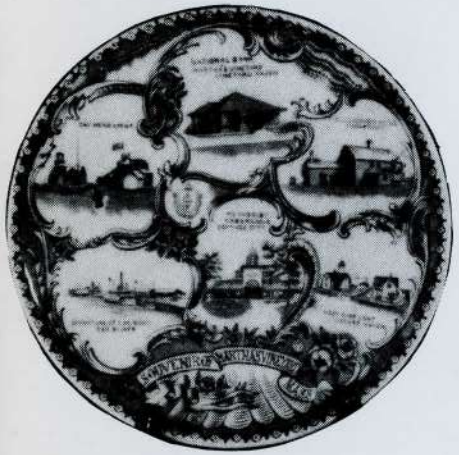
100th Issue

THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

VOL. 25, NO. 4 MAY 1984



Souvenir plate has six Island scenes.

Cottage City Souvenirs

by EDITH MORRIS

□

Gallant Officer Sails Home for the Last Time

by FLORENCE KERN

□

Cape Poge Light: Remote and Lonely

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

Documents: *Jeremiah Pease Diary*

Plus: ***Books, Letters, Director's Report, Bits & Pieces***

SINGLE COPY $1.50

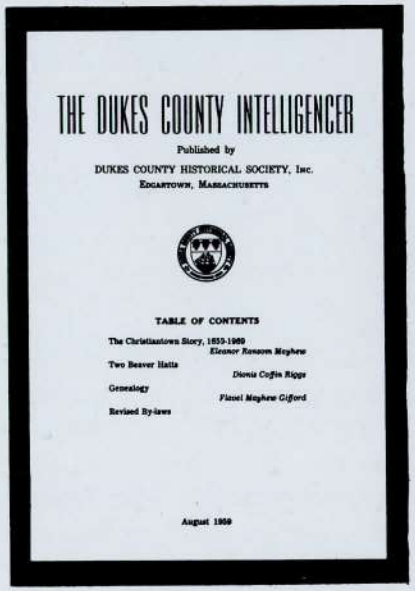
ANNUAL DUES FOR MEMBERS

Individual membership	$15.
(Includes two guest admissions)	
Family membership	$25.
(Includes four guest admissions)	
Sustaining membership	$40.
(Includes four guest admissions)	
Life membership	$200.
(Includes two guest admissons)	

Members receive *The Intelligencer* four times a year.

WINTER HOURS
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Thursday and Friday
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturday

SUMMER HOURS
(June 15 to Sept. 15)
10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Tuesday through
Saturday


THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

Published by
DUKES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Inc.
EDGARTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Christiantown Story, 1659-1959 — *Eleanor Ransom Mayhew*
Two Beaver Hats — *Dionis Coffin Riggs*
Genealogy — *Hazel Mayhew Gifford*
Revised By-laws

August 1959

Our first issue, August 1959.
See details, inside back cover.

THE DUKES COUNTY INTELLIGENCER

Vol. 25, No. 4 May 1984

Cottage City Souvenirs 139
Nobody Went Home Without One
by Edith Morris

Gallant Officer Sails Home for the Last Time 147
Sad Reunion of Twin Brothers
by Florence Kern

Cape Poge Light: Remote and Lonely 150
Concluding Part of the History
by Arthur R. Railton

Books *Coast to Coast Under Sail* 182

Documents: Jeremiah Pease Diary 184
The Great Daniel Webster Visits the Island

Letters 183 **Director's Report** 190 **Bits & Pieces** 192

Editor Emeritus: Gale Huntington
Editor: Arthur R. Railton Assistant Editor: Janet Holladay

The Dukes County Intelligencer is published quarterly by the Dukes County Historical Society, Inc., Cooke and School Streets, Edgartown, MA, 02539. Subscription is through membership in the Society. Back issues are available at cover price.

Manuscripts and other material for publication should be sent to the Editor, *The Dukes County Intelligencer*, Box 827, Edgartown, MA, 02539.

Articles in *The Intelligencer* do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society or its officers.

© 1984 D.C.H.S.

DUKES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Arthur R. Railton, *President*
Lorna Livingston, *Vice President*
Shirley K. Erickson, *Secretary*
Kathryn M. Bettencourt, *Treasurer*

COUNCIL

Elmer Athearn, Richard L. Burt, Eleanor Olsen, 1984; Nelson Coon, Edith Morris, S. Bailey Norton, Jr., 1985; Lane Lovell, Virginia Poole, Doris C. Stoddard, 1986.

Melville G. MacKay, *President Emeritus*

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Edith Bliss — Henry Beetle Hough
Gale Huntington — John Montgomery

Thomas E. Norton, *Director*; Shirley K. Erickson, *Librarian*; Alvin H. Goldwyn, *Archivist*; Doris C. Stoddard, *Genealogist*.

The Dukes County Historical Society was founded in 1922 to preserve the history of Dukes County for the public benefit. It is a nonprofit institution supported entirely by membership dues, contributions and bequests, which are tax deductible. Its annual meeting is held in August of each year in Edgartown.

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

Acquired by the Society in 1935, the Thomas Cooke House was built in about 1765. It has been established as a museum and its twelve rooms are devoted to historical displays that reflect past eras of Vineyard Life. It is open to the public during the summer with a nominal fee being charged to non-members.

The Francis Foster Museum and the Huntington Library are in an adjacent building and are open to the public all year around. In the Museum is an exhibition of the Vineyard's maritime heritage with displays of fishing, coastal trade, whaling, navigation, plus a wide variety of scrimshaw. The Library contains collections of ship's logs, journals, genealogies and other Island documents, plus thousands of volumes of historical works.

The public is invited.

Cottage City Souvenirs

by EDITH MORRIS

COLLECTING souvenirs seems to be something we all enjoy doing, but it was an especially popular hobby in the early part of this century. The dictionary defines a souvenir as "something kept as a reminder." In today's more status-conscious world, souvenirs seem to have become items of wearing apparel, often T-shirts with double-entendre legends.

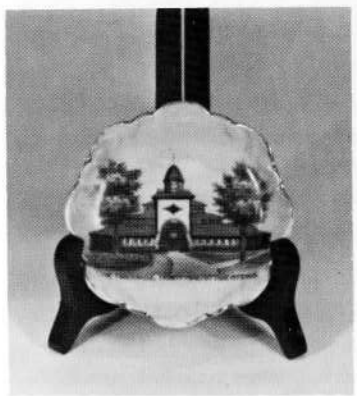
But in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when travel first became a popular pastime for everyone, not merely the wealthy, souvenir collecting was a major part of everyone's trip.

Cottage City (it became Oak Bluffs in 1907) was one of the East Coast's more popular summer resorts and Circuit Avenue was lined with souvenir shops. Nobody went home without "something to keep as a reminder." Today, with "pictorial souvenirs" becoming popular collectibles, many examples of Cottage City souvenirs are being discovered in attics and closets and are showing up at antique shows, flea markets and yard sales.

One must be amazed at the variety, as well as the workmanship and appeal, of these early souvenirs. Most were made for the local merchants by companies in Germany, Austria and England, requiring a well-

EDITH MORRIS came to Oak Bluffs as a teacher in 1926 and has been there ever since. For the past 14 years she has operated her own doll and toy musuem in Oak Bluffs and is a member of the Council of our Society.

organized system of supply. In this country, such firms as C. E. Wheelock Co., and Jones, McDuffee and Stratton, of Boston had travelling salesmen who called on merchants in resort areas, urging them to order pictorial souvenirs of local scenes. It was a big business and, no doubt, a profitable one for both the wholesaler and the retailer. Usually, the merchant would provide a postcard of a scene he liked or one that his sales indicated was popular with the tourists. Sometimes, a more artistic print or engraving was used, but usually the art work was of postcard quality. The salesman would describe the many types of articles on which the view could be printed: cups, saucers, plates, tiles, tumblers, vases, pitchers, ash trays, etc., and the range of colors available. He would be sure to emphasize the fact that the merchant's name and town would be printed on the back, making the souvenir his exclusive design. (All this helps the modern collector in his search for local items.) The order was relayed by the home office to Europe for production. Porcelain items came from Germany and Austria, while England seemed to specialize in earthenware goods. We don't know if the merchant was required to pay in advance or not -- it would seem likely



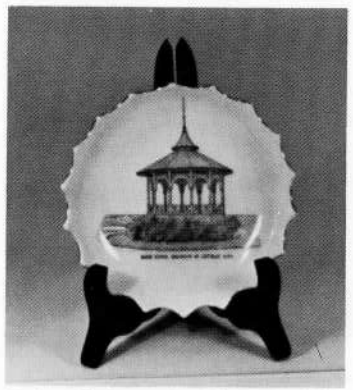


Tabernacle is on small dish; large plate has six Island views.

that he would be because his name was a permanent part of the item.

European craftsmen produced steel engravings from the scenes on the postcards, transferring them to the porcelain article that was hand-painted to match the postcard colors. It would take nearly a year for the souvenirs to arrive at the Island shop.

The most popular shops in Cottage City seem to have been: George Emerson's, F. A. Marshall's Wigwam, and the one whose name is on the back of many more than the others, Stchi Ban. After many years of wondering, the author has learned the story of "Stchi Ban." The late Mrs. Florence Dow once told her that Stchi Ban was a gift shop on Circuit Avenue in the 1880s and 1890s, owned by "theatrical people," the lady being well known for her habit of smoking cigars. Henry Hough furnished the information that it was a Japanese name (or at least Oriental) and that it meant a number. Mrs. David Healey, who lived in Japan for several years, finally solved the mystery. She said that "Itchi Ban" means "Number One," or "the best," or "tops." The Japanese language being based on character writing, there was frequent confusion





Dish with Ocean Park bandstand has "Stchi Ban, Cottage City" on the back.



Popular souvenir shops on Circuit Avenue were Marshall's Wigwam and the Stchi Ban Shop, at far left with the vertical white sign.



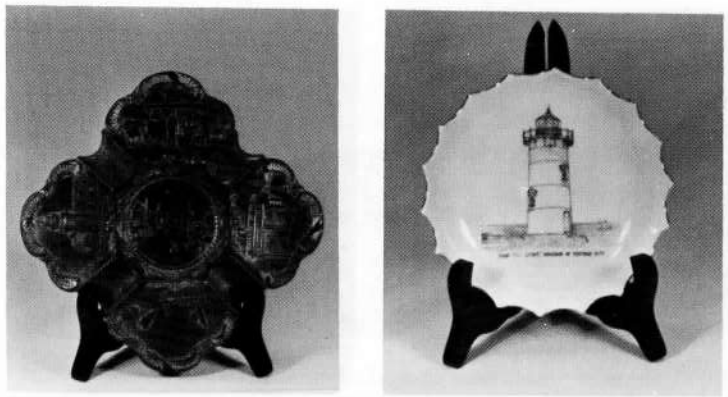
Specializing in imported china, George L. Emerson's China Shop on Circuit Avenue quickly outgrew its original gingerbread cottage.

in translating it into English. That, I believe, accounts for "Stchi Ban" instead of "Itchi Ban." The shop, I have learned from further research, was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Hicks.

The pictures accompanying this article provide a small sample of the variety and details of Cottage City souvenirs. (Vineyard Haven and Edgartown shops also sold souvenirs of their towns, but this article discusses only Cottage City and Oak Bluffs souvenirs.) Some of these souvenirs have been found here on the Island, but many have turned up in faraway places, a fact which adds much to the excitement of collecting.

The chinaware pitcher seems to have been a popular souvenir. Some have no pictorial scene, only elaborate decoration and the words, "Souvenir of Cottage City" or "From Cottage City" in gold lettering. Popular pictorial subjects were the steamers, the pumping station, Ocean Park, the Tivoli and, of course, the Tabernacle.

