

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



THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 29, NO. 2

NOVEMBER 1987

The Making of a Summer Resort



Mason-Lawton cottage, built 1859.

Camp Meeting
of 1872
As Seen by Artists

Edgartown
in the 90s:
The
"Proper" Resort

Customs Collectors
1789 - 1809

by FLORENCE KERN

Boarding School Sketch Book

by RICHARD LUCE PEASE

Letter from the President
News of the Society Bits & Pieces

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10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
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Contributors to the 1987 Preservation Fund (Continued)

In addition to those listed in our August issue, the following members have contributed to the 1987 Preservation Fund:

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J. Gregory Gavin	Rosalie H. Powell
Joseph Mattison	A. Donald Smith
Jessie McChesney	Danielle Wettje

In memory of Doris C. Stoddard:
Elizabeth Germershausen

In memory of Stan Lair:
From the family of Thomas Williamson

Our thanks to the above and, once again, to those named in the August issue for their help with our preservation work.

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Editor: Arthur R. Railton
Editor Emeritus: Gale Huntington

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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 by membership dues, contributions and bequests, which are tax deductible. Its annual meeting is held in August in Edgartown.

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

Acquired by the Society in 1935, the Thomas Cooke House, circa 1765, is a museum of Island history. Guided tours of its twelve rooms are conducted during summer. A nominal fee is charged to non-members.

The Francis Foster Museum and Huntington Library are open to the public year round. The Museum has an exhibition of the Vineyard's maritime heritage. The Library is open to researchers and contains logs, journals, genealogies and other Island documents, plus many volumes of history.

Also open all year are the Gay Head Lighthouse exhibit with its 1854 Fresnel lens and the Carriage Shed containing various old boats and wagons, including an 1854 hand pumper fire engine.



Customs Collectors at Edgartown

Part Two: 1789 - 1809

by FLORENCE KERN

Customs Collector John Pease (1789-1809)

A YELLOWED scrap of paper recently discovered by Alvin Goldwyn, Archivist at the Dukes County Historical Society, appears to be the only document still extant from Squire John Pease's 20 years of service as the first Federal Collector of Customs for the District of Edgartown. It is a brief memo that Collector Pease gave to Captain Nathaniel Backus on April 24, 1790. Now framed and on display in the Customs Room of the Thomas Cooke House, it reads:

Port of Edgartown Commonwealth of Massachusetts
This certifies that Nathaniel Backus, Master of the Sloop
Ranger of Falmouth, has permission to take on bord (sic)
of said Schooner twenty-four bushels salt and proceed to
Falmouth aforesaid
April 24, 1790

John Pease
Collector

One wonders why Squire Pease called the *Ranger* both a sloop and a schooner; why Backus came all the way to Edgartown for salt when there were salt works near Falmouth; and why, anyway, he needed a certificate inasmuch as Falmouth was then part of the District of Edgartown. The certificate cost Backus 20 cents.

That document came to the Society as a gift from Miss Cora Knowlton of Edgartown in 1933, but how this single

FLORENCE KERN, who spends her summers on Chappaquiddick (with many hours in our library), became entangled in the history of customs collectors while researching the beginnings of the United States Revenue Service, a subject on which she is an authority. She spends the winters in Bethesda, Maryland, a short trip from the National Archives and the Library of Congress, where much of her research is done.

scrap of Customhouse history survived through the years is unknown. Clearly, it went back to Falmouth with Backus, but subsequently returned to Edgartown. The Squire's other official papers — and they must have been numerous during that period in America's history — were probably lost when the basement of the Boston Customhouse, where they were stored, was flooded many years later. The customs records had been shipped there in 1913 when Edgartown ceased to be a port of entry. Some of the documents were recovered after the flood by an antique collector who sold them to two of Edgartown's patron saints, the late Elmer Bliss and Wilson G. Crosby, who gave them to the Society. However, none of those documents goes back to the John Pease era.

We don't know the exact date when John Pease began to serve as Federal Collector, but it must have been soon after United States Customs was established by Congress July 31, 1789, and Edgartown was made a port of entry. His name was the 11th on a list of 62 collectors nominated by the President, to be "advised and consented" by the Senate, which was printed in the *Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser* at Philadelphia on August 8, 1789. As the Backus document shows, Pease was acting in that capacity in April of the following year. However, he was not formally commissioned as Collector until March 21, 1791, when President George Washington "nominated, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate," named "John Peas (sic) of Massachusetts. . . Collector for the District of Edgartown." The commission bore the signatures of both Washington and Thomas Jefferson, then Secretary of State. It seems to have taken more than a year for the nomination and consent procedure to be completed and the commission signed. After all, the government was setting up a totally new organization, with hundreds of appointments to be made "by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate." It was a major project, perhaps the biggest the Federal government had undertaken up to that date.

As the Edgartown District's first Federal Collector, Pease was responsible for the enforcement of Customs regulations in Martha's Vineyard, No Man's Land, the Elizabeth Islands and Falmouth.¹ The new Collector was bonded for \$2000, and was obliged by law to reside in Edgartown and to establish an office "convenient for the trade of the district."

Edgartown's relative standing as a port of entry can be gauged by the amount for which the Collector was bonded. His \$2000 bond was less than half that of the Nantucket Collector's \$5000 and far less than Boston's \$40,000, New York's \$50,000 and Philadelphia's \$60,000. The Vineyard's whaling fleet was much smaller than Nantucket's and, as for merchant vessels, they preferred going to a mainland port, such as New Bedford, rather than to unload on the Island. The number of Edgartown whalers did increase slowly during Pease's term of office, but it was not until after the War of 1812 that the port began to flourish with its whaling business. It was never, of course, as important a port as either Nantucket or New Bedford.²

Where Collector Pease maintained his office is not known. It could have been in one of the properties he shared with Squire Thomas Cooke, or in the house he rented in 1787 from Dr. James Tupper of Pownalboro, Mass. This was a new house for which he paid a yearly rent of eight pounds, five shillings, with the understanding that he would keep the fence and windows of the house in good repair, pay the taxes, and not touch the land around the house. Where it was located in Edgartown is not stated in the deed. At the time he first rented the house, Pease was the father of eight children and Naval officer for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a position in which he was an assistant to the Customs Collector. It must have been a large house (in the deed, it was called "a messuage or tenement") and it

¹ A few years later, Falmouth was transferred to the Barnstable Customs District.

² It was not until 1864 that Edgartown unloaded more oil than Nantucket and then the difference was insignificant: both ports unloaded only one vessel that year (New Bedford unloaded 77). The business had been greatly reduced by the Civil War.

may have become his permanent home. If so, it very likely served as the Customs House from 1789 until 1809.

Some Vineyard historians believe that the Thomas Cooke House served as the Customs House from 1779 until 1830; others, that it was the Customs House from 1799 until 1830, and that Thomas Cooke, Sr., was Collector of Customs from 1799 until 1809. Two rooms on the second floor of the Cooke House, on the east side, have long been identified with Customs and are today furnished as the Collector's offices, which they surely were from 1809 to 1830, when Thomas Cooke, Jr., was Collector. What is not so certain is where the office was when John Pease was Collector from 1789 until 1809.³

Lifelong Friends

John Pease, Jr., and Thomas Cooke, Sr., had worked together on the Edgartown waterfront and were lifelong friends and business associates. Pease, born in 1731, was the second son of Edgartown mariner, John Pease, and Hepsibah Ripley; Cooke, born eight years later, was the fifth child of Temple Philip Cooke, mariner, scholar, school teacher and attorney, and Jane Daggett. Before the American Revolution, both owned shares in whaling vessels: Pease in the sloop *Hannah*; Cooke in the ship *Spermaceti*, the last whaler to leave Edgartown before the war.⁴ That voyage was not a successful one as she was captured by the British in December 1776. Both were known as "gentlemen" and "merchants," both men had worked for British customs as surveyors and gaugers. That they may have become business partners is suggested by their joint purchase, in 1773, of several Vineyard properties, including John Norton's large house on what is now Main Street, and "a certain part of a dwelling house situated in Edgartown near the harbor,

³ The house, no doubt, had earlier served as Customs House from 1784 to 1787 when, as we shall see, Thomas Cooke, Sr., was Collector, but that was a Commonwealth office, the Federal Custom service not yet having been created.

⁴ The master of the vessel was John Pease, father of Cooke's friend, John Pease, Jr., who strangely did not buy shares in his father's vessel.

viz., the front chamber & bedroom chamber with the stairway to & from them."

Both men played a role in the effort to win freedom from the British. Cooke, who had served in the Massachusetts General Court for two terms before the Revolution, was also a representative there in 1776 when efforts were being taken to create a Sea Coast Defense organization. He was also the only Edgartown delegate at the first Provincial Congress held in Concord, Massachusetts, October 12, 1774. Pease was a member of the Edgartown Militia, serving on the "Alarm List." Both suffered financially in Grey's Raid on the Island in 1778 and put in claims for damages: Cooke for loss of clothing, 2000 feet of lumber, naval stores and 14 sheep; Pease for one cow and 14 sheep. When the Revolution ended, both were appointed to positions in the customs service which was operated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from 1783 until 1789.

Pease was named Naval Officer in Edgartown for the Commonwealth, in line with the British tradition of appointing an officer to assist and to report on the activities of the civilian Collector of Customs. He held that position until 1789. For the first few years, he reported to the Collector of the District who, at that time, lived at Nantucket. In 1784, Thomas Cooke, Sr., was named Collector at Edgartown and Pease served under him. Cooke was ousted from the office in 1786 by Matthew Mayhew.

