



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 22, NO. 1

AUGUST 1980

Portfolio of Cottage City Views

Vineyarders Down East

by

DOROTHY COTTLE POOLE

Seth Daggett: Master Pilot

by

JANET P. BOSWORTH



Island Energy in Years Past

by GALE HUNTINGTON

Up-Island Tales: Wry and Dry

by CYRIL D. NORTON

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Acquired by the Society in 1935, the Thomas Cooke House was built in about 1765. It has been established as a museum and its twelve rooms are devoted to historical displays that reflect past eras of Vineyard life. It is open to the public during the summer with a nominal fee being charged to non-members.

The Francis Foster Museum and the Society Library are in an adjacent building and are open to the public all year round. In the Museum are displays of scrimshaw, ship models and paintings. The Library is devoted to Vineyard history and has valuable collections of whaling logs and genealogical works.

The public is invited.



Vineyarders Down East

by DOROTHY COTTLE POOLE

Martha's Vineyard was settled in 1642 by Thomas Mayhew, Jr., and several other families from Watertown, Massachusetts. A beautiful Island with a temperate climate and an abundance of game, fish and berries, its soil was poor, turning men toward the sea and, eventually, as the population increased, causing many to seek homes elsewhere.

At first, these emigrants from the Vineyard left singly or by two's or three's, seeking richer farmlands. They went in all directions, but a great many of them steered northeast and settled in widely scattered parts of what is today the state of Maine, then a part of Massachusetts. Sometimes, other Vineyarders would join them and certain settlements, though not so named, became "New Vineyards."¹ Addison was one such settlement in Maine.

The first Vineyarder who ventured this far Down East was Wilmot Wass, a brazier and trader who had come to West Tisbury from Boston with his wife and three young daughters in 1737. Through the years, during which his family increased to fourteen, Mr. Wass became a leading citizen of the mid-Island town.

In 1767, he decided to emigrate and sailed as far east as

¹The settlement in 1791 of New Vineyard, Me., was a real migration of about a dozen families from Martha's Vineyard. For the full story of this migration see *A New Vineyard*, by the present author, available through the Society.

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Machias, perhaps seeking the ideal home site, then he doubled back until he reached Pleasant Bay and sailed up it to the mouth of the Pleasant River. Great Wass Island, now a part of the town of Beals,² was later named for him, but Wilmot Wass settled on Cape Split³ and is commonly acknowledged to have been the first settler of Addison, though concrete evidence is lacking that he was indeed *the* first.⁴

The *Addison-Harrington Register of 1905* states that "In 1770 word came to Martha's Vineyard that cod were plenty in Wescogus River near Jeremiah Plummer's house. Mention was also made of the abundance of fine quality of meadow grass on Plummer's and other meadows." That year, 1770, a Captain Luce,⁵ who regularly sailed a sloop Down East from the Vineyard, exchanging goods for lumber, brought seven families to settle in Addison.

The name of one of the families has been lost. Another was Daniel Small's, who seemed to have no connection with the Vineyard. The five other families were headed by Seth Norton, Daniel Look, Richard Coffin, Samuel Coffin and Barnabas Coffin. The majority of present-day residents of Addison and many in nearby towns, can claim descent from these Vineyard emigrants and Wilmot Wass, who had already established his home on Cape Split.

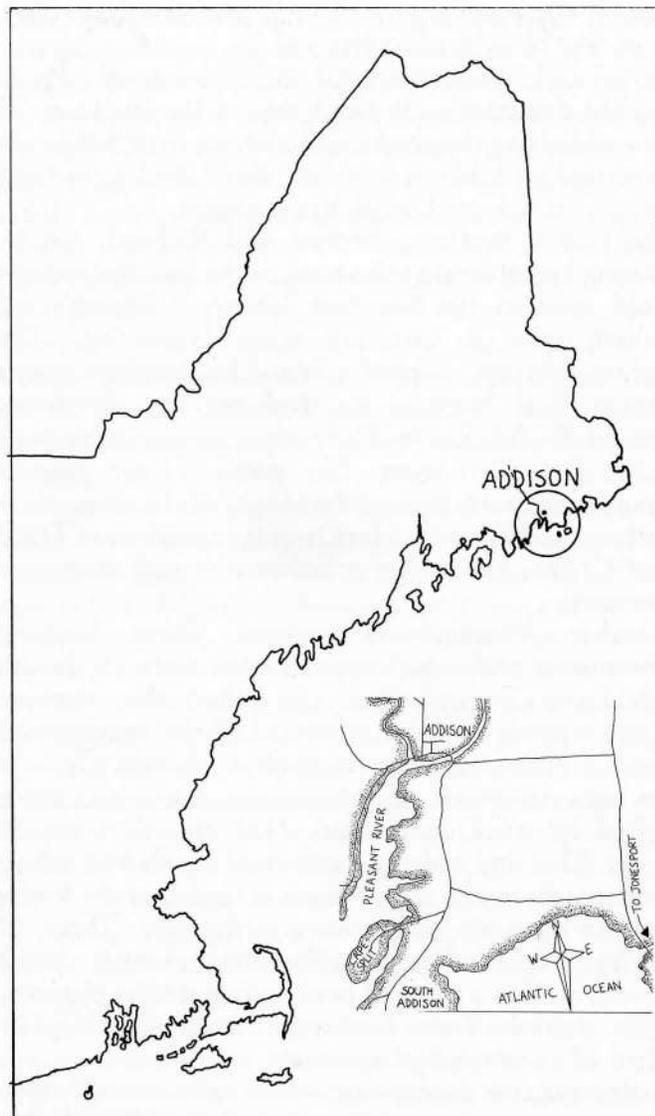
Seth and Amy Norton with their small children, Elihu and Abram, settled at the head of Pleasant Bay. They had five other children, probably all born in Addison: Seth, Elisha, Amy, Hepsibah and Betsey. Seth Norton's will is on file in the Courthouse at Machias and, according to Lawrence Norton of nearby Jonesport, "His widowed daughter, Hepsibah Ramsdale, was left two cows, four sheep, wood for 1 fire, hay, pasturage, right to live in his

²Mr. Lawrence Norton, Jonesport, Me.

³*Addison-Harrington Register of 1905*, p. 9.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 9. "There seems to be no doubt that the inhabitants of Martha's Vineyard sent the first settler to our town, but who this person was, and the date of his arrival, is not definitely known."

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 30.



Wilmot Wass sailed from the Vineyard to Machias, 25 miles past Pleasant Bay (circled) before coming back to settle on Cape Split, shown on insert

house. If she remarried = 0 zero! Her brothers, Elisha, Abram and Elihu⁶ fared pretty well."

Daniel and Ann Butler Look with three small boys and an infant daughter were neighbors of the Nortons. The Looks added five daughters and a son to their family after they settled in Addison, but only three lived to maturity: Damaris, Eunice and Daniel, the youngest.

The Coffin brothers, Samuel and Richard, acquired adjoining lots of land at the head of the Bay, according to an old map in the Mayhew Library.⁷ Samuel's wife, Elizabeth, was a Gardiner from Nantucket. Their daughter, Miriam, married a Beal. Her daughter married Jeremiah Beal Norton, Jr., and his son, Ferdinand, married Julia Ada Davis. Their son is Lawrence Norton of nearby Jonesport, now 87 years of age and an acknowledged authority on the history of the area.

Richard Coffin's wife, Mary, was the daughter of Temple Philip Cooke, an erudite schoolmaster and attorney of Edgartown.

