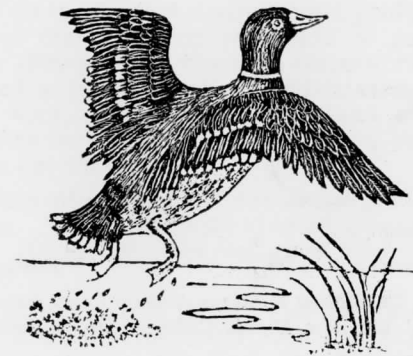


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RECOLLECTIONS OF VINEYARD WILDFOWLING
By JOHN M. LEAVENS

HIACOOMES
By REV. EXPERIENCE MAYHEW

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RECOLLECTIONS OF VINEYARD WILDFOWLING

BY JOHN M. LEAVENS

"It was amazing. You could walk on islands of seaweed in 10 feet of water or more."

The speaker was Herbert C. Hancock, 92, of Vineyard Haven. He was describing brant shooting in 1929 along the strip of beach in Edgartown that stretches from Anthier's Bridge to the Eel Pond.

"At that time," he continued, "the eel grass was just all dying. It would come floating up to the surface and pile up on shoals off shore and form an island."

His companion, Eugene F. Rogers, 65, also of Vineyard Haven chimed in, "You could go out on those seaweed islands, stick out anywhere from 40 to 50 brant decoys, build your stand right on the island and shoot from it using your skiff to go out and retrieve your birds. In 1929 and '30 when we were working in that neighborhood we used to take a truck and a boat and go down on those islands before work. We would dig a stand and set out decoys. Brant would come in just as thick as flies and by the time to go to work we'd have our limit."

"Gunning has all gone to hell nowadays" said Tom Pease, 82, of Vineyard Haven. "There was a lot of brant around in 1917 and right up to the early 1930's when the eel grass died off. But you won't find many today."

The three participants in the office of the Hancock Lumber Company on Beach Road in Vineyard Haven had 203 years of gunning experience among them. The time was October, 1962. Herbert Hancock, born in the Quenames section of Chilmark, shot his first duck in 1879 at the age of 9 with a muzzle loader. He remembers the occasion clearly.

"I was only nine years old and I had been talking to my father, Russell Hancock, about gunning. My father loaded up the muzzle loader with a small charge and let me go. I sat down along side of a little bridge across a drainage canal there in Quenames. About sunset or a little after I saw a black duck following that little ditch right along straight at me. He got up here about where I hunted and I put on to him and killed him and picked him up and went home. I couldn't wait to shoot the other barrel."

Tom Pease, brother-in-law of Keyes Chadwick for 75 years the Vineyard's outstanding decoy carver, began shooting at the age of 12. A great hunter, he still likes to do a little hunting when he can get around to it. "Most people," he says, "remember getting up early and being cold and uncomfortable as part of the fun of duck shooting. You get up early. You walk three miles and a half, get there before daylight, get your overcoat off, sit there in an open stand and suffer."



Sharing a total of 203 years of Vineyard gunning experience are, left to right: Tom Pease, Herbert C. Hancock and Eugene F. Rogers, all of Vineyard Haven. Two of Roger's shadow geese are in the foreground.

Gene Rogers, born in West Tisbury, began gunning in 1913, often in company with Herbert Hancock. As Hancock put it, "we were born up there where the hunting was."

We had assembled to talk about Vineyard decoys and decoy carvers but the conversation swung to hunting ducks and geese.

"Today," Rogers said, "you can shoot two black ducks, two shell-drakes, two bluebills and two geese; no redheads or canvas-back." He added, "I haven't seen a redhead for 30 years. Canvas-backs? I haven't shot one of them for 40 years. The only thing we as duck hunters can look forward to is backward on our memories."

What memories they were of a by-gone age when the sky was dark with waterfowl, when there would be "anywhere from 50 to 100 gunners strung out on Cape Pogue Beach shooting coot," the white-winged scoter, or when thousands of green head plover flew along South Beach "bunch after bunch anywhere from 20 to 100" in a bunch.

So the three made a record of a Vineyard era that is passing, but not yet gone in order to set down what they shot, where they shot and how they shot and to yarn about Vineyard decoys and their makers.

