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"SWEEP OUT THE PLACE WHEN NECESSARY"

by
ELDEN H. MILLS

ANIMAL REMAINS FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES
ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD

by
JOSEPH H. WATERS

THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT
AND THE LIST OF ACCESSIONS

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"SWEEP OUT THE PLACE WHEN NECESSARY"

by

ELDEN H. MILLS, D.D.

West Tisbury Congregational Church

Weird as are so many epitaphs to be found on old gravestones, contributing to the glee of wandering observers not yet saints, the remarks on old slates, where decipherable, oftentimes do enable one to read between the lines and recover passages in the life of the deceased which the years have hidden. Wandering through the old cemetery in North Windham, Vermont, I found the following legend obviously written by a minister in nearby Andover, in which posthumously he had the last word.

Rev. Nathan Noyes Dec. 18, 1808 Aged 60

"Look here and view affliction's favorite son,
Misfortunes sore through all my life have run.
Hard persecution's iron yoke I bore
Till I had seen of gloomy years three score.
Now shout in vain ye persecuting throng,
I'm far beyond the poison of your song.
Live and live happy while my grave you view,
This tongue now cold has often prayed for you."

Of course one is not sure whether this octave reflects a dyspeptic parson, or whether he was the victim of small-town scurrilous gossip, or both! He did tote to his grave an invidious venom, laced with sarcasm, against certain fractious sheep whom sometimes he had shepherded.

A few years ago Lillian Manter rescued from the Town dump four old record books of the Congregational Church of West Tisbury, dating as far back as 1794. Two of those books are the subject of this review. One of them, kept sporadically by ministers, listed births, baptisms, deaths, and marriages, together with complaints and censures for "acts unbecoming to the gospel." "Gross intemperance", and "disorderly behavior", which might be anything

from lethal threats to consorting with the deacon's wife, were matters of painful discipline, although the penitane could usually find a loop-hole through which he might return to grace. The other book is the Record of the Parish Society, and the reason for its existence will be explained later.

In contrast to the acerbity noted in the epitaph cited to begin with, note now the subdued tenor of the West Tisbury minister's statement concerning his relation to individuals of his parish, and his obvious care to exhibit no resentment. This minute antedates the epitaph of friend Noyes (did he compose it after his demise?) by nine years.

"At a Church meeting April the 5th 1799, Asarelah Morse, pastor of the Church of Christ in Tisbury West Parish, laid before the Brethren the following request, viz. (in part)

My Brethren who I respect and esteem as fellow Servants of our common Lord and Master and heirs of the same salvation which is proposed to all in the Gospel. I trust you are not unacquainted with the circumstances of the Parish and the discouragements in the way of my continuing in the Ministry among you, arising from the uneasiness in the minds of many, manifested by their coldness and backwardness in attending upon the publick Worship, in making provisions for the necessary repairs of the building belonging to the Parish and for the payment of the sallery. This has been a discouragement to me, & has induced me to conclude that my continuance with you in the ministry cannot be with mutual satisfaction. Tho it be with regret that I part with those with whom I have lived so long upon terms of mutual friendship, think it my duty to request a dismissal from the Pastoral relation I stand in to this Church; which request I now submit to the candid consideration of this Church, wishing you that wisdom and direction which may enable you to do what is right. And may the great Shepherd (sic) of his Sheep & Bishop of Souls take you into his holy keeping & provide for you while destitute, & in his own time grant you a Pastor &

Teacher after his own heart, & asking your prayers for me, I remain with respect and esteem your affectionate brother and Servant in the faith & fellowship of the Gospel.

Asarelah Morse."

While the rhetoric of this request for dismissal from pastoral relations is very much dated, I submit that any minister whose pastoral connections have reached a stage of tension, might well study this document and catch its spirit. The Church granted his request for dismissal, including this testimony—

"that the Rev'd Asarelah Morse is a person of an unblemished moral character, and that as a Minister of the Gospel his conversation & behavior has been unblamable (no mention of his preaching!) & as such a Person we cheerfully recommend him to the communion & Christian fellowship of any Church of Christ . . ."

Signed Shubael Cottle
Nathan Smith
Ezchial Luce

Just twenty years later a similar letter from Nymphas Hatch, Asarelah's successor, requested the congregation to dismiss him. (The term "dismiss" has always been accepted Congregational usage—never implying adverse or critical judgment.) In part his letter of June 26, 1818 reads—

"You have long witnessed and no doubt with much regret the great diminution of our church & society by death, by emigration & by secedure: and of consequence the increasing inability to support the publick worship to fulfill your engagements made with me at the time of my ordination. You are my witnesses of the opposition, and may I not add variegated discouragements, which I have had to encounter during my ministry in this place. From these considerations you are no doubt convinced that my longer continuance among you cannot be for our mutual edification, satisfaction or comfort. I therefore request . . ."

Almost a year had elapsed after Asarelah had left before the church could look with favor on Nymphus; such a name might justifiably give pause! "On the Sixth Day of February 1801 then

the Church of Christ mett at the Dwling Hous of Deacon Stephen Luce for Counvershion to Consult on the a fares of the said Church. Nothing Dun."

Some examples of strict discipline are found:

Jan. 1st, 1804—The church voted to readmit Joseph Luce Sen. into full communion who for a number of years had been suspended for misbehavior.

Mar. 10—"Voted to suspend Cornelius Dunham & wife, Hugh Cathcart & wife from this church until they make reasonable confession to it for disorderly behaviour & bring their youngest children to receive the ordinance of baptism."

April 18—"Voted to suspend Abishai Pease & wife, & Nancy Pease wife of Jer. Pease for disorderly behavior from this church."

Aug. 11, 1820—"This day Jonathan Look heretofore a member of this church was excommunicated for gross intemperance."

In November of 1785 the church voted "that in all cases before any matter of grief or complaint be brought into the Church, the person complaining shall first converse with the supposed offender."



The West Tisbury Congregational parsonage and the mill pond about sixty years ago.

But almost 100 years later the Church met

"to act on a charge of falsewood (sic) against the minister the Rev. Wm. H. Sturtevant by Brother Nathan Mayhew who'd failed to prove his charge, Adjourned to May 7t and receyed the following comucation", which admitted it was all a misunderstanding. Case dismissed!