Both Pease and Cooke held other important positions. They were selectmen, and served on Edgartown's school committee and health board. Cooke was also Justice of the Peace, Registrar of Probate and Representative to the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as mentioned earlier. Both were highly qualified for the position of Federal Collector when the United States Customs Service was inaugurated in 1789. It seems likely that Cooke may have declined the honor inasmuch as he would have had to give up his lucrative merchant trade to become a

Federal officer and, in addition, he was holding several other important government posts. So, perhaps John Pease was given the commission in his stead. Pease began work in 1789, but it was not, as we have seen, until March 21, 1791, that the President and Secretary of State had time to sign, and send out, the handsome document commissioning him as Collector for the District of Edgartown. Surely, the original Peas (for that is the way it was made out) commission is hanging on some living room wall today, or, perhaps, preserved in some genealogical collection. If so, the Society would be pleased to hear of it. A copy of the commission, signed by the secretary to President Washington and Secretary of State Jefferson, is carefully preserved at the National Archives in Washington.

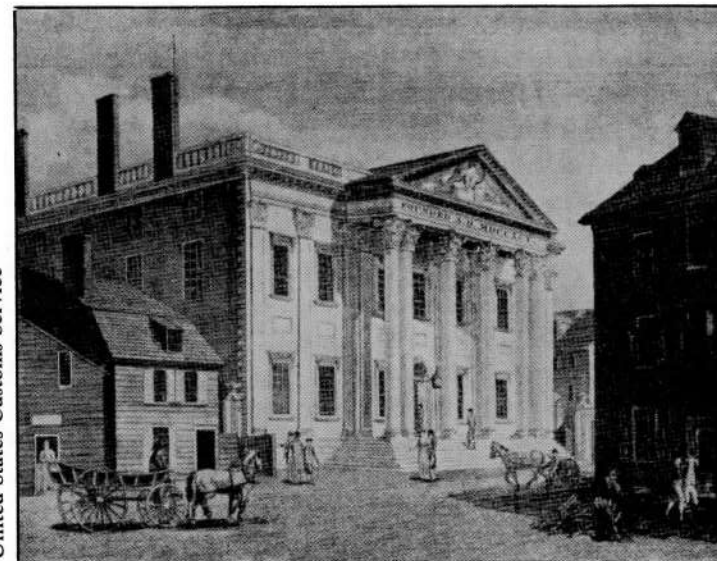
Ports of Entry

At the time Pease was made Collector, there were 59 ports of entry in the United States, 20 of them being in Massachusetts. Edgartown was also a port of delivery for vessels "wholly belonging to the citizens of Edgartown" unless they were carrying goods from the Cape of Good Hope or beyond. In that case, and in the case of all vessels not owned by Edgartown citizens, masters of incoming vessels were obliged to leave copies of their manifests with the Edgartown Collector and to proceed to the nearest port of delivery with their hatches sealed. In some cases, Collector Pease would put a Customs man aboard the vessel to accompany it to the port of delivery in order to make certain that cargo was not smuggled ashore en route.

The purpose of Federal customs was not, as today, to protect domestic industry or agriculture, but for revenue. Despite frequent changes in the details of the customs laws in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the aims of the service was always as follows:

1. To assess and collect customs duties on imported merchandise;
2. To prevent fraud and smuggling;

United States Customs Service



The First Bank of the United States, in New York City, was where customs receipts were deposited from 1791-1811.

3. To control carriers, persons and articles entering and departing the United States.

The first of these aims, at least, was carried out very successfully. Within one year after the establishment of the service, two million dollars had been collected. By 1800, customs had raised enough to pay off all the Revolutionary War debts, to start the United States Navy, and to finance the Lewis and Clark expedition. In 1801, revenues provided the million-dollar ransom paid to the Barbary pirates for the release of the American hostages and, in the following year, to finance the purchase of Florida and the Louisiana Territory. Until the beginning of the 20th Century, the Customs Service was almost the only source of income the Federal government had.

In ports larger than Edgartown, deputies and/or surveyors were appointed to assist the Collector, but here Pease was allowed only to hire men, when necessary, on a pro tem basis, for no more than \$1.66 a day. As the sole officer in

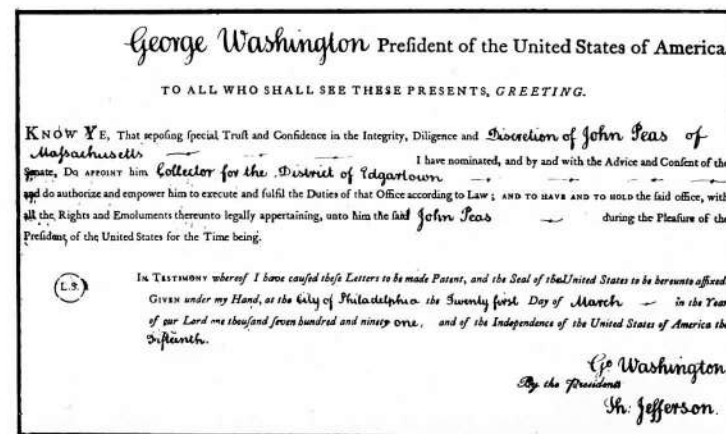
the entire district, he was "the supreme power." No one could challenge his decisions. Each vessel was required, on entering the harbor, to present two copies of its manifest to the Collector, one to be kept by him and the other to be forwarded to its planned port of delivery. These papers had to be delivered to the Collector within 48 hours of the vessel's arrival. "No goods, wares or merchandise" could be "unladen or delivered but in open day" and not until after all duties and fees had been paid, either in gold or silver.

Typical duties in the 1790s were 10 cents on a gallon of Jamaica spirits, 18 cents on a gallon of madeira wine, and from seven to ten cents on a pair of shoes. On beer, the tax was five cents a gallon and on molasses, two and a half cents a gallon. The tariff on coffee was two and a half cents a pound.

A ten percent discount was given on all goods imported aboard American-built vessels or on vessels built abroad and wholly owned by American citizens (this was as close as the law came to protectionism). To encourage the fisheries, there was a bounty of five cents paid on every quintal of dried, pickled or salted fish.

In addition to the duties, vessels were charged a fee for entering and clearing the harbor: \$2.50 if over 100 tons; \$1.50 if under. There was also a tonnage tax of six cents a ton for vessels belonging to American citizens, fifty cents a ton for those belonging to foreigners, unless they were built in America, in which case it was only thirty cents. American vessels in the coastwise trade paid no tonnage tax, but foreigners paid the fifty cents a ton.

Any master who unloaded his vessel at night was fined \$400, his goods were forfeited and his vessel seized if the cargo was worth more than \$400. Masters making a false entry could be charged as much as \$2000 per offense. If a captain resisted a Customs officer, he could be fined \$400. All fines and forfeits were divided between the United States Treasury and the local Collector, with ample allowances paid to all informers.



This commission, March 21, 1791, named John Peas Collector

Pease's salary was meager, but his actual income was relatively high thanks to his share of the fines and forfeits and certain fees which he kept entirely, such as fees for re-entering and clearing, permits to land goods, bills of health and permits to export goods, such as the one he gave Captian Backus on the salt transaction in 1790. He sometimes hired Squire Cooke's sons, John and William, to assist him. A third Cooke son, Thomas, Jr., who was to succeed him as Collector in 1809, was then away at sea.

While most Vineyard historians believe that Thomas Cooke, Sr., became Federal Collector in 1799, and/or served jointly with Pease until 1809, that seems not to have been true. A list of Collectors made in 1896 by then-Deputy Collector John W. Pease does not show that to have been the case. Also a recent study of the records at the National Archives by William F. Sherman of the Judicial, Fiscal and Society Branch of the Civil Archives Division does not show that to be a fact. Mr. Sherman writes:

I have checked records of the General Accounting Office (Record Group 217) and find no evidence that Thomas Cooke, Sr., was a customs officer at Edgartown. The appointment letter addressed to Thomas Cooke, Jr., was dated March 28, 1809, and the letter dismissing John Peas (sic) was also dated March 28, 1809. I did not find any

references to Thomas Cooke, Sr., in either the customs or miscellaneous correspondence of the First Comptroller.⁵

Squire Cooke may have assisted Pease in some uncommissioned capacity. Recently, Mike Ingrisano, dedicated Director of Information at the United States Customs Service in Washington, located an undated copy of "Annals of Edgartown," in which Squire Thomas Cooke is listed as "U. S. Gov't. Service, Customs Service." More research needs to be done to clarify this matter.

By 1809, when Pease was dismissed as Collector, he was 78 years old. He and Cooke, Sr., continued to be good friends and to take important roles in town affairs. The Thomas Cooke House was a center of local activity, although Cooke had, because of financial difficulties in 1793, been forced to sell the old homestead. Sued by the Commonwealth for debts owed to Andrew and Hermann Brimmer of Boston, he lost almost all his holdings, including his old homestead, his church pew and the new home he had built on an adjacent lot. He and his son, Thomas, Jr., were apparently able to rent the old homestead from the new owner and he continued to live there with his son's family until his death in 1821, at age 82, of "languishment." Thomas Cooke, Jr., was able to redeem the homestead in 1798.

Having once had a considerable fortune, Squire Cooke was relatively poor when he died. He left only one wood lot, half a windmill, some furniture, including 37 chairs, 5 looking glasses, and one cow. "All my books of all Kinds only accepting my Large Bible" went to his son, Thomas, Jr. He left \$5 each to daughters and grandsons and the rest of his estate "to my beloved wife, Abigail."

