



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 21, NO. 2

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HERMAN MELVILLE and THE VINEYARD

by FRANCIS ZAPATKA

Chilmark Whaling Masters

by DOROTHY COTTLE POOLE

From New York to the Island
In the Early 1900s

by FRANCES LOUISE MEIKLEHAM

Annual Report to Members

Documents: Jeremiah Pease Diary

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

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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.

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Herman Melville and the Vineyard

by FRANCIS ZAPATKA

Early in *Moby Dick*, we read that the "Quakerish Nantucketer," Captain Peleg, past owner of the *Pequod* mistrusted all non-Nantucketers "unless," in Melville's words, "they hailed from Cape Cod or the Vineyard."¹

A little later we learn that the First Mate of the *Pequod* was a Nantucketer; the Second Mate, a Cape Cod man; the Third, a Vineyarder (pp. 102, 105-6). Still later, Melville writes, talking about these mates: "...three better, more likely sea officers and men, each in his own different way, could not readily be found and they were every one of them Americans: a Nantucketer, a Vineyarder, a Cape man"(p.109).

That Melville had these places and people from these places on his mind seems apparent. My purpose, in this paper, is to show some of the wheres and whens that Martha's Vineyard and people from this Island appear in Melville's life and work.

The principal biographical connection between Melville, a native New Yorker, and Cape Cod and the Islands was a native of West Barnstable, Judge Lemuel Shaw, Chief Justice

¹*Moby Dick*. Ed. Harrison Hayford and Hershel Parker. New York: Norton, 1967, p.69. Subsequent page references will be to this edition and will be made within the text of the article.

FRANCIS ZAPATKA is Associate Professor of Literature at the American University, Washington, D.C., where he has been teaching since 1958. He received his doctorate in comparative literature from Catholic University and has studied at the University of Paris. He is presently working on a tri-lingual anthology of French, Russian and English/American poetry. His interest in the subject of the article grew during several summers spent on Cape Cod. Published here is a portion of a paper entitled "Herman Melville, Cape Cod and the Islands" which he presented at the annual meeting of the Society in Edgartown on August 16, 1979.

of the Massachusetts Supreme Court from 1830 to 1860. This connection is in three parts: first, Shaw had been a close friend of Melville's father, Allan; second, he had been in love with Melville's Aunt Nancy, who died before they could marry; third, and most important, he was the father of Melville's wife, Elizabeth.

Melville dedicated his first novel, *Typee* (1846), to his father-in-law and owed him much in general. What concerns us in particular here is the fact that Melville owed to Shaw what apparently was his only trip to Cape Cod and the Islands.

"Trip" is perhaps not the word to use in describing Melville's visit to the Cape. In fact, he simply traveled across Cape Cod at the end of his brief stay on the Islands, which he made in the company of and at the request of his father-in-law in July 1852. In a letter to his son, Lemuel, during this trip, Justice Shaw wrote:

"The next day [July 13], we crossed Wood's hole to Falmouth, returned by way of Sandwich, & the Cape Cod R.R. to Boston on Tuesday evening."²

As for Melville's acquaintance with Martha's Vineyard, we can say that apparently he spent a grand total of three days on the Island, from Friday, July 9, to Monday, July 12, 1852. (You will recall that *Moby Dick* was published in 1851, a year before this visit.)

This sojourn was in the company of the good Judge, who on July 20 wrote in his letter to his son: "... on Friday morning to the Boat, & landed at Martha's Vineyard. We visited various parts of the island including that celebrated promontory at the west end called Gay head, through a tract of indian territory. We remained at the Vineyard till Monday morning..." (Leyda, I, p. 453).

"[On Monday morning we] had a very pleasant [trip] across in a sailboat, to Naushon. We visited Mr. [William] Swain there, by previous invitation. He is the sole proprietor of the island lives there during the summer in quite a Baronial style, & receives a good deal of company. Mr. Peabody of the King's chapel, with his wife & family, and several ladies were

²Jay Leyda, *The Melville Log: a Documentary Life*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951, Vol. I, p. 453. For subsequent references, see note 1.

there as visitors. We rode over a considerable part of the island, much of which is well wooded, there are many deer that live quite wild in the woods & coverts, some of the party started a fine buck" (Leyda I, p. 453).

So from Friday morning until Monday morning was Melville's total experience with the Vineyard itself; his experience with its inhabitants appears to be largely with Valentine Pease, Jr., (1797-1870), master of the ship *Acushnet*. Since Melville made his first and longest whaling voyage aboard the *Acushnet*, Pease was of considerable importance to Melville's life and work.

The only extensive treatment of Pease appears to be in a 1929 article in the *Vineyard Gazette* by Henry Beetle Hough. Mr. Hough tells us that "Melville's captain was born in a house now gone which stood near Caleb's Pond on Chappaquiddick" and he surmises "it is likely that young Valentine got away from school in short order and finished cutting his teeth on a harpoon in the Pacific... and... that he may have become a Master by 1823 and perhaps much earlier."³

If we consult the "List of Persons composing the Crew of the ship *Acushnet* of Fairhaven,"⁴ we learn when and where the paths of Herman Melville and Valentine Pease crossed: the 20th entry of this document, dated the 30th day of December 1840, sworn to and signed by Valentine Pease, Jr., is that of Herman Melville.

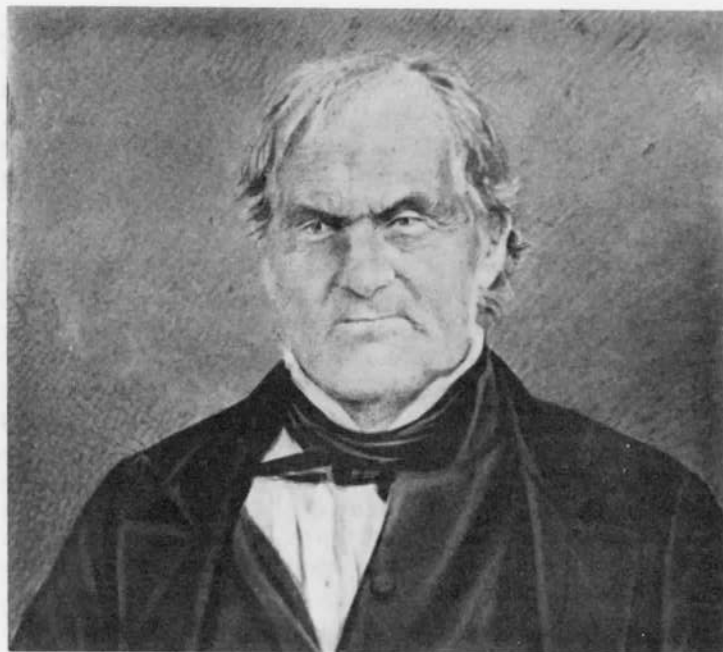
The paths of these two men separated on July 9, 1842, when, according to a United States commercial agency document drafted in Lahaina, Hawaiian Islands, Herman Melville and Richard T. Green (of Rochester, N.Y., a friend of Melville) deserted at Nukehiva in the Marquesas.⁵

Such incidents were frequent, but in the quite autobiographical *Typee*, whose ship (the *Dolly*) and captain

³"Melville's Captain Was a Vineyarder," *Vineyard Gazette*, July 2, 1929.

⁴Dec. 30, 1840, Crew Lists, Records of the Collector of Customs for New Bedford, Records of the Bureau of Customs, Record Group 36, National Archives Building. This is a certified copy; the original is held by the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, New Bedford. On the copy the author worked with one name was omitted, therefore Melville's entry was number 19.

⁵A holding of the National Archives, this document was signed by James (?) Stetson and dated June 2, 1843.



Captain Pease certainly looked the part of a strict disciplinarian

(Vangs) can be associated with the *Acushnet* and Valentine Pease,⁶ Melville apparently felt obliged to justify his conduct. As Anderson points out, he speaks of the "unmitigated tyranny" of the captain and says that he did not live up to his side of the contract constituted by the ship's articles (p. 34). On the other hand, Anderson feels that Melville's motivation to jump ship involved "a desire for romantic adventure" as well as hard fare and harsh treatment (pp. 111-2). Conditions were very difficult aboard a whaler of the time and we have no reason to believe that Captain Pease coddled his crew, "almost half of which," it is known, "deserted before their four-and-a-half year cruise was over" (Anderson, p. 111). But from the record available, Anderson concludes, "It is impossible, after the lapse of a hundred

⁶Charles R. Anderson, *Melville in the South Seas*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1939, pp. 110-1. For subsequent references see note 1.

years, to place the whole burden of the blame on either the . . . captain or the . . . crew" (p. 112).

