held on until December 26, 1993, when he died at 91 years.

Thank you, Gale, thank you.



## Moments in History

### The Island Enjoys A Day of Ecstasy

ON FRIDAY, November 22, 1861, six months after the start of the Civil War, the United States frigate *San Jacinto* anchored in Holmes Hole on her voyage from Fortress Monroe, Virginia, to Fort Warren in Boston harbor. As was often the case, the harbor was crowded with nearly 150 vessels awaiting a favorable wind to negotiate the Sounds. The frigate's arrival brought a flurry of activity among the fleet.

The masters quickly organized a grand salute to the *San Jacinto*. Within an hour, all vessels began to "dress ship," displaying from their rigging all their flags and pennants to honor Captain Charles Wilkes, the frigate's skipper and the North's newest war hero. The Holmes Hole Light Artillery Company marched to the Neck between the Lagoon and the harbor and set up its cannon. With great ceremony, it fired a thirteen-gun salute, which was immediately followed by a less formal salute from handguns fired by many residents. The shore of the harbor was lined with spectators, enjoying the festive tributes. It was a gala occasion, totally spontaneous. When the firing was over, Captain Wilkes dipped the ensign of the *San Jacinto* in acknowledgement.

It was a day to remember. The entire assemblage of mariners aboard their vessels and Island residents on the beach gave a rousing three cheers when the flag on the *San Jacinto* was dipped. *Huzza! Huzza! Huzza!*

Why such an outburst on a Friday in November? Its cause now has been dimmed by time. Sparking the celebration was the "Trent Affair," an incident on the high

seas that fanned to white heat the flames of patriotism among Northerners, turning Captain Wilkes into an overnight national hero.

Aboard the *San Jacinto*, but certainly not enjoying the celebration, were John Slidell and James Mason, two Confederate diplomats who had been taken at gunpoint from the British mail packet *Trent* in the Bahamas Channel two weeks earlier, precipitating a crisis that almost brought England into the Civil War on the side of the Confederacy.

... the *Trent* was hailed by the United States frigate *San Jacinto*, Captain Wilkes, who directed a shot across her bow to bring her to. Then two officers and twenty men, more or less, put off from the *San Jacinto*, boarded the *Trent*, and after a search, took out Mr. Mason and Mr. Slidell and their two secretaries, and, by force, against the protest of the *Trent's* officers, bore them to their vessel.<sup>1</sup>

The presence of these two rebel traitors was not ignored by Vineyard residents. A long unsigned letter in the *Vineyard Gazette* the following week described the feelings of the residents and the intensity of their anger:

Mr. Marchant: Yesterday we were honored by the presence of Commodore Wilkes and the "San Jacinto," but we were dishonored by the presence of Mason, Slidell & Co., on board the same vessel. As soon as the facts were known, our town and harbor were both in a hubbub. Every vessel in the harbor (and I think there were one hundred and fifty in all) soon had the Stars and Stripes aloft, with signals, and in fact everything in the shape of bunting that could be mustered. Our citizens rallied in hundreds to the Neck and assisted a detachment of the Vineyard Artillery in firing a thirteen-gun salute to Commodore Wilkes for his noble and determined conduct in capturing the arch traitors. The Commodore gracefully acknowledged the salute. We then gave three rousing cheers for the Union and three for Commodore Wilkes. Everyone seemed delighted to show their respect and admiration of an officer whose conduct and deeds prove him worthy of greater honors than he has yet received at the hands of the American people. We trust that it may not long

<sup>1</sup>J.G. Holland, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, Gurdon Bill, Springfield, Mass., 1866, pp. 339-40.

be so and that he will receive adequate rewards for his energy, genius and bravery.<sup>2</sup>

Thoughtful persons on both sides of the Atlantic agreed that Captain Wilkes had acted illegally when he seized the men aboard an English vessel on the high seas.<sup>3</sup> Southerners saw the illegal action as something that might bring a much-needed ally into the war. The British government sent a sharp note of protest to President Lincoln, demanding the release of the prisoners within seven days or the British government would recognize the Confederacy and declare war on the Union. The *Gazette*, joining in the jingoism of the moment, put down that threat as simply "great bluster."<sup>4</sup>

