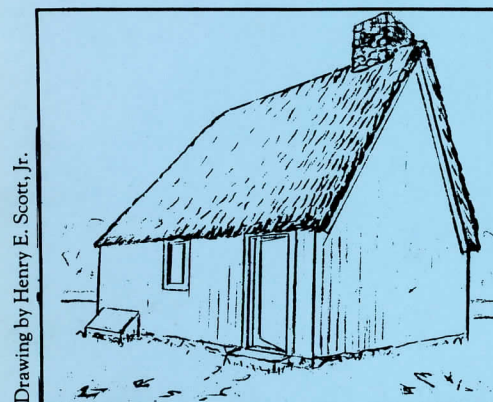




THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 26, NO. 2

NOVEMBER 1984



Built c. 1714 on Nomans, now in Chilmark

Early Vineyard Houses Had Thatched Roofs

by JONATHAN SCOTT



Director's Report

Bits & Pieces



Charlie Mac Vincent: Civil War Volunteer

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

Christmas for a Union Soldier in 1863

Documents: *Jeremiah Pease Diary*

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*Old Chilmark House, Once
on Nomansland, Indicates that*

Early Vineyard Houses Had Thatched Roofs

by JONATHAN SCOTT

WHAT did the early houses on the Vineyard look like -- the houses built by those early English settlers who came here in the 1600s? Nobody knows for certain, but there is an old house in Chilmark today that indicates they probably were small, narrow buildings with steep thatched roofs and vertically planked siding, not unlike the houses at Plymouth Colony.

The old Chilmark house, which has been totally rebuilt in its nearly 300 years, was originally located on Nomansland, the small island about three miles south of the western tip of Martha's Vineyard. It was taken apart and moved to its present site on the North Shore close to Vineyard Sound in about 1815.

Nomansland figures importantly in Vineyard lore. Some claim it was there that in 1602 Bartholomew Gosnold made the first English settlement in America, building a house and fort on the island. Others believe that the Gosnold party did not settle there, but did explore it and

JONATHAN SCOTT, who lives in Chilmark with his wife and family, has recently been awarded his PhD. by the University of Minnesota. His Doctoral dissertation was on the Island's pre-Revolutionary War houses, one of which is featured in this article. He is the Vineyard's foremost authority on old buildings and has written about them before for this journal. Much of his knowledge has come from his work at rebuilding old houses on the Island. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Scott of Chilmark.

name it Marthaes Vineyard, a name which was later transferred to the nearby larger island.¹

Both views seem faulty. Research by historians on both sides of the Atlantic provides evidence that the Gosnold settlement was not on Nomans, but on Cuttyhunk, a few miles away and across the Sound, and that he may never have set foot on Nomansland.

A leading advocate of the Nomans legend was the late Joseph C. Allen who, in his inimitable style, told the tale this way:

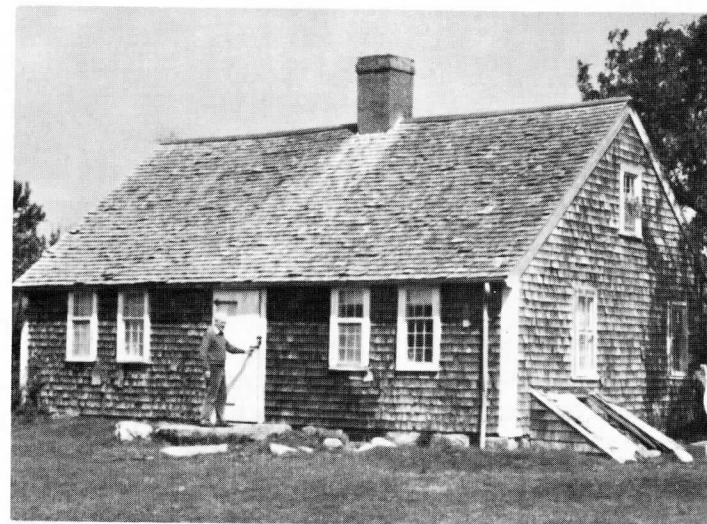
One of the first things the settlers [who came with Mayhew] did was to investigate the island now known as Nomansland, lying three miles southwest of Gay Head. There, says tradition, they found no person living; but they did find -- wonder of wonders! -- an English-built house with a cellar and a roof of thatch, on an island in a pond. It was in a rather sad state of repair, but the thick, whip-sawed boards and hand-hewn timbers were still sound, and the thrifty settlers repaired the building and used it, eventually moving it to the Vineyard where it still stands, sound and weatherproof, with its thatch roof replaced with more modern boards and shingles. There was no marveling among these early settlers as to the presence of that house on Nomansland. A slight survey of the location and the workmanship convinced them that it was the house built by Gosnold and his men. No one has ever disputed the later claim that Cuttyhunk was the site of this settlement, chiefly because no one really cared one way or the other; but the early Vineyarders fully believed, and with just reason, that the first English settlement in New England was on Nomansland and not on Cuttyhunk.²

The house that Joe Allen believed to have been built in 1602 by Gosnold is the subject of this article. It is now located on the Sydney Harris farm in Chilmark, not far from Roaring Brook and the North Shore.³ It was, indeed,

¹Charles E. Banks, *The History of Martha's Vineyard*, Dukes County Historical Society, Edgartown, 1966, v.I, p.62.

²Joseph Chase Allen, *Tales and Trails of Martha's Vineyard*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1938, pp. 14-15.

³The present owner, Sydney P. Harris, was born in the house in 1911.



Built much smaller and thatch-roofed about 1714, the Norton-Harris house was moved to this site off North Road, Chilmark, about 1815.

built on Nomans, by whom we are not certain, but it could have been by Jacob Norton of Edgartown and Newport, R.I., soon after he purchased the island from William Nichols of New York in 1715. One hundred years later, about 1815, it was moved by Capt. Shubael Norton to its present site.

The house, as it stands today, looks nothing like the house it once was on Nomansland; it has been totally rebuilt. But that does not change its importance to history. Nor does the fact that it was not Gosnold's house. A much more important fact is that this house documents the significant changeover from thatched-roof dwellings to shingled houses and gives us an idea of how this may have been done.

First let us deal with the question of why this is not the Gosnold house of 1602.

In terms of the structure of the present house, which we shall call the Norton-Harris house (Norton being the

presumed builder and Harris the present owner), though there is clear evidence that the roof was originally thatched, we do not feel it was the type of building that would have been erected by English explorers in 1602. Gosnold's men built a fort and storehouse suitable "to hold 20 men for a year."⁴ We well might wonder if the little Nomansland cottage could accommodate such a company. More particularly, we note that the present house retains its old vertically planked exterior walls. Recent research by Richard Candee concludes that this technique is of Dutch origin and was unknown, or not used, by the English in the early 17th century. Here in the New World, however, it was used by the Pilgrims at Plymouth, many of whom had spent twelve years in Leyden, Holland, before their historic voyage in the *Mayflower*.

Other English colonists settling in Massachusetts Bay, in Connecticut and Rhode Island, rarely built vertically planked homes, whereas 90 percent of those in Plymouth Colony used this technique.⁵ The traditional English technique at this time was "stud and nogging" construction where a stud wall would be filled with wattle and daub and covered with horizontal boarding, clapboards, or left exposed (half-timber construction). This is probably the way an English house of 1602 would have been built. Stud walls, it should be emphasized, eventually call for horizontal boarding. With vertical plank frame houses, it was sometimes a practical expedient later, for warmth, to add studs and interior walls (as in the Standish-Whiting and Little-Goff houses), but no one, so far as we can tell, ever reversed the process, removing studs and replacing horizontal boards with vertical planks.

Vertical plank frame construction came to the Vineyard

⁴Warner F. Gookin and Phillip L. Barbour, *Bartholomew Gosnold, Discover and Planter*, Archon Books, Hamden, Conn., 1963, p.143.

⁵Richard M. Candee, "A Documentary History of Plymouth Colony Architecture, 1620-1700," *Old Time New England*, v. LX, no. 2, Oct.-Dec., 1969, pp. 37-50.

with the influx of Plymouth Colony settlers starting in the early 1670s. Thatch lots continued to be granted in Edgartown until the 1680s and outlying houses and barns were probably roofed with thatch until around 1700, or even a little longer.⁶ On Nomansland it may have been easier to maintain a roof of this sort with locally gathered reed grasses than to import boards and shingles.

Our conclusion, then, is that the Nomansland house was built, not by Gosnold's men, but most probably by Chilmark carpenters (sheep ranchers and fishermen) in the early 1700s, utilizing the same Plymouth Colony vertical plank frame technique they used on their Chilmark houses, but combining it with the older, still-remembered (and in this case, more practical) method of thatching the roof.

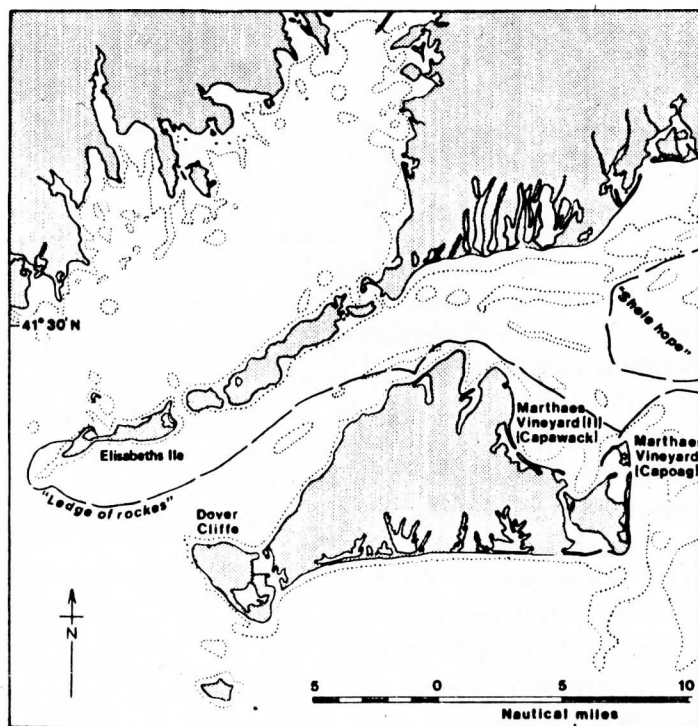
The accounts of Gosnold's voyage by his two chroniclers, Brereton and Archer, I believe, make it clear that the explorer built his house and fort on Cuttyhunk, not Nomansland. Almost all historians seem to agree on this, if nothing else.

