

MV Agricultural Society

James S. Grinnell. 1883. Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Agriculture. *Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society*.

Note: Although this describes a visit to the Fair at the Ag Society it offers a much more expansive view of the Island in the early 1880s along with a lengthy discussion of Island history.

Delegated by the Board of Agriculture to attend the Annual Cattle Show and Fair of the Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society, on the second and third days of October last, I landed at Cottage City on the afternoon of Monday, the first, and was at once driven over to West Tisbury, in the centre of the island, where the society has a building and grounds for their exhibition.

The island of Martha's Vineyard, or ' ' Martin's " Vine yard, as formerly called, — the Indian name of which was Capawack, — lies five or six miles south of the mainland, is of irregular shape, about twenty-one miles long from east to west, and from five to ten wide. It has now five towns, — Edgartown, Cottage City (set off from Edgartown in 1880) , Tisbury, Chilmark, and Gay Head (formerly part of Chilmark). The eastern shore is generally a bluff, some thirty to fifty feet above the ocean, thence to West Tisbury is a nearly level plain, thirty or forty feet above the sea. The land then rises with a broken character to the west and north, in two ridges of from two hundred to two hundred and fifty feet in height for miles, the highest point being three hundred feet.

Among these hills and between the ridges there is excel lent pasture, with valleys of good mowing and tillage land. There are several large brooks which, with their tributaries rising among the hills, furnish water for stock, and in some cases power for small mills.

About twenty-five years ago Dr. Daniel Fisher of Edgartown, a man of great enterprise and business capacity, who had acquired a large fortune in the oil business, believing that wheat could be grown and good flour made upon the island, bought some six hundred acres of land lying on one of the largest of these brooks, and built on the line of the brook five heavy, expensive stone dams, making as many capacious reservoirs. At the lower one, in 1860, he built a very fine mill for grinding wheat and bolting flour, containing every appliance known in those days for perfect milling ; and at that time there was not in the United States a more complete mill for making flour. He imported the best wheat grown in Maryland, and for a time made the finest flour known.

At his death the enterprise was given up, though the mill remains in perfect order, but only used for grinding corn, as no wheat was ever grown to supply it. With that supine indifference common all over the State, the farmers of the Vineyard prefer to buy their flour at a cost of twice what they could produce it for; and from 1850, when they raised the enormous crop of forty-five bushels, there has not been enough grown on the island to make an entry in the census returns down to the present time. Mr. Whiting, with a desire to stimulate wheat-raising, has grown over thirty bushels to the acre, and from one acre's produce received six barrels of superfine flour from this mill. On the south slope of the island from these hills are four large brooks emptying into the sea, and two on the north side.

Gay Head, the high point on the western end of the island, — so named from the singular and brilliant appearance it presents from the ocean, the bluff, one hundred and fifty feet high, seamed down to the water's edge with ridges of variegated clays of different colors hornblende and lignite, — gives its name to the small township, of rough but excellent pasture-land, and also to the light-house which crowns its summit. It contains an inexhaustible supply of fire clay, about two hundred tons of which are annually exported to Providence for fire-brick ; kaolin or porcelain clay of the finest kind is also there found.

The last of the pure-blood Gay Head Indians died some years ago; the population left, of brave and daring boatmen and fishermen, is some Indian, some white, and more negro blood, intermixed beyond the power of any ethnological Harvey to trace the circulation.

There are upon the island, in various places, large deposits of muck, peat, vegetable deposit and swamp mud, of more or less value to compost for manurial purposes, together with kelp, rockweed and seaweed, which is at times thrown upon parts of the coast in large quantities.

The whole extent of the island is 26,390 acres of farm land, of which 4,740 are under cultivation, 5,736 in wood, 15,716 unimproved or pasture land, and 1,298 unimprovable.

There is a great amount of good wood, largely of oak, on the northern and western parts of the island, and in the lower, moister and less exposed localities I noticed many grand oaks that would girt quite six feet.

On the south-eastern part of the Vineyard some hundreds of acres have been sown with the seed of the common pitch pine, and carry trees thirty and forty feet high, showing well what might be done with enterprise and patience. These have not suffered from a fungoid growth, destroying the foliage and trees, as have the pines on the neighboring island of Nantucket. Whether they were the same variety no one could inform me.

Remains of submarine forests have been found at Vine yard Haven and in other places, showing that the island was once heavily wooded, as also Gosnold, the first discoverer, so states.

A large part of the territory is good farming land, and would compare favorably with that of almost any town in eastern Massachusetts, or indeed with many of those on the hard hills of Worcester West or Franklin, and is susceptible of producing much more than it now yields.* * In " Letters from an American Farmer," printed in 1782, which attracted much attention at the time, and after, Hector St. John, the author, says, — " Edgar is the best seaport and the shire town. Chilmark has no good harbor, but the land is excellent, and no way inferior to that on the continent. It contains excellent pastures, convenient brooks for mills, stone for fencing, etc. Tisbury is remarkable for the excellence of its timber, and has a harbor where the water is deep enough for ship³ of the line. The stock of the island is 20,000 sheep, 2,000 neat cattle, besides horses and goats. They have also some deer and abundance of sea fowl."

The Vineyarders have long been noted for their hospitable and cordial treatment of visitors; they are a hardy race and have sent over every sea on the globe their brave sailors and skilled fishermen, who carry with them such a devoted fondness for their island home, that it ultimately brings back to their beloved Vineyard almost all who are not " in the deep bosom of the ocean buried."

Martha's Vineyard owes most of the prosperity that attends her to the whale and other fisheries, for although at the highest, in 1845, she had but fifteen vessels and \$250,000 capital, all from Edgartown, her brave men manned the ships from other ports, and from before that to the present time returned with their hard earnings to invest them in farming. Our census returns show that of the classified occupations there are in Dukes County four hundred and thirty-four persons engaged in the fisheries, and three hundred and thirty-four in agriculture.