WHAT THEY SHOT

In the days before 1918, when federal restrictions took effect, Cape Pogue and Squibnocket were good places for shore ducks.

"The plover," Herbert Hancock recalls, "would feed up on the highlands in the fields after grasshoppers."

"In the 1880's we used to shoot yellowlegs and graybacks* and anything that came along; once in a while curlew, but mostly plover and yellowlegs. I never shot any but the greenhead or golden plover. Now you see the blackhead** once in a while but I don't remember seeing one when I was shooting. I don't remember ever killing a willet on the Vineyard. But the shore birds are coming back. I have heard of more yellowlegs this year than in many years." Hancock also recalled once when his father and an uncle came home from Squibnocket with a nail keg full of plover which were shipped to Fanueil Hall market in Boston.

This mention of the Fanueil Hall market prompted Tom Pease to remark: "Everybody was a market gunner years ago. What ducks you shot and couldn't eat you sold off island. You shipped them in barrels to the Boston market. You'd get a check back weeks later and there were always a few ducks that were green. The market people took them out for themselves. There was nothing the matter with the ducks but they called them green so you didn't get paid for the two or three they carried home. It happened every

*The robin snipe or knot, largest of the sandpipers.

**The black-bellied plover.

shipment. It didn't matter whether you shipped them in January or October there was always two or three green ones."

Geese were shot on Anthiers Pond, Cape Pogue, Pocha Pond Lagoon, South Beach, Squibnocket and Menemsha. Rogers operated a goose blind off Anthier's Bridge on Sarson's Island for 10 or 12 years. The stand called for two pens of flyers and 16 beach birds. The flyers were geese specially trained to fly out to intercept an incoming flock of wild geese and toll or lure them into shooting range of the stand. The beach birds were tame geese staked out along the beach to add a vocal welcome to passing flocks. The use of flyers and beach birds was a highly developed art on the Vineyard, particularly for club shooting. Jim Look of West Tisbury was noted for the use of flyers at his goose stand on Fresh Pond and other points along the great ponds of the south shore.

Goose decoys of both the solid and shadow type were used to lure geese. Rogers recalls using big goose decoys that were called "leaders." These were "slat geese" made out of four foot laths tacked to a frame and covered with a piece of canvas. They were about three feet long. "How a goose ever had the nerve to come anywhere near them I never did understand" observed Mr. Hancock. "They weren't even painted decently."

"They always used to have a couple of those way out in the pond and that would attract them," Mr. Rogers remarked.

"That's right," chimed in Mr. Hancock, "I remember seeing a bunch of geese come swimming right up to them."

Among the ducks shot in recent years are black ducks, blue-bills or scaup, whistlers or goldeneye, scoters, and shelldrake or merganser. Two principal varieties of merganser were commonly shot: the "regular" or redbreasted merganser and the larger "pheasant shelldrake" also known as the goosander or American merganser. Formerly redhead were shot in great numbers and canvasback were occasionally shot but with the inundation of the great ponds during hurricanes the waters became brackish and unsuitable for pond ducks. Bluebills once were abundant on the Vineyard. Hancock recalls shooting with the late Frank Adams of West Tisbury on Armistice Day 1919. He tells the story. "Frank and I went down on what they call Long Point in Chilmark Pond where I own a piece of land. We set there till it got good broad daylight. Before long those bluebills took a notion to go up to the head of Wades' cove and they come right down to us where we had a few 'coys out. In a few minutes that bunch moved and we killed over 20. I remember one little flock of 7 came in. We both shot at them and we killed 6. I says to Frank 'That's too bad. That's killing them a little too fast.' We had all the ducks we wanted, so we give it up and come home."

Scoter shooting was popular too. Gene Rogers describes a coot shoot.

"We used to have pretty good fun shooting coots — the white winged scoter. Years ago we would go down to Cape Pogue Pond. Of course there's lots of scallops in there and that's what they feed on. There'd be anywhere from 50 to 100 gunners strung out on that Cape Pogue beach and they'd start out shooting at daybreak in the morning and run out of ammunition about 10 o'clock so everybody'd come home. They'd go back about 2 o'clock in the afternoon and shoot until dark. They wouldn't kill too many of them. They had to make a direct hit because if they didn't the coot kept right on going. There would be four or five hundred of them in a string and the gunners would shoot right off the beach hummocks or plain beach. All you had to do was stay out of sight because if you didn't they'd hit you."

