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TRAMPING
ON
MARTHA'S VINEYARD

BY
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A TALK
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It may seem strange to talk to mountain climbers about an island whose highest point is only 311 feet above sea level, and yet I assure you that Martha's Vineyard has charms even for the mountaineer. It sounds inhospitable, too, to begin by telling of the difficulties of securing overnight accommodations for a number of people. There are no large hotels in the western part of the island, although Edgartown, Oak Bluffs and Vineyard Haven have many summer inns. Therefore, a tramping party had best be limited to three or four. In these days of automobiles it is, of course, possible to return each night to a hotel at the eastern end of the island but to my mind there is much more charm in "carrying on" from day to day.

A walking trip on the island is far more fascinating if one knows something of its past, and so I am going to touch briefly on the history of the Vineyard.

It is thought the island was visited by the Norsemen in the tenth and eleventh centuries. They named it Straumey, the "stream island," because of the peculiar co-tidal phenomenon which impressed all the early voyagers, resulting in four high tides daily at the meeting of Nantucket and Vineyard Sounds.

Verrazzano, an Italian explorer, named the island "Luisa" in honor of the French Queen Mother. The Dutchman, Block, also came but his name is left to a smaller island nearer New York. Champlain called the island "The Doubtful," as he was much puzzled by the strong flow of waters at Woods Hole and West Chop,

thinking these the mouths of rivers. Hunt, the Englishman, also visited this region, and in 1602 Gosnold spent some months in the vicinity, founding the first settlement of white men on the New England coast, this being established at Cuttyhunk where in 1902 the erection of a monument commemorated the event.

The Elizabeth Islands were named by Gosnold in honor of the "Virgin Queen," and he also gave Cape Cod its name. While he explored the shore, his crew busied themselves catching fish and when he returned to the ship he found it so "pestered with codfish" that he ordered them thrown overboard and dubbed the land "Cape Cod," a name which has clung. Gosnold also named the Vineyard. Brereton was the historian of his expedition, and he has recorded that there was "such an incredible store of vines, as well in the woodie parts of the island, that we could not goe for treading upon them." Gosnold stayed some months but when he returned to England the Cuttyhunk settlers went with him, fearing to remain with the Indians. Gosnold carried back a valuable cargo,—furs and sassafras root,—but it was confiscated on his arrival in England by Sir Walter Raleigh who claimed that the Vineyard was included in his grants.

In 1641 the island was permanently settled. It was then bought, together with Nantucket and the Elizabeth Islands, by Thomas Mayhew, an Englishman, who had first settled in Watertown. Mayhew acquired his grants through Lord Stirling and Sir Ferdinando Gorges, and paid 200 pounds for his lands. Later he sold Nantucket for 30 pounds and two beaver hats, one for himself and one for his wife. I should hate to make any invidious comparisons as to the relative merits of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, but perhaps this shows Thomas Mayhew's opinion.

Governor Mayhew had received a life tenure of his lands and, as he lived to be very old, his rule became somewhat arbitrary. Eventually some of the settlers rose in what was known as the "Dutch Rebellion." The Governor was successful, however, in quelling this insubordination and some of the rebels were banished from the island. It is amusing now to be told that a well known Boston family is descended from one of these exiles.

From the first, Governor Mayhew was just in his treatment of the Indians, insisting that the white settlers pay them for all land. Deeds still exist preserving to the

Indians their proportionate rights in the dead whales cast on the beaches, even though the Indians had sold their shore property. Because of this fair treatment there was never an Indian uprising, the island being guarded even through the Indian Wars by the praying Indians who had been converted to Christianity by the Governor's son, Thomas Mayhew, the missionary. He was the first to work among the Indians, his labors antedating those of the more famous apostle, John Eliot, by some three or four years. Hiacoomes, an Indian of humble origin, was the first convert, and somewhat slow to conversion. He asked the missionary how many Gods he worshipped and when he learned but one, he numbered his own divinities and demands, "Why should I give up my 37 Gods to worship your one?" Eventually his mathematical doubts were overcome, however, and he became a Christian. The others did not follow his example immediately but an epidemic which occurred the next year hastened the work of conversion. It is told in the quaint language of an old record:

"But that which especially favoured the progress of religion among them was a universal sickness, wherewith they were visited the following year (1645) wherein it was observed by the heathen Indians themselves that those who hearkened to Mr. Mayhew's pious Instructions did not taste so deeply of it, and Hiacoomes and his family in a manner nothing at all. This put the Natives upon serious Consideration about this matter, being much affected that he who had professed the Christian religion should receive more Blessings than they."

