

MARTHA'S VINEYARD (CAPAWAK)



"So long as the past and present are outside one another, knowledge of the past is not of much use in the problems of the present. But suppose the past lives on in the present: suppose, though encapsulated in it, and at first sight hidden beneath the present's contradictory and more prominent features, it is still alive and active; then the historian may very well be related to the non-historian as the trained woodsman is to the ignorant traveller."



— R.G. Collingwood, AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939, page 100

The Islands offlying New England

Block Island	Mt. Desert Island
Boston Harbor	Nantucket Island
Dry Salvages	Naushon Island
Gardiners Island	Newfoundland
Isles of Shoals	Plum Island
Long Island	Shelter Island
Manhattan	Staten Island
Martha's Vineyard	St. George's Bank
Minots Ledge	Aquidneck Island



"An island always pleases my imagination, even the smallest, as a small continent and integral portion of the globe. I have a fancy for building my hut on one. Even a bare, grassy isle, which I can see entirely over at a glance, has some undefined and mysterious charm for me."

— [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#)

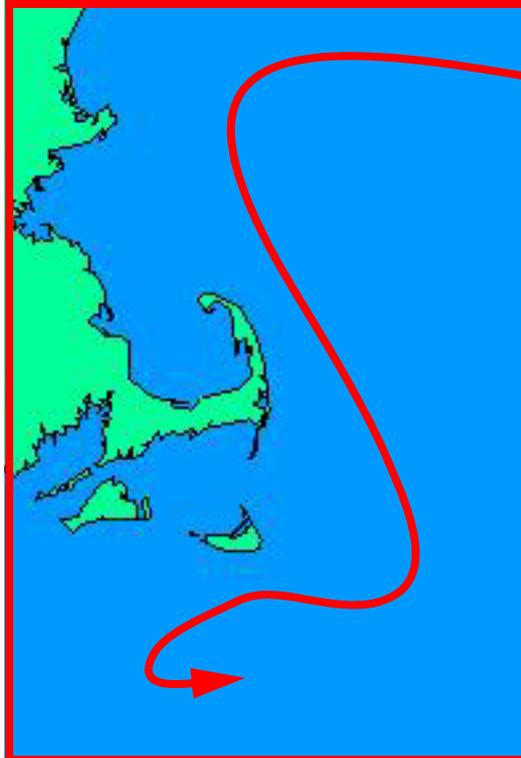
1593

[Thomas Mayhew](#) was born. He would grow up in a town called Tisbury in Wiltshire, a tiny place between London and Bristol to the west. His father would die when he was 21 and he would become a merchant in the town in which he likely had been apprenticed, Southampton, due south, one of the great seaport towns of England. One of the London merchants who was very active in the colonization of New England was Matthew Cradock, and somehow Mayhew would become acquainted with Cradock and, after having been in business for himself for about 10 years, accept an offer in 1631 to become Cradock's agent in the colonies.

[NANTUCKET ISLAND](#)
[MARTHA'S VINEYARD](#)

1602

May 14: [Captain Bartholomew Gosnold](#), in the vessel *Concord* commissioned by the Earl of Southampton in March to establish a New World colony, had sighted Cape Neddick (Latitude 43 degrees) on the Maine coast:



They skirted the coastline for several days and then on this day came to anchor in York Harbor, where they were greeted by “a Biscay shallop [a small fishing vessel used by the Basque of Spain on the Bay of Biscay] with sails and oars, having eight persons in it, whom we supposed to be Christians distressed. But approaching us nearer, we perceived them to be savages.” It is to be noted that even at this early point, one of the natives was attired in a waistcoat, breeches, stockings, shoes, and a hat, and knew some English words, and was able to draw a map of the coastline, on which he marked out the Newfoundland fisheries. Clearly, the New England coast had previously been being visited by trading or fishing vessels.



One of these intrusives, the [Reverend John Brereton](#), reporting on the voyage, would author a BRIEFE AND TRUE RELATION OF THE DISCOVERIE OF THE NORTH PART OF VIRGINIA. The sponsor of this voyage, the Earl of Southampton, was also a patron of [William Shakespeare](#), and about three years later this playwright would be writing a little something called *The Tempest* — quite probably accessing, for inspiration, Brereton's accounts of Cuttyhunk.

RHODE ISLAND

BRERETON'S RELATION

[Brereton](#) described the [Wampanoag](#):

exceeding courteous, gentle of disposition and well-conditioned, excelling all others that we have seen; so for shape of body and lovely favour ... of a stature much higher than we ... complexion ... dark olive; their eyebrows and hair black ... of a perfect constitution of body, active, strong, healthful and very wittie [intelligent].

May 15: [Captain Bartholomew Gosnold](#)'s bark *Concord* came with in sight of the New World headland which they would designate "[Cape Cod](#), and sailed into Provincetown harbor."

CAPE COD: The time must come when this coast will be a place of resort for those New-Englanders who really wish to visit the sea-side. At present it is wholly unknown to the fashionable world, and probably it will never be agreeable to them. If it is merely a ten-pin alley, or a circular railway, or an ocean of mint-julep, that the visitor is in search of, -if he thinks more of the wine than the brine, as I suspect some do at Newport,- I trust that for a long time he will be disappointed here. But this shore will never be more attractive than it is now. Such beaches as are fashionable are here made and unmade in a day, I may almost say, by the sea shifting its sands. Lynn and Nantasket! this bare and bended arm it is that makes the bay in which they lie so snugly. What are springs and waterfalls? Here is the spring of springs, the waterfall of waterfalls. A storm in the fall or winter is the tide to visit it; a light-house or a fisherman's hut the true hotel. A man may stand there and put all America behind him.

NEWPORT

They would go ashore in a region of white sands before passing on around Nantucket Island. Following the coastline for several days, he discovered the large island “Marthaes Vineyard” (actually it seems that this name was originally applied not to the large island, but to an almost insignificant one near it that is now known as “Noman’s Land”). Then, passing around Dover Cliff, they would enter what they termed “Gosnold’s Hope,” which we now know as Buzzards Bay, and go ashore again at what they termed “Elizabeth’s Island,” which we now know as [Cuttyhunk Island](#), which is the last of the chain of Elizabeth Islands that divide the waters off



[Martha's Vineyard](#) from Buzzards Bay. It would take them 19 days, late in May, to erect a fort and storehouse there, on a small island in the center of a lake that was some three miles in circumference, a place that it would be maximally difficult for the native inhabitants to approach by stealth. They would trade with the native inhabitants of this place for furs, skins, and sassafras. They would sow wheat, barley, and peas, and in two weeks the shoots would be nine inches tall and higher. Realizing at this point that the supplies which they had brought with them were not going to last until harvest, they got back aboard their bark to return to England.¹

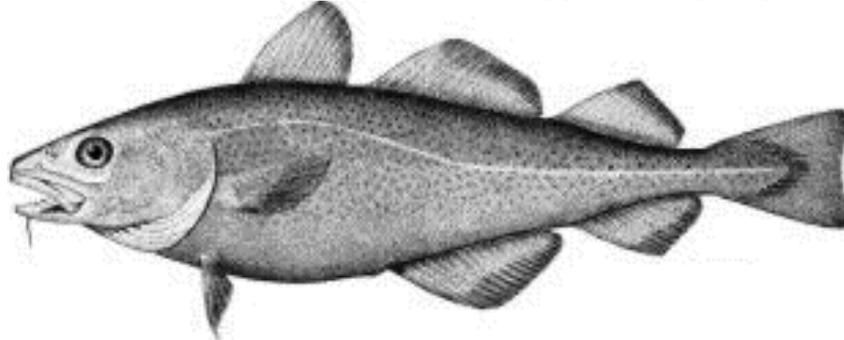
1. A notable account of the voyage, written by one of the gentlemen adventurers, the [Reverend John Brereton](#), would help in popularizing subsequent voyages of exploration and colonization of the northeast seaboard of America. Then there would be [Gabriel Archer](#)'s account some two decades later, after [Captain Bartholomew Gosnold](#)'s death.

CAPAWAK

MARTHA'S VINEYARD



The crew knew that the local sassafras would do well on the market, since Europeans at the time considered this root a cure-all. Despite the accuracy of this estimate that their sassafras would fetch many a pretty penny upon their return, this 1st known attempt to establish a trading post in Wampanoag territory would fail.



Gosnold's expedition anchored in what would become Provincetown harbor and "tooke there a great store of Cod Fysshes":

... that "great store of codfish" which Captain Bartholomew Gosnold caught there in 1602; which fish appears to have been so called from the Saxon word *codde*, "a case in which seeds are lodged," either from the form of the fish, or the quantity of spawn it contains; whence also, perhaps, *codling* ("pomum coctile"?) and coddle, -to cook green like peas.

COD

He may have landed somewhere in the cluster of eight offlying islands now known as the Isles of Shoals without making an entry in his log to that effect.²

2. Other Europeans were along the coast of the northern continent in this year as well. Sir Walter Raleigh had sent Samuel Mace of Weymouth on a voyage to the Virginia coast of the New World to gather plant materials and to search for survivors of the Lost Colony. Captain Bartholomew Gilbert, [Gabriel Archer](#), and others were along the New England coast. Nova Scotia was being visited regularly by English traders.

Although he noted [Nantucket Island](#) in his log, he did not land.

[Captain Gosnold](#) noted a number of native American names on his chart and dedicated it to Prince Charles, 16 years of age (later King Charles I), asking that "you would please to change their Barbarous names for such English, as Posterity may say Prince Charles was their God-father." Prince Charles substituted, for the placename Accomack on this map, the name Plymouth — which appears to be why, on some old maps, there would be a "New Plymouth" marking the location of the New Comers in the bay of Cape Cod and also an "Old Plymouth" marking no white settlement that we have ever known anything about. "Old Plymouth" would simply have referred to this native village Accomack which had been redesignated as Plymouth by the young Prince.

1611

Edward Harlow captured five natives in the Cape Cod region. Epenow, a sachem of *Capawak* ([Martha's Vineyard](#)), was among those [enslaved](#), and would later be donated to [Sir Ferdinando Gorges](#) of Plymouth, England — he would eventually through a ruse escape and be able to return home.

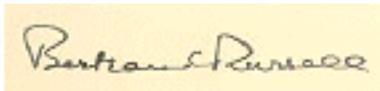
INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE



"...The conflicts of Europeans with American-Indians, Maoris and other aborigines in temperate regions ... if we judge by the results we cannot regret that such wars have taken place ... the process by which the American continent has been acquired for European civilization [was entirely justified because] there is a very great and undeniable difference between the civilization of the colonizers and that of the dispossessed natives...."



— [Bertrand Russell](#),
THE ETHICS OF WAR, January 1915



1614

June: Argall and Ralph Hamor departed from the Virginia coast for England.

The sachem Epenow of *Capawak* ([Martha's Vineyard](#)) who had been captured in 1611  by Edward Harlow, and donated to [Sir Ferdinando Gorges](#) of Plymouth, England, at this point escaped from the ship commanded by Nicholas Hobson. He had tricked them into bringing him back across the ocean by persuading them that he knew where gold ore was to be found. John Smith was exploring the coast from Monhegan Island (Maine) as far as the tip of Cape Cod. Thomas Hunt captured 20 men from *Patuxet* (including Tisquantum or Squanto) and 7 men from *Nauset* to sell as slaves in Spain. Tisquantum was taken to England "on a Bristol ship." [What is meant here is a ship out of the port of Bristol, England — not a ship pertaining to what would become the slave-trading port of [Bristol, Rhode Island](#).] The Wampanoag became hostile towards Europeans.



The Dutch mariner [Adriaen Block](#) mapped the southern New England coast, from the Hudson River to eastern Massachusetts.