The church in those days apparently kept a strict watchful eye on its membership. On May 1st 1836 "Dea. C. G. Athearn and Br. Benj. Manter were appointed to visit and converse with Miss Nabby Lumbert on account of her unchristian conduct and try if possible to reclaim her from her wanderings." Nabby shut the door on the two gentlemen, and sent an angry note to the minister asking that her name be erased from the church books. Three years later she had changed her mind and asked to be restored, but this time the committee reported that it was "inexpedient" to restore her. Then on May 17, 1840, Miss Abigail Lumbert presented a confession of her wrongs, asked for forgiveness and reinstatement, promising to be "more watchful in the future." Unanimously voted!

The meeting house was closed to public worship for over a year until Aug., 1851, a "Rev. Mr. Holman preached three Sabbaths, and when he left the people thought he gave them encouragement that he would return and become their minister; but soon after he left we rec'd an answer from him that Providence he thought ordered it otherwise." Some other church probably offered greener pastures—one of the several mysterious ways in which Providence moves!

The names of Luce, Manter, Athearn, Mayhew, Cottle appear with monotonous regularity, with a generous sprinkling of Norton, Daggett, Allen, Hancock and Whiting. Any young families today stuck for names to adorn their cherubs? I append a random list: Tabathy, Jedidah, Abishai, Zebulon, Gamahel, Armenda, Didamia, Freborn, Bathsheba, Tristram, Presberry, Love, Malachi, Shubael, Metehel, Ruhamah—just to list a few! And, OH yes—Asarelah and Nymphas!

In May, 1837 four adults by the name of Luce were baptized by immersion at Noman's Land. (It would have been a chilly outing

this year!) Two puzzling entries—on Sept. 18, 1841—Albert Nickerson, and again Anderson Luce, were both “baptized on the mother’s account.” It is interesting to note that when the Lord’s Supper is reported it is called “sacrament”, but in every instance it is “the ordinance of baptism.” Both today are frequently, perhaps usually, referred to as “sacraments”, while sticklers for Protestant correctness insist that baptism, (also marriage) is an ordinance.

1819 must have been a rugged winter. On Feb. 12, “David Dunham was lost in a snow storm on Nashawinna,” and was buried three days later. On March 1st, “Susanna Payne, a woman of colour, perished in a snow storm in the woods between her house and Holmes Hole, her body not found until the 14th. She left a daughter at her dwelling, Tabitha by name, who was in a state of mental derangement, being alone and fastened up in her room, the doors of the house locked, she lived 8 days without any kind of sustenance, when a neighbor broke open the door, he found her alive but she died the next day. This being the first time of any ones knowing that her mother was missing. They were both distinguished for their piety, and were members of the Baptist Church. The mother and daughter had been supported a number of years on charity.”

C. G. Hine, in his book “Martha’s Vineyard”, under the paragraph-heading “A True Story of Pirate Gold”, relates how two men came to the house of Abner Mayhew at Squibnocket in August 1815 and asked to spend the night. They were tough customers, and Abner locked them in their bedroom. An Indian girl in the room above peeked through a crack in the floor and saw they had a quantity of gold pieces. Pirates!

Nymphas Hatch concluded his record book with brief particulars of the same event, but the date is different.

“August 2nd, 1811. Yesterday a man was found dead on the beach on the south side of the Island with his throat cut out and a bloody knife by the side of him. Had a jury upon him to day, whose verdict was that he was murdered, in all probability by three ruffians,

who landed about a quarter of a mile to the Eastward of said body a fortnight before, having a vessel’s yawl boat, and traveling on the beach 4 or five miles to a house before they stopt. Said men were strangers, had a quantity of money and hired George West of Manaimshy to carry them to Bedford.”

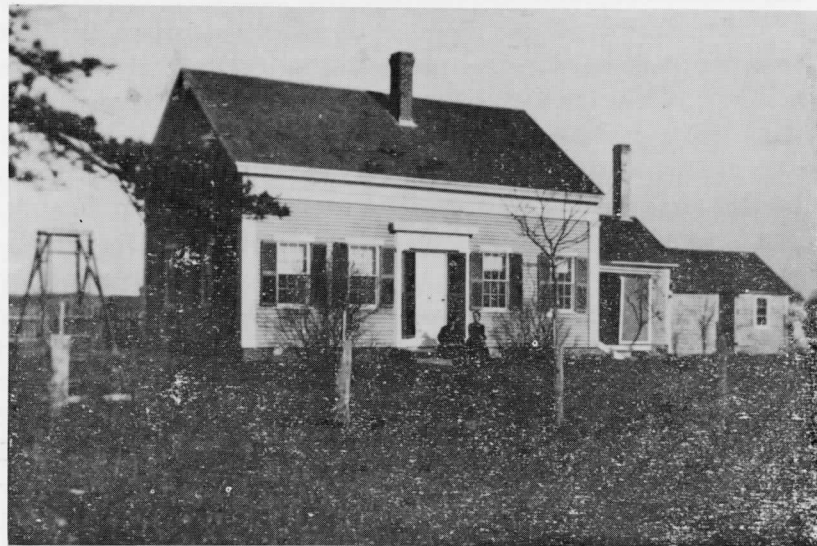
Here is testimony written at the time, and should be dependable. Hine’s story “has largely to do with known facts”, but he tells of a rumor that some years later a dying sailor had confessed being party to the killing of the captain of a brig, scuttling the vessel and making off with the gold, which was buried on South Beach—they thought they were on Long Island. Still later two “naturalists”, who preferred to work at night, left a hole in the marsh 12 feet across, requiring the services of a horse and wagon. Presumably the buried treasure has long since disappeared.

The “Record of the West Parish of Tisbury”, beginning in 1796, concludes with a vote on May 6th, 1878, at “1½ P.M.” To understand what this book, covering the proceedings of the Parish for 82 years, was all about, requires an introductory explanation. To-day in most Congregational churches vital business is conducted by a business meeting of the church, with recommendations, perhaps, from the Board of Deacons or Prudential Committee. Formerly, however, before the days when local churches were incorporated, there was a parish organization known as The Ecclesiastical Society or Parish Society. It handled the business affairs of the church, held the property, and was the link between the church and the state. The General Court (Legislature) had to be petitioned for permission to sell church property, and Parish officers were required by law to be elected annually. Members of the Ecclesiastical Society were not uniformly members of the church, which sometimes led to conflict between the devout and those whose business ethics were not tempered by piety. A meeting of the church could call a minister, but it was the Parish Society who paid the salary and therefore might determine whether he came or not. If the Society developed a grudge or dislike, it could not dismiss the minister, but it could withhold or refuse to raise the salary. Here is a clear case—

April 2, 1877—"Voted that Mr. Sturtevant be no longer employed after the first of July, giving him an opportunity to send in his resignation."

