

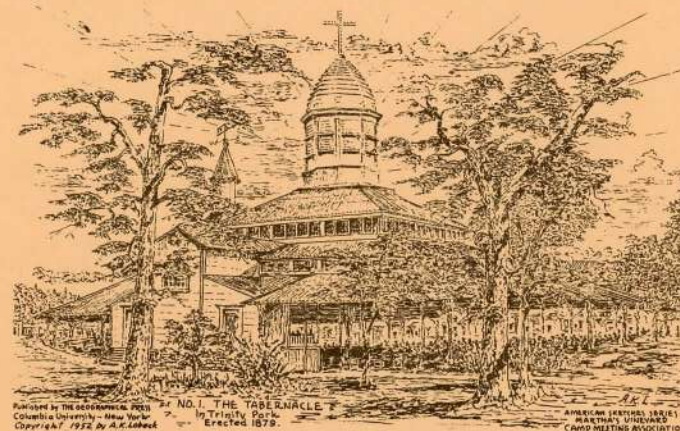
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# THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 21, NO. 1

AUGUST 1979



The Iron Tabernacle at Wesleyan Grove  
by ELLEN WEISS

Little Ladies from Chilmark  
by DORIS C. STODDARD

The "Square" in West Tisbury Center  
by WILLIAM J. BLOCK

Cottage City a Century Ago  
a photo essay

Documents: Jeremiah Pease Diary

Plus: Books, News, Director's Report, Bits & Pieces

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The articles in The Intelligencer do not represent a consensus of beliefs, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Society.

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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.



An architectural historian  
looks at a famed Oak Bluffs  
building on its centennial

## The Iron Tabernacle

### At Wesleyan Grove

by ELLEN WEISS

The first account of how the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association<sup>1</sup> started out to build a wooden tabernacle and ended up with an iron one, because it was cheaper, is contained in the report of the Directors to the membership on August 19, 1879. Succinct in its history and charming in its prose, it is repeated here in full:

"The great event of the past year has been the erection of the new iron Tabernacle. To facilitate and expedite the business, the Directors appointed a building committee, consisting of S. C. Brown, (?) Bicknell, R. C. Brown, Noah Tripp and William Phillips, and instructed them to proceed to building in season for the camp meeting. Plans were obtained

<sup>1</sup> The principal sources for this account are the *Record of the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association*, 1860, Book No. 2 (1860-1886) pp. 161-165, and relevant editions of *The Vineyard Gazette*, *The Cottage City Star*, *The Springfield Republican*, *The New Bedford Evening Standard* and *The New Bedford Daily Mercury*. By far, the most complete accounts are in the two New Bedford dailies. The *Gazette* was a good deal less interested in the construction of the Tabernacle than in the building of the Oak Bluffs skating rink, which was going on at the same time. The dedication of the religious structure was barely noted while extensive coverage was given to the antic festivities connected with the opening of the secular building. (Unfortunately, a search through the New Bedford papers for the period after the dedication has not been completed at this time.)

ELLEN WEISS lives in West Tisbury "as much as possible." Her work as an architectural historian keeps her in Providence, R.I., much of the time, but her fondness for the Vineyard has resulted in an especial interest in the history of the Camp Ground and the Tabernacle. Her writing has been frequently published in architectural journals.



for a building of wood and one was adopted and the Directors voted not to expend over \$7,200. When the proposals were received, it was found that the lowest was a shade below \$10,000 and the highest over \$15,000 and, of course, a meeting of the Directors was called, and the committee was instructed to ascertain the cost of an iron tabernacle. It was found after consulting with J. W. Hoyt Esq., of the firm of Dwight and Hoyt (by whom plans were submitted which were satisfactory) that an iron building could be erected at less cost than a wooden one, and it was resolved to build of iron and the contract was given to Dwight and Hoyt. How well the Board have succeeded in the enterprise we leave the brethren of the Association to judge after examining the building. You will be surprised as hundreds have been to hear that it cost less than ten thousand dollars and still more when we tell you that eight thousand dollars will probably pay all the bills."

The sum the Association paid to Dwight and Hoyt was \$7,147.84.

In that spring of 1879 when the Tabernacle contract was under discussion, the Association was low on funds, its treasury having been nearly emptied the year before by the construction of its new chapel, designed by the Rev. E. L. Hyde, a Methodist minister and amateur architect from Middletown, R. I. The chapel, completed in the spring of 1878, had been initially planned to be located on the site of the preacher's stand, but was built instead within the row of society tents that ringed the preaching area.<sup>2</sup> That first plan called for a building that would seat 600, but as constructed it accommodated only 250.

By the end of 1878, it was agreed to build a tabernacle that would seat 3,000 to 4,000. Competing designs were submitted by three architects: S. S. Woodcock of Boston, E. N. Boyden, also of Boston, and Caleb Hammond and Son of New Bedford. The Woodcock design was selected by the committee. Seventeen construction bids were opened at a

<sup>2</sup> David W. Chase of Providence, R.I., has kindly furnished me with the description of this earlier chapel project from the *Newport Journal*, June 9, 1877. This project may relate to a scheme mentioned in the *Seaside Gazette* for August 4, 1874, in which a committee was to get plans "for a chapel and a tabernacle combined." There seems to have been some thought of a single building serving both functions.

meeting of the directors in Fall River on March 14, 1879, this being the meeting in which all the bids came in too high.

The subject of an iron building was discussed by the directors, but no decision was made.

On April 25, 1879, a contract was awarded to Dwight and Hoyt of Springfield, Massachusetts, for the construction of an iron building to be completed by July 1 at a cost of \$6,200. (John W. Hoyt had been a campground cottager for several years.)

Shortly afterwards, the designs, or more probably the contract specifications, were made public because on May 19, *The New Bedford Evening Standard* published this description of the project:

"The new tabernacle, aside from the pulpit recess, will be 140 feet square with rounded corners. The outer posts will be 12 feet high, with open brace work at the top of each of them, giving the spaces between them the appearance of arches. The three arched portals will be about 16 feet wide and 19 feet high, and will be located in 3 of the 4 gables. The fourth gable will finish the pulpit recess. At the height of 18 feet there will be a 'monitor' arrangement with ventilating windows about two feet high, and at the height of about 30 feet there will be a 'clerestorey' of eight feet rise, with windows the whole size, exclusive of the finish. These windows will probably have a border of stained glass, with the centre of diamond shape, and a portion of them will be made to swing, so that if further ventilating is needed they may be opened. The whole height from the ground to the top of the dome will be 75 feet and to the top of the flagstaff one hundred feet. The whole will be painted with two good coats of paint inside and out."

*The New Bedford Daily Mercury* furnished the additional information that it was to stand a few feet south of the canvas tabernacle and was to have concrete floors and settees, but that the settees would not appear the first season, the old benches being reused instead.

By the third week in May, Hoyt had arrived on the Vineyard to supervise construction. Trees were removed and the ground prepared to support the structure. By June 9, iron sections were arriving along with skilled workers from Springfield to assemble them.

The history of the wrought-iron building components is, as of today, a bit vaguer than one would like. The eastern principal central support of the Tabernacle is stamped, at about eye level, "PHOENIX", indicating almost certainly the Phoenix Iron Co. rolling mills at Phoenixville, Pa., near Philadelphia.<sup>3</sup> One would assume that the pieces in individual sections went by rail to the Dwight and Hoyt shop in Springfield where, according to *The Springfield Republican*, they were assembled into larger sections and shipped to the Vineyard. The largest sections went by boat down the Connecticut River and up Long Island Sound to Vineyard Sound. Smaller sections, but also including the big trusses for the clerestory level, went by rail to Woods Hole, then by the steamer *Island Home* to the Highlands wharf, and finally by flat car on the horse-drawn railroad to the Association grounds. The trip from the Springfield shop to the construction site took a week. The largest transported pieces were recorded as weighing 1,000 pounds.

The only delay in the like-clockwork assembly procedure was caused by a strike at the rolling mills. *The Vineyard Gazette* reported on June 13 that the first section had been raised. The main trusses were in place by June 24 and the last iron section had been shipped from Springfield by that date.

"The building of this edifice, which is entirely unlike anything in this section, attracts a good deal of attention, one newspaper said." Later in June, news stories reported delays (presumably because of the rolling-mill strike) and described

<sup>3</sup> There has been debate in camp-ground circles as to whether the Tabernacle could be a rare early steel structure. Allan C. Steele, a camp-ground resident and architectural consultant who has experience in the rehabilitation of historic metal construction, and Mace H. Bell of Vineyard Haven believe that the Tabernacle may be of steel construction and that tests should be made.

