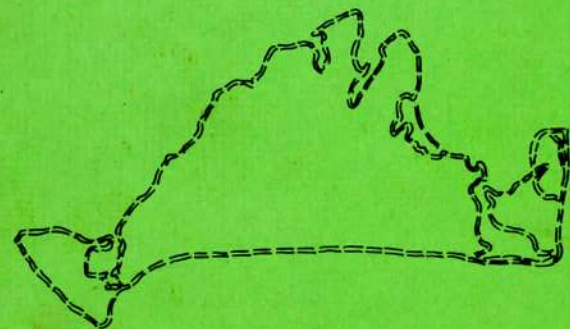


VINEYARD
SAMPLER



DOROTHY
COTTLE
POOLE
1970



2
Signed by
Author

VINEYARD SAMPLER

DOROTHY
COTTE
POOLE

Dorothy Cottle Poole



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DUKES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Edgartown, Massachusetts

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For Donald

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INTRODUCTION

A sampler, Dorothy Cottle Poole shows us, is not only an object, a true record and a discipline, but also a method which can move around freely in history. Its chapters, which seem unconnected, are bound together with a sense of time, place and character. The theme, for those who want a theme, is Vineyard life past and present. The sum total for a curious mind is greater than that contained in many a like-sized volume of consecutive narrative.

From the annals of the Island she selects passages that repair previous voids as in the case of Noman's Land, Lobsterville and Menemsha; or of concise biography, whaling adventure and mutiny, even philosophical essays of an informal kind as in the case of "Work" and "Why Men Fish for a Living". She leads the reader aside to tell him about sea serpents and the Vineyard's affirmed and astonishing record, about scallops, and about ways of life. And she discloses the resources of her own life and interest in "Free Fare" and "Point Inner Place".

One line quoted from a whaling master's journal is as wry and poignant as may easily be found in the same number of words anywhere, and is recognizable as of Vineyard authenticity.

This sampler-anthology, in short, is a fine addition to the permanent shelves of works representing Martha's Vineyard.

Henry Beetle Hough

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VINEYARD SAMPLER

By

Dorothy Cottle Poole

Over 130 years ago, my paternal grandmother worked a sampler which is now in my possession. In those days, little girls practiced painstakingly, often hours at a time at their grandmother's knee, to learn to make fine, even stitches, and then to elaborate. Samplers were made to show a girl's skill with her needle and no two were alike. But plain or embellished, each was just a "sample", a small picture, part of a much larger whole.

In a similar way, I have chosen a few samples, from an infinite variety of material, to give the reader a glimpse of some people, places, and events that have given Martha's Vineyard its inimitable charm.

Concretely, the Vineyard is a beautiful island with broad plains, rolling hills, sheltered valleys, large and small ponds, woodlands, and a delightful climate. It includes stately churches with their spires reaching toward the heavens reminding us that our ancestors were a godly lot, who left all they had known and loved to cross the Atlantic and establish new homes where they could worship as they saw fit, and where they could enjoy the other freedoms granted all Englishmen by the *Magna Carta*.

The beautiful foursquare homes built by affluent whaling masters and the sturdy Federalist and Cape Cod houses of the farmer-fisherman are a part of our heritage, whether or not we happen to live in them. They are a graphic reminder of the honest pride which allowed no workman to produce less than his best. Many of these houses are filled with treasure from the far corners of the earth as well as furniture, glass, pottery, silver, quilts, rugs and other furnishings handed down from generation to generation. But these are only things and, though they are cherished for their associations and used with pride, they are only part of the Vineyard heritage, reminding us of more valuable, though less tangible assets.

The island has been settled for nearly 350 years and each one has added something to its charisima. Admittedly, these pages do not present the whole picture, only scattered glimpses, so I have called them *Vineyard Sampler*.

THE CAPTAIN

Today he precedes his family down the aisle to the very first pew. Tall, rugged, white-haired and white-bearded, he faces the congregation with poise and dignity, as his family files past him to their accustomed seats. After all these years of acting as a buffer between her unpredictable husband and the world, Julia remains calm, serene, unruffled. She's followed by the boys; Will's as strapping as his father, but Henry and little Edgar are slight fellows with their mother's sweet smile. Then last, so she can sidle close to her father during the long church service, is Adelaide, "a chip off the old block." His family ensconced, the captain lays his stovepipe hat and his scrimshaw topped cane on the floor and takes his place at the end of the pew. He bows his head and all the children follow suit.

In quiet dignity the captain attends the service, repeating with firm conviction the dogmas and creeds of his church, singing in a deep bass all the verses of all the hymns, scarcely glancing at the hymnal. He listens attentively to the minister's sermon, noting each point in the long, involved dissertation. Proper reverence to God brooks no inattention to the words of his servant.

Addie is wriggling and little Edgar has fallen asleep by the time the pastor's "lastly" has been followed by another prayer and the announcement of the closing hymn. The captain's "Amen," leads the response to the benediction. He does not hurry to raise his head, to pick up his hat and cane, to leave the sanctuary. Sedately he leads his family up the aisle to greet his neighbors at the door of the church.

More than likely the minister has dinner with him for they are both pious, reverent, God-fearing leaders of the community. Grace, not brief and stilted, but a full-length prayer of thanks, precedes the meal. The dinner is abundant and delicious, for the captain is a good provider. He farms when he is not at sea, and his sons carry on for him when he is.

The afternoon is short, for the church service was long and the dinner was leisurely. Almost as soon as Addie and her mother have put away the last dish, it is time to go back to church for the evening service. No one is excused. Will pleads lessons to prepare, but his father is adamant, for Sunday is the Lord's Day.

The minister scans his flock as the organist softly plays an evening hymn. Would that more men would follow the captain's example, never missing a church service, generously donating money and labor (albeit that was mostly his wife's), training his

family in Christian precepts, walking firmly and steadfastly with God. Next Sunday he'll be missed, for by then he'll be outward bound on a whaling voyage.

The captain is a "Sunday whaler." He professes to observe the Sabbath at sea in precise accord with the fourth commandment. It isn't easy. On most vessels watches are kept, boats lowered, and whales cut in just the same on Sunday as any other day. Besides, the owner expects his ship filled and returned to port as soon as possible, and even one day out of every seven can add six months, or so, to a three-year's voyage.

Nonetheless, at the outset of each voyage, the captain vows his crew will not violate the Sabbath for gain. Spick and span from their Sunday ablutions, they assemble to listen to the scriptures and lengthy prayers, compounded of familiar, sonorous phrases, interspersed with direct references to individual crewmen. This service is repeated in the late afternoon. Week after week, there is no one on the masthead on Sunday, as services are conducted below decks, or on the quarter-deck, if weather permits. But one Sunday morning as the crew assembles, a cry rings out:

"There she blows!"

"Where away?"

"Three points off the larboard bow!" The captain springs to the rigging with his spyglass to size up the situation.

"Hoist and swing! Lower away!" The boats lower and the chase is on. - That evening the captain notes in his journal:

"December 31, 1831 - about 2000 barrels oil in Latitude 37.30 South, Longitude 3.30 West." He ponders his dereliction and adds:

"Far from home, but farther from God."

The captain is a lonely man. He boasts with other shipmasters that, "This side of land I am responsible to my owners and to God Almighty, but on the other side of land, I AM God Almighty." Being God sets a man apart; he has no equal. The mate, through whom all orders are transmitted, is the only man with whom the captain converses at any length. Even mealtime permits scant sociability, for when a meal is ready, the steward speaks to the captain. On his way to the cabin, the master tells the mate, In due time, the mate follows, speaking to the second as he passes; the summons is then handed from second to third and so on down the line. The meal is over as soon as the captain finishes eating, and the men leave the cabin in the reverse order of their arrival, so that the fourth mate, young, lanky, and still growing, often gets up from the table hungry. The skipper notes and regrets this, but

custom must be observed; any slight deviation marks him as weak, and weak he can not be.

The meal over, young Haskins appears before the captain. He is bent double with pain, his face ashen beneath its tan. Experience and a quick check of his medical books convinces the captain of the young man's ailment and he administers treatment promptly and with apparent confidence. But though he constantly makes swift, sure decisions about handling the vessel, hunting the whale, and what to do when sudden disaster threatens, yet with each medical diagnosis he breathes a fervent prayer for God's help. He does not want to have to tell some woman that her husband or son lies in a watery grave, thousands of miles from home. Sometimes the responsibility seems too great.

But there is more. He is arbiter of all misdemeanors, great or small, and must mete out swift, incisive punishment without recourse to judge or jury. Often his discipline seems harsh and cruel, as when he ordered Allen and Dunham strung up by their thumbs for an entire watch last voyage. But had he not, there would have been a mutiny and many casualties would have been listed in the ship's log. Yet, as in all things, he must bear alone the animosity of the punished men, the sullenness or fear of the rest of the crew, and the nagging of his own conscience asking whether the same end could have been achieved less brutally. He wonders what Julia will think when she reads this entry in his journal. - And then thoughts of family and home engulf him. Proud, certainly not lacking in courage, but heartsick, homesick, and lonely, the captain is a man apart.



Dukes County Historical Society
Captain Jared J. Jernegan II

CAPTAIN JARED JERNEGAN, II

Jared Jernegan went to sea as a cabin boy when he was thirteen and sailed two more voyages before he returned, a second mate, from the Pacific, in May 1846. This time he found Edgartown too interesting to leave. The Ripley house seemed to be the lodestone. Jared and Alonzo Ripley had always been friends, but it was soon evident that Alonzo's sister, Rebecca, was the attraction this time. She and Jared were married on June 3, 1847, and had a blissful summer before Jared sailed as first officer aboard the *Erie* of Fairhaven, Captain Ichabod Norton, bound for the Indian Ocean. Earthquakes on Guam and yellow fever in Pernambuco added to the hazards of this voyage, but Jared returned safely in April, 1850.

This time his stay ashore was brief. He accepted a berth as master of the *William Thompson* of New Bedford, sailing for the North Pacific on July 30, 1850, full of elation at having his own command and determined to make a paying voyage.

Meanwhile back in Edgartown, Rebecca was busily and happily preparing for the arrival of their first child. The baby was born March 22, 1851, and was named Josephine, but she lived only a short time. The days that had flown in anticipation of the baby now dragged wearily. Rebecca's house was spotless as she tried to assuage her grief and loneliness with physical labor. Two more years passed.

At last Jared came home, March 3, 1853. He had proved his ability, bringing and sending home 142 barrels of sperm oil, 2874 barrels of whale oil and 35,800 pounds of bone to make his lay \$5600. Rebecca was pleased with his success, but she needed his company, so he stayed ashore six months. Then, as master of the *Erie*, "the best looking ship afloat," Jared sailed for the North Pacific and the Ochotz Sea on September 1, 1853. On his return to the Vineyard in March, 1857, he was met by his wife and their three year old son, Alymer.

Days seemed to fly as Alymer followed his father everywhere and the two became fast friends. It was hard to part when the *Erie* sailed again for the North Pacific on August 3, 1857, but Jared was eager to get back to sea and looked forward to a successful voyage, which would enable him to provide well for his little family.

This voyage was marred by the news of Rebecca's death. She had died January 28, 1858, two weeks after the birth of their second daughter. Jared wrote long letters to Rebecca's family,

reflecting his sorrow and loneliness, and his concern for his motherless children. Writing from the Sandwich Islands in November, 1858, he concludes:

"You may feel assured I feel very lonely in not receiving those kind letters from my poor lost Rebecca. O how lonely will my home be without her it shall be my greatest pleasure to make her dear little ones happy. I think you will ever say they are well cared for I am anxious to return home and shall come as soon as I get a paying Voyage."

In January 1859, seventeen months from home, he wrote to his brother-in-law, Alonzo, saying he was well but "low in spirit." He continued:

"You have lost a beloved Sister and I a devoted Wife, how lonely will be my home without herYes, I have lost a beloved Wife one that was ever uppermost in my thoughts and I think I shall feel her loss very grate when I am home She was a devoted Wife and my prayer is that she is now at the right hand of her blessed Saviour."

A few months later he wrote again to the Ripleys, telling them that he was recruiting for a northern cruise, "probably three seasons" and he explained:

"I want a good Voyage - probably the last I am tired of going to Sea. I have been advised of the death of my darling child. I do assure you it was a heavy blow to me yes she has gone to meet her Mother in heaven My Prayer is that my Boy may be spared me. Say to Alymer he must be a good boy. Say to him his father loves him dearly. Yes I do love him he is all that I have to remember my beloved Wife by I hope Alymer will remember his mother I shall always feel grateful to you for looking after my little ones and should my Boy live I trust he will always love his grandparents."

The next spring it was Sister Mary Jane's turn to hear from the Sandwich Islands. Jared enjoyed Mary Jane's letters because the "tone of expression appears so much as Rebecca used to" and because Mary Jane mentioned "so much about my noble Boy." She sent Jared a daguerreotype of Alymer, but she also wrote that the boy feared a "crows (cross) and cruel mother." Jared replied:

....."My Sister do you not beleave I loved my sainted Wife well enough that I shall never, never see her Noble Boy ill used. Time may change my mind, But as I now feel it appears as though I should ..ever see the one that will lesson my love towards my darling Boy. You must teach him to love me. Tell him his Father heart is almost broken for the loss of his Sainted Mother and for the loss of his little Sister. Truly my lot has been a hard one to bare and sometimes I feel as the quicker I leave this world the better it would be for me. But when I reflect on the future world I ask myself if I am prepared to meet my Angel Wife. I think I must experience a

change of hart ere I am prepared to stand before our blessed Saviour.O my Sister little do you no how fresh the wound is in my hart, and how slow the wound heals caused by the grate, grate loss of my Beloved Wife I loved your Sister with a pure heart yes I loved her with a heart that was never soiled by loveing another before or since hear death. If others are planning for me to unite myself with another I do not thank them. Say to them that your Sister has left a Husband that would sooner die than to think of such a thing as to give himself to another for many years to come and purhaps never. Say to them if they wish not to offend me they will Please never mention the subject to me for as true as I am to be judged hereafter I have never seen the Lady that I thought I should like to give myself to as for loveing another while my Boy lives it appears to me impossible. But we do not no what the future will do for usTruly I believe I loved your Sister more than mennny men loves there Wives, and I think my God that I never used her ill.I think the death of your Sister has broken my Spirits. I cannot sing as I used to before her death, it appears as tho I should disturb her in that beautiful Land where I beleave she is now. I beleave she can see my every movement (and thus I would have it be) When I arrive home I wll have such a monument as you mentioned about and should I never live to return home, I will hear state that such a one must be placed over her and you may have a few words carved on the marble saying that I was her beloved Husband who viewed her as an Angel to me, I would have her daguerreotype and mine also, set into the monument so that when my Son visits our resting place he may know I loved his mother."

Back from his northern Cruise, Jared found mail awaiting him at Lahaina and wrote the Ripleys:

....."I think you may look for me (at home) by the middle of April. You mentioned in your letter I would be welcome to make my home with you. I do not doubt your word in the least But do you not think I would be a grate deal of Trouble to you without doubt I shall be obliged to receive much company But I will come and make my home with you at first for I feel this to be right and I would be near my Boy until he gets well acquainted with me.O how mennny changes since I left home. and as the time draws near for my return it Brings up afresh the deep wound which the loss of my Beloved wifes death made in my heart. I do not wish to wound your feelings by bringing to your mind the loss of your beloved daughter. But I would have you know that a few months or years has not lessened my love for my departed wife. I think you will see me by the 20th of April at the latest I shall come direct to your home.

Your with grate Respect

Jared Jernegan

Jared had said that he thought he'd be home by the twentieth of April, but he arrived in New Bedford on February 28, 1861. Alymer had the sightseeing and shopping expeditions his father had promised him and then they returned to Edgartown. Jared was a handsome man of thirty-seven whose rather stern features reflected the sorrow and loneliness of the past three years. But this was soon changed when he met the charming young school teacher, Miss Helen Clark.

Helen, and others of her family, had come to Edgartown from Gorham, Maine, ten years before to live with relatives, Charlotte Coffin, Aunt Pierce, and Dr. and Mrs. Pease. Helen was a good student, especially in geography and mathematics. She became a school teacher who instructed many a future whaling master in the mathematics he later used in his navigation. However, she was quite willing to forego teaching to become Mrs. Captain Jared Jernegan, which she did on June 5, 1861.

Jared stayed ashore eighteen months, but he grew restless. The *Erie* had been sold and converted to a merchant ship and Captain Jernegan was asked to take her to Honolulu. He sailed June 3, 1862, loaded with assorted cargo, which included 160 tons of coal and a deckload of lumber. The *Vineyard Gazette* for November 28, 1862, Edgar Marchant, Editor, gives the account of this ill-fated voyage:

Loss of Ship *Erie*. Capt. Jernegan, late of ship *Erie*, before reported lost off Cape Horn, arrived in town on Sunday evening last, having taken passage in the barque *Tempest*, Capt. King, which left Pernambuco for New London, on the 16th of October. Captain Jernegan states that the *Erie* was abandonned on the twentieth of August, 1862. On the 16th of August, in lat. 56, lon.74W, the *Erie* experienced a severe hurricane, in which she lost all her sails, carried away the bowsprit, foremast, maintopgallant mast, all the bulwarks, and lost deckload; in fact, the ship was left a complete wreck. A tremendous sea was running at the time, and it made a clean sweep over the *Erie's* decks. Sounded the pumps and found the ship had sprung a leak. On the second day got the wrecked spars clear of the ship, the bowsprit having done much injury to the ship's bow and probably caused her to leak. The gale continued up to the nineteenth, at which time the crew were nearly exhausted, and the leak gaining fast. Commenced to heave some of the cargo overboard from the run scuttle, it being too rugged to work at the after hatchway. The ship was now settling by the stern, having 160 tons of coal in the after hold. Having no boats to leave the ship in, Capt. Jernegan was very anxious to see a friendly sail. He had lost two men overboard, (Charles Hitch, son of Hardy Hitch, of Fairhaven, and Barney Snell, of Fall River,) and many of the remaining

crew were frost-bitten, and had been without dry clothing since the 16th. The cabin, or house on deck, was badly wrecked, and the doors fell down. On the 20th, at daylight, saw a ship running before the wind under three close-reefed topsails. She proved to be the *Southern Rights* of Richmond, Me., W. L. Knowles, master, from Calloa for London. Capt. Jernegan says -

Having lost our boats, they sent a small boat to our rescue. It was very rough at the time I sent six of my men in the boat. When she returned, it was very rugged, and as the wind was increasing, I thought it best for the remainder of my crew to go. I abandoned the *Erie* to save the lives of my men, as well as my own life. We saved nothing but the clothing we had on. The following night we had a heavy gale from the southeast, with much snow, and the *Southern Rights* was much iced up. We had a very long passage to this port (Pernambuco) where we were landed on the 8th of October.

George D. Courtney of this town, who was in the *Erie* when the disaster occurred, also came home in the *Tempest*. The rest of the crew were at Pernambuco, but would soon sail for home.

Captain Jernegan came home as third mate aboard the *Tempest* and there was great rejoicing in the Jernegan family.

Little Laura, born twenty-six days after her father sailed, was a constant delight, and Alymer and his father spent much time together through the winter months.

However, a shipwreck could not make a landsman of Jared, and on June 3, 1863, as master of the whaling bark *Oriole* of New Bedford, he cleared for the North Pacific. The *Oriole* was a beautiful vessel which Jared likened to a clipper ship and, indeed, she sailed like one. Near the Equator she encountered a Confederate Privateer, but smartly outsailed her.

Jared missed his family and wrote Helen long, impassioned letters urging her to meet him in either San Francisco or Honolulu in the fall of 1865 and giving her instructions for the journey.

In March, off the Sandwich Islands, he wrote:

..... Yes, my darling Helen, I do promise myself to see you next November and I know my darling little wife will be very anxious for the time to glide away I shall let you git rate up into my lap just as you used to, then I will tell my beautiful little wife how lonely I have been for more than two years. Many of my Brother Whalemen have been very unsuccessful and I think this will cause many of them to send for there wives. I no of several captains who intend for there wives to meet them next fall. Perhaps you will meet with some of them on the steamer. It is not every woman I would have my little wife to trust herself with as a friend I no I would rather for you to go on Board of the Steamer not knowing one on Board, than to be acquainted with some that will take passage with you. I have

every confidence in you and I shall have no fear but you will take care of yourself the passage out here. Helen let me say to you have no fears in regard to the Passage out to San Francisco, as I assure you it is near nothing, so listen to no one that may try to make it appear a grate undertaking. If I did not want to see you and want your Society I should never of sent for you for I assure you it is no place for a Lady on a Ship if she is not happy in her Husband.

Then from Honolulu he wrote: "received a large pile of letters from you." As an afterthought he added:

I will here mention that my white shirts are nearly worne out. Perhaps you could make me say three or Four and Bring them with you. I expect to see you next October at San Francisco. O how happy I shall feal if you are only well. I should also be pleased to have a few collars (16 neck) When I was at home Brother Nathan wanted to sell his Gold Watch Now I will hear say I should like for you to Purchase it if you Think you can git it for a fair Price and fetch it with you. Have it put in good order.

Helen and Jared met in Honolulu as agreed. Many years later, Helen wrote her recollection of her passage out and the voyage home on the *Oriole*,* which arrived in New Bedford on Sept. 2, 1866. Captain Jernegan's share of this voyage was \$16,000. Another son, Prescott, was born the 17th of December, so the family stayed ashore the next two years.

In October, 1868, Jared took command of the *Roman*, which had just been altered from a ship to a bark. Helen and the two younger children accompanied him and were five months at sea before reaching Honolulu.**Here the family stayed while Jared went whaling in the Arctic summers and, when he returned in the fall, the family joined him aboard the *Roman* for the between-seasons cruise to the line.

When Jared sailed for the Arctic in 1871, Helen and the children took passage on a steamer bound for San Francisco, and thence home. That season Jared sent home 379 barrels of sperm oil, 2232 barrels of whale oil and 30,763 pounds of whalebone which amounted to \$59,000. This was fortuitous for on September 7th, the *Roman* was crushed by the ice and sank immediately, with scant time for the crew to save themselves. Several other vessels met the same fate before the captains decided to abandon the ships on September 14th. Seven ships had succeeded in getting

*This account may be found in *Whaling Wives*, pp. 116-117, by Emma Mayhew Whiting and Henry Beetle Hough.

**Ibid pp. 117-120 tell of the family's life at Honolulu and aboard the *Roman* as Helen remembered it years later and six year old Laura's diary may be found on pp. 127-133.

outside the ice pack and the crews of the abandoned ships made their way through the icy leads to this comparative safety. Sail was made for the straits and the course laid for Honolulu, which they reached late in October. Jared arrived home a month later. Thirty-three years had elapsed since his first whaling voyage, despite his prediction that his second voyage aboard the *Erie* would be his "last awhaling." He was forty-six years old and he settled down at the house on Summer Street, which had always been his home. Now Jared's family, (soon to be joined by a third son, Marcus W., born August 6, 1872) was growing up here, thanks to the Will of his father which gave "to my son Jared my dwelling house I now live in."

But Jared's seafaring days were not over. In 1874, he bought a fourth interest in the bark *Napoleon* of New Bedford and sailed as master for a four year voyage to the Pacific.

While Captain Jernegan was searching for whales, affairs ashore were managed by his competent wife. Occasionally, this necessitated a trip to the mainland, and Laura would be left to take care of her brothers. A letter written to her mother, November, 1875, tells how she managed and gives considerable insight into the Jernegans' family life.

My dear Mama

at precisely five minutes
of eight Monday evening

.....It seems so funny to be writing you. I don't believe I ever wrote to you before.

We have got along nicely today. This morning I got all through my work at eight o'clock. After you went we had breakfast and then I cleared off the table and swept the kitchen and washed the dishes and then I did the rest of the work. I locked your bedroom door just as soon as I did the work there and I put the key under the top of the machine and I did not open it again until I put Marcus to bed. Just before I went to school I put the potatoes in the basin and asked Al to put them on. He said he would so I went to school.

When I got home he had got the table all set and everything all ready. We ate and I washed the dishes and went to school. We had those boiled potatoes (I boiled 18 and we ate 10 so as to have enough for breakfast) and cold meat and bread and apple pie. Then for supper we had head cheese four cruls five pieces of cake and the rest of the pie. That constituted our supper. I came home in the afternoon at quarter of three and then Al went out. I put Marcus to bed at quarter of six. He went to sleep real good. This evening Prescott, Ally and I played the new game Al brought us. We played until quarter of eight and then Al went downstreet.

Prescott got a book this morning down to the library. The name of it was *Forest Exiles*. It was real good. O I sent down and got that pound of butter to the Union Store this morning. It was real good. The milk pail is out for I put it out this morning. The milk the boy left this morning was just splendid it tasted exactly like cream. We drank it for supper.

Aunt Deborah and Annie came here this morning quite a long time after you left. You know I couldn't think what I wanted you to get this morning. Well it came to me all of a sudden. It was an Autograph Album. I have been wanting one for ever so long. I don't know as you will have time to get it when you get this letter but never mind if you don't.

Now I think you had better go to S.B. (South Berwick.) You will never have a better chance and we are getting along nicely here at home and you can go just as well as not. I would if I was you. There I believe I have written everything about today. You wouldn't think there was so much to write would you? Prescott is just going to bed now it is half past eight. I let him sit up because I was lonesome. I will write a lot more tomorrow night about tomorrow.

from Laura

During this voyage the bark *Atlantic* collided with the *Napoleon* resulting in a law suit which netted the owners of the latter \$10,000. Jared sold his interest and bought a half interest in the *Tropic Bird*, which he fitted for the Arctic. He spent one season there and then sold his half of the vessel and its cargo for \$53,000. and returned home overland.

The middle of August, 1881, Captain Jernegan took the bark *Bounding Billow*, Edgartown, to the North Pacific. Here he whaled until November 15, 1882, returning to San Francisco, from where the bark sailed for the next ten years.

In July, 1883 Captain Jernegan sailed the *Napoleon* to the North Pacific, where he fished until the end of October, 1884, returning to San Francisco and home. Jared owned half of the *Napoleon*, and other members of the Jernegan family also owned in her. They were understandably upset when Captain Samuel P. Smith, who had bought a sixteenth interest from Jared, lost the vessel in the Arctic, May 5, 1885. More tragic was the loss of twenty-two men. Some of the boats were picked up by nearby ships, but two boatloads capsized from which only three or four men reached shore; just one, J. B. Vincent of Edgartown, survived. He lived two years with the natives and all that time he carved on small pieces of wood:

J.B.V. BARK NAP.
CAPE NAVARIN
TOBACCO GIVE

These he gave to the Eskimos, instructing them to hand them to any white men they met. Months and months later, one of these crude messages reached a whaler, and Mr. Vincent was rescued.

Twice more Jared went to sea, both times as relief master. In November, 1885, Captain George Baker cleared the bark *Europa* for Japan and the Ochotsk Sea and before long Jared heard from Aiken and Swift, agents, asking him to take over. He brought the *Europa* back to San Francisco, October 28, 1886, with 1450 barrels of whale oil and 16,000 pounds of bone. The bark *Mary and Susan*, Captain Fisher, left San Francisco a month later, bound for the North Pacific. Again a relief master was needed and Jared, who was still in San Francisco, was given the berth. He brought the *Mary and Susan* back November 3, 1887, with 750 barrels of oil and 17,000 pounds of bone. He was paid \$100 per month for his service and given \$70 for fare home from San Francisco.

Jared had been whaling for nearly half a century, but every time he came home he had made some improvement to his house or grounds. The Jernegans, despite - or perhaps because - of the fact that they spent many months at sea, liked growing things. The grapevines, which Jared had planted many years ago, still flourished, and the linden trees, now grown tall and stately, wafted their fragrance over the entire neighborhood. Contentedly, Jared spent the next ten years in his boyhood home, surrounded by his family and friends. He died in January, 1899, but Helen continued to live in the house on Summer Street for over thirty years more.

THE CAPTAIN'S MEDICINE CHEST

Accidents and illness aboard whaleships were common, but not as frequent or widespread as they were in the merchant fleet because whaleships were required by law to go into port every five or six months, and usually skilled medical help could be obtained then. There is no evidence that a medical practitioner was ever signed on board a New England whaleship, in his professional capacity, for a full cruise,* but sometimes doctors were taken aboard for a few weeks or a few months to treat a particular patient or to vaccinate the whole crew for smallpox. Occasionally, a doctor went on a cruise to benefit his own health. However, whalemens had their troubles, which often could not wait weeks or months for attention, so the master of the ship doubled as doctor or surgeon.

Illness and injury were noted in the ships' logs but usually treatment was not. The very early whaleships, and those that made "plum pudding" voyages, had no regular supply of drugs. Later, all vessels were expected to carry a medicine chest, its size and contents depending on the size of the ship and the generosity of the owners.

With only a small chest of drugs and its accompanying booklet of instructions, the master of a whaleship had to treat all common and many rare diseases and to perform surgery which might cover anything from sewing up a small gash or pulling an ulcerated tooth to amputating an arm or leg.

The Dukes County Historical Society has a captain's medicine chest, a sturdy wooden box, with lock and key, put out by Wheelock Finlay and Company, wholesale Druggists and Importers, New Orleans. It has thirty-two partitions above a full-size drawer and contains a booklet entitled, *Directions for Knowing and Treating the Diseases and Accidents Incident to Seamen. Medicine Chests for Ships, Vessels, and Families. Prepared and Replenished at Short Notice According to the Within Directions.* By Edward Munro, Druggist and Apothecary, Water Street, New Bedford, Mass.. Printed by Benjamin T. Congdon, 1835. The last page of this booklet lists fifty-one medicines contained in the chest partitions and the supplies in the drawer below. The remainder of the booklet consists of directions for using these items. Most medicines are recommended for a variety

*Lipman, Arthur G. *Medicine and Pharmacy Aboard New England Whaleships*

of complaints and, to add to the confusion, many substances with curative qualities are fatal if an inexact amount is used.

In addition to the booklets in the medicine chests some periodicals disseminated medical lore. One of these was *The Family Magazine or Monthly Abstract of General Knowledge*, published by J. S. Redfield, New York; Otis Broaders & Co., in Boston, and J. A. Adams & Co., Cincinnati, which had a wide circulation. The Medical Science Section of Vol. VII, 1840, dealt with poisons which it divided into five sections: Irritating Poisons, Acrid Narcotic Poisons, Septic or Putrefactive Poisons, and Poisons of Certain Cases. Its introduction stated that "most substances called poisonous are only so in certain doses; when given in smaller quantities, many are active medicines. Others are fatal in the smaller doses, such as those of hydrophobia and the plague."

After this somewhat ambiguous start, the article lists under each of the five sections, the substances which contain that poison, the symptoms and the remedies. The symptoms of ingested acids and alkalies are "nearly the same," only the rejected matter effervesces with acids and does not with alkalies. The remedy for acid is one ounce calcined magnesium to a pint of warm or cold water, a glassful every two minutes to excite vomiting. Afterwards drink soap or chalk water, mucilaginous drinks, such as lintseed tea or gum arabic, and water. To neutralize copper and mercurial preparations, which are corrosive sublimates, use whites of 12 to 15 eggs beaten up and mixed with a quart of cold water. Take a glassful every three minutes. If you have no eggs, you may use milk, gum water or lint-seed tea. To counteract alkilies, take a teaspoonful or two of lemon juice or vinegar in a glass of water; or simply drink warm water."

Captain Jared Fisher, Jr., doubtless had a medicine chest with its booklet of symptoms and cures, issued by his owners, and he also had the all-inclusive *Every Man His Own Doctor*, printed in 1816, 560 pages of extremely fine print listing "causes, knowledge and cures" of diseases on over 400 pages and medicinal qualities of plants for 50 more. The latter describes indigenous and naturalized plants quite clearly, but is somewhat vague and confusing as to how these may be used to counteract diseases.

The last section of the book surely merits totting it over the seven seas on a four-year whaling voyage for it tells in great detail how to buy a horse (and other farm animals) and how to cure their various ailments.

Another part of this remarkable book gives receipts for the cure of jaundice, heartburn, scratches, sore throat, piles, headache, whooping cough, sprain, cramp, weak stomach, warts, et cetera. These are interposed with methods for preserving foods, including "an excellent catsup which will keep good more than 20 years." Mingled with these are directions for making liquid blacking, dying yarn, destroying vermin, making glass, and additional remedies for ailments of animals.

One can understand this book being in the home of a farmer-fisherman, but why Captain Jared Fisher took it to sea with him is less clear. Apparently he did not wholly rely on this volume, for his log and other books contained many hand-written "receipts for the cure of dysentery." Four of them follow:

1. 15 drops laudanum to 5 drops white vitriol - the vitriol must be dissolved in water as strong as it can be made.
2. Tincture of camphor, rhubarb, laudanum - equal parts. One teaspoon 3 times a day. Brandy and Castile soap.
3. Take 10 grams calomel & 8 grams of opium - mix - make same into 12 pills - take 1 morning, noon and night - also take a moderate dose of rhubarb every 2nd or 3d day. Diet should be light as possible. Rice water for drink.
4. 1 oz. tincture cinnamon, ½ oz. laudanum, ½ oz. tincture of kince, ¼ oz. camphorate spirits. Mix together. Shake well before using. Take a teaspoon in a little brandy - the 2nd dose generally cures - as soon as the disease is stopped, stop taking the medicine as the kince is rather poisonous.

None of these books was "fool-proof," but combined with the skills and common sense that most whaling masters had, they and the medicine chest were valuable in treating minor ailments and in first aid for others until the ship could put into port.

However, there were times when nothing could be done. One of these was when Mr. Warren, a boatheader in the *Belvedere*, Captain Joseph Whiteside, was "ailing" for some time. Suddenly, he became very ill. He was taken ashore to a small hut which had been prepared for him, and two shipmates took turns caring for him. He died in the spring and was buried on the east side of the Mackenzie River. The cause of his death was never known.

A similar thing happened to a harpooner aboard the *Freeman*, Captain John Cook. For two days the man complained of pains in his back, but no one paid much attention to him. On the third day he was found dead in his bunk and his body was committed to the deep. Inevitably, some whalers died at sea, but the marvel is that their number was so few.

Accidents were numerous and many were unusual and serious. In 1816, off the west coast of South America, the *Winslow*, Captain Edmund Gardner, had all boats down on smooth seas with many whales in sight. Five times his boatsteerers missed easy strikes, so Gardner went to the bow of his boat and sang out for the mate to do the same. Captain Gardner harpooned his whale, but was badly hurt in doing so. Bleeding copiously, he was rushed to the ship where it was found that one whale's tooth had entered his skull, another pierced his hand and a third had ripped his right arm from shoulder to elbow. His shoulder and jaw were broken, five teeth knocked out, his tongue cut through, and many bones smashed. The mate and the second officer bound his wounds and set his arm, and the ship headed for Paita. Weak from loss of blood, Captain Gardner fainted frequently and had to be fanned continuously for two days. (After that fans were included in the Captain's Medicine Chest.) On the sixth day after the accident, the *Winslow* anchored at Paita and a doctor from a Spanish ship examined Captain Gardner. Through an interpreter, he said Gardner's wounds were very bad and his left hand must be cut off. (His head also was bad, but the Spaniard did not suggest cutting that off.) He did, however, recommend an immediate visit from a chaplain to hear Gardner's confession as he felt there was little chance of the captain's recovery. Instead, Gardner's mate sent for another doctor from Piura who took the captain ashore, saw that he had proper care and saved his hand. In two months, Captain Gardner had recovered enough to return to his vessel which, in the meantime, had been successfully whaling nearby.

Accident victims in the Arctic very often could not be taken to a doctor. Captain Hartson Bodfish tells in *Chasing the Bowhead** how, as a young man stepping a new fore top-mast aboard the *Mary D. Hume*, the hook on the pennant block broke and a piece of it struck Bodfish's foot, breaking one toe and smashing another. He knew he'd have to lose his toe, so he asked the steward to ask the captain to amputate it. The captain could not come at once. The foot was numb and Bodfish knew the longer he waited the more painful it would be, so with the steward and the cabin boy "looking on and groaning," he whetted his knife, cut off the smashed toe, and had his foot all bandaged when Captain Tilton came below. The foot healed, but some time later Bodfish had to have it opened to remove a sliver of bone which he had missed.

* Hartson Bodfish, *Chasing the Bowhead*, Cambridge, 1936.

