

MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
A SHORT HISTORY AND GUIDE



# MARTHA'S VINEYARD

A Short History

by

VARIOUS HANDS

together with

## A GUIDE

to points of interest

*with maps and pictures*

Eleanor R. Mayhew, Editor



Dukes County Historical Society, Inc.  
Edgartown                      Massachusetts

1956

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## FOREWORD

This book has been compiled in answer to a constant demand for a short guide to Martha's Vineyard, which should also include characteristic aspects of the Island's unique and picturesque history. *Martha's Vineyard: Summer Resort* by Henry Beetle Hough, *Tales and Trails of Martha's Vineyard* by Joseph Chase Allen, and *Martha's Vineyard: Historical, Legendary and Scenic* by H. Franklin Norton cover the ground to a considerable extent, but are, unfortunately, out of print and hard to get. Banks' extensive history of the Island, also out of print, was published in three quarto volumes and cannot easily be carried in the pocket.

The section of the book containing the guide gives routes and mileages, and mentions points of interest with brief comments. The historical sections have been contributed by various authors, to whom the Historical Society is deeply indebted for their laborious and thorough research. Like all islands, Martha's Vineyard has and always has had an individuality of its own, which is felt by all visitors, and which brings many of them back year after year. Inevitably, the Island runs the awful risk of being called "quaint" — an epithet wryly accepted by the residents who are calmly certain that present quaintness is the shadow of past effort.

Both past effort and present charm are at least touched upon in this book. It is not a definitive history, but, as far as it goes, it is as pleasing and as accurate as the contributors can make it. Interest shown by many Vineyarders has been widespread and most helpful and encouraging to those who worked on the book. It has enabled them to gather much material at first hand from survivors of a former day, instead of being compelled to rely solely on records and tradition. The book represents a great deal of work, much of it done by Mrs. Benjamin C. Mayhew, Secretary of the Historical Society, who conceived the idea, and carried through the editing and organization. The Dukes County Historical Society offers it with pride, in the hope that visitors will find in it added reason for the warm feeling which they already have for an isolated place where men have lived and labored for more than three hundred years.

Gerald Chittenden, President  
Dukes County Historical Society

March 10, 1956

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Detailed references to published authorities do not seem appropriate in a book of this scope. However, it is only fitting and proper that credit be given to individuals who have given of their time and energy to make the guidebook section of this work factual as well as interesting. Special tribute is due H. Franklin Norton, Curator of the Historical Society, and to Benjamin C. Mayhew, without whose assistance, cooperation and phenomenal memories little could have been accomplished. Thanks are also due Donald L. Poole for sharing material on Vineyard whaling captains of whom he has made a study. Others who have contributed items of historical importance include, by towns: Edgartown, Henry Beetle Hough; Oak Bluffs, the late Warner F. Gookin, George H. Chase; Vineyard Haven, Miss Nina Eldridge, Herbert R. Norton; West Tisbury, Miss Addie Weeks, Mrs. George B. Martin, Mrs. Horace Athearn; Chilmark, the late Mrs. Henry E. Cottle, F. Roger Allen; Gay Head, Mrs. Napoleon B. Madison, Mrs. Charles W. Vanderhoop; Chappaquiddick, Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Marshall, Miss Julie Chittenden. It is impossible to mention the names of everyone called by phone or accosted on a street corner for specific family or other data, but to these, collectively, a special word of gratitude. The maps were drawn especially and contributed by Will Huntington, the Vineyard cartographer.

Eleanor Ransom Mayhew, Editor



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PART I  
HISTORY

CHAPTER I

THE VINEYARD BEFORE 1642

GEOLOGY

by Blanche I. Goell  
reprint

The late Professor Shaler of Harvard 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 Noman'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 of 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.

from Tramping on Martha's Vineyard

D. C. H. S. publ. Vol. I, No. 3, 1925

## THE VIKINGS

by Clifford R. Davis

What is older in American history than Martha's Vineyard? Possibly, yes, probably, it is the first land on this continent visited by civilized men. Its discovery is a disputable subject.

Therein is a suggested mystery with an historic background: a delightful field for romantic speculation — study. The end of this study could be plausible proof that previous interpretations of background material are wrong, that you have discovered something new. Couple this thought with the subject "The Discovery of America" and you have a great wealth of material to work with. You, being interested, have a wonderful chance to see what you can produce in this amusing field with what you find at Martha's Vineyard.

Suppose you take Edward F. Gray's book, Leif Eriksson, Discoverer of America, to the top of a hill in Chilmark, find a cozy spot on the south side of a great boulder, sink down on a carpet of moss, look out across an expanse of moors, dunes and marshes to the sea. Out there, to the southwest, is Noman's Land. Did the Norsemen live there, or here, 950 years ago? Could this, within a couple of miles of where you are, be the place, until now unidentified, where they made winter quarters? Does available information, offered in evidence fit itself into the picture you imagine? All discovery starts with a question.

Of course, to a scientist, this is "putting the cart before the horse." However, YOU are on a search for pleasure. You are here to enjoy Martha's Vineyard. You have a gift of poetic license fostered by this romantic environment.

There have been many versions written of the Norse Voyages to America, all of them interpretations of Vinland Sagas. The first is dated 1705, by Thormod Torfaeus; and they are still being written. In Gray's book you have a well conceived and executed work as reference. You will find the details and arguments he provides convincing.

Gray advances the opinion that Norsemen came to Martha's Vineyard in the year 1003. His scholarly development of the theme gives pretty solid wings to your flight in imagination. He points to Noman's Land, out there before you, as a wintering place of their choice and occupation. He shows them as sailing into Nantucket Sound from the north and east, as coming to a place where there was a "cape projecting northward from the land" (p. 96). Compare this phrase with line 4 ff., page 42, "They . . . sailed into a certain sound, which lay between the island and a cape, which jutted out from the land on the north, and they stood in westering past the cape". Did the cape project from the land toward the north, or did it project from the land ON the north toward the south?

Gray indicates the cape as West Chop, the Norsemen's place of settlement as Menemsha Pond shores. YOU, on a Chilmark hillside are looking off to the south'ard. West Chop and Menemsha are, therefore, behind you. That certainly will not do for this pondering of voyages of discovery. So let's try this:—

Suppose you are LEIF. You are sailing into strange waters. You have left Nauset Island (now disappeared) and are roving south and west in a comparatively small ship of shallow draught. You know there is land to starboard — Cape Cod — and presently you sight a new, unknown land ahead. Cruising along you close in on the land to have as good a look as you dare. Could that be Nantucket? Look at your map, or preferably a sailing chart of the area, or still better, both. It is Nantucket! You follow the shoreline past Maddaket, then Tuckernuck Island, Muskeget and other shoals. Then you see a cape. Could it be Cape Pogue?

According to Gray, Leif passed the cape in a westerly direction and finally ran his ship aground at a place where it still looked a good way to open water ahead. Here the men jumped overboard and waded ashore. He does not say, however, whether they went to the north of the cape or to the south.

Interpolations often cloud the course of a story, but let's risk one here.

Nauset Island, which figures in the accounts of Gosnold's voyage of 1602, and doubtless was even more impressive in 1003, has now disappeared. Nantucket, Tuckernuck, Muskeget, Martha's Vineyard, all islands and shores in this region have been subject to similar violent changes in shapes and sizes, even positions. The space for conjecture on this basis is wide open, especially when you add this fact to your collection.

The late Mary Cleggett Vanderhoop, writing of Gay Head history and legends in 1904, stated, "on Squibnocket, before the divisions in Mittark's time (c. 1675), there was an opening in the bluff where the waters of Squibnocket Pond and the ocean met . . . it was closed about 1818." Des Cartes' map of 1780 shows Squibnocket to be a tidal pond open to the sea, and there are men today in Chilmark who recall hearing that, in their grandfathers' time, a whaling brig sailed into the pond in a fog and lay at anchor. The opening must have been conveniently wide, and fairly deep.

The point for you is that Squibnocket Pond was once navigable by way of a passage to the sea. Look at your map, and you will note a cove at the southernmost point of the pond. This is all that remains to indicate the old opening. Noman's Land is directly in the offing.

Now, back to Gray's book which places much weight on the test of the old saga that says in effect, "they went OUT



to the island", kept cattle there. There was no snow in winter. BUT, their boat and some dwelling places were in a pond, NOT on "the island", although it is said that Leif had built a house there. That phrase "they went OUT to the island" is a key to a long train of surmises if you place the anchorage for their ship in Squibnocket Pond. Although there is no evidence, the opening from this pond to the sea may well have differed little in character from the stream Gray cites as flowing out of Menemsha Pond to the north.

Again, from the other side of the picture, if the site of the main anchorage and settlement is at Menemsha, the passage "out to the island" would involve journeys around Gay Head over the treacherous stretch of water on Devil's Bridge to Noman's Land. That is, of course, unless the island and Squibnocket Point were once joined as the old Indian legends say. Either way, Squibnocket Pond would have been much handier.

The Norsemen spent more than one winter at Vinland. Is it likely that during so long a time they would have failed to make use of Squibnocket Pond which their hunters and explorers could not have missed, even if their first settlement were at Menemsha?

Another thing! In a swale near the top of a small hill overlooking Squibnocket and the sea, there is an assemblage of sizeable stones which veteran Chilmarkers call the "hog house". It has the appearance of having been created by man. The top of this structure is one stone, flat on its underside, rounded slightly on the upper. This roof-stone is about 6 feet by 6 feet by 1 foot at its thickest place. It probably weighs now more than a ton. It is supported by other smaller stones so placed as to form a small enclosure with an opening to the south. The roof is about 2½ feet from the ground level. Could this be a Norse burial place, a cromlech? It has been identified as such by a number of scholars. And, how many pigs could use it for a pen?

Gray does not mention this stonework. He does, however, go into extensive detail concerning fish, vines, birds, eggs and such which the Norse discoverers found during their stay at Vinland. All of these would be readily available to them if the site of their settlement were on the northern shore of Squibnocket Pond, where, too, they would have had protection from wintry winds.

How YOU, a romantic voyager, are to get the Norsemen from Cape Pogue to Squibnocket Pond is still as much of a problem as getting them from Menemsha to Noman's Land to tend cattle. Some facts are here and they must be disposed of in sensible fashion. Further disclosure is possible. If you find joy in pondering a question based on records, this is one of several which make Martha's Vineyard a most provocative area historically — the first land, probably, on the

American continent to be discovered and inhabited by people of European origin.

## THE INDIANS AND THE EXPLORERS

by E. Gale Huntington

When the first white men came to Martha's Vineyard they found an unusually large and stable Indian population. The number of Indians on the Island at that time is estimated at three thousand. Two generations earlier the population of the Island may have been twice that number, for just before the coming of the Pilgrims a terrible epidemic decimated the New England Indians. Almost certainly it was small pox, and just as certainly it must have been transmitted to the Indians by the crew of some unknown ship trading on the coast.

Such a large population meant a stable and sure economy, and that is exactly what the Vineyard Indians had. Its bases were fishing and farming. Of course there was hunting, too. But fishing was more important.

With the exception of small patches of tobacco which the men tended, the whole burden of the agriculture fell on the shoulders of the women and girls. And they did a good job of it. Some of the fields were astonishingly large, covering many acres, and they were kept beautifully clean of weeds. It was intensive farming, each hill being tended almost individually.

It was not communal farming either, for each family had its own section of the cultivated area. Corn was the principal crop, but beans and squash were also planted and probably sunflowers and Jerusalem artichokes. It is rather doubtful if the Indians used any fertilizer on their fields, and that in spite of the tradition that the whites learned the trick of putting a herring or two in each hill from the Indians. It may well have been the other way around; that the whites, because of the lack of barnyard manure at first, used the very plentiful supply of herring for fertilizer and the Indians quickly saw its value.

It is certain, however, that after three or four years of cultivation, the Indians let their fields lie fallow for an equal period of time before planting them again. The fallow fields were burned over in the early spring before replanting, and in these burnt-over fields wild strawberries grew in profusion.

Corn was the basis of the diet all through the long winter months. It was carefully stored in water-proofed pits or caches. The main corn dish was chowder. This was a corn gruel to which anything and everything was added as it came to hand — fish, eels, shellfish, or meat. And there is the origin of our New England chowder, with potatoes taking the place of the original corn, and with milk as an added ingredient. The chowder pot in the wigwam was

never washed, and its contents changed flavor as new ingredients were added.

Hulled corn and dried beans were eaten together as succotash. Corn was also used as meal to make cakes. Sometimes the cakes were plain, but more often they contained dried meat or oysters, or wild strawberries and other fresh fruits as they came in season.

Corn also was eaten green when the kernels began to fill out in late summer. The Vineyard Indians probably did not have true sweetcorn — that seems to have come a little later from the Iroquois — but the fresh roasting ears of the field corn must have tasted good. They were roasted in pits over hot stones and seaweed. Clams and lobsters were often cooked with the corn, and there is the basis for the New England clam bake.

The men and boys took care of the fishing and hunting, and keeping the wigwam supplied with fish and shellfish and game was a man-sized job. Our Island Indians did not have the bark canoe. Instead, they made wooden dug-out boats of all sizes. The larger types of these boats were completely seaworthy and were often launched through the surf. They fished for anything and everything that could be taken in and about our waters, which included whales and blackfish, seals, porpoise, and sturgeon, as well as all of the common fish that abound hereabouts today. They were excellent boatmen.

The Indians lived in large, permanent villages which were always located near a good supply of fresh water, and near the shore of one or another of the great ponds, from which came such a large portion of their living. Their house was the wigwam.

The wigwam, although small — sixteen feet in diameter was the usual size — was warm and comfortable in most weather. It was beehive shaped and made of small poles planted firmly in the ground and brought together at the top where a small opening was left in the outer covering through which the smoke escaped. The outer house covering was made of skins, or slabs of bark, or carefully woven cattail mats. A weighted skin, hanging in the doorway, served as a door, and it could be held open in good weather.

The floor of the house was usually dug from a foot to three feet below the level of the outside land. That was for added warmth and protection. The floor was made comfortable with skins and furs and cattail mats. And the hearth, a small circle of stones, was the center both of the house and the home. A typical Indian family consisted of man and wife and from three to five children. There was no prohibition against polygamy, but it does not seem to have been very common.

In the summer the Indians wore little clothing; the men a breech clout and not much else except a string of beads.

The women wore a brief skirt-like garment and nothing else at all. And the children went naked and enjoyed a beautiful and complete freedom. In the colder months two different sorts of clothing were worn by all members of the family. One was a fur robe that was worn blanket-fashion, mainly in and about the village. The other type of garment was carefully tailored of tanned deer hide and consisted of a long decorated shirt and leggings. This latter ensemble, together with the fur robe, was protection against almost any kind of weather.

Archæological evidence indicates that deer as well as bear were plentiful on the Island. They were hunted only as needed, and until the coming of gunpowder and steel traps they survived well enough. Foxes and raccoons and skunks vanished from the Island only a generation or two ago.

Also from archæological evidence we know a good deal about the tools and weapons that the Indians made. Quartz and felsite were the principal stones used and they were found on the outer beaches and broken on the spot to see if they were of the desired quality. Some flint was brought to the Island, and also some steatite from a quarry in Rhode Island. From this latter some very fine soapstone bowls were made.

The workmanship that went into the artifacts is often beautiful. The points for arrows, spears, and lances, as well as knives and scrapers for all sorts of specialized purposes were chipped and flaked to shape which gave a sharp cutting edge without too much labor. Axe and adze heads, chisels and pestles were ground to shape and then polished. Needles, fish hooks and awls were usually made of bone.

Besides the soapstone bowls our Indians made pottery of a very fair quality. They also made baskets of various sizes and shapes, and many wooden articles from bows and tool hafts and shafts to bowls and cradle boards. Thus their technology was really fairly complex, and even before the coming of the whites, they had traveled a long way up the ladder of culture.

The Vineyard Indians were Algonquins. The Algonquins comprised one of the largest and most widely dispersed linguistic stocks of the New World. There was little confederation among any of the Algonquin people. The tribes were separated from each other almost entirely on the basis of geographical location. Neighboring tribes usually felt a vague sense of kinship for each other but this decreased as distance and variation in dialect increased.

The real political unit, in fact, one might almost say the real tribal unit, was the village. There were a number of very loosely defined coastal Algonquin groups in New England, among them the Narragansetts, Pequots, Massachusetts, and Pokanockets, but the individual village, with its surrounding



agricultural and hunting lands, always seems to have been the important thing.

The Vineyard Indians were sometimes called Wampanoags which seems to mean "Easterners." They are sometimes referred to as Pokanockets. Collectively, they may have called themselves Capoags, but that is doubtful. It is much more likely that they knew themselves only as Chappaquiddicks, or Nunpaugs, or Takemmies, or Quinnaahs, as respectively they came from one of the four big sachemships of the Island. Aquinnah was Gay Head, Takemmy was Tisbury, and Nunpaug, Edgartown or Great Harbour. An hereditary sachem or lord ruled over each of the villages of these four areas, and under each sachem there were sub sachems or sagamores.

The four hereditary sachems of the Island seemed to have owed a sort of vague allegiance to the great Massasoit of the Pokanockets and after him to his son Philip. This allegiance, however, was not strong enough to lead them to take part in the great uprising against the whites that we call King Philip's War. Each seems to have been pretty much a power unto himself.

The sachems and sagamores constituted a genuine hereditary and landed aristocracy. Besides this landed aristocracy there were two other classes of society; a "yeomanry" that had some rights and privileges, and a commonalty that had no rights at all but on sufferance. This genuinely aristocratic and almost feudal system seems to have been unique with the coastal Algonquins. Most of the North American tribes had a social structure that was much more democratic, and in some respects even communistic.

Thomas Mayhew, the great apostle to the Island Indians, says that the Indian name of the Island was Noepe. And he should have known. Some later authorities have maintained that the proper name was Capawack or Capowock, but in the light of Mayhew's dictum that seems pretty doubtful.

It is hard to try to reconstruct the religion and religious life of the Vineyard Indians because the white men considered everything connected with them to be the work of the devil. But this we do know. In their own way, the Island Indians were very religious. They believed in two great spirits, one the maker of mankind and the other the ruler of evil. And there were innumerable lesser spirits. Indeed, every object, animate and inanimate alike, had its spirit. And to the Indians those spirits were completely real.

Everyone prayed to the spirits, and everyone felt the supernatural world about him all the time. But it was the powwows or priests who were recognized as having the most influence over the spiritual world. There seems to have been some distinction between the powwows and the medicine men. But at this distance it is hard to decide exactly what

it was. Both were men of great importance and stature in the local community.

An Italian navigator named Giovanni de Verrazzano, in the employ of the king of France, sailed by the Island and may have landed here in the year 1524. He made a map of this part of the coast and what looks as though it might be the Vineyard is named Luisa. Not Luisa's Vineyard, but just Luisa. Three-quarters of a century after Verrazzano an English navigator, Bartholomew Gosnold, surely landed on the Island and gave it its present name.

In the years intervening between Verrazzano and Gosnold many European ships must have come to the Vineyard. They left no written record of their coming or stay, but they did leave a record of another kind. They must have come as traders, for in those intervening years the Indians had almost completely given up their Stone Age economy. Gradually, they acquired a store of copper and iron and brass from this trade so that now arrows were no longer tipped with stone points but instead with metal; and iron and brass pots stood over the fires in the wigwams and the women no longer made earthenware pottery or soapstone bowls. It is too bad that some of those traders did not leave us a record of their voyages.

Gosnold came to the Island in the year 1602. He made the voyage under the patronage of Sir Walter Raleigh who was convinced that there was wealth to be had from the New World. Gosnold's voyage was to lay the preparations for gathering that wealth and to build a fort and trading post that might be the nucleus for the permanent settlement of the region.

The expedition did build a fort at Cuttyhunk and they loaded their ship the *Concord* with sassafras wood and furs, but they stayed there only that one summer. Fortunately, however, there were two men on the expedition who kept a careful record of the voyage, and their two "relations" complement and corroborate each other, and it is from them that we know something of the Island and its inhabitants forty years before its permanent settlement. The two men were John Brereton and Gabriel Archer, gentlemen adventurers with the expedition.

Gosnold named the Island Martha's Vineyard, in honor both of his infant daughter and the wild grapes that he found growing here in great profusion. He also named the Elizabeth Islands, though probably not after the then aging Virgin Queen who died in the following year, but rather after some other member of his own family, presumably his sister Elizabeth.

Samuel Champlain followed Gosnold to the Vineyard on an expedition of discovery for France in 1606. He came through Nantucket Sound to the Island and named it rather doubtfully La Soupconneuse which could be translated as "the doubt-

ful one," or "doubtful Island." Which isn't very complimentary.

Captain Adrian Block, the Dutch navigator, for whom Block Island is named, came to the Island in 1614 and named it Texel because the Gay Head cliffs reminded him of a cliff at Texel off the Frisian coast of Holland.

Captain John Smith of Virginia fame, who had long been interested in New England, also made a voyage in this direction in 1614, but he only got as far as Cape Cod and then hurriedly returned to London on pressing business of one sort or another. So he probably never saw the Island. But the voyage was continued by his second in command, Captain Thomas Hunt, who very definitely did land here. He came ashore at what is probably now Edgartown and he called the Island Capawick, perhaps after the collective name for the Island Indians, but more likely from the local name for a part of Chappaquiddick called Capawack, or Capowock, or Capawog.

Captain Hunt took captive a number of Vineyard Indians whom he carried back to Europe with him to sell as slaves. He tried to sell them in Spain, but the Spaniards, with a hundred and ten years of experience behind them, knew that the Indians made very poor slaves indeed, and would not buy them, so Hunt was forced to take them home to England with him. Epenow was the most famous of those captives. He lived in England long enough to gain a good working knowledge of the language and finally, by a very neat trick on the greedy English adventurers, he managed to get back to the Island.

This is how Epenow did it. He had lived among the English long enough to know that the "Gentlemen Adventurers", and that included men of the ilk of Walter Raleigh, Ferdinando Gorges and even John Smith and Bartholomew Gosnold, were really interested in only one thing from the New World and that was wealth. The wealth that they wanted in particular was gold. And so Epenow told them that there was gold on Martha's Vineyard, great quantities of it.

The trick worked. The Earl of Southampton and Sir Ferdinando Gorges financed an expedition to Martha's Vineyard under the command of one Captain Hobson. The ship had no more than anchored in Great Harbour when Epenow made good his escape. Thereupon the ship returned to England with no gold to the "great dismay of Gorges and his collaborators."

Thomas Dermer, "a gentleman of character," visited the Island several times in the years immediately preceding the Plymouth settlement. Squanto, the friend of the Pilgrims, accompanied him on at least one of these expeditions. Dermer met Epenow here and attempted to make friends with the Great Sachems of the Island. He seems not to have been entirely successful in that endeavor, however, for on his last expedition to the New World he came ashore on the Island, and he and all the men of the landing party, except one who man-

aged to get back to the ship, lost their lives in a brush with the Vineyard Indians.

The Indians took a very dim view of this business of kidnapping, and repercussions in general were felt from it for a long time. Epenow, by the way, was probably one of the Indians who greeted the Pilgrims in English on their arrival at Plymouth, to their considerable astonishment.

It was in 1620 that the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, and ten years later the much larger Puritan settlements were made about Boston Bay. From that time on, the Vineyard was a well known place, though it was not permanently settled for still another ten years or so. By then, the name Martha's Vineyard was firmly established. Later, some brief effort was made to change it once more, this time to Martin's Vineyard, for the Catholic Saint's name, Martha, did not sit too well with some of the ancient Congregationalists who despised anything smacking, even remotely, of Popery. Most of us are happy, however, that the name has remained Martha's Vineyard rather than Noepe or Capawack or Luisa or Texel or even La Soup-conneuse.



## CHAPTER II

### MISSIONARIES AND METHODISTS

by Lloyd C. M. Hare

Only in the early history of Martha's Vineyard may one find a proprietary governor, or a succession of manorial lords or his Majesty's justices sitting on the bench in British dignity on the one day and the next day walking twenty miles through uncut forests to preach the Gospel of Christ to the aborigines in wigwam or open field.

This strange contrast of authority is the saga of the Mayhew family at Martha's Vineyard. The ancient Mayhews have been described by a modern writer as "a family pre-eminently masterful, accustomed to rule, and unaccustomed to contradiction" in temporal matters, but whose members likewise exercised a "priesthood in which they were foremost in toil and self-sacrifice, and supreme in the allegiance and devotion to those whose souls they held in charge."

Thomas Mayhew was the English colonizer of the island of Martha's Vineyard. He was bred a merchant at Southampton, England, and later settled at Watertown, Massachusetts. In 1641 he purchased the islands of Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and the Elizabeth Islands from the Earl of Stirling, for which Mayhew paid, as he wrote it, "a Some of Money."

The geography of the new world was an imaginative art in the 17th century. It may be questioned that the Earl of Stirling held a disposable title to these islands. A better title was claimed by Sir Fernando Gorges, who styled himself Lord Palatine of the Province of Maine. Gorges immediately contacted Mayhew, whereupon the cautious merchant again dug deep into his breeches and paid another "Some" to Gorges for the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

The first settlement within the bounds of Mayhew's patent was made at the eastern end of the island of Martha's Vineyard in 1642 at Great Harbour, now Edgartown, by a small band of planters under the leadership of Mayhew's only son and co-patentee, Thomas Mayhew, Jr.

The fathers of Great Harbour cleared the land, felled timber, laid out lots, built houses, tilled the soil, hunted in the woods and fished in the adjacent waters. They organized a democratic town government, built a church and a school-house, and set aside an acre for the dead on Burial Hill.

In settling the plantation at Great Harbour the Mayhews scrupulously observed Indian land titles, a policy which they

enforced upon other settlers throughout the islands and which was generally acceded to by the colonists. Conversely, it was illegal for anyone to purchase Indian rights without perfecting the English title by a deed derived from the Mayhews. The colonization of the islands by the patentees, like the "planting" of all American proprietaries, was a pretentious venture in real estate coupled with the feudal privilege of government. The purchase of Indian land titles was not accomplished in one transaction. Tracts of land were purchased in parcels from the native inhabitants over a considerable period of time.

The spiritual needs of the new colony were supplied by a church gathered at Great Harbour. Thomas Mayhew, Jr., was ordained pastor of the flock. As organizer and first minister of one of New England's early churches, the younger Mayhew is considered to be a founder of the Congregational Church in America, known upon the Vineyard as the Church of Christ. Of this first pastor we are told by an early chronicler that Thomas Mayhew, Jr., was then about twenty-one or twenty-two years of age, and had been "tutored up" in New England, by which it may be inferred that he received his education at the hands of private instructors.

The Rev. Thomas Prince, writing in 1727, adds, "He was a young Gentleman of liberal Education" and had a "Repute for piety as well as natural and acquired Gifts, having no small Degree of Knowledge in the Latin and Greek languages, and being not wholly a Stranger to the Hebrew."

His "English flock being then but small, the Sphere was not large enough for so bright a Star to move in." He observed the natives who were "*several thousands* on those Islands, perishing in utter Ignorance of the *true* GOD, and eternal Life, labouring under strange Delusions, Inchantments, and panick Fears of *Devils*, whom they most passionately worshipped."

Mayhew explains that "their False gods were many, both of things in Heaven, Earth, and Sea."

English settlers at Great Harbour were shocked to observe that Indian women indulged in the "sinful practice of painting their faces."

The Indian inhabitants were not eager to learn about the white man's God. One Indian, only, showed any interest, and he was a native whose descent "was mean," his speech slow and his countenance "not very promising." In fact, so inferior was his station in life that the sachems considered him an object scarcely worthy of their notice or regard.

The name of this unprepossessing Indian was Hiacoomes. He lived to become a prominent figure in American religious history as the first Indian convert in New England and the ordained pastor of New England's first regularly organized Indian church.

His brief biography is published in Appleton's Cyclopædia of American Biography, his name interspersed among presidents and generals and politicians; this simple son of the forest called by the poet Whittier the Forest Paul of his race.

Hiacoomes was stirred by an eager passion to learn the ways of the white man, that mighty race of beings from outer space that had come in clouds of billowing canvas across the open waters. Hiacoomes hovered upon the fringe of every concourse of Englishmen, unobtrusive and unattractive, but thirsting for knowledge. His conduct attracted the attention of the pastor of Great Harbour. The Rev. Mayhew invited Hiacoomes to his house each Sunday night, instructed him in the principles of the Christian religion, and gave him an English primer. This he carried about with him constantly, soliciting every chance Englishman he met to help him to read.

The Indians "set up a great laughter." Whenever they came upon Hiacoomes they would halloo, "Here comes the Englishman!"

A scoffer asked Hiacoomes what he would do if any of his family became sick. "Whither would you go for help? If I were in your case, there should nothing draw me from our Gods and Pawwaws." A mathematically minded critic reckoned up thirty-seven principal gods worshipped by the Indians and asked Hiacoomes, "Shall I throw away these thirty-seven gods for one?"

The Rev. Thomas Mayhew, Jr., made such progress in the education of Hiacoomes that in 1643 his conversion became an accomplished fact. With zealous energy the convert took up the labor of spreading the Gospel among his countrymen.

By 1651 the missionary, with the aid of Hiacoomes, had converted "an hundred and ninety-nine men, women and children." That winter he "fit up" a school in which to teach the Indian children to read and also "any young men that were willing to learne," whereof the Indians "were very glad." An early colonial writer estimates that the number of Indians professing Christianity eventually reached 1,600. The Vineyard mission was one of the first Protestant missions in the world of more than ephemeral existence and success.

The activities of the younger Mayhew attracted the attention of the Rev. John Eliot who about this time had begun a similar work in "the Massachusetts." Mayhew and Eliot wrote a pamphlet entitled Tears of Repentance, or a Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel among the Indians in New England. This was published in London.

English philanthropists became interested in the labors of the two missionaries. The result was the organization of "the President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England," thereafter commonly referred to as the New England Company. The commissioners of the United

Colonies in America were designated the society's agents for local oversight and for the distribution of funds raised in England. For a number of years the New England Company paid the younger Mayhew an annual salary for "his paines and labours" among the Indians.

Tragedy put an unexpected period to the work of Thomas Mayhew, Jr. In the thirty-seventh year of his life Mayhew proposed a voyage to England to settle a family estate and to give the English philanthropists a more particular account of the state of the Indians. With him he planned to take a young Indian preacher who had been brought up by him in his own house.

The missionary and his convert embarked at Boston in "the best of two ships then bound for England." A Boston contemporary writes, "shee had aboard her a very rich lading of goods, but more especially of passengers, about fifty in numbers; whereof divers of them were persons of great worth and virtue, both men and women; especially Mr. Mayhew . . ." A second contemporary adds, "Amongst many considerable passengers there went Mr. Thomas Mayhew, jun., of Martin's Vineyard, who was a precious man." The ship cleared Boston harbor and headed for old England. Neither the ship nor any of her passengers were ever heard of more.

New England mourned the death of Thomas Mayhew, Jr. The author of New England's Memorial writes "the loss of him was very great." The commissioners of the United Colonies expressed the opinion that the vacancy left by him in the missionary field "att present seemeth to be almost Irreparable." His fellow worker, the Rev. John Eliot, cried out, "The Lord has given us this amazing blow, to take away my Brother Mayhew."

The loss of the young missionary fell heaviest upon the Christian Indians. For many years after his departure "he was seldom named without Tears."

At the time of his son's death, Thomas Mayhew, senior, was approximately sixty-five years of age. The aging magistrate "could not bear to think that the Work so hopefully begun, and so far advanced by his Son, should now expire with him also." He resolved personally to continue the missionary work despite the weight of years and the burdens of government. He laid aside "all those Ceremonies and petty Forms and Distinctions that lay in the Way," and which he accounted to be nothing.

Much of the son's success among the Indians had been made possible by the wise, diplomatic and remarkable prudence of the elder Mayhew. From the first day of settlement he had labored by precept and justice to attract the Indians of their own free will to submit to the English authority. He told the Indians that by order of the Crown of England he was to govern the English who should inhabit the island,



and that his royal master was in power far above any of the Indian monarchs, but that as the king was great and powerful, so he was a lover of justice.

The patentee explained to the sachems and sagamores that religion and government were different things, and that the Indian rulers should retain their just authority over their Indian subjects even though these subjects became Christians. In this way he conceived no ill-will of the white man's religion.

As the Christian Indians increased numerically, Governor Mayhew persuaded the sachems to admit into their councils a number of "judicious" Christian converts. He was always ready to hear Indian grievances upon the first complaint, and in cases between English and Indians he gave the Indians equal justice, "nor would he suffer any to injure them in their goods, lands or persons."

The ancient chronicler quaintly adds that Governor Mayhew "charmed" the Indian rulers "into an earnest desire" to copy the English form of government. The Indians made a public and free acknowledgment of their subjection to the Crown of England, with the proviso that the native rulers were to function as subordinate princes according to the laws of God and the king.

It was with this background of extraordinary success that Thomas Mayhew entered upon the duties of the priesthood evangelistic. It was a prospect that promised small financial rewards.

His missionary labors prospered amazingly. He established "Praying Towns" both at Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The inhabitants elected moderators and town clerks and organized petty courts presided over by Indian judges. The most famous of these novel institutions of democracy was that of Christiantown in West Tisbury.

The bloody Indian uprising known as King Philip's War erupted on the mainland. The Christian Indians at Martha's Vineyard organized a military company and acted as the governor's personal bodyguard.

In 1670 Governor Mayhew pioneered a fully organized Indian church at Martha's Vineyard. Prince, the annalist, tells us that men and women were baptised, and their children with them, and that "the Church was desirous to have chosen Mr. Mayhew for their Pastor, but he waived it, conceiving that in his present Capacity, he had greater Advantages to stand their Friend, and to do them Good, to save them from the Hands of such as would bereave them of their Lands, &c."

The faithful Hiacoomes was ordained pastor and John Tackanash teacher, assisted by two ruling elders of their race. The church was eventually divided, and Tackanash ordained a pastor. When a vacancy occurred in the pulpit of the English church, we are told by an early inhabitant that

"Some of our godly English People very chearfully received the Lord's Supper administered" by Tackanash.

Governor Mayhew's religious activities were supported by the English society that had assisted his son. Soon he had the aid of a large staff of Indian preachers, interpreters and schoolmasters. His English assistant was Peter Folger, famed since as the maternal grandfather of Benjamin Franklin. A Mrs. Bland was paid a salary "for healpfulness in Phisicke and Chirurgery."

The crude and superstitious practice of 17th century medicine and surgery leads one to wonder if the Indians might not better have been left in this respect to the unlearned incantations of the "pawwaws."

As Mayhew entered his octogenarian years he drew freely upon the services of three maturing grandsons. These were the sons of the Rev. Thomas Mayhew, Jr. In 1675 Governor Mayhew writes, "I praise God two of my grandsons doe preach to English and Indians Mathew sometimes and John the younger."

Matthew, the eldest, was carefully educated by private tutors at Cambridge to take over the missionary work. He was the Island's first of many authors. His book, *The Conquests and Triumphs of Grace* is an interesting account of the Indian tribes on the Island, their manners, customs and the progress of religion among them.

The next oldest of the three brothers was Thomas Mayhew, 3d. He was "long impowered in the Government of the Indians" and was "both singularly spirited & accomplished for that service: as he was on divers other accounts a very excellent Person." The temporal supervision of Indian affairs descended to his son Colonel Zaccheus Mayhew.

Thomas Mayhew, Sr., died at "a great age, wanting but six dayes of ninety years" announced his grandson Matthew in a letter addressed to Governor Hinckley of Plymouth Colony, and adds this eulogy, "I think without detraction I may say no man ever in this land approved himself so absolute a father to the Indians as my honoured grandfather: I got no great hope that there will ever be the like in this selfish age."

Matthew and Thomas were primarily interested in the civil administration of the Island. It developed upon the younger brother John to continue the family's religious heritage, which was more suitable to his instincts, and in which he for some years had been engaged before his grandfather's death. As a youth John often had been consulted by the sachems and other leading Indians (and given them "good instructions") who saw in him many of the sweet traits of character that they had so loved in his departed father.

At the age of twenty-one John had been ordained pastor of the English church established at the west end of the Island where he served faithfully as "Minister of the Gospel to the Inhabitants of Tisbury & Chilmark united." The Indians would not be content until he became a public preacher to them likewise, and so ardent and urgent were their desires that he could not deny them.

The fourth missionary in the direct line of succession was John's son Experience. The Rev. Experience Mayhew has been considered by some authorities the giant of his field. His long tenure as an ordained minister covers the era from 1693-4 to his death in 1758.

He made numerous visits to "the Main" where he preached at the fashionable churches, and in general was held in such high esteem as missionary, theologian and author that he was awarded the honorary degree of Master of Arts by Harvard College in 1723. Experience was the author of several works published in the English and Indian tongues. He wrote poems which he distributed among his friends to their edification and without compensation, this being the fate of poets. The effusions were much admired by the eminent Judge Samuel Sewall. It may be assumed that they rustled sombrely of puritan theology.

Two of Experience's sons, Nathan and Jonathan, were educated at Harvard College. The studious Nathan appears especially to have been trained to succeed his father as missionary to the Indians, but died two years after taking his first degree and while studying for the ministry. Jonathan showed early signs of a brilliant mind, and promptly upon graduation was called to the pulpit of West Church, Boston, where he became an impassioned advocate of civil and religious freedom on the eve of the American Revolution.

It thus fell to Experience's next youngest son, Zachariah, a man of mature years at the time of his father's death, to continue the family task. Zachariah had not intended to dedicate his life to missionary work. He had aspired only to be a "large farmer" on the Vineyard.

No son of Experience Mayhew could be unprepared by his father's tutoring or spiritual inheritance to undertake the task Zachariah was called to fill. Nevertheless it was with diffidence that he agreed to assume the burden of his forefathers. He dedicated the remaining years of his long life to the ill-paid and laborious tasks of administering to the Indians. So modest was he of his talents that he would not allow himself to be ordained a clergyman until after nine years of missionary service and study.

It was a disheartening field of employment entered into by the new missionary. The Indian population had shrunk from an estimated 3,000 alone at Martha's Vineyard in 1642,

to a few hundred in 1764. In 1792 the population had increased to 440, only a few of whom were pure bloods.

Zachariah's pastorate was hampered by religious schisms both among the Indians and the English, and by the agitations of the American Revolution. Pecuniary support sank to a low level. English philanthropists were not disposed to aid religious work in a rebellious colony.

Revolutionary unrest reached a climax in 1774. In that year Zachariah Mayhew presided at Chilmark town meeting. Delegates were elected to join with representatives from other island towns to "consult what measures may be expedient to be done into by this County in the Present unhappy State of the Publick affairs of this Province."

The Vineyard faced the possibility of a change in political status. This was nothing new to the people of Martha's Vineyard.

The Vineyard three times had changed political complexion. The island had been virtually an independent colony from 1642 to 1665. The inhabitants were startled when they learned that the Duke of York, later King James II of England, had purchased the Lord Stirling patents and was asserting his claim to the overlordship of Martha's Vineyard and adjacent islands.

Thomas Mayhew did not think overmuch of Stirling's patents, but hardly could ignore any pretense of authority made by the heir apparent to the throne of England. Even so, it was not until 1671 that the slow moving Thomas Mayhew met with the duke's agent at a conference held at Fort James on Manhattan Island. Here the ex-Southampton merchant submitted to the inevitable, but not until he had wrangled some good bargains for himself and, in lesser degree, the inhabitants of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

Mayhew came away from Fort James with charters for the towns of Edgartown and Tisbury, and a commission as governor of Martha's Vineyard "dureing his naturall life" over the English and Indian inhabitants. He also carried a patent for "Tysbury Mannor" naming him and his eldest grandson joint lords and "their Heyres and Assignes."

Martha's Vineyard had become an integral part of the Province of New York. In 1683 the provincial assembly divided the duke's holdings into several counties, including Kings (now Brooklyn), Queens (Long Island) and Dukes (Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and the Elizabeth Islands).

Twenty years elapsed. In 1691 the great powers in England moved again. Dukes County was transferred from New York to the Province of the Massachusetts Bay. The transaction aroused the ire of the then head of the Mayhew family. This was Major Matthew Mayhew who had succeeded his



grandfather as lord of the Manor of Tisbury and as the island's chief magistrate.

In the red jacket of "his Majesties" authority and with short sword clanking jauntily at his side Major Mayhew strutted the lanes of Edgartown and frankly expressed his unfavorable opinions of the "pious graybeards" of the Massachusetts who had done this thing to him. According to Mayhew the Massachusetts worthies "all deserved to be kickt into the dock." In words that have a modern ring he declared that "the government of this Country is the worse government in the world."

Until now he and his kin had administered Martha's Vineyard pretty much as they liked with only an occasional eruption on the part of some of the inhabitants who complained about a feudal dynasty, manorial lords, patentees, and of courts packed with the members of one family and their in-laws.

The leader of the opposition was Simon Athearn, a man of undeviating pertinacity, a foe of no mean proportions, and a country squire of considerable estate. He particularly disliked Matthew Mayhew. Their running vendetta enlivens the pages of Vineyard history, and no doubt puzzled the Indians who were being instructed in the truths of love and tolerance by their missionary teachers.

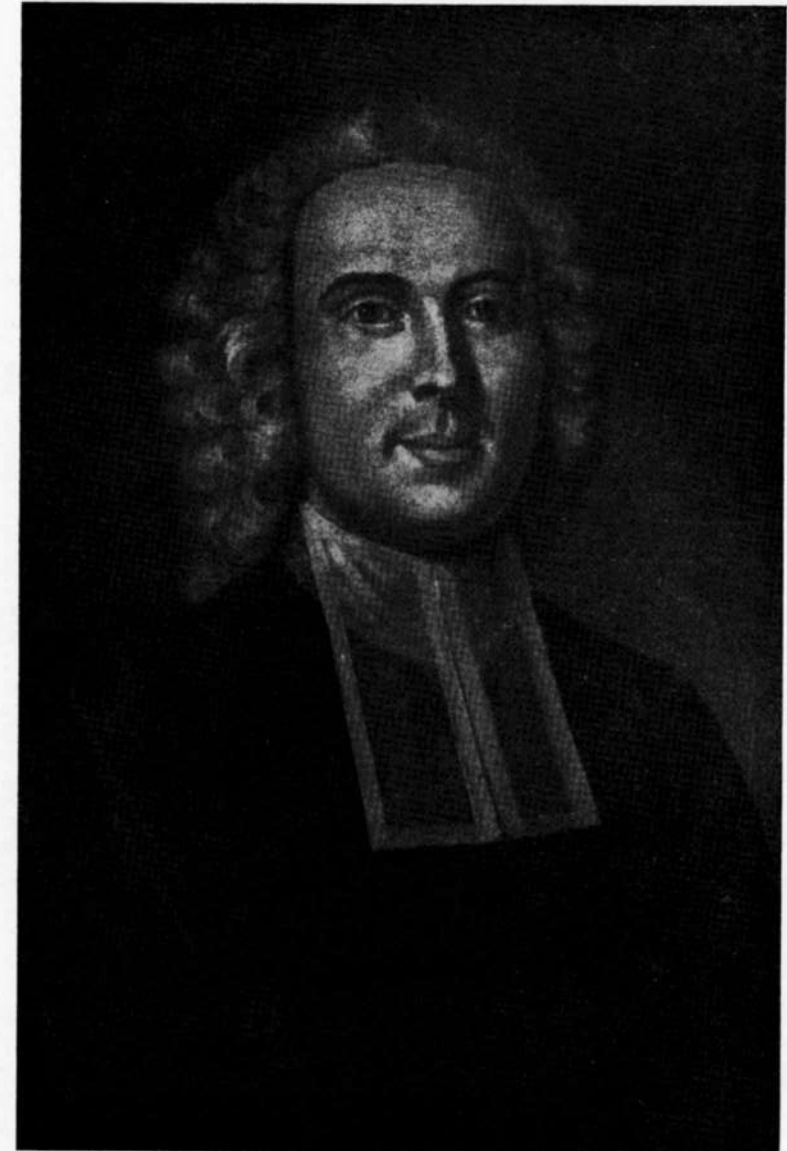
A number of island inhabitants supported Simon Athearn for public office. In submitting his qualifications to the Massachusetts authorities they wrote that, while Athearn might have his "feialing as well as other men," he was "no drunkard, nor no Card player nor a man that freequint tavorns." This could have been a covert slap at Matthew Mayhew.

In this document we catch our first glimpse of night life at Edgartown by candlelight.

The entrenched Mayhews prevailed once again. The "graybeards" of the Massachusetts set up their government in the islands, and appointed Matthew Mayhew to be chief justice of the newly established court of common pleas for Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Whatever the title, either as chief justice under the theocratic government of Massachusetts or chief magistrate under the duke's benign authority, the Mayhew family was "tall" in the saddle.

Two associate justices were appointed to assist the new chief justice. They were Matthew's brother Thomas and one James Allen whose fame rests on the fact that he aspired to high office without marrying a Mayhew daughter — no mean achievement on the Vineyard in the 17th century.

From this date until the Declaration of Independence in 1776, for a period of approximately 78½ years out of 84, some member of the Mayhew family held the office of chief justice at Martha's Vineyard. Thomas Mayhew, 3d, held the office



*from contemporary portrait attributed to Greenwood*  
REV. JONATHAN MAYHEW (1720-1766)

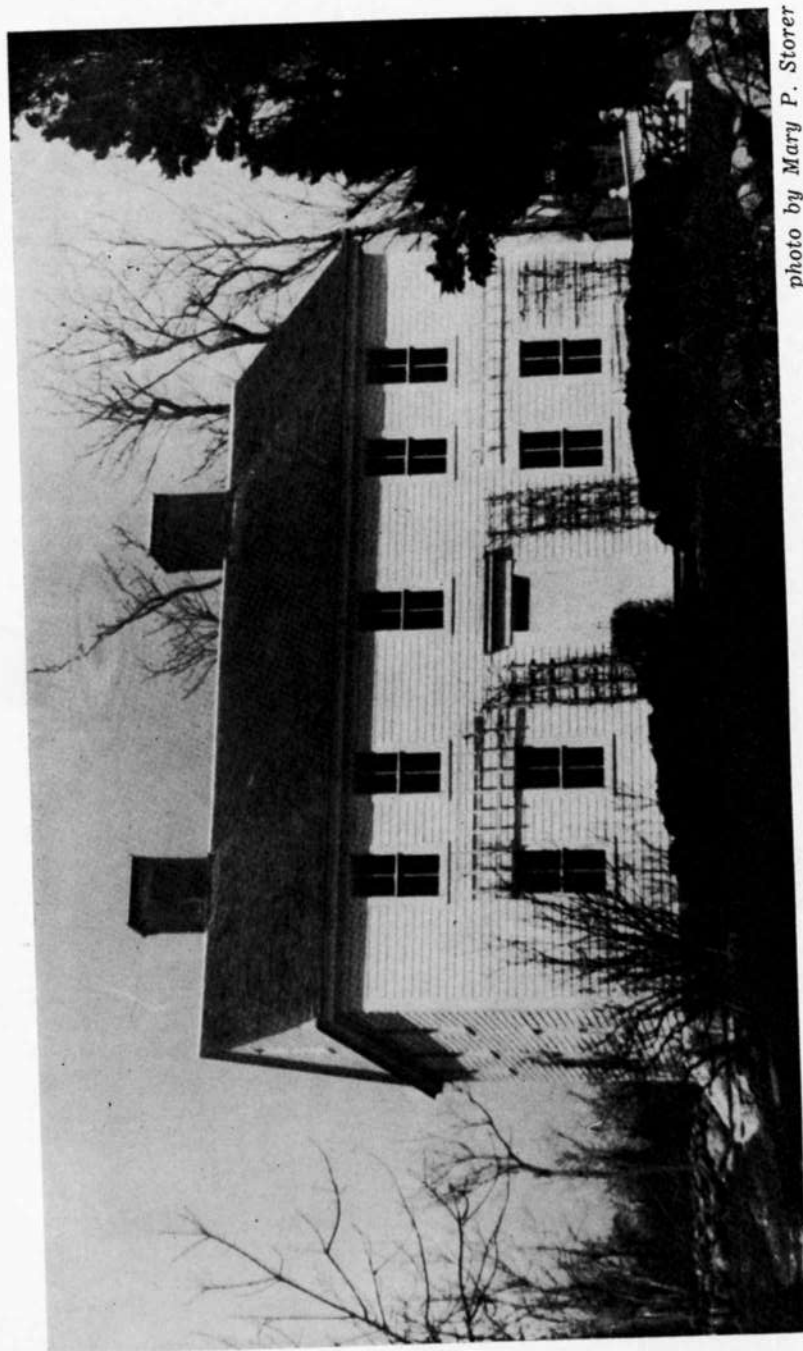


photo by Mary P. Storer

200-YEAR OLD VINEYARD FARMHOUSE

twenty-one years, his son Zaccheus twenty-eight years, and the latter's cousin Paine Mayhew fifteen years.