"It didn't make any difference what you did," remarked Mr. Hancock. "Coot make up their mind where they are going and that's where they go."

WHERE THEY SHOT

Most of the wildfowl shooting took place along the shoreline from Lagoon Pond in Vineyard Haven to Cape Pogue and along the great pond of the south shore to Squibnocket. One of the most famous spots was run by Jim Look of West Tisbury. He and his brothers "owned half of South Side and ran a club, the Middle Point Gunning Club which hunted at Tississa and Fallen Down Point on Fresh Pond." Other clubs that operated blinds at choice spots along the ponds according to Gene Rogers were The Watcha Club, Homer's Point Club and Long Point Club on the West Tisbury South Shore and the Squibnocket Club in Chilmark. Gardiner Green Hammond owned Squibnocket until the early 1920's. Marshall Norton who died just a year or so ago at 94 or so was his gunning master."

Menemsha Pond was a favorite spot for goose shooting. Gene Rogers tells of an experience there four or five years ago. "My son and I were in a blind down below a beach hummock. There were geese flying in and out. I have a dozen goose decoys that I made myself. We had them set out in the water and on the beach. First thing we knew somebody opened up on top of us from that beach hummock. Well it scared the pair of us half to death."

Hancock interjected, "Shooting at the coys, eh."

Rogers continued, "We gradually caught our senses and came up out of the blind hollering like blazes. Here was a fellow with the most sheepish looking grin on his face. He had crawled down on that bunch of decoys."

"If they were shooting at your decoys," remarked Tom Pease, "that was a high compliment to your skill."

The conversation veered back to decoys and their makers.

VINEYARD DECOYS AND THEIR MAKERS

From time immemorial waterfowl hunters have used decoys to lure birds within shooting range. As Gene Rogers observed: "Most anything would decoy a brant. At times when we had nothing else and nothing better to do, we'd take gallon oil cans, and paint them black and throw them out."

"Why" said Herbert Hancock, "we would even mop up the seaweed on the shore and they'd come in to that."

"When it comes to wooden decoys," Tom Pease observed "everybody made their own. They might make one or they might make six. They probably didn't look very good but they always got some ducks or geese."

Gene Rogers has tried his hand at most of the different kinds in use in his day. They included bluebill, widgeon, "regular" shelldrake, and "pheasant" shelldrake, whistlers, brant and goose both solid and shadow.

"I never had money enough to buy any so I had to make them," Rogers commented. "At one time we had somewhere around 100 brant decoys. Mr. Hancock and I made them here in the shop."

As Tom Pease pointed out, some birds weren't too choosy about the decoys they would recognize. "You could take bluebill or shelldrake decoys and daub them with white paint and widgeons would come into them just the same."

Some of the decoy carvers became famous for their decoys. The late H. (Henry) Keyes Chadwick of Oak Bluffs was probably the first among the island's decoy carvers. The late Manuel Swartz Roberts of Edgartown and the late Ben Smith of Oak Bluffs also were top ranking carvers.

Keyes Chadwick (1868-1959)* was a contemporary and friend of Elmer Crowell, a famous Cape Cod decoy carver. Chadwick started in Oak Bluffs under the tutelage of Ben Smith and carved for about 75 years. Tom Pease knew Keyes since he was 12 years old and never saw any indication that he "couldn't read or write colors." Keyes, he relates "was a great poultry fancier and an excellent decoy maker. Keyes," he continued, "was a finish carpenter. He worked for Sam Kidder in Oak Bluffs. In his lifetime he probably made 700 or 800 decoys. He made good ones, but he always claimed that his decoys were not so good as those of Ben Smith."

Mr. Hancock added, "Keyes Chadwick was always talking about Ben Smith. He thought he was more of an expert than any man he knew."

"Yes," Tom Pease concluded. "Mr. Chadwick was always looking for perfection and he never could find it. It worried him very much. Both he and Ben Smith were perfectionists."

*All dates in parentheses in this section are approximate only.

Chadwick's decoy production was steady and his product was always in demand. Tom Pease recalls that Keyes Chadwick made up a whole lot of decoys of different kinds and sold them to Captain Robert Foote of West Tisbury. Foote owned a big piece of property on the south side of the island. He once went to Chadwick and bought all the decoys he had. He bought 500 and some odd dollars worth in one lot. Many of these decoys with the name FOOTE branded in the bottom were never used and became collector's items after Chadwick's death.