The total domestic and agricultural products are \$149,128. The products of the fisheries are \$133,797. The total of farm property, \$799,283 (which is capital). The capital in the fisheries is \$220,695.

Thus it will be seen that the agricultural products gave to each person engaged in agriculture \$446.50 for the year; and the products of the fisheries \$308.33 to each person in that occupation. The agricultural products return but 18½ per cent. on the capital invested, while the fishery products give about 60½ per cent. on the invested capital.

There are on the Vineyard one hundred and fifty-four mariners and forty-four master mariners, who, I presume, take a hand at farming, occasionally. Indeed, I was told that more than half the farmers were also fishermen, and that in addressing a full-grown Vineyarder as "Captain," I would be right three times out of five.

Still there is a great deal of agricultural earnestness among them all, and I do not believe there is a society in the State where its bounty is better earned, more largely distributed, and so generally appreciated, as in this very one.

The three south-eastern counties of the State, where the soil — whatever it was in the earlier days of dense woods, festooned with the vines of the purple grape, which delighted the eyes of the discoverers, and gave to this district the distinctive and captivating title of Vineyard — is much of it sand and drift, and not so responsive to the labor of the husbandman as many other more attractive lands in other parts of the State and country. The occupation of fishing, often very remunerative, and fascinating from its dangers, and the temptation to follow the sea is so strong, that many leave, preferring to plough the ocean than to continue the same-named operation on the unresponding sands of the Cape.

The Vineyard, while suffering with the other two counties, is peculiar, as showing less change in its population than any other county in the State, probably due much to this controlling love of their home, — this nostalgia which will not admit a permanent expatriation.

Nantucket has not so large a population now as she had in 1790. She culminated in 1845, and has been waning ever since. Barnstable has 4,000 less than she had twenty years ago; and the Vineyard has increased but a thousand over the 3,265 she had a hundred years ago. For the first fifty years, with occasional set-backs, she added but about five hundred inhabitants, and has only increased her population the other five hundred since 1840, and that increase has been in Edgartown and Tisbury.

Dukes County, including Gosnold, according to our State census, the only one giving opportunity for comparison, contains 33,945 acres of farming lands, in 371 farms; having 4,893 acres of cultivated land, appraised at \$30.12 per acre; 18,000 acres of pasture or unimproved land at \$9.34; 9,200 acres of woodland at \$12.42, and 1,858 acres of unimprovable at \$1.43 per acre.

On these 371 farms are 978 buildings, or a little less than three buildings to each farm; in that respect a little better than the average of the State.

The average value of all the buildings on each farm in the State, of which there are two and two-thirds, is about \$1,482; the average value of all the buildings on each farm in Dukes County is about \$666. The value of the individual buildings on each farm in the State is less than \$560 each; in Dukes County each building on every farm averages \$253.

The domestic animals on each farm in the State are valued at about \$388 ; those on the Vineyard farms at about \$260.

But the item showing their greatest deficiency and a neglect of good farming, and consequently a loss of products and of profits, is that of agricultural implements and machinery. This not only shows in figures, but was discernible at the fair and in the fields, and is a matter of common remark among themselves ; it indicates thriftlessness and lack of wisdom which, until amended, will always stand in the way of successful farming.

The average value of the agricultural implements and machinery on each farm in the State is about \$120; of the same in Dukes County, \$39, or less than one-third of what farms average throughout the State.

No farmer, nor set of farmers, can use old-fashioned, clumsy, past-dated tools, and stand in the same rank or successfully compete with those who keep abreast of the times with the new and perfected implements and machines of the present day. To use a shakly, one-horse wagon of ten bushels capacity, with a patched and rotten harness, for carting out manure, instead of a strong, handy dump-cart for one or two horses, and the same for harvesting ; or an old-time, rickety plough, an old-fashioned A harrow, for preparing the land, and a little old one-horse plough or corn harrow, in place of a fine iron or improved wooden-beam steel or chilled-iron plough, a wheel harrow, a Thomas smoothing harrow, and a shapely Planet cultivator or Prout's horse hoe, for properly cultivating the growing crop ; or a mere scythe with a ten- year-old snathe, a hand-rake and fork for getting in hay, in stead of a good mowing machine, a tedder and a horse rake ; and an old spade to chop up such roots as he may have, instead of an easy, quick-working vegetable and root cutter, shows in any farmer an inert, inactive disposition, quite inconsistent with the spirit of this age, which so long as it prevails will most assuredly hinder the advancement of him who uses such tools, and just as surely will drive the succeeding generation of boys from the farm to the lively employment of braking freight cars on a railway, driving a city grocer's wagon, or to cast their bread on the waters from a mackerel smack or a whale-boat. Farming at the best is a laborious occupation, a constant struggle against the forces of nature. The elements, excessive moisture or drouth, heat and cold, all kinds of vermin and insects above the surface of the ground and below it, dependence on middle men, and the inability to unite and to make and sustain fair paying prices for their products, are all combined to make the farmer realize that primeval malediction — Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

I know these remarks are not germane to a report on the Vineyard Fair, but I cannot lose this opportunity to iterate what has been often forcibly said, that the farmer who scrimps his beasts, his family and himself, pinching their stomachs, and depriving

himself and his household of every thing but the bare necessities of living, toiling early and late in all weathers, risking his health, often inducing sickness, and generally inducing himself with a full and permanent suit of rheumatism, all to scrape together day by day small dribblets with which, when they amount to a hundred dollars, he hastens to the nearest savings bank, burying it for the small returns of three and a half per cent. a year, — does not have the same happiness in his family, does not accomplish the same good for his neighbors and the community around him, and finally does not, with all his savings-bank investments, leave his family in as respectable and comfortable condition as if he had turned his money back on the farm, in bettering his buildings within and without, making the waste places a fruitful spot, by clearing, ditching and reclaiming land, in buying improved animals for increased products, and improved implements and machines which should ease the unceasing work in his declining years ; by liberal management and generous treatment attracting and retaining around him, in one or more comfortable farmer's homes, those children who, repelled by the hardships and unloveliness of the cheerless farm, have sought more congenial situations, and have found sympathy and appreciation in other occupations and in other parts of the country.