Two Congregational clergymen became associate justices. They were the Reverends John Sumner and John Newman. Newman kept shop and sold chintz and lawn to the ladies and pipes and tobacco to the men, and on Sunday preached sermons on hell-fire and damnation. In his spare time he filled in as physician and surgeon, and later was colonel of the Island militia. The young people loved him. Their elders shook their heads and suspected that he had a "worldly temperament."

One of his Majesty's justices of the peace (1760s) was the Reverend Nathaniel Hancock, late of the Congregational Church at West Tisbury, and founder of a prominent Vineyard family. He was closely related to the revolutionary patriot John Hancock.

Less worldly than Hancock, Newman, or Sumner was faithful Rev. John Dunham of Edgartown who "Full Thirty Years the Gospel He Did Dispense" until death at the ripe age of eighty-five years terminated his useful pastorate. There was likewise the Rev. Samuel Wiswall who never married in order that he might attend to his ministry "without Distraction." Equally faithful to his trust was the Rev. George Damon who accepted the Edgartown pastorate in 1760, but, as he said, "not for the sake of Filthy Lucer."

The years of the Revolution and those that followed were especially difficult for the last of the "Missionary Mayhews." Zachariah Mayhew petitioned the General Court for relief from taxation as he had been "long since deprived of remittances from England." His problems were accentuated by inroads made by the Baptists among the Indian converts, and by both Baptists and Methodists among the whites.

The Baptist schism had early roots among the Vineyard Indians. It generally has been accredited to the teachings of Peter Folger, the "able godly *Englishman* . . . employed in teaching the Youth in Reading, Writing, and the Principles of Religion by Catechizing, being well learned likewise in the Scripture, and capable of helping them in religious matters." But there is no evidence that Folger became a Baptist until many years after he had left the Vineyard.

The Baptist schism makes a definite appearance at Gay Head in 1702. In that year Judge Samuel Sewall visited the Island and prevailed upon the Rev. Experience Mayhew that it was "a thing very expedient" that some short treatise be drawn up and translated into Indian to prevent the spread of what Sewall called "Anabaptisticall Notions."

For many years the only Baptist church on the Island was the Indian church at Gay Head. This was served by a long succession of native preachers. A prominent Indian pastor was Silas Paul. He was the only Baptist minister on

the Island during his ministry. He was followed by Thomas Jeffers of Plymouth, reputed to have been a preacher of considerable native talent.

A traveler visited Gay Head and published his observations in 1809. He found the Indians divided into two ecclesiastical societies, one of which was Baptist, the other Congregational, both taught by Indian preachers "in orders."

There was an Indian school at Gay Head, informs our authority, which was kept by the lighthouse keeper. "Some of his scholars are remarkably apt; and the rest are not below the ordinary level." A generation later the Baptist church at Gay Head had forty-seven communicants. Their minister was the Rev. Joseph Amos "an Indian of Marshpee, entirely blind, but a preacher of considerable ingenuity."

The "Anabaptistical Notions" of the Gay Headers penetrated the white settlements. The Baptist historian Isaac Backus expresses it thus; — the people of the Vineyard were at a pretty low estate because "they seemed to get no good" out of attending Congregational services, accordingly they "attended none." At this propitious moment "four persons near Holmes Hole awakened to a sense of sin" and in 1780 "they experienced a happy deliverance of soul" and sent for a Baptist minister to come over and preach. The Baptist minister was Backus himself, noted among other qualifications as "an earnest and consistent advocate of the utmost religious freedom."

Backus examined the converts. Fifty persons signed a covenant, more were soon added and, continues Backus, "all of them sweetly communed together at the Lord's table." This was the genesis of the First Baptist Church of Vineyard Haven.

At this time there was no Congregational church at Holmes Hole. The nearest "orthodox" (state supported) church was at West Tisbury. For all practical purposes attendance was impossible to the inhabitants of Holmes Hole because of the "remote Scituation" and other "Conspicuous Inconveniencies." The local Congregationalists joined with the new Baptist society to erect a privately endowed meeting house at Holmes Hole, later used also by the Methodists. This was the Proprietors' Meeting House built about 1788.

Obliged to maintain their own church structure and to pay a minister by private subscription the Baptists objected to being taxed by the state to support the "orthodox" or "standing order." One John Davis refused to pay the ministerial tax and was arrested and tossed into "gaol." But not for long. This sort of persecution did not set well with the body of the inhabitants. The episode caused much indignation. The court perceived its error, hastily reconvened, and Davis was released from durance vile.

In 1803 he and seventy-five others petitioned the General Court to incorporate the Baptist Society of Tisbury. The

town of Tisbury made formal objection to the incorporation of "a religious baptiss Society." The next year the town reversed itself and instructed its representative to the General Court not only to oppose the bill, but to assist the Baptist petitioners to have the church incorporated. This was done. At the same session the Baptists were exempted by law from paying the ministerial tax.

In 1804 Ezra Kendall was called to the pastorate of the Baptist church at Vineyard Haven. He was the society's first settled minister.

The new faith had vigorous growth. Communicants of the Holmes Hole "baptiss Society" grew sufficiently strong in the outlying districts to form separate parishes. Edgartown became an independent church, 1823.

In West Tisbury the "orthodox" minister resigned in 1819, pathetically explaining, "You have long witnessed and no doubt with much regret, the great diminution of our church by deaths, by emigration and by seceders," and other "variegated discouragements." The following year Baptists living in West Tisbury arranged with the Congregationalists to share on alternate Sundays the minister. The structure was practically given up to Baptist preachers most of the time.

About 1820-1 the West Tisbury Baptists built their own house of worship situated on the road to Middletown. Local Baptists continued to be members of the parent church at Holmes Hole until 1832 when, by mutual agreement, the West Tisbury congregation was recognized as an independent parish. The first minister was Jesse Pease, a native son of the island.

In 1847 the Baptists built a meeting house in the village of Middletown, (North Tisbury). This was attended by the West Tisbury Baptists until 1852 when the latter seceded and formed a new society in West Tisbury. A meeting house was built on the Edgartown road. The Rev. Jesse Pease was the leading spirit of the enterprise, and served as its first minister.

It remained for the Methodists to provide the great religious upheaval on the Island.

Methodism came to Martha's Vineyard in the person of the great evangelist Jesse Lee, father of New England Methodism and in after life the supreme authority of the Methodist church in America. Lee preached his first sermon on the Vineyard in 1795 at the Proprietors' Meeting House at Holmes Hole. Lee laments, "We had a small congregation and not much life."

The Methodists appear to have met with more resistance on the Island than had the Baptists. Tradition tells us that meetings were often held in out of the way places in order to avoid disturbance.



The first Methodist missionary to be stationed at Martha's Vineyard was Joshua Hall, 1797. This date is accepted as the year of the founding of Christ Methodist Church at Vineyard Haven.

The new faith took root slowly. When the Rev. Erastus Otis arrived in 1809 he found only about nine adherents resident on the island. Otis was a man of fine personal appearance and of a cultivated mind. He held frequent revivals and organized the first Methodist class at Edgartown, consisting of six persons.

The port of Holmes Hole (where Lee had preached his first sermon to an apathetic audience) did not have a class until one was organized by the Rev. Shepley W. Wilson, 1816-17. The Rev. Wilson ran into some difficulties during his term of office. The deacon of the "standing order" at Edgartown was Squire William Mayhew who lived in the so-called "Governor Mayhew House" on the family's entailed lot, and cut quite a figure in town affairs.

It was sufficiently shocking to Deacon Mayhew that the Rev. Wilson should preach in the village that had been the heart of the "orthodox" order so many years. It was bad enough that Wilson should aspire to proselyte converts out of the pews of the society established by Deacon Mayhew's ancestors. The real shock came when the Methodist preacher had the audacity to ask the deacon for the hand in marriage of his daughter Rebecca. The ceremony was consummated March 13, 1817.

Wilson was followed by two evangelists of more than local fame, "Reformation" John Adams who served two terms, 1821-1822 and 1826-1827, and Edward T. Taylor, 1824-25. "Father Taylor," as he was called, had been bred a sailor in his youth. He was happily received by the Island's large maritime population. Taylor mingled nautical terms and figures in his discourses, and by his wit, pathos and imagination controlled the moods and feelings of his hearers in a remarkable degree.

Then came "Reformation" John Adams to serve his second, and most successful, term on the island. Adams was a man of vigorous personality, and always "on the go." He drove a horse and buggy with which he seemed to enjoy a number of accidents. He ranged the Island from Chilmark to Edgartown, proselyting individuals on week days and preaching collective exhortations on Sunday. He even took ship to visit Naushon Island two or three times.

Chilmark, or the "hill country" as he called it, was his most successful territory. He prophetically mentions how "the brethren in the hill country . . . who have long been looking for the kingdom of Christ to come, will yet see the Canaanites driven out, little by little, till we shall possess the land . . ." And then set out to prove his point.

This he did by promoting Chilmark's first Methodist meeting house. He issued a subscription paper, jumped into his horse and buggy and with indomitable energy traveled three days raising almost \$400.00, and finding time to stop off at a wigwam where he "prayed with the natives." He then rushed back to Edgartown where he prevailed upon the Methodists of that town to sell their meeting house to Chilmark and build a new one for themselves. Within several days he is back at Chilmark "with our new preacher" where he made arrangements for him to live and incidentally got "some new subscriptions."

The old Methodist meeting house in Edgartown was purchased (1827) and moved to Chilmark in sections and reconstructed on a site on the Middle Road. The Methodist Church in Chilmark is the only religious society now in this town, and has been for some eighty odd years. It serves as a monument to the energy and prophecy of "Reformation" John Adams.

No sooner had Adams settled the problem of a meeting house for Chilmark than he conceived the idea of a camp meeting. With typical enthusiasm he chose a site at West Chop, paying \$25.00 for "use of the land and some wood." The camp meeting opened August 1, 1827, with more than twenty preachers present, and not far from thirty tents. This was the Island's first camp meeting.

Only a few years later one of Adams' staunch followers went out to the shores of Squash Meadow Pond where he chose and surveyed the site of the first of a long succession of camp meetings that since have become nationally famous. This was Jeremiah Pease, a local customs officer. He and his associates organized the first meeting which was held in 1835. Nine tents graced the circle. In 1857 sixty ministers of the Gospel were present. The following year by "more careful reckoning" by "the best judges" it was estimated that 12,000 persons attended a Sabbath meeting.

From the humble beginnings of the first circle in Wesleyan Grove sprang the town of Oak Bluffs and the Vineyard "summer season."

The man who indirectly had done so much to inspire a great tradition was an honored guest at the camp meetings of 1839, '40 and '41. Of him the camp meeting secretary said, "The Vineyard in former years was the scene of some of Brother Adams' most successful labors, where he joyously reaped a glorious harvest of souls, among whom are some of the most respectable people of the island . . ."

Brother Adams did not rest on his laurels. He profited by the occasion to visit the Island's several towns, and preached in the schoolhouses. Ever alert to win a convert he called on Sylvanus Luce and "hemmed him up in a corner. Lord convert him!!" prayed Adams as he let his victim free.



He preached in the "new schoolhouse" at Lambert's Cove. Methodism had come to the North Shore about 1820 when Mrs. Mary Lambert invited the Rev. Eleazer Steele, then at Edgartown, to come to this part of the Island and preach the new religion. Among the first converts was Capt. Thomas Luce who had lost his sight at sea while using a spy-glass against a bright sun. In 1845 the present chapel was built and dedicated for the use of this sect.

Oak Bluffs — home of the camp meeting — did not have a Methodist meeting house until 1877, when about forty persons met at the residence of Capt. Joseph Dias to organize a class. Services were first held in a small public hall. The members soon entered into a formal organization. Trinity Methodist Church was erected.

The scenic beauties of Oak Bluffs attracted thousands of summer visitors unrelated to the camp meeting. The Roman Catholic, Episcopal and Unitarian churches derive their origins largely from the summer colony.

The first ministers of these denominations were "missionaries," and their places of worship were known as "missions" until such time as memberships became sufficiently permanent to support organized parishes.

The Roman Catholic mission was organized in 1880 to serve the summer residents of that faith, and at first was under the direction of St. Lawrence parish, New Bedford. A lot was purchased and donated by Henry Magetts, described as a "poor man," who served as a butler in the family of a summer resident. The Church of the Sacred Heart was erected on the site.

The first resident priest was the Rev. Patrick E. McGee. The growth of the parish was rapid. St. Augustine's at Vineyard Haven was built in 1911. St. Elizabeth's at Edgartown was dedicated in 1925. The church of Our Lady of the Sea at Oak Bluffs, dedicated 1920, functions only in summer.

An Episcopal service was held at Vineyard Haven in Capawock Hall on Christmas day, 1862, by the Rev. John West of New York. The response was sufficient for him to be appointed missionary for Martha's Vineyard. Services during the formative years were held during the summer only. The cornerstone of Grace Church, Vineyard Haven, was laid 1882.

Much of the preparatory work which led to the building of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Edgartown was done by the Rev. William C. Hicks who undertook missionary work in that town in 1895. Quarters were leased in the upstairs part of Gothic Hall on Main Street. The lower floor was given over to a grocery store and harness repair shop, and later occupied by Jethro Cottle as a dry goods store. The cornerstone of St. Andrew's was laid 1899.

Trinity Episcopal Church at Oak Bluffs is another outgrowth of the summer colony. From its inception the church had no relationship with the Massachusetts diocese, but was administered by a rector invited to the island by the parish itself.

The Unitarian sentiment which swept over New England early in the 19th century left scarcely a mark upon the Island's Trinitarian churches. Edgartown's Reverend Joseph Thaxter "of blessed memory" is reputed to have preached with some Unitarian leanings during his later ministrations. In 1836 the Reverend Samuel A. Devens, a Unitarian clergyman, held services for a time in the old "Church of Christ" hallowed by Thaxter, and founded by the first settlers, but it was not until 1867 that the Reverend Daniel Waldo Stevens was sent to Holmes Hole by the American Unitarian Society as a missionary.

A man of strong intellect, unconventional in his methods and full of enthusiasm matched by energy, Stevens quickly perceived the opportunity to serve the needs of the thousands of mariners who made the harbor of Vineyard Haven a port of call. His Seamen's Chapel and Reading Room became a unique institution known to sailors all along the coast.

After years of service the venerable Stevens still acted as sexton and rang his own bell on Sunday morning, after which he would rush to the pulpit to preach his sermon, somewhat out of breath. He ministered to "Jack" for nearly twenty-four years. A Unitarian chapel bearing his name now stands in Vineyard Haven.

The Christian Science Society of Martha's Vineyard made its first step toward the erection of a church on the Island in 1928. In 1939 a fine church building was completed on New York Avenue in Oak Bluffs.

The "orthodox" church of the first planters is presently represented by the parish at West Tisbury. The old spirit of the "union" meeting house finds modern expression in the Federated Church at Edgartown which houses the Congregational Society founded by the Rev. Thomas Mayhew, Jr., in 1642, and the Baptist Society founded by the Reverend William Hubbard in 1823. The two societies federated in 1925.

For more than three hundred years the church has been a vital factor in the lives of Vineyard people and their guests.

## CHAPTER III

### FIGHTING — FARMING — FISHING

by Joseph Chase Allen

#### FIGHTING

This chapter heading was a suggested one and it is difficult to see how it could be more appropriate. The three pursuits thus enumerated have bulked with importance through the greater part of the Vineyard's three centuries of history. In the pages to follow the effort will be made to take up these topics separately insofar as is possible. To some degree this will present no difficulties, but there will occur points where the three will become almost inseparable and the Fighting, Farming and Fishing will mingle, "foul", as the old, amphibious Vineyarders would say, like seaweed in a mackerel net and as equally impossible to "clear".

To begin at the beginning, which is not original but is thoroughly descriptive, the first thoughts of Island colonists were of fighting. Though they did none of it here on their home ground, they could not take it for granted that hostilities with Indians would not follow their arrival. They were outnumbered five or six to one by Indians, and with the mainland more or less continuously disrupted by some variety of warfare, the colonial custom originating in Plymouth for compulsory military training was not a thing with which men disagreed. Thus the ancient and almost the first general order from Governor Mayhew, to wit: that every able-bodied man should own and maintain "one goodlie musket, with pouch and horne thereto, foure pound of powdre and as much of balle" assumes a significance when the overall situation is considered. And again, a single glance at the lay-out of village sites, or such as may be traced today, reveals a concentration of dwellings for the better protection of families and homes in case of attack. It accounts, too, for the establishment of "common" planting and grazing lands apart from the villages, which practice allowed the settlers to build in close proximity rather than separated by meadows or corn-fields. It is not known, nor even surmised that early Vineyarders were mobilized for any purpose other than training for a number of years after settlement was made. Certain it is that the local militia were not called out by the English high command to assist in mainland conflicts with the Indians, even when they came as close as the town of Dartmouth, now New Bedford, which was burned and sacked during King

Philip's War. This indulgence, or intentional oversight, may well have been due to the infant whaling industry which a greedy government would have been loath to interrupt.

An interesting sidelight on the war with the Narragansetts is that the Island Indians were armed by order of Governor Mayhew to perform guard duty and warn of any attack from across the Sound by hostile Indians. This they did faithfully, not once taking advantage of their white neighbors through possession of guns and ammunition.

Individual sailors and soldiers of fortune went off to fight at Port Royal and Louisburg, but the important point is that the Vineyard colonists were not "impressed" to aid their neighbors on the mainland, nor were they criticized, save locally, for arming the Indians. Somewhere "higher-up" there must have been both an understanding of Island conditions, and a total disregard for the welfare of the harassed peoples so very close to the peaceful and prospering colony.

Yet the time came when even Vineyard men were required, and desperately. Again, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not their removal from the Island to the active war zone was the result of information possessed by the British top brass, or whether some adventurous Vineyard soul found the ear of some officer and actually "sold him a bill of goods." There is plenty of evidence this last might have been the case. At any rate, Colonel Zaccheus Mayhew, CO of the Vineyard militia was ordered to raise a company to serve under Capt. Peter West in the Crown Point Expedition. He managed to muster eighteen men, eight of them Indians.

Of more importance in that campaign were the Vineyard whaleboats, hauled overland into upper New York State, and their crews. These were commandeered by British army officers and armed with swivel guns. Nathan Smith, then of Chappaquiddick, later of Tisbury, commissioned captain, was placed in command of the whole fleet of eighty boats, some from other places than the Vineyard. And it was this fleet which won the war on Lake Champlain and Lake George, breaking down the resistance of the French and their Indian allies, thus securing the capture of the chain of French forts.

Vineyarders were present at the siege of Quebec and at the attempted capture by sea of Montreal. They also did garrison duty at Annapolis Royal. But it is not clear whether or not there was any organized body of Vineyard militia at any of these places, or whether the men were merely scattered volunteers.

History, admissible as such, has not left us with a very clear picture of the Vineyard during the Revolution. The Sea Coast Defense forces are spoken of today with due veneration, the tales of patriotism are told, and one small bronze tablet memorializes the act of three Island girls who blew up the Holmes Hole liberty pole lest it be seized to replace a spar



on a British man-of-war. All very fitting and proper, but as has often been said, there are at least two sides to every story, and sometimes three and four.

Debunkers of history are never popular, and as a rule, their efforts are misguided, whatever they may think. But in justice to all concerned, attention should be called to certain matters which gave this portion of the war area a most peculiar appearance. It should be remembered that the Vineyard had been singularly favored by the British government because of its whaling enterprise. That this attitude promoted good feeling cannot be doubted, particularly as heavy taxes were levied on drift whales in England, but for years the Vineyard colonists were not taxed on whales at all. There were outright Tories here, among them business men who did their banking in England and dealt in English-made goods.

As regards the militia required by law, they were obliged to muster and train under the pains and penalties provided for absenteeism. Whether or not they disliked the duty no one has said, nor if any objected to being ordered into the colonial army. They had not enjoyed serving in the French and Indian Wars, and the inherent dislike for army service among Vineyarders through the generations may be traced back to this period.

At the time that the naval blockade of the Vineyard was established, a large percentage of the men of military age were absent, many being "in the Coste service & at sea upon the whaling desine." Remaining were older men, boys, some of military age no doubt, Indians, and women and children.

If we may accept the little that history has recorded, business was going on as usual, with something of a boost or boom in certain quarters. The nearby villages of the mainland needed Vineyard products, the Vineyarders themselves were eager to cash in on the strained situation, and there was a lively traffic between the Island and certain mainland ports. Then the British men-of-war appeared with their shoal-draft raiders, and ordered all this traffic stopped.

Some of it did cease. Some men, owning boats suitable for the purpose, loaded with vegetables and cheese and sailed right up to the British fleet where they sold their cargoes for hard money. Others ran the blockade, often successfully, but in retaliation the raiders entered harbors and burned and sank boats and small vessels in order to prevent further blockade-running. Yet it has always been apparent that they did not destroy all the boats and vessels even when raiding, and the answer has to be that they did not care to persecute the Islanders too severely. Perhaps because they knew that there were many friendly people among them who did not favor the war. Perhaps not.

Little information regarding Earl Gray, commanding the expedition, has been preserved. But from that little, some-

thing can be judged of his general character, and this supports the belief that the war was distasteful to him, or that he recognized the general friendliness of the Vineyard people.

His correspondence with the selectmen of Tisbury, previous to the raid is evidence enough to show that he was driven by necessity, but that he preferred to supply his men by peaceful means if possible. There is truly a most calamitous impression conveyed in the figures relating to the thousands of sheep seized, the hundreds of cattle, the fowls, gunpowder and other items, by the raiding marines. But it should be remembered that there were hundreds, probably thousands of men in the blockading ships, all in danger of contracting scurvy from the lack of fresh provisions. And the commander would have been held wholly responsible had this scourge attacked his crew with land no more than a few cannon-shots distant.

Of the raid itself, many tales have been told, chiefly relating to besting the British in concealing goods or animals which they sought. Many sheep and cattle, pigs and poultry were hidden in the woods and swamps before the raid, for it was not a thing that occurred without warning. There was a deliberation about it all, and Islanders could see the approaching boats for some time before the marines landed. While this is not intended to present a case for the defence of the British, or in condemnation of the war itself, the fact remains that there was a respect for decency and humanitarianism shown on both sides.

During the Revolution and the War of 1812, Vineyard men took part in many important engagements. There was Colonel George Claghorn of Chilmark, better known as builder of the US frigate *Constitution*; Capt. Robert Manter, born in Tisbury; and Tristram Daggett who served five years and was awarded the badge of merit for honorable service at his discharge. The old pay and muster-rolls mention Allens, Nortons, Skiffes, Luces, Looks and Coffins. There may even have been whole companies of Vineyard militia brigaded with other troops in such manner that their identities as such were lost. Suffice it to say, substantial percentage of Vineyarders were represented in both land and sea forces.

The knowledge of what some of these men did at sea is rather more explicit, some aboard ships of war, and more on privateers. There was a Luce and a Lambert with John Paul Jones on the *Alliance*, and Thomas Chase was one of the crew of the *Bon Homme Richard* during the famous battle with the *Serapis*. An Indian from Gay Head named Anthony served on the *Ranger* under Jones. The *Marlborough*, a privateer, "put into Edgartown harbour to obtain a Complement of Men and Officers", among whom was Cornelius Marchant, later the only one of nine Vineyard men to survive the loss of the privateer *General Arnold* with 74 of the crew in Plymouth Bay, Dec. 24, 1778. The lists of men on the



prison ship *Jersey* and in English gaols include many Island names.

The War of 1812 imposed further hardships on the Vineyard people already suffering under the embargo which cut off the sale of oil, salt, wool, and "other domestic manufactures" from their "usual market of New York & Connecticut", and likewise deprived them of certain necessities of life such as "bread stuffs" which had to be imported. As a direct result, a very respectable number of mariners ordinarily engaged in the coastal trade, became privateersmen. The *Yankee* used Edgartown as a base, and Lieutenant Thomas Milton, her first officer, bought his house lot there in 1814. Joseph Marchant and Solomon Coffin were two of her prize-masters. Captain James Lawrence brought the U. S. sloop of war *Hornet* to anchor in Holmes Hole harbor in March, 1813, and several times subsequently. His crew included Vineyarders, and so did that of Capt. Isaac Hull of the *Constitution*. In fact, tradition credits one "B'osun Luce" of Lambert's Cove with composing the song of the capture of the *Guerrierre*:

"Bold Dacres came aboard

"To offer up his sword

"He hated to because it was so handy-o

"You may keep it Sir, said Hull,

"What makes you look so dull?

"Come on and have a drink of good, old brandy-o!"

There were several other verses, all inspired by local knowledge of the frigate and her commander who had spent some time in Edgartown before the war broke out.

Once again fighting and whaling are mingled in Island history. Not only was commerce at a virtual standstill during this war on the high seas, but few agents were willing to risk capture of their vessels and imprisonment of the officers. The years following the War of 1812 and up to the Civil War, however, were known as the Golden Age of Whaling. And then the Confederate Raiders took such toll of vessels engaged in the trade that it never reached its former peak.

An Edgartown owned whaler, the *Ocmulgee*, with an Edgartown captain, Abraham Osborn, Jr., was the first victim of the *Alabama* during the War Between the States. And without doubt, revenge for the financial ruin suffered by the local whalers and shipowners were in large part responsible for the literal rush of Vineyard men to enlist. Other inducements were of course the "Bounties" paid in hard cash, and general lack of employment. At any rate the Island sent an unusually large percentage of its male population into the service, including eight Indians from Gay Head — not yet admitted to citizenship. Curiously enough for a seafaring community, the Army drew more volunteers than the Navy. A number of whaling captains joined the Navy, most of them as

ensigns, and were present at some of the more famous engagements. Those in the ranks saw active service in the various theatres of conflict with a proportionate number of casualties. It was a bleak period for the Vineyard, and its effect was not soon forgotten.

Although heroism is not lacking in the annals of Vineyard fighting men, few specific heroes are mentioned after Smith of the Revolution until World War I. At this time, an even larger percentage of Island men enlisted for service on land, sea and in the air, the majority of whom engaged in active combat. In fact, Gay Head received the governor's shield of honor for sending the greatest number in proportion to her population of any town in the state.

Curiously, the Vineyarder who gained the greatest distinction had gone overseas before this country entered the war, and enlisted in the French Air Force, to become a member of the Lafayette Escadrille. This was Walter D. Rheno of Vineyard Haven, and he served with brilliance in this famed detachment. The list of his missions was lengthy, and although he died of pneumonia and was brought home for burial, his name is inscribed with others in the shrine which France erected to honor those first air-fighters.

The Vineyard's record as a county in World War II is unsurpassed among the counties of the nation. The average number of men to serve under arms, by counties, was five percent throughout the country. Because of the many volunteers, the County of Dukes County sent better than 12 percent of its year round population to war. Very few failed to engage the enemy either in the European or Pacific theatres. On land and sea especially, for there were not too many aviators among them, they served bravely — and a number did not return. It would not be a kindly thing to mention names of individuals who were cited, for there were numerous others who might well have been, had their heroic acts been known officially at the time. The Island was well and valiantly represented in the Korean conflict, too.

Today Vineyard men in the armed forces are stationed all over the world, some of them no doubt in places once visited by their whaling grandfathers or great-uncles in the spice trade. And conversation at the postoffice does not differ too much from that of a century ago with its casual mention of Pacific atolls, Arctic wastes, and the longing to get home.

## FARMING

From all accounts, and this makes simple common sense, the first thing that people did on arrival at the Vineyard was to look for food, and in this connection they surveyed the lands suitable for cultivation and grazing. As in other historical departments there is practically nothing by way of a record to describe early methods of operation. The records,

such as they are, speak of "goodlie farm-lands", "pleasing meades", and there are some references to crops grown and to food prepared from them. But there is no mention of how these things were done.

It may be supposed that the settlers spaded the ground by hand, and followed practices learned from the native Indians. Certainly they produced the same crops of corn, beans and squashes, eventually adding some of the European grains such as rye and oats, and finally the meadow grasses. But they also took advantage of the growth of wild marsh hay, the black-grass, blue-grass, three-square and others, and the earliest records of land purchases or divisions refer to "sheares inne ye lowe meados", as these marshes were called.

It is probable that during these first years the colonists lived a sort of hand-to-mouth existence, especially so far as cultivated crops were concerned, and this for very good reasons. They had no draft animals, and thus could cultivate only small plots of ground. Exactly how they harvested the hay and secured it from damage is hard to say. That it was stacked out of doors is a reasonable assumption. But the meadows were long distances from the pasture lands and dwellings, and it is not reasonable to assume that a man would keep his one or two sheep or his cow any great way from his house. Did he carry the hay home on his back, or perhaps drag it on a sled? It is possible!

With draft animals available, everything changed. The marsh hay was still harvested, but it was gathered in great quantities and brought back to the barnyards. And on the upland, the sons and grandsons of English yeomen began to put into practice those usages which they had inherited. They built miles of stone walls in connection with the clearing of land. Some of this work was of a cooperative nature taking the form of "wall-building bees" wherein all the men of a community took part, while their wives got together and provided the noonday meals so long as the work lasted. But this refers only to the actual "laying-up" of the walls, the "dry-dyking" as it were, which called for real skill in handling rock. Previous to all this of course the land-owner or owners had hauled the rocks to the wall-site with oxen and drag. And let it not be thought that all the rocks used were rough and round just as they came from the earth. Examination of older walls still standing will reveal many indications that the larger stones were somehow broken, but not how this was accomplished.

Another thing the early Vineyard farmers did might well be continued today to the profit of land-owners and the beautification of the Island as a whole. This was "ditching" by means of which swamps were drained and low tillage protected from rising water and freshets. The chief benefit, however, to both eye and property was in the fact that this system kept

the brooks clear and running swiftly. It made for straight clean banks and level, open beds free from leaves, branches and vegetation. Traces of this ancient ditching may still be found, but only in imagination can a picture be formed of what the surrounding areas were like when the drainage was in full operation.

Although there was money in this Island colony from the very beginning, farm implements were largely home-made, and continued to be well into the last century. This may have been due to an unequal distribution of wealth, or to the frugal nature developed among the people. Whatever the reason many men found it practical to make their own ploughs, harrows, and cultivators entirely of wood weighted with rocks, this despite the fact that the accepted implements of the time, up to 1900 certainly, consisted of wood and iron in combination. Examples of these old wooden devices are well remembered by the older generation even today, and one or two perhaps may still be in existence.

Indian influence may be traced through those years when Vineyarders gained the greater part of their living from their own land. There were stack-stands where beans were piled before threshing, stake and brush corn-cribs, greatly resembling the gabions anciently used for military entrenchments, and hay-stacks ingeniously contrived to serve as snug shelters for the farm animals. These latter were used alternately with brush-and-sod hovels until milled lumber became easier to obtain. Although the Island was heavily wooded at the time it was colonized, boards and timbers had to be sawed or hewn by hand, and most of them from hard woods such as oak. As early as 1658 roof boarding of oak is mentioned, proving that the cedar and soft-pine of Gosnold's day had been exhausted, if indeed it ever existed.

The importance and actual magnitude of Vineyard farming, once the necessary animals and equipment were available, can hardly be realized. The flocks of sheep and herds of cattle must have been impressive even by present day standards. The wool crop far exceeded the needs of the Islanders, and was sold both raw and processed. Census figures of 1720 offer some idea of the importance of other products. In this year are recorded butter and cheese exports from the Vineyard, the amounts given by "vessel-loads" rather than in pounds or hundred weights: so many "vessel-loads" from Tisbury, and so many more from Chilmark.

Gray's raid during the Revolution left the Vineyard with little stock, 10,000 sheep and 300 cattle having been taken. This condition, however, was of short duration, and the "come-back" was swift and complete. Rev. James Freeman, who visited the Island in 1807 reckoned there were 15,600 sheep, 400 horses and colts, 2800 neat cattle and 800 swine. Wool production that year was 23,400 pounds, one half sold raw, and



the rest used in knitting and weaving. Figures in the Gazetteer for 1855 are almost identical, but by 1872, they begin to show a decline which continued almost to the vanishing point until recent years.

The reasons for the gradual abandonment of farming as a livelihood were several: tired land, erosion of salt meadows, falling wool prices, lack of demand for home-made butter and cheese, but most of all, the exodus of farm boys to sea or to jobs on the mainland. Up-Island the fields became dotted with abandoned farms as their owners moved to the shore or "away", and down-Island, new sections of the villages were built up where once sheep grazed. There has been an upswing of late with the influx of so-called gentleman farmers, but this has not restored the ancient farms of colonial days. Scores of cellar-holes, miles of stone-walls, and hundreds of acres of land still bearing traces of cultivation are to be found. The streams are choked, the rail-fences have fallen, and only in rare instances can a person walk across what was once prized English plough-land or open pastures. To be sure some of the old farmhouses are used seasonally by summer people, but for the most part, all traces of the once-thriving industry are buried deeply in brush and green briers.

The newer farms, with some exceptions, are in the "Plains Country" where the gently rolling terrain is perfect for the use of gang-ploughs, power-driven seeders and harvesters. Dairying is the important department today, and the crops raised are chiefly those which serve as feed for cattle. There is some truck-gardening, some cultivation of flowers, and some poultry-raising, but the emphasis is on the production of milk and cream. The farms are fewer than in the old days, but they are vastly larger, and although actual proof might be difficult to obtain, it is a moot question whether there is not more acreage under cultivation today than ever before in the history of the Vineyard.

There are still sheep, but nothing like the flocks in former times. The stock is improved, however, so that the clip is far heavier, and the animals larger and more acceptable in the meat markets. In addition, increasing numbers of choice breeding stock are being shipped to various parts of the country.

As in all other places the Vineyard farmer of today is a scientist in his own right and by training, who takes the fullest advantage of national research and experimentation in all things pertaining to his business. And the good brown earth which so delighted his pioneering ancestors still serves him well, thanks to soil conservation, testing, and the 1001 provisions against wastage.

## FISHING

Vineyard fisheries in common with those in other sections of the country have declined, and insofar as the ancient industry is concerned, have fallen upon evil days indeed. The Island fleet, reduced in number and in tonnage, in equipment and personnel, produces a livelihood for but a handful of people as compared with other days. The most, therefore, that can be said of local commercial fishing is to describe somewhat "the things that were."

Gosnold anchored in Menemsha Bight in 1602, and according to his companion Gabriel Archer, the men "took great store of cod — as before at Cape Cod, but much better."

The first settlers were much impressed and delighted by the vast number of fish and crustaceans to be found around the Vineyard shores. The salt ponds, breaking their beach barriers to empty into the sea, attracted great runs of alewives, perch, and striped bass. The coves and bights along-shore were the summer feeding grounds of other varieties, easily trapped or hooked. And even lobsters were obtainable in every month of the year, for, as winter came, they hibernated among the rocks close to the beaches and could be taken from their covering of eel-grass and kelp. Truly there was real wealth in the seas, as the colonists said.

No one can possibly realize today the labor and improvisation that entered into the Vineyard fisheries even as recently as three-quarters of a century ago. It must be borne in mind that very little of the necessary equipment could be purchased ready-made and that even much of the material used had to be obtained from natural sources. The fish-hook was known to the most primitive peoples and used by both whites and Indians. But for years there was a scarcity of any material that could be made into twine or cordage. Indians speared their bottom fish such as flounder, and caught their round fish by means of weirs, or traps consisting of ingenious arrangements of stakes and brush which were set in creeks and places where the sea could not damage them. From all accounts, the settlers followed the example of the Indians and used these same devices until better ones were contrived. The wooden eel-pot which may still be found in use is a survival of the Indian fish-trap. It was originally intended for catching lobsters as well. Made of oak slats split from the log, smoothed to some degree, then bent over frames of the same material, it was laced and tied together with split pine roots which, when well-soaked, are as flexible as twine.

Tradition has it that a good portion of the Island's inadequate crop of flax was used for codlines, with perhaps some for nets or woven into boat sails. Early English sails were often made of linen, and it would not be strange if the same fabric were utilized by the English settlers here. That some sails were of handwoven wool is also more than prob-



able. Surely those heirloom blankets are scarcely less rough and metallic to the touch than modern canvas.

There was a specially designed cordreel for laying the fishline after the flax was spun. It would then likely be dipped in tar to prevent softening in water and rotting. The Vineyard possessed its own supply of rigging tar obtained from the larger pitch pines.

Whether or not large nets were made before cotton twine was introduced on the Island no one can be sure. However, once it was available, the men would gather on winter nights before wide kitchen hearths to knit seines and nets of all shapes and sizes with their homemade net needles and mesh-sticks. Their meshes were as perfect and uniform as any ever made by machinery. It is not quite a lost art either, for there are still a few men who knit their own lobsterpot funnels and scallop dredge nets, except that now they use nylon thread.

From earliest times cod had a market value once it had been dry-salted, and shipments of salt-cod are among the first Vineyard exports. Scup "sent by the Lord to avert starvation" were eaten fresh, or salted for future use, and the same was true of the striped bass. This latter, according to old journals was seldom eaten fresh "butte ye braines make anne tastie dish", wrote one chronicler of the time. The halibut caught only in spring was "very large and fat, and much better than in Boston Bay". There were plenty of swordfish inshore to be had for the harpooning. These were cut up and salted for local use much as pork is pickled.

The first organized commercial fisheries were in the Great Ponds. Here by virtue of their land-rights, men took herring, or alewives, by the tens of thousands. They were sold pickled by the barrel, and in 1807, Edgartown Great Pond was yielding annually 1000 barrels at \$3 to \$4 a barrel. The pond perch were less valuable.

When the time arrived that twine was plentiful and cheap, the net-fishing began, and for some generations seining and trap-fishing were carried on extensively. The peak of trap-fishing was reached no more than fifty years ago when Vineyard Sound became a scene of activity never known either before or since. There were seventeen sets of trap-gear standing between Devil's Den at Gay Head and Makonikey Head with one to five traps in each set, and as many again from Makonikey to the Sengekontacket opening. Each of these was handled by a crew of men, two to four as the case might be, and the quantity of fish taken may best be judged from the fact that fish-buyers from Fulton Market in New York arrived daily during the summer months.

Men seined between these sets of trap-gear for squeteague, which were the principal fish caught at that time, and for summer flounder (fluke) which schooled quite close to the beach on summer evenings. Spring brought mackerel, netted

off-shore, and great schools of scup appeared with the blooming of the shadbush to fill the traps. Pollock were caught in traps and handline both spring and fall. And from Muskeget westward, line trawls were set November to March for the big fat haddock that once were plentiful in these waters. There were tautog (blackfish) to be found at all times amid the rocks 'longshore.

The earliest fishermen, and many generations following, were at once farmers and fishermen, ploughing and harvesting in season, and fishing betweentimes. To a degree this practice was continued into the present century. But changes came in the fishing industry as they did with the farming. The youth of the Island departed to seek its fortune elsewhere, so that there was a lack of young blood and strength to handle gear. To make matters worse, there was a turn in the cycle of fish-running and certain varieties such as squeteague became scarce. Meanwhile the otter-trawl, operated from large boats and vessels, was imported from Europe, and slowly but surely the shorefisheries of the Island declined. More fish could be taken in the otter-trawls, and returns were proportionately greater, so that the trend everywhere coastwise was toward vessel-fishing.

Volumes could be written about this particular period of the rise and fall of vessel-fishing, but this is pointless because of the variety of opinions accounting for the present situation. The best authorities admit that they do not know the answers; they can only agree that production has declined because of declining supply.

Go out into Vineyard Sound on any summer day, drop a baited hook, and some poor fish will bite. Scup, sea-bass, flounder, perhaps even a bluefish if the proper lure is used, anyway a "horncane". A few men will set lobster-pots among the rocks and will be rewarded by enough lobsters, "a mess", to eat. The striped-bass derby brings out a thousand rod-and-reelers every fall competing for prizes. But the industry which once maintained some hundreds of families, and even earned family fortunes is no more.

The same is true of dragging. At most a dozen fishing-boats base at Vineyard harbors and set their nets anywhere from ten to seventy-five miles from land depending on the season and size of the vessel. In summer most of these put on a topmast and a pulpit and go swordfishing from here to Halifax. These vessels each carry two to six in crew, most of them supporting families with their "shares", percentage of the stock, or catch.

But this fleet is less than half that of fifteen years ago, reckoned by number, tonnage or personnel. The failure of production has driven them out of business, and as of today there are very few young men who look forward to taking over from senior fishermen.

Perhaps this industry will come back as the farming has. No one knows and the wisest men dare not predict. Climatic change is largely blamed for the failure of the fisheries: a warming of the water which has driven native fish to colder latitudes. Should this be true, and should it continue, then Vineyard waters may witness the gradual influx of southern fish. In the meantime, the shrinking fleet manages to preserve the old-time atmosphere about the Island harbors, and the shell-fisheries promote wild activity when the autumn winds blow.

In connection with the early days of fishing, a word should be said about the type of craft the colonists used. Tradition has it that the first Vineyard boat was a sort of rowing scow, square at both ends. Ship's boats or "shallops" and wherries, brought to this country as tenders for ocean-going vessels, did not lend themselves to the beach-hauling necessary on unprotected shores. Hence the flat-bottomed craft. It has further been said that when Island boat-builders became sufficiently proficient to turn out a row-boat with a pointed bow, the term or designation of "sharpie" came into use, and is still applied to the skiff of flat-bottomed design.

At first only small boats were required, for the fish lay close to the beaches, but the fishermen soon discovered that intense fishing along the shores tended to drive the fish away. It was found that better fishing could be had by running some distance off-shore to ledges or other suitable bottom. Larger boats were required for such business with sails as well as oars. And in consequence, the Noman's Land boat came into being, and the establishment of a literal base, during the season, on that small island due south from Gay Head.

The original Noman's Land boat is not remembered at all. An adaptation of the "pink" which was in general use the length of the coast, it was sharp at both ends, open fore and aft, without curbing, and had two masts which could be unstepped. It was small enough to be rowed by one man in a calm, strongly built with oak keel and stem and cedar planking, and could be hauled up on the beach over a "boat ladder". This was a rather light track built in sections, with a groove — always well-greased with anything from mutton tallow to cod-liver oil — to receive the keel. With several men to hold it upright and a pair of oxen to pull it, the Noman's Land boat could be drawn up beyond reach of the tide without removing any of its gear or the catch of fish in the bottom. Being a double-ender it was easily launched stern foremost, but some of the more ingenious rigged a turn table in order to head out.

As a seaboat, it had no known equal and could be depended upon to ride out the worst gales if there was "one man to sail and another to bail". Many improvements were made on the original model until the Noman's Land boat was truly

graceful as well as sturdy. It came to be built in various sizes up to perhaps 28-feet overall, and as small as 16; some were lap-streak and some, clinker built. Delano in Fairhaven turned out a number, but most of them were built by the fishermen themselves, or by a neighbor. Dan Vincent who lived at Quitsa was one of the local experts.

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One chapter of history overlooked or forgotten concerns the fact that the Vineyard was not only self-supporting, but self-sustaining for nigh on to two centuries. Barring the interval during the Revolution and immediately following that struggle when times were hard indeed, she produced virtually all the necessities of life and certain of the luxuries. Only spices, sugar, tea, coffee, breadstuffs and the rum, which was considered quite essential, were imported, and these were obtained by barter or with money from the sale of Island products.

Meat, beef, pork and mutton: fish, both fresh and cured: vegetables and fodder: the clothes people wore, their shoes, much of their furniture and tableware — both pewter and silver, their coverlets and carriages, all were raised, caught, grown or made on the Island.

Naturally the production of these things involved attendant industries. Salt was a necessity, and salt works were operated in Tisbury and Edgartown where sea-water was evaporated in large pans located near the shores. Coopers plied their trade in all three villages, making barrels and casks or the larger tierces, complete with wooden hoops of hickory and willow. Kegs, firkins, "canty-pails", or butter-boxes, were also made by these same artisans.

Blacksmiths, and there were many of them, turned out the finest knives and tool-blades, oxchains, crow-bars and many other items from bar-iron. The ore came from the Vineyard's own bog-iron pits and was smelted in forges "on the Main, where it was much esteemed when . . . mixed with other ores." The silver used in casting spoons was obtained by melting down Mexican or Spanish dollars acquired in the West Indies trade.

This was the age of the flint-lock musket, and the Island had its own gunsmiths, competent to repair these firearms. The last man known to have been skilled at this art — for it was nothing less, was Harlow Crosby of Farm Neck. As he had obviously learned his trade from much more ancient men, it is probable that he followed the original methods, and thus a mention of them may be worth while. Powder-pans burned out on these old guns and new ones could be replaced only by brazing. Crosby burned the scrub oak roots for charcoal, and with this in his brazier, used brass as a bond in soldering on the new powder-pans. He is also believed to



have made small articles of brass such as latches and candle-sticks.

Shoe-makers, or cordwainers as they preferred to be called, were among the earliest settlers, and the several tanneries provided them with hides. The oakbark used in the tanning process was of course more than plentiful. Hatters are listed before 1800. Weavers were of great importance, and one of the first was Edward Hammett, brought here about 1720 to "give encouragement to clothing." Tradition has it that he was the son of an Algerian pirate actually named Hamed. His descendants, many of them, continued to follow the trade into this century.

A word might be said of furniture. Expensive pieces were brought to the Vineyard from England. One such, a serpentine front desk made by Hepplewhite in 1741 for Major Peter Norton, and delivered in 1748, still graces the parlor of a descendant on the Island. There is ample evidence that these imported pieces were copied by local craftsman. Native woods, principally cherry and applewood, were used, also those brought home from sea by whaleships. And on one occasion at least, a deckload of mahogany washed ashore at Edgartown to be made into Chippendale-type highboys, one of which is at the Historical Society.

Handles and fittings could be made at home, and such things as finishing and polishing were easily mastered. The result was that many people owned a few pieces of fine furniture that did not come from Europe but looked as though they might have. In point, and with reference to wood-working, the Athearn family made and played violins. And so skilful was one of the ancient Athearns that an instrument of his was mistaken by an expert for an Amati. The explanation was that "old Athearn" must have seen "one of them Amatis and copied it."

Beds were highly valued according to appraisals of early estates. They were four-poster rope beds having ticks of wild goose and duck down, which were placed on top of mattresses stuffed with sweet flag rushes.

Of the clothing referred to, a word or two might be said which may come as a surprise to many. Wool, of course, was the principal material used, for it was plentiful and possessed qualities which made it both lasting and suitable for the variable Vineyard weather. If anyone should shudder at the idea of working men wearing such heavy garments in summer time, the truth is, they didn't.

The summer dress of the early Vineyard settler consisted of a single garment, the smock. In old pictures of colonial troops, some of them are frequently shown wearing what was called the huntingshift. This is one and the same thing. Fashioned like a long shirt, it fell to the wearer's knees and was usually belted at the waist. With this, a pair of boots if he

was not wading in water, and a broad-brimmed hat of hide, braided corn-shucks or straw, the farmer or fisherman was equipped for his summer duties ashore or afloat.

Trousers, or pantaloons, (breeches were for dress) were rather shapeless as to legs but carefully fitted about the waist and hips. Suspenders had not been invented and the belt for supporting clothing was not yet in use. Therefore the trousers had to be so cut that nothing was required to keep them up, and because there was no underwear, they were heavily lined for winter wear.