Chadwick's output according to Gene Rogers was varied. "I've carved decoy heads for Keyes Chadwick here in the shop by the hour: bluebills, redheads, canvasbacks, widgeons, everything under the sun including shelldrake heads, although he didn't go in for many shelldrakes. He went in mostly for bluebills."

Pease, however, had had a pair of pheasant shelldrakes or goosanders of Chadwick's make. They were big ones 18-20 inches long and heavy. "You take four of them and put them in your bag and walk four miles you thought you'd gone somewhere," Pease noted.

"Crowell did Chadwick's fancy painting." Mr. Hancock related. "Chadwick did a lot of painting himself but when he had a special order to paint he sent them to Crowell. Chadwick had more experience than anyone I ever knew," he observed "because he kept at it till he played out."

Ben Smith (1870-1942) lived in Oak Bluffs. He, too, was a finish carpenter. He was a good workman and quite a sportsman at gunning. Like Keyes Chadwick, he was a perfectionist.

The late Manuel Swartz Roberts of Edgartown, the Vineyard's famous catboat builder, was another top-notch decoy carver.

There were others whose decoys were recalled by the trio. Herbert Hancock himself carved decoys and his father Russell, (1850-1900) made a few years and years ago. The late Bill Dugan, Sr. (1895-1956) of Vineyard Haven did fancy wood carving and also carved decoys for a hobby. His son, the late Bill Dugan, Jr. (1920-1962) made a lot of miniature ducks.

Matthew Hale Mayhew (1860-1940) was an expert painter of autos, carriages and duck decoys. "He was a very methodical fellow," said Tom Pease. "He never hurried. You could measure his footsteps rain or shine across the fields and they never varied an inch. The only time I've seen him hurry was when he had a duck or goose down. Then he'd hurry. He made decoys just for himself. Everybody called him 'Matt Hale.' If you hadn't known he was a Mayhew you would never have guessed it."

Charles Joy (1867-1932) had a blind on Anthiers Pond. He used to make brant decoys that were "all right" according to Gene Rogers and he made them for others as well as for himself.

Frank Adams (1870-1945) of West Tisbury was a wheelwright and carpenter. He made weather vanes and decoys. He too was a brother-in-law of Tom Pease.

Jim Look (1870-1940) of West Tisbury ran an outstanding gunning camp on the great pond in West Tisbury. Herbert Hancock recalled him with unstinted praise. "There was a gunner. He killed more ducks than any man on the Island. He made plenty of 'coys too."

Ben Pease (1870-1938). Tom Pease comments: "He had quite a place on Chappaquidick, round along Cape Pogue. He was quite a gunner and possibly made decoys."

Gene Rogers summed it up. "There have been a lot of fellows around who used to make decoys. Most of them is six feet under the sod and most of their decoys have either washed ashore or gone adrift and what haven't done either have rotted away."

"Or been sold to antique dealers," added Tom Pease. "There's not many left."

There were many old time gunners whose names came up as one recollection recalled another.

Gene Hayden. He had a gunning camp on South Beach that washed away and another on Cape Pogue. He ran the Old Island house in Oak Bluffs. He didn't have anything else to do after the summer people left so he tended to his gunning camp then.

Levi Jackson of Edgartown. There is doubt that he ever made any decoys but he used a lot of them.

Willie Mayhew of Edgartown ran a hardware store. He went gunning some but didn't make decoys. Hancock told an anecdotal story: "I was working on a hotel in Edgartown years ago and I got short of spikes, 20 penny nails, I went over to the Mayhew's hardware store and told him I wanted about 20 pounds of spikes. Willie Mayhew said 'I've only got a few nails left and I'm going to keep 'em for Edgartown.' He wasn't going to sell them to anyone from Vineyard Haven."

Alton Tuckerman. Tom Pease commented, "He's been up in the rest home here in Vineyard Haven for four or five years. He must be in his 80's. He was a tinsmith, went gunning a lot but he never made decoys so far as I know."