Another popular shape was the ceramic slipper and, as today, the sugar and creamer set. Plates and tiles were also popular and more and more of them are showing up at



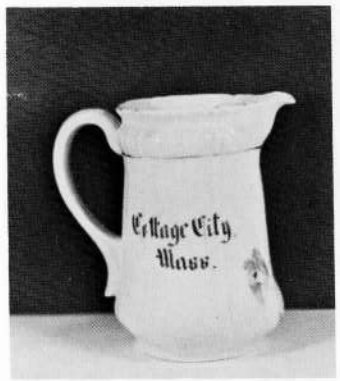
Metal ashtray shows five Island scenes; East Chop Light is on small dish.

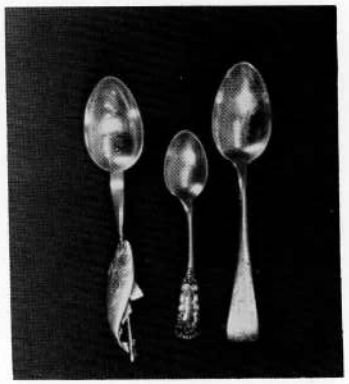
antique shows these days. Plates come in a variety of designs: square, scalloped, oval and some large ones with tiny finger openings.

Some souvenirs memorialize extinct "essentials," such as the wooden hatpin holder with a transfer picture and inscription reading "Bathing Beach and Tower, Cottage City, M.V." Others, such as the ever-popular candle holder, are still useful. I have seen one plate that tried successfully to include something for everybody with views of the National Bank, Gay Head light, the old Mayhew house, the Tabernacle, West Chop light, and the boat leaving the dock at Oak Bluffs.

There must have been a demand by tourists for certain "classic" scenes on souvenirs, regardless of where they were purchased. Among those sold at Cottage City were plates showing a very Spanish-looking church and a sailing barge. Another has a windmill and boat of the types seen in Holland. Boldly displayed under these exotic foreign scenes are the words, "Cottage City, Mass."

On the base or back of most of the ceramic souvenirs are the names of the merchants and producers. They include





Pitchers and spoons were among the most popular souvenirs.

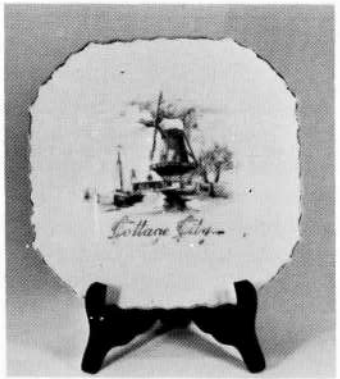
such legends as "Carlsbad, BHFS. China, Made in Austria," and "Carlsbad, From Stchi Ban, Cottage City, Mass., Made in Austria," and "Wheelock, Germany for Stchi Ban, Cottage City, Mass."

Some souvenirs have a date on the front of them, making them especially interesting to historians. The most popular dates seem to be in the late 1890s: 1895 and 1898, specifically.

F. A. Marshall, owner of the famed Wigwam on Circuit Avenue, apparently did most of his business with German companies, while Stchi Ban preferred Austria. Many souvenirs have on the back: "Made in Germany for F. A. Marshall, Cottage City."

Other interesting shapes for souvenirs include double dishes, such as for candy, pin trays, napkin holders and rings, covered boxes and paperweights. Some napkin rings are made of celluloid and contain pictures of Island scenes under their transparent surface.

Silver spoons started to become popular in the late 1880s and soon they were a part of everyone's travels, being easy to carry, usable, decorative and relatively inexpensive. Some have only the place name on the





A Dutch windmill in Cottage City? Tivoli Ballroom, right, surely was.

handle, but others have intricate designs etched on the bowl or handle. Many have ornate handles with raised or cutout letters or designs. Cottage City and Oak Bluffs had a variety of such souvenirs on sale.

Less popular, but still being found by collectors, are the metal engraved plaques mounted on wood. Scenes shown in these souvenirs include the Tabernacle, the Cottage City wharf and the luxurious Sea View Hotel.

More and more Island collectors are attending antique shows and flea markets in their search for pictorial souvenirs of our favorite spot. The variety of souvenirs seems endless and that makes the search exciting and the discovery of a new shape or scene something to be as treasured as the item itself.





Wooden hatpin holder with bathing-beach view; vase shows steamer at dock.

Moments in History

Gallant Officer Sails Home for the Last Time

by FLORENCE KERN

ON January 13, 1866, the U. S. Revenue Cutter *James C. Dobbin*, stationed at Edgartown, was anchored down harbor off Green Hollow. Early that Saturday evening, her commander, Capt. James D. Usher, received an urgent message from shore. Quickly, her anchor was "brought home," as they say in her journal, and by 9:15 p.m., she had left the harbor.

The two-masted topsail schooner sailed to Holmes Hole, "coming to an anchor" at midnight near the 116-foot Steam Cutter *Miami*, commanded by Capt. Daniel Tompkins. Captain Usher and one of his men, Pilot Allen, immediately boarded *Miami* to carry out the orders he had received in Edgartown, which were to proceed to New Bedford "in order to convey to Edgartown the remains of the late Capt. W. C. Pease, U.S.R.S., there being no other means of conveyance before the 16th. inst."

Captain Usher left in command of *Dobbin* his First Lieutenant, Cyrus Worth Pease, twin brother of the dead Capt. William Cooke Pease, who had died of typhoid fever in Charleston, S.C., December 30, 1865, while in command of the cutter *Kewanee*. He was a son of the late Jeremiah Pease of Edgartown and a seventh generation Islander. He was commissioned in the Revenue Marine Service at 19 and had served on cutters east and west, sail and steam for 26 years, making two voyages under sail around Cape Horn. His talents were many: he had designed and built six cutters for the Revenue Service.

With Captain Usher away, it was the twin brother of the dead hero who recorded the events of the next

FLORENCE KERN uncovered this story of the Edgartown twin brothers while researching her history of the Coast Guard, soon to be published. Her most recent work is *Captain Pease, Coast Guard Pioneer*. A member of the Society, she is a Chappaquiddick summer resident.



Courtesy Anna McKay

Capt. William C. Pease looked the way a heroic naval officer should look.

day in the *Dobbin* journal:

"Sunday, Jan. 14th. Commences wind W.N.W. and clear. At daylight, moderate breeze from Nd. with snow squalls. At 8, clearing off. At 12, strong N.W. wind and passing clouds.

"At 2 p.m., *Miami* hove in sight with colors at half mast. Capt. Usher and Pilot returned on board. We were taken in tow by the *Miami* and at 3:30 p.m. came to an anchor in the Harbor of Edgartown. At 3:50 p.m, the remains of the late Capt. W. C. Pease U.S.R.S. were conveyed on shore to his late residence* by the boats of both vessels, and a salute of nine minute guns fired from either command. . . .

C. W. Pease, 1st Lieut."

Early the next morning *Dobbin* re-anchored down harbor. The weather was clear and cold. To quote the journal:

"At 1:15 p.m., the Officers and

*His house then stood on the present site of the Edgartown Market on Main St. In 1922, it was moved to Starbuck Neck.



Courtesy Anna McKay

Lt. Cyrus W. Pease, William's twin, painted this miniature self-portrait.

crew of both cutters, who could be spared from duty, went on shore to attend the funeral of the late Capt. W. C. Pease U.S.R.S. A salute of nine minute guns was fired from both vessels and proper military forms observed on the occasion."

The *Vineyard Gazette* of Jan. 19, 1866, described the funeral this way:

"Capts. Usher and Tompkins, with their officers and crew in full dress, paid their most deferential respects, being present and officiating upon the occasion, also caused to be fired minute guns as the procession slowly followed the body to its last resting place."

Captain Pease was buried in the West Side Cemetery in Edgartown where an impressive monument marks his years of distinguished service on both oceans in the Revenue Cutter Service, now part of the U. S. Coast Guard. He was survived by his widow, Serena, and their 19-year-old son, William Worth Pease.

Cape Poge Light: Remote and Lonely

Conclusion

by ARTHUR R. RAILTON

SOMETIME in December 1901, Cape Poge Light had its 100th birthday, but there was no celebration. Keeper George E. Dolby didn't mention the anniversary in his journal; he probably was not aware of it.

In those 100 years many improvements had been made inside the lighthouse tower. The first lighthouse, in 1801, had a multi-wick, smoky spider lamp that burned sperm oil inefficiently, its light growing dim by dawn. One hundred years later, a concentric-wick kerosene lamp burned bright and clean within a jewel-like lens of precisely ground optical glass that rotated to send brilliant red and white flashes to the horizon.

The equipment had been improved, but not much had been done for the Keepers. They were still isolated, without communications. In winter, they still had to walk miles along a windswept beach for their mail and supplies. In summer, it was less arduous, they could row or sail to town, but in summer everything was easier on lovely Cape Poge. In emergencies, they were better off than the earlier Keepers, there now being two of them at the station, but they still had to rely on a flag hoisted upside-down to signal for help, a signal, as Keeper Thomas was to learn, that was about as effective as shouting into the wind.

The beacon had entered the 20th Century, but for the Keepers and their families little had changed.

ARTHUR R. RAILTON is Editor of this journal.

Then in 1904, things began to improve. That fall, two carpenters, along with a load of hardware and lumber, arrived to spruce up the living quarters. They shingled the house, dug a new well, installed a new pump (still a hand pump, of course) and cesspool and, perhaps most important of all, on November 14, 1904:

> Carpenters finish water closets.[1]

There was no change in the winter weather, however. Severe storms continued to wash away the bank below the tower. On January 25, 1905, "the worst NE gale and snow of the season . . . washed away fifteen feet. Tower stands sixteen feet from edge of bluff." The harbor froze over and Mr. Jeffers came for a visit, driving his team across the pond early in February. Two days later, an "iceboat came out and brought the mail." Twice that month the steamer *Uncatena* tried to get into Edgartown, but couldn't. Then on March 5, 1905:

> Steamers *Uncatena* and *Mackinac* got into Edgartown after a hard battle with the ice. Five weeks today since the *Uncatena* has been to her dock.

When spring came, with it came tragedy:

> April 9, 1905 -- Everett [the Ass't. Keeper's son] went out in the dory and we think he is lost, as we found the dory tipped over at her anchor.
>
> April 10 -- Power boats came out the a.m. to try and get Everett with trolls, but there was too much wind and they had to give up.
>
> April 11 -- Mr. Barrus left this station this p.m. on route for Boston with son's remains. Found body this a.m. close to the dory by Capt. Ripley, Tom Pease and a Mr. Fisher.

It was a sad spring on Cape Poge.

During the winter of 1905-06, several vessels ran aground on the shoals off Cape Poge, one in March:

> March 20, 1906 -- Schooner *Rose Mueller* ran ashore on east side of station at 5 p.m. Crew reached shore about 6:30 p.m. and stayed overnight at Station. Assisted crew in rescuing personal effects & provisions. Ass't. went to

[1] It is not clear what was meant by "water closets." They were in a separate building from the house and if they used water surely would have frozen in winter.

> Town with Mate, absent from 8 a.m. to 12 m. to telegraph ship owners.
> March 23 -- Agent of vessel arrived this a.m. & he had decided to unload the ice & try to get her off. Crew at work throwing the ice overboard.[2]
> March 24 -- The crew of Revenue Cutter *Mohawk* are at work on the vessel taking out the ice. They also have a crew of men from the island at work.
> March 25 -- Wrecking crew started to haul vessel off at 11 a.m. Floated her at 1 p.m., the *Mohawk* started with her at 3:30 p.m. for New Bedford with wrecking crew on board at the pumps.

The ocean continued to cut away the cliff and in October 1907, the *Myrtle* "landed lumber to move the tower." The job was finished by October 11, when "carpenters put down sand anchors" to brace the tower against the strong winds. Such cables are still in use.

The next winter was another rough one and on January 24, 1908:

> Worst storm of winter up to this time. Dike broke through at the South End of pond, cutting off teams from getting here except by beach, five miles further around pond.

