

## **Jeremiah Pease Diary and Notes from the Martha's Vineyard Museum**

### **From the MVM Finding Aid RU 280**

Title: Jeremiah Pease Collection

Abstract: The Jeremiah Pease materials provide detailed accounts of daily life on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts during the early 19th century. The collection includes Jeremiah's personal diaries (November 16, 1817 to June 5, 1857), a journal of surveying activities (April 22, 1822 to September 9, 1856), records of Indian lands on Chappaquiddick (1828; 1849), a log of vessels calling at Edgartown Harbor (January 12, 1827 to December 1, 1834), and a history of the first Methodists on Martha's Vineyard (1847). Five volumes of the diaries are the gift of Julien Vose Weston to the Museum in 1975.

Jeremiah Pease was born April 8, 1792 and died June 5, 1857. His parents were Noah and Hannah Dunham Pease. He married Eliza Worth on September 30, 1813 and they had 10 children. He lived in Edgartown all his life. He was a "jack of all trades": surveyor, Collector of Customs in Edgartown, lighthouse keeper, Methodist layman and chorister, bonesetter, cordwainer, bedsitter for dying persons, politician, manager of Thomas Cooke's salt works, commission salesman for molasses and whale oil, Justice of the Peace. He owned shares in whaling vessels.

### **From Rootsweb at Ancestry.com**

Jeremiah, son of Noah (Seth, Benjamin, David, John) and Hannah (Dunham) Pease; b. Apr 08, 1792 in Edgartown, MA; d. Jun 05, 1857 in Edgartown; m. Sep 30, 1813 by Reverend Joseph "Parson" Thaxter, to Eliza Worth; b. Feb 08, 1791; d. Apr 26, 1879 of senile dibility in Edgartown. She was the daughter of Deacon Jonathan Worth, of the Congregational Church; b. 1755; d. May 31, 1817, and his first wife, Sarah Mayhew; b. Dec 09, 1758; d. Sep 01, 1797. Eliza's half sister Velina, was the wife of Frederick Baylie's Jr, the architect and designer of three churches in Edgartown. Jonathan's nephew, William Jenkins Worth; d. May 23, 1849 in San Antonio, Texas, fought in the Seminole Indian War in Florida, and the Mexican War of 1846. Forth Worth, Texas was named after him. Jeremiah Pease was a US Custom's officer, surveyor, bone setter, lighthouse keeper, cordwainer, and farmer. His carpenter shop employed a few apprentices, and out back, he kept a large garden which was tended to with great care. Many of the islanders benefited by his talent for setting broken limbs, and were also rewarded when they learned the service had no charge. His own wife Eliza, was a patient, after she fell on the ice Feb 14, 1852, breaking her arm, and dislocating her wrist. In 1817, Jeremiah was appointed as deputy customs inspector in Edgartown, which meant boarding at least one vessel a day as it arrived in the harbor, taking inventory, and collecting the tariffs. His title gave him the power to make arrests of smugglers, and put down mutinies on board the ships in Edgartown waters. On one occasion, he arrested seven men from the ships Boston and Thomas of Nantucket. In 1827, president John Quincy Adams made law prohibiting foreign vessels from anchoring within three miles of the US coast without prior notification. Deputy Pease seized the British ship Caledonia for violating the ruling, and a fracas developed when collector Thomas Cooke boarded the ship to remove her flags. Other not so dangerous duties included the maintenance of the island lighthouses. He was the first keeper of the lighthouse at the entrance to Edgartown harbor, being appointed Oct 10, 1828. His diary entry for Oct 15: "Wind NW Received the oil etc., for the lighthouse from the sloop Henry of New Bedford. Captain (John) Akin lighted the lamps for the first time." Jeremiah Pease was raised as a Congregationalist, the religion of his mentor, parson Joseph Thaxter, but later converted to the Methodist Religion. He was instrumental in establishing the Wesleyan Grove Camp Meeting near Squash Meadow Pond, and became the tent

master and chorister. Much of the local history of the island, was learned from a diary he kept from 1819 up to the time of his death. Each entry was preceded with a weather account including wind speed and direction. Children of Jeremiah and Eliza (Worth) Pease born in Edgartown, MA:

DRF reviewed diary 1819-1822, 1846-1855. Sections below transcribed by Linda Hampson contains references to the landscape, land use, and environment or otherwise interesting and peculiar activities noted by Pease.

### **1823-1826**

1-31-1823 Most moderate winter so far, for 40 years there has not been 3 inches of snow at any time.

