

# THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

Published by  
DUKES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
EDGARTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS



THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
(THE PEASE TRADITION)

BY HEBRON VINCENT — 1889

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNT OF ACCESSIONS

BY ELEANOR RANSOM MAYHEW, Secretary

THE ANIMAL FOOD SUPPLY OF VINEYARD INDIANS

BY E. G. HUNTINGTON

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## THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD

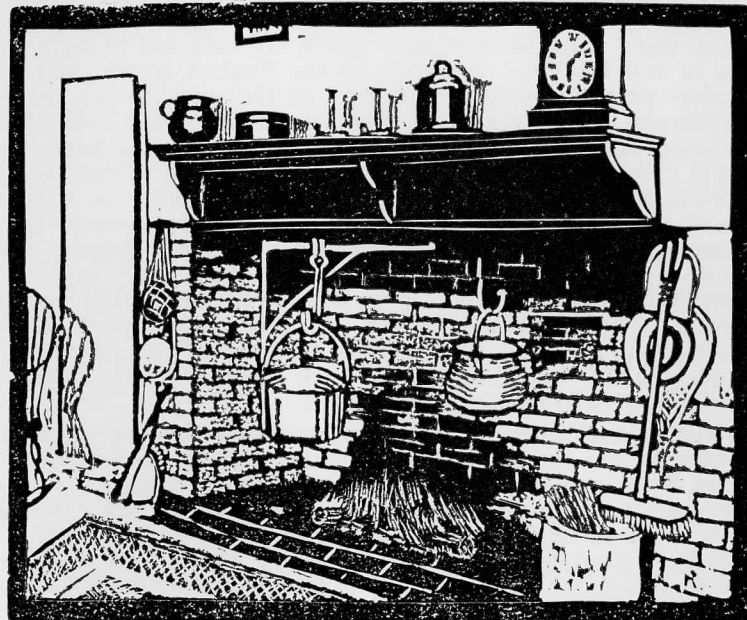
(THE PEASE TRADITION)

BY HEBRON VINCENT — 1889

The purchase of the British right to this island as well as to that of Nantucket and other smaller islands made in 1641, of James Forcett (Forrett) agent of the Earl of Sterling, and of Richard Lynet (Vines) agent of Ferdinando Georges (Gorges), by Thomas Mayhew, of Watertown. merchant, formerly of Southampton, England, and his son Thomas, to be held and enjoyed by them "and their associates", is a matter of undoubted record and is not disputed by any one. That these islands which are said not to have been parts of any territory chartered by the English crown, and were therefore properly under the control of the said Thomas Mayhew as Governor, and that the son Thomas, having been educated for the Gospel Ministry, became pastor of the little church, early formed, and missionary to the Indians as well, these are all well attested historical facts. But a tradition nearly as authentic as a written account says, that there was a settlement by whites here preceding the above named purchase and occupancy by the Mayhews; that a section of the lands was entered upon by those early comers, including that on which the town of Edgartown now stands, under a tenure to be herein after described. All this was handed down from sire to son in the long ago, and was believed by the people of all named resident, excepting any, if such there were, for whose interest it may have been not to credit it.

The account as given to the writer nearly seventy years since by some of the then oldest inhabitants, who themselves received it from an immediate ancestry, is substantially as follows: — That some years preceding the Mayhew purchase — the exact time not averred, but thought to have been from seven to ten years — a vessel from England filled with passengers, bound west and south, came to anchor for some cause in or near the outer harbor of what is now that of Edgartown; that a boat's company — mostly passengers — attempted a landing at what is now known as "Starbuck's Neck", near the present site of the town; that a large company of Indians with their Chief appeared upon the bank, apparent peaceful, but suspicious, to whom the men of the boat made signs of friendship designed to secure their confidence; that one of the company, John Pease, having been in the military service in England and having with him his red coat, made by signs to the Chief and offer of the coat as a present, which after various manifestations of fear and hesitation, was accepted; and that, after some unsuccessful attempts at putting it on aright, it was properly adjusted by the white man, the Indians set up a great shout. The further account is that such was the honor shown and the distinction accorded to the head man, and such the kindly feeling inspired, the Chief or Sachem, in whom as it is held by different authorities the titles of the Indian land vested, so far as the natives had any titles, gave

to John Pease and others a large section of land including the site on which Edgartown is built; that thereupon four of these passengers — Pease, Vinson, Trapp and Browning — decided to discontinue their voyage, and to risk the fortunes of life here; that these four men prepared caves in which to winter about half a mile south of the present town, at a place called "Green Hollow", traces of which still remain, and to which reference will be herein after made. It was further said that some other men came soon after who were allowed to share in the division of the section given by the Chief; that John Pease who was a man of some edu-



By DR. SIDNEY N. RIGGS

*Known as Tom's Neck Farm, the Pease family homestead still stands on Chappaquiddick and the ancient fireplace in the living room continues in use. The farm's name comes from Tom's Shoal between Chappaquiddick and Muskeget.*

cation, kept a record of the settlement and of the division of the lands in a book called in later years, the "Black Book", from the color of the cover; that subsequently to the purchase by the Mayhews, the division above named and this book which perpetuated the evidence of it, became an annoyance and an embarrassment, and that when John Pease died in 1674, and was lying dead in his house, two men came to the house of the deceased, and desired of the man in charge to be allowed to see this book; that he complied — placing the book upon a table — and withdrew to attend to other

duties, and that upon his return to the room the two men were gone and the book was also gone, the latter never having been seen by the public since; that the record evidence of whatever title to land they had in the way related being burned — as was supposed — or otherwise destroyed, or as some believed abstracted for a purpose, and their chief man being dead, those early settlers found themselves deprived of their rights, such as they had, the rights under the Crown being held to control any others, however acquired, and that hence the settlement of claims could go no further back than the dates of the purchases by Thomas Mayhew and his son Thomas.

It is thus that, in the face of a tradition from the earliest time down, as will be shown presently, it has been contended that the Mayhews and those who came with them were the first white settlers here; and the history of the place and people as given by letter writers from abroad, visiting or residing here for a time, has been built upon that theory. And so, if the narrative is true, these first adventurers and settlers — call them "squatters" upon the lands if you will — were deprived, it would seem, not only of any right to the soil, whatever that may have been, but also of any record evidence of a previous existence here, unless it be inferred, which is quite in point, from references of the early Clerks in what is now the first Town Book of Records, to what they call "the Old Records", and from which are copied many papers bearing dates much earlier than those at which they were transcribed into the preserved book and noting events occurring within the lifetime of the said John Pease who is the reputed recorder of the "Old Black Book". It may well be asked what, then, were those "Old Records" from which extracts were made by the Clerks in the early history of the town? And what is there relative to those early men?