Another Vineyard descendant, Oscar Look, is harbormaster and proprietor of a small store on the dock at Addison. Twenty years ago, when this store was serviced entirely by water, it carried all the necessities the townsfolk could not raise themselves. As recently as ten years ago, its stock of staples was adequate, though supplied by truck, not vessel. Now the showcases are sparsely filled and only an occasional candy and tobacco salesman calls at the store, which is inadequately warmed in winter by a pot-bellied stove in the rear. There, Mr. Look has his old-fashioned roll-top desk where he does his accounts and, in a place of honor, displays the pictures of his five children: Jane, Katherine, Sarah, Oscar Jr., and Robert, all accomplished musicians.

Cramming one display case in the store are odd stones,

⁶Lawrence Norton's great, great grandfather. His birth is recorded in Edgartown Church records, 10-31-1760. Quotation is from correspondence with Mr. Norton.

⁷No one seems to know just how the library acquired its name as Mayhews were not among the Vineyarders who settled there.

shells and fish skeletons, while hanging from the rafters are many curios from the sea and mementos of the owner's years on Bataan in World War II. Displaying his treasures, Mr. Look, the great, great, great grandson of Daniel Look, who left Martha's Vineyard before the Revolutionary War, relives the horrors of the 1942 Bataan "Death March" in which he participated.

Some younger progeny of Vineyarders in Addison are Frederick Davis, a young lobsterman, and his sons. They are descendants, through Seth and Amy Norton, of Alice Sisseton, the daughter of the Sachem of Sanchacantackett. Mr. Davis' family comes from Cutler, Maine, where William Davis married Lucy Ann Beal Norton, the granddaughter of Seth and Amy Norton.

Merritt and Tabbitt are common family names in Addison and among these families are descendants of Emma Norton, daughter of Seth and Amy Norton. Emma married a Merritt and her daughter married a Tabbitt. Mrs. Frederick Davis of Addison has made a study of the families in town and finds that many are related to Vineyard people by marriage. There are Alleys who are married to Nortons and to a Coffin; Crowleys who are married to a Norton, a Wass and a Tabbitt. Historian Lawrence Norton states that "practically all the residents of Addison are descendants in one way or another of the Vineyard Settlers." He adds that intermarriage was common, "with nobody else to marry, but there were no more fools and just as many bright as anywhere. In fact, the residents of Addison were self-sufficient, resourceful, thrifty, forehanded, intelligent and smart!" (Like their Vineyard forebears, we like to believe.)

The Pleasant River meanders across Washington County from its source in the northwest corner down to Addison on the Atlantic Ocean. It is navigable only as far inland as Columbia Falls, which is just above Addison, and where there once was a thriving shipbuilding industry that turned out 100 or so full-rigged ships. Now the shipyard

site is the neighborhood shopping center, but the river is still beautiful along its entire course.

Addison itself spreads over a large area and includes many islands, coves and headlands. Addison Point was once considered the elite part of town with stores, lodge and church surrounded by stately elms and well-kept homes, many of which have been destroyed by fire.

South of the point on the east side of the river are Eastern Harbor, the Carrying Place and Tumble Down Dick, once a valuable black-granite quarry, but now the site of a handsome modern home overlooking the islands and Mount Cadillac to the south. Another black-granite quarry was at the Nelson Carver homestead on the west side of the river. There, too, may be seen an old shipyard and an old sardine cannery, remnants of earlier industries. Back on the east side of the river are places with such names as Through the Woode, Tabbitt's Narrows, Kent Place and Cape Split, where Wilmot Wass settled and where some of his descendants live today.

To the east of Addison Point is Wescogus and then one goes through Addison Woods to Indian River, once a thriving village, but now decadent. Crowley's Island is reached from here and across the Indian River Bridge is the town of Jonesport. In all these settlements are families with Vineyard names or with Vineyard ancestors.

Why did Vineyarders go so far to find a new home? Very early in the Island's history there was established a coastwise trade with the entire coast of Maine. Large land tracts in what is now Maine were awarded to towns in Massachusetts to encourage settlement "Down East." Vineyard fishermen sailed Down East to catch, dry and salt cod and were knowledgeable about the area. Eventually, many of the people engaged in these activities became settlers.

Their new homes were "salt water farms" like those on the Vineyard only with more space. Behind them were thick forests with excellent lumber and many fur-bearing



Photo by author

Road to South Addison from Addison, town settled by Wilmot Wass of Tisbury animals. In front was the ocean, teeming with fish and dotted with islands. As on Martha's Vineyard, sheep raising was an important part of farming.⁸ Sheep needed little care and furnished meat for the table as well as wool to be woven into clothing and blankets. Whenever they could, the fishermen-farmers bought islands on which to pasture their sheep and these islands still bear the names of the old settlers: Great Wass Island, Dyer Island, Look Island, Norton Island, Tabbitts Island and others. Little Wass Island was later purchased by the Beal family and renamed Beals Island.

The early settlers built small one-and-a-half-story houses, not log cabins. As they prospered, they moved up to larger and sturdier New England houses, a few of which still stand.⁹ Usually, the building was actually a set of buildings, consisting of a main house with a long ell, a woodshed, a wagon house, a barn and the privy, plus smaller separate buildings for pigs, hens, etc. This type was used even in the villages although sometimes, as on the Vineyard, the barn was built a safe distance from the house to save one or the other in case of fire. Each

⁸It still is, for Addison's Mrs. Davis and others are shepherds.

⁹Oscar Look lives in his family's original house.

fisherman had a shack and dock along the shore. Travel was generally by boat as only the very prosperous had a team and that was usually work horses or oxen.

These early Addison settlers went to sea, fished, farmed and built boats. They even framed houses and shipped them to settlements along the coast where lumber was scarce. Often combining two or more trades "they would do anything to scratch up a livelihood."¹⁰

Pleasant River Valley, for the most part, lived up to its name and life there was calm and serene, if not easy. But it was not entirely detached from the world around it as two memorable events of the past centuries will show.

The first of these occurred in 1775 when several men from the valley joined their neighbors at Machias to oppose the British threat to that settlement. In June the British had sent a routine request to Machias for lumber for new barracks in Boston. Some townsmen objected and gathered at a nearby brook to discuss the matter at length. Finally, one man jumped across the brook, announcing that the time had come to bow to the British or to have nothing at all to do with them. He preferred the latter and invited all who agreed with him to come to his side of the brook. The entire male population of Machias joined him and soon cut a tall pine which they erected in the center of town as a "Liberty Pole" to announce their revolutionary leanings.¹¹

A short while later, the British cutter *Margaretta* and two sloops, *Polly* and *Unity*, came into Machias Harbor with a load of supplies for Ichabod Jones, a local merchant. When Captain Moore of the *Margaretta* ordered the Liberty Pole taken down, the men of Machias decided to seize the British vessels. The British captain learned of their plans and put to sea, but a group of colonists seized the *Unity* and took chase, although the *Margaretta* was heavily armed and the men from Machias had just twenty

¹⁰Lawrence Norton quotation.

¹¹Louise Dickinson Rich, *State O'Maine*, New York, Harper & Row, 1964, p. 110.

muskets with three rounds of ammunition for each. Those who had no guns armed themselves with pitchforks and when the *Unity* drew abreast of the *Margaretta* the colonists leaped aboard and engaged in hand-to-hand combat, using pitchforks against bayonets. Surprisingly, they won and sailed the *Margaretta* back to Machias. This is frequently spoken of as the first naval battle of the American Revolution. Seth, Elihu and Elisha Norton were among the combatants from Addison. Elihu was later in the naval battle at Badaduce (now Castine) when the British beat the colonists, but the vessel he was in escaped capture.