The jingoism was not limited to the Vineyard. The nation, in the north at least, was indulging itself in an orgy of patriotism. When the *San Jacinto* delivered the two captives to Fort Warren, Boston celebrated. Cheering crowds lined the streets around Faneuil Hall when Wilkes and his crew came ashore. In Washington, the House of Representatives voted the nation's thanks to the brave Captain. The whole nation was agog over its new hero:

To the American public the news of this capture was most grateful. ... they greeted the event with huzzas and made a hero of the impulsive Captain Wilkes, who, though a most loyal and excellent person, was possessed by a zeal that sometimes surpassed his discretion.<sup>5</sup>

There seemed to be no way to cool the patriotic fever, to bring reason to the discussion. War with England looked to be inevitable. The Union's hopes dimmed.

Wisely, after receiving the note from London with its seven-day ultimatum, the British Ambassador decided to hold up its delivery to the United States government until late in December. By then, the super-patriotic fire

<sup>2</sup>*Vineyard Gazette*, November 23, 1861.

<sup>3</sup>Captain Wilkes had a history of impetuous behavior and had twice been court-martialled for such actions.

<sup>4</sup>*Vineyard Gazette*, December 20, 1861.

<sup>5</sup>Holland, p.340.

had subsided and cooler heads prevailed. Early in January 1862, the two Confederate diplomats and their secretaries were, in the words of Secretary of State William H. Steward, "cheerfully liberated" from Fort Warren and allowed to resume their voyage to Europe where they hoped to persuade England and France to recognize the Confederacy as a legitimate government and accept them as its diplomatic representatives. Their hopes were not realized, neither nation ever recognized them or their government. They became, undeservedly many now think, men without a country. The *Vineyard Gazette* described their situation this way:

Alas, how fallen are these persons! . . . Mean intriguers and base plotters against country and freedom -- who can respect them? What noble-minded man or woman, entertaining them as guests, but must shrink from a very close embrace and in their hearts feel disgust at their presence?<sup>6</sup>

By thoughtful diplomacy, what could have been a disastrous turn of events for the North had been averted. The British public, aroused by an act of "piracy" on the high seas against one of its mail packets, was demanding that the nation go to war against the North. Had diplomats on both sides of the Atlantic not reacted with calm reasonableness, the English might have joined forces with the Confederacy, making a Union victory doubtful.

The Vineyard's celebration of Captain Wilkes's visit may have been exuberant and ill-advised, but it was as close to the war as most Islanders ever came and for years, no doubt, many who had lined the shores of Holmes Hole treasured its memory.

<sup>6</sup>*Gazette*, February 7, 1862. After the war ended, Slidell remained in France, where he lived throughout the war. We have not learned what happened to Mason.

## In Memoriam Marjorie E. Railton 1918 - 2000

Marjorie E. Railton, wife of the Editor of this journal for 58 years, died at her home in Edgartown on December 1, 2000. She was, by her wish, a behind-the-scenes volunteer, who provided hours of assistance in the production of each issue of the *Intelligencer*.

For more than twenty years, as editorial adviser, copy editor and proof reader, she faithfully worked on each issue to make this a publication she and he could be proud of. Few knew of her efforts, which she carried out in the unassuming, quiet manner so characteristic of her.

Marjorie was a major contributor in another way, equally unheralded. The inflexible deadlines that go along with producing a journal every three months often required that they postpone and at times forego trips that she had hoped to take. Her personal wishes often had to be put aside until the journal had gone to the printer. She, as much as her husband, was dedicated to the *Intelligencer*.

The Board of Directors of the Society, at its December meeting, adopted the following resolution:

*The Board wishes to express its deep sympathy to Arthur R. Railton upon the passing of his wife of many years, Marjorie. She will be sorely missed by all who knew her.*

*Marjorie Railton was a caring person and a friend to be treasured. She was a constant of Vineyard life and, a journalist herself, was a firm supporter of her husband's work as Editor of The Dukes County Intelligencer, reading proof of every issue until her death.*

We will make every effort to continue this publication in a way that would make her proud.