Gabriel Archer, who was on the voyage, writes of doubling a Cape "which wee called Dover Cliffe" [Gay Head] on May 24, 1602. They then came into a "faire Sound where wee roade all night" [Vineyard Sound has good anchorage]. The next morning they crossed the Sound, avoiding "a ledge of Rockes a mile into the sea" [Sow and Pigs reef] and came to anchor at the far side of an island "Captaine Gosnold called Elizabeths Ile, where we determined our abode."⁷

This description exactly fits a voyage to Cuttyhunk, the last of the Elizabeth Island chain. Archer also states that

⁶Banks, *op. cit.* p. 474, says this: "In the early divisions of land in Edgartown there were 'thatch lots' set apart for each of the proprietor's holdings, and they were held as such and passed from owner to owner under this designation as late as 1680."

⁷David B. and Alison M. Quinn, *The English New England Voyages, 1602-1608*, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1983, p. 126.



Gosnold's 1602 voyage, as plotted by Historian David B. Quinn, indicates he did not land on Nomansland, as local legend claims.

"On the North side, neere adjoining unto the Iland Elizabeth is an Ilet in compasses half a mile." There is no small island off Nomans, but off Cuttyhunk, about a mile to the north, is the tiny island of Penikese, which exactly fits Archer's description. It was there that at "Sandie Cove," some days later, Gosnold "stole" an Indian dugout canoe which he took back to England.

From Cuttyhunk, Gosnold and some of his men explored a great sound, which they called "Gosnoll's Hope" (Buzzard's Bay). The exploration was made in what Brereton called "our light horseman," which, according to Quinn,⁸ was "the ship's boat as distinct from the larger

⁸*Ibid.* fn. 8, p. 152.

shallop." If they had left from a camp on Nomansland, they would have had to round Gay Head, cross Vineyard Sound, pass around the Elizabeth Islands and traverse Buzzard's Bay before coming to the mainland; and then they would have to return. This is no journey for a small boat and would certainly have taken more than the one day indicated by both chroniclers.

Thus, we cannot support Joseph Allen's interesting tale. Therefore, the Norton-Harris house is most certainly not Gosnold's. However, it is still a very early structure which may go back to the time of the settlement of Nomansland by the Nortons (who, Banks believes, were the first permanent English settlers on that island). Jacob Norton purchased the island in 1715⁹ and by 1722 his son, also named Jacob, was listed as an Innkeeper there.¹⁰ Undoubtedly, the house dates from this era, if not earlier. Its antiquity is confirmed by its vertical plank frame construction and the clear evidence that it originally had a thatched roof.

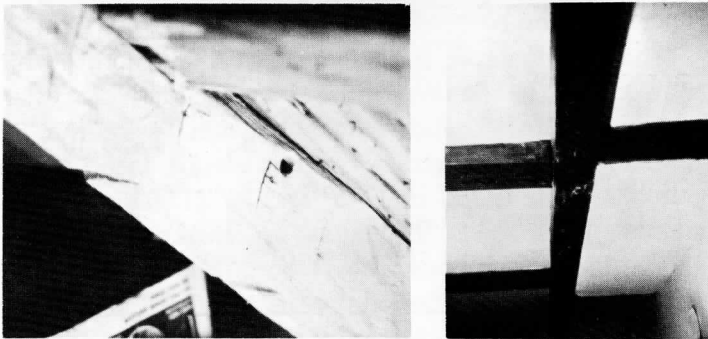
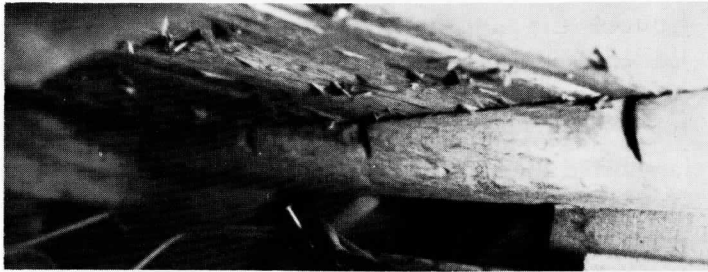
Rebecca Manter, who lived into the 20th century in what was the mill house on Roaring Brook, recalled that her father, who often went to Nomansland, said the house had a steeply pitched thatch roof when it was still over there.¹¹ An examination of the attic of the present house reveals purlins that have smooth, worn notches for the ropes that once bound thatch to the framework of the roof. Though written records reveal that thatch was commonly used in early dwellings in Plymouth and elsewhere, this is the only instance that I have been able to find where physical evidence of this technique survives.

By the end of the 18th century, portions of Nomansland had been bought up by well-known Island families and

⁹Dukes County Registry of Deeds, Book 3: 395;396.

¹⁰Banks, *op. cit.* v.2, "Annals of Chilmark," p. 73.

¹¹As told to Sydney Harris by Rebecca Manter when he was a young boy.



Top, notches in roof purlin were used in tying thatch, as was the hole in rafter, left. Right, girts were spliced at center beam when the house was enlarged after its move from Nomans.

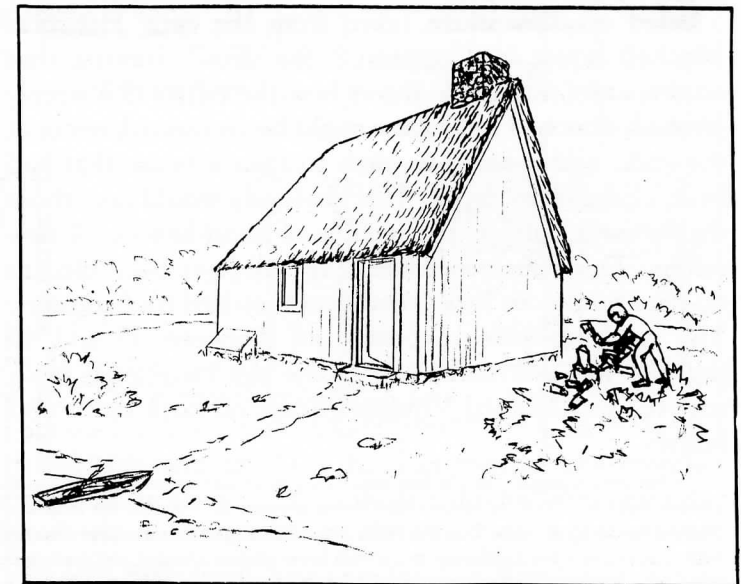
near the original Norton house site there grew up a fishing village on the north shore of Nomans similar to that at Menemsha but smaller.

A Norton descendant, Capt. Shubael Norton (1763-1818) used Nomans as a base from which he hailed sailing vessels in order to pilot them through Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds and across the dangerous Nantucket shoals from whence they could continue their passage to Boston and farther east. In 1813, on the death of his mother, Shubael inherited one-half interest in the Norton family house on Nomansland, plus land on the North Shore in Chilmark.¹² Sometime between then and 1815,

¹²See Deed 20:17, where he buys up the family inheritance on Nomans and in Chilmark from his brother, Constant, then living in Rhode Island.

he took the house down, properly marked the pieces, loaded them aboard his vessel and ferried them to the landing at Roaring Brook. Thence, he moved them up the hill to the present site off the North Road.

Evidently, the house as it originally stood on Nomansland was only one room deep. Sydney Harris, the present owner, said that his father confirmed this some years back when he went over and measured the old foundation on Nomans and found it to be exactly the same length as the moved house, but considerably narrower. When Shubael rebuilt the house on the Vineyard, he extended it in back to make it two rooms deep. Evidence for this can be seen in the splicing of chimney girts and plates. Many of the old rafters were re-used, some were turned upside down to offset sagging, and the ends of all were re-cut to conform to the new lower



Drawing by Henry E. Scott, Jr.

The house, with its steep thatched roof, as it may have looked on Nomansland. Steep pitch was needed so thatch would shed rain.

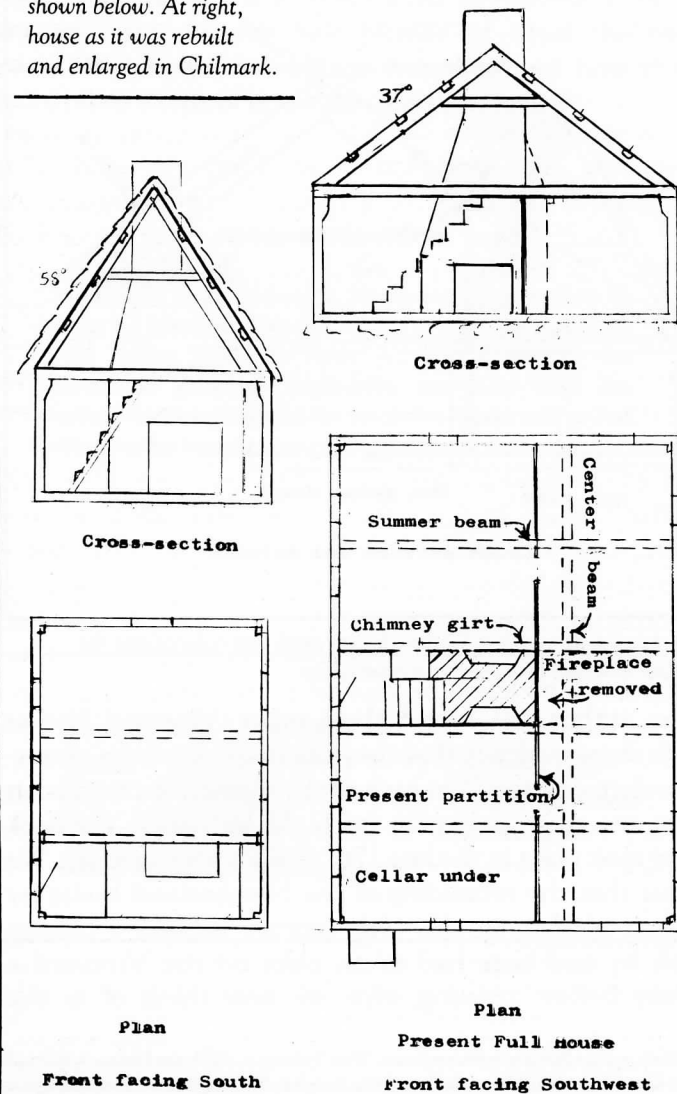
pitch of the roof necessary to span the greater house depth. The central chimney, originally of beachstones, was rebuilt with bricks, locally made at Roaring Brook.

