

150th
Campground
YEAR



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 26, NO. 3

FEBRUARY 1985

Some Holmes Hole Houses And How They've Changed

by JAMES NORTON



Holmes Hole in 1853

Campground Pioneer Opposes Separation

by HEBRON VINCENT

Richard L. Pease's Fall of 1839

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

Review of New Book on Campground

by ALVIN J. GOLDWYN

Director's Report

Jeremiah Pease Diary

Bits & Pieces

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THANKS AND A REMINDER

Our thanks to those members who have sent in their dues for this year and our added thanks to those who have upgraded their memberships to the sustaining category. We urge all who can to do so.

Even more thanks go to those who included a contribution to the much-needed Preservation Fund.

We remind any member who may have put the dues notice aside when it came and by now has forgotten about it that the Society and this journal depend upon your support.

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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. Its annual meeting is held in August of each year in Edgartown.

The Society maintains the Thomas Cooke House, the Francis Foster Museum and the Gale Huntington Library of History, 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 Huntington Library are in an adjacent building and are open to the public all year around. 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, plus thousands of volumes of historical works.

The public is invited.



Some Holmes Hole Houses And How They've Changed

by JAMES NORTON

OBSERVERS of early Vineyard houses are first of all struck by the number that have survived. The Scotts, Henry and Jonathan, have identified more than 30 Chilmark houses built before the Revolutionary War. Their descriptions of some of these treasures of our heritage have appeared in previous issues of the *Intelligencer*.

My own research into the history of Holmes Hole reveals the survival of 14 pre-Revolutionary houses built in the village, plus 3 others which were moved into town during the early 19th Century. This number is just over half of the 27 originally built along the west shore of what is now called Vineyard Haven harbor. That so many have survived is a remarkable record of durability.¹

¹It is especially remarkable because the entire center of town was destroyed in the devastating fire of 1883. Actually, only two of the original 27 and one of the moved houses were destroyed.

JAMES NORTON and his family live on the Norton Farm in Vineyard Haven, the 8th generation of Nortons to do so. A Yale graduate with degrees from Oxford and a PhD. in Indian Philosophy from the University of Madras, India, he is former Professor of Religion and Chairman of the Department of Indian Studies at The College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio. Since returning to the Island in 1973, he has been researching Tisbury history, this article being a tiny fraction of his findings. It is his second article in this journal, the first being in August 1983.



James G. Stevens photograph

THOMAS CHASE HOUSE (c.1717) is on Union Street and is generally called the 1785 Samuel Daggett house.

The only two houses built during the 17th century were the Perkins/Chase house (1674), and the Dr. Thomas West house (1682). They have long since disappeared. Of the first three built in the 18th century -- Abraham Chase's farmhouse on West Chop (1712), the Thomas Chase House (1717), and Abraham Chase's Great House (1727), the later two have survived. It is not easy to recognize them today, however, for two quite different reasons.

The Thomas Chase House stands largely unaltered where it was built c. 1717, on the south side of Union Street. It is not generally recognized as a pre-Revolutionary house because it has come to be known as the 1785 Samuel Daggett house. Deeds and surveys made around 1790 establish this house as Isaac Daggett's Inn, which he had purchased from his cousin Samuel Chase in 1760. The mistaken attribution to Samuel Daggett was made initially by descendants who were the grandchildren of both Samuel and Isaac Daggett. To them it was simply Grandfather Daggett's house, without specifying clearly



James G. Stevens photograph

ZEPHANIAH CHASE HOUSE (1773) stands on the corner of Camp and South Main Streets.

which grandfather was intended.²

Two other early houses retain much of their original character on the sites where they were first built. The Zephaniah Chase House, on the corner of Camp and South Main Streets, was built there in 1773. On the other end of the town center, next to the Stone Bank, is the Jonathan Manter homestead, built there soon after Jonathan's marriage to Sarah Chase in 1755 and her inheritance of the land on which it stands from her father's estate in 1756. Its only significant change was the moving of the front door from the south to the west wall. This alteration was done by Deacon William Downs in the early 1820's, when he began to use the street-side half of the house for a grocery store.

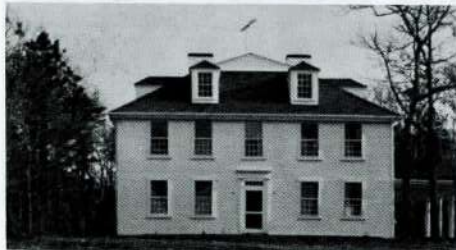
²Mrs. Howes Norris, *Some Early Houses in Our Village*, 1921, identifies the house as Samuel Daggett's. Notes by a contemporary of Mrs. Norris, Mrs. Annie Daggett Lord, c. 1900, identify it with Isaac Daggett, tentatively, as its builder adding: the initials "I.D. cut on doorstep." The documents support Mrs. Lord's recollection of it being Isaac's, though not built by him. It was built for his grandfather 40 years before he bought it.

Sarah L. Norton photograph

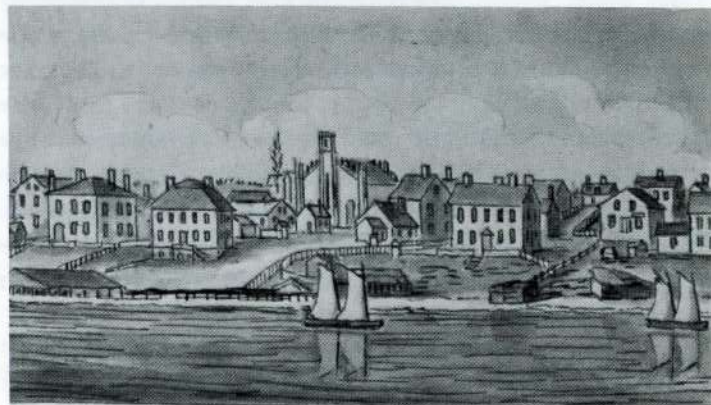


JONATHAN MANTER HOUSE (1755)

James G. Stevens photograph

ABRAHAM CHASE
GREAT HOUSE (1727)
on West Chop.

Engraving by James Warner Barber



ABRAHAM CHASE GREAT HOUSE (1727) is seen here in its original location. It is third from the left in this 1838 drawing.

Sketch by the author.



ABRAHAM CHASE Jr. HOUSE (1741) as it probably looked in 1790 when his son Timothy, the village miller, lived there. Below, the house as it looks today.

James G. Stevens photograph



Other houses have been moved and/or altered to make their original setting and design almost unrecognizable. Abraham Chase's Great House (1727) appears much the same today as it did in Barber's drawing c. 1837.³ Only then it stood prominently in the center of the village on the present site of the Tisbury Police Station, above the town parking lot. It was moved from there in 1922 to the end of West Chop, two miles away, not far from where Abraham Chase's farmhouse stood in the 18th century.

In contrast, the house of Abraham Chase Jr., remains today where it was built in the early 1740s, at the foot of Crocker Avenue. But its original lines are almost totally

³The drawing by John Warner Barber was published in his *Historical Collections*, Door, Howland & Co., Worcester, 1839. The Society owns the original drawing.



MOLLY MERRY/MILL HOUSE (1770) is buried by additions, including Lothrop Merry's mill, 1888. Original house is at left in rear.

hidden by additions to three of its sides. The same has happened to the Molly Merry/Mill house (1770) which stands close by along the shore. When these two houses were built, they were both full-Cape style, looking much like the old Vincent house that is now next to the Old Whaling Church in Edgartown.

Because of the austere simplicity of these earliest Island houses, a style used up to the end of the 18th Century, the alterations made to the front side of these houses followed a fairly consistent pattern.

As the families of the original dwellers expanded, space for new members was made by adding dormers to the front roof, normally facing the harbor to the east, and therefore the first to catch the morning sun. Porches were also added along that same side to receive the increasing number crossing the threshold. Examples of such additions are found in the 1875 drawing of the Ebenezer Allen House (1745), the Jeruel West House (1782), and more elaborately on the John Holmes House (1765).



EBENEZER ALLEN HOUSE (1745) when it was the Seamen's Bethel in 1875.



JERUEL WEST HOUSE (1782) with its front porch and dormers.



JOHN HOLMES HOUSE (1765) has a covered porch and dormers.



ABRAHAM CHASE Jr. HOUSE has many additions, even an enclosed porch.

The next expansion came with the addition of a roof over the front porch, as on the Holmes House. This roof provided structurally for a full, peaked roof over the porch to create an additional upper-story room. If there were dormers already in the main roof, this new roof was extended out either through them (the Abraham Chase Jr., House), or between them (the Ebenezer Allen House).

The final step in this expansion was the addition of dormers to the new roof over the front porch. This proliferation of dormers adorns the Allen House, the Mill House, and the Baxter House (1778), next to the D.A.R. Museum.

The most recent type of alteration has been to enclose a portion or all of the front porch. With the advent of movies and television, the open porch has become less important in the life of an Island family.

This consistency of the changes on the front side of these houses makes it easier to identify them as belonging to the 18th Century. Additions to the other sides have been



BAXTER HOUSE (1778) has had many additions in its 200 years.

much less predictable. Most common have been ells or wings added to the rear, normally on the west, or to the north side, or both. Rarely were they added to the south side. All required additional foundations, and were designed to meet the unique needs of each individual family. The styles and shapes which resulted were as varied as the needs which stirred them.