Coming now to its physical aspect, Martha's Vineyard is the largest island off the coast of New England. It is about $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide by $19\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and contains about 100 square miles. Roughly, it is divided into three parts: first, the belt of hills stretching on the north from Tashmoo to Menemsha, a mile to a mile and a half in width; second, the great plain leading from the foot of these hills eastward and southward to the sea; and third, the Gay Head plateau, a rugged and rocky peninsula at the western end of the island.

There are, of course, charming walks to be taken from Edgartown and Oak Bluffs, but for a tour of the island Vineyard Haven has always been my starting point. Leaving its pleasant old streets, a short walk through the woods brings one to Tashmoo Pond. Tashmoo's eastern shore is plentifully sprinkled with bungalows but the western bank is still delightfully free from habitations and a woody path near the water brings one

to the Sound with the herring creek and the quaint huts of the fishermen. Here one may swing back to the east along the bluffs of West Chop to Vineyard Haven, or Holme's Hole, as it was called in the old days, whose waters have many historic associations.. It was here, during the Revolution, that Major General Grey of the British forces appeared with a fleet of 83 vessels and, descending on the island, demanded that 10,000 sheep and 300 head of cattle be delivered to him within three days.

Both during the Revolution and the War of 1812 the Vineyard was dangerously exposed. Many of the islanders had enlisted in the Continental Army but the forces of the army were too weak to maintain a strong garrison on the island. Consequently the Vineyarders were subject to frequent raids. Major General Grey's raid was so thorough that he left the islanders facing winter in danger of starvation. Then occurred what was known as the Miracle of the Fishes. The people awoke one morning after a blinding snow storm to find the harbors frozen. Imprisoned in the ice were thousands of bass and other fish which, fleeing to the warmer inland waters, had been caught as the waters froze. Salt was a scarcity on the island due to the destruction of two salt works by the British raiding party, but enough was found to cure the fish, which played an important part in the winter's food supply.

From Tashmoo Pond the tour of the island takes one southwest, past several delightful summer residences, and then, by bluff and beach, to Makoniky. Many years ago a large hotel was built at Makoniky. It failed to achieve success but for a number of years was operated as a summer recreation centre by the Y. W. C. A. Makoniky was also the site of an old kiln whence bricks were shipped to the mainland, but my most vivid recollection of that particular section is of enormous, sweet blackberries growing bountifully along the green bluffs.

The rise of the bluffs at West Chop is not great,—about 50 feet above sea level,—but as one tramps westerly the hills increase in height until they reach their maximum in the 311 feet of Peaked and Prospect hills. The character of the beaches changes radically, too, from the flat, sandy shores of Edgartown, Oak Bluffs and Vineyard Haven. The shore is rocky, strewn with large boulders which grow more massive towards the west.

Swinging inland from the bluffs a short detour brings one to Indian Hill. This is not, as so many summer visitors think, the highest point of land on the island. But

there is a beautiful view from its summit and it is readily accessible by automobile, a combination which makes it among the most popular places on the island. On a clear day the view is lovely. Looking across Vineyard Sound, the chain of the Elizabeth Islands, and Buzzards Bay, distance blends to charming outlines the tall chimneys of New Bedford and Fall River; to the east, beyond the Great Plain, is Edgartown with the cliffs of Chappaquidick shining golden in the sun, while to the south the Great Plain stretches seaward, and to the west are the lovely rolling hills of Chilmark. A woody road brings one to the old Indian Chapel. This section is known as Christiantown and was part of the land set aside by Governor Mayhew for the Praying Indians. Near the little chapel headstones still mark their graves, and a bronze tablet placed by the D. A. R. recites the history of the locality.

