



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 21, NO. 3

FEBRUARY 1980

Oak Bluffs in Its Youth



by

HENRY BEETLE

HOUGH

OAK BLUFFS



CENTENNIAL

The First Up-Island Summer People

by GALE HUNTINGTON

Yesterday's Valentines

Documents: Jeremiah Pease Diary

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.

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



On February 17th, 1880, the State Legislature divided Edgartown to create Cottage City. It became Oak Bluffs in 1907. On its centennial, an eminent Island historian and author writes this reminiscence of

Oak Bluffs in Its Youth

by HENRY BEETLE HOUGH

We had our own prophet Jeremiah, surnamed Pease, who lived at Edgartown in the old days and rode out over the sandy hills of a long, winding road into an Eden of summer innocence and delight. In a grove of oaks on the southern side of Squash Meadow Pond, he set out stakes to mark boundaries of his religious purpose and zeal.

First there was the camp meeting with nine tents under the oaks and a stand for preaching, put together out of driftwood. The camp meeting grew, and cottages took the place of tents, more of them every year. A Philadelphia reporter wrote of the campground community in 1877: "These light, airy cottages, which are met on every side as one wanders through the shady avenues, in oak grove, or on the open bluffs -- pretty, dainty little bird's nests of dwellings, muffled among the low trees, with tasteful beds of flowers, shell or pebble walks in fancy colors, rustic flower baskets and stands for flowers, rustic seats built on to or

HENRY BEETLE HOUGH is the author of a score of books and many thousands of articles and editorials in the *Vineyard Gazette*, which he edited for more than a half century, earning it an international reputation for excellence. The Island's premier historian and an indefatigable defender of its naturalness, he continues to be among its most active residents at more than four-score years. A member of the Council of the Society, he and his wife live in Edgartown.



A. Witteman photo

Circuit Avenue in 1890 with Macy's at left, Seaview Livery stable, right between the trees in front, added to the diversity of style in which the cottages are built, and the varied colors used in painting, and the different lights and shades in which they are seen, give to the whole scene a wonderful picturesqueness."

Then came the town, a little of it at first, and then the plan of Robert Morris Copeland, landscape architect, with summer thoroughfares such as Circuit Avenue, originally "The Circuit," and parks, a scattering of them, including Ocean Park, Waban, Hartford, Petaluma.

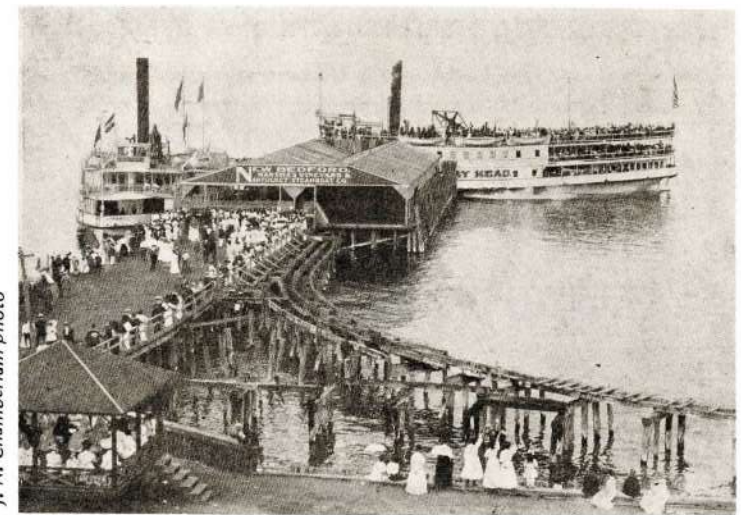
All this is basic, set down many times in annals of the Vineyard. But what most of the public in 1980 cannot have known and therefore cannot remember is that the town, spontaneously, one builder seeking to outdo his neighbors, emulated, copied, transmuted, reflected the fancy architecture of the Camp Ground cottages. Those adjectives so much used in the decades of the 70's, 80's and 90's to describe the cottages that survive today as historical and architectural treasures, were used to describe the new town as a whole, the town first called Cottage City and renamed Oak Bluffs in 1907.

A photograph looking lengthwise through Circuit Avenue,

taken about 1890, shows a succession of verandas and double verandas, supported by slender pillars, edged with ornamented railings, facing the street with all the imaginative fancy and graciousness that wood, as a material, and the tireless ingenuity of the builders could supply. Towers, gables, single and in pairs, flagstuffs, ornamentation in unflagging detail, abound in this photograph and others. Significantly, the only vehicles to be seen on the Circuit Avenue of that time are three horse-drawn carriages, one an open truck. The significance, which hindsight now informs us, lies in the fact that the automobile was fated to bring about the end of the fantasy existence of Cottage City.

"From the deck of the steamer, as we approach," wrote the author of one guidebook, "that portion beyond the further wharf makes a beautiful picture. The towers and minarets of its hotels, and cottages elevated on the bluff, and outlined against the western sky, give it an appearance of Oriental Splendor and magnificence unequalled anywhere on this continent."

There was no Oriental or Moorish influence in the awareness of those who brought about this skyline of towers
Busy moments at Oak Bluffs dock as two paddle wheelers arrive at once



J. N. Chamberlain photo

J. N. Chamberlain photo



Wigwam Block in 1905. Herald Building, next door, has a Japanese Bazaar. The white sign, far left, says: Lagoon Heights lots, \$20 down, \$5 monthly and minarets, and it might be accurately described as a profile of the fantasy and imagination of the time. The theme was one of holiday invitation and enjoyment, an ostentation of jigsaw patterns-- for almost all the detail on every side was produced by this useful craft of the period.

At Cottage City, the excursionist and vacationer left the ordinary world behind.

So it was in the early years of this century when I, as a boy, first knew Cottage City, mingled with the promenaders on Circuit Avenue, walked to the jetties as a Sunday morning venture in sightseeing, and joined the crowd to watch the boat paddle up to the wharf and warp in beside it.