The consistency of the front-side alterations, in contrast to the variety among the additions to the other sides, suggests that the occupants may have attached a certain sanctity to the front doors of their homes. For there is indeed something mysterious, even awesome, about the way a family enters its home for the first time. It is so awesome that each successive occupant has retained a sense of profound respect for that portal. Such much be but one of the many unspoken liens of our goodly, New England heritage retained in these surviving houses.

An extreme example of this consistency/diversity is revealed in the history of a house which stood during the 19th Century along the shore of Holmes Hole, on the site of the bandstand in Owen Park. It was built in 1811 for

James G. Stevens photograph



EBENEZER ALLEN HOUSE (1745), once the Seamen's Bethel.

Captain Tristram Luce, probably by his brother-in-law, Benjamin Chase.

Captain Tristram Luce had a successful career as a merchant mariner while living there. But he sold this house six years later to Captain Thomas Bradley to try his hand at farming in the Cape Higgon region of Chilmark. The new owner was also a successful mariner, who, in 1828, turned merchant. His entrepreneurial and political skills made him the most respected citizen of Holmes Hole in the 19th Century. In 1829, Captain Bradley sold this house to Captain Richard G. Luce, who was on his way to becoming the town's most prosperous whaling master. His fortune growing, he quickly moved on in 1832 to his grand new home, the first to be built on William Street. Captain John Hursel, a pilot, then bought it. Upon returning to his native New Bedford in 1845, he sold it to Thomas Robinson, a cordwainer or shoemaker, the first owner not to have been a mariner. His family lived there until his death in 1857. The next owner was Captain Walter S. Johnson.

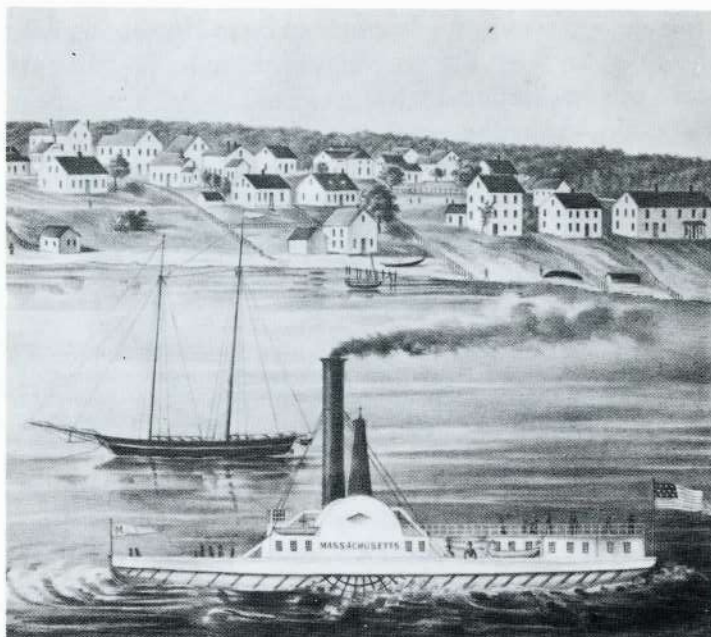
Captain Johnson moved to Holmes Hole from Washington, New Jersey, in 1857, upon his marriage to

Christelina Horton, the daughter of Perez Horton, a pilot, who lived on West Chop. Six years later he bought this house on the harbor for his growing family - a daughter and a son - from the estate of Thomas Robinson. They continued to live in it for another forty years, the longest occupancy in the 19th Century.

Captain Johnson died in Cardenos, Cuba, in 1882. His widow and children - now two girls and two boys - did what many Holmes Hole widowed families have done since the beginning of its settlement. They opened their home to paying visitors and became innkeepers.

This change in the Johnson's life coincided with one of the significant transitions in the life of the community. The village was no longer Holmes Hole, one of the most active coastal ports in the east during the prosperous maritime era of the mid-19th century, but Vineyard Haven, a budding summer resort. These changes, to family and community, became clearly evident in the Johnson home. In response to their success in the growing tourist trade toward the end of the century, they doubled the size of their home, changing beyond recognition the original shape and style. They also gave it a new name, Rudder Grange, from the title of a popular 19th Century novel by Frank W. Stockton. For this expansion, the family obtained three mortgages for a total of \$2635 from Rudolphus W. Crocker. A man of wealth and stature in the community, Mr. Crocker is best remembered as the owner of the harness factory in which began the devastating fire that destroyed the center of town in 1883.

All these people associated with the Johnson's house during the 19th Century were leading citizens in the harbor community. Few other houses could claim such distinction. Another town dignitary joined this list early in the 20th Century. William Barry Owen, son of Arctic whaling master, Captain Leander Owen, bought the house two years after Mrs. Johnson's death in 1901, and



CAPT. TRISTRAM LUCE HOUSE (1811) is just above the two-story house on the waterfront in this drawing made in 1853.



CAPT. LUCE HOUSE, extreme right, after it was enlarged to serve as a rooming house called Rudder Grange in the 1890s.

quickly redeemed the mortgages. This new owner, a graduate of Amherst and a lawyer, had then recently returned from a highly profitable trip to England. There he had successfully introduced the Victor Talking Machine - His Master's Voice - to the European market.

The purchase of the Johnson house was a significant step in Will Owen's plan to build a grand manor on the site of his father-in-law's home on William Street.⁴ He first built a carriage house and formal garden behind it on Franklin Street, known today as Four Way. His scheme also required that all the houses then standing in what is now Owen Park be moved to clear the vista to the harbor from his proposed manor. The expanded Johnson house was moved from its original harbor location to a new site along Main Street toward West Chop in 1910. There it became the property of Charles S. Norton, the last manager of the Lagoon resort hotel, Innisfail, before its destruction by fire in 1906. Charles Norton further expanded the old building by adding an extensive lounge, a dining hall and kitchen. Under his management, the house continued to be a summer inn, but with a new name, Bayside.

There are many who still remember pleasant summer vacations spent at Bayside, so ably run during the years before the Second World War by Miss Merrill and Miss Hornig. After the war, in keeping with the changing times, the building was divided into apartments for summer rental.

In 1964, Bayside was sold by Charles Norton's son, Bayes M. Norton, to Robert Scott, who intended it to be his summer home. After several years of seemingly futile

⁴His father-in-law was John F. Robinson, a carpenter and for many years Postmaster of the village. His house, which he built in 1855, stands on the northwest corner of William Street and Colonial Lane. The present Owen Park is the land from which Mr. Owen removed three houses around 1910. It was given to the town in 1919 by his widow, Mrs. Mary Owen, as a memorial to her husband, who died before he could complete his building project.



CAPT. LUCE HOUSE after being moved toward West Chop and greatly enlarged into the lovely summer inn, Bayside.



Charles S. Norton, at left, owned the Bayside. He is the grandfather of the author, whose father was Bayes Norton, on lap at right.

effort to maintain the old building, Mr. Scott hired Ross Gannon to demolish it, and to salvage what he could to use in the construction of a more manageable home a little farther back from Main Street on the same property.

In taking the building apart, Mr. Gannon discovered the unmistakable posts, beams and sheathing of the original 1811 house which the Johnsons had so totally made over in 1895. In this discovery lay a new life for the original structure. Carefully dismantling the building, Mr. Gannon moved the original pieces to a site on the Merry property along the upper end of the Lambert's Cove Road in North Tisbury. There, by following the numbers placed on the beams by the original builder, he reconstructed the house which had first stood on the harbor shore so many years ago. After such major changes in its shape and location in between, that we may see it today as it stood in Holmes Hole in 1811 is a supreme testimony to its durability.

The Captain Tristram Luce house still affirms the skills and values of the early inhabitants of Holmes Hole, their abiding heritage which is retained in so many of our Island homes.



CAPT. TRISTRAM LUCE HOUSE today in North Tisbury, returned to its original form, Rudder Grange and Bayside now only memories.

The Campground's 150th Year

Campground Pioneer Argues Against Secession from Edgartown

by HEBRON VINCENT

(Written in 1879)

In the 1870s, the Vineyard had its own civil war when property owners in what is now Oak Bluffs, then part of Edgartown, fought to secede from the older village. The forces for secession were, in the main, off-Islanders who had bought land from the Oak Bluffs Land & Wharf Company, plus some Camp Meeting cottagers. There were some Vineyarders among the divisionists, notably Eastville residents such as Ichabod Norton Luce and Howes Norris. Eastville had long felt like a stepchild of the Edgartown establishment.

Those Edgartown Methodists who had created the Campground, the seed which had grown into the booming summer resort of Oak Bluffs, fought the proposed separation. Among them was Hebron Vincent, historian and secretary of the Camp Meetings, now 73 years old. In our Archives we have a document, handwritten by him, arguing his case. It seems to be a speech he made at one of the hearings.

The cause was lost. The State Legislature passed a bill separating Cottage City from Edgartown in 1880.

Hebron Vincent's statement, with his spelling and punctuation, follows:

The Campmeeting on the Vineyard at its present site, was inaugurated by the Methodist Church of Edgartown

HEBRON VINCENT (1805-1890) was an ordained Methodist minister, but spent most of his life as Registrar of Probate for Dukes County. He, along with "four of five brethren," selected the spot for the Preachers' Stand at the first Camp Meeting in 1835. He wrote a two-volume history of the meetings.

in the Summer of 1835. Of course, other neighboring churches joined in it. But in its early history, it was cared for and its interests advanced by the members of this church, more than by those of any other.