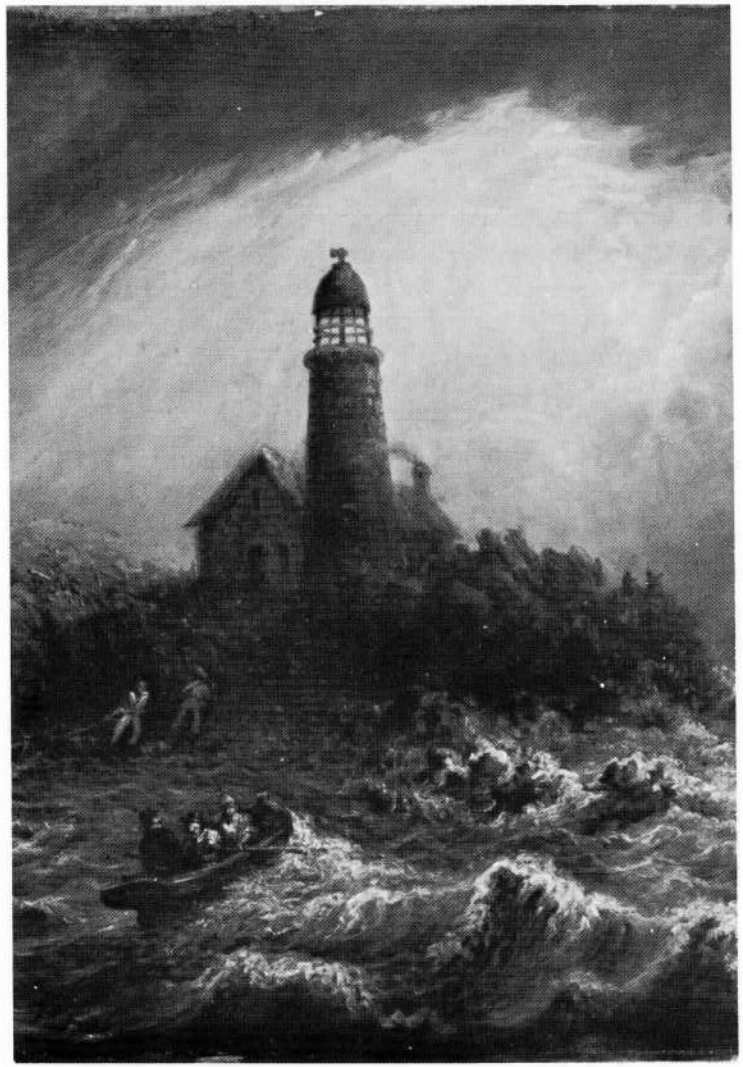
A few weeks later:

> Keepers walked to town over the ice . . . Keepers and Mr. Mayhew broke through the ice in coming from town, lost some goods & mail.

It was just another hazard of winter at Cape Poge. The following summer was pleasantly uneventful, except for a period in which "the Board of Health quarantined station . . . Ass't. Keeper's son has scarlet fever." Then on October 31, 1908, Keeper Wallace A. Eldredge was transferred to the Wing's Neck Light in Buzzard's Bay, after six years at Poge. He turned the "property over to Mr. Barrus as my successor." The Assistant Keeper had been promoted, but it was ten days before ex-Keeper Eldredge and family could leave. A northeaster made it too rough for the *Verbana* to come close enough to load

[2]The shipment of ice from Maine to the Caribbean Islands was a lucrative business during this period. The vessel was bound there.

Cape Poge Light: c. 1845



National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Charles Hubbard painted this most dramatic view of stormy Cape Poge in the 1840s. His lighthouse is highly imaginative.

their household furnishings. The new Assistant Keeper was Charles H. McKay. He and Keeper Barrus faced their first major emergency on February 20, when

> The machinery stopped at 3:40 a.m. Could not make it revolve, had a fixed light until sunrise. Found something like wax in the bearings. Took them out, cleaned them and the Light is revolving good again.

That spring, the *Verbana* took "the sailboat to New Bedford to have an engine installed," marking the end of an era. When she returned six weeks later with "our power boat," the journal gives us no hint of the joy that must have come with the motor! Life was becoming more civilized on the tip of Cape Poge. There was another breakthrough in April 1910 when

> The Ladies went to New Bedford today. Came home on the night boat.

A one-day shopping trip to New Bedford must have seemed miraculous to the Keepers' wives. There was evidence that even the Establishment was softening its hard-nosed attitude. That year, when the Inspector made his annual visit, he wrote in the journal:

> Houses at Poge should both have bath rooms and hot water heaters. Wm. BUCHANAN, Insp.

The bathrooms may not have come that year, but a major improvement in the lighthouse did. It was an incandescent oil-vapor lamp that

> . . . burns vaporized kerosene under an incandescent mantle, giving a much more powerful light with little or no increase in oil consumption. The kerosene is stored in a suitable tank and is forced by compressed air . . . into the vaporizer . . . a few strokes of the pump once or twice a night serve to maintain the required pressure. The kerosene is converted into vapor by a preheating torch when starting the lamp and subsequently by the heat of the mantle itself. The vapor . . . ignites as a blue flame in a Bunsen burner under the mantle, which is thereby brought to a brilliant incandescence."[3]

[3]*United States Lighthouse Service, 1923*, Gov't. Printing Service, Washington, D.C., John S. Conway, pp. 32-33.

For several nights the Keepers, no doubt, wished for the old reliable wick lamp as they struggled with the "brilliant incandescence." By December, they had learned to operate it and had time to enjoy the holiday (with no time off, of course):

> Had a good old Christmas dinner today, with Ducks and all the Fixings.

Spring, once again, brought sorrow:

> March 23, 1911 -- Keeper's wife very sick
>
> March 24 -- Dr. Worth and Mrs. E. T. Vincent came today. Mrs. V. to stay a few days with Mrs. Barrus. Mrs. Barrus had a very bad night.
>
> March 25 -- Mrs. Barrus, wife of Keeper, passed away at 6:15 p.m.
>
> March 26 -- The remains were taken to Edgartown this a.m. The funeral will be held at No. Bellingham, Mass., former home town of Mrs. Barrus, March 29.

Mr. Mayhew, a "neighbor" on Chappaquiddick, filled in for Keeper Barrus, who returned on March 30.

The vaporizer of the new lamp continued to malfunction, causing frequent "smoak ups," as Keeper Barrus spelled them. The old kerosene wick lamp was kept trimmed and used often. Soon, more than the vaporizer was causing problems: the revolving lens that had been installed in 1898 was beginning to show its age. Made by Chance Brothers of England, it rotated every 30 seconds on bearings which, after 13 years of service, were wearing out. On November 26, 1911,

> The revolving parts in lantern working very bad. Stopped four times last night, had to turn by hand. Sent to office for someone to come and fix it.

For four nights, the Keepers kept the lens rotating by sheer muscle, an exhausting task on the long nights of late November. On December 1, the new bearings arrived and the Keepers installed them, enabling Barrus to write that "the revolving macarnism in tower running nicely."

Widower Barrus had been looking for a housekeeper and on June 30, 1911,

> Mrs. R. Thayer and little girl come to live at this station with Keeper.

One week later,

> Mr. W. Thair was at this station to see his wife and little girl.

On August 26, "Mrs. Thayer who was here keeping house for Keeper went back to Boston." Early in October, the Keeper took his annual leave, George Mayhew replacing him at the station. Whether Barrus went to see Mrs. Thayer or not we don't know, but ten days later,

> Mrs. Thayer arrived at this station to keep house for Keeper.

Her stay was brief. Nine days after she arrived,

> Mrs. Thayer left for parts unknown.

It was not a good year for Keeper Barrus; he seemed fed up:

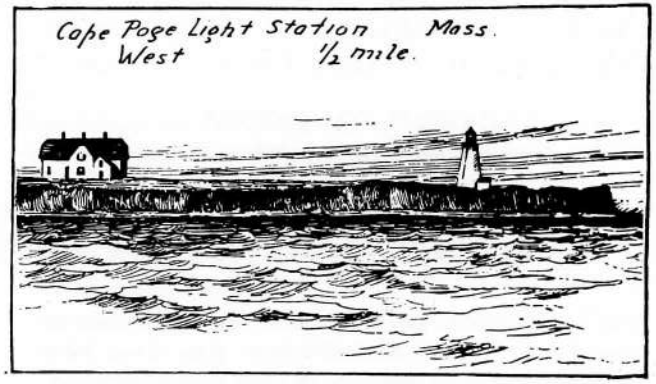
> July 28, 1911 -- Keeper absent from 11 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. for mail, supplies, etc. Out in gail of 70 miles an hour, lost sail -- torn to ribbons -- rubber coat blown to pieces on his back. No more for me, thank you! J.E.B.

For the next three years, there were continuous mechanical problems, the Keepers having to push the lens around on several occasions. The vaporizers were troublesome as well. Then, on a rainy night in July 1914, Keeper Barrus, looking out his window at 10:30 p.m., saw that the light had gone out again:

> Keeper in running to tower, slipped on the wet plank and fell, breaking bone in ankle. Managed to get in tower and start the Light. Remained until 12, then called the Ass't Keeper. The ankle is swollen badly and very painful today. . . Made a set of crutches . . . attended to usual duties.

There is something heroic here. On the tip of Cape Poge, two men work frantically to keep the light burning, some nights having to turn it by hand, some times despite painful disabilities, and the world remains unaware. Even those sailing past, depending on the light, have no idea of the heroics going on in that tiny lantern, atop a 35-foot

Cape Poge Light: 1892



List of Lights & Fog Signals, 1892, U.S. Gov't.

By 1892, a new dwelling had been built. The lighthouse, dangerously close to the cliff, was replaced with a new one, 40 feet inland, the next year.

windswept tower. These were unsung heroes, these Keepers.

They were heroes in other ways also:

> April 15, 1915 -- The three-masted schooner *Roger Drury* of St. John's ashore 2½ miles south of this station at 2:30 this morning. Signals of distress. Keepers went out to her in Humane Dory.[4] The Revenue Cutter came to her and the Keepers returned to station.

But there was good news on occasion. Christmas 1915 must have been made a bit brighter when, on December 22,

> Keeper and Ass't. Keeper received notice their salaries would be increased January first 1916 from $600 to $642 and $480 to $516, respectively.

These were the first increases in annual salaries in years. On April 3, 1917, the Keeper received "Confidential Letter No. 2," as he noted it in the journal. He had failed

[4]The Massachusetts Humane Society had set up a Life-Saving Station near the lighthouse in the 1840s. It was a separate activity, but in 1871 the Federal government took the operation over and the Lighthouse Keeper then became responsible for the surfboat and the rescue activities.

to record receipt of Number 1, but the letters probably were related to the approaching war with Germany, which began April 6. The war had little effect on Cape Poge and when Keeper Barrus was ordered to display Form No. 119 at his station, it must have seemed less than urgent:

NOTICE TO VISITORS:
No admittance until Further Notice.

At no time, war or peace, was the flow of visitors to Cape Poge something to cause the Keepers concern; their most recent visitor had been the stork:

> May 5, 1917 -- N.E. gale with rain. Ass't. Keeper went to town for Dr. Nevin. Arrived at 6:40 p.m. Capt. John Prada reports the roughest trip to Cape Poge he ever had.
> May 6 -- At 1 p.m., a daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins. This is the first Birth at this Station on Cape Poge on Record.[5]

Dr. Nevin, doubtless, hoped it might be the last!

Assistant Keeper E. H. Hopkins, who had replaced Mr. McKay in 1913, had more than an infant daughter to keep him up nights:

> June 23, 1917 -- Revolving parts of lens working poorly, stopping every few minutes. Returned 4 vaporizers and one set of Balls and Bearings for repair.
> July 4 -- Revolving parts of lens stopped at 1 a.m.
> August 27 -- Drum on clock in tower became loose at 3:30 a.m. Had a fixed light from 4:25 a.m. to daylight. Keepers made repairs this a.m.
> September 7 -- Drum of the Clock in tower became loose at 8 p.m. last night. Uneven flashes for one hour while making repairs.
> October 24 -- N.E. Gale with rain. Clock working stiff and revolving part stopped every few minutes last night. Keepers pushed the lens around most of the night. The high tide of last night washed the wood left by the tender all along the beach. Keepers working all day trying to save what they can.[6]

[5]We don't know if any of Matthew Mayhew's eight children were born at the station. Usually Head Keepers and their wives were beyond the child-bearing age when at Poge. With the Assistant Keepers came youth.

