

The Journal of Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands History



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 29, NO. 1

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President Ulysses S. Grant

When Grant Took the Island

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

A Vineyard Girl and Nellie Grant

Another View of the Island in 1874

by NATHANIEL S. SHALER

Our First Independence Day: April 3, 1751

by JOHN A. HOWLAND

Boarding School Sketch Book

by RICHARD LUCE PEASE

News of the Society

Books

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

President and Party Visit Martha's Vineyard in 1874

When Grant Took the Island

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

IT was nothing compared to the way he took Richmond, but when President Ulysses S. Grant visited Martha's Vineyard for three days in 1874, he did, indeed, take it over. Crowds numbering as many as 30,000 at times put on a stunning public display of affection for a President who, in the middle of his second term, was on the brink of a series of shocking scandals. Two members of his administration who were later revealed to have been involved in the corruption were with him on the trip.¹

It is not clear why he came here that August. It certainly wasn't to enjoy the sea air: he was spending the month, as was his custom, at the summer White House in Long Branch, New Jersey, a place not unlike Cottage City. Sea air was plentiful there.²

The trip, which seems to have been planned in secret, probably had political motivation. Grant was being urged by some supporters to ignore the no-third-term tradition and run again in 1876. He seemed tempted to do so and his wife, Julia Dent, was eager that he run, as were some of his Cabinet. However, his Vice President, Henry Wilson, who was also on the trip, had some weeks before been quoted as saying he would not vote for Grant for a third term. As might be expected, the President was not pleased: "It was observable that while there was a perfect external cordiality between the President and Vice President, it did not run

¹Grant's private secretary, Orville E. Babcock, was involved in the Whiskey Ring scandal and his Secretary of War, William Worth Belknap, participated in the Indian agency fraud.

²Grant spent so much time away from Washington that the House of Representatives demanded a list of all executive acts "performed at a distance from the seat of Government established by law." The President refused to comply, citing the 5th amendment.

ARTHUR R. RAILTON, Editor of this journal, is grateful to the West Tisbury and Edgartown Libraries for help with this article.

very deep below the surface." (*Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Aug. 31, 1874)

The *New York Herald* described the pressure that the President was under:

During the last two weeks at the President's cottage [in Long Branch] political pilgrims by ones and twos and threes have been dropping in from day to day to pay their respect to the silent man at the head of the government and, peradventure, to sound him upon the succession. They have learned nothing. (Aug. 19, 1874)

A short time later, while Grant was on the Vineyard, an editorial in the same paper brought up the third-term:

The President is apparently enjoying a season of quiet old-fashioned pleasure while pursuing his short Eastern tour The common people must reassure his spirit, if the discussion of the third-term question has secretly inflicted upon it the annoyance of uneasiness. It would be a brilliant and potent stroke of policy for any popular leader, who wished to perpetuate or extend his power, to bind to his interest a great religious organization whose influence is almost unmeasured. The part which the Church so long played in politics might thus be revived.

The Methodists, the "great religious organization" referred to in the editorial, were congregating in Wesleyan Grove on Martha's Vineyard for their annual camp meeting that August in 1874 and the President's pastor, Rev. Dr. O. H. Tiffany of the Metropolitan Methodist Church in Washington, was there. It was he, the newspapers wrote, who had invited his famous parishioner to join him.³

Grant was no stranger to camp meetings or to Methodists. His summer White House at Long Branch was near the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting and he did, on occasion, visit it during camp meetings:

General Grant. . . has won golden opinions from the pious

³There is no record of Tiffany owning a cottage on the Campground. He did lease a lot in 1871 at 7 West Clinton, but the following year another person, Amos Barstow, built a cottage on that lot. Perhaps Tiffany was renting it from Barstow. Does any member know more?

at the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting and it is not too much to say that his visit to the tents of the godly has secured him the Methodist vote beyond a shadow of a doubt. (*N.Y. Herald*, Aug. 25, 1872)

It may be a bit cynical to suggest that the President had accepted the Tiffany invitation for political purposes, but it is a possibility. He had great respect for the power of the Methodists. One of his biographers, Richard Goldhurst, relates this anecdote:

When a delegation of ministers called in 1872 to let Grant know they might endorse his renomination, the General said there were three political parties in America — Republicans, Democrats and Methodists.

He certainly didn't appear to have come to Wesleyan Grove to rekindle his religious faith. While he slept in the Bishop Haven cottage in the Campground the three nights he was here, he spent few daylight hours on the Vineyard. He and his party travelled to Nantucket and the Cape one day, stopping at villages along the way to wave to the admiring crowds; on the second day, he went to Naushon Island for a talk with the Hon. John M. Forbes, a wealthy Boston Republican and owner of the island. Forbes, who had supported Grant in the two elections, had recently quarreled with him over the ousting of a popular long-time Boston Customs Collector, and the appointment of a political friend, William S. Simmons, to replace him.

The meeting with Forbes may have been an attempt to settle their differences, but it also could have been to sound out the opinion of the influential Boston businessman about the third term.

Thus, it seems clear that the President and his political friends did not make the three-day Cape and Islands trip for the purpose of attending the Camp Meeting. In fact, the only religious service Grant attended was on Sunday morning, his final activity before leaving the Island.

Whatever the motivation, the trip caught the press by

surprise.⁴ The first reporting of it simply stated that Grant would cruise from New York to Newport on the brand-new steamship *City of Peking*, a ship that had caused controversy even before its launching in March. A Congressional investigation had cancelled the government's \$500,000 construction subsidy because of the company's failure to fulfill the contract and for improperly influencing certain members of Congress to vote for the subsidy. The Pacific Mail Line, owners of the ship, invited the President and his guests on the cruise, some claimed, in an effort to win back the subsidy.⁵ Built to carry passengers and mail from the West Coast to the Orient, the *City of Peking* was the second largest propeller ship afloat.

The gleaming new vessel, still on her trial runs, left Pier 42 in New York at 8:30 a.m., August 27, 1874, with 250 invited guests, including the Vice President and some members of the Cabinet with wives and families. President Grant was not on board. The press reported that "the excursion covers a stay at Newport and return to New York on Friday evening," two days later.

As the liner reached the Narrows outside New York harbor, a United States Revenue Cutter came alongside and the President and his party were transferred from the cutter, which had brought them from Long Branch, to the *City of Peking* -- "the well-known face of President Grant wearing its immemorial steady expression." Greeting him as he boarded the liner was the Vice President, "with the expression of a man chewing unripe persimmons."

Two days later, the *New York Herald* had this to say in an editorial:

The voyage of the *City of Peking* from New York to Newport

⁴The *Vineyard Gazette* scooped the nation on the planned visit, but apparently it went unnoticed on the mainland. On Aug. 14, 1874, it reported that "Pres. Grant and a party of friends will visit Oak Bluffs and the Camp Ground soon, it is said." That was two weeks before the metropolitan papers reported it.

⁵We don't know about the ship's construction subsidy, but four months later, in his Sixth Annual Message to Congress, Grant called for "ample compensation for carrying the mails [by ship, including] . . . from our Pacific seaports to foreign seaports on the Pacific." The *City of Peking* had been built for that purpose.

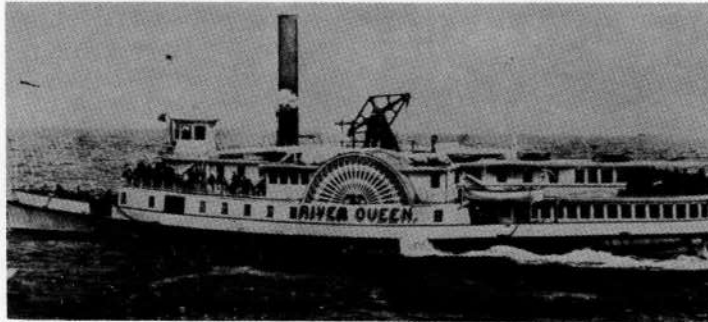
was exceptional in the character of the passengers upon that noble steamer. . . . if the *City of Peking* had foundered at sea, the loss of the President and the Vice President, the Secretary of War, the Postmaster General, Congressmen, politicians and scores of famous men would have almost deprived us of a government. But fortunately, the winds were still . . . and even the apparent coolness between General Grant and Mr. Wilson did not affect the warm spirits of the company. (Aug. 28, 1874)

The winds may have seemed still to the editorial writer, but to many on board the elegant new steamer the ocean was not. The press, eager to expose the weaknesses of politicians even then, took note with seasick humor:

as the gallant ship ploughed proudly out to sea . . . conversation flagged and many persons remembered that they were in the habit of a nap at that time of day. The Delmonico breakfast had tempted all appetites at nine o'clock. The lunch at noon was equally toothsome, but less popular. Dinner came on at five . . . but there were many good feeders who concluded to remain on deck. . . . Long before this, lemons had been handed around the Presidential circle. Persons leaned over the rail, gazing pensively upon the green waters with incoherent ejaculations. The saloon was adorned with longitudinal female loveliness, silent and pale. . . . The veteran orchestra leader Grafulla was so disgusted with the tendency of his orchestra to transpose everything into sea that he nearly threw up his baton. (Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, Aug. 31, 1874)

The account stated that Grant was unaffected,⁶ strolling around the decks, "smoking his segar," but that Mrs. Grant suffered all the way from Fire Island to Newport. Many of the distinguished passengers were grateful when, at 2 a.m., the steamer dropped anchor in Newport harbor, providing a few hours of calm before dawn. About 9 a.m., the Presidential party went ashore to breakfast at the Ocean House. "Almost the first to meet the President was his pastor, Rev. Dr. Tiffany, of Washington, by whose invitation

⁶The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* reported: "Malice, pure malice, whispered that His Excellency had it out with Neptune between Sandy Hook and the *City of Peking*, but the story lacks confirmation." (Aug. 31, 1874)



Steamer River Queen with a load of Island-bound passengers about 1880.

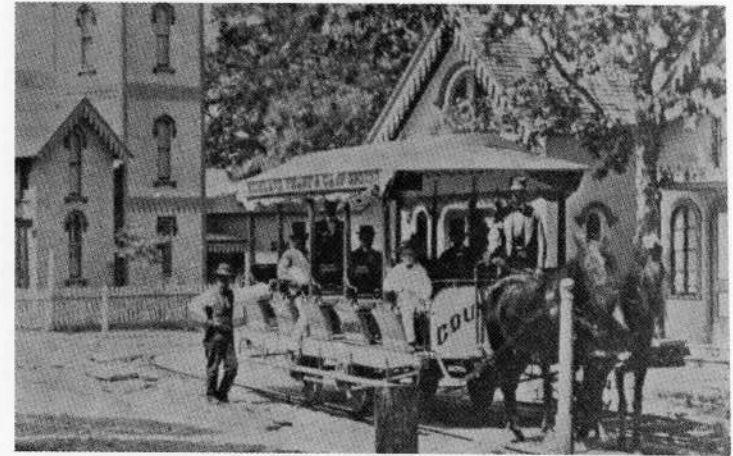
he was present at the annual camp meeting," the *New York Herald* reporter wrote the following day.

