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ADVENTURE ON ST. AUGUSTINE ISLAND

BY CAPT. HENRY PEASE, 2ND

SOME VINEYARD AUTHORS

BY DORRIS S. HOUGH

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ADVENTURE ON ST. AUGUSTINE ISLAND

BY CAPT. HENRY PEASE, 2ND

An account of an adventure recorded by Capt. Pease of Edgartown, master of the 340 ton ship *Planter* of Nantucket, Aug. 18, 1853, on St. Augustine Island, Lat. 5.35 South, Lon. 176.12 East near the Ellice Group. The ship sailed for the Pacific whaling grounds May 19, 1852, and arrived home Aug. 7, 1856, with 1,300 barrels of sperm oil and 100 barrels of whale oil. She then was taken upon the marine railways at Brant Point, Nantucket and the hull repaired. The *Planter* burned on the ways Oct. 28, 1859, according to Starbuck's "History of The American Whale Fishery."

Passing near this island we saw several smokes and not knowing the island was inhabited, lowered a boat and went in as far as the reef which extends about one quarter of a mile from shore and is dry at low water. We saw many natives on the shore who were apparently much afraid of us and could not be induced to come near the boat. We called to them, held up presents and made signs but all to no purpose. As there was no safe landing for a boat, we returned to the ship convinced the island had never been visited by white people.

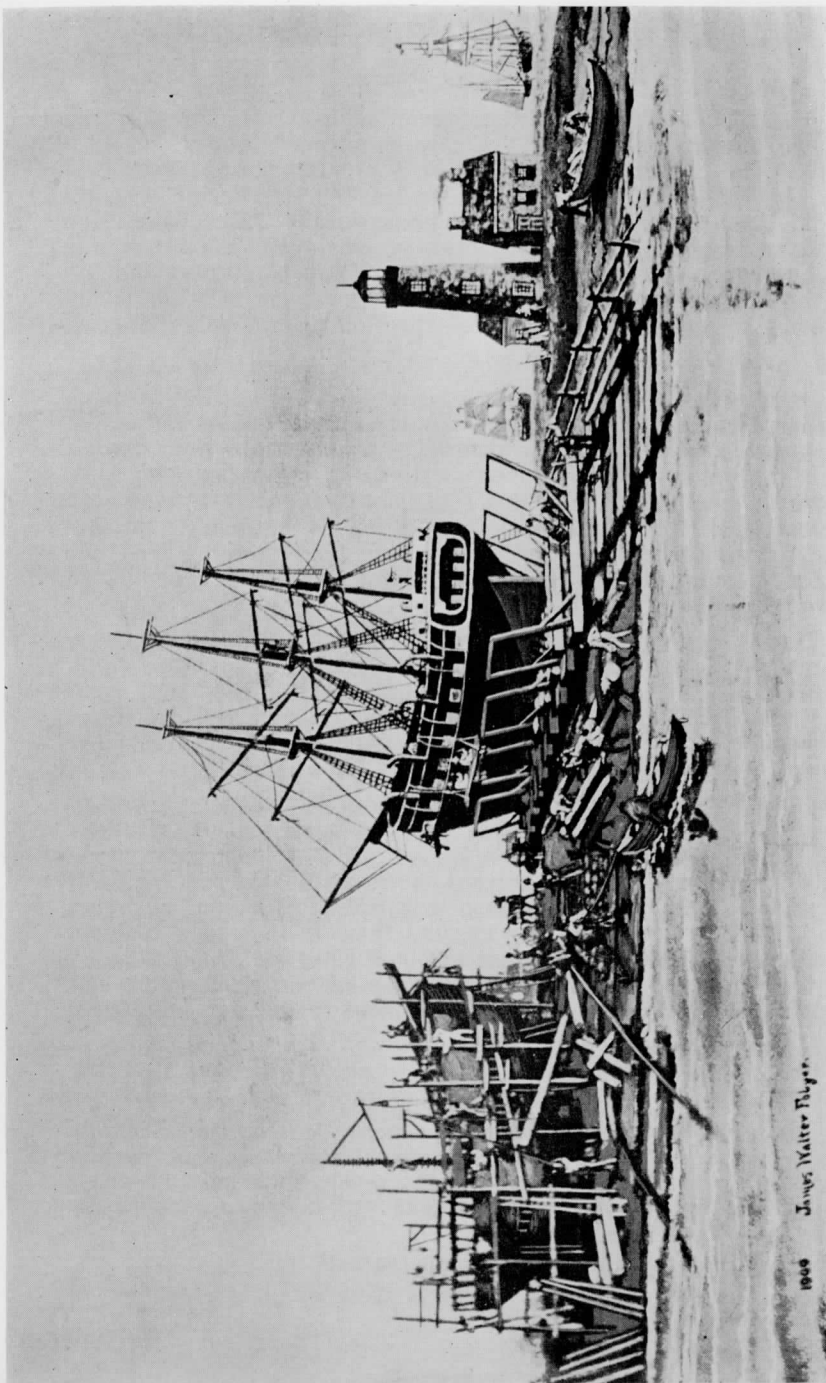
Two or three days after, passing the island again, I put several presents such as irons, hoops, knives, chisels, calico, cotton cloth, fish hooks and several other things, in a barrel, headed it tight and sent the second mate to anchor it on the reef and not to let anyone in the boat land or get within reach of the spears of the natives.

The third mate and steward, both Kanakas, swam the barrel to the reef and seeing the natives standing quiet took it into their heads to approach them. The natives, five or six hundred in number, remained quiet till they got to them when they immediately surrounded them, embracing them in a friendly manner, stripping them of their wet clothing and dressed them in their own fashion. They then led the men away and the boat returned to the ship. I sent the boat in again with a white flag and orders to wait half an hour. Not seeing our men they returned to the ship. We then stood to sea.

The next day we made all necessary preparation for attacking the natives in case they should not give up our men peaceably.

Our third mate is a native of Varavo. one of the Friendly Islands and can talk more or less in all the languages spoken on the different islands of those seas. I felt quite sure he could convince the natives of the consequences if they persisted in detaining them, which proved the case.

As soon as our two boats reached the reef, they sent the steward off. The steward stated they had been kindly treated by all



Ship PLANTER in cradle on the railways with horse attached to the windlass at Brant Point, Nantucket, where she burned Oct. 28, 1859. The original oil painting now hangs in the Gordon Folger Hotel, Nantucket. It was drawn and painted from historical data compiled by the artist, James Walter Folger, covering the period from 1700 to 1909.

the natives from the king down, that the natives had no kind of weapons either of offence or defence.

