The Island's Hereditary Deaf: A Lesson in Human Understanding
by NORA GROCE

Chilmark's Deaf: Valued Citizens
by GALE HUNTINGTON

When Even the Getting Here Was Fun
by JOHN GUDE

Documents: Jeremiah Pease's Diary
Director's Report, Bits & Pieces
Up-Island Tales: Dry and Wry

SINGLE COPY $1.50
ANNUAL DUES FOR MEMBERS

Individual membership $8.
Family membership $15.
Sustaining membership $25.
Life membership $200.

Members receive The Intelligencer four times a year.

SUMMER HOURS
(June 15 to Sept. 15)
10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Tuesday through Saturday

WINTER HOURS
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Thursday and Friday
10 a.m. to 12 noon
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturday
The Cooke House is
not open in winter.

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.

THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER
Vol. 22, No. 3
February 1981

The Island's Hereditary Deaf:
A Lesson in Human Understanding
Nora Groce

Chilmark's Deaf: Valued Citizens
Gale Huntington

When Even the Getting Here Was Fun
John Gude

Up-Island Tales: Dry and Wry
Cyril D. Norton

Documents: Jeremiah Pease Diary
Books
Director's Report
Bits & Pieces

Editor Emeritus: Gale Huntington
Editor: Arthur R. Railton

The Dukes County Intelligencer is published quarterly by the Dukes
County Historical Society, Inc., Cooke and School Streets,
Edgartown, MA, 02539. Subscription is through membership in the
Society. Back issues are available at cover price.

Manuscripts, letters, news items and books for review should be sent
to the Editor, The Dukes County Intelligencer, Box 827, Edgartown,
MA, 02539.

Articles in The Intelligencer do not necessarily represent the opinions
of the Society or its officers.

© 1981 D.C.H.S.
The Island's Hereditary Deaf: A Lesson In Human Understanding

by NORA GROCE

MARTHA'S Vineyard by the latter part of the 19th Century was already attracting national attention. Her whaling fleet and fishing vessels were among the finest in the world. The Island's natural beauty and moderate climate were responsible for her growing fame as a summer colony and, at least in part, the reason for the unqualified success of the well-known Camp Meeting held annually at Oak Bluffs.

President Grant's choice of the Vineyard as a summer vacation spot in 1874 was prominently featured in newspapers around the country and served only to strengthen an already established interest in the Island.

In scientific circles, Martha's Vineyard was also regularly being discussed and not for any of the above reasons, but because the Island, particularly the town of Chilmark, had an exceptionally high proportion of people who were born deaf. In the era before Mendel's laws of inheritance had become the basis for the modern science of human

NORA GROCE is currently completing her Ph.D. in Anthropology at Brown University. Specializing in Cultural Anthropology and Folklore, she has done an extensive amount of field work throughout New England. Her research on the Martha's Vineyard deaf forms the basis of her doctoral dissertation. This paper is a summary of some of the data in her study which has, in part, been funded by a Pre-doctoral Fellowship from the National Institute of Mental Health.
genetics, the question of how traits might be inherited from one generation to the next, was of increasing interest to scientists. Martha’s Vineyard frequently found itself at the center of heated scientific debates as some of the finest minds of the 19th Century sought to account for the appearance of Island deafness on the basis of either heredity or environment.

Particular attention began to be focused on Martha’s Vineyard when, in the early 1800s, Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone and one of the foremost figures in American deaf education, joining the controversy, decided to try to explain how deafness was inherited. He believed that by tracing back through the records and establishing the genealogy of every family with two or more deaf children in New England, some kind of pattern would begin to emerge.

Relying heavily on the unpublished work of the Hon. Richard L. Pease of Edgartown, Bell soon found that not only was the highest concentration of deafness in New England to be found on the Vineyard, but that many of the families with deaf members in other areas of New England were directly related to individuals who had originally come from the Vineyard. Unfortunately, Bell was never able to account for the fact that deaf parents did not always have deaf children and that hearing parents sometimes had children who were born deaf. Because of this, he eventually abandoned his study.

While we now understand how this deafness was inherited, today interest is again centered on the deaf individuals of Martha’s Vineyard. This time, however, the concern is not with how the deafness was inherited, but rather with how these deaf Islanders were integrated into all aspects of community life. Unlike individuals similarly “handicapped” by deafness on the mainland, the Vineyarders who were deaf seem to have participated freely in all aspects of Island living. They grew up, married, raised families and earned their living in just the same way as did their hearing family, friends and neighbors. Their successful incorporation into Vineyard society is a credit both to these deaf Islanders and to the surrounding community with normal hearing. This paper presents a brief overview of my long-term study on the social and genetic aspects of hereditary deafness on the island of Martha’s Vineyard.

The Cause of Island Deafness

The situation in which a small nucleus of original settlers inhabits an area with restricted access, such as an island, a high mountain valley or an isolated oasis, is not an uncommon one. In situations such as these, prominent geographic boundaries, coupled with a relative lack of mobility, tend to encourage future generations to marry close to home, often among people who are already to some degree related. This marriage pattern, called an endogamous marriage pattern by anthropologists and popularly (although not correctly) termed “inbreeding” by the unscientific, usually causes no problems in the ensuing generations. However, in those cases where one or several of the early settlers introduce a deleterious gene into this original group or “gene pool” (or when there is a mutation in a gene once the group is established), the descendants of these original settlers will have a higher probability of inheriting this gene. This is called “Founder’s Effect” by anthropologists and the Martha’s Vineyard deaf provide an excellent example of it.

The first deaf Islander was almost certainly Jonathan Lambert, who came to the Vineyard with his wife and family in 1692. Lambert, who was both a carpenter and a
farmer, settled by the cove which still bears his name and lived there for the rest of his life. Lambert’s name appears infrequently in the records of the period and it is only because of a passing mention by Judge Samuel Sewell of Boston that we are made aware of the fact that he was deaf.

Judge Sewell, while travelling to Edgartown in 1712 on business for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, mentions in his diary that:

"...we were ready to be offended that an Englishman, Jonathan Lambert, in the company spake not a word to us -- it seems that he is deaf and dumb."

Deafness, of course, can be caused by a number of different things: it can be inherited; it can be caused by environmental factors before a child is born; or it can be the result of any one of a number of childhood illnesses and accidents. We do not know how Lambert himself became deaf, however, in his will probated in 1738 Lambert states that two of his seven children are also deaf.

He wrote:

"Considering my 2 Poor children that cannot speake for themselves, I Earnestly Desire that my son Jonathan and my Trusty Beloved friend David Butler, after the understanding hereof would Please, as they would have the opportunity to help them in any Lawful way as they shall see need."

This provision in his will gives us a very strong clue that Lambert’s type of deafness was indeed hereditary.