Many years later, two young officers, West and Cottle, were wintering at Hershel Island aboard the *Freeman*,* Captain John Cook, when they set out with a sled, six dogs and a canoe to get some deer meat. At the edge of the ice they left their sled and piled everything, including dogs, into the canoe. There were a few ducks flying over the open water and Mr. Cottle loaded a shotgun and brought down several. Reaching shore, the men hauled their canoe upon the beach and began unloading tents, camping gear, provisions and firearms. In his haste, Mr. West got hold of the muzzle of a gun. As he hauled it toward him, the hammer caught and the contents of both barrels went through his right arm. With the help of Mr. Eldredge, an officer from the *Alexander* which was nearby, Mr. Cottle applied a tight tourniquet which undoubtedly saved West's life. Aboard the *Freeman*, West refused to have his arm amputated, even though several of the captains agreed it had to be done to save his life. Finally, West told Captain Cook, "I put my life in your hands. Do as you think best. But do you think you can operate successfully?" Cook replied, "You may die if we operate. You surely will die if we do not."

There was no ether, so chloroform had to be the anesthetic and Captain Bodfish administered it. Captains McKenna and Cook assisted Captain Leavitt in the operation. Theoretically, they knew how to proceed, for they had studied all the medical books in the fleet, but they had neither instruments nor knowledge to read the condition of the patient's heart. They gave West a good stiff glass of whiskey before using the chloroform, reasoning that it would stimulate the heart, lessening the danger from the anesthesia. They sterilized their tools as best they could, applied a tight tourniquet to reduce the loss of blood and hung a watch from the ceiling so Captain Bodfish could time the pulsations of the heart. They thought they understood how to pick up the arteries after cutting through the flesh, but confronted with a conglomeration of black powder, pieces of a deerskin shirt, clotted blood and shattered bones, they could not pick out the arteries so they left a flap of skin to go over the shoulder and be sewn on top after the bone was cut. Then they could detect the large arteries by the pulsations and they quickly caught them with forceps and tied them with catgut, carried in the medicine chest for that purpose. Small veins were cauterized with nitrate of silver. All particles of bone and foreign matter were removed and the wound thoroughly

* Capt. John A. Cook, *Pursuing the Whale*, Cambridge, 1926.

cleaned. An hour and fifty minutes after West was anesthetized, the cabin was thoroughly aired and he slowly regained consciousness.

Four times the wound had to be opened and resewn, but gradually it healed and West regained strength, though his whaling days were over. The captains, officers, and engineers of the fleet donated \$1400.00 for West to start a new life in San Francisco.

Another strange accident happened right after World War I when Captain Ellsworth West chartered an old wooden freighter, *Ocktarara*, to carry lumber to Cuba. His chief engineer was engaged in making repairs on the refrigerating system where a slight leak had developed in the ammonia tank. Suddenly the bolt on which he was working blew out, releasing the contents of the tank directly into his face, totally blinding him. He was suffering such terrible agony that two men had to hold him to keep him from jumping overboard. Captain West sent a wireless message asking for information on how to treat the wounded man. Two replies came within twenty minutes. An American ship wired it didn't know what to do. An English vessel reported a remedy suggested in an old medical book they had was vinegar. The captain snatched up a cruet from the dining room and emptied it right into the man's eyes. In less than five minutes, he had relief. The next morning he refused a chance to go ashore to the hospital for, although his eyes were still badly inflamed, he was not in pain.

Accidents sustained aboard ship were as varied and unpredictable as those ashore. Diseases were often attributable to the unhealthy climate of ports of call and to replacements of crew members. Cramped quarters of shipboard life made it very difficult to quarantine the sick, so disease spread rapidly.

The most common disease among seamen was seasickness for, though we often think of that in connection with landlubbers or greenhorns, people who have been to sea most of their lives are frequently subject to seasickness. Doctor Nathaniel W. Taylor, who spent twenty-one months on a whaling voyage to the Antarctic aboard the *Julius Caesar* of New London, * writes that on the fourth day out they encountered a thunderstorm in the Gulf Stream and he experienced the "indescribable feelings of seasickness." He continues, "Seasickness is an inverted peristaltic action of the muscular coat of the stomach and the intestines. The feelings are beyond the power of language to describe and are only

known by those who have experienced them.In certain constitutions and in peculiar states of the system, inflammation is induced which, if not speedily arrested, may end in death.

"Spare diet and exercise on deck are the only preventives. Acidulated drinks help. Salt water or warm tea is a sailor's remedy," as is a half cup of vinegar.

In January, 1822, Moses E. Morrell on board the *Hero* out of Nantucket wrote:

"Most all our hands being unaccustomed to the motion of the ship, those countenances that before had been expressions of pleasure and health, in a moment became dejected, pale and terrific.Such a scene is difficult to describe. Literally, it was a floating hospital. Some would lay prostrate on deck, regardless of spray. Others lying on their chests, sighing to be home where some friendly hand would administer to their wants, instead of which their shipmates, more accustomed to the boisterous elements, stood and laughed at their calamity."*

Doctor Usher Parsons in his revised edition of the *Sailor's Physician* prescribes as a prevention for seasickness 40 - 80 drops laudanum and then retire to berth ¼ - 1 hour before vessel reaches swell of the sea, thus sleep away part or all of the sickness.

Though seasickness might be the most prevalent disease, smallpox was the most dreaded, especially in the cramped quarters of a whaleship. Captain William Mayhew and his wife Caroline in the *Powhatan*, outward bound from Edgartown in April, 1846, underwent a protracted siege of smallpox.** Breaking out in the forecabin, it spread rapidly and when the ship reached the southern part of the Cape Verde Islands, eight men were ill, while several had recovered. The ship was in quarantine at St. Jago for twenty days before it was cleared and the health officers gave permission to land. All seemed well, and early in June the *Powhatan* sailed. As soon as it reached warm weather, more cases of smallpox appeared. Captain Mayhew kept the ship in the cool trade winds until the men recovered and then resumed his course. When they neared the heat of the Equator, more men fell ill, including Captain Mayhew. Caroline had bravely and efficiently nursed them all, but now she had to be nurse and navigator, too. In addition to being thoroughly familiar with the contents of the Medicine Chest and methods for using them, Caroline was a firm believer in cleanliness and fresh air and in separating the well from

**Lipman, A. G., *Medicine & Pharmacy Aboard N. E. Whaleships* Univ. R. I.

**Whiting, Emma Mayhew & Henry Beetle Hough. *Whaling Wives*, Boston 1953.

* Nathaniel W. Taylor, M.D., *Life on a Whaler*, New London 1929.

the ill as much as possible. Undaunted, she cured her husband of a severe case of smallpox while keeping the ship on course. Inevitably, she fell victim to the disease and suffered through it. Thanks in large part to her skillful ministrations, not a man was lost.

Another two-month infestation of smallpox occurred aboard the brig *Sullivan*, Captain William Hagerty, in 1905.* Louis Lopes, mate, noted in the log:

- 10/29/05 picked up 10 men at St. Nicholas, Cape Verde Islands
- 11/ 4/05 one man broke out with smallpox
- 11/16/05 buried one of ten men got at St. Nicholas
- 11/20/05 saw sailing vessels. Captain went alongside to try to get a little sulphur for sick men - would not let him have any because he had no money.
- 11/23/05 another man sick with smallpox so Captain has started for land.
- 11/30/05 second mate and another have smallpox
- 12/ 1/05 put into another village & doctor came aboard and claims disease smallpox all hands vaccinated today at Benvente we are ordered away from here to Rio de Janiero - have a man on board looking out for sick
- 12/ 4/05 One of sick can't take food
- 12/ 5/05 One died at 3 P.M. Buried at 4 P.M.
- 12/ 8/05 Got on way at noon and arrived on quarantine grounds at 5 P.M. - the doctor came aboard - also the custom house officer Men were ordered to hospital
- 12/ 9/05 laying at Rio, the fumigator came alongside fumigated ship - no one able to sleep below tonight Fumigating consisted of placing pans of water about decks - every twenty feet, lighting sulphur and sealing ship completely for two days and one night.
- 12/13/05 the doctor ordered the ship painted
- 12/17/05 three men not feeling well
- 12/18/05 two men went to hospital today with smallpox
- 12/20/05 one more man went to hospital today - fumigator has been alongside again fumigating
- 12/22/05 one of our men came out of the hospital today
- 12/27/05 one of our men came out of the hospital

Scurvy, less common now than in whaling days, was a dreaded disease of seamen. Attributed to salt provisions, grease and fat, want of cleanliness, and laziness, it was particularly serious aboard whaleships icebound on the Arctic and unable to get any fresh

*Lipman, Arthur G., *Medicine & Pharmacy Aboard New England Whaleships*, Kingston, R.I.

foods. A lichen, discovered by Dutch seamen in Iceland, became known as whalers' cabbage.* This moss was apparently rich enough in ascorbic acid to prevent scurvy and was used prophylactically by whalers even before the cause and cure of scurvy were known.

Doctor Taylor, whom we quoted earlier, ** wrote that at Desolation the men aboard the *Julius Caesar* "were driven ashore" to gather cabbages. Captain Morgan had known of seamen "buried alive" because they had scurvy and it was not an uncommon occurrence. My husband's grandfather, Anderson Poole, was mate aboard a Bristol brig, trading to the west coast of Africa shortly after the Civil War, when the second mate went ashore with several crewmen to bury them in the sand to alleviate the scurvy. He packed sand over each man, leaving only his head exposed, and then strolled down the beach while the "cure" took effect. When he returned, a horrible sight greeted him for wild dogs had come out of the brush and killed all the sailors.***

Dana writes, "Scurvy broke out on the way home. One man was disabled and off duty, another in a dreadful state, growing worse daily. His legs ached and swelled with rheumatic-like pains so he could not walk. His flesh lost its elasticity, his gums swelled so he couldn't open his mouth. His breath was offensive and he lost strength and spirit. He could eat nothing - growing worse every day. Medicines were nearly all gone, but they wouldn't have helped. Fresh provisions and being ashore are the only help for scurvy.****

Then they met a brig out of Bermuda, and bought half a boatload of potatoes and onions. The men ate them raw with beef and bread for every meal and filled their pockets to eat between meals. One of the victims soon recovered, but the other could hardly open his mouth so the cook pounded potatoes in a mortar and the patient swallowed a teaspoonful every hour until he could open his mouth to eat raw potatoes and onions pounded to a pulp. In ten days he was back on duty.

In 1832, the *Franklin* of Nantucket was lost and scurvy was the indirect cause. The ship had been whaling in the Pacific and had

*Ibid.

**Taylor, Nathaniel W., M. D., *Life on a Whaler*, New London, 1929.

***The vessel was so shorthanded as a result of this tragedy that it was wrecked and the survivors had to walk many miles along the African coast. Their only drinking water was salt water poured through a bucket of sand, over and over. The mate grew insane and died before they reached home.

****Dana, R. H., Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast*. New York, 1840.

rounded Cape Horn on its homeward voyage, when Captain George Prince and five of his men died of scurvy. Matthew Clark, a boatsteerer, took command, but the vessel encountered severe storms and was lost on the coast of Brazil.*

Captain John Cook says that during six winters in the north with crews of fifty to fifty-five men, he had only one case of scurvy. He attributes the immunity to "a plentiful diet of fresh game (moose, rabbit, deer, bear) provided by hired hunters while the whalemens were frozen in their winter quarters."**

Captain Hartson Bodfish of Vineyard Haven agreed with this procedure. He changed a patient's diet from cooked to raw food - in this case deer meat - but gave no medicine. In two weeks the man was allowed a slice or two of bread and a cup of tea for variety. A few victims did not respond to this treatment and their legs contracted and turned black. They were taken ashore and put in a snowhouse with their legs packed in mud. All recovered in less than a month.

Another constant danger in the Arctic was frostbite and there are many incidents of men deserting their ships only to crawl - or be brought back - with badly frozen limbs, like a deserter from the *Narwhal*. Captain Leavitt had to amputate the man's legs, one below the knee and the other at the thigh.***

Christopher Nelson was one of a crew of forty who survived when the *Helen Mar* sank in the ice in 1892. He and a companion had been on an ice floe with their whaleboat for more than thirty-six hours when the other man lost hope and fell over the side of the boat, capsizing it. Nelson climbed astride the keel of the boat and saw the lights of the *Freeman* which, with the *Belvedere*, had been steaming along the ice pack looking for some sign of the *Helen Mar*. The crew of the *Freeman* heard Nelson's cries and rescued him, but his legs and feet were frozen so badly that his toes were amputated at once. Stimulants were given to him, while his legs up to his knees were put in ice water to draw out the frost. Hot Poultices made of potatoes in their skins were applied until the live flesh began to separate from the dead. Then charcoal and flaxseed poultices were substituted. Granulated sugar was sprinkled on plentifully as a purifier and a great healing agent. The parts were syringed every day with a solution of carbolic acid to keep them

healthy. The patient began to improve; small pieces of bone came out occasionally, but finally this stopped and the flesh began to look better, new skin growing over the raw flesh.

On November 8th, crossing the Bering Sea, the *Freeman* met a Revenue Cutter and signalled for a doctor. The doctor and the captain of the cutter came aboard and looked the patient over. The doctor said to Captain Cook, "You have done well, but to try to save those feet is utterly useless. The skin will never grow over that flesh. The only thing to do is to amputate the feet." Captain Cook tried to tell the doctor that the feet were healing, but the doctor was sure amputation was necessary. Captain Cook was as sure it was not, so he refused to send Nelson aboard the cutter and, instead, took him to San Francisco and put him in the Marine Hospital there on November 18th. The next February when Captain Cook was again in San Francisco, he met Christopher Nelson, his feet now healed so he could walk very well.*

Snow blindness on Arctic voyages was common and painful. The whalemens knew they should wear smoked glasses, but they got careless and then were afflicted by an inflammation caused by the glare of the light on the snow. Their eyelids felt as if they were packed full of needles, all pointing inwards and each one pricking with every wink. "The cure is a drop of molasses in the eye seven or eight times daily. Fine sugar can be used, but is not as effective," and Captain Bodfish said, "Boracic Acid and other things in the Medicine Chest have no effect whatever." Eskimos wear hollowed out wooden goggles, covering their eyes and projecting about an inch in front, with a very narrow slit through which to see.**

In very fine print, the introduction to the *Sailor's Physician* by Usher Parsons, Md.D., says:

"It may be safely doubted whether attempts to diffuse medical science among all classes of people, and make every man his own physician, be conducive to the interests of the medical profession or the cause of humanity."

Just how many men owed their lives to the contents of the Captain's Medicine Chest, and the captain's skillful use of it, can not be reckoned, but there is no doubt that without it the fatalities would have been much greater.

*Clark was the senior officer remaining, but he knew little or no navigation.

**Cook, John A., *Thar She Blows*, Boston, 1937.

***Bodfish, Hartson, *Chasing the Bowhead*, Cambridge, 1936.

*Cook, John A., *Pursuing the Whale*, Cambridge 1926.

**Bodfish, Hartson, *Chasing the Bowhead*, Cambridge, 1936.

SEA SERPENTS

There have been many sea serpents reportedly seen near Martha's Vineyard. The coastal waters from Provincetown to Long Island seem to be one of their favorite haunts. All along this section, from early colonial days to the present, there have been scattered reports of sea serpents, strange, exotic, marine creatures, appearing mysteriously from the ocean depths.

In 1817, the Linnean Society of Boston formed a committee for the purpose "of collecting any evidence which may exist respecting a remarkable animal, denominated a 'Sea Serpent,' reported to have been seen in and near the harbour of Gloucester." The committee drew up careful rules to regulate their investigation. They and a resident of Gloucester, whom they chose, were to act as interrogators. All examinations were to be separate, and the testimony was not to be disclosed until all the evidence had been heard. People were to relate their recollections, but a list of twenty-five questions was drawn up to ask each witness if his account did not supply sufficient data. Only those who claimed to have seen the animal in question were to be examined. All testimony was to be recorded, read to the person testifying, signed by him and sworn to before a magistrate.

Only one creature was seen during this period. It was around Gloucester Harbor for about two weeks, late in August, and was reported in Long Island Sound in early October. It was seen by many people, simultaneously. Observations were from a few minutes to two hours, at all times of day, and at a distance ranging from a few feet to a mile.

The serpent was black, or dark brown, about three feet in diameter, varying from seventy to one hundred twenty feet in length. Most witnesses said the skin appeared smooth, but a few thought it was rough. The head was like a serpent's and three witnesses saw a long tongue protruding from the horny mouth. No legs, fins, gills or mane were reported, but one witness spoke of seeing a bright eye, resembling that of an ox. The serpent appeared to take little notice of its surroundings and was not heard to utter any sounds. This was the evidence of twelve depositions obtained by the committee, and the general agreement of the witnesses merited serious consideration of their evidence.

However, about a month after the disappearance of the sea serpent, a strange looking black snake was found on the beach near Gloucester and taken to the committee. Close examination

and dissection showed that the animal agreed "in many conspicuous, important and peculiar characteristics" with the "strange marine animal" which local authorities asserted had appeared for the purpose of laying its eggs on Gloucester's shores. The committee concluded that these two creatures were so alike that they must be of the same species and "entitled to the same name, until a more close examination of the great Serpent shall have disclosed some difference of structure, important enough to constitute a specific distinction." They named their specimen "Scioliophis Atlanticus" and added a detailed description and illustrations of it to their report.

European scientists immediately pointed out that the "baby sea serpent" was nothing but a common black snake "in a diseased condition." By incorporating such a blunder in their carefully documented report, the committee rendered its work useless. Naturalists felt that men unable to identify correctly a common black snake were certainly not competent to give accurate information about a creature of unknown species, which they had not even seen. Less charitable people simply classed the monster as a myth and ridiculed the careful testimony of the witnesses.

One of the earliest reports of a sea serpent around Martha's Vineyard was in the early 1800's when a London whaler, bound for New Bedford with an Edgartown pilot, reported a sea serpent between Gay Head and Block Island.

Another sighting about this time was reported by the captain of a British destroyer, bound out of Newport for Liverpool. Southwest of Nomansland, his crew saw a huge creature quite close to their ship. Not even the captain could identify the grotesque creature, which showed no alarm at the approach of the destroyer and stayed in sight for a considerable time.

Then about 1860, The barque *Cornelia*, Captain Ephraim Poole, was bound for the South Pacific with Anderson Poole, grandfather of the author's husband, as second mate aboard his brother's ship. It was late summer and, to avoid the storms off Cape Horn, they sailed through the Straits of Magellan. A strange object about fifty feet long, with a long neck and mane, was sighted and the second mate was ordered to lower. Anderson and his crew approached and struck the animal, which then swam off in a frenzy, towing the whaleboat for several minutes before the whaleiron drew. When the iron was hauled back into the boat, a mother-of-pearl scale, twelve inches square and about an inch thick, was clinging to it, but nothing more was found and the creature did not reappear.

Another local whaleship, the *Siren*, of New Bedford, was off the coast of Australia when the captain wrote to the owners: "Raised, lowered and struck a sea serpent. Cut him in and boiled him. Headed oil up in separate cask." The *Siren* continued her voyage, sailing to the North Pacific and into the Arctic. There she was lost in the freeze-up of 1871 - and lost, too, was the carefully hoarded oil of the sea serpent.

About fifteen or twenty years later, a serpent was reported on the Old Man, a spar buoy between Squibnocket and Nomansland. At that time it was customary for Chilmark fishermen to live for several weeks, spring and fall, on Nomansland while they caught and salted codfish. Willie Mayhew, who told this story to the author's husband, and Jerry Look were working on the shore when they spied a strange object on the Old Man. They called to Captain Frank Cottle to bring his spyglass, and the three men took turns watching the buoy through the glass. All reported a strange creature, tightly coiled around the full length of the spar. Occasionally, it would raise its head to look around and then, apparently, doze. It stayed in sight for over an hour and then vanished completely.

Not nearly so long ago, the author's father-in-law and Captain Rasmus Klimm were bluefishing south of Nomansland when they saw a snow-white figure, about twenty feet long, rise from the water and turn completely around, almost like a human. They took chase, but the creature went down before they could get close enough to harpoon it.

In December, 1940, the schooner *Liberty*, still towing her nets, was homeward bound from the fishing grounds. About sixteen miles southwest of the Nomansland hooter, Captain Claude Wagner was alone on deck when he thought he saw a whale spout, half a mile off the port bow. He sang out to Horace Devine, who was below decks mugging up, "Come up on deck. We've got company." Devine went forward and could see the great creature quite plainly as it was about seventy-five feet from the vessel. Evidently not at all frightened, the monster stayed on the surface of the water for some time. Its head resembled a turtle's and its dark body, thirty-five to forty feet long, had lumps the size of a bushel basket along its length. Captain Wagner counted five or six on the near side, and, presumably, there were more on the far side. Both men asserted that they had never seen its like before, but three years later, Captain Wagner saw the same kind of creature three miles south of Nantucket. For several years, fishermen

frequently reported sighting the serpent in this vicinity.

Still more recently, a New Bedford dragger docked at Menemsha with its crew so shaken by their horrible encounter with a sea monster that they did not leave port for several days. These two men reported sighting, between Block Island and Gay Head, a creature seventy to ninety feet long with a long neck and horse-like head, complete with mane, and eyes as large as dinner plates. They had no inclination to investigate, but turned up their engine to its top speed and headed for Menemsha Bight, with many an anxious backward glance.

Reports of sea serpents are not uncommon today. Proof of the validity of the stories and agreement as to what constitutes a sea serpent are less common. Webster defines a sea serpent as "a large marine animal resembling a serpent, often reported to have been seen, but never proved to exist."

Rachel Carson writes in *The Sea Around Us* of the discovery of "strange and fantastic creatures from the silent deeps, miles underwater," weird beings no man had ever seen. She also tells of the divisions of whales into plankton-eaters, fish-eaters, and squid-eaters. The latter are the sperm whale, who have long known what man has just discovered, that hundreds of fathoms below the "almost untenanted blue waters of the tropics is abundant animal life. Here live the giant squid, *Architeuthis*, with bodies thirty feet or more in each direction." Curiously, marine animals tend to vary in color according to the zone in which they live. Below fifteen hundred feet, all fish are black, violet, or dark brown and, beyond the reach of the sun's rays, their eyes often become enlarged and grotesquely protuberant.

Cuttlefish, octopus and squid are all related. They abound in the waters off the Atlantic coast and they range in size from eight inches to more than fifty feet. The giant squid is the largest known invertebrate. Its huge eyes are over fourteen inches in diameter and its body is often twenty feet long, with tentacles extending thirty-five feet more. Sperm whale live on these giant squid and, while in their flurry, have been known to regurgitate pieces twenty feet square. One of these creatures, estimated to be three hundred feet long, was raised from the masthead of the *Charles W. Morgan*, a famous New Bedford whaleship, by the harpooner, Nelson Cole Haley. Haley saw three of these monsters off the lee bow of the ship and he relates that "if ever a man's hair did stand on end, mind approached that point."

Men have always feared the unknown - and they still do. Only

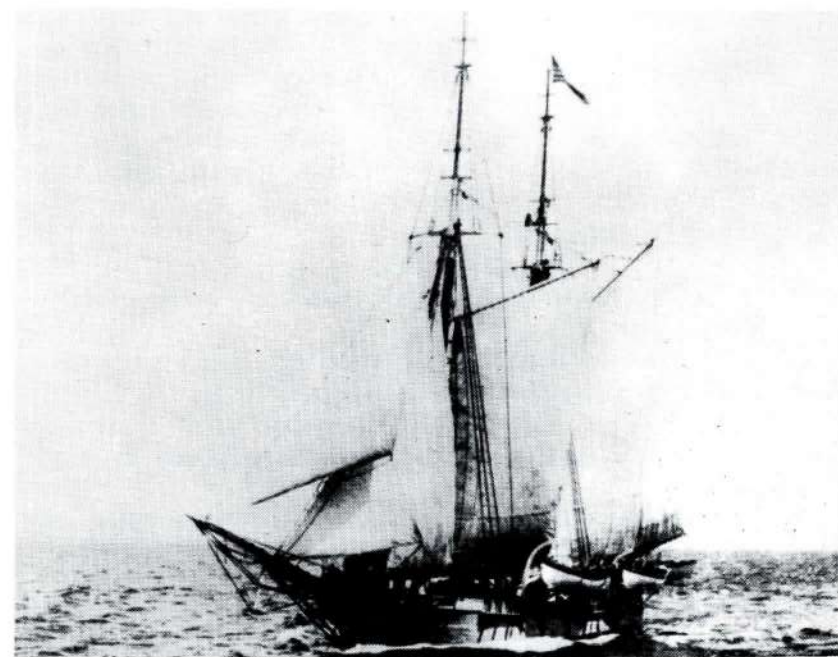
knowledge can overcome these fears. In recent years, creatures supposed to have been extinct for millions of years, have been brought up in fishermen's trawls, giving credence to the belief that many of these strange beings may inhabit the ocean depths and occasionally stray from their usual habitat.

In *The Sea Around Us*,* you can read that in 1938, off the southeast tip of Africa, some fishermen discovered in their trawls a strange, bright blue fish about five feet long, with a huge head and queer scales, fins and tail. They took it to a museum where it was identified as a fish of the Cretaceous Period, sixty million years ago. It was labeled "Latermeria."

A similar incident occurred about twenty years ago when a Coelenterata, supposed to have been extinct for millions of years, was caught off the west coast of Africa. With the improved scientific and fishing equipment in use today, several other species have come to light. Further scientific research may uncover many more of these creatures, presumably long since extinct. Perhaps naming them and classifying them may change a frightening sea serpent into just a rare specimen of marine life.

In a cathedral at Saint Malo, on the western shore of France, is a very famous painting, dating from the fourteenth century. It depicts a ship, about to be capsized and drawn under water by a squid's enormous tentacles, which are wrapped around its masts and through its rigging. We call it a giant squid, but to the people of France, a century before Columbus ventured across the Atlantic, it was undoubtedly a sea serpent.

*Rachel L. Carson, *The Sea Around Us* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), page.53.



Marine Historical Society
Mystic, Connecticut

The Pedro Varella

ANTONE FORTES, WHALEMAN

The sun blazed down on Ponta da Vermelharia, on the island of San Nicolau. It beat on the back of young Tony Fortes, hacking weeds in the sweet potato patch beside his father's small adobe house, halfway up the mountain. The heat parched his throat and caused drops of sweat to form on his brow and course down his cheeks. Occasionally, he brushed them off with the sleeve of his loose white shirt, but he kept doggedly at his work. If weeds choked the potato patch, he and his three brothers and three sisters would go hungry.

When he reached the end of his last row, he leaned his hoe against the house and went whistling down the steep path which led to the harbor. At the water's edge, he shrugged off his garments and dove into the sea, to join other boys released from their morning chores. They swam, dove and frolicked all afternoon. At last, tiring of their fun, they sprawled on the hot sand and idly chatted in their soft *lingua crioula* a Negro simplification of Portuguese.

"Did you work in the sugar cane this morning, Tony?"

"No, I had to weed the potato patch beside our house. How hot it was there, not a breath of air."

"So, it was almost as bad in the cane field. And I never saw a rabbit. I'd hoped to catch one so I could go eeling later."

"I have a couple of hearts, but no hooks. If you'll trade me a hook for bait, we'll get our poles and catch some eels when the sun goes down."

"So, it's much too hot to go now. Do you suppose any whaleboats will come ashore today?"

"Who knows?"

To the boys of Sao Nicolau, New Bedford whaleships were the magic carpet which could free them from their unproductive island and take them to America, where all things were possible. But such a journey was not easy, for the law required each young man to serve two years in the service of his king before he could leave his native land. Such conscription came at nineteen or twenty but the lads of Sao Nicolau were ready for men's adventures long before then. So they lay on the hot sand and speculated about the various whaleships and their crews until the splash of oars and the creak of oarlocks roused them. They jumped to their feet and ran to the water's edge to pull ashore a whaleboat and its crew. The men had come to fill their water casks

at the mouth of the river which flowed down the mountain, and the boys eagerly assisted them.

The whalemens bantered with their helpers, even as they tested their strength and sized up their abilities. Whaleships constantly needed replacements for crewmen who had deserted, been disabled, or been lost at sea and these young men made good whalemens. The boatmen befriended the boys who gathered around them to hear exciting tales of boats stove in by whales, of stormy passages, and of teeming ports visited. Every boy in the village longed for the time when he could, with or without parental consent, sail on one of these vessels. So when the whaleboats returned to their ships, they often carried one or two more crewmen than on their shoreward journeys.

Tony Fortes did not return to the whaleship with the first crew which tried to entice him. He waited for the *Pedro Varela*, Captain Antonio Corvelho,* from New Bedford, Massachusetts. Captain Corvelho had known Tony's family for many years and he had watched the boy grow from a tiny infant to the gangling youth who stood before him now, on the deck of the *Pedro Varela*, two days out from Ilhas de Cabo Verde. With sober mien, but twinkling eyes, he queried the boy about his presence on the ship. Then, the necessary formalities out of the way, Tony was assigned to the third mate's boat and was put to work holystoning the forward deck.

This was early fall, 1908, and until spring the *Pedro Varela* chased sperm whales along the African coast. On July 18, 1909, she landed in New Bedford. At last, Tony had arrived in America. He went ashore to find friends and relatives, who had preceded him, and to make arrangements to live with his godmother, Mrs. Frances Britto, in New Bedford.

Tony found a job in a rope factory in the West End, where he worked from seven to five each day through that winter. When the five o'clock whistle blew, Tony and his fellow workers hurried out of the mill and Tony walked toward Second Street, watching boys and girls coasting down the snowy hills on bright sleds. It reminded him of his childhood in Ponta da Vermelharia. There was never any snow there, but the boys, using planks for sleds, slid

*"Returns of Whaling Vessels Sailing from American Ports, 1876 - 1929," by Reginald Hagerty, and "Whaling Masters," compiled by the WPA of Mass., 1938, both state that Henry Mandly was master of the *Pedro Varela* on this voyage. Mr. Fortes says that Captain Corvelho was the master. As this is Mr. Fortes' story, and as he was there, we have used his version.

down the steep cliffs of white sand. When their rides seemed too slow, they'd line the tracks with dried grass, which soon became exceedingly slippery. Tony's nose still bore a scar, the result of an exciting ride which ended abruptly when he and his plank collided with a large rock. Unconsciously rubbing his nose, Tony hastened home.

After supper he walked from his godmother's house to the corner of Pleasant and Madison Streets. Here, in the neighborhood school, he was enrolled, with nine others, in an English class. Tony enjoyed these evenings for Mr. Swift, the teacher, was a young man who knew how to make prosaic translations a real challenge.

Working in the factory by day and going to school by night kept Tony busy and happy as long as the snow lay on the ground and the biting winds buffeted him about whenever he ventured outdoors. But when the sun woke him earlier and earlier, the snow began to melt, and the cold, forbidding waters of the harbor turned a sparkling blue, he began to chafe at his confinement. Instead of going straight home from the factory, he began to haunt the waterfront where whaleships, tied to the docks and anchored offshore, were being overhauled and outfitted to put to sea.

The *Pedro Varela* was one of these and Tony went to the shipping office of Antone Sylvia, agent, to ask for a berth. He signed on and was told to report for duty in three days. On the twenty-seventh of April, 1910, he went aboard the vessel, lying at anchor outside the harbor. She looked smart and trim with her gleaming white paint and shining masts. Tony did not know that she was over fifty years old, once a U. S. Revenue Cutter.

The officers and boatsteerers of the *Pedro Varela* were all Portuguese. So were the cook and four crewmen. The rest were a motley gang of Americans, small-time criminals, a self-confessed murderer, a drug addict and peddler, and a burglar. All were greenhorns. Whaling was no longer a thriving business and no longer attracted stalwart young New Englanders, eager to work their way aft to a master's berth.

On April 28th, the *Pedro Varela* weighed anchor, headed for the Hatteras Grounds. Late in the afternoon, all hands were ordered aft. Captain Corvelho studied his crew as he pointed out to them the need for cooperation and consideration for others in the close quarters of shipboard life; the necessity for explicit obedience, and the punishment which would inevitably follow any disobedience, or any slackness in the execution of orders. Then the three mates

chose their boat crews, selecting the experienced men first. Tony was in the third mate's crew.

The men had to be taught how to handle the whaleboats, to row, to paddle, and to pull the boat close to a fast whale. When the *Pedro Varela* was becalmed, the boats were lowered to give the crew practice in these skills. There was no spare time while green horns were "getting their sea legs and learning the ropes." By night-fall, the men were so tired that they crawled into their narrow bunks and fell asleep at once, even though many of them slept on pallets of straw. Their meals were monotonous and unappetizing, but working all day in the salt air discouraged finicky appetites. Drinking water aboard whaleships was never very good. Before sailing, the ground tier of casks was filled to provide water for several months and to act as ballast. If the casks were new the water tasted of the wood; if they had been used the whale oil which had been in them lent its disagreeable flavor to the water. Even tea and coffee could not completely disguise this unwelcome taste, and grumblings among the crew were constant.

The *Pedro Varela* cruised the Hatteras Grounds for several weeks without raising any whales so Captain Corvelho ordered a course almost due east, which brought the vessel to the Western Grounds where whales were reasonably plentiful. The third mate's boat fastened to a large whale which resisted capture, smashing wildly with his flukes. The whaleboat was too near to get out of reach so, three times, it was pulled in close to the whale's head to avoid the flailing tail. Then the mate drove in another lance, twisting and turning it deep in the whale's vitals. The surrounding water reddened and dozens of fins cut the surface, as the sharks gathered. The whale rolled over, dead.

By the time the third mate's boat reached the *Pedro Varela*, the men aboard the vessel had everything ready for cutting in and trying out the big whale. Everyone worked until the blubber was stripped from head to flukes and the huge slabs were piled on deck, waiting to be consigned to the tryout kettles. The head of this whale was too large to be taken aboard, so it was secured alongside and buckets on long poles were lowered into the case and brought out, brimming with oil, which was poured directly into the hogsheads on deck. Fifteen barrels of spermaceti, the very best oil, used for making candles and as the finest lubricant, were bailed from the whale's head, which was then cut loose to be devoured by the waiting sharks. Yellow flames leaped from the tryworks all night as the hot oil was emptied from the pots into

the cooling tanks and then pumped by hand into the casks below. This whale yielded sixty-four barrels of sperm oil.

Before the decks were cleared, the *Pedro* ran into torrential rains and gale force winds and was forced to heave to. The little schooner rolled and thrashed through the night and most of the next day. Then the skies cleared and the *Pedro Varela* could get on with her whaling, with only occasional squalls to interrupt the even tenor of her days.

Storms were not the only excitement. One day, while all three boats were out and the third mate's boat was on a "Nantucket sleighride," the mate's boat fastened to a whale about 400 yards away. The whale came right up under the boat, hurling it high in the air. Men, gear, and pieces of the boat flew in all directions. The third mate killed his whale and then went to the rescue of his shipmates who, being experienced whalers, were keeping afloat by hanging on to the wreckage. Men, gear and the wrecked boat were picked up by the other two whaleboats and, by that time, the ship had worked up near them, and took them aboard.

A different kind of excitement prevailed when the watch sighted the bark *Morning Star*, Captain Valentine Roza, of New Bedford. He and Captain Corvelho would have a gam and the crews of the two ships would have a chance to see new faces and hear new tales. Tony and his shipmates were impressed by the *Morning Star*, a large bark carrying five boats. The crew's quarters were much larger than those of the *Pedro Varela*, but were as crowded because the crew was so large. However, everything about the roomy bark seemed bigger and better to the crew of the little schooner. They understood that the dinner served them was unusually good, just as they knew that their cook would have served a better-than-usual meal to the visitors on the *Pedro Varela*. But the water was so much better than that aboard their vessel that it was mentioned many times.

Most of the men knew that when the vessels lay alongside the wharves in New Bedford, they were overrun with rats. While in port, the rats found water ashore, but when the vessels put to sea, the rats had to search for it and they easily discovered the loose bungs on the water casks and scurried in - to drown, not improving the quality of the drinking water. This putrid water had always caused mutterings among the crew, but after the gam with the *Morning Star*, it seemed more unbearable.

Moreover, the *Pedro Varela* cruised the next two weeks, looking for whales that did not show. In the dogwatches*, the Portuguese

*Ordinary watches were 4 hours; dogwatches were 2 hours each.

crewmen stayed by themselves, but evenings they heard the same complaint from the rest of the crew: no whales, monotonous deck duty, bad food and worse water. Some of them declared that they would desert ship at the first port.* Meantime, the food and water got worse.

The men decided to approach the captain. Hammond agreed to be spokesman, so he went to the poop deck to ask the mate to tell the captain that he wanted to speak to him. The crew trailed along and stood in a group amidships, awaiting the outcome. The mate took one look at them and dashed for the captain's quarters. In seconds, the captain, the three mates and the boatsteerers, all armed, appeared on deck. The captain ordered the men forward. They obeyed, but Hammond held his ground and delivered his complaint:

"We can't eat the food. The salt horse is rotten, the bread is full of kerosene, and the water stinks."