The author is of the conviction that the building is wrought iron, not steel. Steel manufacture in 1879 at architectural scale was limited to specially made and therefore prohibitively expensive pieces, not stock building components. The Phoenix Iron Co., did not list steel sections in its catalog until 1885 or 1886, when it advertised a one-size steel deck beam among its wrought-iron production. Filings from the Tabernacle have been examined under a microscope and appear to be iron. Robert M. Vogel, Curator of the Division of Mechanical and Civil Engineering at the National Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, has seen photographs of the Tabernacle and concurs in the diagnosis of wrought iron. Mr. Vogel is of the opinion that the only steel structure completed by 1879 was the Chicago & Alton Railroad Bridge over the Mississippi River at Glasgow, Missouri.

an accident, not serious, which happened in spite of many measures of preventive planning. A rope parted, dropping a piece of iron and three men to the ground. A news story reported that "The bystanders, who are numerous and attentive and have daily watched with interest the progress of the building of the tabernacle, appeared to be much more frightened than the injured men."

By July 1, the building was described as more than half completed, its center framework finished and the assembly of "the wings or lower trusses being pushed rapidly forward." A mid-July completion date was promised and a cut of the building was made for the letterhead of the Association. On July 10, the correspondent for the *Mercury* launched another enthusiastic description:

"The new tabernacle in Wesleyan Grove begins to show what it will be. The frame is all up -- light and graceful -- the dome is complete and two sections of the corrugated-iron roofing have been put on. The work will now rapidly proceed. It covers, maybe, a quarter more ground than the old one, is circular in form, and the ventilation will be ample, which, with increased strength and durability, is the chief improvement. The diameter is just about the same as the longest dimension of the old tabernacle . . . the seats are piled up nearby to be replaced in the new structure."

Two days later, the same correspondent wrote that "As the beautiful building approaches completion it becomes, in the estimation of the hundreds who already come to see it, an occasion of easy expression of admiration." In a fit of aesthetic revulsion, he continued with a plea for a new cut of the Tabernacle for the Association letterhead:

"The one now in use is the worst I ever saw. It has no representation of any support at the back side, and it appears therefore to be held up like Mahomet's coffin, or to tumble in on the ill-defined heads of a closely packed congregation which the cut makes look as much like tall grass."

A few days later, a reading from Shakespeare's *Tempest*, taking place in the chapel was marred by construction noise, but notice was also taken that, if the acoustics proved to be as good as the builders promised, the new structure would be



*For the first 50 years, only the Preacher's Stand had a covering*

admirably adaptable to large gatherings of almost any kind, such as readings and lectures. Thus, we see that today's multi-function usage of the Tabernacle was anticipated right from the beginning.

The old benches were put into the building on July 24 and on July 26 the first services were held. It was a beautiful day, a day after rains, and nature was "vocal with praises." Eight hundred worshippers attended the morning service to hear Bishop R. S. Foster of Boston, editor of *Zion's Herald*. There were addresses at 1:30 and 3, followed by a praise service at 7, with Miss Hazelwood of Providence at the organ, and continuing with still more preaching at 7:30. In honor of the day, the Baptists held no services at their tabernacle on the Highlands. Such was the ecumenical spirit of the occasion.

At the Tabernacle's dedication service, held on Wednesday, August 6, an audience of more than one thousand gathered at 10:30 a.m. "in the beautiful structure." The building committee was on the platform and the choir, under the direction of Brother F. P. Vincent, was seated on the left. The Rev. J. V. Morrison, President of the Camp Meeting Association, led the dedicatory service of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A constellation of other divines followed, each taking a different part of the service. One read the hymn, "I Love Thy Kingdom Lord," while another offered prayers or led the collection. The venerable Frederick Upham read the hymn, "Zion Stands with Walls Surrounded." Bishop Foster's sermon was on the doctrine of the Trinity and the text was the 30th verse of the fourth chapter of Ephesians.



*About 1875, a canvas roof was put up over the congregation*



*Camp Ground cottage of J. W. Hoyt, Tabernacle builder, today*

The day was hot, but it was cool under the shade of the iron and the audience remained interested despite the length of the service. The acoustical properties of the new building were praised.

Despite the enthusiasm of the opening, within a year some complaints appeared in the Vineyard newspapers, indicating a few difficulties with the building. Heat did become a problem after all and suggestions for the solution involved, variously, fans, repainting the red roof white, and curtains for the monitor windows. Dust from the as-yet unconcreted floor was another problem and inventive proposals included putting down a layer of beach sand, installing wooder flooring and carpeting the center aisle with tent cloth. Some speakers were said to wish the old tent back in place of the "beautiful tabernacle." On the whole, however, there was more praise than complaint in the first year of the life of the new building.

"The handsome tabernacle . . . is loudly praised by the visitors for its architectural beauty and by different speakers for its acoustic properties. It is not such a 'barn-like structure' as a certain Boston correspondent tried to make himself believe."

"A perfect gem as far as architectural beauty is concerned."



"The tabernacle is in reality one of the easiest places in the world to speak."

An 1880 guide book described it as "a kind of religious crystal palace, though made of iron."

• • •

The iron Tabernacle at Wesleyan Grove is an extraordinary building, "beautiful" as so many 19th century descriptions record, but also moving, amazing, clever and memorable.

Three tiers of great hovering roofs, plus the cupola or "dome," float above the ground supported only by a minimal web of angle irons, T-irons and pipes, most of which are only two or three inches at their widest dimension. Viewed from the outside, it offers visual metaphors of the tent it replaced, of an alighting bird (the change of angle of the slopes of the roofs suggests the beating of wings) and, as a special though unintended treat for the late 20th century, a friendly, hovering spacecraft.

The stage area at the back provides not only visual support for the weight of the roofs (remember the 1879 complaint about the apparent insecurity of the building as shown in the letterhead cut without its stage area), but it also seems to anchor a form which might as easily waft up and away as settle on the ground.

From the inside, the iron building exhibits a prime characteristic of great architecture: it creates a sense of place, a sense of other-ness, which is clearly ordered by a different mood, a different spiritual intention from the outer world. Its cavernous space, laced by the delicate web of thin supports, is comparatively dark, but also transformed by the light coming through colored glass. There is an irony in the contrast between the cool, magical, mysterious interior and the sharpness of the "real" world outside, the Trinity Park, the Tabernacle's "reality" is its own kind of special "inside" when approached from the out-of-campground real world.

The Tabernacle is a place within a place.

Another aspect of the Tabernacle's enduring appeal is the economy and sheer intelligence, the deuced cleverness of the structure as a building solution. Most of its prefabricated iron members fan out from four principal supports without any



*Curving gracefully, the wrought-iron frame gives a lightness to roof*

circumferential metal connections between them. (The only horizontal rigid iron form, really the scaffold of the structure, is the fixed square of the four great trusses whose members are almost invisible because they are visually eaten away by the light pouring through the clerestory windows directly behind them.) Connections between the radiating lines of descending iron arches are wood, mostly purlins. The two rings of metal "arches" that visually bind the building at the level of the lower monitor and at the outer edge are actually curved brackets which may meet to look like arches, which may not meet (leaving a gap), or which may overlap. It is aesthetically important that these be seen as arches, but as brackets they are a far more flexible device because they allow for variation in the size of the outer bays.

This variation in bay size is the key to the flexibility of the building form, a flexibility necessary because the building was erected on unpredictably uneven grounds. Thus the remarkable speed of construction of the Tabernacle was not ruined by the need for constant adjustment and retooling, on the site, of metal circumferential members. And therefore the iron building really works as a flexible building machine

because it is, essentially, wood-jointed. Surely something of the intelligence behind this scheme is part of the "beauty" so often remarked about in the 19th century and today.

• • •

Newspaper accounts of the Tabernacle's construction tell us much, but somehow not really all that we want to know. We remain ignorant of the sources of its conception as a design and its place in the larger history of American building art. Too little is known about the Dwight and Hoyt operation and about precedence for this kind of building in the 1870s.

George Dwight, Jr. (1838-1909) was born to an old Springfield family and a father who was, at one time, supervisor of the important U. S. Armory in that city.<sup>4</sup> The younger Dwight had experience managing a gas works, a pump business and a steam machinery operation before becoming one of the earliest dealers in corrugated iron in the area. He supplied this material for the Equitable Life Assurance Building in New York City. Many references suggest that John W. Hoyt actually worked for Dwight and was not a full partner, except perhaps for the construction of the Tabernacle, although there is an undated allusion in a Springfield biography to "Dwight & Hoyt, Iron Construction Works, mostly government buildings." An 1879 directory refers to "George Dwight Jr. & Co., Engineers and Builders of Fire Proof Construction" with John W. Hoyt as an employee.

