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The Rev. Joseph Thaxter: A Vineyarder at the
 Battles of Concord and Bunker Hill

by THOMAS E. NORTON

The date was June 17, 1825. A white-haired man, well into his eighties and limping from an old war wound, had made his way through the crowd gathered at Bunker Hill in Charlestown, Massachusetts. This distinguished octogenarian, Rev. Joseph Thaxter, had traveled from his parish on Martha's Vineyard to participate in the ceremonies at the laying of the cornerstone for the Bunker Hill Monument. Upon arriving at the speaker's platform, he was greeted by the top officials of the state and by such dignitaries as the Marquis de Lafayette and Daniel Webster, who was scheduled to deliver the oration.

Some in the crowd must have wondered about Thaxter's identity, and he did present a peculiar appearance. As was his custom, he had dressed in the style of a colonial minister with knickers, knee buckles, and the three-cornered hat of the revolutionary period. It was, however, most appropriate that he had been invited to deliver the commemorative prayer. Exactly fifty years earlier on June 17, 1775, Thaxter had stood upon this hill and had prayed for the Americans who were about to defend these heights against British troops in what has become known as the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Taking his seat as the ceremonies began, Thaxter's mind must have wandered back to that fateful day a half-century earlier. Perhaps he also recounted some of the earlier events of his life that had put him in the position of not only witnessing the Battle of Bunker Hill but also of being at Concord where he saw the first British casualties of the American Revolution. Within a year or so before the Bunker Hill ceremony in 1825, he had written two documents that tell us something about his earlier life. One of the items was a letter describing the Battles of Concord and Bunker Hill. The other was a short autobiographical sketch.

Born in Hingham, Massachusetts in the spring of 1744, he got off to a slow start in life as the result of poverty and a sickly childhood. Until nineteen years of age, he worked on his parents'

farm, and it seems he planned to become a cooper. Then a rather remarkable turn-about occurred in his life, and he decided to take up the study of divinity. According to family tradition, Thaxter changed his career objectives when he won a lottery which provided him with the funds to attend Harvard College.

After graduating in 1768, he began teaching school in Hingham, but soon decided to take instructions in medicine under a Dr. Lincoln. He quickly became a competent bone setter; nevertheless, he gave up all plans to enter the medical profession on a full-time basis. "Studying the theory," he wrote, "was pleasing but the practise was so painful to my feelings that I quit it, and in 1771 betook myself to the study of Divinity [again]. . . resolving to serve God and my generation in the Gospel ministry." For the next three years, he studied and preached in several locations. In those days, however, a student of divinity in the Congregational Church could not be ordained until he was accepted by a congregation to be their minister. Thaxter almost became the pastor at Wakefield, but one man in the congregation opposed him, and he decided not to take any job unless accepted unanimously.

Then in the fall of 1774, he began preaching in the small town of Westford, several miles to the northwest of Concord. Westford was a hotbed of patriot activity, and Thaxter's presence did nothing to cool the anti-British feelings of the people. "Preparations were being made for resistance," Thaxter declared, "[and] I did all in my power to promote it." At a radical meeting in Cambridge, Thaxter volunteered to write out resignations for the royal governor and his councilors. As a result of this, Thaxter noted, "I had the honor to be proscribed by Governor Hutchinson, of which I obtained information and took care not to be found in Boston."

In the Westford area, a regiment was formed under the leadership of William Prescott of Pepperel with John Robinson of Westford second in command. Thaxter became the chaplain at regimental musters, and on one occasion gave a sermon to the soldiers on the virtues of military discipline. On a more practical level, Thaxter took instructions from a British deserter on the use of the bayonet and then became a drill instructor for some of the companies. Upon reflection, it would seem that Thaxter had put

together an oddly interrelated set of professions—bayonet instructor, doctor, and minister. If a recruit in his regiment failed to learn proper military skills, Thaxter would be around to patch up his wounds. If the soldier failed to respond to his medical assistance, then Thaxter would once again be available to say a few words at those final services in his memory. Soon, Thaxter would find need for all these skills.

As the days grew warmer in the spring of 1775, militia regiments throughout Massachusetts became increasingly active. The elite companies known at the time as minute companies and in history as minutemen were constantly on guard against the possibility of surprise British raids. In the area around Westford, Patriots were particularly concerned. Neighboring Concord was very likely to attract hostile attention since the town served both as a supply depot and as the meeting place for the illegal provincial congress.