"Oh, it does, does it?" the captain replied; "then you'll not get as much to holler about." and he put them on short rations: one cake of hardtack and one cup of water daily for three days. Hammond was ordered to stand an additional watch at the mast head and the "mutinous dogs" were kept so busy that they had no time to plan their next move until that night. All the crew were disgruntled and hungry and their leaders urged revenge. They were dissatisfied, bitter, and potentially dangerous.

Then the *Pedro Varela* ran into the doldrums. For days and days, there was no breeze at all. They raised and captured more whales, so many, in fact, that the men grew more rebellious. Their resentment grew until the night of the fourth of July. That night was dark and starless, but dead calm, so the boatsteerer in charge of the "graveyard watch" had turned in and was sound asleep in the larboard boat. The black shadows, which crept out of the forecabin, spread over the starboard side of the deck. Now and then, there was a splash close to the whaleship, but on deck there were only indistinct shufflings. Suddenly, just at daylight, there was a tremendous clatter. The "shadows" had not been content with throwing overboard the harpoons, lances, bailers, skimmers, spades, and all the other whaling craft, but had smashed the windlass and shattered the tryworks, throwing overboard all the pieces they could move. They were making sure that no more

*Maritime Law required whaleships to land at least once every six months, and the *Pedro Varela* had been out nearly that long.

whaling could be done aboard the *Pedro Varela* until after she had put into port for refitting.

The commotion brought the captain and his officers on deck. A swift glance across the deck showed the havoc that had been wrought and its perpetrators. Captain Corvelho ordered the men in irons.

Now the *Pedro Varela* was short-handed. She was nearly becalmed through alternate days of brilliant sun and drizzling rain. A few whales were raised and two were captured, but there was no way of hoisting the blubber aboard, so the spermacetti was bailed from the heads and the whales were abandoned to the sharks. This was most unprofitable, so Captain Corvelho made all possible sail to speed their journey to Fayal. About 200 miles from their destination, they ran head-on into a three-day storm. When the storm subsided, the *Pedro* was 600 miles from Fayal and it was six weeks before land was sighted again.

Approaching the harbor, the *Pedro Varela* got too close to the headlands and drifted toward the rocks. Because the windlass was useless, the anchor could not be used to hold the vessel, so two whaleboats were lowered and spent the afternoon towing the vessel into a safe position where she could pick up the wind and sail into Fayal Harbor.

Here the mutineers were supplied with water for the first bath they had had in months, and were outfitted with clean clothes. They were then sent ashore to be locked in the local prison, until three American battleships, due in from a Mediterranean cruise of duty, arrived in Fayal. Then they were to be transferred to the brig of one of these and taken to the United States for trial.

They were tried in the Federal Court in Baltimore on charges of mutiny on the high seas. This uprising was unique in the annals of maritime law for, technically, the affair on the *Pedro Varela* was not a mutiny because the men did not refuse orders, did not attack officers, and did not plan to take the ship by force. The Federal judge sentenced them to the Federal Prison at Atlanta, but a few weeks after they began their sentences, they were unconditionally released.

Refitted, and with windlass and tryworks repaired, the *Pedro* left Fayal near the end of September. Ten new crewmen had been shipped to take the place of the mutineers and, when the schooner was well out to sea, a young stowaway was brought on deck. He was Joseph Gomes, a brother of the young lady to whom Captain Corvelho was engaged. Gomes was seasick for months, but he

managed to do the tasks assigned him and was willing and eager to learn. All hands welcomed him to the forecabin, a few months later, when he was made a seaman.

The *Pedro Varela* had a good season and the days sped by uneventfully. By late March, the ship, full of oil, arrived at Barbados to recruit and then sailed to Dominica to ship her oil home on the *Richard W. Clark*, of New Bedford. New casks filled with supplies for the schooner replaced the casks of oil consigned to the *Clark*. Then the *Pedro Varela* sailed to the Western Grounds. Three months later she was full so Captain Corvelho decided to go into Fayal to put ashore 200 barrels of oil to be shipped to New Bedford. Then he cruised toward Flores, his native island, where he and young Gomes went ashore to visit their families while the ship cruised for a week before heading back to Fayal to discharge cargo.

About three weeks later, the *Pedro Varela* reached Sao Nicolau and Tony, Joaquim and Jose, as well as the boatsteerers, the mates and the cook had a chance to go ashore to see their families and friends.

This liberty coincided with the Feast of Santa Cruz, celebrated annually on May third. Everyone took part in this gala event. The men butchered several cattle and cut the meat into family sized portions, which the women carefully cooked according to an age-old custom. Kitchens in the village were fragrant with the smell of the simmering meat and of freshly baked bread, large round loaves with delicately browned crusts. The food was taken to the church to be blessed by the priest and was then put into baskets, suspended from long poles, which two boys would carry across their shoulders. When all was in readiness, a procession was formed.

A young man, appointed by the priest, carried the crucifix. Behind him came the flag bearer and the musicians with drum, cymbal and *pandeiro*. They were followed by a bevy of young girls in beautiful white lace dresses and a group of young men and boys, carrying the baskets of bread and meat. As they walked through the village more and more people joined the march until by the time they reached the large open field where long tables had been set in readiness, all the families for miles around were assembled. Everyone was given all he could eat of *sopa*, delicious bread and meat, over which was poured the rich spicy broth, served only on this occasion. When all were seated, the musicians struck up some lively music and old and young danced till they

could dance no more. At dusk, the villagers returned home to do their evening chores, humming and singing as they worked. Tony had had a wonderful day, but he had set his course and he was quite ready to return to his whaleship.

The next season, on the Western Grounds, the *Pedro Varela* filled early and was ready to sail for New Bedford, six weeks ahead of schedule. She tied up at Merrill's Wharf on August 20, 1912. As soon as her cargo had been landed, and all necessary formalities connected with the voyage taken care of, Captain Corvelho sailed, by steamer, for the Azores, to claim his bride.

Tony spent the winter in New Bedford, where he felt much more at home than when he had landed three years ago. He had no trouble getting a job, finding his way about, or finding companionship, so he was busy and happy until signs of spring sent him hurrying to the waterfront to find another berth.

He learned that Captain Corvelho had bought an interest in the bark, *Grayhound*, and was to be master of her on her next voyage. The *Grayhound* was over twice the size of the little schooner *Pedro*, so Tony decided to sail again with Captain Corvelho, but this time he was signed on as boatsteerer.

The *Grayhound* was ready to sail on Monday, May 5, 1913, and on the afternoon before, the bark was open for inspection. A Salvation Army Band played and sang hymns on the forward deck and Merrill's Wharf was crowded all afternoon with people coming to say goodbye to members of the crew and to wish the ship "greasy luck."

Early Monday morning, the *Grayhound* was towed out and her course set for the Western Grounds. She was out a week before whale were sighted, but the first catch was an excellent one, a big bull. By mid-August, the ship was nearly full so Captain Corvelho headed for Flores, where his bride joined the ship. It was beautiful weather and whales were numerous so the *Grayhound* was full when she anchored at Fayal, early in September.

After discharging and recruiting, she sailed for Sao Nicolau, on her way to the South Atlantic. A severe, but short-lived, gale kept them an extra day at Sao Nicolau, and soon after they left the harbor, they had several days of dead calm. Finally, they sighted and captured a lone whale, after it had flipped the boatsteerer into the sea. The man was rescued by his mates, the whale was secured, and the *Grayhound's* jinx seemed to be over, for that season was a good one.

After a rendezvous with the *Richard W. Clark* and several

whalers at Dominica, the *Grayhound* started another season. Fishing was good and it looked as if the ship would be full when she again met the *Clark* in August, this time at Las Palmas, in the Canary Islands.*

For the next two years, the *Grayhound* followed the same course, winter fishing in the South Atlantic, and on the Western Grounds in the spring and fall. She put in at either Barbadoes or the Western Islands every three months to discharge and to recruit. But in September, 1916, she returned to New Bedford, having landed 2580 barrels of sperm oil.

Tony was glad to be back in New Bedford. War was raging in Europe and all shipping was hazardous. There were many U-boat scares and the whaleships went on fewer and shorter voyages. However, the next August, the *Grayhound* left for the coast of Brazil. Captain Corvelho was master and Tony was once more a boatsteerer, one the captain knew to be dependable. He had some crewmen this voyage whom he despaired of ever making into whalemens; but in wartime, what can one expect?

A few days out of New Bedford, the lookout raised a pod of whales. All three boats were lowered. On the *Grayhound* there were only the captain and five men, one of whom was Brown, a promising lad who had been learning to "shoot the sun." The cook and the mess boy were working in the galley when they were attacked by two sailors. The captain, on the quarter deck had his glasses trained on the whaleboats, off the starboard bow, when something made him turn - and just in time. Armed with an ugly looking knife, Brown was sneaking up behind him. The captain scrambled up the rigging, out of reach. Once there, he signaled for the boats to return. A quarter of a mile away, the mate's boat was fast to a whale, but he cut loose and returned, as fast as possible, to the ship. Approaching cautiously, the mate and most of his crew were on deck before the man taunting the captain realized he was no longer alone. The boat crew quickly overpowered the rebels, who were put in irons until the ship reached the Barbados. The morning after their arrival, when the captain sent for the rebels to be brought on deck, they could not be found. They had disappeared, irons and all, without a trace. The local officials were notified and a house-to-house search of the island was instigated, but the men were never flushed out. They had not succeeded in getting control of the ship, but they had made good their escape.

The next few months along the coast of Brazil in the

*Authorities at Fayal had been charging whaleships larger and larger harbor dues each season, so the New Bedford owners had changed their port of call.

Grayhound were uneventful. She reached New Bedford in June and sailed again the first week in September. She was old and it was hard to get material and labor for repairs because the United States was now embroiled in World War I. The whalers tied up or sailed as they were. The *Grayhound* sailed.

The season was average and the *Grayhound* with 750 barrels of sperm oil to her credit, was bound home. She had been leaking the entire voyage, but off Bermuda she encountered a stiff gale and the pumps had to be manned night and day. For three days the gale smote the little bark and the seams along the waterline opened from stem to stern. It seemed that the vessel might founder at any moment. Captain Corvelho ordered heavy chains wrapped around the hull, bow and stern. The men manned the pumps constantly, though they were very weary now for, because of the heavy seas they had had no hot meals, only hardtack and water, for three days. At last, August 22, 1920, they made New Bedford, a battered vessel and its exhausted crew.

The next year the *Grayhound* was sold for a Brava Packet, so Tony signed aboard the *John R. Manter*, Captain A. J. Mandly. This voyage he was third mate when they left New Bedford, destination, "Atlantic Ocean." They sailed in mid-March and returned August 9, 1920, with 500 barrels of sperm oil. This was a real "plum-pudding voyage."

The following February, Tony shipped as third mate aboard the *Athlete*, Captain Mosher, of New Bedford. Ten days out, a huge bull was taken and made fast alongside, ready for cutting in. It was Tony's job to make a hole in the blubber and pass the strap through it, so it could be hauled aboard the vessel. As the great slab of blubber was being raised, the vessel rolled and Tony's leg was caught between the blubber and the cutting stage. His leg was so badly broken that there was little the captain could do, except to keep him under sedation and get him to a hospital as fast as possible. He was taken to Fayal, where he remained in the hospital eight months. The bones in his leg had been cruelly shattered and tiny splinters came out, every now and then, for several years. But he had an excellent surgeon and, in the spring, he was able to walk with crutches, so he sailed back to New Bedford, and has never been to sea since.

In 1925, he married Frances Araujo. Fifteen years before, when Tony left Ponta da Vermelharia to go whaling, Frances had been a very small girl in the neighboring village of Preguica. Then her parents moved to Martha's Vineyard, where she had grown into a



Mr. and Mrs. Antone Fortes
A portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Antone Fortes taken in New Bedford shortly after their marriage.

charming, vivacious young lady. She and Tony lived in New Bedford a couple of years, but after their son John was born, they moved to Martha's Vineyard.

Now they live where she grew up in Vineyard Haven and their son lives across the road, so their four grandchildren are frequent visitors. The house is warm and sunny and again, as during his first winter in America, Tony finds it pleasanter indoors than out. He sits by the sunny window and watches the children at play. Sometimes he thinks of the little village on Sao Nicolau, where one of his sisters still lives, but he does not wish to return there. He is glad that his son and his grandchildren are Americans and have never known the hardships he endured as a youth.

FULL CIRCLE

When the first white settlers came to Martha's Vineyard they found the Indians pursuing whales and attacking them with an audacity that astonished the English. Whales were an important part of the island economy from the outset. When land was bought from the Indians, whaling rights were included and when the white settler sold this property, he passed on the "rights of fish and whale." Whales were exceedingly plentiful and "drift whales" were common on the beaches. Others, close to shore, but not entirely stranded, were quite tame and were easily encircled and caught by the Indians, who willingly taught their new neighbors this skill. As whales became less tame and less plentiful, Vineyarders pursued them in boats fashioned after the Indian canoes, double-ended, lightweight, and seaworthy.

When beach whaling was superseded by deep-sea whaling, Indians were shipped as crew members for they knew the habits of whales and how to hunt them with skill and dexterity. Many Indians became boat steerers and mates, but none ever became a master although, now and then, one was entrusted with a vessel on a 'tween-seasons voyage, while the captain remained in port with his family. So many Gay Headers went to sea that aboard ship any Indian was called "Gay Head". But on Gay Head, each whaler had his own identity. Among others were Amos Smalley, Joseph Belain, Joe Peters, William Cook, Luther Madison, George Belain, Henry Jeffers, Jerry Diamond, Will Lang and Napoleon Madison. The latter outlived all the others and was the last Vineyard whaler.*

Napoleon Bonaparte Madison was one of a large family of fatherless children who lived with their mother in Gay Head, the largest Indian settlement on Martha's Vineyard. There was little money, so the children helped by picking and selling berries, which grew in wild profusion in the fields and swamps, and by finding more remunerative jobs as soon as they were old enough. Napoleon, in his own words, "jumped the gun" and went to work early. He went to school when he could, but that wasn't often, and he learned by "picking up here and there."

*Mr. Antone Fortes, a native of the Cape Verde Islands, still lives in Vineyard Haven but, though he came to America on a whaleship and went whaling many years from New Bedford, he is not a "Vineyard Whaler."

He "picked up" a great deal from Mr. Edy Flanders, a retired whaler, who lived down across Menemsha Creek. Napoleon was sent there for milk and potatoes and he would visit by the hour with Mr. Flanders in his large barn, as clean and well-cared for as the low, gray house nearby. The boy listened avidly as the old man recalled his whaling days. It was through Mr. Flanders that Napoleon got his first real job with the Nortons in Edgartown. There Napoleon stayed three years, earning his keep, and a little more, by chopping and stacking firewood, milking the cows, feeding the pigs and chickens, and doing some of the heavy household chores. He did his work well and was always friendly and courteous, so the townspeople liked him.

The Nortons were kind and he liked them, but Edgartown was a long way from Gay Head and, when he had a chance to go to Lambert's Cove to work on a chicken farm, he took it. Two and sometimes three, other boys worked there and Napoleon became "Poly" and learned to mix work with play. Mr. Frank Schultz, who ran the farm, was a very religious man, but he understood boys and they liked him and respected him, even though they chafed at his strait-laced rules. It was a good life, but Napoleon was a Gay Header and that meant that, fundamentally, he was a man of the sea.

So when summer came, Poly left the chicken farm and went fishing and lobstering in a small catboat with John Davis. They fished from Vineyard Haven and, when the weather was not fit for fishing, Napoleon was free to follow his own pursuits. One such day, when he was walking to Lambert's Cove to visit Mr. Schultz, he saw several bicycles lying by the roadside on Tashmoo Hill. He "borrowed" one and rode to the cove, where he had a good visit with his friends.

On the way back to Vineyard Haven, the bicycle pedals spun round and round and would not catch. Poly did not know what to do so he had to walk, pushing the bicycle along the sandy road at a snail's pace. He wished he had walked in the first place. After awhile he heard a cart rumbling along behind him and turned to see Sammy George Mingo, an Indian whaler and farmer from Christiantown. Mr. Mingo helped Poly put the bicycle in his wagon and they drove to town, exchanging news of their families and friends. By the time they stopped at the livery stable, where Mr. Mingo went to make arrangements for leaving his horse, Napoleon had forgotten all about the bicycle in the back of the cart. As he sat on the high seat, looking at the busy main street, he saw Mr.

Gould, the policeman, walking across the road with a boy who suddenly yelled:

"There it is. There's my bicycle." Napoleon's story of just "borrowing" the bicycle did not impress Mr. Gould, especially when he discovered that the bicycle had been damaged. Napoleon was taken into custody and taken to the jail in Edgartown to await the next court session. The Court felt that Napoleon should be sent to reform school, but Mr. Herman Mayhew, Mr. Baxter and several others, who had known him well when he worked for the Nortons, interposed in his behalf. Ultimately, Herman Mayhew put up bail and Napoleon was bound over to him for two uneventful years.

When his time was up, Napoleon returned to Gay Head, but he had no job and felt too old for berry-picking, so spent much of his time wandering aimlessly. Noticing this and always mindful of the welfare of others, Stella Ryan suggested that he go to the Carlisle Indian School. Having nothing better to do, Napoleon agreed to try it and Miss Ryan at once contacted the authorities at Carlisle.* In due time, the proper credentials and a railroad ticket arrived and Poly bade his family goodbye and left the island. He was sixteen at the time.

At Carlisle, because of his lack of schooling, Napoleon was placed in classes with very young children. He tried hard for a week or two, but it was too humiliating to have to study and recite with children half his age. He couldn't stand it, so he went to the headmaster's office to see what could be done. The master arranged for Napoleon to be transferred to one of the school farms. Daytimes, he worked in the fields and evenings, he attended classes. He was a good worker and it wasn't long before he was made foreman of his group, but the restrictions of the school were too much for his free spirit, so he left Carlisle. He made his way, by several stages to South Dartmouth, where he found work on a farm. The old man who owned the farm was a retired whaler and, during the long winter evenings, he told Napoleon of his adventures at sea. The young man made up his mind to be a whaler. He stayed on the farm until the haying was done the next summer and then went to Gay Head to tell his mother of his plans.

While he was there, the older men who had been whaling, passed along useful bits of information about lays**, food,

*Many Gay Head Indians were educated at Carlisle, near Harrisburg, Pa.

**A whaler was paid a lay (share) instead of wages, a system dating back to the 17th century. Lays varied from a very rare eighth or tenth to 1/250 of the total net proceeds, from the master down to the foremast hand.

whaling lore, ports of call and, inevitably, ended with tall tales. But old Joe Belain was more helpful, for he gave Napoleon very good advice:

"Take enough money with you so that you will not be stranded, penniless, far from home. Be sure to take your own boots, foul weather gear and heavy clothes, too. If you have to buy these things from the slop chest aboard ship they'll cost you three or four times as much as they do at home and, at the end of the voyage, you'll find your purchases have swallowed up your entire lay." Poly took his advice and assembled his outfit. Then he and his cousin, Luther Madison, went to New Bedford.

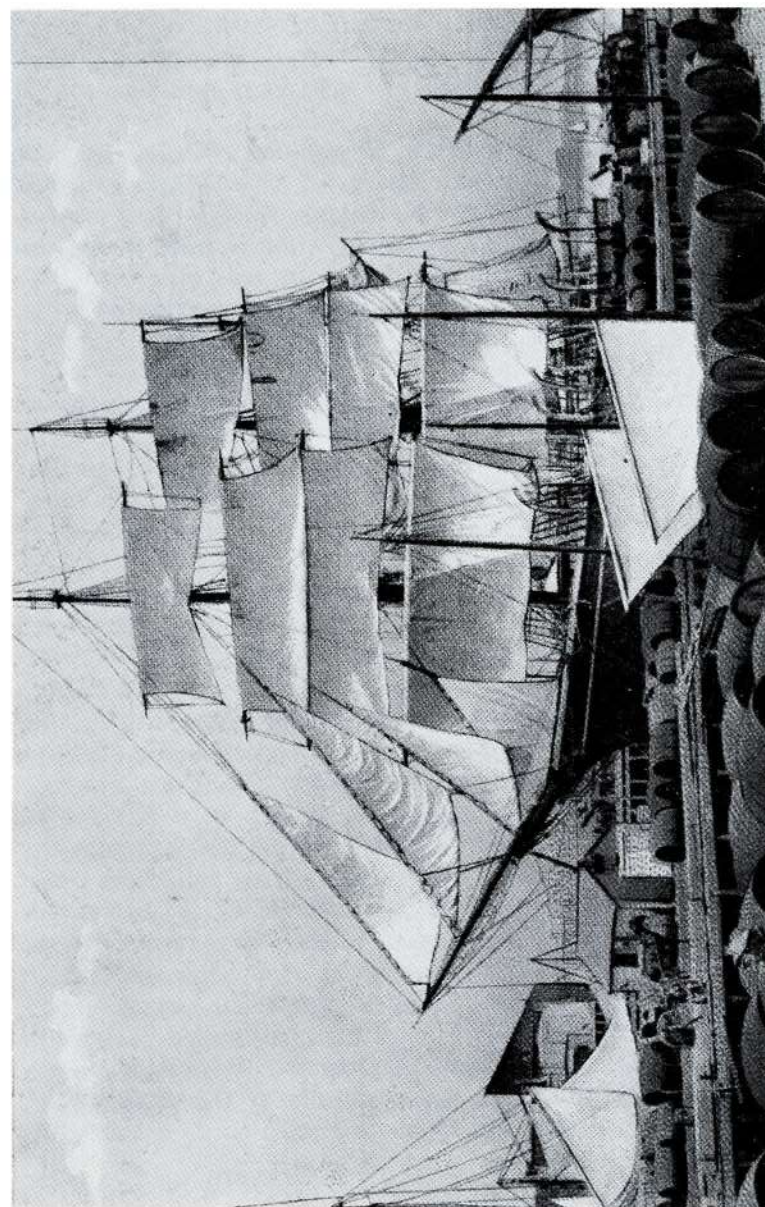
There they found the bark *Josephine*, Captain A. D. West, bound for the Crozets, right whaling. The *Josephine* was a clipper model of 384 ton, built in 1877. She was well-kept, clean and "smart under sail." The young men were pleased with what they saw and signed on, Luther as boatsteerer and Napoleon as foremast hand. They sailed for the South Atlantic in September, 1905.

When the decks were cleared and the rigging coiled, all hands were called aft to pick the boat crews and choose watches. The wind breezed and most of the foremast hands were sick for a day or two. The officers and harpooners got their boats equipped and ready to be lowered when whales were sighted. Men were stationed aloft to watch for whales from sunrise to sunset, each man standing a two-hour watch. Occasionally, all four boats would be lowered to give the crew practice in handling oars and sails and in using the paddles noiselessly, so the whales would not be galled.*

The captain and his officers were respected and the crew was "run-of-the-mill," doing tasks assigned them and filling their leisure time, during the dog watches, with harmless pursuits. Napoleon enjoyed the evenings on deck when the men sang and danced to the accompaniment of banjo, guitar, accordion, or violin. He was not a skillful musician, but he whiled away many an hour practicing on his harmonica the tunes he'd heard the others play.

About ten days after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, the *Josephine* passed the lonely, uninhabited Crozet Islands, discovered by the French navigator, Marion Dufresne, and named for his second in command. Captain West gave the islands a wide

*Frightened away.



Dorothy Cottle Poole

Whaling Bark *Josephine*

berth for he knew that they were surrounded by sunken reefs, over which furious seas seethed and foamed. Giant rollers, winged by thousands of miles of storm, rushed toward the land, thundering at the base of the rocks to send spray hundreds of feet in the air.

One day was much like another, except that each lessened the distance between the ship and her goal. Then tragedy struck. Luther Madison became sick and the captain applied every remedy available, without success. Luther died. When Napoleon went on deck to attend the burial of his cousin, he was overcome with grief. Seeing Luther's flag-draped body by the open gangway, he sobbed and sobbed as the captain read the service and committed Luther to God and the deep.

Work aboard the *Josephine* went on as before. Napoleon was taken out of the forecabin and assigned to his cousin's berth, boatsteerer to the first mate. The ship reached the whaling grounds and the task of filling the hold began in earnest.

The first time his boat was lowered, Poly's pulse raced as he neared his prey. He knew he must strike the whale or be sent back to the forecabin in disgrace. At the mate's command, he peaked his oar and jumped to his feet, grasping the iron. He braced himself firmly against the clumsy cleat and, as wood and blackskin met, Poly buried his harpoon clear to the hitches in the whale's back. Turning quickly, he seized the second iron and drove it into the whale as the boat backed away. Joy and relief surged over him as he realized that his dart had been powerful and his aim true. The wounded whale surged ahead, the whaleboat rocking in its wake. The mate wrapped the whaleline around the loggerhead to slow its racing before he and Poly changed places. In a short while, the strain on the line eased and the crew saw the whale's head break water far to windward. They peaked their oars, turned on the thwarts to face the whale, and hauled in on the line, pulling the boat close enough for the mate to lance the whale. Then, following the command, "Stern, all," the crew pulled back as the whale went into its flurry. Thick blood spurted from its blow hole and its flukes beat the water spasmodically as the whale rushed round and round. Faster and faster it circled in its death agony until, at last, it rolled over on its side, lifeless.

The *Josephine*, some distance to windward, now swung off before the wind and made for the dead whale. The ship hove to, the whale was taken alongside and the whaleboat was taken up.

Whales were sighted almost daily now and the crew was kept

busy chasing them, cutting in the blubber, and boiling down the oil. Of course, they did not always strike the whale they were chasing, nor get every whale they struck aboard, but the boatsteerers on the *Josephine* were skillful harpooners and Captain West was well-pleased with the amount of oil and bone stowed below decks.

There had been a number of gales, but none had been of great intensity nor of long duration. Now the long, low swells, which had been making up for some time, grew higher and longer. The wind breezed. Part of the crew went aloft to reef sails. Others were detailed to secure the boats to the upper cranes, lash down everything loose and batten the hatches. A sudden squall hit the *Josephine* and the mainsail burst, sounding like a terrific explosion. The slashing, wind-driven sleet cut like glass. It filled every corner of the deck and coated the rigging with ice, making the men's descent extremely hazardous. The squall soon passed, but the wind did not abate. It blew harder and harder, until heavy seas came crashing over the rail. Captain West gave orders to heave to. All night, all day and all the next night the vessel was buffeted by the gale, while driving snow made visibility zero. But on the morning of the second day the wind abated, the snow stopped and faint sunlight pierced the clouds. It was still very rough, but Captain West ordered the topsails and courses set and the *Josephine* sped on her way. The bulwarks were stove in and the waist and bow boats were too badly damaged to be repaired at sea. It was the end of the season and winter was already upon them. All things considered, Captain West decided to head for Mauretius to repair damages and recruit.

Inside the harbor at Mauretius, a steam towboat propelled the *Josephine* to the head of the harbor, near the dry dock where several vessels were hauled out for repairs. The first few days in port, everyone was very busy getting the vessel cleaned and repaired. After that, each watch, in turn, was allowed a day ashore.

When it was his watch ashore, Napoleon was almost deafened by the noise on the docks, a mingling of most of the languages of the world with the harmonious voices of many donkeys. Walking along the streets, he saw Arabs in turbans, white robes and sandals. He learned that most of them were merchants, reputedly very wealthy. Other assiduous business men whom he saw were the Chinese with their long pigtailed, wide trousers, conical hats and satin slippers. He was told that nine-tenths of the

mercantile business of the port was conducted by the Creoles, and it was not hard to believe, for there were a great many of these neat, polite, thrifty people industriously at work all through the town. Everywhere he went, mixed with the races described, were hordes of Malaysians, Malabars and Madagasceans. Most of these people performed menial tasks and lived crowded together, anywhere and everywhere, subsisting principally on rice and curry and a fiery beverage called *arrack*, which they consumed in large quantities. These people were purchased by the French and English through what was called the *apprentice system*, but they were really no more than slaves.

Walking slowly through the crowds, along the narrow, twisting streets, Napoleon remembered the admonition one of his shipmates had given him as their watch was about to go ashore:

"Keep your hands deep in your pockets, for these people are masters of sleight of hand." Many incidents he saw in the market place made Napoleon realize the wisdom of his friend's advice, but he wouldn't have missed his shore leave if it had cost him every cent he had.

Napoleon wandered through the markets, sampling their wares, matching bargaining powers with the canny merchants. Then he walked to the edge of the drab, sun-parched town whose only welcome spot was the park with its many fountains. He stopped awhile to listen to the brass band playing outside the barracks and then returned to the dock.

The next day, with damages repaired and fresh supplies aboard, the *Josephine* set sail for the whaling grounds off the Crozets. For months she fished and then, with bone and oil to be shipped home, she went into Natal Durban. Captain West had been there before, so he kept to the windward side of the channel, taking the combers end on, and dropped anchor in the sheltered bay near the center of the coast. Napoleon's watch was detailed to remain aboard ship while the others went ashore. Deprived of a chance to land, the men refused duty. The captain sent ashore for police to arrest the crew and all who refused to go willingly were handcuffed. The entire watch was jailed. Several became ill, but the police insisted nothing was wrong, until finally, a doctor was called. He found that five of the men, including Poly, had malaria. The chief of police escorted them to the hospital, where each crewman was guarded by a policeman at the head of his bed. Two of the men died. After nine or ten days, the rest heard that the ship was sailing and they were to be left behind until they were

well, and then shipped home by the first vessel which called at Durban. Poly sent out word that he wanted to talk with the captain. When Captain West appeared Napoleon announced:

"I don't want to be shipped home. I sailed on the *Josephine* and I want to return on her."

"Well, if you want to stay here until the next time we come in to recruit, we'll pick you up then." Thus Napoleon spent some time at Natal Durban. When his fever abated and he could get about, he learned that Natal was discovered on Christmas Day, 1497, by Vasco da Gama and named "Tena Natalis." Later, Dutch Boers from Cape Colony settled here and the town was laid out. Then the British took it over and made it their base of supplies during the Boer War. The land around Natal was ruled by Zulu kings whose fierce warriors, thousands strong, fought bloody battles with the early settlers.

When he went ashore, Napoleon saw the descendants of these warriors selling magic charms and potions, along with mealies.* He saw their women, who all wear heavy metal rings on their ankles, carrying great trays of produce on their heads. He also saw small featured Indian women dressed in gold and lavender saris, and many Indian men, including snake charmers, fire walkers, and indentured servants from the sugar plantations. There were Indian bazaars and Hindu temples all over the city, for Natal Durban had the largest Indian community of any city outside of India.

As Napoleon explored the city from end to end, days and weeks passed. He no longer felt ill. He was eager to ship out, but he clung to his resolve to wait for the *Josephine*. After about three months, she again entered the harbor at Durban to recruit. As soon as the bone to be shipped home had been landed, and water and food taken aboard, the *Josephine* returned to the Crozets, this time with Napoleon aboard.

The weather was unusually calm; whales were now plentiful and all the boats' crews were busy. One day when the mate's boat was fast to a whale, a dense fog set in. The crew could not see the ship and the men aboard the ship could not see the whaleboat. The whale swam farther and farther from the ship, towing the whaleboat in its wake. Hour after hour, the dense fog enveloped the men. The whale was tiring, but had not ceased its efforts to escape. All hands bent to, to haul the boat closer to its quarry. The mate lanced the whale and the great creature shuddered and then lay still. The fog had grown denser; there was scarcely enough

*Native corn.

visibility to see from one thwart to the next. Fastened to the whale, the boat drifted through the night. The men were wet, cold, tired and hungry. They huddled down to keep as warm as possible, only rising now and then to try to find a break in the thick fog.

Fourteen hours passed. Then the fog lifted and there was the *Josephine*, miles away to be sure, but in plain sight. The men bent to their oars with a will, but progress was slow with the great whale in tow and everyone was relieved when the mate sang out that the ship was bearing down on them with all sails set.

Twice the *Josephine* had dropped anchor at Durban to discharge cargo and recruit. The next time she headed for shore, Captain West said they were bound home and would make port at Saint Helena, to take on fresh food and water. As they approached Saint Helena, Captain West bided his time and entered the cleft between the two mountains, which form the long, narrow valley which is Jamestown, during a period of comparative calm. Usually, the winds blow down the mountains and funnel with violence through the valley, making landing extremely hazardous. As the *Josephine* dropped anchor, barefooted, gayly clad boatmen rowed swiftly across the sparkling blue harbor to board the ship to trade with the whalemén.

The recruiting took several days, so each day the watch not on duty was allowed a few hours ashore. Napoleon was particularly interested to see for himself this famous island and Longwood, home of the exiled emperor for whom he was named. He smiled to himself as he recalled how this had come about. His mother, Rosetta Madison, was friendly with Evilina Cook, who had come to Gay Head from Saint Helena. When the two young women discovered that they were going to have their babies at about the same time, they made a pact that whichever baby arrived first should be named Napoleon Bonaparte. Poly won that honor and the Cook baby was named Arthur.

Now Napoleon had a chance to explore the volcanic island of which he had heard so often. He wandered through the square, past the cannon, used to signal the approach of ships, to the public gardens. He passed the fountain and the pergola and went along the serpentine path, known as the Seven Sisters' Walk, to the goldfish pond, surrounded by cannas and many other flowers in ornately shaped beds.

Napoleon walked until he could look over the old wall and the moat to see the *Josephine* lying quietly in the bay. It was hard to

realize that, at certain times of year, rollers broke with great violence on the lee side of the island, forcing ships to anchor well outside the bay, cutting off all communication with shore. Today, it was as calm as a millpond. Turning back, Napoleon could see the town, filling the narrow valley, extending inland a couple of miles. Beyond the square was a church built from some old Chinese barracks, several houses, a large warehouse, and the way up the Ladder. Poly climbed the Ladder, six hundred ninety-seven steps rising up the sheer, brown rock like a fireman's ladder, to the fort at the top. There he could see the rollers, enormous masses of rolling, heaving water, which often wrought destruction to ships, but which on this day looked like a broad stretch of corrugated cardboard.

Beyond Jamestown, Napoleon came to Rupert's Bay where he learned about the old slave ships, the nearby leper colony, inhabited now only by scorpions and centerpedes, the old Boer Prison Camp and the remains of Haytown. So many reminders of past horrors were too much for him so he returned to the ship as quickly as he could. He had seen enough.

The next time Napoleon's watch was off duty, he and some others set out for Longwood, less than four miles from Jamestown. As they approached the long, low, white house with hibiscus hedges and tidy gardens, they saw a profusion of flowers and acres of carefully tended lawns. They learned that Napoleon had planned his own garden with sunken paths, irrigation ditches, and flower beds of many shapes. They entered the house through the french windows of the billiard room, a green room with golden globes of the heavens and earth which Napoleon used to study, twirling them round and round as he mused. The shutters of the room had peepholes through which, the boys were told, the exiled emperor spied on his guards.

Though he had had a staff of fifty and rode in the first horse-drawn carriage on the island, while the governor traveled in a cart drawn by bullocks, Napoleon delighted in embarrassing his captors. He did everything he could to give the impression that not enough was being spent on his upkeep, though the tally was twelve hundred pounds a year. These were stories of Napoleon that his namesake, and the other whalemén, had never heard. From Longwood, the young men followed a path which led past Napoleon's tomb, Rosemary Hall and Plantation House, where they stopped to look at the two hundred year old tortoise with his leathery neck and puckered skin. They fed him some bananas,

which he seemed to relish, though they were told that pears were his favorite fruit. The tortoise ate slowly, as if he had unlimited time at his disposal, but the crew of the *Josephine* did not, so they left their friend enjoying his feast, while they hastened back to Jamestown.

By mid-morning the next day, the *Josephine* was headed northwest, bound for New Bedford. She passed close to Ascension Island and after that, except for one small pod of whales, there was nothing to see but ocean for three monotonous weeks.

A month north of the equator, the *Josephine* struck heavy squalls. The crew raced to reef in the sails and adjust the yards, first on one tack and then on another. Heavy seas washed over the decks. The incessant thunder was deafening and the lightning almost continuous. It was a rough, stormy night and the gale continued all the next day. Then the weather changed, the seas went down and the ship flew along under a light, northerly breeze.

Expecting to be on soundings soon, Captain West ordered the *Josephine* prepared for entering New Bedford. The try works were knocked down and the bricks and useless lumber thrown overboard. The trypots were turned upside down and lashed between heavy knees, bolted to the deck, which held the tryworks in place. The bulwarks and the deck were thoroughly scrubbed. The masts and yards were given a fresh coat of paint, for like all good whaling masters, Captain West took pride in bringing his ship home in the best possible condition. Soon the vessel eased into Butler's Wharf and the hawsers were made fast.