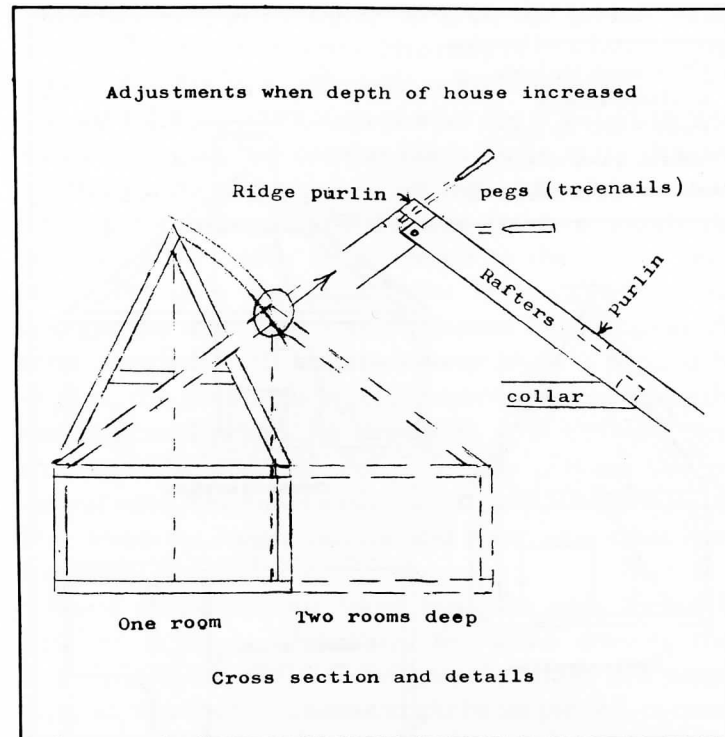
A probable representation of what the original thatched roof dwelling on Nomans was like is shown in the drawing accompanying this article. This form was arrived at by keeping the rafter length the same as it is today, but narrowing the width of the house to the center beam where the girts and plates have been extended. This changes the roof pitch from 37 degrees to 58 degrees. As most thatched roofs require a steep pitch of around 60 degrees, this drawing is probably very close to the way the earlier house looked. By extension, it is probably very similar to the thatched roof, one-room cottages that we believe were very much a part of the early Vineyard scene, but which no longer survive and have long since been forgotten.

Based on dimensions taken from the early Hancock-Mitchell house in Quansoo,¹³ the detail drawing that accompanies this article shows how the rafters in a steeply pitched, thatched roof house might be un-pinned, re-cut at the ends, and lowered in pitch to span a house that had been extended in depth. This obviously would save those thrifty early builders the trouble of hand-hewing all new rafters. This same procedure may well have been used to up-date numerous first generation thatched roof cottages. The resulting lower pitched roof (between 35 and 40 degrees) was eventually to become the traditional pitch adopted for Colonial Vineyard Roofs on both barns and houses.

¹³It has been suggested that the first stage of this structure may have been the small mission outpost or Meeting House that Thomas Mayhew Jr., built for the Indians of Nashawakemmuck (Chilmark) in the 1650s. The rebuilding of this one-room thatched roof structure as a two-room-deep house with lower pitched shingled roof took place when John Mayhew, Thomas's son, and Chilmark's first English settler, moved into it with his wife in the early 1670s. For more on this interesting story see Henry E. Scott, Jr., "The Story of a House; Perhaps the Island's Oldest," *Intelligencer*, parts one and two, May and August, 1981.

On Nomans, the house was constructed as shown below. At right, house as it was rebuilt and enlarged in Chilmark.





Drawing by Henry E. Scott, Jr.

When house was rebuilt in Chilmark, roof pitch was reduced and the first floor enlarged to make it two rooms deep.

The author has found three other Vineyard houses which show evidence that they began as one-room or one-room-deep cottages.¹⁴ In each of those cases, the transition to the two-room-deep plan (with the kitchen in the back room) took place in the late 17th or early 18th century. We believe that the rebuilding of the Nomansland house by Captain Norton in the 19th century echoed a process which by and large had taken place on the Vineyard a century before, creating what we now think of as the

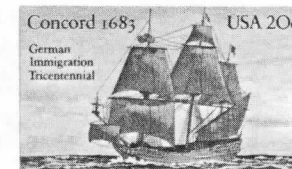
¹⁴These are the Robinson-Bruno house, West Tisbury, c. 1673; the Hancock-Mitchell house, Quansoo, c. 1673 (or earlier); and the Standish-Whiting house, West Tisbury, c. before 1676.

typical Vineyard house with its distinctive plan and roof line.

Thus, although we cannot claim it as the earliest English house in America, the reconstructed Nomansland house may well give us our best picture of what the first generation Vineyard dwellings were like and how they evolved into a type of house familiar to us today.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to Sydney P. Harris for his generosity in sharing his house and his knowledge of its history with us; to my father, Henry E. Scott, Jr., who shared in this project and gave me inspiration and help with the research, the drawings and the reconstructions; and to Art Railton for his encouragement and editorial assistance.



Could this 1683
Concord be the one
Gosnold sailed?

Charlie Mac Vincent: Civil War Volunteer

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

WHEN South Carolina forces bombarded Fort Sumter on April 13, 1861, forcing the evacuation of the Federal troops stationed there, the Civil War began. On the Vineyard, as elsewhere in the suddenly sundered nation, a wave of patriotism swept over the citizenry.

The *Vineyard Gazette*, prior to Sumter, had been urging an accommodation with the South. In December 1860, Editor Edgar Marchant had editorialized:

The question whether slavery is right or wrong is not the question we have now to discuss . . . Will we be brethren, and live peaceably together and respect each other's rights and promote each other's welfare, these are the real questions of issue.

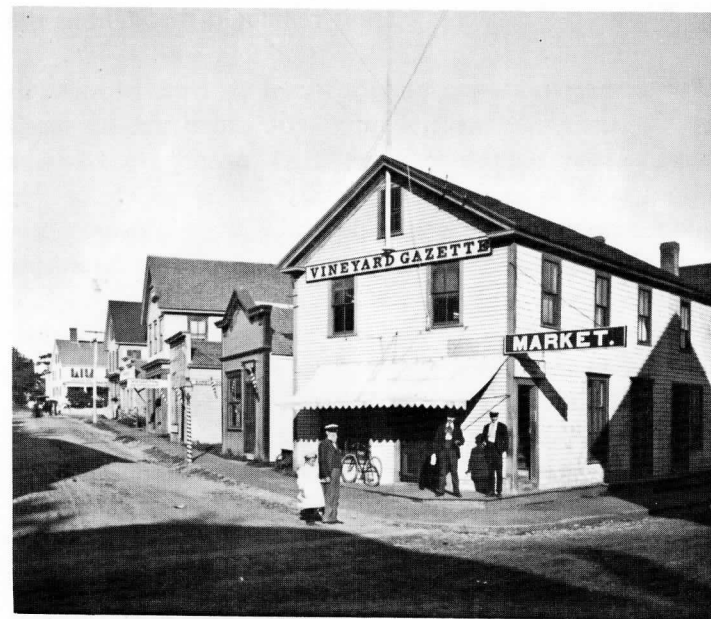
Only a month before the shelling of Sumter, he had written:

Is not the land wide enough for us both to live together in ONE confederacy? . . . [let us] persuade our people to let slavery alone.

But after Sumter, Editor Marchant was ready for a fight. He offered a suggestion to President Lincoln:

A company or two of veteran whalemens, armed with the harpoon, or with lance and spade, would . . . send terror into the hearts of Southern traitors. If President Lincoln would call upon the whalemens of Nantucket, New Bedford and the Vineyard, he could raise a regiment before which no human could stand for a day. . . . martial spirit pervades the people of

ARTHUR R. RAILTON is Editor of this journal.



Charlie Mac was an apprentice at the *Vineyard Gazette*, upstairs over the market at Edgartown's Four Corners, when he enlisted.

the whole Vineyard. . . . Let every man be ready to shoulder his arms!

As Editor Marchant was soon to learn, raising a regiment of whalemens would not be easy. They certainly did not respond to President Lincoln's call of that same week for a militia of 75,000 men, mariners or landlubbers, he did not care. The good Editor enthusiastically took up the cause:

Down with the traitors, we say again. Let them swing from the yard arms and from the gibbets! . . . We are now fairly in for a civil war. . . . We have . . . done all in our power to conciliate the South. But since they have attacked the government and stolen the treasure of the nation . . . [we] put ourselves shoulder to shoulder with all true patriots and march to the rescue of freedom. We fling today the glorious banner of the Stars and Stripes to the breeze.

To dramatize his call to arms, he placed an engraving of

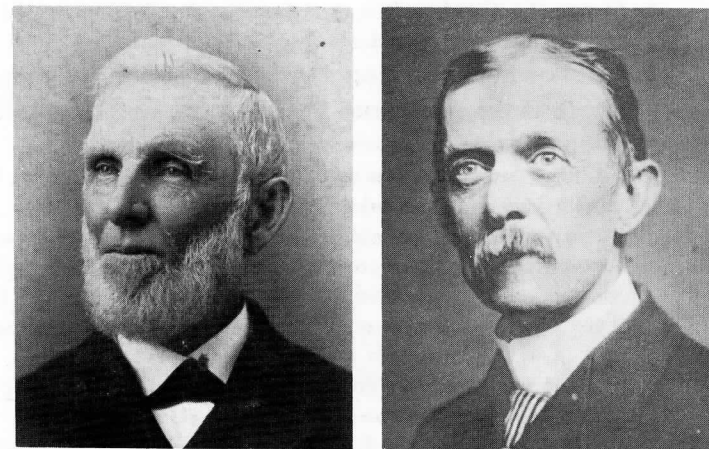
the flag atop the page, where it remained throughout the war.

Caught up in the excitement this must have brought to the *Gazette* office was a young red-headed, freckle-faced lad of 17 years, Charles Macreading Vincent, who had just started work as an apprentice printer in the back shop. He was beginning a very distinguished career as a newspaperman, although of course he had no way of knowing it at the time. It was probably his first real job, although while in school he had worked at the Mattakesett Creek herring run and on the family farm on Katama.

Samuel Gifford Vincent, his father, was an important man in Edgartown. He was a carpenter, having worked on the two largest churches in town, the Methodist and Congregationist, as well as on school buildings and many large homes. For some years he served as Town Treasurer of Edgartown, and was an officer in the Trapp's Pond Fishing Company and Treasurer of the Edgartown Singing School. The young apprentice's mother was Harriet D. Pease before her marriage, daughter of Isaiah D. Pease, Sheriff of Dukes County for 40 years. Harriet's brother, Richard L. Pease, was to become the Island's foremost historian and a distinguished public servant, being at various times a teacher, a Presidential Elector, Postmaster and Register of Probate. He lived with the Vincent family for a few years immediately after his marriage and was a favorite uncle of young Charlie's. Another uncle, this one his father's brother, was Hebron Vincent, a teacher, a Methodist minister and historian of the Camp Ground.