While the corrugated-iron business of George Dwight Jr. would seem to be a natural link to the form of the Tabernacle (a fragment of the original corrugated galvanized-iron roof remains at the eastern entrance, under the present corrugated asbestos roof laid in the 1930s), the story must actually be a good deal more complex. George Dwight Jr. went bankrupt during the construction of the Tabernacle. The iron roof was furnished and installed by Messrs. Hicks & Son of Boston.

John William Hoyt, no doubt more important to our story

<sup>4</sup> The biographical source for George Dwight Jr. is his obituary in *The Springfield Republican*, January 3, 1909, which was kindly forwarded to me by Dorothy Mozley of the Springfield City Library. The only information on Hoyt is from David W. Hoyt, *A Genealogical History of the Hoyt, Haight and Hight Families*, Providence, 1871.



*The Tabernacle as it looked soon after it was built, a century ago*

than Dwight, is a frustratingly mysterious figure to us today. Born in 1839 at Sag Harbor, New York, son of a Methodist minister, he led the itinerant childhood typical of the breed. He was graduated from Wesleyan University in 1858 and, by 1871, is in Springfield as secretary of the American Corrugated Iron Co., presumably George Dwight Jr.'s firm.

By 1876, Hoyt is a cottager at Wesleyan Grove, a fact that wants some explanation, for the designated Methodist camp ground for the Springfield area was at Northampton. Perhaps his choice of Wesleyan Grove is simply another indication of superior taste. It was John W. Hoyt, then, who was the man-on-the-spot with the offer of a cheap iron building, who oversaw the construction and who, judging by the elegance and sophisticated styling of his towered villa-cottage at 18 Trinity Circle, put the stamp of his own fine architectural judgement upon the Tabernacle. Newspaper accounts never failed to praise him. One took pains to point out the only delay in complete fulfillment of the contract was not the contractor's fault. Another wrote:



"Mr. Hoyt, the contractor (Dwight & Hoyt) has won many words of praise as a mechanic and architect. He has not, according to the judgement of any, failed in any degree to fulfill every letter of his contract, and in some places where by an additional expense to himself he could further beautify or improve the building he has done so, as for instance, the glass was to have been plain, instead he has made the outer lighting of each stained glass, that most beautifully reflect rich colors beyond the ability of the best painters to match. The building grows in beauty every day, and the longer one sees it the better he likes it."

One looks forward to new biographical material which will expand upon the life and career of this talented man.

Finally, more research is needed to assess the place of the Tabernacle in the history of American metal buildings. The assembling of structures out of prefabricated metal components has a distinguished tradition in the 19th century, from the famed Crystal Palace in London in 1851 and that in New York in 1853, to the cast-iron commercial blocks of many cities, to railway bridges, railway stations, markets, halls and exhibition structures, such as those at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia of 1876.

Springfield itself may have been a center for ideas about industrialized building processes, for it had an important bridge manufacturing firm (R. F. Hawkins Iron Works) and the famed Smith and Wesson revolver factory. It also had the fireproofing motivation and new building pressures born of an urban conflagration that occurred in 1875. (George Dwight Jr.'s father-in-law was the president of a fire insurance company.)

There are, then, a host of suggestions for areas to investigate as parts of the collective experience behind the design of the Tabernacle. This observer, however, is willing to wager that when all the information is in, it will be seen that no other building told Dwight and Hoyt precisely how to do it, nor predicted how fine the results would be. Thus, there will come a time when the Tabernacle at Wesleyan Grove will enjoy the admiration and affection of the nation's entire body of building-watchers that it now commands on Martha's Vineyard.

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## The Little Ladies From Chilmark

by DORIS C. STODDARD

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A little more than a century ago at Nab's Corners in Chilmark, two sisters, destined to become famous all over America, were born: the first, Lucy Palmer Adams, in 1861, and her sister, Sarah Butler Adams, two years later. Both grew up to become perfectly proportioned midgets and when fully grown were less than four feet tall.

Their parents, Capt. Moses and Susan (Palmer) Adams, had four other children, all of normal size. The family homestead on South Road was well over 100 years old at the time, having been built about 1728 by Eliashib Adams, a cordwainer<sup>1</sup>, the first of the Adams family to live on the Island. He had moved here from Barnstable where he was born in 1699.

Settling in Chilmark, Eliashib married Reliance Mayhew, the daughter of Rev. Experience Mayhew. The marriage was suddenly cut short when Reliance died while giving birth to their son, Mayhew, on Jan. 8, 1729/30. The infant survived and in 1750, at the age of 20, he married Rebecca Mayhew, linking two prominent Island names, Adams and Mayhew. The couple had 15 children.

Three generations later, Lucy and Sarah, great-granddaughters of the prolific couple, were born to Capt. Moses Adams and his second wife, Susan. Right from childhood the two girls were tiny and their smallness made

<sup>1</sup> A skilled craftsman working with leather. While much of his work was making shoes, there was apparently more "status" in being known as a cordwainer than a shoemaker -- sort of like men's barbers today preferring to be hair stylists.

DORIS C. STODDARD is President of the Historical Society and also its Genealogist. She has become an expert on the lives of the Adams sisters while working on upgrading the exhibits in the Adams Sitting Room.

them favorites with the other children at Chilmark School and later at Dukes County Academy in West Tisbury. In exchange for trinkets and favors, they would often allow themselves to be "adopted" by their playmates, acting as their friends' babies. Thus they began role-playing at a very early age.

Finding shoes to fit the tiny feet was a real problem as even the smallest children's shoes were much too large and sturdy doll's shoes were not available. Captain Adams solved the problem by making lasts of their feet with which he turned out homemade shoes, following the steps of his great-grandfather, Eliashib. The shoes were very small indeed. When Sarah was four years old, her foot was only two inches long! She was the smaller of the two and at age 20, fully grown, she stood only 44 inches tall and weighed 51 pounds. Lucy, at 22 years, was 49 inches tall and weighed 64 pounds.

The Adams family was very religious, being brought up as strict Methodists and taking an active part in the Chilmark church, then located on the Middle Road. The sisters became regular performers at the frequent church functions as they early demonstrated a talent for singing and acting. Soon they were being invited to perform at other religious meetings around the Island. Sailors at the Seaman's Bethel and Marine Hospital especially liked to hear them sing the well-known Gospel hymns.

The "break" that led to their stage career came when the Chilmark minister's son, who was then living in Plymouth, Mass., asked his father to try to persuade the girls to take part in an operetta he was producing. The preacher did so and, accompanied by their older brother James, the two girls went to Plymouth where Lucy played the lead role in "Little Red Riding Hood." Their performances received considerable praise in the area.

Mrs. Tom Thumb, living in nearby Middleboro, heard about the two tiny Chilmark sisters with the unusual singing talent and was determined to sign them up with the General Tom Thumb Company, a nationally known travelling group of performing midgets headed by Charles E. Stratton, known on the stage as General Tom Thumb. She sent her agent to the Vineyard several times to talk with Mrs. Adams, now a



*The Adams homestead near Nab's Corner, when the sisters lived there*

widow, the Captain having died in 1874 at the age of 71.

As would be expected, Mother Adams was not eager to have her small daughters travelling around the country with a troupe of show-business folks. After strenuously opposing the arrangement for some time, she and her son James, now the man of the family, finally agreed, provided that the contract stipulated that the girls would not make any Sunday appearances. Throughout their careers, Lucy and Sarah always had such a Sunday clause written into their contracts, often taking less money because of it. They had been brought up strictly observing the Sabbath and continued to do so throughout their lives.

Their New York premiere was in 1880 when Lucy was 19 and Sarah 17. The debut was properly noted in the February 20 issue of the *Vineyard Gazette*. With the General Tom Thumb Company, they toured the nation, appearing in all but one of the states.

Anxious to be accepted for their performing skills and not looked at as "freaks", they worked hard to perfect their act, studying singing, acting and dancing in Boston, Los Angeles and Chicago. In their repertoire were tableaux, skits and songs, including "Little Annie Rooney," "The Bootblack" and other song favorites of the period. In New York City they were so popular that song writers begged them to introduce their latest numbers. Many honors were given them, including having a new vessel out of New York christened the *Lucy and Sarah Adams*. In addition to touring with the Tom Thumb Company, they performed with Barnum and Bailey's Circus, the Lilliputian Opera Company, on the Chautaugua Circuit and at the Tom Thumb Musuem.

When General Tom Thumb died in July 1883, his widow, Lavinia, and two other members of the company, the Magri Brothers, formed a new group and the girls continued their careers with it. In 1885, when Lavinia married "Count" Primo Magri, Lucy, who had become Lavinia's close friend, served as bridesmaid at the lavish wedding, which was attended by 3,000 guests. Sarah, who entered on the arm of the bridegroom's brother, "Baron" Magri, was said to have attracted almost as much attention as the bride.