The Vincent brothers of Chappaquidick. Tom Pease recalled that there were four brothers: Albert, Charlie, Horace and Binnacle Jim. "Binnacle Jim," he said "had one eye. Trouble was when he was a boy he come along the shore one time and said something was all covered with binnacles. He meant barnacles but the name stuck. Horace was a carpenter. All lived on the great plains and all did gunning.

"There was one gunner" commented Gene Rogers "who did a lot of hunting and owned considerable property here and there.

He usually couldn't see and had to get somebody to shoot his duck for him." Pease chuckled, "He wouldn't know what eye to shut up because he saw double. He wouldn't know which place to shoot at."

Herbert Hancock asked for the last word. "When I was a boy they put the law on black ducks. Before then you could shoot the year around. The law fixed opening day for black duck shooting for the first of September. On opening day this time my father and I thought we'd go up the shore along the beach. There used to be this tall grass, creek stuff we used to call it, and the ducks would feed in around that. When I was a boy I went barefooted. I thought the ground felt mighty cold that first day of September and just as soon as it come light enough to see there was a white frost on the ground."

"You was barefooted?" Pease queried.

"Yes, I was barefooted. Feet was tough as a shoe tap," he said.

Whether it be good or bad, or neither, time has changed many things and one of this is wildfowl hunting. "Overkill" is a 1963 word, but it applied to other days. They were the Good Old Days for hunters. The chances are that they never will return. Because of this historians will go hunting for the story of the hunters. Let it not be said that no effort was made at a record.

HIACOOMES

The First Christian Indian, and Minister on
Martha's Vineyard*
from Indian Narratives of Pious Indian Chiefs and
others of Martha's Vineyard (1727)

BY REV. EXPERIENCE MAYHEW

Hiacoomes was an Indian of Great Harbour, now Edgartown, where a few English families first settled in 1642. His descent was but mean, his speech slow, and his countenance unpromising. The Indian sachems and principal men looked on him as a mean person, scarcely worthy of their notice or regard. Living near the English, they visited him in his wigwam, and were courteously entertained by him. They discoursed with him about the way of the English, and the man seemed to hearken, and in a little time began to make them visits, going to some of their houses. About the same time he went to the English meeting, observing what was done there.

This was soon noticed by the Rev. Mr. Thomas Mayhew, who was then minister to the few English inhabitants in that new plantation, and was at the same time contriving what might be done in order to the salvation of the miserable Indians round about him, whom he saw perishing.

Observing in Hiacoomes a disposition to receive instruction, and that his countenance was grave and sober, he took an opportunity to discourse with him; and finding encouragement to go on in his endeavours to enlighten him, he invited him to come to his house every Lord's day evening, that so he might then more especially converse with him about the things of God.

Hiacoomes accepting this kind invitation, Mr. Mayhew used his utmost endeavours to enlighten him. And Hiacoomes seemed as eagerly to receive the instructions given him, as if his heart had been prepared by God, and made good ground, in order to a due reception of his word. As a new-born babe, desiring the sincere milk of the word, that he might grow thereby, he increased daily in knowledge; and, so far as could appear, he also grew in grace.

As Hiacoomes thus hearkened to the English, it was soon noised about among the Indians; and the news of it coming to the Sachems and Powwows,** they were, as obscure a person as Hiacoomes was, much alarmed at it. Some of them endeavoured to discourage him

*The first Indian Church on Martha's Vineyard, which was completely formed, was organized in 1670. The Rev. John Elliot, and the Rev. John Cotton, then came and ordained Hiacoomes, and another Indian named Tackanash, as the pastor and teacher of this church.

**Powwows, means wicked Indians who deceived others by pretending to a diabolical power.

from holding communication with the English; but all that they could say or do to this end, was to no purpose; for it seems that God, by whom not many wise men after the flesh, nor many mighty, nor many noble are called, had by his special grace effectually called him out of darkness into his marvelous light: and having now a taste of that knowledge of God and Christ, which is life eternal, he was resolved that nothing should hinder him from labouring after still higher attainments.

About this time Hiacoomes went with some English men to a small Island near by, called Chapaquiddick, where they there met a Sagamore, whose name was Pahkehpunnassoo, and who reviled him for his communion with the English in things civil and religious. Hiacoomes replied, that he was gladly obedient to them; and that it was not for the Indians hurt that he was so. Upon this, the Sachem gave him a grievous blow in the face, and would have struck him again, if the English present would have suffered it; but the poor man thus wronged, made this meek reply: I have one hand for injuries, and another had for God; whilst I receive wrong with the one, I lay the faster hold on God with the other.