I took the third mate on board but could not induce the natives to visit the ship. We exchanged presents with them, receiving cocoanuts and a kind of wild tarro, the only products of their coral formed island.

I left the steward with them, trusting he might in some manner enlighten and civilize them as he has a tolerable good education for a native.

On the 7th of Sept. when bound south for New Zealand, we made the island again and found the steward well and in good repute with the natives.

We took seven natives on board, two or three of whom were chiefs. It being early in the day we stood over toward Hudson Island, bearing S by W about 40 miles. While the natives were on board we lowered for whales, obtaining one, a calf about 19 feet long. We took him on deck whole. The natives appeared quite observant of all that was going on, two or three measuring with their arms.

The next morning we landed the natives on Hudson Island, promising to wait for them one hour. When the time had expired they came off bringing with them two other persons belonging to Augustine. I learned they quite often pass from one island to another in canoes when the weather is pleasant, the people on this island being subject to the King of Augustine.

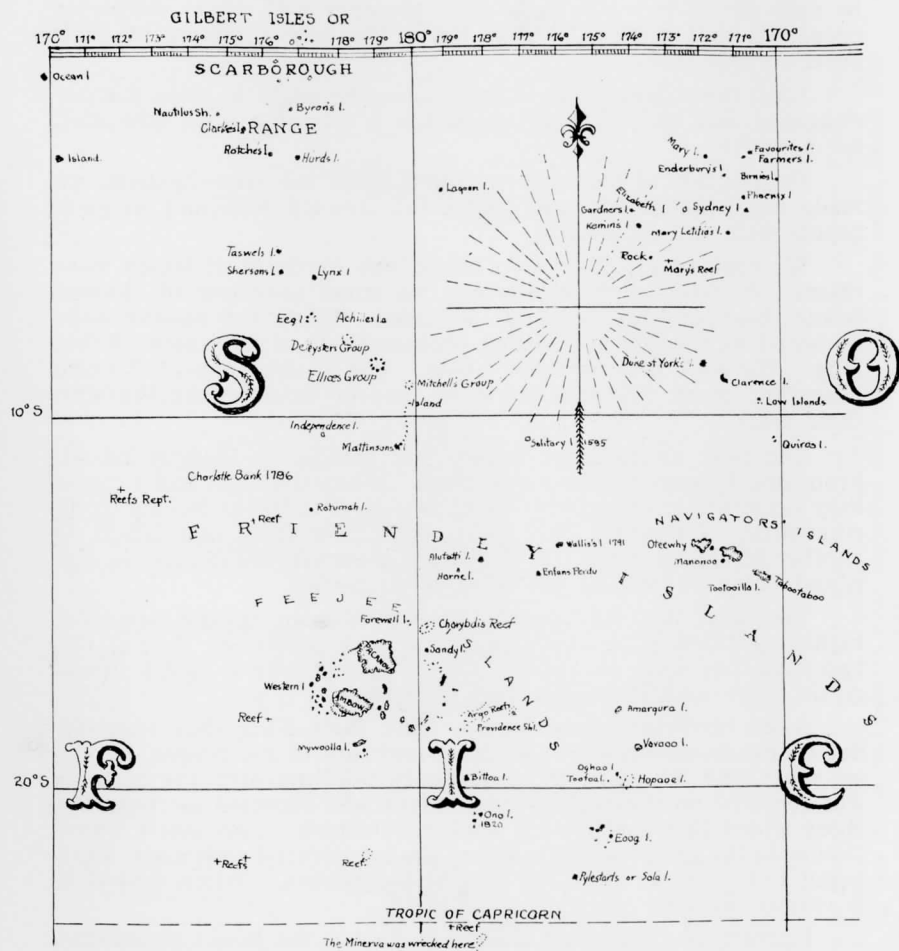
The next day we landed the natives with several presents, highly gratified with their excursion and treatment during the two days they were on board. They were all anxious that I should go on shore with them and visit their King.

After receiving an assurance from their King that I should not be inconvenienced by the great curiosity of his people, I went on shore, the King sending a canoe to take me over the reef. I was received on the reef by two natives who escorted me near the shore where they had fixed a kind of sunshade. This was a frame similar to the sharp roof of a house, the top covered with mats, there being four upright posts to keep it in position. When moved it is carried by four persons.

I remained under and around it during the long consultation some four to five hours.

Men, women and children formed a line fronting their houses, appearing lively and kindly disposed yet very timid of the "white chief from the skies" as they supposed and persisted that we came from thence. I believe however, that I afterwards convinced them of their error in that respect.

When I landed it was my intention to return to the ship the same day but with the rising tide there came a heavy swell breaking over the reef so I could not get off until the second morning.



Drawn by Sidney N. Riggs

A section of a chart of the South Pacific Ocean, including Australasia, the East India Islands and the Western Coast of South America, showing the Ellice Islands. The chart was published in 1849 in London by James Imray at his Navigation Warehouse and Naval Academy. It probably was used by Capt. James Freeman Cleaveland of West Tisbury in the brig MARY WILDER and the ship SECONET and now is in the possession of his granddaughter Dionis Coffin Riggs of West Tisbury.

Their manner of receiving strangers is most tedious and ceremonious but at the same time much of it is amusing and attractive. The stranger is required to stop at the water's edge five or six hours when the King and all his head chiefs are engaged in religious ceremonies and consultations to intercede with their deities that the stranger may prove good friends, that no calamities may come upon their people in consequence of their strange arrival and to consult respecting the reception to be given and hospitality to be extended to the stranger during his stay on the island.

The above ceremonies having been performed, several persons whom I supposed to be priests, first appeared on the beach with four spears some 15 feet in length, lined on each side with sharks teeth. These spears they secured vertically in a line with the beach about 20 feet from the stranger. Beside each of these spears were offerings of coconuts and tarro, cooked and raw, with some other articles which they no doubt considered of value. This having been accomplished, the King with some of the old priests and chiefs advanced, sitting down near the spears facing the strangers, with the spears being between the two parties. In the rear of the King stood all the young chiefs and many of the male inhabitants. After remaining silent in this position about five minutes, each of the old chiefs and priests made a few remarks, after which the King made a short sharp speech when the young chiefs and people made a sudden retreat. The older chiefs with the exception of one or two, remained with the King and moved slowly away.

