

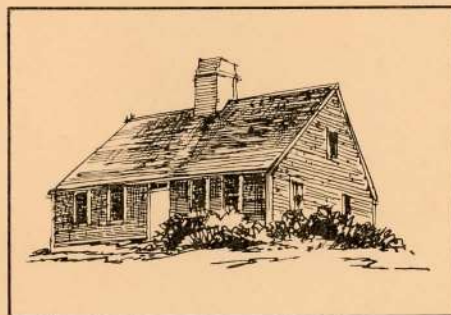


# THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 20, NO. 1

AUGUST, 1978

## The Vincent House



*In 1977 the Martha's Vineyard  
Historical Preservation Society began  
restoration of one of the Island's  
earliest extant buildings, a farmhouse  
from the Edgartown Great Pond region.*

### The Project

C. STUART AVERY

### Architecture and Restoration

ANNE W. BAKER

### The Archaeology

MYRON O. STACHIW

### The Family

MABEL KENISTON BAKER

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Documents: Jeremiah Pease Diary

Plus: News, Word of the Society

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## The Vincent House: The Project

by C. STUART AVERY

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In the spring of 1977, the heirs of John G. MacKenty offered to give the Vincent House to the Martha's Vineyard Historical Preservation Society. There were two principle terms of the gift: that the house be moved from its location near Edgartown Great Pond; and that it be preserved for the public benefit.

Whatever its exact date, it was clear that the house is among the oldest on the Island. Through the years various occupants had made changes to it, but the original structure remained complete and the subsequent additions were of architectural interest.

The preservation society was founded in 1975 to promote an appreciation of the Island's historical, cultural, and architectural significances. It was spurred at that time by the obvious and distressing deterioration and neglect of the Dr. Daniel Fisher House and its grounds in Edgartown. The society acquired that property, and restoration and renovation of house and grounds was subsequently completed. In 1976, the pending demolition of the Ritter House in Vineyard Haven came to the attention of the society. Under its auspices the house was purchased and extensive repairs were made to preserve it. Both these houses are leased as professional offices.

The Vincent House offered a different opportunity. By itself, it is an important remnant of the earliest days of English settlement on the Island and of the rural Great Plains

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C. STUART AVERY is executive vice president and treasurer of the Martha's Vineyard Historical Preservation Society, and has been immediately in charge of the Vincent House project.

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community. Carefully preserved and documented, it could serve as a benchmark for further study of Island architecture.

The society engaged A.W. Baker Restorations, Inc. to restore the house as necessary to make it fit for the move from Mashacket to the grounds behind the Dr. Daniel Fisher House in the center of Edgartown. Myron O. Stachiw, an archaeologist at Brown University, was engaged to study the surrounds of the house before the move; Anne E. Yentsch, a Brown anthropologist, undertook a preliminary documentary study of the house's history.

Tradition had dated the house at 1656. It now appears that the house was in fact built twenty or more years later than that, and that it may well have been moved from another site early in its life.

Further research should clarify the house's early history. The present uncertainty illustrates the value the house can ultimately have: among the difficulties in setting a precise date for the house are the absence of correlations between when architectural details were adopted on the mainland and when they were adopted here, and an inadequate knowledge of the chronology of architectural details peculiar to the Island.

Restoration work on the Vincent House continues now that it is at its new location in Edgartown. The house will be made structurally sound, but changes worked in it by its tenants during the 18th and 19th centuries will not be erased because they are themselves a part of the architectural history. The society hopes to acquire by gift or loan household furnishings and furniture that have been in the Vincent families or that pertain to that early period of Island history.

The building will be opened to the public. The society plans to use the house as an architectural resource center, presenting an educational program to enhance understanding of the great treasury of Island homes and buildings.



## The Vincent House: Architecture and Restoration

by ANNE W. BAKER

The question most often asked of me about any house is: "When was it built?" The following is an account to establish facts, not to establish a date. The facts will suggest their own date. I hope that a presentation of these facts and further research on other buildings on the Island will give us a better understanding of those first proprietors and their principles of structure which have brought us to our present building traditions not only on Martha's Vineyard but in America as well.

In June, 1977, the Martha's Vineyard Historical Preservation Society accepted the gift of the Vincent House from the MacKenty family and made the decision to move the building into the town of Edgartown to be an architectural museum. The Vincents had settled on the Great Plains in Edgartown, an area developed early by the Anglo-Saxon settlers. As the house was still very much intact and an important part of this historic area, it seemed important not to move it away from its site. However, the MacKenty family's needs required that it be moved. At the same time, the Society felt that the location of the museum three miles out of town would limit public availability and use, and would make the house more difficult to protect.

While it is important that any historic structure and its environment be treated as a unit, in this case preservation of the Vincent House for historical and educational purposes

ANNE W. BAKER has been involved in the reconstruction or restoration of more than 200 structures since her career began 20 years ago. Among them are four houses preserved by the Newport (R.I.) Restoration Foundation, and five structures in the New Bedford Waterfront Historic Area.



Figure 1

could best be accomplished by moving it from the MacKenty property into Edgartown.

To minimize the loss resulting from moving the house, an archaeologist was engaged to study the soil under and around the house, an area which would be disturbed during the move. The study would also record the relationship and development of all existing outbuildings. The town records were also searched for documentary records about the history of the house.

This three-pronged approach to the history of the house would give an expanded and more thorough knowledge of man, his environment and his shelter on Martha's Vineyard. From this base of knowledge the Vincent House could spring as an important architectural resource on the Island.

#### Initial Examination

The building and all its parts were carefully measured. When finished, these measurements resulted in 12 sheets of scale drawings which record every architectural detail.

A measured survey facilitates a clearer understanding not only of the structure but also of any changes that might have

been made. It would be used to record architectural details and changes and would serve as a catalog for identifying materials removed during repairs. Measuring included taking a complete set of photographs before any work was started. Photography continued throughout the project: methods, architectural details, daily progress, people, and finally the move, were all recorded. This careful record is most important in developing a resource center useful to other architectural conservators, architects, students, and others.

Measuring forces orderliness and thoroughness on the exploration of a structure. While measuring it became apparent that there was extreme termite damage in the first floor substructure. Investigation revealed clay in one section of a wall, but it was not clear how far it extended or what its function had been. The small visible area was wet and caused concern about the damage it could be creating. It was not until the actual structural repair was started that the extent of this clay was discovered.

Clay infill was an ancient tradition brought from England as "half-timber" construction. It shortly proved impractical as exterior finish in the New England climate. The Vincent House is the fourth known documented example of the early type of infill known as "wattle and daub", to which there are many early written references. The "wattle" is a basket-work of sticks between the studs. The "daub" is the clay material used to fill in and around the wattle.

The method used in the Vincent House is slightly different from other known examples. Instead of weaving sticks to hold the clay, one-inch green oak staves were sprung into small pockets gouged out of the sides of the studs and posts. (See Fig. 2). The "daub" consisted of native clay mixed with hay, pine needles and other fibrous, organic debris and was packed solidly into the walls between the horizontal staves spaced (like a ladder) six inches apart from floor to ceiling. Remains of the infill were found in all exterior walls except the southwest wall. Clay infill was also found in the main interior partition wall running through the center of the house from gable end to gable end. The exterior of the house was sheathed with boards and the interior left with the clay exposed and smoothed to a flat surface in the rear rooms,

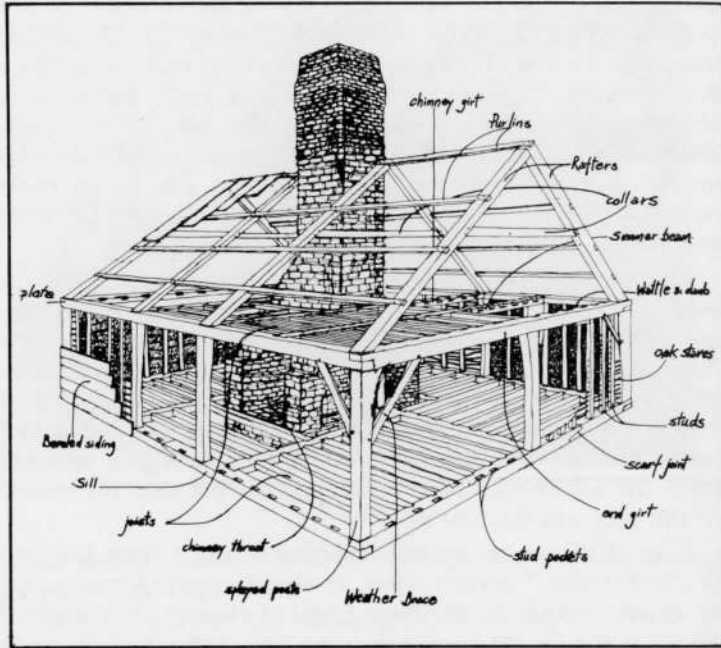


Figure 2

then covered with a thin coat of white-wash. The clay body in the front rooms was less dense and covered with a thick coating of lime plaster. In that area there was no exterior water damage evident and the clay was in excellent condition, as was the surrounding wood. If it was intended as insulation it served well in the twentieth century: throughout a very hot summer it was always cool inside the house.

### The Frame

The present dimensions of the Vincent House (28' x 26') would have been considered large for 1656. The size of its full-Cape frame raised questions as to how much was actually original. Often the "full" shape of a Cape Cod design developed from a "half Cape" or from a "three-quarter Cape" by additions (Fig. 3). Therefore I expected to see that

evolution in the Vincent House. From experience I have learned to look for a scarf joint in the front and back plates (the horizontal beams the rafters sit on) as an indicator of a full, half-, or three-quarter Cape. (Fig. 2). I found such a scarf joint in the middle of both the front and back plates, which ordinarily would indicate that the Vincent Cape had been enlarged from a half-Cape to a full one. However the original sills (Fig. 2) did not have scarf joints but instead ran full length across the front and back indicating that the house had always been a "full" Cape. Additional proof was revealed by an examination of the posts and summer beams. They were chamfered identically throughout the structure: the posts had a one inch wide bevel and the beams had the same bevel brought to a stop with a "lamb's tongue" and "V-check" design (Fig. 4). This decoration was popular in England early in the 17th century.

Oak had been used for the first floor framing. The sills were 8" x 7" front and back, 7" x 7" at gable ends; the mid-sill was 4" x 8" (gable end to gable end). This 4" x 8" was an unusual dimension and strangely was installed flat. The floor joists were random size oak logs (sometimes referred to as "cants") on an average 5" x 7", with the bark left on except for one side trimmed flat to receive the flooring. The hearth timbers were slightly larger and had a full dovetail for



Figure 3

the kitchen framing and a half dovetail for the two front hearths. These dovetails served as a lock to hold the building together, without the use of nails (Fig. 5).

The second floor framing was notable smaller than that

found in typical 17th century structures: end girts were 7" x 9" pine, and plates were 6" x 11". There were four pine summer beams, notably smaller than those found in typical 17th century structures. The summer beams in each front room are 9" x 9". The two summer beams in the kitchen are 5" x 9". Usually, the summer beam would terminate at the center beam; however, in the Vincent house the summer continues from front to back lapping over the center beam. By lapping instead of ending, the summer beams also served as a truss or tie beam and in the case of the kitchen summers, they additionally served as a chimney girt for the two front rooms.

There were twelve splayed posts (Fig. 6). The four corner posts were of oak, the others were of pine. The four corner posts were braced with an oak weather brace on each side and a single brace only was used on the end posts of the center section (Fig. 2).

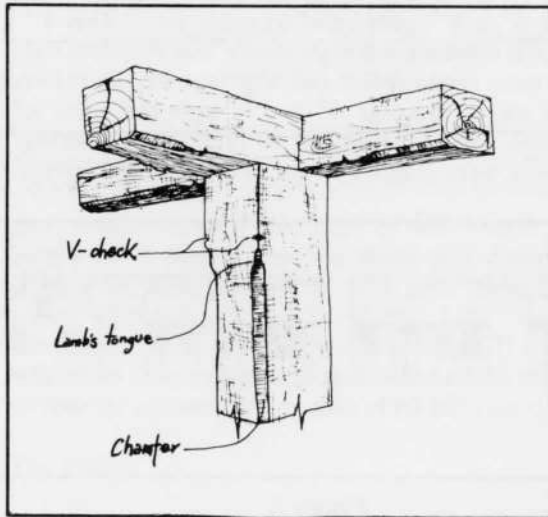


Figure 4

The joists were 3" x 4" pine and most were butt ends housed into the framing by a method called "butt and cogging". The ends of every third joist were shaped with a

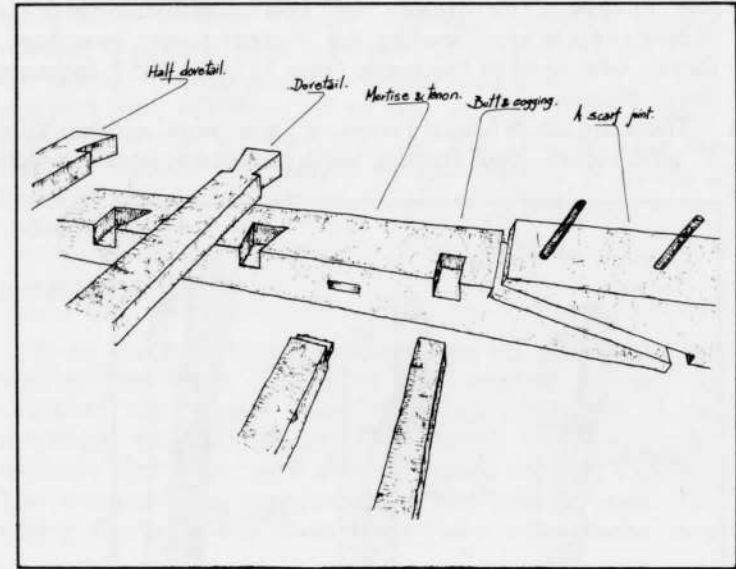


Figure 5

half- dovetail to keep the house from spreading. By shining a light along these joists we could see rough pit saw-marks, uneven scratch marks left from sawing by hand instead of the even marks left from a water-powered sawmill.

As investigation progressed, new questions were always coming up. For example, how could a dwelling reported to be of mid-17th century vintage have been built with such a sophistication of style and lightness of frame while, on the other hand, the hand sawing used to cut the joists was primitive?

### The Roof

The area under the eaves on the second floor remained an open space until the mid-1700's. The size of the bead was the indication of date. At this time, a small room was built here using wide, beaded pine boards set vertically to form partitions. Above this room a sleeping loft was made using the rafter collars on which the flooring was laid with ladder

for access. The need for this additional space is understandable after reading the Vincent family genealogy: Daniel, who lived in the house from 1774 to 1857, fathered eleven children.