They needed that wood as December was unusually cold and the Keepers used up both their wood and coal supplies early. Solid ice cover prevented the supply vessel from bringing more.

> December 17 -- Keepers picking up drift wood. It is very cold and the rooms are damp. Can not keep a fire but a part of the time. No fuel.

It was not a good time for the infant girl. Relief came a week later when the *Azalea* landed two tons of soft coal. The winter's fury continued:

> December 30 -- N.W. gale, snow. The worst storm this winter. Cannot see ¼ mile in any direction.
> December 31 -- N. to N.W. gale with snow. The coldest weather I have seen since I have been at this station.

There was no celebrating New Year's Eve, it seems.

With spring, the weather improved, but the light did not. The tower had settled out of plumb, causing trouble with the rotating lens unit. Workmen spent a week bringing the tower back to vertical and repairing the worn rotating parts. New guy wires were anchored in the sand to steady the tower. Finally, on June 21, a spring-is-here entry:

> Ass't. Keeper went to town for supplies. Took his family with him. This is the first time Mrs. Hopkins has been off this station since_____. [Keeper Barrus never filled in the date, but Mrs. Hopkins had not been away from the station since fall.]

It must have been a happy day for the Hopkins family as they motored into Edgartown harbor in the catboat. Town folks watching, probably envied them and their relaxing life on Cape Poge, far from the hustle and bustle of the world, with no worries about the war. Oh, for the relaxing life of a lighthouse Keeper!

Adelbert Barrus, the Keeper's son, who had grown up

[6]All Keepers resented the fact that when the tenders brought supplies they left them on the beach for the Keeper to haul up the cliff to the house.

on Cape Poge, had joined the training ship, U.S.S. *Nantucket*, as a cadet. When she sailed past Poge on May 6, his father proudly noted the fact:

> U.S.S. *Nantucket* passed this station bound west. Keeper's son Adelbert is a cadet on board.

The war ended without a mention in the tersely written journal. The entry on Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, was routine:

> Fresh N.E. wind, clear. Keeper went to town for supplies.

In March, 1919, Keeper Barrus, after 15 years on Poge, was transferred to Edgartown Harbor Light, a most pleasant change for the lonely widower. He left Cape Poge April 2, and the next day, incoming Keeper H. L. Thomas made his first journal entry:

> Received this station in very poor condition, Keeper's side. Thomas, incoming Keeper.

J. E. Barrus, outgoing Keeper, living alone for nine years, had not been a good housekeeper, it seems.

A few weeks later, Assistant Keeper Hopkins was promoted and transferred to Long Point Station as Keeper, leaving on April 27. A Mr. King, whose first name we never learn, replaced him.

Henry L. Thomas, the new head Keeper, kept a good journal. He wrote legibly and made few spelling errors. He seemed eager to record events. Perhaps it was because he had more to report: he was a workaholic. He spent two months cleaning, whitewashing and painting the quarters that Barrus had left "in very poor condition." Before the end of May, he and Mr. King had varnished the tower floor, painted the tower stairs and inside walls as well as the tower deck. The dwelling sitting room got two coats of Apple Green paint, the oil house was whitewashed. They found time to make a screen door and window screens for the house. Mr. King painted his front room. Together, they made a flagpole, painted the motor boat, cleaned and painted its engine, made a cement step for the oil house

Cape Poge Light: c. 1920



D.C.H.S. Archives

The two Keepers and several other persons sat on the front porch on a sunny afternoon to have this snapshot taken about 1920.

and Keeper Thomas still had time to record on June 28, 1919:

> Keeper 54 years old today.

There was time, too, for another baby girl at the station, born to Assistant Keeper King and his wife at 3:15 p.m. on July 10.

On September 12, 1919, the daughter of Secretary of Commerce William C. Redfield visited the station. She was surely the most distinguished visitor the Keepers ever had. The Lighthouse Service came under the Department of Commerce, so her father was their commander-in-chief. No doubt, she was well treated.

Meanwhile, the painting continued. The front hall got "white, two coats." The woodshed was converted into a barn and in October the Keeper went to town "to get his horse," so he could ride instead of walk to the ferry

landing when the pond froze over. Mr. Thomas was a real drillmaster, keeping his assistant busy every day, and all day. Perhaps that explains these entries:

> April 26, 1919 -- Keeper called for watch 12 mid. At 12:05 light stopped. On investigation found clockworks out of gear. Turned light by hand till sunrise. Mailed Ass't. letter to office.
>
> April 30 -- Letter from Office. Regulation fully carried out and Ass't. not found delinquent.
>
> July 11, 1920 -- Keeper found Ass't. asleep on his watch and clock run down, 2 a.m., fourth time.
>
> July 13 -- Keeper went to town with official mail. Ass't. sent in his resignation.
>
> July 14 -- At 11:15 p.m. found light most out. Ass't. again asleep.
>
> July 28 -- At 3:15 a.m. found Ass't. asleep. Keeper finished watch.

Life was falling apart for Mr. King, Assistant Keeper. On August 2, the journal records, "Mr. King (Ass't.) household goods attached for a grocery bill." The end came two days later:

> August 4, 1920 -- Mr. King left station this morning for good, 9 a.m.

It wasn't until September 21, six weeks later, that Keeper Thomas got a new assistant, Albert S. Smith. Perhaps the delay was due to the fact that the District office had plans to make Cape Poge a one-man station. When Keeper Thomas heard the rumor a few months later, he wrote to his supervisor, Frank J. Morse, in Boston, asking if it was true. He received this letter in reply, which he carefully copied into the journal, but not until November 1922, nearly two years after receiving it:

> Yours of January 3rd., at hand.
>
> Nothing definite has yet been done relative to making your station a one-man station, but I will, in strict confidence, tell you that in all probability it will be made one. However, Keeper, do not let that cause you the least uneasiness, for in many ways there will be advantages to it. Should this come about, automatic alarms, both to the light & lens, will be installed so that a bell will be rung in your bedchamber should either lens slow down or the light change from its even tenor. I will see to it personally that you get the best possible rig. With this, you can turn in at your regular time and a visit at the tower at midnight to wind up lens and pump up oil tank will be all that is necessary. Your station then will be much superior to either Tarpaulin Cove or Bird Island, for at these stations not only do they have the revolving lens, but a fog signal which makes it necessary for them to keep an eye on the fog in addition to the light. Relative to sickness: I do not think you need fear any trouble on that score for a flag set union down would bring you help within the hours of daylight, much quicker than at either of the above-named places.
>
> FRANK J. MORSE, 1st. Ass't. Supt.
> 2nd. District

Just before Christmas, nearly a year later, the ax fell:

> Ass't. Keeper got notice that this station would discontinue assistant keeper January 1, 1922.

It couldn't have been a happy Christmas for Keeper Thomas, but perhaps his very important visitor brought cheer:

> Governor Mayhew took dinner with Keeper and Mrs. Thomas.[7]

On January 5, the tender *Anemone* "arrived 10:30 a.m., took Ass't. Keeper to Bishop & Clerk's Station," leaving Keeper Thomas alone on the station. He didn't stop working:

> Cleaning up former Ass't. Keeper's side, etc. *Found bed bugs.*

True to his promise, Ass't. Supt. Frank J. Morse brought a mechanic on January 16 to install the automatic alarms. But Keeper Thomas was not happy with the new arrangement and it didn't help when he had an accident while tending the light on January 29:

[7]Can any reader help us out? We can find no record of a Governor Mayhew in 1921. For several years, however, Governor Mayhew visits Poge at Christmas. Who was he?

Oldest Known Photograph of Cape Poge Lighthouse and Dwelling: c. 1878



National Archives Photograph

Keeper Edward Worth peers through spyglass atop tower as his family poses below. To the right of the cellar bulkhead is the original dwelling, built in 1801. It was extended to the left in 1843. This tower was built in 1844 when the white walkway was added, connecting it to the house.

Keeper got hurt with tower door, 2 a.m. blowed against him.
January 31 -- Keeper sick, result of being hurt.
February 1 -- Keeper walked to Mr. Pease's farm. He took his auto and took me to town. $1.00
February 4 -- Keeper went to town, walked to dike, from dike to town in auto. $2.00

He seemed depressed at the lonely station and not up to full strength after the accident, hence his references to paying for rides into town out of a salary of less than $2 a day. He must have felt a little better on February 26:

Used the horse today, first time for 3 weeks (*some life*!).

Had he read the 1922 Annual Report by the Commissioner of Light Houses that went to the Secretary of Commerce, he surely would have felt better. Among the very important happenings reported for that year was:

Henry L. Thomas, Keeper, and Albert S. Smith, Assistant Keeper, Cape Poge, Mass., assisted in floating a large sloop-yacht that had run aground on the reservation. Also the yacht *Dolly*, which had run aground.

Those two yachts must have had some influential people aboard to rate mention in the Annual Report. The rescues hadn't sounded very heroic as Keeper Thomas had described them:

July 12, 1921 -- Keeper & Ass't. rendered assistance to Slp. Yacht, *Ladrone*, of New York, ashore NW of this station.
July 22, 1921 -- Keeper & Ass't. rendered assistance to yacht *Dolly* ashore on ledge.

The Commissioner's Annual Reports never describe the steadfastness of Keepers, the monotony of their lives, the all-night vigils to keep a faulty lamp burning or a stalled clockwork rotating, or the long, frigid walks along a windswept beach to pick up the mail and supplies. Such actions were not worthy of record. But "rendering assistance" to a New York yacht on a July afternoon -- that was!

Keeper Thomas, still ailing from his accident, went to the United States Public Health Service Hospital in

Vineyard Haven for an examination on March 10, 1922. He gives us no hint as to why he went, but he does record that the trip took 8½ hours. Health was not his only worry. The ocean was moving closer and talk of moving the tower began. At the bottom of the March page, Thomas provides two unrelated bits of history:

The last time the tower was moved: Oct. 3, 1907 (50 feet).
Boat No. 13 was built by W. T. Beetle of New Bedford in 1895 (old, 27 years).

In May 1922, Superintendent Morse and a crew arrived to move the tower 95 feet inland. It took only three days.

The Keeper's health problems continued and in October this journal entry had an ominous note:

Went to town to see Dr. Worth, PHS, for examination. Not O.K.

His loneliness must have been relieved a great deal on January 5, 1923, when he "installed a Radio for Receiving." He now had a means of hearing weather forecasts and news as well as having some entertainment on those long nights of vigil. He still had no way to call for help except by flying his flag upside-down. With his failing health and with no assistant, he needed communications more than ever. Regularly, he puts the time it takes him to get to town in the journal:

Walked to town for mail, etc. 7 hours the trip, 20 minutes in town.

The motor boat, which helped in warmer weather, had frequent engine trouble and the *Azalea* carried her away for repairs. The year 1923 was a painful one for him both physically and mentally and it must have been a morale booster when on Thanksgiving Day Governor Mayhew and Dr. William Andrews came for dinner. Once again, he does not explain why they chose Cape Poge or who they were.

While Keeper Thomas and his wife were on their annual 10-day leave in November 1924, Superintendent George E. Eaton made his yearly inspection visit. The station was

being operated by a substitute keeper, Mr. Craig. Superintendent Eaton didn't like what he saw:

> Dwelling needs painting, grounds around boat house need cleaning up. Remove oil, Kerosene and gasoline. Are prohibited from being stored in other than oil house. Remove from barn. Clean up & stow boat house articles. Paint dwelling in spring. Restow and clean up barn.

Shocked by the devastating report, Keeper Thomas defended himself in the journal when he returned:

> Station went all to pieces in ten days absent. Additional Keeper used 3 quarts of Alcohol in 9 days.[8] Supt. inspected this station while Keeper was on his leave of absence (Craig sub.), he said he was told not to [do] any work.

His bad luck continued and on December 23 when taking the motor boat to Edgartown for the mail:

> Keeper got his nose broken by motor. Dr. Nevin fixed it up.