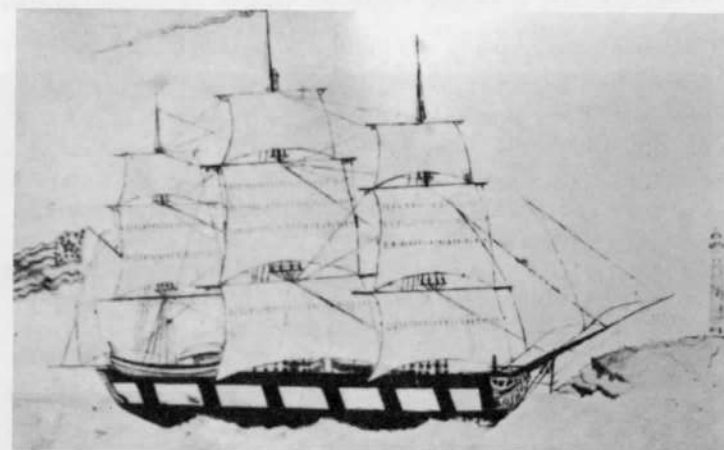
One way or the other, after 18 months aboard the *Acushnet*, Melville deserted, spent a month in the interior among the natives, had to escape from them, served aboard two other whalers, and in the summer of 1843 found himself in Honolulu (Leyda, I, p. 102).

During this summer in Honolulu, the paths of Melville and Pease almost crossed again. Melville "must have experienced an unpleasant shock," Anderson writes, "when . . . the *Acushnet* herself . . . as if in unconscious pursuit -- dropped anchor in Honolulu Bay, June 7th, 1843." But the *Acushnet* stayed only about a day (p. 331) and if Pease was looking for Melville, he did not find him. In August, Melville joined the crew of the frigate *United States*, "the old wagon," as it was called, received his discharge in Boston in October 1844 and so ended his career before the mast.

Captain Pease eventually returned home to Edgartown where he lived in his "shipshape white house,"⁷ the fifth house on the right from Cooke Street, walking south on

⁷Henry Beetle Hough, *Melville in the South Pacific*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960, p. 178.

The Acushnet passing Gay Head, a drawing by a member of the crew



South Water Street. This house, Mr. Hough wrote in the *Gazette* in 1929, was then "by sheerest coincidence the summer home of Melville's daughter, Mrs. H.B. Thomas." Mrs. Thomas was the former Frances Melville (1855-1938), Herman's second daughter. In 1880, she married Henry Besson Thomas (1855-1934) of Philadelphia (Leyda, I, xxix, II, 767,774). "They summered there very many years," Mr. Hough told me in 1978, as did other grandchildren and their families, the Chapins, the Metcalfs, the Osbornes, staying on South Water Street, on School Street and elsewhere in Edgartown.

In a word, if Cape Cod can claim Melville's father-in-law, Martha's Vineyard can claim Melville's daughters, granddaughters and great-grandchildren.

Melville was aware of Pease's return to the Vineyard, for in 1850, Leyda records that Melville's former shipmate, Henry F. Hubbard, visited Herman. A memorandum of the visit written by Melville begins, "What became of the ship's company of the whale ship 'Acushnet,' according to Hubbard who came home in her (more than a four years voyage) and who visited me in Pittsfield." The first entry reads: "Capt. Pease -- retired and lives ashore at the Vineyard" (I, p. 339). He later went into the coal business, Mr. Hough tell us in his *Gazette* article.

One wonders if during Melville's visit to the Island in July
Melville's daughter, Frances, and husband summered in the Pease house



1852, some two years after his meeting with Hubbard, the paths of Melville and Pease did not cross again. If they did, I have seen no written record of it. The last printed record we have of Valentine Pease, moreover, was made by the *Gazette* when it reported his death which occurred on Sept. 9, 1870: "died Valentine Pease, Master Mariner, at his home, aged 72 years, 9 months and 11 days." The final record of Captain Pease is an engraved one in the Edgartown cemetery at the corner of Cooke Street and Pease's Point Way.

To some degree, however, Valentine Pease lives on in Melville's fiction. His traces can be found in *Moby Dick*, but as one writer says, "it is hard to say just how far he served as the model for the fantastic Captain Ahab" (Anderson, p. 33). Another elaborates: "There are readers. . . who assume that . . . Ahab . . . was Herman Melville's fictionalized portrait of Capt. Valentine Pease of the *Acushnet*. It may be so. It would be unrealistic to say that Pease was not in the back of Melville's mind when he wrote *Moby Dick*. He was, undoubtedly, during the early stages of composition, when *Moby Dick* was a 'whaling voyage,' and not a tragic epic. But to assert identity is to be ignorant of the biographical facts and to misunderstand Melville's conception of . . . Ahab." ⁸

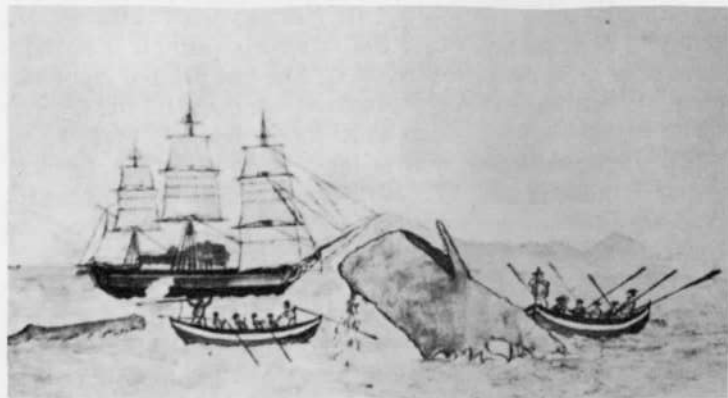
Some of Pease can also be found in *Typee*. In it, the narrator deserts the *Dolly* and, as mentioned above, her master, Captain Vangs, Melville portrays as a tyrant. To identify Vangs and "Uncle Val," as Hough tells us Edgartown boys called Pease,⁹ is dangerous. Yet *Typee* is autobiographical fiction.

But *Moby Dick* provides other fictional connections between Melville and Martha's Vineyard. "The third mate," Melville writes, "was Flask, a native of Tisbury in Martha's Vineyard." The third mate, we might add, aboard the *Acushnet* was George W. Gahan, a native of Faial in the Azores.

Melville writes that Flask was a "short, stout, ruddy young fellow, very pugnacious concerning whales, who somehow

⁸Howard P. Vincent, *The Trying-Out of Moby Dick*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1949, p. 107.

⁹*Vineyard Gazette*, July 2, 1929.



Water-color of the Acushnet whaling, by Henry M. Johnson, boat-steerer

seemed to think that the great Leviathans had personally and hereditarily affronted him; and therefore it was a sort of point of honor with him, to destroy them whenever encountered. So utterly lost was he to all sense of reverence for the many marvels of their majestic bulk and mystic ways; and so dead to anything like an apprehension of any possible danger from encountering them; that in his poor opinion, the wondrous whale was but a species of magnified mouse, or at least water-rat, requiring only a little circumvention and some small application of time and trouble in order to kill and boil" (p. 106).

Tashtego, the harpooner in the boat of Mr. Stubb, the Cape Cod man, is the next Vineyarder in *Moby Dick*.

"Tashtego [was] an unmixed Indian from Gay Head," Melville writes, "the most westerly promontory of Martha's Vineyard, where there still exists the last remnant of a village of red men, which has long supplied the neighbouring island of Nantucket with many of her most daring harpooners. . . [Tashtego was] an inheritor of the unvitiated blood of those proud warrior hunters, who, in quest of the great New England moose, had scoured, bow in hand, the aboriginal forests of the main. But no longer snuffing in the trail of wild beasts of the woodland, Tashtego now hunted in the wake of the great whales of the sea; the unerring harpoon of the son fitly replacing the infallible arrow of the sires" (p. 107).

About the Gay Head Indians and Tashtego, Mr. Hough has written in his book *Martha's Vineyard: Summer Resort 1835-1935*: "the Gay Head Indians had their own unique relationship to whaling. They had been the first whalers of the new world, and their skill with the harpoon was as well founded as it was proverbial. Tashtego in *Moby Dick* was a symbolical figure without which the greatest classic of Whaling would have been incomplete."¹⁰

But Tashtego is not the only Gay Header in *Moby Dick*. He has a "senior," as Melville calls him, "an old Gay Head Indian among the crew" who says fearsome things about Ahab's scar and ivory leg (p. 110). Last, there is Tistig, an old Gay Head squaw, who said ominous things about Ahab's name, just after he was born (p. 77).

There is another Vineyarder in the *Pequod* crew, or at least a one-time resident, the ship's unnamed old carpenter, a kind of Shakespearean clown-like character. About the carpenter's Vineyard background, Melville only tells us that he had "kept a job shop in the Vineyard" and that he was wary of old widows there who, he fancied, took a fancy to him (p. 431). His real-life counterpart aboard the *Acushnet*, however, had a name, Henry Harmer, was only 20, and was born in New York state.