In Boston, General Thomas Gage had been doing his best to avoid hostilities, but on April 14 he received orders to take immediate steps to destroy the rebellion in its infancy. Moving quickly and with great efforts at secrecy, Gage pulled the best troops out of their regular units and formed them into a strike force that began moving to the banks of the Charles River late on the night of April 18. Gage appointed the incompetent Colonel Francis Smith, apparently due to rules of seniority, to lead the expedition. Second-in-command was Major John Pitcairn of the royal marines, an experienced and capable officer. Naively, Gage believed that he would take the Patriots by surprise. His efforts at secrecy were so great that not until the night of the 18th did he tell Lord Percy, his second in command, of the plans. One can imagine Gage's ill-temper when Percy returned a short time later to report that while walking across the Commons, he had overheard several Americans discussing the details of the British scheme to attack Concord. Of course, Gage had no way of knowing that for more than two days the Patriots had been moving military supplies from Concord to neighboring communities.

The breakdown in secrecy turned out to be only one of several things that went wrong during the British expedition. After being

rowed across the Charles River, the 700 grenadiers and light infantrymen were landed in mud up to their knees. Then, after climbing out of the muck and standing around for two hours while Colonel Smith made sure that everything was ready, they had to wade across a waist-deep stream. All in all, it was not a very agreeable way to start a march that would take them on a round-trip of approximately forty miles. As they trooped through the dark countryside, the soldiers soon realized that they were not the only ones awake at this peculiar hour. Church bells could be heard in the distance and occasionally the sound of distant gunshots echoed through the valleys. Arriving in Lexington at sunrise, a vanguard of light infantry under the direct leadership of Major Pitcairn came face to face with the Lexington Minute Company and the Alarm Company, both under the command of John Parker, plus a few unorganized soldiers. On horseback, Major Pitcairn charged up to the Americans and ordered "the damned rebels" to drop their guns and disperse. Following Parker's orders, the Patriot companies started to withdraw, but some of the unorganized Americans found themselves nearly surrounded by the line of advancing troops. Out of panic a few of them fired their muskets. Against orders, the light infantry then blasted away at Parker's militia killing eight of them. One British soldier was slightly wounded and Pitcairn's horse was nicked.

No longer concerned with secrecy, the long red and white column set out for Concord with fife and drums playing. Not knowing exactly what had happened in Lexington, the Concord militia company marched out to meet the British, but when they came to within 200 yards of the redcoats, they immediately countermarched back to the town, seemingly as if they were escorts for His Majesty's troops. One of the militiamen later reported, we "Marched before them with our Drom and fifes agoing and also the British we had a grand musick." Entering the town, the grenadiers searched for munitions, while light infantry companies were sent to guard the south and north bridges and to search a suspected farmhouse.

At the north bridge, about 200 British soldiers took control of both sides of the river, but a large force of American militia had been gathering on a small ridge just above the bridge. The troops from Westford had arrived with their intrepid minister, Joseph

Thaxter, carrying a brace of pistols. Although written nearly fifty years later, Thaxter's account of what happened confirms other stories of the event. The Americans saw smoke coming from Concord, and incorrectly concluded that the British were burning the town. In Thaxter's own words, we have this precise account of the fighting that quickly broke out: "It was proposed to advance to the bridge; on this, Colonel Robinson of Westford, together with Major Patrick took the lead. Strict orders were given not to fire unless the British fired first. When [we] advanced about half way on the causeway the British fired a gun, a second, a third, and then the whole body; they killed Colonel Davis of Acton, and a Mr. Hosmer. Our people then fired over one anothers heads being in a long column, two and two. They killed two and wounded eleven. Lieutenant Hawkstone, said to be the greatest beauty of the British army, had his cheeks so badly wounded that it disfigured him much, of which he bitterly complained. On this the British fled and assembled on the north side of Concord. . ."