Turning shoreward again the tramper picks his way along the rock-strewn beach with Lambert's Cove as a first night's objective. One could, of course, walk from Edgartown to Gay Head in a day, but on our tramps of the island we have never held to direct routes but have zigzagged back and forth across country, doing perhaps 12 to 15 miles a day, getting breakfast and supper with our overnight lodging, and loitering long enough over the noonday meal to build a fire, cook a bit, and "loaf and invite our souls." We have carried our "dunnage" in knapsacks, but cooking utensils and edibles divided among three or four of a party do not make a burdensome addition to the few toilet necessities of so short a trip.

Leaving the attractive little ponds of Lambert's Cove in early morning and turning to the beach again, you are almost sure to be invited by some friendly fisherman to sail to Menemsha or Gay Head, and when you tell him you really want to walk—enticing as is his invitation to sail—he may throw a pitying glance in your direction as if he feared you might be a trifle crazy.

The north shore keeps true to its rocky type, the tide swirling against enormous boulders and the beach strewn with drift wood aplenty for a noonday cooking fire or an exhilarating bonfire. Deserting the beach to clamber up the bluff and strike inland, one comes to a section of the island which is fascinating to the geologist, the Chilmark hills, dotted with countless massive blocks of granite and syenite.

The late Professor Shaler of Harvard owned an extensive and beautiful estate in this part of the island, known as the Seven Gates Farm, and he has written a great deal concerning the geology of Martha's Vineyard and its environs. Both the Vineyard and Nantucket are part of that fringe of lowland composed of glacial drift which stretches from New York to Cape Cod, the eastern end having a double belt of which the Elizabeth Islands and Cape Cod compose the inner line, while No Man's Land, Martha's Vineyard, Muskeget, Tuckernuck and Nantucket comprise the outer line. The glacial drift of which the Vineyard is composed shows four features: the ground moraine or till left by the melting of the ice floe, of which Gay Head is the example; the frontal moraine deposits pushed before the face of the ice floe; the kame or comb-like deposits brought by sub-glacial streams, and terrace deposits formed by tidal action. The hills stretching from West Chop to Menemsha which were pushed up by the face of the ice floe are strewn with detrital deposit, Professor Shaler stating that the deposit in this belt is greater than any of a similar nature in New England, estimating it to be one half a cubic mile or a mass as large as Monadnock Mountain. The kames are composed of detrital material showing irregular depressions or valleys caused by the swift flow of sub-glacial streams cutting through them. This formation is found on the shores of the Lagoon and Tashmoo pond and is also plainly seen on Chappaquiddick. The Great Plain which slopes gently to the sea from the Chilmark hills composes the terrace drift, a formation, according to Professor Shaler, better shown here than in any other part of New England. Gay Head, which is the example of the ground moraine deposit, is a plateau about ten feet in depth resting upon a foundation of tertiary clay. This, as well as the Chilmark hills, is a region of infinite interest to the geologist as it abounds in many rare varieties of rock and fossils.

Inland one touches the little country villages—North Tisbury and West Tisbury, with their charming brooks, little waterfalls and ponds, woods where there are beech and locust and sassafras—that precious sassafras of Gosnold's first cargo! One could imagine oneself in New Hampshire, far from marine vistas and rocky shores, and those who have eaten the delicious summer vegetables of Vineyard farms know that New Hampshire offers nothing more delectable.

From Tisbury there are three roads westward. The South Road is the state road and consequently best known to the summer visitor. But the North Road and the Middle Road, though bad from the motorist's point of view, are doubly alluring to the trumper. Their beautiful views charm constantly. I have always liked to zigzag through the region adjacent to the Middle Road to Tea Lane. Tea Lane, also, has its revolutionary flavor. While most patriotic Vineyarders emulated the example of their brethren of the Boston Tea Party and flung their tea into the harbor or burned it at the base of the Liberty Pole, one family lived on this lane who were suspected of enjoying the forbidden beverage throughout the war. Their house was raided by indignant neighbors but no evidence was found. Not until long after the war was the secret hiding place of the precious tea learned to have been in the loft of the barn.

Every variety of wild flower known to the Vineyard is said to grow on Tea Lane, and, as over 700 varieties of plant life have been listed among the Vineyard flora, it is a paradise to the botanist.