Napoleon had been gone from home twenty-five months. He went ashore and sought out the shipping agent, John Wing, to get paid off. His lay wasn't very great, but he fared better than most, thanks to Mr. Belain's advice. Poly did not linger in New Bedford, but headed for the Vineyard on the first packet sailing that way. Three of his brothers were still at home. It was good to see his family again, but there was nothing to do and he was restless after his months at sea. Charlie Hatch persuaded him to go to Vermont to work on a farm, but Poly could not put up with the irascible Farmer Martin, so he left and went to Granville, New York. He soon returned to Vermont and, after some time, settled in Ludlow and went to work in a woolen mill. Strangely enough he did not mind working in the mill and was quite content with his life in the thriving town. But one day he caught his arm in the carding machine. He could not work for some time, so he decided to go home.

Napoleon had never been homesick. He had, in fact, nearly always felt an urge to leave home, to seek new places and new acquaintances. But that changed. When he returned to Gay Head, he discovered Annetta Vanderhoop, a lively young school teacher, with dancing black eyes and a comely figure. For the first time in his life, he seriously considered settling down. Napoleon had no trouble finding work to do and, once more, he became a fisherman. In summer, he went lobstering; in spring and fall, dragging; and winters he had a small boat of his own from which he fished for scallops in Menemsha Pond. A fisherman's day is long, but Poly found time to woo and win Annetta.

They were married and, in time, had two daughters and a son, who was named Luther. Napoleon built a fine house on the south side of Gay Head, overlooking the broad expanse of the Atlantic. He was made Medicine Man of the Gay Head tribe and he was content to remain at home, enjoying his family and renewing the friendships of his youth.

The years passed quickly. The *Josephine* had been lost off the coast of Chile. All the older men from whom Napoleon had heard tales of great exploits and far places were gone and his contemporaries who had gone whaling had all died, one by one. Napoleon Bonaparte Madison, Medicine Man of the Wampanoag Tribe of Narragansett Indians, was the last native whaleman on Martha's Vineyard, even as his ancestors were the Vineyard's first whalemens.



Photograph by DeWolf C. Thompson
Napoleon Bonaparte Madison, Medicine Man

THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE

More than fifty years ago Julia had come to this trim yellow and white house as the bride of a young whaling master. She was eighteen that winter, a tiny thing with dancing feet and dancing eyes and soft brown curls tied with a blue, blue ribbon. She had gone to singing school at Locust Grove with her cousins, unaware of the picture she had made as she entered the room, color high from the frosty night and eyes sparkling with excitement. She was unaware, but the tall young captain, who had been standing by the organ singing lustily a moment before, was not. He openly stared. The music stopped and commenced again, but he didn't hear it as he hurried across the room to offer his assistance. He couldn't believe that this dainty young lady was Tom's cousin who used to beg to be taken skating when he and Tom headed for Uncle Seth's or Parsonage Pond. In the four years he'd been whaling, little Julie had become Miss Julia. His eyes told her all this, while his lips mumbled the conventional phrases of greeting and then, unconventionally, he refused to leave her side for the remainder of the evening. But Julia was not averse to this attention; in fact, hope of it had prompted her presence here. She had heard that William was home from sea, and she had been dreaming of that home-coming for four years. He might have thought her a child when he sailed, but she was a woman-child who, secretly, had given her heart to a stalwart, young man, whose heart had been devoted to the sea.

The courtship was brief for William would sail again in the spring. He had done well for such a young man so he bought for his bride a house in Middletown, a substantial foursquare house, surrounded by a picket fence.

Their house in order, the bride entertained her husband's family, her own family, the minister, and a constant procession of young people. There was still time for skating, sleighrides, and all the social functions of the neighborhood.

Busy, happy days succeeded each other until the morning in May when William sailed his ship out of Edgartown Harbor, bound for the Indian Ocean. This meant separation: three long years of it. Julia had not meant for this to happen. She had not intended to be left behind and had firmly made up her mind that where William went, she would go, too. It was not that she enjoyed hardship, or would rather try to keep house in the cramped quarters of a whaler than in her own spacious home, but just that

she wanted to share William's fortunes. She would rather be cold, hungry, and seasick with William than to be warm, safe, and lonely without him. She had planned to sail with her husband when his vessel was ready. Ever since the brief ceremony in the little white church on the hill, Julia had talked endlessly of sailing. She had interrogated all the wives she knew who had been to sea. Some of them had smiled at her and said she'd be better off ashore; others had told her of weary monotony and frightening storms; of delightful excursions at Honolulu, and of the strange lands and stranger people seen when ships made land to recruit. She knew she could adapt to the life aboard a whaleship. She planned aloud, morning, noon and night. She was sure William had heard her; but he had not, for his mind had been too engrossed in the responsibilities of his new command. So when the day of departure drew near, and his bride's intent was disclosed, it met with a sharp rebuff. Of course she was not sailing. The deck of a whaleship was no place for a woman. Julia begged and pleaded, but William's no was final and irrevocable. Julia fled to the grove behind the barn. There she stormed and raged and threw herself on the mossy bank to sob until she was spent. Then she schooled herself to accept the inevitable and wasted no more time in useless wailing. She would bow gracefully to the will of her master - this time. She must not let William know she was so upset and hurt by his decision because that would spoil their last few days together. If they must be parted for three or four years, she wanted them both to have only happy memories of these last few days.

William sailed and Julia settled down to life ashore. She cared for the livestock, tended the garden and the fruit trees, and kept her house in order. She attended quilting bees, sewing circle, mite society, and singing school. Twice each Sunday she drove to church. Either her family or William's usually had Sunday dinner with her. She taught the neighborhood children music, rewarding a good lesson with a large glass of milk and a plate of ginger or sugar cookies, or blueberry ginerbread. She roved the fields with her cousins, filling huge pails with blueberries, blackberries and raspberries. These and the produce from her garden she canned and stored in neat rows on the shelves William had built for her in the root cellar. Daily chores filled Julia's life from dawn to dusk.

She had brought her organ from her parent's home and she usually spent the short evening, between supper dishes and bedtime, playing and singing those old familiar hymns which William sang so well. The music dispelled the quiet, but evening,

especially after the lamps were lit, was a lonely time. Then the far reaches of the South Atlantic, or the Arctic Ocean, or whatever body of water her captain was sailing on at that particular time, seemed as far away as eternity. Letters were few, far between, and not very comforting. The news, at best, was months old, and often it took years to reach its destination. Julia sent a letter to her captain whenever the opportunity presented itself and to this end she kept a journal. When her evensong was over, she meticulously noted in her journal the events of the day:

"Patience Tilton died a few days ago.

Went to Nickerson's today. Saw Ira and Eliza.

Celina is visiting her mother for a fortnight.

Father butchered a hog today.

May Nickerson's arm some better. Not yet healed.

Asa Norton and Fannie published today.

Heard Captain Davis married the Widow West in New Bedford."

Then Julia knelt to pray. She prayed for a young girl who had cast aside her girlhood to become a whaling captain's wife; and for that wife, often uncertain, sometimes frightened, and always lonely. She prayed for strength and courage to be worthy of William's choice. And then she prayed for her young captain, so far away, so much at the mercy of the elements, so beloved.

Summer passed and autumn days were frosty. Hour after hour, she sat by the sunny window, putting infinitesimal stitches into tiny vests, petticoats, slips, dresses, sacques, wrappers and all the other accoutrements of a beloved baby. The first child should be a boy, so her trimming stitches were blue; but, just in case - she added a few pink touches. As she stitched, she dreamed of the child yet to be born. Would he be a whaleman like his father? Or would he be a doctor, a lawyer, a minister? She hoped he would chose a profession; but whatever his choice, she knew he'd excel in it, for he would be the captain's son.

Julia's father had butchered her hog and she had made sausage meat and head cheese and had carefully packed fat chunks of pork in tubs of brine. These would be baked with beans, or tried out, crisp and brown, to go with potatoes and milk gravy, or in little brown cubes to enhance salt fish and potato. The fresh meat her father had taken. That would go toward her board for the winter for, about Christmas, she would shut up her own home and to go her parent's house to await the arrival of her child. Her father would crate her hens and tie her cow behind his wagon to drive them to West Tisbury for the duration of her stay. The extra milk and eggs would compensate for the extra labor.

Thus William Albert was born in his grandfather's house, but his father did not hear of his birth until the child was more than a year old. Then, gamming with Captain Daniel Adams on the Mozambique Channel, the young captain learned that Julia had given birth to a child, but Captain Adams could not remember whether it was a boy or a girl. Before Julia returned to Middletown, she wrapped her baby in a nest of blankets and drove him to Windy Gates to meet his paternal grandparents.

Back home, the days moved more quickly with some one to talk to, to plan for. Soon the baby was real company, alert, curious, following Julia about. The days passed, but the evenings were still lonely, for not until William Albert had passed his third birthday, did his father come home from the sea.

William Albert had two brothers and a sister, and still their father was at sea for three or four years at a time, and ashore for only a few months between voyages. While he was away, Julia rose before the sun, roused the boys, and repaired to the kitchen to start her day's work. With kindlings from the woodshed, she soon had a brisk fire going atop the banked coals. She shoved a large kettle of hominy forward, put the teakettle on to boil, and tested the boilerful of water on the back of the stove to be sure it would be ready for her washing. Wintry days the clothes had to be hung out early - earlier than usual. By the time the boys had left the pails of foaming milk and a basket of eggs in the buttery for their mother to attend to later, breakfast was on the table and four lard pails were packed with substantial lunches. A short while later, the four children set off through the woods to school. The sun was still low in the sky and it would be low on the western horizon when they returned. It was a long walk and the older ones chafed at the younger's short legs and slow pace, but they went together for that was one of Julia's infrequent dictums.

Breakfast dishes washed, she strained the milk and put the huge pans on the shelf by the north window. Then she washed all the milking equipment and put it out in the sun to air. Out came washtubs, wringer, and all the paraphernalia of wash day. The piles of soiled clothes became baskets of heavy, wet laundry to be lugged to the back yard and hung on lines there. Her hands ached with cold long before the last garment was on the line. Back in the warm kitchen, she decided to utilize her hot oven. She baked pies, gingerbread, corncake, and a bread pudding, with raisins this time because that was how Henry like it; without raisins the next time, because Will liked it plain. While her pies and pudding baked she put her house in order.

The fragrant gingerbread reminded her that her breakfast had been some hours ago, so she brewed some tea and ate her lunch. She prepared the evening meal, tidied her kitchen, and then went upstairs to dress for the afternoon. Neat and clean, she packed some of her morning's baking into a basket, added a few eggs and a jar of cream, covered it with a snowy cloth and set out across the fields to Auntie Hammett's. It was a good two miles as the crow flies, nearer three probably; but she should be able to make a little visit and be home when the children returned from school. Auntie Hammett was a shut-in and she did like visitors. Julia enjoyed her call and her brisk walk home. She had just time to get in her washing before the children came trooping home.

Evening chores done and supper over, the family sat around the kitchen table to do their lessons while Julia darned or knit socks. Edgar fell asleep and had to be carried off to bed. Addie was balked by her fractions and had a real temper tantrum. Her mother, sympathizing with her inability to master numbers, felt firmly that Addie must learn to master herself, so the lessons went on. At last the murky facts became clear and the problems were solved. Henry and Addie were allowed to play checkers quietly at one end of the table while Will finished his studies. Then it was bedtime. Before they went their separate ways, Julia read from the Bible and they all knelt to pray: to thank God for His many blessings, to ask His guidance that they might live uprightly, as behooved the family of a master mariner, and to petition His watchful care over their father and husband, thirty months out. Another day had drawn to a close.

Sunny days, stormy days, good days, bad days, hundreds of days passed while the captain chased whales and the captain's wife carried on at home. Edgar had the whooping cough and for days Julia feared for his life. Addie swallowed a fish bone and her mother had to extract it while she watched her only daughter gasp, turn purple and nearly strangle. Once Henry fell from the haymow to the barn floor. He couldn't move his arm and Julia was sure he had broken it; but Will, eager to test his medical theories, grasped his brother's shoulder, pressed firmly, and snapped the dislocated bone back into place.

Will was calm and level-headed in an emergency, but he was always experimenting and some of his experiments were well-nigh disastrous. He contracted an unexplained fever which raged for days and days. Alleviating his suffering, keeping the other children

away from possible contagion, supervising work which must be done, Julia grew gaunt and pale from sleeplessness and worry. She had to be everywhere at once. But at last the fever abated; the other children did not incur the mysterious malady; life returned to normal. There were so many of these crises to be borne, so many decisions to be made, and only Julia to make them. She often thought with longing of the two years the captain had stayed ashore, the only time he'd been with her when one of their children had been born. Those had been wonderful years. Worries and problems had lost much of their terror because they were shared. Now she must make all the decisions alone. There were no rules. She always hoped that the captain would have approved of her course, for his approbation was necessary to her happiness and contentment.

Now at last, they could be a united family, for the captain had come home from sea and had become a full-time farmer. Will was in the mid-west, studying to be a doctor. He would be a good one, for all his life he had been interested in healing sick creatures, mending broken bones, and causing the ailing to be well. The other children were home, but it was Henry's last year. His mother wanted him to be a minister, but he wanted to be a lawyer. He was going to Rhode Island next year and, whichever profession he chose, Julia knew he would honor it.

The years sped by. Will had achieved his goal, only to fall victim to a severe diphtheria epidemic. Julia's steadfast faith had waived at this cruel loss. She had felt that she could not have borne it if the captain had been on the other side of the world. Together they bore their loss with fortitude. Now Henry was in Wisconsin, studying law, doing all kinds of odd jobs to pay his expenses. Addie had taught school at Scrubby Neck and at Menemsha before she went to an institute at Worcester. There she met a young man who cut short her teaching career to make her his bride. They lived in Leominster, so Julia did not see them often. Even Edgar had gone to Boston to work. Now it was as it had been in the beginning, only William and Julia.

Julia still rose before the sun. But now it was the captain who prodded the banked coals into glowing, warming fires as he passed through the kitchen on his way to attend to his livestock. By the time the morning chores were done, Julia had an attractive, hearty breakfast set by the sunny south window. In winter this was one of the best moments of the day with a leisurely breakfast and no hurrying to go to work, or to get the children off to school. Mutual

and individual plans for the day were discussed; the latest letters from the children reread; the shipping news noted; ideas and convictions were shared.

In the afternoon, her house spotless behind her, Julia, dressed in a becoming and fashionable outfit, would be handed into the sleigh by an admiring captain. By prearrangement, they would drive to Edgartown; he to attend to business at the courthouse, and she to visit Cousin Carrie. And then there were the socials at the schoolhouse, midweek prayer meeting, church twice on Sunday, and many other gatherings. With the captain as escort, Julia attended them all, her taffeta skirts rustling, her bonnets, pert or demure, according to the occasion.

The long days of work in spring, summer and fall made early bedtime a luxury; but even then there were occasional picnics, church suppers, or excursions to Nomansland or one of the Elizabeth Islands. Best of all there was the companionship which Julia had longed for while the captain had been on the other side of land. Now she could share her thoughts and bask in his approbation, or listen attentively to why she was wrong, sometimes conceding, sometimes gently arguing her point. But either way, it was good to be able to share thoughts and feelings about the children, friends and relatives at sea, religion, the old folks, town affairs, anything and everything.

The companionship was close and warm. Their separations had never diminished the love they felt for one another in their youth and to that had been added a deep, mutual respect and a close comradeship which had nothing to do with propinquity. It was something deep-rooted in their hearts, which even death could not destroy.

Julia learned that one hot August afternoon. She was ladling raspberry jam from a huge kettle to sparkling glass jars, for force of habit was strong and she still canned and preserved as she had done when the children were home. She heard someone drive into the yard so she quickly exchanged her print apron for a clean one, conveniently hung on the back of the kitchen door for just such an emergency. But she was not prepared for the emergency she was forced to face.

The captain, the hired man, and a couple of neighbors had been haying in the north pasture. The horses had bolted, throwing the captain from the mowing machine. He was badly hurt. Someone had gone for the doctor, but Julia thought he would never, never come. He came, but there was little he could do. William did not



Dorothy Cottle Poole

The Captain's widow waiting for the mail.

regain consciousness which was merciful, for he would have hated to be an invalid, helpless and dependent. In her heart Julia knew this and it helped her to accept this abrupt end to the happiest era of her life. The captain would have been proud of his wife as she comforted their stricken families and as she firmly announced, when William had been laid to rest beside his first-born, that the boys and Addie were to return at once to their respective duties, and that she would remain at home in Middletown.

The captain's widow lived alone in the house to which she had come as a bride. She continued to rise before the sun; persevered in her ministrations to the needy; and went as regularly as ever to church. Each afternoon she stood by her gate, a short, stocky woman enveloped in a gray dress, covered with a white apron and a triangular shawl of soft blue wool. Her hair was white now, parted in the middle and drawn back to a sparse knot, and steel-rimmed spectacles covered her twinkling blue eyes. Her face was deeply lined, but still pink-cheeked, and her smile gladdened every passerby. She was a solitary figure, the captain's widow, yet her face and manner reflected an inner peace and serenity which bespoke the acceptance of the inevitable, without abject submission to it. She still watched for letters from afar; only now those letters came by United States Mail and were delivered at her gate; and now the letters were from her children and grandchildren, and never from the other side of land.*

*"The other side of land" was an expression used by the whalemens to denote the Pacific Ocean, particularly the west coast of South America.

WORK

In many circles today work is unpopular. Men spend much time and thought devising ways and means to shorten the working week and to cut hours off the remaining workdays. Less and less worktime, more and more leisure have become paramount concern of countless people in all walks of life. What is this anathema men call work?

In the tower beneath the tolling bell, the artist steps back to view his work. He feels a glow of satisfaction and a surge of pride as he thinks how thousands will sense the majesty and eternity of the ocean as he has captured it on his canvas. He wonders briefly how his fellow painters, one a lawyer and the other a truck driver, have finished their interpretations of the same scene. Their techniques might leave much to be desired, but their enthusiasm was boundless and they had filled their vacation hours with a schedule fully as exacting as his.

Along the waterfront, red or black caps with long visors, brightly colored flannel shirts, very dirty dungarees, and rubber boots are standard equipment. The men scurry to and fro, putting gear aboard their boats, refueling if, as often happens, they got ashore late the night before. They frequently check their watches and glance up the road for tardy crew members. Intermittently, they listen to the radio to get the latest weather report, relaying it from man to man. Finally, before the sun has cleared the horizon, there is a din of motors and the fleet sets out for the day's fishing, commercial or sport.

Two khaki-clad figures clamber over the stonewall and stride off into the woods. Every day these men rise before dawn, consume a sketchy breakfast, drive for miles, and then tramp through greenbriars, marsh and thicket in search of their prey. Occasionally the returning hunters have some trophy to carry - or drag - back to their car. More often they return empty-handed. Cadillacs may transport them to brilliantly lighted, comfortably heated houses and a bounteous meal, despite their empty bags, but they have spent the day as pioneers.

Alert, well-groomed, carefully tailored, the passengers hurry from the ferry's ramp to the pier. All are tanned by the summer sun, not one bears the stamp of his work. Yet in that throng are men who have spent their entire sojourn toiling, night and day, over vital problems. Diplomats, corporation executives, economists and scientists debark, undistinguishable from dilettantes and profligates.

Over and over the flutist plays the difficult strain. He tries the entire composition and then, again and again, the troublesome phrase until the notes come pure and sweet, every time, without hesitation. The effort involved is worthy of a soloist in a great orchestra, but the player is a garage mechanic who meets weekly with some of his friends for an evening of musical pleasure.

Work has many connotations. One man's pleasure is another's bane. Why, then, do men work? Some men turn to work when they are troubled for, in sorrow or in anger, men find work therapeutic. Other men work to better mankind, or to alleviate the sufferings of humanity. Men work from necessity. They work to obtain food, clothing and shelter for themselves and their families, and to insure security for their old age. Men work to gain some specific end, or to lavish gifts on those they favor. Men work to create beauty and to serve humanity. They also work for Fame, Fortune and Power. Men work to dominate others, and men work because they are dominated by others - or by forces stronger than their aversion to work.

But there is a race of men who work because they enjoy working and do not measure their tasks by coffee breaks, days off and vacations. These unusual people often cannot understand the rank and file of men who are constantly agitating for shorter and shorter work hours. They hold no brief against golf, fishing, bridge, poker, or any other pastimes used to fill vacant hours; they simply see no need for them.

They arise each day to a continuation of something very vital. They cannot loiter over breakfast, nor tarry for exchange of chit-chat, for they have work to do. They attack the morning's labor with gusto. Without doubt each step has been well planned; but if the project is a new one, planning is number one on the agenda: careful, considered planning, which may be done while sitting comfortably at a mahogany desk, atop the barnyard fence, or on the end of the dock, preferably surrounded by a dense cloud of pipe smoke.

Plans made, the dottle is tapped out and action begins. From one task to another this worker moves with surety or, meeting a snag, he once more retires behind his smoke screen to battle with it. Every snag is not a frustration, but a challenge. He is a good banker - farmer - fisherman - and he knows it. Unusual problems may arise, but when they do he will summon from his great storehouse of experience data which will enable him to solve the dilemma. Work is a constant challenge and, as such, it imbues the worker with self-confidence and personal dignity.

These men may create beauty, or serve mankind; they may amass wealth and be potentates; or they may pursue lowly, unrecognized paths, with little or no apparent reward. To these men work is not work, it is life.

FREE FARE

At our house we like to eat. The foods on the table are many, varied and plentiful. They come from all parts of the world. Yet every now and then, we are aware that many of our best meals have been native foods, obtained by only a moderate outlay of effort on our part. We decided to take count of stock.

In the spring we like to follow the course of the brook, as it races swiftly toward the sea. Farther upstream we find quiet pools where sunlight filters through a lacy fretwork of new leaves. We bait hooks and cast our lines toward the shadowy rocks. Now and then we see the flash of a trout and dangle the bait enticingly. So the morning passes in utter peace and contentment and, by the time the heightened sun sends us on our way, four beauties lie in our creel. A bit farther downstream, we gather watercress. A crisp salad and golden brown trout will make a meal fit for a king.

Days when a tramp through the woods does not appeal need not be fast days. We can sit serenely on the end of our dock and, casting our lines a few yards out, we can soon haul in enough silvery perch to make a hearty meal. Or we can go to the herring creek. We do not recommend wading in to snatch the slippery fish in outstretched hands, although we have done it that way. Our more rational method is to use a dip net which will ensure an ample amount in a short while. The herring are bony, but sweet and tender and the roe, too, is a tasty dish.

But we do not subsist exclusively on fish. In the meadows we gather tiny, tender milkweed, dandelion, cowslip greens, or perhaps the succulent fronds of the fiddlehead fern. We may add a handful of tart sorrel as an extra fillip for our salad; or we pick morels and puffballs to grace our menu. All are free for the taking.

In summer we go to the cove to dig a bucket of clams, little ones to steam and larger ones for a chowder. If we don't find clams, there are always plenty of quahogs. We don't hurry, but take time to savor the freshness of the early morning hour. Going up the grassy slope toward home, our gaze is arrested by myriad white blossoms and, on closer view, dark red berries. We doff our old straw hats, line their crowns with leaves and gather strawberries, not large, but juicy and sweet. We'll have a shortcake to follow the chowder.

When the strawberry season is over, we go to the plains where lowbush blueberries and huckleberries grow in limitless quantity. In a few hours we fill our pails with fruit for a tasty dessert today,

or for pies when ice and snow make memories of warm summer days especially welcome.

In August the sun blazes down on the plains, making them an undesirable place to be. So then we find our blueberries in the swamps. There in the cool shade, with just enough sun filtering through the trees, we gather the highbush blueberries, large and juicy, well worth the effort of the longer walk. Often along the roadside, we pick chokecherries or purple elderberries to be added to our fare; or spend a pleasant hour or two gathering blackberries from the nearby meadows.

Even a casual stroll along the beach often results in an addition to the larder. Brought in by the tides, Irish moss lies scattered along the beach, its soft greens and purples bleaching to white beneath the summer sun. It doesn't take long to gather enough to dry and powder for a perfect blanc mange.

We still enjoy a morning's fishing. Now we find a comfortable rock on the end of the jetty, bait our hooks and drop them into the water. The heat of the summer sun is tempered by the gentle breeze that ripples across the water and we settle back contentedly, watching the gulls trailing the fishing boats out in the sound. Presently we feel a nibble and haul in our first scup or flounder. When we have enough, we reel in our lines and saunter back along the jetty, pausing to get a few mussels from the slippery rocks in the bight. This afternoon we'll go crabbing. Chowder, crab salad and blueberry pie will make a delightful meal.

Summer wanes and crisper air reminds that fall is the season to prepare for the leaner months ahead. We roam the countryside where tangled grapevines, rampant along the edge of every unused pasture, yield their abundance with little persuasion. From some of these we'll make venison jelly to go with the deer we hope to get later in the season. Now, beside the narrow woodroads we find hazelnuts whose plump nutmeats make wonderful munching, as do the pungent checkerberries which grow along this same road.

Then on a still autumn evening when the harvest moon rides high in the sky, turning night to day, we go to the beach. We cast our lures just beyond the surf; reel them in, and cast again. A couple of fat bluefish reward our efforts. Next time we may hook a bass; or using hand-lines, we may heave and haul for cod. At this time of year, they often have plump roe which, baked with thin slices of salt pork, provide a delicious entree.

Fall days do not remain idyllic. Grey skies and leafless trees make the landscape stark and cold. But we do not think the day

bleak nor dreary as we stride up the hill with our shotguns under our arms. The wind is fresh. In a short while the ducks will begin their flight toward their night resting place. Meanwhile, we hide under cover of a clump of beach plum bushes, noting that they are the bushes we had found so prolific last summer. The plums had been big and plentiful and we had picked an ample supply. Some day soon we must go to the cranberry bogs to scoop up their harvest. We can never decide whether we like beach plums or cranberries better with wild fowl, so we usually serve both.

Casualty, we study the sound, gray under its rippling white caps. We see a number of draggers bound offshore and feel glad that we're not aboard. A buoy setter comes in and we note that it has been preparing for the inevitable winter storms. Our gaze returns to middle distance where we spot a couple of scallopers on the pond. Pond scallops, sweet and tender, are one of our favorite foods. We must dredge a few before the commercial season opens.

A quack sends our glances upward. Here they come; not many, very scattered and pretty high. They fly over without disturbance. No use to fire when the birds are out of range. We scan the sky. No geese seem to be around today. Perhaps it is too early for them. This game takes patience. Presently a duck appears, and another, and another; then a small flock. This is our chance and we shoot a brace of fat bluebills.

Another day we stroll across the upland meadows, where we bag a plump pheasant or a few quail. Either delicacy is the acme of a delightful day in the open. When snow blankets the ground, this same area will be a prime source of rabbits, wonderful in a fricassee.

Before winter really sets in, we go to the pond for oysters. We have them, large and succulent, on the half shell or in a steaming stew, unsurpassed for a chilly evening.

The weather gets colder and colder. Still days and nights thicken the ice on the ponds. A mess of eels will certainly taste good. We collect axes, eel spears and an empty nail keg and walk out onto the pond, just to the edge of hard and soft. With our axes we make holes about two feet in diameter, shoving the loose pieces of ice under the smooth glassy surface of the pond. Exchanging our axes for spears, we drive the prongs down into the mud. We find eel grass and prod and prod until our efforts are rewarded. Our luck is good for we spear several eels from our first holes. We make more holes and fish until our nail keg is full. The big ones we'll split for roasting. The small ones will make stifle,

chowder, or be wonderful fried crisp and brown outside, moist and white inside. Canned raspberries, picked one sunny morning last summer, will add the final touch to an epicurean meal.

This is our stock taking. Not every one relishes all these foods, nor enjoys the leisurely, time-consuming process involved in their harvest. Nevertheless, each season offers its own gustatory delights; none is barren. There's free fare all year on Martha's Vineyard.

LETTER TO AMANDA
MARTHA'S VINEYARD, 1851

Middletown
Martha's Vineyard
3 September, 1851

Dear Cousin Amanda:

Captain Cottle, as master of the bark *Cambria*, sailed on the flood tide this morning, bound for the North Pacific. He will be gone three long years. I wanted to go with him, but the first voyage after our marriage he decreed, "A ship is no place for a woman," and he has never altered his course, so I must remain at home.

You asked how I could bear this lonely life. The care of little William, the house, garden, and livestock leaves me little time for self-pity. Of course I am lonely for the captain's presence, but if I must be left behind, there is no better place to be than in my own home.

Perhaps this is the best opportunity I shall ever have to tell you about my island. I hope that I may persuade you to make me a visit, despite the long tedious journey you would have to make by stagecoach. The inn at Woods Holl has quite comfortable quarters and is very near the waterfront. Sloops frequently make the passage across the sound to Holmes' Holl and I am sure you would enjoy the sail, especially if you come on the *Ann Eliza*, Captain John Merry.

Holmes' Holl is the shipping port of the island so there are many coasters, loading and unloading freight. Along the shore are two long, low sheds with rows of huge vats between them. These are the salt works where sea water is evaporated. They are soon to be abandoned, but I can remember when they, and others like them, were our only source of table salt.

Near the waterfront is Bradley's Boat Yard and many shops, blacksmiths, cordwainers, and coopers. Whatever is needed for supplying the coasters is near at hand and there is much bustle.

To reach my house, you would have to journey by stagecoach again, but it would not be a long trip. You would pass only a few scattered farms before arriving at Middletown, a cluster of half a dozen houses, a small white church, and outlying farms. The stage goes right past my gate and from my parlor windows I can see it on its journey to and from Chilmark each day. An occasional carriage, farm wagons carrying produce to Holmes' Holl and

oxcarts, which come from the Indian settlement at the western end of the island, all pass my windows and give me something to think about as I sit there with my darning or patchwork. When there are no travellers, I can see across the wide flat meadow, on the other side of the road, to the woods beyond. Cedar, oak, beech, walnut and sassafras trees are there, a shimmer of soft green in the spring, a deep, cool, dark green in the summer, and a glistening fairyland when covered with snow. These woods are filled with birds: chickadees, sparrows, nuthatches, grosbeaks, and many, many more. Some fill the air with sweet melody and others, like the bluejay and the crow, shatter the stillness with their harsh cries, but all provide me with entertainment.

Behind my barn is a woodland, stretching for miles along the north shore of the island. This north shore is an interesting place with several coves, in which dwell farmer-fishermen. Snuggled against a protecting hillside or grove of trees, the low farm houses, white or gray-shingled, face the sound. The waves lap the shore a short distance from the front steps, and boats and fishing gear are mingled with plows, harrows and hayrakes in the barnyard. The waters abound with fish and the soil, though light, is rich enough to produce an ample food supply for all the inhabitants and their livestock. Cows graze in the meadows and sheep on the hillsides. Pigs fatten on skim milk and table scraps, and chickens supply eggs and Sunday dinners. Every farmer-fisherman has a dory or two and tends to his fishing early in the day. Windy days, or after he comes ashore with his day's catch, he does his farm work. He has few idle moments, but he has a good life. A good life and a peaceful one, and yet in every kitchen there are firearms for, in addition to farming and fishing, the men hunt ducks, geese, squirrels and rabbits to supplement their winter's food supply.

On the shore near most of these homes there are flakes built to dry codfish for salting. The split fish are spread on the flakes and left in the sun to cure. They must be turned frequently on sunny days to keep them from burning and to insure thorough drying. At the least sign of rain, they must be rushed under cover. The women usually tend the flakes because the men are fishing or doing the heavy farm chores. Drying fish entails a great deal of work, but produces a gratifying meal.

Along this same shore is the brickyard where red clay is made into bricks for Vineyard chimneys and fireplaces. Here, too, is the paint mill where clay and skim milk are made into paint for all our needs. Roaring Brook empties into the sound just beyond the brickyard, and farther up this brook there is a grist mill. Here the up-island farmers bring their grain to be ground to flour and, while

the mill wheel turns and the huge stones grind the corn or wheat to meal, the men exchange news of the fish that have been caught, the game that has been shot, the bushels of corn harvested per acre, the length of the drought or the effects of the deluge, and the latest shipping news: who has sailed and who returned, and how many barrels of oil each voyage produced.

Some of these men come from Chilmark where the farms are scattered among the rolling hills. The fields abound with wildflowers: violets, anemones and geraniums; roses and daisies, goldenrod and asters. It's a beautiful country, but there is not much visiting over the back fence for the distances are too great. So on Sunday everyone meets at one or another of the tall-spired white churches that dot the countryside to give thanks to God for His many blessings and to petition Him to care for their loved ones, at home or at sea. The sermon is always long, but the congregation does not rush home at its conclusion. This is a chance to visit, and people gather in little knots all over the churchyard, exchanging news of local events and the latest reports from the whaling fleet.

I am content in my own peaceful settlement, but I am not confined to it, for I have my horse, Nellie, and a light buggy which can carry me to any part of my island. On Sundays, I drive to Lambert's Cove, morning and evening, to attend church. Once a week I drive over to Rotch's store to exchange my eggs for tea and whatever else I need. In the spring I take my wool to be carded, spun and woven at Thomas Bradley's Mill, which he bought some time ago from Hannah Look. His new machines and power-driven looms do the work so well and so quickly that few women here still card and weave their own wool. In the fall, I take my corn to the old grist mill on the Tiasquin River. Since David died, Hannah has run the mill and I usually plan to spend the day with her. She is a remarkable woman and a great source of comfort to me. When I receive a letter from Captain Cottle, an all too rare event, I harness Nellie early in the morning and drive to Gay Head to share my news with Mrs. Rose, wife of the second mate aboard the *Cambria*. After I have visited with her, I usually go to the Gay Head Light on the westernmost end of the island and stop for a short call with the keeper and his wife. My visits over, I head for home, but I always stop over night at Mother Cottle's in Chilmark, retailing to her all the news from the *Cambria*.

If you visit me, I shall plan to take you to Gay Head, for the colored cliffs are very beautiful and the drive along the south shore is always delightful. Sometimes huge breakers roll in from

offshore, cresting and spilling their sparkling waters along the beach. Sometimes the ocean is as flat as a mill pond. Blue one day, gray or green the next, the ocean is forever changing and always fascinating.

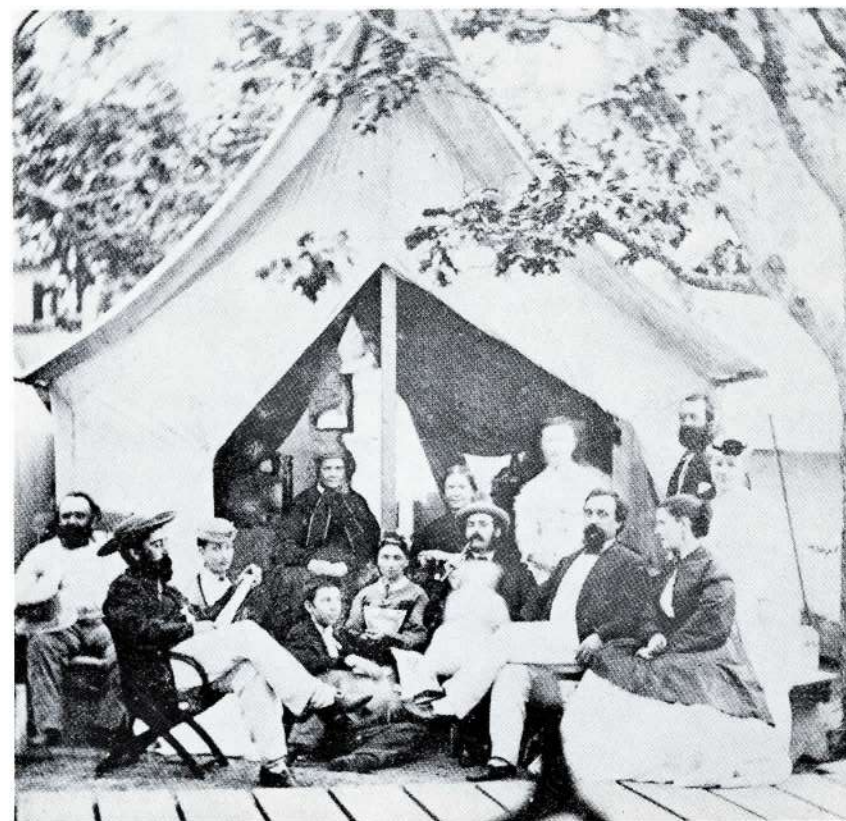
Occasionally I drive to Edgartown to visit Cousin Rebecca or Mrs. Captain Brown. These stays are very pleasant for there is much going on in Edgartown, which is our county seat. The waterfront is a busy place with whaleships at the wharves, outfitting for three and four year voyages to all parts of the world. All that they need is near at hand. There are coopers who make the huge casks for whale oil, as well as barrels, kegs and firkins and the canapails and butter tubs which we use in the house. Nearby are the smithies where the forges glow all day as the blacksmiths pound out tool blades, crowbars and ox chains for the farmers and fittings for the fishermen, coasters and whaleships. There are tanneries, shops for cordwainers, weavers and hat makers, and one of the busiest places of all, the bakery which supplies the hardtack for all whaleships which outfit here.