Each issue will serve as her memorial.





## Henry Baylies: Five Wives And Even More Occupations

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

Some members have asked, "What happened to Henry Baylies after his wife, Hattie, died?" Having followed his story through so many twists and turns on these pages, they want to know how it ends. We are now able to answer their question.<sup>1</sup>

First, we will print the final pages in the journal that he entitled, "A Running Account Of Matters & Things." He maintained it for only a few months after Hattie died. She was the second wife he had lost by death. And he was only in his twenties.

Even before Hattie's death on May 23, 1852, Henry's parents had decided to leave the Vineyard. The week before, his father, Frederick, who owned a store on Edgartown's Main Street, advertised that he was selling his "ENTIRE STOCK at the Lowest Prices." Shortly after, he advertised the sale of his house and lot on Main Street across from today's Town Hall.<sup>2</sup> This was followed by an advertisement offering for sale the family's three pews in the new Methodist Church (which he had built). The pews, the ad said, were "on the broad aisle – two of them are very desirable."

When his parents moved, widower Henry, who was living with them, went along. We don't know if it had played a part in the decision to move, but the father had just lost a re-election bid as County Treasurer, a position he had held for several terms. He was defeated by Barnard C. Marchant, brother of the *Gazette's* editor.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From May 1993 until February 2001, we published the journal of Henry Baylies (1822-1893) covering the years from 1850 until 1852. Born in Edgartown, Henry was principal of the Dukes County Academy in 1850 and a year later the first principal of the Edgartown High School, the Island's first public high school. A Methodist minister, he turned to teaching when a throat ailment kept him from making the long, spell-binding sermons Methodists expected. However, he kept returning to the ministry, his true love.

<sup>2</sup> Father Baylies, a dry-goods store owner, was also a builder and architect. He built the Edgartown Town Hall (originally a Methodist church), the Federated Church, the Baptist Church and the new Methodist Church (now the "Whaling Church"), all among the town's most admired structures.

<sup>3</sup> The *Gazette* seemed unfriendly to the Baylies family. When they moved to the mainland, the paper did not mention the fact, despite the family's importance.

A campaign smear had decided the election, Henry claimed:

County election for Treasurer has taken place & by means of falsehood, as since appears, Father lost his office & Barnard C. Marchant was elected over him.

Henry and his father together purchased a dry-goods store in North Bridgewater, the village to which they will move.

Here are the final entries in this volume of his journal:

**Friday, July 30, 1852** I am again all in arrears with my Journal or rather "Occasional Memoranda." I must briefly note facts & pass on. May 31 (Monday), 1852,<sup>4</sup> I took stage passage for Boston to attend the General Conference, etc., [of the Methodist Church]. The Conf. was just at the point of dissolution, yet I saw most of the great men & heard not a few speeches. An evening session on Mond. continued till after 10 o'clock. On Tues. morning, session continued till between 2 & 3 P. M., when Conf. adjourned *sine die*.

My stay at Conf. was brief but quite satisfactory. I remained in Boston till Friday P. M., boarding at Griffin's. My days I spent in sightseeing & my evenings in company of Bro. Sewall.<sup>5</sup> My health improved rapidly. Friday P. M. June 4<sup>th</sup>, I visited No. Bridgewater to view the place of our proposed residence. Everything favorable & promising. Sat. (5<sup>th</sup>) went to Taunton & stopped with Rev. Bro. Boar . . . & called to see "Aunt Eunice." Attended services at Weir M. E. Church. Left Taunton for N. Bedford June 8 or 9 & remained in N. B. till Sat. 12<sup>th</sup>.

