

Setting and Stage – Incomplete Notes¹

Topography/Relief

From analysis of expos and angle light source.

Sapping Valleys

Chilmark Pond – to moraine then tributaries to northeast. Tips just showing.

Tisbury Great Pond – northwest to moraine then tributaries towards the head of plain, northeast.

Two independent – Watcha and Oyster.

Edgartown Great Pond – all angled to head of plain with tributaries to ENE.

Most with minor tributaries.

Interesting fine SW to NE ridges in Cedar Tree Neck area, Duarte Pond and Tisbury Meadow areas.

Hydrography

Notes to go with Brian Hall's map – Water features and topographic 6-12-2012

No streams east of the line from Rhoda Pond to Mill Pond. Smith Brook west of Rhoda Pond only stream in Tisbury.

One minor exception – stream from red maple swamp to Little Duarte Pond, Mattakeset Herring Creek.

Two big streams – Mill Brook and Tiasquam River – very similar – both confined to narrow southwest to northeast trending valleys between two morainal ridges. Both largely wetlands or wetland confined streams; very gentle gradient. Both empty into tributaries of Tisbury Great Pond. Each collects very little water from tributaries. Why does west area of Tisbury Great Pond serve as an effective tributary – why not dry?

Other streams flow via gentle ground to coast.

Fulling Mill Brook and Mill Brook (c) to south coast.

¹ Additional handwritten notes, notecards, and source material are in the Harvard Forest Archive

Roaring Brook, Paint Mill Brook, Blackwater Brook, Smith Brook and many small streams to Vineyard Sound. Aquinnah – unique with highland and streams diving north and south.

Many ponds artificial.

Shoreline – run futures as sea level rises, what will coastal ponds look like?

Glacial Topography

From Map: Water Features and Topography 11 x 17 6-21-2012) (shows relief with shading)

Katama to Duarte Pond ~ outwash over moraine – topography is very subtle but distinct from the plain. Undulations and depressions – buried features so subtle. Includes small ponds – Duarte, Little, Dodger Hole, Jernegan. But very few relative to west.

Long bottoms only extend east to Oyster Pond. From there to Edgartown (Paqua and Jobs Neck east) they don't extend far up into the plain as the do off Tisbury Great Pond, Long Cove, Watcha, Oyster Ponds.

Also don't extend in from Chilmark Pond or Black Point Pond.

Notes on Characterizing the Island Towns and Diversity

Edgartown Community Development Plan captures Island town character as reflecting their origins: Edgartown as the historical home of master seamen during the whaling era and still the seat of County government; Tisbury as the Island's year round gateway and market town; Oak Bluffs as the Island's first summer resort and continued concentration of summer activity; West Tisbury and Chilmark as agricultural villages; Aquinnah as the Island's remaining Wampanoag Indian settlement and the site of the Island's most recognizable feature and only National Natural landmark.

Below – From No Island is an Island. Perhaps the best description of the diversity of the Island along with the intense passion and depth of understanding that individuals idiosyncratically bring to understanding the Vineyard.

“This variety attracts an extraordinary mix of citizens to the Vineyard. One of Massachusetts' two Indian towns is at the west end of the island, one of America's first and most exclusive yacht clubs at the east, and in between, a community frequently cited as the only middle-class black seaside resort on the East Coast. There is as impressive a collection of powerful, important, and influential members of the Establishment here in the summer as can be found in any one place; there is a burgeoning enclave of its better-known young radical counterparts. There are descendants of Portuguese pioneers who came from the Azores and Cape Verde Islands on whale ships. There are new Vineyarders who have migrated to start a business or to retire in one of the three more

urban down-island towns, there are New Englanders whose ancestors were the first white settlers here, whalers, fishermen, farmers, whose names still dominate up-island villages as well as the streets and stores of the towns.”

Pages 13-14:

“Reading the land and reacting to it, as this man did, is the mark of a true Vineyard aficionado ... and there are many, still, who pursue the never ending discovery, accumulating knowledge with combined awe and delight. For every man who knows the pond-swamp-bog cycle, or the marvel of oysters’ sex life for which he will dig across a sandbar to provide the proper salinity for this mating in a brackish pond, there are those who understand the complex architecture of a dune, built by winds, anchored by grasses, wild roses, and strong-rooted poison ivy, or the slow growth of trees, kept down by wind and salt spray, which will nevertheless transform a meadow into a scrub oak forest. There are men who know that West Tisbury’s rich soil propagates fine vegetables as well as every variety of wildflower growing in the entire state, others who have identified three pockets of rare plants, hidden in the up-island hills, others whose skin is ripped by brambles in the search for thickets of wild raspberries and blackberries. One specialist has catalogued seven hundred separate species of plants growing on the island, another knows what date it is by which migrating birds arrive as his feeder. There are books about Vineyard’s flora and its fauna; the local paper devotes a column to “Our Avian Visitors,” a page to the fishing news from surrounding waters.

Fishermen, hunters, sailors, ornithologists, biologists, archaeologists, naturalists – each finds the Vineyard intriguing for his own reasons, each understands a part of the land and water which was not too different when the first white settlers arrived in the beginning of the seventeenth century.”