Jonathan Lambert’s two deaf children did not themselves marry, but their siblings, all of whom carried the gene for deafness in a recessive form, did marry. As their children and their children’s children grew to adulthood and married individuals who were also descendants of this original settler, a few deaf individuals began to appear regularly in each generation.

This is not to say that marriage patterns were different on the Vineyard from those elsewhere. Indeed, marriage patterns on the Vineyard have always been identical to those of rural communities throughout New England. However, because it was an island, the amount of "new blood," of people coming into the community to settle who were not in some way related to the early settlers, was very low.

Travel to the Island was difficult and expensive. There was no regular ferry service to any point on the Island until 1804 and even after this time service was often interrupted during the winters. While Island men traveled regularly from the Vineyard to distant parts of the world, few of them brought home wives from elsewhere. Old family genealogies rarely include a maiden name that is not found on the Vineyard.

As James Freeman wrote in 1807:

"As Martha’s Vineyard receives not too many acquisitions of inhabitants from abroad, the names of its families which have sprung from the original settlers are few in number. Thirty-two names comprise three-quarters of the population."

Even within the Vineyard itself, because of the distances involved between them, communities kept quite separate. Edgartown, before the introduction of the automobile, was a full day’s travel from up-Island, over rough and at times treacherous roads. As a result, although Edgartown, because of its port, grew to be a fairly cosmopolitan village by the end of the 18th Century, up-Island towns such as Chilmark and West Tisbury remained much more isolated.

---

2Sewell, p. 417. For a full citation of this and subsequent footnote references see Bibliography at the end of this article.


4There was no regular ferry service at all before 1700. In 1703, Isaac Chase was appointed to keep a public ferry and, following him, there was a series of private ferries until 1750 when all regular services were discontinued, the charges having risen so high that they discouraged any but the most important travel. Regular boat services began operating from New Bedford in 1800, using small packets which were all sloops and schooners. Mayhew, p. 76.

5Freeman, p. 26.
Travel was slow in 1850. By 1900, "Crick" hill road was still a muddy mess until the beginning of the 20th Century. People who lived down-Island had more contact with (and more marriages with) off-Islanders than did those who lived up-Island, whose endogamous marriage patterns tended to perpetuate the incidence of Island deafness.

Islanders themselves had no idea why deafness appeared so frequently. Some claimed, correctly as we now know, that the deafness "ran in families," but many Islanders saw no pattern to the appearance of deafness whatsoever. There were several reasons for this.

Many Vineyarders, along with some of the leading medical authorities of the 19th Century, believed that deafness, as well as many other congenital disorders, was the direct result of "Maternal Fright" (sometimes called "marking"). This was supposed to be the prenatal effect on the infant of psychological stress on the mother. The following quotation, taken from the first volume of the prestigious American Annals of the Deaf in 1847, is a report

"Mrs. M., the mother of the four oldest of these mutes, at the time a widow, gave the following account: 'A few months previous to the birth of my second child, I went to the funeral of a neighbor. While at the grave, the singular appearance of a young woman attracted my attention. Some one standing near me told me she was deaf and dumb. As I had never seen a person in her condition before, I watched her movements with great interest. As the coffin was lowered into the grave she clasped her hands, raised her eyes and with a peculiar expression of grief and surprise, uttered such a cry as I had never in my life heard before. Her image was before me by day and by night for weeks and her unnatural voice was constantly ringing in my ears. In due time my child was born and, as I feared, proved to be deaf and dumb. In early life, whenever he was in trouble, he had the same expression of countenance as the deaf girl at the funeral; and whenever surprised into a sudden exclamation, the sound of his
voice was the same as hers. Of my nine children, four were visited with this calamity.

"The nearest neighbor of this family was Mr. S. Soon after his marriage he brought his wife home, where she saw the children of Mrs. M., the first deaf-and-dumb persons she had ever seen. The impression made upon her mind by the misfortune of her neighbor was similar to what has already been described and with a similar result. Her first child was deaf and dumb as was also her fourth child.

"The third family in which there were mutes was that of Capt. T. His wife, previous to her marriage, had never seen a deaf-and-dumb person. Soon after coming to her new home, she was introduced to her neighbors, Mrs. M. and S., where she saw their children and was much affected by their unfortunate condition. A knowledge of the supposed cause of their deafness and the appreciation that it might have the same effect in her case added much to her concern. Her first child was born deaf and dumb and also her third and fourth.

"The other neighbor, Mr. L., who had two deaf children, gave a very similar account of the matter in regard to his wife; ascribing the deafness of his children to the same cause."

Maternal fright was not the only explanation offered in attempts to account for the Island deafness. According to a reporter for the Boston Sunday Herald in 1895, one deaf person thought that deafness was "catching just like diptheria and smallpox," and yet another author suggested that it might have something to do with the amount of salt that is in the air on the south side of the Island.

Even so eminent an authority as Alexander Graham Bell, at his wit's end trying to find the connecting links through familial inheritance, speculated to the Royal Commission of the United Kingdom in London in 1886 that environment might have something to do with it. He said:

"... the appearance of deafness is confined to that

Bell suggested that Gay Head clay might cause the deafness, but he did not explain why the Indians, who dug it for sale, had no deaf children. Particular part of the Island. The geological character of that part of the island is different from the rest of the island. The surface is undulating and hilly whereas the rest of the island is flat. It has a subsoil of very curious variegated clays that crop out in the form of a bold headland that is so beautifully colored by these clays to have acquired the name of Gay Head. Whether that has anything to do with the deafness I do not know, but it is a very curious fact that it is that part of the island alone where the deafness occurs although the bulk of the population lies outside."

Perhaps the real reason why most Islanders did not see a pattern in the inheritance of deafness, however, had nothing to do with the various beliefs entertained as to the cause of the deafness. Rather, it had to do more with the unique position the Island deaf held in the local community.

Bell, p. 53.
Because deafness had appeared regularly on the Island for over 250 years and particularly because many Islanders, especially those who lived up-Island, learned and used the Island sign language regularly, there seems to have been few or no social barriers placed on deaf Islanders. From earliest childhood they were included in all work and play situations. They seem to have freely married partners, both hearing and deaf. Tax records indicate that they generally earned an average or above-average income (indeed, several were very wealthy) and church records indicate that they were usually active in church affairs.

For all these reasons, it is clear that the Island deaf were widely known in the community in a number of different capacities and it is probably because of this that stories and written records that have come down to us about Island people rarely or never mention who was and who was not deaf. In a community where everyone knew everyone else, it seems that there was no need to mention a person’s deafness — everyone who was a contemporary of that person was already aware of it.

Islanders could see little pattern to who was born deaf probably because after several generations, once a deaf person and all his contemporaries are no longer alive, memories fade and facts that were once widely known become lost. Everyone in the community at one time may have known that a certain person and his father and his father’s brother were all deaf, but in subsequent years only the son’s deafness may be remembered. In such a case (and such situations came up several times in discussions of deafness with present-day Islanders), the links showing a clear pattern of heredity may be forgotten and the son’s deafness may be seen as an isolated and inexplainable case.