There are six principal rafters, 5" x 8" pine, with six 4" x 5" pine collars. Roof framing was a purlined system in which

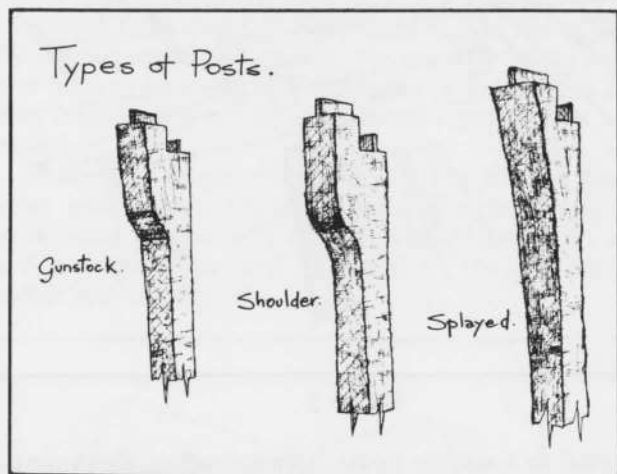


Figure 6

the purlins were let into the rafters on an average six-foot space or rise giving each side three purlins and one across the peak on the east side (Fig. 2). The roof boards were then laid up and down over the purlins. This type of roof framing was commonly found on many Island Capes well into the 18th century.

The purlins were later removed and replaced by secondary or "common" rafters, and the roof boards were changed to lie horizontally.

Pit saw marks were clearly visible on the collars. Ordinarily, the uneven pit saw marks on the joists and collars would be clear evidence of 17th century origin since they would pre-date the use of a water-powered sawmill. Water power eliminated the need to cut large timbers by hand. In the 17th century there was an excellent flow of water eight

miles away in West Tisbury. Although historical records indicate it powered grist mills there is no reference to its use for sawing. It seems possible a sawmill had worked along side the grist mill, but there are no clear records of any sawmill operating on the Vineyard until the 19th century. Thus the research showed this usually reliable method of dating a house as 17th century structure did not in fact apply to the Vincent house.

#### Inside the House

When the first Vincent moved into his new house the interior had been treated in the simplest manner. Its character was derived from the frank treatment of the functional elements, essentially medieval. The posts, girts, summers and joists were all hand-planed and left exposed. The timbers were chamfered and the joists dressed. The ceiling boards in the north front room were planed to a

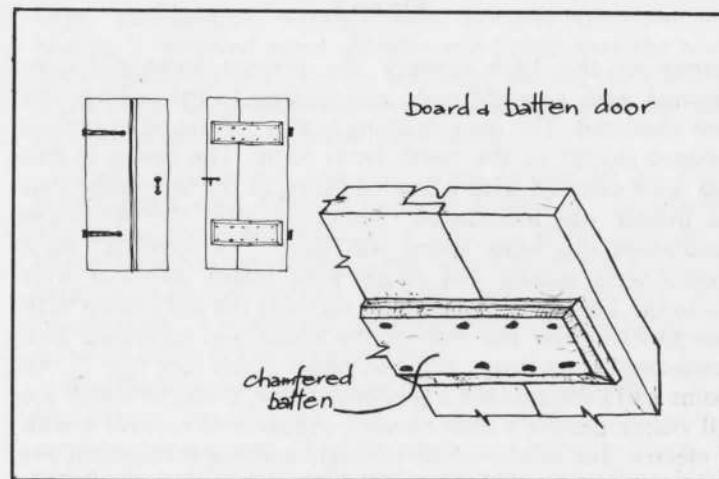


Figure 7

smooth surface, but in the kitchen area the ceiling boards had been covered with whitewash. How long the rooms remained like this is not known but probably during the first



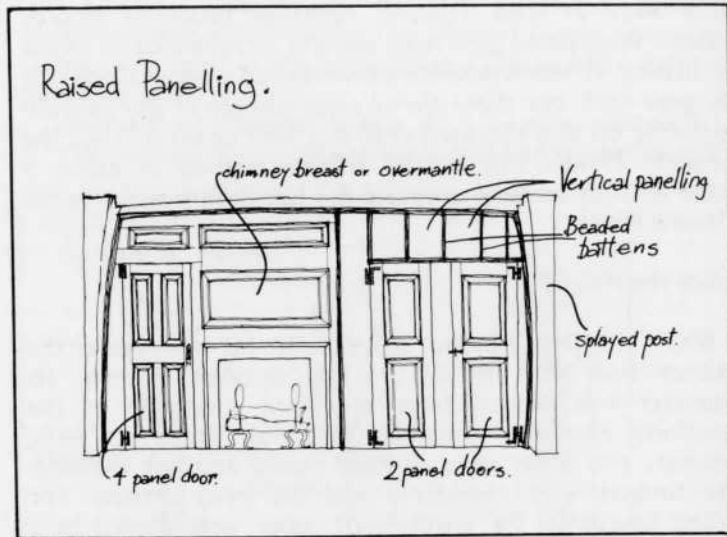


Figure 8

quarter of the 18th century the present hand-split lath, fastened with wrought nails, was applied to the ceilings and then plastered. The main framing beams continued to remain exposed except in the north front room. The beams in this area were covered with a beaded casing at the same time that the plaster was introduced. Sometime after the American Revolution this same room was again "modernized" by a Federal-style mantel and single wide board wainscot with chair-rail. The north front room was also the only room with four-panel doors. The rest of the house was furnished with board-and-batten doors and two-panel doors (See Fig. 7). All rooms had been painted a grey-blue color, traces of which are still visible despite a 20th century endeavor to remove it with an electric disc sander which left ugly scarring throughout the house.

The front room on the south side had a raised panel over-mantel (chimney breast) on the fireplace wall (See Fig. 8). The panelling has beaded battens (much like a window muntin) neatly nailed over the butted seams, a treatment common in many early Capes.

### Wood and Walls

The exterior walls and interior center wall were of stud construction as were the attic gable ends. These studs were Island scrub oak, each piece chosen for the required dimension. A tenon was fashioned on each end of the stud and was then fitted into a pre-cut pocket (mortise) in the upper and lower beam. These studs have a special charm of their own. Their crooked shapes are natural to their growth but are whimsical in house construction.

Another interesting feature was the one-inch hole drilled through the bottom of the stud pocket to the underside of the sill. These holes may have been for air circulation or water drainage.

Much of the early white pine exterior siding was still intact. The boards were sawn, then beveled on both edges in order to lap one over the other creating a tight and flush exterior cover (See Fig. 2). The boards averaged fourteen inches in width and were fastened directly to the studs with large "rose-headed" wrought nails. Shingles now cover these boards. I removed some shingles and found that the boards were weathered and that the softwood around the knots had worn away, suggesting that these boards had been the single exterior weather surface for many years.

I was enlightened one day when talking to an elderly housewright who referred to these boards as "bayboards." The term originated because a lack of white pine on the Island necessitated shipping the wood from the Cape. The trip across Vineyard Sound gave them the name "bayboards." I wondered whether this term originated from a certain pride in the imported pine.

The flooring was also made of these "bayboards." On the first floor there were two layers of flooring with a considerable amount of white beach sand between them. The top layer was ship-lapped and extremely worn; the boards averaged thirteen inches in width. The top floor was probably laid over the lower floor many years ago but the lower floor was also very worn and it had definite marks from door openings and partition walls.

The west side of the first floor, essentially the kitchen

area, was divided as shown in Fig. 9. The partitions were made almost entirely of one-inch thick vertical pine boards used to divide the two back corners from the mid-kitchen area.

The northwest corner was divided again to make a small pantry and there was the familiar tall, narrow window unique to Cape pantries. The remaining space in this area between the pantry and the front parlor was another small room now used as a bathroom. The partition boards in this northwest corner were white pine vertical boards with 1/2-inch bead at the tongue and groove seams (See Fig. 7). The two doors were board-and-batten with H hinges and wooden latches.

The southwest corner was also partitioned with vertical boards but in place of the bead was a simple shadow moulding cut into the edge of the boards. This moulding had been sanded away almost completely by a disc sander. Of the two doorways in this corner one was sealed and the other was board-and-batten with a Norfolk latch and H hinges. This wall may have predated the division in the northwest corner because it had matching wear marks on the upper and lower floor, whereas the other did not.

Several clues indicated that the pantry had originally been located in the southwest corner. The ceiling had a mark where there previously had been another wall. If reinstated, this wall would make a room identical in size and shape to the existing pantry in the northwest corner. The tall, narrow window opening, unique to Cape pantries, was found boarded up behind the wall. Why the pantry was changed from the southwest corner to the northwest corner is open to conjecture.

The southwest corner of the house is also the only section of the house which never had any clay infill. The studs in this area had no gouge marks to receive the necessary staves to hold the clay. The reason for this lack of clay infill is also open to conjecture.

#### Additions to the House

No Cape would be complete without its inevitable ell. The small Vincent House ell, 10' x 10', was attached to the back

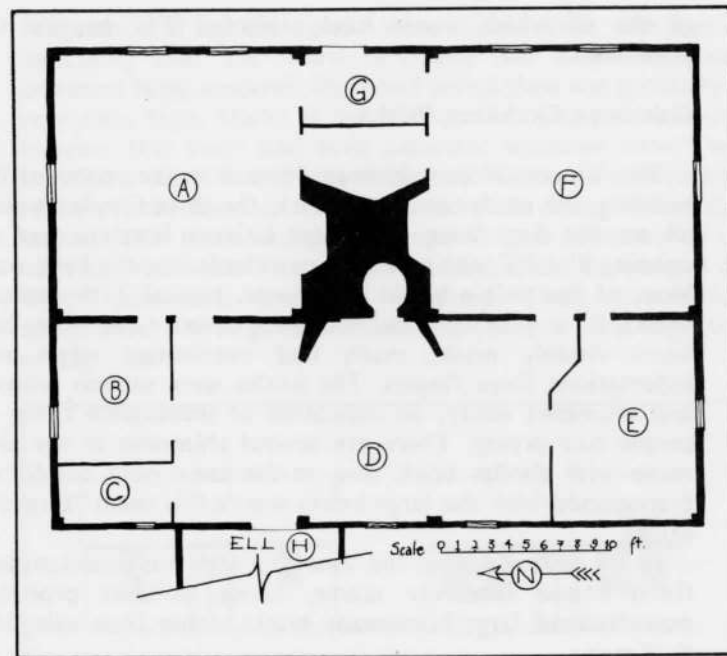


Figure 9

of the house off the kitchen at a very early date. It was built using second hand timbers, as indicated by unused carpentry pockets, marks, etc. in the ell frame. The two corner posts were very ancient with shoulder projections at their tops. Two exterior doors were placed opposite each other to catch cool summer breezes, a charming feature of many ells found on the Vineyard.

The exterior walls of the ell were sheathed with exterior siding of white pine in the same manner as the house. The interior sides of the boards had been white-washed and there were shadow marks from shelving along three walls.

The absence of weathered siding or nail holes on the boards of the main house where the ell was attached suggests that the ell was either built at the same time or very soon after the main house was built. In digging around the ell, archaeologists found remains of a projection off the west end

of the ell which would have projected 7'6" beyond the present ell.

### Chimneys, Fireboxes, Bricks

The Vincent House chimney, located in the center of the building, was made entirely of brick; the three fireplaces were all on the first floor. The large kitchen fireplace had an opening 8' x 4½' with a beehive oven built into the back wall. Most of the visible bricks were large, typical 17th century bricks, 8" x 4" x 1½" and extremely deteriorated. They had been crudely made; many had untrimmed edges and indentations from fingers. The bricks were salmon colored and crumbled easily, an indication of incomplete firing or simple sun drying. There are several chimneys in the area made with similar brick now in the same poor condition. Interspersed with the large bricks were a few small "English" bricks.

In the eastern part of the Vineyard, clay was abundant and field stone relatively scarce, hence builders probably manufactured large homemade bricks rather than using the field stone.

The chimney had been rebuilt judging from the large amount of sooted bricks, "English" bricks, and broken bricks used in construction. (Broken bricks would not have been used in a new chimney.) Cheeks of the large firebox were built at a splayed angle not typical of a seventeenth century firebox, which is more apt to have these cheeks built at right angles to the back. When the hearth was removed, the remains of this earlier type of firebox were found.

Furthermore, the two remaining fireboxes were also built later; behind each of them was found a larger firebox built with the large, early brick. This suggested that the masonry could well have been reworked as many as three times but still during an early period.

### Windows

The present window frames have two twelve-light sash each. The window lights were 6" x 8" and were not original.

Fragments of quarrel glass were found near the house indicating that the house originally had diamond-paned, casement type windows. Diamond-paned glass was generally a very early type. Marks in the studs in the front rooms would indicate that there had been casement windows here. Two stud cuts were found but they had been cut differently. However, the location of the studs in the front rooms did indicate that there had been a single window in the center of each exterior wall. Two of these studs had the type of cut to which casements could be attached. Thus, in exterior appearance, the original structure was changed from Fig. 10A to Fig. 10B.

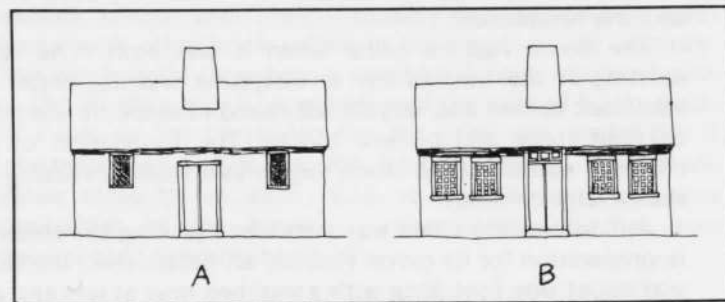


Figure 10

### Stairs

The present stairway is in the kitchen beside the projecting cheek of the fireplace. From the wrought nails used in its construction, I judged the stairway to be quite old. That it was not original to this location was indicated by an empty joist pocket at the top of the stairs where one joist was removed to accommodate the new stairway. The normal location for a stairway in this type of house is in the front hall directly in front of the chimney stack. Investigating this area, which is now a closet, a trap door in the ceiling as well as marks on the vertical wall boards of the closet were found. These marks were probably the edge of two former treads and risers. If so, the first stairway had been there, built as a straight run to the back of the house.

### The Foundation

The foundation of the Vincent House was field stone with six inches visible above ground, extending about a foot below. Mid-sections of each first floor joist were supported by a single stone. Structurally, the short span of the joists did not require these stone supports; therefore, I had to reconsider the possibility that the house had been relocated. We also found several chocks under the structural timbers, mostly around the chimney. Many of these chocks were end cuts or pieces of re-used wood, and might have been used when placing an existing structure on a new foundation. However, these supports could also have been placed during an early renovation.

The house had no cellar when it was built. The cellar existing at the time of my investigation was dug under the southeast corner and was almost round in shape. It was made of field stone and cement blocks. The foundation of the chimney was also field stone dug in as a shallow footing for such a large chimney.

An interesting stone was seen when jacking the chimney in preparation for its move. Possibly an Indian relic, the stone was about one foot long with a snubbed nose at one end and a hole drilled in it one inch deep.

### How old?

During the course of my investigation of the Vincent House, a great many people may have been annoyed by my refusal to confirm the Society's date of 1656. However, I felt that the integrity of a project such as this lay in the careful analysis of facts, and not in merely making quick judgements or confirming already established facts.