Thus young Charlie Mac, as he liked to be called, grew up in an educated household where he developed a love of words and books that was to serve him, and us, well in later years, as we shall see. In the Society's Archives are many letters that Charlie Mac wrote home during his nearly three years of service in the Civil War.

But in 1861, the Civil War was just something to read



Charlie's Uncle Richard L. Pease, left, and friend Richard G. Shute, right, both in later years.

about as he learned the tasks of a printer's devil at the *Gazette*. He was only 17, still too young to sign up, even if the idea had come to him.

After President Lincoln's call for 75,000 men to put down the "insurrection," the Island residents seemed more concerned about defense than in putting down a rebellion. In Edgartown, a Home Guard was formed. "The company numbers some seventy-five men and met for drill on Tuesday afternoon," the *Gazette* reported. In Tisbury, the Town Meeting voted to ask the State for an armed guard Coaster to be stationed in Vineyard Sound and "to furnish Tisbury with three or more rifled cannon and one hundred stand of small arms and equipment . . . to be used . . . to repel invasion." West Tisbury (still part of Tisbury) and Chilmark combined to form a Coast Guard Company for defense of the shores. A letter to the editor of the *Gazette* signed "Spindle Shanks" from Squibnocket contained a note of ridicule:

What they intend to guard we are at a loss to perceive as they have occupied the Agricultural Hall in West Tisbury . . . I believe it is also contemplated to erect a small earthwork at

Menamsha Creek, where one large gun will be mounted to protect the entrance to the harbor.

The following week, another letter, this one signed "Spindle Shanks, Jr." from "Menamsha Creek" scolded the senior Shanks:

Chilmark, as a town, has taken no measures for defense . . . We do not believe our Southern brethren intend to harm us . . . The miserable attempt to ridicule these patriotic young men who have formed a military company at West Tisbury is altogether out of place . . . what Spindle Shanks says about erecting a fort at this place is all nonsense . . . In regard to the slavery question, some of us think there is no great harm in it . . . Indeed, we think it would be no great trouble to find several texts of scripture in support of this doctrine . . .

Such talk was too much for another letter writer, who signed his Letter to the Editor "Union":

We would advise said conceited "Shanks" to let his father and the general government alone and thereby save himself from being accommodated with a coat that will be hard to get off.

Despite Marchant's editorial pleading, there were few volunteers who answered Lincoln's call. The first Island man to do so, as far as our research has shown, was H. Vincent Butler of Edgartown, son of Freeman Butler, a mason. The 25-year-old mariner was christened Hebron Vincent Butler, being named after Charlie Mac's uncle, the Methodist minister and teacher. Freeman Butler was also Charlie Mac's uncle, having married his father's sister, Abiah. Young H. Vincent Butler went to Providence, R.I., to enlist in a Rhode Island regiment on June 5, 1861, less than two months after Lincoln's call for 50,000 volunteers. He wrote to the *Gazette* from Providence:

Left Edgartown and arrived here at 1 o'clock today, just in time to be "mustered" in with the corps . . . took the oath of allegiance to the United States. Not one dissenting voice in our entire corps of 136 men . . . Your writer is appointed a "Corporal." . . . We shall probably leave here on the 10th for Easton, Penn., and so proceed forward to Washington.

In the same issue of the *Gazette* in which Corporal Butler's letter appeared, there was another letter, this one

signed "Fight 'Em" and datelined Holme's Hole. It was highly critical of the men in the town who were unwilling to serve in a Home Guard company:

Mr. Editor, it seems very strange to us that after the town has secured a gun, there can be found no men to work it. Has all the patriotism which was kindled so suddenly died out? So it appears. Cannot we raise a company or two for home defense, while company after company, and we might say with propriety, regiment after regiment have gone to see active service from our sister towns upon the main. Let not Martha fall in the rear.

Another letter, similarly critical, was published in the paper a few issues later. It was from Fort Monroe, N.Y., and was signed N_____:

The Massachusetts Boys stand high and have the name of being the best looking and best drilled men in the Fort . . . I only regret that *Martha's Vineyard* is not more strongly represented.

The 20th Infantry Regiment had a score or more of Nantucket officers in it and one of them, Lt. George M. Macy, arrived on the *Vineyard* in August 1861, appealing for volunteers. The *Gazette* reported that there were "30 Nantucket young men in his company and [he] wants as many more from our Island." Three men from Holmes Hole did sign up. They were Barzilla Crowell, Peleg B. Davenport and Elisha Smith.¹ The event was described by John W. Summerwaves, who couldn't resist a dig at Edgartown in his letter to the *Gazette*:

The Volunteers from Holmes Hole started today on the *Canonicus*, under the command of Lieut. Macy of Nantucket. The citizens contributed some 20 dollars towards a purse, which was handed them on the pier. They left in good spirits. . . . If you hear of any in Edgartown who wish to assist their country now in her time of need, they can join the Nantucket and *Vineyard* boys by applying to John W. Summerwaves, who will forward them immediately.

By the end of January 1862, only 12 volunteers had

¹The Society's records indicate that Elisha Smith, born 1845, was the son of Elisha T. Smith of Edgartown and not a Holmes Hole resident as Mr. Summerwaves stated. Young Elisha was killed in the Battle of Gettysburg, 1863, one of those eulogized by President Lincoln in the famous address.

signed up for the Army from the entire Vineyard. In July, Governor Andrews of Massachusetts called for the state to furnish more soldiers. Editor Marchant of the *Gazette* urged Island men to respond:

The Governor of Massachusetts has made an earnest call upon the people of the State to come forward and enlist in the army of the Union. Massachusetts wishes to send into the field 15,000 additional men. Should this County furnish its proportion of the number, Chilmark would send 4, Edgartown 20 and Tisbury 15. We refer our young men to the patriotic offer of a citizen of West Tisbury, to be found in another part of this paper.

The patriotic offer referred to was by Frederick Manter, who promised to give \$50 to each of the first two individuals on the Vineyard to enlist in the Army. The idea of paying men to volunteer was spreading across the state as talk of a draft became more common. The Island towns, two weeks after the Governor's call for 15,000 men, voted the following bounties for volunteers up to the number required by the quota:

Edgartown -- \$100 to single men; \$125 to married men.

Tisbury -- \$125 plus \$1 a month to each dependent.

Chilmark -- \$75 (later increased to \$100).

Despite the bounties, the quotas were not filled and another critical letter was published in the *Gazette*. Written August 4, 1862, it was signed "L.N.T.", the writer being a soldier at Camp Stanton:

I read . . . that of the quota of Edgartown, only one has been furnished. What does it mean? . . . Is patriotism dead on the Island?

Its quota unfilled, Edgartown held another Town Meeting where it was voted to increase the bounty to \$500 for three-year men and \$250 for nine-month volunteers, plus \$25 for each dependent.² Within a few days 25 Edgartown men signed up for three years and another nine for nine months. Nearly half of the volunteers from Edgartown were members of the Division of the Sons of

²Five hundred dollars was a lot of money in 1862. A teacher was being paid about \$250 a year; a lighthouse keeper \$300.

Temperance, pleasing Editor Marchant who predicted that "they will make noble soldiers and do much . . . to prevent intemperance in regiments which they may join."

Tisbury raised its bounty to \$500 and its quota of 15 was quickly filled. Chilmark voted the highest payment on the Island, perhaps in the state, offering \$600 to three-year men and \$300 for nine-month volunteers. It, too, filled its small quota.

The Island's high bounties attracted off-Island attention and the three towns received, according to the *Gazette*, letters offering to fill the quota with off-Islanders. The offers totalled 40 men, the paper stated.³ Marchant's native pride was hurt: "We trust that Edgartown will need no foreign aid in the matter. Her first quota is full and the second we doubt not speedily will be."

Charles Macreading Vincent, the red-headed apprentice in the back shop of the *Gazette*, now 18, was among the 25 Edgartown men who signed up for 3 years. He was given special mention by his employer:

Mr. Charles M. Vincent, one of the volunteers from Edgartown, has, for a year past, seen service in the *Gazette* office. We predict for him a marked career.

Three of the 25 volunteers were rejected and of the remaining 22, 8 were mustered into Company D of the 40th Regiment Infantry, Massachusetts Volunteers. Young Vincent was among the eight, as was another 18-year-old, Richard G. Shute, who became the Company drummer.

The success that Editor Marchant had predicted for his apprentice came slowly, a long siege of illness being partially to blame. Private Vincent was involved in little combat and considered himself fortunate for that. Spotted

³Each town in the state was assigned a quota which it could fill by men from anywhere, thus bounty hunters would go to enlist where the bounty was highest. If a town didn't meet its quota, a draft would take place. Here, too, outsiders could be "hired" to fill the draft quota. This led to attempts to sign up men, usually blacks, from as far away as Washington, D.C.



Charlie Mac longed to enter Richmond to see how the Secessionists would react to the Federal troops taking over one of their jewels. This is what he saw on April 3, 1865, a city in ruins.

by his officers as an intelligent, well-educated young man who could be more useful to the unit with a pen than a rifle, he was assigned to the Quartermaster, or supply, section. He, however, remained a private for most of his service. Near the end of the war he was promoted to Sergeant and, upon his discharge, he was made a 2nd Lieutenant.

His letters home were frequent and well written. His writing style is vivid, his vocabulary wide-ranging. Only 18 years old at the start of his service, he writes with an amazing maturity. The tone of his letters differs according to the addressees. To his sister, he is lighthearted, often silly; to his mother, he is affectionate and sentimental; to his father, he is businesslike and factual.

On August 26, 1862, at Camp Stanton in Lynnfield, Mass., Private Charles M. Vincent was formally inducted into the 40th Regiment and was given a letter for the Town Treasurer signed by Capt. Henry F. Danforth, recruiting officer:

Pay to Chas. M. Vincent, a recruit accepted and mustered into the service of the United States . . . being an inhabitant of the town of Edgartown, and a part of a contingent of troops that the town of Edgartown is required to furnish for the War, the sum of five hundred and twenty-five dollars, as per order of Selectmen. \$525.

Charlie, proud in his blue Army uniform, must have been given a few days furlough to go home because on August 28, he was credited with \$500 from the town in his father's account book and on the same day withdrew \$54 for himself. He gave his mother \$25 and lent his sister, Ellen M. Crowell, \$100, from his bounty money. Captain Danforth had erred in approving payment of \$525, the sum for single men was \$500. Charlie's father kept a precise account of his son's money, crediting him when he sent any money home (rarely) and debiting the account whenever the family sent anything to him at his request, even charging his account for the boxes and postage.