In about three quarters of an hour several of the chiefs returned dressed in a fanciful manner with wreaths of leaves stained with different colors. These are secured around their heads, waists and ankles. Four of these chiefs approached the stranger, two on each side and taking him by the arms lead him about a half mile along the waters edge, opposite a wide path leading to a clearing in the woods, one part of which is appropriated to the burying of their dead, the other to dancing and other amusements, separated by a wall two feet high.

The stranger is requested to sit down facing the town and not to speak. The King, with an offering of coconuts and tarro slung on a shoulder pole, proceeds into the clearing.

An old priest smutched over with some black substance, now places beside the stranger several platted mats about the size of a common dinner plate, containing food which the island produces.

Suddenly there appeared out of the woods some forty natives dressed and painted in the most grotesque manner. These were attended by some priests with four long spears lined with sharks teeth. All others had a pole about eight feet long with which they came on the half run, cutting and flourishing, halloing and stamping. As they filed off to pass and break in the center there suddenly appeared before me a young, handsome female, standing

and stooping over the articles which the priest had placed beside me. I suppose this was intended as a peace offering to this female as representing one of their deities to act as a mediator between this stranger and her people.

This female was supported by four chiefs or priests, I could not distinguish one from the other with the exception of the Old Smutty Face. She was completely drenched with cocoanut oil from head to foot, dripping from her hair and running down over her shoulders and arms. Her head was bowed with her eyes apparently fixed on the offering while the old priest stood throwing water from a cocoanut shell on the offering and across my shoulders, talking all the while, the purport of which I could not learn. I was then requested to repeat after the old priest to the female, several words which were Greek and Latin to me. Immediately as I repeated the words after the priest, the female and her supporters, together with the offering, as suddenly disappeared as she had appeared, being instantly surrounded by the troop of exorcists who moved off with her, flourishing their poles, stamping the ground and swaying, to clear the premises of all evil spirits.

The stranger is hurried along close after the troop to the clearing where are assembled the King and his chiefs and all the inhabitants, being between eight and nine hundred. The stranger is seated on one side of the clearing which is an oblong square, till the exorcists have completed their performance of exterminating all evil spirits, he then is taken by the arms and hurried to the center of the square where he is seated and the King then makes a short speech. He then is hurried to the opposite side and seated beside a grey bearded priest some one hundred years old and requested to rub noses with him, this being their manner of salutation.

After one of the chiefs makes a few remarks the stranger is hurried through the burying ground to an irregular stone or monument. In front of him on one of the graves is a human skull completely off at the neck where the old priest stands sprinkling it with water from a cocoanut shell and talking very fast. The head was stained a deep black and I was informed it was the head of the first King who ever ruled the island.

The sprinkling ceremony over, food and cocoanut water is placed before the stranger. Having expressed himself satisfied with this, he is slowly conducted out of the burying ground to the square and seated on a mat opposite the King. The King speaking a few words, the natives scamper off to the woods soon returning with many cocoanuts as a present from the King, his chiefs and the people. He is then requested to put over his head a long, wide leaf split up the middle. The old chief, talking as he approaches, tears the leaf from his neck and casts it on the ground, which performance completes the religious ceremony. Immediately after commence their diversions, singing and dancing. The applause of the stranger pleased them much.

Their dance was very amusing and some parts of the female dance was very pretty. After the females had retired, the strangers were requested to dance and on complying the natives appeared much gratified and amused. Thus at 7 p.m. ended the ceremonies connected with the reception of the stranger, having commenced at 8 a.m. and continuing eleven hours without any intermission.

It now being dusk, all returned to the village where I was first introduced to the King without formality. I should judge him to be about 35 years old. I was informed he was the 66th who had reigned on the island. After I touched noses with the King, he bade me goodnight.

I was conducted to the house of one of the old chiefs, took supper and retired to rest on a single mat spread on the pebbled floor. I did not find my bed a very comfortable one. The four chiefs (my escort) slept forming a square, myself in the center. They appeared exceedingly attentive to all my wants, never losing sight of me during my stay on the island.

At 6 in the morning I took breakfast with my escort, my food having been sent up by the King by one of his servants. This was tarro mashed up, put in a cocoanut shell and partially baked.

Breakfast over I was conducted to the house of the King and partaking of his hospitality. After conversing with him a short time I was escorted to the houses of the chiefs with all of whom I was invited to participate. To refuse seemed to annoy them, therefore I partook lightly with all.

Having touched noses all around I was taken to the different clearings where the natives had collected many cocoanuts which were presented to me with much formality, similar to the day before.

I told them I did not need so many cocoanuts but they said they could not help it, they must give and I must receive them and should I leave them on the island they must lie and rot for no one would dare touch them. The gift being consecrated, having expressed my thanks and the ceremonies being over, I was requested by the old priest to take six cocoanuts on a coarse platted mat to the shore. As it was some distance, I objected. I thought it might be something with me carrying six green cocoanuts on a mat before me as it was with the man who carried a pig in his arms that became a hog in weight before he got to the end of his journey. He said it was necessary to take down the first one, otherwise on account of the consecrating of the gift, the natives would not dare take them down so I thought best to comply, the natives taking down the others amounting to two boatloads.

This being over I was conducted to the house of one of the chiefs and took dinner. I was then requested to rest on the mats spread for me for an hour or two, preparatory to meeting the King, chiefs and people to answer questions as to who I was, where

I had come from and what were the manners, customs and means of living among the white people.

At about 3 p.m., all of the inhabitants of the islands assembled in a large square in the center of town fronting the shore.

All of the old chiefs sitting around the King proposing questions which he repeated in a slow, clear manner. He also repeated my answers after the interpreter.

The first question proposed was if we did not come from the sky. I having repeatedly told them we did not, they then wished to know how near the sky we did live and where our land was situated. I told them we lived no nearer the sky than they did, that the sky had the same appearance with them as it did with us. I then took a cocoanut, showed them the form of the earth and other planets, how the earth revolved and how it produces day and night and the change of seasons by its revolutions. I also marked on the nut the supposed situation of America and on the opposite side the situation of their island and showed them how we had sailed around the globe to get there.

They then wished to know if there were not holes in the sky where the rain came through. I told them that the heat produced by the sun caused moisture to rise from the earth and form clouds which when passing near the earth in a condensed state were made by her attraction to fall in rain.