John Pease had died eight years before his friend, in 1813, during the War of 1812. During his 20 years as Collector, he had seen the population of Edgartown shrink from 1356 white males in 1790 to 1226 white males. By 1809, when he left the job, the total had once again returned to the

⁵ Letter to author, dated July 29, 1987.

The Pennsylvania Packet, and Daily Advertiser.

[Price Four-Pence.]

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 1789.

[No. 3282]

Philadelphia, August 7.

Congress of the United States,
Begun and held at the City of *New-York*, on
Wednesday the fourth of March, one thou-
sand seven hundred and eighty-nine.

An ACT to regulate the COLLECTION of
the DUTIES imposed by Law on the TONNAGE
of SHIPS or VESSELS, and on GOODS, WARES,
and MERCHANDIZES, imported into the United
States.

BE it enacted by the Senate and House of Re-
presentatives of the United States of Ame-
rica in Congress assembled, That for the due
collection of the duties imposed by law, on the
tonnage of ships and vessels, and on goods,
wares, and merchandizes imported into the U-
nited States, there shall be established and ap-
pointed, districts, ports, and officers, in manner
following, to wit:

In the state of MASSACHUSETTS shall
be twenty districts and ports of entry, to wit:
Newbury-port, *Gloucester*, *Salem*, and *Beverly*
as one port; *Marblehead*, *Boston*, and *Charle-*
stown as one port; *Plymouth*, *Barnstable*, *Nan-*
tucket, *Edgartown*, *New-Bedford*, *Dighton*,
York, *Biddeford*, and *Pepperelborough* as one
port; *Portland* and *Falmouth* as one port;
Bath, *Wiscasset*, *Penobscot*, *Frenchman's-Bay*,
Machias, and *Passamaquoddy*. To the district
of *Newbury-port* shall be annexed the several

side at *Barnstable*. In the district of *Nantucket*,
the port of *Sherbourne* shall be the sole port of
entry and delivery within the same; and a col-
lector shall be appointed, to reside at *Sher-*
bourne. To the district of *Edgartown* shall be
annexed the town of *Falmouth*, as a port of de-
livery only; and a collector shall be appointed,
to reside at *Edgartown*. To the district of
New-Bedford shall be annexed *West-Port*, *Ro-*
chester, and *Wareham*, as ports of delivery on-
ly; and a collector for the district shall be ap-
pointed, to reside at *New-Bedford*. To the

NEW-YORK, August 4.

The PRESIDENT of the United States was pleas-
ed yesterday to make the following nomination of
REVENUE OFFICERS; and the said nomination
having been taken into consideration by the Senate
they advised and consented to the same.

For the state of MASSACHUSETTS.

Newbury-Port.

Stephen Crofs, Collector—Jonathan Titcomb, Na-
val-Officer—Michael Hodge, Surveyor.

Gloucester.

Epes Sargent, Collector—Samuel Whitmore, Sur-
veyor.

Salem and Beverly.

Joseph Hiller, Collector—William Pickman, Na-
val-Officer—Bartholomew Putnam, Surveyor.

Beverly.

Josiah Bachelor, Surveyor.

Ipswich.

Jeremiah Staneford, Surveyor.

Marblehead.

Richard Harris, Collector.

Boston and Charlestown.

Benjamin Lincoln, Collector—James Lovell, Na-
val-Officer—Thomas Melville, Surveyor.

Plymouth.

William Watfon, Collector.

Barnstable.

Joseph Otis, Collector.

Nantucket and Sherbourne.

Stephen Hufley, Collector.

Edgartown.

John Peas, Collector.

New-Bedford.

Edward Pope, Collector.

Dighton.

Hodijah Bailes, Collector.

York.

Richard Trivott, Collector.

Biddeford and Pepperelborough.

Jeremiah Hill, Collector.

Portland.

N. F. Fouldick, Collector—James Lunt, Surveyor.

Bath.

William Webb, Collector.

Wiscasset.

Francis Cook, Collector.

Penobscot.

John Lee, Collector.

Frenchman's-Bay.

Melania Jordan, Collector.

Philadelphia newspaper setting up the
Customs Service and naming Edgartown
as a port of entry with Pease as collector.

1790 figure. He still had no regular deputies to assist him, even at the busy port of Holmes Hole. However, the wages he could pay his pro tem assistants did rise from \$1.66 to \$2. a day. He had a small revenue boat, possibly a sloop, to patrol around Edgartown and he may have had another at Holmes Hole. The United States Revenue Cutters, *Vigilant* of New York and *Massachusetts* of Massachusetts, seldom visited his district.

New Jobs for Customs

In those first twenty years of the Customs service, the responsibilities of the various Collectors mounted. They now dealt with quarantine problems and with marine hospitals (or their equivalent) in their districts. Although the Lighthouse Service and the Life-Saving Service were separate institutions from the Customs service, the Collectors were expected to assist both since their work was related to marine activities. Pease collected hospital taxes from each mariner who came into Edgartown, and took care of those who were sick or injured. In the absence, at that time, of a marine hospital on the Island, he boarded patients in private homes and supplied the services of a local physician.

He was responsible for maintaining aids to navigation in the district and for supplying oil to some of the lighthouses. It was during his term of office that the government bought four acres of land on the easternmost tip of Cape Poge and built an octagonal pyramid 35 feet high to hold a lantern four and one-half feet in diameter inside which was a fixed light. A keeper's dwelling was built to seaward of the lighthouse. Collector Pease worked with the lighthouse establishment to keep this light and the light at Gay Head in order. The Gay Head light had been erected in 1799, two years before the one at Cape Poge.

During Pease's entire term of office, French and British ambitions plagued the shipping along the Atlantic coast, bringing armed vessels close to Vineyard shores and resulting in the Quasi War with France in 1798 and President

Jefferson's Embargo of 1807. This embargo kept Vineyard vessels in port, much to the distress of Vineyard ship owners and merchants, and was a major problem for the Collector during the last two years of his term. When he was dismissed in 1809, the War of 1812 was in the offing.

(To be continued)

1988 Membership Dues

Early in January, we will be mailing our annual requests for renewal of memberships and for contributions to the 1988 Preservation Fund. We hope that you will renew as soon as possible so as to make it unnecessary for us to send out a second (and, sometimes, a third) reminder.

We also urge you to consider a contribution to the Preservation Fund. It is that fund which enables us to do many of the things that are essential for the preserving of our artifacts and documents. Such work is extremely painstaking and requires great care, making it very expensive. But the results are most gratifying because we know that by having it done we are assuring longer life for those valuable items entrusted to our care.

Now, after that rather mercenary request for financial support, we extend to all members our best wishes for a happy holiday season and a healthy and bountiful new year. Come to our Open House, December 11 and 12, and we will happily extend our wishes in person.

Camp Meeting of 1872

The magazine from which this article is excerpted was among the papers given to the Society by the estate of Henry Beetle Hough, distinguished editor of the Vineyard Gazette and long-time member of the Society.

BILLED as "A monthly Family Journal, devoted to Art Matters, and the Household," "Ours" Illustrated was published in Providence, R.I., by Webb Brothers & Co. Its August 1872 issue was entitled "Camp-Meeting Number" and the camp meeting it describes is on Martha's Vineyard.

A team of artists (at least two, it seems) was sent over to illustrate the article. We are reproducing the sketches with relevant excerpts from the article.

First, a few quotations from the article to set the scene (remember, this was 115 years ago, in 1872):

"This now famous place has become, not merely the gathering place of the Methodists for their annual camp-meeting, but a fashionable resort, and lots are sold at prices which seem astonishingly high to the old-fashioned people, who consider only, or mainly, the intrinsic value of the soil.

"But when the location, the improvements, and facilities for intercourse with the world are taken into account, it is not, perhaps, strange that the denizens of the city should be willing to pay the price they do for a standing place in this region of health and beauty. . . . From a place where originally all that was to be gained by

a visit was the mere quiet and seclusion, this place has grown to be an ornamental watering place, affording all the luxuries of the town, with the strengthening influences of the sea and country. Immense sums have been spent, not only in the erection of elegant cottages, but in walks and roads, and in the means of communication. The views we give of some embellishments will afford an idea of the place as it now is, although nothing but a visit will impart a correct notion of the attractions and salubrity of this most favored spot. . . nothing can surpass it.

"As the steamer approaches the capacious wharf, the eye rests upon the entrance to Oak Bluffs, which gives an attractive welcome to the seeker after repose and recreation. . . . It will be noticed that a large space is left open, a large part of which is dedicated to public uses as a park [today's Ocean Park]. The cottages already built are upon this park, and when the contemplated improvements are completed, it will be a very elegant place.