At Whittendon, I saw a lot of

Arbor Vitae, purchased in Bangor, Maine, & thought I would undertake a Speculation in Trees. I wanted from 100 to 150 to set around my burying place & thought I might sell a few hundred to persons in Edgartown. I therefore ordered 1000 Arbor Vitae & 75 White Spruce. These I rec'd June 16 and consigned to C. H. Shute to be sold at auction. I did not realize anything from sales & took the whole lot into my own hand to set & with the aid of two boys set out 1070 Arbor Vitae & say 40 White Spruce. 110 A. V. I placed around the burying place & the remainder on land belonging to grandmother Baylies<sup>6</sup> who gave me the use of it gratuitously. These trees cost me \$37.07. I watered them daily except Sabbath for more than a month as there was only two very small showers in the time.<sup>7</sup> I shall probably save between 500 & 600 trees. This is my first speculation. It did not result as I anticipated by a great deal, yet I am pretty well satisfied with the probable results. I shall be careful hereafter how I speculate. I have learned a practical lesson and therefore more fully record it.

<sup>6</sup> She was Sally Baylies, widow of the missionary to the Indians, Frederick, who had died in 1836. She died in 1867 at 93.

<sup>7</sup> Imagine the effort involved in watering 900 shrubs daily without running water.

<sup>4</sup> This was one week after Hattie's death, only a few days after her burial.

<sup>5</sup> Hattie's brother, Henry's brother-in-law.

After the family moved to North Bridgewater, Henry taught at Myricksville Academy in Taunton, a few miles away. The academy was affiliated with the Providence Conference of the Methodist Church, the district to which Henry belonged. In June 1853, slightly more than a year after Hattie died, he married Julia E. Packard of North Bridgewater. The family's move off-Island was not long-lived, apparently due to his mother's health. Two years later, he and his father dissolved their partnership, sold the store and his parents returned to the Vineyard. Henry, now again married, continued teaching at the Academy. His mother died in Edgartown soon after she moved back. In 1858, Henry was appointed pastor of the Allen Street Methodist Church in New Bedford and he and Julia moved there.

We know nothing about his new wife, Julia, except that she bore two daughters: Velina,<sup>8</sup> whose birth date we don't know; and Julia Elizabeth, born November 27, 1859. The mother died two weeks later, having had what Henry described as "a prolonged labor." They had been married six and a half years. Now, at only 37 years of age, Henry became a widower for the third time. But this time there was a difference: he was the father of two small children.<sup>9</sup>

A few months after Julia's death, he was given a year's leave of absence from his ministry for "health reasons" and he went on a grand tour of Europe and the Middle East, a not uncommon chapter in a minister's life during these years, as it usually involved a visit to the Holy Land. A newspaper item stated, "He proposes traveling in Europe the ensuing season, accompanied by a gentleman from New York."<sup>10</sup>

Before leaving, he made a brief visit to Edgartown, no doubt to say goodbye to his father. During his months overseas, he kept a detailed journal, describing vividly his experiences. We have two of the four volumes that he wrote and plan to publish the more

<sup>8</sup> Velina was named for Henry's mother, Velina (Worth), who had died in 1855.

<sup>9</sup> We mistakenly stated in the *Intelligencer*, February 2001, that Henry had no children. Our later research disclosed he had three children with two of his wives. In 1870, when he wrote a summary of his life, he said very little about the three children.

<sup>10</sup> *Vineyard Gazette*, March 23, 1860, reprinted from *New Bedford Standard*. The "gentleman" was probably a Mr. Newman, whom he refers to often in his journal later.

interesting sections in future issues.<sup>11</sup>

His two daughters were placed in the care of "friends" while he traveled. These friends appear to have been the Taylors, address unknown. He mentions them in his journal and in letters, but he doesn't indicate where they lived.

In addition to his journals, we have a few letters Henry wrote to his father from Europe and in them he describes his love for the children, especially for the older girl, Velina, whom he calls "Lina." In a letter from Geneva, Switzerland, Sept. 16, 1860, he makes his feelings known:

I am glad to hear you both<sup>12</sup> think so much of my darling little Lina – she needs your love, father, for she is a motherless & now almost a fatherless child. I must leave these subjects, for the tears fall so fast I can hardly see.

