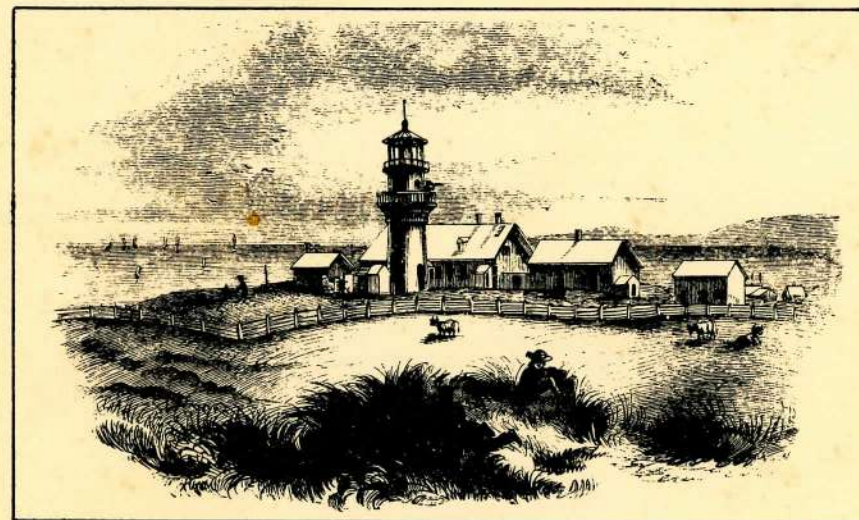




THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 23, NO. 4

MAY 1982



Gay Head Light Gets The Wondrous Fresnel

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

Our First Celebrity: Keeper Sam Flanders

*Plus: Bits & Pieces,
Letters and Director's Report*



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.

PRESERVATION FUND

It is that time of year again when we ask for contributions to our Preservation Fund. This Fund enables us to keep our buildings in good repair and to provide care for the thousands of historical items entrusted to the Society.

THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

Vol. 23, No. 4

May 1982

Gay Head Light Gets The Wondrous Fresnel 139

The second half of the history of Gay Head Light covers the period from 1843 until the light became automatic in 1956.

Our First Celebrity: Keeper Sam Flanders 172

From his remote station atop Gay Head Cliffs, Keeper Flanders charmed the visiting press with his story-telling and hospitality.

Director's Report 182

Bits & Pieces 184

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 and other material for publication 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.

DUKES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Arthur R. Railton, *President*
Stanley Murphy, *Vice President*
Shirley K. Erickson, *Secretary*
Kathryn M. Bettencourt, *Treasurer*

COUNCIL

Edith Bliss, Gale Huntington, Elmer Athearn, 1984; Lane Lovell, Dorothy Cottle Poole, Doris C. Stoddard, 1983; Nelson Coon, Lorna Livingston, Edith Morris, 1982. Henry Beetle Hough, John Montgomery, *honorary members*; Melville G. MacKay, *President Emeritus*.

Thomas E. Norton, *Director*; Muriel Crossman, *Librarian*; Dorothy Cottle Poole, *Historian*; Doris C. Stoddard, *Genealogist*.

The Dukes County Historical Society was founded in 1922 to preserve the history of Dukes County for the public benefit. It is a nonprofit institution supported entirely by membership dues, contributions and bequests, which are tax deductible.

The Society maintains the Thomas Cooke House, the Francis Foster Museum and Library, all located on its grounds at the corner of School and Cooke Streets in Edgartown.

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 is an exhibition of the Vineyard's maritime heritage with displays of fishing, coastal trade, whaling, navigation, plus a wide variety of scrimshaw. The Library contains collections of ship's logs, journals, genealogies and other Island documents.

The public is invited.

Gay Head Light Gets The Wondrous Fresnel

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

This is the second of a two-part article on the history of Gay Head Light. The first was published in February 1982. Gay Head Light is of special interest to the Society because its famed Fresnel lens and clockwork are now on permanent display in a truncated lighthouse tower on our grounds.

WHEN THE critical report by I.W.P. Lewis on 70 lighthouses in New England was sent to Congress in 1843 by Secretary of the Treasury Walter Forward, it triggered a series of events that 10 years later would end the long reign of Fifth Auditor Stephen Pleasonton over the nation's lighthouse service. It also brought national attention to Gay Head Light for the first time.

Secretary Forward told the Congress that Pleasonton was running his office "unaided by the science and skill now sought" and had fallen victim to abuses that "necessarily result from the existing defects in the system."¹ He proposed that the responsibility for lighthouses be taken away from the Fifth Auditor and assigned to a qualified engineer. It was nearly 10 years later before that change was accomplished.

Ellis Skiff, keeper of the lonely Gay Head Light, had, along with other keepers in the district, unknowingly played a role in Pleasonton's fall from grace. One of the complaints by Lewis was that Gay Head Light was too

¹Report of the Light-House Board, Committee of Commerce, 32nd Congress. Washington, D.C. 1852, pp. 534-5.

weak for its important location and should be replaced by a modern apparatus. Keeper Skiff was quoted in criticism of his light. It bothered Leavitt Thaxter, newly appointed Collector of Customs and Superintendent of Lights for Edgartown District, that one of his keepers would publicly criticize the establishment. (When the Whig, Benjamin Harrison, took over the White House in 1841, there were the usual Spoils System personnel changes. Thaxter, a leading Edgartown Whig, replaced John P. Norton, Democrat, as Customs Collector.)²

Collector Thaxter wrote to Auditor Pleasonton that, being "somewhat alarmed from the report of Mr. I.W.P. Lewis," he had made an inspection of the several lighthouses under his jurisdiction. His letter must have pleased the embattled Fifth Auditor:

"... I took with me Document No. 183 of the 27th Congress, 3rd Session, and called the attention of the Keepers to the statement there made by Mr. I.W.P. Lewis and the statements of the Keepers, respectively by them subscribed.

"On reading their statements carefully, the Keepers expressed their astonishment -- said they signed a statement, but they certainly did not mean to sign such."

The Edgartown Collector then quoted a letter he had just received from Keeper Ellis Skiff, who in Thaxter's words was "an intelligent, honest and upright man."

Skiff had written: "I never wished to have any better way for letting air into the Lantern than I now have thro' the scuttle. In regard to some of the statements in Mr. Lewis's report having my signature, I can only say, if they were all on the paper I signed, I knew it not, and they are different than I supposed them to be, and from what I told him. It will at least learn me a lesson for the future, not to sign a paper for any man until I understand its contents."

²The Collector was also Superintendent of Lights for the Edgartown District, which included the islands and southern Cape Cod. Collector Norton, according to Richard L. Pease, was "an active and zealous partisan of the last administration" and therefore must be replaced. Pease was applying for the Collector's job when he wrote that. He didn't get the job.

Another criticism by Lewis was that nothing was being done about the erosion that was threatening the lighthouse. Thaxter reported to Pleasonton:

"Mr. Skiff says (and it so appears to me) that there is no more danger now than there was eight years ago that the buildings will fall . . ."

To Auditor Pleasonton in Washington, support from the Island Collector must have been welcome, but it was hardly enough. He could not ignore the criticism that was coming from many sides. Benjamin Harrison had died after only a month as President and Vice President John Tyler, who was not a Whig like Harrison, had taken over. He was a Southerner, a former Democrat, and more critical of the northern establishment that ran the lighthouses. His Secretary of the Treasury began to push Pleasonton into making changes.

Anxious to keep his job, Pleasonton ordered that the light at Gay Head be moved, although Collector Thaxter felt it was unnecessary. In June 1844, a contract was let to John Mayhew of Edgartown to move the lighthouse 75 feet to a "spot indicated by a post in the ground." By August, the work was finished and Mayhew was paid \$386.87.

Collector Leavitt Thaxter, son of the late "Parson" Joseph Thaxter of Edgartown, was ambitious politically and his enthusiasm may have gotten him into trouble with Pleasonton, who certainly didn't wish to antagonize Congress at the moment. Congressman Robert Winthrop of Massachusetts complained to Pleasonton that the Edgartown Collector was making "a contemptible partisan effort" to oust Capt. Ira Darrow from his post on the Nantucket light vessel. The Congressman said that Capt. Lot Phinney of the Steam Boat *Massachusetts* and other mariners praised Darrow highly and the fact that he was an admitted Democrat should not cost him his job.

Whether politics was the reason or not, in the summer of 1845 Thaxter learned that his days as Collector were numbered. He wrote to Pleasonton in September that "I was assured early this quarter that I should be removed

and I was unwilling to do anything to the prejudice of my successor, who, by the bye, is a very worthy and capable young man."

The "worthy and capable young man" was Joseph Thaxter Pease, son of Jeremiah Pease, diarist. He was then 30 years old, 26 years younger than Leavitt, and a Democrat. Ironically, he had been named for his father's mentor, "Parson" Thaxter, the father of Leavitt whom he was to replace. It was a small world on the Island.

With the inauguration of James Polk, Democrat, as President in 1845, there were the usual personnel changes. On March 7, 1846, Collector Pease (being a Democrat, he was "safe") wrote Pleasonton: "Your letter of the 29th relating to the appointment of Keeper at Gay Head Light has been received and your directions to me have been complied with."

The new keeper at Gay Head was Samuel Flanders,³ a Democrat "as was his father before him." The Skiff family, after two generations at the light, was there no longer. What Pleasonton's "directions" to Pease were we don't know, but they might have been to tell the new keeper not to sign anything without reading it!

Money for lighthouse maintenance was hard to get, as Pleasonton continued to hold down expenses. Evidence of that is seen in a letter that Pease wrote to Pleasonton in 1847: "The Keeper of Gayhead Light has just informed me that the clockwork in his lantern is out of order; so much so that a night or two since, while he was in the lantern the chandelier stopped, owing to the fact that the blocks with which the weights are suspended are worn out." Apparently Pleasonton's control on expenses was so rigid that Pease had to write for authorization to spend \$15 for new blocks, which were essential to the light's operation!

Holding down oil consumption was a favorite economy measure of Pleasonton's. He regularly notified the

³Samuel Flanders was born in Chilmark in 1809, son of John Flanders, a tanner. He married Keziah F. Lambert in 1837 and they had 14 children. At his death in 1903, she and eleven children survived. The political reference is from the *Providence Journal*, quoted in the *Vineyard Gazette*, Oct. 30, 1857.