Then there is Radney, a "sometime" Vineyarder. He was the mate of the Nantucket whaler, the *Town-Ho*, with which the *Pequod* gams near the Cape of Good Hope. Part of the news involved mutiny and an unsociable meeting of the *Town-Ho* with *Moby Dick* during which *Moby Dick* kills Radney. Radney is a "sometime" Vineyarder because Melville apparently couldn't make up his mind about him; on one page (209) he calls him a Vineyarder and on the next, a Nantucketer.

Vineyarders also appear in other Melville novels. In Chapter 4 of *White Jacket* (1850), for example, aboard the U.S.S. *Neversink*, there is Tubbs, "a long lank Vineyarder despised by" one of the petty officers for being a former whaler (pp. 15-6).

And in *Omoo* (1847), Melville's second book, we meet

¹⁰Rutland, Vt.: The Tuttle Publishing Co., 1936, p. 17.



Herman Melville in 1861, twenty years after whaling with Capt. Pease

another Vineyarder. In the last chapter of this novel, which has been described as "perhaps the most autobiographical of all Melville's works" (Anderson, p. 199), the central character leaves the South Seas as a crew member of a whaler called the *Leviathan*. The following is some of what Melville wrote of her captain: "I had seen the captain, and liked him. He was an uncommonly tall, robust, fine-looking man, in the prime of life . . . He was a Vineyarder, or native of the island of Martha's Vineyard (adjoining Nantucket), and -- I would have sworn it -- a sailor, and no tyrant."¹¹

The first thought that comes to mind after reading this is that this unnamed Vineyard captain is very unlike Captain Vangs (alias Valentine Pease, somewhat) in *Typee*. A few lines later, Melville writes, "a cosier old craft never floated; and the captain was the finest man in the world" (pp. 312-3).

On this positive note about a Vineyard captain, I shall conclude this discussion of Vineyarders in Melville's fiction. However, chauvinistic Vineyarders must be warned that the real-life counterpart of the fictional Vineyarder captain of the *Leviathan* was a Nantucketer, John B. Coleman, Jr., master of the Nantucket whaler *Charles and Henry*.

¹¹ *Omoo*. Ed. H. Hayford, H. Parker, G.T. Tanselle. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1968, p. 312. For subsequent references see note 1.

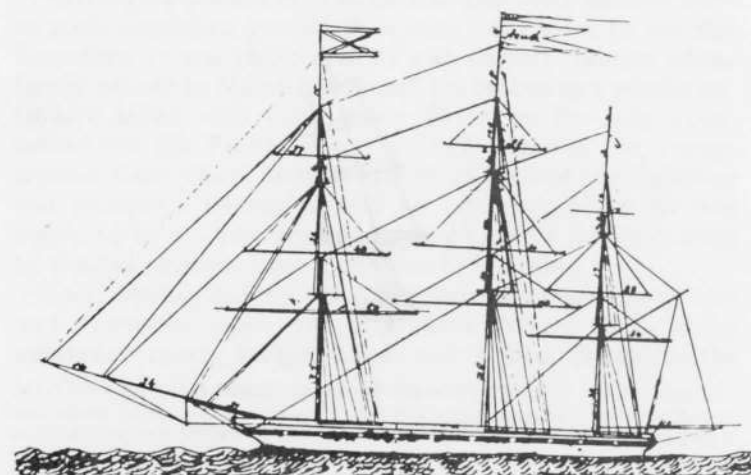
Before I finish, though, there are some miscellaneous Vineyard contacts in Melville's life and Vineyard references in his work that must be mentioned.

We read in *The Melville Log* that the *New Bedford Daily Mercury*, on Nov. 10, 1841, reported that the *Mary* (10 months out, 150 barrels) Edgartown, Atkins Master, spoke the *Acushnet* (p. 123). Melville was aboard the *Acushnet* at the time. We also read in the same work that two or three months before Melville took French leave of the *Acushnet*, the Barque *Columbus*, New Bedf., Tristram D. Pease, Master, spoke the *Achunet* (sic) of Fairhaven and received letters from her (I, p. 126). A little later still, we read that Tristram D. Pease's ship spoke the *Acushnet* about a month before Melville deserted (I, p. 127). Mr. Hough in his *Gazette* article tells us that Tristram Daggett Pease, one of Valentine's younger brothers, also became a whaling master.

Finally, in *Redburn* (1849)¹² Melville provides an entertaining picture of a Vineyard captain. Having informed us that after a few years of sailing, passenger liners were often

¹² *Redburn*. Ed. H. Hayford, H. Parker, G. T. Tanselle. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1969, p. 107.

Plan of the Acushnet drawn by Ansel Weeks, Jr., son of her builder



converted into whalers, he writes:

"Thus, the ship that once carried . . . tourists, to Liverpool or London, now carries a crew of harpooners round Cape Horn into the Pacific. And the mahogany and bird's-eye maple cabin, which once held rosewood card-tables and brilliant coffee-urns and in which many a bottle of champagne, and many a bright eye sparkled, now accomodates a bluff Quaker captain from Martha's Vineyard, who, perhaps, while lying with his ship in the Bay of Islands, in New Zealand, entertains a party of naked chiefs and savages at dinner . . . *Sic transit gloria mundi!*"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: All drawings and photographs for this article except that of Valentine Pease, Jr, are from *The Melville Log* and are printed with the permission of the publisher, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York.



*Stern view of Acushnet, drawn by
first mate of the William Thompson*



Chilmark Whaling Masters

by DOROTHY COTTLE POOLE

Only one whaling vessel, the little 83-ton brig *Rodman*, ever hailed from Chilmark. However, some fifty of her native sons were whaling masters, scores were mates and nearly every home produced at least one whaler. Capt. Moses Adams, who had five sons and two daughters, is just one example. His sons were all whaling masters and one of his daughters married a whaling master. The other was an old maid.

Chilmark boys were expected to attend school when doing so did not interfere with the farm work, but they all preferred to gather at the blacksmith shop, near what we now call Beetlebung Corner, to listen to the tales of the retired whaling masters. Every one of them hoped to emulate the deeds he heard about and most of them started their lives at sea when they were only 12 or 14 years old.

Whaling has always been hazardous and some families went to great lengths to prevent their sons from going to sea. But frequently it was to no avail as with Gilbert Hillman whose family moved to Maine to forestall his becoming a whaler. Gilbert sailed with Capt. Allen Tilton on the ship *Loan*, bound for the Pacific Ocean in 1821. During the voyage around Cape Horn, terrible storms raged and the lightning was incessant. Gilbert proved his contention that he was meant to be a whaler by spending his time calmly reading by the illumination from the flashes of lightning.

Each whaling ground presented its own danger: hurricanes and typhoons upon the high seas; hidden reefs along unfamiliar coasts; savage natives and tropical diseases in the

DOROTHY COTTLE POOLE is the Historian of the Society and an important contributor to the study of Island history through her articles in the *Intelligencer* and the *Vineyard Gazette* as well as through her books, the most recent being *A Vineyard Sampler*, published in 1978. She is currently at work on a study of Chilmark's whaling masters and this article is, in her words, "a preview of it."

southern hemisphere; dense fogs, unpredictable currents and crushing ice floes in the north. Each required special expertise from the whaling masters involved and even then disasters could not always be averted.

Chilmark's Capt. West Mitchell lost two ships in the Arctic. In 1876, he and his crew had to abandon the *Mt. Wollaston*, but fortunately before the disaster they had sent home 250 barrels of sperm oil, 2235 barrels of whale oil and 29,000 pounds of bone. About 20 years later, Captain Mitchell took over the *Abram Barker* as relief master for Capt. C. F. Gifford. She was lost off Cape Navarin in May 1894, but her crew was saved by the *Horatio*.

Capt. George E. Allen was not so fortunate. He left San Francisco on Dec. 5, 1887, for the North Pacific in the bark *Ohio*, the vessel in which he, at the age of 10, had sailed as cabin boy for Capt. Daniel Flanders in 1862. The *Ohio* was lost with all hands at Cape Lisburne, Alaska, in October 1888.

Nearly every season one or more vessels were lost in the Arctic and the disasters of 1871 and 1876 almost wiped out the fleet. Thirty-four vessels were lost in 1871, but there was no loss of life. Five years later, in a similar situation, 12 of 20 ships and barks were lost or abandoned and many lives were lost. George Fred Tilton's famous 3000-mile trek across the barren wastes of Alaska prevented another tragedy in the winter 1897-1898.