To date the evidence that the house was a seventeenth century structure was:

1. Exposed frame with chamfer
2. Large early brick
3. Clay infill
4. Quarrel glass

5. Pit sawn timbers
6. Remains of seventeenth century firebox

contradicted by, in the same order:

1. Frame too light in size
2. Could have been re-used from another area
3. -
4. Still available as late as 1730
5. No clear record of Island sawmill until 1800's
6. Re-built chimney

But to establish a date, I began to hope that I could find a hidden box, or better yet, a dated foundation stone. Instead, a brick with "1672" crudely inscribed on a face was found with other brick rubble in the throat of the chimney. This brick could have been a dated brick from another house or the number may have represented the tally of bricks made in a day, or the particular day the brick was made. But if interpreted as a date for the Vincent House, 1672 made better sense to me than 1656. It was also useful to note similarities of the house to other structures that have documented dates in the 1670's.

### Restoration Prodecure

Once every effort had been made to record and assess the Vincent House, the work of restoring and preserving began. Termite damage was so extensive that we had to consider replacing the entire first floor structure. Because access to the sills and joists was limited to a 14-inch crawl space, it seemed advisable to remove the two layers of flooring. The sills were so deteriorated that the house had settled into an arc that bent the flooring. The floor boards had to be removed from above instead of sliding them out from underneath. To do this, we had to dismantle the southwest partition. All boards were numbered and catalogued as they were removed.

The soil could not be disturbed during this procedure because the archaeological study was still in progress. When the two layers of flooring were removed, grids were laid. The earth was meticulously troweled down to hard-pan, sifted,

and all artifacts and soil disturbances were recorded. The archaeologists found a heavy dispersment of pottery shards from between the mid-eighteenth to nineteenth century. The absence of earlier artifacts supported the possibility that the house had been moved to this site in the eighteenth century. Cross sections taken during the digging revealed dark areas which could be interpreted as post holes left from a post hole house (a house with no sills, but with structural posts set into the ground). The Indian word used to name this point of land, "Mashacket", translates as "at the great house" or "enclosed place", probably referring to a palisaded enclosure built by the native inhabitants for the "Sachem's" house. (Banks - History of Martha's Vineyard - Vol. II, page 18.)

When the flooring was removed, the joists were exposed to be beautiful, all original, and in terrible condition. Could we save the joists? Was it practical to try? Was plastics technology sufficiently advanced to preserve the structure intact? Could the preservation society sustain the cost of a risky approach?

Whenever possible, structures should be preserved; only after that has been studied and proven infeasible should replacement or other methods be attempted. It is natural for good carpenters to want to work with healthy wood, but the responsibilities of an historical project sometimes forbid it.

Work continued on the Vincent House based on the principle of preserving whatever could be saved but influenced by the immediate demands of the archaeologists and the preservation society, and the limitations of time and money.

Each joist was studied and judged individually. Six could be saved. The sills on three sides were hollow or non-existent. To replace the sills we had to jack up the building, which had sagged as much as six inches. Because the floor and sills were rotten, jacks had to be placed directly on the ground under girts and plates. We did not try to straighten the house to its original line but only to a degree that would satisfy the integrity of the structure. This was done section by section depending on where the jacks could best be placed for lifting.

A supply of long, oak, Island-grown logs was found, along with a sawyer and a gasoline-driven saw mill to cut them to the dimensions of the original sills and joists. The sawyer cut a single face on the logs for receiving the flooring. Although the original joists had been installed with bark still intact, we removed it with a broad axe on our replacements feeling that it would be too inviting for termites and powder post beetles.

We fashioned the tenons after the original and dropped them into the pockets we had pre-cut into the new sills. We copied the original joinery. Except for broad axe, draw-knives and adzes, power tools were used for all major work.

One of our more rewarding experiences was the repair of studs. Because we were fortunate enough to be surrounded by scrub oak, we were able to select natural crooked trunks very similar to the originals.

The restoration procedures for the Vincent House were complicated by the need to move this 200-year old house 12 miles to its new location. To resist the strain of the move, we secured the scarf joints in the new sills with carriage bolts instead of wooden pegs. A liquid foaming plastic was especially useful for stabilizing the clay infill.

Securing the chimney for the move presented special difficulties. Many people felt it should be taken down and rebuilt after the move. But I felt that the chimney was the heart of the house and this one might be the last of its kind on the Island. Unlike wooden chimneys, its base was built of loose rubble. The original flues had been "mortared" with clay and the fireboxes with white sand and lime. Moving it intact would be a delicate balancing act.

Convinced we could secure it, we installed a series of wood and wire struts and inserted four-inch thick sheets of polystyrene to stiffen and support the entire length of the flue. Cement was applied to the more seriously damaged areas and the fireboxes were filled with solid chunks of the polystyrene sealed tightly with the foaming plastic. We strapped the stack and braced it around the collars.

After seven weeks of securing sills, joists, fireplaces and flues, we were ready to move.

### The Move

Trouble started when the movers tried to place their iron supports under the chimneys. Had this been a visible area, we would have known that the chimney was rebuilt. Many of the bricks were broken bricks which had been stacked side by side with no interlocking bond or mortar. Consequently, as supports were placed under the chimney, the middle of the chimney started to fall out and the walls slipped sideways. All work was halted while the next three days were spent working under the chimney, supporting every inch of exposed brick with wood, steel, and lots of cement. This was a true labor of love: we had to crawl through a hole hauling the cement and lie on our backs under the chimney. We let the cement cure for two days and lifted the chimney. One week had passed but at last the house was ready for the flatbeds.

The house was jacked up, the flatbed rolled under, and after some maneuvering, the house was balanced on the bed. Spectators gathered and so did rain clouds; the deluge began, the grounds flooded and the house refused to budge. After three days of rain and various adjustments, we were ready to try again.

The first day on the road the house covered less than half the plotted course because so many telephone and electric wires had to be dropped, branches to be lopped, and fences, signs, and other barriers to be avoided. Police escorts, attempting the final mile of trees, wires, narrow streets, and fences into town.

The house spent its first night away from the original site at, and very nearly on, runway E9 of the Dukes County Airport. By the next night, the house had reached the outskirts of Edgartown where we decided to stop before attempting the final mile of trees, wires, narrow streets, and fences into town.

But what was to have been the third and last day of the move stretched out for another five days. Eventually we had to resort to rollers and plank tracks to maneuver around trees. A cinder block foundation had been completed at the new site, and last of all, we built a bridge to move the house

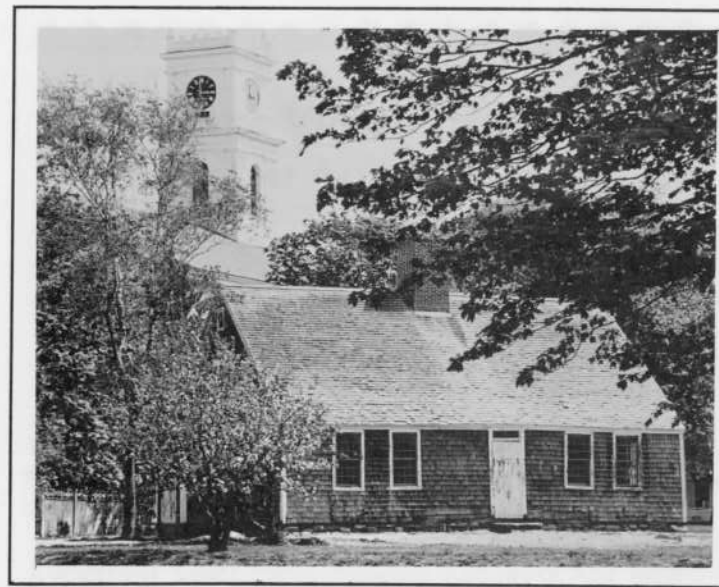


Figure 11

over the foundation. The move we had expected to take three or four hours took twelve days, but the house and its chimney were intact, settled squarely on the new foundation. All that remained to do was to build up the stone work and remove the steel beams bracing the house. A permanent base was cleverly devised by building a plywood box around our emergency fortification.

The Edgartown site does not offer a rural setting nor the same historical significance as the Plains site (See Fig. 11). But in its new location surrounded by a Greek Revival Church, a large Federal house, and other period rooflines profiled nearby, the Vincent House stands in a new and interesting contrast. With simple dignity, it represents the preservation of a way of life and our architectural heritage.



## The Vincent House: The Archaeology

by MYRON O. STACHIW

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**A**rchaeological investigations were undertaken at the Vincent House Site in Edgartown during the summer of 1977. Removal and restoration of the house by A. W. Baker Restorations, Inc. funded by the Martha's Vineyard Historical Preservation Society, called for archaeological testing prior to removal of the house.

The site is located just north of Mashacket Cove on the Edgartown Great Pond, between Kanomika and Mashacket Necks, on land formerly owned by the Vincent family as early as 1656. The site had been continually occupied and farmed since the early 18th century until the mid-20th century.

### Scope of Work

A very limited and specific scope of work was designed for this project. Removal of the house would necessitate the subsurface disturbance of an area with a radius of approximately 25-30 feet from the house. Removal of the chimney and fireplaces together with the house would further cause disturbance beneath the chimney and floors of the house. Replacement and stabilization of the house sills required excavation and exposure of the sills from both the interior and exterior of the house. Therefore, an excavation plan was designed that would investigate the crucial area around and beneath the house to aid in dating and defining architectural features, and testing for, exposing, and salvaging

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any intact subsurface features which might contribute to the establishment of the cultural context, lifeways, and material culture of the site occupants. Any earlier structures or features, historic or prehistoric, were to be searched for and recorded prior to destruction by the heavy machinery involved in removing the house.

From past experience it is known that most activity on a rural site occurred to the rear of the house between the house and outbuildings. For this reason most of the work was concentrated along the north, west, and south faces of the house.

### Methods

All trenches were hand excavated by shovel or trowel in arbitrary and stratigraphic levels. All soil removed was screened through 1/4" hardware cloth, and all cultural material was bagged and recorded by provenience. Any earth moved by the restoration crew was subject to the same procedures of screening and bagging by provenience.

Because of the limited scope of work, and because the focus of excavation was to be the standing structure, all trenches were oriented to the house rather than along an arbitrary grid pattern over the site. While not generally suited for very large or undifferentiated sites, in this case this procedure enabled us to utilize our excavation time efficiently by concentrating our efforts where they seemed most likely to yield pertinent information.

All trenches and features were mapped to scale and at least one wall of each trench was recorded in profile. Progress was recorded in daily field notes. All artifacts were taken to the laboratory and washed, counted, separated by type, and catalogued within their provenience. A total of 68 square meters were excavated yielding more than 21,500 artifacts. Analysis of artifact types and their relationships was kept to a minimum because of the quantity of artifacts recovered, and time and budget limitations. Additional artifact studies and restoration of perishable and outstanding items that could be used in an interpretive capacity are recommended.

### Soils and Stratigraphy

The characteristic stratigraphy of the Vincent House Site is this. Below the sod is a layer of gray-brown loamy sand forming an A horizon approximately 20 cm thick. The next layer, the B horizon, consists of a yellow/orange sand, extending to a depth of approximately 85 cm, below present ground surface. Underlying these is a third layer, a pale yellow sand/gravel, comprising the C horizon. The thickness of these stratigraphic levels varies somewhat, but the basic sequence is the same in all undisturbed areas of the site.

The topsoil is classified as Dukes Loamy Coarse Sand, a poor soil occasionally cultivated for corn, oats, rye, potatoes, and other vegetables, as well as pastured and mowed. Crop yields are comparatively low, but can be improved with fertilization. Areas of this soil type near Katama were used for growing corn by the Indians and later by English settlers, as had also been done above Kanomika at the Vincent Site. The site sits in the middle of an area of this soil type measuring approximately one half by one and one half miles (Latimer 1925).

### Auger Transects

A series of ten systematically placed transects were run to the north and south of the standing house. Transects and station intervals were at a distance of five feet (Fig. 1). Three-fourths inch diameter soil augers were used which provided a 21" soil profile. The strategy behind this method of site survey was to quickly obtain a profile of the soils prior to excavation of trenches and to locate anomalous soil profiles that might indicate subsurface features, thus aiding in effective placement of trenches. Unfortunately, no subsurface features other than the oil tank were located in this fashion.

### Pavement Clearing

A stone paving of rounded boulders and cobbles was found along the rear (west) of the house and around the ell



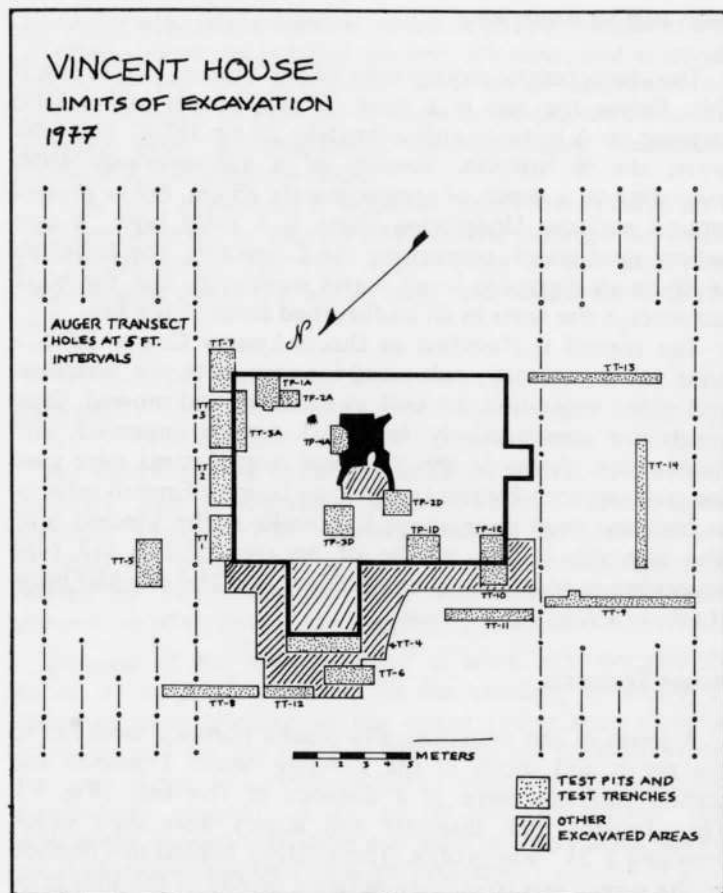


Figure 1

(Fig. 2). The sod in this area was removed and all soil was cleaned from around the stones. The area was then mapped and photographed to aid in the replacement of the stones on the new site. Artifacts recovered were quite numerous ranging in date from very recent to prehistoric times. These included a large quantity of nails (at least 1300) — hand forged, machine cut, and wire — from various roofing and siding operations; 329 window and bottle glass fragments;

bone; shell; a 1910 penny; gun cartridges; and ceramics (120 sherds) dating from the 18th century to the present. A cache of prehistoric lithic material in the form of 41 felsite, quartz, and jasper flakes were found just off the southwest corner of the house among the cobbles. Their origin was puzzling until Mr. MacKenty, who lived there as a youth, identified the cache as a treasure he had buried as a young boy.