The temperature of Martha's Vineyard is much more favorable than in the most of the State, not varying much from that of Nantucket, where there are two hundred and thirty days without frost, while the other parts of the State only enjoy from one hundred and forty to one hundred and sixty, the lowest temperature in winter being from 18° to 25° higher than in the Connecticut River Valley. The Vineyard, however, has some advantages over Nantucket in not receiving the sharp north east winds which sometimes sweep down around Cape Cod but hardly ever touch this island. It is a noticeable fact that while the mean summer temperature of the water in Massachusetts Bay is 52°, in Buzzard's Bay on the south and in the water around the Vineyard and in the Sound, it is 72°. The influence of the Gulf Stream seems to be very perceptible on the south shore ; three times within the past twenty years the islanders have been visited by the golden mullet, a very delicate fish of the South, and never known to be north of the Carolinas. Some years ago a true pelican was shot in one of the salt ponds opening into the sea.

While fishing will always be a large element in the support of the inhabitants of Martha's Vineyard, there is an item I think likely to bring a considerable revenue to the island which, though not agricultural, may be one which the farmer-fishermen of this locality can pursue, and it is oyster culture.

The enormous consumption of this popular bivalve has already created anxiety as to the supply, which many intelligent fishermen fear will not keep pace with the demand.

Prof. Baird of the United States Fish Commission, who is doing more than any one man in this country to increase food supply for the people, has, with Prof. Riley and other assistants at the Station of the Commission at Wood's Hole, found a safe, sure and expeditious way of producing oysters by artificial fecundation.

But beyond this, and which is of much more consequence, is an economic plan for retaining in large ponds or aquaria for the purpose, the embryo or spat after fertilization, till the young oysters shall, free from all outside dangers, attach them selves to twigs, fascines, shells, prepared tiles, and other things arranged for them, till they are large enough to be safely planted out in suitable beds. When it is known that a large female oyster will produce about 60,000,000 eggs, it will be at once imagined how small a proportion of them ever grow into oysters that come to a market. When in a state of

nature most of them are swept away in the salt water unfertilized, and the others are for a long time defenceless, subject to destruction by every variety of marine enemies ; but if they can be preserved in their tender infancy the increase can be controlled to an almost limitless amount, and safely and economically transplanted to suitable beds, where they will rapidly grow.

There is a number of ponds on the southern shore of the island and some on the northern, admirably adapted to the planting and cultivation of oysters, when they can be furnished as readily, as safely and as cheaply as Prof. Baird thinks they can be from his Station.

These ponds, separated from the ocean by only a few feet or rods of a sand bank, are very suitable for this purpose, having a sandy bottom, fed by fresh water from the land side, which can readily be made salt enough by cutting channels through the narrow sand banks into the ocean three or four times a year, with a few days work of men and teams, through which at high tide the salt water will flow in, sufficient to make the water brackish enough for the oysters, — to furnish them food and lime for their shells, and to bring the water to the specific gravity of 1.010 to 1.020, the proper range for oyster culture. Oysters bred in these ponds would have a great advantage of freedom from their worst enemies, the star-fish and the drum, which would not be likely to get into the ponds, and if they did, the water would be too fresh for the dreaded star-fish to live in. These ponds being comparatively shallow, the oysters would probably grow and fatten very rapidly.

It seems probable to me that before long the people of the Vineyard may be able to export many thousands of bushels of oysters of good quality, grown at a comparatively small expense.

The whole character of the eastern end of the island has been changed within a few years, having become a place of great summer resort, first by the Methodists, and later by comfort and pleasure seeking people, who, attracted by the fine air, delicious breezes, and the grand ocean scenery, have made permanent residences there, mostly in the shape of " cottages," from the small box of twelve feet by twenty- two, to the large, ornate, pagoda-like structures of many wealthy proprietors.

The "cottages" of all kinds now number about twelve hundred, and in the height of the summer season, when the camp-meeting is being held, and the hotels and cottages are filled, it is said that there are not less than twenty thousand people on the island.

In 1835 the first modest beginning of a Methodist camp-meeting here was made at " Wesleyan Grove," in the town of Edgartown, on high land about five miles north of the village, in a beautiful oak grove. Nine tents were pitched, and some eight hundred people attended the services. The beauty, the seclusion, the wholesomeness of the location, with perhaps a touch of sentimentality, finally decided the people of that persuasion in the south-eastern part of the State, in 1868, to take an act of incorporation, with authority to hold land and other property, and to make rules and by-laws for their government and protection.

Such has been the marvellous growth of this place, set off from Edgartown, and incorporated as "Cottage City" in 1880, that now one thousand cottages of all kinds are spread over the ground in which twenty thousand worshippers sup plant the place of the few hundreds and the nine tents of fifty years ago.

While these consumers, with not one item of production among them, not so much as a head of lettuce or of that most insignificant of vegetables, a single radish, are to be fed, many of them for three months or more, one would suppose that market-gardening would have become quite extensive, and that the business of supplying all these people with the common spring and summer vegetables and berries would form a very important item in the Vineyard resources; but I was told that most of the articles of this sort were brought from Boston and New York by way of New Bedford, as well as most of the meats.