Further evidence of his love for the children is in a letter he wrote to his father from Messina, Sicily, December 2, 1860:

Probably you have seen Lina lately. How I long to see the dear little creature. And the baby, how much I shall love it! I know you must love these dear little ones for my sake & for their Mother's. But why should I speak of these things – my grief must belong to myself. I alone must bear it.

His daughters were not the only females for whom he had affection. Soon after arriving in Europe, while in Amsterdam, he responded to a letter from his father that included a newspaper clipping about a certain young woman. His reply contains this revealing paragraph (Henry's underlining):

Much obliged for the notice of Miss B. She understands & so do I, whatever others say, that there is no kind of "engagement" between us. She is perfectly free to marry today if she chooses & so am I. . . She is, I think, a superior lady & I esteem her very highly. I have by no means decided that I shall ever marry again. . . Were I to marry, I should esteem myself highly blessed in securing so good a wife as I think Miss. B. would make & she would be my first choice. . . I hope you will make her acquaintance if convenient. I think you will like her.

It may have been somewhat of a surprise to his father that so soon after his wife's death, Henry is already discussing the possibility of remarrying.<sup>13</sup> He had left America only a few months

<sup>11</sup> The first two volumes of his tour journal were shipped from Europe and seem not to have survived. The two we have (courtesy Joanne Coffin Clark) he carried back himself.

<sup>12</sup> "Both" refers to his father and his new stepmother. Frederick remarried soon after his wife died.

<sup>13</sup> Perhaps Father Baylies wasn't surprised. After all, he had remarried less than a year after his wife died. Remarrying ran in the family, it seems.

after Julia's death so these romantic thoughts about Miss B. must have developed soon after his wife died.

Some weeks later, in his journal aboard ship in the Adriatic Sea, he made this guarded mention of his feelings for Miss B:

My thoughts have all day followed the friends at home, to church, at home & in all the probable places & pursuits of the day. I enjoy much in thus placing myself among those I love, with my children & those who watch over them so kindly, with my parents & relatives, [and] with one, of whom I may here say so far away, that she alone of all living young women shares my thoughts & affections.

That is the only reference he makes in his journal to Miss B., whom he doesn't identify.<sup>14</sup> Although he rarely becomes personal in his writing, he does mention infrequently his wife, Julia, and their two children. He wrote at Palermo, Italy, December 10, 1860, the first anniversary of her death:

What a day one year ago. My dearest Julia has been in the spirit world one whole year. My heart has been sad today. . . Julia was a good woman, an excellent wife, a good Mother. In her death I suffered an inestimable loss. . . I have thought much of dear Mother Packard [Julia's mother] and have deeply sympathized with her this day. . . This evening I have written a letter to my precious Lina.

While abroad, he did a lot of writing, not only in his journal, but also producing more than a dozen articles to *Zion's Herald*, the Methodist weekly newspaper. He was paid for them under an agreement he had made with the editor before leaving. In his first article he introduces himself, quoting from his passport:

Age 37 years – stature 5 feet 7 inches English – forehead, high – eyes, light blue – nose, Grecian – mouth, medium – chin, medium – hair, brown – complexion, light – face, round.<sup>15</sup>

He left Palermo December 15, 1860, by steamboat, for Naples, where he found seven letters from America, one from daughter, Lina. He then went to Rome, arriving the day before Christmas. Two letters were there and Henry kept them with his journal. In them we learn something about who is taking care of his children. One is from H. J. Taylor, the other from E. P. Taylor. He gives no further information, but he does quote E. P. as stating:

. . . darling little baby Julia says "Papa" and walks all around the house.

<sup>14</sup> The young woman was Miss Lydia Brownell of New Bedford, whom he married soon after returning to America.

<sup>15</sup> This is the only description we have of his physical appearance.