The "little ladies," as they preferred to be called, stayed with the company for 20 years. About 1900, they decided to leave, preferring to book their own engagements so as to be able to lead a more leisurely life. For the next 25 years, they limited their appearances to church societies and schools, billing themselves as Gospel singers, Christian workers, evangelistic singers and Pastor's assistants. They toured only during the fall and winter, spending the spring and summer at their Chilmark homestead where they operated a tearoom, "At the Sign of the Spinning Wheel."

There, they entertained customers with demonstrations of carding, spinning and weaving wool. Lucy would sing while Sarah played the small organ that had been with them on tour. Tea was served in the arbor outside and inside the house as well for a nominal sum. They also made and sold chocolates and caramel candy.

While on tour in 1930, Sarah fell to the pavement when the door of the car in which they were riding flew open. She

was taken to the hospital with head and hip injuries. The sisters gave four or five more concerts after the accident, but Sarah's injuries made it impossible for her to continue. They returned to Chilmark where it was discovered that she had burst an artery in her hip.

A year earlier they had inherited the cottage of their cousin, Lydia Adams Pease (Mrs. Horatio N. Pease), on the Oak Bluffs Camp Ground, near the Wesley House. Taking care of two houses was too much for them so they sold the old Chilmark homestead in 1933, closing the tearoom and retiring to Oak Bluffs.

Miss Sarah died on December 12, 1938, at the age of 75. The bereaved Miss Lucy spent the winter with her youngest sister, Celia (Mrs. Herbert Fulton), in Amherst, N. H. Reconciled to being alone, she returned to Oak Bluffs in the spring and devoted the rest of her life to church work.

Lucy was a vigorous, strong-willed lady who made up for her smallness by sheer energy and spirit. The Rev. George W. Wiseman had this to say about Lucy in his book, *They Kept the Lower Lights Burning*: "She was a beautiful soul, but a firey little person. Many times her pastors received a tongue-lashing when she thought they were no longer orthodox in their theology."

She regularly reported on neighborhood and Oak Bluffs news in the *Gazette*. Even at age 92, she was still eager to join in an issue and wrote the *Gazette* in support of a man whose letter to the editor had strongly condemned the summer people for wearing too scanty clothing. Lucy's letter quoted the Scriptures liberally and asked "Does it promote pure, clean thoughts to sit beside a person with very little clothing on?" This was as recent as 1953 and written by a former "showgirl," at that!

A gregarious person, she served as president of the Mizpah Class of the Trinity Methodist Church, as Sunday School teacher, steward of the church, member of the W.S.C.S. and was very active in the Neighborhood Association.

Just two weeks before her 94th birthday, on December 28, 1954, Lucy died and in her will she bequeathed several items of memorabilia to the Historical Society. To display these items, along with other antiques from the Adams Chilmark homestead which were donated by Mrs. Walter Condict, the





Left, a publicity photo of the sisters. Right, their smallness is apparent here. Below, Lucy, 90, leads in hymn singing at Mizpah Class



Society has set up the Adams Sitting Room in the Thomas Cooke House. The room, and the house, are open to the public during the summer.

## Press Clippings About the "Little Ladies"

### Lucy about Sarah:

"My little sister and I were very congenial, but very different in temperament. She was rather sedate and reserved, while I would chat with anyone who wanted to spend the time. I was fond of reading story books, she never read one.<sup>1</sup> But strange as it may sound, Emerson was one of her favorite authors and she read much of his writings.

"While with the Lilliputian Opera Co., I was the only 'girl' of the company that would go out with the 'boys' for winter sports. My sister often made the remark, if it was not for her I would 'go to the dogs', but I firmly asserted that I kept steady under my own domination." Letter to *Vineyard Gazette*, Jan. 29, 1954.

"There was a strike of the normal-sized chorus girls in Philadelphia, who declared that the curtain should not rise that night.

" 'They cursed something terrible,' says Miss Lucy, 'and I said to Sarah: "This is hell!" Sarah replied, "Well, if it is no worse than this, perhaps it isn't so bad." ' "

" 'Sarah was better than most preachers,' says Miss Lucy with conviction."

Interview with Joseph Chase Allen, *Vineyard Gazette*, Dec. 29, 1950.

"With a twinkle in her eyes, Miss Lucy loved to tell the story of Count X, indeed a very nice little man, who one day invited Miss Adams and her sister to lunch. But when the unfortunate count came for them, her sister suddenly put her little foot down and refused to go out with him, at the same time signaling Lucy to send him away.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Lucy seemed less than satisfied with this statement about her sister after seeing it in print. She wrote another letter to the *Gazette*: "I feel I gave the wrong impression of my sister.... I mentioned her reading from Emerson, which she did. But, better than that, she was truly a Bible reader. I have two of her Bibles, well worn by use...." *Gazette*, Feb. 12, 1954.

" 'My sister,' explained Miss Adams, 'smelled alcohol on him! Poor man, he was not known to drink, and later we learned that what my sister thought were fumes of whiskey was really some preparation he had used to clean a few stains on his vest.' " Camillo Camara, a neighbor, *Gazette*, Jan. 7, 1955.

#### Lucy about Lucy:

"I live all alone. Lots of other people get to be 90, but not many are as well and as smart as I am. I can do most anything. My sister thought I could do everything.... I don't touch vegetables. I eat meat and potato with plenty of gravy. I never drink anything stronger than tea or coffee and I don't drink them either. My drink is malted milk, three or four times a day.... Lately I've taken up dressing dolls to pass the time. I enjoy dolls. Guess that is my hobby... And of course I go to church regularly. I've been a faithful church-goer all my life."

*New Bedford Standard-Times*, Jan. 17, 1951

#### Lucy about their smallness:

"Lucy is the spokesman of the two, although she says she has to rely on Sarah for names and dates. She is a little older and a little larger too. They have grown seven or eight inches since they first began their travels.... 'We were normal size at birth,' explained Lucy. 'And we have three sisters and a brother who are just like other people. People used to ask mother what she gave us. Of course, she didn't give us anything though I suppose they do that sometimes. But we grew very slowly.' " *Gazette*, July 28, 1921.

"Were you always small? This question has been the invariable accompaniment of the tiny Adams sisters on their travels throughout the country. 'I used to get so tired of it,' laughed Miss Lucy, 'that I felt like telling them, "oh, no indeed, we used to be large." ' " "

*Gazette*, August 4, 1921

#### Tributes in the press:

"Just preceding Mr. Graham's sermon, Miss Sarah Adams, one of the Adams sisters assisting in evangelistic services in Lucasville, spoke briefly. Miss Adams does not stand quite

four feet, but is one of the most forceful speakers who ever spoke from the Trinity pulpit. Her voice is as small as she herself. Despite its smallness, it penetrated that great audience as the nightgale penetrates the night air." *Portsmouth (Ohio) News*, March 24, 1920.

"The temptation to succumb to an inferiority complex was always with her, but per contra she benefited from the habit of nature to give undersized people a temper and attitude of self-confidence, or proud carriage, or lively manner, making up, in attraction, for the lack of impressive physique. No doubt she was possessed of a good bit of egoism, which did not amount however to a vain egotism." Charles A. S. Dwight, *Gazette*, Jan. 7, 1955.

"There were many extraordinary things about Miss Lucy Adams, and one of them was that she was not a prisoner of her littleness. She might easily have followed the easy course and permitted her small stature to garner worldly rewards. Instead of this, she dominated the forces of her life, and her small stature was only part of a sort of personality the Vineyard knows well. It was a strong and fine personality." Editorial after her death, *Gazette*, Jan. 7, 1955.



Miss Lucy looking very handsome in this full-length studio photo



Audiences were enthusiastic about Sarah's "aerial tableaux"

It's easily said, not so easily done;  
 This earning a dollar, it's really no fun  
 Some seem to find, just in the trick of time  
 How to catch and to keep every penny & dime  
 But that seems a gift, which is surely not mine,  
 But some other things, are perhaps at my time.  
 One day my oil stone went on a rampage  
 That got my pass up which I could not ask for  
 So into the work of repair I just dove,  
 My hands I spared not, they got black as the stone  
 And there in the grime, ~~with~~ <sup>not</sup> oil ~~but~~ water  
 I ~~had~~ <sup>did</sup> use up, rage and used as a blister  
 It took full two days, before it would burn.  
 But what could I do, what other way turn -  
 Had it been much longer I'd have frozen to death  
 For nearly as then, ~~one~~ could acceptably over breath  
 Now the battle is over, I'm glad to say  
 My pass & will power, just saved the day  
 For the Ladies Aid you plainly can see  
 I surely had sowed a plumbers big fee

Lucy Palmer Adams

Above, a rhyme, in Lucy's handwriting, about her "handyman" talents.  
 Below left, cover of tea-room menu. Right, their Camp-Ground cottage



The Sisters  
 At the Sign  
 Of the




## The "Square" In West Tisbury Center

by WILLIAM J. BLOCK

If you look at any map of Martha's Vineyard, you will see, a little west of the middle, the strange and seemingly anomalous outline of a square area, comprising a major part of West Tisbury center, unlike anything to be found elsewhere on the Island.