But surely the Vineyarders could arrange with the market-men and supply them with better vegetables from their own gardens than those from the mainland two or three days old. According to the census of 1875 (though matters have improved since that, but the Federal census does not descend to such small things), no asparagus, no lettuce, salads nor greens, no celery was raised and sold on the island; only fifteen bushels of tomatoes, two thousand quarts of strawberries, fifteen hundred bushels of sweet corn, and \$332 worth of cucumbers, — a very small part of the consumption of from ten to twenty thousand people in three months. Of the lambs sold the census report give no return; but the farmers told me that owing to New Bedford competition they could not get paying prices. There is something wrong in this, for they can and do have earlier and fatter lambs than the New Bedford market can afford, and with the class of people who summer on the island, and with proper arrangements with the dealers, they ought to make their lambs a very paying product.

Of dressed poultry they sold, during the year, \$3,270 worth, and of eggs, \$6,300 worth. The poultry and eggs together amount to \$700 more than all the beef and pork killed on the island.

Of pork they made 43,133 lbs., the number of pigs not given ; but if each one dressed 250 lbs. it would only make one hundred and seventy killed, — not half a pig for each farm on the Vineyard, — which we, on the continent, would think pretty small allowance, and which, I should suppose, would not be enough with which to fry the orthodox codfish- balls, let alone what should go into the honored pot that holds the inestimable baked beans. ,

Of beef they slaughtered during the year 47,720 lbs., and if the reported hides corresponded there would have been seventy-three beasts dressing 654 lbs. each; but while Tisbury gives fifty-eight hides to 15,000 lbs. of beef, making each one dress about 260 lbs., Edgartown apparently wrapped in one hide 5,900 lbs. of beef, showing that the hide does not always go with the carcass. The Vineyarders received 9 6 cents for their beef against 9 cents average of the State; for their 13,830 lbs. of mutton, 12 cents, against the rest of the State 9 cents ; and for their pork 10| cents, against 10 cents elsewhere.

In 1858 Mr. Henry L. Whiting of the United States Coast Survey, and now one of the Harbor Commissioners of Massachusetts, having some years previously bought a farm in West Tisbury, had become impressed, in his official visits to every part of the island, by a belief that with the concerted action of the farmers in a society receiving the bounty of the State, the possibilities of increasing the agricultural capacity of the Vineyard, having naturally a good soil, and rich in beds of peat, muck, and in the drifting seaweed, might be largely extended.

Having interested some leading farmers they took the first steps towards providing the necessary funds, and the Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society was

accordingly incorporated in February, 1859, the necessary land purchased, and a convenient building erected by the following October, when the society held its first cattle-show. The society seems by the returns to have been successful. It has gradually paid off all its indebtedness, at one time over \$2,000; it pays annually for premiums entirely within the purview of the law as strictly agricultural, more than it receives from the Commonwealth, and it pays nothing for horse-trotting.

The morning of Tuesday, October 2, the first day of the Fair, was about as stormy and unpromising a day for a cattle-show as the calendar could show, with a howling south-east wind and a pouring rain.

Notwithstanding this, which must have kept away many even of these amphibious islanders, to whom water presents few terrors, there was a fair attendance of farmers with their animals.

Over sixty entries of neat stock were represented by more than seventy head of oxen, cows and young creatures, many of which were very good. The milch cows, with a cross of Ayrshire, and occasionally of Jersey, looked well, considering the very dry condition of the pastures. Two or three yokes of steers were very fine, and would have been credit able at any fair in the State; the young cattle, though pinched by the drought and curled up by the pelting storm, were promising looking.

There were in 1879 upon the island 1,381 head of neat stock, 557 of which were milch cows, and 274 oxen and steers, which, as working animals, I was glad to see, had not entirely gone out of use. In 1845 the islanders had 1,820 neat cattle; in 1850, 1,709; in 1855, 1,690, and so on, decreasing at every decade to the present time, or rather to the time of taking the last census for the year 1879. Since that, I find by the State valuation returns that the milch cows have increased to 738 — a very satisfactory gain for three years.

As butter is a large and profitable product here, the Vine-yarders are very properly cultivating the Ayrshires and the Jerseys.

I would most strongly urge upon the members of this society to bring into the island one or more pure-bred Jersey bulls, as I learned that they were quite commonly breeding to grade bulls, a practice which will surely run out their stock, and certainly will not permanently increase their good milk and butter cows, which are what they want.

Of swine there were but four entries. There are but 265 swine on the island anyhow, not one for each farm, let alone the 1,473 other dwelling-houses. The Vineyarders have something to learn about the profitableness of keeping pigs. With such an extent of pasture land, the best place for them on the farm in summer ; and for winter, with sea-weed to be had for, the hauling, and 390 tons of salt hay, which might be largely increased, and with inexhaustible beds of real muck, how easily they could grow and fatten pigs ; especially as they have from their butter-making about 270,000 quarts of skimmed milk, and from their cheese about 2,800 quarts of whey, with which the young pigs can be most successfully started. What they do with all their skimmed milk I don't see. The 20 calves they vealed, and the 212 they raised in 1875, couldn't use it all, for they made in that year 313,388 quarts of milk, from which they made 15,416 lbs. of butter. In 1880 they sold 183,584 quarts, and also made 22,782 lbs. of butter, which, at even twelve quarts to a pound of butter, would require the skimming of 273,384 quarts of milk. So much for pigs.

Of sheep there were twenty-four entries, covering forty seven animals. The islanders still continue to regard wool as the prime object in sheep raising, considering the flesh of mutton and lamb as secondary, and accordingly offer, first, premiums for fine-woolled sheep, and then for natives and grades; and this, too, when their 9,225 sheep only shear 25,782 lbs. of wool, or two and three-quarters of a pound to the sheep, worth twenty-six or twenty-seven cents per pound, while mutton is worth ten to twelve cents per pound, and early lambs from six to eight dollars each, and grass lambs from four to six dollars.