The architect of our party fell in love with a stately old mansion which stood, unoccupied, half way down Tea Lane. She thrilled to its simple dignity, its charming old doorway and small-paned windows. The front door was hospitably unlocked and we entered to find a delightful old-fashioned scenical wall paper on the hallway. We wandered through its generous old rooms, in imagination sat before blazing fires on wide-spread hearthstones, while the architect, gazing rapturously at neglected terrace and long unpruned apple trees, wrought a picture of well trimmed lawns, many-colored old fashioned gardens, pink hollyhocks nodding against grey stone walls, with rolling hills for background and the sweet tang of sea air everywhere. Under the spell of her enthusiasm, we almost set forth to search out the neglectful owner, with the avowed purpose of taking possession immediately of a splendid old homestead so pathetically left to decay, while its every shingle cried out for some one to love and restore and bring back the beauty which must once have been its pride.

An architect or, in fact, any one who loves the simple lines of old houses, finds constant joys in tramping the Vineyard. Perhaps it is an old wooden fence, unusual but delightful in design, perhaps it is just the dignity of a well proportioned old dwelling, or it may be the charm

of a beautiful old doorway. The towns abound in these, as do many of the more isolated houses scattered in the western part of the island.

Tea Lane ends at the North Road, not far from the road which winds by Howland's Brook shoreward to the old Paint Mill. The old Paint Mill is one of the most picturesque places on the island. It is now part of the Eustis estate known as "Hollyholm," so called because of its many holly trees. The road to the mill is through woods close to the tumbling brook whose, high, flat rocks offer an ideal lunching place on a hot summer's day. The old house, with its treasures of European travel and Colonial times, is as picturesque as the mill. I once asked the present owner about the age of the house, and Mr. Eustis stated it was 245 years old "but," he admitted apologetically, "the new addition is only 150 years old."

The old mill, where in earlier days the colored clays were ground into paint, is now a well-filled dove-cot, with scores of pigeons perched upon its ridgepole.

Howland's Brook widens into a charming little lake before rippling into the Sound, and one then follows the rocky shore again where much wreckage and the dry hulls of forsaken fishing boats testify to rough seas. The bluffs in places show traces of white clay, vividly contrasting against the green of shrubs and grass, an earnest of the more gorgeous coloring to come. A gentleman who spent the summers of his boyhood on the Vineyard once told me that in former years a certain manufacturer of candy was wont to ship to the mainland great quantities of this white clay which he was in the habit of selling as nougat! Needless to say, this was before the passage of the Pure Food Laws but my informant solemnly assured me that in his boyhood he chewed the clay many a time.

In the distance are Peaked and Prospect Hills, the highest points of land on the island, and from either one of these summits there is a magnificent view. It is a pity that few know these lovely hills. The North Road is a sandy, badly rutted road which frightens the average motorist and the peaks of the hills are reached only after a scramble across fields, over walls and through prickling underbrush. But the view from either one of them is well worth the effort. On a clear day, the whole eastern end of the island with No Man's Land and the Elizabeth Islands stretches out, a glorious panorama. A narrow neck of land between Menemsha Bight and Squibnocket connects the peninsula of Gay Head with the main part

of the island. Here, it is said, the Indians once entrenched themselves in an effort to preserve their reservation from the encroachments of white settlers who had grown greedy for land after the waning of Governor Mayhew's influence. One would go far to find a lovelier view,—rolling hills, woodlands, blue sea foaming on white beaches, and the broad sweep of the Sound encircling all.

Swinging down from the hill tops and back to the North Road, one follows its sandy ruts into Menemsha Creek. It is a picturesque approach and it is a picturesque village, grey wharves and fish houses lining one side of the creek, fishing boats anchored alongside, and the fascinating disorder of fishing craft paraphernalia—nets, pots, lines—everywhere. Naturally artists love the spot and seek to catch its charm on their canvasses. In our earlier tramping days there was a famous bakery at Menemsha Creek and we used to talk of its pies and doughnuts, long before and long after our descent upon the village. Now, alas, the pies and doughnuts are no more and we content ourselves with lobsters.

Menemsha Bight makes an excellent overnight stopping place, and, if one can spare the time, is a splendid headquarters for a longer stay. The wharves are a source of unfailing interest and the walks are delightful.