The paving had been disturbed in several places south of the ell along the house wall for electrical and telephone cables. Trench 10, a one meter square trench, was placed at the paving off the southwest corner of the house. It was hoped this trench would provide evidence regarding the laying of the paving, but disturbance from cables and the exposure of a batch of rodent or insect poison halted the excavation. One pane of diamond-shaped window glass, machine cut and wire nails, and 12 sherds of redware and pearlware (1780-1830) were recovered.

This paving was probably placed to provide a well-drained clean walkway around the back of the house. Its date of construction is uncertain as the several disturbances destroyed any intact dating context. However, similar exterior pavements were common in the 18th and 19th centuries over a wide geographic area (Moran 1977, Clauser 1977).

#### Trenches 1, 2, 3, 7

This was a series of one by two meter trenches excavated along the north wall of the standing house at intervals of 50 cm. (Fig. 3). It was hoped that these trenches would expose an intact builders' trench, into which a foundation was laid. Quite often such trenches yield cultural material which may have been deposited into the open trench prior to its being filled, thus aiding to date the construction of the foundation and house. Underlying the house sills at present ground level and extending to a maximum depth of 40 cm below surface (b.s.) was the house foundation, composed of rounded boulders clumsily and unevenly laid up in one or two courses. The unevenness of the foundation undoubtedly contributed to a sagging of the floor and sills in this end of the house.

Occasional patches of cement and mortar indicated areas of disturbance and repair due to laying of pipes through and under the foundation for interior plumbing, a fairly recent luxury (c. 1940). No builders' trench was encountered. Approximately 25-30 cm of gray/brown sandy loam were found in this area, yielding a variety of artifacts, including clay smoking pipe fragments, window and bottle glass, 18th and 19th century ceramic sherds, hand forged, machine-cut and wire nails, bones, hardware, gunflints, a pewter button, and one broken quartz projectile point tip and seven quartz flakes.

Trench 1 contained the only *in situ* refuse deposit located during the excavations. A patch of dark brown soil and a concentration of nails, ceramic sherds, and window glass were encountered at 10 cm b.s. in the western half of the trench. Further excavation showed that the pit was excavated

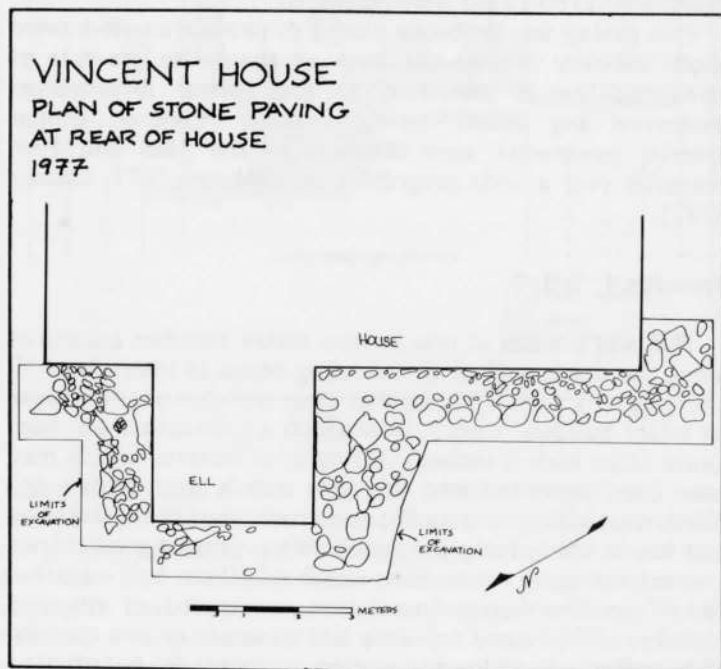


Figure 2

through the topsoil and into the subsoil to a maximum depth of 53 cm b.s. Cultural material recovered from the pit included several clam shells, window glass, 377 handmade and machine cut nails, a padlock, 46 bottle glass fragments, 8 smoking pipe stems, a brass button, one gray gunflint, 522 ceramic sherds, a whetstone and a quartz corner-notched projectile point. Employing the Mean Ceramic Date Formula developed by Stanley South (1971), a date of 1791.7 was calculated. This formula employs the known-mean dates of manufacture of the various ceramic types recovered and allows the calculation of an approximate mean date of deposition or occupation based on these manufacture dates. Based on the principle that ceramics, due to their frequent use, break often and within several years of their purchase, widespread use of this formula has shown that it is a fairly reliable tool for dating historic site occupation or deposition of features. In this case the deposition may have been several years later, as a large number of machine cut nails were recovered from the feature. The method of cutting nails from sheets and rods by machine was not perfected and common until the early and mid-1790's (Nelson 1968). Thus the feature could not have been deposited until the middle or late 1790's.

The following ceramic types and quantities were recovered from the feature:

Type	Sherd Count
Redware, glazed, unglazed	305
Redware, slip decorated (c. 1600-1800)	1
Combed slipware (c. 1670-1795)	1
Tin-glazed slipware (delft, c. 1600-1802)	10
Creamware (c. 1762-1820)	152
Pearlware (c. 1780-1840)	15
hand painted (c. 1780-1820)	22
polychrome hand painted (c. 1795-1815)	19
Stoneware, gray	12
Porcelain, unidentified	5

At least two redware bowls or milkpans were represented in the deposit, as well as a creamware beaded edge bowl. Three

pearlware tea cup handles and cup sherds were also recovered.

Immediately to the east of the refuse pit, a metal water pipe and trench were encountered to a depth of 55 cm b.s., and contained several 20th century artifacts as well as late 18th or early 19th century material, very similar to that within the refuse pit. This is probably the result of disturbance and mixing of the upper portion of the refuse pit which extended beyond the small circular area indicated in the subsoil. Undoubtedly this overflow of the pit was cut into and mixed with the fills redeposited into the trench. Another modern disturbance was located in Trench 2, labeled Feature 1 (Fig. 3). This was a large metal pipe leading from the interior of the house to the cesspool, located to the northeast of the house. Two areas of mottled, disturbed soil were located surrounding the pipe (Fig. 3), suggesting this area had been excavated twice. These pits extended to a depth of 1.3 meters b.s., dug to lay the pipe and allow access for a workman to make repairs or relay the pipe. Artifacts recovered included a mix of 18th to 20th century material.

Within this series of trenches eleven dark soil stains were located. Also four dark stains were located in Trench 3, Room A, along the north wall of the house (Fig. 3). These dark stains were first visible at the top of the orange subsoil at a depth of approximately 25 cm b.s., appearing as mottled stains of dark brown gray loam. All the stains outside the house the foundation line appeared to line up in a gentle curve to the south. A total of seven of these stains was excavated: A, B, F outside the house, and A, B, C, D inside the house in Trench 3. Stain A in Trench 1 extended to a depth of 70 cm b.s. and the undisturbed portion of this pit contained one sherd of delft, seven creamware sherds, seven sherds of pearlware, 14 nail fragments, and three fragments of glass. Stain F in Trench 2 contained three sherds of creamware. Stain D in Trench 3 Room A contained one piece of worked wood and three plaster fragments like those on the walls of the house.

At first the stains were interpreted as postholes of possible prehistoric origin. The recovery of projectile points and flakes and the slight curve to the alignment of the stains

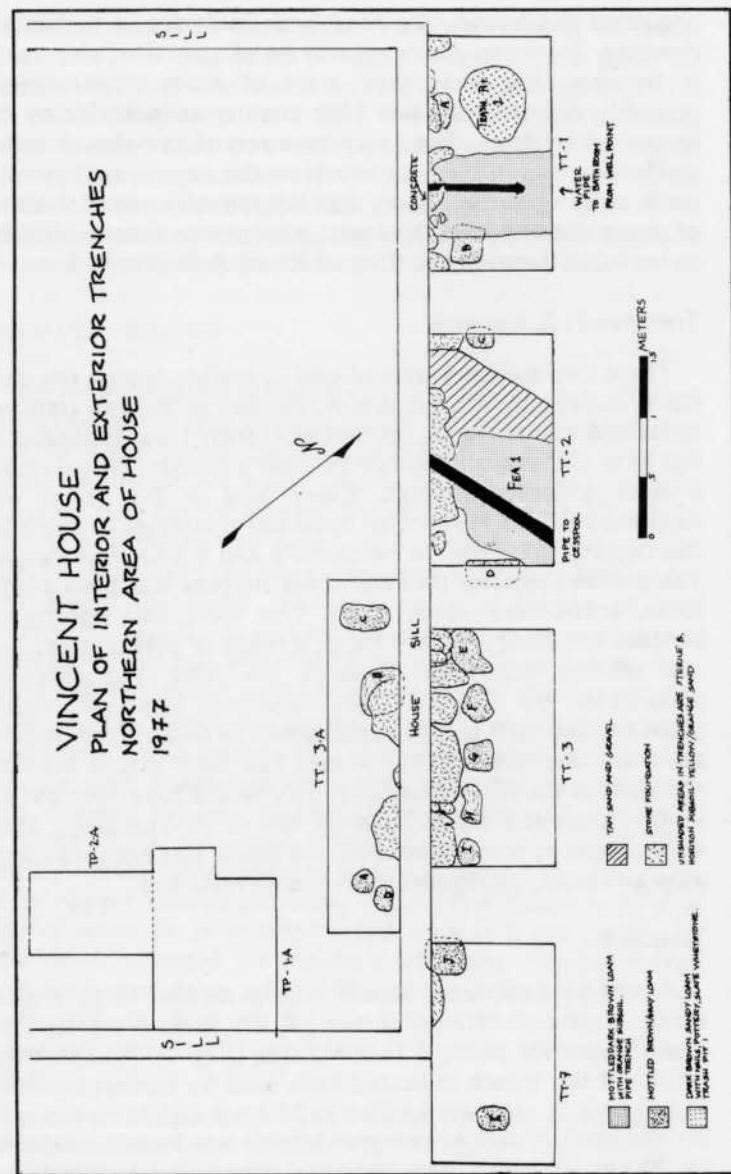


Figure 3

suggested the house may have been built over a prehistoric dwelling. However, upon excavation of several of the stains, it became clear that they were of more recent origin, probably dating to the late 18th century as indicated by the recovered artifacts. They may have served as holes in which scaffolding was placed for work on the house, or they may mark a site where shrubbery was planted or removed. Neither of these explanations, however, adequately account for the stains found beneath the floor of Room A in Trench 3.

#### Trenches 1, 2, Room A

These two trenches were placed to further expose the dark stains in the subsoil in Room A. Neither of the two trenches contained any stains. A portion of Trench 1 was extended to the west and a profile drawn beneath a boulder placed under a floor joist for support. Every joist in this room was supported in this fashion, an unsuccessful attempt to shore up the sagging floor due to rotted sills and a poor foundation. The profile indicates that the stone support was placed on a loose, gray-brown sandy loam. This loose soil was found beneath the floor in every room, a result of constant dryness and silt-like deposition through the floor and repeated disturbance by rodents. This loose soil contained many disarticulated bird and mammal bones as well as small rodent skeletons and nests. If the stones had been placed beneath the joists as the house was built, they would have been buried in the loose soil rather than on top of it. Therefore, they were placed at some time after the house had been standing, atop an already accumulated level of silt-like soil.

#### Trench 5

A one-by-two-meter trench was excavated three meters north of the northwest corner of the house, the first of several trenches planned for this area (Fig. 1). However the results of this trench indicated little need for further trenches in this area. A pipe was located at 24 cm b.s. running towards the cesspool. A dark brown-gray topsoil was found to a depth of 20 cm, at which time the pipe trench was revealed in a matrix of sterile orange subsoil.

Cultural material recovered from the topsoil included bone, shell, 63 fragments of window and bottle glass, 83 machine cut and wire nails, seven pipe stem fragments and ten bowl fragments, and 216 ceramic sherds including redware, creamware, pearlware, stoneware, a teapot cover of Chinese export porcelain (c. 1800-1830), and hard white ware of the mid-to-late 19th century. Also prehistoric material consisting of two felsite flakes and one possible end scraper were recovered.

#### Feature 2 – Rear Ell

The removal of the rear ell by the restoration crew allowed excavation of the area beneath the ell. The ell foundation was built of small stone cobbles cemented together in some places. Recent brown bottle glass in the cement and new sills suggested that the foundation and ell had been rebuilt within this century. Along the west wall of the ell several copper pipes emerged from the ground to what had been a sink and a hand pump for water. The area enclosed by the ell was divided into quadrants and the entire area was excavated to a depth of 20 cm b.s. The first 10 cm of soil were a loose, dry, dust similar to that found beneath the floor throughout the house and containing similar materials. Of particular interest were about 15 fragments of a slate blackboard incised with lettering and multiplication tables, ceramics ranging from delft, combed slipware, and scratch blue saltglazed stoneware (c. 1744-1775) to yellow Fiesta ware of the early 20th century. Prehistoric artifacts included several quartz chips and a copper cutout projectile point. The discovery of this type of point in an archaeological context is not known to have been recorded on Martha's Vineyard. Similar points were recovered from early 17th century Indian burials at Burr's Hill in Warren, R.I. and from Indian burials on Conanicut Island in Rhode Island (Ferguson 1978, Simmons 1970).

Such points date to the early contact period which ranges from the late 15th century to the early 17th century. Fishermen and early explorers made contact with coastal Indians quite early in the 16th century and such items may

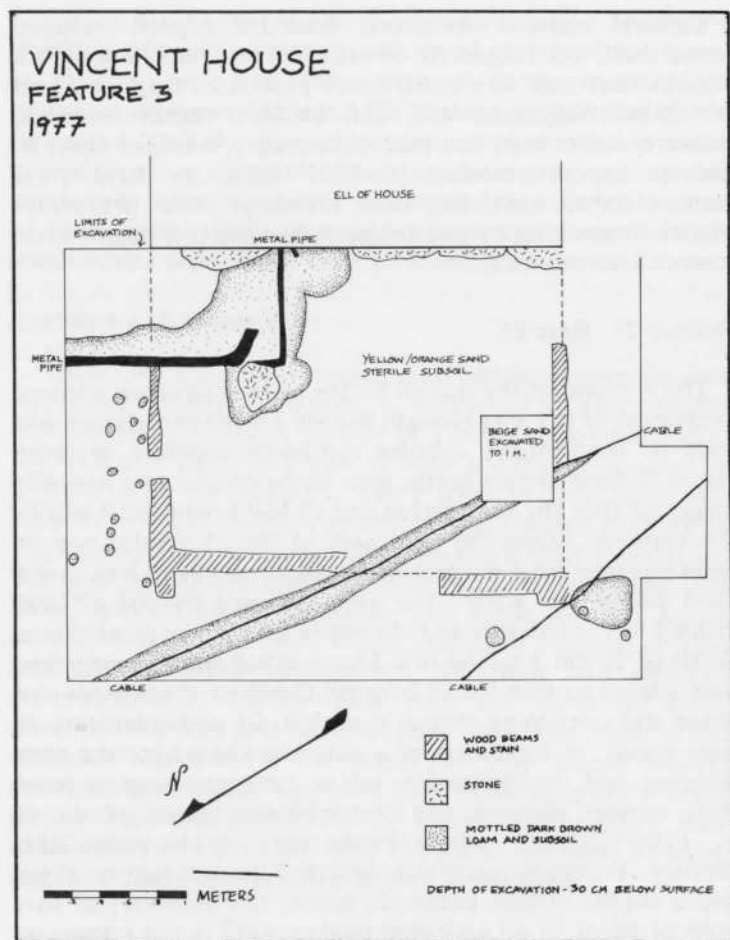


Figure 4

have been traded to the natives. Also, copper may have been salvaged by the Indians from beached or wrecked ships. On Martha's Vineyard, such contact may have occurred at a very early date and on a fairly regular basis prior to settlement in 1643. Banks claims possible contact with Europeans in 1524 when Verrazzano sailed the east coast from North Carolina to

Newfoundland. The first recorded contact was by Bartholomew Gosnold in 1602, followed by Champlain in 1606, Block and Christiaensen in 1611-14, and Capt. John Smith in 1614. Accounts of Gosnold's voyage, recorded by Brereton, the historian of the voyage, mention that the natives possessed a great deal of copper in the form of kettles, chains, earrings, collars, arrowheads, cups, and plates. Banks suggests as their origin the Lake Superior region and a vast trade network. More than likely, however, coastal contact with Europeans and shipwrecks probably occurred with much greater frequency than has been recorded and it is likely that this and local trade networks were the source of most of the copper (Banks-1966).