Collectors when their lighthouses burned more than the national average of oil and demanded an explanation. Pease, receiving such a letter about Gay Head, wrote to Keeper Flanders:

"Please inform me of the cause why more than the average quantity was consumed by you the past year."

Flanders, although new at the job, was not intimidated:

"In the printed instructions which you handed me on my appointment, I am directed to take care that the wicks are kept perfectly even at the top in order to give the greatest degree of Light possible . . . Since my appointment, this Light has, in no instance, burnt more than three hours without being trimmed and the wicks screwed up.

"Now the cleaner the light is kept, and the oftener it is screwed up, in order to 'give the greatest degree of Light possible,' the more oil will be consumed . . . but if it is your wish that the wicks should be kept down and not trimmed so often, I will obey your instructions in that particular as well as in all others . . . No oil has been wasted."

Apparently Collector Pease thought it prudent to get backing from an authority before sending such a blunt response to Washington, so he asked Winslow Lewis, the man who had built most of the nation's lighthouses, to visit his lights to determine why they were using more oil than the average. Captain Lewis responded:

"I would make any reasonable sacrifice to comply with Mr. Pleasonton's wishes in visiting your light houses, if I did not know that no possible good could result from it . . . The principle of the lamps are as perfect as they can be . . . The only reason I can give why the light houses in your district have consumed more than the usual quantity of oil last year is that the oil had been good and that the keepers have been more attentive in trimming their lamps often and keeping the blaze up to its full height during the whole night, instead of letting them go down as is often the case."

Pease, assured by the expert, went up to Gay Head and

looked over the situation. He reported back to Pleasonton:

"I visited Gayhead Light a few days since. The lamps there are in perfect order. I noted that the keeper kept the wicks as high as possible and they appeared about as bright in the morning as they were in the evening, they having been trimmed several times during the night. A better light is shown there than formerly."

So much for the faithful Skiffs and their years of service!

As Lewis has implied, the oil had been of poor quality during this period and lamps often burned lower, thus reducing the amount of oil consumed. Peter Daggett, outspoken keeper of Nobsque (Nobska) Point Light, wrote to Pease in October 1845 that "the oil will burn quite well for 2 hours and then the hard crust gathers on and they will go nearly out . . . If the oil was good spurm it would be as Good a Light at day Light as at or in the eving and the wiks would be soft."

In 1846, the oil was no better and Daggett wrote again, this time charging corruption (his spelling is terrible):

"Sir, I have Drawn of all the clear Oil out of the butts and have washed & scrubed the butts Clean for the Oil when they com. I have abought 80 gallongs of torable Clear Oil & 40 or abought that of thick oil. It is as thick as Mush. You have no Idea what a Cheat there is. The Capt. of the oil Scho. sease [says] he hase Nothing to Dow with it. He can not make me belive it. Every year he takes a Way from Each Light House 40 or 50 Gal. more of less which in all is several hundred Gallons. It is then taken to Newbedford and sold . . . Thay bid it off and the next year sell it to the Goverment mixed in with the Good Oil. It is a fact thay Dare Not Denie, I think. Then if any Light keeper Dair Say he Cant keep a good Light his oil is so bad, thay will publish as thay did Last Winter that it was allways very Conveanent for a Keeper to say he had poor oil . . . I should be Very Glad if you or your Father would come hear & see that oil before it was taken away."

Daggett was not the only keeper in the Edgartown District to write to Pease to complain. Asa Nye, keeper at

Chatham, wrote in August 1846 (his spelling is also poor):

" . . . the oil on hand is somwhat bad . . . I do not wish to find any fault but they say I do not keep a good light. Sir, the lamp will gro dim in some less than 3 hours . . . should you here of a bad light, I cannot help it under present circumstances."

It was not only that the quality of the sperm oil was going down, but the price was going up as the whalers had to go farther to get it. In Europe, lighthouses had already switched to Colza oil, made from the seed of a wild cabbage. In the United States, pressure from the whaling interests (and other reasons) prevented the switch. An attempt to get Wisconsin farmers to grow the cabbage was unsuccessful and sperm remained king.

During President Polk's four years in office, the pressure lessened on Fifth Auditor Pleasonton. It was not because he was making improvements, but because there were too many pressing national matters: the War with Mexico; the creation of the independent Treasury system; the annexation of Texas; the settlement of the dispute over the Oregon Territory; and the acquisition of California. Pleasonton and Winslow Lewis must have felt they had weathered the storm.

In 1849, Zachary Taylor became President and the Whigs returned to power. There were the customary changes at Collectors' offices and lighthouses. Collector Pease was removed and Leavitt Thaxter came back. Keeper Flanders was also removed and Henry Robinson became the new keeper at Gay Head.⁴

After several years of being ignored by critics, the lighthouse establishment came back under fire when the prestigious Franklin Institute of Philadelphia reported on the differences between the U.S. system of reflectors and the Fresnel system of lenses used in Europe. Its conclusions were shattering to the Pleasonton-Lewis establishment:

"The cataptric system adopted in the United States [the Lewis design] is a very imperfect imitation of the European

⁴He was probably from the Robinson family at Tarpaulin Cove, where there also was a lighthouse.

method, which was in use long before its *alleged* invention in this Union. Paraboloidal reflectors, with lamps placed in their foci, were in use nearly 70 years since in France and Great Britain. The addition of a convex lens [the Lewis "invention"] in front of the lamp . . . could only have been suggested by a person entirely ignorant of the elementary principles of optics."

The Institute urged adoption of the Fresnel system.

Auditor Pleasonton came to the defense of Lewis and his establishment. The problem, he said, was the political spoils system which resulted in too frequent changes in keepers, "who for a time do not understand the management of their lamps and consequently keep bad lights and waste much oil." His system was a good one, he claimed, because "the cost of maintaining our light-houses annually does not exceed one-third of that of the English."

Always the auditor!

But Congress had had enough of his penny-pinching and named a board of experts in 1851 to suggest something better. The next year, the board released its 750-page report that detailed beyond question the failure of the Pleasonton establishment to keep up with technology. Congress, convinced, transferred responsibility for lighthouses to a professional Light House Board and Auditor Pleasonton was eased out after 30 years.

That same report emphasized the navigational importance of Gay Head Light, stating it should be upgraded with a 1st Order lens at once, instead of the 4th Order apparatus then being used. "This light is deficient in power . . . At a distance of about 12 miles it is obscured about three-fourths of the time . . . This light is not second to any on the eastern coast and should be fitted, without delay, with a first-order illuminating apparatus. A glance at the chart will suffice to see its great importance."

In the Congressional debates on the formation of the Light House Board, some Senators supported Peter Daggett's earlier suspicion of wrong doing. Senator Evans of Maryland: "I want . . . an end put to that set of

contractors in the northern cities who plunder the Treasury out of hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Senator Duncan of Massachusetts tried to ease the blow to the hard-working Fifth Auditor: "I am willing to render all due honor to that venerable man who may be considered the father of the Light House establishment . . . yet I believe that the time has arrived to reorganize that department."

The only strong opposition to the change came from the New York Senators who were concerned that port fees would be imposed on ships to pay for the higher cost of the new system. They were, they said, concerned for their constituents, the businessmen.

Senator Evans stated the case succinctly: "Upon the one side is Mr. Pleasonton and the gentlemen (from New York) and upon the other side is the rest of the world. That is the way the matter stands precisely."

The amendment creating the Light House Board passed, 81 to 45, bringing a new era to American lighthouses and national attention to Gay Head Light.

It was good news to the *Vineyard Gazette*: "We are very glad to learn that Mr. Pleasonton has lost his office. It is astonishing that our Government has kept a regular antediluvian old Granny like Pleasonton in office for almost a half a century." (Sept. 10, 1852)⁵

Before his departure, Pleasonton had set into motion changes at Gay Head and they were underway even though the new Board was now in charge. In the 1852 Light House appropriation bill (the bill that had been amended to eliminate his position), Pleasonton had requested \$13,000 to refit and improve Gay Head Light, in response to the widespread criticism. Its passage created some confusion at Gay Head, as we shall see.

In 1853, there was another change at the White House when Democrat Franklin Pierce replaced Whig Millard Fillmore (he had become President on the death of

⁵Editor Marchant of the *Gazette* seemed to be waging a campaign against Pleasonton. After reading the 1852 Report by the Light-House Board, he wrote: "The way these reports and documents 'walk into' the old 'Fifth Auditor' is a caution." *Gazette*, Jan. 21, 1853.

Zachary Taylor). Joseph T. Pease was back in as Collector⁶ and Samuel Flanders and family moved back into the keeper's house at Gay Head. (Flanders was so pleased that when his wife delivered a son in June of that year he was named Franklin Pierce Flanders.)

Flanders, unlike most keepers, seemed to relish publicity and he soon became a news source for the *Gazette*.⁷

"We learned," the paper reported in August 1853, "from Samuel Flanders, Esq., that a light house is to be erected at Gay Head this coming fall. It is to be located about 5 or 6 rods back of the present one . . . A new dwelling house is also to be erected. An appropriation of \$13,000 was made at the last session of Congress to cover the expense of constructing these buildings."

Thus there were two separate plans in the works: the Pleasonton holdover plan to upgrade the light for \$13,000; and the still-to-be-approved Light House Board plan to make Gay Head a 1st Order light with a Fresnel lens, which would cost much more.

Editor E. Marchant of the *Gazette* continued to criticize the old lighthouse establishment. Reporting the firing of one of the lighthouse inspectors, a Commodore Downes, he wrote:

"It is about time . . . He displayed an utter ignorance of the duties of his office . . . an active, efficient man in his day . . . now too old for such service . . . the Light House Board must have wide-awake, go-a-head, young Americans, capable of flying, almost, from one post of duty to another . . ."

That should take care of the "regular antediluvian" Stephen Pleasonton and the organization he had built!

With \$13,000 in his budget to upgrade Gay Head Light, Henry N. Harper, agent for the Light House Board in Boston, filed this report to his Washington superiors in November 1853:

⁶Jeremiah Pease, the Collector's father, wrote in his diary on May 31, 1853: "Joseph is appointed Collector of Customs sometime this month under peculiar circumstances." He doesn't explain.