Of women's apparel, much has been written and recorded. Actually the rule which seems to have been followed was to drape the feminine form in as many layers of fabric as the wearer could support. Female underwear as it is known today did not exist. The chemise was the intimate garment, close-fitting, light in weight, and falling about to the knees. Over this were draped, according to some of the oldest inhabitants, as many as fourteen petticoats, one of which perhaps being quilted, a type known as a Cape Horn petticoat. The dress, or gown went over these. Women of that period were not long-lived. Perhaps the weight of their clothing had something to do with this fact.

Exactly when the corset became common on the Vineyard is unknown, although it had been worn by ladies of fashion in England long before the Island was settled. It doubtless was hard to procure at first, and this fact led to a temporary abandonment of that "foundation" garment. However, with the rise of the whaling industry, the corset came into its own here as perhaps nowhere else. The corset of that period was a home-made device of quilted cloth, lined with long narrow pockets. These were to hold the long flat pieces of whale bone, about two inches wide, called busks. It was a pleasing custom in those days for the whaling boy-friend of a young girl to make a set of these busks for his adored, decorating them with etched patterns or views of whaling scenes, ships, public buildings, or whatever.

Stockings of course, were knitted, and while it is generally accepted that very young girls went bare-footed, they did not follow the practice up to any advanced age. At sixteen they were supposed to be marriageable, and there is no evidence that young matrons went about in so undignified a fashion. Shoes were heavy and not too gracefully shaped regardless of whether they were for men or women. The toes were quite square, the soles secured by means of wooden pegs. Many of them had buckles over the instep which were both useful for securing the shoe and decorative. Buckles were made of brass, pewter and silver. Fishermen's boots were of leather until the introduction of rubber early in the 19th century. These were kept supple when not in use by filling them with oil tried out of codlivers.



One further item deserving of mention is buttons, or rather lack of them. The garments of olden days had buttons only for decorative purposes. Lacing-strings or "trussings" as they were sometimes called, tie-strings and some varieties of the modern hook-and-eye combination were used. A revolutionary change in securing garments was brought about with the introduction of the "frog". It is said that a Chilmark Tilton was the first to design one of these for Island use. His adaptation was distinctly nautical being a "bight and toggle" arrangement similar to that used for the mooring of ships as far back as the Egyptians and Phoenicians. This was simply a loop in one end of a cord through which was drawn a stick attached by the middle to another. Tilton went on to improve on his invention by drilling pieces of bone, horn and wood, and fashioning real buttons.

Among the staples which had to be imported was, as mentioned above, bread stuffs, in other words, wheat flour. An attempt to produce this locally, however, was made during the middle of the 19th century by Dr. Daniel Fisher, Edgartown whaling magnate. With the guarantee to purchase their grain, he induced up-Island farmers to sow wheat, thresh and winnow it and bring it to his mill. This was located on the Old Mill River in North Tisbury at the spillway of the lower pond sometimes called "Crocker's". He also owned the mill-right on the upper pond known by his name. Both ponds were formed by dams of beautifully cut stone which may still be seen, although the gates and other wooden portions have long since disappeared.

Dr. Fisher imported his millstones from France and his miller from England. Four and six-horse wains carted the flour to Edgartown by way of the road he built across the Plains for his own convenience. There it was baked into hard-tack to supply whaleships at the Dr.'s own bakery which stood near the head of his (now Town) wharf. This was a short-lived industry, as wheat proved to be an uncertain crop for the Vineyard, and the mill was converted to grind corn.

One other industry of which little is known today was the manufacture of pumps, and wooden water and soil-pipes. More than fifty years ago strangers visiting the Island would exclaim over the fact that, although there were many deep wells, there were almost no well-sweeps, the ancient device by which water was lifted from the source of supply. Instead Vineyard farms and households were equipped with pumps made of wood, the visible portions gaily painted. Some were entirely of wood, others had iron spouts. Originally these were all Island-made on the Edgartown waterfront.

This was an industry that necessity instituted and developed. Whaling ships, schooners and sloops could, and did spring leaks, and in consequence had to be pumped out to prevent their sinking. The amphibious Vineyarders, who

were also shrewd in their own right, would not purchase anything if they could make it, hence the pump-works.

The process was simple enough, although it involved tremendous labor as the barrel of the pump was a log bored from end to end. It required eighteen feet of pump-barrel to reach from deck to keelson in a whaleship, and since many farm wells were no deeper, it was quite natural that farmers would purchase these pumps to replace the clumsy well-sweep. A few of the more enterprising connected sections of pump barrels with their kitchen sinks, and behold, the first Vineyard plumbing had made its appearance.

One last commercial enterprise of olden days bears mentioning, for this was conducted by the ladies, who knit literally thousands of pairs of stockings and mittens for sale both on and off-Island. They also produced an item listed as "wigs for seamen" which undoubtedly were stockingcaps rather than hirsute adornments. An 1807 account mentions for that year an inventory of 15,000 pairs of stockings, of mittens, 3000, and of wigs for seamen, 600. An old invoice of Capt. Seth Daggett's, who not only was a pilot but owned vessels in the coastwise trade, tells of selling 227 doz. stockings, 18 doz. socks and 108 wigs for \$469.80 in Philadelphia. And then there is the story told about Aunt Molly Merry of Holmes Hole, whose husband Joseph was a pilot. Whenever he went out to a ship, she would stock him up with stockings and mittens to sell. On one of these trips, the vessel was lost with all hands, and when the sad news was reported to her, she is said to have exclaimed: "Oh dear, all those stockings and mittens gone."

## CHAPTER IV

### WHALING AND SHIPPING

by Dionis C. and Sidney N. Riggs

Along North Water Street in Edgartown one sees a row of large, white-painted houses, different in architecture, but alike in their simplicity, sturdiness, purity of line, and in the interest of doorway and window treatment. These are some of the houses that were built for Edgartown's whaling captains.

There are other captains' houses farther back from the harbor, and even along the up-Island lanes. Some of them have captain's walks, or lookouts, on the roof, for better vision of the sea. Around the houses are gardens, still growing the old fashioned flowers of an earlier day, still retaining some of the spirit of adventure that characterized the days when Captain Milton brought a small pagoda tree from China to plant beside his doorway, a tree that now overshadows the captain's house on South Water Street.

Many of these houses have passed into other hands than those of the families who built them. Most of the new owners have tried to keep them in harmony with the town that made its chief growth in the heyday of the whaling era, a period that lasted roughly one hundred years in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and left its impress on many New England seaports.

Whaling on Martha's Vineyard started before the first settlers arrived. It was carried on by the Indians, who watched for whales from the shore and went after them in their canoes. The new colonists soon learned from them and established a system of lookouts and signals so that whales at a distance could be sighted and boats made ready to set out in pursuit. The whales were towed ashore, and try-works were erected on the beach where the blubber was cut into pieces and tried out. Records in the archives tell of the men who were appointed for duty as "whale-cutters" for the year 1652.

The oil from the whales thus captured was found to be so valuable that bigger boats were built to go farther offshore, starting a period of great achievement on the Island. Boat building and industries allied to whaling were instituted until the larger towns, Edgartown and Holmes Hole, now known as Vineyard Haven, were alive with the activity of riggers, caulkers, sailmakers, coopers, blacksmiths, and all the artisans and shop-keepers that catered to expanding prosperity.

Throughout the country there was a continual increase in the consumption of oil by lamps and by industry. It soon became an item of export that vied with the commerce of the mother country.

At intervals during this time, England was at war with France or Spain, and these countries preyed on our shipping. The whalers had to fight French or Spanish privateers, and pirates took advantage of the troubled times. The English wished to use our seamen for their own purposes. The whalemen had to contend with all of this in addition to the natural hazards of their profession. The history of the whale-fishery during the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century tells of many losses at this period, when whalers left the eastern seaboard to search for whales in the Atlantic from the Grand Banks to the Western Islands. Vineyard whalers were taken by the French in 1746 and 1753.

Whaling prospered in spite of these difficulties until the beginning of the Revolution. There were twelve vessels in the whaling fleet from Martha's Vineyard at this time.

During the period 1775 — 1783, however, there was very little chance for whaling. The British captured or destroyed ships, whaleboats, and stores in Edgartown and Holmes Hole harbors. When whaleships were captured at sea, the men were given a choice of whaling for the British, fighting for them against their compatriots, or becoming prisoners. The ship owners and the seamen who escaped, turned to privateering. It was several years before the whaling industry recovered from the effects of the war and the depression that followed.

In 1791 the whalers began to go around Cape Horn into the newly discovered whaling grounds in the Pacific Ocean. From this time, except for another interval during the War of 1812, whaling became tremendously important. Ships were built of larger tonnage and along sturdier lines to brave the storms, and to accommodate larger crews and cargoes. After the long voyage it was more practical to stay in the Pacific several years, sending oil and bone home by returning vessels whenever the opportunity came.

Jeremiah Pease, in his diary dated December 17, 1820, writes, "This day Ship *Apollo*, Capt. Martin Arey, master, sails for the Pacific Ocean with the good wishes of every good citizen."

"December 20. This day the Ship *Apollo* sails from the Cove in company with the ships *Planter*, *Pacific*, *Charles*, and *Ruby*. The *Apollo* outsails the famous ship *Planter*, both ships under single reef topsails beating to windward." The *Planter* was from Nantucket.

"January 14, 1821. Ship *Loan* of Edgt., Capt. Matthew Norton, arrives in H. Hole with 1500 bbl. oil. Joyfull news."

He tells of attending a prayer meeting aboard the *Almira*. "The congregation was very large and the discourse solemn."

The meeting was conducted with great propriety, a light shower of rain fell during divine service, there being an awning over the deck prevented any material inconvenience." Five days later the "Ship *Almira*, Capt. Abraham Osborn, haws off to anchor, ready for sea." The next day she sailed for the Pacific.

Nantucket, which up to this time had been the most important whaling center, partly because of the nearness to the Atlantic whaling grounds, now found difficulty in getting these larger ships over the bar in her harbor. They were often sent to the Vineyard for outfitting. Later, New Bedford supplanted both Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket in outfitting and supplying whalers.

Men from the islands continued to captain and man the whaleships, however, and vessels that hailed from New Bedford, Fairhaven or Rhode Island ports were often commanded by Vineyarders. There are pictures in the Dukes County Historical Society of one hundred and ten whaling captains from Edgartown alone.

The portraits are those of men with the strength, courage, intelligence and ingenuity that characterized the whaling captains of that day. A few were rough, self-made men, but most of them were brought up and educated in the tradition of responsibility for their ships, for their men, for the good name of their island in the scattered ports into which their vessels sailed. Promising boys were sent to the academy in Edgartown run by Leavitt Thaxter, a Harvard man, and an educator who, like most of the Vineyard men, had spent several years at sea. Here the young men who were to become sea captains were taught to be navigators and gentlemen.

During the three to five years of a voyage the captain was monarch of his ship, making decisions for survival in sudden storms, for the welfare of the sailors in port as well as in the dangerous pursuit of whales. He had to amputate legs and arms often injured in the whaleboats, to provide against scurvy, dose tropical fevers. He had to be doctor, lawyer, clergyman, and diplomat in foreign ports, as well as navigator.

Sea captains also took the place of fathers and teachers for their men, for the crew lists were made up of boys, often sons of Vineyard families who considered a voyage at sea a necessity for a well rounded education. One authority, in writing of this period says, "A whaling skipper generally knew the record, if not the pedigree of every man who sailed under his command."

A woman still living in West Tisbury remembers her grandfather's interest in the man who had been cabin-boy on one of his ships, in the neighbor who had been his mate, his scorn for the village carpenter who, as boatsteerer, had hurled his iron at a whale and missed. In fact there was quite a feud between captain and carpenter. Freed from the

discipline of the ship the erstwhile boatsteerer protested against the captain's little dog who always barked at him.

"Damn it all, captain, I'll shoot him some day."

"Go ahead," the captain answered calmly, "If you can't hit a whale you can't hit a dog."

Years later the captain's widow complained to her granddaughter, "That carpenter made a miserable job of my front steps. I believe he wanted to get even with your grandfather for that dog episode."

When two ships found themselves near each other on the whaling grounds they "spoke", or set signals, and one captain would be rowed over to the other ship to "gam" or to exchange greetings and news. On one occasion a young homesick third mate from the Vineyard wrote in the log-book while cruising in the South Pacific, "Spoke the *Luminary*, and father came on board and glad was I to see him." That was where Vineyarders often met. The whalemens received their mail through chance meetings with other ships. Sometimes letters and well worn copies of the Vineyard Gazette were left in a mail box on Charles Island in the Galapagos where all the whalers went for the huge turtles that gave needed variety to their diet.

Whaleships carried crews of forty or so, more men than were needed to sail the ship. When a whale was sighted all hands were busy in the chase, in towing the carcass to the ship and making it fast alongside. If it were a sperm whale, they bailed the spermaceti from its head. From all types of whales they cut the blubber in a continuous spiral strip, chopping off pieces that could be tried out in the huge kettles that were set up on deck over a blazing fire in the try-works. All hands worked day and night as long as they caught whales, but there were periods of inactivity when the hunting was poor. This was when the men worked on "scrimshaw", or whalebone carving. Private collections and those in the Historical Society museum show many examples of delicate and artistic work done by the sailors. This is considered a true "folk art".

In an earlier day there were seashells and coral from the South Seas at the doorways of houses where the whalemens lived. Now they are treasured to grace mantels and fireplaces indoors. Today one finds in Vineyard homes huge Chinese vases, lacquer cabinets inlaid with mother of pearl, chests of camphor wood, a "captain's chair" and a baby's crib of the algaroba wood found in the jungles of Ecuador, and fashioned by the ship's carpenter. The "what-nots" formerly held Chinese toys, an ostrich egg on a teakwood stand carved in an intricate design, shell necklaces and savage charms. The bookcases held rows of log-books, that became so commonplace they were given to the children to use as scrap-books. Examples of the things that sailors brought from sea



can be seen in the Historical Society museum, showing something of the vision of far places that opened up to the children of the whaling era.

Often the captains took their wives on long Pacific voyages. In *Whaling Wives* by Whiting and Hough there are stories of thirty-seven Vineyard women who went to sea with their husbands. Sometimes their children were born in the consulates of foreign ports. Aboard ship these babies were bathed on deck in warm Pacific rains while the sailors watched and laughed at them.

From 1835 to 1845 whaling reached its zenith. During this period whaling captains and officers were romantic figures, and even the boys who shipped as crew were envied. A young man who wanted to learn could advance from foremast hand or cabin boy to boatsteerer, then to officer. Each man had a certain "lay" or percentage of the profits, which in those days often amounted to a considerable sum. This was the time when houses were built with the wealth that poured into the communities that sent out whalers. The Methodist Church in Edgartown was built then.

The whalers were explorers and discoverers, but this was incidental to their trade. Ships sent out to take over "new territory" in the names of their governments often found American whalers trading for supplies with the natives there.

It was the whalers which were the first ships to enter San Francisco harbor after news of the Gold Rush in '49. Capt. Henry Cleaveland of West Tisbury, sailing the *Niantic*, heard, when he put in at Valparaiso, that men were waiting at Panama for passage to the gold fields. He had the whaling gear supplanted by berths, stopped at Panama for the eager passengers, picked up the trade winds in the Pacific, and sailed through the Golden Gate in July 1849. The brig *Rodman* from Chilmark and the Edgartown whaler *Splendid* were sent to California then. Capt. James Claghorn of Vineyard Haven brought the first virgin gold to the island. Many Vineyarders joined the Argonauts, and for a few years whaling took a secondary place in the news.

But the whalers were soon back at sea, and whale oil was becoming more valuable than ever. Now the forecastles were swarming with seamen from all ports of the world. A captain who had looked with dismay at having an Irishman in his crew instead of the local boys now took it for granted that he must accept any hands he could get. Whalers began to get a reputation for sloppy seamanship, bad manners, and ruthlessness. Old time captains, saying they didn't know what the world was coming to, retired. Many of them settled down on up-Island farms, invested in fast horses and practiced the latest methods in farming, though they were seldom temperamentally suited to be farmers. Or they bought little stores

as near as possible to the waterfront where they could "gam" with their customers. Practically all the shops along Main Street in Edgartown, and many in Vineyard Haven, were once presided over by sea captains, home from the sea. They got some satisfaction, no doubt, from the cargoes brought from foreign ports, the Joppa oranges, the coffee from Brazil, the kegs of pickled limes. They did not always relax their discipline, even on shore. In one case the grocery boy failed to give his employer the greeting which was customary for the first appearance on deck. "Good Morning!!" the captain shouted so loud the poor boy was frightened.

It was time these men of the old school retired, for a great rival to the whaling industry had been born in Titusville, Pennsylvania, in 1859, when the first oil well was sunk, and petroleum became a commercial product.

This was only the beginning of the rivalry. Whales were still the chief source of oil, and when the War of the Rebellion started in 1861 the few petroleum wells could not begin to supply the demand. But a new problem was posed by the Confederate raiders. The *Alabama* was the most feared of the vessels outfitted to cruise the Atlantic and prey on our shipping. The Vineyard whaleship *Ocmulgee*, Capt. Abraham Osborn, Jr. captured and sunk off the island of Fernando de Noronha, was only one of the many casualties. It seemed particularly hard for Vineyard men to be taken by the *Alabama*, whose commander, Raphael Semmes, in better days, had been a guest at Martha's Vineyard. Other Confederate ships left southern ports as privateers, and shipping companies hesitated to send out their vessels.

The Federal Navy had blockaded the southern ports to prevent raiders from leaving and supplies from entering. To make it more effective, however, someone conceived the idea of sinking ships at the mouths of major harbors. Forty, most of them old whalers, were bought by the United States Government, loaded with stone, and sailed away in two groups. The First Stone Fleet and the Second were sent to their final resting places in Charleston and Savannah harbors. A Vineyard ship, the *American* of Edgartown, and ships that had been sailed by Vineyarders, were among them.

Many ships succeeded in reaching the Pacific, however, went up into the Okhotsk Sea, or beyond the Bering Strait, and considering themselves safe, went on with the business of catching whales. But the raider *Shenandoah* had also entered the Pacific. It went into the northern waters where the whalers had congregated, and captured and destroyed many of them. The destruction continued for several months after the war had ended. Capt. Francis Smith of Chilmark lost his ship, the *William Thompson*, and was taken prisoner aboard the *Shenandoah*. Captain Charles Worth's bark *Edward* and the

*General Pike*, sailed by Captain Shadrach Tilton, were both captured by the *Shenandoah* in 1865.

As a result of this war the whaling fleet was sadly depleted. There were captains with no command, and seamen with no ships to sail. The industry, as it was known in the heyday of whaling, was dead.

Still names of whalers — ships and men, and even names of whales persisted in the everyday conversation of island people. There was Old Paita Tom, the whale who was supposed to pilot ships into that Peruvian harbor, and Moby Dick, the mythical white whale. Herman Melville got his inspiration and the background for that most famous novel, Moby Dick, when he sailed with Captain Valentine Pease, an Edgartown sea-captain. From his personal experience Melville speaks with admiration of the skill and courage of the Indians from Gay Head. They were much sought after on all whaleships because of their traditional skill with the harpoon.

As for ships, the *Essex* and the *Ann Alexander* were two whose names are written in all the annals of whaling because whales, not content with smashing the whale-boats turned on the ships themselves and sank them. Captain John S. DeBlois, who survived the wrecking of the *Ann Alexander*, came to West Tisbury to the wedding of Capt. James Cleaveland's daughter. The two sea-captains, with their wives, had met in Paita, Peru, when the little girl was christened Henrietta DeBlois.

The *Globe* hailed from Nantucket, but she stopped in Edgartown in 1822 to complete her complement of officers, men, and supplies. That vessel was the scene of one of the most horrible mutinies in the history of whaling. The trouble started apparently because the ringleader was jealous of the third mate's wrestling prowess. The effect on many Vineyarders can be imagined by reading Jeremiah Pease's account of the ship's return. "October 20, 1824. The solemn news of the ship *Globe* of Nantucket arrives. Went to H. Hole to carry the news of the death of Capt. Thomas Worth to his brother H. P. Worth, the scene was affecting. Thomas was one of my intimate friends from childhood until I parted with him about 22 months previous to this date."

"November 14. Ship *Globe* of Nantucket arrives commanded by Capt. James King of Brewster. Gilbert Smith, Peter and Stephen Kidder, arrived in her being all that belonged to this town of the original crew that came home in the ship, the mutineers having killed Thomas Worth, master, Wm. Beetle, mate, John Lumbert, 2d mate, and Nathaniel Fisher 3d mate, all of this town (Edgartown) except Mr. Lumbert who was of Chilmark. Left at the Mulgrave Island Rowland Jones and Columbus Worth of this town — "

Another mutiny, similar in atrocity and in lack of provocation occurred on the ship *Junior*, Captain Archibald Mellen, Jr., of Edgartown.

The *Sharon* and *Awoshonks* both had serious encounters with treacherous natives on Pacific islands where they touched. In both of these, Vineyard men distinguished themselves in the bloody fighting that took place.

The ships most often and most lovingly discussed in Vineyard homes were the ones almost entirely sailed by Vineyarders, financed by Vineyard money, and sent out by the Vineyard shipping firms of Abraham Osborn, Grafton Norton, Coffin and Darrow, Thomas Bradley, John Holmes, and others. The *Splendid*, the *Vineyard*, the *Almira*, the *Champion*, the *Ocmulgee*, the *Pocahontas* were some of the vessels whose arrivals in Edgartown or Holmes Hole brought wealth and homecoming young men back to the Island year after year.

Before the complete decline of sperm-whaling, a new kind of whale had been discovered. In 1848 Capt. Fred Manter of West Tisbury, sailing in the *Ocmulgee*, and Captain Royce of Sag Harbor both entered Bering Strait in a fog. When it cleared they found themselves in the midst of a school of bowhead whales, a species not previously known. They were easier to capture because they had not been frightened, and when taken yielded good oil and baleen, a kind of flexible bone. This led more whalers up into the Arctic, making stops at the Hawaiian, or Sandwich Islands, as a base to replenish crews and supplies. They were careful to return from the north before the Arctic ice thickened. Later San Francisco was used as a port for these vessels and Vineyarders made the trip across the country by train to sail them.

At the beginning of this period of Arctic whaling there was great rivalry between the sperm-whalers, or South Seas whalers, and the bowhead, or Arctic men. Even the women took part in the discussions. One woman whose husband and sons had been sperm-whalers hid her Chinese tablecloth when her son-in-law wanted to entertain his friends. "I was afraid those Arctic captains would get ice on it," she explained.

But women actually were the ones to give Arctic whaling a new impetus, for fashion decreed hoop skirts and boned corsets, for which purpose the baleen was ideal. Each year ships braved the frigid north to secure the bowhead whales and they had many Vineyard captains and sailors aboard them. Farther and farther into the Arctic waters they went. They found that in October a northeast wind generally prevailed which blew the drift ice out to sea, keeping a path clear along the coast. In 1871 the weather failed to follow this pattern. The ice came early, bore down on the ships and cracked them as though they were fragile things. Thirty-three ships were wrecked. The crews were saved and two



ships with Vineyard captains escaped to Honolulu with the rescued men and news of the disaster. Vineyarders at home did not know what had happened until the following spring.

There were still Vineyard men willing to brave the dangers of the Arctic. As time went on they became better acquainted with conditions and realized that by spending the winter in the north they would be ready for a season's work as soon as the ice broke up. They made Herschel Island their headquarters and to supplement their supplies, they hunted game in the interior and traded with the Eskimos.

Soon steam whalers came into use. Capt. Stephen Cottle of West Tisbury and Capt. Hartson Bodfish of Vineyard Haven, among others, took the steam whaleships *Belvidere* and *Beluga* from San Francisco up into the north. A Vineyard man, who went to the Arctic in those days tells of seeing Mrs. Cottle, the captain's wife, calmly sitting in her cabin propped up with pillows, knitting, while the vessel rolled and pitched in a heavy sea. Capt. Park Vincent of West Tisbury, Capt. Edwin Coffin of Edgartown, Capt. Ellsworth West and Capt. George Fred Tilton of Chilmark belong to this period.

In the account, Cap'n George Fred, which originally appeared in the Vineyard Gazette, Joseph Chase Allen tells a story of supreme adventure when George Fred Tilton walked 3,000 miles across Arctic ice and the tip of Alaska to get help for the nine whaleships stranded there in 1897. Six were crushed and sunk, the *Belvidere*, the *Bowhead*, and the *Wanderer* escaped, and took aboard the crews of the lost ships. Supplies were running low, however, and George Fred volunteered to get help. Starting from Point Barrow with two Eskimos he walked across Alaska, and completed the journey by rowing thirty-seven miles in a leaky punt to Kodiak Island, where he could get a ship for San Francisco.

But the need for Arctic whaling diminished, the price of whalebone went down, the oil was supplanted. The first steamship, the *Belvidere*, was also with the *Karluk* and the *Jeanette*, the last of the Arctic fleet.

The *Wanderer*, relic of the sperm whaling days when Vineyard masters had commanded her, still lingered at the wharf in New Bedford. She was used as background for the motion picture *Down to the Sea in Ships*, with Vineyarders doubling as sailors and actors. Finally the old ship sailed on her last voyage, (1924) went aground at Cuttyhunk in a gale, and was wrecked. The *Charles W. Morgan*, which many times sailed under Vineyard captains and brought back good cargoes, lives on at Mystic Seaport, Conn. Last of the old windships of the great whaling fleet, she is both a museum and a memorial.

## SHIPPING

The early settlers in 1642 must have found Martha's Vineyard a delightful place. It is to the credit of their descendants that much of the old charm has been preserved. There is no place here for roadside signs or hot-dog stands. People come to enjoy the scenery and to escape from the things that have spoiled so many resorts.

The early settlers had little need for communication with the mainland. They were well supplied with the products of their own farms and fisheries. These, with the island sheep and cattle, furnished a rich life.

For the few, who wished to carry on business or social intercourse with people on the mainland, many problems arose. There was no ferry service before 1700. Prior to this, the island residents and visitors had to rely upon their own or chartered craft. Many of them found passage on coastwise vessels to the nearest mainland ports.

In 1703, Isaac Chase was appointed by the court to keep a public ferry for the transportation of man and beast from Martha's Vineyard to Suckanesset (Falmouth). Chase was permitted to charge six shillings for man and horse, or three shillings for each person. These were considerable sums, as judged by present day standards, and must have made a respectable bulk in those days when paid in barter such as goose feathers or corn. Chase's ferry, in connection with his tavern at Holmes Hole, made a very necessary combination. The infrequency of boat trips across Vineyard Sound and the difficulty in traveling the roads on horseback made a pause for rest and refreshment a necessity.

From this beginning started a long line of ferries, as well as a Vineyard hotel tradition which still has a Chase as one of its hosts.

There was a succession of private enterprise ferries until 1750, when service was practically abandoned. Rates had risen to five shillings per person and people were ferried across to the Cape only under press of extreme necessity. A group of twenty-three men, representing the three towns on the Island, petitioned Governor William Shirley, the Council and the House of Representatives of the province to provide a remedy. Aid was granted to subsidize a ferry. The citizens of the Island were taxed on their personal goods and property to furnish this aid, even as they are today.

In 1800 regular boats were operating from New Bedford. In 1807 Nantucket was included in the run. Thirty years later there was regular service with two boats making the daily trip. One of these boats was a sloop, the *Ann Eliza*, which was captained by John Merry. The skill of the Vineyard master made up for the small size of the vessel.

During the 1830's, steamboat service was started. No records exist, but oral tradition gives us the *Marco Bozzaris*



and, later, the *Telegraph*, both commanded by Captain Barker. These sailed from New Bedford to Edgartown, touching at what is now Vineyard Haven. A later steamer, the *Massachusetts* captained by Lot Phinney of Nantucket, soon found a formidable rival in the *Naushon* commanded by Holmes W. Smith of Edgartown. Captain Smith would wait at the Edgartown wharf until the *Massachusetts* reached Hawes Shoal, east of Chappaquiddick, then he would steam out with the *Naushon* to round East Chop and dock just ahead of his rival. Insult was thus added to the injury of scooping up most of the passengers and freight for New Bedford. On one occasion the *Massachusetts* burned tar to get greater speed but still the *Naushon* showed her heels to her smoky rival. Captain Smith had a dried herring hoisted on a pole as a pennant of victory.

The Nantucketers referred to these herrings as "Old Town turkeys" because they claimed that the "Old Towners" or residents of Edgartown, favored this delicacy. The "Old Towners", on the other hand, assured everyone that the people of Nantucket lived on whale blubber, from which the oil had been tried, so they nick-named them "Scraps".

In 1862 a new boat, the *Monohansett* was put in service. It was soon drafted by the Federal Government to transport troops, and was later used by General Grant as a dispatch boat. The *Monohansett* served her Country and the Island well until 1901 when she was sold to operate out of Vineyard waters. She promptly ran ashore, and as the historian Banks suggests, died of a broken back and, probably, a broken heart.

Island ferries have served in other war efforts. It is a tribute to the seaworthiness of these craft that, during World War II, they could be sailed to England and used as hospital ships in the turbulent English Channel.

Other island vessels have served our nation during its history. In April 1775, Capt. Nathan Smith, of Holmes Hole, in a whale boat armed with three swivel guns and manned by a small crew of Vineyarders, captured the armed schooner *Volante*, a tender to the British cruiser *Scarborough*. Capt. Benjamin Smith, with twenty three seamen and fifteen militiamen, manned the sloop *Liberty* and captured the transport *Herriot* on March 7, 1776. On March 23d Capt. Nathan Smith again distinguished himself by capturing the *Bedford* loaded with stores and provisions for the British army and fleet. His military career, which started in the French and Indian War and continued to the close of the Revolution, was marked by daring acts.

In addition to the vessels financed by the Vineyarders, and commissioned as privateers, many of the young men served with mainland privateers and in the newly formed United States Navy. A host of Vineyard fishermen and sailors, in

addition to the whaler men, were captured by British war vessels. Many of them refused impressment to serve against their Country and were taken to the prison ships, notably the *Jersey*, or sent to Plymouth or Dartmoor. There is a long list of those who died as a result of this imprisonment.

Every war has found Vineyard men using their skill to man or to command war vessels. Edwin Coffin of Edgartown, a whaling captain, held a noncommissioned rating in the Federal Navy. In an official citation he is credited with saving a warship off the Carolina coast. His knowledge of the sea was well known to the commander, who turned over his brass trumpet to the Vineyard officer. When the battleship, with its five hundred men, was clear of the lee shore, Coffin relinquished the symbol of authority. In addition to his citation he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

There are many interesting sea captains, other than those who commanded whalers. Capt. George G. Cleveland of Vineyard Haven spent many years in the most northerly of the Hudson Bay trading posts, living much of the time with the Eskimos. Capt. Robert L. Jackson of Edgartown, whose fishing craft was sunk by a German submarine in the first World War, made his way to safety in an open boat from a hundred miles off shore. His rescue of yachtsmen, who capsized during a gale in Vineyard Sound, was treated by him as incidental. A medal awarded him for this rescue, indicated that others considered it more than an incident.

Capt. Levi Jackson held two Carnegie medals for life saving. One of these was for the rescue of fifteen persons in a January blizzard of 1910, when the six-master *Mertie B. Crowley* went ashore on South Beach near Katama. Captain Jackson and his volunteer crew of four men, all from Edgartown, were recognized in the award as having performed one of the most daring rescues in Vineyard history.

Capt. Zebulon Tilton, brother of George Fred, was a coastwise skipper. His personality, communicated to his schooner the *Alice Wentworth*, made the two of them almost national figures. Captain Zeb appeared on *We the People* and delighted many with his salty wit. A trip on the *Alice Wentworth* was a never to be forgotten experience when shared with Captain Zeb and his crew. The skipper has gone, but the *Alice Wentworth* still serves in the windjammer cruises along the Maine coast.

Some of the Vineyard captains were adopted sons, coming from Nova Scotia, the Azores and other seafaring communities. One of the most colorful of these was Capt. Joshua Slocum of West Tisbury, a Nova Scotian by birth, who rebuilt a broken down 36-foot sloop and sailed a voyage of 46,000 miles alone, in the course of which he circumnavigated the globe.

Boatbuilding was one of the earliest trades of the colonists. It was carried on by individuals at first for their own personal use, then, as one man showed a particular knack or aptitude for laying a keel or shaping a plank, he would agree to set up a small sloop or a pinky for his neighbor. And gradually a boatyard would come into being. With the rise of whaling and coastwise trading, there was a great demand for men to sign on as ship's carpenters, and these often did boat work between voyages.

The first boats built on the island were of necessity small. But, by 1850 Bradley in Vineyard Haven was turning out some very respectable craft, among them the schooner *Leroy M. Yale*, 109 tons, which took a Vineyard mining company to the California Gold Fields in 1849 before entering the coastwise trade. A contemporary account of the launching of the schooner *Thomas Bradley*, 193 tons, in 1855, mentions that it was made of Vineyard oak, and James C. Cannon was the master builder. Possibly the largest vessel to slide off the Bradley ways was the brig *Island Queen*, 106 feet, 279 tons, launched in 1860.

Vineyard Haven has always been the boatbuilding center of the island. There are references to ways on Bass Creek before the Revolution, but the names of the owners are not established. Dennis Dexter operated a boatyard just south of Huzzleton's Hollow, and no doubt assisted in outfitting the *William and Joseph*, the ill-fated whaleship whose loss almost bankrupted the town in 1841. The greatest demand during the 19th century was for pilot boats which took these specially trained men to and from their jobs. These had to be fast, and seaworthy, for it was a highly competitive profession, the first man to hail a ship signaling for a pilot, being taken aboard. Fast boats are still designed and built in Vineyard Haven today, but they are, for the most part, sport-fishermen.

Edgartown had her share of shipwrights, too, although her interests were more in outfitting than actual construction. Joseph Dunham, 1741-1796, is the first on record, and Uriah Morse the best known. There were marine railways beside North Wharf a century or more ago, built for Capt. John O. Morse and Gustavus Baylies. More recently, and up until 1955, Manuel Swartz Roberts built catboats in the building opposite the Town Dock now the Art Association gallery. One boatyard still operates in the town with pleasure craft a specialty.

The Noman's Land boat, favorite of the up-Island fishermen is described in Chapter III.

Prior to the beginning of the 19th century any message sent to or from the Vineyard had to be carried. In 1802 the Salem Gazette carried an advertisement of a telegraph line that would report ships, cargoes and passengers at the

Vineyard. This information would reach Boston, Salem, Newburyport, Portsmouth and Portland with its complicated system of lights and flags, which had been invented by Jonathan Grout, Jr. It gives some idea of the importance of the Vineyard in coastwise shipping even at that early date.

In 1845 there was a semaphore system operating between the Vineyard and Nantucket used mainly for relaying whaling information. A staff was erected on Sampson's Hill, Chappaquiddick, the highest point at the east end of the island, but was later moved to East Chop near the lighthouse.

Samuel F. B. Morse's invention of the magnetic telegraph in 1843 was put in use between Nantucket and the Vineyard in 1857. It extended by way of Maddaket and Tucker-nuck and rendered irregular service until 1861 when it was abandoned.

The United States Signal Service laid a cable between the islands and Woods Hole. It was planned to aid in the forecasting of weather, but the public was permitted to use it when it did not interfere with government work. This line was subject to frequent breaks by vessels anchoring in Vineyard Sound. In 1888 a new line was run from Gay Head to Naushon.

About this time the Bell Telephone system was introduced on the Island but its service was limited. Eight years later, in 1895, Dr. C. F. Lane built an independent line which was operated from a switchboard in the Lane Building in Vineyard Haven and ran to Oak Bluffs and up-Island to Gay Head. It was discontinued just before World War I. Many islanders recall seeing Dr. Lane's buggy with its horse tied to one of the telephone poles, while the lanky physician in frock coat and top hat climbed to repair the line.

The social and newsworthy multi-party lines are now giving way to the dial system. Except for infrequent gales and ice storms, the service is uninterrupted and closely tied in with the nation and the world. Like the transportation to the Vineyard, it permits the islanders to be away from the world and yet part of it.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMER RESORT

by Henry Beetle Hough

The rise of Martha's Vineyard as a summer resort may be said to have begun at any of several convenient dates. Stretching a point, one may consider Bartholomew Gosnold and his men the first summer visitors as far back as 1602, for they came in May and were delighted by the climate and the idyllic surroundings. Or, take Nathaniel Hawthorne, who sojourned on the Island for most of the summer of 1835; or Daniel Webster, who came to visit his friend Dr. Daniel Fisher in the big house next to the Methodist Church on Main Street, Edgartown, in August, 1849.

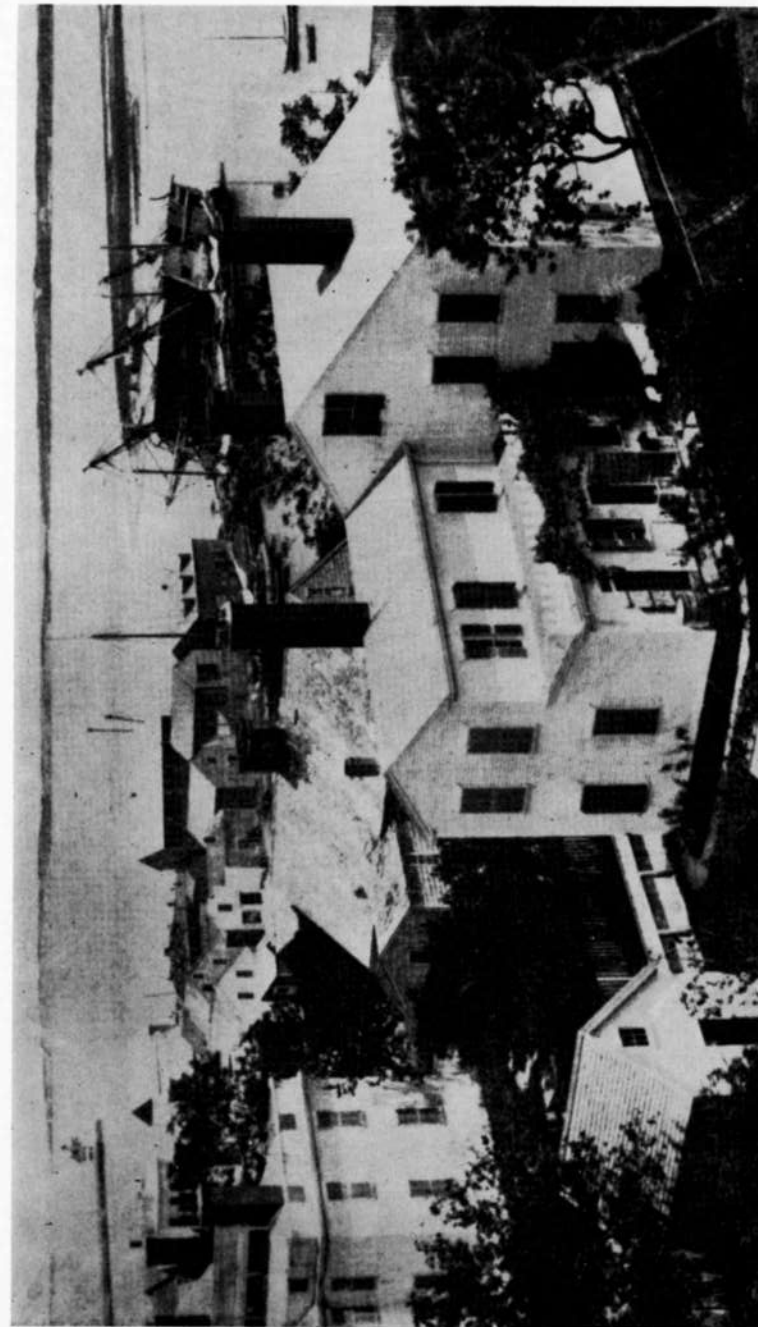
But summer resorts generally did not acquire their present significance until the growth of American cities brought a sharp distinction between city and country life, and made it either desirable or necessary for families to seek the seashore or the mountains for relief in what was known as "the heated term." Once it had been usual for country people to go to the city on certain holidays such as the Fourth of July, to enjoy the excitement of crowds, band concerts, and so on; but presently the trend was reversed, and holidays came to mean an outpouring from city to country.

The new era was ready to burst into flower following the Civil War, and Martha's Vineyard was one of the first of all summer sanctuaries.

There had been various premonitory symptoms. For one, a squadron of the New York Yacht Club visited Edgartown as early as the summer of 1858, and a dance was arranged in the town hall. The sailing in Island waters was excellent, and the harbors were so attractive that these yachtsmen and others were certain to appear each summer in increasing numbers.

For another, various retired whaling captains and a few others went into what was called the hotel business, although it usually consisted of taking boarders. To these establishments came sojourners who would later be referred to as summer visitors.

Some of the Island's physical attractions gained increasing fame and were soon bringing tourists: the Gay Head cliffs, of course, which were often inspected by visitors who were put up overnight at the home of the lightkeeper or in some



from stereopticon view  
EDGARTOWN HARBOR, ABOUT 1872, SHOWING WHALESHIP HOVE DOWN



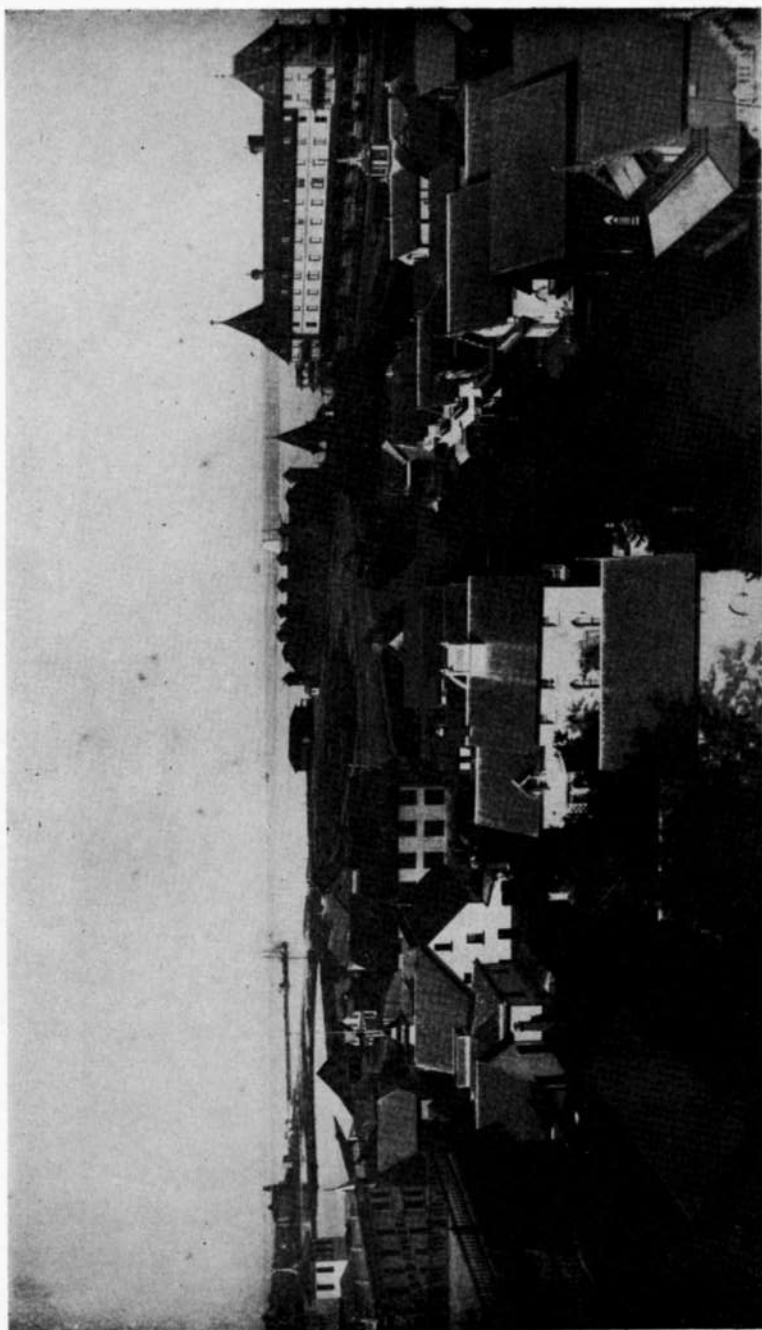


photo by Chamberlain  
EARLY VIEW OF OAK BLUFFS, SHOWING OLD SEA VIEW HOTEL

other dwelling; the surf on South Beach, which was sometimes described as rivalling the spectacle of Niagara; and, most of all, the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting.

The camp meeting, as set forth elsewhere, began in 1835 when Jeremiah Pease and other Methodists drove out from Edgartown and selected a remote oak grove, overlooking a fine lake of blue water, for an appropriate site. Oak Bluffs now stands at this place, but in 1835 almost all was wilderness. The nearest settlement was Eastville on the shore of Vineyard Haven harbor. The present Beach Road to Vineyard Haven did not exist. Winding, sandy back roads were the only land route to Edgartown and it was easier to travel by water.

This the first campers did, rafting their belongings ashore. A preacher's stand was built out of driftwood, along with a shelter in which the clergy could be bedded down in straw. Nine tents were pitched in a semi-circle, most of them improvised out of sailcloth, to accommodate different church groups, and canvas partitions separated the men from the women campers. Like the clergy, the laity slept on straw on the ground.

Seats were made from split logs, with pegs driven into the ground to support them. The whole area cleared of underbrush, was "not so large but a marksman might throw a pebble across it with sufficient force to kill a bird." Preaching and prayer services were held for a week, morning, noon, and night, and although only a few hundred persons were in attendance, from communities round about, there were sixty-five converts.

In the summer of 1836 "brethren were present from New Bedford, Fairhaven, Falmouth, Nantucket, South Yarmouth, Sandwich, Fall River, Bristol, and several other places." No one foresaw that this early camp meeting with its primitive accommodations would grow into a famous summer resort, yet the contributing elements were recognized from the beginning. Said a visitor in 1837: "The grove selected for this meeting is one of the most charming I have ever witnessed. I have attended forty camp meetings, save one, but have never before seen so beautiful a spot for this sacred purpose."

The Island atmosphere with its warm days and cool nights, the softness of the air, the immediate proximity of the sea, the infusion of fragrances from bayberry, blackberry runners, sumach, and other wild growth — all this advanced the interests of the camp meeting and also made certain that sooner or later visitors would arrive early and stay late, enjoying the spot for its own sake, and not limiting themselves to a week of camp meeting.

In 1842 there were forty tents on the ground and a throng of some 2,500 attended the great Sunday climax of the meetings; in 1849 there were fifty tents, by 1851 at least a

hundred, with sixty ministers and congregations counted in thousands. By 1855 two hundred tents were pitched, and by 1858 three hundred and twenty. So it went.

The camp meeting was marked by three outstanding occasions, the Love Feast, the Parting, and the Sacrament. The first of these was described as a time of "general victory and of general triumph with the people of the Lord." All the campers gathered together and presented testimonies, one by one. Sometimes, in an hour, as many as a hundred and fifty would be heard giving "pointed professions of perfect love." The ceremony was "a pleasing family interview" at which all could speak of "their age in Christ."

As to the Sacrament, sometimes the Lord's Supper was administered to more than two hundred communicants under auspices of power and solemnity. For the Parting, the campers gathered together, forming a procession, two and two, "around the area within the circle of tents, singing at the same time an appropriate hymn, and finally all halting, and then each passing by every other one, taking them by the hand and bidding them farewell." This was "truly a ceremony on which multitudes of spectators looked with the deepest emotion."

Hebron Vincent, historian of the camp meeting, wrote of the power at Wesleyan Grove: "The cry for a clean heart becomes general, and the Lord answers in the full salvation of many souls. Numbers who are not easily excited are shorn of their strength, and lie for hours without the power either to speak or move. Some who have doubted the reality of such exercises look on in amazement, and exclaim with the Psalmist, 'This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes'."

With the growth in attendance, the physical arrangements were enlarged and improved. Small wooden buildings began to take the place of tents, and many tents had floors and framework of wood to give them stability. In 1859 a headquarters building for the camp meeting group was built where it now stands. In the rear of the main circle of large tents, an avenue forty feet wide was laid out, and soon the preacher's stand was rebuilt more commodiously, in the form of an octagon. Large tents were still used to provide for church societies, but the tendency was for families to separate and establish tents of their own.

The Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting had become the largest in the world. In August 1859, more than twelve thousand visitors were on the ground for Big Sunday, and as many as thirty-six prayer meetings were in progress at the same time. The increase in sheer numbers had made it impossible to continue the old custom of the Parting, but offsetting gains could be counted.

At the same time, worldly accommodations of many different sorts were now necessary: special trains, excursion steam-

ers, boarding tents and victualling tents, barbers, bootblacks, express companies, itinerant vendors, and even the first beginning of what would be shops.

In 1864, Hebron Vincent was reporting: "It is true that other things were attended to besides religious worship by many gathered here; for it cannot be denied that very many came, as on other occasions, for purposes of pleasure and recreation, rather than for any higher object . . . Promenading was followed no less than in former years, and sea bathing was more extensively practised than ever before. Well as these things are in their places, they should not be allowed to engross too much of precious time. Nor were they allowed to do so by all. Let illiberal critics say what they will of the decrease of spirituality in the meetings held here, it is averred that hundreds and thousands of Christians, ministers and laymen, come for the same holy purposes and in the same devout spirit as in bygone days. It does not follow that because we do not all live together in the large tents, and sleep in the straw, that our religion has died out."

Gradually the tide of new times was rising. Destiny had decreed that the camp meeting should be the nursery of a summer resort.

"Is not health a blessing which we, as Christians, are bound to preserve and promote?" asked Hebron Vincent. "Many without scruple go to Saratoga, Niagara Falls or some similar resort, from which they return with depleted wallets, and, very likely with, to say the least, no more religious principles and enjoyment than they went with. We, of course, admit that many have tents and cottages here who are not professors of experimental religion, and not a few who are not connected with Methodist congregations at home; but they are usually people of high respectability, of good morals and character. And, coming to a place which they know is selected and held for religious purposes, they conform themselves to its prescribed rules."

And, a little later, "Even the wicked may come, as they are likely to appear anywhere, but the visit is bound to be good for them."

This was an excellent statement of a point of view that persisted for decades; yet soon another new element was introduced. In a sense, the camp meeting was to have competition; in another sense, its prescribed rules were to be made a dead letter. Worldly management had introduced bathhouses, a boat bazaar, a tintype saloon, and so on, and in 1866 an ambitious land development scheme was launched.

Capt. Shubael Lyman Norton, retired merchant captain, owned seventy-five acres of land adjoining the camp meeting ground. Much of this tract had been known as the Great Pasture, and for many years it had possessed no special value. Now Captain Norton sold most of the property to a new cor-



poration called the Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Company, in which he himself was an important stockholder.

The promotional leadership was supplied by Erastus P. Carpenter of Foxboro, a successful manufacturer who saw great possibilities in this Island real estate. Other stockholders were Capt. Ira Darrow and Capt. Grafton N. Collins, retired mariners of Edgartown. The new company owned all the open land between the camp ground and the Sound beach where the steamboat wharf and town bathhouses now stand, the beach itself, and the bluffs southeast of the present harbor.

One of the early advertisements of the Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Co. read: "HOME BY THE SEASIDE. OAK BLUFFS, A NEW SUMMER RESORT. One Thousand Lots for Sale. The Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Co., having purchased the beautiful Grove, together with a large tract of land adjoining the Wesleyan Camp Ground, offer for sale at a price within the reach of all, lots in their beautiful grounds called Oak Bluffs . . ."

A Boston landscape gardener, Robert Morris Copeland, was engaged to survey the tract and to lay out streets, parks, and lots. The company built the first wharf on the Sound side, where the present dock stands.

The practical rejoinder of the camp meeting was the erection of a seven foot picket fence around the camp ground, as a protection against worldliness. This barrier was symbolical of a rivalry which continued for many years, despite various truces and concessions now on one side and now on the other.

In 1868 a writer in Harper's Weekly reported: "These thousands of people who frequent Martha's Vineyard at this season have more and fresher pleasures than those who summer at Newport or Long Branch. Here you see the latest fashions, and innocent flirtation is not unknown among the lads and lassies. They play croquet. Just below the steamboat landing there is a beach for bathing. And then there is fishing and sailing for those who are fond of aquatic sports, several good sailboats being always at anchor off the pier. When evening sets in, the girls put away their croquet and attend to the tea-making; then comes the evening service around the cottage doors, while outside the young people are promenading in the gaily lighted streets of the improvised village."

As cottages continued to replace tents, informality and intimacy were emphasized rather than lessened. Most of the cottages showed clearly how they had been developed from the tent idea; they had wide doors which opened to expose the whole interior, admitting all possible fresh air. Promenaders under the trees, through the winding walks of the camp ground, could not fail to observe what the cottagers were doing. Family life was on display.

So it was, also, on the worldly side of the picket fence. But whereas the camp ground cottages often leaned toward

churchly ornamentation, such as Gothic windows and balconies, the summer resort cottages blossomed with gingerbread and jigsaw ornamentation that seemed to represent the holiday spirit for its own sake.

The Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Co. did not rest with an initial success. Its capital stock was listed at \$12,000, and in 1869 exactly \$12,000 worth of lots had been sold. In 1870 the company owned three small hotels, the wharf, bathhouses, fire engines, and a police office. By 1872 it had gone ahead to build the mammoth and even yet unrivalled Sea View Hotel at the head of the wharf. Until this famous hostelry was destroyed by fire in 1892 it embodied untold grandeur for all Martha's Vineyard.

The company subscribed for stock in the new Union Chapel, a non-denominational place of worship which stood well outside the camp ground picket fence and supplied an answer to the challenge of the camp meeting association that the new summer resort was ungodly. In two years the assets of the development company had risen from \$88,066 to \$279,955. But there was now a large funded debt.

In its heyday the Oak Bluffs company built streets and public improvements, was responsible, in fact, for the rearing of a new town. Influenced by this example, some of the directors and leaders of the camp meeting formed a company of their own — the Vineyard Grove Co. — and purchased fifty-five acres of land on the opposite side of the lake from the camp ground, extending toward East Chop. This was the region known as the Vineyard Highlands.

The original impulse behind the Vineyard Grove Co. was one of protection for serene and at least semi-religious surroundings against any kind of commercialization. Destiny, however, or perhaps evolution, decided that it should become another land company, and in progressive stages three different plots of the Vineyard Highlands area were laid out, causing endless confusion for later generations. In modern times the interests of the company were at last acquired by a group of East Chop and Highland residents, and the guiding spirit again became one of conservation rather than profit.

As the decade of the eighteen seventies began, Oak Bluffs was well embarked upon an era of hotels, cottages, surfaced streets, and modern improvements. Even the camp meeting was not immune to the contagion of growth; in 1870 a great tent or canvas tabernacle was acquired to shelter the worshippers and clergy. The big top contained 4,000 yards of sailcloth sewed together in six sections like a circus tent.

The influence of the hustling Oak Bluffs company was reflected in many ways, not least in the founding of more and more land schemes and developments on the Vineyard. Most of them are only names today, discovered in old plans or in records of deeds which modern purchasers come upon with



surprise. The Island was gripped by a boom as feverish as any real estate excitement ever known.

Much of East Chop near the lighthouse had become, almost overnight, Bellevue Heights; Lagoon Heights overlooked the pond of that name, and soon became the site of a new hotel, the Prospect House; on the Tisbury side of the Lagoon was Oklahoma, laid out in lots; the West Point Grove Co. was organized to develop West Chop. Other developments were: Bay View, Grovedale, Lookout Mountain, Engleside, Ocean Heights, Sea View Hill, Forest Hill, and Sunset Heights.

Many of the developments were launched by Vineyarders, but some were promoted by speculators or investors from the mainland. Thomas Hine of New Jersey bought Cedar Neck, which extends into the Lagoon at Vineyard Haven, and when the lots did not sell, turned it into a summer place for his family alone.

The greatest of all the boom promotions was Katama, out near the South Beach from Edgartown. This was financed largely by Edgartown whaling captains, but it became a sort of stepchild of the Oak Bluffs company, with interlocking management. A new hotel, the Mattakeeset Lodge, was opened at Katama in 1873. A year later, one of the Island's great undertakings of the century, the Martha's Vineyard Railroad, linking Oak Bluffs, by way of Edgartown, with Katama and the South Beach, was brought into being as a magnificent tour de force.

Much whaling money went into the railroad, a good deal of Edgartown tax money, and all manner of promises. Since the tracks ran along the shore, a route adopted because it was cheapest for construction, they were within reach of winter storms, and bills for maintenance and repair soon rose to overwhelming proportions. As an investment, the railroad failed — but it was responsible for a great deal of progress in terms of recreation and resort life.

Perhaps the grand climax of the boom was reached with the visit of President Grant to the camp ground and to Oak Bluffs in August, 1874. Flags, brass bands, fireworks, and all manner of festive array greeted the president. After dark, the colored lights of Japanese and Chinese paper lanterns glowed everywhere, a sea of illumination.

Grant stayed at Bishop Haven's cottage on Clinton Avenue where, at eleven o'clock, a mixed quartet serenaded him. He appeared on the balcony and said, "I thank you for your cheerful greeting. No doubt you are tired and sleepy as I am, so I will not detain you. Good night."

On Big Sunday Grant occupied a seat on the platform under the canvas tabernacle and heard Bishop Haven preach on the text "Multitudes, Multitudes in the Valley of Decision."

Events which would bring deflation to the great boom were already well under way, stemming for the most part from

the nationwide panic and depression of the early seventies, and from the excesses of the boom itself. Too many lots had been laid out, and too many fancifully named avenues had been mapped. Purchasers for the offerings of most of the developments simply did not appear. Yet as bankruptcy overtook some promoters, and as scrub oak and briars grew up and concealed the stakes that had marked so many imagined avenues, the camp meeting continued to flourish, and Oak Bluffs continued to grow into a summer town.

The development of Vineyard Highlands continued, too, and in 1875 the Baptist Vineyard Association was formed "to promote fraternal love and more intimate acquaintanceship among the members of our denomination." In the fall of 1877 the Baptist association voted to build a wooden temple in the center of its circle on the Highlands, and under this canopy annual summer meetings were held until the late twenties of the new century.

The Methodists replaced their canvas tabernacle with the present remarkable and beautiful iron tabernacle, dedicated in 1879.

During the next year, the Vineyard Grove Co. made a grant of land, comprising six lots, to the new Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute, a summer school formed by a group of congenial educators and scientists who sojourned on the Vineyard during the warm months. One of the founders was Col. Homer B. Sprague, principal of the Girl's High School of Boston and later to be president of the University of North Dakota. Another was Truman J. Ellinwood, shorthand reporter of Henry Ward Beecher's sermons.

Agassiz Hall, built on the high ground inland from the Highland House, which was the big hotel of the Highland area, contained sixteen classrooms. William J. Rolfe, an eminent Shakespearean scholar, delivered the dedicatory address in July, 1882. Although the Institute was launched enthusiastically, its purpose had no sharp focus or direction until Dr. William A. Mowry succeeded to the presidency and founded the School of Methods which he placed under the direction of A. W. Edson, agent of the Massachusetts Board of Education.

Then ensued a period during which the Institute offered summer training for teachers, and may be said to have established the pattern for summer courses of the future. Eventually, colleges and universities included such training in summer schools of their own, and they could offer credit toward degrees, as the Institute could not do. Although this meant the disappearance of the Institute, yet it had succeeded admirably, so well that it had, in a manner of speaking, done away with itself. Many distinguished educators took summer courses there.

It was on Feb. 17, 1880, that the present Oak Bluffs became a town. That was the day when the governor signed the bill dividing the old town of Edgartown, and — as the residents and summer residents of the new town viewed it — liberating the taxpayers and inhabitants of Wesleyan Grove, the Bluffs, the Highlands, and all East Chop. A great deal of bitterness had attended the struggle for division, and it was long before animosities on both sides died away.

The new town was at first named Cottage City, appropriately descriptive, and familiar because this phrase — “the Cottage City of America” — had been used in the advertising of the Fitchburg Railroad intended to attract visitors Islandward. “Oak Bluffs” was even more familiar, but it was identified with the development company, now regarded as inimical to the interests of the general public. Not until 1907 was Cottage City changed to Oak Bluffs.

At the time the new town was established, the Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Company stood in the unenviable position of having been responsible for the expenditure of some \$300,000 in the development of a resort, and of never having paid a dividend. The company had built up a town and was maintaining streets and avenues, caring for parks, even (up to 1879) lighting the streets, meeting interest payments for improvements that brought no income, and occupying a place of uncomfortable civic responsibility.

The directors of the company were out of harmony, quarreling, and disputing various questions of responsibility for the ills that had come upon the whole enterprise. In this situation, it was decided to sell off the remaining assets, and an attempt was made to do so. The sale yielded some \$22,000, but lots valued at more than \$29,000 still remained unsold.

The company offered to make a gift of the streets and avenues to the town, but the town refused to accept them, not caring for the upkeep that would be required. Someone thought of the parks, and wondered if the cottagers whose property faced the parks would not be willing to pay something for them. It was only an easy step from this thought to a full-fledged attempt to sell off the parks to the highest bidder.

How could anyone sell a public park? Well, were the parks public? They had belonged to the development company and, although they had figured in plots, maps, advertising, and so on, there was nothing to show — so some of the directors thought — that the company had legally parted with them. In due course, a sale was negotiated to a syndicate headed by George C. Abbott, a Boston attorney.

News of the sale came as a “stunner” to Cottage City, for the syndicate proposed to cut up the parks for building lots or to exploit them in any way that would bring profit. Ocean

Park alone, it was estimated, would be worth \$40,000 for building purposes.

The stage was set for a series of legal battles. Reversing its former attitude, the town voted to accept Ocean Avenue, and Mr. Abbott took the offensive with a suit to recover damages for a strip cut from his park. The celebrated case of Abbott vs. Cottage City went to trial at Edgartown, and Mr. Abbott won a verdict against the town. But when the issue reached the state Supreme Court, a decision written by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who had not yet advanced to the federal bench, upheld the town.

This, however, was not the end. At another trial, counsel for the town of Cottage City exhorted the jury in these words: “Mr. Abbott asks you to give him all the ten beautiful parks and twenty-seven avenues of Cottage City, which he says belong to him. If it does, then God save the Commonwealth, for our cities will be ruined . . .” In this trial the jury disagreed.

Meantime another case, initiated by the town, and prosecuted by the state, was referred to a hearing before a master. This was the case of Attorney General, by information, vs. George C. Abbott. The final decision was handed down by the state Supreme Court on Sept. 21, 1891, with a complete victory for the public. “If the corporation had an intention to reserve this right (to cut up and sell the parks for building), the course pursued was inconsistent with common honesty,” said the court.

When news of the decision reached Cottage City, bells were rung, fireworks detonated, and Mr. Abbott was burned in effigy in Ocean Park.

And now Cottage City was embarked upon the decades of the eighties and nineties, with increased pretensions to fashion and elegance. Although the camp meeting pursued its independent way, and in most respects was undiminished, it was proportionately less important in the summer life of the community. At Cottage City proper there were two wharves. The steamboats stopped first at the Highland wharf, where the East Chop Beach Club now stands; this was the Camp Meeting Landing, and horse cars met the boat and carried arriving passengers by rail “over Jordan”, as the Sunset Lake-Lake Anthony crossing was called, to the precincts of old Wesleyan Grove.

Then the steamers continued to the Oak Bluffs wharf where there were no horse cars but, all the same, greater worldliness. Here the band played as the boat docked, runners for the different hotels cried out their appeals, and summer sojourners strolled to watch the incoming crowds.

A famous plank walk of the period ran from the Highland wharf, along the lakeside, “over Jordan”, and to the Wesley House corner where an early postoffice stood. Much of



this walk was lined with souvenir stores, a shop selling pottery made from Gay Head clay, and Rev. J. D. King's museum. Other plank walks ran along the Sound shore, but there was always a gap indicating the division between the camp meeting and the Oak Bluffs interests.

Entertainments of the eighteen eighties and nineties included trips to the South Beach to see the surf, trips to Indian Hill and Gay Head, and — this was a great rage of the times — bicycling, or "wheeling" as it was more generally called. Liv-  
ery stables did a fine summer business, but many of the excursions to Gay Head were made aboard the steamers of the Island boat line which ran for this purpose every Sunday through the season. There was a wharf at Gay Head then, and the excursion steamer would be met by ox carts driven by Indians, to convey excursionists to the top of the cliffs.

These Gay Head excursions cost fifty cents a passenger and occupied a whole day. "Three hours to explore this magnificent headland of Martha's Vineyard and inspect the magnificent light with its wonderful mechanism," announced the advertising broadsides. "Take your knife and paper box along and cut out some of the variegated clay."

There were also moonlight excursions, and occasional trips to Hyannis or other mainland destinations.

As for wheeling, it came on with a rush. The famous Rover bicycle appeared in 1884, not yet with pneumatic tires, but a reasonable semblance of the modern bicycle. And in 1887 the Massachusetts Division of the League of American Wheelmen, which had been founded in 1880, appointed Cottage City for its summer rendezvous. All those smooth concrete avenues the Oak Bluffs company had built were exactly to the liking of wheelmen — how the wheels would purr over the concrete ribbons, nearly level, or with just grade enough to be sporting!

Bicycles were carried free on the steamboats, and the wheelmen were an important group of summer visitors for many years. Cottage City was their first love, but they visited Vineyard Haven and Edgartown too, and not a few of them, weary but persistent, covered miles of dirt road to discover the beauties up-Island.

Among the developments that had languished was West Chop, but in 1887 a Boston syndicate acquired the property and formed the West Chop Land and Wharf Company. O. G. Stanley, an engineer who had come to the Vineyard to visit an old friend, was the leading figure. Besides a number of Boston capitalists, he had associated with him Capt. Leander C. Owen, a retired whaling captain of Tisbury.

By this time most of the development schemes of the boom period had failed, although sporadic attempts were to be made to revive some of them, and others tapered off into the summer life of the Island, until everyone forgot the grand

hopes with which they had been begun. West Chop, however, was a development of a different order. Mr. Stanley proceeded to construct a West Chop and Vineyard Haven water system as a basic step. The collecting basins were at Tashmoo Springs at the head of Tashmoo Lake, and a pumping station was built nearby — where it still nestles among the greenery.

In December, 1887, the completion of the first public water system on Martha's Vineyard was celebrated in grand style, with streams from a hydrant spouting into the air. The West Chop Land and Wharf Co. owned something more than a square mile of woodland and beach, including sightly cedars and oak woods. The West Chop wharf was made a regular landing of the steamboat line, two hotels were built, a bowling alley, billiard hall, and tennis courts. Through the woods a white shell road was built to Vineyard Haven.

West Chop was a success from the beginning, and perhaps this example encouraged the promoters of Makonikey, on the Sound shore some distance to the west. The first announcement of the new resort of Makonikey Heights was made in 1891, but two years elapsed before a hotel and a wharf were built. All the Makonikey directors were mainland men, one of them being E. H. Capen, president of Tufts College.

The hotel at Makonikey possessed a sort of brittle grandeur, with verandas, a turret, and curving bay windows. A contemporary writer said it resembled an ocean steamer in appearance "only it is more delicate in design and finish". As events proved, the Makonikey development was under-capitalized and the tract itself, though compellingly beautiful, was too much isolated for the times. The development won not even an initial success, the hotel was soon closed, and years later served for some seasons as a Y. W. C. A. camp. Makonikey itself awaited its rebirth as a place of summer homes in a new day.

The old hotel, eventually, was torn down. Many of the early resort hotels had been destroyed by fire: the immemorial Sea View, the Highland House, the Prospect House and, last of all, Innisfail at the old Oklahoma development, which had been a resort for men and women of the theatre, with an Irish tenor, Tom Karl, playing host. Mattakeset Lodge at Katama was closed, languished for a time into desuetude, and then one wing was moved to Edgartown as an annex for the Harbor View.

The Harbor View at Edgartown became a sort of link between old and new eras. First opened in the summer of 1891, it was in a sense the last of the old resort hotels and in a sense the first of the new. There were initial difficulties, but soon the Harbor View was proving one of the most important factors in the growth of the town as a summer resort. Other summer hotels sprang from long lineage but their place in



Island history was to be evolutionary rather than spectacular, and still others have risen too recently to figure in this history.

The story of the developments and similar enterprises, all the land schemes, hotel projects, and promotions of the nineteenth century, can give only one side of the history of the Vineyard as a summer resort. The other side is much less gaudy, for it consists of unstudied and often chance visits by individuals and families who fell in love with the Island and returned year after year, decade after decade. Attachments grew from camp meeting days, or from sheer circumstance, or out of some tie of business or friendship.

Howard W. Spurr, who was to become the head of a large wholesale business, visited Edgartown in 1864 on a selling trip. He married an Edgartown girl, was the first summer visitor to rent a house for the season, and ultimately owned a summer home of his own on North Water Street.

In Vineyard Haven, Gen. A. B. Carey was one of the early owners of summer property, and through him was founded, long before the opening of the present century, a sort of dynasty of Army officers who summered in Vineyard Haven when they could, and often retired there. And Judge William H. Arnoux of New York contracted for a summer home in Vineyard Haven in 1885 where his family was to come for generations.

It was in the eighteen sixties that Henry B. Blackwell was introduced to the Island by Ainsworth Spofford of Cincinnati whose father had been a minister at Chilmark. In 1871 Mr. Blackwell wrote: "Comparatively few of the millions of pleasure-seekers who try to escape the heat of the dog-days have ever visited the hills of Martha's Vineyard. And of the ten or fifteen thousand who annually spend a fortnight at the Camp Ground, not one in a hundred has ever crossed the monotonous plains that surround it, or has visited the charming hills of the North Shore, and the still more secluded cliffs of Wacobskie, Nashaquitze, Squibnocket, and Gay Head."

He himself wedded his family to the region of Nashaquitze where various branches acquired house after house; so came Mr. Blackwell, his wife Lucy Stone, their daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell, and family branches in later generations.

Although Mrs. Lucy Sanford came to Chilmark later, her name is usually associated with the beginning of summer life in that region. A Vineyard Congregational minister, Rev. Caleb L. Rotch, drove Mrs. Sanford and her daughter from Edgartown, where they were visiting, to see the Gay Head Light. By chance they visited the Chilmark farmstead that Mrs. Sanford bought and named Windy Gates, a famous Vineyard summer place.

Later, Windy Gates was owned by William M. Butler, United States Senator and friend of Calvin Coolidge. Mr. But-

ler had sat on Grant's knee at the camp meeting in 1874, and he was to become, successively, summer resident of Edgartown, Chilmark, and Lambert's Cove.

In 1888, Prof. Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, tall Kentuckian and Professor of Geology at Harvard, acquired his first property in the hills overlooking Vineyard Sound. He had been fascinated by the glacial character of the Island, and had taught summer classes in geology here. Year by year he bought more old Island farms to satisfy a deep land hunger, until he owned a broad and picturesque domain.

"With a bit of land," he wrote, "anyone may play the part of a god . . . In this day of experiments, when men see deeper in the world about them, a new field of enjoyment is opened to those who are privileged to possess the earth."

Seven Gates Farm, the Shaler property, was to become, in this later day, the site of many summer homes governed by the agreements of a trust company formed for that purpose. And more than one Harvard student who first came to the Island with a class of Professor Shaler, returned in later years to acquire a summer place of his own.

These instances, fragmentary and symbolical, will serve to indicate how the Vineyard drew to its shores, hills, and countryside the summer residents and visitors who felt — or still feel — toward the Island a deep devotion.

Not much more need be said of the summer activities through the decades. Yachts continued to be sailed in Vineyard waters from the first. Back in the seventies, whaleboat races were held; then too began the regattas, with such famous yachts as the *America* taking part. Sometimes there were illuminated boat parades.

For many years the New York Yacht Club maintained its own station at Eastville at what was known as the New York wharf, where New York and Portland passenger steamers stopped. Electric cars ran from Oak Bluffs to Vineyard Haven and picked up fares at this spot. The first yacht club on the Island did not come into existence until 1903, a precursor of the present Edgartown Yacht Club. And in 1928 the Vineyard Haven Yacht Club was founded.

Golf came to the Vineyard in the early nineties. In 1893 West Chop summer residents had a six hole course near the lighthouse. On East Chop the boys of the Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute played golf on a course among the pines, but were converted to tennis when the East Chop Tennis Club was formed in 1910. That same year saw the building of what was at first the Oak Bluffs Country Club, and has since become a private club with the golf course still maintained. Edgartown played golf in 1897 but the game was not provided for permanently until the establishment of the Edgartown Golf Club in 1926.

Fishing and bathing there had always been, and a multitude of other activities natural to sea, beach, woods, and upland. All else could rise and fall, come and go, but the Island remained with its strong appeal, and its own unchanging invitation to lovers of the insular outdoors.

## PART II GUIDE BOOK

### MARTHA'S VINEYARD

by

Eleanor Ransom Mayhew

Martha's Vineyard is an island off the south coast of Massachusetts, and together with the Elizabeth Islands, comprises the County of Dukes County. It is 23 miles long and 6½ miles wide at its widest point, and is a rare combination of sandy seashore and rolling countryside with several high hills and myriad running brooks. There are six towns on the Island: Edgartown, the county seat, Oak Bluffs, Tisbury, better known as Vineyard Haven, West Tisbury, Chilmark and Gay Head. These are connected by 100 miles or more of paved road under constant maintenance. The roadsides are notable for their hedgerow clipping and lack of billboards. The Vineyard is accessible either by air or by sea with scheduled year round service. There are four good harbors, a county and two town airports. It lies in latitude 41:28 N. and longitude 70:35 W. It is six miles from the mainland as the crow flies, and eight as the ferry runs from Woods Hole. The main port of entry is Vineyard Haven.

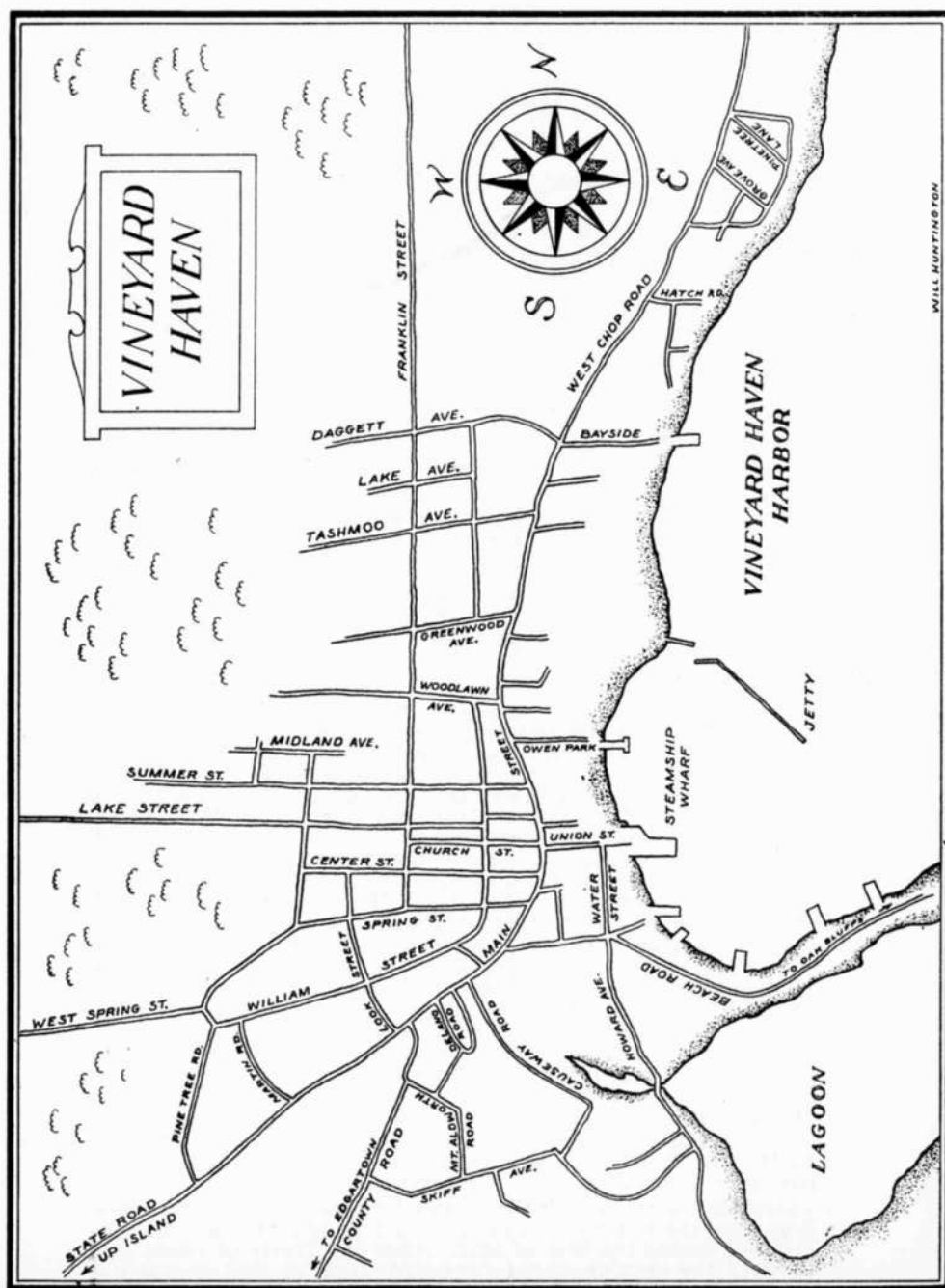
#### VINEYARD HAVEN

The present village of Vineyard Haven occupies the Indian Sachemship called Nobnocket. Known for over two centuries as Holmes Hole, it remained the eastern parish or precinct of the town of Tisbury until 1892. Then the western parent settlement was set off as West Tisbury, and the old name, derived from Gov. Mayhew's English birthplace, was retained by the eastern section. The post-office had been changed in 1871 to Vineyard Haven as more euphonious. The designation Holmes Hole appears as early as 1646 and was doubtless given to the harbor by the first mariner to describe it. The word "hole", sometimes spelled "holl", anciently meant a deep place in a stream.

Early records show that Indian rights on the Neck (West Chop) were purchased in 1660-64, but without the permission of the original patentee, Gov. Mayhew. As a result, Francis Usselton, who had settled on this land as agent of the supposed owners, was summarily dispossessed as a squatter. He, however, was the first white resident, and his name is recalled by Huzzleton's Head where he is believed to have lived. The first permanent English residents arrived in 1674.

The growth of Vineyard Haven was directly proportionate to the expansion of maritime trade between the colonies and West Indies. Its fine harbor was known up and down the coast as a port of refuge in all but a northeast gale.

Unfortunately the British shared this knowledge and little Holmes Hole bore the brunt of Gray's Raid in 1778 and suffered some indignities during the War of 1812. After the Treaty of Ghent and up until the opening of the Cape Cod Canal in 1914, it was not



unusual to count as many as 200 vessels at anchor in adverse weather. Piloting was a brisk business in those days, and vied with whaling and the merchant marine as a profession among the youth of the village.

Two disasters are associated with the town of Vineyard Haven. One was the fire of 1883 which destroyed sixty buildings on both sides of Main Street, happily without loss of life. The other tragedy was the great November gale of 1898 when some 50 vessels were either driven aground along the present Beach Road, or sunk at their moorings. Only the tireless heroism of the volunteer Vineyard crews kept the death toll at a minimum.

Two famous summer developments were begun here in the closing decades of the 19th century, Oklahoma on the west shore of the Lagoon, and West Chop. The former lasted 30 years, but the latter has continued and is the focal point of today's vacation colony.

The place to begin a tour of Vineyard Haven is the bell-buoy off Low Point Ledge where the ferry turns for its run up the harbor. From the deck may be seen many points of interest along the shore that are off the main ways. Old houses dating from pre-Revolutionary days are interspersed with many-gabled cottages of the Cleveland era, and an occasional Vineyard version of Frank Lloyd Wright. Huzzleton's Head is the first bluff south of West Chop. The Hollow, just below, was a center of great activity for over 100 years. A ship chandlery, boatyard, and the wharf used by the earliest Island steamers were located here, and a tavern occupied the old house on the slope above. Earthworks were built into the bank beyond as a protection against the Picaroons, Tory marauders of Revolutionary times. On this bluff, then called Union, stood the Sailor's Reading Room and Mission founded, 1867. Closer to the village may be seen the "Mill house", a quaint cottage, c. 1750, to which is attached as an ell the old grist mill built by Timothy Chase before 1807. The only wind mill of the village, it was moved from its original site near Association Hall to the hill opposite the public library and thence in 1886 to the present spot.

The first wharf at the head of the harbor was built about 1834, and shortly after that Holmes Hole became a regular port of call on the New Bedford-Nantucket run. Union Street, laid out at the same time, leads directly to Main Street from the landing and was named for the old wharf. Jonathan Luce's cooper shop and sail loft that stood near the foot of Union is now halfway up the block, the last of several buildings that lined the north side of the street a century ago. It is now headquarters of the M. V. Art Guild Inc. founded in 1934 to encourage and market local arts and crafts. The 1785 House opposite was built by Capt. Samuel Daggett, one of the intrepid Vineyard pilots who took ships out "over the Shoals" before the Cape Cod Canal eliminated the need for that dangerous passage. This was one of a row of 18th century houses whose front yards originally extended to tidewater.



Tidewater in those days meant Bass Creek, the early channel connecting the harbor and Lagoon, closed in 1835. Today Water Street, running south from Union, more or less follows the old course of the creek for one short block. The approach to the village along Water Street to Beach and up the hill to the junction with Main Street is similar to that of the colonial days when the ferry from the "Continent" sailed up the creek and landed its passengers at the foot of Beach Street.

The Seaman's Bethel, left corner of Water Street facing the SS ticket office, was opened in 1893 by Madison Edwards under the auspices of the Seamen's Friend Society of Boston. At that time thousands of vessels passed through the Sound annually, and hundreds came to anchor in the harbor for one reason or another. The Bethel extended both social and spiritual aid to the sailors, and took care of the shipwrecked. Its launch provided transportation to and from the shore. Chaplain Edwards, who came here from a mission at Tarpaulin Cove, Naushon, was succeeded in 1926 by his son-in-law, Austin Tower, and though the number to be served has greatly dwindled, the work is still carried on.

Halfway down Water Street (R) is the town parking lot, at the head of which is the site of Abraham Chase's Great House, built c. 1727, and moved in recent years to West Chop. A square, Georgian mansion of fine proportions, it was a famous tavern for nearly a century. Abraham Chase was not only an innkeeper, but a trader, and also ran a ferry from the beach below his house to Falmouth. Next north in the row of old houses overlooking Bass Creek is the Capt. Peter West homestead, about the age of its neighbor on the other side, the 1785 House. Capt. Peter, a master mariner engaged in the foreign trade, was one of a number of Vineyarders detained in France by the celebrated Berlin and Milan Decrees and Orders in Council, whereby Napoleon tried a policy of isolation in Europe.

The third house south of the Great House along the ridge was a tavern operated by Joseph Claghorn, and, since he was a housewright, probably built by him about 1788. He also may well have made the sign, now in the DAR rooms on Main Street, which reads "1792 — Lodgings — Joseph Claghorn — Walk In", and is invitingly decorated with tankards and tunnel. Joseph, brought up in the tradition of innkeeping by his grandfather Thomas, host at the Claghorn Tavern across the harbor in Eastville, was, however, a man of several talents. He taught in the first village schoolhouse, was second postmaster of Holmes Hole, and served as tythingman.

Set back from the corner of Water and Beach Streets (R) is the house built by Uriel Hillman in 1801 for Capt. Seth Daggett. A competent pilot by profession, Daggett was much concerned with the protection of the rights of Vineyard pilots which he repeatedly brought to the attention of the legislators

in Boston with suggested revisions of the Pilotage Laws. He was also extremely active in town affairs. His son Leander introduced the first rubber shoes on the Vineyard from Para (Belem) Brazil, and also the first merino sheep which he rescued from a wrecked vessel on Frank's Ledge. His brother Sylvanus is the only pilot ever to have beat a frigate out over the Shoals in a head wind.

Left turn at the end of Water Street goes to Oak Bluffs and Edgartown via the shore route; right turn continues past Main Street to a junction with the County Road to Edgartown (L), and up-Island. (See below). Straight ahead is Howard Avenue to Hine's Point.

Near the start of Howard Avenue were extensive saltworks where salt was manufactured by evaporation from sea water. A driveway (R) leads to the new Memorial Park and Playground, conceived and maintained by the George W. Goethals Post-American Legion. A little further along (L) is a boatyard and shop nicknamed the Bass Creek Meeting House. It is built of materials from the North Tisbury Baptist Church, razed in 1945, and it opens on the last vestige of the old creek.

This part of town was purchased in 1682 from the Sachem Ponit by Dr. Thomas West, the first known physician on the Island and a "King's Attorney". His home is believed to have been located where the hospital building now stands. The Marine Hospital on the hill, de-activated in 1952, was built in 1895, replacing an earlier structure which had provided for ailing seamen since 1879. The latter had originally served as a lighthouse with range lights for entering the harbor, and is now one of the outbuildings. A cemetery for deceased sailors, purchased in 1905 by the Government, is in the woods off the Edgartown road. It was used thirty years and contains ninety-three graves including one woman who had been cook on a schooner.

Hine's Point, a modest peninsula on the west side of the Lagoon, was called Uquiessah by the Indians, and Little Neck by the pioneers. Part of the original West purchase, it changed hands a number of times, but was not really settled until 1872 when it was acquired by Thomas Hine of New Jersey, who renamed it Cedar Neck. He built a sizeable cottage near the end of the point, a footbridge 700 feet long to the Beach Road, and had the property laid out in lots for sale. No development ensued at that time, the present one being largely post World War II.

The route to the village from the 4-corners up Beach Street, once known as Quality Street, passes two houses of interest. Second on the left is that built in 1812 by Obed Coffin, shipwright, whose ways were on nearby Bass Creek. Across the street is a fine two-story colonial dwelling with etched glass fanlight over the door built by Jireh Luce (1796) and subsequently owned by Rufus Spaulding, a physician from West Tisbury. Like his contemporaries, the doctor had several side lines. He was postmaster, justice of the peace, innkeeper, Worthy Master of King Solomon's Lodge in Perfection, and holder of various town offices. His son Rufus became a Supreme Court Judge in Ohio and a representative

from that state to Congress. Other occupants of this house were Oric P. Branscomb and Capt. Gilbert A. Smith, who ran away to sea at the age of 14, and after 27 years as a successful whaler, retired to serve the town and county in various official capacities.

The brick telephone building (1929) is near the site of the first public school in Holmes Hole, the old South School. Hereabouts, too, was the home of Capt. Thomas C. Harding who took a vessel loaded with supplies for the Russian Telegraph Company to Siberia when the Czar was attempting to connect Asia with Alaska by cable (c. 1864). He lost his ship in the ice of the Amur River and was forced to live out the winter with the very primitive Eskimos of that region. His house marked the extreme southern limit of the fire of 1883.

All of Main Street, right turn, from the corner to the present bank, was also consumed in the holocaust which not only destroyed the comfortable old homes and cluttered shops of the pioneers, but changed overnight the entire character of the village. For all the name of the post office had been changed in 1871 to Vineyard Haven, it might be said that Holmes Hole really died the night of the fire. In order to visualize the old Main Street, the site of some of the early buildings and their history are mentioned.

The first hostelry to be located at the corner of Beach and Main Streets (R) was opened at the turn of the 19th century by Timothy Luce. The building had been brought from West Tisbury by Dr. Spaulding who exchanged it for the more pretentious dwelling on Beach Street. Enlarged by Luce, it was described in 1860 as "an old-fashioned country inn . . . as full of comfort, tidiness and snugness as all old-fashioned places are supposed to be." Mrs. Capt. Leander West was hostess then. At the time of the fire, it had been remodelled and rebuilt "at large expense" by the then owner, Samuel Look.

The "old Parsons place" second beyond the inn, where Theodosius Parsons kept post office 1812-1828, was occupied for some years by Capt. Hosea Lewis, father of Ida Lewis, famed lighthouse keeper of Newport, R. I., and heroine of many rescues at sea. Capt. William Cottle lived next door but one. An outstanding event of his long career as master mariner was the capture of his command, the ship *Acastus* of Boston, with a cargo of Virginia tobacco by the French privateer *Le Mercure* in 1811. She was taken into Fecamp and Cottle's trials and tribulations endeavoring to get redress from the French are an interesting chapter in the problems of international trade of the period. He was a choleric character and once sued his neighbor across the street, Hiram Chase, hatter, because he did not like the odor emanating from Chase's dye vats.

At the north corner of Spring Street, first left, stood the Baptist Church erected in 1837 on the site of the Proprietors Meeting House, which had been a sort of community church serving all denominations. Smith's Tavern, dating from about 1750, was located on the north corner of Center Street, next left. Silas Daggett was the first owner, but it was his successor, Capt. David Smith who gave the tavern its name and Duncan Hines rating. Smith served Nevis rum brought in by Capt. Seth Daggett at \$1.00 a gallon. A fearless mariner, Smith's best known exploit was running the British blockade of 1812-14 to bring in "breadstuffs" from New York, only to be chased up Bass Creek by a couple of bargeloads of red-coats, which fired on him and his son, but for some obscure reason, did not follow them.

The present post office occupies the site of a former one established here by Capt. Shubael Dunham, who became postmaster in 1830 at the death of Capt. William Cottle. According to a visitor of the period, mail was displayed in the window like cakes in a bakery. Across Church Street from the post office was the Capt. William Daggett homestead. Capt. Daggett, for whom William Street was named, was a violent abolitionist long before Uncle Tom's Cabin was written, and also a strict Methodist. He gave the site for the 2nd Methodist Church (1845-1922) at the corner of William and Church Streets where the present 3rd building now stands. The 1st church of this denomination, built in 1833, is on the south side of Church Street above the post office. Since 1895 it has belonged to the Martha's Vineyard Lodge of Masons and is known as Capawock Hall. Next door to Capt. Daggett was the house built in 1844 by J. W. Howland, lumber merchant, and later bought by Capt. Thomas H. Smith, Jr., who died in China. Directly opposite Crocker's Harness Factory where the blaze started, it was the first dwelling to catch fire.

On the north corner of Union Street, first right, is the stub of the Lane Block, begun immediately after the fire by Dr. C. F. Lane, a fabulous character still recalled by many of the older generation. When built it had three stories, "a handsome French roof, also considerable bracket work." There were fourteen rooms upstairs planned for summer rental, and stores and office space on the street level. The house formerly at this corner was erected by Capt. William Worth, deputy Collector of Customs and uncle of Major-Gen. William J. Worth, Mexican war hero.

The harness factory, established in 1872 by Rodolphus W. Crocker, occupied the present bank site, which was originally the Capt. Jonathan Manter homestead lot. Capt. Manter was a man of means and character, and so fastidious a dresser that he was known along the Boston waterfront as Count Manter. Among other local claims to fame was his purchase of the first iron cooking stove to be used on the Island. Al-



though Crocker rebuilt his factory as soon as the ashes of the old building were cool, it continued in operation only a short time. The premises were used variously until 1905 when they were acquired by William Barry Owen for the M. V. National Bank which was removed from Edgartown largely through his influence. Owen also financed the bank building. The masonry was done by the late James Norton, examples of whose fine work will be recognized all over the Island. For a few years the Luxemoor Company for embossing leather, also an Owen project, stood in the rear of the bank, but it failed and that building was moved to the foot of Beach Street.

On the south corner of Main Street and Colonial Lane, next left, is the old North Schoolhouse, erected c. 1829. Nathan Mayhew, who owned and occupied the rather stately home across the Lane, was its first teacher. The building was used for a Congregational Meeting House 1837-44, occasionally for town meeting, and subsequently saw duty as a market, a carpenter shop and an undertaking parlor. It was purchased by the D. A. R. Sea Coast Defense Chapter in 1904 and is now a museum, open to the public for a small fee one afternoon a week throughout the summer. Exhibits include fine specimens of scrimshaw, old china, portraits, and a collection of interesting documents. The flagstaff in front was raised in 1898 to commemorate an incident of Revolutionary days which is described on the bronze tablet.

The second house above Colonial Lane (L) was built by Edmond Crowell in 1805 and later became the residence of Capt. Leander Owen, one of the foremost whaling masters of the village and father of William Barry Owen, who was the first to represent the Victor Talking Machine Company in England. Capt. Owen's career began at the age of fifteen aboard the bark *Valparaiso* in 1848, was interrupted by service in the Civil War, and continued in 1870 with the ship *Contest* his first command. His wife Jane and young son William accompanied him on this voyage as far as Honolulu, where they awaited his return from the north. The *Contest* was abandoned in the Arctic disaster of 1871, but Capt. Owen continued to take whaleships north until 1890 when he made his last voyage in the bark *Sea Ranger*.

Owen Park (R) belongs to the town. Cedar trees along its south bound were planted to commemorate Tisbury soldiers who fell during the Civil War, and some others, and at each root is buried a flask containing the written record of a specific hero. A short street beyond the Park leads to the Town Beach and Pier from which can be seen, on the north side, the old Dunham tavern, a two-story colonial dwelling with double chimneys, built in 1803. Thomas Dunham, called squire because of his standing in the community, was a lawyer, innkeeper, town official, storekeeper, politician and

licensed auctioneer. Auctions were almost a daily event according to an 1836 account. The cottage next south was brought from "down the Neck" (West Chop) by Barzilla Luce and 20 yoke of oxen for Lothrop Merry, in his day, c. 1815, the principal trader of Holmes Hole.

At the south corner of Main and Crocker Street, next right, is the former home of Dr. Charles E. Banks, surgeon at the Marine Hospital 1889-92, and author of the three-volume definitive history of Martha's Vineyard. The Tisbury Public Library is at 0.2 m. (L) from Owen Park. First organized in 1878 as the Ladies Library League, its entire collection was lost in the fire. New rooms were opened on Main Street the following spring, and in 1895 the League was dissolved and all books and other possessions turned over to the town for a public library. The present building and land were given by Mrs. John R. MacArthur in 1910 in memory of her mother. The library hours are: Mon., Wed. and Sat. 2:30 to 5:30; Wed. and Sat. 7 to 9; children's room open afternoons only. A World War Memorial tablet is near the street on the library lawn.

Next block (L) is the Unitarian Church erected as a memorial to Daniel Waldo Stevens, who was sent to the Vineyard as missionary by the American Unitarian Association in 1867. His outstanding achievement was the opening in 1872 of the Sailor's Free Reading Room, Library and Chapel, its purpose well described by the name. In addition, there were facilities for letter writing, stereopticon lectures, a wharf to seven feet of water, and fresh water for filling casks. Rev. Stevens also had a museum of curios, which included a fine collection of Vineyard Indian relics, its whereabouts today unknown. Although intended primarily for the use of mariners, the public was invited to attend religious services and borrow books, of which there were over 1100 in 1875. The mission ended with Stevens' death in 1891. The present church was built in 1896 near the corner of Main Street and old Lighthouse Road. It was moved to the present site in 1901. Stevens' old house, part of the original mission, is at 0.4 m. (L) just opposite Bayside, a summer colony dating from 1908 which owed its development to the group of musicians associated with Innisfail before it was demolished by fire. The Bayside Casino on the waterfront at the end of Owen Little Way (R) is now the Vineyard Haven Yacht Club House.

