



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 22, NO. 3

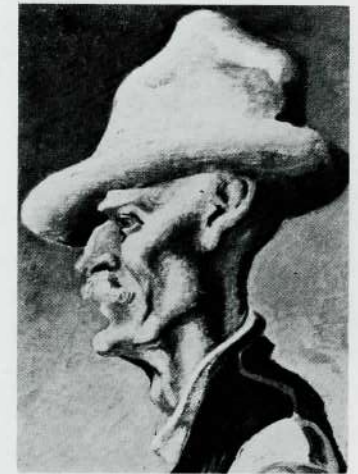
FEBRUARY 1981

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

by NORA GROCE

Chilmark's Deaf: Valued Citizens

by GALE HUNTINGTON



Josie West by Thomas Hart Benton

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

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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.



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.¹ 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

¹Mendel first presented his ideas on heredity in a paper read to the Brunn Natural Science Society in 1865 and the work was published in the Proceedings of that Society the following year. Unfortunately, no leading scientists seem to have taken notice of this original publication and it was only in the year 1900 that, by coincidence, three scientists, working independently, all came upon references to Mendel's paper and realized its importance. For this reason, although the science of genetics may technically be said to extend back to 1865, actually scientists, such as Alexander Graham Bell, working on problems of heredity some 20 years after Mendel's now famous publication, were completely unaware of its existence or conclusions.

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."²

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."³

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

²Sewell, p. 432. For a full citation of this and subsequent footnote references see Bibliography at the end of this article.

³Banks, Vol. 2, p. 53.

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 1800⁴ 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.

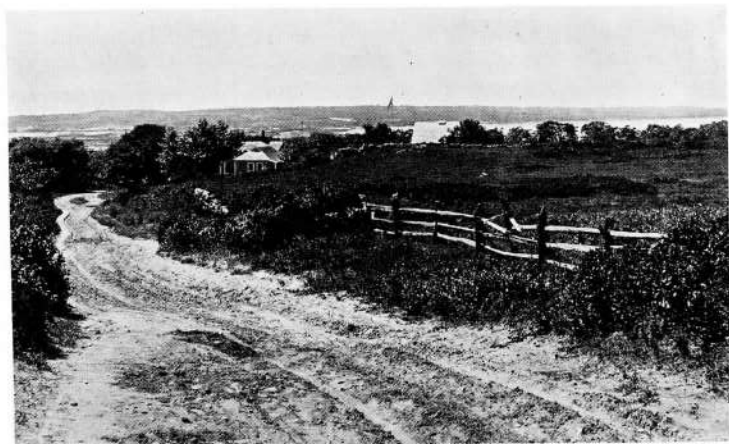
As James Freeman wrote in 1807:

"As Martha's Vineyard receives not too many accessions 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."⁵

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

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 rutty 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*⁶ in 1847, is a report

⁶The *American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb* would later change its title to *The American Annals of the Deaf*, under which title it is still published. While Islanders traditionally called the deaf, "deaf and dumb" or "deaf mutes," in fact, their inability to speak was solely the result of their inability to hear and therefore to learn to speak. They were all capable of producing sound.

entered to help substantiate the effects of maternal fright on the infant. The location is given only as "a small town in the southeastern part of Massachusetts," but because of the exact correlation of names, dates and numbers of children, it can now be established without doubt that this was, in fact, Chilmark.

The author, W. W. Turner, is incorrect in saying that none of the mothers had ever seen a deaf individual before. It certainly helped him make a stronger case for "marking," but in fact not only were all these women from either Chilmark or West Tisbury (then a part of Tisbury), they were also all closely related to one or more persons who were born deaf. Although we can now see that the deafness described in this quotation follows a recessive pattern of inheritance closely, note how the author, unaware of these laws and looking for something else, completely misses all the clues that modern anthropologists and geneticists would be able to pick out. He wrote:

"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 wits' 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."⁷

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.

⁷Bell, 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,⁸ 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 inexplicable 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.

⁸Groce.

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."⁹

"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."¹⁰

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."¹¹

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.