But of course I do not spend much time by the waterfront, where all this activity goes on. Captain Brown's house is on Main Street, a pleasant white house surrounded by attractive lawns and gardens. Cousin Rebecca lives on North Water Street where the large square houses face the harbor. Their parlors are much alike, spacious rooms with beautiful paneling and large fireplaces, often adorned with huge Chinese vases on each side. Dainty teaset, inlaid lacquer boxes, teakwood tea stands and whatnots filled with many curios brought from sea are to be found in all these houses.

When I last visited Cousin Rebecca we went to a tea where I met Mrs. Captain Sayer of Nantucket. She had sailed several voyages with her husband and she knew well many of the ports where the *Cambria* will call in the next year or two. Thanks to her, I will have a much better idea of these places when Captain Cottle mentions them in his letters.

This past summer I went with Mother Cottle and some neighbors to the Camp Meeting in the grove beyond Eastville. People come here from far and near and live in tents for the week, while preaching and prayer services are held morning, noon and night. I was told there were a hundred tents, sixty ministers and a congregation of more than a thousand last summer. It is a beautiful spot and it is mete to worship God where his many marvels are apparent.

Well, Amanda, I have taken you all around my island and I hope I have been able to make you feel some of its charm, but I do

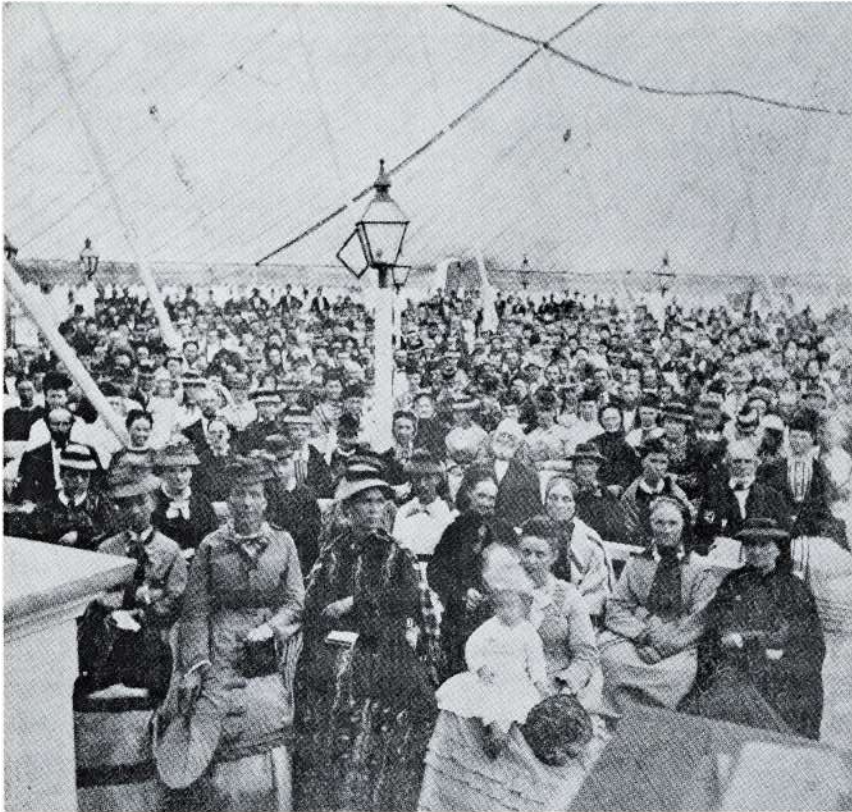


Dukes County Historical Society

Family Tent in Camp Ground

hope you will visit me soon to see for yourself why I love my island home.

Your affectionate cousin,
Julia Ann



Dukes County Historical Society

Congregation in the Tabernacle

WHY MEN FISH FOR A LIVING

Commercial fishing is a gamble. A successful fisherman has to invest thousands and thousands of dollars in equipment for few kinds of fishing are year-round ventures and the equipment, and often even the boats, used for one type of fishing cannot be used for another.

Moreover, everything must be in good working order because if a man misses the first few days of the scallop season, or the first school of lobsters, or any other first, he is already far behind and stands little chance of being "high-liner." Worse still, if his engine fails in the middle of the season, or his boat begins to leak, or his net is torn to shreds by catching on a piece of wreckage, or a hurricane pounds his lobster pots into kindling, his season can be ruined.

A gambling spirit a fisherman must have, but if he is to be successful, he does not rely on sheer luck. He knows where and when to try for each kind of fish. He knows what bait and which lures will be most tempting. He knows the time of day or kind of tide or wind direction that he needs for each fishing ground. He knows when to go and when to quit. He knows that most fish seem to appear in cycles, but his gambling instinct is strong and, if the fish do not come where and when he thinks they should, he usually says, "Not much today, but give 'em hell tomorrow."

And how does a fisherman acquire all this knowledge? Of course, some never do and others acquire it in varying degrees. Most of these outfit for only one or two kinds of fishing, working ashore the rest of the year. Years ago, Vineyarders who did not go whaling were sometimes fishermen-farmers; but today, carpentry and the care of summer homes are the most common second string occupations. There are still a few men whose sole livelihood depends upon fishing. They are the "born fishermen" who work from dawn to dark - and often longer - and whose capital investment is enormous.

The returns are largely intangible. No fisherman need ever go hungry, but very rarely does one ever make a fortune. When fish are plentiful, the price is low and, when prices are high, catches are small or the "run" is too short to compensate for the investment. The substantial profits of a good season can be wiped out easily by one heavy gale. There is no guaranteed income, no fringe benefits, and no retirement pension.

The true fisherman plies his trade for the same reasons that his forefathers went whaling. He loves the sea and glories in its

day-to-day challenge and in the competition with other fishermen. He has many discouraging days: when bad weather prevents going out, or a long day's fishing results in a small catch, ruined gear, or engine trouble. But a beautiful day spent in the vast solitude of sea and sky gives him both a feeling of humility and a tremendous feeling of power. He is monarch of his own private world, even though that world is but a small cog in the universe. Knowing he's providing food for many people while still his own master working at a task he enjoys, affords him satisfaction, deeper and more abiding than fame and fortune.



Dorothy Cottle Poole

Menemsha Swordfish Fleet - 1946

EDGARTOWN'S SCHOONER FLEET

From the earliest settlers, who were not seamen but were "mostly farmers and mechanics from the yeomanry of England,"* the men of Edgartown have looked to the sea for their livelihood. Edgartown men traded along the coast in small schooners or, like the schooner *Nancy*, Captain Lot Norton, they went to Labrador for cod which they "made"* on the rocks at Brador Basin and sold for three dollars a quintal*** to vessels bound to the Mediterranean. Those who did not favor the long run to Labrador fished the Nantucket Shoals which teemed with cod, or had small boats in which they went shellfishing, handlining and, later, swordfishing. Records are practically nonexistent and memories are sketchy, but occasional references to smacks and sloops sailing along the coast with cargoes of quahogs, oysters, bluefish and cod indicate that Edgartown men were taking advantage of the sea's bounty. Nearly every boy had a skiff of his own and progressed to a catboat at a very early age. From there he might seek a berth aboard a sloop or a schooner, but it would not be long before he possessed one of his own. In 1805, Enoch Cornell, age twelve, was "chief mate" of his uncle's two-masted schooner, *Jay*, which "from my experience alongshore in open boats fishing I felt perfectly qualified to perform."**** The cargo he stowed aboard consisted of quahogs, oil, fish and wool destined for New Haven. Until 1870, fishing was mostly by hook and line, but then line-trawling***** was invented in Provincetown and, because it greatly increased the number of fish caught, its use spread rapidly. More fish required more crew and larger boats. Some of the fishermen preferred their catboats with one or two crew, but most of the younger men began building larger vessels.

Originally, these men were trawling off Edgartown. Their boats were powered by sail and each carried a crew of five with two or three dories from which the trawls were set and hauled. Each boat had a shanty ashore where the tubs were baited during the night. A man with a wheelbarrow went from one scallop shanty to another to pick up the scallop rims (at fifty cents a dry basket) as

* Dr. Charles E. Banks, *History of Martha's Vineyard* (Boston: George H. Dean, 1911), Vol. 1, p. 55.

** Spread to dry and salt

*** Quintal = 112 lbs.

**** E. C. Cornell, *Eighty Years Ashore and Afloat* (Boston: Andrew F. Graves, 1873).

***** Hundreds of baited hooks are attached at short intervals to long lines.

the men finished opening their limits. Before daylight they left for the fishing grounds on the back side of the Vineyard. There the dories were lowered and the men paid out their trawls, tossing the hooks overboard with a trawl stick. These men made a good living winters, but they earned it. More often than not, they endured snow, sleet and bitter northeast winds as they rowed to and from the schooner.

Usually, the same crew remained all year and when spring came they would go mackerel gill-netting off cape May, going as far south as Chincoteague, Va., to meet the mackerel coming north. Year after year, Capt. Hillman was one of the high-liners. Mackerel netters did best on moonlight nights, for on dark nights not only did the schools of mackerel show a phosphorescent light, but so did the gill nets and the mackerel wouldn't go near them. The strings of nets were four or five miles long with a kerosene lantern on a pedestal above crossed boards every twenty nets. It was quite a trick to toss this lantern board over the stern without having the light blown out. One member of the crew was detailed to keep the lanterns cleaned and filled and put in their special water-tight box when they were not in use. In daylight, each string of nets carried flags on long bamboo poles in place of the lanterns for there was much steamer traffic off the Jersey coast. If a string of nets was cut off, a dory had to be lowered and the men had to find one side of the cut, tie on a long piece of buoy line and then "row like hell" to find the other side and tie the two pieces together. The vessel jogged all night with a watch to spot steamers and to keep track of the nets. At four A.M., two men went out in each dory to haul back the nets. As each dory was loaded the vessel picked it up, the fish were iced down and the nets hauled aboard and stacked on deck for the next set.

These vessels carried from eighty to one hundred forty nets, each fifty-six yards long. Only large holes were mended during the fishing season. The rest were left for the long cold days of winter when the men could not get out trawling. About June fifteenth, when the mackerel season ended, the nets were washed with fresh water and taken to some large field where they were spread to dry. Then each net was carefully folded and stored in a dry place. During the winter each crew man would pick up a net and wheel it to his cellar or shed where a swordfish pole was tied, horizontal to the ceiling and about a foot below it, over which the net was passed, with corks at one end and leads at the other. As the net was pulled over the pole, every hole was mended, no matter how small. This was repeated until all the holes in all the nets were mended. Usually two men worked together, relieving the

monotony of the task by swapping yarns and having an occasional "coffee break" consisting of a salt herring roasted over the coals of the furnace. When the nets were new, they had been treated with linseed oil and lampblack to keep them pliable. (To keep this mixture from burning the nets, they were sprinkled with salt as they were hauled aboard). The twine used to mend them was oiled in the same way "so black hands were the rule all winter, with wives doing a lot of sputtering."*

As dragging and swordfishing became more important, more specialized equipment, larger vessels and bigger crews were needed. This was the pattern which produced the famous "Edgartown Schooner Fleet" of the first half of the twentieth century.

At that time there was a group of young men in Edgartown who, living a hundred years before, would have been whaling masters sailing the seven seas. Born too late for that adventure, they none-the-less felt, and responded to, the call of the sea. Though not born in Edgartown, they were all ardent boatmen at an early age, fishing near the shores in their small catboats and "graduating" as rapidly as possible to larger catboats, sloops, and then to schooners, or their equivalents.

Horace Hillman and Robert Jackson were the nucleus of this group. Horace had a Nomansland boat before his family moved to Edgartown, but his first craft hailing from there was a catboat named *Thelma*. That same year (1906), Bob Jackson had a large catboat, *Mildred*, followed by a wide, sloop-rigged cat, *Mildred J*. These young men and others fished around the islands, marketing their catches in New Bedford. Then Horace Hillman built a catboat like the *Mildred J*. and named *Louise*. In 1911, he was trawling back of Nantucket in company with the *Eliza Benner*, a sixty-foot schooner, built in 1895. The vessels were caught in a bad breeze and had to haul in their trawls and hasten for harbor. The *Eliza Benner* went around Gay Head, across Vineyard Sound and so to New Bedford. Horace, being more familiar with the waters around the island, sailed through Muskeget Channel and thence to the city. When he reached New Bedford, the *Eliza Benner* was already tied to the pier. Horace did not rest until he had traded the *Louise* for the little schooner, which "rode like a gull," whether netting, trawling or swordfishing. He was the first Edgartown skipper to go swordfishing on Georges Bank, which he did several seasons before he sold her to "Ted" Morgan. Ted made one very successful swordfish trip in the *Eliza Benner*. Some time elapsed before she

* Capt. Philip B. Norton



The *Eliza Benner* swordfishing.

Capt. Philip Norton

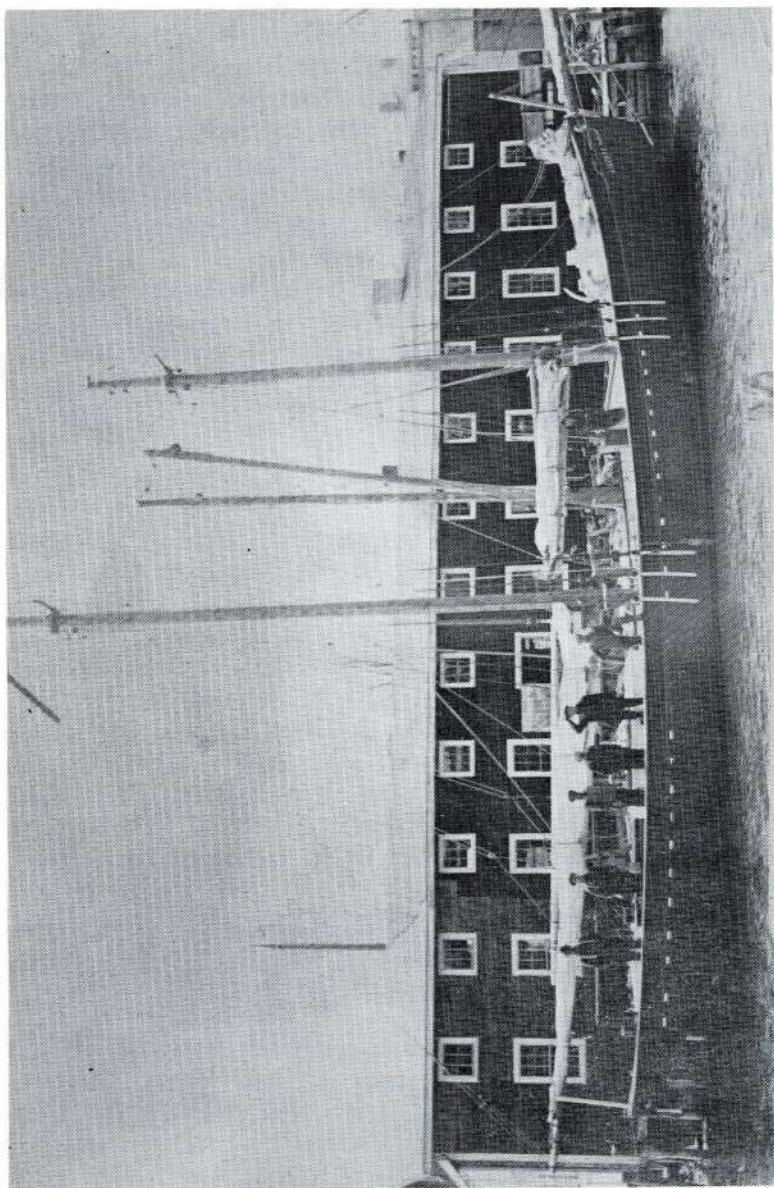
sailed again and that trip was a "broker." The vessel was then anchored in Katama Bay, off Chappaquiddick, and there she sank in the late twenties.

Meanwhile, about 1925, Captain Hillman had had a large schooner built in Essex. She was christened the *B.T. Hillman* for his father, Judge Beriah T. Hillman. The first winter, Captain Hillman went tile fishing off New York. In the spring, he rigged for swordfishing at the South Shoal Lightship, where he and other Edgartown skippers made many record swordfish trips. His greatest rival was his friend, Capt. Jackson, who probably ironed as many swordfish as any man who ever lived.

When Capt. Hillman retired, Capt. Percy McKenna, who had fished with him for many years, ran the *B.T. Hillman*. In the late thirties, the vessel was sold to Dan Mullins of New Bedford. She was renamed the *Gay Head* and used sea scalloping off Georges Bank. In the 1938 hurricane she was lost, with all hands, trying to beat her way home.

The friendly rivalry continued between Capt. Hillman and Capt. Jackson, who fished seven or eight years in the *Mildred J.* George Paul, who had shipped as cook with Captain Jackson, and John Donnelly bought the *Mildred J.* so she remained in the fleet. They didn't do very well and George Paul returned to his former berth. (His brother Harden Paul, was cook for Capt. Hillman.)

In 1914, Capt. Jackson had a sixty foot schooner, the *Progress*, built by Charlie Morse of Maine. Four years later, the *Progress*, with fishing vessels from all along the New England coast, was searching for swordfish on Georges Bank, about ninety miles east of Nantucket. It was a rainy day with an east wind and poor visibility. Ten or a dozen swordfishermen were in sight of each other when a German submarine surfaced and began shelling the vessels. A couple of Maine schooners tried to run for it; one was hit, but Captain Johnson, in the *Albert W. Black* of Portland, put up every sail, started his small Lathrop engine and so got out of range and headed for a shoal part of the Banks where the sub could not pursue. Seven or eight vessels were sunk by German bombs, including the *Progress*, which went down stern first. The men launched their dories and bent to their oars, but Capt. Jackson returned to the schooner for his compass, so he steered a straight course for the Boston ship channel and was picked up fairly promptly. Four of his men rowed around and around for a week (fortunately with some food and water) before they were rescued by a Boston beam trawler. Crews of four more of the swordfishermen reached Nantucket. Captain Jackson's crew that



Capt. Robert Jackson

The *Liberty* at the builders.

trip included Louis Doucette, Mattie Richards, Tommy Marchant, Claude Wagner and George Thomas. All hands were saved.

Marine insurance was so high that many fishermen did not insure their vessels. Capt. Jackson had never carried insurance but a man named Fitzpatrick had prevailed upon him to buy a thirty-day policy just before the *Progress* sailed on this trip. After the war, all the crew received recompense from the government (from German reparations) for all their belongings and their catch of fish, plus interest.

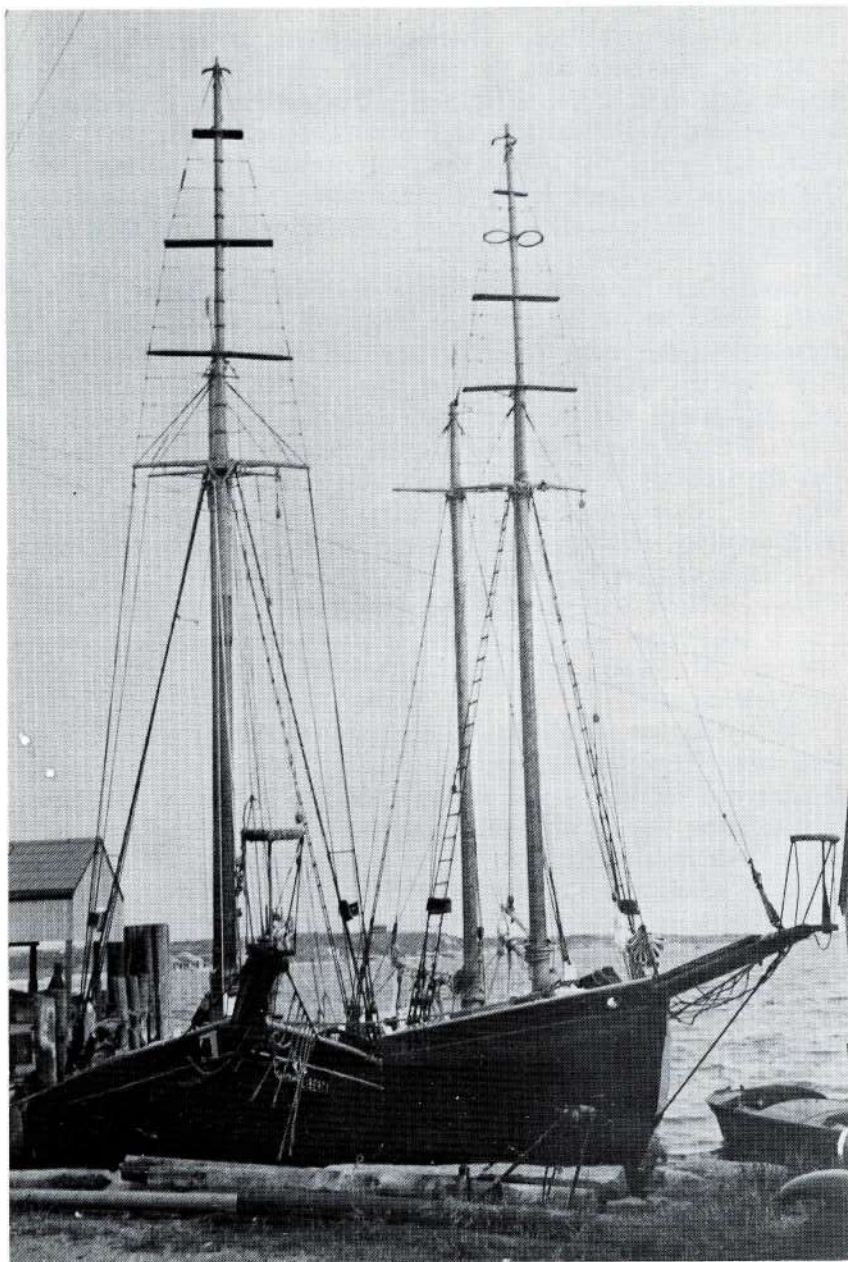
Next, Capt. Jackson had the seventy-foot schooner, *Liberty*, built. While he owned her, the Fishermen's Union tied up all vessels along the coast. The *Liberty* could not sell fish anywhere so Capt. Jackson shipped a hundred barrels or so to New York, but they all spoiled. Of course, masters do not belong to the Union, so Capt. Jackson persuaded the Edgartown skippers to ship with him, and the crew of all captains made a very successful swordfish trip. They landed at Boston but fish dealers there would not handle the catch so they sailed to New Bedford, where they sold to Child's.

Some time later, Capt. Jackson sold the *Liberty* to Capt. Claude Wagner, a Nova Scotian who had fished with him for many years. One winter Capt. Wagner decided to stay ashore and Capt. Angus Lohnes, who owned the *Amelia D.*, took the *Liberty* yellowtailing for a few months.

Off Nantucket on his way home from the fishing grounds some time later, Capt. Wagner was alone on deck when he saw a strange disturbance off the stern of the *Liberty*. He called to Horace Devine, who was down below mugging up, to come on deck at once. Both men clearly saw a huge serpentine creature undulating some distance from the vessel, but parallel to it. For some time it seemed to keep pace with the *Liberty*, but suddenly sounded and was seen no more. This is one of the few corroborated sightings of sea serpents around the Vineyard. Captain Wagner was an outstanding fisherman in a fleet of experts and so the *Liberty* sailed from Edgartown for years longer. Then she was sold to Stonington, where she sank at the wharf.

Meanwhile, the *Hazel M. Jackson* was being built and she made her first trip in August 1920. That was not a big one, but the next was huge. The Union was still prohibiting the sale of fish, so Capt. Jackson obtained an injunction clearing the *Hazel M.* and she continued her successful trips.

On August 26, 1924, the *Hazel M.* was off Nantucket in a severe gale. "Young Bob," over fifty years later, remembers the huge waves and the strange sight of sand, washed up from eleven



Capt. Robert Jackson

Liberty and Hazel M. Jackson at Edgartown Dock.

fathoms, lying all over the water. Everything loose washed overboard, even the foghorn, causing people on Nantucket to believe, mistakenly, that the *Hazel M. Jackson* had been lost.

Captain Jackson sold his vessel in 1940 and retired, but there was still a Capt. Bob Jackson in the Edgartown fleet. Robert Jackson, Jr., known as "Young Bob," had been fishing with his father ever since 1919. The season before that, his mother would not allow him to go fishing, so he worked at the paper store for three to four dollars a week. But he wanted to go swordfishing with his father and he proved to be a fine fisherman. He had very keen eyesight and could see fish on the surface or under water at great distances.

While the *Hazel M. Jackson* was being overhauled in the spring of 1931, the men were stripping the varnish in the forecastle when Capt. Jackson stopped to relight his cigar. He tossed his match toward the slop bucket, but it landed in a can of varnish remover which some one had left next to the bucket. The remover exploded and Capt. Jackson was very badly burned, so "Young Bob" sailed as master and striker when the *Hazel M.* went swordfishing that summer. He was very successful and sailed as mast header for his father for years.

Then he went yachting for awhile, but in 1941, he commissioned Neuburt and Wallace of Thomaston, Maine, to build the seventy-foot *Annie M. Jackson*, named for his mother. The *Annie M. Jackson* was the first ketch in the fleet and she was used mainly for dragging and sea scalloping. During World War II, the *Annie M. Jackson* was a "confidential observer" and her captain had to report to New York every day by telephone (installed by the Government at the cost of \$3500 and sold to Capt. Jackson at the end of the war for \$35.) Besides his telephone, Capt Jackson was awarded a certificate which read as follows:

U. S. NAVY

To all persons who shall see these presents,

Greetings

Be It Known That This

Certificate

from the

Eastern Sea Frontier

is awarded to

Robert L. Jackson, Jr.

in recognition of his patriotic service

as a

Confidential Observer

in Atlantic Waters during World War II

In 1952, Capt. Jackson sold the *Annie M. Jackson* which went to New Bedford. Since that time, he has been a yacht skipper summers and the most ardent fan of the young Edgartown athletes the rest of the year.

Robert Jackson Sr., had two brothers Levi and Samuel, who were part of the Edgartown fleet. Levi had a sloop, *Priscilla*, similar to Pat Kelly's *Natalie*. Next he had a schooner, the *Priscilla II*, which served him well for several years.

In January, 1910, the *Mertie B. Crowley*, a six-masted schooner carrying coal from Baltimore to Boston, was driven off its course by strong tides following a heavy gale. Aboard were Captain Haskell, his wife and thirteen crewmen. In the fog and rain, not realizing the strength of the unusual tide, Capt. Haskell mistook Block Island Light for Shinnecock and the *Crowley* sailed south of Nomansland and south of the Vineyard. On January 23, the lookout saw a second light, which should have been Block Island, but was Edgartown Harbor Light. The vessel struck on Wasque Shoal, southeast of Edgartown and Mrs. Haskell was thrown from her bunk as waves broke over the vessel, clearing the decks. Capt. Haskell shouted to his wife to dress warmly as he hurried to help her from the cabin, fast filling with water. She managed to pull on heavy woolen stockings and galoshes and her husband wrapped a warm winter coat over her night clothes. All hands were ordered to the rigging and, fortunately, all went to the fore and main masts. A bare half hour after the vessel struck, she broke in half and her stern settled rapidly. The temperature was zero and the wind, rain and waves lashed the masts. At daylight, the stranded vessel was sighted from the pilot house of the morning steamer in Edgartown and the Revenue Cutter *Acushnet* in Woods Hole was notified by telephone. People on the beach were helpless because the *Mertie B.* was too far to reach by breeches buoy and no surf boat could live in those towering seas. Several of the by-standers headed for Capt. Levi Jackson's house. In many a sea-rescue his reckless disregard of personal safety had won him the nickname, "Ready-To-Die." Awakened from his sleep, Capt. Levi asked no questions, but hauled on his red flannels, hip boots and oilskins, and led the way to the dock, where his crew were already assembling. Very soon the motor was started, the sails hoisted and the *Priscilla II* beat to windward around Cape Pogue and through Muskeget Channel. The waves were mountainous and Wasque Shoal was covered with terrifying breakers.

The *Mertie B. Crowley* was on the western side of the shoal. Capt. Jackson worked the *Priscilla II* through the narrow gut of

very shallow water between Skiff's Island and Wasque Point and then bore west into deeper water. As soon as the vessel was clear of the shoals, Capt. Levi worked the vessel offshore as quickly as possible, dodging the blind breakers. He steered a zig-zag course, with many close shaves, as the cockpit filled time and again, and the men hung on with one hand and bailed with the other. Everything was coated with ice. After an exhausting struggle, Capt. Jackson worked the *Priscilla II* through the rips to deeper water. Then he stood offshore parallel to the west edge of the shoal until he was opposite and outside the schooner, separated by a quarter mile of terrible breakers. Farther offshore lay the Revenue Cutter *Acushnet* with too deep draft to approach, lifeboats which could not withstand those seas, and a crew that did not know the waters. Capt. Jackson was oblivious to personal danger so he worked the *Priscilla II* in until a scant few hundred yards of broken, tossing, white water separated her from the *Crowley*. For some time he cruised about, studying every detail. Watching for a lull with less turbulent seas, he planned to work up into the vessel's lee so her hull would act as a breakwater. At the first chance, Captain Jackson rushed full speed for the wreck, while enormous waves rolled in from offshore. The men bailed for their lives and kept the *Priscilla II* from filling and foundering but it was a hairbreadth escape.

In deeper water, they repaired the damage as well as they could. Then they waited for a series of exceptionally heavy seas to sweep over the bar and took a desperate chance. It seemed as if the breaking combers would either swamp the *Priscilla II*, roll her over sideways or pitchpole her end over end. The second attempt was no more successful and almost as disastrous as the first. The third try they got so far over the shoals they had to keep going. Waves increased in speed, breakers towered above the boat, and blind breakers popped up on all sides. Capt. Levi clung grimly to the wheel. All hands hung on and bailed. The *Priscilla II* shot abreast and passed the wreck. Then, with the wheel hard over, she was thrown down by the sea and heeled over until the cockpit floor was perpendicular and solid green water poured over her rails. A second later, she was under the schooner's stern. Both anchors were dropped, with plenty of scope, so they wouldn't drag. The wreck listed offshore, forming a pocket to the lee of the *Crowley*. Four dories were lowered and manned by Pat Kelly, Gene Benefit, Louis Doucette and Henry Kelly. The men rowed cautiously, inch by inch, under the lee of the hull. To be caught in the suction or lose control of the dory meant death. For a long time the dories

rose and fell in the trough of the great waves. Mrs. Haskell, the first to be rescued, jumped boldly and accurately into the dory as it started to shoot up. She landed safely but fainted so it was difficult to get her from the dory onto the *Priscilla II*. Only the colored steward missed the dory and landed in the sea. Doryman Patrick Kelly tried to hold him but, frantic with fear, he grabbed the dory's gunwale and it capsized, dumping Kelly into the sea. The empty dory was hurled against the wreck and smashed to pieces. A great wave tossed Kelly high into the schooner's rigging. The steward was given up for lost, but suddenly appeared over the schooner's bow where his shipmates, at great risk of their lives, seized him and helped him into the rigging.

Now there were only three dories to rescue the exhausted crew, one by one. There were many near misses, but finally all were removed - but still not safe. There was danger ahead for the *Priscilla II* could not go back but had to continue across the shoal where, in places, the water was not more than three feet deep. Rescued and rescuers were all suffering from exposure and tension. The *Priscilla II* weighed anchor and, under sail and power, ran dead before the seas across Wasque Shoal for Muskeget Channel. Halfway from the wreck to the channel, the *Priscilla II* seemed trapped with shoal water on all sides and danger of striking bottom. At that moment, she was caught unaware by a great comber from astern. All hands bailed and bailed as the *Priscilla II* was sucked down and down so far those on shore couldn't see her. At the last minute she slid into a gully of deep water. That was the worst. The *Priscilla II* entered the main channel between Skiff's Island and Muskeget and, swept along by heavy seas, was soon in Muskeget Channel where the seas subsided. An hour or so later, she arrived in Edgartown.

A spontaneous outburst of welcome and rejoicing met her. The Haskells were taken to Dr. Walker's home, the mates were housed in other homes and the crew found cots and blankets and gallons and gallons of hot coffee at the Fishermen's Association Building which had been prepared for them. In a few days all returned to their own homes, outfitted with warm, dry clothing furnished by the people of Edgartown. The ship's clock still tells time in Captain Robert Jackson's kitchen and the ship's bell is still a treasured possession of his sister. Captain Levi Jackson was awarded the silver Carnegie Medal and each of his crew was given a bronze one.

Three years later, October 1913, the *Priscilla II*, Captain Levi Jackson, was tied to Straight Wharf, Nantucket, waiting out a

northwest gale, when word spread along the waterfront that a two masted schooner was flying distress signals off Tom Nevers Head. Captain Eugene Clisby and the Surfside Station Crew had rowed along the shore to reach the schooner, *Georgie Pearl*, with coal for Liverpool, Nova Scotia, and had taken Captain Naufstaf and crew to the station. While Nantucket salvage men awaited more moderate weather, Capt. Jackson set out and, finding the *Georgie Pearl* abandoned, took her in tow and started for Edgartown. Off Surfside, he met the station boat with the schooner's crew attempting to reach their vessel. Capt. Jackson, claiming his rights of salvage, would not allow them on board. The *Priscilla II* and her tow reached Edgartown the next morning and Capt. Jackson was allotted \$1000 salvage. A Nantucket newspaper criticized the enterprise of the local men and praised Captain Jackson as a man "brim full of energy and daring, as his recent exploits in saving crews wrecked off the Vineyard have demonstrated."*

When Capt. Levi sold the *Priscilla II*, he had a western type dragger built by Frank Post and christened the *George Jackson*. He used her yellow-tailing winters and lobstering summers with outstanding success. When he sold her, he went swordfishing summers in the *Idlewild II*, which Isaac Norton had had built and had sold to Nicholas Norton of Nantucket.

Robert and Levi had a brother Samuel who owned the ketch, *Phyllis J.*, named for his daughter. He was a good fisherman, but he sailed from Nantucket, not Edgartown, and his boat was later sold to New Bedford.

Captain Levi Jackson had three sons, all good fishermen. George is Fish Warden in Edgartown now and Hiram has been. Sam went fishing for years with his father. Then, when his cousin "Young Bob," wanted to stay ashore for awhile, Sam captained the *Annie M. Jackson*, to everyone's satisfaction, for he was very capable and a smart fisherman.

Hiram was a long time master of the sea scalloper *Emily H.*, which was disabled in a northeast gale in November, 1945, twenty-five miles east of Nantucket. On Tuesday, Nov. 29th, Captain Jackson sailed from New Bedford with a crew of ten. In a heavy wind, the line from a buoy caught in the ship's propeller and disabled the engine. The *Emily H.* had no radio, but another dragger which noticed her plight radioed to Green Harbor for help. By then the winds had reached fifty to sixty miles per hour, gusting to seventy, endangering all shipping along the coast. Heavy

* Edouard A. Stackpole, *Life Saving Nantucket* (Nantucket: Stern Majestic Press, Inc., 1972) page 268.

rain started at 4 A.M. and continued all day and all night. The Coast Guard Cutter *General Greene* was dispatched to aid the *Emily H.*, but when they started the haul, their towline broke and they could not get a hawser aboard the fishing craft, so lost her. They continued to search for some time, even though there was little hope of taking her in tow again. Then the *Anemone*, a lighthouse tender, was ordered to join the search, as was the Cutter *Star* and patrol planes from Quonset. On the third day, reports said the vessel had last been seen being carried out to sea where her chances for survival were "good," as she was rigged with emergency sails. The reports also stated she was a seaworthy boat and well stocked with rations. The reporters did not know that at the outset of the storm the hatches had been battened down and there was no chance of the crew being able to get to the food.