For some inexplicable reason, the British at the North Bridge had not simply retreated, but had fled back to safety in great panic. The Americans also seemed to be in a state of shock over what they had done. It was one thing to write phamphlets, to erect liberty poles, and to drill on the village greens, but they had now killed some of His Majesty's own soldiers. Having done their duty, some of the Americans went home or just milled around, but Thaxter began a pursuit that would take him clear to Charlestown before the day was over. By 1:00 p.m. the British were well on their way back toward Lexington without being molested by Thaxter and his compatriots who were following at a distance. Then, the redcoats ran into the first large contingents of Patriots who had been arriving from the north and south and who were aware of the unnecessary slaughter that had occurred earlier at Lexington. Once again, Thaxter tells the story: "As they descended the hill near the road that comes from Bedford they were pursued. Colonel Bridge with a few men from Bedford and Chelmsford came up and killed several men. We pursued them too and killed some. When they got to Lexington they were so close pursued and fatigued that they must soon have surrendered, had not Lord Percy met them with large reinforcements and two fieldpieces."

Thaxter was not exaggerating in the least; if reinforcements had not arrived, the entire British expedition of 700 grenadiers and light infantrymen would have been destroyed. Even now, the redcoats were far from out of danger, and the Americans seemed to be unleashing a fury that had been building up for more than a decade. Finally, the battle ended when the British stumbled into Charlestown where they came under the protection of the British fleet.

For the next two months, Thaxter remained at Westford, where he attended to the sick and wounded and presided at funerals. He also continued his activities with the army, and therefore found himself at Breed's Hill on the night of June 16 when Colonel William Prescott was ordered to occupy the heights above Charlestown and to dig entrenchments. Upon the first light of day on the 17th, British lookouts aboard warships in the harbor could plainly see a large redoubt and other fortifications on Breed's Hill. Thomas Gage decided to react immediately. He really would have had little excuse for delay since Boston now contained more than 5000 British soldiers as well as three Major Generals—Sir William Howe, Sir Henry Clinton, and John "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne. All three of these men would play important roles in the Revolution. By early afternoon General Howe had crossed the harbor to the Charlestown peninsula with 2000 soldiers. The Americans had continued to build their fortifications despite a constant bombardment from the British battleships, which prevented fresh troops from reinforcing Prescott's exhausted men who had been digging for hours with little food or water. Fortunately, in the nick of time, one group of volunteer reinforcements under General John Stark arrived and manned a stone wall on the beach where a column of British infantry were attempting to circle around behind the Americans.

Another recent arrival at the scene was Dr. Joseph Warren, who at 34 years of age had been one of the most influential revolutionary leaders and who had recently been appointed by the provincial congress as a general. According to Thaxter's account (which he heard from Colonel Robinson), Prescott said, "General Warren, I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you, but from your known character I shall fight with cheerfulness under you." Warren replied, "Colonel Prescott, I have not come to command but to learn to fight under you."

Now the Americans could do nothing but wait as the British started to organize themselves into attack formations. Then, very slowly the entire 2,000 man force began to march toward the approximately 1200 American defenders. For some inexplicable reason the British were carrying full field packs weighing a 100 pounds, and almost all the American observers later commented on how slowly the attackers advanced. Upon arriving within musket range, the British began to fire volleys, but they really had nothing to shoot at since the Americans remained out of sight. Considering the lack of coordination among the Patriot companies, it was remarkable that they were sticking to the now famous order "don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes."

On the beach the British infantry had moved along quickly in their flanking efforts and were rapidly approaching John Stark's New Hampshiremen who had taken positions behind the stone wall blocking the beach. They continued to move forward since the Americans had demonstrated no desire to fight. Suddenly, the front ranks of redcoats, now only fifty feet from the wall, saw dozens of muskets being pushed over the top of the stones by the best marksmen in the American army. Seconds later the beach was littered with casualties and the healthy had fled in panic. All over Breed's Hill, other British units soon suffered similar experiences. General Howe himself had nearly been hit and every officer on his personal staff had been wounded or killed. At the bottom of the hill, the British quickly regrouped and slowly made a second advance only to be repulsed once more. British soldiers were at last given permission to throw off their packs, and they once again advanced. By this time, the Americans were almost out of ammunition, and they were forced to retreat as British troops stormed over the top of their barricades.

And so the day came to an end. Of the 2400 British soldiers who had marched up the hill, more than a thousand had to be carried back to Boston including the 226 dead. Due to the sharpshooting of the Americans, nearly ten per cent of the British casualties were officers. On the American side there were 400 casualties including 170 killed. As in all battles, however, statistics do not tell the story of tragedy. Good men had been killed on both sides. In the third British assault, Major John Pitcairn had just reached the American redoubt when he was shot through the

head and fell into the arms of Captain Pitcairn, his son. Joseph Warren, who had been marked for greatness, also died of a head wound in the last moments of battle. Of his death, Abigail Adams wrote, "Not all the havoc and devastation [the British] have made has wounded me like the death of Warren. We want him in the Senate; we want him in his profession; we want him in the field. We mourn for the citizen, the senator, the physician and the warrior." During the days immediately following the battle, Thaxter must have been very busy in consoling widows and relatives, because 49 men in his Westford regiment had been killed; another 45 were wounded.