Well, some other evidence does exist. And first, the marks of the caves to which reference has been made, (similar to those found elsewhere in this country, made by early settlers), the making of which if not by those four men, no one has any knowledge of their origin.

Approach the spot. It has ever, within the memory of man — of "the oldest inhabitant" — been noted for its greenness, produced doubtless, mainly by sedimentary deposits, but perhaps in part by decayed shells of the bivalves from which much of the daily food was supplied. The aspect of the place is thus very different from any portions of the lands in the field of which it forms a small part, hence the name "Green Hollow." And it is in a hollow or valley.

In or near the year 1853, George G. Cleveland, a native and resident of Edgartown, a young farmer, having purchased of Benjamin Coffin Smith, two acres of land which included the site described, was plowing there for the purpose of cultivation. He commenced wisely on the lower part of the side hill, and had plowed but a few furrows when his plow drove into a bed of large stones —

not more to his surprise than to his joy, for he was about to build a house, and wanted many such stones for under pinning and cellar. But still he had no idea of the extend of his good fortune. Proceeding to search, he found the walls of three separate, underground rooms, in a row within a few feet of each other, in the side of the hill, one of which was as large as an ordinary sleeping room. They appeared to have been covered sufficiently high for persons to stand erect in, and, from the sudden rise in the ground, to have been so like a man's side-hill cellar as to make it convenient to step in and out of the lower side, or front, which was toward the south. Mr. Cleveland unearthed and took from these filled and covered up caves, and carted home about six tons of stones, some of which were smooth and well formed for building purposes. Who put them there? The constructing of those temporary abodes must have been by civilized people. There were houses of some early settlers south of where the town now is, and the graveyard of the early residents, which still remains, is but a short distance from the location of the caves just described.

Another item of evidence consists in the remains and traces of a road now as from time immemorial called "Pease's Point Way". It leads through the rear part of the town, and although now, in some parts obstructed by turns and lots, there are traces of it further on southwesterly towards the Great Pond, so called, two miles or more, to a place where have lived several generations of men by the name of Pease.

Again, some of these four names, and names of more or less of the descendants are in the history of Edgartown, as the books now show, from very early dates. The names of Trapp and Browning are not retained by any now living but they are both in the earliest records extant. A field and a pond near town bear the name of Trapp, and persons living duly trace one line of their ancestry from Browning. Malachi Browning died leaving as his widow, Mary Browning and a daughter Susan (or Susannah) Browning. The daughter married William Vinson. The names of Pease and Vinson — the latter name now for many years spelled Vincent, in the belief, upon research, that this is the proper orthography of the name in this branch — have both had a numerous following. Now if these four men did not come to this island as herein related, there is no evidence as to when they came or whence. There is nothing to indicate that persons of any such names came with the Mayhews from Watertown; and yet they were here in the earliest years of the settlement by them.

Fourthly — Zachariah Pease, a man of irreproachable moral character, died in the year 1845, 44 years ago, at the great age of 95 years. His lifetime thus covered nearly one half of the time from the coming of the Mayhews to the date of his death. He possessed a very retentive memory, was well informed as to his ancestry, claimed to be but the fourth generation from the John Pease herein named — calling John one — and said that he re-

membered his grandfather Sergeant Thomas Pease who was the son of the said John. Granting that he must have been very young at the time of his grandsire's death, or even that he was not yet born, still he was contemporary with the men of that generation, in whose recollections and conversations the matters to which reference is herein made must have been as familiar as household words, and as real verities as though contained in an acknowledged truthful history. This aged man in his later years often told the writer and others the story substantially as herein recited. Capt. Obed Pease was of the same generation with Zachariah, a distant relative, (for all of the named here had one ancestor,) but by birth a number of years his senior. He died in 1831, aged 88 years; dying so much earlier than the other, his age also covered nearly one half of the time named up to *his* decease, and as apparent, was some years contemporary with the grandfather of Zachariah, the said Thomas, son of John. The said Obed was also a man of strong memory, and of other good mental powers, such as had raised him to prominence in his chosen vocation. He, likewise, frequently related in the hearing of the writer, more than 66 years ago, substantially the same account as that given by Zachariah; and at one time addressing a youth then at work who had descended by blood from three of those first four men, and alluding to the gift land by the Sachem in which the town is built, he said, "Boy, if you had your rights you wouldn't have to draw that thread!"

With such connecting links, corroborated by the statements of almost everyone, especially the aged, to one during the life if over eighty years, what rational doubt of the truth of the story can remain in one's mind? It is true, as viewed thus far, it is traditional; but tradition, like circumstantial evidence, is sometimes as convincing as recorded facts. And any little variations in a story as told by different persons instead of militating against its credibility adds strength to it, in that it proves a common origin of it. The History of the English Church written by the Venerable Baede, in the tenth century, was founded in a large measure upon tradition. But this case, it must be admitted, is one of no ordinary tradition.

Zachariah Pease's father was David, and David's father was Thomas, a son of the much talked of John Pease — come whenever he did. Now allowing the account only came from one generation to another, in direct line, there were only two mouths for it to pass through between John Pease the original settler, and the said Zachariah, viz. those of Thomas and David; and Zachariah, as did Obed, who was of another branch of the Pease family — as elsewhere said — told it to the writer and others.

What fairminded person of any name would not believe a story thus transmitted through a credible ancestry? True, the narrative is of no practical value now to the posterities of those four men; but the question of one's ancestry has come to be of much interest, leading to research, and very properly so, especially

when there have been attempts to mystify it and to render it obscure. And in this instance, the truth as to the history of the settlement of this island of Martha's Vineyard demands the putting on record of the circumstances and facts which still survive with the arguments and inferences founded thereon. Happily we are favored with some data yet more in point, if possible. Light breaks in from the oldest book of town records now extant; and by the help of these records we have something still to say.

On page 140 of this book we find that as early as Dec. 4, 1646, "Mr. Mayhew the elder and Mr. Mayhew the younger, gave to the men inhabiting on the island namely the Vineyard this Tract of land following for a Township." What is called "this tract of land" appears to have comprised all the East part of the island, extending westerly to a "line" to "go from Togonoman's Point (Watchy) to the Eastermost Chop of Holmes Hole", now Vineyard Haven, including "all the island of Chopoquidick" and also "All Towanticut (the Sachem) his Right"; whatever that right may have been.