Aboard the battered *Emily H.*, Capt. Jackson and his crew fought for their lives. By using the foresail and the trysail they managed to clear twenty-eight miles of Nantucket Shoal, but not without disaster. On Friday, all hands, including Capt. Jackson, bailed constantly, because of course the pumps were disabled, and strove valiantly to lash the whipping gear fast to the deck. Two deckhands, Louis M. Larsen and Harold Smith, were trying to cover a broken hatch through which water poured by the ton, when a six-foot piece of the deck was torn off by the gale. It struck Larsen, killing him instantly and left Smith with a smashed collarbone. The ship's flares were too wet to use so the crew burned every dry thing they could find. But still they were not seen until Saturday, the fifth day of their ordeal. Then the *Wanderer*, bound for Italy, sighted the *Emily H.* eighty miles south of Block Island. They rescued Capt. Jackson and his crew, gave them dry clothing and hot food and took them to the State Pier in New Bedford where a hearty welcome awaited them. Capt. Jackson's wife and daughter and most of the families of the crew members were on the dock as the *Wanderer* had radioed the good news. A police ambulance took Smith to the hospital at once for the *Wanderer* had had no sedatives to ease his pain. The other crew members were Benjamin de Pira, Edward Manley, Roland Parisiam, Conrad Masse, John Miller, William Beam and John Nietupski.

The report that the *Emily H.* had been allowed to sink was untrue for she was pumped out and towed to port by the Coast Guard. Her foremast, hatch covers, gallow frames and most of her gear were gone. Her deck was splintered and she was a battered hulk.

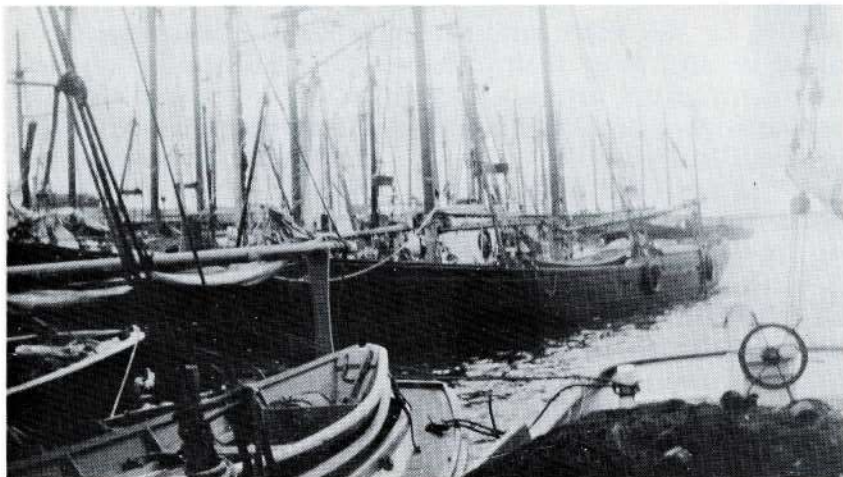
Captain St. Clair Brown came to Edgartown from Nova Scotia around 1900. He had spent his life on the sea, sailing on bank schooners and small coasters from Nova Scotia, but he came to Edgartown as skipper of a large yacht for Bancroft Davis. He went yachting for nine years, until his family joined him in Edgartown and he decided to go fishing. He used his savings to buy a vessel and went mackerel netting off Atlantic City Bar. In a bad storm, a net was washed overboard and caught in the propeller. Although the vessel was reported in trouble, the Coast Guard could not reach her until the next morning. She was a total loss. Capt. Brown had no insurance and he had borrowed money to buy his nets, so he and his family were in straightened circumstances. But his daughter remembers hearing many times as she grew up how the fishermen banded together to help, as they always did when one of their group was in trouble, and so Capt. Brown sailed again. He owned two sloops, *Ethel M.* and *Effie L.*, a schooner, *Three Links*, a launch, *Idlewild II* and the forty foot *Grace and Lucy*. He was an excellent fisherman who, in his later years, returned to yachting.

Louis Doucette also came to Edgartown from Nova Scotia and shipped on several schooners before he bought a sloop, *Gypsy Maid*. In her he went gill-netting off the Virginia coast each spring. As he was an alien, he could not hold master's papers, so Everett A. Poole, a crew member who was an experienced gill-netter, was listed as master.

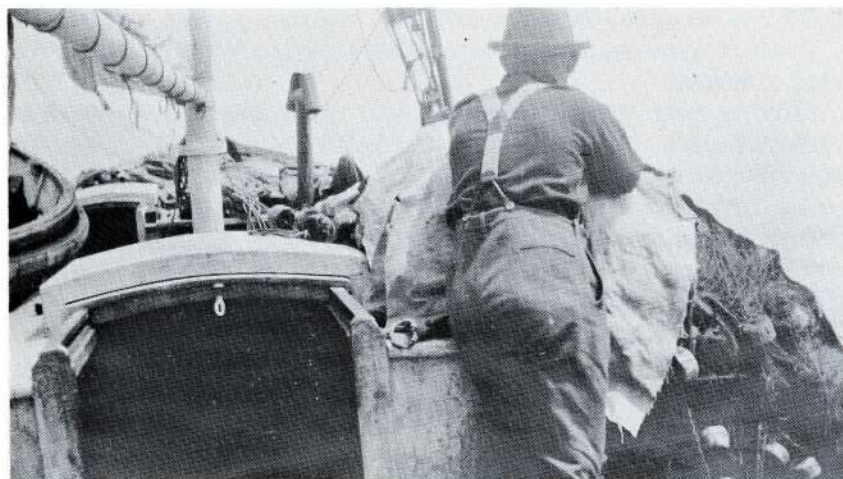
After several years, Louis became naturalized and got his master's license. He was captain and half-owner of a big off-shore schooner, *Gleaner*, from New Bedford. The *Gleaner* had a gasoline engine which blew up in New York harbor, killing four men and severely burning Capt. Doucette, who was hospitalized for twenty-one months. When he recovered, he bought out his partner, Allen Morded, installed a new engine, and resumed fishing. In 1929, going into Boston with 45,000 pounds of mixed fish, the *Gleaner* struck a piece of wreckage near Hull Gut and sank. Then Capt. Doucette went sea scalloping as skipper of the *Isabel Q.* of New Bedford.

One of his sons, Louis, was skipper of the *Gay Head* (once the *B. T. Hillman*) sea scalloping for Dan Mullins. He is now semi-retired.

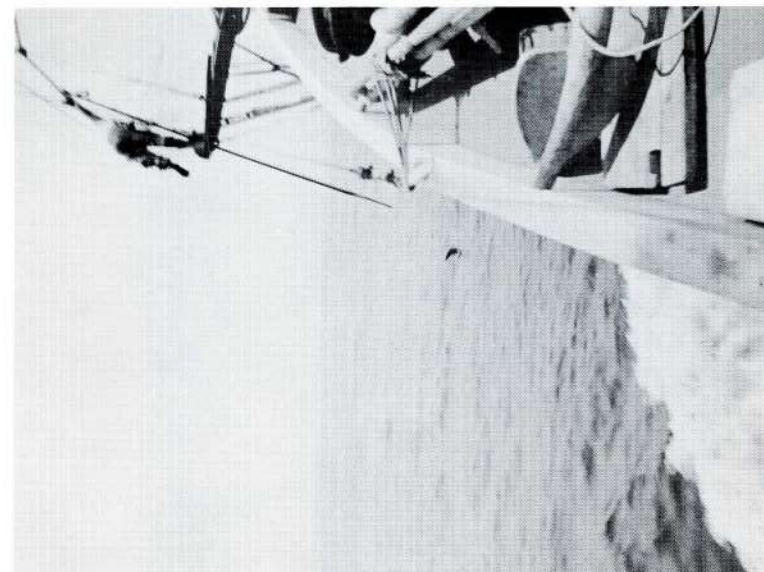
Capt. Leon Doucette, no relation to Louis, also skippered vessels sailing from Edgartown. One was the pretty schooner, *Roseway*, partly fisherman and partly yacht, built for a Taunton lawyer named Hathaway. The first summer she was swordfishing she was a huge success, catching two hundred in one trip. But she



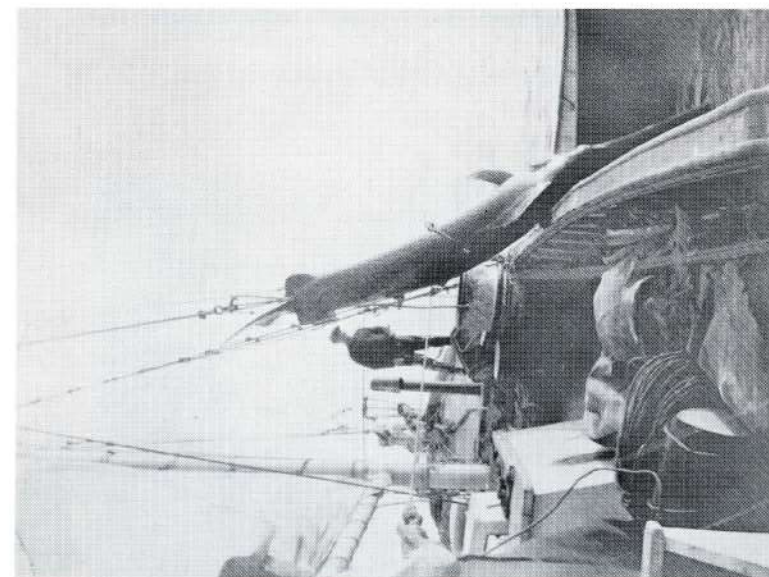
Capt. Philip Norton
Mackerel Fleet - Cape May, 1927 - *Catherine* - lower right.



Capt. Philip Norton
Catherine - Capt. Isaac Norton. Bound south from New York, 1927.



Capt. Philip Norton
Ike Norton strikes a swordfish.



Capt. Philip Norton
Phil Norton admires a Big One 14 ft. overall, 450 lbs., dressed.



Capt. Philip Norton
George Thomas one of the best cooks in the fleet.



Capt. Philip Norton
Captain Levi Jackson semi-retired.

was sold and became a Boston pilot boat. Another vessel that Leon skippered was the *R. B. Stinson*. He also went swordfishing with Ike and Phil Norton in the schooner, *Malvina B.*, and with young Bob Jackson the first two trips in the *Hazel M.* After that, he ran the *John D.* for Mr. Dutra of Provincetown.

Another Doucette, Charles, fished out of Edgartown on most of the vessels, from time to time. Later, he had a catboat named *Gem* in which he went scalloping and mackerel netting.

Edmund Richard, originally from Nova Scotia, was half brother to Louis Doucette. He never became a skipper, but he was highly esteemed as a fisherman. He was reputed to be the fastest man in the fleet at dressing swordfish, being able to dress a two hundred pound swordfish in six minutes. His brother, Mattie, fished with the fleet and in 1935 he sailed as skipper of the *B. T. Hillman*.

"Ike" and "Phil" Norton were another set of brothers who were a part of the younger Edgartown crew. Ike started with a catboat called the *Idlewild*. Then he had a launch built in Maine, and named her the *Idlewild II*. In this he fished all year, mackerel netting in the spring, swordfishing summers, seining in the fall and dragging winters. Capt. Norton's third boat was the *Catherine*, named for his wife. She was built in 1925 and Ike's brother Phil sailed as mate. Phil owned an eighth of the next vessel, the *Malvina B.*, named for their mother. She was schooner rigged and used for swordfishing, dragging and mackerel netting. "Young Bob" Jackson recalls that Ike's vessels were very popular with the crews who didn't have as talented a cook as George Thomas. There was always pie or cake ready for "callers" on the *Malvina B.* Although aboard the *Hazel Jackson* there was always good food and plenty of it, the cook was not good at pastry. One day, greatly to Young Bob's delight, George Thomas sent him a huge frosted cake. Bob could hardly wait to taste it. Alas, when a knife was inserted, the cake proved to be a frosted cardboard box.

A few years later, Capt. Norton had Casey of Fairhaven build him a schooner called the *Catherine and Mary*, used mostly for dragging and sea scalloping. But Capt. Isaac Norton kept "outgrowing" his vessels. Next he had the *Joan and Ursula*, a large dragger. Then he turned to sea scalloping and became a "shore captain." He had a fleet of scallopers which included the *Ike and Jens*, *Edgartown*, *Flamingo*, and the *Hunter*. Capt. Norton owned about a third of each vessel and, though these latter vessels did not sail from Edgartown, Ike was still looked upon as an Edgartown fisherman.

Meantime, Phil had branched out for himself, owning first the thirty-five foot dragger *Josephine* and then the thirty-two foot

Ethel K., which Capt. Norton renamed the *Monoquoy*. This he used mainly for mooring work, but she did go dragging winters before he quit fishing and bought North Wharf, where he and Leon Easterbrook set up a thriving boatyard.

The Vincent twins, Jared and Warren, came from Nashawena, where their father was caretaker for many years and where they went lobstering in their catboat *Teaser*. Then they moved to Edgartown and fished from there. Warren had the forty foot dragger *Halberd* built by Charles Anderson in Wareham. Later, Capt. Vincent had the *R. W. Griffin, Jr.* Dragging lobsters off New York, the vessel was run down by a British steamer and Capt. Vincent was drowned.

Jared graduated from the *Teaser* to the *Driftwood* and, in 1942 he built a fifty foot ketch which he named the *Priscilla V.* By then he was living in Woods Hole but continued to be considered a part of the fleet as he made several trips dragging with them. This was during World War II and soon the Navy commandeered the *Priscilla V.* Then Capt. Jared built a sixty foot ketch, which he also christened the *Priscilla V.* She was later sold to Point Judith and Captain Vincent retired.

Another captain in the fleet was Pat Kelly, skipper and part owner of the sloop, *Natalie*. The *Natalie* had been built by Charles Anderson of Wareham for Capt. Frank Butler of New Bedford who for several years used her swordfishing, gill-netting and dragging. One summer he and his wife and Mr. and Mrs. Everett A. Poole made a cruise to Philadelphia, where they sold, quite legally, a catch of lobsters too short to be sold in Massachusetts. Pat Kelly and some others, including Phil Norton's father, bought the sloop and, with Kelly as her skipper, made some outstanding catches. Returning from selling a trip of fish in New York, the vessel was lost in Vineyard Sound. No one knows what happened as the entire crew was lost. Bobby Taylor (for whom Bob Morgan is named) and Charley Doyle, as well as the skipper, were Edgartown men.

Captain Robert Jackson in the *Hazel M. Jackson* and Captain Claude Wagner in the *Liberty* were sweeping the Sound to try to find some trace of the *Natalie* when another near disaster occurred. Capt. Jackson went below to get something from the engine room and, not being able to see what he wanted, he struck a match. Instantly, the whole room burst into flames. The crew, with the help of Claude Wagner and his crew, had to flood the schooner to subdue the fire. In so doing, they almost sank her. However, Capt. Wagner managed to tow the disabled *Hazel M. Jackson* to Edgartown and both vessel and master recovered.

Captain A. K. Silvia, more commonly known as Tony King, was a real old-timer. He mended and made nets with consummate skill. He owned a two-masted schooner, the *Olive May*, whose crew were Harden Paul, James Sears, Alex Dort, Patrick O'Brien and Thomas Silva. On Monday, Dec. 5, 1910, they sailed for the Rose and Crown fishing grounds, south of Nantucket. The weather was bad and grew worse so Captain Silvia anchored off the lee of Squibnocket with several other vessels. The wind and sea rose and snow squalls were frequent. Early Wednesday morning, the *Olive May* parted her cable and began to drift. The crew struggled with the frozen foresail and finally raised it, while Capt. Silvia worked unsuccessfully to start the auxiliary engine. The *Olive May* crashed down on a rock. The captain, still struggling with the engine, shouted to the crew to launch a dory. Before he could join them, a sea swept them away from the vessel. Capt. Silvia jumped for the rigging. He clung to the swaying icy crosstrees of the mainmast for three freezing hours. When daylight came, he saw the schooner, *Charles J. Kingsland* anchored nearby. As soon as possible, a dory was lowered from the *Kingsland* and Capt. Silvia was taken off the mast of the *Olive May*, which was a total loss, and taken aboard the *Kingsland*. There he found four of his crew and learned that Thomas Silva had been lost. Although he had lost his vessel, Capt. Silvia continued to fish and was one of the crew of masters in Capt. Jackson's *Liberty*. In his later years, he went mackerel netting in his catboat, *Rita*, and did very well.

Another old timer was Capt. Frank Prada, an outstanding fisherman who never owned a boat larger than a big catboat because he preferred small boats. He went mackerel netting, bluefishing and shellfishing, all most profitably. He was highly respected not only on the waterfront, but throughout the community.

Then there was Capt. George Stetson who came to Edgartown from Cuttyhunk. His vessel was the *Alice Stetson* which, with a local crew, fished with the fleet. On August 10, 1918, the *Alice Stetson* was lost on Nantucket Shoals, with all hands, in a fierce gale.

Capt. John Salvador owned a little sloop called *Sea Bird* when he went to Atlantic City netting with the Edgartown fleet. Later, he went into larger vessels, one of which was a little schooner, the *Three-and-One-and-One*, which he owned with Sam Cahoon of Woods Hole. By then, he no longer sailed from Edgartown.

When Capt. Abram Osborn "graduated" from small boats, the last of which was the *Ethel M.*, he was the owner of a pretty

schooner, *Ethel Marion*, which valiantly sailed with the larger schooners throughout the seasons. Captain Abe was a good fisherman and brought in the most profitable swordfish trip ever taken up to that time. He caught these fish late in the season on the northern edge of Georges Bank. They were all 300 to 500 pound fish, which brought some thirty cents a pound in Boston, a big price in those days. Capt. Osborn caught "his fair share" in all types of fishing until the little schooner was lost off the back side of the Cape. All hands were saved and Capt. Osborn at once contracted to have an eighty-four foot schooner built. The new vessel was christened *Ethel Marion II* but it wasn't long before she met the same fate as the first vessel. Capt. Osborn then gave up fishing and shipped as quartermaster on a passenger liner. He died on a trans-Atlantic cruise and was buried at sea.

Though he didn't own a schooner, Capt. Roy Willoughby was a member of the Edgartown swordfish fleet. He had a thirty foot catboat, not highly esteemed by the other fishermen, but Roy sailed with the rest, taking big chances, searching for swordfish around Nantucket Lightship. The *Mildred* was tied to Edgartown Town Dock when the 1944 hurricane destroyed her. Capt. Willoughby then bought a "retired" yacht from New Bedford and continued swordfishing for years.

George Silva and Leon Easterbrook left their small boats to become yacht skippers, piloting the gleaming "floating palaces" of the wealthy around the New England shores in summer, and in warmer waters during the winter. But World War II did away with that. Many yachts were commandeered for naval use, and others were left in dry-dock for the use of such pleasure craft was not only unpatriotic, but it was unsafe. So the two young captains had a sixty-foot sloop built for dragging and named her the *Molly and Jane*. But they did not remain partners for very long for each of them had a fiery disposition and co-ownership led to many disagreements. As they were tied to Pier 3 in New Bedford one day, George Silva went uptown for several hours. When he returned to the dock, he announced that he had sold his share of the *Molly and Jane*. Leon Easterbrook promptly rushed uptown and sold his half, thus negating the partnership.

This story of Edgartown fishermen is intended to preserve a record of the schooner fleet of the first half of this century. There are few people who remember accurately about those years and fewer records, so the author apologizes for any omissions or errors. The *Liberty* was the last of these schooners to sail from Edgartown and by then the cycle had turned and the fishermen were all using "dinner pail" boats. Now a new fleet is building of huge diesel-powered sea scallopers, but that's another story.

THE MAN FROM ANNOBON

Not only have Vineyarders traveled to the four corners of the world, but people from many distant lands have called the Vineyard home. One of these was John Foster, the man from Annobon.

About 1855, the bark *Pamelia* Captain Edward Coggeshall, of New Bedford, anchored in four fathom of water off the coast of Annobon, an island near the mouth of the Ombue River on the west coast of Africa. Almost at once, a dozen or more native dugouts surrounded the ship. At a signal from the officer-in-charge, the black men swarmed up the sides of the whaler with oranges, bananas, grass mats, chickens, parrots and even small pigs to trade for gleaming knives and bright calico.

The black men spoke very little English and the whalemens knew none of the African dialects, but they managed to trade to the complete satisfaction of everyone. Captain Coggeshall made arrangements to send a crew ashore for wood and water.

From his vantage point on a high ledge at the western end of the island, a young boy watched these activities. He had lain there all day, grief-stricken, bewildered and frightened. His father had died and, according to the custom of his tribe, he, the eldest son, must kill his mother, so that she and her husband might be together in death, as in life. But the boy could not bear the thought of killing his mother, so he had run away and hidden at the far end of the island.

As he watched the boats ply between the vessel and the shore, he wondered what life on a whaler was like. Imperceptibly, an idea crystallized. Under cover of darkness, the lad stirred. He flexed his muscles and made a clean, swift dive from the cliff to the ocean. He swam with slow, sure strokes to the whaleship, pulled himself hand-over-hand to the bow of the vessel and slid noiselessly onto the deck. Cautiously, he crept along until he could lower himself into the hold, where he hid until hunger and thirst betrayed him.

By that time, the *Pamelia* was three days out, bound for the Indian Ocean. Mr. Foster, the third mate, who found the stowaway, took him to the captain's quarters. There the miserable, frightened lad tried to explain why he had run away from home and sought refuge on the whaleship.

The captain was a kind man and was moved by the boy's story. Besides, the vessel was now far from Annobon and there was no question of turning back. The captain turned the boy over to Mr. Foster with orders to feed him, outfit him and instruct him in

his duties. And so the mate entered in the log:

"This day discovered aboard a stowaway, a young African boy. Signed him on as a green hand and assigned him to the bow boat, Mr. Foster. Gave him the name of John Foster."

Everything was new to John. He could speak very little English, but he was an apt pupil and so was soon accepted as a member of the crew. Weeks of fine weather and light trade winds, with plenty of whales, kept the crew busy. But the officers, especially the third mate, tutored John, whose memory was phenomenal.

Before long, John could name every sail, every spar and every set of rigging aboard the whaleship, and he never forgot them. He could splice a rope, mend a sail and take his turn at the wheel as well as any man. But he did not want to be a whaler. A ship was too confining for a boy whose home had been all outdoors. Two years of whaling found the *Pamelia* a full ship, homeward bound. Off Gay Head, they picked up a pilot and soon reached New Bedford.

John Foster had never see a city. He had never seen such large buildings, nor so many; and certainly he had never seen horse cars and carriages and drays, hurrying this way and that over the cobbled streets. Everything was new to the boy from Annobon and he wasn't sure he liked it. The noise and bustle of New Bedford confused him and he never strayed far from the dock where the *Pamelia* lay.

When Captain Coggeshall had concluded the formalities of re-entering the port and had reported to his owners, he took John to Purchase Street to outfit him as befitted the foster son of a whaling master. Then they boarded a stage-coach for Bourne. As they drew up before the captain's home, John could not believe his eyes. Surely this huge white house was not to be his home - but it was.

He and the captain alighted and were warmly welcomed by Mrs. Coggeshall. Inside, John was afraid to move lest he shatter some fragile ornament. He felt more comfortable when the captain took him aloft and showed him his own room, which was called the porch chamber. The low ceiling with rafters showing made this room not unlike his quarters aboard the *Pamelia*, and here he felt more at home. But he would never get accustomed to the thick rugs and shiny floors belowstairs, nor to mealtime in the dining room which sparkled with silver and crystal, though he learned, in time, to appear natural in these surroundings. Both Captain and Mrs. Coggeshall were extremely kind and patiently tutored the lad so that he would be happy in his new home, inside and out.

When Captain Coggeshall sailed again, John did not accompany him. He had had enough whaling. The captain had made arrangements for John to attend the village school at the beginning of the fall term. The big room with its rows of desks and seats, the pot-bellied stove and the bench for lunch pails and water bucket at the rear seemed very strange to an African boy who knew of no school except the jungle and the sea.

By opening day, most of the children knew John and he became an accepted member of the group. An apt pupil, he learned to read, to write, and to figure, though he was never proficient in any of these fields. But because of his remarkable memory, he could recite, even when he was an old man, the states of the union with all their capitals, the presidents of the United States, and many other facts that he learned when he was in school. He excelled in spelling and at the end of the year he outspelled the whole school.

After school, John filled the woodboxes, tended the garden and did other chores about the place. Often he ran errands for Mrs. Coggeshall and always, on Sunday, he drove her to church, morning and evening. This was the highlight of the week for John and he sat very straight, reining the bay to a sedate walk all the way. In the churchyard, John lingered to blanket the horse, tie it to the hitching rack and fasten on its feedbag. Then he slipped quietly into the back pew just as the service began. He was perplexed by the sermon, the prayer and the formal service, but he enjoyed the hymns and hummed loudly as the congregation sang.

Gradually he became accustomed to living in a house, eating his meals at the table and even wearing a suit, but he could not get used to shoes and, at every opportunity, he would shed them to go barefoot, even long after the other boys felt it was too cold to do so.

It wasn't long before John's friends began leaving school to go to sea. John did not want to go to sea, but he became restless. He wanted to leave school to do a man's work. When Captain Coggeshall came home, he understood John's desires and went with him to New Bedford to get him established.

Through his agents, Captain Coggeshall met a young man who was looking for a partner to run a store with him. John and the other young man approved of each other, Captain Coggeshall advanced the necessary funds, and they set up their establishment on Union Street.

John was accustomed to trading, so he did very well buying and selling. The business prospered. John made friends with many of his regular customers, especially those who came from the

Vineyard. He listened raptly to their tales of life on the island, comparing what he heard with his memories of Annobon. This pleasant arrangement might have gone on indefinitely if John Foster, who was not stupid even if his education was meagre, had not caught his partner performing legerdemain with the account books.

As Mr. Foster himself told the tale to his grandchildren, his partner was assessing the profits: "Two for me, and one for Mr. Foster. Two for me, and one for Mr. Foster."

Mr. Foster objected and, finding that this had been going on for some time, decided to dissolve the partnership. He sold his share of the business to his partner and, when the packet from Lobsterville made its weekly trip, John Foster was aboard. The run across the sound was pleasant and, as they approached Lobsterville, John knew he was going to like the Vineyard, for the little village reminded him of his home in Annobon.

With the proceeds from his business, John bought a Nomansland boat and a piece of land on the main road to Gay Head. He built a fine two-storied house, a barn and a shop. John did much of the work himself, and the house was quite imposing with gingerbread work on all the eaves, tall arched windows and verandas on three sides. Inside, the house was attractively furnished, incorporating many of the features that John had first seen in Captain Coggeshall's home in Bourne. It was a far cry from the thatched-roofed home of his boyhood.

Such a prosperous young man had little difficulty finding a wife to share his new home, so John and Rachel Anthony were married. In time, they had a daughter, Pamela, named for the vessel that had brought John Foster across the sea.

Spring and fall, the fishermen from the Vineyard went to Nomansland for several weeks to catch and salt codfish. Occasionally, a man would take his family with him, but usually he would fend for himself, living in his own one-room shack. John Foster was one of these, working hard from daylight to dark. He tended strictly to business and stayed pretty much by himself, seldom joining the others for a smoke and a chat on the beach after supper.

One evening some of the young men, whose excessive spirits frequently resulted in pretty rough pranks, suggested, "Let's smoke out old John." Itching for excitement, the young men scurried around the beach until they found a small hatch. Stealthily, they advanced on John Foster's shack. There was no sound from within as they formed a human ladder until one of their number could reach high enough to place the heavy hatch

directly over the chimney. Then with difficulty restraining their laughter, they scattered behind clumps of beach grass to watch the fun.

Minutes went by and no angry man came rushing out the door. More minutes passed, and more. Some of the culprits began to get uneasy. A joke was no joke if it didn't work. They decided to go after John, so the whole crew rushed to the shack and threw open the door. Instead of billows of light smoke with which they had expected to drive out their victim, they were greeted with the faint, but deadly, smell of coal gas.

Then, but not until then, someone remembered that John had been to the back side of the island that day and had returned with a bag of coal, which he had salvaged from along the shore. He had built a coal fire and, drowsy from his exertions, had fallen asleep after supper. Frightened and repentant, the young men revived John, removed the hatch, quickly aired the shack and explained that their intentions had not been lethal. But they could not refrain from tormenting this man whose ways were not their ways, and who stayed aloof from his neighbors all of his life.

One morning John bailed out the *Sophia*, hoisted sail and headed for the codfish grounds. As he neared his destination, he went forward to get his gear from the cuddy. When he opened the door, a huge black crow flew out, pecking him and cawing raucously. John, never having lost his early superstitions, was hysterical as he staggered back out of the crow's reach. Dazedly he turned his boat around and headed for shore. As he neared Nomans, he sang out for Israel Luce to fetch his oxen and he had the *Sophia* hauled way up on the beach.

There was one time when John Foster was in great demand. When anchors and anchor roads were fouled on the bottom, no one was his equal. Expertly he would dive to the bottom and, with no effort at all, stay there long enough to clear the gear. No man in the fleet could swim or dive half as well as John Foster.

When no ill omens prevented John's reaching the codfish grounds, he was a good fisherman. He always had a good catch, but his methods were quite unique. As soon as he hauled in a fish, he would bite it on the back of the head, killing it promptly and effectively. The other men thought he did this to "show off", but it was his customary procedure. One day when the fish were biting exceptionally well, John ran out of bait. He couldn't leave with so many fish eager to be caught, so he cut off a piece from his heel and used that for bait. That day John Foster was high line.

At Gay Head, Mr. Foster raised fruit and vegetables on the land surrounding his house. He didn't keep oxen, nor plow his garden,

but dug it up, little by little, as he wished to use it. He planted in the same way, saving the peelings when potatoes were prepared for a meal, planting a few each day. He carefully wrapped the potato cuttings in seaweed so that they "wouldn't get dirt in their eyes." He planted these potatoes early in March, and always after dark, crawling around the garden patch to do so. Whether his potatoes were the earliest is a disputed fact, but they were excellent, as were the other vegetables he raised.

However, it was his strawberries that were his pride and joy. He carefully gathered wild strawberry plants from along the south shore of the island and crossed them with a very ordinary commercial berry. His entire patch, and it was huge, was protected from marauding birds by yards and yards of netting. On the sunny highland, the berries grew to an enormous size. They were dark, dark red, sweet and juicy. Luther Burbank could not have grown better. Early in the morning, arrayed in the black sou'wester which he wore summer and winter, John gathered the berries and peddled them to all the people at Lobsterville. As he went his rounds, some of the young girls would tease him and "play up to him." John liked this and began to think he had made a conquest. The young men all encouraged him and, on the evening he announced that he was going to present a "trousseau" to his intended, the young people all gathered nearby to watch the fun.

The young lady's father, blissfully unaware of the situation, was nonplussed when John appeared on his doorstep to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage. He forgot that John's customs and his were literally an ocean apart, and he started to lecture John roundly. Fortunately, the girl was nearby and, understanding both her father and John, she appeased them both. The eavesdroppers were called in and the rest of the evening was turned into an impromptu porch party.

Often on his way to find the choicest wild berries, John would pass Deacon Jeffers' home where a very ugly ram was tethered. Every time John went past the creature would charge at him. Finally, John was so exasperated that he said no ram could best him so, as the animal charged at him, John got down on all fours and battered his head against the ram's nose. The ram tumbled over backwards. Never again did he try to attack John.

Rachel had been dead many years when John Foster married a widow, Ann Madison. He continued to raise and sell vegetables and fruit and to go to Nomansland fishing, spring and fall. He had few close friends for he still kept to himself and was

uncommunicative. But he did like to call on John Belain, a relative of Ann's, whom he called "Brother John." When Mr. Belain questioned the appellation brother, John Foster chuckled and replied that they were certainly brothers "through Adam and Eve."

But Ann and John did not get along very well and Ann left him to live with her son. Pamela was married and now John Foster was alone in the house he had built by the side of the road. He became morose and his constant hum became louder and louder, until people declared it could be heard for miles.

Schoolboys plagued him as he worked in his yard, shouting taunts from a safe distance. One day as he sat in his orchard culling apples, one of the boys called loudly:

"Is it true you and your brothers threw coconuts at each other because your heads were so hard?" Mr. Foster did not answer, except to increase the volume of his humming. Presently, a stone hit his head. He was out of the yard in a flash. The frightened culprit ran into the house next door. John chased after him, in one door and out the other, but the youth was too fleet and he escaped retribution.

Another lad was not so lucky. He continually pestered Mr. Foster until one day the old man called out: "Hi, Bill." Then, still talking, he pulled back a coil of rope and let it lash out at the boy, who ran howling down the road. Children began to be afraid of Mr. Foster and to walk by his house on the opposite side of the road. But John Foster was never unkind to those who befriended him.

When Mr. Foster was quite an old man, his property caught on fire. "Fire! Fire!" The cry rang through the night. Mrs. Smalley, whose husband was at sea, heard strange noises and saw a bright glow in the west. She roused her young nephew and they quickly dressed and ran up the hill to the fire. The storage shed behind John Foster's house was blazing mightily.

All the neighbors were there, forming a bucket brigade and fighting the flying embers with brooms and shovels. But where was Mr. Foster? Suddenly they saw him, stark naked, on the roof of the shed, stamping on the fire with his bare feet and shouting: "Where da fire? Where da fire?" With a mightily concerted effort, three young men pulled poor Mr. Foster from the burning building, but he was evidently completely oblivious to the fact that he had been dancing on a fiery rooftop. He sometimes did native African dances for the entertainment of his neighbors and, as far as he was concerned, this was no different.

As he grew older, Mr. Foster attended all the funerals in town. When the service was for some one he had liked, he would go down to the casket and cry and call out as he did at Abiah Diamond's funeral: "Come back, 'Biah. Come back. Pick the berries, 'Biah, pick the berries." Or as he did at Benjamin Rodman's service: Benjamin was the son of Pamelia and Abel Rodman who drowned at Tashmoo. No one knew how the tragedy occurred. Poor old John could not be consoled. At the funeral he constantly cried out: "Who kill you, Ben? Who kill you?"

But no one cried out at John Foster's funeral. In respectful silence, his neighbors bore him to his grave in the old Indian cemetery beside the ocean. Full of years, he was laid to rest. To this day, he is remembered not only for his eccentricities, but for his remarkable transition from his African upbringing to the way of life on Martha's Vineyard.



From drawing by H. W. Elliott

Village at Nomansland



Dorothy Cottle Poole

William S. Mayhew's Nomans Land Boat moored at Lobsterville, 1907

NOMANSLAND

In the late 1800's, fishermen from the Vineyard sometimes spent half the year on Nomansland, codfishing in the spring and fall; lobstering in the summer. Nomansland then, as now, was a part of Chilmark. The land was held mostly in "sheep rights," but this was construed to include the right to build and occupy a shack for seasonal fishing. Annie Wood said the fishermen were given "verbal rights to erect dwellings upon the northern shore, close to the beach."*

At one time, about seventy fishermen and their families camped there in groups known as "Crow Town" and "Jimmy Town." Living there was considered a "vacation" for the wives because housekeeping was minimal. A few families lived on Nomansland all year, fishing and farming. Some of the fishermen lived there only from Monday to Saturday, returning to the Vineyard for the Sabbath. Each Monday morning they would be accorded a royal welcome as they invariably returned with crocks of doughnuts and cookies, freshly baked bread and other foodstuffs, which could not be prepared with the facilities at Nomansland, as well as fresh vegetables and fruits from their gardens.

The shacks on Nomansland were close together and all activities, except the actual catching of fish and lobsters were communal. When a boat had to be hauled out, everyone lent a hand. Together the men set gill nets for herring to use for lobster bait, and traps for conchs, bait for codfish. Frequently, the wives prepared a collective dinner, serving it outdoors when the weather was clement, or commandeering the largest building if necessary.

After a large lumber schooner was wrecked off the island, the men built a church (also used as a school) from the salvaged lumber. They had no minister, but met together in a dignified service of worship, hymn singing and prayer. But title to the land on which the church was built was questioned and a lawyer was to come from Boston to take formal possession of the property for his client. The fishermen learned of the impending visit and put the church on planks and rollers, moving it to an undisputed site.

For many years, each family brought its own supplies from the Vineyard or from New Bedford, although sometimes the smacks**,

*Annie M. Wood, *Noman's Land, Island of Romance*, Reynolds Printing, New Bedford, Mass., 1931.

**A smack was a small schooner.

which came from New Bedford and other cities to buy fish or lobsters, would bring a supply of staples or a small cargo of fruit.

The fishing around Nomansland required a special boat, sharp at both ends, open fore and aft, and small enough to be rowed by one man when the wind failed. These boats were fitted with two masts, which could be unstepped, and were strongly built with an oak keel and stem, and with cedar planking, usually lap-streaked. Some of the fishermen built their own boats, but Delano of New Bedford built most of them.

There was no real harbor at Nomansland and the boats, built with iron shoes on their keels, were hauled up each night over a track with a groove, well-greased with tallow or cod-liver oil, into which the keels fitted. Several men on each side held the boat upright while a pair of oxen pulled it - with catch and gear still aboard - up the beach beyond the reach of the tide. Israel Luce, a deaf-mute, owned the oxen and charged each fisherman five dollars a season for this service.

