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by

GALE HUNTINGTON

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Populations As Indicated By Pre-Columbian
Shell Heaps On Martha's Vineyard

by

JOSEPH H. WATERS

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Nancy Luce

by

GALE HUNTINGTON

Nancy Luce during most of the seventy years of her life was an object of ridicule and mockery. She was reviled and abused. Universally on the Vineyard she was "Poor Nancy Luce." Indeed, she often called herself that. Harsher names were applied to her, too. In spite of that, or perhaps because of it, she is without question the best remembered of all the Island's daughters, and the one about whom the most has been written.

She was not crazy. Not ever. Strange, yes, and introverted, peculiar and eccentric, and ill physically, but not crazy. She loved her hens and wrote about them and for that she payed the price of ridicule, but Nancy was shrewd enough to capitalize on the ridicule, as will be seen.

Nancy Luce was born in 1820 in a small house with a big central chimney and walk-in fireplace in what was then the town of Tisbury near the head of Tiah's Cove. She died on April 9, 1890. Her gravestone, and it is much less ornate than those she erected in memory of some of her beloved hens, states that she was seventy-nine years old. Undoubtedly she looked seventy-nine, the result of illness, unhappiness and suffering, but in actuality she was not quite seventy.

Nancy seems always to have had everyone fooled about her age. During the last years of her life the town of Tisbury supported her through the worst winter months. In a report entitled, "Support of the poor to March 31, 1881," Nancy's age is given as ninety-five, when at that time she was really only sixty.

That same report lists fourteen individuals who were then being cared for by the town. They are listed as sane, insane, partially insane and idiotic. Nancy, in spite of the fact that she looked ninety-five years old, is listed among the sane. That winter the town paid \$4.95 a week for her support which included board, room and clothing.

In the span of years between 1820 and 1890 - the span of Nancy's life - many changes came to the Vineyard. The great days of whaling had come and gone. Farming as a way of life was becoming ever less profitable. But most important of all, during those years the Island had become a summer resort, and like the Gay Head lighthouse with its famous Fresnel lens, like the surf on south beach, and like the Camp Ground, Nancy Luce and her hens were among the attractions that a visitor to the Island really must see.

The livery stable proprietors of Holmes Hole and Cottage City capitalized on Nancy, and she in her turn capitalized on the tourists whom they brought to gawk at her. She sold little photographs of herself holding a hen, and she sold small paper-covered booklets that contained her poetry, her treatise on the diseases of hens, and her philosophy of life.

Nancy was an only child and an only child of parents who were no longer young. Her father was almost fifty and her mother almost forty when she was born. We can only guess at Nancy's childhood, but because she was an only child we can be pretty sure that she did much of the work of the farm that ordinarily the boy or boys of the family would have done. According



Nancy Luce and one of her hens taken by Charles H. Shute & Son September 5, 1868.

to tradition, until she was in her late teens, Nancy was a perfectly normal and quite pretty girl.

She was an accomplished horsewoman and loved to ride, and rode to parties and quiltings. One of the great sorrows of her later life after sickness came to her was that she could no longer ride. In one of her poems called "No Comfort," she says,

You don't know how hard it is to me,
Because I cannot ride somewhere,
I cannot ride, nor walk, impossible yet,
I used to ride once in a while,
On a Canter, Gallop and run,
Oh what a comfort that was.
I have had horses to run with me
So that the ground looked
All in black and white streaks.

.....

When Nancy was seventeen or eighteen, her father, because of approaching old age was no longer able to run the farm properly. Thus the load of maintaining the place and caring for her parents fell on her shoulders, and maintain the place she did. Not only did she run the farm but she ran a small store, too, where she sold tobacco and other necessities of life to her neighbors.

She got her stock in trade almost entirely through barter with Edward Munro, a merchant in Edgartown. She gave him knitted stockings and mittens, and woolen yarn, and in return he gave her such things as her family needed as well as the small stock of goods that she sold. In Nancy's time there were quite a



Nancy Luce with another of her hens about 1877.

few families living in the neighborhood of Tiah's Cove. Knitting stockings and mittens was once a very important home industry on Martha's Vineyard. The finished product was carried up and down the coast in small vessels from Holmes Hole and Edgartown, usually on consignment, and sold in the seaboard cities. There was a saying that from the deck of a vessel coming into Vineyard waters one could hear the click of knitting needles in Holmes Hole and Edgartown almost before one could see the land.