The site occupies an area near Mashacket Neck and Mashacket Cove. Banks followed the derivation of this name and interpreted it as "at the great house" or "enclosed place," referring to a palisaded enclosure for the Sachem's house (Banks 1966). If this is true, then the discovery of the copper point on the site could indicate that the site of this "great house" or village is nearby or at least that the area was travelled and hunted during this period.

Beneath the loose, dry soil a mottled orange sand-brown loam was exposed. Similar cultural material was recovered from this soil from 10-20 cm, only in smaller quantities. At 20 cm b.s. a mottled dark stain was exposed around the pipes in the western end of the ell, a dark stain was exposed beneath the house sill in the northeast corner of the ell (Feature 2B), and a donut shaped ring of soil was exposed in the center of the ell (Feature 2A). This ring of soil was sectioned and the southwest quadrant was removed to a depth of 45 cm b.s. The orange sand within the ring contained one redware sherd, while the dark stain contained several brick fragments and one piece of light green glass. Beneath this feature, two copper pipes were located running to the east. This was rather puzzling as the orange subsoil did not appear as if a pipe trench had been excavated through it to lay the pipes, suggesting that the entire area beneath the ell floor had been filled after the laying of the pipe with a fairly uniform soil. The ring of dark soil still remains a mystery.

Feature 2B, the dark stain beneath the house sill, was excavated to a depth of 35 cm b.s. First the orange sand matrix surrounding the feature was removed. It contained no cultural material. The dark soil within the feature contained several sherds of redware, one sherd of white saltglazed stoneware (c. 1720-1805), one sherd of hard white ware, four nails, bone, and a section of yellow and green painted wood moulding. Again the same copper pipes were encountered beneath the feature at a depth of 35 cm. Thus the entire area beneath the ell had been heavily disturbed since the early 20th century and these features had to postdate that disturbance.

### Feature 3

This area is located west of the existing ell and represents a possible shed or lean-to. Trench 4, a one meter by three meter trench, was placed directly to the west of the present ell (Fig. 1). Removal of the topsoil (0-20 cm) exposed remnants of stone paving, an iron pipe at 14 cm b.s. along the west wall of the trench, and a disturbed area with another pipe crossing the central portion of the trench (Fig. 4). Only the southern half of the trench lacked signs of recent disturbance. The topsoil layer contained a mix of cultural material ranging from the 18th to the 19th centuries.

The seemingly undisturbed southern half was excavated to a depth of 30 cm b.s. Very similar cultural material was recovered from this layer as from the topsoil. However, a decaying wood beam was exposed at 24 cm b.s. It lay along the same line as the south wall of the present ell, but did not enter the east baulk of the trench. At this point excavation was halted in this trench and trench 6 was opened (Fig. 1). At 15 cm b.s. a layer of crushed shell was encountered, most likely part of the present turn-out or driveway between the ell and the well. A layer of mottled brown soil containing bone, 42 nails, pipestems, bottle glass, pearlware and redware (40 sherds) was removed to a depth of 35 cm b.s. and a surface of mottled orange sand. A dark brown-stained trench containing a telephone cable crossed the northeast corner of the trench from 20-35 cm b.s. The wood beam was exposed

at 25 cm b.s. along the western edge of the trench.

Trench 12 was next excavated along the line of the wood beam in trench 6 (Fig. 1). At 15 cm b.s. the wood beam was encountered and a corner was exposed at a point even with the north side of the present ell. The dimensions of this feature could now be determined. The same width as the present ell, the wood beams extended two meters to the west of the present ell. A mix of early 18th - 20th century artifacts was recovered to 20 cm b.s. including two fragments of diamond paned window glass, machine cut and wire nails, plastic, six sherds of creamware, and four of redware.

At this point a large area measuring four meters (north-south) by three meters was opened up and excavated in quadrants to 35 cm b.s., completely exposing the wood beams. A brown loam topsoil was encountered to 15 cm, containing a mix of late 18th-20th century artifacts including a US penny from the second decade of the 20th century. A second telephone cable was located cutting through the feature (Fig. 4). Both the interior and exterior of the feature were excavated to a depth of 35 cm b.s. where sterile subsoil was encountered. The cultural material recovered was very similar from within and outside of the feature, with the exception of three fragments of clay recovered from the interior in the southeast quadrant. This clay is similar to that found within the walls of the house, though it cannot be said at this point whether it was also found in the walls of this structure. Both inside and outside Feature 3, modern artifacts continued to be found with ceramics, nails, and glass dating at the earliest to the late 18th century.

A number of small dark brown stains were located to the north of the feature though none were excavated. A small pit was exposed off the southwest corner of the feature. This pit was sectioned and was found to contain a mottled dark brown soil with charcoal to a depth of 14 cm below the surface of the pit. Its contents were three fragments of bone, two nail fragments, 1 piece of clam shell, and one sherd of pearlware. Its use could not be determined.

One additional pit was excavated within Feature 3 to a depth of one meter, or 1.35 meters b.s. (Fig. 4). The surface of the interior of the feature was found to be quite different

from the exterior in color. Although a similar yellow-orange sand, the interior surface appeared mottled with a red-brown stain. This mottling continued all the way down to 1.35 meters. It is possible that this is a result of a wood floor and leaching. One section of wood beam was removed from the northwest corner of the feature. Beneath this wood beam, two shell fragments, one brick fragment, and seven sherds of a single granite ware vessel (c. 1813-1900) were recovered.

The interpretation of this feature presents some difficulty. The absence of early 18th century cultural material and the preponderance of late 18th-early 19th century artifacts suggests that the area may have been covered over by a structure until the late 18th-early 19th century, preventing deposition in a random sheet refuse manner as in the other trenches until this period. A similar discovery was made at the Narbonne House in Salem, Mass. The removal of a lean to was dated to the mid-18th century by the absence of 17th-early 18th century material within the remaining lean to foundation and occurrence of only mid-18th century and later artifacts in this area (Moran 1977). The large number of early and mid-19th century ceramics (approximately 300 sherds of hard white ware) recovered from the interior of Feature 3 and the granite ware vessel recovered from beneath the wood beam suggest the removal of the structure in the early to mid-19th century and deposition of refuse and fill into this area. The absence of a stone foundation and the depth of the beams with relation to the floor of the existing house and ell suggest that this feature is not the remains of an earlier, longer ell, but possibly an added shed or lean to, with no permanence intended, as wood sills quickly rot out when in contact with the soil and repeated moisture. The repeated disturbance beneath the present ell and evident rebuilding of this ell have removed any traces of a continuation of Feature 3 in this area or of architectural evidence of its relationship to the house or ell; other than its conformity to the width of the present ell.

Trenches 8, 9, 11, 13, 14.

These were a series of 0.5 meter wide exploratory trenches

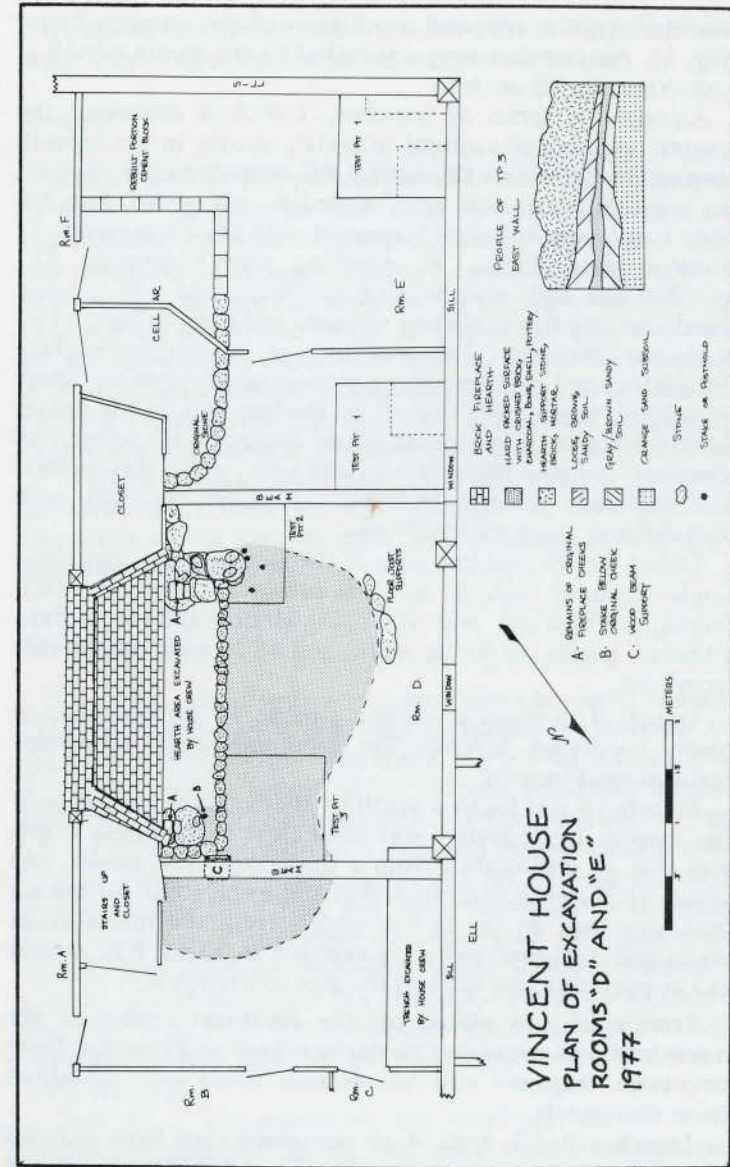


Figure 5

placed along the west and south sides of the standing house (Fig. 1). All trenches were excavated to the sterile subsoil at approximately 25 cm b.s.

Among this series of trenches, Trench 8 contained the greatest amount of cultural material, mostly in the topsoil, ranging in date from the early 18th century to the present. No subsurface features were located in this trench, but 208 bone fragments, 190 shell fragments, 104 brick fragments, 52 window glass sherds, 23 smoking pipe fragments, 111 machine cut and wire nails, 4 gunflints, and 548 ceramic sherds ranging from combed slipware and delft to hard white wares were recovered. This area suffered very little subsurface disturbance and demonstrates a concentrated deposit of sheet refuse just outside the rear ell or kitchen area of the house. Such a practice of broadcast refuse disposal was common on sites into the mid-18th century and later, when this method was replaced, at least in urban or village contexts, with well-defined, excavated trash pits.

Trench 11, located just west of the stone paving, contained similar cultural material and no subsurface features. Hand forged, machine cut, and wire nails, window and bottle glass, a broken quartz projectile point, and 46 ceramic sherds were recovered.

Trench 9 exposed a copper pipe at 14 cm b.s. heading south southwest towards the bunkhouse. No subsurface features were located.

Trench 14 was located south of the house at a distance of five meters. Little testing was done close to the house in this area due to disturbance from a buried oil tank, cables, and pipes. This trench indicated that the excavation for the oil tank extended as far as five meters from the house as oil stains and disturbed soil were exposed at 20 cm b.s., as well as a copper pipe, the same as the pipe in Trench 9.

Trench 13 was placed off the southeast corner of the house and was excavated to sterile subsoil at 23 cm b.s. Only one brick fragment and one ceramic sherd were recovered from this trench.

Trenches 9, 13, and 14 all contained very little cultural materials compared with trenches 11 and 8. The density of the middenlike sheet refuse in the area immediately

surrounding the present ell indicates this to have been the major area of activity and traffic around the house.

### Room E

A one meter square pit was placed in the southwest corner of Room E abutting the sills (Fig. 5). Ten cm of dry loose soil containing 8 bone fragments, 5 brick fragments, 3 nails, one pipestem, 25 redware sherds, 2 creamware sherds, and 1 pearlware sherd were recovered. At 10 cm b.s. a sterile orange sand subsoil was encountered. A section beneath the south sill was removed to expose the foundation and fill around it. A shallow stone cobble foundation only one course deep was exposed. Within the mottled soil among the foundation stones, one fragment of window glass, 2 nails, and 99 sherds of redware were recovered. Redware was a common utilitarian ware from the 17th through the 19th centuries, thus little can be determined from this sample regarding the age of the foundation.

### Room D

Three one meter square trenches were excavated in Room D (Fig. 5). Test pit 1 was located against the west sill and south of a chimney girt. The loose, dry soil was excavated to the sterile orange subsoil at 15 cm and contained material like that found elsewhere beneath the floor and also an 1805 US cent, and a fragment of a diamond shaped window pane. This is particularly significant as the pit is located directly beneath a window. This and other windows in the house show evidence of alteration and rebuilding, the replacement of casement windows containing leaded diamond paned glass with hung sash windows. The discovery of seven fragments of this glass in and around the house lends strong support to the presence of this type of window, common until the early 18th century.

Test pit 2 was placed on the southwest corner of the hearth foundation (Fig. 5). The loose topsoil in this trench also yielded one piece of diamond paned window glass as well as bone, shell, nails, pipestems, two brass buttons, and 24



ceramic sherds including redware, creamware, pearlware, white saltglazed stoneware, porcelair, and Westerwald stoneware (c. 1700-1775).

At 20 cm a hard-packed, dark brown surface was encountered in the northwest and northwest portions of the trench around the hearth foundation. The stones that supported the brick hearth were three courses deep and rested on this dark brown soil layer. Four small stains were located just west of the hearth support stone (Fig. 5). The entire pit was excavated to 40 cm into a sterile orange sand, yielding one quartz flake, one quartz core, one shell, two brick fragments, and three plaster fragments. The stains, interpreted as stake holes, extended to a depth of 15 cm below the level at which they were encountered or 35 cm b.s. They contained no cultural material.