⁷See "Our First Celebrity: Keeper Sam Flanders," p. 172, this issue.

"Our Mr. Blake has visited the lighthouse at Gay Head and reports that the lantern is so poor that 'twould be useless to alter the lantern for larger size glass. Its size will admit of only five reflectors on a side. The chandelier and clock are worthless . . . it will be necessary to have a new revolving chandelier, revolving clock, lamps and reflectors. Mr. Blake says there is a revolving clock in New Bedford made by 'Willard' which is good. The motive power is attached by a rope to a wooden barrel which can be altered to a sprocket wheel and chain, if you think proper."

Mr. Blake, obviously, was still operating as though the penny-pinching Fifth Auditor was in charge. But there was a different mood in the office now. The following week, the Light House Board received this suggestion from Major C. A. Ogden, Engr., working out of the same Boston office as Mr. Blake:

"I would suggest that an appropriation of \$30,000 be asked for towards the erection of a first-class lens lighthouse at Gayhead (Martha's Vineyard)."

Agent Harper was confused and asked Washington for a clarification:

"We wrote you on the 2nd . . . we have had no reply. Our Mr. Blake has an impression that you expect the work to be done. Please inform us if this is correct."

The work was to be done and on May 26, 1854, the *Gazette* reported:

"We learn that the Light House Board are about to remove the old lantern and lighting apparatus from Gay Head Light and to erect thereon a new lantern glazed with large-size plate glass. In this is to be placed 13 new lamps [actually there were to be 14] with the largest sized reflectors . . . The business of lighting our sea coast is in the hands of an active and efficient board of officers and great improvements are now being made . . ."

Within three months, the work had been completed; the \$13,000 spent and in July the *Gazette* informed its readers:

"The old lantern . . . has been replaced by a new one which revolves in about 3 minutes and 58 seconds, with an

interval between each flash of 1 minute and 59 seconds. The new Light is of much greater power."

Though new, this apparatus was still of the old-fashioned design that the Franklin Institute had described as outdated. There were now 14 lamps instead of 10 and the larger reflectors were used instead of the smallest. It was not, however, a light of the 1st Order, as the 1852 Report had called for and as Lewis had urged back in 1843. With the extra lamps and larger reflectors, the apparatus put out so much additional light that it confused mariners. In September 1854, the *Gazette* wrote:

"IMPORTANT TO MARINERS -- It is stated that the Gay Head Light was mistaken for that at Sankaty (*sic*) Head by Capt. Bartlett of the bark *Mary Sawyer*, which caused him to run ashore on the south side of the Vineyard . . . A seafaring friend says no doubt there would be many vessels stranded on our south beach before next spring unless a change was made in Gay Head Light. We deem the matter of sufficient importance to receive the immediate attention of the Light House Board."

Two weeks later, G. W. Blunt, whose earlier complaints had done much to bring about the removal of Pleasonton, wrote to the *Gazette*:

"The notice . . . calling upon the Light House Board to change the character of the lights either at Sankaty or Gay Head to make them more distinct, strikes me as rather unreasonable, as Gay Head is a revolving light and Sankaty Head is a fixed light at the distance of 12 miles or less and beyond that a flashing light. Besides, the lights are 40 miles distant from each other and one is on the east and the other on the west end of two different islands."

Admitting that Blunt was an authority, "perhaps the best," Editor Marchant still demanded a distinction between the two lights. Previously dim, Gay Head was now bright enough to be confused with the 2nd Order light at Sankaty Head on Nantucket. The next week's *Gazette* carried a letter from Lt. A. A. Holcomb of the Light House Board explaining the situation:

" . . . these Lights are distinguished now precisely in the same manner that they have been for the last several years . . . the best Catoptric apparatus that could be made in Boston has been put into Gay Head tower within a few months past, as a substitute for apparatus of a very inferior character and quality . . . at the last session of Congress [approval was given] for the erection of a first-class Light House tower and for a First Order illuminating apparatus for Gay Head. The new tower will be built during the next summer and an illuminating apparatus placed in it which will exhibit a light that the most careless navigator cannot mistake."

In August 1854, only two weeks after the \$13,000 had been spent refitting the old light, Congress had appropriated the requested \$30,000 for the total replacement of the tower, light and dwelling house at Gay Head. Former Fifth Auditor Pleasonton must have been fuming at the waste!

Sometime the next winter, the Board ordered from the Paris manufacturer, Henry Lepaute, an *appareil catadioptrique de 1er Ordre a Eclats de 10" en 10"*.⁸ While his company was manufacturing the apparatus, Lepaute was given permission to exhibit the new lens at the Paris Exhibition of Industry of 1855. Its improved design was something the world was eager to see.

While this was going on in France, confusion continued in the waters off the Vineyard. In March 1855, the brig *Robert Reed* of Canada mistook Sankaty Head Light for Gay Head and went ashore on the Nantucket beach. "The crew all landed in safety," the *Gazette* reported.

In April 1855, Editor Marchant gave more details about the new light:

"We learn that the Light House to be built at Gay Head will be one of the very first order. It will have 3 keepers, the principal of whom will receive a salary of \$800 per year. Mr. Samuel Flanders, the present popular keeper, will doubtless receive the appointment of first keeper. . ."

⁸The Board ordered several smaller Fresnel lenses at the same time. Gay Head's was the only 1st Order; its price, 54,061 francs.

In the next issue, an anonymous letter writer agreed that the higher salary was deserved: "The light is revolving and has to be wound every four hours . . . and some of the family must be moving at all hours of the night . . . for a meager pittance of \$350 per year or a trifle more than 90 cents per day." (It might have been Flanders who wrote the letter!)

Suddenly, the love affair the *Gazette* had been having with the new Light House Board came to an end -- and with good reason. The Board had not advertised on the Island, meaning in the *Gazette*, for bids for the construction of the new light at Gay Head. Editor Marchant didn't like it:

"A gentleman of this town, who has in former years taken contracts of this character and always completed them satisfactorily, has called our attention to these facts.⁹ He was not aware, until too late, that an advertisement inviting proposals for this work had been issued, and was, therefore, shut out from competition . . . It is gross mismanagement on the part of the Board, to say the least, and smacks strongly of corruption."

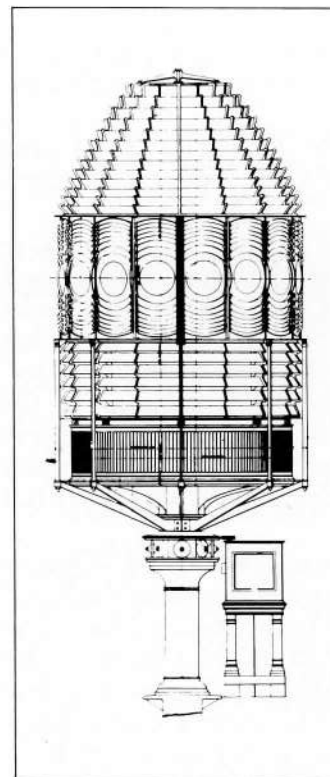
Furthermore, the Editor added, there were other instances of wrongdoing that he would make known later. "The press of urgent business compels us to put the matter aside for the present." There was, he continued, "a strong desire among a large portion of the public for the entire abolishment of the Board and a return to the old system. We have no doubt, from certain facts in our possession, that could easily be brought about."

A mighty strong threat, it would seem, from a four-page weekly on the Vineyard -- a weekly that had been praising the new Board and cheering the removal of the antediluvian old Gräny, Pleasonton!

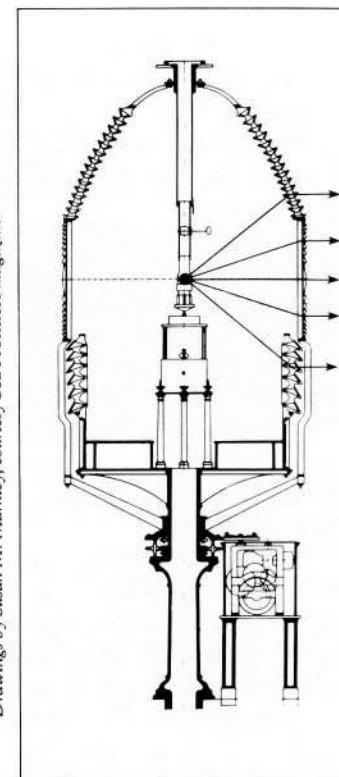
Marchant was right about the contract. Two weeks later, the Board announced it had hired a Caleb King of Boston to build a lighthouse and dwelling at Gay Head. The *Gazette* made no comment. Those promised "certain facts" that would overthrow the Board were never

⁹It might have been John Mayhew of Edgartown.

Adapted from illustrations in the National Archives



Drawings by Susan M. Markley, courtesy Sea Frontiers magazine



First-order Fresnel revolving lens like the one installed at Gay Head in 1856.

published. In fact, for an entire year there was not another mention of Gay Head Light in the *Gazette*, a year in which the biggest change in history was going on.¹⁰

True to the prediction of Editor Marchant, Keeper Flanders was named principal keeper and he did get a raise, but not to the \$800 the *Gazette* had reported. The Secretary of the Treasury informed Flanders: "Your salary as Keeper . . . is hereby increased to five hundred dollars per annum, from the date of the completion of the new

¹⁰The *Gazette* continued to hit at the Light House Board. In 1855, it reported that certain buoys were off station: "The buoys in the Vineyard District have been almost useless the past season, owing to their wrong positions. The Light House Board sleep well."

structure . . . ”

No doubt the raise made Flanders happy, but not as happy, perhaps, as he would have been if he hadn't been expecting \$800.

Meanwhile, unknown to the Vineyard, Gay Head's Fresnel apparatus had won the Gold Medal at the Paris Exposition.