Nancy in the doorway of her house at Tiah's Cove. The three-legged cow is probably "Red Cannon," the subject of one of Nancy's poems. The hens' tombstones are behind the fence at the right. A penciled notation on the back of the card gives the date as 1867.

Probably some of the stockings that Nancy sent to Edgartown she knitted herself, perhaps from the wool of her own sheep. Others she sold on commission for her neighbors.

Here is a letter written by Nancy to Edward Munro when she was twenty that gives some idea of her business operations.

Feb 7 1840

Mr Munro i have sent you sum truck and if there is
Any of it you can't aford to take send it back to
me and i will return it to the owners

15 Pair of gray stockins at 2/ a pair	\$5
10 Skans gray yarn at 28 Cents a skan	2 80
3 skans mist blue at 2/ a skan	1
6 nots blue	28
1 pair mittins at 1/	17
2 Pair mist blue stockins at 4/ a pair	1 33

\$10.58

It is interesting to note that as late as 1840 shillings were still used in such accountings on the Vineyard. Nancy's valuation of the shilling here is 17 cents. At that figure "15 Pair of gray stockins" comes to \$5.10. So Nancy was giving Mr. Munro the benefit of the doubt.

Nancy also called on Mr. Munro for help in another matter. She wanted to paint. As far as we know none of Nancy's paintings are still in existence, and so it is impossible to say how good she was as an artist. But if the beautifully illuminated manuscripts of her poems are any indication, she may have been good indeed. Here is that second letter

Sept 28 1842

Mr. Munroe

You willing to get a box of paints & brush or
two with it for me to Bedford or Boston if you
are going there soon Keep it private & don't let
anybody know about it.
I will pay you the money for it.

Nancy Luce

Nancy's construction and spelling in those letters is not beautiful but her handwriting is. Undoubtedly she had a feeling for beauty.

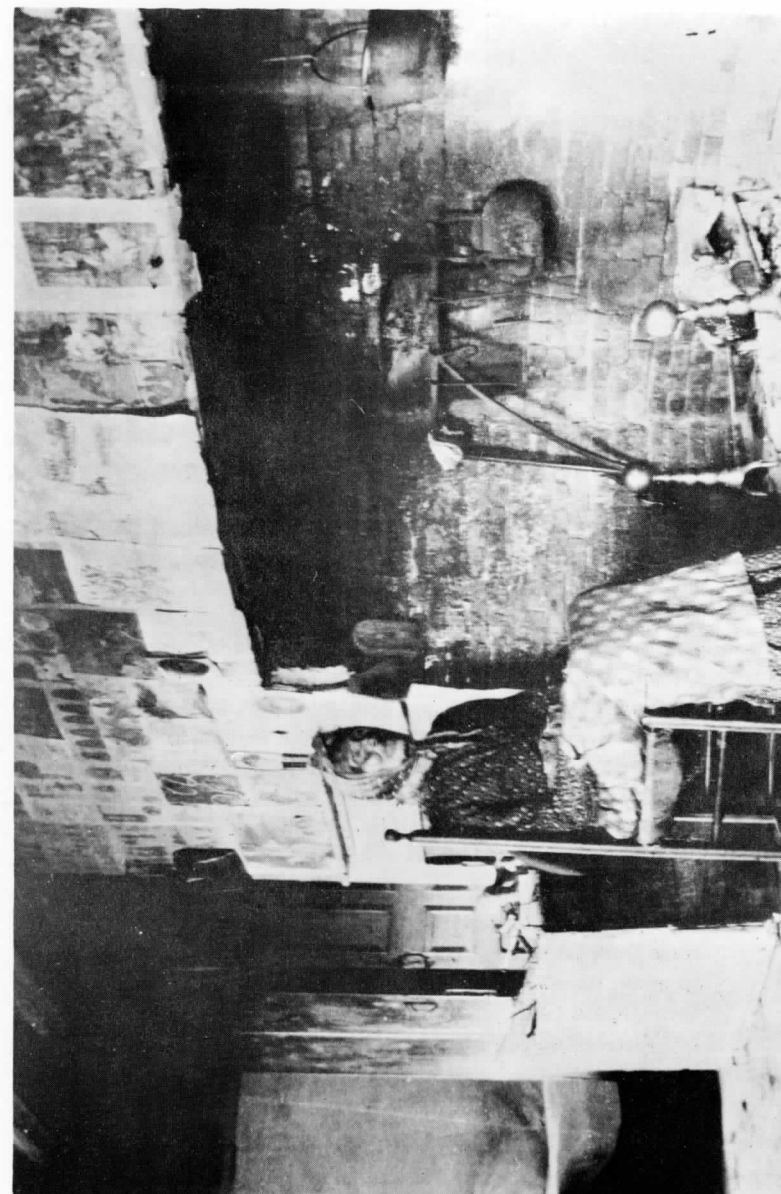
In her poems Nancy says that she became sick because for twelve years she worked terribly hard. Probably she worked harder than any young