From Menemsha one may cut directly south across the island and follow round to Gay Head from that direction, or one may continue along the north shore. For this latter route one ferries across the creek and takes the long beach walk which is somewhat fatiguing but which rewards with the quaintness of the little fishing village of the Indians called Lobsterville. Lobsters cooked on the beach readily make one forget the clinging sand which sucked at ankles and made feet drag. Then on, with a fresh vigor, to the cliffs. The Gay Head plateau is in places rough and rugged, without the charm of the Chilmark hills. There are, however, spots where the cardinal flower grows, and the nearing vision of the cliffs spurs lagging feet.

Gosnold named these cliffs Dover Cliffs in honor of the famous cliffs of his native land. The Dover cliffs, however, are white and, as Professor Shaler has pointed out, these cliffs are much more similar to the colored cliffs of Alum Bay on the Isle of Wight. They are gorgeous in coloring—purest white, intense black, green, red, yellow and brown. "Gay" Head is, indeed, a proper appell-

ation. To see the cliffs on a clear day with sunlight intensifying their colors and the blue sea at their base presents a riot of color not soon to be forgotten.

Professor Shaler considered that Gay Head showed "by far the most striking geological features on our eastern shore. These beds," he said, "contain a greater variety of fossils than can be obtained in any other part of the coast region of New England." Several years ago the cliffs began to smoke and scientists from all parts of the country came to watch the phenomenon. But the non-scientific persons can find as great delight in its beauties. One should walk about the base of the cliffs and see them from the water to appreciate their loveliness to the fullest extent.

Gay Head was long an Indian reservation although there are, of course, no pure bred Indians now living there, as there has been much intermarriage with other races.

Fifteen or twenty years ago one could not visit Gay Head without hearing constantly of the wreck of the steamship "City of Columbus." It was the great drama in the lives of the Indians and all things, both before and after, were reckoned in reference to that tragedy. The steamer was wrecked off the Devil's Bridge on a clear moonlight night in January, 1884, and 125 lives were lost. The Indians did heroic work in rescuing the survivors and in many a little house now hangs a government medal given to commemorate their bravery. Gay Head also has the distinction of having sent to the Great War a larger percentage of its men, in proportion to its population, than any other town in Massachusetts, and this fact is fittingly recalled by a bronze tablet dedicated by the late Governor McCall.

A most enjoyable addition to a tramping trip is a sail across the Sound from Gay Head to Cuttyhunk and No Man's Land. A monument erected in 1902 now marks the site of Gosnold's first settlement of white men on Cuttyhunk, and the island well merits a tramp of several hours.

An additional charm hovers about Cuttyhunk. This is no less than the intriguing suggestion that Cuttyhunk may be the island described by Shakspeare in "The Tempest." At first blush this seems a wild statement, but Mr. Marshall Shepard, in a most interesting paper read before the Martha's Vineyard Historical Society in 1917, sets forth the evidence convincingly. Edward

Everett Hale, in 1902, first made the suggestion. Gosnold's patron was the Earl of Southampton, who likewise was Shakspeare's patron, and it is thought that the poet lived in his house as a member of his staff. What more likely than that Gosnold, returning from his adventures, should come, together with his historian, Brereton, and others of the explorers, to pour forth vivid accounts of the new lands he had seen, and that Shakspeare, listening, should find the tale fascinating? Shakspeare sets the scene of Prospero's island as the "vex'd Bermuthes," but nowhere in the play is there mention of plants or fruits of tropical growth. Instead are descriptions similar to words and phrases used by Brereton in his history. The *Tempest*, it is thought, was published between 1605 and 1610, just after Gosnold had returned and Brereton had written his account of their explorations. The idea is developed most alluringly in Mr. Shepard's article, and it gives an additional thrill to imagine, as Edward Everett Hale suggested, that Miranda may, after all, have been a Massachusetts girl.

No Man's Land, which also may be visited in a day's sail, deserves the name which Gosnold gave. Some years ago Joshua Crane bought the island as a hunting preserve. On the occasion of my last visit, he was building a breakwater in the effort to make a harbor. There was no natural harbor and in former times the fishermen used oxen to haul their boats up little runways each night. It is said that No Man's Land, visited by Gosnold before he touched the Vineyard, was first given the name of Vineyard, but its later title of No Man's Land seems far more appropriate.