The accident must have happened while he was cranking the engine. Broken nose or not, two days later, he entertained that important visitor again:

> December 25 -- Ex. Gov. Mayhew had Christmas dinner with Keeper.

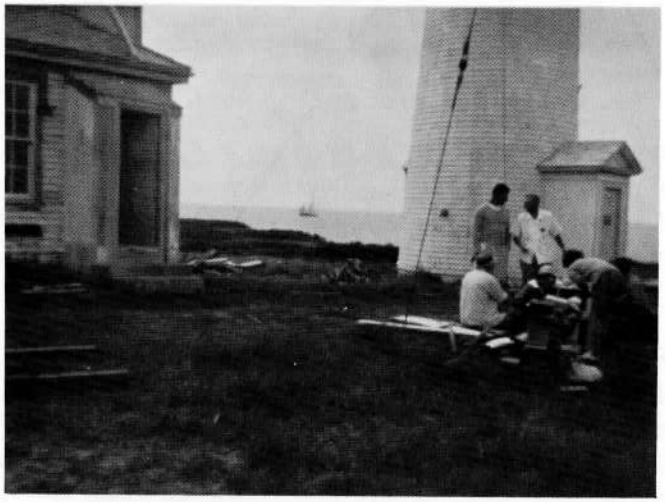
The elements still bombarded the unprotected buildings on the windswept tip of Cape Poge and when a fierce gale blew up on February 27, 1925,

> Motor boat dragged the mooring, pounded bottom so it took rudder off. 9:25 p.m. the house shook so that the Mrs. and I swayed in our chairs and lamp on the table like to went over. Also lens stopped.

During the first two months of 1925, he carefully tabulated the time and distance involved in his trips to town: "Walking to town for mail, 147½ miles, average time on the road, going and coming, 4 hours. Jan. 1 to Mar. 1." The unfavorable inspection report of the previous fall bothered him and he spent April painting the house,

[8]It is not clear what he used it for. As always, Keepers tantalize us with the terseness of their entries.

Cape Poge Light: c. 1952



Courtesy Robert B. Marshall

Lighthouse with abandoned dwelling when Bob Marshall and friends picnicked there about 1952. Two years later, he bought and dismantled the house.

as Superintendent Eaton had ordered. Then in May, while renailing shingles on the tower, he fell from the ladder, hurting his back and shoulder badly. He was alone at the time, his wife being off-Island for 10 days. It was a bad fall, but it wasn't until September that he had his shoulder X-rayed: "Found shoulder O.K., joint stiff." His pain didn't keep him from going out in a gale to help a drifting boat on November 18, 1925:

> Assisted power boat *Gertrude D.* of B. Three days adrift. N.W. Gale. Elmer Dodge, owner, Engine broke down and no food or water.

Another severe storm hit on February 4, the radio reporting winds of more than 70 miles an hour. Both the Pollock Rip Lightship and the Nantucket Lightship pulled their moorings. A few days later, Keeper Thomas came down with a severe cold:

February 9 -- Keeper sick with a bad cold and with high blood pressure.
Feb. 10 -- No better (Grip) performing duties poorly (T. 101).
Feb. 11 -- Tender at light ship, set flag for him. No response. (T. 100-101)
Feb. 12 -- No Dr. Can't come. High winds (Pond frozen over) T. 100-101.
Feb. 13 -- Not able to attend to duties. Set flag for aid. Union down. No response.
Feb. 14 -- Keeper some better. Mrs. T. is sick. (God be with us.)
Feb. 15 -- Very weak, attend to duties under difficulty.
Feb. 16 -- Keeper better. Mrs. Thomas still very sick.

For some weeks after that, he was unable to go to town and a local boatman (Captain Backert ?) brought the mail, the Keeper paying him $5. a trip. By summer, though, he was again scraping and painting, often mentioning that his shoulder was giving him problems. On October 1, 1926, he was understandably not happy when the town cut an opening in East Beach:

Cape Poge is an Island by itself. Finished digging today. Keeper marooned when pond is frozen over from Dec. to March.

The extra work from having no assistant, plus his weakening condition, is taking its toll. His handwriting grows sloppy, difficult to decipher. For days, only ditto marks ("Routine work") are used for his daily entries. Mrs. Thomas is not well either and the doctor orders her to spend the winter in Edgartown. Keeper Thomas faces a winter alone at the station. That was too much. On November 17, he hired a helper:

Clifford Allen came today, stay till Mar. 3 (Paid by Keeper).

Superintendent Morse's reassuring letter back in 1920 about the advantages of a one-man station must have had a hollow ring. Keeper Thomas was paying out of his own

pocket to make it a two-man station again. It was fortunate that he did:

December 16 -- Keeper knocked out. Shoulder gone, caused from fall from tower, May 8, '25.
January 30 -- Keeper knocked out. Old complaint.
February 16 -- Went to town for Medical aid (lead poisoning).

This is the first hint we have of what might have been causing him to lose his balance, to fall and stumble so often: could he have lead poisoning? If so, was it all that scraping and painting that was causing it? Sick or not, he had a light to tend:

February 20 -- Lens stopped rotating 11 p.m. turned by hand till sunrise. Balls crushed under lens.

The following week he walked to town (6½ hours) to see the doctor, who said he had a "bad case of bronchitis." Keeper Thomas blamed it on having been up all night with the balky lens. On March 29 he again went to the doctor's:

Went to town for slight operation on lip -- small (C). Doctor not ready. *Azalea* landed 210 g. oil.

The (C) had an ominous look and two weeks later, its meaning became clear:

April 15, 1927 -- Went to town for an operation. At 1 p.m. it took to bleeding. Went back to town to the Dr., took 2½ hours before he could stop it. Started light 30 m. late. (Cancer). The result from the fall from the tower, May 8, 1925.

Thomas maintained that his problems began with the fall from the ladder. A law passed by Congress in 1916 had made Keepers eligible for the first time for "medical relief without charge at hospitals and other stations of the Public Health Service," so his health care was free, but he seemed to feel he had to show his ailments were job-related.

On Labor Day, he and his wife took their annual 10-day leave. Once again, the substitute keeper was not up to the

job. He had troubles with the vapor lamp, being forced to haul out the old reliable oil-wick lamp. Thomas was not happy with what he found when he returned:

> Additional Keeper smoken the lantern up, left it for the Keeper to wash up on his return from leave (*some mess*). Also he cracked the lens.

It took him two days to clean things up and he wrote to the Superintendent complaining. His shoulder still bothered him, but that didn't stop him from laying 165 feet of concrete walk to the Oil House. He dropped a cement bag on his leg, causing another problem: it "removed the knee cap out of place." There was more:

> Unable to take motor boat out of the water. Can't use right arm. It is still useless from that fall from tower, May 8, 1925.

In December, his wife went to the hospital for an operation. While there, she talked with another lighthouse worker:

> December 28 -- Lighthouse Employee got after the Mrs. for the Keeper taking this station without Assistant. Sup't. ordered it.

On the bottom of the page, Thomas explained further:

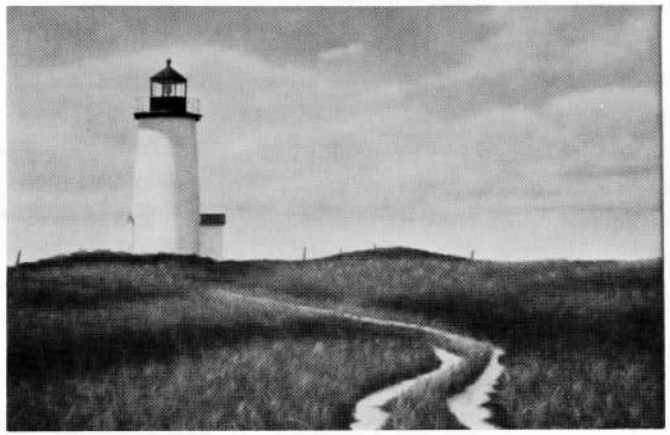
> Thomas, Keeper of this station, have received letters of criticism for taken this station without an Ass't. Letters were not signed so I could not answer them. *I did not ask for it.*[9]

The journal continued to chronicle the health problems of the Keeper and his wife. Operating a rotating-light station without an Assistant Keeper was hard work even for a healthy man. Thomas and his wife were both ill, yet nothing was being done to help them. Did the Boston office think Thomas was just a chronic complainer? A hypochondriac? It would seem that way. But he was sick and for the next year, the journal is sprinkled with entries like these:

> February 17, 1928 -- Started to town. Vicinity of beach got exhausted. A gunner came to stay with me.

[9]Emphasis is his.

Cape Poge Light: 1977



Courtesy Kib Bramhall

In 1977, Vineyard artist Kib Bramhall captured the pristine beauty and graceful lines of the historic shingled lighthouse.

> March 6 -- Sent Form 76 to office for six days leave (operation).
> March 14 -- Capt. Willoughby came down with Mr. Carew to relieve me.
> March 21 -- Returned from sick leave (operation).
> July 30 -- Dr. Nevin tested my kidneys, found left one bad.
> August 7 -- Keeper was hurt on cranking the motor. Had a hart spell.
> October 3 -- Keeper sick with blood poison in left hand caused by cement (working on cement walk).
> January 13 -- [In wife's handwriting] Keeper not feeling well.
> January 15 -- Very sick man. The temp. this morning 102, 6 p.m. 103. Mrs. T. is also sick. No way of getting a Dr. at present.
> January 16 -- Keeper not able to light up. In bed. T. 104.

The darkened lighthouse got the attention of the Establishment. A substitute Keeper arrived on the 18th and two days later, the *Azalea* brought a doctor, who ordered Keeper Thomas not to go out of the house for a

week. When the substitute Keeper left two days later, Thomas went back to work, doctor's orders notwithstanding.

The light was not cooperating; it continued to give trouble. In December 1928, a month before the doctor came, a crew had installed a new pedestal and clockwork mechanism. Two days after they left, the lens began acting up, vibrating the tower so much that two mantles in the lamp were shattered in one night. The next night, the clockwork stopped and Keeper Thomas, weak as he was, rotated the lens by hand all night -- 15 continuous hours. The mechanic came back, but after he left, again the clockwork stopped on "account of tower vibrating."

After the doctor's visit, he was told to submit a report on his illness. He did so February 4, 1929, asking for a transfer. He got no response however and the couple had to get through another Cape Poge winter. The next summer, when the Superintendent made his inspection, he and Thomas discussed a transfer and there must have been some promise made because Thomas wrote after the visit: "Last winter at this sta."

Someone in Boston must have considered Cape Poge a difficult station, worth talking about. In November, two reporters from Radio Station WEEI in Boston came down to interview the Keeper. The journal doesn't state that they stayed overnight, but if they did, they got a good story:

> Light went out 7:15 p.m. Relief valve plugged up. Put (oil-wick) lantern in. Started lens agoing, cleaned valve, replaced it and started light. O.K. in 35 minutes.

Four nights later, he had more trouble:

> Light went out 6:30 p.m. Put in another vaporizer. 8 p.m. light out again. Vaporizer plugged up. Very poor oil.

That was the first complaint about poor oil since the days of sperm oil. Thomas was having great difficulty climbing to the top of the tower, a climb of four flights. On

November 19, "Keeper hurt his knee on tower stairs again. Can't use the leg." He managed to get to the doctor two days later and was told to apply for a month's leave (he doesn't say whether he did -- in any case, he didn't get it). At the bottom of the page for November, he added:

> Keeper walking around on three legs. One is wooden, one cracked knee cap (hurt it on tower stairs).

On three legs or two, he had the energy to rescue a disabled launch, three miles off the station, towing her into Edgartown. But his leg continued to give him trouble:

> December 10 -- Keeper in bed today. Arthritis in left leg. Dr. said nothing can be done.

Christmas brought cheer when Superintendent Atwood of the Edison Electric Company sent him a "fine Pipe, also the Mrs. a two-pound box of candy. We were well remembered at Christmas."[10]

Somehow, despite his leg problem, they made it through the winter. The summer of 1930 was not so lonely. The lighthouse started to have visitors: on July 8, 50 persons came to see it. The total for the summer was more than 200 visitors! The world, at least in summer, had discovered Cape Poge. Perhaps the radio station's reporting had inspired the day trippers.