After the lapse of ten years, it was discontinued here, a meeting of the kind being held in another place in 1845. But in 1846, the committee appointed to fix on another location failing to do so, the Edgartown church again came to the front, re-leased the grounds, purchased material and reconstructed fixtures for the meeting here, others uniting as at the first.

For more than twenty succeeding years, the agent of the grounds, an Edgartown man, spared no pains -- most of the time without pay -- in caring for the property and in making improvements upon the premises, while for nineteen of those years, the Secretary,¹ another of the Edgartown men, was by his reports of the meetings, describing the excellences of the place, and its growth, as a Campmeeting, influencing an increased attendance. These two men also in 1857, when the premises had been sold to a stranger who demanded so high a rental that the meetings were upon the eve of an entire abandonment of the site, at a sacrifice of some time and money, obtained a reconveyance of the lands, and the former secured a lease of the lands on reasonable terms for ten years, but for which repurchase the Campmeeting -- the germ of all the present growth -- would have been removed, and such a place as Cottage City would in all human probability never have been known on Martha's Vineyard.

Of course, the numerous men who came from other places took hold in this work of advancement; and yet for nearly thirty years from the first it was only a camp of tents for religious purposes, and was not expected to be

¹This, of course, was the writer, Hebron Vincent.

anything else. We did not in those years even dream of the location of taxable property here.

All this time, with the exception of the temporary influence of the year's discontinuance named, the numbers of tents, and the numbers of people and ministers attending was annually increasing. We began with nine church tents and an attendance of a few hundreds. In 1839, the number of these tents was 17, and in 1841, 20. In 1844 many hundreds tented on the ground and between two and three thousands were present on the Sabbath. In 1850, the number of tents of all classes, including many family tents, had increased to 87. In 1852, there were 145. There were present 60 ministers. In 1854, twenty five years ago, there were 36 church tents in the circle and applications were made for room for three more. In 1855, there were of all kinds, including family and boarding tents, 200 tents; so that it was begun to be called a "City of Tents." There were about 6,000 people present on the Sabbath.

In 1857, there were 250 tents of all kinds. In 1858, the next year after the reconveyance of the grounds to the old owners, before named, several new large tents were placed in the circle. The whole number of church tents in the circle had been brought up to 42 more than twenty years ago. The number of people estimated to be on the grounds was 12,000. There were 220 tents of all sorts, and 60 lots for new tents engaged for the next year.

In 1859, the new Association building was erected. Some of the tents had been fitted up and furnished at considerable cost. There were 500 of all kinds, some had boarded sides, instead of cloth. The numbers present the Sabbath, about as the preceding year. In 1861, the new stand was built, costing \$500. and the ground newly seated with sittings for three to four thousand people. There were 15 licensed boarding tents, seating from 50 to 400 persons, severally. There were present some time during the

meeting this year 70 ministers of the Methodist denomination alone, besides a considerable number of other churches.

In 1862, the meeting was correspondingly large and was addressed on Sabbath afternoon by Gov. Andrew.

I have collated these facts from many others to show the growth of the Campmeeting from its small beginnings to its being a great meeting long before the building of cottages here; and especially to show the misstatements in the printed plea of Mr. Stetson, which plea was delivered to the Committee of Towns, March 20, 1878.²



Audrey L. Dagnall drawing

Edgartown men having claimed to have been the founders of the Campmeeting and that they had done much to perpetuate it and promote its growth. Mr. Stetson, who was doubtless prompted to it, but as if to rob Edgartown men of any strength in their case, arising from their agency in laying the foundation for the great growth in and about the Camp which we now see, says, page 6 of his printed speech, after having spoken of the Eastville part of Edgartown as it had been: "But about a dozen years ago a total change occurred. . . . For some years there had been among the oaks a small gathering of religionists, who came there for a few days in the summer time to be by themselves and their God, where no noise but that of the sounding sea should disturb their earnest right." Again,

²T.M. Stetson was the off-Island attorney for the secessionists.

page 34, referring to what a witness had said as to the origin of the Campmeeting, he says: "We do know that the sickly thing failed and came to nothing till the Forty Churches took it into their vitalizing charge almost thirteen years since."

The Campmeeting was as strong and as numerously attended and supported more than twenty years ago (as must have been seen) as now and never was, in its history, the "sickly thing" he declared it to have been "almost thirteen years ago."

If he was told it, he was misinformed and if he was not told it, what confidence could we place in other things in his address. Tell of the "forty churches" taking it up, it had *grown* to the "forty churches" 10 years before the time named and was then the largest meeting of the kind in the country and was so declared to be by a distinguished clergyman, Dr. Parks, visiting this meeting from the State of New York in 1859, twenty years ago. And it has never since been "weaker" than then, unless it is since, and by reason of the tendencies growing out of the building of the Cottages and Hotels there, and the Bolling (*sic*) Alley and Skating Rink.

But there are other statements in that printed speech of Mr. Stetson calculated to disturb the mind of one on our side of the case and lead to a distrust of his accuracy in the reference made by him to the decision of the Court. I will refer to only a few of the many.

He says, page 7, speaking of the two sections of the town, that "From one end of New England to the other no instance can be found of more completely diverse interests;" when we have proved, both at the hearing where that declaration was made, and at another since, that the men of Edgartown village, with the addition of a few in that section who with us oppose division, own more taxable property in the part they ask to have set off than all the resident petitioners for division.

He speaks, page 8, of our "hankering after the millions." It is the men at the other end that "hanker after" them -- men who now have been generating the "feud" of which he speaks, that they may handle the funds of these non-residents, notwithstanding the manifested want of capacity on the part of some of the chief leaders to take care of their own.

Another item has reference to Police money expended by the town in that section. He says, page 17, "It is true the town of Edgartown has given the Campmeeting \$110. wherewith to hire extra force, but the meeting has actually expended out of its private funds \$230.50." Formerly, the Campmeeting took care of itself and had comparatively no trouble. Its own men kept the peace without charge to anyone. The first appropriation was \$200. It finally went up as high as \$800. Whatever was raised was nearly, if not wholly, for that section. Never was more than a \$10 reserved for the town. The year named we raised the sum of \$500, all of which, with the exception of \$10, was expended in that section. Why did he not account for the \$380. To tell a part of the truth and not the whole is conveying an untruth; and as in this case committing an injustice.

Page 20, Mr. Stetson speaks of educational matters. He says, "We pay for education \$2400 a year and get back \$700." Now if this were true it might be right, for everyone knows who knows anything about school matters that the money is to be expended according to the numbers and school arrangements for all parts of a town and not according to the places where the most money is paid. But in this case they claimed that part of the town paid 13/22 of all the taxes. Admitting that, by what arithmetic is 13/22 of \$3000 -- the amount raised that year -- \$2400? I have scarcely the time to particularize further.

His persistent reference to "seven miles of desert and stream" between the two parts, which is 6 miles of what

Mr. Carpenter³ testified to be "a pleasant drive way"; his representation that we were envious of Oak Bluffs, when we had invited them hither and never had any strife with them till the North end engendered it; that we were earnest to build the Beach Road to draw people down for our own benefit, when we proved by Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Osborn, that the Bluffs people were urging us for three years to build such a road before the town could be brought to consent to do it; and other such like misrepresentations and exaggerations, run through this document, popularly called the "Eastville Bible," and from it as such, it would seem, the correspondent of the *Boston Herald*, and others inimical to us, have freely quoted and reiterated their quotations.

Indeed, it has been a campaign document for the divisionists. Can the Hon. gentleman wonder that we did not give much heed to his citation of the Decision in question?

³The Hon. Erastus P. Carpenter, President of the Martha's Vineyard Railroad Co., and the Oak Bluffs Land & Wharf Co. Sam Osborn, mentioned later, was also a major investor in the railroad company.



CORRECTION

In our November 1984 issue (v.26, n. 2) we wrote, on page 72, that Christmas 1863 was Charlie Mac Vincent's first away from home. It was his second. Christmas 1862 he was in Virginia (at least on Dec. 23, 1862, he was) as the article states on page 68. Many thanks to Alicia Blackman of Elgin, Illinois, for calling our attention to the error.

Richard L. Pease's Fall of 1839

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

VINEYARD history lovers owe much to Richard L. Pease of Edgartown, the Island antiquarian of his period. He was an indefatigable collector and transcriber of historic documents. Much of his work has been given to the Society where it continues to serve researchers.

His life (1814-1888) was devoted to public work, including teaching school, singing in the Methodist choir, being Postmaster, taking the Census, serving as Registrar of Probate, State Representative, Commissioner of Indian lands and Presidential Elector. An ardent and faithful-to-the-end Whig, he was Secretary of the Edgartown Committee of the party.

Though he transcribed much that others had written, he left little that was personal -- a few original verses of romantic poetry, an occasional report or essay on politics or education and a handful of letters, mostly political. At his death in 1888, he was working on an Island history, much of his research being used later by Charles E. Banks in his work. Despite all his activities, we know little about him as a person. He was, one must deduce, a very private man.

ARTHUR R. RAILTON is Editor of this journal.