woman should have to work. Nowhere does Nancy tell us the nature of her illness, but it was real. There is no question about that. Nancy says that it was the work and two deaths that wrecked her health. The deaths must have been those of her father and mother. Philip Luce, her father, died when she was twenty seven, and her mother four years later. After that Nancy lived her sad and solitary life with only her hens and cow for companions.

There is a tradition that Nancy's strangeness was the result of an unhappy love affair, that she had been in love with a young Vineyard man who returned from a long whaling voyage with another wife. That story could be true but nowhere in her writing does Nancy even hint at it. The only evidence that may bear it out is the fact that Nancy is supposed never to have permitted a rooster or male animal on the place. Fertile eggs to set under a broody hen she got from her neighbors, and she must have depended on a neighbor's bull to see to it that her cow came fresh in the spring. At least Nancy recognized the facts of life.

Whether it was the result of an unhappy love affair or of too brutally hard work, Nancy did become ill and strange. Indeed, when she was twenty-eight years old and still supporting her mother the selectmen of Tisbury were convinced that she was out of her mind, and tried to have her declared legally insane. They wanted a guardian appointed for her so that there would be no danger of her becoming a charge on the town. But Dr. William Luce, a very distant cousin of Nancy's and West Tisbury's doctor, came to her rescue, as did a number of her neighbors. After listening to them the judge decided that Nancy was sane and dismissed the case, and so for the next forty years Nancy was free to lead her strange and lonely existence.

Most of the sightseers who came to look at Nancy and her cow and hens were kind, if amused, and bought the little photographs and copies of her "Works." But there were others who visited Nancy's home who were not kind. They were teenagers mostly and they came in the evening and at night with the intention only to bedevil and revile her, and Nancy who was getting older then, was helpless against them. If they had come when she was a younger woman she might have gone at them with a pitchfork. She complained about the harassment but the complaints seem to have done little good. Here are portions of one letter she wrote in an effort to get help.



Nancy Luce near the end of her years. The pictures above the fireplace must be some of Nancy's paintings. They are not clear but one can make out both hens and horses.

West Tisbury
M. Vineyard, Mass.
April 15th 1879.

Mr. Jeremiah Pease,
Trial of Justice,

Now I put sinners in your care, to make them behave,
A number of kind folks told me to call on you to stop
them from abusing me in any way any longer, they told
me you can do it, and not cost me anything, you must
not let it cost me anything. I can not be murderd
alive any longer, they murder me alive and borborcue
me at a dreadful rate year after year, they have de-
stroyed my head, and my health, and my strength, you
must stop all infernal squealing, singing they call it.
it is infernal squealing.....stop some folks from ever
calling on me again and make the rest behave, Stop
John Tabby Pease from ever calling on me again, he al-
ways come in with vengeance bang and stram, and he tells
his folks come in, they murder me alive and he sets
them on.....she was with him and she went and banged
on my window glass hard enough to break it, stop her
Over 12 men and most as many grils from Vineyard Haven
have murdered me alive..... you must not stop foreign
folks that come from campmeeting and behave well and
bought books of me, I cannot live and get along without
them to come and buy books of me and behave, stop boys
and stop all folks that murder me alive, and make all
others behave....