The road passes through a slough at 0.6 m. known to old-timers as Frog Alley. Hatch Road, next right, was laid out for easy access to the Sailor's Reading Room and Mission. The last North District school stood on this road. At 0.9 m. (R) is the Dunham-Holmes private cemetery. Grove Avenue, just beyond, leads to Huzzleton's Hollow and the site of Holmes Wharf and Ship Chandlery. John Holmes bought

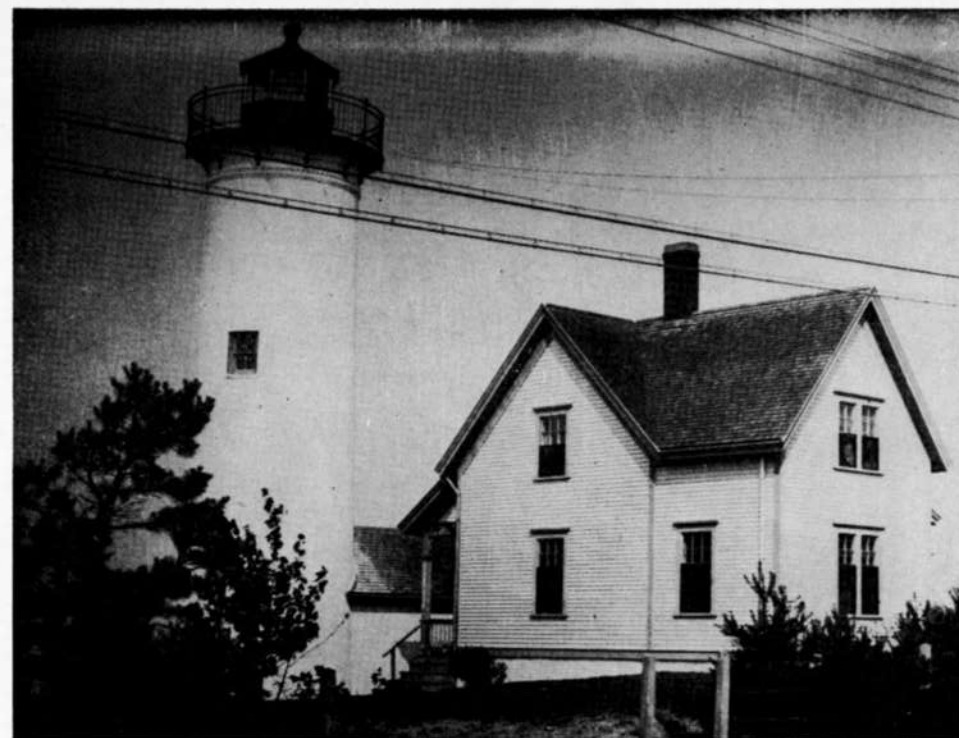


land here in 1765 and built the first wharf on the west side of the harbor. For seventy-five years or more this was the real trading center of the settlement. Not only were ship's supplies of all kinds available, but various other services such as mail and transportation to the head of the harbor. Kittens were in great demand, sailors considering it bad luck not to have a cat on board ship. John Holmes, Sr., received the first pilot's license issued by Gov. John Hancock, dated 1783; his son John was also a pilot; and John III was a notary, agent for underwriters, and newspaper correspondent. George W. Eldridge, son of the famed chartmaker, followed the Holmes family here, and Edward C. Lord was the last proprietor. The wharf, usually loaded with anchors and chains swept from the bottom of the harbor, was used by the Island steamers who stopped here on signal until Union Wharf was built. Harborview Lane, north off Grove Avenue, rejoins the West Chop Road (extension of Main Street) via Pine Tree Lane, 0.1 m. beyond the cemetery. West Chop begins officially at 1.5 m.

West Chop was the scene of two unsuccessful land developments in the 70ties, Cedar Bluff and West Point Grove, which resulted only in the laying out of a street or two and the building of a wharf, 400 feet long, into the Sound. In 1887, a group of Boston capitalists and promoters organized as the West Chop Land Company and took over the entire area at the end of the Chop from Capt. William Lewis, whaling magnate. One of their number, Ogden G. Stanley, was an engineer, and it was due to his foresight and initiative that their first step was to install a town water system and lay mains to supply both the village and the Chop. It was the first such water system on the Island. The water came from Tashmoo spring near the head of the lake of the same name, and at one time was bottled and sold in competition with Poland Spring and other spring waters.

The community, a restricted one, was settled largely by Bostonians, and many of their cottages are now occupied by the 3rd generation. The wharf was made a regular steamboat call which was continued into the early years of this century. The West Chop Land Trust owns and operates a hotel, clubhouses and tennis courts for the convenience of residents of the area.

Erosion of the shore at West Chop has proceeded rapidly. Until the end of the last century there was a small boat harbor, Point Pond, on its east side used by dory fishermen and fringed with fishing shacks. This has been completely obliterated leaving not so much as a cove to mark its location. The West Chop Lighthouse (1.8 m. R) erected in 1817, has been moved back at least once if not twice because of the receding shoreline. It was increased to its present height, standing 84 feet above sea level, in 1891. In a grove near the lighthouse was held the first Methodist camp-meeting on the Vineyard, August 1-7, 1827. Forty tents were erected to accommodate the congregation which on Sunday swelled to 4000. Reformation John Adams, the great revivalist, led the meeting with the assistance of some twenty other preachers.



WEST CHOP LIGHTHOUSE

*Photo by Mosher*



photo courtesy Vineyard Gazette  
WILLIAM STREET, VINEYARD HAVEN



photo by Mosher

VINEYARD HAVEN HARBOR FROM OWEN PARK

The old Great House, moved intact from Water Street, is at 1.9 m. (L). Most of the cottages in this section along the bluff were among the first to be built in the new development. The road turns abruptly left at 2.2 m. and continues past the community buildings, post office and tennis courts to rejoin itself 0.1 m. south of the lighthouse. Franklin Street, right turn beyond the casino, is the most direct route back to the village. The entrance to Mink Meadows Golf Links is at 0.2 m. (R) off Franklin Street.

Greenwood Avenue crosses Franklin Street at 1.6 m. and continues (R) to a narrow sandy road which goes to the east side of the Tashmoo opening, or Herring Creek. Here summer homes replace the old net houses of the seine fishermen. Woodlawn Avenue, next left, leads to Grace Episcopal Church and parish house at the corner of William Street. Originally located on Main Street where the Stevens Chapel now stands, the church was dedicated in 1883. It was moved to the present site in 1901. It has several fine memorial stained glass windows, and the oaken font is a replica of the ancient stone font in the Church of St. John the Baptist, Tisbury, England, where Gov. Thomas Mayhew was baptised. The parish house adjacent has just been enlarged.

A right turn on William Street, officially laid out in 1864 one block west of Main Street, goes past a number of pleasing residences built about that time, most of them by sea captains. The largest of these, a mid-Victorian period piece set back from the street behind an iron fence, was the home of Benjamin C. Cromwell. Capt. Cromwell was skipper of the old Island Line side-wheeler *Eagle's Wing*, which on one trip in 1859 brought 1200 passengers to camp meeting. After she burned, he assisted with the design and supervised the building of the *Monahansett*, which was commandeered for government service during the Civil War, serving at one time as Gen. Grant's dispatch boat. Cromwell was captain during her first tour of duty, and resumed command when she was restored to local waters.

The new (1924) Methodist Church is on the corner of Church Street (L). On Center Street, next intersection, half-way up the block on the south side, is the site of the public school used prior to the opening of the present brick structure in 1929. According to a vote at the 1956 annual town meeting, the new Tisbury fire station will be located here. The Baptist Church (1885) is on the corner of Spring Street, and the parish house just to the north of it. A right turn up Spring Street passes Association Hall, which presently contains an auditorium, fire station and the town offices. It was built in 1844 for a Congregational Meeting House, and later was used by both Universalists and Unitarians. Across the street is a nicely proportioned house of federal architecture



built in 1833 by Capt. Richard Luce. It was the first house on William Street.

The town's second-oldest cemetery is around the next corner (R) on Franklin Street with stones dating back to 1770. Center Street bounds the cemetery on the north and continues (L) to a junction with Pine Street opposite which is the Capt. Benjamin Clough house. Clough's heroism as 3rd mate of the ship *Sharon* when he rescued the vessel single-handed from three Gilbert Island savages who had murdered the captain, Howes Norris of Eastville, is a part of the great Vineyard whaling saga. A left turn on Pine Street goes by the M. V. Hebrew Center — the former Capt. Baxter Downs house — (L) and St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church (R) to a junction with Spring Street near the Tisbury school. Oak Grove Cemetery, started in 1863 as a private investment, is to the west of the school grounds. West Spring Street bears right at the fork here past the Hebrew section of the cemetery and winds along the east bluff above Lake Tashmoo and the Pumping Station to join the state road partway down Tashmoo Hill. Pine Tree Road, left at the fork, meets the highway at the top of the hill. A left turn from either route leads back to town through a fairly new residential section. Beach Street begins at the start of the Edgartown Road (R) of which it was originally a continuation.

Just down the hill from the Edgartown turn-off is Delano Road (R) which is the easiest approach to the Crossways Cemetery, the oldest in town dating back to 1717, and perhaps before. The house on the east corner, now called Company Place, was built by Capt. Peter Cromwell c. 1844. Oldest brother of Capt. Benjamin C., his promising career at sea was cut short by a fall from the main rigging in a gale off Cape Horn which resulted in his death, aged 43. The area back of Beach Street extending to salt water was once the property of an association called the Company that was formed in an endeavor to obtain riparian rights on the Lagoon similar to those enjoyed by land owners on the salt water ponds of the south shore. Causeway Road, next right, is the old Crossways, leading to the early settlement of the West family, and connects with Skiff Avenue near the former marine hospital. The last old house on the left, before reaching Main Street, was built in 1750 by Capt. Matthew Luce. It has a secret subcellar believed to have been used for smuggled goods, perhaps tobacco or tea.

#### VINEYARD HAVEN to EDGARTOWN via the County Road

The Edgartown Road at its start ascends the high ground known as Mt. Aldworth. Many of the houses along here were brought from the ill-fated Makonikey development (*see below*). Skiff Avenue, 0.2 m. (L) is the main residential street of the section and a fine view of the harbor is had from its lower end. It is named for a prominent Vineyard pioneer

family, and not for a rowboat. At 0.5 m. (L) stone masonry gate posts indicate the entrance to a proposed real estate development, Winyah, which never materialized beyond the blueprint stage. Infinitely more successful was Oklahoma, laid out in 1872 along the bluff known earlier as Chunk's Hill on the west shore of the Lagoon. Five cottages were built that first year, and in one of them, Bristhall Villa, Prof. Frederick Bristol opened a summer school for musicians. This rapidly became the nucleus of a musical summer colony frequented by famous concert artists and operatic stars. A hotel was built in 1876 and became known as Innisfail. After flourishing for thirty years, the little group of buildings was destroyed by forest fire, and the colony moved to Bayside, but it was never quite the same. An unimproved road at 1.0 m. (L) leads to the Oklahoma area.

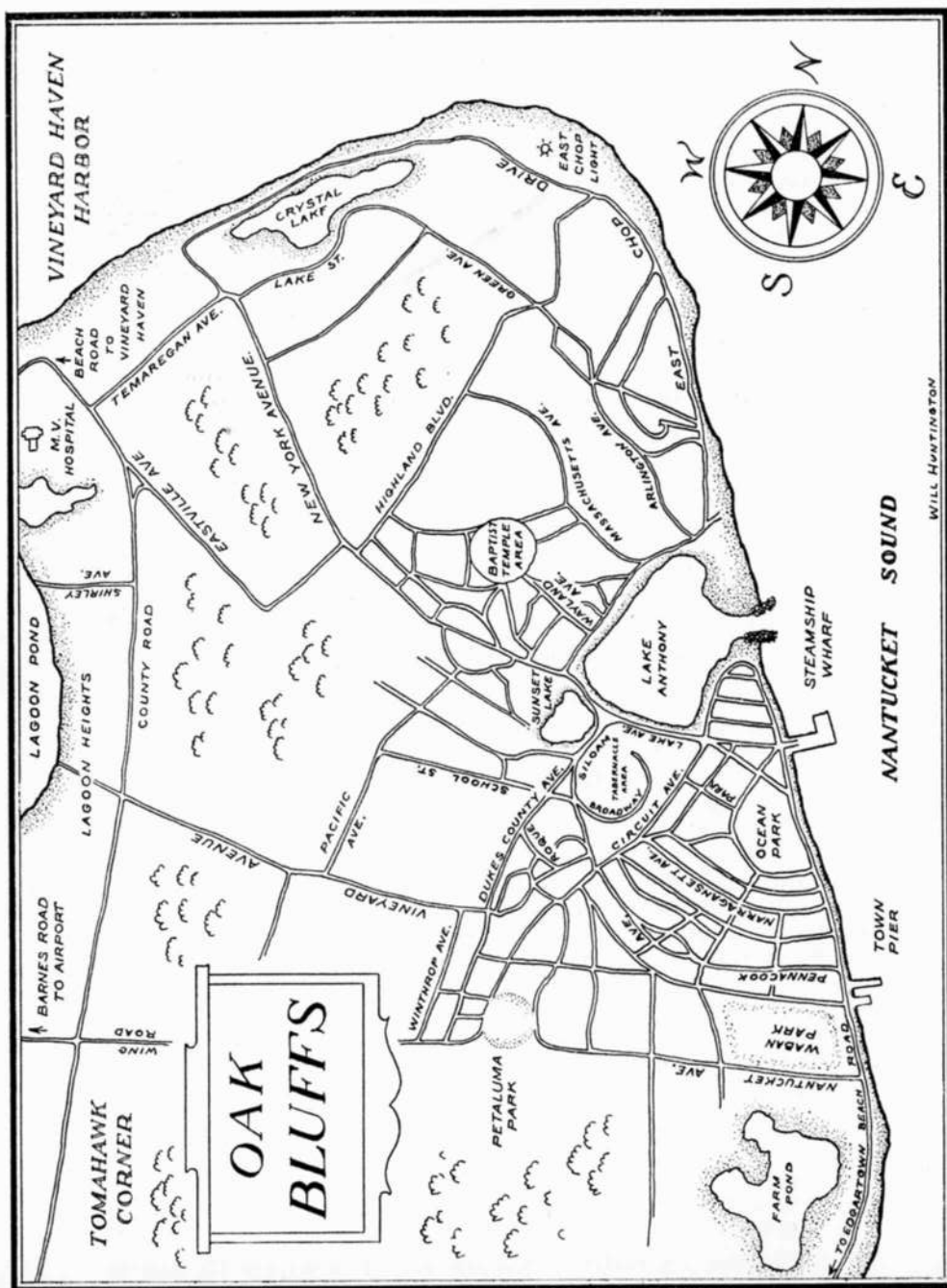
The intersection of Barnes Road (L) to Oak Bluffs, and Airport Road (R) to the County Airport is at 2.4 m., and at 3.5 m. is the junction with the County Road from Eastville, just beyond which (L) may be seen the Wilbur family cemetery. At 3.7 m. (R) is a swamp called the Dodger Hole, once a great place for catching loggerhead turtles. Just beyond is the section known as Miober's Bridge, an ancient landmark and one of the bounds between Oak Bluffs and Edgartown. Miober was presumably an Indian. The birthplace of Harlow Crosby, gunsmith and metal worker, (*see Chap. III*) stood in the fields overlooking the water at 4.0 m. The road at 4.9 m. (L) goes to the Dividend Land and Felix Neck. The Dividend Land was where the property of the Smith, Norton, Beetle and Weeks families intersected, and their descendants still pay collective taxes on it. The new Ocean Heights development begins at 5.2 m. And at 6.6 m. (R) on the outskirts of Edgartown is the M. V. branch of the Mass., S. P. C. A., the Foote Memorial clinic and animal shelter. This service was established by Miss Katherine M. Foote, who built the present house in 1933 and operated the shelter with rare devotion until 1947 when it was taken over by the Society at her request, and a resident veterinarian, Dr. W. D. Jones, installed. County Road merges with the Beach Road from Oak Bluffs (L) into Edgartown's main street.

#### OAK BLUFFS via Beach Road from Vineyard Haven

The history of the present town of Oak Bluffs actually begins with its separation from the jurisdiction of Edgartown after a long and bitter political battle which ended in the incorporation of Cottage City in 1880 — renamed 1907. But the history of the site goes back 200 years or more. Called Ogkesh-Kuppe by the Indians, it became known as Farm Neck following the purchase by John Daggett of the rights of the Sagamore Wampamag to 500 acres described as "lying upon the east side of the easternmost Chap of Homes Hole."

Daggett was one of the original patentees of Great Harbour (Edgartown) and as such was granted farm land in addition to a home lot, but Governor Mayhew saw fit to dispute his title to





the Farm Neck property. Daggett won the law suit in Plymouth court. However, it remained for his son Joseph who married Wampamag's daughter, Ahoma, to take up residence, thereby becoming accredited as the first white settler of Oak Bluffs. Hart-haven is today part of his farm, and his home is believed to have stood on the south side of Farm Pond.

The other two-thirds of the original Daggett grant passed through various hands, the northeasterly section falling to Simeon Butler whose grandson William leased his oak grove in 1835 to some Meth-odists for a camp meeting. The Nortons were entrenching them-selves along the shore of Sengekontacket Pond as far south as Felix Neck and westward to the head of the Lagoon, a territory over which they reigned until the beginning of the 20th century.

Other early settlers in this section were Beetles, Davises and Smiths. There was a sizable Indian village on the pond shore which became one of the first "praying towns" established under the guidance of Thomas Mayhew, Jr.

The history of Oak Bluffs, summer resort, is contained in Chap-ter V. Today's visitor will find every facility available for an enjoyable vacation: bathing, fishing, amusements, sports, and accommodations of all kinds. The harbor provides excellent protected anchorage for vessels up to 11-foot draft.

The building of the present Beach Road was made possible by topographical changes early in the 19th century. At that time a long sand spit extended from Eastville to Bass Creek, the old channel connecting the Lagoon with Vineyard Haven Harbor located near the junction of Water Street and Beach Road. During a gale in 1815, a new opening broke through into the Lagoon  $\frac{3}{4}$  m. to the north which reduced the flow of water through the Creek and caused it to fill in gradually with sand. In 1835 the town voted to close Bass Creek com-pletely. This was finally achieved in 1838 when the sloop *Zeno* loaded with stone and sand was sunk at the mouth of the Creek to keep the fill from washing away.

A road along the beach was then opened, but only as far as the present shipyard which is more or less on the site of an earlier such structure with marine railways operated by the Bradleys in the 1850ties. It was extended to the "new" opening in 1870 and a bridge was constructed, cutting in half the overland route between Vineyard Haven and Oak Bluffs, which formerly was by a long sandy road around the head of the Lagoon. A street railway connecting the wharf and the bridge began operation in 1897. Trolleys were too heavy for the old wooden structure, however, so passengers to and from Oak Bluffs were obliged to walk across it and continue the journey by boarding a car on the other side. This was later remedied by the building of a new bridge. The present drawbridge dates from 1934.

The town boundary line between Oak Bluffs and Vine-yard Haven passes directly through the middle of the chan-nel and divides the Lagoon, which in summer is popular as an anchorage for small boats, and in fall and winter months

is dotted with the skiffs of men raking bay scallops, now the Vineyard's most lucrative fishery.

A driveway on the right (1.3 m. from the start of Beach Road) leads to the Martha's Vineyard Hospital built in 1929 to replace a cottage hospital on the same site. Just beyond, the highway turns right on Eastville Avenue which at one time began at the Harbor (L) and Norris Wharf. The old electric power house stood near this corner. The first house (L) on Eastville Avenue is the original hospital building moved here to make room for the present one. It was previously the home of Capt. Hiram Daggett, who for some years skippered cargo vessels between New York and the West African coast. In 1884 he made a record voyage from Bathurst to Ambrose Light. At the top of the hill, the junction of Temahegan (L) with Eastville Avenue marks the center of the old community of Eastville.

First settled in 1695, Eastville was a thriving community of ship chandleries, stores, taverns and homes for 150 years while the present town of Oak Bluffs was still a farm. It was a part of Edgartown until 1880 (the name abbreviates East Village of Edgartown) and its prosperity derived largely from the patronage of vessels anchoring in Vineyard Haven harbor. Such was its reputation for entertaining mariners and for certain other seaside activities, that the settlement was known locally in its heyday as the Barbary Coast.

The inn (R) facing Temahegan Avenue, once called the Eastville Inn, is the only one left standing of the several hosteleries of this section. Capt. James Lawrence of the U. S. frigate *Chesapeake* and "Don't give up the ship" fame, was possibly its most renowned guest. Another famous old tavern, operated 1730-1786 by Thomas Claghorn and his wife, stood on Linton Lane, the dirt road (R) running in front of the former Eastville Inn to the hospital. It was purchased recently and moved to Edgartown for a summer residence.

Oak Bluffs village may be reached by continuing to the end of Eastville Avenue, a left turn on Towanticut, and right on New York Avenue. An alternate route, now part of the state highway, is via Temahegan to New York Avenue where a right turn leads directly to the business center. Just before the corner is reached, the site of the Bellevue Hotel, Capt. James Claghorn, Prop., may be seen, marked by masonry posts and steps. This section had been christened Bellevue Heights by realtors in the boom days of '71. In 1906, the highly rated Treat Preparatory and Tutoring School for Boys took over the hotel building and functioned summers until the early 20ties.

New York Avenue was opened in the summer of 1866 to provide easy access from Vineyard Haven harbor to the Methodist Camp Ground for the thousands who came yearly from the mainland to attend camp meeting. Up until that time the only way to reach their destination after landing at Norris wharf was by the cir-

cuitous route over Butler's farm road which came out south of the present Sunset Lake and entered the grounds over marshland by way of Clinton Avenue.

The new road, deeded to the Association by Tarleton C. Luce, was a 50-foot strip starting "at the shore of the Harbor" running in a general southeasterly direction to a bound near "Squash Meadow Pond" and thence to include "all the strip of land between the two ponds" (i. e. Sunset Lake and Oak Bluffs Harbor). First called by the Biblical name Kedron Avenue, it became known as New York Avenue following the building of a new wharf at the harbor end which was used by the ships of the Maine S. S. Company running between New York and Portland which called here.

In the gay 90ties, a lively scene awaited passengers from the metropolis at the 5 a.m. docking time. Trolley cars (the line in 1895 extended from Lagoon Heights to the Bridge) carriages and baggage carts with porters from the various caravanseries all stood ready to rush them and their trunks to cottages and hotels across the peninsula. On the wharf, also, was a station of the New York Yacht Club, a place of much activity when the fleet arrived on its annual cruise in August.

The houses lining New York Avenue are for the most part of 20tieth century construction, although a very few date back to the building boom of the 70ties. One of them, indistinguishable because of its new exterior, was built around the central portion of the Stephen Bradley house, moved across the fields from Eastville. Bradley, through his marriage to William Butler's old maid daughter Harriett, became co-owner of the Camp Ground which he later sold to the lessees. At 2.2 m. (L) stands the Christian Science Church, erected by the Society in 1939. Services are held here throughout the year. The 4-H Clubhouse just beyond (R) was established in 1947 in a Quonset hut moved from the County Airport after World War II. The play area in the rear was hardsurfaced (1955) for ice and roller skating, tennis, basketball, etc.

The eastern end of New York Avenue (the causeway between Sunset Lake (R) and the Harbor) is called the "Jordan Crossing," or, more accurately, the "Jordan Road." This name was originated by camp meeting visitors in 1866 who rejoiced over the new way of entering their Holy Land from the West. They were reminded of the miracle whereby the Israelites of Bible times were enabled to enter the Holy Land, crossing Jordan dry-shod between two walls of water.

#### EASTVILLE to OAK BLUFFS via East Chop

A left turn at the junction of Temahegan and New York Avenues leads to Atlantic Avenue and the scenic East Chop Drive along the highlands to Oak Bluffs. East Chop derives its name from an old English term, chops, used to describe the entrance of a harbor or channel. It was first called "the easternmost chop of Holmes Hole" by Gov. Mayhew in 1646.

Crystal Lake, the small body of water (R) once supported two ice companies. Several pre-Revolutionary homes stood



on the bluff above it, now fallen down or moved away. Atlantic Avenue becomes East Chop Drive as it bears right and ascends the hill to the lighthouse. The East Chop Lighthouse was built in 1869 by Capt. Silas Daggett as a private enterprise, a somewhat unique undertaking. On Dec. 16, 1871, it burned to the ground when "one of the ladies" was cleaning "oil carpeting with gasoline which became ignited from the stove and spread to the container". By February 1872, a new structure was in process of erection, the Gazette noting that "Mr. Silas Daggett is entitled to great credit for commendable energy". The lighthouse was transferred to Government ownership in 1876, and was replaced by the present iron tower the following year.

The first paved road beyond the lighthouse (R) is Highland Boulevard which wanders through the pines to join New York Avenue about midway. A left turn off Highland Boulevard at the Green Avenue intersection goes past the East Chop Tennis Club, founded 1910, which evolved from a 9-hole golf course laid out in this vicinity in the 90ties. About 0.1 m. further (R) is the site of the Rice Playhouse, opened in 1925 by Phidelah and Elizabeth Pooler Rice, who had begun classes in voice training in Trinity Chapel on the Camp Ground in 1911. The Playhouse, which operated for twenty-five years, is believed to have been the second summer theatre in the nation, and thus was a pioneer of what is now called the Straw Hat Circuit. The road, Brewster Avenue, enters East Chop Drive about half a mile below the lighthouse.

The Drive makes a sharp turn into what was once called Commercial Avenue. Near this corner stood Agassiz House, dedicated 1882, the home of the Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute. The Institute, inspired by Louis Agassiz's work at Penikese, was founded in 1878 by a group of prominent educators "to meet the vacation wants of such as wish to continue study of some specialty with the rest and recreation of a delightful seaside resort." The courses offered comprised languages and technology, and later included advance instruction in teaching and education. It was the first summer school for teachers in the country, and by 1895, was recognized as the leading institution of its kind. With the establishment of summer classes in colleges and normal schools offering academic credits toward degrees, which the Institute could not, its usefulness was over, and the doors were closed in 1907. At the height of its fame, attendance reached 800.

Directly across East Chop Drive on the shore was the Highland House, an elegant hotel with sixty rooms and two tiers of broad verandas, erected 1872, destroyed by fire 1894. The Highland Wharf, built in the same year by the Vineyard Grove Company which was promoting the Highlands (as this part of Oak Bluffs was known), extended to deep water at the foot of Commercial Avenue. The East Chop Beach Club

(private) occupies the site of the old Highland House bath-houses. Highland Wharf was a scheduled stop for the Island Steamers, and later acquired the name Baptist Wharf with the organization of the Baptist Camp Meeting in Wayland Grove at the head of Wayland Avenue, 4th R. from the corner. A tabernacle to accommodate the Baptists was constructed in 1877 using materials from one of the buildings at the recent Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. It is no longer in existence. Lots sold around the Temple were subject to such rules as "no traffic in hard liquor, no improper conduct or illegal gambling."

A boardwalk extended from the wharf to Jordan along the Harbor. This was the fashionable Promenade for the enjoyment of Highland visitors. Shops fringed the way, notable among them Gregory's which had curios and exhibits from all over the world. Gregory also was the first to commercialize articles made from Gay Head multi-color clays.

For those who preferred to ride, horsecars — later electrified — ran from the wharf across Jordan, along the east side of Sunset Lake and into the heart of Wesleyan Grove. The old car barns are now an apartment building (L), and nearly opposite them is Mill Square, so-called because here Fred Luce's Mill and Lumber Yard were located before his removal to larger quarters back of the Bellevue House. Fred Luce's fretsaws were responsible for much of the intricate scrollwork on Oak Bluffs cottages.

East Chop Drive joins New York Avenue at the west end of the Jordan Crossing. Lake Avenue begins at the east end, continuing to a traffic island, where a left turn up Oak Bluffs Avenue leads directly to the steamboat wharf.

Siloam Avenue, first right beyond the Crossing, follows the old trolley tracks into the heart of the Camp Ground, and is today the best route by car. Siloam, left at the fork, runs two short blocks to end at School Street. On the corner (R) stands a large frame building which was once the Vineyard Grove House, Capt. Joseph Dias, Prop., advertised as "the quietest place in the city." Broadway bears left off Siloam to Trinity Circle and the Tabernacle.

Clinton Avenue, a small park (R) off Broadway near its start, is of interest historically. At #10 the third cottage on the east side, a white lace valentine known as the Bishop Haven Cottage, President Ulysses S. Grant was a guest in 1874. The cottage at the right, entering the Circle, is said to be the first wooden house erected on Camp Ground property. It was built in 1859 by Perez Mason who planned the seating of the Tabernacle in 1861. Next door are the offices of the Camp Meeting Association incorporated in 1868 to manage the property and affairs of the Camp Ground.

The iron Tabernacle, which should be visited, was put up in 1879 to replace a mammoth canvas affair which had provided cover from the elements since 1870 for as many as 3000 persons. Before that time, meetings were held in the open



beneath the then stately oak trees, the preacher, who spoke from a wooden pulpit, being the only one with a roof over his head. The cottages around the Circle, many of them unsurpassed examples of so-called Gothic revival architecture with their intricate tracery and cathedral windows, were erected on former tent sites beginning in 1859. They are owned outright, but the lots are leased from the Association which maintains the grounds and provides certain services. In the old days, no man could pitch a tent without a letter from his pastor, and many of the early restrictions are still in force.

Camp meeting took place in August and lasted one or more weeks. Visiting clergymen and scholars held daily discourses, and other activities included church school classes for young and old. Sunday services are still held throughout the summer in the Tabernacle, and the Wednesday evening community "sings" are an outstanding feature during July and August, especially Illumination Night, dating from 1880, when the parks and cottages are lighted by myriads of Japanese paper lanterns. Winter services take place in the Trinity Methodist Church (1883) on the north side of the Circle, and social events just across Broadway in Trinity Chapel. The latter, known at first as Grace Chapel, marks the site of the Bethel Tent, which was erected for the use of sailors "drawn to camp meeting." There is a convenient car exit just beyond the Chapel to Lake Avenue via Commonwealth Square.

This little grassy triangle was once an attractive grove of oak and balm of gilead trees centered by a tiny pagoda which enclosed one of the several pumps providing well water for campers prior to 1890. The Wesley House (c. 1880) then faced the Square, and next to it on the west were several shops which since have been incorporated with the original structure into the present hotel. The building at #1 Commonwealth Square housed the 2nd Oak Bluffs Post Office on its first floor, and its second story saw the birth of the newspaper Cottage City Star, later the Martha's Vineyard Herald.

Although a route by car is given, the Camp Ground should be explored by foot as many of the unique parks and delightful avenues are otherwise inaccessible. Also most of the streets where driving is allowed are one-way, and so narrow that the driver's attention, at least, must concentrate on his job so as not to hit a gnarled oak or lop off a porch rail. The Camp Ground is laid out in co-tangent circles, and is one of the earliest examples of this type planning in the country.

Circuit Avenue, the main shopping street of Oak Bluffs, is reached by following Lake Avenue to the traffic island and turning sharp right. Laid out in 1867 along the eastern boundary of the Camp Ground, it extends through town 0.7 m., bearing left beyond Petaluma Park baseball diamond into what is now called South Circuit Avenue, and thence to the head of Farm Pond. The name recalls the fact that it par-

tially circumscribed holdings of the Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Company which began in 1868 to develop the waterfront east of the Harbor.

The business section of lower Circuit Avenue is gradually changing character with the tearing down of the old ornate shops and clapboard hotels and the construction of modern buildings and facades. Typical of the bustle and bombazine period is the Arcade, (R) halfway along the block. This was the first commercial building on the avenue, and it also furnished a gateway through the 7-foot picket fence erected by the Camp Meeting Association around its 36 acres to separate the saintly from the secular. The Arcade opens into Montgomery Square where there are shops, hotels, and a way to the Tabernacle. A few steps further is a square 3-story building with mansard roof, for many years known as the Japanese Store. Owned by the Miyanaga family, it probably had more influence on the decor and equipment of Oak Bluffs summer homes than any other single concern.

Park Avenue, first left off Circuit Avenue, runs two short blocks past the Post Office to Ocean Park and the waterfront. Union Chapel, an octagon building constructed in 1870 as a place for non-sectarian and liberal worship, is at the end of the next block (L). It functions during the summer with prominent clergymen from all over the country in the pulpit, and a noted choir. The site is called Chapel Hill. Grove Avenue on the east side of the chapel connects Hartford Park with Ocean Park. The old Baptist Church (now Bradley Memorial) and the town offices are at the Hartford Park end (R) and directly across the park is Our Lady of the Sea, Roman Catholic Church, (services — summer only). A left turn toward Ocean Park passes the Dr. Harrison A. Tucker house, 1872, (R) a notable example of chalet architecture at its most ornate. Dr. Tucker, a wealthy manufacturer of patent medicines (Tucker's #59 Diaphoretic Compound) was one of the outstanding promoters of Oak Bluffs following the Civil War. He was also the resort's most tireless host, entertaining the great, the near great, and the prosperous.

Ocean Avenue, circling the Park, was one of the more stylish addresses of the 70ties and 80ties. The location could hardly have been improved upon with the stores just a step from the back door and the passing parade, the band concerts, the frequent fireworks displays, all to be enjoyed from wide front porches. At the southerly end was the exclusive Oak Bluffs Club, and at the northerly, fairly hanging over the waterfront, was the Sea View Hotel, built 1871-72 on the site of the first Oak Bluffs Hotel. The most pretentious hostelry ever erected on the Vineyard, it vied for elegance with the splendid caravanseries of senior Saratoga Springs, and its destruction by fire in 1892 was a great blow to the prestige of both town and Island.

Two years after the Sea View was opened, the Martha's Vineyard Railroad, which ran along the shore from the steamboat wharf to Edgartown, and thence cross-lots to Mattakeeset Lodge at Katama, began operations. Its wharf property was badly damaged by the Sea View fire, and it finally closed down in 1896. The head-light from the engine, the Active, may be seen at the Dukes County Historical Society.

On the bluff north of the wharf stood the famed roller skating rink, scene of gay gatherings and flirtations. It was built in 1878 by Samuel Winslow, designer and manufacturer of a "new and improved" roller skate, who had put up the first roller skating rink in the country in Worcester two years previous. The Oak Bluffs arena was demolished in the Sea View fire.

The Tivoli, across from the wharf, dates from 1906, and was for many years the elite dance hall, or casino, of the Island. Back of it is Trinity Episcopal Church, open only in summer. And behind the chapel, to complete an odd grouping of buildings, is an ancient merry-go-round known as The Flying Horses which is a museum piece and should not be missed. It operates intermittently during the summer months.

OAK BLUFFS to EDGARTOWN via Sea View Avenue and the Beach Road.

Sea View Avenue is part of the shore road laid out in 1872 to connect Oak Bluffs and Edgartown. The Civil War statue and monument (R) at its start, was erected "in Honor of the Grand Army of the Republic by Chas. Strahan, Co. B 21st Virginia Regiment", and also sometime editor of the Martha's Vineyard Herald. It is the only monument in the country dedicated to the soldiers on both sides of the War Between the States. A memorial boulder to heroes of World Wars I and II stands nearby on Ocean Park.

The concrete promenade along the waterfront extending as far as Waban Park replaces an earlier one of plank on which at one time was a popular pavillion, or "pagoda", serving ice cream and "temperance" drinks. The first house on Sea View Avenue (R) marks the site of the Oak Bluffs Club which was founded in 1886 by a group of prominent and wealthy summer residents for purely social activities. It soon became headquarters for the New York Yacht Club members on their annual cruise, and many brilliant functions took place within its walls. After about ten years, the club went into bankruptcy and the buildings were sold and moved away.

Beyond the clubhouse site are several "costly villas" conceived and built, as were most of the Oak Bluffs cottages, by local carpenters, the wood used brought by locally owned schooners from the forests of Maine. The house once owned

and occupied by Gov. Oliver Ames of Massachusetts is on the north corner of Narragansett Avenue.

The public bath-houses below the bluff were built after the hurricane of 1944 destroyed the relic of 1870. Originally the use of the bath-houses was intended for owners of cottages, who rented them by the season, and for hotel guests, with a small section of the southernmost portion allowed the public. They are now owned by the town and operate throughout the summer for the benefit of one and all.

At 0.4 m. from the wharf is Waban Park used principally for a playground and occasional ballfield. The play in summer is supervised and all children are welcome. In the Gay Nineties it was the scene of hotly waged tourneys of the Cottage City Clerical Croquet Club. Nashawena Park is back of Waban on the hill, and to the south is a group of cottages known as Cluster Village.

At 0.6 m. (R) is Farm Pond, and just beyond is Hart-haven, a family real estate development begun 1911-13 by William H. Hart of New Britain whose manor house is at 1.1 m. (R). The protected harbor (L), originally part of Farm Pond, is private.

1.4 m. (R): The Martha's Vineyard Country Club, founded 1910. It has an 18-hole golf course, and is open May 1 to October 1. It occupies the site of an earlier and smaller course laid out in 1897.

1.9 m.: The so-called new opening from Sengekontacket Pond (R) to the ocean, dredged in 1937 in an effort to improve the circulation of water for the pond shellfisheries. The state beach begins here.

3.2 m.: "Three-mile" bridge over Sengekontacket Inlet, and town line. There is a good view across the pond of the site of the old Farm Neck settlement which is, for the most part, inaccessible save by private road. It is not difficult to imagine smoke rising from a cluster of wigwams near Major's Cove and from the great chimneys of scattered farmhouses; sheep and cattle grazing on Felix Neck; and the yellow ploughed fields of Pohq-auke, now overgrown with brush.

4.2 m.: Menada, or Trapp's Creek, which flows between Sengekontacket and Trapps' Pond (L). Thomas Trapp was one of the first settlers of the Vineyard. This section was called Manadoo by the Indians. The recent Ocean Heights development along the far shore of the big pond may be seen to advantage from this point.

5.0 m. (L): The Martha's Vineyard Cooperative Dairy, Inc., which collects, pasteurizes, and markets milk from Island producers. It was organized in 1946.

5.2 m.: Junction with County Road from Vineyard Haven, once known as the Ferry Path to Holmes Hole, as it led to



Bass Creek from which the ferry was operated to the mainland in early days. (See below for Edgartown).

OAK BLUFFS to the COUNTY AIRPORT via the Lagoon.

The main route to the County Airport from Oak Bluffs follows Circuit Avenue past the Public Library, cor. Penacook Avenue (L), and the site of the gas works on Uncas Avenue, which were built in 1886 and blew up in 1921. Circuit Avenue becomes Wing Road near the Sacred Heart Church (R) facing Petaluma Park. Begun in 1880, it was the first Roman Catholic Church on the Vineyard. It stands in the center of the Portuguese settlement, affectionately called Fayal, started for the most part by men who came to this country on whaleships from the Azores. They were attracted to Oak Bluffs by the opportunity to acquire farm land for market gardening, and the local demand for such produce. They readily became an integral part of the community, and today their descendants of the 3rd generation are leaders in the business, professional and political life of the Vineyard.

As Wing Road bears right beyond the church, it crosses the end of Dukes County Avenue.

An alternate route to Wing Road, avoiding traffic congestion on Circuit Avenue, is by Siloam Avenue, continuing straight ahead at the fork into Dukes County Avenue. School Street, the first intersection, leads (R) to the town schools and cemetery. William Butler's farm house stood about halfway up the hill near School Street, and the cemetery was originally the Butler family's private burying ground.

Next left off Dukes County Avenue is Roque Avenue to the Camp Ground. A modest pagoda in the grove just beyond (L) is near the old Roque Courts where that game, a refinement of croquet, had its inception and saw its demise. Vineyard Avenue, 3rd street right, connects with the County Road from Eastville to Edgartown. The Catholic cemetery entrance is on Vineyard Avenue, and so is St. John's Hall, belonging to the Holy Ghost Society, a Portuguese social organization.

The unpaved road entering the fields across Wing Road from the end of Dukes County Avenue goes to the farm once owned by Manuel de Bettencourt, one of the first Portuguese to hold public office after the town of Oak Bluffs was incorporated. His property, 160 acres in extent, was roughly that third of the original Daggett Farm inherited by Joseph Daggett in 1677. A "used way" about a quarter mile further (L) is part of the old road leading from the head of the Lagoon to the Camp Ground, and is a short-cut to the Oak Bluffs airport. The junction of Wing Road with the County Road from Eastville to Edgartown — often called the "Back Road" — is at Tomahawk Corner.

A right turn on the County Road joins Eastville Avenue a short distance east of the old inn. A one-room schoolhouse with vestibule stood in the fields in 1761 about halfway to the junction where for a few brief years was a modest Methodist Church. The

Baptists met, for an equally brief time, just around the corner on the Avenue.

The state Lobster hatchery is at the end of Shirley Avenue, and is indicated by a descriptive sign. It occupies the site of the first Marine Hospital (1798) on the Island, the second such in the country. A burying ground for sailors may be found here, but most of the markers, which were crosses of teak brought home on a whaler, have disappeared. There were early brick kilns in this vicinity, and a windmill. The hospital was discontinued about 1824.

A left turn on County Road at Tomahawk Corner passes the Oak Bluffs airport which is in Tom Tyler's field. Tyler was the son of the Sagamore Masonomet of Ipswich. On Tyler's Creek, which empties into Sengekontacket Pond, stood Simeon Butler's tannery as early as 1715. At 1.2 m. from the intersection (L) is a dirt road to Sengekontacket Pond. Crossing this road, about ¼ mile in from the present highway, is the original County Road used by the residents of Farm Neck. The old burying ground may be reached by following the cart-track to the south on foot, and also the rock at Pohquauke which Thomas Mayhew, Jr. used as a pulpit when addressing the Indians. For two centuries after his death, Indians from all over the Island gathered here for services during the summer. (The old road to the cemetery, now closed, is at 1.5 m.) A stop should be made at the top of the hill on returning to the County Road for the magnificent view of Pond and Sound, with the Cape Pogue Lighthouse a white exclamation point on the horizon. At 2.2 m. (R) is the site of the Farm Neck schoolhouse, established about 1775. Farm Neck ends at the junction of the Eastville Road with the Vineyard Haven-Edgartown Road at 2.5 m.

Wing Road becomes Barnes Road beyond Tomahawk Corner, thus exchanging the name of one real estate promoter for that of another: Wing's development having been Lagoon Heights, and Wallace Barnes's, Oklahoma on the Vineyard Haven shore of the Lagoon.

Hudson Avenue bears left a few hundred feet beyond Tomahawk Corner to a junction with Lagoon Heights Road (R) and a dirt road, straight ahead, leading to the standpipe of the town water system on the highest land in Oak Bluffs. The Prospect House, another of the fancy hotels built in the 70ties whose brief period of glory ended in flames, was located on Lagoon Heights Road. The remains of a tarred driveway (L) indicate the site of the Prospect House Casino. The western end of this road, formerly the terminus of the electric street railway, intersects Barnes Road about 0.6 m. from its point of origin. A way opposite leads to the Lagoon and site of the Prospect House wharf and bathhouses. Although this was once the main route to the Lagoon, since the extension and hardsurfacing of Barnes Road, it has fallen into disrepair and is recommended only for sightseeing.

The new section of Barnes Road extends from the County Road intersection to Lagoon Heights Road. From here, the lay-out follows in part that of the old pumping station road along the east shore of the Lagoon which became a town way in 1916. Most of the houses on Barnes Road are of recent construction dating from its re-surfacing. At the head of the Lagoon, however, a few 18th century houses remain of a settlement made there by members of the Norton, Luce and



Smith families. According to tradition this was also the site of a populous Indian village.

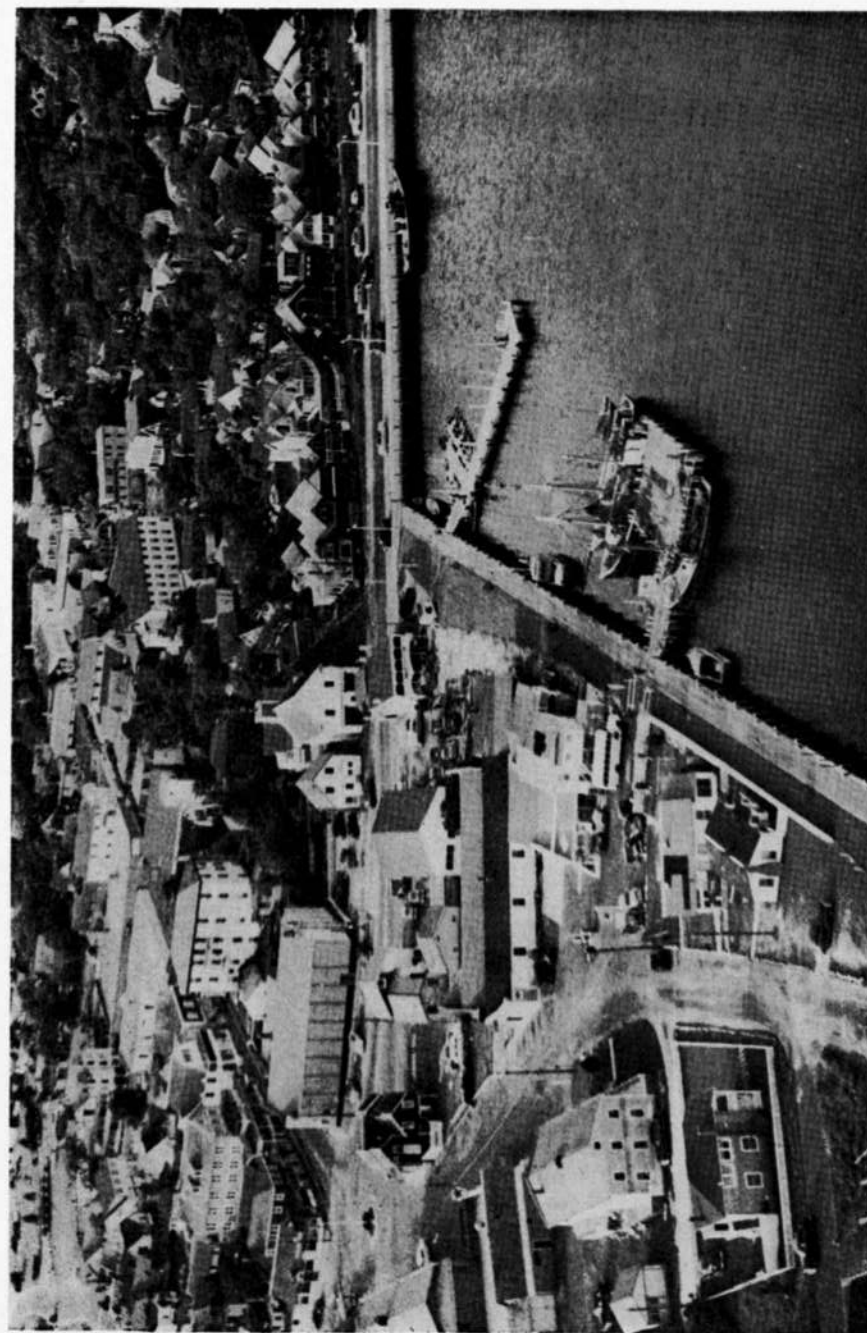
The Indian name of the region was Wequi-tuckquoiau-uke (shortened to Weahtaque or similar forms), meaning "the place of the boundary running-water", or "the place of the boundary spring." Towanquatuck, Sagamore of Nunpaug (Edgartown) established the footpath from this spring to Tashmoo spring as the boundary line between Holmes Hole Neck (Vineyard Haven) and the northern part of his Sachemship, now part of Oak Bluffs. The "stepping stones" across the pool are frequently mentioned in old documents bounding the towns, and in deeds to adjacent property.

Near the head of the Lagoon is a dike built in 1867 by the Lagoon Pond Company, a group of local landowners, in an effort to create a perch and herring fishery. The road across the dike joins the Vineyard Haven Road, but cannot be traversed by car.

The great springs at the head of the Lagoon furnish Oak Bluffs with an inexhaustible supply of excellent water. The springs were first exploited commercially by the Beech Grove Mineral Spring Company, Hamilton J. Greene, president, which sold bottled spring water and "carbonated temperance beverages." In 1889, the Company's holdings were sold to two mainland capitalists, who, operating as the Cottage City Water Company under contract to the town, proceeded to construct the existing water system. The Company bought the bottling company's land together with various other parcels surrounding the water shed, and the fishery company's pond, all of which was purchased in 1944 by the town of Oak Bluffs. The system is operated by a water department headed by three elected officials.

The old house near the road above the pumping station is a Norton family homestead, and the venerable Thomas Smith house stands in the valley to the southwest.