As we have seen, Keeper Thomas was responsible for the nearby Life-Saving Station of the Massachusetts Humane Society. Apparently, it was being discontinued because on July 16, 1930, he recorded:

> I sold the Humane Building & Equipment for the Society to Mr. Swartz.

Another winter arrived and, in spite of his expectations, he was still on Cape Poge. Something was happening, however, as he received three letters from Keepers asking questions about the station, his salary, and other matters. Then, on December 30, the news he had been waiting for came:

[10]The Edison Electric Illuminating Company owned radio station WEEI.

> Official letter stating I am to be transferred to Edg. Sta. Feb. 1, 1931.

He was so eager to leave that on January 1, he was already "packing my household goods (some job!)" On January 22 and 23, he carted his possessions to the boat house for transport to Edgartown Light. The temperature dropped and he began to be concerned -- the pond was freezing over:

> Ice making in the pond. Motor boat to go on the ways if it is down to 20 above tomorrow.

Maybe he wouldn't be able to move his things after all. But for once, his luck was good. The temperature climbed to 40 degrees for three days and on January 31, 1931, he made his final entry:

> Cape Poge, Edgartown, Mass. Thomas, Keeper from April 1919 to Feb. 1, 1931. I, Henry L. Thomas, Keeper, have this day turned the station over to Markus Pieffer as Keeper in good condition. END.

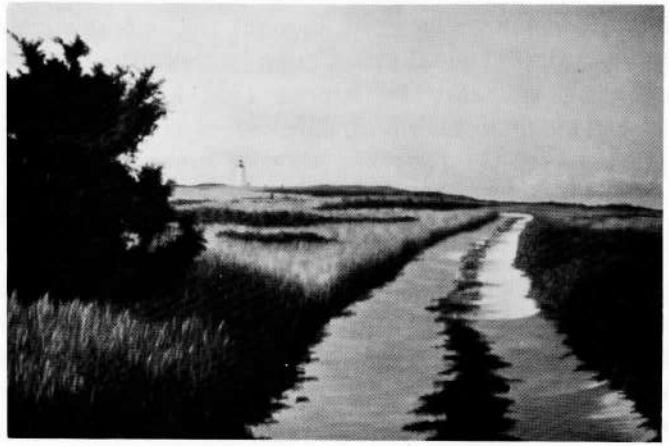
But he couldn't leave it at that after nearly 12 years of hard work and dedication. He added another paragraph:

> RECORD
>
> I took charge of this station April 1, '19 & I leave Feb. 1, 1931. The light has not been out and never a smoke up in the eleven years and 10 months.

It was slight exaggeration, as we have seen, but one he surely was entitled to. He completed his statement with a flourish, making a graceful series of swirls that filled the page.

The new Keeper, Marcus Pieffer, was less informative, his journal entries being mostly "Routine work." According to an article published some years later, he had been "a seaman since his early youth and [was] skillfully trained in lighthouse work and boating." Whatever his training, he seemed to know how to eliminate the many problems that had plagued Keeper Thomas. No longer did the light go out, or the clockwork fail. Night after night, things ran smoothly, or so the journal reported. Then,

Cape Poge and Lighthouse: 1982



Courtesy Kib Bramhall

Artist Bramhall returned to Poge in 1982 to paint the scene again, this time emphasizing its remoteness and loneliness.

suddenly, on May 10, 1938, with no warning, we read:

> Packing up furniture.

The June 2 entry is in a different handwriting:

> Mr. Pieffer left station, 3:30 p.m. Mr. Dubois reported at 1:30 p.m.

Cape Poge had another new Keeper: Joseph H. Dubois. He is more forthcoming and the journal becomes more interesting. His first week was spent "moving household goods from the boat house to the dwelling (by wheel barrow and trailer (hard work)." He learned something about the isolation of Cape Poge:

> Plymouth Coupe stuck in sand. Walked from Chappaquid dike. (Later) No success with Ply. Coupe at Tom's Neck. (Later still) Pull Coupe out with Tractor.

On June 22, 1938, for the first time in 137 years, the journal records an irrelevant event: "Joe Louis retains title, knocks out Schmeling 1 rd."

Dubois was a workaholic, like Thomas. Every day, he

was painting, varnishing, cleaning or repairing. That summer, he helped several small boats in distress, noted that some visitors complained about the mosquitoes, and that "Mr. Crowell's Ford Coupe; (1929 Model) short circuit ignition caused fire. Coupe badly burned." He was not easily excited. The famous 1938 hurricane, which ravaged much of the Island, didn't seem to impress him:

> September 21 -- Fresh S.E., becoming Strong to a Hurricane. Considerable land washed away, tide rose over 100 ft. past boat house, considered 100 mile an hour wind velocity.

Some years later, the *Vineyard Gazette* ran a story about Cape Poge Light, stating that during the 1938 hurricane the folks in Edgartown were concerned that the lighthouse would be washed into the sea. They needn't have worried; Keeper Dubois didn't seem a bit concerned.

In November, he noted that "a bridge was built across the opening." He doesn't give details, but it must have been across the opening that had been dug through East Beach near Shear Pen Pond. The hurricane had virtually closed it up anyway.

Like Keeper Thomas, Dubois was not in the best of health. We don't know what his illness was except that he made several hospital stays, one for the removal of a growth from his groin. One of his stays ended on July 1, 1939, and he recorded in the journal that on that day the "Lighthouse Service was consolidated with Coast Guard."

In the spring of 1940, he went to the hospital in Chelsea, coming back on duty April 18. Within a few days he was cleaning, painting and repairing on a daily basis. He refurbished the no-longer-used quarters of the Assistant Keeper and by the end of May, he had had enough to complain:

> Sundays and Holidays, week days, every available means employed in order to catch up work. No paint during winter, laid up in hospital for a period of three weeks, March & April, and a 2-man station with only one man, trying to do five years' work in one.

There were some events that relieved the monotony of work:

> June 22 -- Aeroplane drops weather device on Parachute. Pick up and forward to Harvard University.
> July 13 -- Dr. Self and friend arrived 30-foot sloop. Occupy Bartlett Camp.
> July 14 -- Mr. & Mrs. Averill & friends occupy Little Beacon.
> August 4 -- One hundred and fifty years Coast Guard.

Our collection of journals ends on August 17, 1940, and after that date we have little information about the activities at the Cape Poge Light station. Keeper Dubois remained on duty until October 1943, when the light was automated. During World War II, a Coast Guard Patrol unit of 24 men and dogs lived at the station, patrolling East Beach 24 hours a day. A two-way radio was installed in the station, although according to one source, it was so unreliable that the Coast Guard put in a telephone line.

At the end of the war, the station was abandoned. When automated, the light was changed to a fixed white flasher, powered by storage batteries, later changed to air-depolarized cells which power the high-intensity light for more than a year without replacement. The 3.05-ampere lamp, controlled by a photoelectric switch, comes on automatically when the daylight fades, sending white flashes out through a 300-millimeter plastic lens. Edgartown Harbormaster John Edwards makes regular trips to the light providing maintenance, replacing the batteries on schedule, installing new bulbs when needed (there is an automatic bulb changer loaded with six bulbs, when one burns out another automatically moves into position), washing salt-encrusted windows and polishing the lens.

The empty dwelling was sold in 1954 to Robert Marshall of Chappaquiddick, who tore it down and built some cottages with the lumber. In tearing it down, he made a

surprising discovery: the outside walls were lined with about 20,000 bricks set in plaster, as insulation between the studs. It must have been done in 1899, the last major renovation, "much better adapting it to being kept warm."

The wood-shingled lighthouse, still braced by guy wires, was now alone on the point. The ocean continued to encroach and in August 1960, the tower, built in 1893, was moved back 150 feet to its present site. But the ocean never stops eroding and in 1982, when Wayne T. Johnson of Brockton, Mass., a lighthouse enthusiast, measured the distance from the base of the tower to the edge of the bank, it was only 38 feet. That was two years ago.[11]

There is no Keeper out there now to sound a warning by writing to Washington, as Keeper Mathew Mayhew had done in 1825, that "if we are not in danger of falling immediately down the clift, it is very unpleasant, particular to females to be thus situated . . ."

But we must hope that some one is watching and worrying about the tower, an ancient structure that has survived for so long and that has, inside its shingled walls, so much history.

We must hope that some one is keeping watch.

[11] A severe storm, March 29, 1984, cut away six feet of the bluff, according to Robert H. Fountain, superintendent for the Trustees of Reservations on Chappaquiddick, as reported in the *Gazette*, April 6, 1984.

Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to the following for assistance in his research for this history: William Sherman of the National Archives, Washington; Florence Kern of Washington; John Edwards of Edgartown; Wayne T. Johnson of Brockton; and Dr. Edward B. Self of Chappaquiddick.

Cape Poge Light: 1983

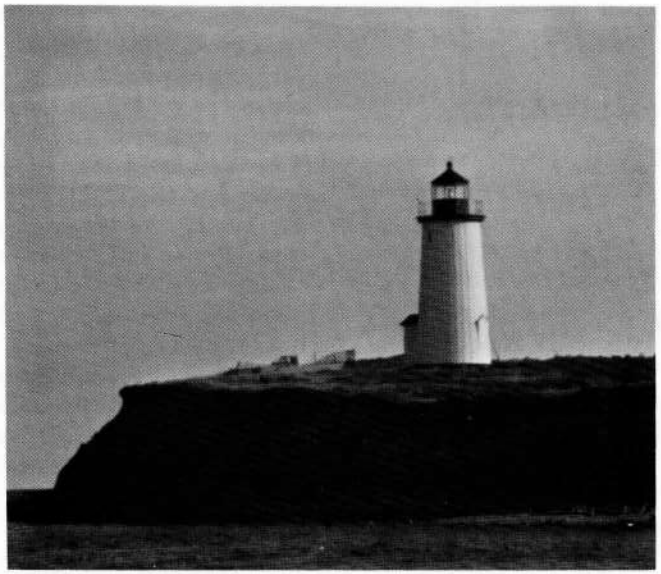


Photo by A. R. Railton

Historic Cape Poge Light, still handsome in the setting sun, its windows boarded over and its base precariously close to the cliff.

KEEPERS, CAPE POGE LIGHTHOUSE

1801 Matthew Mayhew
1834 Benjamin C. Smith (12 days)
1835 Lott Norton
1844 Aaron Norton
1850 Edward Worth
1853 Daniel Smith
1859 George Ripley Marchant
1866 Edward Worth
1867 Edward Worth
Jethro Worth, Ass't.
1882 Jethro Worth
1883 George H. Fisher
1898 George E. Dolby
1900 George E. Dolby
Alfred A. Howard, Ass't.
1902 Wallace A. Eldredge
Alfred A. Howard, Ass't.
1904 _____Westron, Ass't.
1904 J. E. Barrus, Ass't.
1908 J. E. Barrus
Charles H. MacKay, Ass't.
1913 E. H. Hopkins, Ass't.
1919 Henry L. Thomas
_____King, Ass't.
1919 Albert S. Smith, Ass't.
1921 Becomes one-man station
Henry L. Thomas, Keeper
1931 Marcus Pieffer
1938 Joseph H. DuBois
1943 Light automated

Books

New York to San Francisco Under Sail 1892

By Elon O. Huntington. Transcribed by Gale Huntington. Privately published. Illustrated. 53 pp.

WHEN Elon Huntington was graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1892, he had decided on a medical career. College having left him "in a run-down condition," his doctor recommended a sea voyage. The young man had been offered a medical apprenticeship in San Francisco so the decision was an easy one: he bought passage to San Francisco around Cape Horn aboard a three-masted sailing vessel. The year 1892 was near the end of the era of tall ships, the trans-continental railroad having been built in 1869. But nobody ever took a train trip for his health!

Elon, 22 years old, kept a careful log of his voyage and now his son and our Editor Emeritus, Gale, has put it into book form.