While the Reverend Tiffany had headed the Escort Committee, which had gone to Newport the evening before, he was the only man of the cloth on it. The rest of the Committee consisted of Massachusetts Governor Talbot, two Army Generals, two Colonels and eight politicians — not one Vineyard resident among them.

At 11:30 a.m., the party boarded the special three-car train placed at the disposal of the President by the Old Colony Railroad which serviced Cape Cod. The train took the group to Wood's Hole where, waiting at the dock, was the steamer *River Queen*, an Island ferry since 1871. During the Civil War she had been used as a dispatch boat by General Grant. President Lincoln had held preliminary peace negotiations with the Vice President of the Confederacy aboard her at Newport News, at Grant's suggestion. Boarding his old boat once again must have been a nostalgic experience for the President.

The trip to the Vineyard was, in the words of the *New York Herald* reporter, "brief and very pleasant, although the water was hardly smooth enough to allow Mrs. Grant to enjoy the fine scenery, as she had not fully recovered from the effects of Wednesday's sail."

The *River Queen* docked at the Highland Wharf, which



Horse-drawn railway in the Campground some years after Grant's visit.

had been built in 1871 by the Methodists so they would not have to disembark at the Oak Bluffs Wharf and pass through the temptations offered in that "unholy" summer resort. A horse-drawn trolley ran from the Highland Wharf directly into the Campground, delivering the faithful unsullied.

Awaiting the President was a gaily decorated trolley car drawn by six gleaming black horses. The *Vineyard Gazette* described the arrival:

Immediately on arriving, the party entered one of the Vineyard Grove cars, drawn by six horses and appropriately decorated for the occasion, and, followed by a numerous concourse of carriages and pedestrians, proceeded to Clinton Avenue. On reaching that point, so great was the press, notwithstanding the five or six thousand who were congregated in and about the grand stand, that there was some difficulty in extracting the party from the cars; but they finally succeeded in effecting an escape into Bishop Haven's cottage, where they might recruit a little before appearing to the people. . . . an immense bouquet composed wholly of the most elegant rosebuds and green attracting much attention. (Aug. 28, 1874)

The cottage in which the President was to stay was at 10

Clinton Avenue and is still there for all to see. It had been built in 1872, two years before the Presidential visit, by John French of Brooklyn, N.Y. In a rather mysterious transaction only a few days prior to Grant's arrival, the cottage had been purchased for \$2000 by some unidentified friends of the Bishop and presented to him as a gift.⁷

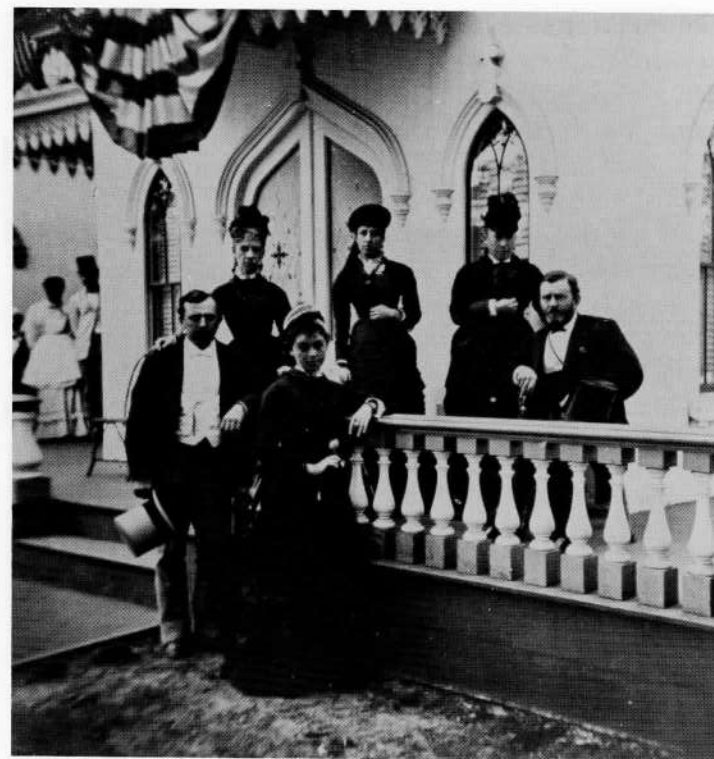
Like the trolley car, the cottage, along with others in the Campground, had been decorated, thanks to the generosity of Grant's newly appointed and controversial Boston Collector of Customs, William S. Simmons. The *New York Herald* commented:

[Simmons] took the occasion to show the public and the President that he was not unmindful of past favors, which he proved by furnishing the bunting, colors and mottoes which covered and decorated the front of the house. "Hang out your banners on the outer walls" was Simmons' motto, and he had done it regardless of cost, which he can well afford, however.

In addition to decorations, Collector Simmons provided for the President's pleasure in other ways: "cigars, being generously supplied, and placed in a conspicuous place in an ante-room." General Babcock, the President's private secretary, was assigned the back room in the cottage. His wife, niece and sister-in-law were also along on the trip and must have been staying elsewhere, perhaps at Reverend Tiffany's cottage.

Greeting the President at the door of the Haven cottage was the Rev. Micah J. Talbot, president of the Camp Meeting Association, which had taken over the Campground from the Methodists in 1866. The Grants were given a half hour's respite before being escorted on foot the one hundred yards or so to the Tabernacle, then a huge

⁷The gift of the cottage changed Bishop Haven's plan to build a cottage in Vineyard Highlands, where he had bought a lot in January. He had to pay the Vineyard Grove Company \$100 to release him from the requirement that a cottage be built within a certain time period. There was another complication for him. When he was elected Bishop, two years before, he had to move from Boston to Atlanta, Ga., so the Island was not so convenient. At the time he was presented the title to the cottage, he remarked that he hoped his friends would make use of it in his absence. (*Boston Globe*, Aug. 21, 1874)

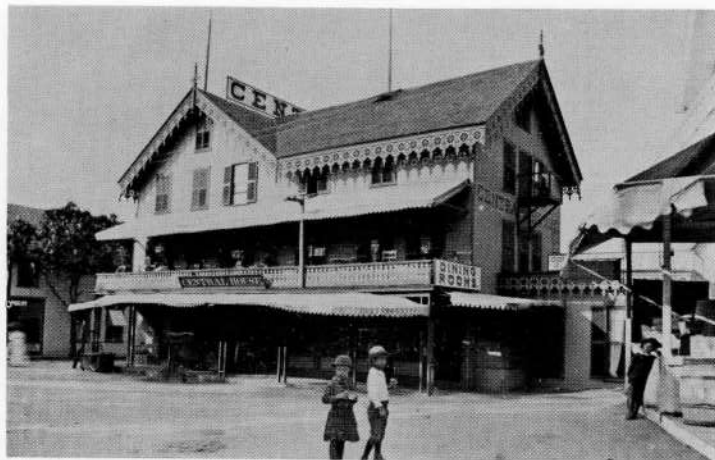


President and Mrs. Grant (right) outside Bishop Haven's cottage. At left is General Babcock, his wife and niece; in center, Babcock's sister-in-law.

canvas tent, where thousands had assembled for the occasion. The regular afternoon services had been sparsely attended as most of the faithful had witnessed the President's arrival. The regular evening service had been cancelled. The Methodist newspaper, *Zion's Herald*, described the scene this way:

Even calm Presiding Elder Talbot flushed a little in the face, as he mounted the stand under the canopy and introduced the President of the United States, not to worshipping, but applauding thousands.

Grant did not speak after his introduction, instead, "as usual, he responded with a quiet bow." The *Vineyard Gazette* gave a few more details of the occasion:

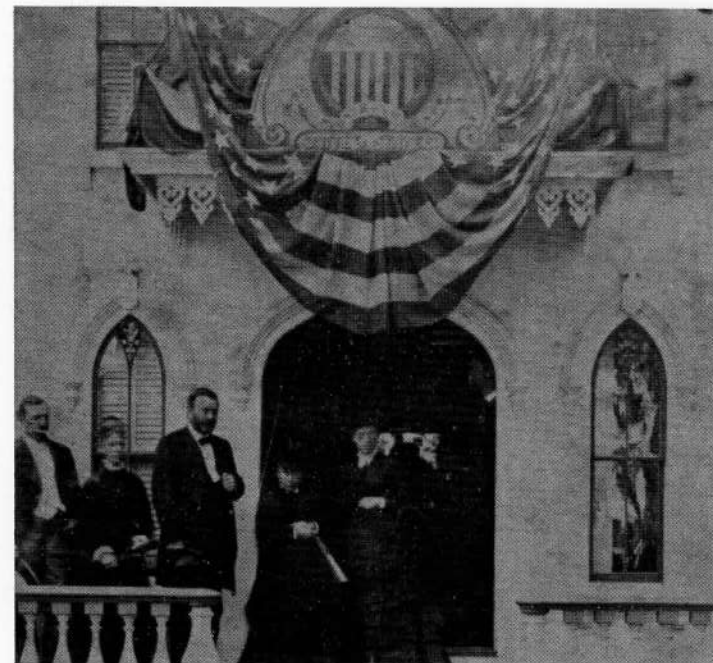


Central House, later the Beatrice House, where the Grants had dinner.

... the space under the canopy and for rods around was one dense mass of eager humanity, such as probably was never known here before. . . Amid a perfect burst of applause, the President was presented, bowing in response to the enthusiastic salutations of the multitude. . . After the singing of "America," the party returned to Bishop Haven's cottage. . . [where] the President again appeared a moment on the cottage balcony and then withdrew and was seen no more till six o'clock, when he dined at the Central House.

The *Gazette* reporter may have missed a good story. The *New Bedford Mercury* reported that after returning to the Haven cottage, the President slipped out to make a private and relaxing visit: "The President called at the cottage of Alderman J. H. Collins of Cambridge on Merrill Avenue, and indulging in a quiet smoke, under the admiring gaze of some 20 spectators. . . the crowd didn't get wind of this movement, which was effected by a neat little bit of back-door strategy."⁸

⁸It isn't clear what the President's connection to Congressman Collins was. Some, knowing Grant's habits, have suggested it may have been refreshments. In any case, Collin's Merrill Avenue cottage (in one report it was called a tent) was a good stroll from Haven's cottage and it does seem that if Grant had walked a crowd would have followed, so that story, like many, may be spurious.



Another photo taken on the Haven piazza. Grant is to left of door.