When I asked them if they could comprehend or if they had any idea of those things being true, they replied they believed what I had told them was true but they could not comprehend it, never having seen anyone to tell them of such things before.

They next wished to know what grew on our lands, what kind of food we had to eat and how cloth, clothing and other articles were made. After I had explained as well as I could, the King and chief seemed unanimous in expressing a strong desire for me to take them with all of their people and carry them to America. When I gave them to understand such measures were not practical, they asked me to send the ship away and stop with them to teach them and tell them all the strange things in the world.

The above conversation being over at 7 p.m., all returned to their houses, took supper and retired to rest. As soon as it is dark, about 8 o'clock in the evening, strolling about and singing or noise of any description is prohibited by the King.

I arose the next morning at 6 o'clock and took my breakfast, the King bringing my breakfast warm from the fire in a cocoanut shell. As the sea had now smoothed down I informed the King I must take my leave. He expressed much sorrow and said that before I left I must be present to a great dance to be given in honor of my visit. This dance was well worth seeing. I shall give a description of it in another place.

The dance being over I was escorted by the King to the great Council House to be present at a consultation in which I was

awarded all the rights and privileges possessed by the King or any of his chiefs at both islands, St. Augustine and Hudson, and providing I should ever visit them again, to go and come at pleasure and take whatever I might be in want of.

I expressed my thanks for their great hospitality. I then told them the Great Chief in our country required all the chiefs who went in ships to be good to all the chiefs and people on the islands where we might stop, not to injure any but to assist and do them all the good in our power, to supply them with such animals and fowls as we might have on board our ships, together with all kinds of seeds and roots which might be beneficial to the inhabitants with instructions how to use them, telling them that my Great Chief expected in return that they would be kind and assist and relieve the wants of all white people who might visit the island. This information gave great satisfaction to them all.

This talk being over, the question was agitated by the chiefs whether the common people should be allowed the privilege of saluting me on my departure, some being in favor of the chiefs only being allowed that privilege, but the majority ruled that all who could get an opportunity so to do. This being settled I was taken around to touch noses with all the old chiefs, they being too old to go to the shore with the rest.

I was escorted by the King and a young chief, his nephew, from the Council House to the shore where I was met with a great number of chiefs, by all of whom I was saluted and many tokens of remembrance were fastened around my neck and wrists.

Near the beach I met many women with children in their arms and the children were presented for a kiss. With the mothers I touched noses.

At the shore I was met by all the younger women and girls when there was such a rush that the King and my other attendants had to step one side and joined me again after passing the crowd.

Up to this time I had supposed that touching noses was the only manner of saluting among them but the young females would cling around my neck three or four at a time, saluting on the cheek till being displaced by others. I made no stop but kept walking on, the females keeping in advance, dancing and laughing and falling back on me as others took their leave or were pressed into the rear. I saw some of them in tears and also some of the younger chiefs.

The King attended me in person through the breakers in a canoe off to the boat where I took leave of him.

From what I saw and the observations I was enabled to make, I pronounce these people to be the most quiet, peaceable, friendly and affectionate toward one another, the most strongly attached to children and hospitable toward strangers, of any people I have ever met with.

The men are a well formed, strong, athletic race, always appearing good natured, having no weapons except the four spears used in their religious ceremonies. No quarreling is allowed among them. Whenever two parties disagree, the natives collect around them and as soon as any strong symptoms of anger are manifested by either party the lookers on immediately step up and seize the parties, taking them off in different directions when they are put under the tabu law, which they dare not openly break. One reason of their strict adherence to the law is probably owing to their strong attachment to their King and chiefs and from their superstitious fears.

The dress of the men is what they call the marrow, about six inches wide and about six feet long, a very fine and neatly platted mat. This is ingeniously passed around the body, up and down around the loins and so finely fixed as not to be displaced in their most energetic exercises.

These natives, taken as a whole, are of a lighter complexion than those of other islands which I have visited. The females are much lighter than the males. Many of the young women and children are of handsome form and features and some of them are quite pretty, with long, silky black hair, lively countenance and black, sparkling, laughing eyes. Those who are more advanced and have become mothers are somewhat prematurely faded. Had they been dressed from youth like our females at home and trained with some attention to appearance, they doubtless would have retained their good looks to a more advanced age.

The dress of the females is similar to that of the males, the mats however are more pliable than those of the men, two of which are worn at a time, one over and a little above the other and tied on opposite sides. The females are extremely fond of flowers and other ornaments.

At the dance on the square the morning I left, the ladies were certainly very tastefully dressed for their limited means. Their heads were dressed with wreaths made of green leaves, woven with various kinds of flowers of different colors and the same around their arms from the shoulders to the wrists, intersected with wreaths of small white polished shells. Another small wreath, similar to that on the head, is worn around the neck, falling gracefully over the bosom. These are all ingeniously secured so as not to be displaced in the exercise of dancing.

In their dance they wore an extra dress over that of common wear, made of leaves of different colors, red, white, black, green and yellow. The leaf is flat, two and a half inches wide and 18 inches long, perfectly smooth and dried so they retain the position intended, horizontal from the person. These dresses are compactly made and are about 2½ feet deep.

From 140 to 150 of these females dressed in the above style, standing ready for the dance, waiting for the musicians to com-

mence playing, truly make a splendid appearance, at which sight many swains of another clime might possibly lose their hearts.

They danced to a tune beat out on a kind of drum, six feet long and about three feet in circumference; four persons beat at the same time commencing slowly and gradually increasing till it becomes one continuous roll. The ladies keep exact time, the hands keeping time with the feet and when the time is at its quickest pitch, their position appears stationary and every part of the body, limbs and dress appears in a continuous state of vibration quite dazzling to the eye of the spectator.

The men also wear ornaments in the dance, in addition to which they paint. They perform well but in taste are far behind the ladies.

The sexes, as I was informed, never dance together, the men dancing first and afterwards the females, and so following each sex separating in turn.

Of their religion I was not able to obtain any correct idea, further than they worship some invisible being, but as it appeared to me, rather to conciliate the bad spirits than to supplicate the good for blessings and protection.

Of the chastity of the females I am also uninformed, but did not discover anything in their manner unchaste while on shore. What they may become if much visited by strangers, is not for me to say, but at the same time I feel quite confident, could proper teachers be established among them at the present time, they would not be easily corrupted.