They could not demand a resignation, but the withdrawal of Parish funds could certainly influence a minister to avail himself of "the opportunity to send" it in, especially since Mr. Sturtevant was specifically "allowed the privilege of absenting himself from the pulpit for the purpose of securing a situation."

Asarelah Morse was pastor from 1784 to 1799. He had been pastor for eight years before this record of the Society was begun. Its first business was the consideration of Mr. Morse's "sallery" which was considerably in arrears. "The committee appointed to apply to Mr. Morse . . . reported they had applied to Mr. Morse and found the sum due to him for his services in the ministry prior to the 13th of February last to be £83. 10s 0d. That the said Mr. Morse proposed to take up satisfied with ten pounds less than what was due to him provided the West Parish would assess, collect and pay the same to him *with convenient speed*. It was then voted to



Another view of the parsonage with a former pastor and his wife sitting on the door step.

except of the same upon the conditions and to thank Mr. Morse for his offer." This entry was dated April 10, 1796. The Reverend Azarelah signed a receipt the following December 9th—"Then received from Shubael Cottle Esq. . . . Two hundred and forty five dollars in full for my salery from December 1st 1795 to February 13th 1796." That is an enigmatic record—\$245 for 2½ months—the next year he was paid \$233 for a full year's service! I think he dated his receipt incorrectly—it should have been Dec. 1, 1794. In any event, salaries were apparently not paid until the end of the year's service, and then sometimes reluctantly! A wait of eight months in 1796 implies an interesting definition of "convenient speed."

At best, the Reverend Azarelah must have had his troubles.

Dec. 1, 1797—"At a parish meeting . . . for the purpose of chusing a commity to treat with the Rev. Azarelah Morse for to know wheather he would rezine his office as pastor. The vote was called and passed in the negative ten to five." Fourteen months went by, obviously in some turmoil. With no resignation from the pastor, the Parish Society met "to see if the parish vote to invite Mr. Henderson to come preach as a candidate and the vote passed in the affirmative. Secondly, it was voted to give said Mr. Henderson fifty pounds to preach in said parish six months and then the meeting fell into some disorder and dissolved without choosing a committee to send to the said Mr. Henderson." Meantime, in the record book kept by Mr. Morse, he faithfully entered all baptisms, deaths and dates of communion, until his resignation, so mild and forgiving, was sent in April 5, 1799.

One reads between the lines a rumble of conflict between the Church and the Ecclesiastical Society which handled the finances. For two years both the Church and the Ecclesiastical Society stood on one foot and then the other. Mr. Morse was through in April, 1799. In September 1799 the Parish Committee met "first to see if the parish would vote to get a man to supply the pulpit for a time which vote was passed in the negative." A full year passed; then a meeting of the Church in the Meeting House (the Ecclesiastical Society usually met in the Court House, then located opposite the

present town house) was "called to consider the expedience of giving Mr. Nymphs Hatch a call to be thare minister and No Vote obtained nor Put." A week later the Church voted to call Mr. Hatch, and sent the word to the Parish Society. The Parish record simply says "Mr. Hatch was not disposed to give an answer at present." The Church, the Society and Mr. Hatch finally got together on May 5, 1801, and he was hired for a year for the "sum of \$233.33 (£70) and use of the parsonage."

You will bear in mind that the West Parish was the First Church of Tisbury, and the civic center as well. On January 1st, 1804 Nymphas Hatch began preaching every third Sunday in Holmes Hole (the Second Church of Tisbury). Meantime the Baptists had come in with some force, and, reading between the lines, this fact was a bit aggravating to the Congregationalists. On April 21st, 1807, this entry in the Parish record—"Voted that the Assessors have the power to tolerate the Baptists to preach in the meeting house when it is not in use." I have endeavored to soften the implication of this sentence, but I am unable to find any definition of the word "tolerate" in use at that time except "to allow by not preventing." Which was what they apparently meant!

Frequent mention is made of the need of repairs to both the "personage" and the meeting house, the latter located in the present cemetery. March 22, 1830—"Voted to repair the meeting house." Two years later John Cottle was appointed to "visit the Congregational Churches throughout the Commonwealth to solicit their assistance to aid us in rebuilding the meeting house." While Mr. Cottle's expenses "on the above expedition" were voted, he apparently was overwhelmed at the prospect of such a journey for there is no record of his accomplishments. Instead, said John, with Willard Luce, "were chosen committee to purchase lumber and build a new meeting house", the cost to be defrayed by the sale of pews, at public auction. The prices of the pews were set by the Society; they ranged from \$20 for those down front, to the back pews at \$56 each! If you insisted on sitting in the "back pew" a perennial tendency, in those days you had to pay heavily for the

privilege! Not a bad idea! No further word of the process of building—only mention of a committee to appraise the pews "of the meeting house recently erected." Fast work, that—voted to build in January, already erected by December—all in the year 1833.

The meeting house was located in the cemetery until Civil War days. No mention is made in the Parish records of reasons for removing it to its present location, or of preliminary debate about it. Suddenly, Jan. 1st, 1861, without warning "Voted to move the meeting house. Henry L. Whiting, James Mayhew and James A. Cleveland com. to select a location." Three weeks later that committee reported "in favor of placing the church on the South West Corner of the parsonage lot," and that was approved. Three years passed, in which estimates of the cost of removal, repairing, building a "bellfry", and underpinning. Obviously dissention had developed, causing delay and caution. April 22, 1864—a new vote and new committee—"Davis Cottle, Daniel A. Cleveland, were appointed a Committee to decide on the expediency of building, purchasing or removing and fitting up the present house and report." This committee (was the previous one dismissed?) brought in its report June 4th and it was "Voted to move the meeting house on upon the Parsonage Lot and make necessary repairs and additions unless someone will give a better lot." The southwest corner of the parsonage lot lies between the present parsonage and the intersection of State Road and the Edgartown Road. The meeting house does not stand there! There is complete silence in the record concerning the change of plans. The next entry takes it all for granted and votes on Nov. 7, 1866 "To underpin the meeting house with stone, to paint it, fix the roof, build a bellfry, and so amend and fit up the house so as to render it comfortable and respectable for the worship of Almighty God." If someone gave the lot where the meeting house now stands in the center of the village, he deserved at least a mention of it and a bit of thanks! Three years later Nathan and Bartlett Mayhew were instructed to build a fence around the meeting house. If that is the fence now standing, it has attained the venerable age of 98 years!