Another outstanding event in which ex-Vineyarders were involved occurred nearly 100 years later. In the 1860's there was a religious group in Indian River that was led by a spellbinder named George Adams, a fiery preacher in the Mormon church. At his instigation, many people in the Pleasant River Valley sold all their property to finance a trip to the Holy Land where, Adams promised, they would find rich farmlands, diverse commercial enterprises and, best of all, they would be eyewitnesses to the second coming of the Messiah.

A bark, *Nellie Chapin*, was built in the Knowles Shipyard at Addison Point and, in the following August, she was loaded with enough lumber for a church, a school and a score of houses. The Palestine Immigration Society, which the group was called, sailed from Jonesport, 155 strong, while a large crowd of their neighbors watched from shore.

They reached Jaffa (now Tel Aviv) in about six weeks and disillusionment began at once. They built houses with the lumber they had carried with them and planted gardens to provide food, but this was no "promised land." Their leader proved to be extremely corrupt under his sanctimonious manner; the local government was hostile; they, as foreigners, were obliged to rent, not buy land. The natives stole their crops and poisoned their water supply.

The sun scorched the land and there were no cooling ocean breezes. Sickness and death were rampant.

Some colonists deserted and the settlement was abandoned. On October 1, 1867, an American steamer, *Quaker City*, stopped at Jaffa and rescued about two-score colonists, landing them in New York. Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), who was aboard, wrote an account for the *New York Tribune*, citing the numerous elements which caused the failure of the colony. He ended with, "Adams, the Prophet of God, got drunk in September, 1866, and remains so to this day. It is hoped he will see the error of his ways when he gets sober."¹² Actually, he remained in Jaffa for some time and then went to California.

Many colonists returned to Maine, but some could not face the "I told you so" attitude of the stay-at-homes so they went elsewhere, several journeying to Michigan. A few remained in Jaffa, two of whom were Abigail Norton Alley¹³ and her son, but her husband went back to Maine.

The returned colonists soon adjusted to their old ways and rebuilt their lives. By this time, the people of the Pleasant River Valley had discovered more of nature's abundance in their seemingly barren land and new industries had evolved. There were packing plants for blueberries, which still grow prolifically on the "Barrens." Sardines, abundant in season, and some clams were also packed for shipment. Clam and lobster dealers bought the fisherman's catch and transported it to markets in larger towns and cities.

Today, Addison is mainly a fishing port with 35 to 40 lobstermen who set their traps from 30 to 32-foot open boats. They use square wooden pots and wooden buoys, although an occasional wire pot and styrofoam buoy may be seen. When not in use, the gear is somewhat carelessly piled in the owner's yard, but his boat is well taken care of.

In the "off season", the fishermen go sea-scalloping or

¹²"Maine's Holy Land Colonists", *Down East Magazine*, Jan. 1977, pp. 40-43.

¹³Lawrence Norton has three letters written by Abigail Alley in Jaffa to his grandmother in Jonesport.



Photo by author

Church in Addison, the Maine town whose early settlers came from the Island dig clams. Periwinkles also furnish a source of income. "Foreigners eat them," exclaimed Mr. Norton. And, like their forebears, many of these men still hunt deer and trap fur-bearers in the forests, and along the shores they still shoot wild fowl of all kinds.

Many trades and professions are represented in the Pleasant River Valley, although the services are somewhat scattered. There is the Down East Community Hospital in Machias, not large, but extolled by its users. A small group in Addison has founded the Pleasant River Valley Historical Society which meets monthly, except in January and February. At present, the Mayhew Library houses the records and memorabilia for the society. The librarian is Dorothy Look, but she is not a descendant of the Vineyard Looks. A spruce postoffice, administered by a friendly, obliging postmaster, John Perry, a part-time lobsterman, connects Addison with the secular "outside world" while several white-spined churches encourage participation in spiritual services.

Until fairly recently, each little community had its own one-room, one-teacher school and, big and little, everyone walked to and from school each day, toting books and lunch pails. Today, grades one through eight attend the D. W. Merritt Elementary School, with a teacher for each grade. Older students attend the regional Narraguagus High School in Harrington, being transported from their homes by buses.

The population of Addison recently topped 1000. It is governed by three selectmen (this year one is a woman) elected annually at town meeting, a lively event which brings out all the various factions to air their views.

Since the store on the dock ceased supplying their needs, housewives shop at the Red and White Grocery or at Brown's Shop and Save, near the postoffice in Addison, or go 25 miles north to Machias. Marine supplies can be bought in town and lumber, paint, and-so-forth, are available at Columbia Falls or Centerville, a few miles away. Machias and Jonesport are within "reasonable" trading distance. For clothing one has to drive nearly two hours to Ellsworth or Bangor, or else sit at home and choose from the plethora of gaily colored mail-order catalogs.

In winter, roads are "semi plowed" and usually sanded after the storm is over, but one has to learn to drive on snow-packed and often icy roads as winter lasts a long time in Maine. It was easier with horses and sledges.

The inhabitants of Addison are well-contented with their way of life and most have no desire to alter their beautiful valley. But the countryside is changing as each year more people "discover" the Pleasant River Valley and build large, rambling summer houses on the sightly peninsulas and promontories. The threat of overdevelopment is not yet evident, but as the Coffins, Looks, Nortons and everyone else on Martha's Vineyard know, it can happen with very little notice.



Island Energy in Years Past

by GALE HUNTINGTON

There's nothing new under the sun and our present energy crisis provides further evidence of the truth of the cliché. In the 1800s, the Island used up its natural supply of cheap and convenient energy as the demand for wood as a fuel exceeded the land's capacity to renew it. At first, the wholesale cutting of trees seemed sensible. Cleared land was needed by farmers, especially sheep growers, of which there were many until the late 1800s.

Sheep raising was exceedingly profitable and nobody objected to denuding the Island of its trees to provide pasture land. That was particularly true of the western part of Tisbury and almost all of Chilmark.¹ Most of the wool, probably, was sold off-Island, but a great deal of it was locally processed into yarn which was woven into blankets and fabric for all sorts of clothing on looms that stood in almost every Island home. Further, an almost universal Island home industry was knitting the wool into stockings, mittens and caps.²

This happy state of affairs was gradually ended by the

¹West Tisbury was then still a part of the town of Tisbury.

²Many such knitted goods, as well as blankets and cloth, were carried all up and down the coast and sold by the small coasters. It was an important Island industry. In 1880, "15,000 pairs of stickings, 3,000 mittens and 600 wigs for seamen were knit annually. . . when you reached Cape Poge light. . . you could hear the knitting needles at Edgartown." Samuel Adams Devens, *Sketches of Martha's Vineyard*, Boston: James Munroe & Co., 1838, pp. 20-21.

GALE HUNTINGTON needs no introduction here. He is the founder and Editor Emeritus of the *Intelligencer*, without whom the publication would not exist. He grew up in Chilmark and now lives with his wife, Mildred, in Vineyard Haven. One of the Island's outstanding historians, his real love is songs of the sea and fiddle playing. He is the author of several books, the latest, *Vineyard Tales*, is being published this month.

ever-increasing importation of wool from Australia and New Zealand, causing the Island's once large flocks of sheep to diminish and finally to vanish entirely. What was left was an Island almost without trees.