2-28-1823 Brig *Neutrality* on shore on Toms Shoal, took a load of molasses out.

3-2-1823 Murder committed at Gay Head.

6-6-1823 This day commenced running the surveying a lot of wood land for Thomas Smith at the head of the Pond so called..... road that leads from Edgartown to Holmehole.

1-9-1824 Took down Saltworks Mill Veins.

2-24-1824 most remarkable winter since the memory of man... all the snow that has fallen would not be enough to cover the ground six inches.

3-3-1824 cargo of ivory put under my charge.

3-6-1824 rains at night to SSW went eeling.

3-13-1824 assisted in putting up Saltworks spouts mill.

3-13-1824 Being appointed by the Hon. Court of Sessions one of the Committee to layout a road from Edgt harbour to the East and West side of Holms hole harbour & to Tisbury.

5-31-1824 A lion and other animals are exhibited here as a show.

2-2-1825 Violent storm with hightide... does much damage to the wharfes Saltworks & Capt. Silas Butlers Shop is demolished the tide was so high, lacking about 12 inches as it was in remarkable Storm of Sept 1815 the wind is that to be about the same as in that gail.

2-16-1825 news of the Election of John Q. Adams President of the U. S. came by mail great rejoicing Cannons fired etc.

2-18-1825 H Hole. The Brig *Albion* of Portland. John Jones Master from Havannah with a cargo of Molasses being on shore.

3-16-1825 Went a fishing to the South side of the Vineyard this day. Benjamin Worth kills a Whale so near the Boat in which I was fishing as to give me a favorable opportunity to see all the manoevers.

5-20-1825 assisted in putting down spouts at the saltworks.

6-10-1825 One of the legs of Bartlett Fisher (and his vest & part of his short) found on the south beach.

4-29-1826 This day I have dismissed Hebron Hinson & given up his Indentures he having lived with me between 5 & 9 (?) years & has been very faithfull; may God bless him in time of Eternity.

7-4-1826 This day John Adams one of the former Presidents of U.S.A. dies & Thomas Jefferson one of the former Presidents does the same day 3 or 4 hours difference.

8-26-1826 U.S. Topographical Engs arrives to Survey this Harbour for the purpose of ascertaining the utility &tc. of a Lighthouse on the flats [JP involved in surveying].

9-8-1826 Sounding.... Part of the harbour, Middle Ground etc.

### **1847-1848**

March 16, 1847 NW cold fresh wind a Fire commenced in West Tisbury this morning and came in contact with the woods burned over a very large tract, the wind blowing strong the fire came down near the place where Mr. Beetles house stood (near Wintucket) it continued to burn until late the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup> the damage done was great.

May 25, 1847 SW a very great number of vessels pass down the Sound probably 200 sail during the day and night it having been a very long E'ly wind.

6-15-1847 WSW to WNW very heavy gale. I think the most severe I ever saw at this season of year from that quarter the sand from the plowed ground was driven in clouds before the wind so thick that the hills at the swimming place could not be seen at times.

6-22-1847 Mowed a part of the meadow near the house.

6-23-1847 engaged with hay.

6-28-1847 rec'd letter from Liet. C. H. Davis of the Coast Survey requesting me to set up and attend the tide gauge.

7-10-1847 Got my hay into the barn from the meadow near the house....

7-21-1847 engaged with hay at the Ox Pond meadow.

8-5-1847 Gale with rain, heavy storm blows the corn down very much. Schooner *Teaser* of Ipswich castaway on Cape Pogue Beach loaded with lumber from Bangor.

8-8-1847 Sist. Celia Johnson Wife of William Johnson (he being the last of the Indian Sachem descendants of Chappaquiddick Tribe of Indians) died about 12 oclock. [at funeral daughter looked at mother] daughter "being the only colored person now living in all the region of what is called Farm Neck, at which place a very large number of Indians and coloured people formerly resided."

8-11-1847 Lieut. Davis takes his Barometer onboard of the Steamer Bible

[Many descriptions of Camp and Camp Meetings].

4-8-1848 "Life is a span a fleeting hour.... Another year of my short life has fled."

7-28-1848 engaged in cutting my oats.

9-2-1848 finished winnowing my Oats, raised 50 & ¾ Bushels this season.

9-27-1848 commenced getting in my corn.

## **1850-1857**

5-24-1850 engaged in dividing Indian land on Chappaquiddick [continued surveying Indian land through early June].