On May 13, 1856, the Board notified its Boston office that “a first order catadroptric apparatus, eclipses and flashing every 10 seconds, which obtained the Gold Medal at the Exposition Universelle held in Paris in 1855, has been shipped from Havre for New York on the 24th inst. per ship *Uncle Toby*. This apparatus is designed for the Gay Head Light House and it may be expected here very soon. I have to request that you will make the necessary arrangements for having it placed as soon after its arrival as possible.”¹¹

So, it would seem, some time in June or July 1856, the wonderful apparatus from France was landed on the Island and installed in the new brick tower at Gay Head. The entire operation went unreported by the *Gazette*. It did acknowledge, on August 1, 1856, that “a new light has been erected on Gay Head . . . The tower is built of brick and is 35 feet high. The keepers' houses are of brick also . . . The illuminating apparatus is a revolving Fresnel lens of the first order, showing a bright flash every 10 seconds. This light will be exhibited at sundown December 1, 1856, from which date the revolving light shown at Gay Head at present will be discontinued.”¹²

Six weeks later, it found another reason to criticize the Light House Board, this time with a nice turn of a phrase:

“The new lighthouse and dwelling house recently built at Gay Head have been in a sad state. The contractor cared more for filling his pockets than fulfilling his

¹¹There is no explanation for the delay in shipping the apparatus from France. If it was exhibited in Paris in 1855, why was it not shipped until May 1856? It could have been held up because the tower at Gay Head was not built until the summer of 1856.

¹²It is unfortunate that the *Gazette* ignored the construction story. We would like to know, for instance, if the bricks were made at the Roaring Brook Brick Yard in Chilmark.

contract. The buildings have just been repaired at a cost of several thousand dollars. The keepers' house was flooded by every heavy rain and nearly destroyed. The covering of the roof has been entirely taken off and a new one put on. The Light House Board manage their business in this District in a most slovenly and inefficient manner.”

Editor Marchant seemed to be telling the Board that if it had advertised in his paper and hired a local contractor things would have turned out better.¹³

The Board did advertise in the *Gazette* in September 1856. A small display advertisement announced an auction of the “Keeper's dwelling, together with some building materials at the Gay Head Light House, October 1, at 12 o'clock.”

Despite the “plundering” of Caleb King and the “blundering” of the Light House Board, Gay Head Light was completed on time. The *Gazette* carried the official “NOTICE TO MARINERS” on November 14, stating that the new light would go into operation at sunset, December 1, 1856. It would show “a bright flash of the natural color every ten seconds. The light should be visible in good weather from the deck of a vessel 19 nautical or 21 statute miles.”

Two days before the first lighting, the *Gazette* reprinted an article from the *Namasket (Middleboro) Gazette*. It described the Indians at Gay Head, the school and church, the selling of clay and cranberries by the Indians, and then it marvelled over the new lighthouse:

“Here is situated one of the most important lights on the coast. The old one, now in operation, is a revolver and consists of 14 lamps, with reflections. A new one, on an improved plan, has just been put up to go into operation the first of December. It cost \$18,000; instead of revolving as the old one, the lamp, which is single, consists of four circular wicks inside each other, enclosed by a glass dome, six or seven feet high and about four wide, which revolves once in four minutes. This dome is formed of about 600

¹³It probably would have been better. For one thing, the local builder would have been more aware of the water problems caused by the clay.

plain convex lenses, and 24 local glasses opposite the lamp. It is a fine piece of work. The light is supposed to penetrate farther than other kinds."¹⁴

Thus, for the first time, Island residents learned the design details of the prize-winning Fresnel -- via Namasket.

And so it was that just before sunset on December 1, 1856, a proud Keeper Samuel Flanders, with his assistants helping, cranked up the heavy weights of the clockwork that drove the huge Fresnel lens around its track, cranked up the piston that forced the oil into the lamp, lighted the four concentric wicks of the Lepaute moderator lamp and released the brake, allowing the sparkling beehive of glass to rotate like a diamond-studded carousel to send a brilliant flash 20 miles across the water every 10 seconds.

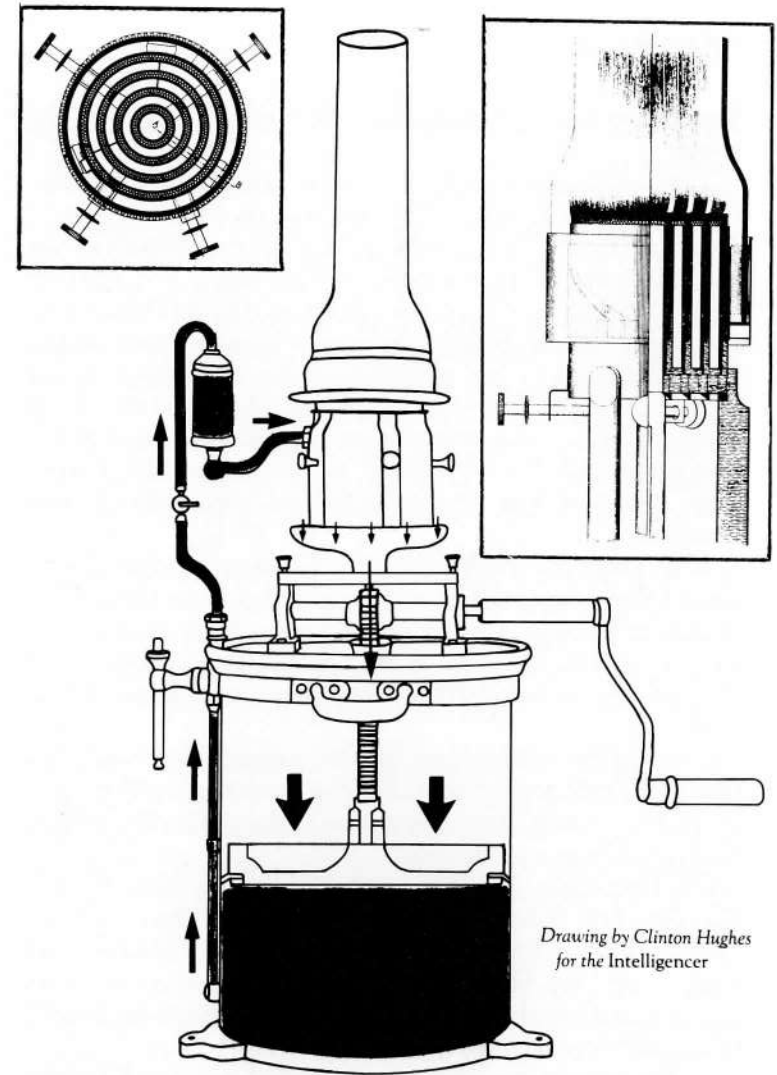
There is no way for us to know how many witnesses there were to marvel at this miracle of light. The *Gazette* did not report it.

That Fresnel lens, which since that night in 1856 sent its beam out to the horizon for nearly 100 years, is the same lens that is now displayed on the grounds of the Society. It is named after Augustin Fresnel, a French physicist, who developed the principle early in the 1800s. He never saw the Gay Head Fresnel lens as he died in 1827, long before it was manufactured. After his death, others had continued to work on his principle, improving it greatly. The Gay Head lens incorporated the latest improvements at the time, particularly the holophotal design of the Englishman, Thomas Stevenson.¹⁵

The compound lens and prism assembly, consisting of 1008 separate pieces of finely ground glass, rotated around a multi-wick lamp designed by Lepaute. The energy to drive the assembly on its eight steel wheels is provided by a descending weight controlled by a clockwork. The weight, weighing over 100 pounds, had to be cranked up every

¹⁴The article contains much of interest. See "Bits & Pieces" this issue.

¹⁵The Stevensons, several of whom were lighthouse engineers, were most unhappy about the way Fresnel seemed to get all the credit for the new lens systems, much of which was their development. Thomas Stevenson, by the way, was the father of famed author, Robert Louis Stevenson.



*Drawing by Clinton Hughes
for the Intelligencer*

Original lamp for the Fresnel was about four feet tall with an oil reservoir, shown in cutaway, as its base. In the reservoir, the weight of a heavy piston forced the oil up through pipe at left into wick chamber. The piston had to be cranked up every half hour. Four concentric wicks, top left, produced a solid mass of flame. The unburned oil drained back into the reservoir, acting as a coolant to keep the intense heat from damaging the lamp.

four hours because of the relatively short height of the tower.

The mechanism that forced the oil up into the lamp also had to be wound regularly; some reports state as often as every half hour. That cranking raised a heavy piston inside the oil reservoir at the base of the lamp. The piston's weight resting on top of the oil forced the liquid up into the wicks. More than twice as much oil was circulated through the lamps as was burned, the excess being needed to cool the lamp. Without the cooling oil, the extreme heat of the brilliant flame would have damaged the machinery. The unburned, hot oil drained back into the oil reservoir from which it was forced back into the wicks by the descending piston.

With four concentric wicks, the Lepaute lamp produced a solid flame four inches in diameter and more than three inches tall inside a tall glass chimney. Heat and smoke were vented to the outside by a metal stovepipe that ran through the center of the lens to a ventilating globe on the roof.

It would be satisfying to be able to state that with this technological wonder marking the entrance to Vineyard Sound no vessels piled up on the rocks of Devil's Bridge. Sadly, that was not the case.

On December 15, 1856, only two weeks after Keeper Flanders first lighted his wondrous lamp, "the schooner *John N. Roach*, bound from Philadelphia to Boston, was lost . . . off Gay Head, entrance to Vineyard Sound and all on board perished. No particulars have been received." (*Vineyard Gazette*)

In the spring another advertisement appeared in the *Gazette*: "AUCTION AT GAY HEAD! The old Lighthouse, a lot of Oil-Buts, and various other articles will be sold to the highest bidder at 12 M. April 14th. By order of Lieut. W. B. Franklin, Engr. Sec'y. Light House Board."

We don't know who had bought the dwelling in September nor who bought the lighthouse at this auction

in April. Perhaps the house was moved, as houses so often were, and is still being lived in. We have no way to know.

The new lighthouse, with its sparkling prisms and lenses and its genial, hospitable keeper, became a magnet for summer visitors who, in many cases, had come to the Methodist Camp Meetings, the Island's first tourist attraction.¹⁶ Gay Head Cliffs, of course, had long attracted visitors, one of whom, the political hero of New England, Daniel Webster, made the arduous trip overland to view the beauty of the clay and said: "It is what Niagara would be if instead of 150 feet of falling water, it exhibited a perpendicular bank of that height, composed of lines, strata and sections of various earths of brilliant and highly contrasted colors."¹⁷

The new lighthouse soon became the centerpiece of the Gay Head scene and thousands of postcards were sent all over the world showing the lighthouse and, on some of them, even its brilliant beam. The press soon followed and many stories of the wonder of the new light were published.