The verandas and balconies were for sitting and watching the summer parade of vacationers stroll past. The avenue itself was more for strolling and shopping than it was for what is now called transportation. And shopping was made glamorous by the Oriental store of Selim Mattar and, at different periods, by the Japanese stores of Miyanaga, Hakar Brothers or Ishikawa. These offered the color and richness of distant places and appealed to the decorative taste of the period.

Or, souvenirs, seashells, post cards, and so on, could be

found at Macy's, at the foot of Circuit Avenue with the pagoda-like roof.

The tower of the Wigwam Block rose above the others on the easterly side of Circuit Avenue, with an elongated vertical sign for identification. The derivation of the name is not clear, but it had achieved enough fame to make any explanation unnecessary. Here was a "headquarters for sea shore supplies," a miscellany on view that included water wings, rugs, toy boats, matting, draperies, crockery, trunks, bags, valises, rubber hose, lawn chairs, window shades and doors.

At the beginning of a season there was speculation as to whether enough money had been raised to keep a band all summer. Sometimes, the band could be kept and, other times, it could not. There were concerts in Ocean Park, and the band played when the boat came in, and the boat would be one of the old side-wheelers, *Nantucket*, *Gay Head*, *Martha's Vineyard* or the new *Uncatena*.

The Arcade was a gateway structure of significance. Through it, past Mr. Perry's cigar store, one passed from worldliness to the propriety of the Camp Ground -- but this propriety was also gay. "The fairy-like character of the whole scene so engrosses the attention that the stranger does not think of losing the way, and the pleasant avenues, lined with *The Tivoli*, dancing nightly in second-floor ballroom, music always live





Wigwam Block in 1905. Herald Building, next door, has a Japanese Bazaar. The white sign, far left, says: Lagoon Heights lots, \$20 down, \$5 monthly and minarets, and it might be accurately described as a profile of the fantasy and imagination of the time. The theme was one of holiday invitation and enjoyment, an ostentation of jigsaw patterns-- for almost all the detail on every side was produced by this useful craft of the period.

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Joy's Pier in 1905. Joy was a condition, not a mere name, says the author these attractive homes, are only the more beautiful because of their crooks and curves," said one guidebook, and my memory says that so it was in the old days.

In 1907, Cottage City had seven livery stables and no garages. The Tivoli, spick, span, and new, with its high towers above the steamboat wharf, was being advertised as "the new casino" and a photograph of the times shows its street-side balcony crowded, its banners flying, and only one or two automobiles that can be easily identified in the concourse of men, women, children and horse-drawn carriages in the street.

This corner hasn't changed much in 75 years, except the monument is gone



The Rausch ice-cream parlor of considerable fame was nearly opposite the Arcade on Circuit Avenue. The Soldier's Monument stood then at the foot of the avenue near the Flying Horses, on which I took occasional rides, and I remember the large sign near the harbor, "Joy's Pier," and I always identified "Joy" with the character of Cottage City rather than with the surname of an ordinary mortal.

A single bus, its seats arranged crosswise, stood near the Herald Drug Store, ready to make two trips to Gay Head every day. But the Sunday excursions by steamboat were also popular.

To our age of almost endless entertainment and recreation, a time and place where the fashionable occupations -- adequate for all -- were sitting on porches and hotel verandas, promenading, listening to band concerts, watching the boat come in, sea bathing in clumsy and drab costumes, buying salt-water taffy and popcorn of many flavors at Darling's, Rausch's famed ice-cream parlor was in the Metropolitan Hotel building



taking the trolley to Vineyard Haven, or Chester Pease's bus to Edgartown and South Beach once or twice a week, and the like of these in simplicity and what now seems tameness -- such a time and such a place can be remembered as no reality at all, but only as some old-fashioned style of quaintness.

There's hardly any convincing proof now that it ever existed, in spite of old pictures and annals. But it did exist, and the coming of the automobile swept it all away, the fantasy, innocence, particular gaiety, and, one should add, inconveniences, too, though they were part of the character and part of the fun.

It could not have been possible, but if some millionaire of the time, more farsighted than was ever likely, could have assured the preservation of the old fantasy town, close kindred to the Camp Ground itself, what a living museum the Island would possess today!



Circuit Avenue was the promenade in 1905 and everybody promenaded to Darling's left, for taffy and popcorn. Right, the elegant Pawnee House



The First Up-Island Summer People

by GALE HUNTINGTON

In 1888 Nathaniel Shaler bought a farm on the north shore up-Island for a summer home. Subsequently, he bought several other places in the vicinity to form what finally became the Seven Gates Farm Corporation of today. Shaler was one of the leading geologists of his time and his study of the geology of Martha's Vineyard is still very valuable to scholars.

A little after Shaler, Mrs. Lucy Sanford bought the home and most of the large farm of George West facing the Wesquabsque Cliffs. Mrs. Sanford spent a great deal of money to improve the house and land, but whether she actually did improve either is questionable.

But neither Professor Shaler nor Mrs. Sanford was the first to buy a summer home in Chilmark. The first were the Blackwells, who had done so about 20 years earlier.

In the last half of the 19th century, up-Island and particularly Chilmark, where the Blackwells settled, was a very different land from what it is today. It was then a land of farms, large and small. The population as listed in the census divided the population of Chilmark almost equally between mariner and farmer. Mariners included whalers, deep-water merchant seamen, coasters, fishermen and pilots. But the mariners all had farms to come home to, even though many of them were of the subsistence variety and very small.

GALE HUNTINGTON has many occupations: fisherman, gardener, teacher, archeologist, folk singer, musicologist, author and historian, to list only the most important. Founder and long-time Editor of the *Intelligencer*, he continues to serve as Editor Emeritus and on the Council of the Society. He and his wife live in Vineyard Haven.