Tramping on from Gay Head, there are on the southern shore some very beautiful sand dunes, not, of course, so extensive in area as the famous dunes of Ipswich, but equally lovely and fantastic in shape. Few people know this section as it is difficult of access, but its fine views compensate for discomfort. Cutting through the underbrush is attended by its troubles, and one recalls poignantly Brereton's description, "the vines were so thick that we could hardly goe for treading upon them." I remember one occasion when a member of our party climbed a tree in despair to discover if there was ever to be an end to the seemingly interminable horsebriar which tangled and impeded every step.

Farther along are Squibnocket Pond and Stonewall Beach. Here the shore is thickly strewn with rocks although the massive boulders of the north shore are not found. Next come the beautiful Wesquabsque and Nash-

aquitsa cliffs. These cliffs have not the brilliant coloring of Gay Head but their bold outlines are splendid, and it is a pity that so few visitors to the Vineyard know them. The beach at their base is marvelously firm and white, looking like marble from the heights above. This section is part of an estate known as Windy Gates, once owned by Mr. Sanford, Editor of The New York Journal of Commerce, and later owned by Senator Butler. One wishes that the cliffs were accessible to the public and that more people might enjoy that wonderful coast view with its bold promontories jutting out to the restless sea.

Professor Whiting believed that this part of the island is undergoing constant erosion. His work on the Coast Survey covered forty years and he estimated that during that period the cliffs at Nashaquitsa had receded over 220 feet, being gradually washed away by sea action. The entire southern contour of the island has changed. What are now great ponds were once inlets or bays stretching far inland, forming a most irregular shore line. Now the action of the ocean has built up a sea wall. Some of the smallest ponds have, in fact, been entirely obliterated. I remember my astonishment on a canoe trip taken long ago through the ponds on the south of the island. Our contour map assured us there was a chain of small ponds at a certain place. We had counted confidently on paddling across them and avoiding a carry. But ponds there were none and carry there most assuredly was, which was taken in wrath and disgust at our supposedly inaccurate map. Long after I learned that those ponds had existed at the time of the making of the map but that the action of the sea was responsible for their disappearance, the sea dash washing away the sand of the beach and carrying it inland some 500 or 600 feet and completely obliterating the ponds.

From the Nashaquitsa cliffs there is a beautiful view eastward of the curving beach line with the ponds shining like jewels in their setting of moors. From this point on, the ideal way and, in fact, almost the only way of seeing the south shore, is by canoe. The sandy banks which enclose the ponds are at places broken through by the action of the tide and so swift and broad a current rushes through that one could not ford the opening. To walk the length of the south beach is thus impossible and to follow the banks of the ponds would be too arduous. But a canoe trip through these ponds is most alluring. Leaving Edgartown one can paddle down Katama Bay, up the mile of the Herring Creek—having the tide with you if possible!—strike across Edgartown Great Pond,

Oyster Pond and into West Tisbury Great Pond. There are carries, of course, but one can paddle nearly the length of the island.

The South Shore is one of the few virgin tracts of land remaining as a haven for game and other birds. For miles there are no habitations, only an occasional shooting blind or hunting camp suggesting the visitations of mankind. This lonely southern shore has long had its flavor of romance. In olden days tales were told of pirates who came at midnight to bury their ill-gotten treasure on its lonely shores; during the Great War one heard stories as to its being a secret base for German submarines and of strange lights flashed at night; more recently one sees mysterious vessels hovering beyond the three-mile limit, and listens to tales of daring rum-runners. So long as there are long stretches of sea and sky and sand, undomesticated by summer cottage and luxurious hotel, there will always be mystery and romance in this mating of the elements. Only the house of the Flynns at Pohogonot breaks the long miles of uninhabited region and in the days when the children of that family were small and a racing silhouette of horse and child flashed unexpectedly across the sands the picture but added to the sense of adventure with which one paddled along these deserted dunes.