7-1-1850 Commissioners [he was one] went to Chappaquiddick to view the damage done to C. Leuges (?) Creek meadow returned to the Court house at 2 p.m.

8-6-1850 engaged with other Commissioners in laying out the road from Edgartown to Holmeshole.

8-8-1850 surveying and cutting a line for the road through the woods to the road near Smith, Jr. house.

8-23-1850 Mr. John P. North having stuck a nail in the ball of his foot a few days ago, dies this morning about 5 o'clock of the Lock Jaw, his spasms were violent a short time before his death, the wound being very trifling closed up in a short time, he was walking the street 2 or 3 days before his death.

10-17-1850 engaged in writing report of Indian land ascertaining contents of each man's share.

4-25-1851 Ship *Champion* Capt. Henry Colt arrives from the Pacific Ocean with 2800 barrels Whale & Sperm oil.

8-13-1851 A young man by the name of Mitchell was drowned near Cape Poge gut so called this afternoon he with two others attempted to swim across the gut the tide running very strong he was unable to reach the opposite shore.

4-8-1852 this day I am 60 Years old oh how my years have flown away.

5-6-1852 Went to Deep Bottom on business of the Indians [Lots of laying out roads, many deaths and injuries, many camp meetings].

5-23-1852 I Bought the 1/8 part of the salt works and land belonging to the heirs of Thos. Jernegan.

12-20-1852 Perambulated a part of the road from West Tisbury Village to Edgt.

10-20-1855 Went to Deep Bottom with the Commissioners for the purpose of ascertaining a line of ancient Indian land.

12-17-1855 Went to Gay Head with the Commissions to \_\_\_ the lines between the White Inhabit and Indians.

4-27-1856 attended meeting at Pohogonot.

6-12-1856 Went to Deep Bottom on business of Indians.

7-16-1856 The telegraph cable is laid from E. Chop of Holmeshole to Woods Hole.

9-5-1856 Engaged surveying for Dr. Danl Fisher.

1-31-1857 This has been the most severe month I ever knew on account of snow, ice, frosty and cold, the thermometer has been from 11 to 12 or 13 degree below zero and ice on the harbor is now 12 inches thick, and extends to Cape Poge, and a great quantity floating in the sound."

2-10-1857 100 men are engaged in cutting a channel through the ice.

2-18-1857 Ice leaves the harbor today having been closed up since the 6<sup>th</sup> of January.

6-5-1857 Light cloudy a little rain a.m. [This was the day he died].

*Record of Indian Lands on the Island of Chappaquiddick and Christiantown, in Dukes County, belonging to Jeremiah Pease, Edgartown, February 23, 1849.*

Also at Deep Bottom in said County October 1846.

Boundary descriptions – meadows, houses, heaps of stones, ditches, Cove Meadow, small ponds in said meadow, Cape Poge Pond, upland, Edgartown harbor, "the land set off for the support of the poor." Sally Webquish, Creek, the Indian line fence, tract of meadow land, Eliakim Jonas, "It is understood that the six Tracts or Lots of meadow set off to several persons before mentioned, are to hold their width according to the number of rods stated in each Tract, from one end to the other until they come to the beach or upland, meaning the six Tracts or Lots situated near the Dwelling House of Abraham Brown.

Description of land to support the Poor – near E harbor, also "on the cliff near Edgartown harbor.... to Cape Poge Pond, 79 acres.

"Should any Persons hereafter appear having legal claims in right of heirship upon the Indian Lands on the Island of Chappaquiddick it is understood that they shall receive their share out of the lands set off for the support of the poor."

"We have set off in Common (under the following regulations) the Peat Swamps on said Island of Chappaquiddick belonging to said Indians and People of color, viz. \_\_\_\_.

Indian Land bounds – 581 1/4 ac. description.

Indian Wood Land 111 ac. and 56 rods.

Has a list of Indian families.

Boundaries for Christiantown.

Division line fence between said Indians, and the White Inhabitants, wall or fence, stone wall, watering place which was formerly reserved for the White People and Indians one rod from the corner of the stone wall and a heap of stones.

"The Spring or Wateringplace contained with the above mentioned Tract set off to said Diadam shall ever be considered free for the use of those Persons whose situation in the judgment of the Guardian of the said Indians shall render it necessary for them to use."

Set off land for the Meeting House and for support for the Poor.

"We have also divided the Wood Land belonging to said Indians and People of Colour at Christiantown, lying detached from their other lands in the following manner,

Lays our specific bounds for individual families.

Lays out "Boundaries of the Whole Tracts of land owned by the Indians and People of colour in Christiantown."