Several Chilmark whaling masters lost their vessels to the Confederate raiders *Alabama* and *Shenandoah* during the Civil War. Most returned to whaling at once. Stephen Flanders had his first command, the brig *Kate Cory*, burned by the *Alabama*, but this did not end his whaling. He continued until 1884 when he retired to become involved in politics. Capt. Francis Cottle, on the other hand, never went to sea after the Confederate raider *Alabama* fired his ship off the Azores.

Chilmark whaling masters, like the others, were a strange mixture of contradictions. Ashore, most of them were dignified, courtly, highly respected citizens. They did not leave these traits behind when they set sail, but aboard ship they had need of instant and exact obedience and that



Chilmark's best known whaling master, Capt. George Fred Tilton, on the deck of the whaling vessel, *Charles W. Morgan*, at *Mystic* in the 1920s

sometimes required curt commands and harsh punishments. Even one ruffian in the crew could cause complete disaster as befell Capt. Thomas Pease whose ship *Robert Edwards* was burned in the Arctic, July 24, 1870, fired by the crew, aroused by one malcontent.

Capt. Daniel Flanders was a truly good and pious man. As such, he did not lower, or carry on any work, on Sundays. One Sunday, off the coast of Australia, Captain Flanders heard some commotion on deck. Going to investigate, he found the mate lowering a boat to go ashore for a load of firewood. The captain tried to dissuade him, reminding him that they did no work on Sunday, but Mr. Malloy was determined to go.

"Go, if you must, but if you're going, be sure to bring back a good load," ordered Captain Flanders, his practicality overcoming his virtue.

George Fred Tilton's heroic journey across Alaska points up the contradictions which characterized whaling masters. George Fred had been a carefree young man, a good worker but prone to flit from job to job and inclined to get into trouble. He could take a whaleship anywhere, control his crew with a hand of iron and had indomitable courage, resourcefulness and stamina. But his famous trek, undertaken with no thought for himself, showed another facet: his deep concern for the welfare of his fellow whalers.

Most whaling masters had dual personalities: independent, resourceful, rugged, even rough, on the one hand, and reserved, tender and compassionate, on the other. The sum total was an admirable individual.

Chilmark Whaling Masters, of which this article is a brief preview, will be the record of such men, in as much detail as the paucity of resource material allows. Included will be a list of each master's vessels, along with the dates and results of each voyage. For those not interested in barrels of oil and pounds of bone, there will be some well-authenticated folklore, such as the whaling masters themselves heard in the Chilmark blacksmith shop when they were young.

From New York to the Island In the Early 1900s

by FRANCES LOUISE MEIKELHAM

When the lilacs made round mats of colored blossoms about their feet, it grew "Hudson Valley hot." Even my grandmother would begin to think well of the idea of a sea breeze. Father would arrange to actually break away from his four-score generators and he and "Sweetheart" would take a weekend trip, trying to find a roof which would be able to shelter our large household without causing them to go through total bankruptcy.

One of my aunts and uncles always went where we went, but there was a hitch connected with this combination: Uncle "Bingy" had heart trouble and he did not like thunderstorms. Each summer spot to date had had a chronic case (after all, storms of that nature are more or less a part of hot weather).

It is all very vague where they picked up the rumor that on a certain island off Cape Cod called Martha's Vineyard the thunder rolled right over it on its mad rush out towards the Atlantic Ocean. They took the not-too-easy trip to reach this "hopeful sandbar," liked what they found, rented a house

FRANCES LOUISE MEIKLEHAM (1903-1977) was born in New York City, daughter of Thomas Mann Randolph Meikleham, a great-great-grandson of Thomas Jefferson, and his wife, the former Agnes Bowie Dash, a second cousin of Gen. William T. Sherman. The family, after renting a house in Edgartown for a few summers, bought a waterfront house on South Water Street in 1908 and named it Nunnepog. In 1916, they moved here from Riverdale, New York, and became year-round residents. In the 1930's, Louise began a business in their home, making and selling home-made jams, jellies and breads under the name Nunnepog. The shop, which she ran there until 1965, was called "The Sea Gull and the Whale." Her father, an electrical engineer, served with several New York power companies and street railways. Her mother founded the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club and was an early activist and ardent crusader for maintaining the natural resources and life style of the Vineyard. Louise, in addition to operating a successful business, was an accomplished artist, having studied in France in her youth, and exhibited and sold many paintings. This article is a portion of an autobiographical manuscript that she wrote late in her life. It is owned by Mrs. Robert Chapman who has generously made it available to the *Intelligencer*.

the size of their pocketbook and two sizes too small for all of us, so Uncle Bingy went to a hotel up the street and we spent our first Island sojourn packed like a quart of blueberries in a pint-size bucket.¹

Probably to help relieve the housing situation, my parents looked up a fisherman in possession of a good-sized catboat. They loved sailing, but not the kind that was handed out to the casual summer visitor, which consisted in going out for an hour's time, making a complete circle in one spot on the surface of the harbor and ending up where they had begun, practically in their next breath, standing on the town dock. Maybe it was his Vasco da Gama nationality, or just pure luck, which made the stocky, bronzed-faced man we called "Captain" so adequate. He had been asked if he would sail for them each day through the twelve hours of daylight. Looking them over with care and the help of his weather eye, he had complied.

Edgartown was the first town I had ever seen. It seemed choked with people after the complete isolation of our New York property and I promptly learned two things: I did not have what my sister had, but I found Pearl!

Everywhere Martha went go-cart riding, her nurse was halted by admiring grownups who went in and out of trances over her pink cheeks, curly hair and winsome blue-eyed smile. Sometimes, I was forgotten completely. Other times, they would turn to me as an afterthought and squeeze out the remark that they were sure I was "a good little girl." I knew something was lacking and, therefore, was perfectly delighted when the black Pearl fancied my company. Her mother cooked for the Studley House, she had time on her hands, was willing to share her corncob, cold or heated, which her Mama kept dripping with melted butter, and she introduced me to Willie Mendence's candy shop with its complete line of doll babies mixed in with the lollipop supplies in the rear.

She taught me to be change conscious and how to pick out a penny-to-a-dime china doll with wired-on arms and

¹This would have been about 1905 when Louise was only a few years old. The summer pilgrimages described here took place every year until 1916, when the family moved to Edgartown permanently.



Louise loved doll babies from Willie Mendence's candy shop on Main St.

painted-on pants. My father found Pearl quite satisfactory, having been brought up during his summers by Nancy, the negro given by Jefferson to his youngest grandchild to have as a playfellow.² My grandmother admonished "Lig" to keep a sharp watch on my thin hair for possible exchanges of inmates from the kinkled head of my boon companion and we spent our first three months in moderately comfortable peace.

In the Fall, Mother found a house more suited to our drawn-out proportions. It was rented for the following year and everyone was satisfied.³

From this time on, lilac blossoms on the ground meant trunks being brought from the stable. "Home" took on the appearance of a city store dispatching the sale of travel gear. Martha and I were the only drone bees. All we did was to haul off our flannel petticoats and hot sticky woolen

²Jefferson's youngest grandchild was Louise's father's grandfather.

³This was the house owned by Marshall Shepard, long-time President of the Society.

pants. The rest of the household, from the Japs up, threw the vim left in their heat-weary steps to getting needed articles into round-topped trunks, trying not to fall in with each armful. We were no easy mark to move. When the last strap had been tightly pulled, William hitched "Bolston" to the express wagon and "goggled" them down to the Harlem River train which, with utmost leisure, snaked them into New York City, Fulton Street and the Fall River boat.

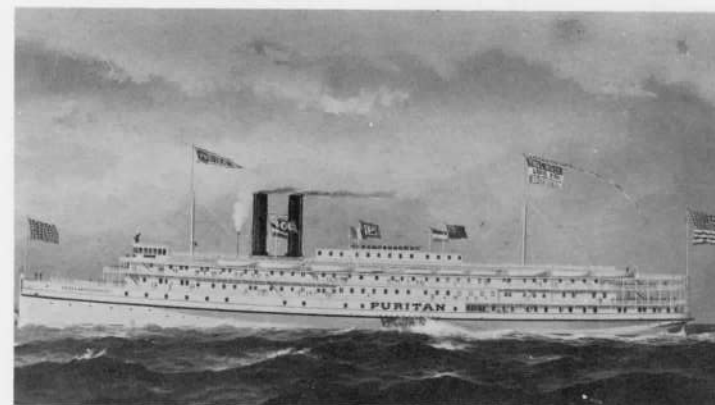
The day after the express wagon had done its duty by our worldly goods, the flapping curtains were rolled up on the station wagon and it did its duty by us, taking the family in stages to the subway. Domestic and children were in the first loads, grandmothers, fraulein-companions and Mother in the next.