Should you look into the phenomenon further, it may intrigue you to discover that the perimeter of the area is just two miles; about 160 rods, or half a mile, on a side.

You will still not realize that you are looking at a relic of one of the earliest settlements by the English in the New World; a survival of the societal environment in which the English, and Europeans generally, had lived and from which they had wrung their subsistence during medieval times and earlier.

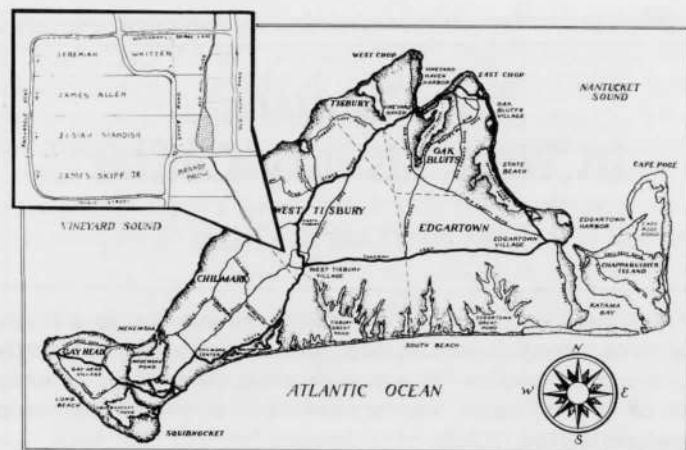
It coincides substantially with boundaries of four contiguous 40-acre home lots, each 40 by 160 rods in dimension, that were originally apportioned respectively to James Skiffe, Jr., Josiah Standish, James Allen and Jeremiah Whitten, four of the original Proprietors, following the 1669 purchase from the Indians of Takemmy, which the English then named Tisbury, after Thomas Mayhew's ancestral home in Wiltshire.

The circumambient ways, Music Street, the Panhandle, Scotchman's Bridge Lane and the State Road, have all been in use from the beginning of the English settlement.

Scotchman's Bridge Lane was laid out when the home lots were originally plotted, as appears from the original descriptions. The State Road has existed from the start of the

WILLIAM J. BLOCK, a keen student of Island history, is a retired lawyer and lives on the "square" in West Tisbury on Music Street.





Above, the "square" is clearly seen on Island map by Will Huntington. Insert shows the four original lots which formed the original square settlement by the Europeans. The path leading from the South Road to the western boundaries of the home lots, now called Music Street, has existed continually from before 1700 to the present. The Panhandle was the path that ran from Music Street along the west boundaries of the home lots.<sup>1</sup>

From Brandy Brow, at the middle of West Tisbury center, the State Road originally ran northerly, in a more or less straight line, to Scotchman's Bridge Lane, but it has curved around the cemetery ever since 1701, when James Allen donated "God's Acre" for the church, which stood there until 1865, and the cemetery that is still there.<sup>2</sup>

In many ancient English villages such as those from which the West Tisbury settlers and their immediate forbears emigrated, the homes of the residents were clustered in a village center, surrounded by fields which they cultivated communally and upon which they pastured their stock in common. So was the new settlement laid out; although the commons were anachronous and were soon to be divided among the Proprietors.

<sup>1</sup> Charles E. Banks, *The History of Martha's Vineyard*, 2 ed., 1966 v. 1, pp. 460-1; *Annals of W. Tisbury*, pp. 111-2.

<sup>2</sup> Banks, op. cit., v.2, *Annals of W. Tisbury*, p. 79.

Originally, they were assigned, in addition to their undivided interests in the commons, "home lots", most of which were on the west side of the Old Mill River, where the more prominent shareholders located. The westerly boundaries were half a mile (160 rods) west of the river, and were matched by the easterly boundaries of the lots laid out on the east side of the river that now mark approximately the west line of the State Forest, half a mile east of the river. The resulting symmetry can be seen on maps.

The accompanying plan is based upon one obtained by Dr. Banks reputedly from the late William J. Rotch and referred to in the History as "the map accompanying this, to which reference should be made for a more particular representation."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps inadvertently, the map was omitted from the book.

As the layouts of ancient English villages that had disappeared can now again be recognized from the air in this age of flight, so the outlines of the original settlement remain strikingly visible after 300 years.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 13.



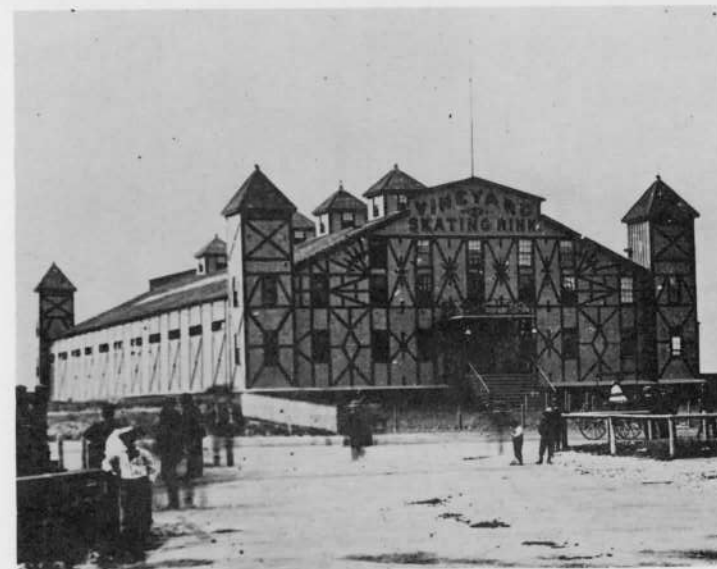
# Cottage City When the Tabernacle Was New



Above, the Methodist Tabernacle and Camp Ground dominated town in 1888. Below, the Methodist Chapel shortly after Tabernacle was built



Above, Wesley House in 1888. (Is this the front or back?) Below, press was more interested in the ugly new Skating Rink than the Tabernacle





Circuit Avenue was certainly busy a century ago, but, below, two horse-drawn wagons and two high-wheel bikes are only visible vehicles



Above, Ocean Avenue on a lovely sunny afternoon. Last house on the right was Dr. H. Tucker's residence, shown below, in its full beauty







Left, the tents were not Spartan and soon grew into cottages, right. Below, Baptist Temple on Highlands was no match for Tabernacle



Above, this wooden bridge crossed the marshland between Sunset Lake and Lake Anthony. Below, a row of Cottage City's handsome cottages



# Documents

*Jeremiah Pease (1792-1857) lived in Edgartown where he served as Customs House officer, light keeper, surveyor, bone setter and religious zealot. His mentor was the famed Rev. Joseph Thaxter, pastor of the established church in Edgartown, variously known as the Presbyterian and Congregational Church (now the Federated Church).*

*The two men were devoted friends and it must have come as a shock to both when Pease, unhappy with Thaxter's liberal Unitarianism, broke away to become a leading member of the group which formed the Methodist camp meeting, espousing more fundamentalist doctrine.*

*As the Rev. H. Vincent wrote in A History of the Wesleyan Grove Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting, "the site now known as 'Wesleyan Grove' was selected and marked out by the late Jeremiah Pease, Esq., of Edgartown, and was repeatedly commended by him to the attention of both ministers and laymen till it was finally determined to hold a meeting here. . ." Pease was not only the Camp Meeting's first Chorister, he also served as Superintendent of the Night Watch for several years as well as being a tent master.*

*He kept his Journal in a series of notebooks, starting a new one only when the previous book was completely filled, regardless of the time of year. Footnote numbering by the editor, Gale Huntington, is consecutive within each notebook and*

*therefore goes back to <sup>1</sup> only when a new notebook is started.*

*The Intelligencer began publishing these excerpts in November 1974, Vol. 16, No. 2.*

## July 1840.

*16th.* Wind SW. Wm. Jernegan Esq dies aged 85. S. G. Vinson's little daughter dies very suddenly of a fever, aged about 4 years funeral this day.

*17th.* Wind SW. J. P. [?] Worth's daughter dies last night of fits aged [blotted]

*18th.* Wind SW. Funeral of Esq. Jernegan and the child daughter of J. P. W. Service by Rev'd Mr. Thomas.