On September 12, 1862, Charlie was back with his outfit and the *Gazette* reported that

The Fortieth Regiment of Mass. Volunteers . . . left their camp at Boxford at 11 o'clock on Monday morning for Washington, via Fall River. They numbered 1002 men, and were armed with Springfield rifles. Several Vineyard men are attached to this regiment.

Six weeks later Private Vincent wrote home from Minor's Hill, Virginia, where he was serving temporarily as Orderly to General Cowdin, commander of the Second Brigade of Abercrombie's Division.

The office is nothing of any great account, yet it is quite important. All I have to do is to stop around the headquarters, and be on hand to carry any orders that it may be necessary to send to the different regiments . . . I shall want a



In his letters, Charlie often mentions the Sutler's Camp, the Civil War version of the Post Exchange. This is one of them.

pair of soldier's mittens pretty soon. Ellen knows how they should be knit, with a thumb & forefinger . . . My boots I shall want . . . be sure to have them double-soled . . . with iron heels and toes . . . When you send them, fill up all the space in the box with the necessities of life, and if you haven't the necessities, you may send some of the luxuries . . . Tobacco is very high out here . . . Send me, say, a pound or so.⁴

On November 24, Charlie Mac had need for more of the "necessaries" and he came right to the point in a letter to his father:

My most respected and beloved paternal ancestor: To come to the point at once, and without crawling over or around the haystack, I am sadly in need of a little of that convenient article, styled "money," by some; the "root of evil" by others; the "needful" by still another class of humanity. I am entirely out of money and a man might about as well be without friends as without money . . . I guess you had better send as much as \$5.

⁴His father's account book shows in November: "Iron Shod boots, etc., \$5.37; Postage stamps & Tobacco, \$1.35.

Since early in November, he had been ill, as had many of the troops in his unit. One of the men who enlisted with him in Edgartown, William H. Harrington, had died of typhoid fever on November 29, and the other Edgartown soldiers had contributed \$6 each to pay to have his body shipped home.⁵ Charlie, who normally weighed about 150 pounds, dropped down to 100 pounds during his long and unidentified illness. He was so ill that, on December 23, 1862, he wrote home:

been off duty for seven weeks . . . the boys thought I had better send for some one . . . to come out here and see what can be done towards getting a chance to come home on a sick furlough for 30 or 60 days, if you could not get my discharge. If father cannot or does not feel able . . . I want you to get Uncle Richard.

Uncle Richard L. Pease headed right down to Virginia, but his trip was to no avail.⁶ Charlie had apparently started to improve and his uncle returned to Edgartown without him. However, recovery was slow and it was not until the end of February, two months later, that Private Vincent went back on "light duty" and not until mid-March that he was pronounced fit for full duty. In a letter to his sister in February he alluded to his inaction:

We may not get any more money for two or three months, and perhaps even longer than that. Hope so, though. Government now owes us for over three months service (very serviceable I have been for the last 3 months, about all the service I have done is to rid "Uncle Sam" of his hospital drugs & bitters).

At the end of February, the unit moved to Hunter's Chapel, Va., closer to Washington, and Charlie is feeling better, as his letter to his father indicates:

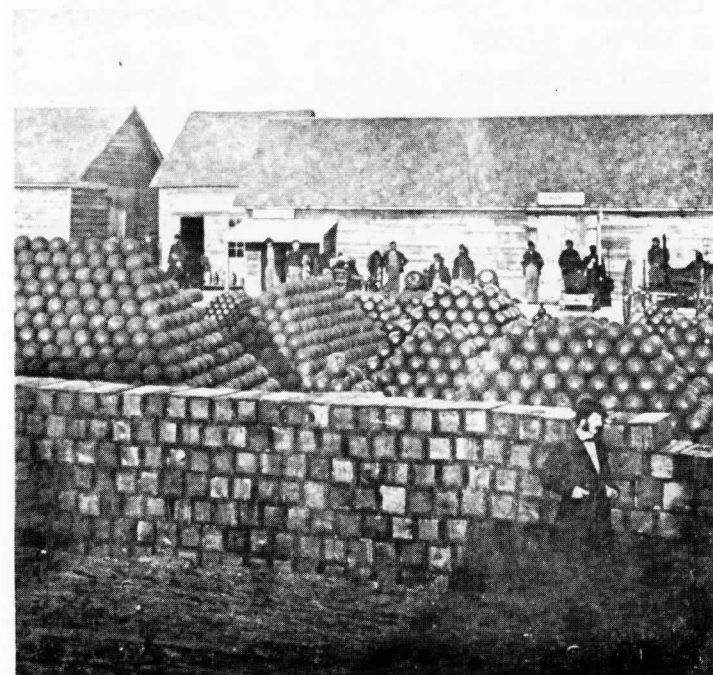
A man can't get along and grow fat very fast on Government rations alone, especially when he has a delicate appetite and is so situated that he is deprived of the staff of life, that is to say, Herring. It still remains to my limited comprehension an

⁵The Edgartown soldiers even had to pay to have a telegram sent to Harrington's widow informing her of his death.

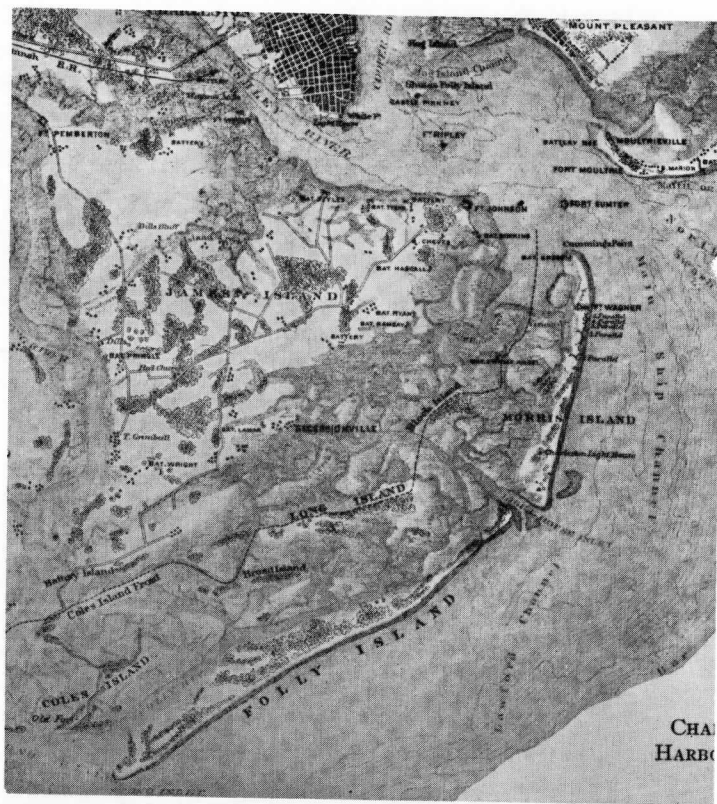
⁶Charlie's father billed his son's account \$72 for Uncle Richard's expenses.

indisputable fact that although other people, who have enjoyed the beneficial effects of a more liberal education than I was fortunate enough to gain possession of and thereby having superior advantages of observation from which to deduce their assertions, yet nevertheless, to the contrary notwithstanding, I am yet to be convinced of the utility of any other substitute for the one which I advocate as the standard article of subsistence for the human family, viz:- Herring!

There is a wide gap of more than six months in the letters we have after that one. The next letter we have is dated October 15, 1863, and is from Folly Island, South Carolina. The regiment is involved in the siege of Charleston. Folly Island is outside the harbor and next to it is Morris Island from which the Union forces are shelling the famous Fort Sumter that guards the harbor



On Folly Island Charlie heard the steady firing of cannon against Fort Sumter. These balls, on Morris Island, are what they fired.



Charlie was on Folly Island, bottom of map, during the siege of Charleston, top. Fort Sumter guards harbor entrance, upper right.

entrance. Charlie is back on full duty:

We are out most every night laying on reserve, ready for the Rebs should they make an attempt to gain a foothold on this island. If they are wise they will let us alone for they will certainly get particular fits if they come round this way . . . Could you have seen our Regiment when we left Boston, Sept. 8th, 1862, with over 1000 men, and then behold it now with less than 300 men for duty, you would scarcely know us. Now we, I suppose, have been reckoned among the lucky Reg'ts., having had no severe engagements and yet one short year has shorn us of about 700 men, unable to perform military duty. Such are the results of hard marching and scanty fare. When I come to think of this

fact I feel that I ought, and cannot be too thankful, that my life has been spared and be able to count myself as one of the "availables." I have indeed been blessed . . . since I recovered from my protracted illness of last winter . . . The death of poor Bennie Smith was a hard blow for me, leaving me, as it did, alone of the Edgartown boys in Company D., 40th. Mass. V.⁷

By the end of November, Company D had moved again and, as Charlie described it, they were installed as "grand guards of that portion of South Carolina soil, styled Otter Island." While at Otter he began working for the Company Commander as a supply clerk. He seemed to be discouraged about the fact he had not been promoted after more than a year of service. Uncle Richard had apparently offered him some advice about how to get advanced, but Charlies didn't take it, writing his father that "it is extremely delicate for a private to solicit anything of the nature to which he referred from a commissioned officer . . . I should not want a chance in my own regiment, but if I could get an appointment to some vacancy that might occur in some colored Regiment, I should like it very much."

He suggested that those at home who had political influence should try to help, meaning no doubt Uncle Richard and perhaps Richard's father, the Sheriff.

The best way that I know of would be for some of you at home that possess political influence to write to Gov. Andrew through our Councillor, if no better way affords, desiring my promotion to the first vacancy in one of the Mass. Colored Reg'ts.⁸ . . . Make the case as strong as possible and put her through if you

⁷Benjamin Smith of Edgartown, son of John S. Smith and Mary Norton Smith, died August 15, 1863, at Alexandria, Va., "of a wasting disease," and was the second Edgartown soldier in the 40th Reg't. to die of illness. Two others had been given disability discharges because of ill health. The other three were transferred to the Volunteer Reserve Corps, which apparently was equivalent to an honorable discharge before end of enlistment period.

⁸There were a number of colored regiments being formed in Massachusetts as residents "bought" substitutes to avoid draft. Governor Andrew was sending "agents into the South to recruit black volunteers to fill the man-power quotas of Massachusetts." William S. McFeely, *Grant*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1981, p. 176.