Only very occasionally does a mention of deafness appear in the written records. Tallies of the number of deaf persons in the United States were made in national censuses beginning in 1830, but this is really the only source available that regularly records this information.

Mention of deaf Islanders does occasionally enter the written records, such as Sewell’s previously mentioned note on Jonathan Lambert. There are other examples:

Reverend Joseph Thaxter, on September 2, 1801, wrote in his record of Edgartown deaths: “George Corliss Pease, the deaf and dumb son of William Pease, fell overboard and drowned in the English Channel, ae. 32.”

“Reformation John” Adams wrote in his autobiography, “Monday I preached at the widow West’s, on Eccl. 10:6,7. This scripture is fulfilled in this place. It was a good time. One deaf man was very happy.”

An account of one of the early Cottage City camp meetings includes a note that “. . . . most soul-stirring of all is to see a deaf and dumb sister speak in signs of the goodness and wonderful works of God.”

Fortunately, while information from written records is scarce, the oral histories of the Island include a great deal of information about what life was like for the Island deaf. Repeatedly, when I have asked about the status of the deaf in day-to-day community affairs, I have received answers such as the following three examples:

“Oh, yes, they were part of the crowd and they were accepted. They were fishermen and they were farmers and everything you like. And when they assembled right before the mail in Chilmark, for example, at night, and there would be deaf mutes there, and there would be plenty of people who could talk and hear, and they were all part of the crowd. They had no trouble, no trouble at all.”

“If there were several people present and there was a deaf man or woman in the crowd, he’d take upon himself the discussion of anything, jokes or news or anything like that. They always had a part in it, they were never excluded.”

“When I used to go up to Chilmark, there were several people there who were deaf and dumb, there were so many

---

9Thaxter, p. 69.
10Adams, p. 99.
11Hough, p. 40.
of them that nobody thought anything about it, but because I was only a boy, I was fascinated watching them and then I was wondering what they were saying. And they would have, when they had socials or anything up in Chilmark, why, everybody would go and they [the deaf] enjoyed it just as much as anybody did. They used to have fun -- we all did."

**Legacy of the Island Deaf**

Island residents began to marry off-Island more often towards the end of the 19th Century. Increased mobility by boat, train and later by car, as well as the influx of summer people and their hired help, drastically changed traditional Island marriage patterns, particularly up-Island where the population had remained quite stable for generations. The result was that the number of individuals who were born deaf declined rapidly. In the 1840s some 14 deaf individuals were born in Chilmark, in the 1870s there was only one.

Most Islanders today remember the deaf as a group of older, and then elderly, individuals who lived quietly in a community in which fewer and fewer persons learned or remembered their sign language. The last person with the hereditary Island deafness died in the early 1950s.

The disappearance of the hereditary deaf on Martha's Vineyard closed a long and interesting portion of the Island's history. But it is only in the past few years, as this country has paid much closer attention to the rights of the handicapped, that the importance of the Martha's Vineyard deaf has become apparent.

Prominent among the reasons why the deaf were able to function so well in daily Vineyard life were the facts that: (1) many people, particularly up-Island, were able to speak the sign language to varying degrees; (2) because it was a small-scale, technologically simple society there were few things that a deaf person could not do; and (3) perhaps most importantly, all these people were included in all aspects of daily life from their earliest childhood.

Because they knew and were known by every member of the community on a personal level, their disabilities were taken as a matter of course, rather than as a stigma. Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of this research is the fact that rather than being remembered as a group, every one of the deaf Islanders who is remembered is remembered as a unique individual.

While there are many problems in today's society which were not present in 17th, 18th and 19th Century Island life, some aspects of the manner in which the Island deaf were treated may today serve as models for the care and treatment of the handicapped in the United States today. The lesson to be learned from the example of Martha's Vineyard is that "handicapped" individuals can be full and useful members of any community if the community is willing to make an effort to include them.

Rather than asking the deaf person -- or any "handicapped" individual for that matter -- to fit himself into the surrounding "normal" or non-handicapped world, the society must be willing to change slightly in an effort to adapt to all. The most striking fact about the "handicapped" deaf of Martha's Vineyard is that no one perceived their deafness as a handicap. As one woman said to me when we were discussing Island deafness:

"You know, we didn't think anything special about them. They were just like anyone else. You know, when you think about it, the Island was an awfully nice place to live."

Indeed it was.
in sharing their time and memories with me in compiling data for this project, I would like to express here my thanks to:

Joe Allen
Mike Athearn
Eva Benson
Capt. Norman Benson
Everel Black
John Black
Eric Cottle
Gladys Flanders
Hazel Flanders
Doris Gifford
Willis Gifford
Mildred Hammett
Henry Beetle Hough
Gayle Huntington
Mildred Tilton Huntington
Fanny Jenkinson
Ida Karl
Stanton Lair
Mabel Look
George Magnuson
Anna Maxson
Esther Mayhew

Mary Morgan
Iva Mitchell
Colson Mitchell
Jeffrey Norton
Ernestine Peckham
Emily Poole
Capt. Donald Poole
Dorothy Cottle Poole
Lemuel Reed
Dionis Coffin Riggs
Emily Huntington Rose
Grover Ryan
Bertha Tilton Salvador
Hollis Smith
Alton Tilton
Laura Tilton
Capt. Tom Tilton
Deacon Leonard
Vanderhoop
Everett Whiting
John Whiting
Ethel Whidden

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While in future publications I will have more opportunity to thank those Islanders who have been so generous
Chilmark's Deaf: Valued Citizens

by GALE HUNTINGTON

When I was a boy living summers on Quitsa, there were eight deaf-and-dumb individuals in Chilmark that I can still remember. At that time on the Vineyard we didn't call them the "deaf" or the "deaf mutes," they were the "deaf and dumb." And almost without exception the deaf-and-dumb were valuable members of the community.

I could talk to them all in the sign language, perhaps not fluently, but well enough to understand what was said to me and to make myself understood to them. So I shall try to tell a little about those Chilmarkers, who, they were, what they did for a living and their relationship, if any, to each other. I shall start with Jared Mayhew.

Jared Mayhew lived in a big yellow Victorian house near the top of Quitsa Hill. He was a very successful farmer and owned several hundred acres of land. He had a good-sized herd of dairy cattle and, before my time, he had had a large flock of sheep. Jared's wife was Lutie Mayhew (her real given name was Jerusha) and she most certainly was not deaf and dumb. Jared and Lutie had only one child, Ethel, who had perfect hearing, as did her own two children. She married Allen Flanders, who also had normal hearing, and they lived in the big yellow house

with Jared and Lutie. Allen helped his father-in-law run the farm and also operated a fish trap in Memensha Bight with his brother Ernest.