In the Tisbury *Town* records a vote was made on April 3rd, 1797 to raise \$250 "for the support of a school in said Town", and the Ecclesiastical Society a year later voted "the sum of \$200 for the use of a public school in said paris." It must have been difficult to keep the Town affairs distinguished from Parish affairs, for the same names are repeated as holding office in both institutions, as well as in the church itself.

The tensions arising from general taxation for the support of the ministry, so general in colonial days, appear in the records of 1800. On the 17th of May, a committee was appointed by the Society "to examine into the propriety of the General Court of Sessions in discharging John Davis from prison last April term who then stood committed for not paying his ministers tax." The committee entered a protest, but apparently to no avail. December 1st following this—"It was put to vote to see if the parish would remit the taxes set against the names of John Davis (et al)". The vote was not recorded—in fact four years passed before the taxes against John Davis were finally erased, May 8th, 1804.

There have been 43 pastors of the West Tisbury Church in 294 years, averaging $6\frac{7}{8}$ years each. Nathaniel Hancock was pastor 31 years—a record; Nymphas Hatch 18 years; William H. Sturtevant 18 years. Mr. Sturtevant did not have entirely smooth sailing. After twelve years in the pulpit, the Parish meeting instructed the pulpit supply committee to interview the pastor, "and if he is willing to remain to the end of the year employ him, stating to him that we cannot raise money to employ him another year." But such are the vagaries of a parish, that three months later this resolution was passed—"We engage the services of the Rev. Wm. H. Sturtevant to supply our pulpit for the next FIVE years commencing July 1st, 1871, at a salary of \$1000 per year", but not binding him to remain longer than he may think best. Before the five years were up, at a meeting in March, after the reading of the treasurer's report—obviously a discouraging one—"The solicitors were instructed to ascertain what sum of money could be raised by subscription for the purpose of employing Rev. W. H. Sturtevant

for one year, also, what amount could be raised for some other preacher." Some months later two votes appear in order: "Voted the solicitors report be read." "Voted that Mr. Sturtevant be no longer employed!"

The meeting house all during these hundred years was kept locked, and year after year someone was "chosen to have the care of the meeting house and his reward be five dollars"; the person elected to that remunerative office kept the key, and at least once was instructed to sweep out the place when necessary! One wonders what requests had come for the use of the building, for on March 21st, 1839 this—"On motion, voted that the Meeting House was built and dedicated to the service of Almighty God and shall be used for no other purpose." But one week later, on "Fast Day", there was more debate about it, and the week-old stricture softened: "Voted, that we choose a Committee to have the care of the Meeting house and allow it to be used for such purposes as they think proper or consistent with the sacredness of the place."

The Church record book, kept by the occasional inspired efforts of ministers over the years, has one final entry on the inside of the back of the book, at the very bottom. It is in the handwriting of Nymphas Hatch, and one could speculate at length concerning what discouraging or conflicting circumstances may have caused him to philosophize, without finishing the sentence. It reads—"There is no wisdom nor understanding. ha Now you also put off all these . . ." I have sometimes felt that way too!

ANIMAL REMAINS FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD

by
JOSEPH H. WATERS

Editorial Note:

Dr. Waters is with the Department of Biology of Villanova University. He has made several studies of the present animal life of Martha's Vineyard in addition to his work with material from the archaeological sites.

Waters (1962a) has compiled a list of animal species identified from archeological sites in southern New England including Martha's Vineyard. Huntington (1962) has provided an excellent annotated summary of animals known, up to that time, to have been used as food by Vineyard Indians. He included some species listed by Byers and Johnson (1940) from a site near Squibnocket Pond, but most species were from a site that he excavated near Lagoon Pond. Since 1962 I have identified more than eleven thousand pieces of bone, and a few additional species, from two other sites near Lagoon Pond and one near Squibnocket Pond, as well as other sites elsewhere on the Island. I also analyzed marine shellfish remains from these sites. This was done by taking samples of a certain size from each stratum within each site, sorting the shells by species, and comparing weights or, in a few cases, numbers of shells. In this report I have included all species of vertebrate animals identified by Byers and Johnson and by Huntington, as well as those that I have subsequently identified.

I am grateful to Dr. William A. Ritchie of the New York State Museum for providing bones, shells, and radiocarbon dates from sites on the Island that he has excavated during the past three summers. Personnel at the U.S. National Museum, Harvard University, and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution aided in identification of bones. I am particularly grateful to Mr. E. G. Huntington of Vineyard Haven for first bringing my attention to the sites studied, for providing bones and shells from the site that he excavated, for information regarding the sites, the Island, and animals now and formerly on the Island, and for accommodating and helping me in many different ways over the past several years.

Martha's Vineyard Since the Last Glaciation

Until a few thousand years ago, islands off southern New England were nothing more than elevated areas in a broad, flat coastal

plain that extended many miles eastward of the present coast line—at least as far as the outer limits of Georges Bank in the southern New England area (see Figure 1). Oyster shells, 8,000 to 11,000 years old, have been found along the continental shelf from Virginia to Georges Bank, indicating that the formerly emergent coastal plain was well supplied with lagoons and estuaries (Merrill, et al, 1965). Teeth of mammoth and mastodon have also been recovered by fishermen from the ocean floor from Virginia to Georges Bank, from near shore to more than 200 miles offshore (Whitmore, et al, 1967). Those from Georges Bank are between 10,000 and 12,000 years old. Bones of other animals have also been found on the ocean floor from Virginia to New Jersey, including extinct musk ox and giant moose. Pollen of spruce, pine, and fir from submerged peat deposits indicates that the coastal plain was well vegetated, and that the vegetation in the southern New England area was originally of a boreal (northern) type. Thus, many animals now found far to the north, as well as now extinct boreal species, probably occurred in the area of Martha's Vineyard at the end of the last glaciation. The last ice sheet melted back from what is now Martha's Vineyard between 12,000 and 14,000 years ago (Ogden, 1963). Boreal plant and animal life probably moved in almost immediately.