Every delegate who has visited this society has commented upon its capacity for raising sheep and lambs for market, and has recommended the introduction of some of the hardy Down sheep to give good shape and early maturity to the lambs, and has insisted on the importance of shelter and better care for the winter than the sheep on the island are wont to receive, to keep the ewes in condition, to save the lambs and to improve the fleece. Perhaps a comparison may stimulate them. Franklin County, with 11,000 sheep of all kinds, — including wethers, barren ewes and yearlings, — raises over 8,000 lambs, which are valued straight through at \$4.35 each, and sends to market over \$16,000 worth of mutton. Dukes County, with a safer sheep-raising country and over 9,000 sheep, raises only 1,400 lambs, valued at \$1.50 each, and sends to market only \$1,700 worth of sheep meat. The islanders say that the improved sheep are not hardy enough for them. No sheep that wears wool is hardy enough to thrive, scarcely to live, on such treatment as most of these Vineyard sheep receive, when they are kept the whole winter unhoused and scantily fed, if at all. It is no wonder that the wool comes off, becomes dead and of little weight ; or that they raise less than 16 per cent. of lambs to the sheep, while the Franklin County shepherd, by care and feed, brings up 95 per cent. of his lambs, and reckons at least 125 lambs to the 100 ewes.

With such a range of pasture, and with winters ninety days or more shorter than ours in the interior, the islanders ought to beat in market with early and grass lambs every county in the State, except Nantucket. They are comparatively free, too, from ravages by dogs. It is said that history repeats itself. In the matter of sheep husbandry in this State this is true, so far as this.

In the laws of Massachusetts Bay, October 18, 1648, it is enacted that, "if any dog shall kill any sheepe, the owner shall either hang his dog forthwith or pay double damages for the sheepe ; if the dog hath bene seene to course or bite any sheepe before, not being set on, and his owner hath had notice thereof, then he shall both hang his dog and pay for the sheepe."

In the legislature of 1882 the Massachusetts Senate passed an amendment to the "dog law," to the effect that if the owner of any dog having killed sheep was known, he should pay for the sheep or kill his dog.

This harmless and wise enactment was in the House attacked by a Boston lawyer and dog-breeder so effectively as to defeat it, by abuse of the dog law, ridicule of sheep husbandry and derision of the farmers, thirty odd of whom there present sat cowed, abashed and tongue-tied as the dog owners triumphantly killed the bill. Truly the men of 1648 were wiser in their generation.

The display in the hall was exceedingly good. The women of the island are as skilled with the needle as those of a former generation were with the spinningwheel and the loom.

Seventy-five years ago there were here three carding mills, which carded 6,000 lbs. of wool, and there were two fulling mills, which dressed 4,000 yards of cloth, out of the 17,775 yards of all kinds which the women of the island wove on the eighty looms in the various farm-houses, valued at about 75c. per yard, and they knitted 7,406 pairs of woollen stockings, worth \$4,448.

There was a large display of useful and of very handsome articles of needlework, and the very great interest felt by the women of the island, and their ingenious and active industry, were manifested in 342 entries of the different classes of needlework, fancy work, worsted work, mats, rugs and knitting, with the inevitable bedquilts.

To almost any one of these busy workwomen might be applied the words of the wise man, " She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands."

Of bread of all kinds there were fifty-eight entries, much of it looking very palatable.

There were twenty-four entries of butter, looking well, and some as fine in appearance and taste as would be found anywhere.

There were four entries of fair-looking small cheeses.

The Vineyard, in the last census year, 1879, produced 705 lbs. of cheese; in 1875, — perhaps by some mistake of the assessors, — only 70 lbs., and that from Chilmark. In 1850 and in 1855 they made over 4,000 lbs. Strange as this decline seems, from that to 705 lbs., it is only one percent greater than that in the great cheese-producing county of Berkshire, and in the State at large, — on the farms. But in the State, the cheese factories produced a third more than double all that was made in home dairies, and there is no factory in Dukes County.

There were 22,782 lbs. of butter made on the island in 1879, 15,000 in 1875, 14,000 in 1870, 14,700 in 1865, 18,000 in 1860, 28,000 in 1855, 23,000 in 1850, and 20,000 in 1845. In 1879 they sold 45,896 gallons of milk; no price given. In 1875 they made 78,347 gallons, valued at 22½c. per gallon, as against 17c. for the rest of the State. Unfortunately, our census for that year is deficient in not discriminating between the milk sold and that made into butter and cheese. In 1870 they are reported as selling 8,565 gallons, and in 1865, 16,189 gallons.

Apparently the cows of the island do not come up to the standard of those of the State at large, which averages 1,183 quarts to a cow, while that of Dukes County is only 570 quarts by the census of 1875, and 670 by the census of 1879.

The vegetables were very good, — cabbages, squashes, and various turnips, — while the potatoes could not be surpassed in quality. The apples and some other fruits were uncommonly good, considering the very dry season which everywhere prevailed.

Cranberries, eleven entries in number, were of two varieties, the large, light-colored, bell-shaped, and the small, round, dark-red kind, more solid and more valuable than the larger and handsomer ones. It seems to me that this should be a much larger crop on the island than it is. There are now between thirty and forty acres in cranberries, part cultivated and part natural bog.

The expense of preparing a cranberry meadow, "bogging," levelling, sanding and setting, varies from \$250 to \$400 per acre, if labor and team are hired, dependent on the " lay of the land," facility for draining and flowing, and the convenience of sand for covering the meadow. Moisture is indispensable, and much labor required to keep out grass and fowl stuff indigenous to such land. The plants will give a full crop about the

fifth year, and after that, except for frosts or destructive insects, against which flowing is the protection, will with care yield to the acre from fifty bushels up into the hundreds, worth from three to five dollars per bushel. One meadow there was mentioned as having the past season produced ninety barrels on two acres, then worth \$12 per barrel, and waiting for a rise, — \$540 for an acre's crop. I was told that there are many acres which could be brought into cultivation for this valuable vine, and readily flowed, which is a prime necessity to the successful cultivation of a cranberry meadow.