Looking at the woodlands on so much of the Island today it is hard to realize that was so, 100 years ago, but it was. Walking through the woods one can still see miles and miles of stonewalls that once separated one man's pasture from another's.

And so it was that in the 1800s, the matter of providing fuel for the widely separated farmhouses became a serious problem. Firewood had been the basic fuel for all of New England. Once a great deal of Vineyard cordwood had gone to treeless Nantucket, but as deforestation spread that was stopped.³ Of course, many families had kept small woodlots which were actually farmed, all the cutting being done in the winter so that new growth would start from the stump in the spring. Then, in 25 or 30 years, those trees would be ready to be cut again. But most families did not have woodlots, and coal, brought to the Island by the little coasters, was not widely used until almost the beginning of this century.

Fortunately, there was another Island source of energy: peat. Up-Island particularly has many peat bogs, most small, but some quite large. With wood almost non-existent, the up-Islanders turned to this other energy source and eventually most places were provided with a peat house.

Peat had been forming in the bogs ever since the retreat of the last glacier some 9000 years ago and it was, and still is, quite deep in some of the bogs. After the bog was drained, the peat was cut into long bricks with a spade

³The deforestation was not caused totally by the demand for fuel to heat homes. Industry played a major part. Chilmark's Roaring Brook brickworks consumed cords of wood annually as did the Sandwich Glass Works. The latter is said to have deforested Nomansland, Cuttyhunk and Naushon islands with its great need for fuel. (It may have burned some Vineyard wood as well.) See *This Broken Archipelago*, James D. Lazell, Jr. Quadrangle-New York Times Books. 1976. Chapter one.



Photo courtesy the author

The Asa Smith place in about 1908. Peat house is at left of windbreak wall. The hills of Chilmark were then like moors, devoid of trees and shrubs particularly made for that purpose. The peat bricks were stacked where they had been cut and then, in the fall, when they had somewhat dried out, they were carted home and stacked again in the peat house.

Peat houses were always built of stone with, of course, a wooden roof. All the other outbuildings on the place, the woodshed, corncrib, shop, backhouse and sheep shed, were almost always made of wood. That "almost" is in that



All that remains of the Asa Smith peat house today are thick stone walls



These two fresh water ponds were once peat bogs near Anderson Poole house

sentence because there were a few brick buildings up-Island. Wood, however, was really the universal building material.

Why, then, were peat houses always stone? Robert V. McCormick, the editor of *Venture* magazine, told me that the reason may have been that there was such a high water content in peat it could have caused a wooden building to rot. That sounds reasonable.

At any rate, the peat houses were made of stone and a few of the stone buildings still stand in Chilmark, while all the other outbuildings that once graced the farmsteads have vanished. At least two of the peat houses have been carefully maintained, but today most are merely four roofless walls that look like ancient ruins.

The peat fire was usually started with wood. Much of that wood came from the beaches. In the days of many small coasters, there was always plenty of driftwood alongshore. It came from lost deckloads and from wrecks.

The odor of burning peat and of peat smoke was very



Beyond this stone wall is a large peat bog that provided energy in 1800s

strong and pervasive although not really unpleasant. Women from Chilmark doing shopping in Holmes Hole or Edgartown were always recognized as up-Islanders by the odor on their clothing.

Other up-Island energy was provided by the waterpower of the brooks that turned mill wheels. There were no brooks of any consequence down-Island so there the mills were powered by windmills, as they were on Nantucket. Of course, wind provided the energy for the vessels that served the Islands. On the farms all energy was provided by the muscle power of man and beast. Oxen did the heaviest work. Horses did some of the lighter farm work, such as cultivating row crops, but mostly they were used for riding and for taking the family to church in wagon or carriage on Sunday.

One wonders if we will ever see the return of those once-so-universal sources of energy?



Peat house on James A. Vincent place is still used, but not for storing peat

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is grateful to the following owners of the Chilmark peat houses for allowing access for photography: Robert H. Conway (the James A. Vincent house); William I. Clark (the Jim Vincent house);



A tumbledown wall may have been a peat house at Ben Fletcher Mayhew's



Only walls remain of Jim Vincent's peat house. They may last for centuries

Ronald Briscoe (the Asa Smith house); Dr. Emanuel R. Piore (the Ben Fletcher Mayhew house); and Peter A. Darling (the former E. Elliott Mayhew barn). Thanks also to G. B. Barnes of Edgartown for his research assistance.



Handsome pump house was once a peat house at E. Elliott Mayhew's barn

Seth Daggett: Master Pilot

by JANET P. BOSWORTH

Since the earliest days of seafaring, when mariners left their home waters to voyage to strange shores, pilots were aboard to direct the course of the ships. Later, the term, pilot, was applied to a person not regularly attached to a vessel who conducted it wherever navigation required special knowledge of local waters.

The earliest known pilot in New England waters was Squanto, the Indian, who was taken aboard the *Swan* by Governor Bradford in 1622 to thread the "deangerous shoulds and roring breakers" around Chatham. Equally dangerous were the currents, shoals and rocks of the waters to the east of Nantucket and also through Vineyard Sound en route from Block Island to Holmes Hole. Indeed, the south shore of Cuttyhunk, Nashawena and Pasque in the Elizabeth Islands came to be known as "The Graveyard" because so many vessels ran aground there in thick fog.¹

The first official action taken in New England to prevent

¹As Capt. George W. Eldridge of *Tide and Pilot Book* fame explained in his letter to Captains and Mates in 1875, the flood tide between Gay Head and the islands of Cuttyhunk, Nashawena and Pasque runs northerly rather than easterly, as it does farther down Vineyard Sound. Ebb currents in the same waters run westerly, setting the starboard bow of an eastbound vessel to the northward also. Thus, in a thick fog, eastbound ships often ran aground on the Elizabeth Islands before the master realized it.

JANET P. BOSWORTH is Curator of the Cuttyhunk Historical Center and has lived year-round on Cuttyhunk since 1975, after many years of summer visits. Her husband, Lloyd, is a member of a long-time Cuttyhunk family, his great-grandfather having settled there in 1860 and some other ancestors, Allens and Slocums, even earlier. This article was developed during Mrs. Bosworth's research for an exhibit now on display at Cuttyhunk on the subject of Cuttyhunk Pilots 1798 -- 1918. For full details on the exhibit see the News section in this issue.

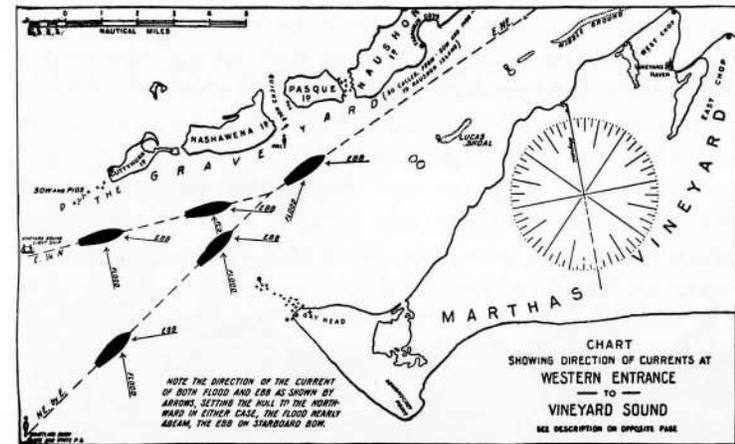


Chart courtesy Eldridge's Tide and Pilot Book

Both flood and ebb tides set vessels to the northward, towards the Graveyard such losses was a law passed in 1783 to authorize suitable persons to be appointed as pilots. Cuttyhunk became famous for its pilots and so, too, did the Vineyard. Of the first ten pilots named for navigating Nantucket and Vineyard waters, three were named Daggett. A few years later, another Daggett, Capt. Seth Daggett (1780-1867) became one of Martha's Vineyard's most noted pilots.