John Pease, Charles Cleveland, the Butlers (George, George, Jr., David and Frank), Luces, Looks, Nortons, and Henry Davis were some who spent several years at Nomansland. A number of Gay Head men fished from Nomans, but kept their boats at Cooper's Landing (Gay Head). Some of these were William Vanderhoop, Charles Ryan, John Belain and Frank Manning. Many of the lobstermen were also codfishermen. Most went handlining, but in the later years, some of the fishermen used line trawls which lengthened the season into early winter. The Vineyard fishermen usually took their cod to market in New Bedford or Providence and were home before Thanksgiving. Some sold to the Fischer brothers, Albert and Walter, who owned a ship chandlery near the steamboat wharf in Vineyard Haven. They bought Nomansland cod in fifty pound bundles, skinned and boned it and packed it, white as snow, in paper-lined three-pound boxes, which they sold with a little leaflet entitled: *About Cod Fish: How They Are Caught, Cured and Packed*.

Sometimes there were as many as fifty or sixty boats codfishing close to the Nomansland shores. In April and May, it was warm and pleasant, but fall fishing (October to mid-December) was cold and disagreeable. When the men sold their cured fish for eight cents a pound, they were well-satisfied; but when the price dropped to four and a half, to three, and then to half a cent a pound, the cod-fishermen, one by one, left Nomansland.

Lobstering lasted a little while longer, for as long as the traps were operated, the men could get "trash fish" for their lobster

bait. They had no wells in their boats, so they stowed the lobsters in crates and bedded them with wet rock weed. A few men had "tow cars," crates roughly boat-shaped, bored full of holes to allow constant circulation of water. These were towed behind the lobster boats and were used to hold the lobsters until the smacks came from the mainland to buy them. But, as power boats became more and more common, the short distance saved by having a shack at Nomans was compensated for by the advantages of the Vineyard and the lobstermen, too, stopped using Nomansland as a base for their operations.

With the transients gone, the few families who made Nomansland their year-round home finished harvesting their crops and repaired buildings and gear for which there had been no time during the busy fishings season. These farmer-fishermen raised flocks of sheep which grazed at will, summer and winter, over the island. The climate on Nomansland was so mild that the sheep did not need shelter nor extra feed in the winter. They grew to an unusually large size and their meat and wool both brought top prices. Each sheep was marked with a distinctive cut on its ear so that, when the spring run of cod was over, they could be rounded up, ready for the shearer who came about the middle of June.

A New Bedford man, Otis Sisson, opened a clubhouse for sportsmen at one end of the island. There were plenty of bass and flocks of ducks and geese so, recreationally, the club was a success. Financially, it was a failure, so when the main building burned, it was not rebuilt and the club was discontinued.

By this time, most of the fishermen had left the island, but Mr. Henry B. Davis still ran his farm. He had a large family of children and when they reached school age, he petitioned the school authorities for a teacher. They refused, but offered to board the children at West Tisbury. Mr. Davis would not agree to this and took his case to the Massachusetts Supreme Court. He lost, so he moved his family to Martha's Vineyard.

For the first time in two centuries, Nomansland was uninhabited. Then, in 1913, the island was sold to Mr. Joshua Crane of Boston. He hired caretakers to maintain the property until 1952 when the United States Government pre-empted it to use as a bombing target, its present status.

LOBSTERVILLE

The latter part of the time that Nomansland was a fishing village, another was established at Lobsterville, back of Dogfish Bar. Except in a northeaster, this provided excellent anchorage so lobstermen, trapfishermen, and handliners all lived there from April through September, fishing the entire side of the island.

Along the shore, fishermen built a row of net houses which, as their name implies, were used to store nets from the pounds. Each pound had to have two sets because, every two or three weeks, the net would become fouled and have to be taken out of the water, dried, freed from seaweed, and mended. A new set would be put in as the fouled one was taken out, because - who knew? - that night might be the very one that the largest school of the season would strike. Oars, oarlocks, bailers, down hauls, anchors and all the impedimenta of trapfishing and handlining were to be found in in these net houses. In addition, most of them were headquarters for lobster gear, for after the Lobsterville gang tended their pounds many of them went out again to haul lobster pots.

Some of the men ate and slept in cramped quarters in their net houses. Others built small cottages of two, three or four rooms, where they lived with their families throughout the season. There were ten or twelve of these houses, built in two rows along the back edge of the wide, sandy beach, on land rented from Frank Manning and Charley Ryan. They were unpainted and unadorned, but a few of them had small flower gardens. Marshall Norton had beautiful roses and geraniums; Nellie Mayhew and Hattie Stewart had beds of bright annuals; but even these small gardens entailed much labor. Loads of loam had to be carted in and a frame built to hold it in place. Not all the men were willing, or able, to put so much effort into a beauty spot for just a few months; but the women cherished their little plots and shared their blossoms with those who had none.

Each house along the beach had a porch, from which vantage point wives could see their husbands coming home and start meal preparations; men could gage the wind and the tide; and the children could play when the summer sun beat too relentlessly on the beach. The row of houses nearer the water was called "Front Street" and the second row was "Back Street." Long planks laid on the sand formed a crude sidewalk in front of the houses and to the communal pump back of Onslow Stewart's house, about halfway between Front and Back Streets. An occasional plank eased the way down the beach to the net houses, the center of activity ashore.

Several fish pounds were located along the bight and farther up the Gay Head shore. The Vanderhoops, Leonard, Edwin and John, had one of these; Bert and Charlie Vanderhoop another; while halfway between Lobsterville and the Head was a pound owned by James Mayhew, Albert Reed and Lyman Cottle. One was run by Frank Manning and Linus Jeffers and another by Marshall Jeffers, Dolph Manning and Derwood Diamond. The first work in the spring was driving the stakes for these pounds.

In the winter, trees had been cut, trimmed and barked to make stakes. One end was cut to a sharp point so that a heavy wooden maul, called a pestle and fastened to a scow, could drive the stake deep into the bottom. It was necessary to drive these stakes down six or eight feet so that they could withstand the winds and tides and hold the nets fast, even when a record number of fish were caught. The heavily laden scows were hauled from shore to the site of the pound by anchors, for there were few gasoline engines then. Sometimes, when the wind breezed from the southwest, the men had difficulty hauling the heavy scow, hand over hand, to shore.

One day, Marshall Jeffers, Dolph Manning and Derwood Diamond, with their helpers, were at their pound, taking in the leader. The pound boat was low in the water, weighted down with wet, fouled net, when Ellsworth Manning, Tom's son, fell overboard and was washed out of reach. Dolph jumped in, swam to the boy and, holding to a pound stake with one hand and Ellsworth with the other, waited for some one to come to his rescue. The pound boat was too unwieldy to maneuver quickly. A catboat, sailing nearby, tacked and tried to get near enough to help but couldn't. Frank Smalley and Frank Manning, from their pound up the beach, saw that something was wrong and made haste to the spot. They had one of the few engines in the fleet, so were not dependent on their sail and could go directly to the men, clinging to the trap, and pick them up. There were many times when owners of these early gasoline engines wished they had never been invented, but at times like this, they were loud in their praises of the marvel of a gas-powered boat.

Most of the fleet were Nomansland boats or dories, but there were a few catboats: Frank Manning's *Flora Dora*, Linnie Mayhew's *Faustina*, Everett Poole's *Goldenrod*, Horace Hillman's *Thelma* and David Butler's commodious *Bessie Howard*. A catboat could carry about twenty-five barrels of lobsters, so the fishermen would crate their catches for a week or two and then sail to market with them.

Some, like Linnie Mayhew, sailed to Oak Bluffs to sell their lobsters at Church's Market. Usually, two or three other men went along to help unload the fish and lobsters. It would be late in the day when they arrived at the market, so when they had sold their catches, the men would clean up and go to a restaurant near the Arcade. After a good meal, they strolled along Circuit Avenue or went to the park to listen to a band concert. Then, with a large dish of ice-cream to "top off the evening," they returned to the boat for a short nap before setting sail for Lobsterville. The hour of departure might be two or three o'clock in the morning, for they wanted to be home in time to tend their gear at the usual hour.

Not every day was a "fish day." When a northeaster threatened, the fishermen sent some one to summon Tom Manning and Simon Devine to drive their oxen down to the beach. In the meantime, some of the fishermen laid a "skid" (a greased ladder) at the edge of the water and rigged up large shackles to attach to the bow of each boat as its owner sailed, or rowed, it ashore. As soon as the bow hit the beach, the skid was shoved beneath it and it was hauled beyond high tide, just as was done at Nomansland. One boat safely beached, another was started, until all were out of harm's way.

Overhauling gear and other chores occupied the men while the bad weather lasted. When the wind direction changed, the ladders were greased again and laid on the shore. At high tide, the gang grabbed a boat and shoved it across the beach, down the skid and into the water. The owner took over and put his boat on its mooring, or more likely, went to haul his lobster pots and only moored at the close of day.

As at Nomansland, lobster smacks came from the mainland every week or two. One buyer was accustomed to pay the odd change for a catch in dimes and it became the custom for the men at Lobsterville to give these dimes to their wives. After awhile, one of the wives told the buyer of this habit so the next trip he paid each man for his entire catch in dimes.

Late in the summer, a two-master from New Bedford came to buy fish and lobsters. Poundkeepers had kept squiteague in pockets for some time, awaiting this buyer who offered higher prices than the others. The women, too, watched eagerly for this off-island buyer for, frequently, he brought watermelons and other special produce for "Grandpa Vanderhoop's" store near the end of Front Street. This was no fluorescent-lighted supermarket, but was a shed purposely kept dark and shuttered to provide

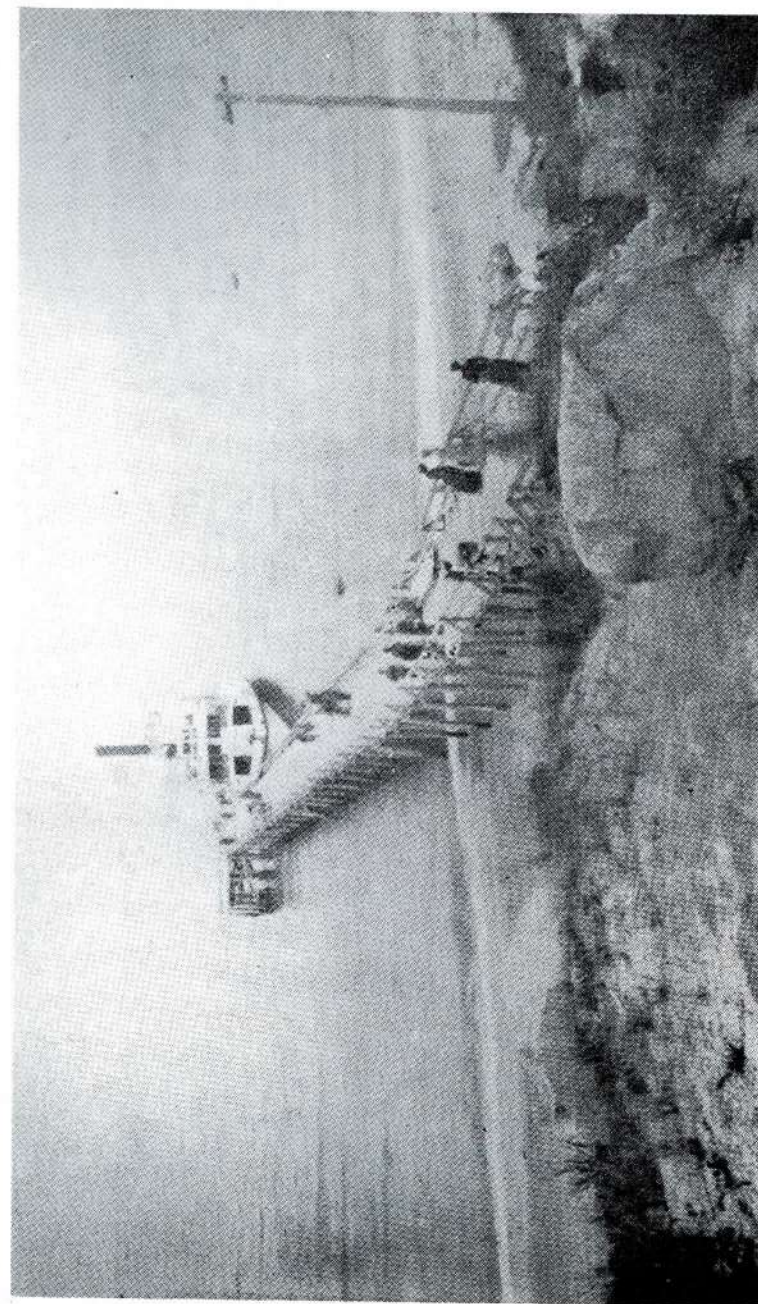
comparatively cool storage. Inside the dimness were great hands of green bananas slowly ripening; barrels of flour, sugar, molasses, and a small one of dill pickles; firkins of lard; candles, soap, and any number of things that might be needed through the summer.

At the eastern end of Lobsterville, up in the hills, was Duncan's clay pit. Here, gray clay was dug and loaded on dump carts pulled by horses along a track which ran from the hills, across a wide sandy beach and eight hundred feet along a pier. The dock reached out beyond the shallows to water deep enough for the three-masters which sailed through the sound and then lay tied to the end of the pier until their holds were filled.

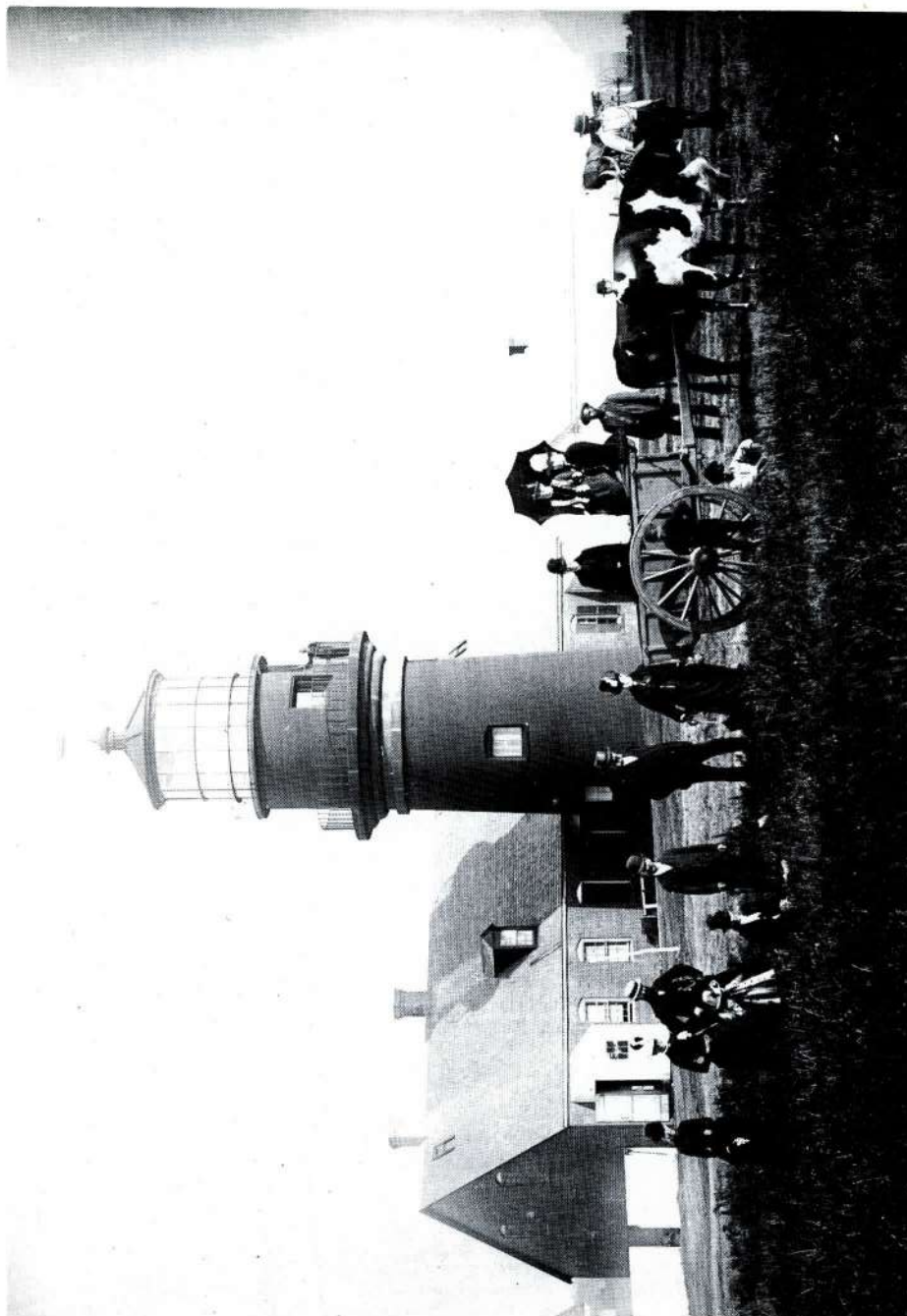
Mr. Duncan attempted to make fire-proof bricks. Several shacks near the clay pit housed large kilns for firing these bricks, but the experiment did not succeed for there was not enough kaolin, a necessary ingredient for this effort. Most of the clay was sent to New York and Boston, but even this proved to be unremunerative and the project was abandoned. The eight hundred foot pier remained, the sole reminder of the industry. Even today, a few spiles may be seen, mute testimony to "Duncan's Folly."

Up near the Head was another excavation, the Gay Head Clay Pit, a less complex industry than Duncan's. Here the clay was dug from the pit and thrown into wheelbarrows, which were trundled to the shore. Then the clay was ferried out to the three-masters, or sometimes carried directly to the mainland by the small boats.

Not far from this pit was the Gay Head Landing where a pier jutted out into the sound to accomodate the sidewheelers which ran excursions from New Bedford. The children of Lobsterville would sit on the high bank above the landing to watch the broad-beamed vessel steam up to the dock to disgorge two or three hundred sightseers. These people, attired in long-sleeved dresses, whose skirts swept the ground, and ornate straw hats perched squarely on top of their heads, picked their way slowly up the defile to the top of the bank where Aaron Cooper, Josiah Jerrod and Deacon Jeffers were waiting with their ox-carts to carry visitors up to the lighthouse. For ten cents apiece, one could clamber up and find a place on the cushioned seat which ran the length of the cart. With a slatted wooden back, these made very comfortable seats from which to view the countryside as the oxen plodded to the lighthouse. There the passengers alit to be shown through the lighthouse by the keeper or his assistant, and to have the marvel of the Fresnel Lens explained. Descending from the light tower, the people scattered to gaze at the colorful cliffs, or to patronize Leonard Vanderhoop's restaurant close by.



Excursion Steamer at Gay Head.



Gay Head Lighthouse - oxcart excursion

Others had eaten at Jerrod's restaurant, a short distance from the dock; or at the Windsor Hotel, a two story building right by the landing, run by Mrs. Rosanna Rodman. When the steamers landed, Mrs. Rodman had a delicious meal of fish chowder, steamed clams, lobster, and homemade berry pies ready for the wayfarers. The Ryan girls and other young ladies of the neighborhood were waitresses and saw that every customer was well-fed.

The ox-carts constantly rolled back and forth from the landing to the light, so everyone had a chance to see the sights. There were several houses nearby where souvenirs could be purchased. Aaron Cooper's wife, Phoebe, painted scallop shells, filled the centers with velvet, and sold them for pincushions. She and others sold clay pipes (not actually made of Gay Head clay), animals and figures made of local clay and glass lighthouses filled with the colorful red, yellow and black clay of the Gay Head Cliffs. Ben Attaquin had a potter's wheel on which he made beautiful vases of the local clay. These would not hold water, however, for to make them waterproof they needed to be fired and firing destroyed the colors.

Mrs. Pauline Vanderhoop, who lived too far from the lighthouse to use her home as a shop, had a bright blue truck wagon with built-up sides and a canvas top, drawn by a handsome dappled gray horse named Nellie. Nellie's wagon was filled with candy, popcorn, and most welcome of all, cold tonic nestling in tubs of ice, out of the sun's hot rays. Then, as now, summer visitors were an important source of revenue.

Several times a summer, the "little Adams sisters" from Chilmark would visit Lobsterville. Each time there would be an entertainment, at Onslow Stewart's house because his wife had an organ. Sarah and Lucy, midgets who had toured with Tom Thumb and had, indeed, been a part of his wedding party, sang and recited, much to the delight of young and old. The house was full, the porch was full, and the sands around the porch were crowded with the rapt audience. The evenings would end with everyone singing a hymn or two, and then sleepy children would be rounded up and goodnights would echo up and down the beach.

Fourth of July was another eventful day. Nearly everyone had guests and picnics were the order of the day. At night, every one gathered on the beach and the porches of Front Street to watch the fireworks. Linnie Mayhew had the biggest display, but several others had sky-rockets and Roman candles, and all the young men had firecrackers, which caused much squealing among the young ladies.

Saturday nights were gala. The week's work was done; the next day was a day of rest, so this was a time for celebration. During the day, one of the men sailed to Menemsha to get ice from Frank Tilton's ice-house on the east side of Menemsha Creek. Every winter, Mr. Tilton harvested the ice from the little pond below his house, and packed it in sawdust to await the demands of summer. Several of the children went along on this weekly trip for ice and they never failed to beg permission to run into the cold blackness of the icehouse. Barefoot and minimally clothed, they shivered most of the way home. The cakes of ice were wrapped in old quilts and loaded in the catboat to sail back to Lobsterville unless, as often happened, the wind had "let go," and then it was "get out the oars and pull like the dickens."

Meanwhile, in the little white house on the hill, Mrs. Ryan had been busy making the delicious custards which would be ice cream by nightfall. Lemon was the favorite flavor, but there was always vanilla for the children. Other times there might be banana, or strawberry, or chocolate, but no matter what the flavor, it was always a treat.

When the ice arrived, the custards were poured into large metal cans, which fitted into wooden tubs. Crushed ice and rock salt were packed under and around the cans and a clamp with a handle on it was fitted on the top of each tub. Then the onlookers were set to work churning. The children always wanted a turn because workers got a chance to lick the paddles when the freezing was done. But as the cream stiffened, the crank turned harder and harder. Little hands gave way to bigger ones, boys to men. The last part of the churning was no child's play. When the job was complete, the ice and salt were carefully wiped from the top of the freezer, the cover taken off, the dasher pulled out. Everyone stood around with a spoon in his hand to sample the delectable concoction.

When it was pronounced just right, a tight-fitting plug was put in the cover, in place of the crank, and the can was once more covered with salt and ice, new supplies being added to replace what had melted in the freezing process. Then the freezers were covered with heavy blankets or quilts and set aside for the cream to "ripen." From that time until after supper was an eternity, especially for the Ryan boys, who could keep their eyes on the freezers, but who were no nearer eating the contents than anyone else.

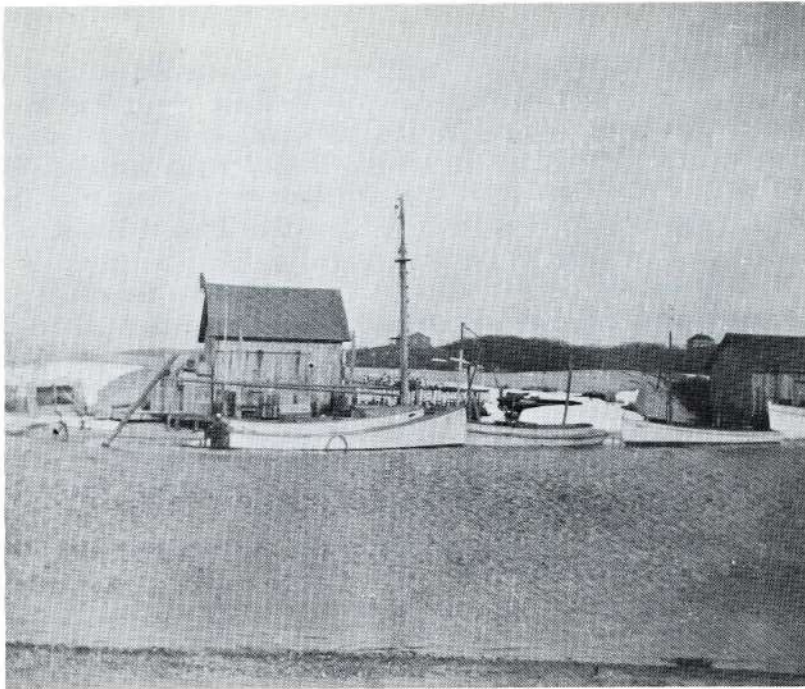
Supper over, the table was spread with a clean cloth and dishes and spoons laid in readiness for the ice cream festival. By ones and

twos, and by whole families, the people of Lobsterville gathered at the Ryans to accept heaping dishes of rich ice cream and to sit around the table, or out in the yard, enjoying its refreshing coolness and each other's company. Charley Ryan was one who had his dish filled time after time and there were others who "ran him a close second," but none could surpass Everett Poole, who could eat ice cream as long as the supply lasted.

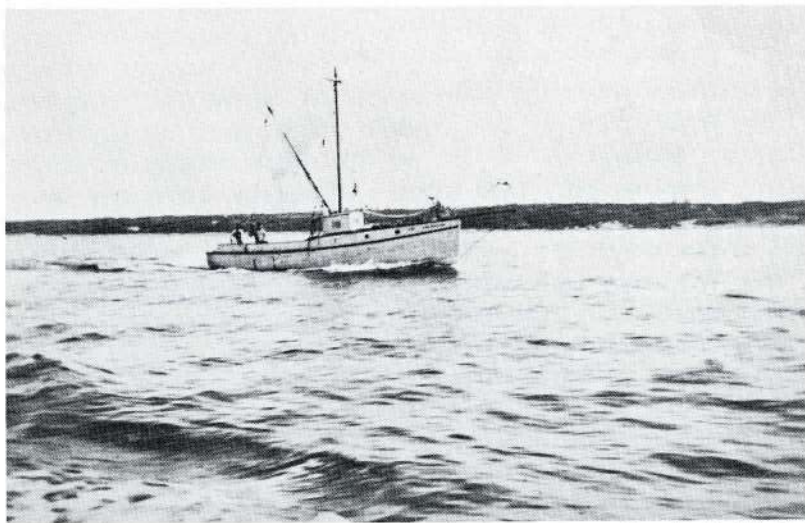
Sunday was the only morning in the week when the rising sun did not shine on men rowing out to the pounds or to their catboats anchored offshore. Sunday there was no activity along the shore, but each little house along Front Street and Back Street was bustling. After an unusually leisurely breakfast, with chores done and house tidy, each family appeared on its front porch and the "whole kit and kaboodle" started up through Manning's pasture to the church above the south shore. On the way they were joined by the Ryans, the Mannings, the Vanderhoops and other Gay Head families. Every one walked, even Onslow Stewart who had to use a cane, but who never missed a Sunday.

At the church, each one was greeted by Mr. Purmont, who taught school on weekdays and preached the scripture on Sundays. Mr. Purmont came from Boston, but he was an integral part of this country community. After the lengthy sermon and the hearty singing of verse after verse of the ringing hymns, the congregation lingered in the churchyard, exchanging news with the lighthouse keeper's family and the families along the main road. Gradually, each group wandered off toward home and a hearty Sunday dinner. Then the older people sat on the porches to read, to talk, or just to rock. The children walked along the beach with father or grandfather, or sat on the steps reading or playing quietly. Usual pursuits were taboo on Sundays, but nearly always one or more carriages, or more likely catboats, arrived from other parts of the island with visitors; so Sunday was a very special day.

When fall came, some of the boats were hauled at Lobsterville, put on wheels and carried inshore for the winter. Others were sailed to Menemsha or Edgartown to be hauled out. The Marshall Nortons went to Squibnocket; Aunt Gibbie and Uncle Austin Smith and the Willie Mayhew family returned to Quitsa; Hiram and Flossie Poole and the Stewarts went back to Chilmark. Albert and Rodney Reed's families and the Cottles went to Menemsha and the James Mayhews to West Tisbury. Horace Hillman sailed his family back to Edgartown and finally, even the men who lived alone in their nethouses returned to their winter quarters.



Dorothy Cottle Poole
Captain Everett A. Poole's catboat *Anna W.*

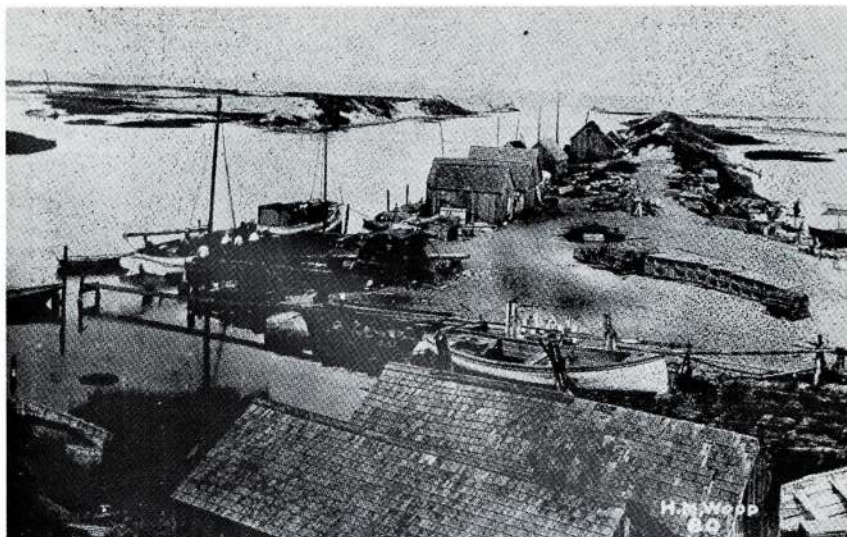


Dorothy Cottle Poole
Ernest J. Dean's lobster boat, *Two Sisters*, the first launch to join the Menemsha fleet.

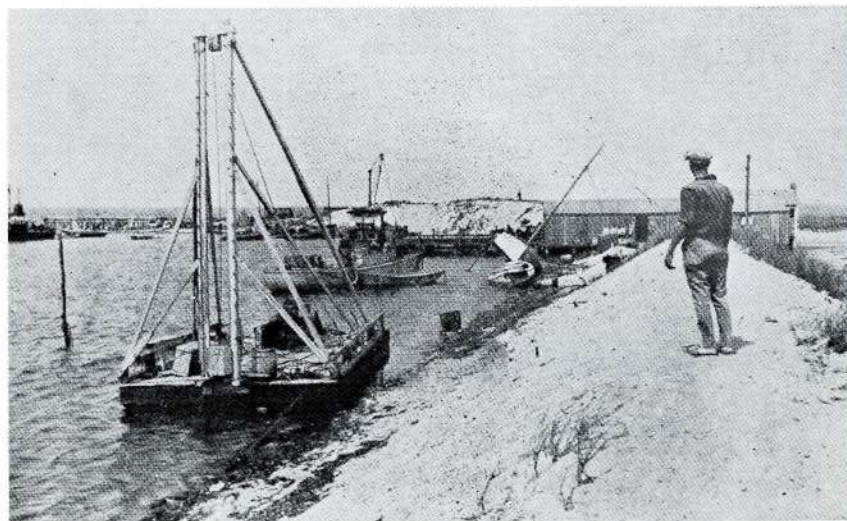
In 1904, Menemsha Harbor was dredged out, making a much more sheltered haven than the bight behind Dogfish Bar. Most of the fishermen left Lobsterville and fished from Menemsha. The little village along the Gay Head shore was abandoned. Some of the cottages were moved away; others deteriorated until they were good for nothing but fuel for clambakes; two or three survived and were later incorporated into summer camps, but that was long after all trace of the little fishing village had been obliterated by the wind, the sand, and the sea.



Dorothy Cottle Poole
Dorothy and Everett, Donald LeMar Poole's fiberglass lobster boat.



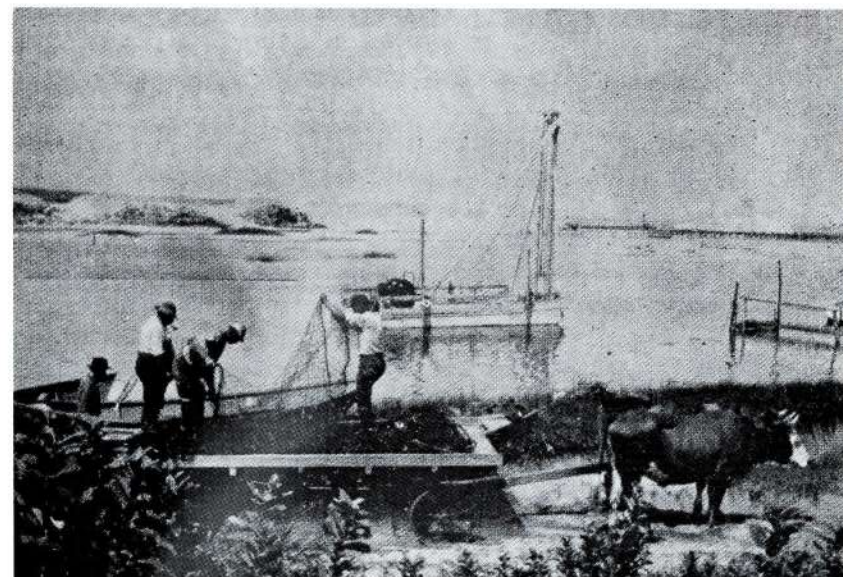
Dukes County Historical Society
Menemsha Creek about 1905



Dukes County Historical Society
Menemsha Basin



Dukes County Historical Society
Trapfishing in Menemsha Bight about 1910.



Dukes County Historical Society
Spreading nets to dry at Menemsha about 1910.

MENEMSHA

In 1904, Menemsha Creek was dredged to make a fine harbor and the lobstermen deserted their colonies at Nomansland and Lobsterville, lived at home, and fished from Menemsha. The port changed, but for some time the fishing remained about the same, except for a gradual increase in the number of power boats.

Fish shanties lined Menemsha Basin. Here, on stormy days, the men repaired their gear, knit funnels for their lobster pots, and recounted their experiences, often with embellishments.

Some commercial lobstering was done from Edgartown. The men fished from dories, often with sails, setting their pots around Cape Pogue. Here, as off Menemsha and Nomansland, there were great beds of eelgrass, kelp and rockweed called "hogbeds." That lobsters were to be found in these spots is graphically told by the story of Jerry Look of Menemsha who, instead of putting extra ballast in his pots, took them out to the "hogbeds" to "soak up." When he pulled them out several days later, he found three lobsters in every pot - and all without any bait. However, the Edgartown men baited their traps, often using bluefish because they brought half a cent a pound less than lobsters, which sold for two cents a pound. The men kept their lobsters in cars under Osborn's Wharf until they had enough to take to market at Woods Hole or New Bedford.

Levi Jackson and his sons, who were the last men to make a business of lobstering out of Edgartown, fished mostly around Nomansland. Today, one or two of their townsmen occasionally spend a summer or two lobstering from Menemsha, and a few men from the eastern part of the island set pots along the north shore. However, most of the commercial lobstering is carried on at Menemsha.

Many aspects of lobstering are the same today as they were a century ago, but some of the work is not quite so arduous, though it is far more time-consuming than most people realize. Then, seventy-five to one hundred pots were ample and a man did not have to go far beyond Nomansland to set his gear. Today, he must have three hundred pots and fish as far as twenty miles outside that island.

As in all businesses, costs have soared. In the days of Nomansland and Lobsterville fishing, lobster pots cost \$.75 to \$1.00. Today, they cost \$12.00 to \$15.00, and even higher for offshore gear. Lobster pots can now be bought ready made and many fishermen take advantage of this time saver. Others still

fashion their own pots, but can buy laths cut to specified lengths, bows bent, and runners already bored for assembling.

Recently, wire pots have been put on the market, some made of aluminum and others of plastic coated metal. These pots cost more than wooden ones, but they are easier to handle and require less maintenance. Worms won't eat wire pots, but electrolysis will. Zinc electrodes in the pots would slow this process, but until the few wire pots in use locally have proved their superiority, most lobstermen will continue to use wooden ones. Power launches with hydraulic haulers reduce working hours somewhat, but in most cases this only means more gear is set.

A lobsterman's day is long; his work is hard; his cash returns uncertain. At the end of the day when he hauls his last pot, he is hungry and tired - and he still has an hour or more before he can unload his catch at Menemsha, get fuel for the next day and tie up to his own dock. Even then, his work is not over for he must cut up bushels and bushels of bait to fill his bait bags, and wash down his boat before he can go home to his well-earned rest.