We in our party looked like an Ellis Island contingent: Japs with their legs hidden behind stacks of suitcases; Liger, her eye with the cast rolling out one way while her straight one looked over her multitude; nurses from France, England or Switzerland; Oie, dressed in a \$25 Panama hat, shepherd-checked suit and patent-leather shoes, could have been anything from the Japanese Emperor traveling incognito to what Brooks Brothers would not advise a male to combine in wearing apparel.⁴

After Mela had read all the ads above our heads in the subway car for the sixth time at the top of her lungs to keep us from asking whether the next stop was the one we got out at, we finally did reach Fulton Street, were pulled through heavy traffic of stamping dray horses delivering products to the stalls in Washington Market, all of us reaching the pitch of excitement the lower New York Harbor whistles seemed to be in, and ended up in the packed lower section of the ornately decorated side-wheeler of the Fall River Line.

Here we usually found my grandmother, Cousin Mary and Mother, who had managed to arrive at nearly the same moment even though they had started at least three-quarters of an hour after we had. All the grownups from this point on

⁴The entourage was large, consisting of several relatives and the following domestic servants: Kida, a Japanese male cook; Oie, a Japanese houseman; Mela, sister Martha's French nurse; Gaga, Louise's English nurse; Isabelle, the family maid; Liger, the grandmother's Irish maid. William, the Irish groom, was left at their home in Riverdale, just north of Manhattan.



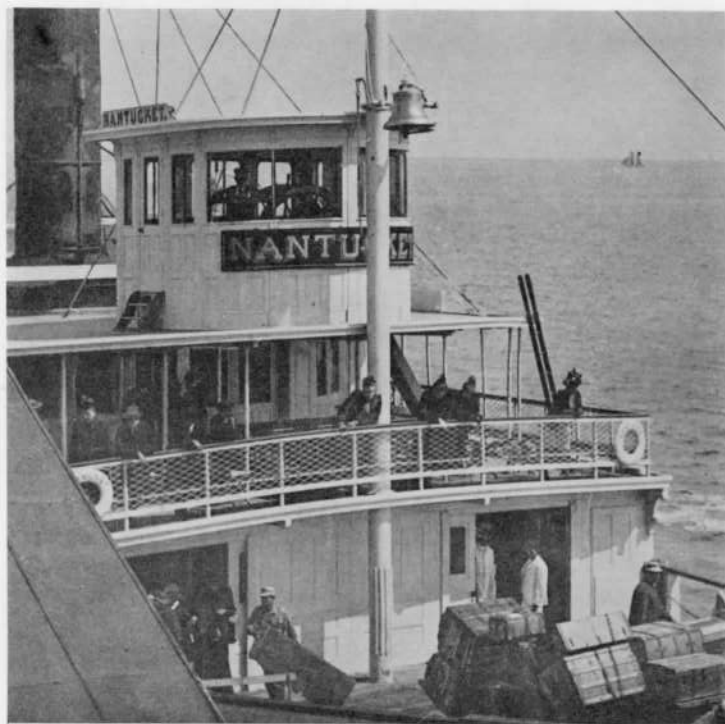
The Meiklehams may have taken this ship, the Fall River Line's Puritan

glued their eyes on the big clock over the Purser's window and offered up prayers that, before the gangplank was taken away, my usually late father would turn up and produce the stateroom tickets so they would not have to sit up in chairs all night on the decks. Whiffs of mixed-up harbor water swept in on an occasional breeze. The squeaky whine of the boat's orchestra floated down amongst the babble of voices from hundreds of other families, all bent on the same journey, for the same end: sand, water and fresh cool air.

Father always just made it, found his favorite black porter and had picked staterooms far from the noisy splashes of the paddles.

Domestics and children ate sandwiches on the deck, with silver mugs filled to overflowing with "Daisy's" best efforts⁵--no chance to avoid her even when taking a trip. There never seemed much sense to be jammed into our nightclothes. It was no sooner done before we were being yanked out of our berths, the window of our stateroom giving us stare for stare, just as black as it had been when we had said our "Now I lay me's" the night before. With no time to do our toothbrush-spitting job well at all, tired bread-and-butter sandwiches were held out with more "Daisy" slightly on the ancient side, since its "bunking

⁵Daisy was apparently the family cow.



In those days, summer folk coming to the Island brought trunks and trunks down" overnight, made up the breakfast piece de resistance.

Somehow we all made the same trolley taking us to the destination of New Bedford.

En route, a car window was found which would go up fast enough to allow Martha to park her late déjeuner outside on the whizzing tracks. We practically walked the rest of the trip on the small Island steamer and everyone was frayed and raveled when we disembarked at "Cottage City," but at least "Mr. Vegetable" was on hand with his disinterested horseflesh drawing their sagging stage coach.⁶ We were quickly hoisted aboard for the six miles of corduroy beach drive to Edgartown.

⁶Mr. Vegetable is unidentified. Perhaps he sold vegetables from the wagon when it was not serving as a taxi.



This was not the house, but Louise was pushed off a dock much like this

Halfway there, Martha would start whispering into Mela's ear. The whisper would be repeated in a round of musical chairs, getting to Mr. Vegetable's slightly deaf instrument, would end up being shouted in loud voices. After much grumbling about the habits of summer people's children, he would stop his team and Mela, Martha and I got down, heading for the best clump of beach-plum bushes that could be found at short notice and we "picked daisies."

Captain was right on hand as the wilted team halted in front of our gate. He took over from that point on, getting us out from under our family's relieved feet.

My grandfather had taught my father to swim by the simple method of tying him in a beach towel, pushing an oar through the knot and resting the oar on a peg, letting him flounder about until he was able to float under his own system. Having drawn nothing but females, it did not seem feasible to hand out the same treatment to us.

Everyone in the family, plus Mr. Brown, the swimming master at the beach, had a hand in making us believe we could lie down in water over our heads without gulping up most of the Vineyard Sound in the same act. It was a necessity to be accomplished as all our waking hours were spent in a rowboat. I was tested by Mela who intended to find out just what I could do. After Sunday school, dressed in Sunday finery, I probably looked nicer to her than I had

ever looked before. She ironed our best dresses and kept the long sashes smooth! Taking me to the end of our pier, she waited until I was tangled up in my own thoughts, then crossed her fingers, said a prayer and shoved me as fast and hard as she could into water deep enough to float the catboat. Captain stood one foot behind her, boat hook in hand, ready to spear me out if I failed to cooperate and went down for the third time.

With the first cold splash, indignation took the upper hand, patent-leather pumps trying to come off, layers of ruffled underclothes and a good quality pique dress pulling me out of the gasping reach of air. With every stroke I took, my pink sash streamed about like a circle of anemic blood. I struck out towards shore with blind instinct, my curls flapping along like a pair of spaniel ears.

After that, I rowed in peace as far out as the stakes the fishermen hitched their boats to.

The second year we owned property in Edgartown,⁷ Father bought a small schooner, hauled out the masts, replaced them with one which could have propelled a boat half as big again and took scant vacations during the month of November to be sure of having gale winds. As an engine was hotly scorned, no one ever knew if they were to be gone for the afternoon or for a three-day cruise. It all depended on the Lord and the sort of breeze He chose to blow on them. Father gave up using the Island steamers and was taxied back and forth by *Hookah*. Children were never taken, they did not fit in with his sort of sailing.

But it was a convenience to have me aboard when Captain⁸ and Mother went to Woods Hole where they did not want to be bothered anchoring. She could not be left to maneuver a two-masted boat up and down before the steamboat wharf while the one man aboard went ashore in the dinghy to get Father. I never knew why she did not row in herself, she stopped at nothing generally!

The harbor at Woods Hole was filled with a boiling tide,

⁷The year would be 1910.

⁸Much later, the captain was Sailing-master John Foster, according to the *Gazette*, Nov. 17, 1939. It is not known whether Foster was the "Captain" in this article, but it is possible.



North Water Street as it looked when the Meiklehams first came here rushing both ways at once through the narrow cut at Penzance Point and one end of Naushon Island. I rowed behind the stakes at home so Mother saw no reason why I should not be able to scramble over the side of the schooner as she kept going at a good clip, not mar the glistening white paint of her sides nor scratch the brightwork of the varnished dinghy, get in, keeping on an even keel, pull out two extra heavy duty oars, and be ready with my first stroke, as Captain set me adrift, to be caught up in a whirling mass of undecided tides, which never made up their minds which way to suck me, my heart thumping so much terrified blood to my ears that I was practically stone deaf from fright.

I'd man the oars with Captain in the meantime calmly shouting instructions from the solid deck through the megaphone; Mother, not interested in more than the binnacle she steered by, kept her eyes glued on it, not giving me so much as a side-long glance. I'd dip my oars, concentrating on not catching crabs the size that would leap into the boat and slush down through the grated flooring.