On the other hand, there were many farms that were large, consisting of a hundred or even several hundred acres. Sheep raising for wool probably produced the greatest wealth, but there were also herds of dairy cattle and much of the milk was turned into butter and cheese.

So up-Island was a land of pasture, meadow and field, all separated one from another by stone walls or, where there were not enough rocks on the land, by split rail fences.¹ The chief grain crops were corn, rye and oats, probably in that order. Up-Island had been almost entirely denuded of trees to provide pasture and tillage. Almost, that is, because there were some woodlots, but so few that many families depended on peat for both cooking and heating. Except for the woodlots, the only other trees were in the orchards with which most farms were provided.

Such was the up-Island to which those first summer people came. It was a beautiful land with a view of water -- pond, sound or ocean -- in almost any direction. The first of the summer people to fall in love with it was Henry Blackwell. He rowed ashore at Squibnocket Landing, now the



Henry Blackwell of Quitsa and his wife, Lucy Stone, pioneer feminist



¹There were, in 1867, "40 miles of stonewalls in Chilmark. . . being made almost entirely of round stones, [they] look like the fancy filament of a queen's crown and add not a little to the landscape." Hine, p. 187. For a full identification of this and other sources see bibliography at end of this article.



Quitsa Pond in 1850, looking toward Menemsha. Not a building in sight

Squibnocket bathing beach, in the summer of 1864. With him was his friend, Ainsworth Spofford, the Librarian of Congress.

We do not know what sort of a boat Henry Blackwell and Mr. Spofford had sailed in, whether it was a yacht or a sloop that they had hired in New Bedford. Nor do we know whether they were on a cruise or whether Squibnocket Landing was their intended destination.² We do know that Henry was looking for a postoffice from which to mail a letter to his wife, Lucy Stone. And it may have been in that same letter that he told Lucy that he had found the ideal place for a summer home.

After coming ashore, Henry was directed to the Squibnocket Postoffice and he and his companion made their way there. It was a walk of almost two miles, for the Squibnocket Postoffice was not on Squibnocket, but rather near what is now Chilmark Center or Beetlebung Corner. The Chilmark Postoffice was on the Middle Road near Tea Lane, where the Methodist Church and parsonage were at that time. At any rate, during that walk Henry Blackwell fell in love with up-Island, particularly Quitsa.

²Hays, in her book, explains that they landed at Squibnocket because Spofford's father "was now Congregationalist minister in the island town of Chilmark" (p. 161). She also states that on the boat with the two men were Henry's wife and daughter. The present author disputes this.



Road past Quitsa Pond, 1905. Edward's Cove to left, Hariph's Creek ahead

Quitsa³ was (and is) the land between Hariph's Creek (always pronounced "crick") and the Gay Head Herring Creek (see map). In all that very considerable area there were then only about twelve houses, almost all of which were occupied by owners of farms, large or small. The excepted two were the Theophilis Mayhew house and the Webquish house, both of which were located on the very large farm belonging to Edward Mayhew. Webquish is an Indian name and Webquish was probably a tenant farmer or farm worker on the Edward Mayhew place. Two other farms on Quitsa were also very large. They were the James Vincent place facing on Squibnocket Pond and the even larger Benjamin Mayhew place facing on Quitsa and Menemsha Ponds. The remainder of the farms were smaller, most of them of the subsistence sort.

How many houses are there on Quitsa today? Instead of twelve could it be one hundred and twelve? And the farms have entirely vanished, as have most of the stonewalls, buried

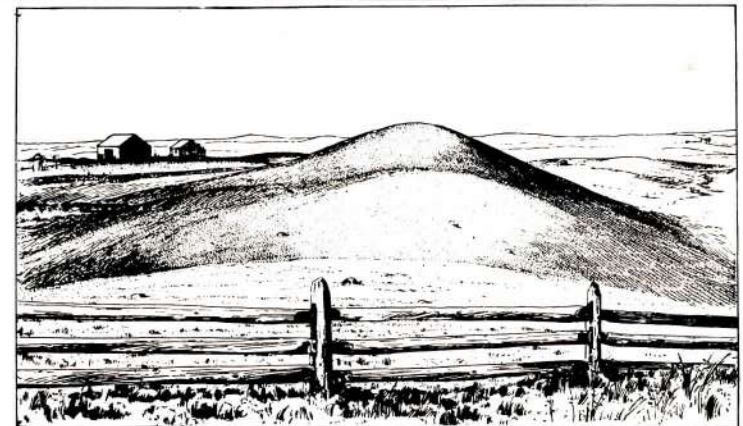
³"Quitsa -- short for Nashaquitsa or Nashaqueedsee, meaning 'between two waters'..." Hine, p. 196.

by thick brush and vines.

But in 1864 as Henry Blackwell and his friend walked to the postoffice, the hills of Chilmark stretched out like moors. That first summer guest up-Island was a most interesting person who had given up a prosperous hardware business in Cincinnati to marry Lucy Stone, one of the pioneers in the movement for woman suffrage, and Henry became just as active in the movement as his wife. Lucy was an extremely strong-minded woman. She refused to give up her maiden name when she married and remained Lucy Stone as long as she lived. She and Henry were constantly moving from one city to another, taking part in suffrage meetings, and when they registered in a hotel as Henry Blackwell and Lucy Stone and asked to share the same room, it frequently caused interesting reactions.

Henry and Lucy spent their summers, or at least parts of their summers, at their home on Quitsa Lane as long as they lived. They had only one child, Alice Stone Blackwell. After their death, Alice carried on the work of her parents and she, too, spent her summers on Quitsa. She lived to see the completion of what her parents had devoted their lives to: the adoption of the woman's suffrage amendment to the Constitution in 1920.