This, most likely, was the same Chief or Sachem, who gave the section of land to the four men; and it does not appear by what right the Mayhews, in this case, conveyed away *his right*, which they nevertheless, thus acknowledged that he possessed. And whatever may have been the denial, his rights and those of Indians are elsewhere conceded. There is, among other things, on page 13, a record of a sale by him to Richard Sarson; and on page 83 is registered the fact of his making a will, wherein he says, he "was weak in body, but of perfect memory." That he could have made such a gift as that herein before described, and that the natives generally had rights in the lands, are sustained by the fact that in 1661, page 144, Nicholas Norton, Thomas Daggett, and William Vinson were appointed by the proprietors a committee with "power to buy land of the Indians within this town bounds for the town's use" also, March 23, 1646, page 12, nearly nine months *before the Mayhew bequest* for a township, John Pease sold a piece of land — two acres — to John Bland. How did John Pease obtain that land? Of whom? What else could it have been but a part of that given by the Sachem soon after the arrival of the four? And if the answer be in the affirmative, it is so much in favor of the claims of the Indians to rights in the lands over which they roamed, and also the still more important claim of the existence here of the four white men previous to the year 1641. Another instance of somewhat similar import is found on page 2 where William Vinson seems to have been confirmed, under the Mayhews, in what was said to be in his "possession"; it being mainly land adjoining "Meshacket Neck", "Quanomica", and the "Pond". It was evidently much added to afterwards, as there came to be, within a compass the radius of which is a mile, separate possessions of at least six men, descendants of William, viz., Barnabas, Daniel, Samuel, Timothy, another Daniel, and Abner Vincent. Question: How came William

in a prior "possession" of the original parcel which was thus confirmed to him, unless it were part of the noted "Towanticut" gift?

To return, this gift of lands for a township is said to have been given to the men "for an interest in common" for their own comfortable accommodation; the donors sharing with all the others in whatever benefits were conveyed. Divisions and assignments of different portions of the lands included, took place at sundry times afterwards. But, further with regard to those early men. On page noted before, that of 144, William Vinson was chosen Constable of the town. Page 145, year 1666, he is named as owner of a certain lot of land, and "his mother", next in the list, as the owner of "two lots." Who could "his mother" be but the widow of the first Vinson here, one of the "four"? Again, this same William Vinson, born 1627, married Susanor, (as sometimes written) Susanah Browning, the "daughter of Mary Browning". And who could Mary Browning be but the widow of Malichi (sometimes written malyas) Browning, the one of the first "four"? To confirm this we find that in the year 1669, page 82, this Mary Browning, the widow, had "freely given unto my daughter Susan Browning's eldest son, Thomas Vinson, my daughter being the wife of William Vinson, I say the proprieties and rights of thirds now mine, and in my possession during my life; and these Rights I give to him above said during my Term yt is of my life, I say ye thirds of all ye land and meadow yt came to me by my husband Malyas Browning." This gift also included all her rights "of fish" — "alewives" and "whale". It is again asked, who could Malyas Browning be but the one in the tradition? The father of William Vinson would have been contemporary with Browning. And as to William himself, he lived to a good old age — cited often as doing important service — dying in from 1695 to 1697, his will being allowed in the Probate Court in the latter year, the first document on record in that court.

As to Trapp: We find that Thomas Trapp was of the same generation as the last named man. On page 41, year 1669, he was one of the appraisers of an Estate with Richard Sarson and Matthew Mayhew. In 1692, and for many years after, he was Town Clerk, and in 1695, page 84, he is named in the list as one of the proprietors of the town. He is frequently spoken of in the Early Records, appears to have been one of the prominent men of his time, and must be regarded as the son of the Trapp who was one of the "four."

With reference to the man John Pease, the foremost of the early men in question. Allusion has already been made to the fact of his having sold a tract of land to John Bland at a date much before he could have acquired it under the donation by the Mayhews for a township.

Of whom then, and when, it may again be asked, did he obtain it? If of Gov. Mayhew, at a previous, ordinary sale, where is the evidence? Whence, else, unless it was a part of the Towanticut gift? In one of the divisions of lands, Sergeant Thomas Pease,

son of the said John, took one and a half lots that had been Thomas Burchard's. This Burchard was probably one of the "additional" men who, it was said, came soon after the four; for his ownership of lands seems to have been coordinated with theirs. The Burchards having removed to Connecticut, John Burchard, son of Thomas, sold to the said Thomas Pease, all the lands which his father had owned on Martha's Vineyard, including "Meshacket Neck"; which neck of land has come in direct line through David, son of said Thomas, to Zachariah and David, sons of the aforementioned David. Thence, (it being divided between the two brothers,) Zachariah's half — mostly the open lands — came to Jesse and Bartlett who sold it to the present Capt. Thomas M. Pease. In 1663, James Pease, an older son of John than Thomas, bought of Joseph Codman the property which the said Codman purchased of William Vinson, in the execution of the deed of which, page 83, it was witnessed by John Pease. In 1653, John Pease and another having had a controversy about some interest, the town, page 149, ended the case, and decided that he should "enjoy that commonage." In 1600, the town chose John Pease and others as a committee to remove some Indians from within certain precincts. Also, same date, page 130, he was appointed, as before, first on a committee to divide all the lands of John Butler. These are but a few of the many instances in which his name appears in the doings of those early years, but they may suffice in this connection.

We have thus far seen the names of a few of those early men found scattered through the records of the times after the Mayhew purchase. Let us now find how the lives of some of those persons and others are contemporary with, or overlap each other, thereby showing that a tradition, such as named were there no other evidence of its truth — is abundantly sustained. And in tracing these things, as the writer is not an antiquarian, he must be allowed to make the most of his references, as heretofore, to persons in or connected with his own ancestry, with whose relationships, of course, he is more familiar than with those of others.

John Pease, as elsewhere said, died in the year 1674, an old man. He left sons James, Thomas, and others, and several daughters, many of whom were undoubtedly of mature age, and some of them at least, must have been long his contemporaries; and being of his own family, they must have known just when he came to the island. Upon good authority it is stated that James Pease was born as early as 1642 and was therefore 32 years old when his father died. His life continued till 1720, making it overlap 46 years the lives of those who lived after his father's death. His brother Sergeant Thomas Pease was born in or about 1656, showing him to be about 18 years of age at the decease of his father, and he lived to be 90 years old, making him contemporary with those who lived after his sire's death 72 years. Benjamin Pease, a son of David, who was another son of John, born in 1676, was contemporary with his uncle James all the later years of his life, and with his uncle Thomas to the end of his life in 1746, and with Malatiah Pease from 1710 to

1748, and lived on to 1778, his life overlapping that of Obed Pease, herein before named, 30 years, and of the Zachariah, before named, 26 years. And the last two were those known and listened to many times in the matter of the tradition by persons now living.