One copybook in our Archives, however, has more of Richard Luce Pease, the person, in it than the others. It seems to be a re-copying of some of the things he had written earlier, sort of a personal selection of important material. Several pages in it are devoted to a diary covering only four months in 1839, while he was teaching school in Lambert's Cove. Why were these particular months in his life memorialized in this most personal of his copybooks? To the casual reader, there seems to be nothing exceptional happening. A careful study, however, uncovers some evidence making this period a most important one for the young man. The evidence being circumstantial, we leave it to each reader to answer the question: Why these four months?

The period of the journal is September to December 1839. Richard L. Pease was 25 years old and had been teaching school in Edgartown for five years. He had not been rehired for the 1839 fall term. He, along with several others, had made a long report to the selectmen urging the town to spend more on its schools. The report is included in the same copybook as the diary. Whether that cost him his job we don't know, but he wrote the following in the book:

In thine hands, O Lord, are the issues of life and death. Thou settest up and thou puttest down. Where my future lot will be cast is known only to thee. A few weeks more and my school here will close. . . . I leave the school in a much better condition than when I took it. I have labored five years -- the longest time it was ever taught by one teacher -- or perhaps ever will be in a population so fickle as this. This fall the new. . . . [he did not complete the sentence].

It was a depressing time. After years of dedicated teaching, his home town had replaced him. What would he do? What about his family? He and Mary West Pease, a distant cousin, had been married three years and had one

child, Maria.¹ It was not a happy time.

His mood must have brightened when Tisbury hired him to teach at its North Shore school in the village of Lambert's Cove in September. To be sure, it wasn't the prestigious position he had had in Edgartown, but it was a job in his field. It is his first four months at that school that the journal covers, September to December 1839:

September 21, 1839. This day broke up house keeping after having kept house since July 2, 1836. With many feelings of regret do I give up my "pleasant home," perhaps not again to be similarly situated for many years! With eagle's pinions time has flown because pleasant occupations, agreeable and obliging neighbors having been the lot of my inheritance.

How pleasant it is to know that in so long an interval no unkind word, no harsh misunderstanding, had for a moment separated us in affection from our household friends. I go, but they remain. May prosperity and joy attend them.

Mary and Maria, now two years old, moved into the home of Sally Luce in Edgartown where they were to board during his stay at the Cove. Disturbed though he must have been over the impending separation, he took time to describe the visit to Edgartown a few days before by Horace Mann, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. Mann, later to become world famous for his educational reforms, had been Secretary only two years and was just beginning his revolution against the educational establishment:

On Wednesday last -- 18th inst. -- Mr. Mann. attended a Common School Convention in Edgartown.² The exercises were most interesting so far as he was concerned; but to be bored to death by that mere echo of the "Hon.

¹They had one more child, Harriett, born November 1840. Neither daughter married. Harriett became, in her adult life, Martha's Vineyard's most knowledgeable genealogist.

²Among his reforms, Mann instituted the County Educational Conventions. This one in Edgartown was the second to be held on the Vineyard.

Mr. Mann" -- H. . . . -- it was too bad; full one half of the business -- the making of motions -- long speeches, etc., were *done* by him. If, as Homer says, "Nothing's so tedious as a twice-told tale," surely nothing's so disgusting as to see such *forwardness* when the occasion does not demand it. O tempora! O mores!

We do not know whom Richard meant by "H. . . .", but it is likely that it was Hebron Vincent of Edgartown, another young teacher and perhaps the man hired to succeed him at the school. He and Hebron were to be competitive through much of their lives, both being politically active, usually at odds.

There is no Sunday entry, but on Monday, September 23, his first day at Lambert's Cove, he writes:

This day commenced an engagement at North Shore. The School pretty full -- about 50 pupils of all ages from 3½ to 17 years. And more to come!! There seems to be a disposition to learn, but some time must elapse before the children will learn to conform to the strictness of my discipline. I hope, however, that no difficulty will arise to mar our future peace. Came up Sabbath afternoon -- arrived just at sunset. Stopt till Wednesday night with Capt. Edmund Cottle -- and then commenced boarding with his mother, Mrs. Polly Cottle.

The young teacher doesn't mention it, but living in the house was Mrs. Cottle's daughter, Hannah, a young widow of 25, who was to be married to a Tisbury tailor, James L. Barrows, the following week. Hannah's first husband, whom she married in 1832 at the age of 17, was Valentine P. Norton of Edgartown. He had died in 1836, three years before Richard moved in with her mother.

The weather turned unseasonably cold that first week.

Saturday 28th. Stormy & cold. Must get my stove up. Nearly a week from my wife and dear little Maria, and yet I do not *feel* the separation as I expected. My time passes away pleasantly.

He didn't go home on Saturday, but went into Tisbury



The old Lambert's Cove Schoolhouse, then located across the road from the church, was very likely where Richard L. Pease taught.

Sunday and then to Edgartown on Monday:

Sabbath. Attended the funeral of the wife of Capt. Tristram Chase -- daughter of Capt. Presbury Norton -- with Mr. Barrows.³ Mrs. Daggett, an old saint, today terminates a life of pain.

Monday. Hannah married. Went home -- started at 4 and arrived before 7 -- in a rain storm 5 miles. Found my wife well, little Maria with a sore mouth. Took tea. Slept comfortably after my long walk.

Tuesday. At Court as one of the Grand Jurors in the afternoon -- 10 minutes -- no business. Pay for 15 miles travel: \$4.15

The next day he returned to the Cove, riding back with his Uncle David. "Gave him a dollar." He makes no mention of school during the week, but Saturday, he visited another school:

Went to Holmes Hole -- dine & supped with Mr. N. Mayhew.⁴ Visited Mr. Mayhew's School. If my scholars had *ever* been so inattentive & turbulent, I know not how

³Mr. Barrows was to become Hannah's husband the next day.

⁴Mr. Nathan Mayhew, memorialized by today's Nathan Mayhew Seminars.

I could have stood it. Saw Mr. Tisdale, teacher in Frog Alley⁵. Stopt at Uncle Silvanus' at night, got a letter from Boston.

Apparently, the new bride, Hannah, returned to live in her mother's house the next week, although Richard makes no explanation:

Tuesday, October 8. Went perching with Hannah. Caught nothing. Rec'd. a letter from Mary by William Cottle, one of my boys. Wrote in return.

Wednesday. Sent letter to Mary enclosing \$2.00 -- Went perching till sunrise -- caught 2 small ones. Sent a letter to Edwd. Munro. First case of correction in school -- Hannah Norton.⁶

Thursday. Up at 4½ o'clock -- made fire.

Friday. Went trouting again with H. Caught nothing.

Saturday he again went to Holmes Hole, returning to Mrs. Cottle's in the evening. Sunday was stormy and he missed morning church, but went later, getting very wet on his walk. On Monday he shows signs of being homesick for Edgartown, or at least for the Lyceum, a lecture series that he had been instrumental in forming and of which he was secretary:

Monday. Drizzly day. Evening, fire in my room. The Lyceum is in session and I am not there. What will they do? I shall, doubtless, be missed. My best wishes are with them. Have thought more of my wife tonight than I have done since I have been here. I wonder at myself that I think no more of my wife & sweet little Maria. I love them, dearly. I never thought I could have been so contented away from them. Yet so it is. We know not what we can endure till called to endure. Would it not be pleasant to have Mary & Maria with me! Pleasant to me -- pleasant to her. Well, if I can get Mother Cottle to consent, we will see. Went down stairs. Wanted me to read

⁵Frog Alley is today's Owen Little Way, near the present Yacht Club. There was a school there.

⁶It is not clear if this is an error or not. Hannah Norton was Hannah Cottle's name during her first marriage. There could have been another of that name in Chilmark, but our records show none.

Mrs. Jarvis, etc. Did so. Said to H,⁷ "How I would like to see my little daughter." "What, more than your wife? Then deliver me from having children if my husband is going to love them better than me." Said I: "That is a story will do to tell here -- It will serve as a good excuse to go home, to see my child, and then I'll see my wife, too."

Tuesday. Stormy all day. 25 scholars out -- 3 girls only. Evening, read & told stories to Mother Cottle & Hannah & laughed till our sides ached.

A letter from his wife arrived the next day, telling of an accident to his daughter:

Wednesday. Read my letter -- found John Baylies was married. Lyttleton C. Wimpenny & Isabella W. Pease published. Edwd. Munro in Boston. My wife desirous of seeing me -- and my sweet little Maria -- wo betide the day -- much hurt by a fall against the stove -- cut between the eyes so as to bleed profusely & probably leave a scar forever. God be thanked that her eyes escaped. May she be preserved to be useful in the world. How I wish I was with her now. Poor little thing. I hope to see you next Saturday. This, too, is your birthday. How soon three years have gone.

Thursday. Evening, read aloud for more than an hour, without much fatigue, from Parent's Monitor to Hannah & Ma'am Cottle. Very pleasant.

Friday. Pleasant. Spoke to Mrs. Cottle about Mary coming to live with me. Did not get a decisive answer. She will, probably, consent. How much my wife will be pleased. Start for Chilmark,⁸ hoping to see her tomorrow. Arrived in an hour & 20 m. Appearance of rain. Elizabeth came up.

It is not easy for us in today's world to sense the travel time involved on even such a small place as Martha's Vineyard in the years before the automobile. Richard was living at Lambert's Cove. After school, Friday, he walked for over an hour to today's West Tisbury where he would

⁷ Hannah Barrows.