Seth was the fifth son of William and Mary (Stewart) Daggett of Tisbury and the nephew of Capt. Nathan Daggett, about whom Dorothy Daggett Johnston wrote in the November 1978 *Intelligencer*. All the Daggetts were seamen: Seth's father was a mariner, as were four of his uncles; one brother, William, was a master mariner; and one, Peter, was a pilot like Seth.

On February 28, 1799, Seth married Mary Dunham, herself the daughter of a master mariner. He was 19 and she 17. They lived at Holmes Hole (Tisbury) and had eleven children, two of whom died in infancy.

Life held many difficulties for pilots, both on land and at sea. Seth was eager to improve the system so as to make

things easier and better. It was the custom in those days, Seth wrote, for pilot boats always to be "cruising between Block Island and Gay Head, and often to the westward of Montoque (Montauk) Point."² He wrote to the Editor of *American Coast Pilot* a proposal that would make it easier for pilots and ships to get together:

"Sir, being a pilot and having experienced much inconvenience by there not being a uniform method of ships firing for a pilot, not being able in foggy weather to ascertain the direction the ship is from the boat, owing to the sudden explosion, when perhaps our attention is taken up by something else, therefore the ship has to put to sea again, or may be lost in consequence, but was the following method adopted there would be no difficulty in finding the ship --

"Whenever a ship fires a gun for a pilot that in exactly five minutes from firing the first gun a second shall be fired, and that to be continued every half hour, by that method the pilot, after hearing the first gun and knowing that it is for a pilot, another would be fired in five minutes, would be all attention and will know the direction the ship is in, and can easily find her."

The Editor asked Captain Seth to have his proposal approved by the Wardens of New Bedford and he wrote to them asking "to have it sanctioned" and also suggesting to them that "if a notice of the above method was immediately published in the New Bedford paper it would be of service."

It is not known whether the proposal was ever universally adopted, as Seth wished it to be.

However, after the passage of the new Piloting Act of 1820, the pilot had other problems. Even after he had located a ship signalling for his services, he was not always sure of being hired. Under the old rules, a fixed fee was set for the service, based on draft and length, but the new

²This and all other Seth Daggett quotations are from various documents in his own handwriting in the Society's archives.



William Bradford's 1859 painting of pilot boats meeting whaler off Gay Head rules permitted haggling between a master and a pilot. Because of this, inexperienced pilots, not familiar with the hazardous Nantucket Shoals, were sometimes hired instead of the knowledgeable, but more expensive, local men. Also under the old rules, any pilot who was refused by a master would receive one-half the fee he would have been paid had he been hired. The new law allowed him only one-third.

Captain Seth, as head of a committee named by the pilots of the Vineyard to protest to the General Court about the new Act, did so vigorously. He felt that not only were the new rules unfair to the pilots, but that a ship being entrusted to an incompetent man might be endangered or even lost. He also urged that all vessels hiring a pilot should be compelled to pay a minimum rate: the fee for a ship with a draft of nine feet. There were many smaller brigs and schooners using the waters and often a pilot might receive less than \$31.50 (Seth's proposed minimum) for piloting a vessel 200 miles or more in a winter gale.

We do not know if the captain's reforms were adopted by the General Court, but the 1827 Pilot Act for the ports of New Bedford and Fairhaven incorporated many of them.

In 1819, in his schooner, *Dove*, Captain Seth went to the assistance of the brig *Betsey* which had lost both her anchors and their tackle while attempting to anchor at Tarpaulin Cove in a gale. She was drifting down dangerously upon other vessels. Seth, by the use of small boats, was able to retrieve one anchor and tackle and to secure the brig. Later, when the storm had subsided, he found the second anchor and piloted the *Betsey* into Holmes Hole. For all this, his fee was \$45. which evidently was disputed by the master. Seth wrote a strong letter defending his fee:

"Pilots do not consider themselves as common labourers for one hour's detention may heave them out of \$100.00 and I really think that the detention by your brig threw them (he obviously means "me") out of more than the bill against her."

Maddeningly, our story must end there since he copied down no more letters about the *Betsey*. We can only hope that he received his full fee.

During the War of 1812, Captain Seth was so well known and such an experienced and trustworthy pilot that he was kidnapped with frequency by the British, needing assistance going over the dangerous shoals. Evidently a heavy sleeper, he made an arrangement with a neighbor who would awaken him and tell him when a party of British seamen was coming.

One night his friend banged on Seth's back door and shouted that the British were coming to the front. Seth quickly grabbed an armful of clothes and fled into the woods behind his house where he hid till daylight. Listening carefully, he made sure that none of the kidnappers were still around and began to put on his clothes. He found that he had picked up his wife's by mistake.

Besides being a good businessman and advocate, a fine seaman, a master pilot and patriot, Seth possessed a sense of humor, as shown in a verse he wrote about friends going herring fishing at Chappaquansett:

"Sometimes they fish by fire light
 Sometimes by light of moon.
 Zackeriah that saint so bright
 Oft stays till Sunday noon.
 One Sunday morn he fished so smart
 He had no time to pray
 And like Joe Harvey with his cart
 Was seen to carry the herring away.
 But Joseph Norton takes his boat
 Since he been Warden chose,
 Loads her as deep as she will float
 Then down the Sound he rows.
 To sell his fish in his intent
 Both fast days and Sundays.
 All is the same to this great Saint
 As Saturdays and Mondays.
 Now of those two it's hard to know
 Which of them is the keenest.
 But neighbors say that Warden Joe
 Most surely is the meanest."³

He was a generous man with his knowledge of local waters and he wrote a carefully detailed set of directions for strangers entering Vineyard Sound. ". . . there is some good directing as far as they go, already extant . . . but thinking those already published as not sufficiently plain I give the following and if they add any security to the Navigation of those Waters my object will be obtained. . ."

His final words in the long, detailed set of navigational instructions seem to be characteristic of Capt. Seth Daggett:

"The channel for any ship is over three miles wide at the narrowest part in the Sound, so that a stranger attending

³These are the final six stanzas of an 11-stanza rhyme in Seth's handwriting that is in the Society's possession.

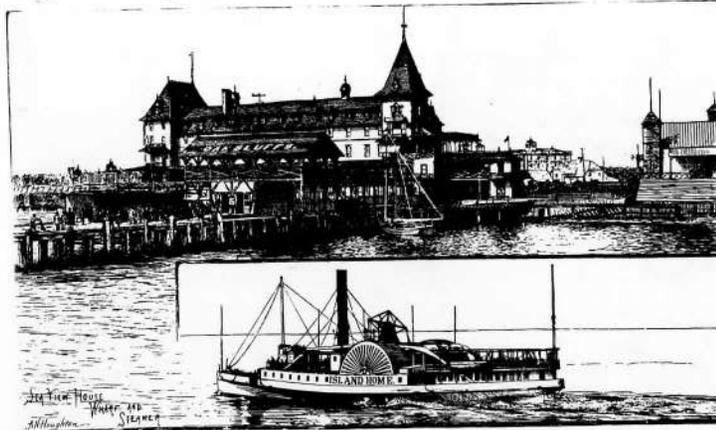
to these directions and the chart and putting proper confidence in himself, may with all safety day and night in clear weather harbour in Tarpolin (sic) Cove or Holmes Hole. But should he be, as is sometimes the case, timid or the weather is thick and he is afraid to run in into the night, by lying to till morning, he will be sure to get a pilot, if he wishes . . . The navigation to the eastward of Holmes Hole is too dangerous and restricted for a stranger without a pilot."