William Vinson, whose mother had "two lots of land" assigned her in a certain division of lands, (her husband having died,) was here when the Mayhews and their coadjutors came in 1642. His life was contemporary with that of James Pease, son of John, till the time of his death, as elsewhere related, in or about the year 1696; also with that of the aforementioned Thomas Pease from 1656, till his death, as above, and with that of Benjamin Pease 17 years, and with that of Joseph Norton from 1649 to 1691, forty two years. Thomas Vinson, son of said William, was contemporary with Benjamin Pease — before named — and the said Joseph Norton — each from 1680 to 1740, and with Ebenezer Norton and Isaac Norton rising 80 years, running to about 1769.

There were longlived women, likewise, whose lives corresponded to each other as to time. The mother of William Vinson, as we have seen, was living in 1669, d. 1672. But passing by the time of the very earliest here, there were many such as described above which might be named.

Sarah Dunham, who was born in 1689, married David Pease, and lived to be 79 years of age. Deborah, wife of Thomas Pease, Jr., born in 1690, lived to the age of 94 years. Mary, wife of John Norton, born in 1721, died in 1814, aged 93 years, her life corresponding with the preceding person, as to time, many years. Hannah Daggett, born about 1748, died in 1841, aged 93 years. She was the wife of the late Thomas Stewart, Sr. Her life corresponded to that of said Deborah Pease many years, and also to that of Mary Norton many years; likewise to that of the early life of the writer, to whom she was known, some 36 years. All these, of both sexes, were but specimens of scores and hundreds, of different names. For in the early days there were many large families, and many persons who, with their plain fare, lived to a great age. How could there, therefore, with the multitude of such cases and the knowledge of and relationships with one another, be any doubt of the truth of a matter of so much interest?

In closing, we may properly allude once more to that "Old Book" popularly called the "Black Book." The questions very naturally arise, what book was that, and when was it destroyed or abstracted?

About 30 pages of Vol. I of town records, the oldest now extant, are mainly devoted to transcripts, copied by the clerks from the "Old Book." The dates of these papers in "ye old book," show that the transactions which they denote took place scores of years before these transcripts were made. These papers were of various matters — lands, divisions, settlements of estates, as well as of births, marriages and deaths, and doings of public meetings of proprietors and of the town. It is not held by anyone that the book

disappeared from the public view till after the death of John Pease. But the transactions, the record of which was thus copied, took place, mainly between the date of the purchase of the island by the Mayhews and that of the death of the said John Pease. But if this "old book" was one commenced under the Governor, why destroy it or hide it after copying so largely from it. Such an old record would be too valuable for this. It were folly to have thus disposed of it. Is it not, then, the more reasonable theory that this was the same book in which, according to the tradition, John Pease kept the record of the previous settlement, continued for the time by the Clerks under the new regime, till the death of this prominent man, and then, after taking out of it into another book, all these later doings, the old book was destroyed because it contained, also, the record of events, any evidence of the existence of which it was not desired by those interested, should go down to posterity.

Finally, has it not been satisfactorily shown that the tradition which has been regarded by some as unreliable, is substantially a historic fact? Of course we could not verify it by a record of the early four for the very reason that that part of the record is missing. But the fact, so far as appears, that they were here when the Mayhews and others came; that their posterities are traced down in the early books still in being; and many of the remote ones are here now, and that one of the four — John Pease — and the widow of two of the others are in the records; that the subterranean homes of those men, at the first, are shown, and that the name of the road they traveled is still used; the large families of their descendants, and the corresponding terms of the lives of many persons, well known in the history of the island; and last of all the facts quite manifest as to the "Old Book" and its fate; all this makes a mass of evidence most convincing, and such as in the matter of what is called a tradition — is so near to a plain written record, as to place the truth of it beyond a reasonable doubt.

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Editor's Note — The above is copied from the original manuscript which was in the possession of the late Miss Charlotte Pease.

## ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNT OF ACCESSIONS

BY ELEANOR RANSOM MAYHEW, Secretary

### ANNUAL REPORT

Wednesday evening, August 22, was the date of the Annual Meeting of the Dukes County Historical Society which took place, as in the past several years, in the parish house of the Federated Church, Edgartown with the president, Flavel M. Gifford in the chair. The usual reports of the secretary, treasurer, and other Council members were read and accepted in toto, following which Milton A. Travers of New Bedford spoke in an interesting and informal manner on The Wampanoag Indians of Southeastern Massachusetts.

Membership, according to the secretary's report, had varied little from last year, totalling 416, comprised of 8 honorary members, 320 annual members, 37 sustaining members, and 51 life members. Of this total, 35 memberships are new. 24 members have been dropped for non-payment of dues, there has been one resignation, and we have lost 9 members by deaths, including our former revered president, Gerald Chittenden, who was responsible for an impressive expansion and improvement of the Society's facilities during his eight years in office. Special annual memberships in the Society with dues remitted were awarded two outstanding scholars at the Regional High School recommended by Superintendent Charles Davis: Miss Susan Jackson and Miss Rosemary Steere.

The Society was represented at the Regional Conference of the American Association of Museums at Mystic and New London, Connecticut, last October by director Mrs. George H. Reid and the secretary, and at the April meeting of the Bay State Historical League in Plymouth, Massachusetts, by the secretary.

As archivist, Mrs. Mayhew was pleased to announce that the manuscript on the life of Captain Bartholomew Gosnold by Rev. Warner F. Gookin, left unfinished at his death, has been edited and annotated by Philip L. Barbour, an internationally recognized authority on the period. Mr. Barbour has also contributed a final chapter for the book describing Gosnold's important participation in the Jamestown, Virginia, settlement, and the completed manuscript has been accepted for publication by The Shoe String Press of Hamden, Connecticut, although no release date has yet been set.

She also reported that Mr. Travers had turned over to the Society the plates and all rights to print and sell his book *The Wampanoag Indian Tribes of Martha's Vineyard* of which a new edition is now available. The gift was made, according to the author, in appreciation of the cooperation and spirit of friendliness he had experienced in his research at the Society, and his growing affection for the Island through his association with members of the Council.