This was in Gay Head, but it was typical of the Quitsa "moors" in 1850





Famed doctor Emily Blackwell was a regular up-Island summer resident

Henry Blackwell had eight brothers and sisters. Two of the brothers also bought summer homes in Chilmark and three of the sisters visited in Chilmark for many years. Henry's brother, Samuel, bought the Theophilis Mayhew place, a very small and very old house on Quitsa, from E. Elliot Mayhew and enlarged it. Samuel's wife was Antoinette Brown and she was almost, if not quite, as famous as Lucy Stone, for she was the first ordained woman minister in the United States. The Reverend Antoinette and Samuel had five daughters and they, like their cousin, Alice Stone Blackwell, spent their childhood summers on Quitsa.

Another brother, George Blackwell, bought a summer place in Chilmark, not on Quitsa but on the Fulling Mill Brook at the foot of the western slope of Abel's Hill. It was the big and beautiful Warren Tilton place. George's claim to fame is that he was a millionaire. He was also an exceedingly good and kind man, which all millionaires are not. George and his wife, Emma, had two children, Howard Lane and Anna, who spent their childhood summers by the Fulling Mill Brook.

Anna Blackwell married Charles Belden, the State Librarian of Massachusetts, and she, her husband and children

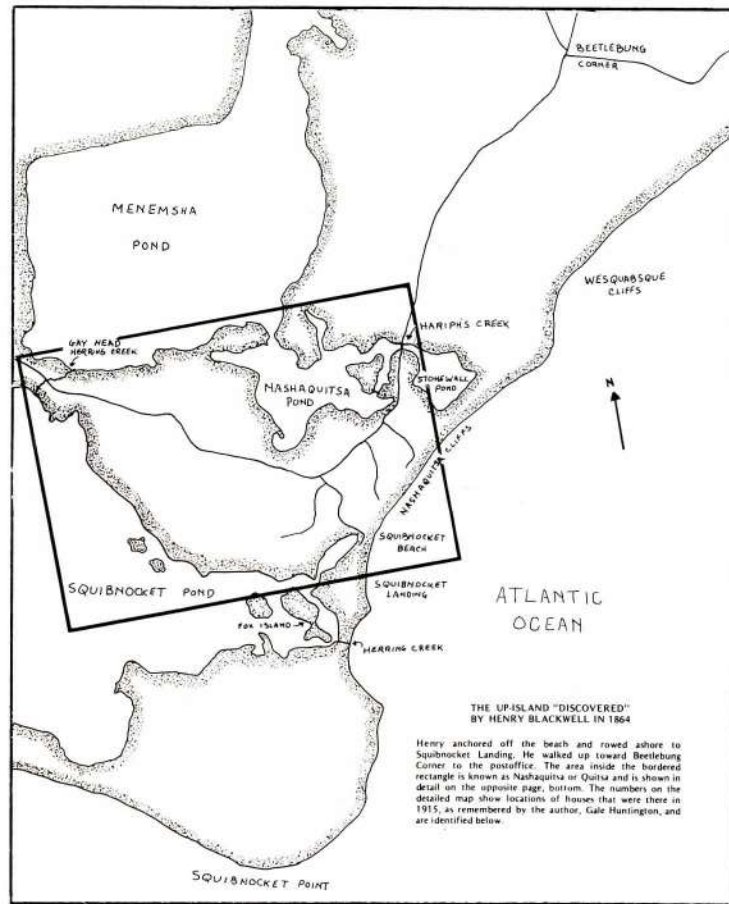


Left, Hannah, adopted daughter of Emily. Right, Alice Stone Blackwell continued to live in the big house on Fulling Mill. As the years passed the brook more and more came to be called Belden's Brook and today, except for purists, that is very much its name.

The three sisters of Henry, Samuel and George who spent many summers and parts of summers up-Island were Elizabeth, Emily and Ellen.⁴ Elizabeth Blackwell was the first woman physician. She and her sister, Emily, who was also a physician, founded the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women and Children in 1857. It is still in operation. Dr. Emily was the surgeon at the Infirmary and, in the opinion of the author of this paper, was a better doctor than her older and more famous sister. That could be prejudice, of course, because she was the adopted grandmother of the author.

None of the Blackwell sisters ever married, but the three who came to the Island each adopted a daughter. Dr. Elizabeth's adopted daughter was Kitty Barry. Dr. Emily's was Hannah, always called Nan by the family, and Ellen's was

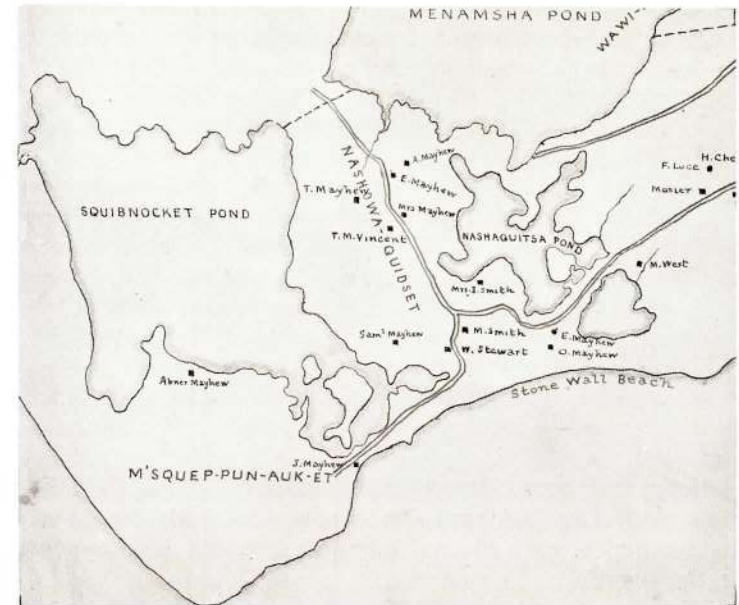
⁴There were two more sisters, Anna and Marian, both of whom lived in Europe much of the time. Anna was one of the first female correspondents, writing for eleven newspapers from Paris. Like all Blackwell girls, they never married.