As the ice sheet melted, the rising sea progressively inundated the coastal plain. At the same time, as the climate became continuously warmer, northern type vegetation in the Martha's Vineyard area was progressively replaced and succeeded by more temperate types of vegetation. Ogden (1959, 1963) has determined that as the ice sheet retreated northward a spruce park—tundra type of vegetation was replaced by a spruce forest. The latter was replaced by pine forests, which in turn were largely replaced by forests of deciduous trees. As deciduous forests became established, boreal animals were undoubtedly replaced at least in part by species from more temperate regions to the south even though there is no fossil record of this. Martha's Vineyard was separated from the mainland between 4,000 and 6,000 years ago. However, it is clear that temperate plant species, and probably animal species, were well established there before separation occurred. This means that species were able to reach not only from formerly emergent coastal plain areas to the south, but also from more inland areas to the west and north. Today Martha's Vineyard has more plants with boreal (northern) affinities than southern affinities, and a greater percentage of plants with boreal affinities than the other offshore

islands (Ogden, 1961). There is no evidence of any strictly southern or strictly boreal vertebrates on Martha's Vineyard within the past 5,000 years. However, within the same time period there are known to have occurred there thirteen species of terrestrial, non-flying vertebrates found only in temperate sections of eastern North America and sixteen species found in boreal as well as temperate sections. Several species in both groups still occur on the Island.

Progressive inundation of the coastal plain first cut off a Martha's Vineyard—Nantucket land mass from the mainland—between 4,000 and 6,000 years ago as previously noted. Subsequently, a Nantucket land mass was cut off, and perhaps as recently as 2,000 to 3,000 years ago the separate islands of the Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, and Elizabeth groups were formed. Progressive rise in relative sea level in the southern New England area is thought by some to have ceased more than 4,000 years ago (Kaye and Barghoorn, 1964), and is thought by others to have continued up to the present time (Bloom and Stuiver, 1963). Changes in marine shellfish populations in the last 4,500 years, as exemplified by samples from archeological sites (see Table 1), suggest what really occurred. All species listed still occur in the area of Martha's Vineyard, but as may be seen, their numbers have changed with time. At the time of earliest human occupation of the Island, between 4,000 and 4,500 years ago, the climate was warmer than at present (Sears, 1963), and the high percentage of Quahog suggests extensive tidal sand flats near the site—in this case near Squibnocket Pond. Subsequent percentage decreases suggest that relative sea level rose and that the habitat near the site became less suitable for Quahog and more suitable for other species. Without going into detail, it is believed that the evidence indicates that from more than 4,000 years ago until sometime within the past 500 years Squibnocket Pond was open to the sea. Then, closed off by storm or tidal action, it became entirely fresh water as it is today. Much the same thing is thought to have occurred at Lagoon Pond. That is, it is believed that formerly extensive tidal sand flats were progressively inundated—due to progressively rising relative sea level. It is also thought that at one point a barrier beach was formed closing off Lagoon Pond and causing it to become much less saline, until it became open to the sea again. Shellfish data cannot be explained on the basis of conclusions by Kaye and Barghoorn, and for that reason it is believed that Bloom and Stuiver are closer to the truth.

By about 2,000 years ago all the present islands had probably been formed. The climate had cooled and was probably much like that today, and the flora and fauna were probably similar to what Europeans found when they arrived on Martha's Vineyard. There has been some rise in relative sea level in the past 2,000 years, and there have been some minor climatic fluctuations. There have also been some changes in the fauna, as will be discussed.

Vertebrate Remains From Archeological Sites—Table 2

I. Mammals

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)—probably numerous since before arrival of first humans. Exterminated by Europeans, but subsequently re-introduced, (Huntington, 1962).

Cottontail (*Sylvilagus* sp.)—DeVos, et al (1956) state that the New England cottontail (*Sylvilagus transitionalis*) was native to the Island, and Bowditch (1965) states erroneously that Byers and Johnson (1940) found remains of this species there. Because I have not yet identified one piece of bone (of more than eleven thousand) as cottontail, it is suspected that no species of cottontail was native to the Island. The Eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) has been introduced—far too successfully.

Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)—probably present, but perhaps not numerous, since before time of first human occupation.

Red Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*)—not recorded on Island since arrival of Europeans. May have been uncommon when humans first arrived, or may not have been native to Island.

Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)—present on the Island about 12,000 years ago (Kaye, 1962), and probably present continuously until exterminated by Europeans. Perhaps never numerous.

Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*)—although evidence lacking, may have been present since before humans first arrived.

Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*)—probably numerous since before time of first human occupation, but not a preferred food item.

Sperm Whale (*Physeter catodon*)—probably never common off southern New England.

Indian Dog (*Canis familiaris*)—brought by Indians to the Island. Emergency food supply. Probably hybridized with European dogs, with living descendants still on Island.

Foxes—Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) may have been on Island for nearly 10,000 years. Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) prob-

ably did not reach Island until about 1,500 years ago, and may have competed with red fox (Waters(1967a). Both species exterminated by Europeans.

Black Bear (*Uros americanus*)—if native to the Island, probably never numerous there. May have been eliminated by Indians.

Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)—probably present and fairly numerous since before time of first human occupation. Exterminated by Europeans.

Mink (*Mustela vison*)—may not have been native to the Island; or, if native, probably not numerous. Exterminated by Europeans? Has been introduced by Europeans.

Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)—if native to the Island probably uncommon. Exterminated by Europeans. Recently re-introduced.

Otter (*Lutra canadensis*)—if native to the Island may not have been numerous. Past and present status unknown.

Seals—Harp Seal (*Phoca groenlandica*) an occasional winter wanderer; normally ranges south only to St. Lawrence river. Gray Seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) probably occurred at least sporadically along southern New England coast since before time of first human occupation of Island (Waters, 1967b). Breeding colony observed around Muskeget and Tuckernuck in 1962 (Drury, 1965). Status of Harbor Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) uncertain, but may have also been continuously present since before arrival of first humans even though no evidence.