Captain Seth Daggett died October 7, 1867.

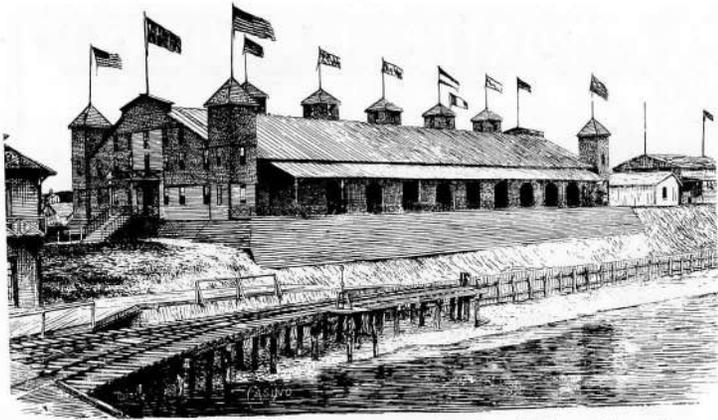
PORTFOLIO OF VIEWS
OF
Cottage City
Martha's Vineyard Mass.

In our library there is a somewhat tattered booklet about seven inches by eleven inches overall with the title reproduced above. It was published in 1886 by Baldwin, Coolidge & A.N. Houghton, Boston, and contains drawings by A.N. Houghton, some of which are reproduced here. The text (except captions) is the original text of the booklet.

Cottage City, Dukes County, Mass., is on the Island of Martha's Vineyard, and is the outgrowth of the Methodist Camp Meeting, first held in the "Sacred Grove," August 24, 1835, which continued with increasing interest and numbers till about 1870, when the place began to change its character, from its almost entirely religious nature



The elegant Sea View Hotel and wharf with an insert of steamer Island Home



Casino roller skating rink from the Sea View wharf with Flying Horses beyond to that of a

SUMMER PLEASURE RESORT

until at the present time there is only the one week each year devoted to the Camp Meeting, not noticeable even in its character outside the "Old Camp Ground." The rest of the ground and time being devoted to structures and amusements peculiar to Sea-side Summer Resorts.

To those who once visit the place comes a desire to do so again, for



North side of Circuit Avenue, Arcade at left and Oakwood Hotel across street



Wesley House from across Lake Anthony. This was the back (note clothesline)

the charm of cool breezes (there being hardly more than two or three calm days during each season); bathing that is unsurpassed for comfort; fishing, the most varied; and a general restfulness which entirely captivates the visitor, and he becomes a yearly pilgrim to this Mecca of rest.

To illustrate some of the features of this place this little book is intended, and to the admirers of Cottage City it is dedicated by the
July, 1886

PUBLISHERS



Oak Bluffs Avenue, 1886. Shipwrecked Tallman sold peanuts in octagonal stand

Up-Island Tales: Dry and Wry

As collected by Cyril D. Norton

Old Mr. Edward Mayhew had a peculiar way of getting rid of late evening callers. When he deemed they had stayed long enough, he would get up from his chair and say, "I'm going to evaporate." If the late callers did not take the hint, they would find Mr. Mayhew actively divesting himself of his clothing.

Jane Ann Swett, the Cape Cod wife of old Mr. Edward Mayhew, was a prideful soul and usually referred to her family as "Our Folks." The Mayhew cattle were a constant source of annoyance to neighbors as he was so negligent in maintaining his fences. The cattle especially annoyed Capt. Anderson Poole and his son, Chester, who were neighbors on Quitsa.

In 1914, Chester Poole sold the Poole place and part of what had been the Asa Smith place to Dr. Elon Obed Huntington. The doctor hired Roger Allen to make some repairs on the house and to add a wing,

changing it from a half-house to a whole-house.

Chester lived in the house while Roger was adding the wing and while he, Chester, was building himself a new house on part of the Point Inna pasture. That house, because of the beautiful stone wall around it, later came to be called Fort Chester.

One day, while Roger was working on the old place, he noticed one of the Mayhew critters had left a large cow-flop right by the back door. Before leaving work that day, he wrote on a shingle, "Our Folks Were Here," and put it next to the cow-flop so Chester would see it when he came home.

John Bassett liked nothing better than to play practical jokes on anyone on whom they could be played. As a result, he was not always in high favor with many people. Once one of those persons complained to the SPCCA folk that John was

mistreating his horse. This was not true, but perhaps to the victim of John's jokes, truth was no matter.

In due time, two members of the SPCCA arrived at John's place: an older man who seemed to have a sense of humor and a younger man whose job gave him an overweening sense of his own importance.

John took the two out to the stable. The animal showed no sign of malnutrition or abuse. However, the young man suddenly observed where the horse had been cribbing (gnawing) the wood of his feed box.

"Ah, ha," said he, pointing to the cribbed wood, which is common enough in any horse stall. "That proves you don't give the horse enough to eat."

"Rats," John said. "The place is full of them. Come in the house and I'll show you where they've been gnawing the iron cook stove."

The young fellow was furious and it didn't make him feel any better when the older man laughed.

After retiring from the sea, Capt. Daniel Flanders decided to have his first vegetable garden. Among the vegetables he planted were beans. Not too long thereafter the beans came up, pushing the seed bean through

the soil as is the nature of beans. The captain's eagle eye soon spotted them. Some time later, he went back into the house and reported that he had had to plant all the beans all over again. It is very doubtful if they came up a second time.

Captain Daniel Flanders and his brother Richard were en route home from New Bedford in their small sailing vessel. There was a new Shipmate stove in the cabin. It was early in the morning and the weather waxed cold. Captain Daniel was steering. After a spell his brother Richard, who was also a retired whaling master, decided that he would go below and start a fire in the new stove to warm his chilly limbs.

Richard had twitted his brother no end about the bean-planting episode, but now the worm was about to turn. Time passed and no Captain Richard came on deck. Finally, smoke began to pour out of the cabin. "But no brother Richard," as Captain Daniel related later. Finally, brother Richard burst forth from the companionway, followed by a great cloud of smoke. Richard had tried to build a fire in the oven of the Shipmate stove.

After that, very little was said about the beans.

CYRIL D. NORTON, a native of Chilmark, was a Harvard graduate with a master's degree in education from Boston University. He taught school in New Hampshire and western Massachusetts, but spent most of his life in Chilmark, where he served as Town Clerk. He was a recognized expert on old up-Island houses and folklore. These tales are included in a manuscript made available by his wife, Evie Norton. Mr. Norton died in 1977.

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 covered in his diary, Pease was constantly involved in religious activities and we have left out many entries that do not include names of those attending the meetings or happenings of unusual interest.

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.

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

October 1842

2nd. Wind NW. Pleasant. Attended meeting at East Side Holmes Hole with Jeremiah. At evening we went to Tisbury attended meeting at Br. A. Johnson's. It was a reformation Season. 13 persons requested the prayers of the Church and knelt

before the Lord. One I believe found trust in believing. T. C. [?] Luce professes Religion at East Side Holmes Hole.