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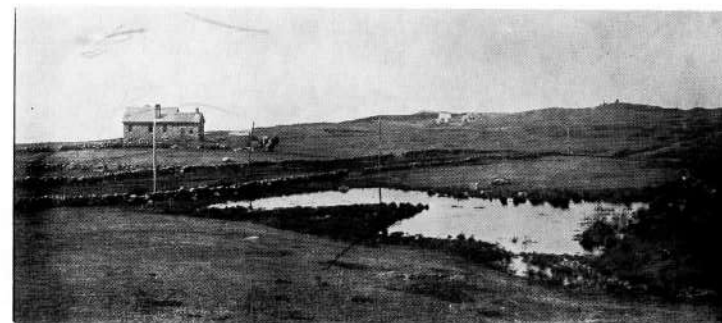
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Gale Huntington	Hollis Smith
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Fanny Jenkinson	Laura Tilton
Ida Karl	Capt. Tom Tilton
Stanton Lair	Deacon Leonard
Mabel Look	Vanderhoop
George Magnuson	Everett Whiting
Anna Maxson	John Whiting
Esther Mayhew	Ethel Whidden



Even at the end of the 1800s, Chilmark was still very sparsely settled

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

GALE HUNTINGTON is Editor Emeritus of this Journal and its founding father. He is an eminent Island historian and has authored scores of articles and many books, the latest of which, *Vineyard Tales*, was reviewed in the November 1980 *Intelligencer*. He lives in Vineyard Haven with his wife, Mildred.

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.



Menemsha "Crick" in 1910, just about the time that the author describes got to know them a little because sometimes Sabrina would do a laundry for my mother and I would get it, pay for it and carry it home to Quitsa. They lived in a little house just beyond what is now David Flanders' real-estate office. That little house has since been added to. George West, Jr., was a farmer. I think he went fishing, too, when he was younger. He and Sabrina had three children, one of whom was deaf and dumb. That was Eva and she married Henry Look, who could hear.

After Mil and I had been married two or three years, we bought the Polander's house, next door to Eva and Henry Look, so we got to know them and their daughter, Mabel, very well. Mabel had perfect hearing. They were good neighbors. Henry was a farmer and was inclined to be slow and late in everything that he did. I remember once he dug his potatoes on Christmas day. Often Mil and I would hear Eva yelling at Henry to get him started on something that had to be done. Eva would shout at him, for the deaf-and-dumb did have vocal chords and used them when necessary. Because they couldn't hear the sound they were making, it was often much louder than necessary. Eva's was so loud that, even with her windows closed, she could

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.²

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

²According 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 GUDE

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 GUDE 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 Gude, 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.¹ 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.

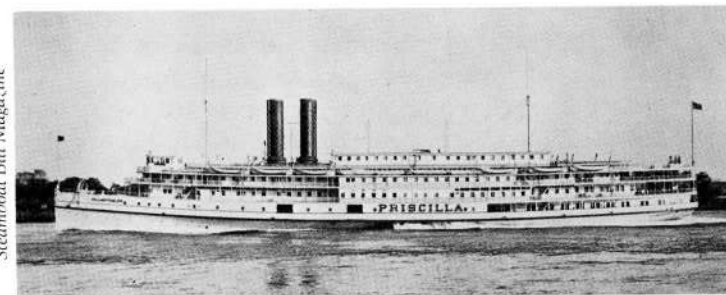
Getting there was cheap,² but more to the point of this story, it was fun.

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

¹In 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.

²Although 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.

Steamboat Bill Magazine

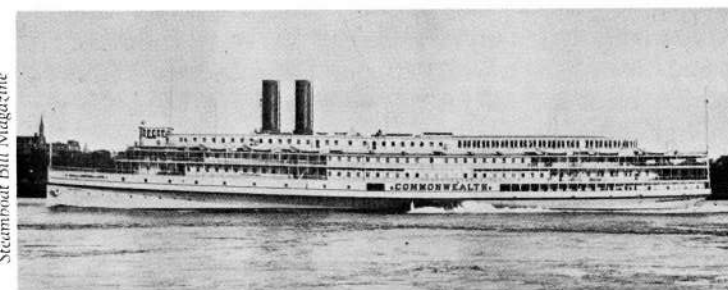


Steamer Priscilla, fast and stately sidewheeler of the New Bedford Line that our host's wife, Dr. Regine Stix, was not overjoyed either at the prospect of having to feed and entertain two persons whom she had never laid eyes on.) But we had decided to risk it; after all, it was a chance to experience Martha's Vineyard.

The weather was against us. Before we boarded, it had started to rain and by the time the boat pulled out of its berth at the foot of New York's Fulton Street, it was pouring. The boat was crowded, it being a mid-summer weekend, and, with the rain coming down in torrents, nobody ventured out on deck.