There was this year, 1643, a very strange disease among the Indians; they ran up and down as if delirious, till they could run no longer; they would make their faces as black as a coal, and snatch up any weapon, as though they would do mischief with it, and speak great swelling words; but yet they did no harm.

Now this, and all other calamities which the Indians were under, they generally attributed to the departure of some of them from their own heathenish ways and customs. But Hiacoomes being built on that foundation that standeth sure, and being one of those whom God had set apart for himself and knew to be his, none of these things moved him; but the things which he had heard and learned he held fast. That he might be in a way to learn more than he had done, he now earnestly desired to learn to read; and having a Primer given him, he carried it about with him, till, by the help of such as were willing to instruct him, he attained the end which he desired.

In 1644, Hiacoomes going to an Indian's house where were several Indians, they laughed and scoffed at him, saying, Here comes the English man. At this his old enemy Pahkehpunnassoo, then asleep in the house, awaked, and, joining with the other Indians, said to him, "I wonder that you that are a young man, and have a wife and two children, should love the English and their ways, and forsake the sorcerers; what would you do if any of you were sick? wither would you go for help? If I were in your case, there should nothing draw me from our gods. Hiacoomes answered nothing, perhaps foreseeing that, if he should answer, it would only put the man into a rage, as formerly: however, he soon after told a friend of his, that he then thought in his heart, that the God of heaven did hear and know all the evil words that Pahkehpunnassoo said; and he was further confirmed in this, when a little after,

Pahkehpunnassoo was, by the just hand of God, terribly smitten with lightning, and fell down in appearance dead, with one leg in the fire, which was grievously burnt before any of the people present were aware of it.

But for this time, Pahkehpunnassoo was spared, though a young man, that was helping him to cover the chimney of the house, at which the rain beat in, was killed outright at the same time. But Pahkehpunnassoo, as obstinate an infidel as he was, so victorious is the grace of God, afterwards renounced his heathenism, and became a worshipper of the only true God, through his son Jesus Christ; so that it is hoped he was at last a brand plucked out of the fire.

In this and the following year 1645, Mr. Mayhew went on with his design of instructing Hiacoomes, and several other of the Indians, as he had opportunity, till Hiacoomes began to be so far from being taught the first principles of the oracles of God, that he became a teacher of others; communicating to as many as he could the knowledge he himself had attained. Some began to hearken to him, yet seemed not to be duly affected with the truths taught, and many utterly rejected them; but God sending a general sickness among them, it was observed by the Indians themselves, that such as had but given a hearing to the things by Hiacoomes preached, showing any regard to them, were far more gently visited with it than others were; but Hiacoomes and his family in a manner not at all. At this many of the Indians were much affected, for they saw that he, who for the sake of the truth exposed himself to the rage of his enemies, and such as adhered to him, fared better than those opposed.

Many of the people desired to be instructed by him; and some persons of quality, such as despised him, sent for him (as Cornelius sent for Peter) to come and instruct them, and those about them.

The Indians began not only to give some credit to the truth that Hiacoomes brought them, but were awakened by what they heard and believed, so as humbly to confess their sins, and be concerned to obtain pardon. Hiacoomes could now tell Mr. Mayhew, that this was the first time that ever he saw the Indians sensible of their sins.

Hitherto the Indians had not any public preaching; but now (in 1646) Tawanquatuck, one of the chief Sachems of the Island, invited both Mr. Mayhew and Hiacoomes to preach to himself and such of his people as would hear them, and Hiacoomes was from this time forward heard as a public Preacher by a considerable number of the Indians; and God gave him not only light, but courage also, for his work; and the Indians said of him, that as formerly he had not been at all accounted of, they wondered that he, who had nothing to say in all their meetings formerly, was now become their Teacher.

The Indian sorcerers, and those that adhered to them, seeing two meetings of the praying Indians set up, in opposition to that

old way which themselves and their fathers had long walked in, were very much disturbed and enraged, and thought to terrify Hiacoomes, and the rest of the praying Indians, by threatening to destroy them by witchcraft.