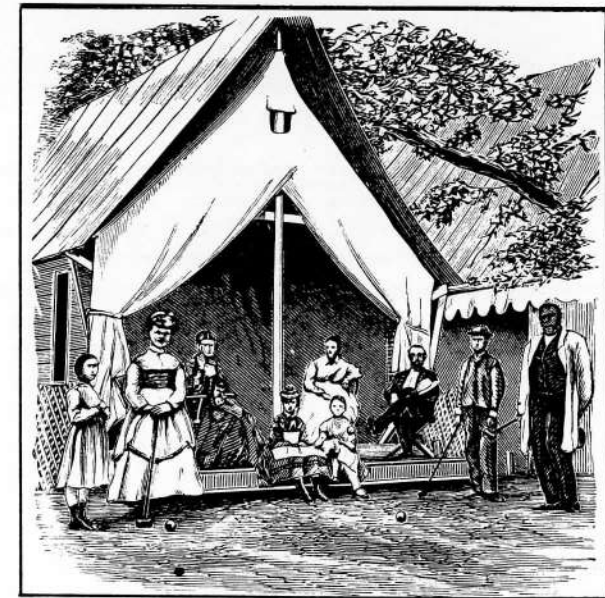
". . . instead of the fervent emotion, and the mistaken, but sincere enthusiasm of the earlier days, it would seem as if the grounds of the modern

camp-meeting, at Martha's Vineyard, were to be rather a fashionable resort, than a quiet and secluded retreat from the fashions and follies of the world. In a country where the population was sparse, where many had only occasionally an opportunity to hear the gospel preached, the idea of an annual congregation, without ceremony and without expense, where the social and religious element could each be cultivated, was a natural and a proper one. . . . There is a force in numbers, there is a contagion of spirit, there is an exaltation in communion, which, when limited to a proper degree, exceeds in value any merely personal

experience. If on earth there is anywhere a foretaste of heaven, it is in prayer and conference meeting of sincere believers. Nor need we either pity or condemn the condition of those who, through the abnormal manifestations experienced or witnessed, were lifted above and out of the ordinary range of thought and feeling, and carried into the realms of imagination, and for the time being, at least, into the kingdom of heaven. If a rude, it was at any rate an honest, religious faith."

Now, the illustrations and accompanying comments.

A FAMILY TENT.



THE family tent is comfortable, unpretending, and yields, save in the severest weather, every advantage

required by these sojourners of a week or a month by the "many sounding sea" in the month of August.



TENT LIFE AT THE VINEYARD.

THIS reminds one of some experiences in the late war. It is exciting to wake up in the middle of the night, and find one's self in a pool of water, with a moderate stream running under and over one's couch of luxurious straw. When, however, the weather is warm, and especially if there is a log

fire within reach, it is not a very great annoyance. For the robust, such experience is, well enough, as a break in the monotony of life; but the feeble, the careless, and the children had better stay at home, or provide themselves with a tent with at least a floor.



CENTRAL HOUSE.

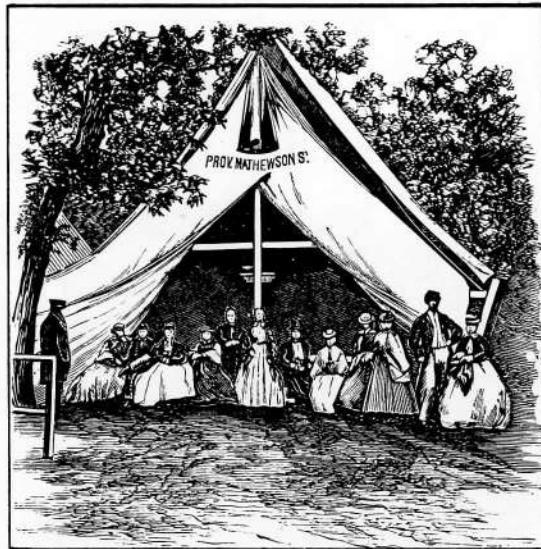
BY SAILING-VESSEL TO
MARTHA'S VINEYARD -- SEA SICK.

WHEW! Here is the other side of the picture, the veritable antithesis of the yacht. Here is a lumbering craft, with a motley collection of passengers, foul weather, sea-sickness, and discomfort.

If there is anything which will take even out of a Methodist minister all fervor, it is that nausea which attacks the person unaccustomed to the sea, when old Boreas is cutting up his antics. This mortal frame may be of little consequence in a broad and religious sense, but it has wonderful power of good and ill just now. When the stomach is turning a hundred

somersaults an hour, all the philosophy of Bacon, all the poetry of Tennyson, all the beauty of all the houries of the Vineyard during camp-meeting time, appeal in vain for recognition.

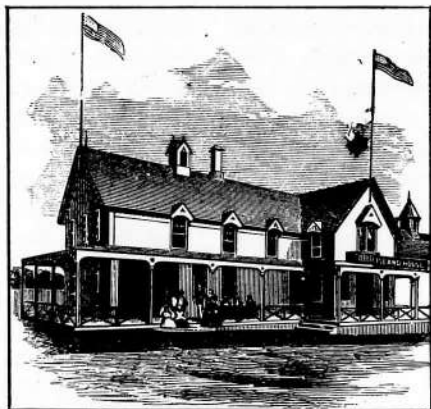
Take our friend, for instance, in the corner, with the pocket-handkerchief, and a visage like that of the Knight of the Rueful Countenance. What less than the prospect of going immediately to Davy Jones' locker, could arouse him to a forgetfulness of his qualms, not of conscience, but of stomach? And after all, it may be the best medicine our friend could have.



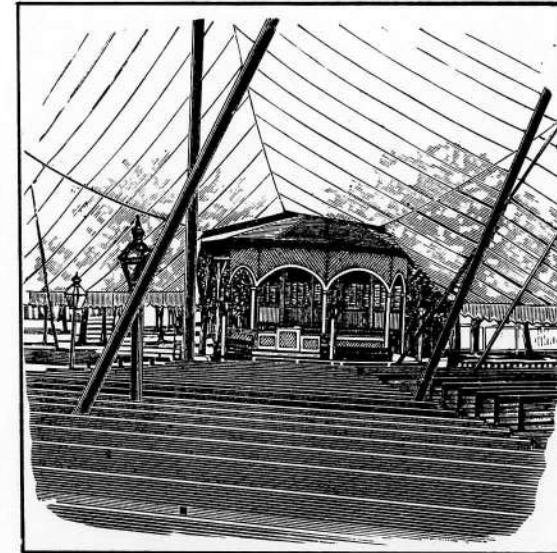
MATHEWSON ST. (PROVIDENCE) SOCIETY TENT.

THE Mathewson Street Society tent is a fair representation of one of the tents which were at first universally, and now considerably, used. It accommodated, and still accommodates the members of one religious society, and all that was required was

shelter. The contrast between it and the three thousand dollar cottages is as marked as the difference which now obtains between the religious and simply secular visitors to Martha's Vineyard.



ISLAND HOUSE.



THE PREACHERS' STAND

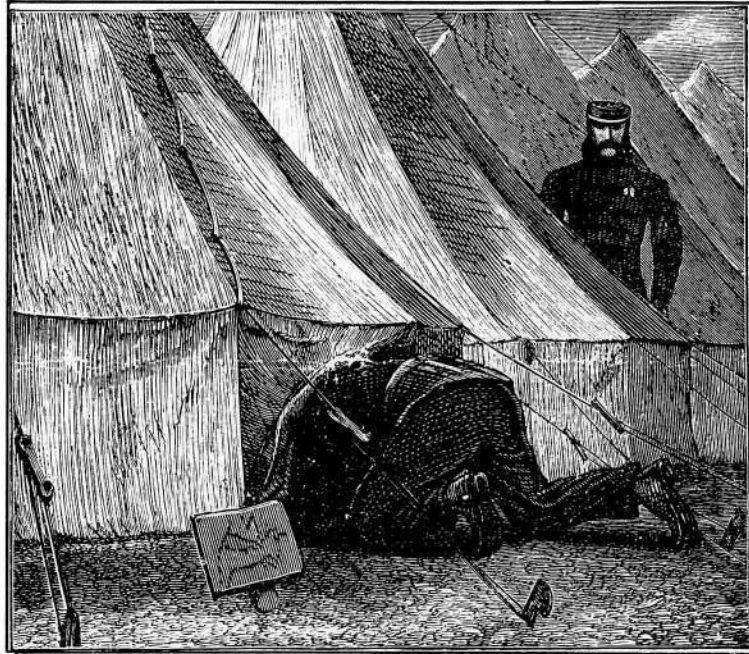
THE preachers' stand is the central point of Martha's Vineyard, albeit the residences have stretched away from it on either side to an extent little dreamed of in the early days of the camp meeting. There are still a large number, if not a majority, who come here mainly, at any rate, for the spiritual influences, and who,

therefore, get as near as they can to the precincts devoted to religious services. The original ground is covered completely with tents and cottages, and nowhere, hardly, in the world, is humanity — well-to-do humanity, that is — so closely stowed as here during the week of the meeting.

IT would be a proof of heterodoxy not to name Miss Nancy Luce and her hens. A visit to her will add a new experience to the student of human nature, and present him a psychological puzzle, which it is more than doubtful if he correctly solves. On the whole, a trip to the Vineyard, with its attendant adventures and excitement, as well as ease and comfort, is worth the time and cost it will require, as it will afterwards afford many an hour of pleasant reflection.

NANCY LUCE.





THE LATCH-KEY AT THE VINEYARD.

WE hope our friend has made no mistake in the number of the domicile. If, now, he should happen to enter the wrong tent, although there would be in that peaceful place no danger from revolvers, there might be trouble which would be as disagreeable, if not as dangerous. Why is it that rebellion is universal? Here is a camp-meeting. There are certain rules, as there should be. There will be only a week to tarry, and yet somebody is always disobeying, always getting into scrapes, always needing the eye of the police. Ignorance would, doubtless, account for a good deal of it, but native "cussedness" must be charged with much, if not the most.



OUR ARTISTS HOMEWARD BOUND IN THE CARS
BETWEEN NEW BEDFORD AND TAUNTON.