The research facilities of the Society were used for various projects during the year, most unique being that of Mrs. Dorothy Gifford Madden, who based the theme of a ballet, which was part of her thesis of a Ph.D. at N. Y. University, on the history and legends of Martha's Vineyard. The ballet was performed with great success in New York on May 11, and Mrs. Madden attributed much of that success to the source materials made available to her in the Society's archives, and to the generous assistance of our late curator, H. Franklin Norton, and of the archivist.

The interior of the Esquire Cooke house has undergone further rehabilitation with the repapering of the South, or "Customs" room in a replica of a wall covering found in the older part of the General Sylvanus Thayer house recently restored in Braintree. The front hall, stairway, and children's room have also been repapered in old style, though not actually documentary papers, the floors taken down to natural wood, and the panelling and other woodwork repainted. The stair-rail and balusters have been stained to simulate the original pine, as removing the many layers of paint would have proved too difficult and expensive an operation. A section of the floor in the summer kitchen and two floor joists were replaced, and some minor outside repairs attended to. Two chairs were repaired gratis by Frederick W. Sherwood in memory of the late D. Herbert Flanders, for many years selectman of Chilmark.

The chairman of the Grounds Committee, Mrs. George H. Reid, reported that our garden "grows and grows." The pagoda seedling, the elm, the russet apple tree are all thriving, as are the small box bushes, offspring of our own fine old specimen, and also most of the old-fashioned roses, which are now in permanent beds. More teucrium edging has been added to enhance the kitchen herb garden. This year our thanks should go to Mrs. Leo Willoughby for old-fashioned blue flag; to Charles B. Cook, Jr. for a handsome display of foxglove; to our neighbors Mr. and Mrs. Irving Willoughby for English daisies and primroses; and to our ever faithful friends, who contribute plants each year, Leo Convery, John Perkins and Nelson Coon.

In an attempt to lessen the expense of grounds maintenance, an electric lawn edging trimmer was purchased, and the results so far have been encouraging.

In the absence of the Exhibits chairman, Nelson Coon, Mr. Gifford reported that exhibits of topical or historic significance have been continued at the Regional High School. These are changed frequently, and Mr. Coon has interested several of the students in assisting him in arranging the displays. There was no Society booth at the Agricultural Fair this year.

The curator, Miss Dorothy R. Scoville, reported a registered attendance of 4600 visitors since the last Annual Meeting. She was assisted during the summer by Mrs. H. Franklin Norton as hostess, and by Alan Crossley, who served in the capacity of guide around the grounds. An "open house" Sunday afternoon, June 3,

inaugurated the summer schedule and was attended by well over 100 guests. Members of the Council and their wives assisted in the capacity of hosts and hostesses. Refreshments were served in the museum building.

The Intelligencer, our quarterly, has continued to draw interest as well as contribute to knowledge about the County of Dukes County and its far-flung associations. Particularly well received were the journal kept by Elon O. Huntington, Rounding Cape Horn, dated 1892, edited by his son E. Gale Huntington; in last November's issue; The Story of Pasque and The Pasque Island Club by Alice Forbes Howland, illustrated with early photos, that appeared in February 1962; and Adventure on St. Augustine's Island, 1854, written by Captain Henry Pease 2nd of Edgartown, and edited by Miss Scoville, which was lead article in the May issue.

Mr. Gifford, as genealogist, reported the usual number of inquiries about family background and ancestors, and a further communication from Sir Edgar Keating of Salisbury, England, which reiterated an invitation to all members of the Society who might be in his vicinity, to call on him. The president then introduced the speaker of the evening, Milton A. Travers, author of The Wampanoag Indian Federation of the Algonquin Nation now in its second edition, as well as of the book on the Vineyard Wampanoags the rights of which he had just presented to the Society.

Mr. Travers opened his talk by modestly disclaiming to be an authority on the Algonquin Nation, but added that he had been studying the history of the early Indians from all available sources, documents and printed material for fourteen years out of curiosity. He said, however, that there were no written records to his knowledge referring to the Vineyard Tribute Tribes between 1602 when Gosnold and his small band of English adventurers established a temporary settlement at Cuttyhunk, and 1641 when the Islands were purchased by Thomas Mayhew. And none known previous to 1602, although the Italian explorer, Verrazzano is believed to have made a landing here in 1524.

He spoke at some length on the association of the Pilgrims with the Pawtucket Indians, who like the Wampanoags, were part of the great Algonquin Nation. The Wampanoag Federation consisted of from 30-40 tribute tribes and extended from Provincetown to East Providence, thence north to Attleboro, and included Kingston as well as the offshore islands. The word Wampanoag means, according to Mr. Travers' interpretation, "first to be blessed by the sun as it comes out of the waters."

There were four tribute tribes on Martha's Vineyard: the Nunpaugs, Takemmys, Chappaquiddicks, and Aquinnahs, of which the Nunpaugs were the largest. He mentioned a number of the outstanding early local Indian leaders: Epenow, who was kidnapped by Captain Harlow and taken to England, but connived successfully to be returned to his homeland; Hiacoomes, the first convert to Christianity made by Thomas Mayhew, Jr.; and Towanicut, the first

sagamore to be converted. There was also Cheeshahteumuck, son of the sachem of Holmes Hole, who was the first Indian to graduate from Harvard college, class of 1665. Joel, another Vineyard Indian, also attended Harvard, but was shipwrecked off Nantucket just before obtaining his degree.

In interpreting a number of Indian names, Mr. Travers explained that they derived from the physical or personal characteristics of place or person. He also told of many which had become distorted over the years into English words as the Indians themselves had no alphabet, and the white man's written interpretation of their language was entirely a matter of phonetic spelling. He described in some detail the life of the Vineyard tribes, the construction of their homes — (called wetus, not wigwams), their tools, food, and day to day activities. A question period followed his talk which was enthusiastically received by a sizeable audience.

#### ACCESSIONS

As usual, accessions for the year vary widely, ranging from choir books to coverlets. A particularly handsome example in the latter category is a silk patchwork quilt edged with maroon velvet and fine lace "made by Mrs. Nancy M. Smith in the 79 year of her age Edgartown April 1886," as recorded in careful chirography on one of the patches. Other scraps show handpainted flowers, a seashore scene, and a sketch of the Edgartown Federated Church and parish house done by the late Elizabeth Estey Fisher. The basic pattern is one of squares subdivided into oblongs, rectangles and triangles which are connected by all manner of stitches, cat, feather, cross, etc. Materials include satins, velvets, brocades and taffetas in rich deep shades blended with pastels.