*21st.* Wind SW. Went to West Side Holmes Hole on business.

*23rd.* Wind SW. Light. The Arbitrators Hon. Chas. Holmes, Capt. Ward M. Parker of New Bedford and Capt. Thomas Bradley of Tisbury to whom was referred the claim of the Swaseys to land in Starbucks Neck arrive and set on that business.

*24th.* Wind NNE to SSW. Stormy. The Arbitrators meet again at 7 A.M. The attorney H.G.O. Colby of New Bedford gives up all claim to land mentioned in the Writ and has all the fees of Courts and Arbitrators to pay except for 20 dollars, which will amount in my opinion to about \$500. I agreed to pay him again for about 3 acres or ½ of 3 acres of land not claimed in the writ worth about \$10 per acre lying near the Eel pond. The arbitrators make up their report and return it to the Supreme Court.

*25th.* Wind SW. The Arbitrators and Lawyers go to New Bedford.

*27th.* Wind SW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole blackberrying.

*28th.* Wind S. Warm. Bot a cow of Br.

Rufus Davis at East Side Holmes Hole.

*30th.* Went to Tisbury with Dan'l Fellows Esq.

## August 1840.

*1st.* Wind S. Rains a little. William<sup>1</sup> arrives from New Haven.

*5th.* Wind SW. Mr. Ebenezer Smith dies of dropsy & c. attended Temperance meeting at Holmes Hole. Address by Rev'd Mr. Boomer at P.M.

*6th.* Wind SW. Funeral of Mr. Smith. Service by Rev'd Mr. Thomas.

*9th.* Wind SW. Attended meetings at East Side Holmes Hole. Returned at evening.

*10th.* Wind SW. Went to Camp Meeting and stayd until the 15th. It rained and thundered and lightened several times during the Meeting. It was a very interesting time said by many to be the best Meeting on many accounts ever held there. I trust much good was done, We had very pleasant times in the tents belonging to the town.

*18th.* Wind SW. Br. John Adams preaches at Br. T. Stewarts at the Plane

*22nd.* Wind DW. Cutter *Vigilant* sails. U. S. Cutter *Hamilton*, Capt Sturgis arrives from Boston via New Bedford.

*23rd.* Wind SW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings. Returned at evening. Br. John Adams preaches here today.

*24th.* Wind NW. William goes to New York via New Bedford.

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah's younger son who served in the U. S. Revenue Cutter Service.

*25th.* Wind SW. Oil vessel arrives and delivers the supply for the Light House.

*26th.* Wind N. Light. B. F. Hallet arrives and delivers a lecture in the old Congregational meetinghouse on the concerns of the nation.

*27th.* Wind SW. Went to Holmes Hole at 5 P.M. with Mr. Hallett.

*30th.* Wind SW. Went to Chilmark attended meeting with Br. Blake in the Methodist Meetinghouse. It was a very engaged season. Several were under the awakening influence of the Divine Spirit as we trust. Returned at 6 P.M.

*31st.* Wind SW. Light. The Collector goes on a visit to Boston with his wife. Engaged at the Custom House.

## September 1840.

*3rd.* Wind SW. Brig *Deborah* arrives from Salem bot by Joseph Mayhew and others for the whaling business.

*5th.* Wind NE. Storm with rain. Gale.

*9th.* Wind NW. Ships *Omega* and *Alexander Coffin* sail which I cleared the Collector being absent.

*13th.* Wind SW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole attended meetings Br. E. M. Baylies goes with me. Attended meeting at Widow R. Nortons at 5 P.M. Br. Thos. Ely preaches. Br. Chase Pease was there. U. S. Ships *Macedonian* and *Levant* arrives from Portland for New York at Holmes Hole.

*14th.* Wind SW. Light. Went to Holmes Hole visited the ships above mentioned. A large company of men and women from this place and Holmes Hole visit them today.

*15th.* Wind NW. The ships sail for New York via Newport.

20th. Wind SW. Attended meeting at East Side Holmes Hole. Ship *Mary* of Edgartown Francis Fisher master arrives.

24th. Wind SW. Went to West Side Holmes Hole. Br. Sherman arrives from Nantucket.

25th. Wind SW. Attended meeting with Br. Sherman at Chappaquiddick.

26th. Wind SW. Attended meeting with Br. Sherman at Pohogonut.

27th. Wind SW. Attended meeting at East Side Holmes Hole in day and at Chappaquiddick at evening. Widow Smith dies. A.E. 80.

28th. Wind SW. Light. Br. Sherman returns to Nantucket. L.M.S. funeral.

30th. Wind NNW. Light. Engaged at the Custom House for several days past.

#### October 1840.

3rd. Went to Nantucket on business relative to the Custom House.

4th. Wind WNW. Attended meeting at Polpes with Br. Sherman had an interesting time.

5th. Wind SW. Returned from Nantucket via Holmes Hole.

12th. Wind NW. Cool. Went to Tisbury on business.

14th. Wind SSW to WSW. Went to New Bedford in Ship *Vineyard*.

15th. Wind SW. Returned via Holmes Hole in Steam Boat *Telegraph*.

21st. Wind SE. Rains a little. Foggy. Ship *Vineyard* of this place Capt. S. R. Crocker drops down to the outer harbour bound to the Pacific Ocean.

22nd. Wind NW. Fresh breeze. Brig *Deborah* Br. Jos. A. Worth sails on a Whaling cruise in the Atlantic Ocean.

27th. Wind NW. Ship *Vineyard* sails.

#### November 1840.

1st. Wind N to NNE. Went to East Side Holmes Hole attended meetings at evening.

6th. Wind NE. Heavy gale with some rain and high tide.

10th. Wind NE. A very heavy gale and high tide. The breakwater is injured. Planks come off. Gale continues all night and during the day.

18th. Wind NE. Cutter *Vigilant* Capt. Conner arrives. Went to West Side Holmes Hole.

29th. Wind NW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Br. Burdett went with me. Attended meetings. Returned at 5 P.M.

#### December 1840.

6th. Wind ESE to SE. Gale high tide and rain. Did not go to East Side Holmes Hole on account of the storm.

9th. Wind W. Light, pleasant. Attended meeting at Chapaquidic with Br. Ely and Br. J. Luce.

18th. Wind NW. The Light Vessel comes in being damaged by a ship running into her.

21st. Wind N. Engaged at the Custom House.

*This same entry for the next five days except for changes in the direction of the wind.*

#### January 1841.

1st. Wind NW. Engaged at the Custom House.

5th. Wind NE. Mr. Samuel Pent dies very suddenly while fishing. Fell dead upon the ice.

6th. Wind SE. Mr. W. Waldron breaks his leg at Tisbury yesterday.

7th. Wind NE. Funeral of Mr. Pent. Service at the Baptist Meeting House by Rev'd Mr. Thomas Ely.

8th. Wind SE. Went to Tisbury to set the leg of Mr. Waldron.

10th. Wind N. Foggy. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meeting. Br. Blanchard master of a brig from the West Indies was there, attended meeting with us as he is an engaged man in the cause of religion. We had a very pleasant season.

11th. Wind ESE. Raining and snows. Went to Tisbury to see Mr. Waldron.

16th. Wind SE to E. Went to Tisbury to see Mr. Waldron.

17th. Wind S to SE. Gale with rain. Did not attend meeting at East Side Holmes Hole on account of storm. Mr. John Clifford a seaman aboard the schooner *Majestic* from St. Domingo died last night and is buried today. Funeral service by Rev'd Mr. Ely. He belonged to Prospect Maine. Aged about 27. Said to be a respectable man.

18th. Wind NW. Mr. Rudolphus Coffin dies from consumption.

20th. Wind NNE. Funeral service for Mr. Coffin. Service by Rev'ds Holmes, Thomas and Ely.

22nd. Wind NE. Went to Tisbury to see Mr. Waldron. Found him remarkably recovered. Told (him) it would not be necessary for me to come again unless some accident occurred, if so he must send for me. I visited him 5 times.

23rd. Wind NNW. The Light Vessel goes to her station today.

25th. Wind SW. Mr. John Smith refuses to pay me for the house which he bot at auction near W. F. Butlers house.

29th. Wind NE. Snows. L. C. Wimpenny arrives from St. Helena in Ship *Dartmouth* having been obliged to return on account of the sickness of Capt. Jared Fisher who was master of the ship and was left at St. Helena being unable to return and Mr. Cleveland 2nd mate being also sick the owners of the ship offer the command to L. C. Wimpenny.

30th. Wind SW. L. C. Wimpenny writes the owners of the above ship that he will accept the command.