All this secular excitement was occurring on the Campground, during the week of Camp Meeting, a time normally fully devoted to religious pursuits. But on this special day, things were different, as the *New York Tribune* explained:

For the time being, piety seemed subordinated to hero worship, and during the first day of his stay, while everybody was running after him, the public meetings were barely attended and the rules were almost forgotten. . . He could only get away from them by stratagem. He probably enjoyed it. (Aug. 31, 1874)

After dining at the Central House (later known as the Beatrice House, it was the largest building in the Campground at the time), the President and Mrs. Grant were driven around the Campground and, outside it, along the streets of Oak Bluffs to enjoy the Illumination, that



"Cottage" of Dr. Harrison Tucker, where the Grants were entertained.

display of Japanese lanterns which is today a Campground tradition. It had been introduced six years earlier by the Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Company outside the Campground, but in recent years, it had spread to Clinton Avenue, within the hallowed area. This was the second Illumination that week, the scheduled one having taken place a few nights earlier.

The parade of the Presidential party was led by the Foxboro Brass Band and it ended at the cottage of Dr. Harrison A. Tucker, a famous and wealthy patent-medicine manufacturer who had a summer home on Ocean Park. The "cottage" was actually a mansion which had been built two years before and was subsequently enlarged even more. The Grants and the other distinguished guests left the carriages and climbed to the third-story tower to watch a spectacular



Grant watched the fireworks from third-floor tower of Tucker's cottage.

fireworks display, honoring the President. It was estimated that there were 30,000 persons in the area to witness the extravaganza.

At the conclusion of the fireworks, it was Mrs. Grant's turn to be honored at a reception given by the wife of the Reverend Tiffany, the family pastor in Washington who a few months before had performed the ceremony in which the Grant daughter, Nellie, was married to a ne'er-do-well member of the British royalty. The reception, an exclusive affair, was held at the Tiffany cottage on West Clinton Avenue. *Zion's Herald*, the Methodist newspaper, seemed a little disturbed by the excess of social activities that were taking place during Camp Meeting week:

Whether the President has been a "means of grace" during the camp-meeting at the Vineyard remains to be seen; he

has, no doubt, been indirectly a pecuniary blessing to its landlords. His visit has been one of unalloyed pleasure to the thousands on the mainland and on the islands who have participated in the protracted ovation of the week. Bishop Haven's and Dr. Tiffany's cottages were made elegant through the generosity of Collector Simmons and other friends, within and without, for the headquarters of the President, his excellent wife and his suite. Many happy invited guests enjoyed the evening reception given by Mrs. Tiffany, and many others had an opportunity to test their ability to keep the spirit of the tenth commandment.⁹ (Sept. 3, 1874)

The Tiffany reception over, the Grants returned to their cottage, looking forward, no doubt, to a few hours of rest. But it was not to be — at least, not for a while:

After the President and Mrs. Grant had returned to their cottage. . . a half dozen of the best singers on the ground, including Mrs. Osborn of Brooklyn, serenaded them. This brought both the President and his wife to the balcony and the power of sweet song upon the midnight air, did what all other appliances failed to do, called out one of his most eloquent speeches. (*Boston Globe*, Aug. 28, 1874)

Eloquence was not something Grant was noted for.¹⁰ In fact, the next day, while touring the Cape, when his train stopped at Wellfleet so he could wave to the assembled crowd, he said to a local politician who had come aboard: "I am not accustomed to public speaking; please return to the people abundant thanks for their hospitality."

Grant's "eloquence" that midnight is a matter of record, according to Henry B. Hough. His total speech:

I thank you for your cheerful greeting. No doubt you are tired and sleepy, as I am, so I will not detain you. Good Night. (*Martha's Vineyard: Summer Resort*, p. 115)

It had been a long day for the President. It had been a

⁹For those who can't recall: the 10th Commandment states "Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbor's." It is not clear which the *Zion's Herald* writer had in mind specifically.

¹⁰The *N. Y. Times*, June 21, 1887, cited a letter from Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman: "In another letter, Sherman said his fellow Union general, Ulysses S. Grant, 'cannot make a speech of five sentences.'"

long day as well for Postmaster General Marshall Jewell, the former governor of Connecticut, who had been named to the President's Cabinet only a few weeks earlier, having been recalled from his post as Minister to Russia. Although it was past midnight, he thought he would enjoy a quiet smoke on the veranda of his cottage before retiring. No doubt, sitting there in a comfortable rocking chair, he reflected on his new prestige — Cabinet officer, travelling with the President and sharing in the public adulation. His cigar had hardly built up an ash before the Campground watchman came along on his nightly rounds.

Seeing the Postmaster General on the porch, he walked over and said, "Well, Sir, I guess you had better go in." It was, he pointed out, well past the curfew hour. The *Boston Daily Advertiser*, describing the midnight encounter, stated that "Mr. Jewell merrily clapped his hands and declared it the best joke of the season. The effort thus to preserve order and insure quiet favorably impressed him." So much for the importance of being a member of the President's Cabinet!

Early the next morning (Friday), President Grant and his party once again boarded the *River Queen*, this time for a trip to Nantucket and Hyannis. Departure was delayed a half hour awaiting the President's arrival. Once aboard, he retired to Stateroom A, a room he had often used during the Civil War. As the boat pulled away from the wharf, Grant appeared "at a window with a cigar in his mouth, and with head uncovered, gently bowed to the large crowd that had gathered there to see the party off."

On Nantucket, the party rode out to Siasconset, a fishing village founded a generation earlier by gentlemen who called themselves "the True Republicans of Siasconset," believers in "much innocent festivity and true sociability." They returned to the Ocean House for a sumptuous luncheon, after which a near tragedy occurred:

While at Nantucket, the horses attached to the carriage which was to convey the President and Mrs. Grant from

the Ocean House to the steamer attempted to run away, but the crowd was so thick they could not get anywhere, and were soon stopped. Mrs. Grant alighted and walked to the boat, but the President had confidence in the situation and retained his seat. (*Unidentified news clipping*, Aug. 28, 1874)

Tragedy averted, they boarded the *River Queen* for the sail to Hyannis. The press, as usual, was watching:

There was a heavy swell on and . . . among the earliest to contribute the elegant Nantucket lunch to the finny tribe was Collector Simmons, and his example of heroic sacrifice was soon followed by a dozen others, some of them good Methodists, meantime, singing the appropriate hymn beginning "That's so with all of us."

In the party on the Cape trip were five Methodist ministers and wives, plus Bishop Haven, so if indeed there was hymn singing, they had a chorus.

Leaving the steamer at Hyannis, the party travelled to Provincetown and then back to Wood's Hole where the faithful *River Queen* was waiting. They landed on the Vineyard at 11 p.m., after another long day.

The next day, Saturday, August 29, the President again left the Island, this time to visit Naushon Island and its owner, the Hon. John M. Forbes of Milton. Accompanying him this time on the steamer *Martha's Vineyard* were Massachusetts Governor Stearns, Bishop Haven, President Oliver Hoyt of the Old Colony Railroad, who had provided the special train used on the mainland,¹¹ plus the son and daughter of Reverend Tiffany. They left Vineyard Highlands Wharf at 10 a.m., and sailed to Hadley's Harbor, where they were met by Mr. Forbes. He and the President rode horseback up the hill to his mansion, while the others followed in carriages. After lunch, the President and Forbes

¹¹Oliver Hoyt had much to gain from the President's trip in that depression year. His business, no doubt, was hurting. The Old Colony Railroad, which he headed, ran from Newport to Boston to Provincetown and thus had a monopoly on rail traffic in southeastern Massachusetts. It also owned three steamers that ran between the mainland and the islands plus the Fall River Line from New York. Having the President make such public use of his facilities was valuable publicity. It is no wonder that he provided such excellent (and personal) service to the Presidential party. He seemed omnipresent.

talked privately. It was, no doubt, more pleasant than their recent talk in the White House had been when Forbes, along with Boston banker William Gray, urged Grant to veto what was called "The Inflation Bill."

Grant's chilly reception of William Gray, a Boston banker, who came to Washington at the end of March to urge a veto of the "Inflation Bill" . . . [was because he] refused to be lectured to by the Bostonian.¹²

It would not have been pleasant, however, if the subject of Collector Simmons had come up. Forbes had strenuously opposed his appointment. His daughter, Sarah Forbes Hughes, explains why in her biography of her father:

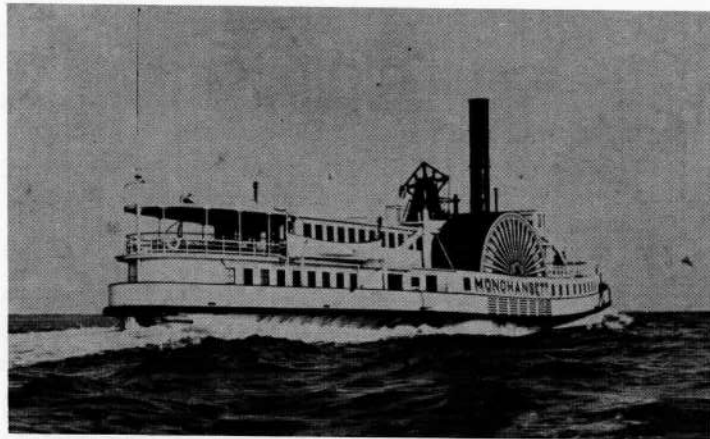
A flagrant instance, at this time, of the growing corruption in what is called machine politics, was the appointment to the collectorship of the port of Boston, of a man whose political career had shown him to be unfitted for the post. This appointment was urged by General Butler, then a Republican member of the national House of Representatives, and always, as my father held, one of the most mischievous influences, in war and in politics, with which Massachusetts had ever had to deal.¹³

Collector Simmons, as we have seen, was the generous patron who had decorated the cottages in the Campground, as well as stocking Bishop Haven's cottage with such amenities as Grant's favorite cigars.

Had the discussion between the two men involved the third-term question, Grant could not have been encouraged. Forbes, who had supported the President in both previous elections, was strenuously opposed to a third term and subsequently became part of the nucleus of the Independent Republican movement which defeated the nomination of James G. Blaine, making Rutherford B. Hayes, a reformer, the nominee and the next President after a contested and

¹²William S. McFeely, *Grant*, W. W. Norton & Co., N.Y., 1981, p. 396. Despite his irritation, Grant did veto the bill, an action which John M. Forbes said was, "next to his military success, the crowning glory of Grant's life." Sarah Forbes Hughes, *John Murray Forbes*, Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1899, v.2, p. 185.

¹³Hughes, p.185. General Benjamin F. Butler served under Grant in the Civil War and was a controversial figure both during and after the conflict. He was involved in some of the corruption in the Grant administration, although it was as a Congressman, not as a Grant appointee. McFeely, p.397.