This region is a wonderful haven for birds. The island is of course the only place where the heath hen is known to survive. This much advertised bird, the pinated grouse or heath hen, was in colonial times so bountiful in New England that apprentices sometimes included in their articles a stipulation that heath hen should not be served them more than twice a week. Now, despite persevering efforts to save them, the species is almost extinct. For some years there has been a state reservation on the island, and every effort has been made to protect and propagate this vanishing bird. Frequent forest fires are thought to have killed the mothers as they sat upon the nests, and cats, hen hawks and rats are among their known enemies. Professor Gross, of Bowdoin College, one of the country's foremost ornithologists, has spent much time on the island studying the heath hen, and he is pessimistic as to its future. In 1923 after long search he could trace only three females and he is fearful that the entire species may be wiped out.

The heath hen is famous for the curious love dance of the male during the mating season. At dawn he goes through his unique performance, the orange bag at his

throat swelling and a strange drumming sound being emitted. Many students of nature have come long distances in March or April to spend a night in the blind erected on the drumming field to see this unusual dance.

The efforts to preserve these birds cover a long stretch of years. As early as 1824 the voters of West Tisbury sponsored a bill in the state legislature looking toward that end but, through an amusing typographical error, the bill was entitled "An Act to Preserve the Heathen of Martha's Vineyard."

The Gulf Stream is thought to influence the waters of the south shore and it is said that several times during the last thirty years the golden mullet, a delicate fish rarely found north of the Carolinas, has been caught off shore. Both still water and surf bathing are to be had here,—a warm, quiet bath in the tepid waters of the ponds, or, scooting across the narrow strip of dunes, a stimulating plunge into the surf. But there is always a strong undertow on this south shore and even the strong swimmer needs go warily.

Tramping along the old West Tisbury road one comes to the Place on the Wayside where Thomas Mayhew, the missionary, bade farewell to the Indians before his departure for England. He had worked zealously among them and was greatly beloved. It is related that Hiacoomes, the first Indian convert, once prepared a great feast in his honor and when Mayhew praised the venison and eels, the Indian replied, "Him no venison, him my best dog; him no eel, him big fat snake."