The voyage was aboard the full-rigged ship *S.P. Hitchcock*, a three-master built in Bath, Maine, in 1883. She was a fast ship, her best time between New York and San Francisco being 101 days. The voyage young Mr. Huntington describes lasted 146 days, almost longer than the food supply.

Reading this day-by-day account of life aboard a sailing vessel as she made her way from one coast to the other makes one grateful for the jet plane. Two of the crew were lost at sea, washed overboard in separate accidents off the Cape. It was a rugged trip, but as treatment for a run-down student, it worked. When he landed in San Francisco, Elon Huntington was a healthy young man and, it must be added, a happy one.

This journal is exciting and vivid, giving us a valuable first-hand account of a lost era. For anyone who loves the sea, this is good reading -- it is also good history.

A.R.R.

CORRECTION

In our February 1984 installment of the Pease Diary, footnote 7 on page 132 was in error in its last sentence. It should have read:

Jeremiah's sons, Cyrus and John, were among those aboard the *Walter Scott* on this voyage.

Letters

Editor:

I was fascinated by the story of Cape Poge Lighthouse and its keepers. Tom Hale's drawing on the cover is very nice.

It is incredible that anyone could live in such stone-age conditions in such a location! How Mayhew, and even more, his wife stood it, raising 8 children in 2 small rooms, defies understanding. What a stingy government we had! Real penny-pinchers.

In your research did the name Judith Gane show up anywhere? In a corner of the Tarpaulin Cove Lighthouse grounds is a grave with a large headstone with her name on it:

In Memory of Judith
wife of Joseph Gane
who died
Sept. 10, 1841, age 94 years. 4 mos.

Was there ever a Keeper there by the name of Gane? We can't find out. Near her stone is a small one which merely says: J. Gane.

I greatly enjoyed the article by John Leavens about Creekville also.

MRS. WESTON HOWLAND
Milton, Mass.

We have found no mention of a Keeper by the name of Gane. Do any of our members have information for Mrs. Howland?

Editor:

In the November 1983 issue you had an interesting account of a gastro-intestinal epidemic that swept over the Vineyard in the fall and winter of 1848.

A friend of mine, Dr. Albert V. Hennessey, retired Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Michigan, tells me there is every likelihood the epidemic was one of bacillary dysentery, caused by *Shigella soni*, a bacillus. The epidemic characteristically occurs in the late summer and fall, as this one did (and polio used to). In warm weather, there are more contacts between people, children play together, fewer clothes are worn, flies are everywhere, and with poor sanitation, the epidemic can race through a community.

With cold weather, all these factors are reversed and the epidemic fades away. Dr. Hennessey also told me that the advent of the automobile greatly diminished the outbreaks of this "bloody dysentery." With fewer horses, there was less manure, hence fewer flies, and less transmission of the bacteria.

THOMAS N. CROSS, M.D.
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Documents

Slavery is dividing the nation. The Republic of California has passed a constitution that prohibits slavery and has asked to become a state. Henry Thoreau's first major work, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, *contains an essay on civil disobedience, a bold topic. There is a sense of impending change in the land.*

On the Island, the big change is religious, with Methodists and Baptists becoming more unsympathetic to each other. Neither cares much for the Congregationalists. Two more ships leave for California and the Gold Rush. Daniel Webster visits the Island, giving a boost to the Whig cause. Jeremiah, no Whig, gets a new political appointment.

We have been publishing excerpts from his diary since 1974.

• • •

June 1849

3rd. S.W., pleasant. Attended Meeting at E'Ville. Br. S. Allen and Br. Geo. Weeks were there. The congregation was large, being a time of reformation. I thought it necessary to correct some reports and did so this day.[1]

4th. S.W., foggy. My Wife & her sister, Sally Arey, set out for Boston via Holmes Hole and N. Bedford. Thunders, lightning at night with rain.

17th. Ely, pleasant. Attended Meetings at E'Ville. Br. Frederick Upham Preached in the Methodist meeting house at E'Ville at 5 p.m. and Baptized Sister Mary Smith, widow of Ebenezer Smith, in the Meeting house and Sisters Dency Luce and Martha W. Luce at the harbour near Br. Linten's dwelling house by emersion. He preached again in the evening. It was an interesting time. The meeting house was so full that seats were brought into the Iles and in front of the Pulpit and when Br. Upham Preached at 5 p.m., there [was] a very large number of men who could not get inside of the house but remained outside during the service. Mr. Kenney, the Baptist Preacher, was there and Br. Geo. Weeks. There having been such a struggle with the Baptists to emerse the young converts and those who had professed Religion some time ago that the spirit of Reformation seems much injured. They held a meeting at Mrs. O.D. Davis a short time since when the members of the Baptist Church (and such as had lately professed Religion) were only invited or admitted, the most of whom were children from 17 to 10 years old, where they were all, or nearly all, (who attended) admitted members of the Baptist Church and many Baptized the next day without the knowledge of their Parents, which has caused many unhappy feelings among much people and proved very detrimental to the spread of Religion there. Yet I hope the Good Lord will revive the same Spirit which existed before their Preacher came there. The Baptist Preacher Baptized B. F. Norton and Asa Luce at the same time Br. U. baptized.[2]

18th. S.W., pleasant. William leaves for Philadelphia, being ordered there to join the new Cutter, or Revenue Schooner, lately built there for the Charleston station.

19th. SEly, light, very warm. Thurm. [Thermometer] 86 in the shade. News of the death of ex-President Polk.

24th. Wly. Attended meetings at E'Ville. Br. Geo. Weeks was there. Rev. Mr. Kenney attended meeting at the Baptist meeting house at 5 or 6 p.m. He held a Sabbath School, as I understood.

26th. S.W., very dry. Steamer *Bibb.*, Lt. C.H. Davis, arrives about 7 p.m. About 10 p.m., a young man belonging to her fell overboard and was drowned, supposed to have fainted just before he fell.

27th. N.E. The Corps of the young man is sent to Boston, he having a Mother & Sister living there.

28th. E., cloudy, ꝛains a little at night. Mowed and got in some hay, half.

29th. E.N.E., rainy. It has been very dry this season. Hay will be much cut off by the drought.

July 1849

4th. Went to N. Bedford in Steamer *Massachusetts* of Nantucket. My Wife, William & Jeremiah went with me. William went to Philadelphia to join a new Revenue Schooner.[3]

The Engine Companies from Nantucket, New Port & Bridgewater were there in their uniforms. The fireworks at night were very splendid. It was the greatest celebration ever witnessed there.

5th. E.N.E. Returned from N. Bedford. Littleton sailed about 9 a.m. in the Ship *Oregon* for the Pacific Ocean.

8th. S. Attended meetings at E'Ville. Opposition to Methodists and Methodism appears very prominent. The spirit manifested by some is truly surprising. Our meetings were very spiritual and interesting. Br. West Luce was there having attended several meetings lately and is much engaged in the cause of his blessed Lord.

15th. N.Ely clear. Attended meetings at E'Ville, had remarkable meetings through the day, the Spirit of the Lord was in our midst, a number took an active part by speaking and praying in meeting but opposition of some who lately professed Religion is astonishing.

23rd. S.W. to E. This day I Bot. Jethro & Polly Norton's share of the Beach adjoining Starbuck Neck, so-called, see the Deed of this date.

29th. S.W. warm. Attended Meetings at E'Ville, it was an engaged time with the Brethren. A.L. took offence at some observations of Br. S. Bradley.

[1] Again, Jeremiah leaves us hanging. Perhaps there was talk of his joining the Baptists.

[2] This unusually long entry indicates that the schism between Methodists and Baptists was deepening. These were not ecumenical times.

[3] Jeremiah's son, William, was a First Lieutenant in the Revenue Service and he was reporting for duty aboard the brand-new cutter *Crawford.* Jeremiah, another son, lived on the Island.

A strange spirit seems to have seized some young persons who lately professed religion, as well as some older ones.

30th. S.W. Littleton's house raised this day, got in some oats.[4]

August 1849

2nd. N.E. rain. Went to Camp Ground.

3rd. N.E. rain. National Fast on acc't. of cholary.

6th. E.S.E. to S.E. cloudy. Hon. Daniel Webster and a part of his family arrive here on a visit and stop at Mr. Gibb's Hotel.[5]

10th. S.E. fresh breeze. Picknick in the woods near Mr. John Cleveland's dwelling house, on acc't. or in honor of Hon. Danl. Webster.

11th. S.E. Mr. Webster leaves Town for Nantucket.

16th. N.Wly. Capt. Marchant is found dead in the Boat which stove to pieces near Washqua opening. Supposed to have attempted to come into the opening in the night, struck on the shoal ground and lost his boat with his life.

20th. S.W. very warm. Went to Camp Meeting, remained there until Saturday.

25th. It was a very excellent meeting, about 50 professed religion and a goodly number of the children of the Lord were much blessed, there was excellent order there, not a person whose conduct required a harsh word or severe rebuke during the meeting. There were about 50 Preachers present. Br. Thos. Ely Presided.

26th. S.W. warm. Attended meetings at E'Ville. Br. Weeks and a number of Brethren and sisters from E. Greenwich were there on acc't of their vessel being on shore. Attended meeting in the Methodist Meeting House here at 7 p.m. Br. F. Upham preached to the Company, now going to California in the Bark *Sarah*, J. O. Morse Master. It was an affecting time, the house was very full of people. The services were interesting. Several Baptist & Congregationalist Ministers were present. Mr. Goodenow of the Cong. Church and Mr. Hatch of the Baptist Church took part in the exercises.

September 1849

1st. N.Ely, rains wet the ground about 4 inches. Hon. L. Thaxter being appointed Collector commences this day and verbally appoints me as Inspector and Dep. Collector.[6]

7th. S.W., pleasant. Rec'd. letters from Cyrus & John on board Ship *Walter Scott* for California.[7]

16th. Sly. Attended meeting in the M. M. House. Mr. Goodenow preached to the Ship *Splendid's* crew.

20th. E.N.E. moderate breeze. Ship *Splendid*, Capt. G. A. Baylies, sail for California with a number of passengers. She is towed out by Steamer *Massachusetts*.

25th. S.W. pleasant. Light Vessel for Pollock Rip arrives (new).

27th. W. fresh, rained a little. Watched last night John's Wife, she is very dangerously sick.

30th. N.E. stormy. Watched with John's Wife. She died at 8 minutes before three o'clock this morning.

October 1849

2nd. N.W. clear pleasant. Funeral of our Daughter-in-law Mary Pease, wife of our Son John. Service by Rev. Frederick Upham and Rev. W. Hatch. A solemn scene. Oh may the Lord sanctify it to the eternal good of all our Souls.

12th. E.N.E. squally. Sent letters to John & Cyrus in California.[8]

November 1849

3rd. S.W. The Light Vessel goes to her station at the Pollock Rip today.

13th. S.W. pleasant. Went to Christiantown, got some cherry trees.

17th. Calm and light breeze Easterly, warm & pleasant. Joseph's house is raised today.[9]

24th. S.S.W. Br. Seth Allen, a very pious man and member of the Methodist Church for many years, dies, a remarkably happy death, at the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. Darius Norton, about 12 o'clock m. Aged_____.

29th. W. to W.S.W. pleasant. This day is set apart by the Gov. of Comm. as a day of Thanksgiving & prayer.

December 1849

2nd. E.N.E. light. Ship *Atlantic* of Nantucket arrives from Pacific O.

11th. W.N.W. fresh breeze, cold, some snow on the ground, the first of the season. Rec'd. letters from Cyrus and John from California.

January 1850.[10]

6th. W.N.W. Attended meetings at E'Ville. Br. Geo. Wicks was there and a F. W. Baptist Br., Master of a vessel in H. H. Harbor, a very engaged & spiritual man.

15th. W.N.W. Went to N. Bedford on business of L. C. Wimpenny.

16th. N.N.W. light. Rec'd. $500 of W. O. Brownell of N. B. on acc't. of oil sold belonging to L. C. Wimpenny and returned by Sloop *Passport*, Capt. Crowell.[11]

[4]Littleton C. Wimpenny had married Isabella, Jeremiah's daughter, in 1839. He was a whaling master and, as we shall read later, made a lot of money. This house was on North Water Street, close to Jeremiah's.