Christmas for a Union Soldier in 1863

Christmas Day, 1863, Charlie Macreading Vincent was on Folly Island, South Carolina, just outside Charleston harbor. It was his first Christmas away from home. Here's how he described that day:

Well, we had a big dinner, I can tell you, the best I have seen since I entered the service of Uncle Sam. We had roast beef, turnips, potatoes, tomatoes, and all the "fixins," such as horse radish, pepper sauce, etc., then came on a great plum pudding, and mince pies, and a dessert of apples, raisins and nuts.

Our officers were very kind and tried their best to give us an opportunity to enjoy ourselves and we did just that thing, I can tell you. By orders from headquarters the day was set apart as a holiday (no duty to perform). The officers of the Reg't. for the purpose of having some sport had contributed funds for prizes in several games and races, as follows:

Mock Dress Parade at 11 a.m. Prize for most absurd character: \$5. A "Sack Race," prizes \$5., \$3., \$1. "Wheelbarrow Race" (blindfolded), prizes same as in Sack Race. "Foot Race," prizes \$5. and \$3. A "Greased Pole," prize \$10.

They were all carried out in good style and afforded some rich sport. No one would try the "Pole," for the reason that it would have been useless. It was as smooth as glass before they greased it and was about 20 feet long.

The Dress Parade was the most laughable feature of the day. Some of the most ridiculous looking personages I ever saw and the most of them acted their parts to perfection. "Taps" was not sounded until 10 p.m., giving us an hour and a half more than usual.

I did not take an active part in any of the games, *except the dinner*, and I think I carried out my part of this performance as well as any of them. I ate all I wanted, I'll bet. Take it all the way round and I think I may safely say I enjoyed myself better than ever I did in the army before or since, and Christmas 1863 will always be reckoned as an era in my army experiences.

Christmas morning the rebs made a demonstration at Stone Inlet and attempted the capture of the gunboat *Marblehead*. They were unsuccessful and went away with less men than they came with. I understand there were one or two men killed on board the gunboat and four or five wounded. Thomas Fisher is aboard of the *Marblehead* . . . Acting Master's Mate.

*Not a mention of Santa Claus,
a Christmas tree or carols.*

are a mind to. If you fail, I shall not be any worse off than I am now. That's so.

Apparently nothing came of it and by February 1864, Charlie Mac was writing from a camp near Jacksonville, Florida. The unit had been converted into a mounted infantry company and it was involved in "raiding all through Florida," as he described it. Now a mounted infantryman he is armed with a "Spencer Seven Shooter Rifle" that is capable of firing seven shots in a minute. For the first time, he is involved in close combat and states that one of his company "when wounded in the arm was but a few feet from me. The ball entered near his wrist and passed out just below the elbow . . . without injuring the bone."

In this letter, dated February 18, 1864, he goes into considerable detail about the North Florida campaign.

Monday, Feb. 8, in the afternoon we left Jacksonville with our whole force, probably about 10,000 . . . and proceeded into the country, rode until near midnight when the independent Battalion of Mass. Cavalry and the 40th Mass. Mounted Infantry and some artillery surprised a rebel camp and captured four pieces of rebel artillery, several prisoners, all their camp equipage, etc., without firing a shot, a circumstance without parallel, I think, in the history of this war. The way the bully boys of the First went on with a cheer was enough to electrify a dead man -- almost. This feat put us in excellent humor. . . . We rested here until about 4 in the morning when we left for Baldwin . . . arriving there just in time to stop a train of three cars with one piece of artillery on board and take them in our possession, without any shots . . . The locomotive escaped, however. Here we found a rebel storehouse with sugar, tobacco, molasses . . . whiskey, etc., in any amounts almost & the way the boys helped themselves to these things was with a gusto. I like all the things, but the whiskey -- that I did not trouble, you may rest assured. . . . Quite early on the morning of the 10th we left Baldwin & after riding some ten miles came across a small body of the enemy . . . after sharp firing for a half an hour we set them a'running lively. The loss on our side was three killed and some dozen wounded . . . about three o'clock in the morning of the 11th . . . we were off again. After travelling

until about noon, say some twenty five miles, we found the Rebs again in strong force and after a short skirmish in which we had three wounded we fell back . . . and stopped for the night. In the afternoon of the 13th we were off again and rode until nearly daylight the next morning, having come about forty miles . . . halted a few hours and were off again, went to Waldo, about twelve miles. Remained at Waldo that night . . . found bacon, sugar, molasses, rice, etc., for our men & corn & hay for the horses. Feb. 15th we left Waldo on the back track and rode nearly all day, all night & part of the forenoon on the 16th to Barber's Plantation where we now remain. Rode about 60 miles in the heat. . . . There are a great many men with sore "sit downs", I tell you. Mine has been pretty sore but is convalescing.

Four days later, he wrote again, this time with less enthusiasm:

Since I last wrote, circumstances have occurred that are extremely unpleasant. Then everything was going on smoothly and a continual success and the ease with which we were proceeding through the country has suffered a complete reverse and we were obliged to retreat here in double quick time The 40th Mass. lost about thirty men. . . . Company D did not lose a man. I was not in the battle. I was unwell and was left in camp with one other man from our company. Consequently, I missed the *fun* of being a target for the rebs. I am not sorry . . . Old veterans say they never heard a heavier fire for the number of troops engaged . . . The Johnnies were too much for us and whipped us fairly.

The engagement he was describing was the Battle of Olustee or Silver Lake in which the Union forces had 193 killed, 1175 wounded and 460 declared missing. The Confederates had 100 killed and 400 wounded.

On March 7, 1864, he wrote to his mother from a totally new address: Florida Rail Road, near Jacksonville, Express Cav., Headquarters, Commissary Dept., Light Brigade.

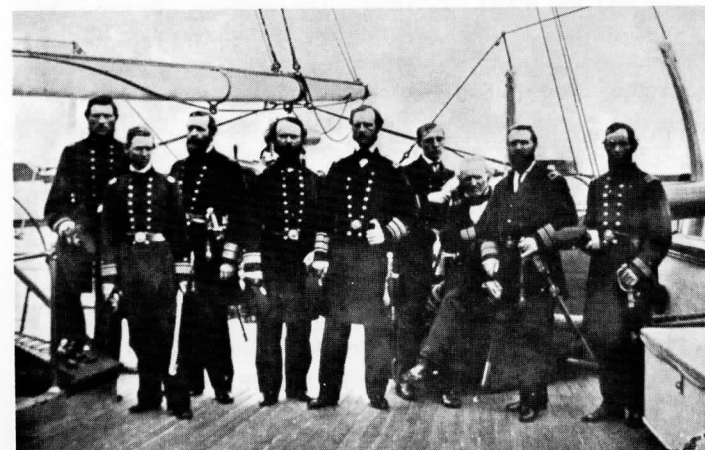
My health is pretty good. The only thing that troubles me is a disease that relates to, or is intimately connected with my posterior or "seat of honor" -- vulgarly called "piles." . . . Fortunately for me, I have had an opportunity to rest the "seat of trousers" from the continual and harassing wear and

tear of the saddle. For about a week past I have been on business connected with the Quarter Master's Department . . . and am now seated in the car in which we bring our supplies for the Light Brigade. I sleep aboard the car, having no horse to bother with. We are already in case of an attack to take the "first train" for Jacksonville with an "Iron Horse" for our leader.

Charlie Mac, in his new duties, is apparently located close enough to Jacksonville harbor so on his supply trips he can visit with some Edgartown men aboard vessels there:

Lieutenants Mussey and Sweet, Ben Ripley of the *Ottawa*, Thomas Fisher of the *Pawnee* are all well. You can inform their friends of the fact.

By May, the unit was back in Virginia on the James River at Bermuda Hundred. Charlie Mac was still with the Quarter Master, but the 40th Regiment was on a line between Richmond and Petersburg. On May 22, 1864, he wrote that in the fighting for Petersburg, Company D had its first man killed in action. The battle for Petersburg (it was nearly a year before the city was captured by the Union) is famous for an ill-fated attempt by the Union



Officers of gunboat *Pawnee* during the war. Thomas Fisher of Edgartown served on her and he may be among those shown here.

forces to take the city by digging a long tunnel under the Confederate fort guarding the city and setting off a mammoth explosive charge in it. The huge explosion went off all right, although somewhat delayed, and the fort and occupants were demolished, but the Union troops failed to follow through in the confusion after the blast. A disaster resulted. The Union lost more men than the enemy and the city remained Confederate. Charlie Mac described the events in a letter to his sister July 30:

We have had harder fighting today than . . . for a long time. Our Brigade has lost some men, but not many, they for once not having been placed in the extreme front . . . One of the large rebel forts was undermined and a large quantity of powder placed under it; and this morning the torch was applied. The fort and all its unfortunate inmates were blown into ruins . . . We captured quite a number of prisoners and their loss must be heavy.

The following morning, Sunday, July 31, he added a sad postscript to the letter:

The affair yesterday, I am sorry to say, did not end very favorably. Yesterday afternoon, our boys were forced to evacuate the works they had gained in the morning and at night we were just where we started in the morning. The loss I think was greater on our side than on the side of the Johnnies. Prisoners about equal. The heaviest loss was among the colored troops of the 9th and 18th Corps. The loss in the 40th, as far as I have learned, was but 4 wounded, all slightly. . . . I must still consider myself a lucky boy to keep out of the awful hard duty that falls to the lot of those doing duty in the ranks.

A week later, in writing to his father, he describes what his Quartermaster work has developed into:

I have been busy making up Returns and sending them away to the proper Departments. My correspondence is getting to be quite extensive. I have written to two Brigadier Generals to-day, and scarce a day passes but what I have correspondence with some member of Uncle Sam's "shoulder strap" gentry. What do you think of that, hey? . . . Affairs look peculiarly black for our side at the present time. That a most egregious blunder was made here on the 30th of July is evident enough to the dullest

intellect. On whom the responsibility of the mismanagement rests will be known to the people ere long. A "Court of Inquiry" . . . is in progress . . . Let the guilty one be brought to the punishment so justly deserved, no matter who he may be. It was a golden opportunity to capture Petersburg, but it was ingloriously lost.