At 2.8 m. is the intersection of the Vineyard Haven-Edgartown County Road, beyond which Barnes Road becomes the Airport Road, built during World War II to serve the Naval Air Auxiliary which carved the present county airport out of a section of the State Forest. The State Forest, comprising 4500 acres largely planted to pine, was surveyed in 1925. Since 1929 it has included the Heath Hen Reservation which had been set aside as a Wild Life Sanctuary in 1908. The Heath Hen, a species of grouse, was strictly a Vineyard product, and despite efforts to protect it, completely disappeared about 1933. The highway enters the State Forest 0.5 m from the 4-corners, and the forester's house is at 1.0 m. (L). The Dr. Fisher Road, extending from Edgartown across the Plains to North Tisbury, intersects Airport Road at this point. On a knoll to the right stood for many years the steel tower used for fire spotting. This was taken down during World War II because of its proximity to the air base, and a new one erected following the war on a hilltop in the Christiantown area. Airport Road ends at the junction with the West Tisbury-Edgar-



OAK BLUFFS, AERIAL VIEW

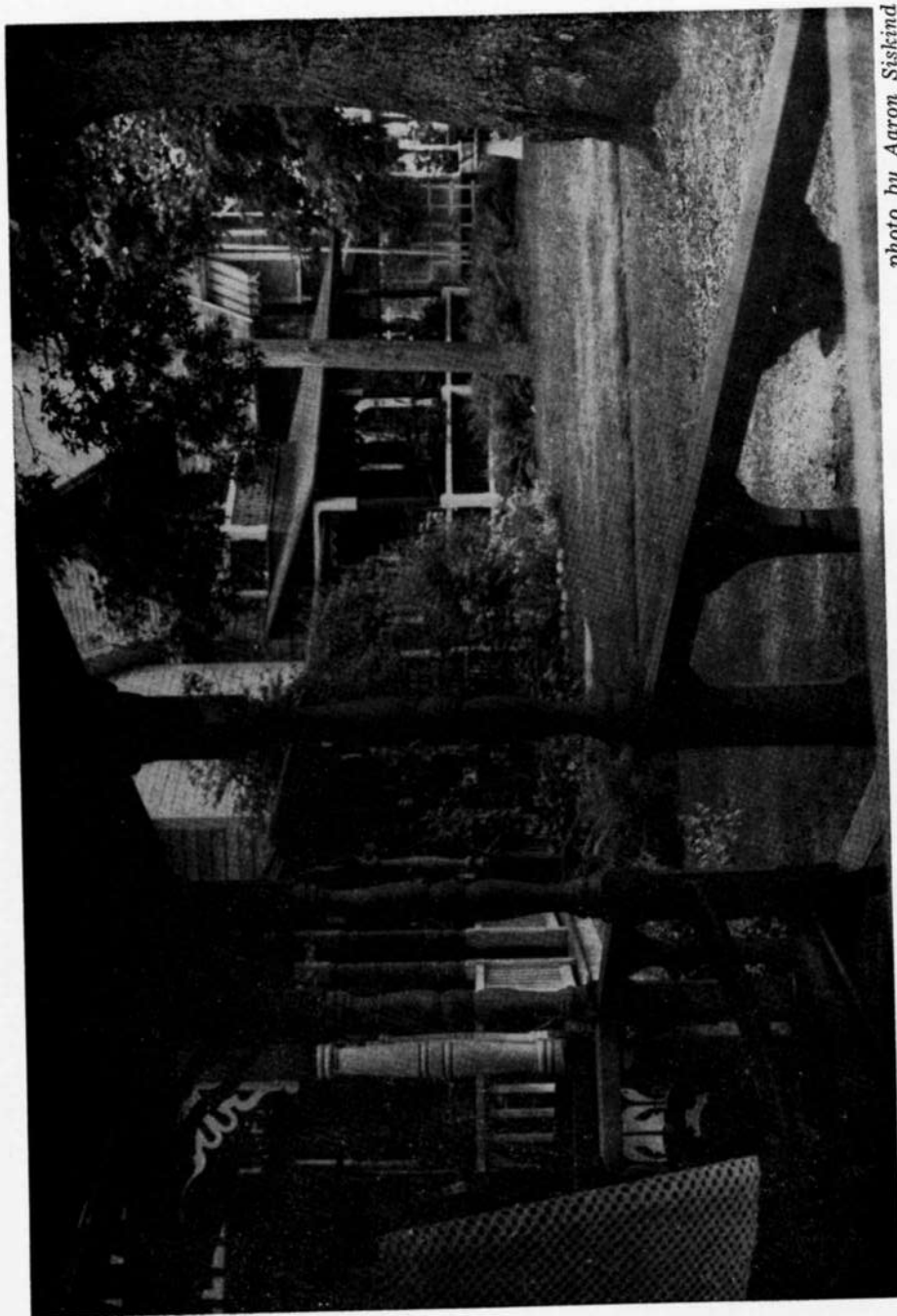


photo by Aaron Siskind

CAMP GROUND COTTAGES, OAK BLUFFS

town Road (Takemmy Trail) where a right turn leads directly to the County Airport entrance. Here are established an egg and poultry business, a plastics works, and several retail concerns occupying de-activated barracks. The airport is used by both commercial and privately-owned craft.

#### NORTH TISBURY and UP-ISLAND from Vineyard Haven

The highway to the up-Island towns begins at the junction of Water and Beach Streets. A mile out, it descends Tashmoo Hill at the head of picturesque Tashmoo Lake, a vista of which is glimpsed in passing. The name, taken from the spring, is derived from the Indian "kuht'ashim'oo" meaning "where there is a great spring". A hundred years ago it was alternately called Chappaquonsett Pond after the creek-outlet between the pond and sound. Tashmoo Farm, on the west side of the Lake near the highway was the Samuel Look homestead, dating from 1769 (see marker in the stone wall). A 9-hole golf course was laid out in the meadow at the head of the Lake in 1898 and was in play until fairly recent years.

At the foot of the hill is the junction with the Lambert's Cove Road, lower end. The highway bears left through a woody section to a second fork with the County Road from West Tisbury village at 3.2 m. (L), where it swings right. Lambert's Cove Road (R), the old shore road serving that settlement, rejoins the state road 4.5 m. to the westward.

Lambert's Cove, originally Onkokemmy Bay, lying between Paul's Point and Makonikey Head, was used as an anchorage by the early settlers of West Tisbury, and also by British privateers. Sheltered against all but WSW to NNE winds, vessels lay from 50 rods to ½ mile offshore in 3 to 5 fathoms of water with good holding ground. Several wharves were maintained here at one time and two or three stores catering to the needs of sailing vessels and fishermen who ran traps all along the shore. The present name comes from Jonathan Lambert who in 1694 purchased property here.

The division of the area between Tisbury and West Tisbury follows an early pattern when part of it was in the sachemship of Nobnocket, and part in Takemmy. Until 1736, the section between Tashmoo Lake and Blackwater Brook near the head of the Cove and known as Chickemmoo, was under the jurisdiction of the town of Chilmark.

At 0.2 m. (R) from the start of the Lambert's Cove Road, is an unimproved road leading to Chappaquonsett and the west side of Tashmoo Lake. Now a summer colony, it was the site of a prosperous herring fishery as described by the Indian name meaning "the net spreading-out place." Salt works, a necessary adjunct to commercial fishing before refrigeration, were operated by Isaac Luce on the shore west of the creek. A cultivated cranberry bog is at 1.2 m. (L). Just over the West Tisbury boundary at 1.5 m. (R) is a private road to the site of the Makonikey Hotel.

The Makonikey Heights Land development consisting of 450 acres started in 1891 with a layout and advertising. In 1893



a wharf to bold water was built and a sizable hotel opened, which closed within weeks due to a labor dispute. The next year a number of cottages were constructed in an effort to stimulate interest, but the location was too removed and difficult of access for the average summer visitor.

In 1904 the Kaolin and Clay Products Company was organized to commercialize the deposits in the area. This too was a failure since it was impossible to use the local lignite to fire the kilns and importing fuel was not practical. The tracks laid to carry bricks to the wharf, 6000 feet of them, were sold for scrap in World War I. The hotel knew one brief spurt of glory before it fell into ruins. From 1913-18 it was operated as a YWCA summer camp, and Mayling Soong, now Madame Chiang-Kai-Chek, vacationed there.

A two-story "half-house" situated on a knoll just west of the Makonikey driveway not far from the road was built c. 1740 by Capt. Nathan Smith, Revolutionary hero. One of his several spectacular exploits was the capture of the British armed schooner *Volante* with a small crew of volunteers and a whaleboat mounting three swivel-guns. It was one of the earliest, if not the first, naval engagements of the War. His brother, Thomas, Jr., built and operated the Chickemmoo grist mill (c. 1734) which served this community up until the end of the 19th century. It was located a short distance to the eastward on Chappaquonsett Brook.

Capt. John A. Luce, whaling master, lived in the next house on the left. He is noted for having had a woman, disguised as a common sailor, in his crew aboard the bark *America* in 1863. She pulled tuboar in the 2nd mate's boat, but failed on one occasion to keep stroke, which resulted in events leading up to her disclosure. At 2.4 m. (L) is the John Look homestead, c. 1790. The first schoolhouse for the so-called northern district was in his pasture. In the woods back of this house was the bog from which iron ore was taken in 1814 to be smelted and made into shot for the U. S. frigate *Constitution* at Colonel Murdock's foundry in Carver. The cannon balls made from this bog ore were subsequently instrumental in the capture of two British ships of war, the *Cyane* and the *Levant* in an engagement off Madeira. The cemetery on the hill opposite has been in use for nearly two hundred years, although there are memorial stones for those lost at sea of an even earlier date.

At 2.7 m. (R) is the Cottle homestead known always as the Big House. The Cottle family acquired property in this section early in the 18th century and built a grist mill. John Cottle, miller, was living hereabouts in 1736, and the Big House was probably built by his son Shubael, miller, innkeeper, and longtime selectman. Dating from 1750, it is one of very few salt-box type dwellings on the Vineyard.

The road passes over Blackwater Brook at 2.8 m. Called Eachpoquassit by the Indians, the brook was the western boundary of Chickemmoo, and an eastern bound of the original

Christiantown grant. (See below). A tannery was run by the Luce near the head of the brook, and was the last such to be operated on the Island. The gateway (R) at the curve closes off the old way to the beach east of James Pond. Capt. Thomas Butler, son of John of Edgartown, first Vineyard whaler on record, had a dwelling in this vicinity as early as 1703. The pond (formerly Onkokemmy) was named for James, Duke of York, and may be the "great standing lake of fresh water" mentioned in Brereton's account of Gosnold's voyage of discovery to these shores in 1602.

At 3.1 m. (R) is the Lambert's Cove Methodist Church, built 1845, the first of this denomination to serve West Tisbury, and still in use. The Thomas Luce house, which once stood in the fields beside James Pond, is at 3.2 m. (L). It was built about 1700, moved to its present location in 1825, and recently restored. The small ponds on either side were known locally as Drinking Water and Washing Water Ponds. Seth's Pond, a little further along, was named for another Luce. It is and has been for years a favorite place for ice-skating. At 3.9 m. (R) is the former Samuel Mingo house, the last Indian home left standing of the old Christiantown settlement. Mr. Mingo was a whaler, and one of his voyages was on the bark *A. Hicks* of Westport in 1879. Just beyond the junction of the upper end of the Lambert's Cove Road with the state highway, the Indian Hill Road forks right. The Christiantown Memorial is reached by turning here (R) and again right on an improved dirt road, 0.5 m. from the fork.

Christiantown was the mile square given in 1669 by the Sachem Josias of Takemmy as a township to the only four known "praying Indians" of the time within his sachemship. The town was governed by local tribesmen under the sponsorship of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The tiny chapel building, about half a mile in, replaces two earlier meeting houses, the first one in use prior to 1680, and a second erected about 1695. Ministers both white and native preached to the congregation and the missionary Mayhews, followed by the Rev. Frederick Baylies looked after their general welfare. The present chapel was built by the state for a school. It was dedicated as a Baptist place of worship in 1871, and has been restored three times, in 1909, 1927, and in 1941, when it was taken over by the county, together with the burying ground, as a memorial. Care of the grounds is under the supervision of the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club.

The burying ground (R) contains the remains of the "praying Indians", marked as was their custom with field stones. The boulder at the back was a pulpit rock, and another beyond the chapel supports a bronze marker with suitable inscription given by the D. A. R., Sea Coast Defense Chapter. The road, narrow and rutted, continues past the cemetery to the top of Indian Hill (268 feet) now private property, but once used for signal fires, & for pow-wows. The Indian Dancing Field lies to the northeast.

Parts of the original "mile square" were sold during the 18th century. The remaining lands were partitioned among the Indian descendants of the original owners in the early 18-hundreds, and have since passed into other hands.



Indian Hill Road (dead end) serves the relic of an old and flourishing community of North Shore dwellers. At 1.0 m. (L) is the William Davis homestead, c. 1790, near the site of the original Davis house built in 1685. This little settlement was known until late years as Davistown, and so also was the road. Diagonally across from the old Davis place, and about the same age is the former Gorham house. A typical Cape Cod half house of a story and a half, it was registered in Washington in 1936 by the Historic American Buildings survey, together with measured drawings. Job Gorham, who came here from Barnstable ran a tannery on the little pond-hole near the road (R).

At 1.2 m. (L) is the former Locust Grove Schoolhouse which served the children of North Shore families from 1884 to 1927. Originally built on the North Road opposite the old mill, it was moved to this location because of the danger of pupils' drowning in the Mill Pond. A serpent kame extends behind the schoolhouse, and there are numerous Indian graves in the vicinity. The road ambles leisurely beneath lofty oak trees to a sharp left curve where it runs along a ridge to Norton Circle turn-around. A narrow stony lane straight-ahead at the curve scrambles down hill to the Obed Daggett Farm on Cedar Tree Neck, scene of many wrecks. About halfway along the lane on the left is an equally narrow and tortuous "way" leading to a few old houses, now with one exception, summer residences. This "way" is all that remains of a well-populated farm road that once connected Lambert's Cove on the east with Kapigan on the west.

Back at the Christiantown Road intersection, a right turn joins the highway 0.7 m. west of the Indian Hill Road near the entrance to North Tisbury.

North Tisbury used to be known as Middletown, as it was about halfway between the east and west settlements in Tisbury township before the division. Simon Athearn purchased property here about 1685, but the first white settler was undoubtedly William Rogers. His son Ebenezer lived in the old house on the ridge (R) which dates from 1710, if not before.

A dirt road (R) goes to farmhouses in back next to the woods and to the North Tisbury cemetery with stones dating from 1835. It returns to the highway about ¼ m. west. The dirt road next left is part of the old Courthouse Road to West Tisbury, but no longer a thoroughfare. Edward Hammett, the worsted comber, (see Chap. III) lived on this road. The North Tisbury Baptist Church (1847-1945) stood in the large open lot (R) just around the curve.

Next to the last house on the right was once owned by Capt. William Cottle. He was 1st mate on the ship *Menkar*, T. A. Norton, master, when she took the second largest sperm whale on record. A general store occupied the end building, and the local post-office was here for a number of years until the R. F. D. route was instituted in 1913.

The state highway, left at the fork, continues to West Tisbury village and beyond, and is called the South Road from

this point on. (See below). The North Road (R), laid out in 1849, leads directly to Menemsha Creek and public beach, and is the preferred route for an up-Island tour.

#### CHILMARK via the North Road

0.3 m. from the fork (L) may be seen the pond and mill-site where Dr. Fisher of Edgartown established his flour mill c. 1850, obtaining power by damming the Old Mill River which flows along the North Road from its source in Chilmark. An old mill building still stands at the spillway. The driveway just beyond (R) is the entrance to Seven Gates Farm, a corporation comprising a number of large private estates. It was begun by Professor Nathaniel S. Shaler, famous Harvard geologist, who purchased an old farm on the North Shore in 1888, and subsequently added several others to his holdings. It derives its name from the fact that Shaler had to open seven gates before arriving home. The road crosses Look's Brook a short distance above the driveway.

At 0.9 m. (L) is the pond formed by the upper dam on the Old Mill River constructed by Dr. Fisher to obtain water power for his mill. Known for years as Dr. Fisher's Pond, it is now called Woods' Pond for the current owners. The Ferguson homestead, 1.4 m. (L) was built before 1787 by Capt. John Ferguson, Sound pilot. Following the tradition of many Island mariners, Ferguson turned trader and kept a store in the ell of his dwelling, which served the residents of Kapigan — the north shore section of Chilmark. He was liquor agent for Chilmark, and hung a mailbag beside the door from which the neighbors extracted their letters, "Wish Books" and copies of the Farm Journal. The house lot is on the boundary between Chilmark and West Tisbury, and another Ferguson house once stood hereabouts which was moved to West Tisbury village over the old road that ran through the woods to the meeting house.

At 2.4 m. (L) is the Capt. George Fred Tilton house. George Fred's 3000-mile hike over the Arctic wastes to get help for his ship frozen in the ice north of Point Barrow is a whaling classic. Capt. Tilton later was curator of the *Charles W. Morgan* when that veteran whaleship was owned by Colonel Green and on exhibit at his So. Dartmouth dock.

At 2.6 m. the North Road crosses Paint Mill Brook at the mouth of which still stands the old Paint Mill built in 1847 by Francis Nye, and operated by King and Wing. Here ochres were ground from local clay deposits, the dust packed in barrels and shipped from Paint Factory wharf on the Sound to Boston and New Bedford. The clay was dug from pits by hand labor, then dried in sheds before being milled. Pay was \$1.00 a ton dry weight. It was the most successful industry ever to locate in Chilmark with the peak annual production of 46,000 pounds. Paint Mill Brook is sometimes call-

ed Howland's Brook for Capt. Elijah Howland who lived beside it on the estate now known as Hollyholm. Tea Lane, left, (unimproved) connects with the Middle Road. (See below).

At 2.9 m. (R) is the Kapigan schoolhouse (1852) the second building erected on this site to accommodate children of the North District of Chilmark. It is now a summer home.

At 3.9 m. (R) is the old Hillman property. Here was the great swamp from which bog iron was extracted and shipped to the forges at Taunton to be cast into shot before and during the Revolution. The Hillman house, c. 1728, may be seen from the highway, set snugly in the little valley. On the left side of the highway was the Claghorn farm, birthplace of Col. George Claghorn, master builder of the U. S. frigate *Constitution*. He also built the ship *Rebecca*, first New Bedford whaler to double Cape Horn and bring back oil from the Pacific. At 4.2 m. (L) is the junction with Tabor House Road.

This road is named for a family of Tabors who lived briefly about halfway along it on the west side in the woods. Only one other house is known to have stood on Tabor House Road, that of Moses Look, built facing the Atlantic near the Middle Road intersection. The east side of the road was uninhabited save for the Sauermaug Indians who lived back in the hills toward Tea Lane. Little is known about the tribe except that an old chief named Sowermog is listed as a minister in "Indian Converts".

Roaring Brook passes under the highway just west of Tabor House Road. It was an important source of water power for 200 years. A grist mill was built on it by John Hillman shortly after he became a resident of Chilmark, and rebuilt in 1849 by the Nyes. It functioned until the early 1900's, the last miller being Will Manter whose wife was the much beloved "Aunt" Rebecca Hillman. At the mouth of the stream near the Sound, a brickyard was set up in 1851 by T. & J. Barrows & Chandler. It was enlarged in 1856 under new management with more machinery and better furnaces. Then, in 1868, it was taken over by Hon. Nathaniel Harris and reorganized as the Vineyard Brick and Tile Works. He installed steam power and imported French labor for whom he built a tenement known as the French Boarding House. Production continued for seven or eight years and the sale of bricks somewhat longer. Then in 1895, his sons Sidney and Charles started a China Clay works on the slope west of the waterwheel, but it was short-lived. All that remains of these ambitious undertakings are a brick smokestack and the waterwheel, and a favorite anchorage for still-fishing off the mouth of the brook known as The Brickyard.

At 5.6 m. (R) is Prospect Hill, the highest point on the Vineyard, rising some 308 feet. On the left may be seen Bliss Pond, formed by damming one of the many brooks that trickle down the Chilmark hills. The old house just below it was built c. 1838 by Ephraim Poole for Capt. Richard Flanders, one of the town's most successful, and most pompous whale-

men. He was renowned along the New Bedford waterfront as being stronger on discipline than on grub. The mill is of recent construction, and together with the adjacent buildings is for summer occupancy.

The Cross Road to Chilmark Center bears left at the triangle, and the North Road continues down Creek Hill to Menemsha Post Office and bathing beach. About halfway down the hill (R) is the Capt. Daniel Flanders house known as The Homestead. Eldest of the three whaling sons of John and Hannah Flanders, Capt. Dan was one of the early staunch Methodists in town. Before sailing on a voyage, he would put into Menemsha Bight to get the parson's blessing for his ship, and to ask for the prayers of the congregation. Flanders was a "Sunday Whaler", which meant, curiously enough, that he would not allow whales taken on the Sabbath, when he was master.

At the foot of the hill, the Basin Road (R) leads to Dutcher Dock and the public bathing beach, where a life guard is in attendance during July and August. The Coast Guard Station on the knoll (L) formerly was at Cuttyhunk, and was brought to its present location by raft in 1952. It was built in 1936. On the slope (R) is the oldest house at the Creek. Built for his father by Capt. Leonard West, it was later occupied by members of the Tilton family and is still known locally as the Frank Tilton Place. At one time the east parlor was used for a store where staples brought by packet from New Bedford were sold or traded to farmers and fishermen of the area.

Menemsha owes its growth to the dredging of the new Creek in 1905, thus providing a permanent channel and protected harbor for lobstermen and trap fishermen, and later for sword-fishermen and draggers. The old channel, called Waywaytick by the Indians, and meaning winding or crooked, was just that, and shoal besides. Before World War II as many as 50 commercial swordfishing boats would tie up here during a summer Nor'wester. Today, with the decline of inshore fishing, their places have been taken by yachts and pleasure fishermen. The Coast Guard Boathouse near the end of the causeway was built in 1944. The shacks, used for gear by local fishermen, are on land leased from the state or town.

The Menemsha Cross Road near the top of Creek Hill, goes to Chilmark Center and connects the North Road with the state, or South Road. Not far from this intersection is the Chilmark Methodist Church (L), built in 1842-3 on the Middle Road and moved to its present site in 1915. Originally a little gem of classic revival architecture, the steeple and belfry were added in 1931 to accommodate the bell from the discontinued Baptist Church in Oak Bluffs. The dwelling next door is the former parsonage, also moved from the Middle Road. Opposite on a prominent knoll stands the only old cut-stone house in town. It was built c. 1842 by whaling captain Ephraim Poole, Jr., who boasted he would have the finest



house in town. The stonewalls alone took Jim Mosher and his crew four years to split and build, and cost the Captain everything he earned on a 3-year voyage to the Indian Ocean.

The Chilmark fire-station (1954) is next left, adjacent to the Town Hall, built in 1897, which contains the selectmen's offices as well as an auditorium, and until 1956 also housed the public library. Bronze tablets commemorating Servicemen of World Wars I and II are affixed to boulders beneath the pines in front of the Hall.

The first purchase of land from the Indians in what is now Chilmark was made by Thomas Mayhew, Jr. in 1653. This was Nashowakemmuck, which constituted the southern section of the present town. Here, at Quanaimes, his son John, third Mayhew missionary to the Indians, built his home to become the first English settler of what was incorporated as the Manor of Tisbury in 1671.

Confusion between Tisbury Manor and the Town of Tisbury caused the former to become known as Chilmark as early as 1680. Then, when the colony came under the jurisdiction of the Province of Massachusetts Bay in 1694, it was duly incorporated under its present name. The township at that time included not only Chilmark proper as it is known today, but also Chickemmoo and the Elizabeth Islands. The section called Nashaquitsa was a separate purchase as it belonged to the Sachemship of Gay Head. The original Chilmark in England is, appropriately enough, a neighbor of Tisbury.

Like West Tisbury, Chilmark was essentially a farming and fishing community for over 200 years. She also contributed her share of whalemens to the Vineyard roster, and many of her captains were famous in whaling annals. Farming eventually gave way to commercial fishing, and today the summer recreation business has eclipsed both. The first summer visitors of note were Lucy Stone, famous suffrage pioneer and her husband Henry Blackwell, who stayed here in 1863. Swimming, sailing, sunning and sport-fishing are the principal seasonal activities.

The four-corners formed by the junction of the Menemsha Cross Road, the Middle Road (L) and the South Road which curves sharply to the west at this point is considered the village center. Beetlebung Corner (SE) with its fine stand of tupelo, perpetuates the local name for these trees whose tough wood was anciently used to make beetles (mallets) and bungs. On the opposite corner is an old farmhouse recently enlarged and renovated for the town library. It was built c. 1790 by Capt. William Tilton, and originally stood about a mile to the eastward on the South Road overlooking the ocean. It was moved to the present location late in the 19th century by George West and used as a residence by members of his family until purchased by the town in 1953.

The route to Gay Head continues with a swing right at the 4-corners. (See below for West Tisbury and Edgartown). On the left is the new (1955) telephone dial station, and just beyond the post office (R) is the Menemsha Schoolhouse which has been in use for over a hundred years. The highway dips to cross Mill Brook, and then meanders uphill to emerge



photo by Clara F. Dinsmore

MIDDLE ROAD, CHILMARK



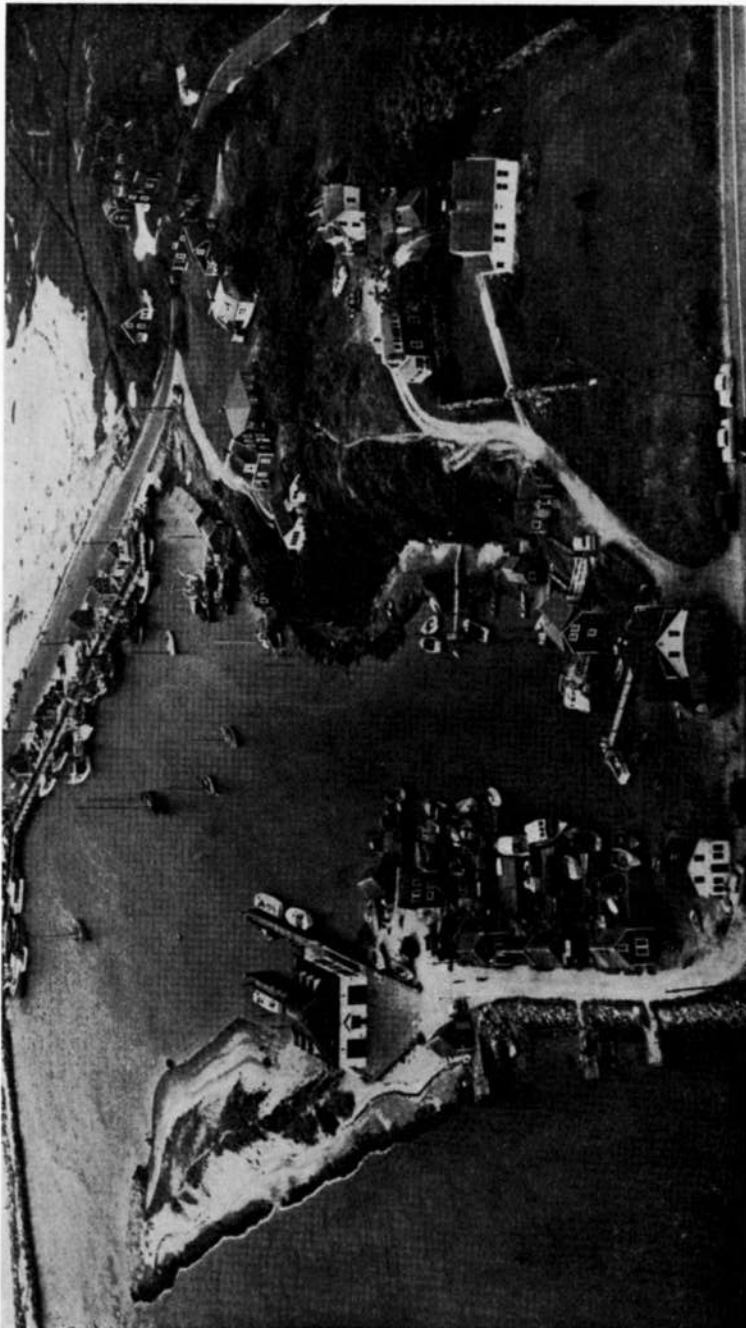


photo courtesy Mass. Dept. of Commerce

MENEMSHA, AERIAL VIEW

upon an unsurpassed panorama of moors and meadows, ponds and ocean. At 0.5 m. (R) from Beetlebung Corner is the Old Great House built in 1735 by Benjamin Lumbert. With twelve rooms, it was for a century or more the largest house in this end of town. The British lodged here during Gray's Raid while they were herding sheep from local pastures. The white house at 0.7 m. (L) was the first Menemsha school building which stood near the present post office and was moved up the hill for a dwelling by Crandon Look, wheelwright.

At the foot of Bridge Hill, the highway crosses Hariph's Creek which connects Nashaquitsa Pond (R) with Stone Wall Pond (L), and enters the Nashaquitsa section of Chilmark. The Indian name — still in use but generally abbreviated to Quitsa — means "the little divided island." Quitsa Pond empties into Menemsha Pond through Pechaker's Creek, and is a favorite small boat anchorage in summer, and scallop grounds in winter. The square enclosure at 1.6 m. (L) is the old town pound. Here animals found wandering at large were penned until claimed and charges paid by their owners. The office of pound keeper was an important one in the days of sheep and cattle farming. After rounding Kettle Cove (R), the road passes the site, at 1.8 m. (R) of E. Elliott Mayhew's little neighborhood store. Nearby stood the first town library (1891) which consisted of 263 volumes including 100 given by Alice Stone Blackwell and other members of that family who owned homes in the vicinity. The old Smith homestead on Quitsa Lane (next left) belonged to Miss Blackwell at one time. This well-preserved colonial farmhouse was built in 1768 by Elijah Smith who, as town tax collector in the year 1778 was relieved of his receipts amounting to £390 by one of Gray's raiding party. A slate tombstone may be seen from the highway in the dooryard on the west side of Quitsa Lane. It marks the grave of young Nathan Mayhew, whose body was brought ashore (1736) from a ship anchored off Squibnocket, but since he died of smallpox, the selectmen would not allow the remains carried through town to the family lot on Abel's Hill.

At 2.1 m. (L) is the road to Squibnocket Beach and the head of Squibnocket Pond. A section of the beach at the foot of the road is leased by the town for the use of Chilmark residents and their guests. The rest of the beach is privately owned. Squibnocket was the summer dwelling place of the Chilmark Indians, and in the 19th century dory-fishermen used the causeway between the pond and ocean to haul up their boats. Several "fish-houses" stood here, and also the Humane Society boathouse, which was on a little rise called Money Hill because of legendary buried treasure. Beyond, on Squibnocket Point, was the New York Clubhouse, for forty or more years headquarters of one of several bass clubs formed hereabouts just after the Civil War by wealthy sportsmen

spurred by an exceptional run of striped bass in local waters. Legend has it that Squibnocket Point and Noman's Land, due southwest, were once connected by an isthmus. Between them now is four miles of not too deep water.

The island of Noman's Land has been part of the town of Chilmark since 1685 when it was included in the Manor of Tisbury by Gov. Dongan of New York. The Indian name of the island was Capoaquidnet. It was first recorded as Noman's Land in 1666.

The early ownership of Noman's — which the initiate now call it — was juggled about until it was finally purchased by Jacob Norton in 1715, whose son was licensed as innkeeper there in 1722. Young Jacob, farmer and fisherman, was joined at his lonely outpost by Israel Luce, weaver. And, for 150 years, fishing and sheep raising were the two chief occupations of the island, although piloting came to be a not inconsiderable third. 600 sheep are listed in an 1807 report which goes on to say "Beside two dwelling houses, there are twenty huts which shelter the pilots who go to the island principally in the winter to look out for vessels which are coming on the coast; and the fishermen who frequent it in spring and autumn, for the purpose of catching the cod and other fish which are found in its neighborhood."

The seasonal settlement grew to forty families, who raised their own pork, hens and vegetables, using rockweed for fertilizer, and brought their staples from New Bedford in sturdy Noman's Land "double-enders." There was a schoolhouse where classes were held intermittently, and meeting on Sunday. The grist-mill used to grind corn in fall doubled as winter storehouse for the salt needed to cure the catch. There were three runs of cod in spring, the herring school, the lance school, and the toad school. The two former referred to "what the fish were feeding on," and the latter appeared at the same time as the toads on Squibnocket.

When the spring fishing was done, the men started rounding up the sheep to have them ready for the shearer who arrived about the 20th of June. It was common pasturage, although the number each man was allowed to run was prorated according to the acreage he owned. Each owner's flock was identified by a registered ear-mark. Noman's Land sheep, like the codfish were of superior quality and brought fancy prices.

After the turn of the century, however, the market for salt fish dwindled with the increased demand for, and improved methods of handling fresh fish; the number of codfish dwindled with the increase in otter-trawling; and running sheep came to be a rich man's hobby on the islands. Noman's Land was purchased by Joshua Crane in 1913, and remained in the Crane family until 1952 when it was purchased by the Government for a bombing target. Now all that is left as a reminder of the old days on the island are a few fishing ranges with such names as The Sheep Pen, and The Fireplace.

Squibnocket Pond is the largest body of fresh water on the Vineyard, and it, too, at one time was open to the sea. Hilliard's Cove at the head of the pond near the road is named for Capt. Hilliard Mayhew whose much altered home overlooks it. He was one of the saltiest of the old whaling captains, and tales of his exploits run the gamut from quelling a mutiny single-handed to a head-on flight from a cannibal island with his whaleboat under his arm.

Back on the highway about opposite Squibnocket Road is a skating pond made from a peat bog by the late Chester Poole, who named it Meadow Lake. The house on the far side was built in 1815 on Squibnocket by Joseph Mayhew. The rafters are made from parts of a ship's pump off a British vessel that went ashore there. Originally a "half-house" it was brought to its present location sometime before 1850. Capt. Otis Smith lived here a short time before he was persuaded to join the exodus to the California Gold Fields, where he died. He was one of five whaling brothers born in the old homestead across the road.

From this point the highway ascends "Turn-around" Hill, where may be obtained a magnificent view over Quitsa and Menemsha Ponds to the Creek, Lobsterville Beach, the Sound and Elizabeth Islands. It is a favorite subject for painters and color-photographers. The little harbor below the road is called Clam Point Cove. The house on the hill at 2.4 m. (L) was built by Simon Mayhew about 175 years ago. This was the last old-time sheep farm on Quitsa. The King's Highway came across Stonewall Beach and ran along the ridge south of this house to Gay Head. It was the only land route "down-island" until Hariph's Creek was bridged in 1847. The so-called Norse Cromlech is located on this property, but permission is required to inspect it. The Gay Head town line is about a mile from here.

## GAY HEAD

Gay Head is one of only two Indian townships in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Mashpee on Cape Cod being the other. Until its incorporation in 1870, the territory passed through a number of hands without affecting the inhabitants to any degree. Governor Dongan of New York purchased the Indian rights from Joseph Mittark, Sachem, in 1687 to validate the inclusion of Gay Head in his manorial grant. The English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts purchased title in 1711 and exercised a benevolent guardianship until the Revolution, after which the state automatically took over. Another 75 years passed before the natives of Gay Head were "merged in the general community — with all the rights and privileges and with all the duties and liabilities of citizens" of the Commonwealth. The principal industry on Gay Head has always been fishing although farming and the sale of clay have been of some importance. Gay Head men have a long and enviable record in the whaling annals of the Islands and New Bedford, extending often through three generations. They were especially famed as expert harpooners, and it was considered good luck to have a Gay Header on the crew. A number of them rose to be 1st mates and took ships on 'tween season cruises, but there is no record of any ever having accepted a berth as captain, though several were offered.

While the Indians knew the west end of Nope both as Aquinnah, "long end or point", and Kuhtuhquehtuut, "on the great Hill", the English name was used commonly as early as 1675, and officially by the old Sachem Mittark. Mittark also was first resident missionary to his people, and after some serious opposition was



successful in "bringing over" all of them to "a profession of Christianity" before his death in 1683.

The Herring Creek over which the highway passes at 3.4 m. was dug early in the 19th century to allow alewives to run up from Menemsha Pond to Squibnocket to spawn, and also to improve the perch fishery in the latter pond. It follows an ancient "trickle" mentioned in early deeds. The herring fishery was important for many years. Not only were the fish cured to sell and eat, but also used for cod and lobster bait, and the scales sold for "priscilla" pearls. The lot at the head of Menemsha Pond (R) on the west side of the creek is now a Town Landing. Formerly the Lewis Cook homestead stood here, and the stone foundation of the old barn may be seen from the road. The Cook men went whaling. One of them, Bill, rose to 1st mate and was "the finest officer I ever had when it came to handling men" according to a Chilmark captain.

The land along the west shore of Menemsha was known as East Pasture. It was used alternately with Middle and South Pastures for communal grazing of stock, for the Indians recognized the value of resting land long before conservation became a popular theme. The high hill overlooking the Sound is called Skissi Hill. Here powwows were held: gatherings with dancing and smoking of the peace pipe to celebrate occasions such as the green corn festival, or the return home of a whaleman from a successful voyage. At the left side of the road above the creek is the Gay Head spring, a source of excellent drinking water for public use. The barway at the top of the hill (L) indicates an old road to Squibnocket skirting Witch Pond where the legendary Sachem Moshop's (see below) pet white whale is supposed to hibernate.

At 3.7 m. (R) is a 100-year old dwelling known as the James Cooper house for its longtime occupant, one of the heroes of the *City of Columbus* disaster (see below). A gate at 3.8 m. (L) marks the beginning of the Old South Road, now virtually impassible, which led to the original Indian settlement overlooking the ocean, discontinued after the building of the present highway, c. 1870. Toad Rock, another of Moshop's pets, his giant toad which he turned into stone before disappearing, is on a trace which branches off the Old South Road toward the head of Squibnocket Pond. A new road, Moshop's Trail, is now under construction which will again make accessible points of interest on the south shore. The dirt road (R) serves residents on the west side of Menemsha Pond.

Half a mile further along the highway crosses Black Brook, the only stream of any consequence on "The Head." Its name presumably derives from the dark hue of its water credited to the peat bog at its source in Great Swamp. However, the many supernatural tales linked with the brook might

well account for its dour title. The Lobsterville Road joins the highway at 4.5 m. (R), and is an alternate route to the cliffs (see below). From here the State Road ascends a ridge from which incredibly lovely views of the broad Atlantic (L) and of Vineyard Sound and the Elizabeth Islands (R) especially Nashawena and Cuttyhunk, may be obtained.

The white house at 5.2 m. (L) originally stood on the Old South Road where it was built by Isaac Rose, 49-er and first post-master of Gay Head. His son Alfred, was one of eight Gay Head boys to fight in the Civil War, and the only casualty. The schoolhouse, (next left), once painted a traditional red, was enlarged to its present size in 1857, at which time it was considered quite up to date "with comfortable seats and desks, a full set of Cornell's large atlases, and well-furnished with blackboards." It is still used today (1956) for the grammar grades. The town library occupies part of the building.

South of the schoolhouse is the Gay Head Baptist Church, 3rd building, dedicated in 1850. It was constituted in 1693, and is the oldest Indian Baptist church in North America. The early preachers were largely native sons, although occasionally "down-Island" men "supplied." Both church and schoolhouse were moved up the hill from the old road, and so too was the parsonage, built 1856, which sits on a slightly but windy knoll to the westward, not far from the site of the Gay Head windmill. Below the hill on which the church stands, and down a walking road, is the old cemetery. The attractive Town Hall (R) was built in 1929. On a boulder in front of it is affixed the World War I Shield of Honor presented by Gov. Samuel McCall which commemorates Gay Head's outstanding contribution in that struggle.

The highway continues beneath an arch of scrub oak framing a vista of moor and ocean to approach the famous cliffs and lighthouse. The open field (L) was anciently known as Cheepii's cornfield, Cheepii being a legendary mischief-making deity. The old U. S. Life-Saving Station and Boathouse (1895) was located on the beach below, and the Belain homestead stands in a meadow halfway to the shore. Here was born Joseph G. Belain, probably Gay Head's most successful whaleman. On more than one occasion he came out of the Arctic with a lay of \$15,000 as first mate for the one voyage. He spent sixty of his seventy-nine years at sea. Another seaman, Bill Vanderhoop, built the yellow frame house (R) within sound and sight of the ocean. Stone foundations of an old peat house and a root shed may be seen to the rear of the dwelling. Vanderhoop went whaling in his youth, and later ran a packet between Lobsterville and New Bedford, carrying fish over and supplies back. His mate for a time was George Christian, a Pitcairn Islander brought here on a whaleship.



At 5.7 m. (R) is the way to the new cemetery, which is on the hill (L) not far from the turn-off. One of the oldest homes in Gay Head still on its original site is the Aaron Cooper place (L) beyond which a dirt lane runs to the South Beach. Ahead the lighthouse stands in bleak dignity as it has for just a century, flashing three white and one red, both warning and a welcome home to men at sea. It is not open to visitors.

The Gay Head lighthouse, for many years one of the ten most important lights on the Atlantic Coast, was built 1855-56 to replace an earlier wooden structure authorized in 1798 by President John Adams. The original lens, of the type invented by Augustin Fresnel in 1814, was constructed in France by the firm of Henry-Lepaute, and received a gold medal at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1855. It was installed in the new tower and first lighted Dec. 1, 1856. The old lamp with five concentric wicks using whale-oil was replaced by an incandescent oil vapor mantel device which was in service until the introduction of electricity on Gay Head in 1951. At that time more powerful bullseye glasses were installed, and the Fresnel lens and apparatus for revolving it were given to the Dukes County Historical Society. Here it is on display in a tower duplicating the upper 15 feet and lantern of the lighthouse.

A square tower in front of the lighthouse was built in 1952 for a Coast Guard look-out and radar station.

The former Coast Guard buildings, now empty, may be seen near the edge of the cliff to the eastward. The keeper's house was built in 1906.

Parking area for a visit to the cliffs is at the west side of the Loop, where there is a short flight of wooden steps for easy access. Historically, geologically and scenically, the Gay Head cliffs are the most important site on Martha's Vineyard. Gosnold "doubled" them in 1602, and named them "Dover Cliff." The present more appropriate name was given by British sailors before 1662. They were a point of departure for the hundreds of whaleships sailing from New Bedford, often with native sons aboard, and the first sight of home mentioned in whaling logs and journals. Geologists have long pondered over their unique formation, and the fossils imbedded in their sands and clays have made many an archaeological field-day.

The path to the top of the bluff continues past an anachronous World War II emplacement and out along a ridge of kaolin from which the best view of the varicolored strata of the cliffs is obtained. Due northwest from this point is the Devil's Bridge buoy which marks the end of a treacherous ledge of rocks at the entrance to Vineyard Sound. Regarded with respect by sailors from time immemorial, Devil's Bridge is most famous as the scene of the wreck of the S. S. *City of Columbus*, January 18, 1884.

The *City of Columbus* enroute from Boston to Savannah struck the ledge about 3.45 a.m. Although it was bright moonlight, she was not sighted for about two hours by the lightkeeper. An-

other five hours passed before a lifeboat manned by a heroic crew of Gay Head men managed to reach her side through the heavy seas. They brought in seven survivors, and a fresh crew took over and saved thirteen more when the Cutter *Dexter* arrived to complete the rescue work. The bitter cold, rough sea, high wind and panic resulted in the loss of 121 lives in a disaster which has never been satisfactorily explained.

To the left of the ridge is a large shrubby depression known as the Devil's Den, where, according to legend, the giant Moshop lived with his wife Squant and his many children before the English came. Here he is supposed to have kept a fire going with trees he pulled up by the roots, accounting for the absence of heavy timber on The Head today. When hungry he would reach out and grab a whale by the flukes and toss it into the ever ready cauldron. It is said that the cliffs were stained red by the blood of these whales. Poor Squant had square eyes, shaped and cut by an enemy while she slept, and she wore her hair over her face to hide her disfigurement. The day came when Moshop decided to leave, as strangers had come to his fishing ground. He changed his children into killer whales, disposed of his pets, then he and his wife walked down the beach to disappear behind Zach's Cliffs. Even today fogs are attributed to smoke from Moshop's pipe, and weird cries heard off the south side before a storm may be Squant warning of another shipwreck. The Devil's Bridge was intended to reach from Gay Head to Cuttyhunk, but never completed. One story blames it on Moshop, and another on Cheepii. Moshop, however, was definitely responsible for breaking through the causeway between Squibnocket Point and Noman's Land. A pageant incorporating the Moshop legends with the early history of Gay Head has been given by a local group for several summers in the natural amphitheatre of the Devil's Den.

There are fine views in every direction from the cliffs, although that along the south shore and to Noman's Land is perhaps the most interesting. The sunsets here are always lovely and often spectacular.

At the end of the Loop, (R) will be noted the first section of the new Moshop's Trail under construction. Lighthouse Road, opposite, runs along the north shore to Lobsterville and Menemsha Pond, and is the suggested route for a return down-Island. Just east of the junction is the end of the old ox-cart road from Steamboat Landing. This was the wharf where excursion steamers from New Bedford, Providence, and occasionally from Oak Bluffs, docked to disgorge hundreds of passengers who either climbed or rode in one of the waiting ox-cart taxis to "see the performance of the Cliffs", as one of the Indian drivers expressed it. In those days it was possible to go up inside the lighthouse and the keeper's family was kept busy guiding tourists over the steep iron steps to the lantern. Just back from the shore

stood a pavillion where the band from the steamer played for dancing. And along the road were several homes, Leonard Vanderhoop's, the Rodman's Windsor House, and Jerrod's Wideawake, where full shore dinners could be enjoyed for 50c, or just a "lemonade made by an old maid in the shade." Gay Head excursions were popular and gala affairs in the days of the side-wheeler.

Not far from the steamboat wharf was a shorter pier used by vessels loading bulk clay from the cliffs 100 years ago. This was taken to Taunton to make cannon moulds, and was also good for refining sugar, according to an old report. The Humane Society station was a little to the eastward, and a later Coast Guard boathouse.

At 0.4 m. from the lighthouse, is an intervale where lived the last pure-blooded Gay Head Indian, Deacon Simon Johnson. The old house of stone with walls a foot or more thick, but with a modern shingled second story, may be seen nestled against a slope left of the highway. It stands back from the old trail to Cooper's Landing, just west of which is Baptism Rock where the ceremony of immersion was practised until recently. Another old house typical of early Gay Head architecture sits on the hillside (R). This was the Patrick Divine place. The Peters family lived opposite, the stone foundation of their house now supporting a garage. The Peters came originally from Chappaquiddick and were sea-faring men. One of the boys, Joseph, was the intrepid captain of the first life-boat to reach the wrecked *City of Columbus*.

Leaving this small north shore group, Lighthouse Road follows the upper ridge of the dunes to a junction with the Lobsterville Road which connects with the highway (right turn), and left, goes to Menemsha Pond.

The old settlement of Lobsterville was situated just west of the bend of the road on its way to the pond. The colony was begun with the upsurge of the lobster fishery about 1878, by some of the same men who codfished at Noman's Land, spring and fall. It offered a safe anchorage inside Dogfish Bar for small boats before the dredging of Menemsha Creek. Here were built a double row of simple cottages: Front Street, near the shore, and Back Street, a little higher on the dunes. There was a store — a branch of Elliott Mayhew's Chilmark emporium — a town pump, walks made of drift lumber, and eventually one telephone. The beach was lined with lobster pots and gear, and with bait-tubs where flounders and skates, speared from skiffs, were salted down together with trash fish from the many pounds longshore. The old Noman's Land boats were fitted with wet wells, and later with two-cycle engines, replacing sails. Buyers came in smacks from New York to buy lobsters at five cents apiece direct from the fishermen.

The colony gradually dispersed when the facilities at Menemsha improved. A few of the old houses are still there, most of them in the guise of summer camps.