EVERY one who has traveled will remember some such experience as this; when the heat, the dust, the weariness, and the utter impossibility of doing anything to better one's self made a night in the cars the very acme of discomfort. We do not wonder at the presence of the junk bottle. Were there no mosquitoes, the very trip itself would almost excuse it, whether it contains some insect exterminator, or equally poisonous whiskey. The

presence of the little girl throws a relief upon this picture, which would otherwise be too sombre to be attractive. The utter despair of the individual with the bottle, and the comic dolorousness of his companion, are enough to tell the whole story of their sufferings and their submission. This is, to be sure, not quite so bad as sea-sickness, but it is enough to make one forswear crowds, camp-meetings, and railroads in July and August.

The Making of a Summer Resort

Edgartown in the 90s: The "Proper" Resort

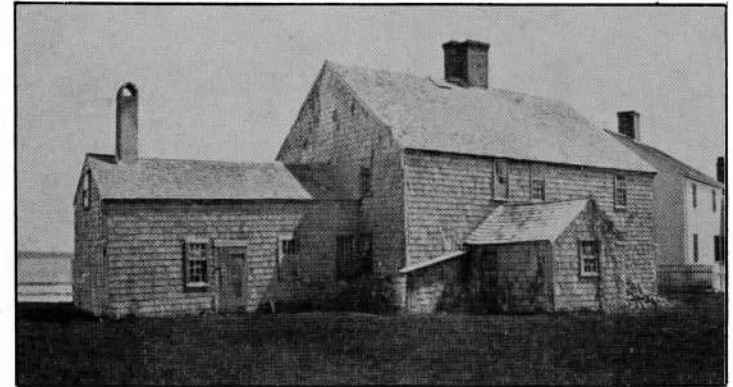
IN that summer of 1874 when President Ulysses S. Grant conquered the hearts of the people of Oak Bluffs (*see Intelligencer, August 1987*), Edgartown was moribund. It was fading into obscurity as the new "summer business" was concentrated at Oak Bluffs, the Island's rising star.

That shook up the businessmen of Edgartown, who wanted to share in the prosperity. To do so, they invested, and persuaded the town to invest, in a narrow-gauge railway which was expected to siphon off some of the Oak Bluffs traffic. A huge new hotel, the Mattakessett, was built at Katama, down harbor from Edgartown and close to South Beach. The railroad, after a series of unanticipated delays, went into operation in late summer of 1874, running from Oak Bluffs to Mattakessett with a stop in downtown Edgartown.

It is not easy to know whether the railroad actually contributed to Edgartown's cash flow or not. For whatever reason, the summer trade began to lift the town's economy. Within ten years, it had become a summer resort in its own right with a character different from Oak Bluffs.

Edgartown's appeal, right from the beginning, was to the established gentry, the "proper" folk. Two articles, both published off-Island about 1890, make clear its difference from Oak Bluffs (compare with the camp meeting article in this issue). The first, from an unidentified newspaper, was printed in August 1886:

Last week was an exceptionally fine one at the seashore. A little cool to be sure, but not uncomfortable. The hotels are quite full yet, and the streets are far from being deserted, especially at mail time. Mr. J. A. French and family of

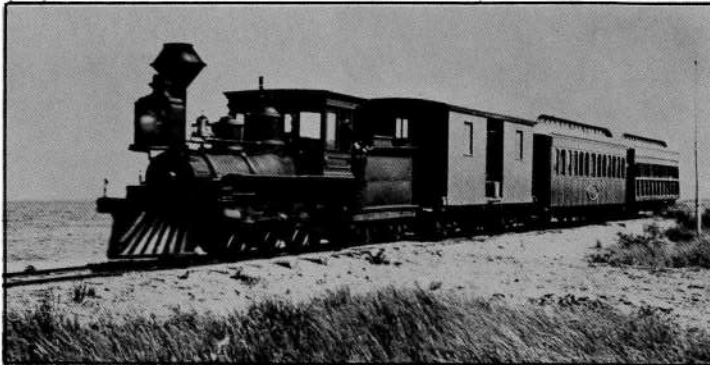


The old Mayhew "mansion" as it looked a few years after this article.

Keene, N.H., and Miss Alice Beecher from Brooklyn, N.Y., are at the Mayhew Mansion. Monday evening being foggy and too unpleasant to remain out of doors, a congenial company gathered in the dining-room of the old house, where a cheerful blaze was sending forth light and warmth from the large fireplace. Corn was popped and excellent candy made and numerous sports were engaged in until a late hour. A row of doughnuts were suspended from the beam which passes through the centre of the ceiling, and a row of men and maidens, with their hands tied behind



Fireplace where a cheerful blaze popped corn for the "congenial company."

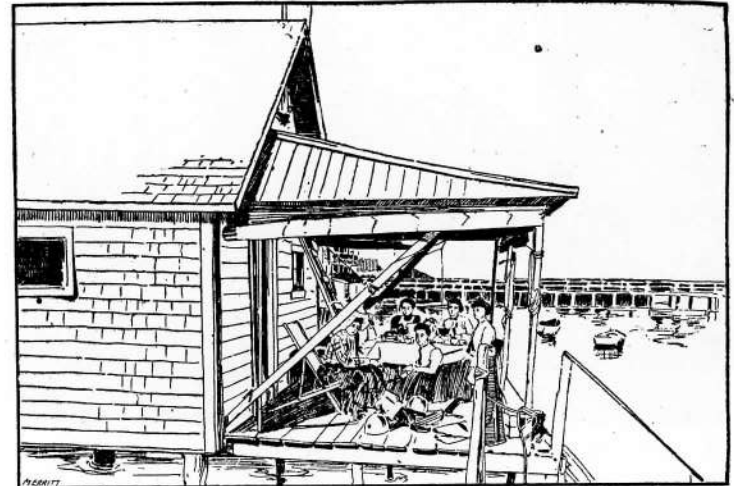


Narrow-gauge train steaming along the beach from Edgartown to Oak Bluffs; a remarkable action photograph for the late 1800s, taken by Richard Shute.

them, vied with each other in their frantic endeavors to see who could eat the fastest. This race being ended satisfactorily amid cheers from the spectators, other amusements, some equally as laughable made the time pass quickly. Wednesday evening the Wesleyan University Glee Club gave a concert in the town hall, which proved to be a very enjoyable occasion and was well attended. A heavy wind storm is raging here today, so every little wave has a white cap on. No boats have gone out, but several yachts have come in, to seek the protection that this harbor grants.

The second, and longer, newspaper story is from the *Boston Globe*, August 14, 1899, thirteen years later. It is headlined: "UNIQUE VACATION RESORT, Six Young Women Have a Boat House at Edgartown, Where They Live:"

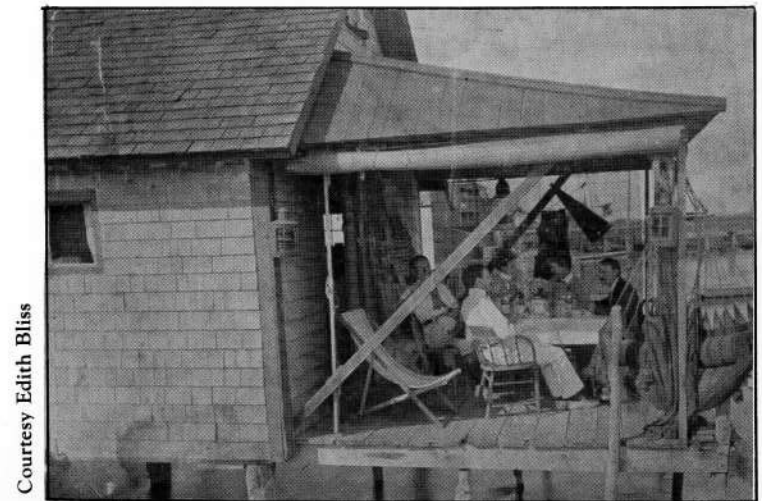
"A Boathouse on the Styx" many of *The Globe* readers have heard of, but there is just as interesting if not as famous a habitation in this drowsy old town of Edgartown, where life contains as much delight and pleasure for a bright young company of maidens as did the domicile first mentioned. The young women in question include six well-known society girls of Brookline, Cambridge and Roxbury, who have come down here for the summer to enjoy Martha's Vineyard in their own refreshingly informal and original way. Their names are Miss Agnes and Miss Grace Bliss and Miss May Whitney of Brookline, Miss Gertrude Bright of Cambridge, Miss Ethel Gurney of Boston and Miss Mabel Curtis of Roxbury;. Each name is a familiar one to many



Sketch from 1899 *Boston Globe* shows the boat house, "Saints' Rest."

of the members of the younger sets of their respective districts.

Cottage life had no charms for them, neither had the fashionable hotel on the bluffs overlooking the waters of the sleepy old harbor; but a boathouse where nothing but their own sweet wills and a refined home training could tell them what to do and how to do it was just the thing. Built



Courtesy Edith Bliss

Photo of "Saints' Rest" in 1910. It hadn't changed much in 11 years.