Their houses are of an oblong form with sharp roofs thatched with cocoanut leaves, so laid as to be impervious to the heavy rains; the posts run up through the building, lengthwise to the ridgepole. At the sides they are only about four feet. Over these across the ends of the building runs a plate, the ends above which are thatched the same as the roof. All below it around the building is left open for the free circulation of air and every house has a thatched frame for this opening below, which is readily put up in bad weather.

Their manner of sleeping is to lay one mat on their pebble paved floor and another over them with one rolled up for a pillow under their heads. In this manner they lie from eight in the evening until daybreak in the morning and probably they sleep more soundly and rise in the morning more refreshed than many thousands who lay their heads on downy pillows.

I left the steward on the island, giving him seeds of various kinds, with instructions how to manage. I had no pigs to give them but put on shore three dozen fowls, all of which I hope may prove useful to them.

(signed) Henry Pease, 2nd, *Ship Planter*
Off New Zealand, January, 1854.

This account is taken from a copy of the original journal hand written by the late Dora L. Peakes and now in the Society's archives. —Editor.

SOME VINEYARD AUTHORS

BY DORRIS S. HOUGH

Like everything else on the Vineyard, its literature goes back to the Mayhews. Not, however, to the Governor, though the letters of his that remain to us indicate that his writings, had he taken time to write anything, would have had a vigor and clarity which would have set high standards for those who came after him.

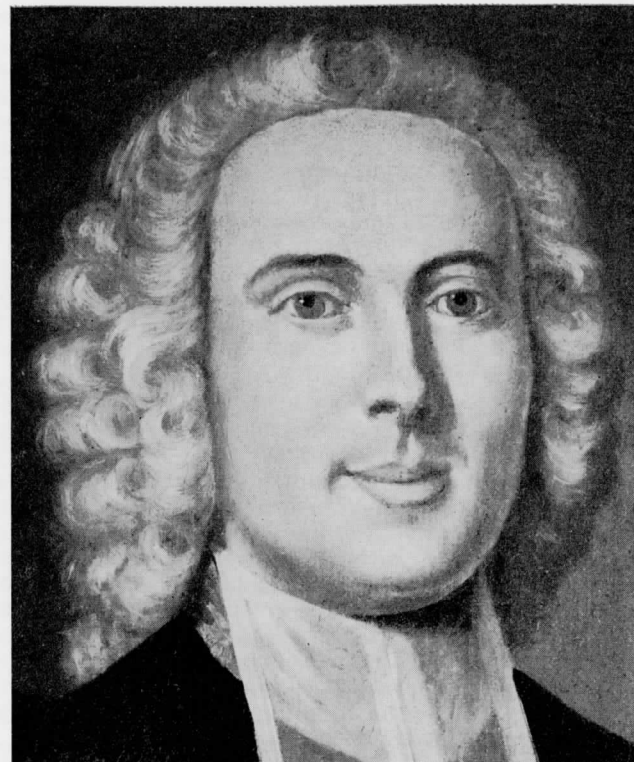
Matthew Mayhew was the first Vineyard author. He was the eldest grandson of the Governor, designated to follow in the footsteps of his saintly father, Rev. Thomas Mayhew, Jr. For this purpose Matthew, at the age of ten, entered school in Cambridge. When sent off island about 1657, "he was accompanied or soon followed by a number of Vineyard Indians," says Lloyd C. M. Hare in his book, "Thomas Mayhew, Patriarch to The Indians". He adds, "In September, 1659 the records disclose payments 'for dieting five Indian Scollars and clothing them'."

After five years of study Matthew returned to the Vineyard to master the Indian dialect. But the ministry was not his meat. He was much more like his worldly and executive grandfather than like his scholarly and gentle father. He became a sort of administrative assistant to the Governor, took increasing shares in government of the Colony, holding various important offices. After his grandfather's death he became chief magistrate.

Matthew Mayhew was a versatile man and probably the most cultivated person, intellectually speaking, on the island in his time. He did not relinquish entirely his contact with the Indians as occasional preacher and full time Magistrate. In 1675 Governor Mayhew wrote in a letter, "I praise God two of my grandsons do preach to English and Indians, Matthew sometimes, and John the younger."

On the basis of this first hand knowledge, Matthew wrote an interesting and authentic account of the Indian tribes of the Vineyard, their manners, customs and the progress of religion among them. The book, "A Brief Narrative — of the Success which the Gospel hath had among the Indians of Martha's Vineyard and Places Adjacent in New England." was published in Boston in 1694. Historian Charles E. Banks reports Matthew's book "Conquests and Triumphs of Grace" was published the following year in London. There was an enormous interest at that time in the Christianization of the Indian tribes and the success of Matthew's writings was assured. Pious phrases and references to the advancement of the Gospel among the Vineyard Indians were the idiom of his time and what his hosts of readers were interested in.

This article is limited to Vineyard authors not now living and was written for a program given at The Want To Know Club, Vineyard Haven, Nov. 3, 1961 — D. H.



from contemporary portrait attributed to Greenwood

Chilmark-born Rev. Jonathan Mayhew (1720-1766), who dedicated his talents to freedom for the Colonies.

Later in life Major Mayhew was accused of lack of religious beliefs. According to some of his neighbors he said, "There is no such thing as the fall of man, for man is naturally inclined to virtue." and he called some of the religious practises of the day "redicolas." His liberal views at that early date seem quite in the tradition of the Governor who combined statesmanlike conduct of Indian affairs with concern for their souls.

The greatest of the Mayhew authors was Experience, nephew of Matthew, son of John and great grandson of Governor Mayhew. Like his uncle, Experience seems to have combined the scholarly interests and administrative talents characteristic of his family but in Experience the scholarly side was the stronger.

The list of his published works include, first and foremost, the Massachusetts Psalter and Gospel according to St. John, in the Algonquian language, published in 1709. Experience was at this

time thirty six years old and had been for sixteen or more years preacher and teacher to the Indians of Martha's Vineyard. Banks tells us that he had not the formal education to be acceptable as minister in one of the English churches, but he was considered a most able colleague by the clergymen. He was one of the great philologists of the Algonquian dialect. Hare quotes from him a few examples of the compounding length of this mystifying speech. "The English words," says Experience, "We did strongly love one another, may be one word in Indian, viz: aum-mun-nuk-koo-wam-oniti-mun-no-nupy, etc. But after reading of so long a word you would need to be refreshed with some that are shorter and have a great deal in a little room. I will therefore mention some such, as nookoosh, I have a Father; noosis, I have a grandchild; wamontek, love ye one another."