After the battle, Thaxter's services to his country were far from over. In 1776, he joined Washington's army and served as a chaplain at White Plains, and he participated in the New Jersey campaigns during the winter of 1776-1777.

His life took a more peaceful turn in 1780 when he became the minister of the Congregational Church in Edgartown, Massachusetts. He served with great distinction, and it came to pass that on June 17, 1825, he found himself facing the huge, but this time friendly, crowd at Bunker Hill. Thaxter's prayer was much too long to be quoted here, but one passage is particularly revealing: "We thank thee that in thy good providence we are assembled to lay the foundation of a monument, not for the purpose of idolatry, but a standing monument to the rising and future generations, that they may be excited to search the history of our country and learn to know the greatness of thy loving-kindness to our nation. . . We thank thee for the unparalleled progress and improvement in arts and sciences, in agriculture and manufactures, in navigation and commerce, whereby our land has become the glory of all lands."

The Liberty Pole Incident

by SHIRLEY W. MAYHEW

Fear and excitement rippled through the island town of Homes Hole on that soft spring April evening in 1778. It had been three years since the first shots were fired and the patriots of the thirteen colonies were still fighting for their liberty from England. The year before, the Massachusetts colony had abandoned the islands off its coast to neutrality as it was costing too much to maintain troops there.

In a March 29, 1777 communication, the General Court had suggested to the inhabitants of the island of Martha's Vineyard that they send their cattle, sheep, and other valuables to the mainland for safe keeping. The troops stationed on the island had then been disbanded and many of the soldiers left to take up arms elsewhere. Some of them, experienced on the sea, had found employment on privateers, and others stayed and formed local defense units.

Although many Vineyarders were sympathetic to the cause of the rebels, it was now apparent that they would be at the mercy of England if she decided to turn her attention to any of the outlying islands. In 1775, Homes Hole, one of the three Vineyard towns, had raised a liberty pole which stood tall and proud on Manter's Hill overlooking the harbor. It is said that before putting the pole in place, the women of the town had poured their supplies of tea into the hole to protest the Boston Port Bill.

The history of every war is punctuated with the names of the great and the famous. Paul Revere, George Washington, Sam Adams, and others are well known to every school child as heroes of the Revolution. As in every great war, however, there were innumerable feats of bravery and courage which largely went unrecorded in the annals of this struggle. Such an event took place on the island of Martha's Vineyard in the spring of 1778.

Two hundred years ago there were between forty and fifty houses in Homes Hole, and some 225 residents, many of them branches of families which had settled here in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Three of these families, the Manters,

the Daggetts, and the Allens, would be linked forever in the minds of Vineyarders after that fateful night of April 19, 1778, the third anniversary of the battles of Lexington and Concord.

Back in 1745 Ebenezer Allen had married Sarah Chase Daggett, a young widow with three small children. Ebenezer had just been licensed as an innholder in Homes Hole, and Sarah was the grand-daughter of Isaac Chase who had come to the island in 1674 and proceeded to acquire land until he owned most of the present village of Vineyard Haven. Sarah's father, Thomas, was one of twelve children and inherited part of this vast property. Young Ebenezer and Sarah were well off and were respected members of the community. They had seven children, one of whom they called Maria, born in 1758. According to Charles Banks, the noted historian of Martha's Vineyard, "...this dashing young girl was the moving spirit in the life of the tavern kept by her father." She must also have grown up with a sense of responsibility, as she had five younger brothers and sisters to help care for. In 1778 Maria was twenty years old.

Seth Daggett was Sarah Chase Allen's brother-in-law by her first husband. He was a carpenter in Homes Hole and fathered nine children before he died of smallpox in 1779. His seventh child, a daughter named Mary, but always called Polly, grew up to be a friend of Maria Allen's, although two years younger.

A third young girl of Homes Hole was Parnell Manter, a twenty-one year old friend of Polly and Maria. Parnell's mother, also named Sarah Chase, was a niece of Maria's mother. By 1778, Parnell who was a first-born child, had five sisters and three brothers, and her mother would have another son and daughter in the next four years.