Jared and Lutie were pillars of Chilmark's Methodist Church and Lutie would translate the minister's sermon, as he was giving it, into the sign language for her husband's benefit.

I knew all those who lived in the big yellow house very well because one of my chores, as a small boy, was to go to Jared's place early every morning to get the milk for our family. We lived then in the Asa Smith house on Quitsa Lane, a walk of about a third of a mile each way, carrying two milk cans. When Allen poured the milk into the two-quart cans it would often still be warm from the cow.

Benjamin Mayhew was Jared's brother and he also was deaf and dumb. Benjamin and his wife (I think her name was Hattie -- she was a West and not deaf and dumb) lived next door to Jared. In addition to his deafness, Benjamin had another handicap: he had only one hand, having lost the other in a mowing-machine accident when he was a boy.1

But neither of his handicaps seemed to slow Ben down very much. He ran a small subsistence farm next to his brother's big place -- a one-horse, one-cow farm -- and made his living as a commercial fisherman. He would row a boat or dory as well as anybody else, thanks to a harness on one oar into which he would slip his arm. He was also an expert gunner. In his day, ducks and geese were still very plentiful and were a staple food supply for many up-island families. Ben and Hattie had three children, all with normal hearing.

Next on my list come George West, Jr., and his wife, Sabrina, pronounced Sabrinee. They were both deaf and dumb. They were quite old when I was a boy and I only

1There were two other Ben Mayhews in Chilmark at the time: Ben Fletcher Mayhew on the North Road and Ben Franklin Mayhew on the South Road. To identify this Ben Mayhew, Chilmark residents always used the nickname, One-armed Ben. It is significant that it was that handicap that was chosen for identification, rather than his deafness.
be heard almost as far away as Chilmark center.

When we lived in the Polander's house, Josie West was another neighbor of ours who was also deaf and dumb. His wife, Georgie Black, who came from New Bedford, had perfect hearing. Josie and Georgie had no children. They lived in what was the old West homestead, the house just beyond the Mill Brook going up the hill after leaving Chilmark center. The picture on the cover of this issue is a reproduction of a portrait of Josie West painted by Thomas Hart Benton.

When I was working in our garden Josie would often come and make suggestions about what I was doing, and his suggestions were usually good and to the point. He was a good farmer, but his real business was cutting cordwood for a large part of the population of Chilmark. From the time I was four years old, Josie furnished all the wood that we burned and by the time I was eight or nine it was one of my jobs to saw it and split it, long lengths for the fireplace and short ones for the big black stove in the kitchen.

Next were Benjamin West and his wife, Katie, both of whom were deaf and dumb. They lived in the house that is now the Chilmark Library. Ben was a farmer and was Josie's brother. They had other brothers and sisters who were not deaf and dumb. I never knew Ben West very well, but I certainly did know Katie. She always said that she was not born deaf, but had been struck by lightning when she was three or four and that had destroyed her hearing. She actually could remember how to speak a few simple words so that they could be understood. 1

1 The reason I knew Katie so well was because she worked for us when our daughter Emily was in the lower grades of the Menemsha school and Mil was working at the Town Hall as the Town Officers' Clerk. Her salary was ten dollars a week and half of that went to Katie, who came to our house before school was out in the afternoon to be there when Emily got home. Katie took good care of Emily.

According to Eileen Mayhew, widow of Benjamin C. Mayhew, the deafness resulted from scarlet fever. It's very likely that I am misremembering.
and also got our supper and ate with us. Katie would tell Emily in sign language what she wanted her to do and sometimes Emily would pretend that she didn’t understand what Katie was signing. That always made Katie furious for she knew that Emily understood exactly what she had been told. When that happened, Katie would tell Mil when she got home that Emily had been a devil. Mil didn’t know the sign language as well as I did, but she knew the sign for Emily and the sign for the devil well enough!

Everyone in Chilmark was identified by a sign for that was an easier and quicker way than spelling out the person’s name. The sign for Emily was a combination of a child and a dimple in the left cheek. It wasn’t really a dimple, but a small scar where a nail had gone through her cheek.

Places, as well as people, were identified by signs. The sign for New Bedford was a quick point of the finger to the north, then the sign for boat, and finally holding one’s nose. That last part was because of the stench of whale oil that once hung heavy about that city.

Joan Poole, Capt. Donald LeMar Poole’s granddaughter, is making a careful study of Chilmark’s sign language. When it is finished, it should be exceedingly interesting.

Such were the deaf-and-dumb of Chilmark whom I remember. I know that there were others. There aren’t many of us left now who can remember any of them. One who can is Captain Poole and I know that he could add a great deal to my story. With new blood from off-Island, and even from down-Island, the genetic fault that caused hereditary deafness vanished after surviving in Chilmark for the better part of three hundred years.

---

An Island Weekend
In the Great Depression

When Even the Getting Here Was Fun

by JOHN GUDGE

IT WAS in the depth of the Great Depression that we made our first trip to the Island. My wife and I were among the lucky ones in 1933 — we were working. She was an English Department instructor at New York University and I had lucked into a job writing publicity for the young Columbia Broadcasting System. One of the programs I was responsible for publicizing was “America’s Grub Street Speaks,” which was an interview with the author of a new book, along with an editor and sometimes a book reviewer. It was the first so-called “talk show” on radio and was originated and conducted by Tom Stix, who years later became my partner in a literary and talent agency.

After one of the Grub Street shows, Tom got a little expansive over a drink and said, “Hey, why don’t you and your wife come spend next weekend with us on Martha’s Vineyard?”

Feeling a little expansive myself, I replied that it sounded

JOHN GUDGE has been writing or looking out for writers’ interests most of his life. He and Tom Stix, in 1944, formed the first agency exclusively representing radio newscasters, those pioneers of electronic journalism on whose words Americans hung nightly throughout the war. The firm, Stix and Gudge, continues to prosper having expanded into the television and literary fields, but last spring, John and his wife, Helen, "packed their worldly goods and chattels, burned their Manhattan bridges" and moved into the old Chilmark farmhouse that has been their summer home for years. It remains such, as they spend their winters in Vineyard Haven, where this winter John is working on a book about the early days of radio.
like a dandy idea. I had heard of Martha’s Vineyard, but had never been there. Tom explained just how to make the trip: take the West Side subway to Fulton Street and get aboard the New Bedford Line steamer — it was really very easy, he assured me.

The New Bedford Line plied daily, perhaps I should say nightly, between New York and the old whaling port of New Bedford. Its boats left New York at 6 o’clock each evening and docked at New Bedford at 6 o’clock the following morning. At New Bedford, the passengers would take a leisurely walk across the wharf and board the small steamer that took them to Woods Hole, Martha’s Vineyard or Nantucket.