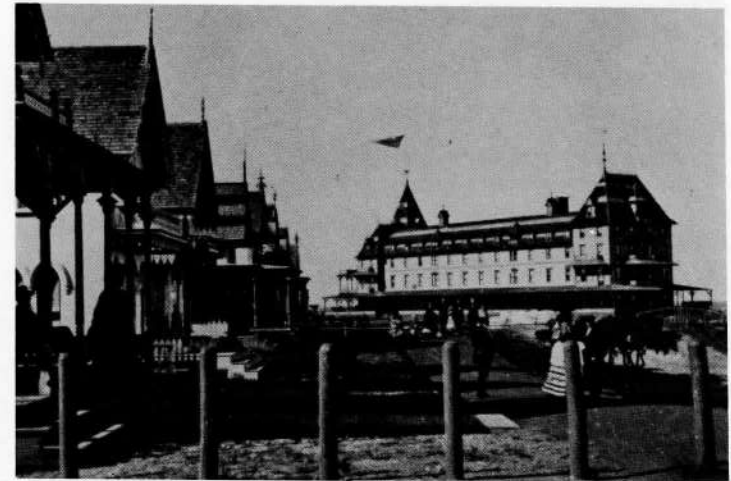
The Monohansett, which brought the Grants back from visit to Naushon.

some said corrupt election that eventually had to be decided by Congress.

Whatever their discussion, at 4:30 p.m., the steamer *Monohansett*, which also had served Grant in the Civil War, pulled into Hadley's Harbor on her way from New Bedford to take the Presidential party back to the Vineyard. Assigned to the General as a dispatch boat, the *Monohansett*, it is said, had a special room on the saloon deck that had been built for Grant's use. If so, he must have felt right at home as she steamed back to the Island, arriving at 6:30 p.m. in time for the President to ready himself for another exhausting social evening.

He was the guest of honor at a supper hosted by J. W. Harper of the publishing house, Harper Brothers of New York. The affair was held at the famed Sea View Hotel, the newest and finest hotel in Oak Bluffs, overlooking Nantucket Sound. It was, no doubt, an elegant affair.

Such events were much enjoyed by Grant, who was a great admirer of successful men, such as Forbes and Harper. "He had a naive admiration for and faith in men of wealth, accepted gifts from them and could see no wrong in them," according to *Chamber's Encyclopedia*.



The new and luxurious Sea View Hotel was located at the head of the steamboat wharf. It burned down in a suspicious fire in 1892.

After the supper, another reception followed, this one given in Grant's honor by Holder M. Brownell, manager and later owner of the Sea View Hotel. It was described vividly by the reporter from the *New York Herald*:

. . . [present were] several hundred ladies and gentlemen, the latter appearing in full dress and the fair sex in the choicest and most elegant toilets which a refined taste or a craving desire for display could possibly conceive. . . those who were not favored with cards of invitation contenting themselves by crowding the corridors and piazzas of the mammoth hotel and peeping through the windows for a glance at the Executive lion. There were thousands of these coming and going all the evening and the scenes outside were scarcely less enlivening and brilliant than those inside. The rustic policemen who were on duty found their authority was not respected and early in the evening they surrendered to the multitude. . . probably not less than a thousand ladies and gentlemen were presented to the President. . . The 'cloth' was most liberally represented in the presence of the greater portion of the Methodist clergy in attendance at the camp meeting. (Aug. 31, 1874)

According to the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, one man was

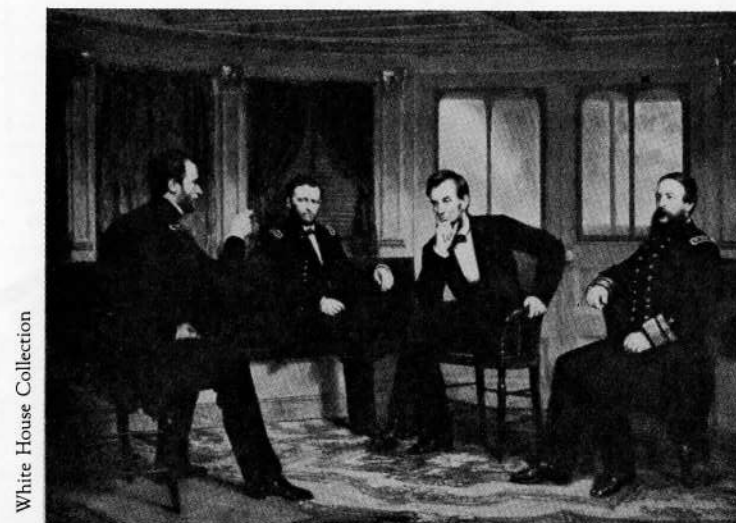
so moved by the grandness of the President and the occasion that he "heroically stopped his watch, that he might always remember at what time he saw the President."

Grant and his wife said good night to their hosts at about 11 o'clock, returning by carriage to the Haven cottage. The carriage, a barouche owned by John S. Cook, had been assigned to the Grants and was especially decorated. During the days the President was off-Island, the carriage was in great demand by private parties who enjoyed the thrill of sitting where the President had sat.

Probably the Methodist clergy left the reception at the same time, because right after the President's departure, the guests began what was called the "hop," with dancing going on until after midnight. It was, without doubt, the Sea View's finest hour.

It was much more than that: it was overwhelming proof that Oak Bluffs had made it into the big time as a summer resort. Laudatory articles appeared in the major newspapers of the country each day describing the Presidential visit and most mentioned the physical charm of the Vineyard. The weather was superb during the entire three days and the reports praised the loveliness of this delightful seaside paradise. In a year of economic depression, such publicity must have buoyed the spirits of the directors of the Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Company who were having some difficulty selling their building lots. The Presidential visit had put Oak Bluffs on the front pages of America and they began to dream of replacing Newport as the East Coast's finest summer resort.

The following day was Sunday, the "Big Sunday" of Camp Meeting, as the final day was traditionally called. President and Mrs. Grant attended the morning service at which their host, Bishop Haven, preached. His text was from Joel: "Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision." It was, according to the Rev. W. V. Morrison, who was present, one of the greatest sermons of his life. It was also the only



White House Collection

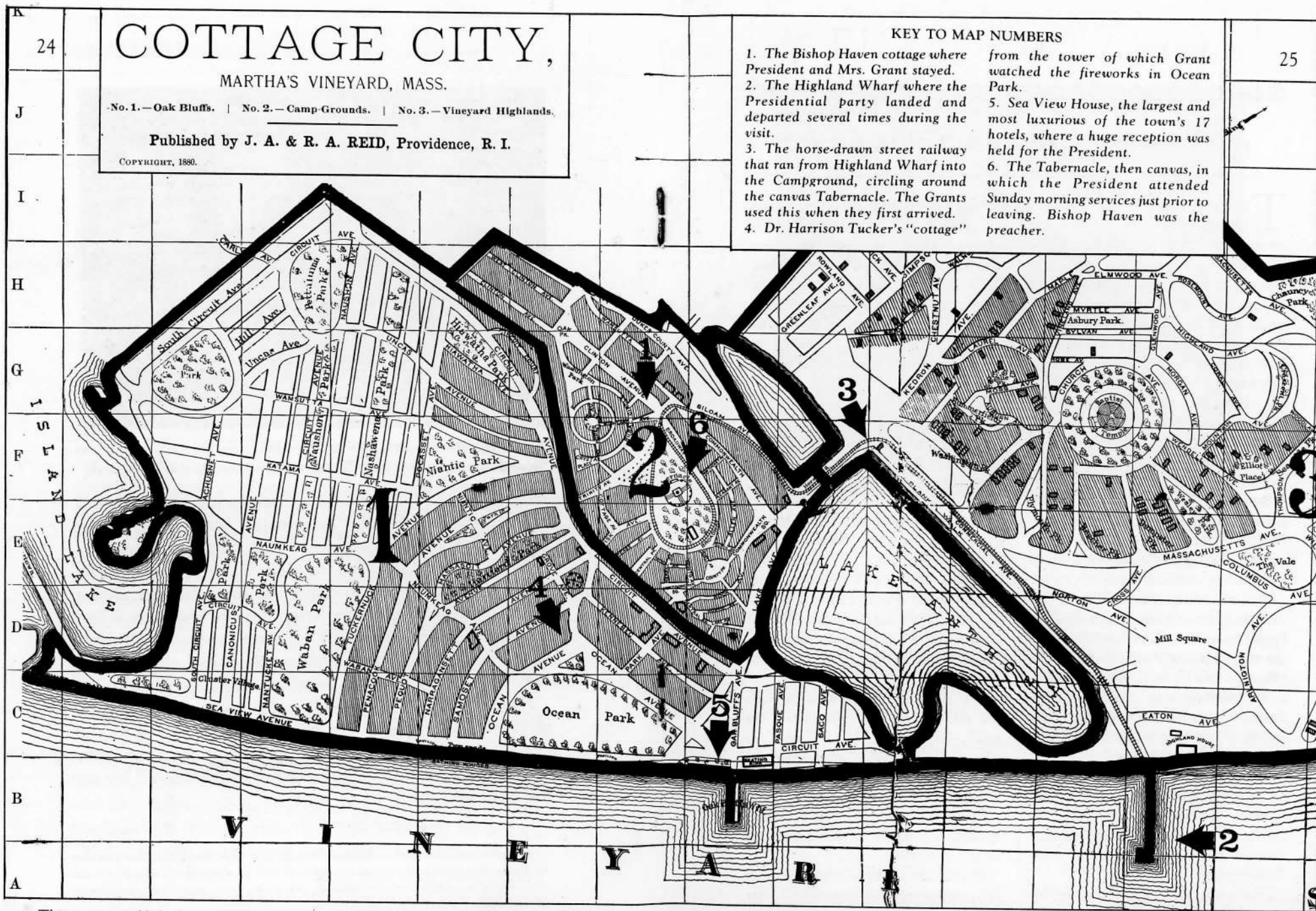
Aboard the River Queen, later an Island ferry, Lincoln, Grant, Porter and Sherman discuss how to treat Southern states when the Civil War ends.

religious service the President attended while he was here.¹⁴

After the service, the Presidential party went to the Highland Wharf to board the *Monohansett*, bound for New Bedford. Mrs. Grant made the assembled Methodists happy when she told them on departing that she had always believed Ocean Grove, New Jersey, near their summer White House at Long Branch, to be the finest camp-meeting grove of all, but her visit to Wesleyan Grove had changed her mind. She was, she said, delighted with this Island.

As usual, the President said nothing — about the third-term or anything else. He bowed slightly, waved to the crowd and with Julia on his arm walked up the gangplank. The steamer pulled away, the crowd dispersed and life on the Vineyard returned to normal.

¹⁴ Postmaster General Jewell delivered a message during the Sunday Love Feast, praising such gatherings of the faithful. Jewell seems to have been a ready speaker. On the Nantucket visit, it was he, rather than the President, who spoke to the crowd from the balcony at the Ocean House.



This map, published in 1880, shows Cottage City and environs four years after the visit by President Grant.