The quilt was a gift from Mrs. William T. Ruhl, Mrs. Smith's granddaughter who remembers spending summers with her grandparents — Elijah and Nancy Boggs Smith — in half of the present John Coffin house, the other half being occupied by the Fisher "girls" Grace and "Lizzie Estey." She also lived some years in the old Mayhew house. Mrs. Ruhl wrote that she recalled "Bunker's ice cream sodas, the nightly boat arrival and the P. O. where we used to gather, and Miss Josephine Huxford's store, where we had privileges as she was a close friend of my mother's."

A second coverlet is a wondrously fine woolen blanket made in Chilmark at what was known as the "Warren Tilton Place" at Happy Valley through which runs the Fulling Mill Brook. The fleeces for the yarn from which the blanket is woven undoubtedly came from Tilton sheep, or those of his brother-in-law Owen Hillman, who lived nearby in the re-built Major Benjamin Skiffe house. The blanket was given by Mrs. Edward H. Powell, great-great granddaughter of Captain Hillman, great granddaughter of Judge Beriah T. Hillman, and granddaughter of Mrs. Fannie B.

Howard of Edgartown. Charlotte, Captain Hillman's wife was a sister to Warren Tilton.

Mrs. Florence Leighton, daughter of Captain Levi Jackson gave a large framed photograph of the sunken schooner *Mertie B. Crowley* together with a framed newspaper account of the famous rescue by Captain Jackson and his crew of 4, of all 15 aboard the wreck including the captain and his wife, January 23, 1910. Also from Mrs. Leighton came a small cabinet bookcase filled with books supplied by the Seamen's Friend Society to the Merchant Marine, which Captain Jackson salvaged from the schooner *Marcus L. Urann*, wrecked off Edgartown's South side September 22, 1924. The books are quite varied in appeal, and aside from the Holy Bible, Pilgrim's Progress and numerous religious tracts include novels by Ralph Connor, Robert Hichens, Jeffrey Farnol and, of all people, Alice Hegan Rice.

A gift in memory of H. Franklin Norton, our late curator, from his wife, Ethel Clark Norton, is a pair of rush-bottom chairs of Sheraton derivation used by Mr. Norton's grandfather, Constant Norton, Collector of Customs 1855-1860, when he occupied the Cooke house. Mrs. Benjamin C. Mayhew's memorial gift in her husband's name consists of a long-handled cranberry rake, a muskrat diving trap made by Mr. Mayhew's father, an eel spear, a modern type, wire mesh eel trap, and a so-called basket quahaug rake invented by the late Orin Norton, the last of our village blacksmiths.

From the estate of Rev. Oliver Purrington came six small books essentially interesting for their imprints and dates of publication. The oldest is *Moral and Instructive Tales for the Improvement of Young Ladies*, etc. 1st American edition; Prentiss, Leominster, 1797. And next oldest — *Peregrine Pickle*, new American edition, also Prentiss, Leominster, 1798. An *Abridgement of Murray's English Grammar*, 4th edition, was printed by Isaac Sturtevant for Isaiah Thomas, June 1811.

Other additions to our collections for which the Society is most grateful are:

Brown, John P., *A Greeting from Martha's Vineyard*. Photogravures. Copyright 1895 by A. Witteman, N. Y.

Bullard, John M. (editor and compiler). *Captain Edmund Gardner of Nantucket and New Bedford: His Journal and the Family*. New Bedford, 1958.

Davis, Mrs. Rufus Pease. Pamphlet: *Our Little People Library*, containing account of John Paul Jones' flag given to the U. S. Government by Mrs. Harriet P. R. Stafford, Oak Bluffs, Dec. 8, 1898.

Elvin, Joseph B., Transcript of inscriptions from stones in Lambert Cove's Cemetery together with photostat showing layout with individual lots designated. Compiled by the donor.

Hobbs, Miss Addie, 50 Glimpses of Martha's Vineyard, ca. 1898.

- Jones, Mrs. William. Paisley shawl, gift of Capt. William Pratt of Taunton to Clarence Briggs, Oak Bluffs, ca. 1860.  
Spanish lace mantilla and Victorian table cover from Briggs family.  
Photo of himself given by Gen. Tom Thumb to Sylvester Carter, Mrs. Jones' grandfather, Oak Bluffs.
- Kidder, Benjamin. Photo, Lucy and Sarah Adams.
- LaBell, Major. 3 wooden coopers' planes of types used aboard whalers in making barrels. Found under Edgartown house, 1925.
- Lewis, Robert L. Framed pictures from estate of Oak Bluffs whaling captain, Leroy Lewis: The first Oak Bluffs hotel, erected by Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Co.; early Camp Meeting print by Kellogg & Comstock, showing tents and open pulpit; shipwreck, schooner *Christina*, Cape Poge, 1865.
- Mayhew, Mrs. Herbert E. Booklets: Sloop *Spray* Souvenir, 1895-1898, U. S. to U. S.; The Story of the Old Mill, West Tisbury.
- Mayhew, Mrs. Benjamin C. Memorial Engraving, Benjamin Mayhew, 1785-1852: N. Currier, fecit.  
Embroidered Chinese child's slipper with bell in heel, brought from Orient by Captain David Adams.
- Palmeira, John E. 3 pair handcuffs, 2 gyves once used in Edgartown goal.  
Book, The New England Sheriff, used by Jason Dexter. Worcester, 1855.
- Plummer, Miss Louisa S. The Social Choir, Boston, 1835. "Singing school" book with cover engraved in gold Sophronia S. West, great grandmother of donor and daughter of Captain Thomas and Sara Spaulding West of Holmes Hole.
- Tilton, Mrs. Samuel E. Almanac, 1889, issued by White Warner Co. Household Ranges, Taunton. Agent Thos. H. Tuckerman, Vineyard Haven.

#### LOANS

- Congregational Church of West Tisbury Records: Journal and Scrapbook, Haig Adadourian. Records, 3 vols: 1796-1877; 1878-1923; Congregational Society Minutes and records.  
Pictures, West Tisbury Pageant, sketches and postcards.
- Willoughby, Irving. Slot machine used in Fred Bunker's ice cream parlour — later Tilton's — ca. 1890, a bicycle enclosed in glass case, mfr. Sun Manufacturing Co., Greenfield, Ohio.
- Hufstader, Mrs. Robert. English lustre grog pitcher.  
Small ivory ship model, early 19th century.  
Soup bone model made from stewbones at Dartmoor Prison, England, during Napoleonic Wars, probably by a French prisoner of war.