⁸This would seem to be an error. Why would he walk to Chilmark on his way to Edgartown? He was in West Tisbury on Sunday.

spend the night before walking to Edgartown on Saturday. He didn't make it to Edgartown:

Saturday. Rain -- rain -- pour -- pour. No home today. Must be patient. How much my wife is disappointed. Read to employ myself. Margaret Ravenscroft, 2 vols. of pp. 220 each.

Sunday 20th. Cold northerly wind -- cloudy all day. Some rain in the morning. Went to Mr. Chase's meeting in the P.M. Heard the little organ -- first ever in a church on M. Vineyard.⁹ Sounded well. Had an invitation to stop, etc., from Mr. Chase & his wife. Did not -- had to walk home.

Home, by now, meant Mrs. Cottle's, his Edgartown trip subverted by the weather. A most surprising development occurred the next week:

Monday. Up and fire made at 5 o'clock. Cold, "leetle" spit of snow in the morning.

Tuesday 22nd. According to promise, lay abed till called to breakfast. Pleasant day. Visitors -- evening -- Anthony Luce, John Cottle, Mr. Barrows.¹⁰ Letter from Silvanus -- expected one from Mary -- Maria getting better. S. G. Vincent sold house to Chas. F. Starbuck. Col. Crane on the island.

Wednesday. Fire at 3¼ o'clock. Lay abed an hour after Hannah left this morning for H. Hole to board with Mr. Nathan Mayhew. Now, if Mary can come. How pleased I shall be!

Thursday. Smoky, thick symptoms of a storm. No knowing whether I shall see my folks or not on Saturday. Begin to think much of home -- alas! I have no home! Yes:

'Tis home where the heart is,
Where its loved ones do dwell;
Be it in palaces,
Thatched cottage or dell.

⁹The Congregational Church in West Tisbury, then located in the cemetery. It was a new building, having been built in 1833 as the Fourth Meetinghouse. It was moved to its present location in 1865.

¹⁰A most interesting entry. What does "according to promise" mean? The evening visitors, one being Hannah's husband. Who are the others?

From Martha's Vineyard by Henry Franklin Norton



This was probably Mrs. Polly Cottle's house where the young Edgartown teacher boarded and, perhaps, loved.

Slight disposition to the headache. Went to bed at 7½ o'clock, awoke about 2 & lay awake more than an hour. Slept till morning.

The next day after tea he again started for Edgartown, walking to his Uncle David's in Holmes Hole -- it took 70 minutes. In the morning he went to Edgartown:

Saturday. At 9½, started with Polly Clifford for home. Arrived at 12, having stopped at Uncle Silvanus' for Elizabeth, who could not go with us. Found my family well. Little Maria seemed overjoyed. "O my papa! O my papa!" said she, kissing me most affectionately. Had my hair cut.

After church on Sunday, he returned to the Cove, the trip taking 2½ hours. His journal has been saying little about his school, but on Tuesday he records that a new student was enrolled: Rhua Cottle, 18. The next day there was more important news:

Wednesday. Pleasant weather. Mother Cottle says, Bring your wife next Saturday. Engaged Capt. Cottle's waggon. Up at 4.

Thursday. Wet in the A.M. Cleared up towards night. Evening went to a Whig Caucus at Mrs. Clara Luce's. Quite a spirited time, upwards of 20 present. Had a cold. Took a sweat.

He had planned to pick up his family Saturday, but once again the weather frustrated him and his trip was delayed until Sunday:

Sabbath. Started after breakfast for Edgartown with Capt. Cottle's horse & waggon. Arrived at 9½ o'clock. Gave Sally Luce ten dollars towards board of my wife & child. Left at 2 and arrived at 4½ o'clock. Rather bleak riding -- exposed to the weather in an open waggon. Had the satisfaction of introducing my wife to my apartments. During the week, the weather very unsettled, at times stormy. Little Maria seems contented & cheerful, occasionally asking about "Aunt Sally's home."

That was all he wrote that week, then, strangely, on the first weekend his family was at Mrs. Cottle's, he went down-Island. No doubt, it was the election that made the trip necessary:

Saturday 9th. Left at 10 for Holmes Hole. Stopped awhile at Lieut. Luce's -- took dinner with Mr. Barrows¹¹ -- supper at Uncle Richard's & lodged at night. Went to Whig caucus.

Sunday. Went down home in 2½ hours. Snow storm. Evening meeting in the Vestry. William sick, thinks of going home. Severe cold since Saturday morning.

Monday 11th. Up & helping father.¹² Sawed wood. How times have altered since I was a boy, then he had no occasion to attend to any "chores," now he has to do all. Went to Sally's¹³ -- glad to hear from little Maria -- all of them seemed pleased with her and missed her much. Sent little presents. Mr. Sylvia sent a dress. Sally, the same. Thankful, a pocketfull of walnuts. Mrs. Wooster, a cent, apples, pears, etc.

Went to the polls & deposited my vote for Edward

¹¹Hannah's husband.

¹²His father was Isaiah Dunham Pease, sheriff of Dukes County from 1822-62.

¹³Sally Luce's, where his wife and child had boarded.

Everett, etc., and used my best endeavors to get as many more to do the same as I could persuade.

The Whigs got most essentially rowed up.¹⁴ We'll see next year if the locos do so. How they crow. "Morton's elected," say they. "Majority in Senate & H. of Rep." Not so fast. If the first is true & Morton is elected, the last is most certainly wrong -- Massachusetts is yet safe. How much effort has been used by the locos, while the Whigs are asleep.

Friday. Evening school.

Saturday. School today.

There are no journal entries for the next week except Wednesday when he "spent the evening at Charles'." We don't know who Charles was. There are no mentions of his wife or child. Then, Friday, once again he left them in Lambert's Cove:

Friday. After school took a step down to Edgartown. Heard Miss Whiting sing & play.

He remained in Edgartown until after church Sunday. His journal states that "during the week very pleasant weather," but nothing else until Thursday:

Thursday 28th. Thanksgiving. Pleasant. Went into the woods -- visited the place where formerly coal had been bored for.

Again, on the weekend, he left his family:

Saturday. In compliance with a letter from home, I went down by the way of little pond -- 1¼ hours there -- 1½ down from there. Engaged Davis Hale for 3 months at \$60 per year, taking his 3 children.¹⁵ Sent \$1 for the Madisonian.

Next weekend, it was another trip:

Saturday 7th. Went, after dinner, to Eliakim Norton's. Then to Holmes Hole. Took tea with Mr. Mayhew, lodged & breakfasted with Mr. Barrows.¹⁶ Church A.M. Sunday.

¹⁴Rowed up, meaning fragmented, quarrelling. The "locos" are the Locofocos, a slang term at the time for Democrats.

¹⁵It is not clear what this refers to, unless the children were to attend his school.

¹⁶"Tea with Mr. Mayhew." Hannah lived there. "Lodged" with Mr. Barrows, Hannah's husband. Interesting.

Heard Mr. Ely. Silvanus L. Pease came up half way with me. Stormy. Wet.

Wednesday of the next week, for the first time since she moved to Mrs. Cottle's, he mentions his wife:

Wednesday. Pleasant. Went with my wife, Capt. Cottle & his wife, to Deacon Cottle's and spent the evening.

For the following four days the entries are brief and devoted mostly to the weather. It is nearing the end of the year and there is snow which, he writes, "remains on the ground the whole week." The ponds are making ice and there is skating, although apparently not for the Pease family. Starting December 22nd, three cryptic entries:

22nd. Sunday. Sabbath School. Went to Mr. Geo. Cottle's.¹⁷

Monday. Stormy all day.

Wednesday, 25th. Came home.

Thus ends our brief look into the private life of Richard Luce Pease, schoolmaster, during his first four months at the North Shore School in Lambert's Cove.

Coming home on Wednesday, December 25, 1839, Christmas Day, he makes no explanation of why he had spent several days at George Cottle's. Nor does he mention Christmas. Nor Mary. Nor Maria.

Nor does he mention Mrs. Hannah Barrows, now boarding with Nathan Mayhew in Holmes Hole as she awaits the birth of her child.

Postscript

Ten years later, Richard L. Pease was appointed Marshal for the Federal Census of 1850. He went to every house on the Island, listing each occupant's name, birthdate, age and occupation.

The 174th house he visited in Vineyard Haven was the home of James and Hannah Barrows, his friends from 10 years before. In the house with the tailor and his wife

¹⁷George Cottle was a Tisbury selectman and the school committeeman for the North Shore School.

were four young children, all boys, and Mrs. Polly Cottle, Hannah's mother. He began to list the family members, starting with the husband:

James L. Barrows 9.3.1815 35 M Tailor

Hannah Barrows 22.9.1815 34 F

Now for the rest of the family, starting with the oldest boy. He began to write:

David P. Pea . . .

Quickly, he stopped and, with a bold stroke of his pen, changed the capital P to a B, obliterating the second letter, and then completed the entry:

David P. Barrows 27.7.1840 9 M

He had no trouble with the rest of the names.