Reaching the dock and maneuvering the heavy dinghy stern first towards the platform where my father had taken up Captain's loud-flung instructions in a seemingly unbroken

telephone conversation, I'd hold the boat steady as he'd seat himself with his bags and about a hundred heavy boxes of things he thought we would be unable to buy in the Island markets and then "coxie" me back through the whirlpools, but never offering to take the oars, just sitting in the stern yelling at me as if I were his college crew he had stroked.⁹

The trip home, when I actually got out of the rowboat, was spent by me in the cabin sleeping from mental exhaustion, Mother and Father enjoying themselves above decks never dreaming they had given me more than a special treat!

The year I was 14, my adored grandmother died. "Home" was to be sold. Our trunks were packed for the last time under its roof and we came to the Island, making it our year-round home.¹⁰ We began a distinctly new way of life. Liger, Isabelle and the two Japanese men were still in our household, but later the Japs went back to the big city. We loved them and missed them. I had never known any other kind of cook or houseman. It seemed impossible that the two women who came to take their place were orthodox species in their trade!

⁹Her father was graduated from Columbia College in 1890 and was a member of the varsity crew.

¹⁰The year was 1916, as previously noted.

Will Mayhew's hardware store was a hangout for hunters in those days



Documents

Jeremiah Pease (1792-1857) lived in Edgartown where he served as Customs House officer, light keeper (although during the period now covered in his diary he has been replaced for political reasons), surveyor, bone setter, religious zealot and the father of ten children. He was the individual most responsible for the selection of the site of the Wesleyan Grove Camp Ground. He served faithfully as an official of the Association until his death.

During the period now being covered by this journal, he became increasingly involved in religious meetings, as did many Islanders during the period of the rapid growth of the Methodist Church, which he joined, leaving the established church.

This diary is being published because it provides an excellent day-by-day record of an important period in Island history when there was no newspaper. We are indebted to Gale Huntington for transcribing and editing this material, as well as for the footnotes.

We began publishing this series November 1974, Vol. 16, No. 2.

May 1841.

2nd. Wind NW to SE. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Br. Gibbs went with me.

3rd. Wind NE Gale. Br. Gibbs goes to

Nantucket⁴. Engaged plowing.

4th. Wind SW. Sowed oats and engaged part day in writing inventory of the Estate of R. W. Coffin.

6th. Wind SE to W. squally. Engaged on the inventory above mentioned.

12th. Wind NW to W. cold. Ship Champion, G. Lawrence master arrives from the Pacific Ocean. Obed Norton lost overboard March 4, 1841.

13th. Wind NW to S. Engaged in writing the report of the above. This day is set apart as a day of fasting &c. on account of the death of W. H. Harrison, late President of the United States.

17th. Wind N to NE. Cold. Planted corn. Brig Pavilion sails whaling.

19th. Wind NE. Cold. Planted potatoes and beans.

29th. Wind SW. Went to West Side Holmes with Br. Thomas Ely on business. Returned P.M.

31st. Wind NE to SW. Br. Erastus Otis visits us yesterday and preached in the afternoon.

June 1841.

1st. Wind N to SW. Went to West Side Holmes Hole. Saw Rev'd Elias Smith.

3rd. Wind SW. Br. Otis attends general class meeting this evening.

4th. Wind W to SW. Br. Otis leaves town for New Bedford.

6th. Wind SW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole Rev'd Elias Smith preached. Br. Royce and B. Chase from the West Side were there.

7th. Wind SW. Rev'd E. Smith came to

⁴It looks as though in Jeremiah's day a little thing like a gale of wind didn't keep the boat -- a sailing packet probably -- from going to Nantucket.

Edgartown. Br. Thomas Ely leaves for conference at Edgartown.

8th. Wind WSW. Very light. Warm. On account of some misunderstanding Filler stabs Coleman in the arm with a dirk. They were not inhabitants of this place.

11th. Wind SW. Fresh breeze. U. S. Cutter *Vigilant*, Capt. Mather arrives.

13th. Wind E. Light. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meeting. Br. Lumbert preached. Returned at evening. The *Vigilant* sails with the collector to visit the Light Houses.

16th. Wind NE. Light. Stickney arrives being appointed by the Conference to Preach here the ensuing year.

20th. Wind SE. Warm rain. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings. A Brother Butler from the State of Maine preaches in the afternoon and at ½ past 5 P.M. Had an interesting time. Returned at night.

21st. Wind E to SW. Pleasant. Contracted with Capt. Joseph Holley for his store and to sell him some land.

22nd. Wind SW. Conveyed the land and received the conveyance of the store above mentioned.

25th. Wind SW. Warm. Engaged at the Custom House.

1st. Wind SW. Very warm and dry. Engaged at the Custom House.

2nd. Wind SW. Engaged with hay.

5th. Wind SW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings. Returned at evening. This day the children are collected together and addresses delivered to them on Temperance at a tent erected for that

purpose near the distrect school houses, by Rev's Stickney, Gannet and Holmes.

6th. Wind SW. Went to Nantucket on business of my own. Rains at night.

7th. Wind SW. Returned from Nantucket. Rains at night.

8th. Wind SW. Engaged with my hay.

11th. Wind N. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings. 5 oclock attended meeting at the school house near I. Norton Esq's.

12th. Wind SW. Warm. Got all my hay into the barn. This day hired my store to W. Baker.

14th. Wind SSW. Went to Christiantown to survey land.

17th. Wind N. Light. Went to North Shore and Chilmark.

19th. Wind SW. Engaged in painting my house. B. H. Ripley falls from a load of hay.

20th. Wind SW. Engaged in painting my house. Set Br. Ripley's shoulder yesterday.

26th. Wind NE. Went to I. Norton Esq's with Dr. S. Whelden.

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

August 1841.

1st. Wind NE. Rains a little. Went to East Side Holmes Hole attended meetings & at the schoolhouse near I. Norton Esqs at 5 P. M.

2nd. Wind SW. Went blackberrying. Cyrus goes to Bristol.

3rd. Wind SW. Engaged in painting.

5th. Wind SW. Cloudy. Engaged in painting. This day the land is purchased by Thomas M. Coffin J. O. Morse J. Gorham J. D. Pease and Fred

Baylies for a new Methodist Meeting House.⁵

6th. Wind SW. Engaged in painting.

7th. Wind NE. Light. very warm. Went blackberrying.

8th. Wind SW. Warm. Went to East Side Holmes Hole attended meeting and at 5 P.M. at the school house at I Norton Esqs.

9th. Wind S. Cloudy. rains a little. Engaged with D. Fellows Esq and Deacon Thomas Coffin in taking an Inventory of the Estate of Thomas Norton deceased.

10th. Wind SW to SSW. foggy. Engaged in painting. Miss Mary Ann Pease daughter of Mr. Henry Pease dies of consumption aged about 22 years.

11th. Wind SSW. Rainy. Funeral of Miss Pease attended in Methodist Meeting House. Service by Rev's Mr. Stickney and Mr. Gannet.

13th. Wind SW. Engaged at the Court House and painting.

17th. Wind SW. Pleasant. Committee meets relating to the new Methodist Meeting House.

18th. Wind SW. Pleasant. News of Veto of the Bank Bill by President Tyler arrives.³ Engaged painting.

20th. Went to Camp Ground.

24th. Went to the Camp Meeting at East Chop, remained until the 30th. The weather was pleasant the 2 or 3 first days but rainy the other part of the time. The meetings were very

²This new meeting house was to be the great Methodist church that still stands in all its glory on Edgartown's Main Street. It is interesting that Jeremiah Pease was one of the purchasers of the land.

³This veto may have pleased Jeremiah. It displeased Tyler's Whig supporters.

interesting. The displays of Divine power was very remarkable. A number embraced religion and a number received a deepening of the work of Grace in their hearts. I think it was as interesting and useful meeting as ever was held there.

30th. Wind SE. Rainy. Some of the people remained at the Camp Ground until the 31st and attended meetings until the morning of that day.

31st. Wind SW. Pleasant. Cyrus arrives from Bristol and William from Norfolk during week.⁴

September 1841

1st. Wind N to SW. The Bark Ship *Clarion*, Capt. Sun, arrives from New York bound on a surveying cruise.

2nd. Wind SW. U.S. brig arrives, being engaged in surveying the shoals & c.

3rd. Wind S.W. U. S. brig and the Barque *Clarion*⁵ sail on the survey of Nantucket Shoals & c. Pleasant. Very warm.

7th. Wind NE. Stormy. Engaged in surveying the road to Holmes Hole.⁶

8th. Wind NE. Stormy. Engaged in surveying land at Pohogonut for C. Butler.

⁴Cyrus and William were Jeremiah's twin sons.