At right is Vineyard Highlands which was only a developer's dream when Grant came four years before. The Baptist Temple, the

circular area in the center, was built in 1878. The steam railroad to Edgartown went into operation after Grant's visit in 1874, running

along the beach from the Oak Bluffs Wharf and Seaview House.

A Vineyard Girl and Nellie Grant

THE Island reception of President Grant and his party was monopolized by off-Islanders. The Vineyard natives were present, cheering along with everyone else, but always a bit in the shadows. That is understandable. After all, this was the President of the United States and the Islanders were not in that league. Their job was to provide the services, drive the carriages, provide the police (although one account made it clear that that job was too big for them), run the steamboats, and, perhaps, even set off the fireworks.

But there was one Island native, perhaps the only one, who had met President Grant before. As one might expect, she was a Pease, the Island's most active political family.

She was Maria Norton Pease, the only daughter of Judge Joseph Thaxter Pease, Jeremiah's eldest son. She had married Edward Fitch Hedden, an officer in the U. S. Revenue Service, in 1871 and spent most of her time in Baltimore, his home port. Two of her uncles, Cyrus and William, were also Revenue Service officers.

Maria's diary for 1874, now owned by her great-grandson, Julien V. Weston, has entries involving Grant. Living in Baltimore while her husband was at sea, she often went into Washington.

That year, 1874, was not only the year of Grant's visit here, but it was

also the year his only daughter, Nellie, was married to a member of British royalty, Algernon Satoris. Nellie was only 18 years old and hers was the first wedding to be held in the White House. Although Maria doesn't seem to have been at the wedding, she did attend the reception afterwards at which she "had a bow from President Grant."

But that wasn't the first time she had met him. On January 20, 1874, she had gone to Washington to attend President Grant's reception at the White House.

On May 18, she again went to Washington and to the White House three days later on Nellie Grant's wedding day. Here is her diary entry:

"Thurs. 21 May, Washington. Saw Nellie Grant off and the car in which she went. Took lunch in the Capitol. Went in the White House in the [East?] Room. Had a bow from President Grant."

The car referred to was apparently the railroad car that was taking the newly married couple to New York where they boarded a steamer for England. It was a sad day for the President. One biographer says: "During the ceremony, the President 'looked steadfastly at the floor' and wept." (McFeely)

Maria came to the Vineyard early in July, remaining until September 7. Her father had a cottage (one of the earliest



Library of Congress

Nellie Grant's wedding in White House. Rev. Tiffany conducts ceremony.

wooden buildings) in the Campground and she was there during the week of the Presidential visit. She makes two mentions of Grant in her diary that week:

Thurs., 27 Aug. Cloudy and pleasant. In the cottage all day and eve. President Grant is here. Passed the cottage and bowed to Ella and I, as we sat on the balcony. Great time. Thousands of people are here.

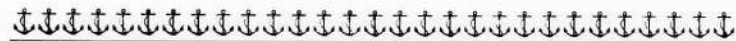
Sat., 29 Aug. In the cottage all day. In the even went to the Seaside and attended Grant's reception with Cy and Ella. Perfect jam. 14 in the cottage."

Cy was her brother, Cyrus, and Ella was his wife.

Maria's young daughter, Anna, was

apparently among the 14 in the Pease cottage because in later years she enjoyed telling her grandchildren, Julien among them, that she had sat on the President's lap when he visited the Tabernacle. She was not the only one who claimed that honor although, it must be added, the news stories of Grant's visit make no mention of his holding children. He very well could have, as he did show an affection for children, often going out of his way to be pleasant to them. (See *Intelligencer*, May 1986, p. 15, for another child who sat on his knee that day.)

Thus we have, however brief, a first-hand personal account by an Islander of the Presidential visit.



Another View of the Island in 1874

by NATHANIEL S. SHALER

When President Grant and his party visited the Island in August 1874, they did no sightseeing at all. They never travelled more than a mile from the Vineyard Highlands Wharf on which they landed. The many newspaper articles about the visit described the wonders of the Campground and of the new summer resort, Oak Bluffs. For another view, written during the same summer of 1874, we present excerpts from an article by the Harvard geologist and Island summer resident, Professor Shaler. The article was published in the Atlantic Monthly, December 1874.

As we cross the sound, some five miles wide, which divides the Elizabeth Archipelago from Martha's Vineyard, the island lies full before us, its length partly hidden from us, however, by our nearness to it. Along the western shore are a range of hills rising to the height of about three hundred feet above the sea; they are round-topped and want nobility; but as a hill is always at its best along-side of the water, they give a great deal to the landscape. To the eastward the shore sinks down into a line of plain almost as level as the sea, and rising only half a hundred feet above it. All the plain is wrapped in a dense mantle of forest and grass, for, unlike most land that faces the sea, Martha's Vineyard retains its foliage, despite the ruthless fashion in which man has repeatedly swept the forests away.

A break in the land brings into view the deeply embayed haven of Holmes's Hole, one of the famous refuge harbors of our coast. We thread our way through a fleet of vessels

NATHANIEL SOUTHGATE SHALER was born in Kentucky in 1841 and taught at Harvard University. He summered on the Vineyard for many years before he began, in 1888, to buy farmland, which eventually became Seven Gates Farm in North Tisbury.

which have found some excuse in the threat of storm for seeking shelter here. Huddled together so close that abuse and badinage can be plentifully exchanged by the crews, lie the motley throng: lumber ships from Maine, their decks piled high above the bulwarks with the yellow, fragrant spoils of the pine woods; colliers from Nova Scotia with voluble Frenchmen for crew, Frenchmen still in every word and feature though their ancestry is as long on our soil as the Yankee; coal ships from Philadelphia, manned with the typical tobacco-stained, taciturn American sailor. Along with these, a herd of vessels engaged in interminable and seemingly objectless wandering up and down the seas in search of hard-earned gains. Here and there, trim, dandified yachts bring their white paint and polished brass into glaring contrast with the grime of utilitarian trade.

The village of Holmes's Hole, or Vineyard Haven, as it has been renamed in deference to modern euphuism, is charmingly placed at the foot of the green slopes on the west side of the haven. It is one of those accidental villages of our shore with none of the premeditation belonging to the towns which have straight streets and well aligned houses. Each house-builder has set his home to please himself; there is in almost all of them an evident desire to face the sea; almost every house has some one window so placed that its owner can watch the varying scene of the harbor. . . . The little houses are simple, with the frequent attempts at rather gingerbread decorations so common with sailors. They are always neat, for the successful sailor is a man of method, and brings a shipshapeness into all his work, on sea or land. Often some great India shell or mass of coral, among the flowers in the door-yard, shows that the owner has been to the antipodes in search of the humble fortune which will carry him in peace to his end. . . .

Very many of the old salts have been whaling captains, and have been brought up in the best school of courage the world has ever known. The man who has been able to show the collected energy required to lance a whale has

nothing to learn in the way of courage from the warfare of man with man. . . .

The trim little boxes of the sea-faring class will soon be overshadowed and blighted by the ambitious houses of the summer visitors, who have just begun to find out the attractions of this shore. So far the new-comers have displayed the admirable lack of discrimination so characteristic of those who haunt the shore in summer; there are two or three great resorts for summer visitors growing up on the low shore of the eastern end of the island, whose interminable sand — its barrenness scarcely veiled by a thin copse of scrubby oaks — is engaged in a give-and-take struggle with the sea. Oak Bluffs, where oaks and bluffs are both on the average less than ten feet high, has grown to be a pasteboard summer town capable of giving bad food and uneasy rest to twenty thousand people.

We want the good reader to have the best opinion of Martha's Vineyard, so we will turn ourselves away from the huddled roofs of the new-made town which looks out of the bushes, the aforesaid "oaks" of the name, and journey towards the central part of the island.

The Professor then goes into a long, laudatory description of up-Island towns and geography, too long to include in this account. It was that part of the Island that he, as a geologist, found most interesting and it is there that, in 1888, he began buying property which eventually became Seven Gates Farm, his summer home. He seemed, in that 1874 article, to have little hope for Edgartown, giving it only brief mention and that at the very end:

In a commercial sense [Edgartown] is a place far advanced in decay: of all its whale-ships, which got from the sea the hard-earned fortunes of its people, there is but one left. This lies upon the ways, stripped of its rigging, looking like a mere effigy of a living craft. But the thrift and cleanliness of the sailor is marked in every paving-stone and shingle of the village. As soon as a mariner comes to fortune his first effort is to get a comfortable home, a big, square, roomy house, which shall always be ship-shape and well-painted.

I never thought so well of white paint before I saw these handsome houses, actually resplendent with a hue which is so often merely garnish in such uses. . . . These comfortable homes, like those of New Bedford, mark a period of prosperity which has passed, never to return. Little by little, the population is drifting away; some houses stand empty, and the quick agents of decay which make havoc with our frail New England houses will soon be at work at them, and even Yankee thrift cannot keep it away.

The Professor was unduly pessimistic about Edgartown, and mistakenly so, as we now know. That never-to-return prosperity did indeed return, greater than ever, thanks to the summer visitors, whose effect on the Island, he thought, would be less than salutary, himself, of course, excepted:

In the new life which our growing fashion of summering by the sea is bringing to Martha's Vineyard, it is to be hoped that the pleasant traces of the old may be well preserved. But lest it be all swept away, we advise our tourists who would see the best of their own land to see it for themselves. Certainly no part of our long shore line has as much to attract and hold the reasonable traveler.

Shaler, it seems, had first come to the Vineyard in 1860 on a prolonged field trip to Gay Head with the French geologist, Jules Marcou. It is not clear how often he returned after that, but what is clear is that his affection for up-Island did not extend to Oak Bluffs. In 1872, on another trip to the Island, he wrote this in a letter to his wife:

" . . . Oak Bluffs is a mushroom town without any oaks, except some scrubs, and little in the way of bluffs except what one gets from the super-christianized people. White pine in the shape of gothic shanties is the only forest growth I have yet found. One is shockingly reminded of the surroundings of a race-track rather than a camp-meeting. The place is not altogether bad. There are some hundreds of little box-like houses of a queer and profane architecture occupied by people of the middle classes or waiting for some one of that class to buy them. These little dabs of dwellings,

about as big as boarding-house slices of mince pie, are scattered around through the thick-set copse of oaks! (save the mark) which are not high enough to hide their ten-foot eaves. There is no visible kitchen to them, nor any outward means of existence unless they live on acorns or are fed by the woodchucks or the emaciated crows, which look old enough to have performed the work for the Syrian hermit some centuries ago.

"... The change of air always excites me; my young companion has gone to bed overpowered by emotions of a composite kind: affected almost to tears by the grandeur of the sea and the size of his supper. I hear his melancholy snore through the double coat of whitewash and wall-paper which form the wall of my room. I have no one to talk to and only a smoky coal-oil lamp for light, so I must try to sleep it off; I am obliged to the glacial period for having made my work at this end of the island quite simple. I go tomorrow or Monday to Tisbury, when I shall write again."