It was a mild April evening and Seth and Elizabeth Daggett had gathered their four children remaining at home around the supper table. Of their six sons born before Polly, Silas was the only one remaining at home, and he would be married before the year was out. Seth, Jr. had died seventeen years before at the age of six, and Peter had died at sea in 1768, leaving a wife and four children. Samuel was married and had a son the age of his own brother West, who would die at sea the next year at the age of fifteen. William, the third born, had married and had four of his seven

children by 1778, and Nathan had married five years earlier and was living with his family in Maine. The Daggetts were a typical family of their time, living with hope but often visited by tragedy. Polly's father, Seth, would die of smallpox exactly a year later, never knowing what his daughter Polly had done that night after she left the dinner table to join her two friends for awhile before bedtime.

Polly's friend, Parnell, was helping her mother prepare the evening meal on that night of April 19th. Although she was the eldest daughter, her sister Rhoda had married first the year before at the age of seventeen. Sarah, Waitstill, and Margaret were probably watching over their four little brothers and sisters aged one to eight. There were nine children so far in the Manter family and all had survived, but Parnell herself would be dead of a fever within three months.

Of Maria Allen's six brothers and sisters, only four girls were left at home. Ebenezer, Jr. had graduated from Harvard College and moved to New Hampshire where he settled as a minister. The oldest son, Perkins, was living nearby with his wife and four children, and the third brother, Ichabod, took up farming in Homes Hole and had a wife and children. He would later move his family to western Massachusetts.

Earlier on this day, His Majesty's Ship *Unicorn* had sailed into the harbor at Homes Hole. One of the reasons it put into this Vineyard port was that a new mast was needed to replace one which had broken. The British captain sent a party of men ashore to purchase the liberty pole standing in full view up on the hill. The three selectmen of the town were called together and the ship's company made an offer for the pole. The town officials refused to sell their symbol of liberty, and the sailors angrily returned to their ship, vowing to return in the morning to take the pole for their mast, sale or no sale. Word of what had happened spread quickly around the town, and it was the main subject of conversation around the dinner table that night.

Spirited Polly Daggett didn't say much when her father related the story that evening, but after the meal she slipped out to meet her friend Parnell. The girls were discussing how to prevent the capture of their one symbol of rebellion when they were joined by Maria. Carried away, perhaps, by youthful enthusiasm, the natural

recklessness of the young, or an ignorance of the possible consequences of a rebellious act, one of the girls suggested blowing up the pole with gunpowder. Maria offered her father's ship's auger, a drill for boring holes in wood, and Parnell would borrow her father's powder horn. The girls, now highly excited, dispersed to get the necessary items for the act which would put their names in at least one history book of the future.

As darkness fell, the three friends met again on the hill which had been named for Parnell's father. They took turns using the drill and stuffing the powder into the two or three holes they made. Parnell ripped up the hem of her woolen petticoat to use as stuffing wads to hold in the powder. At last the holes were stuffed, but how to light them? One didn't reach into one's pocket for a cigarette lighter, or even a match, in those early days. Fire had to be obtained from fire, so Polly dashed home to get a warming pan of hot coals from her fireplace. One can only wonder what excuse she used for this odd errand, but when she again returned to the hill with the coals, the next problem was how to get the powder ignited. The woolen petticoat again served and Polly wrapped a piece of it around a beanpole which Parnell had plucked from a nearby field. The cloth at the end of the beanpole was lighted and then all three girls shoved it against the wads stuffed in the flagpole. After several tries the wads started to burn and the three friends dropped the beanpole and ran for shelter.

The first explosion lit up the night and echoed over the water, and the second toppled the pole to the ground, where it lay splintered and totally useless for anything but fireplace wood. The girls managed to return to their homes undetected and it was many years before the identity of the saboteurs was revealed. The *Unicorn's* captain was outraged but helpless as no one in the town could aid him in determining the guilty patriots in order to punish them. He sailed away the next day without his new mast.

Of the three girls Maria Allen went on living in Homes Hole. Ten years later she married David Smith, a widower with four children, and they had a son and two daughters. Maria died in 1820 at the age of 62 and is buried in the old graveyard behind the town hall in her home town, now known as Vineyard Haven.