This being in 1933, it was very close to the end of the old New Bedford Line. In a few years the Line, along with its two steamers, Priscilla and Commonwealth, were taken over by the New Haven Railroad which, in its turn, eventually went bankrupt. But while the New Bedford Line lasted, New Yorkers could weekend to the Vineyard and return for under $15, including an outside stateroom ($2.50) and the small-steamer fare to the Island.

Getting there was cheap, but more to the point of this story, it was fun.

Following Tom’s directions, that Friday Helen and I boarded the steamer shortly before six o’clock. Although we were footloose and free in those days before we had started to raise a family, we were a little apprehensive. Helen was not enchanted with the idea of being guests of total strangers for an entire weekend. (We learned later

1 In 1878, a Guide to Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket listed four ways to get to the Island by boat from New York: the New Bedford Line, described here; the Old Colony Line (later it became the Fall River Line); the Stonington Line (with a train link from Mansfield to New Bedford); and the Portland Line (the steamer ran from New York to Portland, Maine, with a stop at the Island. The Portland Line ran only Tuesdays and Fridays, but it was the only direct steamer link with New York at the time. By 1933, only the New Bedford and the Fall River Lines remained.

2 Although these prices sound like bargains today, remember that $15 was more than many workers made in a six-day week in 1933. Millions, of course, were unemployed and made nothing, there being no unemployment insurance.
office only six months), the nation’s Noble Experiment was, to all intents and purposes, as dead as Herbert Hoover’s political future, and genuine Scotch and other hard liquors flowed freely, not only on the boat, but ashore. We nobly resisted temptation and went to the small dining saloon where we had a very good steak sandwich with accompanying garnishments for about a dollar.

Still feeling like strangers at a party, we went into the Lounge after eating. There were bridge and poker games going on and for a while we watched the horse-race game that was being conducted by a couple of the ship’s officers in the quarterdeck, but shortly we decided to turn in.

We were awakened early the next morning by the racket and clangor that always seems to be a part of the docking of a big vessel. Hurriedly, we washed and dressed and made our second visit to the dining saloon. There was no breakfast menu, so we ordered the only items being served: bacon on a roll and coffee. It cost 25 cents and was delicious. As we crossed the wharf to board the steamer to the Island, it was still raining. We must have been in a storm area that was moving up the coast at precisely the speed of the boat. The small Island steamer was also crowded and only a few hardy characters ventured on deck, but we managed to find a couple of seats inside.

We were miserable.

The stop at Woods Hole was brief and in another 45 minutes we were docking at Oak Bluffs. It was still raining. We finally spotted Tom, flanked by two small children. He greeted us effusively, shoved our bags and the children into the back seat of his car and away we went for the final half-hour leg of our journey.

There wasn’t much to see as we drove along the winding road toward Chilmark. The rain had abated somewhat, but a heavy fog had rolled in. The only things that were clearly visible were dripping trees and hedgerows. When we finally arrived at the house on Middle Road, we were welcomed by our hostess as the squabbling children were turned over to a pretty young woman named Margaret Halsey, who was a combination secretary to Tom and a mother’s helper to Mrs. Stix. Peg Halsey was to become one of our dearest friends in the years ahead; also, several years hence, she wrote her first of many books, With Malice Toward Some, which became a runaway best-seller.

Within an hour of our arrival at Middlemark, the rain stopped, the sun burned off the fog and we had our first real view of the lovely rolling countryside of up-Island Martha’s Vineyard. Tom and I drove to Menemsha for fish and other food items and I was enchanted with the little fishing village. (Five years later that enchanting village was nearly wiped out by the 1938 hurricane.)

After lunch we drove to Gay Head for our first look at the famous cliffs, glistening in afternoon sunlight which heightened their muted red, slate-blue and ochre colors. Then that evening to a gathering at the James Jacobson, who occupied the Ben Mayhew house overlooking Quitsa Pond. There we met a lot of charming and interesting people, including Richard Simon, the young co-founder of the publishing firm of Simon & Schuster, who could have made just as great a success as a concert pianist.

The next day was one of those unsurpassed summer
days. We spent the entire morning on Squibnocket Beach, where we met many more people who were later to be counted among our close and lasting friends. After lunch we drove to Edgartown. We parked the car at the north end of Main Street, near a magnificently columned edifice that, I was told, was called the Whaling Church. We spent an hour poking into side streets until we reached the harbor. What impressed me most about this ancient whaling port was its tidy whiteness. Every gem of a house, some of them dating back to the 17th Century, looked as though it had been painted that morning. Every picket on every fence was unblemished -- or so it seemed. Edgartown, I thought, should not be looked at in haste; rather, it should be taken in through the pores.

And so, as the songwriter fellow said, we came to the end of a perfect day. After supper and packing, we bade a warm farewell to our hostess, and to Peg Halsey and the Stix kids, and Tom drove us to Oak Bluffs.

What a contrast to the start of our weekend! Then it had been raining dismally and steadily and we were strangers in the midst of a large number of people, most of whom seemed to know one another. Now, we were being warmly greeted by people we had met at the Jacobsons and on the beach at Squibnocket. It was a clear and beautiful evening. Jim Jacobson pointed out the East Chop and West Chop lights and when the little Island steamer drew past the western shore of the Vineyard, we could see the blinker at the tip of the Menemsha jetty and, farther along, the alternating red and white beams of the Gay Head lighthouse, which in the olden days warned many, but not all, vessels off the treacherous shoals of Devil's Bridge.

By the time we boarded the New York boat at New Bedford, Helen and I were ready for bed. But that was not to be, we discovered. It seemed that standard procedure was to stay up until the boat had made its scheduled stop at Newport.

And it was well worth a bit of lost sleep. Newport harbor on that weekend summer night, was a sight I shall never forget, even though I had the good fortune to see it again many times thereafter. Little boats and big boats, sailboats and power boats, and more than a few ocean-going yachts. Lights burned on many of them and people lined the deck rails to wave a greeting as our boat slipped silently through the harbor traffic to dockside. There was music in the gentle night air -- whether radio or phonograph one couldn't tell -- from the softly lighted deck of one of the bigger yachts and we could make out people dancing on the dimly lit afterdeck.

Just a few passengers got off our steamer and perhaps a half dozen boarded her for the trip to New York. Noisily, the gangplank was hauled in and it was time for bed and a dreamless sleep before we disembarked in New York at seven the next morning.

The following summer we made several trips to the Vineyard for weekends and at the close of the season spent a full week at the William Montagues on Windy Gases. Our first child just missed, by a couple of weeks, being born an Islander that summer. Addicted, we rented a cottage in Menemsha the next summer and I commuted weekends throughout the season. Jim Jacobson and I would rendezvous Friday afternoons at a little clam bar a half block from the Fulton Street wharf. Jim always bore a
Up-Island Tales: Dry and Wry
As collected by Cyril D. Norton

James A. Vincent was a very positive man. He found his way to Chilmark (he was an Edgartowner by birth) through his marriage to Florence, one of Capt. Moses West's daughters. James A. had a very fierce face, but was actually quite harmless.