And thus, showing his gratitude to the glacier for making up-Island more interesting to a geologist, the future founder of Seven Gates Farm blew out the smoky coal-oil lamp and went to sleep.



From Autobiography of Nathaniel S. Shaler

Farmer Nathaniel Shaler in his later years at Seven Gates Farm.

When the Island Cast Off The Yoke of the Dynasty

Our First Independence Day: April 3, 1751

by JOHN A. HOWLAND

WHEN, in 1641, Thomas Mayhew purchased his dual grants from the Earl of Stirling in New York and from Sir Ferdinando Gorges in Maine, he became, to all intents and purposes, the sole owner and ruler of a personal fiefdom. For the 50-year-old, generally failed businessman from Watertown, it was a wholly new vista for unbridled control and exploitation. For his family, at least for the non-missionary Mayhews, the next 110 years were devoted to keeping it that way.

Thus, there developed two distinct lines in the Mayhew family: the Missionary Mayhews and the Magisterial Mayhews. The Governor, Thomas Mayhew the elder, was, after the loss of his namesake son, a member of each line, playing both roles, humanitarian and authoritarian. It is the second, and more important role, that is under discussion here.

The elder Mayhew's early assumption of the title of Governor probably made little difference to the handful of early settlers. His self-appointed role as the adjudicator of local disputes no doubt served the sparsely populated Island well enough. It is not hard to visualize, however, the "peasantry" knuckling their forelocks when the "Gov'n'r" passed by.

During the next few decades, however, the population

JOHN A. HOWLAND of Lambert's Cove spent most of his career as Director of Advertising for A.T.&T., where he helped bring pleasure into American homes with the Bell Telephone Hour. His present avocation is digging into, and amplifying, some of the footnotes of Island history.

increased enough for this "Governorship" to be a cause of dissatisfaction. Undercurrents of complaint, even outright defiance, built up — after all, hadn't self-government been a goal of the migration from the old country? These murmurings led Mayhew, in his first overt bid for oligarchy, to draw up and demand the signing of a strange document, a contract of "submission" by the people to the authority of a "major part of the Freemen and a single person." One need not stretch the imagination to assume that this "major part" was made up of none other than Mayhew and his family allies.

In 1663, a cloud appeared which threatened to rain on this family parade and seriously interfere with this one-man's rule over his dutchy. The heir to the first Earl of Stirling sold his American grants to the Duke of York, James, brother to King Charles II, who in confirming the grant included provincial authority over "all those several Islands called or known as Martin's Vineyard and Nantukes otherwise Nantuckett." Unwanted supervision of the fiefdom loomed.

But it was eight more years, in 1671, before Mayhew was officially called to account at a conference in New York to discuss Island matters. The first summons was couched in very cordial language and Mayhew chose to ignore it, as he had most other correspondence in the past, hoping that like Island weather, it would sooner or later go away. Further "invitations" were harsher in tone, however, and he had no choice but to bundle up copies of his two grants and sail dutifully off to New York.

In his earlier years, Mayhew may not have shown much business acumen, but at this conference, which could have ended his suzerainty, he somehow emerged with all the trump cards. Not only were his patents and proprietorship confirmed, but he was, in addition, named Governor for Life! To be sure, the conference did require a local government, but at the same time named Mayhew the Chief

Justice of the Courts, and made his grandson Matthew, who was with him at the conference, Collector of Customs and First Secretary of the General Court.

This was a legal consolidation of dynastic office holding that would have made a Curley, a Hague or a Pendergast blush.

But once again forces rippled the Mayhew tranquility. In 1673, the Dutch retook New York and the Duke of York's government was ended. This provided an opportunity that many Vineyarders had been waiting for: when the Duke's sovereignty fell, so did Mayhew's, they decided. These discontented Islanders took the stance that the seizure of New York either put the Vineyard under Dutch rule or, alternatively, the Island was an independent entity. Their real purpose, of course, was to dump Mayhew and bid for a change of authority under the Massachusetts government.

Forthwith, they demanded Mayhew's "abdication" and appealed to Massachusetts Bay Colony to incorporate the Vineyard into that colony.

The politicians of Massachusetts, rather than welcoming their Island brethren to their bosoms, were chary of getting enmeshed in a squabble that might ultimately involve the Royal Duke, who, although he had lost New York, was, after all, still the King's brother.

Rebuffed by the Massachusetts Bay colony, the "rebels" set up an independent government on the Island, opposing the Mayhew regime. Once again, if large events had not intervened, there is little doubt that the rebels would have won out. Even Mayhew's grandson, Matthew, admitted conservatively that "about half the people were against the Governor." But it was not to be. In 1674, by treaty, New York was returned to English rule and the King once again confirmed the Duke's grant, including the pre-existing conditions affecting the Island.

In short order, the rebels were brought before the Court, with Chief Justice Thomas Mayhew presiding. Fines or

"apologies" were levied. While many rebels departed for safer shores, others made obeisance to the Mayhew magistracy. The mace of office was safely restored, the family and its cronies continued to hold most offices and to rule as judge and jurors, as before. Governor Mayhew, now in his 80s, again proceeded to ignore any submission to other authority, either at home or from New York, and so things remained until 1682 when the life of the "Governor for Life" ended at age 89.

He died in March, but curiously, it was not until August that notification of his death was sent to New York — plenty of time for the heirs and successors to consolidate positions to insure the continuation of the *ancien regime*. And it worked. Executive authority was forthwith invested in Matthew, not as "Governor for Life," but as Chief Magistrate, thus assuring continuation of the old nepotism and influence over the Island's judiciary and governmental functions.

But again a snag. At about this time, in a bow to some constitutional rights in the Colonies, the King issued a Charter of Liberties. Freemen were to be elected to participate in provincial affairs, counties were created and a more formalized local self-government was to be structured.

One peculiar result, however, was that Matthew managed to get himself appointed Sheriff of the Islands, in addition to being Chief Magistrate, certainly not a step to lessen his control. Also, Matthew, unlike his grandfather who had loftily ignored provincial authority, proceeded to cozy up to the newly appointed Governor and, in 1685, through some very involved documents of doubtful legality drawn up by Mayhew and the Provincial Governor, Matthew Mayhew was officially created "Lord of the Manor" — a title or rank that had all but died out, even in the homeland.

The new title gave Mayhew unbelievable dictatorial powers over all manner of things, even for those still semi-feudal days: manorial privileges over lands, rents, the goods of felons and other chattels (including wives and widows),

indentures, patronage from churches and a whole list of benefits and indulgences which, as Banks says in his *History of Martha's Vineyard*, "seemed like reading some medieval parchment."

Fortunately for Island residents, before the new "Lord" could exercise or reap much from this jiggery-pokery, the overthrow of the King in England in 1688-89 put an end to James and his colonial appointees. In 1691, following the succession of William and Mary, the islands were pre-emptorily separated from the Province of New York and finally, and more logically, incorporated into a newly unified government of Massachusetts.

Mayhew (and indeed New York) refused to recognize this annexation. Nonetheless, the Islanders ignored him and an opposition party immediately arose to run a slate for election to the General Court in Boston. The Mayhew "ring" naturally brought all its guns to bear to intimidate and threaten reprisals on those with the temerity to take advantage of this new state of affairs. But at the same time, seeing the handwriting on the wall, Matthew began to hedge his bets and after extended negotiations and concessions with the Massachusetts authorities and the local opposition leaders, bowed to the inevitable. But, in exchange, Mayhew & Co. were allowed to hang on to most of their offices.

From these positions of power, they continued to maneuver and manipulate, dodge and weave, in the struggle to hold and control. They attempted to rig elections, tried to create a "pocket borough" in Chilmark and pulled other schemes only too familiar to students of modern politics. By dint of the extensive inter-relationships in and with the Mayhew clan, they were able to continue their magisterial rule.

Matthew died in 1715, but sons and grandsons continued to hold the reins of power along with the influential and profitable offices. And so things drifted for succeeding decades. Passing years, surely, would have seen a natural erosion and attrition of this power, but Matthew's eldest

grandson, Micajah, was not content to let sleeping dogs lie. In the early 1730s, he made one last bold bid for the return of the good old days by asserting his inherited rights as 'Lord of the Manor' and proceeded to grant rights and to lease lands which were, by then, clearly owned by others with titles presumably confirmed by Massachusetts law.

His action put every title into litigation and the courts worked overtime and the lawyers reaped their due rewards as they cleared clouds from disputed titles. This nonsense continued for almost 20 years, until annoyance at this latest pretension finally reached the boiling point and, on April 3, 1751, the landowners of Tisbury met and declared their "independence" from this dynasty in a document whose language foreshadowed that of 1776. In essence, they told Micajah what he could do with his "Lordshipism" and "determined to Assert maintain uphold and Pursue the Settled order Rights & Priviledges to us belonging against all usurpers Pretenders underminers of the said settled order . . . [in] Covenant agree and Ingage to stand by and assist and uphold each other. . . ."

Thus on April 3, 1751, the Islanders declared their independence.

Micajah died eight years later, still unreconciled and unrepentant, still unrecognized, save by himself, as Lord of the Manor. His heirs did not pick up the torch nor pursue his magisterial claims.

But Islanders should not rest easy. By last count there were 18 male Mayhews listed in the telephone directory. On the surface, they all seem law-abiding and docile enough. But in the bleakness of Island winters, the blood thickens and moods oft turn sullen. Who knows but one of those descendants of the "Magisterial Mayhews," brooding in front of his fireplace, might not decide to rise up and assert those long-quiescent claims and demand his ancestral *droit de seigneur*!

Source: Charles E. Banks, *History of Martha's Vineyard*.

Books

City in the Woods

The Life and Design of an American Camp Meeting on Martha's Vineyard

By Ellen Weiss.

Oxford University Press, New York, 1987. Illustrated. 167 pp. \$22.50.

MUCH has been published about the Martha's Vineyard Campground, as the thorough bibliography included in this book makes clear. That 34-acre tract on a site chosen in 1835 by Jeremiah Pease has become well known to students of architecture, urban planning, and of course, Methodism. Its hundreds of cottages, enlivened by wood embroidery, are a favorite subject for photographers, serious and otherwise.

But now, with the publication of this fascinating work by Ellen Weiss, we have the definitive work on the subject. Members of the Society are familiar with the authority with which Ms Weiss writes. One of her first published works on the Campground, "The Iron Tabernacle at Wesleyan Grove," appeared in this journal eight years ago, in our August 1979 issue. So it is with much pleasure and admiration that we review this, her first book.

The work is filled with historical fact, derived as it was from her Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Illinois. But far from being pedantic, it is much enlivened by well-documented stories of the people, from Jeremiah Pease to

Ulysses S. Grant, who played a part, major and minor, in the life of this unusual piece of real estate.