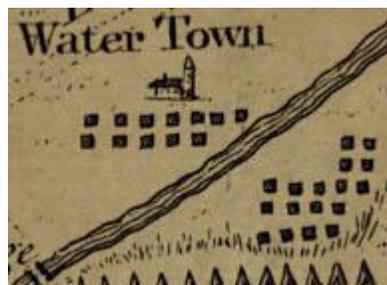
1631

Thomas Mayhew accepted an offer from a London merchant who was very active in the colonization of New England, Matthew Cradock, to become Cradock's agent in the colonies. This was only a decade after the Pilgrims had landed, first at Provincetown and then at Plymouth, Massachusetts. Mayhew was eventually to make his headquarters in Medford MA, where Cradock would have built for Mayhew a "greate stone house."



However, until about 1646, he would live in Watertown while working for Cradock.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD
NANTUCKET ISLAND



1634

Thomas Mayhew's first wife having died, he married again, with the widow of a Mr. Thomas Paine, Jane Gallion Paine. She moved to New England to join him with her children by Paine, Thomas Paine, Jr. and Jane Paine. Thomas Mayhew already had a son, Thomas Mayhew, Jr., who was then about 15. Later the step-brother and step-sister would marry, Jane Paine becoming the wife of Thomas Mayhew, Jr.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD NANTUCKET ISLAND

1641

Thomas Mayhew built the first bridge across the Charles River in Boston.

Lord Sterling, a representative of King Charles I, deeded Nantucket Island to Thomas Mayhew and his son Thomas Mayhew, Jr., whose family had first settled on Martha's Vineyard and grazed sheep out on Nantucket.





1646

Until about this point, [Thomas Mayhew](#) had been living in Watertown while working for Matthew Cradock. Unfortunately, some of the business affairs Mayhew had established for himself and for Cradock had not proven successful and his English boss had become displeased with him. Nonetheless, Mayhew had been elected Selectman for Watertown, Representative to the General Court, and Magistrate. He had become also a miller and a merchant and bridgebuilder, building in 1641 the first bridge across the Charles River in [Boston](#). Despite all of these activities, Mayhew suffered financial reverses and was looking for new opportunities. At this time [Martha's Vineyard](#) and [Nantucket Island](#) were part of the province of Maine, which belonged to [Sir Ferdinando Gorges](#) who had received it from the King, Charles I. But title was a little unclear because the King had also given to Lord Stirling the title to Long Island, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket Island. Neither Gorges nor Lord Stirling had much interest in Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard nor were they concerned about the conflict in their titles. And so Mayhew, eager to leave his troubles behind, set out to acquire the title. He sought title from both of these gentlemen, so that there could be no disputing his own control over the two islands.

These presents doth witness that I, James Forrett, Gentleman, who was sent over into these Parts of America By the honourable the Lord Sterling with a commission for the ordering and Disposing of all the Island that Lyeth Between Cape Cod hudsons river and hath better unto confirmed his agency without any consideration, Do hereby Grant unto Thomas Mayhew of Watertown, merchant, and to Thomas Mayhew his son, free Liberty and full power to them and their associates to Plant and inhabit upon Nantuckett and two other small Islands adjacent, and to enjoy the said Islands to them their heirs & assigns forever, provided that the said Thomas Mayhew and Thomas Mayhew his son or either of them or their associates Do Render and Pay yearly unto the honourable the Lord Sterling, his heirs or assigns such an acknowledgement as shall be thought tt [?] by John Winthrop, Esq, the elder or any two magistrates in Massachusetts Bay Being chosen for that end and purpose by the honourable the Lord Sterling or his Deputy and By the said Thomas Mayhew his son or associates: it is agreed that the government that the said Thomas Mayhew and Thomas Mayhew his son and their associates shall set up shall Be such as is now established in the Massachusetts aforesaid, and that the said Thomas Mayhew & Thomas Mayhew his son and their associates shall have as much privilege touching their planting Inhabiting and enjoying of all and evry part of the Premises as By the patent is granted to the Patent of the Massachusetts aforesaid and their associates. In witness hereof I the said James Forrett have hereunto sett my hand and seal this 13th Day of October, 1641.
 JAMES FORRETT.
 Signed Sealed and Delivered in the presence of
 Robert
 Nicholas Davison 2
 Richard Stileman 3

In a second instrument which he drew up, James Forrett added "Martin's" Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands, and authorized the grantees to plant upon and inhabit those parts, as follows:

Whereas By virtue of a commission from the Lord Sterling, James



Forrett, Gentleman, hath granted Liberty and full Power unto Thomas Mayhew of Watertown, merchant, and Thomas Mayhew his son, and their associates to Plant the Island of Nantucket according to the article In a deed to that purpose expressed: Now for as much as the said Island hath not Been yett whole surrendered whereby it may appear that Comfortable accomodations for themselves and their associates will be found there, this therefore shall serve to testifye that I, the said James Forrett, by virtue of my said commission, Do hereby grant unto the said Thomas Mayhew and Thomas Mayhew his son and their associates, as much. to plant upon Martins Vinyard and Elizabeth Isles as they have by virtue heretofore of the Deed granted unto them for Nantuckett as therein plainly In all considerations Both on the Right honourable the Lord Sterling's part and on the said Thomas Mayhew & Thomas Mayhew his son and their associates Doth appear In Witness whereof I, the said James Forrett have hereunto sett my hand the 3rd Day of October, Annoque Domini 1641.

JAMES FORRETT.

Signed and delivered

In Presence of us

John X Vahane.

Garret Church.

his

mark

However, even this was not entirely satisfactory, since still it ignored Sir Ferdinando Gorges's claim and so he concluded to "make assurance doubly sure" by securing the rights as well from the Gorges interests; and two days later the following instrument, executed by Richard Vines, authorized the elder Mayhew to "plant and inhabit upon the Island Capawok alias Martins Vineyard," as set forth in the following copy:

I, Richard Vines of Saco, Gentleman, Steward General for Sir Ferdinando Gorges, Knight and Lord Proprietor of the Province of Maine and the Islands of Cappawok and Nautican, Do by these presents give full power and authority unto Thomas Mayhew, Gentleman, his agents and associates to plant and Inhabit upon the Islands Capawok alias Martins Vinyard with all privileges and Rights thereunto belonging to enjoy the premises to himself heirs and associates forever, yielding and Paying unto the said Ferdinando Gorges, his heirs and assigns annually, or two Gentlemen Independently By each of them chosen Shall Judge to Be meet by way of acknowledgement.

Given under my hand this 25th Day of October, 1641.

RICHARD VI QES.

Witness: Thomas Payne

Robert Long."

This sewed up the deal. Being especially prudent, [Mayhew](#) also "endeavored to obtain the Indian right of them," going to the islands and negotiating for permission for he and his group to intrude. Mayhew interested some of his Watertown neighbors to join him and among them, you will recognize the names of Daggett and Pierce, which are big names in present-day Edgartown. They made their first settlement there in what they called the East End where the Chief Sachem was Towanquatack. Initially, apparently due to the more violent contacts of previous decades, there was little contact between the indigenous red islanders and the new white settlers. Thus the Vineyard was no longer solely the land of the original Alquonquin Wampanoags, but had become home to Thomas Mayhew of Watertown, Massachusetts and before that Tisbury, Wiltshire. And so Thomas had become "Governor" Mayhew, the master of [Martha's Vineyard](#) and [Nantucket Island](#), his very own tight little islands. He would appoint a group of assistants to help adjudicate disputes between islanders.



1649

[Thomas Mayhew, Jr.](#) converted *Hiacoomes* of *Capawak* ([Martha's Vineyard](#)) to Christianity.

1653

The group of assistants to Governor [Thomas Mayhew](#) in the governing of [Martha's Vineyard](#) and [Nantucket Island](#) included Peter Folger, who had moved from Watertown with Mayhew.

1658

[Sir Ferdinando Gorges](#)'s A BRIEF NARRATION OF THE ORIGINAL UNDERTAKINGS OF THE ADVANCEMENT OF PLANTATIONS INTO THE PARTS OF AMERICA, ESPECIALLY SHEWING THE BEGINNINGS, PROGRESS, AND CONTINUANCE OF THAT OF NEW ENGLAND. WRITTEN BY THE RIGHT WORSHIPFULL, SIR FERDINANDO GORGES, KNIGHT AND GOVERNOUR OF THE FORT AND ISLAND OF PLYMOUTH, IN DEVONSHIRE (London: Printed by E. Brudenell, for Nath. Brook, at the Angell in Corn-Hill)

THE PLANTATION OF MAINE

Also, his grandson's AMERICA PAINTED TO THE LIFE, THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE SPANIARDS PROCEEDINGS IN THE CONQUESTS OF THE INDIANS, AND OF THEIR CIVIL WARS AMONG THEMSELVES, FROM COLUMBUS HIS FIRST DISCOVERY, TO THESE LATER TIMES. AS ALSO, OF THE ORIGINAL UNDERTAKINGS OF THE ADVANCEMENT OF PLANTATIONS INTO THOSE PARTS; WITH A PERFECT RELATION OF OUR ENGLISH DISCOVERIES, SHOWING THEIR BEGINNING, PROGRESS AND CONTINUANCE, FROM THE YEAR 1628. TO 1658. DECLARING THE FORMS OF THEIR GOVERNMENT, POLICIES, RELIGIONS, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, MILITARY DISCIPLINE, WARS WITH THE INDIANS, THE COMMODITIES OF THEIR COUNTRIES, A DESCRIPTION OF THEIR TOWNS AND HAVENS, THE INCREASE OF THEIR TRADING, WITH THE NAMES OF THEIR GOVERNORS AND MAGISTRATES. MORE ESPECIALLY, AN ABSOLUTE NARRATIVE OF THE NORTH PARTS OF AMERICA, AND OF THE DISCOVERIES AND PLANTATIONS OF OUR ENGLISH IN VIRGINIA, NEW-ENGLAND, AND BERBADOES (LONDON, PRINTED FOR NATH. BROOK AT THE ANGEL IN CORNHILL), including his own "A Brief Description of Laconia, a Province in New England."

THE LACONIA PROVINCE

Governor [Thomas Mayhew](#) of [Martha's Vineyard](#) and [Nantucket Island](#), perhaps frustrated with the opinions

AMERICA

Painted to the Life.

THE TRUE
HISTORY
OF

The Spaniards Proceedings in the Conquests of the
INDIANS, and of their Civil Wars among them-
selves, from **COLUMBUS** his first Discovery,
to these later Times.

AS ALSO,

Of the Original Undertakings of the Advancement of
Plantations into those parts;

With a perfect Relation of our English Discoveries, shewing
their Beginning, Progress and Continuance, from the Year
1628. to 1658. Declaring the Forms of their Govern-
ment, Policies, Religions, Maners, Customs, Military Disci-
pline, Wars with the *Indians*, the Commodities of their
Countries, a Description of their Towns and Havens,
the Increase of their Trading, with the Names of
their Governors and Magistrates.

More especially, an absolute *Narrative* of the North
parts of *America*, and of the Discoveries and
Plantations of our English in

Virginia, New-England, and Berbadoes,

Publisht by **FERDINANDO GORGES**, Esq;

A Work now at last exposed for the publick good, to stir up the Heroick and
Active Spirits of these times, to benefit their Countrey, and Eternize
their Names by such Honorable Attempts.

For the Readers clearer understanding of the Countreys, they are lively
described in a compleat and exquisite Map.