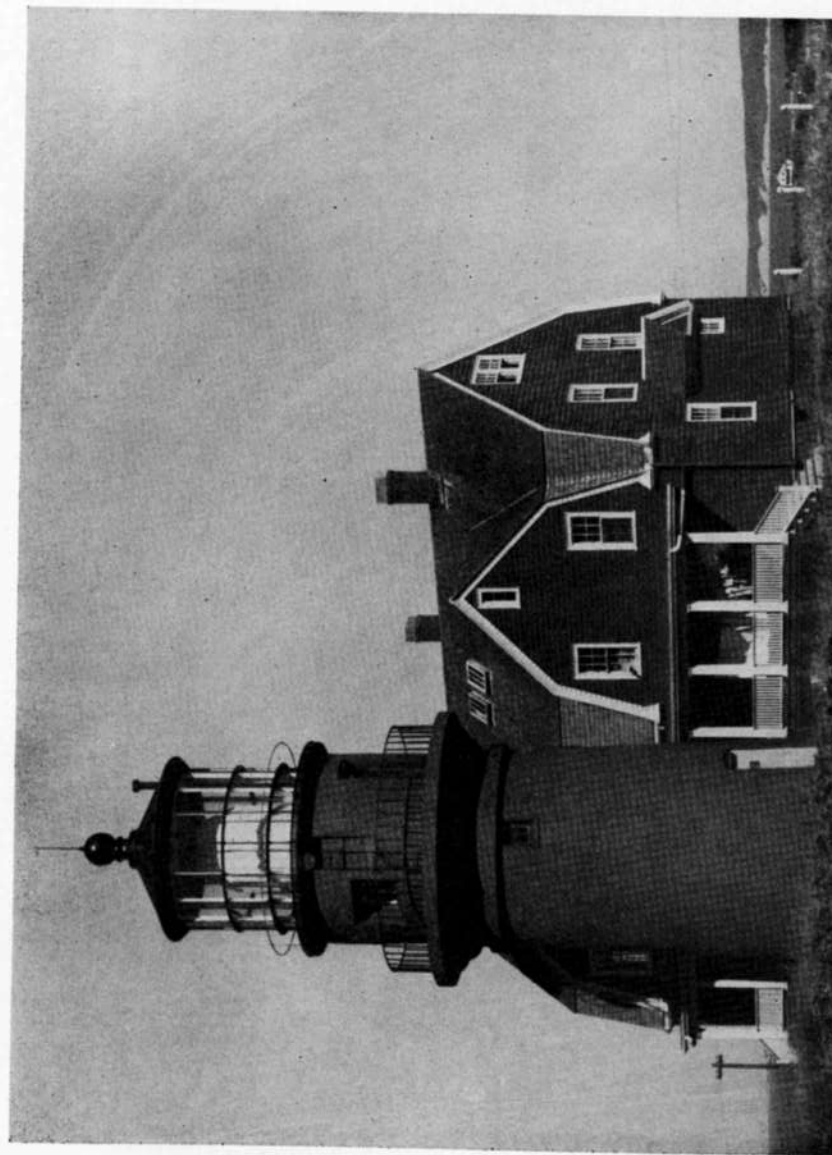


photo by Frank W. Small  
GAY HEAD LIGHTHOUSE AND KEEPER'S DWELLING

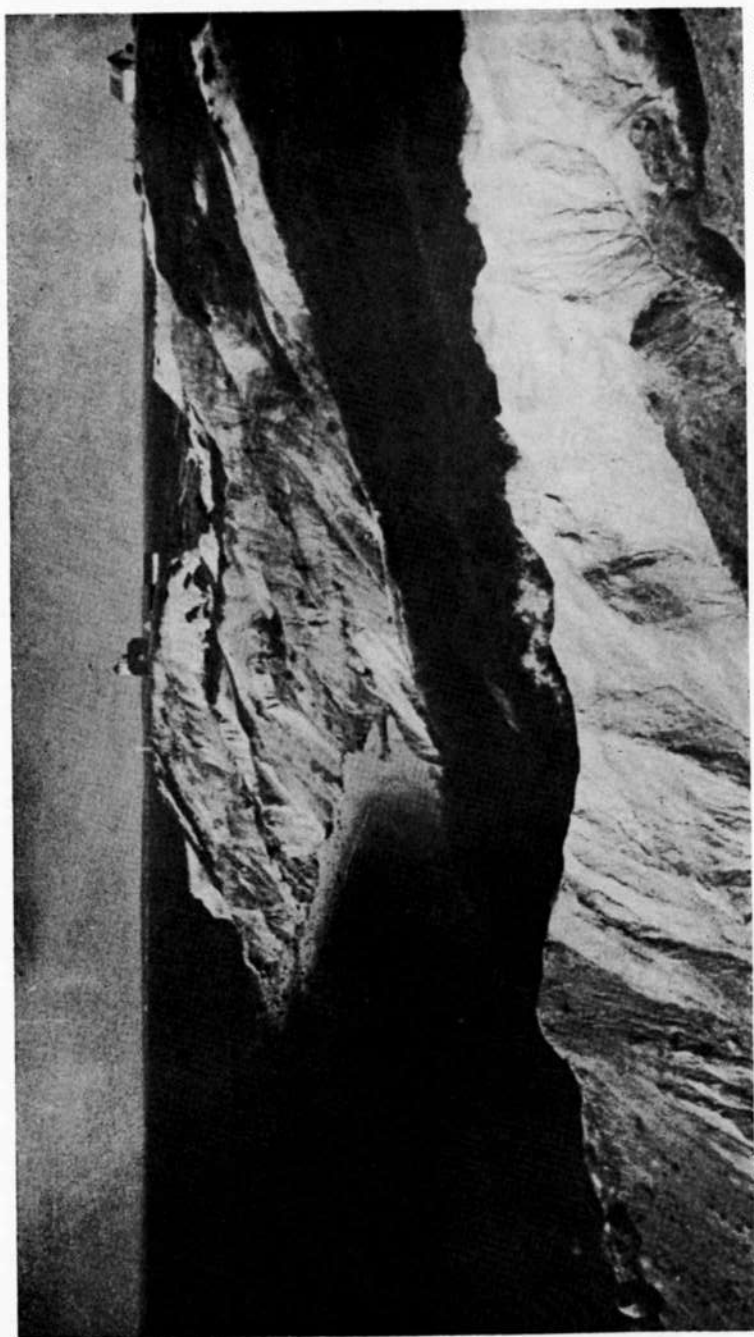


photo by Clara F. Dinsmore, courtesy Vineyard Gazette  
GAY HEAD CLIFFS

About half a mile up the beach is a well-defined track (R) leading to the site of the Gay Head Clay Company, organized in 1893. Clay was shipped from the company wharf which ran out several hundred feet into the Sound from the end of the claypit road. Even some kaolin was extracted for market. The enterprise was discontinued after a very few years.

The area on both sides of the Lobsterville Road as it turns south to the pond is Reservation, or, common land left undivided when the town was surveyed and boundaries defined in 1866. The wild cranberry bogs here are the scene of one of the ancient Indian festivals, Cranberry Day, which is usually observed the second week in October. Traditionally, the whole town assembles here for the day to combine picking with picnicking and general sociability.

Bathing in the pond is popular, especially with small children, for the water is warm and the beach gently sloping. There is also a fine beach extending to the west side of Menemsha Creek where safe swimming may be enjoyed.

The Lobsterville Road rejoins the state highway about a mile and a half below the lighthouse, and the route from here to Chilmark Center is described above.

#### CHILMARK to WEST TISBURY

Two roads lead from Beetlebung Corner to West Tisbury: the South, or State, Road (R) which is the main and most travelled route, and the Middle Road, straight-ahead at the 4-corners.

The Middle Road when laid out in 1846 extended 6 miles from Baxter's Corner in West Tisbury to Hariph's Creek. It was the main thoroughfare of the old village, and, while sparsely populated today, has retained its rural character and charm. Since it is narrow and winding as well as picturesque, it is suitable for pleasure driving only at about horse-and-buggy speed.

On the slope (L) near the start of Middle Road is Sugar Loaf Rock, a landmark appearing in deeds as early as 1677. Peaked Hill rises 298 feet on the north side of the road at 1.1m., the second highest peak on the Vineyard. A signal corps detachment was stationed there during World War II, and at present the buildings are occupied by scientists engaged in radar research. There is a sharply curving downgrade east of Peaked Hill where the road passes (L) a quaint little house that once stood across town at Quanaim's. It was moved over the ice of Chilmark Pond early in the 19th century to a lofty site near Prospect Hill on the North Road. But the wintry gales proved too much for the Tiltens who occupied it, so once more it was jacked up and removed to its present, sheltered location. The Fulling Mill Brook flows past it and under the road (1.3m.) on its way from boiling springs in the high country to Chilmark Pond. Tan-pits for converting hides into leather were located near the source of the brook as early as 1726. These were later operated by William Stewart, who lived halfway up Bassett Hill, the next incline on the right-hand side of the road. The center of Chilmark was reckoned in 1783 to be "forty rods east from a stile in Wm. Stewart fence in the division between his two east places and 20 rods southerly."



At 1.6 m. (L) an old barway marks the drive to the first Town Hall, built in 1844 on land of Capt. Nathan S. Bassett. This building, which was also used at one time for a boys school run by Beriah T. Hillman (Judge to-be), gradually deteriorated until it became known as Woodpecker Hall. It is now a barn on the property in the rear of the dial station at the center.

A private driveway (1.7 m.) goes to the site of the last Congregational Meeting House near the summit of Abel's Hill, just north and east of the cemetery. It was built in 1842 and torn down in 1875 when that denomination had diminished to the vanishing point. The King's Highway ran along the ridge which parallels the Middle Road on its south side for several miles. A large praying Indian cemetery is located on the north slope of this ridge, not far from the top of Abel's Hill. And still further east is the old parsonage lot where Rev. Jonathan Smith, minister of the Church of Christ, Congregational, 1787-1827, lived. A fine American primitive portrait of Parson Smith, painted by Frederick Mayhew from Island ochres, hangs in the Historical Society.

At 2.5 m. (L) is the original site of the present Methodist Church, now on the Menemsha Cross Road. The first building stood on the east corner of Meeting House Way, junction (R). It was bought and brought from Edgartown in 1827, where it had served the same denomination for a number of years. The Methodist parsonage lot, provided by Capt. Daniel Flanders, was on the opposite corner. John Dunham kept store and for twenty or more years the post-office in his home across Middle Road, which is one of many, long-gone and wellnigh forgotten, in this vicinity, the former center of town.

Meeting House Way is an unimproved road connecting the Middle and South Roads. There are no dwellings on it.

The side road next left is Tea Lane, also unimproved. It commemorates the Stamp Act of 1767, although the Chilmark Tea Party, unlike that in Boston, was a legitimate one. It took place in Mrs. Silas Hillman's kitchen where she partook of the brew steeped from contraband smuggled to her by her nephew Robert, captain of the whaling Sloop *Hannah* of Tisbury. She lived in the little old farmhouse on the hill at the corner of the lane, Capt. Hillman lived next door, perhaps half a mile up Tea Lane, in a gambrel-roof cottage which may be seen from the road. There were several other farms in the old days along this sandy, winding trace, but most of the houses have either fallen down or been moved away. Among those who once lived on Tea Lane were Capt. Granville Manter and Joseph Austin, first local citizen of Portuguese origin who was brought to Chilmark by Capt. Ephraim Poole, Jr.

The Middle Road passes over the Tiasquin River at 3.0 m. This second largest stream on the Island winds a circuitous course from high land west of Tea Lane to empty into Tisbury Great Pond. It bears east beyond the bridge to parallel the Middle Road as far as Glimmerglass (Luce's) Pond, and there were at least two mills along this particular stretch, a grist mill and one for fulling woolen goods.

At 3.3 m. (L) is the homestead of the "Middle Road Tilttons", not to be confused with the Roaring Brook branch of the family. It was built by Reuben c. 1760 who ran a grist mill on the brook near the road. The next house on the same side of the road was also a Tilton house, not however so old, and chiefly notable as the home, until his death in 1949, of Capt. Ellsworth L. West, last of the Vineyard whaling masters. A third Tilton place is just over the brow of the hill at 3.8 m. (L) built by Capt. Allen Tilton, c. 1834. Across from Capt. Tilton's is the Leaming Arbore-

tum (admission by appointment) where specimen trees from all over the world have been made to grow.

A carding mill which stood below the old Davis house (3.9 m. R) on the Tiasquin River, is now a shed building diagonally across the road. The last mile of the Middle Road is in West Tisbury, and it ends at Baxter Corner. The story is told about Capt. Dennis Baxter, who owned the corner house: that he came home from a 3-year whaling voyage 3 months early; that his wife wouldn't let him in until the three years were up; so he spent the interim as a guest at the old Mansion House in Vineyard Haven. A right turn on Music Street goes to West Tisbury center; left turn on the Panhandle joins the South Road, east of the village.

The South Road turns sharp right at Beetlebung Corner, and then sharp left to follow the south shore for 3½ miles. Facing the curve at 0.5 m. is an interesting example of the double Cape-Cod house. It was built by Ephraim Mayhew (1810-12) for a home and general store, and is now the residence of his great-granddaughter. The driveway (R) is the entrance to Windy Gates. Now private, it was formerly a section of the King's Highway running along Wequobska Cliffs to Stone Wall Beach. Windy Gates, which was part of the original Nathaniel Skiffe purchase of 1689, became one of the first summer estates in Chilmark when it was purchased by the Sanfords of New York. Mrs. Sanford had the old farmhouse completely remodeled, added wings and new buildings, and installed gold-plated fixtures in the bathroom, a unique innovation on the Vineyard. Left at this corner is the Capt. Austin Smith house. One of the five whaling Smith brothers, Austin, was a 49-er, and a secessionist. He prophesied that one day Jeff Davis would travel the Vineyard roads, and, for his words, was hung in effigy in New Bedford.

The oldest house in Chilmark is at 0.8 m. (L). It was built by Simon Mayhew, son of the missionary John. Simon's son Joseph, born here, was a man of some importance. A graduate of Harvard, class of 1730, he was a tutor there for sixteen years. He also served as Chairman of the Committee of Safety for Dukes County during the Revolution, was Representative to the Provincial Congress in 1774 and 1776, and a Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. At 1.1 m. (L) the Tristram Allen homestead (1797) is an unspoiled example of the two-story half-house or high single, which was not only more spacious, but was also considered more elegant than the low farmhouses typical of the period. It still belongs to the Allen family.

At the foot of the hill (1.5 m.) is the Fulling Mill Brook, on which was located the Island's earliest mill where homespun woolens could be cleansed with fuller's earth to remove oil and impurities. The gracious old mansion (L) in its unsurpassed setting east of the brook was built about 1760 by William Tilton, grandson by adoption of Major Benjamin Skiffe, the original owner of the property. Skiffe became a proprietor of the town in 1692, and was the most prominent

man in Chilmark of his time, as well as being a leading citizen of the Vineyard. For five years he represented the Island at General Court; he was judge of probate; and head of the combined militia of Chilmark and Tisbury. The Skiffe house stood on high ground northwest of the Tilton place, and a part of it was incorporated in the Capt. Owen Hillman homestead which was destroyed by fire about forty-five years ago. The Tilton house was built from wood cut in the valley — known as Happy Valley to generations of Hillmans and Tiltons. It had great looms in the attic for weaving woolen cloth, and in the chimney was a place for smoking meats, while the cellar had a special room for curing cheese.

An excellent view of Chilmark Pond and the South Beach is had from Long View at 2.1 *m.* Chilmark Pond is one of the famous salt water ponds ranging along the south shore of the Island which must be opened by manpower twice or more a year in order to keep their status quo. Riparian rights were once considered very valuable as herring and perch seined here brought in a sizeable income to abutters. Also highly rated were the black grass meadows along its border, which provided winter feed for sheep. On the slope of Abel's Hill (L) is the Chilmark Cemetery, oldest stone dated 1712. The first Congregational Meeting House, erected before 1701, doubtless stood in or near the enclosure. The inscribed tablet on the memorial boulder east of the cemetery drive gives something of the historic significance of this spot. The old South Road ran along the flatland below the present highway, skirting the hill.

The 200-year old house at 2.6 *m.* (R) has belonged, at various times to five different families previous to the present occupants. When built by Capt. James Allen, it stood on the opposite side of the road about a quarter mile to the eastward. It was moved to its present slightly location before 1800. The Bassetts were the fifth owners and it is known today as Bassett Farm. This section of Chilmark was dubbed Wooten Bassett by the late historian Emma Mayhew Whiting. Another occupant of note was Capt. Constant Luce, whaling master, who sailed 1,000,000 miles and never lost a spar or man. A man of little formal education, he achieved this record with an alarm clock for a chronometer and "figuring his position on his thumbnail."

At 3.2 *m.* (L) is a dwelling of rather unique design, which was built by Capt. Mayhew Adams to please his wife who wanted her house to be bigger in front than that of any other captain's wife in town. Next door is the Col. Zaccheus Mayhew homestead "raised" in 1713, and occupied today by his descendants of the 8th generation. Zaccheus was head of the County Militia during the French and Indian Wars and is listed as lawyer and farmer. The old South Schoolhouse,

last of a series to serve the "southeast" district of town is 0.4 *m.* further along (L).

An unimproved road at 4.1 *m.* (R) leads to Quanaimes where John Mayhew, grandson of the old Governor, built his home, in which was born the Rev. Experience Mayhew. John was the first missionary to the Indians to live in Chilmark. Experience followed in his footsteps at the age of sixteen, making valuable contributions to our knowledge of Indian Dialects with his publication of the Massachusetts Psalter (1709). His own knowledge of the Indian language, and especially the local idiom, was unsurpassed. His book *Indian Converts* is a primary source of information about the Vineyard's early days. A portion of his birthplace still stands, according to family tradition, as the ell to an old farmhouse on this road. Quanaimes was later settled by members of the Hancock family — cousins of Gov. John Hancock, the "Signer" — who still own considerable acreage in the area.

At 4.5 *m.* (R) the Eliashib Adams house stands looking much the same as it did when it was built, c. 1727. First of that illustrious name to come to the Island, Eliashib was the ancestor of generations of successful whaling masters. Last of that name to live in Chilmark and occupy the old homestead were the two famous midgets, Sarah and Lucy, who were associated with Gen. Tom Thumb, and later had their own act on the Chautauqua Circuit. Miss Lucy died in 1955 at the age of 94, active until the last in her church work and ever ready to recite Hiawatha's Courtship.

The boundary line between Chilmark and West Tisbury turns sharply at the granite marker opposite the Quanaimes road and follows the highway to the Tiasquin River (5.0 *m.*). Here it again swings south to bisect Tisbury Great Pond.

## WEST TISBURY

West Tisbury today approximates the limits of the original village of Tisbury, incorporated in 1671 by act of Gov. Lovelace, His Majesty's representative in New York. The first purchases from the Sachem Josias had taken place two years previous with the sanction of Gov. Mayhew on receipt of £6:13:4 for his own interests. In 1673, the area called Holmes Hole Neck — now Vineyard Haven — was annexed, and that of Chickemmoo in 1736.

The first proprietors on record were James Allen, James Skiffe, Jr., William Pabodie, and Josiah Standish, son of the intrepid Miles, but so far as is reliably known, only Allen and Skiffe settled here. There is every reason to believe that a mill had been set up on the Old Mill River where it passes beneath the Edgartown Road, prior to any settlement since that highway was known before 1664 as the Mill Path.

Up until the "division" of 1892, Tisbury vied for importance with Edgartown. Its harbor, Holmes Hole, was widely known to mariners as a haven of refuge, and its fields and fisheries were equally prosperous. In 1761 there was a movement to move the county seat here from Edgartown, as more accessible to the majority of citizens. A compromise was reached by alternating court ses-



sions between the two villages for the next 45 years, with Edgartown finally winning out.

The east end, Holmes Hole, finally outgrew its parent. And like most parents, the west end got tired of supporting the extravagances of its child. So, after some years of agitation and acrimonious discussion, a "division" was granted by the General Court, and the village of West Tisbury was incorporated in 1892. The present West Tisbury was the site of several industries in other days. One was a woolen factory which operated about 100 years turning out kerseys and satinets from Vineyard fleeces. There was a carding mill, several important grist mills, and a short-lived flour mill. A furniture factory — so-called — was in production just after the Civil War. At present, two oyster companies have grants in Tisbury Great Pond. Some of the earliest seasonal visitors were members of gunning clubs which bought or leased preserves on the south shore ponds. The summer population today divides its allegiance between the gently rolling farm country and sites overlooking the Sound and ocean.

Left of the boundary bridge, about 300 yards up-River from the highway, may be seen the spillway where was located the grist mill built in 1665 by Capt. Benjamin Church, famous Indian fighter. He sold it in 1669 to Joseph Merry of Hampton, N. H., and went off to fight in King Philip's War. Mr. Merry, who was already over sixty, operated the mill for about five years and then disposed of it to Tristram Coffin, Nantucket proprietor whose son John lived in Edgartown. Thomas Look, who had been acting miller for a number of years, bought out the Coffin interests in 1715, and the mill continued under Look ownership until about 1877, when it was discontinued and the building removed. The large colonial house at the head of the lane (L) was the Look homestead, although part of it is said to date back to Merry occupancy. The square hip-roof dwelling on the highway just east of the lane was built c. 1815 by David Look for his bride, the handsome and dashing Hannah Nickerson, 27 years his junior. David was a good catch. He not only owned the Look mill outright, but, in 1809, he bought out his nearest competitor on the Old Mill River and converted that building into a woolen factory. His store, located on the front lawn, was the only one in town at the time where dry goods and staples could be obtained. For five years, Look was representative to General Court, and during his tenure of office, he was largely responsible for getting a grant of \$3000 from the state to establish Dukes County Academy. Unfortunately he did not live to see the Academy opened, although the first building was erected under his direction and on his land (*see below*). The field opposite the house is known as Merry's field, where old man Joseph ended his days tilling the soil. He died at the age of 103, and his gravestone reads "They shall bring forth fruit in old age."

The old house (R) near the road originally stood at Scrubby Neck beside Watcha Pond. From here it was moved to Tiah's Cove, and thence to the present site by William P.

Bodfish, father of Hartson Bodfish, famous whaling captain. William was the village blacksmith and his smithy was located just across the highway. The large 2-story building set back from the road (L) behind a white picket fence is the Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society's Hall. It was built in 1859 from plans drawn by "an able and experienced architect, Mr. Joseph T. James of Tisbury, and building erected by Moses C. Vincent, Esq." The Agricultural Society had been formed the previous year with Hon. Leavitt Thaxter of Edgartown as its first president. The Annual Fair at which Vineyard products and livestock are shown, is still one of the outstanding events of summer. It usually takes place the 3rd week in August. The Hall is also used by the West Tisbury Grange and other organizations for meetings.

Next door is the former Dukes County Academy building, now the West Tisbury public school. The Academy opened its doors in 1837, and by 1841 there were 55 "gentlemen" and 22 "ladies" in attendance. It was run by a board of overseers who owned shares in the corporation. The tuition was \$2.50 a term for regular "English education", and \$3.50 for languages. It offered an advance course in navigation which was attended by many sea captains and potential sea captains. By 1893 the need for the institution had dwindled with improved state facilities, and the town was allowed to use some of the rooms for a public school. And in 1947, the corporation was dissolved and its entire holdings turned over to the town of West Tisbury. The present 3-story structure is the third Academy building. The first was sold in 1850 and moved to the Old County Road for a dwelling, and the second, after serving as an ell for a period of years, was transferred to the Whiting property for use as a shed. The elms in front were planted in 1845. Left at this corner is Music Street.

Music Street was so-named for the number of pianos owned on it at one time. The story is that shortly after Capt. George A. Smith bought a piano — the first in town — for his daughter, seven more were purchased by neighbors for their daughters. The cacophony along the short street on a warm summer day when windows were open can well be imagined. Capt. Smith's house stood between the Academy and the West Tisbury Free Public Library, and was later occupied by Moses C. Mitchell, teacher at the Academy, and subsequently proprietor of Mitchell's Private School for Boys. The library building was his recitation hall. It was purchased for its present use in 1892 by the Library Association. The library is open Saturday afternoon year-round, and contains, among other things, the tombstones Nancy Luce erected for her hens. There is a children's room on the 2nd floor. The house next door was built by Hariph M. Smith in 1863 for Capt. Cyrus Manter, who took the first American steam-whaler, the *Helen and Mary*, on her shakedown cruise to Honolulu. Capt. William Lewis, who pioneered the building of steam-whaleships in this country, lived across the street in the so-called "Matt Hale" house. Lewis's career was a fabulous one, which began before the mast, and ended in his becoming the "whalebone king", the



largest individual owner and operator of whaleships in the world during the 90ties. All told, there were eight sea captains living on Music Street at one period. One dwelling, interesting in line as well as historically, is the high, narrow house, 5th from the Church (R). This was brought from West Chop c. 1850, by the Widow Hannah Look to provide quarters for the Rev. McGonegal, Chilmark parson who was to teach at the Academy for a few years. Because of its peculiar construction, it is believed to have been part of the old lighthouse building of 1817 which was moved back from the receding shore about 1846. The house was purchased c. 1862 by Capt. Swayne Weeks, and only recently has gone out of the family.

The West Tisbury Congregational Church is on the opposite corner of Music Street from the Academy building. Erected in 1833 on the site of several previous meeting houses in the southeast corner of the cemetery, it was moved to its present location in 1865. The old foundations may still be seen in the cemetery enclosure.

Near the present store and post office stood the "Kithcart Inn", probably the first hostelry in town, licensed in 1701, and just across the road is the much remodelled Traveler's Home, or Tiasquin House, which was operating in 1850. Another old "Ordinary", or perhaps tourist house would be a more suitable title, stands close by the road at the Memorial Triangle. This was run by Asa Johnson, and was opened about 1815. The high bank opposite is called Brandy Brow, with two interpretations: one, that brandy was hidden during Grays Raid in the walls of the old saltbox house that stood there until recent years; the other is that it is the site of a "dram shop."

The road right at the Triangle is the Takemmy Trail to Edgartown (*see below*). The South Road continues to North Tisbury past Parsonage Pond (L) and the Whiting house. This charming old place stands on a part of the so-called homelot of Josiah Standish. The property was acquired in 1760 by Capt. Samuel Cobb from Sylvanus Cottle whose family had owned it since 1688, and promptly resold to the town for a parsonage. Henry L. Whiting, U. S. Gov. Surveyor, bought it in 1840 and it remains in his family today. At the bend in the road (R) is the West Tisbury cemetery which dates from 1701 when James Allen, Esq. gave the first "acker of land" for a "burial place". It has since been enlarged, most recently by this year's gift of two acres from Johnson Whiting. The highway formerly ran south of the enclosure. The field on the left beyond the curve was the old Racetrack where trotting horse races were held during the summer and at Fair-time.

The Panhandle, a short-cut from Middle Road, joins the South Road (L) at the 4-corners, and Scotchman's Bridge Lane leads off (R) to the Old County Road. The latter got its name from Robert Cathcart, the Scottish tavernkeeper, whose home was near the cemetery, and who probably built some sort of bridge over the Old Mill River when this "heye

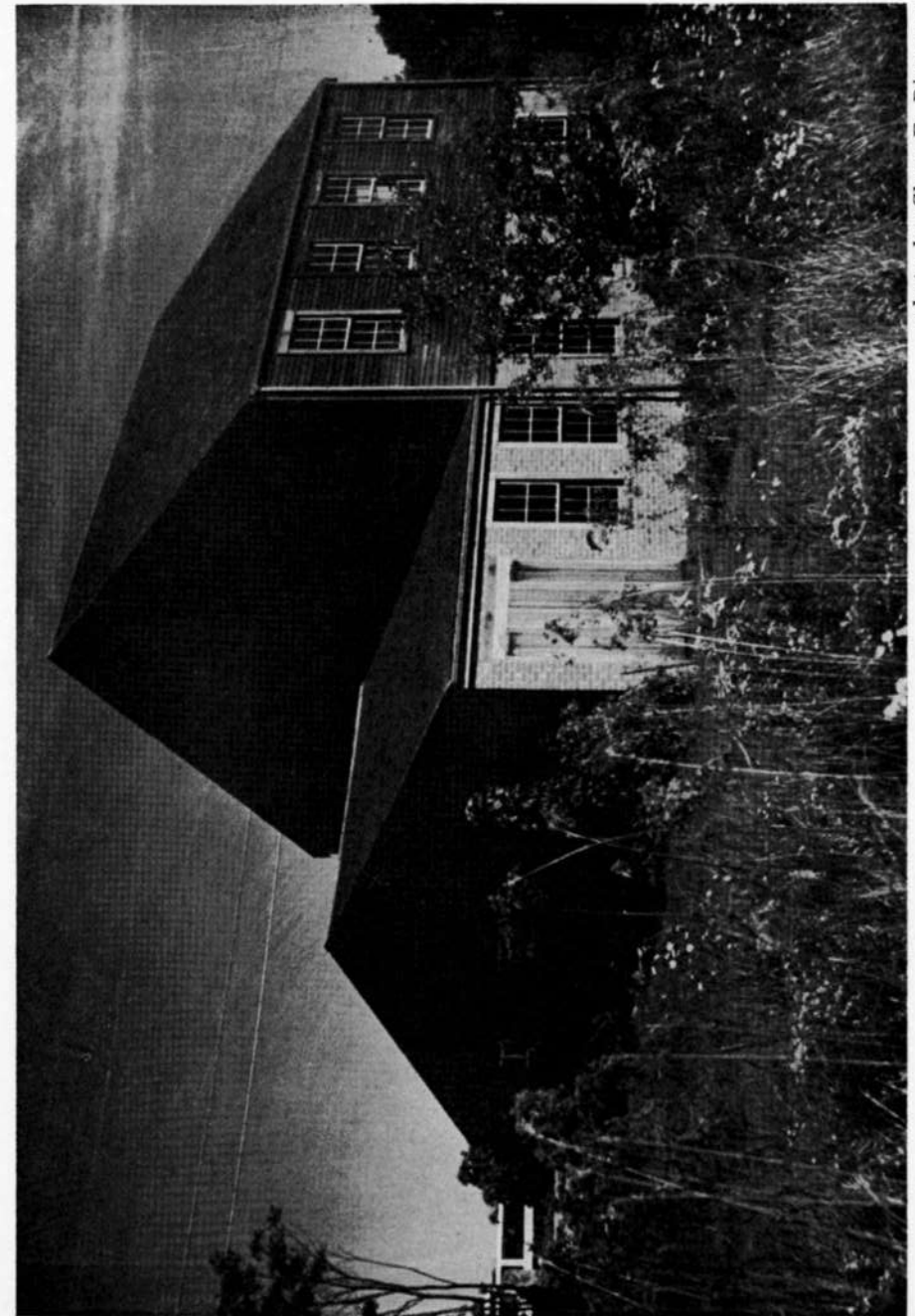


photo by Clara F. Dinsmore  
OLD SATINET MILL, NOW M. V. GARDEN CLUB CENTRE, WEST TISBURY, BUILT 1846



photo by Clara F. Dinsmore  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, WEST TISBURY, BUILT 1833

way" was laid out in 1671. The first West Tisbury Baptist Church (1820) stood on the northeast corner of the Panhandle. After the new meeting house was built in North Tisbury in 1845, it was used as a town hall for about twelve years. At present it is the large hay barn on the Whiting estate. The neat old farmhouse (L) 0.4 m. from the crossroad was once an inn kept by Barnard Luce. It was particularly favored by voters from the east end of town who would stop in after town meeting for refreshment to fortify themselves for the long, and often cold drive home. At 0.8 m. (L) is an old Athearn place where Prince Athearn who worked with Claghorn building the U. S. Frigate *Constitution* was born. This property was part of the Simon Athearn purchase of 1685, and a grist mill was in operation on it before 1792, using water power from the Old Mill River which flows under the bridge at the historic North Tisbury Ford. Just east of this, the last fording place left unspoiled by highway construction on the Island, is the junction with the North Road. The rest of the route to Vineyard Haven is described in a previous section.

#### WEST TISBURY to EDGARTOWN via the Takemmy Trail

The Takemmy Trail, Mill Path, or Plains Road as it is sometimes called, begins with a right turn at the Memorial Triangle around Brandy Brow. It follows, more or less, an old Indian trail, and was the mill path from the first white settlement at Great Harbour to the nearest available water-power for a millsite, which was the Old Mill River. There are no records concerning this early mill save that it existed; but some mill building was here in 1760 because Sylvanus Cottle sold it "with every utensil etc." to Capt. Cobb. It changed hands several times again before David Look took it over and installed looms and carding machinery. The old building was sold to Thomas Bradley, Vineyard Haven industrialist, who replaced it (1846) with a fine new factory for the manufacture of satinets, a heavy woolen fabric used largely for whalemens' pea-jackets. The weathered clapboard structure (R) close by the road is the former woolen mill, now the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club Centre.

The small building near the Old Mill Pond, or Factory Pond as it is sometimes designated, was a grammar school, then an icehouse, and now contains the town offices. The junction of the Old County Road (L) was once the village center. On the west corner stood the Tisbury Courthouse, built in 1764 and used alternately with the one in Edgartown until 1807, at which time the latter town was definitely established as the county seat. The County Jail occupied the opposite corner, 1790-1825. And the minute triangle of sod, greatly reduced by recent road resurfacing, is the King's Land where the stocks and whipping post were located. The site of the



courthouse was later occupied by the Island's first cooperative, the Union Store, in which most, if not all of the shares were owned by local whaling captains. The eventual failure of the enterprise was blamed on "absentee ownership". The postoffice was located in this building for many years until it was destroyed by fire.

A left turn on the Old County Road to Vineyard Haven — once known as Holmes Hole Path—passes a broad, low-posted cottage (R) facing south in true Vineyard fashion, its gable end to the street. Built in 1730 by Benjamin Foster, blacksmith from Sandwich on Cape Cod, it is considered by many the oldest house in the village. According to tradition, materials used in it came from the first Chilmark meeting house which was sold in 1724. One of its more recent occupants was Capt. John Johnson who sailed the *Hattie Smith*, the last whaling schooner out of Edgartown. The next house (R) was built by Capt. Henry Cleaveland in 1833, though the ell is of much greater age. It has seen four generations of sea-faring men.

The hip-roof house with double chimneys opposite is the first Dukes County Academy building, and reflects David (or Hannah) Look's preference for that style of architecture uncommon on the Island. It was acquired by Obed Nickerson and transported "over the brook" to stand on the site of Capt. Samuel Cobb's house. Beneath it are the cellars where Cobb hid guns and powder against the arrival of Gray's Bad Boys in 1778. At the junction of Scotchman's Bridge Lane (L) north corner, is the original parsonage lot where Rev. Nathaniel Hancock lived during his incumbency. A barway (L) a little further along indicates the old turn-off for North Tisbury. Old County Road continues in an almost straight line across the Plains to a junction with the State Road about 3 miles from Vineyard Haven, and is the most direct route as it by-passes North Tisbury.

Directly opposite the King's Land is the house built by James Athearn Jones some time after his return from England in 1830. Jones, a native son, had an intermittent literary career, producing a few poems of indifferent merit, and two novels of some distinction. His major work was a collection of American Indian folklore, the 3-volume *Tales of an Indian Camp*, which represents the first real effort in this country to preserve the old legends and traditions.

William J. Rotch's general store was in the building next east. The adjacent shop, once a schoolhouse, was moved here for storage purposes. Grain was kept in the front half, and the rear was divided between a pork room and a closet for hardware, boots and rope. Mr. Rotch, longtime selectman, was considered the "father of West Tisbury" as he led the fight to separate the east from the west end of town. New Lane (R) leads to the Tiah's Cove Road and a number of farms and summer places. About a mile along the road to Tiah's Cove is the little old house where Nancy Luce lived 100 years ago and wrote poems to her hens which bore such exotic names as Teedie Tainie and Phebea Peadeo.

At 0.4 m. (R) is an orthodox "high double" remodeled by Capt. James F. Cleaveland from the 18th century Squire James

Athearn house. Here he lived with the young wife he brought home from Australia on his return from a whaling voyage, much to the consternation of the community. The house is now occupied by his granddaughter. Across from the old Cleaveland house is a former Baptist church built following a split in the congregation caused by the removal of the parent church to North Tisbury. This modest building, which once boasted a belfry, was largely financed from the proceeds of a heavy run of striped bass in Tisbury Great Pond in the spring of 1852.

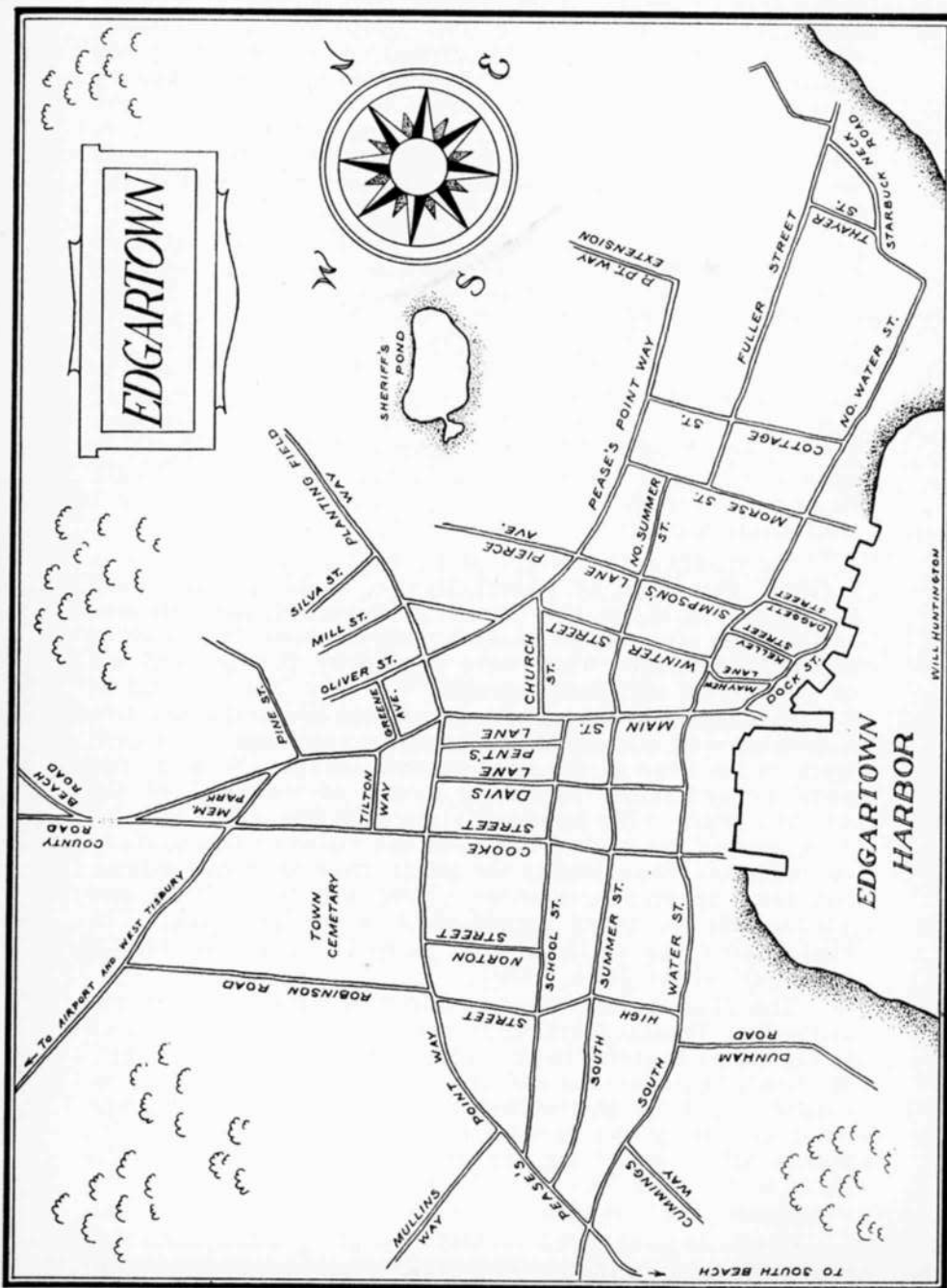
At 0.6 m. (R) is the old John Manter house purchased by Capt. Joshua Slocum on his return in 1898 from sailing his 36-foot sloop *Spray* around the world single-handed. Slocum called the place "Fag-end." The West Tisbury fire station is at 0.8 m. (L), and like all the other fire departments on the Vineyard is manned by volunteers, headed by a chief who is appointed by the selectmen. The large saltbox type building just beyond is the new Martha's Vineyard Youth Hostel, erected by Daniel and Lillian Manter in 1955. The hostel is maintained under the same regulations as American Youth Hostels all over the country. It is open May 1 to October 1 with house parents in residence.

The quaint little cottage at 1.7 m. (L) was built over a hundred years ago by Robert Manter, bachelor. The deep ravine west of it was then known as Robert Manter's Hollow, and is one of a series of such valleys along this road of geological interest. They were formed by the rise and fall of the tide in sub-glacial streams. A very inferior road at 2.3 m. (R) goes to Deep Bottom Cove and Middle Point where a gunning club was located up to a few years ago. A branch track at the head of the cove went to Scrubby Neck, a once populous settlement consisting mostly of members of the Athearn family. The famous Watcha Club was in this vicinity. A network of old roads crisscrosses the Plains section south of the highway. Some lead to the ponds, some to private estates, and some apparently nowhere. Many are now private, and others unfit for travel except afoot or on horseback. The Plains either side of the County Airport (L) are for several miles part of the State Forest.

The Place by the Wayside at 3.7 m. (R) is a memorial to the Rev. Thomas Mayhew, Jr. Here he said a final farewell to his Indian converts before setting sail for England in 1657. Mayhew's ship was lost and the site was for generations regarded as a shrine by the Indians. In 1901 the present monument, consisting of a boulder brought from Gay Head and a bronze tablet describing the incident, was erected by the D. A. R. Martha's Vineyard Chapter on land donated for the purpose by Capt. Benjamin C. Cromwell of Vineyard Haven.

A private road at 4.5 m. (R) runs along Quampache Hollow, or Bottom, to the head of Oyster Pond, which lives up to





its name. It also is one approach to Job's Neck and Pohoganut, once a thriving settlement of fishermen and farmers. Chauncy Crane, who lived here around 1842, raised carriage horses to sell to whaling captains. Wintucket Path, 6.3 m. (R) leads to the Wintucket pumping station and springs which provide the water supply for Edgartown. Wintucket Cove is at the head of Edgartown Great Pond. It was near these springs that the Sachem Towanquatuck, from whom the Mayhews made their first purchases of land, lived. At 6.7 m. (R) a dirt road leads to the site of the old Plains settlement on the great pond. Like all the hamlets once scattered strategically about the Vineyard, this one owed its genesis to one family — the Vincents. Others lived here, but they were a minority. Just before this junction is reached, a grassy lane (L) faintly indicates the start of the Dr. Fisher Road across the Plains to his mill on the north shore. Jernegan's Pond is the name of the small but pleasant body of water at 7.7 m. (L), and across the road is a swamp-hole known as Sweetened Water Pond. The highway into Edgartown continues past the present public school (R) and Memorial Park (L) to a junction with Main Street opposite the County Jail.

#### EDGARTOWN

Edgartown, shire town of the County of Dukes County, is the outgrowth of the settlement begun in 1642 on the shore of the inner harbor by Thomas Mayhew, Jr. Known to the Indians as Nunpaug, a word presumably derived from Nuna-pauke meaning "dry land place", it was originally called Great Harbour on the Vineyard by the English. The present name was bestowed by Governor Lovelace of New York in 1671 in honor of Edgar, infant son of the Duke of York heir presumptive to the British crown. It is believed to be the only Edgartown in the world.

Lacking in trade goods and somewhat isolated in location the village grew slowly during the first 50 years, having only 36 houses by 1694. Expansion of up-Island farming communities, increasing coastwise traffic between the colonies and the rich West Indies, plus the rise in off-shore whaling contributed to its rapid development during the 18th century. And by 1825, the name of Edgartown was known around the globe as a whaling port and birthplace of doughty mariners. For the next 40 years, the water-front seethed with the bustle of arrival and departure of whaleships, coasters, and an occasional vessel from "foreign parts." The streets echoed with hammering on fine captains' houses in the building, and the smell of rigging tar, sperm oil, and new lumber permeated the air.

The lull which followed the decline of the whaling industry after the Civil War was only temporary. In 1872 the land boom which was developing Oak Bluffs into a "watering place" extended to Katama with the organization of a land company and the grand opening of Mattakeeset Lodge. Save for this ill-fated venture, Edgartown's growth as a summer resort has been gradual, steady and dignified, so that the physical aspect of the town has changed but little.

Roads lead directly to Edgartown from all sections of the Island. The village may be reached from Oak Bluffs via

the Beach Road, from Vineyard Haven by the old County Road, and from West Tisbury by the Takemmy Trail. Main Street begins at the junction of Beach and County Roads, just beyond which (R) is the Nathaniel M. Jernegan house c. 1845. Capt. Jernegan was the noted master of the ship *Eliza F. Mason*, first American whaleship to enter Hakodate following the signing of the treaty negotiated by Commodore Matthew Perry in 1854 that opened Japanese ports to commerce. Mrs. Jernegan was the first white woman to spend a night on Japanese soil. But that was only one of her experiences as a whaling wife on this same voyage, for she went through fire, mutiny and collision before seeing her new home again. The original Jernegan homestead, remodelled almost beyond recognition, stands a short distance west on the County Road. It was built in 1715 by Thomas Jernegan, who migrated to the Vineyard from Virginia.

Straight ahead is the Civil War Memorial Park triangle and monument with cannon and balls from the Charlestown Navy Yard. Cooke Street, right at the fork, runs directly to the harbor and is the most direct route to the Dukes County Historical Society museum. Main Street bears left, and sharp left at the fork is Curtis Lane which leads to the Edgartown Golf Club. The County Jail and keeper's house (1870-72) is on the next corner (L). It marks the site of Dr. Fisher's storage shed for whale-oil which was known as The Fort because of a high surrounding stone wall. Across Pine Street stood the Martha's Vineyard Railroad depot, a relic of which is the stoned-up well on these premises.

At the intersection with Pease Point Way is a small triangle with flagpole and tablet commemorating World Wars veterans. On one corner (L) is a quaint cottage with interesting door-head supported by scroll brackets. It was built in 1838 by Capt. Joshua H. Snow, and reputedly paid for by his wife Cindy's sale of home-made candy. A later occupant was Hon. Richard L. Pease, eminent Vineyard historian and man of affairs, and commissioner appointed by the Governor to survey the Indian lands at Gay Head in 1866. Capt. Thomas Mellen lived across the Way in the house he acquired from Ariel Norton, one of the town's master carpenters. Capt. Mellen (1834-1911), who shipped before the mast at the age of 16, is widely known as master of the *Levi Starbuck*, one of the many Yankee whaleships captured and burned by the Confederate raider *Alabama* during the Civil War. Among his other commands were the ship *Europa* which rescued 244 survivors of the Arctic disaster of 1871, and the *Splendid*, unofficial flagship of the Vineyard's whaling fleet. His elder brother, Archibald Jr., also a whaling captain, was murdered during a mutiny aboard his ship, the *Junior*, on Christmas night, 1857.

The handsome residence next door was built in 1840 for Dr. Daniel Fisher, who came to the Vineyard from Dedham

in 1824 to practise medicine. Following his marriage five years later to Grace, daughter of Allen Coffin a prominent merchant and ship owner in Edgartown, his interests became centered on the whaling industry. These included a whale-oil refinery which supplied all the lighthouses in the United States, the largest spermaceti candle factory in the world, and several whaleships of which he was part owner. He was a founder and first president of the Martha's Vineyard National Bank. His North Tisbury holdings are mentioned in the description of that locality. His house with its noble dimensions and highly ornamental roof railing and cupola is framed with timbers of Maine pine that were soaked in lime for two years at The Fort. It was fastened entirely with brass and copper nails. Designed by a Boston architect, the "old Fisher place" is still one of the most elegant in town, a fitting neighbor to the classic Methodist church. The fourth to house this denomination, this building was financed almost entirely by whaling captains, one of whom, John O. Morse, himself went to Maine in 1842 for the lumber. The neo-Greek design was supplied by Frederick Baylies, Jr., whose artistic talent was responsible for three churches and many of the fine homes still scattered about the village. He was the son of the last missionary to the Indians. The auditorium of the church will seat 800, and the tower, 92 feet above the ground, can be seen many miles at sea. The church was dedicated in 1843, the organ installed in 1869, and the tower clock was given in 1889 by Charles Darrow in memory of his grandfather, Capt. Chase Pease.