		Alphonse P. Perry	8.5.1846	4	M		
174	204	James L. Barrows	9.3.1815	35	M		Tailor
		Hannah Barrows	22.9.1815	34	F		
		David P. Barrows	27.7.1840	9	M		
		Thomas Barrows	14.4.1845	7	M		
		John J. Barrows	7.5.1845	5	M		
		James L. Barrows	11.9.1847	2	M		
		Polly Cottle	5.3.1778	72	F		

Hannah Barrows 22.9.1815
David P. Barrows 27.7.1840

David P. Barrows married Cynthia T. Marchant in 1865 and moved to Minneapolis where he was in business. He died in 1871, age 31, of consumption at the home of his father in Chicago. He was enroute to the Vineyard when he died. - Editor's note.

Books

Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association, 1835-1985

Compiled and written by Sally W. Dagnall, with a Foreword by Henry Beetle Hough. Published by Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association. Illus. 128 pp. \$12. hardcover; \$7. paper. (Address: MVCMA, Box 1176, Oak Bluffs, MA 02557)

THE history of Martha's Vineyard is so full, and so fully documented, that it is not surprising that every year is an anniversary of something.

Following Henry Beetle Hough's *Martha's Vineyard: Summer Resort After 100 Years* (1966), we have had various memorializations of Tisbury's tercentenary in 1971, a Tabernacle Centennial Issue of the *Vineyard Gazette* (1979), and *A Centennial History of Cottage City* (1982). Now Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting is celebrating its sesquicentennial, marked by the publication of a history and memoir compiled and written by Sally W. Dagnall.

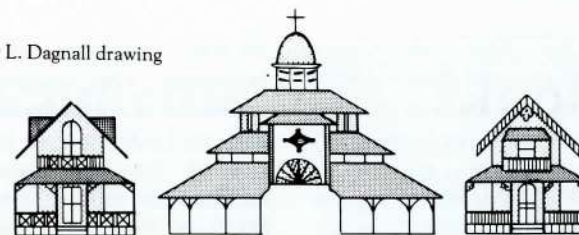
Mrs. Dagnall lives in Tallmadge, Ohio, near Akron, teaching fourth grade. Her family has long been connected with the Island and she has had a home in the Campgrounds since the 1940s. Her book reflects not

only familiarity with the standard sources of Oak Bluffs history, but also her own personal and affectionate acquaintance with the place. Prepared and printed primarily as a guide and *aide-memoire* for Campground leaseholders (no individual owns land there), it is an interesting "inside" view of the unique community. The dust jacket features a jolly neoprimitive painting of the Tabernacle and its grounds by Barbara Corrigan. There are numerous playful decorations by Audrey L. Dagnall, as well as a number of good illustrations and maps.

The first camp meeting was organized by six men from the Edgartown Methodist Church, led by Jeremiah Pease, who had found a "venerable grove of oaks" in William Butler's sheep pasture. The fate of the sheep is not recorded, but the first meeting, starting on August 24, 1835, was an immediate success, with sixty-five people converted and six souls reclaimed. The pioneer congregation was made up of Islanders. "People cooked their food for a week in advance and brought it in baskets from home." The good news spread fast, and in 1836 there were brethren from a number of southeastern Massachusetts cities and towns, from New Bedford to Nantucket. By 1842, 2,500 persons gathered for Sabbath (or "Big Sunday") and in 1860 it was estimated that there were 12,000 at the grove for the closing ceremonies.

During the first quarter-century of annual meetings, housing consisted of

Audrey L. Dagnall drawing



tents for individual families, or "social tents," with a "wall of Jericho" set up, Quaker-fashion, to separate men and women. More permanent structures began to appear shortly after the middle of the century; the first wooden house was erected on Campground property in 1859, and almost every house now standing was built between 1862 and 1880. Mrs. Dagnall tells the story of the Tabernacle itself and its transformation from a huge tent (4000 square yards of sailcloth, drawn 54 feet high at the center) to the remarkable "New Iron Tabernacle," erected in 1879.

Cottage City/Oak Bluffs was growing up outside and around the Campgrounds, especially after the Oak Bluffs Wharf was built in 1866. Day visitors and summer residents unconnected with the Campgrounds became more numerous. For many years, there were hotels, bakeries, shops and restaurants (dry) within the reservation, but these gradually disappeared as Circuit Avenue (originally the outside perimeter, designed as a kind of service road to reduce traffic within) flourished, and after the high, locked picket fence around the Camp Grounds (erected in 1867 and rebuilt in 1886) was taken down.

We are also reminded that Illumination Night is not a religious (or pagan) artifact, but rather a promotion of the Wharf Company, originally celebrated in Ocean Park, only later being centered in Trinity Park Circle, in and around the Tabernacle.

The plain typeface of the new book is set with perilously narrow margins which produce an old-fashioned look. The reader may be further discouraged by the sight of great chunks of text set off in quotation marks, and an index would be useful. As one begins to read, however, one comes to appreciate the skill with which Mrs. Dagnall has selected and organized her material. She displays to advantage the contrasting style and tone of her several sources: the Rev. Hebron Vincent, first Secretary and first historian of the Association, whose talk of "holy purposes" and "devout spirit" is occasionally enlivened by retorts to "liberal critics"; Banks and his irreplaceable *History*; the relatively dry authorized chronologies of A. K. Lobeck (1956) and Ira W. LeBaron (1958); the smoothly anecdotal and non-judgmental narrative of Hough's *Resort* (1966), which usefully summarizes contemporary reporting from the *Vineyard Gazette* and the

Cottage City Star; the very professional *Centennial History* (1982); and the artless reminiscences of those who remembered the way it was.

These last sources provide a personal dimension which is the characteristic of oral history at its best. They make reading the last part of the book an especial delight. We hear from Allan G. Butler, for example, whose ancestor, Nicholas Butler, came from England in 1636 with three children and five servants and settled in Edgartown around 1651. Young Allan cared little for history when he came to the Campgrounds as a boy in the 1920s to visit his grandmother and aunts. But fifty years later, he remembered: "What a splendid place the Tabernacle is! I glowed in the presence of my beloved Grandmother and her gentle ways. Right to this day when I hear certain hymns my memory takes me back to the Tabernacle and I can hear her voice singing sweetly and clear. Those were golden days. There never was another summer quite like that." In this way, Mrs. Dagnall expands the historical record with a nicely nostalgic touch.

In 1931, the Association ceased to be a Methodist institution and became interdenominational. Members of the Board must be Protestants, but cottage owners need not. (An excerpt from the Association Rules show them to be

generally moderate and sensible, concerned with sanitation, safety [especially as regarding fire hazards], and an 11:00 curfew.) In 1979, the year of the Centennial and the Rededication of the Tabernacle, the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association was accepted by the National Historic Register. A Memorial Stone was dedicated to the late Rev. John Dorney who, as building and grounds chairman, "spearheaded the beginning of the restoration of the cottages which are now being recognized as a national historical spot."

Some day soon, it is hoped, an article in one of the local papers or, even better, in this journal will spell out the present and long-term plans of the Association for the preservation of the character and historical significance of the Campground.

Meanwhile, Sally Dagnall's book revives and preserves the past. The Camp Meeting Association emerges in these pages, clear in both sunshine and shadow, to use a phrase which would have suited Queen Victoria, whose distant but majestic presence affected even these disestablishmentarians for the first half of the past 150 years, all the while that they were "organizing to beat the devil."

ALVIN J. GOLDWYN

Documents

Jeremiah Pease, whose diary we have been publishing since 1974, was one of the most active persons on the Island. He was a surveyor, a bone setter, a lay preacher, a Customs officer, a lighthouse keeper, a County Commissioner, Town Moderator of Edgartown, plus being a sometime shoemaker. Yet, fortunately, he found time to keep this journal, the best record we have of Island happenings during his lifetime.

The year 1851 was a most exciting one on the "continent." Jeremiah seemed unaware of the important happenings on the mainland, events which included:

- *The America won the first international yacht race sponsored by the Royal Yacht Society, beginning the legend of America's Cup.*

- *A fire destroyed two-thirds of the Library of Congress.*

- *The clipper ship Flying Cloud sailed from New York to San Francisco in 89 days and 8 hours -- a record that still stands.*

- *Herman Melville published Moby Dick.*

Jeremiah died in 1857, continuing his diary until the day of his death.

August 1851

19th. SWly. Funeral of a child of Wid. J. O. Morse. ¹ Went to E'Ville, set an

¹This has been a tragic summer for Widow Morse. In July she learned of the death of her husband, Capt. Morse, Master of the Bark Sarah, at Paita, New Caledonia, and now her child has died.

arm for Wid. Silva Daggett, she fell out of a cart, the horse fell down, there were 4 persons in the cart, no others injured much. The arm was badly broken, and shoulder injured. Visited Capt. Shubael Norton who embraced Religion the 2nd day after Camp Meeting commenced, found him resigned, and ready to depart this life, with a glorious hope of a happy immortality, he appeared to be near to death, having been unwell for a length of time past with a painful disorder.

21st. NELY to SE, cloudy. Went to E'Ville to see Wid. Daggett's arm.

23rd. SW, fresh breeze. Went to E'Ville to see Wid. Daggett.

28th. SW. Went to E'Ville to see Wid. Daggett's arm.

31st. NELY. Attended Meetings at E'Ville, visited Wid. Daggett.

September 1851

1st. NE, clear weather, fresh breeze. Watched with Brother Nathan Jernegan last night, he being near to death. Br. Jernegan died about 10 O'clock PM. He was a pious man and worthy christian. We were school boys together and always lived in friendship and christian love.