Keeper Sam Flanders, the genial and hospitable host, became the Squire of the Cliffs, telling tales, real and imagined, that even today are being told as Gospel. Most, without doubt, came from the imaginative mind of Keeper Flanders. Not the least of the stories is the one describing the mysterious "loss" of the *Fresnel* on its trip to Gay Head. When it arrived in New York, the story explains, it was in an unmarked box and the Customs officials didn't know its destination. Holding it as unclaimed property for the legal period, they then sold it at auction to the highest bidder. The story, which first appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in September 1859 (see page 176, this issue), was told by Keeper Flanders and certainly could not have endeared him to the Light House Board in Washington.

¹⁶In August 1859, one vessel, the steam boat *Eagle's Wing*, carried 15,000 persons to and from the Wesleyan Grove camp meeting.

¹⁷Quoted in Henry Beetle Hough's *Martha's Vineyard, Summer Resort*, Tuttle Publishing Co., Rutland, Vt., 1936, p. 30. Webster made his trip in 1849 before the new lighthouse was built.

Sam may not have been pleasing his superiors with his fanciful tales, but he was charming the visitors who flocked to the Cliffs. The press loved him and their stories showed it. Every article written about the Cliffs and the brilliant new Fresnel praised the hospitable Flanders. The keeper became the Island's first national celebrity. It looked as though he had built himself a permanent place tending the lighthouse at Gay Head in his "royal House of Flanders."

But that wasn't the way things worked in the Light House Service. In 1861, Abraham Lincoln became President. The defeated Democrats moved out of the White House and out of the Federal jobs on the Vineyard. Flanders, the enthusiastic Democrat, had to move his wife and 14 children out of the keeper's dwelling to make room for Ichabod Norton Luce of Edgartown, former Whig and now an important member of the county's Republican-Union Party. Collector of Customs Ira Darrow, Democrat, was out and the Whig-Republican John N. Vincent was in.

The *Gazette*, announcing the changes, emphasized the incomes that came with the jobs. Collector Darrow had been paid \$1054 in the previous year. Lighthouse keepers were not so well off; they were getting from \$350 to \$500 a year.

The change in keepers at Gay Head didn't seem to please the *New Bedford Mercury*, which late in 1861 published a complaint that came from the Vineyard about the dimness of the light at Gay Head. The name of the complaining party wasn't revealed. The *Gazette* quickly came to the support of the new keeper:

"The information forwarded to the *New Bedford Mercury* from the Island proves to be incorrect. Hon. John Vinson, Collector of this port, has visited Gay Head since the reputed 'dimness' of the Light and finds that all parts have worked admirably and that a splendid Light has been the result."¹⁸

Criticism of the new keeper, I. N. Luce, must have

¹⁸*Vineyard Gazette*, Jan. 31, 1862.



Our earliest photo of the lighthouse, circa 1875.

continued because in May 1862 Editor Marchant again felt it necessary to praise the new regime:

"GAY HEAD LIGHT -- We learn from persons who ought to know that this light is one of the best on the whole coast, now, as it ever has been. The successor of the 'Royal House of Flanders' is every way qualified to make a light 'that is a light,' penetrating into the very recesses of old ocean, and giving a brilliant crest to every billow."

The editor's sarcasm suggests that he suspected that the criticisms of the new keeper were coming from the old.

During the Civil War there was little mention of Gay Head Light in the newspapers, except the occasional announcement of personnel changes. In August 1863, Horatio N. T. Pease, son of Joseph Thaxter Pease (formerly Collector), was appointed assistant keeper, replacing James O. Lambert. The notice states that Lambert was

"removed" and not that he had resigned. Why he was removed is not explained. Young Horatio was part of the very political Pease family and that may have been a factor, although the Democrats were not in power and that was the "family" party.

Apparently, two years of service on lonely Gay Head were enough to satisfy Ichabod N. Luce and in 1864 he resigned as keeper to be replaced by Capt. Calvin C. Adams of Chilmark.¹⁹ Assistants to Adams were Horatio N. T. Pease (who had married Lydia Adams, the Captain's daughter, six years before) and Matthew Poole. The Civil War had brought inflation and the keepers were given raises in 1867. Captain Adams' salary went to \$710 a year, the assistants each were paid \$400.

With these new keepers, the well-publicized lighthouse hospitality continued. The *Gazette*, in July 1869, thirteen years after the new light went into operation, made its first reportorial trip to the Fresnel. Like others, it marvelled at the light and urged its readers to visit the wondrous beacon. "By all means pass the night at the Light House, where you will find everything comfortable and the keepers very obliging." Lighthouse regulations frowned on the practice of keepers taking in overnight guests, but apparently it was the general rule at Gay Head.

Sperm oil was no longer being burned in the light. The service had switched to lard oil in 1867, the result of the skyrocketing price of sperm, which had jumped to \$2.70 a gallon. Lard oil was only \$1.27. Efforts were made to switch to petroleum, but keepers were worried about the "highly inflammable character and explosiveness of its vapor when mingled with atmospheric air."²⁰

In November 1869, Captain Adams, then 70 years old, resigned and his son-in-law, Horatio Pease, became principal keeper. The retiring keeper's wife became assistant keeper and when she died in 1872, her son, Calvin M. Adams, was appointed in her place. It was an intimate family arrangement.

¹⁹Uncle of the Adams Sisters of Tom Thumb fame.

²⁰*Vineyard Gazette*, Jan. 1, 1869.

Frederic H. Lambert must have been the other assistant keeper because in July 1872 the *Gazette* reported that the assistant keeper at Gay Head, Lambert, had "killed nine rats at one shot . . . We defy any rat-ional man to do better."

Where he was when he shot them was not mentioned.

Although little news of Gay Head appeared in the *Gazette*, there was enough happening there to encourage someone to start a newspaper. In 1871, a newspaper, appropriately called *Gay Head Light*, printed its first issue, which, it seems, was also its last. Strangely enough, despite its name, the newspaper contained not a word about the lighthouse.

Dukes County agreed in 1870 to take over the road from Chilmark to Gay Head and in 1873 the *Gazette* reported that "the Post Route terminating in Chilmark will soon be extended to Gay Head and then a Post Office will be established there, as it should be." Gay Head was losing its remoteness.²¹

There may not have been much traffic on the roadway, but the Sound was alive with vessels. Keeper Pease, who kept an accurate count which he regularly reported to the *Gazette*, logged 26,000 vessels in 1873, of which 1,102 were steam boats. That impressive number must have been counted in daylight only, as it is unlikely that keepers could keep track of vessels passing the light during the hours of darkness.

Mariners must have continued to complain about confusing the three principal lights in the area: Sankaty Head, Gay Head and Montauk Point. All were much brighter, all now being equipped with Fresnel lenses, although only Gay Head was of 1st Order. All were flashing or revolving white lights. The Light House Board decided to make Gay Head, the middle one of the three, a distinctive light, something first proposed by Edward Pope

²¹The road was badly needed. One account, around 1840, had this to say: "It is to be regretted, however, that the road for the last five or six miles is so rough and crooked that a guide and considerable courage are indispensable. Not less than 17 pairs of bars must be gone through." *Geology of Massachusetts*, Edward Hitchcock, J. S. Adams, Amherst, 1841, p. 275 fn.

in 1798.

On May 15, 1874, the light at Gay Head was changed from flashing white to the three whites and one red that we know today. This was accomplished by bolting a red screen over every fourth face on the outside of the Fresnel "beehive."

But it didn't eliminate disasters. At 4 o'clock in the morning of January 18, 1884, the 275-foot *City of Columbus* ran up on Devil's Bridge with a loss of 103 passengers and crew. It was a clear night and Gay Head was flashing its three whites and a red, but disaster struck. The ship's captain lost his license (he was a survivor) in the worst marine disaster in Island history.

Excursion boats were regular visitors to the scenic cliffs, bringing hundreds of day-trippers at a time. They landed at a dock on the Sound side of the Head, just east of Devil's Bridge. Two-wheeled ox carts carried the tourists to the clifftop where they would admire the view and visit the famous lighthouse. The keepers were the stars of the show, especially after 1885 when they were issued two sets of uniforms: one duty uniform and one dress uniform.

By this time the Board had convinced keepers that kerosene was not dangerously explosive and the lamps were converted to burn it, eliminating the old problem of congealing oil. Costs were lower with kerosene, which now flowed like water out of the ground in Pennsylvania, selling for about 35 cents a gallon.

In 1890, Keeper Horatio N. T. Pease resigned after having served at the light for 27 years, the longest term of any keeper except that of Ebenezer Skiff, the first. His replacement was William Atchison, who was transferred from a mainland light.

The arrival of Atchison and his family began ten years of mysterious illness among the keepers and their families. It is not known what was the cause. It may have been pure coincidence, but many felt otherwise. Some blamed the illness on the dampness of the dwelling which builder Caleb King had built too close to the ground, which was impervious clay. The house was mildewed most of the



Photo, circa 1880, shows front of dwelling.

time. Others thought it was the water, still being hauled from the distant spring. Whatever the cause, suddenly a series of illnesses occurred.

On December 9, 1890, less than six months after his arrival, Keeper Atchison became very ill and was unable to perform his duties for two weeks. A few weeks later, he was again stricken. The journal reads: the "keeper had a very severe attack of sickness last night." He seemed unable to shake off his illness and three weeks later he resigned.

Edward P. Lowe took over in February 1891. Crosby L. Crocker, who had become an assistant keeper in October 1890, continued in that position under Lowe. Suddenly, two months after he arrived, Keeper Lowe was "taken sick with La Grippe." Then on February 20, 1892, less than a year after Lowe arrived at Gay Head, the journal entry states: "Keeper died this afternoon." He was 44 years old.

Assistant Keeper Crocker became Principal Keeper, with Leonard L. Vanderhoop taking over as assistant, the first Gay Head native to hold that position. Alonzo D. Fisher

became the other assistant.

For several years, there were no unusual illnesses at the lighthouse. Then, four of Keeper Crocker's children became ill and died, all within the 15 months from January 1896 to July 1897. The fifth Crocker child died in 1907, at the age of 15, ten years later.