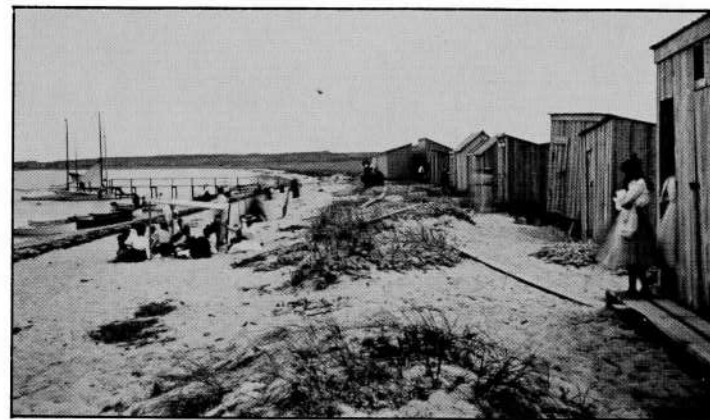


Waterfront view about 1890; "Saints' Rest" is at the extreme right.

on piles over the water, with picturesque Chappaquiddick facing them in the rear and Sol Smith Russell's beautiful new summer home on their right, they are passing August here and pressing perhaps a little more enjoyment out of it than any others of the hundreds of fair sojourners on the island.

A pretty girl is always in demand at the seashore, but when you combine talents to personal charms here is a proposition hard to beat down by old ocean. Each of this sextet is dowered with good looks and musical talents of a decidedly entertaining order. Then shouldn't "the saints" be counted among the most favored vacationists on the isle? "The Saints" is the title by which they are known to summer fame throughout the resort. And why? Simply because some half-dozen years ago the little boathouse in a pious moment was named by the owner, and this interesting nomenclature has stuck to it ever since.

In the endeavor to learn just how a summer day was passed by "The Saints", *The Globe* man made a call at the Rest recently and was given a much appreciated opportunity of acquiring the desired information. First, of course, came breakfast, of which only hearsay evidence could be gathered. The main meal, like all other meals, was eaten on the piazza and prepared by the girls themselves, who take turns in assuming the culinary responsibilities of the establishment. It must be confessed that their experience in cooking is of



Chappaquiddick beach when the society girls went there to swim.

a somewhat limited order, but one would never suspect that such was the reality after having enjoyed the fruits of their exertions in this line.

After breakfast came lounging in the hammocks on the verandas surrounding the boathouse, or a stroll about the crazy old streets that are redolent with suggestions of other days. At 11 comes the bathing. And such dainty bathing suits. If one would know how much live pleasure there is to be found in the tumbling waves and the glinting sands, he must come to Edgartown and watch the Saints as they swim and dive and frolic on the beach on Chappaquiddick. The merry shout of the summer seas is no more light-hearted or gayer than the cries and laughter that make the cliffs which seem to threaten to come crashing down on the fair sirens vocal with their sounds. A half hour's stay here on the sands is worth all the tonics and elixirs to "the tired old feeling" that were ever concocted.

After the row home in the *Mabel*, a trim looking four-oared boat belonging to the Rest, comes lunch, and then in the afternoon a drive to Cottage City, South Beach, or perhaps picnicking on Chappaquiddick. In the evening, the fair Saints tog out in their finest for they expect a jolly party of Harvard men who are passing the month in the Harbor View up on the highlands. And such merry evenings these are to be sure, with their mandolins and guitars and the deep, strong young voices of the men from Cambridge. Mrs. Bliss is there to chaperone, but it is needless to say that

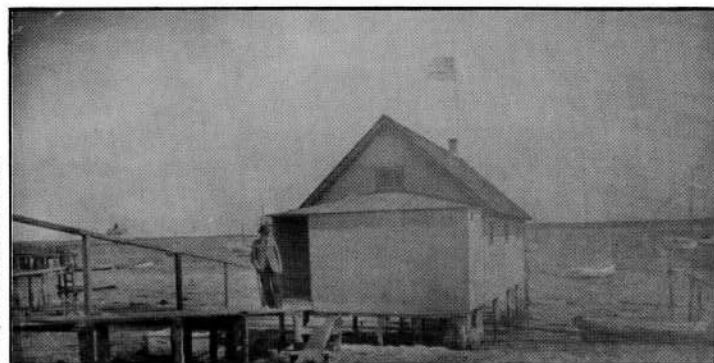


Harborview Hotel where the "jolly" Harvard men stayed for a month.

chaperones are entirely unnecessary to these clever, up-to-date American girls who are nothing if not American in their training and ideas on how to do the proper thing at the proper time.

It is a "dulce far niente" existence, if ever there was one, in this boat house on Edgartown waters, and who would begrudge them all the golden times they are enjoying there?

Oh! Those were the days!



Capt. Jared Fisher, Jr., at the rear of "Saints' Rest." In 1957, it was moved across to Chappaquiddick on a barge by Capt. Samuel B. Norton, father of S. Bailey Norton, president of our Society.

Courtesy Edith Bliss

Documents

Boarding School Sketch Book

By Richard Luce Pease

This journal, kept during the three months from June through August of 1835 by Richard L. Pease (1814-1888) of Edgartown, contains no comments on the national crisis that was beginning to develop over slavery. It seems that in this academy in mid-Massachusetts there were no meetings or lectures on the subject of abolition or the morality of slavery. Temperance was the more popular subject.

As you will read, on July 18th, "a colored preacher from Middletown" spoke at the school, requesting contributions "for the purpose of erecting a Meetinghouse for the colored people." But there seems to have been no discussion of the burgeoning anti-slavery movement even when a black preacher was on campus.

Abolitionist literature was being burned in the South and the Postmaster General was being urged to ban it from being sent through the U.S. mails. Abolitionist writers and agents were being expelled from the Southern states and Gov. George McDuffie of South Carolina was demanding the death penalty for such persons, "without benefit of clergy."

In neighboring New Hampshire, the Noyes Academy at Canaan was burned to the ground by citizens enraged over the enrollment of 14 black students in the school; so New England was not isolated from the storm that was approaching.

Yet, in Wilbraham Academy, a school with strong Methodist connections, there

seems to have been no discussion, at least, none that our journal keeper, Richard L. Pease, recorded, on the subject that was within 30 years to tear the nation apart.

It is not as though Richard was a person who kept himself isolated from politics. Even at Wilbraham, he was sending Whig literature home to Edgartown. The Whigs were just getting organized as a political party at the time. In later life, he became very active in the Whig Party on the Vineyard. He served in numerous political positions, including Registrar of Probate, member of the School Board and Postmaster.

This is the third installment in his "Sketch Book." Others will follow.

July 1835

14th Tuesday. Very warm still. Thermometer stands at 88 above zero. Sent a copy of the "Hamden Whig" home. Rev. Osange Scott and Rev. A. D. Merrill were here today. In 5 weeks the term closes. By the 25th of August, I hope to see my "HOME" once more. To associate with friends, long tried and dear. How delightful the thought! 15th Wednesday. Rainy all day. Afternoon attended declamation by the 2nd. division. Bro. Farmington brought in his clarinet and we had a "right down good time." Mr. Williams left day before yesterday. Evening occupied in writing to F. P. Fellows. 16th Thursday. Sent the letter to F. P. Fellows. Towards night some of the students with instruments went to the Academy and played some time. We had 3 flutes & 1 clarinet. Marched down in regular style to the "Boarding House," serenading "Uncle Hardy." Mr. Fisher, Ames Foster of Randolph

Macon here to breakfast with Mr. Patten.

17th Friday. Weather good. Bought a handkerchief & stock lining (\$1.70 cts.). After tea went into the meadow and raked hay an hour. Fine exercise.

18th Saturday. Very pleasant weather. A colored preacher from Middletown by the name of Beman was here this morning. He is obtaining money for the purpose of erecting a Meetinghouse for the colored people. Mail arrived. I was on the spot and waited — I will not say patiently — for twenty minutes until the letters were ready for delivery. A letter from Mary! and a paper from my father was my share; and happy I was to receive them. Home I hastened to devour the contents. After tea, Mrs. Clark brought in a bowl of fine cherries and had just helped us to a platefull apiece when the “cherry man” made his appearance in the street. Stepped out and bought a bowl full — a quart — and carried them upstairs to the girls! (yes, I did.) Set down and had a “social interview.” Evening attended Class at the Hall, Mr. Patten present. It was truly a good time. My affections seemed raised above the things of this low and transitory world and placed on him who is worthy of them. May I live henceforth not to myself but to God. May I enjoy the presence of my Redeemer — the assurance that I am accepted in the Beloved. That is enough to satisfy my soul. I seek not for the vain glory of this world — for the applause of mortals. No, no! I aim far above them. I hope for better things, for communion with my Maker and final rest in heaven.

19th Sunday. Heard a preacher from Canada, by the name of Smith, son-in-law of Esq. Bliss. Sat in the gallery and played the flute. Weather pleasant.

20th Monday. Nothing very interesting.

21st Tuesday. Rainy almost all day. At tea, Misses Simmons & Mr. Roper. After tea, we had a “social interview.” Cherry man came along — bought 2 quarts of fine cherries. 15 cts. Evening stormy. While I write, the lightning streams along the sky, the thunder shakes the heavens. Calm on the bosom of thy God, my spirit, stay thee now. Wrote to Mary.

22nd Wednesday. Pleasant. Attended declamation by the 3rd division.

23rd Thursday. Today I hope to hear from home. Sent a letter to C. P. Norton, Esq.¹ Sent a copy of the “Western Methodist” to Clement Pease and one to Isaiah D. Pease.² Mail arrived and brought a letter from my dear father and 2 copies of the “Family Minstrel” from J. P. Fellows.

24th Friday. Warm. Thermometer 86 degrees above zero. After tea took a walk up the road about three quarters of a mile to Elder Otis’s and was much gratified in seeing and conversing with the first Methodist Preacher stationed on the Vineyard.³ Stayed till after 8 p.m., after receiving a “pressing

¹ Constant P. Norton was active in Island politics, serving as Collector of Customs from 1855 to 1860.