Test pit 3 was placed against the north chimney girt and the hearth foundation. Again, 20 cm of loose, dry soil were removed containing bone and shell, brick and plaster fragments, a chunk of clay like that found in the walls, nails, glass, textile fragments, plastic, a spoon bowl, two brass buttons, a checker-like gaming piece, and 18 ceramic sherds of redware, delft, creamware, pearlware, and hardwhite ware. Next, 5 cm of hard-packed dark brown soil like that encountered in Test pit 2 were exposed, containing crushed brick, charcoal, crushed bone and shell, and several sherds of redware. This layer covered the entire pit and was found to extend in an arc surrounding the hearth and passing under the single course of hearth foundation stones. This rectangular foundation was of recent origin as it lay atop the loose soil and was cemented together. The area between these stones and the fireplace and under the fireplace had been excavated by the restoration crew to a depth of 50 cm, obliterating any remains of this hard-packed surface immediately in front of the fireplace. However, this excavation exposed the stone and brick supports of an earlier fireplace with a different cheek configuration. The present fireplace possessed cheeks sloping out from the back wall of the fireplace, while the earlier, original fireplace had cheeks that were perpendicular to the back wall of the fireplace, with an opening measuring approximately seven feet. It was

found that the hard-packed surface did not continue under the foundation of the original cheeks, but it was found beneath the foundation stones of the widened cheeks. This hard-packed surface, only 5 cm thick, contained six sherds of redware, four sherds of slip decorated redware, one nail, twelve pieces of crushed bone, fifteen fragments of crushed shell, and one fragment of window glass. From the extent and content of this hard-packed surface, it is hypothesized that this was a short term living surface. It appears that cooking was carried on in the fireplace and the house was occupied for a short period of time prior to the laying of a plank floor. The crushed bone, shell, brick, and redware were well trod upon, mixing with spilled food, liquids, and grease to form a thin, midden-like, dark brown layer. This is a rather significant discovery, as it indicates occupation of the house without a plank floor.

Another interesting find was made in the area of the north fireplace cheek foundation. A decaying wood stake was located in a hole opposite the original cheek foundation. It obviously was used to lay out the fireplace dimensions and guide the mason and bricklayer. Similar stains found opposite the south cheek foundation may have served the same purpose.

A large number of ceramic sherds were recovered from beneath the large kitchen fireplace and hearth by the restoration crew. At least 12 vessels were represented by 102 sherds, including a redware jug, a slip decorated bowl, an annular ware bowl (c. 1790-1820), a creamware chamberpot, almost completely reconstructed, two blue shell-edged pearlware plates (c. 1780-1830), three hand painted pearlware saucers, a transfer printed pearlware plate (c. 1795-1840), a hand painted creamware vessel (c. 1765-1810), and a white saltglazed vessel (c. 1720-1805). Also, 65 pieces of dark green bottle glass, 47 light green bottle glass fragments, two bone fragments, and three shells were recovered. All the material was contemporary, with little or no intrusive material, suggesting a single deposition. When South's Mean Ceramic Data Formula was applied to the ceramics, a date of 1798 was obtained. This suggests that around the year 1800, the hearth area had been opened up,

perhaps for the replacement of the hearth bricks, and these broken ceramic and glass vessels were deposited as part of the fill beneath the hearth. This may signal the date at which the entire fireplace was widened, although no concrete answer can be put forward. At any rate, it indicates a period of rebuilding of the hearth or chimney. The material found beneath the hearth is very similar in date to the earliest ceramics found in Feature 3. Perhaps this indicates a period of rebuilding or remodelling of more than just the fireplace.

### Room A

On the basis of the findings under the hearth of Room D, the hearth of Room A was removed and excavated to see if the hearth structure in this fireplace underwent change, and if so, when. A mixed fill of brown loam, sand, yellow clay, charcoal, mortar, brick fragments, glass, ceramics, and iron was found to a depth of 43 cm below the hearth floor. At this depth 10 cm of a sterile dark brown sand were encountered, overlying a sterile yellow sand. Identifiable artifacts recovered from the fill included 126 bones, 11 shells, 31 seeds, 7 pieces of yellow clay, some adhering to brick fragments, 10 pieces of window glass, three pipe stems, one brass button, 12 pieces of cotton fabric, printed paper (unreadable), one broken felsite projectile point, 8 sherds of redware, 5 of pearlware, one sherd of Jackfield (c. 1740-1780), and one sherd of white saltglazed stoneware. Anne Baker feels that this was not the original chimney or fireplace in the house. The earlier chimney would have been laid with yellow clay rather than mortar. The brick and clay would then be fragments of the original fireplace brick. In fact, the rebuilt chimney and fireplace was built almost entirely of reused bricks, many with this yellow clay still adhering.

A late 18th century-early 19th century context is indicated by the fills beneath this hearth as well as the hearth in Room D. Therefore, it appears that the fireplaces and hearths underwent a major overhaul around the year 1800.

### Conclusions

Archaeological excavations indicate that the Vincent House was not the original house owned and occupied by William Vincent at the time of his death. The earliest possible occupation of this site based on recovered cultural material could be the second or third decade of the 18th century. Even then, very little cultural material dating to this period was recovered. At other late 17th- to early 18th century sites that have been continually occupied since their erection, very little cultural material dating to the early years of occupation was found, and almost never in the original, undisturbed context (Moran 1977, Ferguson 1976, Baker 1977). Two hundred and fifty years of continual occupation, rebuilding, landscaping, introduction of indoor plumbing, and wiring have usually disturbed the areas immediately adjacent to the house, as well shown by the Vincent House excavations.

From the architectural evidence, the interior of the house underwent several stages of renovation as shown by the cased beams, Federal style mantel, changed windows, and rebuilt fireplaces. Archaeologically, one stage of change, renovation, and rebuilding activity appears to have occurred during the late 18th-early 19th century, with most sealed deposits dating to this period.

A review of the documentary data, though very limited at this stage of the project, tends to support the archaeological data regarding the date of the house. William Vincent purchased land in the vicinity of Mashacket and Kanomika Necks as early as 1656. William's son Thomas owned land and a house by 1698 when he sold it to Joseph Marchant, though this does not appear to be near his father's land. The land of William passed to Thomas after his death, as Thomas purchased the house and lands from his mother in 1710-1712. In 1713, Thomas sold seven acres of land on the northerly side of his holdings. A 1743 deed mentions land given to Thomas Vincent, Jr. above Mashacket by his father Thomas. Thus Thomas, Jr., married in 1710, acquired some land owned by his grandfather and then his father. A deed dated 1723/24, mentions Thomas Jr's *new* house by Kanomika Neck. In 1733 Thomas Sr. sells to his youngest son,

Joseph, his house and lands at Mashacket, presumably the house he purchased of his mother.

A map dated to 1781 (Des Barres) shows five structures in two clusters to the north of Mashacket Cove. The same structures are illustrated on an 1856 map (Walling) and are identified as belonging to two Vincent family members. One house is located near the water, just west of the head of Mashacket Cove, probably the house of William, Thomas, Sr., and Joseph; the second located where the present Vincent House was located, referred to as the *new* house by Thomas, Jr. A search for the house of William, Thomas, and Joseph proved unsuccessful. The site may have been destroyed by recent development on the site.

Thus a cursory inspection of the documents indicates that the house mentioned by Thomas Vincent Jr. in 1723/24 may actually be the house now being restored. The archaeology supports this hypothesis. However, further intensive documentary research in which the holdings of the various Vincents would be traced and mapped could provide the necessary confirmation or correct identification of the site. If in fact the house now being restored is the new house mentioned in 1723/24, it would be very significant in that the various architectural details such as diamond paned casement windows, clay and straw insulation, and various details such as framing and chamfering were thought to have been discontinued before this date. The fact that the house may have been built with these details in 1723 suggests a vernacular architectural tradition that continued to use elements of style and construction already in disuse in most areas on the mainland. Carrying it further, this continuation of a vernacular tradition may have also been reflected in other aspects of the material culture of the inhabitants of the island. Little research has been done in the area of community studies of colonial societies in areas that appear as isolated as the interior communities of Martha's Vineyard.

#### Archaeology and Historic Preservation

The preservation of an historic site or structure is a long and complicated ordeal, not to mention expensive. In many

cases it begins and ends with the stabilization of a site and erection of a plaque or the restoration of a house. However, the restoration of the physical context of a site or structure is only the first step in the interpretation of this resource. Not until the social, cultural, and material context has been understood and established can adequate interpretation occur. Archaeology and intensive documentary studies are two tools that can be employed to further explain and understand the social, cultural, and material contexts of a site.

Archaeological investigations can be carried out in two levels during a restoration project and site interpretation. The first involves aiding the architectural historian in dating a structure or various components and exposing additional architectural details and/or testing a portion of a site for cultural resources and clearing it for the subsurface disturbance. Artifacts recovered are often used for display in the house or museum to add an air of authenticity. The limited excavations undertaken at the Vincent House were of this category. This is not to say that there is anything wrong with this use of archaeology. On the contrary, it is highly commendable that the Martha's Vineyard Historical Preservation Society understood the significance of archaeological investigations in this capacity. However, its usefulness does not stop there. The use of archaeology as anthropology, as a social science, used in "the reconstruction of culture history, the detailing of daily lifeways, and the elucidation of cultural process in a broader sense with emphasis on the dynamic aspects of culture" is the second use of archaeology in the interpretation of historic sites (Deetz 1972). A study and integration of the physical and material relationships found in the ground within the social and cultural context would fulfill this second capacity of archaeological investigations.

Such a study would involve intensive documentary research on the family and community, for no household existed in a vacuum but was a member of a community tied together by kinship, economic, and political factors. Recent studies by social historians have shown the importance of the family and community in shaping the lives of individuals

(Greven 1970; Gross 1976; Demos 1970; Lockridge 1970; Henretta 1978). One of the contributions of historical archaeology is an increased awareness that the record of the past is far more complex than has been formerly assumed, particularly the societies of 17th and 18th century Colonial America. The kind of controls available in historical archaeology — the study of historically documented material through archaeological methods — provide a suitable context in which to examine the complex material and non-material relationships (Deetz 1972). Perhaps examples and then applications to the Vincent Site and Martha's Vineyard would further illustrate my point.

The excavation of a number of colonial sites in coastal Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts by Plimoth Plantation and Dr. James Deetz led to the generation of a model for cultural change in this area and New England and the Colonies as a whole. Based on the ceramics recovered from eight sites, three cultural systems in New England in the period 1620-1835 were identified. The first period (1620-1660) reflected ceramic usage of the Stuart yeoman foodways subsystem as well as that of the first settlers. During the second period (1660-1760) ceramics showed differences of use and type, reflecting divergence from the parent culture, exhibiting strong conservative tendencies in stylistic and functional trends. During this period of semi-isolation an entire population of first generation New Englanders grew to maturity, contributing to the cultural divergence that characterized this period.

Ceramics of the third period (1760-1835) showed a greater homogeneity and reflected a more structured pattern of use than those of the earlier period. It is during this period that the New England culture became re-Anglicized. A changing world view in a new Age of Reason, the Georgian mind-set, took over. This new cognitive system stemmed from the new scientific philosophy of the 18th century. When coupled with increased economic, political, and social ties with England, this mind-set spread rapidly throughout New England. Deetz carried this model several steps further, applying it to every category of material culture and activity from deposition of trash to cutlery, gravestones, architecture, cuts of meat,

furniture, marriage patterns, and traditional music of the Appalachian Highlands (Deetz 1972, 1977).

The Mott Farm Site in Portsmouth, R. I. had been occupied by the same family for over 250 years. When the house was to be removed and the property developed commercially, an effort was made to preserve the house and an extensive archaeological study was undertaken. Anne Baker was involved in the house removal and a number of graduate students in Anthropology at Brown University undertook the archaeological study.

One of the completed studies concerned zooarchaeology and agricultural history. In this study, the social context of a cellar fill was established with regard to the occupation of one Mott family member and his family. This context was then used in conjunction with archaeologically recovered faunal remains and information drawn from the probate inventory of the particular family member on animal husbandry to determine uses of animals, agricultural economics, and foodways on a family farmstead. One example of the findings show that although pigs accounted for only 10 percent of the total animals listed in the probate inventory, they accounted for 40 percent of the number of individual animals in the archaeological sample. Also, 88 percent of the pigs were killed when they were less than 2-1/4 years old. Thus it shows that pigs were basically a food source as opposed to sheep and cows which provided other needs and which were kept for a much longer time prior to butchering (Bowen, 1975).

In Salem, Massachusetts archaeological and documentary investigations were carried out on the Narbonne House, a small dwelling erected in the late 17th century and recently incorporated into the Salem Maritime Historic District. House restoration by the National Park Service was accompanied by archaeological investigations in and around the house. Documentary research indicated the site was occupied by families of modest means: a tanner, a ship captain, the daughter of a wealthy Salem merchant family, and at times several families crowded into the house at once. The lack of stylish renovations and continued occupation of this modest dwelling suggested the occupants were never

well-to-do and led a relatively simple life. The archaeological record presented a very different picture during the mid-to-late 18th century. From several trash deposits in the yard of the house was recovered perhaps the finest single collection of ceramics from an archaeological context in New England. Very fine, expensive, imported wares were found in these trash pits, quite different from that which would have been expected. Several hypotheses were put forward, one suggesting, rather tongue in cheek, that this was trash from neighboring mansions, dumped there on contract. A return to the documents and reassessment of the social and economic status and context of the house occupants called for a re-thinking of the standard status-wealth relationship and its accompanying life style. It appears that the widow who shared the small house during this period with her children's families was the daughter of a very prominent Salem merchant family. Her deceased husband, a sea captain, left her with a considerable inheritance. Despite her crowded and modest accommodations, her style of living was quite high. This example shows that neither the documentary nor archaeological records can be trusted by themselves (Moran 1977).

Many other recent examples of archaeological investigations around historic structures to enhance interpretation can be presented. The excavations in Franklin Court, Philadelphia, provided a wealth of both architectural and sociocultural information about Philadelphia at the time of Benjamin Franklin and about the specific site. The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities recently received a grant with Boston University to conduct excavations at three of its properties, in an attempt to better interpret the cultural and material contexts of these sites.

On the Vincent Site, interpretation of settlement pattern, kinship, land transfer, the economic system of the island, and the role of the family farm are but a few of the possible areas of study. The possible presence of three houses at one time owned by the Vincent family on lands formerly of William Vincent provide an excellent opportunity for the study of father-son and extended kinship relationships and land use. (A house foundation had been discovered by Anne Baker and

her crew a short distance to the northeast of the Vincent House. It was suggested that this may have been a house built on the land granted to Reuben, son of Thomas Sr., in 1713. The role of land in a father-son relationship was shown to be of primary importance during the 17th and 18th centuries. (Gross 1976; Greven 1970). These historians show how land had been used by parents for the purpose of providing for the settlement of their offspring. However, at some point the availability of land was much less than the number of sons requiring it, forcing some to emigrate or establish themselves in a trade. In Andover and Dedham, Mass., this was shown to have occurred within the first four generations. The family structure underwent significant change, with the former tightly-knit system, where one or more sons established a household on a separate part of the original grant, changed to a more nuclear type, where only one household functioned independent of any other. This change was further felt in shifting marriage ages and a decline in the birth rate (Greven 1970, Lockridge 1970). On the Vincent lands, this seems to have occurred by the second decade of the 18th century, when all three houses may have existed together on adjacent lands. Archaeological and documentary investigation of all three house sites and their lands could provide an intensive look at the kinship system and its interaction, social and economic similarities or differences.