QUITSA HOUSES IN 1915

See map on opposite page

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Theophilus Mayhew house | 8. Hillie Mayhew house |
| 2. Edward Mayhew house | 9. James Vincent house |
| 3. Webquish house | 10. Anderson Poole house |
| 4. Walter Lloyd Mayhew house | 11. Ben Mayhew house |
| 5. Asa Smith house | 12. Benjamin Mayhew homestead |
| 6. Henry Blackwell house | 13. Jared Mayhew house |
| 7. Willie Mayhew house | 14. T. M. Vincent house |
| 15. Cook homestead | |



Above, part of old unsigned map. Legend reads, "Enlarged from Walling's Map, 1850." Notice on map below how few houses were added by 1915



Cornelia. Ellen Blackwell was not a physician, but was very active in the movement for woman suffrage and a leader in the movement for woman's rights. Also, she was the author of a very interesting little book, *A Military Genius, Life of Anna Ella Carroll*, the female adviser to President Lincoln during the Civil War.

Now let us look very briefly at some of the next two generations of Blackwells and their connections with up-Island. We have noted that Alice Stone Blackwell carried on the work of her parents, Henry Blackwell and Lucy Stone. Of the five daughters of Samuel and Antoinette Brown Blackwell, Florence, the oldest, married E. Elliot Mayhew, long-time postmaster and storekeeper in Chilmark. Florence, with Alice Stone Blackwell, was a founder of the Chilmark Public Library and was long active in town and community affairs as well as being a valued member of the Chilmark Methodist Church. Florence and Elliot had no children of their own. Their adopted son, Walter Lloyd Mayhew, lived and worked in town all his life and his sons and daughters live on the Island.

Samuel and Antoinette's daughters Edith and Ethel both became physicians like their aunts, Drs. Elizabeth and Emily. Another daughter, Agnes, became an artist of very real ability and married Samuel Thomas Jones. They had three children, all of whom spent the summers of their growing-up years on Quitsa. The oldest, Ethel Whidden, like her mother before her, is a very fine artist.

Dr. Edith Blackwell tended one of the children, her nephew Samuel Blackwell Jones, through an attack of typhoid fever. She saved him, but caught the disease herself and died.

Dr. Ethel Blackwell, Edith's sister, never practised medicine. She married Alfred Brooks Robinson and had four children. Of them, Horace B. B. Robinson, the only one still living, has his summer home on top of Lookout Hill in the house that his parents built. From that house there is a most magnificent view of all the western part of the Island, of Nomansland to the south and the Elizabeth Islands to the north.

Howard Lane Blackwell, son of George, was the only



A 1915 photo, taken from shore of Clam Cove, looking east across Quitsa

male child in his generation of Blackwells and today his son, George H. Blackwell, grandson of George of Fulling Mill Brook, is the only Blackwell on this side of the Atlantic still bearing the family name. He has a house on Quitsa Lane not far from the house that Henry and Lucy bought in the 1860s. His three children are all daughters.

Cornelia Blackwell, Ellen Blackwell's adopted daughter, married and then seemed to lose all touch with the family. We have already mentioned Kitty Barry, adopted daughter of Dr. Elizabeth. She took care of her adopted mother in her old age as well as any real daughter could.

Nan Blackwell, Dr. Emily's adopted daughter, married Elon Obed Huntington, a surgeon in the United States Navy. She and Elon had four sons, all of whom spent their summers growing up on Quitsa. They lived for the first of those growing-up years in the Asa Smith house and during those years Dr. Emily, their adopted grandmother, spent part of every summer with them.

We could go on and name the cousins of the Blackwells who also spent summers in Chilmark, but we shall not, for this article is already pretty much of a catalog. We shall end it by saying that there are more than fifty Blackwells and

Blackwell cousins buried in the Chilmark cemetery on Abel's Hill.

At one point it almost looked as though the Blackwells would take over the town of Chilmark, but they didn't, for too many other off-Islanders also discovered the beauty of up-Island, a beauty that first won the heart of Henry Blackwell in 1864, more than 100 years ago.

Picture credits: All portraits of Blackwells taken from *Those Extraordinary Blackwells*, Hays. The two drawings are from *U. S. Geological Survey*, Seventh Annual Report. Others photos are from the private collection of the author.

Wesquabsque picnic of the Blackwells, 1920. Foreground, S. T. Jones and his wife, Agnes, youngest daughter of Samuel and Antoinette Blackwell



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Yesterday's Valentines



These penny postcard Valentines are brightly colored, all dated 1908



Two humorous Valentines. The beer mug is not dated, the heart is 1920





Above, 1906 Valentine beauty. Below, postcard for "King of Hearts," 1910



Winged angel, below, mailed 1908. Others are of similar period, no doubt

These Valentines were selected from a collection of greeting cards for various special days donated to the Society by Lucy Andrews Dowd



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.

November 1841.

1st. Wind S. Foggy. Alden B. Arey of East Thomaston dies at J. Thaxter's Tavern of Southern Fever. He was landed here from a schooner from Savannah.

2nd. Wind SSW. Funeral of Mr. A. At 3 o'clock p.m. went to Chilmark to a Temperance meeting.

5th. Wind NE to WNW. Fresh breeze. News of the death of Capt. Charles F. Starbuck arrives.

9th. Wind NNW. Fresh breeze. Measured the new ship *United States* of Nantucket. Ascertained her tonnage 372 35/95 tons.

13th. Wind NW. Ships *Potomac* and *United States* of Nantucket sail for the Pacific Ocean. Watched with Br. C. Worth's wife being sick.

14th. Wind W. Br. Charles Worth's wife is very sick and near death. Mr. T. M. Mayhew arrives from New York sick with small pox.

15th. Wind NW. Pleasant. Br. Charles Worth's wife dies at about 7 o'clock p.m.