² Isaiah was Richard’s father, sheriff of Dukes County from 1822 to 1862. Clement Pease was a distant relative.

³ Rev. Erastus Otis formed the first “class” of Methodists in Edgartown in November 1809. He was also here in 1810. For more about this Methodist pioneer see Banks, *History of Martha’s Vineyard*, v. 2, pp. 167-8, *Annals of Edgartown*.

invitation” to call again. The old gentleman asked me if I should be here when apples were ripe, as he had a great many.

25th Saturday. In one month, I hope to see “home” again. I hope to behold my dear friends and more than all, my beloved Mary, dearer to me than aught on earth beside. O, Lord, preserve us till we meet again. Sent a copy of the “Western Methodist” to Sam’l. G. Vincent.⁴ Mail arrived and brought a letter from my beloved friend and brother, Chas. Rich, heartily glad was I to hear from him, but sorry to learn that he could not, on account of previous arrangements, come to Wilbraham and go home with me. However, I may perhaps meet him in New Bedford. After tea, a very black cloud arose and spread rapidly around the horizon, while the thunder pealed in the distance, betokening a tempest. At last, it came. The rain descended in torrents; the lightning streamed portentously, lighting for an instant the darkness of the storm; the thunder shook the heavens with a noise that seemed like the discharges of thousands of pieces of artillery. Evening, attended “Class” at the Hall.

26th Sunday. Morning, arose and washed and dressed quite early. Went to the “Boarding House” and recruited — found a number of volunteers — started for Ludlow. Mr. Patten preached two most excellent sermons, visited, after meeting, the Indian’s Leap; — descended the bank and after a short time came to a spring of good water flowing from the interstices of the

⁴ Samuel G. Vincent was Richard’s brother-in-law, having married his sister, Harriet, in 1831.

rock. Some one had placed a peice (sic) of dried birch bark in the crevice so that it served as a conductor of the water, it flowing from the end in fine style. Here we regaled ourselves with the best of liquors — pure, cold water. Afterwards, sang an hymn, commencing “In Jordan’s stormy banks I stand, And cast a wishful eye to Canaan’s fair and happy land, Where my possessions lie.” The old gray rocks re-echoing the strain; perhaps, a hymn was never there under such circumstances. And by the same company will never again be sung. In a few weeks, those composing that company will be seperated (sic), far from each other their lots will be cast; never again will they meet as they now meet. But a time is coming when we shall meet again! Beyond the confines of earth, at the bar of heaven’s high chancery, we must meet. Our number was twenty five. Evening, heard Mr. Tupper, a Congregationalist, in the South Church. Came home, went to my room, and, feeling rather “minorish,” took up my flute and played some time. Of course, such airs as suited my tone of feeling — plaintive, tender, soothing, *minor*!!

27th Monday. Pleasant weather. Evening, played on the flute with Mr. J. O. King. Commenced writing to Mary. At 11 o’clock, went to bed.

28th Tuesday. Mail arrived. Inquired if there was anything for me. Found a letter from Mary. Quite unexpected today. I thought I should have one on Thursday. Sent a letter to my father and one to Miss Mary West Pease.⁵

⁵ He seems to be trying to be cute here. Miss Mary West Pease is his beloved Mary, his fiancée.

29th Wednesday. Weather thick, misty, and accompanied with rain at times. Nothing of any considerable interest transpired today. Afternoon, heard a lecture from Mr. Mitchell, the first of a proposed course on Anatomy. Evening, played the flute a little. Among the rest, the following peice (sic): "When shall we meet again?" I thought of my "home", of the times when I had heard this peice (sic) sung. Happy days! When will they return?

30th Thursday. Morning, Mr. Segin from Middletown took breakfast with Mr. Patten. He has had some correspondence with Bro. Rich concerning his becoming a Missionary to China. Received a letter from my brother, S. L. Pease. He has joined the "Class." I rejoice to hear it. Oh, may he ever be kept in the pathway of life, secure from all the efforts of evil companions and rely solely on his Redeemer for Salvation.⁶ Evening, Mr. J. O. King and I went to the House of Mr. Burt and played on our flutes with him; very pleasant time. Returning home, we met the Astronomy Class with Mr. Mitchell, viewing the heavens with a telescope; got a sight of the moon through it. Evening, very pleasant indeed. Serenaded some of the inhabitants. Came home at 10, studied till eleven, then went to bed.

31st Friday. Afternoon, a thunderstorm, lasting about an hour and a half.

⁶ Joining the "Class" was the first step in becoming a member of the Methodist Society, as it was called then. It reads as though Sylvanus had shown little prior interest in any religious matters.

August 1835

1st Saturday. Afternoon, got my shoes repaired (cost 25 cents). Staid at home to study, considerable to do before the term closes. A little rain. As I sat in my room my thoughts dwelt on the days of my absence from "my home," from my Mary! I thought if I were taken sick here how I should feel; no sympathetic hand to hold my throbbing, aching head; no loved one near; no fond mother to bend o'er her son's sick couch, to nurse him in his helplessness, even as in the days of infancy; no sister, no brother, to watch beside my bed; none — none but strangers to perform the offices of the sick chamber; not even one friend to afford consolation; and then to die here — to breathe my last among strangers — far from my "native isle" where first I drew my breath; to leave my Mary!⁷

Oh, oh, I cannot think about it without deep, deep emotion. Should I die what would become of her whom, more than myself, I love? Oh, fancy paints the scene that would ensue, the news of my death! But I forbear. Into thine hands, O, my God, I commit myself, soul and body, with all the powers & affections of my young heart. May thy "guardian care" be about and around me, sleeping or waking, so thou be my defender, my supporter, my staff, my stay, my all in all! Help me to live to thee that living or dying I may be the Lord's.

⁷ At a time when many of his contemporaries were away from home for three or four years under the miserable conditions that went with a whaling voyage, his dramatics sound rather childish.

Evening, very pleasant. Such an evening as I have often enjoyed in walking on the causeway⁸ with my dear Mary. Sweet moments! Hours of rapture! Attended "Class" in the Hall. I felt my utter feebleness, my insufficiency, my lack of more holiness of heart. Oh, my God, give me as thou seest I need. Give me thy grace to support me, be a light to my path, a guide to my feet. Oh, preserve me from sinning against thee! May my life be in accordance with the religion of Christ, my faith strengthened and confirmed and I enjoy much of thy love, O Lord, my Redeemer.

Sent a copy of the "Springfield Republican" to my father, and another paper to my Uncle Silvanus Luce. Eleven o'clock, must go to bed.

2nd Sabbath. Pleasant. Mr. Raymond preached in forenoon and afternoon. Excellent Sermons! At 5 o'clock, a Mr. Stebbins from Harvard University delivered a discourse on Peace.

3rd Monday. Morning pleasant. Afternoon a little rain & thunder. Evening at home writing to Mary.

4th Tuesday. Weather very cold, thermometer stands at 59 degrees. Sent a letter to Mary. Solar (?) Microscope,

⁸ It isn't clear what he means by the "causeway." It was not until 1847, 12 years later, that the causeway to Edgartown Light was built. There was, at the time of this writing, a bridge to the lighthouse, which was about 400 yards offshore.

flies' wings more than 10 feet long. Evening ½ past 10, must close.

5th Wednesday. Pleasant. Afternoon heard a lecture from Mr. Mitchell on Anatomy. Very interesting. Afterwards, in company with Bro. Hawks went up the mountain — or rather up the Boston road to the "Murderer's Glen," where a man by the name of Lyons was murdered by two Irishmen; he was on horseback, was attacked by these ruffians and shot with a pistol. His body was carried down the bank towards the Chickopee river and concealed. They led his horse up a steep hill road some distance and turned him loose into a large pasture. A boy happened to be near and heard the report of the pistol and the noise of the scuffle. He, being concealed under an apple tree behind a vale, was not discovered till they led the horse up the hill. Then one gave chase. The boy ran and escaped, gave the alarm to the neighbors, who pursued and apprehended the perpetrators of this daring atrocity. They were hung 29 years ago. The place is gloomy — dismal — on one side a river, on the other a steep hill thickly covered with cedars, whose dark foliage heightens the dreariness of the place. Picked a lot of choke cherries and returned. Mr. Hand came in after tea and we "discoursed music" till prayer time (8 o'clock).

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

FOR MORE than five years, the Officers and Council of the Society have been struggling with the problem of space — the need for more space in which to carry out our obligation to preserve Island history.

We have, at the same time, been facing a continuing threat to the Thomas Cooke House, one of the oldest authentic pre-Revolutionary War houses on the Island. Its structure is threatened by dampness and insects. We have slowed the rate of damage, but to stop it will require major changes. It has been slowly sinking into the ground. Its sills are virtually at ground level after more than 200 years of settling. If it is to survive another 200 years, it must be lifted onto a deep, dry foundation.

Furthermore, as we have expanded our activities, we have increased our staff; we have enlisted more volunteers, without whom we could not operate. But while we have increased our work force and enlarged our services, our space remains unchanged.

Our director has no office; she sits at a desk in a corner of the Francis Foster Musuem. Our membership secretary and our librarian work in the Gale Huntington Library reading room; our curator, next to the furnace. That accounts for our paid staff.