Most of the other passengers seemed to know each other so, feeling like the tourists which we were, we repaired to our stateroom and contemplated opening the bottle of Scotch that was intended for our hosts. Although the Volstead Act had not yet been repealed (FDR had been in

Steamboat Bill Magazine



The sidewheeler Commonwealth also made the New York-New Bedford run

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



Typical busy scene in the 1920s as the boat arrived at Oak Bluffs wharf 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 Jacobsons, 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

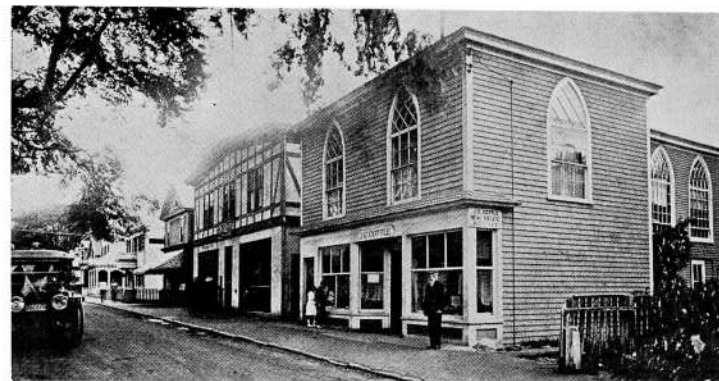
days. We spent the entire morning on Squibnocket Beach, where we met many more people who were later to be counted among our close and lasting friends. After lunch we drove to Edgartown. We parked the car at the north end of Main Street, near a magnificently columned edifice that, I was told, was called 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

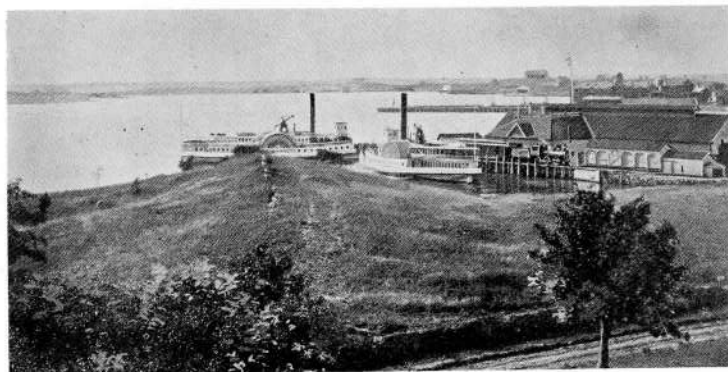


Cottle's Department Store (Gothic Hall upstairs) and next to it was the Telephone Company and the Postoffice on Edgartown's Main Street in 1920

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 oceangoing 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 Gates. 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



Wood's Hole in 1900, when the Old Colony Railroad ran right onto the dock

packet of sandwiches and, after downing a dozen or more littlenecks, washed down with a few glasses of clam and tomato juice (price for everything: 25 cents), we would sit on the port deck of the steamer and eat our sandwiches as the boat rounded the tip of Manhattan, then up the busy East River through Hellgate and into Long Island Sound. I don't remember it ever raining again, although I feel sure it must have.

Soon after that, the old New Bedford Line ceased to operate and we would take the Fall River Line from New York, riding a special bus from Fall River to New Bedford (only about 30 minutes) to make a connection with the Island steamer. The buses, operated by the steamship line, were always on time and it was always a pleasant transfer.

Although not quite as delightful as the New Bedford Line's all-water journey, it continued to be a fact that even the getting here was fun.

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 coasters 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 durned boiled grass. They call it sparrow grass."

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

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 fishermen and seamen hereabouts, a Southeaster would most often last only from nine to eleven hours and a sou'wester from twelve to fourteen hours. But no attempt was made to estimate the limit of a no'theaster.

My mother, Mrs. Malvina M. R. Norton, told me that on Nomansland during one of the codfishing seasons, a no'theaster 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 Noman's 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.

Recriminations 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 door 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 Noman's when the event took place, said, "It's been a long time, Liza, 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 cask 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



Fishermen's shacks at Nomansland where Liza and Aurelia locked the doors

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 Adamses, 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 in 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.

Documents

FOR those who read the story of Jeremiah's conversion in the November 1980 issue, it may be worthwhile to mention that the portion of his diary that follows was written about 20 years later, in an exciting period in Island history. Very little excitement comes through in Jeremiah's entries, however.

Whaling is peaking, bringing prosperity to the Island. The major depression that followed the crash of 1837 is over. The Methodist Church in Edgartown will be dedicated this year, 1843, and the traumatic days of the "crazy" Methodists are history.

Steamboats are now starting to ply between the Vineyard and the mainland, although the service is erratic, expensive and not very popular. Nantucket has been served by the steamer Telegraph for about 10 years, but Vineyard service has just begun with the Massachusetts, which stops in Edgartown on its trip between New Bedford and Nantucket. Pease had taken one of her first trips, on March 23, 1843. Jeremiah mentions that on September 18th the steamboat Flushing began regular service to New Bedford, but we hear nothing about it later. Its career must have been short-lived. Steamers were not an instant success with Vineyarders and all regular service was dropped in 1844.

The following year a new company put the steamboat Naushon into service between Edgartown and New Bedford, but in 1848 that, too, was discontinued for financial reasons. It was not until the late 1850s that the steamboat became the accepted way to get to the mainland.