I believe this crop will yet be a very important one for the people of Martha's Vineyard,

The second day of the Fair was beautiful, and brought out these good people in crowds.

To these Vineyarders, isolated as they are, — doomed never to see on their ocean-bounded home the gorgeous gilded chariot which bears on its pinnacled height visions of spangled beauty, which soon after float through the air on a trapeze, or on a bare-backed, fiery steed, whose lack of apparel they strive to rival, dashing recklessly around the ring of "the greatest moral show on earth under canvas;" forbidden as they are by the "dissocial sea" ever to view there the pride, pomp and circumstance of contingent war, which wraps in blue and yellow glory the bloodless warriors of the main land, as they follow the rattle of the spirit-stirring drum and "the vile squeaking of the wry-necked fife," or the becoming band in full imperial uniforms, through the perils of a sweltering Fourth of July or the horrors of a wet muster in September, — the cattle-show is their great holiday, a combination of all the shows on the mainland. They come for good, honest, unrestrained enjoyment, and they have it. Not a sign of disorder or incivility or intoxication was noticed. All were happy, and listened to a band from New Bedford, which gave satisfactory music and pleased the people.

The exhibition of horses continued at intervals through the second and third days. A ploughing-match came off at eleven o'clock on the farm of Mr. Whiting, of two horse-teams and one of oxen, attracting but little attention. One of the ploughs was a novelty there — a Casaday sulky t plough — which did good work, and was a great credit to the owner who had the enterprise to introduce such an advanced implement on the island. There was a base-ball match between two local clubs, a foot race and other civil games to amuse the crowd.

On Thursday the third day, in the afternoon, the large hall was crowded; the very handsome and able address of Mr. Everett A. Davis, which justly gave great satisfaction to the members of the society, some music, a few short speeches to while away an hour, and the twenty-fifth exhibition of the Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society had become a thing of the past.

Two hundred and eighty-one years ago last May, Capt. Bartholomew Gosnold discovered the "Vineyard." First landing on the small island now called "No Man's Land," he gave it the name of "Marthae's," or "Martin's" Vine yard. The larger island upon which he went the next day, about four miles north, has, however, retained the name to the present time. He then sailed round the high bluff at the western end, now known as Gay Head, which he called Dover Cliff, from the somewhat resemblance to the chalky cliff of that name which he had recently left behind him in his English home.

He anchored in a splendid bay which he called "Gosnold'a Hope" and from there selected one of a group of small islands between the Vineyard and the mainland, which he called "Elizabeth," in honor of his mistress the queen of England, where he established a settlement intended to be permanent, but which, however, continued but one month, as those who came with him as settlers expecting to be planters, frightened by the Indians, and thinking their supply of food to be insufficient, sailed back to England, thus ingloriously leaving the first settlement ever made by white men in New England. They carried with them, beside some furs, about one hundred tons of sassafras (still abundant in that neighborhood), regarded at that time as a sovereign specific for a certain disease then prevalent, enough they thought to glut the drug market of London.

On what is now called "Cuttyhunk" they dug and stoned a cellar, built a log house and fortified it with stockades. Within a few years the cellar was distinctly traced, but now the inconsiderable town of "Gosnold," with its one hundred and fifteen inhabitants, is the only monument to that brave captain who made the first settlement in New England, and who, five years afterward, when, with the famous Capt. John Smith, endeavoring to found a settlement in Virginia, died of a terrible plague.

Although the colonial charter of 1692, from William and Mary, conveyed with other territory this island to our fore fathers by the name of Capawack, with no allusion to any Martha, the colonial government soon after in the same year assumed for it the name of "Martha's Vineyard," which it has ever since borne, though perhaps it might seem that the reasons for calling it by that name rather than "Martin's," are not quite conclusive.

The antiquarians who decided this depended entirely upon the "relation" of Gabriel Archer, a gentleman who, with John Brenton and others, accompanied Gosnold; but the subsequent record evidence is much against them. An eminent historian says that "it is greatly to be regretted that the history of the discovery should have been so neglected."

The account of this voyage exists only in "Purchas' Pilgrims" printed in 1625, and consists of three papers. One is a good, stately, but filial letter to his father from Gosnold himself, somewhat descriptive of his voyage, but mentioning no name as given to this island. The narrative of John Brenton, who accompanied Gosnold, is interesting and quite particular; but he gives no name. Gabriel Archer, who was also in Gosnold's small vessel, carrying thirty-two persons, twenty of whom intended to settle as planters, was the only one of these who made any record. Archer's "relation" is a very interesting paper. He says Gosnold named the small island 'Marthae's Vineyard;' and again mentions the name with the same spell-ings. When Archer wrote this, whether at the time or from memory afterwards, does not appear. His "relation" is certainly incorrect in some particulars as a careful study of the voyage will show. In coming by Cape Cod, which still bears the name given it by Gosnold, he says they steered west. If they had done so there would have been a speedy ending of that voyage. He should have said south. He is also confused in his statements of the islands, and of the navigation after leaving Cape Cod; and he may be incorrect in the writing of this name.

In 1603, the next year after Gosnold's return, Captt Martin Pring or Prynne, spelled differently by different writers, made a voyage to the same places discovered by Gosnold, but makes no mention of the name of Marthae's Vineyard. Nor from 1602 down to the landing of the Pilgrims, and long after, although some voyage was made to that or

some place near, as often as every other year, was there any use of that name by any one as known.

Nearly forty years — long enough for the inaccuracy of forgetfulness to have obliterated any certain recollection of the name, — had passed, when Mr. John Forrett, agent for the Earl of Stirling (who claimed, under a grant from the "Plymouth Company," given at the order of Charles the First, all the islands on the coast from Maine to the Hudson River), in 1641 conveyed, with Mr. Frederick Vines, agent for Sir Ferdinand Gorges, "to Thomas Mayhew and his son Thomas Mayhew, Jr., of Watertown, the right to plant on Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Isles, the same as he had previously granted of the Island of Nantucket."