Our volunteers are no better off. We have several who work virtually on the same schedule as the paid staff. They are at the Society almost every day. These include our registrar of accessions and our genealogist who have desks in the reading room, and our editor who has our only office, in the basement next to the archives. Other regular volunteers work with the librarian, cataloging and indexing new material and returning manuscripts, photographs and books to the stacks after use by researchers. These workers are required to take potluck, some finding space in the crowded basement, others in the library reading room. It is a tribute to their dedication and devotion that they continue to work under such conditions.

All this, of course, is over and above the space for visitors, for researchers, for exhibitions and for storage of the thousands of

artifacts and documents in our care. Or for the preparation of exhibits, or repair of costumes or bindings, or for any of the scores of activities required at a museum.

During the five years we have been studying this problem of space, we have asked experts for advice. Some flatly state that the Cooke House is in immediate danger; others report that our archival storage provides no protection from water damage, always a threat when overhead pipes are present as in our basement.

But more than the shortage of space for today, there is the problem of future accessions. We are running out of space to store them. Yet, inadequate though we are, we are the best archival storage available on the Island and therefore we must, and will, find room until we solve this problem.

We are doing what we can, within the limitations of space. We have rented outside storage for warehousing replaceable items: our publications, for example. We have installed warning systems that would signal any water leaks, or fires or breakins. But these do not protect us from the steady, inexorable destruction that comes from inadequate space and climate control. We must have a larger and more protective facility to fulfill our responsibilities. For 65 years we have been meeting those responsibilities and we must expand to continue to do so.

After many meetings and much advice, we have developed a long-range plan to provide the needed space and assure long life to the Cooke House, our most valuable single artifact. The plan is not final as of today, but it does define our needs and offers some suggested solutions. It is painted with a broad brush. The details are not yet filled in.

That will take more time. It will take even more time to raise the necessary funds for such an ambitious, and essential, project. But we must make the effort and we must do it right. As the County's historical society, we cannot fail to meet our responsibility to preserve Island history.

I shall bring you more detailed information in the coming months. I will describe what you can do to help. We must be able to count on your support if we are to accomplish our goal.

S. BAILEY NORTON
President

News of the Society

From the Director:

MASTER plans for expanding the Society's facilities on the present grounds dominated the annual meeting and have continued to occupy the Council and staff ever since. They are discussed in detail elsewhere. The need for additional space for both collections and activities is brought home to us daily as we try to accommodate new staff members, volunteers, and computers as well as frequent committee meetings. Of special importance at the Annual meeting was President Norton's announcement that former President and Genealogist Doris Stoddard had bequeathed to the Society the proceeds from the sale of her home. It is planned that this generous gift will become the basis for an endowment that will continue to benefit the Society for many years to come.

Members voted at the Annual Meeting to increase the number of members of the Council. Anthony Bongiorno was elected to the Class of 1890 and John Howland replaced Richard Burt as vice-president. Mr. Bongiorno has also accepted the chairmanship of the Building/Development Committee and was responsible for the presentation of expansion plans at the Meeting. Also new is a Personnel Committee, chaired by Frederick Williams who will continue to serve as chairman for our Second Annual Essay Contest for students of Martha's Vineyard Regional High School. Catherine Chamberlain will head a

newly established Program Committee. We hope to schedule a members' event during November and will hold our Annual Open House on December 11 and 12 in conjunction with "Christmas in Edgartown." The special exhibition will be Vineyard Samplers and Needlework.

During the summer rainy days are usually much busier than sunny days, but the good weather of this season did not keep visitors away from the Society. In fact record numbers were recorded. Without the assistance of devoted volunteers in both the Cooke House and the Gate House we would have had great difficulty in continuing our program. Our gratitude goes to each of the many who helped.

This fall work on cataloguing and recording our collections has continued under Curator Gail Tipton and Registrar Dorothea Looney. Esther Mills has begun our first phase of computerization by entering our membership lists. Please check the label on this mailing and notify us of any corrections.

We were pleased to lend photographs to the Gay Head Recognition Luncheon honoring those who contributed to achieving Tribal status. Photographs and artifacts were also lent to the Martha's Vineyard Commission for exhibitions at the Vineyard Haven and Edgartown Libraries in celebration of Coast Week.

Additions to our collections continue to be received. Of special interest is the Gold medal awarded to Frank Golart in recognition of his

bravery in Vineyard Haven harbor during the hurricane of 1898, gift of his son, David Golart.

We hope you will find an opportunity to visit the Society during our winter hours, Thursday and Friday from 1:00 to 4:00 and Saturday from 10:00 to 4:00.

MARIAN R. HALPERIN

From the Librarian:

EARLY fall is busy at the Library, with reference interviews and genealogical searches crowding the shortened hours of opening. There is a flood of requests for copies of photographs and documents, and the usual eddies of correspondence by mail and by phone. Subjects of continuing interest include Island architecture (Campground, Edgartown, up-Island "old"); early Island industry (clay, paint, bricks, cloth, fisheries, herring-scale pearls); early land divisions and roads.

Readers of local newspapers are familiar with the fight to keep South Beach under the control of Edgartown.

Both sides in the court battles can brandish tracings from our old maps. Interestingly, one of the lawyers joined the Society in the course of his research on Katama claims.

As time and help permit, work continues on sorting the generously donated accumulations of James Chadwick and Henry Beetle Hough. Wendy Sheehan has been listing the eclectic Chadwick collection: old documents and copies thereof, letters and curiosa galore. Nancy Young was almost a full-time volunteer on the Hough project. Much of the Hough material came across Vineyard Sound with Henry's father, George A., and his wife, Elizabeth Bowie. Mrs. Young has been using a number of scrapbooks to document the fact that they both had established pre-Vineyard careers more important than may be remembered here. The Hough bequest also includes many additions to our already notable whaling shelves, books sent as review copies to the *Gazette* over the years.

All summer long, we contributed pictures and text to Vineyard and Cape Cod tourist publications. Of more lasting interest, look for an in-depth piece on winter in Edgartown in the December *Antiques*, and for other locally-researched articles in forthcoming issues of *Yankee* and *House Beautiful*.

ALVIN J. GOLDWYN

Bits & Pieces

THERE is no other place on the Island more important to our present than the Campground at Oak Bluffs (see pp. 63-73). It was there in 1835 that the seeds for our future were sown. Little did those fervent Methodists realize what they had planted. If they had, perhaps they would have had some doubts. They had not intended to harvest a summer resort. It was souls they were after.

The growth of their planting was astounding. Vineyarders, whether by choice or otherwise, lost control as it blossomed. The six men who started it were from Edgartown. In less than 25 years, it had become patronized "chiefly by persons connected with the Providence Conference . . . mostly people from New Bedford, Providence and other large places embraced within that Conference." Most of the businesses involved were from off-Island. In 1860, there were inside the grounds four boarding tents, a grocery store, a fruit, pastry and soda store and a barbershop, employing six barbers. Only half were owned by Islanders. Outside the grounds there were five livery stables, only one owned by a Vineyarder.

Circling the preachers' stand (a large, latticed structure built in 1860) were 35 large tents, each occupied by a Methodist Society, four from the Island.

A second circle of tents, outside the first, contained 48 tents, most occupied by families, only 17 from the Vineyard.

The two circles of tents were separated by a 30-foot-wide avenue, called Broadway, which was used by the carriages, as no teams were allowed within the circle. The entrance was along Clinton Avenue, as of then unnamed, and when you came into the grounds you entered Trinity Park, "considered one of the best locations upon the ground, and many of the most beautiful and costly tents" were there. There were 25 tents in the park, none occupied by Vineyarders.

These were the choice locations. Farther from the circle were another 400 smaller tents, most occupied by off-Islanders.

The pride of the Campground in 1861 was the double cottage of Messrs. Mason and Lawton, built in 1859, at a cost of \$700. It was "the most elegant as well as the most costly establishment upon the ground," said the *Gazette*. Mason and Lawton were from Rhode Island (see front cover sketch).

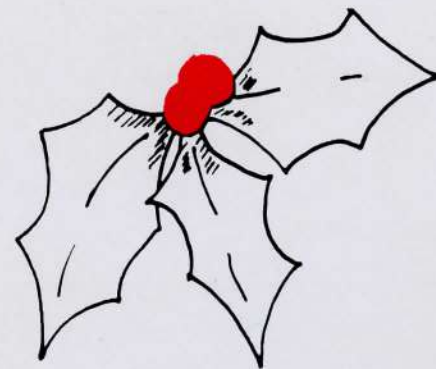
The New Bedford *Whalemens' Shipping List* said this in August 1870:

"What a different aspect here now from what it was thirty years ago! What would the 'Old Guard' who planted this Camp say if they could come back to earth and witness the sightly array of comfort and elegance now presented!"

It was the invasion of thousands of off-Islanders that created the "sightly array of comfort and elegance" and brought the Vineyard fame as a "watering place." It was the word-of-mouth advertising they carried home that began what we are today.

Those early Edgartown Methodists had planted more than they knew.

A.R.R.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Make your 1987 gifts historic!

For those on your gift list who enjoy things historical, the perfect gift is a membership in the Society. Your gift will deliver to them the *Intelligencer* with its interesting articles on Vineyard history four times a year — and they will be grateful for your thoughtfulness each time.

Buying such gifts is easy: send us the name and address of each recipient, along with your check. We will notify them of your generosity. If you wish, we will mail them a copy of this issue of the *Intelligencer* along with our notification (please add one dollar for postage for each such mailing).

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WM. H. MAYHEW'S
Trade * Bulletin.

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An 1898 ad for Willie Mayhew's hardware store on No. Water St., Edgartown.