⁵Notice that in one place Jeremiah refers to the *Clarion* as a Bark Ship and then as a Barque. The answer may be that in 1841 the bark rig was still fairly new. That year, 32 vessels left Nantucket on whaling voyages. There was not one bark among them. One was a schooner, two were brigs, the rest were ships.

⁶This may have been the section of the Edgartown-Vineyard Haven road that runs past the high school. Originally, that road only went between Edgartown and what is now Oak Bluffs.

10th. Wind NE. Stormy. Engaged at the Custom House. Collector goes to New York.

13th. Wind NE. Engaged at Custom House. Cleared ships *York* of Edgartown and *Japan* of Nantucket for the Pacific Ocean.

15th. Wind NE. Engaged at Custom House & for W. King in writing a deed with L.G. Mayhew Esq. Ship *York*, Capt. John H. Pease Master sails for Pacific Ocean.

18th. Wind NE. The Collector arrives from New York. A riot in Streets this night by men belonging to a smack. Two of the number committed to jail.

20th. Wind SSE. Light, warm. Trial of the 2 smack men. Attended meeting at Chappaquiddick.

22nd. William leaves town for Norfolk for Steam Boat via New Bedford. Engaged at the Custom House.

October 1841.

3rd. Wind NE. Storm. Gale, Rain and High Tide. Did not go to East Side Holmes Hole on account of the storm. The Breakwater leading to the Light House is injured by the Gale, about 200 feet breaks away at night. Gale continues during Monday. 7 schooners, 3 brigs & 1 sloop goes ashore at Holmes Hole driven from their anchors. An old schooner which has been some time on shore near the old stacks on Chappaquiddick Point goes entirely to pieces and drifts away, she was a very poor thing. About 50 vessels drift away at Hyannis, Bass River & c. & c. About 30 of them go ashore on Nantucket, Miskeket & Tuckanuck, two on Cape Poge, one sloop bottom up drifts ashore near

Cape Poge Gut, one on the East Chop, one at Lumberts Cove and a number drift out to sea. At Nantucket much damage done to the shipping and several chimneys were blown off in this town.

8th. Wind S. Cloudy. Cyrus goes to Boston via New Bedford.

10th. Wind NE. Went to East Side Holmes Hole, attended meetings, had a very interesting season. Attended meeting at the School House near I. Norton Esq.'s at 5 p.m.

12th. Wind NW. Engaged with my corn. Reformation at Chappaquiddick continues.

15th. Wind NW to SSW. Sloop *Boliver* of Nantucket upset -- being light -- on her passage from Nantucket to this place. The crew are saved by another sloop and steamboat.

17th. Wind NW. Light. Went to East Side Holmes Hole attended meetings. Br. Sherman preached, having arrived there on Friday from Nantucket. Br. Stickney preached at widow Rebecca Norton's.

18th. Wind W. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Brought Br. Sherman home with me. Attended meeting with Br. Stickney, Br. Sherman and others at Chappaquiddick. Had a pleasant season. The reformation still goes on

21st. Wind NW to WSW. Attended meeting at Pohogonut with Br. Sherman at evening.

22nd. Wind SSW. Attended meeting at Chappaquiddick with Br. Sherman and 14 others from this side of the harbour.

23rd. Wind SW to W. Carried Br. Sherman to Holmes Hole to the steamboat. He returns to Nantucket, having had a very pleasant visit.

Annual Report to Members

by THOMAS E. NORTON, Director

One hundred years ago this month, the people of Wesleyan Grove Campgrounds completed an extraordinary tabernacle, which has become a great monument in Vineyard history. A century has now gone by and although that seems like a very long time, Island history in 1879 had already passed many milestones.

Nearly 40 years earlier, for example, Capt. Valentine Pease of Edgartown sailed from New Bedford, little knowing that one of his crew, Herman Melville, would become a giant of American literature. Sixty years before that, the Island was in the midst of a great depression caused in general by the American Revolution and more specifically by the massive British raid against Vineyard towns.

Even at that point in the late 1770s, and even if we only think in terms of European settlement, the Island was far from new, and so, on such occasions as tonight's meeting, we should relax from our daily chores and reflect back for a moment upon the accomplishments of these many earlier generations.

Those of us gathered here tonight are the guardians of that history left to us by so many of our ancestors who chose to call this Island their home. Our main purpose is to preserve. This is not an easy task even if we limit ourselves to the protection of historical artifacts from the obvious dangers. Our scope, however, is much broader than that, for it would serve little purpose if we merely locked things away without much hope of adding to the knowledge of present generations. Thus, our task becomes much more complicated with a great variety of duties.

Although a small organization in terms of funds and facilities, we are responsible for a wealth of information,

This report was made by the Director at the Annual Meeting of the Society held August 16, 1979, at the Federated Church in Edgartown. It is published here for those members who were not in attendance.

including rare books, thousands of documents, photographs, oral history tapes and a tremendous variety of artifacts that have come to the Island from every corner of the world. For well over 50 years, we at the Dukes County Historical Society have done our best to preserve these treasures of Island history and to provide people with access to our collections. With a year-round staff of only myself and our librarian, Muriel Crossman, it sometimes seems impossible just to keep up with new business that must be attended to every day, but in looking back each year we can see many examples of progress.

Our major task each summer is to open the Thomas Cooke House for the enjoyment and edification of visitors. This would not be possible without a dedicated staff of guides, who do a remarkably fine job. Hilda Gilluly is back for her 13th season and she is joined this year by Chris Coughlan, Ann Holton, Wendy Koch and Amy Spector. The gatehouse is in the capable hands of Bob McLane.

Most of our other accomplishments have been described in the last four issues of the *Intelligencer* so for tonight I will mention only the highlights.

With grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and from the American Association for State and Local History, we hired two consultants this Spring. One of them came from the American Antiquarian Society to study our archives and to make recommendations concerning a larger grant to organize and preserve our manuscript holdings. The other consultant is a design specialist from the Maine State Museum, who visited us with the intentions of drawing up a plan for the establishment of a permanent exhibit for the Francis Foster Museum.

In the never-ending task of maintaining our buildings, we shingled the roof of the library and one side of the Thomas Cooke House and also painted the exterior of the library. Money for these projects comes from the Preservation Fund, which is raised mostly from contributions made by our members. Without this Fund, our buildings would surely fall into disrepair.

Inside the Thomas Cooke House, the greatest change this year is in the Adams Room, which has been reorganized and

now contains a model of Sara Adams made by the talented artist, Margot Datz. The Children's Room continues to be improved through the work of Lorna Livingston, who has done a wonderful job of turning this small space into one of our nicest attractions. Another volunteer this past year has been Stan Lair, who provided many hours of talented service in making photographic prints from approximately 600 glass negatives in our archives. Harvey Garneau organized these photographs into albums, improving the accessibility of the collection greatly.

Volunteers such as Lorna Livingston, Stan Lair and Harvey Garneau deserve most of the credit for the progress made at the Historical Society, but there are many others. The list is simply too long to enumerate here tonight. You can learn about their accomplishments by reading the Director's Report in the August issue of the *Intelligencer*.

These individuals have provided the Society with skillful hands that are unavailable to us from other sources and we are always delighted to receive such valuable assistance. One of our most important volunteer positions again changed hands this year when George Adams, editor of the *Intelligencer*, left the Island. Fortunately, we were able to acquire the services of Arthur R. Railton, who has enthusiastically carried on the work begun by Gale Huntington more than 20 years ago.

We should also take note of two other personnel changes tonight. After serving as the Society's secretary for a year, Helen Tyra is resigning in order to work on some projects of her own. We regret to see her go. I think that all Council members will agree that her presence brightened each of our monthly meetings. John Osborn also is retiring tonight as the Society's treasurer, a position that he has held for 22 years. Only one other officer in the history of the Society has served continually in one position for so long and I think Mr. Osborn deserves a round of applause.

With that display of gratitude to Mr. Osborn, I will conclude my Annual Report.

Books

Martha's Vineyard In Color. Text by Marion Vuilleumier. Photographs by Julius Lazarus. Hastings House, Publishers, New York. 95 pp. \$5.95.

This little book adds one more to the long list of works describing our Island and telling something of its history. Another book is always welcome. This one is well written and informative, although sadly some of the information in it is inaccurate.

Fortunately, however, most of the errors are technical in nature, having to do mainly with such things as whaling, fishing and coasting. This reviewer will let the reader discover them for himself.

The 32 full-page and full-color illustrations are clean and straightforward and compare very well indeed with those by Alfred Eisenstadt in Henry Hough's book, *Martha's Vineyard*.

In spite of the technical errors, this is a book quite worth having.

Tisbury

GALE HUNTINGTON

Cuttyhunk as I Remember It (in 1904), by Margaret Brewer. Published by Cuttyhunk Historical Center, Cuttyhunk, Mass. 28 pages. Illus. Price not given.