314 ¼ ac. and nine rods.

Detached Wood Lands owned by Indian and People of Colour.

75 ac. and 34 rods.

Lists families.

Signed by Commissioners John Hancock, Thomas Fish, Jeremiah Pease  
Copy by Jeremiah 2-23-1849

Chappaquiddick

Hon. Leavitt Thaxter – Guardian for the Indians and People of colour and overseer of the Poor of said Indians and People of colour.

Shares of woodland, shares of land at the landing place, shares of the Peat swamp.... for each family shares of the Neck.

Could actually (roughly) figure some out. Pocha Path, Indian line fence.

"We have also set off three spare shares of the wood land, also of the land on the Neck, so called, and the Peat Swamp, and have reserved sufficient Landing Place to accommodate said Indians and People of colour \_\_\_\_."

Neck – “A road or cartway by gates and bars for the accommodation of all concerned, is reserved to, and from Cohog Point so called, on the southeast side of said Neck, and also, on te southwest side of said Neck, from the Pont to the harbor \_\_\_\_.”

“We have also reserved a road, leading from the Swimming Place road so called to Sampsons hill, for the accommodation of persons here in named, to whom the wood land is set off, and the road leading from the Landing Place to the road on the Northeast side of the Indian line fence, said roads being twenty feet in width \_\_\_\_.”

It is also intended that the persons to whom the Peat Swamp is set off shall have the privilege of passing to and from the several shares of said swamp, with cart teams etc. for the purpose of takin their Peat etc.

“It is understood that those persons who have a sufficiency of Peat formerly set off to them, were not entitled to any part of the new division of the Peat swamp....”

*Report on the division of the Indian Land at Chappaquiddick made Dec. 27, 1850 by Jeremiah Pease and Richard Beetle, written and compared with the original by me. Jeremiah Pease.*

Deep Bottom Division 1856 – Not Indian.

John Vinson and Leavitt Thaxter – appointed by Legislature – apportion and divide land.

stone set in ground, stonebound, brook running from Deep Bottom into a pond, the five paths, the country road leading from Edgartown to West Tisbury, corner of Indian lands.

Earlier Section

“We have set off a common (under the following regulations) the Peat Swamps on said Island of Chappaquiddick belonging to said Indian People of Colour, viz. \_\_\_\_.

The Peat contained in the Swamp lying near the Meeting House shall remain free for all those families who may not have a sufficiency of Peat contained in the land set off to said Families, and those who may have more Peat contained within the land set off to them, than shall be sufficient for their own use, shall have no claims upon the remainder, but it shall be divided among said Inhabitants according to the judgment of the Guardians and Overseers.

The land set off to the several Families and adjourning the Peat Swamps, is meant to extend no farther into said Swamps, then shall be judged expedient by the Guardians and Overseers.”

The privilege of picking Cranberries shall ever remain free for the Indians and People of Colour but no one shall be debarred from making any improvements upon Cranberry Swamps, within their respective territories which shall render them more beneficial to their interest.

The passways to and from the several Swamps above mentioned shall be under the direction of the Guardians and Overseers.

The following are the Boundaries of the Indian Wood Land on the said Island of Chappaquiddick which we have set off in common and undivided to the Indians and People of Colour, said land lying detached from their other lands about one hundred and twenty rods to the southwest.

In the division of the Lands of the Indian and People of Colour we have decided that Roads, cart or Passways shall ever be used in their usual manner, or in the same manner as heretofore practiced.

***Box 2, Folder 6***

Surveys – Interesting notes, land on Chippy, one map Belain, Toms Neck, Indian Well known by the name of Jacks Well, Calebs Pond, always reserving the ways as laid out aforesaid, Swamp Meadow sometimes called Square Meadow, Pocha Pond.

***Box 2, Folder 2***

“Perambulating the lines between Edgartown and Tisbury” October 23, 1822.

Plan and deed of land of Starbuck’s Neck “land adjoining squash Meadow Pond.”

1823 December 27 Survey the Indian line Fence so called on Is. of Chappaquiddick.

[So, he undoubtedly kept a separate surveyor’s journal. Wonder where that went.]

***Box 2, Folder 4. Chappaquiddick Land Records.***

Less polished copy of surveys – with small sketch maps.

***Box 2, Folder 7. Records of Vessels at Edgartown January 1827 – December 1834.***

Vessel name, Captain, Origin, Where From, Where Bound, Were Belonging.

1846-55, 1819-22, 1856