In Rome on January 1, he meditates on the New Year, adding: My children are separated. My home is dissolved & when or how these darling ones whom God has given me will be bro't into my home I know not.<sup>16</sup>

Leaving Rome, he is on his way home. The Atlantic crossing was, in his words, "a terrible passage," and he landed in Boston February 10, 1861, having been away ten months. We have no details about his reunion with his family, but even after his long absence, he seemed unable to settle down. In less than a month, he went to Washington to attend the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln on March 4<sup>th</sup>.

In April, he was appointed pastor of the Power Street Church in Providence, Rhode Island. A week after his appointment, he married Lydia A. Brownell of New Bedford, the "Miss B." he had written about while in Europe. She was 18 and he was 39, almost the same age as her father, William O. Brownell, Esq. It was his fourth marriage, her first.

The marriage produced a son, Frederick, named for Henry's father. The boy died while a teen-ager, the cause of death we don't know. Henry's marriage to Lydia lasted only three years, ending in divorce in 1864. Young Frederick seems to have been brought up by his father. We have a letter Henry wrote some years later, stating that Fred was living with him then.

Any divorce was frowned on by the church and especially one that involved one of its ministers. The embarrassed bishop resolved the problem by transferring Henry, who was then pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Fall River, to Iowa "for health reasons."

The bishop's order stated that the "changeable character" of New England's weather had worsened Henry's health, so he would assign him to a place where the weather was less "changeable." So in September 1864, Henry was transferred to Iowa, to become the pastor of the Fifth Street Church in Davenport. In addition to his ministry, he was to teach at Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, a newly established Methodist school.

Not very long after moving to Iowa, he married again. The

<sup>16</sup> This would indicate that the two daughters were not living in the same house, perhaps living in different houses, but both with members of the Taylor family.





On his grand tour, Henry bought engravings of places visited and pasted them in a scrapbook. This is Magdalen College, Oxford, with capped and gowned students and a village work project, involving pipes. Wheelbarrow is hauling loaded wicket baskets.

new Mrs. Baylies, his fifth wife, was Elizabeth D. Chase. We do not know when or where the wedding took place, but we do know it must have been before February 1866 when this item was published in the *Davenport [Iowa] Gazette*:

The Pastor of the Methodist E. Church, Rev. H. Baylies, and his lady, on their return last evening from a visit in the country, were completely surprised to find their house occupied by a host of friends, who unbidden, had taken possession. A most social evening was enjoyed by all. . . . A purse with uncounted green backs was handed [the Pastor] . . . Other valuables were left for family use. . . .<sup>17</sup>

The Iowa parishioners were obviously very happy with their new minister. His five marriages and one divorce didn't seem to bother them. Henry continued to preach with his usual vigor, despite his chronic throat problems, but he couldn't keep it up for long. Two years after moving to Iowa, and shortly after he had remarried for the last time, he was given an ultimatum:

My health failed in Oct. 1865 but I continued to preach & supply till Sept. 1866 when 5 Physicians who examined my case declared I must stop preaching

<sup>17</sup> We have conflicting information on this marriage. The genealogical records of Harriet M. Pease of Edgartown, state they were married in Malden, Dec. 18, 1877, but this news item in February 1866, mentioning "his lady", certainly indicates he was then married.

or die. Thinking I had no right to kill myself I stopped.<sup>18</sup>

He resigned from his pastorate and for the next two years was a partner with C. S. Streeper in a Davenport retail store that sold, as his father's store had done, "Fancy Goods and Notions." He invested \$4000 in the business, but less than a year later he sold his share to Mr. Streeper and moved to Burlington, Iowa, to become a life-insurance salesman. Why he made this sudden switch we do not know. This is all he wrote to explain his reason for making such a bold change in occupation:

. . . in December 1867, when my family [went] East for the winter,<sup>19</sup> I went to Burlington, Iowa, to prosecute the Life Insurance business.

That seems to indicate that his children had been living with him and his new wife in Iowa. All were still young: the oldest, his favorite, Lina, would then have been about 12, Julia, 8, and Frederick, 5.