Miss Nancy Luce

Now since I wrote this letter, Sunday 27th two young men
come from Edgartown, I fastened them out and told them to
go away, I can't let you in, one of them told me dam you,
then he said God dam you, that was the words he said to
me, then he tried to break the bolts to my door, You keep
him away. . . .

As Nancy grew older it became ever harder for her to make a living.
Formerly she had sold hay and eggs and milk in addition to her books and
photographs, but now she was forced to buy many of the very things that
formerly she had sold.

When I used to go out the Room,
And left them both together,
And come in again, they would speak to me,
They was so glad I come in again,
If I was gone to long,
They would both call me to come to them.
When they used to be setting down,
And I looked down on them,
They would tip up their little face on one side,
And look at me with one eye,
And laugh and speak to me.
Poor little Ada Queta she used to get up to the glass,
And stand and look sober,
And then fix her feathers,
And then look again,
To see if she fixed them right.
When I used to go to the glass to put up my hair,
Poor little Ada Queta would be sure and get up
And stand close to my face,
Poor little Beauty Lina did the same,
Most of the times.
Poor little Ada Queta,
She used to stand and study out things, she
She wanted to do, and then she would go and do
it.
She was a patient little heart,
And took everything very kind.

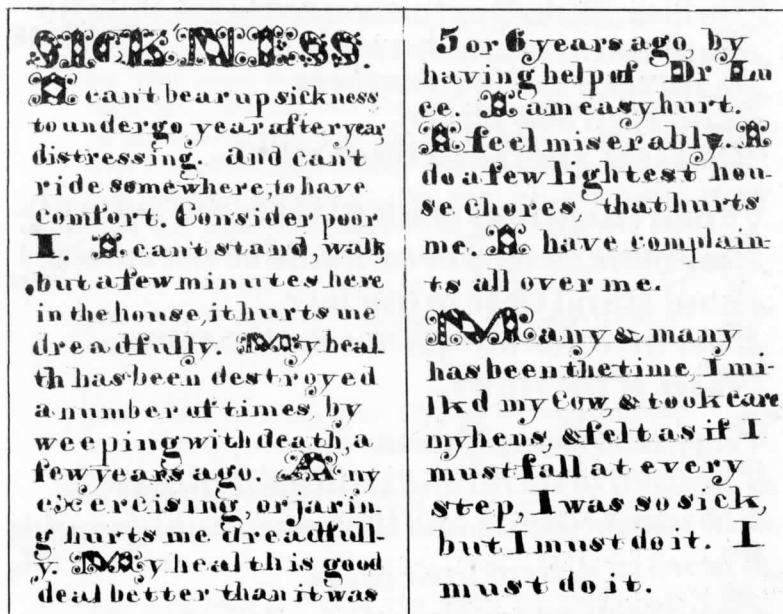
A page from one of Nancy's manuscript books that closes with these lines, "I did this
book in misery in both body and mind in July and August 1859."

Here are parts of a letter that she wrote to Henry L. Whiting that show her difficulties.

Mr. Whiting,

Now in this letter I send you 4 photographs, your daughter wanted them toward the hay, she come last fall after them, I had none, she got 4 books then, towards the hay I owe you for, them 4 books \$1, these 4 photographs \$1, that makes \$2 I have payed you towards the hay, Please let me know how much I owe you, I will pay you, I am dreadful foundered with debts, I am dreadful sorry I could not payed you before..... I been forced to lay out over two hundred dollars only on the outside of the house or the wind would tore it to bits, I am forced to pay about \$25 a year for cow's victuals..... Do excuse me, poor sick,

Nancy Luce



Two pages from a little manuscript book with wallpaper cover. It is inscribed "Present from Nancy Luce September 2d 1865." And again, "be exceeding careful of this Book, You don't know how unable I am to do it."

There is little enough that can be said critically about Nancy's poetry. Most of those of the Island in her time thought it utterly worthless. Most of those who bought her little books thought it hilariously funny. Richard L. Pease one of the leading men of the Vineyard in the nineteenth century, and an historian and genealogist, in *A Guide To Martha's Vineyard And Nantucket*, published in 1878, had this to say about Nancy's work: "It is a dreary waste of nonsense - a mere jingle of words - and yet amusing from its very silliness."