This balance, in this case long words against shorter ones, is characteristic of some of his other writings and I venture to think it may have been a quality of the man. No criticism without a "however" defending clause to follow. For example in "Indian Converts" published in 1727 and intended to bring up to date his Uncle Matthew's report of the Vineyard Indians, he writes: "There have been all along and still are, a considerable number whose conversation is, so far as I can understand, very blameless, and who may justly be looked upon as exemplary Christians, whatever such Englishmen as are filled with prejudice against the Indians may say to the contrary."

Others of Experience's published works are a sermon, 1724; "Letter on the Lord's Supper", 1741 and "Grace Defended" 1744. He also wrote strictures on the conduct and preaching of Whitfield, exposing his errors and extravagances. In 1743 he entered into a theological controversy with Rev. Jonathan Dickenson, president of Princeton University, in which Experience argued in favor of human liberty.

The introduction to "Indian Converts" consists of the lives of the Missionary Mayhews. The following — three pages in a small sized book, is all, the editor tells us, "that the modesty of the Rev. Experience Mayhew, a giant among his brethren, would permit to be said of himself in his record of the "Missionary Mayhews and Indian Converts."

From the introduction to "Indian Converts": "Though he unhappily missed a learned education in his younger days, yet by the signal blessing of God on his diligent studies and labors, he grew so conspicuous by the time he was about twenty five years of age, that the Rev. Dr. Cotton Mather, first in a sermon printed in Boston, 1698 and then reprinted in his "Magnalia" in London, 1702, speaking of more than thirty Indian assemblies and of more than thirty hundred Christian Indians then in this province adds, 'A hopeful and worthy young man, Mr. Experience Mayhew must now have justice done him of this character, that in the evangelical service among the Indians, there is no man that exceeds this Mr. Mayhew, if there is any that equals him'."

"The Indian language has been from his infancy natural to him, and he has all along been accounted one of the greatest masters of it that has been known among us. The honourable Commission therefore employed him to make a new version of the whole book of Psalms and the Gospel of John, which he did in collateral columns of English and Indian, with the greatest accuracy in 1709.

"Such progress had he made in knowledge that he was offered the degree of Master of Arts at Cambridge (Mass.), though he was pleased to excuse himself from the honour. However, the College saw cause at length to overrule his modesty and to confer it upon him at the public Commencement, July 3, 1723, with the approbation of all who knew him."

Jonathan Mayhew was the youngest son of Experience, born Oct. 8, 1720, in Chilmark. He was a boy of intellectual traits and studious habits, developing as he grew older, the religious temperament of his father and grandfather. He was graduated from Harvard College in 1744 and three years later became pastor of the West Church in Boston.

Being a Mayhew his point of view was extremely liberal and he had the courage of his convictions. In no time at all he was at odds with the conventional clergy of the city. But his brilliant mind, his powerful preaching and his winning personality won him the loyalty of his own church and a huge following in Boston. This was the time when resistance to the tyranny of the British ministry was beginning to build up. Jonathan Mayhew dedicated his talents to this cause. He became one of the most powerful orators for the Colonies.

President John Adams said of him: "Dr. Mayhew seemed to be raised up to revive all the animosity of the people against the tyranny within the Church and State and at the same time to destroy their bigotry, fanaticism and inconsistencies. This transcendent genius threw all the weight of his great fame into the scale of his country." (Quoted by Banks, "History of Martha's Vineyard," Vol. III, p. 311).

While his weekly sermons and his frequent political speeches were the core of his great influence, Jonathan Mayhew published several discourses which were widely read and won him supporters even in England among liberal leaders and statesmen. His published sermons were the basis of his receiving an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland.

Among his published works were "Discourses on Charles the First and the Doctrine of Passive Disobedience and Non Resistance," 1750; "Observations on the Conduct of the Society for Propagating the Gospel" 1763; and "Discourse on the Repeal of the Stamp Act," published the year he died, 1766. He was 45.

James Athearn Jones, born Oct. 17, 1791 on a farm in the Scrubby Neck section of West Tisbury, is the author of a three volume collection of the legends of the North American Indians.

His "Traditions of the North American Indians" brought out in 1830, is thought to be the first such collection ever published and was dedicated to Washington Irving.

From childhood Jones had been interested in Indian lore and as a boy had many friends among members of the small Pawkunnawkut tribe living on neighboring Gay Head.

In his teens Jones shipped as a hand aboard vessels running out of Boston to Southern ports. Between trips he operated a "bumboat", trading with vessels which put into Holmes Hole to await fair winds. Restless and full of ambition, Jones also did considerable traveling throughout the states and the Northwest Territory. It was during his travels that he continued his interest in Indian lore.

Largely self-educated before he was 20, he then commenced the study of law and also began writing poetry. He had published a book of poems by the time he was 30, later was part owner and editor of a Philadelphia newspaper for a year, wrote two novels, many poems and essays as well as the trilogy on the Indians.

On July 31, 1817 he took as his bride, his first cousin, Avis Athearn of West Tisbury, daughter of Squire George Athearn, for many years Judge of Probate for Dukes County. No children were born of this union.

After his marriage Jones reportedly taught school in New York City and also practiced law. His first book, "Bonaparte: with The Storm at Sea, Madaline and Other Poems," was published in New York in 1820.

His first novel, "The Refugee — a Romance," was published in 1825 in New York under the pseudonym, "Capt. Matthew Murgatroyd of the Ninth Continentals in the Revolutionary War." Apparently it did not win the acclaim of the critics who had given his book of poems such a warm reception. There is no record of how many copies of the novel were printed but only three copies are known today and they are in the libraries of Harvard and Bowdoin and in the Library of Congress.

A second novel, "Haverhill or Memoirs of an Officer in the Army of Wolfe," was published in 1831 in London and in the same year by Harper's in New York. Critics applauded the book with its historical background.

In 1827 Jones became editor of the National Palladium in Philadelphia, the first daily newspaper in Pennsylvania. His associate was Charles Gordon Greene of Boston who later was editor for 44 years of the Boston Post.

Disposing of his interest in the Palladium in 1828, Jones went to England where he remained for about two years preparing his Indian legends for publication by the London firm of Colburn and Bentley. While there he apparently spent most of his money and was stricken with a nervous breakdown.