He didn't stay long pursuing his new career in Burlington. Within a month or two, he decided he had enough of Iowa. He sold his furniture and left to join his family in New England, despite the hazard of "changeable" weather. It is unclear where the family was then living, but it seems to have been either in Providence or New Bedford. He continued in the life-insurance business, this time as a regional sales manager. It was an occupation he did not like. Soon after moving east, he wrote a letter to a newspaper in Davenport. In it, he sounds just a bit nostalgic for Iowa, but perhaps he is just being kind to his former friends and neighbors:

My eyes look often toward the setting sun, longingly. But the East is my home, and here I expect to live and die. My little Fred, whom, out of regard for a large number of your citizens, I call Fritz, is quite dissatisfied. He came East for a visit. He says he wants to go back and that he wouldn't have come if he had thought he was to stay. I may as well confess, perhaps, that we all feel a little in this wise.

In August 1868, he did return to Iowa. He was assigned to an important position in higher education by the church. He makes no mention of taking the unhappy Fritz or any of the family with

<sup>18</sup> He wrote this in a brief autobiography years later.

<sup>19</sup> The family's move for the winter suggests that wife Elizabeth was a New Englander, complicating the story. Did she follow him to Iowa after his divorce? Was she the reason for the divorce from Lydia?



*In Ghent, Belgium, Henry bought this engraving of Maison des Francs.*

him. Going west by train, he didn't get off in Iowa, but continued well beyond, riding all the way to Utah, which was then the last stop on the still-unfinished transcontinental railroad. It isn't clear why he did this. Perhaps it was his innate sense of adventure. Or perhaps he was marking time before returning to Iowa to take over as President of the Western Iowa Collegiate Institute, a relatively new Methodist academy in Glenwood, Iowa. Again he did not stay long. In less than a year he was heading back to New England.

He explained the move this way: "domestic matters [were] pressing me to come East, [so] I left Glenwood."

This move brought an end to his career with the Methodist Church. His throat was his weakness, preventing his return to preaching or, it seems, even to teaching. He had no interest in a life devoted to selling life insurance or dry goods or anything else. He had more ambitious plans:

My health remaining poor (Bronchial affection) I saw little prospect of preaching again & felt that whatever business I should take hold of I must take for a life work. Trading looked perfectly repulsive if I must continue always. In August 1869, I concluded to study Law [at] Harvard.

At the end of his studies at Harvard, he passed the bar examination on September 17, 1870. After nearly a year with a Boston law firm, he moved out to set up his own practice. At 49 years of age, he embarked on an entirely new career:

God has blessed me & tonight I feel young as twenty years ago & fresh for a life's work. The ministry I love – the Law I like & must follow.

Practicing law from an office in Boston, he lived in Malden. As he grew older, he seemed to become more nostalgic about his youth and his home town, Edgartown. In 1876 and 1877, he wrote a fascinating series of articles entitled, "Boyhood Memories of Edgartown", for *The Vineyard Gazette*. They were signed only, "A Vineyard Boy", and the author's name was never divulged. Today they give us an excellent description of the village and its people in the 1830s and 1840s.

His mother had died in 1855, before he went to Europe, but his father lived until 1884, long enough to see his only child,<sup>20</sup> Henry, succeed in many careers, as a preacher, teacher, salesman, lawyer and writer. He was a bit less successful in marriage, with one of the five ending in divorce.<sup>21</sup> When the elder Baylies died in his 88<sup>th</sup> year, Henry wrote his obituary, declaring his gratitude:

He was a faithful and devoted husband and a considerably indulgent father. Mr. Baylies was married three times and leaves a widow, and a son by his first wife – Henry Baylies, Esq., a member of the Boston bar.

When Henry died December 12, 1893, at his home in Malden,

<sup>20</sup> There were five other children, but only Henry lived more than a year.