A very few others have seen a little more than that. Walter Teller in a fine article on Nancy Luce in *The American Scholar* says this to end his paper: "Not many poets celebrate ornery cows. Now many write of the wit of hens. Nancy's original, and in that sense primitive, view, her subtle syncopation, her discordant grammar but concordant style may leave a small but enduring trace on a landscape where time is always past and landmarks rapidly vanishing."

Temporal Fluctuations In Marine Mollusc Populations As Indicated By Pre-Columbian Shell Heaps On Martha's Vineyard

by

JOSEPH H. WATERS

Editorial Note: Dr. Waters teaches at Villanova University, and is a recognized authority in the field of biology. His work has appeared in the *Intelligencer* previously.

Since the summer of 1964 a team led by W.A. Ritchie of the New York State Museum has excavated archeological sites on Martha's Vineyard, encompassing occupation periods from more than 4,000 to less than 500 years ago. Reported herein are results of analyses of marine mollusc remains in three sites. Special thanks are due Dr. Ritchie for providing shell samples, radiocarbon dates, and other information.

METHODS

Shell samples were obtained by removing, one stratum at a time, a column one-half meter on a side representing all strata in the site. Two such samples were obtained from the Hornblower Site, discussed henceforth, and one from each of the other sites. Shells and fragments from each stratum were sorted according to species and weighed. As total shell weights per stratum varied greatly (from more than 1,300 to more than 32,000 grams), and total occupation time and number of human inhabitants per stratum could not be determined, total shell weights per se could not be used as indicators of species population changes from one time period to the next. Hence, weight for each species is presented herein as per cent of total weight of *shell only* for each stratum. Where weight for a species is less than 0.1% of total shell weight for the stratum, only number of pieces is given.

Radiocarbon dates were obtained from one charcoal sample per stratum, and thus it is not known which part of the occupation period a given date represents. However, as will be seen, some dates fall within 100 years of one another, and as other strata are of a comparable thickness, it seems probable that occupation periods were not much greater than stated limits of error for radiocarbon dates. It is believed that a fairly good correlation of dates with shell data has been obtained.

Relative sea levels for each occupation period are extrapolated from a curve presented by Bloom and Stuiver (1963), who made a detailed study of rate and extent of submergence of the Connecticut coast over the past 7,000 years.

ANALYSIS

Hornblower Site

The Hornblower Site is located on the northwest shore of Squibnocket Pond, about 15 feet above mean sea level. Squibnocket Pond is presently entirely fresh water, and contains no marine molluscs. Several small fresh-water streams flow into the pond, and the only outlet is to the north by the Gay Head Herring Creek into Menemsha Pond. The latter, a salt water pond, opens into Vineyard Sound to the north. Barrier beaches along the south and east sides of Squibnocket Pond reach a height of 35 feet above sea level in some places.

As may be seen in Table 1, there were few mollusc shells in the oldest stratum excavated. However, as Ritchie notes (written communication), this was a thin occupation, by a cultural group which may not have used marine molluscs extensively. It is believed that the sample from the next stratum, less than 100 years younger, is probably representative of local marine mollusc populations for both time periods. The high percentage of *Mercenaria mercenaria* suggests extensive nearby sand flats. The small percentages of *Pecten irradians* and *Crassostrea virginica* suggest lack of suitable habitat for both - i.e., shallow marine habitat with eelgrass for *Pecten*, estuarine habitat with rocky intertidal zone for *Crassostrea* - near the human habitation area. As the climate in this area was warmer than today (Sears, 1963), it seems probable that relative mean sea level, 10-15 feet lower than present, was responsible. What is now Squibnocket Pond was then probably little more than a tidal marsh, fed by several fresh water streams, with water level and salinity varying with the tides. *Mercenaria* probably occurred on sand flats to the south, in an area now inundated by the Atlantic Ocean, and

Crassostrea probably found suitable habitat only at the mouth of the estuary. As Squibnocket Pond is presently less than ten feet deep at its deepest point, no part of it could have provided suitable habitat for *Pecten* more than 4,000 years ago.