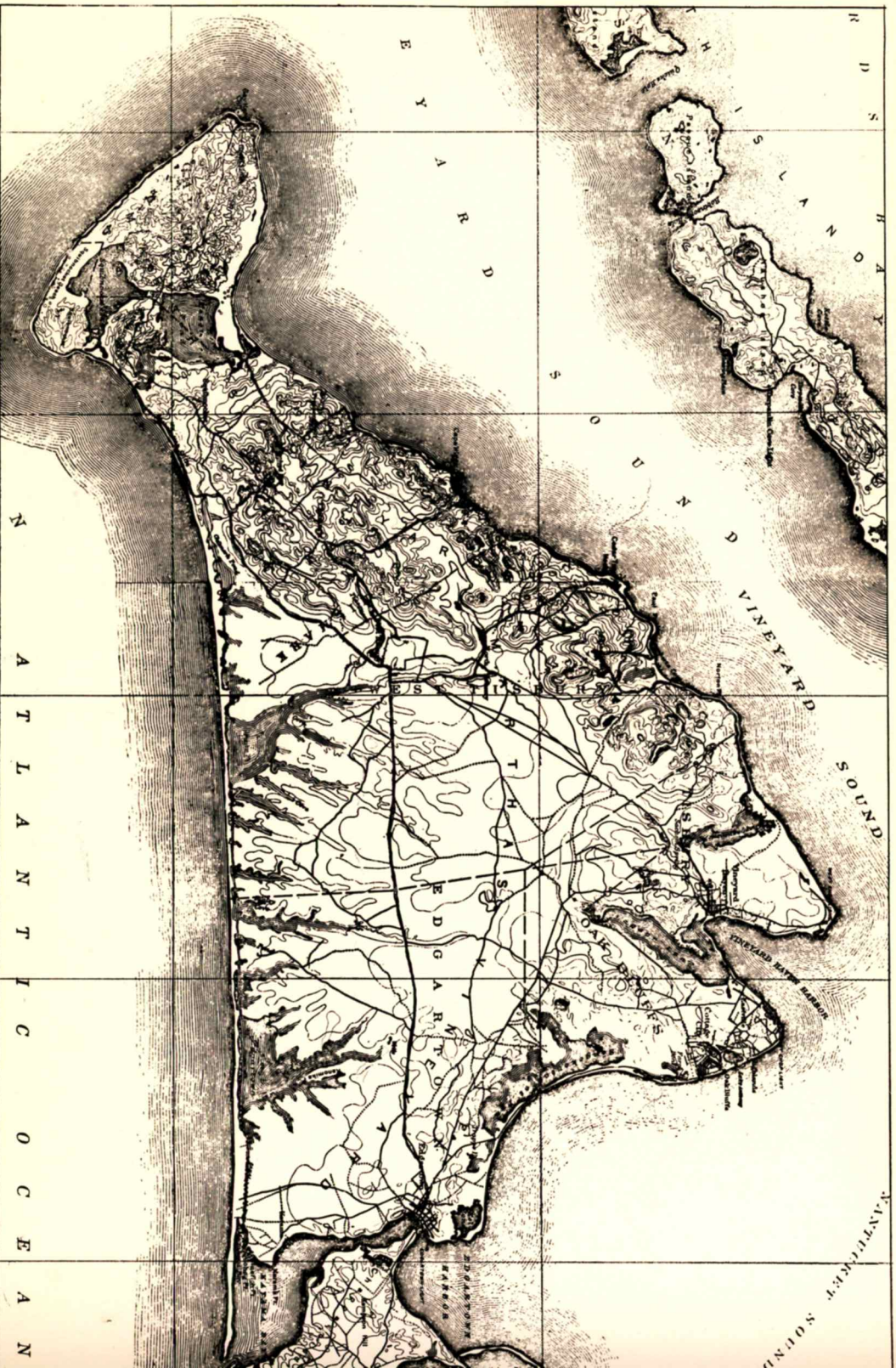
Mayhew planned to visit England to raise funds for his mission and, having held a farewell service at Gay Head, was followed eastward as he returned to Edgartown whence he was to embark. At this spot on the old mill path his converts bade farewell to him, and Hiacoomes picking up a stone, placed it on the ground, saying that never again would he pass that spot without placing a stone there in memory of Mr. Mayhew. "Not in my memory but in that of my Master," replied the missionary. He set sail for England in 1657 but his vessel was lost, and he became the first of many brave Vineyarders to perish at sea. For generations the Indians carried on the rite instituted by Hiacoomes, placing a stone on the site of the farewell ceremony until a great cairn was raised. Mr. H. Franklin Norton, in his entertaining book on the Vineyard, relates that in his childhood he saw an Indian servant of his family place a stone there—a custom which persisted for over 200 years. The cairn has

now been stripped by insatiable sightseers but a bronze tablet suitably inscribed by the D. A. R. marks the site, and the boulder itself was brought by the Indians of Gay Head to commemorate the first missionary to their race.

A canoe trip through the ponds can be broken by a night spent on the dunes where drift wood in abundance provides an ample fire but, if a strong southwest wind happens to be blowing or if a drizzling fog drifts in, this may turn out to be one of the experiences which it is more fun to tell about later than to undergo at the time.

Paddling northward the length of the ponds one comes to many beautiful coves, one of the most charming being Wintucket Cove on Edgartown Great Pond. To slip across these waters at sunset, hearing a wonderful concert and seeing the birds flit across the bow of one's canoe, is an experience not soon to be forgotten.

In this little talk I have not touched at all upon the towns on the Vineyard. Edgartown is my own particular beloved spot and he who desires ideal bathing, splendid sailing and who loves an unspoiled, old fashioned village with shady lanes, alluring doorways and charming houses, will go far before finding a village so lovely. Oak Bluffs has its own devotees, while Vineyard Haven and West Chop offer much that is delightful both to the nature lover and the seeker of old fashioned charm. Inland the villages of Tisbury and Chilmark offer countryside joys. From east to west and north to south, every mile of the Vineyard brims with beauty, and the summer sojourner, whether he dwell quietly in village or tramp far afield, will find heart and mind stored full with precious memories of the loveliness of Martha's Vineyard.



Map of the Island of Martha's Vineyard showing the tramway and canoeing routes taken by Miss Blanche I. Coall