A letter tucked into the journal of that period deepens the mystery. It was written by Lt. Arthur P. Nazro of the Lighthouse Tender *Azalea* to Keeper Crocker in 1901:

"Has the drinking water at your station been analyzed? It struck me that possibly it may have to do with the troubles that have proved so fatal to your children.

"If no examination has been made, I will have one made in Boston if you will please pack up a bottle or tin of water carefully and put it in a box. Send it to the office, at the same time writing a letter to inform us that you have done so. I trust you will all very soon be enjoying better health."

There is nothing to tell us of the results of any tests that might have been made. The Light House Board apparently came to the conclusion that it was the building, not the water, that was causing the problems. After the children's deaths, a report had been made to the Board about the dwelling:

"The floor is at a level with the ground and prevents the raising of the grade to turn water from the clay site. Rain driven against the walls and running down them into the ground is retained by the impervious soil, and keeps the cellars and unexcavated ground under the building and the lower rooms so damp that mold and mildew gather on the walls of the rooms and on household articles . . . The house is too damp and unsanitary for safe occupation by human beings."²²

After 43 years of use, the house was declared not safe for "occupation by human beings."

In 1902, three years after the "unsafe" report, the brick dwelling was torn down and replaced with a wooden one, built high enough above the clay soil to be dry. But there still was no drinking water and keepers continued to haul

²²Lighthouse Clipping List, National Archives.

Photograph by Frank W. Small © 1953



Wooden dwelling was built in 1902 to replace the dank brick structure.

it from the spring. Rain water was still used for washing when available.

Late in 1912 came a major improvement in the light source, the first since 1856. An incandescent oil vapor lamp (I.O.V.) which burned kerosene vapor in its two-inch mantle was installed, one of the first on the coast to be so equipped. The keepers had considerable difficulty with the vaporizers, which seemed to be the weakest part of the system. But in time the equipment became more reliable and keepers became more adept at using it. There were fewer nights when it was necessary to carry the spare oil-wick lamp up into the lantern as a replacement when the vaporizer failed.

Keeper Crocker retired in 1920, moving to Main Street,

Vineyard Haven, where, friends said, he never felt at home. It was not that he didn't like Vineyard Haven, he was lonesome for "his light." He was lost without the daily routine that had been his life atop the cliffs at Gay Head. He had lived there, maintaining the beacon, for more than 30 years, longer than any other keeper. He had lost five of his children there. It was impossible for him to forget. Going to bed without looking out the bedroom window to check his light must have been difficult.

Replacing Crocker as keeper was his assistant, Charles W. Vanderhoop, the first Gay Head native to become principal keeper. Under him, the light had an outstanding reputation for reliability. His hospitality rivalled that of Squire Flanders. Many important persons visited the light and were taken up into the lens by Keeper Vanderhoop, among them former President Calvin Coolidge and movie star Harold Lloyd.

Vanderhoop retired in 1933 and James E. Dolby became keeper. After Dolby's death in 1937, Frank A. Grieder, keeper of Great Point Light at Nantucket, took over the Gay Head station. He had applied for Cape Poge Light, but when the Gay Head spot suddenly became available with the death of Dolby, he took it.

Under the Presidential Reorganization Act of 1939, the Lighthouse Bureau (which had replaced the Light House Board in 1910) was discontinued and lighthouses were placed under the Coast Guard. Keepers were given the choice of remaining as civilians or joining the Coast Guard without loss of pay. At Gay Head, Assistant Keeper Sam Fuller signed up, while Keeper Grieder remained a civilian. With the new lamp, the I.O.V., only two keepers were required to run the light.

Then, in 1941, when the nation went to war, everything changed. Lighthouses were darkened or dimmed lest they aid enemy submarines. The brilliant I.O.V. lamp was removed and a small lamp, not much larger than a Coleman lantern, replaced it to provide a dim beacon for fishermen in adjacent waters. The Coast Guard

Charles W. Vanderhoop, born in Gay Head in 1882, was a member of the Wampanoag tribe and, from 1920 to 1933, keeper of the light. A member of our Society, he took part in dedicating the Fresnel lens on our grounds in 1952.



commander at the Menemsha station moved Sam Fuller over to the Creek and made the lighthouse a single-keeper station. This did not please Keeper Grieder. The assistant keeper's quarters were converted into a barracks for the Coast Guardsmen who patrolled the beaches and who manned the lookout stations. The Coast Guard had little sympathy for the problems of the lighthouse keeper, and vice versa.

When the war ended, the light went back to its I.O.V. brilliance, but it remained a single-keeper station. Mrs. Elsie Grieder, wife of the keeper, was not pleased. It was one thing in wartime, she felt, but when peace came, the station should have gone back to two-keeper status. Her husband was not a strong man physically and the work was too much for him alone. Furthermore, the living conditions were intolerable, with no running water, no electricity.

She took it upon herself to do something about it. A spunky woman (she was later to become the first woman granted a scalloping license in Gay Head -- "but I don't consider myself a woman's libber!"), she wrote to President Harry S. Truman, telling him that she felt it was disgraceful for Federal employees in the most powerful country in the world to have to live in the year 1946 without running water. Other houses at Gay Head had it, she wrote, why couldn't the Federal house?

She was right. The dwelling had the same sanitation problems it had in Ebenezer Skiff's time, back in 1800 - rain water was used for washing and drinking water was hauled from a distant spring. She didn't demand much, she told the President -- only electricity, a bathtub and a flush toilet!²³

In a few weeks, the White House staff responded. Gay Head Light would be electrified and she would get what she wanted.

Two years later, Keeper Grieder retired on disability, but there was still no electricity or running water. The new keeper, Joseph Hindley, had to put up with kerosene lamps and outdoor privies for four more years until 1952, when with the arrival of electricity the famed Fresnel lens was removed and the present high-intensity electric beacon was installed. The lens was dismantled and brought to Edgartown where it was reassembled and mounted atop a truncated tower at the Society. At last, the keeper's dwelling had running water.

Ironically, in four years there was to be little need for running water because when the light was made fully automatic in 1956 the keeper's house was torn down, the station dehumanized. A new era began.

There would be no more keepers, no more Skiffs, Peases, Crockers, Flanders or Vanderhoops to worry about the oil, the wicks or the vaporizers. There would be no need for night watches in the circular room below the giant Fresnel, slowly revolving as it sent its beam out to the horizon. Fully electrified, with no weights to be cranked up, no clockwork to maintain, the light can now be supervised from the Coast Guard station at Menemsha, 10 miles away by road.

But the wondrous Fresnel remains, standing proudly, not at Gay Head, but on the Society's ground in Edgartown, a permanent memorial to our Island's first lighthouse and to those self-reliant men and women who, for more than 150 years, kept a beacon shining atop glorious Gay Head.

²³Interview with author, Nov. 12, 1981.

PRINCIPAL KEEPERS, GAY HEAD LIGHTHOUSE

1799 Ebenezer Skiff
 1828 Ellis Skiff
 1845 Samuel Flanders
 1849 Henry Robinson
 1853 Samuel Flanders
 1861 Ichabod Norton Luce
 1864 Calvin C. Adams
 1869 Horatio N. T. Pease
 1890 William Atchison
 1891 Edward P. Lowe
 1892 Crosby L. Crocker
 1920 Charles W. Vanderhoop
 1933 James E. Dolby
 1937 Frank A. Grieder
 1948 Joseph Hindley
 1956 Light automated

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of the research for this article was done at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and the author is very much in the debt of William Sherman of that institution for his generous and knowledgeable assistance. Most of the non-attributed quotations are from letters, reports and journals Mr. Sherman helped me locate. Other research was done at the Graduate Library of the University of Michigan.

The author thanks Mrs. Elsie Grieder and Mr. Leonard Vanderhoop, both of Gay Head, for sharing with him their recollections, and Clinton Hughes of Oak Bluffs for his drawing of the first lamp used in the Fresnel.

Sea Frontiers magazine, which generously allowed us to use its Fresnel drawings, is published by The International Oceanographic Foundation, Miami, Florida 33149.

Our First Celebrity: Keeper Sam Flanders

HE MUST have been a real charmer -- and a story teller par excellence! Most lighthouse keepers go through life unheralded and anonymous, but not Samuel Flanders. While he was keeper, there wasn't an article written about Gay Head Light that didn't praise Keeper Flanders -- Squire Flanders, as one writer called him. He became known around the country -- the Island's first celebrity.

He was certainly a press agent for Gay Head, telling tales that the press swallowed like cherrystones. Even today, more than a century later, they are still being quoted, part of the legend of Gay Head Light.

Samuel Flanders was born in Chilmark in 1810, the son of John Flanders and Hannah Tilton Flanders. He married Keziah F. Lambert in 1837 and they had 14 children, seven of whom were probably born at Gay Head Light. He served two different tours at the lighthouse: from 1845 to 1849 and then again from 1853 to 1861. Both removals were political -- he was a Democrat and the Whigs in 1849 and the Republicans in 1861 cleaned out the Democrats when they took over the White House. (When the Democrats won, Republicans were out, of course.) He died in 1903, his widow and eleven children surviving.