At the time of the youngest stratum, mean relative sea level was nearly the same as present. The low percentage of *Mercenaria* indicates that sand beds were now inundated in large part. The increased, but still low, percentage of *Mya arenaria* may reflect only increased selection for that species by Indians as *Mercenaria* populations decreased. The much greater percentage of *Pectens* may indicate larger populations nearer the human habitation site, in suitable habitat created by rising sea level. The presence of several species commonly found in brackish and estuarine habitats (*Crassostrea virginica*, *Mytilus edulis*, *Volsella plicatulus*, *Nassarius obsoleta*) strongly suggests that Squibnocket Pond was still open to the sea. If so, the water level therein was lower than present, and fluctuated in depth and salinity with the tides. Judging by present physiography of the pond basin, there were probably fairly extensive tidal flats, suitable habitat for species noted heretofore.

The evidence suggests that Squibnocket Pond was closed off from the sea to the south sometime during the past 500 years.* It is not known if storm action, tidal action, or both were responsible. Following closure, continuous input of fresh water resulted in flushing of the pond from the north end by way of the small stream into Menemsha Pond. There are no marine molluscs in Squibnocket Pond at present, and fresh water fish thrive there. It should be noted that estuarine and brackish water mollusc species are virtually nonexistent in the ocean intertidal and subtidal zones opposite Squibnocket Pond, and that extensive sand and mud flats are no longer exposed at low tide. Only moderate populations of *Mercenaria* occur in inshore areas, and *Pecten* is quite uncommon in that immediate area.

Pratt and Cunningham Sites

The Pratt and Cunningham Sites are located near the west shore of Lagoon Pond. The Pratt Site, about 25 feet above mean sea level, is adjacent to a small fresh water bog and pond which lies between it and Lagoon Pond. The Cunningham Site, much closer to the present shore line of Lagoon Pond, lies

*Editorial Note: Squibnocket Pond was closed to the sea by a violent hurricane in the second decade of the nineteenth century.

about 13 feet above mean sea level. Lagoon Pond presently has an outlet to the Atlantic Ocean through the barrier beach across the north end, which is maintained permanently open. The pond presently supports large populations of molluscs common to intertidal and inshore areas around the island. However, fresh water enters into Lagoon Pond. A pumping station at the south end of the pond provides the fresh water supply for Oak Bluffs.

As may be seen in Table II, there was a marked change in percentages of mollusc species deposited at the Pratt Site in a period of less than 100 years. There is no evidence of significant change in relative mean sea level during this brief time, nor is there any evidence of significant climatic change. The relative mean sea level may have been about seven feet below present, and the relatively high percentages of *Mercenaria* and *Mya* in the older stratum suggest fairly extensive sand flats near the sites. The marked decrease of *Mercenaria* in the younger stratum suggests that the sand flats may have become inundated, and the equally marked increase in *Crassostrea* suggests that the water of Lagoon Pond may have become less saline. The evidence suggests that between human occupation periods storm and/or tidal action closed the barrier beach across the north end of Lagoon Pond. Water level no longer fluctuated with the tides, and continuous entry of fresh water may have raised the water level somewhat. *Mercenaria* and *Mya* either decreased or became less accessible, and *Crassostrea* increased as salinity of the water decreased. It should be noted that there is no evidence of significant change in food gathering and consumption habits of human inhabitants from the older stratum to the younger.

The oldest stratum of the Cunningham Site (Table II) indicates change in mollusc populations since the latest occupation period of the Pratt Site. The percentage of *Mercenaria* is fairly high again (although that of *Mya* is not), suggesting more extensive sand flats near the site. *Crassostrea* is apparently absent. As the climate was probably similar to that today (Dorf, 1959), it is suspected that increased salinity of the water in Lagoon Pond was responsible. It is believed that the north end of Lagoon Pond had become open to the sea again. As mean relative sea level may have been four or five feet below present, tidal flats were probably more extensive than today. However, during the next occupation period (816 \pm 80 YBP) mean relative sea level may have been only one to two feet below present, and during the most recent occupation period it may have been virtually the same as present. In either case, habitat suitable for *Mercenaria* probably became less accessible to human inhabitants, and this seems to be reflected in progressive decrease in per-

centages of *Mercenaria* (Table II). The very small amount of *Crassostrea* suggests continued high salinity of the water in Lagoon Pond, and thus that it remained open to the sea.