Ovid. *Auri sacra fames quid non*—



of other islanders as to his governing of things, abolished his various assistant positions and declared himself Magistrate. This dismissal, along with his increasing rejection of Puritanism in favor of Baptism (or Anabaptism as it was then called) would lead his former assistant Peter Folger to leave the Vineyard in 1662 and settle in [Portsmouth, Rhode Island](#). From this point forward, Magistrate Mayhew's undiluted authority would be a source of island tension he would need to quell. The source for Mayhew's authority, which had originally been [Sir Ferdinando Gorges](#) but had then become Stirling, had by this point become the Duke of York, courtesy of Charles II. This royal authority which had heretofore been unasserted over Mayhew now became something of a thorn in Mayhew's side as the Duke, through his agent in New-York, Colonel Francis Lovelace, interceded in various island affairs. Mayhew would frequently ignore instructions received from the Colonel, or let them lay dormant on his desk before replying many months later.

1662

Peter Folger left [Martha's Vineyard](#) and settled in [Rhode Island](#). He would last only a short time in [Portsmouth](#), quickly accepting an offer from Tristram Coffin to come to [Nantucket Island](#) where, in exchange for land, he would teach and interpret the Wampanoag language for the new settlement there.

During this year or early the following year, Ann Starbuck, the 1st white child born on the island, was born to Mary Coffin Starbuck, who would become a convert to [Quakerism](#).

1671

July 6, Monday: Magistrate [Thomas Mayhew](#) had been summoned from [Martha's Vineyard](#) to New-York for a conference at Fort James. He had brought with him as an assistant his 23 year-old grandson, Matthew Mayhew. Mayhew apparently handled the Duke to his advantage, for when he would leave New-York, he would carry with him the extraordinary title of Governor for Life. Despite the new grandeur of his title, the residents of the Martha's Vineyard and [Nantucket Island](#) still would resist Mayhew's assertion of unconditional authority.

1673

The Dutch re-took control of New-York, and attempted to force Governor for Life [Thomas Mayhew](#) to abdicate his control over [Martha's Vineyard](#) and [Nantucket Island](#) on the theory that the "source" for his authority no longer existed (the area would revert again to English rule in 1674).

1674

➡ As part of the Treaty of Westminster, the Dutch returned Nieuw-Amsterdam to the English. Edmund Andros, the new English governor over the colonies of New-York and New Jersey, restored Governor for Life [Thomas](#)

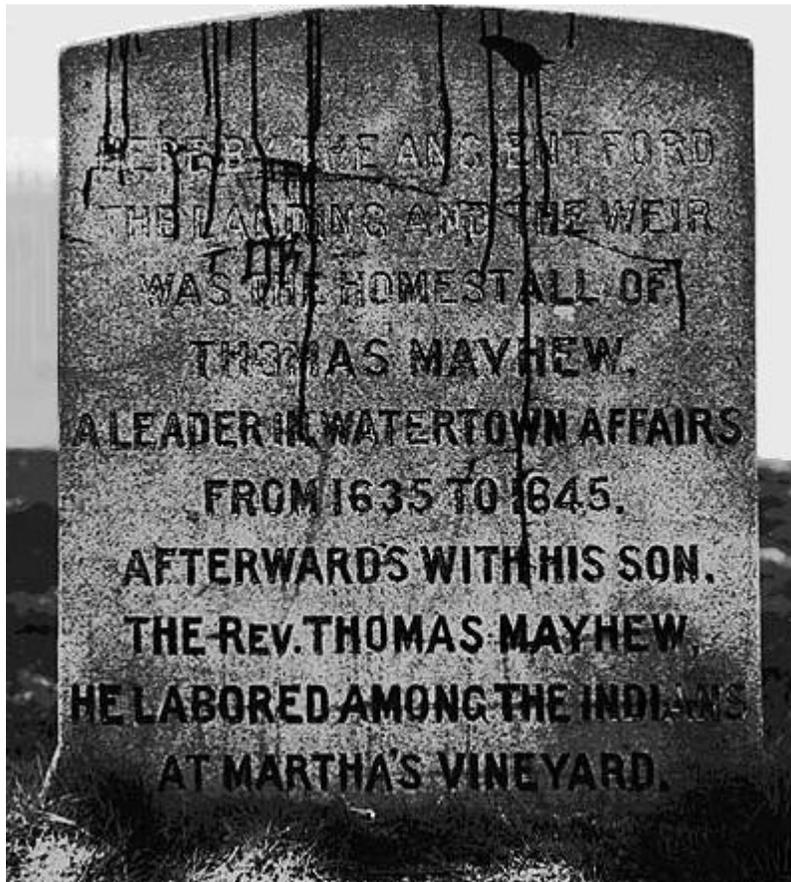


[Mayhew](#)'s unconditional authority over [Martha's Vineyard](#) and [Nantucket Island](#). The Governor for Life promptly fined or punished many of his more prominent critics, and many left the islands. Governor Mayhew's "reign" was not to end until he died on March 25th, 1682. His grandson, Matthew, would have learned the lesson well, and would get himself appointed "Chief Magistrate" — a position in which he would be able to exercise nearly as total an authority as had his grandfather, but without nearly so great a hassle.

Edmund Andros

1682

March 25, Wednesday: Governor for Life [Thomas Mayhew](#) died, and his position of control over [Martha's Vineyard](#) and [Nantucket Island](#) passed to his grandson Matthew Mayhew. The grandson, an astute observer, would forsake titles such as "Governor for Life" and get himself appointed "Chief Magistrate" — a position in which he would be able to exercise nearly as total an authority as had his grandfather, but without nearly so great a hassle.



1692

[Nantucket Island](#) and [Martha's Vineyard](#), purchased from the Earl of Sterling by the Earl of York, and up to this point under New York's jurisdiction as Dukes County, were granted to Massachusetts.



1708

September: French [privateers](#) captured two vessels off [Martha's Vineyard](#). Major William Wanton and Captain John Cranston sailed in pursuit, and in a 24-hour chase the privateers escaped without their prizes, which they scuttled.

RHODE ISLAND

1713

The Colony of [Rhode Island](#) passed an act forbidding [Narragansett](#) tribal leaders to sell reservation land. This is the act which became of concern in 1993 in Rhode Island, that in fact made the national news — because in spite of its express language some reservation land had been subsequently appropriated by whites. A contemporary Native American, learning that the original land sales had been perfectly unlawful, obtained a court order making it difficult for these white homeowners to sell their homes for full value until the issue of original title had been adjudicated, and then the existence of this court order for a time had the chilling effect that it was suddenly impossible for the white people of Rhode Island to go on ignoring the red people of Rhode Island.³

A white missionary, the Reverend Experience Mayhew of [Martha's Vineyard](#), visiting the reservation of the [Narragansett](#), recorded in his journal this exchange with the ruling *sachem*:

On November the 3d ... I returned to the Narragansett Country; and on the next day having obtained two Interpreters, one English man, the other an Indian that had lived with an English master, I treated with Ninnicraft the Sachim there, about the affairs I went upon... He demanded of me why I did not make the English good in the first place: for he said many of them were still bad: He also told me that he had seen [Martha's Vineyard](#) Indians at [Rhode Island](#), that would steal, and these he said I should first reform before I came to them. He further objected that the English there at Narragansett were divided, some keeping Saturday, others Sunday, and others not keeping any day; so that ye Indians could not tell what religion to be of, if they had a mind to be Christians.

1741

April 9, Thursday: [Henry Marchant](#) was born on [Martha's Vineyard](#).

3. I understand that this difficulty is now all cleared away, and it is again safe for the white people of [Rhode Island](#) to refuse to respond in any manner to, and overlook to acknowledge the existence of, the red people of Rhode Island.



1746

July 7: The manumitted Quaker slave Kofi Slocum married Ruth Moses, a *Pequot* from a [Wampanoag](#) settlement on [Martha's Vineyard](#). They would reside on [Cuttyhunk Island](#) as caretakers of the Slocum family's farms there, while raising four sons and six daughters.

PAUL CUFFE

1748

In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), the printer Widow Franklin (Ann Smith Franklin) took as her partner her son [James Franklin](#), who had served a printing apprenticeship with his uncle Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia.

James Franklin's Indenture

Witnessth, That James Franklin late of Newport in Rhode island, And now of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania Hath put himself, and by these Presents, doth voluntarily, and of his own Will and Accord, put himself Apprentice to Benjamin Franklin of the City of Philadelphia, Printer —to learn his Art, Trade, and Mystery, and after the Manner of an Apprentice to serve the said Benjamin Franklin from the Day of the Date herof, for, and during, and unto the full End and Term of Seven Years —next ensuing. During all which Term, the said Apprentice his said Master faithfully shall serve, his Secrets keep, his lawfull Commands everywhere readily obey. He shall do no Damage to his said Master, nor see it to be done by others without letting or giving Notice thereof to his said Master. He shall not waste his said Master's Goods, nor lend them unlawfully to any. He shall not commit Fornication, nor contract Matrimony within the said Term. At Cards, Dice, or any other unlawful Game, he shall not play, whereby his said Master may have Damage. With his own Goods, nor the Goods of others, without Licence from his said Master, he shall neither buy nor sell. He shall not absent himself Day nor Night from his said Master's Service, without his Leave: Nor haunt Ale-houses, Taverns, or Play-houses; but in all Things behave himself as a faithful Apprentice ought to do, during the said Term. And the said Master shall use the utmost of his Endeavour to teach or cause to be taught or instructed the said Apprentice in the Trade or Mystery of Printing and procure and provide for him sufficient Meat, Drink, Cloaths— Lodging and Washing fitting to an Apprentice, during the said Term of Seven Years and at the Expiration thereof shall give him one good new Suit of Cloaths, besides his common Apparel.

AND for the true Performance of all and singular the Covenants and Agreements aforesaid, the said Parties bind themselves each unto the other firmly by these Pretents. IN WITNESS whereof, the



said Parties have interchangeably set their Hands and Seals hereunto. Dated the Fifth Day of November in the Fourteenth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the second King o Great-Britain, &c. Annoque Domini One Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty.
Sealed and delivered in
the presence of us
[Signatures of Christopher Thompson, James Franklin, and Richard Ferguson]

Beginning at about this point, [Henry Marchant](#) of [Martha's Vineyard](#) would have been attending school in [Newport, Rhode Island](#).

1775

May 5, Friday: People were trying to kill each other on the island of [Martha's Vineyard](#).

The Reverend [Asa Dunbar](#) recorded in his journal that his relative Jonas Jones had been taken under arrest by the local revolutionary Committee of Correspondence as a loyalist to the crown: "*Company at my house after Jonas Jones — went to headquarters with him.*"

1798

In Edgartown, on [Martha's Vineyard](#), an elaborate residence was created for the wealthy Thomas Worth. Thomas had been born on December 10, 1742, and on April 19, 1764 had gotten married with Catherine Farmer, daughter of William and Catherine Farmer. The couple had children named Catherine, Eleanor, William, Mary, and Thomas. The older son, William Jenkins Worth, christened in this home during 1804, would take part in the War on Mexico, and it would be in his honor that a town in Texas would be named Fort Worth. The younger son, Thomas, would get chopped in the head with an ax while he lay in his cot asleep, in a mutiny, on his very 1st trip as Captain, on a whaling voyage aboard the *Globe* in 1824. The widowed mother, Catherine Farmer Worth, would die on November 16, 1835.

[RHODE ISLAND](#)

I have not yet discovered at this writing whether this Worth family was still Quaker in these generations, but it had been a Quaker family for a number of previous generations. It was descended from Friend Thomas Worth, who had brought over with him from Oxtou, Nottingham, England to Penn's Pennsylvania colony his Bible, printed in 1636, a BIBLE which was still preserved by descendants even to the 7th generation. From the record inscribed in that volume it would appear that this founding father had been born in 1649, had left England the 21st of 2d month (which is to say April, Old Style), 1682, and had arrived at the Quaker settlement of Darby, Pennsylvania about the beginning of the 6th month following — which was even before Friend William Penn himself had set sail. Per Quaker records:

to ye monthly or Quarterly meetinges In pensivania or new Jersey
or to Any of our friends In ye Service of Truth where our friends
Thomas Worth and Samuell Bradshaw many Come.