In 1644, and once in 1659, Mr. Thomas Mayhew writes as from Martha's Vineyard, but in all other cases from "Martin's" Vineyard. In 1643 the settlement was established at Edgartown by a detachment of colonists with their young minister from Watertown, which was a colonial hive for swarming. In 1644 was one of the early acts of the "Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England, "that the government of Massachusetts Bay may receive "Martin's Vineyard into their jurisdiction if they see fit," it never up to that time having been under the control of any of the colonial governments.

In 1650 Mr. Thomas Mayhew, the grantee under Lord Stirling, who seems to have devoted himself to christianizing the savages, writes from there that the "natives of 'Martin's' Vineyard were mostly Christians, and that all the island was in a measure leavened."

In 1654 Capt. Humphrey Atherton was authorized "to pasture sheep on 'Martin's' Vineyard and Nantucket, he performing the law for keeping sheep."

In 1658 the commissioners of the united colonies wrote to Mr. Thomas Mayhew of "Martin's" Vineyard concerning the Indians there.

In 1662 one John Doggett (who might reasonably have complained when they wrote his name Doghead), of the island called "Martin's" Vineyard, at the October court at Plymouth, complained against the town of the said Vineyard for the title of certain land in the enjoyment of which he was disturbed, and prevailed. Nicholas Morton and John Pease of "Martin's" Vineyard were appointed to answer to the suit. This same Doggett, at the July court in Plymouth, complained against one Geo. Robinson of "Martin's" Vineyard for defamation, and Robinson was ordered "to pay five pounds, and to make acknowledgment to the court and at home on training day at the head of the company."

October 25 of the same year Doggett was tried for "'uncivil carriage" to Mary Robinson and acquitted.

The same year the commissioners of the colonies wrote Mr. Robert Boyle, governor of the "corporation for the propagation of the gospel among the Indians," that Mr. John Eliot had baptized divers of the Indians on "'Martin's" Vineyard.

The next year Simon Bradstreet, president of the commission, wrote Mr. Boyle on the matter of the Indians at "Martin's" Vineyard.

In 1664 Mr. John Eliot asked that ten pounds be paid to Samuel, an Indian of the church of "Martin's" Vineyard, as a teacher at Nantucket.

In 1667 there was ordered by the government to be paid for schools, to Thomas Mayhew of "Martin's" Vineyard, thirty pounds, and for nine teachers, all at "Martin's" Vineyard, thirty-two pounds.

In the same year, in an investigation, King Philip denied killing persons on "Martin's" Vineyard.

In 1672 there were paid for Indian teachers on "Martin's" Vineyard and Nantucket fifty-seven pounds.

In 1680 a protest was entered before Nathaniel Morton, secretary of the court, by Alexander Watts, master of the sloop "Anne and Elizabeth"; sailing from New York, on his course from "Martin's" Vineyard he went ashore on Cape Cod.

In 1681, by order of court, Samuel, an Indian boy, was bound as "prentice" to the widow of John Tucker, late of "Martin's" Vineyard.

Thus much for the fourteen instances from the earliest colonial records of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, where this island is called "Martin's" Vineyard, and not one where it is written Martha's. From 1664 till 1692 the island was under the government of New York, and the following is the record there: —

In 1641 James Forrett, agent of the Earl of Stirling, and Richard Vines for Sir Ferdinand Gorges, conveyed to Thomas Mayhew of Watertown, and Thomas Mayhew his son, "the right to plant and inhabit on Martha's Vineyard," as granted on Nantucket.

The same year Thomas Mayhew and his son sold a "large towne" on Martha's Vineyard to John Doggett and others, — and that's the last of "Martha's" Vineyard in the New York records of the islands.

In October, 1659, Thomas Mayhew of "Martin's" Vineyard sold the island of Tuckanuck to Tristram Coffin and others.

May 14, 1670. — In the minutes of the council of New York, at Fort James, Mr. Mayhew's business of "Martin's" Vineyard was taken up. A letter was read from Mr. Mayhew, desiring "to be resolved in what nature 'Martin's' Vineyard and those parts are, as to government." "The patent of the duke includes 'Martin's' Vineyard," etc.

"The duke's patent, wherein 'Martin's' Vineyard is included is shown to young Mr. Mayhew."

The same year and month Gov. Lovelace wrote to Mr. Thomas Mayhew about his land in "Martin's" Vineyard, and also sent official notices to all who held any interest in "Martyn's" Vineyard to appear, etc.

June 28, 1671. — Governor and council to the petitioners of Nantucket: — "They may join with their neighbors of 'Martin's' Vineyard," etc.

July 6, 1671. — Governor and council having under consideration Mr. Mayhew's affair about "Martin's" Vineyard: "Mr. Mayhew to bring in what he hath bought at 'Martin's' Vineyard," etc.

Before the governor and council, July 7, 1671: — Granted, that the court is first to be held at "Martin's" Vineyard, etc. "Mr. Mayhew is to be governor over the Indians at 'Martin's' Vineyard."

July 8, 1671. — Gov. Lovelace issued commission to Thomas Mayhew, to be governor of the island, "Martin's" or Martha's Vineyard.

Same year. — Gov. Lovelace commends to the governor of New Plymouth, Mr. Thomas Mayhew of "Martin's" Vineyard.

1674. — Gov. Andros of New York issued order for settling government in "Martin's" Vineyard.

1675. — Thomas Mayhew, "upon 'Martin's' Vineyard," writes: — "I had a grant of Mr. James Forrett, agent to the Lord Stirling, for these isles," etc.

1675. — In council, a petition being presented by Mr. Tristram Coffin and Mr. Matthew Mayhew, from "Martin's" Vineyard.