The last letter we have in the Archives from Charlie Mac is dated October 1, 1864, and was written in Bermuda Hundred, Va. His unit has fallen back after a series of skirmishes. Petersburg is still held by the Confederates, but it is being shelled heavily:

Some of the heaviest cannonnading I ever heard occurred over on the Petersburg side about sunset last evening, continuing about two hours . . . Quite heavy firing over that way to-day . . . I believe the crisis is fast approaching and I should not be surprised if I was in Richmond in the course of a fortnight or three weeks. Gold is tumbling down rapidly and so is McClellan's stock. A vote in the 40th the other day stood as follows:- Lincoln 172, McClellan 30, and this is about a fair sample of the feeling of the Army, about six to one.⁹

Although we don't learn it from his letters, we do know that on December 28, 1864, Charlie Mac was put on detached duty from the 40th Regiment, assigned to the Quarter Master Department, and promoted to Sergeant. His prediction about being in Richmond "in the course of a fortnight or three weeks" was, in keeping with his nature, too optimistic. Even Petersburg remained in Confederate hands until April 2, 1865, eight months after the underground explosion. Richmond fell to the Union forces the following day and, although wrong in his prediction about when it would happen, Charlie Mac was there, as we learn in the *Gazette*, April 14, 1865:

A letter covering three large pages of letter sheet [was] just received by our respected townsman, Hon. Samuel G. Vincent, from his son, Charles M., now a member of the 40th Mass.

⁹In the 1864 election, Lincoln, the National Union candidate, was opposed by General George B. McClellan, Democrat. McClellan had at one time commanded all the Union forces. Lincoln won, taking all states except New Jersey, Kentucky and Delaware.

The ardent desire, so long cherished, that he might enter Richmond, has been gratified. We give the letter entire:

| | |
|-----|-----|
| R | A |
| I | P |
| C | R |
| H | I |
| M | L |
| O | 3d. |
| N | 1 |
| D | 8 |
| Va. | 6 |
| | 5 |

Dear Father,

I

AM

HERE.

Your affectionate son,

Charlie Mac

On April 9, General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox; on April 14, 1865, President Lincoln was assassinated.¹⁰ The last of the Confederate troops surrendered on May 26, and on June 18, 1865, the 40th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, left Richmond under orders to report to Boston for separation from the service. There were 23 officers and 390 enlisted men on the roster, one of them being Quartermaster Sergeant Charles Macreading Vincent.

Five days later, on the evening of the 23rd, a proud and happy Lieutenant Charles M. Vincent arrived in Edgartown. He had been promoted to the commissioned grade in Boston, when mustered out. We know that Lieutenant Vincent came home because on June 24 his father entered into his account book:

Cash to himself on his return from War \$20.00

Three months later, Charlie Mac and his father went

¹⁰Charlie Mac wrote a lengthy letter to the *Gazette* decrying the assassination: "What an overwhelming catalogue of crime will be laid to the leaders of this wicked rebellion!" V.G., April 28, 1865.

over the account book and on September 30, 1865, there is this notation:

Settled & balanced all Accounts between us up to this date.

It was signed by Sam'l G. Vincent and Charles M. Vincent. The book shows there had been a total of \$630 deposited to Charlie's account during the war, the largest item being his \$500 bounty payment. Withdrawals and expenditures totalled \$479.51, among which were \$99.50 sent to him in cash in various letters; \$59.78 spent for various items such as boots, clothing and tobacco sent to him; \$72 to reimburse Uncle Richard for his trip to try to get Charlie a sick leave; and \$12.58 for postage stamps sent to him and freight spent on boxes shipped to him.

With the balance of \$151, plus the \$100 bonus the Federal Government paid soldiers upon completion of their tour of duty, and whatever amount his sister had repaid on the \$65 she still owed him on the \$100 loan he had made when he left to go to war, Charlie decided to go into business. On December 15, 1865, with his friend from Edgartown, Richard G. Shute, the drummer in Company D who had been discharged in January 1863, Charlie bought an artist's gallery in New London, Conn., where, according to the *Gazette*, "they soon intend to migrate for the purpose of carrying on the Photographer's business." The editor used the departure of these promising young men for greener fields to make a point: "The same story, going to look for business. Can our citizens read the 'handwriting on the wall?'"

Richard Shute's father, C. H. Shute, was the Island's leading photographer at the time. Apparently, the Connecticut venture was not a great success as Richard came back to take over his father's Island business and Charlie Mac was soon back at the printer's trade this time at the New Bedford *Mercury*, the leading daily paper in the area.

His stay in New Bedford was short. In July 1867 he



Richard Shute, Charlie Mac's Army buddy, ran a jewelry shop and photographic studio, shown at right, in Edgartown after the war.

returned to Edgartown where he bought the *Vineyard Gazette*, which he ran as Editor and Proprietor until 1872 when he sold it to Edgar Marchant, a former owner and his old employer. Charlie left to "assume control of the *Norfolk County Register*, a paper of influence, published in Randolph, Mass." For several years he moved around, operating newspapers in various Massachusetts towns, including one in Brookline.

From there he joined the editorial staff of the *Boston Globe* where he began a distinguished career as a reporter, columnist and eventually Assistant Managing Editor, the

position he held when he died of diphtheria on March 4, 1881, at the age of 37. In his obituary in the *Globe* he was described as "one of the most capable of journalists. The 'Table Gossip' [column] under his charge gave evidence of his sense of wit and humor, while as a general writer he was uncommonly able. . . . Mr. Vincent [the obituary continued] was twice married, his first wife, a native of the Vineyard, dying about two years ago, leaving four children. About two months ago, he was married again and the bereavement comes as a terrible shock, indeed, to his wife."¹¹

His first wife had been Sarah C. Smith of Edgartown, whom he had married in 1870 while owner of the *Gazette*. The notice in the newspaper had been very brief, under the heading MARRIED:

Vincent -- Smith: In the M.E. Church, Sabbath evening, 16th instant, by Rev. A. J. Church, Charles M. Vincent, editor of the *Vineyard Gazette* and Miss Sarah C. Smith, only daughter of Capt. Philip Smith, all of Edgartown.

Our records show that there were only three children, not four as stated in the *Globe*: Laura G., Philip S., and Miriam E.

There are many of his letters in our Archives, far too many to be quoted in a single article. They are written in a style that supports the comment in the *Globe* obituary that "he was uncommonly able," as a writer, even while in his teens. Had his life not ended so prematurely, he would, no doubt, have risen to national prominence in his profession.

¹¹ *Boston Globe*, March 2, 1881, as reprinted in the *Gazette*, March 11, 1881.

Documents

This diary of Jeremiah Pease (1792-1857) provides the best record of Island events during his lifetime. He was a man of great energy and held many positions of importance. He was the person who chose the location of the Camp Ground, thus being responsible for Oak Bluffs being where it is today.

In this installment he records what was probably the first step towards replacing tents with cottages at the Campground. He tells us of the attempt of an arsonist to burn down the Edgartown postoffice, the drowning of a swimmer (still an unusual recreational activity) and a violent storm in which two persons were killed by lightning. Disillusioned and often ailing Gold Rushers continue to return home.

We have been publishing excerpts of this diary since 1974.

January 1851

5th. NEly, very cold, did not attend meeting at E'Ville, John being sick.¹

8th. NWly to NE 18 men arrive from California belonging to this Island.

9th. SE to ESE rainstorm. Engaged in settling the County Treasurer's Accounts. Danl. Fellows & myself being a committee for that purpose.

¹John was Jeremiah's son who, along with his brother Frederick, had just returned from California where they had gone to seek their fortune in gold.

11th. SW very pleasant. Went to Holmeshole, bro't. our Son Frederick home, who has arrived from California via Duxberry. Through the great mercy of the Lord, John & Frederick have arrived safe home, both are unwell but are much better in health than they were a few days ago.

23rd. SW pleasant. J.R. Norton arrives from California.

February 1851

7th. NW cold. Mr. Wm. H. Norton dies at Quampachy.

10th. SSW foggy. Rec'd. a letter from our son William at California containing the news of the death of Theo. Mayhew, son of Theo. G. Mayhew, Esqr. of this place. Schr. Baltic of Provincetown, Capt. Hezekiah Galacar from Port au Prince which arrived here on Friday the 7th about 1 p.m. sailed for Boston about 8 o'clock this morning not having complied with the Revenue laws in entering his vessel.

18th. SW fresh breeze. Engaged Survey at Chappyd. for E. Ripley, Jr., & S. Huxford.

28th. SW light, foggy. Engaged survey land for Nelly Joseph and Danl. T. Webquish at Chap.

March 1851

9th. NNW did not attend meeting at N. Shore acct. of snow in the roads. Married Mr. Charles W. Daggett of Edg. and Miss Deborah C. Bailey of Framingham, Maine.

20th. NW squally. Went to Christian Town to survey land for J. Degress.

Ship *Almira* arrives from P. Ocean.²

26th. SW fresh breeze. Survd. land for Nelly Joseph and D. T. Webquish at Chappaquiddick.

31st. SW weighed Whale bone from Ship *Almira*.

April 1851

6th. SE rainy. Attended meeting at E'Ville. At about 8 p.m. Rodolphus' Wife was confined with a son.³

8th. SW This day closes another year of my short life.

11th. NW at about 2 o'clock a.m. Valentine, infant son of William C. & Serena Pease, dies aged about 2 years, having been sick 7 or 8 days, inflammation of the bowels & fever, the Dr. tho't caused his death. This will be a great affliction to our son William who is now in California.⁴

16th. NE heavy gale with the highest tide for a number of years past.

17th. NE gale continues. A Ship castaway at Succanesset, the Light Vessel from Cross Rip and a Fishing Schooner from Yarmouth on shore at Cape Poge.

23rd. NW to SW, pleasant, a long,

²The Ship *Almira*, Captain Coffin, had left Edgartown July 29, 1847, nearly four years earlier. She brought back 1000 barrels of sperm oil, 1500 whale oil, and 18,000 pounds of whale bone. Jeremiah weighed that bone on the 31st.

³Rodolphus, Jeremiah's eighth child, was 22 years old. This, his first child, was named Samuel S.

⁴The baby Valentine had been named for his other grandfather, Captain Valentine Pease of the whaler *Acushnet*, on which Herman Melville, author of *Moby Dick*, had been a crew member.

severe gale has passed off, many lives have been lost.

24th. SW, went to Pohogonet. Br. C.H. Titus went with me.

25th. N to E light pleasant. Ship *Champion*, Capt. Henry Colt, arrives from the Pacific Ocean with 2800 barrels Whale & Sperm oil. About one o'clock this morning Br. Paul Luce dies having been unwell for a year past. He was the first man that embraced Religion in the Reformation which commenced at E'Ville in May 1834 and continued to maintain an excellent religious character to the last hours of his life. He was a very useful man, always engaged in the good cause of the Lord and in administering consolation to the afflicted. His last moments were peaceful and happy. Another Sincere Friend of mine as well as to all mankind has gone to his long home.

26th. NNW. Attended the Funeral of Br. Luce at E'Ville. Service by Br. Sterns of Holmeshole, it was an affecting season. Br. Luce was a man of good natural abilities and had great influence in that village and will be greatly missed, he always took an active part in our Meetings, was a Class leader and ever ready to support the work of God according to his best abilities. He was years old.⁵

27th. Ely. Attended meetings at E'Ville. Death has deprived that village of a number of the most pious and useful men within a few years.