II Birds

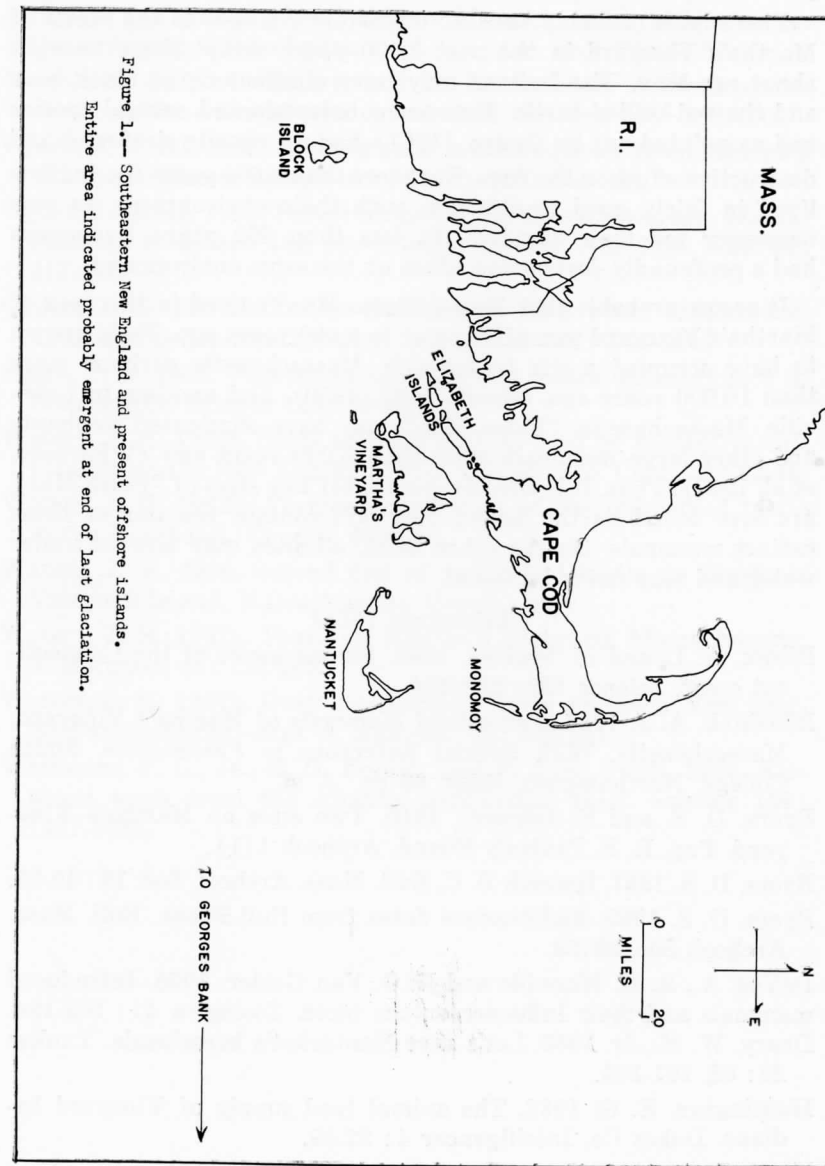
All except two species probably present since before time of first human occupation. Great Auk—extinct for more than 120 years. Heath Hen—last seen for certain on Island in 1932; may never have been numerous there.

III. Turtles

Snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), musk turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*), and box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*) may have been present since before arrival of first humans even though no evidence. Red-bellied turtle (*Pseudemys rubriventris*) also probably present since before first humans arrived (Waters, 1962b, 1966); may have been eliminated by Indians.

IV. Fishes

All species marine, and all probably in vicinity of Island since before arrival of first humans.



Comments

There have probably been no important changes in the fauna of Martha's Vineyard in the past 5,000 years except those brought about by Man. The Indians may have eliminated the black bear and the red-bellied turtle. Europeans exterminated several species and as pointed out by Ogden (1961) had an equally profound and destructive effect on the flora. For more than 4,000 years the Indians lived in fairly good equilibrium with their environment, as was necessary for their survival. In less than 400 years Europeans had a profoundly destructive effect on the same environment.

It seems probable that Man ("Paleo Man") lived in the area of Martha's Vineyard sometime prior to 5,000 years ago. He is known to have occupied a site in Ipswich, Massachusetts perhaps more than 10,000 years ago (Byers, 1957, 1959), and another in Lakeville, Massachusetts. "Paleo Man" may have eliminated elephants and other large mammals more than 6,000 years ago (Whitmore, et al, 1967). Thus, it is conceivable that if any sites of "Paleo Man" are ever found on the Island they will contain remains of these extinct mammals. On the other hand, all sites may now be under water and may never be found.

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REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT, NELSON COON, TO THE
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY ON
TUESDAY EVENING, AUGUST 8, 1967

It is my privilege, for the third successive time, to present to the body of members a report of the "State of the Society" and, although I have been adjured by those who know my propensity for excessive verbalization to "keep it short," I feel that it is my duty to bring all of you up to date on what we are doing or hope to do.

And I do this as representing the Board of Directors with whom I have worked very happily and from whom I have had more cooperation than one usually expects from a dozen independent-minded Islanders, all of whom have much more familial or historical connection with the Island than I. In this connection I would especially wish to note the valuable contributions made by Mr. Flavel Gifford, our genealogist, whose resignation lies on our board table (as he is leaving the Island as a year-round resident); the very unusual, artistic and useful block-cuts which Dr. Sidney Riggs has made for our *Intelligencer* covers; and a devotion to accuracy which has distinguished the editorial content of the *Intelligencer* under Mr. Huntington. Regrettably to all of us he has resigned this editorship and his paid position as Librarian. Other board members have supported me at every turn and my special nod of thanks to Mr. Hall who has been an ardent salesman of our reprinted history. For their confidence expressed by their actions—I thank them.

The staff who work under the direction of your Board have also made this year a good one, for Miss Scoville, our Curator, has done a fine job and especially so in changing and refining the exhibits in our four buildings. The comments which come to us from personnel from other museums who visit us confirm this statement and I think that many of them feel, as do I, that the sense of "a house lived in"; the absence of glass cases, and "don't touch" signs, give our visitors a feeling of participation in the past which should be the *sine qua non* of every museum.

Miss Scoville, following the withdrawal of Board Member Huntington as Librarian, has had excellent help from Mrs. Domingoes Bettencourt as acting librarian, and from a team of young docents who have contributed enthusiasm and intelligence during the summer. Miss Scoville will detail some of her functions in her report to you.

Fundamentally there has been no change during the year in the physical property except as painting and maintenance procedures have constantly to be watched. Under the planning by Landscape Architect, Donald Woodward, (without cost to the Society) the Herb Garden has been redone, with the actual planting under the kind supervision of my predecessor, Mrs. Gladys Reid, to both of whom—my great thanks.