If Henry David Thoreau had visited Martha's Vineyard instead of Provincetown in 1857, and certainly if he visited it today, I do not think he would write as he did after watching the lobstermen of Long Point, Provincetown, fishing from their small boats just offshore:-

"The lobsters catch themselves, for they cling to the netting on which the bait is placed, of their own accord, and thus are drawn up. They sell them fresh for two cents a piece. Man needs to know but little more than a lobster in order to catch him in his traps."*

As inshore lobstering has decreased, there has been some effort to expand offshore lobstering, but very few island fishermen have attempted it for the costs are high, the risks many, and the profits uncertain. In the nineteenth century, anyone speaking of "lobstering offshore" meant off Nomansland. Real offshore lobster catches date back to 1900, when beam and otter trawls were introduced into American waters. Those catches were incidental for the vessels were fishing for fin fish. The earliest recorded otter trawl catch of lobsters was 8000 pounds brought in to New York in 1921. Now commercial operations are concentrated along the Continental Shelf.

*The netting to which the lobster clung was attached to an iron ring with a bridle of lines which ran to a single line leading to the surface. These were the earliest lobster pots used. They were called "ring nets."

MARTHA'S VINEYARD SCALLOPS

The scallop has been known for thousands of years, practically all over the world. Its delicate fanlike shape was worn as an emblem by some of the Crusaders, and it has emblazoned coats of arms of many illustrious families, including those of Anthony Eden and Sir Winston Churchill. There are four species of scallops found along the Atlantic Coast, but only two are of commercial importance in New England, the shallow water scallop and the giant sea scallop. It is known that the Indians of Martha's Vineyard were familiar with scallops, for many shells are found in their middens. Why the redmen did not introduce scallops to the white settlers is unknown but, although scallops were mentioned by the colonial writers, they were not eaten to any extent until about a hundred years ago. Since then, the demand for this epicurean dish has increased greatly, and the scallop industry has become of prime importance to the island economy.

Scallops may be found in sheltered spots along the coast, in water as deep as sixty feet, although usually between five and thirty feet. They are often abundant on high flats covered by only one or two feet of water at low tide. In fact, those exposed places with thick eelgrass seem to receive the heaviest sets, but the young often perish in the cold winters. Heavy sets are usually found in stillwaters or on the sides of a swift current, as at the entrance to harbors, where eelgrass flats line the channel. Although the extent of the scallop area is large, only portions of it are productive at one time. A spot with a good set one year may be completely barren the next. The rough waters of the exposed coastline are a barrier to the natural distribution, but scallops attached to *Ulva* (sea lettuce) may be carried miles by the current and transferred from one locality to another. However, scallop migrations are limited. A scallop may move to various parts of a small bay or harbor, especially if there are strong currents, but it never makes extended migrations.

Scallops are subject to several kinds of mutilation. They are not as hardy as clams or quahogs but are capable of repairing most accidents, and only succumb to severe injuries like a broken ligament, a cracked valve, or a strained abductor muscle. The scallop is preyed upon by starfish, crabs, sea fowl and other animals. Seagulls, too, take their toll of the scallop crop. They swoop down from the air, grasp a scallop and then find a rock or other hard surface on which they drop their prey. The shell breaks, the gull feasts, and repeats the process until he is replete.

Man, too, could be classified as an enemy to scallops if he could overfish them as he does clams, quahogs and oysters. However, the short life of the scallop prevents this. Scallops die naturally before they are two, so if only scallops over a year old are taken, it is impossible for man to exterminate them by overfishing.

A scallop under a year old is a seed scallop and should not be caught. Its growth line is quite pronounced, showing where the shell recommenced growth in May, after the edge had been thickened and blunted through the winter. Sometimes the shell shows a different color between the two parts, and at other times it is necessary to feel the ridge. Transplanted scallops always show change by the formation of a growth line, but spawning does not produce this effect. In open season, any scallop with a growth line is ready to catch for, although it cannot be said that every scallop with a growth line has spawned, everyone without it has not and is seed. Scallops spawn in summer and are visible to the naked eye when very small. Except from December to May, a scallop increases in size until its death. Growth is affected by heredity and environment, but more by the latter, as current is essential for rapid development. The character of the bottom has little effect on the growth of scallops as they simply rest on the surface and are constantly shifting, but the best bottom seems to be tenacious sand (sand with a light mixture of mud) with thin eelgrass; thick grass cuts the circulation of water. Understanding these growth habits is of inestimable advantage to the scallop industry.

Ground favorable to the production and growth of scallops is called "scallop ground", although not all areas so specified are productive at one season. Every town on Martha's Vineyard, except West Tisbury, has at least one area favorable to the growth of scallops. Edgartown Harbor was the first ground fished commercially and it was considered almost ideal scallop ground, with protected bay, light rise and fall of tide, considerable eelgrass, and good circulation of water, and without alternate years of scarcity and over abundance. Recent hurricanes have changed the beds, but they are still good scallop ground. Katama Bay and Sengekontacket, or Anthier's Pond, nurture scallop sets and one or the other is fished each year. Oak Bluffs shares Sengekontacket with Edgartown and the Lagoon with Vineyard Haven. The latter also has scallops in its harbor and in Tashmoo, one area at a time being opened for fishing, although occasionally one period overlaps the other. Chilmark and Gay Head both fish Menemsha Pond and Chilmark also has scallops in "Quitsa" and Stonewall Ponds. The state sets the lines between the two towns and they are

marked with buoys or stakes, wooden or metal. If the season looks good, towns on both sides of the boundary start scalloping the same day, although sometimes it happens that one town's side of the line will have a good set of scallops and the other will be completely bare.

Scallops were first gathered by hand along the beaches after a heavy blow. Then scoop nets, about eight inches in diameter with poles of varying lengths, were used and scallopers waded across the flats, pushing their dories ahead of them and emptying each netful into the boat. Later, an iron frame about three feet long and half as wide, with a three foot net bag attached, was fastened to a wooden pole eight feet long. This was called a pusher and, at low tide, was shoved along the bottom among the eelgrass until the bag was full. Then it was emptied into the dory and the process was repeated.

In the early days of scalloping, most of the boats were catboats under sail, and when the wind failed, the fishermen were obliged to push their boats along with oars. In Oak Bluffs and Vineyard Haven, an anchor road was often used. Two anchors were set with a long rope between them, by means of which a skiff, towing a dredge, was hauled back and forth.

Later, auxiliary engines, and occasionally power dories, were used, increasing the catch thirty to fifty per cent. Usually, two men fished in one boat with their dredges held out by spreaders so that they could cover more ground. At the end of the drift, the engine was stopped while the men culled their catch. Under sail, the culling was done while the dredges were overboard. Nowadays, a dredge consisting of an iron frame and a net bag, which will hold a bushel or two of scallops, is towed behind a boat. Each boat has from two to ten dredges, crossing and recrossing the scallop ground. A single run across the area is called a "drift." The catch is emptied onto a culling board, projecting slightly beyond the sides and fastened across the center of the boat. It is three feet wide with a guard rail three inches high along two lengths, the ends being open. Scallops are separated from rubbish (seaweed, shells, sand, etc.) Then the scallops are stowed in baskets and the trash is thrown over board. Each catch is culled and the board is cleared while the dredges are being towed on another drift. There are several kinds of dredges, but Vineyard fishermen usually use bar dredges for hard, sandy bottom and chain dredges for muddy and rocky bottoms.

Commercial scalloping began up-island around 1915 when Frank Manning and Linus Jeffers discovered that there were enough scallops in Menemsha Pond for such a venture. Chilmark

started a year later with a crop which resulted from the first dredging at Menemsha. His sons credit Charles Norton with introducing scallops into Chilmark by bringing a half-barrel of them from Edgartown, where he lived, and throwing them off Hariph's Creek Bridge into "Quitsa" Pond. However, a bill of lading from Fulton Market dated 1866, and other reports of such sales, testify to the fact that scallops had been present at least fifty years before that and needed only the better circulation of water furnished by the dredging to stimulate their growth and expansion.

Catboats under sail were soon replaced by gasoline-powered boats, many of which were Nomansland boats. The state limit of ten bushels a day prevailed, but there were no wardens to check the day's catch, there were no well-defined roads to the pond either, and scallops were carried by oxcart to Frank Manning's barn in Gay Head, and by sleds to their own homes by the Chilmark fishermen. In barn or kitchen, the men opened their catches each night, packed the eyes in eight-gallon firkins and hauled them to Chilmark Center to be transported to the steamer by Bart Mayhew's stage. At the other end of the island, the fishermen themselves, or hired openers, shucked the scallops in shacks along the waterfront, or in their barns, basements, or kitchens. The eyes were sent to New York by freight or express. Official records state that scallops were shipped to market as early as 1875, but the bill of lading previously mentioned shows that Anderson Poole was shipping scallops as early as 1866.

These New York markets demanded large, white eyes. To meet this demand, the eyes were soaked in fresh water for several hours until their bulk increased about one third due to a complicated change, whose most important factor was osmosis, which caused the swelling of the tissues. There were two methods of accomplishing this. The first was to spread the eyes evenly in a shallow wooden sink with just enough fresh water to cover them and leave them overnight. In the morning, the milky fluid was drawn off and the eyes were packed in kegs or butter tubs for shipment. The second method was to put four or five gallons of scallops into a seven-gallon keg and add water. By the time the shipment reached the market, the eyes had absorbed the water and filled the keg. Retail dealers subjected the scallops to this procedure if the fishermen did not, because the consumer demanded "large, nice-appearing eyes." The small yellow or pinkish eye of the freshly opened scallop took on a white, plump appearance, adding greatly to its salability. On the other hand, its



Ready to Set Scallop Dredges

Stanley E. Poole



Scalloping Through the Ice

Stanley E. Poole



Hauling In Dredges

Stanley E. Poole



Fish Warden.

Stanley E. Poole

fine flavor and freshness had disappeared and it had lost considerable of its nutriment. It was really an inferior article but was not detrimental to health as long as proper sanitary precautions were taken as to water and surroundings. However, this practice is now unlawful. Another practice, outlawed by the Pure Food Acts, was pickling, or salting, the scallops, which was done when the price was low, to hold them for a more favorable market.

Severe winters did not deter scallopers. With the ponds encased in a twenty inch crust of ice, the men chopped holes in the ice large enough to insert a big rake, which they drew back and forth to gather up the scallops. Then with a smaller rake, they lifted them out of the hole and stowed them in sacks. The full sacks were then put into a large hole made for the purpose and left until the catch was great enough to warrant driving an oxcart out onto the ice to collect it. An unusually high price of twelve to thirteen dollars a gallon made the extra work less burdensome.

Scallops used to be opened in the fish shanties along the shore. Long benches, above waist high, were built across one or more sides of the building, with room beneath for barrels to catch the shells and refuse. Scallops were dumped onto the bench and the openers went to work with deft, sure movements, sometimes developing individual techniques. A special knife with a rounded blade was inserted between the valves on the right side, given a quick upward turn with a cutting motion which severed the eye and , at the same time, threw back the upper shell. A second motion tore off the soft rim and visceral mass of the scallop and cast it into the barrel, while a third move separated the eye from the bottom of the shell and plopped it into a container on the bench. Now a state regulation requires that scallops be opened in a state-approved, state- inspected shucking house. Such an opening shed must have hot and cold running water, toilets, smooth, washable walls, cement floors, fiber-glass bench tops, and stainless steel knives and containers. But there are still barrels beneath the benches for the shells and the openers still vie with each other to see who can open the most scallops in a given time, and the gourmet of the group stills pops an occasional scallop into his mouth, solemnly vowing that this morsel is even tastier than the much extolled cooked variety.

Years ago, scallops had no market value and were generally considered non-edible. With the development of the industry, the necessity for regulation arose and conservation measures were enacted. In all the towns of Martha's Vineyard, the selectmen

govern the scallop fishery within the limits of the state laws. In each town it is the custom for the officials to consult with the fishermen before making new laws or amending those in force. Occasionally fishermen petition for some change in regulations. The rules governing scalloping do not change much from year to year, although sometimes the daily limit is altered to correspond with supply and demand, and at times, certain areas are closed to protect seed scallops. In 1910, the state limit was changed from twenty-five bushels to ten bushels and has remained constant. Town limits, however, have been greatly curtailed.

Sometimes scallop regulations have been deemed unfair and minor rebellions have occurred. Such an event took place in Edgartown one year when it was decided to postpone the scallop season for two weeks in the hope that the price would improve. One old-timer said he had always gone scalloping the first of November, and always would. So he did; not in some out-of-the-way cove, but right off the lighthouse bar, in plain sight of all the town, official and otherwise. The officials had to arrest him. He remained defiant until they started up Main Street with him; then tears coursed down his cheeks and he begged not to be taken to jail. The officers obliged and escorted him to the courthouse, where he was reprimanded, fined, and released.

Another year, a male citizen of Gay Head objected to the regulations established by the selectmen, so he called together a group of townspeople and persuaded them to vote to take the authority over scalloping away from the selectmen. State laws required that when this authority was taken out of the hands of the selectmen, it reverted to the state. So this citizen went to Boston to consult with the state officials. They refused to have anything to do with the matter and sent him back to return the prerogative to the board of selectmen.

One regulation, which caused considerable furor in the up-island towns, sought to limit the right to go scalloping to males. The down-island towns occasionally had a few women scallopers, but they were never numerous (except perhaps in Tisbury during the depression years) and caused little controversy. In Gay Head and Chilmark, however, there developed a veritable battle of the sexes, with threats of law suits and exchange of maledictions.

The selectmen of Gay Head posted a ruling specifically prohibiting women from scalloping. One woman, in behalf of her sex, ignored the prohibition and obtained from the town clerk, by cajolery or threat, a scallop license. Backed by advice from legal counsel, she announced she would make use of it. The selectmen retaliated by threatening arrest. A court trial would be lengthy and

costly, so though the final outcome would probably have been victory for the female scalloper, she withdrew and did not attempt to use the license granted her. That was not the end of the matter, however, for other women took up the cause with such tenacity that the selectmen decided to withdraw their ruling, and now women as well as men, pursue the scallop in season.

The town of Chilmark was also besieged by women who wished to go scalloping. There was no actual ruling against their going, but the fishermen were strongly opposed to it on numerous grounds, some valid and some strictly male prejudice. But they were no match for the determined women and first one or two, and then "nearly all" the women prevailed. If their own husbands or sons would not take them, they hired others to do so.

The women did not haul the dredges and many of them did not even cull the catch. Frequently, they simply rode in the boat as passengers, thereby entitling the boat owner to catch an extra limit. As most boats could carry only two or three persons at one time, and as small children were often bundled up and taken along, one boat might make several runs a day. There is no doubt that this resulted in many extra bushels of scallops being taken per day, thus defeating the established limit whose purpose was to provide a reasonable daily catch, over as long a period as possible, for as many fishermen as were willing and able to put in an honest day's work for a moderate day's return.

Women, and a very large percentage of the men in most of the towns, are not commercial fishermen. They take a vacation from their regular work at the opening of the scallop season, fish a few days, or a week or two, while the scallops are plentiful, fishing is easy, and the price is high. Then they beach their equipment and return to their regular jobs. Often the scallop season is a "vacation on pay," and the money these men put into their pockets from the sale of their scallops leaves just that much less to go into the pockets of the commercial fishermen who, when the scallop season is over, have no other work to do. A few scratch out a meagre livelihood quahoging some years and occasionally there is a little oystering; but by and large, when the scalloping is over, the commercial fisherman faces a long lean spell. He is the man on the Lagoon, on Sengekontacket, on "Quitsa" or Menemsha Pond, fishing from daylight to dark. He does not quit when he cannot catch his limit in an hour or two, but persists until a long hard day's work no longer produces even a minimal wage.

In Oak Bluffs and Vineyard Haven when scallops are scarce, the men fish with dip nets. They have a water-tight wooden box, a

yard high with a glass two feet square on the bottom, and sides tapering to a rubber-rimmed nine inch square on top. This contraption is fastened to the side of the boat and the fisherman puts his face against the rubber rim and looks through the glass below to locate scallops. He then uses a light dip net with a two-foot bag, which he maneuvers around on the bottom until it is full, when he hauls it in and empties the catch into his basket. This method is very slow and is only effective in shallow water, but it is used to prolong the season when power dredging is no longer feasible.

Today, the regulations in all the towns are similar; starting hour, minimum temperature, and size of catch are all prescribed. The revenue from this industry varies enormously, but there is no doubt of its importance to the island economy. But scalloping does more than this, for it seems to supply a sort of avocation for the fishermen. The scallop season is eagerly anticipated, it is enjoyed for its duration, and it provides yarns for the rest of the winter.

The future of the scallop industry depends largely upon a proper respect for the preservation of seed. However, the scalloping could be improved if some areas were dredged to provide better circulation of water, and if the scallops were introduced into ponds where none are now. More money needs to be appropriated for shellfish experimentation and propagation. Experiments have already been conducted to determine the effects of salinity, temperature, and current upon the scallops at all stages of their development. It has been established that the scallops grow best when they have an adequate circulation of water. Salinity can vary from an equal amount of fresh and salt water, such as is found at a river's mouth, to extreme salinity. Scallops will live equally well within those limits.

The winter of 1976-1977 was not a good scallop season. Chilmark and Gay Head did not fish at all. The extreme cold and unusual amount of ice drastically reduced the catches in the other towns. Some of the fishermen turned to sea scalloping. Ordinarily, the sea scallop does not attract the Vineyard fisherman because the pond or bay scallop is so much more in demand. However, this is the third time that considerable catches of sea scallops have been brought to the Vineyard, opened and sold by local dealers.

About sixty years ago, there were scattered beds of sea scallops between Gay Head and Cuttyhunk. Men in catboats fished on them through the summer and into the fall until, abruptly, no scallops remained.

(Some time after that, a few small lobster boats from Mt. Desert, Maine, scalloped one summer around the Vineyard, and Maine built boats with Maine crews fished from New Bedford. These scallops were opened aboard the boats and taken to the mainland to be sold.)

Forty years ago, a bed was found in twenty-one fathom of water south of Nomansland. Boats from the Vineyard, Block Island, Newport, and Stonington fished there all winter. Strangely enough, they caught very few scallops by daylight (often less than three bushels) but at night the catches averaged twenty-five or thirty bushels.

For some time now, sea scallop beds off Cape Cod, around Nauset and North Chatham, have been fished, but Vineyard Boats did not fish there until last fall. When the pond scallops proved non-existent last winter, several islanders invested in boats for sea scalloping. The fishing grounds are open sea so winter fishing is hazardous, but the returns are considerable. Most of the local boats bring their catches to the island to be opened, providing work for many openers. Nevertheless, sea scalloping will not easily supplant pond scalloping as far as Vineyard fishermen are concerned.

A FRIEND

I first remember Mrs. V. (not a disguise, but the name by which she was affectionately called) when she came to my grandmother's house, bringing a dainty china plate filled with some still warm delicacy, which she had just made. Grandma enjoyed the sweets, but she enjoyed Mrs. V's company even more. The younger woman would always take a moment from her busy morning to listen to Grandma's latest poem, or her paper for the D.A.R., or the last letter from one of her scattered family. To this family Mrs. V. was far more than just a casual neighbor to their mother, for they knew that she crossed the street, at least once every day, to check on their mother's well-being, something they themselves could not do. I didn't know Mrs. V. very well in those days, for my home was far away and I didn't visit my grandmother very often.

A decade later, my mother came to the island to live and I became reacquainted with Mrs. V., this time as a friend to my aunt and mother. All three women were full of energy and full of the joy of living. They all loved pretty clothes and, togged out in the latest styles, they attended all the interesting events of the season. But they were not just social butterflies. Their talents, skill, and time were given freely to benefit others. They rose early to furbish their homes and fill their larders. Then they met to tie a quilt, to hook or braid a rug, or to sew for the church bazaar. They filled missionary barrels destined for the ends of the earth and Mrs. V. always insisted on "prettying things up" with a bow, a flower or a few fancy stitches.

While her husband lived, Mrs. V. helped in the business. Ostensibly, she was bookkeeper, but actually she was the liaison for all departments. Her charm and sympathetic understanding made customers forget their wrathful complaints, and inveigled workmen into finishing the task at hand, even if it did add a few minutes to their day.

When her husband died, Mrs. V. rented rooms, mostly to school teachers. She fed them, too. Everyone was eager to live at Mrs. V's, not because of the bright, clean rooms, but because of the hostess. She loved cooking for them and never missed a birthday, or other cause for celebration. In summer, young people working in the hotels and shops replaced the teachers and found the same hospitality. Later, Mrs. V's grandchildren spent the summers with her, and they and their friends joined the scores for whom she

graciously opened her home and her heart. Occasionally, summer people who wished to prolong the season after the inns closed, would stay with Mrs. V. and they, too, were added to her list of friends.

So Mrs. V., mother, grandmother, great grandmother, continued to make life easier and pleasanter for others. One by one, her contemporaries died. She herself was seriously ill for months. When she recovered, her activities were greatly curtailed, but she still kept busy. With consummate skill, for she was almost blind, she sewed together countless little pieces of bright calico which, with infinite patience and persistence, became twenty-three patchwork quilts, one for each of her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Today she was ninety-two. Her room was full of flowers; the whole house was full of flowers; beautiful plants, gorgeous bouquets and exquisite nosegays. And for every bloom there was a card: a card chosen with fond care to let a sweet old lady know that she was loved and admired.

She tabulated her gifts like a child: perfume from John; a kerchief from Margot; candy from Robert; money and flowers and hundreds of cards. Her eyes shone. She was pleased, excited, flattered. She was receiving the adulation which had always been her lot. She'd been sprightly and gay; she'd always had a good time; but without even knowing it, her first thought had always been for others. She'd fed the hungry, clothed the naked, comforted the afflicted, healed the sick, and loved all humanity. Yet when she held out her arms and folded me in a parting embrace, she said wonderingly:

"I'm so lucky. I have so many friends. I can't understand it. I can't understand why people are so good to me." And then she put her lips close to my ear and whispered:

"This has been a wonderful birthday; but I miss my old friends. I miss my old friends."

THE FRIENDSHIP QUILT

An old lady sat in the high-backed winged chair in the far corner of the room with a gay coverlet over her knees. She might have been asleep, but she wasn't. She was reliving her youth, bits and pieces, brought to mind by the bits and pieces, spread across her lap. These were all of bright colored silks, satins, velvets and fine wools which a group of her friends had quilted into a handsome covering, seventy years ago, for her to take to her new home, far from her island birthplace. Other quilts of cotton or wool pieces, many sewed into fancy patterns, had been part of her dowry, but this was the only one she had left. For all the years, while the other quilts kept her family warm through the long winter nights, the Friendship Quilt had lain neatly folded on the camphor chest at the foot of the spare room bed. Occasionally, the quilt was brushed and aired, and then it was refolded and laid in its accustomed place, but it was never used.

The Friendship Quilt still lay on the camphor chest, crowded now between the rosewood desk and the mahogany highboy, but now the quilt was used. As her daughter said, "Why save it?" Why, indeed? Who would know - or care - about these many-shaped, many hued pieces with their elaborate monograms or delicately embroidered flowers? The old lady smoothed the quilt over her knees and, touching a piece here and another there, reviewed the events that these jewel-like patches brought to her mind.

This ivory satin with the old English letters, "H.E.C.," was Mother C's contribution, a piece of satin like Henry's wedding tie. The brown merino next to it was a scrap from my bridal gown. I can see it now with its long, tight sleeves, fitted bodice and sweeping skirt, all adorned with yards and yards of soutache. Our wedding was early in the day so that we could catch the stage to Oak Bluffs and the steamer for New Bedford, on our way to our new home. Ours was a simple wedding; we needed no elaborate ceremony to make our pledges lasting - lasting "till death do us part." I have never lacked material possessions and our children and grandchildren have always been thoughtful and loving. Who, but me, knows how I miss the companionship, the encouraging word, the sober judgment, the tender touch that death took from me thirty-five years ago? But I mustn't dwell on that. The long, lonely years are almost over. I've always said one should bring to mind the happy events of life and that was just what this quilt was meant to do.

Here's the blue brocaded satin that Evelina wore at the soiree, when her parents announced her engagement to Dan. That was an occasion. Everyone of importance was there. The gowns and coiffures were all of the latest fashion, but none was lovelier than Evvie's. She said my sprigged dimity was very becoming, but Evvie and I had always been best friends.

Lutie Mayhew always had beautiful gowns, too. This watered taffeta was one of hers. I can still hear her rustling down the aisle in church on Sunday morning, not really late, but late enough to make an entrance.

This grey silk with the violets on it is a piece of Mattie Lambert's shirtwaist. She put that in to tease me. She said it was so I would not forget the beautiful long-stemmed violets her brother, Tom, used to leave on my desk. I liked Tom. He was great fun at skating parties or at singing school, but Tom never courted me. He was much too young.

The blue plaid is from Georgiana's favorite skirt. She almost always wore it when we went skating on Parsonage Pond, and then back to her house for oyster stew. We consumed quarts of oyster stew and followed that with great wedges of chocolate cake. Then some one would play the organ and we would all sing until Georgie's parents gently shooed us home.

This plain creamy white square is one of my favorites because it brings back so many happy memories of Cousin Emma. What good times we used to have on the farm, feeding the baby lambs and helping with the shearing. Emma taught Fan and me to card, to spin and to weave. We spent many a winter's day busily carding or spinning, our tongues whirring as fast as the spinning wheel.

The white challis with the bright flowers was put in by Fan to remind me that she was grown up, too. It's the dress she wore the first day she took my place as teacher at Scrubby Neck.

Oh, here's the red paisley that Grandmother sewed in. I never fail to marvel at her tiny, even stitches. The paisley was a shawl that Great-Grandfather brought from Scotland and Grandmother had always loved it. She wore it until it was in shreds, and then she couldn't bear to part with it. She loved bright colors, quite unlike Grandmother Pierce.

Cousin Prudy added the rose velvet because she knew I had always coveted it. I used to sit in church and see her, two pews down, with her lovely rose velvet dress and wish and wish that I could have one, too. But with seven children, our family didn't have many velvet dresses. The nearest I ever came was when I was four or five and had a garnet velvet coat and bonnet, trimmed with

grey fur. Here it is. I still think it's beautiful. I always loved it, inordinately, and never liked to see Fan wear it, even when I knew it was much too small for me. By the time Charlotte fitted it, I had become reconciled to seeing it on others, but I still thought of it as my coat. I remember when the outfit was new, Mother took me to Pawtucket to visit her family. On the steamer, in the waiting station, and on the train many people smiled at me and I knew they were admiring my lovely bonnet and coat. But when we got to Grandmother's house, no one mentioned how nice I looked or how becoming my new coat was. In fact, Grandmother spoke quite sternly to Mother about vanity and pride and other things I couldn't understand. But I understood enough the next morning. Right after breakfast, I was sent upstairs to Grandmother's sitting room, where I beheld a pile of somber-hued coats, brown, grey, mouselike. Grandmother bade me try them on until I found one that fitted fairly well. Then she handed me a matching bonnet (no soft fur on that one) and said I was to wear it to meeting and for the duration of my visit.

Weeping, I hurried to Mother's room, sure that she would reverse Grandmother's verdict and let me wear my own lovely red coat. But I found Mother in tears, too. We consoled each other and Mother explained that she hadn't realized that Grandmother would insist on her clothing taboos for her grandchildren, but she did. Grandmother Pierce was a Quaker and no bright colors were to be worn by any member of her family, especially on First Day. We bowed to the inevitable, but I was a very somber, subdued little girl as I entered the meeting house and sat, as quietly as I could, between Mother and Grandmother, not venturing to look across the room to where Grandfather sat with all the other men of the congregation. Long periods of silence were broken when some one had a "concern" to speak. One man spoke of devout thanks and I thought how devoutly thankful I was that I was visiting a Quaker household, not living in one. I looked forward to the end of our visit when I could wear my pretty garnet coat and bonnet, and the other gay clothes my mother made for me. Grandmother's lesson on pride and vanity not only had no lasting effect on me, but it made Mother, who all her childhood had been clothed in drab colors, more determined than ever that her daughters be allowed to wear bright clothing. I remember ---

An old lady sat in the high-backed winged chair, in the far corner of the room, with a gay coverlet over her knees. She might have been asleep, for she neither spoke or moved. She might have been asleep - and she was - eternally.

POINT INNER PLACE

Martha's Vineyard is a beautiful island where almost any spot is some one's favourite. Ours is a grassy knoll that slopes gently to a tiny harbor and the waters called locally, "Quitsa Pond."

Years ago, sheep grazed here and furnished quantities of wool from which our great-great aunt, Jane Smith, wove woollens to ward off winter's icy blasts. But that was many years ago. When we first saw it, the walls were falling down and what had once been a meadow was a tangled mass of bushes, berry canes, greenbriar and poison ivy, not prime ingredients for a favorite spot. But the rank growth could not hide the beauty and charm of the place and we loved it on sight. Loved it and coveted it, but forty years were to pass before we could lay claim to it.

Finally the great day came. We had laid aside the purchase price; the current owner was willing to sell; and we found a buyer for the place we had. We could, at last, secure title to our favorite spot.

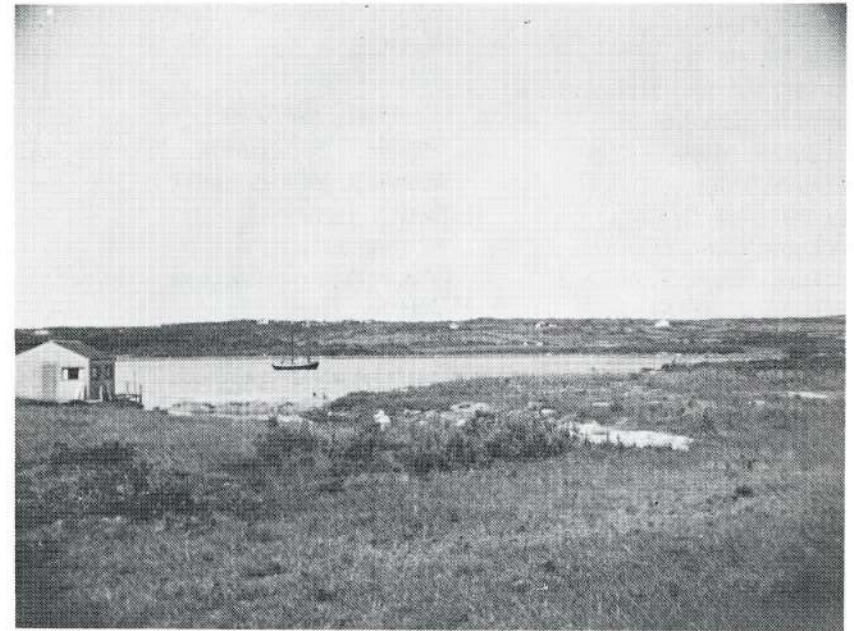
We rebuilt the walls and cleared away the bushes. Following soil analysis, about an acre of land was plowed, harrowed and planted to rye, buckwheat and finally grass. The little harbor was dredged out but the rushes that grew along the banks were not disturbed and, along the brook, the natural growth of black alder, viburnum and shadbush was left untouched. So was the marsh, stretching across the southern part of the lot and, as a result, birds of many species visit this place. Quail and pheasants raise their broods in the undergrowth. Beautiful white swans, geese and ducks of all kinds swim in the harbor, or fly in formation across the pond to the grassy shores where they have their nests. Mourning doves, cardinals and all the interesting little juncos, sparrows and warblers, as well as the larger and not so popular grackles, cowbirds, jays and raucous crows are all at home here.

Snuggled in front of two rolling hills and further protected by evergreen windbreaks, our favorite spot faces Nashaquitsa Pond, a never-ending delight: sparkling in sunshine, constantly changing under cloudy skies, enchanting by moonlight. Ruffling gently in a summer breeze, menacing when swept by gales, it becomes a magic mirror on a calm day, or when sealed by winter's ice.

The near shore meets our lawn which slopes gently towards it. Across the pond is a gorgeous beetle-bug grove, beyond which rise wooded hills. Northward along the curving shore, the trees reveal, here and there, glimpses of partially hidden houses until, at

the end of the vista, ones sees Menemsha Village and the gleaming white Coast Guard Station, over which fly the stars and stripes.

Our chosen spot is far enough from the highway so that sounds of traffic seldom reach it, but there are sounds that add to its enchantment: bird calls in their season, the rustle of the rushes, the wind whispering through the tree-tops and, from just over the hill, the sound of surf breaking on shore and the rote as the waves rush upon the beach and recede, carrying pebbles and stones in their wake. Here the rolling surf, the vast endless ocean, provides sharp contrast to point up the quiet, protected beauty and peaceful serenity of our favorite spot, Point Inner Place.



Dorothy Cottle Poole

Point Inner Place.

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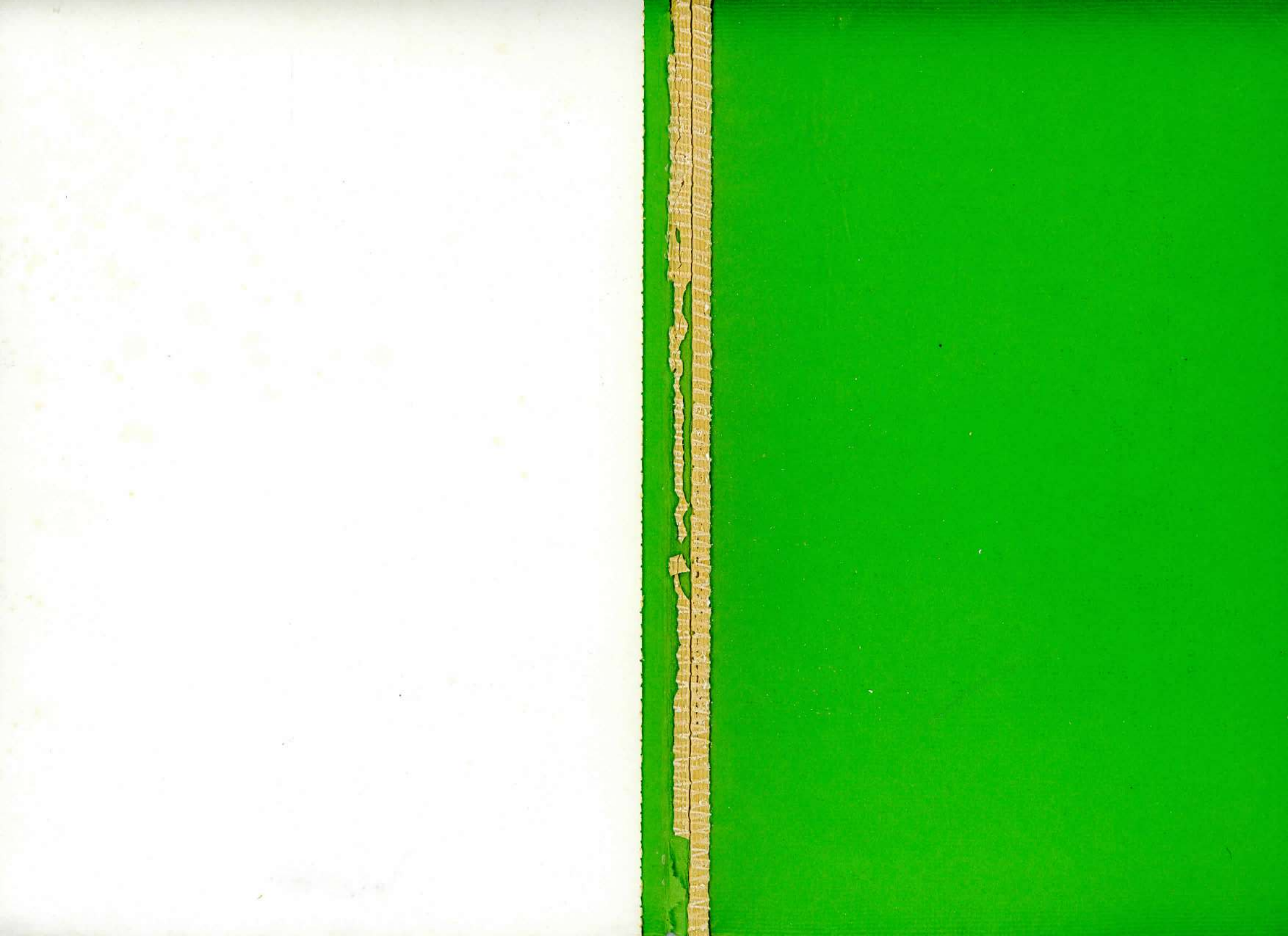
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