Parnell died of an unknown fever three months after the adventure and is buried, with other members of her family, in

Crossways Cemetery, also in Vineyard Haven. The year after she died, her mother had a final baby daughter whom she named Parnell, as was often the custom in those days.

Polly Daggett married Peleg Hillman in 1779 and they went off-island to live. Ten years later she divorced him and returned to the Vineyard. She had no children and never remarried, although she was a great favorite with all her nieces and nephews and was known as "Aunt Hillman". She was also buried behind the town hall after a long life.

In 1898 the Martha's Vineyard DAR placed a brass tablet on a flagpole near the spot where the girls blew up the liberty pole to commemorate "...the patriotism of three girls of this village: Polly Daggett, Parnell Manter, Maria Allen..."

Book Review: Henry Franklin Norton's Martha's Vineyard, the story of Its Towns

(First printed 1923; reprinted 1976 by Oak Bluffs Homemakers Club)

Born, as was befitting a great story teller, in the blizzard of '88, Henry Franklin Norton became known even at a very early age for his ability to entrance audiences with his stories about Vineyarders of by-gone days. As the years passed, his knowledge of historical fact and folklore grew to the point that a book seemed in order. And so, in 1923, islanders had the pleasure of acquainting themselves with his book, *Martha's Vineyard, The Story of Its Towns*. Now more than fifty years later, Vineyarders can once again obtain a copy of Norton's book due to the efforts of the members of the Oak Bluffs Homemakers Club, who have reprinted it as their contribution to America's Bicentennial Celebration. To assist in the publication, the Dukes County Historical Society provided a grant of \$200 to the club.

Many members of the Homemakers Club personally knew Mr. Norton, a resident of Oak Bluffs in his childhood and, later, in his retired years. His father, Henry Constant Norton, could trace his ancestry back to the original settler of the name as well as to many of the other early Vineyard families, and his mother was the granddaughter of Dr. Daniel Fisher, whose magnificent home still stands at the head of main street in Edgartown.

Though a man primarily interested in local history, Henry Franklin was not without substantial experience in the outside world. In addition to attending college and serving as a principal of schools in Connecticut, he spent a short time in his earlier years as the traveling secretary for his famous cousin, Lillian Nordica, "The World's Greatest Wagnerian Singer." On one occasion, he traveled with her to London, where she gave a command performance for King Edward VII. Even while serving in various capacities off-island, he continued his research into island history and helped to found the Dukes County Historical Society in 1922. After retirement he continued his work with the society and served as curator from 1949 until his death in 1961.

With Norton's passing, the island lost one of its few outstanding story tellers, but fortunately he left behind this book which is a treasure house of island history and folklore. Indian legends, island character, great storms, old houses, and patriotic adventures stand out as the prime topics. There is a chapter for each town, and the author provided a pleasing mixture of solid factual history combined with interesting anecdotes and intriguing legends. As Rev. Reed Chatterton wrote after Norton's death, "To single out of the legends of the past what is at the same time important and interesting is an art in itself—an art of which Henry Franklin Norton was a master indeed. To reveal this lore in its proper perspective calls for a kind humor and regard for truth which he possessed in a high degree."

Even those people with only a casual concern for island history will find the book to be most enjoyable, especially due to Norton's unusually fluid writing style. He was definitely a man who had a way with words. The reprint of his book is available from the Homemakers Club, Box 1776, Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts, for \$6.95 (plus 50 cents postage) or a copy can be obtained from the historical society.

Thomas E. Norton

D C H S News

The last three months have been among the busiest on record at the historical society. While getting ready for summer, we had more than the usual number of school tours, and at the same time we had many other irons in the fire. The most time-consuming development took place in late May and early June, when a team of researchers from Australia and New Zealand were here to microfilm all of our whaling logs that deal with the South Pacific. The most noticeable project during this period was the construction of a brickwalk from the gatehouse to the front door of the Thomas Cooke House. Visitors will now easily be able to find their way to the front door without having to tramp through wet grass. The bricks were donated by Mrs. John J. Radley, Miss Rachael Williams, Mr. and Mrs. E. Jared Bliss, Mrs. Kenneth Stoddard, and Miss Edna Zeppernick. The walk was constructed by Rachael Williams in memory of Byron Dow. In her work, Miss Williams was assisted by Mrs. Bliss, Mr. Nevitt Bartow, and by Kevin and Jeffrey Gunderson. Doris Stoddard and Mr. Bliss proved to be able sidewalk superintendents. Upon reaching the end of the walk, visitors will find that the work on the entranceway has been completed. Instead of using wallpaper, we returned the walls to the original plaster, the work being done by Bob Schwier.