To this end, several went to a meeting of the praying Indians, and there told many stories of the great hurt which the sorcerers had in this way done to many, a thing of which these Indians could not be ignorant, and which seemed to discourage them from embracing the true religion. Then this question was asked by one that was on the sorcerers' side. Who is there that does not fear the Powwows? To which another answered, There is no man that is not afraid of them; and he looked upon Hiacoomes who protested most against them, and told him the sorcerers could kill him! But he answered, that they could not; for, said he, I believe in God, and put my trust in him, and therefore all of them can do me no hurt.

The Indians wondering to hear Hiacoomes speak thus openly, they said to one another, that because they heard Hiacoomes words, they did not fear them, but believed in God too.

A while after this, on a Lord's-day after Meeting was done, where Hiacoomes had been preaching, there came in a sorcerer very angry, and said, I know all the meeting Indians are liars; you say you don't care for the Powwows. Then calling two or three of them by name, he railed at them, and told them they could kill all the meeting Indians if they set about it. But Hiacoomes then told him, that he would be in the midst of all the sorcerers on the Island that they could procure, and when they should do their worst by their witchcraft to kill him, he would without fear set himself against them, by remembering Jehovah. By this answer he put them to silence, but none but Hiacoomes was able to do so. Such was the faith of this good man! Nor were these magicians ever able to do the Christian Indians any hurt.

The piety of Hiacoomes further appeared in what follows. None of the praying Indians or their children, having died until 1650, as if God would on purpose in this way distinguish them from the rest of their neighbors, it now pleased him to begin with Hiacoomes, as being the best able to make a good use of such a providence. A young child of his died, and he had the grace to show an excellent example under this trial, and his wife also, who was a pious woman. At the funeral, Mr. Mayhew made a speech concerning the Resurrection of the godly, to life eternal, at the last day: which these good people believing, they mourned not as those that had no hope.

What I have related concerning Hiacoomes being mostly extracted from some of Mr. Mayhew's letters concerning the Indians' affairs, I shall add this testimony concerning him, in one of them dated 1650: He says, "I must give him this testimony after some years' experience, that he is a man of a sober spirit, and good conversation; and as he hath, as I hope, received the Lord Jesus

in truth, so I look upon him to be faithful, diligent, and constant in the work of the Lord, for the good of his own soul and his neighbors with him."

To this testimony of Mr. Mayhew, let me add that of the Rev. Mr. Henry Whitefield, once Pastor to a church of Christ in New England. Mr. Whitefield, in his voyage to Boston, and so to England, was by contrary winds, stopped at Martha's Vineyard about ten days; in which time he conversed frequently with Hiacoomes; and in a book which he published after his return to England, he says, 'I desired to speak with him who preaches to the Indians twice every Lord's day, whose name is Hiacoomes; he is of prompt understanding, of a sober and moderate spirit, and well reported of both by English and Indians. I thought him about thirty years of age. I asked him many questions about the Christian Religion, and about his own state before God: as, 1. Whether he had found sorrow for sin as sin? 2. Whether he had found the Spirit of God as an inward Comforter to him? To all of which he gave me very satisfactory and Christian answers.

As Hiacoomes was a good Christian, so he was doubtless a good Minister. If any man might say, I believed, therefore have I spoken, with respect to his entering on the Ministry, he might truly do so. As soon as he came to understand and believe the great truths of the Christian religion, he began to declare them to his countrymen; nor could he be hindered from doing so. As he daily increased in knowledge under the instructions of Mr. Mayhew, to whom he continually resorted for that end, so he went on to preach to his neighbours, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, which he had received; and it pleased the Lord abundantly to succeed his endeavours.

For three years after his conversion, he only instructed his neighbours in private, as he had opportunity; but after they were disposed to give him public audience in 1646, he preached to them with boldness. He declared the wretched condition of mankind by sin, and the way of redemption which God has in and by his Son Jesus Christ, provided for them, etc. He boldly charged them with the sins and abominations in which they daily lived; especially their worship of false gods, and giving that honor to creatures that was due to Jehovah only.

God did abundantly own this his servant in the work to which he had called him: for when he reckoned up the sins of the people to them, instead of being provoked at him for it, they would many of them, with tears, confess their guilt, and promise to turn to the true God, and serve him only, and seek for pardon through the blood of his Son.