Weiss, a stickler for fact, avoids many of the "cracker barrel" tales that are so often a part of such histories. Her notes are, in many cases, as interesting as her text.

There is a most informative chapter devoted to the design and construction of the typical cottage which, as members know, began to replace the original tents in the middle of the 1800s. This subject is the author's specialty and here we have an authoritative view that has been missing.

But *City in the Woods* does not limit itself to the Campground. It looks at the satellite town, Oak Bluffs, which grew up around the religious retreat, creating many problems (as well as many pleasures) for the Methodist flock. Weiss looks at the town's history as a series of incidents related to the boards and sticks of buildings, and in the case of the Campground and Oak Bluffs the connection is enlightening.

Her favorite architect, it seems, is the little-known Samuel Freeman Pratt (1824-1920), whose career in cottage design was cut short by his sewing-machine patent that made him rich enough to live in an elegant Newport "cottage" of his own. She has identified 12 of the 18 Pratt cottages that are still standing in Oak Bluffs. His flamboyant designs, she writes, "made a visual climax for Oak Bluffs which was more fashionable than the . . . solemn campground cottages." (For more about Pratt, see *Intelligencer*, May 1980.)

Her descriptions of the elegant and luxurious hotels and other public buildings erected after the Civil War, and unrivalled since, provide fascinating proof that those years, perhaps even more than today, truly were the Island's boom years. It was into this setting that President Grant and his entourage arrived in 1874 (see pp. 3-27).

Illustrating and supporting her descriptions are scores of photographs that date back to the late 1800s. Many

of these were printed, with great care and technical skill, by Edith Blake from the original glass plates in the Society Archives. For these alone, the book is worth having.

Weiss, a Society member and frequent researcher in our library, has given us a book that, perhaps for all time, will be considered the definitive volume on the Martha's Vineyard Campground and its seminal influence on this Island's future.

A.R.R.

Corrections

The following changes should be made in Florence Kern's article, "Customs Collectors at Edgartown: 1671-1789," published in the May 1987 issue:

Page 152, line 30. Delete "and supervising inspection of wrecks."

Page 155, line 29. 1787 should be 1780.

Page 157, line 5. "Thomas Jr." should be "Thomas Sr." or just "Thomas."

Page 165, line 11-12. The John Pease who rented the house could have been someone other than the Collector. There were several John Peases on the Vineyard at this time: a yeoman, a cordwainer, a mariner and the Collector.

We regret these editorial errors and omissions.

Documents

Boarding School Sketch Book

By Richard Luce Pease

Richard L. Pease, the author of this Sketch Book, as he named it, was born in 1814 in Edgartown, the son of Sheriff Isaiah D. Pease, who for 40 years held that County authority. Sheriff Pease was an early Methodist and a Camp Meeting pioneer. Son Richard, while a Methodist, did not seem to have the same zeal as his father or his uncle, Jeremiah Pease, whose diary we have also published.

This Sketch Book, actually a journal, covers three months in 1835 when the author attended the summer semester at Wilbraham Academy, south of Springfield, Mass.

His obituary (Vineyard Gazette, Sept. 16, 1888) states that he took charge of the Edgartown School at age 19. If so, he must have done this before going to Wilbraham, as he was 20 years old at the time of this writing. Perhaps there was some educational requirement he needed to continue in his Edgartown position. Returning home in August, he assumed the teaching position in Edgartown, keeping it for four years, when, for some reason, his contract was not renewed, causing him great unhappiness.

This is the second installment in the publication of this journal, which started with the previous issue.

June 1835

21st. Sunday. Still very cold; kept awake for lack of clothes last night. Attended church — in the forenoon Dr. Booth of Boston preached; in the afternoon Revd. C. H. True. Attended a Sunday noon class in Mr. Ransom's room. In the evening heard an Address on the "Use of Alcohol and Tobacco!" by Rev. Dr. Booth, an excellent address. There were quite a number of preachers present today: Rev. Messrs. D. Patten, C. H. True, R. Ransom, J. W. Hardy, M. Raymond, F. Merrick and Dr. Booth. Weather so very cold that several have worn surtouts and overcoats all day. In the evening, numbers came out wrapped in cloaks. 22nd. Monday. Wrote to M¹. . . Still cold. Feel rather downcast, being far from "home," and her I love. No intelligence from home for more than a week! When I think of the sudden changes often made in the fairest prospects — of the many, many who in youth have been called to taste the bitterness of hope disappointed, crushed, withered, I feel that, perhaps, while tracing these lines, my father, my mother, my sister, my brother, my aged grandsire — or she, dearer to me than all else, may be stretched on a bed of sickness, or — death! — or already have been conveyed to — to the church yard!! Oh! my God, prepare me for all that awaiteth me. Bless, oh! bless my friends! Preserve them in health and bring us together again in earth; and in Heaven, thy high and holy habitation, bring us all to praise thee evermore! Amen.²

¹Mary, his fiancée in Edgartown.

²Theatrical, RLP is.

23rd. *Tuesday*. Pleasanter. A rather singular circumstance transpired today. In the morning at prayer time, the principal observed that a man who was at Mr. Ransom's had lost his pocketbook in the village street. A boy arose and laid a wallet on the desk, saying he found it in the street. It was empty and dry. On going home, I saw the man. He had arrived in the stage the day before, stopped at Fuller's, got tea and beer, and lodged all night. On his arrival he came to Mr. Ransom's bringing a certificate from Mr. E. Iason (?) of Woodstock. On the following morning (*i.e.* today) he came in saying he had lost his wallet containing \$5.50 and several papers, among the rest a note for \$60. He seemed much affected — and burst into tears — said he was 100 miles from home and had lost his all; Mr. Ransom got up a subscription paper and circulated it among the students. I subscribed 50 cts. But some suspicions arising among the students as to his real character, I, with others, went to the tavern and inquired into the keeper's knowledge of him; he stated that he lodged there the night before for which he paid him 9 d., that he had not got supper for him nor beer. These assertions, together with the circumstances of the wallet's being dry — it having rained in the night — induced us to consider him an imposter. He got no money and went away in quite a rage.³

24th. *Wednesday*. Very pleasant. Afternoon declamation by the second division. Just before sunset visited the

grave of Rev. Edward Hyde, about a mile from home, ere I returned the shades of evening had fallen.

25th. *Thursday*. Morning pleasant; afternoon little rain. Sent a copy of the Western Methodist to I. D. Pease.⁴ Went to the Post Office on the arrival of the mail and found a letter from M. . . !! Just one fortnight since the receipt of her last! how long to be without news from "Home." Went to the Boarding House with Mr. E. A. Park and attended prayers in the hall. Came home, several students came in, and we had some music — instrumental and vocal.

26th. *Friday*. Pleasant. After recitations heard the sound of a hand organ — the player was the same that I saw at Edgartown a few weeks since. He entertained the students at the "Boarding House" some time — they, as usual, throwing him small change. After nine o'clock: scarcely a sound is heard save the ticking of the watch — and occasionally the mellow notes of the tenants of the neighboring ponds! The winds are hushed to sleep; darkness envelopes the earth. How beautiful the sign of innumerable fireflies flitting around — now seen — now lost — and again blazing forth — and again disappearing.⁵

27th. *Saturday*. Weather very much as it is before, an easterly storm on the Atlantic coast. Afternoon with Bro. Hawks, went up the mountain — picked some fine strawberries, thought that if Mary could share them with me and with me gaze on the enchanting scenery around, how sweet it would be!

⁴I. D. Pease is his father.

⁵RLP is also poetic.

But she is distant far. May God preserve her! Went to the Post Office, no letter from my father — a fortnight today since the receipt of the last. Went to Class meeting — gave Mr. Raymond my certificate.

28th. *Sunday*. Mr. Patten preached in Ludbury. Meant to have gone but the students had started, so I went to the Congregationalist Meeting. Mr. Underwood preached. Such singing I never heard in a Meeting House — about a dozen elderly men and half that number of females composed the choir. Ah! music hath charms to soothe a savage — to rend a rock — and split a cabbage!!⁶ Stopped a few moments at the Sabbath School. Afternoon, heard Mr. Ransom. Evening stormy. One month today since I left my "Home." 8 weeks longer to stay from those dear to me as Life itself.

29th. *Monday*. Students engaged in preparing for the 4th of July. Some wishing to have it celebrated by an oration and dinner; others wish no dinner. Some wish a student to deliver the address; others, a teacher. Mr. Hardy has offered to provide a supper for those who board with him, those who do not, with a few exceptions he says, may come by paying for their entertainment. The evening quite pleasant. Rain during the night.

30th. *Tuesday*. Very cold in the morning. Sent a copy of the "Hamden Whig!" to my uncle, Jeremiah Pease; and a copy of the "Springfield Gazette" to S. G. Vincent; sent a letter to Mary. For dinner we had green peas — first time this season. Afternoon declamation by the third division. In

⁶Sarcastic, as well.

the evening attended a prayer meeting in the other room. Bought oil (15 cts.).

July 1st. *Wednesday*. Attended declamation by the third division. After the declamation, a meeting for the purpose of considering the propriety of a "collation" on the 4th of July. The proposal was negatived. 2nd. *Thursday*. Morning sent a copy of the "Ladies Magazine" to M. W. Pease, together with little books from the "little dears." Went to the Post Office and found — a letter from my father and a letter from my Mary! How much valued are letters by *absentees*.

3rd. *Friday*. Wrote to Brother Rich; evening wrote to my Brother Silvanus. In the evening attended meetings for the purpose of appointing a reader of the Declaration of Independence; chose Mr. Levi P. Rowland!! Some being dissatisfied, another meeting was called and again by a majority was the nomination confirmed.⁷

July 4th. Was awaked at 4 o'clock by the ringing of bells — arose and dressed — took a walk. Not being able to obtain a horse and carriage, started on foot for Springfield — 10 miles! Was 2 h. 10 m. on the journey. Met Mr. Chapin and with him went to the banks of the River; waited awhile to see the Artillery company embark on board of a steam boat. At 11 o'clock went to Dr. Osgood's church to hear an address on Intemperance by the celebrated author of "My Mother's Gold Ring & other Tales," Lucius M. Sargeant. The light infantry were present — a very beautiful company of

⁷Does this suggest that RLP thought he should have been chosen? He didn't attend the July 4th event, as it turns out.

³Suspicious, too.