April 29, 1675. — Gov. Andros issued orders for the courts of the two islands of ' Martin's " Vineyard and Nantucket, etc.

Sept. 28, 1675. — Council voted " to send a great gun to each of the two islands, Nantucket and ' Martin's ' Vine yard."

1685. — Thomas Dongan, lieutenant-governor of New York and vice-admiral, orders the pursuit of a pirate vessel, supposed to be near to " Martin's " Vineyard.

1687. — Gov. Dongan confirmed to certain parties their rights on a certain island lying southeast of ' ' Martin's " Vineyard, known by the name of Nantucket ; an island which was purchased heretofore for a valuable consideration by Thomas Mayhew, Sr., of " Martin's " Vineyard, and Thomas Mayhew, Jr., his son, of James Forrett, agent to William, Earl of Stirling, etc., and referring to Gov. Lovelace's, patent of exactly the same words to Thomas Mayhew in 1671. 1

Aug. 12, 1692. — Council minutes upon reading a letter from Maj. Mayhew of " Martin's " Vineyard, etc.

Oct. 31. — Order of council concerning the government of " Martin's " Vineyard.

Feb. 10, 1692. — Council of New York addressed the king against any attempt to take from New York "Martin's" Vineyard, etc.

Here we find in the colonial records of New York three instances of the island being called "Martha's," and sixteen where it is called " Martin's." This ends the colonial record, but there is some recorded evidence of tradition outside, showing that the island was only known as Martin's Vine yard.

Thomas Lechford, a lawyer who lived some years in Boston, in his " Plaine dealing, or newes from Newe England," in 1641, is the first one to speak of this island before it was deeded to Thomas Mayhew. He says : " Eastward off Cape Cod lyeth an island called ' Martin's ' Vineyard, uninhab ited by any English."

John Josslyn, in his " Voyage," written in 1670, says : —

"Twenty miles out to sea, south of Rhode Island, lyeth ' Martin's ' Vineyard, in the way to Virginia. This island is governed by a discreet gentleman, Mr. Mayhew by name. To the eastward of ' Martin's ' Vineyard lyeth Nantucket islandt"

John Winthrop, in the " History of New England," says in 1643 : — " This yeare some of Watertown began a planta tion at ' Martin's ' Vineyard beyond Cape Cod."

In Hubbard's " Indian Wars," published in 1677, a rude map, one of the first drawn of New England, shows " Mar tin's " Vineyard south of Rhode Island.

Nathaniel Morton, in his "Memorial," published in 1669, says, "The Isle of Capawack now called 'Martin's' Vine yard."

A later edition of this interesting work, by the learned and venerable Judge Davis, has a copy of the map taken from " Hubbardts Indian Wars," described as " A Map of Newe England, being the first that ever was here cut, and drawn by the best pattern that could be had, which, being in some places defective, it made the other less exact, yet doth it sufficiently show the situation of the country, and conveniently well the distance of places."

William Hubbard's " History of New England" in 1680 calls it " Martin's " Vineyard.

It would seem as if all these citations might throw some doubt as to what should be the real name of this island when not one instance is found of its being called ' ' Martha's " Vineyard. Gosnold named the island north of the Vineyard, where his permanent settlement was to be located, Elizabeth, for his queen. Virginia had already

been named for her. Later, Cape Ann and Annapolis were called for Queen Anne, and Maryland for the consort of Charles I. ; but there was no royal Martha, no distinguished woman of that name, save her of St. John's gospel, who had died some time previous, having been canonized July 13, A. D. 303, and there is no suggestion of any other woman for whom he should have called it.

In the voyage down the coast Gosnold gave to unimportant localities convenient names. To "Cape Cod "he gave the name it has ever since borne. "Point Care " he called a dangerous shoal on which he nearly ran. Another headland he called " Point Gilbert," for Bartholomew Gilbert, an explorer and captain of the time, and second officer on this voyage. A reef uncomfortably near their course he named " Tucker's Terror," from the alarm it gave one of his voyagers, and " Gosnold's Hope " was Buzzard's Bay ; and it is probable that he might have called the small island at which he touched for some friend or promoter of his voyage, most likely for Capt. John Martin, with whom not long after, he sailed to Virginia, both being members of the governing council of the "London Company," and undoubtedly friends as they were co-workers in this undertaking. On the one hand we have a ' ' relation " made by one accompanying the discoverer, who himself, with all the others, are silent on this matter. When this was written, at once, or long after the voyage from memory, we know not. This ' ' relation " was not printed, and this name not known, for more than twenty years, and then only by a single mention in only one book, with a curious spelling, and not recognized after that for nearly twenty years more, when the owner, who had received it by grant without a name, conveyed it through an agent, presumably taking the one he gave from Purchas, where it stands to this day, with no imaginable reason for its bestowal. On the other hand, we have an unbroken tradition, running from any time after the discovery of the island down to 1692 of individuals most directly interested in the island, — of the grantee and owner, — of various of the inhabitants, — of all the historians of the times, and of the records of three colonial governments and of two courts of judicature, — all agreeing on a name for the giving of which there was good occasion, and which would have been quite consistent with the discoverer's habit of giving names to unimportant localities.

Tradition is often more conclusive, more thoroughly convincing than a questionable writing, and especially so when its sources are consentaneous and unvarying. Upon tradition depend many of the facts and deductions in that holy book which is our guide in this life and our directory for that which is to come. How much, too, of historic lore, interesting, valuable and fully credited, has come down for years before being embodied in print.

Will it be deemed an impertinent inquiry by a curious but unlearned investigator, with all these citations before him, whether Capt. John Martin, as a brave explorer of this new world, and as an associate and co-worker with Gosnold, had not as reasonable chance to be immortalized in the nomination of this fair island by his friend its discoverer, as any unheard of, imaginary and improbable Marthae?

JAMES S. GRINNELL.