#### February 1841.

3rd. Wind SE. Snows a little. L. C. Wimpenny goes to New Bedford.

4th. Wind SW. Fresh breeze. L. C. Wimpenny returns from New Bedford.

10th. Wind ESE. Rains a little. Went to West Side Holmes Hole on business.

12th. Wind N. Very cold.

15th. Wind NW. A man fell from the ship *Japan* lying at the wharf last night and was drowned. Mrs. Grace Smith this morning was taken very suddenly ill with convulsion fits.

16th. Wind NE. Cold. Mrs. Smith dies at about 7 oclock P.M. aged 66. She had professed religion for a number of years and was a pleasant Woman. I trust she died in the Lord. L. C. Wimpenny goes to New Bedford to take command of the ship *Dartmouth*. 18th. Wind N. Funeral of Mrs. Smith. Service by Rev'ds Thomas Ely, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Holmes.

20th. Wind NW. Ship *Dartmouth*, L. C. Wimpenny master sails from New Bedford for the Pacific Ocean.

21st. Wind W. Pleasant. Went to East Side Holmes Hole, attended meetings. Had a good season some tokens of



Reformation. Funeral of Mrs. Jedidah Beetle who died yesterday morning. Service by Rev'd Mr. Thomas.

23rd. Wind NW. Fresh breeze. Cold. Set a shoulder for Mr. Fisher of Nantucket.

28th. Wind WSW. light breeze, pleasant. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Brs. J.D.S. & S. G. Vincent attended meetings there this day. It was a pleasant season. One young man I trust experiences a change of heart. It was a reformation for him.

#### March 1841.

1st. Wind SW. Brig *Pavilion* lately bot for the whaling business arrived last evening from New York. Pleasant weather. Went to West Chop Light House to carry oil.

3rd. Wind Easterly. Pleasant. Cyrus<sup>2</sup> goes to Boston via New Bedford.

10th. Wind SW. Cutter *Vigilant* Capt. Conner arrives.

14th. Wind NW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole attended meetings and the wedding of Br. J. E. Wait who is married to Sister Maria R. Luce. Returned at evening.

15th. Wind NW. Cutter *Vigilant* sails.

16th. Wind NE Gale with snow.

26th. Wind SW. This day I am removed as Keeper of Edgartown Light House and Sylvanus Crocker appointed to that office by Instructions from the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States to the Superintendent J. P. Norton, Esq. of Light Houses and his letter to me

<sup>2</sup>Cyrus, another son, was a twin of William.

dated March 15th 1841.<sup>3</sup>

28th. Wind S to NE. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Br. E. M. Baylies goes with me. Had a good season.

#### April 1841.

1st. Wind ESE to SW. Bark *Athalia* arrives leaky. 190 bbls sperm oil.

5th. Wind WNW. Fresh breeze. Had some talk with Capt. A. about Colter [?] & c.

6th. Wind S to SW. Ship *C. Mitchell* of Nantucket arrives from the Pacific Ocean. News of the death of General Harrison President of the United States arrives.

7th. Wind SW. Rains a little. Barque *Rhine*, Capt. A. C. Morse sails on a whaling cruise in the South Atlantic Ocean.

8th. Wind NE to E. Another year of my short life is gone. Fast Day. Rains a little at night. Went to East Side Holmes Hole attended meeting P.M. S.G.V. went with me.

13th. Wind NE. A very severe storm. a great deal of snow on the ground. Wind blowing a gale. A remarkable fall of snow more I think than I ever saw at this season before. It has snowed continually from last evening at four o'clock to 4 P.M. this day. Yet much has melted yet a great quantity remains. At no time during the winter has more snow fallen according to my judgment. The ice makes fast.

<sup>3</sup>Jeremiah does not elaborate, but as we shall read later, he was removed for political reasons: he had supported the Democrats Jackson and van Buren for President in the elections of 1829, 1833, 1837 and 1841. Benjamin Harrison, a Whig, was elected in 1841 and Jeremiah paid for his "crime." Crocker, like most Vineyarders, must have been a Whig.

14th. Wind NW. Cold for the season, much snow remains on the ground.

16th. Wind SW. Pleasant. Cyrus goes to New York in Sloop *Mincher* [?] Engaged in painting Heavy [?] Boats & c.

18th. Wind S. Rainy A.M. P.M. Pleasant, wind SW. Did not go to East Side Holmes Hole on account of rain. At ½ past 9 o'clock this evening my father dies aged 87 years and 4 days. He was esteemed an honest man and a Christian. He was an affectionate and kind father. May God grant to sanctify his death to his children, Grand Children and all connections and acquaintances.

19th. Wind SW. Pleasant rather cool for the season. Ship *Ohio* of Nantucket arrives from the Pacific Ocean with 2700 bbls sperm oil.

20th. Wind SW to S. At ½ past 1 o'clock this day the funeral of my Father commences at his late dwelling house by Pray offered by Rev'd Mr. Gannet of the Congregational Church of which he was a member. The corpse was carried to the Congregational Church. Prayer by Rev'd Thomas Ely of the Methodist Church. Sermon and concluding prayer by Rev'd Mr. Gannet. The connections and friends walked to the Church Yard and there deposited his remains with a good hope of a happy resurrection at the last day. To view the graves of my dear Mother Brothers and Sisters and the last look at my Dear Fathers coffin was affecting. Oh Death, Death, Death what a change.

21st. Wind NE. Storm. This day I was sent for by Mr. Shaw Norris to attend the Funeral of his Sister Lucy who died on Tuesday of a fever having been

sick one week and one day. She was a person of amiable character. She professed religion years ago at East Side Holmes Hole and has maintained an excellent religious character ever since. She was much loved by all her acquaintances and is a great loss to that place. She was one of my greatest friends. Oh may the Lord sanctify this death to the good of my love and all who were acquainted with her. Her last were much her happiest days and she died in the triumph of faith in Jesus name. Funeral service prayer & exhortation by Rev'd Mr. Boomer.

22nd. Wind NE. Foggy. Engaged in plowing.

23rd. Wind NE. Foggy. Engaged in appraising the estate of Br. R. W. Coffin.

25th. Wind NE. Rains a little. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings. Br. E. M. Baylies went with me. It was a very solemn season. The death of Sister Lucy Norris is scensibly felt by all the inhabitants of that place. It was affecting indeed to see the seat so often occupied by Sister Lucy in the Meeting House now vacant never to be filled by her again. She was very punctual at meeting even in stormy weather. When there were but few who attended she was most always there. Now she has gone to join the blood washed congregation on high as I trust.

26th. Wind NE. Foggy wet weather. Engaged appraising the estate of R. Coffin.

29th. Wind SE. to WNW. Went to West Side Holmes Hole at P.M.

30th. Wind W. Cloudy and cold for the season. Br. A. Gibbs comes from Nantucket.

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## Books

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*Guide to Martha's Vineyard*, by Polly Burroughs. The Globe Pequot Press, Chester, Conn. 93 pages. Illus. \$4.95.

This pleasant and unpretentious book by a well known Island writer is filled with fascinating lore and a wealth of practical information. It tells you, for example, where you'll find it best to collect shells, or to watch birds, or to admire wildflowers. It lists boat ramps and camp sites and, should you need to know, where you'll find public rest rooms.

Its historical content, while limited by the book's size and purpose, is well written and interesting. It recounts

enough history to satisfy all but the history buff, who, after all, has many other books to choose among. There are walking tours of the three principal towns and bike tours of the Island with emphasis on up-Island attractions.

The chapter on Island architecture is especially helpful in making the tours more interesting (see the *Intelligencer* May 1979).

A paperback, the book contains many maps and handsome sketches by Meg Taylor (although one, of a certain bridge, seems to have been included for other than artistic reasons).

As a bed-table book for house guests, it will provide accurate answers to most of their questions about the Island.

A. R. R.

places except right here fade into greyness with the rest of the world. No doubt those places are interesting and even important, but they seem so far away.

Quickly: How many D's in Chappaqui-ick?

GEORGE W. ADAMS  
Former Editor

Redding, Conn.

Editor:

I am very pleased with the February issue of *The Intelligencer* in which my article on gravestones appeared. It is good inspiration for a student who sometimes finds himself drowning in papers, homework and tests to see his

name on something published. My thanks to George Adams for all the help he has given me. I would also like especially to thank Alison Shaw whose

fine work is very noticeable in the issue.

Brown University  
Providence, R. I. JOSEPH J. IAROCCHI

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## News

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The August issue of *Yankee* magazine contains two articles about the Vineyard. One is "The Wives Who Wouldn't Stay Home," by Henry Beetle Hough, and the other is "The Art Worker's Guild, Inc., Martha's Vineyard, Mass.," by Damon Ripley.