This diary of Jeremiah Pease of Edgartown (1792-1857) provides an excellent day-by-day record of Island history before there was a newspaper. We are indebted to Gale Huntington for transcribing and editing this material.

We began publishing this series in November 1974.

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 Smith Jr's. Br. G. Weeks, Br. H. 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 breeze. Visited uncle Elijah Pease, he being very sick.

17th. Wind NW. Pleasant. Attended meetings at North Shore and at East Side Holmes Hole at ½ 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.¹

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 Farm 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 Wilmington, 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 Holmes Hole on account of the storm. Attended meetings this day at our old Methodist Meeting House. Br. Macreading 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.

16th. Wind SE. Rains. Stormy. Br. Sherman comes from Nantucket.

17th. Wind NW. Br. Lovejoy and Br. Livsy (?) arrive from New Bedford. Br. Lovejoy preaches at evening. Surveyed land at Christiantown 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 reports 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. Captain 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 light 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. Willber 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. Macreading.

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

15th. Wind NE. Light. Ship *York* arrives in this harbour.

³Wood 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:

Vineyard Tales, by Gale Huntington. Martha's Vineyard: The Tashmoo Press, 1980. 244 pp.

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 descendants 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, via 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.'

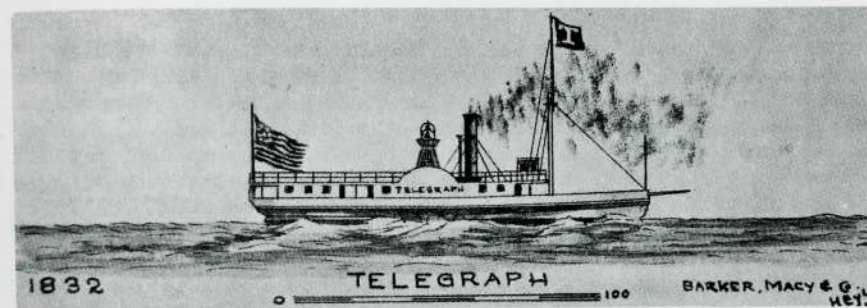
The train ran until 1916.

"It operated six days a week, leaving Boston at 3:10 p.m., arriving Wood's Hole at 4:50, to meet the steamer *Monohansett* 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.

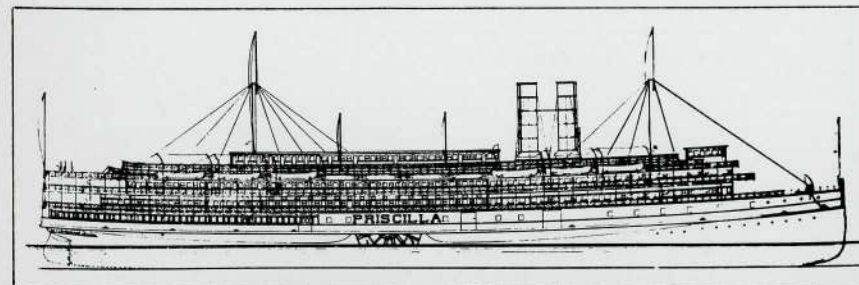
In this issue. . .



The Steamboat Telegraph (1832)



The Steamboat Massachusetts (1842)

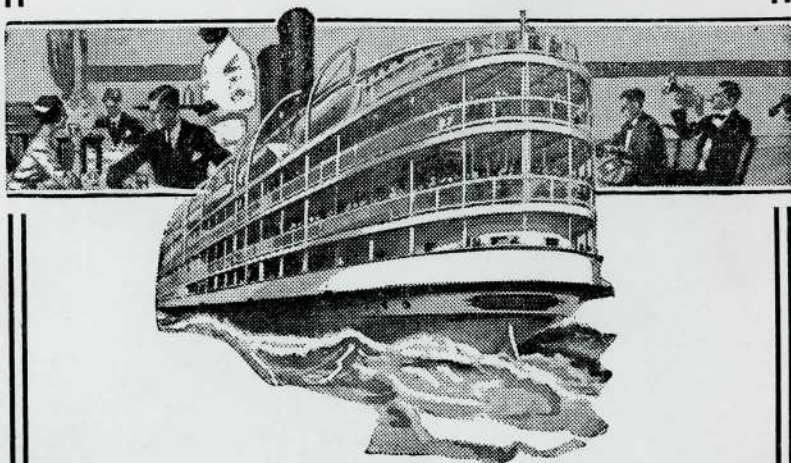


The Steamer Priscilla (1892)

Drawings from *Days of the Steamboats* by William H. Ewen and *Early American Steamers* by Erik Heyl

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