Deare Friends these few lines may Signfie unto you somethinge of our sence and Judgment Conservinge ye aforesaid Thomas Worth & Samuell Bradshaw whose outward beeing was att Oxton In ye County of Nottingham Amongst us theire Conversation & Manner of Life: ye walked Soberly Hamlesly And uprightly as becomes ye truth: Wee had untiy with them And ye weare Concerned with us In Truth's Service And we know nothinge but yt ye are free & Cleare from any Ingagmen both Concerninge ye woman or Any other outward thinges: Soe In ye felling of ye pure and pretious truth & pure Life which floweth And stremeth from one Nation to Another; In the feelinge of which our hearts are Greatly refreshed & our Souls Mutually Compforted though wee bee outwardly farr Seperated one from an other: In Fresh Inoyment of this pure Love of our God his mercys & his Goodness which hee from one day to Another makees us pertakers of; And In ye psent feelings of his Continued presence which at this time is reveled And made known In this our Assembly we remaine your deare friends In ye service of truth.

From our Monthly meeting att ffarusfeild this 20th of ye first month 1682 In ye County of Nottingham

Will Malson, Georg Cockrom, Will Watson, Robert Grace, Nathaniel Clay, John Lankford, Richard Bateman, Edward Asling, Mathias Brackney, George Hopkinson, John Oldham. Will Blane-

This is to Certife to them whom it may Concerne that Isabell Davison of Annenlayes Mill; hath it In hir ming to Transport hir selfe Into Pensilvania in America: that ye said Isabell Dauinson hath walked orderly & soe far forth as wee know is Cleare from all men: Subscribed Att our monthly meetings att Branch House ye 13th day of ye 5th mon: 1682, by us whose names are heare under written.

Edmund Cartlidge; Michall Blunston; John Roades; Thomas Whittbe; John Blunston; Joseph Potter; Joshua Feare; William Day; Richard Sarson; Adam Roades; Samuell ffox; Richard Lees; Elizabeth Roades; Mary Whittbe; Mary Holland; Sarah Day.

On October 8, 1685, Friend Thomas Worth and Friend Isabella Davidson were wedded to one another in a Quaker manner:

Att a monthly meetings at Darby ye 7th day of ye 8th mo;1685, Thomas Worth & Isabel Dauinson declared theire Intentions of Marriage

George Wood, John Smith, Elizabeth Bartrum & Ann Wood to make enqurie Concerniage ye Clearnes of Tho: Worth & Isabel Dauinson

Att A monthly meetings Arr darby ye 4th day of ye 9th mo; 1685, Thomas Worth and Isabel Dauinson declared theire Intentions of Marriage ye second time; thins beinge found Cleare.

This is to Certife all whom it may Concerne that Thomas Worth of ye towne of Darby in ye County of Chester, And Isable Dauinson of ye same Towne having Laid there Intentions of marriage before two monthly meetings According to ye order of truth; And things being found Cleare on both ptys; now for ye full determination of ye Marriage Above said, ye s'd Tho: Worth and Isabel Davinson upon ye 18th day of ye 9th mon;1685 In a Publique meetings of ye people of God declared as followeth: Thomas Worth standing up & takeinge Isabel Dauinson by ye hand said as followed: I doe



in ye presence of The Lord & before you his people heare take Isabel Dauinson to be my wife, promising unto hir to be A loveinge husband soe Long as it shall please ye Lord to Lengthen out our dayes to gather, And the said Isabel Daunison standing up & Takeinge Thomas Worth by ye hand said as followed: I doe in ye Presence of ye Lord & before you his people take Thomas Worth to be my husband promising unto him to be a Loveinge and diligent wife. Wee whose names are under written beinge then & there present are witnesses to this marriage above written.

Thomas Worth
Isabel Worth

Edmund Cartlidge; Michall Blunston; Georg Maries; John Smith; Georg Wood; John Blunston; John Bartram; Sam. Levis; John Wood; Tho: Hood; John Marshall; Sam: Sellers; John Roads; Ellin Garratt; Anna Sellers; Sarah Blunston; Ann Wood; Hannah Wood; Eliner Smith; Elin Gibins; Eliz. Ffearen; Sarah Sharp; John Wood

This couple had three children:

- First, John Worth, who was born on 6/9/1686, and died on 9/23/1716, predeceasing his father but leaving surviving daughters.
- Second, Thomas Worth, who was born on 1/4/1688, got married with Mary Fawertt and had seven children Samuel, Susanna, Lydia, Rebecca, Hannah, Ebenezer, and Mary, and died on 12/19/1778.
- Third, Sarah Worth, who was born on 7/28/1691, and died on 10/8/1696 at the age of 6.

Friend Thomas Worth had been an assemblyman in 1697. Friend Isabelle Davidson Worth, wife of Friend Thomas Worth, died on 3/3/1709 at an age of about 54 years. Friend Thomas Worth died on 10th, 2d mo (April 10), 1731. He bequeathed 222 acres of land in Darby to his surviving son, Friend Thomas Worth, and 500 acres in East Bradford to the daughters of his deceased son, Friend John Worth. They sold 150 acres of the south end thereof to James Jefferis, and in 1738 they conveyed the remainder to their uncle, Friend Thomas Worth.

Per Smith's HISTORY OF DELAWARE COUNTY:

Thomas Worth was from Oxton, in county of Nottingham, England. He settled in Darby town immediately upon arrival in 1682, and subsequently higher up in the township. He was a consistent and exemplary member of the Society of Friends; and having acquired a better education than was usual in that day, his services were constantly in demand in the performance of such duties as required an expert and ready penman. He was married in 1685 to Isabell Daunison (Davison), who emigrated from the county of Darby, and probably came in the same ship with her husband, bringing with her a certificate of good Character, which she fully sustained in after-life. She died in 1709, at the age of fifty-four years. Thomas lived till 1731. In 1697 he represented Chester County in the Provincial Assemble. The descendants of this couple are numerous and respectable; those bearing the name being mostly settled in Chester County, where he had purchased a large Tract of land. He was one of the original purchasers of land in England (from William Penn). His son Thomas removed to Bradford, 1739.



1814



July 6, Wednesday: The Quadriga was restored to its place on the Brandenburg Gate (this symbol of the Prussian state had been removed by the Emperor [Napoléon I](#) in 1806 and was brought back to Berlin by Marshal Blücher).

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

4th day 6th of 7th M 1814 / Uncle David Lawton & his daughters Ann & Hannah Dined and spent the day with us also Sister Ruth - In the Afternoon I went with uncle David to Thos Robinsons where we set an hour in agreeable conversation. The old man & his wife relating several old but interesting Anecdotes, some of them particularly of the Wanton family. - We had in addition to the foregoing at tea the company of Hannah Dennis & daughter Anne. Margaret Buffum & Sister Eliza & Mary In the eveng Edw & Mary Lawton & J Sherman came in, making a very pleasant & agreeable circle. -

While I was at Thos Robinsons with Uncle David the old man related the following. He said the way the Wanton family came to settle on R I was - In Scituate Massachusetts where Edw Wanton first settled there was great persecution of Friends of which society he was convinced under the Gallows when Mary Dyre & her friends were hanged The Priest of the town of Scituate took great pains to do many things to try the feelings of Edw & his family & among which he named his dog Wanton. Edw two sons Wm & John not being in the same spirit of non resistance as their father, was determined on giving the Priest a severe whipping & knowing at the same time it would be unsafe to reside afterwards in Scituate provided themselves with Horses to come off full speed for R I They accordingly put their plan into execution whiped the priest unmercifully, mounted their horses & came away, but before they got far, at a Tavern they were overtaken by a concourse of Presbyterians who surrounded the house. Wm & John looked out of the Windows & determined on an adventure, they accordingly rushed out of the house with sticks in their hands beet their way through the crowd, & seeing the Presbyterians horses were better than their own siezed them & galloped off, these two men were no small adventurers thro' life. Tho John became afterward a very religious Man & Public friend - after they were settled on R I & While they were young in years Pirates infested the Coast the two Wantons volunteered their service to go out after them which they did & finally succeeded in bringing them in - In one of their cruises after these pirates they put into [Martha's Vineyard](#) & Richd Ward was on board, who determined to furnish himself [a number of pages missing]

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



1822



December 15, Sunday: The 20-year-old [Nantucket Island](#) boatsteerer [Samuel B. Comstock](#) and his 18-year-old brother William and his 14-year-old brother George sailed under Captain Thomas Worth aboard the *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#), on its 4th whaling expedition. (On a previous voyage this whaler had been the 1st to take 2,000 barrels of oil.)

This voyage would evidently become very frustrating, for although the vessel initially proceeded east toward the Azore Islands and the Cape Verde Islands, in order to pick up the northeast trade winds and proceed toward Cape Horn and the Pacific Ocean and the whaling grounds there, Captain Worth would turn the ship south without stopping at any of these Atlantic islands for the refreshment and recreation of the crew. Ouch! –Then, after the vessel had rounded the Horn, Captain Worth would pass up another refreshment and recreation spot, Valparaiso on the coast of Chile. Ouch! –Then, when the vessel reached Hawaiian waters, Captain Worth would refuse to allow any of his crewmen to go ashore for their usual refreshment and recreation, but instead would have fresh supplies brought out to the ship at anchor. It was almost as if this young Captain Worth, on his first command, had other things to think about than the usual fun and games with eager little brown people!

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

1st day 15th of 12 M / Our Morning meeting to me was a season of [obscured]ing to me, but I have no doubt it was to many a time [obscured] savour, & appeared like it as much solemnity seemd spread in the gathering – J Dennis had a short testimony [-]er which was acceptable & D Buffum was largely [-]erned to speak of the State of Christendom as portray[ing] a corrupt state of things, when professing Christians [-] different nations engaged in War, are praying to the same God for success on their Arms. Christian pro[-]ing Ministers thus at the same time engaged –how [incon]sistent with the Doctrines & precepts of Jesus Christ [whos]e injunction was to love one another – In the Afternoon it was still to me a season of little proffit but was enabled to feel that Truth [was] prevalent amongst us – Father Rodman bore a short but acceptable testimony - & J Dennis was [eng]aged to recount the present favours of society & [con]trast it with the times of sufferings in the days [-] our valient Predicessors & endeavoured to excite the youth & others present to live near the Truth, the light [-] have, & be obedient to Known Duty –

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1823

➡ March: The whaler *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) was at this point rounding Cape Horn, proceeding from the Atlantic into the Pacific. Frustratingly, the vessel had proceeded past the Azore Islands and the Cape Verde Islands without stopping for rest and recreation. The next R&R spot ought to be Valparaiso on the coast of Chile — but Captain Thomas Worth would refuse to stop off there also. Double ouch! —Then, when the vessel would reach Hawaiian waters, the Captain would refuse to allow any of his crewmen to go ashore for their usual fun and games with these very large and very eager brown people, but instead would have fresh supplies brought out to the ship at anchor. It was almost as if this young Captain Worth, on his first voyage, had other things on his mind than the usual gameplaying with native populations. —Our birthright [Quaker](#) ne'er-do-well, boatsteerer [Samuel B. Comstock](#), must have been getting so frustrated!

➡ May: The whaler *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) was at this point entering Hawaiian waters. Frustratingly, the vessel had proceeded past the Azore Islands and the Cape Verde Islands and Valparaiso on the coast of Chile without stopping. After all this denial of the flesh Hawaii would be an ideal R&R venue — but Captain Thomas Worth was simply refusing to allow any of his crewmen to go ashore for fun and games with these very large and very eager brown people. Instead, inexplicably, he was having the natives bring the needed fresh supplies out to the ship at anchor in their canoes. Our birthright [Quaker](#) ne'er-do-well, [Samuel B. Comstock](#), figured out a way to beat the system. He stowed a likely Hawaiian woman away overnight in steerage, presenting her with a Scotch bonnet in appreciation of nighttime favors. Inexplicably, when he learned of this disobedience, the Captain did not order that his boatsteerer be tied to the mast and lashed to within an inch of his life. He forgave, and this forgiveness would not be forgiven — it was soon going to cost him his life.