Across Church Street is the brick county courthouse, built 1858 (enlarged and renovated 1955) to replace an earlier wooden structure. A jail which served the county from 1825-70 stood at the corner of the lot and was described by a New York World correspondent in 1860 as a "diminutive edifice constructed of massive blocks of boulder granite, whose appearance, size and grated windows excited our surprise and merriment. . . . Constructed of four cells, two on a story, it could be readily set up, yard, fence, roof and all, in an ordinary sized New York parlor. It adjoins a small wooden tenement, the dwelling of the deputy sheriff." St. Elizabeth's Roman Catholic Church is on the right at the corner of School Street.

School Street (exit only) has a number of significant old buildings. The former Baptist Church (1839) now Masonic Hall is on the west side of the 2nd block next to the Jared Coffin house (1823) with its handsome cornice and delicate portico. The David Davis Academy, which dispensed higher education from 1836-50, stands flush with the sidewalk at one corner of Davis Lane, while diagonally opposite in a setting of shade trees and perennial flower borders is the earlier (1825) Thaxter Academy. This was built and directed by the Hon. Leavitt Thaxter with the aid and importuning of his father, Parson Joseph (see below). Young Thaxter was a politician as well as pedant and occupied several positions of importance, both town and county. Facing Thaxter Academy on School Street is Ellis Lewis's home and carpenter



shop, the latter put together from the remnants of the 4th Congregational church. Davis Lane was once called Pilgrim Alley. The next street to intersect School was originally known as Meeting House Way as it led from the waterfront to the cemetery where for many years the "Church of the Standing Order" was located. Later, when South Wharf was built by Grafton Norton, it was called Commercial Street. In recent years it has been designated as Cooke Street, honoring Squire Thomas Cooke, whose home near the corner of School Street belongs to the Dukes County Historical Society.

Built in 1765-66 of "ship-shape" construction and with the original fine panelling and fireplaces intact, Squire Cooke's is one of the best preserved houses of the period on the Vineyard. It was acquired by the Society in 1932. Thomas Cooke was a leading citizen of his day, serving as collector of customs, justice of the peace, and in other informal capacities. He also owned extensive salt works at Starbuck's Neck. The house is furnished with antiques, some of Vineyard make, and there are collections of glass, china, whaling gear, and other Vineyardana on display. Other buildings on the Society grounds include the brick tower which houses the Fresnel lens from the Gay Head lighthouse, a boat and carriage shed, and the museum where the library and special exhibits such as scrimshaw and ship models are found. The Society is open year 'round and there is no admission fee. Hours: June 1 to Oct. 1, Tues. through Sat. 10 to noon and 2 to 4:30; Sun. 2 to 4:30; Oct. 1 to June 1, Mon., Wed. and Sat. 2 to 4 and by appointment.

Also at this intersection are the spare but spacious town house of Thomas Cooke, Jr. (1788); an old shingled farmhouse, built in 1720 by Joseph Norton, son of the patriarch Nicholas, at Farm Neck, and moved to the village in 1822 by "stalwart men" with the help of "strong oxen and good Jamaica rum"; and the strictly individual Ripley house whose builder Capt. Jethro was hero of the Vineyard tale *Eighty Years Ashore and Afloat*. The old South School (1850) is two blocks further out at the intersection of High Street. It is the headquarters of the Boy's Club of Edgartown, founded 1938.

Next on Main Street, diagonally across from the courthouse, is the Town Hall, "raised" April 6, 1828 for a Methodist Meeting House. It was the 3rd building for this rapidly growing congregation; the first is now the tiny ell to the Capt. Chase Pease house next door. The 2nd church, which stood on Winter Street about opposite the present Episcopal parish house, went to Chilmark. The Vineyard Gazette is located on South Summer Street, next right, at the corner of Davis Lane.

The Gazette was founded in 1846 by Edgar Marchant, a man of "strong passions, quick impulses and positive convictions." It has achieved national fame as a country weekly under the present editors, Elizabeth B. and Henry B. Hough, who acquired it in 1920. Since 1939 the editorial offices have occupied the Capt. Benjamin Smith house dating from pre-Revolutionary days. Much of the interior has been preserved including fireplaces, hardware and wide-boarded floors. Visitors are welcome except on publication days (Fridays year 'round, and Tuesdays in summer). Smith was a captain in the Island militia during the Revolution and hero of two naval engagements resulting in the capture of British vessels. The four lindens across from the Gazette were planted in 1861 by whaling captain Jared Jernegan whose house they now shade.

At the end of the next block on South Summer Street is the Federated (formerly Congregational) Church, erected in 1828 from plans drawn by Baylies. The oldest church edifice on the Vineyard, it reflects the simplicity of line of the 18th century meeting house, where Baylies' later work shows signs of the classic revival influence. The design of the facade may well have been taken from Asher Benjamin. The old box-pews are still intact although a coat of pale green paint covers the "graining" of the original varnish stain. The Hook and Hastings organ was installed in 1841, the gift of Allen Coffin, who had picked it up second hand. It was first used in the Old North Church in Boston. A wall clock given in 1840 by the first Ingraham clock maker still ticks off the hours. The parish house, at right angles to the church, was once a village schoolhouse. It was moved to this site in 1850.

North Summer Street (L) is "one-way" entering Main Street. St. Andrew's Episcopal Church is located at the end of the first block on the corner of Winter Street.

Business on Main Street is carried on for the most part in buildings of 19th century vintage. Several were grocery stores started by retired sea captains. The bank (R) at the 4-Corners (intersection of Main and Water Streets) dates from 1855 and was the first brick structure on the Island. For many years the Custom House was located upstairs in the large frame building on the NW corner (L), opposite which and also on the 2nd floor were the sometime offices of the Vineyard Gazette. The fourth corner is occupied by a considerably remodelled Jernegan homestead. (*See below for description of North and South Water Streets.*)

The Edgartown Yacht Club, built in 1928, is at the end of Main Street on the site of Osborn's wharf. Samuel Osborn, Jr., was reputed at one time to be the largest single owner in whalships in the United States. Storehouses, a blacksmith shop, ship chandlery, sail loft and fish-houses once occupied the present parking lot. Dock Street (L) leads to the Town Wharf. The last of the Vineyard smithys is on the left (at this writing) a nostalgic reminder of the shops catering to the whaling and fishing industries that once lined the short street. Here were the pump works where Joseph Kelley turned out wooden bilge pumps; a bakery which made hard tack, the sailors' staple; lumber yards, a carpenter shop or two, and until recently a coal office at the head of the now truncated Mayhew Wharf. Dr. Fisher's famous oil factory stood on the north side conveniently opposite his wharf where Island steamers also docked, occasionally with a whalship in tow. This was rebuilt into the present Town Wharf, at one side of which is the Chappaquiddick ferry slip. The gallery of the M. V. Art Association, an aged and ungainly building at the corner of Daggett Street (L) was for a number of years, until 1955, Manuel Swartz Roberts' boatshop. Daggett Street joins North Water Street opposite the Public Library. About halfway up this short block is the twice removed dame school (R) where Katie Bassett once instructed the young at ten cents apiece per week.



The story of Water Street, which circles the harbor from Cumming's Hill to Starbuck Neck, is really the story of Edgartown. Here the first settlers built their modest homes. Here young boys grew up who were to take ships all over the world in search of Leviathan. And here they returned, most of them, to build the fine houses that make this one of the handsomest streets in New England. Because of existing traffic regulations both North and South Water Streets are entered from the 4-corner intersection with Main Street.

South Water Street (R) extends to a junction with Pease Point Way at the top of Cummings Hill. The house next to the bank was "raised" in 1825 by Heman Arey, best known and perhaps the most adept of Vineyard cabinet makers. His chairs, an adaptation of the so-called pigeonhole type, are collector's items. Arey also managed the salt works at Starbuck Neck for Squire Cooke. On the opposite side of the street, 3rd from the corner, is Chappaquiddick House, longtime headquarters of the Home Club, a social club for men that flourished during the first quarter of this century and was a sort of latter day coffee house in the Johnsonian tradition. Shaded by the great pagoda tree which he brought to Edgartown as a seedling from China, is Capt. Thomas Milton's house. Milton was born in England, but grew up in Salem where he entered the merchant marine. He put in at Edgartown while serving aboard the privateer *Yankee* and apparently liked what he saw, for he bought the South Water Street lot in 1814. It was not, however, until after he retired from sea at the age of 50 that he built the house bearing his name.

At the south corner of Davis Lane, with an enviable view of the harbor and Chappaquiddick, stands the Abraham Osborn house, c. 1830. Capt. Osborn did a fair amount of whaling and then became an agent-owner and an innkeeper. One of his guests was Capt. Raphael Semmes, at the time superintendent of the 2nd lighthouse district, who was in town to negotiate the purchase of sperm oil from Dr. Fisher for government use. Semmes later became captain of the Confederate raider *Alabama* whose first victim was the *Ocmulgee* of Edgartown, Abraham Osborn, Jr., master. Young Abe also ran a hotel in the old house, calling it the Ocean View. Among his visitors of note were Alexander Graham Bell and James Gordon Bennett, the younger.

Diagonally across from the Osborn place is the original Coffin house, now enlarged and remodelled. It was first built facing the harbor, two stories high in front with a shed roof sloping to one story on the Water Street side. The dimensions were: width, 24 feet, depth, 32 feet. The land, purchased in 1679 from Governor Mayhew, was formerly the house lot of his stepson Thomas Paine, who was lost on the same ship with Thomas Mayhew, Jr., in 1657. The builder, John Coffin, was a son of Tristram, one of the original proprietors

of Nantucket. He came to the Vineyard to live in 1682, which is the probable date of this dwelling, thus making it — in part at least — one of the oldest houses now standing in Edgartown. Another house occupied this lot on the Cooke Street side 100 years ago, but is now further out South Water on the north corner of High Street.

The wharf at the foot of Cooke Street (next intersection) is part of old Commercial Wharf where Grafton Norton's whaleships tied up. His house with its whalewalk atop the hip-roof is on the bluff overlooking the wharf. The Methodist parsonage faces Water Street at the Cooke Street corner (L), and just a few steps beyond are some very old slate gravestones which mark Gov. Mayhew's family burial place. The first Mayhew home, probably built for the young missionary who preceded his father to the Island by four years, stood nearby on the waterfront about where a white Georgian family house, c. 1840, is located today. This place burned in 1670, and shortly afterward the Governor put up a fine big two-story house which lasted until 1910 when it was pulled down to make way for the nondescript summer rental now on the bank just south of the present Mayhew homestead.

Directly opposite this property, 5th house from Cooke Street, is what is often called the Moby Dick house. It was begun about 1822, completed 1836, by Capt. Valentine Pease, master of the *Acushnet*, aboard which Herman Melville shipped as a greenhand in 1841 and gathered the material he later used in that great epic of the whaling era.

South Water Street dips slightly to a junction with Dunham Road (L) leading to Tower Hill. Here were located many of the early houses of the settlement, later moved nearer the center of town. Samuel Wiswall was born on Tower Hill and grew up to achieve fame as first captain of Robert Fulton's first steamboat. He subsequently commanded steamcraft on the Hudson for twenty years and then became harbor-master for the City of New York.

Cummings Hill rises from what used to be known as the Slough. It derives its name from Will Cummings who purchased the old red schoolhouse on Pease Point Way and moved it to South Water Street. No longer red, and somewhat enlarged, it is situated near the top of the hill, 4th house (R). On the other side of the street is the venerable Earle cottage, 3rd from Dunham Road. Once used as an asylum for the insane, recent renovations have disclosed manacles in the attic where the unfortunate were chained to the rafters. South Water Street becomes the Cleveland Town Road beyond the junction with Pease Point Way. This road once was a thoroughfare to the Plains settlement around the Great Pond. It is now improved and hard surfaced for only a short distance. The name is a colloquial one and obviously derives from the Cleveland family who settled this particular section.

North Water Street, left off Main Street at the 4-corners, is perhaps the best known, and certainly the most photographed of any street on the Vineyard. The first house on the left is of considerable interest. Built by John Coffin after his family had outgrown the little dwelling on the south side of town, it was occupied by his descendants until recently when the North Water Street Corporation was formed to preserve it, and to convert the vacant area back of it into a village green. (Their holdings also include the Desire Coffin house on Main Street). It was consecutively the home of Enoch Coffin, Esq., judge and representative to General Court; Enoch II, who was engaged in shipping and trading with the southern colonies and Cuba; and James and his son Allen who owned clipper ships in the East Indies trade. The ubiquitous Dr. Fisher lived here for some years after he married Allen's daughter Grace, whose dowry was her weight in silver, and his two granddaughters Grace and "Lizzie Estey" were the last to dispense the lavish Coffin-Fisher hospitality within its doors. The Capt. Charles Fisher (no relation) house next door is described on a hanging sign near the street. The Edgartown post office is directly opposite.

Winter Street (L) is "one-way" to a junction with Church Street and Pease Point Way. Next left is Simpson's Lane, and bronze tablets thereon give the history of the Capt. Thomas Worth house at the corner. The Daggett house (R) at the head of Daggett Street was built by Thomas Pease c. 1750, and purchased in 1805 by Capt. Timothy Daggett, a ship-master who was also part-owner in several Edgartown whalers including the *Splendid*, the *Almira* and the *Vineyard*. The basement of the house was used as a store at one time, and men off ships in the harbor gathered here nightly for a tot of rum and a "gam". Room and board @ \$1.40 a week was also available in 1840. Architecturally it is of interest as the only pre-Revolutionary hiproof house in the village.

The Edgartown Public Library (L) was built in 1903 with the aid of a Carnegie grant, and is the finest library on the Vineyard. It also contains the Charles S. Simpson Art Collection consisting of representative paintings and etchings by several outstanding American artists. The library is open Tues., Wed. and Sat. from 2:30 to 9 p.m.

The third house (L) beyond the library is particularly notable for its delicate and handsome doorway. It was built in 1784 by Peleg Crossman. This and several other houses along here were set catercorner to the street so that the occupants might get a good look down harbor, not so much for the view, but for a sight of incoming vessels. On the north corner of Morse Street, next left, is the Capt. John O. Morse house. The Morse family played a considerable part in the whaling and shipping industries of the village. Their wharf, now North Wharf, was much used by Nantucket whaleships unable

to "get over the bar" to discharge their cargoes at their home port. The senior Morse, Uriah, who came to Edgartown from Beaufort, N. C. by way of Nantucket, was a cooper and shipwright, and his son Uriah carried on the business. Their specialty was whaleboats, and it was considered good luck to have a Morse-built boat aboard. Capt. John had a brief but outstanding career at sea. He was twice master of the ship *Hector* "the luckiest whaleship afloat." In 1849 he took a company of would-be gold miners from the Vineyard to California on the bark *Sarah*, which according to one of the passengers had a speed of ten knots — four ahead and six up and down. Morse died at Paita in 1851 at the age of forty-eight on a between-seasons cruise.

Next door is the pretentious 3-story dwelling built for Capt. George Lawrence in 1832 by Thomas M. Coffin, contractor, with a crew that included the best carpenters in town, Ariel Norton, Sirson P. Coffin, Tom Baylies and Ellis Lewis. It later became the property of Capt. Jared Fisher and is still occupied by his descendants. Its equally handsome neighbor to the north was built by Capt. Edwin Coffin, Sr., c. 1840. A whaling master and ship-owner, he joined the Navy during the Civil War as a non-commissioned officer and came out a lieutenant to end his days farming at Lambert's Cove. His son Edwin had a long and varied career at sea which included whaling, trading and exploring. He was 1st mate of the *Corwin*, Ellsworth West of Chilmack, master, which entered the coastwise trade in Alaska the first year of the Nome gold rush. For several years he took the schooner *Rosario* bow-heading in the Arctic. And in 1903 he was given command of the steam-yacht *America*, chartered for the Fiala-Ziegler Polar Expedition to Crown Prince Rudolph Land. Edwin, Jr., occupied his grandfather's old home, the Squire Presbury Norton house, next to the former Coffin place.

John O. Norton lived on the south corner of Cottage Street, next left. Brusk, fiery and tyrannical, he was the prototype of the Hollywood whaling captain. His wife Charity accompanied him on all his voyages as master to keep the peace, for his crews hated him and would doubtless have murdered him except, as one man put it, he s'posed "the old lady would feel bad." On the shore side of this block was the famous Gorham and Fisher spermaceti candle factory, later owned outright by Dr. Fisher.

The third house above Cottage Street (L) was built in 1802 by Capt. Robert Wimpenny who was in the China trade and one of very few shipmasters allowed inside the walls of the old port cities. Capt. Wimpenny's ship was lost in a typhoon, and his home sold to become an inn, the Ocean House, run by an ex-whaling captain, John H. Pease. Two doors further along is the former Eric Gabrielson house built by a captain of the U. S. Revenue Cutter Service (now Coast Guard). Serving



under Capt. Gabrielson aboard the *Gallatin*, which came into Edgartown frequently, and later on the *Schuyler Colfax* in southern waters, was a China boy named Charlie Soong in whom the captain took great interest. C. J. Soong is better known as the father of the famous Soong sisters of the Chinese Republic. The next house but one was built by Joseph Swasey c. 1766. Jose de Souza is believed to have come from Lisbon as a very young man and settled on Chappaquiddick, the first Portuguese to live in Edgartown. He became a master mariner, married a Pease, and raised a family of twelve children in this pleasantly situated old place.

The Edgartown Harbor light (R) was authorized and erected in 1828. At that time the lantern emerged from the roof of the keeper's dwelling to give the effect of a cupola. The present tower was transferred to this site in 1935 from Ipswich. The old saltworks were located on the waterfront north of the causeway.

Starbuck's Neck Road, left turn at the end of North Water Street, connects with Fuller Street returning to the village. The rather ornate federal-type house on this road was built c. 1842 for Lt. William Cooke Pease, later captain of the U. S. Revenue Marine, according to a plan by Baylies. It originally stood on Main Street east of the courthouse. Capt. Pease's son William Worth entered the same government service and enjoyed a long and distinguished career. Fuller Street runs south two blocks to Morse Street. A right turn on Morse leads to Pease Point Way. The tiny old cottage at the head of Morse Street is perhaps the most travelled of any house in town. It was built on Chappaquiddick by Darius Butler in the late 18th century, and moved to the West Tisbury Road by Nathan Jernegan. It was the childhood home of Capt. Nathan, William and Jared Jernegan who must have found a ship's quarters quite spacious in comparison. About 1854 it was removed to the present site where it was purchased by William Wood, born Silva, who came to the Vineyard from the Western Islands on a whaleship with Capt. Henry Pease 2nd. He served as steward on the island steamers for many years, and his son, William M. Wood, became president of the American Woolen Company, owner of a vast estate on Cuttyhunk, and one of the wealthiest men of his day in Massachusetts.

The Edgartown Tennis Club is a short distance right on Pease Point Way, and just beyond it is the former Capt. Thomas Adams Norton house. Capt. Norton was first master of the famed ship *Charles W. Morgan*, now enshrined at Old Mystic Seaport in Connecticut. A left turn on Pease Point Way leads back to Main Street, bearing right at the junction with Winter Street. Just past this junction (R) is the old North School building which accommodated the children on this side of town from 1850 until the present brick schoolhouse on the West Tisbury Road was completed. Planting Field Way, next right,

was the old Proprietors' road to their cornfields. It is hard surfaced as far as Long Hill and thence is a sandy drive to residences over-looking Eel Pond and the Sound. The Jernegan gristmill stood handily by on the little knoll back of the schoolhouse. The millstones are now doorsteps at the Squire Cooke house on the Historical Society grounds.

Pease Point Way continues with a left turn to cross Main Street at the flagpole memorial described above. At the corner of Cooke Street, next intersection, is a boulder with bronze plaque in memory of Parson Joseph Thaxter whose house stood on this lot (1784-1907). Parson Thaxter, chaplain of Col. Prescott's regiment at the Battle of Bunker Hill, was called to the Edgartown church in 1780 and served the community affectionately and faithfully until his death in 1827. The West Side cemetery occupies the next block and within its enclosure stood the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Congregational Meeting Houses about where the town vault is today. This cemetery was first used in 1782 to inter the bodies of four Edgartown men lost in a ship cast away at Gay Head January 14th of that year. Among the more interesting stones are many erected for men lost at sea or dead on the South Sea Islands. One of these shows a full-rigged ship, and another bears the name of Rowland Jones, victim of the notorious *Globe* mutiny, who died on the Mulgrave Islands, eaten, some say, by cannibals.

Just as Pease Point Way starts up Cummings Hill, it passes a weathered Cape Cod cottage, which is probably the oldest house in town still retaining its original shape and size. Built in 1682, it was occupied for some years by Luke Gray, a schoolmaster who came to Edgartown at the time of the Revolution and married Rhoda Cleveland. He taught in the little red schoolhouse mentioned above. The house remained in the Gray family so long that even now it is occasionally called the "old Gray place." Pease Point Way becomes the Katama Road beyond the intersection at the top of the hill.

At 0.3 m. on the Katama Road is a right fork leading to the Edgartown airport. A rutted lane (L) just beyond the fork goes to the Tower Hill burying ground, the first cemetery of Edgartown, and probable site of the first meeting house. North of Burial Hill at the water's edge is the Joseph Dunham homestead built before the Revolution. Joseph was a trader and sloops carrying tobacco raised on George Washington's Virginia farm often discharged at his wharf.

Katama Road next passes Mill Hill (R) former location of a wind-driven grist mill, and presently topped by the standpipe of the Edgartown Water Co. At 0.6 m. (L) is a private driveway to Green Hollow. Here, according to legend, was the first white settlement on the Vineyard. In 1632 a ship bound for Virginia is said to have put into Edgartown harbor during a storm. Several of the passengers, among them a Norton, Vincent, Pease and Trapp, decided to remain the winter. They are presumed to have lived in caves dug in the hillside, which they faced with stone, and to have been fed in part by the Indians.



At 0.9 m. (L) is the Swimming Place, where cattle and other stock were swum across Katama Bay to the rich pastures of Chappaquiddick to feed during the winter months. Peter Ripley built the old house still standing near the Swimming Place, and here his son Joseph, the town's only avowed atheist, lived most of his life (1757-1830). His epitaph, which he himself wrote, is mentioned in Hawthorne's Chippings with a Chisel. It reads: "By the force of vegetation I was brought to life and action. And when life and action that shall cease, I shall return to the same source."

As the road emerges from the scrub pine woods a fine view across the plains (R) is obtained. At 2.0 m. the new Pine Lots Road forks left to the equally new bay shore development, virtually passing over the site of Mattakeeset Lodge before it again swings left to circle Katama Point. The Lodge was opened in 1873 and continued operation until 1905. In architecture it resembled the contemporary Sea View at Oak Bluffs with a tower at each end. The central section spanned the head of a wharf where the Island steamers called during the summer. This was also the terminus of the Martha's Vineyard Railroad. Access by carriage was over a dirt road at 2.3 m. (L) and opposite, at the curve in the present Katama Road, was the Mattakeeset racetrack.

The bridge over Mattakeeset Creek is at 2.8 m., and just across it is a parking space for South Beach where surf-bathing, surf-casting, bird-watching etc. may be enjoyed. The creek, which runs between Katama Bay and Edgartown Great Pond, was the scene of extensive herring fisheries for many years. After the bottom dropped out of the herring market, the scales were sold profitably as a coating for synthetic pearls. The present creek was dug in 1889 replacing one located nearer the ocean which had functioned from 1728 to 1870.

A sand spit extends along the south side of Katama Bay toward Chappaquiddick, but only once, in 1870, has it ever been possible to drive across to the island. The opening is subject to the whims of tides and storms which break through the beach at one point and close it at another. In order to visit Chappaquiddick, therefore, it is necessary to patronize some sort of ferry.

## CHAPPAQUIDDICK

The name Chappaquiddick could hardly have been more appropriate 300 years ago than it is today if the interpretation "Refuge Island" is taken. Whatever special and mysterious fascination islands have is doubled here, for it can be reached only after two ferry rides by the average vacationer from the mainland.

Gov. Mayhew purchased the Indian rights for what he described as "the neck that lies over the river" from the Sachem Pahkehpunnassoo in 1653, but it was another 100 years before the island was colonized by the whites. However, they did take advantage of the excellent grazing lands there to winter their cattle and small stock. The first settlers were for the most part sea captains. It is not strange, therefore, that Chappaquiddick is noted for producing the largest percentage of whaling captains per male population of any locality in the country. A list compiled in 1878 names 42 such, and it may not be complete. Early in the 19th century, three families living near Caleb's Pond had thirty children between them,

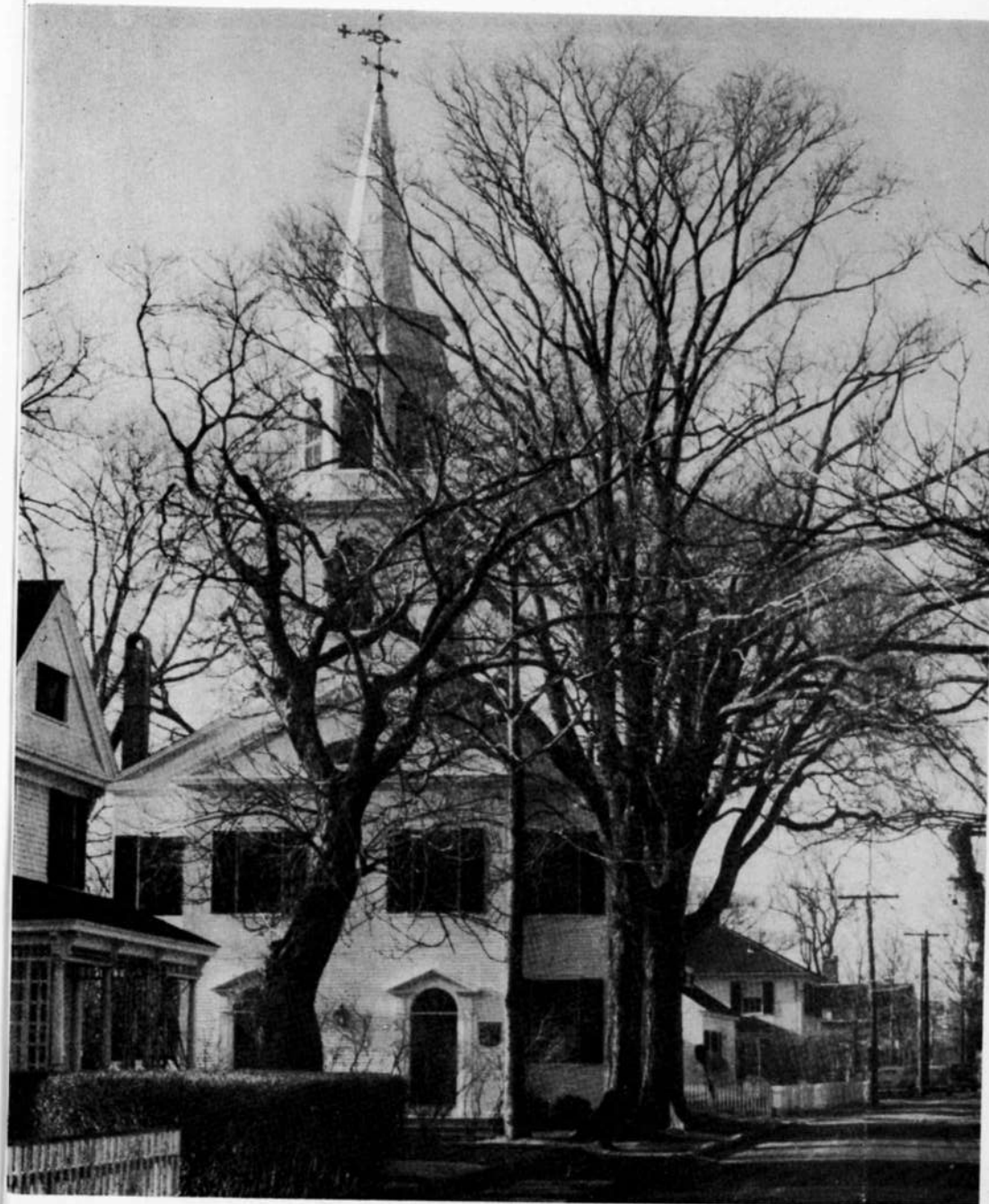


photo by Ann Wallin, courtesy Vineyard Gazette  
FEDERATED CHURCH (FORMERLY CONGREGATIONAL) EDGARTOWN, BUILT 1828

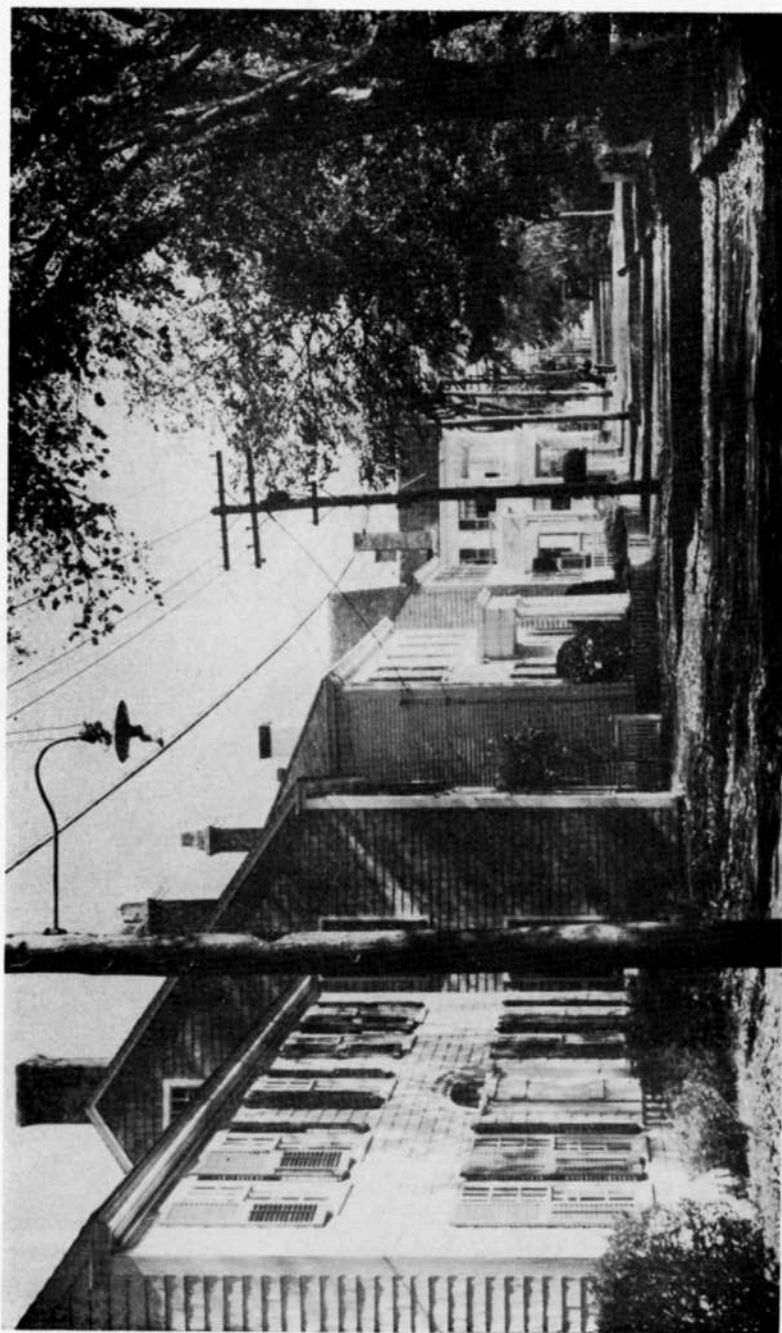


photo by Clara F. Dinsmore  
CAPTAINS' HOUSES, NORTH WATER STREET, EDGARTOWN

of which seventeen boys grew up to become shipmasters, and eight girls married incipient captains.

There were only two sources of income on the island, the fisheries and the corn crop. The former included the important shellfishing areas of Cape Pogue Pond and Katama Bay, and the herring fishery operated by the Pocha Pond Meadow and Fishing Company, incorporated in 1845. Corn raising was an industry, the surplus being exported to Maine and bartered for cedar posts and rails with which to fence the fields. Capt. Samuel Osborn Sr. of Edgartown used his schooner in this trade.

There was a grist mill, operated by wind power, part owner and agent for which was Perry Davis of Providence. He manufactured his first bottle of Painkiller in the former William Huxford house near the mill, though mass production of the panacea took place in Rhode Island. This nostrum was acclaimed by a Burma missionary as a treatment for burns and used by him with "peculiar success" in diseases of the stomach. It was adapted to cure or "alleviate" a host of diseases "both external and internal", and in 1860 the Salem Observer comments, "no article of medicine ever attained to such unbounded popularity and extensive diffusion." What its ingredients were is not known, though its place of origin might indicate an Indian medicine base.

The Indian population were more or less segregated on 800 acres around North Neck where a school was maintained until 1866 under the supervision of the Society for Propagating the Gospel. Their lands were surveyed and divided among the inhabitants as early as 1828, some of whom, if feuding with their neighbors, placed the family graves on their boundaries. For all that Chappaquiddick was one of the early "praying towns" of the Vineyard, where and when and how the Indians worshipped after the death of their first native missionary in 1703 until the building of the Marine Church on Sampson's Hill, is not definitely known. The men, a number of them, went to sea, and others served as volunteer crews of the Humane Society boat housed at Tom's Neck, which saw frequent service on Muskeget Shoals.

The highest point on the island, Sampson's Hill, from which the Indian, Daniel T. Webquish, vowed he could "see all over God's creation and part of Chatham," was a pilot's lookout. The "flagstaff and signal" pictured on an 1830 map was replaced in 1845 by the semaphore station which was part of a chain operating from Nantucket to Falmouth for transmitting shipping information. The lighthouse at Cape Pogue was established in 1801.

The land development fever which attacked the Vineyard in 1866 finally crossed the harbor and by 1890 practically the whole island of Chappaquiddick was divided into lots. There were Island Park, Washqua Farm "the region of Perfect Con-



tent", and others. Even a hotel was planned for Cape Pogue. The development at Sampson's Hill was owned by Governor William P. Handy, the title a courtesy one, who was local postmaster, hackdriver, and storekeeper. When he went on his weekly rounds delivering groceries, he had to open and shut 56 gates and pairs of bars. The reaction against development fever today is represented by the Chappaquiddick Association, composed of land owners who wish to preserve the beauty of the island and protect it from commercialism.

Two protests against Edgartown rule are recorded, the first from the Indian Sachem Joshua in 1712 vs. the Edgartown proprietors. The General Court ordered both parties to be good little boys until it had time to settle the matter, which it apparently never did. The second was an unsuccessful attempt in 1926 to incorporate the island as a separate town.

There are between 2 and 3 miles of paved roads on the island. Beginning at the ferry landing, Tom's Neck Road extends to the ocean side, 3.1 m. The public bathing beach, begun in 1883 is left, 0.1 m., Caleb's Pond, right 0.5 m. The old Indian reservation runs along the left side of the road beyond the pond, and School Road branches right at 2.6 m.

At 2.8 m. on School Road is the dump, site of the main schoolhouse, which had a vaulted ceiling appropriate to infant captains. The best foot road up Sampson's Hill is at this point, and runs about 1½ miles. On top of the hill may be seen the ruins of the 2nd meeting house (c. 1840) which blew down in the 1944 hurricane, and the boulder which anchored the Huxford bull one Sunday to keep the Peases out of church. At the end of School Road is Wasque Road (L) which passes through the "region of Perfect Content" on the way to Wasque Point, 5.0 m. from the ferry landing.

## THE ELIZABETH ISLANDS

by

Alice Forbes Howland

The Elizabeth Islands which lie between Vineyard Sound and Buzzards Bay comprise the township of Gosnold in the County of Dukes County. The five major islands are Naushon, Pasque, Nashawena, Cuttyhunk and Penikese. The smaller islands, with one exception, are satellites of Naushon. They are Nonomasset, Uncatena, Monohansett, Veckatimest, the Weepeckets, and Gull Island a sand spit off Penikese. While physically not a part of the Vineyard, they have been closely tied to it politically since 1654 when Thomas Mayhew obtained a deed from the Indians to Naushon and several smaller adjacent islands including Nonomasset. They were made part of the Manor of Tisbury by Gov. Lovelace in 1671, and thus began their connection with the town of Chilmark which lasted 182 years.

The name Elizabeth's Isle was given to Cuttyhunk by Capt. Bartholomew Gosnold when he landed there in 1602, although it was later used to describe the whole group. He and his men spent about a month here exploring the waters and nearby islands, cutting wood, and exchanging gifts with the Indians. They built a house and fort, but, because some of the men became discontented and threatened to revolt, no permanent settlement was made. Even this short stay is notable, for it marks the first English settlement of any kind in New England.

The first proprietors of the islands, except Naushon, were mainland men interested in lumbering them. And when the virgin stand of beech, oak and cedar was gone, they introduced sheep which thrived here as they did on their native English downs. Rev. James Freeman writing in 1807 tallies 5000 sheep on the islands, which he says "are larger, better fed, more effectively sheltered and have finer and more abundant fleeces than those which are on Martha's Vineyard." Tenant farmers accounted for most of the early population, but until the present town of Gosnold on Cuttyhunk was settled, there was no really permanent community.

### CUTTYHUNK

Cuttyhunk is the most westerly of the Elizabeth Islands and the only one to have a permanent community, the village of Gosnold. A visitor in 1903 called it "an experience entirely surrounded by water", and its latest biographer terms it "the best place possible for a complete rest." It was the island where Capt. Bartholomew Gosnold landed in 1602 and about which two of his men, Archer and Brereton, left such vivid descriptions of what they found and did there. The fort and storehouse they put up on the islet in the pond at the western end must have been well built, for the foundations were clearly discernible in 1797. The site is marked by a memorial tower erected in 1902.



Thomas Mayhew sold Cuttyhunk in 1668 to three Newport, R. I., men including one Peleg Sanford, so for some years it was known as Sanford's Island. Various owners succeeded Sanford, one of whom, Holder Slocum, son of Peleg, prominent New Bedford Quaker, petitioned the General Court in 1788 for separation from Chilmark of the four islands west of Naushon. This was denied, but in 1863, a more concerted attempt was made by the entire group, this time with success, and in 1874 the town of Gosnold was incorporated and the first town meeting held with 26 voters. It is, perhaps, of interest that all voters living on any of the islands must go to Cuttyhunk to cast their votes and attend town meeting.

Farming, piloting and fishing were the chief occupations of the Cuttyhunkers for many years, while today carpentry, painting and work on boats and gear have taken the place of the farming and piloting. The establishment of a sport fishing club in 1864 was the beginning of a new era which was to bring a different kind of prosperity to the island; namely guide fishing and summer visitors. Numerous fishing stands were built along the shores for surf casting, and men who owned sailboats took parties off-shore for striped bass, bluefish, squeteague, cod and pollock. Today, competent and experienced fishermen are available with speed boats to carry visitors to the fishing grounds in Buzzards Bay, the Sound or beyond Gay Head, with bait and tackle provided.

At this writing, there are some eighteen families, comprising about fifty persons, who live on Cuttyhunk the year round, while in summer the number increases to seventy or eighty, not counting the many transients. Many summer people have their own cottages, but for those who come for a shorter stay, there are three good inns or hotels and two restaurants. The Methodist church, the one church on the island, is open during July and August, and the fine, small library welcomes summer bookworms. A market, drugstore, school and town hall complete the list of places which serve the little settlement.

As the island is only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles long by  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile wide, one should not go there expecting to find all the same diversions as on the mainland. For those not fish-minded, there is sailing, swimming, tennis, walks to points of interest, and just loafing in the sun, enjoying cool breezes and lovely views of the ocean and other islands. Because of its formation and location, Cuttyhunk offers much to anyone interested in geology, botany, marine zoology and bird life. Places to visit include Gosnold Memorial Tower, the Coast Guard Station and Lookout Tower, and the fish wharf, a center of activity especially when the fishing boats come in. A lighthouse is still maintained on the western tip although it is of less importance than in the old days when Cuttyhunk and Gay Head lights guarded the entrance to Vineyard Sound for the thousands of

vessels who passed through annually. There is a land-locked harbor which is a favorite port of call for yachtsmen and fishermen alike, where they may fuel, stretch their legs, or just anchor to enjoy the serenity of the little island.

Cuttyhunk may be reached from New Bedford, the nearest point on the mainland, by the 65-foot diesel tugboat *Alert* which leaves Pier 3 daily in summer, and Tuesdays and Fridays in winter for the 15 mile trip across the Bay, taking about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours. For anyone wishing to go to the island from the Cape area, a boat may be hired at Woods Hole, which is some 22 miles distant. It is also accessible from the Vineyard where party boats are available, and is less than 10 miles from Menemsha. Cuttyhunk is the only one of the Elizabeth Islands that is open to the public.

#### PENIKESE

Penikese lies almost due north of the eastern end of Cuttyhunk and has rather aptly been called "a huge pile of stones with intervals of soil." It consists of two hills joined by a narrow isthmus, and a small harbor. Daniel Wilcox of Dartmouth was the first of several owners following the Mayhews, and it was for many years occupied solely by tenant farmers. Penikese has the distinction of producing the only soldier on record from Gosnold to fight in the Civil War.

In 1872, upon a public appeal by Prof. Louis Agassiz of Harvard for funds to establish a summer school of comparative zoology, John Anderson of New York, then owner, offered the use of Penikese together with an endowment of \$50,000. The school, called the Anderson School of Natural History, ran only two years due to the death of Mr. Agassiz. However, it enjoys the distinction of being the first summer school in the country and the inspiration for the present Woods Hole Biological Laboratories. The buildings, after standing empty for twenty years, were struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

For a while, during the 1890s, the island was owned by George and Fred Homer of New Bedford who had a large turkey farm there. Then, in 1905, it was purchased by the state and used as a leper colony until 1921. In 1924 it was turned over to the Mass. Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Game, and has been a wildlife Refuge since that time.

#### NASHAWENA

East from Cuttyhunk, across the treacherous and narrow channel called Canapitset, lies Nashawena. The island, some three miles long and a mile across at its widest point, is largely meadow dotted with groves, swamps and occasional fresh water ponds. Scattered cellar holes and well-built stone walls which criss-cross the rolling, rock-strewn hills are tacit

reminders of the farms of yesteryear. And the many nameless graves, marked only by fieldstones, are grim evidence of the families who lived and died on this lonely, windswept island.

Early purchasers of Nashawena included Peleg Sanford and Peleg Slocum who owned Cuttyhunk. In fact, until the early 19th century, it was called Slocum's Island, while the shallow, rock-studded harbor on the north side was known as Slocum's Harbor as late as 1900. "Farmer" Slocum, who was a prominent Quaker and had Tory sympathies, is said to have supplied produce to the British during the Revolution, altho' there is no record of his ever having lived on Nashawena.

Around 1860, the island became the property of Edward Merrill, a retired whaling captain of New Bedford who owned Merrill's Wharf. A stone tower to his memory, erected by his son, stands on a hilltop near the south bluff. There was some agitation in favor of re-locating the Charlestown State Prison on Nashawena in 1904, but, after serving as a political football for a short time, the idea was abandoned. The island remained in the Merrill family until 1906 when it passed into the hands of two members of the Forbes family which owns Pasque and Naushon. It is occupied year-round by a caretaker and, since it is private property, is not open to the public.

#### PASQUE.

Quick's Hole separates Pasque from Nashawena and is the only channel between Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound that can be used by ocean going vessels. The name of this passage probably derives from Capt. Cornelius Quick, a pirate confrere of Capt. William Kidd's, who is known to have operated in these waters. The name of the island is abbreviated from an Indian word which translated means "where the sea breaks through or divides." Pasque was also known as Tucker's Island during the 18th century when it was owned by Abraham and John Tucker of Dartmouth. There is a tradition that some of Gosnold's crew returned to this region, and that one of them built the house at the east end of the island occupied by the present caretaker, John Olsen.

In 1865 there was a heavy run of striped bass in this locality and a fishing club was formed and incorporated under the name of the Pasque Island Club. A clubhouse was erected and other buildings and a resident farmer installed to raise vegetables and look after the boats, ice house and stables where work mules were kept. The grand opening was in July 1866, and prominent among the guests was P. T. Barnum. The club was continued until 1923 when it voted to dissolve, and James Crosby Brown, who had long been one of the leading members, became sole owner until his death in 1930. Pasque was sold by his heirs to several members of the Forbes family who own Naushon and who live there in summer. It is not open to the public.

#### NAUSHON

Naushon, the largest and most easterly of the group, was called Kataymuck by the Indians meaning "great fishing place." The present name, first used about 1717, is also from the Algonquin, and is translated "tide rips at each end." The narrow shoal strait at the west end is Robinson's Hole, probably named for the Vineyard family of Robinsons which supplied so many tenant farmers to the island. Just westward of Robinson's Hole on the Sound side is the Graveyard, so-called because of the great number of vessels wrecked there.

Naushon has been a private estate since 1682, and owned successively by Wait Winthrop, grandson of the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and by James Bowdoin, son of the founder of Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. In 1856, it became the exclusive property of John Murray Forbes of Milton, Mass., and is still owned and used collectively by his lineal descendants. In early times, the island was divided into a number of farms, each with its own flocks of sheep and cattle. The farmers suffered severe depredations by the British, who landed frequently during the Revolution, abused the inhabitants, and commandeered their livestock. Earthworks and trenches, used in the totally inadequate defense of the island are still plainly visible in the Tarpaulin Cove area where Capt. Elisha Nye and his small company of irregulars tried valiantly to keep the harbor clear of enemy warships.

Tarpaulin Cove, which provides a protected anchorage from all but southeast gales, was frequented by all types of vessels during the Age of Sail. It was strategically an ideal haven for both pirates and privateers awaiting ships with valuable cargoes from the rich West Indies to pass up the Sound. Capt. Thomas Pound was defeated here by the Colonial sloop of war, *Mary*, in 1689, and the following year saw the capture in these waters of the notorious Capt. Kidd with his crew. During the War of 1812, the British brig of war *Nimrod* lay here and made life miserable for the inhabitants of all the islands, and southern Massachusetts in general. Whaleships from Edgartown frequently dropped anchor here awaiting a favorable wind around Gay Head.

A tavern was maintained at Tarpaulin Cove as early as 1755 by Zaccheus Lambert, who built the first lighthouse there at his own expense. Nantucketers were so grateful for this aid to navigation that they "found him" the whale oil for his lamps. There was a store which sold the local farmers' produce — vegetables, mutton, beef and Naushon cheese which enjoyed a "high reputation" — to the vessels that constantly put in at the cove. There was a sailor's mission run by Chaplain Madison Edwards before he moved to the Vineyard in 1892, and even a post office. But these are long gone, save for the lighthouse, which was taken over by the government and rebuilt in 1817, and that today is an "untended" light.

Since the days of Bowdoin tenure, the island has been used solely as the summer home of its owners and their friends. There is not now, nor has there ever been, a permanent community on Naushon. There is no store, school, church, library or post office; the needs of the residents being served from the mainland. At the present time there are only three or four families who live there the year round as caretakers, but the island is well populated during the summer months. Save for a telephone cable to Woods Hole, and a power plant to supply electricity, Naushon remains much the same as when the white men came. Although recent hurricanes have wreaked havoc among the stately oaks and beeches, much of the island is still wooded and deer run through the sunlit glades as they did in Indian days. The narrow dirt roads wind through the woods and over open, rock-studded moors. Automobiles are not allowed. A flock of several hundred sheep is maintained for the wool, but farming and lumbering can no longer be done economically. Hadley's Harbor at the east end of Naushon is one of the finest small boat harbors on the coast. And, although the island is privately owned, certain beaches including Tarpaulin Cove and Kettle Cove, across on the Bay side — have signs welcoming picnickers, with restrictions as to fires and dogs.