On one occasion he had to go to Providence, a trip that in those days was a rare event for all except cooasters and James A. was a farmer.

On his return a neighbor asked him how he had liked his stay in the city. "Well, for one thing," Jim said, "at the hotel I et some dried boiled grass. They call it sparow grass."

When I knew him, years later, he was raising the "durned" stuff on his big farm on Stonewall Pond. Then he called it "sparaguz."

On another occasion while going alongshore to see what the ocean had washed up, a common practice for Chilmarkers, he picked up a large board. Returning home, he informed a neighbor that he had found a board all covered with binnacles. Of course, he meant barnacles.

The news of his malapropism got around and after that, much to his disgust, he was known up-island as Binnacle Jim.

Mrs. Sanford purchased the big Captain Moses West farm and after making many improvements there named it Windy Gates.

One fall she was looking for a caretaker for the winter and interviewed two Portuguese men, a Mr. Cardoza and a Mr. Madeiros. She asked Mr. Cardoza if he would consider living at Windy Gates during the winter and taking general care of the place.

"No," Mr. Cardoza replied, "my wife she work hard and need rest after long summer."

That was that. She put the same question to Mr. Madeiros. He replied in the affirmative to Mrs. Sanford.

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.
asked, “But what about your wife?”
Will she be willing to say here?”

To which Mr. Madeiros replied,
with no hesitation at all, “My wife he
stay where I put him.”

ACCORDING to old-time fisher-
men and seamen herelabobus, a
Southeaster would most often last
only from nine to eleven hours and a
souwester from twelve to fourteen
hours. But no attempt was made to
estimate the limit of a southeaster.

My mother, Mrs. Malvina M. R.
Norton, told me that on Nomansland
during one of the codfishing seasons,
a southeaster once lasted for twenty-
one days. That was in the days of sail,
before engines were available, and not
a boat left the beach in all that time.

ONE morning on Nomans when
many Vineyarders were on that
island for the codfishing, everybody
discovered they had been locked
inside their fishing shacks during the
night. It was quite a while before one of
the fishermen escaped and was able to
release the others.

Reinforcements started. Eliza
Mayhew was suspected at first
because she and David Butler’s
mother, Aurelia, had been more
active in the pranks than most of the
other women. But it was noted that
Eliza had also been locked in, her
doors barricaded by a heavy barrel.

For years, the lock-in remained a
mystery until one day on a trip to
Vineyard Haven, Mrs. Mayhew
stopped in one of the stores and the
clerk, who had been on Nomans when
the event took place, said, “It’s
been a long time, Eliza, since that
lock-in at Nomansland, but I always
suspected that somehow you were
involved in it.”

“I was,” Mrs. Mayhew admitted
and, for the first time, explained what
had happened. “Aurelia and I went
around after everyone was asleep and
locked or blocked up every door.
Then I locked Aurelia in her place
and went to our shack and rolled up a
heavy sash so it would fall against
the door when I closed it so I would be
locked in, too.”

Thus, the mystery was finally
solved.

NAB’S Corner. In 1892, when
West Tisbury separated from
Tisbury to become a town in its own
right, the State commissioners arrived
to lay out the boundaries of the new
town. The plan was to cut straight
across the Island at Nab’s Corner.
Thus, both Quansoo and Quenames
would have become part of the new
town of West Tisbury and Chilmark
would have lost its half of Tisbury
Great Pond.

But the people living in those areas,
the Adames, Hancocks, Mitchells
and a few more had not the slightest
desire to become residents of West
Tisbury. They were Chilmarkers and
intended to do all they could to
remain such.

Therefore, when the State men,
along with the commissioners of the
County of Dukes County, arrived at
Nab’s Corner, the residents met them
with shotguns and informed them
that they were not permitted to go
any farther. Hence, to this day, the
West Tisbury boundary goes from
Nab’s Corner to the Tiasquam River,
sometimes called the New Mill Brook,
bounded by the north side of the
road. The road itself and everything
between it and the ocean remained
Chilmark and Chilmark retained its
part of Tisbury Great Pond.

There was rejoicing in Quansoo
and Quenames. What would have
happened without the shotguns will
never be known.

JOHN Bassett was never too careful
to keep his fences and walls in good
condition and as a result his sheep
would often and suddenly appear in
his neighbors’ yards. One of those
neighbors was my aunt, Mrs. Eliza
Mayhew, and she was a woman of
rather choleric disposition and
righteous indignation when she
scented any wrongdoing.

She would find John and tell him
that his sheep were trespassing on her
yard. John often told her that his
sheep never strayed beyond his
domain. But the evidence was against
him. People using the South Road
after dark always slowed down as they
approached the Bassett place, and a
good thing they did, for John’s flock
would often be in the middle of the
road.

Once, when retrieving his sheep
from Mrs. Mayhew’s yard, John
shouted, “Lizy Mayhew’s mad as hell
and I don’t give a damn.”

That didn’t help matters, but in
time Aunt Eliza always forgave him.

(The fourth of a series.)

CORRECTION

In Cyril Norton’s anecdote
(November 1980) about Bige
Hammett and the Gold Rush of 1849,
it was Otis Smith who was with him
in California and not Otis Poole.

Our thanks to Capt. Donald LeMar
Poole for calling our attention to Mr.
Norton’s error.
July 1843
1st. Wind SW. Got in part of my hay.
3rd. Wind N. Warm. Fresh breeze. A
great fire on the Main.
4th. Wind SW. A company of soldiers
arrived yesterday from Rochester.
They come in front of our house and
go thru various exercises with very
good music. Today one vessel comes
from Falmouth with a number of
passengers. The Steam Boat
Massachusetts lands some passengers
from Nantucket.
16th. Wind SSW. Attended meeting
at a little grove near Br. Thomas
Chase and Brs. Allen, Cottle, Linton
and a number more from North
Shore and Holmes East and West
Side with Br. Benjamin Tilley of
Bristol who went with me. I think
there were more than a hundred
persons present. It was an interesting
time.
22nd. Wind S. Ship Splendid, Capt.
Edwin Coffin, arrives from the
Pacific.
30th. Wind NE. Rainstorm. The
drought previous to this time has
been more severe than for a great
many years. Attended meeting at Br.
Thomas Smith Jr's at M.D. Stormy.
Not many present.

August 1843
7th. Wind SW. Went to Camp
Ground to put up tents &. c.
9th. Wind W. and calm. P.M. SW.
Went to Camp Meeting and stayed
until the 17th. Had rainy weather
4 days of the first of the meeting. There
were 30 tents erected besides the
victualing and small tents. It was an
interesting time. The news of the
death of Br. Joel Knight was brought
to the Camp Meeting on Sunday, the
15th. He was at Camp Meeting the
past year and was appointed to
Providence this year where he
preached until a short time before his
Death.