16th. Wind NW. Fresh breeze, squally. T. M. Mayhew goes to the Light House sick with smallpox.⁷

17th. Wind NW. Brs. Kent Stickney and others arrive from New Bedford for funeral of Sister Worth. Service by Br. Stickney and another man. The church and society in general have sustained a great loss in the death of Sister Worth. She was esteemed, pious, an excellent wife and tender mother.

21st. Wind NW. Very pleasant. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings at evening. Thomas M. Mayhew dies at the Light House of the smallpox and buried this afternoon.

23rd. Wind W. Went to Nantucket in the packet *Lagrange*,⁸ Capt. Cottle. Arrived there at ½ past 12 o'clock

⁷For quarantine probably.

⁸It is interesting to see how the little packet sloops were competing with the steamboat.

p.m. Attended meeting at Br. Blakee's church.

24th. Wind W. Attended meeting with Br. Filmore at Sister Bailey's.

25th. Wind SE. Attended meeting with Br. Sherman, Br. Gibbs & Br. Burdett at Polpis. Rains at evening. Returned to Br. Sherman's, had a pleasant visit.

26th. Wind E to NW. A little rain. Returned in the Steam Boat to Holmes Hole.

27th. Wind NW. Quarterly meeting. Br. Otherman attends.

28th. Wind NW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings at Rebecca Norton's at evening. Returned at night.

December 1841.

2nd. Wind NW & calm. Ship *Alpha* of Nantucket arrives from the Pacific Ocean.

6th. Wind WNW. Fresh wind. Engaged in surveying land on the Tisbury line for Thomas Mayhew 2nd.

8th. Wind SW to NW. Went to New Bedford in sloop *Vineyard*. On the night of the 8th Mr. Abner Fisher's wife and Mr. Rufus Davis' wife die very suddenly.

9th. Wind W to WSW. Returned from New Bedford in the same sloop.

10th. Wind S. Light a.m., p.m. rains a little. Attended the funeral of Mrs. Fisher at ½ past 9 o'clock a.m. and of Mrs. Davis at 1 p.m. Service by Rev'd Mr. Stickney.

11th. Wind NW. Pleasant. Surveyed land for A. Norton's heirs.

12th. Wind SW. The brig *Deborah* arrives from a whaling cruise with 85 bbls. J. Worth, master. On the 8th instant (?) went to East Side Holmes Hole attended meetings, had a solemn

season. The death of Sister Davis had a great affect upon the minds of some of the inhabitants of that village. I hope it may be sanctified to the eternal good of many.

15th. Wind N. Town meeting on account of road near West Luce's & smallpox bills.

17th. Wind E. to S. Light rainy. Dr. Samuel Wheldon dies at about 8 o'clock of Dropsy. His faith was strong in the Lord. He was considered a skillful physician.

19th. Wind NE. Considerable snow on the ground. Did not go to East Side Holmes Hole. Funeral of Dr. Wheldon was attended at the Baptist Meeting House. Service by Rev'ds Holmes and Stickney. It was a solemn season, he having been a physician so long that the principal part of the congregation were persons at whose birth he attended.

21st. Wind N. Cold. Snows a little. Sent communication to William for the Post Master S.L. Pease.

26th. Wind NW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings. Frederick⁹ is taken sick with the Cancer Ash.

28th. Wind SE. Rains. Surveyed land for H. Jernegan.

29th. Wind NW. Light. Ship *Thule* arrives from the Pacific Ocean.

31st. Wind NW. Barque *Sarah and Esther*, Capt. W. M. Lumbert sails for the Indian Ocean on a whaling voyage.

January 1842.

1st. Wind W. Cold. Surveyed a contemplated road by the Court House.

⁹Another of Jeremiah's sons, a tailor.

9th. Wind NW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meetings. Br. Chase and Br. Weeks were there. Ship *Roscius* from the Pacific Ocean arrives with part of the cargo of the ship *Loan* of this place which was cast away at Talcuhana.

12th. Wind NW. Some snow on the ground. Schooner *Gourmet*, Capt. Samuel Tilton, sails on a whaling voyage in the Atlantic Ocean. Ship *Roscius* arrives from Holmes Hole.

14th. Wind SW. Fresh breeze. Engaged as one of the commissioners on the estate of R.W. Coffin.

17th. Wind SSW to SW. Went to the West Chop Light House on business.

19th. Wind SW. Pleasant. Meetings every day this week at the Methodist Meeting House.

20th. Wind SW. Pleasant. Went to West Side Holmes Hole on business. Settled my account against the estate of Charles Smith with John Holmes, Esq., administrator on said estate and received the balance \$14.76 of him.

24th. Wind NW. Fresh breeze. Cold. Ephraim Ripley's wife dies of a cancer.

26th. Wind SW. Cyrus goes to New York via New Bedford. The Collector goes to Washington via New Bedford. Funeral of Sister Ripley. Service by Rev'd Sticknev.

February 1842.

2nd. Wind W. Pleasant. Rather light wind. P.M. SSW. Sent a letter to the captain of the Light Vessel.

7th. Wind SSW to SW. Ship *Lima* of Nantucket arrives from the Pacific Ocean.

8th. Wind NW. Cold. Collector arrives from Washington.

19th. Wind SSE. Gale with rain. Collector's commission expires today and no appointment has yet arrived.

21st. Wind NW. Engaged at Custom House.

27th. Wind NW. Squally rains and snows a little. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Did not have meeting on account of the weather.

March 1842.

3rd. Wind SW. Went to the North Shore. Surveyed land for Leonard Luce. Attended meeting at evening at the district school house. It was an interesting time. Several have lately professed religion at that place.

4th. Wind SW. Surveyed and planned the land near the old meeting house for the estate of R.W. Coffin.

5th. Wind SW to NE. Foggy. Ship H. Allen comes from Holmes Hole.