➡ Summer: The *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) had voyaged halfway around the planet Earth —deep into the Southern Hemisphere and then all the way back north— and had finally reached the productive whaling grounds off Japan. Here they would spend the next almost five months chasing whales — but this time, despite their best efforts, not entirely successfully. Acting up as was his wont, [Samuel B. Comstock](#) got into a wrestling match with the whaler's 3d Mate, Nathaniel Fisher, and found himself pinned. Other ruckuses that he initiated caused one member of the crew to be clapped into irons, and caused the Captain to strike the cook. Under these circumstances, with everyone frustrated, in November the vessel would return to Hawaii.

➡ November: The canalboat *Mary and Hannah* arrived in New-York with a cargo of wheat, the first to arrive from Seneca Lake via the [Erie Canal](#). The owners were presented with an engraved urn.

When the whaler *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) reached Hawaii six of its frustrated and disappointed crewmembers deserted. Captain Thomas Worth was able to recruit seven local replacements, but of course these were not sailors of the highest quality — of these seven new crewmembers, five would be involving themselves, with [Samuel B. Comstock](#), in a mutiny.

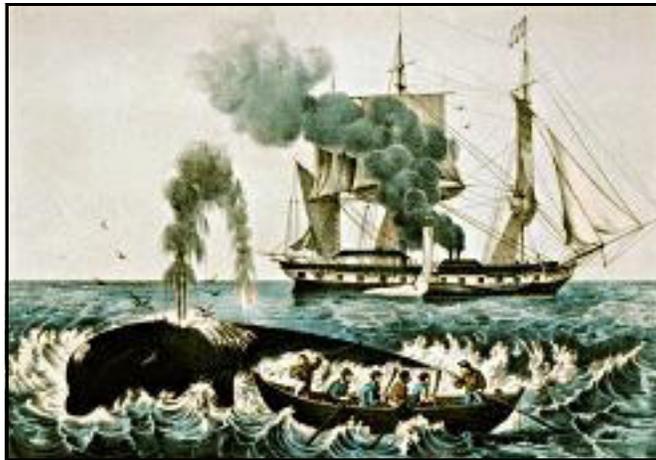
➡ December 9, Tuesday: The *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) left Hawaiian waters to hunt whales along the Equator. When one of the new crewmembers recruited in Hawaii, Joseph Thomas, turned out to need a flogging, the troubleseeking [Samuel B. Comstock](#), it goes without saying, sided against Captain Thomas Worth and sprang to the defense of this sailor.

1824

➡ January 25, Sunday: In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

1st day 25th of 1st M 1824 / Silent Meeting, none of the Most lively to my feelings, tho' there was a good degree of Solemnity -Took tea & spent part of the evening at D Buffums. -

En route between Hawaii and Tahiti, a year into the Pacific voyage of the [Martha's Vineyard](#) whaler *Globe* (renown for having been the 1st ship to take 2,000 barrels of oil), late at night there was a mutiny.



One of the ship's boatsteerers, [Samuel B. Comstock](#), was the birthright [Quaker](#) first child of a birthright Quaker father from Burrillville, [Rhode Island](#), Friend Nathan Comstock, and a Quaker mother, Friend Elizabeth Emmet Comstock, living on [Nantucket Island](#) and then in New-York. This young scion of a privileged and responsible and religious family, having been given the benefit of a guarded Quaker education at Nine Partners, having the world at his feet, had determined that none of this was enough to satisfy himself with his life. He wanted all this plus adequate carousing and swiving. He had therefore equipped himself with the sorts of things he supposed he would need in order to recreate himself as a libertine chieftain on a South Seas atoll — things such as garden seeds.

He persuaded four companions and on this night, with a hatchet, Friend Samuel laid open the head of the sleeping captain, Thomas Worth, with an ax. Silas Payne, one of the new men who had signed aboard in Hawaii, was attempting to use a knife on the ship's 1st Mate, William Beetle, and was doing such an inadequate job of it that Friend Samuel needed to join in with his ax. The other two Comstock brothers took no part in the mutiny. (This would be written up by William Lay in conjunction with Friend Cyrus Hussey, Jr., a Nantucket [Quaker](#) who survived the mutiny, but in general the incident would become another forbidden topic in the community.)



CAPAWAK

MARTHA'S VINEYARD

DEMON OF THE WATERS.

THE TRUE STORY OF THE MUTINY ON THE WHALESHIP *GLOBE*.

BY GREGORY GIBSON.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIK RONNBERG AND GARY TONKIN.

BOSTON: LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY, 2002

Reviewed by Rob Rulon-Miller

In a world where death is as certain as the setting sun, and is as perniciously random as the scattering of galaxies, it's no wonder that death -tragic and unexpected death- is the lifeblood of so much literature and history. I note in passing today's Sunday New York Times cover story on the horrific final minutes of those top-floor employees in the World Trade Towers as recorded in their desperate calls from cell phones or email messages - calls not so much for help as calls already from the afterlife. I also note but will not elaborate on Mr. Gibson's own life-altering foray into the nether world and back: his struggle to cope with the tragic death of his son Galen, who was murdered by a fellow student in a random act of violence at Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, in 1992, a journey Mr. Gibson brilliantly recounted in his critically acclaimed *GONE BOY: A WALKABOUT* (Kondansha International, 1999).

In *DEMON OF THE WATERS*, Gibson revisits death, examining the murderous and most bloody mutiny that occurred 175 years ago on board the whaleship *Globe*, where the loved sons of mothers and fathers were savagely mauled and killed. Successive generations have been captivated by the gruesome event, and it remains, arguably, the most disturbing case in the annals of American maritime history. The *Globe* mutiny has been well-documented and often recounted in maritime anthologies as well as in contemporaneous accounts, including two by the brother of the perpetrator, William Comstock (one in manuscript, one published), and another by two of the survivors, William Lay and Cyrus Hussey. The story falls into Mr. Gibson's lap with the discovery, in Indiana of all places, of a previously unlocated journal recounting the subsequent rescue of the stranded crew on the Marshall Islands in the western Pacific.

The antagonist of the story, Samuel Comstock, is a young man - a mere teenager when we first meet him- at sixes and sevens with



his Quaker upbringing on Nantucket, nothing but a burden for his family and an annoyance to any friends he might have had. When his family moved to Manhattan from Nantucket, Samuel fell in with a street gang named the Downtowners, "who passed their time battling the rival Corlears Hookers. In the manner of many troubled youths, Samuel kept his own hours and often came home late at night, bloody and bruised." To keep Samuel from straying further, his father found him a berth on a merchant ship bound for Liverpool. Four months later Samuel was home again, and to his repertoire of extracurricular activities he now added the chasing of women. The strict Quaker school he was sent to in Poughkeepsie did little more than harden him against authority. Whoring and street fighting were in his blood, and it seems there was little to do with him. Before finally shipping on the *Globe*, Comstock filled out his teenage years by sailing on the *Beaver* with a shipment of arms for rebels in Chile and then on the Nantucket whaler *George* after having spent "some months ... languishing in a Chilean jail" for gunrunning.

The captain of the *Globe* was Thomas Worth, and at age 29, it was his first command. The ship was manned by a crew of twenty, not one of them older than 26 and half of them teenagers. Samuel Comstock at the time was a mere twenty years old, although already well beyond his years. Departing Martha's Vineyard in December 1822, the *Globe* followed a usual course to the Pacific, which meant sailing east towards the Azores and the Cape Verdes, where ships would pick up the northeast trade winds that would blow them south and west towards Cape Horn. Ordinarily ships would stop in the Azores or the Cape Verdes for supplies, but because Captain Worth was delayed in leaving and anxious to get to the Pacific whaling grounds in season, he chose not to put in at either group and continued sailing towards the Horn.

In the south Atlantic the *Globe* captured its first whale, and it is here we learn from Samuel's younger brother, William, who was also on board, that "contact with the whale oil caused Samuel great distress, 'filling him with biles and inflaming his flesh.'" By March of 1823, the *Globe* rounded the Horn and headed up the South American coast towards Valparaiso, a usual stopping point for provisioning and relaxation after the arduous passage. But again, Captain Worth chose not to stop, and instead continued to head towards the rich whaling fields off the coast of Japan. By May, after five continuous months at sea, the *Globe* arrived at Hawaii; nor did she stop here. Nonetheless, provisions -including women- were brought from shore. Captain Worth forbade the women to spend the night, but Samuel Comstock disobeyed the order, and the next morning, according to William, "Lady Comstock made her appearance, emerging from steerage, with an air of great dignity, dressed in a new Scotch bonnet...." Captain Worth made no remark, and it was apparent to the rest of the crew that Samuel was becoming a favorite of the captain. "However," writes Gibson, "by allowing Samuel to openly flout his authority, Worth weakened his credibility and risked disrupting his relations" with the rest of the crew, and "alienated Samuel, a recipient of special privileges, from the mates."

By summer the *Globe* had reached the hallowed cruising grounds off Japan. Here, they spent nearly five months chasing whales,



but it was not a very successful hunt. "During these months of hard work and unspectacular results, the situation on board the *Globe* began to deteriorate. Samuel Comstock did his best to rock the boat." A wrestling match ensued between Comstock and the third mate, Nathaniel Fisher, which Comstock lost, a humiliating defeat he did not readily forget. On another occasion, one of the crew was put in irons, and on another, the cook was struck by the captain, both incidences on account of Comstock. There were complaints all around by the crew about the meager rations; even so, the crew complained that they didn't have enough time in which to eat them. So, after not having set foot on land for nearly a year, after being confined for that long to ninety feet of boat with twenty other men, the crew of the *Globe* returned from the Japan grounds and put in at last at Hawaii. Gibson writes, "All the ingredients for insurrection were there ... indifferent success, bad food, capricious exercise of authority by an inexperienced captain, bullying and physical beatings from the officers, long confinement aboard the ship with no liberty, and the concerted, pernicious influence of a malcontent." On Hawaii six of the crew -it's amazing the number was as small as it was- deserted, and the replacements Captain Worth found ashore -"a rough set of cruel beings" in the words of George Comstock- "seemed so spectacularly ill chosen that one has to wonder about Thomas Worth's grasp of human nature." Of the seven replacements, five were eventually involved in the mutiny. On December 9, 1823, the *Globe* departed Hawaii to hunt whales along the Equator. The captain was edgy and the crew tense. There was a flogging by Captain Worth of Joseph Thomas, who had signed on in Hawaii. Comstock took the side of Thomas, and -this being the last straw- with four other conspirators, in the very early morning hours of January 26, 1824, went down into Captain Worth's cabin and, in the sentence we've been waiting for, brought down an axe, "with such force that it nearly severed the top of the captain's head from his body." Silas Payne, who had also shipped in Hawaii, went after the first mate, William Beetle, with a knife, but he botched the job. Comstock was left to finish it by placing the axe in the mate's skull. Beetle was left "gurgling in his own blood and brains." Nor was this all. Samuel Comstock, the putative captain now, in the next twelve hours managed to shoot, bayonet, stab, disembowel, and throw overboard a total of five men, including the three mates and a black man, William Humphries, who for good measure was hanged from the foreyard for attempting to aid those who has been brutalized.

The mutineers and the rest of the stunned and stupefied crew then sailed west to what is now Mili Atoll at the southern end of the Marshall Islands. Comstock, in what at this point in the story seems like a workaday chore, was murdered by his co-conspirator, Silas Payne, for bribing the natives with precious provisions from the ship. Less than a week later, six of the innocent crew serendipitously escaped in the *Globe* and managed to sail some 7000 miles across the Pacific to Valparaiso and safety.