50 — 15 musicians. The singing was excellent. The Address very interesting. While there it rained. Somewhat in doubt about coming home; finally concluded to start about 6 o'clock as it had ceased raining. Got about 2 miles and it began to sprinkle, sprinkle and thunder. Thinks I to myself, this is a fine fix: what is best? to go on and run the chance of getting a drenching or to stop as some house on the road, nobody knows whose, for the night or to get a hack to bring me home. Concluded to stop at a house, as I saw a man at a door watching the weather and me. Asked if it were convenient for me to stay, as they had company, it was inconvenient. Inquired if he had a covered wagon — had a hack, asked him to tackle up his horse and carry me to Wilbraham. The horse was not to be caught so easily — meantime, it cleared up some, and I started for home. Sprinkled some, but did not rain. Arrived a little after 8 p.m.⁸

5th. Sunday. Morning pleasant. Mr. Pattern to preach in Ludlow. Concluded to go — distance about 4 miles. Visited a romantic place called Indians' Leap, about 80 feet above the bed of the river stands a jutting rock from this, in olden times, a company of 18 Indians leaped into the abyss and were dashed to pieces. Weather rather rainy on our return, but having our umbrellas we experienced but little inconvenience.

6th. Monday. Very cool; received a number of the "Family Minstrel" from Frederick P. Fellows.

⁸Distance covered, about 20 on foot.

7th. Warmer; thermometer at 83 degrees. Received a copy of the *New Bedford Mercury* from I. D. Pease. Wrote to I. D. Pease.

8th. Wednesday. Fair weather. Afternoon, I attended declamation by the 1st division. Bro. Jos. Williams called and took tea with me. He arrived from Boston 6th. instant.

9th. Thursday. Weather very good. This day I wrote to Mary. Mail arrived — went to the Office and found a letter from Edgartown, looked at the superscription and knew it not — broke it open and found it to be from My dear Mary. Evening I attended a "prayer meeting." at the "Boarding House."

11th. Saturday. Weather pleasant. Went with Bro. Gilmore to Enfield — distance 15 miles. Drove to the house of Mr. Levi Abby. Went with his son, L. Pease Abby to Bro. Hemsted's. Got some cherries. Attended a Class Meeting in the same house. A very pleasant meeting. Lodged at Mr. Abby's. Morning walked out about a mile. Took breakfast. Some difficulty in catching the horse. Finally started and arrived at the "Shaker Village" about 10 o'clock a.m. Went to meeting. The performances were very interesting, consisting chiefly of singing and marching. On the road, got some cherries, say 4 quarts. Arrived at home at 4 p.m. Even at Rev. J. A. Merrill's. On my return, my "chum" gave me a letter, I having requested him to inquire at the Office on the arrival of the mail. It was from my father.

Monday. Very warm. Thermometer at 90 degrees in the shade. Evening a

thundershower — lightning sharp and continuous, accompanied by long peals of thunder. Just returned from the "debate." Seated at my window, I can see the "quivering lightnings fly" and "hear the thunder roar."

Yet will I not shrink with fear
When the thunder crash I hear;

Soon the rainbow will appear
And the storm be o'er.
Never will I feel alarm,
God can shield me from all harm,
In the sunshine or the storm,
God will I adore.⁹

⁹This may be an RLP original.



Portrait of Capt. Ephraim Pease (1737-1789), a new accession (see p. 46).

News of the Society

From the Director:

OUR summer season began with a well-attended Sunday opening on June 14th. Much credit for its success goes to members of the Noepe Fibre Guild who demonstrated spinning and weaving and to Edgartown's Cub Scouts, Den 4, Pack 90, under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. George Strimel. The gift of the proceeds from their sale of lemonade and brownies made possible the purchase of a cassette player that is installed in the Carriage Shed so visitors can enjoy sea chanties.

Thomas Cooke House guides Hilda Gilluly, Pauline Berube and Andrew Thomas have returned for another summer and have been joined by Sandra Landers. This year, for the first time, we have had the very welcome help of volunteers both there and at the Gate House. Special thanks go to Mrs. Norman Bridwell, Mrs. Robert Cronk, Mrs. John Gibbons, Mrs. Mary Ellen Hill, Mrs. Wilfred Huntington, Mrs. Tanjy Konjolka, Mrs. June Packard and Mrs. Priscilla Summers, who have been guides and to Mrs. Elizabeth Bowring, Mrs. Robert Cullen, Mrs. Albion Hart, Mrs. Winston May, Jr., Mrs. Clyde Page, Mrs. William Sorensen, Mrs. Anne Verret-Speck and Mr. Arthur Young, who have staffed the Gate House.

Just too late for announcement in the May *Intelligencer*, Mrs. Esther Mills became our membership secretary-bookkeeper. Also, the Council elected

Catherine Mayhew as genealogist. Mrs. Mayhew, wife of Council member Donald Mayhew, brings a great deal of experience in her field, as well as a name with the lengthiest of Vineyard associations.

We have established a new position of curator and it has been filled by Gail Tipton. Miss Tipton, who spent her early summers living in the house next door to the Society, has worked in museums and in education. Her first assignment this summer has been to coordinate our guide program and to organize a much-needed source book of information about the Cooke House exhibition material.

Another important addition, almost a new staff member, is the Society's computer. Its first uses will be for maintaining our membership rolls and financial records.

Among new accessions is an oil portrait of Edgartown Captain Ephraim Pease (1737-1789). It hangs in the Cooke House near the mahogany highboy that was made for Hannah Harper, who later became Mrs. Ephraim Pease. Also on display are two early chairs that have just been restored by the Furniture Conservation Department of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

The summer exhibition in the Foster Museum is of early 16th to 18th Century maps that include Martha's Vineyard, although on some it is identified by such names as Texel, Capawok and Martin's Vineyard.

An important announcement about our future plans is scheduled to be made at the Annual Meeting. We look forward to seeing members and their guests under the tent on the Society grounds, Monday, August 17, at five o'clock.

MARIAN R. HALPERIN

From the Librarian:

MOST of the library hours of opening are spent responding to patron requests. Delivered in person or by phone or letter, the questions range wide. Where correspondence is involved, the answer varies from a sentence or two to several pages of book and document citations. Even after several years' experience in consulting the archives, staff are sometimes surprised at the breadth and depth of our written and printed records of Island history. And sometimes, alas, the search is in vain.

No collection could answer every reference challenge. A researcher brought in an advertisement by a Boston antiques shop for a painting of the clipper bark *Nellie Chapin*. "Martha's Vineyard to Palestine," went the ad. A phone call to Boston was unrewarding: the picture had been sold, and the dealer was volunteering no information. What was the Vineyard connection?

Following several other leads, inquiries made at the Maine Historical Society led to a publisher in Independence, Missouri, and finally to Reed M. Holmes, author of *The Forerunners*, the story of an ill-fated "colony" of 157 down-East Americans

who left Jonesport, Maine, in August, 1866, led by a prophet—or charlatan—named G. J. Adams. Holmes has made the voyage of the *Nellie Chapin* and the subsequent adventures of the Jaffa colony the subject of exhaustive study. The claim of a Vineyard tie was news to him. Conceivably, some of the Maine travelers could have descended from Vineyard emigrants in an earlier generation, but this would scarcely classify them as "ex-Vineyarders," as the advertisement claimed. (Dorothy Cottle Poole's *A New Vineyard*, published by DCHS, follows the Maine Vineyarders down to the 20th century with no references to the Holy Land at all.) And so the search has been abandoned for the time being. Perhaps time, or a reader, will yield a clue.

In the meantime, the Maine connection remains unexplained—like the phenomenon of Patience Worth, subject of another recent question. Ms. Worth was a 17th-century poetess "in the vicinity of Martha's Vineyard," who for some years before and after World War I communicated by ouija board with a modern scribe. But that's another story.

On a positive note, the library receives over 50 periodicals—journals and newsletters—by exchange or by subscription. Lack of space prevents a complete display. They remain another unexplored resource. Members and friends are invited to browse.

ALVIN J. GOLDWYN

Bits & Pieces

PRESIDENT GRANT'S visit to Oak Bluffs had interesting sidelights. Here are a few we stumbled upon during our research.

• He arrived late Thursday afternoon, had dinner at the Central House, was then taken by carriage around the Campground and burgeoning Oak Bluffs. About midnight, he and Julia went to their cottage and prepared for bed. It had been a long day. In the morning, they were to leave to tour the Cape and Nantucket. No doubt, they were ready for bed when some singers, led by a Mrs. Osborn of Brooklyn, arrived and serenaded the Presidential couple.

The singers thought that some music would relax the President. But it may have done just the opposite.

Grant was tone deaf and to him music was noise. He is quoted as having said he knew only two tunes: "One of them is 'Yankee Doodle' and the other one isn't."

Music was so discordant to him that his mother, a devout Methodist, did not take him to meetings because "the tent sings and the Sunday hymns were a riotous cacaphony to his ears, producing in the boy a nervous revulsion."

The President's eloquence (p. 16) may have come from his gratitude that the music had ended.

Mrs. Grant liked music and loved to dance. Grant never learned. "He said

he could dance pretty well if it wasn't for the music."

• It is not clear how close Reverend Tiffany was to the Grants. The 1874 news stories called him the President's pastor. If so, he hadn't been for very long. He did perform the ceremony at the White House wedding of the Grants' daughter, Nellie, a few months before. It was an Episcopal ceremony, in deference to the groom, a member of British royalty. Tiffany was a Methodist minister, of course.

It was Reverend Tiffany, the press said, who had invited Grant to the Camp Meeting. But the President's long-time pastor, according to biographers, was Rev. John Philip Newman, an unctuous and intrusive man whom they did not treat very kindly. He was, they wrote, always hovering over the President during his final illness.

After Grant's death, Tiffany wrote that the President "entered into peace with God at Martha's Vineyard." If he did, the Reverend Newman didn't sense it. He, who "was always called 'Grant's pastor' . . . confessed in his diary that Grant represented his singular failure to bring a soul to Christ."

Newman, during Grant's dying days, tried to get him to take communion. The President refused, stating: "... no worse sin can be committed than to take it unworthily. I would prefer therefore not to take it. . ."

Grant, that remark would indicate, took religion very seriously, more seriously, perhaps, than even his pastor. A.R.R.

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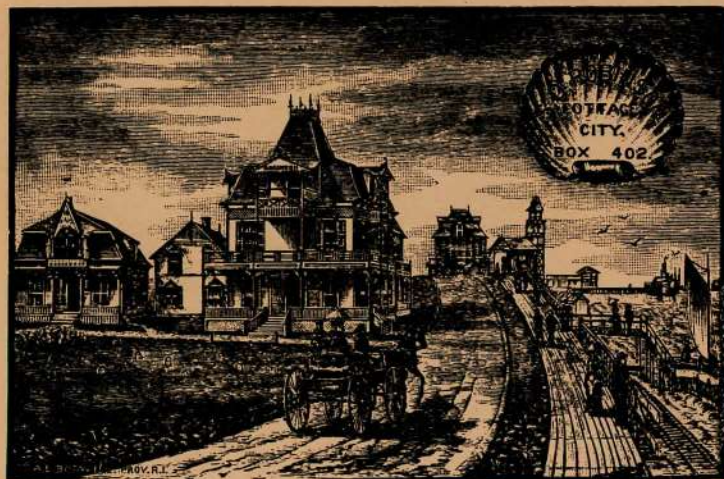
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