Late in 1831 Jones left England to return to the Vineyard where he made his home in West Tisbury for the next 20 years of his life. He wrote nothing noteworthy during this time being chiefly occupied with farming and trading. His Vineyard neighbors credited him with "rare intelligence," a "variable temperament" and a "full share of self esteem."

Not too pleased with living in West Tisbury, Jones went back into journalism early in 1850 in Buffalo, N. Y., where he became editor and part owner of a newspaper. The newspaper venture was brief, however, for the paper ceased publication after three months due to financial difficulties. It was in Buffalo that Avis Jones died.

From Buffalo, Jones went to New York where for the next three years he was active in land speculation in Brooklyn. He was 63 when he died suddenly July 7, 1854, during a cholera epidemic and was buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn.

William Homes, minister of the Chilmark church from 1714 to 1744, became unwittingly a Vineyard author of the first importance. He kept a diary from 1686 to 1746 that was preserved in his family and is now in the possession of the Maine Historical Society in Portland. Known as "Parson Homes' Diary", it is an invaluable original source for the general way of life on the Vineyard in the 18th century.

Parson Homes was the author of five printed volumes on theological subjects. Banks says he "probably" was born in Ireland in 1663 and first visited America about 1686. From 1686 to 1691 he was employed as a teacher in Chilmark, then returned to Ireland where he was ordained in 1692.

He made a second visit to Chilmark in 1714 and remained there for the rest of his life, as pastor of the church. He died June 17, 1746 at 83 and was buried in Abel's Hill Cemetery. (See Banks, Vol. II, Chilmark, p. 48-52).

Notable for two small, informative volumes on the early history of the Wesleyan Grove camp meeting, is the Rev. Hebron Vincent of Edgartown. He was born in 1805 to Samuel Vincent a farmer, and his wife, the former Betsey Pease of Edgartown, and was one of 11 children.

Hebron Vincent's schooling was limited by poor health as well as lack of funds but by working and teaching he managed to attend the Wesleyan Seminary in Maine. He also studied at Wilbraham Academy and attended a college course which he was forced to abandon.

He received an honorary Master of Arts degree in 1869 from Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

In 1834 Hebron Vincent was received into full membership by the New England M. E. Conference and the next year he was ordained as an Elder at the conference. His health compelled him to give up active preaching but he continued to work for the

advancement of Methodism, especially on the Vineyard. For many years he was a trustee of the Methodist Church in Edgartown and in 1835 was one of the group which selected the site for a camp meeting, later known as Wesleyan Grove.

In October, 1832, Hebron Vincent married Lydia Coffin of Edgartown. They were the parents of two daughters, Fannie and Rebecca.

Active in civic and cultural affairs of Edgartown, Hebron Vincent also was Register of Probate and for 32 years Register of Insolvency.

"A History of the Wesleyan Grove, Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting — From the First Meeting Held There in 1835 to that of 1858, Interspersed with Touching Incidents and General Remarks," was published in 1858. His second volume, "History of the Camp Meeting and Grounds at Wesleyan Grove, Martha's Vineyard" — For the Eleven Years Ending with the Meeting of 1869, with Glances at the Earlier Years," was published in 1870.

Both books give eye witness reports of the camp meeting activities and are a valuable record of the period. They summarize the weather, the preachers who exhorted the faithful, special events, the number of conversions and other pertinent facts.

In spite of ill health, Rev. Vincent lived to be 85 when he died of "heart disease" Feb. 13, 1890.

A unique Vineyard author, and certainly one of the most original, was Nancy Luce, who lived all her life on the Tiah's Cove, West Tisbury farm where she was born in 1820. She died there in 1890.

Her early life was like that of any West Tisbury farm child but sometime in her teens she tells us, "I met with living trouble, and forced to weep."

In her diary she wrote, "the cream of it" (her life) "was, in having a horse to go at market with the stockings you do not know what a site of good it did me."

Nancy Luce was a young woman when she was left alone on the remnant of her farm, with only a goat for companion. The goat died and its place was filled by the hens, which were Nancy's friends and housemates for the rest of her life, and to whom she gave fantastic names.

She became a recluse and an eccentric and infinitely pathetic. She was almost constantly ill. In her later years she was a tourist attraction, and she was shrewd enough to capitalize on this by selling "Works of Nancy Luce", a pamphlet of her collected poems, although she protested about the suffering the thoughtless visitors caused her.

Nancy Luce's story is a sad one, of loneliness, illness and hard work. Her hens took the place of family and friends. Her solace

was in writing poetry and in religion. Most of her poems were elegies to her departed hens, or tender accounts of their virtues and cleverness. These cannot fail to raise a rueful smile. But some of the poems recount her own illness and sufferings, and only those whom Nancy herself called "hard hearts" can fail to feel sympathy for this lonely soul.



Nancy Luce, West Tisbury poet-philosopher, with two of her pet hens, photographed at her Tiah's Cove home about 1875.

Tisbury born, author-editor Ben Clough in his article about her writes: "Whence came Nancy's prosody, a unique sort of free verse? The Bible doubtless helped, and a serene ignorance of rules helped still more; most of all there was a gift. If this inspiration was on a par with the better epitaphic poetry of old New England gravestones, that in itself is something rather special, but Nancy omitted 99 percent of the time the device of rhyme. Better, perhaps so, and the occasional bad grammar had its own emphasis, the occasional misuse of words its own brilliance."

In "Be Sure" she wrote:

*"Be sure you choose what is right in the sight of God
Be sure and not have no evil conduct, and no evil speaking.
Be sure and not have no evil thoughts in your heart,
Be sure that you vanish it all clear."*

Another Island poet, beloved by all who knew her, was Emma Mayhew Whiting. Mrs. Whiting was born in Chilmark and spent her whole life on the Island, identified with many Island organizations — the Dukes County Historical Society, Martha's Vineyard Hospital and Agricultural Fair, among others. With all of these,

her church, home and family, and being as she was, a good neighbor to countless persons, she somehow found time to write and study.

Descendant of the missionary Mayhews and early settlers, she was married to Johnson Whiting, son of Prof. Henry L. Whiting of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, a scholar and friend of scholars. Their ancient home in West Tisbury was not only the center of farm and family life but was filled with antiques and curios.

A book of her poems was published by Mr. Whiting as "an enduring memorial" to her. In his dedication Mr. Whiting writes, "the poems were composed by her through nearly 50 years of a wonderful, unselfish, beautifully useful life mid joys and hopes and sorrows."