Signed: Eleanor Ransom Mayhew  
Secretary

#### THE ANIMAL FOOD SUPPLY OF VINEYARD INDIANS

BY E. G. HUNTINGTON

We know very little about the agriculture of the Island Indians before the coming of the Whites. On the other hand, we do know, from archaeological evidence quite a good deal about the animal foods that they ate — the animals, birds, fish, and shellfish. Indeed the Indians ate just about everything that was edible, except snakes, frogs, and salamanders. And why they drew the line there is anybody's guess. Perhaps there was some sort of a taboo involved, just as they didn't begin to eat shellfish until about twelve hundred years ago.

The Indians cooked their food in various ways. Much, undoubtedly, was roasted over an open fire. Much was cooked as stew or chowder in their big ceramic pots, and also they used pits in the earth lined with hot stones — and there is the ancestor of the clam-bake.

Our evidence of the animal foods that they ate comes mainly from the archaeological evidence of three sites; two at Squibnocket and one at the head of Lagoon Pond, and it gives us a pretty good picture of the animal population of the Island prior to the White settlement. And there were many more animals on the Island then than there are now, and many more species, too, and that is just about what we would expect.

How long the Indians have lived on the Island is a question that can probably never be definitely settled, but from all the evidence available, they must have been here for somewhere between five and six thousand years at least. And that is interesting, for it was also somewhere between five and six thousand years ago that the Island became an island. That very important — for us — event took place when the sea, which had been rising for centuries after the retreat of the glaciers, finally broke through into the low-lying lands that now are Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds. This was a part of the general inundation that had flooded the greater part of the vast coastal plain that formerly extended all the way from Florida to Georges Banks, far out to sea beyond the modern coast line. Thus the Indians may have come to the Island dry-shod or they may have had to come by boat. And when they did get here they found a wealth of wild life, and they stayed.

Now, for some seven or eight thousand years before the arrival of these first immigrants there had been a gradual building up of flora and fauna to cover the bleak and desolate barrens that the glaciers had left behind them in their final retreat. This so plentiful supply of animal and plant life that the Indians found when they got here, seems to have reached this area as part of two great streams of migrations. One stream came north and northeast up the now flooded coastal plain, and the other came from the west and southwest through the passes in the Appalachian Mountains.

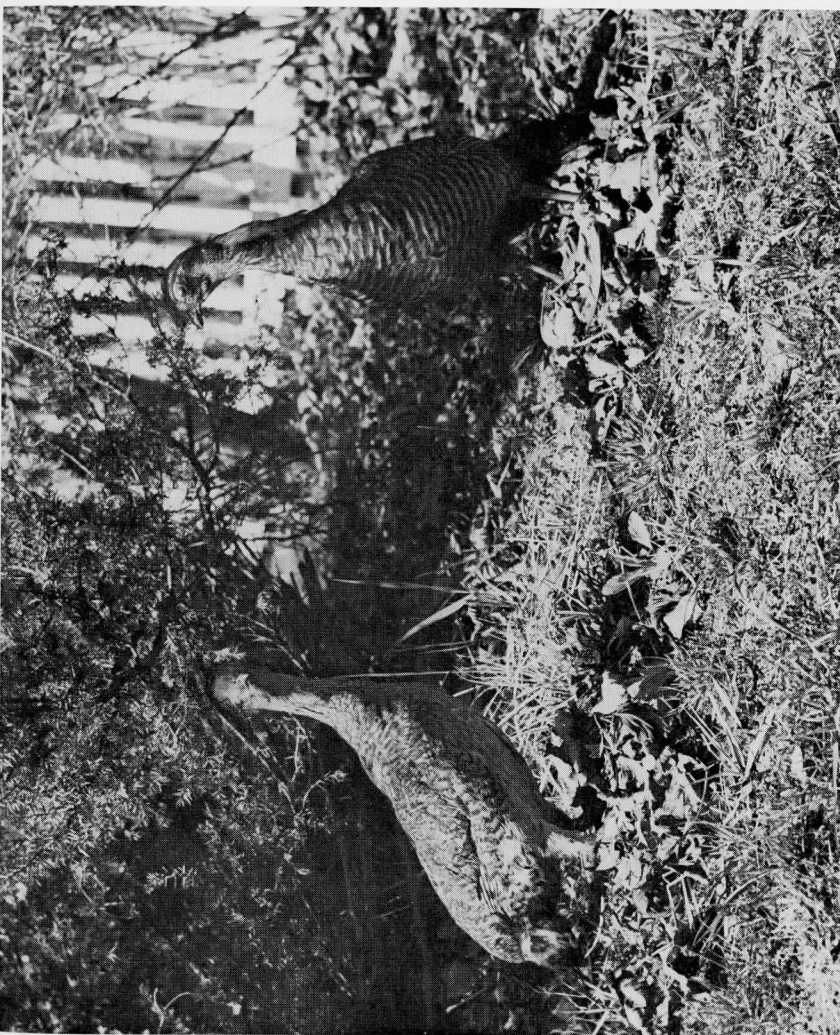


Photo by H. L. Stms, 1849  
 Last seen on the Vineyard in 1932, the heath hen (*tympanuchus cupido*), now is extinct in the world. In 1831 the Massachusetts legislature passed a special act to protect the heath hen. The act was the first protective legislation to be recorded.

In that connection note that there are no chipmunks or woodchucks on Martha's Vineyard and it looks as though there never have been any. That must indicate that the migration of the chipmunks and woodchucks came late, and from the west, and when they reached this area they couldn't get to the Vineyard because it had already become separated from the continent. But if those two species were not here it wouldn't have bothered the Indians much, because there was such a great supply of other and even better eating animals.

When the Indians got here they found foxes, skunks, raccoons, beaver, and bears none of which are here now. The first three of those species, the foxes, skunks and raccoons, were exterminated by the Island sheepmen in a brutal and determined poisoning campaign some sixty years ago. The latter two species, the beaver and bear were probably exterminated either just before or just after the White settlement. Deer were exterminated, too, but they have become reestablished, thanks to the efforts of some deer themselves, that swam across Vineyard Sound from Naushon, and to the local Rod and Gun Club, which brought others in.

Other species have become extinct, too, in the three hundred and twenty years that the Indians have had to share the Island with the Whites. The heath hen has gone, and so have the great auk and the Eskimo curlew. And there are more, like the sea mink. But the Indians had them all, and they ate them all.

And now follow the lists of the various animals, birds, fish, and shellfish whose remains have been found in the middens of three Island Indian villages.

#### MAMMALS

White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus borealis*). More deer bones have been found at the various sites than those of any other animal. So many, in fact that it almost seems to indicate that the Indians may have practised some sort of conservation where this species was concerned.