Another recent publication of interest is *The Whalers* written by A.B.C. Whipple and produced by Time-Life Books as part of the series *The Seafarers*. The Dukes County Historical Society contributed to this book, which includes photographs from our archives. The general editor of this series, George G. Daniels, is a summer resident of the Vineyard—clearly an excellent spot for editing books on seafaring.

Visitors to the Historical Society who are impressed by the model of Sarah Adams should be sure to see the exhibit "Delightful Diminutives" by Margot Datz opening at the Art Workers Guild on August 15. Displaying a most unusual art form and demonstrating an extraordinary talent, Miss Datz produces "little people," who are most difficult to describe. You will have to see for

yourselves. Incidentally, there is some confusion about the spelling of Sarah. On all publicity handouts it was spelled Sara, but both she and Lucy spelled it Sarah in personal writings.

The Vincent House on the grounds of the Dr. Daniel Fisher Estate is now open to the public on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. It is owned by the Martha's Vineyard Historical Preservation Society.

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## Letters

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Editor:

The error was mine, Dr. Bernstein and other Wesleyan alumni, and I apologize. I should have known better.

In truth though, Wesleyan always has been simply Wesleyan to me, just as Oxford always has been simply Oxford, not Oxford University. Don't take it as a slight; such is the fate of the famous.

How Middleton came into it I can't explain, unless it was the result of insular tunnel-vision which makes all

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## Director's Report

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Despite the gas crisis, business has been brisk at the Society this summer and would be even more so if rain clouds would produce some moisture to bring people in off the beaches. We have had many interested visitors who have expressed their delight with our Society and with the tours given by our guides. In the house, Hilda Gilluly is back for her thirteenth summer. She is joined this year by Ann Holton, Chris Coughlan, Wendy Koch, and Amy Spector. In the gatehouse, Bob McLane ably handles the visitors in the morning and Mrs. Gilluly takes over in the afternoon.

The Francis Foster Museum is open for its second summer and visitors are fascinated by its attractions. Nevertheless, we plan to make major changes in this room in order to fully utilize its potential. In June, Al Borgese, the design specialist for the Maine State Museum came to the Society under a grant from the American Association for State and Local History. After two days of surveying our collections, he left with the basic information needed to provide us with a plan for arranging the exhibits in the Foster Museum. As soon as we receive his recommendations, we will begin improvements leading to a permanent exhibit on the subject of whaling.

Only two weeks before Mr. Borgese's visit, we had the pleasure of working with William Joyce of the American Antiquarian Society, who came here as a consultant under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to survey our archives and to make recommendations about the need for a grant from NEH to organize and to catalog our manuscripts. Mr. Joyce concluded that it will take a considerable amount of money to put the archives into good order. In the months ahead, we will be proceeding with the lengthy application process to the National Endowment and hope that it will eventually meet with a favorable response.

As noted in the last issue of the *Intelligencer*, Stan Lair made prints from all of our photographic plates. Now Harvey

Garneau has completed an excellent job of organizing the photos and putting them into albums. Thus, we now have a readily accessible collection of photographs that were previous almost unusable. This is the sort of volunteer work that has always been so important to the growth of our Society. Looking back over the last year, we can see that a great many people have provided assistance. In addition to Stan Lair and Harvey Garneau, we have been ably assisted during this period by George Adams, Jan Benham, Edith Bliss, Muriel Crossman, Janet Holladay, Lorna Livingston, Stan Murphy, Elliot Norton, Dorothy Poole, Arthur Railton, Dot Ritter, Alison Shaw, Doris Stoddard, Snowden Taylor and Rachael Williams. Of course, there have been many other people actively involved in the Society including officers and members of the Council, contributors to the *Intelligencer*, and Society members who have donated money and artifacts. Those of us who work here every day are most grateful for this support and assistance which is really the lifeblood of any organization.

A delightful addition to the Thomas Cooke House this summer is a model of Sarah Butler Adams (1863-1938), which now exerts an almost lifelike presence in the Adams Sister's Room. Aided by the research of Doris Stoddard, Margot Datz produced this marvelous image of one of the Island's best-known personalities in the first half of this century. Sarah and Lucy Adams were midgets who traveled with the Barnum and Bailey Circus until they decided on a quieter existence back home on the Vineyard. We hope that by the end of the summer the talented Miss Datz will finish with the model of Lucy Adams so that Sarah will once again be joined with her sister.

At the annual meeting on August 16 at 8:00 p.m., we will be treated to a most interesting presentation by Frank Zapatka, a professor of literature at the American University in Washington. His topic is "Herman Melville, Cape Cod and the Islands," and as many of you know Captain Valentine Pease of Edgartown was the whaling master, who gave Melville his introduction to life on a whaleship. As in the past, the meeting is open to members and guests, we look forward to a large turnout.

Thomas E. Norton  
Director



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## Bits & Pieces

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Two neatly handwritten letters from Miss Lucy Adams, the little lady from Chilmark, are in our files. The first dated May 27, 1839:

"Yesterday I had the pleasure of visiting your very interesting house... In looking around I found the frame of pictures I sent of my sister and myself in a most remote part of the house, in a room with almost nothing of interest... it was sent by request of one of your prominent members, but I see it was a mistake... I am now disillusioned and am very anxious to relieve you of it... kindly let me know when it will be convenient for me to get it."

Two weeks later, the second:

"...Perhaps I should be put in the class of Romans 12:3. I might have been more correctly impressed about the contents of the room had not the one who was showing me around said as we came in, 'There is not much of interest in this room,' and passed quickly through."

Miss Lucy would be pleased to see how the Society now treasures her memory in the Adams Sitting Room. Sadly, as is so often the case, she did not live to see it.

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The Tabernacle, so well described by Ellen Weiss in this issue, as "a place within a place," has an ethereal quality – especially to the solitary visitor early in the morning. When empty and still,

its acoustics are similar to those of a cathedral, but brighter and more cheerful, not gray and somber as so often the case in old churches. If you're fortunate, as I was, a choir will be practicing in a room over the Camp Ground office, its singing just loud enough to be heard, yet distant enough to lend a heavenly touch. It's a totally different ambiance from the vibrant, lively mood when the hall is filled for a meeting or concert.

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While a young geologist and still a bit of a snob, in 1872, Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, later owner of Seven Gates Farm in Chilmark, was on the Island on a coastal survey. He spent the day at Oak Bluffs. It was before there was a Tabernacle. Here's the letter he wrote that night in 1872:

"Oak Bluffs is a mushroom town without any oaks, except some scrubs, and little in the way of bluffs except what one gets from the super-christianized people. White pine in the shape of gothic shanties is the only forest growth I have yet found.. One is shockingly reminded of the surroundings of a race-track rather than a camp-meeting. The place is not altogether bad. There are some hundreds of little box-like houses of a queer and profane architecture occupied by people of the middle classes or waiting for some one of that class to buy them. These little dabs of dwellings, about as big as boarding-house slices of mince pie, are scattered around through the thick-set copse of oaks!"

Too bad he couldn't have stood alone inside the Tabernacle just for a few eloquent moments.

THE EDITOR

## Some Publications

*The Mammals of Martha's Vineyard* by Allan R. Keith. Illustrated, paper. \$1.25, \$0.40 postage.

*People To Remember* by Dionis Coffin Riggs. Illustrated, paper. \$4.95, \$0.75 postage.

*The Heath Hen's Journey to Extinction* by Henry Beetle Hough. Illustrated, paper. \$1.00, \$0.40 postage.

*The Fishes of Martha's Vineyard* by Joseph B. Elvin. With 36 illustrations of fishes by Will Huntington. Paper. \$1.25, \$0.40 postage.

*The History of Martha's Vineyard* by Charles Edward Banks. A new edition. Indices, illustrations, three volumes. Cloth. \$30.00, \$2.00 postage.

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

*"Cap'n George Fred" Himself.* The autobiography of Captain George Fred Tilton of Chilmark. A new edition. Cloth. \$6.50, \$1.00 postage.

*Wild Flowers of Martha's Vineyard* by Nelson Coon. Illustrated, paper. \$3.95, \$0.75 postage.

*An Introduction To Martha's Vineyard* by Gale Huntington. Illustrated, paper. A new edition. \$3.95, \$0.75 postage.

*A New Vineyard* by Dorothy Cottle Poole. Illustrated, cloth. \$12.95, \$1.00 postage.

*Shipwrecks on Martha's Vineyard* by Dorothy Scoville. Paper. \$3.00, \$0.75 postage.

*Martha's Vineyard: The Story of Its Towns* by Henry Franklin Norton. Illustrated, paper. \$6.96, \$0.75 postage.