It was the new lighthouse with its wondrous Fresnel lens, built in 1856, that brought the off-Island press to remote Gay Head. Even before that, however, in 1855, the *Vineyard Gazette* showered praise on Flanders in an article about the proposed new beacon:

"Mr. Samuel Flanders, the present popular keeper of Gay Head Light, will doubtless receive the appointment of 1st keeper to the new light . . . his influence among the Indians is altogether for good; and his genuine, overflowing hospitality to all, especially to shipwrecked mariners, is always a matter of comment . . . We have heard it said . . . that Mr. Flanders spends one-third of his salary in entertaining his friends and the destitute who are from time to time cast away upon the Head . . . Mr. Flanders is well known in Washington . . . and has won high consideration there." (April 13, 1855)

One off-Islander who called himself "An Old Traveller" visited the Vineyard in 1857 and recounted his experience in a letter to Editor E. Marchant of the *Gazette*:

"One of the most interesting portions of the Island is Gay Head . . . A visit to my more than royal friend, of the 'House of Flanders,' whose bright and steady ray has so long lighted up the tops of the crested billows and served to guide the storm-tossed mariner to a haven of safety, will always be remembered as one of the pleasantest hours of a not a very short or uneventful life." (August 14, 1857)

In the fall of 1857, mainland newspapers began to carry stories about the brilliant new light at Gay Head. The articles always included a glowing account of the beauty of the clay cliffs, the remoteness of the Head, the life style of the Indians, and, without fail, a panegyric for Keeper Flanders. Among the first to do so was the *Providence Journal*:

" . . . By the courtesy of the keeper of the Light, Mr. Samuel Flanders, I had ample opportunity of inspecting it in every part. It is one of the greatest inventions of the age . . . If the light house is an object of curiosity, the family of the keeper is certainly deserving attention. Mr. Flanders was some years ago introduced by Daniel Webster as the most active man on the Island and throughout this community has the reputation of being the counterpart of Lord Chesterfield in politeness. Your correspondent can testify to the justness of common fame in this latter particular, while evidence of his activity will

be found in thirteen sons and daughters, all inmates at present in his family; and, of whom, individually and collectively, any mother might feel proud. He is a staunch Democrat, as was his father before him, and it will be no fault of his should his sons fail to 'follow his footsteps.'"
(Reprinted in Gazette, Oct. 30, 1857)

One month later, the *Boston Post* published a letter, signed only "B," in which Keeper Flanders and his family were given high praise indeed:

"... On the top of this bluff stands the best lighthouse in America, kept by the best man for the office, namely, Sam. Flanders. His lighthouse is as neat and clean and nice as soap and water and hard work and burnishing can make it; and his attention to, and kind treatment of the gentlemen and ladies who visit this very interesting locality, are beyond all praise. He has a wife and twelve fine-looking, intelligent children, the oldest, I should think, about eighteen. The boys, as far as they go, are named for the democratic presidents. I had the honor of being introduced to Martin Van Buren Flanders, James K. Polk Flanders and Franklin Pierce Flanders -- Andrew Jackson and Thomas Jefferson were engaged low down on the side of the bluff in digging petrified clams for some visitors, and James Buchanan, being of too tender an age for presentation, continued quietly asleep in his cradle. I pity the chief of that administration who shall ever undertake to decapitate this good and faithful man, Sam. Flanders... But no man will ever think of such a removal, much less undertake to make it..." (Reprinted Gazette, Nov. 13, 1857)

The *Boston Post* was a strong, partisan Democratic paper and apparently Keeper Flanders knew how to "get ink," untrained though he was in press agency. That account of his sons all being named for Democratic presidents was pure fiction -- a bold put-on. In November 1857, Sam and Keziah had 13 children (not 12, as the reporter wrote), the youngest ("James Buchanan Flanders... asleep in his cradle") was a girl, Grace F. Flanders, born October 13, 1857. Samuel not only assigned her an imaginary and

Sketch by Porte Crayon, Harper's, September 1860.



SQUIRE FLANDERS.

"... notwithstanding some eccentricities of appearance and manner..."

political name, he changed her sex!

He had four sons at the time, one of whom was named for a Democratic president. That was four-year-old Franklin Pierce Flanders, born the year Pierce was elected and Keeper Flanders was given back his old job at the lighthouse. In gratitude, he named the boy after the

president. The other three boys were Wilbur F., Freeman B., and Robert N. -- nary a Martin Van Buren or a Thomas Jefferson, etc., among them!

It wasn't only his children that Keeper Sam spun tales about. In October 1859, a correspondent for the Taunton *American Republican* went to Gay Head and described the magnificent beam radiated by the new light this way:

"...These rays...do not converge until at a great distance; the keeper informed me that they had converged on a piece of paper held on the wharf at Fairhaven, a distance of 30 miles, while the light itself is plainly visible at a distance of 60 or 70 miles." (Reprinted Gazette, October 28, 1859)

Now that was hyperbole! The earth's curvature controls the distance a lighthouse beam is visible, depending on the elevation of the tower and the elevation of the viewer. Gay Head's beam, the Light House Service claimed, was visible 19 or 20 miles under ideal conditions, not 60 or 70, as Flanders claimed. As far as being able to see the rays converging on a sheet of paper held on a wharf at Fairhaven -- well, that's a *real* story!

It was also in 1859 that *The Atlantic Monthly*, even then a national magazine of major influence, broke the "scandal" of the "long-lost Fresnel" -- a story that certainly could not have pleased the Light House Board. The full story as disclosed by the *Atlantic* was reprinted in the *Intelligencer*, August 1981. As Keeper Flanders apparently told it, the Fresnel lens was unloaded at New York, after its trip from France, without shipping labels or customs papers. No one knew to whom it was consigned. Unclaimed, it remained there for the legal amount of time (a year or so) and then the Customs people auctioned it off, still an unopened crate. The surprised buyer discovered what a treasure he had bought and promptly put it on public display, making a handsome profit on the deal. The Light House people, who had been frantically seeking their missing Fresnel, heard about the exhibition and quickly reclaimed the sparkling glass marvel. Recrated, this time carefully

labelled, it was shipped to Gay Head, having been lost, the story went, for "some two years."

The facts don't support the story (see page 159, this issue). On April 24, 1856, the lens was shipped from Le Havre, France, arriving in New York sometime after May 15th. Within six months it was in place atop the new tower at Gay Head. It went into operation December 1, 1856.

Flanders, the reporter wrote, told him the story. Whether the keeper was its originator or not, we do not know. In any case, the "lost lens" tale became part of the legend of Gay Head Light -- a tribute to raconteur Samuel.

In 1850, *Harper's*, another prestigious journal, had a long, interesting article about the Vineyard, complete with sketches by the author. Gay Head and its Light were described in detail and, of course, Keeper Flanders was the star of the show:

"... Squire Flanders is not only a man of consequence on Gay Head, but his renown has extended over the whole Island; and to those who delight in observing the diverse phases of human character he is well worthy of attention. As a public officer, he has weathered the storms and changes of political affairs, immovable as the wave-beaten cliff upon which he dwells; yet his integrity has never been questioned and his lamp has never gone out. The exemplary father of ten or a dozen girls and boys, all named after the Presidents, his household furnishes an epitome of our Federal history. A natural and moral philosopher, according to the teachings of Professor Agassiz and St. Paul, he lectures with equal clearness on antediluvian ichthyology and the ethics of Scripture. In short, notwithstanding some eccentricities of appearance and manner, no one can long sojourn with Squire Flanders without being touched with his obliging and amiable character, and impressed with his substantial worth and honesty. It is a matter of conscience with him to keep his lamp always trimmed and his light set upon a hill. Long may it shine, a luminous example of Federal office-holders, a beacon of safety to the homeward-bound mariner!" (Harper's, Sept. 1860)

As we have seen, despite his ability to weather "the

storms and changes of political affairs," Keeper Flanders, that "exemplary father," the "luminous example of Federal office-holders," was tossed out of the lighthouse, along with his wife and 14 children, the following year by the Republicans, when the Democrats lost the election.

But the year before that happened, the *Boston Courier* sent a writer to Gay Head. He stayed in Edgartown at the hotel run by Mrs. Charity Norton. With 15 others, including the hospitable Mrs. Norton, he made the long trip to Gay Head where he was charmed by Keeper and Mrs. Flanders:

"... Mr. Flanders, the best light-keeper alive, as well as the most obliging man in the world. He is the father of no less than thirteen children... 'who had so many children she didn't know what to do'... Not so with Madame Flanders, she knows well what to do, with and for her progeny, for she readily received 16 strangers into her house that night and disposed of them all comfortably."

(Reprinted *Gazette*, Oct. 5, 1860)

That night, something in the order of 32 persons slept in the keeper's dwelling -- "all comfortably." A tribute to the gracious Squire and Madame Flanders.

There are more apochryphal stories of Gay Head Light that cannot be attributed to Keeper Flanders, but he does seem to be the most likely author. Not the least of these is one that is so much a part of "history" that it appears in the story of the light displayed on the grounds of the Society. It tells of the mighty effort that was necessary to transport the Fresnel apparatus to Gay Head in 1856. One version of the story appeared in the *Gazette*, as recently as June 26, 1970:

"... It took eight yoke of oxen to transport the heavy iron railing for the catwalks... but it took 40 yoke of oxen to move the 60 frames of glass prisms and the multitudinous collection of machinery necessary to operate the new light. The finely balanced lantern weighed over a ton all told. It must have been a slow, ponderous procession that traveled the 20 some odd miles of hard packed dirt and sandy Island roads from the Edgartown

wharf to the clay cliffs... small wide-eyed children and equally open-mouthed Island adults must have watched the ponderous parade."

We don't know how the Fresnel got to Gay Head, but it does seem unlikely that a load that "weighed over a ton all told" would have required 40 yoke of oxen. The *Gazette*, in 1856, did not print anything about the "ponderous parade" or even about the arrival of the lens on the Island. Surely, if 40 yoke of oxen had dragged this crate up Main Street, Edgartown, Editor E. Marchant would have mentioned it in his paper. But there was not a word. It was seen, apparently, only by "small wide-eyed children and equally open-mouthed Island adults" -- not by a single reporter!

Whether that story came from the imaginative mind of that great spinner of yarns, Samuel Flanders, we have no way of knowing. He certainly was equal to it.

But his persuasiveness and charm didn't always work. In 1872, eleven years after his removal from the lighthouse, Samuel Flanders petitioned the United States Congress for an unknown amount of money that, he claimed, he had "expended in improvements upon the Gay Head Light House while he was keeper."

The Congress, accustomed to story tellers of the highest order, was not convinced. His request was denied. Perhaps, if he had been there, to tell the story himself. . .

A.R.R.

Letters

Editor:

Just finished reading the story about Gay Head Light and found it very interesting.

I believe the reason that Nantucket interests wanted a lighthouse on Gay Head was that it would be a great help to their whaleships and shipping interests.

A light that could be seen for 20 miles on a clear night would give them a good landfall. A ship master of those days would find it much easier and safer to navigate the Sounds than to try to reach Nantucket from Pollock Rip, Great Round Shoal or Muskeget Channel. I don't think Pollock Rip Channel even existed then and, even if it did, these channels would be very tricky to navigate under sail. The treacherous shoals and strong cross tides would mean a ship would have to have ideal conditions to make Nantucket by way of the Shoals.