Fast forward to Vevay, Indiana, where in 1978 a local book scout, Jay Small, and his younger partner, John Mullins, unearthed a handwritten account dated 1825 by a sailor on board the *Dolphin*,



a United States naval vessel. The *Dolphin* had been ordered to sail to the Marshall Islands, at the insistence of no less than Presidents James Monroe and John Quincy Adams, to capture the mutineers and learn of their fate. This journal found its way into the hands of ABAA dealer Owen Kubik, who in turn sold it to Gibson. (It is now at the Kendall Whaling Museum.) It contains an eyewitness account by one Augustus Strong, midshipman, of the rescue of the only two survivors on Mili Atoll, Cyrus Hussey and William Lay, and recounts the story they told on their voyage back to civilization. Gibson's book brings the Augustus Strong account to the public for the first time, and for this reason alone the book will stand as one of the most important scholarly works on the terrible event. But, in fact, this journal occupies a minor part of the story as published, much of the recounting of its surfacing having ended up on the editor's floor. As these two expunged chapters may be of interest to our readers, they will run in concurrent issues of this Newsletter.

Gibson is becoming a seasoned, if not a flashy writer. His sentences move at an even pace, and his style is more that of a four-wheel drive Land Rover than a turbo-charged Ferrari. On the surface the facts of this story are practically unbelievable, but Gibson is very adept at making all the bizarreness and surreality of this debacle of a voyage seem possible – even plausible. He teaches us the ways of the sea and the sailor. The passion and intensity that suffuses *GONE BOY* is not so apparent here, but death on the *Globe* could never be so close and personal. Nonetheless, the recounting of the mutiny itself is gripping, and Gibson fixes it firmly in the historical context of American interests in the Pacific in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The thirty-odd pages of Notes at the back are helpful and informative, and the extensive bibliography attests to Gibson's penchant for meticulous research. If there is a flaw in the book, it may be that it was over-researched. Some of the early chapters, especially those on Quaker mores and the building of the *Globe*, seem a little ponderous, as does the chapter on the management of whaleships and the business of whaling. But my tastes notwithstanding, these arcanae must be addressed for the mutiny to be understood in full, and Gibson is successful in getting all the essential information on the page with only minor irritation. The illustrations by Erik Ronnberg and Gary Tonkin are appealing, if not striking, and I would have liked to have seen more illustrations from contemporary sources.



January 26, Monday: The southernmost of two routes was chosen for the Chesapeake and Delaware [Canal](#).

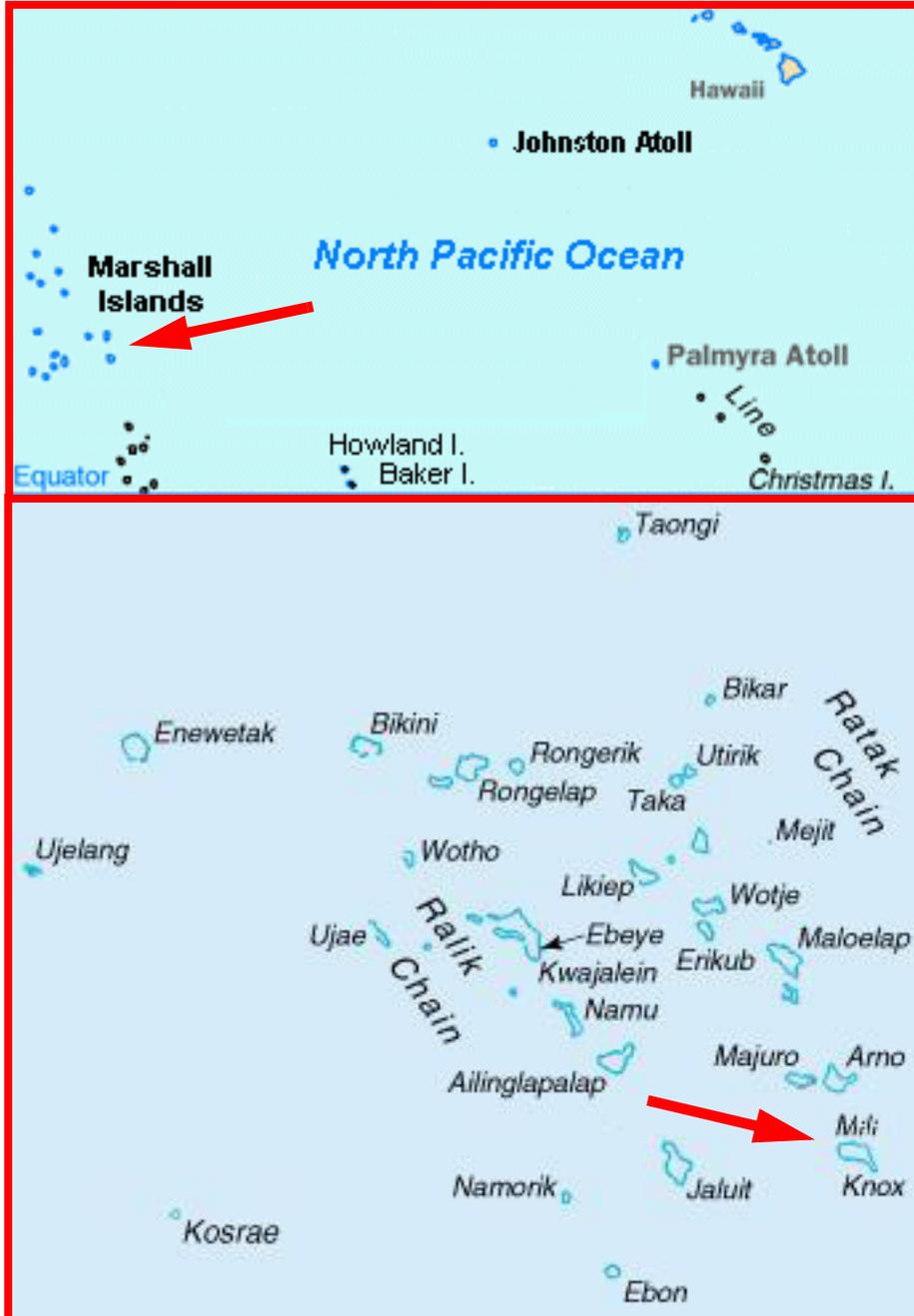
Aboard the *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#), after the previous night's slaughter of officers in their cots by the fun-loving [Samuel B. Comstock](#) and his accomplices, the killing was continuing. By about noon or so the three remaining mates and two others had been shot, bayoneted, stabbed or disemboweled, including William Humphries (presumably this was the ship's cook, since he was a black man). As people were being killed their bodies were being discarded overboard. Finally there was no challenge to the mutineers being in total control, and the surviving crewmembers turned to sail west toward the gorgeous tropical Marshall Islands. When they made landfall, Friend Samuel attempted to barter some ship supplies with the natives, and for some reason this irritated another of the mutineers, Silas Payne, enough to inspire him to discharge his musket and send birthright [Friend](#) Samuel to his reward.

Be careful in your choice of companions, boys and girls!

MARTHA'S VINEYARD

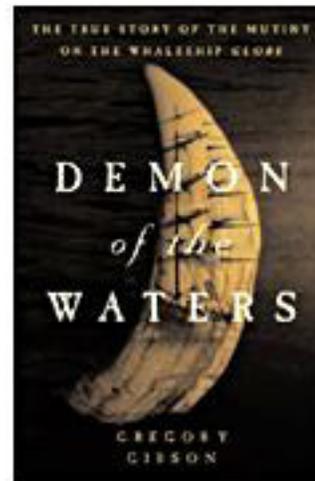
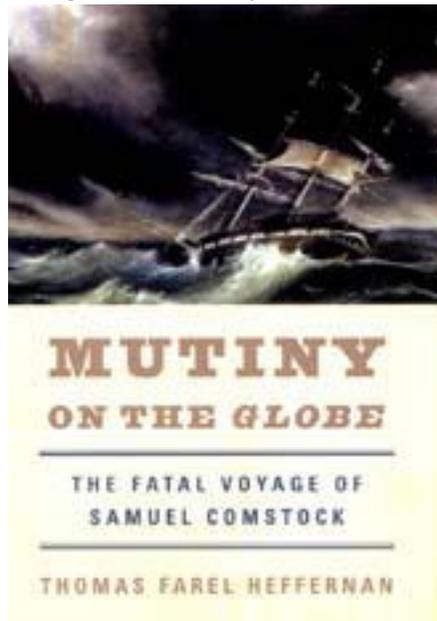
CAPAWAK

 February: Early in the month, the four remaining mutineers of the *Globe* out of [Martha's Vineyard](#) compelled the other crewmen to venture with them to what is now known as Mili Atoll:



There the mutineers incautiously put ashore to establish a settlement, and six crewmembers who had taken no part in the mutiny were able to sail the *Globe* away. They would manage to make it some 7,500 miles across the Pacific to the safety of Valparaiso. The remaining three mutineers, and other members of the innocent crew trapped on the atoll, would of course be massacred, except for a couple of young men whom the islanders would adopt/enslave.

The US Navy would send out a ship to pick up these Americans. The bronzed adoptee/slaves would be rescued by a naval party led by Lieutenant John "Mad Jack" Percival. Aboard this ship 17-year-old midshipman Augustus Strong would be keeping a journal. We can now, in addition to reviewing the various accounts published during the 19th Century, be instructed also by this retrieved journal.



1827

➡ [Harrison Gray Dyar](#) erected an experimental telegraph wire at a Paumanok Long Island racetrack. He proposed to string a wire between New-York and Philadelphia, across New Jersey, and ran into skepticism from members of the New Jersey legislature who feared Dyar as some sort of "wizard" of deception like the figure that would later appear in the "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" story by L. Frank Baum. They feared that behind this project there might be some sort of dangerous agenda to send secret communications in advance of the mail.

"Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!"

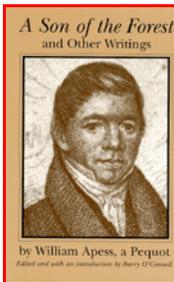


MARTHA'S VINEYARD

CAPAWAK

When one of Dyar's financial backers threatened to accuse him of "conspiracy to send secret communications in advance of the mail" as part of an attempt to get his money back, Dyar fled the country. For many years he would live in Paris where, apparently, he was able to make good money as a chemist.

For the next two or three years William Apess would be an itinerant Methodist exhorter on Paumanok Long Island, in the valley of the Hudson River, on [Martha's Vineyard](#) and [Nantucket Island](#), and in the cities of [Boston](#) and [New Bedford](#). Much of the work he would be doing, of course, since he was not a white man, would need to be with mixed groups of African-Americans and native Americans. In this timeframe, on [Nantucket Island](#), [Friend Maria Mitchell](#) would have been attending Cyrus Peirce's School for Young Ladies. (Other than that, and her own self-education, she was mainly being educated by her father, whom she assisted in the checking of chronometers for the local whaling fleet.)



1839

By this point the heath hen [**Heath Hen**  *Tympanuchus cupido cupido*], New England's version of the prairie chicken, had been so reduced in numbers throughout New England, that it remained only on the island of [Martha's Vineyard](#).⁴An article in the [Knickerbocker Magazine](#) reported on "an old bull whale of prodigious



size and strength," called Mocha Dick, in the Pacific Ocean. This beast was reported to be "as white as wool." [Herman Melville](#) sailed before the mast, that is, as an apprentice seaman, on the merchantman *St. Lawrence* bound for Liverpool and return.