Also my great appreciation to Gale Huntington for his continued interest in the *INTELLIGENCER* to which in functioning as Editor he has brought his resources as an author of no mean ability and a life-time Island interest. He has, I know, a number of real exciting issues coming up in the next year, including one which will feature some illustrations in full color and again I must point out to you that this publication costs the Society more per member than the dues we receive, but we feel that we thus make a contribution to Island History—a job which is our *raison d'être*.

Another feeling which is shared by all of the Board is that ideally, we being a *county* society, should continually consider our function in that light rather than let ourselves be restricted geographically to Edgartown. Thus we assisted the DAR of Vineyard Haven to keep open their excellent little museum and promised the same support this year—a venture which had to be closed, owing to difficulties of personnel. We have also thought (and had some encouragement in thinking) that the much-visited and ideally-situated little museum of the Seamen's Bethel might find advantages in coming under the county umbrella, but this is for future arrangement.

The report of our Treasurer, to follow shortly, will indicate to you that our finances are in balance (a delicate one, perhaps). That this condition makes our accomplishments possible is due in no small measure to the acumen of our founding fathers, who ran up a modest endowment into a sum of which we, as a small county museum are well proud. I cannot, in this connection, fail to mention the death not too long ago of one of the men principally responsible for this condition, Mr. Francis Foster, and from whose estate we received some residual library materials.

Our only financial problem is more a matter of irritation than of money—and that is the average small donation from visitors. We do not charge admission for a number of reasons, but it does seem that we should get a little better evidence of appreciation than

approximately 15 cents per person, which is now dropping into the box.

Management-wise we are doing everything possible to be as business-like as may be, and have this year bought an addressograph to make our mailings easier to handle.

But all along we try not to forget that we are an HISTORICAL society and that history, however much adorned by the tangible exhibits, is usually a matter of written record. Thus, within the year, after some fear and trembling at the cost, we have published our reprint of the justly famous Banks' History of the Island, and I am proud to report to you tonight that of the 1010 copies printed, we have sold well over 500 and are far along in the profit-making. That this, and our other publications, are not an inconsiderable part of our income may be shown by the figures that in the twelve months from July to July we sold \$11,600 worth of printed materials. One local bookdealer, our Secretary, David Hugo, has sold 50 sets of the history right off the retail shelf—a real evidence of interest by persons other than members. I thank all of you who bought sets to help make this venture profitable.

Presently we are putting on the market a paper-back reprint of the very interesting book of several decades ago by Joseph Chase Allen—TALES AND TRAILS OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD—a book which, like all his writings, is a fine and interesting introduction to new Islanders of the lore of this lovely spot of land. Other projects still in the nebulous stage involve publications useful to resident and visitor alike on the subject of Natural History—a series which began a year ago with our monograph on the Fishes of Island Waters.

Finally, in looking over my list of non-accomplishments, I would say that to date nothing has happened on the project which I wrote about some months ago in the Vineyard Gazette—that of a committee to get together to consider how the Society, or a group, might go about the matter of rounding out the history of our Island, which Dr. Banks brought up to only about the turn of the century. I know there *was* interest in this matter as evidenced by letters received, but I simply have not had the chance to pursue the subject. I shall appreciate any suggestions or help which might be offered by anyone here tonight.

And the reason that I have not done anything along this line brings up my final comment—a very personal one. As many of you

know, I have, since my retirement seven years ago, become increasingly involved in the writing of horticultural columns and books, as well as in the conducting of Garden Tours. I still have three books which I feel I must write, while more column-writing and touring still seems to be ahead of me. And I do not get younger—unfortunately. Beyond this I must say that with a life-long association with organizations of many types I have come to the conclusion that accomplishments usually come in the early years of a presidency and that there is nothing worse for any society than a perpetual president.

For reasons, then, both personal and politic, I feel that it is time for me to step down (the new By-laws make the selection of new officers the duty of a Board) and so at this time I wish to present formally and firmly my resignation as President, same to take effect on or after September 1st, 1967. I have enjoyed the many opportunities I have had in feeling that I was part of the real Island life, and thank all of you who have become members or maintained your membership—and helped in many ways.

The Dukes County Historical Society is in my opinion a sort of anchor around which is yawing the ship of the Island Past and that in our membership anchor chain there are many strong links which will be valuable in the future to keep the ship tied to its duty pier.

Four dresses and cape, c. 1800's, from Capt. B. C. Cromwell house, Mrs. Howard Hart, Vineyard Haven.

Collection of Francis Foster estate books.

Trundle bed from Athearn home, c. 1700's, Mrs. Giles Anderson, North Tisbury.

Table 1.—Relative percentages by weight, or numbers of pieces, of marine mollusc shells from three archeological sites on Martha's Vineyard. Relative sea levels after Bloom and Stuiver, 1963.

Age of Stratum - Years	Relative Sea Level - Feet Below Present	Species
360 +	- 1	Bay Scallop (<i>Pecten irradians</i>) Quahog (<i>Mercaenaria mercenaria</i>) Long Clam (<i>Mya arenaria</i>) Virginia Oyster (<i>Crassostrea virginica</i>) Blue Mussel (<i>Mytilus edulis</i>) Rabbed Mussel (<i>Volvelle plicatulus</i>) Limpet (<i>Lepeta caeca</i>) Boat Shell (<i>Orepidula formicata</i>) Northern Moon Shell (<i>Polinices heros</i>) Moon Shell (<i>Polinices triseriata</i>) Basket Shell (<i>Nassarius obsoleta</i>) Channelled Pear Conch (<i>Busyon canaliculatum</i>) Knobbed Pear Conch (<i>Busyon caricum</i>) Waved Whelk (<i>Buccinum undatum</i>) Oyster Drill (<i>Urosalpinx cinerea</i>)
597 + 80	- 1	76% 49% 1% 3% Two One One Two Eight Three One
817 + 80	- 2	76% 49% 1% 3% Two One One Two Eight Three One
1567 + 80	- 4	76% 49% 1% 3% Two One One Two Eight Three One
2397 + 80	- 7	76% 49% 1% 3% Two One One Two Eight Three One
2487 + 120	- 7	76% 49% 1% 3% Two One One Two Eight Three One
4157 + 100	- 13	76% 49% 1% 3% Two One One Two Eight Three One
4237 + 160	- 13	76% 49% 1% 3% Two One One Two Eight Three One

Table 2.— Vertebrate species, minimum numbers of individuals, identified from
archeological sites on Martha's Vineyard. All strata precontact.