10th. Wind N. Went to Chappaquiddick and attended the funeral of Betsy Carter, a pious coloured woman.

11th. Wind N. Cloudy. Cold. Surveyed and planned land for the estate of R.W. Coffin.

13th. Wind SSW. Moderate. Went to North Shore, attended meetings in a new schoolhouse. It was an interesting time being a great reformation there.

14th. Wind SE to SSE. Light. Surveyed land for Jonathan Worth and Thomas G. Mayhew, Esq.

15th. Wind SW. Engaged in surveying land at Tisbury for Anthony Luce and E. Skiff.

29th. Wind WSW. Attended meeting at North Shore this evening. It was very interesting, a great number of the inhabitants having lately embraced

religion.

30th. Wind NE. Returned from North Shore.

31st. Wind SW. Very pleasant a.m. P.M. wind NE. A very severe storm of snow, rain and wind.

April 1842.

2nd. Wind SSW. Squally. News of the appointment of L. Thaxter as Collector of Customs.

3rd. Wind SSW. Went to North Shore. Attended meeting at the west school house. Brs. J. Huxford, W. Munro and Jeremiah¹⁰ went with me. It was a blessed time. One woman professed religion and a number arose in the congregation for prayer. Returned at night. Rains a little, very dark.

5th. Wind NE to N. Ships *Phebe* and *Joseph Starbuck* arrive from the Pacific Ocean.

7th. Wind SSW. Cloudy, rains a little. The Commission of Leavitt Thaxter Esq. as the Collector of Customs for the District of Edgartown arrives. This day is appointed as a day of fasting and prayer through the State.

8th. Wind NE. Cloudy. Another year of my short life is past. This day Leavitt Thaxter Esq. is qualified to the office of Collector of this district. He commences business by taking into his possession the Book, papers and public property and at half past 11 o'clock appoints me a Deputy Collector and Inspector of the Customs for the District of Edgartown. Engaged at the new Custom House from about 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

¹⁰Another of Jeremiah's sons and, it seems, the only one who shared his religious fervor. He took over his father's place in the Camp Ground after his death.

14th. Wind NE. Capt. Richard Luce receives his commission as Inspector of Customs for the District of Edgartown to reside at Tarpaulin Cove.

17th. Wind E. to NE. Light. Went to North Shore. Attended meetings in their school house during the day. At evening attended meeting at East Side Holmes Hole. Returned at night. Jeremiah attended meetings at ESHH during the day and evening. J.W. Coffin, Chase Pease Jr., E. Pease, Wm. Munro, C. Jernegan and L. Donalds (?) were at East Side Holmes Hole. It was a very interesting time.

18th. Wind NE. Storm. Engaged at Custom House at Holmes Hole. Holmes Hole Collector at Probate Court.

19th. Wind NE. Stormy. Engaged at Custom House.

20th. Wind NE to SW. Went to West Side Holmes Hole on business of Custom House. Ship *Clarkson* arrives from the Pacific Ocean.

23rd. Wind NE. Sowed oats.

30th. Wind SW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole to see Grafton Norton. Found his thigh broken. Set it.

May 1842.

2nd. Wind WSW. Pleasant. Collector goes to New Bedford.

4th. Wind SW. Went to East Side Holmes Hole to see Mr. G. Norton. Found him very comfortable. The pain ceased in his thigh where the bone was set. It swelled not any more than is common in such cases. He has the best attendance of his wife and Mr. James Beetle and others. Used wild cherry bark, wormwood and horehound steeped strong. Likewise used New England rum and gin.

Books

America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century by Frances FitzGerald. Atlantic-Little, Brown, Boston. 240 pp. \$9.95.

We who involve ourselves in historical societies may forget that history is not limited to the collecting of artifacts and the preserving of old buildings, important as those activities may be. History is the accurate transfer, as accurate as humans can make it, of the flow of events that brought us to where we are on this planet.

To most of us that transfer occurs within a very brief period: while we are high-school students. Lifelong attitudes toward the nation and the world are often firmed up right then for many who, it is sad to say, never "crack" another history book.

How well do textbooks meet that awesome responsibility? If Frances FitzGerald, the author of *America Revised*, is right, not very well.

"It has been said that though God cannot alter the past, historians can," wrote Samuel Butler a century ago, and this book justifies Butler's cynicism.

Quickly I must add, as is so often the case in our complex society, the fault lies as much with the system as with the historians. (FitzGerald

emphasizes that historians do little of the writing of textbooks, especially of revised editions. It is done by editors in publishing houses, responding to sales reports from the field.) Textbooks are written to be used and, if they don't sell, they won't be used. It is those who place the orders for the major school systems who determine to a large degree what "history" our children will study. And their opinions of what is history shifts along with the tide of public opinion.

What the public thought about mainland China or Iran a few years ago is not what it thinks today. What was, in 1940, an accurate description of the role of the American Negro is (it is good to report) no longer accurate for the Black American today. In telling the Pilgrim story, textbooks once divided the Indians into friendly and unfriendly (towards the Pilgrims, that is), good guys and bad guys. How do you think that reads to today's American Indian? Friends of invaders are usually thought to be traitors, not good guys.

The history textbook writer revises and revises, desperately trying to keep up with public opinion. It is no wonder then that each generation has difficulty understanding its abutments, on either side. After all, if history is revised continuously, the way people think about the world will change with the revisions.

"History books for children," FitzGerald writes, "are thus more contemporary than any other form of

history... each generation of children reads only one generation of schoolbooks. That transient history is those children's history forever -- their particular version of America."

We are, nutritionists say, what we eat. Equally important, we are, in our attitudes toward our fellow humans, a great deal of what we learn in our high-school history classes.

"Let me write our nation's songs and I don't care who writes her laws," a songwriter whose name is lost in my memory once said. He might also have said, "Let me write our nation's history textbooks and..."