The continuous increase in percentage of *Pecten*, in the Pratt Site and then in the Cunningham Site, is of interest. It is not certain if this reflects a continuous population increase, or an increased selection of this species by human inhabitants as *Mercenaria*, *Mya*, and *Crassostrea* became scarce or less accessible. It seems possible that continuously rising mean relative sea level may have produced a continuous increase of habitat suitable for *Pecten* in Lagoon Pond.

DISCUSSION

In recent years archeologists working at coastal sites have attempted to explain temporal fluctuations in marine mollusc remains in terms of various environmental factors including rising sea level. One particularly incisive analysis was that by Salwen (1962) of two archeological sites on Long Island, off the south coast of New York and Connecticut. Carefully considering local physiography, he attempted an analysis in terms of Fairbridge's (1960) theory that for about the past 6,000 years there have been only fluctuations around a mean sea level about the same as present. Powell (1965) also made a quantitative analysis of marine mollusc shells at a coastal archeological site in southwestern Connecticut, the oldest stratum of which was estimated to be about the same age as one stratum in Salwen's sites. However, citing objections by Shepard (1964) and others to Fairbridge's hypothesis, he does not support the kind of analysis made by Salwen. Instead, he refers to several ecological and human factors that could possibly account for trends in his mollusc shell data. In regard to Salwen's analysis, it is of interest to note that sea levels cited for critical dates by him do not seriously disagree with figures and the curve presented by Bloom and Stuiver (1963).

Kaye and Barghoorn (1964) have made a study of Late Quaternary sea-level change and crustal rise at Boston, Massachusetts. They conclude that relative sea level underwent a steady rise from a low of minus 70 feet 10,000 years ago to a stillstand at present sea level about 3,000 years ago. This stands in contradistinction to the concept of a steady rise in sea level up to the present as proposed by Bloom and Stuiver (op. cit.) for the Connecticut coast and Redfield and Rubin (1962) for the north coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

The disagreement regarding sea level changes cannot be resolved in this report. If Kaye and Barghoorn (op. cit.) are correct for the past 3,000 years, some conclusions presented herein are incorrect. As there is no evidence of pertinent climatic change, the only alternative explanation would be in terms of changes in food gathering and consumption customs and habits of human inhabitants. As noted before, there is no evidence of this except perhaps in the oldest stratum of the Hornblower Site. It is very doubtful that local short-term microclimatic and other microenvironmental factors affected mollusc populations near any of the sites in the same way throughout the entire occupation period of any stratum. Data obtained in this study are most easily and reasonably explained following sea level changes as proposed by Bloom and Stuiver (op. cit.). However, it is acknowledged that explanations and conclusions presented herein can probably be never more than tentative.

Table I. Percentages by weight, or number of pieces, of marine mollusc remains at the Hornblower Site.

Age of Stratum In Years	Relative Sea Level In Feet	Species															
4236 ± 160	- 13	Pecten	49%	Irradians	Two	Mercenaria	90%	Mya	43	Grassostrea	One	Mytilus	Two	Volsella	One	Lepeta	One
4156 ± 100	- 13		2%											Crepidula	2%	Goniodonta	Two
586 ± 80	- 1		49%											Polinices	8	Nassarius	3
														Busyon	*?	Busyon	One
														Busyon	*?	Buccinum	One

* Seven pieces, unidentifiable to species.

Table II. Percentages by weight, or number of pieces, of marine mollusc remains at the Pratt and Cunningham Sites.

Age of Stratum In Years	Relative Sea Level In Feet	Species												
		Pecten ttradians	Mercenaria	Mya arenaria	Crassostrea virginica	Mytilus edulis	Grepidula formicata	Polinices heros	Polinices triseriata	Nassarius obsoleta	Busyon canaliculatum	Buccinum undatum	Urosalpinx cinerea	
2486 ± 120	- 7	23%	30%	35%	11%			Pratt Site One	Two		Five	One	One	
2396 ± 80	- 7	38%	9%	14%	37%		One	3	One	One	7	One		
1566 ± 80	- 4	43%	42%	12%		0.7%	Cunningham Site 0.9%		1%		One			
816 ± 80	- 2	82%	12%	3%	0.6%		1%		0.9%		One			
360 ±	- 1	76%	8%	11%			4%	One		One				

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Historical Society News

Summer will see three new publications appearing on the Historical Society's growing book list. Proudly added is the Society's reprint of "*Cap'n George Fred*" *Himself*, by Captain George Fred Tilton, which first appeared in 1928. The book has been out of print for a number of years.