Species	Age of Stratum - Years									Total Individuals
	597 +80	817 +80	400+ -1100+	1567 +80	2397 +80	2487 +120	4157 +100	4237 +160	?	
<u>Mammals</u>										
White-tailed Deer (<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>)	22	19	30	16	17	8	10	1	162	285
Cottontail (<i>Sylvilagus</i> sp.)									1	1
Gray Squirrel (<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>)					2		1			3
Red Squirrel (<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>)			1							1
Beaver (<i>Castor canadensis</i>)			1			1				2
Muskrat (<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>)		3		4	2				6	15
Meadow Vole (<i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i>)		1								1
Sperm Whale (<i>Physeter catodon</i>)									1	1
Indian Dog (<i>Canis familiaris</i>)		5	3	3		1	1		5	18
Red Fox (<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>)			2		4		1	1	4	12
Gray Fox (<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>)		3	1	2					5	11
Black Bear (<i>Ursus americanus</i>)			1		1					2
Raccoon (<i>Procyon lotor</i>)					1		1		8	10
Mink (<i>Mustela vison</i>)		1	1							2
Striped Skunk (<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>)									1	1

Table 2.— Continued,

Species	Age of Stratum - Years									Total Individuals
	597 +80	817 +80	400+ -1100+	1567 +80	2397 +80	2487 +120	4157 +100	4237 +160	?	
<u>Mammals - Continued</u>										
Otter (<i>Lutra canadensis</i>)									4	4
Harbor Seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>)	3	1	2	1					2	9
Harp Seal (<i>Phoca groenlandica</i>)									1	1
Gray Seal (<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>)	2			2			5		6	15
<u>Birds</u>										
Common Loon (<i>Gavia immer</i>)	2		1						3	6
Red-throated Loon (<i>Gavia stellata</i>)			1			1	1			3
Horned Grebe (<i>Colymbus auritus</i>)									1	1
Common Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)		1								1
Great Blue Heron (<i>Ardea herodias</i>)			1							1
Whistling Swan (<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>)									4	4
Canada Goose (<i>Branta canadensis</i>)		2		2					2	6
Brant (<i>Branta bernicla</i>)	3	1							3	7
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	2	1	1							4
Black Duck (<i>Anas rubripes</i>)		1	1	1					1	4
Greater Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>)	2									2

Table 2.— Continued.

Species	Age of Stratum - Years								?	Total Individuals
	597 +80	817 +80	400+ -1100+	1567 +80	2397 +80	2487 +120	4157 +100	4237 +160		
<u>Birds - Continued</u>										
American Eider (<i>Somateria mollissima</i>)	1	1							1	3
Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>)			1							1
Red-tailed Hawk (<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>)			1							1
Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)			1							1
Heath Hen (<i>Tympanuchus cupido</i>)									2	2
Turkey (<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>)					1				8	9
Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)									1	1
Great Auk (<i>Plautus impennis</i>)			1						1	2
<hr/>										
<u>Turtles</u>										
Snapping Turtle (<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>)		1								1
Musk Turtle (<i>Sternotherus odoratus</i>)			1							1
Box Turtle (<i>Terrapene carolina</i>)	1									1
Red-bellied Turtle (<i>Pseudemys rubriventris</i>)			2				1		1	4

Table 2.— Continued.

Species	Age of Stratum - Years								?	Total Individuals
	597 +80	817 +80	400+ -1100+	1567 +80	2397 +80	2487 +120	4157 +100	4237 +160		
<u>Fishes</u>										
Mako Shark (<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>)			1							1
Spiny Dogfish Shark (<i>Squalus acanthias</i>)									1	1
Roughtail Stingray (<i>Dasyatis centroura</i>)			1							1
Atlantic Sturgeon (<i>Acipenser oxyrinchus</i>)	8		1		1		2		2	14
Cod (<i>Gadus callarias</i>)	1									1
Black Sea Bass (<i>Centropristes striatus</i>)			10							10
Striped Bass (<i>Morone saxatilis</i>)				2	1				11	14
Bluefish (<i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>)									2	2
Scup (<i>Stenotomus chrysops</i>)	20	25	300				8		20	373
Tautog (<i>Tautoga onitis</i>)	2	4				1	1		2	10
Searobin (<i>Prionotus</i> sp.)			1							1
Sculpin (<i>Hypoxoccephalus</i> sp.)			1							1
Wolffish (<i>Anarhichas</i> sp.)			1							1
Oyster Toadfish (<i>Opsanus tau</i>)									1	1
Goosefish (<i>Lophius piscatorius</i>)	5									5

The Dukes County Historical Society is proud to announce the republication of **TALES AND TRIALS OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD** by Joseph C. Allen.

This is one of the most charming books of Island history and folklore ever printed. It is on sale at Island bookstores and also in the library - museum of the Society. The price is \$3.95. When ordering by mail please add 25c to cover postage and handling.

Some other Publications of the Dukes County Historical Society on Sale at Island Book Stores and in the Society's Library

Whaling Wives by Emma Mayhew Whiting and Henry Beetle Hough. A new edition. 294 p., illustrated. Cloth \$4.50.

Bartholomew Gosnold Discoverer and Planter, New England — 1602, Virginia — 1607 by Warner F. Gookin and completed by Philip L. Barbour. 271 p. Cloth \$8.00.

Capawack Alias Martha's Vineyard by Warner F. Gookin. 58 p. Cloth \$1.00.

Martha's Vineyard A Short History and Guide. Eleanor Ransom Mayhew, Editor. New 1966 edition with added index. Maps and illustrations. 191 p. Paper \$2.50.

The Wampanoag Indian Tribute Tribes of Martha's Vineyard by Milton A. Travers. 78 p., illustrated. Paper \$2.00.

The Heath Hen's Journey to Extinction by Henry Beetle Hough. 31 p., illustrations. Paper 50¢.

The Fishes of Martha's Vineyard by Joseph B. Elvin. With 36 illustrations of fishes. Paper 50¢.

The History of Martha's Vineyard by Charles Edward Banks. A new edition. Indices, illustrations, three volumes. Cloth \$25.00.