12th. Wind NW. Set out with my wife for New Bedford. Had a very rough passage, wind blew a gale. Arrived there about 4 p.m.

13th. Went to Fall River with my wife and Sister Velina Baylies. Visited Br. Ely.

14th. We all went to Bristol in the Steam Boat *King Philip*. We remained at Bristol 15th and 16th.

17th. We went to Providence. Stopped at Warren. Visited Br. H. Vincent and Br. Bonney. Visited Br. Otherman's family. He was absent.

20th. Came to New Bedford and returned home. Had a pleasant passage.

23rd. Wind SW to W. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. The corps of Mrs. Caroline Fisher arrives from Taunton where she died yesterday at 5 a.m. U.S. Cutter *Jackson* arrives. William comes in her.

24th. Wind NW. Pleasant. Funeral of Mrs. Fisher. Engaged in surveying land for Joseph Mayhew and others.

30th. Wind NE. Light. Went to East Side Holmes Hole in the forenoon. Attended meeting there and at North Shore in the afternoon & at Tisbury at Br. Johnson's at evening. Returned at night. Visited a son of Mr. T. Chase who broke his arm on Thursday and set it on Friday.

November 1842

4th. Wind NE. Went to North Shore

to see the son of Mr. Chase above mentioned. Attended Class meeting at Widow Rebecca Norton's at M.D. Returned at night.

14th. Wind NE. Town Meeting for choice of Governor, Lieutenant Gov., Senator, Representatives to Congress & General Court. Rains at night.

20th. Wind NW. Attended meetings at East Side Holmes Hole during the day and at Tisbury at night. Br. Adams preached at the Academy. It was an interesting time. A very full meeting. Returned at night.

24th. Wind ENE. Rainy. This day is set apart by the Governor & Council as a day of Thanksgiving.¹ Stormy.

26th. Wind WSW. Attended the funeral of Sister Eleanor Linton, wife of Br. Joseph Linton who died on the 24th at 4 o'clock p.m. Funeral service by Br. John Adams. She was a pious woman and one of the first who joined the Methodist Society in Edgartown. She had done as much to support the cause of religion as any woman of my acquaintance, was remarkably kind in sickness and in administering to the comfort and necessities of the Preachers of the Gospel. She died in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. Her loss in the village where she lived will be very sensibly felt.

¹The first Thanksgiving, of course, was at Plymouth in 1621. It became a national observance on Nov. 26, 1789, by proclamation of President Washington. But it not widely observed as a national holiday until 1863 when President Lincoln stabilized the date on the last Thursday in November.

27th. Wind W to NW. Gale. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended meeting there. Jeremiah attended meeting at Br. Thomas Smith's. Gale.

December 1842

6th. Wind NW. Barque *Athalia* Captain Bartlet Mayhew arrives from the Atlantic Ocean with 400 bbls Sperm oil.

11th. Wind NW light and calm. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Br. John Adams preached there this day & at Tisbury at night. Snows at evening.

16th. Wind NW. Went to West Side Holmes Hole on business of a brig.

19th. Wind SW to NW this morning. Light in the Light House went out. I was an eye witness of this.²

25th. Wind S to SW and SE. Went to East Side Holmes Hole. Attended Meetings. Sister Abigail Luce professes Religion at the Meeting in the forenoon. Br. John W. Smith in the afternoon & Br. Bristram Luce in the evening. This has been a glorious day. Sinners awakened. Souls Converted. God grant to carry on this work to his own Glory.

31st. Wind WSW. Attended the funeral of Mr. Jabor [?] Lumber who died the 29th inst. at East Side Holmes Hole. He was 70 years and accounted a pious man. He died in peace. It was a solemn time.

²Jeremiah must have written this with perverse pleasure. As regular readers will recall, he had been removed as Keeper of the Edgartown light for political reasons in March 1841.

January 1843

1st. Wind NW. Attended meeting at East Side Holmes Hole. Had great liberty in speaking today.³ Br. Charles Smith who has lately returned from the Pacific Ocean was there and was very happy in his mind. 25th. Wind NW. Cold. Attended the Dedication of the new Methodist Meeting House at Chilmark. Br. John Adams preached the dedication sermon in the forenoon. Br. Charles Mereading[?] preached in the afternoon. The house was filled with hearers. It was a very interesting time. All the services were performed in an excellent manner.

27th. Wind ESE Light. Hauled up the Revenue Boat. Attended meeting at Widow Norton's M.D.

February 1843

5th. Wind NE. Snow storm. Went part way to East Side Holmes Hole and returned. Did not attend meeting there on account of the Storm.

6th. Wind SW to W. Considerable snow on the ground. Reformation is now going on in each town and almost every Village on the Island. 15 or 20 have professed religion in this town with a few weeks.

7th. Wind NW. Very cold. Ice makes in the harbor.

12th. Wind NW. Snow squalls a.m. p.m. clear. Attended meeting at East Side Holmes Hole. Jeremiah attended

meeting at M.D. schoolhouse. At evening we attended meeting at Br. Chas. Kidder's. William goes to East Side Holmes Hole with me to join the Cutter. Capt. Conner being in command of her.⁴

28th. Wind NW. Light. Attended meeting at C. Kidders, M.D. This month has been quite severe, a considerable snow and much cold weather.

March 1843

6th. Wind NW. The harbour is closed near the Light house by ice that has made within a few days and the drift ice.

9th. Wind W. Pleasant. Went to East Side Holmes Hole and brot William he having arrived there in the Cutter *Jackson*, Capt. Connor. The ice prevented her coming into this harbour.

10th. Wind E. Light. Carried William to East Side Holmes Hole. Snows a little and rains. The ice goes out of the harbour. Did not attend Class meeting at M.D. on account of the weather.

20th. Wind W to WNW. Went to New Bedford in the packet *Vineyard*. Went to Fall River 21st. To Newport 22nd. Returned to New Bedford 23rd. Returned home via Steam Boat *Massachusetts*. Landed me at Holmes Hole.

³J.'s meaning is obscure, but perhaps on other occasions his fanatical religious fervor caused those conducting the meetings to require him to hold back with his "fire and brimstone."

⁴Perhaps William joined the cutter at Eastville because of ice in Edgartown harbor.

News

History was the focus of attention on Cuttyhunk, Saturday, July 5th. The newly formed Cuttyhunk Historical Center, in a successful effort at raising funds and public attention, held an interesting open house at the old Cuttyhunk Club. A delegation from our Society attended and came back enthused.

The Cuttyhunk Club itself is worth a story and we hope to run one in some later issue. We welcome any word from Society members with knowledge of it. It was one of those exclusive fishing clubs whose members came from among the industrial barons of the 1800s, when such barons were, indeed, close to royalty.

Presidents of steel companies, banks and railroads entertained Presidents of the United States and governors in a style that has gone the way of the spittoon, with which the Club was amply supplied.

The Cuttyhunk Historical Center (not part of the Club) is currently located in the island's Public Library, but hopes to have its own building eventually. Mrs. Janet P. Bosworth, Curator of the Center, has put together an interesting exhibit, "Cuttyhunk Pilots 1798-1918" with photos and memorabilia relating to the Cuttyhunk Lighthouse, the life-saving station, various shipwrecks

and other subjects.