September 1843
1st. Wind NE. Cloudy. Fresh breez.
Visited uncle Elijah Pease, he being
very sick.
17th. Wind NW. Pleasant. Attended
meetings at North Shore and at East
Side Holmes Hole at 1/2 past 5 p.m. Br.
Thomas Luce died this morning at
about 8 o'clock, aged about 85 years.
He was esteemed a pious man and
had been a member of the Methodist
Church for many years. He was blind
ever since I knew him which was
about 30 years.
18th. Wind SSW. Foggy. The
Steamboat Flushing, Capt. Gifford,
commences running between New
Bedford and this place.
19th. Wind NW. Pleasant. Steam
Boat Flushing sails for New Bedford.
Frederick goes in her.
20th. Wind NE. Surveyed land at
Fair Neck for order of the Court in
the suit between Jane Luce vs. I.
Norton Esq.
27th. Wind SW. Mr. George Mayhew,
son of Thomas Mayhew, arrives from
Wilmingon, N.C., being sick.
28th. Wind SW. Mr. Mayhew dies at
about 2 o'clock a.m. of a fever.

October 1843
8th. Wind East. Gale with rain. Did
1 It was Thomas Luce who when about 30
years of age had "smuggled" the first two
Methodists to the Island in a load of corn
which he brought from Virginia in his boat in
1787.
not attend meeting at East Side
Homes Hole on account of the
storm. Attended meetings this day at
our old Methodist Meeting House.
Br. Macreadie preached. It being the
last Sabbath we expect to occupy this
house for Sabbath preaching.
10th. Wind SW. Pleasant. This day
the new Methodist Meeting House is
dedicated to Almighty God. Prayer by
Br. B. Otherman. Sermon by Br.
Raymond of Boston. concluding
prayer by Br. Asa Kent. There were
several other Methodist and a
Congregationalist preacher present.
The house was very full of people. It
was an interesting season. Pews were
sold immediately after the service.
The blessing of the Lord rested upon
this undertaking in a glorious
manner. Many more pews were sold
this day than were expected which is a
great relief to the Building
Committee.
11th. Wind NW. The meetings
continued in the new house.
15th. Wind WNW. Attended
meetings at East Side Holmes Hole.
Ship Splendid of this place, Capt.
Smith sails for the Pacific Ocean.
Sherman comes from Nantucket.
17th. Wind NW. Br. Lovejoy and Br.
Livsy (?) arrive from New Bedford.
Br. Lovejoy preaches at evening.
Surveyed land at Christianstown for
William Jeffers.
18th. Wind SW. William and Serena
leave in the Steam Boat Massachusetts
for New York via New Bedford.
This day I received a reappointment
as Light Keeper, Capt. Sylvanus
Crocker being removed. I sent no dirty petition or scandalous report to the Government, but merely stated that if the crime for which I was displaced had ceased to be a crime I would like to have the same station again, meaning the crime of supporting the election of General Jackson and Mr. Van Buren as Presidents of the United States. Took charge of the Light House at ½ past 4 o'clock P.M. 2

23rd. Wind NNW. Fresh breeze. Ship Catawba, Capt. H. Pease, sails for Nantucket being from the Pacific Ocean.

24th. Wind NW. Fresh breeze. Br. Sherman returns to Nantucket.

2We don't know what brought about his reappointment, but we can guess. In the 1840 election, Jeremiah had supported the losing Presidential candidate, Democrat Martin van Buren. The Whig William Henry Harrison, was elected and Jeremiah lost his position as Light House Keeper. Capt. Whig Crocker (probably a Whig) took over. When Harrison died after a month in office, Vice-President John Tyler became President. Tyler, an ex-Democrat who had been put on the ticket by the Whigs to attract Southern votes, was not accepted by his new party, especially its leader Henry Clay. He soon became a President without a party and his entire Whig Cabinet resigned. In June 1843, President Tyler and his newly-appointed Cabinet went to Boston for the Bunker Hill Day celebration. Leavitt Thaxter, the Customs Collector for the Island (who was in charge of Light Houses), had inspected the lighthouse in Edgartown just two weeks before going to Boston to attend the Bunker Hill event. There had been ongoing problems with the light and, probably, he convinced the newly-appointed Secretary of Treasury that Jeremiah's politics were less of a "crime" than a poorly run light house.

29th. Wind NE to NW. Attended meetings at East Side Holmes Hole at 6 o'clock. I married Mr. Edward Beverly and Miss Eunice T. Willer at the dwelling house of Mr. Elisa Smith. 31st. Wind NW. Pleasant. Engaged in settling of Widow Sarah Norton's third of her late husband's estate, he being dead.

November 1843

10th. Wind NE. Did not attend Class Meeting at M.D. on account of the weather. Uncle Elijah Pease dies at the house of Br. J. D. Pease, having been unwell for several weeks past. He was a pious man for many years deacon of the Congregational Church in this place and a worthy citizen.

12th. Wind NW. Gale. Attended meeting at East Side Holmes Hole A.M. P.M. returned and attended the funeral of Uncle Elijah Pease at the Congregational Meeting House. Service by Rev'ds. Mr. Stores (? and C. S. Maccreading.

13th. Wind N to NNE. Town Meeting for choice of Governor & c.

14th. Wind NE. The ground is covered with snow which fell last night and today.

27th. Wind N. Cold. Town Meeting for choice of Representative.

30th. Wind N. Cold. Ground mostly covered with snow. This day is set aside for thanksgiving and prayer. I attended meeting at the Baptist Church. Service by the Rev'ds. Mr. Webb and Hall. This month has been cold and blustering.

December 1843

1st. Wind ENE. Engaged in surveying land near Mr. West Luce's for David Smith and others. Storm. Did not go to Class at M.D.

2nd. Wind NW. Jeremiah arrives from Fall River.

11th. Wind NW. Squally. Attended meetings this day at East Side Holmes Hole. Jeremiah attended and took the most active part. Three men were sunk in a boat near the Light House and came very near being drowned. They belonged to a schooner from Bangor loaded with lumber. They were taken by boat and men from a wood sloop lying near the schooner. 3

13th. Wind NW to NE. Snow squalls. Jeremiah returned to Fall River yesterday by Steam Boat Massachusetts.

January 1844

5th. Wind NW. Very cold. Made a fire in the lantern. 4 Did not attend class at M.D.

14th. Wind SW. Attended Meeting in Town being unwell. Ship York, Capt. John H. Pease, arrives in Holmes Hole this evening with a full cargo of Whale oil. Sent home — barrels some time ago. 5


Wood sloop means a sloop loaded with cordwood. Perhaps Edgartown was outgrowing its wood lots.

4At the Light House, of course. Jeremiah was making sure the extreme cold didn't cause problems with the light.