4. The species probably died off in the sand plains of Long Island and southeastern New England not due to the overhunting but in consequence of denial of habitat, caused by cessation of the native American fire management habits by the European intrusives. Without sporadic fires to keep the pitch pine low forest burned back, the sort of grassy environment of annuals required by the heath hen simply ceases to exist. Steps the white people were taking to preserve the value of their property in the environment actually had been, that is, destroying this environment.

1840

By this point the Heath Hen *Tympanuchus cupido cupido*, which had been such an available staple in Boston as to be considered of little desirability even as provisions for servants, was not often to be seen on the mainland of Massachusetts and Rhode Island and Connecticut (the species would be holding out for a time on Long Island, on the plains of New Jersey, and at a few spots in the Pocono Mountains in Northampton County in Pennsylvania).



After 1870, it would survive only on Martha's Vineyard. In 1890 only a couple of hundred birds would be locatable by William Brewster's most careful observation, on this entire island. By 1896, according to Kenwood, there would be fewer than a hundred survivors. In 1908 a reservation would be established for them at the center of their breeding range on Martha's Vineyard, and although at that point there would be only about 50 left, this reservation would allow them to increase rapidly. By 1916 they would be again at all points on the island –except for Gay Head at the western tip– and the population would be numbering about a couple of



thousand, but then on May 16, 1916 there would occur a large grass fire that would burn off about 20 square miles at the center of their breeding territory. That winter of 1916/1917 would be a hard one, and then in 1917 there would come an unprecedented flight of goshawks, and the counts of *Typanuchus c. cupido* would go back down to fewer than 150 individuals, most of which were males. In 1920, many birds would be found dead or in a weak and helpless condition, evidently due to some disease. By 1925, the population would be probably at its lowest. The spring census of 1927 would produce a count of 11 males and 2 females. In Fall 1828 only two birds would be seen, and after December 8, 1828 only one of these would be seen. On April 2, 1929, this one remaining bird would be photographed from a blind at the farm of James Green on the highway between Edgartown and West Tisbury. This sole survivor would be viewed and photographed by pilgrimage after pilgrimage of birders until, during Fall 1931, it would no longer be located.

1844

[Augustus Addison Gould](#) became a member of the Natural History Society of Lynn, Massachusetts and a corresponding member of the Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Description of Hairy-tailed Mole *Parascalops breweri* on the island of [Martha's Vineyard](#) by [Thomas Mayo Brewer](#), an active member since 1837 of the [Boston Society of Natural History](#). This mammal of New England has come to be known as Brewer's Mole.



PROCEEDINGS, FOR 1844

[Dr. Brewer](#) was elected to the Boston School Board. He would become the senior member of this board and would be rechosen for another term of three years.



1855

The name of *Ousamequin* Yellow Feather the *Massasoit*, “Protector and Preserver of the Pilgrims,” very much like the name of the faithful Indian sidekick Squanto, “a special instrument sent by God,” has always been something with which to conjure.⁵ Thus in this year, when the Boston authorities rejected a petition for a charter for a black militia company, the group formed itself up anyway 300 strong, and equipped itself with arms and with uniforms — and denominated itself the Massasoit Guard. (After the Dred Scott decision in November 1857, this guard would fall in and parade its black faces and its weapons through the streets of [Boston](#).) In considering this black militia, here is what H-OIEAHC, the early American history and culture list moderated by John Saillant, has had to offer on the topic of black participation in colonial militias. Terry Gruber had inquired: “Just one question concerning colonial era militias---did any militia laws in any colonies and states (to 1800) specifically exclude free blacks (I assume enslaved blacks were exempted) from the muster rolls? If so, which states/colonies excluded?” Clayton Cramer responded: “I would not assume that slaves were exempted... Virginia finally excluded blacks from the militia in 1639/40. Remembering that the institution of slavery was still in a formative stage, the ambiguity of whether this meant only slaves or free blacks as well is unsurprising. It would appear that if free blacks were excluded by this law, something changed thereafter, because a 1680 law prohibited ‘any negroe or other slave’ from possessing weapons, but the 1723 law allowed free blacks who were householders or members of the militia to have one gun. The 1738 law required them to muster, but to appear unarmed. Delaware’s 1742 law prohibited servants and slaves from bearing arms, or mustering in the militia. The language is a little ambiguous as to whether free blacks were still members of the militia. [Maryland](#)’s 1715 law prohibiting any ‘Negro or other slave’ from bearing arms off his master’s land would seem to preclude free blacks from militia duty.

Norman Heath made a comment on what Clayton Cramer had written above: “Unarmed militia might seem a curious phenomenon, but according to John Hope Franklin, when [North Carolina](#) finally excluded blacks from the militia in 1812 they made an exception for black musicians (drums and horns were essential military communications equipment). When studying the question of black militia participation it would be well to ascertain exactly what duties were expected in the given time and place.”

Professor Emeritus Jerome J. Nadelhaft responded: “I looked at the issue in South Carolina in connection with the Continental Congress’s recommendation in 1778 that the state arm 3,000 slaves. The easiest thing for me to do is to copy out two paragraphs of my book on SOUTH CAROLINA IN THE REVOLUTION (from page 52)”:

To arm 3,000 slaves as Congress suggested would have been a break with the past only in terms of numbers. In all of the state’s numerous eighteenth-century wars slaves had fought or been ready to. Even after the Stono Rebellion of 1739 dampened the enthusiasm to arm slaves, necessity often dictated that slaves fight. A 1742 expedition to Georgia included armed blacks. During the French and Indian War slaves were used to garrison the post at Ninety Six. In all, of course, relatively few blacks were veterans of battles, even though in 1757 more than 3,000 were enrolled in the colonial militia. One colonial proposal to arm a large number, 500, was defeated during the French and India War by the deciding vote of the speaker of the lower house. To

5. For instance, today, in addition to that monument to Myles Standish and sidekick, from atop a hill that overlooks [Plymouth Rock](#), a statue of the great Wampanoag sachem surveys the harbor in which the Pilgrim Fathers landed over 375 years ago. Holding a long peace pipe, the chief is dignified and confident, nothing about his figure causing trepidation to the tourist. The inscription identifying the native politician as “Protector and Preserver of the Pilgrims” dutifully elides the complexion of his constituency. Today there are, situated in the Aquinnah section of [Martha’s Vineyard](#), but 700 tribal descendants.



encourage those blacks who did fight, the government gave freedom in exchange for killing or capturing one of the enemy or for taking any of his colors.

In 1779, however, Congress's proposal "much disgusted" Carolinians. They thought it "a very dangerous and impolitic Step." In February 1780 the lower house determined not to arm blacks but to allow them to work as pioneers, fatigue men, oarsmen, and mariners. At the same time it defeated a proposal to free slaves who behaved well while in the "said service." No bill embodying any of these proposals was passed by the full legislature. South Carolina's slaves, accustomed to hard use, still found themselves in the strange and unenviable position of being "volunteered" for potentially dangerous service which brought money to their masters, while being denied what they had often enjoyed, the opportunity to fight for their freedom in a time of emergency, the emergency this time ironically being a war for freedom and self-government.

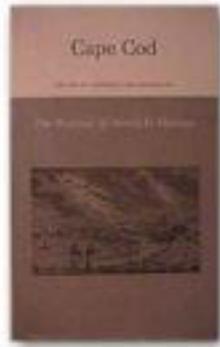
... the information in that first paragraph comes from a 1971 dissertation: John David Duncan, *SERVITUDE AND SLAVERY IN COLONIAL SOUTH CAROLINA, 1670-1776* (Emory University). In a note to the second paragraph I point out that slaves were not alone in being 'volunteered.' In 1778 the state provided for the enlistment of beggars, stragglers, persons, and lewd, idle, disorderly men."



1857

June 12, Friday to June 22, Monday: During this 11-day period [Henry Thoreau](#) was making his 4th and last excursion to Cape Cod. He took the train to Plymouth and visited Clark's Island, Manomet Point, Salt Pond, and Scusset; took train to Sandwich and walked to Highland Light and Provincetown; then took the steamer to Boston. The account of it is in his Journal (9:413-55).

This would be material not used in [CAPE COD](#). Presumably the reason for this is that the manuscript had already been completed; Journal evidence suggests that the manuscript had been completed during the fall of 1855.



It was during this trip that Thoreau, reporting that "Mine was a case of distress," sought out the Humane House supposedly provisioned in Newcomb's Hollow for the benefit of shipwrecked sailors. The pamphlet of the

Trustees of the Humane Society indicates that they were maintaining at that time six huts:

- halfway between Race Point and Stout's Creek
- at the head of Stout's Creek
- on Nauset Beach one and a half miles north of Nauset Harbor (possibly the Newcomb's Hollow facility entered by Thoreau)
- on Chatham Beach about half way between the entrance of Nauset Harbor and Chatham Harbor
- a mile north of the entrance to Chatham Harbor
- on the beach of Cape Malebarre



The whole of the coast, from Cape Cod to Cape Malebarre, is sandy, and free from rocks. Along the shore, at the distance of a half of a mile, is a bar; which is called the Outer bar, because there are smaller bars within it, perpetually varying. This outer bar is separated into many parts by guzzles, or small channels. It extends to Chatham; and as it proceeds southward, gradually approaches the shore and grows more shallow. Its general depth at high water is two fathoms, and three fathoms over the guzzles; and its least distance from the shore is about a furlong. Off the mouth of Chatham harbour there are bars which reach three quarters of a mile; and off the entrance of Nauset harbour the bars extend a half of a mile. Large, heavy ships strike on the outer bar, even at high water; and their fragments only reach the shore. But smaller vessels pass over it at full sea; and when they touch at low water, they beat over it, as the tide rises, and soon come to land.

If a vessel is cast away at low water, it ought to be left with as much expedition as possible; because the fury of the waves is then checked, in some measure, by the bar; and because the vessel is generally broken to pieces with the rising flood. But seamen, shipwrecked at full sea, ought to remain on board till near low water; for the vessel does not then break to pieces; and by attempting to reach the land before the tide ebbs away, they are in great danger of being drowned. On this subject there is one opinion only among judicious mariners. It may be necessary however to remind them of a truth, of which they have full conviction, but which, amidst the agitation and terrour of a storm, they too frequently forget.

Dona Brown has contrasted [Thoreau](#)'s visits to Cape Cod with the more fashionable jaunts of his period, which were to the White Mountains of New Hampshire, to the Catskills, and of course to Saratoga Springs and [Niagara Falls](#):



Until very late in the nineteenth century, Cape Cod was regarded as a kind of New England outback, inhabited by unschooled savages with almost no contact with the outside world. Henry David Thoreau (who went out of his way to visit places no other tourist would go) visited Cape Cod in the 1850s. Writing about



Nauset Beach, now one of the most popular beaches on the Cape, Thoreau reported only "a vast **morgue**, where famished dogs may range in packs." Thoreau knew what he was talking about when he predicted that "for a long time [fashionable visitors] will be disappointed here." The outer Cape remained more or less untouched by tourism for decades. Not until the age of the automobile did Cape Cod really come into its own.



[The location of the Catskills] along the heavily traveled Hudson River route between New York City and Albany made them the most accessible romantic mountains in the east and brought them as early as the 1820s into a web of development that included scenic tourism, industrial development, shipping, and suburbanization. For the best account of the Catskills, see Kenneth Myers, *THE CATSKILLS: PAINTERS, WRITERS, AND TOURISTS IN THE MOUNTAINS, 1820-1895* (Hanover NH: The Hudson River Museum of Westchester, UP of New England, 1987).