That exhibit, at the Library, is open to the public Tuesdays and Fridays from 3 to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 10 until noon.

Two members of our Council have new books out this summer. Neither is a history book, but both are filled with historical fact and fancy.

Henry Beetle Hough's *Soundings at Low Tide* is as current as today's battle to save our environment, but the author, in his captivating manner, has interlaid vivid reminiscences to buttress his case -- images that only Mr. Hough could evoke.

It is a pessimistic book (its title gives fair warning) with its underlying thesis that change is almost always for the worse. But the word pictures he paints of yesterday's charms are so alive and his writing, as always, so endearing, that most history buffs will find much to smile about. Such hard-hitting and often disturbing advocacy as this is necessary if we are to hold onto our precious treasure.

Gale Huntington, like Mr. Hough, has a way with words that bring his memories to life. His newest book, *Vineyard Tales*, is a collection of short stories, all fictional, ranging from young, tender love stories to calculated murder. In each, there is the gentleness and aura so much a part of life when the world spun more slowly.

These fascinating stories all have Vineyard background and characters.

Director's Report

The Thomas Cooke House opened this summer on a bright note when the model of Sarah Adams was joined by a similar model (but three inches taller) of her sister Lucy Adams. As many of you will remember, these remarkable images, including the costumes, are the work of Margo Datz, an artist who specializes in the creation of little people.

In addition to getting the Thomas Cooke House ready for the season, we have been busy with a number of other projects including the expensive painting of the lighthouse, which required a great deal of glazing on the edges of the long windows. We have also been making progress toward our goal of turning the Francis Foster Museum into a first-rate maritime exhibit. The consultant on the project who came here last year under the aegis of a grant from the American Association for State and Local History sent us a set of detailed plans that appear to fit our needs very well. Stan Murphy, a member of our Council who has performed a number of difficult tasks for the Society in the past, has agreed to coordinate our efforts to develop this permanent exhibit.

At present, our temporary exhibit in the Francis Foster Museum takes up only about two square inches of space. Carved from a small whale's tooth, it is a tiny painted goose from the collection of Norma Norton Holmes.

During this summer season, we are participating in an exhibit at the Oak Bluffs branch of the Martha's Vineyard National Bank. Visitors to the bank's lobby will see a number of our artifacts arranged by Hilary Blocksom.

In the *Intelligencer*, we frequently mention the number of researchers who work in our library, and we are always pleased when publications result from these efforts. Recently, *Model Railroader* published an excellent article

by Dan Morgan on the Martha's Vineyard Railroad, and there is also an article in the same issue by Andy Sperandio on how to construct a model of the railroad's entire operation from Oak Bluffs to South Beach. In the June issue of *Natural History* magazine Nora Groce presented a most interesting article about the hereditary deafness that once existed to a large degree on Martha's Vineyard. Using many of our photographs, Jill Bouck and Sara Nevin have done a fine job of writing "An Historical Walking Tour of Oak Bluffs" as a combined effort of the Centennial Committee and Historical Commission.

Our one serious setback this spring occurred with the unexpected death of Rachael Williams, who was a skilled and vigorous worker for the Society. A more detailed account of her work appears elsewhere in this month's issue of the *Intelligencer*. In her memory we have received donations from Mr. and Mrs. E. Jared Bliss Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Cullen, Mr. Heston Clapp, Mr. and Mrs. Silas Howland, Mrs. Fred Ives Huss, Elizabeth McConnell, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur T. Silva, and Mrs. Kenneth Stoddard. In the same spirit, the Society sent a contribution to the Pilot Program at Mystic Seaport.

Once again this year, the Snowden Taylor family came to the Society to provide us with the benefits of their marvelous mechanical abilities. Within a short time, they repaired both our music box and the banjo clock; they also oiled the lighthouse mechanism and provided us with advice on the restoration of the tall clock in the customs office.

The date for the annual meeting this year will be August 14 in the parish hall of the Federated Church at 8:00 p.m. Our program this time will be my slide presentation "Images of the Historical Society," which is a view of the Society from a perspective that is not available on a single visit. I hope many of you will be able to attend.

THOMAS E. NORTON

Bits & Pieces

John Bassett was quite a man. Cyril Norton sure makes him out that way. But to me, he was a hen! That won't make sense until I explain it.

In the 1920s, I summered with my Aunt Jane in Edgartown. She, an English immigrant, and Uncle Everett (born in Edgartown) were typical Islanders with little income, adept at making a little go a long way. One way was to pick apples from trees that grew on private land, with branches hanging over the public roadway.

Aunt Jane and I would drive up-Island in their shiny Pontiac (kept in a galvanized iron garage that still stands) to do the picking. She had her favorite spots, one being on the Menemsha crossroad. She sat in the car and I did the "stealing" reluctantly.

One summer, while picking apples at our regular spot, I spotted an egg in the grass. I told Aunt Jane and, of course, she sent me back after it.

We took it home and I forgot about it. Days later, she led me to her hen house and pointed to a fuzzy chick.

"That's your chicken," she said, "and its name is John Bassett."

She had put the purloined egg under one of her setting hens and it hatched. The apple tree had been at John Bassett's place, hence the name.

On Labor Day, I took the hen home in a wooden crate tied to the running board of our Model T. We were not farmers and never had a hen

before (or since). Dad cut a hole in the garage wall and I had a hen coop.

I wasn't happy at all. My pet was hardly responsive, not at all like Nancy Luce's Ada Queetie. Soon Mother had had enough of John Bassett and suggested that we eat "him."

That was a traumatic day. My father had never killed a hen and was as softhearted as any man alive. But he tried and I cried, helping not at all. He put down the ax and tossed John Bassett back into the coop where "he" lived through the winter.

When I returned from Aunt Jane's the following Labor Day, John Bassett was gone. "He died of old age," Mother said and I believed her.

So that is how, until I read Cyril Norton's Up-Island Tales, John Bassett was just a hen to me.

As I read Gale Huntington's piece on peat bogs, mental images ran through my mind of Chilmark in my apple-stealing days. It was as open as the Yorkshire moors with miles of stonewalls. You could see everywhere.

Whenever we drove up-Island with my Uncle Everett, he would always stop briefly at Abel's Hill. There were no trees to block the view of the ocean stretching out to Bermuda. Surf tatted its lace edging along the south shore.

"This is Long View," Uncle Everett would announce, "and over here," pointing to the Chilmark Cemetery, "is Long Rest."

The long rest remains, but the long view is gone, alas.

A.R.R.

In Memoriam

Rachael V. Williams, a devoted Council member of the Society since 1976, died unexpectedly at Mystic, Conn., on May 11. She had spent the day doing what she did so often: donating her energies and skills to the preservation of our history. This time it was as a volunteer worker in the Mystic Seaport's Pilot Program.

An energetic woman with many talents, she gave of them generously to the Society. She singlehandedly built the brick walk from the new Gatehouse, reshingled the back wall of the boat shed and refurbished our collection of models of Island ferry boats. This collection, appropriately, is now on display in Oak Bluffs, the town she lived in and loved and whose history she cherished. It can be seen at the Oak Bluffs branch of the Martha's Vineyard National Bank.

But of her many projects, the one that appeals most to visitors to the Frances Foster Museum is the very old coin-operated bicycle slot machine which she restored and put into working order. Of all the exhibits in the room, it is the one that is most universally exclaimed over. The regular whirring of its wheels all summer will be a continuous reminder of the manner in which she so generously gave of her energies and talents.

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.