Another question that could be asked is the place a rural farmstead, and Martha's Vineyard in general, held in the three system cultural model presented by Deetz for Plymouth Colony. An early 19th century account of Edgartown states that marine traffic to and from the mainland was heavy, with as many as 1200 sail anchoring in the harbor in the course of a year. This does not suggest an isolation from styles and material goods 'au courant' at a given time. The architectural evidence from the Vincent House, however, suggests a vernacular architectural tradition lagging considerably behind the coastal mainland. Whether this is also reflected in the material culture and social context is yet to be determined.

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## The Vincent House: The Family

by MABEL KENISTON BAKER

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**T**he William Vincent house, built about 1656, is one of the oldest in Edgartown. It is situated on one of the loveliest coves on Great Pond, about two miles from the town as it now stands. At the time it was built there was a large settlement on the many coves of the Pond and on the adjacent plains. It may seem puzzling to us now why such a large settlement should have been there instead of near the fine harbor.

There are, however, many good reasons for the choice. The Pond was well stocked with fish, springs of clear pure water abounded on the shores, and the nearby woods furnished an abundance of wood for fuel and lumber. The marsh hay, which grew in great profusion on the shores of the pond, was another inducement. This hay, highly valued for food and bedding of livestock, was divided and apportioned among all the settlers living near the Pond, who in time became organized as the Great Pond Proprietors, under charter. These proprietors, naturally, placed their homes as near to the Pond as they could. They were the wealthy men of the town.

Among the earliest of these settlers was William Vinson, who came from Bromfield, England, and was granted land in Norwich, Conn. in 1651. It is presumed that he came to the Vineyard with John Pease about 1655, when he purchased land on Starbuck's Neck. In 1656 the records show that he

MABEL KENISTON BAKER prepared this record of the history of the Vincent family from family records and geneological documents, and presented it to the MacKenty family when they purchased the property from her. There is now doubt about precisely when the house we think of as the Vincent House enters the tale she tells. She was a Vincent through her father Samuel Keniston; her mother, Adelaide J. Keniston, was formerly a Pease. Mrs. Baker was born June 8, 1877.

bought of Edward Andrews, "his house and land adjoining to it, about 20 acres, bounded on East side by land of John Burchard and on west by Mamanekorn Neck, one end butting on the fresh pond and other on the Common." This was at Mashakommuket, where he afterwards resided and which remained Vincent property for many generations.

Before 1656, Vinson had married Susanna Browning, daughter of Malachi and Mary Collier Browning. Browning was one of the first contingent to leave England for Watertown, Mass., where Thomas Mayhew had first settled. He, Browning, came to Edgartown about 1647, and drew his land, a lot on Tower Hill, south of the "Slough", which his daughter sold for a pair of gloves. By her marriage to Vinson (which became Vincent about 1880), she became the ancestor of all the Vineyard Vincents.

William Vinson brought his bride to the pleasant farm house with its south windows looking out on the Pond. The records of the town show that in 1659, he was a juror and in 1660 was a member of the "Train Band". Later he took part in the Dutch Rebellion. He lived to be three score years and died in 1697. He had become estranged from his only son, Thomas, "who hath not demeaned himself well towards his mother and myself" and so cut him off with ten shillings. There is evidence that later Thomas repented and was reconciled with his mother, who at her death willed the estate to him.

Thomas was called a gunsmith (1689) and a locksmith (1707). He probably removed to Norwich before 1707, where his wife's family resided. He married Sarah Post, daughter of Thomas and Mary Andrews Post about 1676. He later returned to Edgartown, where he lived on the farm. He and Sarah had eight children. His estate was inventoried in 1740 to be 240 pounds.

His son, Joseph, born in 1698, inherited his estate and in 1726 married Matilda Dunham, who outlived him by 24 years. They had nine children, of whom Joseph, born in 1734, became the next owner of the property.

The second Joseph married Thankful (Dunham) Stewart, widow of Timothy, in July 1766. They had only four children and at Thankful's death in 1814, their son, Daniel,

inherited. He was born in 1774 and married in 1799 Susanna Jernegan, daughter of Squire Wm. Jernegan, who was one of the town's leading citizens, well known for his wisdom and intelligence. They were my great-grandparents of whom I heard many stories told me by my mother and aunts. Ten children were born to this couple, and eight lived to a ripe old age. Most of them were well known on the Island and lived interesting lives.

At this time the farm was most prosperous with much land under cultivation, a fine orchard of apple, pear and other fruit trees on the east side of the house, and flocks of sheep as well as cattle and poultry. The material for all clothing was grown or raised here. A piece of a wedding gown worn by Matilda, daughter of Joseph, who married Simon Mayhew, which is at the Dukes County Historical Rooms, was probably made from flax grown here. The spinning wheels were used in the large kitchen and usually stood near the fireplace. Other handmade appliances for weaving were kept in the attic until needed.

Sarah, the first daughter of Daniel was born in 1801, and in 1825 married Archibald Mellen, uncle of the late Capt. Thomas Melleen who is remembered by many at this date. Archibald was a successful sea captain, but met an untimely death at sea where he was brutally murdered in a mutiny. Two children were twins, Herman, who married Louise Mayhew and moved to Chilmark to live in a house on the South Road near Abel's Hill, which is still standing, and Amanda, who in 1837 married Judge Theodore G. Mayhew, who was judge of Probate her for thirty-five years. They lived on a farm at the end of Dunham Road given to Amanda by her father, Daniel Vincent, which is now owned by Mrs. Frank Atwood.

Thankful, born in 1811, married Samuel Keniston in 1830, who was a lawyer here for many years and also editor of the Vineyard Gazette before Mr. Charles Marchant. He was my father; I became the last in the Vincent family to own the farm.

Joseph moved to Nantucket where he was a contractor for many years and who framed a house for his sister,



Amanda, at Nantucket and sent it by boat to be put together here.

Simon married Mary Rotch, the sister of the well known and much loved William Rotch. Oliver, the youngest son, was a "forty-niner" and came home with a modest fortune. At one time he owned a store in Oak Bluffs and was also the owner of the Meikleham House on So. Water Street.

Daniel and his wife and children were a very happy family but misfortune came to them early. Daniel had bought a spirited horse and wishing to show it to his brother, Herman, drove to Chilmark. On the way back, the horse was frightened by an overhanging rock and ran away, throwing his owner out so that his head was injured and Daniel Vincent was blind for the rest of his life. Later, because of his blindness, he deeded the farm to Oliver to run and take care of him and his wife. One of Oliver's first acts, a hard and cruel one, was to cut down the trees in the orchard, in spite of his father's pleas. Some time later, Daniel's wife was taken violently sick in the night, when they were alone except for the hired man, who slept in the barn. Daniel went to arouse him and told him to ride in haste to town for a doctor. The man got up, went around the barn, and Daniel's wife died alone with her blind husband holding her hand.

Oliver kept the farm but used it mostly as a summer residence. After he sold his Water Street house, he bought the house on Summer Street, later bought by his nephew, Allen Mayhew, and now owned by Oliver's grand-nieces. His wife was Susan P. Swain from Nantucket and she died as a young woman. Oliver lived to be 83 years old and died in 1903, leaving the farm and his estate to be divided among his nieces and nephews. One of these, Samuel Keniston, bought out the other heirs and acquired the farm. At the time of his death, his daughters inherited it and it was kept by me, the eldest, until it was sold in 1940 to Mr. and Mrs. John MacKenty of Scarsdale, New York.

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## Documents

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*Jeremiah Pease (1792-1857) of Edgartown was a Customs House officer, land surveyor, bone setter, and an important figure in the early Methodist Church here. He married Eliza Worth in 1813. The Intelligencer commenced publication of these excerpts from his diary in Vol. 16, No. 2.*

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November 1837.

1st. Wind NW. Went to Nantucket with Br. Sherman in the Packet *La Grange*, Capt. F. Coffin. Had a three hours passage.

2nd. Wind WNW. Returned from Nantucket in the steam boat via Holmes Hole. Painted the Revenue Boat.

4th. Wind SW. Ship *Susan*, of Nantucket, Joseph Holley master arrives from the Pacific Ocean.

7th. Wind NW. Examination of Capt. Charles Darrow at the Court House. Great excitement on account of the death &c. of Mrs. Margaret Coffin.

8th. Wind NW. Very cold. The Baptist Meeting house dedicated at Holmes Hole. Did not attend class meeting at East Side Holmes Hole.

9th. Wind calm. Engaged in putting tops on my chimneys. Launched the Revenue Boat &c.

13th. Town meeting for the purpose of choice of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Senator and Representative

to the General Court. Abraham Osborn is chosen Representative.

14th. Wind NE. Rain and gale with high tide.

17th. Wind N to SW. Bought a cow of Capt. Ephraim Ripley.

19th. Wind S to SW. Rains a little A.M. P.M. clear. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings. Br. Willard preached. Returned at night.

27th. Wind SW. Engaged in surveying land for Alfred Norton and M. Steny (?)

30th. Wind SW. Pleasant. Went with Eliza to the dedication of the Methodist Meeting House at East Side Holmes Hole. The services were attended by Rev'ds. Elijah Willard, (?) Brown, and a young Baptist preacher name unknown to me. Br. Willard preached in the evening. It was a pleasant season. Thus hath the Lord in answer to much prayer granted that favored people a comfortable place for worship. And blessed be his name.

December 1837.

2nd. Wind SW to S. The body of Betsy Gersham of Gayhead was picked up. She was drowned last night.

3rd. Wind SSW to W. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings at the new Meetinghouse. A love feast was attended A.M. P.M. Br. Willard preached. Prayer meeting in the evening. It was an interesting and blessed season. Returned at night. Very pleasant weather for the season.

17th. Wind N to ENE. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings in the new Meetinghouse. Returned at

night. Snows a little at night. My brother J. D. Pease's wife dies of a consumption at about 3 o'clock P. M. We trust she died in the Lord. Her end was happy and peaceful having strong confidence in her redeemer. A son of Mr. John Cleveland dies. He had been subject to fits for number of years.

19th. Wind NW. Clear. The funeral of brother Isiah's wife attended at the Methodist Meetinghouse. Funeral by Rev'd Asa Kent.<sup>1</sup>

28th. Wind SE. Light. Cloudy. Engaged at the Custom House the past several days.

30th. Wind SW. Pleasant. Very warm. Mrs. Abigail Cooke dies.

#### January 1838.

9th. Wind SE. Light. Foggy. Went to Quampacy. Attended meeting in the evening at Br. E. P. Norton's. Returned at night.

10th. Wind WNW. Very pleasant and warm. Samuel Smith dies suddenly.<sup>2</sup> County Temperance meeting at the Congregational Meetinghouse. Address by Rev'd Mr. Tilton. Did not go to East Side Holmes Hole on account of business.

11th. Wind NW. Cold A.M. Pleasant P.M. Engaged in surveying land for Seth Vincent and Nathan Norton at

Swan Neck. Visited the afflicted family at Pohoganut.

12th. Wind SW. Pleasant for the season. Funeral of Samuel Smith, Esq.

Funeral by Rev'd Mr. Chase of Tisbury.

13th. Wind SW. Pleasant. News of the death of Capt. Jared Worth arrives.

16th. Wind SW. Pleasant. Attended a meeting at Josiah Smith's at Pohoganut.<sup>3</sup> It was a solemn and interesting season. Several were awakened to their situation while out of Christ. Miss Hannah Smith seemed to enjoy a measure of peace in believing in the Lord. Br. Brown came from Chilmark. Returned at night.

18th. Wind SW. Warm. Foggy. Went to the County Register's office on business.

21st. Wind W to SW. Cloudy. Snows P.M. Went to East Side Holmes Hole, attended meetings. Returned at evening. Visited Widow Norton she being unwell and 83 years old. She has been 60 years a professor of religion.<sup>4</sup> Had a hospitable visit.

22nd. Wind SW. Attended a meeting over the Plain. Br. Brown preached.

23rd. Wind SW. Attended a meeting at Pohoganut. Br. Brown preached.

<sup>3</sup> Josiah, was the youngest, with his twin sister Clarissa, of the children of Samuel and Love Smith, Samuel was the brother-in-law of Parson Joseph Thaxter. It sounds as though none of the family had joined the new religion. Now Jeremiah was after them.

<sup>4</sup> But not of the Methodist persuasion. The Methodists had not been on the Island that long on in 1838.

<sup>1</sup> The manuscript autobiography of Asa Kent is in the archives of the Dukes County Historical Society.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel was long the Recorder of Deeds for the County. He lived on a big farm at Pohoganut. The Society has some of the "Diurnal Records" of his daughters Hannah and Rebecca.

29th. Wind NW. Gale. Town meeting for choice of Register of Deeds.

#### February 1838.

5th. Wind N. Cold. Ice makes very fast.

8th. Wind S. Light. Foggy. Rains a little. The Sheriff serves a warrant on me from Joseph Swasey and heirs on account of land which I bought of S. Vincent and others on Starbuck's Neck.

11th. Wind S. A.M. Went to Chilmark with Br. S. G. Vincent. Attended meetings at the Methodist Meetinghouse during the day, at night at Br. Look's. It was a very interesting time and the blessings of Heaven attend those meetings. A severe storm of snow and wind came on before I arrived home. This is the first Sabbath that I have spent any other place except East Side Holmes Hole for nearly four years, except for stormy Sabbaths at home.<sup>5</sup>

15th. Wind NE. Light. Snows. Cutter sails to a brig from New Orleans cast away at Gayhead.

18th. Wind W. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Walked on account of ice and snow being very slippery. Attended meetings and returned at evening. Gale at night.

19th. Wind W. Severely cold. Ice makes fast and cuts one of the planks in the Revenue Boat. She fills partly

<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah was the lay preacher at Eastville during those years. Now Eastville had a church and when it got regular preacher. Jeremiah could go where he was needed.

full of water. Hauled her to the shore and bailed her out. Wind blows a gale.

21st. Wind NW. Very cold. Harbour frozen over from Cape Poge to Gurnet's (?) Point. Did not go to East Side Holmes Hole. Cold.

24th. Wind W to WSW and NNW. Moderate. The harbour closed with ice.

26th. Wind NNW. Very cold. Town Meeting for the choice of County Register. Attended meeting at Br. Stewart's.

28th. Wind NW. Cold. Did not go to East Side Holmes Hole on account of cold and ice. This has been a very severe month.

#### March 1838.

2nd. Wind N. Moderate. Ice remains hard. Harbour still closed.