The Indian dog (*Canis familiaris*). That the Indians ate dog is an undoubted fact. But they may have done so only when other meat was scarce. Dogs must have been very valuable as scavengers about the village sites.

Gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*). The gray fox seems to have been more common on the Island in Indian times than the red fox.

Red fox (*Vulpes fulva fulva*).

Black bear (*Ursus americanus americanus*).

Beaver (*Caster canadensis*). From peat bog evidence we know the common beaver was on what is now the Island ten thousand years ago. So beaver must have come here very soon after the retreat of the glaciers.

Harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*).

Gray seal (*Halichoerus gryphus*).  
 Muskrat (*Fiber zibethicus*). "Musquash" was considered one of the greatest of delicacies by the Indians.  
 Otter (*Lutra canadensis*).  
 Common mink (*Mustela vison*).  
 Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*).  
 Skunk (*Mephitis nigra*). The late Benjamin C. Mayhew of Chilmark told the author of this paper that in his opinion the local skunks must have been a sub species or race, for they were larger than the mainland skunks with a very narrow, and at times almost non-existent white stripe.  
 Cottontail rabbit (*Silvilagus transitionalis*).  
 Sperm Whale (*Physeter catodon*). The Indians were the first whalers from Martha's Vineyard, going out to sea on their big dugout canoes and killing the whales, and then towing them in to the beach. There a great feast would be held. For the Indians wanted the meat, not the oil of the whales.

#### BIRDS

Great auk (*Plautis impennis*). This large flightless bird has been extinct for about a century.  
 Black duck (*Anas rubripes*).  
 Mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*).  
 Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*).  
 Horned grebe (*Colymbus auritus*).  
 Loon (*Gavia immer*).  
 Red-throated loon (*Gavia Stellata*).  
 Red Breasted Merganser — shelldrake (*Mergus serrator*).  
 Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallapavo silvestris*).  
 Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*).  
 Bald eagle (*Haliaetus leucocephalus*). Both the bald eagle and the red-tailed hawk may have been killed for their feathers as well as their eating quality, which probably was not very high.  
 Also many bones of small birds have been found, none of which have yet been surely identified. In this connection it is interesting to note that, as far as I know, no remains of the heath hen have yet been surely identified.

#### FISH AND TURTLES

Dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*).  
 Sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*).  
 Tautog (*Tautoga onitis*).  
 Sea robin (*Triglidae priontus*).  
 Scup (*Spuridae*, probably *Stenotomus chrysops*).  
 Scup (*Stenotomus versicolor*).  
 Striped bass (*Roccus lineatus*?). This identification is tentative, from the scales only.

Sting ray (*Dasybatis centrurus*).  
 Red-bellied turtle (*Pseudemys rubriventris bangsi*).  
 Red-bellied turtle (*Pseudemys rurriventris rubriventris*?). There seems to be a little doubt about this latter.  
 Undoubtedly as more digging is done in Indian sites the remains of other species will come to light. Scholars are particularly anxious to find sea mink, elk, and moose. Also the Labrador duck.

#### SHELLFISH

The only shellfish listed here are those found by the author, and only those found in sufficient quantities to indicate they were used for food.  
 The Pond scallop (*Pectan irradians*).  
 Soft shell clam (*Mya arenaria*).  
 Quahaug (*Venus mercenaria*). One supposes that the "mercanaria" comes from the fact that it was from the quahaug that the Indians manufactured wampum.  
 Oyster (*Ostrea virginica*). There is some question as to whether or not the Vineyard oyster may be a sub-species of *Ostres virginica*.  
 Winkle (*Busycon canaliculatum*).  
 Winkle (*Busycon carica*).  
 Blue mussel (*Mytilus edulis*).  
 Ribbed mussel (*Volsella plicatulus*).  
 Boat shell, or quarterdeck (*Crepidula fornicata*).  
 Moon shell (*Polinices heros*).  
 Sea clam (*Spisula solidissima*).

The author has had a great deal of help in gathering information on the various species listed in this paper. Particularly he must thank Dr. Joseph H. Waters of Duke University; Douglas S. Byers of the Peabody Foundation of Andover, Mass.; and Dr. Henry B. Collins of the Smithsonian Institution.

Identifications were made possible through the help of the staffs of the following institutions: The Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University; The Smithsonian Institution, of Washington, D. C.; and the United States National Museum in Washington, D. C.

A partial bibliography would include the following: Waters, Joseph H. and C. Jean-Jacques Rivard: *Terrestrial and Marine Mammals of Massachusetts and other New England States*. Brockton, 1962. Byers, Douglas S. and Frederick Johnson: *Two Sites On Martha's Vineyard*, Andover, 1940. Ogden, J. G. III: *Late Glacial Vegetation And Climate of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts*, Doctoral Dissertation, New Haven, 1959. Huntington, E. G. An Archaeological Study From Martha's Vineyard, *The Dukes County Intelligencer*, vol. 1, No. 2. 1959.

A few back issues of the *Intelligencer* are available at fifty cents each at the Dukes County Historical Society in Edgartown.

Vol. 2, No. 1 — Dr. Sidney N. Riggs' illustrated article on "*Vineyard Meeting Houses*."

Vol. 2, No. 2 — "*The Episcopal Churches of Martha's Vineyard*," by Dr. Riggs; the "*Annual Report and Account of Accessions*" by Eleanor Ransom Mayhew, Secretary, and second installment of Rebecca Smith's *Journal*.

Vol. 2, No. 3 — "*Years of Innocence on Martha's Vineyard*," by Henry Beetle Hough. "*Some Gay Head People About Sixty Years Ago*," by Eva Ryan. "*A Cache of Indian Artifacts*," donated by George Magnuson.

Vol. 2, No. 4 — *The Singing Tiltons and Some of Their Songs* by E. G. Huntington, also a continuation of Rebecca Smith's *Diurnal Records For The Year 1813*.

Vol. 3, No. 1 — *Merrily They Rolled Along — On Skates — Five Miles At Sea*, by C. Nelson Bishop; *Sand Dunes and Sea Law* by Stanley King.

Vol. 3, No. 2 — *The Peddle Cart* by Flavel Gifford; *Rounding Cape Horn* by Elon O. Huntington; *Annual Report* by Eleanor Ransom Mayhew, Secretary.

Vol. 3, No. 3 — *The Story of Pasque and the Pasque Island Club* by Alice Forbes Howland.

Vol. 3, No. 4 — *Adventure on St. Augustine Island* by Capt. Henry Pease, 2nd; *Some Vineyard Authors* by Dorris S. Hough.