[5]It would seem unlikely that Jeremiah would have been enthused over Webster's visit as he had just been removed from his lighthouse job by President Taylor, a Whig. Webster, of course, was a leading figure in the Whig party. Gibb's Hotel is today's Edgartown Inn, next to the Public Library.

[6]There was more than meets the eye in this. Leavitt Thaxter, a Whig, replaced Jeremiah's son, Joseph, a Democrat, as Collector. He then named Jeremiah, a Democrat, as his Deputy.

[7]Jeremiah's two sons had left on the *Walter Scott* to seek their fortune in the Gold Rush.

[8]The letter to John, whose wife had just died, must have been most difficult to write.

[9]Joseph, Jeremiah's son and former Collector of Customs, was building a house on North Water Street, just beyond today's Daggett House. (See Bits & Pieces.)

[10]Even as late as 1850, there seemed to be no celebration of Christmas or New Year's, at least not in Jeremiah's diary.

[11]*Passport*, a packet, regularly sailed betweeen the Island and New York City, making stops en route.

February 1850

6th. N.N.W. fresh breeze, P.M. very cold. A very excellent meeting this evening in the vestry of the Methodist Church. Reformation still continues, a number have already professed Religion and the good work goes on.
9th. S. little rain. Received 2 letters from our Son, John A. Pease, at San Francisco.
14th. S.W. to S.E. storm. Surveyed land for James & Henry Beetle. Wid. Julia Norton, Wid. of Elihu P. Norton, dies at about sunrise this morning. She was a very pious woman from early life and died a triumphant death. She was a member of M. E. Church for many years and will be much missed by all classes of people. She was an excellent woman.
18th. S.W. pleasant. Mr. Geo. Richardson who lived at E'Ville a few years ago, died at Holmeshole the 10th inst. as I am informed. He was esteemed a pious man and possessed a very remarkable memory, could repeat more Schripture (*sic*) than any man I ever saw, when he has attended meetings I have frequently requested him to repeat a chapter, which he always did from memory without the least mistake.
19th. N.E. storm, gale with rain. Yesterday I received a new Commission as Justice of the Peace from Gov. G. N. Briggs of this Commonwealth.
27th. N.W. to N. Went to N. Bedford in Packet *Passport* on business of L. C. Wimpenny, received of Wm. O. Brownell $2000.00 on L.C.W.'s account for which gave him a receipt as per copy enclosed in Littleton's papers relating to his business. Returned from N. B. March 1st.
This winter has been remarkably moderate, very little snow or ice. I think the most pleasant I ever saw.

March 1850

3rd. W. to N.N.E. snows a little. Set out to attend meeting at North shore but returned on acc't of storm.
4th. W.N.W. pleasant. Isabella moves from our house to her new home.
10th. W. to N.N.W. snows. Did not attend meeting at E'Ville on acc't of snow, returned. William returns from Charleston, S.C.
23rd. N.E., snowstorm. The Schooner _____wrecked, both masts cut away, is towed in by Steamer *Telegraph*. She was from Thomaston for N.Y.
29th. S.W. pleasant. 4 inches of snow on a level on the ground which thaws fast. William sets out for N. York, having been ordered to join the Cutter *Polk* to sail for California from that place.[12] Br. Jon. Worth's child, a daughter about 2 years old, dies very suddenly at 1 o'clock a.m.
30th. S.W. pleasant. Mrs. Betsy Pease, Wid. of Capt. Marshal Pease, dies this morning very suddenly, found dead in bed by her daughter.

12. The story of William and his duty on *Crawford* and reassignment to California is fascinating. For the details, see *Captain Pease, U.S. Coast Guard Pioneer*, by Florence Kern, Alised Enterprises, Bethesda, MD.



Joseph T. Pease's house, about 1885, 25 years after it was built. Minus the front porch, it still stands today at 65 North Water St., Edgartown.

31st. N.W. pleasant. Attended meetings at E'Ville. I have not attended meeting at E'Ville for 5 Sabbaths past on acc't of Small Pox and stormy weather. S. B. Norton's wife took the small pox from the clothes of their son-in-law, Mr. Luce, who died at sea, his clothes being sent home in a filthy state and knew not what disorder he died with until she broke out with that disorder, her 2 dauters had a light touch but not very sick. Widow Betsey Pease & the child of J. Worth were buried today.

Renewal Time

Many thanks to those of you who have already sent in your 1984 dues in response to our annual reminder letter. Especial thanks to those who have upgraded their membership categories and also, of course, added thanks for all contributions to our 1984 Preservation Fund.

We remind members who may have put the dues notice aside and, perhaps, by now have forgotten it that the Society and this journal depend upon you.

Director's Report

As signs of spring become stronger, providing the impetus that we need to begin preparations for the summer season, we should take a moment to look back at the events of winter that included visits from a number of interesting people who braved the blustery storms to travel here to work on various projects.

From Mystic Seaport, Ben Fuller and Peter Vermilya visited us to provide some expert advice on the best way for us to preserve our whaleboat and our Nomansland boat. Kim Downs-Watson, a Nantucketer, flew to the Vineyard to pursue her research on the early years of Peter Foulger, the grandfather of Benjamin Franklin. Making two trips to our Society, Joyce Hill has been intensely studying the life of Frederick Mayhew in preparation for an exhibit of his paintings at the Museum of American Folk Art in New York City. Until her visit we did not know the name of the artist who did our portraits of Captain and Mrs. Richard Luce, but we are now quite sure that the painter was Frederick Mayhew. In addition to everyone mentioned above, many other researchers and visitors have come to the Society this winter to use the Gale Huntington Library or to visit the Francis Foster Museum. We also have had numerous historical and genealogical questions from around the world including Australia and the Fiji Islands.

Some of the people who have used our research facilities in the past have rewarded us recently by depositing the results of their studies in our library. After many years of work, Harold Wilson has given us his manuscript of a book entitled *Captain Bartholomew Gosnold: Unsung Founder of the English Colonies in America, 1602-1607*. Helen

Drezner of Rutgers University provided us with a copy of her paper on the life of Edward Dalton Marchant, the famous portrait painter of the mid-nineteenth century from Martha's Vineyard. James H. K. Norton presented us with a copy of his work-in-progress *Holmes Hole 1675 to 1860; The Heritage of a New England Coastal Town*, and James B. Richardson III of the Carnegie Museum sent us his paper *Prehistory and Paleoenvironments on Martha's Vineyard*. We also received a report to the Massachusetts Historical Commission on the Vineyard's *Prehistory Cultural Resources and Site Locations* by Jill Bouck, Richard L. Burt, and James B. Richardson III.

All of these scholarly works as well as many other items were accessioned by Dorothea Looney, and some of the cataloging problems have been greatly eased by the expertise of Mickey Barnes, who has joined our industrious group of volunteers. Kay Chamberlain, Joanne Clarke, and Miamo Meisner have continued their work helping Alvin Goldwyn with the Archives.

As the weather improved in April, Bill Schwabe and his students completed the work on the handsome brick walkway given to the Society by Edith Bliss in memory of her husband, E. Jared Bliss, Jr. Work is continuing on the Carriage Shed, and it will be tremendously improved by the end of May.

We hope that many of you who have been away during the winter will come by to visit us this summer. The Thomas Cooke House will be open from June 15 to September 15, and the hours will be 10:00 until 4:30, Tuesday through Saturday.

THOMAS E. NORTON

Bits & Pieces

IN Jeremiah Pease's diary, we learn that his son, Joseph, built a house on North Water Street in Edgartown in 1860. The house still stands and when repairs were being made on it in 1942, the *Gazette* reported that the workmen had found therein this pencilled note on a board near the chimney, signed by Jos. T. Pease:

"This house built by Jos. T. Pease in 1850. Carpenters Sirson P. Coffin, Jeremiah Pease, Jr., Lorenzo Butler. This alteration in chimney, etc., made in Nov. 1867 by Edw. R. Dunham and Jos. W. Donaldson, men claiming to be masters of their business, particularly Mr. Dunham, who, I believe, has built several meeting houses on Cape Cod in former years.

"Business very dull here now. About 23 stores in town and the most that is doing is in selling goods.

"These carpenters charge me $3. per day and the mason, Wm. W. Butler, I hear charges $3.50, an outrageous price, but if there was anything doing in the law, I should not be so particular about it. However, they are not paid yet.

"The town is in debt about $40,000, the county about $14,000, and the people generally are not entirely free from debt, nevertheless there is money enough in town to pay all up and have plenty left.

"This is the best built house in town.

Jos. T. Pease, Nov. 25, 1867

"I shall pay these men their price."

His statement that there were then 23 stores in Edgartown amazes one.

ERRORS in historical journals must be corrected, even when they are discovered 15 years late. In our May 1969 *Intelligencer* we published a statement about Nancy Luce that requires not only a correction, but an apology to the famed lady poet of West Tisbury. We stated that "during the last years of her life, the town of Tisbury supported her through the worst winter months."

Not true.

We do have in our Archives bills to show that the town did support a Nancy Luce, but she was another woman, the widow of Hovey Luce. We discovered the mistake in going over U. S. Census data for 1880. In the data, a Nancy Luce, 95, "boards" with Eunice R. Gray, the woman who had signed our bills for the "support of Nancy Luce."

The same Census data show "our" Nancy Luce as "Single," and "Keeping house," alone and without help from the town. Nancy often wrote that she would die rather than "go on the town." We now know that she never did and it makes us feel good to set history straight.

We, along with many others, were in error about her birth date also. Our article gave it as 1820. Another U. S. Census, this one 1850, precisely lists the date of her birth as August 23, 1814, making her 75 years old when she died in 1890. Her gravestone lists her age as 79.

A.R.R.

Our 100th Intelligencer

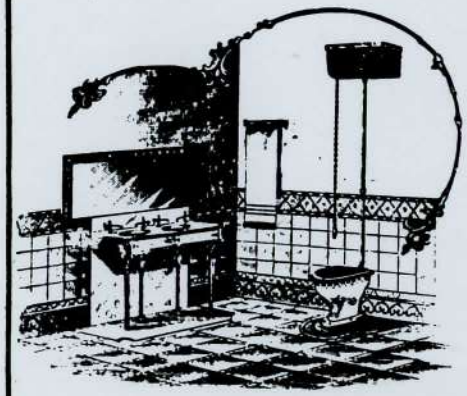
Journals such as this are not supposed to be making history; their job is to record it. But this particular issue *is* history-making, being our 100th.

The first *Intelligencer* was published in August 1959. Its 16 pages contained articles by Eleanor Ransom Mayhew, Dionis Coffin Riggs and Flavel Mayhew Gifford. The illustrations were woodcuts by Dr. Sidney N. Riggs, President of the Society. The Editor of the first issue and of most of the 99 that followed was Gale Huntington, who explained its purpose in a brief introduction:

> "It is hoped that this issue of The Dukes County Intelligencer may be Vol. I, No. 1 of a quarterly publication of the Dukes County Historical Society, Inc.
>
> "The purpose of the paper is to present brief articles dealing with the history, geology, archaeology, and folk lore of Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands that will be both of general and scholarly interest."

Thank you, Gale, for your untiring work in the birth and growth of our journal. Other Editors during those 25 years were Dorothy Scoville, George W. Adams, and Arthur R. Railton, the present Editor. The Society thanks each. Thanks, also, to the hundreds of authors who have turned an idea into reality by their research and writing and given us 3356 pages of Island history.

EDWARD E. SILVEY,



Plumbing,
Steam and
Gas Fitting

BY THE MOST APPROVED METHODS,

Tin, Copper, and Sheet Iron Work.

ROOFING AND JOBBING LICENSE.

Bicycles

FOR SALE,
TO LET, AND
REPAIRED.



154 Circuit Avenue, Cottage City, Mass.

From *The First Resident and Business Directory of Nantucket, Edgartown, Cottage City, Vineyard Haven, Tisbury, West Tisbury and Chilmark*, 1897.