Mrs. Whiting's last project was "Whaling Wives" written in collaboration with Henry Beetle Hough, editor of the Vineyard Gazette and a well known author.

Her collaborator wrote: "Mrs. Whiting read her first paper on whaling wives before the Dukes County Historical Society in 1939, and then she began to plan a major work in earnest, against the countless demands and interruptions of her daily life. When she died in 1947 she had laid the groundwork of the book, completed drafts of the first chapter and other sketches, accumulated a great quantity of notes and references, collected pictures of most of the whaling wives, and had explored countless log books and records. All her material was alive and suggestive. Her collaborator, who was associated with her for many years in the Historical Society, regrets she could not have herself rounded out this cherished enterprise."

Another well known West Tisbury resident was Capt. Joshua Slocum, whom the Island claims because the only home he ever owned on land was the small house and farm he bought in West Tisbury in 1902. Born in Nova Scotia in 1844, a naturalized American citizen, his true home was the Seven Seas. He went to sea at fourteen, and sailed some voyages before the mast, then became mate, master and owner of merchant ships. He belonged to the age of sail and when that died his career died with it.

He worked in shipyards and eventually became owner of the *Spray*, a derelict oyster boat, which he rebuilt plank by plank on the Fairhaven shore. As he worked on her his great project must have been forming in his mind, and when she was launched, he saw she was ready to companion him on a voyage around the world.

They set sail April 24, 1895, from Boston and returned on June 27, 1898, when he sailed into Newport, R. I. In three years and two months Captain Slocum had sailed around the world, 46,000 miles entirely by sail and entirely alone. It was one of the great sea exploits of all time and his account of it, "Sailing Alone Around the World" is a classic of narrative writing.

"Sailing Alone" was not Captain Slocum's first published book, nor was the voyage his first adventure. The "Voyage of the *Liberdade*", 1890, recounts his trip with his family, from Brazil where his vessel had been wrecked, to Washington, D. C. — a trip made in a sort of canoe, thirty five feet long, that he built himself. Four years later he published the "Voyage of the *Destroyer* from New York to Brazil," an account of his taking the *Destroyer* to Brazil for the use of the Brazilian Navy. Both these books were slim volumes, had no great success and very few copies are to be found now.

"Sailing Alone," however, had great success here and abroad. First published serially in the *Century* magazine, it was brought out in book form in 1900 and has had several editions in England, besides translations into French, German and Polish.

Captain Slocum made his last voyage in 1909. He and the *Spray* sailed from Menemsha to Vineyard Haven, whence they set sail outward bound for South America on Nov. 14. No trace was ever found of either ship or skipper.

Dr. Charles E. Banks' monumental work is the three volume "History of Martha's Vineyard." Volume I, a general history of the Vineyard as a whole, and Volume II, the annals of the separate towns, were published in 1911; Volume III, Family Genealogies, in 1925. Once a sine qua non in every literate Vineyard home, the history now is out of print and has become as rare as it is precious. It is a scholarly work, based on original sources, and is invaluable alike to students and lovers of the Vineyard.

Doctor Banks came to the Vineyard in 1889 as surgeon at the Marine Hospital. He held that position until 1892 but even after he was transferred he retained not only his interest in the Vineyard but kept a summer home here. His hobbies were genealogy and history, and it is in these fields that his reputation is more lasting than in his profession. His "Topographical Dictionary of 2885 English Emigrants to New England 1620-1650" was published in 1937 and contains genealogical references to many Island families.

Dr. Banks was a careful scholar, a painstaking researcher and student. His genealogical writings — pamphlets, magazines and books, embodied much study of original sources and are regarded as completely authentic. Where new information has come to light since his day, the gap to be filled in, usually was indicated in Banks' own writings.

Like Dr. Banks, Mr. C. G. Hine was an "off islander" who became so devoted to his summer home that he identified himself with the Island and in 1908 published his own account of its history. He called it "The Story of Martha's Vineyard" with the explanatory subtitle, "From the Lips of Its Inhabitants, Newspaper Files and those Who Have Visited Its Shores, Including Stray Notes on Local History and Industries." The book is just what the

sub-title says. The illustrations are excellent photographs of the early days.

The Hine's family home was on the tip end of Cedar Neck, an area jutting out into the west side of the Lagoon adjacent to Vineyard Haven harbor. A narrow wooden footbridge once connected the Point with the Oak Bluffs - Vineyard Haven road. Hine also wrote "The History of Cedar Neck" in a small volume of warmly reminiscent bits, privately printed in 1907. In his preface Hine explains it as "an intermittent chronological account of things and folks who have had to do with this bit of earth."

In connection with Vineyard historians, mention should be made of Mary A. Cleggett Vanderhoop of Gay Head. She came to the Vineyard from Appleton, Wis., as the wife of Edwin D. Vanderhoop who will be remembered as the only Gay Head Indian ever to sit in the Massachusetts state legislature. Mrs. Vanderhoop was graduated from Lawrence University in Appleton and taught school for several years.

Becoming interested in the folk lore and traditions of the Gay Head Indians, Mrs. Vanderhoop collected them from the old people and wrote them down. While the material never was published in book form, it did appear serially in 1904 in the old New Bedford Standard, was reprinted in 1920 in the Vineyard Gazette and still is available for reference. This was an original and striking piece of scholarly work.

Henry Franklin Norton, late curator of the Dukes County Historical Society, was a walking history of the Vineyard. His knowledge of the island was bred in his bones, composed of historical facts, family traditions, neighborhood tales. He had experienced it, rather than learned about it.

His book, "Martha's Vineyard," published in 1923, is made up of this history and legends, and of his own and his folks' experiences. It is an important addition to Vineyard history.

He was born in the "Norton Country" of Farm Neck, on land originally owned by Nicholas Norton, the ancestor of all Vineyard Nortons. Like many of the large holdings of the original settlers, the land was divided into smaller (but not always small) farms among subsequent generations.

Following the custom of many island boys of his generation, Franklin Norton continued his education on the mainland. He was graduated from Normal School, then in Hyannis, later attending education courses at Harvard and Yale. He became a teacher and was a school principal in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut. In July, 1925, Mr. Norton was Maine's delegate from the National Education Association to the World Federation of National Education Associations in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Like many other Islanders, Mr. Norton returned to the Vineyard for his later years. He died in July of 1961.