Another important project this spring was the complete renovation of the costume room. Insulation was placed between all the studs and rafters, and then the room was boarded in so that there has been a tremendous improvement in appearance, cleanliness, and temperature. Marilyn Maxwell, one of our summer staffers, has a particular interest in costumes, and she has done an excellent job of organizing the exhibits.

As described in the last issue of the *Intelligencer*, we have restored fourteen of our paintings with money from the Preservation Fund. In other areas of historic preservation, we repaired and rebound a number of our rare books. This was done with money left to the society in memory of Kenneth Stoddard. In addition, one of our banjo clocks has been magnificently restored by the volunteer efforts of Snowden Taylor and members

of his family. Starting out with a clock that was in extremely poor condition, Mr. Taylor turned back the years so that one would think that this exquisite timepiece had hardly aged since it was produced in the early 1830's. In a type of work far more delicate than laying bricks, Rachael Williams repaired a carved eagle that had been gathering dust in our attic for years, but it will now be on display in the house. To keep various crawly creatures from eating these exhibits and the house itself, the Gremlin Fog Service donated a substantial amount of exterminating services to the society.

While all of the above has been going on, we have been adjusting to a number of staff changes. After nearly ten years of service as our librarian, Mrs. Bettencourt has retired although she still volunteers occasionally when we need her skills in handling our membership files and in giving tours to school groups. She will be missed by everyone at the society, especially by those who had the pleasure of working with her. Gale Huntington also will not be at the society as much as in the past since he needs time to finish three books that have been in the works for several years. In appreciation of all his services over the years, the Council of the Society has made him an honorary member. In addition to these changes, Alison Shaw, our archivist, is not working with us this summer so that she can devote full time to her other job at the *Gazette*. Our guides in the house this summer are Janet Holladay, Suzanne Herlitz, Marilyn Maxwell, Hilda Gilluly, and Tom Carley. Shirley Drogen and Milton Wright are taking turns working in the gatehouse and in the library. We are also fortunate this summer to have the services of Candace Heald, who is with us on a museum internship program and is doing several specialized projects as well as being a guide.

Among our recent accessions, we received the log of a whaling voyage (1855-58) from the Ship *John and Edward*, commanded by Francis Cottle Smith of Chilmark. The log, given to us by Mrs. Henry Adelman of Mantoloking, New Jersey, is a most interesting one with detailed descriptions of events and places. We also received one of the folding chairs used in Oak Bluffs during the campmeetings from Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Mabee.

The annual meeting this year will be held on Tuesday, August 17 at 8:00 p.m. Our plans for the evening include a musical program presented by Gale and Mildred Huntington, who have had a long association with folk singing, especially in relation to songs of the sea. Mrs. Huntington comes from the "Singing Tilton" family, and Mr. Huntington, author of *Songs the Whalemen Sang*, recently received a certificate of recognition for his work in folk music from the Greater Hartford Folk Music Society. Thus, the annual meeting (open to members and guests) should be a real treat, and we hope to see many of you there.

Thomas E. Norton

CORRECTIONS

In the last issue of the *Intelligencer* (May 1976) the following corrections should be noted in the article, "Thomas Cooke, Esq., Thomas Cooke, Jr., and the Cooke House:"

At the beginning of paragraph 4 on page 121, the date should be May 19, 1763

On page 125, "Whaling Map of 1858" should read "Walling Map of 1858"

Some Publications

OF THE DUKES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ON SALE
AT ISLAND BOOK STORES AND IN THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY.

The Mammals of Martha's Vineyard by Allan R. Keith. Illustrated, paper.
50¢.

People To Remember by Dionis Coffin Riggs. Illustrated, paper. \$4.95.

The Heath Hen's Journey to Extinction by Henry Beetle Hough. 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, \$30.00.

"Cap'n George Fred" Himself. The autobiography of Captain George Fred Tilton of Chilmark. A new edition. Cloth. \$6.50.

Wild Flowers of Martha's Vineyard by Nelson Coon. Illustrated. Paper \$3.95.

Indian Legends Of Martha's Vineyard by Dorothy R. Scoville. Paper \$2.50.

An Introduction To Martha's Vineyard by Gale Huntington. Illustrated, paper. A new edition. \$3.95.