Gale Huntington, the vice president of the Society and editor of the *Intelligencer* has written *An Introduction To Martha's Vineyard* which is an illustrated short history of the Island. It will be published soon.

Nelson Coon, former president of the Society has written *The Wild Flowers Of Martha's Vineyard* which is now on sale in the Society's library and in Island bookstores. This finely illustrated book fills a long felt need. This book, like Mr. Huntington's is sponsored by the Historical Society although not printed by the organization. All three books will be on sale at the Society's museum library.

Now that summer will soon be on the calendar the Historical Society staff is busy with preparations for greeting our seasonal visitors. The Thomas Cooke house, carriage shed and grounds are being polished up in anticipation of that daily schedule to begin May 31.

Our first application for a student tour visitation was made by a group of about 35 students and teachers from the Elisabeth Irwin high school in New York City, on a May 7 trip to the Island.

Over the past several months, membership dues in the Society have shown an encouraging response to bills sent out the first of the year. Unfortunately however, some of our members are missing their *Intelligencers* because we do not have their forwarding addresses. We now are holding returned copies until called for, and postage is paid. If you have not received your *Intelligencer*, please notify us.

Since our last report of accessions in the February *Intelligencer*, more interesting items have been added to our collection.

The wreck of the *City of Columbus*, lost off Gay Head Jan. 18, 1884, provided the mahogany for the little red carpeted step stool given by Miss Mora Norton and her mother, Mrs. William Norton, Jr. As a bequest from Mrs. Norton, came the bronze medal awarded by the Humane Society to her father, Benjamin F. Mayhew of Chilmark, for his efforts in rescue work at the wreck.

Our costume room in the Thomas Cooke house has added a beautifully made white muslin petticoat of the 1880's, all lace ruffled, tucked and feather stitched. This came from Mrs. Dudley B. W. Brown of Vineyard Haven, who rescued it from a long ago, Island auction.

Dr. Sidney N. Riggs, past president and the Society's cover artist (he did the wood block jacket design for the republished "*Cap'n George Fred*") brought in a worn journal of the Ship *Pocahontas*, on a whaling voyage in 1842.

Miss Harriet Taylor of the Pine Cobble School, Williamstown, Mass., sent along a handsome set of color photographs which she made of the so called cromlech in Chilmark, while doing Norse research here last Fall.

A batch of old documents found at the town dump, were contributed by Mrs. Robert Chapman, who has an eye for the value of such preservation. Other interesting old documents were contributed by Mr. and Mrs. Everett Whiting, from the Whiting home in West Tisbury.

Two old photographs used in the Nantucket *Inquirer and Mirror* calendar of 1928 and 1932, respectively, were discovered by Mr. Otto Van Koppenhagen at a Providence book sale where he bought them especially for the Historical Society at the total cost of a dime! A small photograph of the no longer existant Mattakessett Lodge and a 1911 postcard view of S. Water St. were given by Mrs. Mary C. St. John of Old Lyme, Conn. The Museum library also has added a second volume of *The Bradford History* much used by researchers. This was a gift from Mrs. Adaline Rappaport, Council member.

A visit to the Historical Society should be a "must" for all of you, this summer. Come and see us!

Dorothy R. Scoville
Curator

Some 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 edition with added index. Maps and illustrations. 191 p. Paper \$2.50.

Our Enchanted Island by Marshall Shepard. An attempt to prove that Martha's Vineyard is the Island of Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Paper, 50¢.

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 by Will Huntington. Paper, 50¢.

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

Tales and Trails of Martha's Vineyard by Joseph C. Allen. 234 p. Illustrated. Paper \$3.95. When ordering by mail please add 25¢ to cover postage and handling.

The Dukes County Historical Society

announces a new edition of "Cap'n George Fred
Himself."

This autobiography of Captain George Fred Tilton
of Chilmark has long been out of print.

It is one of the classic adventure stories of all
times and the Society felt that its republication
was a must.

It can be purchased at Island book stores and at
the Society's museum library. The price is \$6.50.