3rd. NE, fresh breeze. Funeral of Br. Jernegan, service by Rev'd. C. H. Titus and Rev'd. Mr. Crocker.

5th. NE to SSW. Stephen Skiff, Esq., of Holmeshole dies about 10 AM of consumption, he was elected one of the County Commissioners in 1850. We had been engaged together in laying out the new road to that place last summer.

6th. SW, pleasant, very warm. E.B. Vincent's Wife died yesterday.

7th. SW. Attended meeting at E'Ville AM; PM attended meeting at M.D., Br. Weeks preached, then attended Funeral of Esq. Skiff at Holmeshole and of E.B. Vincent's Wife at Edgt.

8th. SW. Ship *Champion*, Trisham P. Ripley Master, sails for Pacific Ocean.

23rd. NE, cool. Court of Commissioners sets to day. Esqr. Skiff being dead, Mr. John Hammett of Chilmark, one of the special commissioners, takes his place.

24th. NE. We view the new road leading to Holmeshole and do not find it completed agreeably to the directions of the Commissioners; therefore do not accept it. We grant 30 days more to Edgartown, according to their petition, to finish it. Tisbury does not request any further time. We appoint Mr. Henry Pease to complete the road within the limits of Tisbury.

28th. Ely, light. Attended Meetings at E'Ville. Brs. Rose & Coombs, two Masters of vessels from the State of Maine, were there and took an active part in the meetings. Both were engaged men. Br. Rose is a free-will Baptist, Br. Coombs, a Methodist.²

30th. SWly, Bot. a Buggy carriage of Mr. Lovell of Tisbury.

October 1851

1st. WNW. Ship *Walter Scott*, Capt. Henry H. Marchant, arrives last

²There seems to be a movement towards ecumenism. Twenty years earlier, the Baptists and Methodists were "competitors."

night. Ship *Splendid*, Capt. John Fisher, sails for the Pacific Ocean.

5th. ESE, light. Attended Meetings at Chilmark. It is a time of Reformation there, attended Prayer Meeting AM. Br. Slater Preached in the forenoon, I talked some PM.³ It was an excellent season, about Twenty have lately embraced Religion, a number of whom spoke during the day.

7th. SE, light. Engaged at the Custom House and husking corn.

8th. Sly. Went to Chilmark, attended meeting in the M[ethodist] Meeting house. Br. Slater attended. It was interesting time. Several have professed Religion since I was there on Sunday. Ret. in the night.⁴

10th. SEly, light. Went to Chilmark to see Herman Vincent, Esqr., one of the County Commissioners, on account of Capt. Edmund Bradley, who is in prison for Intemperance or drunkenness.

11th. Ely, light, foggy. Capt. Bradley is released from prison.

16th. NW to E, light, clear. A Daughter of Deac. Thos. Coffin dies of consumption.

17th. SW. Brig *Corinth Smith* from Cadis arrived; wrecked on the S. Shoal.

³Jeremiah "talked some," he wrote. He was an exhorter in the Methodist Society. Somehow it is difficult to picture him as a hell-fire preacher, his diary being so reasoned. Did he "talk," or did he exhort? It would be satisfying to know.

⁴Jeremiah went all over the Island to Methodist meetings. He rarely went to the Edgartown Methodist Church. It would be interesting to learn why.

20th. SW. Schr. loaded with lime castaway on Stony Point, Cape Poge, and burns up to day.

30th. SSE, pleasant. Went to Tisbury, set a wrist for Wid. Athearn.

November 1851

4th. NW. Went to Tisbury to see Wid. Athearn.

8th. SE, pleasant. Went to Tisbury to see Wid. Athearn.

11th. SW. Went to Tisbury, visited Wid. Athearn.

23rd. NW. Attended meetings at E'Ville. Visited Capt. Shubael Norton, being near to death, found him resigned, having strong faith in his Blessed Redeemer and ready to depart at his command. We sang a hymn, "All is well," prayed, and left him rejoicing in the hope of a happy immortality.

24th. NW. Capt. Norton dies this morning.⁵

27th. NNW, pleasant for the season. This day is appointed by the Governor and Council for Thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God for blessings and mercies received during the past and former years.

30th. NNW, light, pleasant. Attended Meetings at E'Ville AM, at M.D. PM. Gale at night. Brig and Schooner cast away on shore at Cape Poge, loaded with lumber.

⁵This was Shubael Norton who lived at Farm Neck, then part of Edgartown. His son, Shubael Lyman Norton, has been called "the father of Oak Bluffs" (see Hough, *Martha's Vineyard, Summer Resort*).

December 1851

8th. SW. Went to H.Hole, carried Velina to the Steamer. She goes to Boston to visit Frederick.⁶

18th. NW, cold Br. [British] Ship castaway at Miskeket, 256 passengers from Ireland, 4 perished by the cold.⁷

19th. SW to W, cold. Went to H.Hole with Br. J. Linton, attended meeting in the vestry of the M. Meetinghouse. It was a reformation season, several having recently embraced Religion there. Br. Stevens and the Baptist minister were present.

28th. SE, light. The ice breaks away from the other shore, come against the Revenue Boat, tears up the stake to which she was moored and drives her on shore without any other damage; hauled her up; rains a little. Did not attend meeting at E'Ville on ac't. of the weather.

31st. S, foggy, rains at night. This has been a very cold month.

January 1852

3rd. NE, squally. Engaged with D.F.,⁸ Esq., in settling ac't. with County Treasurer.

10th. SW to W. Went to Chilmark to see Sister Adams who had fallen and hurt her arm.

⁶Velina was Jeremiah's daughter. She was going to visit her brother Frederick, a tailor.

⁷He must mean Muskeget. The tide of immigrants was just beginning. Steerage fare (under atrocious conditions) from Britain to New York was \$10.

⁸This was Daniel Fellows (D.F.) who served with Jeremiah on a committee to settle the Treasurer's accounts.

12th. W to NW. Miss Hannah Davis died of consumption, aged about 20 years. She was the Daut. of D. Davis, Esq., and esteemed a pious, worthy young Woman.

14th. W, cold. My wife fell on the snow & ice and broke her arm & dislocated her wrist.

18th. NE, severe snow storm. Did not attend meeting at E'Ville.

19th. NE to NW, very cold, snows and blows into banks.

20th. WNW, cold, clear. Harbor all frozen over and a great quantity of Ice in the Sound.

21st. NW, very cold, Ice makes fast.

25th. SW to W. A son of Mr. Wm. Vinson dies, aged about 8 years.

27th. NW, cold. Funeral of the Boy above mentioned, service by Revd. Chas. H. Titus. It was an affecting time, he was an interesting child and a Sabbath School scholar.

29th. NE, cold. The ice is broken up. Vessels went out yesterday and the day before through the ice. The Ship *Walter Scott*, Capt. Grafton N. Collins, cut through the ice at the mouth of the harbor and went to H. Hole or the Cove on the 28th. Mrs. Clavissa Marchant, wife of Rev'd. Henry Marchant, died on the 29th, having been sick several years. The harbor is closed with ice as far, or a little beyond the Light House. Snows a little.

February 1852

4th. SW. The ice goes out of the harbor, having been closed for a long time or since the 19th. Inst.

12th. NW, fresh breeze, squally. Went to Holmes Hole, attended to business with Thos. Bradley, Esq., relating to the Will of Rev'd. Jonathan Mayhew; concluded to place the profits of the fund so far or up to this time, in the hands of Deacon Simon Johnson of Gay Head, being about \$58.00.⁹

13th. NNW, cold AM. PM, SW cloudy, snows a little at night, NW snows. Wid. Dency Jernegan dies.

16th. NW, snows, clear PM. Funeral of Mrs. Jernegan. She was esteemed a pious worthy member of the Baptist Church for many years past and died a happy death at 53 years. Service by Rev'd. Mr. Crocker, Rev'd. C.H. Titus, Rev'd. Mr. ——— of the Cong. Soc.

20th. NNW, very cold, ice made last night as much as any night during the winter, the harbor being nearly closed.

24th. SW, pleasant. Went to Holmes hole for the purpose of attending to the Gauging a Cargo of Molasses which was castaway at Cutter Hunk, returned, the parties not being ready.

29th. NW, Gale. Did not attend

⁹The Rev. Jonathan Mayhew (the Lesser, as distinguished from the famed Jonathan of pre-Revolutionary days) died in 1826, willing \$300 "to establish a permanent fund the profits of which shall be appropriated for the maintenance of a Sabbath school on Gayhead during the summer season...." Administration was to be by the Quarterly Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church, which must have delegated Jeremiah and Thomas Bradley to do the work. Wonder what has happened to the fund? Is it still supporting such a Sabbath school?

Meeting at E'Ville on acc't of Gale. Velina arrives from Boston, having been there on a visit at Frederick's.

This has been a remarkably cold, stormy winter.

March 1852

4th. NNW, very cold, makes ice across the harbor last night (below the L. House).

6th. NWly to NEly. Exchanged a piece of land with David Davis and sold him a Lot adjoining Abm. Osborn's land, deeds dated this day.

15th. SSW. Engaged surveying land for Indians at Chap.

23rd. SSE, cold. Surveyed land for Seth Marchant on the plane.

April 1852

1st. N. to SW. Mr. Wilmot Smith dies, aged —, a pious man.