4th. Wind W. Very light and calm. Pleasant day. Went to East Side Holmes Hole were there. Very good meetings in the forenoon and afternoon. Slavery preaching at evening. I visited Widow Roda Norton being near unto death, and the family living in the other room of the house. Returned at night.

5th. Wind ESE. The ice which has closed the harbour for some time past goes out and vessels pass without any fear of ice. Wind blows fresh at 2 P.M. Hauled up the Revenue Boat.

7th. Wind E. Rains a little then snows fast. Did not go to East Side Holmes Hole on account of bad riding. Temperance meeting at night.

11th. Wind S and calm. P. M. WSW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Did

not attend meeting there on account of some unpleasant conversation with Br. E. Willard which took place last Sunday. He preached this day and evening. I went to West Side of Holmes Hole. Attended meeting with Br. Hawley. Had a pleasant time. Returned to East Side at evening and then home. Some remarkable circumstances transpire this day.

25th. Wind N. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings at the Meetinghouse in the forenoon and afternoon and at Capt. Shubael Norton's in the evening. Returned at night.

27th. Wind E to ESE. Attended settling a dispute between William Brown and Francis Smith relating to land, fences &c., &c. Joseph Vincent, Hiram Jernegan and myself were the referees. Engaged all day in surveying land at Chapaquidick. Snows in the afternoon. U. S. Cutter *McLane* arrives.

April 1838.

2nd. Wind NW. Engaged at the Custom House. Town Meeting.

8th. Wind ESE to W. Went to West Side Holmes Hole. Attended meeting at the Methodist Meetinghouse. Br. Halway preached. There is a Reformation there. Returned at night. Collector returns from Boston. Rains at night. *Oh time.*

12th. Wind WNW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole to carry Sister M. Morse.

14th. Wind E to N. Rains and snows a little. Very cold. Went to Pohoganut,

got a bushel of wheat to sow<sup>6</sup>  
16th. Wind changable N to SE. Went to West Chop. Surveyed land for Jaber Lewis and James West. \$2.50 paid by J. L.

21st. Wind NE to SW. Boarded Schooner *Sarah Wells* from Cape Haitien (?).

23rd. Wind NE to S. Schooner *Dorcas* (?) Capt. Hosmer takes the corps of George Hobbs who was accidently killed by the discharge of a gun when on board the Schooner *Lucy Blake* last fall to Camden, Maine.

27th. Wind N to SW. Went to Pohoganut. Attended prayer meeting at Br. Josiah Smith's.

May 1838.

7th. Wind SW. Pleasant. U. S. Revenue Cutter *Vigilant*, Capt. Day arrives.

9th. Wind S to W. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended Class meeting. Returned at night. Watched with Capt. Silvanus Crocker's wife she being very sick. U. S. Revenue Cutter *Vigilant* sails.

10th. Wind SW. Mrs. Crocker dies at about 11 o'clock A.M. A. E. 57. U. S. Cutters *Vigilant* and *McLane* arrive.

11th. Wind SW. Funeral of Mrs. Crocker. Funeral by Rev'ds Mr. Hall Kent and Merchant. U. S. Cutters *Vigilant*, Capt. Day sail with the

<sup>6</sup> This is an unusual entry, for very little wheat was ever grown on The Island. Rye, corn and oats, but not wheat. I have never heard a good reason for this.

Collector to visit Light Houses, the *McLane*, Capt. Currier on a cruise.

12th. Wind SW. Mr. G. T. Cornell's Bakehouse takes fire. Seen at ½ past 3 o'clock A.M. It was soon extinguished by the engines. Damaged the building about \$80. Loss of bread &c. \$300 or 400.<sup>7</sup> Timothy Coffin very sick with the consumption. Ship *Champion*. Capt. G. Lawrence, Jr. sails for the Pacific Ocean.

16th. Wind SW. Ship *Mary* Capt. Henry Pease arrives from the Indian Ocean with 2100 bbl oil and 100 perm. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended class.

17th. Wind W. Light. Rains a little. Timothy Coffin dies of consumption. A peaceful and happy death.

19th. Wind N to SW. Surveyed land for R. W. Jernegan. ½ day.

20th. Wind SW. Gale. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings. Br. J. Whittlesey preached (as he called it.) Through at 5 P.M. on the last Sabbath at which time some thought

<sup>7</sup> The "bread" destroyed was undoubtedly ship's biscuit (hard tack) Housewives in the year 1838 did not buy store bread. They made their own corn or rye bread on the Vineyard.

he used improper language about... [At this point Jeremiah seems to be using some sort of cipher.]

22nd. Wind S. Foggy. Engaged planting potatoes.

27th. Wind SW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings. Br. Norton Esq's. Returned at evening.

28th. Wind SW. Foggy. Surveyed land for R. W. Jernegan.

29th. Wind S to SW. Pleasant. Court sets this day.

30th. Wind NE. Cloudy. Rains a little. Br. Kent preaches at the school house near Ichabod Norton's dwelling house.<sup>8</sup> Eliza and myself attended with some of the Bretheren this day. The Swasey family call on me by their attorney for ½ of the land &c. owned by their grandfather. Did not attend class at East Side Holmes Hole.

<sup>8</sup> This was the Farm Neck schoolhouse. William Butler taught here or in an earlier building in about the same location when he was a young man in 1792. We have his diary for that year in the Society's archives, and excerpts from it were printed in the *Intelligencer*, vol 8, nos. 2 and 4.

EDITED BY  
E. GALE HUNTINGTON

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## News

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This month Eliot E. Macy's book *The Captain's Daughters* is expected from its publisher, Devin-Adair.

The captain is George Washington Eldridge; the daughters are Gracia Eldridge Harrington, Mary Eldridge Macy, Nina Eldridge, and Ruth Eldridge White.

In 19 chapters, Mr. Macy recounts in his mother's and aunts' words reminiscences of their childhood in Vineyard Haven, mostly during the period 1885 to 1900.

There is a strong marine flavor, because of Captain Eldridge's involvement in the sea: the daughters helped in his ship chandlery, and helped preparing the now-famous tide book he originated, and charts he published. The daughters describe their life at school, their church life, and the people they knew.

The material is gathered from tape-recordings and written accounts. It is recounted in the first person, in an edited and reconstructed form.

Readers of the *INTELLIGENCER* are familiar with Stanley Murphy's study of Island duck decoys. Late this fall the Godine Press will publish the completed work, with more than a gross of photographs.

Because of the Island's location on the flyways and because of the fine gunning areas here, the Island produced many decoy carvers. But unlike many areas, the Island never

developed a single regional style: the carvers were an independent lot who each developed and stuck to his own style.

Stuart C. Sherman of East Chop and Providence has been commissioned by the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission to compile a bibliography of manuscript whaling logbooks and private journals.

The potential value of this to historians is obvious to anyone who has hunted fruitlessly for that elusive logbook which must contain the information he needs. The logs contain an enormous range of information about whales and whaling, anthropology, geography, medical treatment of seamen, economic history, ethnic history, and more. As time passes, they are being scattered further and further into unlikely corners.

Whatever its side benefits, the bibliography has been commissioned for its immediate scientific value. Information concerning whale sightings, catches and depletion rates will be used to study whale populations and demographics. This knowledge will help establish reasonable catch quotas to preserve the whale species.

The completed bibliography is expected to include more than 4,000 records preserved in the U.S., England, Australia, West Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

Private owners of logbooks and journals can aid the effort by contacting Mr. Sherman at East Chop or at Brown University, where he is acting university librarian.

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## Word of the Society

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Playing all of its twelve tunes at least once, the music box worked overtime on the afternoon of July 9 as it entertained members and guests gathered at the Society to dedicate the new Francis Foster Museum. But before the music began for this happy occasion, we were privileged to hear the words of Rev. Brian Roberge who reflected on the value of local history and then delivered a prayer of appreciation for the Society's good fortune in being able to construct this building. In looking to the past, he admonished those in attendance to be mindful of the present, and he expressed everyone's gratitude toward such people as Francis Foster, who are so devoted to the improvement of the lives of others. After the formalities, the music box took up its merry song, and punch was served by Dot Ritter and Doris Stoddard. The floral arrangements for the day were provided by Edith Bliss.

Seeing the museum for the first time, the visitors were delighted with the various displays, particularly with the beautiful quilts that are hanging on one of the walls. Some exhibits came directly from the Society's library, but many new artifacts are now being exhibited in the substantial cases that Rachael Williams, a member of the Council, so alertly acquired at almost no expense. She then stored them for us, arranged to have them delivered, and repainted them herself. Every member of the Council contributed to establishing this new museum at the Society, but special mention should go to Stan Murphy, John Osborn, and Doris Stoddard. Mr. Murphy topped off his labors by arranging for the carving of a quarterboard bearing the inscription "Francis Foster Museum." It turned out to be a beautiful piece of work and now decorates the side of the new building, adding greatly to the appearance of the grounds.

In addition to examining the exhibits in the Francis Foster Museum, several members also took a tour of the Thomas Cooke House to see the many improvements accomplished in the last year. Everyone was delighted by the tremendous

change in the Borning Room. Until last spring, this room was one of our least attractive areas, because the numerous small items on display such as dolls and toys needed much individual attention before there was any possibility of arranging the room into an attractive exhibit. Fortunately, Lorna Livingston recognized the need, put her talents to work and turned the room into an exceptionally nice display area with toys and dolls in such good condition that in most cases one would think that a child had just taken them out from under a Christmas tree.

During the spring we also painted the Oak Bluffs Room and the China Closet. Before the opening date of June 15, Sara Fuller, one of our summer guides, did a great job of cleaning the house from top to bottom, and she even undertook the task of washing all the china and glassware. In showing people through the house, Miss Fuller is ably assisted by our other charming guides: Sarah Cogan, Hilda Gilluly, Susanna Jones, and Regina Trebby. Mary McLane tends the gatehouse in the morning, and Mrs. Gilluly takes over that task in the afternoon.

With money from the Preservation Fund, we also greatly improved the carriage shed this spring by sealing off the open front with plexiglass sheets and with glass doors. In the past, it was impossible to keep the place clean and to protect the artifacts from the elements. Now, we have accomplished these goals without substantially changing the appearance of the building.

Due to the extra space in the basement of the library, three of our members decided that we had gone long enough without any kitchen facilities at the Society. Consequently they provided the funds to build and equip a kitchenette, which will be an everyday convenience and will make it much easier to have such things as the open-house for the dedication of the Francis Foster Museum.

Our one setback this spring occurred when Marian Halperin, our secretary and registrar, resigned from both of these positions, which had been taking up much of her time. Her special talents as a museum registrar will be particularly missed, but fortunately the system established by Mrs. Halperin will enable us to carry on with the proper

accessioning of donations.

Congratulations to Dorothy Poole for her new book *A Vineyard Sampler*, which is a culmination of a lifetime's work on Vineyard history. It may be purchased from us for \$10 plus \$1.00 postage.

We hope everyone will attend the annual meeting this year to be held at the Federated Church Parish House on Tuesday, August 15 at 7:30 p.m. As our guest speaker we are delighted to have Edith Blake, who will talk on the architecture of Oak Bluffs. The meeting, of course, is for members of the Society, but you may bring guests. We will look forward to seeing many of you there.

THOMAS E. NORTON,  
Director

## DUKES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Doris C. Stoddard, *President*  
Stanley Murphy, *Vice President*  
John Worth Osborn, *Treasurer*

### COUNCIL

Edith Bliss; Nelson Coon; Alfred Hall; Dorris S. Hough;  
Henry Beetle Hough; E. Gale Huntington; Melville G.  
MacKay; John H. Montgomery; Dorothy Cottle Poole;  
Rachael Williams

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Thomas E. Norton, *Curator*; Muriel Crossman, *Librarian*;  
Dorothy Cottle Poole, *Historian*; Doris C. Stoddard,  
*Genealogist*.

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The Dukes County Historical Society was founded in 1922 to preserve the history of Dukes County for the public benefit.

The Society maintains the Thomas Cooke House, the Francis Foster Museum, and a library, all located on its grounds at the corner of School and Cooke Streets in Edgartown.

The Thomas Cooke House was built about 1765. The Society acquired the building in 1935 and established it as a museum. Its 12 rooms are now devoted to historical displays and period rooms which reflect various eras of Vineyard life. Displays of whaling equipment, exotica brought home by sea captains, children's toys, early china and furniture, and portraits of Islanders may be seen on informal tours of the house.

The new Francis Foster Museum and the library are in an adjacent building. The library is devoted to Vineyard history, and has interesting collections of whaling logs and genealogical works. The Francis Foster Museum contains displays of scrimshaw and paintings.

The attractive grounds include an herb garden, a boatshed exhibit, and the famous Fresnel lens from the old Gay Head lighthouse.

The buildings and grounds are open during the summer (June 15 to Sept. 15) on Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Off-season, the Francis Foster Museum and the library are open Thursdays and Fridays, 1-4 p.m., and Saturdays, 10-12 a.m., and 1-4 p.m.

The Society is a nonprofit institution supported entirely by membership dues, gifts, and bequests. All contributions are tax-deductible.

### TO JOIN THE SOCIETY AND SUBSCRIBE TO THE INTELLIGENCER:

Please enter me as a member of the Society for the current year (beginning Jan. 1). This entitles me to the *Intelligencer* and all other membership benefits.

- Single Annual Dues .....\$8.00  
 Family Membership for Husband, Wife,  
and Children 18 or under .....\$15.00  
 Sustaining Membership .....\$25.00  
 Life Membership .....\$200.00  
 I enclose \$ .....  Please bill me.

Name .....

Permanent Address .....

Summer Address .....

## Some Publications

*The Mammals of Martha's Vineyard* by Allan R. Keith. Illustrated, paper. \$1.00, \$0.30 postage.

*People To Remember* by Dionis Coffin Riggs. Illustrated, paper. \$4.95, \$0.65 postage.

*The Heath Hen's Journey to Extinction* by Henry Beetle Hough. Illustrated, paper. \$1.00, \$0.30 postage.

*The Fishes of Martha's Vineyard* by Joseph B. Elvin. With 36 illustrations of fishes by Will Huntington. Paper. \$1.00, \$0.30 postage.

*The History of Martha's Vineyard* by Charles Edward Banks. A new edition. Indices, illustrations, three volumes. Cloth. \$30.00, \$1.00 postage.

*"Cap'n George Fred" Himself.* The autobiography of Captain George Fred Tilton of Chilmark. A new edition. Cloth. \$6.50, \$0.65 postage.

*Wild Flowers of Martha's Vineyard* by Nelson Coon. Illustrated, paper. \$3.95, \$0.65 postage.

*An Introduction To Martha's Vineyard* by Gale Huntington. Illustrated, paper. A new edition. \$3.95, \$0.65 postage.

*A New Vineyard* by Dorothy Cottle Poole. Illustrated, cloth. \$12.95, \$0.65 postage.

*Shipwrecks on Martha's Vineyard* by Dorothy Scoville. Paper. \$3.00, \$0.65 postage.

*A Vineyard Sampler* by Dorothy Cottle Poole. Illustrated, paper. \$10.00, \$1.00 postage.