Dona Brown continues her observations on the subject of [Thoreau's](#) "tourist non-tourism" of Cape Cod on her pages 64-65, with an endnote on page 228:



Some promoters came to see the remaining prosaic names in the region as a great handicap to its development. Starr King was most outspoken in his opposition to the names of the White Mountain region, referring to the names of the Presidential Range as "absurd" and "a wretched jumble," and calling for a renaming of the peaks. Most writers did not openly attack local names, especially those of the Presidential Range, which possessed at least some meaning for mid-nineteenth-century tourists, but instead opted for a kind of parallel unofficial naming system, based on real or imagined Indian names for places. Many guidebooks opened their first chapters with a discussion of the "original" names of the region and their meanings. It was a convenient way of attaching romantic Indian associations to the region, since the writer was free to embellish the interpretation of such Algonquin terms as "Waumbek," which means "white rocks" but could be interpreted as something like "Mountains of the Snowy Foreheads." These shadow names had become so conventionalized by mid-century that Henry David Thoreau could make an inside joke of them. His book on Cape Cod, like many other pieces of scenic writing, began by tracing the origins of a local name. In Thoreau's hands, it was pure parody:

CAPE COD: I suppose that the word Cape is from the French *cap*; which is from the Latin *caput*, a head; which is, perhaps, from the verb *capere*, to take, -that being the part by which we take hold of a thing:-Take Time by the forelock. It is also the safest part to take a serpent by. And as for Cod, that was derived directly from that "great store of codfish" which Captain Bartholomew Gosnold caught there in 1602; which fish appears to have been so called from the Saxon word *codde*, "a case in which seeds are lodged," either from the form of the fish, or the quantity of spawn it contains; whence also, perhaps, *codling* ("*pomum coctile*"?) and coddle, -to cook green like peas. (V. Dic.)

Thoreau had not always mocked such scenic conventions. At one time, he had actually anticipated a career like Hawthorne's or Cole's, making a living interpreting scenery to readers. Thoreau wrote extensively about his travels and, at least at first, he too attempted to attach romantic associations to the landscape. But by the middle of his traveling career, he had come to see scenery very differently.



After his 1846 trip to Mount Katahdin, Thoreau turned against the patching of human associations onto the landscape. He began to portray the places he visited as examples of nature untoured: "vast and drear and inhuman," like Mount Katahdin; "inhumanly sincere, wasting no thought on man," like the deserted beaches of Cape Cod.⁶ He traveled as far away as he could get from genteel tourist regions, and his writing took the form of antiscenery tracts. But Thoreau's mocking discussion of the origins of the name Cape Cod ended on a serious note, with his famous description of the Cape as the "bare and bended arm of Massachusetts." Even for Thoreau, writing about scenery led to the irresistible temptation to create serious associations.

On pages 201-3 Dona Brown continues her discussion of Cape Cod:



Not much of Cape Cod had become familiar tourist ground by the turn of the [20th] century. True, Henry David Thoreau wrote with great admiration of the landscape of the Cape after his walking tours there in the 1850s. But Thoreau's Cape Cod essays describe a place very different from the Cape of today. The popular beaches of what is now the Cape Cod National Seashore appear in Thoreau's descriptions, not as lovely scenery, but as an empty and savage land - the "most uninviting landscape on earth." Thoreau himself preferred the desolation he encountered on Cape Cod to the more civilized charms of heavily traveled regions like the White Mountains or [Newport](#). In fact, he made that contrast a central theme of his Cape Cod essays, playing up the difference between fashionable resorts and the beaches of Cape Cod: "They commonly celebrate those beaches only which have a

6. His experiences on Mount Katahdin or on Cape Cod cannot be categorized simply as encounters with the sublime. In fact, they are a direct repudiation of the language of the sublime, since he described nature as having **no human meaning**: the sublime in nature, though frightening in its power and "otherness," was understood to be filled with significance, even messages, for its human viewers.



hotel on them," he wrote, "But I wished to see that seashore where all man's works are wrecks." Although his essays took the form of the sort of travel writing that was intended to entice tourists to a region, Thoreau emphasized that he had peculiar tastes few travelers would share: "Every landscape which is dreary enough has a certain beauty to my eyes." He really hoped no one would be converted to his taste for Cape Cod: "I trust that for a long time [fashionable visitors] will be disappointed here." And for a long time they were. Many of Thoreau's contemporaries were looking for scenery with a special sort of meaning, for landscapes endowed with the "interesting associations" of poetry or romantic history or legends. Cape Cod certainly possessed the raw material for such a trade: sublime seascapes, native legends, the tales of weather-beaten "old salts." But, with the notable exception of Thoreau, no one exploited that raw material in the 1840s and 1850s. Mid-century travelers imagined Cape Cod, when they thought of it at all, almost as "antiscenery" – the direct opposite of the kind of nature they craved. One 1863 children's book, for example, used the Cape's landscape as a symbol of emotional deprivation: The heroine suffered through a loveless, stunted childhood, growing up where there was "no sweet singing of birds in the air; but the harsh cry of curlews.... No soft murmur of little brooks; but only the measured roar of the wild ocean waves. No rustle of leafy woods ... only the dreary beach-grass and blue moss." Not all coastal regions appeared so unattractive to nineteenth-century travelers. In fact oceanfront resorts were springing up almost everywhere except Cape Cod in the second half of the century. To the south, on [Martha's Vineyard](#), the Methodists colonized Oak Bluffs. Their hotels and cottages competed with a variety of nearby [Rhode Island](#) resorts, all the way from ritzy [Newport](#) to popular Narragansett Pier. Not far to the north, Nantasket Beach and Cohasset on the Massachusetts coast plied their vacation trade with great success. Cape Cod certainly had beaches fine enough to rival any of its competitors. But few promoters saw their possibilities. Twenty years after Thoreau made his famous tramp, the situation had not changed much. National guidebooks gave Cape Cod very little attention.

In APPLETON'S ILLUSTRATED HAND-BOOK OF AMERICAN SUMMER RESORTS, published in 1876, the whole area of the Cape rated only one page. (The White Mountains, in contrast, were allotted fourteen pages; Mount Desert rated three.) The single page devoted to Cape Cod was composed of a series of passages the editor lifted from Samuel Adams Drake's NOOKS AND CORNERS OF THE NEW ENGLAND COAST [1876], a book dedicated to exploring out-of-the-way and quaint sections of the shore. Yet even Drake found it tough going to promote the Cape. "To one accustomed to the fertile shores of [Narragansett Bay](#) or the valley of the Connecticut," he admitted, "the region between Sandwich and Orleans ... is bad enough." But, as he put it, "beyond this is simply a wilderness of sand."

August 28, Friday



August 28, 1857: Polygonum Pennsylvanicum by bank, how long?

R.W.E. says that he saw *Asclepias tuberosa* abundant and in bloom on Naushon last week; also a sassafras stump three feet across. The deer escape by running to the mainland, and in winter cross on the ice. The last winter they lost about one hundred and fifty sheep, whose remains have never been found. Perhaps they were carried off on the ice by the sea. Looking through a glass, E. saw vessels sailing near Martha's Vineyard with full sails, yet the water about them appeared perfectly smooth, and reflected the vessels. They thought this reflection a mirage, i. e. from a haze.

As we were riding by Deacon Farrar's lately, E. Hoar told me in answer to my questions, that both the young Mr. Farrars, who had now come to man's estate, were excellent young men, —their father, an old man of about seventy, once cut and corded seven cords of wood in one day, and still cut a double swath at haying time, and was a man of great probity, —and to show the unusual purity of one of them, at least, he said that, his brother Frisbie, who had formerly lived there, inquiring what had become of a certain hired man whom he used to know, young Mr. Farrar told him that he was gone, "that the truth was he one day let drop a prophane word, and after that he thought that he could not have him about, and so he got rid of him." It was as if he had dropped some filthy thing on the premises, an intolerable nuisance, only to be abated by removing the source of it. I should like to hear as good news of the New England farmers generally. It to some extent accounts for the vigor of the father and the successful farming of the sons.

I read the other day in the Tribune that a man apparently about seventy, and smart at that, went to the police in New York and asked for a lodging, having been left by the cars or steamboat when on his way to Connecticut. When they asked his age, native place, etc., he said his name was McDonald; he was born in Scotland in 1745, came to Plymouth, Mass., in 1760, was in some battles in the Revolution, in which he lost an eye; had a son eighty-odd years old, etc.; but, seeing a reporter taking notes, he was silent. Since then I heard that an old man named McDonald, one hundred and twelve years old, had the day before passed through Concord and was walking to Lexington, and I said at once he must be a humbug. When I went to the post office to-night (August 28), G. Brooks asked me if I saw him and said that he heard that he told a correct story, except he said that he remembered Braddock's defeat! He had noticed that Dr. Heywood's old house, the tavern, was gone since he was here in the Revolution. Just then Davis, the postmaster, asked us to look at a letter he had received. It was from a Dr. Curtis of Newton asking if this McDonald belonged about Concord as he said, and saying that his story appeared to be a correct one. Davis had never heard of him, and, as we presumed him to be a humbug, we advised Davis to write accordingly. But I afterward remembered reading nearly a year ago of a man of this name and age in St. Louis, who said he had married a wife in Concord before the Revolution, and then began to think that his story might be all true. So it seems that a veteran of a hundred and twelve, after an absence of eighty-seven years, may come back to the town where he married his wife in order to hunt up his relatives, and not only have no success, but be pronounced a humbug!!⁷

NAUSHON ISLAND
NANTUCKET ISLAND
MARTHA'S VINEYARD



7. These last two paragraphs appear in the manuscript journal under date of July 28, having been written at the time when he was writing up his recent Maine excursion. The date in the second paragraph indicates this as their proper place.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD

CAPAWAK

November: The name of *Massasoit*, “Protector and Preserver of the Pilgrims,” has always been something with which to conjure.⁸ When in 1855  the Boston authorities had rejected a petition for a charter for a black militia company, the group had formed itself up anyway, and equipped itself with arms and with uniforms — and denominated itself the Massasoit Guard. In this month, after the Dred Scott decision was announced in the press, this guard fell in and paraded its black faces and its weapons 300 strong through the streets of [Boston](#).



8. For instance, today, from atop a hill that overlooks [Plymouth Rock](#), a statue of the great Wampanoag sachem surveys the harbor in which the Pilgrim Fathers landed over 375 years ago. Holding a long peace pipe, the chief is dignified and confident (*vide* above), nothing about his figure causing trepidation to the tourist. The inscription identifying the native politician as “Protector and Preserver of the Pilgrims” dutifully elides the complexion of his constituency. This may arguably be the only statue ever erected in Massachusetts in honor of a man from [Rhode Island](#). Today there are, situated in the Gay Head section of [Martha's Vineyard](#), but 700 tribal descendants.



2000

June 11, Sunday: In the [New York Times Book Review](#), Paul Theroux was allowed to place a derogation of [Henry Thoreau](#), on page 13, that will be found of interest, by those of us who find this sort of thing of interest. In the course of reviewing a new book on the history of Cape Cod, [Martha's Vineyard](#), and [Nantucket Island](#), a book entitled THE ENDURING SHORE, Theroux found occasion to instance Thoreau's [CAPE COD](#) as having been by way of contrast "one of the thinner books," having been merely "a posthumous compilation of sardonic lectures and articles he produced in order to make a living." The famous village-of-Concord resident author of this thin sardonic CAPE COD was characterized by Theroux as not having been a real scholar. Instead of being one of the "few real scholars" who have dealt with Cape history, Thoreau was caricatured as having been merely one of the "many village explainers."

Takes one to know one, guy!

2003

Winter/Spring: [H2SO4](#) journal featured an article by Heidi Pollock, "Reviews of Books I Shouldn't Have Read," in which this person emoted for almost a page about her attempted reading of [WALDEN](#) on the beach at [Martha's Vineyard](#). She found [Henry Thoreau](#) "just too pedantic": "I mean, *darling*, nobody actually *reads* Thoreau ... I remember almost nothing about the book."

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)





MARTHA'S VINEYARD

CAPAWAK



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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: September 2, 2013

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.



Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.