6th. NE, snow storm, heavy gale, high tide, snow about 3 feet deep in the banks. Brig castaway at E. Chop.

8th. SW, pleasant. Fast day. Attended meeting at the Congregational meeting house, there being no Methodist meeting today.

This day I am 60 Years old. Oh, how my years have flown away.

9th. NE, gale. Heavy snow storm all day. 3 vessels castaway on Tom Shoal. PM wind hauled to the N. still a gale with snow. Wid. Polly Davis dies at E'Ville, aged 77.

16th. WNW, gale. Clear, cold. Capt. Joseph Sprague dies very suddenly.

28th. WSE, fresh wind, cold. Br. Gould, Methodist Preacher, arrives, being stationed here this year.

30th. S, light, warm. This has been a very stormy cold month.

May 1852

6th. SW. Went to Deep Bottom on business of the Indians with S.P. Coffin.

18th. NW. Br. J. C. Bontecou leaves Town for Ohio, via Boston, he with his Wife and son having visited his Friends here a few days.

19th. S. Ship *Planter* of Nantucket, Capt. Henry Pease 2nd, sails for the Pacific Ocean. Court of County Commissioners sets today.

8th. SSW, fresh breeze. Ship *Mary* of Edgartown, Capt. G. A. Baylies, sails for the Pacific Ocean, rains a little. News of the death of a young woman who lived at E'Ville a few years ago, by the name of — Daggett. She married a man from the state of Maine and removed there and died at E'Port as I understand. Visited Mr. West Luce.

13th. SW, pleasant. Attended meetings at North Shore. Visited Mr. West Luce. This evening our Daughter Elisa is married to Samuel S. Stewart.

17th. SW, very warm. Visited West Luce re \$19.25.

23rd. SSW, fresh wind. The woods near the little Pond are on fire.

24th. SSW. Ditto.

27th. SW. Attended meetings at Chilmark, Br. McGonacoon & Br. Dunbar Preached. It is a time of Reformation there.

28th. SW, fresh breeze, warm. Commenced mowing.

Director's Report

There was on January 1, 1985, a "changing of the guard," as the Gazette headline described it, at the Society. Our faithful Director for 12 years, Thomas E. Norton, resigned and his position was filled by Mrs. Marian R. Halperin.

The newspaper's headline, as so often is the case, does not totally describe the position: there is far more to it than guard duty over historical treasures. It requires a blend of administrative talent, historical knowledge, staff guidance and a sprinkling of showmanship. Our new Director has these and other attributes in good measure and we are looking forward to increased public awareness of the worth of this splendid institution under her directorship.

Just as we welcome the new, we must admit to a sadness about the departure of the old (although, of course, he is not old!). For a dozen years, Tom Norton has been the symbol of the Society to the community. His deep knowledge of Island history, his familiarity with the thousands of documents, photographs, books and artifacts in our Archives and Museums, have made research much easier for hundreds of individuals. It will be a long time before we feel confident about such matters in his absence.

The Officers and Council, on behalf of all members, thank Tom for his dedication to this organization and to Island history over those 12 years and wish him happiness and success in the years ahead.

MY THANKS go to each and every one of you who has made my arrival as Director of the Society a real homecoming. Some of you may remember me as Secretary of the Council from 1973 to 1977 and for a longer time as Registrar of Accessions. Familiar faces,

objects and places -- and even my own handwriting on old accessions lists -- have made the time between seem far less than eight years.

A high point in the Society's recent schedule was the Christmas Open House held on December 14th and 15th. In the festively decorated Huntington Library and Francis Foster Museum over three hundred people enjoyed refreshments and special exhibitions that brought back turn-of-the-century Christmases through costumes, objects that might well have been received as gifts, and greeting cards. In contrast, an assortment of pre-Civil War documents -- logs of such vessels as the *Sarah* and *Ocean* and account books kept at Mayhew's store in Edgartown -- illustrated "business as usual" at a time when on the Vineyard and the ships it sent to sea, Christmas was clearly not a day for special celebration. Mrs. Niels Olsen was chairman of the event which all attending agreed must become a Society tradition.

Researchers and visitors in the Library and Museum have made the Society an even more active place than I had expected and plans for the future promise that it will be busier still. February will bring a new printing of *Introduction to Martha's Vineyard* by Gale Huntington. In preparation for a mid-June opening, work has already begun on repainting and reorganizing some of the rooms in the Thomas Cooke House under the chairmanship of Mrs. Bushnell Richardson.

The last few weeks have made me very much aware of the remarkable and extraordinarily diverse accomplishments of the Society during its sixty-one-year history. Anticipation of working with the staff, Council, and membership to continue and further this effort is an exciting and happy prospect for me, and I thank you for the opportunity which is mine.

MARIAN R. HALPERIN

Bits & Pieces

WHEN William Henry Harrison was elected President in 1840, the Island's Whigs were jubilant. Among them was Richard L. Pease (see page 113), as ardent a Whig as there was in Edgartown.

The Spoils System being in full bloom (having been invented by the Jackson Democrats), there was a wholesale changing of the guard in Federal jobs: out with the Democrats, in with the Whigs. Customs Collector of the Port, Democrat John P. Norton, had to go and several Whigs coveted the post.

Among the Edgartown Whigs who wanted the job were Abraham Osborn and Leavitt Thaxter, both highly regarded by the community. Richard L. Pease, who was not doing well financially, saw a chance for himself.

In a letter marked Confidential, dated June 26, 1841, he wrote to Congressman Burnell in Washington. The candidates, he said, "come so well recommended that to me it seems difficult to determine between their claims . . . perhaps an entirely new candidate, if unexceptionable in point of standing, integrity, etc., would best conduce to the harmony of the Whig Party & that of yr. friends. . . . Messrs. O. & Thax. & Skiff are men in good circumstances, who need not the emoluments of the office; suppose that I should forward a petition for the station. What would be the

prospect of success?"

We don't know the Congressman's reply, but RLP didn't get the job. It went to Leavitt Thaxter, son of the late "Parson" Thaxter and, like RLP, a school teacher.

But RLP wasn't only looking out for himself -- or for Whigs. Two weeks later, he wrote again to the Congressman, this time on behalf of a Democrat. The Spoils System was continuing its grinding and Keeper Lot Norton's job at Cape Poge Light was in jeopardy. He was not a Whig and that meant replacement. But RLP came to his rescue:

" . . . it is the almost unanimous wish of this community that he [Norton] may spend the remnant of his days in his present station.

"Mr. Norton is not a Whig; but he is an honest, upright man of true republican principles, and, like thousands of others supported Jackson and Van Buren, but never prostituted his station to party purposes."

Mr. Obed Fisher had been proposed for the job by some local heavyweights, Abraham Osborn and Dr. Daniel Fisher.

"Of Mr. Fisher, I shall say what is well known to this community. From his youth he has been a seaman and likewise an intemperate man. He has been confined for several weeks with infirmities arising from habitual use of ardent spirits. . . ."

This time, RLP won his case. Keeper Lot Norton "spent the remnant of his days" on Cape Poge, dying there in 1844.

A.R.R.

Monday. Up five made at 5 O'clock. Cold - little spit of snow in the morning.

Tuesday 32° - According to promise, lay abed till called to breakfast. Pleasant day. Fister's evening - nothing new John Smith - Mr. Barrows - letter from Silvanus - expected and from Mary - Maria getting better - C. B. Vincent's sold house to Chas. F. Starbuck. Not home on the island.

Wednesday. Five at 3 1/2 O'clock - lay abed an hour after. Hannah left this morning for N. Y. to board with Mr. Nathan Mayhew. Not if Mary can come. Now pleased & shall be!

Thursday - Smoky - thick - symptoms of a storm - no knowing whether I shall see my folks or not on Saturday. Begin to think much of home - also I have no home! - Bed.

*It's home where the heart is,
Where the fond ones do dwell;
Be it in palace,
Thatched cottage, or dell.*

Slight disposition to the headache - went to bed at 7 1/2 O'clock awoke about 2 a day awoke nine then an hour - slept till morning.

Friday - 36° - Weather pleasant. After tea went to Uncle David's in 70 minutes - found little Ellen there - she sung me a number of hymns.

Saturday - 41° - Started with Billy Clifford for home - arrived at 12. Having stopped at Uncle's & Cousin's for Elizabeth, who can't go with us. Found my family about. Little Maria seemed overjoyed. "O my papa!" "O my papa!" she said, kissing me most affectionately. Had my hair cut.

Sunday 37° - Mr. M. went to Church. 4 1/2 O'clock left on my return - at Prince's Regent at 5 1/2 - met 16 hours - home at 34 minutes home. Weather today & yesterday very pleasant indeed.

Monday - Cool so then saw a cloudy evening. George's seemed so. Letter from Mary.

Tuesday - Most pleasant. Wrote home to Silvanus & Mary. Anna Kittle - 14 yrs. - came in to school today. Evening - Reading - Class Meeting.

Wednesday - Pleasant weather. Mother little says. Raining no going with me Saturday. Engaged Capt. Patten's waggons. Up at 4.

Thursday - Met in the A. M. Cleared up towards night. Evening went to a Whig Cantab at Mrs. Clara Sweet - quite a spirited time - upwards of 20 present. Had a cold. Took a sweat.

Friday - Cloudy & thick all day - evening hard rain. - Studied Emerson's Arithmetic.

A page from Richard L. Pease's diary.