<sup>21</sup> We don't know how the fifth marriage ended. There is no Elizabeth Baylies listed in the 1870 Census in Massachusetts. Henry is in it, but she isn't.



he was 71 years old. The obituary in the Malden newspaper was not very long:

Henry Baylies Esq. a very prominent and well-known citizen of Malden dropped dead at his home on High St., yesterday, probably of heart disease. . . . [he had been] confined to the house for about a year. . . . [and it was] thought he would not live. He finally recovered. . . but gave up his Boston office and transacted his legal business at home. . . He was a man of public spirit and wide information. He leaves a family.

"He leaves a family", is all the obituary tells us. But he left much more. His surviving journals describe an extraordinary life. From them we learn a great deal about this Vineyard son, who made his way in the world, pursuing a variety of careers. At the end of the third volume of the journal he kept during his European trip, he wrote:

What will ever be done with this mass of crude matter crudely arranged & noted in these three volumes I have written since leaving Boston 18 Apl. 1860, only 7 months ago? However, if it answers no other purpose, the very recording has doubtless proved & will prove advantageous to me. Here endeth the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume.

Now, nearly 150 years later, some of "this mass of crude matter" is being read by persons, who like him, are devoted to the Vineyard and its way of life. He would be happy to know that.

Vol. III. Journal of Mr. Henry Baylies during his Grand Tour.  
 Cultivation of the  
 Germany } Frankfurt on the Main to Eisenach.  
 Friday July 27. 1860.  
 Left Frankfurt for Eisenach on the Route to Berlin this morn.  
 a little before 6 o'clock. Having a long ride of 17 1/2 miles before us  
 which we could not accomplish before 12 1/2 miles midnight we  
 treated ourselves to the luxury of a 2<sup>nd</sup> class car instead of 3<sup>rd</sup>. It  
 was much improved & not being crowded we enjoyed the privi-  
 leges of resting our feet or leaning almost full length & sleeping  
 when we desired. It was designed to accommodate 8. but only  
 3 occupied it.

Opening paragraph (slightly reduced) of Henry's Vol. III, during his Grand Tour.

## 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

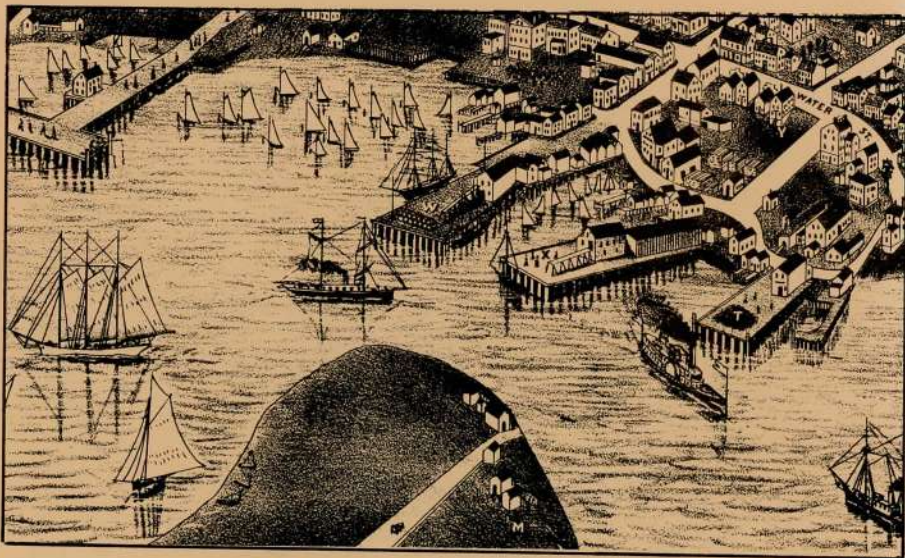


MARTHA'S VINEYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

# WALKING TOUR OF HISTORIC EDGARTOWN

New and Revised

*Including a Brief History from 1602*



*Edgartown Harbor in 1886*

RARE OLD PHOTOGRAPHS, MAPS, FACTS AND  
LEGENDS ABOUT ITS OLDEST BUILDINGS

By ARTHUR R. RAILTON

*Art Railton's booklet on Walking in Edgartown is available at the Museum.*