JIM MORGAN

Menemsha

Captain Morgan makes a good point. Historian Banks, in Vol. II, "Annals of Gosnold," of his History of Martha's Vineyard, states that when Zaccheus Lambert, tavern keeper at Tarpaubin Cove, put up a light there at his own expense in 1759 (the first in the County), he was provided with oil by the people of Nantucket "out of their meer Courtesy." It is apparent that the Sound was an

essential waterway for that island's enterprises.

Editor:

I read with great interest the first part of your article on the Gay Head lighthouse and look forward to the second part, as well as to future articles on other Island lighthouses.

I thought you would like to know that another picture of the first Gay Head lighthouse exists. It is in Edward Hitchcock's *Geology of Massachusetts*, published in 1841. According to the narrative, Hitchcock first visited Gay Head in 1823 and made several more visits before publication of his work. It appears that the picture in the book is an earlier one than Barber's. The light keeper's house is much smaller looking and the top of the lighthouse is somewhat different.

PRESTON G. HARRIS

Chilmark

It is embarrassing to admit we don't know what we have in the Society's own Library! Thanks to Mr. Preston, we looked in our copy of Hitchcock and, sure enough, there is an 1830 drawing of Gay Head Light, showing the cliffs in color! The coloring must have been done, one book at a time, by hand, making it one of the first books with a color plate, no doubt. The differences between the two sketches, Barber's and Hitchcock's, are artistic, there having been no change in the buildings during those years.

Editor:

One of my classes is focussed on library services to the disadvantaged (mentally, physically, educationally, etc.) and I regularly schedule a field

visit to the Cleveland Speech and Hearing Center. This semester I am taking along a copy of the February 1981 *Intelligencer* with its articles by Nora Groce and Gale Huntington to share with the Director of the Center. I'm sure he'll find the articles interesting.

ALVIN GOLDWYN

Professor

Case Western Reserve U.

Cleveland, Ohio

Editor:

In my spare time (such as it is) in law school here, I have been digging up the reported opinions of the Mass. Supreme Judicial Court regarding lawsuits that originated on Martha's Vineyard. The opinions started around 1803.

Some of the opinions recite the facts of the case and are interesting history in themselves. Others talk more about the law, but knowledge of their existence may lead some historians into the court records where the facts may be discussed at length.

Would you ask your readers for cases known to them, as an aid to my research? It might save my tired eyes. I hope to write a short article sometime soon on what I have found.

ERIC L. PETERS

343 Corona

Denver, CO 80218

Editor:

Would it be possible to inform your readers that our Society is having an Historical Art Exhibit at the Cuttyhunk School, July 4 through

Labor Day? Emphasis will be on history rather than art, all being of Cuttyhunk.

There will be some quite lovely works, old and new, by residents and visitors. We plan to sell a 1983 calendar with some of the paintings as illustrations.

JANET BOSWORTH

Cuttyhunk Historical Society

Editor:

We are delighted with the new printing of the Mayhew Tree. I had not envisioned it as being so large and legible. It is almost as big as the original which hangs above me as I write. It is certainly an attractive project for the Society.

ELIZABETH KEYES

Philadelphia

Mrs. Keyes wrote the article on the Tree in the November 1981 issue. The Society has just brought out a new printing of the Tree suitable for framing. Copies are available for \$2 each plus \$2 for packing and mailing. Several prints can be mailed at the same time for one handling charge.

Pease Diary

We apologize to Jeremiah Pease fans for omitting his Diary from this issue because of space limitations. He will be back in August.

Director's Report

ONE OF the most remarkable products of human industry that has ever been given to the world through the arts of printing and engraving."

These were the words once used to describe an exciting accession recently acquired by our Society. In a spring that has been notable for a number of important additions to our collections, the highlight was the gift of three charts from *The Atlantic Neptune* series.

Only a few complete sets of the series are now in existence and it is a major event whenever a library is able to acquire any of these handsome charts. The three that were presented to us are the three charts in the series that show the Island and the area around it.

These 33-inch by 43-inch charts were produced in the 1770s by Joseph F. W. DesBarres for the Royal Navy and are part of a series that covers the east coast from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico. The three we have will provide Vineyard historians with the earliest accurate description of the Island and surrounding areas. In addition to their research value, these beautifully hand-tinted charts add greatly to the attractiveness of the library and the Francis Foster Museum. We urge members to come in and admire them.

The framed charts were presented to the Society by Mrs. Leonardo Mercati in memory of her late husband, Paul F. Warburg.

Another important accession, especially valuable to historical researchers, came from Nantucket in the form of 90 photographs of the Vineyard, photographs that have previously been almost unknown to Vineyard historians. With the help of Stan Lair of Vineyard Haven, the Society traded some copies of Nantucket photographs in our collection for the Vineyard photos in the collection of Mr.

Charles Sayle, Sr., of Nantucket. These photographs, taken by Harry Platt in the 1880s and 1890s, are generally of very high quality. Although many show familiar Island scenes, the Nantucket photographs do include a number of unusual images that were missed by the Shutes, S. F. Adams, Joseph Warren and other photographers who are well known to Vineyard historians.

Other interesting accessions received recently include a pitcher of "Boston Mails" china from Norma Sallop; fifteen letters of Richard E. Norton, first mate aboard the whaleship *Iris*, given by Richard Norton Thomas; a china doll dressed by the famous Lucy Adams, given by Mrs. Russell Walmsley; and a letter to Ethelinda Lewis from her husband "On board the Barque *Ocean* of New Bedford," given to us by Douglas Look.

In relation to the preservation of our new accessions and of the many thousands of other items at the Society, we are pleased to note that we have recently installed a sophisticated fire and burglar alarm system, paid for with money given to the Preservation Fund. The system will provide protection for our collections in the years ahead.

This winter the library has been a busy place with many researchers and volunteer workers in attendance. The very regular volunteers are Joanne Clark, Shirley Erickson, Maimo Meisner, Stan Murphy, Norma Sallop, Frances Sawyer, Doris Stoddard and Dan Sullivan. They have been most generous in helping out with clerical duties as well as working on special projects.

This summer the Society will be open, as in the past, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, except on Labor Day. We hope that you will make a visit. We have many new items to show you.

THOMAS E. NORTON

Bits & Pieces

READING various contemporary accounts of Gay Head Light in the 1800s gives a first-hand insight into the life style of the Indians at that place -- a life style much different from that in the Island's larger towns.

A letter signed only "Observer" printed in the *Namasket Gazette* in 1856 reported that:

"... the natives here [at Gay Head] number about 200 and live very comfortably... Unlike their brethren in Marshpee (sic), they prefer their land to remain undivided, each one cultivating as much as he chooses, the revenue of the remainder going for general purposes... This part of the island seems for the most part to be a bed of valuable white and red clay. It is worth \$3.50 per ton on the spot and is carried off in cart loads... Sometimes in calm weather, large ships anchor near the cliffs and load; at such times they all turn out, the women as well as the men; the men cut out the clay in lumps, while the women stand in rows down to the vessel and pass it along in their hands, after the manner of passing pails of water sometimes at fires; they afterwards divide the money, one man having as much as two women..."

That pay ratio continues down to this day all over the country, argue Women's Rights leaders. It's just a bit better: 59 cents to the 100 that the male gets, isn't it?

THE GOOD in "good old days" did not apply to roads, as a letter in the *Vineyard Gazette* of 1857 indicates:

"... Of the road from Chilmark to Gay Head, I must say I never saw its equal in my life. It is execrable in the extreme and reflects no credit upon the Indians of the cliffs..."

It is not clear why the writer felt it was up to the Indians to build a better road to make it easier for him (and other sightseers) to get there. It wasn't until 1870, thirteen years later, that the County agreed to improve the road past the Chilmark line.

THERE is a notebook in the stacks of the Society's Library that is filled with dates of births and deaths in up-Island towns in the 1800s. Inside the front cover there is a neatly written inscription:

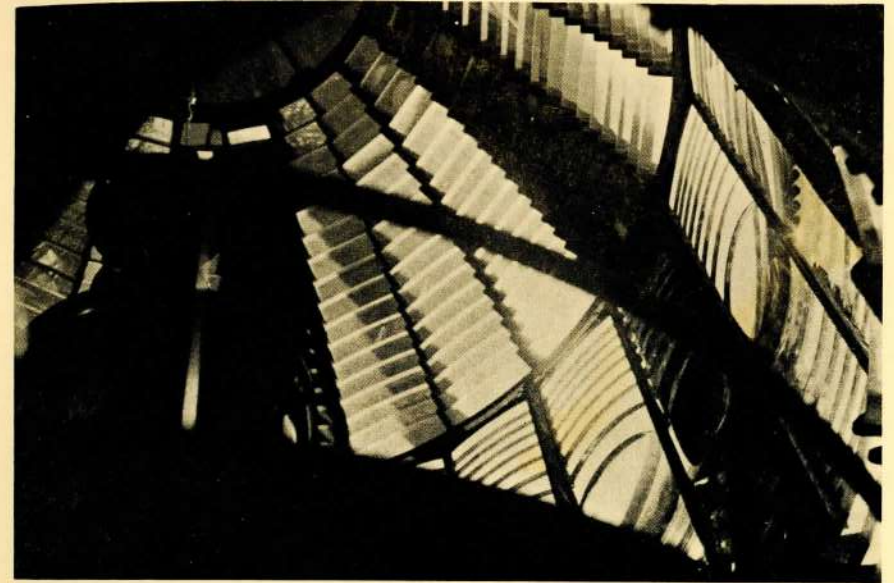
"Alexander Graham Bell
1500 R.I. Avenue
Washington, D.C."

The book contains line after line of names copied from birth records. It obviously was part of Bell's research into the family relationships of children born deaf (see *Intelligencer*, Feb. 1981). On page 7, where the births in Chilmark for the month of February are written, there is this:

"Note: as an illustration of orthography of the old records of Chilmark, I give a specimen word: 'februywary.'"

I guess Johnny couldn't spell even then!

A.R.R.



In its tower next to the Cooke house, below, the Fresnel is shaded to prevent the lens from starting a fire with sun's rays. Above: inside view of the three whites and one red.