⁵Jeremiah often left space for details, intending to fill it in later, usually forgetting to do so. Br. Luce, we learn from our Archives, was 74 years old.

29th. NE light. Finished planting corn.

May 1851

4th. NE rainstorm. Did not attend meeting at M.D. An alarm of fire was made about 8 p.m. at W.H. Munro's store at the 4 corners. There was found in the letter box of the Post Office next morning a cotton rag which had been set on fire and dropped in the box and burned the rag and several letters a little, and went out. No doubt the intention was to set the office on fire. The alarm was first given by Rodolphus who was passing the store of Wm. H. Munro on the corner of Main and Water Streets. This we conclude was also set on fire but extinguished in a few minutes. The fire was kindled in some papers in the chamber entry. Supposed to have been done by a bad Boy.

17th. SSW. Mrs. Abby Marchant dies at about 11 a.m. of a sore leg, having been afflicted with it for several years. She was a very pious woman, having professed Religion in early life, joined the Methodist Church and always maintained an excellent character. She died as much resigned and enjoyed as great faith as any person I ever saw. She was a valuable Sister in the Church.

18th. SEly, little rain. Attended meeting at M.D. in the forenoon, attended the Funeral of Sister Marchant at the dwelling house of Br. C. Marchant and the Sermon at the Methodist Meeting house after her

burial. It was a solemn season, the congregation was large, there being no other meeting in the other Meeting Houses during the day.

21st. SSE foggy. Bo't a cow of Tisdale Smith which proves very ugly, returned her.

June 1851

3rd. SW. Sister Prudence Morse, Wid. of Uriah Morse dies suddenly aged 79. She was esteemed a pious good woman and had done much for the cause of Religion in early life, had been a member of the Methodist Church nearly 40 years.

5th. SW. Engaged in surveying and planning land for J. Vinson, Admt. on the Estate of H. W. Smith deceased.

8th. SEly. Attended meetings at E'Ville. News of the death of Capt. Obed Luce of that village arrives. He is said to have been murdered at one of the Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

11th. SW. Ship *Almira*, John L. Jenks master, sails for Pacific Ocean.

25th. SW. Went to Chilmark, attended County Comm. Court. Viewed and accepted the Road leading to Menamsha.⁶ Court was held at the house of Smith Mayhew, Esqr. where we were again entertained in the best manner without any compensation.

July 1851

4th. S to SW. This day is celebrated

⁶Menemsha was spelled with an "a" at the time. It was sometime later that it became Menemsha.

by display of flags of the shipping. Picknick at Catamy, firing of Guns and display of fireworks at night.⁷

At about 6 p.m. Capt. Henry Pease late master of the Ship *Walter Scott*, arrives from California and brings the solemn news of the death of Capt. John O. Morse, late Master of the Bark *Sarah*. He died at Paita on the 27th of May last of the dropsey, a great loss to this community.

15th. S to SSW. Br. F. Upham arrives from Fallriver to build his Tent at the Camp Ground.⁸

16th. SW. Went to Camp Ground to assist Br. Upham.

29th. SSW heavy thunder, lighting and rain. The Thunderstorm was tho't. to be more severe at Holmeshole than at any former period since the memory of man. Mr. Nye was killed instantly by lightning at his paint shop. The Widow Alvina Norris was killed about the same time in her dwelling house, both buildings were much injured by the lightning. They were very respectable persons of that place. About the same time Mr. Wm. Brown and the Widow Goodrich were struck by the lightning at Chappaquiddick but not injured much.⁹

⁷Fourth of July had become the major holiday of the year. This may have been the first time Edgartown had fireworks.

⁸"To build his tent" must mean he put up board sides and frame. This, doubtless, was the first such construction.

⁹At the Camp Meeting two weeks later there was also a violent thunderstorm which Hebron Vincent, in his history of the meetings, described this way: "... the pealing thunder

August 1851

5th. Nly, cloudy, light wind. Went to Camp Meeting. Remained there until the 13th. The weather was pleasant. The meeting was the most interesting and remarkable that was ever held there. There were probably more than 4000 people who attended, excellent order prevailed during the meeting, there was no disturbance.¹⁰ The Preachers were more engaged than usual. It was the opinion of Rev. Asa Kent who is now an aged Minister of the Gospel, that there never has been a meeting of this kind held in this region so profitable to the blessed cause of our Redeemer as this. The Secretary of the meeting reported one hundred and thirty who professed to find redemption in the blood of the Lamb, no doubt many more were happily converted to God.

A young man by the name of Mitchell was drowned near Cape Poge Gut, so called, this afternoon he with two others attempted to swim across the Gut, the tide running very strong he was unable to reach the opposite shore. He was at the Camp Meeting and I presume heard his last sermon, prayer and exhortation there.

and the almost constant lightning's glare operated to test our readiness to leave the world instantly, as two fellow mortals had done in a neighboring village during a most dreadful thunder storm but a few days before."

¹⁰Every year Jeremiah states that the Camp Meeting is the best ever held. He was Night Watchman so was especially pleased to report that excellent order prevailed.

Director's Report

BALLOONS, flowers, music, punch bowls and a colorful tent created a festive atmosphere for our annual meeting on the beautiful late afternoon of August 20th. Following a brief business meeting, more than 200 members and guests toured our various attractions, including the refurbished carriage shed and the new exhibit on Nancy Luce in the Museum.

The event was also a publication party for the new book published by the Society: *Consider Poor I -- The Life and Works of Nancy Luce* by Walter Magnes Teller. Many members purchased copies of the book and congratulated the author who was at the meeting.

Contributing to the outstanding success of the meeting were many people, but special notice must go to the chairman, Mrs. Eleanor Olsen, and the honorary chairman, Mrs. Edith Bliss. During the business session, the members elected Arthur R. Railton, President; S. Bailey Norton, Vice-President; Kathryn M. Bettencourt, Treasurer; and Shirley K. Erickson, Secretary. Elected to three-year terms on the Council were Elmer Athearn, Richard L. Burt and Eleanor Olsen. Welcomed to the Council was Miriam Richardson, who was appointed in July to fill the term of Edith Morris, who resigned for health and personal reasons. Mrs. Morris will be missed as will the retiring Vice-President, Lorna Livingston. We are grateful to both of them for their outstanding service to the Society through the years.

Again this year we had a pleasant summer season with interesting and interested visitors from many places around the country and world, including Australia, Austria, Bermuda, Canada, England, France, Ireland,

Italy, Mexico, the Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa and West Germany.

We were especially pleased to receive an official visit from Admiral Richard Bauman, Commander of the First Coast Guard District, who came to the Island to inspect its lighthouses, giving special attention to the historic beacon on our grounds. After going over it with a careful eye, he concluded that the Fresnel lens we have is a "national treasure." He congratulated the Society on the care with which it is maintaining the 150-year-old mechanism.

Fortunately for lighthouse lovers, it can be seen in full operation, rotating as it did for nearly 100 years at Gay Head, every Sunday night during the summer thanks to the effort of Tony and Kathryn Bettencourt, who are as reliable as the old-time lighthouse keepers.

In case you missed reading it, we will mention the editorial that appeared in the May 19th issue of the *Gazette* on the 25th. anniversary of our *Dukes County Intelligencer*, congratulating Gale Huntington for having founded the journal and serving as its Editor for 19 years. The editorial noted that the more than 3300 pages of the *Intelligencer* published to date "constitute a priceless accumulation and heritage of history and lore for Martha's Vineyard." We all agree with the editorial that "warm congratulations have been well earned by Gale Huntington, editor."

We hope that many of you will have a chance to visit us this winter either to see the Francis Foster Museum with its new Nancy Luce exhibit or to do research and reading in the Gale Huntington Library of History. These are stimulating activities for the winter months and we urge you to take advantage of your membership. The Fresnel lens and lighthouse, along with the Carriage Shed with its Button fire engine, Nomansland boat and many other historical items are also open to the public all winter, free of charge.

THOMAS E. NORTON

Bits & Pieces

ARMY food being what it is (and always has been, it seems) soldiers get hungry for home cooking. Charlie Mac Vincent, private, U.S. Army, 40th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, Civil War, was no exception (see article in this issue for more about Charlie). During his first year in the service, food was often a topic in his letters home:

"Meat and hardbread will do very well for 50 or 60 meals, but when it comes for a steady diet, it is rather tough."

He wrote his mother about the monotony of Army food and listed a few things he wanted her to send:

"Firstly, a small loaf of brown bread, Indian cake or Indian pudding . . . And if possible a small spare rib will go tip-top. . . fresh pork, if you can get a piece without too much trouble, please do so and I will be under everlasting obligations to you. If you can't get one handy, a small chicken, with plenty of stuffing, would be nice and perhaps not too expensive. If neither of these are convenient, if the old hog's hams are out of pickle, send us a few slices . . . we can fry it."

He even asked his married sister, Ellen, to help out:

"If you are so disposed, I want you to make me a loaf of that plain cake that used to taste so good at home. And if the old hog is dead, you can use any spare dough you may have by

frying a few 'double breasted' doughnuts."

Another need of all soldiers is the occasional letter from home. Mail call is the most looked-for time of all. Charlie, who loved words, wrote often and expected his family to do the same:

"I have been anxiously awaiting a letter from some member of the family, a sorrel top offshoot of which I am. But man is often doomed to disappointment in this mundane sphere which we inhabit and it is no more than fair that I should *enjoy* my portion of such things. The afternoon of the same day on which I closed my last and greatest epistolary effusion, effulgent with brilliant ideas, sound logic, disinterested patriotism and stubborn, indisputable, incontrovertible facts, we effected a landing on the south bank of the James River at this singular named village of Bermuda Hundred."

That surely must have gotten him a letter by return mail!

His was a warm, loving family, if Charlie's letters are evidence. He mentions wanting to get home for a "smoke in the old washroom" with his father to talk about herring (his favorite food), the war and other things. The complimentary closing in one letter to his mother reads:

"More love, still more love, ditto for love, more love if wanted."

Yes, Samuel Gifford Vincent's son loved his family and he loved words. As the *Boston Globe* wrote in his obituary, he was "uncommonly able" as a writer.

A.R.R.

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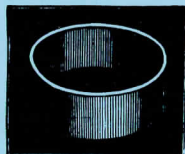
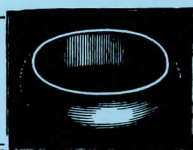


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Advertisement for Richard Shute's shop in Edgartown in 1897.