Though God blessed his ministry, giving him much success, yet did he not at all appear to be lifted up therewith; but thought he still needed the continual help and instructions of Mr. Mayhew, by whom God had called him out of darkness into his marvelous light.

To him he frequently still resorted, that he might be yet more taught and illuminated: and in particular, on the day before the Sabbath he constantly did so, in order to his being better prepared for the service of that holy day.

This course Hiacoomes held, till, to his great grief, he lost Mr. Mayhew in 1657; which was indeed a heavy stroke on these poor Indians, and exceedingly lamented by them. However, this good man went on in the discharge of his duty; and God so succeeded the labours of this, and some other servants of his, that most of the Indians here, were in a few years brought to the acknowledgement of the great truths of religion; and it is hoped that many of them effectually were called.

Hiacoomes went on steadily in the work to which he was called, till he arrived at so great an age, that he was not able to attend the public ministry any longer. He survived his colleague before mentioned, made a grave speech at his funeral, and laid hands on, and gave the charge to Mr. Japheth at his ordination; who succeeded Mr. Tackanash in his office in 1683.

My father* who then preached to the Indians on this Island, and assisted in the management of their ecclesiastical affairs, being present at the funeral of Tackanash, took in writing the heads of the speech made by Hiacoomes, with what else he thought observable in his Funeral Obsequies, which was as follows:

"Here, said he, is my deceased brother. Paul said, this body is sown in corruption, but it shall be raised in strength. Now it is a pitiful, mean body, but then it shall be a glorious body: yea, however this body shall be consumed, and be as if it had never been, as it were turned into nothing; yet the power of God shall bring it forth again, and raise it up an excellent and glorious body. Yea, this body is now a precious body for example sake: though this body is but one, yet there are many people round about come together to see it sown. But if a man should go about to put one grain of wheat into the ground, there would not be so many people present at the doing of it, as there are at the interring of this body. And as you see many present at the burial of this body, so there shall be many at the Resurrection. But it shall not be then as it is now; now everyone is diversely apparelled; but the righteous at the Resurrection shall have all one uniform glory.

"I shall now speak a short word to the relations of the person deceased, especially to his wife and children. If you be desirous to see your father, seek your father; for he went before you in every good work, therefore seek your father in every good work, and you shall find him again; for God's mercies are exceeding great."

Having finished his speech, they proceeded to fill up the grave; and this good man standing by, said "This is the last work man can

*Mr. John Mayhew, son of Mr. Thomas Mayhew.

do for him; the next work God himself will do." When he spoke of the Resurrection, he uttered himself with fervency and confidence, such as would become one who had himself actually seen the dead raised.

Hiacoomes was of great age when he made this speech; yet he lived, if I mistake not, till 1690; but was not able to preach publicly. I saw him frequently when I was a youth, and still remember him; the gravity of his countenance, speech and deportment. He seemed always to speak with much thought, and I think very rarely smiled. I was present when he laid hands on Mr. Japheth, prayed, and gave the charge to him: which service he performed with great solemnity; and, as I have heard my father say, with very pertinent and suitable expressions. In his last sickness he breathed forth many pious counsels, and gave good exhortations to all about him, and thus went to his eternal rest.

NOTE — Experience Mayhew (1672/3 — 1758) son of John Mayhew and grandson of Thomas Mayhew, Junior, was the fourth of five generations who ministered to the Indians of Martha's Vineyard.

Almost from birth Experience had been exposed to Bible teaching and the language of the red man. His father, who was the first minister of the West Tisbury Congregational Church, died when Experience was sixteen years old. In 1694, when he attained his majority, he served as "teacher" in his late father's church and was engaged by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to carry on the missionary work on the Vineyard.

As their minister he taught, preached and aided the Indians in many ways.

His contributions to the literature of the early mission field are: *Indian Converts, Ne Kusukod Jehovah Kessehtunkup* (The Day Which the Lord Hath Made), *Massachusee Psalter: asuh Ukkuttoohomaongash* (The Massachusetts Psalter or Psalms of David) and probably a revision of the *Indian Primer* of 1720 and 1747.

Experience Mayhew died November 29, 1758 and is buried in the cemetery on Abel's Hill in Chilmark. His son Zachariah became the fifth and last of the Missionary Mayhews.

—S. N. R.

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

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