History comes to us in various print forms, from the thorough three-volume work of Banks to the personal memoir, such as Louise Meikleham's article in this issue, The

carefully researched documentation of the professional provides the fundamentals of the period, but the memoir, while often less than perfect, fills in the flesh tones that help bring the period to life.

Such a personal memoir is this little booklet on Cuttyhunk in 1904. Written by Margaret Brewer (1876-1972), who obviously was devoted to that last of the string of Elizabeth's jewels. She tells of the *Cygnets*, the island's ferry to New Bedford, and the water taxis that came out to meet her and carried her passengers ashore before the channel was deepened. She provides a wealth of information about who lived where and how they spent their days and earned their living. The photographs provide a sense of the barrenness of the rough and hilly island.

This booklet was published by the Cuttyhunk Historical Center and edited by Flora H. Fairchild. A preface by Julia Kidder is a warmly intimate study of the late author, a former Brockton school teacher whose "heart was in Cuttyhunk."

A.R.R.

WITHOUT COMMENT

Town of Tisbury
To: Frank [F.] Martin, Dr.
For taking care of school house.
6 weeks at 50 cents per week:
\$3.00

Approved
B. F. Norton

Vineyard Haven
Jan. 1, 1884

Letters

Editor:

I have read the article by Ellen Weiss on the "iron" Tabernacle (*Intelligencer* August 1979) and do not find anything that I could disprove at this time—concerning the matter of whether the framework is iron or steel.

Clearly, the issue should be resolved once and for all. That could easily be done by having a scleroscope check made on an actual sample of the framework, as suggested by the Structural Steel Institute.

As I have said before, I still have an idea that the framework is structural steel. If so, that would make the Tabernacle one of the earliest steel structures in the nation.

It seems to me that the matter is of sufficient importance for the Campground Association to authorize the scleroscope examination.

ALLEN C. STEELE

Oak Bluffs

Editor:

Wesleyan Grove has now made it into a major history of American architecture. The book is the second volume of *American Buildings and their Architects*, published by Doubleday. This volume (but not the whole series) is written by William H. Pierson, Jr., professor of history at Williams College.

Professor Pierson calls Wesleyan Grove "one of the most remarkable concentrations of folk architecture in

the country." He includes a photograph of the Bishop Gilbert Haven Cottage, which he discusses at length, ending with: "The sum of all the parts is charmingly incoherent, and in its uninhibited and joyous exhibitionism, it is American folk architecture in its most exuberant form."

ELLEN WEISS

West Tisbury

Ellen Weiss is the author of the article on the Tabernacle which appeared in our August 1979 issue.

Addenda

Inadvertently, the following list of references and acknowledgements was omitted from the article about the Adams sisters, *Chilmark's Little Ladies*, in our August 1979 issue:

Vital Records to 1850.

Dukes County Historical Society files.

Vineyard Gazette files.

Probate and Land Court offices, Dukes County Courthouse.

Once More the Thunderer, Henry Beetle Hough.

General Tom Thumb and His Lady, Mertie E. Romaine.

Information provided by Miss Jean Baird and Miss Mora Norton.

Photographs provided by Julie Hinckley Hatt, Stanton Lair and Jackie Baer.

We regret the omission.

Director's Report

Summer 1979 turned out to be one of the busiest on record with 3737 visitors from all parts of the United States and the world, including Australia, Canada, China (Peking), Denmark, England, France, Germany, Holland, Nicaragua, Norway, Sweden and the U.S.S.R. Although the Thomas Cooke House is now closed for the winter, we are still enjoying visits from many persons who come to see the Frances Foster Museum and the other attractions on the grounds.

At the annual meeting in August we noted that John Osborn was retiring as Treasurer after 22 years of service and he was given a warm round of applause. The members then elected Kathryn Bettencourt as his replacement and Shirley Erickson was elected Secretary in place of Helen Tyra who had served admirably for a year, but decided to undertake new endeavors this winter. Stan Murphy resigned the vice-presidency to accept a seat on the Society's Council and Melville McKay was elected vice-president. Also elected were Dorothy Cottle Poole, Henry Beetle Hough and Arthur R. Railton to the Council for terms of three years.

A number of new accessions came in during the summer, including a Bible, given by Wallis Sturtevant, Jr., that once belonged to Zachariah Mayhew, who was the last of the missionary Mayhews. Two other important Mayhew items came from the estate of Mrs. Bernard Wagenaar: a chair and mirror once owned by Governor Thomas Mayhew.

Again this summer and fall many researchers have been using our library to research a broad spectrum of topics with particular emphasis on genealogy, the Wampanoag Indians, Oak Bluffs and whaling. Fortunately, Doris Stoddard is here to help the genealogical researchers and to answer the many genealogical inquiries that we receive by mail. Muriel Crossman digs out material for the other researchers and continues with her project of cataloging the books in the

library. This latter task is a particularly difficult one due to the specialized nature of our collections, including some very old and unusual volumes.

With money from the Preservation Fund we have continued our never-ending efforts to maintain the Society's buildings. The exterior of the library has been painted and the Customs Office in the Thomas Cooke House has been carefully repainted, including windows, woodwork, ceiling and floor. Before the onset of winter, we hope to paint the lighthouse, which will be a difficult task because all the large windows need to be recaulked. We also expect to reshingle another side of the Cooke House this winter.

Thanks to our members who have been donating to the Preservation Fund for the last few years, we are gradually reaching the point of being able to say that the Historical Society's buildings are in good repair. Of course, no one ever finishes the job of keeping an old house in good condition. We have the added problem of maintaining and preserving innumerable historical records and artifacts.

As usual, the library and Frances Foster Museum will be open this winter from 1 to 4, Thursday and Friday afternoons and from 10 to 12 and 1 to 4 Saturdays. Please drop by to see us.

Thomas E. Norton
Director

Letters to *The Intelligencer* are welcome indeed and, if deemed of general interest to the members of the Society, will be happily printed, subject to editing to meet space limitations. We are especially anxious to hear from readers whose research and recollections may be more accurate than ours. Please address your letter to Editor, *The Dukes County Intelligencer*, Box 827, Edgartown, MA. 02539.

Bits & Pieces

In the good old days, 'tis said, life was relaxed, less frenzied. Folks didn't rush around the way we do now. Life, many say, was serene.

That's what we like to think. But then we read Jeremiah Pease's diary and we wonder. He seems always going to Holmes Hole, Chilmark or New Bedford. He went up-Island more than many Edgartown residents do today.

And it wasn't easy. He didn't get in his car and roar up the Speedway to Vineyard Haven. He hitched up his horse and spent an hour or two getting there. How long did it take to sail to New Bedford on a packet? And how much did he relax when the wind was whipping up Buzzard's Bay?

As for being blissful and serene, Jeremiah surely was far from that. He was a religious zealot and seemed to spend most nights trying to save a soul or two in meetings that must have tied knots in everybody's stomach. But he was not the only zealot. Here is how one clergyman, Samuel Adams Devens, described the Island in 1836:

"Why, Sir, [writing to the editor of a religious publication] this place has been the stronghold of fanatical preachers, and not seldom patients have been transferred from the hands of the clergyman to those of the physician. What think you of meetings every night in the week for six weeks, yes, for three months in succession, prolonged sometimes even into midnight, until the vestry floor, by its apparently lifeless trophies, bears melancholy witness to the tremendous effects wrought upon the nervous

system by the machinery of superstition? Such unwelcome statements I would not publish unless supported by the best of evidence. They proceed from the lips of those who have been constant attendants on such occasions. But to borrow the quaint phrase of an ungrammared rustic, -- 'times a'n't as they used to was.' There has been some change for the better, though, strange as it may seem, the present Clergyman of the Trinitarian Society in Edgartown, one year since, held a meeting of no less than six weeks duration . . . He told me he was pretty much run down; and well he might be. It is surprizing he ever got up again."

Samuel Devens was a minister in the established church, the Congregational, and its unitarianism kept it separate, and rather snobbishly so, from the more emotional Methodists and Baptists. So allowance should be made for his bias.

But those *were* times of intense fervor, the period of the Second Awakening.

Aboard ship, though religiosity did bring serenity. As Dorothy Poole says in her article, many whaling masters insisted on Sunday being strictly observed: no work or lowering boats.

Francis Allyn Olmsted, writing in 1840, described the Sabbath on a whaler this way:

"It is very gratifying to take a look at the forecastle upon the Sabbath in pleasant weather. Perfect stillness prevails aboard the ship; no loud talking is allowed, while the 'people' after washing and dressing themselves neatly, are seated around the forecastle, or upon the windlass, pouring over the Bible or some tract."

Now that was the serene Sunday with not even a football game on TV.

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.