5Jeremiah intended to fill in the number of barrels later, but he apparently forgot.

16th. Wind ENE to E. Ship York comes up to the wharf

26th. Wind NW. Very cold. Received bbl. of oil from Dr. Fisher. 6 Much ice makes in the harbour.

27th. Wind NW. Very cold. Harbour closed across by the Light House.

6A barrel of Fisher's fine whale oil for the Light House lantern.

Books

ADDENDUM

In the book review by Stephen Railton in the November Intelligencer, the following introductory paragraph was inadvertently omitted:


We regret our error and apologize to the author, publisher and reviewer. For those who did not read the review we quote its concluding paragraph.

"As every story in this volume testifies, Huntington has looked at the physical world with a writer's eye, and listened to people's conversation with a writer's ear. But more impressively, in the best of these Vineyard Tales, he has shaped his insights with a writer's art."
Director's Report

OUTSIDE the Library and Francis Foster Museum, the cold and quiet of winter have descended, but inside there is a good deal of activity with many visitors and researchers. In fact, the year 1980 was our busiest ever in the Library with more than 80 serious researchers, among them newspaper reporters, lawyers, genealogists, environmentalists, students, professors, local historians, artists, photographers, government officials, model builders, antique dealers, archaeologists and even skin divers (the last-named looking for locations of shipwrecks and sunken treasure). Of course, we also get many requests by mail for information; much of this involves genealogical questions, which are expertly handled by Mrs. Stoddard.

In addition to Mrs. Stoddard, several other volunteers have been particularly active in recent months. Dan Sullivan has come in nearly every day to help Mrs. Crossman with library cataloging and Harvey Garneau continues his work with our photographs. Linsey Lee has been doing a great deal to help with our efforts to turn the Francis Foster Museum into a major maritime exhibit. In the Fall of last year, she represented our Society at a three-day workshop in Providence on the development of museum exhibits, which was organized by the American Association for State and Local History.

Linsey Lee is also helping out at the Tisbury Museum to develop the exhibits of that new museum. This ambitious project is off to an excellent start and, on a number of occasions, we have had the opportunity of talking with the Tisbury Museum people and explaining various aspects of our operations to them.

Through Mrs. Stoddard's connections with genealogists around the country, we recently learned an interesting story about the original publication of the Mayhew Family Tree.

In 1787, a Jonathan Mayhew was born in the old Mayhew homestead on Edgartown harbor. After working in Boston for six years, beginning as a clerk at the age of 15, he briefly returned to the Island where he married Elizabeth (Eliza) Cooke, the daughter of Thomas Cooke, Jr. Eliza had been born in the Thomas Cooke House, which now belongs to the Society.

Leaving the Island and eventually settling in Buffalo, N.Y., Jonathan Mayhew became a prominent businessman and a vigorous supporter of the Buffalo History Society. Research on the Mayhew family led him to design the Mayhew Family Tree, which he published and offered for sale in 1855.

We received this information from one of his descendents who still possesses an elaborately etched, covered flip glass, marked as having belonged to Thomas Cooke, Sr., and his wife, Abigail. She also owns Mrs. Cooke's wedding ring.

Incidentally, reprints of Jonathan Mayhew's Family Tree are available from us for one dollar plus another dollar for mailing.

THOMAS E. NORTON

Reverend Jonathan Mayhew (1720-1766), born in Chilmark, whose namesake devised the family tree, was one of the most highly regarded clergymen in New England before the Revolutionary War.
**Bits & Pieces**

It wouldn't do to let future generations believe that all who came to the island years ago did so with the style described by John Gude in this issue. Some came differently.

For me, there was none of the relaxed mood of the Priscilla. We lived in New Hampshire and our annual trip began a week ahead of time with my father preparing the Model T for its long trek. We'd load it the night before and early the next morning head south down Route 28 for Wood's Hole.

Route 28 then (and now) ran right through downtown Boston. The whole family frantically watched for Route 28 signs along narrow streets jammed with trucks and people. By the time we got to the Blue Hills we were exhausted.

Then came Brockton, its Main Street lined with shoe factories and narrowed by street-car tracks and (do I remember correctly?) an occasional slow-moving freight train.

Next, Middleboro, along sandy stretches of open country with "Indians" sitting by the roadside selling fresh berries. Past the Wareham herring creek, then a beautiful spot, and soon the resort-like Buzzard's Bay with its handsome railroad station and puffing locomotives. Just often enough to be suspenseful, the wooden drawbridge over the Canal would be up and we'd wait, worrying about "making the boat."

Wood's Hole was busy, only slightly less hectic than now, as the train came backing down from Falmouth, stopping almost on the dock. My father would nervously drive over the narrow gangplank into an opening in the side of the steamer, maneuvering the car into a corner of the hold alongside crates and carts loaded with luggage. Soon, he'd join us on deck, totally exhausted – his long trek over for another year.

There were others, years earlier, who came more elegantly as we learn from Charles Hulick, his brother, Bill. Here's his story of "The Flying Dude," an elegant private train to Wood's Hole:

"In 1884, a group of Brahmins from Beacon Hill and bankers from State Street chartered a private train from the Old Colony R.R., guaranteeing the railroad a minimum of $22,185 for the season, June 5 to October 5. The Old Colony provided a locomotive, a combination baggage car and coach, plus two parlor drawing room cars, the 'Naushon' and the 'Mayflower.' The train ran until 1916.

"It operated six days a week, leaving Boston at 3:10 p.m., arriving Wood's Hole at 4:50, to meet the steamer Monomessett which took them directly to the wharf at the famous Sea View Hotel where many of them stayed.

"The schedule was based on the desire of the members to have dinner at six o'clock on the wide porch of the huge hotel, overlooking the Sound. They ordered their fresh lobsters boiled, with drawn butter, 'no nonsense about Thermidor or Newburg' for them.'"

That kind of "getting here" really was fun!

A.R.R.

---

**In this issue...**

- **The Steamboat Telegraph (1832)**
- **The Steamboat Massachusetts (1842)**
- **The Steamer Priscilla (1892)**

Drawings from Days of the Steamboats by William H. Ewen and Early American Steamers by Erik Heyl
The Overnight Luxury Route between

CAPE COD
and NEW YORK

via FALL RIVER LINE
There's no pleasanter way to travel to and from the Cape—than by water. Here's one popular route—on the luxurious Fall River steamers with big breezy staterooms, dance orchestra, delicious a la carte and table d'hote meals, also club breakfasts. Fast rail and coach service between pier and Hyannis and other points.

via NEW BEDFORD LINE
Another overnight cruise on the Sound—just as comfortable, just as delightful—via the romantic old-time whaling port. Motor coach connections here to and from all points on the Cape. Also direct steamer connection at the same wharf for Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

« Tickets at all local Ticket Offices »

NEW ENGLAND STEAMSHIP LINES