A.R.R.

Letters

Editor,

In Dorothy Poole's interesting article on Chilmark whaling masters (November 1979), I like the picture of Captain George Fred Tilton. I only wish that it showed his gold watch chain a little more clearly. That chain was almost heavy enough to anchor the *Morgan*. (And at today's gold prices it must be worth nearly what the ship cost!)

However, there is a mistake in the caption. The photograph was not taken at Mystic, as the caption writer says, but at Round Hill near New Bedford. The *Morgan* did not go to Mystic until 1941. And when she did go there, George Fred did not go with her, but rather came home to a happy

retirement on the North Road in Chilmark. However, George Fred was the *Morgan's* master and curator while she was berthed at Colonel Green's Round Hill estate. And many people think that that is where the *Morgan* should have stayed.

GALE HUNTINGTON
Vineyard Haven

Editor:

Since we would have given you permission to use the drawing of the *Acushnet* (sketch of the stern view of the vessel printed in our November 1979 issue on the cover and on page 58 -- Ed.) if you had applied to us and in view of the confusion at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich as to the reprint rights, you may consider this letter as retroactive permission to print the picture. A correction in the February issue as to the true owners of the picture would seem to be in order.

I hope that we can be of service to you in the future in less embarrassing circumstances. If so, please feel free to write, call or visit.

PAUL CYR

Curator
Melville Whaling Room
New Bedford Free Public Library

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.

Director's Report

With the arrival of 1980, the Historical Society can look back over an existence that encompasses at least part of seven decades—all but twenty-two years of the twentieth century, and with this issue, we have published the *Intelligencer* in four decades (beginning in 1959). The 1980's will bring some financial difficulties, which will have to be overcome, but nevertheless we look forward to continued progress. In concluding the 1970's, we built the Francis Foster Museum and this new addition will give us the room to grow in the years to come.

Building the Francis Foster Museum two years ago provided the Society with much more space in the library, and this causes us to feel rather farsighted considering the large number of researchers who have been working here in the last few months. The variety of these people has been remarkable: newspaper reporters, lawyers, genealogists, environmentalists, students, college professors, local historians, artists, photographers, government officials, model builders, antique dealers, archaeologists and even skin divers. It has been a most interesting (and crowded) several months.

An important project this winter involved the accession of whaling artifacts and ships models recently given to the Society. Most of the thirty items are such things as harpoons, blubber hooks, oil testers and cutting spades, and for almost every artifact we have a record of what vessel it came from. Several of the items, for example, were salvaged from the wreck of the *Wanderer*, the last square-rigged whaling vessel to leave New Bedford, which went to its final resting place on the rocks of Cuttyhunk at the beginning of a voyage in 1924. Cataloging an accession of this size is a major task and in January we were most fortunate to have with us Anne-Marie Dallenbach, a museum intern from Goucher College, who has

done a fine job of organizing this interesting collection.

It is that time of year again when we are busy processing the dues and donations to the Preservation Fund. If you have not already done so, would you please send in your contribution. In the next issue, we will publish a list of those who have given to the Preservation Fund, and we thank you for your support.

Thomas E. Norton
Director

It's only a suggestion . . .

Do you know someone (in the intelligentsia, of course) who would enjoy reading the *Intelligencer* regularly? It's a simple matter to arrange a gift. Just send \$8, along with the name and address, to the Dukes County Historical Society, Box 827, Edgartown, Mass. 02539, and we'll do the rest. The recipient will receive not only a year's subscription to this quarterly, but a membership in the Society as well.

Bits & Pieces

In his warm, bittersweet account of Cottage City in his youth, Henry Hough identifies the villain in the piece this way: "... the coming of the automobile swept it all away..."

Although he, a young lad, didn't notice it, the sweeping away had begun even then, according to the historians Hine. In 1908, the authors had this to say about the just-finished Beach Road from Edgartown to Oak Bluffs:

"The road has one and only one drawback. It is a good road and consequently much affected by the automobile, whose indecent haste prevents its occupants from enjoying the view and fills the eyes and clothes of less rapid citizens with dust and distress."

In 1908, it was motor cars; today it's mopeds. Tomorrow?

• • •
Those Blackwells in the Gale Huntington article were, to use the sportscaster's obnoxious-ism, "some kind of family." They left England as Dissenters from the established Anglican church -- husband, pregnant wife, eight children plus three of Blackwell's sisters, a governess and three servants. Blackwell didn't like the fact that as Dissenters they were not considered "proper" by British Establishment folk.

In their adopted country, they continued to be anti-Establishment. All nine children were successes,

although we hear most about Elizabeth, the first female doctor.

The Blackwell males even married anti-Establishment women.

When Henry Blackwell married Lucy Stone, the pioneer feminist, in 1855, he read into the ceremony: "This act implies no sanction of, nor promise of voluntary obedience to such of the present laws of marriage as refuse to recognize the wife as an independent, rational being..."

That was in 1855, remember!

Samuel Blackwell, Henry's brother, married Antoinette Brown, our first ordained female preacher. When she, a delegate to the World's Temperance Convention in New York, was not allowed to speak from the platform because of her sex, she stood silently at the podium for three days, disrupting the proceedings. She never did get to talk, but she made her point. (All she had intended to say was "Thanks for letting a female attend.")

• • •

How do you spell Wesquabsque, as in Chilmark Cliffs? (See page 102.)

Here are some spellings we found: Wequobscut and Wequobsket, both in Banks.

Weyquosque and Wesquobsky, both in Shaler.

Weaquabsqua, on a Mayhew deed.

Wequobsque, on the Chilmark Historic Landmarks map.

Wasquabskue, in Indian Notes of the Museum of the American Indian.

Weequobska, on the U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey, 1897-8.

We chose Wesquabsque, backed by Hine and our own expert, Huntington.

A.R.R.

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.